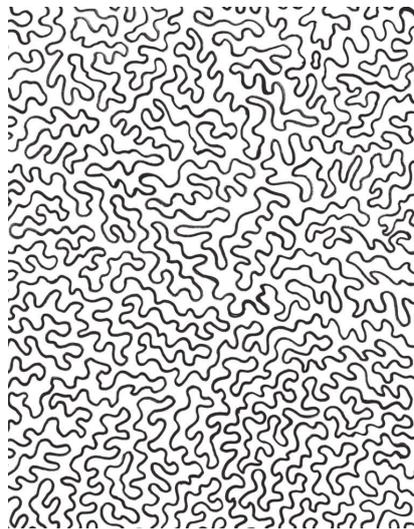


FEELS ZINE



This
hurts
like
hell.

How does one describe a feeling so universal, yet so deeply personal? And what can we learn from others' experiences with something that is both ubiquitous and insidious? In this issue, we share some of the realities of feeling lovesick - how it manifests, how we cope, and the wisdom we can gain from it. In doing so, we hope to find the beauty buried underneath.

Issue 02 - Lovesick
©FEELS Zine

How would you describe FEELS, and its objectives?

FEELS' mission is to create a safe place for people to express their most honest and raw emotions and, in turn, foster an open dialogue about some of the most sensitive feelings. We believe that there are no 'good' or 'bad' feelings; their value comes from how we each relate to and experience them, and we like to show many different experiences with a single feeling for this reason. We want our pages and our space to be for everyone -- all mediums, all people, all feelings.

«There are many ways of expressing what's going on inside of us. The most common response after reading our zines is that the person no longer feels alone - they've found solace in the words and art we publish.»

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Pins FEELS
©FEELS Zine

A photograph of a stone building with a window and a person's back at the bottom. The building is made of light-colored stone blocks. A window with a dark frame is visible on the left side. At the bottom center, the back of a person with dark hair is visible, looking towards the building. The overall scene is outdoors, possibly on a street or plaza.

Can you say a word on your background, what first drew you to found Feels?

Funny you should ask that -- *FEELS* was born in the summer of 2016 after a trip to the very first Toronto Art Book Fair where we found so much inspiration in the creative & supportive small-press community. The concept for what exactly we wanted to publish came from the harmony between our two founders' backgrounds -- art direction and graphic design on one side, and social work on the other. We are both very openly emotive people but at the time felt stifled by situations that didn't allow us to express ourselves fully. This sparked the need to create a space where contributors can express themselves in whatever medium feels most natural to them, opening up the depth of experiences.

Can you explain our readers what is a zine, what makes the difference with other art publications?

Zines are small-print runs and self-published; they are so special to us because the medium is free from overarching mandates and advertising. We have the opportunity to create something completely our own, based on our own morals and passions.

FEELS is a "Zine about feelings" – can you develop your approach?

In terms of how we select content, this sentiment is paramount. We decided right from the beginning that this is not an advice publication, this is a sharing publication. This means that we do not accept content with advice (unless we speak to a selected expert on a very specific topic connected to the feeling), because what works for one person does not work for everyone. We want people to just be honest, and connect with each other that way.

«We decided right from the beginning that this is not an advice publication, this is a sharing publication.»

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How the Magazine is running? What is your process like?

We release three issues each year, and our process is generally one month for submissions, one month for selections/edits, one month for building the issue, and the last month is for the release. We go through and make decisions about content together in a thoroughly collaborative process.

What message do you want to convey through FEELS ZINE?

We want to convey that there is absolutely nothing wrong with expressing your feelings; socially, feelings, and especially showing your feelings, is seen as weak or negative (and connected to gender in ways we do not agree with). We believe there is strength in owning and working to understand our feelings, and that being more open fosters deeper relationships with others and with ourselves. We also want to show that there are many ways of expressing what's going on inside of us. The most common response after reading our zines is that the person no longer feels alone - they've found solace in the words and art we publish.

Is there a project in particular that you would like to detail?

We always have a lot of plans in mind in terms of the future, but in terms of things we've worked on with our past issues, I think we're both really proud of the poetry event we held at our first anniversary launch in January 2018. The speakers all did a fantastic job and the audience was incredibly supportive. It was the first time it felt like we were fostering a real community.



