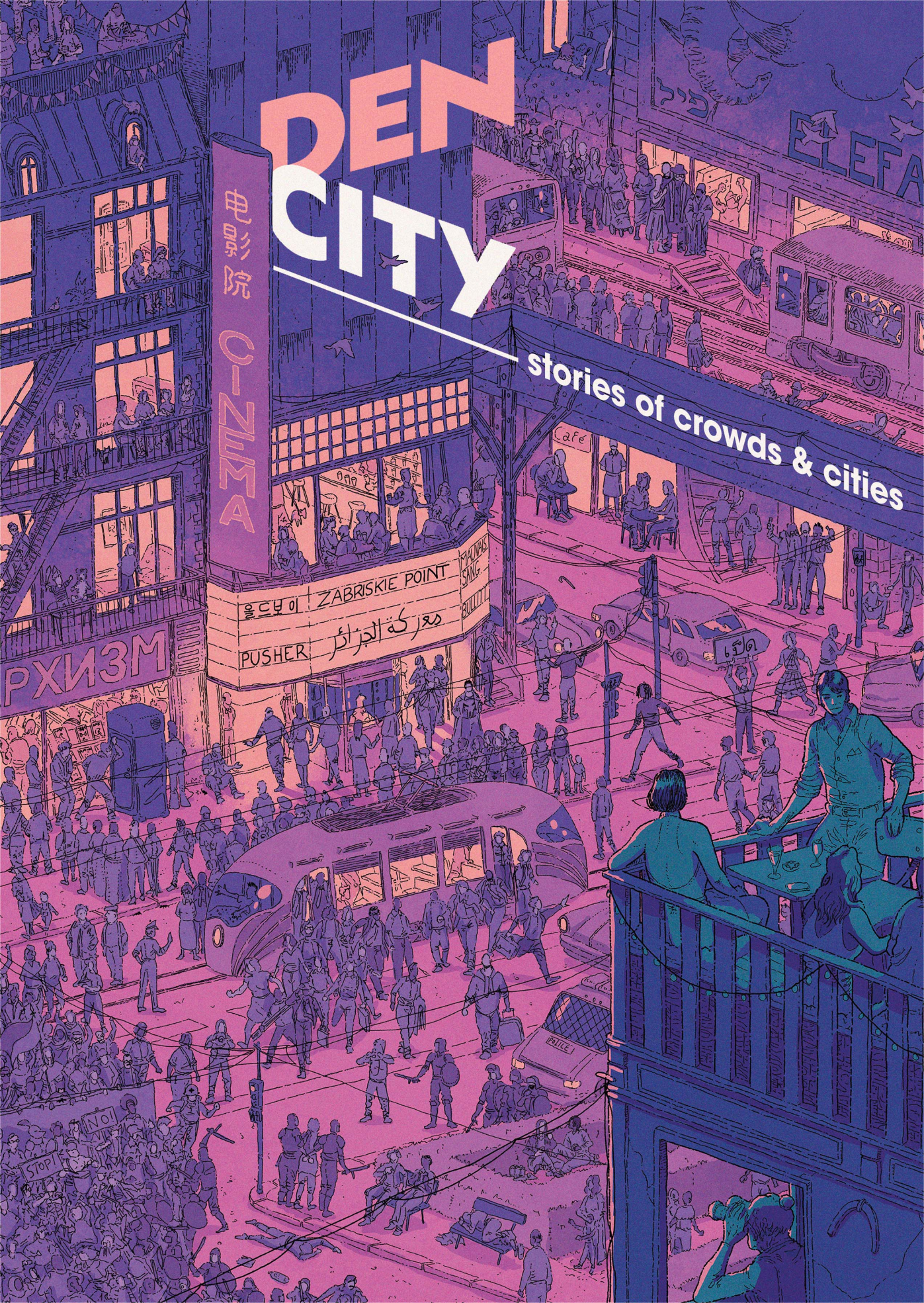


DEN CITY

stories of crowds & cities



电影院

CINEMA

올드 보이 ZABRSKIE POINT

PUSHER معركة الجزائر

PXH3M

ELEFA

STOP! NO!

POLICE

Contents & Creators

COVER ART

FÉLIX THE ROVER - Born in Paris, Félix moved to Brussels in order to do a bachelor/master degree in Comics/Publishing. From there, he has worked on the massive collective zine Satan Disco with Controle Turbo; Born in Winter, a 12-meters silent fresco; and has recently finished The Changing of the Guard for David Lloyd's Aces Weekly.
Instagram: @the_rover_comics
BlueSky: @therovercomics.bsky.social - *Twitter: @The_Heretik*



CONSENSUAL ELEVATION

MYFANWY TRISTRAM is interested in the power of comics to educate, enrage and create change. As well as the small details of everyday life, her work tackles global systemic issues, while aiming to weave in humour and beauty. Recent projects include Draw The Line, Sorry For The Inconvenience, and The Noisy Valley.
Website: myfanwytristram.com - *Instagram: @myfanwytristram*
Patreon: www.patreon.com/MyfanwyTristram



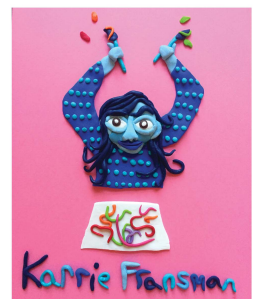
IN THE PURSUIT OF STARDUST

KAY SOHINI is a writer and cartoonist based in New York. Her work has been published in The Washington Post, Women Write About Comics, The Nib, among others. Her graphic memoir This Beautiful, Ridiculous City is slated to be published by Jonathan Cape (Penguin Random House) in 2024.
Website: www.kaysohini.com/portfolio - *Instagram: @kaysohini*
Twitter: @KaySohini



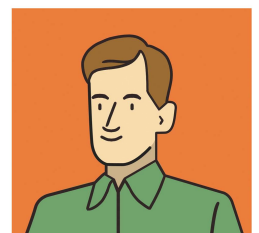
UNITING AGAINST WHAT DIVIDES US

KARRIE FRANSMAN created comics for The Guardian, The Times and The British Red Cross. She is creative director at PositiveNegatives - who use comics to amplify research. She co-created 'Gender Swapped Fairy Tales' (2020) and 'Greek Myths' (2023) with Jonathan Plackett (Faber & Faber) and published 'The House That Groaned' (2012), and the award winning 'Death of the Artist' (2015) with Penguin Random House.
Website: karriefransman.com



ANATOMY OF A PROTEST CROWD

ADAM ALLSUCH BOARDMAN is an illustrator based in Leeds. His works are characterised as a blend of diagrammatic and editorial imagery with a pinch of playful composition and colour. Adam's past clients have included The Economist, Nobrow, Usborne and The Hyde Park Picture House.
Instagram: @aaab_illustration



BLESSING OF THE SEA

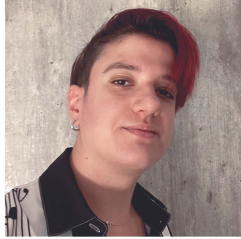
MARCO DEL GALLO is an anthropologist, PhD candidate at the London School of Economics (LSE). His research interests lie at the intersection of theories of urbanism, labour, and the state in Indonesia.

