



ARTIST STATEMENT

SADHA (they/them) is a Japanese and Black comic artist and illustrator born in the middle of a hot July summer in Yokohama, Japan. Now, however, they currently call Alabama their home after bouncing around various south eastern cities.

With graphic line work, and even more graphic themes, SADHA crafts thrilling stories inspired by how they experience the world, and how the world may experience them.

SADHA completed their BFA at Pacific Northwest College of Art in the Fall of 2021, having majored in illustration with a minor in creative writing. Previously, they attended the Watkins College of Art in Nashville from 2017 to 2020. They were an active member of the Nashville arts community, and has curated multiple shows in the area.

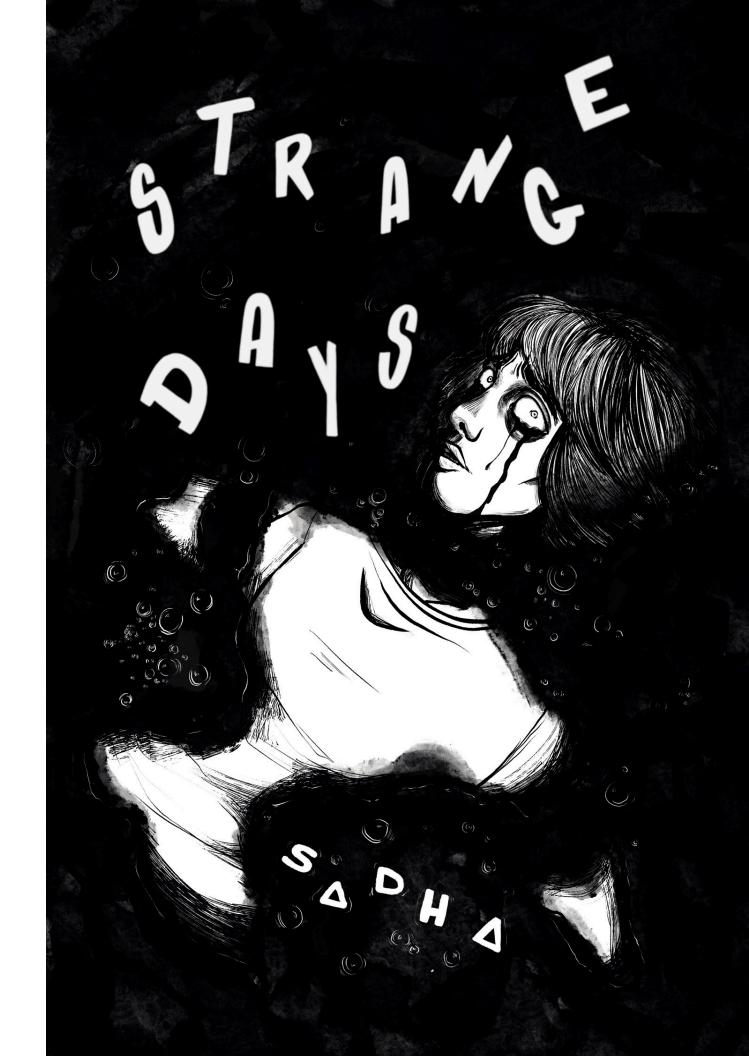
WRITTEN PROPOSAL

With a fully developed story pitch as well as the first section of the series, I intend to create a graphic novel that explores the crippling loneliness behind having mental and physical illnesses. My picture book, *Strange Days* will be told through a gritty, horror/thriller style. I will tell the story of Jean Oliver, a socially inept person in his late 30s, who has something eating him from the inside out. They must figure out how to get whatever is destroying his body out of his system before they hurt those closest to him.

In short, Strange Days serves as the visual storytelling of the delusions and hallucinations I have been experiencing for the past few years.

My work will discuss what I was subject to processing in terms of my physical and mental health, and how much of a toll it took on my mind and body. What some might not think about is how they affect each other, and how the negative energy of illness in general affects multiple areas of the mind and body. Jean Oliver will be a vessel for me to explain to the public what I experience as a physically ill and mentally ill person. Overall, my work doesn't have a "good" or "bad" guy, but something more realistic: a complex character.

Rarely do we see a perfectly morally righteous person outside of fiction. Humans are such multifaceted, and flawed creatures. As much as my art pulls from imagination, I remember to ground my characters to reality. I'm unsure if I can call myself a "good" or "bad" person. I do good and bad things, and my definition of good and bad might be different from others. I can't explain every action I do and every thought that runs through my head. I don't know if I'm a good person, but I am an intricate and real one. I want my characters and my writing to reflect that. My art is made to be relatable, and to achieve that it has to be just as hard to accept as it is pleasant to view.





In terms of content, a few series greatly inspired me and this work such as *Jujutsu Kaisen* by Gege Akutami, or *Tokyo Ghoul* by Sui Ishida. Above all, *Parasyte* by Hitoshi Iwaaki was the biggest inspiration for me. *Parasyte* perfectly encapsulates the feeling of slowly losing yourself, your values, and being taken over by an unknown force so well.

