WRECK

COVID-19 SPECIAL

05 2020

VOLUME 2

WRECK

INTRODUCTION

These are unprecedented times seen across the U.K and most of the Globe, in this micro-issue of Wreck I want to explore both the positive and negative aspects of a nationwide lockdown. This volume will however be focusing on a more positive side of isolation as the the national and international news has become over-burdened with negative stories and scaremongering.

It seems that the contemporary roaring twenties has started with an epidemic, not the best start to a new decade but hopefully a time that brings the nation together again. On the back foot of Brexit and the general election Britain was divided in two, countless political attacks from both sides, news stories condemning party leaders, constant reminders we were no closer to a Brexit deal than when we started in 2016 and then a new deal that seemed to benefit no one.

Britain was a war zone for political ideology, no one was safe from a casual debate at the dinner table turning into a savage and brutal argument that split families. However, it seems that this epidemic has started to heal the gap in the nation, people staying home to protect others no matter their political agenda and to protect the country they live in. It's almost moving to see that this virus has humbled the nation into compassion and kindness for each other.

In this issue, I will be exploring the impact the virus has had on myself creatively and politically. While this pandemic has halted the political progress of our nation, it does not mean the problems have dissipated.



ACREDDITED TO

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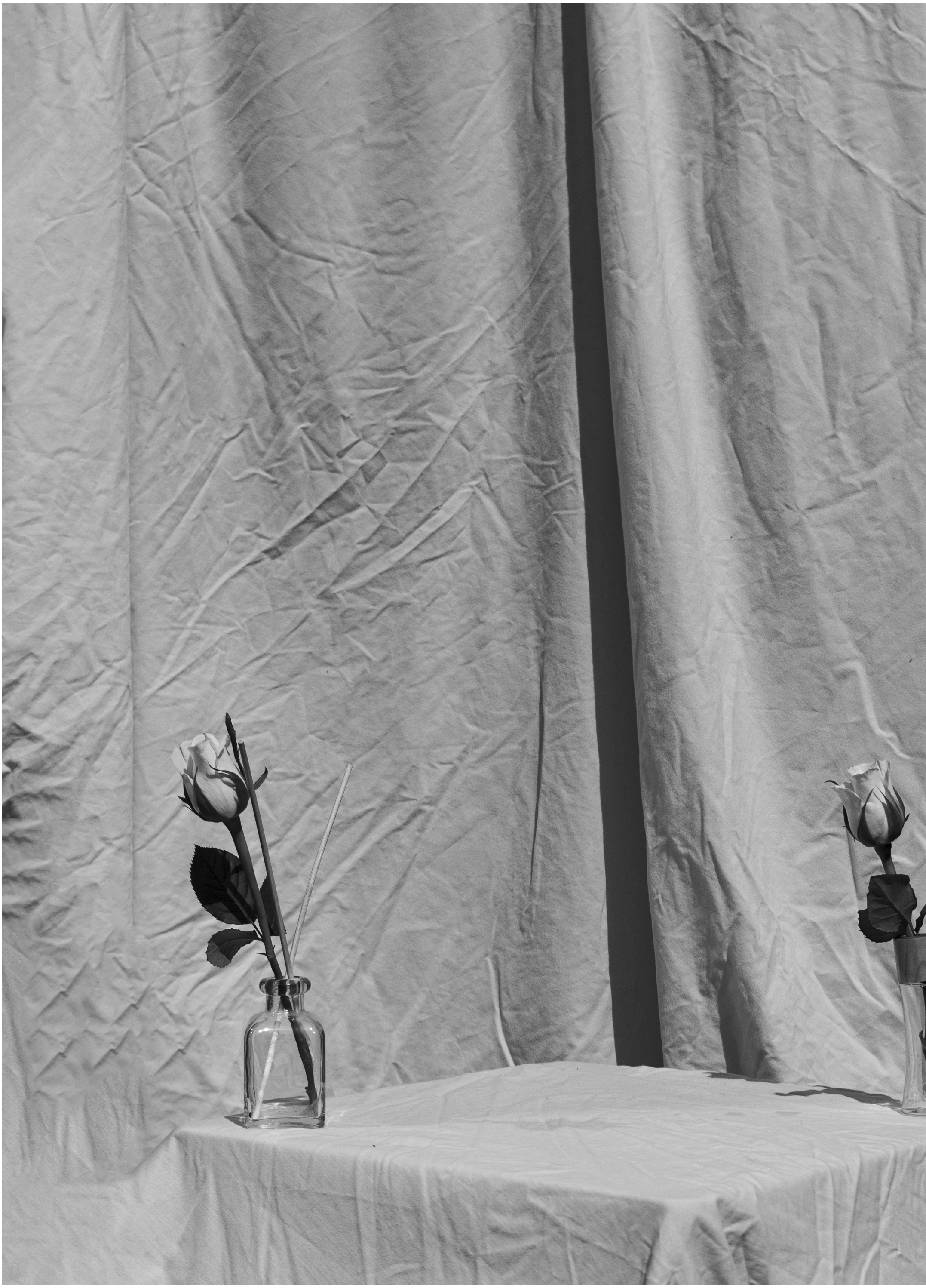
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INNOVATION IN ISOLATION

