illuminate

Issue No. 1, Spring 2020

cultivate

Dear readers,

Welcome to the premiere issue of Illuminate, a Dartmouth Photography Society publication.

In the following pages, you will find not only student photography, but artist statements for each submission, revealing the ideas and motivations behind the camera. We hope this will allow for a greater appreciation of student artists and their work, as well as a deeper connection with the photographs themselves. Every artist has two stories to tell: the one that brought them to compose their work, and the one that you, the consumer, experiences by viewing it. By providing both in this magazine, we hope that you can enjoy each photograph for how it moves you and for how it connects you to the artist who created it.

Our theme for this issue was cultivate, which produced a variety of beautiful interpretations. We've broken them down into four categories to streamline your viewing, based largely on the artists' own descriptions of their work.

We hope you enjoy.

The Illuminate Editorial Team

Front Cover Credits

Open Mind

Emma Kallman '22

One particular thing that I discovered during this isolated term is all the time I have to think. I have so much time to further my knowledge, develop my creativity, and begin to plan the path post-quarantine.

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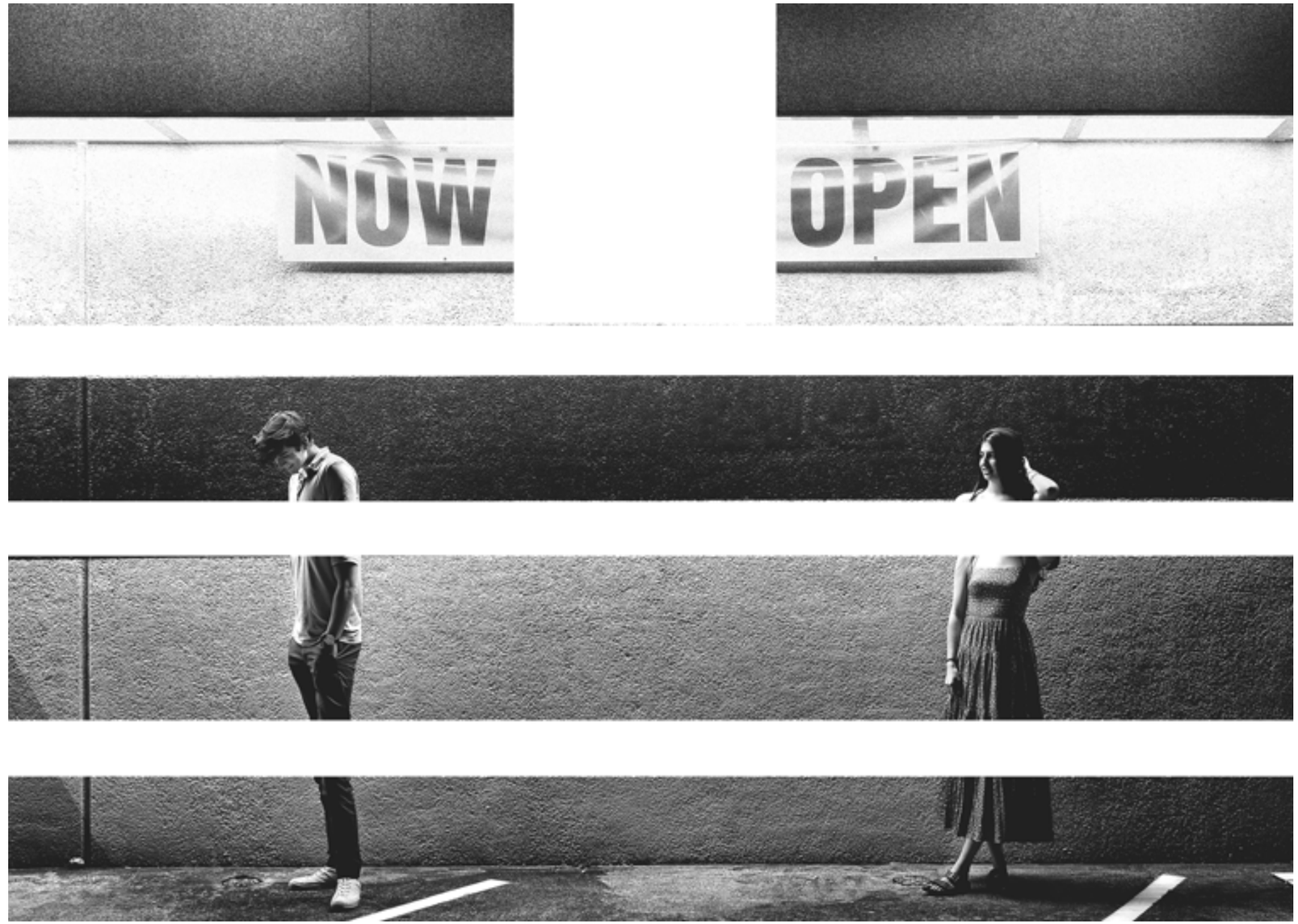
cultivate

