

VANGUARD

# SPOT ON!

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Interview with Liv Murray Chapados

Edited by Alexei Ungurenaşu



## LIV MURRAY CHAPADOS

The Vanguard Youth Arts Collective are a group of creatively driven youth who act as a voice for an emerging generation of the arts within the Windsor Essex region.

'Spot On!' is Vanguard's artist interview series edited by members Meaghan Sweeney and Alexei Ungurenaşu. These interviews offer a spotlight for emerging and established local artists who work in various media to discuss and promote their past and current art projects.



Liv Murray Chapados (they/them) is a 17-year-old aspiring artist who has been an active participant in art for over a decade. Born and raised in South Windsor, they credit their sisters greatly for helping them find their passion for art. Watching them paint and dance as young girls really sparked an interest for all forms of art. Chapados started as strictly a performance artist, following in their sisters' footsteps, and started to pursue a hobby in dance. This then developed into a love for the theatre, which they still have to this day as they will attend university in a theatre program. They started going to an art-based high-school, and that is when they started developing and expanding the media in which they express themselves through their art. Constantly inspired by the people around them, the experiences life threw at them, and a new-found passion for nature, they decided to teach themselves digital art and collage work. Their main media now are concert photography, portrait photography, and poetry.

**You often combine text and images in your work, collaging poems and song lyrics and photographs. What elements inspire and guide your process in these projects?**

What guides my inspiration to combine my photography, poems and collages really varies from piece to piece. When I'm photographing a concert or live event, I want to emphasize a certain message or feeling that you would experience if you were present during the performance. For example, when I did the photography for Hailey Chase's rendition of "A Change Is Gonna Come," I wanted to add the lyrics to make the photo have the same power that the performance did. In other occasions, I use the background to emphasize the text. For my poem "Home Town," I wanted to incorporate places or moments that induce a strong sense of nostalgia for me. I then wanted to put it all together in a collage that looks like a child would make it because I felt that it would further the narrative.

**In what ways are you thinking of further experimenting with your collage process?**

I want to get more physical with the creation of my pieces. For a while now, my art has been very digital based, and it has become my comfort zone. I have always thought that with digital art, the opportunities are endless, and while that is true, I believe there is a whole other world that I have yet to explore. As of right now, I am trying to push my own limits and see what I can make.



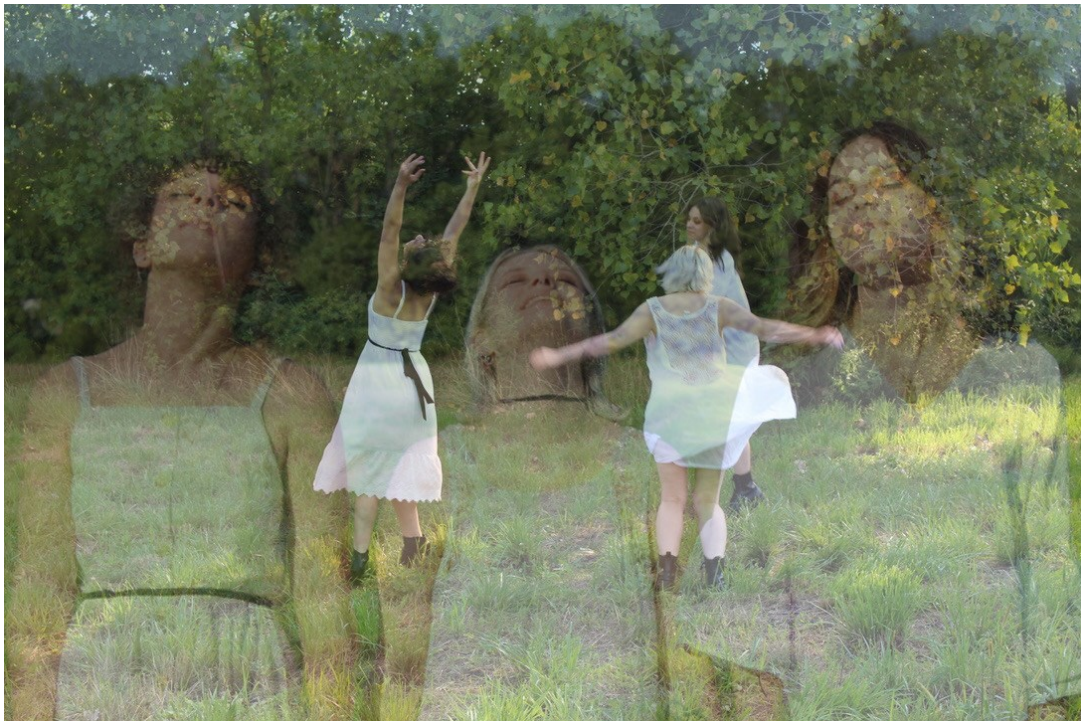
"Hailey Chase: A Change Is Gonna Come" (2022)



