

Jo Sandman:

The Photographic Work



Memento Mori #16 (detail), 1998, edition 3/3
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo

Jo Sandman: The Photographic Work

February 8–September 6, 2020



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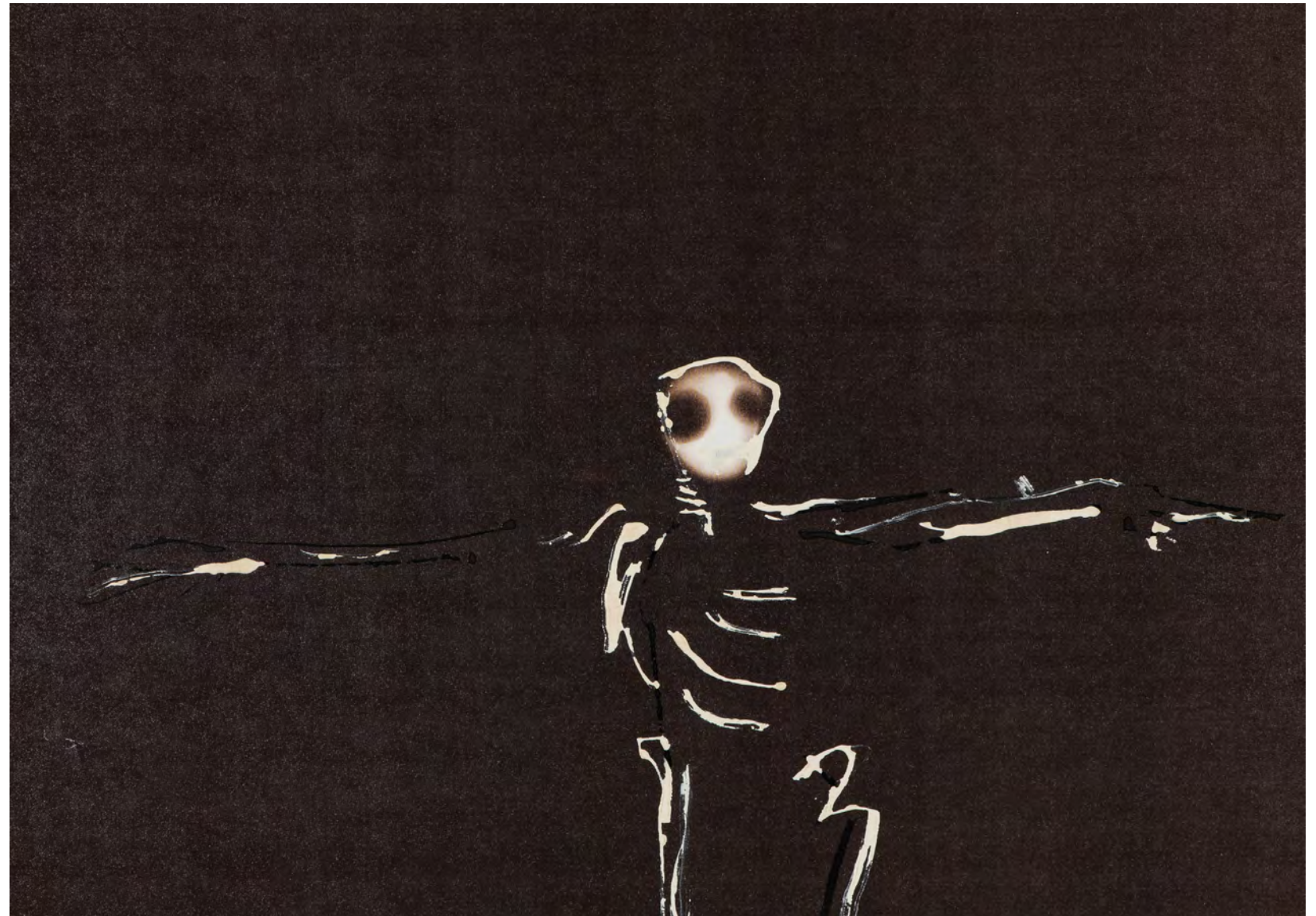
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10 ¾" x 13 ⅜"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



Acknowledgments

I have been privileged to know Jo Sandman and her work since the early 1990s, when I first encountered an installation of her sculpture at the Thomas Segal Gallery during the brief heyday of the Boston's South Street contemporary art gallery scene. In my previous life as a curator at the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, I worked with Jo to exhibit her then-new photographic work in the national group exhibition *Terrors and Wonders: Monsters in Contemporary Art*, and in a solo exhibition of her Palm Press portfolio, *Light Memory* (which we also acquired for deCordova's collection).

I am now thrilled to re-engage with Jo and her photographs at the Fitchburg Art Museum. In 2019, Jo gifted sixty-four artworks to our Permanent Collection, allowing FAM Curator Lisa Crossman and I to select the very best images from each of her photographic series. Now, FAM is proud to uphold the photographic legacy of this immensely important New England artist, which also significantly augments our rapidly growing collection of photography. Many thanks to Jo for her generosity, and also to Katherine French, Susan Lewinnek, and Robert Asher who helped facilitate the gift.

Memento Mori #36 (detail), 1998,
edition 4/5
Van Dyke Brown photogram
on Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



This wonderful donation also resulted in FAM's exhibition, *Jo Sandman: The Photographic Work*, which I organized with FAM's Terrana Curatorial Fellow, Marjorie Rawle. Marjorie played many key roles in this project, especially regarding this exhibition catalogue. She authored an excellent essay, while also coordinating a team of students at Fitchburg State University, who designed the catalogue as an assignment in Professor Rob Carr's Document Design class in the spring 2020 semester. Much of this work was conducted remotely, due to the coronavirus pandemic. Many thanks to Professor Carr and students Grace Bowen, Caitlin Corliss, Morgan Hauber, Jared Moore, Casey O'Brien, Alexander Pierre, Samantha Sale, and Brooke Van Bramer.

I would also like to extend special thanks to FAM Trustee and Fitchburg State University President Dr. Richard Lapidus for his enthusiastic support of the FAM/Fitchburg State partnership that makes this catalogue, and many other collaborative projects, possible.

At the Fitchburg Art Museum, I hasten to thank Collection Manager Charlie Cruz and Museum Technician Tom Keaney who beautifully installed the exhibition to the Director's exacting specifications.

FAM is proud to present and preserve the work of Jo Sandman. Jo ranks among the Promethean figures who brought the light of Modernism to Boston, a city largely considered an aesthetic backwater for much of the twentieth century. Early in the century, Boston profited from European emigres like Karl Zerbe, Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Gyorgy Kepes. A bit later, Jo Sandman arrived from Black Mountain College, and communicated the latest insights from the American avant-garde to generations of students, collectors, and museum visitors. We are all grateful.

Nick Capasso, Ph.D., Director



Double, 2001
transparent Lambda
print over C-print
23" x 23" x 2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



Light Memory #2, 2006
sepia-toned silver
gelatin print
16" x 20"

Shapeshifter: Jo Sandman and the Photographic Work

Marjorie Rawle, Terrana Curatorial Fellow



Jo Sandman is an artist who defies categorization and succinct exposition. Her seven-decade, multimedia career has unfolded across the United States and has included materials as disparate as oil paint, live grass, medical x-rays, found coral fragments, and radiator hoses, in a trajectory that the art world has celebrated as dynamic and experimental. These descriptors of Sandman as an artist without boundaries—a shapeshifter—are more than labels, however, as they underscore the fluidity of her photographic work in particular. As the final act of her career, Sandman’s photography excavates the history and technical bounds of the medium in order to create images that illuminate the mutable, fugitive, and impermanent nature of the human condition and spirit.

Long before her turn to photography, Jo Sandman was part of the developing artistic circles that would come to define American abstraction of the second half of the twentieth century. As an artist born and raised in Boston, Sandman’s first encounter

with art-making was a painting course at Brandeis University. She spent the summer of 1951 at the legendary Black Mountain College in the company of Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and Robert Motherwell, among others, so it is unsurprising that she emerged emboldened as a painter. Her commitment to Abstract Expressionism¹ brought her to New York City in the early 1950s, where she studied under Robert Motherwell and Hans Hofmann. By 1954, though, she had evaded the gravitational pull of the New York School and moved across the country to earn a master’s degree from the University of California, Berkeley. Sandman returned once again to the Boston area where she continued to paint until the end of the 1960s, but also began a long tenure as an educator, initially at Wellesley College and eventually at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design.

