Re Imagining the Family

An exegesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

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February 2009

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgment has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

Pauline Anastasiou

22nd February 2009

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Lyndal Jones.

Abstract

This exegesis will address the following questions that result from the propositions.

How can the disruptions caused specifically by one family's experience of the margin that is migration and the margin that is death be represented in art and how might these art works allow for the possibility of resonance for the viewer?

How are margins defined and how might they help to provide a theoretical underpinning for this research?

How does the medium used influence the understanding?

These questions are addressed in both the project and the exegesis.

Re Imagining the Family

Foreword

When there is a death that is socially unacceptable, there can be no openness in its grieving; the grief is always qualified and happens elsewhere and in very complicated ways. My quite unintentional response to this occurrence in my own life was to make this series of films. The work for this project began when I decided to make films that I now realise were an attempt to construct a version of what might be viewed as a happy family.

As I looked through the hours and hours of video footage I had taken of my family, I found myself completely mesmerised by my daughter at three for example, prancing around in a dancing class, by watching my son at two sitting on the rug in the back room talking to his Star Wars figurines as though they were his friends… of my father presiding over the dinner table, of days spent on the beach, and of the children eating and sleeping. This was the stuff of home movies but it was also an extensive historical archive of one family.

I then began making small movies made up of moments that I had selected from all of those hours that I had video taped. I very soon realised that it would only ever be those moments that I was now selecting that any one would ever see. I was manipulating the image of the family, rendering it as happy, and I supposed that this was consistent with most family albums.

The quest in this research has been to find another way of looking at the family in more complex and hopefully truthful ways.

What I have found most interesting about the completed work is my children's acceptance and unspoken acknowledgment of the truth of this work for them.

INTRODUCTION

This research project is based on very personal material. There is a commonality to many of our lived experiences no matter what our culture, but this work is particularly personal and when I had completed it I wrestled with its appropriateness. The indecision was to do with that border between the personal and the private. There is a lot written on the personal basis of the songs of Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Mick Jagger, after all, but each of these musicians have produced songs that resonate because we have layered them on to our own lives. I negotiate that border encouraged by these musicians but also by many visual artists such as Sophie Calle and Pipilotti Rist who I have responded to in my research.

Making videos that purport to be 'real' using footage of 'un-constructed moments' (my home movies), is of course questionable because the self consciousness rendered by the video camera suggests that what is happening is no longer as it might have played out. The introduction of the video camera changes the reality. With the understanding that this is the nature and consequence of the camera, my premise in using the home movie footage was to make something that initially has the assumption of reality and then as a constructed work the intention of offering the viewer an interpretation of the reality. Construction is complex though; everything constructed is done to offer that interpretation.

The videos of these children's lives are intended to show the complexities of their existence. The difficult moments are still not told but they are implied, and there is a recognition I believe that lives belong to a space that signifies a crisis. This space of disruption and difference is what Michel Foucault describes as heterotopia. The movies I have constructed are intended to belong to the 'heterotopic' place (a place that accommodates the margins) that Foucault talks about (Foucault 1997) and which is expanded on in chapter two.

The heterotopic space was also important to look at with respect to my fathers' place in this project. He also took movies; his were filled with reminiscing, longing and the questioning of the border he had crossed in making the decision to live in this country. Looking back at this project it seems that I took a lesson from my father and repeated that process. My work I suppose allows me to make sense of these margins in similar ways.

The work has been made through a conscious and unconscious sieve of culture and history and it has come from a subconscious of slippage, the hybridisation of forms that I have been informed by and the dreams I have had. I have not storyboarded this work, I have dreamed it. My knowledge of the moving image; my understandings of narrative and my training and aesthetic sensibilities come primarily from photography and cinema. My work

references these mediums. The Muybridge horse (1878/2007), without its rider, that appears in the video work, *Horse without rider,* for instance*,* is relevant to me in my practice as a photographer. It is that curiosity to investigate what is unique in behaviour and to document it that is the connection. The footage I have used of the floating house has come from Getty's (1916/2007) archive of old 16mm Hollywood film footage and the road metaphor comes of course from the cinematic road, for example, Abbas Kiarostami's *Ten,* Joel and Ethan Cohen's (2000) *Oh Brother Where Art Thou* with its reference to Homer's *Odyssey,* The Maysles brother's (1968) documentary *The Salesman,* Wim Wender's (1984) *Paris, Texas.*

PROPOSITION

I propose an experiential investigation of those times or situations where we find ourselves in the margins. The resulting videos are about the margins that I have experienced, of migration, death and the way in which, through video, this particular family is re imagined.

I also propose that, while the works come from a personal archive, they will have resonance in the public realm, precisely through that particularity.

Further, I propose that this work is informed and underpinned by the writings of important contemporary cultural theory of the margins as described by Homi K. Bhabha, (Rutherford,1990) but also by Foucault whose discussion in *Of Other Spaces* (1967) involved a new concept of spatial analytics. Foucault identified the space of the margins, which he called *'heterotopias'* and claimed that once identified within a particular society, those margins would reveal who we are as a society.

I propose furthermore that this body of work seeks to offer an example, through the digital, of the convergence of the home movie (initially for private viewing and now widely seen on You Tube), with video art, television and film.

This exegesis will address the following questions that result from the propositions.

How can the disruptions caused specifically by one family's experience of the margin that is migration and the margin that is death be represented in art and how might these art works allow for the possibility of resonance for the viewer?

How are margins defined and how might they help to provide a theoretical underpinning for this research?

How does the medium used influence the understanding?

These questions are addressed in both the project and the exegesis in the following ways:

(1) The Video Project

My project consists of videos I have constructed from home movies taken over a number of years by my father and myself. The home movies were taken on Super 8 film, Video 8, analogue tape, and digital video. The titles of the films are, *They know we are looking, Horse without rider, The floating house, He died, Look at the sea,* and *Young girl.* Some of these titles may not be particularly revealing and I don't intend them to be, but I do hope they guide the sentiment that I hope the movies reveal.

They know we are looking consists of footage taken on a road trip to Robinvale, a town close to Mildura where the children's father had lived. It was a trip where we were able to remember and reminisce in ways we had not been able to do at home. The road in this video work is an obvious and inescapable metaphor and one where the metaphor is played out. Salles (2007), the director of *The Motorcycle Diaries* and *On the Road*, writes, *Because road movies need to trace the internal transformation of their characters, the films are not about what can be seen or verbalized but about what can be felt — about the invisible that complements the visible*. Those internal transformations are what I have tried to express in this video. Salles (2007) also writes *about the necessity for the camera '… to remain in unison with characters who are in continual motion — a motion that shouldn't be controlled.* When I was making this video, this notion was an important element in its construction.

The floating house is dominated by the image of a house floating on the water. The calm motion of the original footage (Getty Images 1916/2007) is interrupted by my footage of waves hitting the house and breaking over it. The floating house references the cinematic influence in my work but more importantly it again acts as a metaphor of an unanchored and seemingly unstable house. The feeling of not being anchored I think is important especially in relation to my daughter and I wanted to express this by juxtaposing the young, giggly, grounded girl, with the cheesy footage of a girl of a certain age and attitude who is starting to have an awareness of the possibilities, without the binding ties that exist when children are younger. This video is a partner to the *Horse without rider, w*hich is also about recognition of change, of a passage through life and of the acknowledgement of loss. Once again I have appropriated footage. The Muybridge horse provides a strong metaphor as a constant through the work and once again it references my own practice as a photographer.

The next three works contextualise the first three. One is of myself as a young girl, *The Young girl*, at a family picnic. My father used his Super 8 camera to take this footage. The theme is consistent with the videos I constructed of my children, the young girl running towards her father and then turning away when she reached him is what I have explored in the videos; growing up, making choices, moving away. *They Know we are looking, The floating house and Horse without rider*, are dominated by this idea of movement through time, the galloping horse, the children walking away in unrecognizable corridors or traveling on the road heading somewhere.

Look at the sea is one very short video work chosen from the hours of footage taken by my father as instructional pieces for his children and *He died* is a way of acknowledging that loss is about a lot of things, but the deep loss felt by us and what this project is ultimately about is the death of a father.

