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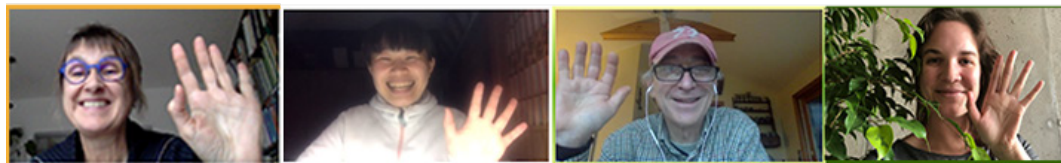
RESILIENCY THROUGH ARTMAKING

Re-charging the IMAGination

As artists and educators, we continually find ways to energize and invigorate our practice. Now, as we strive to make sense of unprecedented global events that have uprooted our routines we are at new beginnings compelled to again witness the power of art to bring us hope, joy, and meaning. In this issue we present visual essays that have demonstrated novel and innovative ways that artists, educators, and community members recharge as an active commitment to revitalize the imagination and sense of wonder. These essays illuminate how visual language and aesthetic experience brings optimism and resilience into the creative process. By exploring the unexplored they refresh the imagination of self, learners, and community members.

As newly appointed co-editors we are also at new beginnings exploring the unexplored and honored to present this, our first issue. We are grateful to Teresa Eca who pioneered and edited IMAG through these past seven years and to graphic designer Angela Saldanha for her keen dedication and vision. We hope to follow their path to Re-charge Imaginations for our readers through many upcoming IMAG issues.

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IMAG issue 11 **RESILIENCY THROUGH ARTMAKING**

The first issue by the IMAG QUARTET ::

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A Pedagogy of Photographic Seeing That Seeks to Dwell

Keywords or phrases: photographic seeing, photographic composition, self-cultivation



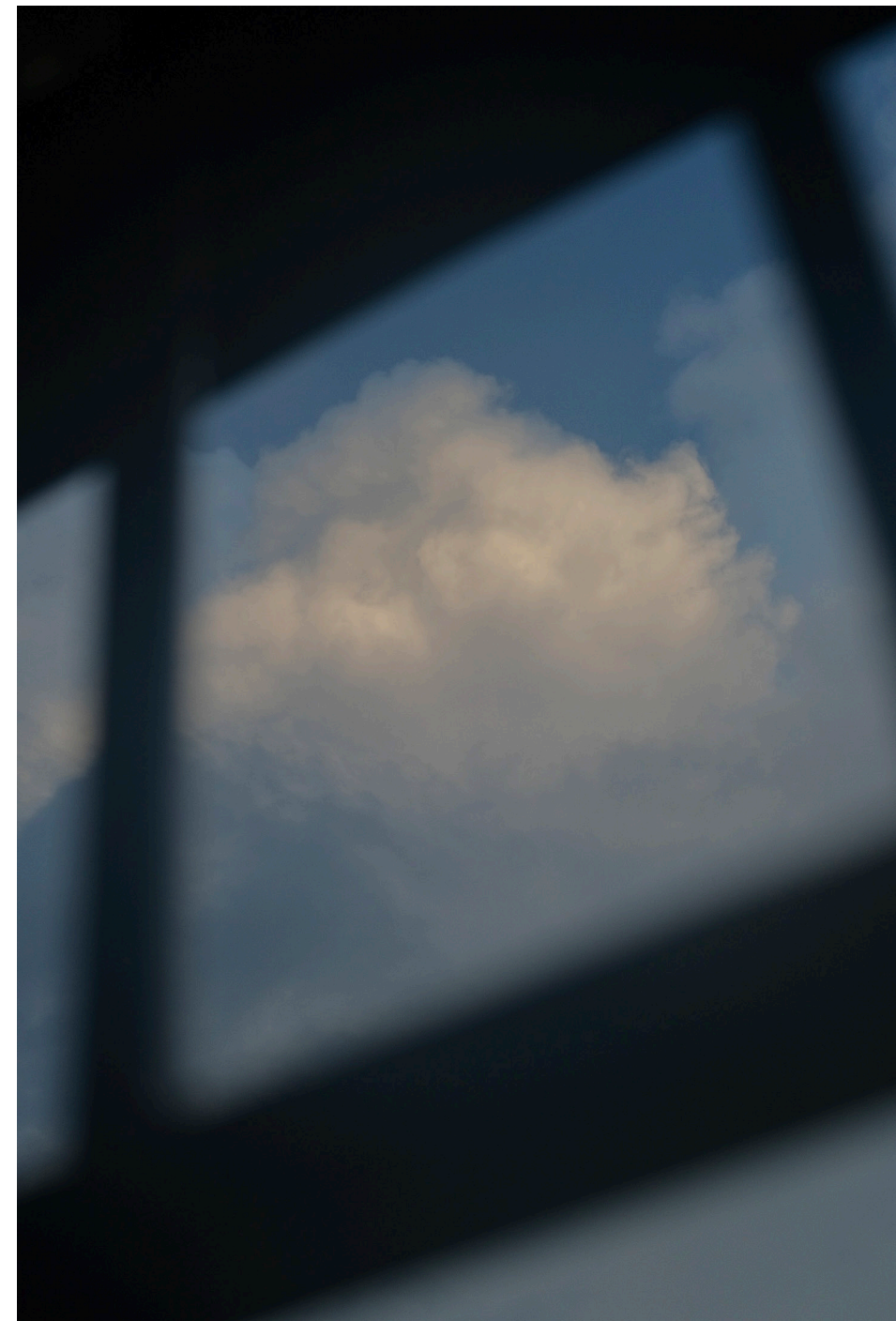
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This photo essay presents my living inquiry (Springgay et al., 2005) about the possibility of poetic dwelling as a newcomer to a huge and populated city, where I also started working as an arts-based educational scholar in a local university. Amid a changing urban living environment, the anxieties of surviving in a stressful academia and emerging inner queries about the purpose of living at a new life stage, I seek out a way through with a digital camera in hand. Being one of the mediums closest to reality, photography may enable a realization of spiritual self-renewal that is both grounded in the mundane and generative in affecting poetic thoughts.

