Working *(with)* the Dead: Agency and its Absence in the Use of the Found Image

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The making of meaning – or the telling of a story – in visual art practice often involves an elaborate performance of the space between multiple sites, such as the viewer, the image/object, and the maker. Likewise a conventional understanding of collaborative practice is one in which a relationship between multiple sites of agency is performed within agreed upon boundaries, whether they be contextual, conceptual or material. This performative and collaborative space becomes interestingly problematic when one site is much less active than the other – when one is in fact dead. With this, the relationship between *now* and *then* becomes relevant to the discussion, as the making of meaning becomes a collaborative practice of memory.

Within the context of an artist's use of a found family photograph, images of the dead by the dead, collaboration can be said to be occurring in highly complex and problematic ways. Making comparisons between vernacular family photo albums sourced from second hand markets, Gerhard Richter's *"Atlas"* (1962 onwards) and Tacita Dean's *"Floh"* (2001), this article considers the degree to which the intentionality and agency of the maker of the vernacular photograph may be re-activated and performed by proxy through the inclusion of the found image in a work produced by an artist. The article considers how such works might sit within conventionally understood definitions of collaboration. My discussion draws from the disci-

pline of Memory Studies, in particular the role of the listener/viewer as described by Sue Campbell in her text "*The Second Voice.*"[1] The writing of Annette Kuhn[2] and Martha Langford[3] concerning the relationship between memory, vernacular photography and narrative construction, also informs the discussion. As vernacular photographs are here considered as mnemonic objects, the underlying theoretical framework of the article engages with the material semiotics of Science Technology Society (STS) studies, as outlined by John Law, which privilege the role that inanimate objects play in the construction of the social relations that surround them.[4]

I suggest that something of an ethical problem may occur when an artist uses a found family photograph as the basis of his/her artwork. While the use of the found object was long ago established within arts practice when Marcel Duchamp placed a urinal in an exhibition in New York in 1917, the use of other found objects such as vernacular photographs is much more complex. Family photographs are authored (made) yet unpublished. Such images can be highly structured and posed, and the intentionality that they assert can be as personal and as profound as any expressive "art" object produced within the romantic/modernist paradigm. They are equally as much a *staging of the self*. However the context in which the vernacular statement (family photograph) is made is different, and the intended audience – the viewer/listener (the family member) – is very different to that of the art gallery visitor. This article does not so much argue against the use of found family photographs by artists as suggest that there is a complex thread of relationships being performed through such practices of quotation that are yet to be adequately theorised.

Early in her discussion of shared memory in her text *The Second Voice,* Sue Campbell writes:

> James Wertsch says that memory theorists should pay attention to M.M Bakhtin's claim that any utterance is 'interindividual' – 'a drama' in which a triumvirate of characters participates: the one who speaks (the first voice); the once who listens (the second voice); and all others who have contributed to the meaning of the words that the speaker uses (the third voice).[5]

Campbell goes on to argue that the role of the second voice has not thus far been afforded sufficient attention in the theorisation of memory, and again quotes from Wertsch that, "it is after all, standard practice to formulate what we say in anticipation of who the listeners might be."[6] Here we return to the topic of the vernacular family photograph considered as a *staging of the self* (by the first person) for a known (second person) viewer. There are times when the staging of the self is performed for the self – the

"I was there" of the tourist photograph, as a mnemonic object asserting that one has indeed been elsewhere.[7] This first-person-to-first-person communication is straightforward reminiscence. When presented for another family member, it becomes a narrative statement of, "Look at me. That's when I was elsewhere." Campbell writes:

> Sharing memory is how we learn to remember, how we come to re-conceive our pasts in memory, how we come to form a sense of self, and one of the primary ways in which we come to know others and form relationships with them, reforming our sense of self as we come repeatedly under the influence not of our own pasts as understood by others but of the pasts of others.[8]

Sharing is an intentional act; however, the focus here is on what happens when the image is viewed/read/listened to elsewhere by an unintended audience. What happens when the second voice is so significantly different from the one initially intended? Can it be considered a form of collaboration? If so, how?

