

Press Release

## Nonmemory

Curated by Jay Ezra Nayssan

In collaboration with the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts

15 September 2023 – 14 January 2024

Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles

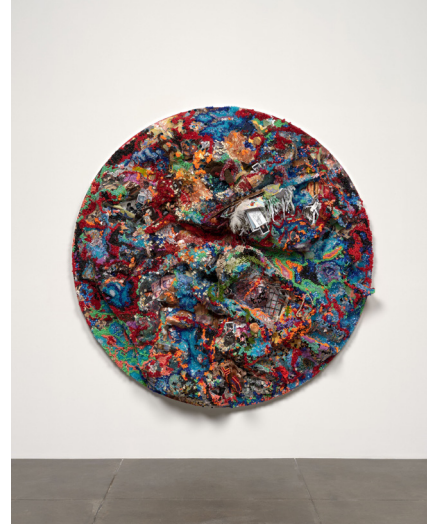
North A Gallery



**Los Angeles...**Curated by Jay Ezra Nayssan, 'Nonmemory' brings together seminal works by Mike Kelley and a group of seven contemporary artists – Kelly Akashi, Meriem Bennani, Beatriz Cortez, Raúl de Nieves, Olivia Erlanger, Lauren Halsey and Max Hooper Schneider – whose works all play with the role of memory as it posits our perceptions of space and place. Through a variety of media and material, the artists in this exhibition use space as the repository for dreams, fantasies, traumas and anxieties, while offering opportunities to re-imagine and recreate reality. The title of the exhibition 'Nonmemory,' takes direct inspiration from Kelley's use of the term, a way of treating, reordering and representing the complex and unstable relationship between memory, space and identity.

Beginning with 'Educational Complex' (1995) and ending with 'Mobile Homestead' (2005 – 13), the second half of Mike Kelley's career was largely devoted to exploring the porousness of memory in relation to space, producing extraordinary fantasy structures and imaginary landscapes that manifested a new 'psychic reality.' Kelley's architectural and environmental reformulations arose from the 'non-memory' of various institutional spaces or built environments he encountered throughout his life: from every school he attended, to a wishing well in the Chinatown district of Los Angeles, to representations of Kandor, and finally to Kelley's own childhood home in Detroit, Michigan.

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Alongside a number of Mike Kelley works related to 'Educational Complex,' Meriem Bennani and Olivia Erlanger's pieces continue Kelley's assessment of institutional and domestic space on identity formation, highlighting how the subject not only develops in, but is developed through space. Through her particular use of documentary and animation, Moroccan-born artist Meriem Bennani's work in the exhibition deals with the legacy of colonialism in Morocco and its effects on the identities of students educated in the French lycée system, herself included. Culling from a range of suburban visual lexicon and architectural vernacular, Olivia Erlanger's pieces investigate the mythology behind American social mobility and its fraught relationship to gender and class. Artists Raúl de Nieves and Max Hooper Schneider both amass large amounts of personal and found objects in their works, which are reminiscent of Kelley's lavish collection of keepsakes that saturate his Memory Ware Flats series. De Nieves is a Mexican-born artist whose 'psycho-topographical' pieces cull from memories of his migration from Michoacán to the United States. Deploying sublimity, nostalgia and tropes of the natural to different ends, Hooper Schneider's excessive accumulation and subsequent degradation of everyday objects renders conventional forms and habitats strange, unfamiliar and constantly in flux. Similar to Mike Kelley's Kandors, Kelly Akashi and Beatriz Cortez engage with natural and counter architectural forms as a way of challenging our perceptions of space and time. El Salvador-born, Los Angeles-based artist Beatriz Cortez's multimedia amalgamations of distant pasts and futures create new historical and spiritual multiplicities in the present. Kelly Akashi, also Los Angeles based, uses the lens of geology as a psychological metaphor for expansive time and space. Los Angeles-based artist Lauren Halsey's architectural prototypes work to archive and preserve the unique, hybrid culture of South-Central LA into the future. Placed in dialogue with each other, Mike Kelley's 'Mobile Homestead' and Lauren Halsey's piece expand on the evolution of social practice and public art over the last several decades, underscoring the complexities of navigating between institutional and non-institutional space.



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### Publication

A book co-published by Del Vaz Projects and Hauser & Wirth Publishers will accompany the exhibition. Designed with Mike Kelley's conceptual formulation of 'non-memory' at its core, the publication will feature a new text by Nayssan, reproductions of important works by Kelley and his foundational text, 'Architectural Non-memory Replaced with Psychic Reality,' documentation of the exhibition, and a series of conversations between participating artists and contributors: Kathryn Andrews, Miriam Ben Salah, Ruba Katrib, Jova Lynne, Ceci Moss, Mary Clare Stevens and Daniela Lieja Quintanar.

### Programming

Beginning 23 September, a series of public programs organized by Del Vaz Projects in collaboration with Hauser & Wirth will take place in response to the exhibition. Program highlights will include a screening of Meriem Bennani's 'Life on the CAPS' trilogy and a panel discussion between artists featured in the exhibition. In November, Del Vaz Projects and The Performance Project will present 'Our Name is Moving,' a performance by Poncili Creación accompanied by 'Possibilities of Matter,' a Learning workshop on puppetry. For more information, including dates, times and how to RSVP, please visit [hauserwirth.com/events](http://hauserwirth.com/events).