"I'm Thinking Of You" (2021)

## What are some of the topics and themes you explore through your poems?

The main topics and themes I explore in my poems are based on personal experiences. A topic I find myself gravitating towards is girlhood and what that entails. Growing up female, I have both witnessed and went through a great deal of exploitation. I like to use both a vague descriptor where the viewer can interpret it in any way they'd like to and a detailed descriptor where a narrative is plainly laid out for the viewer. With my "I'm Thinking Of You" piece, I wanted to explore the insecurity and anxieties that come with interpersonal relationships—being someone who has tried to abandon their femininity. It's a feeling that I have failed to put in coherent words, which created a poem wherein each word on its own has a meaning but when put all together it's as if you're listening to someone speak another language. If you read more of my work, you will see a lot of me messily trying to explain the feeling of being in my skin.



"And They Will Grow" (2021)

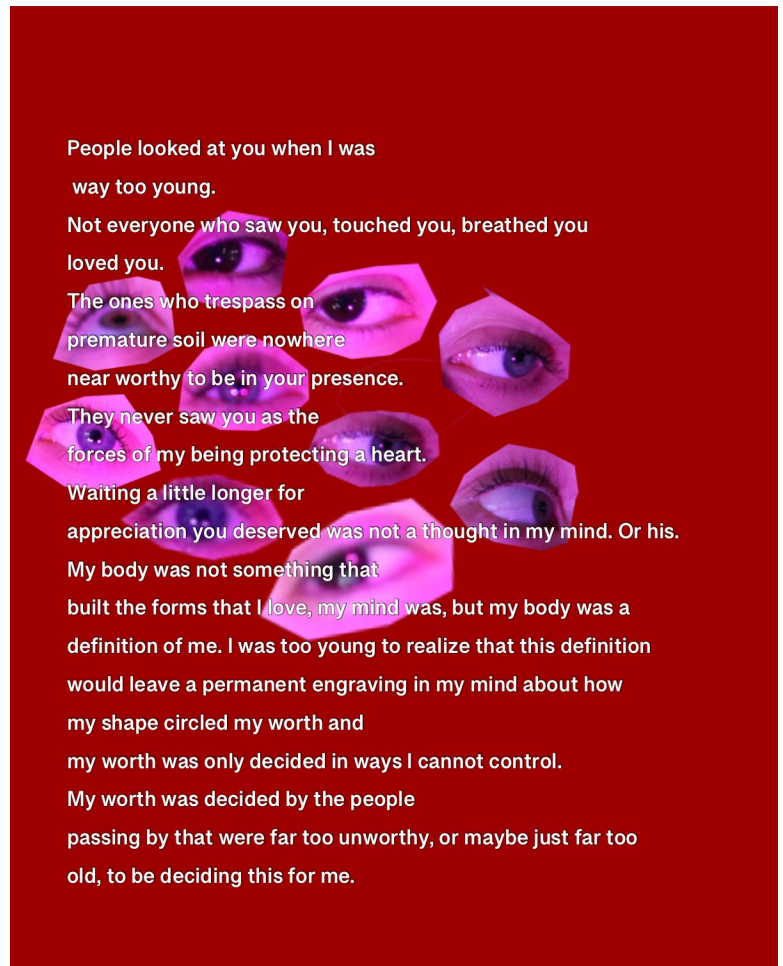


**In your photography, you sometimes use double and even triple exposure. What is your motivation behind using this technique?**

The use of multiple exposures in photography was one of my first attempts to further my creativity in this specific art form. It's a technique that has stuck with me throughout my journey in figuring out my personal style. Majority of the time, it just starts out with the plan to do a casual photo shoot. While the model and I are actively shooting, a narrative will develop on its own that is authentic to whoever is a part of the photo shoot. I like to use it as a way to express a full story in just one picture. I use it in the same way I would write a poem. In my piece "not your fault," I wanted it to be perceived as a beginning, middle, and end. What I love about this technique is that, unlike a poem or series of pictures, the viewer gets to decipher the order of the story.



