

# KATHARINE NORTON

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## 2022 MFA PHOTOGRAPHY THESIS EXHIBITION



## DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

MAY 6-20, 2022

# 2022 MFA PHOTOGRAPHY THESIS EXHIBITION

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The *2022 MFA Photography Thesis Exhibition* features the thesis works of the MFA candidates in Columbia College Chicago's Photography Department. This exhibition presents photographs, installation, and video works that are representative of the culmination of research and practice these emerging artists have maintained throughout their time in the program.

Participating photographers:

Jes Farnum

Sylvie Harris

Katharine Norton

Emilie Plunkett

Ziru Tang

Fengzhao Xu

Senjie Zhu

The *2022 Photography MFA Thesis Exhibition* is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), and the Photography Department.

# KATHARINE NORTON

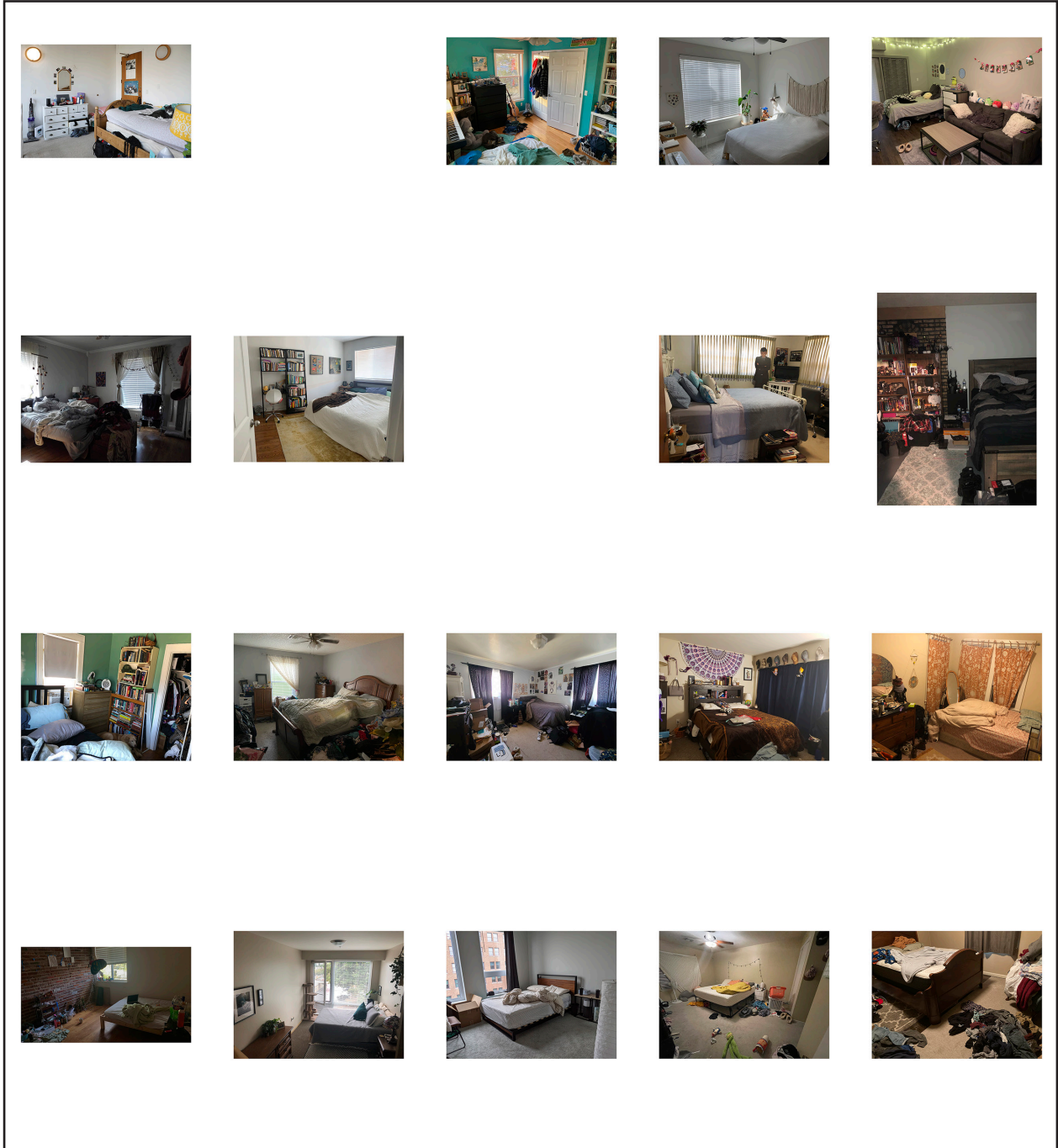
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In Katharine Norton's photographic project, *A Means of Connection*, Norton sends a series of prompts for photographs to a set of twenty participants. These prompts act as a way to learn more about the participants while initiating conversation and fostering connection. Their responses are compiled into accordion books and the aggregate material allows patterns to arise such as commonalities in photographic language.

