THE BREAKFAST SERIES

A Defense Paper Submitted to the College of

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

in the Department of Art and Art History

University of Saskatchewan

Saskatoon

By

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Abstract:

The purpose of this project was to produce visual work that examined a possible nostalgia that unfolds around the breakfast meal. The method of examination involved creating a process breakfast that was followed thirty times. The result of following this process was the taking of three hundred Polaroids that were then edited for their potential to visually reconstruct the ideal process breakfast. This process of discovery has resulted in a number of significant insight into the narrative of breakfast: that an idealized narrative could exist in the visualization of the process breakfast; that elements of nostalgia that may exist within the work are contingent on the viewer; and the level of authenticity of the project affects the nature of the idealization in effect.

Acknowledgements:

Dedication:

To Megan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction:

This paper will provide a description of the process in which I engaged the project, a process that served as an instrument of both exploration and understanding. In many ways the paper is akin to an artist statement, even though it is much more extensive in both size and detail. As this a concurrent, rather than a supportive or adjunctive paper, a written version of the thesis does not reside here, in words, but exists solely in the work that is shown in the exhibition.

This paper will first introduce the four main points that serve as demarcations and will proceed to elaborate on these four points in four sections. These four points note information that is visually apparent in the work. Inside or personal information when provided either in the four points or the section they cover is essentially unimportant when examining whether the four main points are accurate to visual work of the thesis. However, some personal and inside information is necessary in order to provide context within the confines of this defence paper. Ultimately, the viewer of the work should be able to determine each of the four points below without the aid of this paper through careful examination of the visual work as presented during the show.

In section five, a transcript of an interview conducted between Megan Bocking and James Hare as well as a short introduction will be provided that justifies the inclusion of the interview in this paper. Section six will discuss a sample of previous work and the relationship between the thesis show and these projects. Section seven will conclude the materials herein examined.

1) *Myself eating breakfast with another person, in this case my partner Megan.*
2) *These digital prints are a selection designed to construct an idealized or perfecting narrative from a large selection of Polaroids that were taken at numerous separate process breakfasts.*

1

3) *Within the work are elements of personal nostalgia that may exist for the viewer; and it is the seeking of these personal elements that partly concern the production of this work.*

4) *This process is mediated through the use of a camera and selected medium, in this case Polaroid, so that an increased level of authenticity may be present in the work.*

Section 1)

Myself eating breakfast with another person, in this case my partner Megan

> 1:1) Inside and personal information and why it is relevant.
> 1:2) Description of the process of breakfast.
> 1:3) Details of personal interest regarding breakfast.

1:1) Inside and personal information and why it is relevant.

The inclusion of information not evident in the work termed inside information, especially personal information regarding my relationship to the person who appears in the some of the digital prints is an important point to the context of this paper but not necessary to an understanding of the show. Megan Bocking, the person to whom I am referring, will have a more direct voice that reveals her active participation in the work. Megan's participation will be presented in a transcribed interview in section 5 of this defence paper. This transcript has been incorporated into this document in order to challenge any idea of Megan as a mute receiver onto whom ideas or feeling are impressed or embossed by myself. If this information were not included, the essential meaning could be viewed as unchanged, as it is obvious from the work that I am eating breakfast with someone else.

1:2) Description of the process of breakfast.

The process that serves as the basis for this photographic work was developed over a period of two months in mid 2006. The process currently consists of my partner and I going out for breakfast at a restaurant in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Currently we go every Friday at nine o'clock in the morning.

A list of clothing worn during the process:
James:

1. Black hooded sweatshirt with either zip up front or an overhead pull on (alternates with item two)
2. Black collared shirt with mother of pearl buttons (alternates with item one)
3. Grey or black t-shirt
4. Blue jeans
5. Running shoes

Megan:

1. Cream coloured zip up the front sweater (optional, dependent on temperature)
2. Purple sleeveless t-shirts with a design in blue and teal on left side.
3. Blue jeans
4. Brown leather ballet flats

Arrival time at Peter D's family restaurant: Friday, between 9:15am and 9:30am

Criteria for the selection of Peter D's family restaurant as the site for this process:
1. The serving of a reasonably priced traditional breakfast special.
2. Restaurant décor.
3. The large number of booth rather then table seating.
4. Availability of seating during designated time.
5. Large south facing windows.

Note: Traditional breakfast special is defined as a meal consisting of the following:

1) Water and tea or coffee.
2) Two eggs prepared as desired.
3) Choice of bacon, sausage or ham.

4) Choice of toast consisting of brown (whole wheat) or white (refined flour). Occasionally the option of rye toast is encountered.

5) Hash browns.

Peter D's also has a second breakfast special that consists of the following:

1) Water and tea or coffee

2) Choice of bacon, sausage or ham.

3) Three pancakes with butter and syrup.

Additional toppings for the pancakes can be requested at extra charge.

A single flight of stairs takes us to this second floor restaurant, and we are seated in usually two or three minutes after entering. A waitress comes and delivers menus, fills the water glasses on the table and asks what else we would like to drink. Two cups of tea are then ordered. We both normally order the special.

James: Eggs easy over, brown toast, bacon.

Megan: Option a) Eggs poached, brown toast dry, sausage.

Option b) Pancakes, sausage, strawberry topping.

The waitress then takes the menus and leaves with our order.

Conversation is initiated while we wait for our food, which arrives usually within ten minutes of ordering. By this time more hot water is needed for the teapots and more creamers for the tea.

The food is eaten and the conversation resumes. As each of us finishes, the forks and knives are placed in the traditional four o'clock position and moved to the edge of the booth. Tea and water become again central items of consumption.

The plates are cleared and the water glasses refilled. It is at this point that we are asked if anything else is wanted and an answer in the negative is given.

The bill arrives. It is presented either on a small black tray or just as a folded slip of paper. Occasionally there are two sweets whose taste is a choice between artificial orange or artificial peppermint flavours. By this point one of us is usually ready for a quick trip to the washroom while the other waits in the booth. Once we are both back at the booth, we get up to leave, taking the bill with us to the till.

Cost of breakfast:	$14.30 CAD
Tip amount:	$2.50 CAD
Total:	$16.80 CAD

We leave Peter D's restaurant together.

