

# The Institute of Reminiscence

A black and white photograph of a woman with her arms crossed leaning on a railing in a modern interior. She is wearing a beret and a patterned top. The background features a series of circular recessed lights and several large, teardrop-shaped glass light fixtures hanging from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is contemplative and artistic.

Mariano Doronzo



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# Content

- 4-5 The Institute of Reminiscence
- 6 Contribution by Peter Bonnell
- 7 **Slides on a Lightbox by Marian Doronzo**
- 8-11 Conversation with Mariano Doronzo
- 12-21 Slides on a Lightbox
- 22 Artist biography
- 23 About Artcore

# The Institute of Reminiscence

Artcore in partnership with FORMAT/QUAD invited artists to apply for The Institute of Reminiscence, a two month residency that aimed to investigate relationships to memory association, repetition and reappearance, as well as forms of “active” remembering both in a private sphere and public sphere.

For two months, Artcore has become a think-tank to expand the boundaries of public debate about how the future of remembering is currently changing. The Institute of Reminiscence has been a hub tracing the transformation of memory archives from physical to digital information and the corresponding evolution of public and personal remembering through the artworks of two selected artists.

Contextualizing memory’s role in visual theory and aesthetic politics, the residency explored how perception of memory and its value has changed today alongside new understanding of reminiscence and its importance to understand the past to imagine the future.

The catalogue collects the outcomes of two months research and production which have been developed into The Institute of Reminiscence exhibition with artworks by two artists in residence Mariano Doronzo and Olivia Punnett.

The body of works in the show engages with ideas and possibilities which explore issues with memory embodied in material and spatial conditions, beside specific installations that reflect upon memory’s effects through time, and yet others that enlist the agency of remembrance or forgetting to work through aspects of the numerous pasts by which the present is always haunted.

For The Institute of Reminiscence, Mariano Doronzo presents Slides on a Light Box, a project aiming to light up and preserve some of the memories on the cusp of being lost forever.

Collecting memories and stories from local people, the artist has built up a new visual map of Derby by revisiting the places where they live/lived, work/worked and also spend their free time. Many of these places no longer exist but will either have been deserted or replaced with new stories and life.

Moreover Doronzo’s work documents how Derby has evolved, changed or stopped in time.

For The Institute of Reminiscence Olivia Punnett presents a body of work that responds in print, projection and sculpture to her personal interest in time & the remembered image, emotion of loss, moving closer to a sense of feeling that is time specific, a memory, a place, a moment; both concealment and revelation. Using photography as a starting point, the work also responds to the natural environment.

Elemental Symbolism is present in prints and projections from water.

This residency alongside the exhibition, which is part of FORMAT festival, critically plays with ideas of memory and loss and its effect on the dream of overcoming human memory's fallibility.

## The Art of Reminiscing by Peter Bonnell

On first inspection, this two-person exhibition at Artcore presented under the title The Institute of Reminiscence would appear to feature two artists with differing ideas and aesthetic approaches. To a certain extent the true can be said of the latter, but as for the former – the two artists, Olivia Punnett and Mariano Doronzo, have both conjured satisfyingly formed bodies of work that find interesting ways to complement each other and mine the notions of what it means to simply remember and to recollect.

Olivia Punnett's installation is an ephemeral approach to memories and remembered events/ experiences. Rather than a direct documentation and presentation of (sub-jective) fact her work suggests an experience, one that is highly personal. Mariano's Doronzo's project Slides on a Lightbox is the culmination of the artists brief (approximately two-months) yet exhaustive research into Derby residents and their singular and collective memories. Documentary in approach, this body of work is a fascinating snapshot of the city today.

Presented in collaboration with FORMAT International Photography festival The Institute of Reminiscence deftly references the 2019 festival theme of FOREVER// NOW – a theme that suggests a consideration of the present whilst at the same time addressing the past. It has been my pleasure to work on this project with the superb team at Artcore, and to mentor two artists of great skill. The support and mentoring to Midlands based artists that Artcore offers is exemplary.

**Peter Bonnell** is Senior Curator at QUAD, Derby. He has an MA in Contemporary Curating from the Royal College of Art and before taking up his position QUAD in 2012 was Exhibitions and Education Officer and then Curator at ArtSway, which was a small gallery based in the New Forest.