The process shifts the power dynamic so that the participants control what Norton and the viewer are able to see. Some choose to skip prompts or drop out of the project entirely. Unlike a traditional relationship between photographer and subject, they are able to choose how and if they want to be represented.

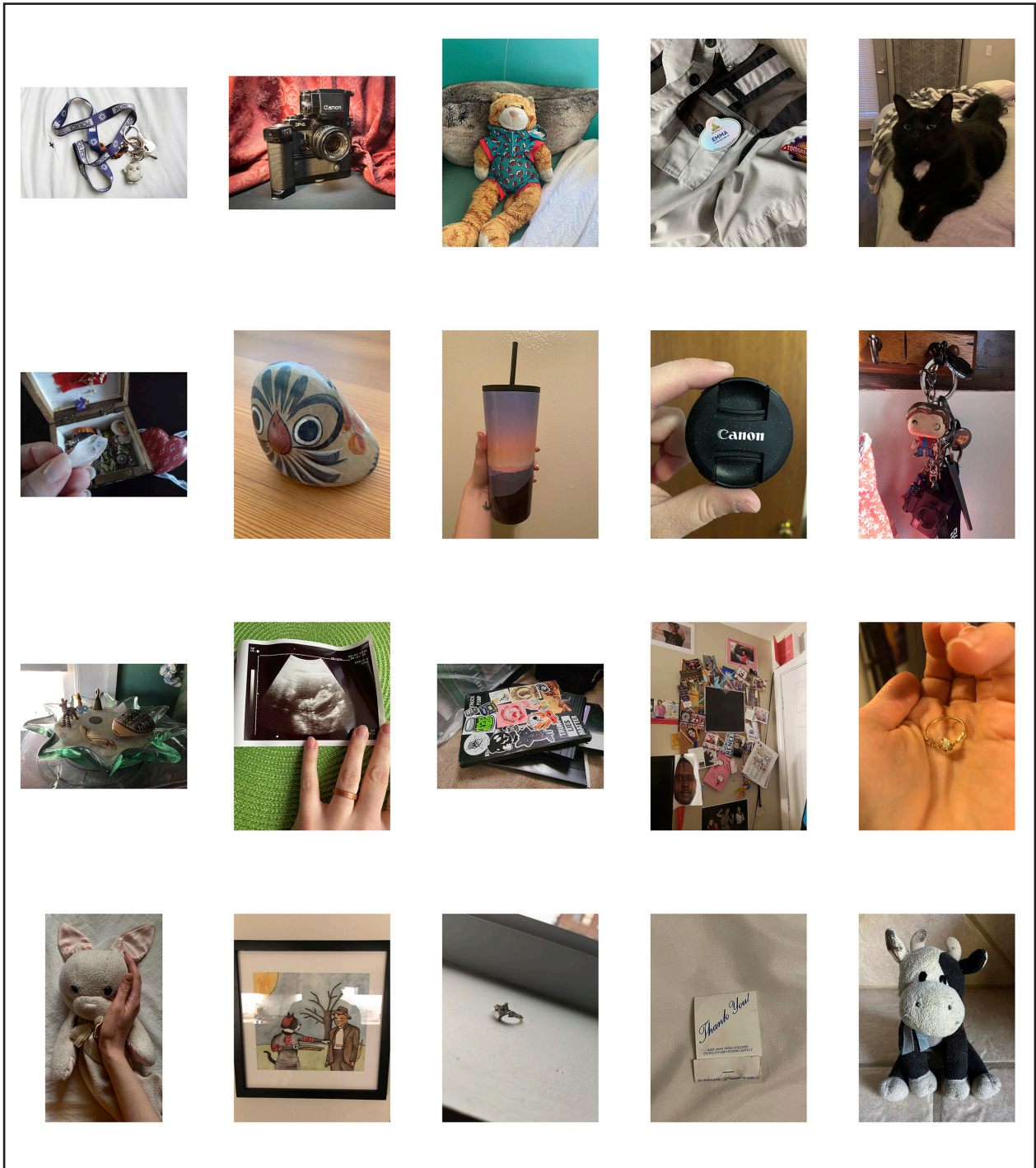
Many of the photographs are inscrutable to anyone other than the sender. This is a result of the limitations of photography as a form of communication combined with some participants' choice to limit what they reveal. The images offer what may seem like a sizable sum of data while still ultimately highlighting that the subjects are unknowable to the outside viewer.

