

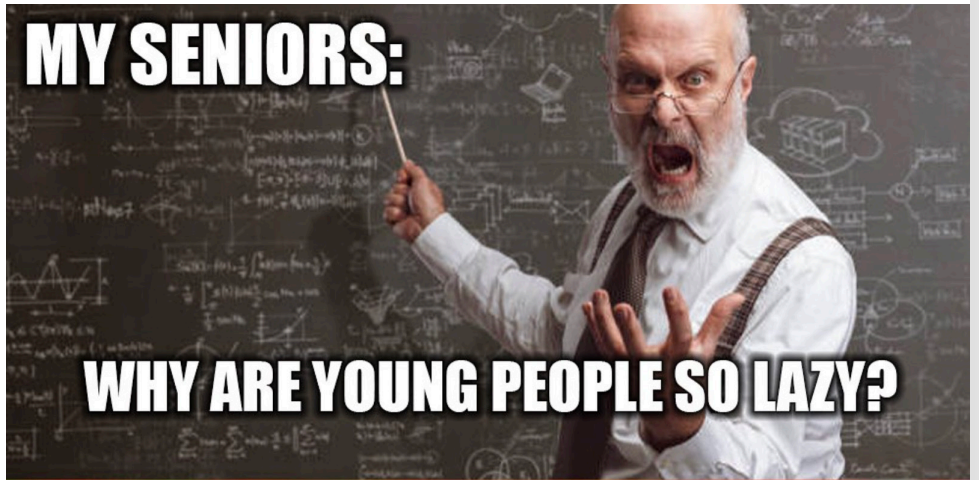
### Selected Posts/Memes from @Nihilistpotata

The following memes have been selected from my Instagram account @nihilistpotata. In this account, I combine the image of a nihilist potato with the artistic concept of Dadaism to challenge conventional tastes in art and traditional methods of visual creation. @Nihilistpotata documents my graphic design experiments using memes. The themes of these memes delve into my general life troubles and aspirations, as well as my more particular experiences navigating graduate school. It aims to strike a balance between my online persona as a humorous potato and my embodied identity as a nerdy Asian woman who is considered to be conventionally unattractive. Through the act of meme-making, I aspire to empower not just myself but oppressed people writ large— LGBTQ2S folx, racialized and Indigenous communities, the poor, the disabled, the bullied, those suffering from mental illness, and many more; all who seek to resist, survive, laugh, and heal.

Figure 1.  
 Untitled,  
 A screenshot of @Nihilistpotata on Instagram



nihilistpotata



nihilistpotata

This meme was inspired by my experiences teaching undergraduate students. Many students with mediocre performance in class were often not considered hard-working by faculty. However, during an in-depth conversation with the students, I learnt that many of them were trying to grapple with issues in their personal life while also dealing with mental health issues. This meme satirizes the generation gap between teachers and students, whereby the students' issues in life are often not understood by members of the faculty.

[#generationgap](#)[#mentalhealth](#)



Figure 2.  
*Where Am I Here?*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



nihilistpotata



My parents: you should learn how to drive as a decent adult

Me:



What I can afford:  
-A road test  
-A driver license



What I can't afford:  
-Car  
-Insurance  
-Gas  
-Parking



nihilistpotata

I made this meme after I got my driver's license in my 30s. It highlights the irony of being labelled an adult who can drive a car but whose financial situation as a graduate student doesn't allow them to afford one.

[#adulthood#poverty#affordability](#)



