

MUSEUM OF SHIFTING  
MEMORIESSEP 2 2026  
JAN 24 2027

AGNES ESSONTI LUQUE, A MÍ DE PEQUEÑITA ME DABAN NOSTALGIA A CUCHARADAS, 2024, INSTALLATION

«We are our memory, we are that chimerical museum of shifting forms, that pile of broken mirrors.» In 1969, Argentine writer and poet Jorge Luis Borges closed his poem “Cambridge” with this phrase. This exhibition is inspired by this metaphor that compares memory to a “museum of shifting forms.” Through the works of contemporary artists from the Colección Generaciones of the Fundación Montemadrid, the exhibition delves into the fragmented, chaotic, and ever-changing nature of memory. The exhibition invites viewers to explore how memories are rewritten and reinterpreted as fragments that form new narratives.

Memory constitutes one of the fundamental mechanisms through which we build our identity. Through it, we organize our experience, give continuity to the passage of time, and establish relationships between dispersed events. However, memory does not function as an organized archive or as a chronological succession of events. Rather, it constantly selects, transforms, and reinterprets what we preserve from the past.

Remembering also implies forgetting. Every act of memory involves a selection: some events remain clear

while others disappear or are transformed. Far from being a defect, this selective nature allows memory to remain alive and continue to adapt to new experiences.

Museums have traditionally been understood as institutions in charge of preserving the material memory of a society. They gather objects to prevent their disappearance and organize them into historical stories that aim to give meaning to the past. However, no museum is completely objective. Every collection responds to decisions, omissions, and particular ways of interpreting history.

This exhibition is based precisely on that tension. If the museum usually aspires to preserve a stable memory, the *Museum of Shifting Memories* proposes the opposite: a museum where narratives remain open, where meanings change with each visitor, and where memories are as mobile as those who evoke them.

Contemporary art offers a privileged space to reflect on memory because, like memory, it does not propose isolated answers or closed stories. The works gathered in this exhibition use archives, photographs, found objects, abandoned architecture, modified landscapes, and personal narratives to question what we think we remember.



MARIONA MONCUNILL, *TEXT ON SNOW IN THE BOTANICAL GARDEN*, 2013, VIDEO PROJECTION AND 220 PHOTOGRAPHS (10X7 CM EACH)

More than representing the past, they reveal the mechanisms through which we construct its meaning in the present.

Borges dedicated a good part of his work to reflections on perception, time, and identity. His intuitions about memory coincide with current research in psychology and philosophy: remembering is always a creative and subjective act. Just as the meaning of a work of art changes over time, our memories also change, adapting to our emotional needs, our contexts, and our desires.

Other authors, such as Mark Twain and Vladimir Nabokov, also noted the creative nature of memory. Nabokov, for his part, approached memory as a terrain of poetic reinvention through gaps between fragments of memory. For him, the past was a series of reworked scenes, where objective precision mattered less than emotional intensity. Twain wrote that when we remember, we beautify the past, highlighting how the human mind unconsciously reconfigures what we experienced to make it more coherent or bearable. Both, like Borges, teach us that memory is not a faithful mirror, but rather a work of intimate fiction.

At the beginning of the tour, you will find a selection of works by Jorge Luis Borges, Vladimir Nabokov, and Mark Twain, whose texts dialogue with the themes of this exhibition. Although they belong to different cultural contexts, Borges, Nabokov, and Twain agree in understanding memory as a creative activity. Their texts are not presented here as an explanation of the artworks, but as an open conversation with the artists, their works, and the audience. The words of these writers accompany the

visit to show that literature and art share a persisting focus on memory.

### **The Spatial Narrative**

The exhibition builds a spatial narrative that immerses the viewer in the formation of memory, inspired by Borges' reflection in his poem "Cambridge." The route is divided into two large sections. The first section (Gallery 1) is titled "A Pile of Broken Mirror Shards" and unfolds through three corridors in the Tower Gallery. The second section (Gallery 2) is titled "Chimerical Memories" and makes up the rest of the space. Passing through the two galleries physically represents the memory process, from its fractured beginnings through a journey in the labyrinth of our mind to the illusory reconfigurations of experience.

