

In transit, our memory fragments

JMCAnderson // Brooke Palmieri // Paula Turmina // Catriona Whiteford

Wednesday 16 March – Friday 27 May 2022

Opening hours: Wednesday – Friday, 11am – 5pm (or by appointment)

Chelsea Space is pleased to announce *In transit, our memory fragments*, a group exhibition of new works by artists JMCAnderson, Brooke Palmieri, Paula Turmina and Catriona Whiteford. The exhibition, curated in collaboration with Nodes network, considers the transformation of memory as a communal process, informed by encounter and exchange, in constant flux.

Through a collective engagement with the emotional, personal, and political charge of material and memory, the selected works enact systems of language and transformation, to traverse conditions of communication and objecthood. Each work honours the vanishing horizon of what we have experienced, and who we have become in the aftermath. Memories can challenge the familiar, become distorted and distant or stand prominently within our minds: either way, memory is an imperfect art of calling what is past into the present – a conjuring – that will always be inaccurate and partial. But no matter how imprecise memory is, it holds a truth.

The exhibition includes the production of ephemera alongside traditional sculptural, painterly, and text-based registers. These articulations of memory resonate through acts of cause and effect, between materials, the audience, and the artists. The result is an exhibition developed through shared conversations, mutual support, and skill sharing, where aspects of the artists' practices carry across and inform each other's work, in the common act of remembering.

Nodes is a network for showcasing and supporting artists, with the aim of forming collectives and building connections. The programme offers a series of in person and digital residencies, creating a forum to share ideas, inspire dialogues and initiate dynamic collaborations.

For this exhibition, Nodes invited four artists who had not previously worked together and created a space for a dialogue to emerge and grow over the span of a few months. Through workshops and sharing sessions facilitated by the Nodes team, the artists developed the themes and approach of the exhibition together organically; collaboration and experimentation weave together the work of all four artists - the result, an exhibition formed entirely from new, site specific works.

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JMCAnderson

Upon entry to the gallery JMCAnderson's artwork *But you're not really Black though?* is displayed in large, red vinyl produced from the artist's handwriting. Reflecting on moments from the past where language and terminology has failed her mixed heritage, Anderson presents two new text works examining the truth between what we say, the perceptions we hold and the imagery we evoke through our linguistic choices.

But you're not really Black though? is a comment made to JMCAnderson by another Black Woman when working within an arts institution. This lived experience has stayed with her, where the questioning of the Blackness or Whiteness of her skin tone is a regular occurrence in her everyday life from both parties. Taking the comment made in the past and casting it from her mind into today's reality sheds light on mixed heritage perspectives that resonate with others, while acting to empower and overcome the memory and racial language used against her. The recollection of this event and the making of the work has brought up emotions of sadness and hatred that the artist had repressed. By placing the words into the public eye Anderson unravels feelings of pride as she grapples with the scenario that took place.

How nice it is to see a man with blonde hair and blue eyes with an African Woman is a performative work that captures a statement said to Anderson, who is half Jamaican, and her partner as they got out of a taxi in Norwich. Approached by an elderly man on the street, the man looked at them both and proceeded to say "How nice it is to see a man with blonde hair and blue eyes with an African Woman"... The writing performance captures the repetitiveness of the memory as she continues to struggle to understand the dialogue exchanged. The work and the performance become ritual whilst recognising the failure of language - particularly in the struggle for justice and reducing communities to only their challenges.

Brooke Palmieri

Elsewhere, the artist Brooke Palmieri presents three new works: *Muscle Memories No. 1: In a Dissociation You Saw a Way to Survive And You Were Full of Joy*; *Muscle Memories No. 2: All Learning Is Recollection Until It Isn't* and *Muscle Memories No. 3: We Will Get Our Asses Kicked. We Will Win.*

In Palmieri's words, "every Memory Palace needs a well-stocked tool shed". Expanding upon – and camping up – the architectural "method of loci" tradition of training the memory drawn from classical antiquity and popular into the Renaissance, Palmieri imagines an assortment of workspaces within which to process their memories. Each panel engages with time differently, and considers how violence, dissociation, and instability impact memory and meaning-making itself. When the sheets containing specific memories are exhausted and scattered to a wider readership (or thrown away), only the tools and leftover materials remain to shape the next set of experiences into some other version of the self.

Paula Turmina

Alternative worlds and versions of memory are discovered in the collection of works by artist Paula Turmina. Interested in what shapes memory and the abstract production of shapes formed from memory, Turmina has worked with oil painting and clay sculpture to present moments from the past that have affected the present. The sculptural works were produced through a process of activating

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memory via touch and experimentation. Each work captures, transforms and reclaims the imaginary landscape of Turmina's mind, embodying and transferring memories through trial and error.

