

Have you ever spontaneously connected with a stranger? Have any of those experiences stuck with you to this day? After speaking with many of my friends about their meaningful interactions with strangers, I became interested in exploring these questions. In my research, I found that many people feel more inclined to open up to strangers because they have no expectations or biases of the person as they do with family/friends. And the interactions are often short with low stakes and no consequences. The ephemeral nature of these mini relationships intrigued me; the fleeting intimacy shared by the strangers reminded me of the poem “To A Stranger” by Walt Whitman, and I wanted it to be a focus in my piece.

For this project, I created a 5’x4’ oil painting on a wood panel depicting the inside of a crowded metro bus. In addition to the painting, I made a sound to play while viewing the piece. The sound is my reading of the poem “To A Stranger” layered with sounds of buses stopping, taking off, and the chatter of people riding the bus. This painting acts as a snapshot of these strangers together. I wanted to express the quality of the relationships they share, ones with no past and no future, only a present.

*PASSING STRANGER*

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