In this discussion I present two related modes of collaboration. The first concerns the relationship between the first and second person – between the active narrator and the passive listener. A narrative (relationship) is performed through the presence of both the speaker and the listener. One is activated by the other – one brings the other into being – and thus narrative can be considered a collaborative practice. In theory, a narrative can only occur if both sites are occupied. When we read a text, the voice of an author is present by virtue of his/her name. If the author is anonymous, the reader relies more heavily on a prior understanding of genre, register, and other more complex linguistic codes.[9] In the absence of the voice of the first-person narrator/maker of a family photo album, the second-person listener/reader/viewer is forced to rely more on their understanding of the semiotic codes presented within the grid-like structure of the album than on the content of the images themselves. And when the coherence of an album's narrative structure is absent, for example if the photographs exist as a loose collection in an old cigar box, then certain strategies of sorting and ordering are required in the reconfiguration of a narrative. The material elements of similarity of size and type – those aspects outside of the image – begin to play a part.[10]

The second mode of collaboration presented here evolves out of this absence of the first-person narrator/maker. When the first-person narrator/maker is absent, the listening/reading/viewing second-person is caused to draw meaning from the very materiality of the object. The materiality, the tactility, and the smell of a family photo album evoke (somewhat more so

than the content of the images) the notion of the *living presence response*, a term which derives from the writing of Alfred Gell. In an article responding to Gell's posthumously published book *Art and Agency*, Caroline van Eck writes,

> Gell defines art objects in performative terms as systems of actions, intended to change the world rather than encode symbolic propositions about it. Art works thus considered are the equivalents of persons, more precisely, the equivalents of social agents.[11]

Interestingly, this conception of the performative role that an object has within relationships of meaning resonates with the central concern of Science Technology Society (STS) studies. STS studies are closely associated with Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which the English academic John Law describes as

> a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treat everything in the social world as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located. [ANT] describes the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, "nature", ideas, organisations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements.[12]

The interest here is in how the intentionality of the absent photographer/maker persists within the inanimate photograph or album (object) as a form of agency, made active through its inclusion in an artwork made by an artist. The argument is that such use constitutes a form of collaboration, albeit a highly problematic one.

As an object, a family photograph performs a particular function in constructing and maintaining relationships within the family unit through a process of recognition of simile and difference – the *"here"* and *"there"* of home and away, and the *"us"* and "*them*" of the inside and outside of the family group. Family photographs are *taken* with this future familial gaze in mind, to capture a moment for future remembrance – a remembering that often involves a telling of stories *within* the family group.[13] In this respect the humble family photo album presents an incredibly complex object for research, providing multiple readings through the complexity of its content, construction and materiality. The album performs multiple tasks. It is at once an object containing the individual within the practice of family;[14] a complex spatial and temporal location device – the *"I was there"* tourist photograph presented within a grid-like structure alongside the picture

postcard from the same place;[15] and a site for the performance of remem-
brance – of absence and of presence, of here/now, there/then.[16]

An interesting phenomenon exists in which Danish family photo al-
bums from deceased estates make their way to Australia to be sold off in
second-hand markets, as a result of the death duties in Denmark. It is a cu-
rious economic practice of emotional and geographical distancing that ex-
poses the complex *here/now, there/then* narrative structures within such
material objects when they become viewed far from the time and place of
their origin.[17] This article makes use of a comparison between a collection
of some of these Danish Albums and an Australian collection found in a
second hand market in Adelaide. The Danish albums contain images from
the late 1860s to the 1950s. In one of the albums (c. 1921), the couple to
whom the albums once belonged travelled through Europe on what may
have been their honeymoon. The Australian collection consists of approxi-
mately 300 loose photographs dating from c. 1907 to the early 1950s. In-
terestingly, there are a cluster of photographs from the early 1920s in which
the couple appear to have travelled to Europe, and so one can imagine that
perhaps both couples were in the same Paris cafe at the same time. In
both these examples, the presence and absence of structures of presenta-
tion direct the interpretation of the reader. One collection is in a series of
books, ordered and authored; while the other is in a cigar box, porous and
prone to loss and addition.

Through their appearance of coherence and order, family photo al-
bums reflect a desire for a kind of stability with which to anchor familial rela-
tionships, although it can be argued that this is something of a false con-
struct. Interestingly, the pages of a family album resemble Aby Warburg's
Mnemosyne Atlas (1924). The former describes familial relationships, and
the latter aesthetic relationships. Through his grid-like arrangement of rep-
resentations of artworks Warburg sought to describe the structural similari-
ties that lay deep within the history of Western art practices. He used a se-
ries of large panels containing reproductions of artworks, which curiously
resemble the clustered pages of a family photo album. The process of ar-
ranging likeness according to a structural ideal that Warburg made use of
acts as a public and aesthetic equivalent of the desire for order and con-
tainment that we see within many family albums. In both cases, the end re-
sult is arrived at as much from an authored (thus provisional) intent as it is
from that which is present within the representation. In his text *Each Wild
Idea: writing, photography, history*, Geoffrey Batchen writes about a fram-
ing technique used for early photographs in which a number of images are
framed together in large gilt frames. Batchen comments:

Their gilt geometries (so solid, so visible, compared to the elusive,

reflective images of the photographs they contain) conjure the win-dow that photography claims to provide onto the world, even as they firmly demarcate our separation from that world. But beyond all this, the gridding of photographs provides them with the unmistakable structure of narrative, with the declared capacity to tell a story, al-ways a weakness of individual photographs.[18]

This relationship between the structure of the grid and the singular in-dividual image, in terms of the potential and capacity for narrative, is central to this discussion. In his text *Gerhard Richter's "Archive": The anomic ar-chive*, Benjamin Buchloh discusses Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* in relation to Gerhard Richter's Atlas project, which commenced in the early 1960s.[19] As part of his working process, Richter arranged some of his own family photographs alongside other images (sometimes found family photographs, sometimes commercially produced images) in a grid like arrangement on large boards. These panels formed the genesis for a number of his paint-ings. Richter's body of work is incredibly diverse, however, much of it can be said to deal with the notions of family memory, both personal and public, that family photographs call to mind. One particular image that has been discussed in a number of texts is his painted portrait of his uncle Rudi, based upon a photograph of Rudi wearing a German army uniform. The shift from photograph to paint and the use of a painterly blurring technique can be said to assert many issues concerning acts of remembering and forgetting associated with World War II and its aftermath in Germany.[20]

Similarly, *Summer 1955* (1995), a series of photographs produced by Estonian artist Peeter Linnap, deals with issues of remembering and forget-ting – and the instability thereof – within a range of social, cultural and vis-ual structures. The collection consists of approximately ten large photo-graphic reproductions of smaller 35mm photographs taken by Linnap's step-father, Enn Kiiler, in 1955 while he was an Estonian University Army Cadet incorporated into the Soviet army. The photographs show each ca-det (Kiiler's colleagues) posed individually with handguns aimed in various directions – each one seemingly isolated (at least by the camera) within a barren landscape. None of the photographs present the individuals as a group. The original photographs were taken during the Cold War, a time when Estonia was occupied by the Russians. As with Richter's work, com-plex notions of memory and forgetting are present within these images re-presented by Linnap. Through exhibiting the photographs in what was ef-fectively an installation, with the individual figures brought back together on the one wall, in a grid-like fashion, Linnap returns each singular individual to a common shared relationship, and to a common and shared history, as problematic as that may be. A shared relationship is also presented in the

way that they are hung relative to each other. In one image the horizon line in the background is much lower than in the other photographs. To account for this, the artist has hung the image higher, bringing the works together through the presentation of one common horizon line, which produces one coherent space. In reproducing the images, Linnap retained the ghost-like sprocket holes from the negatives that are left on the sides of some of the images. Interestingly, this asserts something of the materiality of *the moment,* a concept so central to the discourse of photography. The images were exhibited with the series of cadets facing each other from opposite walls, and with a large photograph of the same (but empty) landscape at the end of the adjoining wall. Linnap performed the works by firing an air pistol into the empty landscape, thus reactivating the images and closing the distance of time and space between the production of the photograph and its presentation. In so doing, Linnap made use of one particular aspect of the outside of the image: the sound of a gun.

One can argue that the sound of the spoken voice is what gives it its authority – it is that which makes it present. The first person narrative that a family photo album implies through its content and formal structure is central to the practice and performance of memory in the writing of Martha Langford. For Langford, the family album has a deep connection with the oral tradition of narrative embedded deep within family. In the foreword to the text *Suspended Conversations: The afterlife of memory in photographic albums*, the author writes that

> [t]he parallels between photography and orality are striking. The structure and content of oral tradition—the fabric of memory in oral consciousness—are met in the photographic tradition. In the thrall of written language, we speak of always *reading* the photograph; what I want to suggest instead is that we pause in the still of our photographic vaults and try just for a moment to listen.[21]

The viewer/listener thus becomes, in the terms presented by Campbell, the second person.[22] The idea of listening to these albums as objects also calls to mind Geoffrey Batchen's writing on the performance of the family album, and how if we encounter them in a museum "displayed behind glass, in a vitrine ... we can only imagine the murmur of laughing voices that would have animated and shaped the experience of looking through them."[23]

The narrative function of the family photograph is also central to the writing of Annette Kuhn, although here the agenda of the author leans more explicitly towards a sociological, auto-ethnographic inquiry into the relationship between individual and collective memory.[24] The voice of the respondent is central to Kuhn's concern. The voice of the speaking subject acti-

vates the image, and is activated by it. The role of the listening subject appears at first to be displaced and made absent, only to reappear in the shape of the voice of the author of the article—that of Kuhn herself.