By the end of the 1960s, the turning conceptual tide in American art urged Sandman to explore the alternative, “non-art” materials of Minimalism. She explained her shift away from Abstract Expressionism proper as a reactionary gesture: “Each new generation kicks the previous generation in the shins.”² Still conceptually interested in painting, however, Sandman found novel ways to explore the medium without its traditional techniques. She folded unstretched canvases and drop cloths, caulked rope-like forms onto emery cloth, installed insulating foil across gallery corners, coaxed tar into eccentric shapes, and even filled radiator hoses with plaster and sliced into them to reveal their structure. At this point, her artistic gestures also became intuitively responsive to, rather than fully in control of, her materials; they began to “mark themselves,” as she worked to “release forms” rather than manufacture them on a painted surface.³

She has reflected on the unique way in which her multimedia approach retained the language of painting: “The core of my work is based in drawing, though I utilize a number of materials and visual approaches. . . . I am continually drawn back to drawing as a method of investigating the world through observation and imagination.”⁴ This desire to absorb, dissect, combine, and transform the physical world through the creative act is the driving force behind the entirety of Sandman’s output. Perhaps informed by her former instructor Hans Hofmann’s theorization of the “push and pull” of a painted surface,⁵ her oeuvre has been propelled by an endless series of dialectical tensions between process and image, positive and negative space, light and dark, disparate artistic media, and many other oppositions. By the late 1990s, this exploratory and boundary-blurring energy was directed not only at a new medium, but also at representational imagery and the human condition.

For an artist whose vocabulary had been material- and process-oriented, formalist, and purely abstract for five decades, the decision to begin working with suggestive imagery—and the human figure, no less—seems a dramatic reversal. Yet Sandman describes the shift in a more nuanced way:

After years of working abstractly, I became interested in using the world of appearance—the real world—to inform my work more directly. The issue became one of how to accomplish this using the lens of my own sensibility, one which avoids the literal and which invariably yields up spare, stripped-down images.⁶

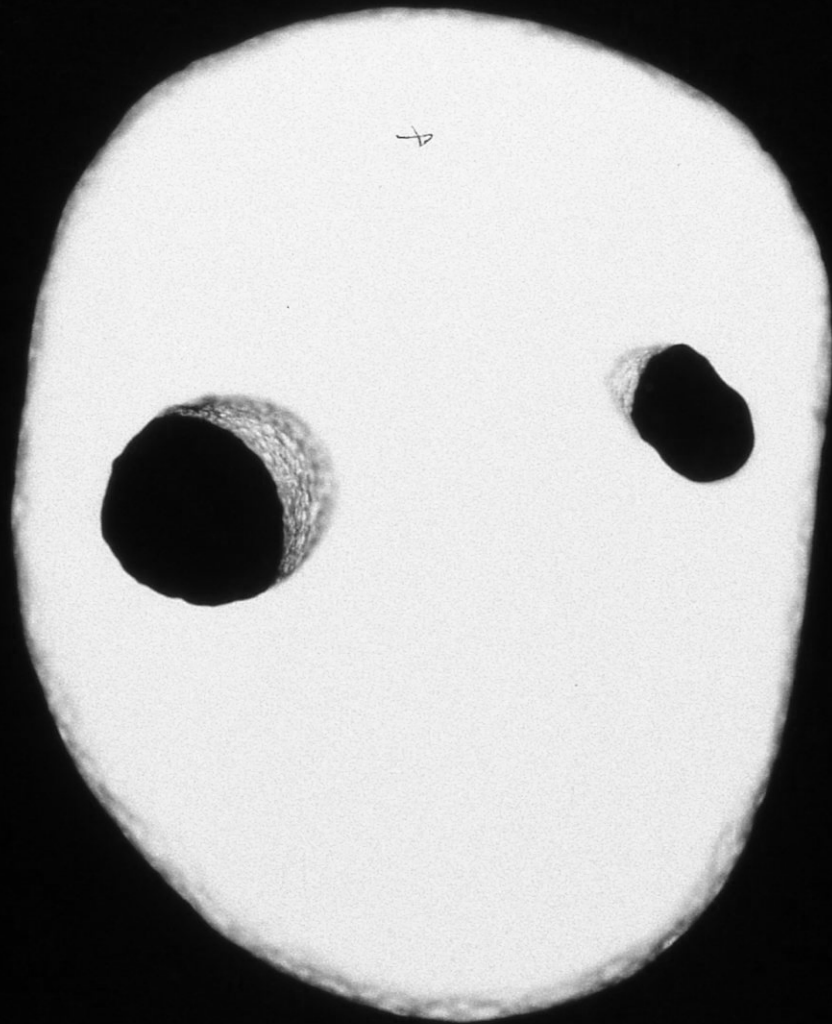
Sandman’s turn to photography was less about becoming a photographer and more about exploring a tool that had, since its inception, been viewed as an objective recorder of this “real world” that had newly captured her attention. At the time of Sandman’s shift, however, photography had reemerged with full force into the art world of the 1990s. The rise of digital photography and new media technologies spurred new

possibilities for and conceptualizations of the medium as highly subjective, alterable, expressive, and thus “artistic.” Furthermore, Sandman’s turn to the representational can also be contextualized within a broader, art world-wide return to the figure, induced largely by the new urgency for identity politics amidst the “Culture Wars.” Primed by this climate, Sandman approached photography, figuration, and the metaphysical with her characteristic experimentalism and sharp eye.

Though there are distinctions to be made between Sandman’s photographic bodies of work, a haunting illumination permeates the work as a whole. Light became her next material collaborator, and it now seems almost inevitable that the artist, who viewed drawing at the core of her practice, would eventually turn to a medium that literally means “drawing with light.”



Thermal Drawing 1 (left) and *3* (right), 2007
digital pigment prints
22" x 17"



A technique that Sandman employed frequently in her photographic work—the photogram—was even described by William Henry Fox Talbot as “the art of photogenic drawing” when he first perfected it in the early 1830s.⁷ Sandman’s series titles, such as *Light Tracing* and *Thermal Drawing*, point to a self-conscious continuation of her formal interests and experiments of the previous decades. She has even described her photographic work as “a very painterly process,”⁸ residing “somewhere between painting and photography.”⁹

