

MASS MoCA

Shaun Leonardo and Bruno Miguel delve into the myths of storytelling and collective memory in Kidspace exhibition

Defining Moments is on view June 26, 2022 through May 2023

North Adams, MA, June 7, 2022 – MASS MoCA has announced *Defining Moments*, featuring the work of Shaun Leonardo and Bruno Miguel, on view in Kidspace, the museum's child-centered gallery and hands-on studio, beginning June 26. The exhibition explores how memories are formed, recalled, and visualized. Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary artist Shaun Leonardo and Brazilian pop artist Bruno Miguel share their individual and cultural memories, expressed in a range of mediums from paintings and wall drawings, to mixed media sculpture and collages. Their work delves into the mythic aspects of generational storytelling, the formative role of nostalgia, and the fallibility of collective memory. *Defining Moments* will be on view through May 2023.

Shaun Leonardo has long explored the concept of memory in his drawings based on news stories and popular culture. Now, as a father, he takes a turn in his new work, focusing on his family from Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. Leonardo's evocative line drawings of his *abuela*, *abuelo*, *tio*, and *primo* are depictions of family stories that he passes along to his young daughter. In several of the drawings, Leonardo questions the accuracy of his recollections. In sharing these stories both orally and visually, Leonardo considers how memories are formed, maintained, and changed over time.

Bruno Miguel's mixed media work reflects on the experience of growing up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Using tea cups that are often given as wedding gifts, Miguel coats them with resin and spray paint to create mini landscapes that memorialize domestic, everyday moments merged with fantastical representations of the natural world. In his dense, layered paintings, Miguel includes collaged pop culture ephemera as a form of nostalgia, particularly for those who grew up alongside the development of the Internet. His fascination with popular culture is also evident in 21 paintings—all part of one title, *Marina Helps Bruno (lesson 1–21)*—that resemble the pages of coloring books, filled with superheroes, cartoon characters, celebrities, and musicians. Completed as an adult in collaboration with his mother, these pieces show the long-lasting impact of a meaningful interpersonal memory.

Miguel's newest work focuses on the Eurocentric history of his community by amending the traditional scenes in tapestries, including *Povo Cigano (Gipsy People)*, *São Cosme e Damião (Saints Cosmas and Damian)*, and *Seu Tranca-Rua and Dona Sete in the Garden of Love*, that are found in many Brazilian homes. The artist accentuates the existing European figures and backgrounds by adding paint and presents them with spirits from the Afro-Brazilian religion Umbanda to remind us to not take for granted the collective memories that are presented in even the most seemingly benign objects.

The exhibition features prompts posted throughout the gallery that encourage thinking, sharing, and conversation about memories. Children can set a table for a pretend meal with Shaun's image of his grandma and their friends, and the ArtBar will also offer special projects to conclude visits to the gallery.

Shaun Leonardo is a Brooklyn-based artist from Queens, New York. His multidisciplinary work negotiates societal expectations of manhood, namely definitions surrounding black and brown masculinities, along with its notions of achievement, collective identity, and experience of failure. His performance practice, anchored by his work in Assembly—a diversion program for court-involved youth at the Brooklyn-based non-profit Recess, of which he is the co-director—is participatory and invested in a process of embodiment. He received his MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, is a recipient of support from Creative Capital, Guggenheim Social Practice, Art for Justice and A Blade of Grass, and was recently profiled in *The New York Times* and CNN. His work has been featured at The Guggenheim Museum, the High Line, and New Museum, with a solo exhibition, *The Breath of Empty Space*, presented at MICA, MASS MoCA, and The Bronx Museum of Art.

Bruno Miguel lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. An inveterate collector of quotidian objects, Miguel's practice explores the fluid relationships and personal stories embedded in familiar household items and consumer products to reframe the international dimensions of Pop Art and the avant-garde in Brazil. Miguel's paintings and installations—which frequently manipulate traditional Carnival techniques in polyurethane foam, resin, and papier-mache—convey the layered histories of Rio de Janeiro's landscape from a critical periphery. Miguel graduated in Fine Arts and Painting from the School of Visual Arts, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. Currently, he teaches art and art theory at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and at the School of Visual Arts, Parque Lage. His solo exhibitions include shows at Largo das Artes, Museum Paço Imperial, Rio de Janeiro, Centro Cultural da Caixa Econômica Federal, and Centro Cultural São Paulo. His work was included in group exhibitions at the Cultural Center Bank of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo; Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago, Chile; Caixa Cultural, Rio de Janeiro; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro. *Defining Moments* is Miguel's first North American museum exhibition.

Programming at MASS MoCA is made possible in part by the Barr Foundation, Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, and Mass Cultural Council.

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About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art. With vast galleries and a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace all forms of art: music, sculpture, dance, film, painting, photography, theater, and new, boundary-crossing works of art that defy easy classification. Much of the work we show in our light-filled spaces, on our technically

sophisticated stages, and within our lovely network of late 19th-century courtyards is made here during extended fabrication and rehearsal residencies that bring hundreds of the world's most brilliant and innovative artists to North Adams all year round. For more information about MASS MoCA, visit www.massmoca.org.

About Kidspace

Kidspace at MASS MoCA is a free community-centered art gallery and art-making studio presenting exhibitions focused on timely social justice themes. Artists are selected for the educational and artistic merit of their work and their ability to connect to children and adults. Exhibitions have featured renowned artists from around the world including Wendy Red Star, Wes Bruce, Portia Munson, Willie Birch, Federico Uribe, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Roger Shimomura, Ran Hwang, Genevieve Gaignard, and Nick Cave. While an emphasis is placed on our partnership with local schools, children, and families, Kidspace is for everyone. Our motto is: Kidspace, it's not just for kids; adults welcome too!

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