

PHOTOGRAPHIC DURATIONS

documenting snippets of my Nana's life

Katey Pittwood 2011
MA & D

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institutional of higher learning, expect where due acknowledgements is made in the acknowledgements.

This thesis is constituted as 80% practice based, accompanied by this exegesis, worth 20%. Documentation of the final exhibition will be included upon completion.

Signature_____

Date_____

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank all those who assisted me during this project, especially Dienneke Jansen, Julia Oram and Dale Fitchett all from Auckland University of Technology. Thanks to AUTECH for the Ethical Approval to pursue my project. Many thanks also to my colleagues at New Plymouth Girls' High School and in particular Kirsty Grieve. My biggest appreciation goes to my partner Earl, who supported me through the stress, tears and artistic break throughs over the past three years. Lastly my sincere thanks to Margaret Avis Jones (Nana) who provided me with the ability to persevere with this project so that I, and future generations will have lasting memories of the most fantastic Nana!



Figure 1 Photographer Unknown. (approx. 1947) Young Nana

ETHICAL APPROVAL

Ethics approval was granted on 19 September 2011 by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee.

Ethics Application number 11/202.

DEDICATION

For my fantastic father who hated having his photograph taken!



Figure 2 Photographer Unknown. (1982) Dad and I

ABSTRACT

This visual arts research project will explore my Nana's daily rituals through analogue photographic investigations. It aims to explore the relationship between photography and the desire for nostalgic experiences, specifically focusing on the compulsive desire to protect and photograph what is at risk of becoming lost. This practical project examines the relationship between mortality and photography. It takes into consideration preconceptions and emotive reactions that exist in western culture towards the notion of loss and how we deal with this. It questions whether photography enables us to come closer to addressing mortality and death.

This project will be explored from an autobiographical standpoint, through the documentation of the personal and familial connection between my Nana and myself. This project attempts to non-invasively capture small but distinctive moments of Nana's life in her domestic space. Driven by the desire to 'preserve' these moments, her day-to-day rituals will be investigated through regular, routine visits in order to explore multi-faceted collections and create an accumulative narrative. The project aims to represent the routine nature of this repeated process in a way that celebrates the specific way I as both photographer and granddaughter relate to and observe her as my Nana by the way of weekly visits.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is made up of my written exegesis worth 20% and my final exhibition worth 80%. There is a strong relationship between my art making (represented in the exegesis and the final exhibition) and writing, which focuses on theorists and artists that further inform and enhance my practice.

The layout of this exegesis is structured in two parts and is to be read concurrently. On the left-hand side of the page I speak in the first person. I chose to use a diaristic method as it echoes my regular visits to Nana's house and gives the reader a view from my personal standpoint and a vernacular voice. On the right-hand side, related concepts are addressed through discussions that reference theorists and artists providing a contextual framework.

Images of my photographic work have been interspersed throughout the exegesis as they are relevant to both bodies of text. The titles of my images are the different cameras used and there is further information on their characteristics on page 48.

Small analogue cameras without tripods or artificial lighting have been selected, along with methods like 'shooting from the hip'. This left much of the image construction to chance. I use these techniques as they do not interfere with Nana's space, leaving our conversations and social get-togethers uninterrupted by the camera's shutter clicking,

thus eliminating self consciousness and uneasy feelings that a camera typically creates.

Within the exegesis the methods and concepts are discussed. I start by addressing my Nana's life in a domestic interior space that is specific to her as a western woman of an elderly age. Nostalgia and the memories of my family are discussed and through these concepts, anticipated loss is addressed. This moves on to questioning preservation within photography and the archiving of this. Then the photographic act itself is explored by different means of shooting while also considering Nana's personal space. I examine my weekly ritualistic encounters with Nana and how documenting every one of these effects my project and pushes my ideas further. My strong attachment to analogue photographic processes allows me to experiment and find the best cameras to use. I then consider how these images may result in creating artefacts through photographic exploration with small analogue cameras and different film types. All of these are done through the use of photography and conceptual theorists.

Documentation of the final exhibition will be included upon completion.

PREFACE

When the phone rings in the middle of the night the coldest chills run down my spine. More often than not, my life changes forever after these types of calls. They are usually calls bringing bad news of a loss I am about to endure.

I have distant memories of loved ones in my mind, but the closest memories live within snapshots that have been lovingly saved and collected by me. While flicking through these albums and images of loved ones, a wave of nostalgia overcomes me. Through the act of viewing of the photograph, my once so 'normal' family seem to exist like it was only yesterday, despite the absence of the sense of smell, texture and sound. I can recall and relive the emotions within the images and I can remember the objects seen in the images, which have now been left behind in a time that will never return.

My Nana is someone who is very special to me. She is still alive and has lived in the same house since before I was born. Her furniture has never shifted more than an inch, which makes me feel stable and secure. She too, is surrounded by album pages of her past.

In late 2010 Nana was diagnosed with breast cancer, resulting in a mastectomy and radiation therapy. This whole situation scared me. I suddenly felt compelled to document her life before it was too late. Nana is my rock. However, I know she is in her 80s and that there may

not be much longer left to capture her quiet but interesting life.

Trying to grasp hold of moments and secure and preserve memories through the use of photography seems like the logical thing for me to do. I started out with questioning how to photograph and document my Nana and through its methodological development some questions arose. Am I photographing my relationship with Nana? or am I photographing my anticipated loss?

I want to photographically document Nana's every day life in a non-invasive way and during my visits with her, I am attempting to uncover and hold on to snippets of her daily life.

HER DOMESTIC SPACE

Sunday morning: going to Nana's house to take her some plants and yesterday's newspaper, which she spends the rest of the day reading.

The unruffled and quiet environment that one might live in when in their 80s has a slow sense of time, to the point that you wonder, when you visit this person if time is even passing. Nana's movements are leisurely and unhurried. Very little changes, and sometimes the only way you can tell time is moving is by the sun moving around the house and by different windows that are infused with light as the day goes on. Nana is seen in many of my images pottering in her suburban domestic bliss in New Plymouth. Her surroundings have not changed in over 30 years. No furniture or décor accessories have moved and her daily rituals are repeated again and again, almost to the minute, depending on what the TV Guide offers that day, or which supermarket has the best specials on offer. The net curtains are slightly worse for wear. The wallpaper was designed in the late 70s and is complemented by the amber textured glass in the bottom of the ranch slider. This amber glass which was at eye level when I was five now resonates in my head and reminds me of my years of playing shops on Nana's coffee table and losing all the real money out of her purse. I know Nana loves these memories and talking about them makes her laugh. I have these memories because she still lives in this house, with the same coffee table. Without these objects to

In the 1958 publication *The Poetics of Space – The Classic Look at How we Experience Intimate Places*, Gaston Bachelard discusses the domestic house as a place where personal experiences reach their optimum, and that how this is a manifestation of the soul. He discusses how the house is more than just an 'object'. It is an intimate space that harbours beauty, memories and "...is our corner of the world." (Bachelard, 1958, p. 4). In our homes we experience protection from the past, present and future, which at times can arouse and disturb each other in our memories and daydreams about the home. We are given the ability and freedom to feel stability and a connection within our dwelling and this is why the home is such an important place in our nook of the world.

prompt my memories, will I forget them in the future?

Nana's home is a true reflection of her age and the type of life she has experienced. Her life has been typical of a middle-class New Zealander; she has experienced life as a wife, mother, daughter and grandmother. Nana was always the provider of food for the family, the housekeeper and someone who relied on her husband for the sole income while the children were growing up. A woman of her age spends copious amounts of time in the kitchen preparing food for any person visiting. Food is seen as a welcoming token and if you leave feeling full or with a bag of food to take home her job is done.