**Katharine Norton** is a photographic artist from Tulsa, OK and is currently based in Chicago, IL. Norton graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from the University of Tulsa and is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Photography at Columbia College Chicago. Norton's personal work explores themes of performance, identity, and community.



*Take a photograph of your bedroom in its typical state (don't clean for the photo). Try to get as much of the room in the image as possible., 2021*



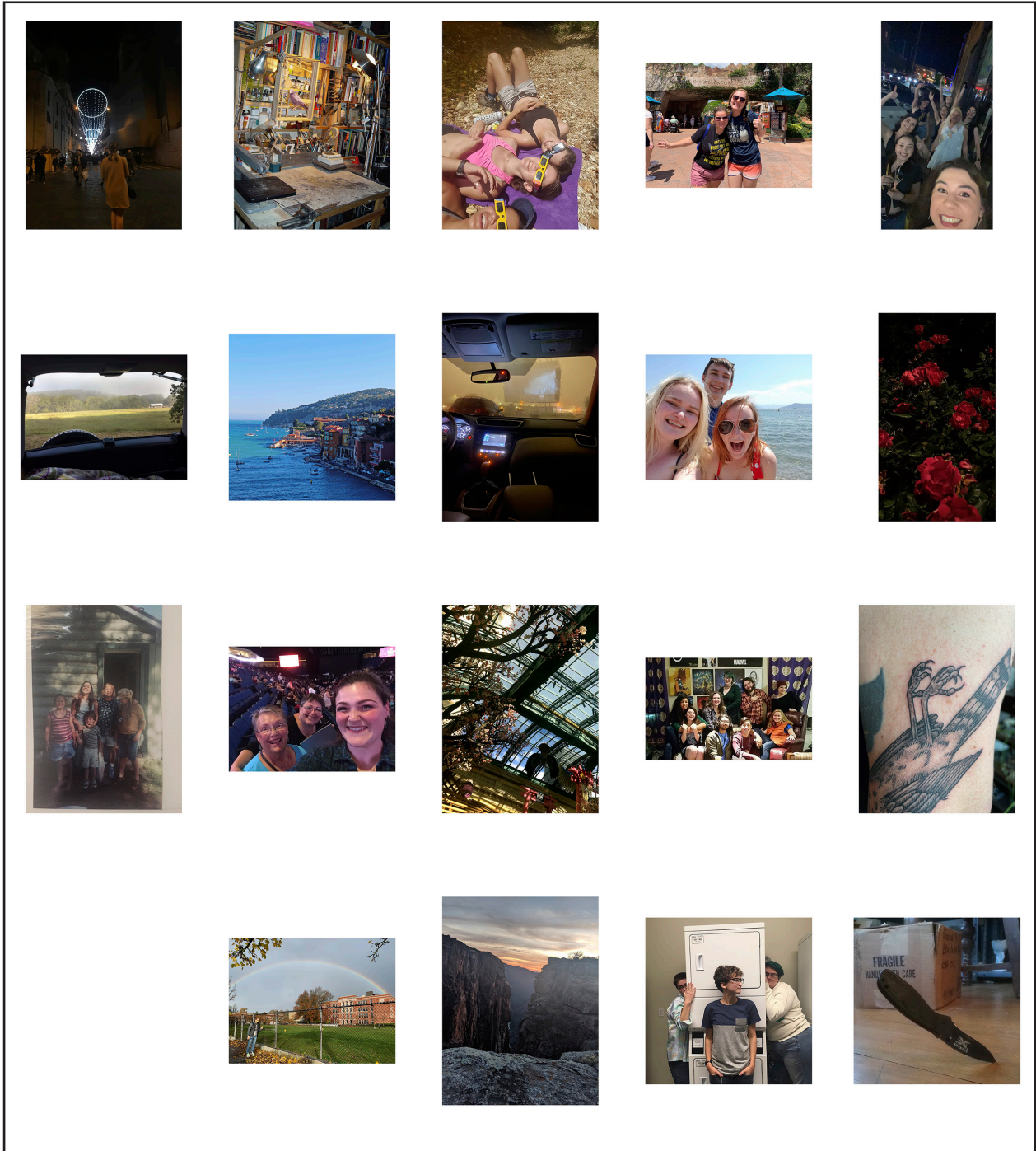


