



mario petrirena

the distance between

mario petrarena

the distance between

The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia

February 25, 2017 - April 29, 2017

at the broken places 2005
collage on paper
12 x 6.5 inches



on the cover:
bouquets of sorrow 2014
collage on paper
11.5 x 7.5 inches

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are artists who exhibit such individuality that they do not fit easily into our perceived notions of an artist. Mario Petrirena is one of those unique artists. He was born in Union de Reyes, Cuba in 1953. At the age of eight he was airlifted from Cuba to the United States in the historical Operation Petro Pan evacuation. Petrirena has had an incredible journey, which without a doubt, I believe will continue to be expressed through his making of art for years to come.

It is with great pride that The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCA GA) presents the distance between: a major thirty-year retrospective of work by the artist Mario Petrirena. The depth and breath of his continued exploration into his life through his art has created a lasting body of work. When seen all together, [Petrirena's art] is experimental, deliberate, focused and intuitive—telling a poignant but tender story of a life of exile.

We hope you will enjoy this exhibition catalogue. Much gratitude is owed to David Houston, Executive Director/Chief Curator of The Bo Bartlett Center at Columbus State University for his scholarly essay. Houston has followed and written about Petrirena's work over many years. This long history with the work has given him insight into the threads of cultural duality running throughout Petrirena's work. He has expertly woven together these threads to offer the reader an insight not readily explored or recognized. Huston's essay pays tribute to both the artist's art making and the artist's dual cultural experiences. We are also indebted to Petrirena's long time friend, Mirtha Ferrer for her creative talent, skill and dedication to excellence in designing this beautiful catalogue. It is an important documentation of Petrirena's work and one that MOCA GA is honored to publish. A special thank you to another of Petrirena's good friend, Susan Loftin for her input in the design and installation of the exhibition.

This exhibition and catalogue was made possible through generous support of private collectors, friends, and anonymous donors. We are also grateful for support from the City of Atlanta Power2Give matching gift program. Thank you to the numerous lenders to the exhibition. Their generosity in sharing the works in their collection made the distance between exhibition a comprehensive survey of the artist's career to date.

I would also like to thank members the MOCA GA staff for support of this project. Eric Kaepplinger, MOCA GA's Lead Art Preparator, for his ability to create the installations and placement of artworks the artist envisioned. Thank you to Amy Kicklighter, MOCA GA's Development Officer for excellence in fundraising for the exhibition and catalogue and for organizing the accompanying programming. Thank you to Jessica Schmitz, MOCA GA's Collections/Exhibitions Manager for expert documentation records of the many works included in the exhibition. Additional gratitude to Emily Knight, Visitor Services Manager, Ivy Kroncke, Events/Programs Manager, and Stacey Savatsky, Archivist.

And finally, I personally wish to thank Mario Petrirena for allowing MOCA GA the privilege of presenting this important body of work. We look forward to the outpouring of his next creative production.

Annette Cone - Skelton
President/CEO/Director

ALIVE WITH SILENT FIRE

Mario Petrirena's life and work embrace both sides of his hyphenated Cuban-American heritage. Unlike many immigrant artists who feel they never belong anywhere, Petrirena feels both Cuban and American. This ongoing cultural dialogue invigorates his work so that it seldom follows one line, but relies on a series of lines that constantly flow across and within one another in a lively exploration of diverse materials, symbolism, and meaning.

Born in Union de Reyes, Cuba in 1953, Petrirena's early years were formed by the political and personal uncertainties following Fidel Castro's revolution. As a member of the land owning class, his family was suspect and he still vividly remembers the night that soldiers knocked on the door of the family house, searched everywhere for contraband and, finding none, still arrested his father. Although he was soon released, this episode left an indelible mark on the young Petrirena with an early lesson on the contingencies of everyday life. This was amplified on a more personal and emotional level when he was plucked out of his familiar world and sent with his older and younger sisters to an unknown destination and an uncertain future in America. The airlift of Cuban children that came to be called Operation Pedro Pan was initiated by the rumor that Fidel Castro was planning to start a program of sending large numbers of Cuban children to the Soviet Union for a sound Communist indoctrination. Although the rumor of the program was never realized, it did send a shock wave through the parents of young children to the point of creating their own pre-emptive airlift to America. At age eight, he found himself living in an orphanage in Pueblo, Colorado in a new world among strangers who spoke a language he had never heard.

As Edward Said so eloquently argued in *Representations of the Intellectual*, there is a fundamental difference between an exile and an immigrant. Where the immigrant often embraces a new world, the exile, wrenched from a world held dear, is often inconsolable and marked by the bitterness of loss and a longing to reclaim the lost world. "Because the exile sees things in terms of both what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpoint in the old country. Intellectually this means that an idea or experience is always counterposed with another, therefore making them both appear in a sometimes new and unpredictable light . . ." The immigrant, on the other hand, leaves one world for another and eventually embraces another, appreciating both the world left behind as well as the new one. Exiled at a young age, Petrirena is more of an immigrant than an exile, although the bitterness and sense of loss of his Cuban world was ever present and kept alive by the older generations in the Cuban exile community. Petrirena's experience of Cuba is mediated by myth and memory. Surrounded in his formative years by the food, music, and language of Cuba, his art of memory is marked by a nostalgia for his lost world.

An art of memory is necessarily fragmentary, poetic, and exploratory, three words important to understanding Petrirena's artistic practice. He sees the making of art as an ever-unfolding process of discovery, one that relies more on intuition and understanding than planning and technique. Although his early training was in clay, he has developed a wide range of materials, both made and found, that are often used in works of varied scale and contexts over time. As he succinctly states, "I work intuitively and ask questions later." For him, art is a quest for discovery—discovery about oneself, one's place in the order of things, and the way art can illuminate both.

Although he has been consistent in his exploration of the same materials and motifs in his work for decades, the real unity behind Petrirena's mature work is the conceptual framework within which it all unfolds. Believing that art is an open-ended intuitive act of discovery, Mario Petrirena has forged a deeply personal iconographic visual language that, although deeply



untitled 2007
concrete and clay
7 x 12 x 12 inches

anchored in gratitude 2014
clay
2.5 x 19 x 9 inches



autobiographical, avoids being overtly personal and solipsistic. He repeatedly revisits a small number of motifs: the hand, the face, the cone, the house, the tombstone, and the human silhouette with a limited range of materials including clay, glass, concrete, and paper, supplemented by his toolbox of widely diverse found objects and images. In his embrace of intuition, he purposefully dethrones reason, willfulness, ego, and self-expression for an art that privileges the unknowing knowingness of intuition, the power of unconscious association, and the belief that the deeply personal can communicate an understanding of life that transcends the individual. Mario Petrirena's approach to art and life might best be understood as mystical.

