

The Race

A Photo- Novel directed, produced and photographed by Patrick Nagatani with
Scott Rankin - cloud images - pilot/video artist - professor at Illinois State, Normal
Randi Ganulin - tech assistance - artist/designer working in Seattle



Prototype Tokyo Bay

Patrick Nagatani is at first a long time visual artist and most recently has challenged himself with creative writing. Much of his past work has evolved around storytelling and narrative fiction as photographic “fact”. He has dwelled in the land of fiction and magic with his images and now in this novel. He is choreographing the creative writing of 12 other writers who are contributing to the novel. The images here will be at the beginning of each chapter of the pilot’s stories. They are meant to illustrate the novel with a feeling of flying spirit and magical space.

The choice of work and The Race images in this exhibition are meant to examine and develop a dialogue between the physical and the spiritual. Something that Nagatani is dealing with in his life as he battles metastatic cancer. The Race images hope to form the connections in this dialogue of a Yin Yang nature.

Starting: Tokyo
Ending: San Francisco

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*"Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun-split clouds, — and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air....*

*Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace.
Where never lark, or even eagle flew —
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
- Put out my hand, and touched the face of God." John Magee*

Project History

-August 1945, 36 crated, Supermarine Spitfires shipped to British RAF Headquarters, Burma.
-December 1945 c crates buried in area with Buddhist stupas from the era of the Pagan Kingdom, under direction of RAF Colonel Gertrude Humphreys.
-Many years later Mary Cundall, Lincolnshire, England, widow of Spitfire pilot killed in WWII begins 15-year search for buried Spitfires.
-January 2013 Keiko Kobahashi, personally funds activities and arranges for well-known Japanese archeologist Ryoichi to aid the British team searching for planes led by British archeologist Ruda Brickman based on wnotes from Mary Cundall. They find and excavate intact crates buried near the stupa known as the Temple of the Clouds
-2013 Mitsubishi, under supervision of Christine Banfield, Folland Aircraft, Great Britain modifies planes to create floats for buoyancy while in water and lift out of the water.
- June 2013 - Keiko Kobahashi b. 1945, Personal Sponsor (no corporate sponsorship) and organizer of The Race, President and CEO Mitsubishi, citing the legacy of Amelia Earhart selects 15 women pilots. A prize of \$250,000 will go to each pilot who completes the race. Among the criteria for selection were the pilots personal lives or heritage and were drawn from areas of international injustices to personal conflicts. Citing her Buddhist and Shinto beliefs and *Kojiki*, the race is to be in the sky, the primary stage of Creation.
Keiko Kobahashi envisions that these women pilots will be the beginning of a movement that deals with saving the planet both ecologically and culturally. Borrowing from Joseph Campbell commenting on women, "On the simplest level, then, she is the surrounding sky. On the philosophical level, she is Maya, the forms of sensibility, the limitations of the senses that enclose us so that all of our thinking takes place within Her bounds-she is *IT*. The Goddess is the ultimate boundary of consciousness in the world of time and space.

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The Planes and Pilots



Silver/1

Christine Banfield, Aircraft designer, flyer, and engineer.

b. Great Britain 1945. 5'7', plump, dirty blond short hair

After having designed the newly built Spitfire floatplanes, Banfield petitioned to fly in the race. She also declined any prize money in the event she finished the race.

