

Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things

by

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A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in
CRITICISM AND CURATORIAL PRACTICE

OCAD U Graduate Gallery
205 Richmond Street West, Ground floor, Toronto

March 24th to March 29th, 2018

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, April 2018

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Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things

A curatorial thesis and exhibition paper by Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya

Master of Fine Arts in Criticism and Curatorial Practice 2018

OCAD University

ABSTRACT

This curatorial thesis, *Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things*, examines the power of biographical objects, those everyday things in our possession that anchor memory, to provoke new ideas about our relationships with others and ourselves. The five artists featured in the exhibition: Jasmine Cardenas, Renée Hayward, Sara Angelucci, Vanessa Hussey, and Sarah Malekzadeh, express themselves through personal belongings; all of their artworks visualize the importance of personal and family possessions and explore the associated memories and stories those biographical objects tell when presented in a gallery setting.

Treasured Memories also includes an online project *Mementos: Ordinary Objects of Extraordinary Circumstance* (www.mementosproject.ca) where Torontonians were invited to go online and share a story about their personal possession. All submitted stories were displayed during the exhibition and the viewers also had a chance to participate by writing a brief label describing their object and the story attached to it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my primary advisor, Gerald McMaster, for his consistent support and guidance throughout the production of this thesis. I would also like to thank my secondary advisor, Dot Tuer, for her considerate suggestions and support of my project. Thanks also to Nancy Campbell and Maria-Belen Ordonez for being part of my examination committee and for their thoughtful feedback.

Many thanks to all participants in the *Mementos* participatory web project study. Thank you for sharing your unique and inspiring stories. It has been an honour to facilitate the storytelling process and give a possibility for other Torontonians to learn something new about people who they had never met before. Thanks also to the artists for generously contributing their creativity and time to the project. Without your support and openness this exhibition would have been impossible.

Finally, I would like to thank my partner and my family, for being always honest and supportive. You gave me the strength I needed to complete this thesis.

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CURATORIAL ESSAY

Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things

INTRODUCTION

The uncanny was not to be found in the exotic but the everyday.
Sigmund Freud

Ordinary objects are part of our everyday existence. As we grow old and our lives unfold, our possessions become markers of our identity; they help us understand ourselves and hold our memories, ideas and inspirations. Moreover, objects have stories associated with them, but many are most likely untold. The exhibition, *Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things*, brings together the works by four Toronto-based artists: Jasmine Cardenas, Renée Hayward, Sara Angelucci, and Vanessa Hussey and a New York-based artist Sarah Malekzadeh, to address the importance of personal and family possessions and to explore the associated memories and stories biographical objects tell when presented in a gallery setting.

In her text, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of Peoples' Lives*, American anthropologist Janet Hoskins argues that personal possessions pervade our life and become inseparable from us as “the capacity of a person to act as a social subject is defined through his or her relation to the material world, and particularly to certain objects that represent him or her.”¹ All selected artworks in the exhibition are biographical objects, some belonging to the artists and some belonged to their family members, that are encoded with stories and meanings. Sociologist Violette Morin defines biographical objects as objects that are bearing traces of use and/or belonging and visualize the relationship that exists between the subject and the object.²

¹ Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of Peoples' Lives*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), 193, accessed March 1, 2018, https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/jaro2013/SAN105/um/Janet_HoskinsBiographical_Objects__How_Things_Tell_the_Stories_of_Peoples__Lives-Routledge_1998_.pdf.

² Caterina Albano, “Displaying Lives: The Narrative of Objects in Biographical Exhibitions.” *Museum and Society*, 5(1), 2007, 16, accessed March 1, 2018, http://damianlesueur.com/Artakt_dev/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/Displaying-lives_the-narrative-of-objects-in-biographical-exhibitions_C.Albano.pdf.

Using the concept of “biographical objects,” *Treasured Memories* aims to testify the actor-network-theory (ANT), described by French philosopher Bruno Latour and later reiterated by anthropologist Daniel Miller and archaeologist Christopher Tilley, that shifts the emphasis from human actors to place objects in relation to humans as agents of action.³ The exhibition thus addresses how artists make work with biographical objects to convey how possessions have agency, carry knowledge, and are able to influence their identities and histories.⁴

When we talk about biographical objects, the concept of memory is an integral part of the discussion as these objects operate as a catalyst in the recollection of lived experience and speak to the power of memory in generating affect. In *Treasured Memories* exhibition, memory has a dual function: it is a form of knowledge, presented by selected artists, as well as an agent of the imagination conceived by the artists for viewer. Inspired by French novelist and critic Marcel Proust (1871-1922), who perceived memory as an important constituent of a person’s inner self, I consider memory as an emotional base that can bridge the gap between past and present and connect personal stories to a wider audience.⁵ This approach is similar to ideas of contemporary French theorist and historian Pierre Nora, who writes that the exhibitionary practice of privileging memory in art that has actual traces of events or experiences that allows for subjective reception of an individual story.⁶ In relation to Nora’s notion of *lieux de memoire* (site of memory), *Treasured Memories* places in conversation artworks that incorporate objects in which memory is harboured and that carry actual traces of events or experiences. Sara Angelucci’s, Jasmine Cardenas’s and Vanessa Hussey’s works embody artists’ relationship with their parents and show how their identities were influenced or not by their parents’ histories.

³ Daniel Miller, *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (London: Routledge, 2003), 19.

⁴ Mentioned in Tilley (1999) and Gell (1998).

⁵ Joan Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2007), 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

Renée Hayward's and Sarah Malekzadeh's works seek to address how through art, artists were able to deal with grief, and preserve the memories of family members who have passed away. All these personal experiences open up the possibility to connect with the viewers through an emotional state.

The biography of a personal object is always bound up in a story. Hoskins (1998) believes that we narrate ourselves through certain objects with which we establish some kind of devoted relationship.⁷ As each work in *Treasured Memories* tells a story about the artist and their family members, and is based on the everyday objects they used throughout their lives, the exhibition addresses how personal possessions serve a crucial role in artists' self-representations, and influence how they experience the world around them. To support this storytelling component of the exhibition, *Treasured Memories* includes an online project *Mementos: Ordinary Objects of Extraordinary Circumstance* (www.mementosproject.ca), in which Torontonians were invited to go online and share a story about their personal possession and become, in effect, co-curators of the exhibition's content. By using "crowdsourcing" method as the practice to engage the public in advance of the exhibition's opening, the exhibition becomes a participatory one. This emphasis on participatory design was influenced by exhibition designer Nina Simon and her *The Participatory Museum* book where she advocates the creation of exhibition as a content platform, not just a provider, to allow people to exchange their ideas with others.⁸ In addition to displaying all submitted stories online, *Treasured Memories* has two participatory wall installations. The first one features the photographs and their associated stories Torontonians submitted online and the second one, called "Share Your Object Story," invites the visitors to write a brief label describing their object and the story attached to it.

⁷ Janet Hoskins, *Biographical Objects: How Things Tell the Stories of Peoples' Lives*, (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁸ Leslie Bedford, *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experience* (Routledge, 2014), 42.

In combining together the selected artworks and the *Mementos* project, *Treasured Memories* makes evident the emotional significance of personalized objects that also have agency and carry knowledge about someone's identity.⁹ By addressing biographical objects and personal narratives, the selected artists have represented their histories and created a delicate path between the private and public spheres in which these objects are animated and displayed. The viewers, in turn, by exploring the events and experiences from artists' private lives through visual material, will respond relating these stories and objects to their own. *Treasured Memories* is thus concerned with creating an interactive dialogue for critically examining visual discourse and for providing an opportunity for self-reflection and understanding. In each of the sections that follow about the individual artists in the exhibition, it is this self-reflection and understanding that lies at the core of my interpretative frameworks for the works I have selected.

SARA ANGELUCCI

Can you describe a person based on the objects found in their wallet? What do the items in our wallets tell us about ourselves and our personality? We rarely think about what is inside our wallets, but when we do, we get impressive and unpredictable results. One such example is a work by Toronto-based artist Sara Angelucci, whose installation is an attempt to understand people based on their quotidian possessions. The artist found her father's wallet in a box of "family memorabilia" ten years after he passed away.¹⁰ Angelucci went through the objects in the wallet to rebuild her father's portrait using its contents; as well, she later repeated this exercise with the objects from her own wallet. Her installation *Everything in my Father's wallet /*

⁹ Don Norman, *Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 6.

