



Studio 203
3440 Motor Ave STE 203
Los Angeles, CA 90034
info@thestudio203.org
www.thestudio203.org



Instruments of Memory

Includes work by Dana Funaro, B. Neimeth, Aneesa Shami and Patricia Yossen

Curated by Claudia Pretelin, PhD

February 26- April 30, 2022

“What served in place of the photograph; before the camera’s invention?
The expected answer is the engraving, the drawing, the painting.
The more revealing answer might be: memory.”
– John Berger, About Looking

Instruments of Memory presents artistic work that investigates materiality in relation to history, place, time, and remembrance. This exhibition features new and recent work by four artists based in Los Angeles, California: Dana Funaro, B. Neimeth, Aneesa Shami, and Patricia Yossen. With practices spanning ceramics, painting, photography, fiber art, and sound, the artists investigate how places, landscapes, remains, and objects produce and affect identity and how memory is linked to the tactile and intuitive qualities of the materials.

B Neimeth’s work examines notions of intergenerational transmission of memory linked to family heritage and the Austria-Jewish immigrant experience. In the photograph, “Beverly Hills, Fl 6” B. Neimeth invites us to enter the world of her 96-year-old grandmother, an immigrant from Austria who moved to the United States at age fourteen. A resident of Beverly Hills, a small town in the state of Florida, the home and objects we observe in this photographic image are now only a memory apprehended by time, as fragile and vulnerable as the chair sculpted by the artist to accompany the sound piece “My Little Old Shrimp Woman Dried Up Like a Prune.” Using a now outdated device of communication, visitors are enticed to pick up the telephone and listen to a humorous and poignant conversation between two women that belong to different generations.

Patricia Yossen’s practice visually explores contemporary constructs of domesticity and professional life. In “Círculos de Confianza | Trust Circles”, Yossen pays homage to the figure of Lola Borrás, a craft-based artist and proto-feminist who lived in Yossen’s hometown Recreo in Argentina. Borrás created a handcraft circle for young women and had a huge impact in the community and on Yossen. Gathering in community to produce work, Yossen expands upon Lola’s practice, retrieving collective knowledge and extending it in a different space. In the delicate porcelain handkerchiefs placed in a circled installation, the artist evokes memories of her mother, a former apprentice of Borrás, wearing this feminine embroidered accessory as part of her daily fashion.



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CONVERSATIONS WITH WOMEN IN THE ARTS

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In the *Reclamation* series, Aneesa Shami creates abstracted memory landscapes that combine narrative, allegory, history, and Islamic folklore creating a body of work that captures the blending of cultures that have informed her style. Using reclaimed fabric and traditional applique techniques to mimic the informal look of collage, Shami incorporates harmonious palettes and dynamic patterning in large-scale pieces that transport the viewer to a mythological and sacred land. Through material exploration, Shami unravels the intricacies of interwoven histories of her roots in Lebanon and the hidden memories and mystical aspects of the collective unconscious.

In Dana Funaro's work, time and memory are inextricably linked. Exploring the balance between control and chance, Funaro has studied and experimented with the inherent qualities of rust and oxidation employing this technique and materials to create metaphors that investigate themes of time, memory, growth, transformation, acceptance, and healing. Layered with defined texture and depth, these abstract explorations of memory reveal intricate color shifts and shimmering surfaces caused by the chemical reactions on paper and copper, revealing earthy mountainous landscapes with reflective peaks and valleys, wild cosmic explosions, and delicate cascades of dazzling crystals.

An extension of our site www.instrumentsofmemory.org, which began as an online project documenting the work of women in the arts, Instruments of Memory is a growing community that seeks to promote the work of women from different latitudes through in-depth conversations, exhibitions, and programming with different community partners. This exhibition is the first of our collaborations with Studio 203, an artist-run space in Los Angeles founded by Aneesa and Grant Zizzo. Visit our website to read our conversations with the women featured in this exhibition.



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ABOUT THE ARTISTS:

Dana Funaro is an artist living and working in Los Angeles. Her work is a meditation on the human experience and an attempt to understand our relationships to one another within the cosmos. In search of a balance between control and chance, she uses materials as metaphors to explore themes of time, memory, grief, acceptance, and healing. Loss, growth, and transformation all leave behind memories that are powerfully symbolic. Materials with these inherent qualities are intrinsic in her work.

B. Neimeth is a Los Angeles-based visual artist and teacher whose research examines familial and intimate relationships. Through archives, photographs, video, writing, and sound, she explores the flexibility of memory and its connection to space. She has shown internationally at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in Singapore, Human Resources in Los Angeles, the Center for Sex and Culture in San Francisco, and ROSEGALLERY in Los Angeles. Her work has been published in the Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly Journal and reviewed in What's on LA, Fabrik, and Lenscratch. Her work is part of the collections in the California Institute of the Arts and Yale University Libraries.

Patricia Yossen was born in the rural town of Santa Fe, Argentina. She studied education and sculpture and her life in the countryside has a profound influence on her artwork and pedagogy as an art educator. In 1996 she moved to Mexico City, where she studied techniques in stone carving and ceramics. In 2005, she moved to New York, where she worked in the education department at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Museo del Barrio. Yossen received an MFA in sculpture at Pratt Institute and subsequently relocated to Los Angeles, where she currently works as an art educator at Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), and is a Professor at Occidental College where she leads the CoLABorate workshop. Her work as an artist has been shown at numerous galleries in Argentina, Mexico, Spain, New York, and Los Angeles.

Aneesa Shami is an artist and researcher based in Los Angeles using recycled materials to create fiber art. Her work references the sublime and world mythologies to evoke a sense of the collective unconscious within her imagery. Shami holds Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees in both Fiber and Art History from the Kansas City Art Institute. She was the Textile Arts | Los Angeles AIR at Helms Design Center in 2018, and was a Fellow for the Mildred's Lane Attention Labs: Order of the Third Bird in 2015. Shami's work has been exhibited nationally in galleries and museums. She recently created costumes for Planet City (2020), directed by Liam Young, which was commissioned for the NGV Triennial 2020 in Melbourne, Australia. Aneesa Shami is also the co-owner and director of Studio 203, an artist-run space in Los Angeles that collaborates with artists to create exhibitions and host workshops and performances.

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ABOUT THE CURATOR

Claudia Pretelin is a Mexican art historian, independent curator, and arts administrator based in Los Angeles, California. She holds a B.A. in communications and received her M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Her academic work has specialized in the fields of photo history and contemporary art. She has lectured in Mexico, Argentina, and the United States and her work has been published in magazines such as Alquimia, Revista de Arte y Diseño, La Palabra y El Hombre, and Terremoto. For more than ten years she worked for the Mexican photographer Graciela Iturbide and has also assisted & coordinated research and exhibitions in photo collections, museums, and art galleries, including Rochester Contemporary Art Center (RoCo) and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE). She currently works in the studio of renowned artist Gary Baseman. Pretelin is the Founder & Content Curator of Instruments of Memory, a site that documents conversations with women in the arts published as interviews and oral history.