

Letter 005

Elusive Lustre

I can't stop thinking about KPop Demon Hunters, the appreciation of the *fans* as an entity and resource, the inconsistent yet compassionate interactions between audience and performers—the vulnerability and signature East Asian drive to secretly absolve shame in the dark (as seen in other films like Memoirs of a Geisha) and pushing past it here to reconstruct the perception of love and acceptance in a new light...very progressive and futurist. It's a lesson that must be actively taught to children. The self-harm or battle (both internal and external) scar metaphors—personal demons in *patterns* of behaviour. A momentary, self-contained and sacrificial love story between public-private-personal mask layers, with justified secrecy and lies justified. An acknowledgement of essential backroom deals and talks between rivals, it pokes great fun at Korean alternative medicine, work ethic, K-Pop and K-Drama tropes. With Korea's wartime dusting, remaining severed, this film celebrates their Gat hats and reaping the Jeosung Saja's grim myth from rich history. It's a love letter to the power of music across time.

I've never had such dramatic tone shifts in a similar film—although personally rusty regarding PG media, such high-budget swings between lore, raw emotional psyches and intimate moments strikes me with the same delicate blunt effectiveness as paternal K-Dramas. To the point.

I admire the culture of Eastern pop idols, long-adoring Hatsune Miku on deeply conceptual, audiovisual and entertainment levels (giving god at Project Diva). To think, perhaps, earth's final interactive voice could be a fabled digital goddess engraved on metal plates spinning around the sun...somehow a comforting thought. Gives extra credit for this soviet anthem, reaching for anime intro greatness and for Portugal for recreating Your Name.

The strength in femininity reflected in the Arcane, The Mitchells vs the Machines and Spiderverse character design. With attention to blush directionality—the appreciation of either gender's overt voluntary publicly presented attributes (consciously or subconsciously) in a polite equal measured manner in children's media. It's a contentious topic and often justifiably lopsided yet demonstrating correct delivery to younglings whilst casually reminding adults is inherently valuable. To educate all on broader human behaviour; romantic failings, awkwardness, strange quirks; all while their potential causes, pitfalls and consequences.

Oh, and the music!

*I broke into a million pieces, and I can't go back
 But now I'm seeing all the beauty in the broken glass
 The scars are part of me, darkness and harmony
 My voice without the lies, **this is what it sounds like**
 Why did I cover up the colors stuck inside my head?
 I should've let the jagged edges meet the light instead
 Show me what's underneath, I'll find your harmony
 The song we couldn't write, **this is what it sounds like***

— "What It Sounds Like"

*No more hiding, I'll be shining
 Like I'm born to be
 'Cause we are hunters, voices strong
 And I know I believe
 — "Golden"*



"There's so much pressure. You're representing an entire culture, I've gotten messages like, 'I don't know why you're doing it like this,' and at first it was very difficult, but I landed in a place where I had to just make a movie that I believed in, and I think it's important for everybody to know that everyone has a different relationship to their culture. You're not going to be representing things exactly the same way as somebody else is. It just means that we have to make more movies about every culture."

— Maggie Kang,
Animation Magazine (2025)

"Even though we're grown up, we could still be kids and we can enjoy it [...] And I feel like that's what I also hope people take away from this... people think an animated film is just for kids, but it's not."

— Arden Cho, *Gayety (2025)*

"It's like this magical world and it's girls kicking ass, let's go."

— Arden Cho, *Gayety (2025)*

"I wanted to portray women the way I've always wanted to see women portrayed, especially in a superhero movie,"

— Chris Appelhans,
Animation Magazine (2025)

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I'd be remiss to exclude Perfect Blue in this letter. It illustrates the morbid temperaments of obsessive parasocial connections directed at similar idols. It should be noted when done ideally, even the mildest heartfelt praising of magnificent artistic execution wrestles with insane fixations.



Btw, I should confess I watched the film with you on a significant psychedelic dose feeling aspects of the film truly spoke to me. Laying on the couch for 30 minutes afterwards letting the message seep in. Staring deeply into the squared perforated ceiling as it formed webbing crystalline geometries. I mention this as one of my favourite artists is Louis Wain, the poor Englishman whose madness slippage spilt across his late work and eventually psychiatry textbooks. How fitting the movie messenger was!