Even though he is steeped in the Cuban exile experience, Petrirena seldom overtly embraces politics in his work. Instead of a politically driven didactic or narrative art, Petrirena's approach, as Louise Shaw has pointed out, "Is never far from autobiography, but on an emotional, rather than a narrative level." In constructing an intuitive art of autobiographical reflection, Petrirena's poetic is one of exploration and re-contextualization that relies on the use and constant reuse of the same objects and materials, imagery, and ideas in a serialized flow of objects over time, media, and cultures.

One of the most lasting ideas behind his work is dualism. As the product of two cultures, resolution and finality are anathema to his understanding of himself and his place in the world. A list of dualisms important to the understanding of his work follows:

- Cuban / American
- Exile / Immigrant
- Experience / Memory
- Flat / Three-Dimensional
- Made / Found
- Fragmentary / Narrative
- Iconography / Open Text
- Singularity / Repetition

Duality is the refusal to follow a single line to a finite end. The resulting path is one of constant discovery and rediscovery, one that is a carefully chosen circular movement that always leads back to a similar lack of closure and a distrust of finality and conclusions. Petrirena embraces repetition and permutation as working methodologies.

The dominant motif in Petrirena's iconographical pantheon, and the one most closely related to his Cuban identity, is the face of Santa Barbara, the saint known for her tenacity in holding on to the Christian faith in the face of death. A small image of Santa Barbara is the one thing that the artist's mother brought with her when she left Cuba and a larger effigy of the saint was one of her first, hard-earned purchases in her new world. For Petrirena, Santa Barbara is his iconographic link to Cuba, signifying a powerful combination of associations with religion, homeland, and family. She appears both singularly and serialized, on surfaces and in interiors, on vessels, figures, houses, and found objects. Typical of his use of found images and objects with direct iconographical associations, Petrirena de-contextualizes the image, stripping it of all traditional religious associations and specific references. This movement from the larger meaning to the personal is important for Petrirena's working methodology. In choosing an image rich with both personal history and religious iconographical significance, the artist begins with an emotional and historically charged motif and immediately dethrones meaning through serializing the image as a repeating form to the point that it loses individuation and becomes a pattern and surface rather than the face of a Saint. Santa Barbara appears in a variety of emotional contexts; joy, sorrow, loss, and gratitude in a variety of colors, textures and surfaces. She is the queen of repetition.

Glass is another emotionally charged motif in Petrirena's work. The artist continually returned to the use of glass for decades before he finally realized that it had profound meaning for him deeply buried within his psyche. Glass, as a container, a divider, broken into shards, penetrating objects, and as a sea of fragments on the floor, has been a constant, and often mysterious, recurring motif whose meaning became apparent while reading *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*, Carlos Eire's account of the Pedro Pan Airlift. When the author described his departure from the Havana airport as a Pedro Pan child slightly older than the artist, the memory of standing with his sisters in that same terminal flooded back into his mind for the first time in decades. Havana's modernist airport has a large glass curtain wall dividing the departures from those remaining behind, and Petrirena immediately realized that the significance of glass in his work was directly related to the complex emotions he felt in leaving everything familiar behind for an uncertain future. The last memory, deeply suppressed for years that he had of his parents on his native soil, was standing behind that large wall of glass. Glass as a container and divider, but his work also follows the unconscious desire to fracture glass into small shards, symbolically regaining the wholeness of a lost world.

Petrirena's three-dimensional works are all variations on a few archetypal forms. Foremost of these is the vessel, the most fundamental structure in ceramics. The vessel as container, particularly the bowl and an oval elongated tray-like form, are recurring in Petrirena's work. The bowl is the more central of the two, sometimes containing objects, but most often the face of Santa Barbara. The bowl is a container of meaning, of family and faith, but also of loss. One significant reiteration of this form is the face bowl cast in dark, monochrome concrete; the past bound by the present, hope, and psychological weight. The oval tray form has a more obvious symbolism as the bearer of an offering or emotions. This elongated form, often covered with seductive surfaces, is most often given a charged title, such as "Sorry Beyond Measure" or "Anchored in Gratitude". These works are suggestive of profound emotions carried by the physicality of the forms and embrace the dualisms of the physical and the immaterial; sorrow and gratitude.

The other significant recurrent three-dimensional forms are the house, the human figure as silhouette, and the tombstone. Houses, light and dark, small and large, pedestal base and floor standing are often the armature of narrative information. The repeating form of Santa Barbara often adorns the small clay houses. The larger ones bear plastic flowers, photographs, and other icons of memory. The human figure he renders as an anonymous, faceless silhouette completely covered with the repeating form of Santa Barbara is part self-portrait, part icon, and part contemporary sculptural form. Although not specific, Petrirena's use of the human silhouette is evocative and rich in meaning and accepts a wide range of different readings. Similarly, the tombstones, whether individual stele or composed in groups, are often commemorative and deeply embedded in the artist's memory of family visits to the cemetery as a child. Memory and a sense of loss and connectivity here are translated into form and symbolism.

Petrirena has always worked with two- and three-dimensional media, particularly clay and collage. His artistic talent was recognized as a teenager in winning his high school art award. Matriculating at the University of Florida, he continued working in both two- or three-dimensions, naturally gravitating towards the growing importance of sculptural clay. Ironically, two of his most important influences during his college years were photographers. Although he never studied photography, the University of Florida faculty member Jerry Uelsmann was a major influence on Petrirena's use of the fragmentary image composed into an incongruous whole. Uelsmann's evocative images were narratives that denied fixed meaning, highly imaginative, and deeply personal. The second major influence of his college years was the visiting photographer, Duane Michaels. Michaels use of staged images and sequential narrative left a strong impression on the young artist struggling to understand how to build content and meaning into a work of art.



untitled (MPA-9) 2015
collage on board
12 x 9 inches



untitled (MPA-5) 2016
collage on board
10.25 x 6.75 inches

Other diverse influences, some obvious, some less so, are Frida Kahlo, Vincent Van Gogh's line drawing, Joseph Cornell's boxes, and Pablo Picasso's monumental protest painting *Guernica*. In discussing his influences, Petrirena observes, "You have your own road, you meet people and see works that light your path, but you find your own way. It is inside you and you find your own voice inside yourself."