1:3) Detail of personal interest in the area of breakfast.

For me, breakfast has become about the companionship or company of other people. I grew up in a large family by southern Ontario standards, with three siblings, two younger sisters and a younger brother. This meant that meals eaten out in a restaurant were rare due to both financial and schedule pressures. The more common breakfast meal was oatmeal and raisins or a poached egg on toast. The meal was hurriedly made and speedily consumed before one was pushed out the door for school or whisked into a car to drop off a sibling or myself at some extra curricula activity. The occasional respite from this hectic routine was a family outing to a restaurant for breakfast.

The way the meal was served at the breakfast restaurants we visited would impose a more measured pace on my family's frantic routine. First we had to dress and travel to the establishment. Normally we would have to move a couple of tables together to accommodate our family. Once we were all seated, we could order breakfast. The 'delays' imposed by ordering food, waiting for the food to arrive, eating the food and

finishing the drinks meant added time and forced a level of relaxation on everyone. I say level rather then period because my family almost never relaxes fully so it is never a case of stress or no stress but rather more or less stress. Since breakfast out was a relatively rare occurrence it was therefore something different special.

In part, as a result of these life experiences while I was growing up I have come to appreciate breakfast as a meal of preparation. By preparation I mean that in order to enjoy the meal one must be prepared to wait. It is also a meal that prepares one for the day ahead. I, personally, tend to reflect on the events of the previous day and plan what I need to do for the current one in the time I have to wait for the meal out to arrive. I enjoy guiltily the relaxed start to the day this provides. My guilt arises from my parents' attempts to rarely spend time carelessly; they have impressed these values onto me in such a way that I am cursed to be busy or guilty about not being busy or sometimes both.

Section 2)

These digital prints are a selection designed to construct an idealized or perfecting narrative from a large selection of Polaroids that were taken at numerous separate process breakfasts.

Points to be covered in this section:

    2:1) Personal process of working with photographic imagery.
    2:2) Visual narrative in relation to the process of breakfast.
    2:3) Nature and reason for idealized or perfected narrative.

2:1) <u>Personal process of working with photographic imagery.</u>

Personal photographic process is based on the use of black and white 135 film. Variations occur for other media as noted at end of section 2:1.

Points to note: the camera is almost always carried on my person.

135 film: This is the manufacturing and professional description for what is normally called 35mm film. The number 135 refers to the 135 cm length of a 36 exposures roll of photographic film. Often referred to erroneously as 135mm, the film is actually 135cm in length by 35mm in width.

Cycle 1)
    a) General shooting of the surrounding environment.
    b) Processing of film that was taken during general shooting.
    c) Contact sheets made from the negatives.
    d) Negatives and contact sheets filed in binders that form my archive of images.

This cycle is continual. Once step d) is reached step a) begins again.

Contact sheets: Photographic prints produced by placing a sheet of negatives on top of a sheet of photographic paper and shining light through the negatives onto the paper to produce a print. Usually this operation is performed in a darkroom with an enlarger. A sheet of heavy glass is often employed to hold the negatives flat during exposure. This allows the creation of a positive image from the negatives that can then be easily examined.

Cycle 2)

Negative archive inspected regularly for emerging patterns of visual images.
If a new pattern is discovered there are three options available:

  a) Make test prints from a selection of the pattern imagery.
  b) Create a new project based on discovery of a new pattern.
  c) Do nothing and wait to determine if similar images reoccur.

Undertaking option a) does not preclude the undertaking of option b) or vice versa. The undertaking of option c) precludes all further action until a later date.

Test prints: Photographic prints made to determine exposure and to provide an enlarged version of the negative. These are often employed to ensure correct image selection and image order during editing process.

Option a) Make test prints from selection of pattern imagery.

  1) Edit the images from contact sheets to personal preference.

2) Test prints are made from the selected negatives and are printed in line with the image as it appears in the contact sheet.

3) Test prints are edited for content and appearance relative to the other images.

4) Determine the size and materials of final photographs.

5) Final images are re-edited to ensure the final selection was correct.

   a) If the final prints are to be large then a smaller print is made using the same materials to serve as a roadmap to the completion of final large print.

   b) If the final print is small then printing then no road-map print is required.

6) Final photographs are made and prepared for display.

Option b) Create a new project based on discovery of new pattern.

1) Determine the source of new pattern through the examination of both personal interest and also the visual record produced by cycle 1).

2) Outline specifications of the project including permissible variations and the requirements for structural cohesion.

3) Decide the potential size of final photographs.

4) Determine the shooting schedule.

   a) If the project is a constructed or set photography then material cost, film cost and type, available space, people to model, lighting equipment costs and time frame for completion must be determined. These factors may impact the feasibility of the project.

   b) If the project is a documentary photography series then film costs and type, time frame, special equipment costs and access to subject must be determined. These factors may impact the feasibility of the project.

5) Develop the film and create contact print of the negatives.

6) Examine the contact sheets and select the potential final images based on personal preference.

7) Print test prints of the potential final images.

8) Edit the test prints for content and appearance relative to the other images.

9) Determine the size and materials required for the final photographs.

10) Re-edit the final images to ensure the final selection was correct.

    a) If the final prints are to be large, then a smaller print is made using the same materials first. This print is to serve as a roadmap to the completion of final large print.

    b) If the final print is small then, then no road map to the print is required.

11) Create final photographs and prepare them for display.

Option c) Do nothing and wait to determine if patterns reoccur.

Wait to determine if the pattern is a true pattern seen repeated in the archive or if it is a transitional or fleeting one. Such a pattern could lead to a more interesting and informative visual idea on which a project could be based.

Variations dependent on media:

1) Polaroid

    a) Pull Polaroid

    b) sx-70/600

2) Large format

3) Alternative processes (e.g. cyanotypes)

4) Digital outputs

1) Polaroid

    a) Pull Polaroid

Because the Polaroid produces an instant positive image, which requires the removal of the excess chemistry and negative, control over the final appearance of both the Polaroid and potentially of the final print is severely curtailed. This occurs because all adjustments must be done in the camera when the image is taken and can only be affected slightly by altering the development time and temperature of the Polaroid. Examples of this film are

Polaroid 669 or 690. The above statement holds true except for type 665 and 55 which produce a black and white positive print Polaroid and a gelatine and silver black and white negative.

