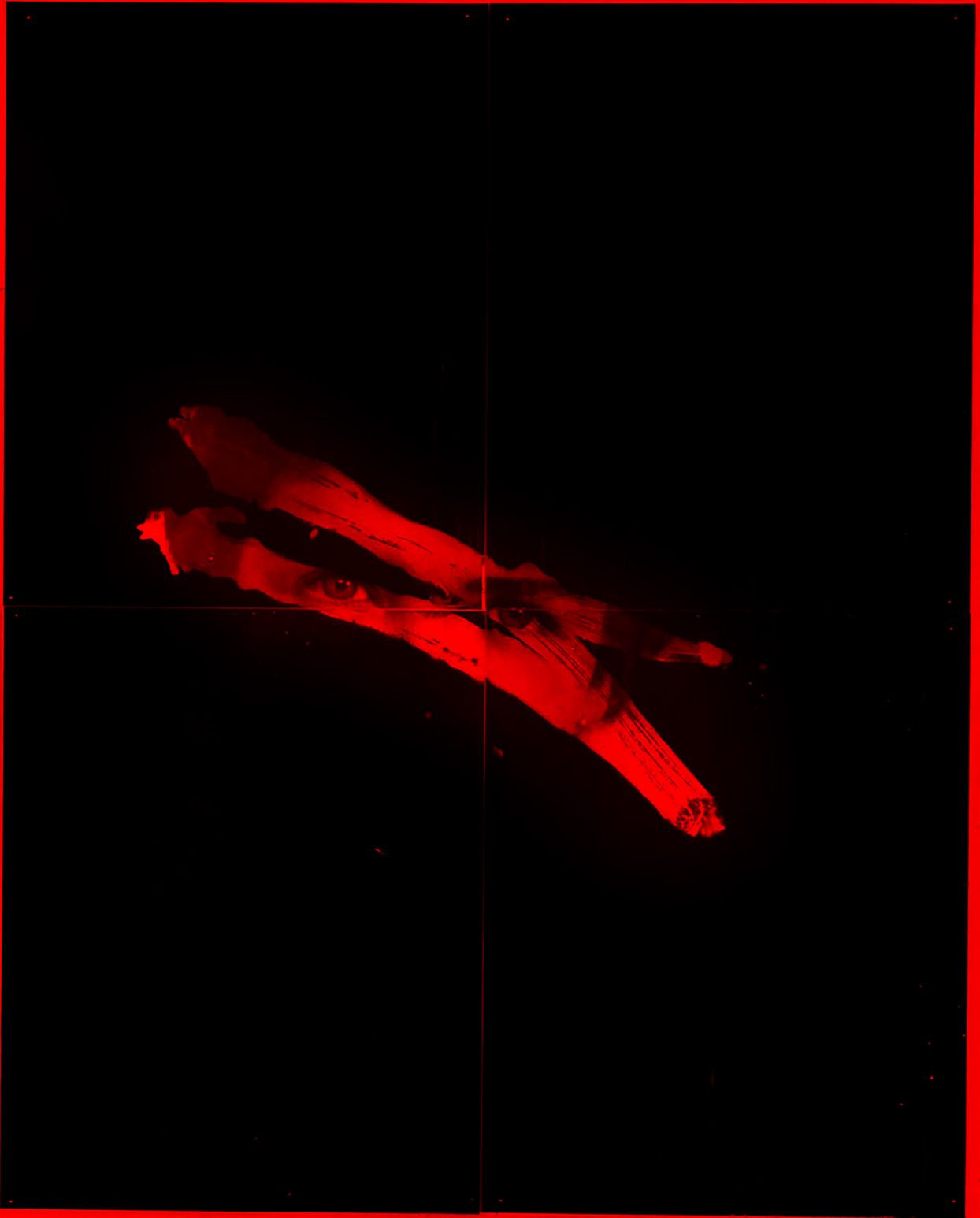


En saga från igår



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INTRO

So, how should I start this?

I don't really know if I can...to understand what I do, you need to understand who I am.