our past

Teen Age

Seth Weprin '23

There's something nostalgic in seeing a scene of people "crushing" on each other laid out in front of you. It's interesting because that scene is something that almost never manifests explicitly; it just stays locked in our minds. We cultivate this idea of the person we like. We imagine the perfect scene and the perfect mood and the perfect background music. It's that mental landscape and the feelings it entails that I'm trying to portray here.



Treat Yo' Self

Seth Weprin '23

I got kicked out of this 7-11 like a million times before they actually let me shoot in there. This was a photo that never really impressed upon the people I showed it to, but I always liked it. I think it plays into that whole artificial nostalgia that we create in our heads when we think about certain times and places. I definitely feel a certain nostalgia for that 7-11; it was on a forgotten intersection, in a kind of forgotten part of town that I used to live in.

Trinity

Seth Weprin '23

I think there's a special quality to soft photos like this, especially when they don't show a complete subject. Hard, contrasty photos really help you envisage a scene; they help you visually relive some nostalgic past, but softer photos play more into those ephemeral, unnameable feelings you get from reminiscing.

Petals

Seth Weprin '23

This is another photo that plays into those weird, transient feelings we get when thinking about the past. A lot of times, we feel as though we're in some sort of ether. We can't quite make sense of or articulate what we're seeing, yet there's a unique feeling attached to this unformed image, a sense of déjà vu or something totally unnameable.

Castle on the Hill

Kevin Yang '20

This photo was from my sophomore winterim - the first time I traveled on my own. I had saved up money from photography gigs on campus and spent the past term pouring over research and making itineraries. I think this experience was one of the most transformative for me, as it made me more cognizant of my passions and impact on the environment. It's funny thinking about travel when we're under lockdown, but this is the perfect time to reflect on the purpose of travel and what we can truly learn from it.

our selves

Barrier

Keoni Ocalvey '20

One of my favorite definitions of cultivate is to devote oneself to something. However, being stuck at home and taking classes, both synchronously and not, has showed me just how valuable personal interaction is - especially when trying to learn or foster a relationship. The distance and added distraction of the screens/recording devices doesn't allow one to fully devote their attention or care to the other. Instead, it is almost impossible to not get distracted by a notification on the computer or a family member walking behind the camera's view. The partial view of the other person can also lead to misinterpreted communication and ultimately misunderstandings.

Screen Time

Keoni Ocalvey '20

Personally, when someone tells me that they're cultivating knowledge or a skill, I interpret it as they are going deeper than the surface level knowledge of things. They're applying what they've learned, putting their own spin on it, and ingraining that knowledge or skill into their lifestyle. This term at home has given me a lot of time to think about what I actually want to do with the rest of my time on this earth and also reflect on why I've made the choices that I have so far.

Ultimately, this has mostly just involved spending time on the internet researching, but most of my growth has actually been occurring when I look past the screen and apply what I've learned in a project that I set up for myself. It is easy to get trapped into continuously learning online, but it is also critical to stop and digest what one is consuming.

Kalāheo Neighborhood Park

Keoni Ocalvey '20

College students around the world were required to return home unexpectedly due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. No one expected this and very few probably would have chosen this outcome. As a senior, I was especially saddened by losing my fabled 'senior spring' and was given little choice except to remain in Hawai'i in my parent's home. However, no matter how much the situation sucks, I have been able to relive and cultivate both the positive and negative aspects of my childhood. These include riding my bike with my little sister to our neighborhood park that we frequented from birth, playing on the equipment or practicing sports.

The Path Forward

Ryan McCann '22

I found these stairs in the woods by my house. I took the photo because I thought it was interesting and thought it looked like a good picture, but now that I look at it, I see it as a representation of cultivating progress. It's steep, winding, and takes work to get to the top, but we will in the end.

From Stone

Ryan McCann '22

This small tree grows out of a boulder at the bottom of my driveway. It has been growing for the past ten years or so, but hasn't changed much in that amount of time. Despite that lack of growth, to me it embodies the idea of self-cultivation. There is a small patch of dirt that it is growing out of on top of the rock, but other than that, it's on its own. It has to fight and claw for every inch of rock it breaks through to survive.