Digital manipulation of the Polaroid is possible, but again it is limited due to the image being a positive print image rather then a traditional negative. As a positive, there is no extra information stored in the print that can be extracted and enhanced using conventional photographic techniques, such as burning, dodging, or the digital equivalents to these processes.

Due to these material limitations, if Polaroids are to be the final images then only slight correction of the image is possible after initial shooting. In this case final image qualities must be determined onsite at the time of exposure. Preplanning of images and making adjustments during shooting to achieve the desired image are of great importance with this medium.

b) sx-70/600

Due to the chemical process that produces images in sx-70 type products (including 600, sx-70 blend, Spectra Image, and other variations), the control over the final image quality by the photographer is even more limited than with Pull Polaroids. The absence of manual control over f-stop and shutter speed on the cameras further restricts the photographer's control. The only controls over the final image available to the photographer is the selection of which Polaroid product to use, the location, the lighting of the scene, and a very limited control over the lightness or darkness of the image through the use of an on-camera dial.

For further information please see 4:1 on pg. 16.

2) Large format

Large format traditionally refers to negatives that are at least four inches by five inches in size. This film is a single sheet film, indicating that each image is made on its own separate negative rather than in a roll on which a number of photographs could be taken together. The time required to use a large format camera results in fewer and more deliberate photographs being taken. The speed of working with the camera and the cost of film impact the amount of time needed to take a larger number of images. Therefore a greater amount of time is needed to complete a body of work made with this format of negative. Ultimately fewer photographs are taken, thus reducing the potential pool of photographs to edit from. While this increases the speed at which these projects can be edited, it also increases the possibility of the project failing due to lack of suitable images that conform to the project parameters and expectations.

3) Alternative processes

Alternative processes refer, traditionally, to any non-silver based photographic process. This definition is not entirely accurate as some methods that are characterized as alternative do use silver either to produce a negative or in the final print. With this noted, alternative processes can be seen to refer to photographic processes that are commercially obsolete. Because of the translation between silver based photographic imagery and the alternatives offered by various processes, the suitability of any negative for use in these processes and the print qualities that result are not readily apparent as they are in black and white, colour or digital photography. As a result, image selection post-final printing is of greater importance because of a higher rate of rejection of final prints from completed series due to quality concerns.

4) Digital outputs

Digital outputs are printouts produced by a range of technologies onto a range of materials. These technologies are a form of printer, though the exact nature of the printing process can vary. The materials involved can include, but are not limited to, cloth, paper, flexible plastic, and sheet metal. Digital outputs are normally considered

when colour images are desired due to the greater control possible over the final images qualities. Digital outputs may also be selected due to the increased archival possibilities available in this medium especially when considering the use of colour in the image.

2:2) <u>Visual narrative in relation to the process of breakfast.</u>

While each image in the series does not strictly correspond to a precise section of the breakfast process as described earlier, the images were selected for the illustrative quality they provided to various parts of the narrative of the breakfast process. Selected not only to their formal qualities, the images' ability to illustrate the possible emotional aspect of the breakfast process was given equal consideration.

While the scene visible in the image should be evident in each digital print, and its importance in the series clear both to the other images in the series and to itself, an example of the relationship between the process and the image will be provided here. As a note, it is taken as understood that the meaning of the image is partially, though not wholly bound by cultural understanding and, as such, is sensitive to both physical and temporal alteration.

Example Image 9

Image 9 shows a tabletop that appears to be made of patterned green marble streaked with white highlights. On the table is a folded cream coloured receipt. There is an orange candy in a clear cellophane wrapper on top of the receipt. On the back of the receipt that is folded in two width wise was a written 'thank you' from the waitress. Printed on the receipt are a few lines for writing along and the Peter D's logo printed along the bottom.

Moving into the background or up from the receipt, there is a half full glass of water on which droplets have formed on the outside of the glass. The glass has a large rim that narrows to a smaller base. Approximately a third of the way from the top of the glass, the design shifts from that of a smooth cylinder to that of an octagon with slightly concave sides that are angled down to a thick bottom.

Further up, there is a shallow bowl and a small plate. The shallow bowl has a number of creamers placed foil seal down on it. The saucer has a decorative pattern running around the inside edge. It is not possible to distinguish the pattern due lack of image clarity. A brown coloured pattern appears on a cream colour of the bowl. To the immediate right, a small plate touches or seems to touch the shallow bowl. On the plate are two used creamers standing together foil side up. There is an object on the plate to the immediate right of the creamers, but it is too dark to be identified.

The image is dark overall, with the receipt and candy appearing lighter while the rest of the image rapidly fades out of focus and into darker tones. Overall brown and yellow tones dominate, but rather than being bright they have a warm and yet sombre appearance. This image was selected for its autumn like colour scheme and was meant to suggest a quiet ending to the meal depicted in the image. As this image is near the end of the narrative, not only was the image of the receipt having arrived important but so was the emotional resonance.

2:3) <u>Nature and reason for idealized or perfected narrative.</u>

The images were selected from Polaroids taken over an eighteen-month period totalling three hundred separate images. As part of the breakfast process one pack of ten Polaroids were taken per breakfast. These sets of ten Polaroids are displayed as part of this show. From these sets, Polaroids were selected for their formal qualities, emotional impact, and the aspects of the breakfast process they depicted. The Polaroids were then scanned, dust spotted, colour corrected and enlarged before being printed onto archival rag paper. For further information regarding the selection of digital output, please see digital output in section 2:1.

The process of editing single images from the sets to create an assemblage of the documented event could be viewed as an attempt at idealization. This is further enforced with the alteration in scale and desire to ensure an archival quality. Since the narrative the images construct is not an actual process breakfast but a selection from many similar yet distinct process breakfasts, the narrative becomes a created or fictional narrative that could be seen as important in understanding the work.

