

## BFA Senior Thesis Conversations featuring Jordan Barram

Questions by Daniela Segovia



**Jordan Barram** is an artist, printmaker, and writer from Richmond, California. She loves the ocean, stop-motion animation, and hot Cheetos, and wants to be a dog mom when they grow up.

### What is your thesis investigating?

'My ET Ex-Girlfriend' is an exploration of friendship, sexuality, and self-esteem to discover both by using imagination as a safe alternative to reality. The creation of this story began as a way to validate my own feelings of isolation, attraction, and ultimately confusion around "what is allowed". By pulling iconic imagery and references from movies, books, music, and other storytelling devices, this soon-to-be book is the story I would have wanted—and still want—as a young queer person. With this story and stories like it, I want to participate in diversifying the narrative we provide for ourselves, our peers, and our future by destigmatizing, identities, experiences, and relationships larger society does not recognize or support.

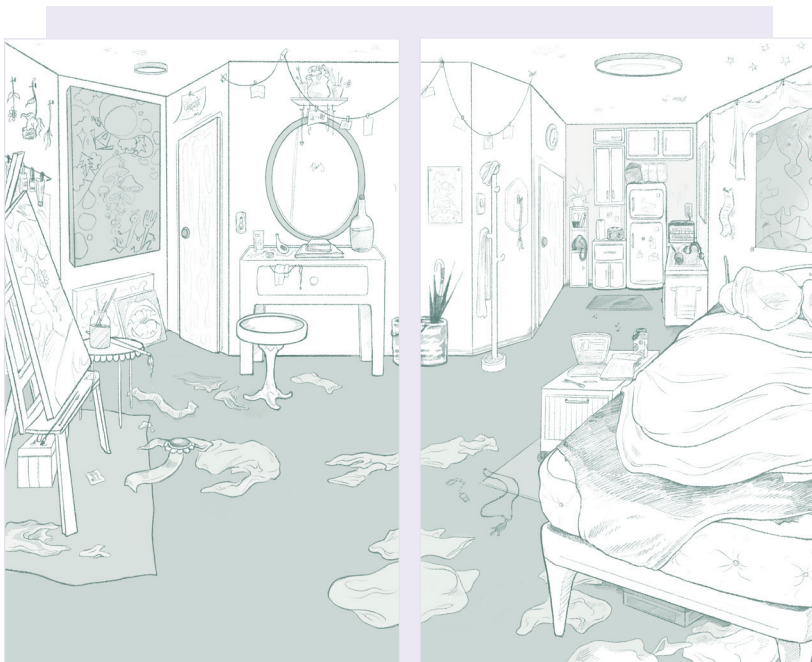


### Is there a particular image, poem, or concept that inherently shows in your work?

There is an inherent sensuality in my work that carries through all mediums I have worked with, but especially in my illustration and design style. A physical sensation exists behind every emotion that can be communicated simply by the human body if one is paying attention, and it is my mission to make it hard not to. The feminine form is both my enemy and my muse and my work explores the inseparability of the two while investigating the roots of what is shameful and what is beautiful.

### What or who are your major influences?

Books were my first biggest influence. Before I could read I would look at the pictures and wonder what was going on, even creating my own story to go along with the illustrations in my head. As I got older and became literate I would get so lost in a book that I would not hear my mom talking to me, even if I was in the passenger's seat of the car she was driving. Museums were great, but nothing could beat pouring over a bound copy of 'The Sistine Chapel' for hours on end, trying to find details I hadn't noticed the day before. Once I was too old for "reading hours" and life got a little too full for a novel a day, movies and TV replaced books as the worlds I could dive into that were not my own. I now find my work wants to become that place that allows readers to be swept up in a story, and I think it is even more important that my audience feel seen and respected by the universe and its characters that I've created.



### What's next for you?

I have lots of ideas—way too many for my own good—but writing this story has been one of the most meaningful and eye-opening projects of my life, and I want to run with it. I have several more graphic novel and indie comic drafts that I intend to follow through with and publish in the next few years. I've also spent most of my life in California, which will change this fall, as I'll be moving to New York. The lack of certainty these days makes it hard to guarantee what's next but I know that in due time my love for what I do will get me exactly where I need to be.