(2) The Exegesis

The exegesis comprises three chapters and each chapter responds directly to the questions that form the basis of this research.

Chapter One: *Migration, Margins and My Father's Movies*
This deals with the first question.
To reiterate:
How can the disruptions caused specifically by one family's experience of the margin that is migration and the margin that is death be represented in art and how might these art works allow for the possibility of resonance for the viewer?
This chapter looks at the video work and writings of Mieke Bal (2004) and Abbas Kiarostami (2003) whose work resonated in its location of the margins. It was also informed by John Berger and Papastergiadis (1993) in their discussion of migration.

Chapter Two: *How to Negotiate the Margins*
How are margins defined and how might they help to provide a theoretical underpinning for this research?

In this chapter I reflect on Michel Foucault's essay, *Of Other Spaces*, (1967) Homi K. Bhabha's (Rutherford, 1990) notions of hybridity, Victor Burgin (1996) and his reflection on the position of space in cultural theory and examples of how Foucault's *Other Spaces* applies to the arts. The reading of these placed my work in a theoretical cultural context and enabled the work to move from the purely personal.

Chapter Three: *The Digital Home Movie*
How does the medium influence the understanding?

This chapter traces my shift from photography to the moving image using the family album as a thread. Furthermore it also traces the shift from the context of the video work from the private to the public viewing of the gallery. In order to do this I looked at the following writers and artists; Phillipe Parreno, Pipilotti Rist, Bill Viola, Tacita Dean, Hiraki Sawa, Lyndal Jones, and many film makers and animators, Wong Kar-wai, Wim Wenders, Charlie Kauffman and Michel Gondry in particular.

Tanya Leighton's (2008) very informative collection of essays, in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader* and *Documenta X* (1997) provided a contemporary framework for an understanding of the history of the moving image as an art form. Ubuweb, and the Video Data Bank, provided me with examples of video work that I may not otherwise have had access too. For example, Dziga Vertov, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Gary Hill, Vito Acconci, Sophie Calle, Tacita Dean.

The reading of this exegesis begins on the left hand side of the page. The right hand side contains what I am calling notes. The notes are particular; they inform the exegesis and the video work, since its beginnings are located in a personal space. Sometimes the right hand side contains pictures, thoughts and musings, and sometimes quotes that I am drawn to and that I have thought were important in the reading.

CHAPTER ONE

MIGRATION, MARGINS AND MY FATHER'S MOVIES

Mieke Bal and Abbas Kiarostami whose video work and writings reference the theme of migration informed my project.

Mieke Bal's video (2004), *Road Movie*, begins with a man walking on the side of a road, carrying two suitcases. He walks the length of the road hemmed in by the yellow line of a median strip. He walks till he is a speck on the horizon and then he walks back, very slowly. The landscape is flat and uninteresting; it is almost post-industrial in its anonymity. The sky changes to indicate a passing of time. We wonder why this man walked the length of the road and why he came back.

A story about migration is the overwhelming narrative. The young man in the suit, shirt collar buttoned up, no tie, reminiscent of a European style of dress of a particular time, alone, carrying nothing but two small suitcases clearly represents so many images of young men travelling alone to foreign countries.

Kiarostami's video, *Five*, subtitled *Five Long Takes*, consists of five separate works that are quiet and reflective. The film is 74 minutes long and is spare.

The first work, *Wood*, is a frame focused on the sea and the immediate shore that changes only slightly over an extended period of time. The soundtrack reflects the natural environment of the visual without disturbing the contemplative movement and rhythm of the waves.

Bal, 2006, *Road Movie*
The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor the leaving behind of the past… Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the fin de siecle, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond'. (Bhabha, 1994, Introduction)

There is a piece of driftwood on the sand. It is encrusted with fossilised sea creatures, so that we know that this piece of driftwood has belonged to the sea for a long time, but it has been left stranded on the shore by the natural movement of the tides. The waves move towards the piece of driftwood on shore and move away again without taking the driftwood back to sea. Eventually the intensity of the waves increase and start hitting the driftwood more violently, still not pulling it back in. The driftwood is then struck violently and is broken into two pieces one smaller than the other. The larger piece is eventually taken back out to sea, but the smaller piece remains on the shore.

When the driftwood was broken into two pieces and then separated, it caused an unexpected disquiet in me. This feeling could only be located in my understandings of the separation of migration.

Margaret Morse in an essay titled 'Home: smell, taste, posture, and gleam', (ed. Hamid Naficy 1999) speaks about her life as the child of a diplomat who moved constantly from place to place.
"How then does one manage the investment of sympathy without deep anchors? Speaking for this loose cohort of childhood drifters, we do have origins and sense memories; it's just that they are a composite of shifting locations and short-term bonds. The capacity to endure sustained dissonance and lack of closure is something I recognise immediately in my fellows in this privileged cadre of the not precisely homeless. Resourceful and self contained some of us even prefer the weightlessness of the floating world" (ed. Naficy, H, p. 68)

The 'floating world', lightness of movement, possibly carefree and without the longing of home, is quite a different perception of the video's significance to me. In my mind, the driftwood was not aimlessly floating, but forced into a position of separation.

There are other interpretations that come of viewing. Another suggestion is that that the driftwood's essence has fundamentally changed. It is no longer a piece of wood, it is now

I was caught out by the emotion I felt watching *Wood*. The narrative in my head became intensely personal and the strength of concern for the driftwood surprised me.
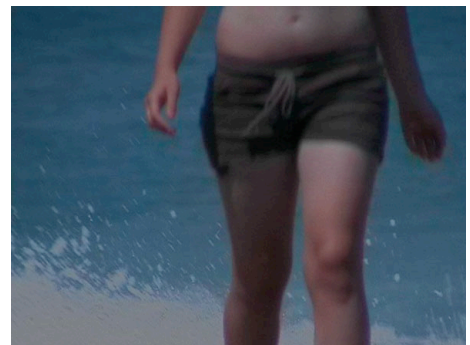
video still, 2005, *Apollo Bay*
Early on in the video as I watched the waves lick the driftwood I remembered my children tease the waves with their toes so that reverie inspired by the quietness of the film took me to a place on the beach I recognised and had special feelings for, not the Caspian Sea, where this was taken, but somewhere else. The gaps in the video, that is the repetition in the movement of the waves, that space allowed my mind to make associations, dreamlike connections to my own experiences. I realised that I was addressing this internal experience in my own works.

driftwood, it has been transformed into something else as a condition of its time spent in the ocean. (From a discussion with Lyndal Jones, August 2008)

This video represents for me a powerful metaphor of what happens to that next generation of children who have made that transformation.

Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity is relevant here. He writes,
'But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom' (Rutherford 1990).

Kiarostami, (2003) in a documentary about *Five*, *t*alks of not wanting to capture and hold an audience with a narrative. He does not want to impose a narrative on an audience that makes this work challenging to watch. Kiarostami says that he allows his audience time and space to dream a narrative within the work itself. He seems to provoke us, if we allow ourselves to engage, into a position where we have freedom of movement within the film for our imaginations to take hold. "Life does not reveal its secrets so easily, why should cinema?" (Kiarostami 2003) Striving for a participatory cinema in which viewers bring their own interpretations to the work is a philosophy that both Bal and Kiarostami adhere to. In *Five* Kiarostami provides those quiet gaps (Bal, 2006) that invite the insertion of the viewer's own experience and imagination. It is those gaps in Kiarostami's work that allows us the space to dream, imagine or question. I found myself compelled to make a decision about how to watch the work. I might have fallen asleep because of the calming repetitive rhythm of the waves (which is a reaction to the film that Abbas Kiarostami professes to be happy with), and because in reality nothing was happening and nothing was being told. But a narrative began in my head and I was compelled to see it to its conclusion.

