

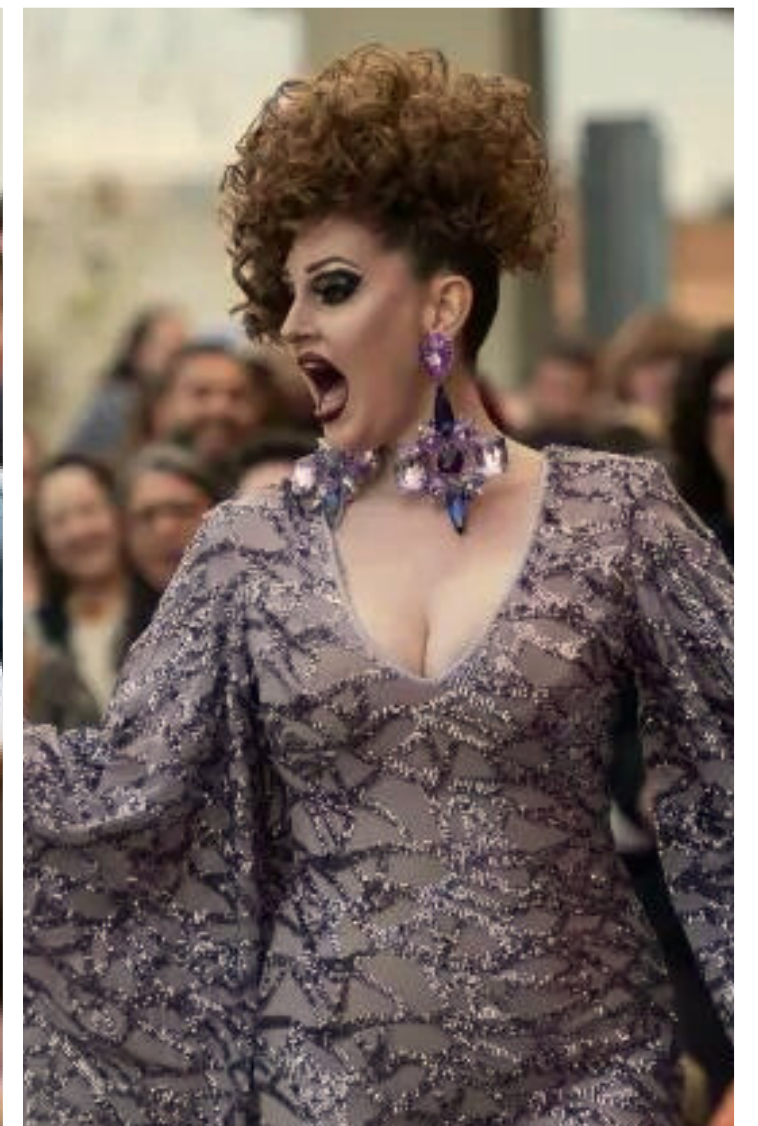
The Squeeze

OC PULP ARTS COLLECTIVE

MARCH EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS

Trans Day of Visibility: *Illuminate Identity* @ The Frida *March 30th - 11 - 2pm*

Hosted by the LGBTQ Center OC and held at the Frida Cinema in downtown Santa Ana, join us for a fun-filled celebration of Trans*, Non-binary, and nonconforming excellence! There will be SWAG bags, live music, clothes, and more!