My work is made out of necessity, my images are at their best when there's something at stake. Sometimes it can feel like life itself is at stake, simply exposing emotions in order to move on in everyday life. Anxiety, worry, and sadness are often the starting points of a work and its processes, and yet simultaneously, it's driven just as much by love.

Black and white photographs comprised of the perfect grayscale, encompassing the total-spectrum of the zone system, is a dream that I will someday accomplish. .

As an alchemist, I stand day and night developing film and analog images in the darkroom, a little too bright and; a little too dark. It's a very different process, than to press the shutter of my Hasselblad or Toyo - one day, a week or a year earlier, and to try to see and embody an emotion, attempting to convey a meaning, and realise "yes I did it!.." It can be hard to understand why you took a picture when you develop it a year later.

I have never understood the differences between private and personal, nor do I remember which of them to keep away from art. Most of what I do comes from doubt and curiosity, there are too many answers out there and too few questions.

Doubt is an antidote to stupid obviousness.

If you make pictures without meaning, you have to make sure that it is so beautiful that it can stand alone without meaning, for my own part I do not care much for beautiful pictures.

My ambition is not to please the spectator, beauty is a consequence of truth.

We cannot quite see the beautiful without daring to feel the discomfort in us, the wounds we carry.

The insight that only you and I have access to, if we dare to see it, we see art.

ABSTRACT

A note for the reader; I have to start by apologizing, when you read this you have to understand, I cannot do anything but this. After my grandmother died, this is the only thing I can do and base my artistic practice on.

In November 2021 something happened that was going to change my life forever: after a short time of sickness, my grandmother died.

This project is about love, grief, memories and a longing to something you can never again be a part of.

How to take pictures of memories - your own memories? Of someone else's memories or the memories of a house that is now empty?

*Is this project even about my memories or their memories?
Or am I developing my own sorrow? Is that something I want to do?*

We have one thing together and that is the house that my great grandfather built for himself, his mother and grandmother. The house my grandmother was born in, 1940 and died , in 2021, a family home that once housed 5 generations and is now empty.

The house that has always been there, the house that my grandmother was born in and died in was built in 1933, red with white knots, exactly as it should be.

At one point 5 generations lived in the house at the same time, my mother Anna Lena, her parents Inger and Anders, my grandmother's parents Anna and Johannes, my great – grandfathers mother Kristina and my great – grandfather's mother's mother Kerstin. (I hope this was correct.)

My oldest aunt slept on a sofa in the kitchen underneath the swing of the pendulum clock, because she was the first one up in the morning to make coffee. The second oldest slept in the chamber that was directly adjacent to what was then the local post office, upstairs Anna and Johannes were in one room and grandma and grandpa slept with my mom in the other room.

A total of 7 under the same roof, that also served as the local post office.

The post office was where the living room is today, where, during opening hours, an extra table was pulled out, which assisted the postal chores during the working day.

There is still a path from the bottom of the village up some steep slopes through a small forest and past some farms, to reach the post office.

Now in 2022 there is no one left in the house, my grandmother was the last to live there alone, not even the old cat accompanied her anymore. In 2021 she became ill and passed away very suddenly.