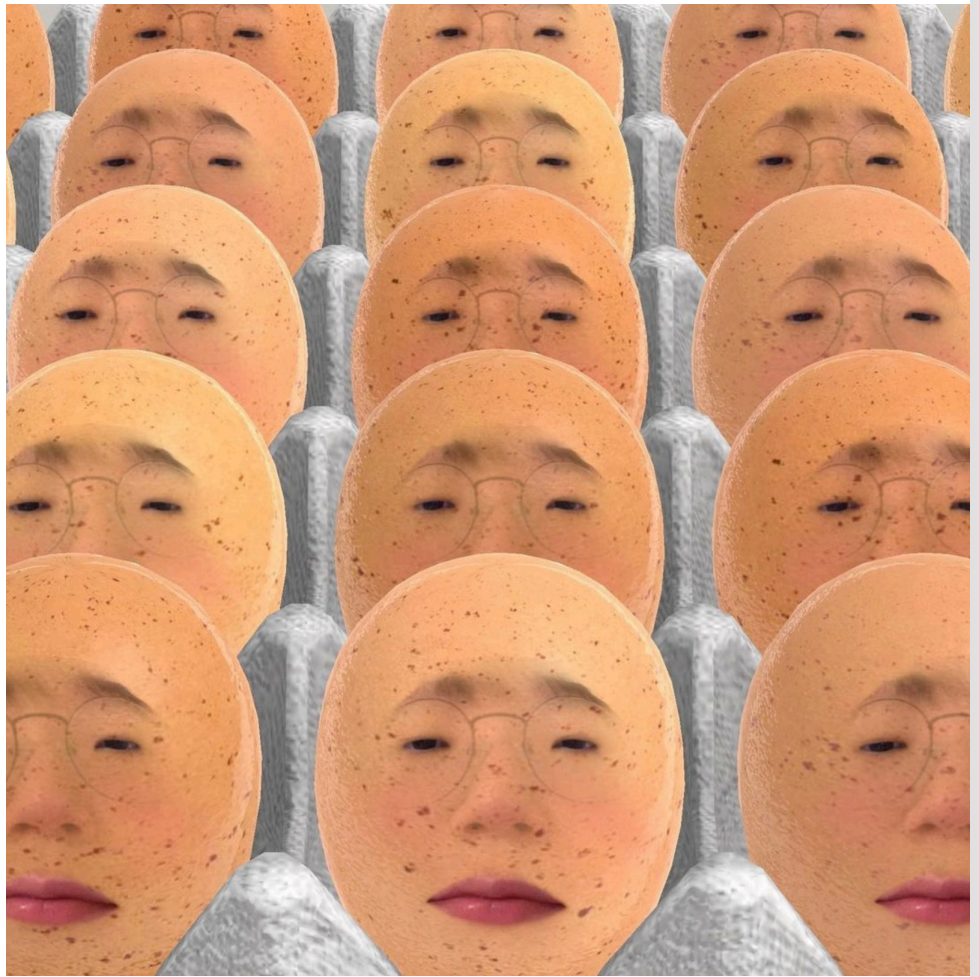
Figure 3.  
Decent Adult  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



nihilistpotata



**nihilistpotata**

This meme explores the current trend of using filters when taking selfies and hints at how filters on social media affect the way we perceive ourselves.

[#identity#filter](#)



