PHOTOGRAPHY LOSS AND MEMORY

a visual account of grief adaptation

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PAGE 4 FIG.2, PAGE 25 FIG.8, PAGE 29 FIG.9, PAGE 30 FIG.11, PAGE 37 FIG.14, PAGE 41 FIG.22, PAGE 93 APPENDIX VI, and PAGE 100 APPENDIX IX HAVE NOT BEEN DIGITISED AT THE REQUEST OF THE UNIVERSITY
Abstract

The development of academic research and professional practice regarding human aspects of death, dying, bereavement and grief, have emerged as a prolific, diverse and at times controversial area. Much of the theories and expert opinion has been largely expressed in scientific or clinical terms; research and practice from a creative perspective, as a sustained and systematic approach, have received less attention.

This practice-led study offers an alternative method to the predominantly theoretical and textual discourse normally encountered within the subject domain. It utilizes the singular or combined application of creative still photography, videography and lenticular technology, as a strategy for the development and application of a ‘considered photographic approach,’ in the study and management of grief. Through creative processes, it explores and interprets human responses to the loss through death of someone close, and demonstrates the value of creative practice as scholarly research, and its significance as a tool for the development of communication and understanding, in the context of therapeutic intervention and personal wellbeing.

Divided into five topics, the research themes have been developed from an evaluation of personal experiences, a reading of the creative and scholarly literature relevant to the subject area, and through third party participation. The themes explored through this practice led research are as follows:

Pictures From Life: creative practice in a clinical context.
Introduces a new UK based photographic led workshop programme, designed specifically for children and young people who have experienced a family death. Through creative practice it opens up a new and stimulating path to the expression of grief, helping to strengthen family communication and understanding.

Borderlines: between hope and despair.
Drawing on my personal experiences, and those of close family members, this is an intimate story of a family coping with grief. Its focus is on pre-term infant death, and it explores the notion of emotional, physical and professional boundaries in relation to that experience.
Monday’s Child: private memorials and the human bond.
Working with case study volunteers, this work reflects on the importance and diversity of the 'continuing bond' humans maintain with their dead. Transported through the words of the bereaved, accompanied by images of their private memorials, it invites the viewer to evaluate the relevance of this practice in human adaptation to grief.

Conversations: non-verbal communication, biography and grief.
Examining the significance of non-verbal visual coding as an expression of grief, this work uses gesture and facial expression as a narrative form. It explores the impact of a sudden death through three personal and contrasting stories.

No One Home: death, relationships and social context.
Using the landscape of the domestic environment as its focus, this study considers the role of memory and its influence in the new and challenging contexts created for the living, following the death of a close family member.

Collectively the visual work incorporated within this research provides a contemporary document and artistic reference, which has proven relevant in a broad range of transdisciplinary contexts including health, education, research and the arts.
Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the De Montfort University, Leicester, UK.

Michael Simmons
July 2007
Dedication

To my wife Alison, for her understanding, patience and love, which has carried me through the triumphs and terrors.

To my sons Edward and George, whose love and humour I can never repay.

To the memory of my Father Thomas Charles Simmons and my Mother Lily.

And to the memory of Charlie, whose is always in my thoughts.
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Special thanks to the volunteer research participants, who generously gave their trust and time to this research project.
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PHOTOGRAPHY LOSS AND MEMORY

a visual account of grief adaptation

Introduction
Introduction

The power of images to interpret events and emotions is a basic premise of art.  
(Bradley et al. 2001, p. 7)

This dissertation presents the ideas and methodologies, which support the practical use of creative lens-based technologies, as a core strategy to explore and interpret human experiences of grief.

The nature of this practical investigation is to demonstrate the effectiveness of a ‘considered photographic approach,’ as a valuable method for the development of personal wellbeing. It is also designed, through exhibition and presentation of the artwork produced, to raise awareness of the benefits of this strategy, in a broader social, educational and health related context.

The term ‘a considered photographic approach,’ is used here to describe the process whereby an individual or group, engage in the formulation and expression of ideas utilizing the singular or combined application of still photography, videography and lenticular\(^1\) technology. This will be discussed in detail later in Chapter One.

Placed in a health context, these lens-based practices have been employed as a means to explore and evaluate personal and emotional experiences of grief. This can assist in “[achieving] both conscious and unconscious expression,” which can act “as a valuable agent for therapeutic change” (Dalley, 1984, p. xii).

The practical work created provides the major contribution to this intellectual enquiry, and this discussion is written as a supplement to that investigation. It is designed to articulate the key concepts of the practical research, in terms of the theoretical, aesthetic and technical approaches relevant to that work, and place it within the multidisciplinary, historical and contemporary framework relevant to the subject area.

Developed over the past six years, the work has drawn on my own personal bereavement experiences, and those of volunteer participants, as primary data to inform, conceptualise and develop the research.
The theories and influences that support this study were stimulated and informed initially through an earlier body of photographic work, which I created retrospectively as an adult, in response to the death of my father when I was a child.

The creation of this original lens-based artwork, involved a process of deconstruction and a reconstruction of events, through a proactive process, which included self-reflection, self-evaluation, and the involvement through discussion with close family members. The negative emotional experiences produced through bereavement, which include amongst others, sadness and anger, were re-aligned as histories, memories and biographies overlapped and resonated, and past experiences became re-appropriated, re-interpreted, and articulated in the present.

Such processes help place the maker in a new relationship to their experiences, through the development of critical distance. A term, which describes the means whereby an experience or event can be understood, and its implications appreciated from a more informed perspective.

Engaging in such activity can play a significant role in the creation of positive emotions, such as optimism and contentment, in terms of understanding or defining the relationship between the survivor/s and the death experience. As Fredrickson has observed:

Phenomenological, positive emotions may help people place events in their lives in broader context, lessening the resonance of any particular negative event.

(Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1371)

As a catalyst for change, such a positive emotional engagement may assist the bereaved to create meaning from their loss. Research has shown that positive evaluation of experiences during bereavement can help to produce 'resilient rather than vulnerable survivors' (Riches, 2002, p. 8).

Presented in visual terms, this can also extend the subjective processes developed through its creation, into an inter-subjective experience, as "a focus for discussion" (Case & Dalley, 1992, p. 1), in a broader social and critical context, as the work engages with an audience.
There are five themes considered and explored in the practical work and these are comprised of the following:

**Pictures From Life:** creative practice in a clinical context.

Introduces a new UK based photographic led workshop programme, designed specifically for children and young people who have experienced a family death. Through creative practice it opens up a new and stimulating path to the expression of grief, helping to strengthen family communication and understanding (Fig. 1).

![Fig. 1](From: Pictures From Life - pilot project 2003)

**Borderlines:** between hope and despair

Drawing on my personal experiences, and those of close family members, this is an intimate story of a family coping with grief. Its focus is on pre-term infant death, and it explores the notion of emotional, physical and professional boundaries in relation to that experience (Fig. 2).

![Fig. 2](From the bookwork: Borderlines Simmons, 2006)
**Monday’s Child**: private memorials and the human bond.

Working with case study volunteers, this work reflects on the importance and diversity of the 'continuing bond' humans maintain with their dead. Transported through the words of the bereaved, accompanied by images of their private memorials. The work invites the viewer to evaluate the relevance of this practice in human adaptation to grief (Fig. 3).

**Fig. 3**
From the bookwork: *Monday's Child*
Simmons, 2005

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**Conversations**: non-verbal communication, biography and grief.

Examining the significance of non-verbal visual coding as an expression of grief, this work uses gesture and facial expression as a narrative form. It explores the impact of a sudden death through three personal and contrasting stories (Fig. 4).

**Fig. 4**
Detail From: *Conversations*
Simmons, 2004
No One Home: death, relationships and social context.

Using the landscape of the domestic environment as its focus, this study considers the role of memory and its influence in the new and challenging contexts, created for the living, following the death of a close family member (Fig. 5).

Although there is a chronological sequence to the production of the five bodies of work, there are overlaps in their development. This became an integral part of the research methodology, as the differing themes, and the way in which they matured, informed the other projects to provide valuable insights, structure and cohesion. They are listed here in the order that they will be discussed, and the date information pertains to the completion date of the work.

Collaboration has been the key element throughout the development of the practical work, which has been presented along with the theories that inform it, to a range of interdisciplinary audiences at workshops, conferences and seminars in the UK, and abroad (Appendix I).

From the outcomes of this extensive exhibition programme, it has emerged that a considered photographic approach to the study and management of grief, is a welcome addition to the range of methodologies normally encountered within the subject domain, which originate predominantly from the scientific and clinical communities. A detailed account of each of these topics will be given later.
Highlighting the contribution this visual research has provided in a cross-agency context, Dr Robert Kastenbaum commenting on my work, has written:

I see much value in your distinctive and innovative work, which will have relevance to human service caregivers, researchers, and people in the arts and humanities.

(Email correspondence with the author. See Appendix II)

Feedback such as this, coupled with successful funding bids received from the Arts Council England and other agencies (Appendix III), underlines the importance of a considered evaluation of the current position of a considered photographic approach, as a research strategy in general, and its impact as a tool within the context of grief study in particular.

Chapter One begins by looking at the origins of academic and professional enquiry into grief through a selective historical analysis. It goes on to evaluate the research focus and strategies in relation to this study, and in the broader context of understanding human experiences. It highlights the importance of individual self-knowledge, and argues that biographical and experiential information, as primary data, is a valid and valuable resource in the study and management of grief.

The chapter looks at collaboration between photographic and clinical practice as a strategy for the development of improved understanding in a diagnostic context.

Chapter Two looks at the historic role that posthumous photography has played in human adaptation to grief. It considers the continued importance that images of the dead play in contemporary white British English speaking culture, and gives a detailed account of the bookwork *Borderlines: between hope and despair* (Simmons, 2006), which has been created as part of this research.

Chapter Three examines how art practices have been used to memorialize human life, and reviews ways in which artists have expressed personal experiences of grief, through creative practice. It discusses in detail the bookwork and DVD, *Monday’s Child: private memorials and the human bond*, which provides visual evidence of how a range of people have adapted to the experience of bereavement and grief, through the creation and maintenance of private memorials in the domestic environment.
Chapter Four focuses on two additional examples of the practical work from this study, *Conversations: non-verbal communication, biography and grief*, and *No One Home: death, relationships and social context*, and gives a detailed account of each of the themes explored.

In concluding, I evaluate the outcomes of this research and argue that a considered photographic approach to the study and management of grief, can be both valuable and effective in terms of the healing process, and contribute to the knowledge and understanding of the subject area.

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**Endnotes**

1 Lenticular Technology uses a row of simple lenses in register with specially prepared digitally interlaced images to create movement or the illusion of three-dimensional depth. See Appendix X for a more comprehensive technical explanation.


3 Dr Robert Kastenbaum is is a renowned scholar and the preeminent authority on the psychology of death. Kastenbaum is Professor Emeritus of Gerontology and Communications at the University of Arizona. He is Founder and former editor, *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, founder and former editor, *Omega, Journal of Death and Dying*, former president of the American Association of Suicidology, former president, Behavioral and Social Sciences section, Gerontological Society of America, and former president, American Psychological Association's Division 20.
Chapter One

The Concept of Grief: an historical overview

Research Perspective: definition and focus

Research Strategy: interpretation and expression

Application: collaboration, intervention and healing

Pictures From Life: considered photographic practice in a clinical context

Some Other Considerations for the Research
The Concept of Grief: an historical overview

Quite deep down I can trace the feeling of a deep narcissistic hurt that is not to be healed (Freud quoted in Jones, 1957, p. 20).

