

March 1, 2021

News Section

Student Spotlight

For our first Student Spotlight, we have Sophomore Ryan Pye. Ryan is a Business major with an interest in Film Studies as a minor, hoping to do something with film studies and production after graduation. His favorite hobbies are writing and producing his own music, which he has been doing since high school in 2017. He decided to take his music more seriously once arriving at college in 2019 because he felt there was more opportunity given, such as creative song ideas and the chance to get inspired. His inspiration comes from his past but more so life experiences in general. Ryan stated, "Life is always changing, so there is always a song to be written to capture those moments, good or bad."



When Ryan goes home to NYC, he spends about 5 hours producing his music in the studio. Although he only has a few songs released through both Apple Music and Spotify, he has over 30 others that are waiting to be released. He draws motivation and song inspiration from the artist The Weeknd because his music makes him feel soulful and he relates to his lyrics. One day, Ryan hopes to collaborate with The Weeknd and have his music reach a broader audience.

When asked where he sees himself in 5 years, Ryan said, "music will continue to be my hobby and something I am passionate about," along with the hopes of having music videos released and more albums written. He decided not to major or minor in music because he doesn't want his music to die out or become something of a chore, because at the end of the day, music is a hobby and therapeutic to him, he doesn't want to risk feeling "bored" or "drained" from studying it academically.

One of Ryan's favorite songs written is "Nightmares." He said it "relates to everyday life, no matter what the circumstances are - anyone can relate to it." Some of his most cherished lines ever written come from this song, giving lots of emotion towards trust, relationships, and the

value of hard work. Ryan quoted that, “this song will always hold importance to [him] because it was a time in [his] life where [he] felt the most inspired to write music.”

For anyone afraid or insecure of writing music or sharing it to the world, Ryan gives the advice of “always stay true to yourself and never be afraid of judgement because that’s how you grow” ... “there will always be someone out there who appreciates your music, whether that’s two people out of ten, do it for those two people because then there’s purpose – you must start somewhere to grow.”

You can check out Ryan’s music on both Spotify and Apple Music, along with staying up to date on any new songs or music videos released. If you or anyone you know has a hidden talent, passion, skill or anything you’d like to share with the world, please reach out to Fiat Lux News Secretary, Kailey Reyes, to be featured in her ongoing series “Student Spotlight!”

By Kailey Reyes

Opinion Section

Graduating from the Electoral College: Act I

Setting: Frontier Living in the Back of the Mind



Can the U.S. truly claim to spread Democracy, while never being a Democratically Structured Government itself? Put another way, why does our Republican Politics find resonance with the expression that Democracy is being spread by American rule? Aren’t they the only ones that feel this way?

Before we try and wring out the loftier essences of our political system, let’s investigate its ever trusty pragmatism. Pragmatically speaking, the use of a Democratic-Republic, over that of a Direct Democracy, is how simple it is to implement. In order to elect a Republican

Representative, one only needs to be a ‘good judge of character’ (which Republicans will typically describe themselves as, regardless of how others may feel they have been utterly duped by their party). Alternatively, if we were to directly vote on policy, then the voter would have to be acutely aware of said policy’s: social impacts, restrictions on freedom, impression on foreign countries, economic consequences, current need for action, things of this nature..., and these voters (however many are designated) need to agree in broad terms that the policy only has a few possible implementations (or border on chaos when an amorphous 3% of the populace manages to elect policies on indeterminate ideological bases)(some direct democracies accomplish the structuring of directness by limiting those who can vote {like the French Revolution}, but the Freedom of the voter in their relationship to the rigid government, provided by a Democratic-Republic, is precisely what allowed for the voters expansion without a deeper fundamental instability {like what eventually happens in the U.S.}).

Access to the sort of knowledge that could create a cohesive united State of America had been localized (before increased Globalization allowed for smoother, free-range modes of habitation [Through televisual learning, and Medias’ Regnum]), disparate (before Northern Unification sealed its guiding principle [Namely Racism, and its end] / before Western Expansion caught up with its desires [Explicitly Sexism, and its destruction]), and varied (before the most basic problems {need of land and her resources, where states would occur and how they would be tied together, who were the enemies of the state and why} were adequately solved throughout the Colonial and Republican Eras [and then taken for granted as problematic, and *not* a problem]). So the most logical solution was to respect the locality enough to: sort disparate views, and take care of their varied problems (which created the mini-states within the over-state, each inhabitant of which extrapolates from the position that they’re within a reverse matryoshka doll of what America *is* {Where you built the County on You, the State on the County, the Country on the State, and eventually might reach out the world}).