While lockdown had told many exposing truths about ourselves and and the incompetence of the government that runs our nation, isolation has the creative juices of many artists to flow and allow them to propose and create new and innovative ideas what could not have been available if "normal" life was in full swing. Myself and others have taken this idea of creation in confinement as a challenge rather than a set back. The restrictive dualities of isolation has let many of us to become creative in ways of set design in particularly in the artistic field of photography. Studios constructed from old bed linens and still life images created from what can be found around the house. For me, isolation has allowed me to explore aspects go photography that I have never taken part in.

My usual comfortable place in photography is in portraiture, in particularly fashion and editorial style portraiture but in isolation I have learnt to remove myself from my idle seat and move into realms of photography outside of my comfort zone. For example this still life image created by myself is a new step in an adventure of the various genres of photography. The image constructed from old bed linens and fruit found in the house and taken on a camera resting on top of a make shift tripod is my first step. This much more traditionalist style of image is not my usual forte but these lockdown restrictions seem to be ironically freeing as it has allowed me to be experimental in my photographic practice that I hope to take further in my work and this zine.

Furthermore isolation has not only allowed me to test my creative capabilities it has also allowed a mutual friend of mine to gain positive business in her independently run company 'Nufinwstd' or @nufinwstd on instagram. Much like the previous business promoted in my first issue of Wreck, Nufinwstd is a zero waste and ethical clothing business that reworks old pieces of clothing or material and makes them into new pieces that fit the fashion criteria of what's in now. Due to the lockdown resulting in an influx of online shopping to major retailers it has also trickled down to smaller companies such as Nufinwstd receiving a larger quantity of orders. This has allowed the business to still gain revenue in a time when major businesses like John Lewis are struggling but has also allowed new and creative ways of making clothes that not only meet the fashion trends but also exceed them. As well as this the business owner has be

en making masks made from spare material when making the clothing to create masks and other PPE that they have been giving away for free to nurses and anyone who may need it. This small sign of compassion has been extremely moving that displays that kindness and caring qualities in people that are still happening in testing and troubling times. Which is much more than large billion dollar companies such as ASOS and Amazon that have been subjecting their staff to unsafe and unsanitary conditions to work in and little to no monetary contributions to the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic.









As well as lockdown allowing me to push my boundaries in terms of comfort zones, it has also allowed me to push my boundaries inside of my comfort zone. As someone who favours shooting different models, lockdown has been a challenge trying to shoot models outside of the household as the government has banned contact between people outside of a shared house. From this, new innovations from Vogue has created the 'facetime' shoot. I wanted to try this myself and these images are the result. Using the same idea of bed linens as a studio background, the lines created in the dress and background compliment each other well as well as the sun making the model glow in that of a renaissance painting. Technology has allowed me and other artists to shoot models externally, internally. Lockdown has become less of a barrier and more of a hurdle, with enough conviction anything seems to be possible.