I began to think about photographing Nana, and I start to ask myself some questions. Can Nana's identity be located solely in her home? Or can I portray this elsewhere through the use of photography? Does Nana always have to be in the images to portray her identity? Or can she be represented through her home?

Shelter is an important aspect when we consider our home. For most westerners it is a domestic space, a place of refuge, safety and comfort. These shelters are psychologically and emotionally charged. It can be a sanctuary that offers calm, warming feelings alongside family time, domestic chores and day-to-day life.

Akiko Busch, an American writer has focused on certain aspects of the home in her 1999 publication *Geography of Home – writings on where we live*. She considers how certain objects and interiors house nostalgic feelings and "...while we may rely on high-tech appliances in almost every room of the house, the objects of our greatest affections bring a sense of history with them." (Busch, 1999, p. 21). Busch's writings refer to the kitchen as a provider of heat, nourishment, vapours and products that create memorable feelings for our physical and psychological needs. Busch says "Our collection of appliances, neatly lined up on expansive kitchen counters and shelving, suggests that there is something soothing about the rituals of domestic labour." (Busch, 1999, p. 46). Objects in the domestic interior offer feelings of comfort and familiarity, which are often the core make-up of our home. Because of this, my work focuses as much on Nana's home as a domestic setting as on our relationship.



Figure 3 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Sampler 1



Figure 4 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Sampler 2

After reading Busch's theory that the home has to offer comfort and history, I took this cheap plastic camera to photograph the exterior of her house. The camera has four separate shutters that work together simultaneously to create four images on one negative. This relates to my ideas by showing a quick succession of movements or repeated moments. Each exposure is slightly different and shows a series of split seconds on the one frame. The black edges are created by the camera and the film is grainy and poorly exposed. I do not intend to work with the exterior of Nana's house any further as I do not think they offer me any comfort or nostalgia.



Figure 5 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 1

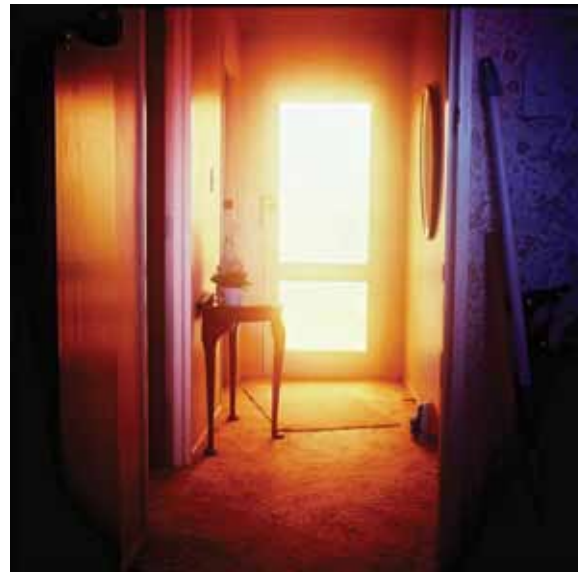


Figure 7 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 3



Figure 6 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 2



Figure 8 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 4

This work refers to Bachelard's theory on how the house is imbued with nostalgia and memories which makes it a home. I started out trying to document Nana's untouched home, although she really wanted to make her bed before I took these images. I used a 120 mm expired film which captures a sense of Nana's space, which she inhabits daily. Using expired film allowed me to explore different colour shifts that occur in age affected film, while photographing an age affected space. The strong natural lighting from the windows and doors illuminates the rooms, suggesting presence and feelings of warmth and emptiness at the same time.

MY NOSTALGIC MEMORIES

*Saturday late afternoon: passing by, before I go to the supermarket,
Nana does not expect me but is very grateful for the visit.*

From losing so many family members over the past five years and with getting older myself, nostalgia enters my life more and more frequently, leaving me with feelings of emptiness but happiness at the same time. I yearn for the past, and the return of an absent loved one, or to be back in a particular place or time. All this allows me to remember the past and what will never exist again. Remembering the past is an important process because it acts as a reminder that we are mortal. We will not be here forever and our memories fade with time. Nostalgia is a particular emotional state that is a bittersweet longing for those people who I have lost.

I enjoy looking back on the past, looking back on what has been before me or what has happened to me that I had forgotten. I feel safe when I have stability and permanence, and often nostalgic feelings from an old photograph will enable these feelings. But I also feel a sense of sadness when I plough through the old album pages of the boxes of images that never quite made it to the pages of the album. A photograph has the ability to rekindle memories that otherwise lapse. Photographs are more than just images we can physically hold. We caress them and reminisce over them again and again, to remember and somehow relive feelings

Nostalgia was originally derived from the Greek words *nostos*, 'to return home', and *algos*, meaning 'pain'. Nostalgia was described as a sense of being homesick and was seen as a medical condition in the seventeenth century. This idea has since changed and is now considered to be an internal feeling that we are faced with once we leave a particular place or time that resonates with us. We are left only with our memories or imagination of that moment or period and wanting to return to that exact instant is physically impossible. That moment is now absent and gone forever.

In Dylan Trigg's 2006 publication *The Aesthetics of Decay – Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*, Trigg says "As the affirmation of the present becomes determined by the memory of an absent past, nostalgia veers toward the absolute." (Trigg, 2006, p. 65). He also says

The impossibility of nostalgia predicates itself on the desire for the absent. In the return to remembered place, space and time disunite, causing temporal categories to unbind. In the homecoming, such a disparity between space and time exceeds anticipation and so undermines the reality of the past. (Trigg, 2006, p55).

It is the desire for the absent that causes our feelings of loss and sadness when experiencing nostalgia.

and thoughts, and maybe even smells, from the past. Photographs are not only static images, they are also a physical object and when I view a family photograph album, I perform an act. Certain albums require different viewing actions. A photographic image becomes an object when you can do something physical to it – you can touch, hold and feel it. Image based objects may contain emotional qualities, which can generate and determine sentimental feelings that can not otherwise be realised.

When handed a pile of old black and white photographs from Nana's past, I feel a sense of loss and happiness at the same time. Not for the events that have occurred, or for the unknown people in them, but for the fact that my Nana was once a young, happy, smiling person who had supple skin and revealing clothing. Suddenly I want to know her when she was like this. I want to hear more and more stories about her past and when I hear her laugh while telling these stories, I get a sense of her youth. Seeing these images, which I never knew existed, makes me realise that you can have a strong connection with photographic images that you have not taken or been a part of. These images are especially sentimental to me because I am so close to Nana and they are from her life before I existed. The images are from a time where she seemed her happiest. Being absent from that era makes me yearn for more information. Like Roland Barthes and James Elkins, I am drawn to know more about the person I love. I will pick up on this point further

American literary theorist Susan Sontag examines nostalgia within photography in her 1977 book *On Photography*. Sontag discusses nostalgia as being in the present, not the past. In terms of time, we are always living in the future. Time does not stand still long enough for us to measure the present, even when we take photographic documentation of that present moment. In the present, however, the camera can fix and hold a moment and hence the photograph immediately slips into the past. The past has existed and we can feel this physically through nostalgia. Photography can portray a specific time. It is evidence that the past has existed. When looking at a photograph we may feel this as nostalgia, yearning for what has been, flipping through album pages and reminiscing on what happened previously. However, we can never return to that place or time. Over time we revisit and rewrite our histories through each viewing of the photographic image because it is concrete, but the memories in our minds are disputable. Nostalgia is always in the present time because we are always living in the future because time does not stand still.