Video still Kiarostami, 2003

"Kundera tells a fascinating story that genuinely impressed me: he relates how his father's lexical range diminished with age and, at the end of his life he was reduced to two words: 'It's strange! It's strange!' Of course he hadn't reached that point because he had nothing much to say any more but because those two words effectively summed up his life's experience. They were the very essence of it. Perhaps that's the story behind minimalism too… If anyone were to ask me what I did as a director on the film, I'd say, Nothing and yet if I didn't exist, this film wouldn't have existed…This film is my own 'two words'. It sums up almost everything. I say 'almost' because I'm already thinking about my next film. A

When Mieke Bal's man disappears into the distance he is small, almost not visible in the image. Bal talks about his coming back as a relief of the tension the viewer feels in his return. Bal also talks of giving the viewer that same space.

"Formally, it is a narrative 'in the third person,' about someone else. You look on, the way you ordinarily look, with indifference. An unreflective look, taking in only what interests us, remaining on the surface of everything else: this is the look the first half of the film solicits. When he has disappeared and the image remains empty of his presence, the memory of his passing by seems like a little piece of lint on a black shoulder… The empty road is the image of normality… What's the point of this emptiness? Why would this be what we want: because we know it so well, because it is what we find normal, although the lack of meaning begins to glare at us as soon as we start to think? This is the turning point, long before he turns around and walks back. The turning point of the act of viewing is the moment boredom becomes a trigger of asking ourselves questions about the point of our existence, not that of the anonymous walker." (Bal 2006)

In the light of this stated 'openness', it is no surprise that when I watch Kiarostami's videos shot on the Caspian Sea my narrative becomes one of re-living memories.

My father was one of those young men in search of something. The road as metaphor is overly used but in fact it is an inescapable metaphor in describing the changes those of us make in our lives. My father re visited his home forty years after he had left it. He took hours and hours of video on a small analogue video camera that he had purchased for the trip. The footage contained long slow pans across each of the landscapes he visited but what was extraordinary about this footage was that it was entirely instructional. He spoke about the history of the country, but more importantly his personal history, in the belief that there was a necessity for us to understand the traditions of our ancestors. He believed that history contained important knowledge that we'd missed out on because we had grown up in another country. He was teaching us the history.

My father's videos are about the young man returning home.

one-word film perhaps." (Kiarostami, 2003)

Family photograph, (photographer unknown.)

Mieke Bal's man with the suitcase had a resonance I didn't understand. This photograph reminded me why. Behind me, a suitcase clearly part of the furniture. I grew up in a large house that people lived in and passed through. It was their first home in this country and of course they all had suitcases.

Our Boat (Photographer Unknown)

My father had lived in a house perched on the edge of a cliff overlooking the Mediterranean. I remember stories about living in that house as though

They feel much like Mieke Bal's constructed works; long slow steady pans of the vistas he knew as a child and believed he still had a connection to, saying more than the documentary of the tourist but something about the recognition of a sadness, about the loss of his home, his displacement. This displacement was two-fold. In the first instance, as a young man he made the decision to leave his home in search of something else. He became part of the diaspora of migration, but while he was away, his home in Cyprus was claimed by the Turkish occupation of the northern part of the country where his home was located, which meant for him an end to the dream of returning to it. Leaving was a source of distress twice.

As John Berger writes,
"The final return is mythic. It gives meaning to what would otherwise be meaningless. It is larger than life. It is the stuff of longing and prayers. But it is also mythic in the sense that it never happens, there is no final return…" (Papastergiadis 1993, p. 118)

I think that my father's videos are about reclaiming that lost time. Not just about reminiscing, but about imagining that what was in front of him was who he was, it was about him. Kiarostami (2003) said, *"In my mind, our dreams are the windows in our lives and the significance of cinema is in its similarity to this window."* I wonder whether my father's capture of his home on video was like recreating the dream of himself.

The driftwood in Kiarostami's video is for me, a metaphor of the post-colonial migration of this region that is such a common experience.

Writing about family becomes such an intermingling of stories that crosses over families, time and generations. Family histories are complex, and trying to tell the stories of family begin to take on shapes of similarity that are quite predictable in many ways. We belong to a migrant culture where so many of us have had similar beginnings and we have lived in a world where we share common stories, but each time they are told, they are told from individual experience. In my own family are the stories of my

they were my own memories of being there.

When I was a child my father owned a boat called Jedda. We went out on the boat often and when we didn't we would still go to the marina where it was moored and have a cup of tea and sandwiches. When we no longer had a boat we would drive to the beach every Sunday. In summertime we played on the beach but in wintertime we sat in the car with our thermos of tea and looked at the sea. When my father was much older he had a house on the beach and we sat on the veranda looking out at the sea.

My father (Photographer unknown)
On his first trip 'back home', his video documentary, I call it documentary because as he filmed, in long filmic sweeps of the landscape, he spoke into the camera a diatribe that was meant to be a serious tutorial for his

grandfather, my father and his siblings, my father in law and his family. All have interesting and different stories, but all are familiar. John Berger writes on this,

I think the experience of emigration, of displacement could be found in almost everything I've written, and that corresponds to something deep in myself that I don't fully understand. But it is also one of the typical experiences, if not the typical experience of our century." (John Berger cited in Papastergiadis 1983, p. 8)

Homi K. Bhabha (1991), also writes of this collective experience, *'…Frederic Jameson invokes something similar in his notion of 'situational consciousness' or national allegory, where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience, cannot but ultimately involve the whole laborious telling of the collectivity itself.'*

Elytis was a Greek poet who my father read and recited. Elytis' work is not nostalgic or tear stained. It offers a world-view that is an affirmation of possibilities and is steeped in the traditions of a culture that has argued the possibilities for generations. Now when I think about the sessions spent with my father laboriously translating poem after poem so that I could understand the intricacies of each of them. I realise my father was trying to have me understand those lessons he thought fundamental to our lives. It is this that I fear my children have lost and I now understand my father's panicked frustration while we were growing up. This country did not offer the traditions he understood. He witnessed the erosion of certain understandings and a loss of safe passage through life as a result. His videos and mine too perhaps are an attempt I realise in hindsight to clarify and make safe that passage.

children about this place that he saw as our real home.

My mother and father, (photographer unknown)

My father in law, very recently spent some time revealing to his grandchildren what he felt was an intimate history of their father's trip to Australia. He tried to deconstruct for them that trip from England in relation to the impact he now felt it had had on his son. He was keen to have his grandchildren know about their father's passage.

Record album cover Theodorakis (1974)

CHAPTER TWO

HOW TO NEGOTIATE THE MARGINS, MIGRATION, MY FAMILY AND MY VIDEOS

On March 14, 1967, the *Cercle d'Etudes Architecturales* in Paris invited Michel Foucault to give a lecture on space. He proposed a new 'spatial analytics', (Defert 1997) which he termed "Heterotopology." The lecture remained unpublished for years with the exception of excerpts printed in French in the Italian journal *L'Archittetura*, in 1968. Its next publication was not until 1984 for the exhibition *Idea Process Results* at Martin Gropius Bau in Berlin. (Defert, 1997, p. 274)

Foucault's essay (1967) '*Of Other Spaces*' offered a proposition immediately apparent as a discourse that I could work through in discussing some of the themes of my research. His essay began with the idea that one consequence of the globalisation of the world's economy, i.e., the massive movement of people across borders, has made the relevance of space an important concern for our time. Foucault offered an explanation of how space might be understood; he offered a new concept of spatial thinking. The proposition suggested that an understanding of the existence of a particular space '*other space*' is important in locating the margins that are not necessarily recognised and are in effect hidden. The idea that these spaces reflect the realities of society resonated on many levels.

Gardies, in *L'Éspace au Cinéma*, says, "*…does not every narrative, regardless of which medium accommodates it, tell either explicitly or allusively, openly or subliminally, the story of humanity in its relations with space?* (Gardies, 1993, pp. 142-43)

Space and place, the internal as in Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1968) and Foucault's located place in *Of Other Spaces* (1967) are concepts that draw us into an understanding of the importance of 'space' and 'place'. They asked that we pay attention to these concepts in new ways.

Family photograph (photographer unknown)

The Mad Pomegranate Tree
I named this photograph *after Elytis' poem of the same name.* It is a picture of my mother and her siblings balancing precariously on top of one another. I regard this as *a* metaphor of the madness of being drawn into the temptation of the new beginning that was migration.