*Take a photograph of an object that you would never want to lose., 2021*

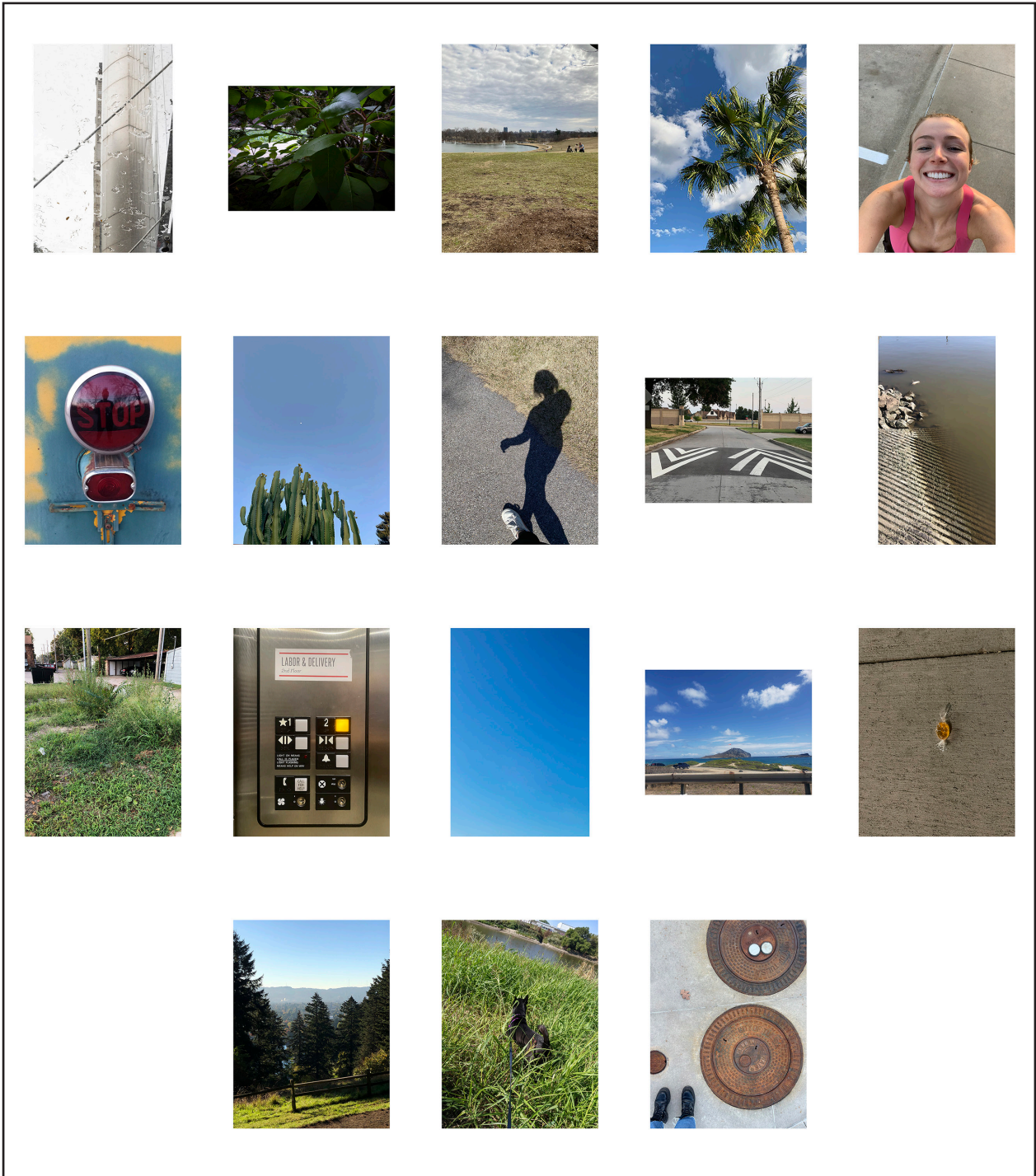


*A Means of Connection, installation view, 2021*



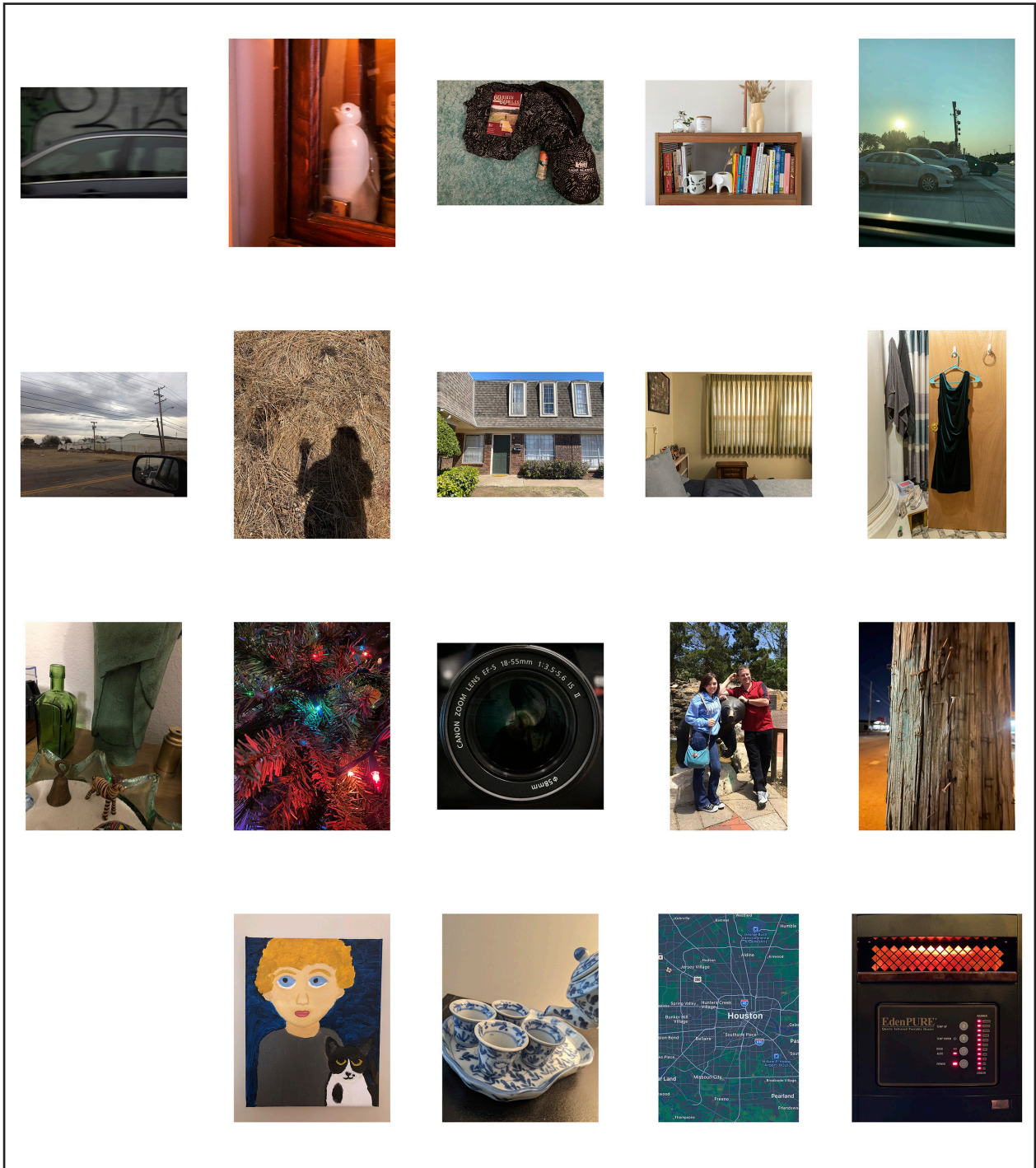


*Go through the photos on your phone. Send me one from a time that you wish you could return to., 2021*