"not your fault" (2019)

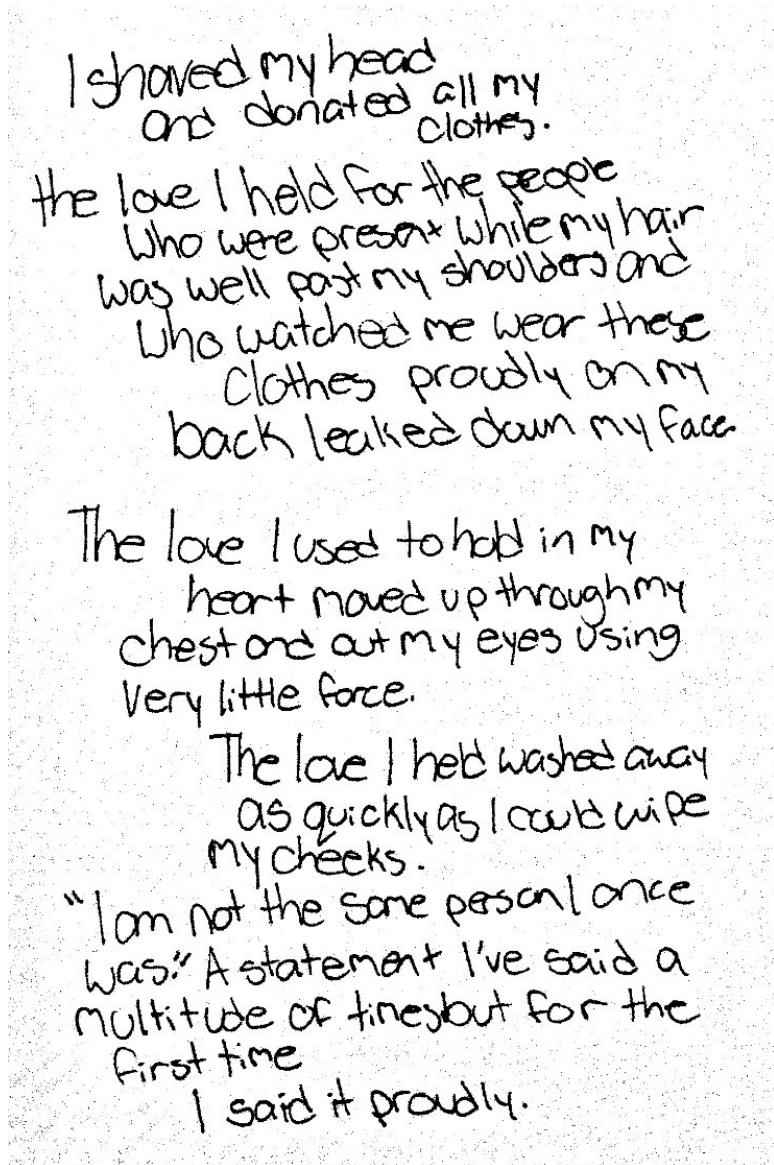


"Protection Of A Beating Heart" (2020)

**How does your background in dance and theatre translate into your photography and poetry?**

Theatre is definitely a huge inspiration for my work in poetry. My first experience with writing was writing monologues for acting classes. I like to start a lot of my poems out as if I am writing a monologue that will be performed and then adjust it to be perceived in a literary sense. Having theatre be such a defining part of my childhood gave me a sort of cheat code to understanding and creating metaphors. It also helped me make clearer narratives but also understand when you don't need to be clear to make a point.

Dance has played a much smaller role in my other work. I mostly use it to figure out how I would like to compose a certain image. Since I was trained in what looks good visually while dancing, I try to translate that into my photography with the use of lines, negative space, and irregular shapes to make a regular-looking piece.



