



PRESS RELEASE

SOLO SHOW JUANAN SORIA

MEMORIA – SYNAPTIC PLASTICITY 11 NOVEMBER – 20 DECEMBER 2025



'The Memory of Antinoüs' by Juanan Soria, 2025, acrylics and oil on canvas, 150x100cm

Husk Gallery is delighted to present **'Memoria – Synaptic Plasticity'**, the second solo exhibition in its gallery space featuring Spanish artist Juanan Soria, exploring the theme of memory. The exhibition is designed as an imaginary **'hippocampus'**, the part of the brain responsible for forming, storing and retrieving memories, which resembles a seahorse due to its anatomical shape. In this context, the concept of **"synaptic plasticity"** plays a central role: the ability to create new connections, both between neurons and between ideas, layers of time and emotions. In his paintings, drawings and installations, Soria interweaves scientific imagery with a subtle, poetic-conceptual reflection on memory and experience. He explores how memory and oblivion merge, and how the loss of memory — through degenerative processes, traumatic injuries and the material destruction of heritage — can generate new forms of meaning.

While **'memoria'** refers to the human capacity to remember, encompassing the subjective and emotional aspects of memory, the hippocampus is the biological mechanism that enables this. This part of the brain is where **'synaptic plasticity'** occurs: the process by which nerve cells form new connections and strengthen existing ones. This is what makes it a place where memories are created, connected and stored. The Latin name **'hippocampus'** means 'seahorse', referencing the characteristic shape of this area of the brain and forming a recurring motif in Juanan Soria's new series. The seahorse serves as a metaphor for the hippocampus, a subject that Soria also explores using **MRI** images. These images make the invisible structures of the brain visible in a rich palette of colours and shapes. While much remains unknown about how the brain works, it is clear that memory-affecting disorders such as dementia and brain tumours are closely linked to the hippocampus. In his work, Soria explores this biological fact through digital images of medical science.

Soria's fascination with history and its material traces is a recurring theme in his oeuvre. In his diptych, he connects material memory with mental memory: on the one hand, through the depiction of an archaeological excavation of the statue of **Antinous**, the young lover of Emperor Hadrian, who was immortalised as a god after his untimely death; on the other hand, through the microscopic representation of synapses, the crucial connections between nerve cells that make memory possible. During **synaptic plasticity**, new synapses are created and existing connections are strengthened, the process by which memories are formed and stored. The diptych reflects Hadrian's desire to keep Antinous' memory alive by anchoring his name and image in the culture and architecture of the Roman Empire. In this way, the memory of his beloved was literally immortalised in plastic form.

Synapse is a series of drawings referencing places, traces and moments from the history of memory, as well as its absence. Like synapses in a brain, the images touch, intersect and connect, where memory and oblivion constantly converge. The works are executed on concrete, a material traditionally associated with robustness, stability and durability. However, behind this appearance of eternity, concrete proves to be fragile and vulnerable – just like memory itself. The drawings feature circular voids: holes in the image that symbolise the incomplete nature of memory. These voids reveal that the process of remembering is always intertwined with the process of forgetting.

Forgetting is also a natural way of keeping our brains healthy. They only store information that is essential for survival. However, sometimes an event leaves such a deep impression that it cannot be erased. The traces and scars it leaves behind become part of our personal identity and culture. Soria's drawing, **'Venus'**, depicts various stages in the life of Diego Velázquez's 17th-century painting, 'The Toilet of Venus'. The drawing depicts the material traces of human aggression towards the iconic painting throughout history. Within the same conceptual framework lies **'Reconstrucción de la Memoria 01'**, depicting the reconstruction of Michelangelo's sculpture Il Giovannino. Like Soria's painting **'Las Cajas Españolas'**, it reminds us of the traces of aggression towards works of art during the Spanish Civil War.

Remembering and forgetting do not exist separately; they are connected, as can be seen in works such as the monumental drawing **'Damnatio Memoriae'**. The title literally means 'destruction of memory' and refers to a Roman practice whereby the memory of a person, or even an entire culture, was systematically erased. Images, names and texts were destroyed in order to remove all traces of a defeated enemy's existence. In this drawing, Soria establishes a connection between this historical practice and contemporary forms of erasure — instances when identity and culture are eradicated to make way for a new narrative. His visual language operates at the intersection of the tangible and the digital, where artistic mastery and technological references converge. Digital grid structures and layers of transparency serve as subtle references to contemporary image-editing and memory-storage methods, thus reinforcing the idea of the fragility and reinterpretation of memories.

Juanan Soria's interdisciplinary, critical and reflective practice invites viewers to consider what is not immediately visible: history, the hidden meaning behind a work of art, and the traces of violent or social destruction. Through his work, he encourages us to reflect on fragility, the past, and the constant reinterpretation of what remains, on material, psychological, and cultural levels. In 'Memoria — Synaptic Plasticity', Soria presents a visual and conceptual exploration of memory itself as a dynamic network of connections between body, image and time.



'Hippocampus 02' by Juanan Soria, 2025, pencil on paper, 100x39,5cm

About the artist



Juanan Soria (°1985, Ubeda, Spain) grew up in Andalusia. Currently, he lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. Beside painting and drawing, he creates installations and video work. He obtained a BA of Fine Arts at the University of Sevilla and a MA of Art Production at the Polytechnic University of Valencia. The Spanish artist completed several residencies, among others in Cordoba, Madrid and Ubeda, that led to exhibitions. Furthermore, he was declared laureate in several Spanish art prizes, in the field of painting and video art. Since 2013, he has been busy on the Belgian art scene among which his first solo show 'Crear capas' in 2022 at Husk Gallery. He was awarded with the Third Prize of the Art Contest 2021 edition in Brussels which led to his solo show 'Les ennemis de la mémoire' in 2023 at Carrefour des Arts in Brussels. His artworks are included in diverse public collections in Spain. In the spring of 2026, his work will be exhibited in Spain at Espacio Gala. Fundación Antonio Gala in Córdoba

and at the Iglesia de San Lorenzo. Fundación Huerta de San Antonio in Úbeda.

Opening

Tuesday 11 November 2025 from 2 to 7 pm in the presence of the artist

Rivoli Open Sunday 7 December 2025 from 2 to 6 pm

Opening hours during exhibition

Thursday*, Friday* and Saturday from 2 to 6 pm or by appointment

*Exceptionally closed on 11.12 and 12.12

The exhibition ends on Saturday 20 December 2025

For further inquiries:

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Social media

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