

Geographies of Memory

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LAMB Gallery

32 St. George Street

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London

‘The exercise of imaginations is dangerous
to those who profit from the way things are
because it has the power to show that the way things are is
not permanent, not universal, not necessary.’

Ursula K. Le Guin
A War Without End

LAMB Gallery is pleased to present *Geographies of Memory*, a group show featuring the work of Lucas Arruda, Rômulo Avi, Fiza Ghauri, James Hillman, Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato, Giulia Mangoni, Josh Raz and George Shaw.

Historical events and individual lives encounter moments of intersection enabling the creation of autobiographical memory. As Cuban American psychologist Olivia M. Espín pointed out, memory can help us to frame reality: conflicts that happened in places where she was living at that time served 'to anchor her memory.' Her research focused on memories as a crucial element in the formation and preservation of self and identity.

Taking the academic's theories on 'geography of memory' as a point of departure, we have invited artists to explore the theme of memory not just as a residue of past experiences but rather as an ever-changing constructive process deeply related to our emotions, values, and communication systems and feelings.

Lucas Arruda's (Brazil, 1983) works are a determined process of research developed around the landscape. Through a series of cohesive paintings that navigate between abstraction and representation, Arruda materialises the ongoing process of construction and deconstruction of memory. Arruda's luminous, small-scale depictions of landscape bring to light the weight of existence, capturing land, sky, and water in an almost sublime manner. The atmosphere conveyed through an ethereal use of colour invites the viewer to embark on the ever-constructive process of

memory: understanding the horizons of those landscapes as the constant friction between imagination and reality, apparition and emptiness.

Using figuration as his visual language, **Amadeo Luciano Lorenzato** (Brazil, 1900 - 1995) portrayed the reality of Belo Horizonte throughout his life. He considered painting an essential daily activity; Lorenzato was not a professional painter and worked in civil construction for most of his life. Initially, Lorenzato would go for walks in his town and the countryside, drawing on sketchbooks everything that his eyes could grasp. Later on - taking as a point of departure those sketches - he would create vibrant colourful compositions transferring his memories onto the canvas and creating a pictorial archive of the images, smells, and textures of Belo Horizonte.

Joshua Raz's (United Kingdom, 1993) paintings uniquely represent the same landscape at the same time but are perceived from the lens of different figures. All of these perceptions enable a collective reconstruction of a geographical memory. Through layered compositions and subtle representations of human figures, Raz explores individualism and the almost inevitable need for connection with others. His practice addresses a cultural shift: from valuing external fact towards prioritising our emotions as a measure of reality; the idea that 'if you feel it, then it is true'.

George Shaw (United Kingdom, 1966) paintings evoke a feeling of nostalgia through the depiction of streets and landscapes that mostly make reference to the council state where he grew up in Coventry. At a first glance, these realistic depictions might seem purely representational however, they unlock the artist's personal past giving the viewer access to those childhood memories which have configured to a certain extent the artist's identity. Shaw is capable of transcending the classic clichés of landscape painting suggesting deeper feelings of sadness and melancholy through the delicate contrast of light and darkness and by including elements like litter or graffiti to manifest the previous presence of someone in that space.

Understanding painting as an open-ended question, **Rômulo Avi's** (Brazil, 1992) work captures images that flourish from a confluence of streams of consciousness. Distancing himself from the classic mimetic process of representation in painting, Avi investigates the concept of utopias through an intuitive process. He transforms the surface of the canvas using a squeegee to create texture and depth, configuring a landscape that encompasses ideas, dreams, and memories. It seems as though the reworked surface is composed of snips and cutouts of multiple experiences, both personal and universal, that blend into his rich-layered compositions.

Approaching memory as a joint exercise to conserve tradition, **Giulia Mangoni** (Italy, 1991) is interested in deconstructing notions of memory and the identity of specific regions through painting. Her recent body of work reflects on the feelings of belonging to a specific territory. This investigation occurs collaboratively, as Mangoni works closely with artisans, agronomists, and breeders to gain a deep understanding of Ciociaria's popular tradition, a rural region south of Rome. The result of her findings is a series of small-scale paintings where different influences, relationships, and contributions have enabled her to create works that temporally solidify the process of gathering and disseminating knowledge.

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James Hillman's (United Kingdom, 1992) practice develops around modern and bucolic notions of manual craftsmanship. The dialogue between the two sides results in the generation of images that confuse classical pictorial languages with those of industrial manufacturing and digital aesthetics. Many of the works require machines specially built in the artist's studio for their production. Hillman's practice presents craftsmanship as an element to understand tradition and as a vessel for collective memory and history.

Fiza Ghauri's works almost obsessively on wood. She is interested in the possibility of reworking its surface multiple times. Through the materiality of wood, Ghauri explores the metaphysical ideas of landscape. It's through this idea of landscape from where she explores the complexities of migration and movement, seeming to present memory as a key element to recover a sense of self.