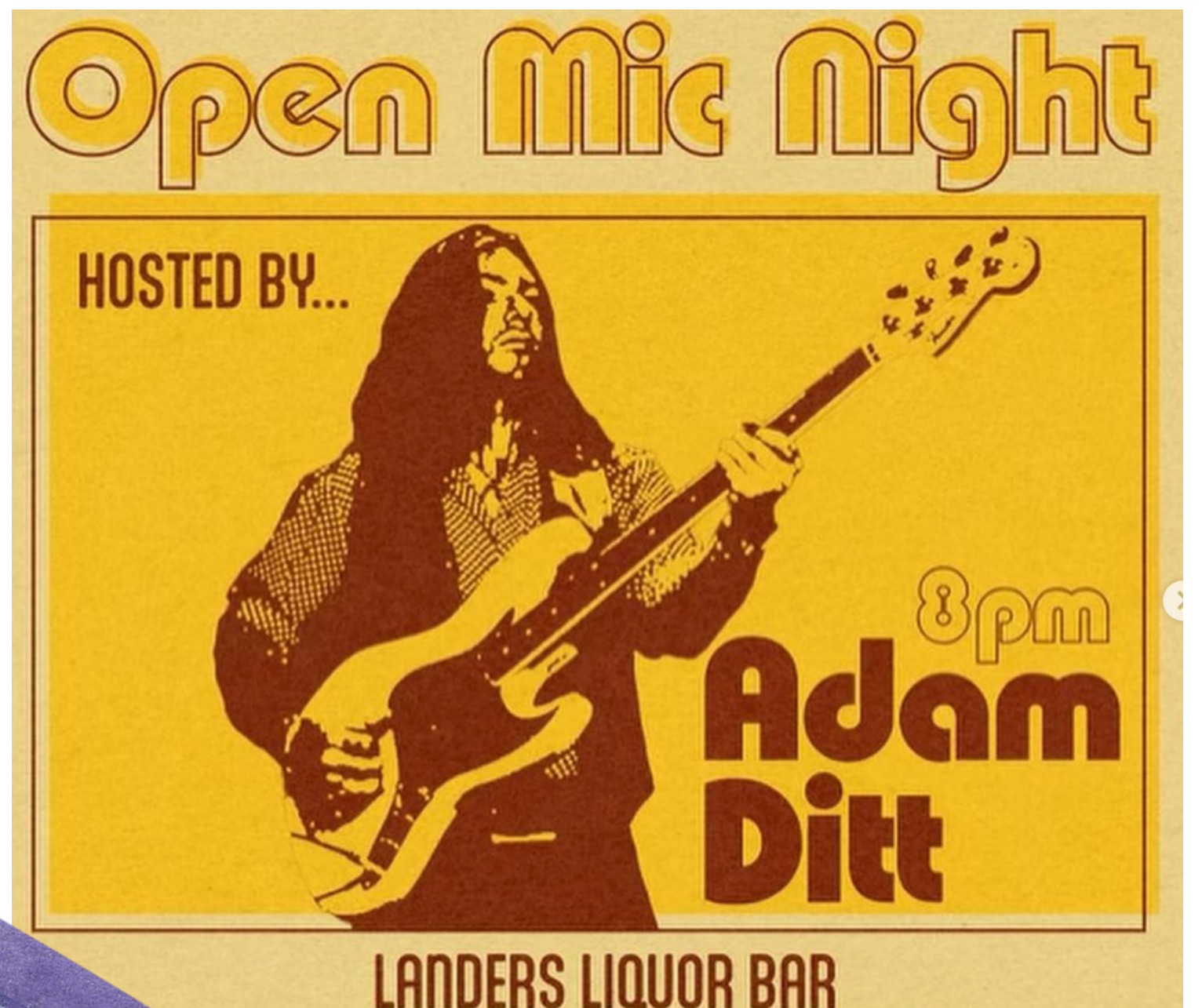


Monthly Art Show @ The Linden Twig

The Linden Twig, an art gallery and antique store in Old Town Tustin, is hosting their first monthly art show through March 31st, featuring a gallery of Orange County visual artists.

Mr. Ditt's Open Mic Night @ Landers in Costa Mesa *Last Friday of the Month - 7:00pm*

Stop by and grab some great food and drink while you listen to local musicians take the stage! Sign up at 7:00 if you want to perform!



LOCAL ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

LAUREN NICOLE (SHE/HER)

As an artist, Lauren Nicole is all about expressing herself — but there was a point in her life when her cognitive functioning dropped to a point where she could no longer communicate.

When she was a teenager, two cars slammed into the car she was driving, causing her head to hit the window at over 55 miles an hour. At the hospital, she was advised to take an Advil, and then proceeded to spend the next ten years of her life with an undiagnosed brain injury.