Growth

Emma Kallman '22

In the past couple weeks, I've focused a lot on a cultivation of self. I've had a whirlwind of changes hit me school wise and a couple other personal challenges to deal with. It's in times like these where I find it's very helpful to take a step back and focus on the things that make me happy.

Sprouting

Victoria Quint '22

little leaves unfurl
aching for promising sky
rooted, still, in earth

This little guy poked his leaves out after some spring cleaning, finally free of the previous year's debris. There's something so hopeful and pure in new growth, something that inspired me to take a breath, reevaluate, and stretch for what I can during this pandemic.

The Weathering of a Castle

Kevin Yang '20

Looking up at this hulking profile of the mountain, it's a treat to imagine what the rock faces have seen since being carved into existence in the last ice age. This is a testament to perseverance. As I slowly go crazy from being cooped up in the same room for what seems like years now, looking back at this photo reminds me to weather the storm.

our relationships

Family Tree

Emma Kallman '22

One of the gifts of quarantine has been the extra time with family. I haven't been home for a long period of time in over two years, and I'm so grateful to have more moments with my parents and my little sisters. This is a photo that I took of my sisters' hands, my hands, my mother's hands, and my grandmother's hands that I feel represents the need for and benefit of connection in our current time.

Siblings

Keoni Ocalvey '20

One of the (very few) positives of the global crisis for me has been my ability to cultivate the relationship I have with my little sister. Being from Hawai'i and five years older than her, I left home before she entered high school and have only been able to return during the long Dartmouth breaks. However, even during these breaks we don't have quality time to hang out as either she is practicing her sport, still in school, or I am quickly rushing off for another trip. I am grateful that I have been given this time to get to know the woman she has become, especially as she is going to be attending a different University next year and I will probably work in a different state than the rest of my family.

Vail

Keoni Ocalvey '20

When the corona virus outbreak gained significant coverage and acceptance in the US, we were given conflicting information on what to do in order to stay safe. It was almost impossible to cultivate the supplies such as masks, hand sanitizer, or even toilet paper that we needed. It was, however, even harder to cultivate the correct facts regarding how the situation would pan out and ultimately what we should be doing when we do have to leave our homes. Masks and social distancing give us some peace of mind, yet we never can fully control our own health.

Cold Reflections

Kevin Yang '20

Quarantine has made be revisit old memories and experiences. This photo was taken this past summer on a backpacking trip with my father. Growing up, I didn't have the best relationship with my family, but my father has always supported my love for the outdoors. This trip was the first time we've traveled with just the two of us in my twenty-one years of life. I'm not the best at keeping in touch (I think I've called my parents once in four years of college), but even so I'm incredibly grateful for their cultivating this love for the outdoors in me.

Herbivore

Connor Bishop '23

Cultivate a new relationship in this time of isolation, but keep others in mind before removing your mask to kiss!

Face to Face

Emily Luy Tan '20

During my time in college, I've become more intentional about the ways that I think about my self and my positionality. Coming from a small town in the middle of homogenous Wisconsin, I'd never had to look in the mirror critically. Dartmouth has been the stage on which I have been exposed to more diversity than ever before, and I have consequently been confronted with my own misguided ideas of the intersectionalities of race, gender, class, ability, and nationality. Over the years, I've worked to better understand not only my identity as a second-generation Asian American woman but also how I can use my privilege to make the changes I want to see in the world.

Roll Credits

Emily Luy Tan '20

This photo was taken outside of a historical cinema that had recently been closed down near my hometown in Wisconsin. For my sister and I, film and visual culture have been important vehicles with which we have explored our understanding of the world around us and ourselves as creatives. In light of the economic downturn due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, I've been thinking a lot about what significant sites of cultural production, community, and self-understanding have been lost.

POV

Emily Luy Tan '20

For me, this photo is a mediation on optics. I shot it during a time when I was struggling to feel like I was living my life well, with confidence, intentionality, and meaning. On one level, I was questioning my own self-worth based on a physical image of my body, one that I had started to hold up against societal standards of beauty. On another level, I was beginning to interrogate my assumptions about the world around me that I had formed from narratives in popular media. For me, this was a step toward learning how to better navigate a world so dictated by images, those that can simultaneously hold so much meaning and yet can be so misleading.

