



Window

Watercolor and acrylic, 11 inches by 15 inches

By Kaite Yang

“I was sitting in a perceptual psychology class,” recalls Kaite Yang, a 2009 graduate of Dartmouth College, “learning about Purkinje trees—retinal blood vessels in the eye. And I thought, ‘It would be really great to paint real trees inside the eye.’” Yang mulled the idea over for three years before bringing it to fruition as part of a series called “Alchemy Inside,” a set of works depicting parts of the human body “as carrying multiple associations, meanings, and references.” Yang often takes this sort of deliberative approach to her art. “Many of my paintings develop as complete images in my mind that I carry with me until I am ready to commit them to paper,” she says. “I . . . regard art as not just the actual painting process, but the path of creatively formulating an idea.” In the case of this painting, the wait seems to have been worthwhile: “Window” was selected last year for inclusion in a juried exhibition at Johns Hopkins Hospital. After graduating from Dartmouth, Yang worked for AmeriCorps for a year, helping to run the children’s programs at the Upper Valley Haven, a local homeless shelter. She is now pursuing a doctorate in psychology at Princeton. She believes that “science and art have much to share and learn from each other in their methods and ways of understanding the world. I like to think that they are both trying to capture something true in the world and the experience of life, but through different processes and media.” She adds that seeking connections between art and medicine was “one of my goals upon coming to Dartmouth. . . . I was always very struck by the beauty and enigma of the human body and its organ systems.” Yang says she’s been interested in art “for as long as I can remember. . . . My artwork is with me every bit of the way, even if I’m not ostensibly ‘doing art’ as a career. I think my artwork shapes the way I try to look at connections between things that may otherwise seem totally unrelated. It’s an exercise in mental flexibility.” ■

For a **WEB EXTRA** with more of Yang’s ideas about art, plus more of her work, see dartmed.dartmouth.edu/sp11/we02.