For my grandmother Kathleen Dunbar (1915 – 1998).
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Abstract

This doctoral research addresses the question of how the photograph can operate as an environment of mnemonic return. Using practice-based research as the site for the generation of new knowledge, the project evolves over three stages (Phases I – III), moving from the individual to collective contexts. Drawing from the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, memory theory, and contemporary art, the research explores inter-relationships between the image, memory and generative or regenerative creative strategies used to reconstitute lost or partial identity narratives. The project is designed to incorporate conversational partners at each stage, which also includes research outputs through public exhibition, discussed sequentially in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. A comprehensive overview of all practice-based outcomes has been produced as a series of books to accompany this text (Appendices i-iv). These include a full catalogue of artworks presented through interim and final exhibition, along with three prototype photobooks, one for each of the stages outlined. The research is located within the developing field of practice-based Fine Art enquiry, and the artwork produced is treated and discussed as the site of new knowledge.

This research proposes and outlines a working practice-based methodology, through which the photograph can be treated as a site of mnemonic return. In Phase I, this is examined as an individual engagement with autobiographical photographic materials, where the operation of memory in relationship to the image is elicited, triggered and examined through iterative studio-based visual cycles of return, contextualised in reference to selected psychotherapeutic, autobiographical, psychogeographical and aesthetic methods. In Phase II, the autobiographical method is continued but extended outward to encompass cultural and collective memory, through identifying and creatively reimaging mnemonic links to André Breton’s semi-autobiographical novel Nadja. Breton’s text is re-navigated, psychologically and also mnemonically to reimagine the potential of its main protagonist, Nadja. Breton’s work is used as a mnemonic map and armature, to forge connections between the private sphere of individual autobiographical memory, and its potential as shared creative or imaginative recollection. In Phase III, previously unpublished materials by Dorothea Lange, from her 1954 commission for Life Magazine in Ireland, are used as a starting point for collaborative fieldwork, exploring where individual autobiographical memory can become a site for collaborative, and collective mnemonic return.

The dissertation contributes new knowledge to the field of contemporary photographic practice, proposing alternative readings and approaches to using the documentary image. This also includes new insights into the work of Dorothea Lange, as an iconic representative of this form of photographic work. It also outlines useful aesthetic, conceptual, and relational strategies for exploring the photograph as a site of mnemonic return in collaborative, community based contexts.
Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that the work on this dissertation is based on my own independent work, except where I have received help as stated in the acknowledgement and text. All quotations and summary of the work of others have been acknowledged where appropriate.

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Martina Cleary

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 20/03/2017
INTRODUCTION

Context of the Research

The background to this research emerged through ongoing practice-based questions and interests in identifying how photography functions as a mnemonic environment, in light of theories and aesthetic developments within the field of contemporary photographic practice, from 1990’s onwards. In particular, I am influenced by new aesthetic and conceptual strategies employed by photographic artists who address inner subjective responses to the world. Here I refer to the potential of the photograph to act as a reservoir of latent associations and significations, inducing context-specific memories superseding the technical, material, or visual particulars of the image itself, while also being cognisant of how such factors influence the manifest material realization of the image. In short by what means does the photographic image work through associative, affective, perceptual or psychological responses to induce or sustain memory, and can this be seen or actively signified within the aesthetic form of what is presented to the viewer? In my own practice I would describe my use of the photograph as the expression of a frozen psychological state, rather than an interest in capturing a frozen moment. A concern with memory has been at the very core of my art practice since 2006, and came to the fore as a potential topic for PhD research following community-based work with subjects suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

According to Ian Farr (2012), a concern with memory, or memory work as a conceptual paradigm, has emerged as a recurring theme within contemporary visual art practice from the 1950’s onwards. Characteristic of this form of practice are, autobiographical or confessional approaches, adaptations of archival techniques, or artistic appropriation of visual anthropological or ethnographic methods to construct or reconstruct stories and histories, whether individual or collective. Fredric Jameson (1992) who was one of the first theorists to describe postmodernism, compared this new paradigm shift as a state comparable to schizophrenia, having at its core a rapidly changing, even disintegrating sense of self, memory and identity. This growing cultural preoccupation with memory, could in this respect be seen as a reaction against an underlying fear of the disintegration of memory, which has been further heightened by the displacement of knowledge storage through ever expanding uses of digital technology. Theorists including Nicholas Carr (2011) and Jaron Lanier (2011), describe the advancement of digital technologies as resulting in a flattening out, or shallowing of the capacity of the mind to deal with information through true reflective introspection and memory work. In a time also described by William J. Mitchell (1992) as the post-photographic, the indexical register of the image has given way to what Fred Ritchin (2010) terms the hyper image: a conflation of sources that threaten not only notions of authenticity, but also the material mnemonic culture of the visual photographic artefact. Photographs are increasingly created, shared and forgotten via digital platforms only, with these platforms now having purposeful obsolescence built in, e.g. Snapchat and Instagram. In vernacular usage photographs are now rarely circulated in printed form, in albums, on walls, or as personal mementos, as they would have been only a decade ago. As the photograph as
material artefact becomes increasingly obsolete, its potential to function as a mirror, trigger, signifier of memory is also in a state of change.

An important part of this research therefore has involved questioning how memory and photography inter-relate; how the photograph as a physical material object serves to preserve, prompt, and even reconstitute memory, and how interaction with the photograph’s material form helps to consolidate memory in an age of increasing memory loss. Through practice-based studio methods, I have explored how to use the material image as a site of mnemonic return, to re-construct, even restore a sense of identity to the speaking subject, where this has been fragmented, threatened or erased. Beyond understanding the underlying concepts and context of my own practice as a contemporary visual artist, I am also interested in applying the knowledge generated here within community based and relational art projects, where the methods outlined can be used for arts-based memory work beyond the formal gallery context.

This research project has been carried out over a time period of 4.5 years, and conducted through the creation of one extended cycle of practice-based research for public exhibition. This consists of three distinct but interconnected stages (Phases I – III), as outlined in the chapters to follow. The research methods involve practice based research including the studio use of Collage as a visual aesthetic method and Wandering as a conceptual paradigm, drawn from psychogeography as a literary as well as visual arts movement; Participant Driven Photo Elicitation, and selected Ethnographic and Autoethnographic strategies. In the chapters that follow I will present an outline and rationale of my use of these methods, in relation to the stages of development and outcomes within studio experiments and results. This research is situated in relation to the following fields and disciplines:

**Art History**, particularly photographic history and theory of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, including ideas drawn from Roland Barthes on the relationship between the photographic image and mourning; Ian Walker on the nature of the Documentary Surreal; Gregory Batchen on the materiality of memento-mori in photographic practices; Michael Sheringham on Psychogeography and Surrealism; Justin Carville on collective memory and the photograph in the Irish context; Martha Langford on the correspondence between photography and narrative mnemonic strategies; Mariah Devereaux Herbeck on narrative drift and nomadic subjectivities.

**Memory Theory**, on the relationship between trauma, recollection, visual signification and return as discussed by Cathy Caruth, Annette Kuhn, Ulrich Spear, Judith Herman and Didi Huberman. Gaston Bachelard, Frances A. Yates, and Edward Casey have been referenced to discuss the relationship between memory and place. Certain aspects of the project are linked to relational and community based practices in contemporary art. Here photo elicitation and memory work, while also linked to methods in photo-therapy, are differentiated from this through the application of outcomes purely in non-clinical contexts. Grant Kester, Nicholas Bourriaud and Suzanne Lacy are important reference
points regarding community based and relational artistic research and production.

**Objectives of the Research**

As noted above, throughout this research my concern has been in gaining a deeper understanding of how the photograph operates as a site of mnemonic return. Beyond the surface register, or the indexical documentary trace, the perceived objectivity of photography as a mechanically recorded instant, some images can often become more, having the power to trigger deep mnemonic associations. These images can lead the viewer towards a space of personal memory; a memory environment which can be entered into through a process akin to re-navigating a lost territory, repositioning the subject in space and time. It is an interaction with the image involving a re-visiting, re-claiming, re-voicing or re-imaging fragmented or semi-forgotten content, a process which can become a conscious creative act of remembering identity. This use or understanding of the photograph allows for a more complex, and multi-faceted realisation of the tacit, latent and often invisible content beyond a surface reading of the image. Here the photograph seems to transcend the indexical, or iconic function, possessing instead a power to communicate something beyond the literal. In these instances, the image becomes a form of visual resonating ground, through which the viewer can access the more amorphous, in flux, or elliptical within consciousness. The photograph opens to interpretation in ways only works of art can, growing within the viewer, in complexity and meaning. My interest in this topic stems in part from a certain frustration with the limitations of photography, or rather how it is used, understood and validated according to its objective indexical register. As a contemporary lens-based media artist, my practice has always incorporated methods, techniques and concepts that extend beyond the understanding of the photographic as literal and objective. What I have been investigating here is how certain photographs function as memory matrices, how their visual aesthetic and apparent obviousness are in fact deceptive, how they become starting points on a map into complex journeys of psychological return.

With regard to the generation of new knowledge through this research, I have begun with the understanding that photography is never simply about the decisive detached moment. There is always a subtext, substratum, latency influencing how photographic images are created, interpreted and read. I want to understand how this inter-relationship between the photographic image and memory operates, on both a personal and collective level. I have set about exploring this topic by working through the material and aesthetic parameters of the medium, through my own art practice, to gain a deeper insight into how exactly photography can be re-constructed, re-interpreted and re-invented. I treat photographs as mnemospheres, a term I use to describe the complex emotional and psychological environments surrounding certain photographic images, initiating journeys of mnemonic return. Memory is regarded here as being anchored to physical place, as much as it is to the photographic artefact. The idea of memory as a haunting also reoccurs throughout. Through the research I aim to reposition my work in relation to documentary practice, identifying strategies for incorporating meta-textual and reflexive tactics that allow for a new form of hybrid practice. The research also tests the extension of practical uses of practice-
based results beyond a Fine Art context, through the use of collaborative and relational strategies in the field work conducted in Phase III.

Therefore, I would summarise the main objectives of this research as follows:

- To gain a deeper understanding of the underlying structure of my own practice, in particular how memory influences my approach to creating photographic images. How do I position my current conceptual and aesthetic approach as a contemporary photographer, in relationship to developments within my field, particularly with regard to the de-materialization of the photographic image?

- To investigate the inter-relationship between memory and visual form, drawing upon aesthetically, philosophically and psychoanalytically informed theories of image analysis, as presented in the works of key theorists and artists influencing my work.

- Beginning with my own studio experiments, I will identify tacit strategies and through which the photograph is operating as a site of mnemonic return on a personal level. What I discover will then be tried and tested with the collective context through situated fieldwork.

- To discover new insights and knowledge, relevant to contemporary photographic practice, including the contribution of new insights, undiscovered materials and original artworks to the field.

A synopsis of the key research questions within this project include:

- How does the photograph function as a site of mnemonic return, and how is this informing the conceptual and aesthetic approach within my work as a contemporary photographer?
- How am I using the photographic process as a form of memory excavation, reclamation and reconstitution of identity narratives?
- What are the core strategies and techniques within this process, which can be applied beyond the context of the personal, to collective and community based projects?
- What new knowledge does this practice-based research contribute to current developments within my field?

**Overview of Chapters**

This dissertation is structured into four main chapters, following the sequential development of an extended body of artistic visual outcomes, presented for and through public exhibition. In Chapter one, I will introduce the key research methods used, providing an overview of their application during the project. My main method is practice based research, and within this the use of Collage as a consistent visual aesthetic strategy, and Wandering as a conceptual paradigm borrowed
from psychogeographical cultural practices. Secondary methods include autoethnography and autobiography, and I will include an outline of how and where each has influenced practice based outcomes. As I have used photographic materials as primary and secondary resources to initiate conversations at each stage of the project, I will briefly discuss photo elicitation and phototherapy, outlining where these methods apply to and differ from my own use of the image as a generative artefact in memory work. Following this overview of methods, the dissertation outlines the three stages of the project (Phase I, II and III), in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Each of these chapters follows a similar format, including an overview of starting points, an outline of practice-based experiments and an analysis of results. The trajectory of the research moves from the individual, towards the collective, with links between key stages made with reference to relevant theories of memory, as well as conceptual and artistic influences which have informed my thought as the project evolved. For the sake of brevity, general theories of memory are covered in chapter 2, aesthetic and artistic influences in chapter 3, and finally collective applications of the photograph as a site of mnemonic return, through fieldwork is outlined in chapter 4. As this is a practice-based research project, illustrations of visual experiments will be used to support the written argument throughout this text. In addition, the Appendix includes five important additional components:

- A catalogue of all practice-based outcomes including documentation of the final exhibition of work held at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, County Clare, in August – September 2016.
- Three prototype photobooks, one for each of the stages (Phase I-III) of the project.
- Research resources gathered during Phase III, including previously unpublished visual and textual materials from The Dorothea Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California, and fieldwork materials from within the local community context.

It is important to note that the visual artworks created during this project are the main site and evidence of the knowledge produced through the research. This write-up serves the purpose of providing insight into their generation, and content. In drawing up conclusions I will be treating these artworks as the evidence and site of new knowledge.
CHAPTER 1 - METHODS

Practice Based Research

The central research method used during this project has been practice based research. As a contemporary visual artist, it is through my studio experiments and their outcomes that I aim to address my topic. In doing this I have generated a large body of practice based studio outcomes, including photographs, photo-books and mixed-media artefacts, which serve to investigate and address my questions. Results have been presented through public exhibition at key stages throughout, culminating in a final showing of work in August – September 2016. To outline my understanding and use of practice based research, I will now briefly outline the key attributes of this method.

Christopher Frayling describes three approaches to practice based research, derived from Herbert Read, including, Research into Art and Design, Research through Art and Design, and Research for Art and Design. It is within the third of these categories that I would locate my own work, in what Frayling describes as,

Research where the end product is an artefact – where the thinking is.... embodied in the artefact, where the goal is not primarily communicable knowledge in the sense of verbal communication, but in the sense of visual or iconic or imagistic communication.

(Frayling 1995, p.5)

Within the context of Fine Art practice based research, the main site of new knowledge is understood to be located within the artworks produced. Frayling discussing this point notes, that practice based research involves taking an idea, reflecting upon it, contextualizing it and translating it through the artwork itself, with outcomes or knowledge being generated through the meeting of process and reflection upon process. This reflection upon process happens in the space between text and image. The progress of my research follows this journey, moving between studio work and reflection upon studio work. This is documented through ongoing journals and use of artist's books in particular, to build cohesive narratives, drawing together and resolving components within the research at key stages throughout. This journey through materials, concepts and thoughts, also determined the structure of my final PhD exhibition presentation, as well as this dissertation. The end products of my research are therefore artworks, formatted into three series of inter-connected bodies of progressive creative development. In writing about these artworks, I will be treating them as Frayling outlines above, as practice based research objects that embody knowledge relevant to my topic of inquiry. The end products from this investigation include outcomes developed and presented in three main stages or Phases. While a certain number of illustrations have been included in the main body of this dissertation in describing these, please refer to the Appendix items (i-iv) for a more comprehensive overview of the full portfolio of visual outcomes, which include:


Phase III – *The Suitcase Archive (2015-2017)* – a series of large scale collaborative archival photographic prints, five handmade artist’s books, and a sound piece. This part of the project is also shown with thirty-five original Dorothea Lange prints from The Oakland Museum of California.

Clive Caseaux (2008, pp.107-108) in his review of four of the main current publications on practice based research, including Carter (2004), Gray and Malins (2004), Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén (2004) and Sullivan (2005), argues that while all these theorists agree that it is the interdisciplinarity of this form of research in art which makes it unique, none explicitly describe how knowledge is generated using this method. Caseaux proposes to bridge a perceived gap in reasoning between artefact and its rationalization or verbalisation, through applying Kant’s theory of knowledge, to philosophically construct an outline of the processes involved. He says that that according to Kant,

> Concepts determine the content of experience, and the interdisciplinary tension between concepts creates occasions for reality to surprise us and new observations to be made.


It is according to this rationale, somewhere between disciplines, in the meeting or juxtaposition of discourses used within a practice based research project (whether philosophical, aesthetic, art historical or psychoanalytical) that new knowledge potentially emerges through critical inquiry and articulation of encounters on the threshold of shared or contested ideas of aesthetic and meaning. What Sullivan (2005) would describe as a form of transcognition occurs. I find this concept of transcognition relevant as I have drawn upon memory theorists influenced by psychoanalysis and neurobiology. Transcognition as an intellectual framework is also evident in the collage methods I have used in the physical making of the work. I interleave sources not only within the aesthetic material form, but also through the interconnected epistemological discourses informing the conceptual foundation of the work. I will discuss these sources in detail, in relation to practice based research outcomes in the chapters to follow, identifying how studio results function as objects of thought and evidence of new knowledge.

In describing practice based research Gray and Malins (2004, pp.104-105) also use the metaphor of a journey to characterise the creative process central to this kind of project. They list explicit recommended stages, components and activities, which I find helpful in distinguishing practice based research from regular studio practice. Here it is distinguished as a method involving an intentional identification of systems for gathering, analysing, synthesising, presenting and communicating findings. The tools and techniques used must therefore provide for an additional layer of reflexivity, through for example strategies such as: systematic documentation, testing and conscious reflection upon studio discoveries. Journaling, keeping logs, compiling textual and visual records and tracing each stage of studio progress is advocated. Gray and Mallins also state the importance of establishing explicit criteria for the evaluation and analysis of results, relevant
to research questions. Certain elements of this pragmatic and logical approach are of course borrowed from other disciplines, where quantitative and qualitative research strategies are well-established to generate empirically objective outcomes. However, as Gray and Mallins also note, in the Fine Art & Design context these strategies, are applied so the artist researcher may gain a more conscious or cognitive comprehension of the tacit knowledge, within studio materials and processes which are often very subjective, idiosyncratic and personal in nature. This includes gaining a working understanding of transferrable methods from within studio processes, as well as the development of insights leading to identified benchmarks of innovation within the discipline. New knowledge generated could for example take the form of, a discovery of new practices, techniques, processes or materials. It could mean revisiting, reinventing, or re-reading practices currently in existence, to find new aesthetic or conceptual contributions. It might allow for interdisciplinary knowledge transfer, making explicit qualities unique to the creative arts of benefit to other areas of research and development.

As a result of this research I will claim that new knowledge has been discovered within a number of these categories. This claim will be discussed in detail in chapters 1 to 3. Over the course of this project I have also used several of the strategies presented above, to help bring the tacit, often non-verbal processes within studio experiments, into language, and thereby into the arena of conscious scrutiny. This began with keeping a Professional Development Portfolio, documenting on-going visual experiments in the studio, and reflexive analysis on these. As the project progressed, findings were also presented through the delivery of academic papers selected for a number of international conferences and events including: the Art, Memory, Place, Seminars, at The Irish Museum of Modern Art (2015), the Format (2015) Conference, Derby, the Locating The Gothic’ International Conference at Limerick School of Art & Design (2014), and the USW Annual Postgraduate Research Seminars (2014). These formal academic contexts allowed me to formulate informed rationale on the strategies, content and directions emerging within the studio work. During the course of the project, studio outcomes were also selected for a number of important international exhibitions including, Describing Architecture, Memory and Place, curated by Antoin Doyle, Dublin (2014), Format/Evidence, curated by Louise Clements, Derby (2015), The Athens Photo Festival/Reframing Memory, Main Exhibitions at the Benaki Museum (2015) and the Impressions Fine Art Print Biennale, curated by David Ferry, Galway (2015). Work from Phase II was also shown at the Obscura Festival, Malaysia (2015), the Tbilisi Photo Festival, Georgia (2015), and Just Another Photo Festival, New Delhi (2015). The series Postcards From a Life won the Ideas Tap Award at Format 2015. These were all events curated by experts within my field, and my decision to submit the work for professional evaluation in this way was strongly influenced by my experience with the Nordic model of postgraduate research in Art & Design. This requires PhD candidates to present studio outcomes, as well as written work in professional contexts over the course the PhD research project, in addition to a final exhibition and write-up. With this in mind I also presented a solo interim exhibition They Glide Like Birds, Sing and In Groups Over The Roads, in April 2016, at the Glór Cultural Centre in Ennis, County Clare, in preparation for the final PhD exhibition in August-September 2016. I would support the rationale
of the Nordic model, because it emphasises the generation of Practice Based Outcomes for publication and dissemination through avenues that are authentically relevant to industry standards within the discipline. Submitting work to the exhibitions above necessitated all of the tasks of gathering, analysing, synthesising, presenting and communicating findings as outlined by Gray and Mallins in their description of post graduate research in the visual arts. It also helped me in identifying benchmark points, and resolved practice based research findings, within such a lengthy project. It allowed me to conclude certain stages within the research, and identify follow-on goals in line with the overall research objectives. While, the traditional route of presenting academic papers through conferences happened in tandem with studio research outputs, I would argue that submitting the work for professional evaluation by industry curators and experts is an authentic benchmark in determining whether outcomes are considered innovative, relevant and contributing new materials to the field. I will discuss the use of journaling and reflexive analysis as part of my methodology, in the more detailed analysis of practice based research in chapters 1-3, to follow. I will summarise by saying that the inter-relationship between the theoretical underpinnings of the research and the practice based outcomes were subject to both academic and creative forms of textual analysis. This happened through the writing of the academic papers mentioned above, the keeping of journals recording fieldwork in Helsinki, Paris and Ireland, and also the generation of texts constituting part of the content of several of the finished artworks and prototype photobooks.

In her recent article on integrating theory and practice in Fine Art research, Mo Throp proposes a number of approaches for bringing together textual and theoretical strands within a practice based research project. She describes the importance of shifting reflective written and theoretical discourse from a position adjacent to studio production, to one of active dialogical engagement with material outcomes. In describing how she trains Fine Art students at the CCW Graduate School London, she maintains that the written component of practice based research should function not simply as a commentary, explanation or contextualization of what has happened in the studio, but as “a critical vehicle for considering and disseminating alternative possibilities for the work that is being produced during the research process.” What is important here is that students include self-reflexive mapping as evidence of enquiry, and that they regard studio practice as a generative site for the development of new critical analytical positions. Emergent questions in this scenario, evolve authentically from genuine studio based experiments and problems, made explicit through an on-going examination and interrogation of materials, processes and concepts. This is a form of material thinking in action, where the outcome or artwork created is treated as an active agent, performing its own potential as a means to reveal new knowledge. In this way, throughout the duration of the research project, the practice continues to function as a dynamic site for on-going exchange, reconsideration and refinement of the research objectives. It is a momentum based on natural cycles of speculative thought, moving between making and contemplating upon making, intuitive testing, post production analysis, re-examination, conjecture, decision making and proposition formation. As Throp notes,
We consider the proposition that the artwork might assert, or propose an argument or a critical relation or dimension; how it operates as an object in the world – how it is encountered by the viewer – its performative potential. The work then refuses the role as illustrating a research question through considering how it might become/perform an on-going exploration of a particular research question which does not necessarily know the outcomes.

(Throp 2016, p.6)

I find this description of practice based research useful as it offers guidance in understanding the complex inter-relationship between making and the interpretation of making, or the formulation of coherent logical arguments, rationalizations and theories on what is actually happening within the studio, and how this answers the questions being asked. As Throp also observes, the initial question which inspires or drives the research usually shifts, mutates and evolves, once exposed to the reality of studio experimentation, where it is tested and re-tested through materials based experimentation. As outcomes can only be understood through what is presented within the practice, that is through a tangible material form, results are often difficult to predict, even translate into an adjacent language of evaluative analysis. As stated above, my own way of approaching this dilemma has been to use a range of different textual components, serving different functions within the overall framework of the research project. Sometimes texts operate as part of artwork itself, sometimes it as reflexive commentary upon it. The styles of writing used within this research also vary according to context, and include: formal academic or aesthetic analysis used in conference papers and this write up, field notes and structured interview transcripts, and what I would describe as more poetic or literary forms, used as expressive agency within the artworks, artist’s books and prototype photobooks produced.

I will also mention Praxis and Hybridity in relation to practice based research, as both are central to this method and to how I work as an artist researcher. In a chapter for Estelle Barrett’s, Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry Robyn Stewart describes the inter-relationship or meeting point of theory and practice as Praxis, commenting,

Praxis, for me, involves the crucial and inextricable meld of theory and practice. Thus practitioner-based research is concerned with processes for theorizing practice, using appropriation, pastiche and collaboration as basic tenets.

(Stewart 2010, p.124)

Pastiche is understood here as a form of intellectual hybridity, which according to Stewart emerges from the inherent inter-disciplinarity of artistic methods, a position corresponding to that of both Sullivan and Caseaux above. It is understood that this form of research, while borrowing certain qualitative strategies, transgresses boundaries between observation and participation, subjectivity and objectivity, because of the phenomenology of artistic practice. The researcher is required to occupy positions both inside and outside the field of inquiry, often becoming both object and subject of observation, through the reflexivity required by artistic work. Autobiographical and autoethnographic methods, are often used in conjunction with practice based research, producing what Stewart describes as bricolage, enabling us,

To collage experience, to involve issues of knowledge and understanding, technology, concept, perpect, skill and cultural and discipline experience... travelling between various research disciplines in an attempt to build the most appropriate bridge between aesthetics and experience through
Hybridity is central to every aspect of my own work, where theories of photography, memory, perception and identity meet, through inter-medial experimentation. Therefore, collage is not only a visual method in the aesthetic of studio output, but also a conceptual approach in how the theoretical, artistic and literary influences are brought together in final outcomes. For this reason, I have identified Collage as an important secondary method within my Practice based research, and will provide an overview of it in the section to follow.

In concluding my discussion of practice based research, I will say that I allow for qualities of dynamic and transformative change within my application of this method. I agree with Mika Hanula, a respected theorist on artistic inquiry as research, who reverts to poetic rather than descriptive language when describing its potential outcomes. Holding a similar position to Throp, Hanula advocates that practice based research be judged within the framework of its native discipline, and as he points out, art practice has never been a highly rational, empirical, or quantifiable activity. Ambiguity, open-endedness, process-driven indeterminacy, are all salient features of artistic production. In *Artists as Researchers – A New Paradigm for Art Education in Europe* (2013), Hanula describes this form of research as “an act of fumbling, of a sort.” Its value lies in its ability go deeper, to stay with the uncertainty of the creative process, to discover within this a way to articulate, debate and quarrel with the core issues embedded in a practice. He also maintains that there are certain real frustrations because of its inherent uncertainties. In a statement reminiscent of an extract from a Surrealist manifesto, Hanula describes practice based research as,

> The art of almost, yes.... When you start you get the drift of catching the basketball, the internal logic of a practice based and in its nature inter-disciplinary act of research, it just happens that all of a sudden you are trying to catch a fish or a refrigerator.

(Hanula 2013, p. 89)

With an awareness of the uncertainty, even irrationality of creative practice in mind, in attempting to evaluate or interpret practice based research outcomes, I agree with Chilton & Leavy, who in their essay for the Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research (2014) draw upon several theorists Barone & Eisner (2012), Faulkner (2009), Cole & Knowles (2008), Langer (1957) on this topic. All seem to agree that the only way to measure it, is to examine its effectiveness as Art. Under the criteria of aesthetic power, they note, outcomes must be considered according to their ability to inspire an imaginative response, to evoke through affective resonance, and to aesthetically function at a level of credibility meeting the requirements of Art. They point out that this demands incisiveness and coherence within the work, as well as a power to connect with the viewer expressively, to for example evoke empathy or offer deeper insight. In short the result must operate as a work of Art, within the criteria and expectations of this form of material cultural production. Otherwise the research fails and the method is not appropriate. If the first standard for evaluation then is the aesthetic quality of results, the second according to Chilton & Leavy (ibid. p. 417), is the appropriateness of the research methodology applied in relation to the
question. Beyond this the knowledge which is produced is intended to be ambiguous enough to allow for multiple, multidimensional, complex, dynamic, inter-subjective, and contextual interpretations.

**Collage As Method**

My second research method which could also be regarded as being within the umbrella category of practice based research, relates to the aesthetic as well as conceptual framework I have used throughout the project. I would describe collage as a way of thinking as well as an approach to thinking through materials. Kathleen Vaughan in her article *Pieced together: Collage as an artist's method for interdisciplinary research* (2005), outlines the use of collage informing contemporary artistic production. She describes collage as an aesthetic process which can bring together visual and textual strands within a work, allowing for the interweaving of different primary artistic and theoretical sources. Describing her own practice-based doctoral research, Vaughan outlines the lineage of collage from the early cubist experiments of the 20th century right to the present day. As a visual and conceptual method it has been used to deconstruct dominant forms of discourse and to incorporate and integrate multiple voices, or perspectives within a work. Drawing upon Brockelman (2001), Harding (1996) and Lionnet (1989) in particular, she notes that collage is inherently interdisciplinary, heterogeneous, and provisional. Collage or *Métissage*, is described with reference to Lionnet (1989, p.6) as allowing for the articulation of,

...new visions of ourselves, new concepts that allow us to think otherwise, to bypass the ancient symmetries and dichotomies that have governed the ground and the very condition of possibility of thought, of "clarity," in all Western philosophy. Métissage is such a concept and a practice: it is the site of un-decidability and indeterminacy, where solidarity becomes the fundamental principle of political action against hegemonic languages.

(Vaughan 2008, p.18)

Throughout this research I have used a form of conceptual as well as aesthetic collage, as a method to generate lost, subjugated or erased memory narratives, in particular those of female subjects often absent from mainstream cultural discourse. Using a collage strategy, I have combined archival, found and constructed visual sources, to reassemble mnemonic environments (mnemospheres) for these subjects. Collage promotes a melding together of fragments, and a certain interplay between evidence and imaginative reconstruction. The resulting Art becomes the new knowledge or proposition. Vaughan also mentions feminist philosopher and post-colonial theorist Sandra Harding (1996), who proposed collage as a model for a ‘borderlands epistemology’. This resonates with ideas I have used from another feminist theorist and cultural analyst Mariah Deveraux Herbech, who describes the idea of narrative drift, as a potential mode of liberation and agency for female subjects within cultural production. Here the very act of finding breaks, ruptures and disruptions within the construction of meaning, whether visual, textual or epistemological, so characteristic of forms of collage, bricolage, deconstruction and reconstruction can become a force for the reconstitution of lost memory. Vaughan also proposes certain characteristics of collage as a research method which I find relevant to my own intentions.
Collage is understood as the juxtaposition of fragments through experimentation, to evoke recognition of new or alternative meanings. This can offer unexpected insights and alternatives to traditional dialectical arguments, particularly in the context of the writing of historical memory. Collage is also inherently interdisciplinary, allowing for the piecing together of a variety of sources. It can also consciously include the position of the researcher/artist as agent. It has an open-ended quality, which invites conversation between components within an individual piece or a body of work. Here new knowledge is generated through negotiated interaction within material form, as either an individual or shared act. I see this particular attribute of collage as flow, or the opening up of a space for a relational exchange within the making of meaning central to studio work and creative method. The potential for continuous development, movement, transformation and change within the construction and interpretation of meaning inherent to the collage form, is also consistent with the natural open-endedness or indeterminacy required of art making at its best.

Lynn Butler-Kisber (2010) who has also written extensively on collage as a form of visual research, notes how this method is also effective in making tangible certain forms of knowledge that lie beneath the surface of conscious awareness. This is particularly relevant in memory work. Tracing the lineage of collage back 1,000 years to ancient Japan, and drawing upon contemporary theories Brockelman (2001), Robertson (2002), Davis (2008) she maintains, that as a method collage is effectively aligned with postmodernist modes of thought, where meaning is often built through the deconstruction and reconstruction of tacit, latent or hidden associations. Quoting Davis (2008, p. 250), she notes that, “Collage, created from a synthesis of shattered fragments, realised in an emergent, often randomized composition, arrives at meaning in a very different way, accidentally, capriciously, provocatively, tangentially.” Kisber emphasizes that this non-linear way, can indicate what often eludes regular language. Surprise juxtapositions within the visual field can reveal the hidden, ineffable, and subconscious mechanisms, including those of memory. I have use collage as method in all phases of the practice based research, to generate multi-layered matrices within the material and conceptual structures informing the work. Collage work in Phase I, helped elicit suppressed traumatic memory. Collage became a means of tapping into or accessing the subconscious, much in the way collage was used by the first artists influenced by psychoanalysis, the Surrealists, and more recently visual art therapists, who use photo elicitation to access latent memory.

Kisber and Poldma identify the potential for elicitation as another powerful attribute of collage as method. They recommend working on a series of small-scale collages to repeatedly address the phenomenon under investigation. Then, after a number of collages have been created outcomes can be analysed as visual portrayals, where,

Each collage then shows a facet of the phenomenon...which can be examined collectively based on content, colour, shape, size, content, space, directionality, or any other compositional dimensions, to see if there are unintended commonalities that exist across the collages.

(Kisber and Poldoma 2010, p.4)
I will use this approach in my analysis of outcomes created in Phase I in particular, where an archive of personal photographs formed the basis of several multi-media collage experiments.

Swanson and Wald (2013), also identify within collage as method, the following important qualities which are relevant to understanding my practice based research and its results. They maintain that collage:

- Allows for the synthesis of thought to construct new insight.
- Facilitates open-ended imaginative engagement with the topic under investigation (Eisner 2008).
- Provides for a creative piecing-together based on creating resonances, connections, discursive potential (Vaughan 2005).
- Facilitates verbal and non-verbal thinking, moving from what is currently known towards the discovery of new ideas through association, rearrangement and rethinking of starting points (Zaltman and Coulter 1995).
- Promotes the transcendence of linear thinking, encouraging the development of new insights based upon feeling and tangible experiences (Butler-Kisber and Poldma 2010).
- Entails forms of psychological projection that allow for indirect approaches to materials which could otherwise be difficult for participants in the process (Koll, von Wallpach, and Kreuzer 2010).

An important follow-up to working through collage is the generation of written interpretations of what has been produced, which can offer innovative insights (Havlena and Holak 1996). In accordance with this theory in Chapters 1 - 3 to follow, I will emphasise the application and outcomes of using collage in practice based research evidenced in studio production.

**Wandering as Method**

I would identify wandering as a second method under the broader category of practice based research, which has been used throughout all stages of this project. Here ideas taken from psychogeography as an artistic conceptual approach (both literary and visual), have been very important. Memory, and an awareness of how it is linked to a phenomenology of place forms the basis of my own use of psychogeographical wandering. I would describe this as a form of psychogeographical memory work, or mnemogeography. Psychogeography as a concept is historically attributed to Guy Debord, and defined within the French Situationalist International Journals (Knabb, p. 45) as, “The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals”. According to Coverly, psychogeography as a practice has its origins in the 17th century, within the visionary writings of
Defoe, Blake and De Quincey amongst others, and evolved in 19th century Paris into the idea of the urban Flâneur, as evident in the works of Poe, Baudelaire and Benjamin. These writers, who would also influence later psychogeographical visual practices, presented the figure of a detached solitary wanderer undertaking journeys through urban spaces, as a form of creative engagement. The emergence of the Flâneur also occurred in part as a response to the historical destruction of the older medieval centre of Paris. As Coverly observes,

The fate of the Flâneur is bound up with the fate of the city he inhabits and his very existence acts as an indication of the struggles later generations of urban walkers will have to face as the city is redeveloped.

(Coverly 2010, p. 20)

Here he (as the Flâneur is usually a male subject) is cognisant of this state of urban decline, erasure and transience, becoming a nostalgic witness to states of external impermanence. During the early 20th century the Flâneur was transformed within Surrealist texts, including those of Breton, Aragon and Soupault, to become a figure more psychologically attuned to the influence of external triggers upon subconscious drives. The city as the setting for urban wandering, became for the Surrealists a stage for marvellous encounter fuelled by desire, a process which ultimately revealed the hidden nature of the self to the wanderer/narrator/protagonist of many Surrealist Art works. As Coverly also notes (ibid, p.21), “It is in Breton’s Nadja and Aragon’s Paris-Peasant that we find the blueprint for what has been described as the psychogeographical novel.” For these artists wandering or aimless drifting became a form of divination and their approach was a direct precursor to the later, more politically engaged Dérive and Détournement of the Situationalist International movement of the 1950’s, led by Guy Debord. Rather than erotic encounter, the Situationalist International extended the potential of wandering as method into a form of social activism. Here the concept of a wandering detached subject becomes a form of resistance, at the quotidian level, to structures of power. To drift according to the activists of Situationalist International, can become a political gesture, a form of embodied conscious disruptive intervention. Debord’s manifesto recommended conscious resistance at the quotidian level, through becoming aware of how power reveals itself in its control of every aspect of everyday existence. In Knabbs we find several of the original treatise of the Situationalist International group, including Debord’s explanation of the potential of such interventions,

Everyday life is the measure of all things: of the fulfilment or rather the nonfulfilment of human relations; of the use of lived time; of artistic experimentation; of revolutionary politics...To fail to criticize everyday life today means accepting the prolongation of the present thoroughly rotten forms of culture and politics, forms whose extreme crisis is expressed in increasingly widespread political apathy and neo-illiteracy, especially in the most modern countries.


For Debord revolution begins through the bringing into consciousness of all of the structures which govern the behaviours, forms and expectations controlling how we live and navigate daily life. Drifting can become a form of making these usually hidden power structures visible, as it disrupts the routines by which we usually inhabit space and time. This potential of wandering as political
intervention even contravention of everyday practices and political hegemonies, is something noted by subsequent late 20th and early 21st century female scholars such as Rebecca Solnit, Mariah Devereaux Herbeck and Doreen Massey who offer feminist perspectives on gender and wandering. As Solnit in her chapter ‘Walking After Midnight; Women, Sex and Public Space’, in Wanderlust observes,

A woman who has violated sexual convention can be said to be strolling, roaming, wandering, straying, all terms that imply that women’s travel is inevitably sexual or that their sexuality is transgressive when it travels.

(Solnit 2006, p. 234)

Laurin Elkins in her recently published book Flâneuse is more direct in her examination of the implications of gender on wandering as political agency:

Walking where other people (men) walk without eliciting comment. That is the transgressive act. You don’t need to crunch around in Gore-Tex to be subversive, if you’re a woman. Just walk out your front door.