The architecture of the Tower Gallery becomes an active element of the curatorial discourse. Corridors, changes of direction, and open spaces condition the visitor's journey in the same way that memory organizes our memories: through associations, interruptions, returns, and unexpected discoveries. The tour does not aim to offer a linear narrative, but rather an experience that invites you to get lost, establish personal connections, and build your own story.

The visitor does not occupy a passive role within this exhibition. As visitors walk through the galleries, they establish associations between the artworks and their own experiences, becoming active participants in the construction of meaning. Each tour produces a different exhibition, because each memory reorganizes the frag-



BLEDA Y ROSA, *ALTAR*, 2007 - 2009, PHOTOGRAPH IN A DISPLAY-CASE FRAME, 150X165 CM

ments in a different way. In this sense, the museum stops being only a place where works are observed and becomes a space where memories are also produced.

## Galleries

### Gallery 1: A Pile of Broken Mirror Shards

This room explores how memories fragment. The works presented here illustrate how our experiences become incomplete representations in our minds. From interventions in construction materials to reinterpretations of abandoned spaces, this section invites us to reflect on the nature of our memories. This first gallery, confronted with fragments, reveals the impossibility of a faithful memory. Borges suggests that each attempt to remember is, in reality, an imperfect reconstruction. Just as the fragments of a broken mirror cannot reconstruct the original image, our memories do not reconstruct the past as it was, but only partial reflections mixed with emotions, desires, and forgetfulness. Nabokov confirms this view: by leaving and filling again gaps between the fragments, we modify what we remember.

Many of the works gathered in this first gallery are based on remains, documents, images, or seemingly ev-

eryday spaces. However, far from reconstructing a complete story, they present open fragments that require the active participation of the viewer. As with memory, each visitor will establish different relationships between these elements, filling in what remains absent through their own experience.

There is the first work titled *Jura* [ˈdʒorʌ, Latin yoorah] from the *Rendering Landscapes* series by Santiago Giralda, which consists of a series of canvases painted in various colors, evoking a mountainous landscape made up of chaotic images that overlap each other. This constant tension is supported by emptiness, by blank and open spaces that invite the viewer to intervene, to generate meaning through a process of personal reconstruction based on their own knowledge.

Eventually, the visitor comes across *Intermission. Mysterious Incident in Lake Desmet* by Juanli Carrión. This installation is a wooden structure on which photographs of old battlefields during the American Civil War are projected. With this almost theatrical staging, Carrión invites the viewer to think about how even the history of a country can be an imaginative construct. In this case, the artist presents how the United States government



JUANLI CARRIÓN, *INTERMISSION, MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT IN LAKE DESMET*, 2010, INSTALLATION, 200 X 200 X 240 CM

created a common identity from the memories that were forged during the battles. However, these are still isolated elements that are understood in different ways from individuality.

In this room, memory is presented as a ruin, as a space where what remains are vestiges, imperfect traces of what was once lived.

## **Gallery 2: Chimerical Memories**

The second room examines the creative process of constructing memories from fragments. The term “chimeric” refers to both the imaginary and the combination of disparate parts, reflecting how our minds fill in the gaps and associate memories to create new narratives. The works in this room demonstrate how fragments overlap and



SANTIAGO GIRALDA, JURA [ 'D3wRA , LATÍN YOO-RAH ], OIL ON LINEN, 230X640 CM (TOTAL), POLYPTYCH

combine, giving rise to unique and sometimes surreal interpretations of our memories.

Our memories combine disparate elements such as images, words, sounds, and emotions, which intertwine to form new stories. Twain illustrates this phenomenon in his autobiography, where memories become imaginary to recreate our experiences. For Twain, it is always an act of creation rather than conservation.

If the first gallery emphasizes what is lost, the second explores what is invented. The artworks show how imagination is not contrary to memory, but is part of it. The unexpected associations, the superpositions of images, and the mixture of different moments reveal that remembering also implies transforming, reinterpreting, and giving new meanings to what has been experienced.

