

This catalogue accompanies the exhibition "Anamnesis" on view at the Walsh Gallery June 1 - July 10, 2014.

All measurements are in inches, height by width.

All images contained in this catalogue are courtesy of the artists unless otherwise noted.

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anamnesis

featuring:

Arianna Carossa

Michelle Mackey

Kara L. Rooney

Shuli Sadé

and Gerald Slota

Curated by:

Jeanne Brasile

What is memory? Is it the physiological progression of chemical reactions along the brain's neural pathways? Or is memory function a more personal process of coding and recalling past actions, events and thoughts that, when compiled, form our sense of identity? Memory can be studied through a series of disciplines and frameworks, owing to its complexity and multifarious nature. The issue at stake in this exhibition is how contemporary artists internalize their understanding of recall -- its nature, function and content – and how they represent these ideas to a viewing public. Residing in the slippery space where reality meets imagination, it is often difficult to express memory in words or imagery. The artists participating in “Anamnesis” were selected for their range of interpretations and expressions, yet the common motif of the fragment maintains cohesiveness throughout. Using the fragment as a unifying element, the artists evince a variety of palpable interpretations on the elusive subject of memory.

Michelle Mackey's paintings present the viewer with a series of disjointed spaces that are haunting and elusive. Informed in part by Gaston Bachelard's book, “The Poetics of Space,” Mackey's understanding of memory is intrinsically rooted in place. Painting iconic spaces from memory, Mackey creates fractured interiors characterized by dark swaths of color punctuated by intense areas of bright light. The resulting imagery is not meant as a veritable account of the locations she paints, but rather an assemblage of sensation and emotion experienced in a particular setting. As with memory, the spaces she paints provide access to deep recesses while creating visual barriers due to skewed perspectives,

accumulations of paint and elements that render the space partially illegible and yet, vaguely familiar. Working the paint through unorthodox processes and materials, she furthers notions of the past by creating surfaces with the patina of decay.

Similar to Mackey, Shuli Sadé's work is inextricably connected to place. In the case of Sadé, she utilizes the iconic skyline of Manhattan to suggest a strong link between memory and environment. In her video "Grid Signals," she sectors the familiar image of midtown New York City into a series of smaller shapes that dissolve and reappear, indexing the manner in which neurons fire areas of the brain to ignite the phenomena of recall. The soundtrack accompanying the images is that of a teletype, an outdated form of communication used to distribute news to media outlets. Comparable to the brain, the teletype coded messages to facilitate their transmittal over space and time. Sadé's art is influenced greatly by her collaborations with neuroscientists to understand the biological mechanisms of memory. Concomitantly, she is inspired by the writings of photographer Georges Perec, who noted the impact of architecture and space on memory. Like the neuroscientists with which Sadé works, Perec also understood that memory is a three part process of recall, encoding and storage.

Kara Rooney addresses the idea of the fragment quite literally in her installation "On Moving Farther Away from Speech, or Hindsight is Never Twenty/Twenty." Comprised of white ceramic and plaster shards embedded or embellished with swatches of photographs, Rooney places them atop glossy black platforms in the center of the gallery. The severed shards and truncated photographs render them indecipherable individually. Placed in proximity, these discrete elements channel ancient civilizations and knowledge. Pieces resembling fluted columnar fragments, pottery

shards and architectural remnants bring to mind Classical Greco-Roman architecture and associations with great kingdoms of the past. Working the materials by feel and intuition, Rooney lets her hands guide her, as if past knowledge flows through her in the creative act. The individual sculptures also reference talismans, beckoning universal knowledge that is passed through generations in a sort of ancestral memory that flows through all of humanity.

Countering this shared interpretation of memory is Arianna Carossa's "Summer 1983." Incorporating found objects, with their own past associations and memories, Carossa creates a vignette to remark upon her personal experiences as a child summering at the beach. A lounge chair, central to the installation, is adorned irrationally with boat bumpers which connote a sense of safety and security. Emerging from beneath the chair and bumpers is an individual board, which references planking on a boat or boardwalk. On the wall behind these traces of Carossa's summers past is a painting, obscured except for two small round holes, which provide only hints of the image beneath. These small holes are perhaps a reference to the portal windows on a boat. What can be seen through the portals is a series of indecipherable gestures in the brushwork in shades of blue, gray and brown – conceivably a seascape. The psychic weight of the objects accumulated in space present a fixed moment of childhood happiness. Carossa doesn't present us with the facts of her youth, but a series of fleeting, yet somehow familiar impressions that resonate on an illogically emotional level.

