

Emma Upton '20
The Elements in Me,
2020

ART 500

"This series explores the four elements of nature—earth, air, fire and water—through portraiture. In quarantine, I have found solace in the natural world. Stepping outside, away from my computer's exhausting glow, allows me to breathe, to smile and appreciate our crazy world. All four elements

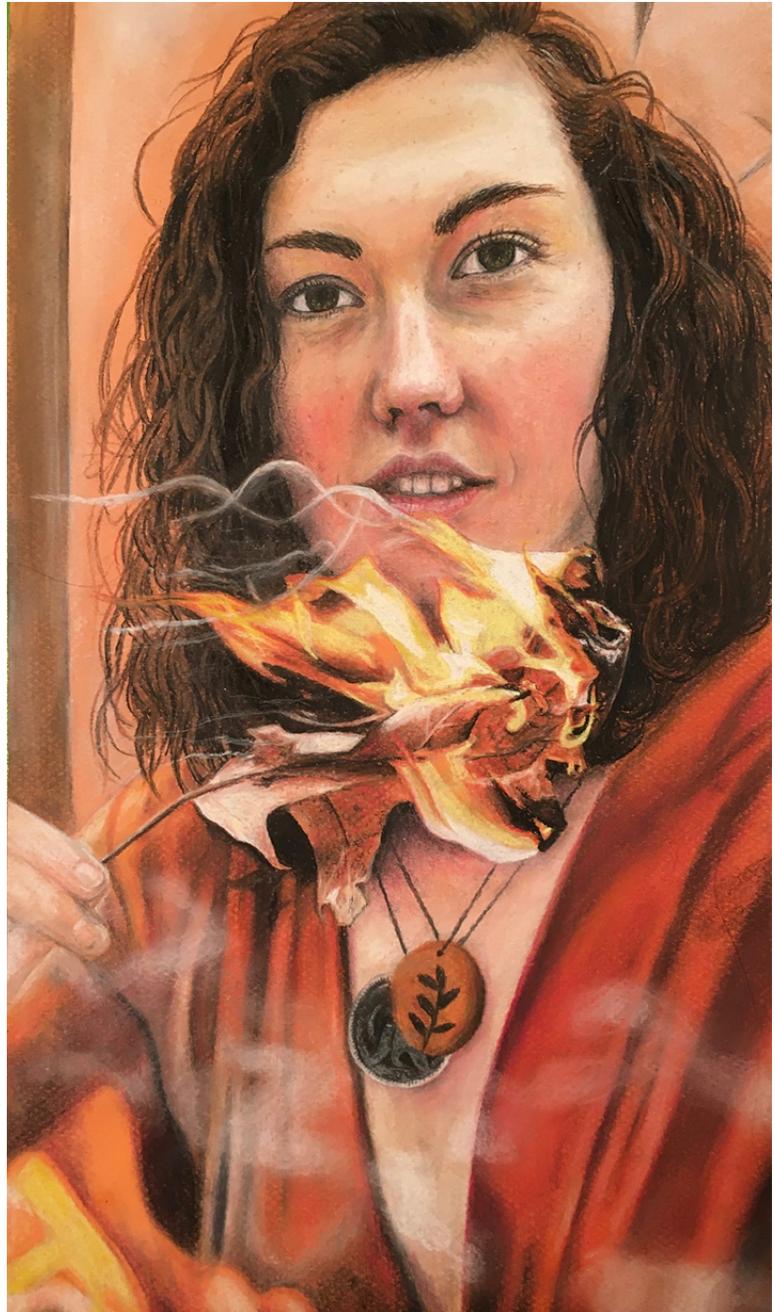


Air, 2020, Pastel on paper

play a vital role in my emotional and physical well-being. When my hands are brown with dirt, my pants are muddy and my bare feet sink into the earth I feel connected to the world, grounded and safe. Laying on my back, listening to the breeze rustle the leaves and watching the boughs sway beneath the power of the wind, I feel as if the air carries all my worries away into the sky. At the end of an exhausting run I slip off my shoes and sit on the mossy banks of a stream, cleansing myself in the flowing waters. Sitting around a fire in the hearth alongside my family, the warmth reminds me of the love that surrounds me.

I chose to use myself as the subject of the portraits to reflect the importance of the elements in my life. Spending hours studying the

intricacies and imperfections of one's own face is both a humbling and empowering experience. What better time to grow to love oneself than quarantine, when we spend so much time alone? The four self-portraits are based off of reference photos taken in a photoshoot at the beginning of the term. Each piece illustrates an element and uses a different color palette to highlight the focal element. For instance, *Air* is mostly composed of light blues, purples, pale skin tones and white, while *Fire* uses a warmer palette of reds, oranges, yellows, pinks and browns."



Fire, 2020, Pastel on paper

Instagram: [@stuck_in_the_mud_](https://www.instagram.com/stuck_in_the_mud_)