As Westerners, we find it so important to document special and significant milestones in our lives, such as birthdays and Christmases, but very rarely are the sad moments documented, such as funerals, even though this makes the events even more distant. In her 2003 case study *Photographs and Domestic Spacings*, Gillian Rose discusses this idea and says "The more distant people are, the more important photographing becomes." (Rose, 2003, p. 11). Photographing people is an important way for memories to be passed down to generations, alongside written and spoken words. Memories can fade over time, allowing us to forget what has been before us. Photographs fix moments and enable us to hold particular histories as evidence of what occurred. They also prompt us to think about what sits outside the image in space and time. When looking at photographs we are reminded of 'what is not there' or 'what was there'. Rose says "...the photographs themselves offer a presence which is a reminder of absence and distance." (Rose, 2003, p. 13). The difference between memories and evidence is that memories are in one's head. They are specific to one's own thoughts and recollections of past events.

in pages 20, 25, 26, 31 and 42. With nostalgia comes feelings of some form of loss, it is bittersweet and is longing for something that has passed. They might not always be sad feelings, but nostalgia refers to the past, or passing.



Figure 9 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 1

"The more distant people are, the more important photographing becomes." (Rose, 2003, p11) was the starting point for these images. A torn handkerchief is placed inside the camera so that when the shutter is clicked the hanky is automatically exposed on every image. This acts as a veil, suggesting mourning clothing due to its darkness, and its threads hanging offer a torn and worn-out quality. Nana is at a distance, unreachable and slightly out of focus and made me think about her being distant from me even though she is still alive.



Figure 10 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 2



Figure 11 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 3



Figure 12 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 4



Figure 13 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Fish Eye 1



Figure 15 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Fish Eye 3



Figure 14 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Fish Eye 2



Figure 16 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lomo Fish Eye 4

Nostalgia is about yearning for the past and for something that will never happen again. Nana is always in the kitchen preparing food but this exact moment will never be again. Nana is cooking afternoon tea and the harsh lighting is enhanced by the vignetting of the rounded lens, creating a spotlight on Nana. I feel nostalgic about these images because it reminds me of her when I was a child.

ANTICIPATING LOSS

Tuesday morning: picking up Nana as we are going to Spotlight in the school holidays. I arrive and she is eating avocado and promite on toast.

I am still very much afraid of death but we often find it disturbing as it is forever, the absolute final moment. In my family, when a member dies their funeral is rushed. We are always in a hurry to bury any grief, thoughts or emotions that are hard to talk about. The thought of Nana not existing anymore is unfathomable. I am scared of Nana dying as she has always been a part of my life. At the moment her presence in my life is concrete and real; Nana has been something so stable my whole life. Her daily actions are predictable yet fascinating. I have asked myself, what is this need to photograph Nana?

It started when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The realisation that she will not be part of my life forever frightened me. It made me think that other people must also be in this situation of anticipating loss and it made me want to document and share our relationship with others. Hopefully by allowing the viewer to become immersed in my project, it will enable them to access their own feelings of anticipated loss and the senses and reactions that accompany loss. Soon I may only have memories and visual documentation of her in my life and I need to capture these on film before it is too late. Being faced with the death of Nana is unsettling and could result in feelings of guilt and

Bachelard's theory on localising time is that moving time is a duration; however, a creation can happen in an instant, like the click of a camera's shutter. Memories need duration to be able to remember them. Duration is a period of measured time, therefore the past and future can be divided into two separate things. This means that each moment or instant links to one another and allows something to always be connected with the past. Bachelard says

Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the more sound they are. To localise a memory in time is merely a matter for the biographer and only corresponds to a sort of external history, for external use, to be communicated to others. (Bachelard, 1958, p. 9).

remorse if I do not document our relationship. When anticipating loss you can mentally prepare yourself for the sorrow that you are about to endure. Yet the mourning that you subsequently face when a loved one passes is dark and unnerving. Photographing Nana is part of me preparing my anticipated loss. I feel I am capturing her spirit on film before she has gone.

In his seminal text *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), French theorist Roland Barthes constantly focuses on death, especially after finding an image of his mother after her death. Many of us have images of people who have now died and these images become more important once that person has passed on. This may be the only tangible object that can jog one's memory of them. It is overwhelming going through old images and realising a single instant of time can change everything so quickly, especially death, due to its permanent nature. A photograph lives on after a person has died, meaning past time is always in the present. Barthes believes that death is implicit in all photographs. The death of the moment is evident in the photograph because once the shutter has clicked that moment has physically gone forever. That moment has died. Barthes' relationship between photography and memory is strong. He claims that he wants to find the essence within photography. Photography has a direct link with memory as it carries a trace of what was there, what has been and what really existed. There is an emotional investment when looking through images as they are vehicles for carrying the so-called truth, which can set in concrete what our memories often beg to differ.

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Figure 17 Maddison, R. (2006)

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Figure 20 Maddison, R. (2006)

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Figure 18 Maddison, R. (2006)

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Figure 19 Maddison, R. (2006)

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Figure 22 Maddison, R. (2006)

In 2007, The National Portrait Gallery (Australia) showcased an exhibition of contemporary photographers called *Reveries: Photography and Mortality*. This exhibition focused on the idea of self portraits made in the presence of mortality. All of the images pushed the boundaries between private and public because many of them were about the death process or were taken within the presence of death. Raw emotions were on display and things that are usually experienced privately were on show for anyone to view. Many of the images taken after death focused on memorialisation; however, there is an irony here. Life is temporary and photography was used to create something more permanent. The images that were exhibited are a celebration of that.

One of the exhibiting artists was Ruth Maddison. In 1996 she compiled a series of images taken in her parent's home, while her father was ill. These were then printed 10 years later in 2006 and called *The Beginning of Absence*. She photographed various objects and rooms in colour with the technique of cropping and making sure the whole composition was filled with things that were very 'him'. The format of the image is square, the focus is soft and along with the muted tones and the use of natural lighting, the images already seem less permanent and more like catalogued images of his possessions. Absence has already begun to creep in, even though he was still alive.

Images retrieved 21st November, 2011, from http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/exhibition_subsite_reveries6.php

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Figure 23 Noble, A. (2001)

Anne Noble, an acclaimed contemporary New Zealand photographer, photographed her father after his death. Noble's father suddenly died of a heart attack but the family's lives continued around his deceased body while they waited for the funeral to occur. Noble photographically documented this, capturing the familial relationships her father had been a part of. Noble looked to photography to make sense of his death and asked questions around 'seeing absence'. She went about "...measuring the different depths of silence..." (Paton, 2001, p. 7). Silence is felt in these images because of the uncluttered compositions that house pockets of light and depict the absence of her father's soul. These images are a sensitive tribute to her father, who is quiet and still. Sadness comes in different depths and is often felt through hushed emotions. We are often taught to hide these emotions or perhaps we are just lost for words. Ideas of loss and sadness are combined with her father 'being at peace' and the rest of the family continuing to function with their day-to-day life.

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Figure 24 Noble, A. (2001)

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Figure 25 Noble, A. (2001)

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Figure 26 Noble, A. (2001)



Figure 27 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lubitel 1



Figure 28 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lubitel 2

This week Nana went to have her second round of radiation treatment and I felt lost not seeing her. To discard these feelings of emptiness I went to her vacant house and projected images. This experience was unearthing as Nana was not in her house to protect me. Her image was there but it seemed as if I was trying to replace her body with an image – it was as if she had died even though I knew she had not. Thinking about anticipated loss and how this may effect me, I exposed the film to the edge of the sprocket holes to show the entire possible image. This was done at night so I could get the best quality projected image possible. These images are eerie and translucent in their quality. A ghost-like appearance is created when the projection overlaps furniture and curtains and creates the sense of folding images back into themselves.