(Elkins 2016, p. 21)

As Elkins notes, the very act of wandering for a female subject is politically charged. To choose to wander can therefore be read as a form of conscious resistance, a defiance of patriarchal conventions governing personal autonomy and freedom to move within public space. I am particularly interested in these views of wandering as not only a creative, but a politically subversive act. Wandering is a core strategy in how I gather primary materials for practice based research outcomes. My embodied presence in the everyday, my experience of navigating both urban and rural environments is also deeply influenced by memory. This includes the memory of what is known and allowed within an interconnected web of socially and culturally constructed expectations, regulations and prohibitions. Maria Devereaux Herbeck (2013), in her description of what she terms “narrative drift” in recent French literature and film, including André Breton’s novel Najda (1928), has described a process whereby certain subjects, particularly certain women, succeed in escaping the all-encompassing, usually male gaze of a centralized narrative authority by physically wandering beyond the limits of what is expected or permitted. Where the female subject moves beyond the scopic abilities of the voyeur/narrator of many narrative accounts, the story doubles back upon itself rather than the object of the gaze, and the author becomes visible. In Breton’s case, these are the moments in his story of Nadja where he can only speculate upon her life, as she vanishes into the city, and into the unknown. In these moments Breton is to reflect upon his own intentions, and the meaning which Nadja seems to provide. In these instances, where the object/subject of vision literally walks away, disappearing from vision, the narrator must also shift from observation to reflection, from claims of certainty, to poetic and imaginative speculation, relying on memory to fill gaps in perception. As Devereaux observes, when the “screen of authority” invested in the narrative agent or voice is destabilising, so too is the reader’s/viewer’s faith in the power of the larger ontological constructions it upholds. James Clifford in his article on ethnographic Surrealism, interestingly observes that where,
Reality is no longer a given, a natural, familiar environment, the self, cut loose from its attachments, must discover meaning where it may, a predicament which destabilises the self, threatening at its most nihilistic complete erasure of identity. 

(Clifford 1981, p.543)

Here the idea of detaching from the security of some natural order, including visibility within the field of signification is seen as potentially nihilistic. However, in Devereaux’s analysis, this cutting loose and drifting out, is not about alienation, or relegation to oblivion, rather it provides a freedom in detachment to become something new. For the female subject this can include a cutting loose from the conventions of gender specific socio-political confinements, and a release from the memory of what one can or should be. The decision however risky becomes a claiming of individual agency. Devereaux cites, characters such as Mona in Agnes Varda’s work Vagabond (1985), are examples of where a female drifter is written into visual and textual language. As Devereaux also notes, Mona, like so many female subjects who defy social expectation, including Breton’s Nadja, is ultimately punished for such transgression. Where Nadja was confined to the mental asylum, Mona dies in a ditch, to be found by a rural farm labourer.

In my own practice based research, I have consciously used wandering as a method during all three stages of my project, with these points at the forefront of my mind. In Phase I, wandering was a means to remember and give words to unclaimed autobiographical memory. During my wanderings in Paris for Phase II, in trying to literally inhabit Nadja’s lived experience, to speak her memories, the transgressive nature of her existence, and of my own became ever more apparent. The gesture became one of actively using past memory to generate new memory and an alternative potentiality, for a female subject who chooses to wander beyond the boundaries of what is allowed. In Phase III wandering was a route home, a means of remembering self and connection to place after many years of drifting. In all three stages of this project I also began with a series of pre-existing photographic materials, as the starting point for journeys of mnemonic return, to real places in Helsinki, Paris and County Clare in the West of Ireland. This process included returning several times to certain locations, and through these cycles of physical embodied return, I was able to also access memories, both personal and collective, that were not available at the outset of the process. The wandering became a ritual involving the re-emergence and reconstruction of latent mnemonic content, which found visual form through my studio experiment. It also became a form of agency to reclaim experience, and to voice often suppressed traumatic memory, and what I see as gender-specific forms of cultural erasure. This method is connected to a psychogeographical approach, in that I used the external environment as a psychological projection ground, becoming consciously attuned to the changing impact of place upon perception, emotion and thought, with particular attention to the impact upon memory and realization of personal subjectivity during the process. Using wandering as a form of detached, embodied, physical drift also allowed me to access states of consciousness usually inaccessible to everyday existence. It required a shift in awareness of the everyday, which was transformed, revealed or re-engaged with as material for a creative working through, where memory became the main access point to initiate, transform and contextualize outcomes.
Autoethnography and Autobiography

As personal memory, whether my own or that of subjects encountered during fieldwork, was an important part of my process, it is important to discuss autoethnography and autobiography as two additional research methods of relevance to this project. In Creating Autoethnographies (2010), Tessa Muncey describes this form of inquiry as one which places the researcher at the very centre of the investigation. It is a self-reflexive method demanding a deeper critical awareness on the part of the researcher, of their own position within each stage of the research. Muncey identifies the origins of autoethnography in the work of Hayno (1979), noting how it emerged in response to perceptions of alienation, or absence of identification within more objective forms of research. Autoethnography is also regarded as part of a post-modernist and poststructuralist development in analysing metanarratives of knowledge generation, advocating the inclusion of voices often silenced in more objective, empirical and rational discourses. This is relevant to my own investigation, in that I am actively searching for and constructing the lost voice, the forgotten or supressed memories of female subjects, which are the points of departure for each stage of practice based research development. In Phase I the voice is my own, in Phase II it is that of Nadja the heroine of André Breton’s semi-autobiographical novel. Phase III, focuses on the memories of local Irish women, in response to images gathered by Dorothea Lange in 1954. Muncey also provides valuable strategies in planning and writing autoethnography, which in many ways sound like the creative writing of literary or poetic text. She advocates,

The use of the snapshot to describe both literary and pictorial episodes, the stimulus of artefacts to conjure up feelings and thoughts, and the use of the metaphor to enable deeply personal experience to be layered and disguised without losing meaning.

(Muncey 2010, p. 55)

Muncey even suggests a creative writing process comprised of five stages: “cognitive”, “scribbling”, “serious”, “polishing” and “relishing”. This method appealed to me, as it is similar to my creative, intuitive processes as a visual practitioner who also works with text. It is relevant to my topic in allowing for affective content through both the generation and reading of primary and secondary sources, which I believe is important and necessary when tracking the dynamics of memory itself. This said, I also sought to avoid certain characteristics of the autoethnographic, which like the autobiographical method, I feel can become self-indulgent, narcissistic and too limited in scope to constitute knowledge applicable beyond the private introspective context. I am more drawn to what Leon Anderson (2006, p.378), describes as analytic autoethnography rather than emotive or performative styles. He identifies five key points which locate this method as a subgenre within the broader practice of analytic ethnography. These include: (1) complete member researcher status (2) analytic reflexivity (3) narrative visibility of the researcher’s self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis. It was important to me that throughout the project my position as the researcher and artist would become visible as an agent and participant within the emerging practice based research outcomes. This happened through keeping ongoing reflective journals, the content of which was used as textual components in finished artwork. It also necessitated becoming one of the subjects within the
fieldwork conducted in Phase III and including the use of personal autobiographical memories in work for public exhibition alongside that of participants.

Sarah Walls in her article ‘An Autoethnography on Learning about Autoethnography’, references the work of Sparkes (2000), Pelias (2003), Neuman (1994), Boucher (2000) and Ellis (1999), amongst others and notes that while more scientific methods call for the erasure or minimization of a subjective position, authoethnography works with and through elements of self-observation, introspection, evocative story-telling, and imagination. The imaginative and story-telling components were important throughout the project, to explore inter-relationships between image, memory and narration.

**Photo Elicitation and Phototherapy**

In discussing the use of photo-elicitation in fieldwork within community contexts, Auken, Fisvoll and Steward (2010) provide an overview of this method and its application, which I find relevant to my own intentions. They describe how it involves using participants’ own photos along with in-depth interviews as a way of accessing tacit, often unconscious assumptions about the meaning and reading of photographic materials. As they note it is also a way of bridging certain gaps in communication and overcoming perceived hierarchies in the construction of knowledge based on outsider/insider, observer and observed dichotomies. They recommend a method of participant-driven photo-elicitation. As noted here (ibid., p.375), other advocates of this method (Collier, Beilin, Rose, Harper, Stewart and Floyd, and Loeffler) use the image as an anchor to help participants explain experience, perspective and memories. Two forms of photo-elicitation are discussed in this article: that which is externally driven, involving participants responding to images provided by the researcher, and that which is participant-driven, with subjects choosing their own visual materials for discussion. I used both forms within Phase III of my project, which began with a focus group responding initially to an archive of images by Dorothea Lange. As the fieldwork progressed, participants were then invited to gather or create their own photographs responding to key research questions. The final stage of this fieldwork involved direct collaborative creative exchange. In Phase III, we co-created certain pieces (images and photobooks) following on from in-depth recorded interviews. As Auken et al. observe, participant-driven photo-elicitation is a method that provides access to a deeper substratum of participant knowledge, a form of collaborative production, which can also be perceived as less marginalizing or threatening. In working with ten participants from within my local community over a period of six months in the final stage of this research, and as a relative outsider within the rural agricultural context which I was studying, these qualities within the design of the fieldwork were important. Informed by previous experiences of practice based research in community based contexts, and influenced by theorists such as (Grant Kester, Suzanne Lacy, Suzi Gablik, Nicholas Bourriaud, and Claire Bishop), I wanted to adopt a relational approach, which would incorporate aspects of co-authorship, within certain materials generated. Through guided activities including, structured workshops, presentations, participant driven photographic elicitation, interviews, psychogeographical wandering as a group, and holding a community based exhibition of results,
the potential of the photograph to operate as a shared environment of mnemonic return was addressed. During this fieldwork I used the narrative interview style, aware of its relationship to oral history traditions. As Hanula et. Al note,

Here the concept of narrative is understood as a means of shaping or ordering past experiences. It is the act of telling stories, getting into particular ones, and not answering generalised questions….. It is never experience as given, or neutral, or as the final answer, but experience as the base of constant play of leaving and returning, getting closer and gaining distance, but always staying with it – staying with the productive dilemma and its time and place-bound articulations and actualizations.

(Hanula et. Al 2014, pp. 40-41)

These cycles of return, including the retelling of stories, their recollection on an individual as well as the collective basis using selected photographs to initiate the process, became the basis of the aesthetic construction of new work within all stages of the project. Some would argue that there is also a deeply therapeutic quality to this form of practice, especially where memory is the starting point and focus of the investigation. It is therefore important to also mention photo-therapy and note that while there are certain features consistent between what I am doing and this well-established method, the difference is in my intended use of research findings. Outcomes from this research are intended to produce artistic rather than the clinical findings. Having studied expressive Art Therapy as part of a previous Graduate Degree, I am very aware of the differences involved at all stages in the process, including the generation, discussion and dissemination of visual outcomes, between Art Therapy and Fine Art contexts. Phototherapy is defined by Del Loewenthal (2013) as an emerging method within the field of psychotherapy, rising in prominence and application over the past thirty years. Among the leading figures in the field he lists Weiser, Krauss, Fryear and Walker, noting that is a more recognised method among psychotherapists practicing in North America and Finland. Among Weiser’s five main techniques listed by Lowenthal (ibid. p. 6), I would identify two as relevant within my own project. These include the use of photographs to construct metaphors of self, and the use of photo systems, “which are ways of reviewing family albums and photo-biographical collections”. In this context, personal photographs are used to help subjects verbalize memories which are either forgotten or repressed, often due to trauma. The photograph becomes a projection ground, or container, through which mnemonic traces can be reassembled into cohesive narratives, either verbal or textual. Ulla Halkola describes this use of the photograph, under the guidance of a trained psychotherapist as:

(reaching) a point, where in confidential interaction, photographs and photographing function as impulses to memory and to recognising and expressing emotions, thus promoting the self-understanding of the client. It is a question of a comprehensive process where the photos used in therapy are connected to the client’s mental images, beliefs, and memories of self.

(Halkola cited in Lowenthal 2013, p. 20)

In this context the photograph becomes a site of mnemonic return, through which the subject can revisit a range of autobiographical experiences, with the image operating as an access point to memories that may be initially inaccessible through any other form.
This therapeutic process is relevant to Phase I of this research in particular, during which I decided to investigate autobiographical memories linked to personal trauma. By taking myself as subject, I intended to observe the psychological dynamic underlying my relationship to the photographs involved, and discover whether the process would allow me to find closure. This happened under the guidance and supervision of professional psychotherapist Caoimhe Ní Thóibín. The fact that sessions undertaken were part of a PhD research project was discussed and clarified at the outset of the psychotherapeutic engagement. It was agreed upon that I would use a selected series of photographic images as the starting point and basis for each session, and that my purpose was to explore how these images might assist in triggering or accessing memories related to a particular period of time, and events. Over six-months, using this one set of images from a personal album, I aimed to use the photographs to elicit repressed mnemonic content through repetitive cycles of narrative recollection. It was also agreed that each session could be recorded and transcribed, with emergent content potentially becoming the starting point for further in depth studio experiments. What was taken from transcriptions of the recorded sessions was primarily textual. I extracted certain things I had said during the stream of consciousness narration central to the psychotherapeutic process, where previously subconscious memories often emerge through speaking about things previously undiscussed. Extracts from this material was then written into collage pieces or artist books made later in the studio. Here I focussed on my own voice, which was often addressed to the subject in the photographs. Or alternatively, when a difficult memory emerged within narrative recollection, this was transcribed, repeated and transformed, through several consecutive visual iterations within studio processes. It is important to state that the psychotherapist voice does not appear in any of the artworks, nor have transcripts of the individual sessions been included as an Appendix item. My rationale for this decision, is that the specific or explicit content of each psychotherapeutic session remains within the sphere of the private, whereas the resulting artwork inspired by what emerged, has been consciously created for the more public context of the gallery or publication, where artwork while often emerging from the autobiographical, has the capacity to speak beyond the self through creative transformation. I believe a balance between the private and the public has to happen within this process. There is a necessary additional stage or step between what happens in the psychotherapeutic situation, and what is communicated in any artwork inspired by this. This step also differentiates the process from regular art therapy, where raw, emergent, untransformed visual or textual material is treated as clinical evidence in its own right. The decision to engage a psychotherapist was taken with the intention of establishing a controlled environment through which I could explore and potentially access traumatic memory, which could then inform the studio work. The mnemonic narratives recovered also prompted a return journey to real sites related to the events described. Located in Helsinki, these places became part of the first physical journey of mnemonic return in the project.

Ulla Halkola (ibid., p. 26) in her analysis of the relationship between photographs, memories and biographical meaning also maintains that this method of working with photographs is “not restricted to verbal descriptions…. associative work is also possible, almost promoting time travel
led by emotions”, a point I would strongly agree with. Within my own experiments the autobiographical photographic materials became portals through which I could almost time travel to recover memory, initially my own, and as the project developed this broadened to encompass cultural as well as collective ideas of memory as it relates to the reclamation, excavation and re-construction of ideas of self, especially the recollection of self, shattered by individual or historical trauma. As Halkola (ibid., p. 27) along with other experts on trauma (Van der Kolk, Kuhn, Karuth, Herman) note, “The extremes of remembering a trauma may change from detailed recalling of sense perceptions to the delivery and fragmentation of memories or even to a total forgetting of the event”. My own struggles to reassemble narratives, to piece together a cohesive storyline from traces of memories, resurfacing through photographs, is reflected in the fragmented broken aesthetic in practice-based research experiments in Phase I. However, staying with this method and understanding its application, literally from the inside out, was of great benefit in providing me with a working insight into its potential use beyond the personal. Lowenthal also believes that ‘talking picture therapy’ or phototherapy can require up to six-sessions. I participated in eight in total, each lasting one hour, with personal photographs acting as the starting point for an additional photographic working through, influencing the generation of the Artwork created for public exhibition in Phase I. This method was also relevant in Phase III of this project, in that it relates to certain ethnographic uses of photo-elicitation during fieldwork.

I will discuss in detail in the chapters to follow, how I applied findings from Phase I to practice based research outcomes in Phases II and III. As a final point in this overview of methods, I will say that my intention in the overall trajectory of the research, has been to move from the personal towards the collective. In doing this I followed an arch of investigation from the use of very personal materials in Phase I, to shared cultural artistic sources in Phase II, and finally collectively relevant archival materials in Phase III. This progression also traced a very personal journey of mnemonic return for me, moving from a position of exile to one of return to my culture and country of origin. The research journeys and fieldwork carried out during the project, were possible through the support of Travel & Training Grants from The Arts Council of Ireland which provided the means to gather materials on location in Helsinki in 2013, Paris in 2014 and The Oakland Museum of California in 2015. In addition to this, I was also awarded a number of grants from the County Clare Arts Office, which supported the fieldwork in Phase III, and also covered some production and presentation costs involved in the interim and final PhD exhibitions. This sponsorship also provided the means to invite Gerry Mullins as a guest speaker to my final exhibition, as part of the Culture Night 2016 programme. I believe that the most significant contributions of new knowledge to my field have happened in Phases II and III of the project outcomes. In Phase II this includes the creation of new artworks which have been selected for important international exhibitions by respected curators and experts in my field. In Phase III, in addition to the generation of new artworks, there was also the discovery of previously unpublished materials on the work of Dorothea Lange in Ireland, as well as what I claim are new insights into her process and intentions for this work. I will discuss these points in detail in the chapters to follow.
CHAPTER 2 – PHASE I / REMEMBER TO FORGET

Everything in life is memory, save for the thin edge of the present.
(Gazzaniga cited in Foster 2009, p.2)

Starting Points Phase I

To understand how the photograph operates as a site of mnemonic return, I will first outline selected theories of memory, and how memory is within these, understood to function within the photographic image. For the purpose of this research, I have selected only those theories which describe memory as a form of inscription, both physically and psychologically. This limitation within the scope of the research is important, as my aim has been to find expressive photographic forms to make memory visible and materially inscribed, through art practice. In discussing memory, I will refer to ideas drawn from the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, neuroscience and trauma theory. I will also discuss key conceptual and aesthetic strategies within the work of selected visual artists which have influenced my process. In selecting these artists, I have identified three categories of artwork which were important in my own studio development: artwork influenced by autobiographical methods, artwork which uses archival strategies to excavate or reconfigure memory, and artwork which has a strong narrative structure to reconstitute fragmented or lost memory. These points will be discussed with reference to contemporary photographic theory on memory and the image, along with chosen works from each artist, and my own practice based research outcomes.

Theories of Memory

In identifying theories of memory relevant to my research the first point of interest was the idea that memory is physically inscribed upon the subject. Whitehead (2009) locates the origin of this concept in Ancient Greek philosophy. In the Theaetetus (c. 360BC), Plato described memory as being like a wax tablet onto which objects of perception can be converted into thoughts, through a conscious effort of imprinting, or inscribing. He suggests that perceptions, ideas and memories are somehow tangible things which leave a mark on the person. Plato believed that at birth, prior recollection of ideal forms already existed within the soul. This memory, or recollection of eternal higher truths, were to a greater or lesser degree already individually imprinted. This latent knowledge or memory of the ‘Ideals’ according to Plato, could be discovered through a process of dialectical questioning, as a form of re-collective reconstruction. This is demonstrated in Meno (c.387BC) where Socrates and Meno argue about the nature of knowledge. Richards (2007, p. 21), notes that it is important to understand how this dialectical (or philosophical) reasoning, based on a two-way argument was understood as a way of strengthening memory. In contrast the art of rhetoric, or persuasion, which would become the later medieval and Renaissance forms of memory training, and the modern concept of the rote-learning, actually diminished memory. Therefore, in Platonic thought, memory is also understood as a process of recollection, where engagement with a conversational partner, guides the individual towards not only true memory but the ability to hold a moral position, insight into higher spiritual truth, and awareness of the
soul. In contrast in Aristotle’s *De memoria et reminiscientia* (350 BC), memory is formed entirely through lived encounter with external reality. While the allegory of the wax tablet persists, Aristotle believed that it was only what the senses, through the body experienced during the course of a lifetime, that constituted mnemonic impressions. Aristotle also differentiated between memory and imagination, while the latter was of the past, perception is of the present and prediction of the future, with the imagination arising outside of this. As Whitehead notes,

> There is, then, a distinction between sense images and memory images; the latter are produced or derived from the former by a kind of secondary imprinting process. For Aristotle, memory necessarily contains images of what has entered thought through the senses; he does not believe, like Plato, that the objects of thought can exist separately from the sensible, material world. (Whitehead 2009, p. 23)

A distinction between the real and the imaginary is the second point of importance here. I will argue that it relates to differences in approach, perception and understanding at the core of my own practice, and how I reconcile differences in this between documentary and constructed forms of photography.

In addition to theories of memory as inscription, ideas about the link between memory and place have been important during this research. In antiquity when primacy was given to oral recitation, rather than written records, memory was reinforced through figuratively situating the information to be remembered within real places. Recollection involved a process of inner visualization, an imaginary journeying through the site of choice, to gather details associated with key objects or points within an argument. By Roman times the art of oration required training using this place system, which took precedence over earlier rhetorical traditions. Interestingly this new art form is believed to have been discovered through a traumatic event. In Cicero’s *De Oratore* (55BC), we find the example of Simonides of Ceos, who remembered the guests killed at a banquet, based on where they sat around the table. The placement of the subjects within the space of such dramatic events is also important in reconstructing mnemonic details. As Richards comments,

> The orator who wants to train his memory, we are told, must create a background for storing images, usually an architectural location such as a house; this enables the orderly retrieval of images which are used to mark the objects or words to be remembered. These images should be vivid and remarkable so to aid memory. (Richards 2007, p. 22)

Beginning with the very first studio experiments, I have consistently used links between image and place to explore the real places, or mnemonic environments associated with selected photographs. In Phase I of the research, this necessitated a journey to locations in Helsinki. In Phase II, I explored memories related to key locations in Paris, and in Phase III, it was immediate sites within my current local environment of County Clare, in the West of Ireland. Using photographs as a map, I have wandered through real places, as a method of excavating, externalizing and materializing memory to create new visual artwork. In finding the links between image, place and memory, through cycles of return and narrative elicitation, I set about reconstituting memory as the active agent, or subject of the investigation, a process I will explain in detail in discussing artworks produced, below.
Returning to theories of memory, an additional point of importance within this research, is the connection between memory and identity, or the construction of a coherent narrative of self. Whitehead (ibid, pp. 50-83) identifies the writings of John Locke, David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and William Wordsworth, as foundational in a growing awareness within early European philosophical discourse, of this link. For Locke personal identity, or self, is that which can be sustained as a stable consciousness through time, through the agency of memory. It is that which can also be recounted through a cogent temporal narrative, which traces the story of the self. Remembering is conceived of as that which involves a process of reflection, or an internalization of experience, and through this process, the subject comes to understand the essence of individualism. For Hume, the longevity and strength of external impressions upon consciousness are a significant factor in the strength and duration of memory. Where external stimuli are new or vibrant, they form ideas, and eventually memories. But where the external input is weaker, damaged or fading, what develops is imagination rather than true memory. This distinction can however be tenuous, as Whitehead observes,

The boundary between memory and imagination therefore becomes profoundly unstable in Hume; memory, by implication, can no longer be relied upon to be faithful and historically accurate to the past that it records, and it therefore becomes difficult to ‘know’ the past, to distinguish between remembered and imagined realities.

(Whitehead 2009, p. 60)

From an artistic starting point, the act of taking poetic licence, of obscuring the boundaries between fact and fiction, true recollection and imaginative embellishment, can also be a means to disguise, or allegorically expose the personal through the public platform of cultural production. Inhabiting a space between both fact and fiction, memory and imaginative reconstruction, is a consistent feature within my studio practice. It is something I often also use as a feminist strategy, to reconstitute lost, erased or forgotten histories of women. Where the autobiographical details, and historical records are missing, e.g. as in the case of Breton’s Nadja. I have used autobiographical memory combined with imaginative reconstruction to create her narrative voice, through the work Postcards From A Life. This point will be discussed in greater detail, in the analysis of outcomes from Phase II to follow.

A sustained research interest in psychoanalytic theory has also informed my practice over the past number of years, and theories of memory since the early 20th century have been broadly defined by this field, and more recently developments in neuroscience. As Terdiman, (1993, p. 240) notes, “Psychoanalysis is our culture’s last Art of Memory.” Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer are largely attributed with the first psychoanalytical investigations of memory malfunction, as the root cause of mental illness. In Studies in Hysteria (1895) Freud concludes that hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences, a diagnosis made after six-months in Paris observing the work of Charcot at the Salpêtrière Asylum in Paris. While sexual repression was broadly identified at the time as formative in the symptomatology of what Freud described as hysteria, he concluded that it was problems within memory function, especially its repression, avoidance or denial, in instances of individual trauma, which lead to the symptoms he witnessed. The talking cure, the
foundations of modern psychotherapy, became a way of bringing into consciousness memories which had split off, and taken on a life, a self and potency of their own within the subject's identity. This idea of memory causing a splitting or double consciousness, was supported by the studies of contemporaries such as Binet and Janet. But unlike Janet, Freud didn’t believe that hysteria arose from innate mental weakness, but rather a diminishment of consciousness evident in these subjects, due to an immense drain on mental faculty, caused by the unconscious internal obsessional repetition of problematic memory. He referred to this as a “state of preoccupation” (ibid., p. 283) and it was only by speaking through, or remembering the life narrative, that Freud and Breuer believed the patient could be cured, as if through speaking memory, they could exorcise ghosts. With more inaccessible and difficult memories, Freud asked patients to describe images which came suddenly to mind. He also used methods of free association, and in the more difficult cases hypnosis to access buried memory. Once made conscious, according to Freud (ibid., p.233), these memories would miraculously vanish forever, “the image vanishes, like a rescued spirit being laid to rest”.

In A Note upon the Mystic Writing Pad (1924), Freud also revived the Platonic idea of memory being like a wax tablet, using a more contemporary allegory. He described a gadget built of a slab of wax, a layer of transparent paper, and an upper layer of celluloid. This uppermost layer could be written upon, but once lifted clear of the underlying wax, the inscription vanished. The original trace of every impression made however remained, as memory does within the subject, on the substratum beneath. This became a template for his three-tier model of the psyche. Freud’s link between the inscriptive function of language and the making conscious of memory is also very important here. He maintained that without articulation through language, external subconsciously registered stimuli, or memories cannot be brought into consciousness. This is also important in understanding how traumatic memory functions. When external circumstances and their related impressions are overwhelming, they enter the system on a somatic level bypassing language. Recollection of events in these instances can manifest as broken, fragmented and disjointed mnemonic narrative, or alternatively an inability to actually speak of certain experiences using regular forms of verbal or written language.

In the Invention of Hysteria, Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière, Didi - Huberman (1982) presents a very strong critique of the ethical intentions and methods used in the early days of psychoanalysis, where photography also became a tool to generate a visual typology of hysteria. Didi - Huberman claims that we are actually witnessing in the iconic photographic plates of the famous hysterics of the Charcot archives, including for example those of the Surrealist muse Augustine, the embodiment of traumatic memory. He describes an “overhang of affect” within these images, signifying the presence of something invisible to the eye of the viewer, but terrifyingly present for the subjects depicted. This invisible presence within the photographs, according to Didi - Huberman is in fact the memory of traumatic events, which are repeatedly re-enacted through the body and gestures of the captured subject, who is physically and psychologically reliving events. Charcot and his official photographer Paul Régnard have
therefore inadvertently documented the performance of suppressed memory, and the unnatural contortions of the subjects, their maniacal gazes into the surrounding air are the first images of people suffering from what is now classified as post-traumatic stress disorder. The haunting, enigmatic quality in these photographs, or what Didi-Huberman (ibid., p.127) describes in Kantian terms as the “overhang of imminence in visibility”, also reveals the limitations of the photograph to represent what is beyond the indexical, visible field of the real. Where artists of previous generations, such as Fuselli could have painted the symbolic representation of an incubus preying upon a sleeping subject to communicate psychological distress manifested through dreams or visions, the objective outward looking eye of the documentary camera misses this world of inner psychological turmoil. However, in Huberman’s analysis of these images, it is the invisible as a latency, an ellipse, or absence within the field of visual signification, which does in fact allow the image to transcend its documentary function. There appears a strange absence in the visual field, making these images both uncanny and unnerving.

This picturing of the invisible, of the haunting quality of memory within a photograph, is further analysed in Ulrich Baer’s Spectral Evidence, The Photography of Trauma. Baer discusses the particular difficulties encountered when the photograph seeks to bear witness to trauma. He notes that,

The medium of photography always raises the question of the relationship between seeing and knowing…We may even consider a particular photograph ‘untrue’ if everything in it is located outside the realm of our experience.

(Baer 2002, p. 87)

This is of course due to the expectations placed upon the documentary image to represent the objective truth of external reality. Where this reality includes unimaginable events, or lived experience, the photograph can also be considered unbelievable. In reference to secondary witnessing, made possible through photographic evidence, Baer describes this as a process of trying to come to terms with that which is present in excess, impossible to forget, yet somehow unavailable to us as viewers. Empathy, imagination, even false-memory can begin to fill the spaces between what is seen and what is known. In a detailed analysis of the Iconography of the Salpêtrière, Baer also draws distinct parallels between the technical aesthetic form of the documentary style used, and the actual psychological states of the women depicted. As an example in point, catalepsy, which was understood by Charcot to be a state in which the body retains or remembers the trauma of a physical attack, re-enacted as a physical freezing or contorting of the limbs, is equated with the ability of the photograph to freeze the body in motion. He notes that,

Catalepsy retains by way of the body what photography appears to retain with the camera: it freeze-frames and retains the body in an isolated position that can be viewed and theorized about outside of a temporal continuum.

(Baer 2002, p. 39)

This idea of certain events becoming detached from regular temporal, sequential recollection is an important one, and central to understanding the dynamic of how memory works. Like frozen fragments of photographic moments, traumatic events can become detached from their context, and remain outside of regular narrative sequence. As Baer observes,
Hysterical catalepsy – like the body frozen by the flash in Charcot’s experiment – combines two different temporalities or frames of reference: the moment of a past unassimilated event, which returns in the present state of dissociation. The dissociation is not spatial, it is not an out–of–body experience, but it produces a simulacrum of memory, the haunting reminder of an unassimilated past event that imposes itself in an on the present.

(Baer 2002 p. 50)

This idea of disjuncture in the temporal flow of lived experience due to traumatic memory, and the innate quality within photography to fragment, displace and freeze slices of time was something I actively used in constructing visual memory narratives for studio work in Phases I and II of the project. This will become apparent in detailed discussion of practice-based research outcomes for both Phase I and II of the project below.

In Bessel Van Der Kolk’s article *Trauma and Memory* (1998), he outlines some of the key attributes of traumatic memory and how this differs from the operations of regular memory. In his discussion of the mechanism of dissociation inherent to the psychology of trauma, he describes how regular declarative, or explicit memory (conscious memory) is constructive and forms a base into which new information is generally integrated. However, memory is susceptible to distortions depending upon the affective impact or the personal significance of lived experience. Where this is overwhelming, the result can be retrograde amnesia, or a complete dissociation from events as they happened. Non-declarative, implicit, or procedural memory which includes the memory for skills, habits, emotional responses, reflex actions and classical conditioning, which is understood as unconscious, can in cases of traumatic events, become the level at which such memories are recorded. Where experience is traumatic, somatic impressions can remain detached from consciousness, and direct conscious access. Symptoms of trauma mentioned in Van Der Kolk’s article include confusion, mutism, stupor, acute catastrophic stress reaction, panic, cognitive disorganisation and disorientation. Dissociation at the moment of trauma is the most important influence on whether subjects develop long-term symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. While dissociative coping mechanisms may help the subject deal with the experience as it occurs, the resulting splitting off of associated memories becomes pathogenic.

The failure to find words, particularly in cases of extreme trauma is well noted in contemporary trauma studies such as Herman (1992), Caruth (1995) and Kuhn (1995). Charlotte Delbo, in her famous account of trauma as a Holocaust survivor, (Cuberston 1995), describes the impact of extreme threat to the integrity of the body as *sense-memory*, which is radically different from *thinking memory*. Delbo (ibid., p. 170) describes sense memory as *deep memory* which differs significantly from recollections that follow rational patterns of emergence. She says that the problem with traumatic memory is that it never remains past, but floats autonomously in and out of consciousness “in its own perceptual present.” In Delbo’s account, deep memory or sense memory, is an embodied reliving of trauma, whereas telling the details of past experience, or normal recollection, is external memory. Words often cannot express sense memories because they involve a splitting of mind and body within consciousness, at the moment of trauma. The idea that trauma can shatter not only the power of recollection, but physically alter the
physiological structure of the brain is now also substantiated by neuroscientific studies. Returning to Van der Kolk, he provides a detailed account of how trauma operates on a neuro-hormonal level, as endogenous hormones are secreted when an individual is under stress. Through this process, emotionally significant material is more quickly consolidated and easily accessible via neurological pathways later. This makes traumatised subjects more sensitive to triggers which induce a re-accessing or reliving of traumatic memory, causing flashbacks, nightmares, or repetitive anxiety precautions, which in turn induce the re-release of stress hormones, which further reinforce memories of the event. Subjects are in this sense continuously re-traumatised by cycles of mnemonic return.

So to define trauma as opposed to regular processes of memory, it is evident that trauma has a potentially devastating impact on normal memory functioning. As Herman (1992, p. 175) describes it, regular memory has sequence and moves forward, whereas trauma causes memory to become frozen, stagnant and stuck. She expands on the contrast between both in her discussion of remembrance and mourning, likening trauma to the experience of fragmented recollections resembling still snapshots, or silent movies. The role of the therapist here, is to be a witness to what is eventually spoken and an ally, she comments (ibid p. 178),

The therapist must help the patient move back and forth in time, from her protected anchorage in the present to immersion in the past, so that she can simultaneously re-experience the feelings in all their intensity while holding on to the sense of safe connection that was destroyed in the traumatic moment.

Herman also describes how memories of trauma have to be transformed, so they may eventually fade in the way that regular memories do, if the subject is to recover. Techniques such as “direct exposure” and “flooding”, require the patient and therapist prepare a written script, compiled after initial audio recordings. A detailed factual account of events, which is spoken through and finally delivered by the patient, with the therapist acting as witness, can alleviate symptoms now broadly classified as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Importantly as noted by Herman (ibid, p. 183), it is through the telling of a story of events, in the safe environment of the therapeutic interaction, that traumatic memory can be processed in a less abnormal way.

With this transformation of memory comes relief of many of the major symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. The physio-neurosis induced by terror can apparently be reversed through the use of words.

Describing the symptoms and causes of post-traumatic stress disorder other contemporary experts such as Regel and Joseph (2010, p. 13) note,

The biological perspective is that PTSD is caused by the biological mechanisms that are activated during trauma, and which are adaptive during trauma, but somehow fail to switch off once the danger is past.

Symptoms can manifest as constant alertness, hypervigilance, startle response, focused concentration or constantly being in ‘survival mode’. A slowing down of time which is experienced by the subject during a traumatic incident, can also be indicative of disassociation at moment of
event, leading to a wider spectrum of psychological problems later. Drawing upon the early 20th century theories of Janet, Regel and Joseph describe disassociation (which is a splitting off of certain memories, or the self experiencing these) is a consequence of the subject being simply overwhelmed, often by the physical or physiological impact of what is unfolding. Janoff-Bulman’s social cognitive model from the 1990’s, is also noted here, with trauma recognised as leading to profound changes in the subject’s world and life view. It can cause a complete psychological shattering of the subject, including individual belief systems that the world is benevolent, life is meaningful, or that the self is worthy. To overcome or recover from the impact of traumatic events, requires a significant working through, including an ability to return to, and somehow give shape, form, words and structure to traumatic memory.

These theories are particularly relevant to what emerged within my practice-based experiments in Phase I of the project. When deciding to use certain autobiographical materials as a starting point, I also supported this with resource to a psychotherapist over a period of six months, as I was aware of the potential impact of accessing buried traumatic memory. By consciously using myself as the research subject, and choosing particularly vivid personally significant mnemonic materials, my intention was to understand the psychological dynamic of these memory processes and theories as an inhabited psychological space. By actively experiencing the potential and process by which the photographic image might function as a site of mnemonic triggering in this, I hoped to gain insights which could later potentially be applied beyond myself. My findings are based in and through my studio outcomes and within the context of a Fine Art practice and will be discussed as such.

**Visualizing Memory**

A close reading of a photograph is like a stone dropped in a pond, with its ever expanding inclusions, occlusions and allusions. (Langford 2008, p.4)

The primary research material used as a starting point in Phase I, consisted of autobiographical photographic images, or what could broadly be described as family album materials, in that they were taken at the time as snapshots to record my daily domestic life, and never meant to be used as more than a private record of a time and a place. My decision to begin here was influenced to a large extent by the writings of Martha Langford on photography and memory. In *Suspended Conversations, The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (2008), Langford points to certain conventions in the choice of subject matter, self-representation, narrative visual sequencing, and the ritualistic function within this form of photography, particularly in the construction and perpetuation of social norms. She advocates looking for certain repetitive patterns, including absence as well as presence in what has been included or excluded from the album. In her essay for *Locating Memory, Photographic Acts*, edited by Kuhn and McAllister (2006, p. 242) Langford comments that, “The album can be understood in this way, as an additive articulation of memories that accrue to a sense of self in the continuum of belonging.” The album can also be considered a vernacular means to visually relate a sense of origin, identity and connection to community as
As well as place. The accumulation of snapshot memories, serving as visual prompts for the recollection of personal histories within albums, has evolved as a form of seamless alteration in how individual and collective stories are visually inscribed. Langford (2008, p. 26) also references Bourdieu’s ideas on the collective role of the album, which is regarded as a form of aid to memory through, its presentation “in chronological order, the logical order of social memory.” She has also described the family album, as a “remembrance environment” (ibid. p. 223), and a site of contemporary material cultural practice which unites anthropological, ethnographic, psychological, linguistic and vernacular folkloric strands of inquiry.

