

**The Archaeology of Memory:
Inquiry Into Studio Production**

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Of
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ABSTRACT

The Archaeology of Memory: An Inquiry Into Studio Production

Gillian Wallis Johnston

This study into my creative process as an artist is based on a qualitative analysis of my artmaking process. It focuses on the production of a body of artwork and the subsequent exhibiton, "The Archaeology of Memory," which opened in Montreal on August 22, 2002 at Galerie Gora. Using the theme of memory and narrative, culled from artefacts such as family photograph albums, heirlooms, and journal acccounts, I investigate the layers of meaning that form personal identity. My insights grow broader as I examine the construction of a national identity through the notion of "collective memory."

The purpose of this exploration is also to demonstrate how the 'praxis' of art making and exhibiting, may inform and revitalize the teaching practice of art educators.

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The source of inspiration for this thesis and the body of artwork produced for my exhibition, has been my incredible family, my loving parents, Leena and Bruce, and my dear brother, Peter. Their story, as well as those of my grandmothers, Savy and Angele, my step-grandmother, Ingeborg, my grandfathers, Cedric and Yrjo, my uncle, Eero, and my great-aunt, Sirpa, have added to the tapestry of ideas woven by memory and narrative into my work.

I would also sincerely like to thank, my supportive daughter, Kristina, and friends, Ingrid, Matthew and Samantha, a dedicated team, who helped me to assemble the exhibition. A special thanks to my friend, Claudine, the curator of "The Archaeology of Memory," whose creative ideas and tireless efforts, were much appreciated.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vii
(1) BACKGROUND	
What is Hidden?.....	1
What is Revealed?.....	3
Heart and Mind	4
(II) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	5
(III) RELEVANT LITERATURE	5
(IV) METHODOLOGY	12
(IV) PROCESS	13
(V) INQUIRY INTO THE MAKING OF AN ART OBJECT	16
Sources for Ideas for “The Spy’s Chest”	17
Themes and Concepts.....	18
Background History.....	18
The Beginnings of Research.....	19
The Journal	20
The Research Site.....	22
Memory, Observation and Imagination In My Creative Process.....	22
The Wunderkammer In Process - Discourse on Meaning Making.....	25
Stumbling Along the Path to Discovery and Change.....	28
Timeline for Studio Production of Spy’s Chest.....	29

Musings on Conclusions of the Work.....	30
(VII) RESEARCHING THE PROCESS FOR THE INSTALLATION	
“MEMORY, CULTURE. AND HISTORY”	41
Absence and Presence.....	41
(VIII) FULL CIRCLE - ARTICULATING THEMES AND CONCEPTS	45
(IX) PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTING THE EXHIBITION	53
Choosing the Space.....	53
Media Savy.....	53
Studio Work in Progress, July 7-August 17.....	54
Reviewing the Journals for Clarifications on Meaning.....	56
Assembling the Work.....	57
Plotting the Exhibition Space.....	59
Hanging the Show.....	59
(X) REFLECTIONS - CONNECTING TO THE WHOLE	61
(XI) CONCLUSION	63
REFERENCES	79

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.....	33
Figure 2.....	34
Figure 3.....	34
Figure 4.....	35
Figure 5.....	35
Figure 6.....	36
Figure 7.....	36
Figure 8.....	37
Figure 9.....	37
Figure 10.....	38
Figure 11.....	38
Figure 12.....	39
Figure 13.....	39
Figure 14.....	40
Figure 15.....	40
Figure 16.....	50
Figure 17.....	51
Figure 18.....	52
Figure 19.....	65
Figure 20.....	65
Figure 21.....	66
Figure 22.....	66
Figure 23.....	67
Figure 24.....	67
Figure 25.....	68

Figure 26.....	68
Figure 27.....	69
Figure 28.....	69
Figure 29.....	70
Figure 30.....	71
Figure 31.....	72
Figure 32.....	73
Figure 33.....	73
Press Release 1 in 7.....	74
The Art of Memories.....	76
Galerie Guide of Montreal.....	77
Class Acts.....	78

(I) BACKGROUND

In this thesis I will examine my creative process as an artist, during the making of a body of artwork based on my family history, from the conception of the ideas to the final solo exhibition. Through a reflective process I will focus on three seminal artworks which use the theme of memory and narrative. I will then relate what I have gleaned from this study of my artistic practice to my professional practice as an art educator, and how this may contribute to the body of knowledge in Art Education.

“What Is Hidden?”

In 1997 I underwent a difficult personal experience with the death of my father. The result of this profound sense of loss, and its cumulative effects on my life, led me to begin searching for the meanings that were forming through my artistic practice. By keeping a journal and using my memories and an autobiographical approach, I entered into a kind of artist/researcher mode of working. David Hawke, an Australian art educator wrote in his 1997 paper on autobiographical research that: “artist/researcher may embrace self-reflective methods of attending to and scrutinizing their own thoughts and actions which permit outcomes to become the basis of elucidation of their practice” (Hawke, 1997, p. 33).

Before entering my studio in the past three years, I have made a habit of keeping some notes on paper about the work that I have been thinking of doing on memory. During the time that my father was in the hospital, I was also reading books on brain research, in order to be able to better understand my father’s condition. He was left totally paralyzed from the neck down from the final stroke to his frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex. In this period, people’s recollection of events became the central theme in a lawsuit that was

orchestrated by my stepmother over a will that had been made by my father in 1991, after he had suffered a series of small strokes. The final outcome of this drama rested on issues surrounding the veracity of memory. Each person's accounting of events past, had intriguing layering of truths which only made the whole process more difficult to comprehend. However, in the end as certain legal documents were finally uncovered, truth was allowed to prevail, and my family won its hard-earned victory over lies and deceit.

Over this harrowing three and a half year period, I began to formulate concepts for artworks using the theme of memory and narrative, which synthesized my need to remember my father, my childhood, and my relationship to the people that had helped to shape my life. This new studio adventure helped to crystallize my interest in researching the construction of identity through the process of mirroring experience through a phenomenological investigation. I began to examine the idea that one's history is a re-presentation and re-structuring of the past. As Adele Flood posits:

individuals strive to organize their temporal experience into meaningful wholes and to use the narrative form as a pattern for uniting the elements of their lives into unfolding themes (Flood, p. 4, 2000).

In 1999, I went to England and Finland with my daughter Kristina, to visit the places I had grown up in as a child. I also intended to consult with the people, about the events that I remembered. I kept a travel diary, which contained the most pertinent facts of my encounters with my past life. I tried to write about the place or relatives and friends, that I would be visiting before I actually arrived on site, to see what I could recall. I was surprised to find that my memories were actually quite vivid about the places where I had either gone to school or in which I lived for a period of years as a child. When I came home from my trip, I discovered old photograph albums of my family and objects of

my father's life. These treasured artefacts kindled my belief that keepsakes and photographs help one to delve further into the narratives that shape lives. So that what is hidden, in someone's personal history, may become revealed through a detailed process of examination. These reflections motivated a series of artworks that represented members of my immediate family and my mother's aunt, Sirpa Tolonen. Issues of identity and construction of societal/historical personae became the theme of this body of work.

"What is Revealed?" Eventually in 2000, I undertook a second journey back to England which proved to be the beginning of a new way of utilizing the theme of memory in my artwork. As I trekked through the beautiful Cotswold valleys, ancient villages, churchyards, ruins of historic buildings and ritual sites, I became increasingly fascinated by the notion, that not only is one's identity formed by memories, but that the collective memories of past societies and cultures lie buried in landscape and man-made structures. Historicity and the idea of a national memory became an important theme for my new pieces, which combined photographic images with text. The use of words with visual images were inspired by an outing to the famous Chained Library of Hereford. This medieval library of handwritten documents and texts was encased in a twelfth century abbey. I felt a certain sense of rapture seeing the "written word" being preserved in such splendid condition.

The inclusion of text in the new installations added an important element to the process, by allowing the viewer to question the authenticity of historical facts and society's interpretation of events as they defined the life of a nation. A part of Britain's colonial past was examined through a mixed media photo/collage of my grandfather, Brigadier General Cedric Wallis, who in the photo was surrounded by his stalwart Indian army officers. It served again as a reminder that political events that shake up countries and continents do, in fact, impact on

the very lives of individuals in a direct and significant manner. It shapes and inculcates the history and memory of each generation to come.

Heart and Mind

In my latest pieces of studio work, there has been more of a marriage of the heart and mind. The photograph is a re-presentation of what was, what is no longer and what now only exists in memory. No one's life is as perfect as those fleeting moments of "oneness" captured in a photograph. One is left with the sense of something or someone once "having been" - the mind captures the essence of the photographic tale but the heart adds the poignant dimension. As Graham Clarke, author of The Photograph (1997), suggests:

any photograph is dependent on a series of historical, cultural, social and technical contexts which establish its meanings as an image and an object. The meaning of a photograph, its efficacy as an image, and its value as an object, are always dependent on the contexts within which we 'read' it. We need to view the photograph in relation to what Roland Barthes called it: a transparent envelope, a potent phrase which suggests its underlying ambiguity as an artefact and a means of representation (Clarke, 1997, p. 19).

My final tribute to memories and family ties came full circle in my photographic installation which showed my journeys in a physical sense (construction of a linear timeline of events with photos and artwork but allows the viewer to realize that photographs serve as precious reminders of one's own personal history).

(II) AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

From 1999-2002 I constructed over thirty five artworks which included: photographic installations, wood and mixed media collages, paintings and sculptures. Twenty nine of these were shown at Galerie Gora on August 22, 2002. With these artworks, I created two distinct groupings; one group alluded to the symbolic power of the personal constructs of memory and narrative, and the other to historical and cultural memory.

In my thesis I will work with three documented artworks. They symbolize the beginning, middle and end phases of my artistic production on memory. Through an analysis of the studio process using a phenomenological approach, the symbolic meanings and constructs will reveal themselves as they occurred during each working phase. In order to understand the complexities of my first artwork, I will use a timeline to show the sequence of ideas and events that created it. After the first phase has been completed, I intend to spend time reflecting on what the process has revealed in terms of any personal and or communal meanings.

I have kept journals and notes in order to gain insights into how the works were formed and how they progressed until their completion. As well, I will review how the entire exhibition was planned and executed.

(III) RELEVANT LITERATURE

David Hawke sees the power of personal narrative, which may come in many forms in a visual arts practice, carrying an important message to other practicing artists and art educators. It reveals that one's studio practices may be examined and understood through a heuristic framework, which gives contextualization and form to what was hitherto thought of as a mysterious and powerful act. The image of the artist has been portrayed as either a "penetrating social critic,

mystical muse, tormented recluse, or eccentric," all of which posit a naively Romantic view (Hawke, 1997, p.31). The artist investigates questions and tries to think and act on his/her research.

In a truly heuristic investigation one "emphasizes 'connectedness and relationship,' portraying the whole, rather than fragmented person (Emery, 1997, p. 28). This, then, means that the essence of the person in experience is retained; the researcher does not become disconnected from the experience. As Emery goes on to explain, "Heuristic inquiry requires that one be open, receptive, and attuned to all facets of one's experience of phenomenon, allowing comprehension and compassion to mingle" (p. 16). This method also encourages art education researchers to delve into personal knowledge but also to reflect on that knowledge and how it can be used for their teaching practices. It is a form of self-knowing, an intrapersonal way of knowing. It is closer to a metacognitive process which conceptualizes one's role and practices in the learning/teaching process" (Emery, 1997, p. 29). Heuristic inquiry is useful to both the artist/researcher and the artist/teacher. For both, the process fuses a passionate need for understanding with a great involvement in intellectual action.

Whichever method one uses in an autobiographical approach as a researcher, one more often than not relies on the power of memory. American scientist, Rebecca Rupp, explains how she sees memory as being the "bedrock" of human identity" (Rupp, 1998, p. 9):

memory built up over years and decades, is one of the few human creations that is entirely and inimitably one's own. Like fingerprints, of which all five and a half billion set on the planet are unique, no two human memories are the same. Each is a wholly individual construct, a personal museum of once and present fascinations, as crammed with treasured odds and ends as

sixteenth and seventeenth- century Wunderkammer (p. xiv).

The first piece of work from my series on my family to be examined is an actual doll's chest of drawers, which has become a wunderkammer of sorts - a collection of artefacts and treasures that belonged to my father. Entitled "The Spy's Chest," it alludes to my father's involvement in the British secret service during the Cold War. Rupp's book Committed To Memory (1998), shows how the process of memory may be used as the linchpin to study and re-present events from one's past. It also points out that memory changes as one ages and how the ebb and flow of each phase of "re-membering" aids one in understanding the complex layers of this mental process (p. 10).

In using the photographs as artefacts and mediators of memory, I have been most interested in the work of Paul Duncum, an Australian art educator. His argument for a broader concept of the visual arts, which would include many more kinds of images than main stream Western cultural icons, struck an immediate chord within me. He argues for the consideration of the "family snapshot" to be seen as a form of vernacular art, which provides the common imagery made about family members of society (Duncum, 1997, p. 36). The family album is a key to the relationships within a family unit. The snapshots are "mere fragments of experience" which have been cut off from the past (p. 39). He describes what memories these photographs may produce about loved ones:

This is most notably apparent with photographs of dead relatives. Through photographs we allow something of their presence to be maintained. Their memory is captured through a physical likeness. We allow pictures to re-present their subject. Photographs allow us to commemorate a person, to pay our respects, but also to alleviate grief by feeling closer to the ideas than is otherwise possible (p. 39).

Documenting and photographing one's family members affords one a glimpse

of a kind of reality. However, the photograph forms an identity which may actually mask a different kind of reality altogether. My father's picture (in the "Spy's Chest") may have portrayed the picture of a fairly happy looking individual but in real life, his world was less than pleasant. So often this kind of family snapshot is shown in albums which are "deeply embedded in historical and continuing social dynamics, and cannot even significantly be understood without an appreciation of such historical and social factors" (p. 42).

It also offers an opportunity to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next. Family photos without any particular "artistic context" have this value of passing on or "transmitting knowledge." I have sought in part of this project to both celebrate and transcend the homely virtues of "Kodak moments" passed down through generations. Adele Flood makes consistent use of this device in her work which explores her family and her life as a textile artist. She strongly believes that, as we artists/educators research our own lives, we may then develop these life stories which are more like a "landscape of illusions and memories; a collection of finely rendered images that are given coherent meaning and contextual place through the retelling and the memoried experience of the individual" (Flood, 2000. p. 5). Lives would not be seen as continuous linear stories, but more as a series of disjointed events, retold in a particular context. This applies to the works, in particular, that are contingent on my childhood experience. The video that I did this summer in particular deals with the artefacts of that childhood and their link to places and events in my memories. However, there is no sense of continuity in the film, the images live in a surrealistic tale, bound together only by threads of narrative.

The work of the philosopher, Paul Ricoeur, investigates the process of looking at the narrative form that arises when one works with the construction of images with the addition of text. This new format in my work adds a mediating

force “which turns narrative into logic” (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 30). My pieces are not necessarily organized in a systematic way to represent life events in a linear continuum; however, stories do become apparent which aids in the development of multiple meanings. It allows the viewer to make up a plot which does make, “the intelligible spring from the accidental, the universal from the singular, the necessary or probable from the episodic”(p. 41). It is this construction of symbolic meaning in the process of creation that drives me to work more with narrative as a structure.

The choice to examine the deeper meanings inherent in the second piece of work, (in the third phase of studio production since my father’s death) has led me to use a more phenomenological approach. Max van Manen’s work on analyzing lived experience has allowed me to re-present my feelings about my life as I have perceived their impact upon my existence(van Manen 2000, p. 4). Phenomenological research seeks to explicate the phenomena as they present themselves into consciousness. Therefore, unlike traditional research methods, one’s findings are not broken down into components to be analyzed and ordered as such, but rather seek to bring one closer to the phenomena under examination (p. 4).

Going back to England on my second journey has allowed me to re-contextualize this experience to focus on the larger meanings that are implicit in human experience. In this way, I have been able to disconnect from the initial experience of having dealt with my own life questions, in order to continue searching for the essential meanings which can be applied to human historical and cultural development. Thus in paying attention to the idea that human history is the result of memory and meta-narratives, allows for the voice not of one, but of many to speak. Van Manen goes on to say that bringing one into contact with the phenomenon to be observed may be done through the form of

a poem, narrative, diary, logbook or journal of lived experience. I will discuss how my use of studio notes and journals has aided me in the methodology and procedure that I have chosen to use for my thesis.

Two works that have influenced my research are: Time Regained” Vol. XI of In Search of Lost Time, by Marcel Proust and Paula by Isabelle Allende. Both these novels deal with the power and fragility of memory as process, reflection and inspiration for making art. In “Time Regained” Proust’s sixth volume of his treatise, he meditates on personal experience, the passage of time and the essence of memory (Proust, trans. 1999, p. 272-276). Upon reading Proust, I became acutely aware of the power inherent in the act of remembrance, and how significant this form of thinking is to the production of art. Proust’s narrator speaks of reminiscences that aid in drawing out ideas from the “shadow,” where hazy impressions of lived experience still exist (p. 273). Through the aid of the sense of taste, touch, or sight, he is able to reconstruct memories that enable him to remember:

the noise of the spoon or the taste of the madeleine, or those truths written with aid of shapes for whose meaning I searched in my brain, where-church steeples or wild grass growing in a wall - they composed a magical scrawl, complex, and elaborate (p. 274).

The narrator recognizes that the images that come flooding back from childhood are represented in such a way, that he does not question their authenticity. These and others have formed the basis of his character and life (p. 274).

In “Paula,” Allende reveals the history of her family and her own life, to her dying daughter who lies in a coma. It is a riveting account of a mother’s love and the painful process to which she must surrender herself in letting go of her daughter. The book is full of insights using her memories, but is told in a surrealistic, magic realist way, which adds to its poignancy:

In the long silent hours, I am trampled by memories, all happening in one instant, as if my entire life were a single, unfathomable image. The child and girl I was, the woman I am, the old woman I shall be, are all water in the same rushing torrent. My memory is like a Mexican mural in which all times are simultaneous: the ships of the Conquistadors in one corner and an Inquisitor torturing Indians in another, galloping Liberators with blood soaked flags and the Aztecs' Plumed Serpent facing a crucified Christ, all encircled by the billowing smokestacks of the industrial age. So it is with my life, a multilayered and ever-changing fresco that only I can decipher, whose secret is mine alone (Allende, 1996, p. 23).

My brother, Peter and I, reversed this process by recounting some parts of my father's life to him, so that he could have a sort of life-review and go peacefully to his death. We wanted the end to have some grace for him and bring peace to his suffering. Daniel Schacter in his book, Searching for Memory, (1996) speaks of the need for humans to do a life-review in some way before they die. My father was so incapacitated by the tubes in his throat, that he was unable to speak audibly. I thought it would be helpful to him on this leg of his final journey if we were to retrace the steps of his life. In this way, we were also able to tell him what a wonderful adventure we had shared with him.

Anne Truitt in her book, Daybook: The Journal Of An Artist, allows the reader into her thoughts as she creates artworks in her studio. She ponders the reasons why and how thoughts and impressions are forming ideas for the 'making'. I found her diary extremely enlightening as a thoughtful examination of studio process. But what was even more engaging was the way in which she wove her life into her art, and her art back into her life. The feelings that were created in the dialogue with herself and the reader allowed one to understand the way an artist approaches the experience of making a work of art.

