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AfterImage

Family Folklore and the Plurality of Memory

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

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because without the lamination of your history, skills and faith onto mine,
A Lonely Place Facing The Sun would not exist.

*The people of my mother's family have been
olive-growers, fishermen, sheep farmers, mothers and migrants
who made their home on an isolated shore.*

*The first of these was Antonino Moleta,
my great grandfather, who sailed from his home on one island,
Isola Stromboli, to settle on another island,
Rangitoto ki te Tonga, D'Urville Island.*

*Next in this tale is Rosa Criscillo, who joined him,
and joined with him, to bear a deced of children.*

*And Vincenzo, who was born third to last,
who fathered Marie-Jean, also third to last.*

And then I arrived, eldest child, grandchild, great grandchild.

*I have a pair of sons of my own now, who will become the next inheritors
of this Moleta legacy.*

They already carry a look about them, of strong Italian boys.

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Abstract

AfterImage - Family Folklore and the Plurality of Memory is a site-responsive, archivally motivated investigation of memory and its permeability. It draws upon the narrative legacies of the Moleta family and the Rangitoto ki te Tonga | D'Urville Island property they inhabited throughout the twentieth century. This exegesis examines the complexity of making work that responds to acts of personal and collective remembering. Passing time, discrete perspectives and their influence on memory, and the fickle kinship of memory and truth are discussed.

I attend to the uncomfortable history of my colonial settler ancestry, and in conjunction with this, consider female domestic experience through critical analysis of experimental test works that engage with photography and moving image, including *Matrilineal Residue* and *A Family Folklore*. The use and manipulation of archival sources is discussed in relation to the work of artist Emily Parr, including my exploitation of biographical objects as indexes of the transmission of intergenerational knowledge.

A Lonely Place Facing The Sun and *Her Oscillating Care* are among the moving image installation works discussed in relation to the intermediality of still photography and moving image combinations, and modes of poetic documentary. The intersecting binary of movement and stillness makes room for a plethora of others - past and present, dead and alive, fixed and transforming. The materiality of light and surface take on new significance, in both moving-still and moving image installation works, leading to ideas about the immersive qualities of digital projection and the occupancy of a darkened three dimensional space. I describe the framework of decision making that leads to metaphorical expressions of memory and time, and the punctuating and repeating moments that hold meaning in the creative work.

The Pervasive Redolence of Waitai

My matrilineal history traverses a collection of remote and rugged places. It began on Stromboli, one of the Aeolian Islands north of Sicily, and continued to Waitai, a steep, windswept, isolated property at the north-eastern end of Rangitoto ki te Tonga | D'Urville Island. Translated as 'Salt Water', Waitai had an earlier name given by Ngati Kuia, 'Mukahanga', or *a lonely place facing the sun*, which is a description that could equally be applied to Waitui, the farm at the frayed outer limit of the Te Taihū-o-te-Waka | Marlborough Sounds that the Moleta family relocated to in the days following my own birth. These two ancestral places are separated by just thirty kilometers of the Cook Strait, and they are visible to each other from their steep hilltops. Waitui is the place of my own childhood holiday memories, while Waitai is the origin of absolutely all of my mother's.

The work that has blossomed from this time of Master's research is both archive and site-responsive. I examine the ways that these sites may be imbued with collective and individual memory, and add the complexity of making work *about* a place while largely not being physically present in that place. I utilise photographic and moving image applications to bridge the span between the known realities of my own geographical location, with the formerly imagined places that my Italian migrant family settled.

As my family ages, I am responsible as a guardian of the archive of stories and photographs, and in that capacity I embrace the multiplicity of voices from the web of connected people associated with the Moleta name. Predominantly, I have attended to those memories that are spoken to me by my mother, because of the role they have had in forming my identity, and because of my primary interest in the female colonial-settler experience. The matriarchal narrative has been documented with less detail in our written and photographic histories than that of the heroic male counterparts.

What has become apparent through this gathering and interrogation of family memory is that there is a plurality at work. The stories alter according to the speaker and their social and temporal distance from the events they describe. The closing work for this masters, *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* (Fig. 1), honours that plurality, through layering and repetition, fragments and glimpses, delivered through the presentation of projected digital video installation.

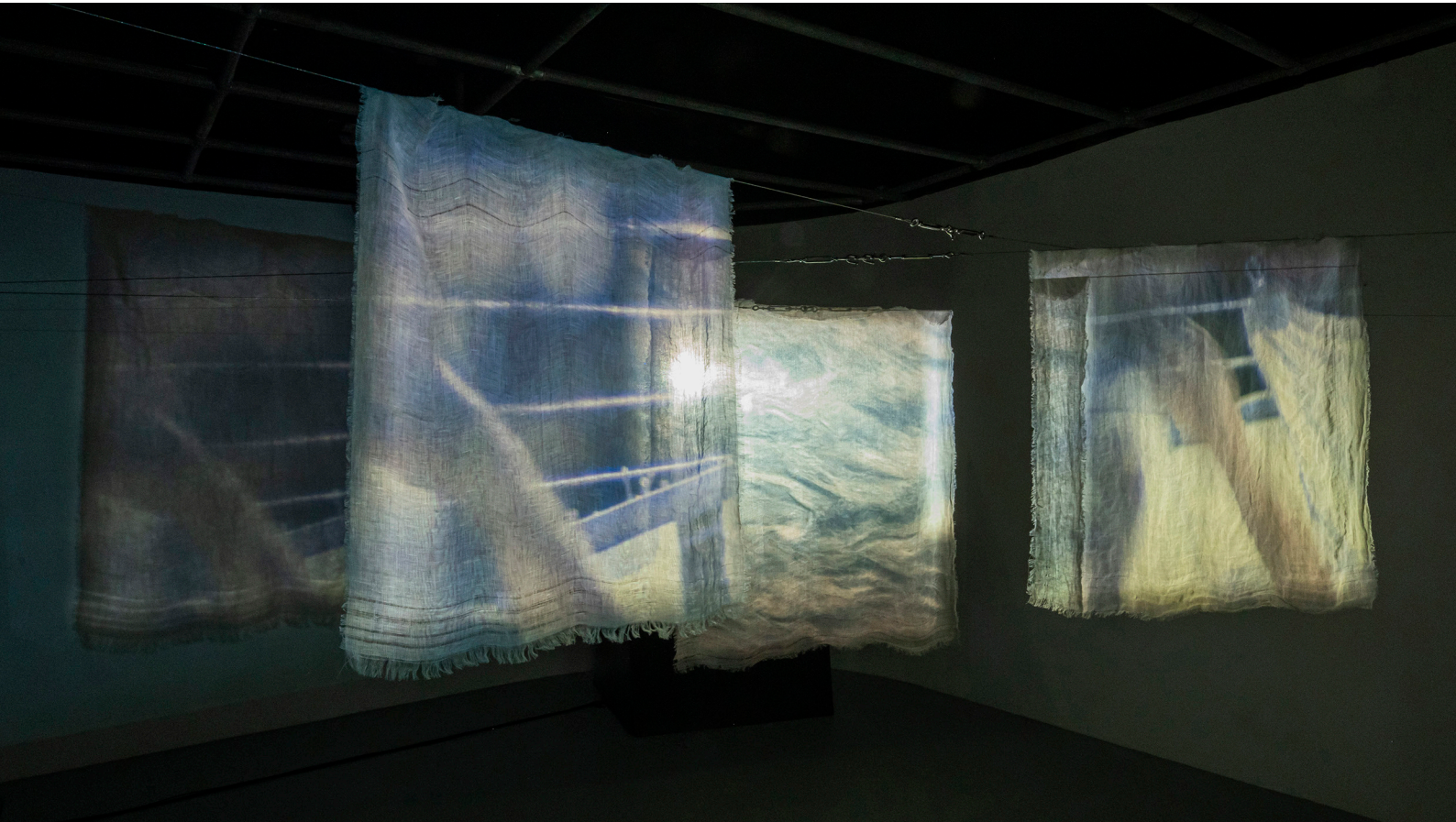


Figure 1. *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun*, 2025. Installation view, Toi Rauwhārangi, Wellington.

A thread running through all of the iterative works leading to the final diptych moving-still, *Her Oscillating Care* (Fig. 2) is the attention paid to the ubiquitously repetitive nature of female domestic labour. With each work, consideration has been given to the importance of biographical objects, particularly those I have inherited from my mother's family, and significantly, objects that represent the work of women.

And finally, this project stretches the conventions of traditional photographic and video mediums, at times merging the two through projection installation that interacts with suspended fabric and paper surfaces. Rather than relying on conventional narrative storytelling, the work relies on pointed moments of interest or vague discomfort to punctuate the viewer experience.