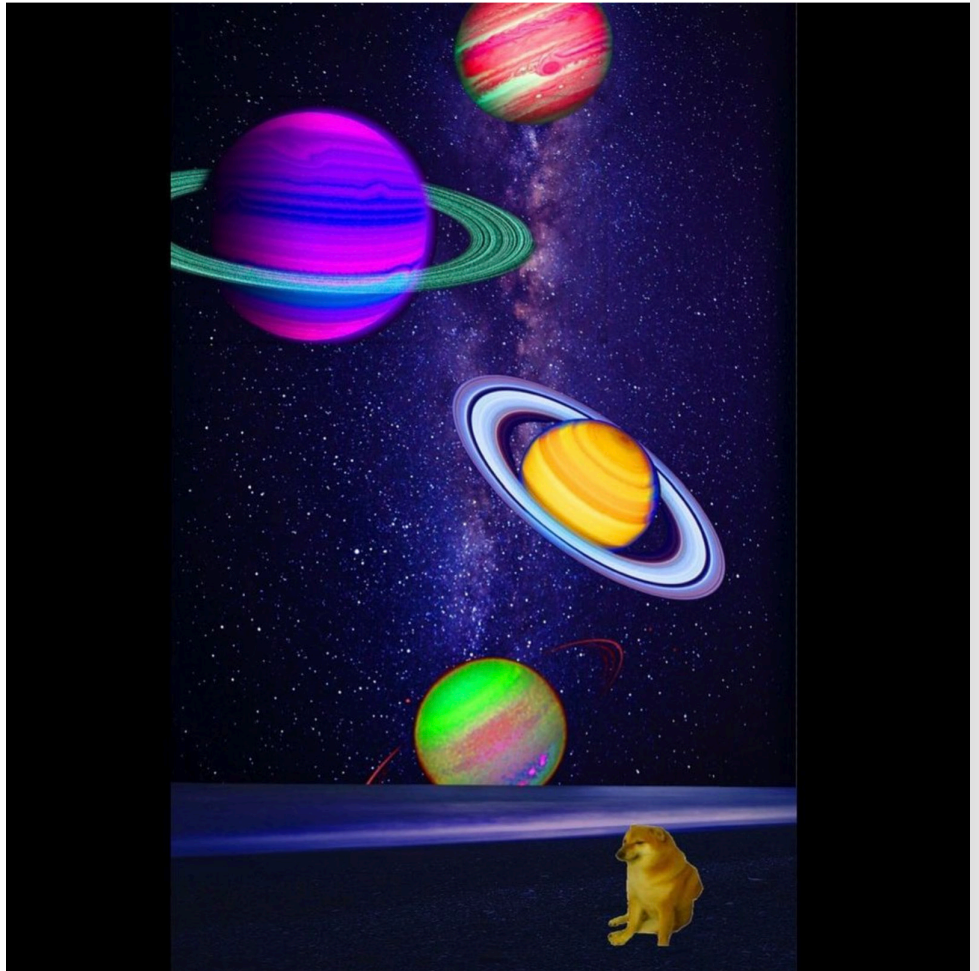
Figure 4.  
*Egg Me*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



nihilistpotata



**nihilistpotata**

I made this to document a dream I had and to explore the possibility of using remix as a way to quickly document one's imagination and dreams.

[#dream](#)[#surrealism](#)[#fantasy](#)

Figure 5.  
*A Dream From Last Night*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