Government Incompetance

"All in this together" is the new slogan announced by the government to inspire the nation to stay home in order to keep one another safe, yet this hasn't seemed to work. People are still out together, visiting each other's households, having parties and going about their daily lives as if a epidemic isn't looming over their shoulders. It is selfishness and irresponsibility at its core, a clear lack of self awareness and compassion for others and it seems even our elected officials aren't safe from it. Government Scientist Neil Ferguson was the latest to break quarantine when he let a woman visit him despite his party and daily conferences telling the public to stay home and protect others. The British COVID-19 advisor has broken the rules proposed and set by the government he helps to run. Thousands are dying and many more are critically ill as the U.K overtakes Italy and the rest of Europe in our death toll reaching over 32,000 at the time of writing, many more to follow I'm sure. Could this be purely down to the select few choosing to break quarantine or could it also be due to the lack of preventative measures taken by the government in the earliest of outbreaks. Our first case came in late January before the correct preventative measures of a full national lockdown on the 23rd of March, that's nearly a full two months before the correct procedure was taken to ensure the safety of the general public. As well as this a devastating lack of PPE equipment to protect those on the front line, those being primarily nurses and doctors as well as Care home support workers, Police officers and Paramedics left many of those helping on the frontlines with little protection and in the lethal mercy of COVID-19. This has led to hundreds of needless deaths and a continuation of the spread of the virus. One of these deaths being Mary Agyeiwaa Agyapong, who worked on a general ward at Luton and Dunstable University Hospital for five years. She was a heavily pregnant nurse in her late term working on the frontline of the epidemic who died from the coronavirus and received an emergency C-section in order to save the baby. Agyapong made the ultimate sacrifice to protect those who she loved and the general public when her death could have been fully preventable if the government ran a competent process in order to protect the ones who are protecting us.

This gross negligence and incompetence by our conservative led government that encouraged the idea of 'Herd immunity' before backing out with their tail between their legs has led to thousands of deaths of mothers, fathers, daughters, sons and many more. This idea of 'Herd Immunity' directly affects minority and working class groups who predominately work in supermarkets, factories and the NHS frontline and shows the clear lack of compassion for those who don't live in the 40% bracket. This government has shown their true colours in light of the epidemic and have proven that they only care for those who aren't working class or more likely those who will vote for them. The predominantly white led upper class that would not be affected by the virus as they are capable to still earn money from working at home or having enough money stored in their offshore accounts to keep them happy seem to be immune. The black community is most affected in the U.K as they make up the majority of the 'key workers' workforce powering our country. This is due to the lack of economic opportunities that the black community receive leaving them stuck in a cycle of minimum wage jobs. It seems that our most vital jobs at this time are the underpaid professions. Its almost ironic that the people our country chose to exclude in our Brexit vote are the ones helping us the most. This isn't fair, due to the institutional racism upheld by our government thousands have died helping us. The furlough pay given by the government hasn't been enough to sustain whole families either. This is clearly seen in the death of Agyapong leaving a motherless child in a world and a government that seems to be ungrateful for her mother's sacrifice to protect others. The question rises, Why was she working so late in her pregnancy ? It was due to her minimal furlough payment and need to help as the same government a couple years before had grossly under funded the NHS resulting in shortages of nurses and equipment . She had to work to sustain her family, unborn child and to help combat the large influx of COVID-19 cases that had hit our hospitals. The serious lack of PPE equipment couldn't allow her to protect herself appropriately while she worked to pay the bills that were still coming in despite her furlough payment as the government had chosen not to lift those bills either. Mary Agyeiwaa Agyapong is one of many tragic stories that have been told over the course of this pandemic and I'm sure she won't be the last. This pandemic has shown the true intent and absolute incompetence of the government that runs our country. Thousands have died and unfortunately, more are to come.