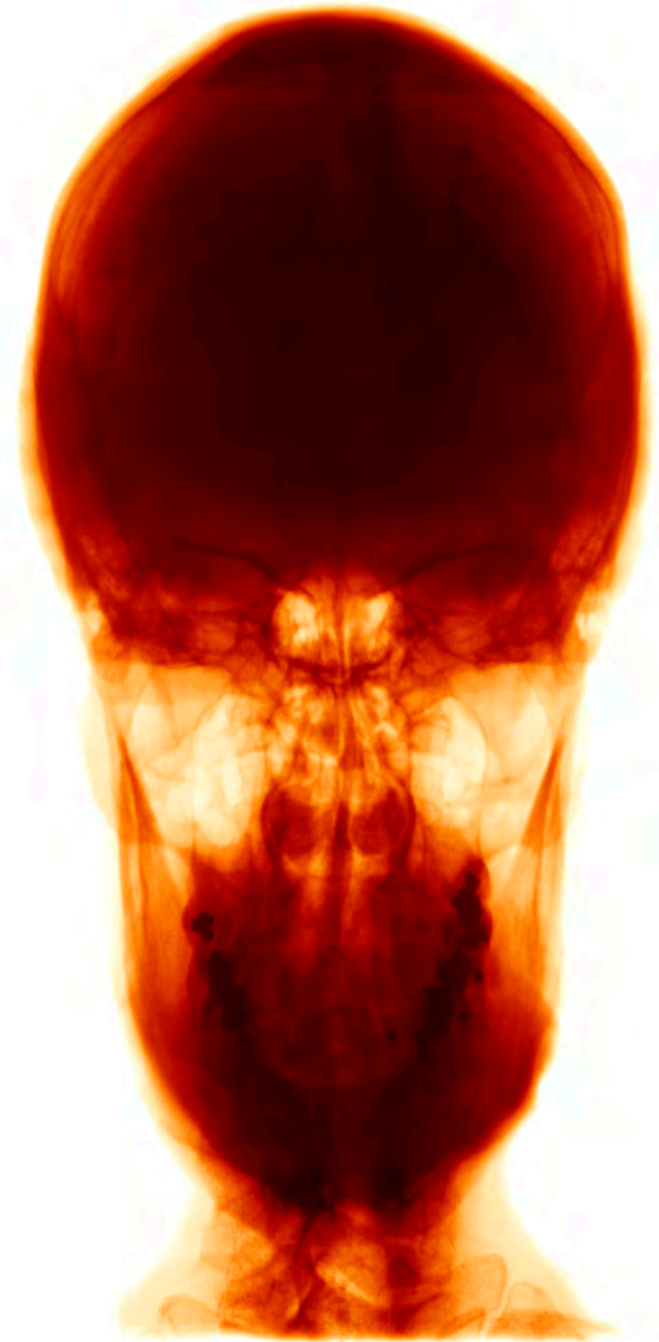
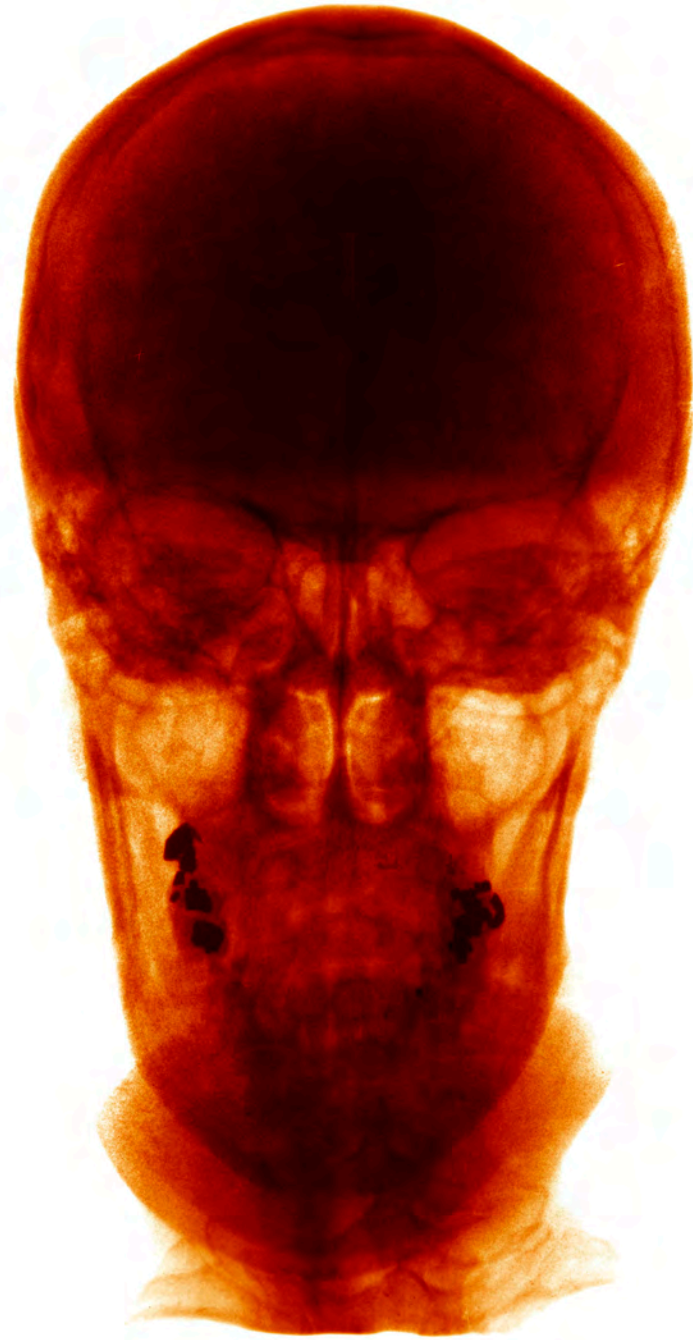
What was wholly new in this phase of Sandman’s career, however, was her foregrounding of spiritual, emotive, and ultimately human concerns. An interest in recognizable, bodily imagery had already been percolating, as curator Katherine French has noted in the “sensuality” of Sandman’s earlier sculptural works.¹⁰ Yet Sandman’s play with light was loaded with a conceptual weight not so overt in her

previous work. The manipulation of light and dark, inherent in the photographic process and on full display in Sandman’s photographic work, also has deeply spiritual and metaphysical connotations. Life and death, good and evil, known and unknown, material and immaterial—these oppositions, and many more, can all be placed on this metaphorical light-dark spectrum. At the core of the work is the sense that light is the ultimate mobilizer, transformer, and creator, propelling the images “to vibrate out of deep space.”¹¹ This is a meditation not just on the generative act of the artist, but also more broadly on the nature of the universe, of consciousness, and of humankind’s transience.

The objects at the center of Sandman’s photographic work fall into two loose categories: found objects (mostly earthen fragments and rocks, but also snakeskins, computer parts, and even notes from the famous composer John Cage) and medical x-rays.

Light Tracing #5 (detail), 2003
enlarged photogram
24" x 20"

Chiro Study #1 (left) and *#8* (right), 2007
archival digital pigment ink print
mounted on aluminum
30" x 24"



These objects were manipulated in ways that bring the body overtly into Sandman's work for the first time. She drilled and carved into rocks selected for their suggestion of "primordial head-like forms,"¹² in order to enhance their uncanny qualities. These carved rocks were then printed as photograms or placed in the negative holder of an enlarger, emerging as ghostly, near-human visages against dark backgrounds. Just as African masks (one of her dominant influences for this work) signal a liminal space of ritualized transformation, this imagery floats and evolves across an indeterminate environment.

Similarly, but with more exacting precision, Sandman digitally edited x-rays of her own body and others', subtly altering both the bone structures and color palettes. Her audience is physically implicated, as we cannot help but continuously relate to and distinguish our own bodies from these x-rays. Sandman has described their multifaceted purpose: "While these films

were originally used as a medical tool, my aim is to discover their artistic aspects, exploring the remarkable juxtaposition between the shared and the unique."¹³ Antique photographic techniques like Van Dyke Brown printing and various other color manipulations infuse Sandman's work with warm, lush textures that delight the senses, a far cry from cold medical or geological data. The intense red-orange of her *Chiro* series is the result of several layers of skull x-rays, so that the saturated palimpsest "increase[s] the sense of burden of each image, as if they carry their own history of misfortune."¹⁴ Sandman has likened her layering methods, on display most evidently in her *Transmission* series, to the human condition: "Collage allows for disparate images to accumulate in a fashion akin to the human psyche."¹⁵ Repeated tirelessly over the course of two decades, Sandman's shadowy and skeletal figures are suspended in and transform across an ethereal space, like "phantoms or beings in the process of mutation."¹⁶

Though only one series is specifically titled *Memento Mori*, Sandman's entire photographic output is a spectral reminder of our mortality: "All of my photo-based work speaks to the tentative nature of life, and the entire series serves as a reminder of our limited time on earth."¹⁷ Existential questions abound, despite the undeniably engrossing aesthetic qualities of line, luminosity, and shape that make each piece an intimate masterclass in form. Energized by the tension between abstraction and representation, human and nonhuman, individual and collective, light and dark, life and death, these images are anything but still. When asked how her photography relates to the rest of her work, the artist has said: "Possibly it expresses the desire, the attempt, to push on through one's existential dread, to struggle with the new."¹⁸ Through a meditation on death, then, Sandman's photographic work is a paradoxically joyous celebration of the power of the creative act to transform and perpetuate, even in the face of finality—a consummate summary of a legendary artistic career without bounds.



Notes

1 Sandman describes her early commitment to abstract painting: “For the next decade throughout the sixties, I became a dedicated Abstract Expressionist painter.” Interview with the artist, conducted by Susan Lewinnek, March 2020.

2 Jo Sandman, quoted in “Painting with Light: Remarks on a Studio Visit with Jo Sandman,” *Ain’t Bad*, November 10, 2014, <https://www.aint-bad.com/article/2013/11/10/jo-sandman/>.

3 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

4 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

5 For more on Hofmann’s “push and pull” and other theories, see William C. Seitz, *Hans Hofmann*, with selected writings by the artist (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1963), exhibition catalogue.

6 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

7 Malcom Daniel, “William Henry Fox Talbot and the Invention of Photography,” *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tlbt/hd_tlbt.htm.

8 Jo Sandman, quoted in Robyn Day, “Painting with Light: Remarks on a Studio Visit with Jo Sandman,” *Ain’t Bad*, November 10, 2013, <https://www.aint-bad.com/article/2013/11/10/jo-sandman/>.

9 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

10 Describing a sculptural series with tar, French states: “Whether the apertures described in *Degrees of Desire* represent lips or female anatomy, there can be no mistaking their sensuality.” In Katherine French, *Jo Sandman: Once Removed* (Framingham, MA: The Danforth Art Museum at Framingham State University, 2008), exhibition catalogue.

11 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

12 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

13 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

14 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

15 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

16 Jo Sandman, writing on her bodies of work.

17 Jo Sandman, quoted in D’lynne Plummer, “Unreasonably Beautiful: Examining the Artwork of Jo Sandman,” *ArtsEditor*, November 22, 2011, <http://artseditor.com/site/unreasonably-beautiful/>.

