

Rafaela Freitas da Silva (b. 1997) is a Brazilian graphic designer and visual storyteller based in Los Angeles. She graduated in 2021 with a degree in Geography and Education in Brazil, where she began drawing a direct line between territory, space, and memory, and the fields of art and design. Now studying Design, she continues that same investigation through visual storytelling, whether in an object, a magazine, or a piece that carries someone's story.

She also works across other artistic mediums, including ceramics, textiles, and drawing, and believes that every space, physical or emotional, holds a narrative waiting to be told.

This [portfolio](#) brings together personal projects, coursework from her design studies, client work, and projects from her background in geography — work that spans different mediums and moments, but keeps returning to the same questions about space, memory, and the stories objects and places carry.

Rafaela Freitas

Graphic Designer &
Visual Storyteller

1. Joia For Selana - 2026

tools/Medium: *Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop*

A5 — 148 × 210 mm (5.8 × 8.3 in)



A multidisciplinary project combining creative writing, editorial design, and handmade jewelry. I sewed a necklace, earrings, and charm from reclaimed plastic bags, wrote the story behind them, and compiled both into an Extended Spec Sheet — exploring memory, friendship, and reclaimed materials through the format of a personal archive.

This object was made for a fiber arts class, for an assignment to create something about happiness using an unconventional material. After thinking about it for a while, I thought of my friend Selana and her favorite medium: trash bags. I kept thinking about making something for her, so I did.

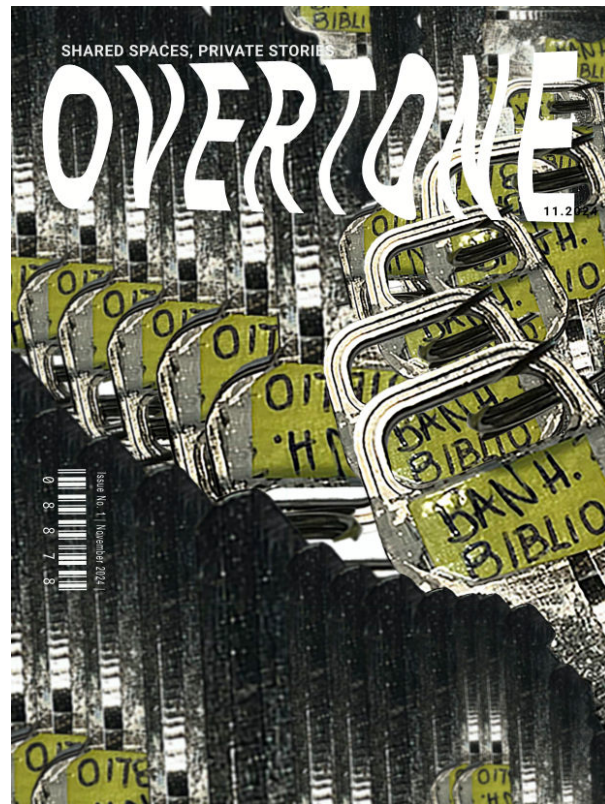
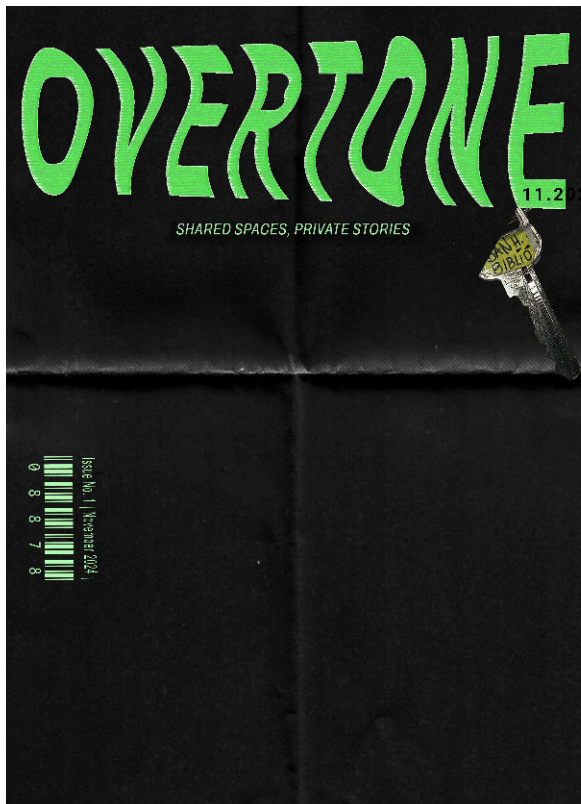
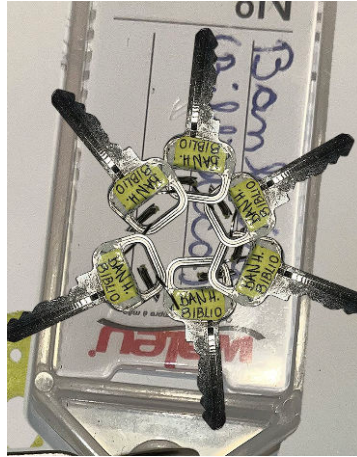
While making it, I kept thinking about our story and how it connects to our hometown — that's why I landed on earrings. It made sense, since people from our hometown are always trying to find places to wear cool clothes and jewelry, even though there's not much to actually go to. So I wrote a memory text around that.