Figure 2. *Her Oscillating Care*, 2025. Mockup showing video still overlaid on black and white inkjet print, Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington.

A Strombolani Migrant Story

In the late 19th Century, Aotearoa New Zealand saw the beginning of migration from small places in Italy. Many Strombolani emigrants gathered in Island Bay, working as fishermen, market gardeners and shopkeepers. The flavour of that suburb was distinctly Italian throughout the 20th Century, and many of the original families still have members living in the area. My own ancestors were only there for a small time before they left for a more challenging adventure across the Cook Strait.

My great grandfather Antonino Moleta arrived in Aotearoa in 1897, and spent a number of years working as a fisherman in the Island Bay community, and then as a market gardener in Levin. He was ambitious, and unafraid of hard labour, and he stockpiled enough money to purchase a tract of land that had become available for sale on D'Urville. Antonino and his brother Salvatore took 250 sheep on a barge to Waitai, to set about fishing and farming and survival in that remotest of places. Waitai was without running water or electricity, and all of the household and farm tasks were accomplished with hard labour. Great Grandpa Nino sent home to Stromboli for a bride. In 1909 Rosa Criscillo disembarked from the Moeraki at Wellington Harbour, resplendent in her lilac wedding gown, and she met and married Nino that same day. Less than a week later they travelled to Waitai, where she and her new husband forged a life, alongside his brother Vincenzo and her cousin Angelina, also newly married. Over the next half-century, the Moleta family turned Waitai into a thriving sheep farm, busier than many on the mainland, and 'cleaner' than any other on D'Urville, meaning that it was eventually devoid of the native mānuka and tauhinu that freckled most of the grazing land in Aotearoa. Antonino and Rosa had many children, who in turn had children, amongst them my grandfather Vincenzo Fiore.

My mother Marie-Jean, the middle child of five siblings, grew up in that place, but a damaging family feud tore my grandfather and his family away from the farm when mum was in her late teens. I have heard stories and descriptions of that ancestral home my entire life, but had never had the opportunity to visit there.

Primordial Remnants

Evocations

About memory - personal and collective, actual and borrowed

“To live is to leave traces.”

- Walter Benjamin¹

This work trains its gaze on notions of memory, via the mechanism of my personal matrilineal narrative. I come to it having spent three years (and more informally, my lifetime) investigating the origin stories of my mother’s Strombolani migrant family.

Through the interrogative process of the MFA, and the symbiotic experience of making, evaluating and trimming excessive complexities, I have questioned the value inherent in retaining or recalling pieces of the past through memory. From the outset, I was aware that memory is long acknowledged to provide unreliable witness, that it is unlikely to create a truthful facsimile of historic events. I have been thinking about the use of photography as a memorial, and also about the merit for using memories as evidence for things that have happened.

This introduces the central concern of the work, that plurality of memory complicates our understanding of truth. Professor of Culture Liedeke Plate describes *liquid memories* - that is, the process of retelling that acknowledges a fluidity of narrative, and the potential for alteration in future retellings. My own mother said, during a recorded conversation with her sister: “Family folklore can warp and change with the telling”. Multiple individuals, sharing an experience, will often convey substantially different interpretations of what has happened. The passage of time will further cloud details that might otherwise pin notions of truth to the reported memory.

I became deeply interested in this multiplicity, and began to make work that responded to both the fragility of memory, and its creative potential. When making the penultimate test work, *Tattered Souvenirs* (Fig. 3) - a projected video installation using five small muslin banners, suspended haphazardly in the space, I began to explore visual and material tactics for opening up the interpretive potential of the video memories. Close crops of scenery and action allowed for a viewer to more fruitfully imagine what might exist beyond the seen phenomena. Repeated motifs of seawater filmed in different qualities of light suggested potential alternative atmospheric and temporal states for the same physical space. Making this work, and engaging in the critique and feedback process with my MFA cohort led me to the realisation that I could legitimately use very simple fragments of motion to suggest plural, plastic perspectives.

¹ Candida-Smith, *Art and the Performance of Memory*, 275

² Plate and Smelik, *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, 101.

³ Bain, Mills, Woodman, *D’Urville Island Memories*.



Figure 3. *Tattered Souvenirs*, 2024. Installation detail, Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington.

The idea that memory can operate simultaneously in personal and collective modes, representing the interests and perspectives of many, has informed ongoing creative development. Many of the artworks made in the process of the MFA have utilised methods of layering to signify progressions of time and perspective. *Terra e Mare* (Land and Sea), (Fig. 4) stacked semi-transparent organza photographs of grass and water in receding columns, to explore the repetitive actions of people labouring, and to suggest the clarity of memory diminishing through time. Plate's ideas about liquid memory are evidenced in the installed work, through the reenactment of female domestic labour, and colonial settler activity. In this work, mythical retelling, as she puts it, fits the liquid present condition.⁴ That is, through the medium of projected video, the recreation of these kinds of labour, generated in response to a received and

⁴ Plate and Smelik, *Technologies of Memory in the Arts*, 107.

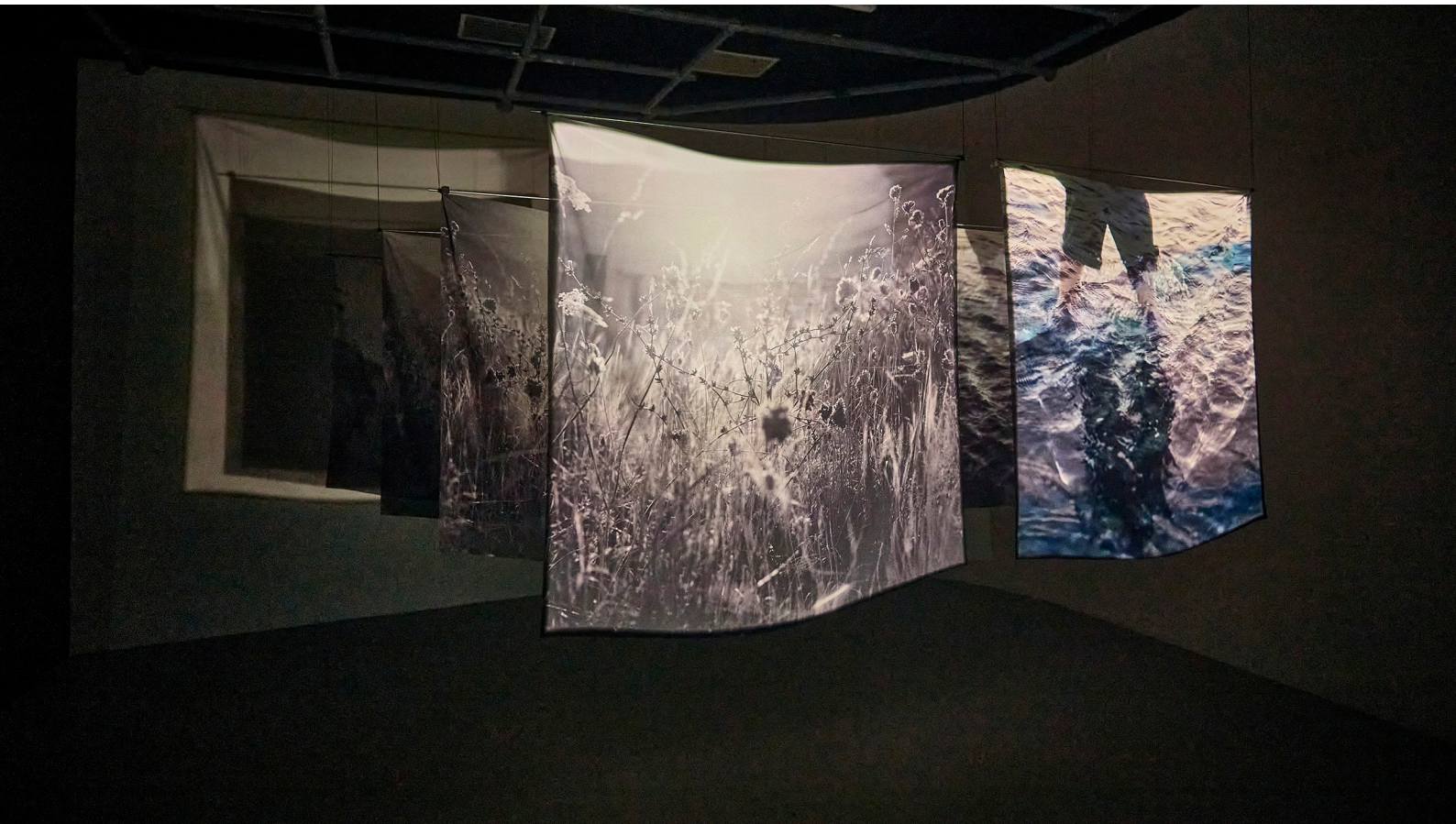


Figure 4. *Terra e Mare*, 2024. Installation view, Toi Rauwhārangi, Wellington.

interpreted oral history, leaves room for, and indeed suggests future interpretations of that same history. In a continuum of chronicled family tales, my staged recreations suggest what *might have been*, rather than state what absolutely *was*.