Foucault began *Other Spaces* by making a distinction between what he saw as the primary concern of the nineteenth century; that is history - in effect time. *"It is the second principle of thermodynamics that the nineteenth century found its essential mythological resources."* (Foucault 1967) This principle says that closed systems, while their energy remains constant, evolve to higher levels of disorder. Entropy is a measurement of this and refers to the concept of movement and time. So, the nineteenth century's 'essential mythological resource' was its 'obsession' with history. The twentieth century he argued would be the epoch of 'space'. While Foucault acknowledged the intersection of time and space he wrote, "*We are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and the far, of the side by side, of the dispersed.*" (Foucault 1967)

This view was controversial, and not all theorists regarded this altered emphasis positively. Paul Smethurst for example in *The Postmodern Chronotype*, comments on this,

'*Jameson…also emphasises the spatial dimension of human affairs, connecting spatialisation in cultural and aesthetic forms to economic factors operating in an era of global capitalism. But unlike Foucault and Lefebvre and the postmodern geographers who seem to be calling for an emphasis on the spatial, Jameson tends to regard the shift as largely negative, lamenting a loss of historicity, loss of depth models, as though the postmodern signaled a falling of critical distance.*' (Smethurst, 2000 p.114)

Victor Burgin (1996) in his book *(In)Different Spaces* gives another example of this dissention of opinion,
'*Lefevbre identified the "trial by space" to which "everything that derives from history" would submit. … joined others, notably Michel Foucault, in rejecting all historicist teleologies – all one-way roads – as woodenly implausible… Lefebvre was perhaps the first to identify "loss of identity" as a "besetting terror" of the trial by space. … An identity implies not only a location but a duration, a history. A lost identity is not only lost in space but in*

It is interesting to note the convergence of concern for the now 'global world' as discussed by The Club of Rome.
In April 1968, a small international group of professionals from the fields of diplomacy, industry, academia and civil society met at a villa in Rome. Invited by Italian industrialist Aurelio Peccei and Scottish scientist Alexander King, they came together to discuss the dilemma of prevailing short-term thinking in international affairs and, in particular, the concerns regarding unlimited resource consumption in an increasingly interdependent world. Each participant in the meeting agreed to spend the next year raising the awareness of world leaders and major decision-makers on the crucial global issues of the future. (Club of Rome 2008)

time. We might better say, in 'space time.' (Burgin, l996, p. 23)

That it would be space that inhabited our thoughts in the 21st century was an important assertion for the time. We now know as Foucault suggested in his 1967 lecture that; *"…the problem of siting or placement arises for mankind in terms of demography".* Foucault makes it clear that it is not just about how many people will live in the world but also about how problems of physical proximity and proximity of relationships are negotiated and defined. The assigning of place and demography is a problem demonstrated over and over again in migratory shifts (of large and small scale movement) due to for example, war or famine or natural disaster.

Foucault's *Of Other Spaces* proposed the concept of 'heterotopia.' He suggested that there are 'different spaces' that contest the spaces we know and are unlike the space we live in. He suggested that these sites probably exist in every culture and in every civilisation and like utopias, they reflect society and have a *'general relation or inverted analogy with the real space of society.'* But utopias are not real places. Foucault referred to utopias as '*sites with no real place*'. The '*other spaces'* he calls heterotopias are, unlike utopias, real places. They are '*counter sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia…these places are absolutely different from all the sites they reflect and speak about.*' (Foucault 1967)

Foucault began by describing heterotopia in relation to utopia. This does not mean though that a heterotopia is a space that utopia promises. It is an '*enacted space'* with the possibility of altering the expectation of utopia in a way that makes it real. Utopia after-all does not exist. He used the mirror as an analogy.

'I believe that between utopias and these quite other sites, these heterotopias, there might be a sort of mixed joint experience, which would be the mirror. The mirror, is after all, a placeless place. In the mirror I see myself there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror.

An example of the impassioned debate surrounding this issue in this time of heated political activity was demonstrated by Jean Luc Godard in his film *La Chinoise*, *"It was the same year 1967 of the 'heterotopia' lecture…(that) he had the pro Chinese student throw tomatoes against a copy of Foucault's The Order of Things, a book whose 'abrupt discontinuities in the thinking of the time' were taken as a 'symbol of negation of history – and therefore of the negation of revolution".* (Defert 1997 p. 276)

But it is also a heterotopia in that the mirror does not exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there… The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there. ' (Foucault, 1997, p 265*)*

Foucault's mirror analogy invites some consideration of Lacan's 'mirror stage' that is *'that process which includes the entry into language, into socialisation, the prescriptive gaze of the other which succeeds in splitting the subject into perceiver and perceived, subject and object'.* (Gunew,S, p. 21)

This doubled perspective becomes a trope readily associated with the experience of the margin. The fragmentation of identity and the contradictions in conforming to the doubled gaze of incompatible expectations, as the story of migration recounts, is a frequently negotiated theme that the concept of the heterotopia accommodates.

Foucault clarified this idea by outlining six principles of heterotopia.

1st Principle: 'Crisis heterotopias: *'… are privileged or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, the elderly'.* These change over time. Crisis heterotopias are persistently disappearing and are being replaced *'heterotopias of deviation'* that belong to those outside of the norm. Foucault (1997)

2nd *Principle: '…society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion; for each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or*

Our own heterotopia video still 2007

If the word mirror were replaced by the word video, then a personal analysis of my representation of my children is interesting. In looking into the screen I see my children, and of course notions of identification, alienation and narcissism must be regarded as relevant. On the screen the condition is absence and presence as in the mirror and yet in that absence there is the perception of reality.

another.' The example he uses is the cemetery whose function and location changes according to the beliefs of the society of the time. Foucault (1997)

It is interesting to recognise that there are counter sites that are reflected back from society. There is a comprehension here that these are political spaces and belong to a political ordering. A description of the deviant in any particular society is an example of this.

3rd Principle: 'The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' Examples of this are, the theatre, the cinema, and the garden. This seems an obvious example, but it is the very fact that the space can take you elsewhere that is of interest. It is not that it takes you to another place in the viewing, but that it can allow a place and space where the *'other'* exists.

4th Principle: *'Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time--which is to say that they open into what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. Museums and libraries, the idea of accumulating everything.* Opposite to this are those hetrotopias linked, *'… to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival.'* These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal; they are rather absolutely *'temporal (chroniques).'* (Foucault 1997)

5th Principle: *'Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In general, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place. Either the entry is compulsory… or else the individual has to submit to rites and purification…others on the contrary that seem to be pure and simple openings, but that generally hide curious exclusions…could perhaps be found in the famous American motel rooms where a man goes with his car and his mistress and where elicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden.'* (Foucault 1997)

When I first read Burgin's quote below, It seemed to provide an explanation for why I so readily accepted the mirror analogy and Foucault's concept of the mirror as heterotopia. The language Burgin uses is language that I find particularly relevant when the *'seer'* is looking at her own children.

'Since the seer is caught up in what he sees, it is still himself he sees: there is a fundamental narcissism of all vision. And thus, for the same reason, the vision he exercises, he also undergoes from the things, such that, as many painters have said, I feel myself looked at by the things, my activity is equally passivity - which is the second and more profound sense of narcissism: not to see the outside as others see it, the contour of a body one inhabits, but especially to be seen by the outside, to exist within it, to emigrate into it, to be seduced, captivated, alienated by the phantom, so that the seer and the visible reciprocate one another and we no longer know which sees and which is seen.' (Burgin 1996, p. 4)

It occurred to me as I was reading this that those little cafes that sprout up in the migrant 'ghettos' those Greek cafés where only men seemed to go to, or now, the small Somali restaurants that are restrictive and

Wim Wenders described his American hotel in *The Million Dollar Hotel* as '…a ship of fools, a madhouse, a substitute for the closed asylums…' (Köhler, 2000, pp 45.)