(IV) METHODOLOGY

In studying my studio process, I will be using a qualitative form of research. Within this framework, I will be using the data that has already been collected in the form of journals and working notes. I will present a cohesive account of my search for meanings as they emerge from the process of my artistic production. My research on the psychological and philosophical aspects of memory and narrative will serve as the underlying themes for this research. This portion of the thesis is informed by the work of John Dewey. He believes that an artist approaches his or her respective work in much the same way that a scientist does. Both are trying to solve a problem, using a form of experimentation (Dewey, 1961, p.). Yet, since accurate records are not usually kept of an artist's output, it looks less like research and more like random invention through imagination. However, as I have gone through the process of keeping records of my working habits, I have begun to see that even though there was a sea of emerging thoughts, emotions, and memories from which to pick, there was also an ordered relationship between the ideas and their implementation. The art making process relies on intuition, imagination, and reconstruction of experience through memory. However, the artist must also have a keen awareness of how insight and structure build on one another to form a significant piece of work (p. 286).

As already stated in my aims and objectives, I will study three pieces of artwork. They are: "The Spy's Chest" (wunderkammer), and "Memory, Culture and History," and "The Lasting Honour." Since this form of self-inquiry takes into account one's senses, perceptions, beliefs and judgments, one remains open to the facets of one's experience and allows for a sense of true awareness to occur. Through a hermeneutic phenomenological approach one invokes description, interpretation and self-reflection or critical analysis (van Manen,

2000, p. 4). This type of human science aims at both:

explicating the means of human phenomena (such as in literary or historical studies of text) and at understanding the lived structure of meanings (such as in phenomenological studies of the lifeworld (p. 4).

The lifeworld that is being studied through this method is my engagement with myself -in-the-world as artist. This type of knowledge system does not set out to prove a particular thing, rather it focuses on the essential meaning that comes from analyzing lived time. It is more philosophical in nature. It seeks to question what constitutes the world and what “being” in the world means to us. This type of research delves into the mysteries that make up life (p. 23).

I will endeavour to use a methodical structure, which may be seen as a dynamic interplay among six research activities

- 1) turning to a phenomenon which seriously interest us and commits us to the world;
- 2) investigating experience, as we live it, rather than as we conceptualize it;
- 3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;
- 4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
- 5) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
- 6) balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (p. 30-31).

(V) PROCESS

In the thesis I will introduce the reasons why I undertook to begin this research and some pertinent details of my father’s death in 1997 and how it links to my subsequent trip to Europe. I will then describe how, upon my return from Europe, I found an old photograph album of my parents, which was the impetus for my first work, the “Spy’s Chest.” My recounting of my second trip back to

the UK will show how this voyage and my own photography produced a new body of work which enlarged my view of memory to include the collective, in terms of history and culture. It will also include the analysis of two other pieces of studio work. Each of these sections will contain a series of reflections based on the visual and written data.

To be included in the first analysis is a timeline and a series of photographs, which will help to illustrate the working process as well as the more elusive aspects in re-remembering the critical moments of 'artistic' inspiration. These will be linked to the theoretical discourse of memory and narrative in the relevant literature. I will also include short excerpts from the diaries and field notes. In this way, I hope to be able to show how identity transforms through time and how our links with the present better mediate our understanding of the individual.

In the "Memory, Culture and History," installation, I will delve back into the reasons why I took the photographs for this installation. Through a discussion of the relevant literature, I formed a new understanding of my work and how it was to be installed.

These works were the linchpins for the actual exhibition. I will then examine the process of how the installations were created for the gallery space- what changes resulted as I worked through my ideas, and what if any changes I made to the actual groupings.

How an artist works through a set of ideas which eventually culminate in a body of work that is then to be exhibited will provide several implications for art education. It is, first, a study of an artist's process using memory and narrative as thematic tools by which to discover symbolic meanings in the studio process. This is meant to open up the understanding of the creative process in the studio;

perhaps to even demystify the process. It will also serve as a way in which art educators can begin to transform the process for students who work within a certain framework of their own memoried experience.

It is hoped that the thesis will provide valuable information to Art Education students who have intentions to set up an exhibition in a commercial gallery space.

(VI) INQUIRY INTO THE MAKING OF AN ART OBJECT

When an idea- an idea of any kind - is left in us by life, its material pattern, the outline of the impression that it makes upon us, remains behind as the token of its necessary truth (Proust, trans. 199, p. 275).

In "Time Regained" by Marcel Proust, his sixth volume of his treatise "In Search of Lost Time," he meditates on personal experience, the passage of time and the essence of memory (p. 272-276). Upon reading Proust, I became acutely aware of the power inherent in the act of remembrance, and how significant this form of thinking is to the production of art. Proust's narrator speaks of reminiscences that aid in drawing out ideas from the "shadow," where hazy impressions of lived experience still exist. (p. 273). Through the aid of the senses of taste, touch, or sight he is able to reconstruct memories that enable him to remember:

the noise of the spoon or the taste of the madeleine, or those truths written aid of shapes for whose meaning I searched in my brain, where - church steeples or wild grass growing in a wall - they composed a magical scrawl, complex and elaborate (p. 274).

The narrator recognizes that the images that come flooding back from childhood are presented in such a way that he does not question their authenticity. These and others have formed the basis of his very character and his life (p. 274).

Since the death of my father in 1997, my life as an artist and a teacher of art, has changed. The examination of how these events and memories have joined to produce a new body of artwork, and how symbols and meanings are forming in my art making process will be the focus of this part of my thesis. I will endeavour to use an autobiographical, phenomenological approach to describe my "lifeworld" and to delve into the deeper meanings that are forming in my work through an hermeneutic orientation (van Manen, 2000, p. 4). By using phenomenology, one begins "to operate on the principle of the recognition of

the existence of freedom in human life (p. 4) And as self-consciously “free humans” we are able to delve into the deeper understanding of the meaning of certain human experiences or phenomena which allows us “to remain less susceptible to the control of others (p. 20-21). A phenomenological human science promotes a certain concept of progress, which helps human beings to become increasingly more thoughtful as they try to understand the complexities of human life. For instance, in looking at the experience of an artist or teacher one may begin to acquire action sensitive knowledge - the phenomenological text invites dialogic response from one. By engaging with the text one may begin to respond to the life of the ‘other’ at a meeting point. (p.21). Using a hermeneutic approach, which delves deeper into my process as an artist, will allow me to mediate in a personal way what may be unique and different about how I acquire knowledge into my making.

Sources for Ideas For “The Spy’s Chest”

While sorting through photographs and mementos of my father, I began to realize that these items were beginning to give me a new insight into the man whose entire life had been shrouded in secrecy. As I searched for more information on his past during my trip to England in the summer of 1999, I realized that the “idea” of this person’s identity was not firmly rooted in my mind. My memories of Dad and my childhood were at times true, and at times, quite coloured by narratives from other family members and interpretations rendered by the passage of time. But an understanding of the deeper truths began to form, as I realized what a great impact my father had had on my life. It became even clearer after the recent completion of my “Spy’s Chest” or “wunderkammer,” which was a seventeenth century “cabinet of wonders,” and held a collection of all sorts (Rupp, 1998, p. xiv). Through the praxis of the work, it has become more evident that one’s understanding of self and others is

mediated by many internal as well as external factors.

Theme and Concept

When I began to do my work in the fall of 1999, I knew that memory was going to be the basis for my new studio work and I was going to investigate nature and the power of remembrance. I had purposely decided to track my reactions and recollections to the revisited haunts of my early youth spent in England, where I was born, and in Finland, where I lived on and off for five years. I kept a diary and took many photographs of the people I used to know, and the places in which I had lived. However, after two attempts at pieces of artwork that were more abstract in nature, I discovered the old photo albums of my mother, a box of loose pictures and some books and objects that had belonged to my father. These led me to make the mixed media works I have been doing for the past three years, which have incorporated photos, and vegetative matter such as, twigs, roots, dried fruit and Japanese mulberry paper. I also began to see that these pieces would eventually become part of an installation and therefore, each work was a referent to the next one being made. Also during the act of selecting the images for the assemblages, I found I was constantly being drawn to pictures of my father and his early life with my mother.

Background History

Dad finished Oxford University in 1948 having completed an Honors degree in History and Economics. After the war and the completion of his service with the British, navy, he was able to finish school in just three years as a mature student. He had held the rank of Lieutenant, worked in naval intelligence and had seen action at D-Day and in the campaigns in Africa. In 1949, my father met my mother in Finland. Dad was supposedly working for an importing company in England and he was in Finland on some sort of job.

However, what my mother was not to know until much later, was that the handsome, suave Englishman, was not quite what he appeared to be.

There followed an intense period of nine years, while my family country-hopped back and forth between England and Finland. It was an exciting time for my father and his work seemed to really engage him, but it was difficult for the rest of the family. Changing languages, schools, and never being able to make friends for any length of time, made it a frustrating experience for my brother and me. For my mother, having to leave her country with two small children was very uprooting. However, being the loving and dutiful wife, she would eventually end up half way around the world, living in Canada and not being able to return home more than six times in forty-two years.

The Beginnings of Research

I decided this past winter to begin the reconstruction of the story of my father's rather engaging past, while I was doing a great deal of reading on artists who have used memories to create work. I had already done two artworks using the photographs of family members, when I came upon the work of an American artist named Ben Freeman. His mixed media work relies heavily on "family photos, portraits and other heirlooms (Schacter, 1999, p. 303). They focus on "traces of the past that may fade, decay, and even change over time but nonetheless exude a compelling emotional aura"(p. 306). Freeman even uses other people's photos and mementos that he collects in antique shops and flea markets. He has become fascinated by "the chemistry between time and our attempts to resist its passage by immortalizing events or moments in enshrinements of objects, images and concepts" (p. 306). It was important to form questions about the transformation of identity through time, and our links with the present, and how that mediates our understanding of the individual. I began to root out themes with which I might be interested in working and

started to formulate a plan.

The Journal

Part of this plan was to keep a journal of my studio process, in hopes of unlocking the theoretical as well as practical underpinnings of my creative process. Approaching my research as the “subject” and “object” of my inquiry was appealing and yet, the self-reflective method of “attending to and scrutinizing” my own thoughts and actions was daunting (Hawke, 1997, p.33).

Australian art educator, David Hawke has written that:

The writing of autobiography as research has no single predetermined form. The way an autobiography emerges may be much like the artistic practice and the life story it depicts. Autobiography, like other types of qualitative research, establishes its various understandings through the temper and form of the presentation of the data within it. The argument is presented that autobiography can be considered as a form of research and as a basis for artistic practice and this congruence makes its application in art education particularly relevant (p. 31).

I began my journal by writing just about life events that had sparked me to go looking for a container for the the pictures that I had found. My first thought was that I wanted to be able to find a metaphor for mind/memory and that I wanted to work with a three dimensional object. Until then, the work had consisted of mixed media and sculptural work.

Journal, February 11, 2000. This past fall, I read Rebecca Rupp’s book, “Committed to Memory,” and in it, she described an object called a “wunderkammer.” This was a cabinet which could either display or conceal treasured collections. I am drawn to this idea of Dad’s life as a cabinet, which holds compartments which may reveal something about his “other’ identity, the one which was hidden from us. Most of my life has been spent trying to understand the enigmatic character that was Bruce Exton Wallis.

In Isabelle Allende's book, "Paula," she reveals the history of her family and her own life, to her dying daughter who lies in a coma. It is a riveting account of a mother's love and the painful process to which she must surrender herself in letting go of her daughter. The book is full of insights using her memories, but is told in a surrealistic, magic realist way, which adds to its poignancy:

In the long, silent hours, I am trampled by memories, all happening in one instant, as if my entire life were a single, unfathomable image. The child and girl I was, the woman I am, the old woman I shall be, are all water in the same rushing torrent. My memory is like a Mexican mural in which all times are simultaneous" the ships of the Conquistadors in one corner and an Inquisitor torturing Indians in another, galloping Liberators with blood soaked flags and the Aztecs' Plumed Serpent facing a crucified Christ, all encircled by the billowing smokestacks of the industrial age. So it is with my life, a multilayered and ever-changing fresco that only I can decipher, who secret is mine alone (Allende, 1996, p.23).

Peter and I reversed this process by recalling some parts of Dad's life, so that he could have a sort of life-review and go peacefully to his death. We wanted the end to have some sort of grace for him and to bring peace to his suffering. I even wrote a poem for him celebrating his favourite sport of fishing. It's something we used to do as kids during our summers in Rapide Blanc. One of the pictures that I am definitely going to put in the wunderkammer is of Bruce fishing with his ever-present cigarette hanging from his mouth. Now that is an image that represents him well!

February 12: *I began talking to mother today about this wunderkammer idea and she mentioned that I should look in the garage where I had stored all sorts of objects from the past. I found Kristina's old doll's chest. It is the perfect object! A year ago, we had put it away when I bought her a new bedside table, because this piece of furniture was too small to hold all of her teenage paraphernalia. I was glad to see how beaten up it looked; the passage of time had really left its marked imprint. I've decided to sand it down and*

repaint it an oriental poppy red to symbolize Dad's passionate nature. The work begins tomorrow.

The Research Site

The first thing I had to do was organize my workspace. I wanted to make sure that the artwork and writing would occur on a regular enough basis with few interruptions from the outside world. It is difficult at best to work in a studio at home when other priorities can get in the way. I decided to spread out of my studio and go into two other rooms in the basement.

Journal, February 13: Now that I have been able to go beyond the studio, I seem to feel a new found freedom to work on several ideas at the same time, so that I am able to group pieces together to see if they will work in the installation I have planned. In any case I am now concentrating my efforts on the doll's chest. I have been sanding it down in the garage and have discovered that it contains layer upon layer of old paint. I originally painted it a colonial blue, but now see, flesh pink, pale green, cream and a light burgundy all making their way to the surface. I've decided to bring it inside and leave it just the way it is. These layers speak of how memory is layered and becomes the 'bedrock' of human identity (Rupp, 1998, p. 9). It is a perfect metaphor for the fact that much of what we remember is what we are.

Memory, Observation and Imagination In My Creative Process

The role of memory, observation and imagination is always present throughout the artistic process. In this work, my memories are the linchpins of impressions that have been forming for almost half a century. This may indeed be the catalyst for looking back over one's life and assessing one's position. I would not have been comfortable in this role of observer of my family's history, nor in making works about these people, had I not returned in 1991 to Concordia to do my Diploma in Art Education. While I had been away from school since the seventies, the whole postmodern wave had begun. My work

for galleries had continued to be thematic and responsive to my interests, but still disengaged from very personal issues and in a way more safe for me. When I took the studio course, they allowed me to feel ready to explore issues closer to home.

I see that though I initially intended the work to be about memory, not particularly my memories, but throughout this process I have been forming connections to the past, and to the people that have made up my own personal history. Place has not become as much of an issue - being an immigrant might have had something to do with that. Since I did so much moving around as a child, I have always remained in a sense, slightly detached from my surroundings. I think my mother mentioned that we moved houses eleven times in thirteen years. My memories are rooted to people, not houses, nor landscapes but in the most important constant in my life, my family. **Figure 27**

In beginning the “looking” at the photographs and old family heirlooms, I realized that there was more to the process than mere observation. I began immediately to form images of how I would use these interesting photographs, many of which were taken by my father with his prized Leica camera. He had a darkroom at home and delighted in taking many wonderful black and white pictures of mother, Peter, me and our family occasions. Dad then switched to colour photography. Kodak had just invented colour processing in the late fifties and all of a sudden we became a “Kodak moment!” Paul Duncum, an Australian art educator, speaks eloquently of the need to recognize the importance of such moments and histories of families, through the family photo album. The photograph brings us “closer to our memories, while reminding us that their subjects belong to the past” (Duncum, 1997, p. 39). Families prize their picture albums because they are more than mere recorders of history, but contain images that insure against a time when the family members will

"mature, disperse, and die" (p. 39). **Figure 29**

When I look at the pictures of my parents who have just met and fallen in love, it gives a completely different impression from the one that my brother and I recall. When we came to live in Canada our parents marriage began to disintegrate, and so in looking at these first loving shots of "the couple," I can use my imagination to conjure what they were like then, and what their conversations might have been.

Journal, February 14. How fitting! I have just spent Valentine's Day alone having lunch in a cozy little bistro watching other lovers. I now feel that I can continue to examine the relationship of my parents and so perhaps this will lead me to know what to do with these photos of them that I have laid out on the floor. There are lots to choose from and I especially like the ones Dad took of Mother in his apartment in Helsinki, when he was first courting her. They are really sensual; Mother looks amazing, very photogenic and very aware of her own beauty. The camera loves her and I think Dad's gaze is all over those pictures. It certainly looks like love to me. In any case, it is an intimate portrait of the two of them and I want to put them into one of the drawers in the wunderkammer. But what to do with the rest? I feel that their love story should have a background presented in the piece and perhaps I will use their really strange story. I have not been able to talk about Dad's occupation from 1949-58 until very recently because of the Official Secrets Act.

When Bruce met Leena, he was acting as an intelligence officer for the British secret service or M.I. 5 and M.I.6 - James Bond's outfit. He really was a 002 and was a licensed operator whose main job was to set up an agency in Helsinki after the war, to recover the agents who had been working in the Soviet bloc countries, which were now hostile to Britain. The cold war was on, and Dad's job more closely resembled that of the hero of John Le Carré's books, George Smiley, the doggedly loyal and clever agent, rather than the super ruthless, and flamboyant, James Bond. While working undercover, he fell in

love with his "Finnish blue-eyed baby," as he use to call my mother. My mother was unaware of his true occupation until just before they were to be married, when they ran a tight security check on my mother's family origins, just to make sure they were no 'dyed- in- the- wool" Communists hiding in the closet! My mother and father would entertain a mixed assortment of agents and other interesting people from the Foreign Office. Life was quite glamorous for mother, though somewhat treacherous for my father. Somehow, they managed all the moves and had two children and bounced between London and Helsinki. The thing I remember most about those early days, was how much I loved my family and how important it was just to be able to stay together. I missed my father when he would have to leave abruptly but he always tried to send postcards to us, and bring us little trinkets to show us which countries he had visited. Those momentous are still treasured possessions to me. I think we hang onto bits from the past, to remind us of those times because memories fade away.

The Wunderkammer In Process - Discourse on Meaning Making

So now that I have glued down a selection of the pictures, it has occurred to me that this chest is really about 'the Spy,' the hidden identity, the "man of many faces." It is also about the unglamorous side of being an agent in His Majesty's Secret Service. The work of spying on others is not a noble act in itself but some may argue, it preserves the necessary balance of power between nations. It facilitates and manipulates political events, so that supposedly the world may "remain free from tyranny." That may be quite a simplistic view. However, in order to become a spy, one must be very intelligent, have a strong sense of duty to country and also perhaps a sense of the heroic as well. After all, one must be prepared to risk all, one's life and liberty for others. These kind of government agencies pick loners, without strong familial ties. When our family grew, Dad's job became increasingly more of a desk job, which he detested with time. We emigrated because he was tired of having so little of import to do.

Dad always liked action, he liked challenges and perhaps always saw himself in the centre of the fracas. So the natural path led him to become a kingpin of business.

In the drawers, I have decided to speak of the world of the spy and put in things, related to the pleasures and vices of a James Bond character. I also see the child's chest as a perfect metaphor for lost innocence and the drawers will contain something of the harshness of the adult world: perhaps tobacco, evidence of a liking for alcohol, a deadly Finnish knife called a puukko, and other personal effects like a martini shaker, and one silver martini glass. Bruce always liked his martinis, though I do not know if he preferred them "shaken and not stirred." Dad would laugh at all the fuss when he saw the Bond pictures. "very funny, very unrealistic," he would say but "still amusing." I think he was secretly pleased that we thought his past profession contained some elements of daring. He was very cagey about what and how he had performed his duties during his time in service, and then he only spoke of his life after several vodka martinis.