Applying her oral photographic framework, Langford presents an in-depth analysis of the interrelationship between conventions of visual photographic representation within the collections of family albums, held at the McCord Museum of Canadian History, and practices of interpretation, or reading of these albums in operation within the everyday response of test subjects. This idea informed and influenced the first year of my practice-based experiments, where I visually and conceptually applied her method of “speaking the album” within my studio work. In doing this I used and transcribed audio recordings, made during psychotherapy sessions, responding to personal album images, with the intention of going as deeply into the latent memories triggered by these images as possible.

The theories of Roland Barthes in Camera Lucida on the relationship between the photograph and memory, particularly as it relates to the autobiographical content of family albums became more meaningful the further I progressed with the studio experiments. Barthes’ belief that the photograph prohibits memory is relevant. He comments,

> Not only is the photograph never, in essence, a memory (whose grammatical expression would be the perfect tense, whereas the tense of the Photograph is the aorist), but it actually blocks memory, quickly becomes a counter-memory.

(Barthes 1981, p. 91)

What he describes here is the false composure of scene or action within the photographic moment; we compose or pose ourselves before the lens, momentarily arresting temporal continuum, which is inconsistent with the mechanisms of memory itself. Time within the photographic image is for Barthes engorged, literal, eidetic, it cannot be reinvented, reinterpreted nor transformed in the way that true memory operates. He notes that the only way to transform the photograph is to throw it into the refuse. It is perishable, sensitive to material decay in a way that the mnemonic traditions of earlier societies were not. Barthes’ theory of the punctum was however particularly significant for my own process. In describing the affective impact of a photograph of his mother in the Winter Garden, Barthes describes that unexpected quality within certain photographs, that which jumps out, wounds, pricks, or is poignant, as the punctum. He maintains (ibid., p.57) that figures in photographs are usually “anesthetized and fastened down, like butterflies.” However, it is through the punctum that the entombment of time within the photograph is ruptured. This happens through an affective association and identification - a recognition, which causes the subject pictured to live again in a space beyond the frame. The
viewer can somehow re-engage with this subject, beyond the image's “flat death”, beyond its temporal immutability.

The punctum, then, is a kind of subtle beyond - as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see.  
(Barthes 1981, p.59)

In discussing photographs and mourning Barthes draws upon Proust's observation, that when looking into such photographs, one is better off in fact relying on memory, as photography induces only a heightened sense of loss. The photograph can never sum up what he describes as the totality or essence of that person, what remains are only fragments of recognition, through certain physical features or gestures. It is memory, elicited by the photographic trace which lends a certain 'air' to the image. These theories provided insights into the psychological dynamic, and certain frustrations with the impenetrability of the photographic image, when trying to access powerful memories. I limited my initial selection of source materials to those which I felt had this quality of punctum, or the ability to wound, and began to use this idea to physically rupturing or wounding the surface of the image in response. Langford also introduced me to the writings of Marianne Hirsch on the family album as a site of memory. Hirsch claims that:

Recognizing an image as familial elicits a specific kind of readerly or spectatorial look, an affiliative look through which we are sutured into the image and through which we adopt the image into our own familial narrative.  
(Hirsch 2010, p. 93)

This idea of suturing is important, as it implies we place ourselves into certain images on a highly subjective level and not only that, but we take from them something which can be creatively incorporated into our own autobiography or identity. As Langford also notes Hirsch relates this process to Barthes's idea of the punctum, which he terms as:

Idiosyncratic, un-theorisable: it is what moves us because of our memories and our histories, and because of the ways in which we structure our own sense of particularity.  
(Langford 2008, p.28)

Applying these theories to studio process, I realised that by staying with certain photographs, and returning to them in cycles of discursive and aesthetic repetition, I was able to gradually reconstitute lost memory. There was indeed a large part of my self still sutured or buried within the associated mnemonic content triggered by these photographs. By using them actively as an environment of mnemonic return, I was able to find order within fragmented autobiographical narrative and find closure, a process I will now discuss in more detail below.

**Practice Based Research in Phase I**

Based upon the theories and concepts discussed above, in beginning my first practiced based experiments, I set certain guidelines and parameters:

- I would limit my visual starting points to personal photographs, and stay with these until I had tested whether and how they functioned as environments of mnemonic return. I would therefore be my own initial test subject.
• The process would be supported through resource to a certain number of sessions with a psychotherapist, to aid deep memory work. These sessions would be recorded and transcribed.

• I would use materials that emerged from this process, to guide and inform visual content in resulting artwork. My intention wasn’t to illustrate personal memory, nor to engage in art therapy. I was interested in consciously discovering and visually expressing any latent mnemonic content within the images. I would find conceptual and aesthetic approaches, to generate materials for public exhibition. From what emerged, the emphasis was therefore on creating resolved visual outcomes rather than finding therapeutic strategies. As I have some training in expressive Art Therapy, (gained at the Aalto University of Art, Design & Architecture while studying form my M.Ed. in Art Education), I was cognisant of differences between this and a Fine Art approach to image making.

• My aesthetic and material form would be exploratory, allowing for new directions within my visual art practice.

I initially selected photographs from my personal family album, based on the physical aesthetic form of the photograph as object, and how this communicated a sense of time, history and memory. Tonal range, staining, fading, handwritten messages, general wear, flaws in certain images, all suggested time embedded in the substance and surface of the photograph as artefact. I organised, arranged and rearranged these images randomly, influenced more by their aesthetic rather than content. Some were of subjects within living memory, others stretched back a few generations. I also digitally scanned this material, layering and juxtaposing certain visual features with more contemporary personal photographs, with the intention of playing with temporal reading, and inserting my own experience into the continuum of family time and memory (Fig. 1). From the outset, my use of collage as a way to work with flow, mutability, and the reformation of narrative reading was very important. Along with these photographs, I began to also use selected 3D objects. This decision was influenced to a large extent by Geoffrey Batchen’s analysis of the use of objects alongside images in early photography, to enhance their mnemonic impact (Batchen 2004). For example, Batchen discusses how in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, personal photographs were often housed in elaborate frames, into which artefacts such as hair, fabric, hand-written texts, dried flowers and keepsakes could be placed. The photograph became a reliquerie, to house momento-mori, often even worn on the body or inside personal garments. As Batchen notes, the photograph while fulfilling its indexical function as proof of the former existence of an event or person, was not felt to be sufficient to do this alone. The multi-sensory, tactile attributes of for example a lock of hair, or pieces of a garment once worn, were used to enhance memory through what were essentially collage objects. Batchen also observes how these practices were often considered women’s craft, and tied to traditions of mourning. He comments,
No doubt the time spent in crafting such things was part of the period of mourning, a time of contemplation and creative activity that helped to heal the bereft as well as memorialize the dead.

(Batchen 2004, p. 78)

This use of an object or material, to enhance the tactile multi-sensory mnemonic capacity of the photograph was influential on my studio process. As was the idea of using more 3D pictorial materials to simultaneously stay with, while working through difficult memories evoked by the content of the images. With this in mind I begn to use more repetitive and labour intensive techniques in the studio. This included making photographic emulsion lift transfers onto a variety of surfaces (Fig. 2). I found the slow, laborious and repetitive physical actions needed to create these pieces effective in forcing me to stay with the memories that were surfacing. In his essay, Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (1914), Freud outlines the differences between different forms of remembering, and also the role of repetition in the process of coming to terms with, or avoiding, certain difficult memories. He describes the early psychoanalytic techniques of Breuer for example, who would have employed hypnosis to access repressed memories, as cathartic release. It was thought at that point in psychoanalysis, that by identifying and bringing the cause of problems ‘into focus’, the impact of events could be relieved through abreaction, or the acting out of the underlying cause of the malady. In contrast by 1914, Freud advocated concentrating on the workings of the mind of the subject in the present, and in particular any resistances or neurotic repetitive actions which were evident in the subjects behaviour. He maintained that compulsive urges to repeat, were in fact a way of remembering. This form of repetition for Freud, included the enactment, or ‘acting-out’ of repressed memory. Repetition was also central to his theory of transference. Here the subject is driven by a compulsion to repeat certain forms of relationship, particularly within the psychoanalytic treatement, which demonstrate an avoidance of remembering, of an underlying originary cause. According to Freud the greater the resistance, the more repetition replaces true remembering. Freud notes (ibid, p 149),

The patient repeats instead of remembering, and repeats under the conditions of resistance...(and)

We may now ask what it is that he in fact repeats or acts out. The answer is that he repeats everything that has already made its way from the source of the repressed into his manifest personality – his inhibitions and unserviceable attitudes and his pathological character traits. He also repeats his symptoms in the course of the treatment.

In the more modern methods he described, the role of the analyst was to help the subject build associations, to bridge certain gaps in memory, to recognize the avoidances, repressions or the neurosis of repetitive cycles so as to overcome them.

In light of these theories, my decision to use sometimes repetitive actions or aesthetic gestures to continuously revisit certain photographs, such as threading, or emulsion lift transfer, could be read as an avoidance strategy. I would argue however that the difference lies in the creative process itself as a conscious act of agency and discovery, both psychologically and materially. While it does often involve a making real and putting outside of oneself, or giving expressive form to certain internal, often unresolved and sometimes subconscious obsessional cycles, there is
also a transformative element central to this process. It is about a discovery of the new and unexpected, within the self and the material, which supercedes the safety of simple repetition of what is already known, consciously or subconsciously. Freud (ibid, p 146) also observed that,

In the many different forms of obsessional neurosis in particular, forgetting is mostly restricted to dissolving thought-connections, failing to draw the right conclusions and isolating memories.

Another difference here within the iterations of studio work, is the drive towards cohesion, connection, completion and resolution. In my own process driven experiments, I was using text in relationship to the image, along with the narrative format of the book, to rebuild connections between isolated fragments of recollection, to put things in order, to make sense of memory. And further to imagine alternative endings, or transformative psychological avenues out of traumatic autobiographical events. This is a very different experience and use of repetition, to the dissolution of neurosis described by Freud above. Another important distinguishing feature within studio work is the conscious agency that is involved. It demands a reflective and reflexive awareness of what is emerging, or surfacing from subconscious memory through the manifest form of the visual artwork, as it changes beneath the hand and before the eye. Within this process time can also be experienced differently; what I have describe as a slowing down, or staying with memories that return. In his article The Flow Experience (1979, p. 63), Mihaly Csikszentmikalyi describes alterations in consciousness characteristic of a number of activities, creative practice being one of them. On the concept of flow he says,

It is the state in which action follows upon action according to an internal logic which seems to need no conscious intervention on our part. We experience it as a unified flowing from one moment to the next, in which we feel in control of our actions, and in which there is little distinction between self and environment: between stimulus and response; or between past, present, and future.

Here action is governed by both the conscious and unconscious mind in harmony, with full awareness of the self in the moment. It is very different to the unconsciousness, or lack of control of neurotic compulsion. The dissolution of boundaries between the past, present and future, or the sense of stepping outside of time, is also something quite characteristic of the flow experience. I would argue that this state of consciousness, what Csikszentmikalyi (ibid, p 65) also describes as, one in which the subject “becomes more intensely aware of internal processes”, is very effective for memory work, as there is a conscious temporal interchangeability between the past and present, as memory comes to mind. Memory can be treated as a fluid and dynamic phenomenon, which is just as open to reinterpretation, reforming and remoulding, as any other medium brought into the studio process. It is often memory which does come to mind while in the studio, it directs action towards an overall goal of creating a cohesive, unified and transformed expression for communication through the work.

What initially emerged in the first stages of this project, were several disjointed fragments, which were pinned like pieces of skin to the studio wall. Things appeared to be literally in pieces, and in trying to access memories attached to the visual, I was stripping everything back to the essentials of the image. By digging up the past, excavating the memories, the studio was becoming an archaeological site. An assemblage of bone and personal artefacts, including my shoes, driving
licence, keys, wallet, bank cards and jewellery were arranged in a manner resembling an archaeological dig on the studio floor, in a self-portrait of my psychological state at the outset of this journey (Fig. 3). Influenced by the visual form and function of cabinets of curiosity as miniature memory environments, I also began to consider possible containers to house these fragments. References to birds at this stage, were prompted by classical allegories of memory being like an aviary, full of brightly coloured creatures that are difficult to pin down. I was also treating the emerging visual fragments like specimens, or pinned butterflies, using collage to juxtapose 2D & 3D elements intuitively, allowing chance to determine how images, objects and materials would be finally visually synthesised within the artwork. Reflexive analysis through ongoing written analysis of studio outcomes, and discussion of these with research supervisors allowed me to begin to access, and verbalise certain subconscious associations and recollections, triggered by the visual field of the image (Fig. 4).

However, I soon realised that beyond certain aesthetic qualities, the older archival album materials were not really relevant to my intention, as their associated memories were beyond my own lifetime. I decided instead to concentrate on authentically autobiographical images, related to personally significant events. Knowing that traumatic memory leaves the greatest imprint, I also knew that choosing photographs related to disturbing life events might be a useful place to start. I narrowed my selection down to approximately one hundred photographs, related to a particular time and place. I also had several written diaries from this time, and began to re-read these in conjunction with my visual treatment of the images (Fig. 5). I digitally scanned, cropped and reframed photographs, to concentrate my attention on details within this material. This process allowed me to visually select and focus in on what was significant. I began to literally dig into the surface of the image. I created multiple copies of photographs which I felt were more significant than others, using repetitions, echoes, silences, avoidances, dead ends, in a process which aesthetically mirrored a psychological working through of their mnemonic content. I realised that fragmentation within studio results mirrored my own difficulties in piecing together events. Gaps, erasures, ellipses, voids, disruptions in the visual inscription of how I technically composed and reassembled what I was working with, demonstrated real problems in reforming linear sequence in a narrative account of events. Text became an important means to address latent memories, and also to communicate what the image alone could not. As mentioned above, the material techniques I chose entailed physically repetitive and slow actions, requiring more prolonged embodied engagement, or a staying with the content of the memories evoked by the photographs. The hybrid collages which emerged, integrated elements of analogue, digital and alternative photographic processes, as well as text and a threading through of material.

The tactile quality of results were also important. The emulsion lifts were skin-like, both in tone and texture, which inspired me to concentrate further on the physical embodied presence and absence of the subject they depicted. As I found this process increasingly difficult to negotiate alone, and influenced by Martha Langford’s theories on speaking the album, along with insights gained from trauma theory (Herman, Van der Kolk, Kuhn, Karuth), I decided at this point to work
with a psychotherapist. My intention was to use a dialectical conversation to tap into the deeper memories elicited by the images. Practice based alterations to original photographs now became experiments in trying to communicate difficult affect driven recollection. During the spring and early summer of 2013, I worked through this same set of images in each session. Extracts from transcribed audio recordings of these sessions were then carried further into collage pieces in follow up studio experiments. The process became both a physical and a psychological remembrance of fragmented narrative, through a very different process to the usual speed of my previous photographic work. I realised that memory, trauma and mourning were central to what was happening, and began to address the lost subject in the images, directly through text as well as image. I was also trying to disrupt what Barthes described as the “flat death” of the photograph, to break or penetrate the cold surface of the image. By lifting the photographic surface physically like a veil, I was attempting to metaphorically, or ritualistically re-enter its mnemonic environment through the sense of touch. I decided to obscure identity in some photographs, through cropping, blurring, and hiding the face as much as possible. This allowed me to visually distance myself and I hoped also to somewhat transcend the autobiographical content.

Aesthetic controls regarding media, techniques, scale and presentation formats. After this, my intention was to work as intuitively as possible, letting memory dictate outcomes. First results included the series Some Spectral Muse, 16 mixed-media collages (Fig. 6) and the artist book Helsinki Album (Fig. 7), which contained 65 larger emulsion lifts in a hand bound artist book.

The presence and absence of the body is very apparent in all studio work from Phase I. Skin becomes the skin of the image and the body simultaneously, with suggestions of wounding, rupture or trauma happening at the surface of the image. In a second artist book, Blood book (Fig. 8) references to the body are more apparent as I used my own blood for writing the narrative extracts. Photographs are sewn into skin-like leaves that unfold in a maze-like configuration, which much like memory can be entered and read from different starting points. In accordance with ethical practice, the blood for this work was drawn in a small amount by a medical professional. The completed piece was exhibited in a glass cabinet and not handled by the public.

I used the blood to write a final letter to the subject in these images, as a reciprocal gesture, a form of ritual, farewell and mourning. In the work Memory Skins no. 2 - 6 (Fig. 9) the sense of the surface of the photograph becoming the skin of the body is more apparent, and is combined with direct references to loss. In a final piece in this series Memory Skin no. 1 several individual fragments of image and text were finally brought together as a wearable dress or shroud (Fig. 10).

Aesthetic influences during this stage of the research included the artists Annette Messager, Joesph Cornell, Maria Lai, Louise Richardson and Ellen Gallagher. I was particularly drawn to the sculptural qualities within these artists works, and their treatment of the surface of the photograph as something to be disrupted. The artist book format also became a device to physically and psychologically rethread fragmented narratives into a cohesive linear form. In listening back to conversations with the psychotherapist, the importance of place in relation to memory also
became increasingly apparent. In addition to my album materials, I began to gather and work into online sources including maps and found images from Google Maps & Google Earth. As I digitally retraced memory journeys in virtual reality, this process triggered deep and vivid recollection, returning through dreams. I realised that I needed to undertake an actual journey of return back to places associated with the images I was using. In December 2014 I returned to Helsinki, and began to use wandering as method to reclaim memories attached to places from the album images used. In the process I also re-photographed these sites and wrote texts to accompany the new images. This material was compiled into the handmade artist book Remember To Forget (Fig. 11) for the final exhibition.

Gaston Bachelard commenting on the interrelationship between space and memory notes,

We live fixations, fixations of happiness. We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protections. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams.

(Bachelard 1994, p.6)

He describes the metaphysics of consciousness as the interplay between reality, recollection, projection and dream, centralized at the site of where we identify as home. What we remember of home, according to Bachelard promotes a phenomenology of being, sheltering and protecting the essence of who we are. He describes this intertwining of the psychology of self and place as “topoanalysis; the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives.” In my journey back to Helsinki, I was searching for traces of memory still lodged in sites of autobiographical significance, places I once regarded as home. I began re-photographing these external locations, and also writing to record the inner psychological impact of the experience. My intention was also to express something of the nausea, perceptual vertigo and psychological frustration of trying to find the perfect image externally, of what is held only in the mind’s eye. On the nature of memory Bachelard comments,

Memory – what a strange thing it is! – does not record concrete duration, in the Bergsonian sense of the word. We are unable to relive duration that has been destroyed. We can only think of it, in the line of an abstract time that is deprived of all thickness. The finest specimens of fossilized duration concretized as a result of long sojourn, are to be found in and through space. The unconscious abides. Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are.

(Bachelard 1994, p.6)

I found these ideas to be profoundly true during this stage of my project. As I physically re-encountered certain physical spaces, I began to understand how memory really is held fast by the physical architecture of our lives. It can be suddenly triggered by the opening of a real door, or the way shadows fall in the corner of a room once inhabited. As I spontaneously gathered what I found on site to express this experience, the architecture which once contained and preserved my material life, now became the projection ground of a haunting. Memory became the footprints of dust trailing across the freshly painted floor of an empty room. It was there in the tracks through December snow which would vanish by morning. It was in faint scratches on walls, breath on a cold pane of glass, the silent, still and darkening rooms now devoid of warmth. The images generated at this point are of empty, cold, lonely spaces, places at the end of the world for me. In
the new works created during this journey, qualities of extreme light or darkness were used to suggest the fading away into oblivion of everything in time. An image of a staircase ascending into nothingness communicates something of the loss I felt. Using the camera’s capacity to perceive too much or too little light, became an allegory for the faintness or excess of memory, in certain moments or locations.

By some strange synchronicity, during this journey, the majority of the sites of importance to me were also undergoing physical renovation, and were therefore empty vacant, desolate and liminal. In some instances, all I found were whitewashed walls, entrances fenced off, spaces in a state of transition. These external circumstances became a perfect visual metaphor of a deeper psychological state of being within myself. I realised how futile it was to try to hold onto the past, when everything, even the physical architecture related to our most important experiences is transient and subject to change. I was trying to photograph the impossible, the memory of a place, its shadow or chimera long after its moment has passed in external reality. To this end, the affective overlay of memory, became the afterimage of double exposure. I often captured the same location from slightly different points of view, to express shifts in perception and the continuous subtle distortions of memory. In some pieces I overlaid several images until I achieved a kind of whiteout, or in the Platonic sense, an ‘ideal’ of what the space was in memory, rather than as a shadow in reality (Fig. 12). These spaces became platforms or stages, perfectly set, for projection of absence (Fig. 13). But through this process, I was also making sense and purpose, reforming past events into a coherent narrative, restructuring order from chaos. Details which were previously disassociated from consciousness found sequence and meaning. In a way I was reforming, reconstituting and preserving a narrative which had detached at the time, leaving me bereft, unable to find closure and move on.

Aesthetically, in comparison to initial studio experiments in Phase I, this direction also marked a return to a cleaner, more purely photographic aesthetic within my work. The visual aesthetic resolution of Phase I happened through producing a series of 12 digital archival prints and the third handmade artist book Remember To Forget, including memory texts which I wrote to accompany visual materials. The first edition of this work was selected for the exhibition Describing Architecture, Memory and Place, curated by Antoin Doyle at The Irish Georgian Society, Dublin in 2014. Please refer to Appendix (ii) for a final edition of this in the prototype photobook, Remember To Forget, which includes a more comprehensive overview of the journey undertaken in Phase I.

**Conclusions for Phase I**

In working through Phase I, I realised that my core studio methods included:

1. **Choosing a pre-existing archive of photographic materials** and using this as a site of return, to observe how memory operates in relation to the image. This process
necessitated staying with a selected series of images until I felt I had fully exhausted or excavated their mnemonic content.

2. **Altering the surface of the image** to discover and suggest alternative readings, perspectives and memories buried within, or behind the image.

3. **Writing this mnemonic material out in textual form to generate new content**, to go deeper into what is hidden or latent. Through this process I was working into what wasn’t always visually obvious indexically. In re-creating narratives, I was also able to bring cohesion and closure, particularly to problematic memory. The process was similar in many ways to what Langford describes as speaking the album.

4. **Using a conversational partner to gain distance and perspective during memory work**. In Phase I, this conversational partner was a psychotherapist. Audio recordings taken during sessions, added an additional reading allowing access to subconscious content through the later transcription and reflection upon what was said.

5. **Returning to the mnemonically charged physical site where key photographs were taken**, and recording what emerges, through new images and text. Here original photographs become visual triggers, or co-ordinates on a map, in a journey which is essentially an interplay between the psychology, or phenomenology of being and place.

Aesthetic form followed the memory work in Phase I. It was important to use photographic processes which required time and sustained, often very repetitive physical interaction with the surface of the image. This forced me to linger with content and whatever repressed mnemonic associations surfacing within consciousness. Qualities of fragmentation, erasure, rupture, dislocation in these early studio experiments, all reflect the psychological process of coming to terms with trauma. I treated the material surface of the photograph as a skin, veil or film that signified the body of the lost subject depicted in the images. By working into selected photographs several times, with slight variation in each iteration, I was able to further remain with emergent memory, and also intervene given the perspective of time or hindsight. In this way the original photograph became the site of mnemonic return, in a process which allowed me to rebuild meaning, to piece together fragments, and importantly to offer alternative readings of what happened, and how I could reconcile myself to this. I began to use the artist book format as a way of containing and also marking end points within these cycles of memory work. While this process has similarities with certain methods of photo elicitation and photo therapeutic applications, I would say the difference in outcomes is within my final intention for results. Primary materials, including the original autobiographical album photographs, and the exact details of audio transcripts were creatively transformed, to be presented within the context of a public gallery exhibition or publication. In this respect, the boundary between public and private, subjective and objective, fact and imaginative reconstruction, researcher and the field, was at the forefront of my
awareness. I chose to begin my research with autobiographical materials so as to understand the relationship between photograph and memory from a more authentic position, to locate myself within my field of enquiry, or be the first subject of my investigation.

I will add here that the studio-process and related research, also brought insights into the importance of mourning in coming to terms with difficult memories. In Mourning and Melancholia (1917) Freud distinguished between mourning as natural, and melancholia as where this goes awry and veers into pathology. He observed that while both psychological process originate with the death or loss of the loved one, in cases of melancholia there is a refusal to let go. This can result in a collapse or invasion of the subject's ego, by the memory, or the shadow of that which was lost. Here the ego can identify with aspects of the lost object as a way of retaining what has already vanished. Where mourning runs its natural course and has an end point, melancholia is limitless, leaving the subject trapped in endless cycles of return. Ambivalence, or a simultaneous feeling of both love and hate towards the object, particularly in cases where traumatic events have happened, can further complicate the situation, as the struggle slips into the unconscious and lingers on. Havi Carel (2007) draws attention to the post Freudian theories of Melanie Klein, in particular her ideas on object relations to identify potential solutions to this problem. He argues that for mourning rather than melancholia to occur, it is important to see the lost object as it was, both the bad and the good, as this allows detachment from ambivalence, including any lingering and unresolved feelings of anger, conscious or unconscious. He notes (ibid p. 1079)

Mourning for Kline is the opposite of ‘moving on’ – the point of mourning is not to forget or overcome the love or the lost person, but to remember them in the right way, to maintain a positive inner object that is an internalized part of the lost object. What is required is not simply identification, but identification with the positive aspect of the object. Such identification allows introjection, a way of preserving the object while acknowledging the loss.

Here detachment is seen in Freudian terms as active choice. There is work involved in mourning, which is systematic, and demands facing the reality of each and every memory which returns. The process of mourning allows for a turning inward and away from life while doing this, with the ultimate aim of coming to terms with loss as acceptable, so that a new investment in life can begin. This, according to Freud also required an ability to accept the transience of all things. Mourning is viewed as the natural psychological process of coming to terms with the impermanence of life, whereas melancholia is an illness that can overwhelm the individual ego, often causing complete self-destruction. Through the practice-based studio work in Phase I, I realised that after over twenty years, I finally began to mourn, and through this process was able to put into words memories both good and bad related to events I had buried.

However, while I realised this was an important personally significant psychological development, I also wanted to relate the research to the broader context of my own field of contemporary photographic practice. I began by researching artists who were also using pre-existing or archival materials, text and cycles of return, to investigate, deconstruct, or reconstitute memory narratives.
Here I would list Susan Hiller, Mariana Castillo Deball, Luise Schroder, Niina Vatanen, Sophie Calle and Taryn Simon as important influences on my aesthetic and conceptual approach in studio work during Phase I. I will discuss the issue of aesthetic form, and the location of my practice in relation to the contemporary field of visual production in greater detail in the next chapter but conclude here by saying that the strategies discovered in Phase I, became the foundation for the next cycle of work in Phase II. Please note that in addition to illustrations of studio work provided at the end of each chapter, a full catalogue of practice based outcomes, including documentation of the final exhibition is provided as Appendix item (i).
Figure. 1  Cleary. M. (2012) Mixed-media collage, 80x120cm.

Figure. 2  Cleary. M. (2012) Photographic emulsion lift experiments on various surfaces, sizes variable.
Figure 3  Cleary, M. (2012) Mixed-media collage, 80x120cm.

Figure 4  Cleary, M. (2012) Mixed-media collage, 180x220cm.
Figure 5  Cleary, M. (2012) Photo album and diary materials used for Phase I, sizes variable.

Figure 6  Cleary, M. (2013) Some Spectral Muse, 8 in a series of 16 mixed-media collages, each piece 30x40cm.
Figure 7. Cleary, M. (2013) Helsinki Album, Photographic emulsion lifts in hand bound artist book, 38x48x8cm.
Figure. 8 Cleary, M. (2013) *Bloodbook*, Photograhic emulsion lifts, blood, wax, thread, 15x30x3cm.
Figure. 9 Cleary. M. (2013) *Memory Skins no. 2 – 6*, Photographic emulsion lifts, thread, text, each piece 20x26cm.

Figure. 10 Cleary. M. (2014) *Memory Skin no. 1*, Photographic emulsion lifts, textile, thread, text, 54x160cm.

Figure. 11 Cleary. M. (2014) *Remember To Forget*, Handmade artist book, including 18 archival prints, text and memory maps, 15x25xcm.
Figure. 12 Cleary. M. (2014) *Remember To Forget*, Archival Digital print #7 of 10, 40x50cm.

Figure. 13 Cleary. M. (2014) *Remember To Forget*, Archival Digital print #4 of 10, 40x50cm.
CHAPTER 3 – PHASE II / POSTCARDS FROM A LIFE

Who am I? If this once I were to rely on a proverb, then perhaps everything would amount to knowing whom I haunt.

(Breton 1999, p.11)

Starting Points Phase II

The work created in Phase II of this research responds to André Breton’s novel *Nadja* (1928), which includes forty photographic plates by photographer Jacques André Boiffard. I chose this text as a starting point for the next stage of the project for a number of reasons. Firstly, the memory of Breton’s novel had directly influenced the chain of autobiographical events referred to in Phase I above. Having discovered Breton’s work as a young artist in my early twenties, I began at that time to question Surrealist ideas of the muse as a conduit to the personal subconscious. Influenced by theories of the gaze emerging from first and second wave feminist discourse e.g. Pollock (1988), Mulvey (1989), Parker (1995) and Berger (2008), I also questioned the possibility of reversing its traditionally male position. I was interested in developing a female expression of journeying into the subconscious, and wondered if a male muse would have the same impact. In her work on women in the Surrealist movement, Whitney Chadwick (1991) describes this phenomenon of the muse or femme enfant, which for the male Surrealists drew back the veil to threshold states. Real-life examples cited by Chadwick include Germaine Berton, a young anarchist and revolutionary, Gisele Prasinos a 14-year-old poet, Gala Dali, Leonora Carrington, and of course Nadja. Literary heroines or rather anti-heroines included Sade’s *Justine*. But of all these figures, it is Nadja who has become, according to Hester Albach (2009), the heroine of Surrealism, perhaps due to her tragic fate. Chadwick also maintains that female Surrealists such as Leonora Carrington, Leonora Fini and Dorothea Tanning, rather than using a muse as a doorway, mirror or projection ground for their own unconscious desires, inhabited their work with archetypal or symbolic animals to refer to aspects of the unconscious self, perhaps as a means to access the elemental, or lost matriarchal traditions. Referring to the journals of Leonora Carrington for example, Chadwick (1998 p 13) notes,

> Carrington was not alone in projecting aspects of the self as animal surrogates...Many women, including Carrington, Fini, and Varo, adopted strategies that more recently have been referred to as ‘self-othering’. Identifying with moments prior to historical time and/or outside the ‘civilised’ cultural spaces identified with patriarchy, they sought the sources of the ‘feminine’ and ‘woman’ in epochs and places in which women were believed to have exercised spiritual and psychic powers later repressed under patriarchy.

While Carrington’s paintings are often populated by hybrid animal forms, Fini of course also used androgynous figures where the male, as well as the female body are the object of her gaze. However, I felt that Chadwick’s consignment of female desire to an almost twilight world, of obliquely alluded to symbolic scenarios, was another form of censorship and perhaps of its time. I knew quite early in my own practice that as a female artist, I occupied a position of both the viewer and viewed. I was the speaking subject and also the object of the gaze in traditional ideas of who looks and who is seen. In reading Breton’s story of encounter with Nadja, while I identified...
with him as the artist, I also identified somewhat with Nadja as a woman, and I wondered whether
a male version of Nadja were even possible, and if so, how could I give this kind of encounter
expressive form. The work of film director Leo Carax in the early 1990’s, in particular Les Aîmants
Du Pont Neuf (1991), which reverses the gender roles in a story of encounter between a female
artist and her muse, would have also been influential here. The film follows a young woman as
she wanders Paris at night. Unfolding on the Pont Neuf, a location very close to Place Dauphine,
and several of the sites of Breton’s novel, this female protagonist who is threatened with
impending blindness, begins to question everything about her life. She drifts out into the city at
the night, and in this nocturnal world encounters a male vagabond. Experiencing varying states
of altered consciousness, often verging on surreal hallucination or madness, it is sometimes
unclear if this male companion is real or imagined. He gradually leads her towards her own nature,
and freedom from past events. These cultural influences directly impacted upon my lived
experience in the 1990’s in Helsinki, when I eventually did meet the subject and inspiration for the
works created in Phase I, Remember To Forget. Where I once judged Breton for leaving Nadja
on the doorstep of the asylum, I now realise the complexities of what such an encounter can
involve, and the fact that sometimes there is no other choice. It’s a matter of self-preservation,
with art being a way to reconcile the self to the tragic, or traumatic, by transformative means that
make sense from chaos or insanity. In this light Breton’s reflections on his own autobiographical
recollections, in the third part of his novel, including his sense of being haunted by Nadja, are
very familiar. The practice-based work created during Phase I of this research, was my first
attempt to put these autobiographical events into expressive form using the novel which inspired
them in real terms, as a means, map or armature to also journey back, initially through memory,
but then through real psychogeographical wanderings in Paris. While the speaking voice in Phase
I - Remember To Forget is from one subject position, my own, as I directly remember and address
the subject of memory. In Phase II - Postcards From A Life, the speaking voice changes and
oscillates between becoming the object and subject of the text. Sometimes I am Nadja addressing
Breton, at other times I am myself remembering my own life and what it is to inhabit the position
of the artist, and ultimately the survivor who remembers and creatively reconstructs the story of
events. The method being used here was also inspired by the theories of Pierre Yves Jacopin,
which will be outlined in greater detail shortly. Given these deeper autobiographical links and
significant influence of Breton upon my life and memory, it was very important to bring this
particular novel to the fore, as I moved into Phase II of the research.

A second reason for the appropriateness of using Breton’s text, is that it transgresses certain
genre boundaries, including obscuring distinctions between autobiography and novel, real and
surreal, fact and fiction. This blurring of boundaries, between the real and imagined, true memory
and a creative re-construction allowed me to conceptually reconcile two directions within my visual
production, which incorporates both documentary and tableaux vivant approaches to
photography. The former method I associate with external objective representations of events,
the latter with their mnemonic reconstruction. Thirdly, having experienced the very powerful
connection between memory, the photograph and place in Phase I of the project, I wanted to
investigate this further. I felt the certain methods borrowed from psychogeography would allow me to do this. Breton’s text is identified as a classic example of psychogeographical writing, and is based in Paris, a city which is most associated with this conceptual method. By using this source, in the same way I had used my own album images in Phase I, I also hoped to move beyond the autobiographical towards more culturally engaged collectively relevant content. I decided to use Breton’s novel, and the photographs by Boiffard, as a map, mnemonic resonating ground and conversational partner, to bridge the gap between the autobiographical primary sources of Phase I, and broader, collectively relevant questions on photography and memory, as I moved into Phase II. To support the research, I undertook two journeys to Paris, visiting the Charcot archives, the archives of the Centre Pompidou, and the first retrospective of Boiffard’s work held in Paris in January 2015. I used Breton’s text and Boiffard’s images to trace my own journey of mnemonic return in the process. I visited the same places mentioned by Breton, searching for material traces of what remained, prompted by details within the photographs and references from the text.

Suddenly, perhaps still ten feet away, I saw a young poorly dressed woman walking toward me, she had noticed me too, or perhaps had been watching me for several moments. She carried her head high, unlike everyone else on the sidewalk. And she looked so delicate she scarcely seemed to touch the ground as she walked.

(Breton 1999, p.64)

This is the moment that Breton, while idly wandering from the Humanitie bookstore on Rue Layfayette on October 4th 1926, suddenly spots Nadja for the first time. We are introduced to her as evening is about to fall, as an almost spectral presence, a waif, surrounded by an aura of the uncanny or unearthly, suggested not only by the fact she almost floats above the ground, but because of her detachment from the rest of the evening crowd. Despite initial misgivings, Breton approaches her on impulse. Nadja, as if expecting this, willingly accompanies him to a nearby Café near the Gare du Nord. And so, almost in an instant a course of events, surreal in every sense, are set in motion. The suddenness of this encounter and the almost instantaneous unfettered intimacy between Breton and Nadja, conform to the conventions of the marvellous encounter, a trope consistent within early Surrealist literature. Breton even references this during his third meeting with Nadja, citing an article L’esprit Nouveau, from his work Les Pas Perdus, which Nadja is reading. Here he describes how Louis Aragon, Andre Derain and himself had all met, only minutes apart a marvellously strange woman, a ‘veritable sphinx’ as they made their way along the streets of Paris. For Breton and his fellow Surrealists, the marvellous was that which could rupture the mundane, the routine and the pedestrian forms of thought, and they were ever vigilant to its sudden emergence. There was something of this, or what Walter Benjamin (2005, p.209) described as a ‘profane illumination’ in Breton’s encounter with Nadja. Transfixed by her fern-green eyes, and a ‘certain luminous pride’ in her demeanor, Breton immediately recognised something significant in the event.

In reality, Nadja was Leona Camille Ghislaine D., twenty-four years of age, and from the rural town of Lille. Having given birth to an illegitimate daughter when only eighteen, she was exiled by her family and sent to live under the patronage of an older sponsor in Paris. Struck by what he
saw as her other-worldly detachment and visionary quality, Breton pursued her for ten days through the streets of Paris. Nadja’s mystery lay in her inexplicable, almost clairvoyant capacity to move lucidly between regular and alternative states of consciousness. She was for that very brief period of time the embodiment of the archetypal muse. As in the writing of contemporaries such as Louis Aragon’s *Paris Peasant* (1926), Philippe Soupault’s *Last Nights of Paris* (1928) and Walter Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* (1927-40), Breton’s story is that of the Flâneur; the wanderer or entranced somnambulist on the threshold of the uncanny, who seeks and finds in the object of desire, not only a door to the subconscious, but ultimately the answer to the riddle of his own identity. Breton’s infatuation with Nadja, though short-lived, drew him towards a dark undertow, a psychological voyeurism into states verging on insanity. On 24th March 1927 in the spring following their brief affair, Nadja was admitted for psychiatric care to the Perray-Vaucluse Hospital, and from there transported to a hospital near her home town of Lille, where she died in 1941 at the age of thirty-nine. Breton never saw her again in person beyond that initial ten-day encounter, but her spectral presence lingered on, resulting in his 1928 novel, and her enduring legacy as one of the great Surrealist muses. The manuscript of his novel is divided into three parts: the first contains a reflexive autobiographical narrative, setting out certain philosophical and artistic principles of Surrealism. The second part presents a sequential diaristic account of his time spent with Nadja, recording their ten-day encounter. In the last section of the book we find Breton’s reflections on events, and his attempt to reconcile himself with Nadja’s fate, and his own part in it. Aware that history would perhaps judge him, his eventual publication also includes a condemnation of the profession of psychiatry. He notes that all that saved himself and his fellow Surrealists from a similar destiny was “the gift of that instinct for self-preservation which permits my friends and myself, for instance to behave ourselves when a flag goes past” (1999, p. 143).

