

Expressing Themselves in *Charcoal*

New student magazine gives voice to artists of color

WHAT DO YOU SEE when you look in the mirror? A provocative question designed to elicit introspection and reflection, it's also the theme of the debut issue of *Charcoal*, a new, free student-run biannual print magazine celebrating student artists of color.

The issue (charcoalmag.co) features a series of arresting photographs of students in tight close-ups. Some grin into the camera, others stare as if daring the camera to look away. Each was asked, "What do you see when you look in the mirror?"

The question applies not only to the subjects, but to the magazine's contributing artists and writers, most of whom identify as people of color.

"We want to create a space for student artists of color to come together, to get to know each other, to realize that other people like them exist," says *Charcoal* creative director Remy Usman (CFA'19). "I was looking for a way where I could be around creative minds that shared my experiences."



From *Charcoal*, an image from a photo series inspired by the meaning of the color red in Chinese culture by Patricia Ho (CFA'19).

Charcoal magazine creators Eva Vidan Gallagher (CFA'19) (from left), Remy Usman (CFA'19), Adia Turner (CAS'19), and Bradley Noble (CAS'20) plan the launch of their first issue.

And at BU, that's not always easy. "I didn't know there was another black graphic design student until the end of my sophomore year," she says.

The glossy 98-page full-color magazine—founded by Usman, managing editor Adia Turner (CAS'19), marketing manager and photographer Bradley Noble (CAS'20), and art director Eva Vidan Gallagher (CFA'19)—has

a mix of photography, painting, personal essays, and more, addressing race and representation and the intersections between identity and art.

Friends from the Atlanta area, Usman, Noble, and Turner are among BU's Posse Scholars. (The Posse Foundation is a national scholarship program that sends urban public high school students "with extraordinary academic and leadership potential" to participating four-year colleges and universities.) Gallagher and Usman, both graphic design students, became friends when they studied abroad in Italy last year.

"Going to BU as a person of color at a predominantly white institution, sometimes your voice tends to get lost amongst the crowd, the majority," says Turner. "So just getting people who tend to get lost in conversations, who are forgotten about, this is what *Charcoal* is for—to give those people a chance to be seen and to be heard and to get their vision off the ground."

The second issue of *Charcoal* is due out in the fall. **JB**