For Petrirena, finding not just a single voice, but multiple voices that are constantly in dialogue, in conflict, and constantly in a state of flux, is critical to his creative working methodology. I have referred to his studio as his toolkit and his first creative act is collecting the found materials that assume a complex resonance in his work. Collecting and making, both in dialogue and in conflict, provide the creative tension that allows common materials to take on an uncommon iconographic significance across time and media. This productive tension is played out in his selection of materials and the foundation of his compositional strategy, a strategy that, at its best, is often provisional and improvisational. A look at his exhibition catalogues will find both recurring motifs presented in a variety of contexts and the same objects used in compositions that are widely variant in context, scale, and meaning. This approach foregoes closure in favor of spontaneity and is often dependent on context, site, duration, and other private associations intuitively processed and understood after-the-fact by the artist. This unfolding dialogue of materials assembled with an intuitive improvisational technique has stood the test of time, and while he continues to produce fixed compositions and finished works, they are best presented in dialogue with other works that constantly shift and morph.

Collage, by its very nature, is an art form composed of fragments built into a larger whole. It has been an important part of Petrirena's repertoire from his youth. Collaged images, singular, tethered into large rolls, mounted on scrolls, and in historical frames, show the range of Petrirena's exploratory spirit and the cohesion of his intuitively based working methodology. His collage work is dominated by three distinct approaches: the incongruous image drawn from several different historical periods; de-eroticized, re-contextualized, pornographic images; and self-portraits. Petrirena's skill at matching scale, contexts, and transitions is most apparent in his incongruous images assembled with photographic fragments from a wide range of sources. The old and the new, the living and the dead, and the well-known and the obscure are commingled in multiple compositional planes. They offer glimpses of the familiar in a context of teasing fragments that, when read as a whole, retain their suggestive allure, but also lose their original associations and become unique images in themselves. The de-eroticized images sourced from cast-off pornography retrieved from dumpsters occupy an interesting place in his image world. They give and deny in that they give enough form and context to acknowledge their source, but they also deny the synthesis. This keeps eroticism in play, but just out of reach, which gives the sexualized imagery the edge of salaciousness. Similarly, his self-portraits are among the most neutral portrayals of self I know of. Denatured of ego and a projection of self, they present the familiar image of the artist in a variety of modes from humorous to morose. They become essays on representation and self in a general way, as much as self-portraiture.

Mario Petrirena's approach to room scale and smaller installations, like his collages and assemblage sculpture, is layered and intuitive. He uses and reuses objects in different contexts, some of which are also exhibited as independent objects or in small groups, often making them the centerpiece of the installation. This approach to space as a three-dimensional collage relies on his seamless movement between two- and three-dimensional work unified by a refined sense of composition and contextual relationships between objects. His infinitely variable system of images and objects are an ongoing play of intertextuality that invites the viewer to read his exhibitions as one large installation piece.

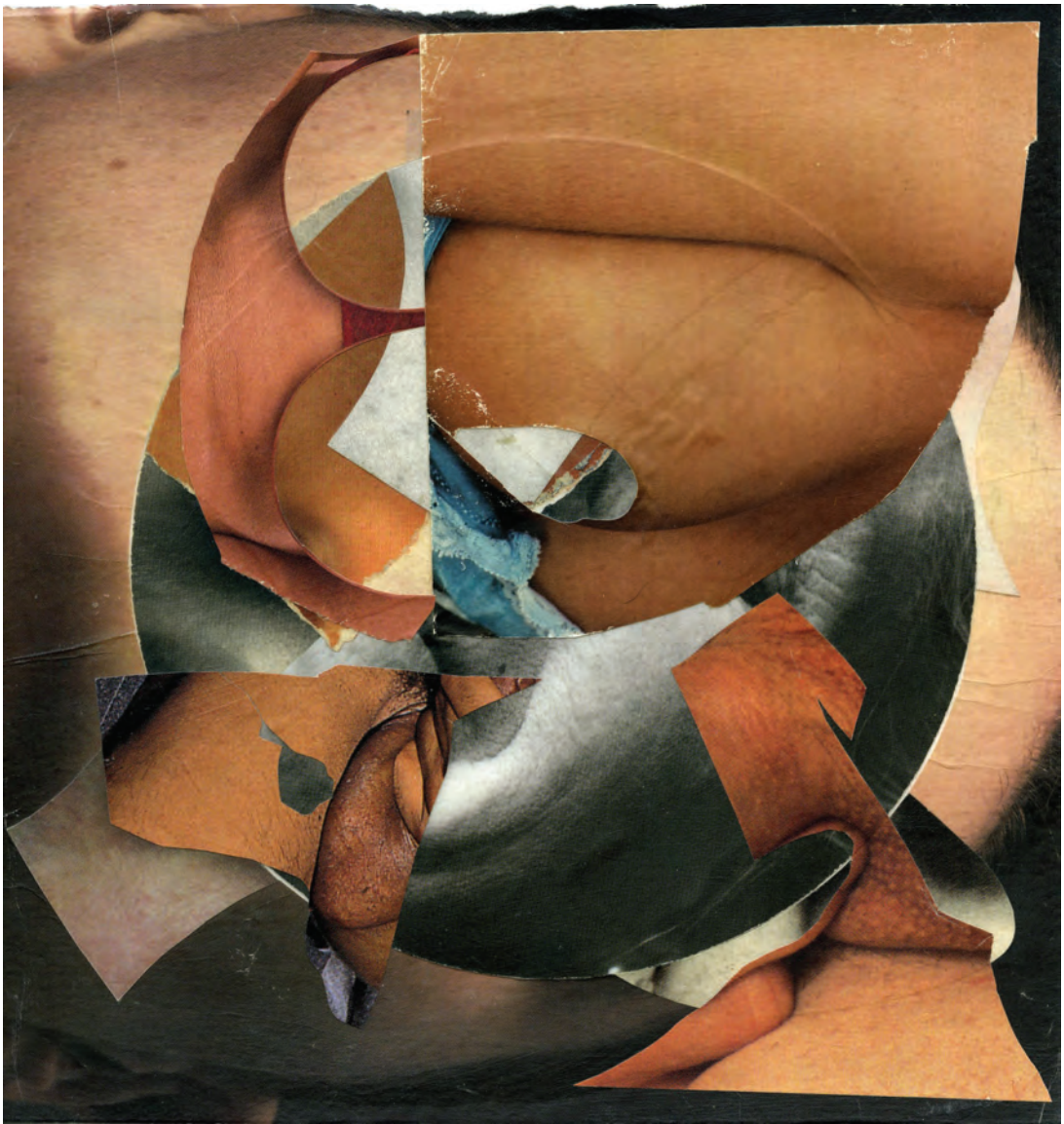
An extension of his ongoing intertextual play may be seen in a lesser-known body of work in the public sphere. In 2007, he was one of five artists invited by The City Office of Cultural Affairs in Atlanta to create images for the side of Marta