Then I kept pushing the idea further, thinking about how ironic it was to display the piece like something fancy when it's actually made of plastic. That's why I made the spec sheet — to dig deeper into that irony. That's how the project turned into an editorial piece.

2. Key project 2024 - 2026

tools/Medium: *Illustrator, InDesign and Photoshop*

8.5 × 11 in (21.6 × 27.9 cm)



Key Project began with an object I never meant to keep.

It's the key to a bathroom, specifically the library bathroom, at the school where I used to work in Brazil. I don't remember taking it. I don't remember packing it. A year later, already living in Los Angeles, I found it sitting quietly in the pocket of an old jacket, as if it had followed me the whole way without asking.

In 2024, an assignment asked me to build a stop motion piece in Photoshop. I chose the key as my subject, framing it, breaking it apart into collages, layering it across time. It felt like the only honest choice. The key had already done to me exactly what I was trying to represent: it had traveled through time on its own, uninvited, and arrived somewhere I never planned for it to be.

The following semester, a new assignment asked for three magazine covers. I used the same key again, this time in Photoshop and Illustrator, to build Overtone, a fictional art and culture magazine. The issue I designed centers on shared spaces and private stories, thinking specifically about that school bathroom. It's a place most people walk past without a second thought, but one that quietly absorbs years of conversations, silences, small rebellions, and the kind of memory that only accumulates when no one's watching. A bathroom, like a key, is rarely just functional. It's territory, shaped less by its use than by what happened inside it.

