

Yuck 'n Yum

AUTUMN 2012 FREE



Yuck 'n Yum is: Andrew Maclean, Gayle Meikle, Ben Robinson, Alexandra Ross and Alex Tobin.

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Sturgeon's SNP Scotch Shortbread

*Baked in clay midgee spits on the Island of Bannockburn,
fae an ancient auld recipe given to the SNP by Mel Gibson
on the set of Braveheart.*

*These biscuits commemorate The Banning
of Shortbread by England after the
Shortcake Uprising of 1327.*

These shortbreads are hand Saltired by Nicola Sturgeon

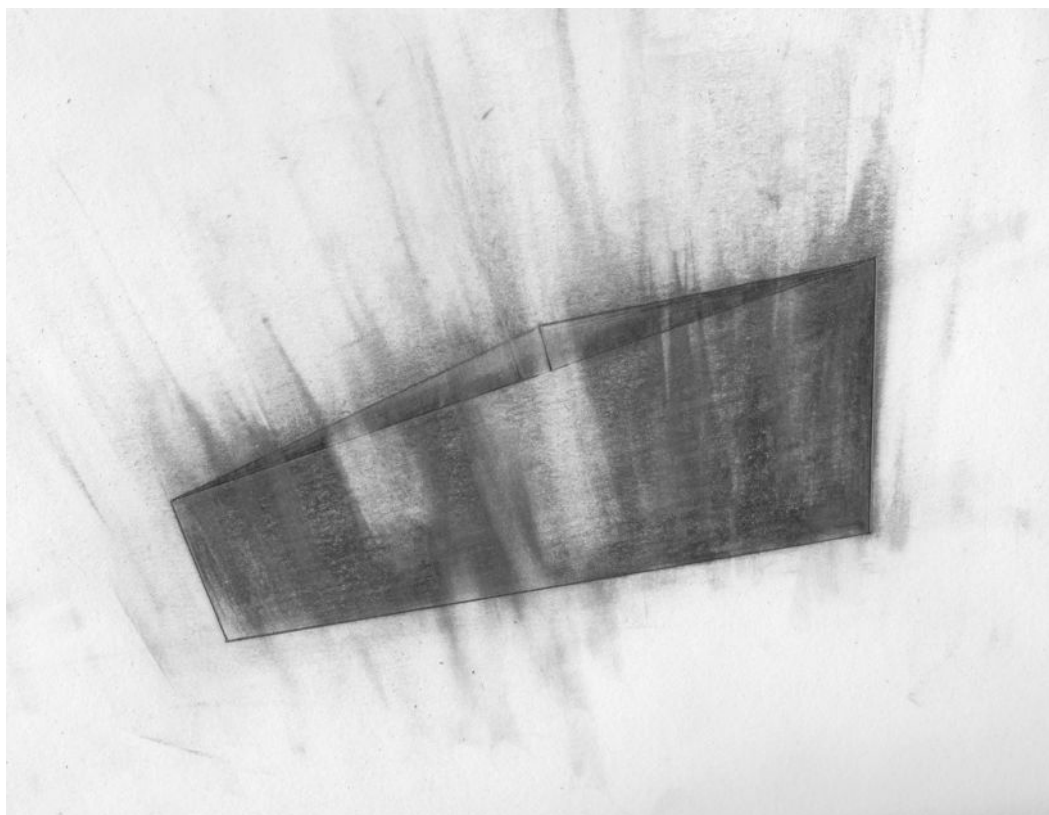
Whole *binders* full of artists

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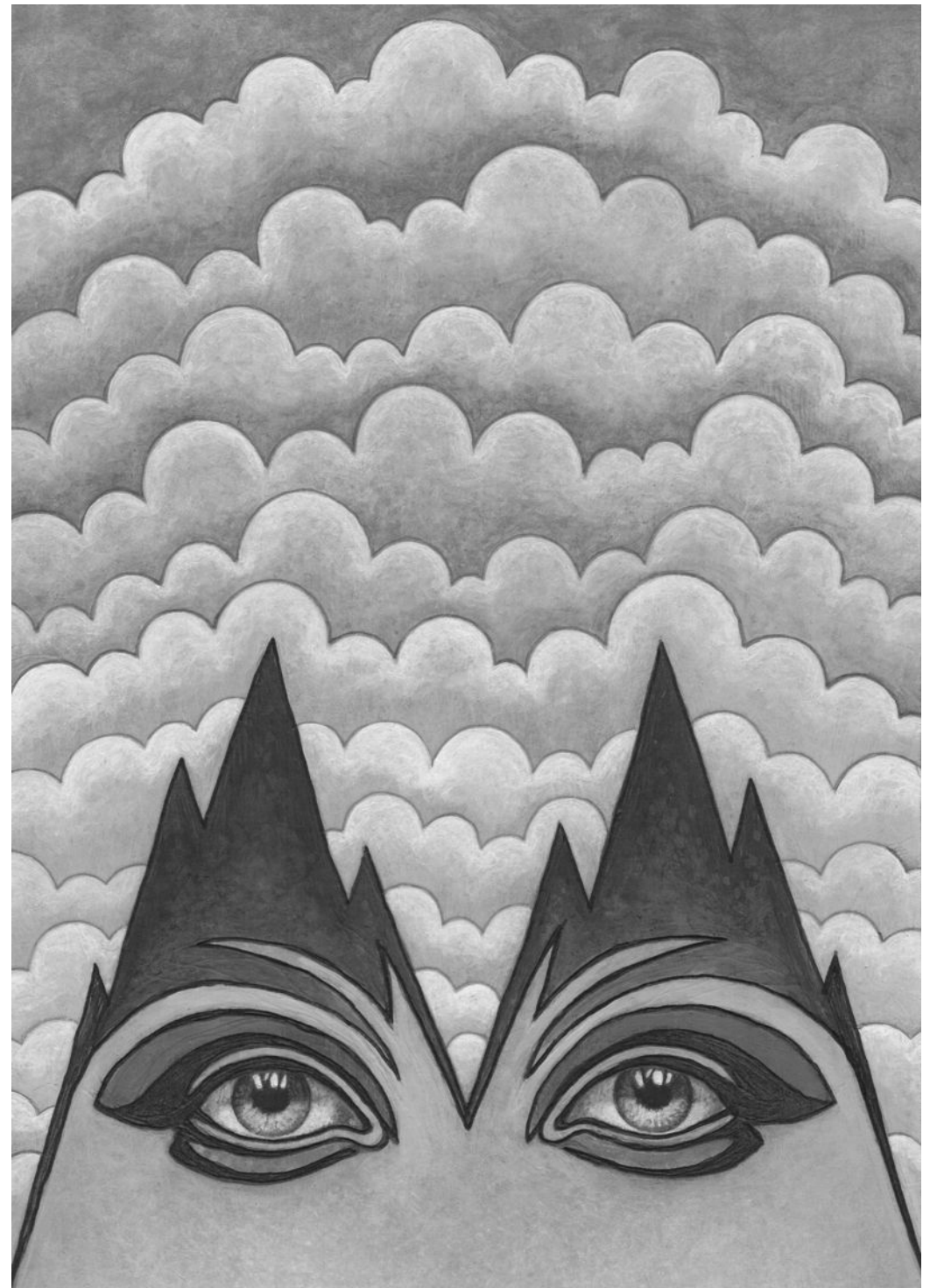
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Cover by Helen Flanagan





Oursight is what binds us every eye movement we make is interrupted by fleeting moments of black





...And things get weirder. Perhaps the strangest element in Flavia's awkward suspension of residence is the UK Border Agency's bizarre "Exceptional Talent" or "Tier 1" visa category for "high-value migrants". Knowing that the rarity of these visas was due largely to their daunting application process, and confident of her own artistic ability, Flavia looked into officially registering her Exceptional Talent. The UKBA website defines the visa thus: "*Tier 1 (Exceptional talent) is for people who are internationally recognised as world leaders or potential ¹ world-leading talent in the fields of science and the arts, and who wish to work in the UK.*"² The only current holder of an Exceptional Talent visa in Scotland is Edinburgh International Film Festival director Chris Fujiwara.

