




BEFORE I FORGET

KRISTIN BECK



Before I Forget is a series about dementia, memory, and identity.

The body of work, created in response to helping my father who has dementia, visually represents the impaired and declining cognitive functions and memory lapses with portraits, 3D objects, and interactive elements.

Some themes include repetition, reminders, response delays, reduced capacities, and realizations of losing a sense of self. In concert with these depictions are audience participation stations and a community building project.

Additionally, my goal is to raise awareness for dementia and Alzheimer's disease.



As a multidisciplinary artist my studio practice is fueled by the color and rhythm of the subtropics combined with the love of making functional pieces, like handmade books or quilts. I am fascinated by how things are made, and the storytelling derived from learning a process, particularly ones that are passed down through generations. I create pieces using multiple mediums to broaden the visual texture of a body of work.

Who Are You If You Don't Remember?

2024, Acrylic on canvas

As diptych 72 x 48 inches

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Memory Quilt Community Project

I asked the community to share a memory on a piece of fabric with the intent to make a colorful, scrappy quilt out of it. The memories shared here are all beautiful short stories of what our lives contain, behold, and tell us about each other.

The museum hosted two sessions, one of which was supported by the Alzheimer's Association SE Florida Chapter (in June) coinciding with its Longest Day campaign.

Memory Quilt Community Project
Community contributed memories, pieced by Kristin Beck, quilted by Rag Dog Quilting Ink, fabric, thread, as triptych 40 x 96 inches

(This page, top right detail and bottom right)





Repetition Portraits

Each portrait depicts an obsessive memory loop with repetitive thoughts and mark making

One vintage fisherman's hat

Repetition Portraits – Kodiak Alaska
2023, Ink on paper, 11 x 17 inches

One vintage Coast Guard uniform

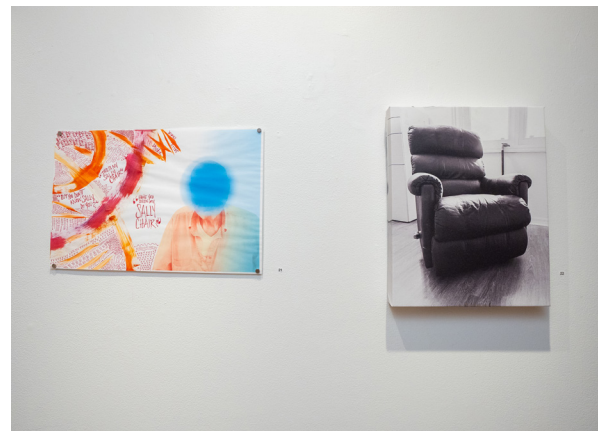
Repetition Portraits – Sally Chair
2023, Ink on paper, 11 x 17 inches

Portrait of Sally Chair
2024, digital print on canvas, 14 x 11 inches
(Opposite page, top left)

Repetition Portraits – Seafarer Jeans
2023, Ink on paper, 11 x 17 inches

One vintage pair of Seafarer Jeans
(Opposite page, bottom left)





Deconstruction of a Businessman

It started with a pile of my dad's old office shirts he had been transitioned out of wearing. From them, I made a quilt, and used the scraps from 'deboning' the shirts for a pair of weavings—buttons and all.

Then a diptych using the shirt pockets and his handkerchiefs. Using every piece is something a good farmer would do. He grew up on a farm.

When moving his things, I also found a bag of pre-knotted ties. All nine of them are displayed with honor along with his briefcase which contained these yellow pre-sharpened pencils.

My dad's business was real estate and this was part of his identity for all of my youth.





