

Artist's Statement

MY WORK EXPLORES disaster, memory, and vulnerability through printmaking, book arts, sculpture, and performance. I question the way we look at tragedy as well as the way we deal with its aftermath.

In our contemporary media-driven culture, catastrophes of all kinds are trivialized by their frequent appearances across the spectrum of information channels, especially as access to data is more widespread than ever before. As a society, we have become desensitized to these events through constant exposure. Separated from the outside world by our screens, we create a culture of indifference as we learn to ignore tragedy on all scales.

Disasters are the perfect locus to observe the line where function and dysfunction bleed into one another. The illusion of control and privilege are irreversibly challenged as we discover how small and insignificant we are. Increasingly, the question is not whether natural disasters will happen but rather when.

This issue's cover image takes its name from the volatile process by which tornadoes form: *Tornadogenesis*. The work was in large part inspired by the derecho that struck central Iowa in August of 2020. Although not technically a tornado, according to the National Weather Service the 140 mph straight line winds were roughly equivalent to an EF3 tornado. It was an incredibly devastating and unexpected event.

In this work, I attempt to reconcile the violence and ensuing destruction with the sense of awe that such a storm can inspire. *Tornadogenesis* can be interpreted as a progression of the emergence of a storm, or as three storms coalescing. It is a sculptural tunnel book combining drypoint, monotype, watercolor, colored pencil, and cut paper, nestled within a handmade box. Printmaking enables me to make many iterations of my prints,

which in turn allows me to use them in unexpected, non-traditional ways, such as creating sculptural works rather than traditional editions.

— Raluca Iancu
Tornadogenesis, 2020, tunnel book with drypoint,
monotype, cut paper, watercolor, colored pencil