Journal, February 18. Today I had the idea to include smell as a deep memory trigger in the chest. Proust speaks of the "taste of the madeleine," as a way of remembering his grandmother and their afternoon teas (Proust, trans., 1999, p. 274). Taste, sight, smell, sound and touch are all instrumental in recalling memories to the surface. I always think of Dad with that ever-present smell of either pipe tobacco, with which Dad used to roll his cigarettes when he was younger. I think the smell of the tobacco will be very pungent and enlist the viewer in using the sense of smell, which is an important tool for memory. Also the smell of brandy would be good. I'll soak a cotton ball in some of the liquor and let it sit in the drawer. My father's vices were that of a generation of men who thought they had to out-drink, and out-smoke everyone in sight. It was this John Wayne kind of mentality under which Dad operated. I thought that it

was just Dad's character, but I realize now that it symptomatic of males from the war generations. They could not, and would not, disclose much of who they were, and what they were feeling. It was just not 'manly' to do so. One had to protect and serve one's family and country, and in the end, if there was room leftover, one took care of oneself. I always recognized my father's great sense of duty to the family. However, as we were to find out much later, all this was really somewhat of an illusion.

It all broke down quickly when Dad left us in the seventies, and moved to the United States for his new job and new marriage. The family was shattered and the "spy's" deception loomed large. He did not seem so heroic anymore. Perhaps in a sense, the wunderkammer reflects my somewhat jaded view of a man who really had been a role model for me. But it is unrealistic to expect one's memories of their parents to remain wrapped in cotton wool, safe and sound. One cannot make them into the icons one would like them to be - the "Perfect Mum and the Perfect Dad/" Perhaps it is merely a middle aged projection on my part, because I do not feel that I can be my child's saviour, anymore than my father could be mine or the family's. He did his best for us and then he did what was best for him.

The chest really talks about a period in his early life when all things were still possible and, in a sense, life was more cut and dry, choices were perhaps easier to make, and the lines were not so blurred as to what was right and what was wrong. There is a simplicity to life when one is young and in a sense more naive to the complexities that overtake us as we age. We have more choices to make for ourselves. and others in our lives. As one begins to examine the role of parent and child, one begins to see that this relationship is a complex one at best. So, in a sense, this chest is also a tribute to the courage, ingenuity and zest for life that my father displayed. It is not meant to be hostile or dark, but musings on identity, role-playing, relationships and the moral choices one must make in life. Our identities are formed like layered cakes with many nuanced shadings. We are the sum total of our lived experiences and as we age we do

have secret compartments, where we hide the truths of certain events from the prying eyes of the world.

Stumbling Along the Path to Discovery and Change

I have decided to change drawer #4 after I have shown the work to some student friends of mine. It occurred to me that the inclusion of James Bond and George Smiley references in the photocopied book covers, was way too pointed a reference, to the identity of the mystery man on the back of the chest is. It is difficult to keep the metaphors open to interpretation when one is portraying one's own kin, but necessary if the reading is to remain relevant to the viewer. I really want people to connect to a sense of mystery with this character but also to meditate on the mystery of their own identities, and how much is not for public consumption. Also in terms of a Jungian perspective we all encounter the 'Shadow' side of our 'Persona' at different points in time. There is always the play with the other.

February 21. I feel as if I stumbled onto something important a few days ago, but I was unable to deal with it right away. I have decided to change drawer #4, the references to Bond and Smiley are just too over the top. Now I plan to include a map of London, where we lived in Chelsea, as more of an indicator of how we may try to map out our future lives but how it rarely works out according to plan. The map may also symbolize the location of spying and the fact that no human beings exist within this mapped space. In a sense the spy is meant to be invisible.

This drawer will contain the remnants of a British passport, which will have both names blanked out in order to show that this type of occupation engendered the use of many false identities. Also in drawer #2, I will use a picture of Dad as a young lad, just coming to England at the age of seven from India, to enter boarding school. He did not see his parents for seven years, but had guardians whom he visited in Wales during his holidays. This is a sweet picture of a young lad, who has no idea what culture of cruelty

awaits him in those dark, dank schools. I will also include pieces of liquor labels to suggest growth into manhood and the adoption of vices. There will also be a flask of Dad's, that he used in the navy. While on watch, in the freezing waters of the Atlantic, the young officers used to take a nip of brandy, as a way of protecting themselves from the cold and damp of the upper deck.

So each drawer is now finished and the pictures are glued down. All that remains is to glue the portrait of Dad on his wedding day on the back of the chest, and to place the Le Carré text, which deals with the spy's world. I plan to obliterate some parts of Dad's face, which suggests his hidden agenda. Also, I have decided to include bits of text from some Bond novels in two drawers, to give support to a kind of narrative about the characters in the photos, and the relationship of the "spy" to his amour!

Timeline for Studio Production of Spy's Chest

Fall 1999 Begin reading works on memory by psychologists such as Rebecca Rupp - information about wunderkammer as a metaphor for mind/brain and memory - cabinet of wonders - stays with me until February 2000 when I begin an investigation into my father's life

Winter January 2000 - February Read Paula by Isabelle Allende and Time Regained Vol. XI of In Search of Lost Time, by Marcel Proust - both novels deal with the power and fragility of memory as process, reflection and inspiration for making art

February 7 Begin searching for a real physical object to represent the wunderkammer

February 12 Find old doll's chest of my daughter's stored in the garage - decide to sand it down and paint it red **Fig. 1**

February 13 Discover that the chest contains several layers of paint and decide to keep the chest as is, to show idea of layers of memory - use quote from

Rebecca Rupp about “layering of identity”

Look at pictures in albums of mother and father, concentrating on their love story **Fig. 2**

February 14 Take time to choose pictures, thinking about Dad as MI6 agent for the British Secret Service - make connections to both characters of George Smiley, spy in Smiley’s People, novel by John Le Carré and James Bond from Ian Fleming’s books - both writers that Dad used to read - think about Dad’s eventual disillusionment with the job, too much of a desk job - our coming to Canada, Dad becoming an economist for Canadian Pulp and Paper Association Think of child’s chest as metaphor for lost innocence, drawers to contain indications of grown-up vices such as tobacco and alcohol **Fig. 5**

February 15 Beginning to assemble the aretefacts of Dad’s past - silver tennis cup he won in school in England, silver martini shaker and glass he used to make his cocktails, pewter flask he used in the navy **Fig. 3**

February 16 Selection of Dad’s wedding portrait for back of the chest + other objects to be photographed **Fig. 4**

February 19 Selection of covers of James Bond and Smiley book and map of London + flask **Fig. 5**

Also picture of Dad aged seven - selection of texts to be used from spy novels

February 20 Assemblage of drawers: #1 not decided yet #2 portrait of Dad as small boy + vodka and wine label - innocence lost **Fig. 6** #3 cover of Bond book and British passport with no name - alludes to changing identities of spy - fragility of our own identities **Fig. 7** #4 pictures of Mum and Dad **Fig. 8** #5 martini shaker, glass and wine label **Fig. 9**

February 21 Re- do of drawers: #1 Drum tobacco **Fig. 10** #2 addition of flask **Fig. 11** #3 add more book covers and red mulberry paper used for bottom of drawer - symbolizes power, excitement #4 more pictures added to Mum and

Dad's drawer and glued down over earth coloured mulberry paper, symbol of grounded relationship at this point in time - addition of text from Ian Fleming's novel - concerns the habits of the spy, his passion for certain foods - aphrodisiacs? - also speaks of his relationship with women - alluded to the heavily charged romance of my parents **Fig. 12** #5 Straw added to drawer with martini shaker etc. and brandy soaked cotton balls - scent element brought in to be seductive to the viewer for purposes of recollection **Fig. 13**

February 23 Reorganization once again work on drawer #3 take out excess book covers, add bird's skull - hinting at deathly business of spying #3 does not work - take out book covers, entirely too obvious reference to fictional spies - put in map of London - idea of mapping identity and life - also text from Bond that speaks of the Double O status as not being a noble thing - Dad was really 002 - it does mean "license to kill" - addition of Finnish puukko - not subtle but a real knife of Dad's used for camping, fishing, hunting etc. and postcard from Dad and Mum's honeymoon which is 51 years old - factor of time, age and memory **Fig. 14**

February 24 Final day of work - add cut pieces of text to fit over Dad's wedding portrait and think about the relationship of the words to the image of the hidden face - alluding to this man of mystery - the "man of many faces" **Fig. 15**

Musings on Conclusion of the Work

On completion of the chest, I was surprised at the direction that the piece took. I had no idea it would end up being a "spy's chest", but I was rather pleased with the results. Throughout this process, I have seen that I could not always ascertain when and where an idea came from but that the creative process, though not as mysterious as one might think it to be, certainly has many undefinable elements in it. Ideas for a part of a work, seem to materialize from some strange corner of the brain and may be brought to light during the

course of a conversation, a walk in the woods or even a shower. However what I have also realized, is that one's intuition and persistence play an undeniable role in creation. One must seize whatever small opportunities present themselves even if one is not quite sure of how they link to the larger conception of the work in process. During the creation of this mixed media piece, I came upon objects, like the fifty year old postcard or the puukko, and by researching their backgrounds, I uncovered a great deal more new information, which I then transformed into new themes in the artwork.

This process continues until you arrive at the point when the conception and artwork are one. At this point the artwork exists as a complete piece.