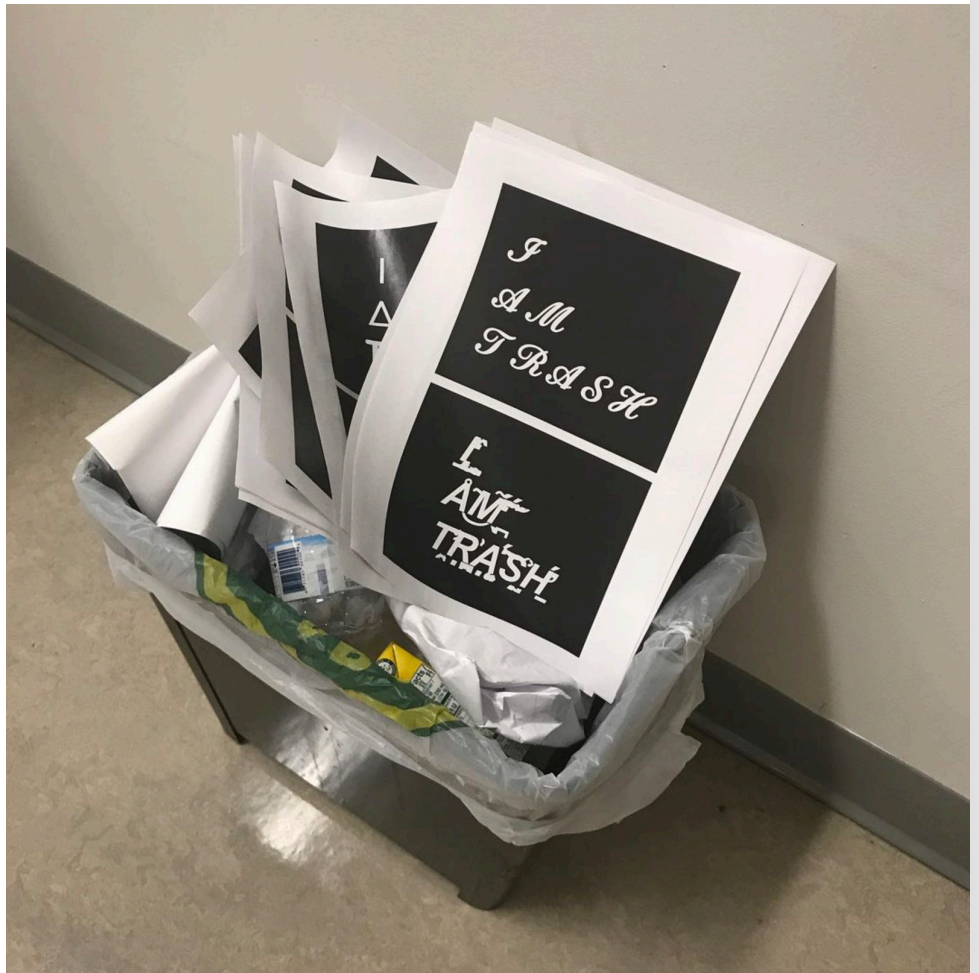


NIHILISTPOTATA

Posts



nihilistpotata



**nihilistpotata**

This is a photograph I took after I completed a graphic design project and trashed my material. The photo alludes to the wasteful nature of graphic design production, and questions the lasting function of visual material and its negative impact on our environment.

[#graphicdesign#waste#value](#)

Figure 6.  
*I Am Trash*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata

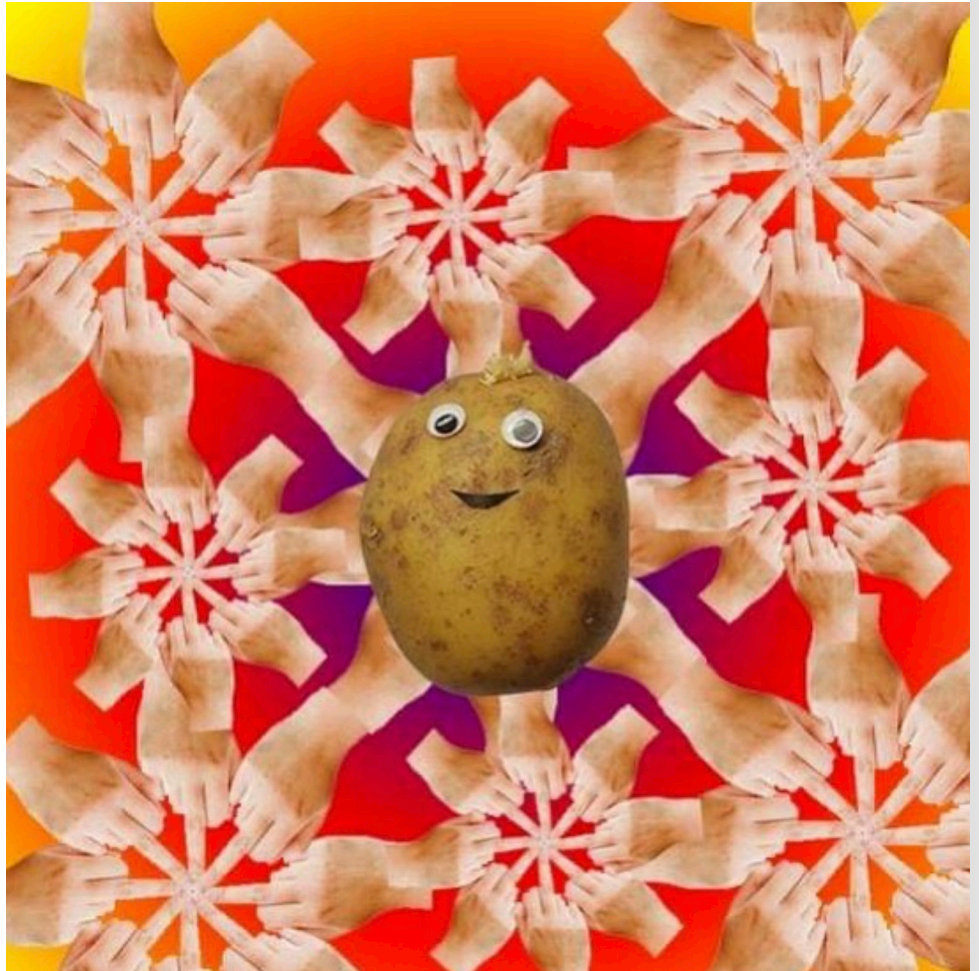




NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



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**nihilistpotata**

I made this meme during the COVID-19 pandemic when Asians were facing massive racism. As an Asian myself, I had to deal with such behaviour on a daily basis.