18 Jo Sandman, quoted in “Unreasonably Beautiful,” 2011.



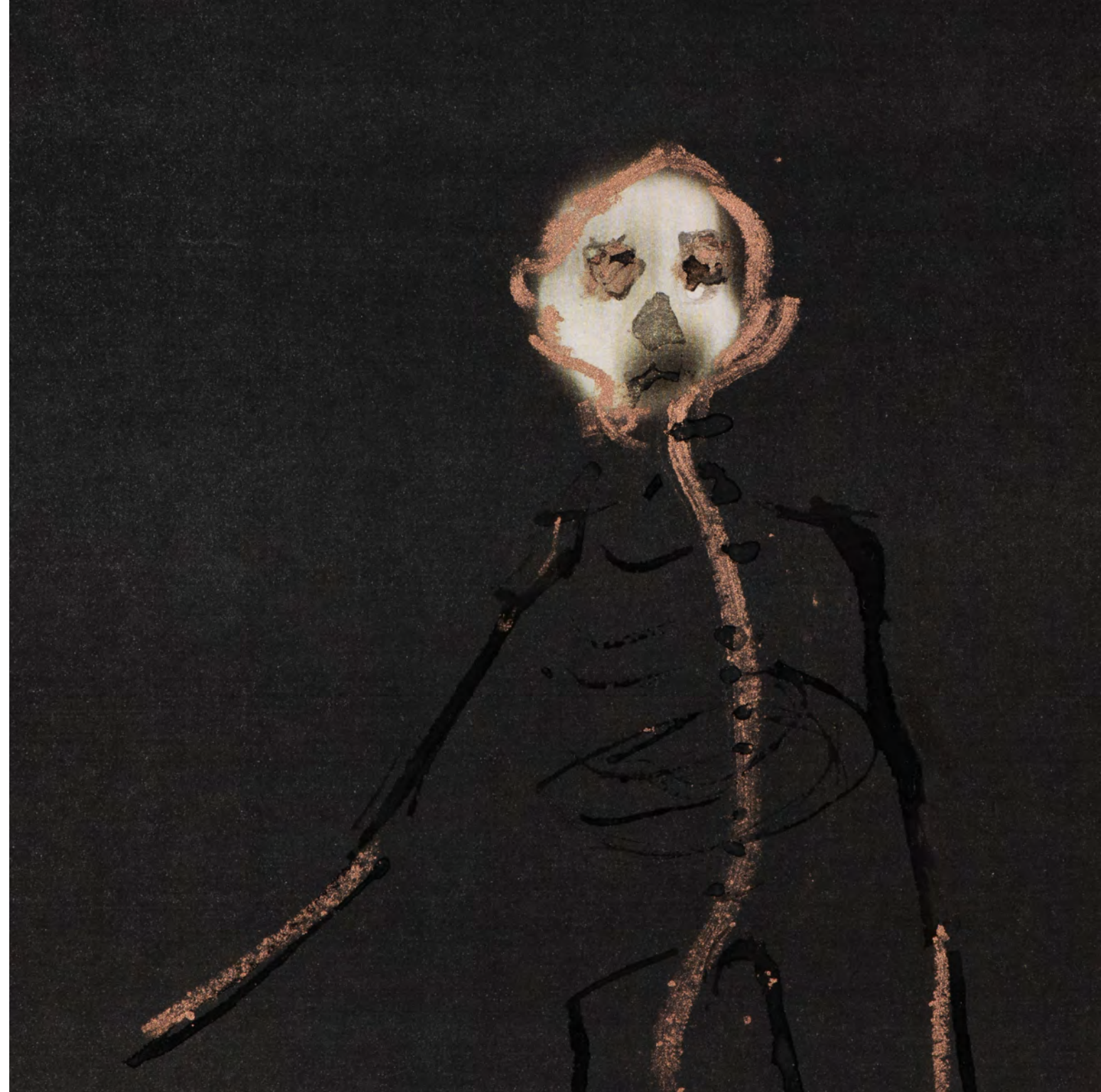
Metamorphose #14 (detail), n. d.
conte crayon on Van Dyke
Brown photogram
10 ¾" x 13 ¾"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo

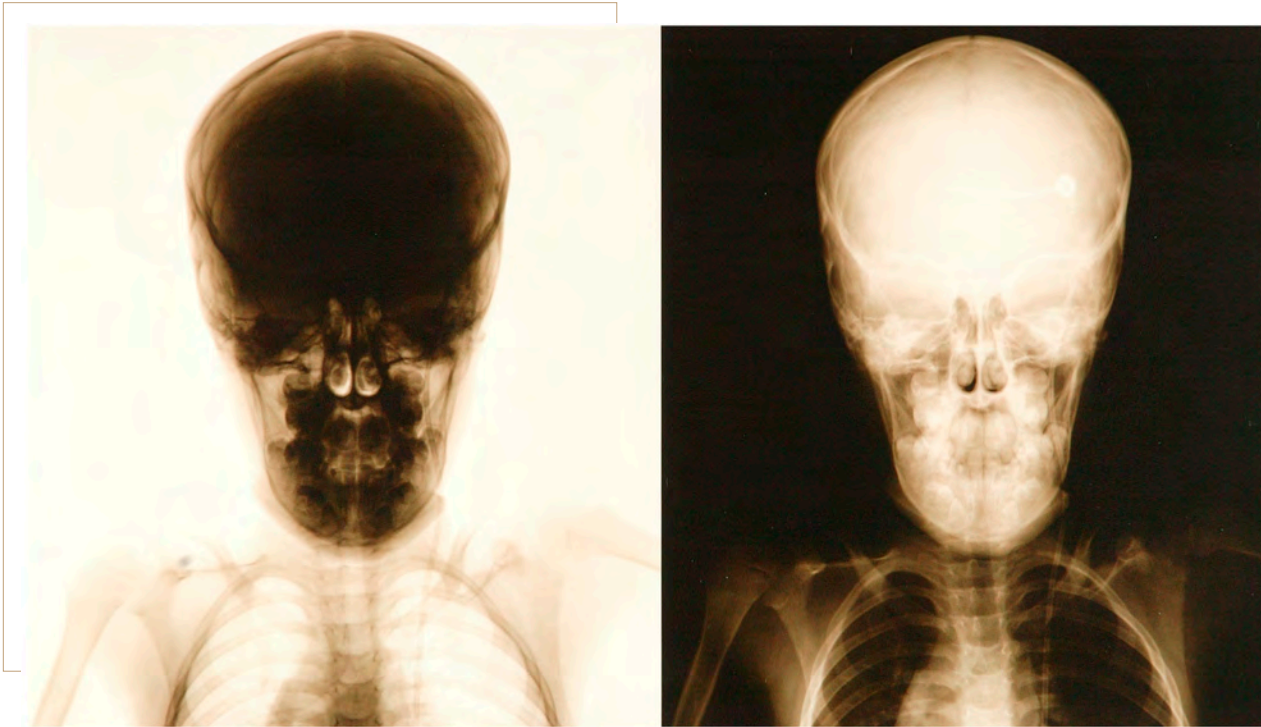


Light Memory #18 (with detail, right), 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"



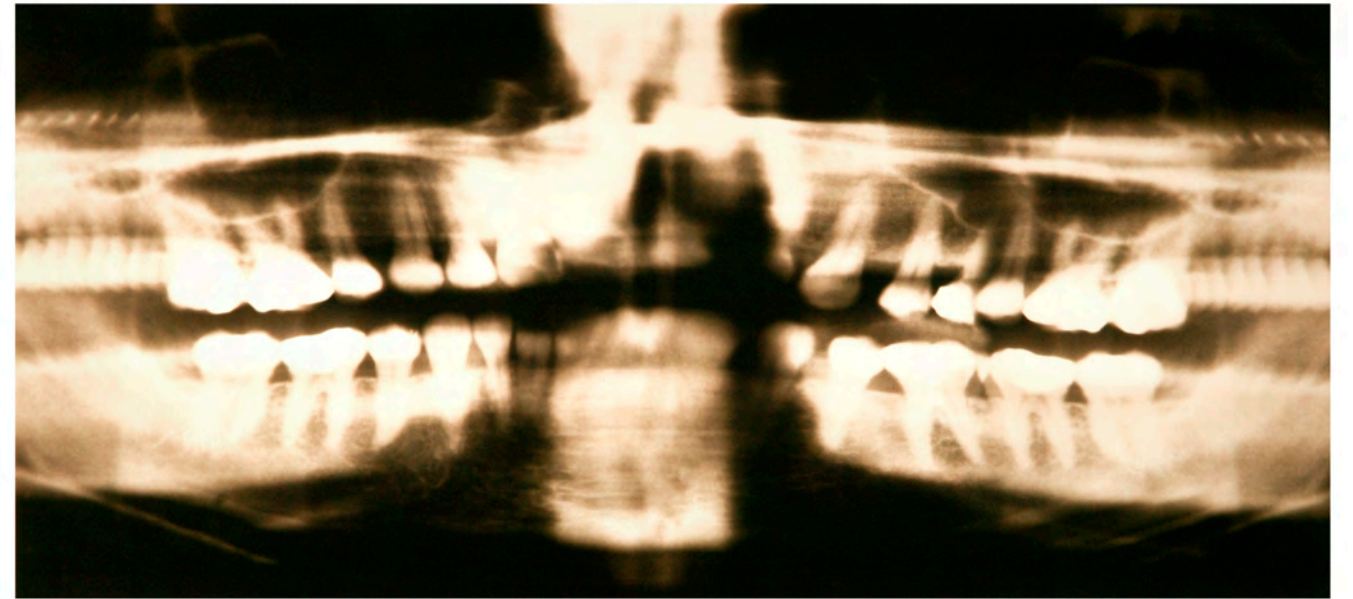
Metamorphose #15 (detail), n. d.
conté crayon on Van Dyke
Brown photogram
10 3/4" x 13 3/8"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo





Light Memory #33 (left) and #24 (right), 2006
sepia-toned silver
gelatin prints
16" x 20"





Light Memory #38, 2006
sepia-toned silver
gelatin print
16" x 20"

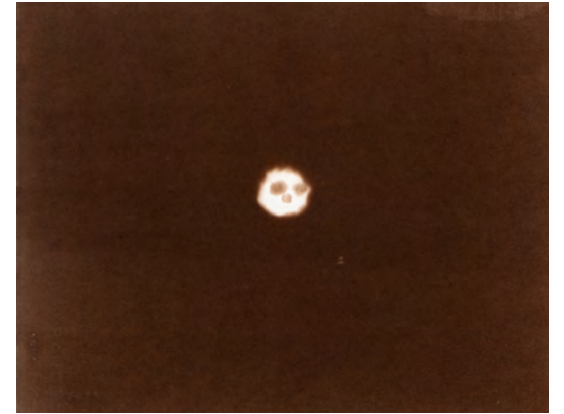
After years of working abstractly, I became interested in using the world of appearance—the real world—to inform my work more directly. The issue became one of how to accomplish this using the lens of my own sensibility, one that avoids the literal and that invariably yields up spare, stripped-down, images.

This work derives its imagery from myth, poetry, and dream. I work towards a fragile, haunting presence, a kind of apparition emerging from dark space. I begin with found objects underfoot, most often stone, coral and shell. Many of the pieces I choose suggest primordial head-like forms. I carve, drill, and shape them to expose more fully those characteristics which initially attracted me to them. This [skeletal] imagery expresses in yet another way the implication of being stripped to the bone, and of an ongoing transformation.

Jo Sandman

Memento Mori #19 (detail), 1998, edition 2/3
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo





Memento Mori #3, #26, #16, and #17 (left to right), 1998
Van Dyke Brown photograms on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



*Earliest Brown Print #8 (left) and #23 (right),
c. 1998–99
sepia prints
21 ¼" x 17 ½"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo*

As I walked along the shore of a volcanic island, I started to see “faces” in the sand. I found these artifacts strangely compelling, even in their incomplete state of missing, disarrayed features and jagged outer contours. They seemed to reference primitive masks, faces on worn ancient coins or even portraits of distant relatives of the Venus of Willendorf.

Through [carving, drilling, and abrading them] I hope to retain their contingent character, keeping them free of the particularities of time and space. I aim to highlight their materiality, their undeniable resemblance to the “stuff” thrown up by the Big Bang—pieces of the earth which still survive.

[T]he images seem to vibrate out of deep space. Sometimes they appear to me as phantoms or beings in the process of mutation.

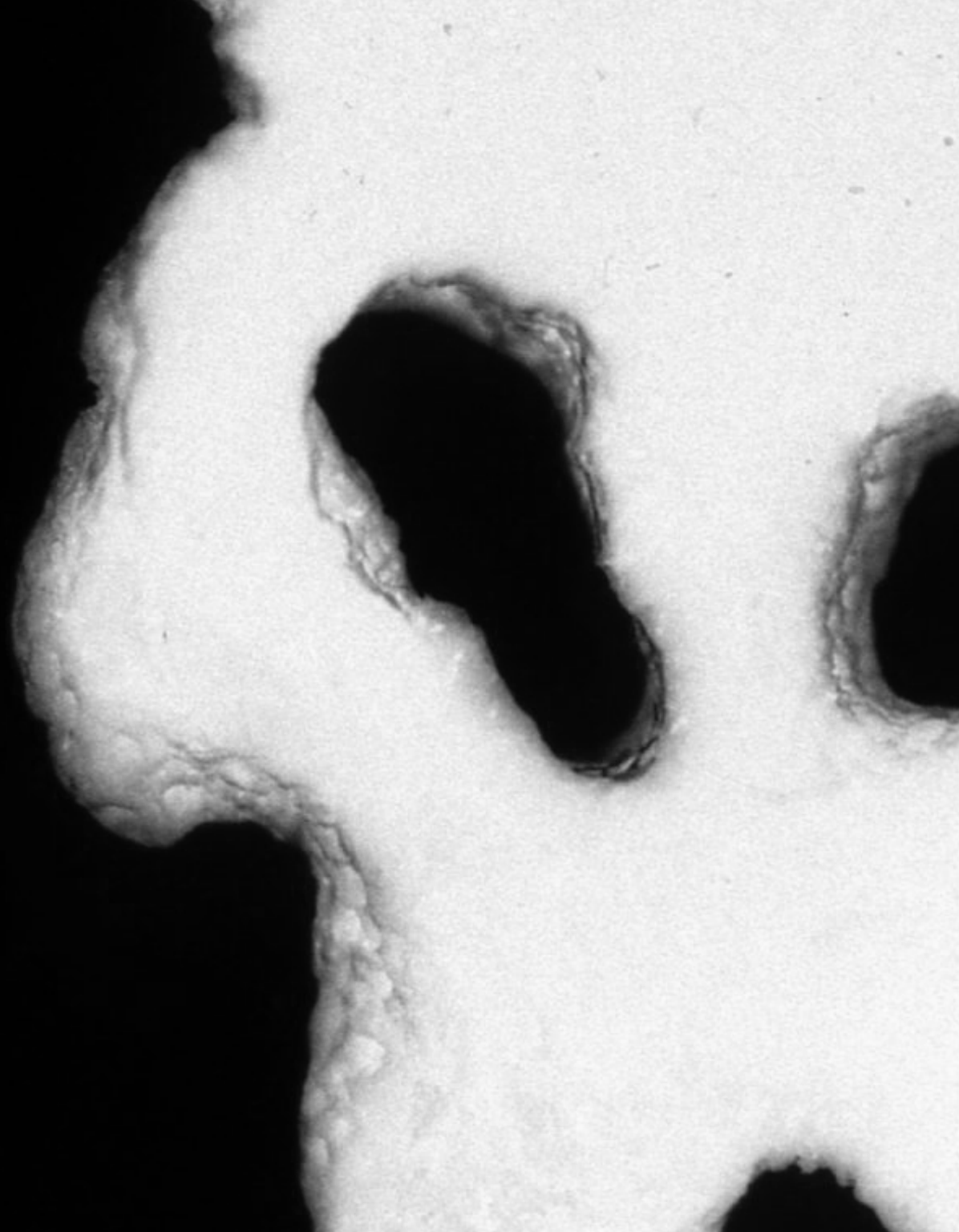
Jo Sandman

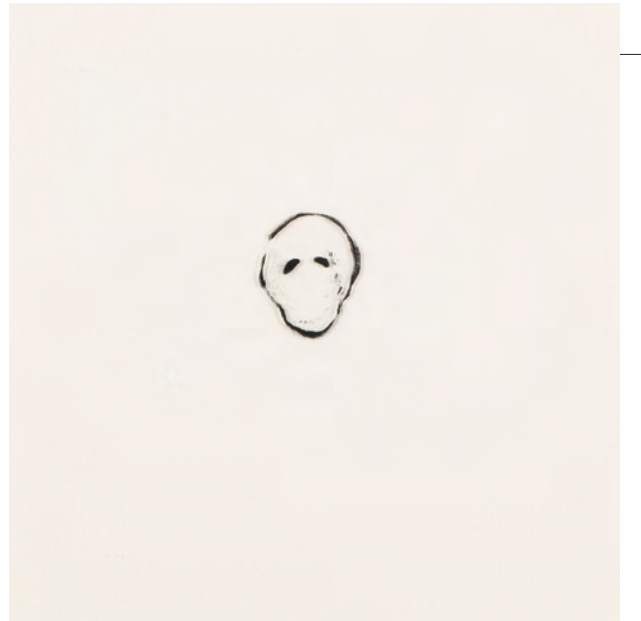


Double, 2001
transparent Lambda
print over C-print
23" x 23" x 2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



*Light Tracing #8, #9, and #1 (left to right), 2003
enlarged photograms
24" x 20"*



