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Senior Projects Spring 2020

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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## Present, Elsewhere

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*Bard College*

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Lauren Nelson  
Artist Statement

### Present, Elsewhere

As days elongate into immeasurable stretches, memory lurks closer to the surface of conscious thought. Vivid dreams overflow into waking hours, blurring the thin line between recollection and fantasy. From the area of my bedroom floor I record these memories, noting as I drift further from the present. Which moments demand my attention? Which challenge my perception of our current reality? Which bring me joy?

*Present, Elsewhere* is as much an exercise in grappling with our new parameters for living as it is a study in memory. In my drawings, as my title suggests, the figures are both present and elsewhere. Their bodies occupy physical space, yet they are equally entwined in the nostalgic hues of daydream and fantasy. Each work recollects a feeling. A soft midnight breeze drifting into a bar after closing. Hands sinking deeper into wet sand as the tide rolls in. A figure longing for the outside world reflected in the glass walls encircling her. Some of these memories are my own, others are imagined fictions, but each focuses in on a different facet of yearning. One memory conjures up a longing to return to a specific past, while another behaves as a crutch, restricting access to the present.

In each work I meticulously honor scale and formal interactions, while allowing my hand to run wild in color and light. It is easy to forget that the internal geometries of our world remain largely the same, despite the flurry of change that pervades it. This tension between realistic rendering and nostalgic color manifests within each piece. In one drawing the warm hue of an umbrella pours into the heightened pink of a flushed cheek. In another a disembodied lamp appears to light a figure from within. The vibrancy of the light within connects each piece, uniting individual pockets of memory into a collection of disparate flickering moments.

(Selected Works)







