

Title: Memory of a Memory

A collective memory project and digital online archive derived from public call-out in collaboration with the Bluecoat gallery and LOOK International Photography Festival, Liverpool, England.

This paper investigates the process by which photographs prompt memories, the 'distance' involved in the actual reading of images, (both physical & digital) and the photograph as much as a trace of memory as of reality.

In particular vernacular photography, the subjectivity of our own remembering and the reading or re-reading of images once the original visual photographic reference points are removed from the evaluative process.

Derived from individuals text-based submissions of recollections, stories or narratives associated with specific photographs 'Memory of a Memory' shifts focus away from the indexical nature of the visual / physical photographic image to 'reveal the hidden narratives and memories within. Therefore providing a more democratic platform whereby unheard voices might be aired for those outside of the family group / not necessarily depicted within the actual photographs themselves.

As Kelly states: *To move in for an intimate read of the vernacular family image and at the same time to pull back to see the whole, thus pushing and pulling the boundaries of viewing distance.* (1)

In Memory of a Memory it is the participants / audience who are invited to stand in for the photograph. Here Memory of a Memory is concerned with the *unrealised redemptive possibilities contained in the photographic object* (2). The repository itself acting as a catalyst for the retelling and release of privately held yet collectively shared memories.

Key themes include the act of remembering, the consequences of forgetting and photography's uneasy relationship to the real. The conventions of the vernacular image and in particular the family album and its tendency to privilege certain stories.

Memory of a Memory therefore takes these overarching topics as its premise and raises questions regarding the mnemonic functions of photography in securing notions of the past. The photographic record as a memory trigger and the concept of who's memory and past is it that is actually visually perceived / recorded.

Interests also relate to the liminal qualities of a photograph and its potential to possess / cross the threshold between our physiological / psychological response in terms of photographic record, memory, meaning.

The photograph as sensory threshold where one perception or condition blends or collapses into another and memories which outlast the original physical photograph and that persist long after its photographic referent has ceased to exist.

References

1. Angela Kelly, CAA Formal Paper Proposal Catharsis: Images of Post Conflict Belfast (2010)
2. Michael Newman, Salvage Tacita Dean: Seven Books (Gottingen: Steidl/ARC/Muse d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2003), The Collection.

N.B. As advised by Nicolas Lambouris I have forwarded a 'Word' document containing examples of work from the Memory of a Memory project to Filitsa Charalambous (the conference administrative secretary) due to the actual file size of this document (25Mb)