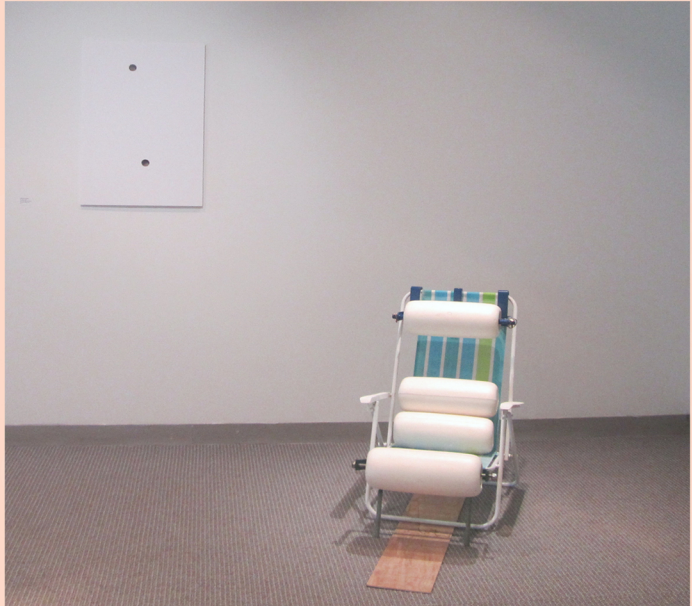
Utilizing experimental photographic techniques, Gerald Slota's "Found" series of black and white images results from a collection of negatives purchased at an estate sale. Slota manipulated each image as it was exposed for printing with overlaying marks and gestures. This technique

partially obscures the identity of the subjects, creating a quality of universality within this estrangement from the original context. The playful gestures in Slota's photographs extend to the gallery wall in charcoal, setting up a relationship between the veracity of the photographs' depicted past and the illogical present of Slota's installation. Furthermore, the gestural lines, shapes, rubbings and erasure marks -- both on the wall and in the photos -- serve as temporal signs that can only be perceived presently as a mark of the past. This disjointed assemblage of past and present, familiar and unknown -- creates a rift with reality. The original photographs, meant to function commemoratively, in Slota's hands, transcend their memorial purpose to become a highly charged emotional statement on the inconsistent quality of memory.

Ironically, it is the fragment that unifies the whole of the exhibition. Although recall is a potent emotional force in our lives, it comes to us in bits and shards, altered as memories are written, coded and retrieved. Despite the fact that reminiscence can be one of the most important defining faculties of self, it is often fickle and plays loosely with reality. The question posed by the exhibition becomes "How can the tenuous phenomenon of memory define our history and sense of self so vividly?" The answers reside in the art.

- Jeanne Brasile, Curator

Arianna Carossa



Summer 1983
3D installation and paint
variable dimensions
2014

Michelle Mackey



Calm Distance

latex, joint compound, shellac on wood

11" x 22"

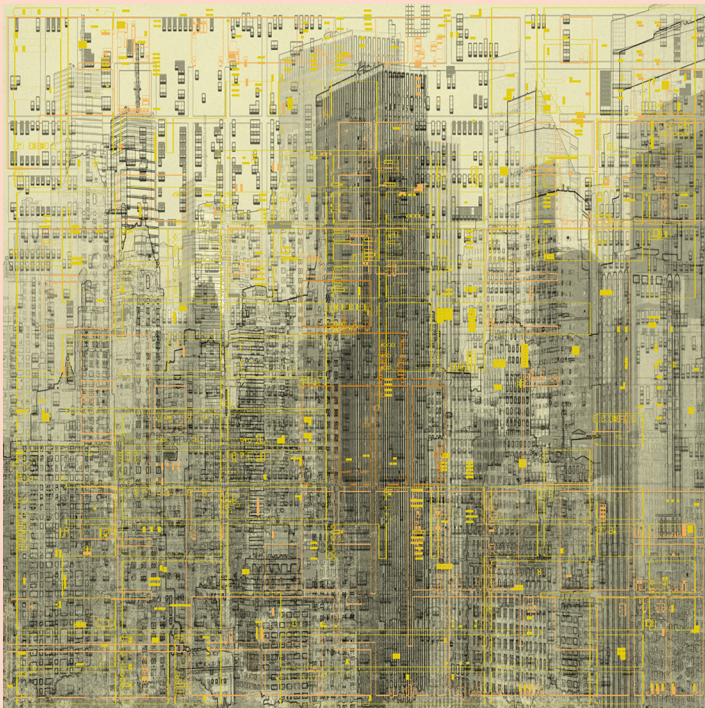
2014

Kara L. Rooney



On Moving Farther Away from Speech,
or Hindsight is Never Twenty/Twenty
ceramic, plaster, wood, resin and digital photograph
dimensions variable
2014

Shuli Sadé



Anamnesia
digital print on back light film mounted on wood, edition of 5
75" x 75"
2014

Gerald Slota



Daughter
unique silver gelatin print
10" x 8"
2006



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