Och nu är allt ett minne
En saga från igår

And now everything is a memory
A fairy tale from yesterday¹

1 Andersson D, *Visor och Ballader*, 1987, Page 130.

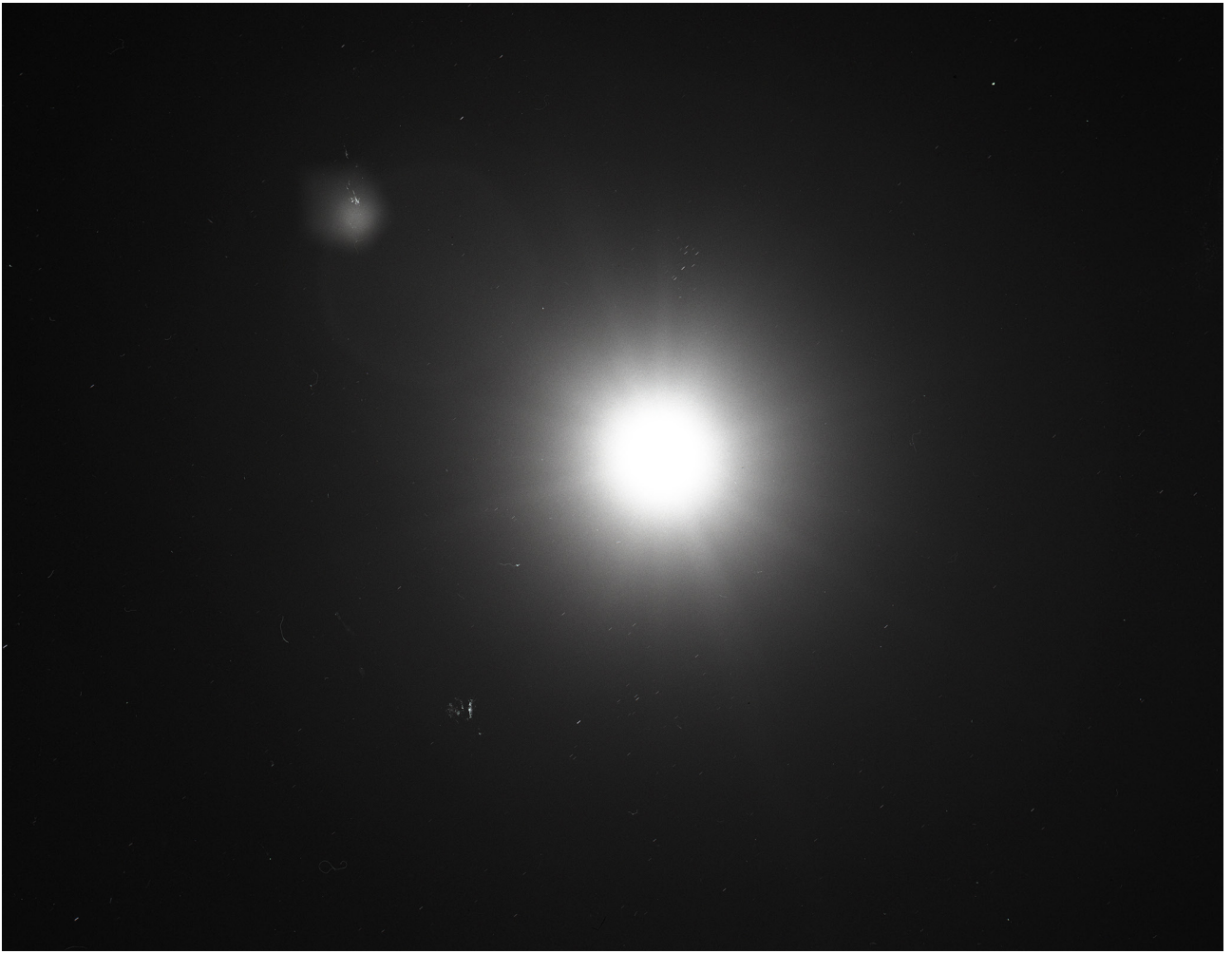
Friday November 19th

It's Friday evening, November 19th, Astrid and I are driving from Florence to Rome where I intend to take pictures for an ongoing project. It's dark and the Italians are whizzing past us on their little scooters, we just bought rings to get married and are dreaming of inviting our family and friends to a wedding in Italy this summer.

My phone rings, in the last weeks I get scared every time it rings, I'm afraid that the call is one I do not want to answer. It's mom so I answer and tell her I'm driving, she says to call her upon arrival. It's at this very moment that I realise the agreement between my grandmother and I is had been broken, that we'd meet again on the 21st.

We didn't get to see each other for that one last time.

We were on the phone with each-other every day when I traveled to Paris, Venice and Florence. I sent her daily pictures of the Eiffel Tower, St Mark's Basilica and she was so happy and it felt like she was there with us, she commented. Tuesday afternoon was the last time we spoke with each other, after that she never answered the phone again. the last correspondence we had with each other was when I'd sent her a picture of the baby my best friend received the same day he came home from Paris, I got a heart back. That was the last I heard from her.