Fig 1a: An cylindrical-orientation-obsessed feline friend

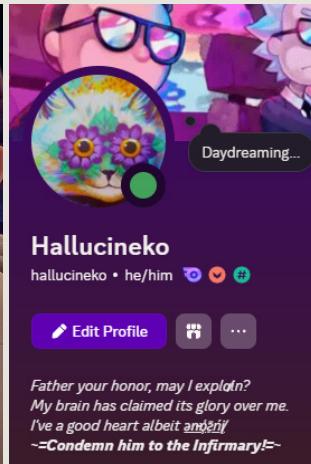


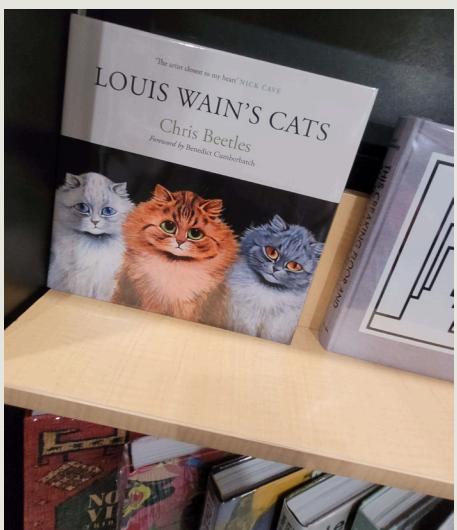
Fig 1b: My discord



Fig 1c: Late Louis Wain's Work



Fig 1d-e: More Louis Wain work



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Living for the present

I invite you to compliment the string of gifts I'm scheming for others with similarly formatted letters, take, for example, the plan to introduce you to sweet white Moscato wines, Mead liqueur, Cloudberry Lakka or perhaps even Lychee liqueur from my hometown. A sophisticated, varied introduction to ancient art of sweet fermentation. Else there are convergent ideas...I'd like to get Chelsea swell seashells from our seashores as a tongue in cheek pun after unfortunately missing her birthday to chase lightning up the Wide Bay, only picking up beach shells on the end of the same afternoon I visited Urangan's aquarium and witnessed the largest mollusk shells I've ever seen. Tonna should pair well with Lychee liqueurs.



Figure 2a-b: Urangan Aquarium; shell exhibit



Fig 2c-f: Gift candidates



Fig 2g: The final faceting boss

To finally visit the Richmond lapidary club, For Prj. Lazuli These three Muong Nong tektites won't facet themselves!



Fig 2h-k: Alcoholic gift candidates

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Drumroll...

Suggestions informed by heavy paradoxical leaning towards the warm fuzzies, musicals and gruesome horror.

Warm Fuzzies

Words on Bathroom Walls (2020)

A tender exploration of Adam Petrazelli, a schizophrenic high school student. Through his eyes and ears, we perspective his vibrant medically accurate hallucinations. As he navigates a new Catholic school, an experimental antipsychotic and falls for Maya, the film meditates on honesty, acceptance, and the human need for connection through our struggles. A notable film that treats mental illness with the compassion and understanding mental illnesses deserve.



Robot & Frank (2012)

In the distant future of 2027, geriatric ex-thief Frank lives with dementia when his son gifts him a caretaker robot. What begins as resentment slides into criminal partnership, as Frank teaches his robot companion the art lock-picking and larceny. Together, they embark on heists that reinvigorate Frank's sense of purpose. A viscerally bittersweet reflection on aging, memory, and unexpected companionship.



Note:

All titles are available on Polymath's Jellyfin

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Gruesome Horror

The Magnus Archives (No. 14)

Lee Rentoul seeks revenge on his former associate Paul Noriega through dark magic. After visiting an old woman in Bexley surrounded by framed jigsaws, Lee begins receiving mysterious cardboard boxes containing body parts - fingers, then a tongue - forcing him to seek help from the Magnus Institute. A visceral tale of betrayal and supernatural justice served piece by piece.



Verónica (2017)

During a 1991 solar eclipse in Madrid, 15-year-old Verónica and friends conduct a séance to contact her deceased father. The ritual goes wrong when the glass shatters, cutting her finger and dripping blood on the Ouija board. What follows is a harrowing descent as Verónica experiences increasingly violent paranormal occurrences threatening her younger siblings. Based on Spain's first police-documented case of paranormal activity.