In what must have seemed a perfectly sensible move at the time, the UKBA advised Flavia that her Talent could be classified as Exceptional were she to receive 5-star reviews for her Fringe show this year. The absurdity of this condition made it to national TV with the headline "Show has to get five-star reviews at Fringe or producer will be deported"³ (although Flavia quickly points out she wasn't *deported* but left the country as a legal migrant before her then-current visa expired).

As things go, the long application process for the extension of Flavia's visa necessitated a return to her home country, where she is now. The UK visa application process is notoriously strenuous. In 2008, I was granted a one-year Japanese student visa, for the price of a university recommendation and five pounds. A friend of mine doing the opposite – coming to Edinburgh from Kyoto, for four years – was charged more than a hundred times as much.

* * * * *

Flavia came to Edinburgh from Brazil in 2006, attracted by the world's largest arts Festival. While studying at Queen Margaret University, she helped found independent theatre group Tightlylaced Theatre. The group, directed by Jen McGregor – currently well-known for her activism in the public arts – is notable for its promotion of Edinburgh theatre culture outside of Fringe time. In 2012, Flavia set up her own Fronteiras Theatre Lab, a "transcultural" organisation focusing equally on research, professional development and production. The group draws its ethos from Flavia's own cross-cultural experience, and from an intense love of Scottish and South American culture. The name means "borders", a sad irony considering her dealings with our Agency of the same name. Now back in Brazil, Flavia is working to set up the Fronteiras Explorers programme, which she describes as "an artistic residency/ research lab/exchange project" with the aim of bringing Scotland-based artists to the Brazil-Uruguay border to explore the same cultural synthesis she has so benefited from.

Flavia is preparing to apply anew for residence in the UK. Fronteiras Theatre Lab is online at <http://fronteirastheatrelab.com/>

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[1] It is rumoured that the "potential" phrase is to be scrapped, so those of you who aren't already internationally recognised as world leaders in your field, look for another route, please.

[2] www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/tier1/exceptional-talent/

[3] www.local.stv.tv/edinburgh/111114-show-has-to-get-five-star-reviews-at-fringe-or-producer-will-be-deported/



Without Fronteiras
An interview with Flavia D'Avila

Flavia D'Avila is a friend of mine. The expat Brazilian theatre producer with the rhyming name has a lot of friends. She's well known in Edinburgh's creative circles for her tireless hard work in independent theatre. Culturally bilingual and fluent in Scottish humour, she could pass for an Edinburgh native. She's one of very few people I know who seem to be constantly, refreshingly overjoyed at living in Scotland. Now though, she's absent from her adopted home-city, returned to Brazil as an ex-expat, due to some particularly awkward clauses in the UK visa system.

* * * * *

The recently-graduated artists' ubiquitous "Method of Survival" is to work any available paying job while developing one's own Real (i.e. artistic) Work. Yuck 'n Yum readers in the same boat will sympathise: this is not the sort of lifestyle that endears itself to paperwork. At what point do you get to call yourself a pro?

Flavia graduated from the department of Drama and Theatre Arts at Queen Margaret University in 2010. A fellow professional-in-all-but-income, her adoption of the Recently-Graduated Lifestyle placed her out of the range of working visa eligibility:

"To try and put it simply, following the new immigration rules that came into effect in February 2012, I am very uncomfortably sitting between a few visa categories, but not fitting into any of them. The points-based system seeks to standardise the applications, but it's incredibly hard for people who would benefit from some flexibility, like myself. My post-study work visa ran out and I've had to return to Brazil to assess my options and try to get a new visa.

