

# DEFINING MOMENTS

*Shaun Leonardo & Bruno Miguel*

DRAWING  
ACTIVITIES  
INSIDE!



MASS MoCA

# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION



Bruno Miguel, **For Radiant Children**, 2017. Acrylic paint, oil paint, enamel, oil-based pen, spray paint, toys from the artist's childhood, two cloth dolls sewn by the artist's mother and left in his crib when he was born, and polyester resin on wood, glass, printed fabric, and canvas.

*Defining Moments* explores how memories are formed, recalled, and visualized by two Latin artists. 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. Specifically, Shaun's art focuses on memories and stories about his family from Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. Bruno's mixed-media work offers many perspectives on growing up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



**An awareness of memories is particularly relevant today as we consider what we may recollect about living through an unprecedented pandemic. What stories will we tell about this time in 10, 20, and 30 years from now?**

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Shaun Leonardo** has been considering memories 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. The artist's evocative line drawings of his *abuela* (grandma), *abuelo* (grandpa), *tio* (uncle) and *primo* (cousin) are depictions of family stories that he passes along to his young daughter; and to all of us, he invites us to ask ourselves how our own memories are formed, maintained, and indeed change over time. In several of the drawings, Shaun questions the accuracy of his recollections. For instance, Shaun's *abuelo*, a great storyteller, once described an event that took place in the Atlantic Ocean as a young man; however, the artist shows him as the older man who he knew.



Shaun with his daughter



Shaun as a kid with his mom

**Bruno Miguel**'s mixed-media work offers many perspectives on memories of growing up in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Using tea cups that are often given as wedding gifts, he coats them with polyurethane foam, paper-mache, 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, Bruno includes collaged pop culture as a form of nostalgia, particularly for those who grew up alongside the development of the Internet. Bruno's fascination with popular culture is also evident in 21 paintings that resemble the pages of coloring books of 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. A perhaps more serious storyline, Bruno's newest work focuses on the Eurocentric history of his community by amending the traditional scenes in tapestries that are found in many Brazilian homes. The artist accentuates the existing European figures and backgrounds and presents them with spirits from the Afro-Brazilian religion Umbanda to remind us not to take for granted the collective memories that are presented in even the most seemingly benign objects.



Bruno as a kid

# TEST YOUR MEMORY



Shaun shares a memory of his tio (uncle) Carlos standing near a palm tree in Guatemala. He recalls this image from a photograph.

Shaun Leonardo, **Carlos**, 2011–2022. Sign enamel on MDF cutout. Courtesy of the artist

## *To Do at Home*

Recall a happy memory of an event or person and draw as many details as you can remember. See if you can find a photograph to which you can compare your drawing.



# A CUP FULL OF MEMORIES

Using porcelain pieces from tea sets that are traditionally given as wedding gifts in Brazil, Bruno transforms them using similar techniques used to create floats in the carnival parades, the most popular party in his country. These mini-landscapes overflow the domestic memories of the former tea set owners' families and show us that nature, if allowed, ends up recovering their space.



Bruno Miguel, *Those People in the Dining Room*, 2012–2014. Fifty tea cups, spray paint, cold porcelain, polyurethane foam, wire, acrylic resin, and paper-mache on porcelain. Courtesy of Sapar Contemporary and the artist

## *To Do at Home*

Add your own fantastical landscape or other imagery to this tea cup and saucer.



## Defining Moments: Shaun Leonardo and Bruno Miguel

June 26, 2022–May 29, 2023

Curated by Laura Dickstein Thompson, EdD

Exhibition research and prompts were designed in collaboration with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA) interns AJ Burton and Erick Ramos-Jacobo, as well as museum educator Lilly Rodriguez. We thank the Berkshire Immigrant Center for its translation services.

Major support for education at MASS MoCA is generously provided by The Willow Tree Fund. Additional support is provided by the Institute for Museum and Library Services; Samantha and Daniel Becker; John B. DeRosa; the Feigenbaum Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; the Ruth E. Proud Charitable Trust; and the Milton and Dorothy Sarnoff Raymond Foundation in memory of Sandy and Lynn Laitman.

Support is also provided by Anonymous (2); the Avangrid Foundation, in partnership with Berkshire Gas Company; Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the Adams Cheshire Educational Partnership, Gateway Fund, Meadow Fund, SEE Fund, and William J. and Margery S. Barrett Fund; Joyce Bernstein and Lawrence Rosenthal; Charles H. Hall Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee; Mass Cultural Council; MountainOne; and the Robert Lehman Foundation.

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

MASS MoCA is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional support is provided by the New England Foundation for the Arts through the New England Arts Resilience Fund, part of the United States Regional Arts Resilience Fund, an initiative of the U.S. Regional Arts Organizations and the Mellon Foundation, with major funding from the federal CARES Act from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Cover: Shaun Leonardo, *Abuelo (in the kitchen)*, 2011–2022. Sign & metallic enamel on MDF cutout. Courtesy of the artist



Post images of your projects to #kidspacemm or tag Kidspace @ MASS MoCA

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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