transit buses, in his case an early photographic portrait of his friend and patron Judith Alexander sitting horizontal on the side of the transit buses. Enjoying the quirks of the small anonymous medium of the postcard, the artist was an early proponent of mail art, and the postcard format has continued to be a medium of communication, expression and public investigation. In 2013 Petrirena set up a small “shop” in the Atlanta airport to distribute his artist postcards in one of the public spaces of intimate transience and unfocused hurry. Some three years later he created a variation of this project on the Georgia Tech University campus that was both a continuation of the postcard project and an act of audience engagement similar to Joseph Beuys public action projects. Since 2012, he also has been “postcard bombing,” placing postcard reproductions of his work and original art postcards in racks where other postcards are sold, including museum stores. Unlike many more rationalized conceptual projects that need metrics and other documentation for full realization, Petrirena sees the act of placement as the completion of the work and is unconcerned with audience or outcome. Similarly, in his project, 50 on the Island, the artist placed fifty of his own exhibitions catalogues at fifty different locations on the island of Manhattan in New York City. Petrirena reflects on the project as, “. . . a way to leave some mark on New York City. In the process it became a way of learning about the city, experiencing it in new way. Leaving the catalogues in different places without being noticed became a challenge and, in this new age of surveillance, it became a little scary. What surprised me the most about this project was how much fun I had doing it.”

One unexplored influence on his work is the point-of-view grounded in the Roman Catholicism of his upbringing in the Cuban emigre community. He points out that Cuba was ever-present in the sights, sounds, smells and tastes that permeated the exile experience, to which he might also add the influence and spiritual practices of the deep faith of his mother and others close to him as a child and young man. Santa Barbara was always close by in his mother’s purse, and they have become the patron saints of Petrirena’s mature work as an artist. As direct heirs to the tradition of the Colonial Baroque, the Latin Church rested on the belief that Truth is unknowable, and a noble, but ultimately unreachable goal.

Mario Petrirena’s approach to art; visceral, personal, poetic, yet also intuitive and one that embraces the mystery of the unknown, shares a similar spiritual viewpoint filtered through the prism of art. He remembers being set apart as a young man because of his deeply seated yearning for beauty. Some see poetry as a source of inspiration for his work, but there is a symmetry of poetry in the unseen unity of his life and work. His humble, powerfully uncompromising spirit has found him pursuing a variety of non-vocational jobs to maintain the integrity and independence of his studio practice. His work, a direct extension of his life and his worldview, has an inner logic and authenticity that is rare, one that is, as Rocio Rodriguez has succinctly observed about Petrirena’s work, it is “ALIVE WITH SILENT FIRE”.

David W. Houston
Executive Director
The Bo Bartlett Center
Columbus, GA



untitled (mp104) 2012
collage on paper
8 x 7.5 inches



the doomed scent
of her fragility 2005
collage on paper
11.5 x 8.75 inches



wonderfully imperfect 2003
clay, found object
29.25 x 20 x 20

the water next time 2010
clay
4.5 x 3.5 x 4.5 inches





biography, family, narrative, personal, memory





santa martha mother of six 1986
collage, found objects, bronze
76 x 23 x 9 inches



daddy come ride with me 1987
clay and found objects
31 x 60 x 36 inches





untitled 1994
clay
7 x 11 x 10.5 inches



untitled 2007
clay
4.5 x 13.5 x 5 inches



left:
laughing to keep from crying
1997-2017
collage and found objects
6.5 x 4.25 feet

right:
the known world 2005
collage on paper
8.25 x 8.25 inches



hybrids, transitions, duality, complex



the place of silence 2013
clay
8.5 x 12.5 x 13 inches



of other silences 2013
clay
8.5 x 12.5 x 13 inches



of dreams that were 2014
clay
7.25 x 13 x 13 inches





conflicts, disputes, strife, discord, loss

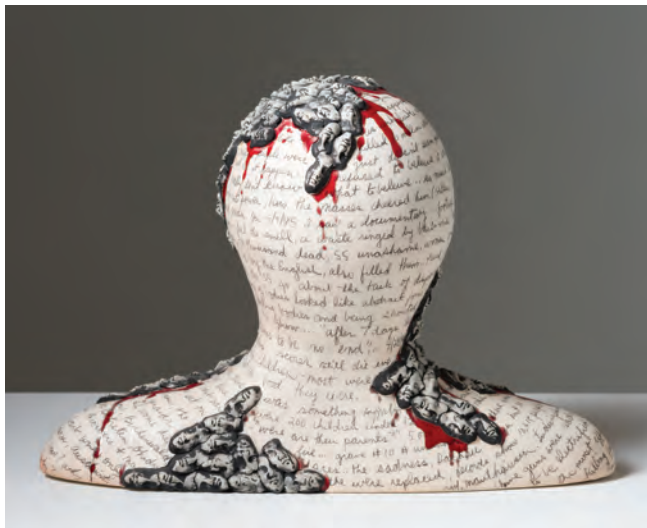


the killing fields 1985
clay
3 x 13 x 13 inches



sorrow beyond measure 2011
clay
2 ½ x 19 x 9 inches

conspiracy of silence 1986
clay
8.5 x 18 x 7 inches



how could they 1985
clay
13 x 19 x 8 inches



angel of death 1986
clay, glass
14 x 14 x 6 inches



in the dead and silent land 2010
collage on paper
11.5 x 8.25 inches



do unto others...with liberty
and justice for all 2009
clay and found objects
55 x 14 x 4 inches