In order to get a work visa, a person needs to have a job that pays at least £20,000 a year, and their employer (which they call 'sponsor') would have to be approved by the UK Border Agency as legitimate.

Like most people working in the creative industries, I had a part-time job which was ok to pay the bills, but not anywhere near enough to meet those criteria, and I didn't get paid sufficiently for my theatre work either. That's what I mean about a lack of flexibility... if you are part-timing and/or freelancing, you can get by alright, but it's not considered enough to have a work visa. I did seek full-time jobs within the arts, but there aren't that many that offer 20,000 or above as a wage, and then the competition for those that do is tough. Besides, with a full-time job, it would be a lot harder or even impossible to keep up my own work with my company."

These visa conditions do not tend to favour creative workers of any stripe, and would prohibit a considerable number of foreign professional artists (and certainly the majority of foreign emerging artists!) from living in the UK on the basis of their work alone.





The GIF That Keeps On Giving: an interview with Roarlivia

The bitmap image format aka the Graphics Interchange Format aka the GIF is a staple food for any serious online image devourer. A handy file carrying up to 256 colours per frame, one that delivers a highly compressed, simple and often hypnotic animation, it's also capable of being shared via social networking and microblogging sites such as Cinemagram and Tumblr. The GIF was introduced by Compuserve on June 15th 1987, making the 25-year-old format older than many members of its youthful hip plugged-in audience.

Since 2007 Tumblr has served as the microblogging site of choice for a huge number of users posting up links, comments, quotations, photos, drawings and yes, GIFs. It truly is staggering: as of August 20, 2012, Tumblr has over 69.4 million blogs and more than 29.8 billion total posts. These blogs are home to many millions of GIFs all squirming, flashing and undulating their way across the world's screens. On the lookout for a paradigmatic GIF artist, I happened upon the Tumblr posts of Olivia Fox aka Roarlivia:

How long have you had your Tumblr page?

April 2010, I knew it was going to be a slow summer and I wanted to do something productive.

What's its purpose, if any?

It's a semi-organized space to put my artwork publicly. It's fun, I can post unfinished pieces or different variations or stuff I'm unsure about with little to no pressure.

Is your Tumblr page related to your general art/design practice?

As a (mostly) digital artist I can use my tumblr page as a sketchbook. I don't really like showing my actual sketchbook to people partially because I'm not happy with my drawing skills, but mostly because I don't think it accurately represents what I spend my time making. I feel more comfortable sending people to my tumblr page for them to scroll through and get a taste of what I'm about.





How do you make your GIFs - what software do you use, how much time and effort goes into making them, what purpose do they serve?

I make GIFs in Photoshop. A lot of the time the effort doesn't come from the GIF making process. A GIF can be used as a short snippet of a larger video or animation piece, in that case the time was spent on the original video. What's cool about that is these preview GIFs can sort of stand apart as their own piece. Sometimes I'll take footage or make an animation in After Effects or pull a video off YouTube and bring some of the frames into Photoshop, from there I can edit the frames individually and make it totally different from the source. There are also specific pixel and color algorithms unique to GIF making that are fun to explore. There are endless program and effect combinations to experiment with. Like any medium GIFs have their own set of conceptual abilities and limitations.

Do you find Tumblr useful as an art network and/or social network?

Yes to both! It's very easy to get jaded and bogged down by popular websites, it's important to keep criticizing these sites and how we use them, but I've actually managed to use Tumblr to find some amazing artists and friends. This has been true with other social networks and programs I've used in the past, but Tumblr has a way of helping you find people extremely relevant to your interests. It's like an online convention, our sites serve as tables. We're showing our work or collected goods to each other, talking, and trading.

Can you recommend any other Tumblr pages and/or GIF artists?