## Slides on a Lightbox by Marian Doronzo

*“...the darkness does not lift but becomes yet heavier as I think how little we can hold in mind, how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with every extinguished life, how the world is, as it were, draining itself, in that the history of countless places and objects which themselves have no power or memory is never heard, never described or passed on.” — W.G. Sebald, Austerlitz*

*Slides on a Light Box* is a project aiming to light up and preserve some of the memories on the cusp of being lost forever. Mariano Doronzo wanted to protect and document these memories with an initial aim to spend his time visiting care homes and centres as well as independent shops or businesses run by the same families for many decades.

Through their memories and stories Doronzo has built up a new visual map of Derby by revisiting the places where they live/lived, work/worked and also spend their free time. Many of these places probably no longer exist but will either have been deserted or replaced with new stories and life. The body of work in the show documents how Derby has evolved, changed or stopped in time, through a wide collection of Derby people's portraits.

*“Last December, I applied for something different: an artistic residency in Derby at the Artcore Gallery with a quite ambitious project. I thought it was something I had to try but I never thought I was going to be selected – probably this is why I made it so ambitious. Luckily I was wrong and so had to make my second appearance in Derby on the 14th of January 2019. Another Monday but not so sunny this time, it was grey and wet instead. Never mind.*

*Today, it has been two weeks since then and I have been working hard on my project to obtain some of the stories I would like to tell and transform into an exhibition.*

*At the beginning, I had no personal connection with Derby so I had to speak to the landlady of the Dragon Pub in Nottingham where I usually work at night. She is not just my employer. During these years spent here she has also become one of my best friends. She made the call and put me in contact with Steve, one of her friends.*

*“You've got your first connection with Derby now”, she said after that call.”*

— Mariano Doronzo

## Conversation with Mariano Doronzo



Mariano Doronzo, Alice fixing bikes, 25cm x 25cm, Silver Gelatin Print, 2017

### **Where are you based?**

I have been based in Nottingham since 2014.

### **How did your artwork start out?**

My artwork became very intensive and more than a passion when a friend of mine gave me an old Praktica film camera as a present. Since then I have been documenting the street life in Nottingham and my travels across Europe..

### **How do you get ideas for each piece of photography?**

It depends on the project I am working on. Usually, it is the story behind a person or a specific place, but sometimes it can also be something strictly visual like a particular light condition.

### **How do you go about transforming an idea like that into a photograph?**

Every time is different. I guess I try to find a link or a connection between what I am trying to say and the image itself.

### **How has your photography evolved over the years?**

I would say I am studying and working to make my photography more essential and powerful at the same time.

### **What does your photography aim to say to your audience?**

My photography aims to tell a story or to provoke an emotion.

### **What is the most challenging about your work?**

Probably meeting people and creating an intimate relation within a few minutes. It is incredible how deep you can go into someone's life if they trust you. But this is a mutual and empathic exchange and does not work all the time. You can not force it.

### **Where did you get your ideas from (what, if any, sources did you use)?**

I think my ideas come mostly from the book I am reading or I read recently. But they can also come from movies, other people's work or anything that strikes me and makes me think.

### **Looking back at your old works, what you do think about them now?**

They are definitely different. At least the way of composing a picture, but not necessarily in a bad way; for example sometimes I miss the naivety and spontaneity of my early works.

### **How and when have you decided to investigate themes that explore the street life and processes of measuring, mapping and visualising people behavior in the city?**

I started to document the street life when I moved to England and particularly to Nottingham. At that time, I did not know anyone in Nottingham or anything about the place.



Mariano Doronzo, Kim Thompson, 25cm x 25cm, Silver Gelatin Print, 2017

I guess being alone, I was trying to find a connection with people and the environments I found myself in.

**What is the most interesting or inspiring thing you have seen or been to recently, and why?**

The most interesting thing I have seen recently was a Marina Abramovic exhibition called “The Cleaner”. Her work made me think we should constantly try to challenge ourselves to escape the daily routine.