Figure 29 Pittwood, K. (2011) Holga 1



Figure 30 Pittwood, K. (2011) Holga 2



Figure 31 Pittwood, K. (2011) Holga 3

In Noble and Maddison's photographs, they both contain images of the figure or objects from the home that are very depictable and are not abstract when viewing. When taking these images I wanted Nana to become part of her surroundings and I was challenged due to low lighting in her spare bedroom. The blue is a very harsh tone and creates a sense of coldness against the black walls. The double exposures show different time sequences but only over a matter of split seconds. The block of flats across the road are evident, suggesting suburban life in New Plymouth through the sheer fabric of the net curtains. I am not going to specifically explore this suburban context, but it will be an implicit reference throughout my work.

AM I PROTECTING PRECIOUS MOMENTS?

Sunday lunchtime: my sister's family is at Nana's as well. The great grand children have taken the red purse to the shop to buy lollies.

The memories I have of my nana are irreplaceable. No one can take these away from me. Without tangible artefacts like photographs to look back upon, these memories can fade over time and feelings of guilt for not remembering them can be overwhelming. Looking back upon images reminds us that we are mortal creatures, especially when we reminisce about past events and experiences. This act can make us feel the paradox of warmth and sadness at the same time. When photographing Nana, I am creating permanent photographic images that record and document snippets of time in the hope of preserving these. Through analogue means, I am able to mimetically and physically fix the reflected lights of a specific moment onto a light sensitive surface. The recorded indexical evidence can then be viewed in the future.

When looking back at old photographs I reminisce over that moment in time and I forget that that moment in time has vanished and is now replaced by the remaining artefact, known as the photograph. Is the photographic process the only way I can visually document Nana in this present (or past) time, for the future?

We can record and fix time by obtaining a photograph, and through this we can view the past time in the present. It has become a compulsive act

In *Camera Lucida* Barthes discusses what photography is and why he is drawn to a photograph of his recently deceased mother. The constant reference to one single image in particular 'Winter Garden Photograph' (1898) becomes the touchstone from which he develops his ideas. The photograph was damaged from once being in an album. It showed his mother, aged five at the time, and her brother who was seven "standing together at the end of a little wooden bridge in a glassed-in conservatory, what was called a Winter Garden in those days." (Barthes, 1980, p. 67). When Barthes discusses this image I never see a reproduction of it; my mind is left to wonder and create the image in my head.

I cannot re-produce the Winter Garden Photograph. It exists only for me. For you, it would be nothing but an indifferent picture, one of the thousand manifestations of the 'ordinary'; it cannot in any way constitute an objectivity, in the positive sense of the term; at most it would interest your stadium: period, clothes, photogeny; but in it, for you, no wound." (Barthes, 1980, p73).

When Barthes discovered that quintessential photograph of his mother as a young girl, the emotions he felt were not expected from that day when sitting alone in his mother's apartment. In the image, his mother was happy to be photographed by the operator, and as the spectator at that time, Barthes became aware of so many thoughts, emotions and memories from an image that he did not know existed.

to photographic Nana and to document her daily life and surroundings. The obsessive and repeated ritual of doing this has become very important to me and I almost feel lost if I do not take my cameras with me when visiting her. She expects this now. This project has become a shared project between us, because Nana is helping me to protect precious moments by allowing me to photograph her. When Nana and I converse about these acts, we are creating precious moments without realising it and even though I am not present in the actual images my presence is felt through the intimate nature of them.

In *Camera Lucida* Barthes uses the words 'studium' and 'punctum' to describe a photograph.

The studium is about the analysis of ideas within the photograph through that viewers particular perception. In contrast, the punctum is about the sensation aroused by something in the image and the things or feelings that affect us. Punctum is used in relation to things in the photograph that grab our attention. It can dominate the image by pricking, bruising and making holes in us. It is often an accident or something unintentional. The punctum is likely to be different for each of us. Photographs with a large emotional weighting have the punctum evident. They take hold of you and are potent. The punctum allows us to remember and hold onto what matters. Over time the punctum is likely to change in relation to when we view precious moments over different time durations.

In *Camera Lucida* Barthes discusses photography and time in various ways. He says "The photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and for certain what has been." (Barthes, 1980, p. 85). What precedes us is important to remember emotionally, but at the same time take a sensitive approach. Barthes states that "Every photograph is a certificate of presence." (Barthes, 1980, p. 87). Photographs are a documentation of 'what has been'. They act as evidence or proof that that event has taken place.



Figure 32 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 5

Protecting precious moments is pivotal to this project. Here, the whole family is at Nana's house and to show duration all images are double or triple exposures and allow Nana to be seen in more than one view over a period of five to ten seconds. Taking up space and inhabiting time is explored through the capture of movement, depicting time passing quickly. The square format of the image, with its vignetted edges, allows the full frame of the negative to be shown, and represents the whole negative without cropping or amending in any way. The repetition of the paint brushes and windows shows their importance. Hannah (great grandchild) is in the background looking directly at us, unlike Nana, challenging the viewer on where to look and rest their eye and she returns the viewers gaze.



Figure 33 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 6



Figure 34 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 7



Figure 35 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 8



Figure 36 Pittwood, K. (2011) Diana F+ 1



Figure 37 Pittwood, K. (2011) Diana F+ 2



Figure 38 Pittwood, K. (2011) Diana F+ 3

Within these pinhole images I refer to Bathe's quote about 'what has been', these offer a layering effect of time 'that has been'. A blurred figure hiding behind her surroundings where she feels safe is evident in two images but gone in the third. Nana's figure is transient. She will repeat the same rituals daily, but that precise instant has gone forever.

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ACT

Saturday about 11.00am: Nana has the flu and makes me sit outside on the porch. She sits in the sunroom at a distance so I do not catch her bugs. We look at the Woman's Weeklys.

I visit Nana regularly purely for the pleasure. The camera always accompanies me on my visits. When I photograph her it is about being in the moment and shooting that immediate experience. I am not in the image; however, my presence is felt through the intimacy that the images hold.

Using cameras such as the Halina Prefect 120 mm camera allows me to look through its large glass viewfinder from the top. That particular camera tolerates me holding it very close to my body and often it is held from my chest or stomach so we can still engage in conversation without interference and any discomfort. Fine details are confused within the resulting images. A lack of information is due to low or limited depth of field, and the visual description of the imagery is frequently puzzling because of the nature of the camera. It is not sophisticated like cameras produced today. This method offers me the option of not looking through the camera's viewfinder so that Nana is not distracted by my actions. It is as if I am not actually taking the photograph but am conversing with Nana in the moment, without any intrusion from the camera to spoil what we share together. This type of camera is also

The act of photographing someone can make them seem very vulnerable. That person (or persons) is never really sure what you will or could do with that image, that slice of time or that memory. Once the shutter is clicked, a piece of you is frozen in an image. You are being transported into the future and into the unknown. French film theorist Christian Metz says that "...the snapshot, like death, is an instantaneous abduction of the object out of the world into another world..." (Metz, 1985, p. 84). That exact moment has passed and you are now living as an image, fixed on paper, in a time period that has vanished forever

The choice to photograph is up to you as the photographer or the 'operator' as Barthes describes it. It is your choice to click the shutter; however, as the subject matter, you often do not have the option. Jacques Derrida interviewed Gerhard Richter about photography in 1992, in his book called *Copy, Archive, Signature – A Conversation on Photography*. Derrida says

Yes, someone controls or chooses the photographs; one gives the photograph that one wants. In a series the multiplicity is in principle immediate. A drawing, on the contrary, is singular: there is only one, in any case it does not of itself imply a series, as a photograph does, even if in some cases there is only one. The principle of the series is inscribed in the photographic act. (Derrida, 2010, p35).

Derrida is saying that a series of images can control your point of view, they work as a singular image and it is all down to the photographic act.

one that Nana would have been photographed by or would have used herself to take her family snapshots . This type of camera would have commonly be used for vernacular photography to capture those special family moments that Nana would have been a part of.

