

---

Senior Projects Spring 2019

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

---

Spring 2019

## Dog Eyes

Jackson Shea Denahy

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2019](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2019)

 Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

Denahy, Jackson Shea, "Dog Eyes" (2019). *Senior Projects Spring 2019*. 257.  
[https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj\\_s2019/257](https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2019/257)

This Open Access work is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been provided to you by Bard College's Stevenson Library with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this work in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@bard.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@bard.edu).

Life is a series of decisions resulting in situations that lead on to the next event. Every moment we create for ourselves touches us in one way or another. Every moment that sticks with an individual is then a memory. They lie between reality and one's imagination, shrouded in one's own beliefs, desires, and fears. They are neither reality nor fiction, but in a way the realest image of a moment one can culminate though misconstrued by time. In time, it recedes and becomes more mysterious until it resurfaces.

Sometimes a memory can be collective and exist outside of an individual. History is a memory shared by many and retold as it is distorted by the masses. On the other end two individuals can share one memory, and the feelings felt between the two of them. A memory like this can be shared by anyone, with anyone, whether it's your closest friend or the deer you scared off on a walk.

When you have a pet dog, you must take that dog for walks every single day in order to give it the exercise it desires. It becomes routine to share the same experience with your dog daily but from very different perspectives. Dogs seem to interact with just about everything they can, pulling their walker behind them. The walker may be jaded by the tediousness of their dog walks, and does not find the same pleasure in these things. The dog can be completely absorbed in their environment as the walker dissociates, staring at their phone. Slipping back into reality for a moment to take a picture, the walker captures a glimpse of what the dog is doing. Something about what is reflected in a photograph is between participating in a moment and neglecting it altogether. A photograph is still a memory, and can sometimes hold a different kind of value in that it provides so much information without a clear sentimentality. They act as a trigger for the imagination of their creator that helps them to return to that space and time.

Life can be monotonous when you travel between the same points and participate in the same tasks regularly. However, it is often the most monotonous moments that help to supply us

with sustenance. It's the tediousness of life that allows deviations from the norm to feel all the more powerful. Memories of routine tasks begin to blur into one unclear story. The dog and its walker both experience each walk in the same way personally, but with this disconnect between the two of them.

All of my imagery comes from my own photographs taken of scenes from my life that feel regular. By painting them I am able to explore the subject matter and delve deeper into the reason I felt the need to photograph it in the first place. Excitement comes in rediscovering something that I have already experienced, much like the dog. You never fully miss out on something if you're present, and it is possible to rediscover aspects that were nearly overlooked from the start. Friends who I paint begin to develop as characters when they reappear in different settings, so that the viewer begins to understand them as more than paint. Tasks and activities that reoccur in one way or another begin to speak for the larger patterns in life. Color and light naturally emphasize the details that I focus on most, hinting at the reality of the memory being depicted.

Painting one's own photographs places you somewhere between the dog and the walker, as you rebuild the image to your understanding of it. The viewer is capable of relating to the human experience, its archetypes, and lifestyles. The space as a whole between each painting is then one larger story, told through the memories of brief moments.