The viewer arrives at an elongated hallway in which lies the installation *A mí de pequeña me daban nostalgia a cucharadas* by Agnes Essonti Luque. The piece consists of a colorful carpet from Sacks & Motors on the floor, and on it are distributed spices related to the market in her hometown in Cameroon. Two photographs are hung on the wall, one framed corresponding to a plate of food and a second photograph of what remains after a family meal: a series of pots waiting to be washed. Thus, the work presents a superposition of fragments that reflects the idea that memories are formed not only by facts, but also by testimonies, fantasies, and the gaps that the mind fills in in its own way.

In the work *Colección pública (Bien de Interés Cultural)* by Leonor Serrano Rivas, impossible compositions are generated from film scenes in which the foreground is no longer occupied by the big stars or the scripts imposed through decontextualized film extracts united into a new film. The clips become a superposition of extracts of memories that, through their locations and background sounds, we are able to recompose.

Finally, the visit closes with a weaving on the wall by Elena García Jiménez, called *Registro anómalo de recontextualización*. The work is made up of woven photography, intervened objects, and graphic work, extracting the im-

ages from their contexts and giving them a new meaning through art. The images evolve, thanks to the artist's manipulations, until they become something that is familiar and yet unrecognizable.

The visit ends with this piece that unites imagery and art, just as this exhibition unites the words of Borges, Nabokov, and Twain with the art of memory. The choice is not a coincidence, since the written word is a carrier of imagery, and images are carriers of language. Both are between what is seen and what is said, and memory is located in the middle of these two.

In this gallery, the fragments come together again to become new personal narratives, reflecting the creative and illusory act of reconstructing memory from subjectivity.

### ***In Summary***

The *Museum of Shifting Memories* proposes to understand memory not as a stable archive, but as a living process in constant transformation. Each work constitutes a fragment of that imaginary museum that Borges alluded to, a space where individual memories dialogue with current experiences. The visit invites us to assume that forgetting, imagining, and remembering are not opposite actions, but rather inseparable processes through which we build our identity.

This exhibit seeks to ensure that, when the viewer walks out through the door, they take away a reflection on how memory always changes and is reconstructed from each person's subjectivity. The aim is for the visitor to reflect that remembering is not reliving a fixed past, but rather a continuous process of giving new meanings to what has been experienced. The hope is that they leave with the idea that we are, after all, "that chimerical museum of shifting forms" that Jorge Luis Borges spoke of, capable of creating new stories from the fragments of our experience. Ultimately, the exhibition invites us to value the imperfection of memories and recognize the strength we have to reinvent ourselves through them.



JAIME DE LA JARA VELASCO, *ACTO III - PAUSE II*, 2004, MIXED MEDIA, 244 X 200 X 60 CM

### About the Colección Generaciones

La Casa Encendida is a cultural and social center located in Madrid, managed by the Fundación Montemadrid. Since its opening in 2002, it has established itself as a multidisciplinary space that combines contemporary art, education, environment, and solidarity.

The Colección Generaciones is an initiative of La Casa Encendida that, since 2000, has supported young emerging artists in Spain. This project offers visibility and resources for the production and dissemination of innovative works. In its 25 years of history, it has had more than 18,000 participants and has served as a platform for artists who today have international recognition.