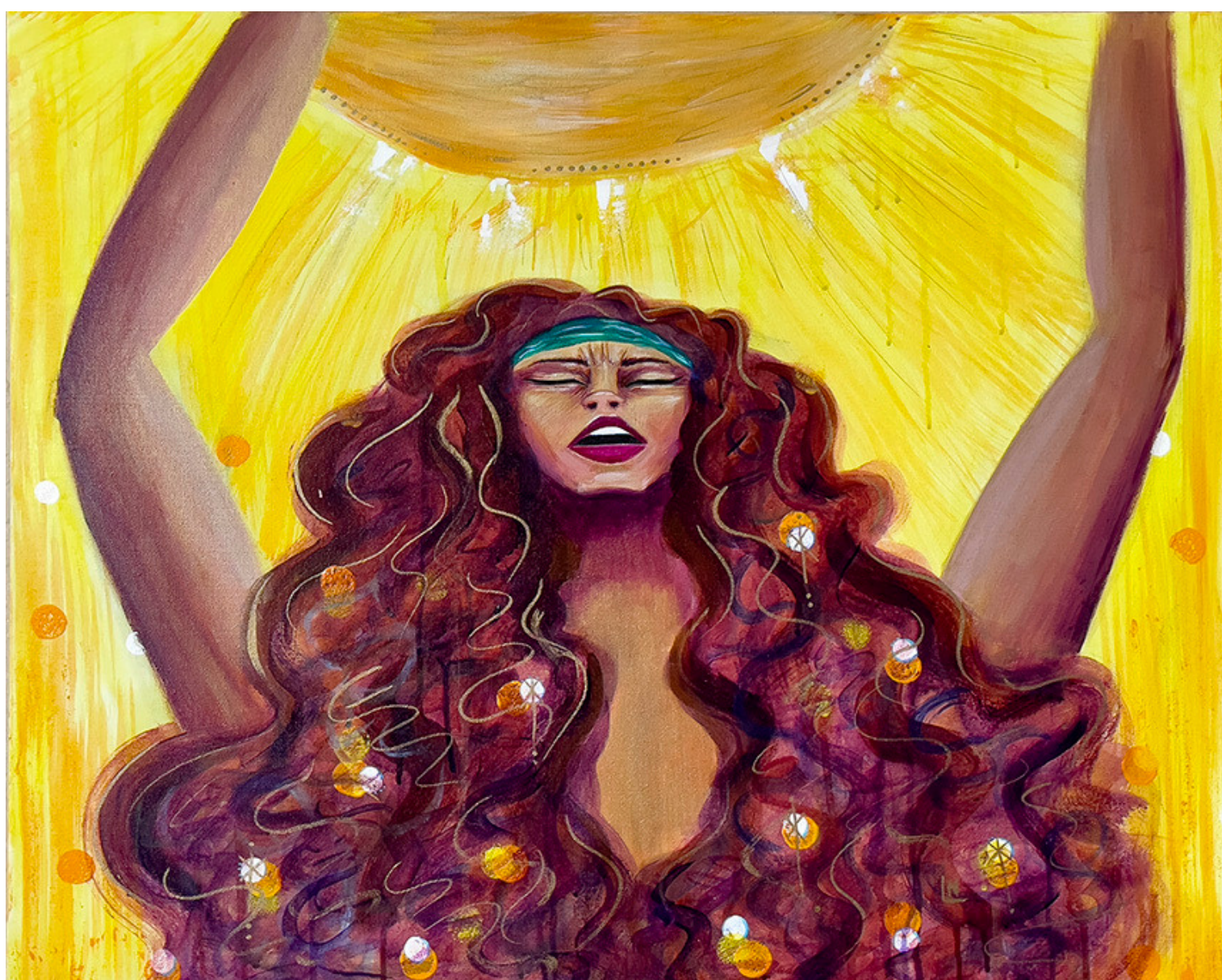
“I was losing a lot of my abilities,” she recalls. “There was a period of my life where I couldn’t string five words together.”

After finally receiving the care she needed, she heard of others struggling to navigate the same misdiagnoses and pitfalls of the healthcare system, and thought to herself, “This story can’t keep happening. I had to find a way that I could create awareness.”