NADIYAH SUYATNA is an illustrator based in Indonesia. She draws inspiration from urban landscapes and everyday life. *Website: nadiyahsuyatna.com*

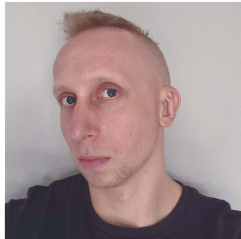




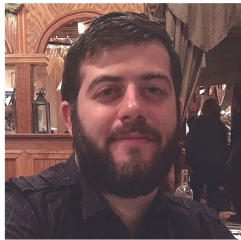
AARON EAMER - Inspired after Thought Bubble 2021, Aaron finally began (and continues) developing the creator-owned Madison Bridge Crossing, a Negative Space Pitches Semi-Finalist. Until then, you may notice his name in anthologies and producing other shorts. A film production graduate in 2009, he's always been interested in character development, and lives in Bristol, England, home of Banksy and throwing statues into rivers.
Twitter: @aaroneamer



FEDERICA MANCIN - Based in Italy, Ika developed an interest for drawing while attending university. After obtaining her degree in languages, she attended the International School of Comics, receiving her diploma in 2020. She enjoys reading most genres, ranging from sci-fi to slice-of-life tales and is most recently known for winning Marvel's Art Atelier competition and as interior artist on Miles Morales: Spider-Man.
Twitter: @IkaDraws - Instagram: @Ikadraws95

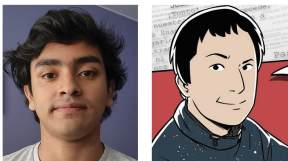


DOUG LEE - Doug likes colour. Not just the art of colour but also the science of colour. He also likes the spelling of colour and will never accept alternatives. He has been learning to colour under K. Michael Russell and is in the process of adding further colouring credits to his name. When not colouring, Doug occasionally writes, though procrastinates by colouring.
Twitter: @DougColours - Instagram: @DougColours



TAYLOR ESPOSITO - A Tripwire and Ringo Award-winning comic book letterer, Taylor is owner of Ghost Glyph Studios and teacher at the legendary Kubert School. A former staff letterer at DC and production artist at Marvel, he has lettered titles such as Red Hood and The Outlaws and Constantine. Other publishers he has worked with include Image, Dark Horse, Line Webtoon, Dynamite and IDW.
Twitter: @TaylorEspo - Instagram: @TaylorEspo

UNDER THE BRIDGE



ALBERTO RAYO is a comic book writer and editor from Lima, Perú. He walks a lot and loves to ride the bus, despite what this comic may indicate. He also loves writing short bios. *Instagram/Twitter: @rayointhebottle*

SEBASTIAN CARRILLO is a 23 year old comic book artist from Peru. His career in design has informed the graphic approach to his page layouts. Experimentation with techniques, formats and the medium itself, as well as narrating stories set in Lima, Peru are what drives his fondness of comics.
Instagram: @sebas carrillocortez - Twitter: @Sebasti38998519
Website: www.artstation.com/sebastiancarrillocortez

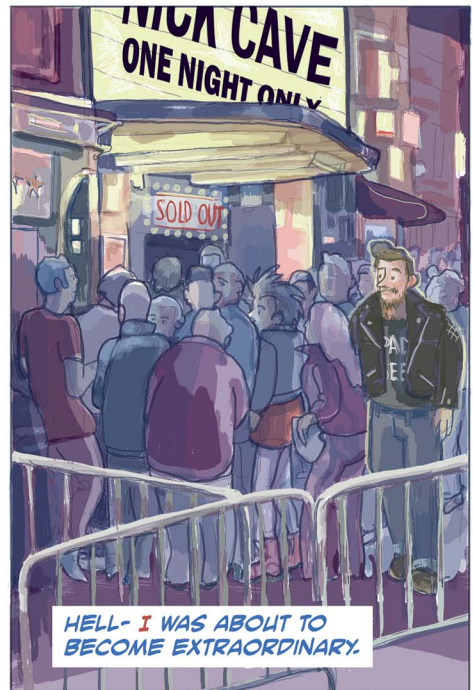
PASSENGER KING

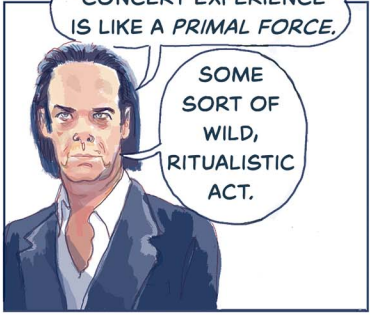


COLIN MCFARLANE (editor & project lead) is Professor of Urban Geography at Durham University and leads the DenCity European Research Council project. He is author of *Waste and the City: The Crisis of Sanitation and the Right to Citylife* (Verso), *Fragments of the City: Making and Remaking Urban Worlds* (University of California Press), and *Learning the City: Knowledge and Translocal Assemblage* (Wiley).
Website: www.durham.ac.uk/staff/colin-mcfarlane/ - Twitter: @ColinMcFarlane3



JORDAN COLLVER (editor & designer) is an illustrator and research communicator using visual narratives in comics to explore themes of science, nature, history, and belief. He is the artist for the Eisner-nominated comic *Hocus Pocus: Magic, Mystery & The Mind*, and is an associate lecturer in science communication at the University of the West of England. He sounds Canadian but lives in Bristol, UK.
Website: jordancollver.myportfolio.com - Twitter etc: @JordanCollver



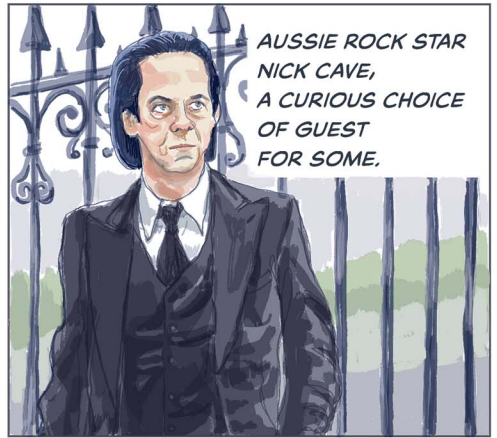


6 MAY, 2023

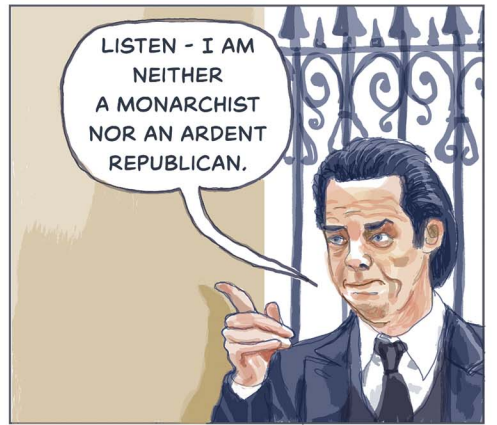
THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE
HAVE COME TO LONDON
ON THIS CORONATION DAY
WHILE MILLIONS MORE
WILL BE WATCHING
THE INVESTITURE OF
OUR NEW KING VIA
THEIR TELEVISION SETS...



AUSSIE ROCK STAR
NICK CAVE,
A CURIOUS CHOICE
OF GUEST
FOR SOME.



LISTEN - I AM
NEITHER
A MONARCHIST
NOR AN ARDENT
REPUBLICAN.



WHAT I AM ALSO NOT
IS SO SPECTACULARLY
INCURIOS ABOUT
THE WORLD -



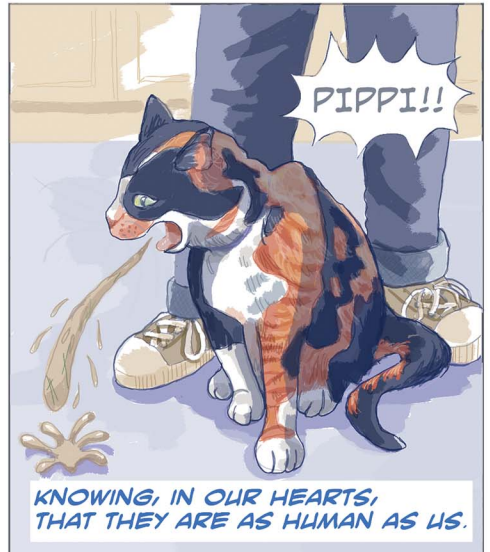
- AS TO REFUSE AN INVITATION TO THE MOST IMPORTANT
HISTORICAL EVENT IN THE UK OF OUR AGE.



NOT JUST THE
MOST IMPORTANT,



BUT THE STRANGEST,
THE WEIRDEST.