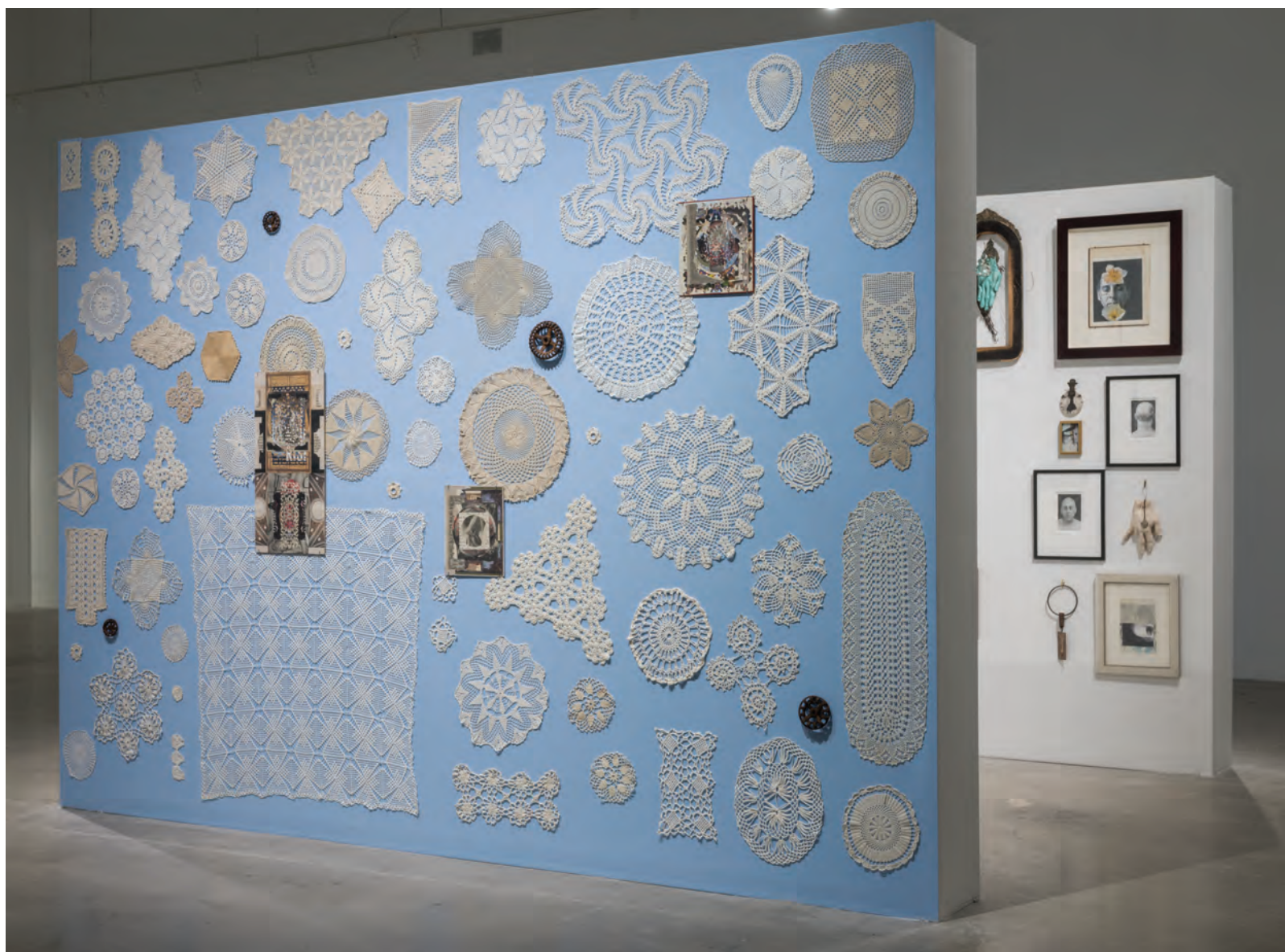
the complicated, inarguable
truth 2016
collage on board, found
objects
64 x 23 x 3.25 inches



in the shared sorrow 2011
collage on paper
10.25 x 7.25 inches



many among the many 2017
doilies, collages and found objects
8 x 11 x11 feet



beauty, strength, humanity, understanding





me, myself and i 2004-2017
collage, clay and found objects
8 x 11 x 11 feet



in fear of one another 2016
collage
height 8 inches, width and
depth vary



of complicated doubt 2014
collage and found object
31.5 x 18.25 x 6.5 inches





untitled 2007
clay
9.5 x 13 x 13 inches



untitled (MPA-8) 2016
collage on board
12 x 9 inches



me, we, them, us 2014
collage and found objects 16 x
14 x 8.25 inches



the inaudible voice of it all 2017
clay, plastic flowers and
found objects
11 x 17 x 31 feet



mortality, transition, hope, remembrance, impermanence



Giving tree, 2011 - Present

"The Giving Tree is an ongoing project that I started in 2011 in Decatur, Georgia where we live. From 2011 to the present I leave artwork created by myself on an existing hook on this tree. The works are left anonymously, unsystematically, randomly; with the hope that they will be found. They are attempts to surprise and reward the observant viewer. This is an ongoing piece that will continue until I am found out. Interesting exchanges have occurred, for example works or art by others have been left on the hook. Sometimes notes are left asking, "Where have you been?! Welcome back!"



Postcard Bombing, 2012 - Present

"I started Postcard Bombing as an ongoing project in 2012. I place printed postcards with images of my work and or original collages with existing postcards anywhere that they are sold, including but not limited to museum shops. Once I have left them I make no attempts to observe or document what happens. The act of leaving and sharing them is the piece itself."

Postcard project, 2013

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

"In an attempt to engage the public, to encourage them to communicate in a different, slower way I collaged 1,500 original postcards to share. I've been making postcards to send to friends and family for 30 years. I wanted to share this experience with the younger generations that are ever dependent on instant communication. What would they write? How would the person receiving it feel? The postcards were placed in a tower that contained 120 slots. The tower was placed in the Atrium of Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport where I would engage the public encouraging them to take a postcard to share with a loved one. The diversity of the audience and their reactions were wide ranging and led to many stimulating conversations. I encountered people from all 7 continents, people of all ages, races and professions. The tower was put out 19 times in the course of 2 months. I would stay with the tower 2 to 4 hours at a time. It was an amazing and rewarding experience!"



50 on the island, 2012

"Bottles with messages have been thrown into the sea for hundreds of years. Their purposes varied, but in the end, they are attempts to communicate. Playing with this idea, I left 50 catalogs on the island of Manhattan. The catalogs, "mario petrarena: abstractions and other realities" were left between January and February 2012. The project started as a way to leave some sort of mark on New York City. In the process it became a way of learning about the city, and experiencing it in a new way. Leaving the catalogs in different places without being noticed became a challenge, in this new age of surveillance, even a little frightening. What surprised me the most about this project was the amount of fun I had doing it.



public, alternative, offering, exchange, beyond

Art in motion, 2007

Both an exhibition of photographic images and an innovative temporary art project that mobilized MARTA transit buses to display the images of, artists Sheila Pree Bright, Michael Reese, Mario Petirena, Katherine Kolb, and Larry Walker on the sides of buses. In collaboration with MARTA and in celebration of Art and Culture Month and Atlanta Celebrates Photography.

