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**Sydney College of the Arts**

The University of Sydney

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

2013

RESEARCH PAPER

**OF BEING AND BECOMING**

By

**Ling Yuen**

February 2013

## **Statement**

**This volume is presented as a record of the work undertaken for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney.**

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## **Abstract**

My Master of Fine Arts work titled *Of being and becoming* will be exhibited at the Sydney College of the Arts Graduate Exhibition in December 2012. The series explores mimesis in the re-staging of intergenerational family photographs. My methodology of re-enactment unearths submerged genealogical histories and measures the cultural distance travelled by intergenerational bodies. The photographs examine how cultural and familial narratives contribute profoundly to our sense of individual and collective identification. Combined with fragmented voice dialogue the installation fosters a dynamic exchange of personal memories and historic experiences. The work will be installed in two small rooms, the first containing ten large photographic prints selected from the re-staged images. The second room will exhibit 40 small photographs juxtaposing the original images with my re-enactments. The work's audio component consisting of overlapping voice dialogues will be installed over both rooms.

My Master of Fine Arts research paper investigates the concepts and issues explored in my practical work, in particular theories concerning identity and representation relating to photography and the visual vernacular. I also examine cultural analysis on contemporary ideas of race, hybridism and transculturation that are inherently informed by postcolonial and global momentums. Re-evaluating the image of the family and its accompanying social ideologies, my research explores the ways in which intergenerational memories and transcultural experiences potently inform our individual perspectives and cultural conceptions. Siting results from my visual practice and from interview data with my photographed subjects, my research concludes in articulating human experience as an intersection of historical fact and personal mythology. Located in between the real and the imagined, my research and practice explore the dynamic forces that transform our conception of contemporary identification.

*Man is what brings society into being.*

*The prognosis is in the hands of those who are willing to get rid of the worm-eaten roots of the structure.<sup>1</sup> – Franz Fanon*



**(Fig.1)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 16x11cm.

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 13.

This Master of Fine Arts dissertation aims to examine how visual culture, in particular the photographic, has profoundly contributed to the construction of contemporary identities. My academic research considers the ways that social perceptions are powerfully influenced by standardizing representations and photographic conventions, both of which are deeply imbedded with socio-political ideologies that form and shape our collective conception of cultural and historic experience. Concurrent to the themes central to my Master of Fine Arts practical work titled *Of being and becoming* (Fig.1), my dissertation interrogates the act of looking, heightened by the photographic gaze, as an act mediated by hierarchies of wealth, race and gender, that subsequently regulate the production of knowledge and the distribution of power. Furthermore, my combined theoretical and practical research investigates the role that photography continues to play in reinforcing historical discourses of cultural identification through pervading constructs of imperialism, colonialism, ethnography and anthropology.

My postgraduate research examines several contemporary works in which cultural identity is explored in order to demystify structures of institutional power and social domination. Through the deconstruction of photographic conventions, the art practices discussed in this paper effectively expose the relationship between visual representation and our inherited social conditioning that affect our current states of social conflict, class stratification, gender inequality and cultural erasure. The works analyzed employ photographs to challenge pictorial conventions and subvert representational sovereignties, re-examining the ways in which our prescribed ideologies control our production of self-meaning. The chapters that follow contemplate the theoretical framework that underpins my Master of Fine Arts research and practice, and employ contemporary photographic works by Simryn Gill, Mohini Chandra and Carrie Mae Weems to illustrate my conceptual concerns.

The first chapter analyzes postmodern issues of identity and representation through the examination of hybridism in Simryn Gill's series *A small town at the turn of the century* (Figs.3-5). In order to explore Gill's subversive use of masking and concealment, I reference Allan Sekula's writings on physiognomy and social profiling, in combination with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's examinations of faciality and subjectification. I also call on the writings of postcolonial cultural theorists Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha to interpret Gill's poignant negotiations of cross-cultural identification in our globalized era. Gill's series addresses new, transcultural modes of belonging and engages in dialogues of cultural and ethnographic deterritorialization, described succinctly by cultural theorists Ien Ang and Nikos Papastergiadis. Gill's lyrical portraits are hybrid expressions of multiplicity and illustrate shifting transformations in contemporary identification and self-recognition. The chapter concludes with a comparison of Gill's masked portraits to my re-embodied photographs, as both works decode and reimagine expressions of identity through examinations of photographic performance, mimesis and ritual.

The second chapter discusses Mohini Chandra's work *Album Pacifica* (Figs.8-11), employing Elizabeth Edwards's new postmodern perspectives in anthropology to illustrate Chandra's cross-disciplinary methodology. Through *Album Pacifica* Chandra demonstrates that it is not solely the photographic image that bears the burden of significance. Her photographic subversions emphasize that our social practices surrounding photographs are equally potent with cultural meaning. I employ the writings of cultural theorists Annette Kuhn and Marianne Hirsch to explore concepts of memory, 'postmemory'<sup>2</sup> and the familial that reverberate throughout *Album Pacifica's* transcultural and intergenerational dialogues. Benedict Anderson's analyses of diaspora and imagined communities are

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<sup>2</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

applied to contextualize the geographical and genealogical lines of communication drawn by Chandra's dialogues. Contemplating the deeply interconnected cultural associations that link the personal with the collective, I articulate correlations between Chandra's historical narratives in *Album Pacifica* and those unearthed through my re-enacted portraits in *Of being and becoming*.

The third chapter considers two works by Carrie Mae Weems, *Family Pictures and Stories* (Figs.15-17) and *From Here I saw what Happened and I Cried* (Figs.18-20), that potently infuse the photographic image with provocative textual and verbal accompaniments. Through her image/texts Weems effectively repositions our habitual relationship to photographic representations and profoundly challenges our conception of historical knowledge. In order to examine the relationships of power dissected throughout Weems's imagery, I employ Michel Foucault's theories concerning the disciplinary gaze and Edward Said's illuminations on the politics of difference. Jo Spence's reflections on the influence of socio-political ideologies on our everyday experience of photographs are applied to contextualize Weems's interrogation of visual histories as converse sites of collective belonging and cultural alienation. The writings of bell hooks and Franz Fanon are also discussed in relation to Weems's depictions of exile and the colonized psyche. I conclude the chapter with a brief analysis of data from interviews with my subjects that describe the family photograph as our principal record of genealogy, an evocative source of cultural transfer and a personal site of historic self-definition.

The fourth and final chapter reviews my Master of Fine Arts creative process from its early conception, to the development of a working methodology and through to the theoretical and artistic issues that were encountered during the work's execution. The chapter reviews the methodology of mimesis that I implement, neither as a visual trick nor as a

passive reproduction, but as an active interpretation towards the creation of alternate signification and new meaning. I describe my subject's genealogical embodiments through repetition of appearance, adoption of gesture and performance of photographic ritual. Through the process of re-enactment my participants demonstrate the ways in which we use family photographs to simultaneously reflect and project ideas about our own identification. The work illustrates that it is in our family's imagery, more so than any other, that we are most personally invested and in which we may witness a genealogy of likeness, the exchange of familial and cultural scripts and the transfiguration of the intergenerational body. Dispersed throughout the paper are annexes containing personal dialogues from interviews with my photographed participants. Similar to the overlapping voice narratives that are incorporated in the exhibited installation, these annexes offer subjective perspectives to the concepts investigated within the work.

The theoretical reflections and cultural concerns contemplated in this paper are directly inspired by my photographic installation *Of being and becoming*. In collaboration with my subjects I have unearthed submerged historical narratives that explore the critical role photographs play in the production of cultural meaning, the preservation of family heritage and the formation of personal identifications. Like that of Gill, Chandra and Weems, my work occupies the dynamic spaces of personal reflection, socio-historic critique and cultural production. My visual methodology utilizes the photograph's capacity to connect us to collective dialogues and incorporates individual narrative to introduce ideas of cultural and historical consciousness into the images. The prolific intersection of photographic pauses with verbal punctuations invites viewers into a landscape of subjective rediscovery - towards new understandings and transformed self-awareness.

“I was born here in Australia and when I was three my parents went back to Holland because my dad is Dutch and my mum is Indonesian. My mum had gone to Holland to go to university and she worked part time at the airport where she met my dad who was working there as well. Basically they fell in love, they got married, they had us. So I grew up in Holland and studied there but ever since I knew I was born in Australia I’ve wanted to come back. I came to Sydney in 2005, I think I had my quarter life crisis. I wasn’t happy in Holland at all. I applied for my Australian passport and just went. In Holland I was an architectural designer, I had five years experience but here in Sydney it doesn’t count if you have overseas experience, it has to be local. So my first job was as a fast food maker for a Dutch fast food shop in Darling Harbour. I did that for three months before I couldn’t handle it anymore.

My parents got divorced when I was quite young and my biological father wasn’t there for me, so everything I am today is because of my mum. Because she is mainly Indonesian that’s where I get most of my influences from, but I also see Dutch ways. I think I got the Dutch rudeness a bit in me but I don’t really care for the Dutch mentality. There’s this saying in Holland, “the man with the biggest mouth rules the world,” and that’s really how the Dutch are. I’m a bit more modest. I love the Australian way. I love how the Australians are very open and kind. Even though my English wasn’t so good it was quite easy to integrate. I think I identify myself more with Australians than with the Dutch or Indonesians.

Growing up in Holland there’s quite a lot of half Indonesian, half Dutch children because Indonesia was a colony of Holland for the longest time. There are a lot of influences in the Dutch culture of Indonesians and Dutch and their intermingling. Basically almost all of my friends were half

Indonesian, half Dutch and living the same as I and my brothers and sister were. Here in Australia they've never really heard of the mixture but in Holland it's very common. My mum spoke Indonesian to her brothers and sisters but she didn't teach us because they wanted to have conversations that were adults only.

This is an old black and white photo of my Indonesian grandparents. They must've been very young. They look quite happy and very modest, basically the Indonesian way I think. I don't know how they met but I do know that they weren't supposed to get married. Their families weren't happy that they were dating. It was kind of like Romeo and Juliet, one of them was below the other one's class, that's a big thing in Indonesia if you marry below your class. It's still very old fashioned but especially back in that day. Plus she was quite young, I'm not sure how old my grandpa was but my grandma was 15 when they ran away. I think they're either from Manado or Makassar Island and they ran away to Jakarta, that's where they married and had nine children.

The look in my grandpa's eyes is very familiar. It's nice and calm and it's warm. I think it's the same look my mum has when she's happy, when she's content. It's soothing I suppose for me. I can see my mum in his eyes. He passed away when my mum was around 18. My mum told me stories about him, he was very strict but fair and my mum only had good memories of him. So when I look at this photo I can relate to all the stories my mum told. He looks like a warm, gentle man. My grandma passed away this year, a couple of days before my daughter was born. She was buried on the day Olivia was born so my mum had grief, but she also had joy because she had another grandchild. So it was a bit of a battle in between feeling sad and feeling happy."

Hendru Lagerweij, Sydney 2012 (Fig.2)

Smoke Signals – Signs from the Borderlines

*The political dissident photographer however is involved in an apparent paradox, that of seeking to penetrate appearances with an instrument designed specifically to record appearances and appearances alone.<sup>3</sup> – Victor Burgin*



**(Fig.2)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 11x16cm.

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<sup>3</sup> Victor Burgin, "Art, Commonsense and Photography," *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photographs*, ed. Jessica Evans, 77 (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997).

In the photographic series *A small town at the turn of the century* (Figs.3-5), Simryn Gill employs the allegory of masquerade to explore the multi-layered nature of our social constructions of identity. Gill's sitters pose arrested in their familiar environments; in sitting rooms, backyards, with feet dangling in a swimming pool. Yet, the ubiquitous, everyday allure of Gill's photographs is disrupted by guise as her subject's don surreal masks and participate in her theater of the absurd. Gill's series denies us access to her subjects' faces, the site in which according to widespread Western belief, one's identity and character can be read. We cannot look deep into her sitters' eyes to *see into their soul*. With faces concealed, Gill's portraits subvert our conventionalized perceptions. Her image plane, rendered fertile with metaphor and meaning, engages us in active interpretation.

### **Rules of Recognition**

The tradition of physiognomy achieved widespread regard in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when complemented by burgeoning developments in photographic portraiture. The pseudo-scientific technique of classifying predominately facial attributes, with correlating intellectual capacities and behavioral traits, was applied with fervor to the disciplines of criminology and ethnography. Physiognomy promoted a corporeal ideal of normality based on the attributes of the western man. Divergence from these archetypal features symbolized corresponding moral and intellectual deviations and certainly the most obvious differentiations were racial. In his text *'The Body and the Archive,'* contemporary artist and theorist Allan Sekula closely examines how advancements in physiognomy proposed a means in which authorities could intensify their grip on social control. Sekula chronicles how institutional social and racial profiling became widely practiced, justified by these so-called *scientific* theories that subjectified physical appearance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October*, vol. 39 Winter (1986): 3-64.



**(Fig.3)** Simryn Gill, *A small town at the turn of the century*. 1999-2000.  
Type C print.

Adopted into ethnographic discourse, physiognomy provided a rational basis for the already existing philosophies of imperialist sovereignty over *inferior* races, who thus endured continued political subjugation and economic repression. Such a mindset provided developed nations with justification for legacies of domination, oppression and atrocities against humanity. Despite subsequent scientific discrediting, physiognomy's distinctions of racial signification remain embedded within our socio-political dichotomies of historical domination and cultural difference, for example, west and other, developed and developing, us and them, light and dark, good and evil, and so on. The influence of physiognomic thought is equally evident in contemporary photographic semiotics and particularly found in the genres of anthropology, ethnography, journalism and the documentary. Visual theorist Victor Burgin aptly describes this 'habitualisation' of thought and perception as leading "millions to collude in their own repression, and which allows the rich and privileged to continue to act selfishly."<sup>5</sup>

It is undeniable that when we view a photograph of a human subject we rely almost entirely on interpreting the face to formulate identification. Physiognomy not only appears to offer us unequivocal answers to questions of race and gender, but the face is widely believed to impart clues towards a person's inner character. Faces are said to be the marker of each of our individuality, however, when viewed from an ethnographic perspective, they become signifiers of our collective subordination. Gill's masked portraits remind us that our dependence on appearance is profoundly misleading and that our conventional readings of photographs are steeped in troubled imperialist ideologies. Gill's series shakes our photographic perceptions. Her methodology forces us to question the efficacy of our practices of identification and to reconsider the integrity of our cultural assumptions.

