

Rachel Grobstein: Ghost Stories Artist Statement

Life changes in the instant. The ordinary instant.

- Joan Didion

This body of work explores memory and loss. The miniature sculptures catalogue roadside memorials, collections of objects that offer a powerful language of commemoration, grief and celebration. Memorials are collision sites, where meaningful items entangle with discarded ones, time periods collapse and hierarchies are flattened between the sacred and mundane. Objects accrue on top of older objects, making visible the passage of time and creating a collective archeology of mourning. These ephemeral monuments blur boundaries between the public and private, functioning as tributes, labors of love, calls for justice, and collective gathering spaces for negotiating trauma. These memorials confront us with death in an everyday context, as opposed to keeping death compartmentalized in specialized zones. Here, memories are often so palpable they feel like presences, conjured by collections of things.

Many of the sculptures are based on real memorials, layering homage upon homage, while some are fictional. The works of painted cut paper more broadly explore spaces designated for the negotiation of memory and grief, how memories can haunt, and playful attempts at communication with the dead.