



*José Andrés Mora*

*The Mornings in Reverse*

*The Mornings in Reverse* is the result of a group effort.

To Lucas Cabral, Camila Salcedo, and Chantal Khoury, I am thankful for the hours of work, infinite understanding, flexibility, and shared experiences that allow us to understand ourselves, each other, and the rest of our community.

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Thank you.

José Andrés Mora  
The Mornings in Reverse

March 12 - May 14, 2022  
Artspace Peterborough

artspace

# Foreward/ Here Comes the Sun

Lucas Cabral

The sun brings with it “new light”; an image of a new day with new perspectives and opportunities.

In this new body of work, Mora calls our attention to a layered, indeterminate place. A place where each new sunrise drags behind it the days it welcomed before. A place insitu, where days fade, slide, blur, and fold into one another - where they are remembered and reformed.

Text, faux sun bleaching, and abstract digital drawings question how the passing of time intersects with our memory. A careful crafting of text echoes thorough self-reflection and guides us into our own. The work encourages personal self-reflection and welcomes shared experiences like that you’ll read in Camila Salcedo’s essay.

Here, instead of creating spaces and structures that punctuate his writing, Mora’s writing creates space and time for the shared experience of reflection and memory making.



**above:**

*Time and Light*

2022

Process: 4K, 3-channel video

Media: 50" monitor, synchronized media players

8.5-minute loop

*I understand it this way:*

*For anyone alive, there exist only two places in the universe: the land of facts and the land of perceived truth. We live alone within the land of perceived truth, bound to it by our body and separated from the land of facts by a thick translucent skin.*

*Being alive is to make sense of what's on the other side of that membrane. We can see past its milky density with effort, pushing against it so that the membrane may thin and lose its opaqueness, clearing our view of facts. We remember and understand facts by making our side look like the other side. And the better we see through the hazy membrane, the better we can rearrange things on our side to mimic what we see.*

*The moment we stop working, the thicker and more opaque that membrane grows, like an infected tissue, and the harder it is for us to remember; this is truth entropy.*

*It takes energy to keep reality and perception close to each other. To maintain the order on our side. This order is sanity. Alex was sick in a way they couldn't put the energy into it sometimes. My mistake was to confuse "couldn't" with "wouldn't." I don't think they had a choice.*

Excerpt from untitled story, 2022  
by José Andrés Mora



Dragged  
into the present tense,  
the memory of a  
a paring blade  
concealed within a folded newspaper  
is a foreign event.

Nobody said that  
The Past turns into plasticine  
figurines,  
and that one's own hands  
when they reach  
, with thirst,  
into the past tense (  
when they anticipate the familiar edges  
of shelved memories)  
dent everything with the weight of  
each grasp.

I fear through my skin's intuition  
that what I hold in my hands I haven't held  
before, and  
that the strangeness of my own past  
to myself  
betrays habitual remembrance.

I have to forget to remember well.



**image:** *Dissolve* 2022, digital drawing, vector gradients, inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave, 20" x 40", edition of 15



# The Mornings in Reverse

Camila Salcedo

José Andrés Mora's *The Mornings in Reverse* shows us a new side to his practice that is more intimate; it offers insight into how he makes sense of light, time, and memory, as a Venezuelan artist with an experience of displacement. In his artist talk, Mora mentioned that he is "allergic to citations" and is curious about how a text reads when the source is known. As someone from the same city of origin, Caracas, I imagine that this "source" might be the beautiful, sticky, crime-ridden city of our shared pasts. Caracas comes across in his prints, where he translates observations of light into digital drawings, and in his poems, through which he grapples with the active experience of remembering.

Mora's previous text-based works assert control over his public through carefully selecting the language in the text and contorting the movement of machinery, which allow him to reclaim his lived experience of assimilating into Anglosaxon society. This element of manipulation appears in *Reeler*, a monitor that moves from left to right across a beam and a steel rail, revealing new words that



Reeler 2020, LVL beam, steel rail, stepper motor, dimensions variable

are replaced every time the monitor comes back around. The unknown “voice” of the text keeps apologizing and promising to leave, as if having an argument with itself. The work commands my ears to stay alert because of its ever-present machine sound, and forces my neck to move from left to right as I attempt to grasp the words in real time. Located in another room, this older work represents a physical divide between his emotionally-distant works, and these newer, more intimate pieces.