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<sup>5</sup> Burgin, "Art, Commonsense and Photography," 76.

Gill's work reference Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theories of subjectification, wherein the face has been socio-historically and politically over-codified. Gill's masks thus intervene in the conventional reading of her portraits. They serve to deterritorialize the face, freeing her subject's from their physiognomic prisons; from the 'black hole' of subjectification.<sup>6</sup> The series refuses our compulsive desire to colonize photographic representations with standardized and superficial meaning. This playful arbitration of the visual has a strange power over the conditioned viewer whose privileged act of looking is disrupted. Gill's anti-portraits invite the viewer to set aside their expectations of instant visual gratification and to abate their hasty desire to rationalize, classify and arbitrate. The work prompts the discarding of our conditioned, ethnographic gaze for a more critical consideration. Gill approaches her portraits as though they were intricate tableaux in which the viewer must actively decipher the rich and complex visual codes that populate the picture plane in order to extract its multilayered narratives and to negotiate various pathways towards meaning.

### **The Burden of Cultural Authenticity**

The writing of cultural theorist Ien Ang supports Gill's disruption to our habitual, ethnographic reception of photographs. Similar to Gill's transcultural background that encompasses Indian, Malaysian and Australian association, Ang is also affiliated with multiple spaces of belonging. Both Gill and Ang are representatives of the hybrid character of our contemporary culture; a mode of being that powerfully contradicts the historical and problematic categorization of cultural identification based on racial origins.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), 167–191.

<sup>7</sup> Ien Ang, preface to *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), viii.

Ang argues that in today's society, where much of the world's population has been drastically reconfigured and in which nations can no longer make claims to racial or cultural homogeneity, that it has become utterly meaningless to hold individuals up to cultural assumptions or ethnic stereotypes.<sup>8</sup> Ang grapples daily with how she is classified by others based entirely on her appearance. Her cultural authenticity is often challenged with some labeling her 'a fake Chinese' upon learning that she could not speak the language of her ancestral origins. Born in Indonesia, schooled in the Netherlands and now residing in Australia, Ang's identity continues to be interrogated by those keen to satiate their visual preconceptions. Ang points out that racial identifications are never chosen, but instead inherited or assigned. She argues that imposed ethnic *misidentifications* are not solely based in ignorance, but that much cultural stereotyping is derived from historical epistemologies of power and domination.<sup>9</sup> In the case of Gill's Asia, colonized people were regarded as repressive and subordinate. Today, Asian populations continue to be fetishized as servile and submissive. Through her anti-portraits, Gill removes her subjects from these all-encompassing politics of race to take a deeper look at the nuances of cross-cultural identification.

Postcolonial theorist Stuart Hall maintains that all people "speak from positions within the global distribution of power."<sup>10</sup> In *A small town at the turn of the century* Gill's visual voice reiterates Hall's belief that identity is not simply a matter of 'being' but of 'becoming,' not exclusively about 'where we came from,' instead, of 'what we might become.'<sup>11</sup> Gill's human

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 30-34, 54.

<sup>10</sup> Stuart Hall, "The Meaning of New Times," *New Times*, eds. Stuart Hall, Martin Jacques, 133 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Stuart Hall, "Culture Identity and Diaspora," *Identity: Community, Culture and Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford, 225 (London: Lawrence and Wishart: 1990).

stems that grow and ripen to bear fruit are, like her subjects and her own subjectivity, undergoing constant metamorphosis and regeneration.

### **Coveted Territory**

*A small town at the turn of the century* contains critical postcolonial narratives. Though the title of the work is ambiguous, Gill's choice of regional fruits such as durian and jackfruit as headdresses, provides suggestion of locality. The portraits are in fact taken in her childhood hometown of Port Dickson in Malaysia, strategically situated along the international shipping routes of the Malacca strait. Thus Gill's choice of masks resonates with multiple associations. On the surface they act as ciphers, disrupting the conventional flow of photographic reception, while on another level, they signify the legacy of colonial trade that has dominated the region.

Gill's choice of local fruits makes reference to the colonial history of Malaysia, specifically the occupation and industrialization of its land and the ascendancy and exploitation of its peoples. Colonial regimes viewed ethnic human existence as commodities and established class systems of racial identification based on economic contribution. In Malaysia indigenous populations were relegated to poor rural areas, Indian indentured laborers toiled on plantations and the Chinese in the mines. Gill's eloquent physiognomic concealments however, erase her sitters' markers of difference, replaced instead with the fruits of their colonial labors; as living, breathing commodities. Gill's series demonstrates how contemporary populations continue to grapple with the effects of colonization long after their nation has achieved independence. Like Gill's subjects, postcolonial individuals continue to negotiate their way through deeply rooted systems of socio-economic inequity and racial prejudices that have been instilled over generations.



**(Fig.4)** Simryn Gill, *A small town at the turn of the century*. 1999-2000.  
Type C print.

The series also speaks of cultural 'deterritorialization'<sup>12</sup> as described by contemporary theorist Nikos Papastergiadis. Gill's fluid portrayal of identities riding the tides of diaspora and influenced by the pervasive waves of globalization, destabilizes imperialist ideals of territorial purity. Gill re-imagines cultural associations that were once believed firmly bound to ideas of racial distinction, ethnic segregation and unchanging traditions. Her botanical subjects are not rooted in place, they are free to move both geographically and philosophically, occupying the multiple and fragmented landscapes of identity, culture and history.

### **Hybridism and the Divided Individual**

The origin of the word hybrid describes the offspring of animals or plants of mixed origins. In philology, the term distinguishes a word whose prefix or suffix is derived from one language and whose 'stem' originates from another.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, cultural hybridism characterizes individuals or groups who are formed from the comingling of two or more disparate cultures and traditions. A growing global phenomenon particularly in postcolonial cultures, hybridism operates 'in between' conventional conceptions of identity. Postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha explains that hybrid subjects who occupy this scarcely documented, cultural 'third space,'<sup>14</sup> have most often been unrecognized in political agendas and under-represented in the collective imaginary; their narratives duly absent from historical canons.<sup>15</sup> Gill's portraits examine the hybrid condition in order to offer multiple versions of community and belonging that do not subscribe to the insular promotion of a historically patriotic national image.

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<sup>12</sup> Nikos Papastergiadis, "And an Introduction to the Aesthetics of Deterritorialisation," *Art and Cultural Difference: Hybrid and Clusters, Art and Design Profile No 43*, ed. Nikos Papastergiadis, 6 (London: Academy Group Limited, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Sabne Mabardi, "Hybridity in Cultural Theory, Encounters of a Heterogeneous Kind," *The Creolization Reader; Studies in Mixed Identities and Cultures*, eds. Robin Cohen, Paola Toninato, 249 (New York and London: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 38.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

Stuart Hall explains hybridism through the consideration of 'routes,' with its projections and desires, against the unchanging and predetermined nature of 'roots.'<sup>16</sup> Hall's poignant homonym rings true to many individuals such as Gill and her subjects who come to inhabit multiple sites of culture, ethnicity and nationhood. Furthermore, Hall explains that hybridism does not simply bridge different cultures and traditions, but as a process, it motions to infuse and translate them to form new realities. In this light we can now recognize Gill's subjects quite literally as uprooted plants in the process of transformation, moving in an ethereal state 'in between' classification.

### **Nostalgia - *Just isn't what it used to be***

Gill is revisiting childhood spaces through her dreamlike imagery steeped in nostalgia. We perceive a strong sense of reimagining personal memories and of locating moments in the present to recreate narratives from the artist's past. Even so, Gill is wary of offering up her childhood small town to the fickle visual consumption of contemporary audiences. Acting as storyteller in her fiction of the faceless, we can recognize Gill's affection for her haunting figures, yet we are unnerved by their strangeness nonetheless. In *A small town at the turn of the century* Gill explores the poetics of the 'in between,'<sup>17</sup> drawing on the dynamic relationship between the past and the present, between the imagined and the real. Like Gill's unidentified figures, Ang explains that the individual in diaspora is 'temporally disembedded,'<sup>18</sup> their nostalgia displaced from the historical flow of time. In Gill's exhibition publication John Barrett-Leonard eloquently describes the series as connecting "to the ache of leaving and longing for home, and that irrecoverable moment of childhood filtered

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<sup>16</sup> Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Thousand Oaks, 1996), 4.

<sup>17</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 38.

<sup>18</sup> Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*, 45-54.

through a knowing, contemporary, gaze.”<sup>19</sup> Traversing the ebb and flow of historical tides, Gill returns to her childhood hometown to find herself in limbo, in a dream-like mythology, caught in between present day realities and her cherished remembrances of the past.

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<sup>19</sup> John Barrett-Lennard, *A small town at the turn of the century: Here and Now* (Perth: CDC Graphics, 2001), no page.



**(Fig.5)** Simryn Gill, *A small town at the turn of the century*. 1999-2000.  
Type C print.

## *Of being and becoming*

My personal relationship to a familial history of migration and diaspora that similarly found pause in a developing, colonial nation, equips me to access narratives in Gill's series through imaginings of my own. It is in Gill's innocuous multi-layering of cultural difference; the contrast of crude industry against idyllic nature, the sweeping spectrum of skin tones and the conspicuous stratifications of class and wealth, that enable me to draw upon my own historic and cultural remembrances. Yet it is the smallest details, such as the curving of bare feet (Fig.5), which reverberate and resound with the imaginative play of memories and association. In contemplation of Gill's images, I am able to interpret my own cultural narratives based on my historical constitution.

It is with this same spirit of affiliation that I undertake my series *Of being and becoming* (Fig.6). My work employs old family photographs as catalysts in the reconsideration of submerged historical narratives and engages both subject and viewer in a collective exchange of historical knowledge, personal memory and cultural experience. Through selecting and re-staging old family photographs, my sitters are presented with the occasion to explore cross-generational identifications and uncover in them new personal associations. While each of my re-staged photographs are intimate depictions of a unique familial history, the narratives that are revealed become an intrinsic part of the fabric in which we collectively weave the social and cultural dialogues of human experience.

*Of being and becoming* explores how intergenerational photographs are capable of revealing to us aspects of our personal identity. Furthermore the series investigates the ways in which we use photographs to formulate, record and transmit ideas about our self-knowledge. Just as Gill's subjects employ masks to signify our socially coded and ideologically constructed relationship to identity, my subjects adopt the ruse of personification in

order to emphasize the fragmented and assumed nature of our identifications. Like Gill's masked characters, my subjects embrace the inherent artificiality of photographic representations by partaking in the project's visual re-embodiments and contemplative role-play. Their photographic performances emphasize the ways in which we all move fluidly in between multiple sites of identification that fracture and recur throughout our lifetimes.

My re-enacted portraits explore the nuances of personal identification measured by increments of cultural transformations and genealogical change. The act of mimesis and subsequent temporal juxtapositions illustrate each individual's constant negotiation between genetic resilience and intergenerational acculturation. On a journey through familial memory my subjects uncover the roots and branches of their historical and cultural fragmentation, arriving at new perspectives of past events and at an augmented understanding of how their multifarious identifications have come into being.

Gill's anti-portraits deny the face as a site of identification. The viewer must instead decipher the network of personal signifiers and cultural metaphors that envelope her sitters. Similarly, *Of being and becoming* takes an unconventional approach to engaging in discussions of identity construction and self-projection. My subjects present us with their bodies arrested in the postures and trappings of a genealogical ancestor. They interact with the camera inviting the viewer to partake in the theatrics of their historical morphology. Through explorations of their own family photographs my subjects are able to undo the ethnographic gaze that conditions our ways of seeing and in doing so, deconstruct restrictive social ideologies of racial signification.



**(Fig.6)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 11x16cm.

Equipped with intimate familial knowledge and profound personal implication, my subjects dismantle the classificatory associations and superficial stereotypes that typify most photographic readings. Delving beneath the surface and unhindered by ethnographic assumptions, the series isolates interpersonal narratives that evoke intimate dialogues about cultural history.

The methodology of re-staging family photographs situates my images in a curious position in between historical document and contemporary construct. This alternate space provides the imaginative terrain in which past and present interact and the relationship between reality and its representation can be rearticulated. Through mimicry and collaborative discovery my subjects and I are able to step inside and explore the historical record, infusing the archival image with new relevance and new life. My mimicked portraits obscure traditional modes of photographic representation and move to disassemble and intertwine conventionalized visual rhetoric.

Like Gill's *A small town at the turn of the century* my series explores new systems of reference that respond to the challenges of defining and depicting transcultural identities in increasingly globalized times. The work rejects ideas of historical linearity and socio-cultural absolutes to present contemporary subjectivities that are marked by constant renegotiation. My genealogical re-enactments illustrate geographic and cultural deterritorialization, as its historical dialogues move along axes between Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, Chile, The United States of America, Canada, Spain, England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Holland, Italy, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia, Morocco and Ethiopia; retracing the postcolonial and transnational routes that we have come to inhabit as hybrid individuals in an era of global transformation. Similar to the anthropologically infused work *Album*

*Pacifica* by Mohini Chandra that will be discussed in the following chapter, *Of being and becoming* examines the relationship between private narratives and collective cultural understandings in order to present each of its voices as democratic, significant and central to the historic account.