*Nadja* is essentially a story of the haunting quality of memory. Breton chose forty-four photographic plates to accompany his text, the majority by the photographer Jacques-André Boiffard (Fig. 14), whom he commissioned to record certain places related to the story. The clinical gaze of the camera, with its power to document detail, combined with the speed and fragmentary nature the imagery produced, held great potential for early Surrealists. The camera could reveal, in its unnatural precision, like a surgical instrument cutting into the fabric of the real the extraordinary nature of things when they are examined closely. Surrealism necessitated a shift in consciousness, a lucidity of perception, openness to waking dream and hallucination, where ordinary things were allowed to metamorphose. In the process, the truly Surrealist photograph had to simultaneously look both outward and inward, finding in the external environment moments, forms, encounters which though actual, were also totemic. In this approach the photograph had to function as both evidence and subconscious trigger. Many of the early photographers working with the Surrealist group, including Boiffard, Brassai, Atget and Lotar, used similar strategies to Surrealist writers. Like Breton, Soupault and Aragon, in the traditions of the late 19th and early 20th century Flâneur, Surrealist photographers wandered the streets, the flea markets and the outskirts of Paris, in search of the marvellous in the everyday. This was an external event which ultimately revealed the true nature of the subject to himself. Photography in
this context was about the everyday reimagined as revelatory, epic, even mythic. The Surrealists became visual anthropologists of the everyday made magical, and certain places were the preferred sites of expedition. Boiffard followed Breton's trail to the flea market of St. Ouen. As Ian Walker (2002, p.115) notes, the flea market, the abattoir, the zones at the edges of the city, frequented by gypsies, vagabonds and itinerants, were hybrid spaces offering escape and transformation.

Therese Lichtenstein in *Twilight Visions, Surrealism and Paris* (2010) identifies a number of Surrealist photographers who were also using certain aesthetic strategies to communicate a more dreamlike, ethereal and haunted vision of Paris. The expressive quality of these works would perhaps have been more appropriate than the documentary approach used by Boiffard, for the novel, a fact reflected in Breton's eventual dissatisfaction with what was produced. Photographers such as Brassai, Kertesz, Ilse Bing, Man Ray, Germaine Krull, as well as Maurice Tabard, Lee Miller and Roger Parry created classically Surrealist photographs, in which the ordinary is seen through a Surrealist lens. Lichtenstein comments that they shared a kind of twilight sensibility, using unusual lighting, disorientating camera angles, attention to unusual details, montage, doubling and fragmentation to communicate a more subjective, internalized and spectral vision of the city, to produce psychologically compelling images, which are both document and enigma, evidence and evocation.

From November 2014 to January 2015 the Centre Pompidou in Paris opened the first comprehensive retrospective of the work of Jacques-André Boiffard, including many of the original images commissioned by Breton. These photographs are primarily documentary shots of several of the key locations described in the novel, and taken according to careful instructions from Breton. However, it was the very evidential or indexical nature of the images, something the Surrealists believed would make photography the perfect medium to demonstrate the Surreal within the real, that Breton found so disappointing in this work. In his effort to provide manifest visual evidence of the sites of the story, it seemed Boiffard failed to communicate any of its psychological complexity or atmosphere. Ian Walker in his discussion of the ‘voluntary banality’ of Boiffard’s work for *Nadja*, is of a different opinion, regarding these images as important examples of the true Surrealist vision. Walker (2002, p. 61) describes these images as being infused with what Annette Michelson (1979) terms, “a sense of imminence, of occurrences past or still to come”, generated through bringing together the highly introspective vision of the text of the novel, with the potential of the photographic image to function as evidence. Michelson claims, that for Walter Benjamin these photographs “evoked, in their vacant stillness, the scene of a crime”, they were in their ordinary, non-eventfulness, the silent stage set where all actions and events transpired. The photographs were added to lend veracity to the story, serving to illustrate exact places to prove and counterbalance the Surreal nature of events described. In Man Ray’s image *Terrain Vague* (Fig. 15) and Atget’s *Villa d’un Chiffonier* (Fig.16), we have powerful examples of what Walker describes as the meeting of the surreal with the real, in a form of documentary surreal. It is the absence within Man Ray’s image that takes on a weight of
foreboding. Here is evidence of a space at the edge of the world, a photograph of the disappearance of the real. As Walker describes it:

We have come to a land where even the surfaces suffer from ellipse, where culture would never be seen as more than a trace…Form was rendered obtuse, thick, blank.

(Walker 2012, p.117)

Walker’s writings on the ability of Surrealist works to operate “between index and construct”, have been particularly insightful during this research, and have allowed me to reconcile previously disjointed approaches within my studio practice. His observations about the Surrealists’ understanding, use and application of a documentary approach, to capture the surreal within the real was of real benefit when I began to navigate the streets of Paris myself, during Phase II. It provided me with a new conceptual approach to synthesise the theories informing the practice with the aesthetic and practical realisation of the work. As Walker notes,

The Surrealists...valued photography for the same reason, since, much as they prized the imaginative power of the human mind to write poems or paint pictures, there was a worrying flaw in such activity, which could indeed be easily dismissed as ‘just’ imagination. However, if the power of the camera could be harnessed to record, not only the stolid surface of reality, but also the more obscure relationships that connect within it, the results could be worth more than any number of imagined scenarios. Photography could anchor the surreal in the real, and our common belief in the actuality of the image exploited to convince us that this surreality was also irrefutable.

(Walker 2012, p.11)

This surreality is evident in the documentary images of for example Eli Lotar (Fig. 17) and Brassai, (Fig.18&19) where an uncanny, eerie and foreboding atmosphere pervades, with little intervention beyond perception and sensitivity to such phenomena, on the part of the photographer. In search of the totemic, the magical and the revolutionary power of the subconscious to rupture the real, the Surrealists also often appropriated photographic materials from anthropological surveys, including in particular the images of Marcel Griaule, which were often published in the Surrealist magazine Minotaure. They often turned this anthropological gaze to re-contextualize the ordinary within the everyday, within their own culture, and city, as if seeing things for the first time, as though in a foreign land. Drifting to the edge of the city, of night, of everyday life on the margins of society to find the unexpected, was a method common to both Surrealism and European traditions of the Flâneur.

Finding a Conceptual and Aesthetic Form for Memory –
Practice Based Research in Phase II

As mentioned previously, my choice of Breton’s novel as the starting point for Phase II, was due to not only its personal mnemonic significance, but also its richness as a literary source, anchored in an artistic movement which has been of great influence on my studio practice. In addition to this, by using Breton’s work as a conversational partner, I hoped to move the research from the autobiographic towards more collectively, and culturally relevant material. I aimed to also discover ways of reconciling two divergent threads underpinning how I approach photography. What Walker described as the Documentary Surreal offered a ground to synthesize both the more objective and poetic strands within my practice. I began by applying the studio methods identified
in the conclusion to Phase I above. Boiffard’s images became the pre-existing archive of photographic materials and Breton became a conversational partner. I used his day by day account to determine not only my own route through the city, but also the structure and content of both the visual and textual response I would create, in generating new work. I researched the true background and autobiography of Nadja (Leona Camille Ghislaine D.) to gain further insights into her life. In a narrative style similar to his, I used a semi-autobiographical account, written in the first person, to respond to his description of events. In doing this my intention was to explore the mnemonic potential of both text and image, giving voice to Nadja’s perspective on events. I drew upon personal memory to give the text life and contemporary relevance, using Breton’s text as the resonating ground or conduit. As I wandered through the actual places described in the book, I also allowed my own memory to weave in and around Breton’s descriptions of events and psychological states. I employed Surrealist techniques of chance and synchronistic encounter to prompt new iterations and interpretations of the story. I also visited the flea market of St. Ouen, in search of chance finds which could be integrated into the material construction of the work. For example, on the floor of one of the warehouses, I found a collection of discarded postcards, photographs and personal letters, tracing the life of a single woman wandering through various locations in Europe. Dates on the photographs ranged from 1938 to 1968. They became materials to imagine an alternative destiny for Nadja, one where she wasn’t incarcerated for the rest of her life. These were digitally scanned and integrated into the new archive I was building.

I also visited several of the places described in Breton’s novel, even booking myself into the Hotel Henri IV on Ile de la Cité, in December 2014, and stayed there for ten days into January 2015. My intention was to inhabit as closely as possible the rooms and spaces where Nadja had once lived. The Hotel Henri IV is located at Place Dauphine, and is the site of one of the most dramatic scenes in the book. My intention was to enter into the psychological and mnemonic spaces of the novel, to gain insights into its context, location and atmosphere, to inspire voice and memory for what was absent, silenced, lost or erased. In doing this I was also drawing upon a method learned from cultural anthropologist Pierre Yves Jacopin, through a workshop I had taken at the Aalto University of Art Design & Architecture (2001), during previous postgraduate research. Trained by Lévi-Strauss, Jacopin uses what he terms a generative approach to analyzing the narratives (or myths) used to create personal and collective cultural meaning. His technique involves identifying, claiming and retelling key stories already in collective circulation. By altering certain details, these narratives can be reinvented as a means of claiming active personal agency. As noted previously the events in Breton’s novel influenced my own autobiography. By reconnecting to Breton’s text in the second stage of the project, I was going deeper into the artistic and cultural sources which had so profoundly influenced me as a young artist, and also in no small way caused events touched upon in Phase I. The memory of Breton’s story and a subsequent iteration of this, through the more contemporary work of Leo Carax, altered the course of my life. It was therefore a logical step for me to return to this point of reference, and to use it to find connections where the personal becomes enmeshed in the web of social, cultural, and artistic memory, that link the individual to what can be collectively shared, experienced and remembered.
In addition to selected theories of memory, and philosophies on the relationship between the photograph and memory, it is important at this point to now also identify certain reoccurring aesthetic and conceptual approaches I have used throughout this project. My studio processes have been influenced by a number of key visual artists and works. In discussing practice based research in Phase II, I will include these influences through an aesthetic analysis of what I consider the most important characteristics of certain works by these artists, evident in my studio outcomes. For the sake of clarity and brevity, I have identified a number of categories I consider important here. My intention is to outline reoccurring and useful visual strategies in addressing my research topic within studio outcomes, which I can also use moving forward in my practice.

Images within Images

As noted previously, memory has often been described or conceived of as being linked to spatial and material inscription. As Foster (2009, p. 6) observes, in the ancient Greek world memory was allegorically described as being like an aviary, filled with brightly coloured but ever moving forms. Whitehead elaborates upon the lineage and evolution of this link between memory, inscription and spatiality, observing of the memory place system of antiquity that,

This tradition consciously builds on Aristotle's notion of recollection, to develop a system of memorizing that involves the methodical ordering of memory images and a search based on the principle of association.

(Whitehead 2009, p. 33)

Here information to be remembered is imaginatively placed within architectural forms in the mind’s eye. By re-navigating the space the subject can retrieve what is to be recollected, using spatially located visual cues. Frances Yates (1966, p.136), describes how the art of memory was transformed during the Renaissance by figures such as Giulio Camillo into miniature architectural structures. Camilo’s Memory Theatres consisted of wooden models, large enough to physically enter, and filled with boxes, images, figures, ornaments and papers, which the viewer could use to prompt the recollection of details. The complexity of the symbolic meaning of materials placed in these theatres were astoundingly ambitious. They operated as codices to preserve ancient hermetic teachings on the origins of man, divinity and the universe, through a labyrinthine web of mnemonic triggers. As Yates notes,

Camillo brings the art of memory into line with the new currents now running through the Renaissance. His Memory Theatre houses Ficino and Pico, Magia and Cabala, the Hermetism and Cabalism implicit in Renaissance so-called Neoplatonism. He turns the art of memory into an occult art.

(Yates 1966, p. 154)

In visual form, these early theatres of memory were very similar to what would become in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the Wunderkammer, or cabinet of curiosity, which would in turn lay the foundations for the modern museum. In her discussion of the cabinet as instrument, Barbara Maria Stafford (2001) describes how Samuel Quicchelberg’s invention of 1565, evolved to become a device, ranging in scale from that of a miniature piece of furniture, to sprawling
collections of artefacts spanning several rooms. According to Stafford the cabinet of curiosity served many functions including the activation of all the senses, through a form of synesthesia. As the viewer engaged with the material presented within the cabinet, new links, associations and knowledge could be constructed through imaginative, ludic, reconfiguration. In the process, memory could also be re-navigated as an active territory of potential reconstruction. Stafford also presents the work of Joseph Cornell as a recent example of how the cabinet has been used within the context of contemporary artistic practice. She comments that,

Cornell’s ‘assemblages of potent fragments – drawn from the detritus of popular culture – gain their identity through ever-changing linkages and multiple orientations, thus sharing a family resemblance stretching back to the nineteenth-century shadow box and early modern poetic armoire. (Stafford 2001, p.18)

Throughout his career Cornell created several hundred mixed-media sculptural objects that reference the aesthetic form of the wunderkammer. He uses photography in many of these as a means to relate complex, appropriated, compartmentalized and variant visual information. Images are frequently repeated, juxtaposed, collaged or effaced, to evoke alternating mnemonic associations and multiple readings. In his review of Cornell’s recent exhibition at the RCA, Colin Martin (2015) describes how the artist was inspired by the early Surrealist collages of Max Ernst. However, Martin distinguishes between the true reliance on chance, which was the modus operandi of the Surrealist method, and Cornell’s precisely calculated constructions. While Cornell, like the Surrealists used found and appropriated materials gathered from second hand stores and flea markets including: books, old engravings, prints, photographs, keepsakes and travel ephemera, drawn from both high and low culture, his work is more playful, even light hearted, in comparison to the darker thematic content of true Surrealism. As Martin notes (ibid, p. 84), “He contrasted in his works’ ‘white magic’, aimed at reigniting the innocent wonder of childhood, with the overly erotic Surrealist ‘black magic’. ” This lighthearted playfulness is evident, I would argue in Cornell’s careful editing of his primary source materials. These frequently include images taken from nature, travel, astronomy and science. His works are often flights of fancy, imaginative journeys to places he never visited in life, with his art becoming a sort of vicarious form of Flânerie. In the works Naples 1942 (Fig. 20) and Untitled (Celestial Navigation) 1956-58 (Fig. 21) for example, we have the suggestion of travel ephemera from the micro to the macrocosm. These 3D montages combine photographs, photographic objects, mirrors and the fragments of artefacts, creating images within images. His use of repetition, variations in scale, colour overlays, cropping, inversion, simultaneously elicit and obscure the associative and indexical readings of the photographic sources used. There is also the suggestion of traditions of reliquary in Cornell’s works. Pieces such as Untitled Object (Mona Lisa) (Fig. 22) resemble lockets, or what Geoffrey Batchen (2004, p. 32) classifies as a form of photographic practice that combines several images into one object, as a form of “sensory consummation of sight and touch”. As Batchen notes (ibid., p. 39), where fragments of fabric, personal effects or keepsakes are preserved with images, the result, “underscores the symbolic and abstract qualities of memory, without forsaking the proof of ‘what has been’ provided by the medium of photography.” This combination of artefact with image, along with the sense of complex layering within the work effectively evoke associative
reconstructions. Individual objects, images and components within such pieces seem to operate as evidence, or loci of residual memory traces, which are open to multiple interpretations by the viewer.

This inter-relationship between the photograph and material artefacts or objects, became more conscious within my studio process during Phase II. Inspired by the work of Cornell, and more recent contemporary artists using the memory box or cabinet of curiosity as a conceptual construct, such as Mark Dion, Stuart Lantry and Maissa Toulet. I wanted to incorporate found materials alongside my own photographs. These included artefacts gathered during my journeys through Paris, (antique postcards, letters, maps, items of clothing) were all used and appropriated to build a fictional archive for Nadja. Some of these were then dipped or cast in plaster, others were scanned and digitally embedded into collage pieces. As Phase II progressed, I became more interested in embedding images within images, to create a more complex visual field, more like a memory cabinet or grid. I felt that this disrupted narrative sequence, and promoted the building of associative links between visual elements within each work. This layering process which was an extension of the collage method used in Phase I, was especially appropriate to memory work. In placing several images, or image objects within the same visual plane, there was potential to trigger the sense of a journey into and through the piece, inducing recollection. I regard the aesthetic as very similar to memory boxes, or cabinets of curiosity, where several often disconnected elements are compartmentalized, but form the overall web of meaning, made possible through encountering the work. The art of Annette Messager, e.g. pieces such as Maman, Histories de Sa Robe Verte, and Mes Vox (Fig. 23 and 24) were important influences here. Messager’s use of multiple photographic sources and references, juxtaposed in a non-liner matrix was a visual and conceptual device which I felt reflected something of the way memory operates. The structure of these works were important in influencing my decision to find alternative narrative forms, in the construction of studio outcomes in Phase I. As Phase II progressed, I began to concentrate more on this issue of narrative sequence, particularly within the relationship between text and photographic image. All preliminary 3D artefacts were finally removed and displayed separately, in three memory boxes, one for each phase of the project (Fig. 25). This allowed me to concentrate on the photographic again, and also to develop the content of narrative texts.

**Temporal Disruptions**

The first iteration of this new direction within the practice was Postcards From A Life, a work consisting of ten diptychs, one for each day of my journey through Paris, in the footsteps of Nadja and Breton. Each work includes a map juxtaposing my route with that of Breton’s, a constructed conversation between two speaking subjects, and finally a series of twelve photographic images, each the size of a postcard, arranged in a grid (Fig. 26 & 27). I deliberately used aesthetic conventions of photography from different eras, to skew temporal reading within these pieces. Using my own photographs, combined with archival and found sources, textual fragments and,
my intention was to suggest evidence of a life and an autobiography, to give Nadja’s experience voice and interiority. The work is a constructed archive for Nadja, a materialization of traces and memories from a life that has been otherwise erased. The maps traced my routes through Paris, in the footsteps of Breton and included extracts from the original text, along with some of my own experiences and memories. I used double exposure in camera during several journeys to play with the Surrealist idea of chance, and also continuing the idea of approaching things from different mnemonic moments or perspectives, as begun in Phase I (Fig. 28).

Beneath each map was a second panel, containing the textual response to Breton (Fig. 29). I planned my journeys to mirror Breton’s route through the city, writing and re-photographing as I went. While I used the novel to guide my direction for each day, I also allowed chance, free association and of course memory to inspire what emerged. I reduced the tonal range in the final map, to emphasize certain information. The most mysterious, haunting and poetic sequence of events in Breton’s novel occur at Place Dauphine, on Ile de la Cité. Breton describes it as follows,

There must be a certain confusion in her mind, for she has driven not to the Ile Saint-Louis, as she supposes, but to the Place Dauphine…The Place Dauphine is certainly one of the most profoundly secluded places I know of, one of the worst wastelands in Paris. Whenever I happen to be there, I feel the desire to go somewhere else gradually ebbing out of me, I have to struggle against myself to get free from a gentle, over-insistent, and, finally crushing embrace. (Breton 1999, p.80)

It is here that Nadja’s reason also gives way to a form of irrational terror. She believes that there are subaltern tunnels beneath her feet, and wanders manically in search of a doorway from which “everything begins”. She is haunted, even possessed by the past at this location, grabbing hold of railings at the Conciergerie, refusing to be physically moved. She refers to a blue wind passing through the square, leaving her in dread of death. Her visions culminate in seeing a flaming hand above the river, an omen of a future catastrophe she cannot explain. In his discussion of sadness and sanity in Surrealist photography, David Bates (2004) introduces Margaret Cohen’s theories on Breton’s work. Cohen maintains that this novel contains more complex, multilayered references to the history of Paris, than is initially apparent. The sites most troubling to Nadja, particularly that of Place Dauphine, are where some of the most violent events in Parisian history transpired. As Bates notes,

Nadja’s hallucinations, far from arbitrary, have a historical accuracy and we can begin to sense that Breton’s playful writing is more of a ‘docu-drama’ than at first imagined. (Bates 2004, p.97)

Her vision of the flaming hand over the Seine, has a precursor in Gerard de Nerval’s story, *La Main Enchantée*, situated in Place Dauphine. This was inspired by T. A. Hoffmann’s *The Enchanted Hand*. The motif of demonic possession of a hand, central to this tale also appears in Dali and Bunuel’s *Un Chien Andalou*. Simone de Beauvoir has also connected the work of Nerval with Nadja, in particular his final novel, *Aurelia, (Ou le Reve et la Vie)*, (1855). Identified as a Gothic work, this is an autobiographical account of the writer’s descent into madness, before his own suicide. Nerval was of such importance to Surrealism, Breton had initially considered naming his movement the Supernaturalists rather than the Surrealists. In discussing the nature of Nadja’s
madness, Bates also maintains that the psychosis from which Nadja suffers involves a "hole, rent, a gap, with respect to external reality," which is then filled by the projection of a repressed thing, a psychic process linked to the subject's relationship to the father, paternity, and patriarchal law. Her madness is therefore symptomatic of an inability to reconcile herself to the law of the father and the symbolic order. Nadja also refers to herself as Melusine in Breton's account, a mythic archetype and alchemical figure, visually a half woman, half-serpent, also evident in drawings preserved in Breton's personal Archives. In Psychology and Alchemy (1993) C.J. Jung describes how Melusine is equated in the neo-Christian traditions with the anima mundi, the feminine in nature. She signifies the unconscious, but also evil and matter combined, so her destiny is to be cast out, he comments,

The experience of the unconscious is a personal secret communicable only to a very few, and that with difficulty; hence the isolating effect we noted above. But isolation brings about a compensatory animation of the psychic atmosphere which strikes us as uncanny. The figures that appear in the dream are feminine, thus pointing to the feminine nature of the unconscious. They are fairies or fascinating sirens and lamias, who infatuate the lonely wanderer and lead him astray...and the Melusina of Paracelsus is another such figure.

(Jung 1993, p.52)

There is no doubt that Breton viewed Nadja as a “veritable Sphinx”, a form of dark muse and a conduit to access the subconscious. She is after all taken to be one of the most iconic of such figures in the Surrealist tradition. It could be argued also that Nadja was driven insane by her inability to reconcile herself with a system which demanded so much of her. Gradually overwhelmed by her visions of Breton, as an overpowering God-like figure who can completely nullify her existence and also his projection of darkness onto her, his final abandonment leaves her completely bereft. She fully collapses into madness like an imploding star. Bates describes this psychodynamic as follows,

Breton remains on the side of the symbolic order, he is the neurotic witness to his own unconscious conflicts, while Nadja is given to signify the unconscious and can no longer bear witness to her own thoughts. Nadja transgresses the symbolic order and pays the price of incarceration.

(Bates 2004, p.110)

There was undoubtedly an exploitative even cavalier attitude in Breton’s behaviour towards Nadja, evident in the overall Surrealist indifference to the vulnerability of those suffering from mental illness. In 1928, (the very year Nadja was published) photographs of Charcot’s famous psychiatric patient Augustine (Fig. 30) were used to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Hysteria. Didi-Huberman (1982, p.148) describes how Surrealism regarded this malady, suffered predominantly by young women, as “the greatest poetic discovery of the nineteenth century,” proclaiming “We love nothing better than these young hysterics, of whom the perfect type is provided by the observation of the delicious X.L. (Augustine).” As noted earlier, it was Breur and Freud who had first proposed that hysteria was in fact, the reoccurrence of suppressed memory. In the case of Augustine, the most famous hysteric in Charcot's studies, this was the memory of a traumatic rape, buried in the body, and repeated through psychotic gesture as a split-off disassociated component of the psyche. For the Surrealist artist it seems, Augustine was to be used to expand consciousness like a psychotropic drug. The photographic plates created by Régnard for Charcot, present the first visual taxonomy of the associated psycho-somatic
phenomena of hysteria; female subjects (though there were also male hysterics – suffering from what we understand today to be PTSD), are captured prostrate, frozen, catatonic and in many instances seemingly possessed or overwhelmed by an invisible presence. Like Nadja, Augustine looks to the air, transfixed by hallucination. In Régénard's *Les maladies épidémiques de l'esprit*, there are also some interesting visualizations of pre-psychoanalytic beliefs that the symptoms of hysteria resembled demonic possession. Subjects, mainly women are here depicted as falling victim to an infernal presence, which is expelled on the air, like an exhalation of foul breath. However rather than a supernatural presence interfering with the subject, what we are witnessing is a re-enactment of traumatic memory, trapped in the contorted gesticulations of flesh and bone. In this context, the Surrealist fascination with the psychological illness of these young women is predatory and troubling. Like Augustine, Nadja is celebrated by Breton for her unusual visionary qualities. Although Breton finally describes her as mad, he is loath to draw distinctions between the irrational and rational mind. Nadja in the end underwent a final redemptive transformation, becoming the one born to transgress all rules as a beacon of revolutionary emancipation. Breton concluded she,

…. was born to serve it (freedom), if only by demonstrating that around himself each individual must foment a private conspiracy, which exists not only in his imagination…by thrusting one’s head, then an arm, out of the jail - thus shattered - of logic, that is, out of the most hateful of prisons.  
(Breton 1928, p. 143)

This is easily said in the hindsight of literary reflection, and the privilege of justifying actions according to the dictates of an artistic manifesto. The events of this story raise many questions regarding power relations determined by class, gender and artistic ethics. I was very conscious of these issues during the research, and also of the possibility that Nadja’s mental illness may have been a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. Breton’s descriptions of her episodes of psychosis, and their haunting quality resemble accounts from Freud, Breur and Charcot’s early studies into memory and its maladies. Nadja is depicted by Breton as a figure cast adrift, spectral and detached from regular life. Her perceptions are frequently distorted by fears of the past or future. Her subjectivity at times seems to collapse, as her identity is interchanged or overwhelmed by her thoughts of Breton, or figures from history and myth. I wanted to communicate a sense of this temporal and identity disruption within the aesthetic form of the studio work. This is reflected in the written texts through the interchangeability of speaking voices, which weave in and out of each other, and also the skewing of the temporal register of the photographic styles combined within the accompanying images.

The images for each diptych are gathered from a number of sources. I re-photographed several of Boiffard’s sites, including my own images of chance encounters on location. The collection of personal photographs and letters from a mysterious anonymous woman, dating from 1907 to 1968, which I found at the market of St. Ouen became the locus of a constructed visual autobiography. This unknown figure, who is pictured travelling, often entirely alone around various locations in Europe, became the signifier of an alternative destiny for Nadja. I scanned this material, using the tonal range and material style of the photographs to digitally alter
contemporary digital shots. While in Paris I also gathered several archival sources to integrate into the work.

At the archives of the Centre Georges Pompidou, I viewed the collaborative psychogeographical artist book *Memories* by Asger Jorn and Guy Debord (Fig. 31). The random juxtapositions and playfulness of their approach helped me understand the often arbitrary, haphazard and illogical way memory operates, and the poetic licence allowed the artist to express this. I also used drawing along with the slower technical process of solar plate and photo etching, to think into the ideas of the work and synthesize some of the archival resources I was finding. In the drawing series *The Blue Wind*, (Fig. 32, 33 & 34) this thinking through drawing and more material visual forms, that combine photographs, text and alternative ways of working the surface of the image are more apparent. I chose the form of a postcard as a means to integrate all of these visual research sources, because as an artefact of visual material culture, it is used for the preservation of everyday memory. Sending postcards has also been described as a female occupation, and as such postcards are regarded as disposable, sentimental and forgettable. I felt this format was particularly fitting to resurrect the forgotten life of Nadja. From the flea markets in Paris I also bought a selection of second-hand postcards, choosing dates and images roughly corresponding to the locations and dates in Breton’s novel. I digitally integrated original handwriting from what remains of Nadja’s letters and drawings to Breton. In the absence of autobiographical traces of Nadja’s existence, I was generating my own to create the content from often anonymous sources, alongside my own documentary images of the time spent wandering in search of these traces in Paris.

The American conceptual artist Susan Hiller, in particular her work *Dedicated To The Unknown Artists*, (1972-1976) (Fig. 35), was a key influence at this stage of my project. Hiller’s piece consists of 300 found postcards, all of rough seas around the coast of Britain. These have been systematically organised into grids, according to a typology devised by Hiller based on their textual references. Accompanying these postcards, Hiller has also included a map of their points of reference, along with empirical data charts based on an analysis of the linguistic and visual traits of each. The final work is presented on fourteen framed panels, and as a book and dossier.

Trained in both art and anthropology, Hiller defines her work as “paraconceptual”, a term describing how she integrates influences from both conceptualism and paranormal investigation. The interplay between factual and fictional, recollection and fantasy, empirical and absurd data, are characteristic and deliberate within her approach. In the accompanying publication to Hiller’s exhibition at the Tate London, Ellen Gallagher notes that anthropological methodology and systems of taxonomic classification underpin Hiller’s production. In her archival piece *From the Freud Museum* (Fig. 36), this is evident in how she gathers, sorts, classifies and transforms, found or appropriated materials, to construct what Gallagher describes as micro museums whereby,

This curious anthology of oddities, collected by the artist for their personal associations, have been meticulously arranged, annotated and indexed to provide the viewer with an array of tantalizing...
fragments of cultural memory from which to form their own associations and meanings. 

(Gallagher 2011, p. 16)

In her collection of selected talks and texts, *The Provincial Texture of Reality*, Hiller describes how she,

declassified and reclassified objects of no value, in an overt cultural archaeology…(an) elusive double perspective of the dreamer, who simultaneously grasps reality as well as what reality hides.

(Hiller 2008, p. 28)

Here the dreamer is both the artist and the viewer, who must lucidly traverse states of consciousness and subconscious perception in order to construct meaning in fragmentary material traces of what remains. Using images, texts and photographs, collected and divided into new taxonomies, the re-mounted, like precious historical artefacts in archival brown boxes Hiller proves that even within the museum of the father of psychoanalysis memory is always a space for revision. Knowledge and memory are to be contested. Two vials of water, one labelled Lethe the other Mnemosyne, appear in this work, referencing the Greek belief that after death the soul on its journey through the underworld can choose to drink from the river of forgetful oblivion or remembrance (Fig. 37). In the context of this work, Hiller draws the viewers’ attention to the deep time and memory within history, and the agency required in choosing when and what to remember, and of course the legacy of psychoanalysis, as the modern art of memory. Her use of images within image, meaning layered upon meaning, in meta-textual compositions, creates a work functioning like memory itself, built upon shifting levels of association, prompted by unexpected links and temporal shifts. The conceptual approach and aesthetic form I chose for my own series *Postcards From A Life*, owes much to Hiller. However, where Hiller used exclusively found postcards to generate taxonomies, I have created my own to construct a fictional archive. The photographic images here were used as environments of mnemonic return to generate new insight, knowledge, and potential reading for Bretons memory of events. The process was also about returning to create a different future for Nadja, and women like her.

The diptych pieces in *Postcards From A Life* were my first attempt to synthesize research for Phase II, and were successful to the extent that it allowed me to integrate complex content. In adopting certain archival and anthropological aesthetic methods, I could bring order, structure and form to the memory processes informing the thought behind the studio outcomes.

**Narrative Drift - Inscribing and Un-inscribing the Image**

Sometimes it doesn’t add up, there are holes, ellipses, elisions, gaps, erasures, disappearances in what is left. Maria Devereaux Herbeck, in her description of what she terms “narrative drift” in recent French literature and film, including Breton’s *Najda*, has described a process whereby certain subjects, particularly certain women, succeed in escaping the all-encompassing, usually male gaze of a centralized narrative authority. This authoritative position is often reinforced with the aid of ideological systems, including those of anthropology, ethnography and psychoanalysis. However, where the subject moves beyond the scopic abilities of the narrator, the narrative drifts,
doubles back upon itself and the narrator, rather than the object becomes visible. In Breton’s case, these are the moments in his story, where he can only speculate upon Nadja’s existence, as she vanishes into the city and the unknown. Breton is then forced to contemplate his own life and intentions. In these moments, where the protagonist literally walks away, the narrator must also drift from observation to reflection, from claims to truth, to speculative, poetic and imaginative dreaming, influenced by personal memory. As Devereaux remarks, when the “screen of authority” invested in the narrative agent or voice is destabilising, so too is the reader and viewer’s faith in the power of the larger ontological constructions it upholds. James Clifford commenting on ethnographic Surrealism, maintains that where,

Reality is no longer a given, a natural, familiar environment, the self, cut loose from its attachments, must discover meaning where it may, a predicament which destabilises the self, threatening at its most nihilistic complete erasure of identity. (Clifford 1981, p.543)

But in Devereaux’s analysis, this cutting loose and drifting out, is not about alienation, rather it is a freedom through detachment from the conventions of a prescribed social reality. The decision however risky, to wander, becomes an individualistic politics of claiming agency. As Devereaux notes, characters such as Mona in Agnes Varda’s film *Vagabond* (1985), are examples of a female wanderer, who chooses to drift rather than live within social conventions, particularly those imposed upon a female subject.

This concept of narrative drift is one I found appropriate and useful in understanding my intention, methods and results during the research. In physically wandering through psychogeographical spaces of Breton’s novel, I gravitated towards those spaces where Nadja seemed most elusive. Where, as Devereaux describes it, the female subject disappears from view and is freest to determine her own identity. In these absences I found the most potential for speculating upon, discovering or suggesting what the missing mnemonic content might contain. I would also equate these drifts, silences and disappearances within textual narrative, with certain unusual phenomena in the visual field. These can occur both within the perception of the subject described, and also at the level of signification of the photograph, as document of psychological states where memory interrupts, ruptures and distorts perception. In this sense Nadja’s visionary hallucinations, can be understood as mnemonic interferences. Didi-Huberman (1982, p.129) also draws attention to Charcot’s studies of the “ocular symptoms” of hysteria, which he maintained included, micropsia, macropsia, concentric shrinking of the visual field, dyschromatopsia, dissymmetry, reduction of visual ability on the right side, and interestingly achromatopsia, which caused the subject to see the world as a photograph. As discussed in chapter 2 (above), Didi-Huberman describes an “overhang of affect” in certain documentary photographs from Charcot’s Iconography of hysteria. The spaces of absence take on an ominous quality, and become a projection ground for the viewer to imagine what emptiness might contain. This is also what Ulrich Baer has described as “spectral evidence”, where absence and erasure can inversely become the most psychologically charged element in a place or scene (Baer 2005).
At this point in the project, realising how problematic memory disrupts the psychological functioning of perception, vision, and inscription, I decided that this should also become apparent in how I treated images about this phenomenon. In the final edition of practice-based research outcomes for Phase II, the digitally altered photographic series *The Blue Wind* (Fig. 38 & 39) this began to happen. Consisting of 10 digital photographic prints, in which extracts from the textual narrative written for *Postcards From a Life*, have been inserted into the digital code of selected images, my intention was to discover how the memories contained in the narrative drift of the text, could interfere with and disrupt the visual field. In each image I inserted text, up to the point where the photograph still remained intact. The visual glitching was unpredictable, open to chance, and in direct relation to the textual interference with the digital code. In effect, I was inscribing and also un-inscribing the image, opening up spaces of disappearance prompted by an unpredictable impact of mnemonic content on the visual field. In two larger pieces Hypermaps #1 & 2 (Fig. 40 & 41) an overload of memory caused the breaking down of the image on a digital level. Technically I loaded so many visual moments from one psychogeographical journey through Paris into the same visual field, the computer was unable to process the information. The digital disintegration of the image became an interesting aesthetic to speak of the fragility of the new photographic surface, which is really a screen interface.

Additional conceptual and aesthetic influences at this stage included artists who have also incorporated text, and the simultaneous erasure of text into the construction of photographic work. Here the work of Finnish photographer Niina Vatanen was important, for how she writes and unwrites images, and also in how she inverts the surface of photographic images to address themes of memory, loss and erasure. In *A Room's Memory* the first comprehensive catalogue on Vatanen (2013, p. 12), Pari Stave introduces her work as having, “a disquieting sense of absence, void, and latency”. Pessi Rautio (ibid, p.23) describes a reoccurring “blocking of the gaze” within her images. Vatanen frequently uses accidental technical mistakes, erosion and loss of context to open appropriated archival photographs as mnemonic projection grounds. She isn’t particularly interested in the indexical register of these images, rather she uses their vernacular familiarity to explore the point at which the index is infused with associative resonance, evoked by memory. Tears, chemical stains, scratches, light leaks; evidence of the history of the photograph as a material artefact, reveal a hidden affective latency within the visible field, allowing for this imaginative projection. Exposed spaces between frames, elude to what is hidden, the time between things, the agency of unique and particular decisions which were once taken. In *Reverse View* (2010) (Fig. 42) an instant of light and shadow, the essence of photographic inscription at its purest, seems to have permeated the back surface of the image and hover unfixed above its surface, like a chimera threatening to fade. In another piece the series *A Rooms Memory* (2010), *The Collector* (Fig. 43), an archival gloved hand pins butterflies onto a cloth in a shaft of light casting long shadows into the background. Both pieces offer brilliant insight into what we demand of the photograph, in its purest aural function, this is the photographer as magician or alchemist, who with a slight of hand seems to have trapped light to suggest the fragility of memory. Vatanen’s work, *The Red Letter, And Other Confessions* (2006) (Fig. 44) was also relevant. Here she has
photographed a series of autobiographical letters, where the text has been rendered illegible. It is simultaneously present and absent, the photographic document of an erasure of mnemonic content. The motif also reoccurs in a later beautifully ethereal series, *A Seamstress’s Notes* (2010) (Fig. 45) in which the intimacy of personal letters, postcards and photographs are sewn through with various threads, suggesting memento-mori. This work recalls that of Maria Lai, for example, *Lenzuolo* (2007) (Fig. 46), an influence in Phase I of the project. Here the simultaneous writing and un-writing of language, as suggested by the presence and absence in the threaded texts suggests both revelation and erasure.