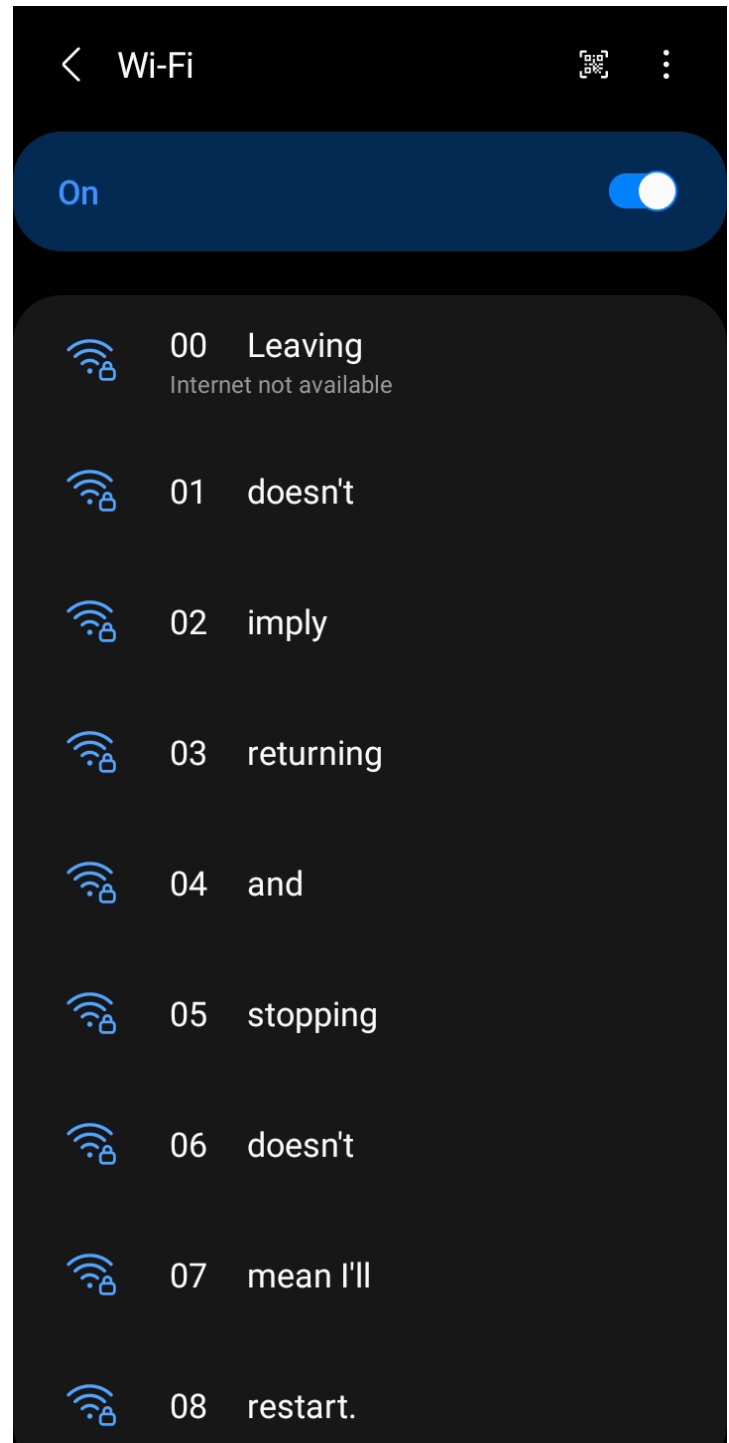
The works in *The Mornings in Reverse* leave interpretation

up to the viewer, presenting a new side to his practice. As a fellow Venezuelan, I see Mora’s treatment of light as related to his experience of being from the tropics. When displaced to Canada, the lack of sunlight in the winter creates a difficulty that comes across in the yearning for light in these works. His attention to sunlight and colour, feels familiar: the way that light is portrayed with warm tones, and the blurry shadows’ deep greens and dark blues are comparable to the shadows in tropical landscapes.

I nearly miss a work until I take a pause to look at my phone. “Rogue Lament” is a list of WiFi networks that read as a poem whose speaker stubbornly rejects the acts of leaving and starting. It strikes me as a way for Mora to reclaim the difficult process of assimilation, which forces one to hide in shame. He takes ownership over his choice to stay and to stop when he wants to, not by force.

When I enter the exhibition on a luminous winter day, I am struck by the brightness of the space. The sunlit white walls and tall ceilings bounce light directly onto the works and the shadow that is cast by the gallery windows is eerily similar to the first work I see, a large four foot square print of what looks like a greenish window grid. Next to it is a poem printed onto a bright pink background titled Habitual Remembrance; in first person, the poem reflects on the act of remembering and memory as an ungraspable event. The poem ends with: “I have to forget to remember well.” To me, the act of remembering is more active than forgetting, the passing of time taking me further and further away from the truth.