IN THE PURSUIT OF STARDUST

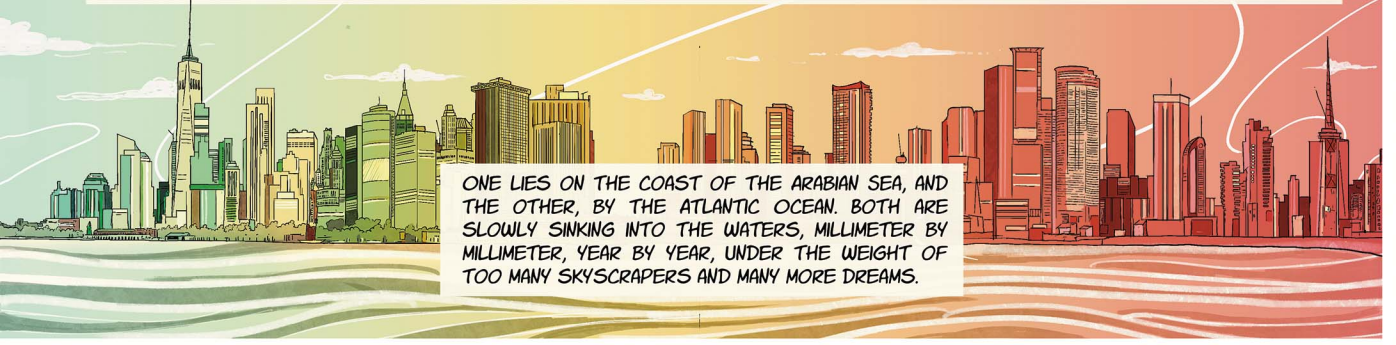
Kay Sohini

CITIES ARE INHABITED BY SO MANY PEOPLE THAT THEY ACQUIRE SENTIENCE BY OSMOSIS.

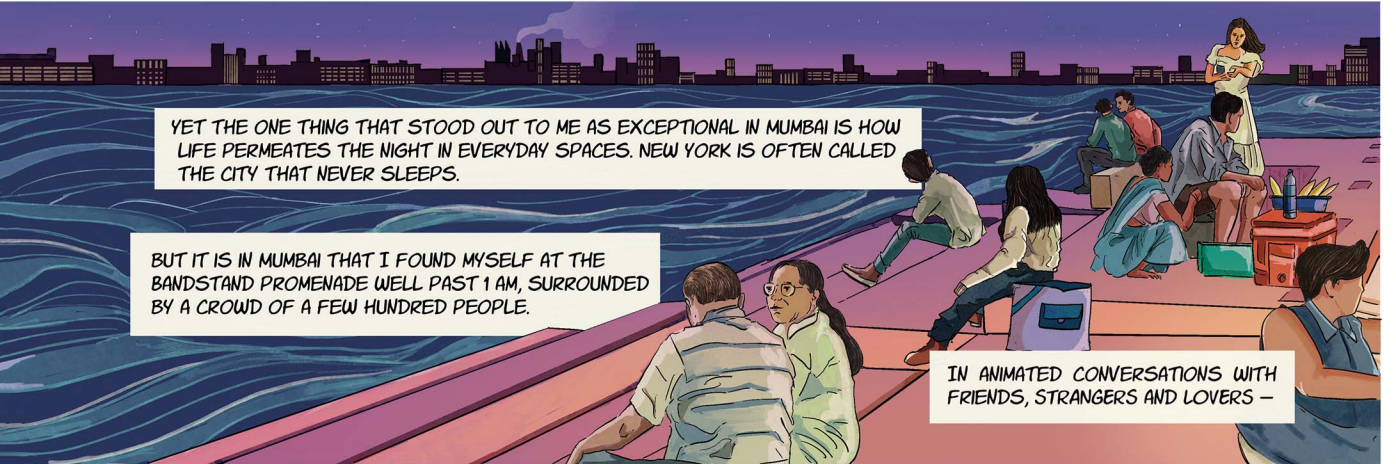
IN THE SUMMER OF 2023, I TRAVELED TO MUMBAI ON A WHIM. A CITY THAT HAS ALWAYS BEEN AT THE PERIPHERY OF MY DREAMS, AND A CITY, IT TURNS OUT, AS SENTIENT AS NEW YORK, MY HOME. IT REINFORCED MY HYPOTHESIS.

THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THESE TWO COASTAL METROPOLISES ARE STRIKING. TOO MANY PEOPLE, TOO MANY DESIRES, MANY FULFILLED, MANY LANGUISHING, TOO MANY HEARTS BREAKING ALL AT ONCE, WHILE MANY MORE CLAMOR TO JOIN THE QUEUE. AMBITION, CREATIVITY, GREED, STARTLING OPULENCE, EVERYDAY PRECARITY, AND ABJECT POVERTY COEXIST ON BOTH ISLANDS.

THEY ARE BOTH BIG, BEAUTIFUL, DIVERSE, EXHILARATING, A LITTLE DIRTY AT PLACES, AND DOGGEDLY RESILIENT.




ONE LIES ON THE COAST OF THE ARABIAN SEA, AND THE OTHER, BY THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. BOTH ARE SLOWLY SINKING INTO THE WATERS, MILLIMETER BY MILLIMETER, YEAR BY YEAR, UNDER THE WEIGHT OF TOO MANY SKYSCRAPERS AND MANY MORE DREAMS.



YET THE ONE THING THAT STOOD OUT TO ME AS EXCEPTIONAL IN MUMBAI IS HOW LIFE PERMEATES THE NIGHT IN EVERYDAY SPACES. NEW YORK IS OFTEN CALLED THE CITY THAT NEVER SLEEPS.

BUT IT IS IN MUMBAI THAT I FOUND MYSELF AT THE BANDSTAND PROMENADE WELL PAST 1 AM, SURROUNDED BY A CROWD OF A FEW HUNDRED PEOPLE.

IN ANIMATED CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS, STRANGERS AND LOVERS –



LEISURELY STROLLING ALONG THE WATERFRONT AS THE WAVES RELENTLESSLY CRASHED AGAINST THE ROCKS LINING THE BEACH, SNACKING ON FIRE-ROASTED CORN ON THE COB, AND LIVING AS THOUGH THE EVENING HAD JUST BEGUN.



YET OF ALL THE CROWDS I ENCOUNTERED IN MUMBAI, THE ONE I FOUND THE MOST STRIKING IS THE ONE THAT GATHERS ROUTINELY OUTSIDE MANNAT. A 1920S ERA HERITAGE BUILDING, IT IS NOW HOME TO THE COUNTRY'S MOST CELEBRATED ACTOR, SHAH RUKH KHAN.

PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY ARRIVE ALONE, IN PAIRS, AND IN GROUPS, AT ALL HOURS OF THE DAY AND NIGHT, BY BUS, BY CAR, BY FOOT, AND GATHER WITH STRANGERS IN FRONT OF THE LANDMARK. SMILING, GRINNING, REVERENT. REVELING IN THE MERE PROXIMITY TO THE ORDINARY BOY FROM LOWER-MIDDLE-CLASS DELHI WHO CAME FROM NOTHING AND, BY THE TURN OF THE MILLENNIUM, HAD EVERYTHING.

A MUSLIM SUPERSTAR IN A HINDU-MAJORITY COUNTRY, HIS THIRTY-SOMETHING-YEAR-OLD LEGACY IN HINDI CINEMA IS ONLY MATCHED BY HIS UNABASHED SECULARISM, A TRAIT OF UNTOLD SIGNIFICANCE IN 2020s INDIA.

IT SEEMS A LITTLE EXTRAORDINARY THAT IN A CITY WHERE THE POPULATION DENSITY WEIGHS DOWN ON LIFE AND REAL ESTATE, WHERE SUMMERS ARE UNBEARABLY HOT AND TORRENTIAL MONSOONS WREAK HAVOC IN JULY, WHERE UNNUMBERED HOURS ARE SPENT IN TRAFFIC AND IMPOSSIBLE COMMUTES, ITS PEOPLE STILL FIND TIME TO PAUSE AND LOOK FOR JOY.