Scene A: Crossing State Lines



A common tactic Republican’s employ to justify their positioning goes something like this. The other Modern Democratic Governmental Forms: like Socialism (where the government immediately gratifies the existence of its democratic constituents in terms of the government), Communism (where its democratic constituents could only be within the government), and fascism (where the government is of higher import than its

democratic constituents, the citizens sacrificial in nature), fail to create a true freedom from the government (where our ‘Representational’ government is only tied to its democratic constituent

as far as the democratic constituent feels the government has represented them) within the government, and harness that power of freedom (the democratic constituents' Will works in making a government that represents them, alongside their forms of resistance and adherence, failure and success, love and hate [Criminality *and* Lawfulness]). Our system realizes (a 'Republican' might say) that the government's reach is purely symbolic and can only affect those who let themselves *get caught* up in its workings, it sets up borders (and laws within to give meaning to those borders) only as far as the state's democratic architects want to raise them in freedom's name, and has its dutiful criminal cross those borders when freedom demands it [In this way, both ears listen to her, and both hands build her works, one steady, one free].

In the end, they would say, 'this is the path that can actualize the most freedom using modern standards' (exemplified by Churchill's classical conservative retort to what he sees as false governmental forms). But I would go a step farther and claim, 'this was the only way freedom could have been actualized, from its beginnings' (trailing into the beyond of what is possible now, eventually freeing us), by properly politicizing every desire [Identity Politics, and those who make it up], letting information wash over this desire's wish for the world [Real to Fake News, and the process in between], cleanly allowing this desire to finally stand free in the world [That it begins to see itself next to the factual world's initial oppressive occurrence {changing our historical state}], empowering the individual when they climb atop the state [That an election should never be something that proves the minority wrong, but *what* gives the majority an opportunity to prove themselves right, alongside the rights of others].

We have elected politicians to represent our ideals, but their usefulness runs them thinner and thinner with time. First we elected the stout, simple made-of-the-land Politician with the task of jury rigging the bare necessities of our legal life, through whatever Antique, Europine, and Domestic product proved useful for reaching at a deeper freedom (say in the ground, in the dirt), striving to be one thing (and in that one thing, becoming one thing, a digger at truths). After their success, we had for a time sat in a glut of freedom's inert happiness, drawing it from a well. From this relative abundance, we started to prefer the duplicitous 'two-facing' politician who knew better how to prepare the cup of freedom to our tastes (by their airs, by their breath), failing equally to represent both sides of America (not giving out the states bread to those with oil to dip them in, dipping their bread so lightly in their own shallow pools as to basically just be eating bread). These hypocrites made politicians have proved too light for the American Paradox [Criminals with a state, trying to make laws without criminals], and the people stand divided together, saying *they are America*, each and every one. *They will represent themselves*.

"We needed the electoral college to teach us how to stand on our own achord, but we need it no more" they cry, cheerfully, awaiting their diplomas. "Tut-tut" reply the Republic's instructors, not yet retired, "Graduating is only half the fun. How will you use that knowledge? How will you prove that knowledge?". But the young do not listen to the windbags, they are fed up on their hypocrisies. They have new identities, and these new identities will be their politicians (and

they try at their concerts in unison, with cigarette lighters and cell phones bright, to catch sight upon that colorless oil, so they can finally walk the cinders of the stuffy old state, and purge that many voiced stench lingering upon everyone's nose, and the brilliance of the flames will show us dancing with shadows, and all will be warmed again, and none shall be burned) The youthful idealism pangs faithfully against the cynical, hardened arteries of the old conservative's bell-shaped heart.

It rings.

"True, you're resistant now, the flame small, the candle sure."

"But you'll learn of the real world, and its ways, sooner or later"

Scene B: The Loss of a New York State (of Mind)

The Average Joe hears news that the rules are changing in the big cities. A buddy told it to him once, while Joe was slowly bathed in oil from his t-rusty old steed. He's been fighting the wilderness for years now, all on his lonesome (though not the real wilderness, mind you, since that had been made anthropogenic by those that came before us long ago). Keeping that lonely vigil on his post at the edge of town, eating



dinner with the tv. He's been losing touch with the reality of his situation. Pretty soon the congressman that answers to him about all this, will be out of a job. And poor old Joe's going to have to listen (for the first time in his life, mind you), to what other people have to say. Average, Joe hasn't been to the city for anything but sightseeing, and doesn't know much about the people who live there (those people he'll be reporting to, come their change, mind you). Joe, he doesn't know if he can *trust* them. And by the way they speak to him, he doesn't know if he *can* trust them. He tries to listen, but he never learned how. Losing more of himself each day, all he has now are questions (which, at one of his pity parties, he openly asked to no one, who was in attendance).