“That’s something that I struggle with, I feel a little bit displaced actually. I don’t feel like Fiji is my home, even though it’s where I was born and a lot of my family are still there. I moved to Australia when I was six so I hadn’t really formed strong relationships. Australia, I feel like is becoming home, but something’s missing over here, though this is the closest I guess. I went to a school in Liverpool and there were lots of different cultures, migrant families, second-generation migrant families, lots of Australians as well. There were definitely conflicts between me and my parents because they grew up with a very different culture to what we were growing up with. I did find it quite hard. I moved to Surry Hills when I was 24. I moved out of home which was a big deal and that’s a cultural thing that my parents had to get over. My father was fine I think, but my mum I guess found it hard. She told most of my relatives and she was probably telling herself, that I was house sitting, but I’d actually moved out, officially.

My parents are Indian and they were both born in Fiji. Their parents were born in Fiji and I think maybe my great-grandparents migrated from India, South India is as much as I know. My parents speak Hindi but my grandparents speak Tamil and Telugu and my parent’s, their marriage was arranged. My mum was 17 and I think my father was 30 so there’s a big age gap there. I don’t think she knew how old he was when she met him and I don’t think he made a point of it either. Their marriage lasted 20 years and they are blissfully separated now.

So this photo is probably taken in the early 1970s. It’s of my Aunty Maya and another aunty. Maya was probably around 15, she was very sick and she died a few years after. The photo is taken in a photographer’s studio in town after Maya had a doctor’s appointment. My other aunty is wearing a sari and she looks very glamorous. I have four aunts and two uncles and

I'm hoping the reason why the other siblings aren't in the shot is because they're at school, but they may not be. I think all of my mum's sisters never aspired to have a job because that wasn't even a choice, they were just going to get hitched, so they only completed year eight or year nine. I haven't ever asked my mum what she wanted to do when she was in high school because it wasn't about that. It was a very uniform story that they were all meant to have.

This photograph means a lot to me because it's the only photo I have of my Auntie Maya. She passed away before I was born, I never knew her. This is one of the oldest photos we have actually. I guess I've always fantasized about who she was. I made her out to be a really cool aunty because she wasn't there and I was allowed to use my imagination and paint a whole canvas of what Maya was like, which was probably very different to what she actually was like. So in my mind, she was a little bit independent. I like that she was wearing pants and not a sari. My mum has told me struggle stories about Maya, she always said that Maya was very beautiful and that she died because of diabetes, that is pretty much all I know. I wish I could know what they were thinking about just as the photo was being taken. Was she thinking about a boy that she saw on the bus? Was she sad? This photograph tells me that there's history and there's family. Also it was taken in Fiji, so that's my background. It does mean a lot to me.

I don't think I'm going to marry an Indian person, my little sister has but I doubt I will, basically because I think when you marry an Indian person you marry their whole family, whereas I'd just like to marry one person."

Nitasha Nadan, Sydney 2012 (Fig.7)

Ways of Knowing – Exhuming the Archive

*History, of course, is always ambiguous, always messy, and people remember – and therefore construct the past in ways that reflect their present need for meaning.<sup>20</sup> - Ien Ang*



**(Fig.7)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

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<sup>20</sup> Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*, 28.

Mohini Chandra's art practice re-examines photographic contexts to explore the role that photographs play in our production of cultural meaning and historic understanding. Chandra's ancestors were among the shiploads of Indian indentured laborers transported to Fiji under British colonial rule. Achieving economic stability after several generations, many of her family members became part of a second wave of diaspora by continuing their upward migration to Australia, New Zealand, North America and England. During her youth, Chandra's family would shift between Australia and the United Kingdom, where she continues to reside.<sup>21</sup> Chandra's personal experience of moving across multiple, diverse cultures, informs her investigations of the transitory nature of identity in our postcolonial era. Her cross-disciplinary practice interweaves multiple histories, perspectives and methodologies that she ascribes to her 'fluid and amorphous' cultural position.<sup>22</sup> Chandra often employs her own family's visual history as a case study in her work to examine how vernacular photography has been used to shape identities and preserve communal bonds in the wake of cultural upheaval and geographic dispersion.

In her series *Album Pacifica* (Figs.8-11) Chandra acts as an anthropologist, researching, unearthing and compiling family photographs from the archives of her globally dispersed family members. She selects and unites over 100 photographs, many sent from one individual to another as a form of correspondence in diaspora. Chandra's collection represents lines of communication that circumnavigate the globe and retrace the complex geographical contour of a fragmented community. However Chandra curiously conceals the images, displaying only the yellowing paper surfaces of the backs of the photographs, visibly degraded by the passage of time.

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<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, "Travels in a New World – Work around a Diasporic Theme by Mohini Chandra," *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*, eds. Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, 147-148 (Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Mohini Chandra, *Invia.org*

<http://www.iniva.org/dare/themes/space/chandra.html> (accessed 20 Feb. 2012).

Like scientific specimens, each bear their own unique markings while many also contain portrait studio stamps and handwritten text on the backs; cryptic clues for our decoding and deciphering. At times descriptive, “After the thaw... I still felt cold.. Trying to make a lawn & to conquer the land I lost myself to England!” and at others obscure, “nice nice ugly,” (Fig.8) the text engages viewers in personal contemplations and imaginative exchange.

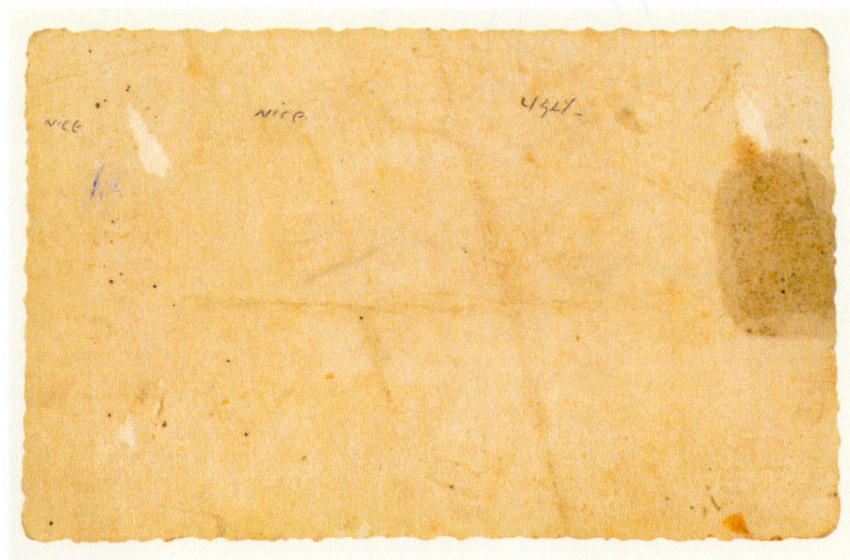
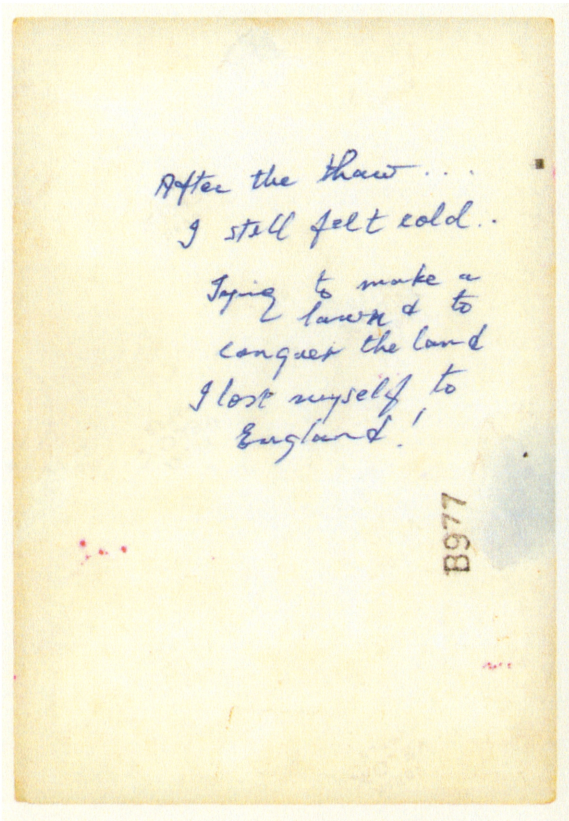
In *Album Pacifica* Chandra’s denies the photographic image, however, in its absence we are offered the space to visualize an imagined historical landscape. It is from the combination of Chandra’s fragmented cues with our own personal projections, that we may each generate our own evocations of meaning and understanding. *Album Pacifica* offers a new way to encounter and map cultural experience, directly engaging with individual subjectivity and intangible memory. Chandra’s intersection of the personal with the factual demonstrates that human experience exists in the delicate balance in between.

### **Familial Rites**

The relationship between the photograph and the familial extends back to the very beginnings of photographic history. Early portraiture served to memorialize family members, both living and deceased. The first photographic albums correspondingly emerged as many traditional family units were ruptured by migration to urban centres during periods of industrialization. Thus, in times of dispersion and transformation, photographic albums became repositories in which a family’s history and genealogy could be recorded.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Segel, “Talking through the “fotygraft album”,” *Phototextualities: Intersections of Photography and Narrative*, eds. Alex Hughes and Andrea Noble, 242-243 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).



(Fig.8) Mohini Chandra, *Album Pacifica*. 1997.  
Type C prints.

Your cousin Anne (1st. B/D)  
Jan 1967.  
Tongan / Indian  
mixture

→ Monika.

2 FEB 1967

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P. 11125 51223  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
Phone 4-1127

The Royal Visit

Died in New Zealand  
on 13 October 1971

My aunt, cousins &  
nephews nieces at a birthday  
Party. An excuse to drink  
Australian Beer & Johnny  
Walker Red label as  
Indians were to allowed  
1 dozen Beer & 1 Bot Liqueur  
per month, which could not  
be bought without a Police  
Permit, Colonial Days!

(Fig.11) Mohini Chandra, *Album Pacifica*. 1997.  
Type C prints.

Chandra's series demonstrates how the photograph decisively shifted oral and textual transmissions of family narratives to that of the visual, creating a reliance on seeing and a new history based on appearances. Considered by most as a form of evidence, to view a photograph is thus to bear witness, to verify, to know. To be immortalized in a photograph has become proof of existence.<sup>24</sup>

As described by Marianne Hirsch, a principal theorist in memory studies, the photograph quite efficiently "became the family's primary instrument of self knowledge and representation - the means by which family memory would be continued and perpetuated, by which the family's story would henceforth be told."<sup>25</sup>

By the mid-twentieth century photographic portraiture became more economically accessible and therefore befitted a popular ritual for colonized subjects in documenting their changing conceptions of family and in establishing their cultural positioning.<sup>26</sup> It is not unusual then that many of Chandra's photographic backs bear the stamp of Indo-Fijian studios. Even though at its peak the Indian population in Fiji had comprised almost half of the country's cultural demographic, they have been and remain markedly absent from the nation's historical imagery. The portrait studio quickly became a popular site in which Fijian Indians could direct, narrate and record their own historical representations.

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<sup>24</sup> Segel, "Talking through the "fotygraft album",," 242-243.

<sup>25</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, 6-7.

<sup>26</sup> Kirsten Emiko McAllister, "A Story of Escape: Family Photographs from Japanese Canadian Internment Camps," *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*, eds. Annette Kuhn, Kirsten Emiko McAllister, 83 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).

## The Interconnectedness of Memories

Cultural theorist Annette Kuhn writes, “telling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of ourselves,”<sup>27</sup> a statement to which *Album Pacifica* stands testimony. Exploring the photograph as memory’s dominant pretext, Chandra investigates the fusing of the past and the present in our daily negotiation of memories. Though Chandra’s photographs contain narratives that are highly personal, her project brings to mind the collective nature of remembering and the complex layers of meaning and association that are revealed in its process.

Kuhn analyzes photographs as sites of emotionally charged conflict between memory and desire. Deconstructing her own childhood photographs in ‘*Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination*,’ Kuhn illustrates how each family member employs photographs to establish their individual narratives and to position their personal longings. Moreover, Kuhn recognizes that these multiple associations can be continually repositioned, revised and rewritten. Kuhn hypothesizes that there is no such thing as photographic objectivity nor veracity of memory; what exists instead are infinite interpretations of the same past, running alongside and bumping up against one another.<sup>28</sup>

*Album Pacifica* portrays historical experience as overlapping and socially conversant. Through collective photographic acts, Chandra’s relatives form and forge their identities in relation to one another and their network of intersecting narratives. They recognize identity as an amalgam, not an absolute.<sup>29</sup> Exploring the pieces of her family’s history, Chandra also probes at her own identity puzzle to assemble the possibilities of who she is and who she might become.

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<sup>27</sup> Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London: Verso, 1995), 2.

<sup>28</sup> Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, 17.

<sup>29</sup> Edwards, “Travels in a New World,” 152-153.

## Post-Haunting

In her text *'Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory,'* Hirsch states:

*"in lives shaped by exile, emigration and relocation, such as my family's, where relatives are dispersed and relationships shattered, photographs provide perhaps even more than usual some illusion of continuity over time and space."*<sup>30</sup>

Hirsch writes of second or third generational narratives, so encompassing that these inherited remembrances are capable of pervading familial psyches long after their lived moment in time. *Album Pacifica* deeply engages with this phenomenon of absorbing narratives that precede one's lived experience, what Hirsch has termed 'postmemory'<sup>31</sup> and akin to Said's concept of 'transgenerational haunting'<sup>32</sup> - the remembering of remembrance. 'Postmemory' narratives are predominantly transmitted through oral histories, mediated by recollections and are powerfully catalyzed by photographs. Inherently subjective and incomplete, they are equally evoked by historical fractures and traumatic silences as they are by familial revelation.<sup>33</sup> In *Album Pacifica* we witness Chandra explore her own 'postmemory' through her family's photographic practices that serve to bridge the geographic and emotional expanses of diaspora and globalization.