[#covid](#)[#asianhate](#)[#racism](#)[#everyday](#)

Figure 7.  
*Middle Finger Ornament*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



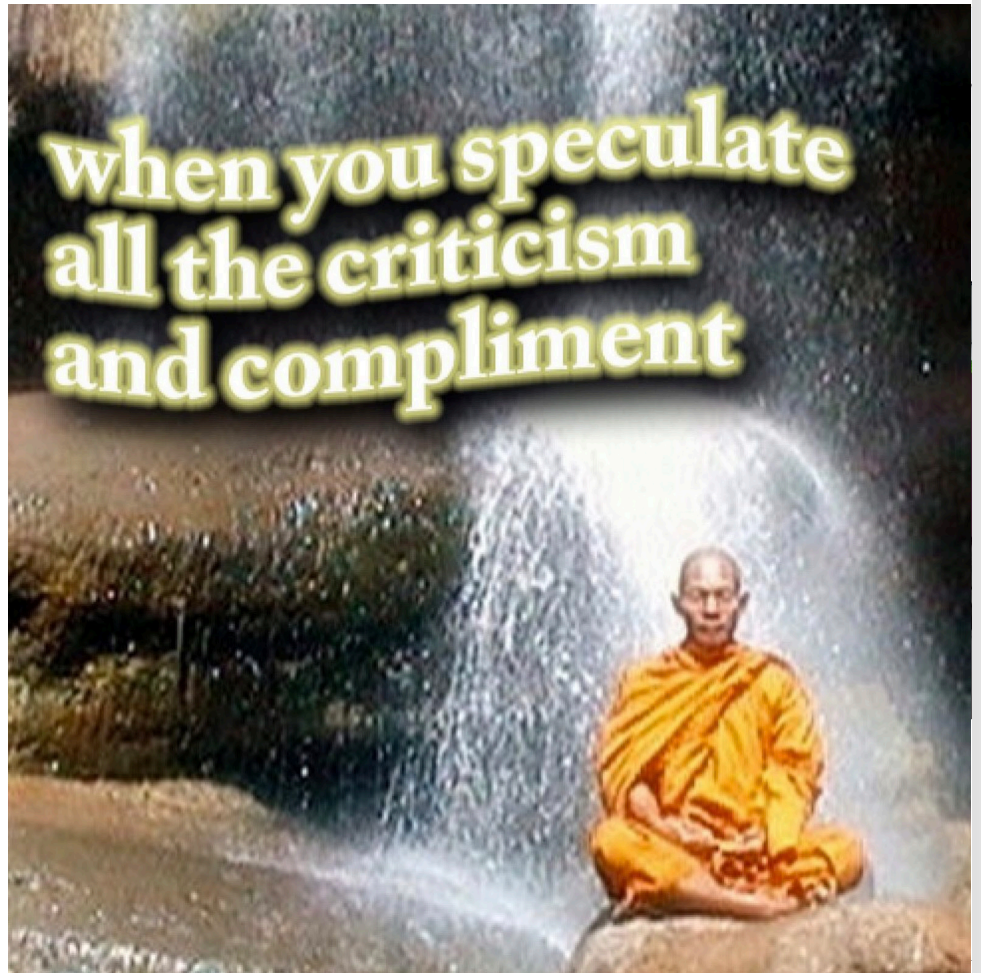


NIHILISTPOTATA

Posts



nihilistpotata



nihilistpotata

This meme was inspired by my experience in grad school, where I found that feedback from my peers and professors could be very subjective.

