

Memento: Soledad Arias and Madeline Djerejian @ CUCHIFRITOS, NYC

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"In our times the aura has become only a presence, which is to say, a ghost." -Douglas Crimp

The objectification of a person through artistic reproduction reveals the problematic nature of representation and its effort to capture life or to even recall it. A photograph tries to capture a moment and make it memorable, a portrait tries to

make the portrayed immortal, while a mirror confronts us with the self.

memento investigates the space, as an experience, that is created when one views reproductions of an individual or the self. The artistic methods used by the artists explore such moments as much as they expose the viewer to the notion of the ephemeral, transient quality of our own and collective identity. **memento** is a reflection upon presence and absence, and creates an ambiguous space for introspection.

Soledad Arias' *Spill* (2002) is an installation of approximately 1,000 two-inch mirrored stainless steel discs spilled on the floor. Reflected in the piece, the spectator becomes the subject of the work, elevated to the status of the temporary portrayed. Suddenly, the self is cast into scrutiny: the spaces between the mirrored circles cause visual interruptions, fragmentations and a delay in perception, challenging the viewer to discover either

the limits of the work, the self or both. Moving through the *Spill*, each momentary internal experience vanishes into the next, further existing only as memory.

Madeline Djerejian's *Museum Pictures* (2002-2003) presents photographic views of Old Master and 19th century painted portraits, taken from oblique angles to include reflections from the museums' own light sources. Denying the established perception of a painting, the photographs also break with the conventional language of portraiture: the traditional protocol between artist, sitter and viewer is reconfigured. This "re-portraiture" revisits the resonance of the portrayed, its identification and uniqueness. The individual in the painting becomes a faint, veiled phantom, freed of an actual referent. *Museum Pictures* evoke a sense of displacement, an eeriness of a moment - a reminder that existence is transitory. □

