

JUSTIN CARNEY

and the disappearing has become

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Where the Valley Sings combines landscapes and portraits in a series of photographs that explores the lives of my relatives residing in the mountains of Northern New Mexico. The valley my family calls home is named Cañon de Cantor— which translates to the singer's canyon. It is here where my ancestors settled, raised their families, and tended to their crops. They were known for singing their prayers, and the valley would carry their songs. The children grew old, and generations passed into the next. I was not raised here, but my grandfather was nearby, and he tells me stories of his childhood— exploring the mountains alone, fishing, and dreaming of making this valley his home one day. Decades

later, he and my grandmother were able to move onto this land, and now, in his mid 80's, he continues to plod away every day, working to preserve it. This project is a meditation on the idea of the American dream or the vestiges of it, and the broader conflict between humans and the natural world when we don't take care of it. The effects of drought and wildfires are ever-present and ravaging the vitality of this area. The land is not fruitful, and tenure through generations is dying. With this body of work, I have strived to create a document of life in the mountains and a deeper personal connection with the land's current ecosystems adapting to changes and trying to survive.







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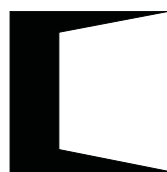
Justin Carney uses autobiographical photography to question how death and grief affect familial connections—the bonds that keep a family together and cause them to separate, and how those bonds shape an individual. He is originally from Baltimore, Maryland, and is currently pursuing his MFA in Photography at Indiana University, Bloomington. He has won the Best in Show Award for the 2020 Emerging Vision, Colorado Photographic Arts Center Biennial Student Show. His work has been exhibited at the Pingyao International Photography Festival in China; the International Exchange Exhibition at Keimyung University in South Korea; and the 2017 Governor's Awards for the Arts in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Judges Pick | Selected by Efrem Zelony-Mindell

"Through the emotive depths of familial bonds and emulsion Justin Carney forges a world outside the limits of photography's faithfulness. Carney's art excites me as it pries open the potential of photographic imagery and artistry. In these works the fleeting nature of memory becomes an opportunity to celebrate and commemorate affection while also embodying its complicated nature to loss and forgetting."

– Efrem Zelony-Mindell, 2022
Publisher, curator, podcaster

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