The last trait: *'… of the heterotopia is that they have a function in relation to all the space that remains. This function unfolds between two extreme poles…Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned, as still more illusory. …Or else, on the contrary, their role is to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled. This would be a heterotopia not of illusion, but of compensation…for example the first wave of colonization in the seventeenth century, of the Puritan societies that the English had founded in America and were absolutely perfect other places'* Foucault (1997)

The spirit in which Foucault's lecture was given is un-stated. Some of the examples I think indicate a lightness of spirit, and as I have already written the essay was not printed again widely until 1984. However it seems that a spatial deconstruction was necessary and unavoidable for the time. Edward Soja makes this point in his book *Third Space,*
'... that the assertion of the alternative envisioning of spatiality (as illustrated in the heterotopologies of Foucault, trialectics and thirdings of Lefebvre, the marginality and radical openness of bell hooks, and the hybridities of Homi Bhabha) directly challenges… all conventional modes of spatial thinking. They are not just 'Other Spaces' to be added on to the geographical imagination, they are also 'other than' the established ways of thinking spatially. Soja, (1996)

Each heterotopia is in a sense an indicator of the society (and it's political construction) in which we live. Locating those spaces and understanding their function, recognising changes, movement or reversal in their roles enable us to locate and understand our spaces, not through interior devices such as Bachelard (1964) allows, but through real exterior spaces that are formed and changed as society/culture/tradition/laws move

closed, are examples of places that seem to have an obvious function, drinking coffee or eating, but are really places where groups of people can gather in order to negotiate their new surroundings. The function changes when assimilation becomes a possibility for that particular group

Once again this drew me in, this third principle. When I was making the video work, I felt that showing the work had to be considered carefully. It had to be shown in a space capable of allowing it to belong to that heterotopia. Even though the idea of deviation, not belonging to the norm may not be openly expressed in the video work, I think it is true to say that the work is not usual in it's representation of the family and therefore needs to be considered in a space that allows that viewing.

Foucault wrote about heterotopias again in *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences.(2002)* Here Foucault offers us an explanation for the difficulty we might have in articulating the heterotopia. I think it is true that we find it difficult articulating who we are as people in those spaces and why I trip over those words when I want to identify myself or my children as belonging to a heterotopic place.

from one state to another. Heterotopias intersect with each other and have familiar attributes, but are still 'other'. They may be entirely incompatible, some are solely about space and others have a spatio – temporal relationship.

Foucault says they *'draw us out of ourselves'*. This language seems to give them a place in our interior, but Foucault's argument maintains that each of these spaces can be located in real sites, however because these sites relate to and reflect other sites they can be difficult to recognise or distinguish.

The concept of heterotopia draws in the margins and there are a number of authors writing about social or racial conflict, about migration and displacement or about gay issues, who have used the heterotopia model as a framework for the understanding, recognition and location of marginal groups. Newman (2000) writes, that heterotopias have an obvious reference *'…to the gay enclave, often a real geographical location that has an undeniable physical form…for example Sydney's Oxford St… is also an imagined community.'* (Newman 2000)

Dominic Head in his analysis of Nadine Gordimer's novels discusses heterotopias in relation to black urbanisation. He writes,
'The specificity of South African urbanisation suggests not only a challenge to conventional descriptions, but also the existence of sites from which energies for social change might emerge. Foucault's concept of 'heterotopias' helps explain how such a possibility can be conceived… The concept of heterotopias can identify the sites of social experience and hence of social struggle. The black urban experience in South Africa – especially township life - is a manifestation of disposition and repression…In this sense one might talk of black ubanisation as heterotopia, a socially created spatiality (albeit within strict confines) which maintains a contradictory link to all other sites of South Africa, to which it is the required source of exploitation as well as the banished site of repression.' (Dominic Head, 1995 p. 29*)*

Film is often concerned with the alienation of people who 'belong' elsewhere in other places. Wim Wenders is one example of a

Utopias afford consolation: although they have no real locality there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region in which they are able to unfold; they open up cities with vast avenues, superbly planted gardens, countries where life is easy, even though the road to them is chimerical. Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy 'syntax' in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite one another) to 'hold together'. This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: they run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of the fabula; heterotopias (such as those to be found so often in Borges) desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences. (Foucault 2002)

filmmaker who uses space and place never in a subordinate role, but as an impetus for the narrative. His narrative is often about an inner crisis that is told through a place that reflects that crisis. We recognise *Paris Texas*, *Wings of Desire*, *and The Million Dollar Hotel* as examples of this. Wenders' locations always reflect that inner disturbance. The hotel in *The Million Dollar Hotel*, was still occupied by its residents. Wenders shot on location using one floor of the hotel. He described the hotel as *'…a holding place for the most destitute residents of LA, who otherwise have to live on the streets in the makeshift encampments that appear every night and are swept away each morning by the street cleaners to free the daytime streets for business and tourism.'* (Jones 2008) This is a perfect description of a heterotopic place.

Foucault's proposition on heterotopias might also be a vehicle for understanding how the modern family operates. His first principle for example allows a space, where childhood is lived outside the norm, may be understood.

'Rites of passage', and the notion of belonging to the 'crisis heterotopia', or 'heterotopias of deviation' apply to children for example, who suffer in loss, displacement, separation. Children's lives are not assumed to be difficult; certainly in our society children are thought to possess a naivety and innocence brought about by an unburdened existence. The 'essential mythological resource' of the family is that of a utopian existence and certainly family video more often than not tries to represent that utopia even though we know that families are fraught and that their existence revolves around a forced participation in ceremony.

The 'home movie' camera is rarely picked up in times of distress; the nostalgia of this emotion is more often than not lost in family video (unlike its representation in film). Captured domestic histories are liminal in the sense that they attempt to be something they cannot be. There are always gaps between what's imagined and what's there. But the mythology of the utopian family is consecrated by the still photograph or the video footage.

Of course there are always exceptions. The exception I particularly admire is the work of Richard Billingham (2008) who wrote about photographing his family,

'my father raymond is a chronic alcoholic.

he doesn't like going outside, my mother elizabeth hardly drinks, but she does smoke a lot.

she likes pets and things that are decorative…

that's the thing about my dad, there's no subject he's interested in, except drink….

it's not my intention to shock, to offend, sensationalise,

be political or whatever, only to make work that is as spiritually meaningful as I can make it –

in all these photographs I never bothered with things like

the negatives. some of them got marked and scratched.

I just used the cheapest film and took them to be processed at the cheapest place. I was just trying to make order out of chaos.'
(Billingham 2002)

The idea of replacing Foucault's mirror with screen in looking at cinema became an obvious substitute. I found that Powrie (2005) had done just that in his essay *Unfamiliar places: 'heterospection' and recent French films on children.*

Film does represent children in crisis, eg. *Central Station*, by Walter Salles, (1998), *Bad Education*, Pedro Almodóvar (2004) but according to (Powrie 2005), that space of crisis is most often portrayed nostalgically. Domestic video representation it seems is not alone in its nostalgic representation of children.

'Film representations of children look nostalgically backwards at childhood as a moment of purity and freedom from the materialistic restraints of the adult world'. Powrie then cites Richard Coe, who in his study on autobiography, writes, *'The Romantics were unable to make the distinction between the reality of their child selves and the sentimentalised–idealized image of childhood innocence… it is a fantasy that has endured.'* He says that this liminal nostalgia is still present. The subtext is*, 'I wish I could attain that state of innocence again' (nostalgia tinged*

The hotel we stayed in, Mildura (video still 2005)

I have been filming my family - happy family is the pretext even during difficult times when we have been dealing with illness, death, dislocation, separation…

Of course I wanted none of the horror represented, that would signal me as mother, a failure.

with self pity)…or …I'm glad my childhood was not like that (nostalgia tinged with pity)' Powrie 2005

Domestic video is not alone in its nostalgic representation of children.

Foucault's final paragraph in *Of Other Spaces* I think explains the value of imagining the consequences of those margins not existing.

'*…and if we think …that the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself , that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea... The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilisations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.*' (Foucault, 1967)

Two important trips, once to Sydney and another to Mildura were taken at times of high emotional stress, but there is no evidence of that stress in the home movies taken at the time. (I make the distinction between the home movies, and the video works I made for this project.) Why didn't I film the crying and the anger?