The other cameras I am using are 35 mm cameras. These cameras are more conventional. I look through the viewfinder from the back, thus looking through the camera straight at my subject. These cameras are more invasive, so I use it for photographing Nana's house and surroundings. It often interrupts my visit and the conversations that we have created. All cameras are used without flash and all settings are manually worked out. I have chosen not to use a hand-held light meter as I feel it will be pushy and may interfere with our conversations that take place during the photo shoot.

My intuitive mode of shooting and my desire to capture spatial atmosphere without the feeling of being invasive, aligns with the strategy to 'shoot from the hip' or place the tripod at this height. This desire comes from wanting to be a child back in Nana's house when everything was carefree and easy. My hip height is about where my eye level would have been when I was eight or nine years old. These methods of photographing Nana unposed and unaware, without the usual controls that metering, focusing and framing-up creates, hands over a lot to chance. Considering that many of the cameras used

Didier Semin wrote an essay in the book *Christian Boltanski* called 'From the Impossible Life to the Exemplary Life'. He discusses the term 'photographic practices' which encompasses a broad range of all things photographic. In the essay, Semin presents his ideas about photographs and their subject-object relationship. He says "A photo is an object and its relationship with the subject is lost. It also has a relationship with death." (Semin, 1997, p. 25).

French artist Christian Boltanski works across many mediums and focuses his work on mortality, consciousness and remembering. His installation works are based on imagery found, which he has no connection or association with. "The fact of dying was inside the fact of living. Now we've become ashamed of dying, we want to forget that we're going to die." (Boltanski, 2006, p. 27). The relationship between photography and death is pertinent because once someone has passed the only thing left of them is memories, images and objects that will carry on their legacy.

Forgetting that we will die is a convenient thing to forget in the 21st century and carrying on with life allows us to forget the inevitable.

are well over 50 years old and many things can and do go wrong allows for secrets to appear in the image making and is part of the excitement. There is also an imbued nostalgia within the cameras I am using. I feel as if I am preserving their history and honouring them by continuing their use. The 35mm cameras were not considered professional cameras and in their everyday use produced films that often included 'failures'. These qualities of 'failure' excite me. Handing over the process of photography to chance allows me, as the photographer, to stand back and experience the moment and interact with Nana as if none of it was occurring.

Once the film is developed it is evident that the camera notices details that I did not notice during the moment of shooting due to my quick methods and not looking through the viewfinder. The images are not an intrusion of Nana's space, but are more an interaction within her environment. This allows Nana to have a sense of privacy while I work and enables me to capture my experience with Nana as opposed to creating portraits. She is both an unhurried and fleeting figure, rushing around trying to please everyone present in her home. When photographing, I ask myself if Nana's figure is essential to the images in order to portray nostalgia, loss or memory? Or is her presence felt in the images through the untidiness of her home, the television maybe playing in the background or the windows or ranch slider possibly being open?

James Elkins' 2011 publication *What Photography Is* is a response to Barthes *Camera Lucida* which was written 30 years ago. Elkins talks about the images of his family's past that were taken before he was born. They resonate in his mind and he does not want to erase them even if he never views them again. He goes on to discuss how nostalgia cannot be portrayed in a photograph because your memories are always naturally deteriorating over time. Elkins says.

After I realised that I was only hoping to reconnect to that face, and that I valued it because it could possibly, conceivably contain and reveal something about my father, I also saw that I valued it because I had an obscure sense that all other hundreds of pictures of my father could not reveal anything other than what they openly depicted, and that searching for memories in photographs was therefore a false solace, in which I had fooled myself into thinking that my own memories, which are naturally growing fainter and more inaccurate with each passing day, are not ruined and ultimately erased by the force of the particular faces captured in photographs, but that somehow, paradoxically, these memories could actually be strengthened by reviewing those same images." (Elkins, 2011, p. 114).

He refers to the imagery of his family as being poison to his memory because these images are strong, they are an artefact whereas his memories are frail and he ends up gripping to the photograph in the present time. Elkins talks about one day giving up all the actual images of his family and to just "...keep only my own naturally failing memories." (Elkins, 2011, p. 115). Elkins wants to give up his family photographs because he does not feel that they can offer him anymore than his own memories can.

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Figure 39 Strba, A. (1974-1997)

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Figure 43 Strba, A. (1974-1997)

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Figure 44 Strba, A. (1974-1997)

Beginning in 1974 and finishing in 1997, Swiss artist Annelies Strba embarked on a long project called *Shades of Time*. In this project she photographed her immediate family, which extended out to her grandmother and eventually her grandchildren. The images are un-posed and capture the moment and draw on vernacular photography. Many of these images look like the abandoned images from the family albums, yet Strba values these immediate and somewhat accidental images. The images start in traditional black and white and move into colour in the later years. Her images celebrate simple everyday family life by capturing moments in history that might later cause nostalgia as well as preserving memories of her family as they grow up and get older. Her family relationships are not at risk but this has allowed her to record valuable yet banal events that most families experience every day.



Figure 45 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 9

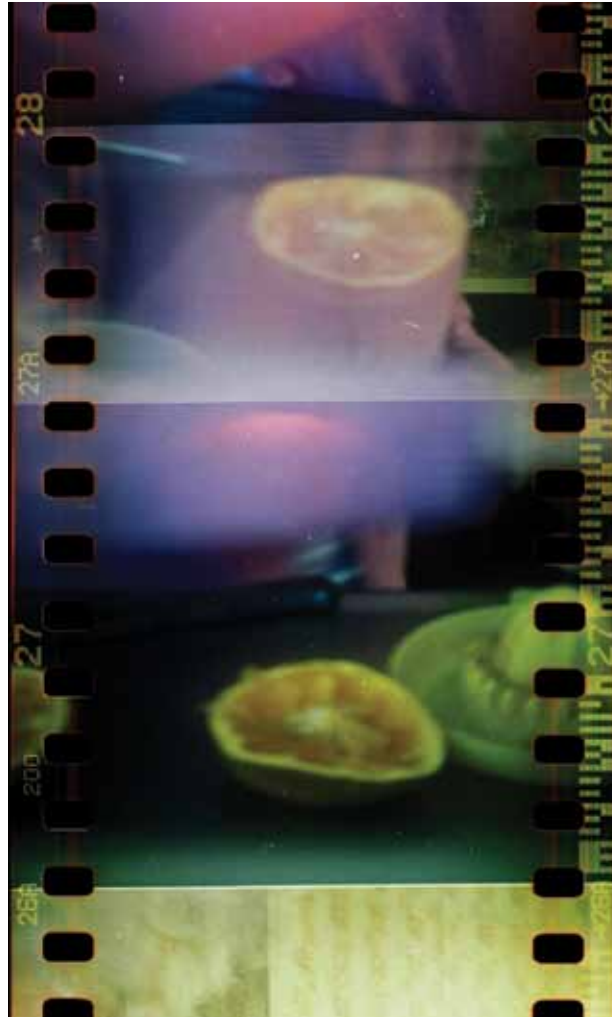


Figure 46 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 10



Figure 47 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 11

The photographic act is a compulsion for me and I feel the need to document every day banal activities that Nana undertakes. The multiple exposures of Nana making grapefruit juice for her grandchildren are over powered but the mauve of her jersey but complement the yellow grapefruit, as does the film edges. Movement is apparent due to the numerous exposures and time shifts. Repetition is evident within the image, mimicking the action of squeezing and de-pipping the fruit. The process of shooting from the hip allows me to be part of the act rather than being the photographer at a distance.