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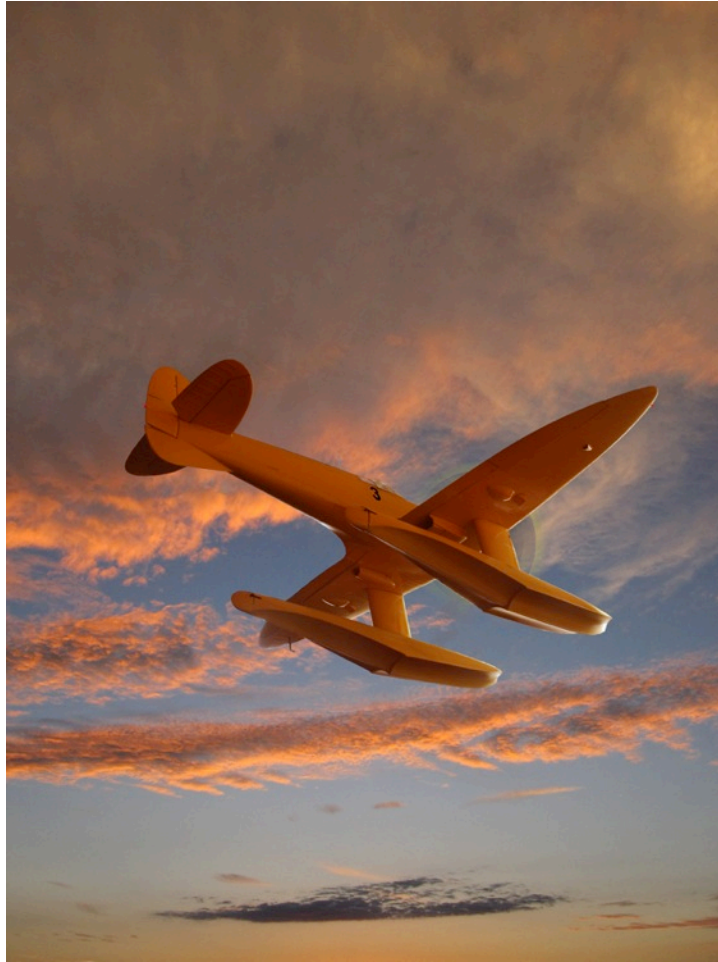
Champagne/2

Ayame Kobahashi

b. November 29, 1962, Ise, Japan, Ayame is 5'8", half Japanese and half Irish with auburn hair, fair skin, freckles and looks Irish but identifies herself as Japanese. (Daughter of Keiko Kobahashi).

Personal Statement: In pursuing my desire to fly, what I longed for really was the ability to contemplate my life unfettered by the concerns that bind me to the earth and circumstance, to feel unhinged from time.

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Orange/3

Hamidah Gyamtso

b. Tibet 195?, orphan raised by Tibetan Buddhist nuns, fled to Bhutan 1959. Hamidah is very short and dark skinned, hair tied in a bun.

In 1977 moves to America, ordained a Buddhist nun falls in love with a novice monk (of Mid-Eastern background) from Normal, Illinois, moved to France.

Personal statement: I continued to teach him Buddhist philosophy and he brought me to the clouds. I have been a licensed pilot for 20 years now. His and my 'enlightenment' takes place in the sky."

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Copper/4

Raya Sol del Mundo

b. 1952, Southwest U.S. of Native American and Mexican descent learned to fly while attending UCLA

Personal statement: I saw my body free of any physical bonds. I could soar in the sky and touch the clouds of my childhood dreams. I wanted to break free of gravity and metaphorically break free of ties to location. I wanted to soar above my 'mundo'.

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Peach/5

Janet Tomiko Mochizuki,

b. Los Angeles, California, on August 29, 1978, 5'4" Japanese-American, wiry, athletic build, shiny, helmet-like hair and straight bangs. UC Berkeley, studied Japanese Literature and took up flying.

Personal Statement: "The strongest, most visceral memories of my childhood are of dreams I had of flying, soaring over treetops with exhilarating speed, and being able to maneuver my body for quick take-offs, sharp turns and graceful landings. I discovered as a teenager that my paternal grandfather, Isamu Mochizuki, had been an ace fighter pilot and officer in the Imperial Japanese Navy during the Second Sino-Japanese War and World War II"

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White/6

Leah Katzenberg.

Born in Bern, Switzerland, on October 16, 1961, 5'7", 130lbs

Personal Statement: Because of my dad's involvement in the coordination of the theft of the Mirage plans in Switzerland and the exodus from the country of my birth, I wanted to give meaning to the family's uprooting and my parent's sacrifice by becoming a pilot. Because my father was an aeronautical engineer, his close friendship with a Colonel in the IDF, and an air force who wanted more female pilots, my path to the cockpit of fighter jets seemed almost preordained. "For me, the actual flying was initially more of a challenge and though I exceeded all the benchmarks required to be a part of this elite team, I never felt that I was as good as some of them. Winning the race in an international contest was part of my motivation to apply, though I don't like to admit that this was my reason for doing so.