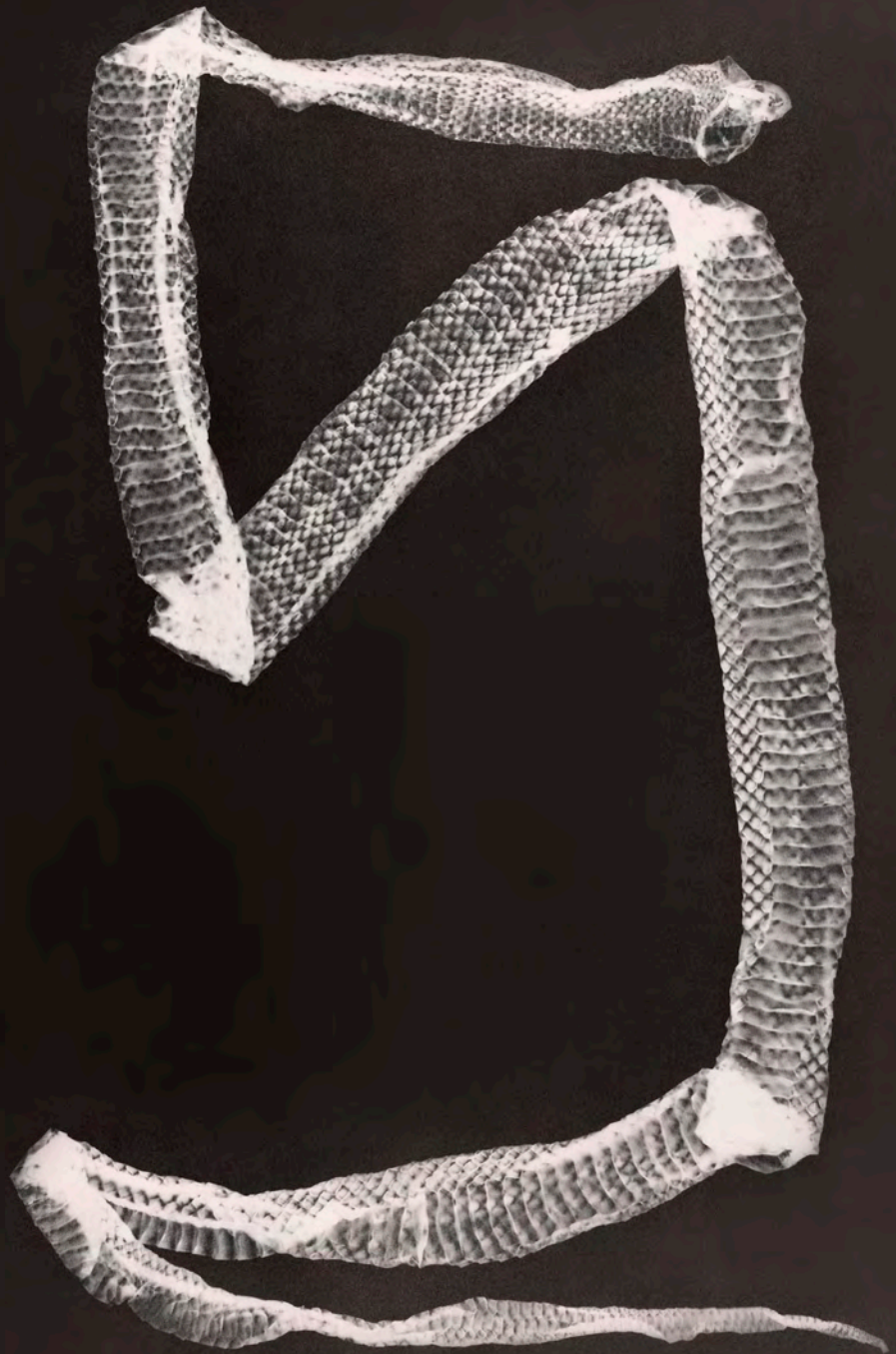


Twice #3, #7, #23, and #14 (left to right), 1998–2000
photomechanical images on transparency
and Arches watercolor paper
8 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 1 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



These [Thermal Drawings] reference my earlier work as a painter and process artist. Through the use of a heat source I am able to record my hand flying over the surface of facsimile paper. These drawings are then scanned and output as large archival digital pigment prints. While my work with x-rays is preconceived and exacting, these drawings are spontaneous. They spring from an impulse to use unimpeded gesture to create a celebration of life.

Jo Sandman



Serpent #4 (left) and *#1* (right), 2012–2014
platinum/palladium photograms
translated into digital prints
40" x 36"



Light Memory #1, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"

These images of abstracted human faces [in freestanding Lucite frames] are taken from x-rays and found objects, carved by nature into the resemblance of man. Color planes pull from the masks an expanded sense of identity and individuality. Collage allows for disparate images to accumulate in a fashion akin to the human psyche.

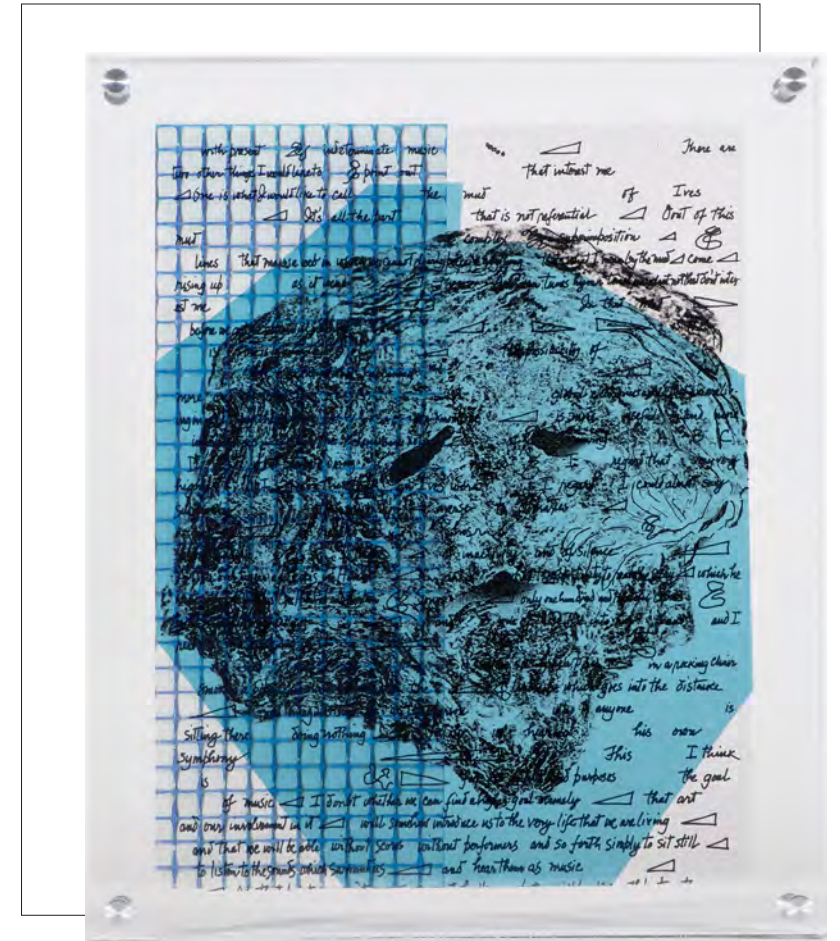
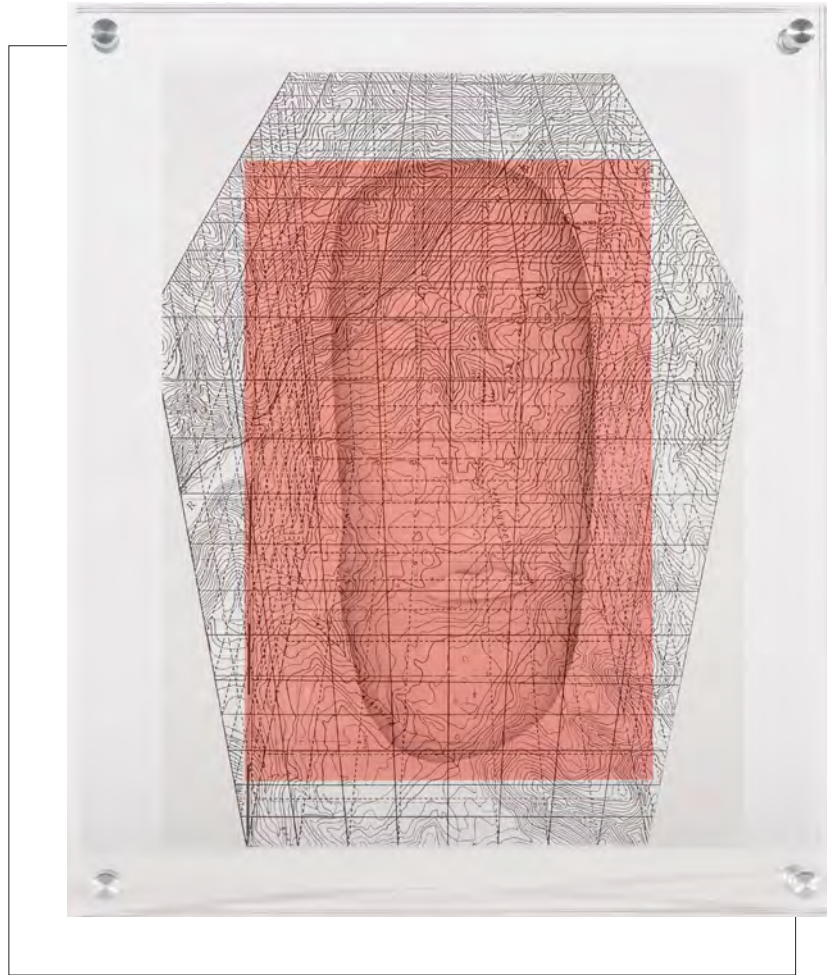
The joining of a number of disparate images yields an acceleration of ideas which provide a more complex portrait of the individual. In these works, human “masks” are overlaid with circuit boards (which one day will be incorporated into our bodies). Grids symbolize the structures and strictures of society, and meandering land maps suggest journeys of the spirit in the past or future and our inner and outer lives.