November 23rd

I returned home again on November 23rd, 2 days later than we'd agreed upon, but I wasn't in a hurry anymore, I wasn't here to meet her again.

I'm now here to plan for her funeral, together with my mother and eldest brother. It is the first time in my life that I'm in a gathering like this, it's completely strange to be sitting and looking at coffin designs and how much they cost.

The woman in front of us asks "Is there a poem you'd like to include in the obituary and should there a symbol in it also? A cross or a bird or something like that?" The lady in front of us talks about everything we should be thinking about.

"A cat," I say "maybe a cat can be in the obituary, she loved cats!". My mother and brother agree, poem should be about the forest, nothing sad something more hopeful.

Should the obituary be an imprint of my grandmother or our memory of her?

I'm afraid I'll forget her or her voice.

The woman at the funeral home has just returned from being on sick leave, her husband died and she said that she still has his voicemail so that when she misses him the most she can call and hear his voice again.

I wish I could hear my grandmothers voice again.

I'm back in the house, alone in the room she died in, the living room that became a bedroom for the last few weeks of her life, or more an all in all living room where everything she needed was nearby (The stair up to the bedroom got too steep, and stairs down again to the toilet too scary).

I look through her books Fröding, Andersson, Bellman, Strindberg, Boye, Almqvist. My grandmother was the person who made me become interested in poetry, she was also the person who encouraged me to go my own way, she always met me with a smile in my eccentricities,. If I wanted my hair dyed, she dyed it or if my brother and I wanted to watch a horror movie she fixed it when my mother was working nightshift, even though I had nightmares and could not sleep for the next 3 nights. I guess it became my mother's problem when I didn't dare to turn off the light or to sleep alone, not my grandmother's.

I walk to the kitchen, open the pantry and see a bag of sweets she bought the last time I was home.

I remember that we ate out of the bag together and now, there it is with its half remains.....I take one and put it in my mouth, the taste of it, becomes almost too strong for me.

I'm back in the living room in November again, sitting with grandmother and talking about life, the trips we've made, and how sad we both feel that she got so sick. But most of all we talk about death and that dying isn't something she wants.

I go back to the living-room, look at photographs and am struck by the thought of how strange that bag of sweets is, just the sight of it and then the taste, gives me more memories of my grandmother than a photograph of her does.

How is it possible that a taste or an odor is stronger than a photograph? I, who photograph to not forget. According to the artist Sissel Tolaas, we only have 30 percent of our visual memory left 3 months after an event, and yet 100% of our odor memory remains with us after one year. Tolaas developed The Smell Memory Kit² - a kind of emergency kit for when something special or memorable takes place in our lives, you should open the bottle with perfume, crack it and smell, it apparently hold the memory longer.

So it makes sense that the memory gets stronger when I smell her perfume or eat sweets that we ate together.

I will never be the same person again after my grandmother passed away, mine and others' memories of her and all those who lived there are the only ones left.

The house is there with everyone's stories inside ready to share with me, so I start looking through all the photographs that are unsorted or in albums around the house.

For once in my life, I allow myself to look back in time, I've always felt the great inertia we humans feel, always having to drive forwards and not caring about the past. I used to get annoyed with people who wanted to sit and look at pictures, memorializing the past.

I've always thought it's problematic to look backwards, when what we do as a species is go forwards, but maybe it has something to do with my upbringing, that I don't want to look back and that I soon have repressed everything?

And now I'm sitting here looking at pictures of a house, doing a project more as a spectator than as an operator - as Barthes (1982) would have put it. I sit here, watching and wondering, asking questions, looking at a life I've never lived, but been fascinated by.

I recognize the people in the pictures and I play out scenes in my mind from the photographs, how I think they would have behaved, of course I have no idea what they were like when the pictures were taken.