A. *Dad's Office Shirts*
2024, Upcycled business shirts, fiber, thread,
and fabric, 48 x 36 inches

B. *Dad's Office Shirts Weaving I*
2024, Business shirts scraps, buttons, thread,
reclaimed stretchers, and nails, 20 x 16 inches

C. *Dad's Office Shirts Weaving II*
2024, Business shirts scraps, thread, reclaimed
stretchers, and nails, 10 x 8 inches

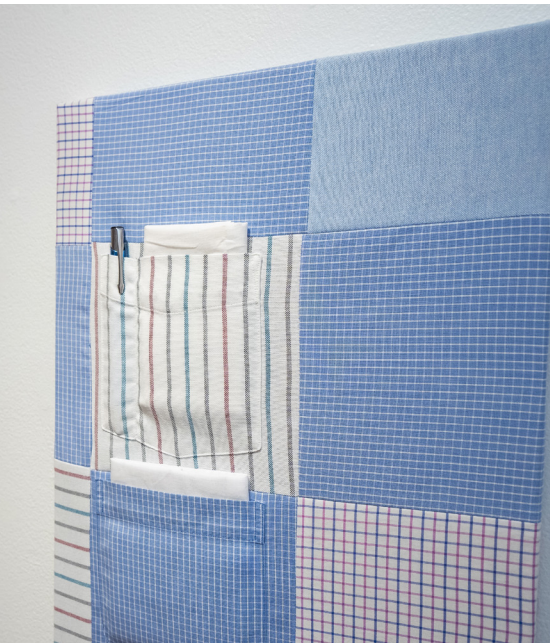
D. One vintage briefcase



A, F, and H



B, C, and D



E, A, F, G, and H

E. Pencils

2024, Fiber, pencils, reclaimed stretcher frames, tape, 40 x 30 inches

F. Tied to the Past

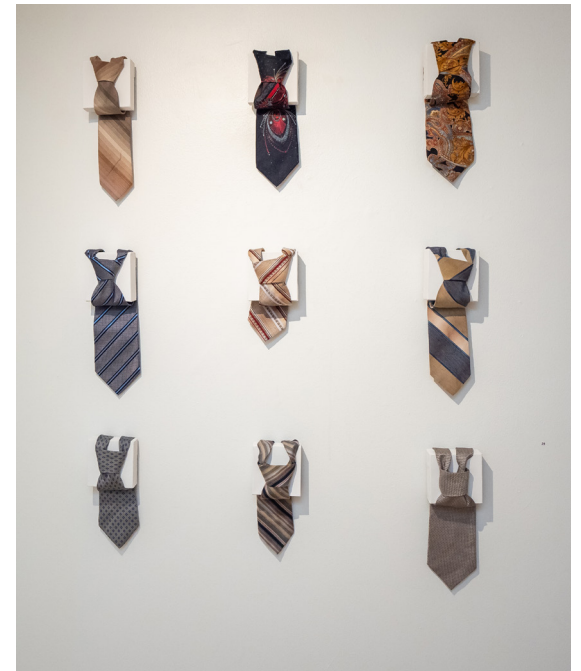
2024, Vintage neckties mounted on nine stretched canvases, base is 4 x 4 inches

G. Dad's Office Shirt Pockets I

2024, Fabric, thread, handkerchiefs, pen, and wood, 24 x 12 inches

H. Dad's Office Shirt Pockets II

2024, Fabric, thread, handkerchiefs, and wood, 24 x 12 inches



Memory Station

When a person with dementia begins to wander, they sometimes describe it as wanting to go home. By creating a replica with a bench in a garden or a hallway, a facility can create the illusion of a bus stop to help prevent wandering. This helps mitigate anyone getting lost or leaving the facility and allows for caregivers a chance to redirect a resident. By satisfying the want of going home, the bus stop replica is neutral ground, and the redirect can be a simple statement like, 'It looks like rain, let's get an umbrella.'



HOME

What does going home mean to you?

When a person with dementia begins to wander, they sometimes describe it as wanting to go home. By creating a replica with a bench in a garden or a hallway, a facility can create the illusion of a bus stop to help prevent wandering. This helps mitigate anyone getting lost or leaving the facility and allows for caregivers a chance to redirect a resident. By satisfying the want of going home, the bus stop replica is neutral ground, and the redirect can be a simple statement like, 'It looks like rain, let's get an umbrella.'

Please take a moment to participate in this uncomplicated demonstration and describe what home means to you. Write your memory on the yellow sticky notes with a pen, both located on the table next to the bus stop. Once complete, add your note to the wall. [These are anonymous, or you can choose to share your name.]