- City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs



mario petrirena

EDUCATION

- 1981 MFA, Rochester Institute of Technology, School for American Craftsmen, Rochester, NY
1977 BA , University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

SELECTED ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 the distance between, Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Atlanta, GA
2016 The Postcard Project, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA
2014 in the remembering, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2013 The Postcard Project, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, Atlanta, GA
2011 a poem, a fable, a rumor, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2010 Soul House, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA
imagining memory, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
abstractions and other realities, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans LA
2009 my mother's house and other struggles, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2008 abstractions and other realities, Farside Gallery, Miami, FL
the language of brown: ceramic sculptures, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2007 New Sculpture and Collage, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2006 12th Annual Master Series, conversations: past and present City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
2005 homage to loftin and ohr: an installation, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2004 Mario Petrirena, President's Gallery, Brenau University, Gainesville, GA
two sides of the same coin/new and old work, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
2000 Hoping, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1999 Portraits, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1998 Mario Petrirena, Mayor's Office, City Hall, Atlanta, GA
1997 Private Territory, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1994 Mario Petrirena, Recent Clay Sculpture, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1993 Mario Petrirena, Recent Work, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
Mario Petrirena, Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
1992 Mario Petrirena, Recent Sculpture, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1991 Mario Petrirena, Recent Work, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1990 Mario Petrirena, Recent Clay Sculpture, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1989 Mario Petrirena, Recent Work, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
1985 Engraved in Our Minds, Studio D-1, TULA, Atlanta, GA
1981 Mixed-Media, Original Gallery, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 ¡NUEVOlution! Latinos and the New South, Levine Museum of the South, Charlotte, NC
This Beautiful Tangle, Dalton Gallery, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA
2015 Artist as Friends, Hudgens Center for the Arts, Duluth, GA
2014 Impact and Legacy: 50 Years of the CINTAS Foundation, Museum of Art + Design, Miami, FL
2011 southXeast, Florida Atlantic University Gallery, Boca Raton, FL
2010 6, Freedom Tower, Miami, FL
Recent Acquisitions, Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, Fort Lauderdale, FL
2010 Latin American Art 3, Lehigh University Gallery, Bethlehem, PA

2008 Hello Liberty, Dalton Gallery, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA
 Unbroken Ties, Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale, Fort. Lauderdale, FL
 INDEX, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY
 2007 Art in Motion: Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority Buses, Atlanta, GA
 Speak (Again) Memory: Carlos Estevez & Mario Petreina, Contemporary Art Center, New Orleans, LA
 Unbroken Ties, Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA
 2006 Poetic Expressions of Mortality: Figurative Ceramics, the Porter-Price Collection, Mobile Museum of Art, AL
 Collecting Cuban-American Art, University of Buffalo Art Gallery, Center for the Arts, Buffalo, NY
 Latin American Photography 2: Selections from the Leigh University Galleries Collection, Bethlehem, PA
 2006 - 2005 Shades of Clay: A Multi-cultural Look at Contemporary Clay
 Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz, CA
 Louisiana Art Museum, Baton Rouge, LA
 LA Berman Museum of Art, Collegeville, PA
 J. Wayne Stark Gallery, College Station, TX
 2005 CONVERGENCE: Beijing Off-Biennial, Beijing, China
 Cuban Art New York 2005, Dactyl Foundation, New York, NY
 2004 Redefining Georgia: Perspectivas en Arte Contemporaneo, The Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA
 2003 The Story of the South: Art and Culture, 1890-2003, Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA
 2003 - 2002 Georgia Triennial
 City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
 Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, GA
 Telfair, Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
 Albany Museum of Art, Albany, GA
 2001 New Orleans Triennial, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
 1998 Connections and Contradictions; Art from Atlanta Collections, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta, GA
 Altered Beliefs: Rethinking the Black Aesthetic, City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
 1998 - 1997 Breaking Barriers
 Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL
 1996 Nellie Mae Rowe, Morris Museum of Art, Augusta, GA
 1995 Gallery Artist: Group Show, Sandler Hudson Gallery, Atlanta, GA
 1994 Wishing Place, Bathhouse, Arts Festival of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
 1993 Remnants: Installation by Five Cuban American Artist, Florida Gulf Coast Art Center, Bellair, FL
 Crosscurrents: Rethinking 20th Century Art, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 1992 Angry Love, Taboo, Pavilion, Arts Festival of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
 1992 - 1991 CUBA/USA
 Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL Fondo del Sol, Washington, DC
 The Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul, MN
 The Art Museum, Florida International University, Miami, FL
 Nexus, Philadelphia, PA
 University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL
 1991 Art of Our Time, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 1990 Recent Acquisitions, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 1989 Birmingham Biennial, Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL

- 1989 Interference, NTID Switzer Gallery, Rochester, NY
- The Assembled Object, The Atlanta College of Art Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- Installations, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 1989 - 1987 27th National Exhibition: American Ceramics Now
 - Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY
 - American Craft Museum, New York, NY
 - Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
 - deCordova Museum, Lincoln, NE
 - Butler Institute of Art, Youngstown, OH
 - Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE
 - Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL
- 1989 - 1987 Outside Cuba/Fuera de Cuba
 - Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
 - Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Arts, New York, NY
 - Miami University Art Museum, Oxford, OH
 - Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico
 - Center for the Fine Arts, Miami, FL
 - The Atlanta College of Art/New Vision, Atlanta, GA
- 1988 Southern Expressions: A Sense of Self, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
- Georgia Artist, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- Latin American Artist of the SE Coastal Region, Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans, LA
- The Figure and Clay, Pewabic Pottery, Detroit, MI
- 1987 Mattress Factory Show, Atlanta, GA
- Spotlight'87: Southeast Crafts, Arrowmont Gallery, Gatlinburg, TN
- 1986 A Sense of Humor and Subversion, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 1985 The Alternative Biennial of 1985, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- Vietnam and Its Aftermath, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- The Total Tomato, Alexander Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- 1984 The Body and Its Function, Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, GA

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2016 Artist in Residence, Georgia Tech, Atlanta, GA
- 2006 Hambidge Fellowship, Hambidge Center, Rabun Gap, GA
- 2006 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, New York, NY
- 1995 Artist in Residence, Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
- 1993 Artist in Residence, Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
- 1991 Cintas Fellowship, Institute of International Education, New York, NY
- 1990 Individual Artist Grant, Georgia Council for the Arts
- Artist in Residence, Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
- 1989 Artist in Residence, Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
- 1988 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship
- 1987 Jurors Award of Excellence, Spotlight '87: Southeast Crafts, Juror, Paul Smith, Director, American Craft Museum
- 1986 Cintas Fellowship, Institute of International Education, New York, NY



hope is the last to die 1986
clay, barbed wire
24 x 16 x 6 inches

- 1985 Artist in Education, Georgia Council for the Arts, Humphries Elementary, Atlanta, GA
 1984 Artist in Education, Georgia Council for the Arts, Len Lastinger School, Tifton, GA

SELECTED PUBLIC AND CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Alston and Byrd, Atlanta, GA
 The Carter Presidential Center, Atlanta, GA City of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
 Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta, GA Cintas Foundation, New York, NY
 Clayton State College, Morrow, GA
 Hartsfield International Airport, Atlanta, GA
 High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA
 Hyatt Regency, San Juan, Puerto Rico
 Intercontinental Hotel, Atlanta, GA
 King and Spalding, Atlanta, GA
 Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA
 Paul Jones Collection at the University of Delaware
 Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA
 Macon Museum of Art and Sciences, Macon, GA
 Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
 Sprint Corporation, ATC
 The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Atlanta, GA
 University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL

SELECTED CATALOGUES

- 2016 This Beautiful Tangle, Dalton Gallery, Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA
 2008 mario petrirena: abstractions and other realities, Farside Gallery, Miami, FL
 2007 Unbroken Ties, Dialogues in Art, Museum of Latin American Art, Long Beach, CA
 2006 12th Annual Master Series: Mario Petrirena; conversations: past and present City Gallery East, Atlanta, GA
 Poetic Expressions of Mortality: Figurative Ceramics, the Porter-Price Collection, Mobile Museum of Art, AL
 Latin American Photography 2: Selections from Leigh University Art Galleries Collection, Bethlehem, PA
 2005 Convergence, Beijing, China
 Contemporary Cuban Art in New York 2005, New York, NY
 2003 New American Paintings, Juried Exhibition-in-Print Number 46
 2002 Georgia Triennial: 2002/2003, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
 2001 The Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, Atlanta, GA
 2000 New Orleans Triennial, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
 1999 The Paul Jones Collection, Marietta/Cobb Museum of Art, Marietta, GA
 1998 Connections and Contradictions; Art from Atlanta Collections, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Atlanta, GA
 1997 Breaking Barriers: Selections from the Contemporary Cuban Collection, Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, FL
 1991 Cuba/USA, Fondo del Sol, Washington, D.C.
 1989 Outside Cuba/Fuera de Cuba, Jane Zimmeal Art Museum, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ
 1988 Southern Expressions: A Sense of Self, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
 Artist in Georgia: 1988, Nexus Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA
 1987 American Ceramics Now, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY



lost in an ocean of guilt 1989
clay and found objects
13.75 x 14.25 x 6.75 inches

the distance between

INSTALLATIONS

daddy come ride with me
1987
clay and found objects
31 x 60 x 36 inches

the inaudible voice of it all
2017
clay, plastic flowers and
found objects
11 x 17 x 31 feet

many among the many 2017
doilies, collages and found
objects
8 x 11 x 11 feet

me, myself and i 2004-2017
collage, clay and found
objects
8 x 11 x 11 feet

laughing to keep from crying
1997-2017
collage and found objects
6.5 x 4.25 feet

the truth of all that is not seen
2017
fabric, glass and found
objects
16 x 73 x 31 inches

COLLAGES

the forgetting day 2005
collage on paper
12 x 9.75 inches
collection of Lisa and Dr.
Arturo F. Mosquera

the doomed scent of her
fragility 2005
collage on paper
11.5 x 8.75 inches

the silence that surrounds
necessity 2016
collage on board
10.5 x 7.75 inches

untitled (MPA-11) 2016
collage on board
11.25 x 9 inches

in the season of dew 2002
collage on paper
12 x 8.75 inches
collection of MOCA GA
gift of David S. Golden

them, the other, the rest of
them 2001
collage on paper
10 x 7 inches

trials of faith 1996
collage on paper
24 x 21 inches
collection of MOCA GA
gift of David S. Golden as
part of the founding collection

infinite and unforeseen 1996
collage
24 x 21 inches
collection of Clark Atlanta
University Art Museum
gift of Susan Petrarena

the known world 2005
collage on paper
8.25 x 8.25 inches

misplaced and ill-fitting 2005
collage on paper
11.25 x 8.5 inches

in the small silences 2005
collage on paper
10.25 x 10.5 inches

echoes of mercy, whispers of
love 2010
collage on paper
11.25 x 8.25 inches

in the dead and silent land
2010
collage on paper
11.5 x 8.25 inches
collection of
Alexandra Lampert

in the shared sorrow 2011
collage on paper
10.25 x 7.25 inches

remembered or imagined
2013
collage on paper
9.5 x 7 inches

the cost of not forgiving
2013
collage on paper
10.25 x 7.75 inches

all alone together 2013
collage on paper
9 x 7.5 inches

untitled (mp70) 2009
collage on paper
5 x 5 inches

untitled (mp71) 2009
collage on paper
7 x 7 inches

untitled (mp104) 2012
collage on paper
8 x 7.5 inches

untitled (mp130) 2013
collage on paper
6.25 x 4.75 inches

untitled (mp132) 2013
collage on paper
10.75 x 8 inches

untitled (MPA-9) 2015
collage on board
12 x 9 inches

untitled (MPA-8) 2016
collage on board
12 x 9 inches

untitled (MPA-8) 2016
collage on board
12 x 9 inches

untitled (MPA-5) 2016
collage on board
10.25 x 6.75 inches

untitled (MPA-7) 2016
collage on board
11.25 x 9 inches

at the broken places 2005
collage on paper
12 x 6.5 inches

bouquet of sorrow 2014
collage on paper
11.5 x 7.5 inches
collection of Baxter Jones

OBJECTS/SCULPTURES

memory wall 2011
found objects
97 x 6 x 6 inches

wonderfully imperfect 2003
clay, found object
29.25 x 20 x 20

memories upon memories
2016
clay
12.25 x 5.25 x 5.25 inches

santa martha mother of six
1986
collage, found objects,
bronze 76 x 23 x 9 inches

the baby that wasn't meant to
be 1987
clay, glass, found objects
5.5 x 6.75 x 5.25 inches

i'll be praising god 1987
clay, found objects
5.5 x 8 x 5.25 inches

homage to susan loftin 1988
clay, glass
8.25 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches
collection of Debbie and
Paul Hudson

untitled 2007
concrete and clay
2 x 12 x 12 inches
collection of Ken Barnette

lost in an ocean of guilt 1989
clay and found objects
13.75 x 14.25 x 6.75 inches
collection of
Rocio Rodrigues and
Larry Karp

in my inherent contradictions
2012
clay, wire, found objects
6.5 x 11.5 x 11.5 inches
collection of
Marta and George Garcia

untitled 2007
clay
7 x 13 x 5 inches
collection of
Martha and Sean Cook

yes 2005
photo, found objects
101 x 13 x 2 inches
collection of Liza and
Dr. Arturo F. Mosquera

untitled 1994 clay
7 x 11 x 10.5 inches
collection of
Mirtha Ferrer and
Ralph Chandler

untitled 2007
clay
4.5 x 13.5 x 5 inches

tethered 2004
photo, glass and found
objects
10 X 5 X 5 inches

truth and beauty 2004
photo, glass and found
objects
10 X 5 X 5 inches

as we go 2014
glass domes and found
objects 7 x 16 x 4 inches

hope is the last to die 1986
clay, barbed wire
24 x 16 x 6 inches
collection of
Lisa and Rob Tuttle

conspiracy of silence 1986
clay
8.5 x 18 x 7 inches
collection of
Clark Atlanta University
Art Museum
gift of Judith Alexander