The Creation of The Spy's Chest



Figure I The Chest
February 20

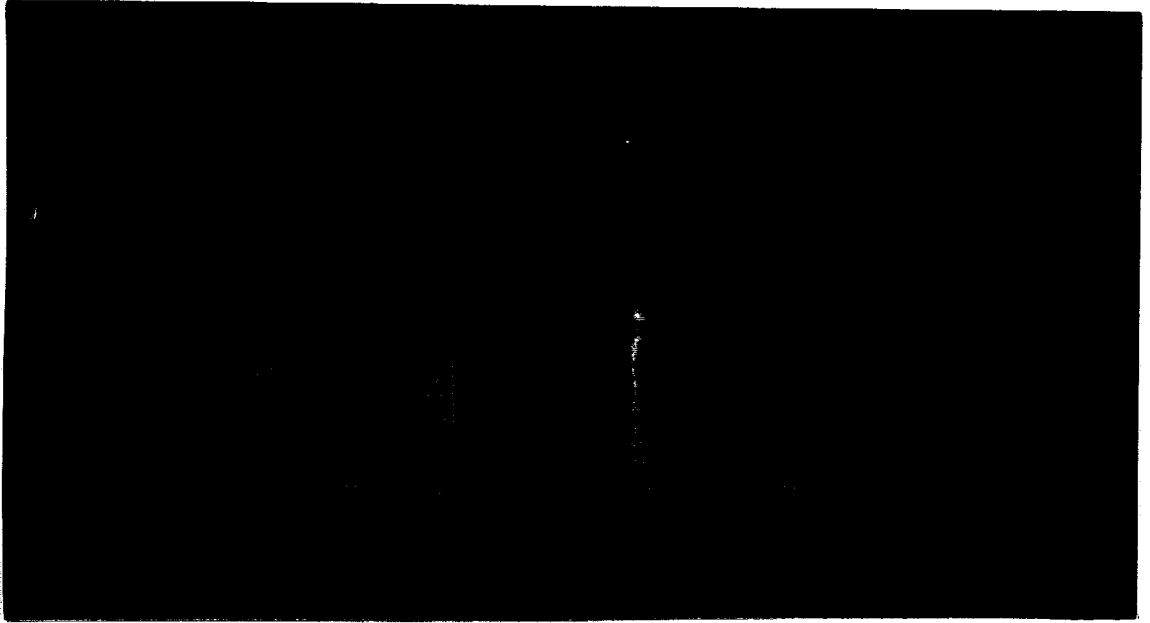


Figure 2 February 14

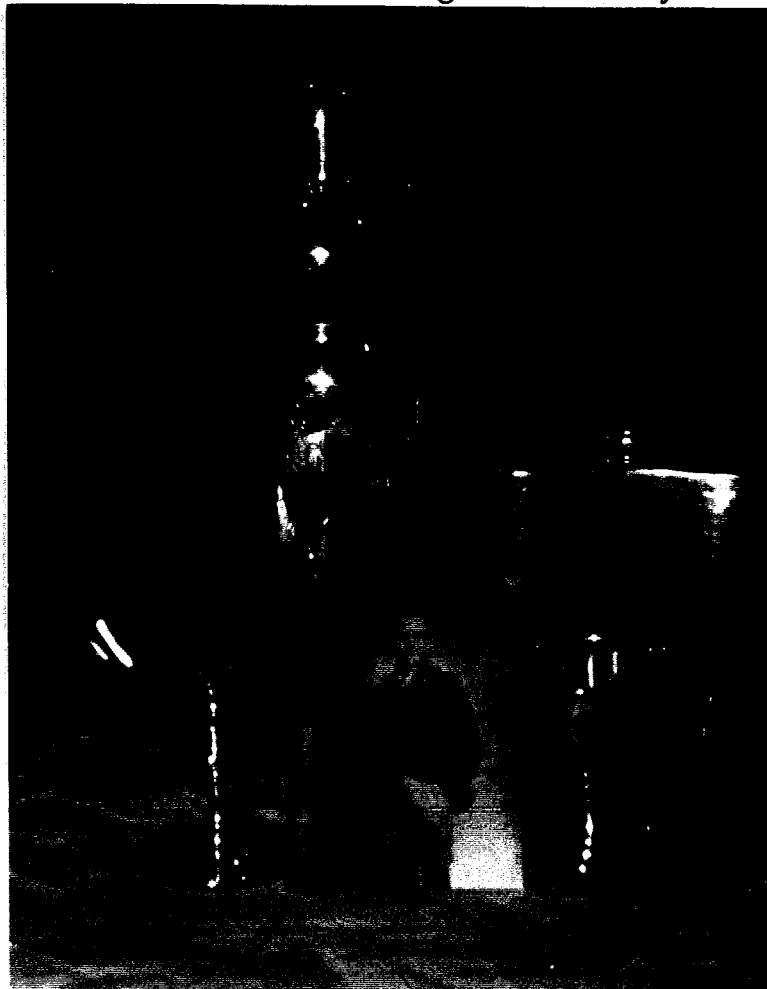


Figure 3 February 15

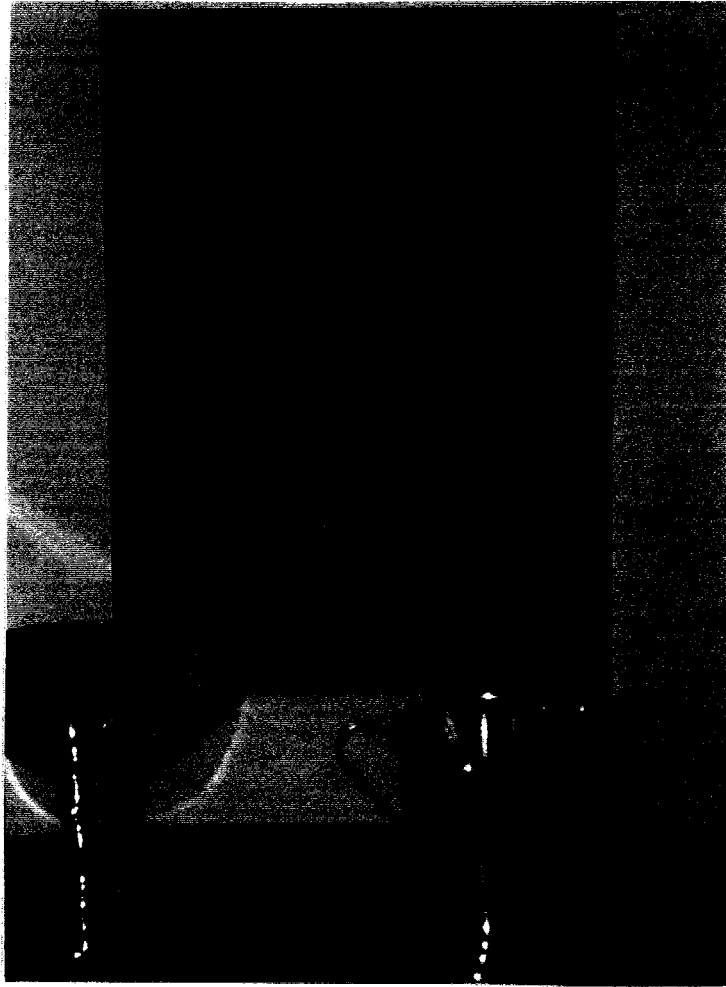


Figure 4 February 16

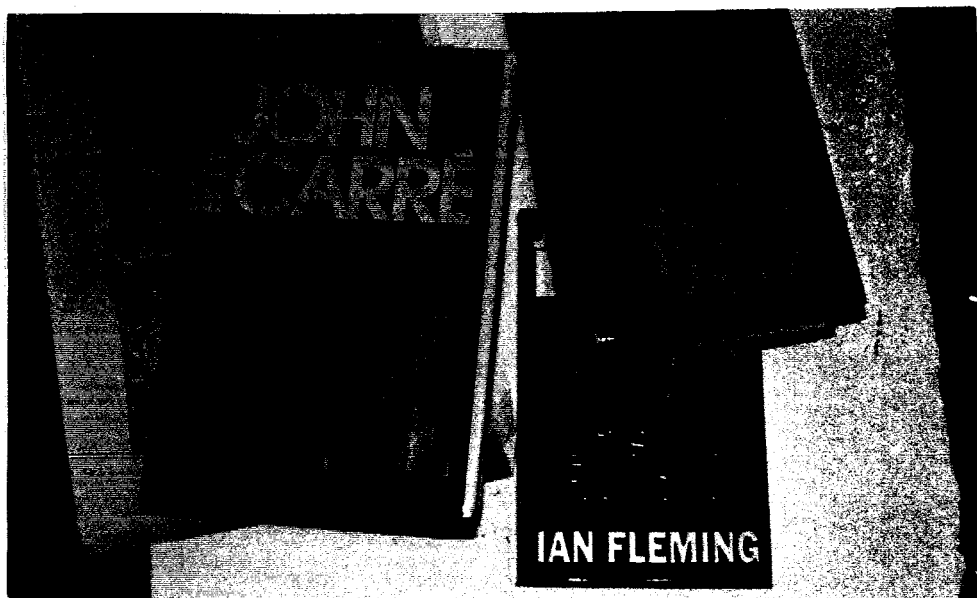


Figure 5 February 19



Figure 6
February 20

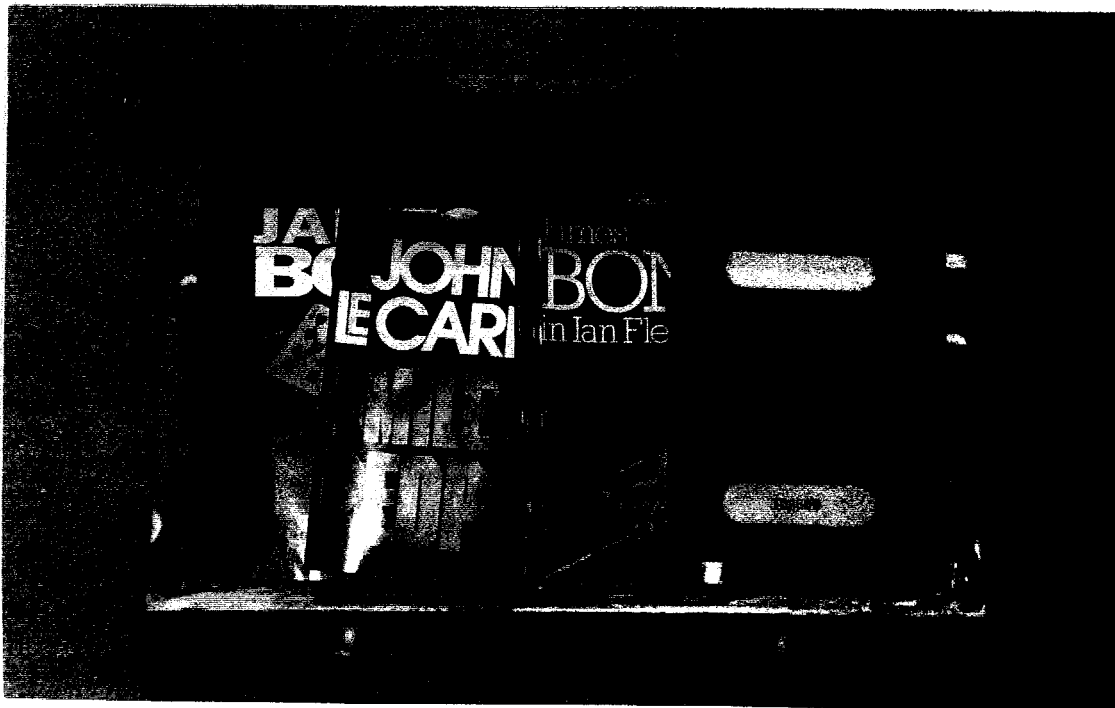


Figure 7 February 20

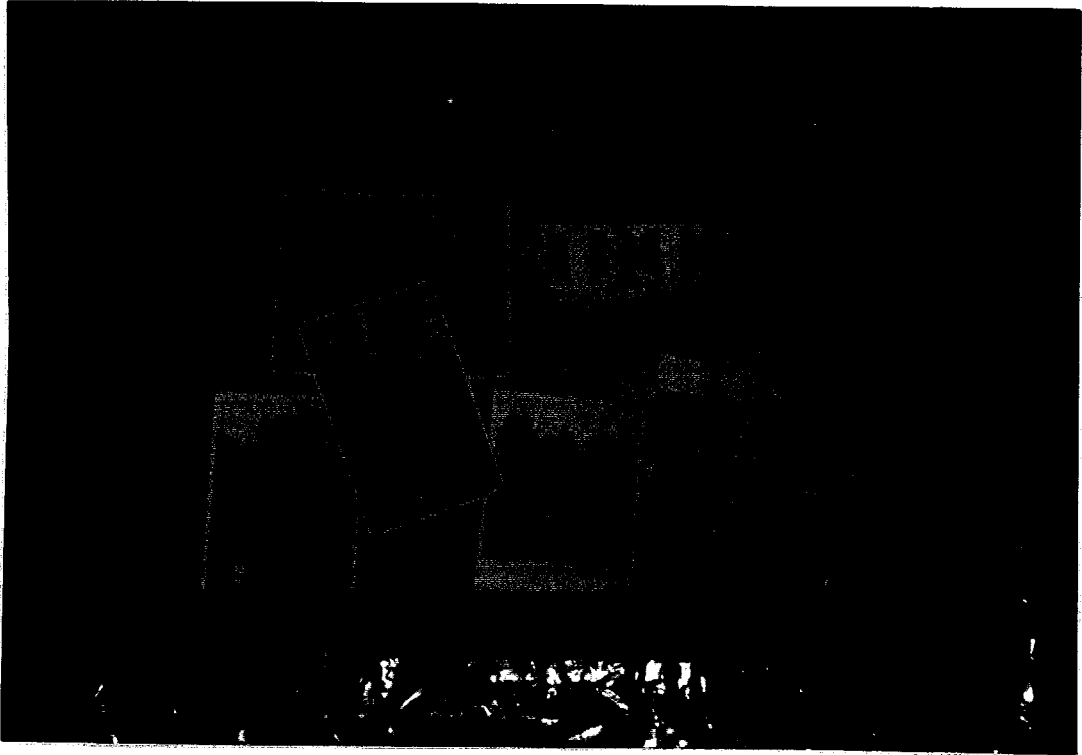


Figure 8 February 20

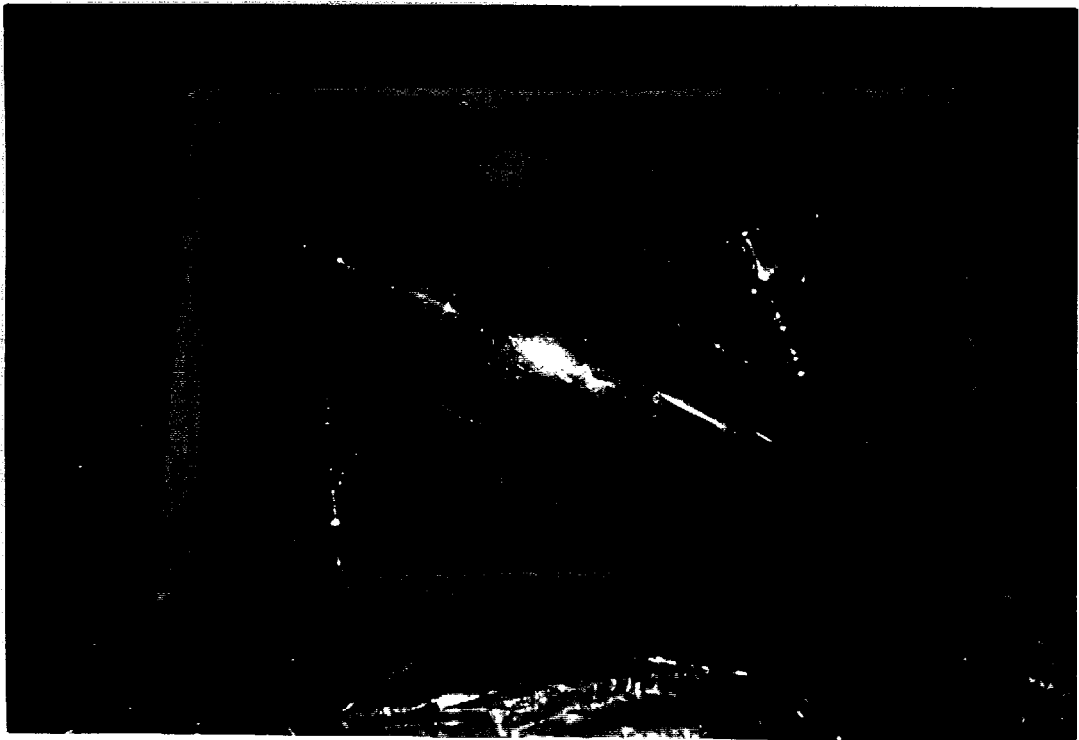


Figure 9 February 20

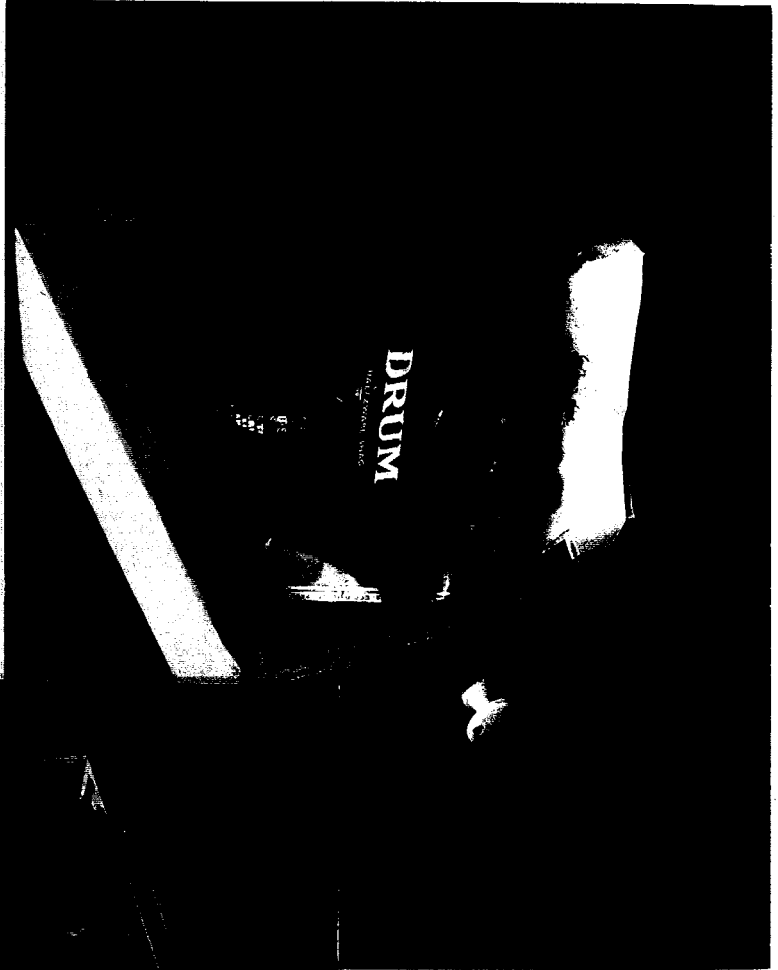


Figure 10
February 20

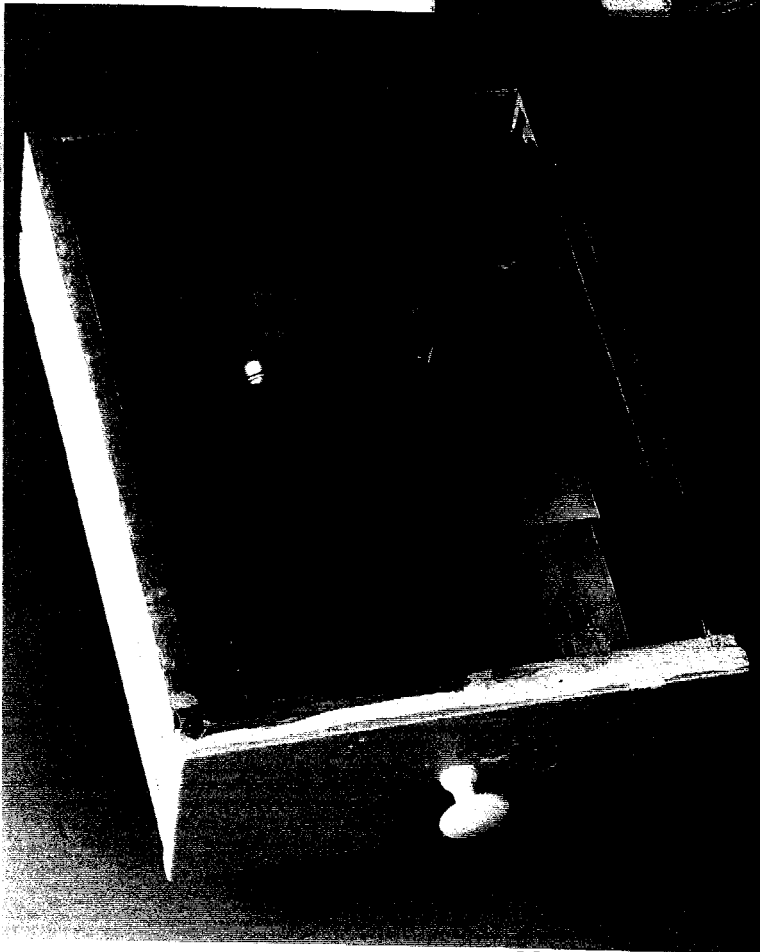


Figure 11
February 20

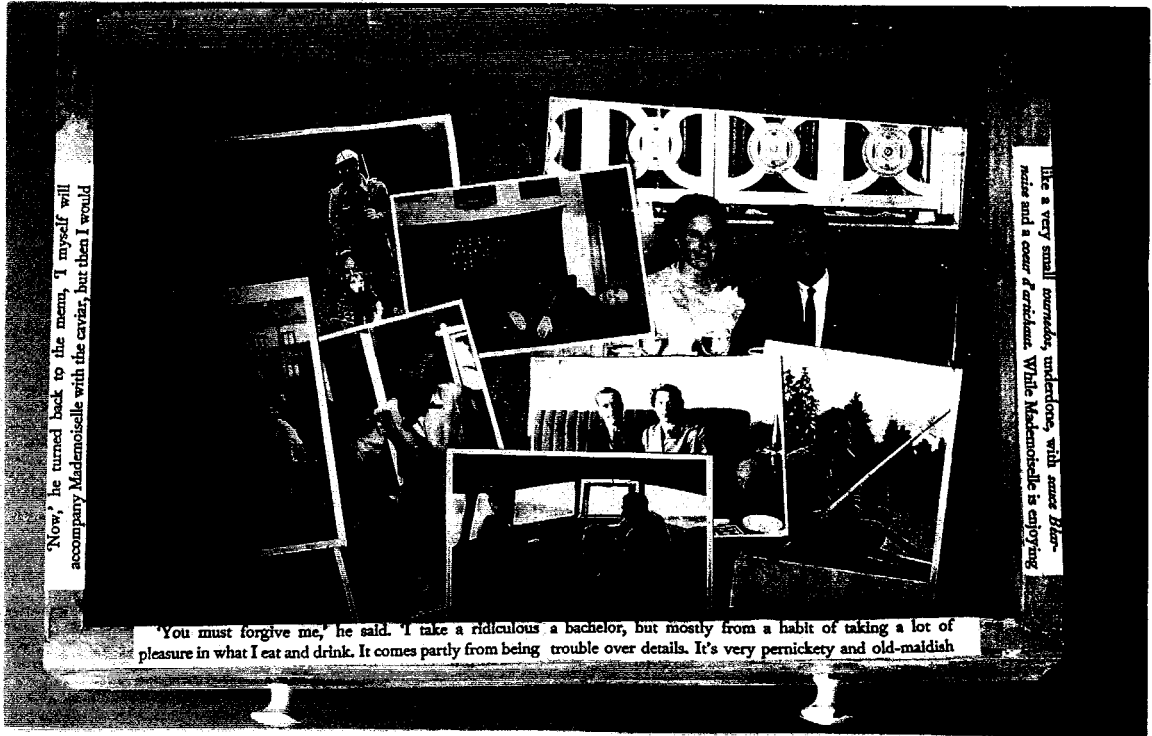


Figure 12 February 21

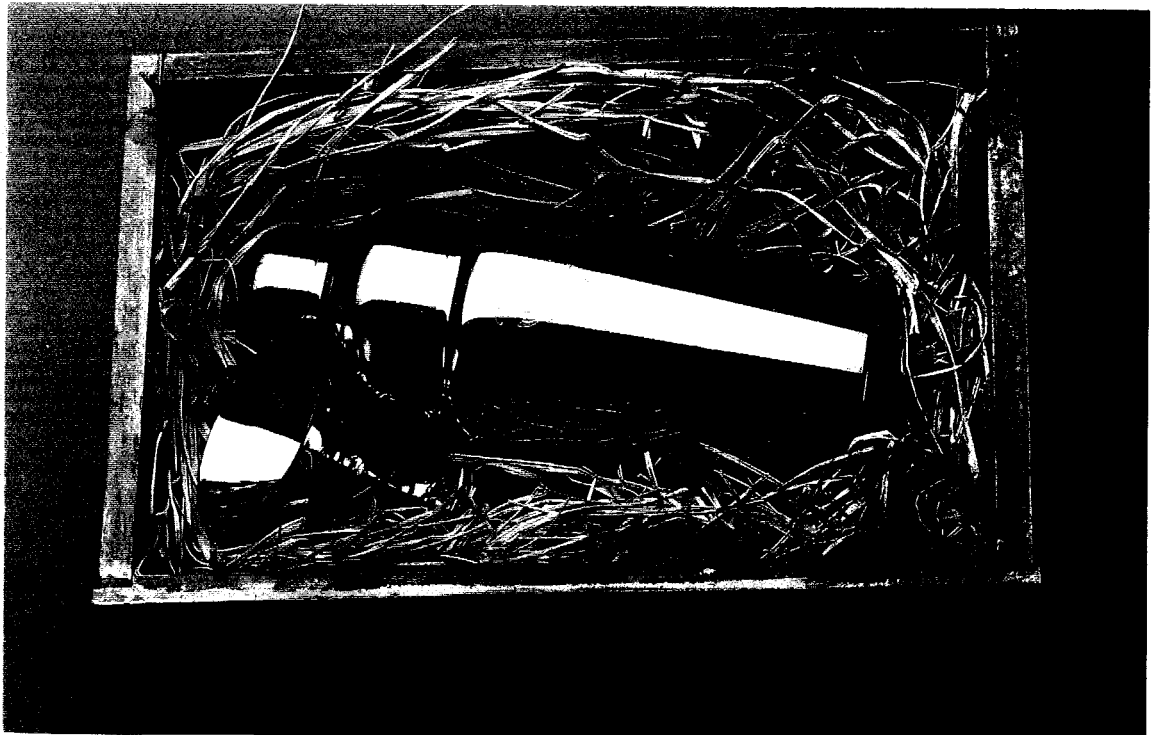


Figure 13 February 21



Figure 14
February 23

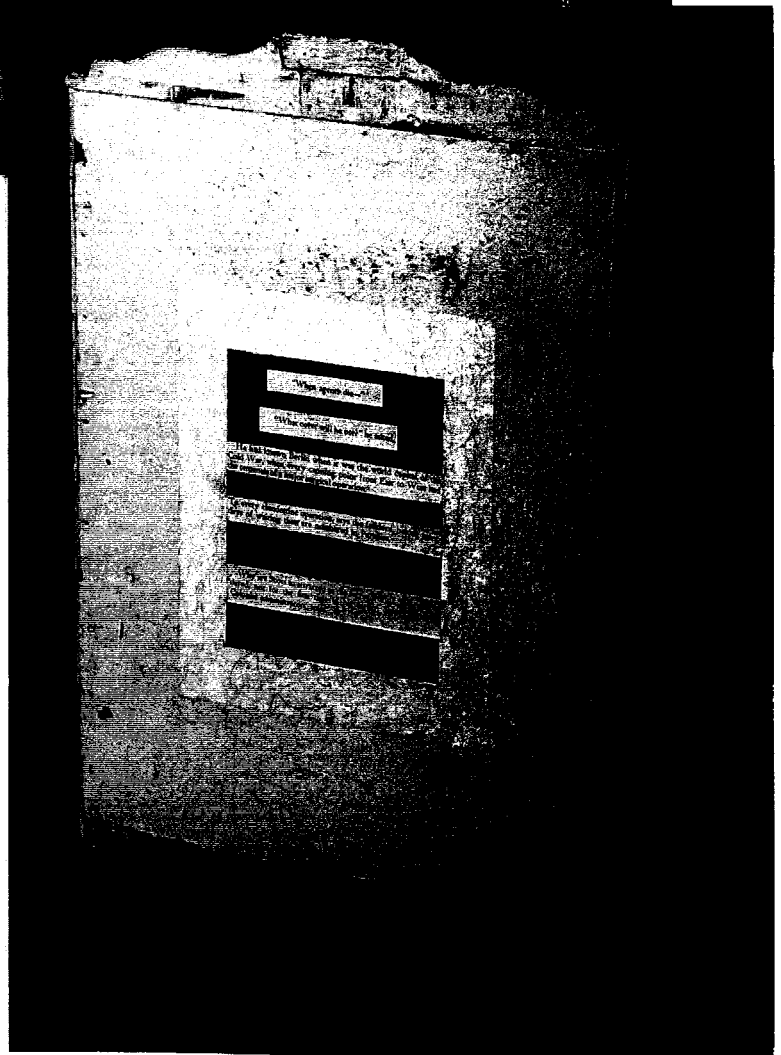


Figure 15
February 24

**(VII) RESEARCHING THE PROCESS FOR THE INSTALLATION
“MEMORY, CULTURE AND HISTORY”**

Absence and Presence

In beginning my analysis of the components of my installation, “The Archaeology of Memory,” I will delve back into the journal that I wrote on my trip to England in August, 2000. This exploration allowed me to see how I took the photographs that eventually included arrangements with other mixed media works.