**Which other photographers' work do you admire, and why?**

In the last few months I have been admiring the work of Robert Mapplethorpe. I find it elegant, original and also so provocative.

**How do you see The Institute of Reminiscence, as an experience, to support your career?**

I think my experience at The Institute of Reminiscence is fundamental to support my career. Being guided by a mentor is probably the best way to make my way of working more efficient and my work stronger. Furthermore, it will be a good opportunity to gain my artistic network meeting other artists and curators who work with the gallery.

**What's next for you in the future?**

I am working to make my long-term project of street life about Nottingham into a photography book. It is a body of work spanning across five years 2014-2019 entirely photographed on film.

## SLIDES ON A LIGHTBOX



Mariano Doronzo, Andy Cooper (b.1958 in Derby)



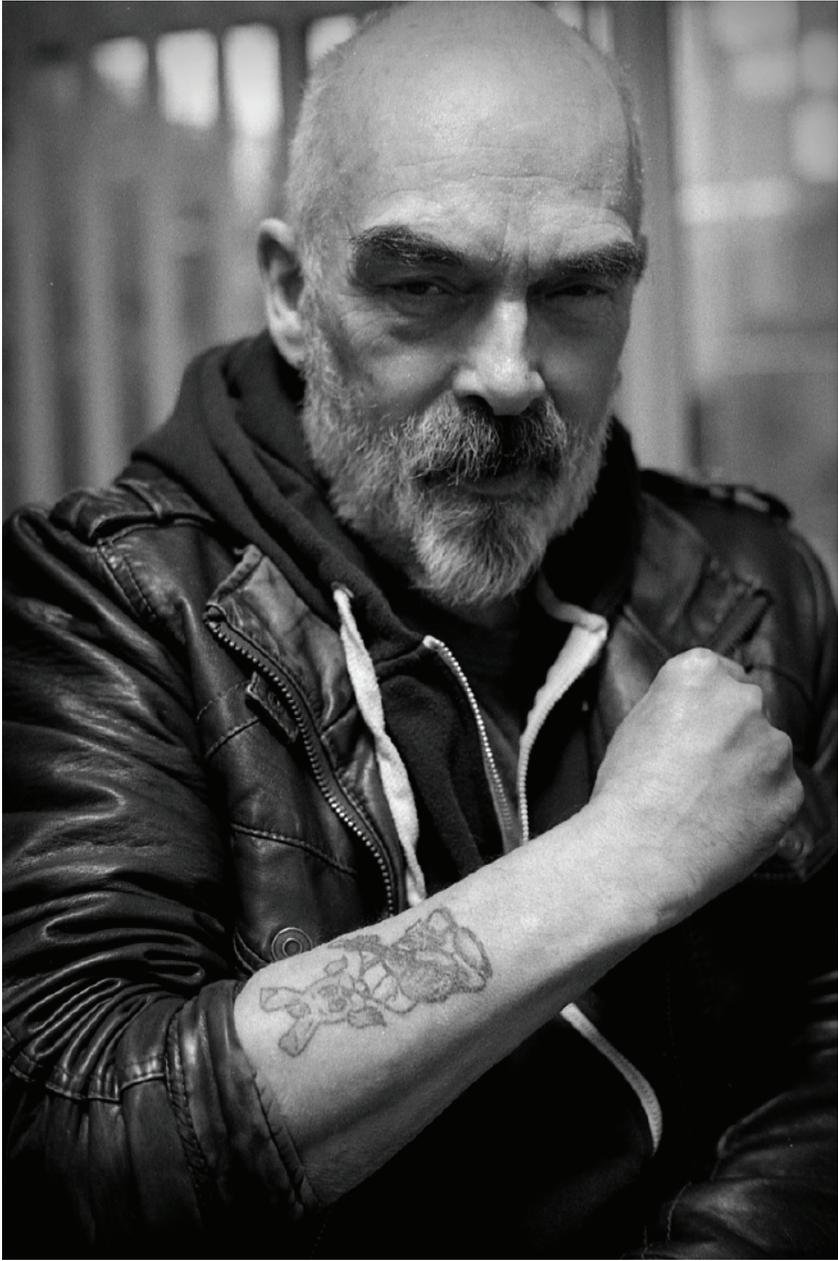
Mariano Doronzo, Ayaka Cleobury (b. 1978 in Gifu Prefecture - Nagoya, Japan)