¹⁰ For the purpose of this essay, Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines "family memorabilia" as things that stir recollection or are valued or collected for their association with a particular moments and people. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Memorabilia," accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/memorabilia>.

Everything in my wallet, 2005 (figure 1) consists of approximately ninety-six photographs that show and contrast the life of her father – an immigrant, a labourer, a father and a hunter – and hers as a Canadian-born woman, daughter, and an artist.

When we look at the photographs of objects in her father's wallet, we can identify him as an immigrant to Canada because of his Italian birth certificate. The wallet further indicates his masculinity through such items as a hunting license, a note permitting him to hunt on private property, and the United Steelworkers of America Union Card. Angelucci's wallet similarly reveals aspects of her lifestyle, containing cinema, gallery, and library memberships, foreign currency, travel receipts and business cards obtained from abroad, and a university faculty card. The photographs that represent these objects in the two wallets reveal generational, gender, class, and cultural differences between the father and the daughter. At the same time, other objects in the wallets are photographed to suggest that both owners remain close to family as both carry photographs of their loved ones. Each wallet has pictures of someone named David, and the artist's nieces, Marianne and Rachel. Marianne's image in the father's wallet shows how she looked like the last time he saw her, as does the photograph of her in Angelucci's wallet ten years later. The wallets demonstrate how Marianne matured over time.

With ninety-six 10" x 10" photographs mounted in a grid, the scale of the project is expansive and detailed. We cannot see every detail of the photographs from a distance. Thus, the viewer is intentionally invited to come closer to identify the objects in the photographs and spend the time comparing similarities and differences between the two wallets' contents. The order in which photographs are placed is not as important as the objects themselves; the point is more about how each tells a story of its owner. It is the purpose of this artwork to invite us to think about ourselves and how our identities are reflected in the contents of our wallets. Thus, the

central question visitors will be invited to engage with is: what object of extraordinary significance is in your wallet? Do you carry photographs, memberships or unusual objects?

The discovery of her father's wallet became a motivation for Angelucci to look at ordinary things and use them as a representation of a person's identity and to reevaluate her identity based on her findings. She also puts an emphasis on the role vernacular photography plays in our everyday life and the role personal possessions, as subjects, play in framing personal stories, creating histories, and memorialization.¹¹ Angelucci's creativity helps her to transform each photograph into an element of purpose and to create a dialogue between the objects that were dislocated from their context and brought from private sphere to the public gaze. This way the story behind her work and selected objects can be reimagined and made into a multitude of different stories created by exhibition viewers.

JASMINE CARDENAS

Should we preserve our cultural heritage especially when we, or our relatives, have moved to a new country?¹² Can cultural traditions give us a sense of belonging, providing us with insight on our origins, how we shape our identities, and what makes us different from the majority of people in the country where we currently live? Toronto-based artist Jasmine Cardenas answers those questions through artworks that addresses memory, nostalgia, and a search for identity through family history. By examining her family's past and stories from her parents, who came to Canada in the 1970s, her recent installation *You are the glue that holds us together*, 2017 (figure 2) emphasizes Cardenas's cultural background and shows her reflections and desire to understand her identity as a Canadian-Ecuadorian artist. The installation consists of various-

¹¹ Vernacular photography - creation of images that take everyday life and common things as subjects. It is concerned with ordinary domestic rather than with something monumental. Catherine Zuromskis, "Vernacular Photography" in *Encyclopedia of Twentieth-Century Photography* edited by Lynne Warren, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1611.

¹² Cultural heritage is our culture, values, objects, and traditions passed on from generation to generation.

shaped wood cut-outs mounted on the wall to represent objects that she associates with Ecuadorian and Canadian culture, such as banana leaves or the CN Tower. The purpose of her work is to create a mix of two cultures visualized through the use of vivid colours, distorted sculptural shapes, and personal memories. The installation also has a celebratory tone that emphasizes her family's history and Ecuadorian culture, the one so different from the Canadian culture where she lives today.

Before creating the various-shaped wood cutouts, Cardenas tried to recollect the memories she associated with the Ecuador she visited as a child. She also looked at family mementos that point to people and places that she might have never met or visited, but that she feels a deep connection to. One of the dominant and easily recognizable objects in Cardenas's installation is the banana tree leaf that signifies Ecuadorian culture for her. The artist found numerous photographs of this plant in her family photo albums. This plant was also a part of her grandmother's garden, and it was Cardenas's sketches of the leaf that triggered the initiation of her large-scale installation. To reference the power of ordinary objects to stimulate reminiscence of memory, exhibition features a small family photograph of Cardenas's father and her sketchbook she used to draw preparatory sketches of banana leaves.¹³ As for the dominant Canadian symbol in her work, the CN Tower, is the most easily recognizable form as a reminder of her new home.

Cardenas's work is a big, colourful ensemble of objects where each piece draws attention but also invites the viewer to dive in and explore the composition in greater detail. Many objects are organically shaped, some are curvy, and some triangular. It is essential to understand that all of the wood cut-outs are the outcomes of the preparatory research stage of Cardenas's work and

¹³ For the purpose of this essay, The free dictionary defines reminiscence as the act or process of recollecting past experiences or events. "Reminiscence," *Thefreedictionary*, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/reminiscence>.

are the starting point for new paintings: she stamps the wood cut-outs onto a raw canvas or a piece of fabric as representations of memory. In addition, through her installation, Cardenas is dissolving the subject/object divide: the work of making wood cut-outs (objects) is essential to the process of making memory, and the wood cuts become part of the constitution of her subjectivity.

One of the dominant features of Cardenas's installation is colour. The artist, influenced by Michael Taussig's book *What Color is the Sacred*, traces colour through the colonial trade.¹⁴ Cardenas forms her work out of brightly coloured pieces and hues that are unusual to the North American eye but which are widely used in Ecuador as a marker of cultural identity. In addition, all the colours the artist uses in her installation are part of the Ecuadorian flag: yellow, dark and light blue, red, green, and brown. She is not afraid to give power to colour and to make it the dominant element of the picture thereby disregarding any possible associations with so-called "uncivilized" kitsch aesthetics.¹⁵

Returning to her cultural ancestry, childhood memories, and family stories have enabled Cardenas to memorialize her discoveries in this installation. In *Treasured Memories*, the viewer can see how "raw materials," in the form of wood cut-outs, become the actual artwork that embodies how Cardenas understands her personality and defines her identity. Her installation represents the reminiscence of memory, an active act of recollecting events and experiences from the past, distinct from Greek philosopher Aristotle's concept of simple remembering, which he described as a passive affection that brings warmth.¹⁶ In her installation, Cardenas

¹⁴ Michael Taussig, *What Color is the Sacred*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009).

¹⁵ "Uncivilized" kitsch aesthetics refers to the objects made by non-Western people that are often considered by Western people as incapable of creativity and innovation like artists from Europe and North America, who have "artistic genius" and create "high art." Helmut K. Anheier, and Yudhishthir Raj. Isar, *Cultures and Globalization: Cultural Expression, Creativity and Innovation*, (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2010).

¹⁶ From Aristotle's "On Memory and Reminiscence" treatise written in 350 B.C.E., translated by J. I. Beare and originally published in W. D. Ross, *The Works of Aristotle* (vol. 3), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930).

links reminiscence with autobiographical memory and biographical objects and invites us to understand our tendency to contemplate on and try to recollect our past.

VANESSA HUSSEY

Can books, without ever being read, say something? Toronto-based artist Vanessa Hussey explores the infinite potential of the book form. Her artworks place the ordinary object, the book, which is usually perceived as a container that conveys information into a context in which form is important and is valued as content. Through digital photography, Hussey presents books as art objects in order to help her discuss issues of memory, nostalgia, and understanding oneself and one's experiences through the memories and experiences of another.

The five photographic prints included in the exhibition focus on books and their markings and the annotations people tend to make in them. Not every piece represents a book in its original form: some books have underlined text; others have ripped, folded and cut-out pages visualizing the experiences people might have while reading the text, as well as suggesting how these experiences can be different at different times of our lives for different people and even different generations. What stands out about these artworks is the way in which Hussey has paired different books with significant objects and mementos to visually describe how the story in each book resonates with the people, places, and times the artist associates with them. Each print has different background that Hussey uses to create connections between the book, the objects and associative stories about her family members or herself.

