



Literary Journal

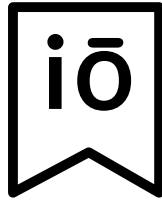
VOLUME 1



PROSE

POETRY

VISUAL ARTS



Literary Journal

VOLUME ONE

Editors

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Designed by

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Fiction: The pieces of prose labeled fiction are just that. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales, is entirely coincidental.

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Memoirs: The pieces of prose labeled memoir include events and conversations that have been written to the best of the author’s ability, although some names and details may have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

ENGAGE WITH US

We want to make literature and art more accessible for everyone, which is why we accept prose, poetry, visual art, and even experimental pieces from a wide range of voices.

If you like what you read in the coming pages and have work that you would like to publish, submit your work or ask us questions at **ioliteraryjournal.com**

We have a weekly publication called *Refractions* that showcases artists from all backgrounds and provides a platform for those who may not have access to traditional means of publication.

Alternatively, you can submit your work to one of our upcoming volumes.

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EDITORS' NOTE

Dear Readers,

Our name, *iō*, has two distinct origins.

In Greek mythology, “Io” was one of the mortal lovers of Zeus, representing both transformation and displacement. Her bodily and spatial banishment speaks to *iō*’s focus on the theme of marginalization and those considered “other” who inhabit the sociopolitical outskirts. In gemology, “iolite” has many interpretations, some of which include its ability to release creativity. Iolite’s physicality also speaks to its multifaceted nature; when turned, iolite exhibits three colors in three different directions.

Around November 2017, before we chose the name *iō*, we were just a few women Skyping across the country on Sunday mornings to talk about a thrilling idea we were passionate about. Fast forward a year and here we are, with volume one complete and a dozen more ideas in the works. This process was a culmination of countless discussions, late night reading and editing, follow-up emails, and too many drafts to count, but we are proud to say that we were able to pull everything together despite our hectic lives and still managed to have fun.

Our greatest achievement in creating *iō*’s first print volume was bringing together a beautifully diverse body of work from various creative voices. The works showcased in this volume demonstrate that while we may live vastly different lives, we can all connect to one another’s perspectives and experiences.

iō’s first volume allowed the editors’ vision of building an inclusionary body of work to become a palpable reality. Each contributor both reaffirmed *iō*’s goal of publishing diverse voices and set a precedent for the range of possibilities in its future. The editors thank the writers and artists published in *iō*’s inaugural volume for confronting our deeply complex social environment, pushing artistic boundaries of craft and genre, and making the unseen shine. They have created the scope of experiences we hope to foster.

In our coming volumes, we aim to continue embracing all artistic forms while expanding to produce themed issues for print and our online publication, *Refractions*. We are honored to walk toward this future with the signature of those who made this volume possible.

Crystal, Isabelle, Laura

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to give a special thanks to these individuals for supporting our vision of iō. Their generous contributions truly made a difference in the creation of our first book and has allowed us to set a precedent for future volumes.

Ashley Bonano
Caren Bozer
Ylce Irizarry
Sveinn Kjartansson
Divya Kumar
Chris Perilla
Jennifer K. Sandoval and Irma Sandoval
Linda Sims
Kemi Sowemimo

We would also like to thank Janna Doyac for her contributions as a former iō editor. Janna's vision for an inclusive literary journal that gives a voice to under-represented and marginalized communities helped form iō's foundation. Her insight on iō's mission and her work in the editing process shaped what iō is today. She, along with Morgan Wilson, selected a new name for our literary journal representative of the unique writing and artwork we aim to share.

Mahu Kamal was iō's first creative director and art critic. She spearheaded our brand make-over after changing our name from *Prism* to iō. From revamping our website to taking charge of social media promotion, Mahu was on fire from the beginning. We appreciated her honest feedback on various aspects of the start-up process. A big thanks to her as well.

VISION

iō believes that art is derived from one's experiences and exploration of life. Therefore, anyone is capable of creation. However, not everyone has access to the traditional means for publication. This book aims to provide a platform for these underrepresented voices of our time. Now is your chance to listen and respond.

NOTE FROM THE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

I couldn't be more proud of the work done by the women at iō. At university together, they identified a need in the creative community: a literary journal that provides a platform for the underrepresented voices in literary and visual mediums. Whatsmore, they didn't let this idea fade away; a year after they graduated, they committed to manifesting this idea into a reality. All of this while they've worked full-time, prepared for law school, or tackle graduate programs. They not only gave me a wonderful opportunity designing for them, they inspire me to invest my whole self in the work as they do.

For those feeling the creative itch but don't feel ready to make the leap of faith, I say leap. For those who having been hustling hard and aren't sure if they're going anywhere, hold fast. Your time is not wasted through exploring creative pursuits, but it *is* wasted by waiting around.

It can be accomplished. The trick isn't by focusing on becoming the next Shepard Fairey or Paul Rand; focus on expressing yourself. Having a job doing creative work doesn't guarantee that you will produce great work. As countless designers have mentioned, some of the best projects were for themselves or a friend.

THEMES EXPLORED

love
family
identity
sexuality
mental health

loss
abuse
politics
resistance
self-acceptance