As I developed *Strange Days*, the major themes of *Parasyte* and the change the protagonist goes through, was often something I referred back to. To say that I mainly create art centered around "dark themes" is a very broad statement. In reality, my most personal work often is a manifestation of my hallucinations, intrusive thoughts and urges, and trauma I've harbored for years and years.

Alongside that, I also divulge in topics such as sex from more of an aggressive standpoint. These are all things one wouldn't start a conversation with, but I hate beating around the bush. My art is created to make people uncomfortable, but I want them to think more than anything. My work doesn't exist solely for shock value, but because these are all fragments of myself that I want to allow people to take in. In that regard, *Strange Days* exists as my first big completed work that showcases how I view myself in this world. The art I have created before this project exists as a way for me to start understanding how to conceptualize my own fears and thoughts.

Strange Days, and the work I create in the future will serve as an invitation for the public to view and perceive my brain through vividly dark imagery. In all, I'm ecstatic to be able to develop this story to its fullest and allow the public to be able to see what I've been struggling with for the past few years. I had been so afraid to illustrate this story, mainly out of fear for what others would think of me and my mental state, but also because I wasn't sure if my ability would be able to properly tell this story. Now, years from when I had first drawn Jean Oliver on the margins of an English paper, I know that I'm more than ready to tell and show the triumphs and tribulations of Jean Oliver—the man who is being eaten from the inside out.

ABSTRACT

Strange Days is a horror/thriller comic telling the story of Jean Oliver (they/he), a socially inept person in his late 30s, who has something eating him from the inside out. He must figure out how to get whatever is destroying his body out of his system before he hurts those closest to him.

Strange Days is the visual explanation of the crippling loneliness I felt when facing various mental and physical illnesses, and the struggle to live with these ailments every day. "The Void", or the thing eating away at Jean Oliver is the physical manifestation of the intrusive thoughts and delusions that I've pulled from my own experiences. These illnesses disrupted my daily life, and made recovery feel like something I could only hope for. I was unable to contact close friends and family in fear that they'll be overwhelmed, and doctors weren't sure exactly what the issue was. I felt completely alone.

This project is my way of coming to terms with the life I was living at the time, and turning these isolating and disturbing thoughts into something I could invite others to engage with.





ORAL PRESENTATION

Before we get into the presentation I'd like to start off by saying that due to the content of my thesis and it being a pitch for a horror comic, I will be discussing topics such as suicide/suicidal ideation/overall mental and physical trauma and illness.

Hello everyone! Thank you so much for gathering today. I don't actually know a ton of you guys here today, I transfered over quarantine so this is my first semester on campus. It really does mean a lot to me.

My name is Sid Campbell, I'm a Japanese and Black illustrator, and I'm here to present the first 15 pages or first chapter and pitch my comic Strange Days.

This is a comic that explores the crippling loneliness behind having mental and physical illnesses. *Strange Days* serves as the visual storytelling of the delusions and other health issues I have been experiencing for the past few years.

Strange Days is told with a harsh graphic line art style to compliment the gritty horror/thriller tone throughout the story. This is the story of Jean Oliver, a socially inept person in his late 30s, who has something eating him from the inside out. He must figure out how to get whatever is destroying his body out of his system before he hurts those closest to him and himself.

These illnesses disrupted my daily life, and made recovery feel like something I could only hope for. I was unable to contact close friends and family in fear that they'll be overwhelmed, and doctors weren't sure exactly what the issue was. I felt completely alone.

Strange Days is my way of coming to terms with the life I was living at the time, and writing about the future I want, one where I'm older, I've become content with life and the disabilities I have. It's me turning these isolating thoughts into something I could invite others to engage with.



These 5 series, Tokyo Ghoul, Fire Punch, Parasyte, Jujutsu Kaisen, and Homunculus, inspired me the most while making Strange Days.

Tokyo Ghoul and Parasyte were series that I was really into when I was in high school, around the time I was really starting to have some issues with my health. Both the protagonists had "health related issues" aka another entity or power has invaded their body and now they're shit outta luck. I thought it was the coolest thing in the world, it made me feel a little bit cooler about losing my shit all the time.

I started reading Jujutsu Kaisen after I took a long break from anime and manga, after a long period of time where I didn't know how to feel about the medium anymore, where a lot of racist comments really did affect me. It's like something clicked when I picked Jujutsu Kaisen up and I stopped caring, I was having too much fun.

All of these manga have things that I was inspired by to directly improve my own story or as an example of things I didn't want it to become. Mainly, I am creating a story that does not star a teenage protagonist, and does not go against my morals, specifically (since this seems to be a problem within the medium) I am creating a work that doesn't rely on the suffering of women and queer people to show the severity of a situation.