**The Photobook as a Mnemonic Environment**

A final influence I will mention here is that of artist Mariana Castillo Deball, as her work also uses the Artist Book as an immersive environment to address the deconstruction, erasure and reinvention of memory. In the aesthetic and material construction of her work, usually presented as large installations, Deball allows for spaces of ambiguity to emerge, to deconstruct the provenance, presentation and indexical register of visual cultural materials, to reimagine history, not as a closed narrative, but a site for excavation and alternatives. In her recent article for the exhibition catalogue accompanying *Parergon*, at the Hamburger Banhoff (2015, p. 319), Kirsty Bell comments that the artist has described herself as “a parasite in the archaeological and anthropological collection of the museum”. Using performative lectures, film, nomadic sculptural configurations and relational publication projects, Deball allows for both narrative and interpretative drift within her work. As Bell notes, the artist consistently obfuscates her own voice and position within the fragmented materials presented, to introduce what she terms “discursive vectors”, informed by what is excavated, secondary research and the contribution of several invited participants. Multiplicity of subject positions, chance encounters of association, tangential constructions of meaning, encourage what Bell terms an “immanence of revelation” (ibid., p.232).

One of Deball’s main strategies is to abandon dialectical subject/object relations. In *Uncomfortable Objects* (2008/09) she creates a process whereby inanimate things assume voice and agency, through the invention of a new memory narrative for each. Deball uses a method similar to the Surrealist use of automatic writing, where haunted things speak, and their chance encounters become revelations. For example, in *El Donde Estoy va Desapareciendo* (2014) (Fig. 47) an animated film, the *Codex Borgia*, a pre-Columbian document tells its own history saying,

> Thus began my voyage/I wandered over land and sea/the voices became more and more strange/no one opened my pages to repeat their histories/I began to forget where I came from/my shapes went mute.

(Deball, 2014)

In Deball’s work the absent, the dead, the silenced, the negated in traditional Eurocentric anthropological and ethnographic discourses, assumes new agency, as salvaged fragments of material culture speak their memory. As Bell (2015, p. 321) notes, we are presented with, “Instead of a human subject moving through a system of objects, the object proceeds through the system of people”. However, Hal Foster (1996) in his critique of the ethnographic turn in contemporary
art practice, describes a risk of re-inscribing alterity in any unquestioning neo-romantic equating of the creativity with ideas of unconscious primitivism, something endemic to the Surrealist legacy. He recommended instead, a “complex imbrication” to move beyond simple oppositions, particularly postcolonial notions of the primitive outsider, the irrational, emotive and silent. For Deball, who often begins with artefacts referencing her own cultural origins, now stored in European museum collections, this problem is particularly relevant. Spaces of emptiness, of erasures and forgotten subjectivities can in Deball’s work become spaces of imaginative intercession. To play with the evidence means to be able to creatively reinvent memory, a process of taking back power, agency and interiority through the creation of alternative mnemonic narratives. Deball has also consistently used the book as a site of intervention. In *Do ut Des*, (Fig. 48) an on-going piece, she presents a collection of books designed by Eugenio Hirsch as an overview of the collections of various world museums. These catalogues published in the 1970’s were created to assist visitors navigate the history and collections of these institutions. Appropriated in a contemporary context, they provide Deball with an atlas for institutional critique. By literally cutting holes in these books, including their photographic evidence, she points towards layers of absence, spaces of extrusion within colonial memories of the past. In *Uncomfortable Objects* (2012) (Fig.49), photographic material from disparate ethnographic sources, are collaged, overlaid, distorted and stretched into thin skins on asymmetrical sculptural forms, that extended through space, like organic thoughts, finding their own route around the architecture of the museum. In a commissioned essay for Deball’s publication, *Uncomfortable Objects* (2012), Jimena Canales (pp.37- 47), charts the historical, philosophical and scientific progress of an idea as a form, that from even the smallest of gestures, or petites causes, can cause the greatest of effects. The implication here being that even the slightest deviation in variables within knowledge, can reinvent the world. Deball’s work is political, in that she sets the stage for such deviations in traditions of collective institutionalised remembrance to occur. She uses the evidentiary power of museum aesthetic, to expose hidden political trajectories within systems of collective memory. The ruin, the trace, the mute decontextualised object, like a photographic slice of time, become props forever shifting within contingent notions of reality. At the core of Deball’s practice, as with Hillers, I would argue that there is a similar form of conceptual and narrative drift. Each wanders, if not physically, then through the halls and collections of western knowledge. Like thieves, vagabonds and rag pickers, these artists choose what to borrow, what is needed to tell a different kind of story. In this form of work, memory is fluid, interchangeable, mutable. Deball consistently uses the book as a form which can be reinvented to speak new narratives. The artist book is an aesthetic form I have also used in each stage of the research. It has been a means to explore the inter-relationship between the photographic and textual contents of studio outcomes, while also testing the limits of each in communicating the complexities of memory. This form allowed me to synthesize and consolidate each cycle of the work and create immersive mnemonic sequences for the viewer.

In concluding this section on finding an aesthetics for memory, I will say that all of the artists presented here, which have influenced the visual and conceptual development of my studio
experiments, share similar approaches to the treatment of the photograph as a site of mnemonic return. Each in their own way test the documentary limits of the image to the point where it yields to a form of lucid reconfiguration. Images that are unquestionably snatched from their original function as documentary evidence, become harbingers of memory, often through the evocation of presence within absence. In borrowing strategies from both Surrealism and ethnography, each of these artists also uses chance as an active method of unconsciously accessing buried mnemonic content. However, unlike their Surrealist predecessors, this is not a search for marvellous encounter, with a primitive, absurd, subconscious projected into the silenced field of the other. Instead chance is the moment where the authority of institutional ontologies and the photograph itself, are treated as negotiable. Agency is handed back to the viewer as an invitation to enter a different form of relation. Use of the photograph as a site of memory, whether archival, anthropological, vernacular or constructed, becomes a means to renegotiate the limits of identity.

Conclusions for Phase II

By the completion of Phase II, I could identify consistent conceptual and formal aesthetic strategies within core artistic influences, and my own studio application of these to enhance the potential of my photographs to operate as environments of mnemonic return. As discussed above, these include:

1. **Images within images**
   The final resolution of this strategy is evident in the series *The Blue Wind* (Fig. 39) and *Hypermap 1 & 2* (Fig. 40&41). This is the final edition of the Paris cycle of work. By inscribing mnemonic texts at the level of the code of the image, and also within its visual plane, I was aiming to express repetitions, echoes, re-occurrences within the visual field of psychologically influenced background content. I pushed this to the point where digital memory began to collapse, and used the visual breakdown as part of the aesthetic of the image. The result is images within images, moments within moments, memories within memories, up to the point where the capacity to retain information begins to disintegrate, because memory is overwhelmed. This is something I anticipate I will use further, by integrating multi-layered presentation platforms, and also moving image within future work.

2. **Use of Temporal Disruptions**
   As discussed above, problems in memory functioning, particularly in instances of trauma, can result in ruptures, gaps, erasures, repetitions, and general disruptions within the usual linear sequencing of events remembered. I have visually referred to this through deliberately skewing the temporal register within the aesthetic of several images in Phase II. This includes scanning and appropriating archival photographs, and integrating their style, form, and technique with my own work, shot with a variety of cameras, from medium format film to iPhone snapshots. This is most evident in how I synthesised materials in compiling *Postcards From a Life*, where the sources include found, appropriated, archival and new materials. I
would like to pursue this further in the construction of impossible narratives, based on the
temporal impossibility thereby playing with the vulnerability of memory further.

3. **Narrative Drift - Inscribing and Un-inscribing the Image**

Inspired by Van Der Kolk’s descriptions of lesions and ellipses, where trauma is entombed as
absences in memory pathways, I have been searching for visual means to express this. I
would identify the actual holes in the books of Mariana Castillo Deball, or the blacked out
texts in work by Niina Vatanen, or Maria Lai’s simultaneous writing and un-writing within her
threaded books, as examples of a dual signification: of absence and presence, inscription
and un-inscription in the same gesture. This simultaneous utterance and masking of
utterance, was something important to me in Phase I, as a deliberate means to both reveal
and conceal traumatic autobiographical memory. In Phase II, I allowed chance to enter the
process more consciously. By inscribing memories within code of the image, I was
simultaneously un-inscribing the visual field, allowing memory to unpredictably erase what
would visually remain.

4. **Use of The Artist Book As A Memory Environment**

By the end of Phase I, I had created four handmade artist books. For Phase II, I returned to
the photobook format as a means to digitally produce a layout which allowed me to quickly
alter visual and textual sequences, to edit and restructure emerging memory narratives. I felt
that the book format, provided a perfect self-contained environment, which also included a
beginning and end point, with potential to offer closure. As a material, aesthetic and
conceptual form, it provided the perfect means to collate the diverse sources within the work
into one platform. Three prototype Photobooks have been created for the project, and my aim
is to have these published once the PhD is completed
Figure. 14 Boiffard. J. A. (1928), Sample illustration pages for André Breton’s Nadja.

Figure. 17 & 18 Lotar. E. (1929) *Aux Abattoirs de La Vilette*, Silver gelatin print, 22.2x16.2cm, *Documents* Vol. 6. and Brassai. (1932) *Maréchal Ney*, © The Brassai Estate.

Figure. 19 Brassai (1933) *Paris by Night*, © Estate Brassai.
Figure. 20, 21 & 22 Cornell. J. (1942) *Naples*, Box Construction, 28.6x17.1x12.1cm, (1940-42) *Untitled Object (Mona Lisa)*, Box construction, 3.5 x 7.6 cm, and (1956-58) *Celestial Navigation*, Box Construction, 30.8x43.2x9.2cm, The Robert Lehman Art Trust, courtesy of Aimee and Robert Lehrman © The Joseph and Robert Cornell Memorial Foundation/VAGA, NY/DACS, London 2015.

Figure. 23 Messager. A. (1990) *Maman, histoire de sa robe verte*, photographs, watercolour on paper, textile in a glass and wood case, 138x178x7cm. The Collection of The Indianapolis Museum of Art.

Figure. 26 Cleary. M. (2015) *Postcards From A Life Day # 1*, Archival Digital print # (1 of 10), 10x100cm.


Figure. 28 Cleary. M. (2014) *Postcards From A Life* first journeys and maps.
Last October fourth, toward the end of one of those idle, gloomy afternoons I know so well how to spend, I happened to be in the Rue Lafayette; after stopping a few minutes at the stall outside the Lemanite bookstore and buying Trotsky’s latest work, I continued aimlessly in the direction of the Opera.

What a contrast it is without you here. It’s as if all the celebrants have stopped. Paris is calling me out into the night, but I linger in the calm emptiness of your absence. The days we drifted out like a party. You standing in the dark corridor of a shabby hotel, eyes burning, so high in the stillness of a sight you said, open chasing the lightening. That’s what you were, a sky creature fallen to earth, plunging momentarily because I wanted your protection, just for a while, just to believe there could be rest. Where are you tonight? I call but your phone has been off the hook for days. How could I think desire was a fair trade for freedom?

Tomorrow I will wander out to chase the wind again, the blue of the wind, through the backstreets of Paris. But tonight I will linger on, in the shadow of how we met, in the scattering of a line, in the spaces between everything else. The sky is opening up now, over the rooftops and chimneys of Paris.

Figure. 29 Cleary. M. (2016) Postcards From A Life Day # 1 (Detail).
Figure. 30 Régnard, P. (1878) *Photograph of Augustine*, Iconography of the Salpêtrière, vol. II


Figure. 32 Cleary, M. (2014-15) *The Blue Wind*, Solarplate print, ink, thread (Detail).
Figure. 33 Cleary. M. (2014-15) *The Blue Wind*, (Detail).

Figure. 34 Cleary. M. (2014-15) *The Blue Wind*, Drawings, solarplate prints, intaglio prints, photo etchings, dimensions variable.
Figure. 35 Hiller. S. (1972-76) *Dedicated to the Unknown Artists*, 305 postcards, charts and maps mounted on 14 panels, book, dossier, Each panel 55x104.8cm.

Figure. 36 Hiller. S. (1991-96) *From the Freud Museum*, commissioned by Book Works and Freud Museum London, Vitrine 220x1000x60cm, containing 50 boxes, each 25x32.5cm, and video 15min.

Figure. 37 Hiller. S. (1991-96) *From the Freud Museum*, (Detail).
Figure. 38 Cleary. M. (2016) *The Blue Wind Day # 5*, Archival Digital print, 60x60cm.

Figure 40: Cleary, M. (2016) Hyper Map #1, Archival Digital print, 90x90cm.

Figure 41: Cleary, M. (2016) Hyper Map #2, (Detail).
Figure. 42 & 43. Vatanen. N. (2010) Reverse View, c-print, 66x54cm and Collector, 2010, C-print on aluminium, 45 x 56 cm, A Rooms Memory C/O Berlin 2015.


Figure. 45. Vatanen. N. (2010) A Seamstress's Notes, Sewing on paper and on cardboard, 51 pieces in three sizes, 18x23cm, 23x30cm, 30x39cm.
Figure 46 Maria. L. (2007) *Lenzuolo*, paper and thread, 103x150cm.

Figure 47 Castillo Deball. M. (2011) *El Donde Estoy Va Desapareciendo*, drawing, india ink on cotton paper, 40x1000cm (unfolded).
Figure 48 Castillo Deball. M. (2008) *Do ut des*, altered books.
Figure. 49 Castilo Deball. M. (2012) *Uncomfortable Objects*, metal structure, papier-maché, laser prints, aluminum wire, 20x10x5m, Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, 2012.
Starting Points Phase III

In Spring 2015, following my final research trip to Paris, I brought Phase II to completion. I felt I had gained sufficient knowledge of the theories and aesthetic approaches informing my practice, to address the broader scope of my topic, and the potential of the photograph to operate as a site of mnemonic return on a collective level. To do this my pre-existing archive of images and conversational partner would be Dorothea Lange, and a series of images she created in Ireland in 1954. I selected this portfolio by Lange for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was relatively unknown in Lange’s overall production and was therefore relevant material for the potential discovery of new knowledge at PhD level. Secondly this work was created within the context of the local community where I currently live, and was therefore both accessible and relevant as material for potential fieldwork. Finally, I saw in Lange’s work an archive which bridged the divide between personal and collectively shared ideas of place, memory and identity, invested in the photographic image.

Lange visited Ireland in September 1954 on a six-week assignment for Life Magazine. She was fifty-nine years of age, and it was her first trip outside of America. Moving west from Dublin, she based herself at the Old Ground Hotel in Ennis, in County Clare, and hired a car to travel out daily into local villages and townlands to document rural existence as she found it. She was accompanied by her son Daniel Dixon, who was to write a photo essay for her images in the final article. Prior to visiting Ireland, Lange read The Irish Countryman, a book written in 1937 by the Harvard academic and anthropologist Conrad Arensberg. His text was based on observations made during a year of field studies in the small village of Lough in North-West Clare. Linda Gordon in her autobiography on Lange, A Life Beyond Limits, (2009, p.370) notes that in Ireland Lange was searching for something of the rural unspoiled relationship between people, community and the land that marked her project on Mormon life in America. Her photo-essay on rural Irish existence was the second in a series of four, commissioned for Life magazine in the 1950’s, beginning with Three Mormon Towns, which she completed with Ansel Adams in 1953. However, as Linda Gordon (ibid., p.367) notes, there were a number of problems with her work for Life. Two of her four projects were ultimately rejected completely, and a definite sense of nostalgia permeated all of the images selected for publication. As Gordon observes of the article on Ireland, there was a certain “family-farm romance” about it, and the “mawkish captions” written by the magazine staffers, whose writing was selected instead of Dixon’s, only added to the problem. Gordon also maintains that Lange’s preparation for her Irish visit included devising a list of topical symbolic, descriptive and analytic categories, including emigration, congregations, the temperament, the weather, the church, the creamers and the fair, along with technical specifications including angle of view on her subjects. Lange also found and concentrated on a number of families during her visit, including the O’Hallorans of Inagh, in central County Clare, whose two daughters were about to emigrate to America, and the inhabitants of the farmstead of
Michael Kenneally, who was over time to become the most iconic subject in this body of work. During her six-week stay in Ireland Lange shot 2,400 images, but only nineteen of these were published by Life Magazine. The rest of this large portfolio has remained largely unknown, buried in the archives of the Oakland Museum of California. Gerry Mullins, an Irish freelance journalist living in San Francisco, discovered the work by chance while searching for an Irish interest item for the Gael newspaper in the early 1990's. His book Dorothea Lange's Ireland (1998), is the first and only comprehensive published collection on Lange's Irish work, and includes one hundred and six images, with accompanying articles by both Mullins and Dixon.

In a recent interview I conducted with Mullins (2014), he described his rationale in selecting and sequencing Lange’s images in his book. Starting with Michael Kenneally and his mother, Mullins chose photographs which he felt traced the typical path of many Irish emigrants, from the rural homestead, to the country town, to the big city, whether in Ireland or abroad. He seemed to have a particular attachment to Michael Kenneally and described him as the real embodiment of the Irish Countryman, as described by Arensberg. Kenneally is, according to Mullins, the signifier of something which hasn’t changed about life in the West of Ireland, something that can stand apart from the harsh and often soulless corporate-driven environment of contemporary urban existence. While Lange is most renowned as a great documentary photographer, who demonstrated a remarkable ability to quickly empathize with and intimately portray the unique human circumstance of her subjects, Mullins claims that in her Irish work she was also photographing the idea of a place. He concludes that in Ireland she was not searching for the particular in people, rather,

A portrait of the country itself, its population, its customs, its mores, its atmosphere, the texture of its life. In these things you don’t approach individuals as individuals. You’re thinking on a different level. (Mullins 1998, p.11)

This idea of setting out to photograph a collectively shared idea of a place and people is of course problematic and complex. If we are indeed seeing in Lange’s images of Ireland, the signification of something beyond the particulars of any one individual, fixed in time or place, how does the usual indexical register of the documentary image, which captures the particular so truthfully, become so porous, so infused with abstract qualities such as atmosphere, or notions of the texture of a way of life? This quality, I would argue, is rooted in the mechanisms of memory, where the perception of one individual moment is transcended, to become that of a collectively agreed upon, or felt sense of place, time and subjectivity, usually through retrospective analysis of the image. The photograph becomes a collective projection ground, or mnemonic environment, triggering often unexpected associations. And through the sharing of this expansion of memory, invested in the photographic trace, collective meaning can later be re-constructed.

It is important however to note that Arensberg’s work, the starting point for Lange, was not without controversy in its descriptions of the nature of local life. His book about the rural community of Lough caused considerable offence existing right to the present day. This rejection of Arensberg, and the later resistance, silence, even indifference to Lange’s Irish work, given her international reputation within the history of documentary photography, is I believe also indicative of certain
difficulties met by many photographers when representing this region of Ireland and its inhabitants. I will discuss this point in more detail in what follows, but begin with the premise that Lange’s work in Ireland has become deeply enmeshed in the complexities of post-colonial memory, making it an ideal site to examine how the photograph operates as a site of collective mnemonic return.

**Collective Memory and its photographic trace in the Irish Context**

Justin Carville who has written extensively on the history of photography in Ireland, and also what he describes as Lange’s documentary humanism in her Irish work, describes how the photograph is, in and of itself, outside of language. However, through the very nature of linguistic discourse, the image once subjected to its scrutiny, is drawn into the sphere of interpretation. It is here that the construction of meaning begins to form around familiar tropes, and also where memory influences how we actually see and understand the visual. Referencing Victor Burgin, Justin Carville (2009, p.202) notes that photographs rarely exist outside of language, as it permeates the visual, “through memory and snatches of works and images that continually intermingle and exchange one for the other.” This process of exchange, or the circulation of signs through conscious or subconscious repetition is of course more disputed in post-colonial contexts. The visualization of the rural west of Ireland, a place long considered the last authentic stronghold of Irish cultural identity, is a case in point. When remembrance is politically disputed, the denotative quality of the documentary image has additional resonance, because of its illusory promise of providing a convincing version of the truth. As a mnemonic site or trigger, here the photograph also becomes politically useful as material for mnemonic reconstruction, or a possible intermediary ground to discover, even re-imagine what has been erased within dominant historical narratives. Lange’s images of Ireland have provoked feelings of not only very deep attachment on a local level, but a strong rejection of their iconographic representation of the rural West in broader cultural circles. Influenced by Arensberg, and consistent thematic interests, her work in Ireland was somewhat predetermined and directed towards the pre-urban and pre-industrial and pre-capitalist. As noted, she was searching in Ireland for something that had already vanished in America. Luke Gibbons (1996, p39) describes such nostalgic evocations of an idealised past as resulting from ‘a very distinctive form of longing; nostos, to return home,’ caused by the loss of a sense of belonging. Justin Carville (2009, p.206) however sees a danger in anthropological studies such as *The Irish Countryman*, in their objectification of the Irish as the “primitive incarnate of Western Europe”, spatially and temporally dislocated from the rest of the Western world. Drawing upon Adrian Peace’s (1989, pp.89 -111) critique of this form of study, as collections of odd facts and curiosities which portray the idiosyncratic, irrational and odd attributes of their subjects, Carville describes Lange’s photographs of Ireland as being already, “framed by an anthropological discourse”, that depicted the Irish as culturally backward in comparison to other Europeans. Linda Gordon’s observations would seem to concur with this criticism. She comments that although Lange did develop personal relationships with her subjects in Ireland,

Nothing roughed up her misty, romanticised take, not the arduous labour, the poverty, or the emigration of so many of County Clare’s young to the United States.
This perspective on Ireland was reinforced, (granted against Lange’s wishes), by the final text which accompanied the photo essay in \textit{Life} magazine, describing the country as a place set apart, outside of time, of pure origin of the seed stock of many modern Americans. This framing of timelessness according to Carville, was symptomatic of an ongoing need to find, even invent a sense of authentic origins among a people displaced.

In his work, \textit{Inauthentic – The Anxiety over Cultural Identity} (2004) Vincent J. Cheng examines some of the problems inherent in this search for authenticity. His analysis provides some important insights into why Lange’s Irish work, and similar collections have been either completely ignored, or alternatively harshly critiqued in the broader cultural discourses on photography and identity in the Irish context. Cheng, a Joycean scholar influenced by post-colonial theory, describes the ongoing urgency within Irish cultural discourse to reconstitute a sense of shared collective identity and memory. He observes how certain stereotypical motifs, particularly those related to geographical locations in the West of Ireland have become part of the cultural baggage associated with the region, and one that travellers to Ireland usually carry with them. There are several examples of this in both historical and contemporary travelogues, that represent the people and places of Ireland through certain reoccurring types. Volumes such as Mrs S.C. Hall’s \textit{Ireland: Its Scenery Character, etc.} (1841-1843), or Clifton Johnson’s \textit{The Isle of the Shamrock} (1901) are typical of the travel journal of the gentleman scholar in Ireland, a trope dating back to the Elizabethan plantation era. Brian O’Dálaigh’s \textit{The Strangers Gaze – Travels in County Clare 1534 – 1950} (1998) and Glen Hooper’s, \textit{The Tourist’s Gaze: Travellers in Ireland 1800-2000} (2001), include numerous examples of travel writing, from William Thackeray to Samuel Reynolds Hole and Heinrich Boll, that represent the rural Irish in a particular light. These texts collectively inform the creation of the memory of place, popularizing certain reoccurring cultural stereotypes, which could be considered racist. Cheng (2004, p.30) observes how Joyce parodies this tradition in the figure of Haines in \textit{Ulysses}, who “reflects one discourse, that of the colonizer, that fashions Irish character and identity as one of otherness”. Like other native or indigenous people, within this ethnographic construction, the Irish were viewed as one of the primitive races, wild, defined by alterity and beyond the civilised boundaries of empire. By depicting the local community as innately backward, trapped in time, beyond the social and political space, justifications could be made for the denial of political autonomy and self-governance. As Murray (2006, p. 19) notes,

Justification for the mission of saving the Irish, from themselves, was based on conceptions of barbarism, ignorance, paganism and inferiority. These representations of the uncivilised ‘other’ were early examples of racialisation and Ireland proved to be no exception. [And] ‘Whiteness’ equated with a homogeneous way of life without boundaries and exclusions bears some deconstruction in the case of the Irish. It can be problematised, on the basis of religion, where the Protestant migrants to Britain were not subject to the discourses of racism or discrimination that Catholics were.

In addition to initial acts of physical violence during colonization, a secondary form of occupation, through cultural propaganda, insinuated itself at a deeper level, through a psychological
disenfranchisement, or alienation from a sense of an authentic self, which included the suppression of the native language. The psychological implications of this process are of course manifold. They include not only gaps, disassociations and repressions within collective memory narratives, but a split with the individual identity and psyche, alienated from language, place and sense of authentic identity. As Cheng notes, the nationalist agenda was about,

Wresting back the power to define oneself and one’s own national identity...in order to combat the pejorative labels of an imperialist English discourse of Irishness, in response to the anxiety of a loss of subjectivity and self-representation.

(Cheng 1995, p. 30)

There was, according to Kiberd (1996), a vested political interest amongst the newly emerging agricultural middle class in particular, in maintaining the status quo, including a pastoral subset that would remain subservient to a new form of ascendancy. In this process the preservation of an ideal of a noble but pure Irish peasant, a suffering but stoic man of the land, of simple faith, in superstitious commune with a quasi-mystical, even other realm, was needed to produce a new variant on an old political hegemony. Kieberd describes how,

...the emerging Irish middle-class installed the landless peasant, the superannuated aristocrat and the urban poor as the bearers of an updated mythology. The notion of a timeless peasant, like the dream of an ahistorical nobility, was a fantasy purveyed by the new élites who had seized the positions of power in towns and cities.

(Kieberd 1996, p. 483)

In this respect, any attempt to romanticise the rural life of the 1950’s Irish farmer is contentious, because there is a danger it will either revive pejorative racist tropes, or play into a conservative nationalist agenda. Cheng also notes, that in constructing this new nationalist ideology, with its reinvention of the memory of the rural west, the histories of women and of the labour movement, were carefully excised from the records. When Lange visited Ireland in 1954, she seemed to be looking back nostalgically to a form of rural society described by Arensberg, that many Irish people even then found problematic.

Mac Laughlinn (2001) notes how Irish Nationalism, like the nationalist movements of several small European states had its ideological roots in the French Revolution, which led to Romantic revivalist aspirations and the foundation of post-revolutionary democracies. However, in Ireland so geographically close to its colonizing neighbour, nationalism was to take on a particularly separatist nature, defining itself in opposition to a dominant mainland culture. However, it would also be characterised, according to Mac Laughlinn by the assimilation or replacement of the British colonial model in Ireland, by an equally stratified class system, serving certain groups rather than collective political aims. He comments, (ibid, p 173)

These social groups reinforced their capacity to survive and prosper by literally sinking deep roots into the very soil of Catholic Ireland. They forged a national and regionally specific historical consciousness which stressed the importance of the family farm, and the centrality of private property, both to the survival of Catholic society and to the future of the nation-state in Ireland.

Mac Laughlinn’s analysis of the post Famine era, is scathing in pointing out the hypocrisy of this new hegemony, which professed collective nationalist ideals while pursuing highly individualistic, and self-serving goals. He notes how these groups were the first to benefit from the emptying of
the land through starvation and mass emigration in the mid 19th Century. Further, in periods where emigration eased, the threat of both urban and rural unrest, evident in grassroots movements for social reform, which could address ideological principles of nationhood, or nationalism, was something highly undesired by the aforementioned groups. He observes (ibid, p. 178) that while between one-third and one-half of the country’s youth were forced to emigrate in the period 1855-1914, this went largely un-addressed from within the rural and professsional nationalist communities most impacted.

This sector did not lament the passing of traditional Ireland as a result of emigration but tolerated it because it eased pressure on family farms, halted the drift towards farm fragmentation, and made room for ‘grazers and their bullocks’ throughout the length and breadth of Catholic Ireland.

Therefore, the foundations for an increasingly isolationist, conservative, provincial nation-state, based on Catholic values and church control, which idealised a rural way of life, governed by increasingly puritanical views, was put into place in the formative years of the Irish Free State. The growing disillusionment of writers such as W.B Yeats, who led the Celtic Revival as a literary nationalist movement, is palpable in poems such as September 2013, or the later Easter 2016, where the sombre realization of the disparity between ideological aims and political reality dawns.

Yeats railed against what the dream of nationhood in Ireland was becoming, under the leadership of what Mac Laughlin refers to as the ‘shopocracy’, the church and a class of middle men (teachers, guards, clerks) that were gaining political foothold and often extending this based upon the disenfranchisement of those forced off the land, while also absorbing the redistribution of landed gentry estates in the first years of Irish government. It was into this context that Lange arrived in 1954. The Ireland she sought was already contested ground, but her uncritical search for representations of the rural farmer, his pure existence on the land, his religious Catholic devotion, and the centrality of the family homestead, tapped into problematic iconographic tropes, tainted by a growing disillusionment with new state. Works such as such as Patrick Kavanagh’s The Great Hunger (1942), or Myles na gCopaleen’s, An Béal Bocht (1941) rather than Conrad Arensberg’s The Irish Countryman, could perhaps have been more appropriate places to gain insight into the contemporary socio-political situation with regard to rural Irish existence. In this light, Lange’s work could be seen as perpetuating a questionable symbolic economy. Edward Said (1990, p 74), in discussing the dilemma of nationalism in relation to post-colonial politics in Ireland, also observes in his writings on W.B. Yeats that,

For all its success in ridding many countries and territories of colonial overlords, nationalism has remained, in my opinion, a deeply problematic ideological, as well as socio-political, enterprise. At some stage in the anti-resistance phase of nationalism there is a sort of dependence between the two sides of the contest, since after all many of the nationalist struggles were led by bourgeoisie that were partly formed and to some degree produced by the colonial power; these are the national bourgeoisies of which Fanon spoke so ominously. These bourgeoisies in effect have often replaced the colonial force with a new class-based and ultimately exploitative force; instead of liberation after decolonization one simply gets the old colonial structures replicated in new national terms.

David Lloyd (2001) in his analysis of post-colonialism in Ireland, also recommends the use of two concepts from the recent theories of Homi Bhabha, in particular the ideas of hybridity and temporality. Here, history according to Lloyd should not viewed as one linear progression, rather as a complexity of often parallel events heading at different rates towards significant convergence
points. As an illustrative example of this in the Irish context, Lloyd (ibid. p 15) draws upon Margaret Mac Curtain’s discussion of the Irish Revolutionary Nationalist Countess Markievicz, who discussed how several influencing factors informed the 1916 uprising. These included the efforts of decolonization, the women’s movement and industrialization. However, the latter two were as Lloyd points out, “superseded almost entirely by the subordination of a narrow version of the nationalist project”, by the political forces that would found the Free State. This process is described as one of occlusion, or a falling out of visibility and representation, of certain groups and interests, who were denied access to the emergent systems of political power, and subsequently excluded or written out of historiography. Importantly, Lloyd states that (ibid, p 16),

The work of postcolonial projects is to split apart the conjunction between the nation-state and its history, opening space for the recovery and articulation of alternative narratives.

In this respect it is crucial to challenge stage propaganda in all its forms. Drawing upon the theories of Fanon, Lloyd also notes how the drive towards individualistic gain of the emerging middle class only arrested the true revolutionary spirit of nationalism, becoming instead an early facilitator of global capitalist mechanisms in Ireland. Geraldine Moane in her article on ‘Colonialism and the Celtic Tiger’ (2017) concurs on this point, describing how native elites in the early days of the Free State, simply replaced the older colonial structures, perpetuating a system of social inequalities and economic exclusion that evidences itself right to the present day in the most extreme forms of the Celtic Tiger excesses, a phenomenon caused and exacerbated by global capitalism. Interestingly Moane also focuses on the psychological legacy of colonial history in Ireland, noting how unresolved trauma has formed a prevalent culture of ‘doublethink’. This has allowed for both individual and collective blindness to several forms of abuse, denial and silencing, including financial, physical and sexual abuse perpetuated by state and religious institutions right to the present day. Moane also identifies a range of pathologies, which she maintains directly relate to the legacy of colonialism. Among these she lists; the loss of the native language, with implications for consciousness, creativity and identity; very high levels of drug and alcohol consumption; distortions of sexuality due to oppressive interference of the church in state politics, which also includes an obsessional need to control the female body, and the displacement of anger through horizontal hostility mechanisms, manifested as passive aggression, non-cooperation and racism. Drawing upon recent writing by Fintan O’Toole (1996) Moane also discusses how an ongoing sense of individual alienation from the State, has led to a disregard for common laws and rules, which manifests in everything from common disregard for road safety regulations to littering the natural environment. As the system is still viewed as external, or rule from outside, it is not fully accepted as our own. A more effective strategy would perhaps be, as Lloyd recommends (2001, p 17), to apply post-colonial analysis as a means to interrogate collusion between colonial forms of control and nationalism as a State mechanism,

For it is not simply a question of the extent to which nationalism replicates the political and institutional forms of the imperial state, enabling its continuity in the forms of a ‘neo-colonialism’, as has been noted by Reynaldo Ileto (1997) of the Philippines, or by Partha Chatterjee (1986) on India, or by many scholars working on Ireland. It is, moreover, that the work of decolonization itself is interrupted in the occlusion of the multiple modes of resistance that emerged and continue to merge on the interfaces of domination and insurgence.
Nationalism is here distrusted, as potentially yet another mechanism of a conservative state, and post-colonial projects are viewed as a critical position from which to examine modes of memory, and the memorialization transmitted by historical account, including resistances to what is officially sanctioned, supported or silenced. A final point here on the persistence of silences within memory and its narration in the Irish context. These are acknowledged by Lloyd as often being intrinsically linked to political necessity, sectarianism, and the ongoing threat of violence, particularly in the Northern Irish context. As Moane also observes (2001, p 114), the silence around the traumatic legacy of colonialism in Ireland is an ongoing issue, for example collective discussion of the Irish Famine, only began to enter public discourse and rituals of commemoration in the 1990’s, and memories of the Irish Civil War (1922-23), are still relatively untouched.

Justin Carville (2011) also draws our attention to the fact that claims to photographically represent the Irish as a collective identity or race is also contentious. This is because photography in Ireland was linked to social class, status and mechanisms of post-colonial control. Apart from being an expensive hobby of the landed gentry, photography was rarely accessible to the ordinary people. It was also routinely used to record prisoners, rebels and agitators and as Carville notices, it came to be distrusted because it was used as a tool to serve a colonial agenda whereby,

The photographic documentation of the Irish face thus required supplementary characteristics to emphasize visible difference from the Anglo-Saxon. Compiled in different types of albums to those crafted in the Big Houses, photographs turned the deviancy of the Irish face in on itself in an attempt to discipline the unruly appearance of Irish physiognomy. The deviant face was photographically transformed into the face of the deviant. (Carville 2011, p. 94)

By the early 20th century a catalogue of Irish types had also evolved to serve a growing tourist industry. Here certain favourites were consistently repeated, including the Irish Fisherman, Spinning Woman and Colleen (ibid, p99). This form of ethnographic tourism is evident in even the earliest colour photographs taken in Ireland by Marguerite Mespoulet and Madeline Mignon-Alba, who recorded life in the Claddagh district of Galway. More systematically and forensically, it was applied by Charles R. Browne, in his quantitative analysis of the phrenology of inhabitants of the Aran Islands, and western counties, where photography was used as empirical evidence to support an idea of racial types. The technical and aesthetic conventions of this form of photography, are easily recognizable. The objective, and objectifying gaze of the camera is used to set the subject apart from context, classifying them as something other than the civilised norm of polite cultured society. There are recognizably similar conventions in operation in Charcot's visual Iconography of the Salpêtrière, (referenced in Phase II above), and the construction of racial/ethnic typologies. The subject is centrally placed, parallel to the camera, often in full body composition and evenly light against a neutral backdrop. Whether the gaze of the subject looks out directly to engage or avoid the camera, and thereby the gaze of the viewer was often used, along with an analysis of facial features, to categorize the subjects psychological or moral disposition. Many images in this style are also labelled with generic rather than personal labels.

The formal language of this kind of photography is echoed in early documentary photography,
and Lange worked in a time when objective and objectifying modes of practice were the norm, even the mark of competence within the medium. However, what is different in the Irish work I would argue is its historical context. Lange’s style, technique and thematic interest, trigger very uncomfortable mnemonic associations. Her image of the young girl Bridie O’Halloran was one which caused the most unease within the local community when first published by Mullins. In my interview with him in (2014), he recounted how the fact the little girl was wearing a potato sack, sewn into a simple dress, was a point of local shame as recently as 1998. Inspired by his publication, the American filmmaker Deirdre Lynch in her award winning film Photos to Send (2002), also documented some of the contemporary reactions to Lange’s work. Through revisiting and interviewing surviving subjects or their descendants, Lynch uncovered autobiographical memories, which were then overlaid with original recordings from interviews with both Lange and Dixon. In one sequence of Lynch’s film, we hear Lange describe a particular man she encountered on an Irish country road. The sentimentality of her expression in this audio recording is remarkably patronizing, showing little understanding of the reality of Irish rural existence in the 1950’s. It is as though she is in love with an idea but luckily her camera documents the reality. I would argue that several of Lange’s images also trigger what Marianne Hirsch (2012) has termed post memory, because they mnemonically resonate, even echo visual photographic typologies. Whether these were constructed under the colonial agenda to deliberately and systematically misrepresent the rural Irish as innately backward, ignorant, and deserving of their lot, or the later nationalist propaganda, which eulogized the noble peasant, they still provoke strong critique. The work I believe also captures a certain performance of identity to camera, or an idea of Irish identity, as staged or parodied, for the outsider’s gaze. Cheng, in his analysis of the inter-relationship between the visitor Haines, and the native Duck Mulligan, in Joyce’s Ulysses, notes how, Mulligan understands the paradoxes of commodification and the ethnographic mentality, as he entertains the Englishman…. he understands what the ethnographic discourse is looking for (and its structural indistinguishability from reproducible parody). (Cheng 2004, p. 34)

The performance of identity to camera in the rural Irish context, is often exactly this, a performance which is so well remembered and internalised, it can be difficult to distinguish performance from reality. There is a sense though in these moments, both from behind and in front of the camera, from one Irish subject to another that something is not quite real in the moment. It’s usually when the performance ends that glimpses of something else can be seen.