angel of death 1986
clay, glass
14 x 14 x 6 inches
collection of
Gregory V. Petrirena

how could they 1985
clay
13 x 19 x 8 inches
collection of MOCA GA
permanent collection gift of
CGR Advisors

all of hope and nothing of
despair 2000
plastic flowers, wood
37 x 25 x 13 inches

between the sea and the sky
2004 inches
Georgia marble
24 x 12 x 4 inches

in ways unseen 2004
found photos, wood,
plexiglass
35 x 21.5 x 7 inches

untitled 1987
clay
27 x 10.5 x 7 inches

untitled 1986
clay
31 x 21 x 7 inches
collection of
Klaus and Lauren Rees

the killing fields 1985
clay
3 x 13 x 13 inches
collection of
Gena and William Spivey
VanDerKloot

sorrow beyond measure
2011, clay
2 ½ x 19 x 9 inches
collection of
Debbie and Jeff Chapman

untitled 1990
clay
7 x 5 x 2 inches
collection of Robin Sandler

untitled 2007
concrete and clay
7 x 12 x 12 inches
collection of
Judy and Scott Lampert

do unto others...with liberty
and justice for all 2009
clay and found objects
55 x 14 x 4 inches

the lottery of existence 2005
clay, found object
30 x 15 x 15 inches

the complicated, inarguable
truth 2016
collage on board, found
objects
64 x 23 x 3.25 inches

of dreams that were 2014
clay
7.25 x 13 x 13 inches

the place of silence 2013
clay
8.5 x 12.5 x 13 inches

of other silences 2013
clay
8.5 x 12.5 x 13 inches

untitled 2007
clay
9.5 x 13 x 13 inches
collection of
Mille and Robert Lathan

the water next time 2010
clay
4.5 x 3.5 x 4.5 inches
collection of
Linda and Jim Alexander

me, we, them, us 2014
collage and found objects 16
x 14 x 8.25 inches
collection of Richard L. Boger

anchored in gratitude 2014
clay
2.5 x 19 x 9 inches
collection of Richard L. Boger

of complicated doubt 2014
collage and found object
31.5 x 18.25 x 6.5 inches
collection of
Andrew and Daniel
Keller-Bradshaw

in fear of one another 2016
collage
height 8 inches, width and
depth vary

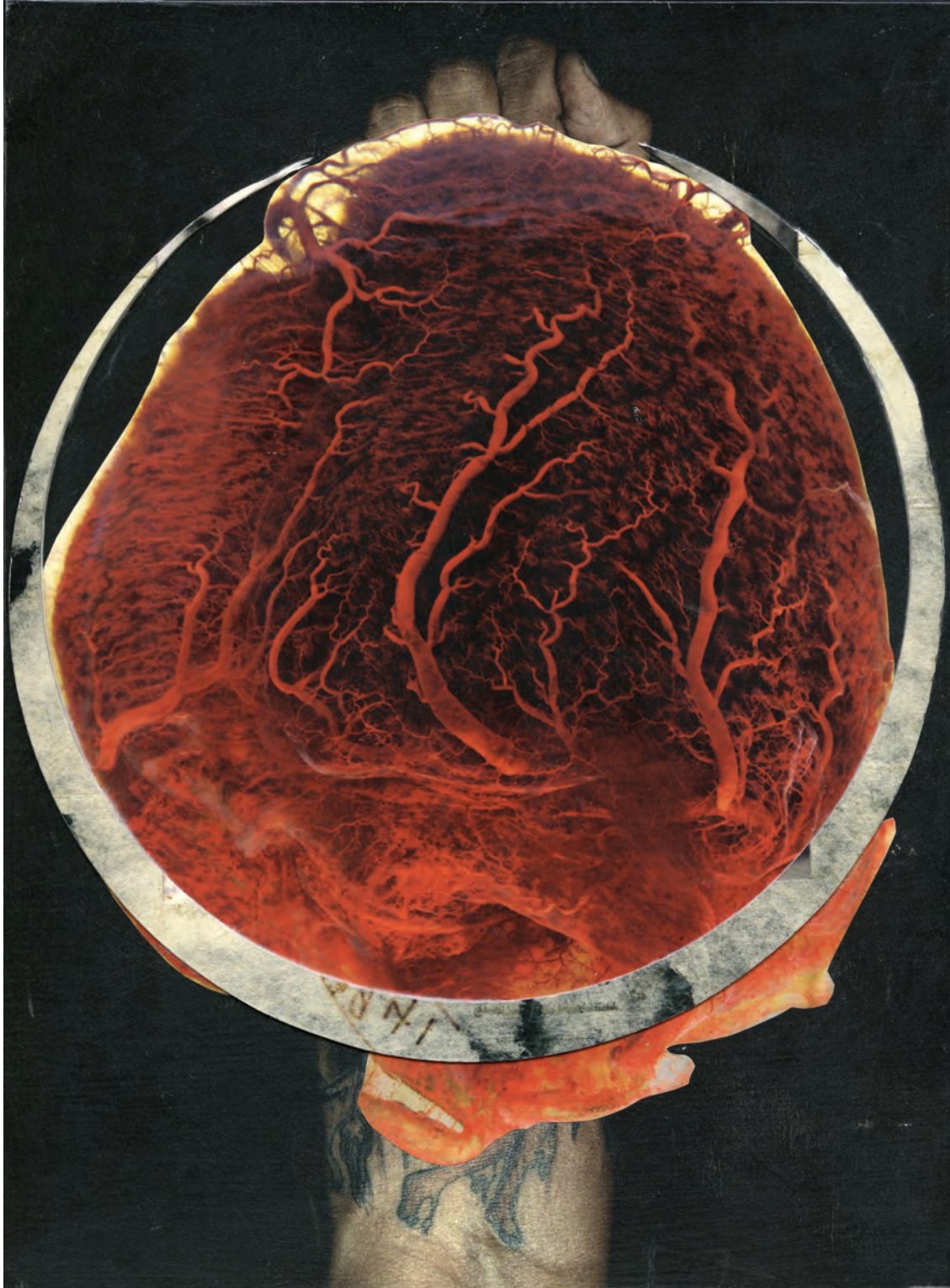
me, you, them, we 2014
collage
height 9.5 inches width and
depth vary

parts of the circle 2016
collage
9.5 x 23 x 21 inches

in the silent land 2010
found photos, found objects
97 x 6 x 6 inches



in my inherent contradictions
2012
clay, wire, found objects
6.5 x 11.5 x 11.5 inches



remembered or imagined 2013
collage on paper
9.5 x 7 inches

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Houston, David W., Mario Petrirena: the distance between

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CA**