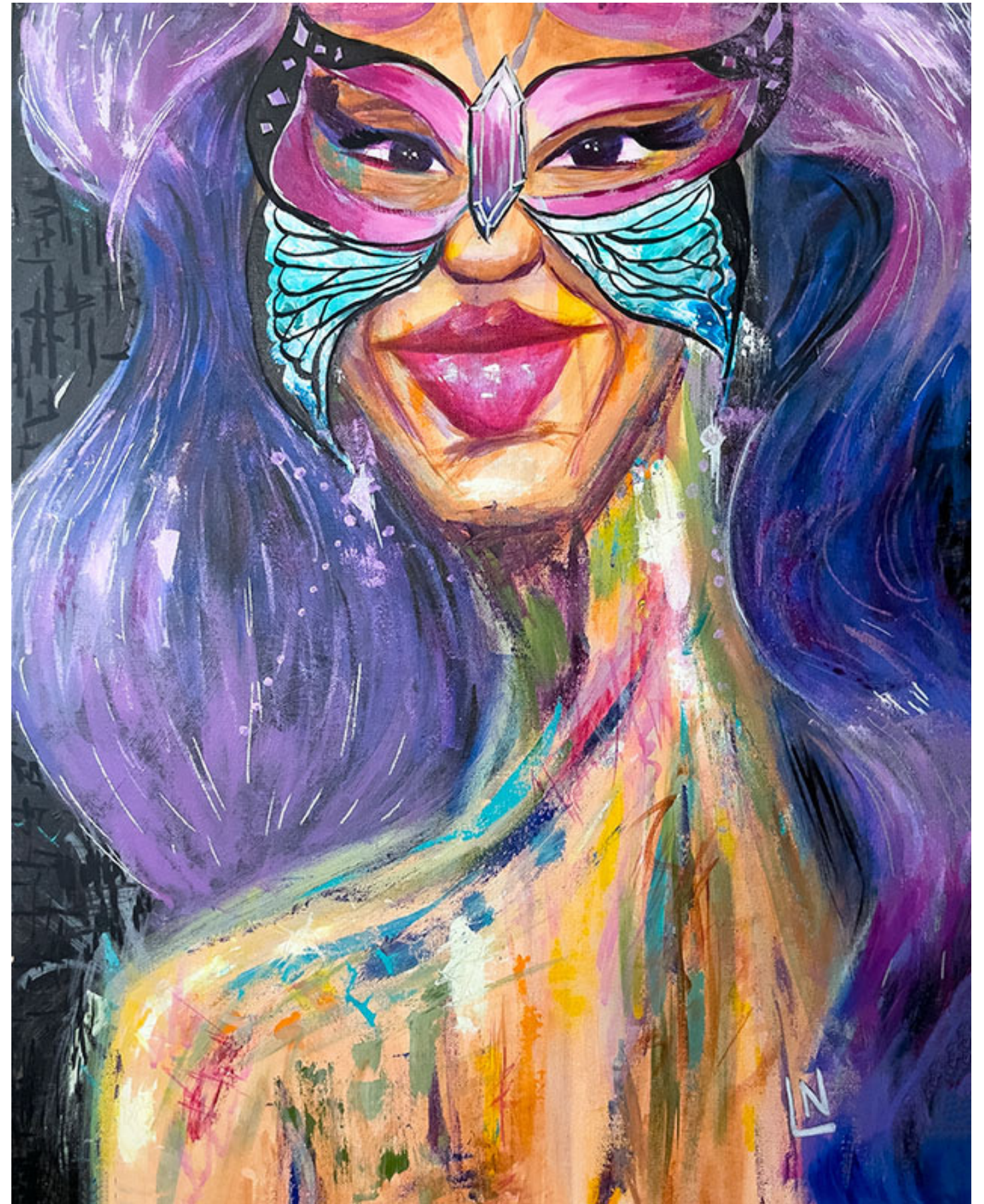
Now, Lauren is dedicated to creating supportive spaces for neurodivergent and/or disabled people to engage with art. Recently she curated “Through the Cracks,” an art exhibition held at Crear Studio that featured artwork by artists from the “Lost Girls/Lost Generation.” This term has come to describe the countless neurodivergent individuals, largely women, who grew up without a diagnosis because they either unconsciously learned to mask their symptoms, or had their symptoms dismissed or overlooked.

Lauren was flagged for autism as a child but didn’t receive a formal diagnosis until she was an adult. Her paintings — vibrant portraits of feminine beings with unusual perspectives — convey to the viewer what having sensory processing differences is like.

“I want people to feel frustrated,” she says. “The whole point of my style is to make people think, ‘I know what that is, why does something feel weird? Why can’t I trust it?’ That emotion right there is what it feels like when you can’t trust the information your body is giving you.”



The Offering - Lauren Nicole



Butterfly Woman - Lauren Nicole

As part of her artist residency at Muckenthaler Cultural Center, she is working on an exhibit of paintings as well as an immersive outdoor art installation. The installation will explore extractive relationships, and the way in which neurodivergent individuals are at a higher risk of predation.

Lauren was also recently awarded the California Creative Corps 2023-2024 Artist Grant from the Arts Council for Long Beach and the California Arts Council. The California Creative Corps grant allowed her to curate the “Through the Cracks” exhibit as well as painting workshops designed to facilitate self-expression. With local arts nonprofit, The Friends of the Arts, and funding from the Impact Projects grant from the California Arts Council, she has been able to begin leading sensory-safe open studio sessions. She stresses the importance of accepting, empowering spaces.

“[After the accident], my family gave me a soft place to land and to heal and I think a lot of us need that but the world doesn’t let us have that. It’s kind of an act of resistance to be like, ‘No — I will make a soft space rooted in unconditional love.’”