Practice Based Research in Phase III

During initial work in Phase III, I began by re-visiting and re-photographing many of Lange’s themes and places. In doing this I found the influence of memory was ever present, in how subjects were presenting themselves to the camera, and also in my own decision making processes on what and how to photograph. I decided quite early that I wasn’t interested in reconstructing scenes with surviving subjects or their descendants, as this had been done, by photographers such as Chris Wallis, John Kelly and of course Deirdre Lynch. Instead I began to consider her choice of sites and events and using similar strategies to those applied to Breton
and Boiffard began a form of psychogeographical wandering, using what was available to me in Gerry Mullin’s book, along with copies of original contact sheets Mullins had given to the Clare County Archives. I appropriated certain formal and aesthetic strategies from Lange’s work, to aesthetically push my practice towards conventional documentary modes. I realised at this stage that Lange’s images were in a real way becoming sites of personal mnemonic return, because they held traces of a time and way of life existing at the threshold of my awareness, through first memories of place, of home, of family, of stories attached to fragments of photos kept in family albums. As an emigrant recently returned to Ireland, the pathos of her work was strengthened by a sense of personal exile. There was something in Lange work which reminded me of origins, but at the same time this nostalgia was problematic.

Gaston Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space* (1958) connects the formation of identity to early kinaesthetic memories of the first place of dwelling. The first home he believed is imprinted within us, through the memory of the material fabric of the intimate spaces of our personal lives. The sights, sounds, smells, and even spatial layout of our first home is something we carry within us, as a foundation for deep memory and a rootedness within individual being in the world. Here the first home functions as the shelter for the development of individuality, memory and the ability to dream. The more securely our memories are attached to this first shelter according to Bachelard, the more stable or permanent they are. Bachelard’s metaphysics of being therefore, links the formation of self, consciousness and memory, to the physical attributes of the first home, as a definitive site. He describes this phenomenon:

> Something closed must retain our memories while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.

(Bachelard 1958, p.6)

He uses the term topoanalysis to describe a process whereby our psychological self, (including imagination, and creativity) become imbricated with memories of home, as a place part real, part reconstruction, within which we may dwell, establishing a secure sense of identity. Edward Casey in his work *Remembering, A Phenomenological Study* also discusses how memory and being are linked to place. He states that,

> As embodied existence opens onto place, indeed takes place in place and nowhere else, so our memory of what we experience in place is likewise place-specific: it is bound to place as to its own basis.

(Casey 2000, p.182)

Both Casey and Bachelard return to early classical theories on the connection between memory and place, and the importance of using this link in remembering what is essential. Casey discusses Aristotle’s idea of place as a container (*perichon*), which prevents division and dispersal, noting:

> It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities. We might say that memory is naturally place-orientated…. Unlike site and time, memory does not thrive on the indifferently dispersed. It thrives,
As I ventured out to search for the sites of Lange’s Irish work, in the hope of also finding a form of psychological return in the process, I soon realised this would be impossible. Certain photographs evoked a longing for something which could never be reached. Bachelard describes this in terms of that place of “motionless childhood”, the memory of home as a state of mind or reverie, rather than a geographical location on a map. In searching for certain places or situations, I was in fact trying to re-enter spaces of memory associated with my grandparent’s village, where I spent part of my childhood. There were visual references to the housing, clothing, daily existence of that time in Lange’s images. My attempts to return to that time through a camera, were futile. As I travelled from event to event, documenting what I found, my sense of alienation only increased. I was the outsider, the wanderer, who never fully belonged to that rural way of life to begin with. I also had no interest in perpetuating the anthropological or ethnographic gaze, and realised I would have to find alternative methods in dealing with this material. Images of the stranger, or wanderer with a suitcase that reoccur in Phase III are a reference to this state of being, and also inspired the title for the final exhibition and prototype photobook *The Suitcase Archive*, Appendix (iv).

However, by the spring of 2015 I realised a different approach would be needed if I wanted to get closer to the people and place in Lange’s images. I applied for a new stream of funding from the local County Clare Arts Office, the *Creating Space Grant* to do this. My project proposal stated that I aimed to *Create Space* for a community-based project in my local parish of Kilkeedy. The thematic focus of this project would be *Memory, Place, Identity and the Photographic Image*. The project was designed for adult participants, with an interest in photography, storytelling, mapping, local history and heritage. The aim was to offer a programme of art related activities (practical workshops, talks, a community led exhibition) through which participants could creatively combine visual and narrative materials to tell stories of place, memory and daily life within the community. Participants would work with photography, simple bookmaking techniques, mapping and narrative storytelling to explore these topics. This could include working with pre-existing photographs e.g. archival or personal collections, as well as creating new images of daily life on the land. Outcomes from the workshops were to be presented through a public exhibition at Tubber Hall at the end of the project in December 2015. I also stated that the thematic focus of the project was influenced by my on-going PhD research into the work created by American photographer Dorothea Lange in County Clare, and that my particular interest was in discovering how her themes, especially the images she took in Tubber and Kilkeedy, (the parish where I now live) can be photographically revisited and reinterpreted today. I was hoping to discover what ideas of family, place, community and tradition mean within this community today. And further, how does photography become an important site and trigger for the preservation of both individual and collective memories of these issues. My hope was that through creating this space for creative exploration from within the local community, that I could also open a forum for relational discussion around Lange’s work, which would help me find a new way to approach this thematic content within my own practice. I also...
stated that as a contemporary documentary photographer, I wanted to incorporate the voices and perspectives of the subjects I am investigating, rather than simply representing them from a distance. I added that in addition to exhibiting outcomes at Tubber Hall, I also planned to show selected material from this project alongside my own work, at two solo shows at Glór Ennis and The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon in 2016. I was successful in this grant application, and also in securing funding to visit The Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California in advance of beginning the workshops.

In July 2015 I travelled to the Archives with the hope of finding additional materials related to Lange’s visit to Ireland, including any additional images from Kilkeedy or personal writings and artefacts from her visit which could provide a way for me to create a meta-textual reading, in a manner similar to that used in Phase II with Breton’s *Nadja*. I knew that like Gerry Mullins, I would be influenced by personal memory in how I selected any new materials from Lange, so I decided to consciously allow this to become part of the process, in line with the autobiographical methods used in both Phase I and II. I also realised from Phase II, that I needed to find something which would allow me to move beyond a purely documentary approach in photographic results. In this respect mistakes, experiments, anomalies and technical accidents were of particular interest, as they could allow for chance to reveal lesser known, unconscious or previously un-noticed facts on how Lange worked. Of the one hundred and six images selected for publication by Gerry Mullins, fifty-three percent of these portray male subjects. These outnumber the images of women in his publication on a ratio of almost 3:1 so I was also interested in discovering any additional materials on Irish women’s lives. I spent two weeks in the archives, systematically examining all the contact sheets, field notes, personal letters and relevant articles. Due to the quantity of materials available, I decided to limit my selection to previously unseen photographs of Lange’s female subjects in particular. This included alternative shots of women Mullin’s had included in his publication. My choices of certain photographs above others, were guided by different criteria. I identified four distinct categories, including: images of women’s working life, of psychological spaces or autonomy, of moments of inter-relationship or spaces between women, and finally images of women who are usually forgotten or erased from history. My hope was to bring forty of these original photographs back to Ireland, with several examples for each of these categories included. Due to the cost however, I had to eventually reduce this amount to the purchase of ten prints. These were supplemented by a generous donation of thirty-five additional prints from Gerry Mullins, for my final exhibition. I will discuss individual images selected in relation to practice-based outcomes below. An additional important discovery at the archives were Lange’s unpublished Irish field notes. These included quick observations on the context of subjects, logistical and house-keeping reminders such as how to group photos, and personal observations about certain people and places. Some even included names and addresses of people she was told to visit in 1954. From these field notes, I then selected what I found particularly poetic or poignant, using this to prompt my own written responses, in the same way as I had worked with Breton’s text in Phase II. On returning I knew I would also begin the community based project in Kilkeedy, to run from September to December 2015.
The project in Kilkeedy was launched in early September, after being advertised in the Parish Newsletter, and announced at Sunday Mass by the local priests. I also gave an introductory talk on the work of Dorothea Lange in County Clare at Tubber Hall, including a brief overview of the aims of the Creating Space project in the community, which was attended by over 30 local people. It was explained here that the project was structured around a series of workshops to be offered once per week for 12 weeks. These workshops would be designed around three focus areas, with four weeks for each, to include photography, visual storytelling and simple photo-bookmaking techniques. Workshops would be open to 12 participants, with the option available of attending all or selected sessions to allow flexibility and further outreach within the community. Each workshop would be three hours in duration. In addition to these 36 hours of direct workshop contact, I was also available for site/context specific visits, to allow input from individuals who would like to contribute, but might not be able to attend the workshop evenings. I could visit and meet people on a one-to-one basis, if they had photographic materials they would like to share or contribute to the project. I also made it clear at the outset that a collaborative exhibition of participant’s work would be presented at Tubber Hall at the end of the project, that the project was happening within the context of broader PhD research, and that selected negotiated outcomes could potentially be included in my own PhD exhibitions in 2016 in Ennis and Ennistymon.

Of the twelve participants that joined the weekly workshops four were female and eight male, ranging in age from (38 – 81 years). Nine of these were born in the area of Kilkeedy or its neighbouring townland, two came from Irish urban contexts, one was from the UK. Seven of the twelve made their living directly from agriculture, or had an agricultural background. All were familiar with and had an interest in the work of Dorothea Lange in County Clare, and its thematic focus. Starting with an image by Lange of a local man, Patch Flanagan (Fig. 50), we began conversations about the potential of the photograph to preserve memory, to communicate ideas of place and identity, and to tell stories or histories, both individual and collective. During this process I also invited participants to gather archival materials if available, as well as taking their own images of their daily life in response to Lange’s themes. Aesthetically and conceptually projects such as Deirdre O’Mahony’s XPO, Martina Mullaney’s Turn In, Melanie Friend’s Border Country, Ruby Wallis’s Autowalks, and 21 Grams by Seamus McGuiness were important influences in my methods here. In Conversation Pieces, Community + Communication in Modern Art, Kester (2004) observes how certain strategies can be actively used to redefine stereotypical representations of communities of place. He advocates forms of “creative facilitation of dialogue and exchange”, noting that,

While it is common for a work of art to provoke dialogue among viewers, this typically occurs in response to a finished object. In these projects, on the other hand, conversation becomes an integral part of the work itself. It is reframed as an active, generative process that can help us speak and imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict.

(Kester 2004, p.8)
In this respect, participants became conversational partners to address the mnemonic content triggered by Lange’s work, exchanges which allowed me new insights and ideas on how to reimagine ways of simultaneously referring to Lange, while also visualizing similar content as it is today. Kester also discusses issues such as the changing position of the artist as author, within these inter-subjective generative processes, and also the different aesthetic paradigm of relational or dialogical forms of art. Having worked previously on community based projects, I was aware of some of these issues in advance, such as for example, shared authorship and process driven aesthetic outcomes. It is important to state here, that there were three distinct stages or tiers of engagement within this relational project. In the first workshop driven stage, I took a secondary role. I did not take photographs myself, but facilitated and helped participants to find and compile their own memory narratives using photographic and textual materials, as we worked towards producing a group exhibition of participant work in December 2015. My intention here was to create a space for participants to generate their own response, to find their own solutions to what was being introduced visually, technically, aesthetically and conceptually. These outcomes were also specifically for the Creating Space project, which was participant driven and centred. Of the twelve workshop members, ten completed a series of images for this group exhibition. During the process, nine out of these ten became actively engaged in learning more about the photographic process, and took on the challenge of tackling a theme of their own choosing, inspired by Lange’s work. One relied completely on archival family album material.

The broader themes of participant driven content included images of; harvesting turf, hurling, market gardening, the environment and landscape, local life on the land and activities at the community hall, ironworking, family portraits, and historical as well as contemporary farming practices. Examining participant responses in greater depth, it is important to also consider if, and in which instances the photographic or textual materials created, functioned as environments of mnemonic return, for the individuals concerned, or for the group as a whole. Of the ten participants, four became particularly engaged in using the photograph to access autobiographical memory, which included using materials from family albums, photographic archives, or re-photographing the family, or family home as it is today. For Ann O’ Donnell, this involved revisiting her childhood home several times to photograph certain objects, or locations within the house or its grounds. Images of what remained, including childhood toys or household utensils from over seventy years ago, were then brought to the group for discussion. Her photographs referenced for example, the way the household was once run, or shared childhood pastimes. Ann also gathered archival photographs where these objects, including a dolls pram, a communion purse, herself at the front door of the house, or standing with her brother on the front lawn, could be compared to her own shots of the same items, places or people in the present (Fig. 51). It was especially poignant during group discussions, when she spoke about these two sets of images, comparing, contrasting and remembering all that had changed or disappeared. It was very clear that throughout the project, Ann engaged deeply in the process and the photographic journey also became a very powerful means for her to remember, and discuss her recollections. Another participant that concentrated on the family, and the home was Bernie
O’Grady. She began with several visits to the now derelict cottage of a woman she remembered from childhood. Bernie documented what she found on site, and used the images to piece together her recollection of this woman’s life. This prompted her to also search for and find photographs to supplement absences in the narrative. This was another example of where the inter-relationship between image, narrative recollection and revisiting, or re-photographing a particular place was very effective in evoking memory. For the public exhibition however, Bernie chose to concentrate on portraits of her own family (Fig. 52). We had discussed the simplicity and formal composition of several of Lange’s portraits, and this influenced how Bernie photographed her own daughter, sons and husband, at work on the family farm in Kilkeedy today. Tess Diviney chose to document the route to the bog to harvest turf with her daughter, an activity which led to recollections of farming traditions from her childhood growing up in the midlands. Tess also photographed her participation in the local County Clare tradition of attending mass on Inis Cealtra, an island on Lough Derg (Fig. 53).

Michael O’Donohue was another participant who worked between images from personal archives. As a local farmer whose family has been in the area for over six generations, Michael had also served for decades as the regional president of the IFA (Irish Farmers Association) in County Clare, and proved a wealth of information on local agricultural life and history. He chose to concentrate on the unique way in which farmers over the centuries have built and partitioned the land in this region. He documented different features in the stone walls on his own land, that show how livestock were herded and kept, including traditional building and penning methods. As a farmer who had been actively engaged in local agricultural policy and politics, Michael’s shared memories of a more public, rather than the private nature. He did however bring one very personal image, of himself at a famous demonstration against government changes to agricultural policies in the 1960’s. This marked an important memory he could share with great pride, through the agency of the image (Fig. 54). Michael Keane, also concentrated on photographing aspects of his life as a farmer. This included images of the changing seasons on his land, and differences between natural plant species and those he cultivated himself. Michael also collaborated with Colm Mac Lochlainn on a series of images including local place names in Irish. Where Michael identified sites on his land retaining older Irish names, Colm documented each, and working together they transcribes the written form of the spoken dialect (Fig. 55). Having worked for Gael Linn, an organisation dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the Irish language, Colm had a lot of knowledge to share on this topic.

The everyday use of the Irish language in the naming of places, objects and routine agricultural practices was something that was discussed on a number of occasions in the group. It is important to note that Irish was the main language in many parts of County Clare until the mid 1950’s. The Irish names for places often hold additional layers of meaning and memory, communicating facts about natural, seasonal, or environmental changes to the land over time, which have been lost or are disappearing as the language fades from everyday usage. There was a definite awareness of this within the group, perhaps due to the age of participants. Tess Diviney for example, who
used Irish words naturally intermingled with English to describe harvesting turf or hay, commenting on the need to preserve and remember this material. There was also some discussion on which language to use when selecting a title for the group exhibition, but in the final democratic vote, an English title was chosen. While not explicitly stated, the reason for this may have been because most people in the group, while having an understanding of Irish, are no longer fluent speakers. There may also have been a feeling of not wanting to alienate those who have no understanding of Irish at all, either within the group or the broader community.

Undoubtedly the issue of memory as it is preserved by the native language of a people and a region is very relevant here. But it is also very complex in the Irish context, where speaking the mother tongue was something either forbidden, enforced, avoided or promoted, to varying degrees, and for differing political or socio-economic reasons from the 17th century onwards. As Murray (2006, p. 22) describes it,

As a colonising tool, the deliberate process of the removal of the mother tongue, Gaelic, probably represents one of the most brutal and decisive acts by an Imperial power. The 18th century Penal laws forbade the use of Irish. As a result, the use of English, led to the creation of an English elite so that anyone wishing to advance their education, their economic, or political futures, could not do so by using their mother tongue. This language shift was further institutionalised with the introduction of the National School system, which established English as the required medium of instruction in schools. The final blow was dealt by the onset of the Famine in 1846 which killed off one in three of the population and provided an economic and pragmatic incentive to the Irish people to learn English.

This decline and disappearance of Irish is a well-researched topic. Hindley (1991), Palmer (2001), Allen and Regan (2008), Mac Siomoin (2014), and beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, slippages between what can be known or remembered of place and identity, as language itself changes, or is forced to change by external circumstances, is an important issue when considering relationships between memory and its expression in narrative form. Elizabeth Palmer (2001, p. 173) likens the disappearance of the Irish language to the development of a “clamorous silence”. Contrasting the colonization of Ireland to the Spanish conquest of America, she describes the latter as a situation where the indigenous experience was utterly silenced and frozen out of language. In the New World silence signified “the death of a people”. In Ireland however, something different occurred, as Palmer defines it (ibid, p. 175),

The English imagined that to silence Irish was to silence dissent and excise memory; they envisaged English as an instrument of control and its imposition a way of instilling attitudes felt to be native to their civil tongue. They dreamed of a univocal Ireland; the reality, however, was more complex and equivocal…. Bardic poetry picked up intimations of the silence that would, in time, overtake the Gaelic world. But Irish was vigorously resistant, discomfiting the state and raiding its texts with incursion. Moreover, it was part of a polyphonic pattern of native contestation.

This I would argue is evident right up to the present moment, in the way Irish continues to be integrated into, or transforms the way English is spoken, particularly in more rural contexts. The
inflections, intonations, accent and structures of speech often echo that of native Irish, as though it exists beneath consciousness, like a memory, still held in the body or on the tongue. It seeps into and invades English, often very directly in the naming of things and places, causing ongoing debate at both regional and national level. Richard Pine (2014) provides an overview of the influence and importance of Irish on writers from Oscar Wilde, to James Joyce, and more recently Brian Friel who launched Field Day Review (1980), to address exactly this topic. Pine details (ibid, p. 29) how Wilde linked the colonization of Ireland as a place, with a reciprocal counter-colonization by Irish writers, of the English language. Wilde commented,

I do not know anything more wonderful or more characteristic of the Celtic genius, than the quick artistic spirit in which we adapted ourselves to the English tongue. The Saxon took our lands from us and left them desolate – we took their language and added new beauties to it.

Pine also describes how Joyce (ibid, p. 52) created a “Hiberno-English idiom”, to express this Irish experience. But as his alter-ego Stephen Daedalus portrays it in A Portrait of The Artist as A Young Man (1914), his “soul frets in the shadow of his (the invaders) language”. For Pine the importance of reclaiming personal and collective history, which includes a conscious awareness of language, in the postcolonial context is essential because,

When a person or a society loses its memory, its connection with its past, it ceases to have a history, and with that loss comes the incapacity to conceive of the future, since the future depends for its volition and validity on a sense of the past, a sense of origins.

Pine (2001 p. 35)

For Pine, the work of the artist in this situation becomes one of recovering, rewriting, and rebuilding memory links between past and present, with imagination becoming a key and important factor in envisioning the future. He lists writing by Brian Friel, in particular Translations (1980), Making History (1989) and Dancing at Lughnasa (1990) as examples of where memory and the imaginary are intermingled to find a place beyond the literal or the real, to discover, or discern from history what has been buried under the weight of colonialism. He notes how (ibid, p. 235),

Many post-colonial writers have found it expedient – and perhaps necessary – to employ the imaginary as a place where value can be attributed without reference to the realities of colonial experience, and at the same time to validate the imaginary as a “real” topos.... The invention of memory – or the use of an invented memory – constitutes a necessary lie to confront the untruths experienced at the hands of the coloniser.

There is definitely potential material here for post-doctoral work on the inter-relationship between, memory, image and the Irish language, however, returning to the fieldwork and the topic of this research, I will mention the contributions of one final participant Michael O’ Conor, whose approach was different in that he worked with archival materials only. These were photographs taken by a family relative, a great-uncle, who was an amateur photographer within the local community at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Unusually for the time, he had his own camera and documented many of the local people (Fig. 56). Unfortunately many glass plate negatives from this archive have been lost, but Michael was able to construct a partial visual
history of family and place from what had survived. As noted previously, photography at this time in Ireland was generally confined to the landed gentry class, so finding any images taken by local people, from within their own community is always significant. These provided visual triggers for Michael to reconstruct autobiographical memories, which could then be shared within the group, initiating collective recollection of history as told by those who lived it.

December 2015 marked the end of the group work, and the official Creating Space project. It had provided me with valuable insights, from a more authentically insider position into the community and context of my broader PhD research topic. Following this, I then invited a number of the participants to engage with me on a one-to-one basis, through interviews and collaborations, more explicitly related to the PhD research. My selection here was based on what emerged for exhibition, and individual interest. I began this next stage with a structured interview, to gather more focussed narrative responses. Transcripts of these interviews are included in Appendix(v). From what was gathered I was then able to suggest creating collaborative visual responses to the Lange’s images. As noted previously, I was also particularly interested in addressing the experience of Irish women living on the land today, to correspond with the images I had discovered at The Lange Archives. I therefore interviewed all of the female participants first, including Bernie O’Grady, Tess Diviney and Ann O’ Donnell. In addition to these women, I also invited Elaine D’Alton, Coordinator of The Clare Women’s Network to respond to the same set of research questions, to provide additional broader socio-political insights into issues faced by contemporary women in this region today. Participants were informed that these interviews were conducted within the context of PhD research, and that the resulting collaborative visual materials created, along with extracts from their initial work for the Kilkeedy exhibition would be included as part of my own exhibitions at Glór Ennis, and the final PhD show at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon. Participants were also invited to both events, including the public talks for each, in which their contributions were acknowledged and discussed.

Based upon these interviews, examples of the collaborative portraits made include those with Tess Diviney and her Husband Tony on their farm near Gort (Fig. 57). This was prompted by Lange’s image of Patch Flanagan at Tubber Fair (Fig. 50). Tess remembered Patch Flanagan from childhood, and in her interview recalls specific memories related to him, his brother and the fair at Tubber. In another collaborative portrait made with Colm Mac Lochlainn and his granddaughters, the staging of the image was also very consciously negotiated between us. In interview Colm selected a number of photographs by Lange, discussing how they evoked personal memory, but decided to include his granddaughters Róise and Rhiannon in an image which emphasised the gesture of the hand, recalling an original image by Lange which appeared in Gerry Mullin’s (1998) publication (Fig. 58 & 59). On the day, both girls also responded to Lange’s image of Catherine and Anne O’ Halloran (Fig. 60), who were about to emigrate forever to America. While they stood at a very similar dresser in their grandmother’s kitchen in (2016), we talked about emigration from the West of Ireland, and the different opportunities available to young women in Ireland today (Fig. 61).
The topic of emigration was also discussed with Bernie O’Grady, who chose the image of Annie O’Halloran and her two daughters, as the starting point for a collaborative portrait including her own daughter Ruth (Fig. 62). Bernie responded to one of the unpublished photographs by Lange that I brought back for exhibition. In Lange’s image, the women have been caught with their eyes closed, as if sleeping, dreaming or already departed, while the mother maintains a fixed gaze directly to camera (Fig. 63). An offshoot perhaps, due to the cut off in the composition, it could naturally be overlooked as a mistake. However, for me there is something here which transcends the documentary, suggesting a turning inward, to memory, the subconscious, and what is not immediately apparent in the external reality of the moment. Working with Bernie and her daughter, I used compositional mirroring to suggest alternating subject positions between mother and daughter, in response to this photograph. Double exposure, is again used to bring two moments into one; a before and after, of presence and absence, as the subject appears then disappears from memory. The inter-relationship between both is held, as though through reciprocal remembrance. An undertow of presence and absence, of loss and departure was something evident in the sequencing of several images within Lange’s contact sheets. For example, in (Fig. 64) a woman stands at the open door of the house, facing into the light, and then in the next frame she is gone. Lange repeated this scenario in several shots at the O’Halloran farm, changing the subject, and his/her going out from the door of the house. I would argue that she was constructing images here to express something of the emotional or psychological impact of emigration. Lange’s field notes, provide additional insights into her thoughts while on location. There is a poignancy, even inevitability, regarding the topic of emigration in these texts.

In working with Ann O’Donnell, now in her mid-seventies, and an emigrant who returned after decades abroad, the lived experience of what Lange witnessed was given voice. In many respects, Ann became for me The Irish Countrywoman, a complimentary counterpoint to Gerry Mullins’s identification of Michael Kenneally (Fig. 66) as the main subject in Lange’s Irish portfolio. I visited Ann’s home several times, and she also invited me to a number of community events. In her kitchen in Kilkeedy, we discussed her memories of life in the 1950’s, of her own experiences of forced emigration, and of her return in later-life to the local farming community where her brother inherited the land. I took several portraits of Ann (Fig. 65,67&68). Our collaboration inspired me to reflect upon and include my own memories of emigration into the narrative of Phase III. For both Ann O’Donnell and Michael O’Donohue, I had considerably more input gathered, and created two larger pieces Storylines no. 1 & 2 (Fig. 69 - 72) for the final exhibition. These large works consist of a compilation of materials on one printed surface. In the upper section of each, there is a draft layout for a photobook. This prototype, which was also exhibited on a shelf underneath, incudes a combination of the participants own images from the Creating Space project and textual extracts from the interviews conducted in the Spring of 2016, which I compiled into narrative sequences. In the lower section of the Storylines prints, my own photographic response to what I was hearing runs parallel to this. This was a third stage or final tier within the relational work, and it is here that I began to independently respond to Lange’s themes in the
contemporary context, based upon insights gained from these conversational partners. Selected original prints by Lange, relevant to participant’s stories were also installed beside these materials where appropriate. As in previous phases of the research, the book format was a means to synthesise and bring order to often complex and disparate sequences of recollection. Four handmade prototype photobooks books were made in total, for Ann O’Donnell, Michael O’Donohue, Tess Diviney and Colm Mac Lochlann (Fig. 73). I used these to experiment with layout, sequencing, visual relationships between participant images, archival materials, and textual strands within the content. These books, along with the collaborative portraits were given to participants as an acknowledgment and appreciation of their contributions to the research, at after the exhibitions. Based upon these prototypes, a final photobook was also compiled for all participants, to document the Creating Space project.

With regard to my use of original works by Lange, I purchased ten previously unpublished prints from the Oakland Museum of California, for use in both the interim and final exhibitions. In addition to this, Gerry Mullins kindly allowed me to borrow thirty of the original prints, used in his 1998 book. Lange’s works were embedded within the narrative flow of all components for Phase III. They were placed alongside my own images, those made in collaboration with fieldwork participants, and in some instances were also hung alone to give context to place and time within the overall installation (Fig. 74 - 76). My intention was to create an immersive environment for the viewer, that would include and emphasise the different mnemonic layers within the project. As noted earlier in choosing previously unseen images form the Lange Archives, I was searching for materials which offered a potentially different reading of her work, and therefore new knowledge or insights. This included using extracts from her field notes in Ireland alongside the photographs. I felt many of these read like short poems, and I presented them under glass as part of the final exhibition (Fig. 77). They are also included in the prototype photobook The Suitcase Archive (Appendix iv), becoming a conversational partner for the generation of my own texts, in a manner similar to how I responded to Breton in Phase II. As part of the PhD exhibition, I also gave a talk with Gerry Mullins on the topic of Photography, Memory and Place in Dorothea Lange’s Images of County Clare. This was presented in the gallery space, on Culture Night 2016. The audience included several members of the O’Halloran family, directly related to the subjects in Lange’s images. All three public exhibitions presented in Phase III of the research, were well attended and supported within the local community, reaching an audience of several hundred directly through the talks and openings, and potentially two thousand upwards through the durational run of the exhibitions. Both the interim and final exhibition were also featured in the local media, widening public awareness of the project.

The potential of the research to influence collective memory, with regards to the work of Dorothea Lange, what is known of the work, and also its potential to influence ideas of shared memory or history is therefore promising. My emphasis on selecting and emphasising new materials about the lives, experiences and memories of women within this, was certainly a new angle on the reading and discussion of Lange’s Irish work. In this respect, the research has the potential to
expand what is included in future records of collective memory and history in the area. The
enerative approach taken in using Lange and other archival sources as a means to connect to
individual and collective memories of place, during the Kilkeedy group work, also provides a
template for future projects, exploring the spaces between private and collective accounts of
history.

In concluding this discussion of outcomes from Phase III, I will also mention my own response to
Lange’s photographs, inspired in particular by my conversations with Ann O’Donnell. By including
myself within the field of inquiry in Phase III, I was incorporating and following through with the
autobiographical strand within my methodology, from Phases I and II above. This had followed
an arc, moving from the highly personal, to the personal as part of cultural discourse, to finally the
personal as part of a community or collective experience. By including myself as a subject of
inquiry, answering the same questions and undertaking a similar visual process, I was also
integrating an autoethnographic reflexivity into my methodology, to gain insight into the impact of
the fieldwork as a participant myself. I realised that for me the image which triggered the greatest
personal memory, was taken at the O’Halloran farm in Inagh (Fig. 78). It captures two figures
standing outside the door of the house. The woman turns away, her features fading into the light.

We seem to be witnessing a film still, something I would argue that Lange has directed, rather
than objectively observed. The woman is Catherine O’Halloran, who is about to permanently
emigrate to America. Her hand reaches backward towards her father, whose gesture could be
read as either holding onto, or letting go of the young woman. While Lange is using one of her
own consistent motifs: the gesture of the hand, to express all that can be said in a simple touch,
we see something unusual here in the Irish context. It is a rarely depicted moment in the father
daughter relationship, and I believe an attempt to communicate something of the psychological
complexity of the loss involved in emigration. There are few pictures of this kind of inter-
relationship, especially through the gesture of an adult woman holding her father’s hand as a form
of familial relationship in Irish photography, particularly from the era of the 1950’s. This suggests
a certain staging of the image on the part of Lange, a repetition perhaps of the expressive
language of the body, evident in some of her most famous portraits in America, where the hand
is an important indicator of human emotion. I identified with Catherine’s experience the most, and
Lange’s image triggered autobiographical memory of having to emigrate from Ireland in my early
twenties.

My response *The Road Through Kilkeedy* (Fig. 79), shows a female subject between two roads.
The road on the right, stretching through the townland of Kilkeedy, was the historical route taken
by emigrants to America. The local crossroads as the meeting point for those taking the ships
from Galway Bay to Boston America, was eventually also named Boston. On the left is Bothár
Na Minne, - The Road of the Corn/Maize. This road runs almost parallel through the land to the
other route, and was built by the starving during the Great Famine of (1845-1852). Through
walking the land with participants in Phase III, gathering stories of place, I found myself connecting
to deeper memory located in these places. The young woman in my image sits on a rock, between
two memory roads through the landscape. One stretches towards a future that is elsewhere, the other backward into a time of unresolved traumatic loss. Her choices in the present are overshadowed by memories of both roads, a fact I believe influences many Irish people right up to the present day. I met this young woman by chance during my wandering for the research, and asked her to become part of the project. The suitcase as an object also found by chance, in a second hand store in North London during the course of this research, became an uncannily synchronistic find. It already had well-worn travel labels for journeys between London, Paris, and Ireland, which could easily have been my own, it was the perfect signifier of myself, my memory and journey within the work (Fig. 80). It became a device to visually represent my wandering, and sense of displacement. Images of this journey, including the people I met along the way, or sometimes only the suitcase itself, as an indicator of my presence, were included in the final piece. For the final exhibition these images, along with autobiographical texts printed on travel labels, were displayed either in or around the suitcase, as a personal memory archive. My thoughts were tied to stones from the local landscape with string, to suggest an almost obsessive but futile need to ground them again in place. Some of the thoughts on the stones were displayed on a shelf above the suitcase, like a mantel piece of mementos, including images of people who had interacted with the suitcase during my journey (Fig. 81). I also decided to print several of my larger works and the images taken during my first journeys out into the land, in (10x15cm) format at a local two-hour photo store, as a reminder of how I once also carried all of my personal belongings, including snapshots from my life, in such a temporary way. The suitcase also contained a notebook recording impressions from many of these journeys. In a final handmade artist book (Fig. 82), images, maps and thoughts from the journey were shredded, as a way of bringing closure to some of the memories I didn’t want to reveal.

Conclusions For Phase III

In Phase III fieldwork I applied strategies and techniques developed in Phases I & II, for collective purposes. This included using Langford’s speaking the album, as a means to elicit memories related to the personal photographic materials brought by participants during fieldwork. Lange’s work as a shared archive, or memory ground, became the point of both departure and return, guiding the emerging content of collaborative interactions. The fact that her work is collectively remembered by many in this area, made it a powerful starting point to move from the collective, towards individual material. Where individual narratives lapsed into silence, or there were natural resistances to making the personal public, Lange’s work operated as an intermediary ground, to initiate discussion. Through the process the personal could be reconnected to the broader context of collective life in the community, and context today. Conversations developed between two participants in particular, relating to the use of the Irish language, attached to sites within the local environment. This led to some broader discussion on memory, meaning and language usage. These moments were interesting in that they demonstrated the ongoing relevance of post-colonial history, and its lingering effect on both private and collective memory in the area. Discussion of women’s lives and experience on the land, including land ownership and political representation,
was met with some silences, or resistances in the group context. This may have been due to the age of participants, and certain reserve on this within a group context. This question was later addressed on a one-to-one basis through interview questions.

My main discoveries in Phase III included:

- Through the fieldwork, I discovered reoccurring thoughts and experiences, which helped me understand how Lange’s work was so mnemonically powerful. Gerry Mullins described this as how she composed her images, which are so cleverly constructed, that they can tell a life narrative in one frame. Mullins referred to one image of Michael Keneally in particular, how Lange had set him against the mountain, in a field, with the backdrop of turf stacked for the winter. Every aspect of his life and survival according to Mullins could be read in that simple composition. Colm Mac Lochlainn repeated some of these thoughts, commenting on how important it was for the image to tell a story. This ability to construct a narrative from the photograph, and in the process infer, retrieve or remember details, supports the idea of the photograph being a mnemonic space which can be psychologically entered. Through the process the viewer can gather clues to trigger memory. This importance of place is mentioned by the majority of respondents here, with many referring to places of childhood.

- Colm Mac Lochlainn, Ann O’Donnell and Michael O’Donohue all commented on the importance of material details, particularly in articles of clothing, furniture, household or farm objects. There were names for certain things Tess knew only in Irish, as they had now vanished from common usage, especially through the development of mechanical farming processes. Visual references to working life on the land, were also very important for Ann O’Donnell and Michael O’ Donohue.

The living connection to the people depicted in Lange’s Irish work continues to guarantee its importance in this area, if not within the broader Irish cultural context. This was evident in the overwhelming support received for both the exhibition at Tubber Community Hall in Kilkeedy, and also my final show at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon. In both instances there was a large, inter-generational audience, with many attending in search of that connection through the work, to memories of family, former friends or neighbours. Sean O’Halloran, the young boy captured in Lange’s images of the family, along with several members of the extended family also visited the PhD exhibition on Culture Night 2016. This event drew in a very large audience, and in itself became a sort of clan gathering for several people. Beyond this particular context however, knowledge and appreciation of Lange’s Irish portfolio fades. I believe this is related to ongoing divisions between rural and urban life in Ireland, and persistent difficulties in re-imaging the former.

- On a personal level, I felt that the fieldwork did bring me closer to my subjects,
providing better insights into Lange’s thematic focus while in Ireland. As an Irish photographer however, I did experience significant inner struggle in tackling this material, related to personal memory, and a knowledge of the social, historical and political context on a level Lange wouldn’t have had to deal with. I did use Lange’s documentary approach in a separate commission completed during the research, and found working within an unknown context infinitely easier. That said, persisting through Phase III, was a definite personal journey of mnemonic return, like the completion of a journey begun when I left Ireland in 1995. For future fieldwork of this kind, I would aim to introduce text as a generative tool from the outset. I expected participants would find the writing of individual texts to accompany their photographs as a relatively easy task, which it wasn’t. Some felt uncomfortable with this in the latter stages and didn’t write anything at all. I would also integrate more workshops on narrative building, and techniques for combining text and image, archival and new visual sources. The larger Storylines #1&2 made with both Ann O’ Donnell and Michael O’Donohue, have provided templates for future collaborations of this kind.
Figure 50: Lange, D. (1954) *Patch Flanagan at Tubber Fair*, © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.

Figure 51: O’Donnell, A. (2015-16) *Memory Objects*, sample of photographs taken during Kilkeedy Project.
Figure. 52 O’Grady. B. (2015-16) *Family Portraits*, sample of photographs taken during Kilkeedy Project.

Figure. 53 Diviney. T. (2015-16) *Blessing the Hurl on Inis Cealtra*, sample of photographs taken during Kilkeedy Project.

Figure. 54 O’Donohue. M. (2015-16) Sample of archival photographs used during Kilkeedy Project.
Figure. 55 Mac Lochlainn. C & Keane. M (2015-16) *Fieldnames* Sample of collaborative work.

Figure. 56 O’Connor. M. (2015-16) *Photographs from the Collection of Frank Brew*, gathered during the Kilkeedy Project.
Figure. 57 Cleary. M. (2016) Collaborative Portrait with Tess and Tony Diviney on their farm near Gort, Archival digital prints, 50x50cm, and 60x70cm.

