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*Sadie and The Birdcage*: A Cig Harvey Analysis

Walking through the Baum Gallery, located at the University of Central Arkansas, I thought I was just walking through any other gallery; I was bored, not expecting anything but average photographs. But, hidden on the wall, *directly* in the middle of the wall, a photograph appeared, as if a magician summoned it. It was *Sadie and The Birdcage*, a photograph taken by Cig Harvey in Tenant’s Harbor, Maine of 2013; it shows in her *Red to Velvet* exhibition. It uses an archival pigment print to expose the colors beautifully and clearly. Without this type of print, the interpretation of imprisonment and isolation would not have the same effect.

Seeing *Sadie and The Birdcage* for the first time, My eyes immediately drew near to the birdcage. It is a rustic cage painted light pink, conditioned to be about twenty years old. Lying behind this old cage is a young, pale woman. Her skinny hands hold the cage in front of her cold young eyes, as if they were jail bars. The space behind her is black and swallows her body. The colors, subject, balance, its composition, it all gives this feel of loneliness, self-imprisonment, and trapped beauty. Curious of its true meaning, research is made, but nothing is discovered. It is like a ghost; no words found to describe or translate its meaning. Compared to Cig Harvey’s other photographs(which usually consists of natural props, like flowers, and vibrant colors), this one seems to be different in a way that uses a metal prop and of low color saturation.

*Sadie and The Birdcage* is a photograph taken by Cig Harvey. It can be found in her exhibition, *From Red to Velvet*, located at the University of Central Arkansas in the Baum Gallery. This photo can be missed if not looked out for. It represents self-imprisonment, loneliness, and a trapped mind. It uses colors like black, gray, and pink to focus on the birdcage which then draws eyes towards the pale woman. I believe the strongest part about this work is its ability to be missed easily; because of this ability, it presents the meaning and symbolism to the viewer. I also believe that the weakest part about this work, in terms of subject, is the woman. While the birdcage stays strong in color and dominance, the woman behind the cage remains dull, thin, and young, referring to her weakness.