Max, the King maxcapacity.tumblr.com I've been following him for years, I still get giddy when he likes one of my posts.

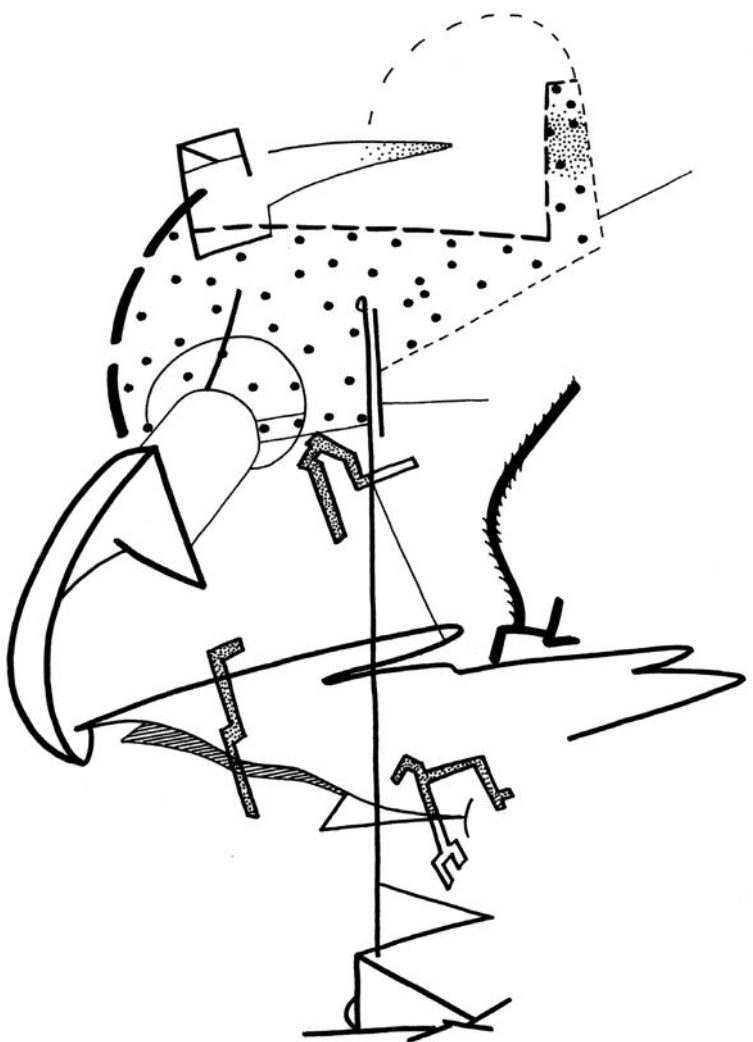
My favorite contemporary digital artist Jaakko Pallasvuo www.dawsonscreek.info