3. Key project Ceramics

tools/Medium: *Clay*

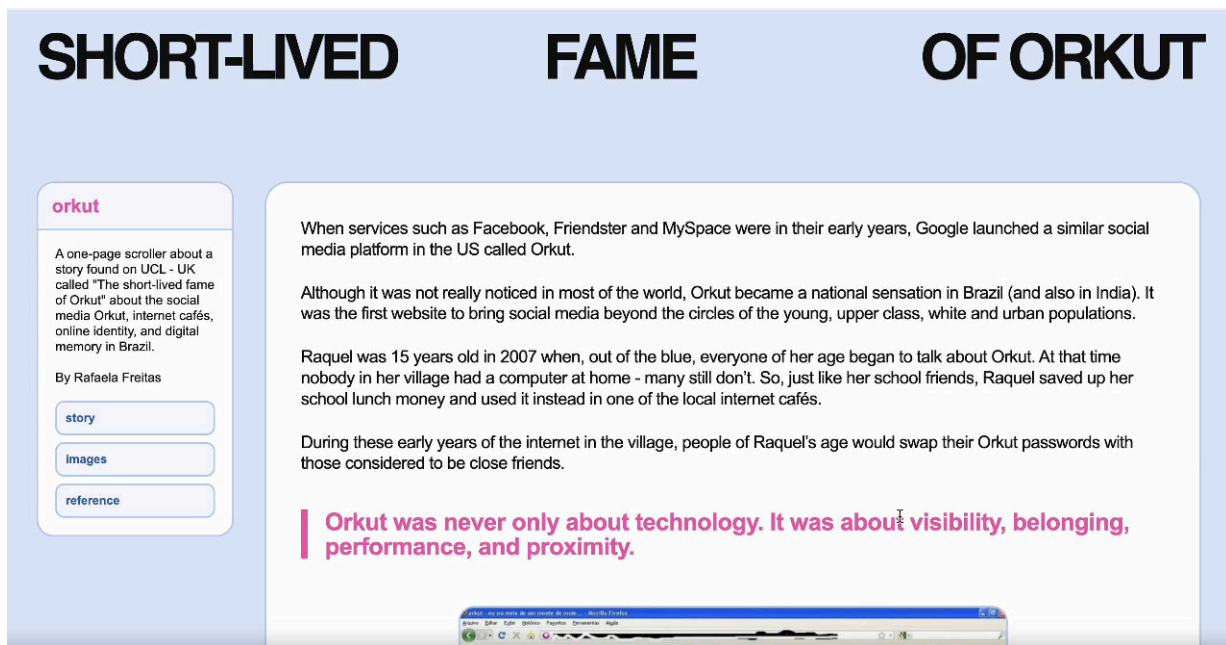
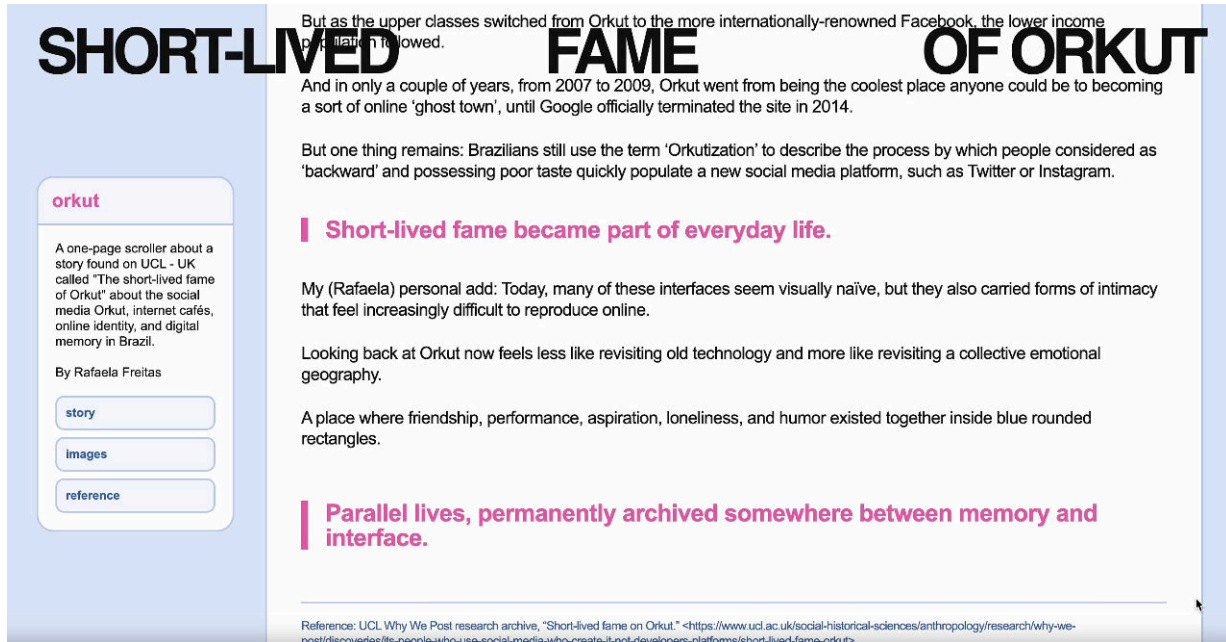
20 in (51 cm)