IN THE LITTLE MOMENTS, IN EVERYDAY SPACES.

"Politicians use religion as an agenda and I think it's the lowest, cheapest and dirtiest trick in the world."



India Today Conclave, 2011

"MANNAT," WHICH ROUGHLY TRANSLATES TO A PRAYER OR A WISH FULFILLED, HAS BEEN EXALTED TO THE STATUS OF AN URBAN PILGRIMAGE OF SORTS OVER THE YEARS.



A CROWD SO UNIQUE IN ITS INCEPTION AND PREMISE—

WHAT DOES IT SAY OF OUR DESIRES?

SPRAWLING BY THE STANDARDS OF MUMBAI REAL ESTATE, IT HAS COME TO REPRESENT FLICKERING BELIEF IN A SYSTEM THAT ONCE PROMISED TO REWARD HARD WORK (EVEN WHEN UNACCOMPANIED BY SOCIAL CAPITAL).

AND THE LEGIONS OF PEOPLE OUTSIDE MANNAT, IS A SURE, IF PECULIAR, SIGN THAT HOPE STILL LINGERS IN THIS CITY, AMIDST THE INEQUALITY AND THE CHAOS, AND AGAINST ALL ODDS.



UNITING AGAINST WHAT DIVIDES US

BY KARRIE FRANSMAN

Zrinka Bralo came from a small but beautiful city.

"Architecturally it's very mixed because it's on a crossroads geographically."



But this diversity was a double edged sword. "We had political upheaval and quite a few demonstrations. In the months before the war there was an attempt to cut the city into parts by masked gunmen but the people turned out and destroyed those barricades."

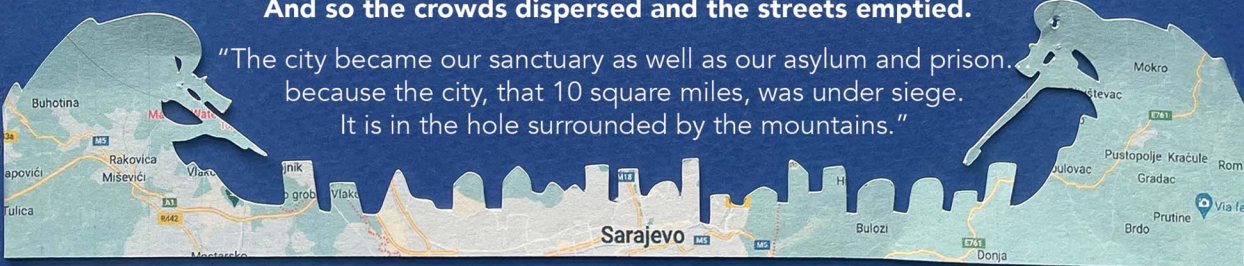


"However, when that happened the second time the snipers started shooting and killed 2 women and this is officially when the siege starts. And it doesn't matter if there's 10,000 of you. You can be shot."

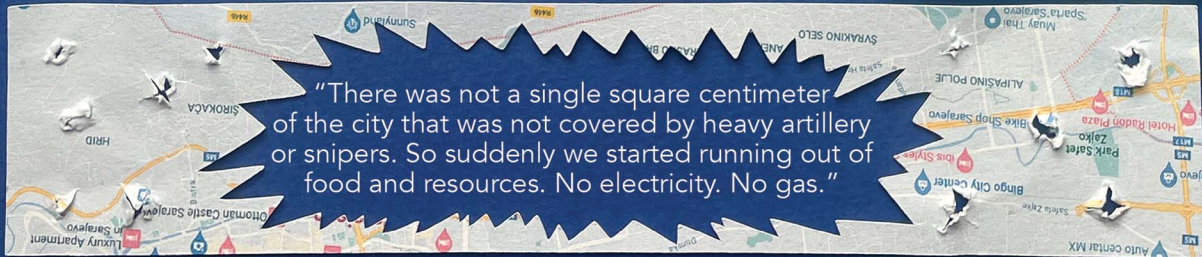


And so the crowds dispersed and the streets emptied.

"The city became our sanctuary as well as our asylum and prison because the city, that 10 square miles, was under siege. It is in the hole surrounded by the mountains."



"There was not a single square centimeter of the city that was not covered by heavy artillery or snipers. So suddenly we started running out of food and resources. No electricity. No gas."



The city was under siege for nearly 1500 days- the longest siege of a capital city in modern history. 13,952 people died.



"There was a really calculated genocide and urbicide. Physically destroying the spaces where we coexisted. Sarajevo was this place where you didn't really ask for people's nationality or ethnicity or religion and you didn't care. The separatist nationalist needed to destroy any reminder that life was possible together and better."

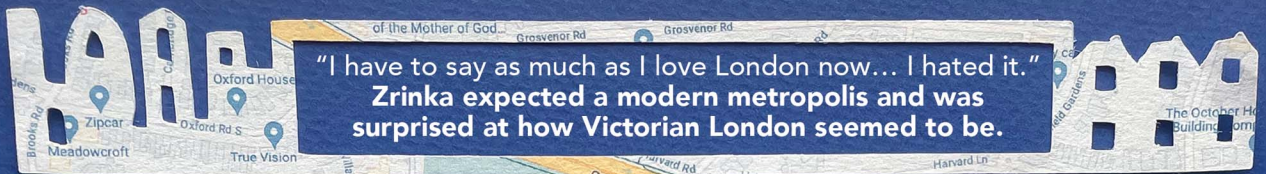
Zrinka and her family lived in a brand new building that had been built for the Olympics.

"My apartment block had 12 floors. Each floor had 4 apartments. We would be going up and down. It became a vertical street."

"When a mortar lands and hits the concrete it disperses itself into 400 deadly pieces of shrapnel. The noise of it is absolutely horrifying because you can't place it. When the shelling stops you have the silence... and that was the spookiest sound of no sound at all. In cities there's always a hum. There's electricity in the wall, people travelling, driving. And all of that disappears."

"A group of us young journalists started working with foreign correspondents... We thought that if the world knows the truth and the facts then all of this is going to be resolved really quickly. And somewhere through the winter I literally had frostbite and we started realising we had no oil or gold or diamonds and nobody cares."

Zrinka's work as an international journalist allowed her a press pass and to board a UN plane. She arrived in London as a refugee in September 1993.



**"I have to say as much as I love London now... I hated it."
Zrinka expected a modern metropolis and was surprised at how Victorian London seemed to be.**

The Brits she met were welcoming.

"People were really supportive and kind and understanding because we were all so traumatised. In this state of trauma it's almost like having a buzz in your ears and a high temperature all the time."



But the process of seeking asylum for a refugee was less so. "From the structural point of view there was a very aggressive rejection. I was refused asylum because I travelled through another country which is exactly the problem we have now."

"In 1997 when Labour came into power they decided that everyone from the former Yugoslavia was allowed to settle. It took 3 years and then I was on this pathway that took 10 years to get citizenship and I couldn't leave the country."

But even after her battle for citizenship was over, Zrinka continued to fight for her fellow refugees.

By 2015 she was working with Citizen UK, CalAid and setting up Refugee Welcome

when Zrinka heard for the first time about Ros Ereira.

Ros had worked as a TV producer and was a mum. In September 2015 she saw there was going to be an EU summit.



She couldn't find a demonstration to join to show support for refugees so she set up a little Facebook group

"The next morning the picture of Alan Kurdi was in the paper. That particular picture made a big impact, partly because I think it looked like everyone's sleeping toddler."



"Even the Daily Mail cared about refugees that day. And suddenly the numbers on that march went spiraling. We had 10 days. So literally for about a week I didn't get dressed, I didn't have time."

Ros was joined by an amazing team of refugees, refugee advocates, charities and event planners. She met with the Met Police, Trafalgar Square Greater London Authority, Transport For London and Westminster Council to plan the protest.