I've been reading manga since I was in middle school, the 7th grade to be exact. My first manga was one piece, both in reading and in collecting. It was the first one I owned, one of those 3 volume omnibus volumes that I can't stand now. Throughout now and the 7th grade (or like... 2011 or something) It's been an interesting journey. I've read various different series over the years, I think these are the 10 that have influenced me the most as a storyteller and as a comic artist. They've all inspired me in various ways from line quality in JoJo, Hellsing, and Phantom tales, to the paneling and pacing in Boy's Abyss, Witch Hat Atelier, and Gangsta.



Due to the nature of this story, Strange Days will be recommended for Teen+ audiences. The anxiousness that Jean Oliver feels because of his health alongside of his fear that his life is wasting away without accomplishing anything will resonate with a vast amount of people, specifically young and older adults. Strange Days resonates with LGBT+ audiences as well. As a nonbinary lesbian of color myself, there was no way I could create a story that didn't have queer people of color. Since this story is so incredibly personal to me, I needed to create characters who were like me. In a way, this helped heal a younger me who never saw themselves in the media.

The first drawing of Jean Oliver I made was during my first year english class. I accidentally took an Olive Green marker from my professor. (We were annotating poems on the wall, I think there was one from Langston Hughes and another poet.) That day, my professor also handed back a quiz and I doodled some character on the margins (as artists do). I kept meaning to give the marker back, but it ended up staying with me. I kept drawing Jean Oliver after that, and he grew and changed alongside me.

A bulk of the visual development for Strange Days happened this year. The following are a few quick drawings I did to understand what kind of tone and feeling I wanted to illustrate for the project. In short these are "non-commitment" pages.

After that, I wrote a script for the first 10 pages. I wasn't sure if that would be too little, and at this point I didn't have a ton of experience making comics, so 10 pages became the first goal. Once the script was completed and got a green light, the first 10 pages were quickly thumbnailed. This was just to get a general idea of what each page would look like, and how they would work cohesively. Some panels I've had dancing in my head for eons, eager to draw it once I finally worked on the first chapter, and some were excruciatingly difficult to conjure up.

Next, the thumbnails were drawn again, cleaner and clearer, for another round of thumbnails. Though those are already legible, I went over them again, adding details for pencils.

As soon as the 10 pages were ready, I started the inking process. I didn't know how I wanted to ink this comic, or the type of marks I would be making until I went in and did them. After a single page was inked, I toned it and added shadows and highlights.

Though the story could've worked with the 10 pages, it was incredibly rushed. I noticed I didn't add any full spreads, and things weren't working the way I needed it to. So, after my midterm review, I added and reworked multiple pages. In the end, the project came to 15 inked pages in a 20 page booklet.

Since I had more practice inking at this point in the semester, the rest of the pages went by smoothly. At some point, I started merging the thumbnails and pencils together to save time.

Not every page made the final cut. The first couple of pages I started inking (thankfully) became the only pages cut out. I was able to salvage a lot of the page on the right and repurpose it later on.

I made it my goal this semester to communicate this story as clearly as I could. That means I had to figure out how to describe the feeling of the thing eating Jean Oliver. A lot of this was me having to remember what that feeling was like, since a lot of Jean Oliver's experiences with health are pulled from my own life. The conclusion I came to was that the thing spewing from Jean Oliver's body felt like a metal scrubbing brush dipped in tar. Obviously, it's a very specific thing to illustrate, so I knew that wasn't going to be exactly understood. That being said, I took a great amount of time testing various brushes to get the closest to that feeling.

Throughout this process, I also created a variety of promotional images and potential book covers. Usually, I'd pick one sketch and go with it, but I had a difficult time letting any of them go. I found a way to incorporate each of the original book cover sketches throughout the project.

As I mentioned earlier, I will be printing the comic at 7.5 x 5 inches, and will be read from left to right. This size is the standard for printing English translated manga in the US. I grew up reading manga, and it became one of the biggest reasons why I'm an artist today. Every time I envisioned my own, it was at this size, and in black and white. I plan to send this pitch and the pages to Viz Media, Dark Horse, and Yen Press. If it doesn't become a viable option, I will opt to publish *Strange Days* independently on comic hosting sites such as Webtoons.