There is a general consensus within academic and professional communities that the foundations for the analysis and understanding of human adaptation of grief, emerged from the psychoanalytical tradition beginning with Freud's influential study, *Mourning and Melancholia*, published in 1917. Freud argued that in order to find resolution to grief, individuals had to detach themselves from the deceased loved one, in order to move forward in their lives. He describes this process of letting go as a formative journey, leading to the acceptance of the bereavement experience only when "the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (Freud, 1984, p. 253). A process, he acknowledged that is "carried out bit by bit, at great expense of time and cathartic energy" (Freud, ibid. p. 253). Although Freud's theory set a benchmark for grief analysis, becoming the dominant model of Twentieth Century thinking, a paradox exists between his theoretical expression and his own personal experiences of grief, following the death of his daughter in 1920 and his grandson in 1923. A letter to his friend Ludwig Binswanger illustrates:

> Although we know that after such a loss the acute state of mourning will subside, we also know we shall remain inconsolable and will never find a substitute.

(Freud, 1961, p. 239)

Freud's exclusion of his personal responses to bereavement in his theories on grief resulted in successive studies continuing with his earlier paradigm (Silverman and Klass, 1996, p. 7). Although there are discussions on grief in earlier documents (Burton, 1651; Rush, 1821; Darwin, 1872; Shand, 1914), systematic enquiry into human mortality and the consequences this has for the living, is a relatively modern phenomenon, which emerged after the Second World War (Small, 2001, p. 21) and was stimulated by:

> [...] the rapid expansion of organised sciences and societal funded research; the appearance of the mental health movement ...and a powerful death anxiety that has been attributed to the use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

(Benoliel 1994, p. 4)
Supporting Freud's earlier concept, later research (Lindemann, 1944; Bowlby, 1979; Raphael, 1984; Parks, 1986) developed new modalities, which also emphasized detachment but indicated evidence of a 'continuing bond' (Klass et al. 1996), which was given less attention in the literature.

In *A New Model of Grief: bereavement and biography*, Walter (1996), highlights these inconsistencies within the classic texts suggesting "selective reading" by scholars. In contrasting lived experience to traditional theories, Walter challenges the "conventional wisdom" and also draws attention to the importance of "autobiographical data" as a comparative research strategy in "the purpose and process of grief" (Walter, ibid. 1996, pp. 7-23).

**Research Perspective: definition and focus**

Understanding is not embedded in the experience as much as it is achieved through an ongoing and continuous experience of the experience.

(Ellis & Bochner, 1992, p. 98)

We live within a complex world mediated by our personal, social and cultural exchanges. Understanding our position within that system is informed by our lived experiences. Making sense of whom we are and what has happened to us is a direct result of renegotiating our past experiences in the present. A process which informs our position in the world, by developing a sense of 'self' and providing a "memory structure" (Schank, 1990. p. 115) on which to establish order and create meaning within our lives (Brunner, 1990. pp. 12-13). As Sociologist Gordon Riches has written:

This project that is 'me' requires that I stock-take these moments, that I arrange them in order, that I set them out into a biographical narrative that show the threads of my life from its beginning to the present moment - and beyond into hopes, fears and strategies for the future (Riches, 2001, p. 8).

Death is a universal human experience, and as Silverman has noted "because we will all die and at one time or another become bereaved" (Silverman, 2000, pp. 468-9), anyone at anytime can find themselves confronted with the consequences of death and the experience of grief.
As defined by Corr et al. (1997) grief “signifies one's reaction both internally and externally to the impact of loss” (Corr et al. 1997, p. 221). ‘Internal’ reaction may be defined as a mental or psychological response, experienced phenomenologically through the negative emotional repertoire associated with grief, which may include anger, fear and depression. ‘External’ reaction may be considered in terms of an individual’s physiological wellbeing and social functioning.

For the purpose of clarification, loss in all cases under discussion refers to the death of an individual, and the permanent absence of that individual from the lives of those who remain. Bereavement describes the situation of individuals who have experienced a loss.

For the majority of people, grief will eventually become resolved over time. Resolution can be defined in this context, as moving on from the death experience, to establish a new and effective life after death. Not in the abstract religious or spiritual sense of the ‘hereafter,’ but in the ‘day-to-day’ reality of adapting to the life challenges imposed by the death of a loved one and the experience of grief. Achieving some kind of normality requires a stabilisation of emotions, with the bereaved “find[ing] an appropriate place for the dead in their emotional lives” (Worden, 1991, p.16).

However, for a minority grief may become complicated. Clinical studies report “that individual psychological responses, such as depressive symptoms, may mediate changes in cellular immunity” (Irwin & Pike, 1993, p.160), resulting in illness.

Negative emotional experience can also lead to a breakdown in an individual’s social performance. This can have a significant affect on relationships both intimately, with family and friends, and more publicly in the broader network of work colleagues and acquaintances. All of these relational mechanisms provide a supportive framework, which may weaken or deteriorate, with potentially damaging consequences including social exclusion or low self-esteem.

Clinical opinion has been divided however, in terms of what constitutes normal or complicated grief, and the concept of “Traumatic Grief is only recently emerging in the
contemporary literature" (Jacobs & Prigerson, 2000, pp. 479-495). What is evident in
the research is that:

[...] positive emotions carry the capacity to transform individuals for the better,
making them healthier and more socially integrated, knowledgeable, effective and

Responses to the experience of grief however, may vary between sociocultural groups
and individuals within those groups, as "common habits, common assumptions,
common standards, belief systems and patterns of behaviour," will define and mediate
the way people respond (Snow, 1964, p. 64).

Differences in cultural behaviour in relation to death, dying, bereavement and grief,
have been documented in a number of studies (Kalish & Reynolds, 1976; Irish et al,
1993; Hayslip & Peveto, 2005). Highlighting some of these cultural contrasts, English
sociologist Tony Walter has observed:

Human societies vary enormously in whether people are required to remember, or
forget, the dead. In millions of Japanese homes, daily offerings are made to the
ancestors. But some Native American tribes refuse to speak of the dead after the
funeral, while others burn all the deceased’s property. Catholics say masses for the
dead; Protestants concentrate on the living (Walter, 2002, p. 2).

Encompassing such an inclusive range of cultural diversity however, is beyond the
scope of this enquiry. Set against the backdrop of mainstream white English speaking
British culture, my research, although specific in terms of ethnic scope, has found
resonances in a broader cultural context.

The reasons for my specific focus are twofold; firstly it denotes my own cultural
position, and as my personal bereavement experiences have been used as a key
source of information, it is of primary significance in that context. Secondly the study
has also collaborated with research participants, who have all volunteered from this
sector. This has not been a deliberate orchestration on my part, as there has been no
other ethnic interest from my efforts to recruit volunteers.

This may be because these requests were printed in English, and therefore, it could be
argued, not specifically targeted with any particular ethnicity in mind. It could mean that
other individuals and groups (for whatever personal or cultural reasons) would not respond to such a request. As a researcher, my individual cultural background and gender may have had some influence on the situation.

It is interesting to note however, that of the people who did volunteer, following the publication of the call for participants, 60% of the respondents were female. This might perhaps indicate the significance of gender in this context, which finds resonance in studies that report on gender differences in responses to grief (Thompson, 1997. pp. 76-88). As Field, Hockey and Small have written:

Help seeking and ‘emotionality’ are part of the conventional ideas about female roles, whereas males are expected to restrain their expression of emotion, [being] more reluctant to seek help from others (Field et al. 1997. p. 4).

Regaining an emotional balance following the distressing experience of bereavement is central to both psychological and physiological health and wellbeing. The focus of this research is to present a means whereby positive emotional change is encouraged, through considered photographic practice.

Research Strategy: interpretation and expression

I have always thought that being creative is there for all of us, like being educated.

(Meadows, 2006)

Although some bereavement studies have acknowledged that photographs “provide a focus for emotional release and exploration of personal feelings” (Riches & Dawson, 1998 p. 125), these refer to the use of existing family photographs, not photographic work created as a specific response to the experience and interpretation of grief.

Such research concentrates on the role that domestic photographs play as “objects of discourse” (Radley, 1990. p. 50). School photographs, holiday snaps and other familial images “establish a link with the past” (Radley, ibid. p. 46). It is argued that these images represent a catalyst for subjective personal and social interaction and reorientation, as the bereaved negotiate the changes to their lives imposed by death. As Visual Anthropologist Elizabeth Edwards has observed:
Photographs are not merely looked at - they are handled, caressed, stroked, kissed, torn, wept over, lamented over, talked to, talked at, sung to, written on, exchanged, displayed and performed in a multitude of ways (Edwards, 2005. p. 40).

In this context family photographs provide a vehicle for the development of a continuing dialogue, through which the bereaved can "[establish] the significance of the life which has been completed" (Riches & Dawson, ibid. 1998, p. 133).

The use of photography in therapeutic and other clinical settings, as an analytical tool for measurement, description and evaluation, has been practiced and understood for many years including, medical and social research.

A range of methodologies has developed within these frameworks, and a variety of terminologies have been created to describe the various applications of these photographically based initiatives. These include, but are not limited to: Photo Elicitation (Harper, 1984; Heisley & Levy, 1991; Banks, 2001; Radley & Taylor, 2003), Photo Novella (Wang & Burris 1994), Photo Voice (Wang & Burris, 1999), and PhotoTherapy (Weiser, 1971; Krauss et al.1983; Berman, 1993).

All of these varied initiatives acknowledge the use of photography, as a means to improve knowledge and communication, as they can "elicit, draw out, [and] evoke responses from participants" (Riley & Manias, 2004, p. 400).

An important point to note however is that the people using these processes are not primarily photographers or visually trained, and are not concerned with the photographic process in terms of aesthetic development or conceptual merit.

For example, a recent study examined the effects that the physical environment of a hospital ward had on patient's recovery. Patients were given cameras to document this environment, and the resultant images were then used as "a more powerful tool for eliciting patients experiences that would an interview alone." Although the images produced could be considered "banal, they were articulated into significance by the commentaries of the patients" (Radley &Taylor, ibid. 2003, p. 79).
Psychiatrists in the late nineteenth century had acknowledged the value of image making by mental patients, and clinicians have recognized the application of art practice as therapy for a number of years (Waller, 1989, p. xi).

Contemporary Art Therapy initiatives provide a system for the expression of emotions using a wide range of creative practices including photography, dance and music. However the basic premise of Art Therapies has similar criteria to the other clinically led applications already discussed, which is "low skill" (Knill, 2001, p. 74), with "aesthetic standards [being] of little importance" (BAAT, 2006).

The subordination of technique is perhaps understandable, given the diversity of client groups within Art Therapy generally. Young children and the mentally handicapped are just two examples of the breadth of the patient/client mix, and the 'problems', which have brought the patient/client to therapy are equally wide ranging.

Although Art Therapists "have a considerable understanding of art processes underpinned by a sound knowledge of therapeutic practice" (BAAT, ibid. 2006), a recent personal communication with the Director of The Childhood Bereavement Network in the UK, highlighted the possible limitations within such practices saying: 

[...] most practitioners come from social work or counselling or nursing backgrounds rather from the creative side - which creates difficulties in that they are wary and diffident in terms of actually transferring what they learn/absorb into their practice.

(Willis, 2005, pers. comm. with the author. See Appendix II)

This raises two important questions for the context of my research, which are:

1. Could considered photographic practice be provided by non-clinically trained individuals to offer additional resources, fortify support and be implemented as a tool in the healing process, and contribute to increased opportunities for research in health and education?

2. Can provision be made to extend the reach of non art-based practice through a professional collaborative strategy between artists and clinicians?

As an educator teaching photography and digital media, a key component in the learning process is concerned with the development of individual practice. By this I
mean assisting students to discover and develop a personal system of analysis and expression on a topic or subject area that is of specific interest to them.