Over a year later, I returned to the key a third time, now in ceramic. I built it using colored clay and a clear glaze, deliberately broken and reassembled like a puzzle, aged to look like far more time had passed than it actually had. That distortion isn't a mistake. It's the most accurate part of the whole project. More time has passed for me, emotionally, than the calendar has any way of proving.

4. “The Short-Lived Fame of Orkut” — Interactive Web Design

tools/Medium: *CodePen*



<https://codepen.io/refeelee/full/vEyqVW>

I got curious one day: if I searched for Orkut on Google Scholar, outside of Brazil, would anything come up? It turns out there isn't much research on it in the Northern Hemisphere. Orkut lived and died as a mostly Brazilian phenomenon, barely documented internationally.

Then I found one piece, published by UCL (University College London), that treated Orkut as a real social testimony rather than a footnote. I used to spend hours on Orkut myself, so reading someone else's academic account of something so personal felt strange in a good way. I decided to build a page around it.

The assignment was for a web design class: build a page with navigational elements guiding the reader through different sections or parts of a text. The theme was open. I chose Orkut on purpose, using the platform's own interface as visual inspiration, but pushing it slightly forward into a 2020s visual, all bold, oversized type for the headlines. It felt right: Orkut belongs to a very specific moment in Brazilian internet history, and I wanted the design to sit right at the edge of that memory, familiar but not exact.

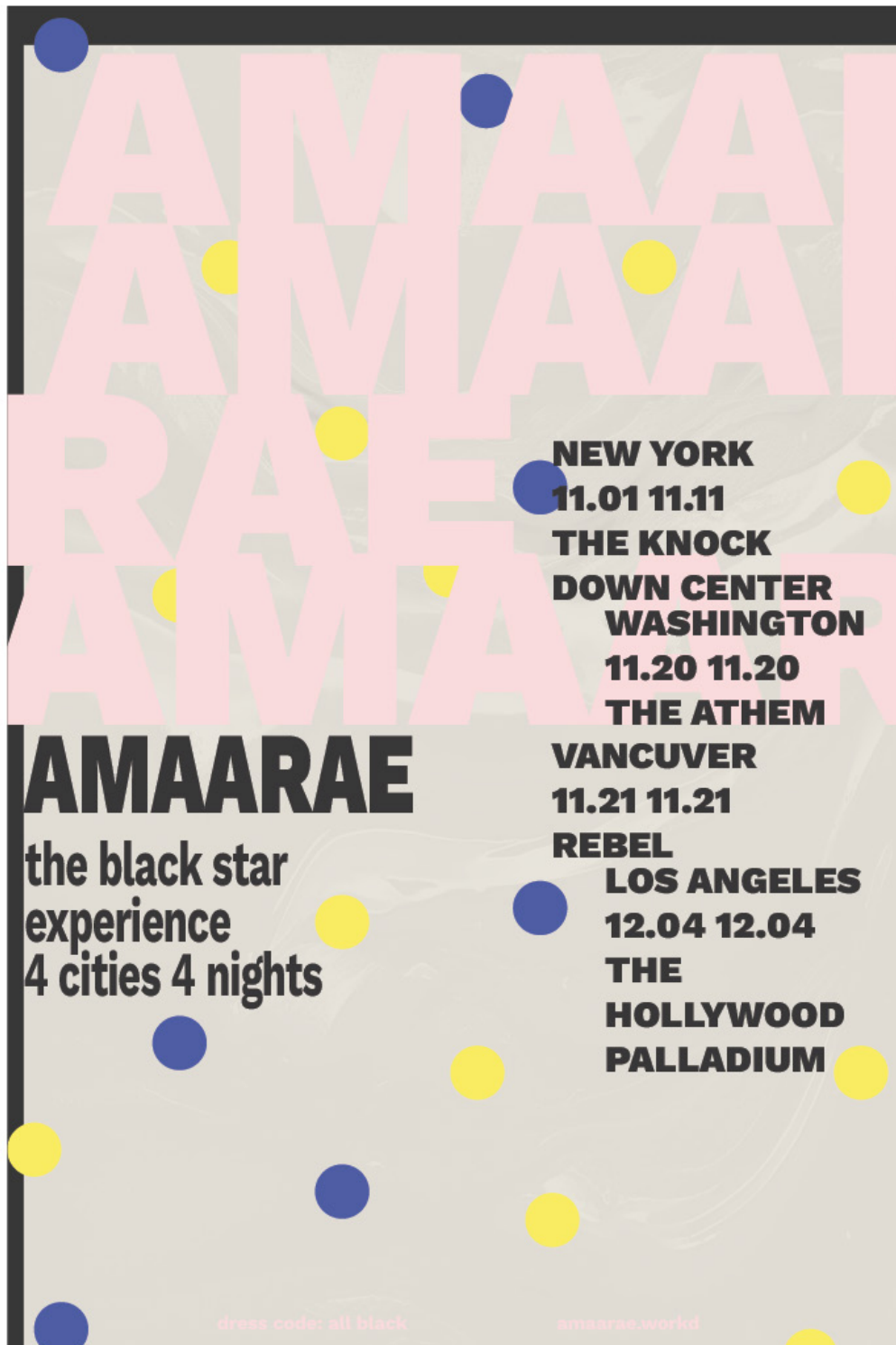
It took about a week to build.