The six albums of Ellen, Ulla and Bente

The set of six Danish family photo albums mentioned earlier are highly structured in their presentation of family and have a strong sense of being authored; in other words, the sound of the voice of the maker is quite present. Coherence is established by one particular album that shows a series of portrait photographs of the family unit dating back to the 1860s. This coherence is also established through a selection of four to five pages devoted to each member of the family, one after the other. These individuals are Ellen, her daughter Ulla, her son Poul (who died when he was 21 and who does not appear in many of the other albums), and her husband Axel. The album shows one particularly haunting image of Ellen's two children, Ulla and Poul in 1919. Their posture and proximity to the camera suggests that it was a self-portrait taken by Poul, with Ulla standing close by. His face is blurred and the silver within the image has started leaching to the surface, adding to his ghost-like appearance. What appears to be his death while still relatively young is presented (unintentionally) by this image, and by the last image within the structured sequence of images set aside for Poul, in which the image is missing from the album.

A complex series of problems is set in place when photographers turn the camera on themselves in this way. The discourse of the gaze, in terms of who looks at what, when and where, is made perhaps more problematic when such images appear in family photo albums. The nature of the subject position of the viewer is rendered unstable, in the same way that the position of the viewer who stands in front of Velasquez' "Las Meninas" (1656) is called into question by the presence of the mirrored reflection of the King and Queen of Spain on the back wall of the pictured space of the painted image. The spatial locations of the speaking and listening subject are transposed in such an image. In holding the small photograph taken by Poul of himself and Ulla, and in standing in front of the painting by Velasquez, we the viewers outside the frame (the second voice) are brought into the subject position of the viewers within the frame. We displace them, although they have already displaced themselves.[25]

Other albums in the collection focus mostly on the lives and travels of Ulla, her husband and their daughter Bente. Two albums contain holiday photographs taken on a journey through Western Europe in 1921 before Bente was born. Given the placement of these images in relation to one

solitary image of Ulla in her wedding gown, one could surmise that perhaps the journey was in fact their honeymoon. Many of the places have their location faithfully recorded in white pencil beneath them. The last album in the series is perhaps the most structured, consisting of a series of portrait photographs, not of Ulla and her husband, but of their house in the 1950s. Curiously, there is enough information available in and between the photographs to construct a map of the ground floor of their house. The first photograph in the series presents the front of the house, after which we are led through a series of rooms to the back yard where the couple are seated drinking tea and patting the dog. They look to the camera, acknowledging the photographer and, by extension, themselves as the primary viewer of the photographic object. As with the photograph by Poul of himself and Ulla, here Ulla and her husband occupy the twin positions of first and second voice. However, through displacement and the distancing process of death, we, the second voice (viewer), shift to first voice in a curious act of collaborative narration.

Jacky Redgate is an English-born Australian artist who, like Gerhard Richter and Peeter Linnap, has a very diverse practice, one aspect of which is the use of her own family photographs within her work. Redgate's series *A Portrait Chronicle of Photographs, England, 1953-62* (1984), represents her own narrative of family and migration through the use of enlarged, though otherwise unaltered, family photographs. While some of Richter's images blur the boundary between relationships of family and others, through the inclusion of both in some of his *Atlas* panels, Redgate's works are more clearly authored through the stated provenance of her work and through the textual accompaniment in the form of the title, which fixes, locates and narrates the image. Given the distanced viewers' lack of detailed understanding of Redgate's (or Richter's, or Linnap's) familial relationships, however, it would be possible for the artists to insert a found image into the narrative, and the viewer would be none the wiser.[26]

One particular word that immediately comes to mind when thinking about these and other artists, and their use of memory-based images, is "*strategy*". The English artist Tacita Dean often uses strategies for finding and developing narrative-based works, although having said that, her strategy for the production and outcome of her artist book *Floh* (2001) is perhaps based more on anti-narrative. Dean gathered a collection of family photographs from flea markets, mostly in Germany, and presented them *as is*, without commentary, in the form of a book. "Floh" is the German word for flea, as in flea market. The intention is that the gap left by the lack of mediated narration will be filled in by the viewer's pre-existing understanding of the familial and social relationships that such vernacular images

normally present. Likewise, performing the book as an object of mnemonic narration through the turning of its pages simulates the real vernacular object, although here the materiality of *Floh* is a lot colder than an actual family album.[27]

