



*Collected Memories,
Collecting Dust...*

An exhibition of lived experiences

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Jersey's Temps Passé is rapidly fading from our shared public experience.

Collected Memories, Collecting Dust visualizes narratives based around local traditions, agriculture and family life at a time when it could all be lost.

Tute rein se turne en déclin/ Tut cheit, tut muert, tut vait à fin.
All things to nothingness descend/ Everything falls, dies, comes to an end.

(Wace 1170 ll.65-66).

Mate i te tamaiti, he auru kowhau, mate i te matua te takere.

To lose a child is a leakage, to loose a parent is the bottom dropped out.

(Maori proverb).

This exhibition is dedicated to my father, Ken Thérin, and granny, Rosalie Thérin (née Le Lay) who both passed away in 2010.

I miss them daily.

Remembrance

The exhibition focuses on objects belonging to my late grandmother, Rosalie Thérin, late grandfather, Lawrence Thérin and late Father, Ken Thérin. For me, their possessions took on a whole new level of meaning when they passed away. Photographing them in the family home gave the images a domestic context¹, a further layer of narrative, and created an archive of memories from my teenage years.

The theme of memory is in every photograph. Whether the photograph was taken to show how things were (Tea cups) or arranged to highlight the specificity of each object (One for every occasion), the photographic lens works to ‘inhale the spectator and exhale memory’ (Langford 2007 p107). Moreover, the photographs

allude to lives lived. Minimal use of portraits and family snapshots throughout the series allows the viewer to insert their own histories and stories into the picture. We can imagine what is beyond the frame by seeing that which is contained within it.

‘Photographs help us to remember by prompting thoughts of the invisible. Going through a box of snapshots that correspond to my childhood. I see a snapshot of my mother, broadly smiling, standing under a Broadway marquee. *Where was I when you and Daddy went to New York? You stayed with your Grandmother.*

There are no pictures of my grandmother and I, sitting in her tiled sunroom (her winter garden), listening to the Saturday evening radio broadcast of the recitation of the rosary, but I remember’. (Langford 2007 p106).

¹As opposed to an archival/museum context



Whakapapa

Through recent reflection on my motivations for this project I have discovered that it is my Maori heritage and experiences that drew me to look at issues of local customs and family traditions. Family (whanau), ancestry (whakapapa), creating relationships between others (whanaungatanga), local knowledge (korero) and local customs (tikanga) are very important for Maori; and I have intuitively applied these values to my life in Jersey. By referencing family experiences of local history (Collection on blue formica) and claiming my link to this history genealogically (Proof and permit) I am locating my identity as Jerriais whilst using Maori value systems to do so.

‘Identity is changed by the journey; our subjectivity is re-composed... [it] is not to do with being but with becoming’.

(Sarup 1996 p6).

Resolution

On having conversations with others whilst taking these photographs and exhibiting them I am able to learn more about my family's history in Jersey, unlocking the stories that passed away with the objects owners. Although I can concoct my own stories from half remembered truths and mental images, it is the undiscovered stories held by others about my father and grandparents that I want to hear.

I spent 10 years living next to my grandmother. A coat closet connected our lounges with a door on either side. We would talk about what was on television, her raspberries and what she was having for lunch that day. I would find her outside weeding her tomatoes, picking beans and chopping

kindling. Everything I learnt about her was through these day-to-day encounters. Once, I had the opportunity to interview her about the German Occupation of Jersey. She brought down her ration cards, her identity card and a couple of old cans of Klim. I wrote a report on it for school. It was just another school project until she had passed away. Now she has gone, I wish I had kept those tapes and I had been bold enough to ask her more about her life as a young woman. Knowing she watched Emmerdale and Coronation Street religiously and liked roast beef best is a nullity. Stories about her as a person and her history are other people's memories. I hope these photographs will prompt them to share their memories with me.



Images

Front cover: Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *Collection on blue formica* (Detail) [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Page 1: Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *Tea cups* (Detail) [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Page 2: Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *Tea cups* (Detail) [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Page 3-4: Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *Proof and Permit* [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Page 5: Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *Collection on blue formica* (Detail) [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Page 6 (Top to bottom):

Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *One for every occasion (Cream leather)* (Detail) [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Thérin, R. (Artist). (2011). *One for every occasion (Ostrich)* [Photograph]. Edition of 3. Collection of the Artist.

Citations

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Sarup, M., (1996) *Identity, Culture and the Post Modern World*. 2nd Edition. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press.

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