The narrative presented in the large images shows, with a degree of visual inaccuracy, the process of breakfast. The narrative, though, is not a truly natural narrative since the series shown was created from a selection of images that were part of other narrative series that were themselves produced though a constructed process. Between these two points, one in which the narrative is accurate to the process and the other in which the narrative never occurred as it is presented visually, leaves room for an idealized version of events to be constructed. Each image could be considered true in two distinct ways depending upon the images location. In this paper, true is defined as an accurate depiction of events that occurred in front of the lens with enough fidelity and validity to be recognized by a viewer who looks at either the Polaroid or the digital image made from the Polaroid. Simultaneously, to being true in itself, the image, due to its position in relation to the other images shown, does not accurately construct a visual narrative of what occurred.

Instead, the image creates a fictional narrative that might only be accurate to the abstract process of the process breakfast, not to the events themselves.

The ideal could be considered to be in the work because the images displayed arise from edits. This editing consisting of both positive and negative choices made by the selector, in this case myself, both during the breakfast process and later in the selection of Polaroids to be enlarged. By selecting some images and not others, that choice creates a ranking or hierarchy of images within the project. Provided that the criterion for selection does not vary and the editing process encompasses enough time, ultimately a single image would be chosen for that set of criteria based on the images one had to select from. By selecting each image from the Polaroids according to a consistent set of criteria, the final images selected are the ideal images from the choices available.

To further idealize the Polaroids, after they were scanned, the images of the Polaroids were then dust spotted, the contrast and colour adjusted and finally then enlarged. This process of adjusting the images to refine the quality of the final digital output further separates and idealizes the image from the original Polaroid. Not only was the best image for a particular set of criteria selected, the final image was then further refined to create an image that could be considered technically superior to the original Polaroid from which it originated.

Section 3)

Within the work are elements of personal nostalgia that may exist for the viewer, and it is the seeking of these personal elements that partly concern the production of this work.

Points to be covered in this section:

3:1) Definition of nostalgia.

3:2) Reason for interest in nostalgia

3:3) Identifying potentially nostalgic elements within work.

3:1) <u>Definition of nostalgia.</u>

In order to facilitate clarity about a discussion of nostalgia as it relates to the work presented and discussed in this paper, the following definition has been included. This definition is the one used throughout this paper.

Nostalgia refers to a desire to re-experience the feeling of a real or imagined social interaction that occurred or is believed to have occurred at some point in the subject's past. This nostalgia may be linked to a single physical location or to a type of location, a particular time or date and or to a singular person, group of people, type of person or a particular personality type. The person experiencing nostalgia is aware that a complete re-experience is not possible, but something similar to the desired event maybe possible.

3:2) <u>Reason for interest in nostalgia.</u>

Information contained in this section is of a personal or subjective nature. It will not be apparent to a viewer of the work what are the precise underlying causes for my interest in nostalgia nor what my reasons are for seeking to experience it. This section is included to allow insight into the causes of personal my interest as they relate to nostalgia as defined above.

My nostalgia for breakfast has grown from two experiences. The first is the relatively large number of physical relocations I have experienced in recent years. These have been due to both educational and employment needs. I have lived in five different cities in the last seven years and I have moved between them more often then that. The continual transience and the instability that this brings to social support networks form part of the desire to re-experience a more stable period of my life.

The continual shifting of location has also meant a greater physical distance from my parents, siblings and friends. This distance, while not necessarily weakening the ties of family and friendship, has strained or severed the lines of communication. The lack of easy and plentiful interaction with a family or friends, such as what occurs over breakfast, is difficult though not impossible to replicate in a new location with new people.

The second experience that ignited my interest in nostalgia was the realization of my parents advancing age. While they are both in good health their advancing years have not left them untouched in appearance. When my Grandfather passed away after a battle with stomach cancer, the importance of and my connection to my immediate family was emphasized to me. This spurred the desire not to recapture an imagined past per se, but to attempt to transplant what I consider important experiences, imagined or real into the present. As such this project uses the form of an imagined past experience to create an actual and contemporary one.

3:3) Identifying possible nostalgic elements within work.

There are three possible nostalgic elements within the work presented. They are encompassed by the photographic material used to create the initial images, the location or set of the process breakfast, and the nature of the lighting. These three aspects in the work could be considered important to the viewer when considering the potential presence of nostalgia. While the experience of nostalgia is a personal one, being triggered by various visual experiences and will, therefore, vary according to the individual. The

three elements outlined here could be presumed to encompass the majority of such triggers.

The instant print Polaroid used as the photographic medium to document the breakfast process is a relatively recent invention unveiled at a shareholders meeting of the Polaroid Corporation in 1971. While Polaroid cameras and film are still being produced, their use has greatly diminished as technological development has rendered this form of photography obsolete. As a potentially dead photographic medium, Polaroid could be set to join a long list of created and abandoned photographic processes. At the same time, unlike many other processes, Polaroid still possesses a personal cultural memory. People still remember using the medium even if today they no longer do, unlike many other dead forms. People may be familiar with the products of such disused photographic processes such as tintypes or black and white fibre prints, but have no personal experience in producing their own images with these image-creating technologies.

Due to Polaroid's position of being a modern day mass produced and mass consumed form of photography that is steadily becoming obsolete, it could be viewed as a medium possessing a more personal cultural memory, rather than a cultural nostalgia of a re-imagined past such as with the Daguerreotypes.

The second aspect of the work that may be seen to employ a nostalgic element is the location of the breakfast process. The setting, an old family restaurant, was selected, in part, for the décor. The décor in Peter D's restaurant is old, but it is original. This is different from the style of 'new old', where the décor of these establishments is based on historical styles that are improved upon and often imported to suit current tastes and expectations of patrons. The age of the restaurant is not only apparent in the décor. Wear on the table surfaces and well-used china and the utensils add a genuine feel of age to the restaurant. As noted in the interview, the decor has not been changed in at least twenty years and this atmosphere of age is evident upon entry. It is from this age that the restaurant could be seen to embody an aspect of nostalgia.

The light in the digital prints and the Polaroids is the final aspect of possible nostalgia in the work. The directional, natural light interacts with the medium of Polaroid and the décor of the restaurant to produce a softly lit scene in the images. While this in itself is not necessarily nostalgic, the softer lighting facilitates nostalgia or nostalgic feelings particularly when combined with location and image quality.

