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Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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sweet embrace

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Sabrina Kissack
Artist Statement

sweet embrace is an attempt to paint the remnants of spectacle in a slow moving and inconclusive world. The characters exist in a state of obsessive observation, edging towards what they are drawn to but never taking it. The event does not occur on screen, but there is a sense that it has already happened. Perhaps it has happened in the dimension we can see and perhaps in another that has overflowed into the world of the film. The glitter, the jewels, the hair, the blood, the paint, the glove all serve as markers of the event. They are not meant to be symbols, but rather objects presented to create their own outline of a ghostly body and time. They are what has been left over to observe. The camera moves slowly in search of violence and conclusion, yet it only lands on fragments. It finds pieces of the bodies and what may have fallen out of them. It finds moments of their relationship to one another, but only in manipulation. If there is violence, it is slow, hidden behind color, darkness and gauze. The camera looks to uncover the suggestion of an event as much as a viewer might. "The boyfriend" speaks, "the hand" searches and "the girl" is watched. They are outlines of themselves, as their archetypal characters in horror, teen romance and pornography often are. I do not intend to explicitly change these outlines, but instead to place them in a different kind of narrative where they are not required to answer definitive questions.

Further, this project is an experiment in what it might look like for eroticism and fear to evolve out of uncertainty, rather than from the knowledge that a climax will occur. Although I have taken great influence from horror and pornography, I am critical of their typical submission to a moment of climax, leading to resolution. These films are most compelling to me in their ability to observe bodies in pleasure or pain while remaining curious rather than assuming in their approach. This project is ultimately my own take on a horror movie, made from these moments of observation.