I asked people to participate in this uncomplicated demonstration and describe what home means to them by writing a memory on a yellow sticky note and adding it to the wall in the memory bubble shape.



Description of station, ink on paper, 18 x 12 inches

Bus stop sign, potted plants, bench, wall decals, paper with memory bubble, sticky notes, and pens, 2024, dimensions variable



Memory Nests

A set of five pieces featuring a sparkling memory encased in colorful gossamer-like strands of time.

Memory Nest in Orange
2024, Fiber, thread, fabric, ink, steel wire, grapevine, 10 inches round

Memory Nest in Blue
2024, Fiber, thread, fabric, ink, steel wire, grapevine, 6 inches round

Memory Nest in Purple
2024, Fiber, thread, fabric, ink, steel wire, grapevine, 6 inches round

Memory Nest in Green
2024, Fiber, thread, fabric, ink, steel wire, grapevine, 6 inches round

Memory Nest in Rainbow
2024, Fiber, thread, fabric, ink, steel wire, grapevine, 10 inches round

(This page, left to right)





Chasing Mermaids

Lifting a Polaroid image as the emulsion floats in water is like chasing a mermaid and a poetic description of what it's like to chase your own identity or not recognizing your own image.

Chasing Mermaids – Carlos
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches

Chasing Mermaids – Celeste
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches

Chasing Mermaids – Ted
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches
(This page, top row; left to right)

Chasing Mermaids – Burt
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches

Chasing Mermaids – Luanne
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches

Chasing Mermaids – Henrietta
2024, Polaroid emulsion lift on paper
4 x 4 inches
(This page, bottom row; left to right)



Motion Portraits



A glimpse of a subject as their visage disappears along with their memories. One to alcohol poisoning and the other to Alzheimer's.

Motion Portrait – Tom
2024, Lenticular photograph, 20 x 20 inches

Motion Portrait – Beverly
2024, Lenticular photograph, 20 x 20 inches

(This page, left to right)



Life Receipts

These life size receipts depict a bit of a person's life. If you were to tally up your life what would the receipt of it look like? What would you remember or wish for people to remember about you? Is it as simple as this or more complex? My wish for you is to consider your life, your memories, your identities, and that you spend your time here with purpose before you forget.

Life Receipt North

2024, Digital print on cotton
70 x 19 inches

Life Receipt East

2024, Digital print on cotton
70 x 19 inches

Life Receipt West

2024, Digital print on cotton
70 x 19 inches

Life Receipt South

2024, Digital print on cotton
70 x 19 inches

(This page, left to right. Opposite page, detail of Life Receipt South; far right)



Brainzinkles
1278 SOUTH 49TH AVENUE
PORTLAND, OH 43051

MAILING ADDRESS: 1278 SOUTH 49TH AVENUE, PORTLAND, OH 43051

JOBS	11
CONFERENCE	2
PHONE NUMBERS	6
MEETINGS	112
PARTNERS	2

NUMBER OF ITEMS	6
NUMBER OF CHECKS	UNKNOWN
NUMBER OF DEBTS	UNDEBTABLE
NUMBER OF RECEIVED SPONSORSHIPS	26

TRANSACTION TYPE	METAPHYSICAL EXCHANGE
APPROVAL CODE	000000
APPROVAL DATE	00/00
PAYMENT ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION LABEL	LIFE RECEIPT
MEMORANDUM ID	XXXXXXXXXX
CARD NUMBER	XXXXXX

5 15824266335 19

Identity
5569 NORTH TRELANDAY WAY
SPRINGFIELD, OH 45506

MAILING ADDRESS: 5569 NORTH TRELANDAY WAY, SPRINGFIELD, OH 45506

VISIONS	63
CONFIDENCES	37
DE VICES	6
PRELUDES	17
PROPHETIES	14

NUMBER OF ITEMS	5
NUMBER OF CHECKS	UNKNOWN
NUMBER OF DEBTS	UNDEBTABLE
NUMBER OF POWER TRIPS	54

TRANSACTION TYPE	IDENTIFICATION
APPROVAL CODE	0000
APPROVAL DATE	00/00
PAYMENT ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION LABEL	LIFE RECEIPT
MEMORANDUM ID	XXXXXXXXXX
CARD NUMBER	XXXXXX