Join Lauren Nicole for these upcoming events!

Sensory Open Studio for Neurodivergent & Disabled Adult Artists
Every third Saturday 1PM-4PM at Laguna Health & Wellness

Color Your Emotions: An Intuitive Painting Workshop with Lauren Nicole
Saturday, April 4 1PM-2:30PM at Laguna Health & Wellness

READING RECS!

SANBUD TEHRANI (HE/HIM)

I've decided this month to honor my absolute favorite women when it comes to writing fiction. I know I've missed countless names, it's not meant as a snub of course. I'll try (mostly) to avoid the obvious (yes, go read Ursula K. Le Guin right fucking now).

SHIRLEY JACKSON

I think this is bread and butter shit, certainly one of the names on this list people are probably most familiar with. It helps that Netflix has been adapting her stuff lately. And of course, I'm sure everyone read "The Lottery" in high school (which is a decent story in a shockingly good collection of hers). I will say, hands down, Shirley Jack may be my favorite fucking writer in fiction of all time. That's no faint praise, but her mastery and versatility, particularly in the medium of short stories, is one that always inspires me with fear and awe (as if witnessing the arrival of a diety from the sea). To call her writing "horror", is true, but for some that may create visions of genre limitation. To tell the truth, yes she was the master of the ghost story, the classic hitchhiker tale, what have you, but she also displayed an effortless effervescent control over every aspect of human "horror". Sometimes it was just a story about a weird encounter a little kid has with a stranger on a train, or a story about a mean old lady who sends people in her neighborhood anonymous hate mail because she thinks she's the town's First Citizen.

Where to Start: *The Lottery and Other Stories*, *Dark Tales*
Deeper Cuts: *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*



MARY RENAUULT



A British novelist of the early 20th century who struggled with her gay identity but forged some of the finest historical fiction ever written (often set in Ancient Greece and dealing with homosexual relationships). I hesitate to say I have the same favorite novelist as Jack F. Kennedy, *Bootlegger Baby* and *All-Around Sham*, but it's pretty damn close. Renault's prose practically sparkles off the pages, she imbues her characters and their arcs with such a deep grace and emotionality. In addition to her series, one on Theseus and one on Alexander the Great (including his death and the Diadochi aftermath), she has a fine selection of standalone novels I would recommend to anybody (even those without an interest in historical fiction, or understandably, tired of the Western History Dad fetishizing overemphasis on everything Ancient Greece).

Where to Start: *The Last of the Wine*, *Fire from Heaven*
Deeper Cuts: *The King Must Die* + *The Bull from the Sea*

READING RECS!

SANBUD TEHRANI (HE/HIM)

OTESSA MOSHFEGH



Wow, just wow. Ottessa's a writer (of partially Iranian descent) who has been shocking and disgusting people for going on a decade now. She's got the handle of grotesque horror the way a Ryu Murakami does, and an eye for the psychotic or unlikeable protagonist in a way similar to Bret Easton Ellis (but in my eyes far more successfully). Shit gets visceral, shit gets gross, bodies are real, bodies smell sometimes, bodies are shit. She has one novel which I will never admit to another human being I have actually read, because it truly passes the line of good taste into something so incredibly disgusting and fucked up you could never admit it having consumed it. And it's still a pretty good book otherwise! I won't tell you which novel, but good luck not stepping on that land mine. You'll know when you do. Believe me. Oh, and honorable mention, the McGlue audiobook is charming and hilarious. A 19th century closeted homosexual sailor man who's a drunkard and a Masshole, and whoever recorded this shit really brings that accent I gotta say. Where to Start: *Eileen*, *Homesick for Another World*
Deeper Cuts: *Death in Her Hands*

MARIANA ENRÍQUEZ

This is a woman to watch, much like Moshfegh, I sense Enriquez has a productive and storied career in front of her. Showing an expert ability to craft narrative, interweave the supernatural and deeply disturbing, all with a powerful emotional core and (well pointed South American political commentary. Also like Moshfegh she's shown versatility and mastery in both long and short form fiction.

Where to Start: *Our Share of Night*

Deeper Cut: *The Dangers of Smoking in Bed* + *Things We Lost in the Fire*



Non-fiction Honorable Mention:

Attack Warning Red! by Julie McDowall

Abducted: How People Come to Believe They Were Kidnapped by Aliens by Susan A. Clancy

Everyday Life in the North Korean Revolution, 1945–1950 by Suzy Kim

Grandmothers of the Light: A Medicine Woman's Sourcebook by Paula Gunn Allen