

# On the Cover: September 2022

Motif is excited to welcome illustrator and visual artist **Jeremy Ferris** to the cover of our 2022 Fall Guide. Ferris is currently living in PVD where he is the Digital Projects Librarian at Providence Public Library. Ferris holds a Master of Library and Information Studies degree from Simmons University as well as Bachelors degrees in Studio Arts *and* Brain and Cognitive Sciences from the University of Rochester in upstate New York, where he is originally from. Ferris relays that “his work revisits what we can see and what we miss of ghosts and reverberations.”

As an artist, he has been part of several exhibitions and curated two of his own solo exhibitions. Ferris calls his creative process circular, and says that he isn't “rigorous” with sketchbooks, but often writes or draws on scraps of paper throughout his day that may or may not get lost in the shuffle. As influences, Ferris cites Maeve Martin, Agnes Martin and those involved in the **Providence Comic Consortium**. The Pawtuxet Valley Textile Strike was his inspiration for this piece in particular.

In 1922, RI experienced one of our most catastrophic labor strikes. This walkout lasted eight months and caused the end of what most saw as a ‘prosperous period’ following the end of World War I. When workers found out that their days would get longer- and their paychecks slashed in half due to a local family selling the mill to a corporation, as many as 3,000 - 5,000 workers from multiple mills ultimately decided that they had enough and either walked out or suffered the consequences of the strike when their mills closed.

The strike dominated in the newspapers, overshadowing both smallpox and the death of Pope Benedict XV. *The New York Times* reported that the Governor mobilized artillery companies to control the rioters that were attacking the mill plants.

The decision to portray these strikes on our cover is to honor the centenary of these strikes that so devastatingly impacted RI and the memory of what those ancestors went through to help pave the way for unions and more just working conditions. Pawtucket, as the birthplace of the industrial revolution, was also the birthplace of several union-building firsts, including perhaps the first industrial strike in the US and certainly the first strike by women workers, in 1824.

**Photograph by Carey Goodrich, 2021.**