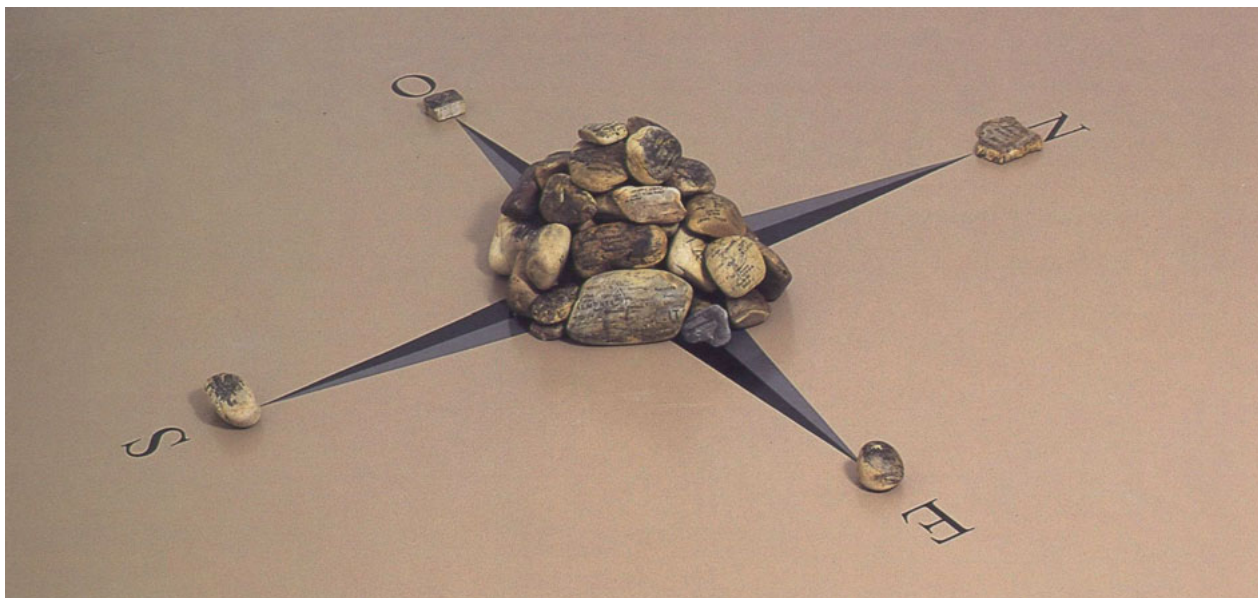
Through the Colección Generaciones, La Casa Encendida has contributed to strengthening the Spanish artistic ecosystem, offering a space where research, experimenta-

tion, and creation find institutional support. The initiative has allowed numerous emerging proposals to enter into dialogue with the public and with other agents in the artistic field, consolidating a network of artists, curators, and professionals.

The presence of these works in the *Museum of Shifting Memories* exhibition allows us to approach the collection from a perspective focused on memory and its multiple forms of construction. Each piece acts as a fragment of experiences, contexts, and views that, when brought together, generate new connections and readings about the present. In this sense, the Colección Generaciones becomes a space where individual and collective memories intersect, showing how contemporary art can preserve, transform, and question the narratives that construct our perception of the world.



PERLA ZUÑIGA, *SALA DE INFUSIONES*, 2013



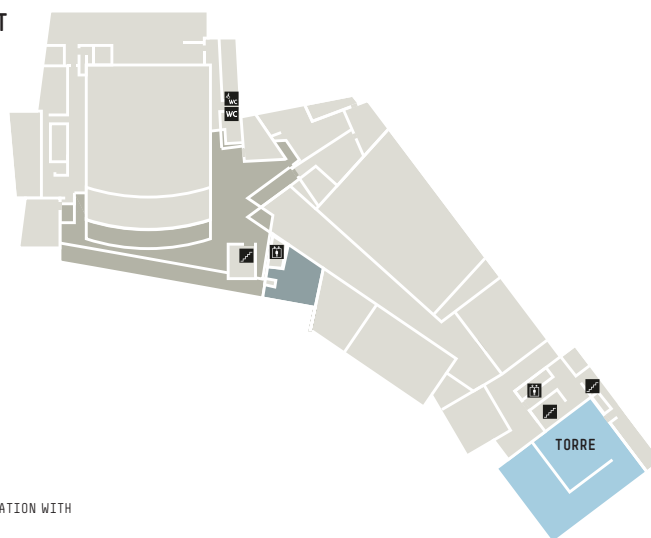
CAROLINA BELÉN MARTÍNEZ, *MUDAR EL PAISAJE*, 2005, INSTALLATION

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## MUSEO DE MEMORIAS INCONSTANTES

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