5 15824266335 19

REAL LIFE MEMORIES
606 EAST OLIVE CIRCLE
BALTIMORE, MD 21212

MAILING ADDRESS: 606 EAST OLIVE CIRCLE, BALTIMORE, MD 21212

RECEIVED MAIL	1,201
RECEIVED BUSHES	18
RECEIVED ATTENDED	19
RECEIVED MAIL	6
RECEIVED WEDDING	7

NUMBER OF ITEMS	5
NUMBER OF CHECKS	UNKNOWN
NUMBER OF DEBTS	UNDEBTABLE
NUMBER OF POWER TRIPS	47

TRANSACTION TYPE	PHYSIOLOGICAL EXCHANGE
APPROVAL CODE	0000
APPROVAL DATE	00/00
PAYMENT ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION LABEL	LIFE RECEIPT
MEMORANDUM ID	XXXXXXXXXX
CARD NUMBER	XXXXXX

5 15824266335 19

Memory Lines
323 WEST FIRST STREET
ALPHARETTA, GA 30229

MAILING ADDRESS: 323 WEST FIRST STREET, ALPHARETTA, GA 30229

RECEIVED MAIL	6
RECEIVED BUSHES	6
RECEIVED ATTENDED	19
RECEIVED MAIL	6
RECEIVED WEDDING	7

NUMBER OF ITEMS	5
NUMBER OF CHECKS	UNKNOWN
NUMBER OF DEBTS	UNDEBTABLE
NUMBER OF RECEIVED SPONSORSHIPS	UNKNOWN QUANTITY

TRANSACTION TYPE	SPIRITUAL EXCHANGE
APPROVAL CODE	0000
APPROVAL DATE	00/00
PAYMENT ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION ID	XXXXXXXXXXXX
APPLICATION LABEL	LIFE RECEIPT
MEMORANDUM ID	XXXXXXXXXX
CARD NUMBER	XXXXXX

5 15824266335 19



1278 SOUTH 49TH AVENUE
PORTSMITH, OH 45011

#001-009 2/29/24 13:37:47 CO CASHIER
INV#00051511 TRS#2258

JOB	21
SURGERIES	3
PHONE NUMBERS	9
MEETINGS	372
MARRIAGES	2

NUMBER OF ITEMS	5
NUMBER OF CHANCES	INFINITE
NUMBER OF DREAMS	IMMEASURABLE
NUMBER OF MISSED OPPORTUNITIES	29

TRANSACTION TYPE	METAPHYSICAL EXCHANGE
AUTHORIZATION	APPROVED
APPROVAL CODE	85169
PAYMENT ID	HXYGFFFYHY9
APPLICATION ID	A0000000005T889
APPLICATION LABEL	LIFE CREDIT
MERCHANT ID	024589627
CARD READER	BBPOSX

Fractured Portraits

A moment captured, each subject lost in thought, and represented as a memory fragmented with some parts lost to time. Would they know now what they were thinking?

Fractured Portrait – Dennis
2024, Digital print on chiffon
32 x 25 inches

(This page, right)

Fractured Portrait – Jo Ellen
2024, Digital print on chiffon
32 x 25 inches

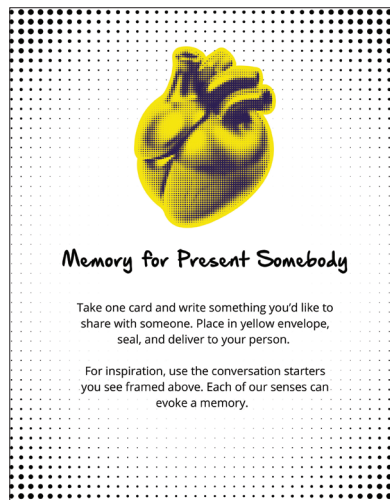
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Participation Station