Inspired by Elliot Eisner's (2002) framing on the pedagogy of art (i.e., what and how art teaches), I propose the particular inquiry question: how and what could photographic seeing teach me in the quotidian life?

To engage with the question, I designed an initial self-practicing protocol inspired by relevant photographer's heuristics (Fulford & Halpern, 2014). I set up a spatial condition (limitation) for photo-taking that avoids sites popular opinions regarded as beautiful or fit for making eye-catching images. Instead, I make photographs only within the spatial range of my daily routines (i.e., urban routes of less



than two miles between my apartment and the workplace) no matter how plain or lacking beauty the surroundings appear. The condition enables me to perceptually engage with an ordinary environment with aesthetic alertness. The whole protocol enacted over months aims for making some photographic work in the expressive form of sequenced photos. It is a practice of creating a potential whole (i.e., photo narrative) from collected parts (i.e., separate photos). There are three basic activity components that I articulate with a simplified analogy of writing composition.

First, walk with a camera regularly as processes of visual drafting. In this phase, I required myself to take photowalk almost once every week. I spent longer time than usual walking slowly at a random pace, learning to allow myself to be guided by immediate qualitative experiences with the camera eye in an environment. The taken photos are my attempts of photographic seeing, which form an initial archive of some raw vocabularies and(or) perspectives.