Research, planning and creating are the central processes employed to achieve these goals. Research involves an investigation into the area of interest to develop a plan of action based on an evaluation of the information discovered. This necessitates a range of activities, which could include but is not limited to:

- Looking at lens-based practitioners, who have examined similar themes and assessing the merits or otherwise in relation to the proposed project.
- Looking at other disciplinary approaches to similar themes.
- Exploratory practical investigation of approach in terms of technique style and its application.
- Working with third parties in respect of sampling, information gathering and assessment of project aims and objectives.

Planning involves:

- An evaluation of research outcomes and how they might be incorporated into original lens-based work.
- Testing the theories developed in the research process in terms of viability.
- Logistical organization.
- Audience consideration in terms of understanding and impact.

Creating involves the practical application of the chosen technique/s, informed by the research and planning stages, which includes a consideration of what it will look like.

The aesthetic value here, is not concerned with beauty or craftsmanship as an end in itself. But rather as an integral part of decision-making, which will have relevance to the conceptual and developmental progression relevant to the intent of the work. This will ultimately have influence on both the maker and the viewer/audience.
Applicaton: collaboration, intervention and healing

Telling a personal story becomes a social process for making lived experience understandable and meaningful.

(Ellis & Bochner, op cit. 1992. pp. 79-80)

The advancement in digital technology within photography and lens-based media has provided a wide range of easily accessible resources, both in terms of use, availability and cost, which would otherwise have negated their use. It has also removed the need for specialist environments such as darkrooms. Technology has broadened the scope for the application of creativity, which effectively provides greater opportunities for expression, and enables users to explore personal issues in a way, which would previously have been impossible.

If a system is to be useful therapeutically, however, it has to provide lasting benefits for the patient/client (Berman, op. cit. 1993), and inter-disciplinary professional collaboration could provide the answers. As part of the information and knowledge development process, such collaboration could extend the reach, in certain cases, of the therapeutic process to enable a deeper engagement by both therapist and the patient/client.

A good example of a collaborative strategy can been seen in the work of Deborah Padfield (2003). Padfield worked for eight months with chronic pain sufferers at INPUT, the pain treatment unit at St Thomas' Hospital, London, using photography to help patients visualize their pain. Padfield provided an evaluative, descriptive and diagnostic framework, in a context where words my often fail to convey adequately the necessary information to affect successful diagnosis and treatment.

Highlighting the negative impact poor communication can have, Padfield has written:

It is not only to Doctors that chronic pain sufferers find it difficult to articulate what they are experiencing, but also to family and friends. The place this leaves them is often lonely and unreachable by those outside it (Padfield, ibid. 2003, p. 17).
By enabling patients to analyze, deconstruct and reinterpret their pain through image making (Fig. 6), Padfield effectively breached the communication barrier imposed by language. The results are "something more valuable for both doctor and patient" (Pither, 2003, p. 127). It could also be added that it improves understanding in the broader social network to which the patient/client belongs, providing a more supportive framework.

Similarly, my work developed as part of an investigation into professional collaborative possibilities, combines the experience of a professional photographic artist and teacher, with those of a trained clinician, as a model for consideration in the context of bereavement care.

Applying the unique and specific skills of each discipline contributes to a more focused and dynamic approach, which ultimately provides improved benefit for participants. Through such a strategy, knowledge, skills and understanding are transferred, improved and developed.
In October 2002 I was invited by Tracy Wilson, the Childhood Bereavement Coordinator for the Children's Fund Lincolnshire, to discuss the possibility of providing Photographic Arts provision, as a core strategy in the context of practical bereavement support, for children and young people in the Lincolnshire region. Tracy is a qualified Social Worker and Counsellor, based at the Kingfisher Children's Unit at Grantham Hospital, Lincolnshire, UK.

The Children's Fund is a national initiative funded by the UK Government's Children and Young Peoples Unit (CYPU). The Government established the CYPU as part of their strategy to tackle child poverty and social exclusion. The Children's Fund aims to provide a flexible and responsive approach to supporting children and young people, primarily between the ages of five and thirteen and their families, who are at risk from social exclusion, with initiatives nationwide.

As part of that service provision the Children's Fund Lincolnshire, through the Children's Bereavement Project, offers bereavement support schemes for bereaved children, young people and their families within the Lincolnshire region. Their aim is to provide a service that will respond effectively to the needs of their clients.

Lincolnshire is a large geographically diverse rural county, and as Tracy Wilson has stated:

Mapping bereavement services in Lincolnshire has illustrated that within the county there exist significant gaps in bereavement and art provision, which has contributed to the idea of offering a visual arts bereavement programme. Consultation with bereaved families locally has given significant evidence for the need (Wilson, 2003, pers. comm. 23rd June).

Development

After a number of meetings throughout the winter of 2002, I submitted a proposal (Appendix IV) for a Pilot Photographic Arts Project that would enable children to engage in the creation of considered photographic work, which focused on the terms of bereavement and loss in the broadest sense i.e. loss of friends, loss through divorce,
relocation of school or housing, loss of a pet etc. The focus of this pilot project was to develop an awareness and empathy to the subject as a consequence of that process.

The pilot project, *Pictures From Life: an alternative family album*, took place with a small group of Year Five children (10 students) at a school in rural Lincolnshire in the spring of 2003. The project brought together three qualified and experienced individuals who as a team provided skills in photographic and art practices, teaching, social work and counselling. This was in effect a feasibility study; the aims and objectives were to evaluate the following components of the project:

- The introduction of considered photographic practice (research, planning and the creation of original artwork), in the clinical context of bereavement support.
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration as a project strategy in terms of project team cohesion and effectiveness.
- Logistical management and cost implications.
- Participant response in terms of prior skills learning, knowledge transfer, skills development and increased awareness of project themes.
- Participant group dynamic in terms of the solidarity, integration, and social communication across a diversity of background, gender and individual experiences.
- Quality in terms of delivery, creative output and experience.
- Repeatability.

The pilot project proved to be a conclusive success across all its evaluative criteria. It demonstrated that interdisciplinary collaboration was an effective and valuable model on which to build a workshop programme specifically focused on providing support for children, young people and their families who had experienced a family death.

Children’s bereavement projects nationally are very sporadic, and this new initiative was the first of its kind in Lincolnshire. Much of the work already achieved elsewhere in the UK, has been through support programmes with much less emphasis placed on the recognition of photographic-based practice as a medium for bereavement care.

**The Project**

The Children’s Fund Lincolnshire, wanted to extend its bereavement support, and I was commissioned to design a programme, which introduced the notion of
relationships in family death and bereavement, providing an opportunity for communication and social development for the participants. Children and young people often feel isolated in their experiences of loss and grief, which can lead to social exclusion in its widest sense. Children’s grief is frequently misunderstood or ignored. Misunderstood grief can significantly affect a child’s education, relationships, and self-esteem (Job & Frances, 2004).

Families often find it very difficult to communicate with each other about their feelings surrounding death, and bereaved families constantly request facilitation in the opening up of lines of communication (Wilson, 2003, op cit. pers. comm., 23rd June).

Hosted by the United Lincolnshire Hospital Trust (ULHT) the first Pictures From Life workshop ran as a weeklong programme in August 2003. It focused on children and young people who had experienced a significant bereavement, and were experiencing difficulties as a consequence. Their families had requested assistance, and had been referred to the scheme through the Children’s Fund Bereavement Project.

The Workshops
Play is an integral part of the workshop strategy, and games are incorporated as a means to get to know each other, develop a sense of trust and to provide a release from the intensity of working in such a personal and emotionally charged way.

A few days before the workshop begins, a familiarization session is held and the participants, along with their parents/guardians, are welcomed by the Pictures From Life team, and introduced to the programme. This involves a discussion on the important role that the parents/guardians will have, outside the workshop session, in assisting with their child in the development of work for the project, and helping to maintain their focus and commitment.

A presentation on the possible approaches and techniques the workshop might take is given (group dynamic may alter the way any given workshop will run), to prepare participants and begin the research and planning stages. This includes selecting family photographs, objects and other mementos associated with their experiences, to bring to the workshop sessions.
At the beginning of the workshop, parameters are established on attitude and behaviour during workshop sessions, through a group discussion. The rules established through this process are written down and displayed within the workshop area. A typical list may include:

1. One person speaks at a time – every one listens
2. Respect others
3. What is said in the group stays in the group
4. Help each other
5. Look after each other
6. Trust everyone in the group
7. Share your ideas and your work
8. Be careful with equipment, belongings and ‘special’ things
9. It’s OK to show how you feel
10. Don’t be afraid to speak
11. Don’t think less of anyone because they show their feelings

During the workshops the children are encouraged explore the meaning of bereavement and loss, and invited to share their experiences through oral histories and discussions about their object choices. Through this dialogue, the children begin to express their personal feelings and experiences through the creation of a considered piece of photographic artwork (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7
From:
Pictures From Life Workshop, 2005
Pictures From Life provides an alternative approach to the context of bereavement care, providing a qualified, skilled and experienced team of professional practitioners from creative and clinical disciplines, allied in the provision of a healthy grieving process. This allows the children time to acknowledge and normalize their bereavement journey, by creating a meeting place for others with similar experiences and encouraging self-expression.

Taking part and sharing with others their individual stories helps to construct new relationships, bridging the gap often encountered between emotion and expression (Fig. 8). It also provides an object of discourse that can be shared and discussed in a broader context beyond the sessional confines of its making, thereby extending the reach and value of the activity over and above the processes of its initial creation.

Integral to the project, is allowing others to share the experiences of the children and families who have taken part. To enable this, an exhibition programme is organised a few moths following each workshop. Something the children and their families have all wanted to do.

The workshop outcomes have been exhibited in two shows to date, both at The Harding House Gallery, Lincoln. These were:

- Primary Colours in June 2003
- Through the Eyes of a Child in March 2005

At each event the children and their families were invited to take part in a shared day, to meet again and discuss progress. Responses to these and other follow up sessions conducted by the Bereavement Coordinator at one month, three months and six months, including feedback questionnaires, has proven that the programme has helped to facilitate social development, strengthen families, and reduces isolation.

Pictures From Life opens up a new and stimulating path to the exploration and expression of loss. By taking part the participants can construct for themselves a new and continuous relationship by celebrating their ideas, raising their feelings of self worth and valuing their memories. It is a process, which may endure as the child or

In March 2005 a half-day seminar was organised to promote and disseminate the work of the project, and to launch its website, which I had designed to assist in this process (See Appendix V).

The Director of The Childhood Bereavement Network in the UK, Sarah Willis (who chaired the seminar), has acknowledged Pictures From Life as "a beacon project." The programme has received funding support from The Arts Council England and it is now in its fourth year. See Appendix VI for a copy of the Pictures From Life promotional DVD.

Although it represents only a relatively small study sample, (and as such it is perhaps invalid to make direct comparisons with other more established practices), it is interesting to note, that of all the participants who have taken part, none have required additional support or follow up work. Compared with the variable success of the normal bereavement support mechanisms undertaken by the Hospital Trust. This is an encouraging result.
Comments from those who have taken part, and from delegates who attended the seminar (collected through questionnaires), reflect the positive reception of this initiative and these are detailed in Appendix VII.

*Pictures From Life* has run four workshops since its inception. The workshops are organised in addition to the normal working practices of the team members. It is now in its fourth year, and there are plans to develop the programme as a national initiative.
Some Other Considerations for the Research: ethics protocol and trust

Working closely with Research Participants and third party agencies in real situations requires an understanding and appreciation of ethical issues and the rigorous application of protocols, to legally and morally protect both researcher and research subjects. All participants are interviewed and given a full account of the research activities, its methods, aims and anticipated outcomes, including the difficult emotional journey this may entail and the subsequent placing of gathered information within the public domain.

