

# Memory:

(Short Description)

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*Memory* is an exhibition composed of prints, laser etchings and sculptures that focuses on the relationship between human memory and computer memory.

As a culture we are growing increasingly attached to the Internet via the computers in our homes, offices and pockets. These devices not only remember the things we expressly tell them to remember (like saving a file), but they also remember by automation. As a result, most of our actions online are recorded deep within our computers (not to mention online by companies and governments), creating footprints of data that were never designed for us to see. *Memory* is an exhibition that attempts to reveal something human and intimate about us through these lost narratives left behind in our interactions online. Roth paints detailed portraits of the individual, but the work also paints a portrait of the Internet at this specific moment in time. These portraits are archiving the seemingly incidental into something permanent.

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(Long Description)

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There are two reasons we tell a computer to forget: to free up technical resources or to destroy a potentially undesirable history. On the one hand, these memories can tell us a lot about who we are (both individually and as a culture), but on the other they can restrict us when we know that our actions are always "on the record." The *Forgotten Spring* sculpture, a tangible embodiment of the action of clearing this data, is intentionally conflicted as to whether it wants to be tossed away or archived forever. This physical representation of our lost digital histories is created from four months worth of Internet browsing data, resulting in a 1.5 x 42 meter long vinyl print compressed using an industrial compactor.

Roth's *Internet Cache Portrait* series is composed of uncensored streams of images passively collected through a sitter's daily Internet browsing. This new series depicts four individual sitters from different countries, occupations and genders, all rendered during the same two week period of time. Faces of "friends" from the sitter's social profile exist side by side with corporate logos, mangled pieces of google maps, family photos and banner advertisements. These algorithmically produced prints act as a contemporary nude, exposing in a generous and open way an individual's private online interactions.

Roth's related *Silhouette* series utilizes the 18th century technique of the same name by representing a subject as an outline cut into a single piece of solid black paper. The technique was originally conceived as a time saving measure (e.g. John Miers "the 3 minute sittings" circa 1800), however more recent studies have shown that the silhouette is the most immediately recognisable and identifiable shape of an individual. Although the technique most commonly depicts a person in profile, Roth applies it towards the proportions and shape of the modern day Internet. This new series of 17 laser cut black art boards are composed from pieces of the artist's own Internet browsing data. The individual compositions are based on standardized

internet advertising proportions, drawing into question whether these proportions are in reaction to or are a driving force behind the general shape of the web. Similar to its 18th century counterpart, the series eschews the content of the subject, leaving only the familiar outlines to represent the character.

*Since You Were Born* is a book composed of a chronological history of every website visited on the artist's computer over a three month period beginning with the birth of his daughter (July 19, 2013). This wandering path through the Internet and first few months of parenthood ranges from the intensely personal and touching to mundane and narcissistic. A subtext of this piece is that it is a story that exists in one form or another on every computer with an Internet connection, and it is being shared with the world's largest tech companies and government agencies, often without our knowledge (although most likely not in book form). The book's title is primarily a reference to the artist's daughter, but a secondary reading places the Internet as both the medium and subject. The piece highlights the web, which is just emerging from its own infancy, as something we turn to repeatedly with questions as personal and significant as how to raise our children.

The only piece of technology in the exhibition is a solitary computer quietly set to screensaver mode. The sculpture is composed of an old laptop and off-the-shelf screensaver software displaying a series of animated images. Instead of showing photos at random from the computer's photo library, the software has been set to choose images from the hidden Internet cache directory that were automatically downloaded by the browser during the artist's daily online interactions. The title, *Not In Use*, refers both to the display mechanism as well as the data itself, which is stored only temporarily before being overwritten and forgotten. The resulting slide show is a lonely presentation intended for an absent user.

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