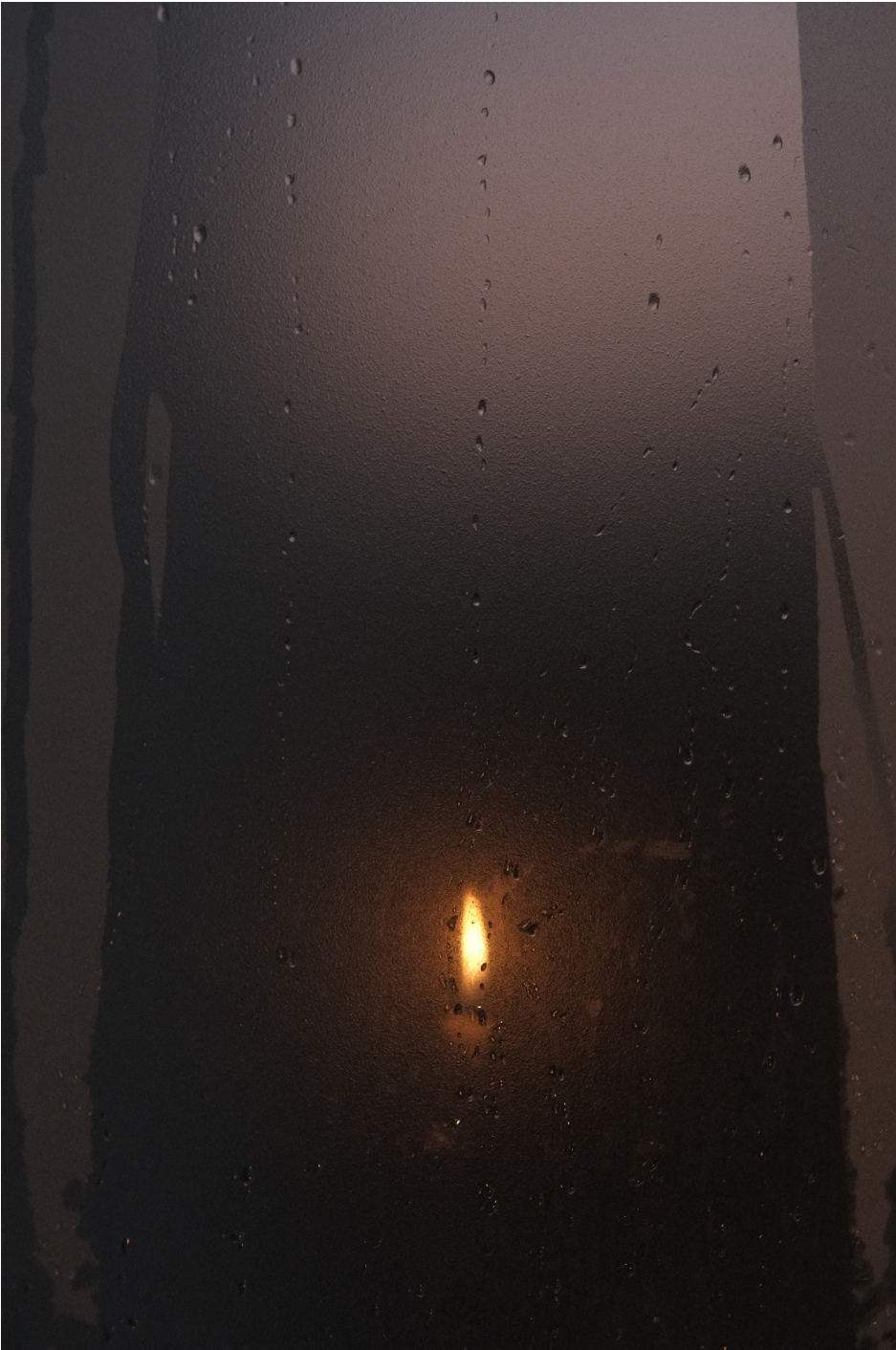
Second, select photos out of the initial archive as identifying appropriate compositional words, phrases or a particular lens of seeing. In this phase, I spent time on the computer reviewing the photo archive. I asked myself to “listen to” (Webb & Webb, 2014) those visual drafts, perceiving and identifying the sticker ones, which bear longer gaze or generated visual engagement beyond the fixed frame. It could be a process of distilling aesthetic clue(s) of qualitative perception from the archived mess.

Third, sequence photos with an attempt of composing an expressive whole. This final phase demanded me to put the pieces into a visual narrative and often went back and forth with the first and second phases. The process of sequencing photos could evoke affective writing upon an aroused poetic impulse. And I made the photographic series with an intention to, ideally, effect in readers an enhancement of certain qualitative experience.



Maxine Greene once stressed the necessity and significance for educators themselves, if wanting to realize aesthetic education among students, to “develop a heightened sensitivity” and experience “what it is life to live inside” varied art forms (Greene, 2001, p. 8) . In her sense, the described photographic practice has become an aesthetic process of self-education to me. The process has taught me to attend instead of to intend when feeling the perceptual and qualitative elements in an ordinary material environment and in processes of composing an expressive photographic work out of them. It has helped nurture a sense of hope, joy and even living wonder, when I did not know in the very beginning what vision may come out of this process under limitations. The protocol itself, when enacted and revised repeatedly, has a potential to become one technique of living and self-inquiry. This protocol, together with the idea of sequencing photographic narrative as a mode of living inquiry, could be considered as an alternative vision for utilizing photography in arts-based pedagogy and educational research.

As a direct visual illustration and a temporary closure to the beginning inquiry question, I present a nine-photo series created with a title and an opening text I felt compelled to write upon an emergent impulse in the process.





Like Dwelling in A Bird's Eye

How can I make my gaze more settled in the hurried and crowded corners of this huge city? A material home or shelter can be a haven bringing a sense of security, but the gaze longs for a space to breathe widely. In the day-to-day structures of ordinary life, I need to understand and practice photography as a way of self-cultivation. Framing a photograph can be an exercise of breathing. The frame of the lens can become a perceptual filter, being able to identify and eliminate visual redundancies through deciding a visual focus and the periphery, discriminate between a foreground and the background, a move that also allows the rigidified eyes to stretch out from time to time. There are also those times, when secretly praying for the unexpected, one may encounter an existential moment of (self) presence.

Sitting in front of the computer, sorting, selecting, and sequencing photos, from this one to the next, I try to breathe in different walking rhythms. From this photo to the next, eyes perching, moving away, perching, moving away, again and again. I try to put temporary moments into those intervals, those moments of intrinsic stillness, to let the gaze rest in a nearly imagined way.

A little more agile, if possible, and a little lighter,
to approach the health and spirit of a bird,
like dwelling in a bird's eye.



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