Figure 48 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lubitel 3



Figure 49 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lubitel 4



Figure 50 Pittwood, K. (2011) Lubitel 5

These photographs share methods and ideas with both vernacular photography and Strba's work. This camera is fully manual so I guessed light meter settings and the result was underexposed images. Often failure in my image making allows me to further experiment with cameras, exposures and film types. A sense of time is created through these images - the era of the film is recognised by the film type on the negative strip. Unlike Strba's images the figure is very abstract and could be seen as photographs taken by an amateur.

WEEKLY RITUALISTIC ENCOUNTERS

Thursday afternoon: quick visit with my camera before going to the supermarket to get meat for tea.

It has become a weekly ritual to visit Nana, accompanied with my camera. Taking the film to be developed has also become a ritual within itself; one that sometimes ends in disappointment. This sense of failure makes me want to delve into the photographic act and I am driven to further master the lighting, camera and film. Working in this uncontrollable way allows me to engage with a process that has such a high risk of failure as experienced by the family amateur photographer. It offers disappointment but at the same time intrigues me to push the films and cameras to their limits. Revisiting and reshooting has become my routine. Each visit and shoot is never the same. The relationship between the failure and anticipation of the film being successful is exciting and the chance of it working is unknown until the packet of images is opened. When successful I have beaten the odds of technical difficulties and the natural tendency to want to hide from the camera.

The obsessive nature of visiting Nana has slightly changed throughout this project. My love of spending time with her has not changed but I feel empty when visiting her without my camera. She now also expects me to turn up with the camera and it has become 'normal' to her. I feel the compulsive need to photograph every visit because otherwise I feel like

In *Photography: A Middle-brow Art* written in 1965, Pierre Bourdieu, discusses how the act of photography is undertaken everyday by millions of people who are essentially photographers. These people are amateurs in this profession, but the 'snapshot' is a very personal activity that happens spontaneously every minute of every day. Photography is about the 'act' of taking the pictures. There are many different functions of photography depending on which social group you relate to. It may be to preserve the present moment of a child's birthday party, or the other end of the spectrum where a photograph is seen as a work of art. Images are fundamentally about preserving a moment no matter which social group you collaborate with.

I am missing an important moment in her life. I also worry that one day I will turn up without my camera and then the next day she may not be with us and I will have missed out on a 'last' photographic opportunity. Becoming compulsive with my ritual of photographing is something that meets my need for stability.

When photographing Nana I am blurring the boundaries between private and public. I am isolating certain moments of her life to record and show to viewers, most of whom she will never meet. There is a large accountability of trust between us which is seen in the printed images. The responsibility I have to Nana is to respect her space and how she will feel once these images are exhibited. I want her to feel celebrated and special when she sees our relationship on show.

Acknowledging that we will all die seems to have been forgotten, and remembering this fact is a rare occurrence in modern Western society. We are mortal creatures and what may preserve our lost presence is photographic documentation, keepsakes and mementos. Henri Bergson, an influential French philosopher, states in *Matter and Memory* (1991) that "To picture is not to remember." (Bergson, 1991, p. 135). Remembering something allows you to place yourself back in that time, place or event, like it was yesterday. Only picturing something is similar to daydreaming. It is fictitious and often other factors influence what you think and know, when this is not the truth. Bergson sees time as being the essence within living, and capturing or abducting a given moment through photographic means and preserving these moments forever allows history to continue.

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Figure 51 Bellieu, J. (2005)

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Figure 53 Bellieu, J. (2005)

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Figure 54 Bellieu, J. (2005)

An enormous accountability of trust is seen in Jaret Bellieu's autobiographical photographic work called *Familial Endurance* which began in 2005. He began photographing family incidents when his mother was diagnosed with cancer. The family's journey through sickness was documented with dignity and love, yet at the same time celebrated his mother's life with compassion. Most viewers will identify with these images, as cancer has probably touched their lives directly. We can feel the family's pain, strength and suffering – both medically, physically and emotionally. The value recorded these moments is immeasurable for Bellieu and could act as a way of preparing himself for the inevitable. In 2005 Bellieu gained a scholarship to produce a body of work titled *Expect Delays*, where he documents a journey that he and his brother took across Canada in the wake of their mother's death.



Figure 55 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 5



Figure 56 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 6



Figure 57 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 7



Figure 58 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 8

Having ritualistic encounters with Nana allow me to be with her when important and unimportant events are happening in her life. Here I used the 35 mm Pentax camera, which allows for shallow depth of field (f 1.4) to blur many details, but at the same time gives the viewer enough information to see Nana in her home. The images show natural lighting and suggest a fine day, yet Nana's expression is of sadness. These images were taken before she went for her radiation treatment. I feel these images that show Nana clearly are something I want to continue with. I do not feel she would be comfortable with me showing these images in an exhibition, and I do not want this project to focus on portrait photography.



Figure 59 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 9

The accountability of trust is Bellieu's work is something I wanted to explore with my own family. Quietly observing Nana at differing degrees of proximity from outside her ranch slider adds warm, blue tones from the glass. Trust is seen in these images because of her relaxed nature while I take these images. Being so distant from Nana when photographing makes the viewer of the photograph become an outsider when looking in at her watching her television. The haziness is warming, and the reflections of the trees from outside suggests she is in her home and at ease with this task.



Figure 60 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 10



Figure 61 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 11



Figure 62 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 12

ATTACHMENTS TO ANALOGUE PROCESSES

Sunday afternoon: Nana is rushing to write a letter to Auntie Jeni in Australia so it can go in the post first thing Monday morning.

Photographing preserves a minute moment, a fleeting snippet of time. Usually a fraction of a second with the single click of the shutter preservation takes place. I have chosen to use film for this photographic project because of both its accuracy and unknown factors in the imaging. Nana and I cannot get involved in the editing on the spot, a process that could have created more 'performed' images. The chance factor is also high because neither of my cameras have built-in light meters and hand held light meters offer too much of a distraction. Advancing film before the next shot is taken and making sure all images are taken before removing the film is a ritualistic act I love to perform. This love is linked with the obsessive nature of photography and the idea of wanting more and more imagery of our relationship. This way of working also values and validates what has historically been considered 'failure' because not every image is certain to end up being successful.

Digital and analogue differ in their relationship with time. Digital is essentially a binary code and it has discrete discontinuous values. It is a series of separated pixels, codes and numerical sequences that represent an image, usually stored on a chip. Digital photographs have changed our view of photography with its quick and immediate ability to

Photography oozes death because it is always of a moment gone forever. In his essay *Stillness Becoming: Reflections on Bazin, Barthes and Photographic Stillness*, Jonathon Friday, a university lecturer, says

All that survives are the visual traces that unchangingly identify what is no more or soon will be no more. Even as we are astonished by the conjunction of past and present in the photography, we are horrified by its message of death, decay and loss. (Friday, 2006, p54).

Being faced with death every day is a culture shock to us, as Westerners, we tend to sweep death under the carpet because it is often too distressing to deal with. Within photographs, things being 'no more' are made permanent in the image and possibly memories. It is the 'being no more' that we are left with.

create imagery, much of which is never printed, never becomes an artefact.

Analogue photography captures a certain moment in time by burning an image permanently onto a light sensitive substrate. It has a continuous nature, creating depth and substance within the negative. The grains of silver on the negative receive the light from that actual moment in time. Film also allows time and chance to be encapsulated for as long as the negative or photographic print survives.

I have chosen to work with analogue photography because of the archival quality that film has to offer. Negatives can be stored for centuries and as long as the print survives the image will be viewable. The use of old vernacular cameras relate to the project aims in the way that they house nostalgia and Nana would have had her portrait taken previously with these types of cameras.

Sontag relates death to photography by saying “Photography is the inventory of mortality.” (Sontag, 1977, p. 70). She sees photography as a way of fixing time, making us realise we are mortal creatures. Loss is a part of life that we will all experience with different events, people and maybe inanimate objects. When photography was invented in the 19th century people were suddenly able to fix reality to paper and through the viewing of photographic portraits we came face to face with our mortality.