Section 4)

This process is mediated through the use of a camera and selected medium, in this case Polaroid, so that an increased level of authenticity maybe present in the work.

Points to be covered in this section:

   4:1) Type of equipment and materials used to make the work shown.

   4:2) Definition of authentic.

   4:3) The process used in an attempt to preserve the authenticity of the image in the work shown.

4:1) <u>Type and of equipment and materials used to make the work shown.</u>

   a) Camera: Polaroid SX-70 Land Camera Alpha Executive.

   Manufactured between 1975 and 1977.

   Based on original design introduced at the 1972 shareholders meeting.

   Camera has been recently modified by the addition of a filter to allow the use of Polaroid 600 instant print film due to the discontinuation of SX-70 instant film in March 2006.

   This camera was used to produce all three hundred Polaroids for this project.

   b) Polaroid film: 1) Polaroid SX-70 instant print film.

   Manufactured between December 1972 and March 2006 when at the time it's discontinuation it was selling under the name Time Zero instant print film.

   80 ISO effective film speed.

   2) Polaroid 600 instant print film.

Manufactured between 1981 and present.

600 ISO effective film speed.

c) Scanner: Epson Expression 10000XL – Photo.

d) Computer: This section while necessary for the completion of this project does not provide details due to the number of different computers involved. There were four separate systems involved at various times when working on this project. For further details please see the minimum system requirements for the programs and peripheries involved.

e) Computer programs: 1) SilverFast 6.5

This program was used to scan at high resolution the selected Polaroid prior to importing the resulting .tif file into Photoshop.

2) Adobe Photoshop CS

3) Adobe Photoshop CS2

4) Adobe Photoshop CS3 Bata version

These programs were used to dust spot scanned images, alter the colour values of the scanned images to better approximate original Polaroid values and

f) Printer: Epson Stylus Pro 9800 printer

Epson Ultra Chrome K3 ink

g) Paper: Stonehenge rag paper 38 inches by 50 inches

ISO: This acronym stands for International Standards Organization. This is similar to, and yet distinct from, the ASA that stands for the American Standards Association.

4:2) <u>Definition of authentic.</u>

For the purposes of this paper, the word authentic is defined as follows. Authentic is the original, prototypical photographic image created at the time of exposure and is an accurate transcription of the events as they occurred in front of, and visible to, the lens of the camera. The authenticity only relates to the images created, not to the event the images depict.

4:3) <u>The process and materials used in an attempt to preserve the authenticity of the image in the work shown.</u>

The photographic medium of Polaroid could be seen to produce an authentic image as defined above. The image produced by a Polaroid occurs without any additional assistance on the part of the photographer beyond the pushing of the button. Indeed, the process refutes any attempt at interference: to try any manipulation will negatively affect the quality of the image. Such attempts are obvious in the final instant Polaroid. Due to this technical development, the Polaroid is always the original or prototypical image/object since it contains its own negative and therefore cannot be reproduced in the same form as the original. The image could be copied by other media, indeed it has been in this show, but the new image is evidently a copy since it is no longer the object that, in part, defines a Polaroid. This linking of the image to the object protects the image from losing the point of origin in the same way that other forms of photography do.

The authenticity possibly established for the original Polariod the authenticity of the large digital prints, which are based on the Polaroids can now be established. The process of alteration to the digital copy of the Polaroid has been noted in this paper and any changes to the image are apparent when compared to the original Polaroid. So as not to conceal

24

the true form and source of the digital prints, the white "packaging" section of the Polaroids was included. The representation of the original Polaroids does not attempt to disguise the nature of the medium from which it has originated, but rather to translate it into another form to allow room for the ideal to be injected.

This authenticity of the image, both digital and Polaroid, could be seen to be important in work since the authenticity establishes the distinction between the documented process of breakfast shown in the Polaroids and in the idealized fiction created from this documentation in the digital prints.

Section 5)

The Megan Interview.

Section 5 has been included to provide Megan Bocking a direct forum and voice in this paper. Her inclusion is important since she is an important person in the work. Without providing the opportunity for her to voice her ideas about the work it would be possible to see her as a silent subject serving as an object of display rather then an active participant in the creation of the work and its underlying process. Since the production of this work has been in part a partnership between Ms. Bocking and myself it would be inappropriate to omit her opinion from this paper.

Total length 16 min, 28 sec.
Recorded on August 11th at 24:06
At the University of Saskatchewan, Archaeology building, room 322

J: I think that's working, working, working, working, that's working now. So.

M: So.

J: We should, er, do this interview?

M: Okay, you want to talk about breakfast?

J: Yea, lets talk about that good, I need to know your perspective on all of this.

M: Okay, so you want to know how I take my breakfast?

J: Well, we can start there if you like.

M: Okay, uh, I like my eggs poached medium with brown toast that's dry. The reason I like them poached and dry toast is cause, no gall bladder equals can't really eat a lot of fat, so I can't really handle having fried eggs and butter on toast with hash browns, too much. So that's why I take breakfast that way.

J: Okay, and why sausage?

M: Sausage? Never been a big fan of bacon cause my mum always made it and it was really like, limp bacon you know, it was never crispy so it was kinda nasty.

J: You're just suspicious of the pig in that form?

M: Yep and its bacon, ham or sausage. Ham always seems like a supper thing. I

26

don't know, and sausage tastes good when you put syrup on it.

J: Okay. So it's the whole Twin Peaks quote. Maple syrup collides with pig.

M: Exactly, yea.

J: Okay. So why do you get er, why are you involved? What's in this for you?

M: What's in it for me?

J: Umhum.

M: I get to go for breakfast.

J: That's the only reason?

M: I'm joking, um, I don't know I think its about family, I mean when you look at your past breakfasts its all about the family that surrounds you then. I think this is how you make your own family.

J: Okay.

M: I think that the people that when we do go for breakfast with people they're people, like its not a casual, you don't invite people you don't know. Like Eve comes with us or my parents come with us. When we go for breakfast with other people right?

J: Umhum.