My mother reported memories of pulling weeds - Tauhinu and Mānuka, a tedious, grueling labour of her childhood. In response, I captured video of my son walking in gumboots, pausing to pulling Puha / Sow Thistle from the cluster of grasses, and later my mother in a similar landscape ripping the same species from the ground, to convey the generational repetition of that task. I chose not to adhere so directly to the index of the weeds she identified from memory. My re/vision of her memories refrains from copying precise details, and instead laminates my own memory into each of the moving image works. This combination of re-enactment, interpretive recreation and mythical retelling aligns with my understanding that just as the present is fluid, so is our understanding of the past.

Sarah Durcan's book *Memory and Intermediality in Artists' Moving Image* describes the differences between memory and history - that the latter cannot exist without the former, because much of history is made of different kinds of recorded memories, and that they are in fact, 'different kinds of knowing'. "Memory, by definition is selective and ambivalent, as significant as much for what it occludes as what it foregrounds. In memory studies, the emphasis shifts from the truth status of historical accounts to an interest in what motivates differing narratives and versions of events."⁵

I became deeply interested in the narratives told by and about my mother's family, because of exactly those characteristics - a spectrum of motivations, driven by relationships, identity, time, and perspective. Many of the stories I have encountered romanticise the isolation and wildness of life on D'Urville Island, and the hard labour required for surviving there. My mother's recollections are filled with both nostalgia, and a shuddering relief that she no longer has to live in a place so isolated, where social interactions were effectively cut off by geography and culture. Mum's middle brother brings a very different perspective to his youthful reminiscences, and his stories are often simultaneously tinged with sadness and a lingering resentment about his place and role in the family, and pride in the gutsy adventures the Moleta children had. The story of my great grandparents Antonino and Rosa is both compelling and contested, passing as both legend and fact through the generations that followed.

The Moleta family migration history is remembered through memory objects including photographs and heirlooms, public records, which have been gathered and preserved by multiple descendants, and via encounters with indirect memory, also known as 'postmemory'. Drechsler and Große in *Information Storage: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, describe Rieke Böhling's dissertation project that assesses the ways that descendants of migrants remember their family migration stories. Multiple mediated sources contribute to acts of remembering. The project investigates postmemory in relation to: "a migration process that they themselves have not been part of but with which they will nevertheless be confronted in their everyday lives."⁶ The term was used by Marianne Hirsch when assessing the impact of the Holocaust on the descendants of survivors, but can be applied to other traumatic contexts and events, including migration, for second and subsequent generations. Events remembered by my family that followed their migration from Stromboli to D'Urville included a number of incidents that inflicted trauma on all three generations of Moleta family that preceded me. Lasting family feuds were a pattern to be repeated in each generation, and I have inherited knowledge about the insults and injustices they visited upon each other, that seemed to follow a cultural norm. My mother said, in one

⁵ Durcan, *Memory and Intermediality in Artist's Moving Image*, 4

⁶ Drechsler and Große, *Information Storage : A Multidisciplinary Perspective*. 173.

of the conversations I recorded with her: “Aunty Mafalda acted like I hardly even lived there. Almost like they wiped us in their minds, even though I lived there longer than she did. Our family is quite famous for writing people off completely.” I did not experience that migration and conflict, but I am affected by the consequences of it, through her memories.

The moving image works I made in the second half of the MFA investigated the notion of postmemory by entangling my own temporally-removed perspective with some of those moments of poignancy and pain. Some of my earlier test works, including *WindMemory* (Fig. 5) and *A Family Folklore* (Fig. 6) lifted statements from the recorded conversation between my mother and aunt out of context, and incorporated them into the video sequences through printing on fabric, and through captions overlaid on the imagery respectively. I hadn’t ever created video before, and my filming and editing skills were in their infancy, but I experimented with slow moving sequences to evoke the feelings associated with the memories I had heard. As an exercise in discovering the impact of pairing their words with the soundscape and imagery, it was useful for me to see how conceptually directive those methods might be, and through testing and critique I realised that the work had become so specifically about my mother’s story that it closed the door on any broader interpretations.

Later works more subtly used some of the same statements as the impetus for the image making. For example, my mother described an early memory: ‘Once I stood on a needle, and she said “That’s going to travel up your bloodstream and into your heart.”’ As a response, I captured a falling needle, and edited a sequence of the moment of picking it up to make reference to that memory without describing it for the viewer. I intended that the experience of seeing the needle drop might ignite feelings and memories not so closely tied to that specific incident remembered by my mother - perhaps instead a slight unease at seeing the sharp metal spike so close to bare skin. The critique I received indicated that my audience vastly preferred this imagery without an overtly emotive and fussy use of captions, and that removing the complexity of words and pictures allowed them to soak in the sensation of it more fully.

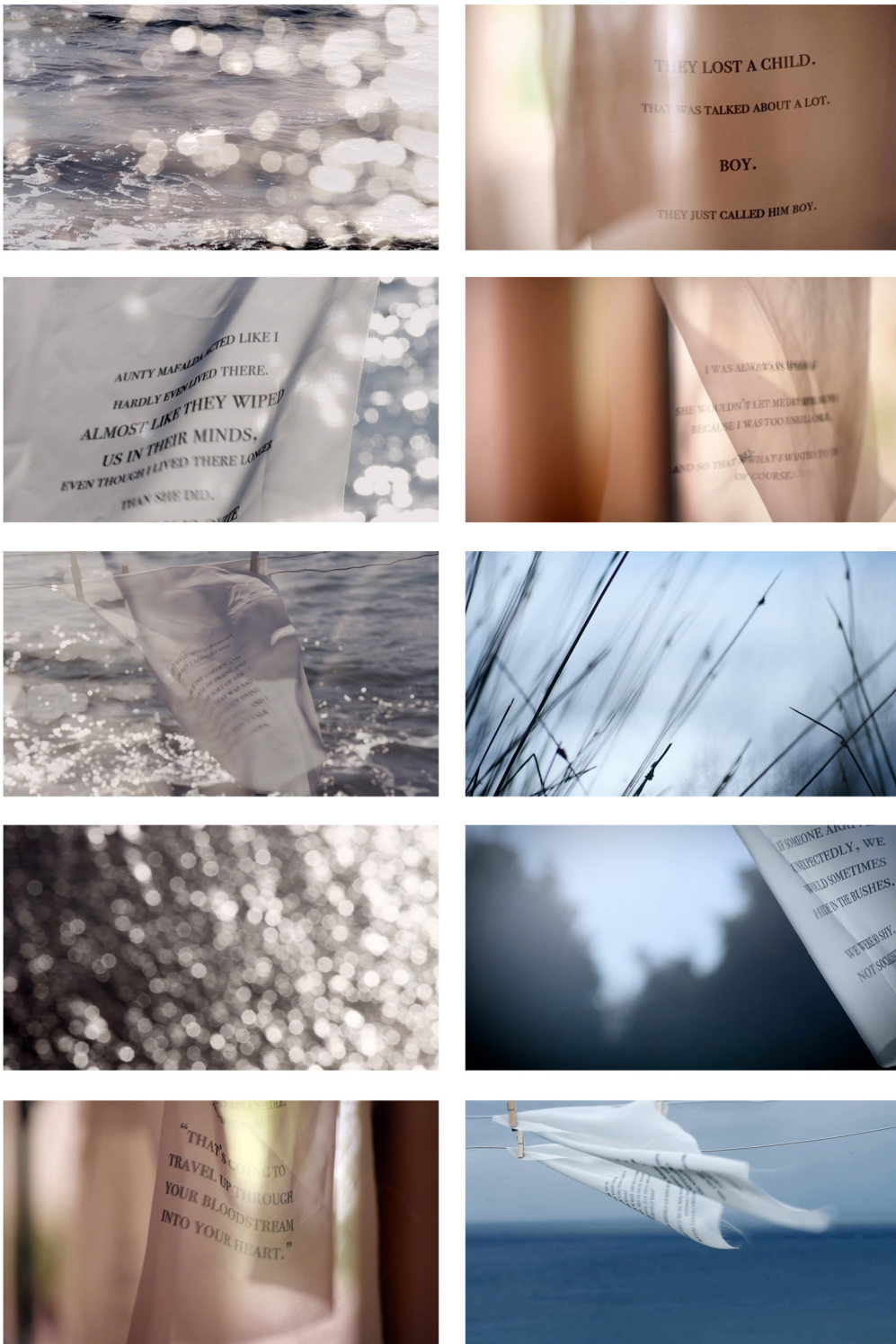


Figure 5. *Wind Memory*, 2023. Screen stills (Left top to bottom: 00.09.55, 00.48.38, 01.46.32, 02.16.05, 02.59.45, Right top to bottom: 03.25.20, 03.44.42, 04.22.29, 04.52.50, 06.10.48)