Sontag says “As the fascination that photographs exercise is a reminder of death, it is also an invitation to sentimentality.” (Sontag, 1977, p. 71). The sentimental nature of these images fixed on paper is huge. They can be one-off images or mass produced digital images that all retain the potential for sentimentality and pathos, touching on mortality.

In *What Photography Is*, Elkins discusses the love for the camera itself and that we need to talk about the actual camera when theorising photography. He says

“Photography’s apparatus is consistently fetishized: almost everyone who is serious about photography has a special attachment to some of their cameras and lens. Equipment is a principal subject of conversation among some professionals and amateurs, but it is rigorously excluded from academic writing about photography.” (Elkins, 2011, p. 150).

He goes on to say “...a fetish requires absolute, intimate devotion...” (Elkins, 2011, p. 150). An obsessional and devotional mode of working has manifested itself in all aspects of the projects methodology.



Figure 63 Pittwood, K. (2011) Fish Eye 5

Encapsulating an image on a negative forever allows the analogue process to capture a moment that is unknown to the viewer until the film is developed. There is a degree of chance in the image making. The circular framing device here is caused from this particular camera lens gives a playful yet surveillance effect. The colours are muted and tones are washed out due to the cheap flash installed in the camera. The images are of Nana in her dining room and kitchen. For me these images are nostalgic because of what is depicted. The forms and shapes are distorted due to the fish eye lens, curvatures are created and colours are blown out.



Figure 64 Pittwood, K. (2011) Fish Eye 6



Figure 65 Pittwood, K. (2011) Fish Eye 7



Figure 66 Pittwood, K. (2011) Fish Eye 8



Figure 67 Pittwood, K. (2011) Agfa Agnar 1



Figure 68 Pittwood, K. (2011) Agfa Agnar 2

Having a strong attachment to analogue processes gives me the drive to continue experimenting with different cameras, films and techniques. Using an expired 35 mm film along with low lighting and accidental image quality create a sense of the amateur photographer. This was done because I did not want to place artificial lighting in Nana's house to distract her from performing her usual actions even though she is not present in the images. Dots and film coding are visually overpowering.

DOES THE IMAGE BECOME AN ARTEFACT?

Friday afternoon: visiting Nana with my sister. Nana is making us apple pikelets; they are a little dark in the colouring for my liking, so I refrain from eating any.

A few months ago I asked Nana if she had any old photographs. After rummaging around behind her television she handed me a small plastic bag (a recycled TV Guide bag of course) containing photographs from her past. The majority of the images were black and white and none of them I had seen before. Most of the snapshots had Nana, her house or her beloved Corgi named Honey in them. While looking through the old images with Nana, her face lit up when telling all the stories that coincided with what was depicted in the photographs. It became quite a special act of remembrance spending this precious time with my Nana, and allowing her to relive these memories many years later.

The images acted as artefacts as I was able to touch the different paper weights and surfaces, scan for any handwritten information on the back and ask Nana who these unknown characters were. I think Nana's relationship with the images are less precious than mine. I asked if I could borrow the images to scan, and she insisted that I keep them. She did not seem fussed about holding onto her past through the photographic image. Maybe faded memories are enough when you are her age and

The actual desire, need or compulsion to take a photograph allows an event to be recorded forever, meaning that the negatives or digital files can be saved and viewed forever. For the photographer, the encounter you have with the camera and event/situation/object/person that you are photographing immediately creates a relationship. You can interfere, invade or ignore, to the point that an artefact is created out of the photographer's ignorance or interest.

In the book *Photographs Objects Histories: on the Materiality of Images*, Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart state that "...a photograph is a three-dimensional thing, not only a two-dimensional object." (Edwards & Hart, 2004, p. 1). Edwards' idea of a photograph being a three-dimensional thing/object is evident particularly with photograph albums or stored images. These objects are imbued with a huge emotional and often nostalgic load. They are created as valuable objects from the moment they are printed, held and viewed. The image becomes the actual object. They can then become an object of desire, something that is longer for, often without realising it.

living in the present is sufficient.

Images in a photograph album become artefacts of the past due to the nature of repeatedly viewing, handling and experiencing them. Something is an artefact when we can use tangible senses to experience it. These old images of Nana have become relics from the past, objects of desire and nostalgia because of their content. The images of Nana that I am producing will become archives to our family due to their content and personal value. Once printed, some images will be large and unable to be touched and handled easily. This turns them into archives rather than artefacts of Nana's spatial surroundings and our relationship at its best. My photographs are more like documented archives rather than artefacts. Artefacts are safely stored history, saved for the future. They are often small and tangible. My final works will be large and un-framed, not protected from the atmosphere.

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Figure 69 Deveney, K. (2001)

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Figure 78 Deveney, K. (2001)

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Figure 70 Deveney, K. (2001)

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Figure 80 Deveney, K. (2001)

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Figure 72 Deveney, K. (2001)

Seeking and documenting banal moments in ones day is what KayLynn Deveney did with her 2001 photographic project *The Day-to-Day Life of Albert Hastings*. Deveney was interested in capturing her subjects' experiences in their homes which are usually not considered worthy enough to take a snapshot of. She documented her neighbours domestic routines and his idea of a home and how he occupied it. These images show an intimate glimpse of an elderly male who lives alone and is facing death. Once the images were taken, Hastings was asked to handwrite captions under the images to add his perspective to what and how his life was being depicted. This allowed the project to become a collaborative project. The emotive feelings associated with these images is very personal and blurs the line between public and private. Hastings has allowed this to occur with ease and we can see his appreciation of their friendship through his facial expressions and effortless movements throughout the images. He died at the age of 91, the same year the book was published.



Figure 73 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 1



Figure 76 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 4



Figure 74 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 2



Figure 77 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 5



Figure 75 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 3



Figure 78 Pittwood, K. (2011) Top Tron 6

The Top Tron 110 camera is a basic point-and-shoot camera from the 1980's that has a very limited focus range and lacks the ability to capture details. I could have attached flash bulbs but I have not and have just relied on natural lighting from the windows. The blue line present is from the film being scratched inside the camera. The grain is evident due to the film being so small; when blown up larger this is expanded. These images barely contain a figure and portray absence, loneliness and an awareness of sadness when all images are placed together. The windows are an opening to the outside world, maybe even to the spiritual world. After taking these images I decided they were not artefacts but more archives of that moment in Nana's house one evening. Archives are seen as more special objects and these are a documentation of a certain time to me.

CAMERAS & EXPERIMENTAL METHODS

**CAMERA TYPE**

Agfa Agnar

FILM CAPABILITY

120 mm or 35 mm with an adaptable back

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Tends to under expose double and triple exposures, has adaptable shutter speeds and apertures, shutter release is broken making it hard to use.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Lomo Lubitel

FILM CAPABILITY

120 mm or 35 mm with an adaptable back

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

35mm back allows you to expose right to the sprocket holes.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Action Sampler

FILM CAPABILITY

35 mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Takes four images on one negative, shutters are not quite synchronised, light leaks though one shutter, viewfinder is not accurate.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Pentax

FILM CAPABILITY

35 mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Fully manual SLR, large range of shutter speeds and apertures, takes very crisp images.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Diana F+

FILM CAPABILITY

120 mm or 35 mm with an adaptable back

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Has a pinhole option, double and triple exposures are easy.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Lomo Fish Eye

FILM CAPABILITY

35 mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Fish eye effect, vignetting, flash if required, poor quality images, need to get relatively close to subject matter.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Top Tron

FILM CAPABILITY

110 mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Not suitable for low lighting conditions, film hard to obtain.