M: Its not just this project but its about an intimate relationships then someone that you know from the department or something right?

J: Uh-huh.

M: So, so I think that for you this a way of you making your family depending where you are right? In Cambridge its your family that's related right, blood relation.

J: Umhum.

M: And in Toronto it was your family then right? Your friends and contact and all that and here its your family here. So partly that's something I see in the work. Um, I also think its funny that the Polaroid's look so much better then the food actually tastes. Like when you ask me if we want to go out for breakfast, right, you ask me once a week or whenever we decide we are going to go I'm like, oh yea cause I can picture the eggs in the and the pancakes in the pictures and all that right? And it looks so good but it's usually luke warm, the tea's really not good, you know?

J: Yep.

M: So, what's in it for you?

J: Well, that's the whole question of the ah, the paper. But I guess that's still begs the question, you know, that's what you see in the work of, of mine. That's what you see in it, and why I do it, but why do you take part?

M: Um, I know I already er, I, er, ask you this when you have to write your

one page summary. I understand why you don't like to answer because it's a hard one. Um, you asked me to participate the project kind of grew with us working together, you know like, it is your project but I do photograph you in it right?

J: Umhum.

M: So, I'm not being very articulate. So why I do it?

J: Yea.

M: Um, I think it is time for you and me to have together. I mean its something that, I mean we live together, right? And we've lived together for almost a year and a halfish?

J: Yep.

M: Right. So its something that you and I could easily just eat breakfast quickly at home but in a way when you do that its kinda of like, then we're separating for the rest of the day, right?

J: Umhum.

M: So to take that time in the morning just to hang out with each other before we each go on our own ways is kind of nice because it gives you that time to kind of um, just relax a bit and I don't know, have food we don't usually cook at home like we never, well we made

poached eggs at home once right?

J: That was fun.

M: And we never have hash browns at home and like I thing partly I do really like going out for meals to.

J: Umhum.

M: So I think it give us a slower morning and just time to relax and hang out together, um, and then to that's why I like and its kinda like, you know how at home there's certain things that we cook and certain thing that we don't?

J: Yea.

M: You know like we'll have pancakes every so often but we'll never make like, I don't know hollandaise sauce or something right? Which I can't really eat anyway but, you know if we were going to have, we can go to a restaurant and have what ever you want.

J: Yea.

M: You know? So.

J: So the fact that you don't have to make the breakfast is that?

M: Exactly, well I don't usually make breakfast that much but you know.

J: You've been doing the fruit more recently.

M: Its true. But it is about that also not having to cook so one of us like usually, one of us is running, usually I'm

crawling out of bed and getting dressed while you make breakfast right? But then there's kind of that time for both of us to relax and hang out together before breakfast gets there.

J: Unhum.

M: So, yea.

J: So was there anything else?

M: I don't know? Do you think we pose for the camera?

J: I think we try not to but we do.

M: Yea, I think so to, I think the longer the project goes on the more posing we do.

J: The less natural it becomes?

M: I don't know if it's less natural or that we anticipate the photo being taken.

J: Or the result of what the photo looks like.

M: I anticipate the photo being taken and that's because I'm usually the subject.

J: Umhum, but I also know that I anticipate how the photo will look, so I have, you know some idea of from the other end of the camera what its going to turn out like.

M: Yea, but that's something I like about the Polaroid camera is that you can't see when you take the photo, the

screen goes black so you never really can't know.

J: Yea, that's true.

M: And that's me giving away control.

J: But then with any camera that you don't see the photo you only see the a.

M: I know but I think particularly with Polaroid because its immediate, it develops right away.

J: Yea.

M: And I think too there's this anticipation.

J: So you sacrifice the moment of seeing for the er, the permanency of the er, image you get to see right away.

M: I don't know if it's permanency or its like um, the immediacy of being able to see it.

J: Okay.

M: Um, and two I think Polaroids are known for being like, really crappy right? Like images that were either unfocused or the flash is on or there's red eye or something right?

J: I guess but that's never been experience of them so.

M: I know. I usually see Polaroid as like, or have seen it as some that's really fun but usually yields really unfortunate results.

J: Well spectra film, all the cameras are just crap so that feeds into it.

M: Yea, so I think that partly, another thing I like about it though is how like I was talking about how the food is really not that good and all that stuff but when you think about it, its really, its romanticizing right?

J: Yea.

M: Like it is romanticizing this event and it is time for you and me, so I think it is partly maybe the idea of going for breakfast relaxes me a bit.

J: Yea?

M: Cause I feel like we have time for each other.

J: Okay.

M: You know? Like that kind of, yea.

J: I kinda understand what your saying.

M: It romanticizes the idea of taking a slow morning and like and whether or not at the end of the meal were rushed or one of us is stressed cause we have to get going.

J: Umhum.

M: You know like it still like at the end of the end of the day you would say oh, I went for breakfast that was nice and it was slow.

J: Yea.

M: You know? Even though at the end of it it might have been really rushed, or we were really trying to get out of there or something right?

J: Yea.

M: So I think the idea is romantic.

J: Yea, hum.

M: So, and I know for a lot of people going out for breakfast usually happens after a night of like heavy partying right like Eve you know?

J: Yea.

M: And so, its kind of like.

J: Though its usually a very late breakfast the following day.

M: Its true but you know like.

J: And somewhat, somewhat heavier on the coffee.

M: Yea. So, I don't know, I think that it, yea, anyway.

J: Think that's, think that's good?

M: And I like the restaurant.

J: You like the restaurant?

M: Can I talk about the restaurant?

J: Go for it.

M: I really like the restaurant. I think it's hilarious because the people who work there know who we are, know that we come there often and like, ah it's just hilarious. And I think its funny cause when I was a kid that restaurant was

really like a dive, right we would go there, well when we were really little we didn't have and money it was really special cause we could look out over eighth street and watch the cars go by right? And that was when my parents had like no money, right three kids how are you supposed to have money? But then the older I got the more divey I thought it was, like the worst restaurant and I was oh god you know? Like you kind of realize that veneer of childhood comes off, um, and so, now, for me, the restaurant is special because of you and me because it is the place you and I go for breakfast. So.