"And still on the day I was like, 'Maybe no one will come?'"

"We were at the bottom of Park Lane outside the Hilton and suddenly these two huge rivers of people started approaching out of the park and down Park Lane from Marble Arch. It was utterly overwhelming."

SAY IT LOUD SAY IT CLEAR REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE

As Ros reached the top of a slight hill on Picaddilly she looked back
"We couldn't see the back. It's just forever and it's huge."

Around 90,000 people attended the march on 12/9/15. It was reported to be the biggest pro refugee march in the UK.

As she led the crowd through the city Ros recalled a song she sang as a child at the youth group Woodcraft Folk:

Today I saw a dream come true,
I never thought I'd see.
50,000 marched on London Town,
on one thing they'd all agreed:
That the future of the human race
must never again depend
on politics and businessmen.
Protest! Your life defend.

Zrinka was also in that crowd, holding a banner at the head of the march alongside refugees from all over the world. She said the march *did* make a difference.

"We had this very organised well thought through policy advocacy that was happening behind the scenes. We had negotiations. We went to David Cameron. And THEN the march happened. It helped to exert the pressure because media could not ignore it and politicians could not ignore it."

Zrinka's fight for refugees continues today. She is CEO of Migrants Organise - a grassroots organising platform for all migrants and refugees.

Today refugee's rights are under threat with Suella Braverman's policies. And the right to protests itself is also under threat with the introduction of 'The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act' by the Conservative government in April 2022. This bill gives more powers to the police creating new criminal offences associated with protest behaviour. Amnesty International called the bill "a dark day for civil liberties".

Protest crowds can come together over a single photograph

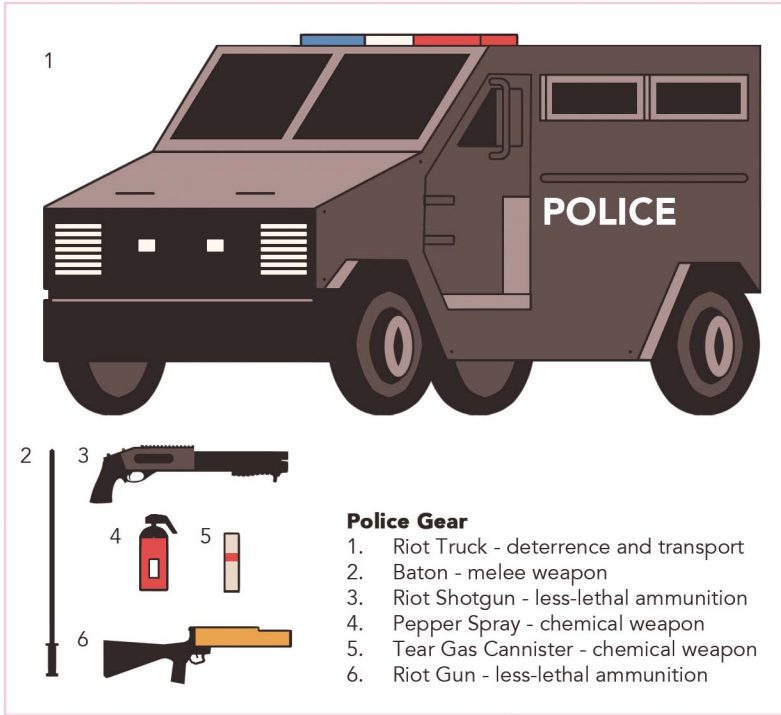
or be dispersed by a single bullet

They can close cities down or open cities up to welcome outsiders in.

The power to protests is a human right that must be protected.

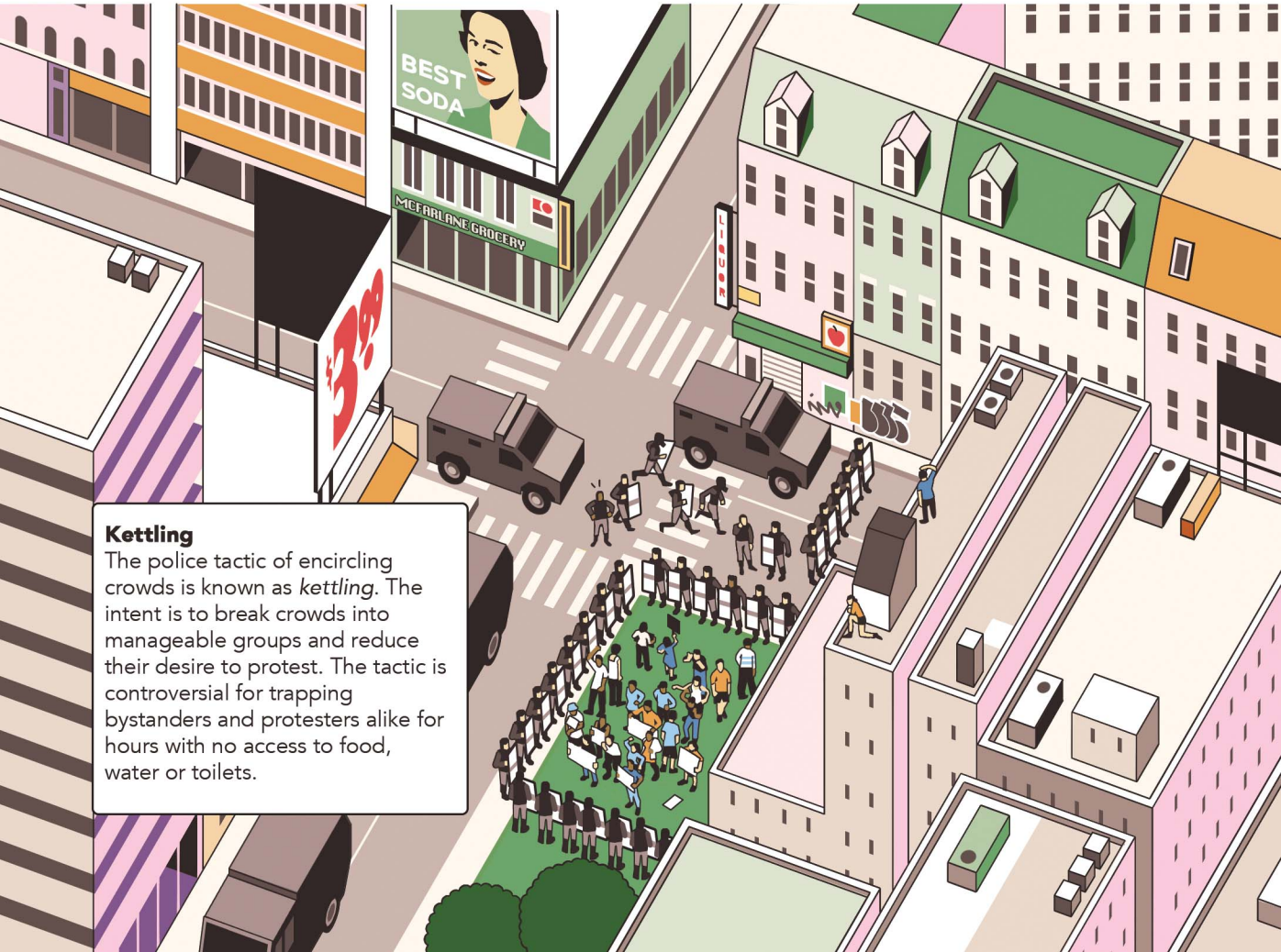
Protest! Your life defend.

