Sara Pedigo  
Artist Statement

Through the act of painting and drawing I am able to look back at the past and create images that speak about autobiography and its relation to family, memory, and loss. Within the last two years, my work has shifted from recording my present experiences to those of my past. It is based on my childhood experiences associated with my mother’s battle against cancer and her resulting death. As a result of her mental deterioration empty spaces and information gaps persist throughout my family history. This work strives to turn mundane family snap-shots into memorials of nostalgia and longing. It recreates the images of both our youths, celebrating records of a time when my mother was young, healthy, and we were all unaffected by her illness. By re-recording the personal history of my family, now left only to photographs, I am able to mourn her loss and reconnect to happier times.

With my lived experience as a starting point the work is also built upon the notion of the “all American childhood” as related to cultural expectations and its representation through the lens of amateur family photography. I am interested in pursuing the notion that these images reinforce a myth of family because they are actual records of time spent that create falsified impressions of leisure, pleasure, and carefree childhoods. This use of the common family snap-shot as source material allows viewers outside of my family to reference their own personal archives of family photos, due to the commonality of this pastime. Recently the work has focused on silhouettes of my family members against vacuums of white space. The blank areas surrounding each individual reference memory and its evolution as one matures, ages, and gains an adult perspective of the past. The white spaces surrounding the figures also break down the pictorial space of the image by taking out the actual environment surrounding the figures. This withdrawal of information allows the viewer to project his or her own lived experiences onto the picture plane, as well as my past.