

**MATERIAL
NOSTALGIA**

FOUND POLAROIDS

MATERIAL NOSTALGIA: FOUND POLAROIDS

Nostalgia and the Material Turn in Creative Practices

This booklet is a result of a workshop exploring the material turn and its antagonistic position to prevailing digital modes of creation. Situated within the turn back to analogue processes and aesthetics, the workshop explored issues of nostalgia, the relic, object journey, collaborative creation, and the interplay between the digital and the analogue. The discussion of the above themes culminated in a flash-fiction exercise, using images from The Found Polaroids project. Participants chose a Polaroid and created a short narrative inspired by the image. Here, the collected stories have been compiled, resulting in a narrative collection of subjective responses to relics from the past. This book is a tangible remnant of the workshop's discussion, with print acting as an antidote to digital ubiquity, and its contents reflecting the nostalgia we often imbue our material objects with.

Edited by Emma Sharpe and Kyler Zeleny

Layout by Noah Earle (www.ablecreates.com)

Workshop part of the 2016 Intersections / Cross Sections
Annual Graduate Conference and Art Exhibition at
York and Ryerson University.

Workshop facilitated by Emma Sharpe and Kyler Zeleny.
Images graciously supplied by the Found Polaroids Project
www.foundpolaroids.com



Laura took out the creased old Polaroid she always kept in her purse and studied it. It had been her 16th summer, the best one she's ever had. She smiled. She had left that life behind when she'd boarded the plane to Oaxaca.



Three weeks before my man hormones kick in. (So I hope).
I imagine myself: thick beard, thicker armpit hair. Tall probably.
My voice lower and deeper than my father's. But sweeter.
Because I'm sweet. Sweet like doilies, cinnamon buns,
and cherries. It's my favourite. It's also my Dad's and he
says it was my grandfather's too, who also had
a thick beard, with thicker armpit hair and a
voice so low you could not hear it.



I am Chris. I live in a small town. Mr. Smith is the only barber here. Everytime I get my haircut here, I am worried about my safety. Will Mr. Smith cut off one of my ears? He is the one who controls scissors. Everytime I have to get my hair cut, I feel so sad. Every time I finish it, it looks like I have a new life.



THIS IS ALLEN ON HIS FIRST DAY OF WORK.

He works at a bank. His Aunt Ruth decided to take him out to a fancy restaurant to celebrate. Ruth's husband, Larry, is taking the picture. Although Ruth and Larry are married, Allan does not call Larry Uncle Larry since Ruth married when Allan was quite late into his teens.



CHURCH WAS MY WEEKLY PENANCE.

Not to God but to my Dad, or maybe some belief that I had to go be bored to make up for the fortunate life I got to enjoy. After church my sister and I played with sugar cubes or chewed on Styrofoam cups waiting for Dad to finish his coffee and socializing.



WRIST TO RISK AND CHEEK TO LIPS.

“Let’s compare mine to yours”

- This was the end of our (rail) road.



IT WAS A HAPPY DAY FOR THE MOST PART.

But right after this image was taken, with the flash of the polaroid, all of the lilac balloons popped at once.

After that, everything else felt strange that day.

I haven’t bought lilac balloons since.

Or taken any polaroids.