CREATIVE BRIEF

PROJECT VISION

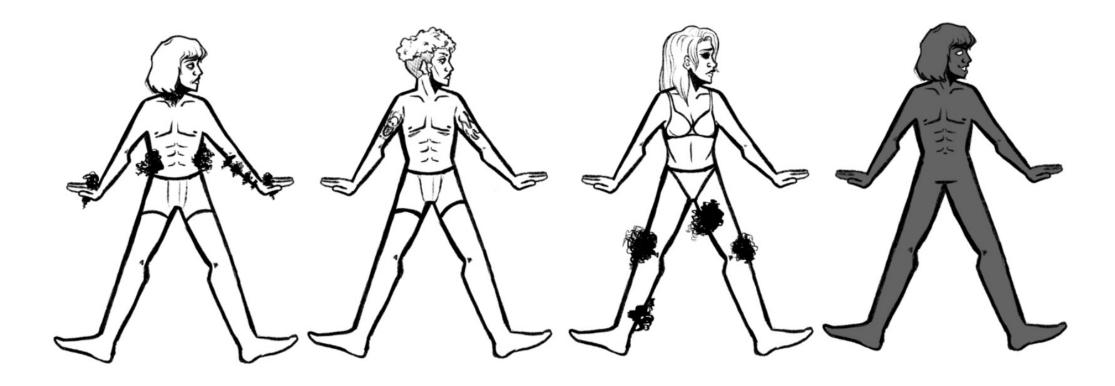
With a fully developed story pitch as well as the first 10 pages of the series, I intend to present a graphic novel that explores the crippling loneliness behind having mental and physical illnesses. Strange Days serves as the visual storytelling of the delusions and other health issues I have been experiencing for the past few years. My comic will be told with a graphic line art style to compliment the gritty horror/thriller tone throughout the story. With this, I will tell the story of Jean Oliver, a socially inept person in his late 30s, who has something eating him from the inside out. He must figure out how to get whatever is destroying his body out of his system before he hurts those closest to him.

MARKETPLACE APPLICATION

As I mentioned earlier, I will be printing the comic at 7.5 x 5 inches, and will be read from left to right. This size is the standard for printing English translated manga in the US. I grew up reading manga, and it became one of the biggest reasons why I'm an artist today. Every time I envisioned my own comics, it was at this size. This size is also small enough to fit in a bag or to hold while being big enough to clearly read each panel no matter how intricate. For a book of this size, the price range would be from \$9.99 USD to \$15.99 USD. This is also modeled after other manga and comics, such as *The Adventure Zone* graphic novels (roughly \$11 to \$12), most manga published from Shonen Jump (\$9.99), and Viz Media original manga series *Devil's Candy* (roughly \$13 to \$16).

AUDIENCE

Due to the nature of this story, Strange Days will be recommended for Teen+ audiences. The anxiousness that Jean Oliver feels because of his health alongside of his fear that his life is wasting away without accomplishing anything will resonate with a vast amount of people, specifically young and older adults. Strange Days resonates with LGBT+ audiences as well. As a nonbinary lesbian of color myself, there was no way I could create a story that didn't have queer people of color. Since this story is so incredibly personal to me, I needed to create characters who were like me. In a way, this helped heal a younger me who never saw themselves in the media.



COMPARATIVE MEDIA

My inspirations when writing and first conceptualizing *Strange Days*, and the inspirations I have when creating the physical material are very different. At the beginning of this journey, *Strange Days* was going to operate as a picture book, so many of my inspirations were within that category. As I continued creating and changing from a picture book to a graphic novel, I slowly waned from referring to my old references.

Strange Days, at least in writing and concept, has been in development since my freshman year of college (more specifically, spring semester of 2018). As I got older, Jean Oliver grew as well into a visual manifestation of the paranoia and fears I had accumulated over the years. As I was developing Strange Days, I often looked at other works for inspiration in both style and content. These works included Jujutsu Kaisen by Gege Akutami, Tokyo Ghoul by Sui Ishida, and Happiness by Oshimi Shuzo. Above all, Fujimoto Tatsuki's works such as Chainsaw Man, and Parasyte by Hitoshi Iwaaki were the two biggest inspirations for me. Parasyte perfectly encapsulates the feeling of slowly losing yourself, your values, and being taken over by an unknown force so well. As I developed Strange Days, the major themes of Parasyte and the change the protagonist goes through resonated with me. As for Chainsaw Man, Fujimoto created this amazing fast paced thriller that rocked me to my core. His mix of comedy, horror, and religious imagery throughout the first part of the series really pushed me to think about how I wanted to communicate Jean Oliver and my story.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

For this project, I have 10 fully inked comic pages to compliment a pitch packet I have prepared for Strange Days. The 10 pages will be printed as a $5'' \times 7.5''$ booklet. For the presentation itself, I will print the 10 pages at $10'' \times 15''$ to be displayed on the walls as well.

Strange Days is an entirely digital comic made on Procreate for the iPad. I took excerpts from a short story I had previously written for Strange Days and converted it to a comic script. As I was writing, I would think of some panel ideas and page layouts. Some came to me instantly, while other scenes took time. I knew what I wanted to communicate, but was unsure of the most effective and interesting way to do so. From here, I reviewed various references and inspirations such as manga (specifically Witch Hat Atelier by Shirahama Kamome, Fire Punch, Look Back, and Chainsaw Man by Fujimoto Tatsuki, Boy's Abyss by Minenami Ryō, and Tokyo Ghoul by Ishida Sui), whatever was playing on the living room TV, and vintage Japanese posters and advertisements. After the first round of thumbnails were done, I made clearer, more detailed thumbnails which went through various changes. When the thumbnails were finished, I moved onto pencils. The pencils I have for Strange Days are very messy, but messy work in any pre-inking phase is vital to me. There's just enough detail to serve as a base for the inks, and more than enough empty space to add detail. Finally, the inking starts. I flip through various inking pens for different comics and assignments. I tested various pens I had in mind to ink the bulk of the pages with, and then pens for special effects such as the rotting in Jean Oliver's body. I thought long and hard about what brush would be best to communicate the idea of something heavy and dense (such as tar) but also scratchy and rough (such as a wire brush used to clean kitchens with).