Jo Sandman

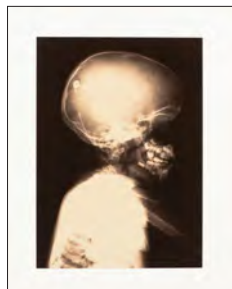
Transmission III, c. 2013
photomontage on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



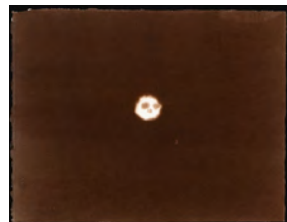
Transmission XV, XIX, and IX (left to right),
c. 2013
photomontages on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo



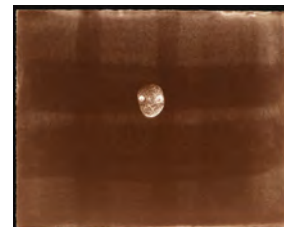
Exhibition Checklist



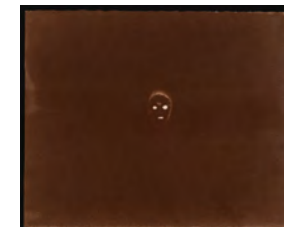
Earliest Brown Print #8, c. 1998–99
sepia print
21 ¼" x 17 ⅛"
Gift of the artist, 2019.9.1



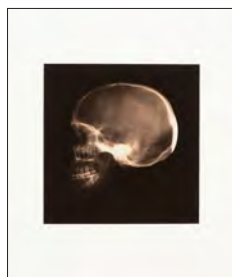
Memento Mori #17, 1998, edition 1/4
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.8



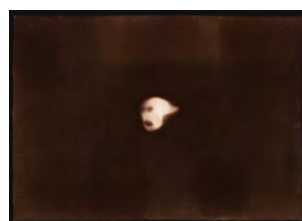
Memento Mori #36, 1998, edition 4/5
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.1



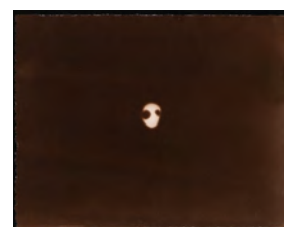
Memento Mori #26, 1998, edition 4/5
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.9



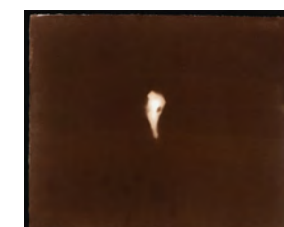
Earliest Brown Print #23, c. 1998–99
sepia print
21 ¼" x 17 ⅛"
Gift of the artist, 2019.9.2



Memento Mori #19, 1998, edition 2/3
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.3



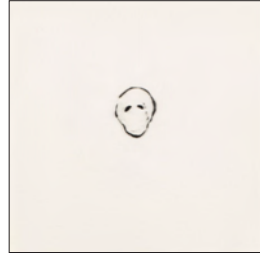
Memento Mori #16, 1998, edition 3/3
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.7



Memento Mori #3, 1998, edition 4/5
Van Dyke Brown photogram on
Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 ½"
Gift of the artist, 2019.7.5



Twice #7, 1998, edition 1/3
photomechanical image on
transparency and Arches
watercolor paper
8 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 1 1/2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.10.2



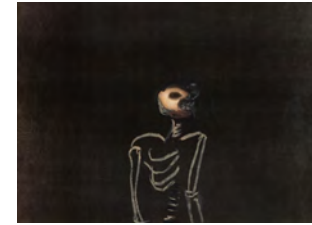
Twice #3, 1998, edition 1/3
photomechanical image on
transparency and Arches
watercolor paper
8 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 1 1/2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.10.1



Twice #14, 1998, edition 1/3
photomechanical image on
transparency and Arches
watercolor paper
8 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 1 1/2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.10.3



Twice #23, 2000, edition 1/3
photomechanical image on
transparency and Arches
watercolor paper
8 1/2" x 8 1/2" x 1 1/2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.10.4



Metamorphose #14, n. d.
conté crayon on Van Dyke
Brown photogram
10 3/4" x 13 3/8"
Gift of the artist, 2019.8.5



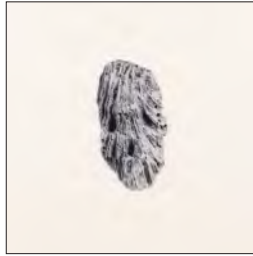
Metamorphose #15, n. d.
conté crayon on Van Dyke
Brown photogram
10 3/4" x 13 3/8"
Gift of the artist, 2019.8.6



Metamorphose #13, n. d.
conté crayon on Van Dyke
Brown photogram
10 3/4" x 13 3/8"
Gift of the artist, 2019.8.4



Double, 2001
transparent Lambda print
over C-print
23" x 23" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.22



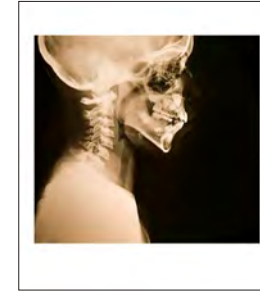
Double, 2001
transparent Lambda print
over C-print
23" x 23" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.23



Light Tracing #8, 2003
enlarged photogram
24" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.24.8



Light Tracing #1, 2003
enlarged photogram
24" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.24.1



Light Memory #18, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.3



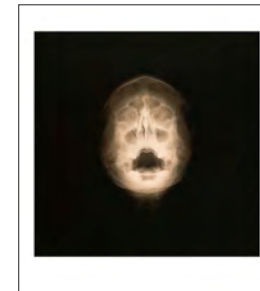
Light Tracing #9, 2003
enlarged photogram
24" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.24.9



Light Tracing #5, 2003
enlarged photogram
24" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.24.5



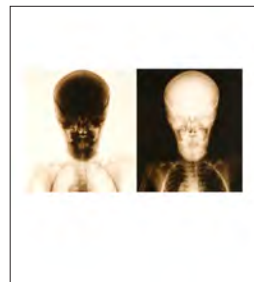
Light Memory #38, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.8



Light Memory #1, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.1



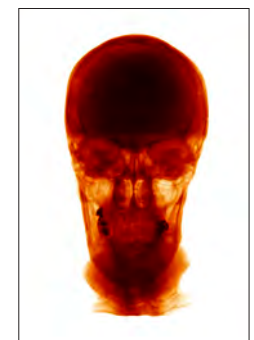
Light Memory #2, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.2



Light Memory #33, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.7



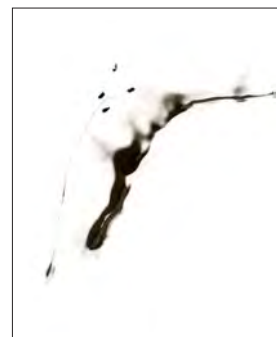
Light Memory #24, 2006
sepia-toned silver gelatin print
16" x 20"
Gift of the artist, 2019.26.4



Chiro Study #1, 2007
archival digital pigment ink
print mounted on aluminum
30" x 24"
Gift of the artist, 2019.27.12



Chiro Study #8, 2007
archival digital pigment ink
print mounted on aluminum
30" x 24"
Gift of the artist, 2019.27.11



Thermal Drawing 1, 2007
digital pigment print
22" x 17"
Gift of the artist, 2019.28.1



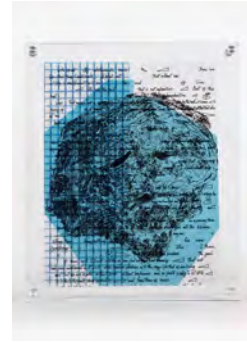
Thermal Drawing 14, 2007
digital pigment print
22" x 17"
Gift of the artist, 2019.28.3



Thermal Drawing 15, 2007
digital pigment print
22" x 17"
Gift of the artist, 2019.28.4



Thermal Drawing 3, 2007
digital pigment print
22" x 17"
Gift of the artist, 2019.28.2



Transmission IX, c. 2013
photomontage on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.29.3