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<sup>30</sup> Hirsch, preface to *Family Frames*, xi-xii.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>32</sup> Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 496.

<sup>33</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 22.

## **Zones of Contact: Contemporary Perspectives in Anthropology**

Chandra's art practice is postcolonial and cross-cultural. Her methodology borrows from the disciplines of anthropology and ethnography to map temporal and geographical movements. Yet, unlike traditional anthropological roles, Chandra's standpoint is deeply ambivalent. Visual anthropologist and historian Elizabeth Edwards describes Chandra as situated both within and outside of the communities that she observes, thus enabling her to embody the position of historical interpreter or cultural 'translator'.<sup>34</sup> Chandra's art practice demonstrates a new kind of self-reflexive anthropology in which she investigates issues as a situated, active participant in the production of meaning.<sup>35</sup>

Like pieces of a nostalgic puzzle, Chandra reconstructs photographic rhetoric to explore alternate modes of transferring historical narratives. She values the creative and imaginative spaces of memory studies, oral transmissions and autobiographies, over immovable historical facts and scientific evidence. Chandra's anthropological act of reassembling a family's fragmented history incites a momentary and symbolic reversal of the physical and psychological dispersion caused by migration and diaspora.

## **New World Nomads: Between the Centre and the Periphery**

Chandra's work engages with contemporary cultural dialogues in which subaltern histories and diaspora narratives are emergent. Historically, migrant communities have not received serious theoretical consideration since the various disciplines of cultural studies have traditionally sought the authentic subject, pure and indigenous. However, since global

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<sup>34</sup> Edwards, "Travels in a New World," 147.

<sup>35</sup> John Wynne, "Hearing Faces, Seeing Voices: Sound Art, Experimentalism and the Ethnographic Gaze," *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*, eds. Arnd Schneider, Christopher Wright, 49 (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010).

populations have undergone drastic reconfiguration, historically marginalized narratives have found new platform.<sup>36</sup>

While Chandra negotiates her own family's interpersonal narratives, what she mediates to the viewer is not so explicit. The textured backs of her photographs offer an imaginative screen in which the viewer must project their own imagery. Chandra's textual clues lead us on our way, however our individual routes will take us to our subjective destinations. Chandra's methodology engages in contemporary discussions about the cultural and historical significance of vernacular photography. Furthermore, the reversal of her photographs, that so poignantly articulates the historic invisibility of marginalized identities, also acts to negotiate the re-contextualization of private imagery into the public domain.<sup>37</sup> While her work undeniably evokes diaspora experiences, Chandra merely employs her family's history as a template. *Album Pacifica* adeptly reflects the open-ended and multilayered way that each of our historical experiences are remembered and transferred.

### **The Psychology of Belonging**

Chandra is interested in the colonial policies and postcolonial power relations that have informed our current condition of globalization. Her photographic investigations are not so much concerned with contesting the sanctioned narratives that are fixed in the historical record, but rather to reimagine those that have been effaced or omitted. Nonetheless, in unearthing a version of history not widely told, Chandra destabilizes the authority of both the historical and political canons and interrogates the scope and validity of our cultural understanding.<sup>38</sup> Chandra's process

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<sup>36</sup> Mohini Chandra and Rebecca Epsom, "Tracing Histories," *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*, eds. Arnd Schneider, Christopher Wright, 104 (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Edwards, "Travels in a New World," 148.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

highlights the critical role that ancestral heritage and cultural memory play in our self-awareness and access to belonging.

Imagination is always intrinsic to any personal or collective identification. Theorist in international studies, Benedict Anderson comments on how all communities, from families through to nations, link their members in imagined relationships, and that these links however tenuous are what embed people in their social milieus.<sup>39</sup> Anderson compares looking through someone's family album to studying an archaeologist's findings; from its photographs we are able to read and interpret cultural meaning and detect the socio-cultural desires that are invested in the family image.<sup>40</sup> Chandra's considerations of the social values that underpin her family's collective photographic practices extend our intercultural understandings of identity, community and history - both real and imagined.

*Album Pacifica* is Chandra's quest for coherence in her own familial experience of multiple identity shifts and cultural displacement. Diaspora and dispersion effectively dislocate individuals from contexts of belonging and collective identification. Yet as Chandra reveals through *Album Pacifica*, the desire to align understandings of our past with the negotiations of our present are powerfully and poignantly explored in deconstructions of our familial photographs; the sumptuous arbitrators of our memories.

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<sup>39</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2006), 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

You could perhaps guess  
who are these two great sailors

B977

Yours sincerely Snowman  
from the Himalayas.

*Sig*

piled against the window  
after an all-night drift.

Hari Prasad (Kundan's husband)  
as a chauffeur in Fiji sporting his  
English Humber Supersnipe  
with Union Jack & Crown  
1940's

I live with them here  
in LA 1996

Probedo.

(Fig.12) Mohini Chandra, *Album Pacifica*. 1997.  
Type C prints.

## **Personal Morphologies: Palm Trees and Pompadours**

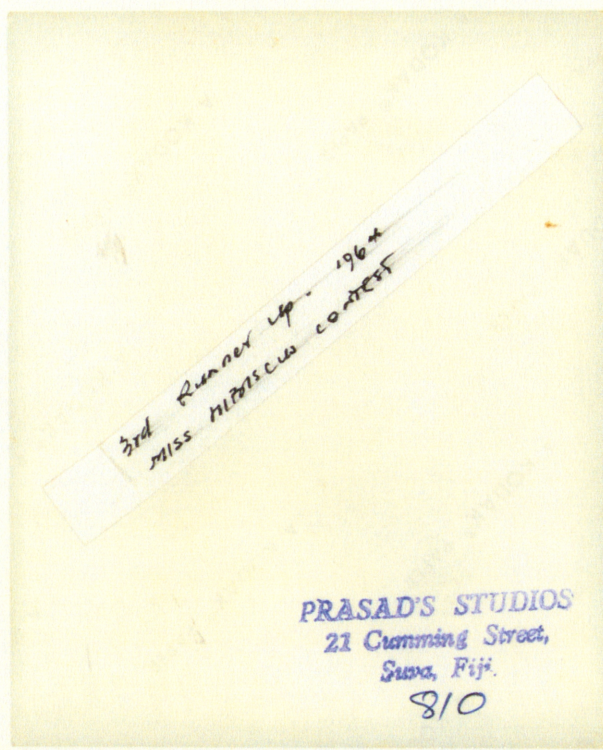
It was with certain whimsical delight that I discovered Chandra's diaspora inspired oeuvre. My own maternal grandparents were part of a migratory movement from China to Fiji in the early twentieth century resulting in my mother and her 12 siblings being born and raised in the pacific colony. My own 'postmemory' is rich with the imagery of 13 children weaving in and out of their father's general store, trading produce with the indigenous Fijians, learning to make curries from their Indian neighbours and diligently sitting in the front row of class at the local Chinese school. Certainly my mother's photographs portray the transition of gangly children clothed in homemade hand-me-downs and flashing innocent smiles, into socially conscious young adults influenced by Western pop culture, sporting pompadours and beehives, and dancing to rock and roll music on the wireless.

Like Chandra's relatives, my mother and her siblings would soon disperse throughout the globe seeking tertiary education in nearby Commonwealth countries and continuing their intergenerational, upward migration. By the time I was born my parents and two Fijian born siblings had already migrated to Canada, drawn to the promise of a more progressive life. We lived only two years in the country of my birth before migrating again to Australia. As a young child growing up in the homogeny of 1980s suburbia, I was already deeply conscious of a complicated web of personal associations; a network of countries, cultures, traditions and spaces of belonging that inexorably connected us to the movements of each of our globally dispersed family members.

Viewing Chandra's work is like looking into a mirror onto my own family album. The historical accords and cultural analogies are so striking that it requires interrogation of the details in order for our narratives to be differentiated, for example, Chandra's stories appear to be based in Suva

while ours predominately took place on the other side of the main island in Lautoka, and it was the Miss Hibiscus contest that one of Chandra's relatives participated in (Fig.11), not the Miss Sugar pageant in which my mother placed first runner up in 1966 (Fig.12). Our stories are almost identical yet just discernable. Both Chandra and I share parallel histories of diaspora, ancestral dislocation, social repression, cultural adaptation, and the interconnectedness of global networks of belonging. However, interpreting these curiously parallel narratives from an alternate perspective broadens my own understanding of the wider socio-cultural and political powers that govern each of our existences. Interpreting Chandra's work augments my own knowledge of how our collective identities are formed, determined at large by global and economic structures that operate, for the most part, outside of our consideration.

Similar to Chandra's progressive approach to multiple perspectives and alternate methodologies, my series seeks to discover new ways to rework photographic contexts in order to engage viewers in collective dialogue. Like *Album Pacifica*, I too have taken my cues from old family photographs as vehicles of communication between generations. My re-enactments measure the cultural distance travelled by genealogical bodies and explores the degrees and dimensions of intergenerational metamorphosis. My re-staged images do not aim for historical accuracy or faithful replication. Instead they bring renewed life to that which has transpired within the margins of history and interrogate spaces of divergence, posing questions around the gaps and disjunctures in historical memory. Through my photographs I seek to recover and re-insert displaced histories back into our collective understanding, to re-engage silenced or undocumented narratives and to bring stories of the margin towards the centre.



(Fig.11) Mohini Chandra, *Album Pacifica*. 1997.  
Type C print.



(Fig.12) Photographer unknown, Miss Sugar Finalists 1966.  
Black and white photograph.

In our work, both Chandra and I solicit the democratic and social nature of vernacular photography. As powerful instigators in the transmission of oral histories, we employ photographs to explore how cultural knowledge, traditional values and social experiences, are passed from generation to generation through acts of collective remembering. *Of being and becoming* (Fig.13) demonstrates that engaging with photographs is a never-ending process of making sense of our selves and the physical and psychological spaces that we inhabit. In the process of re-enactment, my subjects explore their own relationships with the past and it is through these understandings that their own visual biographies can be imagined. The series demonstrate how our memories, like our identifications, are constantly changing, pushed and pulled by the force of new information, shifts in desire, waves of nostalgia, forgetting and re-imagining.

My subjects delved deep into their own 'postmemories' in order to locate and express highly personal dialogues, however, I found it remarkable that much of their familial histories continued to remain undefined. My participants often knew very little about the actual *facts* surrounding their chosen photographs and were drawn instead to the mystery and projected mythology that the images evoked. Analyzing family photographs are ideal occasions to pose questions about historical fractures and to resolve intergenerational ambiguities, yet at the same time, it is from our personal musing over unexplained silences and familial secrets, that we create the space for our own associations. As demonstrated by Nitasha's dialogue that opened this chapter, it is in between the photograph's liminal frames that we project our own versions of history. The inherent incomplete nature of photographic narrative allows us to create our own personal interpretations, meeting our needs for genealogical self-recognition and socio-historical belonging.



(Fig.13) Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 16x11cm.

Introduced in the chapter that follows are two works by Carrie Mae Weems in which she powerfully emancipates and reclaims the African American identity from its historical legacy of oppression and domination. Weems reanimates cultural imagery and visual discourse to engage in critical dialogue issues of identity and the complicated politics of photographic representation.

“I was born in Nelson, New Zealand. I came over here when I was a baby so even though New Zealand is my home in the kind of spiritual sense, Australia has always been my home, it’s where I grew up. I’m mixed race, so a lot of who I am or how I see myself is reflected in the fact that I’m mixed between Maori culture and also European culture. The way I live my life, the two kind of conflict with each other because I’m never either one or the other. I think culture is the most important thing that impacts on my identity per se, and then contrasting that is the fact that I sound Australian and trying to rationalize that in my head, let alone to people who want to, not put you in a box, but kind of classify the person that you are. A lot of people won’t see me as a mixed race, they see me as an Australian but inside I don’t feel inherently Australian.

My mum and dad are both from a small town in New Zealand called Kaitaia. They were neighbours. My dad is a white New Zealander. They were quite well off in comparison to my mum’s family who were very poor. My dad’s family was English. My dad’s grandfather was an English planter, he relocated to Fiji, married a local white girl there, then his son, who is my dad’s father, migrated to New Zealand and that’s how that side of the family started. My mum’s side of the family traces its roots back to the first canoes that arrived in New Zealand.

My mum was brought up in a period where she was discouraged actively from participating in her culture. Her mother could speak the language fluently but never talked to any of the children in it. They used to get caned if they were speaking in *Te reo*, which is what we call the Maori language. So you know there is a whole generation of denial about being Maori and obviously she’s passed on those stigmas to me. Growing up I was encouraged to lead a more, ‘white’ kind of lifestyle. She thought she was

doing the right thing in guiding me towards the things she aspired for, those kind of 'white' things. My mother was a very strong influence in my growing up, saying very clearly from a young age, you need to do these things because you don't want to struggle like our family has struggled in the past.

There's been a renaissance now back in New Zealand where its been acceptable to say that you are Maori, to learn your language and about your culture. There was a whole load of shame associated with Maori people and what they stood for and its only really being corrected now. It's quite funny that my mum in her late 50s has started to learn her own language again. I'm probably on a similar journey to my mum, trying to find out how to relate back to my tribe, the language that I speak, the songs that I should know. That's quite common in my generation.

