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Humes 104

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Campus Commentary #4

Forget-Me-Not: Fading Memories

For my fourth campus commentary, I visited the Katherine and Tom Belk Visual Arts Center. The gallery frequently changes its showcased art, and when I visited on Friday, April 24th, it was student works from the art classes provided on campus. The art piece I analyzed was named *Forget-me-not*, created with water color and alcohol ink on Yupo paper by Jane Martens. Martens is class of '28, a psychology and studio art double major, and the art class she took was *Advanced Drawing*.

The piece itself was mainly blue, yellow, and green where the blue and yellow met on the page. I believe the main inspiration for the piece are the flowers named forget me not, as the flowers are blue and yellow, and the title is the same. There were four faces on the page. The face with the most distinct blue features visually seen was at the bottom left, and the one slightly above to the right had its eyes closed, but also had blue distinct features. The face above the second face was becoming blurred, and the facial structure was no longer visible. What was visible were the features, like the nose, mouth and eyes, and now they were green fading into yellow. The eyes were open once again. And the last face, at the top left, was almost completely blurred except for the eyes, nose outline, and mouth. The features were now completely yellow.

The girl had flowers in her hair and they blended in with the swirling blue, yellow, and green swirls in the background.

I believe the artist wanted to convey the feeling of a memory that was starting to fade. The watercolor and alcohol ink gave the impression of a lucid dream, and the memory started to be “washed away” as the swirls blended in with the background. The distinct blue features becoming yellow, seem to be a remark towards the lack of prominence the features are starting to have in the memory holder’s mind. She gets lighter, and less recognizable as the faces increase. Her eyes being closed in one of the portraits make me believe that it’s meant to be a moving memory, and not a still life. The title being Forget-me-not, and the art piece being inspired by the flowers seem to be a clever juxtaposition. Martens’ piece is about someone starting to fade in a memory, but the flowers mean not to forget the people you love. And they’re given to the people you love. The flowers in the girl’s hair only point further to the role of the flower to the piece.

I do believe the artist is successful in conveying the message they wanted to convey. The piece comes across bittersweet and nostalgic. Though the colors are cool toned, the vibe isn’t necessarily sad. Water color makes the piece look all the more lucid. It does come across like a memory starting to fade, and everything but the facial features fading is a clever touch. You have to look at the piece further to see these details, and it’s almost like the memory holder trying to hold onto the memories. I do believe my perspective could be expanded further if I knew more about watercolor and alcohol ink painting. I’m limited when it comes to meaning coming directly from the creator, seeing as there was no description other than who created it and with what. However, from what I did see, I understood what was happening and I loved the piece. I believe it connects to justice and memorials, how memories start to fade with time, especially generation to generation. In order to remember and acknowledge an event in time, one must prevent it from fading by having a historically documented recount of it.