JEPHINA,

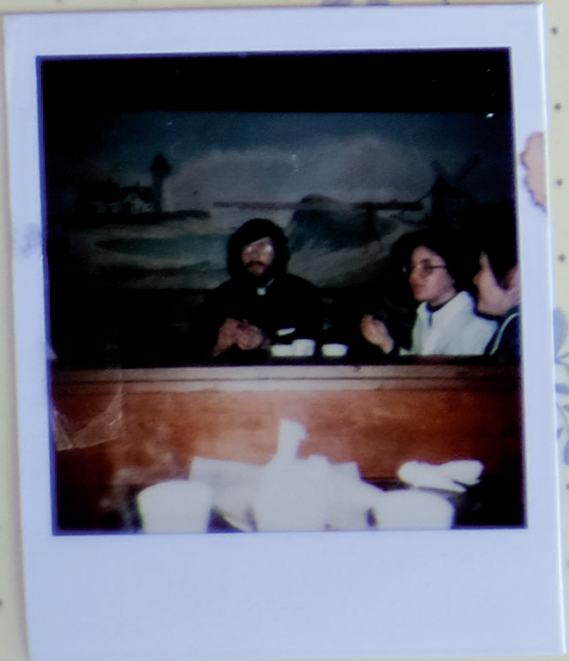
It has been exactly one year since she left us. August 23, 1982 is a date that will forever burn in my mind. 1983 has become a year of emptiness, sorrow and despair. Her voice speaks out in my dreams, and her laughter echoes in my heart.

Time will continue to pass, and I worry that my heart will collapse from within.

I miss you my dear sweetheart. You are my love and my light.

May God bless you. You are forever in my heart.

Your Papa







She spent her money on Louis Vuitton luggage, long-distance phone bills, fresh flowers for herself every Friday. She called an ex-lover who lived in Montana and told him she was now a blonde.

“Never liked blondes,” his voice crackled on the line, and she smiled and said, “I know.” The bag sat packed beside her. She crossed names off the list as she called. John, Jim, Jason. The sound of their breath static and similar through the receiver. She bent over the telephone cord as though imposing her own body on them. Her voice was something rarely forgotten.



SHE HALF TURNED TO LOOK AT ME,

her cheek still resting on her hand, and I realized I'd interrupted a reverie. Eyes half closed, her sidelong expression under those thin pencilled eyebrows reminded me of a silent movie heroine – her usual sweetness touched with a weariness of the world.



THIS IS MY BABY GRAND-DAUGHTER

and daughter four days after giving birth. They just came home from the hospital yesterday right in time for the air conditioner to break. There has been a heat wave for the past two weeks, but I think it's a blessing because she's been sleeping like an angel.



THE SUMMER HEAT IS BACK AGAIN.

We've lived in California for nearly 12 years,
and I still haven't got used to it. We went for a
walk today, out back; I so love walking with
Lisa and Sarah. I'm not looking forward
to the day my two girls leave home.



THESE ARE EVERYONE'S CUPBOARDS.

The cookbooks are not unlike your own.
Your mother, your grandma were the original
hipsters – you're always one step behind.
You know what the bottom of the table looks
like, you've memorized the loose tile. Every dish
has a story, all familiar flavours new. But the
moment captured is always still a surprise.



“You stole my chicken!”

uproar, laughter

wedged between your

salty, sticky fingers.

Crushed aluminum masterpiece

in my palm

I watched you,

salivating,

feast in a frame

above your full plate.

Thanks. No thanks.

Every. Damn. Year.



Remember that day, Dad, back in 1978, before 'take your kids to work' was an annual thing, when I put on a jacket, sat at your desk, and called one of your clients to sell them some of your cleaning supplies. My first sale! Now, all these years later, I dread picking up the phone every morning.

Turns out this was all about spending the day with you instead of learning how to make a buck. Wish I had a few more days like that to spare.

CONTRIBUTORS

Kris Bertram, page 8

Elyse Bouvier, page 16

Sarah Brown, page 13

Ian Fitzgerald, page 6, top left

Alison Hedley, page 14, top left

Samantha Hogg, page 15, top right

Eileen Mary Holowka, page 15, bottom right

Aleks Kaminska, page 7, bottom right

Paul Moore, page 17

Ana Rita Morais, page 7, top right

Leslie Schumacher, page 14, bottom left

Alexandra Simpson, page 4

Milena Stanoeva, page 3

Emilie St. Hilaire, page 6, bottom left

Han Zhao, page 5

Centerfold photo by Kyler Zeleny pages 10 & 11