This is a photo of my mum as a nurse and studying in Kaitaia College. She was in her early 20s so it would've been in the mid-60s. Actually my mum's profession has defined a lot of our lives but I don't often see pictures of my mum like this, in this sort of serene, professional manner. My mum's worked hard her whole life but she's never really worried about the look of it all, so it's kind of funny to see her with a starched cap and cape. Her eyes and they way that she's looking away almost looks a bit wistful. There are not many instances where I've seen that kind of look on my mum's face. I think there is a sense of youthfulness there, that this is the lady that I didn't know before all of the kids and life and all the stresses that come with it. There's something mysterious about her. Actually looking at it I was surprised to see how similar we look in some ways. When I was young they used to call me little *Junsie* and I never really saw it, but looking at this photo made me realize that there are a lot of similarities."

Lomi Kim Shaw, Sydney 2012 (Fig.14)

*If he hollers let him go* – The Power of Social Control

*Our problem, as artists and intellectuals living near but not at the center of a global system of power, will be to help prevent the cancellation of that testimony [the polyphonic testimony of the oppressed and exploited] by more authoritative and official texts.<sup>41</sup> – Allan Sekula*



**(Fig.14)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

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<sup>41</sup> Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 64.

Carrie Mae Weems is a contemporary American artist whose powerful work confronts representational discourse and contests the hegemony of western imperialist thought. Through her art practice Weems examines how visual and vernacular culture have strongly influenced the formation of our historical memory. She uses photography to demonstrate the extent to which our socio-cultural conceptions are prescribed and controlled. Through provocative combinations of image and text, Weems reveals photographs as sites of contested power. She poignantly reclaims and reanimates the past by creating alternate spaces of understanding that effectively reconsider historical narratives and subsequently reposition our perception of the present.

In *Family Pictures and Stories* (Figs.15-17) Weems photographs her own family, not through a series of conventional snapshots or from an 'objective,' ethnocentric perspective, but rather through a refigured documentary gaze. Weems perceives documentary photography as "a genre in which the photographer sought to capture the ethnic 'other,' to go out into somebody else's world and have a dark adventure and live to tell about it."<sup>42</sup> The realisation of this inequitable transaction compelled her to break with convention and to document instead, with an internal, feminist and racial lens. In *Family Pictures and Stories* Weems interrogates her own perceptual conditioning. She refocuses the conventionally objectifying photo-documentary gaze to produce intimate, visceral and centralized representations of subaltern identities. By documenting her own family, Weems obscures the discursive divide between photographer and subject to powerfully transgress traditional modes of photographic representation.

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<sup>42</sup> Jesse Hamlin, "Carrie Mae Weems' Sharp Views: A Tough at Racial Perceptions," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 10, 1993.



I went back home this summer. Hadn't seen my folks for awhile, but I'd been thinking about them, felt a need to say something about them, about us, about me and to record something about our family, our history. I was scared. Of What? I don't know, but on my first night back, I was welcomed with so much love from Van and Vera, that I thought to myself, "Girl, this is your family. Go on and get down."

**(Fig.15)** Carrie Mae Weems, *Family Pictures and Stories*. 1978-84.  
Gelatin Silver print.



It amazes me that even in the midst of a bunch of crazy wild kids, my sisters still manage to carry on a half-way decent conversation. I'm really impressed.

**(Fig.16)** Carrie Mae Weems, *Family Pictures and Stories*. 1978-84.  
Gelatin Silver print.

## Fool Says

Weems's decentred documentary representations confront the social infrastructures that govern our access to knowledge and to the successive distribution of wealth and power. More specifically, she interrogates the relationship between visual ideology and social domination, which philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault describes as the 'disciplinary gaze' with its hierarchical systems of authority, surveillance and control. Foucault considers how visibility has been adeptly manipulated to regulate our perceptions and to modify social behaviours.<sup>43</sup> Said further elaborates on Foucault's social analysis by illustrating how conventional ideals and standardizing imagery are circulated innocuously in the cultural vernacular and gain sufficient momentum to pass through the course of socialization to find their way onto our cultural registers of knowledge, irrespective of integrity or veracity.<sup>44</sup>

By re-examining representational tropes, Weems calls to our attention the way institutions of social control have produced repressive regimes of truth about racial identities that have become deeply embedded in our cultural conscience. These negative and confining representations not only solidify dominant beliefs about racial difference, but at its most damaging, they regulate the very identifications that are circulated, consumed and enacted *within* racialized communities. Weems's response to Foucault and Said's illuminations on the politics of vision, knowledge and power is one of ideological resistance and cultural reclamation.<sup>45</sup> Weems presents her subjects with social emancipation and self-possession. Her representations of the family differ from the tradition of white, middle-class patriarchy. Weems situates her own gendered view of her African American, working-

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<sup>43</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 174-176, 209-217.

<sup>44</sup> Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 239.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

class family against this dominant gaze to powerfully disrupt our collective ideas of social and familial normalcy.

### **Collapse of the Ego: Dismantling the Social**

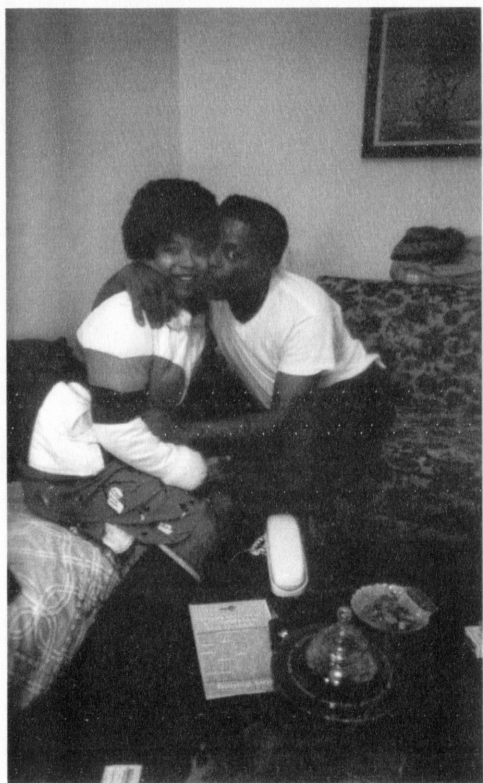
Cultural interlocutor Jo Spence dedicated her lifelong relationship with photography to investigating its complex and limitless negotiations of representation and identity. Spence's cultural analysis explored notions of the self and the family in relation to gender and class ideologies. Her photographic endeavours sought to demystify the politics of socio-economic power. By examining her own interfamilial representations, Spence was able to interrogate the breadth of her inherited cultural construction that in turn cultivated her social subservience.

Unlike Weems's more organic portrayals, Spence discusses how her own familial photographs consisted only of stylized and conventional representations. As her feminist and class awareness grew, Spence recognized that family photographs were not transparent historic records, but instead symbols of familial unity, social normalcy and cultural cohesion. Among her family photographs, Spence noted the remarkable absence of any indication of hardships such as illness, unemployment or divorce that were principal narratives in her family's working-class history and fundamental to their shared experiences. These critical, socio-political narratives were completely erased from the historical record of her family album.<sup>46</sup>

In contrast Weems image/texts capture her familial subjects in all their guises, even those that appear unflattering or shameful. She pictures without reservation or judgment, her mother at work in a sewing sweatshop and her father's licentious proclivities as he embraces his multiple 'Susie-Qs' (Fig.17).

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<sup>46</sup> Jo Spence, *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography* (London: Camden Press, 1986), 83-85.



Daddy—much to the dismay of my mother—definitely has a way with the ladies. They swarm around him like bees to honey, they just love him. Man has so many women he calls them all Suzie-Q so he doesn't have to remember any one name.

**(Fig.17)** Carrie Mae Weems, *Family Pictures and Stories*. 1978-84. Gelatin Silver prints.

Like Spence, Weems makes us aware that complex cultural sentiments such as pride and shame, are mechanisms of our inherited collective construction. Through her work she examines the social parameters of private family narratives and pinpoints our unquestioning adoption of conventional ideologies and class beliefs, as the root of our identity conflicts and socio-cultural angst. Weems demystifies our relationship to such social paradigms by revealing their highly fabricated nature and therefore demonstrates that beliefs about identity, community and culture can be reclaimed and re-imagined.

### **Conscious Utterance**

Weems further deconstructs photo-documentary conventions through her use of captions and spoken dialogue. Her accompanying textual and aural landscapes present first person narratives that provide intimate context to the photographed individuals and the relationships that bind them, not only to each other, but also to Weems as photographer and narrator. Weems delves beyond photography's factual classifications of name, place and date, to provide personal reflections and remembrances that are deeply implicated and interconnected. She inserts the voice of the artist directly into the work to deny the traditional transparency of the documentary photographer. Furthermore *Family Pictures and Stories* contains multiplicity of voice through its interwoven parallel narratives that invites viewers into the private landscape of Weems's family folklore.

Contrary to the well-theorized masculine domination of photographic discourse,<sup>47</sup> *Family Pictures and Stories* is conversely permeated with matriarchal dialogues; a perspective that is most often absent or under-recognized in critical theory. Weems pioneers cultural terrain to create her

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<sup>47</sup> See Laura Mulvey's, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen*, vol. 16.3 Autumn (1975): 6-18.

images from a position of double discrimination, that is, from *both* a gendered and racialized perspective.<sup>48</sup>

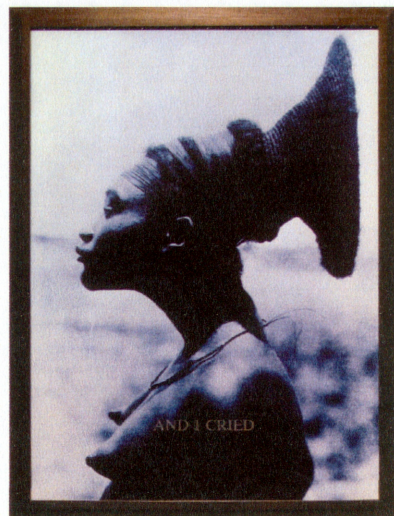
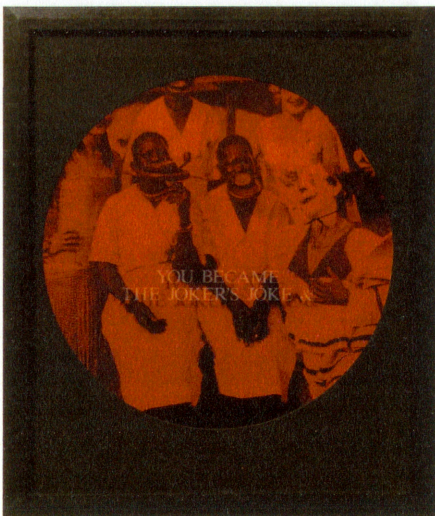
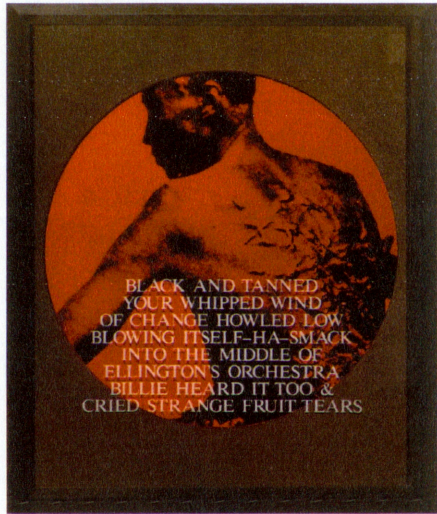
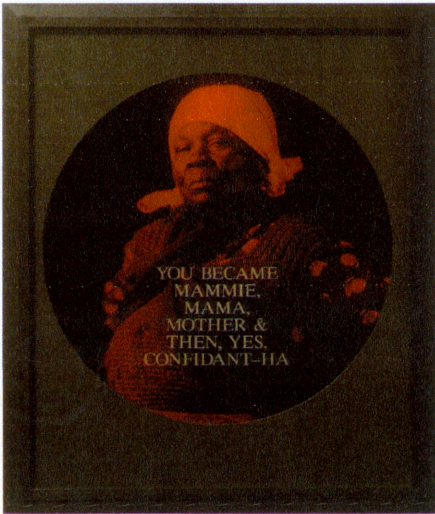
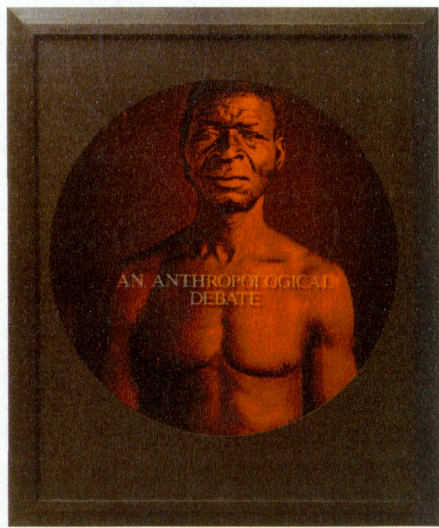
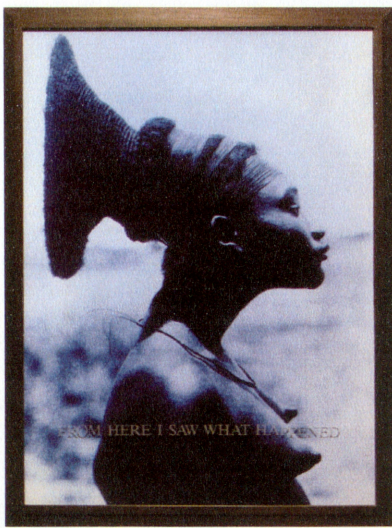
### **Of Longing and Belonging**

In her series *From Here I saw what Happened and I Cried* (Figs. 18-20) Weems's further extends her concerns of social subjugation achieved through the proliferation of imagery. Commissioned to produce a work on African American history using photographs from the Getty Museum archives, Weems's series aggressively contests America's proud historical legacy. The work simultaneously critiques the institutional archive including photography's role in defining historical knowledge and propagating socio-cultural *truths*.