The other “vector gradient” prints in the exhibition appear like distant memories, the visual blur reminding me of different acontecimientos (“events”, in spanish) in my past. In “An Exit”,



**above:**  
*Rogue Lament 2022*  
Poem written as WiFi Network names. Accessed  
by searching for WiFi Networks on a device.  
Media: Access point, router, battery.  
No dimensions  
Edition of 5



deep and dark blue hues of a sky surround what looks like blurry lights on a fictional billboard; they make me reminisce on riding in my parents' car on Caracas nights, when I would squint my eyes to catch auras around the street lights and the passing cars, with the window cracked to feel the lukewarm breeze as we drove down the cerro. The digital print titled, "Arrival" depicts a blurry image of what looks like baby blue peeks of light creeping through deep green shadows, and I remember lying down on my twin bed unable to sleep, staring at the shadow that the trees cast through the street lights and onto

the ceiling, the patterned swaying of trees and the soothing sound of baby frogs eventually putting me to sleep. Mora's poem, "Dissolve," is the chemistry bonding my present in Canada to my past in Venezuela; it ends with the words "dissolve the chemistry bonding memory to the present." His prints bring back flashbacks of a simpler time when living in my motherland was my lived experience, and not a memory to activate.

**below:**

*The Mornings in Reverse* installation image

**right:**

*An Exit* 2022

Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

35.5" x 55"

Edition of 10









After viewing “Time and Light”, a video installation, a few times around the loop, it occurs to me that Mora does the opposite of what this work describes – he turns time into light with his work; he captures time and space with the camera to absorb light as it enters the lens. I sit to contemplate it: a 3-channel video on three monitors that fold across the right corner of the gallery which depicts a freshly cleaned kitchen with moving text overlaying the scene. The text and images zoom in and out simultaneously, and every time they zoom out, a new sentence is revealed as more words enter the screen; every time it zooms in, the text enlarges to reveal the same sentence: “turned light into time”.

The “unnamed” speaker in Mora’s works, acutely aware of the time and of sunlight’s effect on the body, is more self-referential than the artist might admit. To me, Mora grapples with memories of a place where there are no seasons, where the days are the same length, where the moon looks like a smile or a toenail (never a letter C or a parenthesis), and where sunsets feel like a “morning in reverse” – a new day starts as the sky is turns a deep dark blue.

**above:**  
*The Mornings in Reverse* installation image

**right:**  
*Domestic Entropy* 2022  
Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients  
Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave  
14.25” x 20”  
Edition of 15



It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our apartment is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our city is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our memory is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our flesh is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our present is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

It takes energy to keep things clean;  
the order of things in our apartment is  
the least likely arrangement of matter.

# List of Works

## *Time and Light*

2022

Process: 4K, 3-channel video

Media: 50" monitor, synchronized media players

8.5-minute loop

Edition of 5

## *Domestic Entropy*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

14.25" x 20"

Edition of 15

## *An Exit*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

35.5" x 55"

Edition of 10

## *Rogue Lament*

2022

Process: Poem written as WiFi Network names.

Accessed by searching for WiFi Networks on a device.

Media: Access point, router, battery.

No dimensions

Edition of 5

## *Habitual Remembrance*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

19" x 40"

Edition of 15



*A sunset is a sunrise in reverse. The parenthesis of my day opened, against my will to sleep, before dawn, and would close, against my will to sleep, after dusk*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

48" x 48"

Edition of 10

*Arrival*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

20" x 37"

Edition of 15

*Dissolve*

2022

Process: Digital drawing, vector gradients

Media: Inkjet on Hahnemühle Agave

20" x 40"

Edition of 15

*Reeler*

2020

Media: LVL beam, steel rail, stepper motor

Variable dimensions

Edition of 3

José Andrés Mora  
*The Mornings in Reverse*

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Artspace is located on Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg land in the community known as Nogojiwanong by some, and as Peterborough by others. This community exists in the territory defined by colonial terms as Treaty 20, or the Williams Treaties, a series of treaties that date back to 1923.

The territory under this treaty consists of the First Nations communities of Alderville, Beausoleil, Curve Lake, Georgina Island, Hiawatha, Scugog Island, and Rama. The Nishnaabeg are the traditional caretakers of this land and territory and as a settler-founded and led organization, Artspace is grateful to exist on this land and in this community.



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