The first three prints created by Hussey are portraits of her parents. The first piece, *Untitled I*, 2012 (figure 3), is William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* (1954). This book belonged to Hussey's mother and it has her original handwriting. The objects placed in proximity to the book are coded as feminine, ones which visualize how Hussey created her mother's portrait through

the family possessions: her mother's nightwear is used as the background, and Hussey's grandmother's bottle that her mother kept is placed on top of the book.

The second piece *Untitled 2*, 2012 (figure 4) features William Faulkner's novel *As I Lay Dying* (1930), a reference to both Hussey's mother and the artist's relationship to her. The main character of the Faulkner's book discovers that his mother did not want to have children; similarly, being a mother is a role that Hussey cannot see herself fulfilling. The artist thus relates herself more to the character of the book than to her mother, and seeks to counter, through the juxtaposition of objects and text, the emphasis that society places on girls being cast as both feminine and mothers. The vase placed on top of the book is a further reference to femininity. The hidden photograph inside a book is a portrait of her mother's first boyfriend, which Hussey speculates is an object perhaps not typically kept by a married woman.

The third piece *Untitled 3*, 2012 (figure 5) is a copy of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) (the title is not identified on the image), which once belonged to the artist's father and which still has his highlights. On top of the page of the book opened to an annotated section Hussey has placed a small snapshot of her father. *On the Road* was one of his favorite novels, yet Hussey does not like the book and does not understand why. By creating her father's portrait through the object he owned and cared for, the artist was learning how different they are in spite of the fact that they are part of one family.

The last two photographic prints in Hussey's installation are self-portraits where the artist further explores the issues of femininity and memory. *Untitled 4*, 2012 (figure 6) is of *Cat's Eye*, Margaret Atwood's 1988 novel where the main character reflects on her childhood and teenage years. The highlighted paragraph is the one that resonates with the artist the most and references Hussey's bad experiences with girls when she was that age. The artist points to the competition

between the girls, who like cats, do not support each other. The object on top of the book is used as an additional symbol of femininity alongside the floral butterfly patterns of the background. *Untitled 5*, 2012 (figure 7) features Robertson Davies' *What's Bred in the Bone* (1985). All the memento objects on this photograph are objects of memory: Hussey's hair; her grandfather's elephant statue she collected; and her dog's baby teeth. All represent the artist's attachment to things, and to a past that is difficult to let go. The pages of the book are cut out like a jewelry box or treasure-box visualizing Hussey's habit of hiding things in the books.

Overall, Hussey's work is an exercise in nostalgia that represents her tendencies to hoard things for sentimental reasons. Hussey's point is that a book is more than just reading material: a book takes up space in our world of object-oriented culture and can carry deep histories with it. Each digital print tells a story about the past and about Hussey's family or herself. She creates sensitive portraits of people she knows through the objects they used. Some of the books belong either to Hussey or to her parents, and have marginalia left on the pages. Interestingly, these books were owned by her parents at the age she was when she created her installation in 2012, and Hussey was trying to understand what her parents did decades ago. Although many of the books are Anglo-American literature classics, for whoever is reading them, they have the quality of defining for the readers at a moment in time. Perhaps, it is this very quality that gives such books their timelessness.

SARAH MALEKZADEH

Do you collect relics or mementos that once belonged to your relatives or family members? Have they taken on new identities and purposes? Such mementos, once collected, often have an associated story, as well they enliven the memories people might have of the original owners. These objects are sometimes kept hidden in boxes, on top of a shelf, or placed in family albums;

they are inactive and kept just as reminders of the past. Nevertheless, some memento owners animate their objects and use them in their everyday life or even in their artistic practice. One such example is Sarah Malekzadeh who owns her grandmother's signature stamp, once used to sign her name, and which Malekzadeh now utilizes to paint her grandmother's portrait.

Malekzadeh had seen the stamp as a child being carried by her grandmother in the waistband of her long skirts. Her grandmother, who was illiterate and used the stamp to sign her name, raised ten children mostly on her own and lived between Iran and Canada to help out with raising Malekzadeh's siblings and the artist herself.

For Malekzadeh, this tangible object served as both the catalyst for creating a series of artworks and the tool of their production, both commemorating the memory of her grandmother, and enlivening it by using the signature stamp in an innovative and productive way, as all the artworks selected for this exhibition were created by Malekzadeh using the stamp and ink on paper. *Maman*, 2017 (figure 8) is a colorful and detailed portrait of Malekzadeh's grandmother, who sits on and is framed by textiles containing floral shaped patterns to make a connection to the pattern the artist associates with her grandmother and which evokes strong memories of being in her grandmother's house. The second piece, *Robabeh Torkzadeh*, 2016 (figure 9), is a life-sized portrait of the five-foot-tall woman created to show the solidity and strength of Malekzadeh's grandmother.

Malekzadeh's work is a representation of her childhood memories as a way of overcoming the loss of her grandmother by keeping family memories and stories alive for her and future generations. Her grandmother's stamp was a great influence in shaping Malekzadeh's identity as an artist, and contributed towards establishing her unusual and unique practice and method of work. The stamp thus became a companion and an artistic tool without which the story of its first

owner would remain untold. Finally, the stamp visualizes how significant a simple material object was for its owner and for the person who inherits it after the owner's death. In *Treasured Memories*, the viewers can see a 3D printed version of the original stamp and a photograph of the artist's hand holding the original stamp used to inspire dialogue between the story behind the painting, viewers, and the artwork as a whole.

RENÉE HAYWARD

What happens after you lose someone you love? How do you grieve? Possible answers to these questions are provided by Toronto-based artist Renée Hayward. Hayward's art installation seeks to represent how we can overcome experiences of heartbreak and grief, and how we grow wiser and stronger from those experiences. After witnessing the death of her grandmother, Hayward began to heal by looking at objects that connected her to happy childhood memories of her grandmother when she was still alive. For Hayward, ordinary objects like a pillow or a chair provided a passageway to explore the themes of memory, nostalgia, and the presence and absence of the body. Her grandmother's possessions formed a tangled web of experiences and became a catalyst for her art installation that invites the viewers to explore and create personal connections to the objects Hayward has preserved after her grandmother passed away.

The act of collecting as memory work is a visceral experience for Hayward. In *Untitled (Kitty Crompton)*, 2017 (figure 10), she recreates a portrait of her grandmother using objects as reminders of her grandmother's character, style, and interests. The installation selected for this exhibition is one of many iterations of this process and consists of nine objects: a phone, a book, a pillow, a spoon, a drawer, a chair, a frame, a clock and a wooden shoe stretcher that Hayward's grandmother used the most throughout her life. In the process of assembling the work, the artist thought about objects' proximity, aesthetics, and orientation to establish a potential for the

viewer to make connections between all objects. Her grandmother's life unfolds with each possession, and their associated stories activate the still assemblage of personal objects, while evoking the presence of the absent owner.

The first object (figure 10) at the top left of the installation is the phone with a long cord folding down on the wall. To Hayward, this object, among others, brings her back to her grandmother's time, as most people no longer use a dial phone anymore. The next object, the drawer, reminds the artist of the times when she was a small child. It is purposefully placed this way so that the viewer will see it from a child's perspective as Hayward remembers seeing it. Other objects – a book, spoon, frame, shoe stretcher – contribute to the feeling of the past and visualize the qualities of her grandmother's style and interests. This assemblage becomes a cohesive colour palette and a show-and-tell of the objects manufactured in the last century.

The most prominent objects in the installation are the pillow and the chair. The former is placed vertically as opposed to how we usually use it on a bed. It is purposely placed this way in order to create a shape of a body to hug as you would embrace a real person. The pillow is one her grandmother used every night, and contains her smell and sweat. Both the chair and the pillow visualize the absence of the owner's body. Hayward believes that objects can evoke a presence not only in their form and proximity to one another but also by what is absent. Viewers are invited to imagine Hayward's grandmother sitting on it, perhaps posing for a photo surrounded by her everyday objects, or telling a lovely story about each of them.