Issue 04 - Anger Poetry
©Vide Press

**«We definitely believe independent art has
the capacity to challenge norms and provide
a mechanism for activism.»**





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PUBE PANTIES

BODY HAIR ART BY SARAH SICKLES

I've recently been exploring the "provocative" through social media censorship. Particularly on Instagram, and through a lot of scandals, pubic hair and nipples are considered offensive and images containing them are taken down off the platform. I created a way to represent pubic hair, to celebrate it, the choice to have it, to own your body, through the creation of the pube panties. Though they cover up the real thing, the presence of pubic hair is still there. It's almost more provocative, or a larger "fuck you", to wear the pube panties (something that does not violate the censorship rules of Instagram) than posting an image containing real hair. They're a vehicle for positive thoughts about body pride, censorship, and the feminine when it comes to appearance. **A celebration of womanhood.**



Exploring the "provocative" through social media censorship.

Issue 03 - The body Love
©FEELS Zine

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What are the main influences that make up FEELS, as well as your identity?

We've taken a lot of inspiration from musicians, artists and writers that had the courage to tell their truth, even when that truth is ugly or complicated. I think the depth of our friendship and understanding of each other has also heavily influenced the decisions we make for FEELS; I'd like to think people are interested in being a part of something authentic and honest, which is what we strive to show with our magazine.



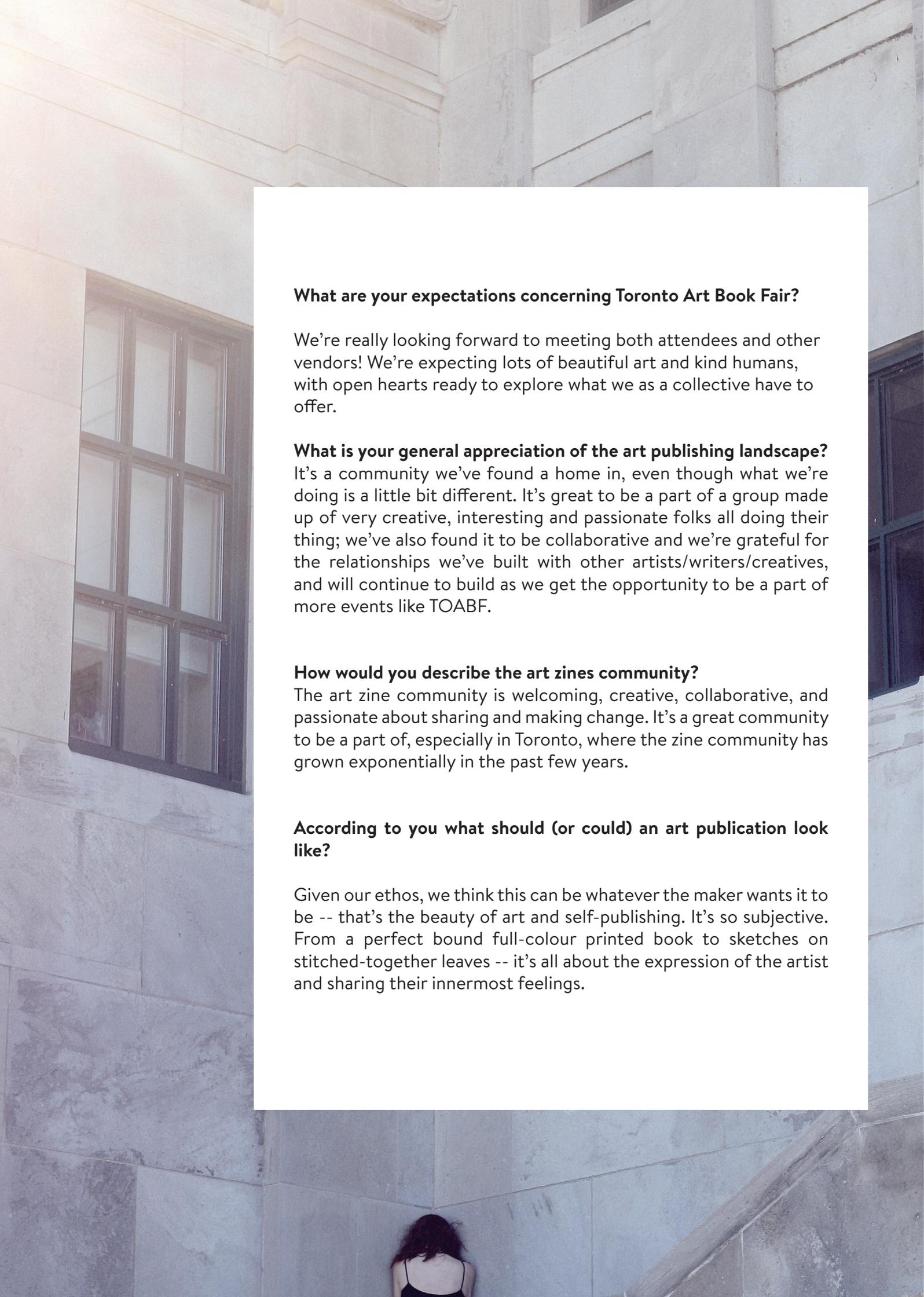
Sarah and Hannah, Co-Creators
©feels zine