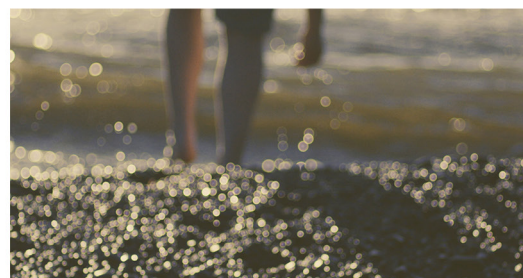
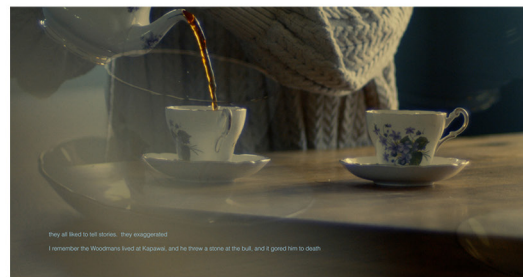
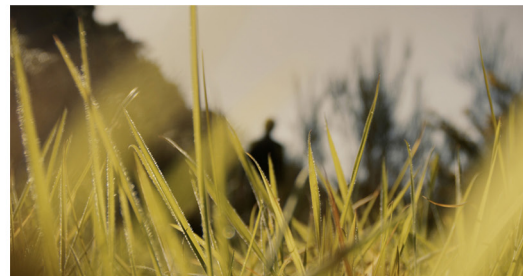


Figure 6. *A Family Folklore*, 2023. Screen stills (Left top to bottom: 00.37.12, 01.16.07, 02.28.04, 02.59.21, 03.45.19, Right top to bottom: 04.10.04, 04.48.12, 05.08.22, 05.47.07, 07.24.16)

Durcan also discusses artistic applications of postmemory, with reference to Chantal Akerman's moving image work *D'Est (From the East)*.⁷ Filmed with a meditative and circular structure, *D'Est* is observational, documenting landscapes and characters enduring the instability that remained after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc. Akerman's personal experience of postmemory - the presence of the trauma her mother endured but never spoke about, motivated the creation of the film and is interpreted through scenes detailing the mundane activity that occurs in the midst of despair. Sombre queues of indifferent people waiting for public transport are surveyed by the camera in slow tracking sequences. Characters go about the rhythms of work and leisure, observed by a static camera. Stories are unresolved, leaving the viewing audience with a tangible sense of the uncertainty felt by the characters. *D'Est* uses non-linear time, in a manner that parallels activities of remembering, and isolates and overlaps human experiences without adhering to a narrative structure. Rather than engaging the viewer through investment in a singular character's narrative arc, *D'Est* presents an assemblage of ordinary individual and collective human malaise, as a representation for postmemory.

The events that affect our ancestors can reverberate through time, via the behaviours that extend from those experiences, the stories told amongst families, and the social and economic consequences. This is particularly true of traumatic histories, but may also occur following times of significant cultural change. I consider the very visceral response I have to Moleta family stories and interpret that as a component of postmemory. My direct memories of school holidays spent on the similar-yet-divergent location that is the *Waitui* farm became a gauzy layer of understanding, rather than concrete knowledge about the nature of life on *Waitai*. It could be considered that this use of memory that is not my own is a way of creating a counterfeit representation of historic narratives, and yet, my intent is not to present a deceit, but to illuminate a spectrum of lived experiences, and to employ imagination in concert with knowledge. It is my experience that this pairing of imagined with factual can be a generative creative practice, allowing for more of that *liquid state* that Plate describes to exist in the work. I am not constrained by inherited family lore, but able to make variants that merge real and imagined.

Additionally, I've been encouraged by the notion that memory is more than just a replay of perceived events. Rather, it is a creative endeavour. Frederic Bartlett, one of the 'pioneers of the psychology of remembering' claimed that: "remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organised

⁷ Akerman, *D'Est (From the East)*.

⁸ Drechsler and Große, Information Storage. [Electronic Resource] : A Multidisciplinary Perspective. 162.

past reactions or experiences”⁸

Bartlett’s idea is shared in a chapter about family memory, in Rieke Böhling and Christine Lohmeier’s chapter in *Information Storage: A Multidisciplinary Perspective*, pushing back against any notion that remembering is an activity that returns stored information as fixed or complete. This aligns with Plate’s description of liquid memories, and works particularly well when framing how families tend to remember. My own ancestral records incorporate many kinds of concrete and ephemeral evidence, including photographs, maps, books and articles, objects, as well as a rich tradition of oral recount. The Moleta family hold and maintain the legacy of stories in ways that elevate nostalgic fragments, prideful identity, and also closely guarded resentment over injustices. Those things colour all of the direct and indirect memories I have gathered throughout this project, and I find that cold facts are only the first stepping stone to understanding what our history really looks like.

It is my belief that the accuracy and detail of a memory are of vastly less import than what the associated emotional resonance might be. For this reason both the test work, *Tattered Souvenirs* and final work *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* omit any detailed narrative, instead presenting closely cropped glimpses of largely environmental scenes, and evocative actions, that infer time, place and activity, rather than describe it closely. The work is a surrender to the emotions associated with particular memories, no longer serving motivated detail, but opening audiences to a wider and more actively sensory encounter with memory as I have presented it. My inclusion of specific objects and locations point the viewer with markers of familiar time and place, specifically as being bucolic, coastal and nostalgic, while domestic labour and productive recreation describe the activity particular to my family. The work is about both the Moleta story, and that of many colonial settlers to Aotearoa.

Unearthing Skeletons and Writing the Wrongs

Ethical considerations for working with family stories

“As soon as we die, we enter into fiction. Just ask two different family members to tell you about someone recently gone, and you will see what I mean. Once we can no longer speak for ourselves, we are interpreted.” - Hilary Mantel⁹

Novelist Hilary Mantel, in her Reith Lectures of 2017, articulated the idea that when we investigate historical events, our understanding of them is filtered through entirely second-hand evidence. Her own work creates fictional narratives that begin with extensive research and factual context. She never claims that her writing is factual, although it is compelling enough that readers often believe it to be truthful. Learning any history generally exposes us to a narrow, usually victorious, dominant narrative, at the expense of alternative stories that could create a richer, more nuanced understanding. Mantel understood this and exploited the possibilities that lie in lesser and unknown stories to feed her creations, particularly in her *Wolf Hall* series of novels where she re-imagines a character normally categorised as the villain to be the hero of the story.

Gerard Hindmarsh's *Angelina: From Stromboli to D'Urville Island: A Family's Story*¹⁰ is a novel, described by the author as 'faction' - that is, facts enriched with fiction, about my great grandmother Rosa, and her cousin Angelina. Hindmarsh states at the outset that he has employed poetic licence in the narration of the Moleta story. His perspective is shaped by his own relatives, who lived on the island for a much shorter time than my own branch of the family. When he published *Angelina*, there were many feathers ruffled among my mother's extended family. Rosa, the titular character's cousin, and the eldest matriarch on Waitai, is characterised in an unsympathetic way.

Recently, an interesting experience of viewing a one-woman theatrical adaptation of the *Angelina* story introduced a real-time example of the risks of this kind of representation. During this dramatic presentation of the story, characters were indicated through gestural motifs, - the moustache twirling, foot stomp of Vincenzo, and arm pinching and squealed 'ow' indicating Rosa. Taken in isolation, these indicators of character could be seen as mildly irreverent caricatures of real-world people. At the conclusion of the play, Gerard Hindmarsh mounted the stage to join the performer, Martine Baanvinger, and conduct a question and answer session with the audience. Hindmarsh prefaced his talk with an assertion that both novel and play were never intended to cause offence, and that the stories he had received from his own family branch were merely embellished for dramatic effect. In that moment I learned afresh about the

⁹ Mantel, *The Day Is For The Living*.

¹⁰ Hindmarsh, *Angelina: From Stromboli to D'Urville Island : A Family's Story*.

care required in using my family stories, to avoid inflicting hurt on the wider family. Simplistic characterisations of my ancestors would be a misrepresentation, and would distract from the more subtle and nuanced ideas I have gained about the way we remember. In addition, I have prioritised the inclusion of multiple voices, in my gathering of stories and my recreation of them. My mother and her siblings have all provided unique, overlapping accounts of their childhood on Waitai, and consequently I nurtured the representation of plurality of memories in the creative work. This is seen particularly through the represented labour that all of the siblings remembered so clearly - time foraging on the beach, fishing and playing in the tide, and working in the house and on the hills.

