

Student Photographer's Sense of Place

By Kathryn Liebowitz

In 2021, the Groton History Center presented Sense of Place, an exhibition featuring the works of 25 local artists. The project was inspired by the historic art collection at the Groton History Center and the question of "What motivates today's Groton artists?" Student artists from GDRHS visited the exhibit and we were equally impressed by their own creativity and artistic talents.

If you've noticed some exceptional sports photography in the *Groton Herald* this spring, that's Ellie Petro's work. Ellie, a sophomore at the Groton Dunstable Regional High School, started interning at the newspaper, capturing her classmates on the playing fields and the tennis courts (when not out there herself competing in varsity basketball, girls' tennis, and track and field).

After snapping shots with her cell phone in middle school, Ellie got her first camera (a Canon) last fall when she took Mr. O'Connor's beginning photo class. She followed up with an advanced darkroom class; next year, Ellie hopes to do an independent study in the darkroom, developing work she'll include in her junior-senior art portfolio (in preparation for college applications).

As a photographer, and member of the National Arts Honor Society, Ellie is open and willing to try new approaches and techniques: "Wherever you are, you can get good shots." Her preference these days is for sports photography. Yet, in quieter moments, she's drawn to places like the town dock off the Nashua River. Here she finds the silence, beauty, and rare calm so many seek in the onrush of days.

About the inspiration for her photograph, "Reflection," Ellie writes:

This dock is a serene spot on the Nashua River where I come to relax and gather my thoughts. Here, I forget about the stress of the outside world and focus on what is present in the moment. This dock is so quiet, yet so loud. All the sounds of birds chirping, water flowing, and trees rustling accompany this beautiful place. I go to the dock when I am feeling overwhelmed by school, sports, or anything else. Sitting at the dock for even a few minutes relaxes me and helps me remember what really matters. I come to this mindful place to appreciate nature and all of its beauty without distractions from the rest of the world.