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Hillenburg, Stephen, Creator, Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke, Rodger Bumpass, Clancy Brown, Film Distributor Paramount Home Media Distribution, and Copyright Collection. SpongeBob SquarePants. produceds by United Plankton Picturesuction Company, Nickelodeon Animation Studiosuction Company, and Rough Draft Studiosuction Company [Hollywood, California: Paramount, ©, 2013] Web..

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DOCUMENTATION



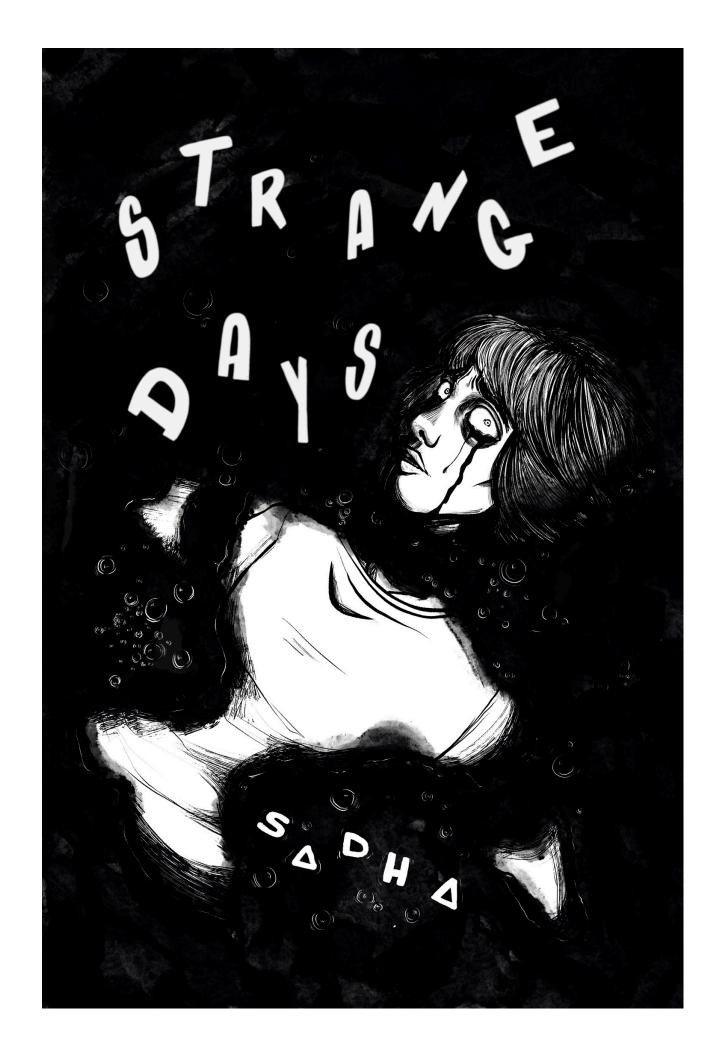






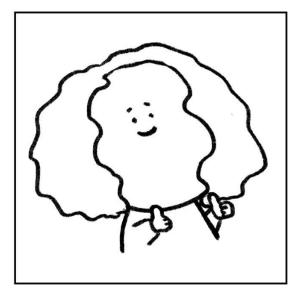
FINISHED DIGITAL PAGES





Jean Oliver Cézanne is a socially inept person in his late 30s, dragging himself through every mundane day. After a mysterious illness disrupts his monotonous lifestyle, Jean Oliver realizes something is eating him from the inside out. Now, Jean Oliver must figure out how to get whatever is destroying his body out of his system before he hurts those closest to him... and himself.







Thank you for reading the first chapter!

For more work:
@sadha.art on instagram
@sadhaart on twitter



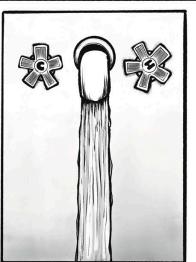




















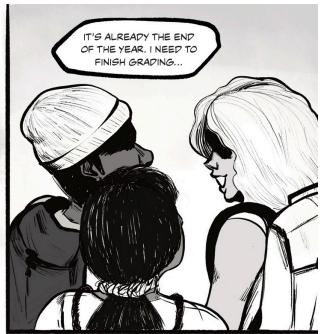
CLASS.