When we retell a story that has been passed to us, we tend to distil it, retaining narrative hooks, and moments of definition, and potentially reaching for some kind of larger meaning. My own re-creation of reported memory attempts to shift understanding from something that is static, and strictly confined to the past, to an ongoing, changing sensibility that honours the nature of memory. It seeks to redress the implied absolutes of Gerard Hindmarsh's 'fact-ion', removing the limitations of a linear narrative and precise character formation, and leans more ardently towards an episodic and experiential representation.

I discovered the work of Emily Parr, (Ngāi Te Rangī, Moana, Pākehā), a research based artist, with a moving image practice, living currently in Tāmaki Makaurau. Her artmaking often engages in ideas about memory and legacy, and takes responsibility for the taonga of both objects and stories collected through her family, and now held in museum collections. In her autobiographical and archival masters work, *Moana Calling Me Home* (Fig. 7) a 6 episode collection of video sequences, Parr weaves together many family stories and artifacts, layering contour drawings from archival photographs and documents over somnolent video landscapes. It is accompanied by her quietly voiced, deeply personal narration. Part of the intention of this work is the effort to reconnect her identity with Te Ao Māori. She does so while incorporating some unfavourable incidents in her storytelling. During *Moana Calling Me Home*, she says: "Sometimes we must unearth our most uncomfortable histories in order for them to be laid to rest in the right way." I was particularly affected by this sentiment, as it resonated with similar feelings about excavating stories from my family that when heard in a contemporary context reveal my modern attitude and the expected collision with historically accepted norms. The way that Parr manages this is through that marriage of contemporary scenery with archivally sourced line drawings, and her honest voiceover. Her words acknowledge both the discomfort of learning those less edifying details of her family stories, and empathy for the context that those details occurred in.

¹¹ Parr, *Moana Calling Me Home*, pt. 17:24 mins.



Figure 7. Emily Parr, *Tūrangawaewae [or] Moana Calling Me Home*, 2020. Single-channel digital video and audio, courtesy of the artist.

Parr acknowledges the complexity of histories involving people who inhabit places they do not belong to. She prioritises the protection of her whakapapa, utilising this family archive for her artmaking, but respecting the sanctity of family taonga. She does not attempt to take responsibility for the impact of her ancestors' actions as colonial settlers, indeed, during her voiceover she makes her incredulity and discomfort known as she relates the stories. Her musings on the motivations of the characters let the audience understand Parr's positionality in relation to this history. As *Moana Calling Me Home* proceeds, documenting a haerenga that takes her to her ancestral lands, she opens her archive of stories to allow a dialogue to flourish.

I was careful at the outset to gain verbal and written permission by my mother and her siblings for the voice recordings and transcripts I made, explaining the general enquiries of the project, and the potential outcomes. Initial moving image tests used some of those voice recordings as part of the soundscape, but obscured the sound so that individual words were muffled and inaudible. Certain of the stories I heard were identified as being for my ears only, and so I refrained from using any part of that information. Other stories containing compromising behaviour have either been abandoned or the perpetrator left nameless.

Part of the development of this project involved a pilgrimage to Waitai, as I had never visited that place before, and my mother hadn't been there since the family left the island in 1977. In February of 2024, Mum, Dad and I travelled to the ancestral farm, so that I might gather source material and gain clearer understanding of the geographical context that her memories were situated in. That journey last year was both homecoming and discovery. While we were there, more and more of her memories surfaced, and I was able to visualise the events and pastimes she described with so much more clarity than before. Something that allowed me to do was compare my *assumptions* relating to the physical reality of Waitai, with my life in Pōneke and the hillside and seashore filming locations available to me there. First-hand experience of that place refined the ways that I chose to represent mum's memories, so that what I made was tonally and texturally accurate, if not a straightforward documentary of the island and all that meant. The locations I chose to film were able to evoke the landforms and atmosphere I experienced on Waitai. I could finally see the overlap between the real and the imagined, and exploit that in the making. Photographs taken on-site at Waitai became a stage for the performed memory I captured with digital video in Pōneke. *Her Oscillating Care* relies on the tension of the *in-between*. Fact and fiction, dead and alive, past and present, colour and monochrome, moving and still are all diametric opposites, but the sticky place in-between is able to suggest multiple times, perspectives, and states.

Magpie tendencies and Pākehā guilt

Excavating the family archive and colonial settler histories

Much of the history I have investigated has centred on my great grandmother Rosa Criscillo's experience, and that of her daughters and granddaughters. Through my mother and grandmother, I have received a wealth of matriarchal knowledge. The Moleta family were proud of their economical use of resources, of creating things that were hand-crafted, home-cooked, grown and harvested and, as my mother stated, "We knew who we were", meaning that they had an inbuilt belief in their social worthiness. Exploring the archive of stories and the memories recounted by my mother and aunt has opened a door to that values base, and cemented my identity as a keeper of matriarchal history.

My mother's family has a rich written, oral and visual history, shared and disputed by that concise group of temperamental Italian migrants and their descendants. In my determination to guard and revive our family knowledge, I have spent the greater part of this project digging into our archives, collecting an array of written accounts, and considering the photographs and legacy items I have access to. In a similar way that Emily Parr has discovered incidents in her ancestral stories that produce a cringe that is familiar to many Pākehā when learning about the ignorance and dominance of our colonial past, I have learned about my own family's role in colonising Waitai. When reading about Antonino's purchase of the land, and the clearing of the native bush *by way of burning*, I felt conflicted about how to respond to that information. One of the video sequences, of somewhat skeletal trees captured on a foggy day, was my subtle way to memorialise the devastating and productive impact of my ancestors.

In a similar way that stories are passed, from one caretaker to another, inherited objects maintain many of the same properties. I have been the recipient of a small group of items, all of which have minimal monetary value, but their familial and cultural value is significant to me. Defined as sitting somewhere on a continuum of gifts and commodities, anthropologist Janet Hoskins, in *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*¹², explains that biographical objects are also imbued with qualities of the people who owned them. She contrasts these kinds of objects with those that are more publicly consumed, and not tied directly to a particular user's identity. Her thoughts consider how explicitly personal objects can be, when compared with mass-produced items that maintain an enduring anonymity. "At the temporal level, the biographical object grows old, and may become worn and tattered along the life span of its owner... the biographical object "imposes itself as the witness of the functional unity of its user, ...Biographical objects share our lives with us."¹³

¹² Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of People's Lives*.

¹³ Hoskins, 8

An early use of biographical objects is seen in a test work titled *A Treasury*. (Fig. 8) I was interested in the layering of contemporary and historic time, and embodied memory. I also wanted to indulge in the perversity of presenting objects of low material value in the way that museum artefacts might be recorded. I photographed them against a dark, textured background, lit narrowly, as though for an exhibit. Subsequently, I photographed the same objects held by feminine hands, in digital colour, and printed them onto organza to be hung in front of the black and white print. The transparency of the fabric allowed the object to have two states - that of past and present, when viewed in alignment. This work was a first attempt to contrast ways of understanding an object - as being significant and inert, utilitarian and active. Following discussion with my peers, I recognised that the still photographs I had made were rigid and didactic, and that a greater appreciation for the functional purpose of the objects would honour their legacy more successfully.



Figure 8. *A Treasury*, 2023. Inkjet prints on cotton rag paper, with digital sublimation print on organza, overlaid

The next test titled *Matrilineal Residue* (Fig. 9, 10) employed two of those biographical objects - a recipe book and a family spoon - showing them in active possession by mother, daughter and granddaughter. Akin to film stills, the images hung suspended, light transmitting between each diaphanous banner, allowing the viewer to see moments overlapping. Each image presented an interaction between the women and the object. This work communicated a very clear progression of time, and the transmission of intergenerational knowledge. I applied a photographic lighting style and colour palette that referenced classical master painters, and staged simple scenes that would represent that bequest of materials and skills. The feedback I received helped me to understand that the light quality, colours, and styling were all signifiers of traditional modes of representation. My personal history making photographs for advertising purposes had trained me to use visual language that delivered meaning at a glance. These images were conceptually simplistic, and would skewer the work for a very narrow audience reading, leaving them with nothing to unpack. It wasn't my desire to deliver such immediate and straightforward messaging through the work, so in the subsequent test works I moved away from this highly produced method of communicating visually. Breaking the habit of a lifetime, I began to explore moving image, and, for a time, abandoned my focus on biographical objects in favour of a closer attention to family stories.



Figure 9. *Matrilineal Residue*, 2023. Installation photograph, Toi Rauwhāangi, Wellington.