I was born when my grandmother was 47 years old, my grandfather 51 and my great-grandfather 75. I don't even know who took these pictures, I try to tell a story about those who lived here, from the memory of the house itself, but at the same time, I put myself in the middle of the story and my grandmother (and not her father who'd built the house). My grandmother was an only child, so I think she was at the centre of her parents lives.

I sit here with Songs and Ballads by Dan Andersson³ in my hands and look out of the window, the snow is pouring down out there and it looks like one of my childhood winters. It's peculiar it was such a long time ago that it snowed so much and she will never be here to see it again and I will never be able to tell her about it. Who will now call and say that the winter is too cold and dark but the summer and the flowers are absolutely fantastic?

*"And with summer and beauty and forest wind chords
stands my homeland and greets me happy,
be greeted me! - But where is my father's farm,
it is empty behind the row of maples"⁴*

Sometimes I'm amazed that she lived so long, she always took a chance in the intersection that went from up from the village down to the school where my mother lives, she put the pedal to the metal across the road with an old red Saab, her hair fluttered in the wind but she never crashed. Maybe she was Nicolas Cage in Fast and the Furious when she came slipping down the road.

2 SUPERSENSE 2022, 29-03-2022, <<http://smellmemorykit.supersense.com>>

3 Andersson D, *Visor och Ballader*, 1987

4 Fröding G, *Svalan Svenska Klassiker*, 1965, page 186

When I look over at her film collection made up of 90% action, it had to be pang pang no boring movies and 10% British comedy Keeping up with appearances was her favorite perhaps as she recognized herself in Hyacinth Bucket. For me they were 2 twin souls, it always had to be perfect, it was food for 20 even if there were 5 to visit, the tablecloth would be ironed and mangled and the welcome drink would be 80/20 with alcohol so people got started talking straight away, so it was never too quiet and uncomfortable for too long.

I take another candy and my thoughts wander on to the fact that we sat and watched football this past summer, Euro 2021, every night there was a match, Astrid and I went to visit her and sat here on the sofa where there is now a bed, its here my grandmother slept her last weeks in. We sat there and drank beer and cheered on those we thought were the best, Grandma always got so nervous when there were penalties, she didn't dare to watch TV once, and in the final she changed which team she cheered for on 5 occasions in the same match, as she felt so sorry for those who'd be the losers.

I've never cared too much about memories, I didn't take notice of photographs, life has only been about getting from a to b as quickly as possible. I have long carried with me Barthes' words from Camera Lucida

"Which is there in every photograph: return of the dead"⁵

Is that why I've never been interested in family photos before?.....because of my fear of death? I have always said that I get scared to see pictures of myself as a child, because I've never felt that I know the person in the pictures or that I remember how he was or thought that it's a picture of me. Did I not want to look at pictures of my relatives because I didn't want to realize that they're dead? That if I stay away from that house and do not think about them, they will still be there?

Or am I now trying to bring my relatives back to life again? Have I, now that I'm older regretted that I was not here in the house more often, after I moved out when I was a 16 years old Didn't I visit them because I thought it was not good enough to be here?

In the darkroom 7 Dec.

There's 10 days remaining until the funeral and I'm making pictures for an exhibition about a house and my grandmother's death before she has even been buried, this is my mourning process, not to sit and think but to turn my inside out and be honest about my grief.

When I began at KiT, I'd worked for 7 years as a printmaker for Dag Alveng⁶ known for his incredible grayscale in his black and white pictures, where details in the blacks and the whites should never burn out.

So after being schooled in printmaking techniques, I felt it was time for me to do something new when I started the art academy.

Both in darkroom technology and how I capture images, I was playing with solarization and photogrammetry in the dark room., One day I put these two things together, with chemistry instead of objects in the darkroom and things occurred that I thought were very interesting to pursue. I attempted using the technique with different images however the outcomes were poo and over time I discovered it was just a technology for the sake of technology and I was becoming an analog geek. This is always my biggest fear, when technology turns into a fetish and becomes more important than the meaning behind the work, I always get skeptical.