5. Amaarae Poster - 2025

Alternative tour poster

tools/Medium: *Illustrator*

8,5x11 in



An alternative poster design made for a class assignment. I used Amaarae's official website as a reference point and worked to translate her visual identity — colors, textures, and overall mood — into a new poster concept for one of her tour dates.

6. Tisa Pro - 2024

tools/Medium: *Illustrator*

8,5x11 in

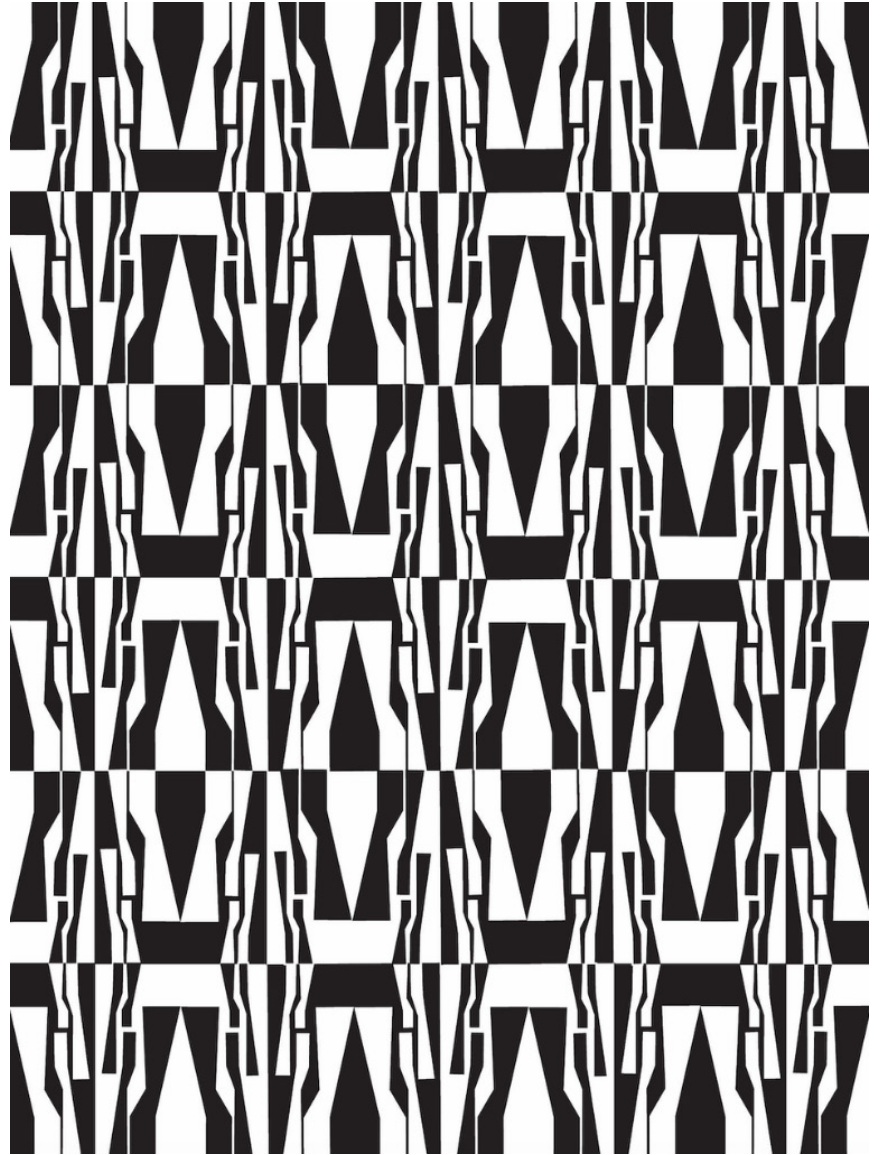
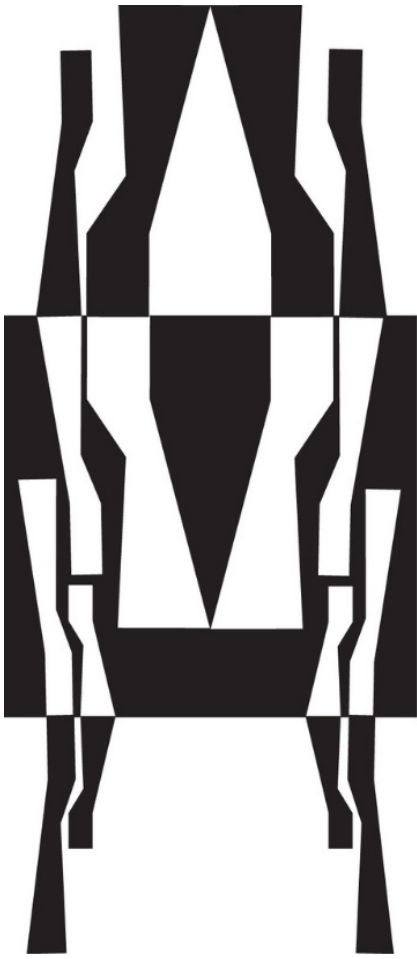


A type specimen for Tisa Pro, designed to feel like a classroom chalkboard. The dark background and chalky cream lettering reference the boards used to teach handwriting and typography.

7. Notan pattern exercise - 2024

tools/Medium: *Illustrator*

A5 — 148 × 210 mm (5.8 × 8.3 in)



A Notan-inspired pattern study exploring the balance between positive and negative space. I designed a single central shape in Illustrator, then expanded it into repeating 3×3 and 6×6 tile grids using only black and white, testing how far one form could be pushed through repetition alone.