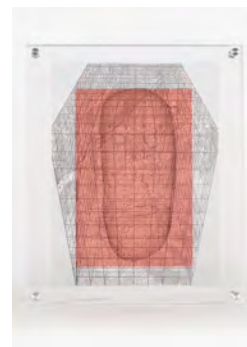
Transmission XIX, c. 2013
photomontage on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.29.1



Serpent #4, 2012–2014
platinum/palladium photogram
translated into digital print
40" x 36"
Gift of the artist, 2019.30.2



Transmission III, c. 2013
photomontage on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.29.6



Transmission XV, c. 2013
photomontage on acetate
12" x 10" x 2"
Gift of the artist, 2019.29.2



Serpent #1, 2012–2014
platinum/palladium photogram
translated into digital print
40" x 36"
Gift of the artist, 2019.30.1

About the Artist

Boston-area artist Jo Sandman was not only a witness to the historically important experimentation that shaped mid- to late-twentieth-century art, but also an active participant. A student of both Hans Hofmann and Robert Motherwell, she was in residence at Black Mountain College in the early 1950s and later worked for Walter Gropius. Trained as a painter, she went on to create innovative drawings, photography, experimental sculpture, and installations. Her work is now in the permanent collections of several museums, including the Addison Gallery of American Art, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, the Seattle

Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, the Rose Museum of Art at Brandeis University, and numerous others. Exhibited widely throughout her career, the Danforth Museum of Art at Framingham State University hosted a career retrospective in 2008 entitled *Jo Sandman: Once Removed*, organized by Katherine French. Significant awards include fellowships from the Massachusetts Arts Council and the Bunting Institute at Harvard University, as well as grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation.

Memento Mori #17 (detail), 1998
Van Dyke Brown photogram
on Arches watercolor paper
11" x 13 1/2"
Photo credit: Charles Sternaimolo

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2014 *Transmissions*, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, MA

2008 *Jo Sandman: Once Removed*, Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA

2007 *Heat/Light*, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, MA

2003 *Inside the Image*, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, MA

2002 New England School of Art and Design at Suffolk University, Boston, MA

2001 *Photo/Drawing*, 55 Mercer Gallery, NYC • OK Harris Works of Art, NYC

1998 Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA • DNA Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1995 Andrea Marquit Gallery, Boston, MA

1994 OK Harris Works of Art, NYC

1989 Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA

1988 Mobius, Boston, MA

1986 *Locus*, deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA

1985 Van Buren/Brazelton/Cutting Gallery, Cambridge, MA • Group Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1984 Gallery 11, Tufts University, Medford, MA • Group Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1983 Stux Gallery, Boston, MA • Group Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1982 OK Harris Works of Art, NYC

1981 Stux Gallery, Boston, MA

1980 Galeria, Liga Estudiantes de Arte, San Juan, Puerto Rico

1978 Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, NYC

1977 Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA

1976 Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA • Sunne Savage Gallery, Boston, MA

1975 OK Harris Works of Art, NYC • Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA

1974 Gallery of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA • Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA • Sunne Savage Gallery, Boston, MA

1973 OK Harris Works of Art, NYC

Selected Group Exhibitions

2017 *Expanding Abstraction: New England Women Painters, 1950 to Now*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA

2013 Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, FL • Cambridge Art Association, Cambridge, MA

2012 Axis Gallery, Sacramento, CA • *Written & Rendered*, Brickbottom Gallery, Somerville, MA

2011 *Color Study*, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC

2010 University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME • *Going Forward, Looking Back*, Simmons College, Boston, MA • *Black & White*, Brickbottom Gallery, Somerville, MA • *Limners to Facebook*, Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC

2009 *Fusion: Science and Art*, Foundry Art Center, St. Charles, MI • Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA • *Out Of The Box*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA • *EDGE*, ArtSpace Gallery, Maynard, MA

2008 Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, MA

2007 Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester, MA • *New England Photography Biennial*, Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA

2006 *Outside the Box*, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, MA • Concord Art Association, Concord, MA • Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA

2004 *Refigured*, McMullen Museum, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA • *Concerning the Spiritual in Photography*, Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA

2003 *Photography: Past & Present*, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, MA • *Under the Influence*, Brickbottom Gallery, Somerville, MA • *Seven Concord Artists*, Concord Art Associations, Concord, MA

2002 *Eleven New Objects*, McCoy Gallery, Merrimack College, North Andover, MA

2001 *Terrors and Wonders*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA • *I Love New York, Benefit Exhibition for World Trade Center*, OK Harris, NYC

Selected Group Exhibitions

2000 *Visual Memoirs*, Rose Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

1999 *Students of Hans Hofmann*, Cape Cod Museum of Art, Dennis, MA

1998 *The Drawing Show*, Mills Gallery, Boston, MA

1997 Photographic Resource Center, Boston, MA

1996 DNA Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1995 *Dialogues Past and Present*, Hess Gallery, Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hill, MA • *A Taste of Honey*, Terrain Gallery, San Francisco, CA • *Sculpture Invitational*, Gedney Farm, New Marlborough, MA • *2 in b + w*, Andrea Marquit Gallery, Boston, MA • *Single Fire*, Bernard Toale Gallery, Boston, MA

1994 *Material Transformations*, Tuft University Art Gallery, Medford, MA • *Temporal Systems*, The New Arts Center, Newton, MA

1993 *Small Works*, Andrea Marquit Gallery, Boston, MA

1992 *Master Drawings by 8 Boston Artists*, Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA • *It's About Time*, Starr Gallery, Newton, MA • *Laundry Lines, a Reclamation Artists Collaboration*, Government Center Plaza, Boston

1991 Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA • OK Harris Works of Art, NYC • *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, Terrain Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1990 Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA

1989 *10th Annual Boston Drawing Show*, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA

1988 *Boston Now: Works on Paper*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA

1987 *Drawings for Sculpture*, Thomas Segal Gallery, Boston, MA • Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA

1986 *Insights: A Look at the Development of Six Boston Artists*, North Hall Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA • *Inaugural*, Stux Gallery, NYC

1985 *Screens*, Van Buren/Brazelton/Cutting Gallery, Cambridge, MA • Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, MA • Group Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1984 Cherry Stone Gallery, Wellfleet, MA

1983 Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago, IL • Group Gallery, Provincetown, MA

1982 Stux Gallery, Boston, MA • *Being and Nothingness*, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, MA • Clark University, Worcester, MA

1981 *Boston Now: Abstract Painting*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA • Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA

1980 *Up for the Summer*, Marianne Deson Gallery, Chicago, IL

1979 *Prospectus: Art in the Seventies*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT

1978 *Borderline Drawings*, Iolas Gallery, New York, NY • *Geometry as Structure in Contemporary Art*, Wheaton College, Norton, MA

1977 *Drawings and Collage*, New York University, NYC

1976 *Art on Paper*, 1976, Weatherspoon Gallery, UNC, Greensboro, NC • *On the Wall*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (installation) • TV Workshop Showcase, Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA (video) • *Five New York Artists: A Selection*, Leah Levy and the Grapestake Gallery, San Francisco, CA

1975 *Bicentennial Art Commission Awards Exhibition*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA • *New England Women*, deCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA

1974 *Thirteen Boston Artists*, Edinburgh Art Festival, Scotland, UK • TV Workshop Showcases, video produced at The New Television Workshop, WGBH, Boston City Hall, Boston, MA

1973 *Unstretched Paintings*, Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA

1972 *Stretched, Unstretched and Folded*, Boston City Hall, Boston, MA • *Big Bad Show*, Thayer Academy, Braintree, MA

1971 *Flush with the Walls*, Men's Room, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Awards

2006 Concord Art Association, Concord, MA

2002 Best Mid-Career Exhibit, International Association of Art Critics, New England

1990 Citation for Excellence, Boston Society of Architects

1986–87 Bunting Fellowship, Radcliffe Institute/Harvard College, Cambridge MA

1984 Fellowship in Sculpture, Massachusetts Artists Foundation

1975 WGBH's New Television Workshop-video production grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, and Massachusetts Arts Council •
Painting Commission, Boston 200 Bicentennial Celebration, Boston, MA

Education

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

University of California, Berkeley, CA

Hunter College, New York, NY

Hans Hofmann School, New York, NY

Hans Hofmann School, Provincetown, MA

Brandeis University, Waltham, MA

Black Mountain College, Black Mountain, NC

Teaching Experience

Massachusetts College of Art and Design

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

University of Texas at Dallas

University of Cincinnati

Wellesley College

Thermal Drawing 14, 2007
digital pigment print
22" x 17"



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This catalogue accompanies the exhibition *Jo Sandman: The Photographic Work* presented at the Fitchburg Art Museum, February 8–September 6, 2020.

This exhibition was organized by Director Nick Capasso with Terrana Curatorial Fellow Marjorie Rawle.

Texts by Terrana Curatorial Fellow Marjorie Rawle and Jo Sandman.

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