ANATOMY OF A PROTEST CROWD



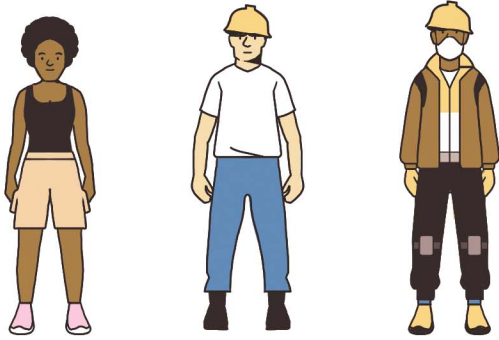
Police

Police are deployed for the purposes of crowd control, public order and as a form of deterrence. Riot gear can include armour and an arsenal of weaponry. While special riot weaponry is designed to be less than lethal, injury and the rare death is sadly possible.



Kettling

The police tactic of encircling crowds is known as *kettling*. The intent is to break crowds into manageable groups and reduce their desire to protest. The tactic is controversial for trapping bystanders and protesters alike for hours with no access to food, water or toilets.



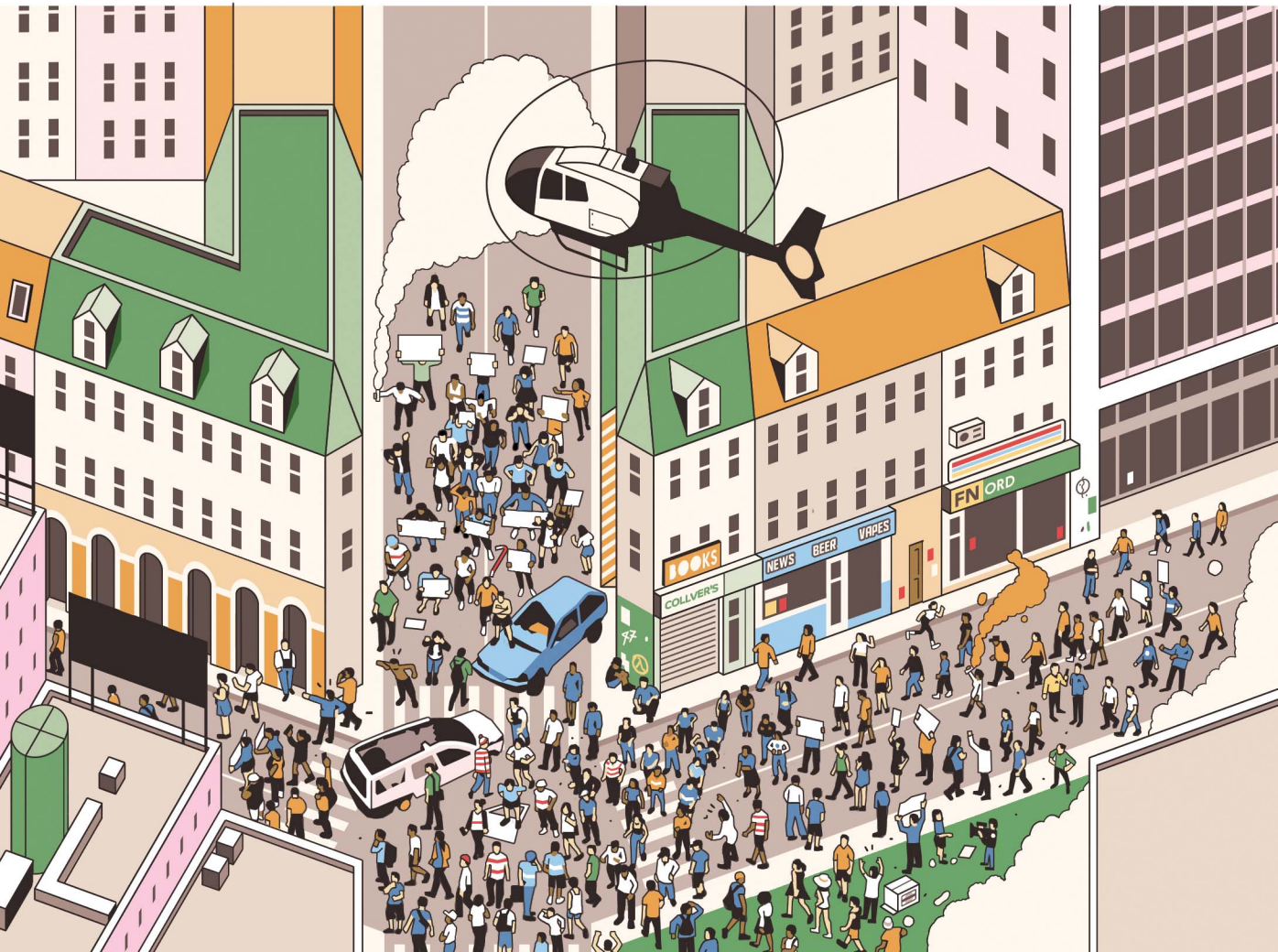
Protesters

A protest is a public demonstration to express disapproval or to show support. A protest can range from a single person to a crowd of thousands. Many things can catalyse a protest; including government policy, climate concerns and war.

The vast majority of protests are peaceful. However, violent clashes with police and counter-protesters have led some to wear protective clothing, and in some cases, carry weaponry.

Protester Gear

1. Helmet - protection from projectiles
2. Water - used to deter dehydration
3. Goggles - protection from tear gas
4. Umbrella - defence against weather
5. Walkie-Talkie - communication
6. Mobile Phone - communication and recording
7. Rucksack - used to store first aid and food
8. Ear Protection - protection from sound weapons
9. Flare - symbolic and attention-grabbing
10. First Aid - plasters and clean cloths



BLESSING OF THE SEA

by MARCO DEL GALLO
and NADIYAH SUYATNA



THE POLITICS OF GREED
SHAPE JAKARTA'S
NORTHERN COAST...

FLATTENING LIQUID
SURFACES...

IMPEDING SEA
ACCESS...

DAMAGING
ECOLOGIES...

AND CEMENTING
SOCIOECONOMIC
INEQUALITIES.

ONCE A YEAR, FISHERS AND
THEIR FAMILIES GATHER TO
CELEBRATE NADRAN,

A SEA FESTIVAL WHICH HAS BEEN
GOING ON FOR GENERATIONS
AMONG JAVA'S COASTAL
COMMUNITIES.

IT HAS BEEN
ADJUSTED TO LIFE IN
THE INDONESIAN
CAPITAL.



BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER IS NOT EASY. THOUGH THE FESTIVAL LARGELY RELIES ON INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS, FINANCIAL HARDSHIP AND DISPARITIES HAVE MADE EXTERNAL FUNDING INDISPENSABLE.



NADRAN IS HAPPENING NEXT WEEK. HOW MUCH HAVE WE RAISED SO FAR?

NOT MUCH, MY FRIEND! LET'S ASK THAT BOSS OVER THERE.



NOT TODAY...

I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY.

HE'S COUNTING DIRTY MONEY!

CALM DOWN. HIS BAD DEEDS WILL COME BACK TO HAUNT HIM. WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

IN RECENT TIMES, MANY MUSLIM FISHERS HAVE ABANDONED TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES SUCH AS NADRAN IN FAVOUR OF A STRICTER INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM.



IS YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW JOINING TOMORROW?

NO, HE DOESN'T BELIEVE IN IT ANY MORE.

PLUS, HE'S SELLING HIS BOAT...

TOO MANY DEBTS.

TRRTTRRTTRRTTRRTTRTTT

NADRAN HAS STARTED. ECLECTIC CROWDS OF SMALL BOATS CHASE AFTER THE FESTIVAL'S PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL EPICENTRE - A WOODEN MINIATURE BOAT.

THE BOAT IS FILLED WITH MANY DIFFERENT OFFERINGS. THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE IS THE HEAD OF AN OX SACRIFICED RIGHT BEFORE PEOPLE TAKE TO THE SEA.

WHILE THE MEAT IS DISTRIBUTED AMONG FAMILIES, THE HEAD IS GIVEN TO THE SEA AS A FORM OF GRATITUDE AND FUTURE BLESSING.



AS FISHERS, OUR LIVES DEPEND ON THE SEA. WE SHOULDN'T JUST EXTRACT FROM IT: WE MUST RETURN SOMETHING TOO.