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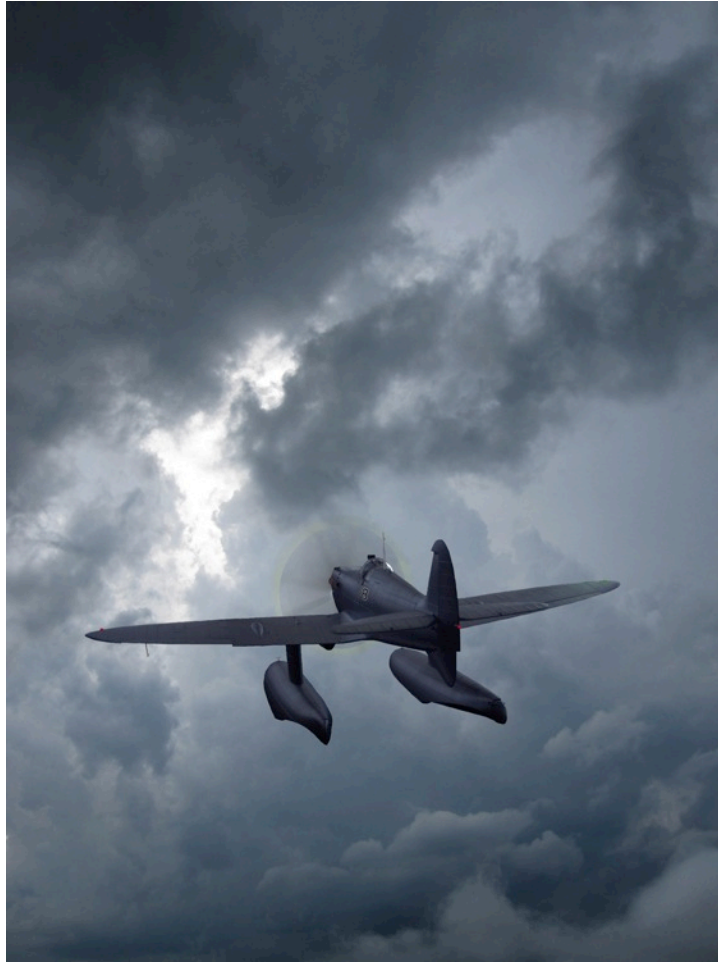
Burgandy/7

Radka Zelenkova, tall, solidly built, short blonde hair.

Born in Prague, April 30 (Čarodějnice, Witches' Night), 1961

Personal Statement: My grandfather escaped Czechoslovakia in 1940 and joined the British Royal Air Force. He planned to fly a Spitfire for the Battle of Britain but was shot down in an earlier battle. I wanted to be a pilot like my grandfather. After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, my father got me into the Czech Army's flight school. My father thought my ambitions were more suited to a man, but since he never had a son, he approved of them. My first flight instructor attempted to rape me but I fought back and injured his eye, rendering him like Jan Žižka, the legendary one-eyed soldier. I've never been with a man. Luckily, I did not have to sleep with men to earn my position as a top pilot, as some of my women friends did. I like that it's a women's event. I want to celebrate how far we've come as women. In 1993, I worked at the 8th Women's European Championships, held in the Czech Republic where I met my partner, Lenka. Favorite color is burgundy; favorite number is 7.

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Black/8

Ruth Johnson

b. 1980, Arkansas, oldest of 7 children, 5'11", skinny, large bones,

Personal Statement: Necessity made me a tomboy. My brothers all stand above 6'. As I grew, each felt that it was a rite of passage to challenge me. I remained undefeated. Eventually, I made my way to college, the University of Arkansas, where I studied agriculture. Even as I found my way through this new world, I kept one eye on the sky. My uncle had a crop-dusting business and even before I learned to drive he taught me to fly. He got his start because his daddy, Uncle Irving, sent money back home so that he could buy his first airplane. I fly because I feel free, if only temporarily. I fly because I am a woman, because I am black, and because as a black woman I feel that no space—including airspace—should be denied me. Those are the lessons I learned during 'story' time. Those are the lessons that I keep.

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Blue/9

Ting Xu Chan,

b . Winter 1974, in a yurt, Inner Mongolia, weaned on Yak milk has Honey-brown skin, dark black-brown hair that bleaches red when she spends time in the sun. Striking grey-blue eyes, which she inherited from her maternal great-great grandmother and can be traced back through the maternal line to the Bourchikoun tribe of which Genghis Khan was the most famous member. On the back of her right shoulder she has a blue-black spot that looks like someone squeezed her too tightly. She wears it proudly as a mark of her birth.