Musicals

Scott Pilgrim vs the World (2010)

Scott Pilgrim, a 23-year-old bassist, must defeat the seven evil exes of his new floral, mysterious girlfriend Ramona Flowers in musical video game-style battles. The epic for love navigates some of the funniest, human and strangely wholesome scenes put to this director's unique screens. A kinetic explosion of comic adaptation, games, and rock music that turns romance into an early 2010s kaleidoscopic orchestra. [Sample]



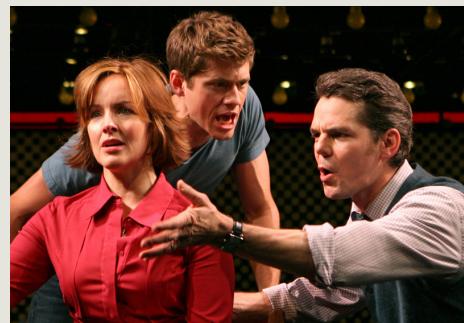
Sing (2016)

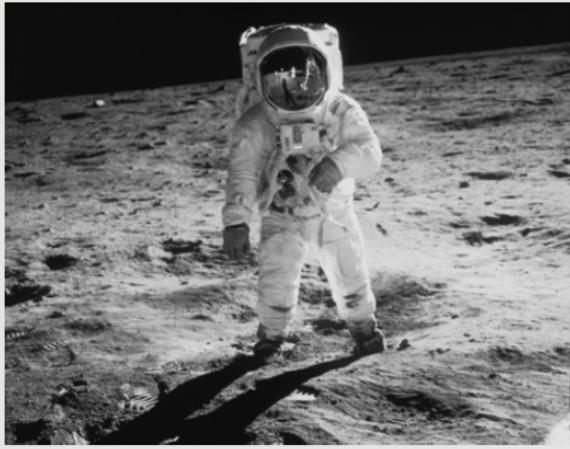
Koala Buster Moon's struggling theater faces foreclosure until a typo turns his \$1,000 singing competition into a \$100,000 sensation. A pig housewife discovers her inner diva, a gorilla defies his criminal father, and a shy elephant conquers stage fright as they all chase their dreams through 85 hit songs. Pure fur-wrapped joy!



Next to Normal (2008)

Diana Goodman struggles with bipolar disorder following the death of her infant son, as her family navigates the effects of her illness through a rock score of over 30 songs. The Pulitzer Prize-winning musical confronts grief, depression, and the meaning of "normal" in suburban life. Raw, transparent, and emotionally devastating theater. [Sample]

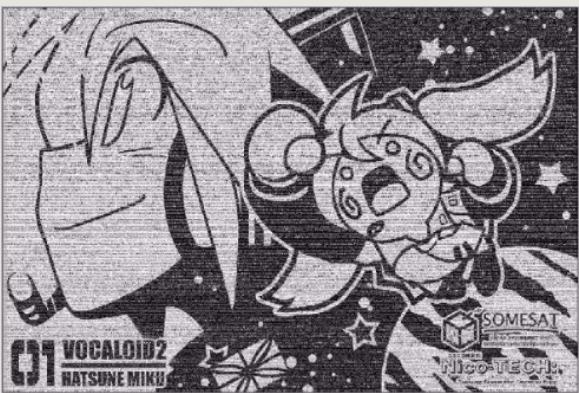




Weightless Daydreams

An intergalactic rock star (Ziggy Stardust), a celestial-sailing golden vinyl record, a musical group whose waves wash over galaxies as they rock the heavens. A titanic string quartet on stage deorbiting into Saturn—a real ***space opera***. Speaking of, would you like to attend an Opera at our capital's signature building sometime? I recall the Harbor Bridge's DJ set as Chris Hadfield set standards for the Hatsune Miku's JAX Venusian spacecraft engravings.

▲ FIGURE 1.7 This famous photograph from the first Moon landing (Apollo 11 in July 1969) shows astronaut Buzz Aldrin, with Neil Armstrong reflected in his visor. Armstrong was the first to step onto the Moon's surface, saying, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." (When asked why this photo became so iconic, Aldrin replied, "Location, location, location!")



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