

Miriam

Martín La Roche: *Yo también me acuerdo* September 21- November 18, 2023

Opening Reception: September 21, 2023, 6-8pm

"I remember regretting things I didn't do.
I remember wishing I knew then what I know now.
I remember peach-colored evenings just before dark."
—Joe Brainard, *I Remember* (1975)



Martin La Roche in collaboration w/ Mirthe Berentsen, *Sandplay*, 2023

Miriam is pleased to present *Yo también me acuerdo* (I do remember), an immersive installation by the multi-media artist Martín La Roche. Born from a series of prompts, this exhibition serves as a site for conjuring memory and imagination—a creative psyche catalyzed by cognitive and literary means.

La Roche's exploration into the artistic exercise began in September 2018, when he served as an artist in residence for Beautiful Distress: a program striving to facilitate awareness and acceptance around mental health through designing communal creative projects for the Partial Hospitalization Program at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, New York. Over the course of four months in the Behavioral Health Services department, La Roche led *I Remember* sessions, inspired by the eponymous prose-poetry book by the 20th-century American artist and writer Joe Brainard. Held every week, during each meeting he facilitated a verbal exercise in which a gathering of clients and therapists would compose and share sentences beginning with the phrase "I remember." Motivating actions ranging from song to storytelling, these automatic reading sessions became a generative departure point for the artist—from which the three interconnected works *Sandplay*, *Gamma Colors*, and *The Mondays Bulletin Board* took shape.

Installed in the front gallery, *Sandplay*—a collaboration between La Roche and the artist, writer, and fellow Beautiful Distress resident Mirthe Berentsen—is a large sandbox populated with a topography of found objects. An homage to Dora Kalff's Jungian sandplay therapy innovated in the 1950s, the interactive piece encourages visitors to play and collaborate as they discover and arrange objects. On surrounding walls, *Gamma Colors*—created by participants during an auxiliary exercise for the Kings County Hospital—is a series of silkscreen prints composed of pure color. The pigments were sourced from industrial paint samples from the Dutch hardware store Gamma, where shades are given names translating to "Police," "Museum," "Coziness", and "Virtual," among other uncanny descriptors. As an extension of the *I Remember* sessions, La Roche invited clients to rename the color swatches, creating their own spectrum of chromogenic incarnation and personification.

Over the course of the exhibition, La Roche will stage four on-site session reinventions—a series of creative, tactile, and collective exercises in which visitors are invited to choose objects from shelves surrounding *Sandplay*, write *I Remember* statements invoked by the selected objects, then add them to the sandbox where they are free to reorganize materials alongside the other participants. After each session, the sandbox arrangements will be traced and hung in the gallery, culminating in the piece *The Mondays Bulletin Board*—named in reference to the noticeboard where he would curate improvised visual collages for the Partial Hospitalization Program staff each week. Sandplay Sessions will take place in the gallery on September 21 from 6-8pm, October 15 from 2-4pm, November 12 from 2-4pm and November 18 from 4-6pm.

Five years after his Beautiful Distress residency, *Yo también me acuerdo* expands the metabolic possibilities of creative directives. Across the myriad prompts embedded in the installation, La Roche offers a kinesthetic learning space in which personal memories are shared and fresh narratives are shaped.

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Martin La Roche, *Gamma Colors*, 2022

About *Quick Crossword Nr. 13.692* for Miriam Bookshop

As an appendage to the exhibition, La Roche will create an activation in the bookshop through a new special edition. Since 2014, the artist has used his practice to release the crossword puzzle from the sequential constraint of “clue/answer,” by using ambiguous hints such as “larger than life,” “evidence of an old wound,” or “not doing much,”—directing readers to perform surprise actions such as making a publication, building a hairdresser’s vitrine, fabricating an art installation, or writing a new crossword puzzle. For this edition, the artist appropriates a repeatedly used found crossword puzzle (*Quick Crossword Nr. 13.692*), reprinting it with twenty-three new hints that present readers with instructions to reorganize Miriam’s bookshop—allowing for serendipitous connections to arise and making space for structural systems to be upended.

About the artist

Martin La Roche was born in Santiago Chile in 1988. He earned a BA in Visual Arts at the University of Chile, Santiago in 2013. In 2015, he completed a postgraduate program at the Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Since then, he has lived and worked in Amsterdam. His work has been shown in solo exhibitions at MAVI (Museum of Visual Arts, Santiago de Chile); Casanova (São Paulo, Brazil); Manifold Books (Amsterdam, The Netherlands); Die Ecke Arte Contemporáneo, (Barcelona, Catalunya); and Beautiful Distress (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), among others; and in group exhibitions in Colombia, Germany, Serbia, Switzerland, and Japan, among others.

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by appointment during non-open hours