J: Is it still a dive?

M: Kind of. Are you kidding? Like they haven't changed the furnishings since I was like, since I have been born. As long as I've gone there its always looked the same. I think it's a little divey. The washrooms, errawa.

J: I don't know your washrooms.

M: It's not pretty.

J: Okay.

M: Um, and like the, so it's a little divey still I think. But yea I really like it there. And the waiters and waitresses are hilarious, especially since we have been

going there so long we can tell when someone is new. You know?

J: Well we know all of them on sight at least. We don't know the names or anything, at least I don't.

M: No, I don't know any of their names either but then we also like, I've kind of figured out who the owners are, you know?

J: Umhum.

M: And like. So its just funny. That one-day they arranged the sausages on my plate that was hilarious. Cause they knew it was being photographed right? But it's the only time it's ever happened.

J: Right.

M: Its never happened since.

J: Maybe they've gotten bored with us.

M: Maybe. Maybe we're just annoying now like who knows right?

J: Yea, maybe they thought we were food, you know, reviewers.

M: Maybe or the health board.

J: I hope not.

M: I don't know. So yea, so mostly I look forward to going to breakfast for you cause I remember the pictures, like I'm so visual it hurts right, but I think of the pictures and I'll be like oh yea lets go for breakfast it really not that good. One time I went there with Eve and a

friend of hers. It was me first day off, it was last summer and we went there and I wore different shirt then usual right, cause I always wear the purple shirt when you and I go, well most of the time, and I was joking to Eve that I should wear a different shirt then the purple one so that people, that they knew that I had a larger wardrobe and I don't think they really, like there, the people that work there were kinda confused cause they didn't know what to do with me cause I wasn't with you and I wasn't being photographed.

J: Did you get those pity looks?

M: No, not like at the gym. Um, yea it was funny though. So.

J: Okay, we'll go with that and see how that plays out and maybe do more, maybe we'll er, redo everything.

Section 6)

Previous work and its relationship to the thesis work

> 6.1) Family Breakfast series
> 6.2) The Parking Lot Polaroids
> 6.3) Locations Panoramics

In this section a description of the appearance of each project followed by a description of the process, if applicable, of making the work will be provided. There will then be a section describing the underlying motivation for each project and how these motivations both differ from and are similar to the current work being shown.

6.1) Family Breakfast series

This project consists of an as yet undetermined number of black and white photographs. As this project is not yet completed, it is important to consider that the final size and media of the photographs has not been finalized. Instead, a number of different attempts at determining the ideal dimensions of the images have been made and the latest and most successful of these attempts will be discussed here. This noted, the version is still open to alteration in the areas of both scale and media. Media refers to the material and process that produce the image. Examples are black and white fibre prints or digital outputs.

The images were and still are being shot on 35mm black and white film using a variety of different camera brands and models along with a variety of film types. This project has been on going for approximately three years and will shortly enter the fourth year since its undertaking. This time scale is somewhat arbitrary since prior to two years ago the project was part of the negative archive and as such indistinguishable from the rest of the images produced during Cycle 1). About two years ago, I noticed the pattern of

photographs and began to work more closely with these negatives. I have since added new negatives as part of this project.

The Family Breakfast Series revolves around my family going out for breakfast at various restaurants near the family home. The decision to go out for these meals was not planned more than a day in advance and can be initiated in as little time as fifteen minutes prior to the outing depending on circumstance. The location of breakfast varies and is contingent on a large range of factors all of which are related to family dynamics.

Example of how family dynamics influence location selection:

My youngest sister, after it has been offered that we go out for breakfast by my father, suggests that we all go to Dee Dee's Café since she likes the hash browns better there. My other sister, also younger than me, notes that she doesn't want to go to Dee Dee's since the restaurant does not serve pancakes and suggests that Barnacle Bill's Fish and Chips as an alternative. My youngest sister doesn't like Barnacle Bill's and tries to veto that idea with a simple no. My father then suggests another alternative of Angel's Diner. My mother objects since Angel's is in Guelph and feels that the hour and twenty minute round trip is too far since the families activities for the day are entirely in Cambridge. My youngest sister agrees that Angel's is too far and suggests The Preston Family Restaurant instead. While further away than both Dee Dee's and Barnacle Bills, it is not as far as Angel's and it serves pancakes.

Process of working:

Though the project began as part of the process of Cycle 2) Option a) as described on pg. 7, it now contains elements that are of Cycle 2) Option b) as described on pg. 7. The Family Breakfast Series contains two exceptions to these processes as described earlier; it does not have a projected completion date, nor a resource allocation budget. These two exceptions are due to the open-ended nature, low initial costs for continuing to make

negatives and the unstructured frequency and location of the event. All of these factors contribute to the in determinant date of completion for this project.

The negatives have so far always been printed full frame, which is unlikely to change regardless of the final medium selected. Full frame printing occurs when a negative is printed so a black border is produced around the print. The border is the clear part of the negative that surrounds exposed frame of the negative. This type of printing maybe done as a visual indicator to the viewer that the photograph has not been cropped from the original frame of film taken at the time of exposure by the photographer. The considered importance of this feature varies by photographer. I utilize full frame printing because I believe it is one of the few successful methods of indicating my hand in the final photograph rather than for aesthetic considerations.

The underlying motivations for this project are very similar to the ones outlined earlier in section 3:2). On top of these, the documentary nature of the project was appealing due to the genres traditional aesthetic features and also for the strictures regarding both the nature of evidence and the role of witness, though all of these concerns may be considered intertwined on some levels.

This project could be considered similar to the breakfast series presented by this paper, as both concern the same subject matter and could have similar origins in personal interest. Despite this, both projects could also be viewed as very different both aesthetically and conceptually as one relies on a process to create the situation on which the work is based and through which the work in created while the other is based on a possibly more passive role regarding instigation of events presented in the photographs.

6.2) The Parking Lot Polaroids

The Parking Lot Polaroids project consists of thirty Polaroids, three inches by four inches in size. These Polaroids are displayed in thirty separate boxes approximately five inches by eight inches in size along with a cue card approximately the same dimensions as the

Polaroid. On each cue card is printed the date on which the image was taken, the weather conditions and any events that occurred on the night previous to the image being made. The project can be displayed either as a grid, six boxes wide by five boxes high or in a row thirty boxes long.