"You can have some food from the Government's Pocket.

But are you going to clean up after yourselves?

or are we going to have to do that too."

"You can have houses ordered deep within the Government's Pocket.

But are you going to keep the house in order?

or are we going to have to do that too.”

“You can drive to work in your Government’s Pocket.

But are you going to take care of your car?

or are we going to have to do that too.”

No one answers Joe. No one hears him. No one cares.

All his life, Joe had liked the symbolism that the government had a hand in his pocket, and what that prison mile metaphor said about their relationship. He doesn’t like the fact that he’ll soon be forced to dip his own hands in, and grab hold for dear life, like everybody else.

...

Let’s hear it for Joe

-Politikos

Literature Section

Surviving College

The semester grows,
and the piles of snow
make the sidewalk hard to traverse.
My bank account is thin
so I try to get in
to a job, although I'm exhausted.
It was a bad choice
and I'm overworked,
overwhelmed already with classes.
I come in for my shift,
just a week in,
tired but spritely,
needing a nap almighty,
and it turns out I've been fired.

The business can't afford me,
is what he says,
They're barely staying afloat.
I nod and cry, cry and nod,
thankful and about to explode.
More time for your classes,
my mother says,
my grandma says,
my friends say,
You weren't going to survive that anyways.
They're right, I know,
so I keep moving on
with time on my hands,
but poor.

By Dale Mott-Slater

Bird Shot (Part 2)

(Continued from last issue)

Mild profanity warning

“Can I bring my basketball shoes, too? I'm tired of wearing Dad's old boots. They're not even broken in,” asks Mark. He's never packed his own suitcase and evidently, has never combed his own hair either.

“I'll pack your stuff. Go downstairs. Put your boots on. Gloves? Hat? All of it,” I tell him. He digs the crusty sleep out of his eyes and reaches down to pick up his pellet rifle. Rob would say something like, “It's time for him to become a man,” and I would reply, “Oh, because you set such a great example for that, don't you?” Mark slings it over his shoulder and kicks Linda's bedroom door, stomping his way down the hall.

Outside my bathroom window, down in the driveway, Linda finishes pulling the blue tarp over several garbage bags in the bed of my pick-up truck. *My* pick-up truck, from before the kids, and before *Ron's* house. It was my father's before that and he took care of the damned thing. Now, I take care of it and it takes care of us. Linda slams the tailgate closed and stares at her brother, lost in a storm of bootlaces.

“You look like a clown in those,” she tells him.

“It's not my fault. They were Dad's. He's a grown-up,” Mark replies. He looks down at his toes, still a solid inch from touching the steel-tip of the boot and pushes his finger down to feel for them.

“Yeah, well...” Linda continues. “Dad *was* a grown-up. Now he's a fucking clown.”

“Hey!” says Mark, his chest not fully committed to his defense of my ex-husband. It sounds more like a, “Hey, what's that over there?” or, “Hey, let's change the subject.” I'd rather not intervene.

Linda sits shotgun next to the shotgun and rubs her hands on her jeans, smelling them and silently gagging to herself.

“I told you to use the funnel,” I tell her. “Now we're all going to smell it the whole car ride.”

“I just can't really fathom trying Grandpa's old diesel. Is it even going to make it there? Is it going to ruin the truck, Mom? Mom?” she asks.

It'd better make it there. We have to leave. The indefinite torture of waking up to Mr. Roberts across the street, every morning, in his bathrobe like he's going to grab the paper and then forgot that the entire world went to shit—I would rather pull my own teeth out. He waves every time. I still wonder what he's been eating this whole time since he never comes down to FoodPlus. Life outside of this town, this county, has to be better than Mr. Roberts.

It turns out, just simply changing the oil and all of that doesn't mean shit up here in the Rust Belt. The truck doesn't fucking make it. A bang, a long whine, and then the sound of my alternator, completely calcified and rolling into the highway shoulder like some dented bowling ball. Mark wakes up in the back seat once the rumble of the engine cuts out. Yeah, Grandpa took real good care of it and blah blah blah. Linda has enough ammunition to taunt me for hours now until we figure out our next step. I look back at Mark, never having been in a break-down on the side of the road.

