



It Starts with a Seed

EMMA GILFIX

INTRODUCTION



ABSTRACT

It Starts With a Seed contemplates a cohesive balance between two forces of life: nature and society as a whole. Considering the value of stillness, I reflect on the role of the United Nations as a third party and mediator for the two forces. The piece is a product of multiple artistic mediums, paralleling the overlap between the concrete and the virtual that the essays below convey, as well as an illustrative metaphor considering climate change in a post-pandemic world.

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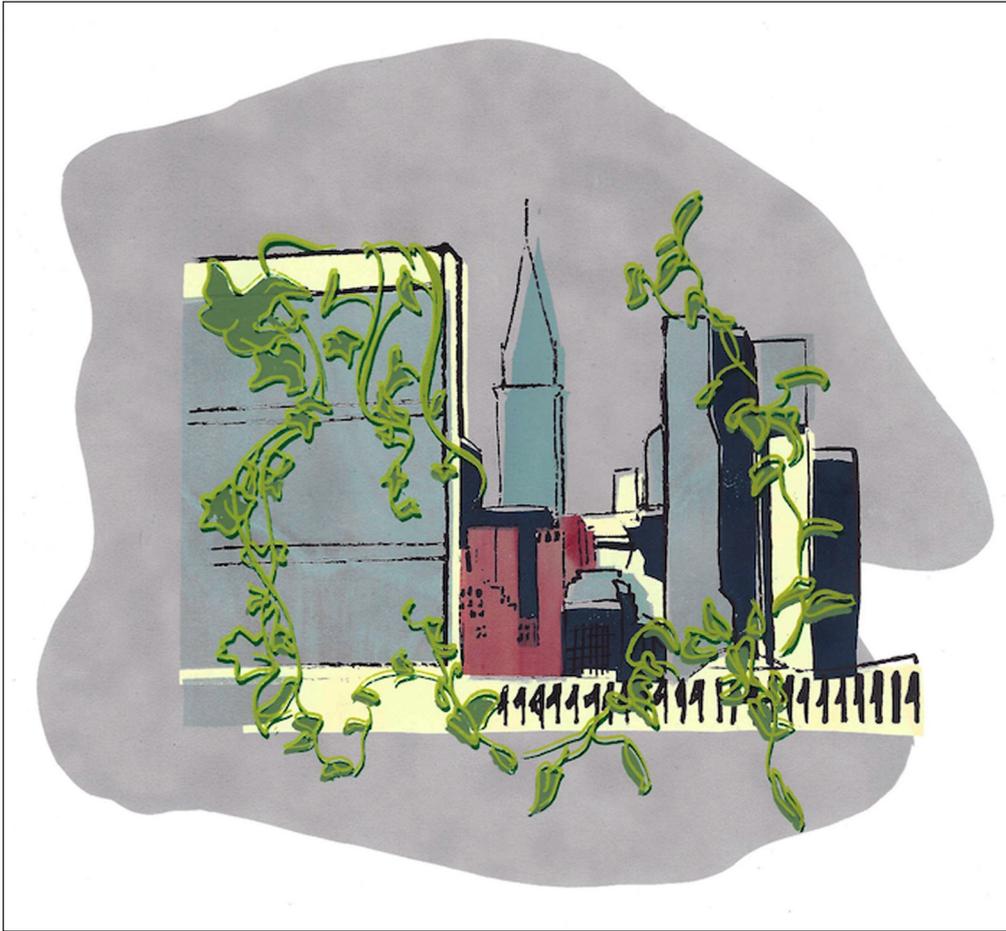
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The armature still stands, the building is still there, and we can breathe life back into it. Perhaps it was a deemed *utopian dream* in the post-cold war era, because society had only just awakened— as if we thought we were ready for a thriving international organization, but we were only setting the table.

Perhaps the way this pandemic has unified the globe is worth recognizing as an example of a central issue binding government systems together, rather than set groups. The United Nations is, first, a symbol and mediator to bring peace and security internationally. However, after peace and security, climate change is listed as the third issue the United Nations is called to act upon—followed by sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production and more.

As a result of the virus, the physical building of the United Nations has been vacated while the individuals who once utilized the space are encouraged to retreat until a cure is manifested. However, like the virus, there's another war going on between mankind and an invisible opposer—global warming. Taking a moment to recognize the impact that the pandemic has had on reducing the rate of climate change, what if we put the same amount of energy and strategy used to take control over the virus into control over global warming? This piece represents the impact that *stillness* alone can have on the Earth; reflecting on the influence the virus has had on the reduction of climate change, beginning with air pollution.

There is a paradox going on in the way this pandemic has brought the world together while necessitating distance and reclusiveness. The entire globe has been impacted, regardless of what degree, similar to the way climate change is affecting the globe in a less aggressive or outright manner. Consider the level of impact that humankind could have on putting a stop to global warming if we exercised the same degree of focus toward reversing the damage that has been done to the Earth since we moved in, to live in cohesion with the environment.

I value that art is a mirror into the mind through its style and content. That's why it's important for my work to be processed through various mediums. Seeing the same subject matter in various forms, altered by the technique or tool used, influences the final vision along the way.

It Starts With a Seed began as a digital illustration that was transferred onto 10 film sheets, each layered with ink through the technique of rubylith masking and ink drawings. The sheets were then burned onto silk screen frames and printed as monoprints through the process of split fountain inking. Split fountain inking is the combination of, in this case, two ink colors poured onto the screen so that the inks blend together gradually through each pass. This is, in part, a free-forming technique where the print that is transferred onto canvas cannot be completely controlled. Each of the layers exist as symbols of elements contributing to the foundation of a story, matched by sharp or rigid corners. The black key line brings dimension and character to the geometric shapes. A loose vine falls from the top of the United Nations along the ground level, stretching along towards neighboring buildings. The vine starts to rise again until it reaches back up to the skyline toward open air. By the end of the process, the final print is supported by two other pieces: the digital illustration and collection of film sheets.

A still life that isn't all that still in what it represents, rather a representation of moments suspended in time. Two independent forms of life divided by what mankind can and cannot control. *It Starts With a Seed* demonstrates how the stillness of the city could influence the growth of nature back into urban life, considering the idea of the two existing as cohesive forces.

Emma Gilfix received her B.A. in International Relations, with minors in Anthropology and Spanish at Saint Michael's College in Vermont, 2017. Her background in art began with a question about how to study art in its entirety, through the lens of International Relations. She witnessed the impact of these two forces joining together in the form of social transformation—locally and cross-culturally. Art, in any form, can serve as a means for dialogue without the use of words necessarily. Her work continues to evolve and expand with each project, seeking out new techniques and considering alternative storylines. Ultimately, her passion is rooted in creating art for art's sake, but to provide purpose to the practice brings value to the work invested. Emma's primary trades are illustration, screen-printing, and digital design. She currently lives in New York City, NY.

COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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