When I arrived in Gloucestershire, my intention was merely to have a wonderful holiday and to enjoy exploring the hills and vales of green and misty England. The trip was planned to include some time in the West country and a few busy days in London. What I did not know at the time was that the photographs that I would eventually take would become the basis for an ambitious project two years hence. I was also not aware of the impact that this land would have on my memory, psyche and soul.

Journal, August 11.

Today as I walked down the ancient track ways and long barrows of neolithic peoples, I felt the presence of absent souls long forgotten. This week I photographed the crumbling walls, tombstones and monuments of Chipping Camden, Tewkesbury Abbey, the Chained Library of Hereford and Stonehenge. I became interested in the idea that the stones themselves contained the markings of past societies. The notion that these creations, wrought from the very stone and mortar of this land’s bedrock, were the inventions and applications of cultures that sought to leave behind a legacy of their existence, resounded within me. My very soul was being called back to participate in a kind of ritual process as I took the photographs.

While I took the pictures, I thought that there eventually might be an

opportunity to tie all of this visual information together once I got to Canada.

For the first part of my journey I wound my way across the hills towards Chipping Camden which is north of Oxford, and became fascinated by the red tintured walls of this town. Chipping Camden is an exquisite example of an historic place where one feels that time has stood still as the ancient architecture remains well restored.

Journal, August 6. This morning I entered the peaceful town of Chipping Camden and to my delight I found absolutely beautiful examples of Norman architecture with its graceful perpendicular style. As I meandered through the narrow streets, I came upon a graceful little garden tucked in at the back of an alleyway; an enchanting surprise resting there in its glory. I immediately took out the camera and started shooting the site of my "Secret Garden." Having been a big fan of this book, while I was growing up, this discovery made me feel somewhat as if I were being treated to an episode in my memory of childhood delights. I was always reading and enjoyed being immersed in a fantasy world.

While I was admiring the stone walls, I discovered a window that was bricked in and thought this to be a very strange thing. It certainly was an oddity.

I later found out that four hundred years ago people in England were taxed by the number of openings in their homes and therefore; that was why the "window on the wall" was in existence. The next stop on this exhilarating tour through time, history, and culture, was Tewkesbury Cathedral. I became transfixed by the bleeding limestone walls and the molding lichen and moss covered tombstones of its graveyard. I shot a roll of film at this location and tried to photograph the interior nave, but to no avail, as my flash could not penetrate the interior gloom and darkness. But I did walk upon the worn stones of this cathedral and marvel at the feeling of ancient foot prints made by the parishioners, who had come to pray. More remarkable findings of man's early

concept of Self-in world awaited me at the incredible Chained Library of Hereford. Here the written “word” was pristinely preserved in ancient manuscripts from as early as the 12th century, which informed one of the discoveries of knowledge in the fields of science, philosophy and law.

Journal, August 7. Today’s exploration took us to Tewkesbury Cathedral and Hereford, to view the world’s first “Mappa Mundi,” or map of the world, and the oldest collection of handwritten book in a chained library (the manuscripts are literally chained to the walls, to prevent any thievery). Both experiences unlocked the idea of historical memory - the celebration of births, deaths, marriages, and other rituals being performed within these heavy stone walls of an eleventh to fourteenth century edifice, and the knowledge and memory inherent in the superb archives of Hereford.

Man’s very search for “truth” was made visible through the language and text that I pondered on that August day. However, as I was wrapped up in the process of “looking” and contemplating the maps and manuscripts, I managed to miss the sign: “Flash photography, not permitted,” and began taking some shots of the treasures. I was sharply reprimanded by a guard but allowed to keep the precious witnesses to these early marvels of man’s ingenuity, after I apologized profusely for my ignorance. Light of course destroys the chemical compounds in the inks and thus every modern use of flash photography fades the precious words. The words that formed these texts challenged the ideas of the times and were responsible for the development of Western society as we know it today.

One of the last stops on this West Country tour took me to Stonehenge which was probably the most remarkable of all of the sights that I visited. I knew as I photographed the site with hundreds of other tourists, that these pictures would become part of the work that I would begin upon my return home. I felt myself grasping at concepts about what I had witnessed in the few

that I had toured this great country, but I still had no idea how I would present all of this pictorial information, although I did feel that it would be important for me to record it. After all, a solo exhibition of my work was something I had never before attempted to do. For the last ten years, I had always been too busy with my studies, teaching and mothering to really give too much time to my studio work. I could feel that this new passion for photography would lead to an important contribution in my work.

Journal, August 10. When I was a little girl, I used to search for the fairies in the garden, trying to uncover the mysteries of the woods and the spirits in the dells. Now here I am once again, the explorer of the mythical and the magical. When I approached the grand rock formations I felt that they had been designed by incredibly strong and mysterious beings from our world. This overwhelming sensation of standing in front of such colossal forms carved out of the very land around them, allowed me to ponder the concept of man's everlasting search for meaning. In this ring of monolithic stones, I found the very presence of ritual and magic palpable. I could imagine ancient tribes undergoing the ritual of the Winter Solstice, while waiting for the shaft of light from the sun, to penetrate the crevice just at the right moment, so as to allow the souls of the dead to depart to the next world. It was at that moment in my imaginings that I once again thought of my dearly departed father who had already left on his last journey. It was as if in the sharp longing for his presence, I was somehow comforted by being at that place in time. There was a sharp conjoining of personal memories, entwined with the collective memories of societies that had suffered the same type of loss. I felt at that moment, in that circle of stones, that there was such a deeply rooted need in humans to make meaning of the inexplicable fate of our existence and the quest for transcendence. One cannot help but feel moved at this spot on earth and not feel the presence of a reality that speaks to one of the narrative of human consciousness and the concept of infinity.

(VIII) FULL CIRCLE - ARTICULATING THEMES AND CONCEPTS

In the spring of 2001, when I began my studio courses at Concordia, I eventually began to assemble the photographs from this trip. I was very pleased with the results of my walk with history and concluded that the photos of the mottled walls, soaring churches, learned manuscripts and magnificent ritual site should be paired together. I showed them in class, hung from the ceiling, blown up to 11x17," glued onto foam core. For "The Archaeology of Memory," exhibition in August 2002, I wanted to show them again, but this time they were to be professionally heat-set by a photography company. I wanted them grouped onto two walls in inverted "T" formations to accompany the second theme of the show: "memory, culture and history." **Figures 16 and 17**

One set of four images would be: photos of Stonehenge with the images of the manuscripts from the chained library at Hereford and the other grouping would include, Tewkesbury Abbey and the Secret Garden photo paired with the photos of the brick walls. They would be viewed on opposite walls in the second room and nearby there would also be a mixed media piece with a stand which would include some objects which contained personal artefacts.

In 1999, I had come upon an article entitled, "National Memory," by Ronald Koven which spoke about the significance of the memory of "place" such as the sites I had visited, but it also spoke of the idea that a people could be defined by the narrative which is produced in the retelling of events. Thus essentially "painful recollections, not pleasant nostalgia" (Koven 1994, p. 17) could also be manipulated to preserve a "national memory" of a people. Thus events could be retold and manipulated in such a way that a society could hold itself in a more positive light during dark periods in its history.

The article concluded that "memory is a synonym for national identity," with the memory cultivated and passed down through later generations through

an institutionalized approach to folk memory” (p. 18). In thinking about this idea of collective memory, I had already done a piece on this theme about my late grandfather, Brigadier General Cedric Wallis. In this mixed media artwork, I had used a photograph of Grandad and his 5/7 Rajput Indian army officers, sitting on top of two collaged tombstones from Tewkesbury Cathedral, surrounded by Japanese grass paper, bordered by vines from my house’s chimney. This piece was entitled “National Memory” and sought to reflect on Britain’s colonial past. While I was photographing the tombstones in England, I had noticed that on one of them, it had the phrase, “Sacred to the memory of....” and it inspired me to think of what these markers really meant to human existence. Zeitlin and Harlow speak eloquently about this form of commemorative art: “We create gravestones along with tangible and audible worlds of art and music that express our sentiments and often convey something of the personality of the deceased” (Zeitlin and Harlow, 2001, p. 12).

It also allowed me to also understand that the place one dies has to be marked and that is why it is important for the ones left behind to mourn the individual and that they have a place to visit. These soldiers in my grandfather’s regiment, who went with him to die on the battlefields of Hong Kong in World War II, had no one to visit the places of their deaths, like so many before them. They died on foreign fields far from their loved ones. That sad thought impressed me and I again recognized the feeling that life in all of its frailty was an event to be celebrated and marked. It also pointed out the fact that the loyalty of these troops to a foreign power that was ruling their own country, was quite singularly remarkable. The story of British colonial rule is a complicated affair within a complex history.

Even though my grandfather was famous, I thought of him as an ordinary man, not really a hero, even though he had tunneled most of his men out of the

prison of war camp in Hong Kong, although he had to stay behind because he was the commanding officer. And even though I used to speak a lot to my grandfather about his life while I was growing up in Canada, I just saw him as a kind man, who had always maintained that to forgive one's enemy was the mark of any truly strong person. He maintained that to harbor grudges would only defeat oneself in the end. I have tried to let some of my grandfather's teachings contribute to my understanding of life.

I had also heard the story of how Grandad and Ingeborg (his third wife), had come to Canada after the war, when the British government had tossed away its ex-army officers without so much as a decent pension on which to live. I knew how he had become a night watchman to make ends meet until he could get on his feet. The picture of a man of his stature sitting in a warehouse on a cardboard box has always impressed me. Perhaps that is why I understand the concept of humility so well. Eventually my grandfather began a successful career in business as a consultant who found jobs for retired British army personnel.

While I was growing up, I rarely speculated on his role as agent for colonial oppression. Lately, I have been reading books about India's colonial past and what the present India remembers about that period in history. "Tamarind Mem," by Shauna Singh Baldwin is a look at Indian life twenty three years after the British have left India and the legacy of their rule. In this passage the main character describes the changes wrought on her grandfather's sense of Indian identity:

In all the photographs I had seen of him, Dadda's father looked like an English gentleman with a neat mustache, a solar hat, a jacket and a crisply pleated dhoti. There was another photograph in the box which must have been taken before my grandfather joined the Railway and

came to Dehli, before he changed his name from Gokulnatha to Moorthy and turned from a priest's son into an employee of the British. In this picture there was a row of thin men in turbans - the fancy ones with gold borders. My grandfather was the tall, thin youth without a turban, right at the end of the line. He had a Brahmin's shaved head with a traditional juttu uncut at the back. When he moved to Dehli, he shaved it off. Then terrified that the gods would curse him for such a sacrilegious deed, he offered twenty rupees' worth of coconuts to the Krishna temple and for five years after that donated a pair of silver lamps as well (Badami, 1996, p.70).

This passage made me reconsider the photograph of my grandfather and his role as an officer in the company of his Indian men. "Cedric" looks like a somewhat unhappy young man, with his injured eye covered by a black monocle, the pupil having recently been scratched out by a branch while he was on manoeuvres in the cavalry. He holds a cane, being newly blinded in that eye. The young Indian officers look vaguely uncomfortable in their wool uniforms, and the Sikh officers sport sparkling white turban which stand out in the noon day sun. It is a picture of colonial rule, and yet though I may engage in a critical look at Britain's role as the aggressive super power, in this instance, my grandfather only appears as somewhat weak and frail and even more human. **Figure 18**

While making this mixed media artwork that would eventually be paired with the other photographic installation, I used a layering process. It included not only the use of photographs but handmade Japanese paper glued directly onto the canvas. This gave the impression of a second skin which symbolized the idea that in trying to understand the lifeworld of another, one must try to wear the "skin" of the other. For a final touch, I added the wonderfully textured

vines from my chimney, which also contained some jet blue berries. I attached these around the perimeter of the piece like a border, which symbolized the idea that this was indeed a tribute to the bravery and courage of these servicemen, whose lives became inextricably woven together.

I now teach second generation East Indian children and am drawn to the idea that my family's history has somehow come full circle. I, too, am still somewhat of an outsider, an immigrant in this great land, teaching the Canadian grandchildren of the generation that have felt the yoke of Britain's might. I feel a strong sense of emotional connection to these children and their heritage, which in a strange way is bound to mine, because my father was also born in India and loved this country.

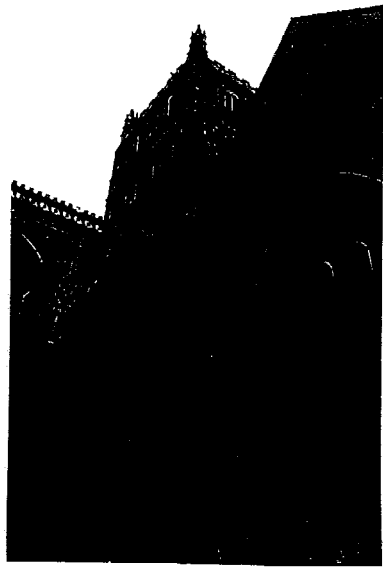


Figure 16

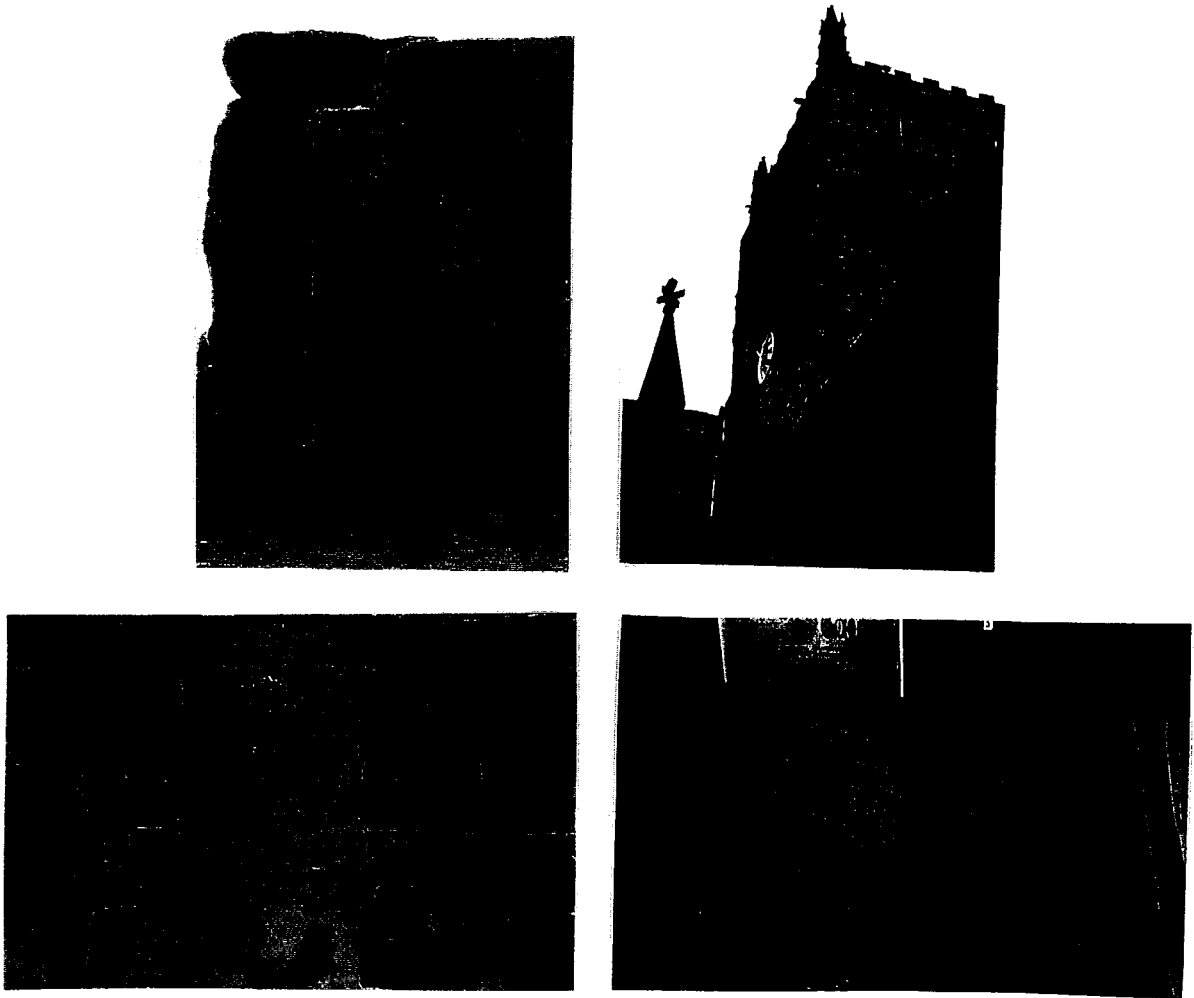


Figure 17

The Elements of "The Lasting Honour"



(IX) PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTING THE EXHIBITION

Choosing the Space

When I finally assembled all of the photographs, mixed media artwork, paintings, and sculptures, in the two ante rooms of my studio, I worried about how I was going to mesh my personal memory artworks with the others dealing with collective memory. There were two very definite separate themes at work; so, I had to exhibit the pieces in an appropriate way, in a space that would allow them to be installed separately. I managed to solve this problem with a gallery that had partitioned space and pipes that ran the entire length of the ceiling, from which I could also hang my sculptures (see **Figure 23**). I set the date for the exhibition with Galerie Gora for August 22, 2002. Since this exhibition was to be a tribute to my late father, as well as a huge reunion party for my family and friends, some of whom were coming from very far away, I decided to take on the larger and more commercial venue. I was also hoping to get some sort of review in the paper. I would eventually end up doing most of my own publicity and setting up a comprehensible press kit. I was fortunate to get a comprehensive article written in the West Island Chronicle (p. 76).