Figure 10. Individual images photographed digitally for *Matrilineal Residue*, 2023.

My final work *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* resurrects fleeting uses of biographical objects - the spoon, lace, and tea set all make appearances as glimpsed memories, without drawing close attention to their significance as family taonga. They retain their original functions, but tie the work to a non-specific history through their materiality. Rather than my early interaction with these objects which attempted to exalt them above their humble purpose, I chose to exploit their inherent ubiquity, using them as props for the memory activities I captured. Janet Hoskins' appreciation for biographical objects honoured the life they share with their user, and so I chose to do the same. Additionally, their familiarity is a gateway for audiences to enter with their own memories as they watch these objects perform their duties.

The Recurrent and the Singular

Wash the dishes. Dry the dishes.

The riches of domestic repetition

New Zealand artist Joanna Margaret Paul was an innovative, interdisciplinary artist who, among other disciplines, produced work in both still and moving image form. She was comfortable in the ambiguity between media and she was deeply interested in the domestic, responding often to her own lived experience and her domestic surroundings. Motherhood was a major influence on her art life. I remember standing in front of her work in Wellington City Gallery and feeling my eyes well up because her life seemed to be such an echo of my own. My photographic career post-children had been so centred on the domestic reality I was immersed in, and continues to be heavily influenced by that. It felt immensely moving to me that Paul would be acknowledged for her lifetime of working with domestic scenes, and that she would defend that mode of artmaking. “I don’t wish to separate the significant and everyday actions but to bring them as close as possible together. It is natural for women to do this; their exercise and their training and their artistry is in daily living.”¹⁴

Paul’s work *Napkins*¹⁵ (Fig. 11) is a video work that uses the framing of a window to present a view of linens blowing on the line. The simplicity of this motion piece, with its rhythmic pattern of fabric blowing in the breeze, and the multiple viewpoints of that domestic scene, is a familiar echo of the daily life for many women. My own memories at Waitui of a windy hillside, nappies on a line could as easily be represented in that work. Part of the *Terra e Mare* installation work is the physical representation of linens on steel wires. As well as the layering of the repetitive act of hanging the washing and getting it back in again through the projected video, the printed banners were affected by the movement of people and air. I wanted viewers to feel inherently part of the scenery, that they could partake and witness in the physicality of that domestic ritual. Paul described her intention to bring the stuff of her daily life into the work she made, rather than to push it aside to make room for some kind of lofty artmaking, and I had the same objective.

Many of the memories reported to me by my mother and her siblings were significant moments in an otherwise repetitive life. Chores of self-sufficiency follow a pattern driven by necessity. The routines of cooking for the family, and the workers, were described by many of the Moleta women. Clearing weeds, mustering, the schedule of the supply boat, the daily, weekly, yearly pulse of life, weather and geography are rhythms I consider core to what was told to me about survival on the island. One of the priorities I found in making work that responded to these reported memories was that there be a backdrop of this repetition. Those rhythms needed to feel like the heartbeat underlying the more staccato moments of memory. I have long considered

¹⁴ Paul, *Napkins*. Via <https://www.circuit.org.nz/work/napkins>

¹⁵ Paul, *Napkins*.



Figure 11. Joanna Margaret Paul, *Napkins* (1975) 3 minutes 18 seconds. 8mm film transferred to digital video. Silent. Courtesy of the estate of Joanna Margaret Paul, Robert Heald Gallery and CIRCUIT.

the impact of the many kinds of hidden labour that women undertake. It occurred to me that one way to honour that female labour would be to include instances of repetition in the video work.

Terra e Mare was set partially against the wild grasses that grow on Waitai. Activity on the land was shown via a printed photographic screen of midsummer growth, with the heads of yarrow and aristeia, shivery grasses with hardy stems that can stand against the strong winds that lash the hillsides. I included the labour of removing weeds and planting fence posts in the video sequence. The more female role of managing the laundry was the most poignant footage, and so I have chosen to reimagine that material in a new work on display at Thistle Hall - *Her Oscillating Care* a diptych of black and white photographic prints, framed and suspended in space, with looping video rear projected depicting that same laundry ritual. The two monochrome prints, hanging side by side, are variations on the same grassy scene, indicating that this activity happens in multiple locations. While one print is illuminated with the video sequence of the woman walking to the line, hanging the linens, the other photograph lies inert, suggesting that whether we are present or not, the land endures.

‘Look at you, Just look at you!’

The prick

Roland Barthes, in *Camera Lucida* coins a term, the ‘*punctum*’ - an often minor detail that delivers a prick to his senses in a photographic image. He wrote: “*punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole - and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).”¹⁶ In each of the works made in the past year and a half, I have considered the punctum present in the words uttered by family, or recorded in written documents. There are stories of disturbing things said to my mother as a child, for example that she would have to “wear callipers and never being able to dance”¹⁷ which act as a punctum when I encounter them, and consequently my image making, either moving or still, hopes to recreate that prick for others. A punctum as described by Barthes is a wound, and the stories often involve a wound. A longing for something that can no longer be accessed, or a hurt from fear or guilt delivered verbally by somebody who *should know better*. Barthes wasn’t necessarily referring to something that was traumatic when he described a punctum, however even in the most pedestrian of my mother’s stories, there frequently seems to be a subtle, or sometimes overt prick for me. Usually it’s something disquieting or melancholic. I came to feel that this concept of the psychological wound was one of the key components of many long-held memories, and that perhaps if I could deliver the little stings in the work I made, an audience might connect more closely with their own memories.

My second use of time-based imagery was in *A Family Folklore*. For this work, those harvested statements from my mother and aunt’s conversation were incorporated as visual stimuli and as captions for the video sequences. The resultant video was a quiet, slow moving and episodic piece. I was interested in using the words to provide the prick, often contrasting the statement with the imagery. What emerged was that the two components complicated each other in ways that were not always helpful for the viewer to bring their own interpretation to what they were seeing. The description of somebody being gored by a bull, laid against imagery of pouring tea felt too overt, a contrast that lacked nuance. My attempt to deliver a verbal punctum against slowly moving scenery merely undermined the potential punctum moments of that same scenery. As the tea spilled from the spout of the kettle onto the saucer, the audience were seeing a kind of punctum that I had chosen to capture and include, but they were simultaneously struggling to read the captioned prick delivered below. This approach was confusing and lacked subtlety, and so I needed to find other ways to introduce those little wounds.

¹⁶ Barthes, *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography*. 27.

¹⁷ Bain, Mills, Woodman, *D’Urville Island Memories*.

Some of the moments of the later work, *Tattered Souvenirs*, produce a mild discomfort. Bare hands, ripping a weed from the ground, the dirt cascading from straggly roots, and the dusting of dirt from those encrusted hands activates my senses to make me think about the gritty feeling of soil under my fingernails. The ripping of a hook from a fish's mouth, the skeleton hurled into the water are visceral in sound and view. The careless toss of teacup and saucer into the water - the kerplunk of the precious china hitting the surface, illustrated my horror that something precious was being discarded. Mum said "Aunty Lena threw all of the antiques down the creek. She was into modernising things."¹⁸ which I perceived as an intolerable disregard for family treasure. I filmed familiar moments, giving the work a truth to experience rather than a direct truth. No longer did those moments need to be tied so closely to my mother's family memories, although those were the original impetus for their creation, instead they might ignite memories in a disconnected viewer. An added benefit was that they interrupted the meandering pace. I reintroduced those punctum moments in *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* as small punctuations in otherwise abstracted scenes.

¹⁸ Bain, Mills, Woodman, *D'Urville Island Memories*.

Belatedness into Becomingness

In search of the Living Presence Response

Stillness and motion

Initially, using still photography as a preferred medium was an instinctive choice because of my professional history with that craft. That photography is also something that preserves memory, and also blocks and replaces it, is well discussed. Barthes, in *Camera Lucida* notes that a photograph quickly becomes counter-memory, that it wipes any kind of additional richness from that record by the very fact of its limited, two dimensional, fixed existence.¹⁹ What more can we understand about a moment from the past, than whatever is frozen in the surface of the photographic image? I would additionally suggest that employing traditional moving image as an alternative medium does little more to suggest anything beyond what is pictured in the frame. Jean Ma, professor of film and media history at the University of Hong Kong, wrote an essay, *Photography's Absent Times*²⁰, which in part discusses Roland Barthe's ideas about photography; that it is "steeped in death and melancholy", while the cinema "presents an animated subject, unencumbered by such mortal fixations". My forays into the visual expression of memory had me looking closely at the potential of video to both make reference to and undo those notions of death and animation.