At the bottom of the installation the artist has placed a vintage retro-mold ceramic wall-clock from the 1960s. The clock is not something you see in stores today. It is old and probably not of high value, but it brings colour and enlivens the composition, becoming a perfect final and vital piece of the overall ensemble. In earlier version of this installation, Hayward also included a

ticking clock sound to reinforce a temporal presence within the objects and also to provide a sense of both pause and urgency.

Through *Untitled (Kitty Crompton)*, Hayward creates an exercise of observation, interaction, and reflection by using contemplative and utilitarian objects to understand the relationship between oneself, the objects, and others. She invites the viewer to imagine her grandmother through the lens of objects assembled to create her portrait. Hayward's work visualizes quotidian objects as outliving their owner's physical bodies, while at the same time allowing parts of us to continue. Personal family possessions become mementos for future generations to keep and use as memories of the past. Hayward's loss allowed her to find a family presence in these objects, accessible through observation, and to realize that they are also a vital extension of her own identity.

MEMENTOS PARTICIPATORY ONLINE PROJECT

A memento is a sentimental and emotionally loaded object, a material reminder and at times anachronistic thing of the past that tells stories and can transfer knowledge and values about an individual or a family. The power of a memento lies in its connection with an actual person, place, or an event. It can be a starting point for conversation and encourage individual or group storytelling, and be a platform for sharing and interpreting experiences, emotions, and ideas. The use of storytelling as learning pedagogy and methodology can exemplify that stories have layers of meaning, and they tend to change with different audiences who experience them.¹⁷ Digital storytelling (in the form of a website project) is used as part of the *Treasured Memories*

¹⁷ Ozhan Tingoy, "Using Storytelling in Education," (Yeditepe University, 2006).

exhibition and in order to enhance people's participation by weaving together images and narratives, which participants submit online, and invite the visitors to add to.

For the physical installation of the *Mementos* project, I was inspired by French contemporary artist Christian Boltanski and his photography installations in which he uses photography and found objects to question memory and individuality. *Mementos* mimics Boltanski's *Lessons of Darkness* exhibition (1988-89) where he incorporated elements of light into his installations to enhance the focus on the people in the photographs. *Mementos* employs Boltanski's method of exhibiting photographs of people and objects without naming their owners to evoke emotions and to allow people to look for personal connections. I see the spectator as an actor who activates the installation by looking and wondering about people's histories. Viewer participation and the actual experience is the key part of this exhibition as the "Share Your Object Story" wall installation, which content will be created by exhibition viewers, will be disassembled after the show. What will remain is the memory of it.

CONCLUSION

Ordinary objects are infused with meanings that may not have value in the outside world, but within everyday personal lives they symbolize relationships and events that matter. As British anthropologists Marilyn Strathern and Alfred Gell argue, objects describe our past; they are images that reflect our present, and are signs that calls us on to the future.¹⁸ Biographical objects, as presented by artists in this exhibition, open up the possibility of creating new kinds of relationships between people of different backgrounds. They operate as a catalyst for

¹⁸ Marilyn Strathern, "Artefacts of History: Events and the Interpretation of Images," in *Culture and History in the Pacific* (ed.) Jukka Sikaka. (Finnish Anthropological Society, 1990).

identification, memory and self-discovery and invite the viewers to draw upon their own life stories to connect with the work.

In *Treasured Memories*, the task of preserving memory through personal possession is revealed as a difficult but interesting task. There will always be a tension between an object and the story or event it is meant to depict based on the perspective of the narrator – the owner of that object. Nevertheless, all selected artists are open to different interpretations and provide viewers a platform for us as viewers to think about our personal history, how it has been shaped, and how we might best document things/events to come.

Similar to the experiences we have by reading books, *Treasured Memories* is an opportunity to experience sentiments, attitudes, and stories of the participating artists, their voice, and worldview, through art. It is obvious that our lives are all different, and every exhibition visitor will bring a different background and, perhaps, their own personal baggage to the exhibition. They will understand and experience the artworks in various ways, but also, in similar ways, by sharing a version of the artists' experiences. Moreover, the participatory component of the exhibition will enable participants to rethink art collectively, and to engage viewers with the stories of others whom they might never have met in a different setting.

EXHIBITION REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Art that focuses on employing ordinary objects and personal possessions has become a platform for artistic investigations, a resource for academic research, and a tool to visualize personal life, history, and identity. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, artists have included “found” objects in their works, but it was French-American artist Marcel Duchamp and later Pop Art artists, such as Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg, who placed quotidian items in the center of their artistic practice. Art became less mimetic, and artists started to move towards creating more conceptual works.¹⁹ The intent of *Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things* is to show that the use of ordinary objects is still very relevant in contemporary artistic practice.

This exhibition is about elevating the ordinary, by telling narratives of the everyday, and its relationship with contemporary art. Based on my interest in material culture, *Treasured Memories* addresses everyday objects that were not initially created for artistic and exhibition purposes. My intention is to focus on the themes of storytelling, memory, and the search for self-identity as they are visualized in the selected art pieces. The exhibition is a means to help viewers understand the proposed concepts while activating personal associations to memories, emotions, and events from the past.

METHODOLOGY

To organize an exhibition about personal possessions, I first had to choose what objects best suited the exhibition concept: relics, souvenirs, mementos, or all of them together. In the end, I decided to focus on mementos because they have a more direct relationship to memory,

¹⁹ The Greek word mimesis means “imitation” and re-presentation - not copying. Plato and Aristotle spoke of mimesis as the re-presentation of nature. Britannica, “Mimesis,” accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/art/mimesis>.

and they broaden the variety of possible issues and stories discussed. Sometimes, mementos can be souvenirs, but in most cases, there is a significant distinction between those two objects. Souvenirs are things people obtain when travelling while mementos are objects people keep based on life experiences and significant events that they want to keep in their lives.

The exhibition casts a light on the theme of storytelling and the sharing of personal narratives; as well, it demonstrates how everyday objects have associated stories and that many stay untold or are shared with only a small number of people. Through *Treasured Memories*, I am interested in curating the personal bringing and bring artists' stories to the public sphere of an art gallery. Using the Duchampian notion of taking an everyday object and by placing it as a new artistic discovery within a new context of an art gallery and with a new title gives ordinary objects new meanings and reveals them in a different light.

The public space makes the chosen personal possessions very different from their original contexts, and it also brings the attendant issues of how people move through space and how the works will be interpreted by different visitors. If we look on the exhibition's floor plan (figure 11), we can see that the order in which selected artists are discussed in my curatorial essay follows the order in which the artworks were installed on the walls. At the same time, there is no prescriptive tour of how people should experience the exhibition – I am just proposing an order and the visitor can choose if they want to follow it or experience what attracts them the most.

The first three artists discuss their relationship with their parents. Angelucci's work reveals the differences between her father's and her lives. What is interesting is that the objects represented in her wallet do not reveal her family history, and only by looking at her father's wallet the viewer can understand that her family came to Canada from Italy. Cardenas's work, on the contrary, reveals her family roots and her desire to represent herself as Canadian-Ecuadorian

artist whose identity was influenced by the memories and stories she obtained from her family members. Hussey's work reveals the disconnection someone can have with their parent and the desire to have a different life. The last two artworks in the exhibition discuss the deep connection Malekzadeh and Hayward have to their grandmothers, who have passed away, and the desire of both artists to keep the memory of them in a form of an artwork.

My work and interest in material culture led me to investigate relevant concepts in fields of phenomenology, sociology, psychology, "human-thing entanglement theory," as well as ethnography, storytelling, narrative analysis, and participatory art practice. My interdisciplinary academic research draws in equal parts from primary and secondary materials, both physical and digital, and from more specific research about each artist's practice. This approach led to the creation of a carefully planned and designed multi-dimensional project.

Artists' selection began ten months before the start of the exhibition, and after they were all confirmed, I remained in full contact with each artist until the installation of the show. I organized multiple studio visits where I met the artists in person, and learned about their practices and what inspired them to create their pieces. After coming to understand their perspectives, I wrote a curatorial essay with in-depth descriptions of each artwork.

To understand what common themes each artist presents in the selected artworks and personal stories, submitted through the website project, I subjected them to narrative and thematic analyses, in which I tried to understand relationships between their experiences and the objects that were the catalyst for the result of those life events. I collected data from the website (images and written stories submitted by the public) and identified key concepts to create main themes discussed by artists and *Mementos* participants. My analysis discovered that some people tend to focus more on family roots and family histories while others discussed the objects

relating only to a particular individual self. In addition, to make the *Mementos* project more engaging for the exhibition viewers, I am posing the following questions to stimulate broader and more detailed responses: What is the history of this object? How does its use change with age? What does this object mean to you? What happens when it reaches the end of its usefulness? Is this object meant to be showcased publicly or is it clutched privately far from view?