«We believe that art and expression are of pivotal importance to change. None of us exist in a bubble»

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Issue 02 - The Lovesick
©FEELS Zine

The background of the page is a photograph of a stone building with a window. At the bottom, the back of a person with dark hair is visible, looking towards the building.

What are your expectations concerning Toronto Art Book Fair?

We're really looking forward to meeting both attendees and other vendors! We're expecting lots of beautiful art and kind humans, with open hearts ready to explore what we as a collective have to offer.

What is your general appreciation of the art publishing landscape?

It's a community we've found a home in, even though what we're doing is a little bit different. It's great to be a part of a group made up of very creative, interesting and passionate folks all doing their thing; we've also found it to be collaborative and we're grateful for the relationships we've built with other artists/writers/creatives, and will continue to build as we get the opportunity to be a part of more events like TOABF.

How would you describe the art zines community?

The art zine community is welcoming, creative, collaborative, and passionate about sharing and making change. It's a great community to be a part of, especially in Toronto, where the zine community has grown exponentially in the past few years.

According to you what should (or could) an art publication look like?

Given our ethos, we think this can be whatever the maker wants it to be -- that's the beauty of art and self-publishing. It's so subjective. From a perfect bound full-colour printed book to sketches on stitched-together leaves -- it's all about the expression of the artist and sharing their innermost feelings.

How would we distribute small presses? Which publishing traditions did we wish to continue, and which did we wish to challenge?

