



José Manuel Fors (b. 1956 Havana, Cuba). **Parasol**, 2003. Mixed media, color photographic strips on umbrella frame. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Irwin R. Berman; 2008:11.3

# Memory Works

GALLERY GUIDE

JORDAN SCHNITZER **MUSEUM OF ART**



# Memory Works

Communications scholar Marita Sturken defines “technologies of memory” as tools that can activate memory flows and encourage the creation of counter narratives as well as commemoration. Writing about cultural memory, Sturken explains how memory is constantly negotiated and reframed by objects, images, and diverse representations of historical accounts and contemporary events. As Sturken argues, “These are technologies of memory, not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning.” Technologies of memory might include public artworks, film, posters, memorials, photography, ribbons, “and even bodies themselves” as these objects and sites not only evoke memories but can create new ones as well.

Exploring the concept of technologies of memory, this exhibition examines artworks that question the myriad ways memory works and the tools that incite remembrance, reflection, and dialogue. The artists in the exhibition adopt and share their own tools to enhance memory, interrogate it, and contest the ways we remember and experience our memories.

José Manuel Fors explains, “Mi primera exposición personal se tituló *Acumulaciones*; desde entonces tengo una marcada tendencia a acumular cosas...La acumulación de documentos y objetos no siempre puede tener un vínculo directo con mi memoria familiar, pero sí es un trabajo íntimo que se va expandiendo (My first solo show was titled *Accumulations* and since then I have a tendency to save things...The safekeeping of documents and objects is not always related to a family memory, but it is an intimate work that keeps expanding).”

Reflecting on the role of memory, Georgina Reskala comments, “A moment is alive each time we speak of it and remember it. And each time we speak of it we transform it. Every time I replicate an image, I mimic storytelling and memory making as I take a moment out of time, copy it, reshape it, transform it, or erase it. I am interested in the power of narrative and how it shapes our personal history as well as our collective memory.”

This exhibition is curated by Dr. Adriana Miramontes Olivas, Curator of Academic Programs and Latin American and Caribbean Art.





# Parasol

José Manuel Fors (b. 1956 Havana, Cuba)



José Manuel Fors (b. 1956 Havana, Cuba). **Parasol**, 2003. Mixed media, color photographic strips on umbrella frame. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Irwin R. Berman; 2008:11.3

José Manuel Fors meticulously compiles and classifies information through a selection of paper, photographs, leaves, and other found objects to delineate the fragmentary work of memory. In **Parasol**, Fors deconstructs an umbrella, rendering it not only useless but vulnerable. Originally a flexible object produced to protect from rain and sun, here the umbrella is rendered flat and fragile. Open and exposed, the umbrella displays an amalgamation of images. Through this accumulation, composition, recontextualization, and reemployment, Fors questions the passage of time and our inability to thoroughly see both present and past.

Fors was trained as a painter but soon began to experiment with photography. His father had a photo lab at home and through his friendship with Rogelio López Marín he became fascinated with the medium. Speaking of his work, Fors explains, “comencé enamorado de la fotografía, pero a la vez sentía que no podía ser fotógrafo. Tenía que hacer una obra. Empiezo a incorporar objetos a esas fotografías y manipulaciones de todo tipo—con tinta, le agregaba superposición de textos, y se fue enriqueciendo (I fell in love with photography, but at the same time I felt I could not be a photographer. I had to create a different kind of artwork. I started incorporating objects into my photographs and manipulating the objects—with ink, overlaying texts, and the artwork was transformed).”

# Hojarasca: Cubo, Plato

José Manuel Fors (b. 1956 Havana, Cuba)



José Manuel Fors (b. 1956 Havana, Cuba). **Hojarasca: Cubo, Plato**, 2002. Toned gelatin silver print, paper, string, coffee, broken ceramic plate, dried leaves, plexiglass and box. Gift of Linda and Irwin Berman, in memory of Linda; 2016:48.17

In 1982 José Manuel Fors created **Hojarasca** (seen above, right) in his house and art studio in Cuba. Speaking of the photograph, Fors noted that originally it was only created as an object of study, meant to be photographed, not intended as an installation. As he explains, “no tenía entonces la conciencia de haber realizado un *environment* (back then I did not know I had created an *environment*).” While unaware of its potential as installation art, Fors nonetheless was conscious of the artwork’s ephemerality, a theme that has long captured his attention.