Film Foundary

Emily Luy Tan '20

This photo is significant to me since it is the first film photo I ever captured and it represents my first steps into a whole new realm of photography. Beyond cultivating myself artistically in this new way, this photo also represents a feeling of place that I cultivated during my time abroad in Nepal. I was alone in Kathmandu for the first time, exploring the city's chaotic streets that seemed to call for me to document them. I had just met a handful of talented, seasoned Nepali photographers who took me under their wing, let be borrow a film camera, and became my analog mentors and friends. This group of photographers lived and breathed film. I had never been a part of such a collaborative and open creative community like them before. That sense of community and constant experimentation is something that I will forever cherish and work to engender in the spaces that I occupy.

our surroundings

Pathfinding

Victoria Quint '22

This trail, one of my pandemic favorites, never fails to transport me out of time. It feels like the glaciers just receded yesterday, leaving mossy scars on the earth begging to be explored. The outside world disappears almost entirely, save for the occasional appearance of another hiker, leaving space to just be.

Give Me Water or Give Me Death

Connor Bishop '23

In this age of isolation, if one has the luxury, we should seek to cultivate and strengthen our relationship with nature. In doing so we may realize that all life on every scale has similarities. We all depend on water and we all depend on the environment.

Persistence

Ryan McCann '22

This storm came after a while without any rain. The plants outside were needing water, and this storm has since allowed them to grow.

Butterfly Eye

Ryan McCann '22

I decided to start growing plants at the beginning of this pandemic when I was going to be stuck inside for a while. I discovered this flower, the Bluebird Columbine, and noticed how intricate the flowers are and how brightly colored they are, which has brought a lot of life into my home during a time where that might be harder to find.

A Vermont Boardwalk

Victoria Quint '22

As ancient and untouched as the trail may feel, I'm forced to confront the presence of others when I reach the boardwalk. Making my way across, though, I know that that isn't such a bad thing. Otherwise, I'd be sloshing through mud, slipping down towards the unforgivingly rocky river. Whoever installed those boards is cultivating the trail, not only for themselves, but for anyone who can find it. That's Vermont generosity for you - unassuming but kind.

Spring Sun

Victoria Quint '22

As the weather warms up, releasing us from the damp chill of early Vermont spring, I find myself shifting to be outside as much as possible. Perhaps that's one good thing about the pandemic - being able to watch the delicate leaves unfurl day by day until they're broad and waxy, truly focusing on them for once. There's not much else to do, after all.

Artist Spotlight

Keoni Oclavey

For the longest time I didn't really have a 'philosophy' behind my photography. Instead, I just sort of took photos and edited them into things that I thought looked good to me. I was able to get away with this for quite some time because most of the things I photographed were already inherently 'beautiful' - such as a sunset on a beach in Hawai'i or Dartmouth's campus during peak foliage. Sadly, that also meant that if my photos portrayed a deeper meaning or emotion, it was completely by chance and fully unintentional. Instead, to be honest, when I took a photo, I was only thinking about capturing a viewer's attention or getting the most 'likes' possible (very shallow, I know).

However, all of this came crashing down when I took Photo 1 this term virtually. Firstly, because my professor wasn't at all afraid to "critique" my photos and secondly because quarantining at home meant that I didn't have access to any of my normal subject matter. At first this was quite disheartening (probably because I thought too highly of my own skills) and at the time I even wondered if I had the ability to take photos that would please my professor at all.

Luckily, as time progressed, I overcame these hurdles and began to increasingly appreciate my professor's criticism. At first, I began to almost 'relearn' photography, watching documentaries on other photographers' work that made me 'feel' something such as Steve McCurry's documentary style or Vivian Maier's street photos. Then I began reflecting on the aspects that I most resonated with and tried to think back on other inspirations from my life that I could draw on. This process was quite successful and ultimately gave me the desire to capture this special moment in history in a way that conveyed what I was actually doing and feeling.

The photos in my set were my attempt to capture these exact things - the immense amount of time that I was spending at home, the feelings of isolation and distance, and the overall tension/ uncertainty that the world's current events brought into my life. While they may not portray the emotions/period in the exact way that I envisioned, I am very proud that I made the conscious effort to try and capture them in the first place.

Additionally, taking these photos not only allowed me to improve my photography skills, but more importantly gave me a medium to reflect on what I was feeling and what I could do about it. Overall, the entire term turned into a time of 'cultivation'- cultivating my photography skills, cultivating the relationship I have with my little sister and my hometown, and overall cultivating the 'photographer' I want to become in the future.

Contributing Artists

In order of appearance

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Members of the Dartmouth Photography Society were motivated to create Illuminate in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, stressing the importance of creativity and visual expression as a way to connect with one another despite our distance from campus and in direct response to this stressful, isolating time. We hope that this publication can aid in the maintenance of a strongly-tied artistic community.

We publish new issues of Illuminate every academic term. The theme for out next issue is yet to be announced, but you can keep up to date with current themes, how to submit your own work, and other publication information at our instagram and our website. For inquiries, please email (illuminate.magazine.dartmouth@gmail.com).