

Whitney Stansell

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Artist statement

A First Date, A Funeral, and Moments in Between is a series of drawings depicting one or more tableaus presenting a moment in time—intimating a fuller narrative. My family history, memories, and oral narratives that have been passed down from generation to generation inform this series. The work creates a visual record of how images based on memories are layered and housed within the brain.

I have rendered the characters and their surroundings with simple contour lines similar to that of storybook illustrations. Visually the work reflects the fact that so many of these stories were related to me throughout my life; they are an oral storybook. The characters, objects, or scenery are often cut and taped into place, allowing the *possibility* for them to be moved within or removed from the scene (much like how the mind can shuffle and collage various disparate elements of memories to determine meaning). The newsprint paper on which some of the images are drawn changes hue over time as it is exposed to light and air (again, referencing the way the mind shifts or colors memories over time). The central characters, setting, and significant objects of each story are numbered within every drawing. In the accompanying book each number is defined or described and can be read as the viewer traverses the body of work.

Multiple narratives exist within one piece, layered upon one another. By combining these sometimes-disparate vignettes, a new, more complex narrative is created. By including a broad circle of characters in the series, the historical timeline in which the actions took place begins to collapse (for example, in one of the drawings my mother and I simultaneously exist as little girls.)

There is a literal quality to the work that captures and augments history in physical terms where before it didn't physically exist. I have made my blend of "second-hand memories" into a physically existing and recorded history.

Biography

Whitney Stansell was born in Greenville, SC. Being home schooled, along with her six siblings, affording her a unique educational environment filled with creativity. Her family moved frequently during her childhood due to her father's pastoral duty, making the bonds between family members that much stronger. Whitney attended the University of Georgia on a full-athletic academic scholarship and in 2003 she received a BFA in Fiber

Arts from the college. She taught high school Visual Arts for Landmark Academy from 2003-2007. In 2006 she began her studies at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta working towards an MFA in painting. In 2007 She had her first solo show at TEW galleries titled *An Iconography of an Imagined History*, which is based on the stories of her mother's childhood. In the fall of 2008 Stansell will exhibit her thesis show *A First Date, A Funeral, and Moments in Between*, at Stokes Gallery. Stansell is an adjunct professor at the Art Institute of Atlanta and currently resides in Historic College Park with her husband and filmmaker, Micah Stansell.