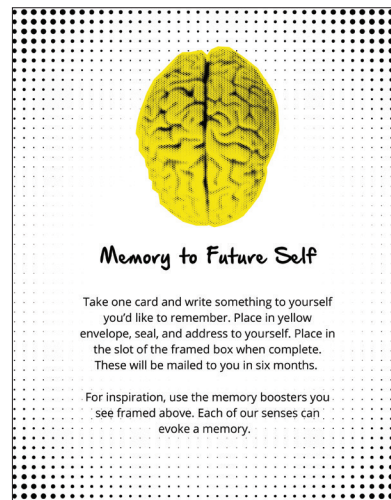
I invited people to take a card and write a memory on it. They could either address the card to themselves, which will be mailed in six months, or take a card and share a memory for some-one else to enjoy. The posters of the five senses served as prompts to get their thoughts flow-ing. The instructional poster described the five types of sensory memory and ended by posing a thought about losing one of these memories due to cognitive decline.



Memory for Present Somebody

Take one card and write something you'd like to share with someone. Place in yellow envelope, seal, and deliver to your person.

For inspiration, use the conversation starters you see framed above. Each of our senses can evoke a memory.



Memory to Future Self

Take one card and write something to yourself you'd like to remember. Place in yellow envelope, seal, and address to yourself. Place in the slot of the framed box when complete. These will be mailed to you in six months.

For inspiration, use the memory boosters you see framed above. Each of our senses can evoke a memory.



Did you know there are five types of sensory memory?

They are iconic (seeing), echoic (hearing), tactile (touch), olfactory (smell), and gustatory (taste).

A poster is an example of iconic memory, while a bell is an example of echoic memory. Petting a soft kitten or a dog's cold nose would be examples of tactile memories. Smelling cookies baking is an example of an olfactory memory, while eating those same cookies is an example of a gustatory memory.

Please take a moment to participate in this simple demonstration of memory making. There are instructions on the table alongside the cards, envelopes, and pens.

After you make a card, consider this:

Sensory memory can be important for an individual's survival, psychologically speaking. While all our senses can revive a memory, olfactory (smell) is considered one of the most powerful. What would you do if the transmission between your sense of smell and how your brain interprets it is impaired?





Cards, envelopes, pens, card collector, all on table, dimensions variable
Instructions for sharing memories (two pieces), ink on paper, 11 x 8.5 inches
Framed conversation starters (five pieces), ink on paper, 17 x 11 inches
Description of station, ink on paper, 18 x 12 inches



Video Shorts

Flicker

2024, Sound and video, :32 seconds



Now What?

