

a place to remember you by



Lianna Zaragoza
MFA Thesis Exhibition
March 22-April 2, 2021
Gallery 102
Washington DC

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How do we decide what to keep and what do we leave behind? What remains?

Being forced to leave my home for extended periods of time in my teenage years taught me how to quickly and selectively choose the most important possessions to bring with me and to face the uncertain prospect of returning. This instability coincided with the loss of my grandfather Charles, who taught me skills like how to fix the dock and prune roses. I learned the labor of care in the construction and preservation of the place our family called home.

A Place to Remember You By examines the entanglement of grief with place through an environment that simulates my past homes using synthetic and earthen materials. I create an immersive installation representative of the overwhelming experience of loss. I use cellophane to imitate the effect of water and its capacity to refract light. Uprooted grasses partially submerged in resin enact the decay of memory and my attempt to preserve it. I include objects that I've carried with me throughout my life, such as sketchbooks and rocks, which rest upon the docks I built to merge my past and present. I engage with where I live now though collecting local clay and creating watercolors to record the incoming tide of a nearby creek. Through these works I use the skills I learned to approach loss as a site of possibility with the potential to remap the past and reimagine the future.

Lianna Zaragoza lives in Arlington, VA and works in Washington D.C. The foundation of her practice is rooted in acts of care and efforts of preservation. She often simulates and recreates elements of the natural and built environments of the places she grew up as a resource for simulating home through accessible materials. Operating within the context of cultural and physical displacement, she communicates the connection between grief and place through installation, painting, sculpture, and site-responsive works. In her work, she disrupts the notion of loss as a fixed location and approaches it as a site that can be reactivated and has the capacity for continual transformation.



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