5 Barthes R., *Camera Lucida*, 1982, page 9

6 Dag Alveng, 2022, 29-03-2022 <<http://www.alveng.com>>



When I make these images I use a technique where I put the paper in the enlarger as I'd usually do when I work with analog photography, after the development I paint fixative on the images, what I choose to paint is fixed after I turn on the light and the rest of the image continues to be developed until it turns black. This way I can decide what one sees when you view these pictures, it becomes my memories of these people. It may seem like I've scratched out details of my memory.

Like the picture of my grandmother as a child, something I don't have such a good memory of but I've seen her clothes later in life and then it will be the clothes I focus on. Removing in order to reveal, like my professor Anne Karin Furunes mentioned in one of our tutorials.

For the exhibition I make the most of the pictures in advance because I cannot control the process one hundred percent, I want to make most of the pictures perfect.

At the opening, I develop the last pictures in the exhibition in front of the audience, as the pictures are made in the gallery, I have to turn it into a darkroom, so I need the red safelight in the gallery. Red light prevents the paper from turning black and I can develop the images as usual.

The red light holds on to the subject and my memories, but as only I know, the white light will soon light up and my memories will disappear into the dark, so I have to paint what I really remember so that it does not disappear forever. The light comes on and we can see the pictures clearly for a few seconds before they start to disappear.

My process of developing images in front of an audience, is informed by the artist Ulay, who with his photographic series *Fototo*⁷ (photo dead) made an exhibition/performance where he hung all of the images in the exhibition wet, without fixing them, so when he turned on the light the whole exhibition turned black in front of the audience.

Fototo was Ulay's way to say goodbye to photography and start with performance art instead, and when I stand here in the darkroom with fixative everywhere, because I managed to spill out all the chemicals in my homemade developing trays, coughing, I think should I also kill off photography from my life?

No, I'm finally free in the the darkroom again and can do whatever I want!.

The funeral 17 dec

It's Friday morning and the whole family is gathered, I'm incredibly tired and trying to get some coffee into my system.

It's been a long night, too many thoughts went through my head. I promised myself at Bengan's funeral that I wouldn't wear a suit again because it felt so wrong. But if I don't wear one at Grandma's funeral, she'll probably be disappointed, so I've gone for something in between, suit pants in wool and a white shirt that I've not put on yet, in fear of spilling coffee on it.

Astrid and I have to go to the church before the funeral and take pictures, my mother has requested it and for some weird reason we have pictures from the funerals of a-lot of relatives. So we arrive early to take pictures before everyone else shows up.

We arrive at the church and I don't understand what I'm doing here, I've been away from here after she died, so it feels like she's still alive, and to my horror we are not the first at the church. We're an hour early and Kerstin and Kerstin are already here, my grandmother always said, they always come an hour before they're supposed to arrive.

7 de Appel, 2022, 29-03-2022 <<http://deappel.nl/en/events/ulay-fototot>>

I have always laughed and thought that she was exaggerating, but even to her funeral, they are 1 hour early and now they will be in the picture. I start to smile at the thought that me and grandma are just as annoyed right now.

The funeral is as it usually is, the same song is played as at my grandfather's funeral, Tröstevisa by Benny Andersson (Abba Benny). My grandmother had written to us what she wanted for her funeral, music, cakes and no one singing,

-Who can stand hearing anyone standing and roaring in the church, she said before she died.

We got everything except the violinist she wanted because he'd turned 92 and was senile, so my mother didn't dare to bet he'd be able to do it. Afterwards we went to the parish home and had coffee and when we were done there, she was already lying in the ground next to my grandfather and my uncle.

I'm too young to remember my uncle, he died of leukemia when I was 1 year old, my mother went between maternity ward and the cancer ward when I was about to be born.

My grandfather, I do remember, he was the strongest in the world, that's how I remember him big and strong, happy, but with a bit of a temper.

Once he was babysitting for me and my brother; when they were working on an old fishing rod, I took my chance and set off on a very small but fast bike. I was going on an adventure and this was my chance, I biked uphill and my legs were burning, my goal was not so far away, and of course, it was the very big river nearby.