IF WE DON'T DO THAT, THERE WILL BE DISASTERS AND PEOPLE MIGHT DIE WHILE FISHING.

ANYONE CAN JOIN NADRAN. CONFLICTS SEEM TO BE DISAPPEARING!





QUICK, PUSH IT!

THE PEAK IS REACHED WHEN THE RITUAL BOAT IS EVENTUALLY TOSSED INTO THE SEA AND SUNK.

FASTER! LET'S BE THE FIRST ONES TO HIT THE BOAT!



I HOPE THIS WILL BRING MORE FISH TO OUR FISHERS AND KEEP THEM SAFE

AS SOON AS IT COMES INTO CONTACT WITH THE OFFERINGS, THE SEA WATER IS CONSIDERED BLESSED.

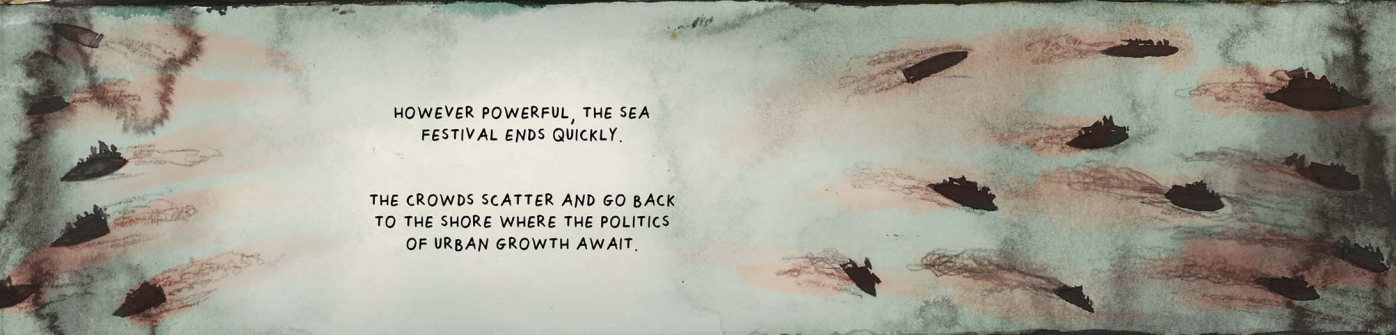


I GOT THE WATER, MOM!

WELL DONE, BOY! WE SHOULD SCATTER IT ALL OVER OUR HOME: I TRULY WISH WE CAN AFFORD TO FINISH THE RENOVATION BY NEXT YEAR.

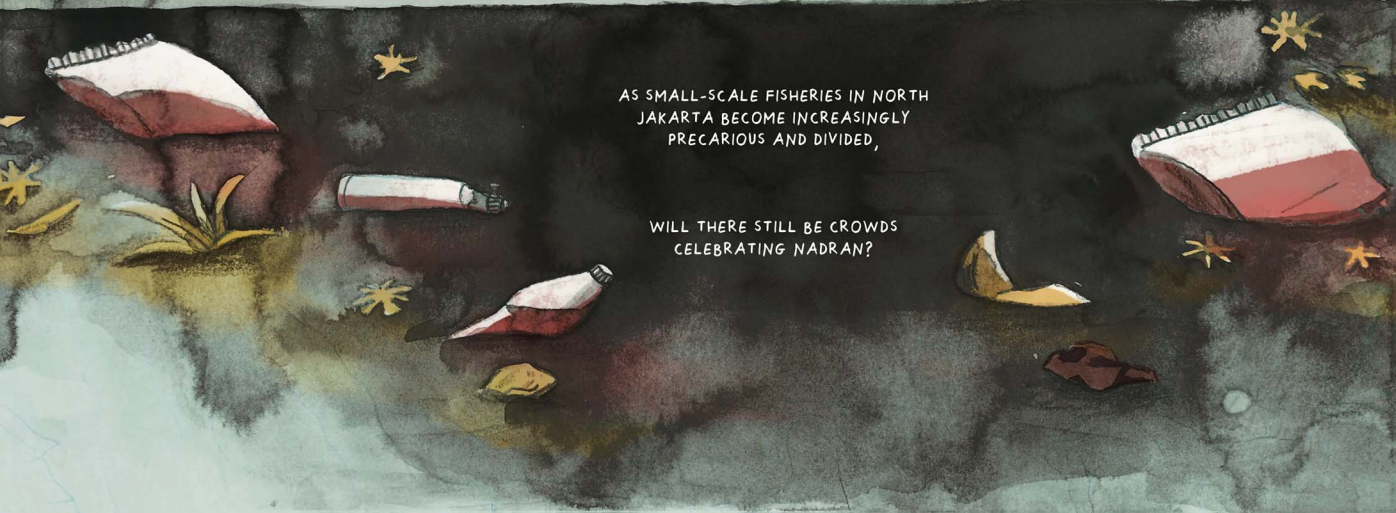
PARTICIPANTS SWIFTLY DIVE IN AND POUR THE SEA WATER INTO THEIR BOATS TO ATTRACT GOOD FORTUNE. SOME EVEN BRING IT TO THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AS A GIFT.

GIVE THIS TO YOUR GIRLFRIEND. MAYBE SHE WILL FIND A GOOD JOB IN THE END.



HOWEVER POWERFUL, THE SEA FESTIVAL ENDS QUICKLY.

THE CROWDS SCATTER AND GO BACK TO THE SHORE WHERE THE POLITICS OF URBAN GROWTH AWAIT.



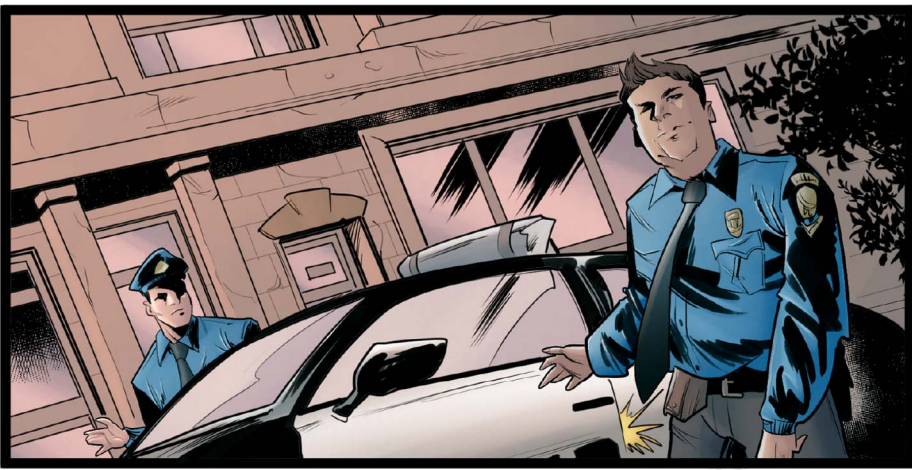
AS SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN NORTH JAKARTA BECOME INCREASINGLY PRECARIOUS AND DIVIDED,

WILL THERE STILL BE CROWDS CELEBRATING NADRAN?



UNDER THE BRIDGE







COBY!
TIME TO
COME IN.



NOBODY IN
CHARGE HERE,
OFFICER. WE'RE
ALL HERE FOR
ONE ANOTHER.

SORRY
TO INFORM
YOU, YOU
CAN'T ALL
BE HERE--



THERE'S A
GLOBAL PANDEMIC
AND GROUPS ARE
ONLY ALLOWED
WITHIN SINGLE
HOMES.

WHAT?

WHAT'S
HE TALKING
ABOUT?



WE ARE
A SINGLE
HOME!

YEAH!



I'M SORRY, I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO
TELL YOU.

CITY
ORDINANCE
JUST SAYS NO
CROWDS.

SIR, WHAT
ARE YOU
EXPECTING
FROM US EXA--

THEY'RE
KICKING US
OUT OF OUR
HOME!