Personal Statement: When I was twelve my family was relocated by the Chinese government from their nomadic life to a small cement apartment in Hohhot, the capitol of Inner Mongolia. The Mongols believe that the spirit of the 'Monkh khokh Tengger', the eternal blue heaven, is among the objects everywhere in the universe. I felt that the sky had been taken away from me, and I longed for a way to find its spirit. It was not until I was the farthest I had ever been from my homeland that I rediscovered the sky of my childhood. I was working as an assistant to one of my Princeton professors, and we had traveled to Nevada to photograph the Nevada Test Site from above. My first trip in a small plane, floating over the stark flat earth in an endless sky, was sheer eternal blue heaven. I knew then that I had to learn to fly to keep Monkh khokh Tegger awake in my soul.

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Turquoise/10

Firooz Irani

Born in 1953, in Isfahan, Iran (city of angels and stone carvings), pure Caucasian (Persian) light skinned, hair is reddish brown in a long braid, 5'3, eyes greenish blue, Kashmiri blue. Her voice is lyrical yet angry

Personal Statement: When I was growing up I saw many smart Air force officers who would circle the Empress Farhadiba. I would think often, what fun to be smartly dressed in all that blue and gold and to be bowing and scraping and be admired. Yes, that is what I had thought. But in those days as I was only a teenager, I realized that the only way to wear one of those uniforms was possibly to marry an Air Force officer. So, Instead I befriended Air Force officers and managed to get my flying credentials with friends in the Shah's military."

"But now I think we had more freedom then as women than we have now as Iran has changed so much. It is putting us women behind veils and shrouds. Genetically we are not women who can be covered up under the purdah or burqa. From the daughter of Zarathustra, Pouruchista and Pantea Arteshbod, the great commander of Persian armies, we've always had women fighters and pilots. Islam has brought submission to women.

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Red/11

Ludmilla Litvyck

Born in 1966, childhood in Urals

Personal Statement: I have learned, growing up in the Urals, a descendant of the inter-marriage of Cossacks and Russian Jews, that breathing freely and deeply in the long months of winter would do nothing but freeze my lungs and cause a sure and painful death. My career choice, first to fly and then to design aircraft, was laughable before the fall of Communism, but my so-called brilliant ascent coincided with the fall of the system and the short-lived but well-loved rise of democracy in the country. I kept my flying skills sharp because I believed that it was a glass house, democracy a fiction that would fall when the powers that be decided enough of the freedom experiment. I knew that flying was the skill that could transport me both figuratively and literally from the shards and lift me to safety. With a heavy heart, I am leaving behind my love and my lover to join The Race. I care not about winning. There is no one to go home to and no system to ensure or even celebrate a victory of any sort. I have taken the challenge as an invitation to escape what was cold in my heart and to breathe some warm air into my lungs. I am going to fly to fly.

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Green/12

Moira S. Neville

b. May 1916 ?

5'2" traces youthful red hair some freckles still evident on her bright blue-eyed features. Titanium knee joint, ceramic hip replacement, prosthetic hand with carbon-fiber fingers, She can replace the artificial hand with other gadgetry.

Personal Statement: I grew up on a family farm close to Cork, which is where I discovered my engineering abilities and flights of fancy. At the same time my family recognized and got to know my genius for 'fixing' things in both the mechanical sense, mostly farm machinery, and on more than one occasion, animals. Otherwise they saw my talent in the healing arts. My healing bit was not surprising as I come from a long line of medical doctors. With that in mind, it seemed appropriate to join the air force as a woman mechanic during WWII.

'My name is Moira and I'm a pilot who is getting on in life. I have seen a lot since early childhood in Dublin when the family moved there from Cork during the early 20th century - actually 1916. I have followed the development of air transportation from the early air circuses with biplane Gypsy Moths and the R101 and R100 airships when the slide rule was king or queen if you prefer it, in the 1920s. I lost my bother in WW1. It was probably why I learned to fly or needed to do something valuable for society as a whole to make up for the guilt I felt for all those thousands of lost or squandered lives including those of innocent civilians. Both sides were the losers except for the big arms manufacturers or government entities and their minions. Not that I'm an anarchist or socialist mind you, just a simple aeronautical engineer who loves to fly.'

