

Accumulated Histories: Collections of Family Photographs

Jenna Edwards

The images in the series *Accumulated Histories* represent an individual or family's entire collection of photographs. There is no information about the people who created these photographs other than the provided name and visual clues that appear in the images such as glimpses of written text. By denying viewers the pleasure of actually seeing the photographs, slides, or Polaroids themselves, the images exclusively investigate the photograph's intrinsic characteristic (as we know it throughout history) as a tangible and three-dimensional object. This physical presence is visually represented in these large prints by removing the photograph's original context as a precious image kept in an album or tucked away in a shoebox. The photographs are instead carefully stacked to resemble architectural-like towers that emphasize the space they occupy and alter the conventional relationship between an individual and a photograph.

Currently, the family album is a fading tradition and virtual imagery is becoming increasingly favourable, resulting in the loss of tangible experience with the photographic object. The images in this series address this with their large scale, making the structural towers of photographs substantial before the viewer and each individual photograph's edge distinct – as if one could reach into the photograph and pull one out. In this way, each image is designed to 'interact' with the audience and suggest the physical experience of interacting with a photograph in their hands. While the images are meant to be experiential in this manner, the relationship between each image in the series is further significant as it speaks more generally about the physical presence of photographs in these individual's lives. *Accumulated Histories* investigates the unique way in which families and individuals amass their created memories and the physical space those images occupy.

Jenna Edwards graduated from Ryerson University with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and was presented with the Best Graduating Student award at the School of Image Arts' annual *Maximum Exposure* exhibition. Since graduating she has traveled to Paris for a photographic conservation and collections management workshop, actively exhibited her work within Toronto, and been published as an honourable mention in Magenta Foundation's Flash Forward: Emerging Photographers 2007 publication.

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