Media Savvy

There is a need for any artist/educator who is hoping for some sort of critical success with an art show, to learn how to properly prepare a press kit with concise and well written information. A short biography and description of the show is what is required. Also the kind of photographs and the way in which one packages the information is very important. The writer who did my story emphasized how my kit stood out because of the impact of the cover page (photograph I had taken of the "Window on the Wall") and its overall presentation. **Figure 24**

The process of putting on a show has to be done in a logical, concise and

ordered way. It is to have a competent artist's statement, curriculum vitae and professional visuals of your body of work. In order to have a show reviewed in Canadian Art one must send one's press kit and a sample of a story line months in advance. I managed to get into the Montreal Gallery Guide, which is the only bit of publicity that Galerie Gora actually gave me, and I was also featured in Concordia's graduate magazine, in the section, "Class Acts." (See p. 78)

Studio Work In Progress July 7- August 17

So with the exhibition date set in stone and only six weeks to finish my work, I headed down to my studio to see where I needed to add or subtract from the work that I had already done. I decided on thirteen pieces that I had made over a two year period. But I had to add two parts to an existing sculpture that I entitled: "A Question of Balance." Originally I had designed a house of sorts (8x8x15") made from birch branches, as the skeletal structure, with the addition of Japanese handmade paper for the walls, with little window-like openings through which would could view a cube, with old photographs of my mother's childhood in Finland. I had been thinking about this piece for a long time and suddenly by looking at my collection of twigs in my garage, I came upon the concept for this three-part hanging sculpture. I decided to design small wire baskets that would encompass and connect the river stones that I had collected from Finland. They would hang in the middle of the sculpture right to the floor like the spine of the piece. I would make a bundle of these twigs and it would eventually hang on one side of the house to balance out the other forms. This sculpture then took on a larger meaning which emphasized a dialogue between the natural elements of stone (hard and immobile) and wood, (bending and yielding); the essential materials for many of the pieces in my show. **Figure 25 and 26.**

I also had to redo a mixed media piece on my father because the original

photograph and woven handmade paper, was too fragile and slight tears were appearing at the top of it. This careful reconstruction was worse than making the original piece because I was feeling the strain of working on several things at once. I remember finishing "Mutation and Memory," in the dead heat of a July night, kneeling on my bad knees, gluing the fragile photographs and paper together, wishing that I was not such a perfectionist. **Figure 25**

Long summer days are conducive to being outdoors and doing lazy things, like sunbathing and reading, but I spent my time happily weaving wire cages for my sculptures, stitching fabric and garments onto canvas, (**Figure 19**) sewing copper thread around vines around a mixed piece, (**Figure 20**) painting with black lava and other textured acrylics and taking black and white photographs of Cap St. Jacques for a "landscape and memory" piece (**Figure 31**). In fact I never stopped working until the very day of the opening of the show.

I also had an amazing experience while photographing the area around Cap St. Jacques, in the western part of Montreal. Finally at the end of July I was tired of being cooped up in my studio. I decided on a beautiful, clear night in the middle of July to go on a drive with my camera in tow. I took some black and white film, because for a long time, I had been thinking of doing black and white photography because that was the real art of taking pictures. My family's photographs of England and Finland were so well done, that I thought I would challenge myself to see what I could do. A surprise awaited me on my little sojourn.

Journal, July 23. As the sun sets on Cap St. Jacques I feel the gentle warmth of the last rays of the day. In front of me a baptism is taking place by the water's edge of the Lake of Two Mountains. It is a strange to see a congregation of East Indians in the Quebec countryside. As their singing fills the air, there is a surreal quality about this evening. It is a rather moving example of Christian ritual occurring in an unexpected

setting.

The sky has turned an azure blue with gentle puffs of pale peach, woven with Payne's Gray. The sun is finally dipping below the trees on the perfect little island in front of me, and the seagulls are taking flight. The tranquillity of this moment is divine. The lake's glassy surface now contains ripples of silver that shimmer in the last light of the day. What a sight!

When the films were processed I was heartened to find a few good photographs, which I then wanted to use in the diptych I was going to make in the last week of July. I had an original plan for this final piece but it was to grow and change in the weeks to come.

Reviewing the Journals for Clarifications on Meaning

In April while, I had begun to focus on the larger theme of the show. I was trying to think of titles for the exhibition. Some working titles were, "A Spy in the House of Memories," "Spying In the House of Memories," or "Healing Memories," all of which I quickly rejected.

Journal, April 15. I've decided against three titles which I consider to be too personal and maudlin. I have a real fear of making this show about nostalgia or just as an ode to a somewhat interesting group of people. I need to make it more universal and so I've come up with this new title: "The Archaeology of Memory." This has a bigger focus, a good adjustment from the personal to the collective uses of memory and identity, time and place, society and culture. This implies that there is information given to us - mined so to speak, from cultural artefacts which lie buried in the past. The very notion of unearthing these memories/narratives of the lives of people who have gone on before us really works for me. Also there is this notion of the object as the container of this information, which is the key to the story.

However I also decided to review my January entries in my diaries to clarify the meanings that were forming in my body of work, as a whole, so

I could properly install it in the gallery. I wanted the narrative to be visually strong enough for its themes to unfold in a manner that would be readable to the viewer.

Journal, January 10. I have just gone to a conference at McGill for the "Traces" lecture series in January, and been interested in a discourse, by Alan Hepburn, on the disappearing bodies in spy narratives as a synonym for the question of visibility of the individual in the postmodern paradigm. Of course since my father was a real spy, I have already done three pieces, posing questions on the idea of "self" through heterogeneity, mutability and multiplicity. Grant McCracken's lecture prompted me to think of my use of the spy as a metaphor for a postmodern icon, which is used to establish relationships with a character who is always in the state of becoming a person who becomes etc.....The mobility of the self is likened to the notion of expansionary individualism, a creature that consumes the world. This is a pragmatic, interest seeking, imperial character, very much the prototype of the era. The notion of individualism is now the self who is multiplying and increasingly following his/her own path. McCracken used Madonna as the postmodern pinup girl, who exemplifies his theories, while I have used my own father whose life keys into many of these concepts.

So six months later, I was in the process of reviewing my reasons for doing the works that I had already done and now I would have to create seven new works which would complete the production of this exhibition. All the pieces were beginning to fit.

Assembling the Work

I reacted by first arranging the photographs of the various installations on the floor, assembling and reassembling the images until a completed image formed. I put the ready pieces in groups and saw how they reacted to one another in terms of color, materials and smaller themes.

I invited the comments of my friends and family, (some of whom are artists

themselves), which helped me to weed out the pieces that were not working for me. I was encouraged by their positive reactions to my new work but still concerned how the new pieces would work with the old ones. There is always a sense of exhilaration when I begin a new production but there are always those insecurities that plague me, until I feel that the pieces “speak” to one another. It was about the end of July when I started to feel that the creative “flow” was really in motion.

The artworks to be edited out were the ones that did not fit into the gallery space. One artwork, a series of black and white photographs from the 50's entitled, “Birthday Party,” on which I had been working since April 2002, was simply shelved as it was simply too large for the gallery space. This collage of images taken from a contact strip that my father developed of my brother's second birthday in Finland had to be enlarged by the aid of a computer because I did not possess my father's original negative. The photographs were done in a logical action sequence but the last frame was blurred so that it made my brother's figure disappear. It pained me to let go of this piece due to technical problems, since it also fit into the idea of the mutable identity construction in postmodern times.

Another piece about my brother and I coming to Canada as new immigrants was also put aside. I had used jelly fish candies to illustrate childhood delights, which I had glue-gunned onto the painted canvas but they had dried out and fallen off. As I have already stated, there were problems with other works that I had created in the past few years. The very nature of corporeality moves toward the process of decomposition and the materials I have used do serve to illustrate my philosophical existentialist concerns about life - lived experience death- loss of loved ones, otherness - being an immigrant and mystery - reflected in places like Stonehenge. They do present conservation problems but

I have begun to store my work more carefully in sealed containers so that they do not all decay too quickly.

Plotting The Exhibition Space

On a trip to California in the first week of July, I sat in the plane on the way to San Diego and sketched. There were two versions of how I thought the existing artworks would look in the gallery space and I began to get a clearer idea of what I still had to complete in order for the exhibition to jell together. This was probably the most agonizing part of the planning. I was lucky enough to have the talents of a gifted artist/curator, Claudine Ascher. Claudine and I had met in the early nineties when we were both exhibiting our work in a very fine gallery on the West Island. We had been part of two women's group shows and over the years, our mutual respect and friendship had continued to grow. When I began to conceive of this exhibition, I knew I wanted the critical eye of an experienced professional, who could aid me in hanging the exhibition. I learned that collaboration between artist and curator proved to be a fruitful experience.

Initially I had taken photographs of the space at the gallery that I was coveting especially the formation of the pipes than ran along the ceiling. Since three of my sculptures were hanging pieces, I needed to know how and where they would hang in the room. They could not obliterate the pieces behind them, so this in itself was a very tricky business. This was what Claudine and I struggled with the most. One had to let the sculptures have enough space around them to make some sort of visual statement, which meant that the artwork on the walls had to be limited in certain areas. I thought this might create visual boredom, but instead it created drama and flow. **Figure 20**

Hanging the Show August 19

Eventually all the work was finished and loaded into the van and off my team

and I went to hang the show. The second room came easily with most of my planning on paper coming together. The first room proved to be a puzzle which we had to solve. The actual hanging time for this exhibition was seven and a half hours. The show was difficult to hang because of the many kinds of work and that the fact that I had created groupings of objects that had to work in the allotted space together.

The most successful arrangement for me, was the painting entitled "Earth Memories," shown with photographs of basalt rock formations in Finland, combined with little stone sculptures. I knew when I made the balanced stone constructions, that it would be installed on this large wooden bench, in the gallery - which looked very raw and edgy. **Figure 30**

During the week before the show opened, I had decided to put the mixed media piece, "The Lasting Honour," (already described in the thesis) into its own environment in the second room with a white sculpture stand, upon which stood an old wooden chest from India with letters from my grandfather and other memorabilia. I wanted to let the viewer make the connection that these letters had belonged to a person who had had a relationship with someone in the photograph in the piece itself. There is one special letter featured in the box which talks about a book entitled, "The Lasting Honour," (a quote from Winston Churchill) that had been written about the fall of Hong Kong. My grandfather's role in the conflict is featured in more than twenty-six pages. This artwork acts as a criticism of the book and in fact is a piece of historical narrative, which is the key to much of this room's meaning. Letters themselves are keys to human history; they are at once documents, social contracts and most of all, important vehicles of communication. **Figure 29**

(X) REFLECTIONS - CONNECTING THE PIECES TO MAKE A WHOLE

The next day, I went back to take shots of the installations of the exhibition and set up the lighting. I stood there marvelling at the completion of three years of hard work. After my father died, I was very angry. I was angry at having to fight my stepmother and her clan for the right to claim what was rightfully my family's. I was terribly hurt and disappointed at the loss of a good friend in my stepmother, and more importantly, I was tired of being in charge of the will debacle.

But what I had not realized during the making of the show and completing my course work, was that part of the process was the culmination of my grieving process. I recall how grateful I felt to be standing in the gallery, knowing that my father would be justly proud that I had taken on the challenge of not only doing a Master's degree, but that I had challenged myself as an artist. I had something to prove to myself. I wanted to risk failure and I needed to know if the work could stand up to public scrutiny. In the past years when I had been involved in other shows, I could always hide in the "group," now, I had to fly by the seat of my own pants. I liked the feeling. It was a little bit like being back on the old balancing beam when I was a child doing gymnastics. I always feared doing the walkover, but once I had accomplished it, I felt elated.

As I surveyed the gallery, I felt quite triumphant even before the show opened, because I knew what the past years had cost me both emotionally and physically. Now, I felt truly gratified. I realized that in my process of making art, using the theme of memory and narrative, that I had chosen to work through not only a process of identity but to work through the complex issues of personal grieving. When one embarks on this road to making meaning out of the meaninglessness of death, one is not always well equipped to understand the

journey. In the book, "Giving Voice to Sorrow," I found a passage that truly made me connect to myself and to my giving voice to my own sorrow.

"One does not possess one's past," wrote existential philosopher Jean Paul Satre, 'as one possesses a thing one can hold in one's hand, inspecting every side of it; in order to possess it, I must bind it to existence by a project." Increasingly the bereaved engage in creative personal projects that help them possess their past. Those who no longer walk the earth are dust and spirit. We can only know them through the creations they leave behind - memory albums, letters, poetry, drawings, music - or through our memories of a shared past with them. Commemorative narratives, rituals, and art that we create from those memories can capture the essence of a person who has died and serve to evoke his or her presence among the living. These artful forms of remembrance have a particular poignancy because the motives behind them - evoking a loved one, recalling a life shaping sorrow - are so pure (Zeitlin and Harlow, p. 4-5).

As I reviewed the narrative format of the show, I became aware of how I had focused on the stories of those living, but mostly of those whose voices could now only echo in the artefacts that had been left behind. What had begun as a vehicle of discovery about my own childhood, immigration to a new country, and the teaching and making of art, had grown to encompass the much larger issue - transcendence over death. In middle age, there is a perhaps a need for looking back over one's life, because it seems to be the time when one may discover new insights about how one has lived out one's dreams and aspirations. It is also a time though to strike out in new directions and seize new creative ways of living.

I certainly had no particular desire to become a teacher when I was young and a textile designer, and I never really had the drive to become a full-fledged

artist in my twenties and thirties, but I have accomplished both in middle age.

(XI) CONCLUSIONS

While teaching high school for the past six years, I have become increasingly frustrated by the sense that art educators do need to find time for studio production. With ever increasing demands on our time through expanding work loads and larger class sizes, art teachers may soon become mere technicians who teach art making skills, rather than vital and creative individuals who inspire, encourage, and invigorate their students' learning.

Art educators should not be mere pedagogues but people who also actively create art. By seeking to enrich ourselves as creators, we continue to add to the "homer faber" (man-the-maker) in society. Art educators must inspire, motivate and model by example. They must be able to generate more understanding about the complexities of the artistic process. Creating art is a necessity, not just for the preservation of cultural ideas, but as a way of staying in touch with the very fundamental idea of creating.

It was also through the advent of a personal life crisis that I began to draw back into myself, to contact the artist in me, to nurture my creative spirit. The more I began to think about my memories of my childhood the more I realized that I had to get back into the studio. It was my overwhelming need to work and at the same time, to deal with the loss of my father, that ultimately culminated in the new body of work. I also hoped that by going into a serious study of how and why I produce art, it would revitalize my teaching practice.

I was also becoming aware that the way I was relying on my studio journals pushed me further in my working process. I began to see how the making, reflecting and the transposition of knowledge was allowing me to re-experience

the events of my existence in an entirely different light. It was not only the event of my father's passing that motivated me to dig into my subconscious memories of childhood, but the gratitude that I felt for the family I have. This new way of processing information was something I had not done in the past. The idea that I was engaging in a form of research in the studio was stimulating me to learn about the formation of my own ideas. I could see why it was important to understand what factors, like artefacts, mediated the creation of my artworks.

In coming back to university to complete a Master's degree, I was encouraged to test my ideas about teaching and making art. My teaching had become my main focus and love. However, I began to realize that I could contribute more to my students by providing a real forum for exchange in the classroom, while continuing to do my art. The students who came to my exhibition were excited to be able to finally view the completed artwork that I had been doing for so many months. During the working process, they had been invited to witness the birth of many of my creations. They sometimes contributed their advice and certainly always, their encouragement. This allowed for an atmosphere of mutual respect to occur, and promoted a sense of curiosity and wonder, which enriched the atmosphere of my art room.

Finally, having examined the process of hanging my exhibition, will hopefully serve to enlighten and encourage art educators to take on the challenge of exhibiting. Art educators deserve to see themselves as valuable contributors to the world of pedagogy as well as to the arts.