In **Hojarasca: Cubo, Plato**, Fors maintains his interest in transience, the manipulation of space, and engagement with the notion of a “nonsite.” A term coined by artist Robert Smithson, “nonsites” are objects or situations found outdoors and deemed “artworks” by the artist’s choice. Fors’s selected assemblage of leaves, chairs, books, and plates thus acts as a map to point elsewhere—outside the gallery space.

In **Hojarasca: Cubo, Plato**, Fors does not engage the entire gallery floor, as in earlier installations such as **Hojarasca**, but he contains the leaves within an enclosure to comment on the superimposition of meaning and the passage of time. Fors creates a palimpsest to generate new ideas and assembles a technology of memory to activate past and present in unexpected ways.

# Journal

Shon Schooler (b. N/A)



Shon Schooler (b. N/A). **Journal**, 1998. Artist book; 6 blank leaves and 17 laminated leaves of flower petal specimens, edition 1/1. University of Oregon, Design Library, Artists' Books; N7433.4.S366 J68 1998

Shon Schooler has co-authored a variety of artist's books, including *The travelers*, (1994-1995), *Ten reasons to save a drowning fish* (1996), and *The dream of childhood* (1997). In *Journal*, the artist features seventeen laminated leaves of flower petal specimens. Beautifully intact in some cases and torn in others, each leaf registers a detailed record of its history and life as it encountered weather changes and living organisms.

Schooler's technologies of memory not only recall the passage of time but focus on valuable skills such as observation and respect for the environment. The small scale of the artwork invites an intimate experience with it and spurs reflection on life, our surroundings, and our interactions with humans and non-human beings and entities.

# Fading

Elsa Mora (b. 1971 Holguín, Cuba)



(detail)

Elsa Mora (b. 1971 Holguín, Cuba). **Fading**, 2018. Paper and glue. Museum purchase with funds from the Ballinger Endowment Fund; 2019:3.1

Elsa Mora's work dissects notions of grief and wellbeing. She believes in the therapeutic power of art and has devoted her artistic energies to channeling psychological and emotional stability. Exploring the human condition, her work examines the myriad ways the brain works.

Mora's mother has bipolar disorder, her sister was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, and her son lives with autism, so creating intricate works with her hands provides the artist with a sense of comfort and an opportunity to explore depression, memory, and delusion. According to Mora, paper "became a metaphor for the mind and its malleability."

In **Fading**, Mora focuses on diverse states of consciousness, obliviousness, presence, and loss. As the artist claims, "The gradation of colors is a visual representation of that state of appearing and disappearing, feeling and not feeling." The large quantity of hand-made circles in **Fading** is also a commentary on attentiveness, patience, and diligence, and serves to question how values are constantly being transformed and how life and memory are not only always changing, but evanescent.



To watch a UO Artist Talk scan the QR code  
<https://bit.ly/MoraUO>



# Untitled #0184161

Georgina Reskala (b. 1967 Mexico City, Mexico)



Georgina Reskala (b. 1967 Mexico City, Mexico). **Untitled #0184161**, 2018. Photograph on linen. Gift of Jane Beebe, PDX Contemporary Art; 2020:43.1

Georgina Reskala's photograph on linen is frayed in several locations, deliberately forsaking traditional methods and functions of photography to play with form, medium, and subject. Carefully practiced, her methodology does not communicate chaos or carelessness, but attention to detail and precision. Yet, the unraveling of textiles, aided by superimposition and fading images, inhibits vision and hampers understanding. This inability to "read" the image eventually creates a sense of discomfort associated with the withholding of knowledge. As such, Reskala asks viewers to come to terms with the fragmentation and loss of information and the limits of the human body as an individual and collective entity.

Reskala was trained as a photographer, but she embraces chance and the idea of the "accident." Reflecting on her artistic practice, Reskala explains, "I started to do a lot of research on language, memories, and dreams. I also started to think about how our brain chooses, for lack of a better word, something to remember and things to forget. To me, my process is sort of akin to remembering and forgetting because every time we tell a story we add things to it and we leave things out, and it changes all the time, but it's the same basically."

