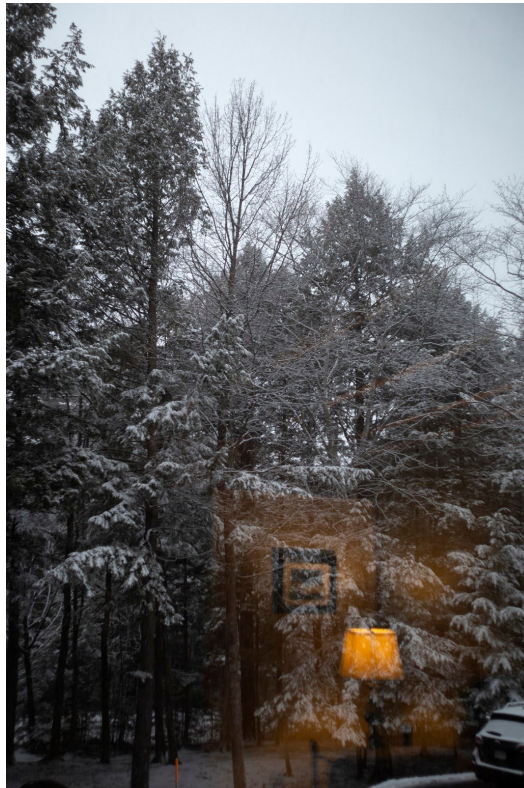


# *Mary O'Connor*

*An Interview conducted by Hyoyang Song*

H: What influenced you to study photography at college?

M: My art teacher in high school. She really influenced me during that time of my life and I looked up to her. She inspired me to create without being afraid of people's interpretations of my art.



H: Why do you photograph? The main reason you are photographing?

M: I photograph because it allows me to capture my emotions or experience in life at a certain time. I'm interested in how images can keep the memory of someone alive or let me experience a moment in history.



H: Where do you get artistic inspiration? Are there any other forms of art you practice?

M: I've recently been inspired by my grandfather's photographs. He took amazing photographs throughout his life that have greatly inspired and shaped my work to be what it is today.

H: What do you photograph normally and why do you decide to photograph them?

M: I've photographed scenes around me that are significant in some way, such as self-portraits-, and members of my family. Religious iconography is also an important part of my work.



H: How did you use photography in your life? What do you want to say to starting college students about photography?

M: I would say that it's not an easy journey if you go through art school. There's going to be occasions where you question why the hell you're doing it at all. It's competitive and you

have to grow in confidence with yourself and your work. I remember being told during sophomore year by a reviewer that she couldn't see my photographic eye at all. You just have to be strong, push forward, and be open minded to others ideas or thoughts. That's how I grew as an artist and person.

H: Whose photographic style do you admire the most?

M: I was always inspired by Vivian Maier's work, ever since I saw the documentary on her. I think I was drawn to the mysterious aspects of her work as well as her personal life not on camera.



H: Did that artist influence your work?

M: Yes, I remember making work greatly influenced by her when I first arrived at MassArt. I used a medium format camera, a Rolleiflex to be exact. I took a lot of pictures of my shadow, that's for sure.

H: What other projects do you want to start in the near future or far in the future? What do you want to say through photographs?

M: I don't really know what I plan to do in the future. I think that's one of the exciting and appealing things about art. You never know what direction you'll go in the future or what will inspire you down the road.

H: Has coronavirus affected your photography career?

M: I would say yes. When news of the pandemic started to blow up everywhere on the news, I began to sift through my old family photos and my grandfather's photos. I had never really thought much about appropriated imagery until then.



H: Do you pursue jobs related to art or photography? Are there any goals you are chasing after graduation?

M: I don't plan to get a job doing photography after school. However, I do think that I will continue to photograph and have my own side projects.