### **About Mike Kelley**

Over the course of a career spanning four decades, Mike Kelley (1954 – 2012) produced a provocative and rich oeuvre that included drawing, painting and sculpture, video and photography, performance, music and a formidable body of critical writing. Born in Detroit, the artist studied at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor from 1973, before relocating to Los Angeles in 1976 to enroll in an MFA program at the California Institute of the Arts. Kelley's art conflates the highest and lowest forms of popular culture in a relentless critical examination of social relations, cultural identity, and systems of belief. Engaging themes as varied as adolescence, educational structures, sexuality, religion, post-punk politics, pop psychology and repressed memory, Kelley worked through the turbulent conditions of the American vernacular to reveal unexpected connections and expose the defaults, tensions and contradictions that make it up.

This fall, a major retrospective 'Mike Kelley: Ghost and Spirit' will open at the Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection in Paris. On view from 13 October 2023 – 19 February 2024, the exhibition is organized by the Tate Modern, London in collaboration with the Pinault Collection, Paris, K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf and Moderna Museet, Stockholm and will travel through spring 2025.

### **About the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts**

The Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts advances the artist's spirit of critical thinking, risk taking and provocation in the arts. Established by Kelley in 2007, the Foundation seeks to further Kelley's philanthropic work through grants to arts organizations and artists for innovative projects that reflect his multifaceted artistic practice.

The Foundation also preserves the artist's legacy more broadly and fosters the understanding of his life and creative achievements through educational initiatives including exhibitions, educational events, publications and the preservation and care of the Foundation's art collections and archives.

### **About Jay Ezra Nayssan**

Jay Ezra Nayssan is a curator, writer and the founder of Del Vaz Projects, an arts nonprofit based in Los Angeles, California. Beginning in 2014 as an alternative exhibition space located in Nayssan's home, Del Vaz Projects has expanded over the last decade into a curatorial platform, independent press and artist production fund. In addition to the programming at Del Vaz Projects, Nayssan has organized exhibitions and programming for galleries and institutions, including this year's inaugural series of off-site projects at Frieze Los Angeles.

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Gallery hours:  
Tuesday – Sunday, 11 am – 6 pm

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### Caption and courtesy information:

Mike Kelley  
(left) Repressed Spatial Relationships Rendered as  
Fluid #1: Martian School (Work Site), (right) Drawing  
for Repressed Spatial Relationships Rendered as Fluid # 1:  
Martian School (Work Site)  
2002  
© Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts. All Rights Reserved /  
VAGA at ARS, New York, NY  
Photo: Christopher Burke

Meriem Bennani  
Ponytail  
2019  
Aluminum, steel, corrugated plastic, rubber coating,  
automotive paint, foam, interchangeable palm tree, rocks  
and monitor screening: MISSION TEENS: French school in  
Morocco (2019; video, color, sound; 36 min 33 sec)  
275.6 x 360.7 x 383.5 cm / 108 1/2 x 142 x 151 in  
© Meriem Bennani  
Courtesy the artist, C L E A R I N G and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Keith Lubow

Raúl de Nieves  
One One Eight Four Five Time Is On My Side  
2023  
Mixed media on aluminum wood panel  
213.4 x 213.4 x 45.7 cm / 84 x 84 x 18 in  
© Raúl de Nieves  
Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Morán Morán  
Photo: Keith Lebow

Beatriz Cortez  
Underworld Meteor  
2022  
Steel, patina  
35.6 x 49 x 46 cm / 14 x 19 1/4 x 18 1/8 in  
© Beatriz Cortez  
Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and Commonwealth and  
Council  
Photo: Keith Lebow

Lauren Halsey  
dat fuss wuz us  
2023  
White cement, fiberglass and mixed media  
260.4 x 278.1 x 134.6 cm / 102 1/2 x 109 1/2 x 53 in  
© Lauren Halsey  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Keith Lubow

Kelly Akashi  
Cultivator Cavern (Thorned Truss)  
2022-2023  
Tri-color marble, weathering steel, lost-wax cast bronze,  
frameworked borosilicate glass and beeswax candles  
163.2 x 69.9 x 45.7 cm / 64 1/4 x 27 1/2 x 18 in  
© Kelly Akashi  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Keith Lubow

Olivia Erlanger  
Act V  
2023  
Basswood, plexiglass, MDF, aqua resin and paint  
134.6 x 124.5 x 50.8 cm / 53 x 49 x 20 in  
© Olivia Erlanger  
Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth  
Photo: Keith Lubow

Max Hooper Schneider  
Pond Scum Phalanx  
2023  
Porcelain figurines, fishing lures, miscellaneous tackle, dirt,  
gummy candies, pigmented urethane resin, clear mineral oil  
and glass tank  
Approx. 104.1 x 81.3 x 81.3 cm / 41 x 32 x 32 in  
© Max Hooper Schneider  
Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and François Ghebaly  
Gallery  
Photo: Keith Lubow