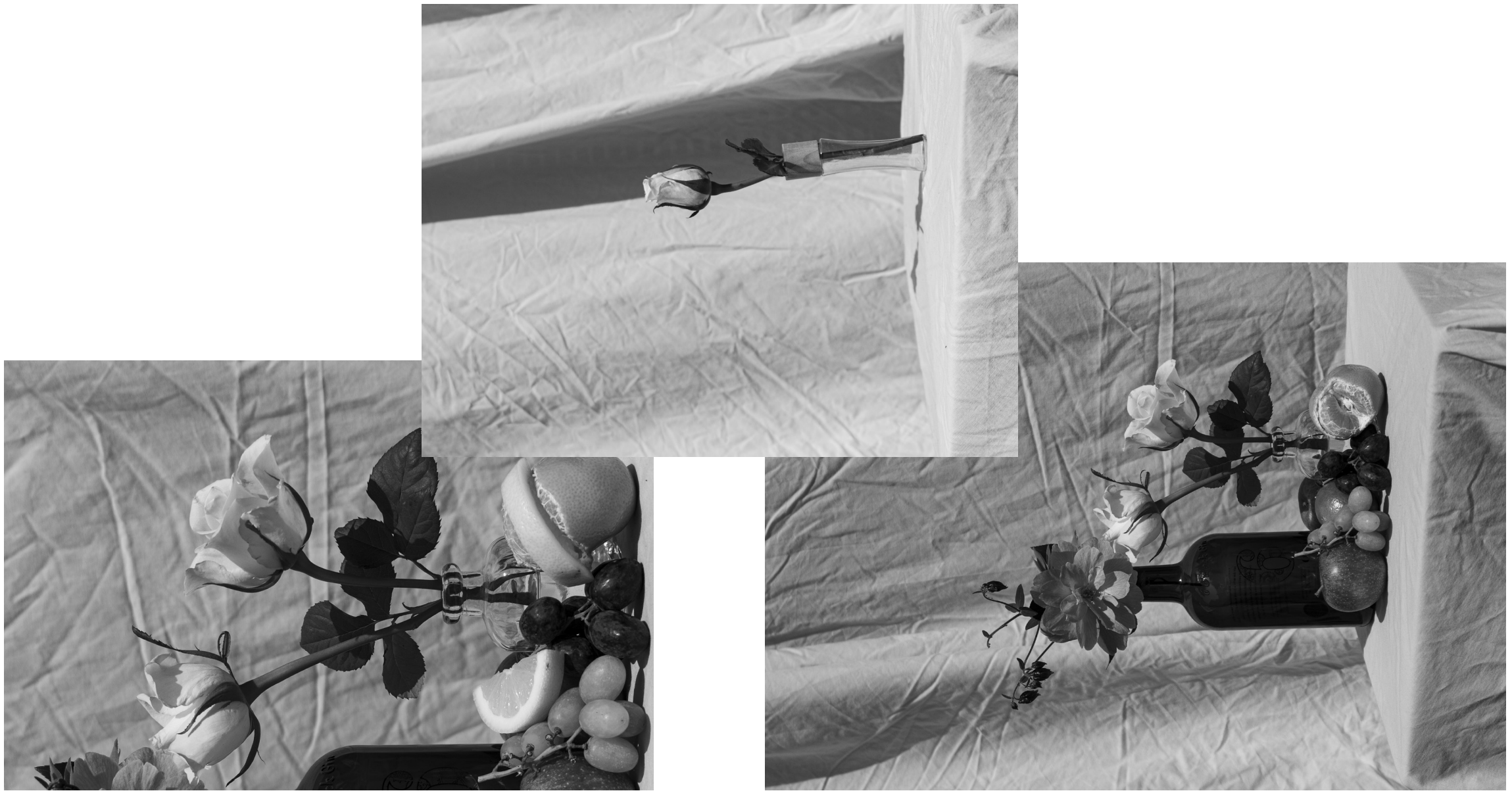
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OUTRO

Thank you for reading this mini issue of Wreck, hopefully once the epidemic starts to be on the steady decline and we are allowed to see each other again I can create more volumes on this zine focusing on different stories other than this one. I hope that the deaths also decline as well as new cases and people stay home to protect each other. The present is about caring for each other in hope for a better future, check on your friends and family who are isolating alone and STAY HOME !!



