

Memory Tokens

Julia Christ

My work deals with memory and the affliction of forgetfulness. Memories start out vivid and get washed over, dulled. New experiences cover up those of the past, and the authority of our memories is called into question. Like most humans, I collect memories compulsively; like souvenirs in a hoarder's obsessive sanctuary, those memories start to pile up. They become indistinguishable and forgotten. These collected memory tokens, whether or not they are consciously acknowledged, trigger different emotional responses and forever influence my identity.

When I revisit a place, I am brought back to events that previously occurred there; multitudes of past memories and associated feelings flicker over the actual space like a projection of light. I am seized by a hidden moment from the past and am transported back into my own personal history.

In this work, the figures are the embodiment of memory. Drifting within the space, the protagonists are unfixed and prevented from fully assembling. The physical distortion of the figures suggests memory distortion. Conversely, the environment is tangible; it is a firmly established presence. The environment both supports and competes with the figures. It creates a filtered surface over these fractured, painted figures and further clouds their presence.

Even as the figures struggle to permeate the constructed space, they insist upon their presence; like memories, these figures are holed, partial, and fractured. Nevertheless, they are significant—both the figures to the paintings and the memories to my identity. Old memories remain influential and significant to us no matter how fractured they become.

My intention is for observers to be consciously aware that they are in the act of viewing; they should feel intrusive and uncomfortable when studying these figures engaged in private transactions, which could include a trivial encounter, an affectionate touch, or a silent convergence. Like my struggling figures, I labor to catalog these memories so they do not become lost within my mind. Although these drifting memories are infinite in number and impossible to pin down, I try to replicate and reconstruct them in my paintings. The work brings forth new life and new meaning to the site, to my own personal history, and to my identity.



Suburban Summer
30" x 30"
Oil on Canvas





A Room of Light
20" x 30"
Oil on Canvas





Surveillance
60" x 72"
Oil on Canvas





You and Me
60" x 72"
Oil on Canvas

