

Wish You Were Here: *Diane Feissel*

I was lured to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1998, when I was 27. I came to San Francisco from Philadelphia, where I had lived after attending college in the Philadelphia suburbs. A native New Englander, I ended up in the city of Philadelphia after college and after a teen-hood of thinking I was going to be a professional dancer (ballet). As I began college I reluctantly succumbed to my other art-y leanings toward the visual arts, and subsequently studied visual art both in college and post-grad at schools in Philadelphia before deciding that I needed to heed the call of San Francisco – a city I had only visited once but yet had great hopes for in terms of being a new, exciting frontier. My love for the geographic region of the Bay Area is profound; I lived there for only nine years, I departed in 2007 in search of a less expensive area in which to live and have my life as an artist. After two and a half years in Raleigh, NC, I found myself drawn back to Philadelphia, for its familiarity, its affordability, and its warm and generous artist community. I have lived back in Philadelphia since 2009, and I absolutely adore my life in Philadelphia, and the artist community – the paintings I have in this show were done on a plein air painting expedition in Curaçao, which I never would have thought to undertake without the urging and companionship of a fellow artist friend here in Philadelphia. My work has gone in many different directions since leaving California, including an exploratory period of working on printed fabric when I lived in North Carolina—also influenced by time spent in France in the 2000s—and then more plein air work in the Philadelphia area. I dearly miss the San Francisco Bay Area, but still come back to visit as a tourist when possible. I am still a working artist with a day-job here on the East Coast, but am inspired daily by the lovely art community here in Philadelphia and have also been a model for many artist friends here in the city.