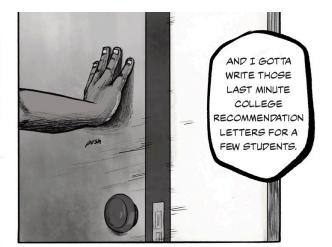


















































PROCESS BOOK





Sketches

The very <u>Very</u> first sketches of Jean Oliver (top image) were drawn on the margins of my college freshman English class. I never stopped drawing them.

e naturally, the doodles got better over time.

lip was usually squiggly lines













More Sketches!



Technically the "first page"
ever made for Strange Days.

I wanted to create a single page
that would give the overall
mood for the comic. At the time, I
didn't know what part of the story
I would illustrate (Hence why this guy
aka The Void, has more defined features)

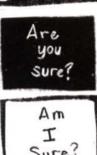
A "non-commitment page", I suppose.

Somewhere in between an inked page and pencils

A lot of really small, personal details throughout the project.
For example, Jo's room is based off of my pavents room from my childhood home. I spent a lot of my like standing & looking in of this mirror, Jean Oliver would definitely do the same.







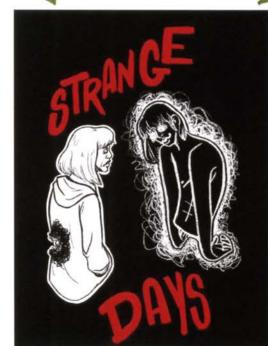


Digital Illustrations

The first time The Void was drawn as Jean Oliver The logo came from this project! (Nov 2019)

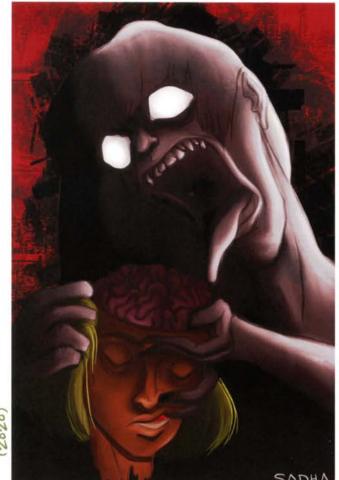
From an art licensing Class

I took at my Ist college.











The Void used to look like final So that changed FAST.



I used to reference/use imagery of hands A Lot, but it's stopped being super present in the work now.

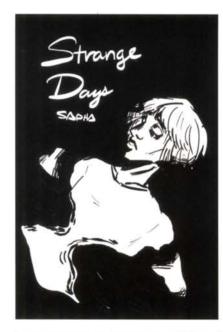
(this was Jan 19)





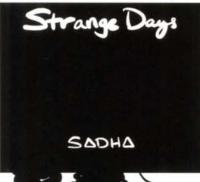
also went
with literal
blood seeping
out of Jo's
Bady, which
I'm glad is
gone ~!















Promotional Illustrations

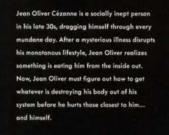
Through the course of the semester, I created to sketches, two for promotion, and 4 cover sketches.

I really wanted the cover to be an interesting, yet simple illustration that focuses on Jean Oliver.















Pretty much every illustration was utilized. I really liked each sketch, even though only the top left really worked as the cover.

NO ART IS WASTED! Sketches to Final

a helhim lesbian, a nonbinary individual. & Benny was a

Benort huge

Characters

The 4 main characters of Strange Days are Jean Oliver, The Void, Benoit (Benny), and Nicole (cole)

The first dapter is really focused on just Jo (and later, the Void), so naturally he was drawn the most.

Not a ton about Jean Oliver's design has changed over the years (I noticed that as I got all this together)

Though a lot (most, really) of Strange Days revolves around Jean Oliver's health, there's also a focus on relationship (especially platonic/ non romantic love)



First lines illustration (2020)



Before anything, any "actual inlury" on pages ... A script!=

10 Pages Breakdown Synopsis -

The 10 pages will cover the first 10 pages of Strange Days, and primarily will cover the introduction to Jean Oliver's character, and the mysterious thing happening to his body.

- 1. Jean Oliver sees a strange image of darkness and something attempting to claw at him. He wakes up once his phone alarm blares. There's three panels at the bottom that show him struggling to turn off his alarm and wake up.
- 2. Jean Oliver starts going through his morning routine. He goes to the bathroom to take a shower, but stops by the mirror to examine his body. There's strange black bruising in his neck and sides of his torso. He sighs but pays it no mind. JO steps into the shower (there's panels of JO in the shower, including one of his feet by the drain. There's blackened water and odd clumps that get stuck at the drain. The tub itself is incredibly
- 3. The rest of Jean Oliver's routine continues. There's 4 panels at the top that show Jean Oliver brushing his teeth, getting dressed, driving to school, and beginning class all with a dejected frown on his face. (For lack of a better example, I'm imagining this like when Squidward was living the same boring life over and over each day in that episode where he moved)