Figure. 58 & 59 Lange. D. (1954) Young Girl at Hurling Match Ennis, (left) © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor, and Cleary. M. (2016) Collaborative Portrait with Colm Mac Lochlainn and his granddaughters, (right) Archival Digital print, 60x70cm.

Figure 62 Cleary, M. (2016) Collaborative Portrait with Bernie O’Grady and her daughter Ruth O’Grady, Archival digital prints, Each 60x70cm.

Figure 63 Lange, D. (1954) A67.137.54142.9, O’Hallorans (Mother, Daughters), © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.
Figure. 64 Lange. D. (1954) A67.137.54151.2 & 5, Kenneally’s Farm Scenes, House Interior © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.

Figure. 65 Cleary. M. (2016) in collaboration with Ann O’Donnell, Archival digital prints, Each 60x70cm.

Figure 68 Cleary. M. (2016), *Ann O'Donnell at Finnerty's Pub Fashion Show*, archival digital print 60x75cm.

Figure 69 Cleary. M. (2016) *Storylines #1*– (Detail) images for collaborative photobook made with Ann O'Donnell.

Figure. 71 Cleary. M. (2016) Storylines #2 – (Detail) images for collaborative photobook made with Michael O’ Donohue.
Figure. 72 Cleary, M. (2016) *Storylines #2* – (Upper section) images for collaborative photobook made with Michael O’Donohue, (lower section) my photographic response to his story, (on shelf) finished photobook made with Michael, Archival Digital prints, sizes variable, and Lange, D. (1954) four framed prints on loan from the personal collection of Gerry Mullins.

Figure. 73 Cleary, M. (2016) Collaborative photobooks made with Michael O’Donohue, Tess Diviney, Ann O’Donnell and Colm Mac Lochlainn, Archival digital prints, each 12x16x4cm.
Figure. 74 Cleary. M. (2016) Exhibition installation The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, including my images responding to Lange’s work and Lange. D. (1954) five framed prints from the personal collection of Gerry Mullins.

Figure. 75 Exhibition installation The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, From top left to bottom right; Lange. D. (1954) A67.137.54191.9 People, AP.137.54592.12 People, A67.137.54138.10 O’Halloran’s and AP.137.54027.1 Town, all 1954. © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.
Figure. 76 Cleary. M. (2016) Exhibition installation The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, including collaborative portrait made with Ann O’Donnell, transcript for interview conducted with Ann O’Donnell, and Lange. D. A67.137.54151.2 & 5, Kenneally’s (Farm Scenes, House Interior), circa 1954. Photonegative, 2 x (1.5x 1 in). © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.

Figure. 77 Cleary. M. (2016) Exhibition installation The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, including transcribed Field Notes from Ireland discovered at The Lange Archives at The Oakland Museum of California.
Figure. 78 Lange, D. (1954) A67.137.54138.10, O’Halloran’s, © The Dorothea Lange Collection, the Oakland Museum of California, City of Oakland. Gift of Paul S. Taylor.

Figure. 79 Cleary, M. (2016) *The Road Through Kilkeedy*, Archival digital print, Each piece 60 x 70 cm.
Figure. 80 Cleary, M. (2016) *The Suitcase Archive*, Mixed-media assemblage including photographs, rocks, texts, labels, string, postcards, sizes variable.
Figure. 81 Cleary. M. (2016) *The Suitcase Archive*, Archival Digital prints, sizes variable.
Figure 82 Cleary, M. (2016) *Memory Lines*, Artist book including shredded photographs, text, maps, 18x44x12cm.
FINAL CONCLUSION

I began this research questioning how the photographic image signifies, constructs or preserves individual and collective memory. I was interested in how the photograph operates beyond the documentary, representative function, inducing associative, affective, perceptual or psychological responses which trigger, sustain or communicate memory. My aim was therefore to explore and find methods by which the photograph operates as a form of mnemonic environment, a space into which the viewer or practitioner can enter, and in the process access latent mnemonic content. In drawing up my final conclusions, I will return to the questions set out at the beginning of this dissertation. I will reflect upon each in turn, and how they have been resolved. I will also identify the new knowledge I believe this project contributes to my field, noting the implications of findings on my own work moving forward.

The Place of Memory Within My Practice

How is memory informing my understanding of photography, the topics that I choose, the conceptual and structural approach underlying my practice? How does this relate to the field of contemporary lens-based work?

At the outset of this research, my method was informed by tableaux vivant as a contemporary, post-digital genre of photographic practice. I entered the field of photography as a painter, incorporating influences such as Jeff Wall, Gregory Crewdson, Francesca Woodman, Jan Kaila and other contemporary artists, who use performative and constructive strategies, in creating large scale scenes to camera. Here the image is conceived of in the mind’s eye, well in advance of its final realization in external reality. I realised that my real thematic focus was in fact memory, as the formative cause of certain psychological states, and its latent influence upon the present moment. There was a certain difficulty however in turning the camera inward, and trying to represent the psychological dynamic underpinning the work. A dilemma within representation became increasingly apparent in a project I completed directly before beginning my PhD research. While working with a local community based group, I witnessed difficulties among participants in representing traumatic memory, related to lived experiences of violence. It was inappropriate to use constructed tableaux methods in this context. But using a collaborative documentary approach, also faltered in communicating participant’s memories. In this context, I had also gathered audio narratives, and used text to bridge gaps within the visual, but it was apparent that certain memories were just too difficult, or remained outside representation, even when using external visual signifiers to reconstruct a story. The potential of the photograph to operate as a site of mnemonic return, was therefore the underlying question at the beginning of this research, and I hoped to find new strategies to help me understand, and find creative solutions to work through difficulties in visualizing certain types of memory.

Through using myself as the test subject the first stage of the research, I was able to gain direct insight into the use, application, and effectiveness of combining strategies adapted from
psychotherapy, photo-elicitation and phototherapy within a Fine Art studio context, particularly in addressing selected autobiographical material. By using the aesthetic and material techniques outlined in Phase I, I was able to use the photograph to consciously revisit difficult memories. Initially this happened within the studio environment, but as the project developed, I began to undertake real journeys of mnemonic return, to key sites related to the photographic material I was using. The strength of the interrelationship between image, memory and place was something new to me. I was at times overwhelmed by the detail and affective impact of the process. However, it was only through linking memory, the photograph and physical site that subconscious memories returned. Interestingly, I also found virtual reality platforms such as Google Earth a really powerful tool in initial stages of this process. Journeys of virtual return, using 3D maps to navigate and view certain sites from different perspectives, elevations, dates and times evoked really strong memories, usually returning through dreams. This inspired me to begin real journeys through the sites related to the archival photographic materials used as the starting point in each stage of the project. While certain strategies within process could be related to photo-therapy or photo elicitation, I also integrated another method to inspire practice-based outcomes. This was adapted from Pierre-Yves Jacopin’s generative myth-making technique, and included taking an original narrative or story, and retelling this in a way that allowed for alternative outcomes, and subjective agency. This required a lucid interplay between memory and imagination, fact and fiction, individual and collectively shared materials, which was appropriate to my own creative approach. This method was very effective in helping me rebuild memory narratives fragmented by trauma, and in the process reconstitute a sense of meaning, potential, and identity. Having gone through this process myself, I could now more effectively apply these strategies in community based projects addressing similar thematic content.

Aesthetically I believe I have also come some way in reconciling the divergent strands within my studio practice. I hadn’t realised the direct impact of Surrealism, on not only how I visually construct my work, but also on the underlying conceptual approach I use. In Phase II, I began to consciously use Surrealist elements of chance and the random juxtaposition of events, as a method in how I wander, and compile my source materials. To this I added my own form of memory work, generating new creative content through the encounters that occurred, both real, visual and textual, on site in Paris. This could also be described as an alternative form of street photography, where memory becomes the map, or codex, through which encounters within the present are deciphered, reinterpreted, and reformed for a contemporary context.

The Creation of New Memory Within My Practice

In addressing how I am using my photographic process as a form of memory excavation, reclamation and reconstitution of identity narratives, I can now say that I have been using clearly recognizable and consistent strategies over time, including:

- The use of **collage as an ongoing method** to access subconscious memory, through
creating random juxtapositions of elements. The first Surrealists including Breton believed that this form of subconsciously driven practice would be impossible to realise visually, because at that time the visual couldn’t keep pace with the delivery of spoken text. Using the potential of digital technology, it is now possible to quickly juxtapose fragments of image, and narrative content, in very intricately interconnected layers within the same image surface. As mentioned above, the physical collage experiments of Phase I, which included extensive periods of concentrated often cyclical re-visititation of certain images to probe their memory content, was extended in Phase II into digitally constructed outcomes. Here memory narratives were even inserted into the code of images randomly to see how memory could disrupt the photographic surface, resulting in a random digitally generated collage aesthetic.

- I would use the term visual narrative drift to describe the aesthetic, psychological, conceptual and also physical approach underpinning this process. Physically the materials for new work was gathered through psychogeographically drifting within the context under investigation. These journeys often including several sequential days of drifting across the city or rural context I was using. In Paris this was guided by an interweaving of both Breton’s memory and my own, a process which sometimes necessitated wandering the streets for ten to twelve hours at a time, to get into a psychological state of mnemonic return. During my second research visit, when trying to connect with Nadja’s state of mind, through staying in the Hotel Henri IV at Place Dauphine, or visiting the building where she spent her final days in Paris, this involved entering a state of lucid consciousness similar to certain Surrealist methods. It was about entering a zone on the edge of the city and of consciousness, to access a space of creative or imaginative potential where memory could be reconfigured towards the future. I would also associate this term Drift, with what Marianne Deveraux describes as the moments when the subject wanders away from the scopic gaze, and potentially beyond regulation, the symbolic order, the law of the father, and the performance of the feminine for a male voyeur, whether real or internalized within the psyche. Where Collage is a play with formal elements on a visual surface, drifting is a form of play between the real and imaginary, the past and the future, in the continuum of a heightened now, experienced behind the camera while drifting.

- There was a sustained use of relationship to an external context throughout the project. At all stages photographic materials became a shared mnemonic environment to initiate, sustain and extend conversations about memory. In this respect, the presence of a conversational partner was essential but also different throughout. For Phase I this was a controlled experiment, through recorded interactions with a psychotherapist, using this contained environment as an incubator, to address the personal and the traumatic. In Phase II, the conversational partner was extended outward into the cultural sphere to become a symbolic point or anchor in wider discourse. Through the use of Andre Breton’s
Nadja and Boiffard’s accompanying photographs, which provide a visual scape for the events described in the text, I was able to move beyond myself, and begin to consider the wider scope of my topic. This also applies to my use of Lange in Phase III, where her Irish work became a way in, map or armature through which I could construct my own conceptual approach to documentary photography. One which also allowed for the inclusion of textual, collaborative and autobiographical elements.

- The significance of the autobiographical within my practice, as a method and also a thematic interest became increasingly apparent through this research. While this was explicit in Phase I, which began with life experience as the starting point for memory work, I realised that the autobiographical was also the driving force in my selection of archival sources and conversational partners for Phases I and II. While Breton’s novel is widely known as an important work in Surrealist art, and it thematically explores the psychological impact of unresolved memory, it also had significant autobiographical importance for me, as it influenced and redirected the course of my life in my twenties. In consciously choosing and identifying this influence, I began to discover, articulate and creatively reimage the imprint of memory from that time. Likewise, my choice of one portfolio of work by Dorothea Lange, which is directly relevant to my own experience of forced emigration and return from Ireland, became a profoundly important route for a psychological return home, over the past five years of the research.

- During the project I also realised that memory is itself mutable, subject to reinvention, and built of a delicate relationship between fact and fiction. Memories of the past, like hopes for the future are what we actively create with them. This ability to reimage memory towards the future is perhaps part of the freedom of the artist, but an important one in emerging from the shadow of memory, whether individual or collective. This could also be viewed as a form of psychological drifting, from the real, towards the potential of alternative outcomes, via the creative agency of the imagination, which allows for a degree of transformation. It opens the possibility of envisioning a better future, where the shadow of traumatic memory, whether autobiographical or collective, begins to fade. The practice-based investigation also becomes a living embodied interaction with site as the reconfiguration of new memory, during the studio-based processes described here. I also realised that several of the artists I have been influenced by over the past decade effectively blur the boundaries, between the real, symbolic and imagined, often for socio-political ends. In the work of Mariana Castillo Deball for example, this is a way of discovering lost stories and histories, erased by colonialism. For Susan Hiller, it is a means to include voices from the margins within dominant institutional discourses of knowledge. The majority of the artists referenced use the archive and a museum aesthetic to consolidate reinvented memory, as a means to lend authenticity to the message of their work. I found their subversive appropriation and reconfiguration of institutional tropes particularly useful, as it provides insights into how a certain distancing,
and meta-textual layering within the work, can also make the personal collectively relevant.

- During the project, I also began to creatively use and incorporate *text as a way of superseding certain blocks, silences, evasions and invisibilities* within the photographic. I used narrative sequence and inter-relationships between spoken or written language and image to probe memory. I gained a better understanding of the impact of trauma on the subject's ability, or resistance to linear logical forms of narration, and the psychodynamic of this. As a consequence, I began to allow for repetitions, associative digressions, silences, fading away and re-emergence within language to be expressed in tandem with photographic materials. The artist book and photobook have become important visual forms within my practice, to explore and contain these links between memory, image and language.

**Contribution of the Research to New Knowledge**

- Use of the photograph to initiate generative mnemonic drifting, using real sites as a point of entry into a mnemonic reconstructive processes. Creative studio based strategies are used here as part of a process which can be applied beyond the individual to collective or collaborative contexts. Memory narratives triggered by photographic materials can initiate more sustained, in depth and actual journeys of mnemonic return. These can help reconstitute identity, through entering a process of constructing new narratives, or reconstructing stories previously lost or damaged, for example through trauma.

- The use of slower forms of photographic visualization, which include physical interaction with the surface of the image help this process. They slow down the usual pace of creating and also viewing the photographic image. The reproducibility of the image itself means it can also be revisited and physically altered through multiple iterations. This process of mnemonic return in a material, or aesthetic sense, also promotes an excavation of the image. Like memory it involves repetitive visitations, with the potential for different views, perspectives, or interpretations of events to be discovered each time.

- There is a different approach to photographic time in operation here. It is not the decisive moment of the documentary image, nor the conflation of many moments familiar within tableaux vivant. It is more about what Bachelard has described as motionless time, where memory freezes perception psychologically. Here a place can become the site of constant mnemonic iteration or return, with the photograph operating as a visual trigger, rather than indexical representation of what is then perceived. Perception here encompasses the external visual field, as what is seen by the eye of the mind, or recollection. I believe this leads to a different potential approach to documentary practice, through opening a conceptual framework to consciously integrate the inner psychological processes, or the
imaginary of the photographer with outer phenomena unfolding in the real world. Making the process conscious and explicit through the use of archival starting points, also opens up a relational ground for conversations beyond the purely autobiographical. The use of other forms of creative expression in conjunction with the photographic, for example written or audio narrative, is important in working into and through the process.

- In Phase III new knowledge on Dorothea Lange’s work in Ireland was discovered. This included selecting and publishing through public exhibition, previously unseen photographs, as well as field notes from The Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California. New categories were proposed to analyse this material, in particular her work on Irish women. As there is only one book currently available, that of Gerry Mullins (1998), dedicated exclusively to Lange’s Irish work, this practice-based research has contributed to the overall general knowledge and awareness of the extent, depth and content of what Lange photographed while in Ireland. There is enough material available for an additional book, with a particular emphasis on her portraits of Irish women. It is interesting that Dorothea Lange Looks at The American Countrywoman, was published in 1967, evidence perhaps of the lingering influence of her Irish visit. However, having now studied the Irish work its entirety, I am also proposing an alternative position to that of what has been written about this portfolio to date. I would disagree with Linda Gordon (2009, p.372) that nothing disturbed Lange’s “misty, romanticised take”, on the Irish context. It is apparent from both the field notes, the contact sheets, and also fieldwork conducted in the community of County Clare, that Lange was aware of the impact of forced emigration upon the subjects she was working with. It is evident in how she staged certain images, the presence and absence of the subject in the sequencing of shots, the arrangement of those about to emigrate prominently in certain images, the use of body language to suggest the psychological impact of imminent departure, and of course the poignant observations on emigration in what she did write. I would substantiate the statement that Lange staged certain shots, by drawing attention to what is visually evident from the contact sheets. For example, the image of the woman present then absent in the door of the house, (exhibited in the final exhibition), was from one shoot, where she also composed the same image with a male subject. It was clear to me as a photographer, that she was in some instances, particularly where she revisited one household or family, directing her subjects. In another sequence of images with the O’Halloran’s for example, different female members of the family who are about to emigrate, are moved singly into the foreground in relationship to the entire group lined up against the wall of the house. In an interview I conducted with Mary Leyden, one of the children in Ennis town that Lange photographed, Mary also described how persistent Lange was. Although she was reluctant to be in a portrait, Lange insisted, returning a number of times until she had the image she wanted. Based upon Deirdre Lynch’s documentary Photos To Send (2002), I would agree with Justin Carville that certain aspects of Lange’s, and also Lynch’s approach are problematic. There are cultural sensitivities with regard to the
representation of this type of thematic content in Ireland, which isn't always apparent to an outsider. As an Irish artist and researcher, this project has heightened my awareness of this, and also the potential of addressing this topic in future research. The discourse surrounding photographic production in Ireland needs to address issues such as the contemporary representation of the rural Irish west, as well as the reimagining of what collective photographic memory might be in this context today.
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**Book Chapters**


**Catalogues**


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*Reframe Memory, Athens Photo Festival* (2015), Hellenic Centre for Photography, Athens.

**Magazine and Online Articles**


**Newspaper Articles**


**Websites**


Albert Kahn Museum Website


**Video/DVD**


**Interviews**


**Seminars and Conferences**

*Picturing The Family: Media, Narrative, Memory*, Birkbeck, University of London, July 2014.


Format 15/ Evidence International Conference, Derby, April 2015
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54b116f4ce4b047061238181d/5545eb04e4b03724d711363e/1430645508495/FORMAT+15+SPEAKER+TEXTS+AND+BIOS.pdf


List of Appendices

Appendix (i) *The Photograph As A Site Of Mnemonic Return*, Catalogue of all practice-based outcomes including documentation of final exhibition.

Appendix (ii) *Remember To Forget*, Prototype Photobook for Phase I.

Appendix (iii) *The Blue Wind*, Prototype Photobook for Phase II.

Appendix (iv) *The Suitcase Archive*, Prototype Photobook for Phase III.

Please refer to accompanying DVD for PDF documents of these. For correct layout, use [View – Page Display – Two Page View from dropdown menu in Adobe Acrobat Pro].

Appendix (v)

List of items

- Interview with Gerry Mullins.
- Interviews from fieldwork conducted in Phase III.
- Visual materials gathered from The Dorothea Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California.
- Extracts from Lange’s field notes from Ireland used in the final exhibition.
- Exhibition materials Phase III.
- Additional Research outputs Phase I & II.
Appendix (v)
Interview with Gerry Mullins
Dublin – 8th May 2014

You were the first to compile a publication of Lange’s work in Ireland. What led you to this series of images, and why do you think they are so relatively unknown in comparison to her other work?

The nuts and bolts of it was I was living in San Francisco. I was writing for an Irish newspaper called The Gael. I was looking for an Irish story, because I would look for anything with a kind of Irish angle on the story, so for example, the Clancy Brothers came by and played a concert and I went to that and wrote a review. An exhibition opened in San Francisco, in the Museum of Modern Art, called ‘Dorothea Lange American Photographs’, and it was on all the bus shelters. It was very well publicised. I was cycling by the Museum one day on my way home from work and I thought well maybe Dorothea Lange…because I could see she photographed a lot of country people and rural people. And I said, well maybe she photographed Irish people who moved to America, to farms. I went in and spoke with the curator, her name was Sandra Phillips, and she took me through the whole exhibition. I just walked in off the street more or less. She showed me various people on the land, but there was nothing to suggest they were Irish, and then as I left, she suggested I contact the Oakland Museum. She said she thought that Lange was actually in Ireland. So I called up the Oakland Museum, but I didn’t take much notice of it really, because I thought well maybe she stopped in Shannon on her way somewhere much more interesting, and stood at the top of the gangway and took a few snaps. Oakland Museum said, ‘yes we have her Irish collection here’, so I made an appointment.

At the time I was working for a company called Montgomery Securities, they’re a financial management company and I used to work New York stock exchange hours in San Francisco, which meant I was working 6am until 2pm. I got out of work at a quarter past two, and hopped on the Bart, went over to Oakland and was there by 3pm. So I’d have a couple of hours to look at the images taken in Ireland. I went over and had a look and saw straight away, two and a half thousand images taken in Ireland. I knew I’d hit some sort of interesting vein. Then I went over and made an appointment every week, for a period of a month or two, going through all the images on a forerunner to a DVD. One at a time would come up on the screen. They had fed all the negatives onto some form of a CD disk. There was one button to advance it and I pressed that 2,400 times. But all along the way, I realised that I had been naïve to think that Dorothea Lange would have photographed Irish people on farms in America. What I learned along the way was that even though Irish people came from farms or rural areas, when they came to America they were a very urban people. Irish people strangely went to New York, Boston, Chicago and other cities. Other immigrants didn’t, they went to rural places. Like the Germans colonised large parts of the Mid-West.

Do you have any ideas why this might have happened, why they abandoned the land completely?
Somebody must have done a study on this, but there's safety in numbers, and when one group of Irish people put down roots in a particular city, they can look out for the next group. There could have historically been a lack of faith in the land, possibly. And perhaps it's more difficult to start in a rural area. Like if you go to New York there's plenty of work. It's a harsh environment, but if you go out to Wisconsin, where do you even start? Certainly you can't buy land if you're a poor immigrant. Maybe the other people who went would have had the means with them to buy land, and maybe as well land labour was mostly done by slaves in the early days of Irish immigration. There wasn't work there.

Why do you think these 2,400 images have been sitting there and given no attention in comparison to Lange's other work?

I think most artists get cubby-holed and they get best known for one or two pieces, or bodies of work, and other work goes into the shadows. Dorothea Lange in everybody's mind is the photographer of the Great Depression, that's her forte. Everything she did before or after that goes into the shadows, and it's even still there. I did 'Dorothea Lange's Ireland', but she also visited Egypt, Israel, Venezuela and Peru.

I think her health was failing then, and also she didn't have the contact to the people that she had in Ireland.

Probably true, and she probably also didn't have much time as she was travelling with her husband, so it was really his gig. But if I had the time and money, I'd be trying to produce the pictures from her other work.

What kind of reception did this book receive in Ireland?

Well great, it became a bestseller. It went straight to number three in the bestseller list and stayed there two in En weeks, and two at number four. It would have done much better, but my publisher Elliot and Clarke brought the book out in February in America, and March in Ireland. So by June or July they were already for sale to a company called Black Belt in Alabama. So even though they did a great job producing the book. They had a good idea on the aesthetics, I had no idea that they were selling themselves, at the very time that this book was a bestseller in Ireland. We needed to order in thousands of more copies to really capitalize on the sales. There was a six or eight-page spread in Cara magazine on every Aer Lingus flight coming into Ireland in the summer of 1996. Every flight from America to Ireland had six pages of these photographs. But when people got off the plane and went looking for the book, they couldn't find it. Ireland and England were sold out. I had the publisher in England ringing me asking for more copies, and Black Belt in Alabama saying they didn't have the money to put into it.
So you’re saying this was produced in America and was selling mostly to the diaspora coming back in. But how has it been received by the cultural community in Ireland?

I’d say it did extremely well in County Clare and with people whose parents were from County Clare, and that would have been replicated in the sales. Dorothea Lange’s name itself meant nothing to anybody in Ireland. Nobody would have even heard of that name before this book. People from outside Clare wouldn’t have cared, because it’s not Dorothea Lange’s Ireland really. She took a few pictures in Dublin, which allowed me to title it that. It got plenty of promotion, it was realised it was a good book. It qualified as a good present for a lot of people.

Of the 2,400 images Lange took while in Ireland, how did you make the final selection for the book? What factors influenced your choice of some images above others? Did you select them, or did you do that with Daniel Dixon her son?

Mostly me. I traced out a storyline that isn’t apparent in the book, but basically I started out with Michael Kenneally and his mother. A very rural setting, and traced this to a rural village Ennistymon, and then to a town, Ennis, and right up to the last pictures which are Dublin. So in a way, it traces the progression of the Irish Countryman. That’s what happened to Irish people. They started in rural society, then moved to cities, be it in Ireland or elsewhere. Then the pictures themselves. There weren’t two and a half thousand eligible pictures. A lot of them, even of Michael Kenneally, (I’d say she photographed him fifty times or so), and like any photographer you take a lot of shots and keep going until you have the right one. We used about four or five pictures of Kenneally, from about seven or eight that were eligible. But you couldn’t have that many of one person. So I’d say of all the pictures she took, about one hundred and fifty were useable, certainly not two hundred. I’ve certainly thought about producing a second Dorothea Lange’s Ireland, but there isn’t enough for a second edition.

It’s interesting to see that for me as a photographer, the offshoots. It also says here, in the text by Daniel Dixon, that she was working in diptychs. Is this something Dixon and you came up with for the book, or did Lange talk about it?

It’s something that Dan said, and I take him at his word. My own thinking is that she thought the story was going to be told in two panels. I don’t know, I just imagine her getting out of the car, taking a couple of establishing shots, getting closer and taking another few, then finally asking, ‘do you mind if I take a picture’, and taking a few more. And somewhere in there, Daniel said she was experimenting with using two or three pictures to tell a story. If you get a catalogue of her retrospective exhibition in 1966, she was putting it together as she was dying. You can see in that if she was using two pictures together, or just one. And she did use a couple of diptychs there.

Well in the arrangement of your book there is often a correlation, a close-up and an action shot, or a portrait and a detail e.g. hands. Did you do the layout?
Yes, and no. I did the storyline and scripted the pictures, then it went to a designer and she laid it out herself. She changed some of the bit, like Ennistymon coming after Ennis. I would see that as flawed in the book, but maybe she did rearrange the images a bit to show what you’re describing, like close-up and far away shots and that. There is something else that you may want to be aware of. The copyright and permission to use these images from the Oakland Museum is very strict. You’re not allowed to crop, or have photographs bleed toward the edge, or cross the central line of the book, or overlap one another. So it kind of restricts you, it has to be one picture per page.

_Were you influenced in any way by memory, either personal memories of the West of Ireland, or collective ideas in previous representations of this place, or time period?_

I’d have to answer that question under two headings, whether I was consciously or unconsciously influenced by memory. So I’ve no memory of this time, this is twenty odd years before I was born. So I’ve no memory of it, or I don’t have personal memories of the West or the people because I didn’t know them. What I would have, if you want to call it a collective idea, I did know Ennis, and went there to meet up with my uncle. We walked these very same streets trying to find out where the pictures were taken, so in a way I was absorbing that. I did have some kind of cultural memory of these places.

_Did any of the images strike you when you were in America. Sometimes as an immigrant the Irishness of things hits you very poignantly. Would any of them particularly resonate, not necessarily as something you would have lived, but beyond that, through memory?_

I could identify with a lot of these images. Like as a kid I was on a farm in Mayo and we were up on top of haystacks. Or the man there on the left hand side, his name was O’Flanagan. He looks as much like my grandfather as anybody else. My grandfather wore the same coat, the same hat. So there’s a resonance all the time. There’s another picture in Ennis where they’re all at a toy stall. My dad was in St. Flannans College in Ennis, and I think he was in boarding school at the time these pictures were taken. So I was going through these pictures thinking of him, but I had to look three or four times. So, I kind of knew the place. This was a different time, but not a purely different place. Was I influenced by memory, probably unconsciously.

_You have met and interviewed many of the original subjects. Based on their responses, do you believe Lange really documented the conditions of the time. Is there documentary truth in her vision of the West of Ireland?_

I think she did a great job in photographing what she did at the time. You can never get everything, the photograph can only record what’s presented to the camera. Like she couldn’t photograph the night, what happened at night time. She managed to do better than any other photographer that I’m aware of. She obviously had a list of things to get, based on Conrad Arensberg’s work. She
wanted to get the man in the field, and the woman in the haggard, or back in the house cooking a meal. She wanted to get the people in the sports field, in the mart, in the market, in the town and so on. She had a hit list and that was a good representative list. I think it was an accurate representation. But forty or fifty years later we now accept that this was a desperate time for people, particularly anybody who might be vulnerable. There were desperate levels of sexual abuse and oppression. We can accept that now. But how can we expect a woman who arrived in Ireland for a month in 1954 to detect all of that. It’s too much to expect. So yes, she photographed things and the images evoke a sense of sentimentality. She didn’t construct that. If you look at Michael Kenneally, the main picture in the whole collection, or the mother putting the pancakes down on the fire. Some people will look at that and have a sentimental feeling towards it. But that’s not Dorothea Lange’s responsibility. All she did was record the moment. And if one person is sentimental about it, and another sees the hardship, Dorothea isn’t responsible for the feelings these people have. When she photographed Michael Kenneally, she posed him, but she didn’t interfere much more. This idea of standing the subject off centre is very much her. And another great thing she used to do, her photographs are stuffed with information, and yet it looks like a simple picture. I mean in this picture you get to see the clothes the guy wore, the condition of the clothes, the rips in the sweater, the fact it isn’t really fitting him. So you get an idea of the guy’s position in the world. You get an idea of the land he is farming, like these are all reeds. It’s wet boggy land. And you get a good idea of the house, his living conditions. This is his fuel supply, this is his meat supply up on his hill. Yu can see why the land is so wet because the rain is just running off the mountain. This is the fodder for the cattle here. So in one photograph, we know a huge amount about this man. More than one photograph could ever tell about my life. We know what he’s eating, what’s keeping him warm, where he’s living. We know what he’ll be doing tomorrow morning. And that’s very much a Dorothea Lange picture. The photograph is aesthetically pleasing yet it’s stuffed with information.

You’ve met descendants and even living subjects from these images. When you bring these photos back and show them, are the reactions you get, ‘yes that’s the way it was’, or is it more of an emotional, sentimental response?

Well you get a bit of both. It depends on them. The O’Halloran sisters for example in Massachusetts, they’re kind of embarrassed about the whole thing. They’re interested but were as happy not to cooperate. But their brother in Ireland, Sean O’ Halloran, he feels very emotionally attached to the pictures. These people wouldn’t have had photographs of themselves at the time. The girl who died of appendicitis, Nancy Keane’s sister, she was photographed by Lange, and when my book came out over forty years after the photograph was taken, her sister was in a bookshop in Ennis and almost dropped at the sight of it. She never had a picture of her sister before. She didn’t think a photograph even existed of her and all of a sudden she’s in a bookshop in Ennis and she’s got the picture in her hand. You can imagine the fright.
But nowadays you can’t really do that, not discuss with your subjects where their picture is going. How did you negotiate that?

Well legally I bought the right to use those pictures from the Oakland Museum. The people in the pictures had no rights over them. If Dorothea Lange came to Ireland now, they would have some rights over her work. She just wouldn’t have been able to photograph. Now it’s just too restrictive. You can’t nowadays just park the car on the side of the road in a village like Inagh, and start photographing children on the road to and from school. It’s just impossible. It was seen as being a bit of a novelty back then. So no, I didn’t seek anybody’s permission, but I did seek their cooperation, because I wanted them to be on side, and I wanted to get information. I didn’t legally require it, and I didn’t get sufficient opposition that would cause me to leave a picture out. Bridie O’Halloran didn’t want to cooperate with the documentary, which was fine, but we still used her in the book. And the same image was used on the cover of a book by Polly Devlin, her autobiography ‘All of Us There’. They coloured up the picture which is very much against the rules of the Oakland Museum. And Bridie O’Halloran would have no opportunity to protest. It was her image, but not her property.

Why did you like the picture of Michael Kenneally in front of his house in particular?

It was one of the first images of the whole collection that I printed out. I had that up on my mirror in San Francisco. I would be going off to my work in buildings like this here in Dublin, modern buildings in the financial district of San Francisco – putting on my shirt and tie, heading off into the corporate environment. It’s harsh, a soulless corporate environment. Before I went out the door, the last face I would see, would more or less be Michael Kenneally, standing on a farm in 1954. And I wouldn’t have any idea if he was alive or dead, or if that was really his farm, or if he was just passing by. And then for me to find myself in Ennis, and to find myself going out to Cloonanaha where he lived, and finding the house sitting on the side of the hillside as if nothing had changed. And then to find him. That was just extraordinary. It was just mind blowing. It was one of the highlights of my life. To find him alive and well. He was telling me stories, making me laugh. Effectively, he’s the main man in that collection in my view. He is the Irish Countryman that Lange was trying to photograph. Yeats had his fisherman sitting on the rocks, Mike Scott of the Waterboys had his fisherman. Various other artists had their individual who’d signify freedom. Michael Kenneally is the man of this collection.

These images become portals through time, to an idea of the West of Ireland for many people, would you agree?

Yes. Kenneally only died last year. His life didn’t change a huge amount from between last year and when that picture was taken. So, a portal to go back in time. That house has changed because it burnt down in 1999 or ’98. But like what you were saying earlier on, if I’d used a black and white camera, nothing had changed.
Lange’s work has been criticised by certain writers, for presenting a pastoral, romantic ideal which overlooked some of the harsher realities of 1950’s rural life. Would you agree with this?

I think she found a certain truth and her photographs described that truth to the best of her ability. She didn’t present pastoral romantic ideals, she presented what she saw and if that is what the commentator read into here images, that isn’t her fault. She didn’t ‘create’ the images. She just documented them. Perhaps you should contrast her images with those of John Hinde who has also photographed Ireland in the 1950’s. Hinde staged his photographs and later artificially coloured the images to hype up a particular image of Ireland. That image was pastoral and romantic. It was manufactured. Lange’s work is the polar opposite. She didn’t stage shots and she didn’t doctor them in the darkroom.

What role do you think memory may have played in how Lange selected and depicted what she found? She was strongly influenced by Arensberg’s writing. Do you think memory of this, perhaps predetermined what she was searching for and depicting?

Yes, she was influenced by Arensberg. This, I believe, made her choose Co. Clare, and helped her put together a shot list including: the farm, the GAA, the church, the market, the village, the town, the men outside, the women at home and around the haggard, and the family in the middle like the hub of a wheel. This, to me, is a form of research and mightn’t be memory in the way that you mean. Also, note that Lange hardly depicted this work. The shots that appeared in Life Magazine weren’t really of her choosing. Only her 1966 retrospective in the New York MOMOA represents her representation of the Irish work, and then there were only five shots.

Do you think these images have more potency among the diaspora than they do in Ireland, where there is often a certain cynicism towards images of the West?

Yes. I was for seven years a member of the diaspora. Everything Irish meant more to me then: the music, the films, the books, the photographs.

Do you think post-colonial experience and memory has influenced the reception of this body of work in Ireland?

I don’t think so. I’m not a believer in the ‘post-colonial’ explanation of anything anymore. We are no longer post-colonial, we are at least post-post colonial, and probably post-post-post-colonial. There is hardly a person alive who has a memory of colonial Ireland so the influence of that time has faded. Memory has, of course, influenced the reception. Especially among people who remember the 1950’s, they see a lot in the photographs that they can identify with. Simple things, like the steel bucket on the flagstone floor, and the clean proper clothes in the church photographs contrasting with the attire in farm-related photos, is something that the older generation react to.
If Lange were to reshoot this series today, what do you think she would be searching for?

The demographics have changed. In 1954, any study of Ireland had to be predominately rural because that is where people mostly lived. But now we are mostly an urban, or probably a suburban people. A study today would have to be in a built-up environment. Of course there are echoes of the past in our current society and the further one gets from Dublin, the more this becomes apparent. In the Dublin area, where a third of the population live, many are originally country people, and they bring those memories with them. So the memories are alive, but they are competing with a lot of other times and places for people’s head space.

Interviews conducted in Phase III.

Interview Date: Wednesday 29th December 2015
Subject: Bernie O’Grady
Lange Photographs referenced: O’Halloran family

1. What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?
Well I’ve taken family portraits, that’s one aspect, and then I’ve taken images of a deserted abandoned home, from a deserted village in our locality. And I’ve also been able to get earlier images from a particular house which has been very useful and very enlightening I suppose.

2. Why are these images important to you?
Because I remember the brother and sister who lived in the house. The man actually died in the house and the lady, the sister, I remember her coming to mass. She was crippled, bent over. She obviously had a hard life. I remember the colours of her cottage. It was so warm and evocative and actually, over Christmas my sister in law was telling me, she came home from England to see Mary there. Mary was always laughing. She had a great sense of humour. When she was able to do it she had a beautiful garden, geraniums, roses, daffodils. It’s obviously overgrown now, but I can just picture it as it was.

3. What memories do they evoke?
They bring to mind the life that people had. They didn’t have any running water in the house. The river was just there in front, so she would have had to haul the water in for everything that she needed I suppose. They just had a hard life, both men and women, but I suppose women particularly, on their own there.

4. Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?
Yes, it can preserve images and then when you go back to it you can recall, an era, or a time or a moment in time.

5. What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?
What triggers memory in relation to that photograph is the actual colour of the house. The colour she had on the house was a warm ochre. I always felt that was such a wonderful feature. It was the colour that struck me initially years ago, as different from others in the locality, which wouldn’t have been painted or distempered. They would be just a cold cement, but hers was a very warm house. The photograph of the window with no glass, very thick walls. The house so dishevelled at this stage now. I was never actually in the house when people were living in it, so when I got into it now, the photos bring to mind that she didn’t have a very happy existence. It was a kind of isolated existence, but she obviously was a very happy person, as well, within herself. She was content with her lot. She had great faith. That’s displayed in all the holy pictures that are still left there. The little candle sticks and I know her other neighbour brought her to Knock every year. I suppose she got consolation from that. The objects that are around the house would reflect it.

6. Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for you?
The first one that comes to mind is the fair in Tubber, and the neighbour who was just up the road from us at home. Patch Flanagan was his name. He was a character and his brother Joe as even more so. They had another brother who was a teacher. Then he had four sisters who were nuns. That’s the first image, when I saw the book that came to mind. I couldn’t believe he was actually there. I personally knew him. I suppose the other images that are evocative are within the house of the O’Halloran family. They’re evocative of what some women still do, they carry out some of those chores within the house still.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still exist within the local context?
I suppose baking is coming back into fashion. We’re told now with the recession that it is. But it’s still done within the house.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
Her work definitely is evocative of a moment in time, a short period of time. It’s very popular, but I know Clare Library have a lot of work done as well preserving photographs from different collections apart from the Lange collection.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes together nowadays?
Not answered.

10. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
I would say life for women has changed immeasurably since Lange’s visit, for the better. When you look at her work, a lot of the women, the majority were still in the home. They worked within the home and on the farm, and didn’t have an outside outlet, or job, whereas now anyone of my era, they all work outside of the home. All the farmer’s wives, they all work outside the house, even on a part-time basis. They’re independent, they drive, they’ve a lot going for them. I think they have the best of both worlds really.

11. Are there any constant things that remain in the daily life on the land for women in Co. Clare?
In most households, taking care of the home and family. But I do know some women who combine work with helping out on the farm, occasionally.

Interview Date: Wednesday 29th December 2015
Subject: Tess Diviney
Lange Photographs referenced: Milking and saving the hay, Tottenham’s farm, Mt. Callan.

1. What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?
I’ve chosen the bog, a photograph of the rain and a rainbow, and the blessing of the hurl at a holy well.

2. Why are these images important to you?
The bog photos bring back memories of my childhood.

3. What memories do they evoke?
We would get ourselves ready for the bog. Women made the tea and sandwiches, we had currant cake and put these in a bag ready for the bog. My father would ask a few neighbours to give him a hand on the day, and children automatically went. The bank was cleared off with a space and the sleán was used to cut the turf. That was laid up on the bank and then the people on the bank made in into stughs. That was left for a month or so, until it dried out and then, it was formed into reeks. It was brought home first, and then made into a reek. The rainbow just reminds me of everyday life. Then we went to a few of the blessed wells. On pattern day this year we went to Inis Cealtra and the priest said mass in the open. In the graveyard a little girl brought a hurly up at the offering.

4. Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?
The photographs can, in fact it brings you back to your youth. It might, maybe be hard to explain to children what to do, what you were doing, but the photograph shows an image of what you were at, and you can explain then.

5. What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?
   It was a big preparation and our fuelling for the winter depended on it. It was either wood or turf. We didn’t use coals so we were dependent on the turf for the winter season.

6. Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for you?
   Well the image of the woman and man with the cow, carrying the bucket, she was milking the cow. On our own farm we had ten cows, and three or four of us milked the cows, three each by hand, depending on the day or the amount of help we had. Then we strained the milk into a milk tank, and there it was let cool. The next morning my father took the milk to the creamery. That was a source of income as well. When the milk was separated in the creamery, then we got it back, and that was in turn fed to the calves in the afternoon. That was their feed, and one source of income for the farm as well. Selling the milk and the butter as well. The photograph of the hay would have brought back memories, because then it was cut with a finger mower. My father had a tractor so he cut for the neighbours. At about three or four in the morning, he’d cut the hay for himself, and that was let lie for a day or so, then we turned it. Again we had a big méihal, and on a good sunny day we’d tram all the hay. The women of the house brought the food to the meadow, and when they went, in turn they were asked to pull the butt of the tram, and make sugáns for over the tram. That tied down the tram in case of a storm or wind. It was left in the meadow for the season. After about six weeks or so, it was brought home. There was another big day. Well it was the men who did this. They brought in the trams on the tractor and put it into the hay shed, three or four farmers. Some would fork the hay, others would push it out around the eye of the shed, until the shed was filled. That was our hay saved for the season, to feed the cattle for winter.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still exist within the local context?
   Most of them have silage making equipment now. Everything is done in one day. It’s baled in one day, and plastic is put over it, and it’s put in the back of the shed. Well it accommodates people working off the farm as well. In the past farming was a full-time job, whereas nowadays it can be done in a number of days, and you can still hold down a job as well.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
   Oh definitely. I don’t know about the young people in some cases, if they weren’t on a farm they wouldn’t maybe understand some of them. But farmers, people who have gone through this type of life, it would definitely bring up memories. It would remind them of the old days, which are long gone in some cases.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes together nowadays?
   In most cases they’ve gone. You might get the odd farmer who hasn’t moved with the times, but very few and far between.

10. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
    It has, life has changed for women in Ireland since then because, probably at that time women didn’t go to work, whereas nowadays I’d say the majority of people will go out. They’ll raise their family, you’ve childminders and crèches, and the children are taken care of, so it gives the husband and wife a chance to work.

11. Are there any constant things that remain in the daily life on the land for women in Co. Clare?
    I don’t know if there is. I suppose we still do the washing and the kitchen work. Some men will do that now but…. I don’t know. Well, washing the dishes, and washing the clothes, and drying them. Knitting, sewing, crochet that kind of thing. Men have taken on equal roles nowadays in nearly everything.
Interview Date: Sunday 1st January 2016
Subject: Elaine Dalton

1. What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?
I think the images are very varied. You can see a very obvious poverty. Poverty is a modern day word actually, it’s a word that we put onto everything now, but actually it’s probably not the word to use for back then, because it was normal. Now it would be considered to be poverty, but then it was more indicative of lack of personal transport, lack of machinery and technology, manual work, manual labour, long days, short nights and at the same time in some of the photographs I see privilege. Back then I can see privilege. I can see people who were clearly in some sort of elevated position in their communities. Even that one where the young boys are looking on at the traveller men playing instruments. Even though music is part of the Irish life, it would have been very associated with the traveller community. But even the expression on the boy’s faces are of curious distain. It’s like what are those people doing, so yes, the images are absolutely fantastic, but, you can definitely see people better dressed. In better economic situations with their umbrellas.

2. Why are these images important to you?
They would have been very worrying times and I’m sure it was much more common then, but at the same time maybe there was a closer sense of community among women. I think women have become quite isolated out from each other now. We have modernised in terms of accessibility to transport and technology, but some of that has created distance in communities. For example, in my current circumstances I consider my place of residence to make me more like a commuter. I live in the community, but I don’t participate in it. If that was forty years ago, I would have no choice but participation, because I wouldn’t have been able to get more than two or three miles beyond it.

3. What memories do they evoke?
I suppose Lange’s images evoke a curiosity in me about the sort of kinship there was then, and maybe women realising the hardship of other women, and acting accordingly. Like helping out your neighbour. You still see it in communities, but still. I think things probably have changed somewhat.

4. Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?
Yes, I really do, because if you don’t have this sort of memorabilia, I suppose first of all its honouring the lives of the people who participated in the photographs, who well may be forgotten. It keeps the spirit of a person’s life documented, even if that documentation is only a split second.

5. What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?
Not answered.

6. Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for you?
There are images of hardship, the grandmother sitting at the fireplace, her eyes are dancing in her head but I can see from her clothes and her hands that she is no stranger to very hard work. It reminds me a bit of myself, insofar as no matter what is happening to you, it’s not that you keep the bright side out, but it’s about survival instinct and you’ve got to survive, whatever your current circumstances are. So I would definitely relate to that. Or that you can find the fun in some things in life. Or that you find things to be, I don’t know if the right word is grateful for, but relieved about. Relieved that there are some things that you don’t have to worry about, like that bag of coal coming in, or the food on the table.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still exist within the local context?
I think there’s great benefits to technology being able to get out of your location, but it brings additional problems that have never been addressed, like, and I’m going to state the obvious ones here, around childcare, and red tape and bureaucracy and rules e.g. maybe it was totally acceptable thirty years ago, forty years ago, to just pop your child in next door. Or the child could probably have been in the house at seven in the morning, if you had a long journey to get to your location. You couldn’t just do that now. You probably wouldn’t even know your neighbour enough
now to do that. It’s that individualization, that has come along with technology, with science. So yes, I do see a loneliness, not among women, but by women’s separation from each other. I think in the work that I do very recently we have a group called the conversations group, and we gathered about 25-30 women. I was in a very privileged position that I would have known a lot of the individual stories of these women. There would have been a significant, a very high level of pain and hardship of all sorts of problems in that room. From mental health issues, to women with their children being taken into care. And to see all of these women interacting with each other in a way that somehow left those problems outside for a moment, for an hour, for two hours. Yet at the same time there was fantastic camaraderie in the room. We talked about stories of Christmas as children, what it was like. Some women did share in terms of the incredible poverty that they grew up with. And they’re not very old women. I suppose in a way things have changed dramatically, and then at the same time, nothing changes at all.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
Every picture tells a story, even if it’s only a story we make up in our own head, if we don’t have a background story. There are still very telling things in photographs. So yes, its hugely important, but probably to honour the people that are in the photographs, I guess it could be used as a very visual interpretation of what’s wrong in society. And what we would like to address in society. It can be used as a comparative study, what was it like then, what is it like now. So documentation doesn’t have to take place in formal settings, of report writing and submissions. The work that I would engage in somewhat.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes together nowadays?
I think there’s still disproportionate discrimination against women who work the land. When it comes to the law and legal systems. And when it comes to ownership. I think that may have shifted slightly, but it’s still deeply significant and deeply discriminatory against women. So women can do a massive amount of work, untold hours on farms, and in agricultural life and still not get recognised for doing that. Sometimes by family members, but by the law, which essentially the thing that going to stand on your side.

10. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
Yes, I think it probably has somewhat. Time doesn’t stand still and life doesn’t stand still. It doesn’t mean that societies can’t go backwards, and in a way I suppose, from my life experience and my professional experience, things are actually going backwards. But we’ve got lot more issues to deal with now. We’ve got a situation, where for example, we’ve got the traveller community. When you talk about racism, or discrimination, or prejudice, this is probably not the language of these times. The language of prejudice and discrimination would be much subtler. Because now we’ve got a whole new language around these issues. There would have been a time certainly, where while there was an economic and social separation between the traveller community and the settled community. From what I see, there’s no embracing, or respect, or credence given to the lines or the history of this community. It has all been sort of erased and I see that as very sad, because actually in the time of Lange’s photographs, there would have been a great value put on the contribution travellers made, the trades they contributed to communities, and that is now gone. Again this is tied into technology and progressions. Their trades have died and in the world of consumerism, you’re just an economic unit. They don’t have a value. And I think that’s something from the photographs until now that I can see is not necessarily something that’s similar. It’s something that really fallen apart. I also think it’s hard to make the comparison, because now we have a lot more different nationalities living in Ireland. And this is probably something that may not have been, the people of Ireland when these photos were taken. That wouldn’t have been a very dominant issues, whereas now it’s a very dominant issue that we have to share space with people who are not essentially Irish. Of course I see that as a great positive for Ireland, because I think it enriches Ireland. But it’s not something that probably, well I saying that without thinking about it very clearly. I’m not thinking about the history of Ireland, and the colonizing of Ireland. So we probably always had to share our space. Bu at the same time, not to the same level.

Interview Date: Tuesday 2nd January 2016
Subject: Ann O’ Donnell
**Lange Photographs referenced:** Portrait of Michael Kenneally and his mother, Local Postman, Woman at the door of O’Halloran’s house.

1. **What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?**
   Images of toys I had as a child. Images of the fields in front of the house which we always called the lawn, but was really a field, and the cattle on it. That was always there. The farming implements. The old car which really was essential to get out of the village to towns, until you were able to cycle and then you cycled. Yes, and then the churns, having cows meant having milk and butter and selling it.

2. **Why are these images important to you?**
   That was our life as children. We were fully involved in that life and we had to help, but we didn’t really have play stations, computers, toys. We had books, we weren’t that interested in reading for a long time. But the working life of the land was what we spent our days doing really and helping, and being useless.

3. **What memories do they evoke?**
   The usual I suppose from looking back in my seventies. It always seemed to be fine and we had great fun. Yes, we did help, we did work, but we had really great fun, and all the neighbouring children would gather when there was an event. Either cutting hay or turning hay. The same with the corn, even churning butter. Because neighbours would get a bit, need a bit. Good memories.

4. **Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?**
   It certainly triggers the memory, so yes I suppose it supports the memory. You don’t remember everything until you suddenly see something. It triggers so therefore it supports. I think it helps ground us as we get older. And perhaps pass on what we think is important, maybe, to the next generation. But it’s their chance, whether they think it’s important or not.

5. **What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?**
   Looking at the old sewing machine my mother made all our clothes on. She made my dresses and made coats. She made my brothers trousers and did a lot of knitting. The churns as I say, they mad butter which was sold. That paid the household bills. There’s and old iron there, that had a weight in it that you had to heat in the range. It would be red hot and you had to take it out with a long handled tongs and pop it into the iron to iron the shirts for the men for Sunday. Which was the only time they wore an ironed shirt really. Yes, it’s mostly things that I selected to photograph. I’ve only got one brother because my father died when I was very young. Everybody else of my years, they’re just not here anymore. Well I’m turned seventy, so a lot of them have gone. They emigrated and some of them died. When I look at the older family photographs, it’s what we were doing, like playing with cats or dolls. That was a neighbour there, I think it was Christie Mullins. We would play for hours with simple things like that, and the dolls prams will be thereabouts. That was my mother. There’s an old kettle there that sat on top of the range and was boiling all day.

6. **Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for you?**
   There was one of the ladies, where she’s looking out the door about to leave. And there’s one of the postman. He was so important. Our postman used to cycle from Tubber Post Office to us here and he brought a daily paper to the house. He also brought news. And the other thing he brought, which he wasn’t expected to bring but did...The women locally would order day old chicks from hatcheries some place, we always thought it was the midlands or Dublin. They would come down on the train, the night train. I think it was into Ennis they used to come and from Ennis up to Tubber. He would always be asked to bring them, and this box would come with perhaps a hundred day old chicks in it. It was aerated, there were little holes in it. The chicks had never been fed or watered, but apparently the fact is when they hatched out, they had enough food in them, from the egg to sustain them for the journey. You would always lose some, but he would bring them, and on that carrier tied with binder twine. He’d come and say, I’ve got chickens for you Mrs Bring them in, warm them up! He was involved, he’d want to know if you’d lost some. As children we were involved in feeding them and one of the things was, mashed up egg, and very fine pinhead oatmeal and a drink obviously. But you had to drop their beaks into the drink because they didn’t know how to drink, because they didn’t have a parent to copy. But that was a very strong memory attached to that photograph. Another one there, the cake. The pride in backing a
There’s one - two girls, Catherin and Ann O’ Halloran in front of the kitchen dresser. Those fancy jugs were actually what they called jam mugs. When jam was sold at that time you bought those and they were full of preserved jam, and then you had the jug afterwards. They all evoke.

The hands of Eleanor O’ Halloran, born in 1871. She’s obviously a very old lady, but the hands are quite big for lady’s hands, but it’s purely from hard work. If you exercise and work your hands a lot they get big.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still exist within the local context?
Well we cut the hay, ok, it’s highly mechanised but there’s still the same panic about getting the hay cut, while the weather is holding as they say. While it’s not raining. And then ok, it can be bales the next day, whereas it was a longer more physical process when I was younger, but there’s still that almost fever. And the women here call it madness, about getting the silage done. That is there still. The cattle go out to the mart. They used to go out to the fair, we used to walk them. I remember my brother very young about eight, walking the cows to the fair in Gort. We used to have somebody work for us because my father had died. They would go out in front and stand in roads that led off the main road. I remember going as far as Kilmacduagh with my mother. And then the road was straight to Gort. You’d start out about two to four in the morning, depending on the start time at the fair. You’d walk as far as Kilmacduagh. It was judged to be four miles and people would say a nice steady walk, three miles in an hour. But of course you wouldn’t. But you’d be so tired and you turned around and came back, because you had stock at home. You had cows that needed milking. You had an hour in bed and turned around and did that. But I never felt it was hard work. No, you were in company with others doing it. You were all feeling tired and you knew you’d get something if the cattle sold at fair, you’d get something new out of it. Bribery.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
It’s important because without the photograph, the memory doesn’t always come. Or perhaps the memory has gone, like how we did things, the method and the helping one another. It’s gone, and when you see a photograph of people getting together around hay and making what they called small trams and then cocks, you knew they were all helping each other as neighbours. I think that we forget because it no longer happens. It’s superseded by the bales.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes together nowadays?
There is here on our farm. My brother has quite a lot of land and cattle, and he’s in his mid-seventies so he can’t possibly do it all. So we have a cousin who’s about three miles away. Today cattle breeds have changed and you can’t really go in amongst cattle on your own anymore, because they can attack you. They can turn on you, so you always have somebody even if it’s just outside the pen or the shed. If you have to move cattle, he will always go for Martin and Martin will come for him. All the neighbours will help if you have emergencies where cows start to calf outdoors, and the weather is bad and they’re in trouble. So you need help to get them in. And we have tractors, but you still need people. You need people watching to ensure there’s no accident about to happen. If somebody’s there they can make a phone call. In this part of the world yes the do help each other. They also argue with each other, but that’s fair exchange isn’t it?

9. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
It’s changed. I can only talk about this area and it has changed enormously. But women still are stressed, like they were then – worried or anxious about the men working as many hours as possible in a day, with machinery today, to try to get the silage done, to try and get it in. And if they have to do more than one cut of silage, which they do. They’ve got it twice in the growing season which is a problem. The other thing of course is the prices of property. If you get married and build your own house, most women have to go out to work. And they would have done the farming support as well. And if they have children, they’re responsible for them. You can’t have the man, if he’s farming on a tractor – children shouldn’t be there on a tractor. I know they are, but they shouldn’t be, it’s too dangerous.

10. Are there any constant things that remain in the daily life on the land for women in Co. Clare?
I don’t know any women now who work on the land, like my mother was the main worker on the land, because after my father died she decided she was going to continue farming. I remember
my mother learning to drive a tractor at sixty, in order to help with this terrible rush of getting the hay in. I don’t know of any women who get that involved. There was only her who got that involved then, perhaps. Every wife of a farmer is involved, because it’s a stressful time in farming and that alone, just the stress of it, they have to deal with, and they do what they can. They do the paperwork, and its enormous now. The chaps tend to avoid that, so it falls on the women completely. By and large the women do it. That’s difficult, but if they’re born on a farm and if they’ve grown up with it, it comes a bit easier. But very often they’re not from farming backgrounds and it’s a big job, multi-faceted, and you don’t have time to do it well sometimes. It’s like putting out bushfires.

Extract from earlier interview

My mother was a very strong character, a slight woman but very strong. Very bossy, but kind when people were in trouble, like deaths and illness or accidents. She was very good with stock and had a lovely herd of Galway ewe’s which she would lamb herself in the Spring. She had cattle and we had one person, a cousin who lived in and worked, and had to be paid every week which she often found a strain. But her one thing when I was growing up was that my brother was going to do the land, but I was going to get away and have a better life, than the land demands of you. She was about thirty-seven when she became a widow. She married when she was thirty-three and my father was fifty. She never had any intention of marrying again, she had her life there. My mother would have stock to sell, but women weren’t allowed, it was a tradition. As with Irish folklore there’s very little written down, it’s all word of mouth. Normally women had family, brothers or very often if it was a young widow her father would do the trading for her. They were just not allowed to trade, in anything. But my mother was well able to cope. She was very quick and had cuteness about trading, through sheer necessity. She died in hospital at eighty-one and had made a good living. I was sent to Seamount, the boarders. Strange to say my brother would have loved to just gone out into the world. He would have loved to do engineering. All I wanted to do, and this is why I’m back here now, is stay. I never wanted to leave. But even though she was a woman running the farm, she would have never thought of handing it onto me, and letting my brother go to school. She always said, it was no work for a woman. It was too hard. But you see it was all hard, physical work then. Today any woman can drive a any machine as well as a man. My mother never thought of marrying again. She liked her land, and once she got the hang of it she really enjoyed managing it.

Interview Date: Sunday 10th January 2016
Subject: Colm Mac Lochlainn
Lange Photographs referenced: Boy on bicycle.

1. What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?

I wanted to photograph gates for a long time, but I’d never had a proper excuse. When Des said there was a photographic project going on I thought great, but at the time as well I think I had just found the latch for the gate outside. I’d taken not of lots of gates around the place because I think they’re beautiful. I know the reaction I got when I said I was going to photograph gates, the first time. Nobody seemed to know what it was about at all, but I really love these things. I really love old iron things, I think I’ve got iron in my blood. My family, my ancestors were iron workers and Mc Gloughlin on had a foundry in Dublin. They actually collaborated with the Pearses at the turn of the 20th century, doing churches. Those Mc Gloughlin built the railings outside Dublin’s Mansion House for instance. And various other things. The works were still going in Inchicore, maybe even still going for all I know. They’d be distant cousins of mine now, if they’re still operating. Our family history is well documented. We all know where we came from, and who our ancestors are, our grandfathers and who our great grandfathers were. My father’s father worked for that company. When I was maybe fifteen, I was on a student exchange with a student from France who father oddly enough worked in iron as well. Jean-Michel, and I went to visit the Mc Gloughlins family iron works in Inchicore when I was about fifteen. But I used to spend all my time when I was on holidays in the Gaeltacht in the blacksmiths forge, in Ballingarey. The blacksmith used to take us, because my Irish was fluent anyway, so I wasn’t learning very much in class. The blacksmith would say, ‘suigh sios ansin, na habair tada’, and I’d sit there all morning long, watching the farmers bringing their horses in to be shod. Big hooves like dinner plates. Chatting about what was going on and everything else. So, I have something in me anyway, that has an affinity with ironworks.
2. Why are these images important to you?
This is what I was thinking about. It makes me think about forges, about how they work, and hammering, and sparks and steam and smells. The smell of the hot iron, the smell of singed hoof will stay with me forever.

3. What memories do they evoke?
Also the poem that I wrote, I was trying to think of some way of writing prose to try and encapsulate what the project for me was about. But that's the way it came out. It just sort of popped out in a twenty-minute think. I think I was driving along one day and I said to Hilda, I said, tractor bruised. And she said “what?” And I said tractor bruised. That’s my poem, what it’s about, gates bashed and bent. It hangs on that.

4. Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?
Certainly, because we got out Dorothea Lange’s book and when I saw those first, which was probably for the first time in about 2001, I found them very evocative. I thought just from looking at the photos, that I understood more about where I was, because we’d moved down from Dublin. But I’ve always been interested in photographs. I’ve always been interested in photography. I've no great expertise in black and white photography. I had to have colour film before I could start to really make sense of photographs. But I loved black and white, I love black and white photographs. My father was into photography. I used to work for Gael Linn, and worked with Slógadh. The first photographer that I met working with Slógadh was Bill Doyle. I’ve got photos by Bill Doyle and a book of photographs by him. My father has one of his photographs on the wall in the living room so, yeah, photographs are very very evocative. Beautiful, moving, a good photograph is like a painting for evoking feelings.

5. What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?
I don’t think it works like that. I think it’s light. I think I just go for the light. I remember walking into a gallery in Saville, of Impressionist painters. And big, ornate Impressionist pieces hanging on the wall. Somewhere around the middle of the gallery, this tiny red rectangle. I saw it from the door, and I made a bee line straight for it. It was a little, small print – painting, called ‘Red Church in the Middle of the Forest’. Really just a little red rectangle – Kandinsky. I wanted to steal it. Light is what does it for me, skilful use of light. Dorothea Lange’s prints, where I know that she’s bringing out more light on faces, and light on hands, and the rest can be a bit indistinct. But that's what evokes the feelings. It’s the one of light and of course her immaculate focus. Aspirational stuff.

6. Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for you?
This one at Tubber Fair. That’s mighty. We always took our holidays in very rural places when I was a child. You might be up in the mountains in a little cottage that just had bottled gas for light and heat and cooking. Or sometimes just turf for heating. So I did encounter a lot of these farmers and milking and that kind of stuff. These boys, these boys, they kind of remind me of my childhood. We were better off than these people, but my own recollection of the ’50’s now, I wouldn’t go back there for toffee, or anything! Everybody doesn’t agree with me you know. Hilda grew up the same time as me, she doesn’t have….. but I thought….I don’t think any real proper light entered into my life until I heard the Beatles, which was about ’62-’63. So when I look back….. it probably wasn’t all grey. The evocative ones? There’s one now. The shoemakers there, I can smell that. And boys on bicycles. The thatcher’s, but I’m looking for a photo of… I always find graveyards very evocative places and you can always learn a lot by walking around a graveyard looking at gravestones. That’s almost the same as Caisleán Maol down the road from us in Kilkeedy, Kilkeedy Castle as it’s called. This is at the creamery, or the co-op. These fly boys. They’re the ones the guards were looking out for at the dances I bet you. They’re smarter than the average person wouldn’t you say? Do you know these people? And the photograph about the O’Halloran’s at Mt. Callan. It’s because he’s got his back to the camera. It’s like looking back and looking forward at the same time. You can get a sense of time going forward and also time going back, because you’ve got the three looking directly at the camera. One boy half turned around. Whatever’s going on back there. There’s something happening in the background. I don’t know what. I was talking about it the other night and thought maybe an animal, or some boy, or something maybe. The grandmother was in the house and maybe she called or something. The three girls are focussed on what’s in front of them, and the boys turned around. You know it’s another thing that every picture tells a story. If you’re taking pictures, make them tell a story, or have a story that can be
inferred from the picture. And this farmer milking his cow out in the field – it must have been a very good cow! But I love this book.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still exist within the local context?
There’s a bit of it. There’s some people who don’t want to let go of the past. There are farmers around who may have had to look after parents for years and years and years. And by the time their mother or father would pass away, they’re too old to get married. Although they might not say it to themselves, they probably live very lonely lives. You know you don’t see these people, that’s the thing. The odd time you might meet them in the shop. Or at a funeral for instance. You’ll see these people, sometimes you see them at the Cooley Collins festival. Some of these boys down from Slieve Aughy, and places that they live. And you see them around town going into sessions and things. There not many of them really, because people have left the land. Other people buy the land or get use of the land. They’re working away and the youngsters that are working as farmers now, many of them are qualified in agricultural science. There’s advice for Tagasc. There’s all sorts of back-up and assistance going on now that wasn’t before and there’s not many people living that hard life really anymore. Although when we moved here first, you know, we would see the lads that you used to see more often, and you don’t see so much – gabardine coats tied with baler twine, cycling bicycles. Hardy men. This was 2001-02. There are still a few of them about, but fewer and fewer as the years go by. It used to be almost like a uniform. You can see it in some of Dorothea’s photographs, which remind you of those people who’ve clung onto the old ways, until perhaps they passed away themselves.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
Oh for sure, because in a way I bought the book because it reminded me of the place where I am now. What it used to be like. But doing this project and meeting people who actually know people, or who could even be related to people who are in these photographs. It makes it very personal, because on one level I was looking at it as, here’s this Dubliner – this Johnny come lately type landing into rural County Clare. And I didn’t know any of the people at all. I didn’t really even think that I would have a connection with them. So I was looking at them sort of objectively, as an outsider. But when you meet people who can tell you, oh such and such a person lives there, in Boston, and they’re here, and his brother in law, or his son in law, you know – related to people who are in the photographs, and can tell you about the real individuals…that was a revelation to me. And it also makes the whole thing very immediate, very relevant, and very contemporary.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes together nowadays?
I think there are other members of the group who can answer that question much better than I could.

10. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
A lot of young women can get employment in Ireland and stay at home, and they’re far better educated. Opportunities for women in rural Ireland are way, way better than those days. That’s all those O’Halloran girls could do really, was emigrate. The chances are they would have been going into domestic service in America. Whereas nowadays if our young women emigrate, they go to high powered jobs. And it’s a choice. They don’t all go to the same place. They go to London, Australis, New Zealand, all sorts of places. Their choice is way better. Also they’re far more independent now than they used to be. The people also come back.

11. Are there any constant things that remain in the daily life on the land for women in Co. Clare?
I think there are other members of the group who can answer that question much better than I could.

Interview Date: Sunday 10th January 2016
Subject: Michael O’ Donohue
Lange Photographs referenced: Those related to farming life.
1. What images have you chosen or taken in response to this project?
Images of the stonewalls on my farm, walls that are there for over two hundred years. They're
only on the limestone plateau because we moved all the walls on the grazing area before that.

2. Why are these images important to you?
Well you see they represent a sense of history and some things we have lost. In the old days our
farm would have had a massive amount of walls, but in the spirit of increasing farm output, they
were removed from the arable areas in the 1970's.

3. What memories do they evoke?
The memories of the walls in the fields bring back hardship, raising stones and stock, bushes and
briars growing beside them. Now on the limestone pavement there isn't sufficient soil for them to
grow, and they're nice to look at, and not difficult to maintain.

4. Do you think the photograph can operate or support memory, individual or collective?
A photography is excellent to bring back memories because, I would just make the example, in
this particular place we hold an annual party for the old people. Only last week, or a few weeks
ago somebody passed away and they asked me I would have a photograph for their mortuary
card, because the family didn’t have any. For instance, one of those there, that woman died last
week, and the family hadn't any image of that particular person.

5. What exactly is it in the photograph which triggers memory?
To me photographs are important twenty to thirty years after they are taken. The older they are
the more valuable they are, or more interesting anyway.

6. Which images from Lange do you most relate to or which evoke a sense of memory for
you?
Well I remember seeing them, I don’t remember when they were taken, because they were taken
about 1950. While I possibly was at the fair in Tubber that day when Lange passed through. I
wouldn't have been one of the attractions there, she was concentrating on older people. I would
have been twelve years old at the time, so a sightseer at the fair rather than an active person. I
was born in 1939, and have been here every year since. Her images bring back memories of the
type of clothes, the vests the farmers wore at the fairs, and the inadequacy of those clothes for
the weather. Heavy cold coats with no rainproof garments or things like that. Also pictures of
people walking to mass, which were taken back near Inagh. The numbers that were going to mass
back then, and how it has changed in a short lifetime.

7. What do you think might be the equivalent of that image today, does the subject still
exist within the local context?
Very little is the same today. The biggest example is the population that was there then. It has
really disappeared in those areas since. People have emigrated. Our population in this area is
now about four hundred. We have figures going back to four thousand in 1880. There were nine
hundred in 1961. A lot of people have moved into the area that are not from here, but if it were
not for them, then the population would be much worse. The house where I was born, my father
and my grandfather and my great-grandfather lived there. I’m not too sure if my great-grandfather
was born there, but he definitely lived there. At the time farmers were tenants, and they moved
around. We located some remnants of our family in other areas. One of the anomalies is what
happened to our name. In the 1950’s when there was a revival of the Irish, the O’ was re
-introduced to O’ Donohue, whereas in all the official documents it would still be Donohue. And all
the graveyards and gravestone names are Donohue. I think it was a pity that the name changed,
I’d have preferred if it hadn’t, but it’s built in now and there isn’t much you can do. It came from
the Irish, but we have census records of 1855 and 1824 and the name that was used Donohue.

8. Do you think Lange’s work is important in preserving local collective memory?
Yes.

9. Is there anything left of the collective ritual of farming life, where community comes
together nowadays?
Not so much anymore. The biggest change, looking at Lange’s work is of course manual labour,
it has almost disappeared. Machinery and electronics have changed the type of farming were
doing completely. The income of a farmer was based on the amount of labour that was used in
those days, because their best paying crops were either market garden, sugar beet, or corn. When machinery wasn’t as advanced, it was manual labour that produced most of those. And of course horses were the most important. The harvesting was by far the most important thing. It was the test of your strength, your income and your ability to farm within the year. The amount of food you could produce at harvest time, which would feed livestock also. The people were absolutely dependent on it. Money wasn’t in as much use every day as it is nowadays. Income only came in once or twice a year and most bills had to be paid of farms, at the time of harvesting. Farmers didn’t use banks to such an extent. At least small to medium sized farms. They depended on merchant credit, and on getting their fertilizer and seeds early in the year. They would be paying for it at the time of the sales, so a bad harvest was a bad year.

10. Do you think life for women in Ireland has changed much since Lange’s depiction, if so how?
The life of women has improved immensely, I mean, the type of work that ladies did in the past. It was unbelievable. They spent hours and hours at manual work. They were involved in everything that the farmer did, but they were full-time housekeepers and full-time child minders. But they still continued to work on the farm. It wasn’t unusual to see the women milking cows, with a baby in a pen, a cot, that time, probably a tea chest. The type of work women did, and they accepted it as normal…they carried water from the wells, they boiled and they cooked for the people and for farm animals. At harvesting time, when people were out working in the fields, they brought their meals to the field. They also participated in the work being done in the field and when the big event of the year came, the threshing on farms, up to twenty men would have to be fed. As well, the women would have to mind the children and look after the older people. A remarkable thing that has changed immensely is generations. Mostly at that time, the older people lived in the house until they died, and the young woman who was looking after her kids and her mother-in-law, or her father as the case may be, in poor accommodation. Of course the introduction of electricity in the late 50’s was the biggest boon that came to rural Ireland. But in particular for women. Before that everything was drudgery. I mean clothes would be hand washed, and had to be ironed with an iron that was heated in the fireplace. But the remarkable thing in my memory is how people dressed so well, and went out so neatly. In the rural areas everyone had what was called a Sunday suit, only worn on those occasions. But they went to mass and other things, far better than nowadays. For a man to be seen in the church without a collar and tie would be deemed terrible. It evolved slowly. Even at the moment if you just look at the political situation you see ministers and Taoiseach’s touring the country, and they’re not even wearing a collar and a tie. I would think it changed with the advent of television. They saw what was happening. Sure everybody wore a tie and a hat, you weren’t dressed without it. Equally the ladies of course had their own style. They were more careful I’d say that time than they are in how they dress today.

11. Are there any constant things that remain in the daily life on the land for women in Co. Clare?
Not answered.
Extracts from the field notes of Dorothea Lange in Ireland

On Southern Island
Sept 5th 1954

Did you know
that Over
The Raincoat
The Telephone book
The overcoat drying out The rain
The hedgerows no trees
The thatched houses
The flowers
Cheerful, open people
warm and loving
all look like cousin's
red cheeks and hair
Sound of the cart around the corner

From a family of four
three must go
and leave a living for one
Much is consumed here
More than any other country
No wash lines
No dust
No erosion
No signs
No coffee
No litter
No decay or neglect
except the people
Clear and tended
the roads are never dry
They glide like birds
single and in groups
over the roads.

Emigration is part
of the Irish way of life
Three out of four
One out of three boys and girls
will be living outside of Ireland
It's normal to get on the ship
They have to take
to the emigrant ship

Ireland before the famine
There's no palpable urgency.
For I believe
I've got things going

Congregations
The church
The creamery
The fair

Emigration
Congregations
Symbols
The temperament
and the weather
The head of the countryman
who is everywhere in the world

Sept 14th - Tuesday

Get fair schedule
Wylde
Mail film and write letter
Get camera and typewriter
Find out about castles
The old old lady

The co-op creamery
The fair at Tulla
The search for emigrant

These roofs
The temperament
is like the weather
Find the owner
of Bunratty Castle
Major Russell

A progression
A panorama

The welcoming hand
On that family

Of her twenty-four,
where are they?
Who will have the girls in Mass?
Address in Mass
Sailing of the ship
Where to go to church?
Who gets the farm?
Tom
Who saw the passage?
The aunts
Who will meet in NY?
Two aunts
How long lived in this house?
This family
Who else is going?
Maybe John
Maybe Ann
How many in the family - six?
The mud in the road
Does marriage figure?

The fire and the pot
The bread
and the hearth
and the head
The mother
and the grandmother
and the hearth
The four walls
including the father
The table
The display board
and all members of the family
in same position
The boy at the door

Shoot all three - one Hasselblad
Use Contax and Biogen
Use flash bounced and one set

The work in the haggard
What one sees from the door
What one sees as work goes on
Work in the haggard
Work in the fields
And the fields
The surrounding country

A farm
The hearth
The four walls of a room,
one family
What one sees from the door
The work of the mother
The work of the father
The work of the children
The next house

Sept 8th - Saturday Ennis
Population 7000
Drapers 48
Pubs, as nearly as these fellows could count
65
Rent £24
Rates £42 per annum
Live in the shop or behind
or alone
up the wandering stair

Sept 23rd - Thursday

In the lane
When the floods came
it flooded
So they put in a government relief scheme
To straighten it out and put in
dry masonry
One hen and a turnip for wages

The hand in welcome
The hand in parting
The Dorothea Lange Archives of The Oakland Museum of California.
First selection of 40 images made during research visit in July 2015
(please note, images taken as snapshots from contact sheets).
Ten were finally purchased to include in the final exhibition.
Exhibition Materials Phase III

Interim Exhibition of first results from Phase III, Glór Ennis, April 2016.
Installation of interim exhibition, Glór Ennis, April 2016, including selected collaborative pieces from fieldwork.
Final Exhibition at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, August – September 2016.
Culture Night 2016 at The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon, which included a joint presentation by both Gerry Mullin’s and myself on the topic of Photography, Place and Memory in Dorothea Lange’s Images of Clare.
Publicity poster for Culture Night 2016.

Culture Night 2016 @
The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon
Friday 16th September - 8:00pm

Photography, Memory & Place in Dorothea Lange’s images of Clare
Presentation by Gerry Mullins author of ‘Dorothea Lange’s Ireland’
and visual artist/researcher Martina Cleary

The Courthouse Gallery Ennistymon
Parliament St, Ennistimon, Co. Clare
(065) 707 1630
Tuesday – Saturday, 12 – 5pm
http://thecourthousegallery.com/
Additional Research Outputs for Phases I and II


Exhibition of the series *Postcards From A Life* at the Following exhibitions;

The work also received The Ideas Tap Award at Format 2015, www.ideastap.com/IdeasMag/all-articles/FORMAT-Festival-IdeasTap-award-winners


The Impressions Print Biennale 2015, Ireland, curated by David Ferry.

Louise Clements, curator of Format 2015, also brought the series to the Obscura Festival Georgia, the Tbilisi PhotoFestival and Just Another Phot Festival New Delhi, in 2015.

The following research papers were presented at the following events;


*Playing with The Evidence: Reconstituting the Photographic Trace as an Act of Intervention, Disruption, and Political Agency*, at the international Format 15 conference, Derby, April 2015https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54b116fcee4b047061238181d/t/5545eb04e4b03724d711363e/1430645508495/FORMAT+15+SPEAKER+TEXTS+AND+BIOS.pdf