A family photo album shares the structure of a book, and so the viewer/reader makes an assumption that they are event-based in their presentation of a narrative, that they share the sequential chronological structure of a diary. The authority of the moment captured is asserted through the recording and presentation of significant events, arranged like a series of film stills in the temporal order in which they occur. However, in reality, the construction and reconstruction of an album is always fluid and contingent on the changing intentionality of the authors, as the albums are handed down from one generation to the next. Look on the back of a photograph as it comes adrift from the ornate little triangular pieces of paper that hold it in place and you sometimes find traces of one or two different kinds of coloured paper glued to their backs, remnants of the pages of previous albums from which they have been torn by previous generations, and rearranged in a different order and sequence. The coherence of a collection of images arranged in a collection of albums may in fact be an artificial representation based on a desire for coherent relationships of family, and of identity in relation to place and time, where the reality is sometimes otherwise.

I noted earlier how Batchen establishes a distinction between the strong narrative potential of a series of images presented in a grid-like structure, compared to a problematic singular individual image, which seems to have less potential.[28] Elsewhere, in another text, *Forget me not: Photography and Remembrance*, Batchen argues that the material hybridity of images that have been embellished and added to with other mnemonic materials, such as hair and other organic materials, are able to recuperate the emptiness of the single fixed image, through the tactile complexity of their materiality.[29] Hybrid materiality thus retains what cold singularity threatens. When the collection of images lacks the coherent material logic of the album or the hybrid materiality of the embellished image (for example, if and when the photographs are found in a cigar box), then the reader/viewer is forced to look for other markers of coherence, other narrative elements. The reader/viewer is forced back into the content of the image.

The photographs of Jessie Eileen Shannon

Unlike the Danish family photographs mentioned above, this collection of images from South Australia lacks the coherent narrative structure of a book. The collection, consisting of 22 negatives and 321 loose photographs of various sizes dating from c. 1907 to the early 1950s, was found in a cigar box in a second-hand market in Adelaide. Two of the folders contain large (10.1 x 12.2cm) individual negatives cut from roll film. This in itself gives an indication of the economic background of those taking the images, in that the cameras that take such large negatives were quite expensive. The folders containing these larger images are both from *"S.P Bond Ltd, Photo Stock Merchants, 51 Rundle Street, Adelaide"*. The third folder contains negatives that are slightly smaller (6.2 x 10.7cm). This folder is from *"William Whiteley Ltd in Queens Road, London"*. Apart from this information, not only is there no narrative structure provided by the album, but the materiality of the images themselves gives little away, and so the viewer/reader (second voice) is forced back to the content of the image.

The earliest group of photographs appear to be located at a large country house. Outside spaces are depicted more than interiors. Interestingly, the space most regularly shown in the earliest photographs is that of the back yard – the idealised *original* garden –, a quasi-sacred space. In one image, c. 1907, four women sit facing the camera. Three are seated on a bench while the fourth sits on the ground in front of them. The woman sitting on the ground features throughout the collection, and so one could hazard a guess that the collection once belonged to her. In this image, only one of the figures directly engages the camera while the others are engaged in conversation. In another early photograph of the same back yard and the bench, the same and other figures are arranged more formally. The young woman sits on the lawn with her siblings (?), as three older women in their 60s (?) sit on a bench behind them. This time all but one engages the camera with their gaze.

Authorship of these images is impossible to determine. Within this small grouping, there are enough photographs of the back yard, taken from different angles at different times, to give the viewer a strong sense of the space, in much the same way that the portrait of the interior of the Danish couple's house maps the space. As there is little in the way of writing on the back of any of the photographs, it is difficult to determine where or when they were taken. The late Victorian clothing would suggest the early 1900s. While most of the images seem posed, they also appear to be quite informal. There is no sense of occasion or of an event being recorded, however there are two photographs of the young woman on the back of a

buggy driven by two older women. One the back of one, it reads *"Leaving Home."*

Another image presents the young woman looking slightly older, dressed as a nurse standing next to a French or Italian Soldier. The soldier has one leg and stands awkwardly on crutches, perhaps being held upright by the nurse. Neither of them appears to be present within this strange photograph. Disturbingly it is less a photograph of them than of the empty space between the man's knee and the ground. Another photograph shows a young man lying in a hospital bed. He looks straight at the camera. A calendar on the wall behind his head appears to have a French flag on it. A narrative starts to suggest itself that in *"Leaving Home"* she travelled from South Australia to work as an Army Nurse in France or England during the First World War.