EXHIBITION CONCEPT

Voice shapes experience. I, as curator, see myself as a facilitator who brings the voice of the storyteller, the artist, without telling the visitor what to think or how to interpret each story. When making my catalogue was inspired by Leslie Bedford's book *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experience* where she argues that creating an exhibition is not only "about teaching – the didactic telling – but closer to facilitating – the experiential showing or doing."²⁰ I aimed to make my exhibition an interactive, emotional, and imaginative experience and used a narrative mode to emphasize both the storyteller and the listener by creating a conversation and opening up a visitor's mind. Through *Treasured Memories*, my intention is to engage people's emotions and imagination while looking at ordinary objects and personal possessions.

My exhibition catalogue is intentionally written in a style accessible to a specialized and non-specialized viewer. It invites everyone to interact with the work, make personal connections and think how their life and the use of personal objects is similar or different from the experiences discussed by selected artists. I noted that visitors, who came to the opening night,

²⁰ Leslie Bedford, *The Art of Museum Exhibitions: How Story and Imagination Create Aesthetic Experience* (Routledge, 2014), 115.

actively used the art catalogue as an exhibition support material; however, during the regular gallery hours, people spent less time examining the show and the catalogue.

Leslie Bedford is not the only scholar who promotes exhibition design based on storytelling. In their book, *Museum Making: Narratives, Architects, Exhibitions* (2012), MacLeod, Hourston Hanks, and Hale describe a new form of the museum making, formulated in the last decade, that creates narrative environments where experiences and stories became a part of the process of storytelling. This approach produces a more engaging and memorable experience available to a broader public. Mary Jane Jacob (2006), American curator, writer, and educator, also emphasizes the advantages of an open gallery space devoid of predetermined ideas, in order for audiences to benefit from deep engagement with exhibition materials.

One of the contemporary examples that demonstrate the success of the exhibition design based on storytelling is the Museum of Molndal in Sweden where more than ten thousand ordinary objects are accessible to visitors to inspire old memories and the creation of new stories. The museum visitors and objects interact with each other every time they come in contact with each other. I am hoping that *Treasured Memories* becomes such a platform for people to share the stories from their own lives based on the artworks they see and the stories each artist shares with the public.

The overall environment of the exhibition is created as an experiential and conversational space, where visitors can seamlessly move from being functioning participants to an audience member and back again. I am offering a possibility for audiences to be creators of the exhibition's content by submitting their stories online before the exhibition as well as during the run of the show as an attempt to collectively rethink art. This model accounts for a "social turn in

contemporary art” as explored by an art historian and critic Claire Bishop in *Artificial Hells*.²¹ Bishop argues that participatory art places artists or curators as producers of situations, and the audience as the projects’ co-producer or participant.²² She advocates the social turn in contemporary art with its principal goal of moving away from an emphasis on a commodity object to providing an experience.

In a gallery or museum setting, many exhibitions that include physical objects have vitrines, and all items are placed inside so that no one can touch them. As the pieces, selected for *Treasured Memories*, are either photographs, paintings or art installations, everything is placed directly on the walls. The visitors will be invited to come closer and spend time observing every detail of each installation. Small memento objects will be placed next to the works on plinths to create a dialogue between objects and contexts of the works, as well as giving the viewer more non-prescriptive clues on how to read each piece. Nothing will be placed under glass, which will help make every element of the exhibition welcoming and engaging. I argue that when visitors are trusted, they assume responsibility. It is my hope they will appreciate and respect the unusual approach to having objects outside the glass vitrines or placed at a safe distance from them.

EXHIBITION REVIEW

To understand relevant curatorial precedents, I researched exhibitions in which curators and/or artists brought up similar issues concerning mementos, memory, storytelling, and personal possessions. My ideas were largely influenced by the exhibition *Mementos: Artist’s Souvenirs, Artefacts and other Curiosities*, held during Art Brussels in 2017, and curated by Jens Hoffmann and Piper Marshall. The show combined personal and sentimental objects from a diverse group

²¹ Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, (London: Verso, 2012), 2.

²² *Ibid*, 2.

of artists that were displayed in a highly subjective context of an art fair. The idea of showing the impact that particular objects have on their owners is an approach I elaborate on in my exhibition.

I was further inspired by the local Toronto exhibition *Not Forgetting*, curated by Patrick Macaulay and Lisa Myers in August 2012 at the Harbourfront Centre. Their focus was on experiences that come from our own lives or those of our family, and the act of remembering the stories, ideas, and memories that convey nostalgia and function as a means to deal with loss. I was moved by Meryl McMaster and Shauntay Grant's works at the *Every. Now. Then: Reframing Nationhood* exhibition at the AGO, which transferred ideas about personal objects or family mementos. McMaster's *Time's Gravity* work is a photograph where the artist stands in the snow holding her journals. Each book has a drawing on the spine, used as a storytelling method, which marks important events McMaster experienced throughout the years. Shauntay Grant's work *Grandmother, Teach Me* represents heritage quilts that were made by her great-grandmother from discarded clothing. Grant has little memory about her great-grandmother, but the quilts help her bring back the family history and stories that they keep. Both pieces inspired me to demonstrate the importance of the memory preservation, personal or otherwise; as well as the deep connections we have to personal objects, which define us and reflect who we have become.

Daniel Miller's *The Comfort of Things* and Sherry Turkle's *Evocative Objects: Things we think with* became conceptual catalysts for creating the *Mementos* participatory web project. Both authors formed books around the stories of their research participants, personal or family mementos, and the important personal possessions they keep in their lives. I also came across *Passages: What We Keep Tells a Story*, a web project that invited the public to share the story

attached to the objects they keep. Curated by Christine Boyanoski for the Art Gallery of Peel in 2013, online submissions were combined with works by contemporary photo-based artists whose work references personal histories.

Another inspiration for the participatory component was the Toronto-based non-profit organization Myseum, which positions itself as a platform to showcase diverse perspectives of the city's past, present, and future through ideas, art, artifacts, and participatory activities. This approach to museum and exhibition making help visitors experience different perspectives and stories as well as to better understand themselves and others. *Treasured Memories* was influenced by the first ever physical exhibition organized by Myseum *Cosmopolis Toronto: The World in One City* (November 2016 – January 2017) where every participant was asked to tell a story of their migration to Toronto and to hold an object that connects them to the past while being photographed. *Cosmopolis Toronto* explored the journeys of newcomers to Canada presented through a series of photographs captured by Colin Boyd Shafer.

All of the scholarly and curatorial examples mentioned above emphasize storytelling, and place the curator as a facilitator of dialogues and archivist of memories. With *Treasured Memories*, I want to assist viewers in achieving critical consciousness and the interactive consumption of art while actively participating in the creation of new stories. I want to move outside the traditional “white cube” space and add website component to the exhibition to reach more people and provide an opportunity for them to critically engage with exhibition materials.²³

²³ The concept of the gallery as “white cube” was introduced in the early twentieth century in response to the increasing abstraction of modern art. It refers to a gallery aesthetic characterized by square white walls and a light source coming from the ceiling. Tate, “White Cube,” accessed Feb 25, 2018, <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/w/white-cube>.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Material culture is crucial to people's identity. Sociologist Ian Woodward believes that the material objects we possess can be used in the identity-related task of understanding oneself. He proposes an Object-Relations Theory, which is a modern adaptation of the Freudian psychoanalytic approach, and emphasizes the use of objects to establish relationships for certain types of emotional sustenance and psychological development. Woodward writes that "people choose certain objects from within their environment to develop, manage and mediate their sense of self."²⁴ Through this exhibition, I want to convey that objects have agency and not just mediators that communicate something about ourselves and our identity.