The Archaeology of Memory Exhibition

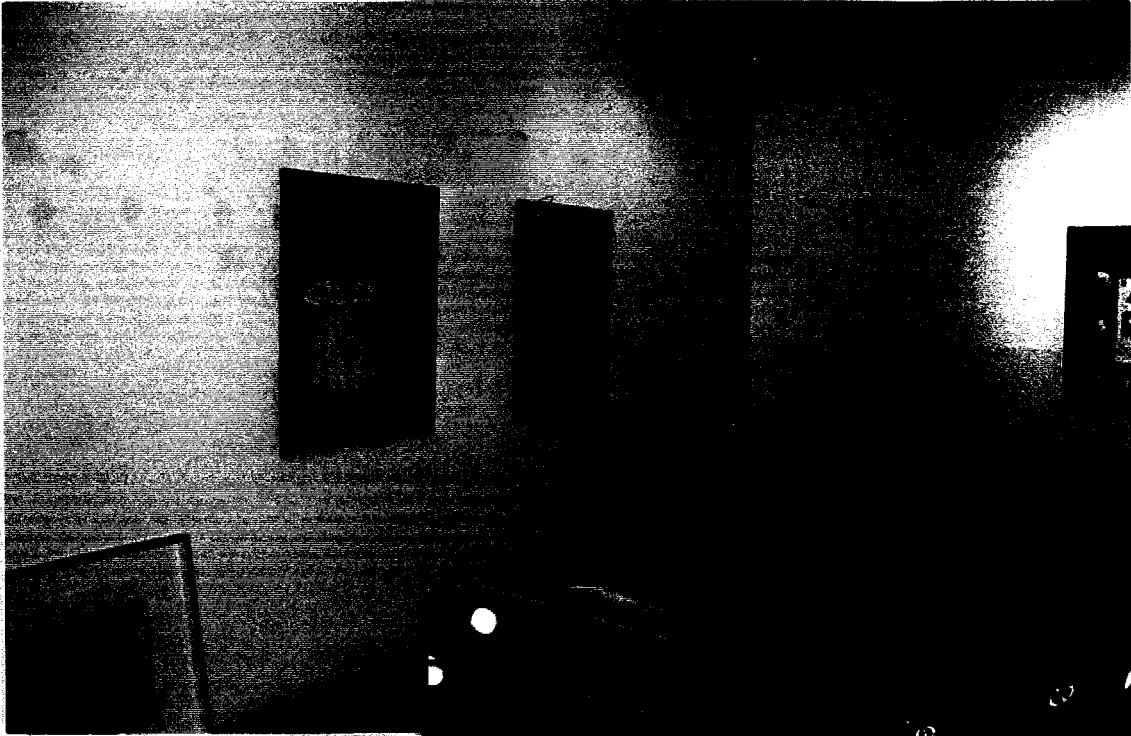


Figure 19 August 20

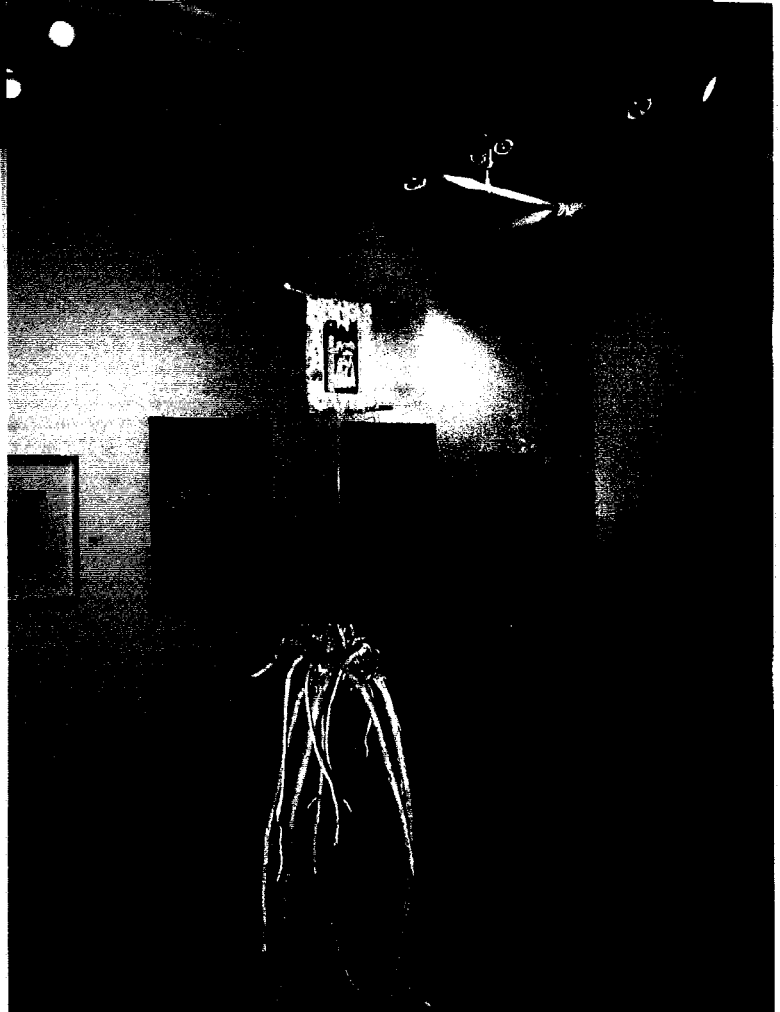


Figure 20 August 22

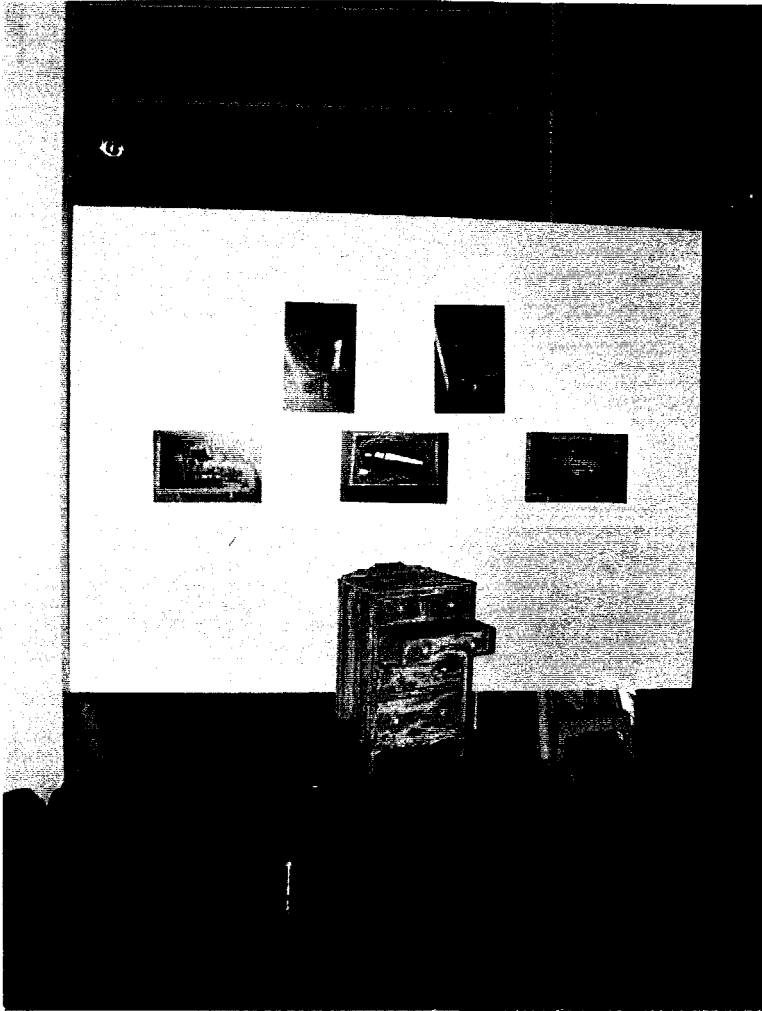
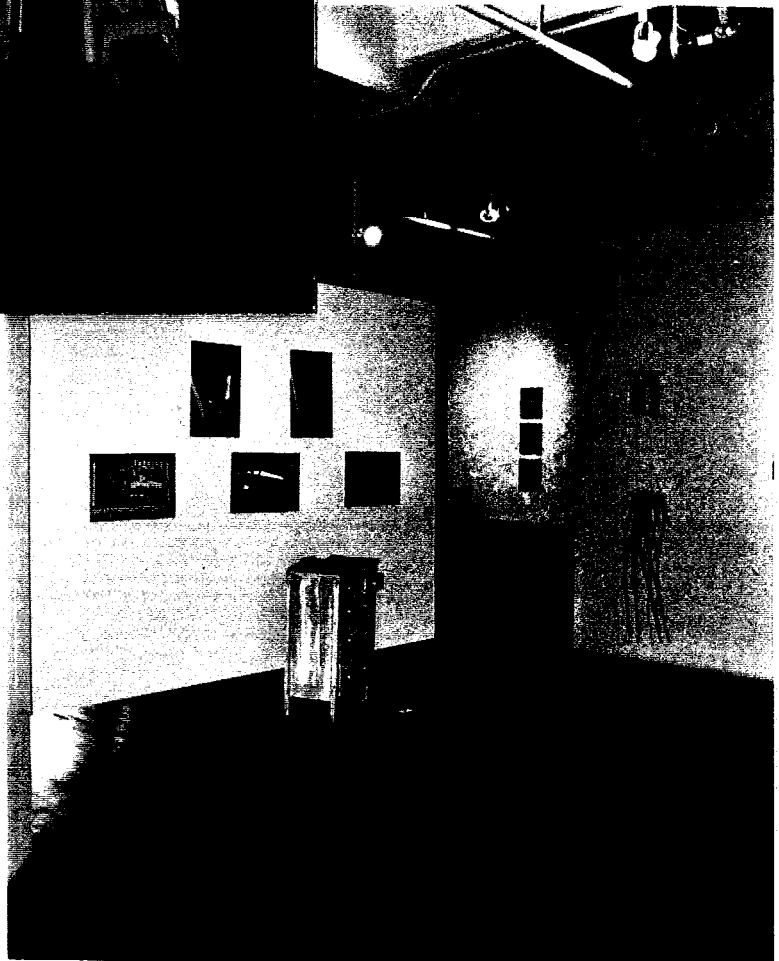


