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it also depends on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides that contaminate surrounding ecosystems. And these impacts scale globally. No individual can counter these systems alone. This is why art does not end with its making, it must be shared. Artful living extends into community, because connection itself is generative. Tending a shared greenspace or offering a handmade gift to a neighbor does not undo systemic harm, but it shifts powerlessness. It creates relationships where there were none and makes visible an alternative logic: actions rooted in reciprocity rather than extraction.



A foundational example is the "Three Sisters" method—corn, beans, and squash grown together. This interdependent system produces more resilient, abundant harvests than monoculture farming. In contrast, industrial agriculture relies on monocropping, which depletes soil nutrients, reduces biodiversity, and increases vulnerability to pests and disease.

Small gestures accumulate, shape the people involved, and create micro-environments of care that resist isolation. To live artfully is to remain attentive, to question inherited ways of thinking, and to resist systems that prioritize control, ownership, and dominance over land and life. The earth does not speak in words, but it communicates constantly through growth patterns, weather, sounds, and absences. These are forms of language, and it is our responsibility to learn how to listen, and to translate what we hear into form, through art and through action, to give shape to what is already being said by the earth: *help me thrive*. When I paint encounters from walking through my neighborhood, it is because these organic moments speak more clearly than constructed experiences. A blooming flower is the result of relationships: soil, water, time, labor, climate, and care.



3
Without my art and language (*this zine*), I would feed into isolation, reinforcing the illusion that individual action is enough, or worse, that nothing can be changed. Can these moments of beauty radicalize us? Can they move us to protect and sustain the earth? When I look at flowers, I feel the tension between life and systemic constraint. They are small oases of saturated vitality within landscapes shaped by neglect and control. And yet, they persist through our care, and through their own ecological relationships. Their resilience offers a model for me to follow: an endless courage. Ecologically, plants grow wherever conditions allow. And native plants sustain entire ecosystems. They support pollinators, whose labor underpins global food systems. They improve soil, retain water, and create new discoveries; they are long-held forms of knowledge cultivated by Indigenous communities and Black agricultural traditions, which have long been suppressed by colonizing systems of land and resource control.

These questions arise when I stay with these plants: Whose land made this possible? Whose hands? What histories allowed or prevented this growth? Plants and blooms remind me that stewardship is an ongoing responsibility. I offer these moments through imitating flora's forms and colors as an invitation to see that our shared environments are worth tending to, in direct action and through daily decisions.

In sharing these encounters, I reach toward others who are already caring for the earth in ways both visible and small. Even within the hopelessness of our catastrophic climate, let this be a reminder personal actions still carry outward effects, and there is power in collective actions. To witness how plants grow is to understand that growth is never isolated. It is a collaborative art project. It is something we are already part of. To live artfully is to participate in that collaboration one step, or one decision at a time; Working toward reciprocity, toward care, and against extraction and isolation.

2
In my artwork, plants and flowers hold this tension, the artworks carry anger toward capitalist systems that exploit the earth, and toward the apathy that allows this harm to continue. At the same time, they remain symbols of hope. Plants grow as well as they can with what they are given... This is the model I follow: to live in a way that insists on the earth's ability to thrive. May plants and flowers carry weight in your own mind and heart. Artful living can begin with noticing their needs. Artful living, or making art daily, confronts rage by processing it. What begins as anger moves through my mind, through my body, through my hand, until theory becomes material: a drawing, a painting, an object that holds both hope and rage. These physical, sharable works become invitations for conversation around the environment. This is necessary, as change begins when ideas become shared values in communities. Without sharing these encounters, my hopeful moments within greenspaces during daily routines, I would be silencing my most potent experiences with the earth.



BoysaLauren@gmail.com
@LaurenBoysaArt
LaurenBoysa.com

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Every day, I am reminded that the world sustains violence I do not support. Yet these genocides and ecocides are upheld collectively and structurally, and often feel impenetrable. Extraction, overconsumption, and environmental destruction, are systems designed to divide and instill fear in us. When I encounter flowers blooming or plants growing, these moments of beauty call me into stewardship and action. A bloom exists because certain conditions have been met, and these systems of care, attention, interdependence, and reciprocity, offer models for enacting change.



ONE STEP AT A TIME:

Living artfully everyday, fighting extraction with collective daily decisions and endless courage



A collection of thoughts and drawings from Summer to Spring

Made by Lauren Boysa