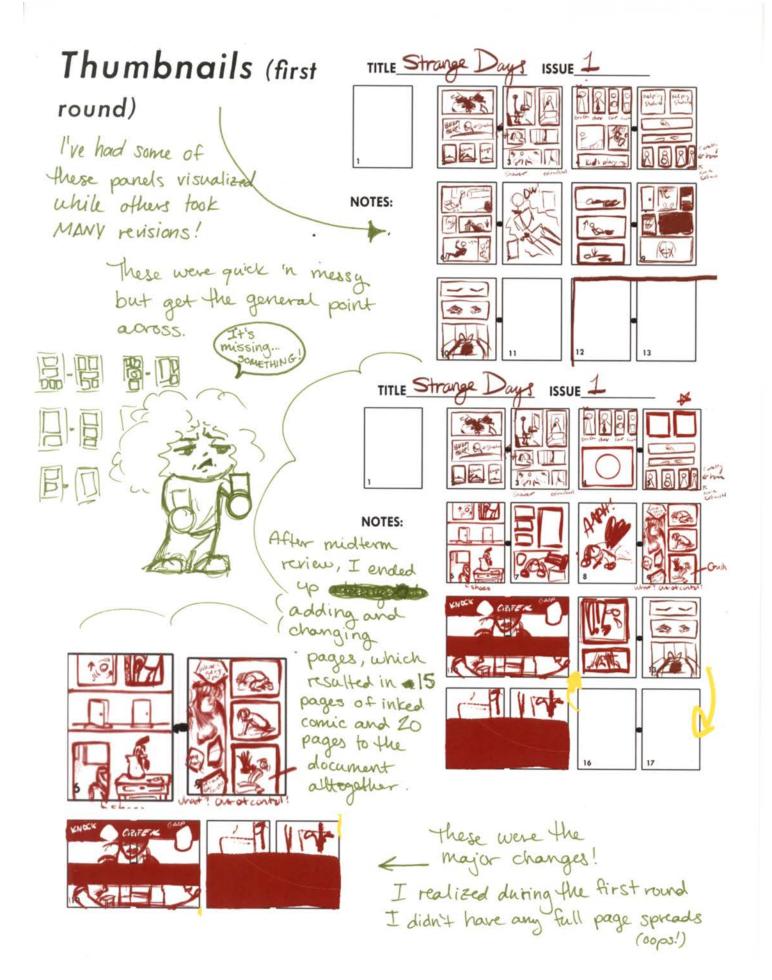
The rest of the page shows Jean Oliver teaching his students

- 4. Time passes through the day, and Jean Oliver is finally able to go home. There's a panel of a clock followed by Jean Oliver teaching his orchestra students, this time more exhausted and slightly sweating. The bottom panels show him going back home in the same dejected "Squidward living the same life montage" type of way. JO visually looks worse through each panel, sweating more and overall looking more sick (his dark spots look more prominent as well).
- 5. He stumbles into his apartment and staggers towards the kitchen table mumbling "grade tests grade tests...". He makes it to the chair before collapsing entirely.

- Full page of Jean Oliver's body completely spazzing out. The dark bruises have all turned into holes with static poking out of them. He's laying in a growing puddle of black goo from said holes.
- 7. Jean Oliver's body spazzes, calms down, He tries to sit up, and then he's down again as the spazzes start again.
- 8. Someone (the neighbor, but this isn't known to the audience yet) walks through the still open apartment door. From JO's POV, they walk closer to him. The person is incredibly frantic. His vision is blurry and he starts blacking out/going in and out of consciousness. There seems to be another body behind the neighbor (this is the Void but again the audience is unaware of that) but Jean Oliver cannot identify it at all.
- Jean Oliver wakes up in an ambulance. He's incredibly scared, the neighbor and professionals are there as well as the unknown figure. He still cannot see properly, and blacks out again.
- 10. This page I planned to have a page dedicated to clearly viewing Jean Oliver's body as medical professionals strap on gloves and hover over his body. BUT I tend to have a habit of planning too much beforehand, so if this page needs to be cut in order to make everything else work and kinda use this as an extra page elsewhere, I'm good with that. I did start thumbing these very loosely and it did fit within the other 9 pages, so I'm not too worried.

originally, I pitched a 7-8

page comic and pitch packet, and was worried that I would be biting off more than I could with 10 pages... LMAO



Thumbnails

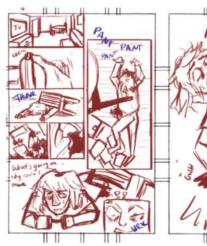
(second round)

Made the thumbrails a little bigger + clearer

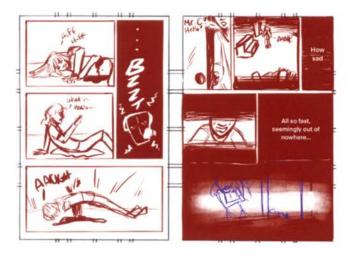
This + penals are only from the first round (I kinda skipped parts of this after midterms)

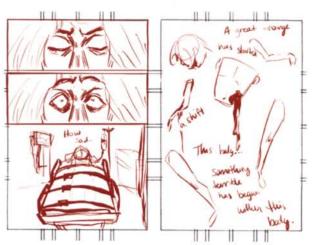
I was the most excited and scared for this









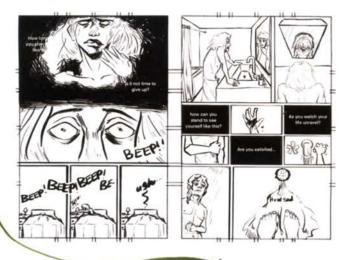


Pencils

Thumbnails... but... more detailed!