A discovery was made when I created the first *MovingStill* (Fig. 12). My observation was that ordinary scenery, photographed with analogue medium format black and white film, is an anachronistic and traditional documentary expression of place. However I saw that a print of that scene came to life, albeit imperfectly, via the projected colour motion video that was cast overtop. I learned to digitally and optically map the frame of the projected video precisely to the edges of the print. The combination of a still photograph and digital video projection transformed a static moment into one that was no longer absolute or definitive. This experimental intersection of modes produced a tension between past and present, and acknowledged the impact of passing time and the resonance of place. As a material expression of memory, my moving-still artworks exploited a dialogue between the languages of stillness and motion - that still and motion imagery can reveal both fixed and transitory qualities in a subject.

¹⁹ Barthes, *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography*. 91.

²⁰ Beckman and Ma, *Still Moving : Between Cinema and Photography*. 99.



Figure 12. *MovingStill*, 2023. Installation photographs showing black and white inkjet print without projection, and the same print with colour projection overlaid.
Toi Rauwhāangi, Wellington

In critiquing Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency*²¹, Art Historian Caroline van Eck argued that Gell didn't go far enough, to incorporate the experiential component of a work of art. She describes Gell's belief that artworks (indexes) have the ability to influence the audience, to effect change or ignite awe, but then argues that artworks can also make viewers respond as if the work of art is alive. "Yet it is precisely the experience of a work of art turning out to be alive, of the creeping awareness or sudden appearance of the inanimate as an animated, living being that defines living presence response, makes it resistant to any form of scientific explanation, and at the same time profoundly unsettling."²²

The notion that still photography might become something more than a passively viewed artwork was an intoxicating one. By manipulating the work to produce a living presence response, as van Eck suggests, I could arrest my viewer for a longer time, and encourage more visceral interactions with the work. There is a sticky space between movement and stillness in which I was able to extract a subtle disquiet that served as a *punctum*. I attempted to produce a living presence response with this moving-still method. One of the beautiful things about using digital video projection was that I was able to introduce the moving images gradually, so that the inert printed image was transformed *unexpectedly* into something alive. Viewers of the work at first didn't fully understand what they were looking at. Additionally, the inkiness of the black in the print confounded viewers who first saw the work during the movement phase. The photograph appeared to be a strange square television at that point, however the rich blacks that are impossible to achieve on a digital screen were present against the details of the moving image. The projection amplified the reflected light of the paper surface, and added jewel colours. Instead of the movement emanating from inside the image, it was reflected off the surface. Upon close inspection, the digital resolution could be seen on the focal plane of the projected image. I found this pleasing, as it reminded a viewer that this mystery was a creation of ordinary technology.

Time based imagery reveals the subject as un-fixed, while the still photograph pins it down, etching a singular moment into the material surface of the paper or the digital screen. A photograph is in principle unchanging, while motion implies constant change. The intersection of these two modes of storytelling offers a tension, and introduces greater intermedial potential. Whatever a printed 'screen' is made on, be it a traditional photographic print on paper, a fabric banner, a Japanese paper screen or linens on a washing line, I learned that the projected video can be aimed and mapped to transform the still photographic image.

²¹ Gell, *Art and Agency: Towards a New Anthropological Theory*.

²² Van Eck 2010



Figure 13. *Terra e Mare*, 2024. Installation detail, organza sublimation prints with digital video projection mapped to the surfaces. Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington.

I am interested in the idea of the spectral that is delivered by the moving-still works. In this instance the moment captured in the photograph has passed into history, and conversely the motion projected overtop brings that space to life, in the movement of grasses or water, and the activity of people. When the video fades to black, we are reminded that the black and white scene remains, evidence of that crystallised past. The looping cycle of the video awakens, or *resurrects* the life in the scene each time. Ordinarily we see a delineation between still and moving image works. This method blurs the definitions and opens possibilities for unexpected phenomena.

With *Waitai Familiar* (Fig. X) I extrapolated on that first moving-still work, generating a grid of eight square scenes, mounted as monochrome prints on the wall that woke and slept in an edited sequence. The rigidity of their arrangement, and the hard black borders failed to convey my ideas about the intangibility of discreet memories, however the potential for each scene to interact with each other was clear, and further developed in later test works. A successful element of *Waitai Familiar* was in the use of two photographic still interiors, which were layered into motion footage captured in an empty white studio to bring movement to locations unavailable for filming. That method makes it possible to explore all-new combinations of archival and contemporary imagery.



Figure 14. *Waitai Familiar*, 2024. Installation view, inkjet prints mounted on the wall, with digital video projection mapped to the surfaces.
Toi Rauwhāangi, Wellington.

From here to there and back again

Poetic Documentary, and making work in a place that is about a place that is not being photographed

Undertaking to make artworks about my family's memories allows my imaginative reconstruction of the events I have received. Most of my research time has been anchored here in Pōneke, and as a consequence, the staging of the greater part of the video sequences has happened in and around my home. The journeys I have made to Waitai and Waitui in the last year have informed my understanding of the physical characteristics of those places, which I was then able to imitate using alternative sites. Documenting the essence of these memories in a place that is *my* context rather than that of my mother was initially driven by necessity, however following my time on Waitai, I decided that it mattered more that I evoke the feelings associated with the memories than a verbatim recreation of place and story.

The work of Pierre Huyghe, an artist working with fictional narratives, is a fitting example of someone engaging in documentary fiction. Huyghe borrows stories from cinema, and stages them in actual places. This mode of representation suggests ongoing transformational possibility, - another example of the 'unfixed'. His work *Streamside Day*²³ documents an event that Huyghe orchestrated specifically for filming, using a real place as a stage, invoking cinematic representations of place, while simultaneously creating a platform for people to reenact scenes from cinema.²⁴ He wanted to "set up a reality, building a situation, constructing a world and documenting it"²⁵ Huyghe's process allowed for organic moments to occur, available for documentary, inside the framework of the celebration he mounted. I approached my own documentary production in a similar way, creating the *mise en scène* and some simplistic instruction to my models, and then I filmed what they did, without a great deal of interference.

²³ Huyghe, *Streamside Day*.

²⁴ Durcan, *Memory and Intermediality in Artists' Moving Image*, 176.

²⁵ Huyghe, *Streamside Day*.

Tightrope, Trapeze and the Afterimage

This burgeoning installation practice

Tāmaki based artist Stella Brennan works regularly with archival sources, and just after I installed *Matrilineal Residue* at Massey in 2023, the end of the first quarter of the MFA, I viewed her exhibition at City Gallery Wellington, *Thread Between Darkness and Light*. Brennan “suspends a room full of ancestors printed on silk, an overlapping maze of translucent images”²⁶. (Fig. 15). This method for presenting an unearthed family photo archive achieved a measure of weightlessness, the silk delicate and vulnerable to the movement of bodies around the space. I had sought a similar outcome, choosing in multiple test works to use photographic prints on fabric, hanging them inside a confined space so that viewers might affect change with their presence. Unlike the carefully staged photographs of *Matrilineal Residue*, Brennan’s approach commingled images displaying the age and decay of her plate glass negatives, and the immediacy of a candid moment, bringing historic moments to an absolute present. The transparency of the fabric suggests permeability, which I interpret as a way we can reach through the material surface metaphorically to a historic time.

There was an elegance to Brennan’s installation, the photographs attached cleanly to wires without fussy mechanisms, allowing the images to echo the fragility of their glass-plate origins, to nod to the domestic in their materiality, and to democratise the sequence. Early installation test works, including *Matrilineal Residue* and *Terra e Mare* were physically complicated, adhering to rigid processions of individually suspended images, with pieces of wood, steel rods, linen cord and labour intensive assembly. In my most recent test and the final installed work I embraced a more organic approach. *Tattered Souvenirs* played with more randomised height and angles in a way that I hadn’t attempted previously, and *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* further simplified this by stitching the loosely woven, frayed and distressed hemp screens directly to the tensioned wires, removing much of the fussiness of suspending the screens independently of each other.

²⁶ Brennan, *Thread Between Darkness and Light*, 104.



Figure 15. Stella Breanman, *Thread Between Darkness and Light* (installation view),
Shown as part of exhibition *The XX Factor*,
Trish Clark Gallery, Auckland 2023

In *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun*, I went on to play with the sequencing of scenes in my edit, to encourage a viewer to make subconscious connections between sometimes disparate components, in the way that my own memory testifies to. Pairing scenery of cold skeletal trees with a neighbouring sequence of foliage embroidered on a hoop, created a semantic link between those very heterogeneous scenes. I juxtaposed blurry and sharp variants of an event, for example the pouring of tea shown in two focal states. I paired the same action occurring in different environments, in the kitchen, and the same action executed by different generations, shown in weeding and walking. I separated action and consequence, with a falling teacup and later, the smash of china. I included repetition of the same scene with slightly altered action, in the dropping of a needle. These methods are efforts to convey the liquidity of memories,

specifically that they may change in sequence or detail or through personal motivation. Imperfect repetition became a subtle way to infer that potential for repeated memories to change with the speaker, and with the passage of time.