I cycled to the river because I wanted to walk on the hanging bridge.

I arrived, took one step on the bridge and then heard a humming behind me. I got terrified and started walking towards the sound, because I thought it was the best thing to do at that time - I'd been discovered.

I stood there with my summer bleached hair and boots that were too big for me, and there it was, Grandpa's red Saab was driving straight at me, I gave up, I was defeated - but that was nothing my grandfather cared about. He and my brother stepped out of the car, my brother just stood there scared to move, while my grandfather runs up to me and tears off a big ball of my hair and hits me on the ass so I run like crazy towards the bike and start my long bike ride home again with the red Saab right behind me.

My brother later told me that it was like in slow motion when Grandpa opened his hand and a handful of hair slowly flew away in the wind.

February 19th

Now I'm sitting here again. The 19th of February, 3 months after my Grandmother passed away, I've been here a week now and hooked up my old nintendo 64 and I'm playing Zelda. If it's an attempt to go back into childhood or if I just have to pass time because I'm too sick to go out, I do not know.

All of a sudden a new monster comes out, chased away by my friend Sheik who I still don't know who it is, but then Sheik says something to me that meets me in reality:

"The flow of time is always cruel. It's speed seems different for each person, but no one can change it. A thing that does not change with time is a memory of younger days." -Sheik⁸

I really wish I had memories from my youth, they are almost non-existent, it's like I forgot everything that was good and only took with me what is bad. But with these pictures, they open my mind more and more, I'm not sure if the memories are my own but it does not matter, they are good and that is the only thing that matters to me.

When working with *A tale from yesterday*, it comes to me that photography and memory are 2 different things, and I have, for a long time been taking pictures to remember - just because I haven't had the time or will to do so myself, and now almost all of the memories are gone. In the book "The Mass Ornament" Kracauer (year?) writes;

*"Memory encompasses neither the entire spatial appearance of a state of affairs nor its entire temporal course. Compared to photography, memory's records are full of gaps."*⁹

I interpret this statement in a way that all of our memories and feelings about people and events are different. I think about it like a story that's 100% true of my life, even though it didn't happen to me, that I can write it and its authentic even though it didn't happen in real life., memories are in a way what I'm after, its not episodes that happened but is true anyway. That is why the past is changing all the time and maybe it's changing more than the future.

That is why the pictures in *A Tale From Yesterday* are black with something you can see very clearly, and some part where you can only get a hint of a silhouette in the black - like memories and feelings. The gaps in our memory that we write ourselves, new memories come and old ones disappear. Are my memories my own? Or are they someone else's? My brother is four years older than me, and I know that most of my memories from our childhood are his.

In this project I'm working with both the photograph and memory more than I have done before, first I'm the spectator, looking at the family album or pictures. Looking and thinking about the people I see. But then I become more of an operator when I start to choose what pictures to show to you, and even more when I start to remove big parts of the pictures. I'm guiding you through my, other's and the house's memories.

The relation to the people in my pictures, or as Barthes calls it the spectrum from the word spectacle, I wasn't even born when they were taken in the first place, the last picture so far in the project is on my mothers' baptism, 24 years before I was born. Maybe my way of photographing old pictures is a very obvious attempt to bring the dead alive again. It is both with joy and sorrow that I'm trying to create new memories and relations with my relatives. However, if that doesn't work, at least all of the family pictures my grandmother didn't have the strength left to sort are now in albums.

"What does my body know of Photography?

I observed that a photograph can be the object of three practices (or of three emotions, or of three intentions) : to do, to undergo, to look.

The Operator is the Photographer. The Spectator is ourselves, all of us who glance through collections of photographs-in magazines and newspapers, in books, albums, archives . . .

And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, any eidolon emitted by the object, which I should like to call the spectrum of the Photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to "spectacle" and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph:

*the return of the dead."*¹⁰

9 Kracauer S., *The mass Ornament*, 1995, page 50

10 Barthes R., *Camera Lucida*, 1982, page 9









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