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Rebecca Campbell, *Infinite Density, Infinite Light*  
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by Jody Zellen



The radiant and complex paintings in Rebecca Campbell’s exhibition “Infinite Density, Infinite Light” draw from the past, yet are very much about the present. They explore the nature of family, the freedom of being a child and the fragile nature of memory. Using found images including family snapshots and Polaroids, Campbell transforms isolated moments into stories about the people in her life— be it her children or parents. Within each work, she uses different painting styles to create an evocative journey through her own history.

Although the exhibition is predominantly a show of paintings, Campbell also includes a sculptural installation in the center of the gallery that directs the interpretation of the works. Titled *To the One I Love the Best* (2017), this mixed-media piece consists of a collage of translucent silk banners suspended from copper piping. They contain enlarged reproductions of concert tickets, a Western Union Valentine’s Day Telegram, handwritten letters and other documents that span different periods in Campbell’s family’s life.

In her paintings, Campbell often juxtaposes realistically rendered areas with looser, more abstracted brush strokes and thicker applications of paint. These gestural markings create a dream-like sensation that suggests the passage of time as evidenced in *Nature Boy* (2021), a large painting of Campbell’s son in the woods. The boy wears a white T-shirt with red letters that spell the word LOVE and holds a single plant stem. Behind him is an inkling of a path that leads to a giant tree trunk painted abstractly with swirling strokes in a range of soft colors. Campbell’s mélange of styles enhance a narrative that weaves past and present, dream and reality. The setting is simultaneously peaceful and unsettling as the child’s expression is one of defiance and awe.

Most of the paintings in *Infinite Density, Infinite Light* challenge the idea that there is a straightforward narrative about family: children growing into adults, having children of their own and negotiating the wonders of life. While Campbell depicts her subjects with compassion, at times she places them in potentially ambiguous situations interrupting what is represented in the original photographs with an abstract overpainting that suggests a divergent trajectory. In this exhibition, Campbell invites viewers to bear witness to her personal journey, while simultaneously suggesting it could resonate universally.

<https://artillerymag.com/gallery-rounds-rebecca-campbell/>