I was never able to film those intimate moments. For me they were just not appropriate on video. Those memories sit in more important places; in a place where memories can, for each of us, become what we make them. It is far too easy to use a few minutes of video as evidence of either what we believe to be true or for it to remain in conflict with our memories.

There was also an element of wanting to capture evidence that might override my children's memories of their own lives, just in case they didn't remember the times that were good.

"The surest sign of wonder is exaggeration" Bachelard (1964) says. Perhaps this is the concept I have been working with. Exaggerate and that will fill the viewer with wonder. No need to tell the truth really. But we all hold on to the memories we think are about the truth of our existence.

CHAPTER THREE

THE HOME MOVIE

Recently I questioned my mother about a particular photograph in her album. The photo was of a group of people I didn't recognise. They were sitting and standing around a dining room table obviously celebrating an event, a birthday or anniversary. My mother didn't know who they were either. It seems the photograph had been accidentally placed in amongst her photos when she had picked them up from the camera store. She had never thrown the unknown family away. It has sat in amongst all our other family photos for the past forty years.

The history of the representation of family has been well documented. Martha Langford (2001), in her book *Suspended Conversations: The After life of Memory in Photographic Albums* is one such documentation. She writes about the ritual of the family album, and referring to Bourdieu, claims,

'…a certain reverence creeps into Bourdieu's text as he sketches the modern rite of initiation, the presentation of the family album to the stranger in chronological order, the logical order of social memory. This tribal ritual, he, says, confers solidarity and decency on the group, whose collective interest over rules the individual…all the unique experiences that give the individual memory the particularity of a secret are banished from it, and the common past, or perhaps, the highest common denominator of the past, has all the clarity of a faithfully visited gravestone… By collective will, the strained, the posed, and the stereotyped are redeemed.' Langford, (2001)

As Bordieu points out, we have always edited and manipulated our family histories. We do this by making decisions about what we photograph, what we put into the family album and what we leave out. We usually have some regard for what we remembered of the events and individual aesthetics but these

My son's own utopian view of *The Bridge in Robivale* (2005)

elements are entirely subjective. The availability though of digital video and home editing suites, along with our experience of the medium, means that the manipulation of our histories can be accomplished in much more deliberate and sophisticated ways. The same ten minutes of footage might be edited in any number of ways and it is far more likely that the disastrous family gathering will be edited as a triumph. (Spence, J, 2004) The possibilities of manipulation are endless and the consequences interesting. What if, in constructing a representation of the family, we unintentionally, create, a 'star' system within the family or an entire fabrication of the family history?

That the still photographic image will no longer exist in its present capacity as the prime recorder of our family histories is apparent; the commercial viability of digital video technology aimed at home consumption inevitably means a move away from the still to the moving image as the choice for family documentation. This becomes even more inevitable as the digital camera and of course the mobile phone now also have the capacity to take video.

Portrait photographers were employed to take photographs in the tradition of the painters of the nineteenth century. When in the 1880s Eastman popularized the camera, we had a firm understanding of the conventions of photography; Kodak (George Eastman House archives) produced instructional booklets on not only how to use the camera, but how to take the portrait. These conventions attached to family portraits are mostly followed despite some aberrations of fashion, but we understand how to read photographs especially when they are packaged in a family album. Where will the conventions for digital representations of the home movie be derived? Our models will not come from the video artists who have been the fore runners in the use of and experimentation with video, (the art gallery is not the common experience for the moving image) but will come from a set of codes that are translated from our understandings of 'good viewing' and this for most, will be referenced in popular film and television. The home movie, will I think, suffer from the inescapable internalisation of well-

The home movies (Web page still 2007)

reinforced filmic codes that are prescriptive and make the construction of other forms difficult to internalise. Whatever the convention becomes, the home video will be a hybrid of the still image, of film, of television, and of the internet.

Marshal McLuhan (1964) writes, ' …any technology gradually creates a totally new human environment. Environments are not passive wrappings, but active processes"

Leighton says with regard to this, "…what we might consider 'television', 'video art', 'the cinematic' or other – are artificial and similarly indeterminate; their presumed boundaries are in fact permeable. To assume the stability of any artistic (or non artistic) media is to fail to appreciate that different image making practices frequently cohabit the same technologies: video, for instance, encompasses home movies, digital film, commercial television, internet broadcasts and video art. Every term presents different dilemmas, complexly intertwining with others." (Leighton, 2008 p 11)

McLuhan's (1964) '[technological] environments are not passive wrappings but active processes' once again applies.

Examples of the adoption of these codes are familiar to any one who has spent time navigating their way around YouTube. Video blogger, Steve Garfield, for instance, began uploading videos of his family in 2005. He made 53 movies that year of what he called The Steve and Carol Show. His opening sequence is of himself and his wife Carol, sitting at the kitchen table with a little soundtrack similar to the themes of many television sitcoms we are familiar with. The content was carefully chosen and the editing was made in the genre of comic sitcom, but the content is the home movie, the holiday trip to the snow, putting up the Christmas lights or sharing recipe ideas with Steve's mother.

YouTube and the home movie is a perfect example of McLuhan's assertion and the Steve and Carol Show is an example of this.

The slightly more troubling videos on YouTube take their

Working with moving images has a quality of transience that fills minds with possibilities. Where Barthes (1980) talks of a photograph as a 'certificate of presence', I think the moving image shreds that presence. The sustainability of truth-value even on the most subjective level is not fixed. I, as the subject, work fully aware that I can alter the meaning of any moment in my construction of a video.

(George Eastman House archives)

example from shows like *America's Funniest Home Videos* (1990-) that 'exploit' families for a laugh, or *Jackass,* (2000-2002) that humiliates. On YouTube, the uploaded movies that adopt these formulas seem to be taken by younger members of the family and have an edge to them that we don't often see in the traditional home movie. For example, the young boy who was tormenting his sister with the camera while she was in the middle of a fight with her mother, taunting her with, 'this is one for YouTube' and it was. This form of the home video has informed this exegesis, but it requires further research beyond the reach of this project.

Emma Crimmings (2003) wrote of Naomi Bishops and Richard Raber's work, *Traces,* in the exhibition Remembrance and the Moving Image

'Traditionally home movies have been preoccupied with recording life's 'happier' moments: a child's first steps, weddings, holidays, parties and reunions. The intention is to avoid remembering life's darker moments; loss, grief, regret and longing. And yet these accidental moments lurk, like covert agents, on the edges of a frame, appearing in a smile or the simplest of gestures, with little respect for the original documenter's intent. What makes Traces so compelling is its ability to reveal the moments that sabotage the lingering smiles of the Super 8 personae.' (Emma Crimmings 2003)

In video we inevitably form patterns of narrative that are beyond the suggestive narratives of stills. The difference between video and the still is more than one degree of constructedness. A still is chosen, it is a definitive limited moment and we can read and remember between these moments. It is framed on the page. But a piece of video footage never engages with the page. Recognising those *'revealing moments'* is what makes the moving image powerful and telling.

"To use one of Bergson's lovely expressions, the image of our perception – like the video image – is created from 'visual dust'. Video technology allows us 'access' to something that belongs to the dimension of pure perception beyond the image, to the flows of light, to the flows of the flux – matter. Video assails and

The Carol and Steve Show: Episode 48 - In the Kitchen

This week we're back in the kitchen, where the Carol and Steve show began. Carol and I discuss the future of the show, why coffee is hotter than pasta and whether or not everything goes on the web.

Select Player

processes something of pure perception..." Lazzarato (2008)

This '*pure perception'* (Leighton 2008 p. 286) and its quality of immediacy (the cheap cost of video tape, and the portability of the camera, enables long sequences to be recorded) feels quite different to the physical nature of film and the quality that the intervention of the chemical process gives it. (Leighton 2008) This immediacy allows us to think of video as the perfect medium for the documentation of the family, and its quality reminds us of the most accessible visual medium in the home, the television.