Participants are required to sign a consent form (Appendix VIII) and are given written copies of all necessary information, inclusive of data protection information and their right to withdraw at any point in the procedure.

The primary goals, following recruitment are:

- To build a working relationship based on trust.
- To gather empirical data in the form solicited narrative disclosure including photographic stills, video and audio recordings.
- To produce original creative work based on collected information.

This process requires that the work produced reflects the, trust and integrity of the participants, and is both a truthful and respectful representation of their contributions.

It is interesting to note that all of the volunteer research participants readily agreed to take part in this research and expressed conclusively their wish to support activities, which would be of help to others, reflecting the value of real experience as a research tool. Because of the in-depth qualitative nature of this study for both researcher and respondents, it is only possible to work with a relatively small numbers of participants.

Building trust takes time and requires a broad range of inter-personal and communication skills.

Rigorous attention to detail in the use of stills photography, video and audio recording of the relevant circumstances, events and situations appropriate to the research themes, is applied throughout contact sessions. Building information in this direct way enabled the key issues to be explored.
Chapter Two

Grief and the Human Bond: posthumous portraits

Borderlines: between hope and despair
Grief and the Human Bond: posthumous portraits

[...] the photograph as the frozen trace of life would seem to be the fitting artefact of mourning both the life that was lived and its passing in death (Liss, 1998, p. 6).

Photographic practice has a long association with death and human adaptation to grief, and photographic images of the dead have shared a continued relationship with the living. From the inception of photography, such images have provided a focus for grief, and mediation with the realities of death (Fig. 9). As Audrey Linkman (2005) has written:

A portrait of the dead at peace could help alleviate the anguish caused to the bereaved by a painful or tragic end. While portraits of those who had died a 'good' death could serve as an example and role model for the living (Linkman, 2005, p. 49).

Fig. 9
Baby in white gown on draped pedestal, c. 1890 Stanley B. Burns, MD and the Burns Archive

These images were often the only photographic record of an individual, especially children. They frequently portrayed the dead as sleeping. Posthumous photography became an accepted ritual in nineteenth century Europe and America¹ (Burns, 1990; Ruby, 1995), and Queen Victoria (an enthusiastic patron of photography generally), hung a post-mortem photograph of Prince Albert above her bed at Balmoral. Although initially photographs were an expensive luxury, the rapidity of the medium's technical developments, and an increase in the number of professional photographic practitioners, soon provided a more affordable and widely available service. However, there is evidence to indicate the difficult nature of this type of work.²
In line with the continuing developments of the photographic medium\(^3\) (products became both cheap and easy to use), social changes in Western attitudes to dying, death, bereavement and grief shifted from the familiar, established and "elaborate mourning rituals of the nineteenth century" (Howarth, 2001, p. 247) to a position, which in an increasingly secularised and individualistic twentieth century, lacked ritual and rejected death (Aries, 1974; Norbert, 1985; Giddens, 1991).

The need for posthumous portraiture however, has never lost its momentum and continues, as a private practice, amongst many individuals and families today. The following photograph supports this statement (Fig. 10). The image is taken from *Monday's Child: private memorials and the human bond* (Simmons, 2005), which forms part of this research. The image is a detail from a 'memory book,' compiled by a widow to document the time spent together with her husband, and this post-mortem image is one of several that form the final chapter in this personal story. A detailed account of this body of work is given in Chapter Three.

Images of the dead are perhaps at their most valued in cases of infant mortality, where there is often little or no history on which to build memories. Hospital Maternity units in the UK have, for a number of years, offered instant Polaroid photographs of stillborn infants, or those who die 'in utero'\(^4\) or in the 'neonatal'\(^5\) period (Fig. 11). Some hospitals offer a more comprehensive service (Bourne & Lewis, 1991. pp. 1167-8). Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester for example, offers post-mortem photography by the Medical Illustration Department on a 24/7 basis. Responding to "[e]very stillbirth, aborted foetus/baby, and neonatal loss at anytime day or night, in any location the Maternity unit requests" (Meredith, 2000. p. 163).
Records of such events illustrate "[...] the importance of photographic images in assisting with their grieving process" (Meredith, ibid. 2000, p. 161).

Drawing on my personal experiences, I have explored the experience of bereavement in this context, through my own photographic practice. This body of work juxtaposes personal photographs taken in the hospital, which include post-mortem images, with specifically created photographs and text to examine this complex issue.

**Borderlines: between hope and despair**

A personal account of infant death in pregnancy

Nobody knows for certain what the future holds. Nobody knows the exact moment they are going to die. There is no certainty. You have to grasp and make the most of what you are given.

(McIntyre, 2004, p. 7)

*Borderlines* is an intimate story of a family coping with grief. Its focus is on pre-term infant death, which could be considered as one of the most difficult areas of bereavement.

Losses involving 'in utero' and 'neonatal' deaths account for a significant percentage of infant mortality. Around a quarter of every confirmed pregnancy in the UK ends in miscarriage. A term used to describe a pregnancy that ends before twenty-four weeks gestation. This is defined by the Stillbirth Definition Act 1992 as the developmental age of a foetus that can survive independently of its mother outside the womb. Anything earlier than that has no legal standing, which has a direct effect on the way the pregnancy is managed professionally, and perceived within a wider social context.

Deaths before twenty-four weeks are not acknowledged legally or medically. There is no legal requirement for a death certificate or other documentation. This contributes to the notion that infant deaths before the twenty-four week point are lesser events (Riches and Dawson, op cit., 1998) and "often not viewed as proper bereavements" (Lovell, 1997, p. 29). Social, political, medical and religious opinions differ in this...
respect, but ultimately it is the families who have to face the realities of such experiences. The word families is highlighted here, as it is often the "women's experiences [which] are defined and managed" (Lovell, ibid. 1997, p. 30); somehow fathers get left out (The Miscarriage Association, 2006).

For most women and their partners, life begins at the moment of conception, with all thoughts, hopes and activities centred on that perception. Loss at any time during pregnancy is equivalent to the loss of anyone "who left a mark on the world and occupied a place in the memories of the people who knew him or her" (Lovell, ibid. 1997, p. 35). The problem is how to qualify those feelings as an individual, within the family and the wider social community to which parents belong, when there is very little history with such an early loss, and nothing tangible to act as a focus for grief.

The work explores these perspectives, which are conceptualized and expressed as boundaries. Gender, culture and politics are the three key areas examined in this complex interconnecting narrative.

Gender in this case refers to the relationships between mother, father and siblings of the immediate family structure. Culture refers to the wider social communities to which they belong, and this includes the broader social context of family, friends and acquaintances. Politics refers to the legal, medical and religious position with regard to pre-term infant death.

Modern hospital policies vary as to the consistency of management in such cases, but that is not a concern of this study. Regardless of the views and opinions of the agencies that manage the individuals and families involved in an experience of this nature, borderlines are created between individuals experiencing the same event.
Our Story

Charlie was our third child, unplanned, but not unwanted. As veteran parents (having had the experience of two pregnancies and births), we were both somewhat philosophical about the event, and had decided not to announce the news to our families, until obvious signs compromised our secret.

Conceived shortly after my mother’s death, in our minds Charlie seemed predestined. The idea that as one person dies another is born, made Charlie feel extra special, and we hoped for a girl. Our other two children are boys, who at the time were ten and eight. We involved them in all aspects of the pregnancy, listening to the heartbeat when the midwife came by for check ups, and looking at the ultrasound scan to try and to pick out a recognisable feature; thinking of names and planning all the activities we would do when Charlie arrived.

Things went along much as expected, with morning sickness and increased hospital visits. Following a routine scan at about twelve weeks, the doctors noticed a thickening of the tissue at the back of the baby’s neck and head, and we quite naturally, became concerned. We were told that the symptoms were consistent with Down’s Syndrome and although a shock, we considered the options and decided to go ahead and accept Charlie for what he was.

When a subsequent scan revealed the loss of amniotic fluid from the womb, we began to panic. A scan at seventeen weeks identified ‘other complications.’ We were sent to another hospital for a second opinion, and the odds began to stack against Charlie’s development. We were left alone in a room like naughty children, although abandoned would seem a more appropriate term for the feeling it created. We were finally confronted with a ‘team of experts,’ who without compassion proceeded to present us with the facts. The only memorable words echoing amongst the medical jargon were ‘non-viable,’ which left us stunned and stinging as if from a slap. There were problems with organ development, and Spina Bifida.

For a few days we occupied a world of disbelief, until finally we were admitted into hospital for a termination. Because of Charlie’s developmental age, the procedure would mean giving birth, following inducement.
We encourage our two boys to meet Charlie and we all spent time together in the delivery suite, as a family.

Later that day, as we left the delivery suite and I closed the door, a swing ticket hung from the handle, like the ones placed on hotel room doors requesting 'Do Not Disturb.' This one carried a logo of a child forming the pupil of an eye with a teardrop (the logo used by the Stillbirth and Neonatal Society, SANDS). I remembered eleven years earlier seeing the same symbol on the handle of a door, as we carried our first child home along the corridors of the same maternity unit.

Charlie was cremated and we have kept his ashes. We have created a garden at home in a quiet corner, with flowers and trees and a bench, where we sit and remember.

The Work

*Borderlines* is a complex blend of images, some black and white and some in colour. These images are interwoven with text, designed and presented as a bookwork, which is as an intentional device to develop a sense of intimacy with the reader/audience.

It is a re-presentation of Charlie's story, which is in fact an exploration of many stories. Through an examination of the inter-relational experiences of wife and mother, husband and father, sons and brothers, it comments on the broader social and cultural context in which the events happened, and how as a family, their individual experiences have contributed to their continuing personal and family life.

It articulates the multiplicity of pregnancy, for the baby as well as others, by exploring the physical and emotional differences in experiencing pregnancy. Research has shown that men, women and children grieve differently. Women may become more absorbed in grief than men, becoming more introspective as opposed to their male counterparts, who tend to return to active social involvement at an earlier stage (Strobe and Schut, 1995). Children vary in their response to grief depending on the age of the child, and the relationship the child had to the deceased (Job & Frances, 2004).
Other important considerations, are the boundaries created by the professional communities who manage and legislate pre-term infant death, which are often at odds to lived human expectations, and ultimate experience.

Through photography and original poetry, written specifically for the work, I explore the notion that in any given situation there are always different perspectives. Some of the images were taken in the maternity suite at the hospital on the day. They bear witness to the event and as such from the foundational platform around which the story is built.

These images are in black and white. The reason for this was not premeditated, it just happened to be black and white film in the camera at the time. We wanted a permanent record of our child, for our other children and ourselves. As photographer Pedro Meyer has noted:

I knew full well that my emotions at the time would not allow me to recall further on, the specifics of any given moment. The photographs have indeed allowed me to return many times to those captured slices of my experiences, and flawed, as those pictures inevitably are, due to the limitations inherent to the photographic medium, I do get a sense of the way it all happened. (Meyer, 2001, p. 03)

Other images have been created specifically for this piece, as narrative links connecting family album photographs with objects and mementos from the hospital and other locations, and situations relevant to the story. These images are in colour.

Poetry was written to augment the predominant visual construction. It highlights the conflict and contradiction between the physical, and the emotional, between the individual and the family, and between the medical and professionals involved with the experience of losing a child in this way.

The poetry’s metre provides a tempo within the work based on the symbolic rhythm of the human heartbeat, which is also reflected through the juxtaposition of large and small images as they oscillate to this pulse in a combined cadence. The text also represents the ‘flat line’ associated with heart monitoring, which graphically depicts end of life, and runs in one straight line across a black background throughout the work.
The black and white images refer in the main to the events within the hospital, and the colour images are concerned with life outside that environment. There is one exception, and that is the last double page spread. Here a colour passport photograph is placed in relation to a photograph of our ‘family wall’ (Fig. 12). This image is in black white, and is symbolic of everything beyond our intimate family experience. Together these images reflect the isolation we felt and still feel, in being able to integrate our dead child in the broader context of our lives.