“Pennsylvania border?” he asks before yawning. He holds the pellet gun tight in one arm and rubs his eyes with the other hand. I take a good five minutes of pretending to them that I'm formulating a plan.

“You kids remember when that out-of-towner came in two months ago?” I ask them. “The one with the stupid re-furbished school bus?”

“The blue one? The one who got his wheels stolen?” Linda chimes in. “They didn’t even leave it on cinder blocks for the poor guy. No gun. No nothing. Sucker,” she finishes. “Trish and I felt pretty bad—but we couldn’t stop laughing. They walked all the way back out of town.”

I look in the rear-view at a big, fat passenger van cresting the hill behind us. I’ve never stuck up anybody in my life, much less contemplated how I would go about it. I hope they’re considerate and realize I have kids. Ugh. That sounds so stupid.

“Well,” I say to Linda, holding my hand out at her side of the center console. “Let’s see it.”

Linda slides the action back, safety-on, and hands me the shotgun. I eye the empty breach like I’m confirming what type of batteries it takes. Linda pulls her fanny-pack around to the front and hands me the double-A sized shells, one at a time. She shakes one of them up to her ear, a salt or a pepper that might need refilling. The tiny pellets inside, meant to spread out and hit a bird, sound like someone in Ricky Ricardo’s band about to start up the maracas.

“Mom!? You can’t do that. You’re not a criminal,” Mark adds. Linda reaches around behind her and punches him in the thigh.

“There’s no such thing as criminals anymore, Dummy,” she yells. “Who knows who this wacko could be. Besides, Mom’s bad-ass and she can do whatever *the fuck* she wants.” Looking again in the rear-view, squinting and focusing, she giggles. “It looks like one of those big, crazy, church-people vans that go on field trips or whatever,” she says.

“Don’t say fuck in front of your brother, please. Wait, the ones that go on *field trips*?” I ask. I look over at her, her eyes locked on to the approaching vehicle. She looks brave—braver than me. She’s not like her father either, I decide. I used to think that sometimes she undermines me in the same snakish ways I remember from Ron. She’s just living—surviving. I don’t want the kids getting into this kind of shit, this kind of survival. No matter how I feel, I look into Linda’s eyes and I see someone forced to be an adult and a girl who still needs to find adventure in this world.

From that perspective, I take it back. Aside from Linda, Mark *is* reminding me a lot of his absent excuse of a father. He looks worried, more appreciative of shooting ducks and pigeons than seeing his mother get into it over a new vehicle and some T.P., trying to feed her family.

“Mark, it’s gonna be fine,” I smile. “Go crawl under the tarp and grab a twenty-four-pack before they see the rest of it. We’ll see what they say.”

“Well if they can’t appreciate a nice stack of cold, hard paper—maybe they like breathing out of the back of their head instead,” says Linda taking the plastic-wrapped bundle from her brother. “I’ll get out first—show them the T.P.” Her door’s already open and she plants her right foot to stand up and her head turns back to watch the van approach.

“Absolutely not, Linda. Give it to me—now!” I yell at her. She already has the seat belt unbuckled and the best I can do is rip off a piece of plastic from the corner of the package. It's the exact moment I realize I'm no longer in control of the situation, and that this is all just a sick joke. I think about the mini-van in front of our house and shredded, toilet paper-confetti raining down on that woman once the gunfire stopped. I chamber a shell in the shotgun and open my door.

“Stay here, Mark,” was what I wanted to say. Mark beat me to it.

“Mom—look! Cool dog!” he says, pushing his hands up against the window as the van rolls to a stop right next to us. He's right. The dog, the van, the nice guy Linda just seems to be talking to all of the sudden. It's mesmerizing. It's too good to be true. I snap out of it.

“Linda, get over here! Mark, shut up and stay in the truck!” I yell. The shotgun's pointed at the man's face, interjected by a rather delightful border collie in the passenger seat. He smiles and puts his hands up and the dog puts its ears up. For some reason, I'm more angry with this complete stranger than I've ever been with Ron. I think it's the stubble. Ron never could grow facial hair.

“Listen to me. I'm calling the shots now, okay!? Turn the van off!” I yell at him. He smiles again and turns down his Allman Brothers.