Another theoretical approach that helped me to understand why personal possessions have crucial roles in this psychodynamic activity of constituting and understanding oneself is phenomenology. Its main concern is our experience of things. In *Spirit, the family, and the unconscious in Hegel's philosophy* (2009), David V. Ciavatta emphasizes the importance of Hegel's theory of recognition that is grounded in the phenomenology of our experience with other selves and is also crucial for understanding how we experience the world in general. The theory is based on the concept of "intersubjectivity" and demonstrates our ability to recognize ourselves in others and to relate to their experiences.²⁵ Based on Hegel's account, Ciavatta argues for a need to move away from the twentieth-century phenomenological tradition that privileges the "I" and the first-person perspective that makes problematic explaining how people experience other people's selves. We experience the world not as singular entities isolated from others but as "co-selves" living in an intersubjective network of mutual recognition. Every

²⁴ Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture*, (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2014), 125.

²⁵ David V. Ciavatta, *Spirit, the Family, and the Unconscious in Hegel's Philosophy*, (State University of New York Press, 2009), 1.

selected artwork in *Treasured Memories* proves that selected artists' experiences were influenced by the lives of their family members.

British archaeologist Christopher Tilley also focuses his attention on Hegel's ideas and mainly on the concept of "objectification" to help us understand what things are and what things do in the social world. He believes that "personal, social and cultural identity is embodied in our persons and objectified in our things."²⁶ Our possessions are mediums through which value and ideas are constantly reproduced; thus, without things, people could neither be themselves nor know themselves and others. This leads to the Human-Thing Entanglement theory, formulated by British archeologist Ian Hodder, which emphasizes humans' dependency on material things. Hodder believes that people depend on things in cognitive and psychological development and in terms of their identity, perception and being. The things with which humans are entangled include their ideas, thoughts, emotions, and desires. Objects, he argues, are entangled with our identity.²⁷

In *Treasured Memories*, all artworks produced were selected to influence the thoughts and actions of viewers. All the artists present personal or family possessions as subjects of biographies and personal identities. Their art is not a simple object of aesthetic contemplation; it is made to act upon the world and bring the fulfillment of desire, admiration and/or confusion. We touch the things and the things simultaneously touch us and they, as Smithsonian curator William Bird (2013) believes, celebrate people's experiences and reality in certain period of time.²⁸

²⁶ Christopher Tilley, Webb Keane, Susanne Küchler, Michael Rowlands and Patricia Spyer, "Objectification," *Handbook of Material Culture*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2006), 70.

²⁷ Ian. Hodder, *Studies in Human-Thing Entanglement*, 2016, accessed August 10, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ian_Hodder/publication/297459200_Studies_in_HumanThing_Entanglement/links/5715bd7a08ae1a840265048f.pdf.

²⁸ William L. Bird, *Souvenir nation: Relics, Keepsakes, and Curios from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2013.

The concept that is most directly intertwined with the exploration of oneself is memory and the reminiscence of memory: “the act of remembering events and experiences from the past.”²⁹ Professors of psychology Susan Bluck and Linda J. Levine (1998) examined the relation of reminiscence to autobiographical memory and the self. Bluck and Levine define self-schema as a stable set of memories that summarize a person’s beliefs and experiences while autobiographical memories are our personal experiences influenced by objects, people and events experienced at particular time and place.³⁰ They compared the two to demonstrate that self-schema guides the process of reconstructing memories and autobiographical memory, in turn, play a central role in defining the self.³¹ When linking reminiscence with autobiographical memory together in an exhibition setting, viewers will better understand people’s tendency to contemplate on their past.

Lastly, storytelling and art-as-experience are two concepts that influenced the theme and the design of *Treasured Memory*. American philosopher John Dewey (1859-1952), argued that our life is experience, and to make art relevant to people, artists should recapture that experience. He articulated the need to move from an emphasis on the material work of art to the development of experience and having active audiences. Dewey’s ideas were re-evaluated by museum scholar Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, whose scholarship addressed the recent museological turn towards collaboration, in becoming active learning environments for their audiences and connecting museum artifacts with people and their experiences.

CONCLUSION

This project has enabled me to understand that the world of objects is central to an understanding who we are. *Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things* demonstrates that learning about

²⁹ Cambridge Dictionary, “Reminiscence,” accessed February 20, 2018, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/remembrance>.

³⁰ Susan Bluck and Linda J. Levine, “Reminiscence as Autobiographical Memory: a Catalyst for Reminiscence Theory Development.” *Ageing and Society*, 18, (1998), 186.

³¹ *Ibid*, 187.

personal possessions and their relations to their owners is both a way to provide a context as well as a way to learn about others. This exhibition emphasizes that the discovery of the self can happen through one's examination of personal and family personal objects and the narratives attached to those things. Viewers are invited to compare and contrast multiple interpretations of treasured memories, stored in personal belongings, and to see how objects have a powerful impact on our identity.

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APPENDICES

A: LIST OF ITEMS IN ANGELUCCI'S INSTALLATION

Angelucci's Dad Wallet Image List:

- #1 – Photo of Nonno (Grandfather)
- #2 – Army Friend
- #3 – Photo of David, Marianne & Rachel
- #4 – Total automotive services – business card
- #5 – Italian Birth Certificate
- #6 – Stelco Identity Card (fiery orange flames) – plastic business card
- #7 – Dr. Blackstone office card – Blue plastic card
- #8 – Stelco In. Health Insurance Certificate (white business card)
- #9 – Ontario Health Insurance Commission Identification Card – beige & purple
- #10 – Small white card with mathematical calculation
- #11 – Canadian Tire Credit Card
- #12 – Old photo of mom
- #13 – Dr. De Tullio dentist appointment card (blue)
- #14 – Christmas photo, Marianne & Rachel
- #15 – Trailer Permit
- #16 – Firearm Acquisition Certificate
- #17 – Certificate of Canadian Citizenship
- #18 – Photo of David & Marianne
- #19 – Photo of Lou as a baby
- #20 – Photo of Nonna with Basket of Tomatoes
- #21 – Yachetti, Lanza & Restivo - payment
- #22 – Carolina Apartments Business Card
- #23 – Visa Card
- #24 – Stelco Identification Card – with firey red sparks
- #25 – Hamilton Wentworth Regional Police Business card - Constable W. Van Dyk
- #26 – Three 86 cent stamps
- #27 – Picture of Marianne – blue dress

- #28 – Admit One
- #29 – McMaster University Medical Centre – 3U Cardiorespiratory – white card
- #30 – United Steelworkers of America Union Card
- #31 – Sears Card
- #32 – Ontario Driver’s License
- #33 – Jumbo video card
- #34 – Social Insurance Card – Part one
- #35 – Leon’s Card
- #36 – Driver’s License Card – blue no photo
- #37 – Canadian Tire Store Credit
- #38 – Phil Tristaino address
- #39 – Yellow prescription card
- #40 – B & G Auction receipt
- #41 – RCA Stereo receipt
- #42 – Slater Furniture Receipt
- #43 – Lens Crafters receipt
- #44 – Canadian tire \$
- #45 – Insurance Certificate card – Bryan Burnside
- #46 – Gas Bar – Gas coupon
- #47 – Bell Phone Centre Receipt
- #48 – Lined paper with measurement
- #49 – Lined paper with Note from Lupita to allow hunting on her property
- #50 – Gas Receipt
- #51 – Game Hunting permit with stamp
- #52 – Game hunting permit
- #53 – Photo of Nonno & Nonna
- #54 – Yellow – Ministry of Natural Resources License to Hunt Small Game
- #55 – Duplicate Social Insurance #
- #56 – Health Card

Sara's Wallet Image List:

- #1 – Cab receipt
- #2 – Receipt for psychotherapy
- #3 – 401 Building pass card
- #4 – INTO Security Card
- #5 – YMCA Card
- #6 – St. Michael's Hospital Card
- #7 – OCAD Faculty Card
- #8 – Photo of Marianne – approximate age 6 (Sara Angelucci's niece)
- #9 – Photo of Rachel – approximate age 7/8 (Sara Angelucci's niece)
- #10 – Business card for plaque mounting
- #11 – TD Bank Card
- #12 – Marianne at age approx. 15
- #13 – Card from Japan – NADIFF is an art bookstore
- #14 – Visa Card
- #15 – Photo of David, Rachel, Marianne (Note: Both had this photo in their wallets)
- #16 – Jennifer Crane's address
- #17 – Bus ticket receipt
- #18 – Air Canada Airmiles card
- #19 – Receipt from Dominion for film processing
- #20 – OCAD photocopy card
- #21 – Business card info on hard-drives
- #22 – University of Guelph student card
- #23 – Ticket to Calgary receipt
- #24 – AGO members card
- #25 – Queen video card
- #26 – Mountain Co-op card
- #27 – TD Bank business card
- #28 – Bloor Cinema membership
- #29 – Health Card
- #30 – Power Plant membership

