

Art and Memory

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This year's IVLA online exhibition, *Art and Memory*, features work by twenty-seven artists working in a wide range of mediums. These mediums range from photography, painting, textile, sculpture, and ceramics. This year's first-, second-, and runner up winners utilized photomontage, acrylic painting on a wood panel, and drawing. *Limitada (Limitless)* by Viviana Torres-Mestey (first-place winner) is a self-portrait photomontage inspired by a transformative experience in a meditation session. *Samurai Spirit* by Ted Larson (second-place winner) is a painting that explores a memory of watching a film. *Calm After the Storm* by Leshan Li (runner-up) is a drawing of the artist's father capturing a moment of peace after a time of great difficulty. The twenty-seven works of art in the exhibition were chosen by a jury from ninety images submitted by artists from around the world.

The theme, *Art and Memory*, has been interpreted in a wide variety of ways. One approach was through ancestral connections. *In Search of Her Archive* by Susan Jane Britsch is a digital work taken from a photobook interrogating the life of Britsch's aunt Anne. Within this image you see two connected portraits with the faces obscured by tree branches. Britsch explains that the task of this work is to situate her Aunt's life within her own and vice versa. Another work, *Aegis through Lineage* by Boneger Kwarteng embodies the essence of ancestry, resilience, and the interconnectedness of human existence. Made from resin, gold plated copper, and ink, this work draws inspiration from the Zulu shield which serves as a metaphor for the strength and legacy passed down through generations, guarding the wearer with the spirit of those who came before.

A similar subtheme of this exhibition is time. *I Pray this Finds You Well* by Cheryl Bomba is a photograph that speaks to the enduring human need to stay connected-across distance, across time, across silence. Two small portraits, each showing a woman with hands clasped in prayer, rest beside a letter bearing a Richmond, Virginia address. Whether this letter is sent or unsent is unknown. This photograph is meant to remind us that the deepest connections aren't measured by speed-but by intention, memory, and love that waits patiently to be received.

A piece that also explores time is *Liminality* by K.E. Rajcic. This digital photo composition represents liminal in-betweenness as a threshold carrying meaning across time. The image of classical architecture represents the past while the translucency of the image symbolizes the permeable boundaries of the various thresholds. The red orange tint energizes and uplifts the grounding opaqueness of the stone frieze while the expectant youthful visage connects us to memories of our own youthful anticipation of what will be.

Other works in this exhibition explore the human experience. *Echoes through the Sacred: Remembering Through the Body* by Gyuzel Gadelshina is a paper work with fluorescent pigments that explores the body as a site of memory. The work depicts the outline of a human body with fluorescent colors inside on a black background. Gadelshina explains that, “The glowing colours, emanating from the chest and limbs, draw attention to the body’s inner, unseen life and echo sacred body painting rituals, where marks on the skin become embodied acts of memory and storytelling”. A sculptural piece titled, *We are the body, the boat and the water*, explores the human journey. Made from glazed terracotta, this site-specific sculpture is in 3 sections. All three sculptures have a human sitting on top of what looks like a body of water. From the first to the third sculpture, the depicted figure is more submerged in water. This piece acts as a metaphor for life challenges as we grow as people and in age.

All the pieces included in this exhibition explore the theme of *Art and Memory* in personal and creative ways. Viewers interacting with these artworks will perhaps leave the exhibition with new insights to memory, experiences, and what we value as humans through our interactions with time and others.