For want of a structure with which to ground and narrate the images, appearances and the way people age become factors in arranging the parts of the whole. A young man who appears early in the collection, naked and sitting on the side of a boat, later becomes the young woman's husband. More than half of the photographs were taken on a journey from Australia to Europe in the early 1920s. The couple seem to be in their early to mid-thirties, and are accompanied by an elderly woman (the younger woman's mother) and a group of other people. There are the occasional place names written on the back of some of them: *"Cairo, 7.am," "On the road to the Pyramids," "The train station at Pompeii."* Many images are of relatively well-known tourist sites; others are not so well-known.

Although the structure of this collection – an old cigar box – can be seen as porous, there is enough within the content of the images, and within the similarity of paper size and type, to be able to say that the collection has coherence. That is, if we exclude a photograph of a strange man holding a fish. In this last image an arm enters the frame of the photograph from the right, holding aloft at chest height a large fish. The setting is a back yard, although not the one seen earlier in the collection. This photograph shares no similarity to any other image in the collection, and yet it was found in the cigar box and thus it should not be excluded. This photograph of a strange man holding a fish is a curious analogous equivalent to the remnants of coloured paper that we sometimes see stuck to the back of photographs inside family albums; it acts as a reminder of the constructed nature of all such collections, and points to our second-person performance of narrative construction, for want of the presence of the voice of the first person. The apparent externality of this different and particular photograph of a strange man, who is most probably dead (holding a fish, which is most definitely dead) directs us, the second person viewer/listener, to an ac-

knowledgement that ours has in reality become the voice of the narrator, that of the first person. In reading, we narrate, and thus we collaborate.

Shifting Voices

I came across these two collections of old family photographs in 2006 while engaged in a studio-based PhD research project that sought to describe contemporary and modernist art practice as a form of self government through a self-conscious (though not self-reflective) staging of the self as externalised other. The motif of the artist studio was presented as a quasi-sacred panopticon-like space in which an artist performs "in anticipation of who the listeners might be."[30] I argued that the constructed institutionalised practices of the self, seen in contemporary art, mirror other economic and political (particularly neo-liberal) practices of the self.[31] My collecting of old family photographs began prior to the commencement of my PhD, and I re-alised early on that the performances, and narrations, of the self seen within them were analogous to artistic practices of the self, and so they were used as a point of comparison. Now that that research is complete, the focus shifts to what was originally merely an analogy.

During the course of this new research project I have been surprised at the number of artists who make use of family photographs, sometimes of their own family, sometimes not. It is certainly a common practice in need of further theorisation. The found family photograph is a complex surrealist part object *par excellence*. My own attraction to such objects is like that of the character Nino in the film *Amelie* (2001).[32] We arrange them, we tell stories that are not our own, and yet they are our own, *because we tell them*. Each small collection presents some kind of analogy for a narration of the self, and so it seems that it might be actually be us standing just out-side of the frame of the photograph, holding a dead fish. We are included, but not.

I have suggested that the process of the construction of meaning – or narrative – involves a shifting of the location of the speaking voice. This model is suggested by the writing of Campbell in her discussion of the sharing of memory, and Langford and Kuhn in their positioning of the pho-tograph within broader oral traditions. It has also been suggested that ob-jects present a "*living presence response*"[33] and that they act with agency,[34] enabling the concept that the maker (first voice) of the image does not merely speak through the image (as a text), but that the image speaks itself.[35] This allows for the theorisation of an artist's use of a found family photograph as a practice of collaboration, in which the found image actively participates in the making of meaning. Gerhard Richter and Tacita

Dean present two different models of artists who use found family photographs, and there are many others who produce works that somehow activate the agency of the maker of the vernacular photograph by proxy.