UHH--
CLIFTON?
SHOULD WE
BE CALLING
BACK-UP?



EVERYBODY, THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT, GREG!



HOW ABOUT YOU LEAVE OUR HOME?

GET 'EM OUTTA HERE!



CLIFF--
I'M JUST PASSING ON ORDERS.



WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!

HE'S JUST A KID!

SH**! DID YOU GET ALL THAT?!

WRITER - AARON EAMER
ARTIST - FEDERICA MANGIN
COLOURS - DOUG LEE
LETTERS - TAYLOR ESPOSITO

THERE ARE MORNINGS STRANGER THAN OTHERS.



SOMETIMES YOU LEAVE A BIT LATE BUT STILL GET EARLY TO WORK.



SOME OTHER TIMES YOU BUMP INTO SOMEONE WHO LOOKS A LOT LIKE SOMEONE YOU KNOW.



NOW?

MY PHONE HAS TURNED INVISIBLE.



UH?

I STILL FEEL IT ON MY PALM.

WARM AND LIGHT.



A FAMILIAR SOUND CATCHES MY ATTENTION.

MY BUS GETS CLOSER.





C-CAN YOU SEE THEM?



THEY'RE FLOATING...

AS I ASK THE OTHER COMMUTERS, I CAN'T STOP STARING AT THE STREET.



RIGHT?

I SEE THE BODIES. THE PEOPLE. SOME TIGHT, SOME RELAXED.

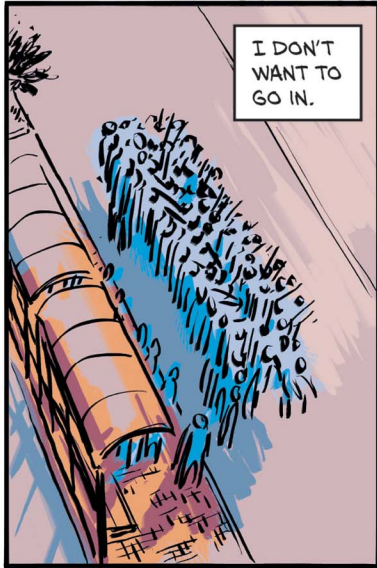
AN ACCUMULATION OF HUMANITY LINGERS IN FRONT OF ME.



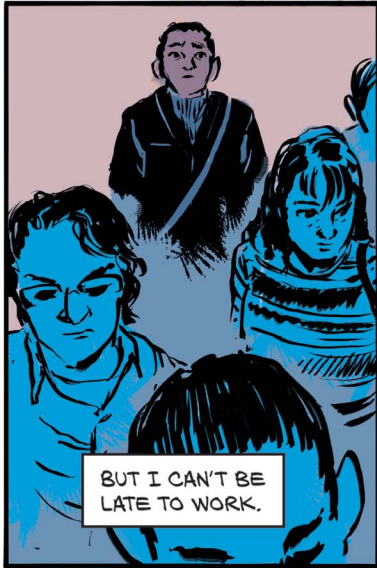
OH...

MY BUS IS HERE.





I DON'T WANT TO GO IN.



BUT I CAN'T BE LATE TO WORK.



MY MUSCLE MEMORY GUIDES ME, STEP BY STEP.



I TRY TO NOT LOOK DOWN.

IF I SEE THE ROADWAY MOVING UNDER MY SHOES, I MIGHT CRY.

I NEED TO TURN MY ATTENTION ELSEWHERE.



AND TO BE PART OF SOMETHING...

THE PASSENGER KING
SCRIPT BY ALBERTO RAYO
ART BY SEBASTIAN CARRILLO



Reflecting on DenCity

Colin McFarlane



How do you feel about density? What thoughts has the comic left you with? Send your feedback through this QR code.

Density defines cities, and cities define density.

Density is a rhythm, dancing in the city. It might be a crowd ebbing and flowing, in silence and full voice, still or in motion. The crowd waiting for the traffic lights to change at a busy city centre crossing in Tokyo or New York. The evening crowd in the concert hall waiting in anticipation of the band to take to the stage, then erupting into euphoria when they finally appear. Or, the crowd waiting, massing to watch a spectacle: a football final, a war memorialisation, a King's coronation. Crowds composed of an alchemy all kinds of views, experiences, and emotions: solemn, awed, elated, or moved, others angered, frustrated, confused, or alienated. And then, density dispersed as the crowd returns home.

Density is political. During the COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions meant that even small gatherings of people could be seen as a 'crowd' that violated the rules, with sometimes heavy-handed policing in response. In cities all over the world, thousands gathered in the streets to break those restrictions and assert that Black Lives Matter. All over the world, city centres regularly witness marches chanting support for refugees, demanding an end to war, calling for better pay and working conditions, insisting that another world is possible. The crowd like a great wave at sea, crashing down on cities demanding change, generating solidarities and flashes of hope.

Density is shaped by the city's inequalities. Just as the city concentrates wealth and poverty, aspiration and despair, so too does it concentrate people into prosperous or deprived areas. Hyper urban development from Jakarta and Mumbai to Nairobi and London takes shape as a densification of people, money and increasingly tall buildings that most cannot afford.

Densities of opulence and densities of deprivation are connected, not separate. The former often depends on the latter for cheap labour, from driving buses to cleaning houses or staffing cafes and collecting garbage. Meanwhile, indigenous and traditional communities can be left fractured and alienated, clinging to cultural histories and festivals that are losing their footing in rapidly changing cities.

Density is hardwired. It cannot happen without a material substrate to enable it. The buses, trains and cars that move compressed bodies around congested transport networks. The smart phones used to organise protests. The helmets, goggles and first aid kits of protestors, and the riot trucks, batons and tear gas canisters of the police. The precarious shoddily built houses in neighbourhoods or refugee camps where people struggle to maintain a decent home, or access basic water and sanitation. We take so much of the 'stuff' of density for granted - except when it's gone, when the buses stop or the power cut kicks in or the internet goes down.

Densities are recorded and visualised. If a protest escalates, or if a police encounter with a gathering of homeless people spirals to violence, moments of drama might be filmed on smart phones. What happens next, if and when the video clip goes viral? 'Going viral' is itself a kind of density. The viral moment encounters other crowds on social media, crowds that are stretched across the globe rather than located in one place, expressing their dismay or support in their echo chamber of choice. In these online-offline cross-overs, density does not stop in the city.

A
NOTE
OF
THANKS

It was great to have the chance to work with such a talented group on this anthology and I thank them all for their ideas, conversations, enthusiasm and contributions. I am grateful to Martha Julian, Thought Bubble's Festival Director, for her advice and for putting Jordan and I in touch. The comic would not have been possible without Martha's initial support and enthusiasm: thank you. I owe a big final thanks to Jordan for all he has done to help make this happen; it has been a pleasure working with such a talented editor and comic creator.

WHAT IS DENSITY TO YOU?

Are there densities you are drawn to or repelled by? That you love or hate? That have moved or inspired you? That have left their mark? How do densities shape your experience of the city?

If you care about cities, this collection of comics will leave you with a lot to think about...

Density is the beating heart of the city, changing from day to day and variously surprising us, frightening us, exhausting us, inspiring us, and energising us. We might be drawn to it and caught up in it, or desperate to get as far as possible from it. This anthology brings together contributors from across the world, and vividly shows that, for better or worse, density is a shared global urban experience. From London, Sarajevo and New York, to Mumbai, Jakarta and Lima, to live in a city is to encounter and deal with all kinds of density.

Cities are engines producing densities over and over again. The squeezed daily commute, the bustling urban market, or the busy cacophony of city beaches and parks. Far more than just numbers of people, density is the very life of the city. It is people jostling onto buses and trains, crowding into bars and cafes, gathering for protests, singing together at a concert, navigating the busy festival, 'holding it in' at long queues for toilets, and much more besides.

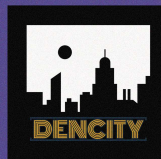
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