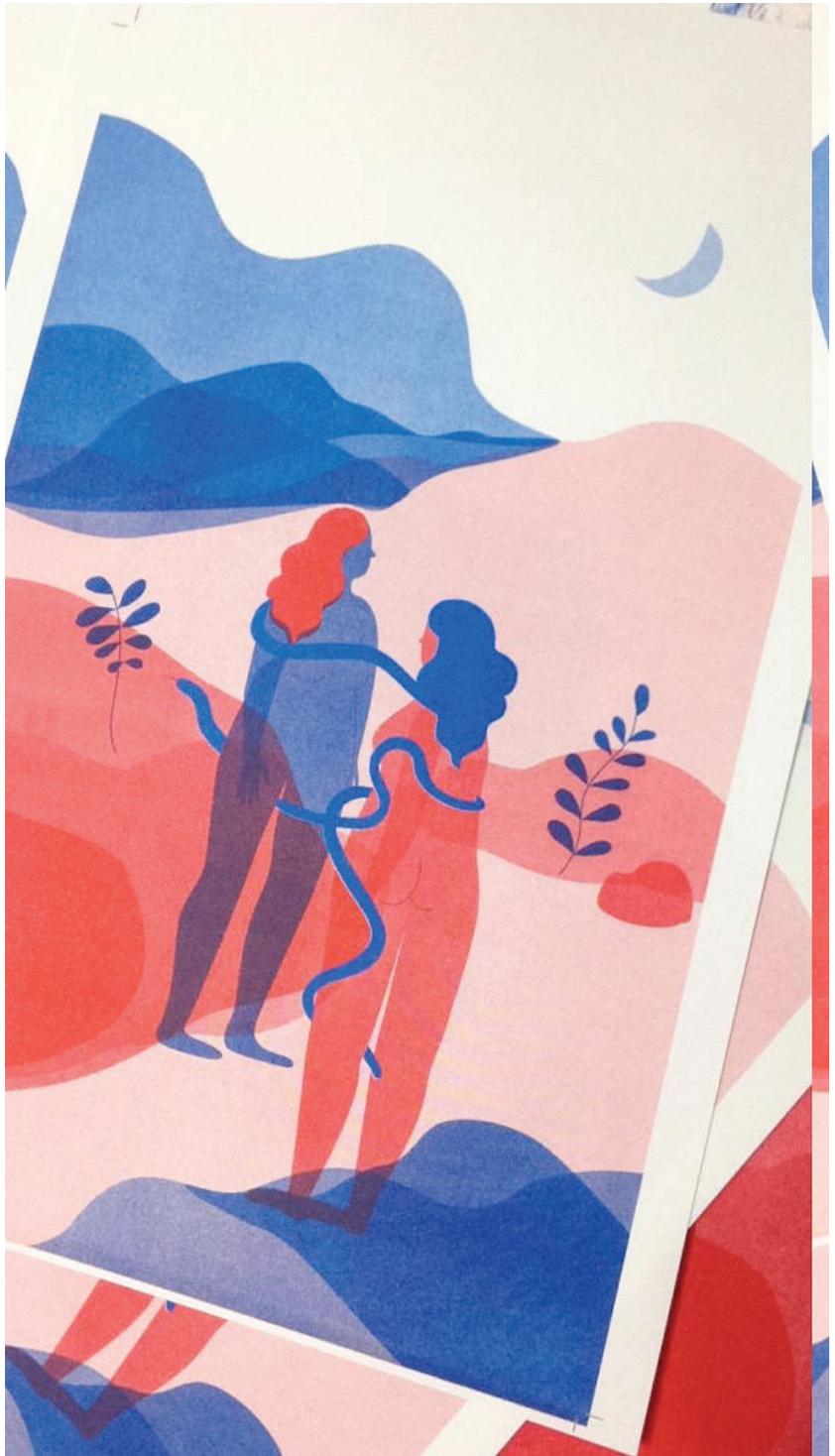
Right now we sell in independent shops (mainly in Ontario), as well as at events and through our online shop. We made the decision right away to be a hard-copy magazine and not to offer a digital version because we love the tactile nature of zines, books, and magazines. We love to hold and touch them, and felt that some of what we were doing would be lost if translated online. We put a lot of care into the way it (pardon the pun) feels.

What could be your own definition of a “printed matters”? Art publishing?

Similar to our previous answer, we think this can be whatever the maker wants it to be. As long as it’s physical/printed, and has someone’s expression of art on/inside it.

«Ideas tend to get watered down or lost altogether once filtered through the machine of mainstream media, and I think humans will continue to seek out original art.»





Maia Boakye poster
©Vide Press



What are the challenges for a publication like FEELS Zine in the current art publishing community?

I think our challenges are the same as any other niche market: financing is always a challenge, competition with larger publications, etc. That said, in terms of within the community, we've found nothing but mutual support.

How would you describe the current publishing community in Toronto? Worldwide?

We've found that these communities exist all over the world; we think there will always be a demand for creative ideas and the DIY ethos. Ideas tend to get watered down or lost altogether once filtered through the machine of mainstream media, and I think humans will continue to seek out original art. Seeing events like TOABF and other independent publishing events happening all over the world gives us inspiration and hope for the power of personal expression.

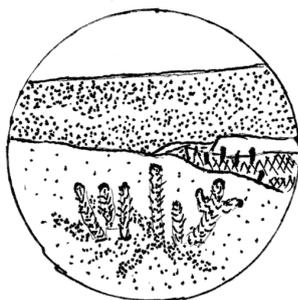
What are your thoughts on TOABF 2018 theme of political activism and resistance? Can the magazines be used as a political medium to critique and subvert the established practice of traditional institutions today? If so, how?

We're excited to be a part of this year specifically! We definitely believe independent art has the capacity to challenge norms and provide a mechanism for activism. In most of our issues, elements of activism have come through because we're very interested in sharing subversive ideas, and we do not shy away from publishing politically-charged content. We believe that art and expression are of pivotal importance to change. None of us exist in a bubble -- everything we do is affected by the world around us, and a big part of that world is interacting with traditional and established 'norms'. We are living in a time of large social change and very opposing views -- what better way to express our perspectives than with printed matter.