I initially suggested that something of an ethical problem may occur when an artist uses a found family photograph as the basis of their artwork, especially when that artist has no direct relationship to the maker of the image, or to those pictured within it. I speak here from my own reluctance to make such artworks, while at the same time I am mindful of the paradox that my discussion of found photographs still re/presents them. It was only in the final stages of writing this piece concerning family photographs, narrated and performed through the use of a grid-like structure, that I more clearly realised I had been doing it from the beginning, in the material that I presented in this paper. (See fig 1. Below)
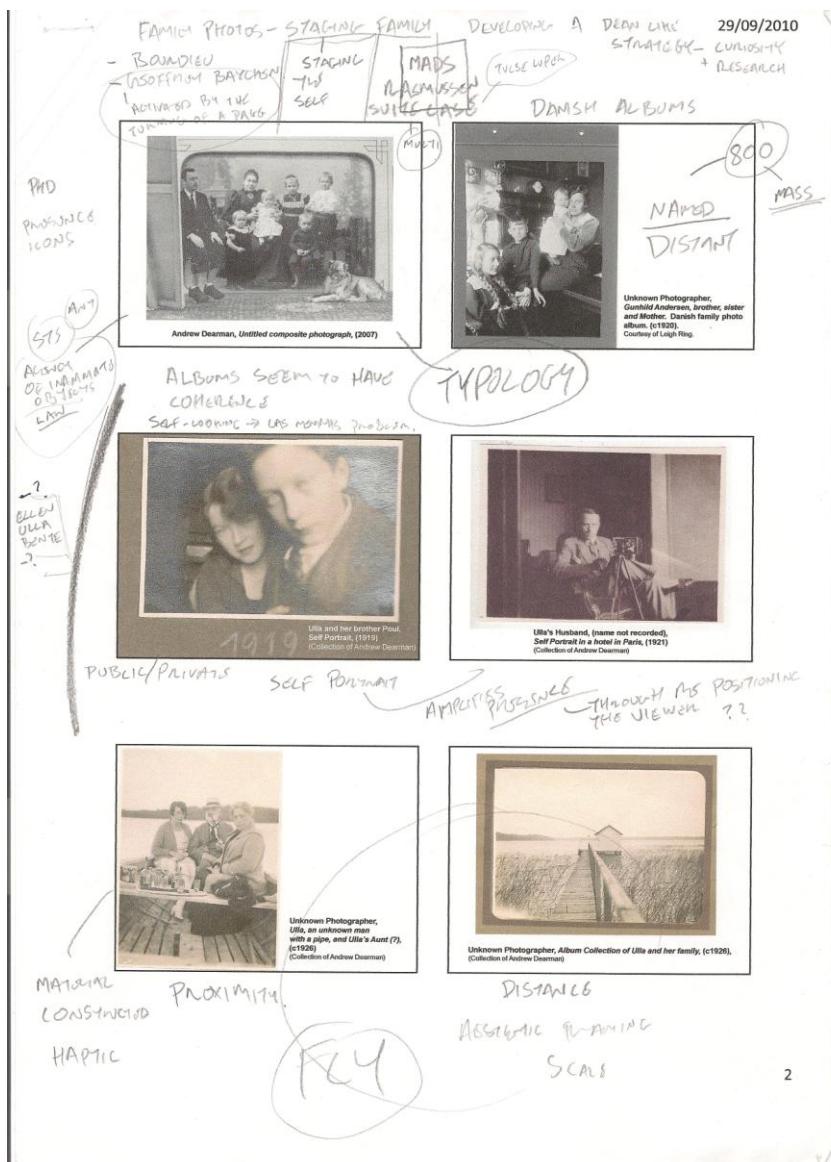
Figure 1 Andrew Dearman, Conference paper PowerPoint presentation notes: Images with notation*. (2010). Printed with permission.*

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NOTES

[1] Sue Campbell, "The Second Voice", *Memory Studies* vol 1, no 1 (2008), 41-48.

[2] Annette Kuhn, "Memory texts and memory work: Performances of memory in and with visual media", *Memory Studies* vol. 3, no. 4 (2010) 298-313. See Also: "Photography and cultural memory: a methodological exploration", *Visual Studies* vol. 22 no. 3 (December, 2007), 283-292.

[3] Martha Langford, *Suspended conversations: The afterlife of memory in photographic albums* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001). See Also: "Speaking the album: An application of the oral photographic framework," in *Locating memory: Photographic acts,* ed, A. Kuhn & K. E. McAllister (Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2006), 223-246.

[4] John Law, "Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics", *Hetererogeneities.net*, 2007,   date   of   access: 26   April   2008, http://www.heterogeneities.net/publications/Law-ANTandMaterialSemiotics.pdf.

[5] Campbell, *The Second Voice,* 42.

[6] Wertsch, *Voices of Collective Remembering,* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002) 16, in Campbell, *The Second Voice,* 42.

