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Buffalo, NY 14214
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Paloma Barhaugh-Bordas, Understory

Paloma Barhaugh-Bordas’s solo exhibition, Understory, is comprised of multimedia monotypes, collages, and appropriated ecological elements through which she works to construct a personal narrative of identity based in place. Her work adapts the landscape of the many regions she’s called home and traces the self-conscious search for cultural roots as a first-generation American. Barhaugh-Bordas’s work begins with photographs and high resolution scans of plants as a way of recording and fragmenting geographies. Barhaugh-Bordas uses print media to investigate and inform the meaning and purpose of serial works composed of repeated symbols, gestural marks, and photographic reproductions. Rather than creating multiples from a single image, Barhaugh-Bordas works in series and reproduces imagery and symbols across multiple prints.

For the work in this exhibition, Barhaugh-Bordas has collected and composed various plant forms and found objects directly onto print plates and scanner screens. She employed a direct method of image making, seeking to capture a sense of ecological colonialism while also speaking to the ways nature, and specifically invasive species, move through both time and space. The layering of organic and inorganic material, along with gestural lines and patterns, suggest a tension between nature and the ways humans try to contain it. The placement of her work on top of hand-crafted tables as well as the gallery walls recalls her direct process while also inviting viewers to actively investigate each composition.

Cover image: Neck Piece, 2019, 30 x 52, dye sublimation on handmade paper

Phyllis Thompson, Making Memories: Telling Visual Stories

Phyllis Thompson’s exhibition, Making Memories: Telling Visual Stories, uses monotype printmaking to construct images rooted in childhood memories that focus on experiences both real and imagined. She uses a monotype process akin to the direct process of collaging, because, like memory, it is an imperfect system. Her process includes visual elements such as patterned fabric, textured papers, and faded photographs to construct deeply personal portraits that move between symbol and metaphor.

The work in Making Memories connects Thompson, and by extension the viewer, to her familial lineage. Each print includes the title written in a lovely script, often naming the individuals in the artwork. Circles serve as an important symbol in Thompson’s work as well, referencing memories of her grandmother using needle, thread, and thimble to gather fabric circles called yo-yo’s that were sewn together to make a bedspread. Making the circles and creating the coverlets was a satisfying and a peaceful activity for Thompson’s grandmother; a way that she could express herself creatively. And although Miss Lucy’s hands and fingers were permanently bent from arthritis, the spiritual satisfaction of being creative outweighed the physical discomfort of its process. The circles themselves, as well as Thompson’s prints, are evidence of the value in constructing something both meaningful and beautiful from the scraps of daily life.

Cover image: Retreat from the City, 2018, monoprint

Evolving Memories #4, 2019, monoprint