# Berlin 1928-1989

Matthew Picton



Matthew Picton (b. 1960 London, England). **Berlin 1928-1989**, 2015. Archival papers and boards. Purchased with funds from the Patricia Noyes Harris Bequest; 2016:55.1

An assemblage of maps, cartoons, prints, literary sources, film posters, and snapshots creates convoluted landscapes that defy simple categorization and master narratives. For over a decade Matthew Picton has questioned notions of history, colonization, and war. He juxtaposes outdated and modern maps and separates the different layers with pins to create what he calls "sculptures." In this artwork, Picton focuses on Berlin, one of the many metropolises that have captured the artist's attention, to examine trauma and violence. Other issues Picton investigates include the challenges cities face due to natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, and fires.

According to Picton, "There is some intrinsic quality to cartography that goes beyond the scientific document — a beauty of form and detail, a record of past times and places, something that lives as a world in which imagination can flow; places to re-visit, places to re-imagine, a world to re-make itself in the imagination." Picton's artworks question how we remember the sites we interact with, the cities that mark our lifetimes. Yet, as he deconstructs maps, Picton also contributes to the decolonization of knowledge, asking us to unlearn received histories and write new ones.



To watch a UO Artist Talk scan the QR code  
<https://bit.ly/PictonUO>

# Missing

Mika Aono (b. 1970 Sendai, Japan)



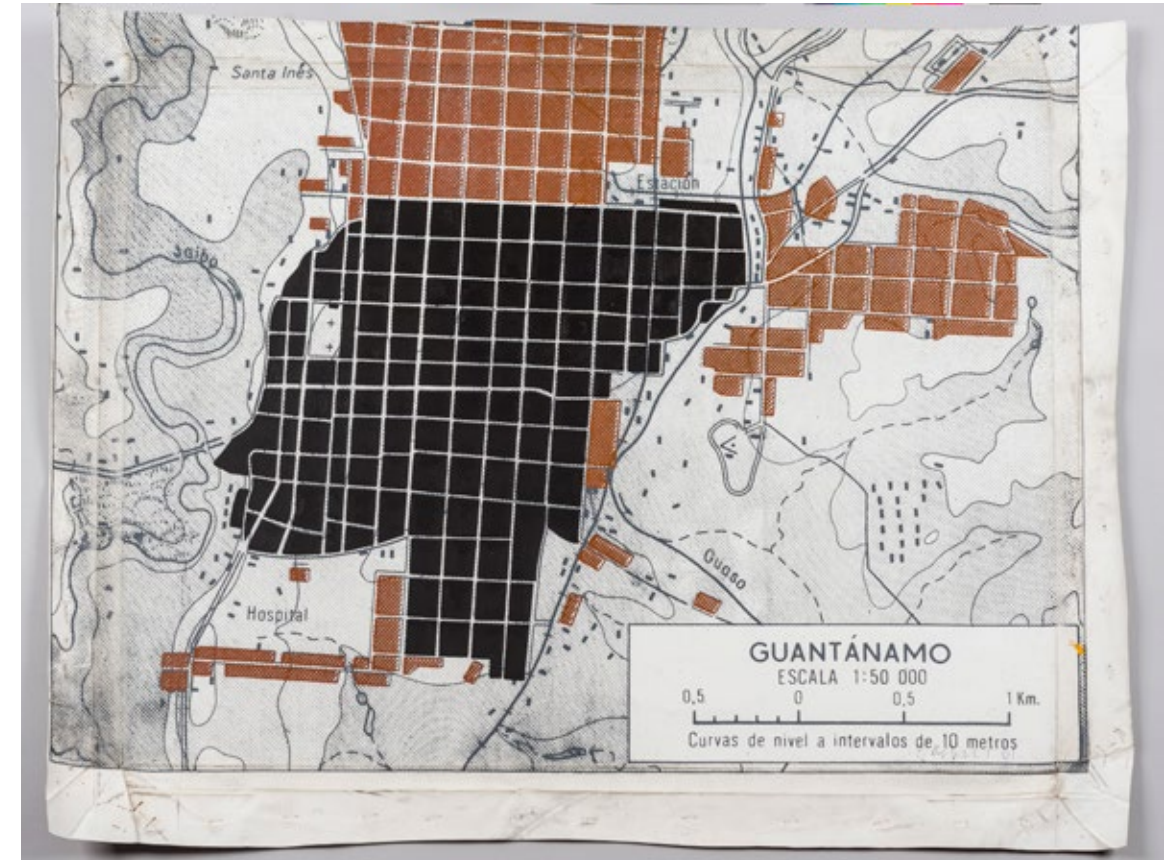
Mika Aono (b. 1970 Sendai, Japan). **Missing**, 2016. Spit bite etching, woodblock embossment, letterpress on paper. Gift of the artist; 2016:14.1