"The Ones We Used To Be" (2022)

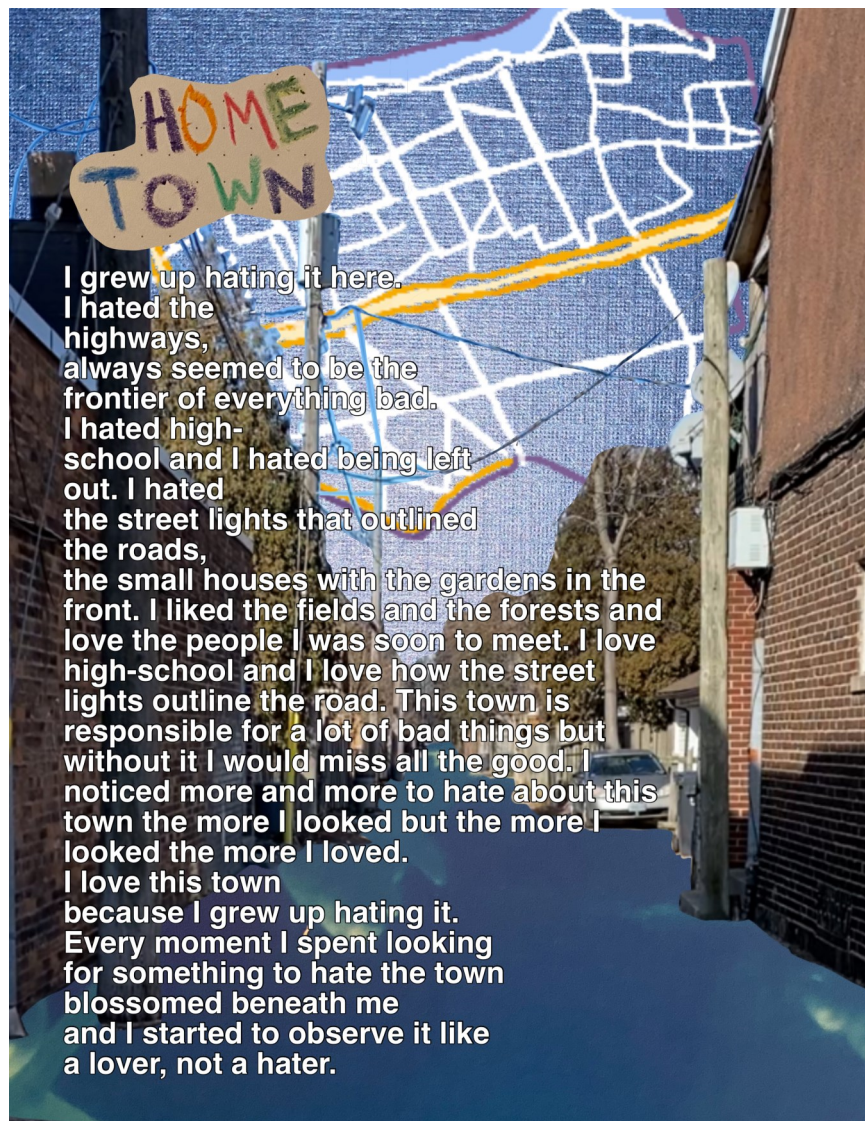
### **What is your perception of Windsor as an artist living and working in the city?**

My perception of Windsor as an artist will change frequently depending on what I am doing. I spent a lot of time hating Windsor because it seems like a boring city, and you could find millions exactly like it. I still understand the boring part, and I believe that my options and opportunities are limited due to where I am located. I realized this from a very young age, and it took me a while to realize that if it was as plain as it is often seen, I wouldn't have gotten the drive that I have to pursue creative fields. I have lived here my entire life—almost all my work is inspired by personal experiences, which wouldn't

have happened if I lived elsewhere. Windsor is the place where I met the people and discovered the things I love most in this world. Realizing this really changed my perspective on Windsor. I wouldn't be who I am today without Windsor. I have no way to tell what my work would be like living elsewhere, so for that reason I am thankful to have grown up here because I know what my work is like here and I know how to develop my work here.

