

REWIND

REVIEW

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Vol.2 | Spring 2021

PROFILE

## Digital Drawing Room: MFA Fine Arts featuring Wenxin Li

by Becca Chacon



Starting May 10, you can view work by students in the MFA graduating class on the website [2021.CCAMFA.art](https://2021.CCAMFA.art) and in the [Class of 2021 Showcase](#).

Works in this series were written by students in Glen Helfand and Maria Porges' respective graduate writing seminars this past fall and spring.

To Wenxin Li, daily sounds are like music, playing all around us. Li believes there is great power in sound; it connects to all our senses and triggers memories. As an observant and curious listener, she makes connections between the familiar sounds, like the sound of drinking water, which she calls daily sounds, to memories in her life. Li hears the sounds all around her, records, transcribes them into musical notes, and makes a finished piece that is played through a music box. She envisions her works being experienced in private spaces, places where the viewer can be alone to be reminded of their own memories.

In her most recent work, *Sound of Words* (2020), Li's video performance displays a black screen. Viewers hear a writing implement inscribing on a surface—a reenactment of Li's mother writing to her. The inspiration comes from Li's experience in the Audium Theatre in San Francisco, where 176 speakers play sound art in total darkness.

Li is currently residing with her family in China. She notes that "When I wrote my thesis, I realized that maybe sometimes noise isn't a bad thing. I realized that there were some changes back at home—for example, my parents snore at night. I couldn't sleep, which I thought was terrible. But then I realized that the noise moved me, and I was really happy. And I'm really lucky that my parents can play with me. I'm not alone." In the past two years of her program, Li has found the subtlety of listening to sound, the power it holds to bring memories about, and the way it can bring familiarity to any viewer.