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Evaluation

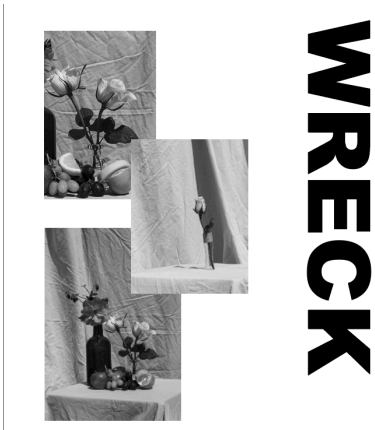
Photostory

When approaching the prospect of creating a news style article/think piece about the current COVID-19 situation, I wanted to approach the issue in a much more positive mind set as I felt that the news and other pieces of media had become overbearingly negative. Coming off the back foot of my Individual Practice project I was eager to continue my zine in new and interesting directions. Thus creating Wreck Volume 2 (COVID-19 Special) in which I wanted to highlight the positive aspects of a national lockdown that displays the progressive features of personal businesses and creativity.



I wanted a continuous theme in my images of beauty in domesticity and its simplicity to bring joy and satisfaction to not only myself but hopefully those who would be reading the next volume of Wreck. I wanted to firstly display this is in the front cover that featured a washing line and bed sheets drying. The image shot in black and white highlights and accentuates the creases in the sheets that compliment the moody and dark sky well. The inclusion of the side of my home was also intentional to further highlight the national lockdown and familiar surroundings we are all experiencing. The creasing in the sheet and the iconography of bed linens relating to domesticity was something I wanted to create as a repetitive motif in my images in order to link them all back to my major theme of domestic life. As well as this I felt that the creasing in the sheets really helped give all of my images texture and create a much more tactile and 3 dimensional image to give my spectator an immersive experience. When approaching the style of images inside of the zine I wanted to display images that pushed not only my creative capabilities in terms of comfort boundaries but also to push technology in order to create images that bent the rules of the lockdown. I wanted to begin my zine with a style of image that I have never delved into, still life. Taking inspiration from traditional still artists such as Juan Sánchez Cotán who had created this image I also wanted to create a much more traditional style of image. I felt that this challenged me as I am much more comfortable in a contemporary and editorial style when creating my photos. Therefore I created a series of 4 images, one featuring on my first page spread and the other three coming together in a collage at the end of my zine. All four images included my motif of the bed sheets using it as a background and stool covering and take heavy influence from Cotán's painting. This is most apparent in his inclusion of open fruits, this technique that almost creates yonic imagery I also wanted to recreate in





my images as seen in the bottom photo. I wanted this to be a call back to my previous issue of Wreck which displayed exclusively women and issues that they have faced. Furthermore the lone standing rose trapped in a vase is used to symbolise the social distancing and isolation Britain and most of the world is facing, as well as this the use of a lemon slice to replace the missing orange segment in the top image is used to hint at the unease and restlessness the U.K is feeling in their impatience for lockdown to finish as the lemon doesn't fit the needs of the orange. Creating meaning in inanimate objects was something that challenged me as I found it easier to display emotion and symbolism in human subjects. I did however find this challenge extremely helpful in my progression as a photographer.