[#gradschool#debate#skepticism](#)

Figure 8.  
*Grad School Motto*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata







NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



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**nihilistpotata**

I made this meme in remembrance of the Tiananmen Square incident. This meme celebrates the youth's resistance and affirms the manifesto of their political demands.

[#Tiananmen#protest#anniversary#censorship](#)



Figure 9.  
*Happy Anniversary*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata



NIHILISTPOTATA  
Posts



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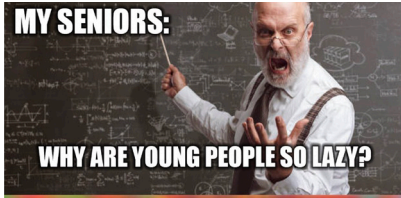
**nihilistpotata**

This meme was made to challenge the contemporary standard of what is considered good art. It is a blend of photos of my cat, remixed with a picture of someone viewing art in a gallery. Its purpose is to remind us of the moment, when at an art gallery, we think, "Is this more worthy to view than a cat video?"

[#art#value#museum#gallery#tiktok#catmeme](#)

Figure 10.  
*The Art of Cat*  
Meme,  
by Ins @Nihilistpotata





My parents: you should learn how to drive as a decent adult

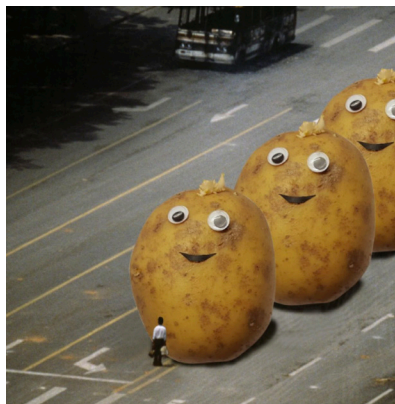
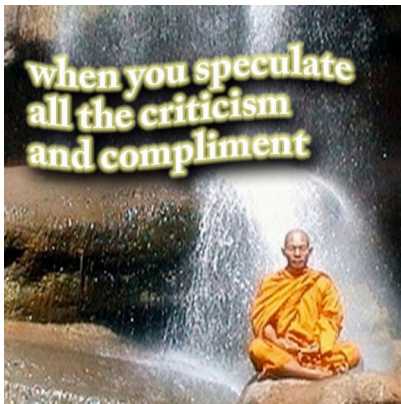
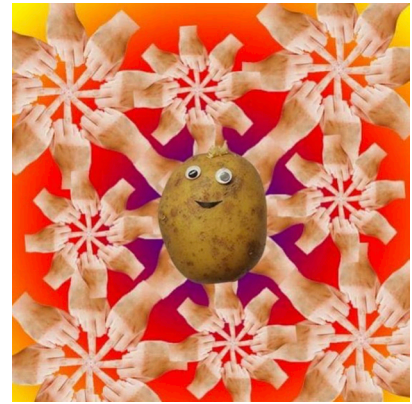
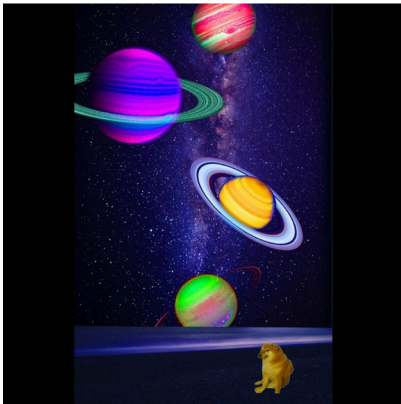
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[@Nihilistpotata](#)

## Author Biography



**Helen Yaqing Han** (she/her) is a graphic designer currently in her fourth year pursuing a Ph.D. in education at York University. She completed her master's and bachelor's degrees in graphic design and worked for several years as a designer in different countries. Helen's current research focuses on experimental pedagogy, specifically exploring meme-making as a method to encourage experimental graphic design, foster creativity among non-professional creators, and build communities based on creative making using emerging digital tools and social media platforms. Meanwhile, she has also been curious about emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and algorithms, which are heavily influencing how people produce and perceive cultural productions now and in the future.