In Tanya Leighton's introduction to her book, *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, she has a section titled *The Problem of the Medium* in which she discusses video and its place within the moving image and its early relationship to film. She cites examples from the 60's and 70's such as Andy Warhol's 'mediation' of film and video in his portrait of 'Edie Sedgwick, *Outer and Inner Space*, Bruce Nauman's work, *Live Taped Video Corridor and* Vito Acconci's *Centres*. These she says all point to '*video's immediacy'* and that the '*now-ness of communication is both opened and foreclosed in television.'* She goes on to say, '*If there is a difficulty in specifying and articulating the formal language of video, it may be attributed to it's instantaneity – the quality of it's being able to produce the image simultaneously as it transmits it…video seems stuck, ontologically speaking 'between cinema and a hard place' – the hard place of television.'* (Leighton, 2008, p. 23)

The concept of 'being stuck' though, has to be re evaluated in the light of the advances in video technology. While film stock, processing and projection has remained static, the major advances in video have meant that it is no longer confined to the small screen, that video is now capable of being projected on to large screens without any degradation of quality. (Horrigan 2008) Once again, a hybrid 'other' means a transformation of those mediums and a change in their relationship to the medium occurs.

This is an important understanding in the locating of my work,

On how video actually works,

'*Pure perception exists only as abstraction for us because a filter that makes something visible is necessary for it to appear. 'A large sieve must intervene here like an elastic and shapeless membrane, like an electromagnetic field in order to have something emerge from this chaos…from the physical point of view chaos would be a universal attack of dizziness, the entirety of all possible perceptions as infinitesimal or endlessly small as they may be; the sieve extracts the differences that integrate themselves into regulated perception.'"* (Deleuze in Lazzarato 2008)

because I have used the video of the small screen, the digital home movie, intended for the television or computer screen and made work that feels to me has an aesthetic grounded in film and is intended not for a cinema but for the large wall of a gallery. What was originally shot as a home movie has become an installation for the walls of an art gallery.

Bellour (2008) writes on this through the discussion of a work by Bill Viola, *Slowly Turning Narrative* (1992) He writes,
'*Why this very strong term, narrative: narration, story, fable, tale? And why a revolving story? Why slow? Is it in order to differentiate itself from cinema, or that in it's own way, this device shows that film is a narration in images that does not revolve like this*?' He goes on to say regarding the relationship between cinema and installation. '*…one would have to describe the explosion and dispersal by which that which one thought to have been cinema (if one accepts to see it through it's eyes) now finds itself redistributed, transformed, mimicked and reinstalled.*' (Bellour 2008)

Pippilotti Rist is an example of one of many artists who have naturally moved into making work in this transformed medium. The specificity of either film or video is no longer a consideration. A description of one of Rist's installations demonstrates this. Raymond Bellour (2008) in his essay *Of An Other Cinema*, (a reference to *Of Other Spaces),* explained the configuration of her installation as consisting of large projections and small screens and the intersection of the two.

'*Of course I put the three screens into relation with one another: the large one, which seems to be composed of parts of the landscapes in the second one; the second one, which tells me of the third; the third one, where I seek the heroine in her domestic life. I then project this relation on the two mini window screens of pure light. The whole house, the set, seems to explode from within, under the pressure of the mixing of images; each of the objects that surround it becomes a promise of a fictional narrative. The device leads me to combine and re combine fragments of images and words that the spectacle aims at me, starting from the elements that it procures. Definite, limited interaction, but more forced and more lively than that which we*

experience at the cinema. We are indeed in an other cinema.'
(Bellour 2008)

Phillipe Parreno and Douglas Gordon's Feature length documentary '*Zidane A 21st Portrait',* was a film made using 17 cameras, all trained on the title character. The film documents every movement Zinedine Zidane makes for 90 minutes. This is a concept that seems firmly placed in a gallery, not for popular cinema release and while Tacita Dean's choice of medium, 16mm. film, makes work that is not its' traditional content. Her film *Kodak* 2006, where she filmed the Kodak factory in France when she heard it was closing down, says a great deal about the relationship that artists have with the medium. The uncertainty of its continuation as a medium makes it all the more seductive to work with, and it was a medium for art, the work conceptually crosses over. There is a sense of irony in another of her films, *Fernsehturm,* which takes place over 44 minutes inside the restaurant of the famous TV Tower erected near the Alexanderplatz in eastern Berlin in 1969. Goddard, writing about the work noted,

'*It is only barely perceptible that the restaurant itself revolves within the spherical shape elevated high above the city, and that the view keeps changing for the patrons seated so satisfyingly at tables around the outer edge. The restaurant is a structure, like a ship, a cathedral, or a museum, that accommodates human desire and passage.'* (Goddard, 2003)

The hybridity of the moving image offers the moving image-maker choices that allow for the convergence of medium, concept, and viewing that was in the past not available or sometimes regarded as unacceptable.

To come full circle, John Conomos, in the introduction to Mutant Media (2008) expresses this perfectly in relation to cinema, '

But we are also witnessing, as Victor Burgin articulates in his recent fine study of how cinema has been scattered across a variety of media, plus fantasy and memory, the emergence of the 'cinematic heterotopia'. This follows Michel Foucault's essay 'Of other spaces', with its valorisation of the concept 'heterotopia', a place of incompatible, juxtaposed sites.

Therefore, the 'cinematic heterotopia', according to Burgin, 'is constituted across the variously virtual spaces in which we encounter displaced pieces of films: the Internet, the media and so on, but also the psychical space of a spectating subject that Baudelaire first identified as "a kaleidoscope equipped with consciousness"

Home movies website still (2007)

Lev Manovich (2007) in an article *Understanding Hybrid Media* writes,

In the second part of the 1990s, moving-image culture went through a fundamental transformation. Previously separate media—live-action cinematography, graphics, still photography, animation, 3D computer animation, and typography—started to be combined in numerous ways. By the end of the decade, the "pure" moving-image media became an exception and hybrid media became the norm. (Manovich 2007)

I refer to my own work as an example of the convergence of media. My project includes, digital video, super 8, and video 8. The super 8 was originally intended for the screen, Video 8, the television, digital video for the computer screen. I chose footage always according to it's content, not it's medium. In post production I also changed original content for example, I eliminated Muybridge's rider using the program Photoshop frame by frame.

In the same article Manovich goes on to say,

Although the particular aesthetic solutions vary from one video to the next and from one designer to another, they all share the same logic: the simultaneous appearance of multiple media within the same frame. Whether these media are openly juxtaposed or almost seamlessly blended together is less important than the fact of this co presence itself. (Manovich 2007)

CONCLUSION: ON RETURNING TO THE VIDEO PROJECT?

I wrote in my introduction that I came to these video works naively, with little experience in working with the moving image, but what I have concluded is that I had a wealth of knowledge from my experience as a consumer of film.

I made very clear decisions in making the videos. I knew that I did not want an explicit, linear narrative. I had written in my notes that I felt that memory was an invasion of images and was about a layering of thoughts and that this layering was what I had to do in order to explain what I wanted to say about my children, their relationship to me as they were growing up and their response to their father's death. The original footage I had taken had to be worked on, manipulated edited, slowed down. I wanted to use those cinematic codes to evoke a dream like state. Those dream sequences, the repetitions and the slowing down of movement all indicate a cinematic fiction, but I was also telling a story as though it were a piece of documentation.

When I completed the first video, *They know that we are looking,* (the road movie), I recognised that negotiating the narrative would be complex for the viewer. The original raw footage is what we might recognise easily, the home movie; but the montaged and layered work is reliant on the viewer to a number of possibilities in the making of meaning.

When I selected each of the clips to be included in the videos, I was surprised by the way they fell into place. When I saw my son's head floating in the sky, or my daughter skipping at one moment and then looking back in the next to whisper something to me, it felt that that was exactly as I had imagined the narrative to play out and it now occurs to me that the editing was much more deliberate than I had thought. The videos became manifestations of my dreams.