Weems's selected images are framed in black circular mats that symbolize the historical objectification of her African subjects by various institutional lenses, most notably, the scientific microscope, the ethnographic camera and ultimately that of western imperialism. Weems begins with early nineteenth century anthropological photographs in which Africans slaves are documented as biological specimens of classification and colonial conquest. Her accompanying narrative illustrates how such depictions functioned to dehumanize their racial subjects. Weems continues her dialogue with images from the celebrated history of American photography to reveal how African American representations have been consistently reduced to stereotypes of denigration, servitude and ridicule. Weems references blatant racist iconography and employs the ubiquity of popular culture and folklore to bring to light the way white supremacy and black inferiority have been inscribed in the discourses of the everyday.

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<sup>48</sup> Kimberly Lamm, "Portraits of the Past, Imagined Now: Reading the Work of Carrie Mae Weems and Lorna Simpson," *Unmaking Race, Remaking Soul: Transformative Aesthetics and the Practice of Freedom*, eds. Christa Davis Acampora, Angela L. Cotton, 109 (New York: State University of New York Press, 2007).



(Fig.18) Carrie Mae Weems, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. 1995-96. Type C prints.

## The Self as the 'Other'

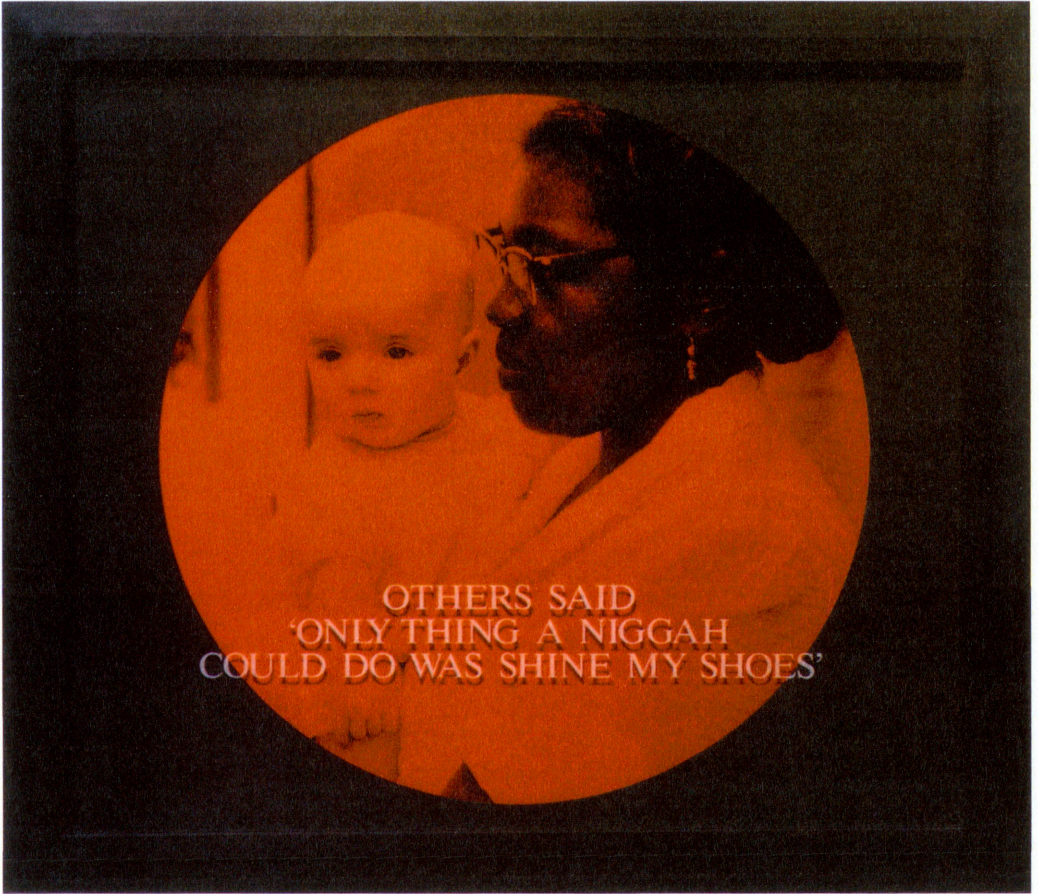
Weems reexamines the symbolic status of visual iconography by including images by highly revered and respected American photographers, such as Robert Frank and Robert Mapplethorpe. Frank's startling visual juxtaposition of a light infant in the arms of its dark nanny (Fig.19) can no longer be regarded in the context of objective documentation, it must now be considered in relation to historic depictions of black subjugation. The inclusion of Mapplethorpe's photograph (Fig.20) in particular, introduces controversial dialogues about the fetishization and hyper-sexualization of the black body by the dominant white gaze. Through her uncompromising depictions of black kitsch and degrading racial stereotypes, Weems elicits Frantz Fanon's analysis of the colonized racial psyche in which the 'black' image has come to exist solely within a binary relationship to that of the 'white.' Fanon explains that the racialized body has been so effectively positioned throughout history and dominant ideology, that it will always be regarded and moreover regard itself, in its comparison to and inescapable difference from the body of the white.<sup>49</sup> Hall confirms Fanon's hypothesis when he poignantly expresses, "they had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'."<sup>50</sup>

Weems's re-contextualizations are acts of reclamation. By inserting historical racial representations back into contemporary dialogue, Weems liberates muted, dormant imagery from its secure nestling deep within institutional discourse. Infused with dissonant narratives, Weems's image/texts compel us to collectively reconsider the apparatus of historical memory. The work is at once confrontational and disturbing, yet empowered and commanding.

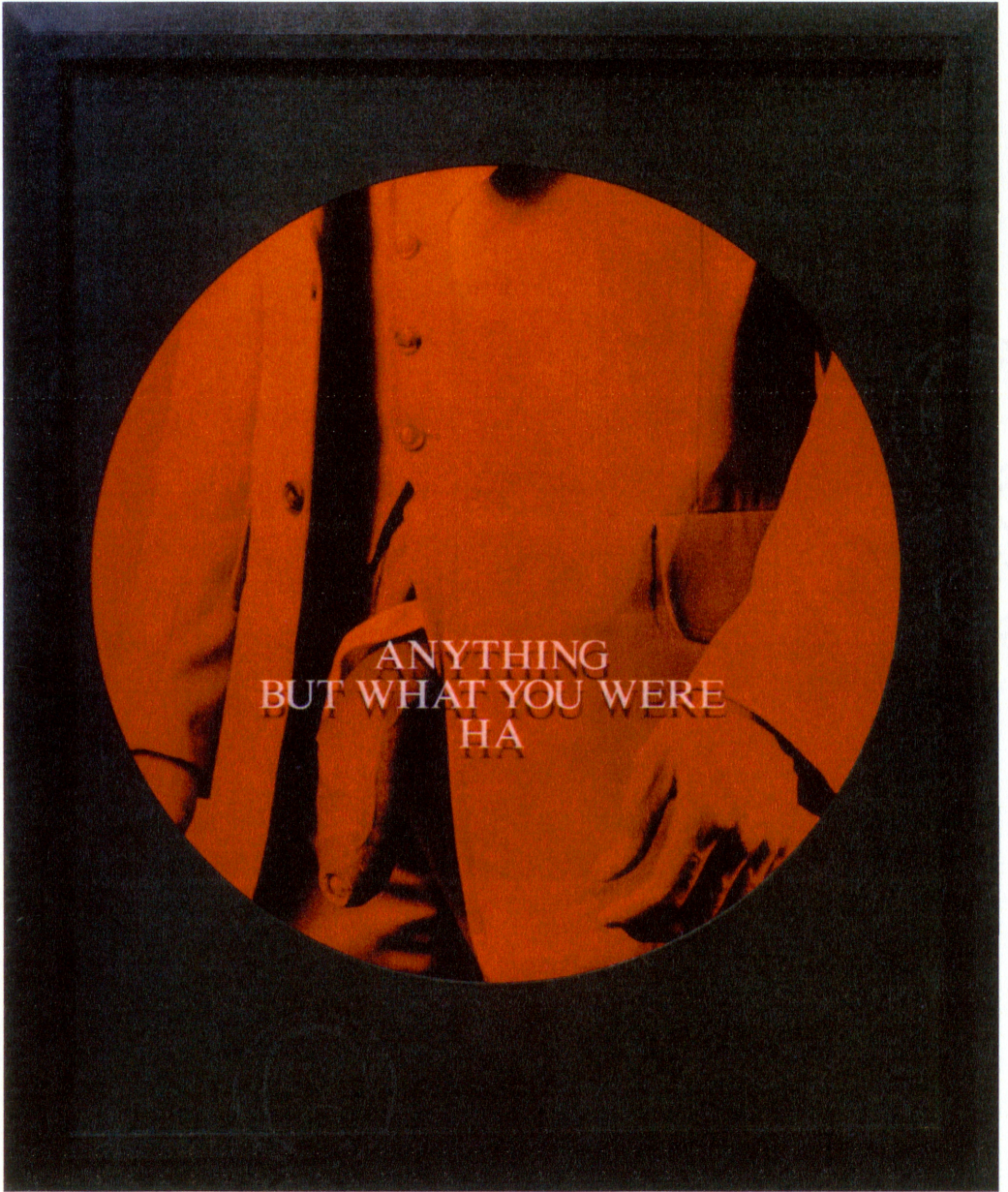
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<sup>49</sup> Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 100.

<sup>50</sup> Hall, "Culture Identity and Diaspora," 225.



(Fig.19) Carrie Mae Weems, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. 1995-96.  
Type C print.



(Fig.20) Carrie Mae Weems, *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*. 1995-96.  
Type C print.

Weems challenges us to recognize the limitations of institutionalized imagery and subsequently the ways in which socio-political interests and agendas of remembrance control our habits of seeing. However, Weems's powerful re-contextualizations also demonstrate the prolific possibilities of the archive when reinterpreted from a critical perspective. Her reworking of photographic contexts and repositioning of historical narratives produces new understandings of cultural history through critical socio-political contestation.<sup>51</sup>

### **Beyond Lament: The Exile and the Anticolonial**

According to contemporary American cultural theorist bell hooks, Weems's work is pervaded by the evocation of exile and infused by the politics of cultural dislocation.<sup>52</sup> *From Here I saw what Happened and I Cried* engages the palimpsest of diaspora communities and embodies nostalgia for a homeland that has long ceased to exist in its remembered or desired form. Said describes the condition of exile as characterized by the 'crippling sorrow of estrangement'<sup>53</sup> and bound by an immovable longing for what has been left behind, of paradise lost. Furthermore, exiles desire to return to this nostalgic state of intrinsic belonging which can only be mythologized and never achieved. Said explains that while exiles occupy positions of 'terminal loss,' they may also engender sites of imaginative investment and creation. By consequence, the exile must straddle borders and are thus positioned to more readily transgress barriers of convention and ideological expression. Like Weems, the exile may recognize that ideologies are provisional and ultimately a product of social construction. It is from this recognition that actions of deconstruction, revision and re-creation are made possible.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Kuhn, McAllister, *Locating Memory*, 6-10.

<sup>52</sup> bell hooks, *Art on my Mind: Visual Politics* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 68.

<sup>53</sup> Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 173.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-186.

hooks positions Weems's work beyond the postcolonial. She remarks that the postcolonial approach tends to consider subaltern identities as they are situated against white legacies. In hooks's own words, postcolonial viewpoints 'often maintain white cultural hegemony' and therefore she sites Weems's perspective as anticolonial; acting to decentre, interrogate and displace dominating ideologies.<sup>55</sup> Throughout her work Weems creates alternate dialogues that disrupt accepted epistemologies and challenge governing systems of knowledge and power. Her image/texts enter into the historical, poking and prodding at our collective subjectivity. hooks acknowledges that we have all been socially conditioned to look at images of race and difference with a colonizing eye. Weems's work however, introduces radical and multiple subjectivities that aim, not just to challenge, but also to shift the colonizing gaze itself.<sup>56</sup>

### **The Crime of Difference**

Of African, Native American and Jewish descent, Weems herself is a cultural hybrid, constantly negotiating a process of traversed borders.<sup>57</sup> Her work generates discussion about the socio-cultural visibility and political agency of marginalized and oppressed peoples in national, gendered, racial and historical discourse.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, she makes explicit our responsibility in the construction of our own identities and of those around us.

Weems demands change in the way we are educated about images and their relationship to history, culture and ideology. She desires a visual democracy where people will not be confined by limited and repressive imagery. In order for this to be achieved, representations of the marginalized must become increasingly centred, self-defined and emancipated from narratives of socio-political subordination. Weems

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<sup>55</sup> hooks, *Art on my Mind*, 66.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>57</sup> Marybeth Sollins, *Art in the Twenty-First Century*, vol 5 (Dalton: Studley Press, 2009), 53.

<sup>58</sup> Lamm, "Portraits of the Past," 140.

highlights the necessity to critically examine identity issues and bring subjugated knowledge into the forefront of cultural dialogue. She encourages the questioning of historical imperatives and the contestation of cultural hegemony.<sup>59</sup> In making us aware of the inherited and constructed nature of oppressive ideologies, Weems indicates that they can be disinherited and undone. Through her art making Weems presents us with an ideological dilemma and asks if we dare participate in its resolution.

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<sup>59</sup> hooks, *Art on my Mind*, 91-92.