Mariano Doronzo, Daniel T. Wheeler (b.1984 in Derby)



Mariano Doronzo, Dee Sangha (b.1985 in Coventry)



Mariano Doronzo, Gary Skelton (b.1958 in Romford)



Mariano Doronzo, Jessica Lopes (b.1973 in Johannesburg, South Africa)



Mariano Doronzo, Michelle Hollinshead (b.1969 in Derby)



Mariano Doronzo, Michelle Tara Chann Bentley (b.1967 in Nottingham)



Mariano Doronzo, Steve Keemer (b.1965 in Bradford on Avon)



Mariano Doronzo, Tim and Michelle Worth (b.1967 in Altrincham, b.1965 in Sutton Coldfield)

# Artist biography

*“We all need a good story to listen to. Whether we want to or not we tell our own stories. I document and recite my story through photography and writing – in narratives solidly intertwined and laced with the tales of the life around me.”*

— Mariano Doronzo

## Exhibitions

27 OCT 2018 – 6 JAN 2019

“THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN” OFF-CENTRE PHOTO FESTIVAL  
THE NEW ART EXCHANGE, NOTTINGHAM (UK)

10-17 NOV 2017

“THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS” EXHIBITION  
THE PHOTO PARLOUR, NOTTINGHAM (UK)

APR 2018

“THE PROMISE IS A LIE” EXHIBITION  
THE GOLDEN FLEECE PUB, NOTTINGHAM (UK)

1-5 NOV 2017

“KALEIDOSCOPIES”  
DISAPPEARING PARATISSIMA 13 ART FAIR, TURIN (IT)

2-6 NOV 2016

“LEARNING TO FLY” PARATISSIMA 12 ART FAIR, TURIN (IT)

23 JAN – 20 MAR 2016

“THE NECESSARY PRACTICE” EXHIBITION  
NEW ART EXCHANGE, NOTTINGHAM (UK)

27 FEB-6 MAR 2015

“PORTI URBANI” EXHIBITION  
BIBLIOTECA COMUNALE, TRANI (IT)

8-14 MAR 2015

LUNA DI SABBIA, TRANI (IT)

9-15 MAY 2015 –

UFFICIO MODERNO GALLERY, TURIN (IT)

22-29 AUG 2015

MOMART GALLERY, MATERA (IT)

## About Artcore

Artcore is a contemporary arts space that celebrates the Derby, East Midlands and beyond cultural richness and diversity. The venue presents an ever-changing programme of art exhibitions, creative activities for adults and young people, film screenings, artist residencies, talks, and festivals. With our statement “together we stand” we want to engage and connect with diverse range of communities in Derby. Our key objective is to use art as a tool to strengthen community cohesion and engage with a wide range of audience, educate, raise awareness and provide a space to build self-confidence and mutual trust and respect.

We engage with society’s most disadvantaged and vulnerable people, by offering inspiring and motivating programmes in areas where there is a lack in provision and engagement with the arts is minimal. Our mission is to become a place where talent and creativity is nurtured and where art and culture are accessible to all. We aim to bring positivity and shine in people lives providing a platform to encourage dialogue between people of all ages, abilities, diverse cultural background through creative activities, skills sharing and development.

Artcore offers a contemporary gallery, workshop and artist studio promoting distinctive art and culture. Through a vibrant programme of events, exhibitions, residencies, art talks, screenings we provide a platform to showcase significant art locally, nationally and internationally by supporting early, mid-career artists and established artists.

At Artcore, education in general is fundamental to the work we do. We develop and strengthen the education role in a non-formal education approach. Our main objective is to engage young in learning experiences to enhance their curiosity and interest on their art skills, developing their uniqueness and progression as individual, also through volunteering and work experience.

We believe art acts as a learning tool, breaking down barriers and contribute in the production of knowledge and dialogue as a vehicle of analysis and growth. Moreover we engage with our audience through creative, imaginative and meaningful activities, offering the individuals the opportunity to experiment with creativity, enhance learning and broaden career prospects.

