

U-Press Telegram

Memories are made of this

By Shirle Gottlieb
Correspondent

Thursday, June 16, 2005 - Artist/curator Jonathan Anderson has teamed up with Echo Long Beach (a new nonprofit organization dedicated to artistic creativity, cultural renewal and restoration) to present "Memorability," a fascinating exhibit that features eight local artists whose work explores the subject of memory and the ways it influences, informs and enriches everyday life, both for each of us individually and the culture we live in.

Throughout time, people have struggled to recover what they lost. The artists in this exhibit attempt to visualize the bittersweet emotional pain of these struggles through artistic expressions that include painting, drawing, assemblage, documentation, mark-making, printing, photography and anything that connects to inner meaning.

Two magnificent paintings by Dominic Cretara dominate the gallery. The first is the haunting facade of a colorful old "Doorway" from his past, a backyard entry with peeling paint, missing bricks, crumbling masonry and weeds growing around the steps. The second, "Autobiography," is a composite picture of the artist and his Italian family at many stages of his life. He depicts himself as a 10-year-old boy in cowboy boots and as the adult artist he later became, surrounded by extended family and the literary figures that influenced his life in Boston and in Italy.

By contrast, Natalie Anderson conveys the essence of memory by cramming a "Years" worth of used, dried-up tea bags into the compartments of a printer's drawer that hangs on the wall. Jenine Haard takes an old violin case full of dust, mold and cobwebs, stuffs it with a decomposing baby dress, and mounts it on a rusty music stand. Samantha Minear presents "Home," an intaglio print of a house and heart inside an all-embracing skeletal rib cage.

Other artists who probe memory in this provocative exhibit are C. Charles Bowden, Amanda Hamilton, Barry Krammes and Kwanyoung Lee.

"Memorability," Koo's Art Gallery, 530 E. Broadway, Long Beach; (562) 491-7584 or (888) 316-9947. Noon-6 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; through July 3. Free.

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