![Fig. 12](From: Borderlines Simmons 2006)

Our story begins with a passport photograph (Fig. 13). We had all crowded into the tiny photo booth, when the children were much younger, and the resulting image has become an important part of our family album. The photograph gives an insight into the ‘characters’ within the family group, and helps to define us as individuals. But the image is flawed. It is scratched, and shows signs of handling. We appear crowded in the picture contained within the borders of family. This image has been chosen as it establishes unity, intimacy, individuality, and vulnerability.

![Fig. 13](From: Borderlines Simmons 2006)
The written account of 'Our Story' given earlier is included at the beginning of the book, to set the scene. From there the story begins to unravel. It places location and characters in relation to the event, and develops its narrative through the juxtaposition of image and text.

The following spreads (Figs. 14 – 22) translate our emotional responses developed through the sharing of memories, and are presented here for the readers personal evaluation.

The text reads:

between hope and despair, between biased and fair, between damage and repair
between support and neglect, between accept and reject, between hurt and protect

Fig. 16
From: Borderlines
Simmons, 2006

between beauty and beast, between sinner and priest, between famine and feast

Fig. 17
From: Borderlines
Simmons, 2006

between living and dying, between laughing and crying, between truthful and lying
there are borderlines...

between love and lust, between doubt and trust, between flesh and dust
between father and mother, between sister and brother, between self and other

between humility and pride, between conceal and confide, between living and died
The text reads:

always borderlines

The book has been developed with the involvement of the immediate family, through discussion and consultation about our unique set of experiences. Produced six years after the event, it has given us an opportunity to reassess how we feel. Bereavement is not something that goes away, it is a lifelong condition, and as part of our individual and communal past, there has been cathartic value in reconsidering these events. The book, has allowed us time to reconsider Charlie as a family member, and the processes involved has helped to integrate him into our ongoing lives.
Endnotes

1 The Burns Archive is considered to be the most comprehensive archive of over 700,000 vintage images including post-mortem, memorial, medical, war and crime photography. The collection is owned by Dr. Stanley B. Burns, M.D F.A.C.S., a practicing ophthalmic surgeon in New York City, USA. Visit www.thebumsarchive.com for further information.


3 In 1888 George Eastman, the founder of Kodak, introduced a camera pre-loaded with film. Once the film was finished the camera was sent back to Kodak's Rochester plant for processing and the results were posted back to the consumer. 'You press the button, we do the rest' became Kodak's marketing slogan.

4 In Utero refers to before birth, or in a woman's uterus

5 Neonatal is the term given to newborn infants less than one month old.

6 Down's Syndrome is a genetic condition (i.e. something you are born with, which is present in the baby from the moment of conception) caused by the presence of an extra chromosome. Chromosomes are tiny particles, which are present in every cell in every tissue in our bodies. They carry the 'blueprint' for all the characteristics we inherit.

In 1959, a French geneticist, Professor Jerome Lejeune, discovered that Down's syndrome was caused by the presence of an extra copy of chromosome 21, making 47 chromosomes in all.

People with Down's syndrome all have a certain degree of learning disability (mental handicap). The degree of disability varies from person to person and it is impossible to tell at birth what that degree will be. (Downs Syndrome Association, 2006).

7 Spina bifida is caused by problems in the development of an embryo in the womb. It is known as a 'neural tube defect' as it results from the failure of the embryo's neural tube to develop properly.

The neural tube forms in the first few weeks of pregnancy and eventually goes on to form the baby's brain, spinal chord and their coverings. Spina bifida is when the neural tube does not develop properly and this results in an incorrectly developed spine. (NHS Direct, Health Encyclopedia, 2006).
Chapter Three

Creative Practice: memorialization and grief

Monday's Child: private memorials and the human bond
Creative Practice: memorialization and grief

Can storied urn, or animated bust, back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?

(Gray, 1912, p. 41-4)

Historically the visual arts have provided a rich legacy of artefacts that commemorate and memorialise human life and the rituals surrounding death and dying (Llewellyn, 1991; Stevens-Curl, 2001). These range from large-scale public displays including paintings, sculptures and monumental art (Fig. 23), to smaller more intimate items of jewellery, and personal objects (Batchen, 2004) for more domestic or private consumption (Fig.24).

Fig. 23
*The Albert Memorial*
Sir Gilbert Scott, 1872-1876

Fig. 24
*Portrait of a young woman with wax flower wreath*
Makers unknown, c 1890

Artists throughout history have given an "[...] expression to their own grief through works that focused specifically on their personal, losses" (Katz, 2001, p. 1). For example, the English Poet Laureate Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) published his classic long poem *In Memoriam* in 1850. Written as an elegy to his friend Arthur Hallam, it is comprised of 133 poems, written over a seventeen-year period (Gray, 2003).

I dreamed there would be Spring no more,  
That Nature's ancient power was lost:  
The streets were black with smoke and frost,  
They chattered trifles at the door:  

(Tennyson, 1850)
Following the deaths of his two daughters just sixteen days apart, German writer Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) composed *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs for the Death of Children) a group of 425 poems, written between 1833-34.

I often think they have just gone outside  
And will soon be coming home again,  
It’s a beautiful day, there’s no need to worry,  
They have only gone out for a long walk  

(Rückert, 1833-34)

The Austrian composer Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911) set a personal selection of five of these poems to music between 1901 and 1904. In 2005 (commissioned by Picture This, Bristol and Opera North) video artist Mariele Neudecker (2005) inspired by, and incorporating Mahler’s music and Rückert’s poetry, created five video installations on the same theme (Fig. 25).

Other notable examples include Verdi’s *(Requiem* (1874), Auden’s *(Funeral Blues* (1936) Dunn’s *(Elegies*, (1985), and there are many others.

Contemporary lens-based practice is no exception. Mari Mahr explores the memory of her mother in *(Time for Sorrow* (1990) reflecting on the importance of everyday objects as catalysts for remembrance (Fig. 26).

Peter Max Kandhola in his book *(Illustrations From Life* (2003) provides a moving portrait of the final moments of his father’s life. (Fig. 27). Through a detailed analysis of
hair, tissue and fluid we are also invited to reflect on the realities of life and death as “a process of evolution and new beginnings” (Kandhola, 2003. p. 14).

All of this work is concerned with exploring personal experiences, whereby “[...] the breakdown of the everyday structures of living creates a need to reconstitute meaning in story telling” (Skultan, 1998, p. 48). The practice of recounting the dead “tells the story maker who the deceased was, and by extension who the story maker is” (Walter, op cit., 1999), which can provide catharsis.

As discussed earlier, societies differ in their responses to loss through death, and how the rituals surrounding death, dying, bereavement and grief are mediated in a cultural context. Creating and maintaining memorials to the dead, contribute to the celebration of the lives that have been lived.
English anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer (1905 – 1985) however, defined the maintaining of private memorials to loved ones as 'mummification' (Gorer, 1965, p. 79), a term that emphasise a negative or pathological response to grief, a refusal to let go, or to move on. Later research has redefined this perspective, considering memorialization and other strategies to be an important part of the grieving process (Klass et al, op cit. 1996; Riches & Dawson, op cit. 1998; Walter, op cit. 1999).

Grief is an active cognitive process of adjustment, and requires a contemplation of, and adjustment to, changing sensibilities. It requires an acknowledgement and acceptance of emotional significance shaped by personal events. Creating and maintaining private memorials provides an occupation of mind and body. Many people construct 'memory books' as mentioned earlier, or create gardens or plant trees. Such activities develop and promote interest, and as Fredrickson has observed:

Interest, a phenomenologically distinct positive emotion, creates the urge to explore, take in new information and experiences, and expand the self in the process.


From personal experience, creating and maintaining private memorials, has provided an essential strategy in understanding my experiences, and an opportunity of integrating the dead into my ongoing life. As an adaptation to grief this acts in part as a reminder, but perhaps more importantly, as an opportunity of rebuilding new and continuous relationships following the physical and emotional changes brought about by death.

To explore the notion of private memorials, I worked closely with case study volunteers to examine what forms such memorialization might take. Through listening to their stories, I have created a body of visual work, which reflects this practice and its relevance in human adaptation to grief.
Monday's Child: private memorials and the human bond

[...] an unconscious fantasy of resurrection as well as a conscious if reluctant acknowledgement of loss (Kuspit, 1997, p. 98).

*Monday's Child* is a traditional nursery rhyme, designed to acquaint young children with the days of the week. It belongs to a traditional poetic form, which follows a simple structure associating words of a similar sound, organized in a short verse or rhyming couplet. Easily remembered and passed on by word of mouth, these rhymes developed at a time when literacy was an advantage of social status. Such rhymes provided an aid to learning, teaching and memory for the 'common people' (Fox, 2000).

Between the 17th and 19th centuries many of these rhymes, along with religious and political material, songs and stories, were printed as small booklets accompanied with illustrations. Normally printed on a single sheet and folded into various combinations of pages, these inexpensive booklets were sold on the streets, at markets and fairs by peddlers or 'chapmen,' a term meaning 'cheap,' and in all probability related to the Anglo-Saxon 'ceapian', meaning to barter, buy or sell (The National Library of Scotland, 2006). Chapbooks, as they became known, provided a "fascinating picture of the British provincial scene – its everyday life, mortality, and its attitudes toward children" (Stockham, 1974, p. 4).

Adopting an image and text format, as a presentation methodology, the work draws on the 'Chapbook' as representative of the voice of the 'common people.' The work has been developed over a two-year period.

The Work

For me, the prophetic character inherent in the nursery rhyme *Monday's Child* stands as a positive echo of the fundamental potential within every child or individual's development, the life chances and the richness and diversity of humanity as a whole. Death with its random menace threatens to undermine that potential, and dealing with its aftermath forms the central theme of this work, with particular emphasis on the creation of private memorials.
There are two questions to ask:

- What determines the form of these memorials?
- How do people interact with the memorials they create?

As an adaptation to grief, memorials can act in part as a reminder, but perhaps more importantly, as an opportunity of rebuilding new and continuous relationships, which can assist in providing positive meaning for survivors, and help build psychological resilience (Fredrickson, op cit. 2004).

Adopting the oral tradition of the nursery rhyme, *Monday's Child* explores the theme of private memorials through a collection of personal bereavement histories gathered thorough audio recordings of interviews with the bereaved. It incorporates still photographs taken during these contact sessions, in a direct response to the personal, physical and emotional inter-personal dialogue created in this context.

Participants commented on the way in which they were able to talk to me, as a relative stranger, in an open and frank manner. They remarked that our discussions covered things, which they would not have talked to family and friends about. By taking part, they had placed themselves in a new relationship to their experiences, which had proved to be beneficial.

Taking seven of these personal stories, representing the days of the week referenced in the rhyme, the book takes the reader on a journey of remembrance and rehabilitation, transported through the words of the bereaved accompanied by images of their private memorials. Reflecting on the importance and diversity of the 'continuing bond' humans maintain with their dead, and inviting the viewer to evaluate the importance of this practice in human adaptation to grief.

The book begins with *Monday's Child* and shows a woman's hand holding a framed photograph (Fig. 28). The image is faded, but the vague outline of a baby's face can still be seen. It is a post mortem portrait of a stillborn child. For fourteen years it has been proudly displayed alongside other family photographs.
Monday's Child – is fair of face

When the picture came up on the screen
It was obvious straight away
There was just nothing there
I mean...
I've seen scans before
And you can actually see movement
Even if you can't make the baby out
You can see movement
And this was just like a still photograph

Each double page spread (Figs. 29 – 34) represents another day of the week and another personal method of memorialization and interaction.

