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Rosy Pictures: An Installation of Photography

ABSTRACT

Rosy Pictures is a body of photographic work that considers the relationship between medium, material, and process in the formation of human memory. Found family slide archives, Kodachrome slides depicting landscapes, interior and exterior spaces, travel, gardens, and family portraiture are combined, layered, and re-photographed using light to form new spaces that rest somewhere between reality and fiction. Combining both analogue and digital technologies, material function is questioned in a culture dominated by moving image screens, and ephemeral digital data. In this way, the outdated Kodachrome slide object becomes an immaterial trace of its material existence, and a catalyst for exploring how photography frames the past within the present.

KEYWORDS: photography, archive, memory, image, hybrid



Introduction

Rosy Pictures is a body of photographic work that explores notions of nostalgia and memory as they operate at the intersection of old and new media technologies. Returning to quasi analogue methods of image making in an age dominated by digital imaging technologies and moving image screens, *Rosy Pictures* considers the relationship between process, material, and medium in the formation of human memory. Using the language of outdated photographic media technologies combined with hybrid approaches to image making, found colour slides are deconstructed, layered, illuminated, and re-photographed to form new spaces that rest somewhere in-between reality and fiction. Following this process, photography is considered for its material potential as hybrid digital and analogue methods of photography converge.

The installation includes seven 24" x 24" archival pigment prints on baryta photographic paper from a total collection of thirty six images: *Darling I can barely remember* (*Rosy Pictures* #23), *In and outside* (*Rosy Pictures* #16), *You in this light* (*Rosy Pictures* #11), *Path from Longwood* (*Rosy Pictures* #21), *Quiet houses* (*Rosy*

Pictures #06), and *Ever welcome (Rosy Pictures #12)*. Imagery from an extensive collection of found Kodachrome slides depicting landscapes, interior and exterior spaces, travel, gardens, and family portraiture are combined, layered, and re-photographed using light. Rather than using a camera to capture a lived experience, light is used in post-production to activate, blend, and re-construct relics of an already documented past. These strategies of blending time, space, and location attempt to deconstruct the family slide collection and re-present it as an immaterial trace of its material existence. In this way, imagery and time simultaneously disintegrate and compress as new spaces, and narratives are formed.

Encountering the Archive

I am interested in photography's ability to rest in-between a pictorial image representing a particular space in time, and a material physical object that resides in the present. Today, photographs are ubiquitously circulated within the space of the screen, but also collected for their material importance and sentimental value. This breakdown between image space and object space that photography operates within today's mass digital culture is a point of departure I explore in my work. In response, *Rosy Pictures* addresses the family archive as it operates in-between an analogue and a digital realm. With *Rosy Pictures*, my interest lies in how media, and in particular photography, shapes, constructs, and re-forms human memory to affect how we view the past within the present.

The Kodachrome slide rests within a particular point in human history and the history of photography, where the ability to produce photographs becomes ubiquitous and completely accessible to the masses. In the 1950's through to the 1970's individuals begin to document their daily lives in colour archives, and present them in the family slide collection. Images of themselves can be archived, curated, and projected as a cinematic event through the slide projector. This movement in photography enables individuals to present themselves to others in idealized contexts, and the Kodachrome becomes a staple of representing the nuclear family.

Rooted in a sculptural approach to photographic image making, I work with found Kodachrome slides as physical archival material rather than intangible pictorial images. Using labour intensive digital and analogue experimental processes that include light, collage, layering, digital imaging, and the human hand, I re-photograph these collected images and combine them to form new spaces. These processes are the result of interactions between mind and body as I seek to address the prevalence of digital imagery in contemporary culture and the imminent death of analogue photography using hybrid approaches to image making. Working primarily with transparent film and light, photography becomes an avenue for re-experiencing the archive and producing spatial and sensorial installations that rest between reality and fiction.

I consider photography a never-ending process of memory construction, rather than static documents of a particular event in time. In her article *Remembrance: The child I never was*, Annette Kuhn contextualizes the family photograph as an object caught in a continuous state of flux when she writes, “[f]amily photographs may affect to show us our past, but what we do with them - how we use them - is really about today, not yesterday. These traces of our former lives are pressed into service in a never ending process of making, remaking, making sense of, ourselves - now.” (Kuhn 2003: 397) For Kuhn, photographs from family archives are connected with identity, place, and time. These images are continually recycled in a process that allows the viewer, collector, or the owner of a photograph to re-experience, re-frame, and re-contextualize the past in order to piece together an understanding of the present.

Conclusion

The archive as it operates in a digital age results in fragile fragments of human memory. The possibility of digitization in the management of personal and historical archives makes photographic documents of human existence vulnerable to loss in the ephemera of pixel data, the web, and the screen. The malleability of the family archive identified by Kuhn informs *Rosy Pictures* as a process of making and a body of work. I look at the archive as an encounter and a point of departure that enables me to explore the processes of human memory, and to unravel how digital technologies affect this universal human activity. My interest lies within photography’s role in constructing, re-shaping, and affecting how we look at the past within the present. As a result of this inquiry, *Rosy Pictures* considers a photograph’s object-hood, materiality, unique relationship with space and the human body, and also its psychological effects on remembering and forgetting in a digital age.

References

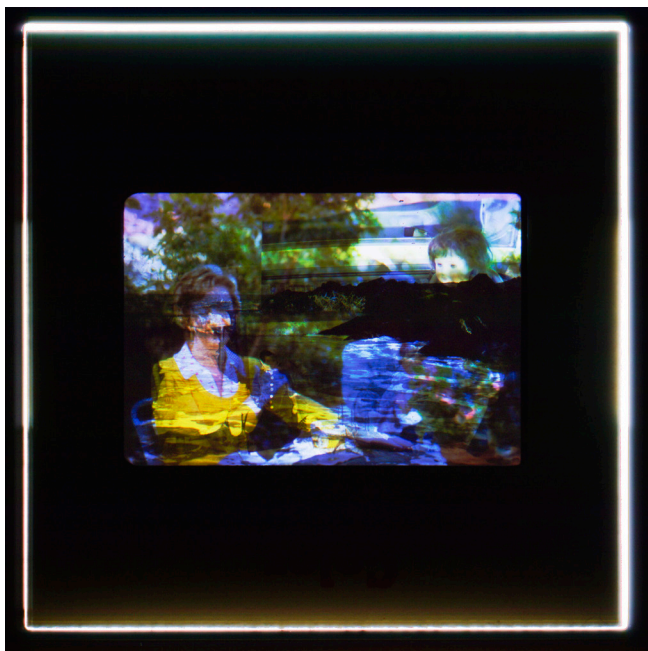
Kuhn, Annette. 2003. Remembrance: The child I never was In *The Photography Reader*, edited by Liz Wells, 394-401. Routledge: New York.



Natalie Hunter. *Darling, I can barely remember* (Rosy Pictures #23). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *In and outside* (Rosy Pictures #16). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *You in this light* (Rosy Pictures #11). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *Path from Longwood* (Rosy Pictures #21). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *Quiet houses* (*Rosy Pictures #06*). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *Ever welcome* (*Rosy Pictures #12*). 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.



Natalie Hunter. *Unseen sun (Rosy Pictures #1)*. 2016. 24" x 24". archival pigment print on baryta paper.