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UNDERGRAD: A series on ending well.

You know that feeling when you graduate? That's where I feel Older & Wiser Co. arrived in 2023.

I was burnt out and overwhelmed with the idea of doing things at the same mindset and frustrated with the feeling of responsibility to keep it up the pace.

Transitioning into 2023 I had rather more “gutsier” goals (higher risk purely because of the potential embarrassment of public failure. I wanted to throw more in person events, initiate structured programming, and design concepts for in person experiences rather than exclusively digital consumption. I believed in myself, and I believed in a particular future for O&W even if I didn't see 100% clearly the next steps.

I did what I always do—“the next best thing” and for awhile that worked. but I could feel the a worn out tension encroaching on my entrepreneurial bliss.

Something was off, and for the first time, I just threw my hands up. I knew I needed to “take a break” (as if I know how to do that effectively), but I feared pulling back too much or losing momentum even though in my heart of hearts I wanted to quit.

There was so much guilt seeping in around the idea of quitting though, so instead, I froze. Thankfully, at this point in the journey I've learned *you should always haev dialogue with other artists*. In doing so, I realized that no one was putting expectations on me besides me, and that in order to move forward I had to convince *myself* it was safe to go with my gut.

So I did what any self respecting over emotional artist would do and looked to my past for inspiration, gratification, and direction.

Scrolling through archives of instagram stories, sorting through galleries upon galleries of work, and inspiration I had saved on pinterest that I never dreamed I could possibly bring to life, but had. There were old posts about juggling school, and trying to pay tuition with another plant sale



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FOUR. YEARS. LATER. It seemed like I had earned just as much from my “real world experience” that I would have from a bachelor degree. (Lucky, since I dropped out.)

What got me this far was the openness that O&W would be what it was meant to be, an extension of myself growing and developing. Of course I had expectations or “high hopes” for a sustainable business or organization, but like a child you wish would desperately stop fidgeting, O&W would get restless again... and now I realize it was **me**. *I was restless.*

Desperate to keep growing, not ready to settle down or sustain, or maintain— I only wanted to do things once, or if it had to be done again, better. I didn't care about being the best, or “top of the line”, I wanted art to consume me so I could come out on the other side (forgive me) older and wiser.

Who knew when I chose that name it would end up meaning so much.

I chose that name to represent the products I originally sold, but even as things shifted over time I kept the name and now, I know why. It was an inclination of something greater pulsing below the surface.

That instinct began whispering of another season on it's way and quietly, but firmly asked for recognition of the last.

This final push to make it through the summer honestly felt like the last push before seeing your baby's face... I had carried this thing for so long, sustaining, growing, protecting, loving, and now, I was ready to look and see all it truly was.

I was ready for life to begin again, just like it had began at the conception of this whole thing.



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I am changing, therefore O&W is changing. Or to put it another way I am not dead, O&W is not dead. ;)

I'll insert a little bit of the speech I wrote for the farewell event *Pomp & Circumstance*, a night where we recognized O&W and welcomed in the next stage.

There's no way I could ever sum up all that O&W is, because over time I've come to realize that O&W is not a thing— it is a being, an extension of myself.

It's not a business, or an organization, or an opportunity, it is in all actuality, human... lived out in me and the collaborators, clients, and creatives that have come together unified by a concept.

It will never stop existing, and even if it did, it's spirit would carry on under a different name. It's spirit and determination to make pure gold out of piles and piles of scraps.

So what does all that mean?

I've been creating concepts, throwing events, hosting classes, and a plethora of other dreams and schemes; essentially I dropped out of college to craft my own version of an education.

BUT I also started doing this when I was 20 years old and lived at moms house (shoutout to mom) ... I'm 25 and on my own now, with real life jobs and bills and career paths to figure out.

translation: It's not sustainable for me to carry on the exact same way with the exact same force as life evolves.

I also think It's really important to not fear transitions, but to face them head on with honesty, grit, and honor.

Sometimes you just know when it's time to move on, and there's something beautiful about bravely accepting that. **SO— moving forward, there won't be free classes and programs and**



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unexpected nature where stagnancy or traditionalism has taken root. I'm looking for ways to join forces with those who already are fighting the good fight and are plugged into resources that I don't have access to. There's a lot of good eggs out there... Let's see what we can do!

Undergrad • Pomp • Thesis • Commencement • 2023

< **Pomp & Circumstance** **Equinox Event 3.19.23.** >

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