Tuesday's Child – is full of grace

From the bookwork:
*Monday's Child*
Simmons, 2005
When she was really really ill,
The bed had been brought downstairs. 
She'd lost so much weight with the cancer you see. 
She woke up one morning and said to her husband, 'How big are fairies?'
And he just said, 'Oh they're not very big at all.'
And she said, 'That's what I am... ...a fairy.'

Wednesday's Child – is full of woe

His dad...
...we're split up you see
He's took it as hard as me...
I mean it was his only son
He said to me...
'Get the girls to clear his bedroom'
And I said: 'Not it stops like that until I die'
I feel closer to him in there
I know it sounds silly, but...
...if you open the wardrobe door
I can smell him...
I can smell him on his cloths
Thursday's Child – has far to go

The text reads:

I walked in to his office,
And I noticed that the calendar had not been changed...
And then I realised.
He'd changed it on the 8th,
Because he changed it every day,
And of course he died on the 9th,
So I decided not to change it
Or his office.

Friday's Child – is loving and giving

From the bookwork:

Monday's Child
Simmons, 2005

Fig. 31

Fig. 32

From the bookwork:

Monday's Child
Simmons, 2005

52
I sorted out bits of information I’d got
Things that I found in the house
To make a book of all the memories I have of Pat...
And her time with me
Pat’s life book...
I started the book with a picture that’s on the television
That’s the very first picture I took of Pat
I can’t do any more,
Because there’s nothing else to do
The only other thing I can do is to get on with my life
At some point, you have to get on with your life

Saturday’s Child — works hard for a living

The garden was Kath’s church
She was happy there more than anywhere
Kath flowered it all, and looked after it
And I was the labourer
She always said she wanted her ashes scattering in the garden
And that’s what we did
I don’t think we’ve done too bad...
...for the first year
Sunday's Child – is fair and wise and good and gay

When I get a nice Christmas card I never throw it away.
This card...
He gave that to me the Christmas before he died
In the April
I wonder if he knew he was going to die?
I keep it with all his details,
His funeral service and the flower cards and sympathy cards.

Development

At a recent conference on the social aspects of death (DDD7),¹ I was asked if Monday's Child could be developed into a digital form, and I was invited me to submit a proposal to Springer Publications in New York, USA with ideas in this context. As a result, I have developed the work as a moving image piece, which incorporates the original still images, on a digital 'timeline'.² This extends the potential of the work in a number of ways.

• It remains true to the original concept as a vehicle for voice of the 'common people.' Modern technologies such as DVD's, it could be argued, are the twenty-first century equivalent of the earlier Chapbooks.

• It allows additional information to be layered into the work, including voice and music and text, a process, which can significantly affect the interpretation and
impact of the work.
• As a format it allows greater potential for dissemination as it is more cost effective
to produce in quantity and can be made available via the World Wide Web.

This technique is relatively new, in the context of still image development, which has
expanded with the accessibility of digital technologies.

Historical background

At the ‘Digital World Conference,’ held in Beverly Hills, California USA in 1991, a
groundbreaking, computer based, multimedia photographic documentary I Photograph
to Remember (Meyer, 1991) was premiered. Combining a slide show of still
photographs with an audio track of voice and music, Mexican photographer Pedro
Meyer showcased an alternative digital family album. Movingly, respectfully and frankly
the viewer is allowed access to the intimate story of the final years of his parent’s lives.
Not only was it “the first CD-ROM with continuous sound and images ever produced
anywhere” (Meyer, 2001, p. 1), it demonstrated that a technology associated with
dispassionate mechanical precision, could provide a platform for an emotive human
experience.

The power and impact of the work must also be considered as “for thirty-two minutes,
from the moment the lights went down till the closing credits, there wasn't even the
sound of breathing” (Stein, 2006, no page numbers). Published initially as a CD-ROM,
it can now be viewed on the web (Fig. 35). Meyer's work develops the
documentary/journalistic tradition, from the more typical image and text model, into a
format that adds the powerful dimension of the human voice. Music can further
increase the impact of the piece to provide a more involved sensory experience for the
audience in much the same way as film or television.
The viewer's experience of the work is controlled by the creator, in terms of the pace and the timing of what you see, and when you see it, in relation to the dialogue; pauses being as important to the structure and 'feel' in much the same way as the image content and sequencing is to the documentary genre. As Meyer has written:

The narration and the use of my voice made a huge difference to how the work was perceived. It is precisely because of the inherent limitations of the photographic medium, that the presence of the voice picks up where the photograph couldn't tread (Meyer, ibid. 2001, p. 4).

At a time when the photographic industry was witnessing a renaissance with the advent of new technologies, Meyer was at the forefront creating an e-based platform through his Website Zone Zero, enabling others, with less expertise (either financially or technically) to develop their own personal stories and present them to a broad audience base. At about the same time (still in the US), a group of artists and media designers began to see the potential in the developing technology to create a system of teaching and learning that "challenged the impermeable aesthetic borders" and gave a voice to ordinary people and the "unique gifts, voices, and ideas of the participating
members' which would 'provide] enormous contributions to the culture' (CDS, 2006, no page numbers).

The San Francisco Digital Media Centre (now the Centre for Digital Story Telling - CDS) was born out of the multimedia autobiographical work Next Exit created by media artist, video producer and performer Dana Atchley (1993), in collaboration with Joe Lambert, a theatre producer and dramatic consultant. Next Exit was "an excellent example of the positive impact of new technology on the ancient art of storytelling" (Atchley, 2000, no page numbers), and for the past twelve years CDS have "[encouraged] people to take personal stories and turn them into media mementos" (CDS, ibid. 2006, no page numbers).

Borrowing from that American model, UK journalist and documentary photographer Daniel Meadows began developing digital story telling "as a new television form" (Meadows, 2005, no page numbers), which would become:

An elegant and economic means of self-representation, based on personal collections of still photographs, coupled with a voice-over narration (Meadows, op cit. 2005, no page numbers).

Beginning in 2001 and in collaboration with BBC Cymru Wales, Meadows developed Capture Wales, a series of digital stories created by ordinary people empowered by the learning and teaching of digital media and story telling techniques through workshops. The stories are available on the Web, on radio and television, which represent, as Meadows eloquently puts it, "a gaggle of invisible histories, which tell a bigger story of our time" (Meadows, op cit. 2005, no page numbers).

Unlike Meyer, these stories created movement (utilising the latest computer technology, which is now widely available) with still photographs, using rostrum effects, normally associated with film and television production. They were much shorter in length, around two-minutes on average. These mini movies are no less powerful for the condensed format, in fact the design allows for a greater dissemination of information via the Internet.

Rostrum work refers to the traditional method of creating movement of static objects such as photographs or paintings. With a special camera mounted on a fixed arm at
ninety degrees to the picture plane, the camera can be moved precisely in any direction (a term called 'panning'), across the image and can be used to 'zoom,' where the camera moves from close-up to wide angle or vice versa. In the digital age this can be achieved using software applications.

In either format it adds visual interest and assists in the narrative flow. Ken Burns, an American documentary filmmaker popularised this technique. Using photographic archives, letters and diaries Burns told human stories of historic events such as, The [American] Civil War (1990) and The West (1996) with voice over narration, music and interviews with historians. The pan/zoom technique is now incorporated as a standard 'effect' in video editing software.

Adopting these processes, the digital version of Monday’s Child uses voice over and rostrumed still images. Music has been added as an integral element, as it underlines the intent of the piece. In this case the music has been composed with two overlapping piano melodies of different signatures, which alludes to the ticking of a clock, thus adding a subliminal layer of time to the final moving image piece. The addition of children’s drawings with the voices of children reciting the nursery rhyme, to the background sound of a playground, emphasises my original concept of life’s potential being threatened, and this opens the film. The DVD is available for viewing and can be found in Appendix IX.

End Notes

1 DDD7 is the acronym for The Social Context of Death Dying and Disposal, 2005. It is an interdisciplinary conference held every two years, initiated and organised by the editorial team of the death studies journal Mortality, from the University of Bath, UK.

2 Timeline is the term given to the workspace, which film or digital movie editors use to organise the contents of a moving image work. This includes all elements such as film or video footage, stills, and audio.
Chapter Four

Expression of Emotion: non-verbal communication

Conversations: non-verbal communication, biography and grief

No One Home: death relationships and social context
Expression of Emotion: non-verbal communication

Words very often seem to be the direct expression of meanings... it is only when specific meanings are developed out of [images] that words can flow.

(Bartlett, 1932, p. 219)

As has been already discussed, considered photographic practice, as a vehicle for the expression of human emotion, provides a methodology that can be used effectively to interpret lived experience.

Non-verbal expression, articulated by gesture and in facial appearance, is an integral part of our communication strategy. Since a large percentage of our sensory perception is visual (barring any impediments), ocular information plays a significant role in the way we perceive the world (Hall, 1974).

Scholarly interest in non-verbal expression stretches back to the first formal exploration by Aristotle (384 B.C. - 322 B.C.) in 350 B.C. (Kennedy, 1991). Along with theoretical exploration, visual depictions of emotion also have a rich legacy. French artist Charles Le Brun (1619-1690), in his book *A Method to Learn to Design the Passions* (1667), categorized a range of human emotions into twenty-four drawings, which were used as a reference source for artists and performers.

With the advent of photography in the mid nineteenth century, the photograph soon became the index by which the world was measured as its assumed objectivity, gave rise to the belief that "what was [seen] in a photograph was true" (Ivins, 1953, p. 94). The scientific communities soon embraced photography as an empirical tool.

Dr Guillaume Duchenne de Boulogne (1806 – 1875) a French neurologist, assisted by Adrian Tournachon (1820 – 1910) provided a remarkable representation of physiognomic expression in his book *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression*, published in Paris in 1862. These images were made by passing a small electrical charge through electrodes placed at certain points on the face to stimulate specific muscle reaction (Fig. 36).
The English scientist Charles Darwin (1809 – 1892) in his seminal work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872/1965), examined the relationship between gestures and states of mind. He used a selection of images by Duchenne de Boulogne, as well as photographs of the insane, which he felt expressed their emotions more clearly, as did children. He had concluded that facial expression of emotions were biologically determined, and not learned differently in each culture. In recent times:

[...] scientists have discovered a neurological explanation for the affinity between physical expressions and emotional sensations (Turner, 2005, no page numbers).

American psychologist Paul Ekman pioneered research into the facial expressions of emotions, and with Wallace V. Friesen, developed the Facial Action Coding System (FACS). This detailed technical guide explains how to categorize facial expression (Ekman & Friesen, 1978). By examining videotapes Ekman and Friesen were able to distinguish changes in muscular contractions, and make distinctions between them. They then used combinations of photographs of both male and female models (Fig. 37), who were:

[...] instructed to move particular facial muscles listed in a table. We separately photographed the three areas of the face, which were capable of independent movement – the brow/forehead; eyes/lids and the root of the nose; and the lower face, including the cheeks, mouth, most of the nose and chin (Ekman & Friesen, 1975, p 28).
By combining these various photographic representations, they provided a model for the categorization of human facial expression.

The following body of work harnesses non-verbal coding as a narrative form, to explore human responses to grief. Developed over a two-year period, the work examines its theme through the isolation of facial expression and body language, from video taped interviews.

**Conversations: non-verbal expression, biography and grief**

For a deceased person in the West today who is mourned by more than one rememberer, there is comparatively little provision for the mutual interplay of their memories of him (Vitebsky 1993, p. 259).