Focusing on the unhoused population of Eugene, Mika Aono highlights areas in the city where people without a permanent shelter can be found. Her methodological approach challenges the ways we see and remember cities. Her print exposes a culture of neglect, brutal capitalism, and other social ills that continue to permeate our society. Locally, recent reports indicate that since 2018 the number of individuals without shelter in Lane County increased by 72%.

In conversation Aono explains, "I recorded every time I saw people standing at the street corner asking for money or food by dropping nitric acid on a copper plate on the same place on the map. The direct etch from the acid represents the encounters. Then, I printed them in a color of muted red that might evoke some wounds or blood stains. The darker the spot, the more people I saw needing help at the place. That's why it folds like an old-school map. The text 'Home is missed here' has double meanings. Their home is physically missing, and their 'home' (as in family, warmth, security etc.) is being missed by them."

# Guantánamo

Ibrahim Miranda (b. 1969 Cuba)



Ibrahim Miranda (b. 1969 Cuba). **Guantánamo**, 2001. Acrylic on canvas . Museum purchase; 015:21.6

Guantánamo opened twenty-three years ago after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 in New York City. According to recent reports, fifteen men are still in the prison and one man has been held there since it opened without being charged. While it is estimated that it costs approximately \$13 million per year per prisoner, there are currently no plans to close it. This raises questions about the future status of its prisoners, including those previously exposed to torture. Under the current administration, the site is now regrettably used to incarcerate immigrants.

Maps are a common motif in Ibrahim Miranda's oeuvre. Unavoidably, the political nature of Miranda's **Guantánamo** provokes inquiries on trauma, unlawful detentions, bureaucratic inaction, and failures of the governmental security apparatus. The artwork also raises questions about the U.S. naval base in Cuba, a country long isolated and subjected to innumerable sanctions by the United States, and asks viewers to consider issues of foreign occupation, foreign relations, and changing notions of justice.



# Self-Portrait

SHIMA Kuniichi (b. 1935-2018 Tokyo, Japan)



# Memory Works

**Artist Project Space**

February 22, 2025 - June 1, 2025

SHIMA Kuniichi (b. 1935-2018 Tokyo, Japan). **Self-Portrait**, 1974. Screen print; ink on (2) river rocks. Gift of the Jack and Susy Wadsworth Collection of Japanese Prints; 012:7.104

Kuniichi Shima's unconventional printing techniques include stamping images on 10,000 stones from a river only to send them back into the water after the artistic action had taken place. Here we see a self-portrait of the artist, prompting questions about identity and change. As we age, photographs remind us of what once was. They act as a *memento mori*, a reminder of our mortality, as they delineates bygone days and physical attributes and features that have disappeared or transformed.

The self-portrait serves not only to aid the individual, but as a social tool used both historically and in contemporary times to remind others of our presence and, crucially, as a means to connect with one another. In **Self-Portrait**, Shima's adoption of rocks for a portrait paradoxically evokes a desire for permanence and commemoration while reminding viewers of the transience of life.



## JORDAN SCHNITZER MUSEUM OF ART

University of Oregon

### About the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art

The only academic art museum in Oregon accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the University of Oregon's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (JSMA) features engaging exhibitions, significant collections of historic and contemporary art, and exciting educational programs that support the university's academic mission and the diverse interests of its off-campus communities. The JSMA's collections galleries present selections from its extensive holdings of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and American art. Special exhibitions galleries display works from the collection and on loan, representing many cultures of the world, past and present. The JSMA continues a long tradition of bridging international cultures and offers a welcoming destination for discovery and education centered on artistic expression that deepens the appreciation and understanding of the human condition.

1430 Johnson Lane, Eugene, OR 97403 | 541-346-3027

[jsma.uoregon.edu](http://jsma.uoregon.edu)