Going into the middle section of this mini issue of the zine, I wanted to regain focus back into one of the core intentions of the zine which was an editorial style fashion magazine. However findings models to shoot was obviously very difficult due to the lockdown precautions set by the government. This was a large obstacle for me until I saw that Vogue had still created images through the use of FaceTime. These images featuring supermodel Bella Hadid and shot by Pierre-Ange Carlotti were all shot over FaceTime through the direction of Carlotti on camera placement and pose. This revelation in shooting models outside the home while staying inside inspired me to create my first FaceTime shoot as well. Taking inspiration from Tyler Mitchell and his Vogue shoot with Beyoncè that featured the use of bed sheets in the images I again used used my bed







sheet motif in my FaceTime shoot. The middle image created by me is the only photo that features colour in this issue of Wreck as I wanted the bright colours to reflect the positive aspects of pushed creativity and technology. The ruffles in the dress, curled hair and creases in the sheets all compliment each other creating a sense of texture in the images. Shooting over Facetime took lots of patience and taught me to be precise in what I'm looking for in my images. moving forward I feel that my skills in communication when asking a model to pose has improved greatly.

In my final section of my zine I wanted to adhere to a much more news style broadsheet style in terms of writing, mixed with visual discourse of my zine. While trying to stay positive throughout my zine I felt that it would be a disservice to the other core purpose of my zine which was to highlight the injustices in our society. Therefore creating my last piece of writing paired with my self portrait image that focused on the incompetence of the government that leads us. Taking inspiration form traditional photojournalists such as

Don McCullin and mixing it with the editorial style of image that creates sets and orchestrated photos, I created a self portrait image to display the need for PPE that also exudes themes of distress and unease. The image again featuring my initial motif is much more focused on the distress and negativity of the disease. The gloves being used to choke the subject is reference to the lack of PPE as well as the disease itself being respiratory and directly affecting the breathing of the people infected. Again the creases in the sheet and folds of the mask almost look like they are made of the same material maybe hinting at the importance of staying home (domesticity) to protect yourself (the mask). This new style of image taking and writing in my zine allowed me to approach subjects from new angles and allowed me to be self reliant when creating a new project.



Overall this much more experimental issue of Wreck that allowed me to push my creative boundaries in terms of comfort zones and technology has taught me to see challenges as hurdles rather than barriers. Taking photos of inanimate objects has help me find meaning in places I could not see before, using FaceTime as a photographic tool has allowed me to become a greater communicator when expressing my needs to a model and broadsheet style writing and self portraiture has allowed me to become much more self reliant when creating images.

Moving Image



When creating the moving image portion of my project I wanted the video to be in direct relation to the themes of the zine specifically the domesticity motif found throughout the zine. Taking inspiration from the film Roma directed by Alfonso Cuarón I wanted to create something similar. The film focuses around one of two domestic workers that clean for a wealthy family in Mexico. The film beautifully captures the simplicity of domestic life which was exactly what i wanted to achieve in both my zine and moving image piece. My piece features the hanging of washing on a washing line before being left to dry which we partly see. The folds and ripples created by the wind blowing the sheets and the ghostly figures seen behind the translucent sheets create eerie yet calming imagery that displays the beauty behind a simple act. I wanted to being the whole project together through the use of the bed sheet motif which comes together and includes three bed sheets from the three different shoots inside the zine ultimately



culminates the project into one video. The noir style black and white tones found in Roma can also be found in my video too as the black and white narrative in the video expresses the simplicity theme originally intended as well as highlighting the contrast in the bricks of the house and the creases in the sheets on the line. Much like the front cover of the zine i wanted to include the house in the video as not only does it add new texture not seen in the project so far but also to remind the spectator of the familiar surroundings everyone seems to be in at this current moment. The over exposed sky almost makes the whole video seem like a dream, this paired with the intentional lack of audio traps the spectator in the video left with the ringing in your head that your brain creates to fill the void in noise. This allows you to focus completely on the video, becoming engrossed. The open windows hint that the house in use and almost looks inviting despite the colder tones found in the video.

In conclusion, this video was made to culminate the domestic theme throughout the project and express its simplicity in one video. Taking inspiration from Roma with its similar themes the video also features its noir style of shading and tones. Overall, while the video is simple it is effective in communicating its purpose.

Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPjcst1aFMU

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