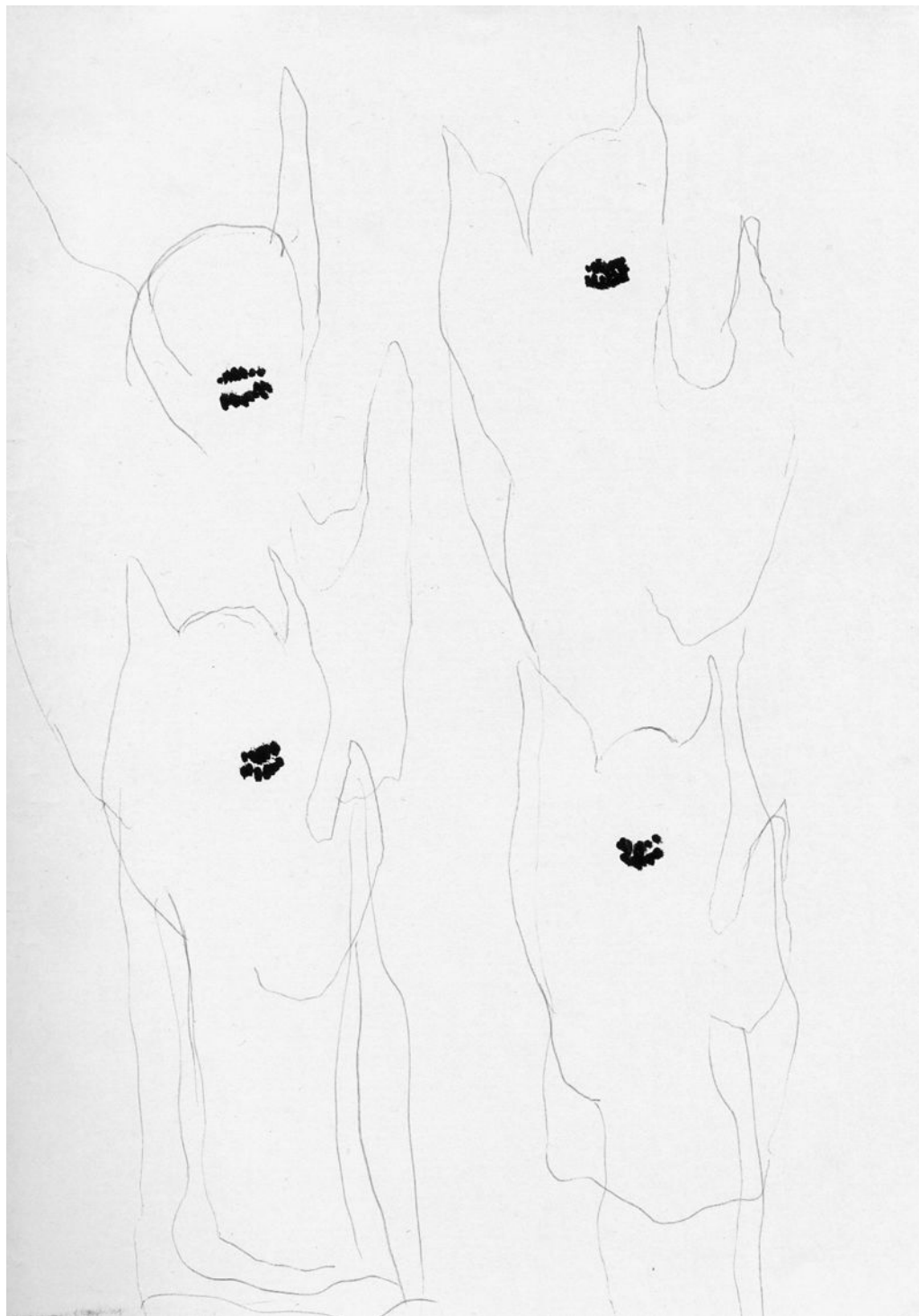
My best friend Kim taught me how to gif back in the day when it was somewhat harder magicalbagofcats.tumblr.com/tagged/art

Friends forged IRL through mutual admiration of each other's work/tumblr posts: ala-bas-ter.tumblr.com, adactivity.tumblr.com/tagged/mystuff, b-m-f-u.tumblr.com, suffervacation.tumblr.com, plslala.tumblr.com, thespithouse.tumblr.com, negativepleasure.tumblr.com, spacecrystal.tumblr.com, abandrewart.tumblr.com.

Great GIF artists: www.unomoralez.com, francoisegamma.computersclub.org, newvisiontechnology.tumblr.com, noirlac.tumblr.com, fmtownsmarty.tumblr.com, dataerase.tumblr.com, torngarsuk.tumblr.com. I'm gonna go ahead and mention www.dump.fm too.

Olivia Fox is somehow a printmaking student at Purchase College, State University of New York. She works as an assistant in various large format digital labs, as a digital archival assistant for a library, and at a cafe. She likes weird manga and has dreams of making a comedy show. Her Tumblr is at <http://roarlivia.tumblr.com/>





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