The collection of works have been inspired by J.G Ballard's writing:

"Every step we've taken in our evolution is a milestone inscribed with organic memories - from the enzymes controlling the carbon dioxide cycle to the organization of the brachial plexus and the nerve pathways of the pyramids cells in the mid-brain, each is a record of a thousand decisions taken in the face of a sudden physicochemical crisis. (...) Each one of us is as old as the entire biological kingdom, and our bloodstreams are tributaries of the great sea of its total memory."

For Turmina, memory is a language that can manifest through multiple sensibilities. It can mend, provide an act of care and leave a mark. This series of paintings are a reflection of the process of remembering and forgetting. It is a process unearthing working methods that situate painting as the last stage. Painted from the clay object that has initially captured the bodily experience, the small oil paintings are inscribed with organic memories - as Ballard suggested. Each chosen title, such as *Memory of heat (exercise for future survival)* and *Miscommunication* gently guide the viewer toward the experiences captured.

Catriona Whiteford

Moving between physical, object-based sculpture and auditory soundscape, Catriona Whiteford's work is an intimate display comprising three new works. Her work is embedded first in language; in the ways that language fails, ruptures or empowers. Through modes of expression spanning poetry and audio, to working with materials such as resin and zinc, Whiteford's works explore the impact of touch, memory and translation on how we see and present ourselves.

Pech, a large resin sculpture rests on the gallery wall, angular and transparent in part. Taking as its starting point the Scots etymology of the word: 'to breathe in a laboured way, with exertion or sigh', it is both quiet and active. The use of resin is integral - fluid and solid, opaque and reflective - it makes space for an image subsumed by the performance that masks it, and suggests a form of interior exhale activated by the viewer. It is the act of breathing ourselves out and beyond, in the release of a sigh.

Based on the idea of transformation between physical touch and care, into an intimacy that is hidden within material, *the weight of your palm* journeys to something more formative - the unwavering comfort from a loved one. The weight of the sculpture is important. It is the weight taken of a resting arm and palm of someone dear to the artist. Fabricated using 4,685g of Zinc, the material choice is indicative of Zinc's presence in the body for wound healing and the healing that happens when embraced or comforted by a loved one.

For, in your breath I cannot fail addresses allegory as a process of absence and removal. The work is rooted in collaboration and discourse to reveal a gentle humanness, imperfectly evolving as a musical score. Created from a conversation between the group of artists, the artwork is a musical translation of four vocal recordings reenacted as an improvisational melody. Its linguistic absence opens up multiplicities that go beyond, and are in excess of, the voices and words gathered.

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JMCAnderson (b.1994) is an artist, curator and facilitator living in Norfolk. Anderson has been Associate Curator (2017) and Programme Assistant (2019-2020) and is currently the Creative Associate for Artists Lone Twin (2022). Commissions and residencies include 'I Am...', Norfolk & Norwich Festival (2021); 'Constellations', Firstlight Festival (2019); Cyprus College of Art, Paphos (2018) and St Marys Works, Norwich (2016).

Brooke Palmieri is a historian, writer, and printmaker. In 2018 they founded CAMP BOOKS, a platform to make the long history of gender non-conformity more accessible. Their writing has been featured in *Louche* magazine, *WMN_Zine*, and Pilot Press. Recent works include 'Women Against Imperialism: 13 Posters Used In Protest' at the Bower, London (2019); 'Take Nothing For Granted: Theses on History' (2020) and 'The Temple of Wisdom for this Queer World'.

Paula Turmina (b. 1991, Brazil) lives and works in London. She graduated with a BA (Hons) in Painting at Wimbledon College of Fine Arts and an MA Fine Art at the Slade School of Fine Art. Residencies, scholarships and exhibitions include Winsor & Newton, The FineArt Collective; Zsuzsi Roboz Scholarship, Chelsea Arts Club Trust; 'London Grads Now', Saatchi Gallery (2020); 'The Land of No Evil', Offshoot Gallery, and 'Neo Norte', Exposed Arts Projects in 2019.

Catriona Whiteford (b.1985) is an artist, curator and writer. Currently a studio artist at Studio Voltaire, London, she works across disciplines in sculpture, photography, installation, audio, and writing. Recent exhibitions, grants and creative partnerships include KUNST Berlin 2021, HANGAR, Lisbon (2021), DOOResidency, Zaandam (2021), Mark Devereux Projects DIALOGUES (2021), A-n Artists Bursary (2019).

Nodes is a collective and artists support network run by curators Gaia Giacomelli, Michael Glassock and M Irwin. Nodes' aim is to foster new creative communities and collaborations and offer insight into the creative industries, especially for early-stage career artists or for those with least access to the arts.

Acknowledgments

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Quotation: Ballard, J. G. 2005. *The Drowned World*. London, England: Fourth Estate. p.43-44

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