8. Octopus Vase, Reimagined - 2026

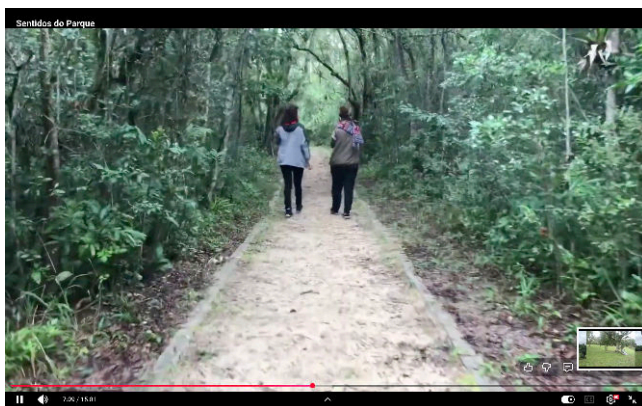
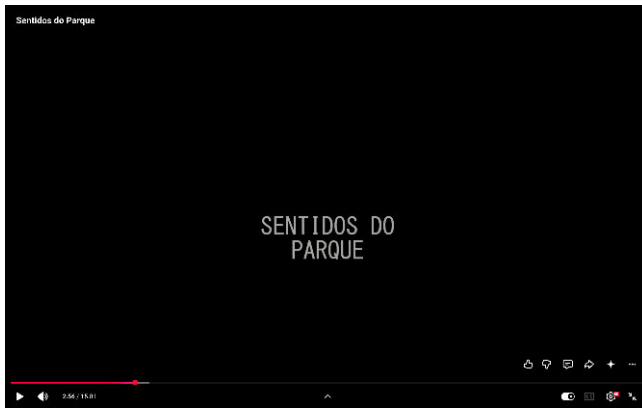
tools/Medium: *Stoneware clay, cream and black ivory glaze*



A ceramic magazine basket made for a college ceramics class, inspired by the Minoan octopus vase, specifically their freedom with pattern, using marine animals to build abstract, flowing shapes and color. Partway through, I started thinking about my own field, and let that take over: I freehanded letters and numbers onto the surface, typing them out by hand as they came to mind.

9. Sentidos do Parque - 2019

tools/Medium: *Video, field research*



Youtube Video

A short documentary made in 2019 during my internship as a geography student at Parque Estadual da Serra do Tabuleiro, in Florianópolis. I filmed the park and the surrounding neighborhood, trying to understand what the park meant to the community and to environmental preservation through interviews with park workers and with children from a local school, talking about what they liked about the area. Between the heavy rain during filming and how hard it was for the kids to name what they actually loved about the place, the project ended up carrying a melancholy I hadn't planned for.

10. Life Drawing: Selected Work (2024-2025)

tools/Medium: *Charcoal and graphite*



Selected work from Life Drawing classes, moving between quick gestural sketches and slower, more built-up figures. Working across both speeds let me study the same body from two different angles, one chasing movement, the other chasing weight and form.

11. Casa dos Tempos - Brand Identity and Social Media - 2025

tools/Medium: *Adobe Illustrator and Express*



Casa dos Tempos: Brand Identity & Social Media. Developed logo alternatives and refined the original visual identity originally, and designed the complete social media content system, including templates and visual structure for ongoing posts.

Curriculum Vitae

EDUCATION

AA in Graphic Design — Los Angeles City College (LACC), Los Angeles

Expected graduation: December 2026

B.A. in Geography and Education — Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (UDESC), Brazil

Graduated: April 2021

EXPERIENCE

Design & Social Media — Casa dos Tempos

2025 – Present — Client work spanning branding and social media content

Teacher — Rede Estadual de Educação (Brazilian State Public Education Network)

2021–2022

Educational Intern — Parque Estadual da Serra do Tabuleiro, Brazil

2019 — Supervised field internship centered on community engagement with the park, resulting in the documentary *Sentidos do Parque*

SKILLS

Software: Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, Figma

Web Design: HTML, CSS, JavaScript

Handmade: Ceramics, sewing/textile work, charcoal drawing

Writing: Creative writing, non-fiction

RECOGNITION

Selected, VAMA — LACC's annual juried student showcase, 2025

Sentidos do Parque presented at IX Seminário IC na Escola — Mostra Pedagógica, 2019

LANGUAGES

Portuguese (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate)

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