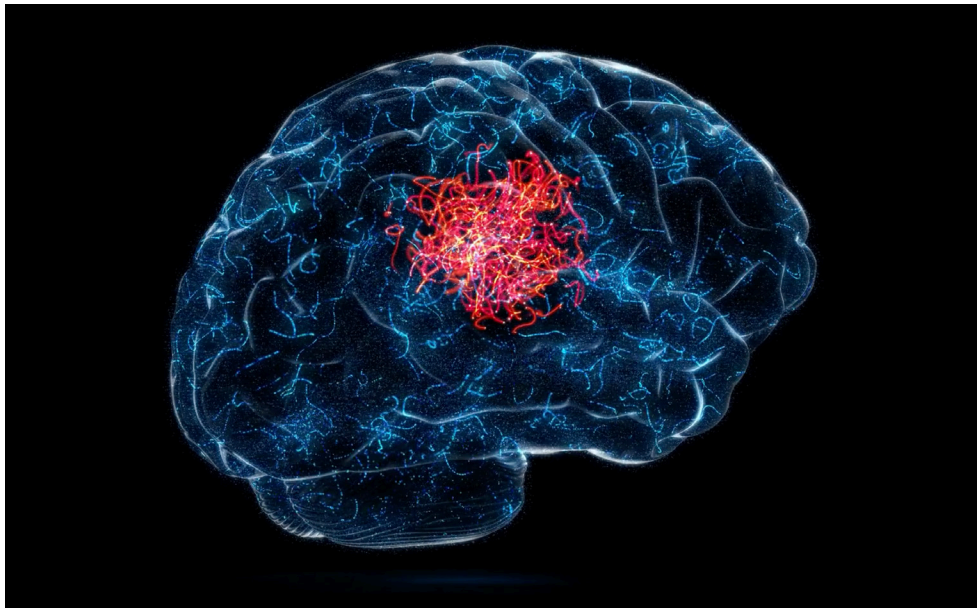
2023, Sound and video, :20 seconds





Flights

2024, Sound and video, :50 seconds



Question Processor

2023, Sound and video, :25 seconds

Paper Circle Portraits

A portrait of a dear family friend who had Alzheimer's and one in a random moment. Each of the portraits are set among paper circles, which are like memory bubbles and cyclical. The grid keeps them from floating away.

Paper Circle Portrait – Gladys
2024, Paper and vellum affixed to paper, 22 x 18 inches

Paper Circle Portrait – Beverly
2024, Paper and vellum affixed to paper, 22 x 18 inches

(Left to right)



Vintage Portraits

Memories of graduation and school photos against the chaos and confusion of life.

Vintage Portrait – Bertrand
2024, Found photograph and paint on upcycled metal sign, 20 x 12 inches

Vintage Portrait – Ethel
2024, Found photograph and paint on upcycled metal sign, 20 x 12 inches

(Left to right)



Half Portraits



This series of three, allow you to see a portrait of yourself (by virtue of the mirror) if you've lost half your visual identity and you no longer recognize yourself. The metallic threaded parabolic half is the web of leftover synapses.

Half Portrait in Yellow

2024, Thread, acrylic mirror, and watercolor on paper, 18 x 18 inches

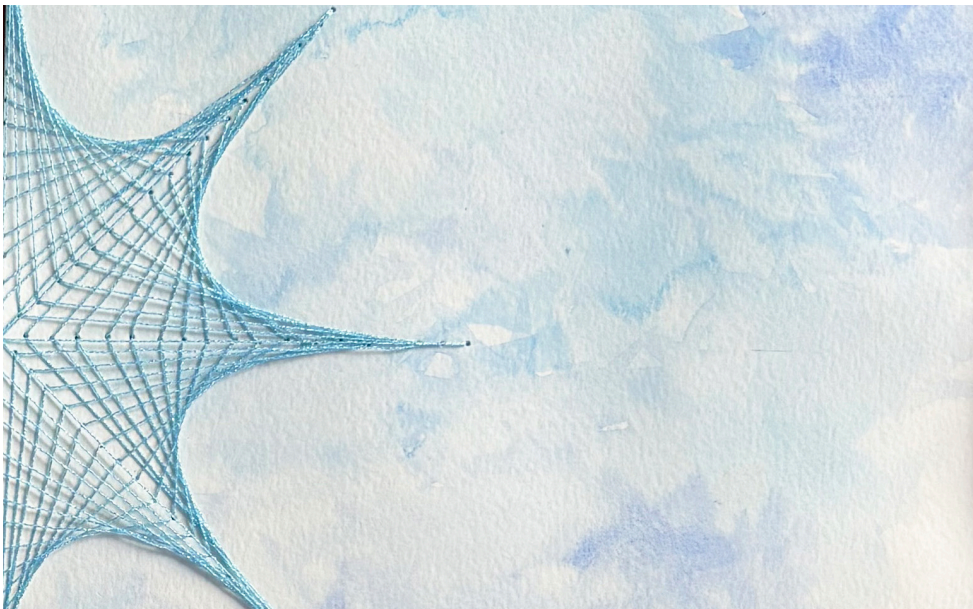
Half Portrait in Blue

2023, Thread, acrylic mirror, and watercolor on paper, 20 x 20 inches

Half Portrait in Red

2024, Thread, acrylic mirror, and watercolor on paper, 18 x 18 inches

(This page, top; left to right and bottom, detail of Half Portrait in Blue)



BEFORE I FORGET

Series by Kristin Beck

Exhibited at the Coral Springs Museum of Art, Coral Springs, Florida
August 1 - October 5, 2024

Installation photos by the City of Coral Springs
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