

ARTIST STATEMENT: AMY CANNESTRA

Remembering is altering the thing one is remembering

Children have a fascination with the unknown. They also have an uncensored curiosity that drives them to play and learn. By catching bugs and collecting them in glass jars, they are able to study these creatures up close. Though full of good intentions, the act of catching and keeping is a morbid one: the insect is pulled from its natural habitat to be examined and cherished, but the short attention span of a child will most likely leave the specimen to be forgotten and left to decay in a glass tomb.

Remembering is altering the thing one is remembering is a multi-media installation that mimics the playful act of collecting. Instead of bugs, however, the displayed jars contain short videos of the lush and expansive Grenadian landscape and everyday life. Not scripted or staged, the footage shows the island as she lives and breathes. Figures enter and exit scenes with enough detail to know they exist, but appear more like shadows of what was. Moments of Grenada have been recorded and examined before they decay. At the base of each jar is the copper foil that can also be found wrapped around Grenadian-made chocolate. As hard as we may try to keep natural elements from going stale, it is only effective for so long before the process of decay takes over. For “Remembering is altering the thing one is remembering” the foil blankets a portion of the glass, referencing the act of preservation for the memorabilia that lives within. Research shows that our memories are malleable. Each time we recall an adventure, relationship, or trauma, our current emotional and physical state will influence and be written into, even over, the original. As we continue to recall a specific memory, are we really remembering what we experienced, or a past turned into a fiction compiled of years of overlapping emotions and memory fragments. The question “do you remember?” can be answered with a confident “yes”, but when we try to fill in the details, can we rely on this certainty? Knowing that our memory changes means we must question the nature of the stories we tell and the legitimacy of the histories we write.

Living and creating in Grenada was a transformative experience. Everything was new, I was always asking questions and “discovering” species of insects, plants, fruits, and vegetables that I have never encountered before. My inner child and natural curiosity was piqued and I collected as much as I could. Back home I can tell stories, show artifacts, and play videos, but the more I recall, the further I move from the truth of my experiences. Remembering is altering the thing one is remembering is presented with the hope that the Grenada I remember is “true”.

BIOGRAPHY

Amy Cannestra, an interdisciplinary artist from Wisconsin, USA, has a contemporary art practice that shifts back and forth between a light-hearted commentary on social and political issues and works investigating how human experience effects identity. Both ways of thinking are visualized through the use common household items and found objects, which reveal insight to place and time, following in line with the 1960s Pop Art Movement. Cannestras’ works have

been shown internationally including the 2017 edition of TRIO: Three Dimensional International Rio Bienal, 2016 Transart Triennial in Berlin, and in galleries in New York City, and Los Angeles.
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