"They accepted my explanation but with reservations as they, the government types, had seen this kind of heroism or heroics before and knew from past experience that it could be trouble or at least the source of questioning authority. My stint working on Spitfires came after I was not accepted as a flyer in the RAF. I suppose I was too unpredictable and, as a consequence of my having a private license, was taken on because of the shortage of men and also to be a 'fitter' or 'artificer' on maintenance crews working round the clock. Quite a bit different than the air circus but at the same time the need for a strict and professional attitude matched well for me. Later in the war and between home visits I was given back the pilot role, which was earned by my expertise, abilities and physical agility, if I do say so myself."

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Yellow/13

Nanibah Jackson, b. Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A., July 13, 1983, Navajo/Laguna American Indian, 5'3", muscular, long dark black hair, piercing eyes, dark skinned Navajo

Personal Statement: Very much alone on the rez, and with "coke bottle" glasses to correct eyes that crossed from a cradle accident, I was always the weird one in my elementary school. I had few friends and found that making model airplanes was a way to spend time and dream. I was always interested in flight and aircraft. The first good model that I built at that time was a ME 109, a World War II German Luftwaffe warplane. I use to do imaginary take offs in it and imagine flying the plane as I held it in my hand and walked to secret landing strips that I had built in the land outside of dwellings on the Laguna Pueblo. It was during those times that I found tranquility and a joy of being alone and the thought of being a pilot. My chance of real flying came when a good friend from the Bureau of Indian Affairs took me to the small Double Eagle airport outside of Albuquerque and paid for my flying lessons. I have been flying for almost thirteen years. I think I am one of the youngest pilots in this group of diverse and international women. I look forward to flying in the aircraft that fought the 109's during the war.

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Chartreuse/14

Piccolo Uccello

b. May 15, 1984, San Benedetto del Tronto, Ascoli Piceno, Italy. Very short with dark hair

Personal Statement: Although I truly love air travel and I have always had a predilection toward and fascination with flight, piloting is not my heart's most ardent desire. It started with my father's telescope and continued throughout my school years as my knowledge of aeronautics and space travel expanded. I suppose I have always been more rational-minded than most of my female peers, explaining why I excelled at science, math, and physics. I pursued a passion for astronomy and astro-physics in and outside of the classroom.

As a child every time I was asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would answer 'astronaut'. During my years at upper secondary school, I aimed my education with the sole intent of one day working for the ASI (Agenzia Spaziale Italiana). My grandfather, a pilot, began giving me an initial education on airplane flight despite my mother's persistent vehement wishes that I pursue more lady-like interests. In my teen years, especially during summer breaks, I would pursue my airplane piloting with my grandfather's old CANT Z.509. I loved flying the plane, even as my heart continued to set itself in the stars

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Khaki/15

Arianne Maya Parker

b. November 11, 1965, Hartford, Connecticut, moved to Spokane, Washington when 7, fair-skinned, almond shaped eyes, Russian or Slavic high cheekbones, medium length straight brown hair

Personal Statement: On my first trip up in Uncle Jim's single-engine Cessna, I was transfixed. Flying high above the coastline, I could see the evergreen forests, lakes and peaks of the wet water-land under brilliant summer sunshine. At times, as the little plane tilted and turned over the landscape, the sun glinting down on the many waterways sparkled and blinded me. It filled me with a bright certainty I had never felt before. It was crystalline, clear, and perfect. I felt as though I could hear the voice of the sun call out to me; a certain hum like music, and the tinkling of bells. Once there, I never wanted to leave. But come down to earth I did. Eventually I came out of those summer flights in my uncle's plane with a pilot's license and a longing to fly whenever I could.

But my studies took over every fall, winter and spring. I made good enough grades to get my undergrad degree from the University of Washington, and then went on to grad school. In the summers I flew, when the normally grey Puget Sound skies became clear and blue, and my imagination could soar. It is in the air that I gather the ideas for my story writing, and bring them back down to earth with me to craft and tend to them, growing them from the tendrils of ideas found while alone high in the sky. I still find it hard to believe that I have been included in this clearly powerful group of women.