The afterimage cast upon the wall, in the final work, arranged first in a test space at Massey, and ultimately in the installation at Thistle Hall in February, serves to fulfill several functions. When a viewer is in the presence of the work, they are free to move around it in the semi-darkness, the air of their passage creates ripples and flutters in the hemp banners. This has the effect of momentarily misaligning the banner with the projection. As they pass through the beams of projected image they may cast a shadow, creating a silhouette of their upper body on the fabric, or an even larger one on the wall. By this interaction with the light and registration of the image, they effectively enter and affect the memories represented in the video. I see this as an echo of what can happen when memories are shared between family members, that one sibling, for example, may convey their impression of an event, adding or altering what is remembered. The afterimage is an even more potent representation of that. It is already distorted by soft focus, and the imprecise outline of the video image mapped around the frayed fabric edges (which are cast as a semi-transparent shadow by the video projection). The afterimage could be regarded as an imitation of the event, removed from the source, imperfect in its verisimilitude, but adhering to the story as closely as it is able. A viewer in the presence of this installed work is immersed in it, because of the space it occupies, both physically with wires and fabric, and optically with light.

In the final testing of this work, I trialled the overlap of video imagery through the vantage point of each projector in relation to the position of the fabric. The symbolism of merging layers of fabric and video in this way serves my model of memory, evoking my personal experience with the confusion of peripheral data when trying to recall an event. I learned that there was a delicate Goldilocks style balance in the amount of overlap. Too much, and all clarity and meaning is lost, and too little would feel unintentional.

I chose not to include a soundtrack in the final works. My earlier efforts to support the visual work with sound were overbearing, dominating the already quite full experience of seeing the work. The relative silence of *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* is more meditative and less intrusive. Only the whir of the projectors and the internal mechanisms of breath and heart rhythms accompany the viewing experience, making more room for a spectator to internalise the imagery.



Figure 16. *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun*, 2024. Installation detail, showing overlapping projection imagery, Toi Rauwhāangi, Wellington.

Opening at the Close

The trajectory of this MFA has landed me in the margins between conventional modes of making. I am embracing intermediality in the evolution of my art practice. Conventional photography has made room for moving image, and stepped aside altogether for more expansive installation methodologies. As I worked through iterations of this memory work, I learned to relinquish some of my tightly-held control over the planning and production, and to allow new connections to emerge in response to the intersection of these modes. I have a sense of something tidal in the making and remaking, progressive iterations shucking unnecessary distraction and complexity. Each successive work reveals more visceral impressions of my memory legacy. *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun* and *Her Oscillating Care* are subjective manifestations of memory. Their durational and physical properties allow me to play with sequencing, overlap, pace and juxtaposition variables.

At the conclusion of this time of study, I find that my art practice is positioned alongside an array of contemporary moving image and installation artists, and amongst those who operate in the domains of archive and memory. It has radically altered from my point of origin, moving away from what I have known and expected, into territories that challenge my assumptions about who I am as an artist. I no longer dwell exclusively in the house of the still photographic image, and in linear expressions that equate *this* to *that*. It is a dynamic and fluid progression, and I feel that I am only ankle deep in the surf, poised to wade out beyond where my toes can touch the seabed.

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Figure 12. *Moving Still*, 2023. Installation photographs showing black and white inkjet print without projection, and the same print with colour projection overlaid. Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. Images artist's own.

Figure 13. *Terra e Mare*, 2024. Installation detail, organza sublimation prints with digital video projection mapped to the surfaces. Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. Image artist's own.

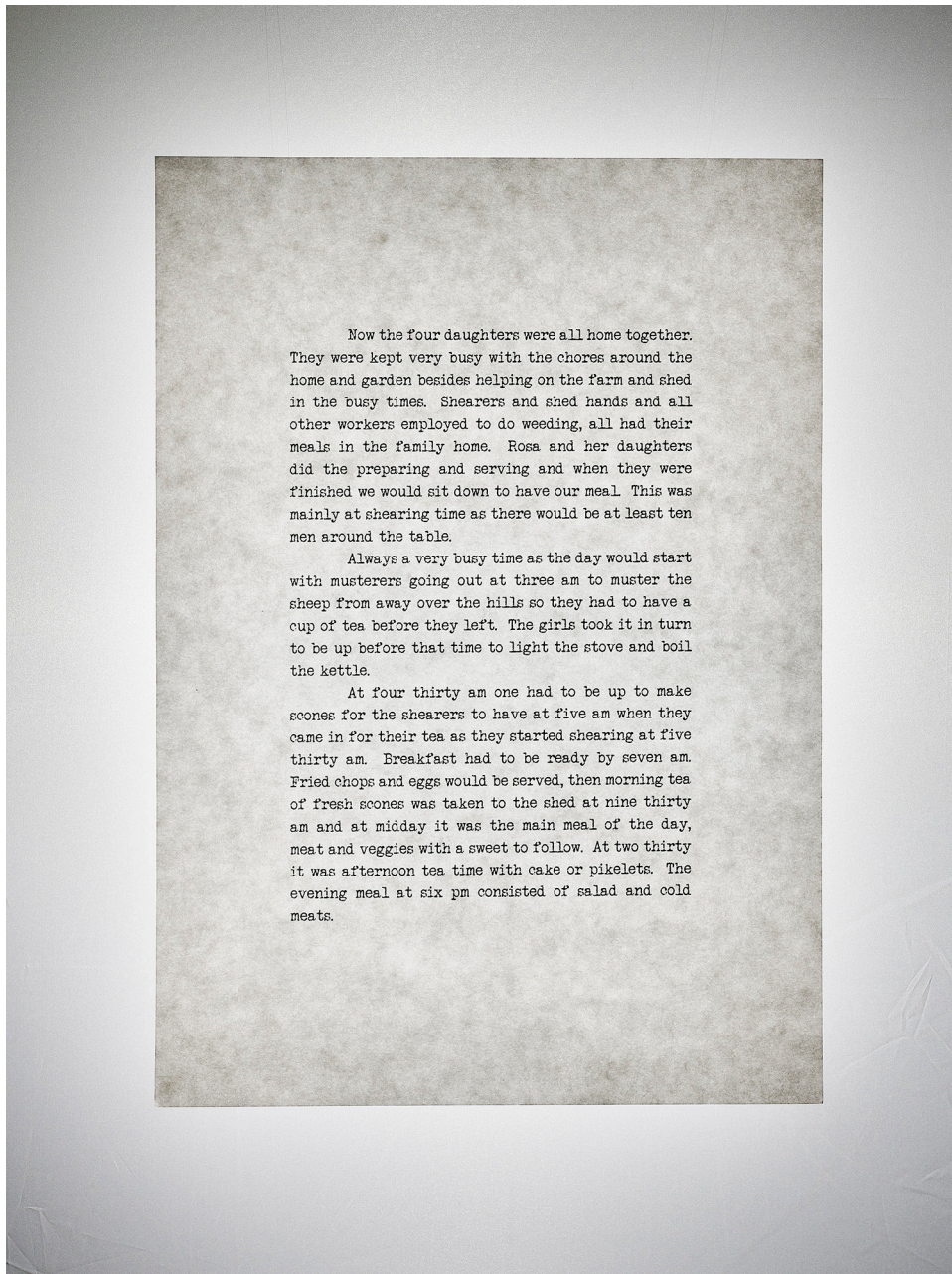
Figure 14. *Waitai Familiar*, 2024. Installation view, inkjet prints mounted on the wall, with digital video projection mapped to the surfaces. Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. Image artist's own.

Figure 15. Stella Breannan, *Thread Between Darkness and Light*, 2023. Installation view, Shown as part of exhibition The XX Factor, Trish Clark Gallery, Auckland. Image courtesy of the artist.

Figure 16. *A Lonely Place Facing The Sun*, 2024. Installation detail, showing overlapping projection imagery, Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. Image artist's own.

Appendices

Appendix 1



The Daily Bread, inkjet print on cotton rag paper, installed alongside *Matrilineal Residue*,
Toi Rauwhārangi, Wellington. 2023

Appendix 2



A Lonely Place Facing The Sun, (installation detail showing frayed edges of hemp fabric, distressing, and the clarity of image on the projection surface)
Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. 2025

Appendix 3



Terra e Mare, (installation details showing: above, layers of organza images with projection cast straight through them, diminishing in power as it recedes, and below, the 'afterimage' that landed on the wall opposite the projector, to reveal layers of diminishing clarity) Toi Rauwhārangī, Wellington. 2025

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