Non-verbal communication can convey significantly more information than speech alone, which demonstrates the importance of gestural coding in the interpretation of speech. As psychologist Geoffrey Beattie (2003) explains:

> With these movements the brain is spontaneously generating an image to convey semantic information [...] the gestures are instantly understood by others. We learn language by learning about word meanings. But, here, the brain is spontaneously generating images, abstract things that other brains recognise (Beattie, 2003, p. 19).

As a universal picture lexicon, our gestures and facial expressions can communicate a diverse range of both blatant and subtle nuanced information, which also at times
contradicts the words that we speak. We may say for example that we are fine, but our body language will indicate that we are not fine (Beattie, ibid. 2003).

The Work

*Conversations* has two strands to its concept and development. It began life with the intention of providing a visual lexicon of emotional responses associated with bereavement, but the methods used in its creation also provided therapeutic support for the participants.

Because of the transient nature of time-based events, the volume of sensory information received from a real-time experience, our ability to retain anything but a tiny percentage from any given occasion is relentlessly compromised. As Max Kozloff has written:

> A certain invisibility comes to light, the kind of split-second episode that happens between our normal perceptions and is typically absorbed and erased by them.

(Kozloff, 1977, p. 32)

*Conversations* takes as its point of departure the camera’s ability to record information, which in a real-time event would otherwise be lost to our consciousness, allowing it to be reviewed and deconstructed long after the event has passed. Working initially with one case study volunteer, a videotaped interview was conducted where the participant talked frankly and openly about her bereavement experiences. In this case the accidental death of her eighteen-year-old son three previously.

Digital video tape records images at twenty-five frames per second. By slowing the recording down it is possible to view a single 1/25th of a second as a single image. Playing and replaying the moving image in this way, frame by frame, allows subtleties between the various parts of a single gesture or facial expression, which affect its interpretation and impact, to be identified and isolated (Figs. 38 & 39).

This amputation from the general information recorded leads to a condensed, focused, and intense distillation of visual information. It creates a time lapse in reverse, which allows the viewer to read the complex and expressive visual coding of intricate human responses, both singularly and in relation to one another as a whole.
By configuring these selections in a matrix pattern, but not in chronological sequence, it provides a profusion and confusion of visual information (Fig. 40).

From a Western perspective, this matrix would naturally be read from left to right with an anticipation of a chronological pattern or a grouping of simple units. When confronted with a sequence of similar toned and shaped objects in rows or columns,
the human brain has a tendency to organise things into some kind of order (Gregory, 1979).

In the following illustration (Fig. 41), the dots are equally spaced, but as we look at them, there is a tendency to organise the columns and rows into separate units (Gregory, 1979, p. 11). This process underlines an important aspect of human understanding of visual information, in that:

> Perception involves going beyond the immediately given evidence of the senses [and] is not determined simply by the stimulus of patterns; rather it is a dynamic searching for the best interpretation of the available data. (Gregory, ibid. 1979, p. 10)

*Conversations* has utilized our predisposition to search for visual order. This deliberate orchestration of visual elements forces discontinuity of analysis and confusion for the viewer. This foregrounds the mixed and broad range of emotional responses experienced with bereavement, which can move from total despair to elation in a split second. It was envisaged that the completed work would be developed as a large installation, which would fill the viewer's whole vision in an overwhelming multiplicity of discordant images designed, to confuse and instil a sense of the emotional tensions indicative of the bereaved state.
As already discussed, following bereavement, individuals can often find it difficult to discuss or express their feelings surrounding death (Vitebsky, ibid. 1993; Walter, op cit.1999; Wilson, pers. comm. March 6th, 2006) within their families and the wider communities to which they belong. A lack of communication and understanding may result in the bereaved can becoming marginalized through their experiences.

The sharing of information is a vital means of human expression and understanding, both in terms of informing others and for our own evaluation. Our past informs our present, and the way we interpret the world is informed by that historical connection. Integrating these two perspectives creates our identity and is crucial in creating a strategy for our future development (Kuhn, 1995; Riches & Dawson op cit. 1998; Walter, op cit. 1999).

As part of the ethical protocol, which governs this research, a courtesy copy of the videotaped interview was given to the participant with a request for confirmation that the content was acceptable for use in the research.

Not only did the experience of taking part in the interview provide positive benefits to the participant, by creating an opportunity for her to tell her story, it also gave (as a result of watching the video) the ability to observe her position from an external perspective, a process hitherto unavailable to her. The video, in addition, acted as a catalyst for additional dialogues with significant others. Interestingly, not the immediate family, as might have been anticipated, but with the best friend and a work colleague of the deceased.

The majority of contemporary research on bereavement in the West, concentrates on "[...] isolated individuals, at most individuals within families, dealing with their own private grief. Somehow, other people [...] get missed out" (Walter, op cit. 1999, p. xiii). I was subsequently approached by these 'outsiders', who had experienced difficulties in finding a suitable level of support, from traditional agencies, in dealing with their own bereavement experiences.

The problem they were facing was with the difficulty in discussing their emotions adequately with the people closest to them. Partly because of the intense emotionality involved, but also because some of their thoughts and feelings were difficult to
articulate in such close relationships.

The mother, for example had been unable to talk frankly with her husband about the death of their son. As a consequence she was becoming ill and taking anti-depressants. In a preliminary interview conducted as part of this research, she commented on the restrictive nature of orthodox professional counselling as being “too clinical”. Her observations on the effectiveness of psychotherapeutic intervention were expressed by saying that she could not discuss her issues by an appointment system, or in an environment (in this case a hospital), which she felt was inappropriate due to its formal setting. She indicated that the methodologies used in the counselling process (brandishing a clip board and the proffering a boxes of tissues), may have an adverse and possibly negative affect in “[...] the process of gaining access to buried memories and suppressed feelings” (Soloman 1995, p. 14).

Similarly the best friend and work colleague had both become ‘different’ people. Again, because of their inability to express their emotions to the people that mattered to them, they had both become angry and isolated in their grief, and had ostracised the very people whom they wished to include and communicate their grief to. Both had sought professional intervention at various times, but with little therapeutic success.

Talking to a comparative ‘stranger,’ but who was also ‘one of them’ as a bereaved person myself, created an environment that was both empathetic and cathartic. The interviews were conducted in their own environments, where they felt safe and secure. My capacity as interviewer did not compromise the situation, in that I was not perceived as judgmental or authoritative. My line of questioning allowed the participants to verbalise their feelings without ‘pulling any punches.’

By taking part, all the participants were given a VHS copy of their interviews. This enabled them not only to view their individual stories, from a more objective viewpoint, but also to allow others into their personal emotional lives through their ‘conversations.’ The films acted as a buffer in the difficult process of communication, and facilitated the process of understanding for the people closest to them.
Conversations now had two additional participants whose stories needed to be incorporated into the practical work. With a tripartite perspective based around the death of one individual, a more suitable vehicle was required to reflect the increased depth of the work. Lenticular technology was chosen, as it would allow three differing images to be integrated into a single panel. The technology is normally used in advertising, and can be considered ‘gimmicky’ or fun. The technique has not been used before in this context (Richardson, 2006, pers. comm. 12th June).

With funding from the Arts Council England, Conversations was made using a range of still images taken from each of the three-videotaped interviews. A total of one hundred and forty-four individual images were selected, and combined in forty-eight panels (twelve across and four down), with three individual stills in each finished panel. The full installation is designed to fill the viewers visual field. As the viewer’s position moves in relation to the installation, the images embedded in the panels shift and change at different rates. Some move completely from one image to the next others merge and overlap. The whole experience is one of continual mutation.

It is difficult to reproduce as an illustration but the flowing gives an idea of the final effect (Figs. 42 & 43).
For the participants, their collaboration has helped to create something that is both relevant and personal to them, and also something that can be used in the broader context of social and health related areas through exhibition.

The work has been exhibited at a diversity of forums in the UK and abroad, and its form and function discussed with a range of health and social care workers. This has involved presenting with the key research participant (the mother), who has talked about her experiences, and the therapeutic value of participating in the processes of making the work.

Placing work of this nature in the public domain can extend the subjective processes prompted in its creation, to a reactive and inter-subjective experience as the viewer is drawn into and engages with work at a personal level. This can have a significant for others by creating what Video artist Bill Viola has termed, the “a visceral/emotional circuit” and one, which “dramatically” altered the functionality of an artwork from something that is experienced emotionally, as a “participant” not rationally, as a “viewer” (Viola, 2003, p. 2).

See Appendix X for comments from people who have experienced the work.

Fig. 43
Simulation of a detail of the installation view showing the effect of the technology: Conversations Simmons 2005
No One Home: death, relationships and social context

All this work is about process, change and transformations. Bringing theories, issues, ideas and intuition to exploring personal stories (Martin 1995, p. 67).

Home, so the saying goes "is where the heart is," an adage that stands as a metaphor for a significant personal relationship, both physical and emotional, with individuals or social groups and with specific spaces or places. The heart, in medieval times was seen to symbolise memory (Carruthers, 1990, pp. 46-60) and it has been argued that memory is shaped through our relationship with the physical world (Radley, 1990, op cit. p. 47). Often an amalgamation of many facets real and imagined, whatever our individual notion of 'Home' may be, its foundation will be one that is central to our psychological equilibrium, a focus of our identity and a symbol of stability.

When someone close dies, those core values are undermined and a new and challenging context is created for the living. In experiencing the death of a loved one, it has been said that we are confronted with our own mortality. In the book Singing My Hymn Song, author Malachy McCourt (2001) writes about the death of his mother saying:

There's a certain security in having the parents still living. In a sense, they are in the line of fire, and as long as they are in the front line, I feel like a support unit. But as soon as they die, I'm moved into a combat zone, next to be mowed down.

(McCourt, 2001, p. 125).

The sense of vulnerability, disorientation and anxiety, created with the experience of grief, is explored in No One Home. It is a study of two related but alternative perspectives associated with the broader idea of 'Home.' One is external, which finds expression in our relationships with people, objects and spaces, and our familiarity and intimacy with the practices we engage in with them. The other perspective is an emotional one, informed by those external influences, but articulated internally, through feelings of reassurance, comfort and belonging (Pink, 2001, p. 06).

The study considers the role of memory and its influence in the new and challenging contexts created for the living, following the death of a close family member.
The Work

In the early hours of the morning, at home in her own bed, my mother died quietly in her sleep, silently crossing the threshold into memory. At precisely the same moment, the house too passed mutely into reminiscence, closing the door on over half a century of home life. Along with my mother's body, the house in turn had to be attended to and the process of clearing out and selling had to be addressed. In the eighteenth century, it was commonplace to “freeze the domestic interior. Stopping clocks at the hour of death, turning mirrors to the wall and draping black cloth over the pictures” (Hallam, 2001, p. 118).

By examining the structure and components of the home and the associations connected to that environment, and in an attempt to hold onto what I felt I could not keep, I began to photograph the house. For two months after the funeral, I would visit the house every week to record its details, to maintain a physical relationship with this place, to preserve the constancy it denoted and retain the history created within its precinct (Fig. 44).

With the photographic process, as I thought, symbolically embalming the house against change and decay. My response provided an occupation for mind and body, the camera acting as a buffer to the trauma. This offered a system whereby certain stability is afforded against the shifting sand of emotional turmoil, normally experienced in
bereavement. The process of photographing gave a direction to a situation in which we can often feel out of control.

My initial idea was to create a comprehensive geographical survey of the house, as it was at the time of death, and then to document the changes as the furniture and other items were distributed amongst the family, sold or otherwise disposed of. What was interesting to note was that although the initial images depicted a sense of normality, and seemed warm and welcoming, the actual feeling of being in the house was very different. As the days passed the house began to alter physically, and those environmental changes began to impact on the way that I felt emotionally. It was coming into winter, and the heating had been turned off, leaving an uncomfortable chill in the house, even though the weather was, for the most part sunny and clear. My mother smoked and that familiar odour too, was changing.