- #31 – Coffee card
- #32 – Subway card
- #33 – Air miles Card
- #34 – Shoe receipt
- #35 – Toronto Image works receipt
- #36 – Sticky note with Bach flower remedy
- #37 – Sticky note with note about chicken to Greg
- #38 – Business card with Marc Legot email
- #39 – Chinese money
- #40 – Alliance Francaise Card
- #41 – Ontario Driver's License
- #42 – Back of Marianne's photo

B: ARTWORKS

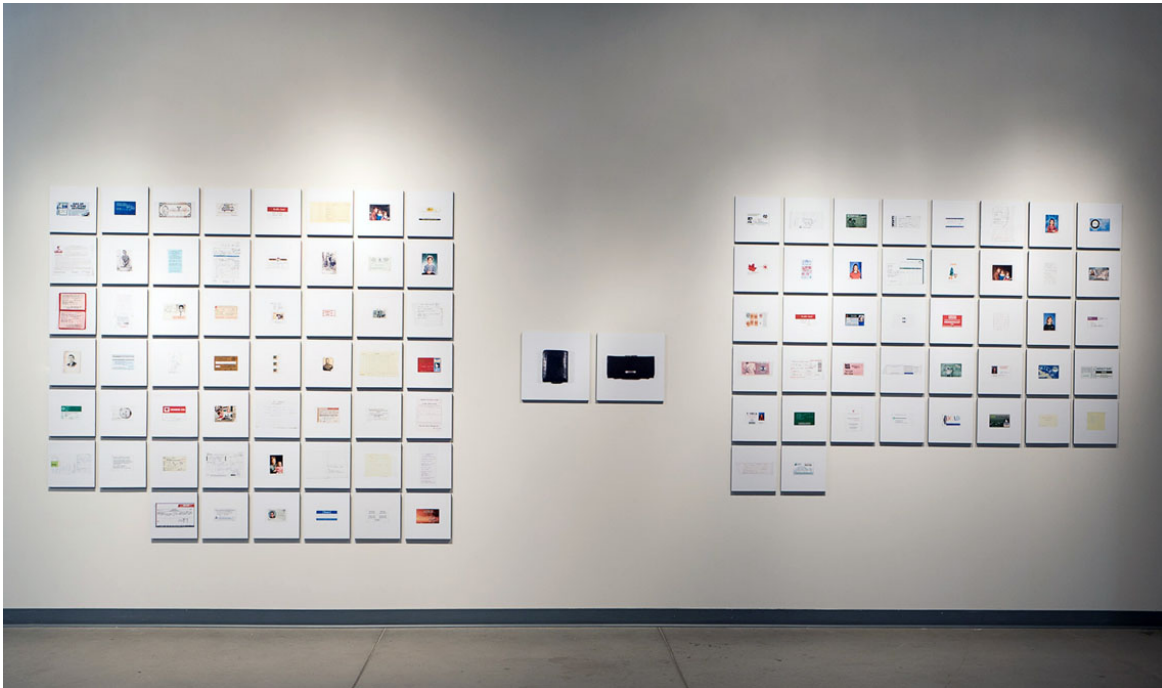


Figure 1. Sara Angelucci, "Everything in my Father's wallet / Everything in my wallet," 96 (10 x 10 in), 2 (15 x 15 in) Colour Photographs, 2005



Figure 2. Jasmine Cardenas, "You are the glue that keeps us together," Mixed Media Installation (Plywood and Acrylic), 60 x 90 in, 2017



Figure 3. Vanessa Hussey, "Untitled 1," 13 x 13 in, Photographic Print, 2012



Figure 4. Vanessa Hussey, "Untitled 2," 13 x 13 in, Photographic Print, 2012



Figure 5. Vanessa Hussey, "Untitled 3," 12 x 12 in, Photographic Print, 2012



Figure 6. Vanessa Hussey, "Untitled 4," 13 x 13 in, Photographic Print, 2012



Figure 7. Vanessa Hussey, "Untitled 5," 13 x 13 in, Photographic Print, 2012



Figure 8. Sarah Malekzadeh, "Maman," Ink on Paper, 37 x 71 in, 2017



Figure 9. Sarah Malekzadeh, "Robabeh Torkzadeh," Ink on Paper, 71 x 37 in, 2016



Figure 10. Renee Hayward, "Untitled (Kitty Crompton), " Installation (Found Objects), 60 x 84 in, 2017

TREASURED MEMORY: THINKING WITH THINGS

Floor Plan

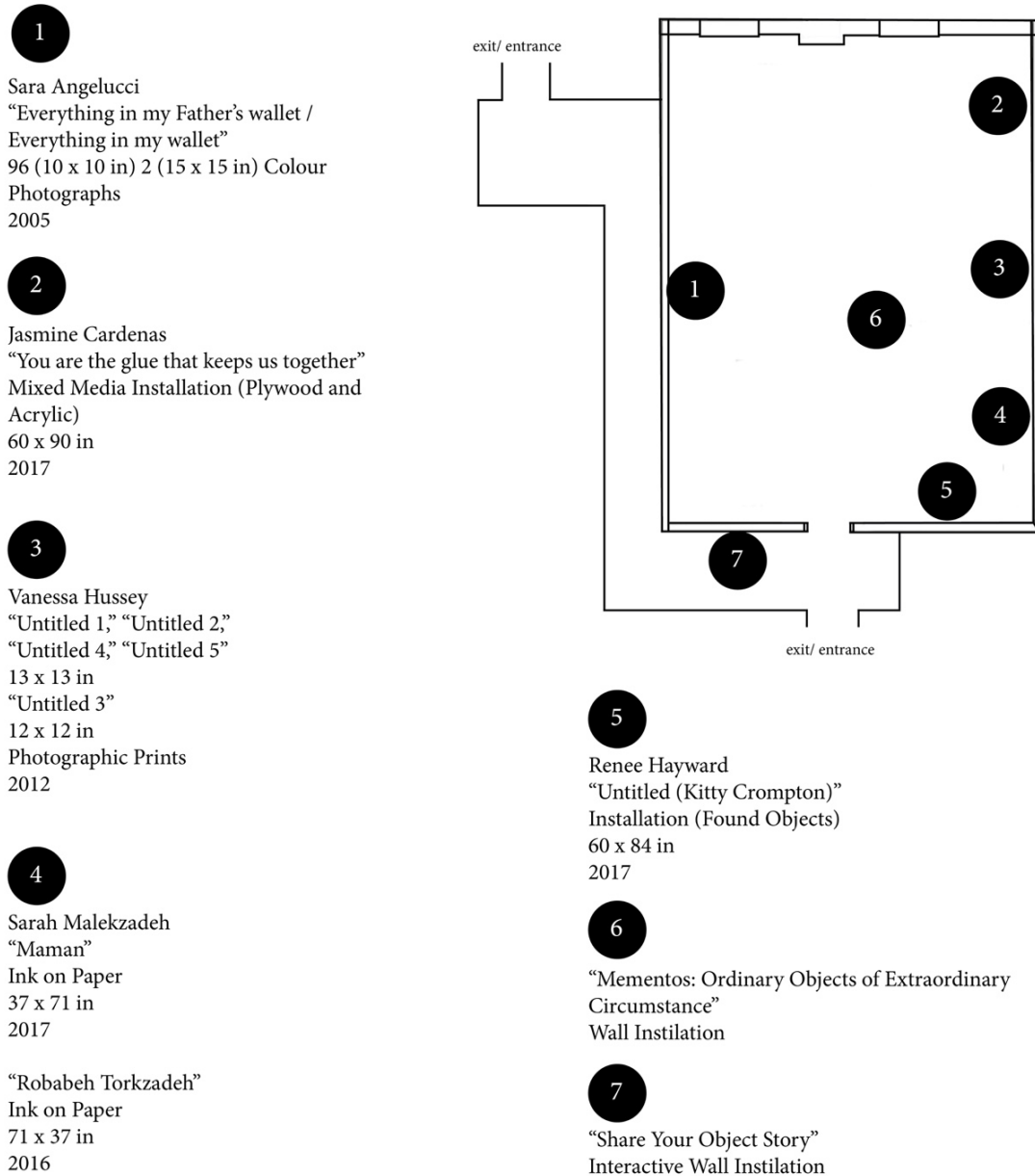


Figure 11. Gallery Floor Plan

C: ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

JASMINE CARDENAS

Jasmine Cardenas (b. 1995, Toronto) is a multi-disciplinary artist working with sculptural paintings, collage and installation. She received her BFA from OCAD University (2017) and is a graduate of the Florence Off-Campus Study Program. As a first-generation Ecuadorian-Canadian, Cardenas explores themes of cultural hybridity influenced by memory, family photographs, and her personal experiences. Cardenas is the recipient of the OCAD University Cross-Disciplinary Studies Award (2017). Her work was included in Artist Project Untapped (Emerging Artists) (2018) and will be included as part of the Art Gems Silent Auction collection (2018). Her work can be seen at: <http://www.jasminecardenas.ca/>.