**CAMERA TYPE**

Holga

FILM CAPABILITY

120 mm or adapted to accommodate 35 mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

Double and triple exposures are easy, not suitable for low lighting conditions.



CAMERA TYPE

Halina Prefect

FILM CAPABILITY

120mm or adapted to accommodate 35mm

IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS

This is the camera I have chosen to use for my final exhibition. Double and triple exposures are easy, not suitable for low lighting conditions, has three apertures to choose from. Because the viewfinder is from the top of the camera, this allows me to take images of Nana unposed and without encroaching on her personal space. There is no option to change the shutter speeds and therefore the shutter works like a pin hole camera. It is very easy to place foreign objects inside the camera for different effects.

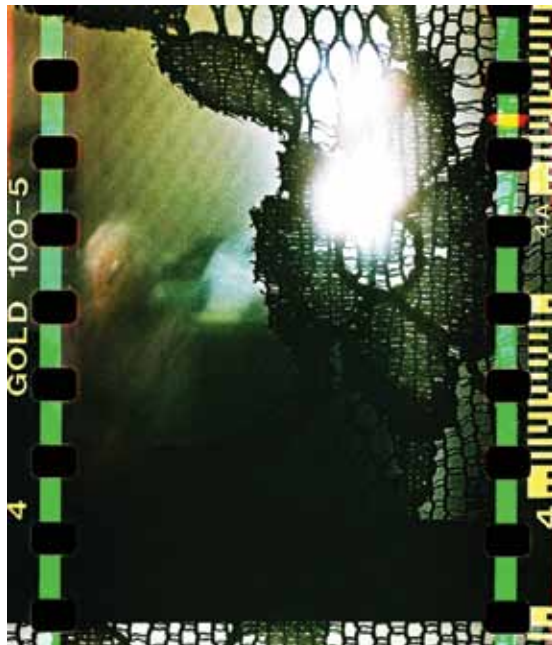


Figure 79 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 12



Figure 80 Pittwood, K. (2011) Halina Prefect 13

Experimenting with placing lace inside the camera acts as a veil and allows harsh light to come through the part of the lace that is ripped, thus acting as a framing device. These images are somewhat lost due to the sprocket holes being brightly coloured and the formal pictorial differences that the lace has created. Nana is a ghostly figure in the background which is something I was thinking about when taking the images. I asked myself 'what would the images look like if she was no longer alive?' Is this a simulation of her spirit still inhabiting her home? and 'is it possible to even show this because she is still very much alive?'



Figure 81 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 15



Figure 84 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 18



Figure 82 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 16



Figure 85 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 19



Figure 83 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 17



Figure 86 Pittwood, K. (2011) Pentax 20

Placing ripped tissue paper inside the camera I was trying to create a mask or frame that distances you from the figure in the composition. The layering of opacity weights within the tissue creates the feeling of you wanting to tear it apart further to see more of the image. It creates a tunnel of interest or framing device to isolate certain areas of the composition. These images act as a sequence, almost like film stills or images from a proofsheets. Nana is interacting in her space and we can see evidence of this from movement through the still shots. The moving camera and shifting viewpoints offer a sense of her going about her routines and it shows more of her environment. These images show the ritualistic nature of her movements.



Figure 87 Pittwood, K. (2011) Holga 4



Figure 88 Pittwood, K. (2011) Holga 5

Working with film cameras that are not necessarily of huge value allow me to place foreign object in them without worrying about camera damage. Placing cardboard cut outs inside the camera and exposing on 120 mm film allowing the cut out to be directly exposed onto the image each time. These images are from two different films with similar cut outs and I was thinking about 'anticipated loss' and what it would be like to photograph Nana when she is no longer there. I do not think I will continue to experiment further with black and white film.

FINAL DECISION MAKING

The first step of my final decision making was to choose the Halina Prefect camera, which houses 120 mm film. This allows me to gain much finer detail due to the large negative size and the use of the double or triple exposures working alongside my conceptual contexts. None of the images are manipulated digitally, but negatives are scanned and then printed digitally. The square format is indicative of the camera and unifies the image clusters that are also imbued with nostalgia.

The colour shifts in my work are important to note as they determine the time of day or year the visit took place or what Nana was wearing that day. Colour shifts also occur when using different brands or expiry times of film.

The viewing experience I want to create in the final exhibition is one of intimacy. By sharing the familial relationship between me, the photographer and granddaughter, and Nana, the unposed subject, I hope to achieve a sense of the routines and rhythms of our time together. Printing the images of the interior of Nana's house large, will show a sense of her space and allow the viewer to feel immersed in it. These will set the scene for the exhibition and will be seen first upon entering the room. There will possibly only be a few selected from this series.

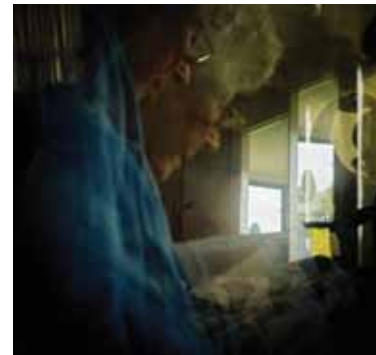
Small images will be placed in groupings and clusters and will be

placed together in accordance with the visits I had with Nana. Together all these 120 mm analogue photographs aim to create a sense of the ritualistic, a key concept of this project.

POSSIBLE LARGE IMAGE CLUSTERS



POSSIBLE SMALL IMAGE CLUSTERS





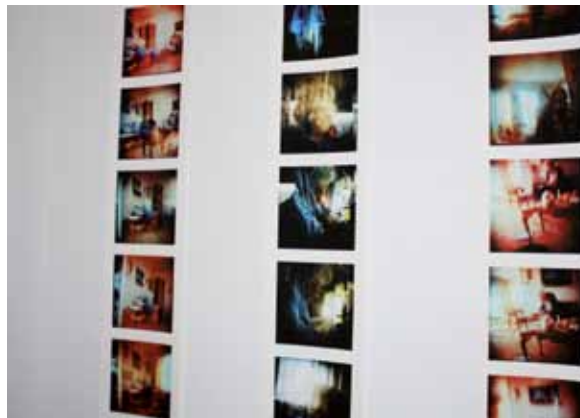


CONCLUDING COMMENTARY

The emphasis of this research project has been on exploring how nostalgia is located in the photographic image and going back to the question in my abstract 'does photography allows us to come closer to addressing mortality and death?' I think photography enables us to confront and address mortality, specifically the western taboo associated with death. Through the visual nature of photography which allows us to repeatedly view the images and allow us to remember the past and realise that this will never exist again. Throughout this project I have allowed time and chance to capture fractions of a second, hopefully forever, as long as the negative or print survives and as long as we survive to view them. This project was also driven by a desire to work with the type of cameras that have recorded much of my Nana's life. It employed and investigated a range of analogue cameras from two different decades, from which decisions were made to focus on one camera for its particular shooting and image characteristics. The resulting image possibilities such as multiple exposures differentiate themselves from both vernacular and archival photography. Exploration with the cameras and processing became obsessive in itself, yet this way of working did not eclipse the project and as method, related well to the focus of the project. This project

has been from an autobiographical standpoint which allowed my idea of the narrative to result in a very personal project. I have represented a familial connection and am compelled to continue photographing Nana as her spirit still excites me. Nana is now 82 years old and presently cancer free and I will keep documenting her life ritualistically, but maybe not weekly!

FINAL EXHIBITION



The final exhibition was held in the PTO Gallery in Eltham, Taranaki. The work consisted of 14 separate film drops, each containing all of the 12 images from each 120mm film. Each image was 125mm square and the whole drop is 2500mm long. On the adjacent wall, two images of the interior of Nana's house hung. The dimensions of these are 1000mm square including the frame.









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