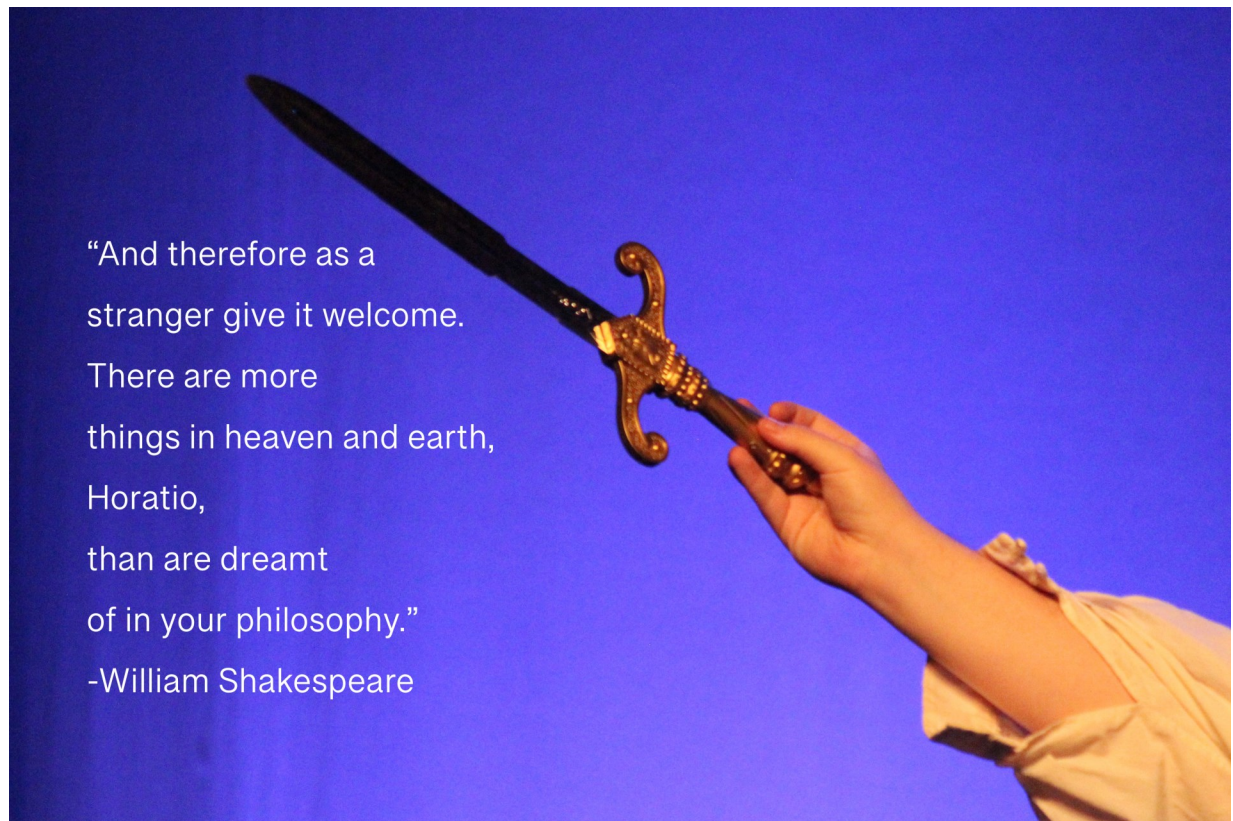
### **How would you like to see others' perceptions of the city shift?**

I personally do not have a strict opinion on how I want others to perceive Windsor. Everyone is going to have different experiences depending on what demographics they come from. I don't have any desire to shift others' perspectives due to this. It was easy for me to learn to love the city because I have had a fairly easy life here. If it doesn't work for other people, that's extremely understandable. One thing that is beautiful about art is how everyone has their own way of creating it. I found that developing an appreciation for how I grew up helped shape my style of creating, where others may not see the point in that and still create some of the most beautiful pieces of art.



"Home Town" (2021)





"Your Philosophy" (2022)

We thank Liv for being our guest in the Spot On! interview series, and we look forward to seeing how their work continues to evolve!

If you would like to see more of Liv's work, you can find them on Instagram @z00t0pia1.

For more artist interviews and other Windsor-based projects, follow the Vanguard Youth Arts Collective on Facebook and Instagram @vanguard.collective and stay tuned for our next issue as well as our first print volume of interviews in early 2023!