The Polaroids were taken with a 103 Polaroid Land camera using Polaroid 669 film. The project lasted for thirty days over which the thirty images were taken. This corresponds roughly to the thirty-four days I worked as an all night security guard. The parameters for the project were as follows: the Polaroid must have the sun or approximate position of the sun included in the Polaroid, the scene must be free of people and moving cars, the light must be bright enough to allow the Polaroid to be taken hand held without any blur and the final image must be relatively free from Polaroid defects.

Polaroid defects occur for a number of reasons: the first and most likely is the chemical package has dehydrated slightly over time resulting in there not being enough chemicals to completely cover the image producing part of the Polaroid. Second the rollers that spread the chemical pouch onto the image part of the Polaroid when it is pulled out of the camera could be worn or could have a build up of chemical residue resulting in uneven pressure. This can cause not enough of the chemical to be pushed into one area and too much chemical into another, resulting in uneven development. Finally if there is dust or dirt on the rollers or on the Polaroid packet then spots where the chemical was completely pushed away from the Polaroid will occur, coating the image with a repeating pattern of small red or white spots about the size of a pins head.

This process was started and completed within the process of Cycle 2) option b) as described earlier in this paper. The project was undertaken in response to my personal situation of spending long periods of time at night alone at work. The result was an increase in personal boredom and a feeling of relief to the arrival of dawn that ended my shift. While this personal situation forms at least part of the underlying motivation for the work to be created, it does not necessarily encompass the results in the work.

At first I was only interested in the colour and nature of the image produced by Polaroid in response to the lighting situations found at dawn. As the project progressed and especially now that it is finished, I am unsure about my motivations regarding this work and the meaning of the results produced. I have found that this work can carry a number of metaphors or ideas, even though these are not necessarily in the work but instead are layered on top. This has made the work somewhat unique among the projects that I have made. The Parking Lot Polaroids are very different from much of my work and especially from the work discussed in this paper. While they both have a very careful structure or process used to create them and rely on similar photographic mediums, the two projects are very different both in content or subject and motivation.

6.3) Locations Panoramics

The Locations Panoramics series was shot while I was on an academic exchange in Germany for four months. The film was not developed and the prints made until my return to Canada. I mention this since it meant that while I was working I was unable to see the results of what I was making, the camera becoming literally a black box. The project, after editing, now consists of eleven sets of photographs. Each panoramic is composed of twelve separate photographs that overlay each other to make the larger image. There are four black and white panoramics and seven colour panoramics. The final images are approximately thirty-two inches wide by three inches high. The images have been matted and framed for display.

The photographs were taken using a twin lens Rolleiflex 2.8b on a variety of medium format films. The negatives were printed full frame with a black border and then assembled to create the final images. To produce the work, a spot was selected at the site. A tripod was then placed on that spot and adjusted for height and to ensure that both the camera and the head of the tripod were level. A light meter reading was taken and the camera set to the correct exposure. Twelve photographs were then taken every thirty degrees to complete the three hundred and sixty degree rotation.

I was motivated to make this project because I was away from a place that was home. Home in this case was not my parent's home, nor an apartment I rented, nor the different cities I lived in, but a place of familiarity that was in all these places. This motivation of trying to make a home in a place that was not home required me to see what was around me, in this case quite literally, and to try and understand it. While this motivation is not truly in the work that was created, it in part, inspired its creation. This motivation is not entirely foreign to the work being shown in this show. The familial is a common theme or source of motivation for much of the work I have made. This is the case for both projects, though they obviously draw from different aspects of the concept of the familial.

Section 7)

Conclusion.

The preceding sections are perhaps a map to the work presented in the exhibition *The Breakfast Series*, providing explanations to some of the underlying ideas or themes that may be present in the work for the viewer. At the same time, it is possible through the examination of the show to derive the four original points provided here without the aid of this paper. Instead, the additional information contained in this paper is intended to provide a greater understanding of motivations and processes that resulted in the production of the work, rather than explain or argue the contents.

To review the four points that were raised at the start of this paper were as follows:

1) *Myself eating breakfast with another person, in this case my partner Megan.*
2) *These digital prints are a selection designed to construct an idealized or perfecting narrative from a large selection of Polaroids that were taken at numerous separate process breakfasts.*
3) *Within the work are elements of personal nostalgia that may exist for the viewer, and it is the seeking of these personal elements that partly concern the production of this work.*
4) *This process is mediated though the use of a camera and selected medium, in this case Polaroid, so that an increased level of authenticity maybe present in the work.*

Each of these four points served as a unifying header to three points that covered various aspects of the work. Each of these secondary points helped inform and were informed by the header that preceded them. Occasionally, words used in the four original points required further distinction since their specific meaning varies depending upon the situation and subject area.

In the first section, pertaining to point 1) covered the content of the work, examined the process that underlies the work shown and provided some information about my motivations and personal interests in breakfast. Point 2) examined the role of the constructed narrative in the work and presented how this process related to the original Polaroids that were taken during the process of breakfast. The section also provided a detailed overview of my working process. Point 3) examined the work in relation to my personal history. Some of the reasons for my interest in my personal and family history are provided in this section. In point 4), the equipment used to make the work was examined, as were the possible implications that using these pieces of equipment had on the work.

Section 5) presented an interview with Megan Bocking, one of the main participants in the project. In this interview, Ms. Bocking outlined her relationship to the work, including her reason in for participating in this project, what the project has come to mean for her, and what her understanding of my relation to the work and its process is.

In the last full section earlier and ongoing projects were described and compared to the one on display. This was done to provide a larger context for this work in relation to my process of artistic exploration. This section is not strictly necessary to understanding the thesis work. That noted, the section was intended to elaborate on projects mentioned in previous sections and make connections regarding how my process of discovery has moved from earlier work to arrive at the work presented in the thesis.

In short, this paper has discussed the reason behind the project, the equipment chosen and the methodology used. This paper provides various forms of background information for the project itself, but the project to stand independent of the paper.