RENÉE HAYWARD

Renée Hayward is a graduate of OCAD University and was awarded the 2017 Medal for Cross Disciplinary Art Practices. She specialized in Life Studies, a program that explores the intersections of art and science. As a multi-disciplinary artist with a focus on natural science and history, both of which influence her observation and research-based practice, Hayward builds narratives from collections of objects, exploring and manipulating the relationships between everyday items. Her current work considers the impressions made on the spaces we inhabit through the functional and decorative items that we choose to accumulate. She has shown work locally, in Toronto's Ontario Science Centre (2014), Art Square Gallery (2015), Ben Navaee Gallery (2016) and others. Her work can be seen at: <http://www.reenehayward.com/>.

SARA ANGELUCCI

Sara Angelucci is a Toronto-based artist working in photography, video and audio. Her work explores vernacular photographs and films, analyzing the original context in which images are made. Drawing attention to conventions of image making, her work foregrounds the cultural role vernacular images play in framing particular stories, creating histories, and memorialization. Angelucci's work has developed from an examination of the family archive and immigration, to a broader analysis and interpretation of anonymous/found photographs. In recent photography, video, and audio projects, Angelucci draws from the history of photography, as well as natural and social histories, transforming found images and repositioning them within the broader cultural context from which they emerge.

Sara Angelucci completed her BA at the University of Guelph and her MFA at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD). She has exhibited her photography across Canada including exhibitions at the Art Gallery of York University, Le Mois de la Photo in Montreal, Vu in Quebec City, the Toronto Photographers Workshop, the MacLaren Art Centre, the Art Gallery of Hamilton, the Richmond Art Gallery, and the St. Mary's University Art Gallery in Halifax. Her work has been included in group shows in the US, Europe, and at the Pingyao Biennale in China. Her videos have been screened across Canada and abroad, and at festivals in Europe, China, Australia and the U.S. She has participated in artist residencies at the Art Gallery of Ontario, NSCAD, the Banff Centre, and at Biz-Art in Shanghai. Angelucci is an Adjunct Professor in Photography at the School of Image Arts, Ryerson University. Her work can be seen at: <http://sara-angelucci.ca/>.

SARAH MALEKZADEH

Sarah Malekzadeh is a New York-based artist who primarily works with oil paint. Her work is often inspired by her relationships, her mixed Iranian, Canadian and American background and the environment. Sarah has a BA in Arts and Contemporary Studies from Ryerson University and a BFA in Drawing and Painting from OCAD University. She is currently in the MFA Fine Arts program at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Her work can be seen at: <http://www.sarahmalekzadeh.com/>.

VANESSA HUSSEY

Vanessa Hussey is a Toronto-based artist and current advertising student at OCADU who also holds a BFA in photography from OCADU. Her photography work is often rooted in memory, nostalgia, and connections with the past, both strong and tenuous. Her work has been included in shows at the Harbourfront Centre, Edward Day Gallery, and ACT's Snap! Live Auction. Her work can be seen at: <http://www.vanessahussey.photography/>.



TREASURED MEMORIES: THINKING WITH THINGS

Toronto, March – Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya is pleased to share with Toronto a unique MFA Thesis Exhibition, *Treasured Memories: Thinking with Things*, opening on March 24th, 2018 at 6 pm.

Treasured Memories brings together the works by four Toronto-based artists: Jasmine Cardenas, Renée Hayward, Sara Angelucci, and Vanessa Hussey, and New York-based artist Sarah Malekzadeh to address the importance of personal and family possessions and to explore the associated memories and stories those biographical objects tell when presented in a gallery setting. The selected works include prints, installations, and paintings.

The exhibition also includes a participatory web project *Mementos: Ordinary Objects of Extraordinary Circumstance* (www.mementosproject.ca) where Torontonians were invited to share a story about their personal objects. All submitted materials will form a "Share Your Object Story" installation where any exhibition visitor will be able to contribute.

The exhibition will be unveiled at OCADU's Graduate Gallery, 205 Richmond St W, and runs from Saturday, March 24th through Thursday, March 29th, 2018. For more information, please check the Facebook event page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1404257973029664/>.

Free tickets also available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/treasured-memories-thinking-with-things-tickets-43056785003?aff=es2>.

About Elizaveta

Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya is an independent curator based in Toronto. She holds a BA in Art History from the University of Toronto and is currently completing an MFA in Criticism & Curatorial Practice at OCAD University and working in a curatorial and administrative capacity at the Jessgo gallery. Some of her recent exhibitions include co-curatorial projects *Humber Bay & Shoreline Speaker Spin* for Art Spin and Myseum of Toronto (2017); *Isaac Julien: Rethinking Space* film screening for OCAD U (2017); *Still Nasty* for the AGO (2017); *Fragments* for the Jessgo Inc. (2016).

E: EXHIBITION FLYER

**Treasured Memories:
Thinking with Things**

OPENING RECEPTION
24.03.2018
6 PM - 9 PM

FEATURING WORKS BY:
JASMINE CARDENAS
RENEE HAYWARD
SARA ANGIUCCI
SARAH MALEKZADEH
VANESSA HUSSEY

CURATED BY
ELIZAVETA ZHURKOVSKAYA

24 - 29 March, 2018 | 12 pm to 6 pm
OCAD U Graduate Gallery | 205 Richmond St. W



F: DOCUMENTATION



Figure 1. *Treasured Memories* opening night exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 2. *Treasured Memories* opening night exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 3. *Treasured Memories* opening night exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 4. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 5. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 6. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 7. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, *Mementos* project 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 8. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, art catalogue, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 9. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, art catalogue, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya



Figure 10. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, *Share Your Object Story* project, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya

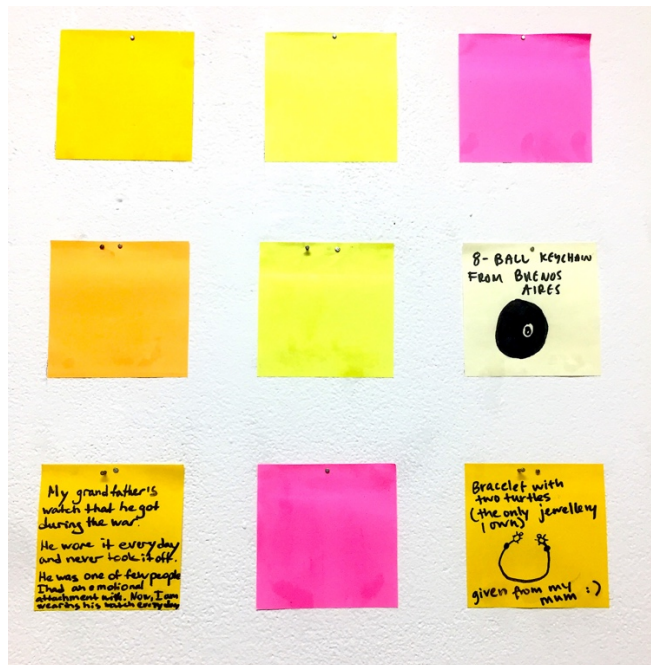


Figure 11. *Treasured Memories* exhibition shot, *Share Your Object Story* project, 2018. Photo Credit: Elizaveta Zhurkovskaya