“Ma'am—before you leave me out to dry, I just wanted to say that my name's Jack and I'd be real happy to talk with you. The truth is, nothing fishy about it, this van doesn't like to start back up too well once you turn it off. I spend so long startin' this pain in the ass that once I got it goin'... You know. Things are just a little bit hard for me,” he says, slapping his lap hard, the sound unexpected. Not a spank or a hard pat. Something plastic. He doesn't even try to look at us, especially my seventeen-year-old daughter. I've seen enough T.P. change hands in enough bad ways to know this guy doesn't really care.

“He said he doesn't want the paper, Mom. Just asking how we're doing,” Linda tells me with her eyes wide-open, giving me violent eyebrows and looking up and down the body of the van. It felt like someone was luring my child away to Woodstock. I've never cramped her style this bad in her entire life, not even with a shotgun.

By Andrew Wiechert

Entertainment Section

A Pattern Realized

February 10th, 2021 saw the release of the movie *Music*, directed and scored by musical artist Sia. Thought to tell the story of finding your voice and creating family, the movie is centered around Music (played by Maddie Ziegler) who is on the autistic spectrum. However, the movie, and director, are in the middle of a controversy surrounding Sia and Ziegler's representation of autism and how to respond to it.



The autistic community has come out full force and, due in part to the wide-reaching social media apps like Tik-Tok and Instagram, have been outspoken in how harmful *Music* is to long-lasting autistic representation and understanding.

“Not only did *Music* do a horrendous job on portraying autistic voices, but it also includes some black face that makes me extremely uncomfortable,” said one student, who wishes to remain anonymous, “Not only that, but the film is extremely ableist, the

fact that Sia worked with Autism Speaks on it, the strobe [and] flashing lights which makes it even hard for neurodivergent people to watch, and the extreme caricature Maddie Ziegler uses to what feels like almost make fun of someone who is non-verbal and autistic. It’s cruel.”

The movie’s main affront is a specific scene where Music is restrained while she is having a meltdown. Meltdowns are a common occurrence in autistic people, essentially an intense emotional outburst brought out from being overstimulated.

“Using restraints [has really set back autistic representation.] It’s very harmful for us because it’s being promoted as a good thing, but it’s not, people have actually died from that kind of restraint—basically being on top of the person and holding them down! We have overstimulation to certain noises, or textures, and it makes us very, very uncomfortable,” explained another Alfred University student, who wishes to be unnamed “We are very diverse, so when freaking out, if we aren’t putting anyone in harm? Calm us down first, or at least try, but jumping on us and trying to restrain us with so much force? Not everyone should be treated like that.”

In film, there have been several positive representations of autistic people, such as Adam Raki in *Adam* and Simon in *Simple Simon*. In television, as well, with Spencer Reid in “Criminal Minds” and Maurice Moss in “IT Crowd.” Namely, the television show “Atypical,” garners a lot of

support amongst individuals in the autistic community, is seen as a great representation of autism.

“I immediately recommend that over *Music* any time. The show centers around a boy with autism whose special interests include penguins and drawing. The show talks about his family and how they deal with everyday things, as well. There is also LGBTQ+ representation on that show that makes me incredibly happy,” the anonymous student relayed, enthusiastically.

However, the running theme with each of those depictions is that each character is not played by someone on the autistic spectrum (at least as of the publishing of this article.)

While the list is small, it is worth mentioning the popularity of some autistic actors who play autistic characters. Mickey Rowe is credited as the first known autistic actor to play any autistic character in a professional performance setting, making his debut in the play “The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time.” Kayla Cromer plays Matilda on the television show “Everything’s Gonna Be Okay,” which also portrays LGBTQ+ relationships on the autistic spectrum.

Though there is a lack of autistic characters portrayed by autistic actors, that does not mean that there is a lack of autistic individuals in Hollywood.

“A favorite director of mine also happens to be Tim Burton, which many people didn’t know but, he, in fact, has autism!” One of the anonymous students said.

“I don’t know if he ever played the role of an autistic person, but [I really like] Anthony Hopkins, especially him playing Hannibal in *Silence of the Lambs*,” the other anonymous student added.

The autistic community is often the punchline in media, and while there have been strides in recognizing neurodivergence as something positive and respectable, there will always be a representation like *Music* to set back the progress. What is important, and what the autistic community wants to note, is that they will remain and fight back against harmful misrepresentation.