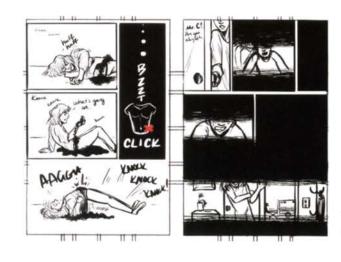
Some pages went under major
revisions. This one in particular
didn't look right at first,

So I took reference pics and
tried argain!











another change, and added as a way to come full circle

Pages in Progress

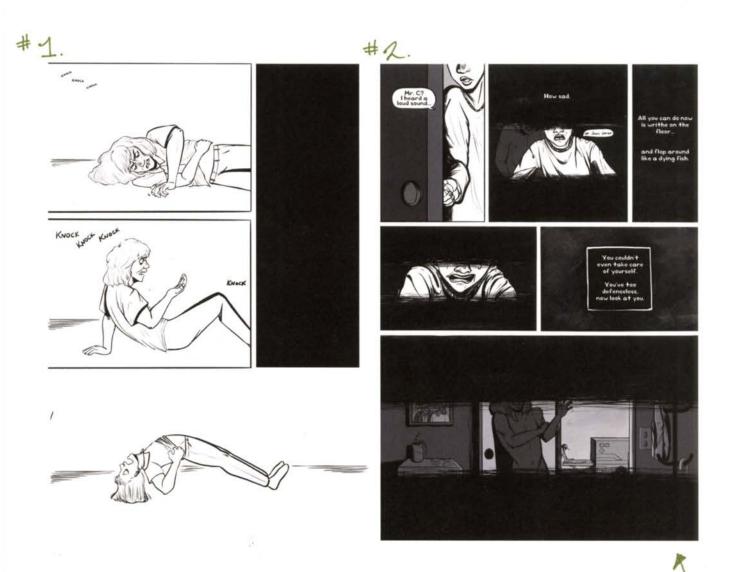


that were added to thumbs post midterms, I would ink right over it. Sometimes I'd do a quick penals pass, but the Humbs were clear enough without them.









Deleted Pages

Not every page is a winner in But elements from this page were redistributed to other pages.

#12 wasn't interesting enough; and #2 needed to be stretched out to fill more pages/fix pacing.

What's Eating JO?

(Can I Touch It?)

One of the biggest challenges I faced was figuring out what the goo inside Jean Oliver looked like.

I wanted to give the impression that it was something Sticky and gross, yet scratchy and hard. The only way I could word it was like a steel brush dipped in tor.

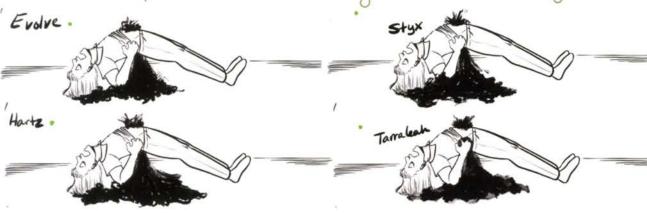
Visually though, that's too exact of a feeling to emulate exactly.

I thoroughly tested various brushes that would get

me close to the "brush-in-tar" look. "Why is this important?"

you may ask. It isn't, technically. But this is what my body

felt like, so I want to convey that as accurately as I can.















me when i realise i have long term disorders that will be with me for life







Word + Image

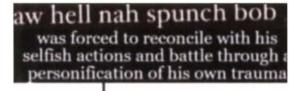
I accidentally started collecting memes that really related to Strange Days that I thought about A LOT. Recent by I found this on twit or and didn't know the full quote

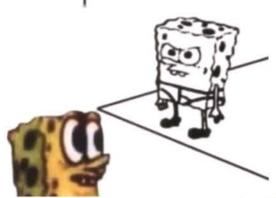
It stuck with me.

"I am constantly trying to communicate something incommunicable, to explain something inexplicable, to tell about something I only feel in my bones and which can only be experienced in those bones. Basically it is nothing other than this fear we have so often talked about, but fear spread to everything, fear of the greatest as of the smallest, fear, paralyzing fear of pronouncing a word, although this fear may not only be fear but also a longing for something greater than all that is fearful."

-Franz Kafka, Letters to Milena









like this is To othe Void