I had chosen the clips to be included in the videos from hours

and hours of home movies that I had taken over a period of twenty years. I remembered a lot of the footage well, but I also rediscovered footage that had been lost to me; for example the early video I had taken on my High 8 camera I found hidden away under my mothers bed. I then had to find a way of seeing that footage again; the old camera had disappeared. I then had to transfer the analogue film into a digital format. That took an enormous amount of time, and it also meant that I became very familiar with those hours and hours of tape. By the time I had completed that process I knew what I wanted to use, although I'm not sure I had any particular criteria for those choices. In some instances I chose clips that I thought were aesthetically interesting, others were chosen because they were linked closely to memories of particular times in mine and my children's' lives. But mostly I think that I made connections in my head of the stories I wanted to tell.

This quote from Bachelard, expresses in ways that resonate of how I worked while making the videos.

'But reverie does not recount. Or at least there are reveries so deep, reveries which help us descend so deeply within ourselves that they rid us of our history. They liberate us from our own name. These solitudes of today return us to the original solitudes. Those original solitudes, the childhood solitudes leave indelible marks on the soul ' Bachelard (1958)

The videos are titled, *They know that we are looking, The floating house, The horse without rider, The young girl, He died, Look at the sea.*

The last three videos I chose to show on a small screen and looped together. They were about those people who were essential in the telling of the story. They surround the other three videos with a context. Essentially they are of my father, my children's father and of myself. Both fathers are dead and their deaths are why the videos have been made. The loss is the essence of the narrative.

The young girl is 8mm footage taken by my father at a family picnic. The movie is one of a number of home movies that my father took when we, my siblings and I were young. I had seen the 8mm movies once or twice and remembered that particular

Long before I had made the decision to show a series of video works for this project (I had intended to show stills, not video), I found some notes that I had scribbled down.

Project – take stills from all of my video work at particular intervals of time… those images as stills represent that time in that moment…the text that will accompany each image will engage in what has just lead to that image and what has happened immediately after the moment. The text should be quite minimal, it shouldn't tell a complete story, there should be as many interpretations as there are viewers.

The project should be about a partial or diluted memory of a time. The stills should feel as though they are not ordered in any linear construct but of course are ordered as a result of my actions… construction as a way of representing imagery happens regardless of the imagery…so while there is some ambivalence of meaning the loading of intended response can be constructed

piece of footage of the young girl (me) running towards her father. I was drawn to this because of the link that that provided to myself as a child and to that of my children's lives. I was also very drawn to the aesthetic of that piece of footage, and it's expression of childhood.

He died, was taken at a party at our house with a High 8 video camera. Of all the footage I had of my children's father, it was this video that I had to include. I remembered that it existed, but I hadn't been able to find the tape. It became more and more important to find this as I neared the completion of the project. When I did find it, I understood my obsession. It was important to represent him as we remembered him before he had been overcome by his addiction.

Look at the sea is a video tape that my father took when he went to visit his home some thirty years after he had left it. *Look at the sea* offers a context for the repetitive use of the sea in my videos. My fathers' home was an island in the Aegean and it explains the strong connection we had to the sea as children and the subsequent connection to my children. The sea is the repetitive and connecting theme in the final videos.

The sentimentality of the work concerned me - my use of the obvious metaphor and archetypal images. The house, the horse, the ocean and the road, those images were in my head from the very beginning and they told the story. All of these elements seemed necessary, but irrationally so. I have already spoken of the sea and its relationship to my father and husbands' experience of migration. The road and its ties to an important trip we took after the death had to be there, and the horse and house both.

I think that the installation of the work helped to negotiate the sentimental nature of these videos. The gaze that moves from one video to the other as they played opposite, and diagonally opposite one another to form a triangle meant that the sentimentality was broken by the interruption of each of them at different points of the narrative. None of the videos were easily read as singular narratives. The gaze of the viewer also served

I know I don't want to leave evidence around for my children to find. I know they have memories but I want my memories through my home films to override their memories of their own lives.

as another interruption. Foucault's heterotopic mirror analogy the mirror or the cinema screen serving to represent that which is not *"…since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.* ' (Foucault, 1997) also helps to break the perception of reality.

Chris Marker's attempt to organise memory in the film *Immemory* (1999) and Michel Gondry's attempt to locate memory in the brain and stop its erasure in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) are interesting concepts. When we play with memory and re negotiate it physically through its re-organisation or it's re telling, re remembering we alter our relationship to it. Gondry's fictional musings that traumatic memories can be located and selectively erased, suggests an understanding that in fact memories do alter and change over time. There seems to be some evidence that suggests that memories are effectively re written every time they're

activated, thanks to a process called reconsolidation. It appears that instead of simply recalling a memory that had been forged days or months ago, the brain forges it all over again, in a new associative context. In a sense, when we remember something, we create a new memory, one that is shaped by the changes that have happened to our brain since the memory last occurred to us. (Johnson, 2004)

That must certainly be the reason for the re-organization of these moving images. It is in order to re configure a history that doesn't suit us. Even the simple act of creating a family album does that. For me as the storyteller and witness, the memories of intense emotion fuelled by images or recollections need to be negotiated. Shards of emotion dissipate when truth is re negotiated.

'Memory is tied to the body and so also to place. This means that memory brings body and place with it, but body and place also bring memory.' Malpas, (2005)
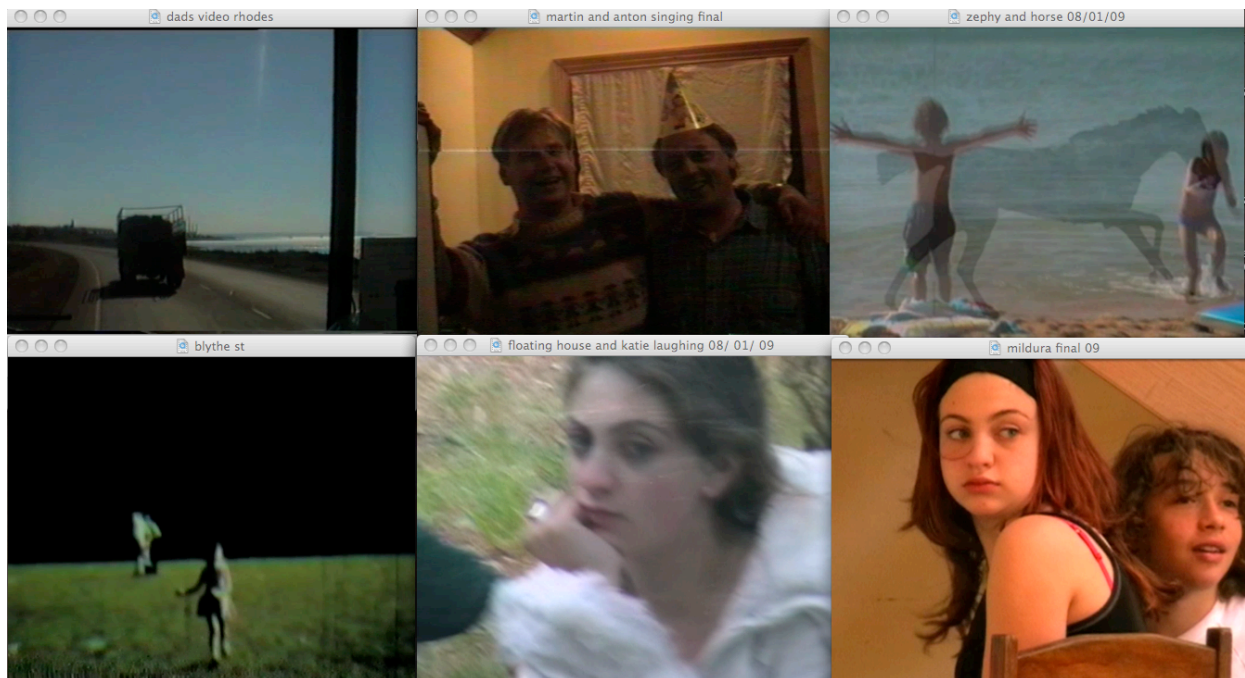
The work: *Look at the sea*, 1990

        He died, 1989

        Horse without rider 2008

        Young girl, 1965

        Floating House, 2008

        They know we are looking, 2008

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