By Sam Sage

Sports Section

Sports During COVID-19

Several AU student athletes began practices last Saturday, February 20th. Both the coaches and students were eager to get to working out again and participating in their sports, especially after having the scare of increased positive cases on campus just last week. All sports teams are back to work and began their seasons strong with high hopes of making it to competition in the next few weeks.

All sports teams have been taking COVID-19 safety and regulations more seriously than ever, wearing masks and keeping a social distance at practices and when working out in the varsity weight room. Head Track and Field coach Angie Taylor said, “The team is staying COVID safe during practices by social distancing, wearing a mask, having their own water bottles and not sharing, being honest about how they feel before attending practice and not engaging in risky behaviors.” By taking these small steps to remain safe during practices, Coach Taylor believes that the Track and Field team can have a “productive indoor and outdoor competitive season [and that] it comprises of keeping everyone safe, excited, encouraged and achieving personal and team goals.”



Although everyone is continuing to remain safe during practices, it isn't always easy on the student athletes or the coaches. “Being a coach during COVID has been very different and frustrating to say the least, but as the leader of the program, I have to stay focused on the goal of keeping the student-athletes motivated and encouraged,” expressed Coach Taylor.

“Even though lacrosse practices look like normal practices, the addition of masks can get annoying regarding more acne breakouts and the difficulty with breathing but it’s not anything we complain about because we’re all fine with it—we’re doing what we can to stay safe,” said Sophomore Women’s Lacrosse player, Mackenzie Jordan. “We avoid large gatherings [off the field] and do our part in making sure [everyone] can have as normal of a season as possible.”



Despite the frustration both the student athletes and coaches feel during this time, they’re doing their best to remain smart and safe for the sake of their seasons, but more so for the sake of campus staying open, in general. Everyone is trying to avoid the chaos of last Spring when everyone was sent home and lost their seasons, this time the focus is on keeping everyone safe and making sure they’re abiding by the rules.

“We are always wearing masks and step away from one another if we are taking a drink, as well as staying apart as best we can during drills,” said Senior Men’s Tennis Captain, Adam Shearer. “[We do] whatever necessary to keep the ability to play, [even though] the masks can make it difficult to breath at times, especially in long points or on runs, but it’s well worth the discomfort to be able to play,” said Captain Shearer.

Faculty, students, and student athletes that are a part of AU hope to remain cautious and attentive to the safety regulations regarding covid. Athletes are doing what they can to make sure campus remains open and for all sports teams to have a well-deserved season. Captain Shearer expressed that, “as a captain this year, [he is] trying to make sure everyone does their best to stay safe and healthy. [Tennis] has a strong team and a good shot at winning [the] conference this year. With this thought in mind, the whole team is focused on getting better and staying safe while doing it. I hope that by the end of the semester we can all look back and see improvement in our play and we can only do that by staying healthy and by following the COVID guidelines.”

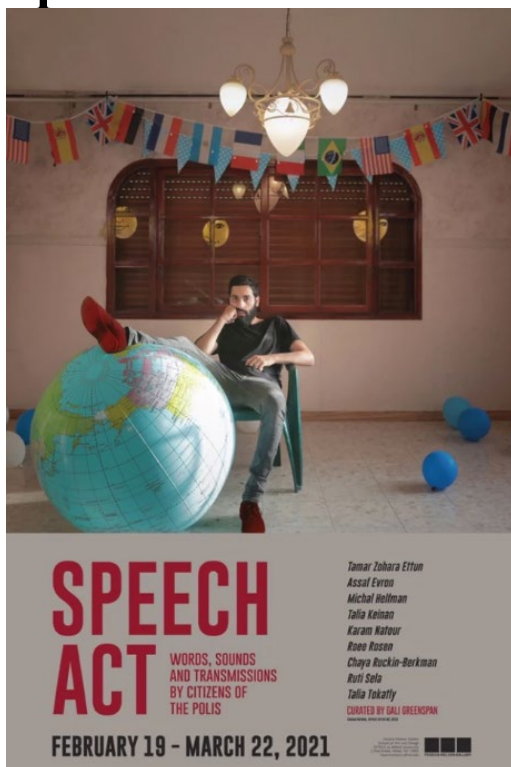
By Kailey Reyes

Advertisement Section

Open Call 2021: Electronic Media



Speech Act



Virtual Artist Lecture



Grants Panel



Come Hell or High Water



Startup Allegany Collegiate Competition



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