**Five Years of Cut Me Up Magazine: Panel Intro**
Andrea Burgay, Founder and Editor

Thank you all for joining us for our presentation on 5 years of *Cut Me Up* Magazine. My name is Andrea Burgay and I am the founder and editor of *Cut Me Up*. Today I am joined by a group of artists and curators who have had deep relationships with *Cut Me Up* over the last 5 years and will share their experiences working on the project.

But before introducing our panelists, I want to talk about what *Cut Me Up* Magazine is and share a little bit about its history. I describe *Cut Me Up* as a participatory magazine of visual call and response. Each issue presents 18 original collage images. These artworks become raw material for reader-artists to respond to by reconfiguring and transforming them into new artworks, in response to curatorial calls addressing contemporary issues. A curated selection of the newly created responses forms the content of the next issue.

I’m often asked what led me to start this magazine. Several ideas that are very important to my own work with collage led to the creation of *Cut Me Up*, including: the power of transformation as a way to respond to an object or material and give it new meaning; connecting with rhythms of the cycles of life—death, decay and rebirth; questions of inspiration and ownership—if a piece is literally made of fragments of other people’s work, can it fully be claimed as one’s own?; and a desire to expand how we think about collage methods and materials.

But above all, *Cut Me Up* arose from my jealousy of musicians—specifically the unspoken dialogue created by different instruments or vocals played in response to each other, known as call-and-response. I was always drawn to visual arts, but many people in my family are musicians, and after many family events, they would jam—take out the guitars, and without any set plan, just sit down and play. Someone would play rhythm, and someone else would start playing a riff, then a solo, and then someone else would jump in and take it in an entirely new direction. Visual artists don’t have a common structure in which to interact like this. We look at each other’s work, and for the most part, use words or writing to describe what we think about it. I wanted to create a new scenario in which artists could respond to each other’s work visually, in the language we know best.

Musical call-and-response also extends into performance. The audience knows the words, sings along, and sometimes the band stops entirely, letting the audience lead. This dissolves the boundary between performers and audience, making everyone both a participant and a creator. This is also what I wanted to create with *Cut Me Up*—a magazine where the readers become the creators of the next content and the artists become curators of future issues—a visual symphony where we are all mixed in together.

This panel is a celebration of the fifth anniversary of *Cut Me Up*. Issue 1 was launched here at Kolaj Fest in 2018. Some of you were here and enthusiastically responded to that very first call, for which I am forever grateful, as I really had no idea what would happen when it started.

I have continuously been amazed by what has unfolded with *Cut Me Up*. Over the past 5 years, over 700 artworks have been made in response to *Cut Me Up* calls. The response artworks for each issue range widely in scale and media and encompass a huge range of conceptual approaches. While only 18 artworks are printed in each issue of Cut Me Up, our website archives all of the submissions created for each issue, showing the diverse responses to each call. Artists have connected and responded to each other’s artwork in many complex ways. You’ll hear about all of this from our guest artists.

We have had 10 incredible guest curators who have drawn upon their own work and engagement with collage as a medium to develop calls that have addressed: what collage can do that is different from other artforms; exploring new techniques, approaches, and ways of thinking about materials; how collage can respond to important contemporary issues; looking to the history of collage as a way to relate to the present; thinking about collage methods as metaphors to explore how processes create meaning; and considering overused ideas, imagery and, materials in collage. You’ll hear about the process of curating an issue and how the calls for two of these issues evolved from guest curators who are here today.

And an incredible community has developed around *Cut Me Up*. I hoped that finding your artwork within the artwork of someone else would create an experience of recognition, of feeling a part of someone else’s story, perhaps even an experience of feeling seen or understood. I watch artists connect with each other on our Instagram about transforming each other’s work, or using the same work in different ways. There is more to explore in how these connections have evolved. I, of course, have also had the ongoing pleasure of meeting, connecting and learning from all of the artists and curators who have been a part of this project.

So today, this incredible group of artists and curators are going to share their artworks and issues they’ve curated and tell their own stories.