DATEBOOK
SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE

"'Nostalgia for the Present Tense' by Chelsea Ryoko Wong at Jessica Silverman"
By Tony Bravo
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Chelsea Ryoko Wong, "Modest Flirtations," 2024. Photo: Chelsea Ryoko Wong.

"Nostalgia for the Present Tense," an exhibition of 12 new paintings by San Francisco artist Chelsea Ryoko Wong, is inspired by her recent travels in Europe, East Asia, North Africa and California.

The works capture "moments when the artist was struck by the value of community," according to the gallery statement. Wong is an existentialist who believes that the artist's role in culture is resisting nihilism, and she looks for social harmony amid turbulent times.

The 12 works on view in "Nostalgia for the Present Tense" are almost little plays in the scenes, characters and interaction they portray. Whether the setting is a beach, a disco or ski slopes, these vividly colored worlds are so inviting you want to spend time with the paintings to soak up their ambience.

But while the worlds are beautiful, it's the relationships between the characters that really bring them to life. The clusters of people, the body language and socializing are fascinating, and there's a sweetness and sincerity to her figures' facial expressions.