(Fig.21) Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

## Parables of Transfiguration

It is evident that Weems constantly interrogates her own art practice, questioning *who* is being represented, from *whose* perspective and for *whose* consumption. She goes beyond the obligations of an artist towards that of a cultural emissary with a curatorial imperative to educate. As I consider the implications and intentions behind my own art practice, I realize that I too desire to work from a place of social consciousness. I wish to align my personal motivations with the collaborative investments of my subjects and at equal measure with the critical engagement of those who will view the work. As an artist that identifies as a cultural hybrid, I operate from a place of self-reflexivity through the research, cultivation and communication of transcultural ideas. By assuming the role of cultural intermediary, I guide my subjects to communicate personal narratives that are at once private and distinct, yet ultimately communal and universal.

Family photographs foster intergenerational storytelling. These shared dialogues transform historical experience, with much imaginative investment, into familial parables designed to educate younger generations of the transitions of the past that have enable their state of being. In particular for the children of migrants there exists the 'postmemory' of an almost mythical place of ancestral origin in combination with the 'transgenerational haunting' of historical routes that encompass economic adversities, racial prejudices, genealogical dislocations and cultural fusions. These transgenerational narratives reverberate throughout *Of being and becoming* (Fig.21) as each of my subjects unpack their historical baggage in order to project their own individualism. The series engages with the archival photograph in acts of shared remembrance, preserving these intimate vignettes from the erasures of historic amnesia and cultural complacency.

*Of being and becoming* examines our modern day mythologies and portrays lyrical evocations of the shifting paradigms of global identification. The series achieves polyphony of voice through the soundscape of multiple, overlapping and intertwining narratives. Sourced from interviews with my subjects, the installation's aural accompaniment provides intimate remembrances, cultural anecdotes and socio-political insights to the genealogical histories that are visualized. Through the authority of voice, rich with its distinct accents and intonations, we witness cultural transfigurations measured one story at a time. The series emphasizes the power of personal testimony in shaping our knowledge of socio-cultural and historical experiences.

Weems's visual methodologies disrupt conventionalized perception. Her deconstruction of ethnographic representations from within the institutional archive, powerfully portray the way that subaltern identities have been decentred throughout the historical record. Similarly my re-staged family photographs offer an alternate take on historical and genealogical representation. Each of my subjects' familial histories offers a window onto private narratives that map colonial and postcolonial geographies. Some of the interpersonal dialogues revealed cultural conflicts, social immobility and historical subjugation, while others portray more fluid negotiations of cultural translation and personal transformation.

Throughout her work Weems closely examines the relationship between acts of looking and the dimensions of power and control. She deconstructs visual rhetoric in order to critique our unquestioning prescription to conventional ideologies. *Of being and becoming* also employs photographs as loci of ideological resistance, seeking to dismantle our inherited social conditioning. Through the spirit of the surreal, my repeated imagery brings to the surface Oedipal incongruities and cultural disjunctures in an attempt to unravel the socio-political scripts that engender conventional

ethnographic and familial representations. My subjects thus employ active revision of identifying narratives to become agents in their storytelling.

More often than not, lingering beneath seamless appearances, family photographs mask untold narratives and conflicts. Photography theorist Geoffrey Batchen explains that photographs require a disruption to their semblance of the real in order to break with conventionalized perception.<sup>60</sup> Visual theorist Clive Scott echoes these sentiments, claiming that in order for photographs to exist as sites of constructive memory they must be discrepant and incongruous.<sup>61</sup> Weems's textual interludes reposition her visual images and interrupt our habitual production of meaning. Likewise, my use of visual mimicry embodies a kind of uncanny repetition that moves perceptions out of the conventional trappings of the past and into the dynamic and shifting present. While the series motions towards an evocative and emotional exchange of image and narrative, the efficacy of the work relies on solicitations of memory and the dynamic engagement of each viewer through whom individual meaning is filtered.

The narratives in *Of being and becoming* explore ideas of exile, transculturation and intergenerational shifts in belonging and home. From these examinations we may recognize that uprooted migrants often experience a lifelong and unresolved struggle with re-attaining a sense of home. The hybrid or transnational on the other hand, have come to regard belonging as a site of multiple associations, tenuously tied to both familial histories and to a complex set of factors that inform their individual constitution. My re-embodied tableaux depict transcultural identification as partially tangible and largely imaginary, tentatively secured by familial and cultural roots, yet entirely subject to flux and transfiguration.

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<sup>60</sup> Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), 94.

<sup>61</sup> Clive Scott, *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), 236.

As discussed in the chapter to follow, my art practice reveals that hybrid identifications are fundamentally fragmentary, characterized by personal metamorphosis and intergenerational re-creation.

"I was born in Warracknabeal in Victoria. I live in Sydney now, but I've lived in Yackandandah and Shepparton, Victoria; a series of ever-smaller sheep and wheat farms that my parents owned. When I was little photographs were really important. I often used to go through them with my parents and have a look at photos from our family history and have those stories explained to me. So I had a large sense of who we were and where we'd come from based on photographs.

My background is Scottish, our family on both sides immigrated in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century so we've been in Australia for five generations. I'm quite fascinated by Scottish heritage and a sense of where I came from but they're such loose ties and I think that any claim on my part to access that would be fairly tenuous. I'm quite interested but I think you reinvent yourself generation by generation. Just because an ancestor of mine was whoever they were in Scotland, there may be a small, minute measure of pride in that but then, you are I think largely the invention of yourself in your own lifetime, perhaps a little bit of your parents and a little bit of your grandparents, or a lot of your parents and a little of your grandparents.

This is a photograph of James Stanley Marchbank who is my paternal grandfather. He was a farmer. My dad's family had all been sheep and wheat farmers in Victoria since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The photograph was taken in 1941, just before he was about to depart for service in Singapore to defend the borders of the commonwealth against the Japanese. It's a black and white photograph. He's in his military uniform with his slouch hat, looking off into the distance, eyes full of hope and expectation. He's part of the eighth division signals and his unit insignia is sewn onto the sleeve of his military uniform. Shortly after they arrived, Singapore fell and he was transported to Changi prison as an Australian P.O.W. After Changi he was sent to work on the Burma railway from 1943-1945, at a number of

different camps before they were repatriated. He had pretty hellish experiences there suffering from dysentery, beriberi and skin complaints. He was really malnourished; he was a skeleton, so much so that he ate furiously upon return.

This photograph is significant because my grandfather is a big part of my life and a big part of my father's life too. He never really spoke about his war service right until the end of his life but obviously those experiences were a major shaping part of his identity. He was very gentle and compassionate, but he could be quite a grim man. You got a sense of the hurt and the experiences that he must have carried through his life and in this photograph I can see a side of him perhaps before he experienced all of those things. It permits an understanding of him that I might not have otherwise had.

My mum's father was a pilot in the RAAF and my father was in the army reserve, so some sort of military involvement was always part of our family life. I had considered at points joining the army or the air force, but I think in my teenage years I repudiated those things. I look a lot like my father, and my father looks a lot like my grandfather, so there's also an eerie sense that that could've been me had I been living during the 1940s. I have this dilation of time looking at him, that collapsing of time. One of things that we do maintain because of our Scots heritage is that all of the boys have the same first name. So my full name is James Thomas Marchbank, and his full name is James Stanley Marchbank, that sort of heightens the eeriness of slipping in and out of time because there's only one degree removed in our names."

Thom Marchbank, 2012 (Fig.22)

*Memory cuts both ways; the act of remembering someone is surely also about the position of oneself, about the affirmation of one's own place in time and space, about establishing oneself within a social and historical network of relationships.<sup>62</sup> - Geoffrey Batchen*



**(Fig.22)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

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<sup>62</sup> Geoffrey Batchen, *Forget Me Not*, 97.

Previous to commencing my Master of Fine Arts candidature, I produced a set of portraits of individuals in their home environment that addressed ideas of self-definition in relation to personal histories of migration and cultural transitions. Exhibited in September 2010 at Concordia University in Montreal the series entitled, *boxed: and if you must put me in a box, make sure it's a big box*<sup>63</sup> (Fig.23), visualized spaces of transculturation and explored the multiple sites of heritage that my subjects choose to retain, preserve or in several cases, rediscover or reimagine.

I began my Master of Fine Arts study hoping to expand these ideas of cross-cultural identification, with my own family history and photographic archive as potential inspiration. While the idea of investigating my family's narratives was certainly an appealing one, I found that I desired to learn about the experiences of other people whose intercultural narratives followed different paths to that of mine, yet who also occupied similar, deeply ambivalent spaces of hybrid identification. In photographing numerous subjects I felt I could achieve a more comprehensive survey of cultural transformations in our contemporary times. Aiming to capture a vignette of the hybrid condition, I was interested in portraying what it meant to draw on, or be drawn by, more than one set of identifying influences and I began experimenting with how this could be investigated through contemporary photographic practices.

Concurrent to my postgraduate studies, I exhibited two photographic works that examined on a more autobiographical level several of the themes that I was beginning to explore in my research. The triptych *Gone are the days bonfires make me think of you*<sup>64</sup> (Figs.24-25) shown at Paper Plane Gallery in February 2012, considers the ways in which our personal memories and experiences of photographs invariably transform over time.

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<sup>63</sup> Dan Bern. Lyrics from "Jerusalem," *Dan Bern. Work Records*, 1997.

<sup>64</sup> Spencer Krug. Lyrics from "Silver Moons," *Dragonslayer*. Jagjaguwar Records, 2009.



**(Fig.25)** Ling Yuen, from the series *boxed: and if you must put me in a box, make sure it's a big box*, 2010. Type C Print. 20"x20".



**(Fig.26)** Ling Yuen, *Gone are the days bonfires make me think of you*, 2011.  
Pigment Prints each 16"x30".



**(Fig.27)** Ling Yuen, panel one of *Gone are the days bonfires make me think of you*, 2011.  
Pigment Print. 16"x30".



(Fig.26) Ling Yuen, from the series *One Year*, 2011-2012.  
 Pigment Prints, each 6"x9".

The series *One year* (Fig.26) exhibited at Sydney College of the Arts Graduate School Gallery in April 2012 and Verge Gallery in May 2012 consists of 54 photographs that I had taken within the span of one year during which I had moved from Canada to Australia. In the process of departing and arriving, the images portray interpersonal negotiations with people, places and psychological spaces, as physical and emotional connections were both severed and remade. The use of sequence in both works further explores the ambiguities of photographic meaning as connections form across images, conjuring associations that may or may not be historically accurate. Both works evoke narratives that require imaginative investments and personal projections in order to articulate meaning. The works *Gone are the days bonfires make me think of you* and *One year* demonstrate that photographs are objects loaded with personal memories and cultural associations. Family photographs in particular are deeply enchanting as they engender the ritual transfer of history, knowledge and cultural experience across generations. Our family photographs, weighted by sentiment and nostalgia, become an integral part of the very mythology in which we are each distinctively draped.

Intergenerational family photographs possess such disarming familiarity and resounding potential for self-recognition. They speak not only of genealogical history but they offer us a sense of socio-cultural endurance. Hirsch explains that the complex exchange of gazes, projections and desires that take place when we view family photographs constitute a kind of self-portraiture in the act of looking itself.<sup>65</sup> I began utilizing the family photograph in my image making to bring this symbolic exchange to fruition. I believed that exploring old photographs through the performance of re-enactment could be a subtle, yet powerful way of examining historical narratives and depicting intergenerational and intercultural 'roots' and 'routes'. Re-enactment seemed to offer a method in

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<sup>65</sup> Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 83.

which I, as a researcher and artist, could form dynamic collaborations with my participants to create avenues that would lead to interpersonal revelation and new cultural information.

### **Processes of the Past**

When photographing for the series *boxed*, I was often meeting subjects for the first time. The photographing process involved lengthy conversation and I aimed to translate this exchange into each portrait. Many sittings involved varying degrees of impromptu performance for the camera as subjects demonstrated cultural actions or personal rituals. Though I was pleased with the series' visual outcome, I lamented over not having recorded the vocal narratives. I wished to have employed the power of oration and richness of voice to complement the visual information of the still photograph. From this experience I decided that I would record audio interviews with my subjects for *Of being and becoming*, that this new photographic work would have an aural accompaniment.

In order to achieve a more democratic level of collaboration I felt it important that my subjects be instrumental in the selection of the image that would be re-photographed. The organizing and assembling of costumes, props and locations was a combined effort and as a result my subjects were partial producers of the subsequent images. Certainly, though I directed my sitters using the original image as a guide, the performance and embodiment was entirely their own domain. I also believed that my subject's selection of photograph could offer insight into our social relationship with intergenerational imagery and illustrate the way in which we employ family photographs at different stages throughout our lifetimes in order to reinforce our own need for identification.



(Fig.27) Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment prints on silver rag, each 11x16cm.

My focus was on young adults roughly in their 30s as a demographic who were in the process of considering more seriously the various influences that contribute to their self-definition. My only criteria was that the old family photograph should come from previous generations as I wanted to avoid the impulsive narcissism of revisiting one's own self image as a infant or child. Additionally, the aim of the re-enactment was to explore lines of identification across generations and to measure the cultural distance travelled over genealogical time.

Upon asking my subjects to choose a photograph that they identify with, I found the vast majority of those who were in romantic relationships choose to re-enact images of parents or grandparents pictured in happy union, and to immerse their current partners in this historic, idealized imagery. Those not in relationships selected narratives that reinforced their present social positioning, for example, Edith (Fig.29), newly separated, and Lisa, single, were drawn to an image of their respective grandmother and mother embodying female autonomy and self-determination despite stifling familial pressures and societal expectations. Nitasha, single, selected an image of her two aunts that she re-staged with her younger sister, Shivani, engaged (Fig.7). The simple portrait speaks volumes about intercultural choice with the two sisters curiously clothed in conflicting dress. When I asked Nitasha who would be wearing the sari she replied without hesitation, "I don't own a Sari, Shivani has a quite a few, besides, it's fitting, I'm about to buy property, I should be wearing the pants." Several of my subjects proudly selected images that inserted their familial heritage into mainstream historical narratives, most notably through military or vocational associations. By situating our own private stories alongside collective historic contexts we insert our narratives into the architecture of popular knowledge and understanding. My subjects' choice of image powerfully demonstrated that, while the exercise of contemplating old

photographs looked to the past, the process of interpretation, identification and projection, were profoundly rooted in the present.