[7] Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*, trans. S Whiteside, (London: Polity Press, 1990), 68-9   See also, Jonathon Culler, *Framing the Sign – Criticism and its Institutions*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 154.

[8] Campbell, *The Second Voice,* 42.

[9] Stuart Hall, *Representation – Cultural Practice & Signifying Practices* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1997).

[10] The process by which the viewer/readers acquire their capacity to read such objects forms the heart of the discourse on photography. For example, see Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. A, Lavers, & C, Smith (New York: Hill & Wang, 1968); John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage International, 1991); Stuart Hall, *Representation – Cultural Practice & Signifying Practices* (Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1997)*;* Siegfried Kracauer, *Photography,* trans. T Levin Thomas, *Critical Inquiry* vol. 19, no.3 (Spring 1993), 421-436; Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 2002).

[11] Caroline van Eck, "Living Statues: Alfred Gell's Art and Agency, Living Presence Response and the Sublime", *Art History* vol. 33, no. 4 (September 2010), 644. Although he uses different terminology, Ernst Gombrich also points to this relationship between the object and the viewer when he relates how upon visiting Queen Victoria's residence on the Isle of Wight, he was taken on a guided tour and came across a life size marble statue of the Queen's dog. He writes, "I don't know what impelled me to ask our guide, 'May I stroke him?' She answered, 'Funny you want to do that; all the visitors who pass stroke him—we have to wash him every week." Ernst Hans Josef Gombrich, *Art & Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation,* (London, Phaidon, 2002), 97.

[12] John Law, "Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics." See also Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York & London, Routledge, 1993).

[13] Michael Haldrup, & Jonas Larsen, "The Family Gaze", *Tourist Studies* vol. 3, no. 1 (2003), 23-46.

[14] Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-brow Art*. See also David Chaney, *Fictions of Collective Life: public drama in late modern culture*, (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), 94.

[15] Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*; Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Flamingo, 2000); Culler, *Framing the Sign;* Sontag, *On Photography.*

[16] Barthes, *Camera Lucida*; Geoffrey Batchen, "'Fearful Ghost of Former Bloom': What Photography Is", *Photoforum*, 2003, date of access: 15 April 2007, <http://www.photo-forum.org.uk/pdfs/Batchen.pdf>; Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography & Remembrance*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004).

[17] Andrew Dearman, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead: Performing disjunct memory through an early 20th century Danish family photo album —in early 21st century South Australia", *Image & Narrative*, November, 2008 http://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/Timeandphotography/dearman.html.

[18] Geoffrey Batchen, *Each Wild Idea: writing, photography, history* (Cambridge (Mass) & London, MIT Press, 2002) 66.

[19] Benjamin Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's 'Atlas': The Anomic Archive", *October* vol. 88 (Spring 1999), 117-145.

[20] Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's 'Atlas': The Anomic Archive"; See also Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: October/MIT Press, 1996); Rosemary Hawker, "The Idiom of Photography as the Truth in Painting," in *Medium Cool*, Andrew McNamara, Peter Krapp (ed), *South Atlantic Quarterly* vol 101, no. 3 (Summer 2002) 541-554, date of access 3 November 2003, http://www.muse.jhu.edu.

[21] Langford, *Suspended conversations: The afterlife of memory in photographic albums*, viii.

[22] Campbell, *The Second Voice*

[23] Batchen, *Forget Me Not*, 49.

[24] Kuhn, "Memory texts and memory work: Performances of memory in and with visual media", See also "Photography and cultural memory: a methodological exploration".

[25] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things – An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, Vintage/Random House, 1970); Stuart Hall, *Representation – Cultural Practice & Signifying Practices.*

[26] A student of mine recently told me that she had believed for quite some time that the people in her mother's family album were related to her, until her mother advised her that she had found some of the images in a second-hand market. She liked them, so she stuck them in her own family album.

[27] Mark M. Godfrey, "Photography Found and Lost: On Tacita Dean's Floh", *October* 114, (Fall 2005) 90-119.

[28] Batchen, *Each Wild Idea*, 66.

[29] Batchen, *Forget Me Not*, 94.

[30] Campbell, *The Second Voice.*

[31] Dearman, "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead: Performing disjunct memory through an early 20th century Danish family photo album – in early 21st century South Australia".

[32] *Amelie* (*Le fabuleux Destin d'Amelie Poulain*). Directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet. 2001. France: Miramax.

[33] van Eck, "Living Statues".

[34] Law, "Actor Network Theory and Material Semiotics".

[35] Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity.*