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Dientes

BY COLLEEN CONROY

There is something more beautiful than literature and it is called truth. It is combing your hair; it is waking up. It is how you take your coffee. Truth is a slink of wood beneath your feet. Whatever small gestures pull you through each day as a human. She remembered it there, in the South, where the stars are different.

In the case of some events, it is hard to tell if they would make a better beginning or ending. That's what she thought when she woke up on the plane somewhere above South America. In Santiago, the airport was cold and gray, and various men tugged at her arms simultaneously. She floated through, thinking the things written on the walls were meant for her. They weren't.

She thought about how doubt could still creep in when you were so full, it seemed like it shouldn't be possible, yet it was.

She ended up in a dirty van with a large man in a maroon sweatshirt. On the way to the bus stop, he haggled kindly and tried to convince her to let him drive her all the way to Pichilemu. In a moment of exhaustion, she accepted. Startled, he pulled over to buy spare parts for his engine.

Once into the country, he stopped at a mercado and returned with a bag full of fruit. "Mira, you have to eat." He handed a string of large, purple grapes over the back of his seat. They were dusty, and she wiped them on her pants. She had never seen such large grapes, nor was she hungry, but they ate in silence anyway, the man spitting the fat seeds out the window, and the girl collecting them on her leg. They looked like brown teeth, like molars. Out the window it looked like some version of home, whatever that meant. She sat and didn't think, she didn't have to. Sitting was enough.

("Rosas? What's wrong with you? You are such a simple girl, you think love is like biting an apple and remembering to spit out the seeds?").

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There is a world in front of you, and beside you, when you are in love. You must remember to look next to you — that can be the hardest part, as we are taught to always look forward, onward. She wanted to feel the arrival on her skin, limb by limb — to let them out like branches collected from the tree she climbed in the yard where she grew up. She practiced turning her head, just to be safe.

In the town that night, they sat on the sidewalk and drank the crisp glasses of dry, white wine from the sommelier. A drunken fisherman whose hands were black with the

sea came in from the harbour, and reached out to touch her hair. She couldn't understand what he was saying, but he was smiling. She smiled too, but she was terrified.

Later, she sat in the bed, the one that creaked and tilted if they loved or simply shifted in the night. She sat in the bed and thought of emptiness and fullness, but mostly fullness because she had eaten a large dinner in the main town, and she thought about how doubt could still creep in when you were so full, it seemed like it shouldn't be possible, yet it was. The space between them in bed felt like the worst day of the week. She tried telling him this, but all that came out was something about the South.

(She had always been afraid of things that were too elegant or too grotesque).

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They were in Chile, yes, but it could have been anywhere, the way they were doing it. Sometimes you pay more to pretend you are nowhere. The benign stillness of big, smooth beds, of sheets whose stains cleaned themselves, of the towels and wine bottles that disappeared each day like magic.

She wasn't used to it, and she enjoyed it, but she felt slightly ashamed and ate too quickly at the free breakfast and took fruit with her back to the room. She ate it later in the sun, alone on the balcony where no one could offer to do anything for her. When he broke a wine glass, she crouched in the dark trying to clean it up, and when the maids came the next day, she was ashamed when she thought of the shards she'd pushed under the bed.

Issue 05 - Wanderlust
©FEELS Zine

According to you, what is the future for the independent artistic print culture? The independent publishing community?

As technology is becoming more and more a part of our daily lives, the DIY/independent/handmade movement has grown in tandem, as a way to combat all this tech. We hope to will continue to grow! We hope it continues to be a place where everyone feels welcome, where new ideas can be fostered, and where people can seek escape and find solace in printed matter.

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«What does it mean to feel calm?»

FEELS Zine is currently looking for contributors for Issue 06. Would you like to share your deep thoughts about the most tranquil feeling? Send your applications to hellofeelszine@gmail.com by June 30.

www.feelzine.com
[@feelzine](https://twitter.com/feelzine)



Issue 06 - *Calm*
Original photo by ©Lindsay Rosset



**Interview conducted by Miléna Chevillard
A conversation with Sarah and Hannah
Co-Creators at FEELS Zine**

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**Cover: Issue 01 Anxiety
Layout: Miléna Chevillard**

#InsideTOABF2018