### **Negotiating Mimesis**

In the process of re-photographing I strived for gestures of repetition in pose, expression, dress, setting, form and colour; yet I intentionally avoided pure imitation. Just as my restaged photographs embody new subjects, I felt that their representations should reflect new subjectivities and display evidence of contemporaneity and fundamental divergence from the original image. Therefore, while the re-enactment critically informed the process of photographing, it became less important to the consideration of the final images. As a series, the images explore evocations of the past interacting with realities of the present and thus employ actions of mimesis and repetition in order to reveal dissonance and transformation.

My subjects' original photographs were visibly dated by their black and white or faded colour appearances and were marked by varying degrees of physical disrepair and photographic 'flaws,' such as blurring, incorrectly exposures, stark shadows and awkward framing. I chose not to remain true to these visual particularities in my new imagery, instead employing desaturated colour to portray the intersection of the archival with the contemporary and to unify the images as an independent series, irrespective of their referents.

The process of re-enactment was partially my way of negotiating the change in context of introducing private photographs into public dialogue through exhibition as an artwork. The methodology resurrects an existing image but alters its meaning, offering access to new narratives, memories and experiences. In keeping with this open-ended perspective, I needed to resolve how to present image with sound in a way that was not overtly literal, linear or didactic.



(Fig.28) Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment prints on silver rag, each 11x16cm.

I decided to utilize fragmented and overlapping voice to contribute to this multi-layered, multi-narrative approach to historical remembrance. My aural accompaniment emphasizes the radial nature of memories and experiences so succinctly described by John Berger in his photographic essay 'Ways of Remembering'.<sup>66</sup> Its multiplicity of voice animates the abundance of stories and associations that overarch and reappear in our memories throughout our lifetimes. As the viewer engages in the installation they must call on their own subjectivity and upon entering into the work's dialogues, they ultimately altering its meanings.

### **Changing Perspectives in Cultural Epistemology**

As the project contemplates issues of transculturation, I had initially considered focusing on subjects who were ethnic minorities or culturally marginalized. I soon realized that this was an extremely flawed and outdated preconception of contemporary society. All Australians, notwithstanding the indigenous population, are essentially generations of migrants. Whether one's ancestors were subjects of early British settlements or of the subsequent waves of European, Asian, Middle Eastern or African Diasporas, Australians are now becoming aware of the inherent hybridity of their collective identification. Some subjects who doubted whether they could offer the project culturally diverse narratives revealed rich mixed heritages, while others maintained their cultural distinctions even though some would regard their Irish or Scots heritage as indicative of Australia's Anglo-Celtic cultural *norm*. Irrespective of race, many of the dialogues that emerged from the interviews were intergenerational accounts of social prejudices countered by endeavours in acculturation and adaptation. Many subjects experienced varying degrees of alienation during their youth due to cultural differences with their peers, while some spoke of interfamilial conflicts when significant social transformations had occurred between generations. As adults, my subjects now recognize the

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<sup>66</sup> John Berger, "Ways of Remembering," *The Camerawork Essays: Context and Meaning in Photographs*, ed. Jessica Evans, 46-47 (London: Rivers Oram Press, 1997).

changing face of global populations in which cultural diversity is rapidly becoming normalized and cultural identifications that were once historically excluded or suppressed are now proudly regarded as the very substance of contemporary society.

It is significant to note that while my subjects are currently living in Australia and Canada, the majority of intergenerational images that were re-staged for this project originated in other countries. Though suggestions of ethnicity are found in the original images, the photograph's dominant information is undeniably ubiquitous. The images can be visually traced, not to racial or national origin, but to specific eras of production due to unilateral stylistic conventions. For better or for worse, the visual rhetoric of photography transgresses language and culture to mimic, unify and universalize human social experience. Yet, perhaps it is upon this common ground that photographs are most powerfully able to act as sites of intergenerational and intercultural exchange.

*Of being and becoming* explores how identity is formulated through a fusion of contemporary socialization, familial history, personal subjectivity and intangible memory. The series addresses how our social and familial experience of photographs condition us to situate ourselves within its conventional, normalizing narratives, yet it is from this process of homogenization that we risk losing our grasp on our distinct cultural and historic individuality. My installation of refigured family imagery and interweaving dialogue explores the photograph's intermediary space in which the shape of our own identification may be recognized, reconsidered and re-imagined.

*Once a story is told, it ceases to be a story:  
it becomes a piece of history.*<sup>67</sup> – Carolyn Steedman



**(Fig.29)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

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<sup>67</sup> Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (London: Virago Press, 1989), 143.

*Of being and becoming* embarks on the reawakening of intergenerational remembrance by exploring the transitional space in which the vernacular photograph becomes historic testament when it intersects with the subjectivity of oral transmissions and the powerful poetics of memory and 'postmemory'. The work explores ideas of identity in the re-telling, or re-articulation of the past. Its methodology reincarnates archived photographs into new autobiographic expressions. Fusing the private with the social, individual experience with historical knowledge and personal memory with collective associations, viewers are invited into a dynamic landscape of shared experience and cultural exchange.

*Of being and becoming* (Fig.30) addresses the social and historical transactions of photographs in our contemporary culture. Through re-enactments, my subjects offer their contemporary bodies as sites of historic signification, producing cross-cultural and intergenerational evocations that chart genealogical experiences and remembrances throughout time and space. As Allan Sekula's studies in physiognomy and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theories of subjectification attest, our bodies are a surface upon which others relentlessly project ideas about our identification. In response, my re-staged photographs employ embodiment as an act of self-redefinition. My participants select and assume genealogical guises to effectively *project back*.

My intergenerational re-enactments extend the historical scope of self-representation and allow my subjects to approach their relationship to the past from various perspectives. Performing in their own familial theatre, they experience for a moment what it might feel like to step into an ancestor's skin and to embody a moment of history. bell hooks acknowledges that we have all been historically conditioned to inhabit certain cultural and familial roles. Michel Foucault also states that we have habitually succumbed to society's 'disciplinary gaze.' Accordingly, the

project's process of personification and imaginative interplay, proved an empowering opportunity for my subjects to deconstruct prescriptive and controlling social imagery, to reconstruct familial mythologies and to re-write their own historic imagery.

Visual culture, in particular the photographic, powerfully contributes to the creation and maintenance of communal belonging, among however, only a select portion of the population. As a result, visual representations often promote idealized identifications that are highly exclusionary. By way of response the artworks discussed in this dissertation contemplate how identities have been represented, or more precisely misrepresented, throughout photographic history. Reinforced by the socio-cultural analysis of Jo Spence, *Of being and becoming* examines family photographs as sites of identification that are likewise, influenced by wider historical and political signification. Contemporary artists Simryn Gill, Mohini Chandra and Carrie Mae Weems address these complicated socio-historical considerations to create a kind of counter-photography of cultural representation. Similarly, the dialogues unearthed by my postgraduate research and art practice address the 'under-narrativisation'<sup>68</sup> of hybrid, transcultural identifications. *Of being and becoming* portrays issues of displacement, adaptation and transformation, pervaded by the emotional pull of individual memory engaging with the power of Marianne Hirsch's intergenerational 'postmemory'. Instigating the sociability of storytelling, my series illustrates Annette Kuhn's descriptions of the link between the vernacular photograph and the transmission of *petites histoires*; rendering the photograph's image, that which is visually captured in the photographic frame, as the mere beginning of its social lifespan.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 205.

<sup>69</sup> Steven Feld, Virginia Ryan. "Collaborative Migrations: Contemporary Art in/as Anthropology," *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice*, eds. Arnd Schneider, Christopher Wright, 112 (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010).

My work explores the shift in context of photographs that transitions from the private to the public, the vernacular to the critical, and the social to the theoretical. Correspondingly, contemporary historians such as Elizabeth Edwards describe new approaches in anthropology and cultural studies that embrace the prosaic experience of every individual as sites of critical and theoretical analysis.<sup>70</sup> This approach favours the intertextuality of cultural nuance and experiential memory, rather than the inflexibility of historical facts or scientific classifications, and thus enables a more poetic examination of the socio-cultural gestalt of our movements in historic time.

*Of being and becoming* draws on tenuous personal memory and sumptuous familial heritage in order to explore the very tangible transformative effects that global politics have had on the hybrid individual. Engaging both visual and verbal narratives, the series retraces historical migratory momentums, theorized by Edward Said, Stuart Hall and Homi Bhabha as stemming from the socio-economic inequities of imperialism, colonialism and globalism. *Of being and becoming* seeks to give voice to personal narratives and historical experiences that have been subsequently silenced or that continue to be submerged. Its explorations portray dynamic dialogues of diaspora and dislocation, racial discrimination and social marginality, and ethnic conflict and cultural convergence.

Ien Ang writes:

*“the meaning of heritage is profoundly symbolic: how and what we value in the past says something about how we see ourselves as a community today and how we project ourselves into the future.”*

Ang believes that in order to develop a healthy and positive relationship with our heritage, we require access to a shared history that is inclusive

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<sup>70</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, 203.

and open, not exclusionary and absolute.<sup>71</sup> Postcolonial art practices move towards expanding the historical cannon in order to transform notions of heritage beyond the preservation and promotion of a selective, patriotic past. New hybrid perspectives regard history as a living entity that can and should be continually contributed to by all, particularly the marginalized and repressed. This sense of reflexivity demonstrated in *Of being and becoming*, and promoted by cultural theorist Frantz Fanon, leaves historical knowledge open to interpretation, contestation, revision and re-imagination.

Like Gill, Chandra and Weems, I stage resistance through my art practice, disrupting photographic conventions to explore new cultural terrain. Hybrid in both subject and approach, *Of being and becoming* seeks new ways to depict the increasing multiplicity of contemporary identities. Through the opposing forces of mimicry and divergence, the series aspires to achieve a personal poignancy while simultaneously examining issues of critical and political significance. Challenging traditional depictions of family, community and nation, the work deconstructs representational ideologies to access new spaces of self-definition and expression.

The works of Gill, Chandra and Weems, each in their own eloquence, investigate deeply ambivalent ideas about contemporary identity and belonging. Working in collaboration with specific communities, they redefine the artist/subject dichotomy, acting as interpreters in processes that are inclusionary and participatory. Through *Of being and becoming* I confront issues of personal implication and by way of social mediation, employ a more egalitarian approach to my art practice. Examining issues pertinent to contemporary thought and critical theory, such as globalism and postcolonialism, race and representation, and social degradation and

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<sup>71</sup> Ien Ang, *Intertwining Histories: Heritage and Diversity* (NSW: History Council of NSW, 2002), no page.

cultural reclamation, I employ the photograph to investigate physical and psychological spaces of community and belonging.

Theorist Benedict Andersen describes how governments and institutions attempt to structure populations through socio-political classification, that is, by nationality, ethnicity, gender, marital status, education and economic class. However, these superficial and limiting social constructs say very little about the more complicated network of influences that constitute our individuality. Rigid and imposed social classifications cannot begin to convey a cohesive notion of our selves and our cultural and historical composition; they fall short of communicating who we really are, how we have come to be, or what we hope to become. Identity is our conception of personhood, much of which cannot be superficially displayed nor easily deduced. My Master of Fine Arts research and practice examines how photographs can be employed to explore the complexities of identity in contemporary times. Through *Of being and becoming* I present an interactive space in which the poetics of identity can be reexamined, rewritten and re-visualized - where each of our stories can be told.



**(Fig.30)** Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

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(Fig.31) Ling Yuen, *Of being and becoming*. 2011-2012.  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.

# Catalogue of Work Presented for Examination

## Of being and becoming, 2011-2012

1. *Maya Devi & Venkatamma Naiker Nadi, Fiji 1970s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
2. *Stanley Marchbank Bonegilla, Australia 1941*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
3. *George & Freda Cooke Scarborough, United Kingdom 1939*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
4. *Tureiti June Stevens Kaitaia, New Zealand 1960s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
5. *Maisie (Mary) Walsh Duleek, Ireland 1940s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
6. *Janice Gersbach & Fred McLean Sydney, Australia 1969*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
7. *Louis Umberto Gonzales Valparaiso, Chile 1930s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, 112x76cm.
8. *Sydney, Australia 2011 / Jakarta, Indonesia 1957*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.
9. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Valparaiso, Chile 1930s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
10. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Kaitaia, New Zealand 1960s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
11. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Suva, Fiji 1982*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.
12. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Nadi, Fiji 1970s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
13. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Romania 1930s*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
14. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Hong Kong 1974*, 2011-2012,  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.

15. *Montreal, Canada 2011 / Montreal, Canada 1978, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.
16. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Fiji 1910-1920s, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
17. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Bonegilla, Australia 1941, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
18. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Scarborough, United Kingdom 1939, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
19. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Russia 1955, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
20. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Woodville, SA, Australia 1975, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
21. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Sydney, Australia 1976, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.
22. *Montreal, Canada 2011 / Cirebon, Indonesia 1977, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
23. *Sydney, Australia 2011 / Duleek, Ireland 1940s, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
24. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Sydney, Australia 1991, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
25. *Montreal, Canada 2011 / Montreal, Canada 1972, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.
26. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Sydney, Australia 1976, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
27. *Sydney, Australia 2011 / Sydney, Australia 1969, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 16x11cm.
28. *Sydney, Australia 2012 / Christchurch, New Zealand 1970, 2011-2012,*  
Pigment print on silver rag, each image 11x16cm.