
Senior Projects Spring 2024

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2024

carnesVirtuales

Brandon Alvarado
Bard College

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carnes Virtuales

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts of Bard College

by
Brandon Alvarado

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2024

Artist Statement

carnes Virtuales

I believe my painting practice over the past year has been an act of reverence towards my subjects, while at the same time, an act of reflection upon how they have shaped my life. I depict the subjects of my paintings as I see them and feel them, not necessarily as I wish them to be. My paintings are born from a digital realm that is becoming increasingly intertwined with the physical world. There is an inextricable synthesis between my perceived identity and my experiences within the digital world. The physical manifestation of these paintings is my way of reconciling the parts of my life that took place within the digital world and its lack of tangibility.

While doing these paintings I began to see something incredibly sublime about my digital devices that I could only liken to the teachings of Christianity I have grown up with since a child. The seemingly permanent nature of one's digital identity, like a soul to be judged and live on in an afterlife that far surpasses our time on earth. The incomprehensible expanse of the internet and limitless possibilities for the most deranged and the most beautiful corners of the human mind to coexist. The comfort and/or paranoia of possibly never feeling alone, unguided, uninhibited, unmonitored or uninfluenced, evocative of the omniscience of God (or Santa Clause). These are concepts that began to influence my work the more I created. I began to use Christian language such as bible verses, sayings, and phrases, presented in neatly computer-quantized, recognizable fonts to reference these feelings and ideas that I find parallel between the biblical and the digital. I view this use of text in my paintings as more than just words, but beings that inhabit the same plane as everything else within my images. They are personified symbols of my identity that I see existing in the two separate but connected realms of digital and physical.

The use of borrowed images, some extremely recognizable such as emojis or certain design features of various interfaces, comes from a desire to commune and reflect on this drastic technological

change that I believe is an essential characteristic of my generation. People born in and around the 2000s are the first to fully adopt and embrace a digitized way of life and I have begun to notice that we are now starting to look at our modern technologies with a bit more foresight and in a more absurd, fantastical, dark, ironic, and loving way. I want to connect to this ongoing conversation.

The physical nature of my paintings, made of canvas, paper, wood, oil, and acrylic paints, and my tendency towards a hyper-realistic style, paired with subject matter and imagery typically experienced virtually on a computer screen, expresses my embrace of the virtual space functioning ontologically identical to the physical world in many aspects. My cultural identity, sexuality, philosophical and spiritual beliefs have developed and existed equally perceivable as reality both in the digital and physical world. With these paintings, I aim to come to an acceptance of this new reality.

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