Figure 21 August 20

Figure 22 August 22



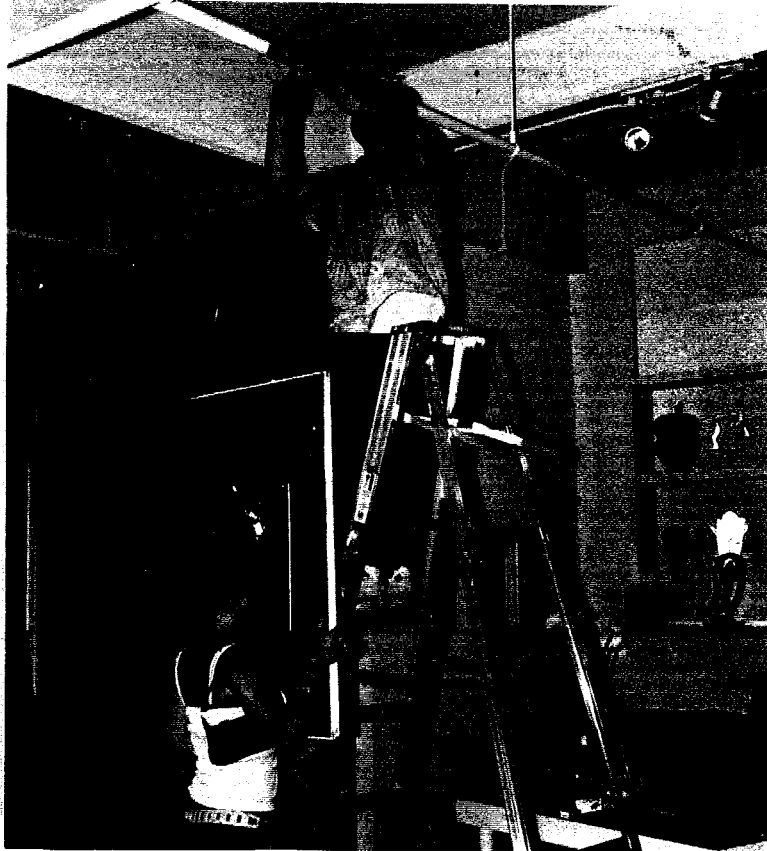


Figure 23 August 20

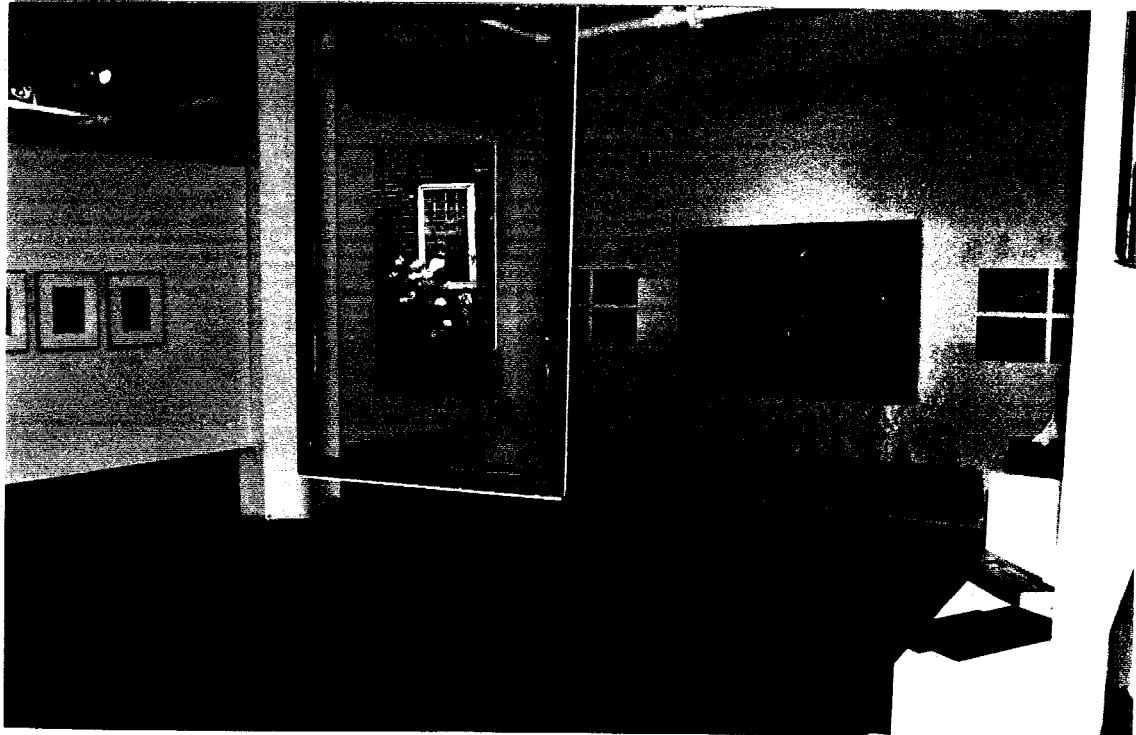


Figure 24 August 22



Figure 25 August 22

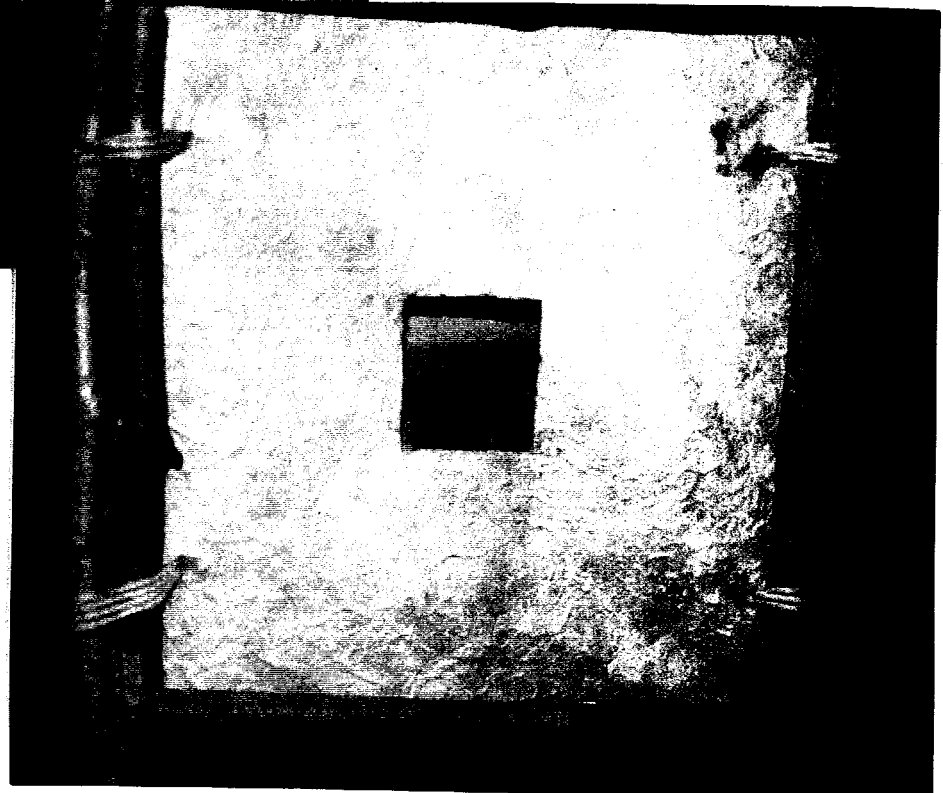


Figure 26 August 22

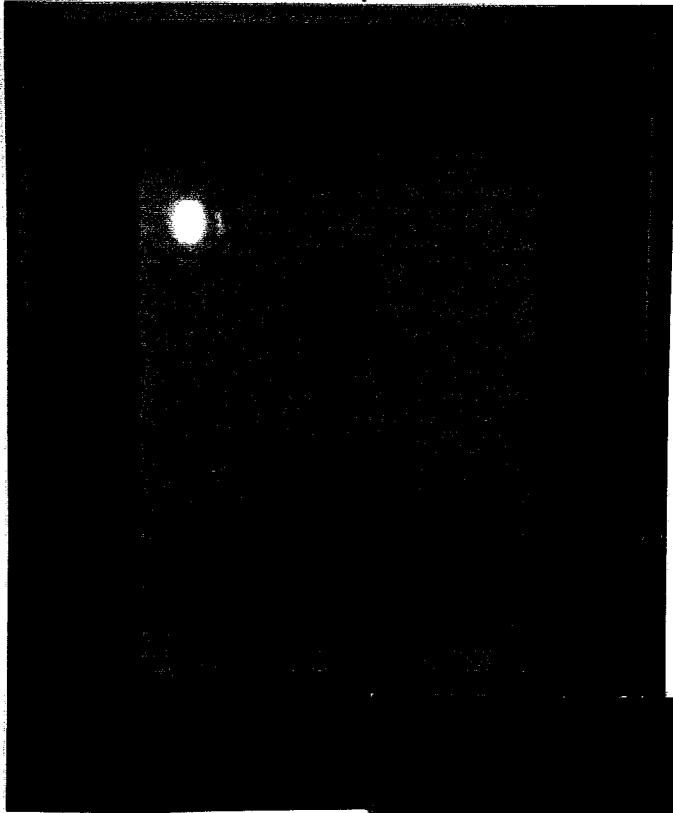


Figure 27 August 22

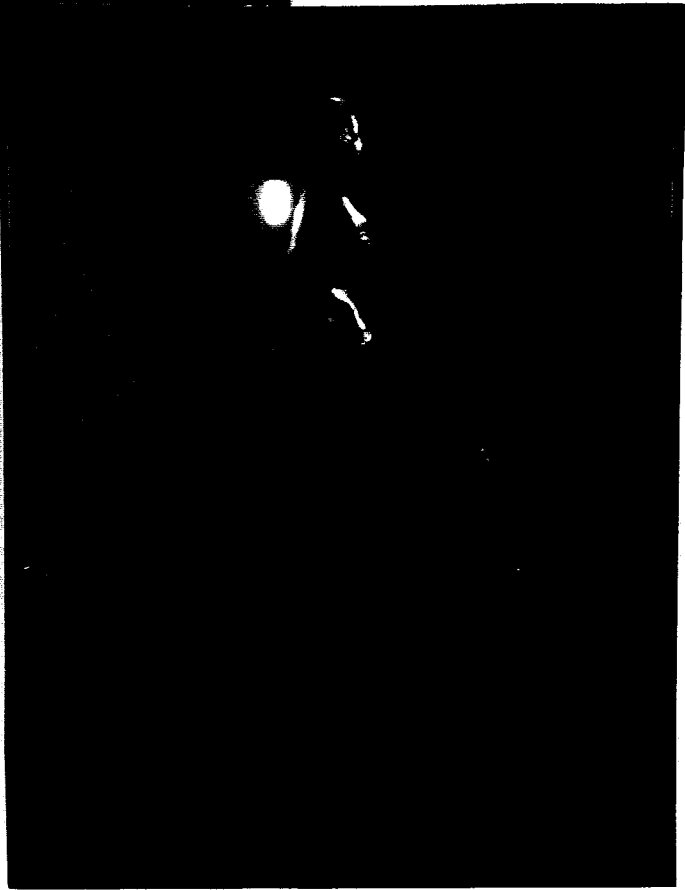


Figure 28 August 22

Installations

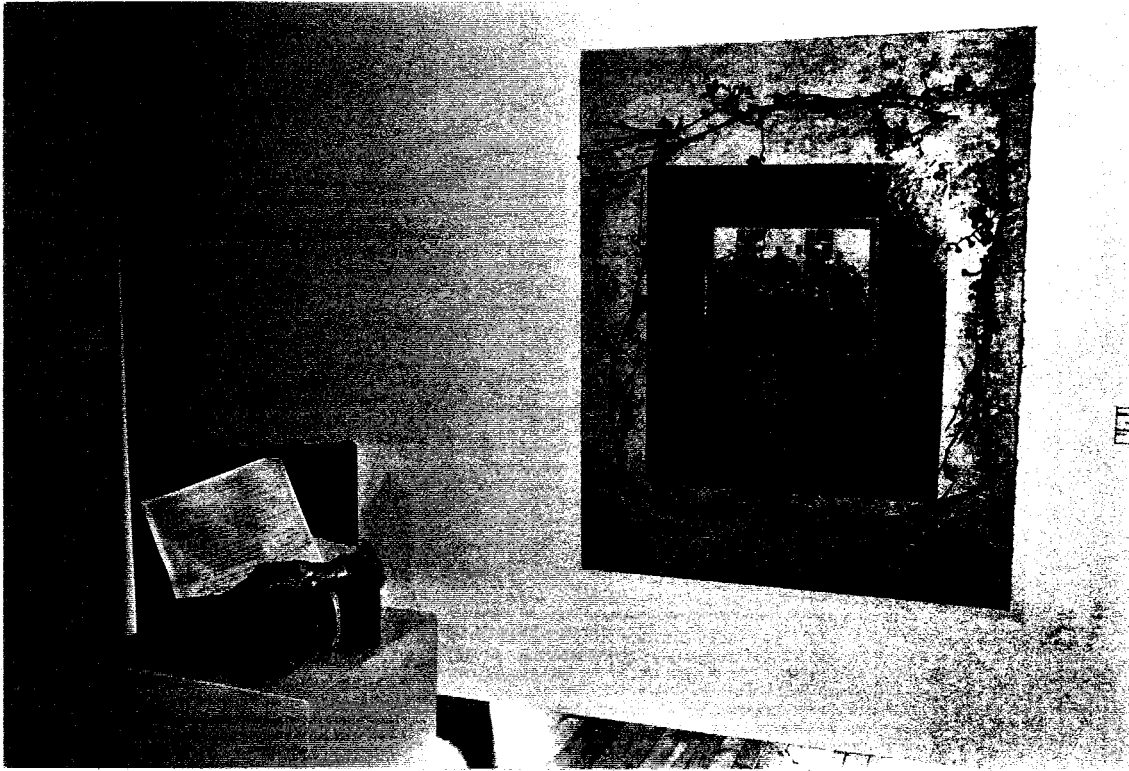


Figure 29 August 22

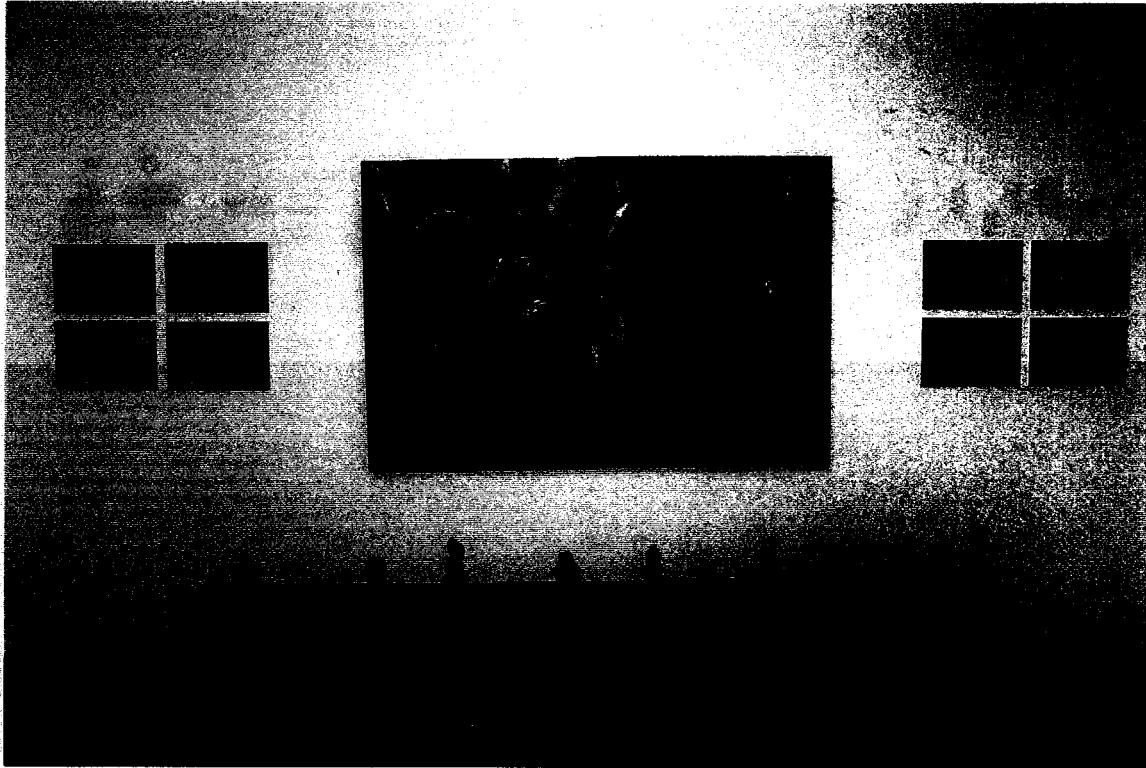


Figure 30 August 22

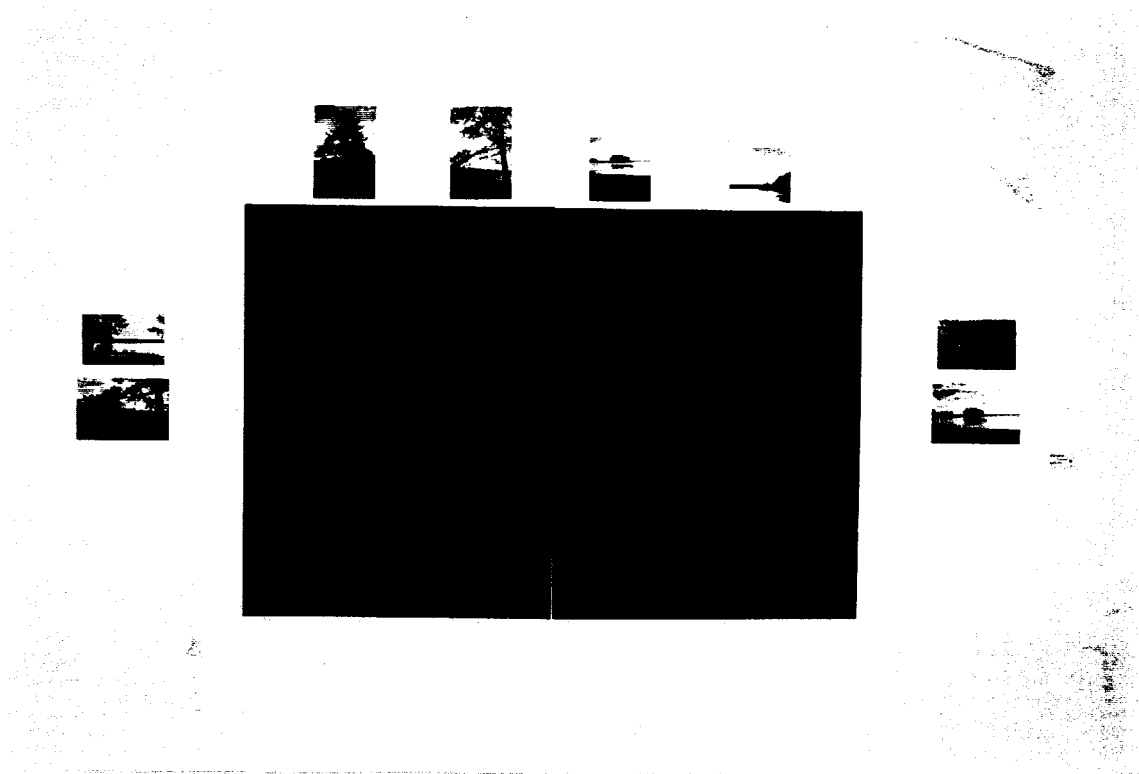
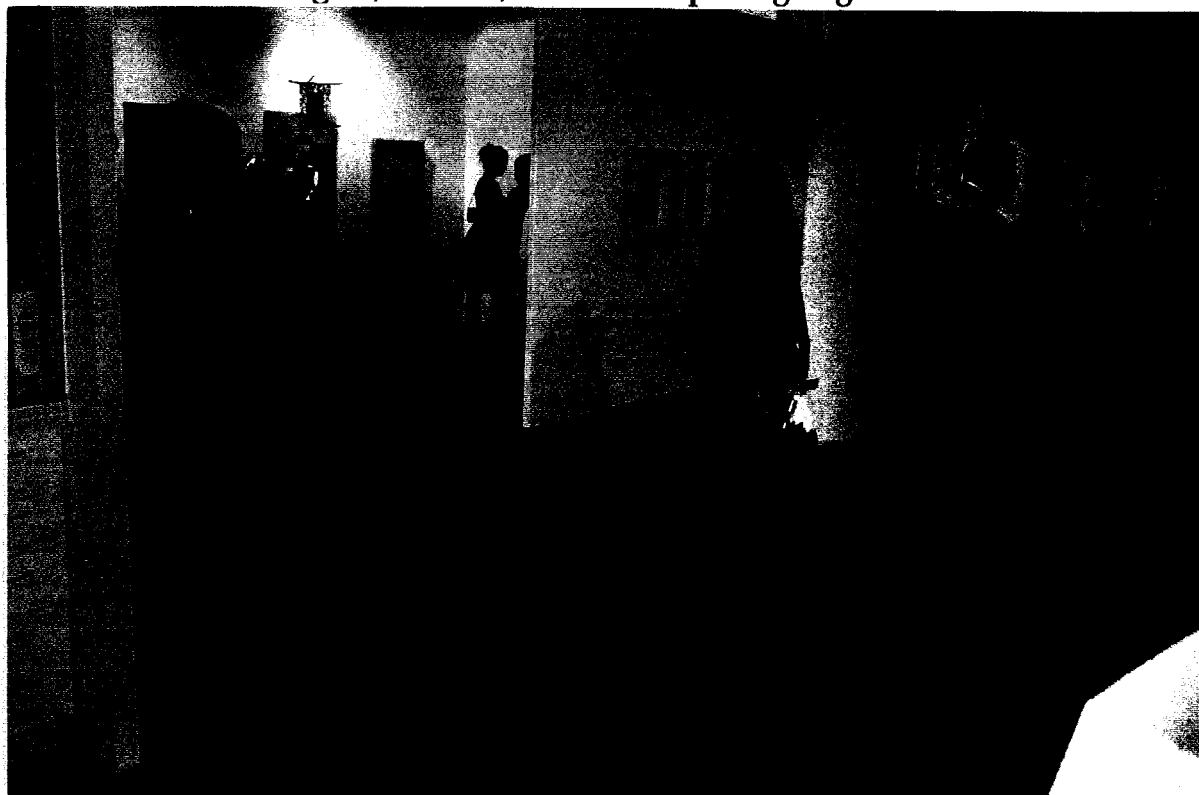


Figure 31 August 22

"Lights, Camera, Action" - Opening Night



Figures 32 & 33

GALE RIE GORA

CONTEMPORARY ART CONTEMPORAIN

460 Ste. Catherine Ouest, suite #305 Montreal QC. CANADA H3B1A7

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PRESS RELEASE August 5, 2002

The exhibition of works by **Gillian Wallis Johnston** entitled "**The Archaeology of Memory**", is on view **from August 20 to September 7, 2002** at Galerie Gora , 460 Ste-Catherine Street West, Suite 305. The **vernissage** takes place on **August 22, from 6 to 9 pm**. Regular gallery opening hours are from Tuesday to Saturday, 12:00 to 5:00 pm. Please call Galerie Gora at (514) 879-9694 for more information.

What would you do if you discovered your father was a spy? Family history was a curiosity for Gillian Johnston, artist and art educator, until the process of dealing with her father's death revealed secrets she'd never dreamed of. Led into a long and emotionally arduous search across three continents, three generations, and countless family documents, she traced her family's progress through time, space and intrigue, recording her discoveries as collages, assemblages and mixed media works. Her insights grew broader and led her to examine the construction of national identity through what she identified as 'collective memory'.

One aspect of this exhibition takes a form reminiscent of a museological display. It manipulates the objects normally associated with record-keeping and documentation, photographs, photocopies, letters and memorabilia, as if these are painterly or sculptural media. Combined with natural elements symbolic of place and time, such as wood, dried flowers, stones, seed pods, and materials proper to the art-making process, such as pastels, acrylic paint and hand-made paper, the family history becomes as ode to memory, to context and to the hidden currents that flow throughout our lives.

Another aspect of this exhibition analyses the creation of a national history through the accumulation of personal histories. Events occur which cause

overlaps and common experiences which are then marked and recorded. Photographs, paintings, assemblages and sculptures pay tribute to the physical and man-made environments such as libraries, monuments and architectural remnants, in which events both specific and universal occur.

Gillian Wallis Johnston was born in London, England, but also lived in Helsinki, Finland and eventually immigrated to Canada with her family. She is a professional artist and teacher with a BFA73 from Concordia University, AAS74 (Textile Design) from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, as well as a Grad, DipArtEd94 from Concordia University and is currently pursuing a MArtEd.

Source: Claudine Ascher, Curator

Information: Joe Gora, (514) 879-9694

The art of memories

BY SCOTT TAYLOR
The Chronicle

Gillian Wallis Johnston has lived a most extraordinary life by normal standards. She is an accomplished painter, designer and mixed media artist, she has taught both art and design and lived in England and Finland before emigrating to Canada.

BEACONSFIELD

The Beaconsfield resident comes by it naturally. Her father was a British diplomat who moonlighted as a spy for MI5, the British equivalent of the CIA in the United States. He was a major player in bringing other spies in from the cold shortly after World War II. Her grandfather was a brigadier general for the British Army in the same war, her mother, Leena, is also a noted artist, an aunt is a novelist and her grandmother was an actress in Finland.

Opening yesterday and continuing

until Sept. 7, Johnston shares her family's lives with the public as her exhibit, *The Archaeology of Memory*, is showcased at Galerie Gora, 460 Ste. Catherine St. West.

Her research and the inspiration for the exhibit are the result of a deeply personal experience she underwent with the death of her father in 1997. "The result of this profound sense of loss, and its cumulative effects on my life, led me to begin searching for the meanings that were forming through my artistic practice."

While a stroke left him debilitated, Johnston began researching how the brain worked in order to better understand her father's condition. "In this period, memory or the lack thereof, became the central theme in a lawsuit that was orchestrated by my stepmother over a will that had been made by my father in 1991 after he had suffered a series of small strokes," she said.

(See *INTRIGUING*, page C6)



Chronicle, Peter McCabe

Gillian Wallis Johnston prepares her mixed media piece called *Spy Chest*, part of her collection titled *Archeology of Memory*.

Intriguing art on display

(From page C1)

The final outcome rested on issues surrounding the veracity of memory, but the journey to a successful conclusion led Johnston to formulate concepts using the theme of memory and narrative. "I traveled to England and Finland after my father passed away. The idea of these memory trips was to rekindle the memories of my youth," she explained. "I tried to recall the details of places from my childhood before I went to them and was surprised at how accurate my memory was in a visually descriptive manner."

When she returned home, she discovered old photo albums of her family and objects from her father's life that her mother had managed to hold on to after her parents' divorce.

"Those treasured artifacts kindled the idea that keepsakes and photographs may help one to delve into the narratives that shape our lives."

Johnston works with pictures, furniture, birch, stones, private possessions and more in an exhibit that is at once visual and philosophical. It serves to make one ponder the source of memories both personal and collective and opens the question of who we are.

"Who we are is a mixture of how we were nurtured, our own experiences and influences from environment and the people we've met," Johnston said.

The *Archeology of Memory* will run through Sept. 7. For more information, call 879-9694.



**SEMION
DAYNOVSKY**

Peintres d'Israël

30 juillet - 17 août

vernissage
3 août
14h -17h

**MANUEL K.
ORTCHANIAN**

18 juin - 6 juillet

vernissage
22 juin
14h -17h

GALERIE CORA



MICHEL VELKAMP

Artiste peintre



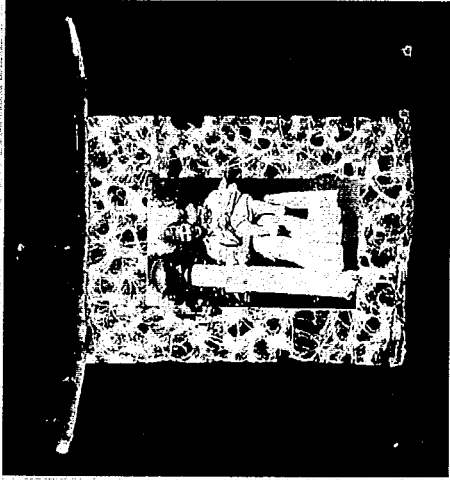
30 juillet - 17 août

vernissage: 3 août, 14h -17h

**GILLIAN
WALLIS
JOHNSTON**

20 août -
7 septembre

vernissage
jeudi, 22 août
18h -21h



*The Archaeology of Memory / L'Archéologie de la mémoire,
technique mixte / mixed media*

CLASS ACTS

Some graduates in this listing have received more than one degree from Concordia. Sir George Williams and/or Loyola. These people are listed under their earliest year of graduation.

41 Vernon Bonyun, S BCom. is retired and has three children, and lives in Oakville, Ont. "I'm still learning (music, piano and writing)."

50 Horace Philipp, S BSc, S BA 54. was recently named a Fellow of the Chemical Institute of Canada. The CIC recognized the significant contributions made by Horace to the advancement of coating technology. He lives in Ottawa.

56 Stanley Horner, S BA. taught at Concordia from 1963 until 1993. "I have published three books since retiring and am in the midst of the fourth one. I also teach a course at the University of Victoria. My website

is under 'eternal' construction." <http://members.shaw.ca/iia/seh2.index.htm>

63 Howard Alper, S BSc. is president of the Royal Society of Canada. for a two-year term ending November 2003. He was first elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1984. Howard is a Professor of Chemistry and Vice-Rector, Research, at the University of Ottawa. His basic research spans organic and inorganic chemistry, with potential applications in the pharmaceutical, petrochemical, and commodity chemical sectors of industry.

67 Murray Meyer, BA. a Los Angeles lawyer, is also the writer-performer of *Walking Back to Brooklyn*, a 70-minute

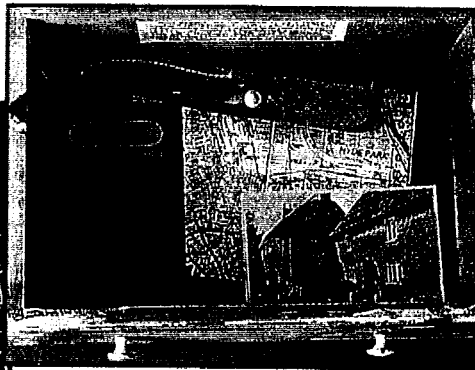
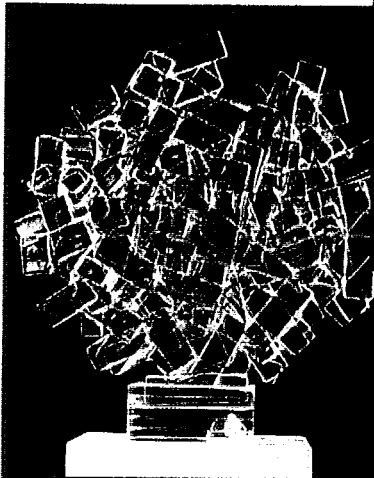
one-person autobiographical show about a 12-year-old who runs away from home to walk to Brooklyn from Montreal in 1957. Murray recently performed it at the Seattle Fringe Festival and will next perform it at the Santa Monica Playhouse in Santa Monica, Calif., December 14. www.walkingbacktobrooklyn.com

Paul Rappell, L BA (comm. arts). writes. "I moved to Toronto in 1970 and began a career in teaching (also spent time co-chairing a couple of City of Toronto committees). Married Noreen in 1979 and have a daughter, Gabriela, who is currently in engineering at Queen's. I retired in June and we have moved to Kingston, Ont., where I wake to the sound of water lap-

ping against the shore! Still manage to keep in touch with some old Loyola friends like Terry Cherry, L BSc 68, and Paul Robson, Loyola 66. Hi to all KX'ers and comm arts grads!" paul.rappell@sympatico.ca

68 Richard John Newman, L BA (poli. sci.). is the owner of a JP Fork Lift in Montreal. He is married with children and lives in Beaconsfield.

David Rattray, S BCom. has been appointed to a two-year term, beginning June 2002, as



Roger Vilder, L BA 67, has exhibited for more than 30 years throughout the world. He is currently exhibiting his works from the '70s and recent works in glass and bronze at Park'art Gallery in Marseille, France, until December 28. Pictured at left: *140 Rectangles*.

Gillian Wallis Johnston, S BFA 73, GrDip (art ed.) 95, held an exhibition of her photography and mixed media works, "The Archaeology of Memory," at Galerie Gora in Montreal, August to September. The exhibition served in conjunction with her MFA in art education thesis. Pictured above, left: *The Spy's Chest: Drawer #4*.

Jackie Rae Wloski, S BFA 71, exhibited in group shows in Montreal at Arts N.D.G., July to August; Espace Deux of the Saidye Bronfman Centre of the Arts, September to October; and at Galerie de la ville, September to October. Pictured above, right, from the Arts N.D.G. show: *Sunset, Decarie at Monkland*.

42

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