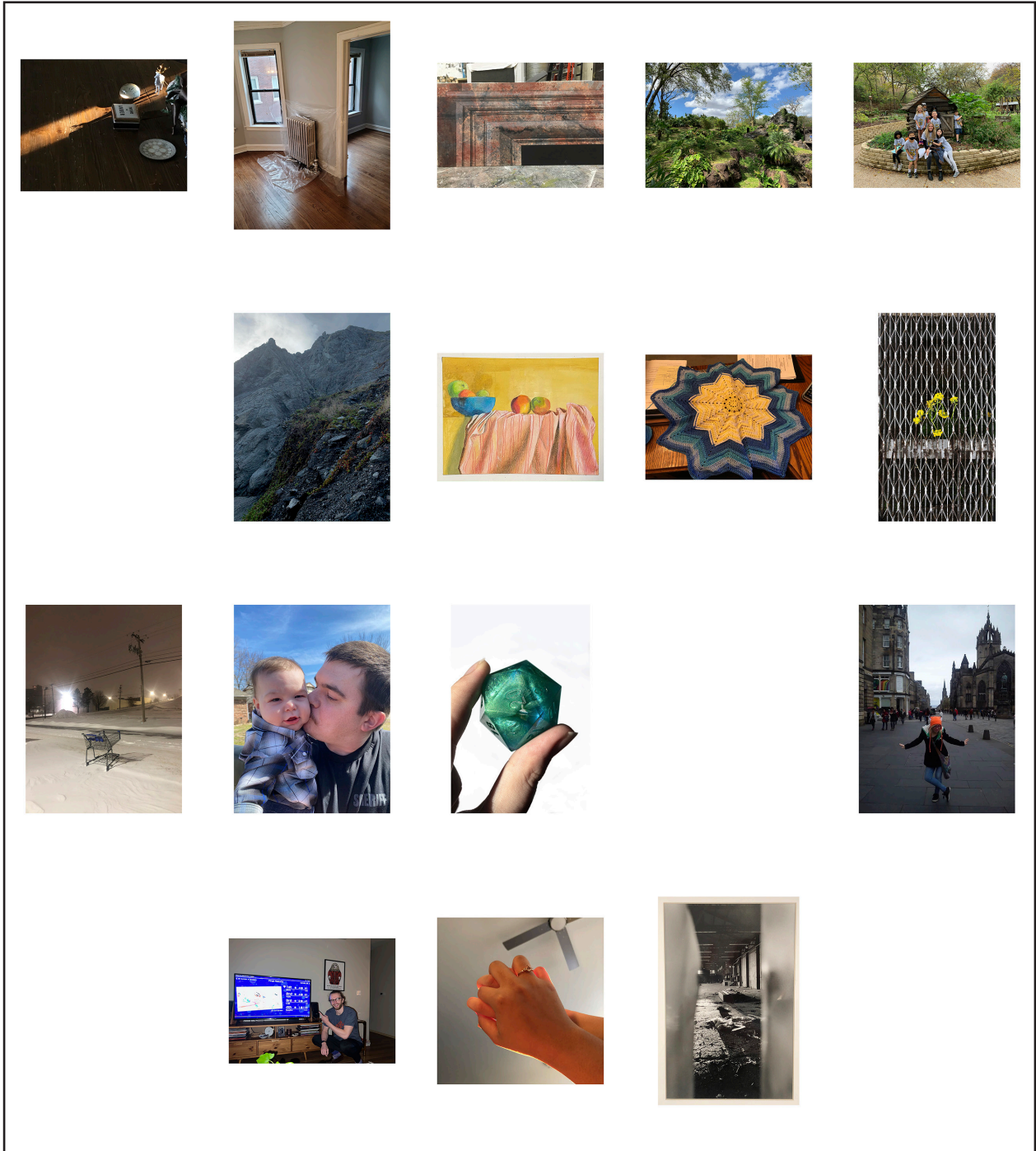


*Go for a walk and at the halfway point make a photograph., 2021*



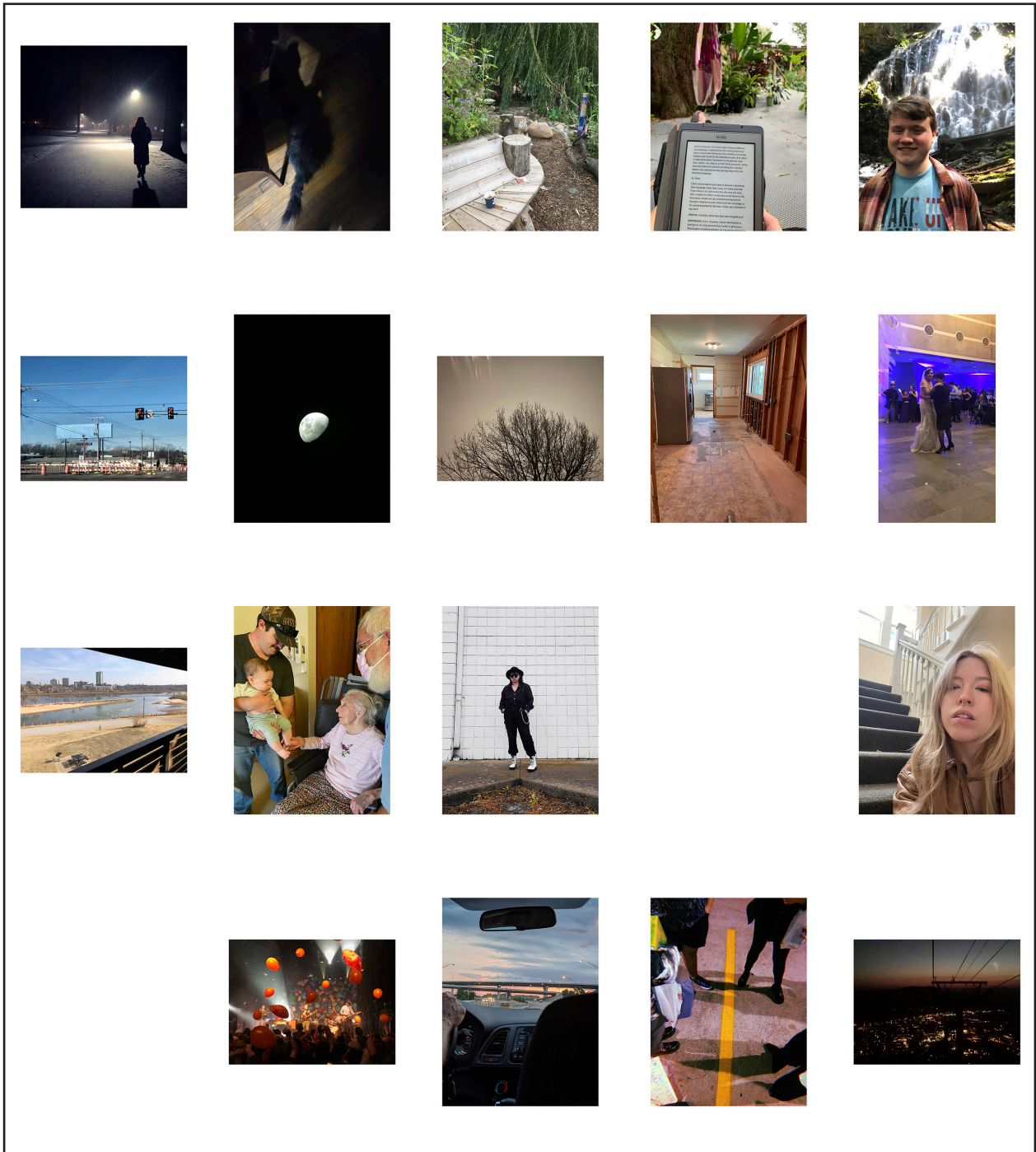


*Remember the last time you saw someone you miss. Make a photograph., 2021*



*Go through the photos on your phone. Send me one that you're proud of, 2022*





*Send me a photograph that failed to fully capture a moment or experience, 2022*

# INTERVIEW WITH KATHARINE NORTON

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler and Sierra Delamarter

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**Sierra Delamarter:** What was the thought process behind your choice of display, why the accordion style format?

**Katherine Norton:** I wanted to allow the viewer to track both prompt and participant through the images, the columns are participants and the rows are prompts, but I felt like a flat grid on the wall felt too cold. This display also allows them to be seen off of the wall as individual books.

**Kaylee Fowler:** You talk about how your awareness of communicating with others has shifted during the pandemic; how has, if at all, your photographic practices also changed during the pandemic?

**KN:** The biggest shift with this project is that I am not taking the photographs. It's been really interesting giving up control over the images in my work. With other projects, I have been more concerned with making "good" images, but in this body of work I had to learn to let go of that.

**KF:** What is it about photography that draws you to it as a means of exploring your subject matter? When did your interest in photography start?

**KN:** There's a number of things I like about photography as a medium such as its perceived truth, but the main aspect that I have enjoyed exploring in this work is how democratic it is. With the widespread use of phones with increasingly high quality cameras, there are fewer barriers to making photos.





## THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

The DEPS Artist Profile Series presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with, and support the arts community. The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by Fine Arts major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistants Kaylee Fowler and Sierra Delamarter. Graphic design is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Gray Beyer. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: [colum.edu/deps](http://colum.edu/deps)

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