After the survey was completed, my sisters and I began to sift through all of my mother’s personal effects, and clear the house for selling. This proved to be a difficult emotional journey, and tensions were created between our memories of life at ‘home,’ and the reality we were now faced with.

Firstly there was a natural reluctance to accept the loss, prompted by the familiarity yet strangeness of being in the house under these circumstances. This response is echoed in a videotaped interview with a case study participant, who commented on such experiences by saying:

I sometimes hear him shout me to iron a shirt for work... I can sit and imagine his shouting 'Mum' when I know he wants something... yeah, for a long time you expect them to still walk in (Videotaped interview with Case Study, 2003)

Secondly, there was the anxiety arising from the process of dismantling, as the lives of the deceased are ‘removed’ from the physical space. A process noted by Elizabeth Hallam:

The interior stands as an 'immobile' material surround, once part of life and now difficult to interact with [which can become] a frightening excavation in an unknown territory (Hallam op cit. 2001, p. 118).
No One Home attempts to visualise the emotional, social and physical repositioning the living are forced to make arising from the experience of the loss of a close family member. The project makes tangible the complex emotional and physical turmoil created through the process of reorganizing of the physical space associated with the dead, and the practical disconnection of the dead from within that space.

The changes brought about by the death of a significant person in our lives, relates not only to the permanent absence of that individual, but also to the social roles associated with that individual. As Bermann has observed:

In her death, we were dying as well. Mother and daughters: what had been us was changing, because she was leaving it, she was leaving us; she was leaving what we were together (Bermann, 2001, p. 52).

There are two aspects to the final body of work, created to test the theories that the roles of memory and reality play in developing an understanding of lived experience. This work has been created through from the outcomes of a dialogue between the three surviving children, and is presented as a representation of our mutual dialogue.

The first strand is comprised of four lenticular panels, which incorporate images taken from the photographic 'survey.' Through these, the viewer is placed silently in relation to a recognisable environment. The work utilises photography’s power to draw the viewer into its own time to evoke a sense of familiarity, ordinariness, and continuity. But these images endeavour to go beyond the normal conventions of formal analysis.

Portraits from the family album, that traditional and universal symbol for memory, with a format practiced and understood across the world as a system of storage and retrieval, offering tangible reminders of all that is good in our lives. These portraits now become estranged characters gazing with intensity into the eyes of the viewer to create tension and unease (Figs. 45 & 48).

Objects float above these elements inviting the viewer to formulate links and associations. The technology employed allows the content of the panels to seemingly project their information in what appears to be three dimensions. This is a visual deception.
Fig. 45
Lenticular Panel From:
*No One Home*
Simmons 2005

Fig. 46
Lenticular Panel From:
*No One Home*
Simmons 2005

Fig. 47
Lenticular Panel From:
*No One Home*
Simmons 2005
The viewer can interact with the work by touching the panels. As they do their hands seem to pass through the various layers and draws the viewer into a familiar yet foreign territory.

The second strand presents a more simplified visual format (Figs. 49 – 52). In these four lenticular panels the viewer is presented with wallpaper and floor coverings interlaced with selected objects. As in the previous panels, the technology allows creates the perception of three dimensions. Overlaid onto these lenticular panels are the real objects. Together these elements challenge the senses to create uncertainty as the viewer interacts with the work.
Fig. 50
Lenticular Panel From:
No One Home
Simmons 2005

Fig. 51
Lenticular Panel From:
No One Home
Simmons 2005

Fig. 52
Lenticular Panel From:
No One Home
Simmons 2005
End Notes

1 Adrian Tournachon was brother of the famous French photographer Nadar (1820-1910). Nadar was the pseudonym for Gaspard-Félix Tournachon.
PHOTOGRAPHY LOSS AND MEMORY

a visual account of grief adaptation

Concluding Remarks
Concluding Remarks

From the ruins of destruction, the past is brought into a new relationship to the present (Green, 1994, p. 12).

For our ancestors, death was very much part of life. The sheer stress of living, with illness and disease aggravated by social factors such as poverty and an inadequate system of health care, meant the experiences of death and the rituals surrounding death, were familiar features of everyday life.

Death was a domestic event, and attitudes towards death, dying, bereavement and grief had a common currency. In the West today, advances in health and social care have extended life expectancy. Along with increased longevity, modernity has relocated death from the home to the hospital and nursing home. Although over half a million people die in Britain every year, we rarely witness death first hand (Main, 2000. p. 863).

As a consequence, we lack “the most elementary emotional and religious resources for dealing with it” (Stokes, 2002, p. 2). Religious practices in the West have “partially lost their key cultural and pastoral role in articulating the discourse of death and bereavement” (Percy, 2002, p. 9), and what was once common has become alien.

In today’s technological world, our experience of death is frequently informed via a relentless media bombardment, which partly anesthetizes us through the graphic description of devastation and personal tragedy of others (Sontag, 1973. p. 20), “and for a moment your compassion is pricked and then you go on with your life and it’s forgotten” (Thompson, 2006). It also makes us resistant against the realities of our own mortality and of those we love (Norbert, op cit. 1985, p. 1).

In the West we tend to view death as something that happens to other people, although we understand the temporality of life. As Freud has written:

Our own death is indeed quite unimaginable[...] At bottom nobody believes in his own death, or to put the same thing in a different way, in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality. (Freud 1953, pp. 304–305)
Modernity, despite its technological accomplishments, has removed a vital link in our social, cultural and spiritual relationship with death. Grief is a consequence of living, and as such is a diverse, complex and challenging part of our ongoing lives.

This dissertation has presented five bodies of practical photographic-based work, which together as a consolidated whole, has shown that the application of a considered photographic approach, as a core strategy in the exploration and interpretation of human experiences of grief, can provide a valuable means to evaluate and translate experiences and emotions, which might otherwise remain invisible.

 Visualization provides a challenging and expressive form of enquiry, and a framework for the improvement of communication, understanding and knowledge, which can foster and promote positive emotional change, and encourage personal wellbeing.

Personal stories speak in ordinary terms often about extraordinary events. There value is in the telling, and their relevance is in the interpretation. Our memories and experiences can be re-appropriated to provide a rich vocabulary to connect with, describe, and evaluate our lives, and allow us to engage with the complexities of our existence in a positive and proactive way.

The value of this approach, its impact as a tool within the context of grief study, a system for personal development, social orientation, and a method in bereavement care, has been proven through this research.
PHOTOGRAPHY LOSS AND MEMORY

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Appendices
Appendix I
List of events to which the author has contributed, and published material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5th International Gestalt Australia and New Zealand Conference</td>
<td>This paper and presentation continues to build on relationships established with the Victorian Association of Family Therapists in Australia in 2001. It discusses the use of photography and other lens media practices as therapeutic tools to provide a unique approach to current therapeutic methodologies, and reflects recognition of its relevance and innovation within contemporary clinical discourse.</td>
<td>September 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DD7 The Social context of Death, Dying and Disposal 7th International Conference</td>
<td>The Social context of Death, Dying and Disposal is an international conference initiative, developed by the editors of the peer reviewed death studies journal Mortality, which promotes the interdisciplinary study of death and dying.</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortality Volume 10 Supplement Pg 68 ISSN 1357-6275</td>
<td>Published book of Conference Abstracts</td>
<td>September 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Bereavement Network Bulletin 8</td>
<td>National Children's Bureau The article detailed the initial concept and development of the Pictures From Life visual arts project, which was designed to provide an opportunity for bereaved children and young people who have experienced a significant loss, to express their memories of the dead through visual arts practice. The work itself would celebrate the children's ideas and raise their feelings of self worth by valuing their memories and producing artwork of high quality.</td>
<td>August 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pictures From Life
Half-Day Seminar organised to promote and disseminate photographic workshop programme exploring bereavement. March 2005

Through the Eyes of a Child
The exhibition showcased the work produced by the participants of the developing Pictures From Life Visual Arts Bereavement Project February - March 2005

The Trauma of Sudden Death
An invitation by the Lincolnshire Bereavement Forum, to present creative work examining bereavement issues, and to discuss methodologies in relation to working with Case Study volunteers, the social, ethical and therapeutic associations of participating in practice led research and its implications in the wider context of death studies. April 2004 and

Aspects of Grief Throughout the Family
An invitation by the Lincolnshire Bereavement Forum, to present creative work examining bereavement issues, and to discuss methodologies in relation to working with Case Study volunteers, the social, ethical and therapeutic associations of participating in practice led research and its implications in the wider context of death studies. June 2004

Feeling Alone and Different: a childhood bereavement network conference.
An invitation to participate in a National Conference hosted by the Childhood Bereavement Network, London. This included discussing the relational aspects to my research and showing the practical outcomes of working with case study participants. April 2004

The Home Ideal Show
A multi media exhibition exploring the domestic environment. The Home Ideal Show explores the domestic spaces we inhabit and how significant they are to us in our memories and our daily life. The exhibition featured over fifty artists, writers and filmmakers from the UK and overseas. My contribution was a work in development installation entitled No One Home, which explored the altered March - May 2004
Exhibition of photographic work from the Pictures From Life Visual Arts Bereavement Project

The exhibition was the culmination of a new visual arts initiative and was opened by Ms Cheryle Berry the head of education in Lincolnshire.

Invited by the Research Group Literature and Anthropology at the University of Konstanz, Germany. The author was asked to contribute photographic work for exhibition at the Galerie auf der Empore, Konstanz, Germany. The exhibition investigated the power of photographs and objects as stimulus for memory and formed a central focus for an international workshop.

One-day seminar was organised to coincide with the photographic exhibition Our Fathers: childhood loss and memory. Chaired by The Revd. Canon Andrew Stokes, Precentor of Lincoln Cathedral, the seminar debated aspects of grief and identity and was sponsored by Lincoln Co-operative Funeral Services.

Published work in The Victorian Association of Family Therapists

Invited by Annette Kuhn, Professor in Film Studies, and Rosemary Betterton, Reader in Women Studies, both from Lancaster University, the author addressed an audience of members from the University’s Institute for Woman’s Studies at an exhibition of his photographic work at The Folly Gallery, Lancaster. This provided an opportunity to discuss creative practice, photography and...
representation with two international research scholars. The invitation underlines the importance of the authors work as scholarly practice, and highlights the relevance of the work in an interdisciplinary context.

Voices Across Culture, Time and Sea.
Victorian Association of Family Therapy, Melbourne, Australia

The Inaugural Pan Pacific Family Therapy Congress, Melbourne, Australia
The work was invited for exhibition as a centrepiece to this conference and was a unique addition to the

September 2001

85
Dr Robert Kastenbaum, Professor Emeritus at Arizona State University, USA.

To: msimmons@ntlworld.com
From: Robert Kastenbaum robert.kastenbaum@asu.edu
Date: 07/11/2005 10:44AM
Subject: Hello

Dear Mike,

Thanks for the additional information on your creative work. What I don't know about creative digital photography, though, would still be enough to fill many books! This project will definitely be a learning experience for me. I see much value in your distinctive and innovative work, which will have relevance to human service caregivers, researchers, and people in the arts and humanities. This might be a good time to see how close we are to developing an official-type book proposal. Attached (I hope) is the proposal guideline document from Springer Publications. Your proposal will have a more personal pathway, however. It will go immediately to the director of publications (who is quite interested in the very brief description I shared with her), and will be marked specifically for the Death & Suicide Series.

I'd suggest that you coast through a very preliminary draft of the proposal. Write the parts you feel ready to write and raise questions when there are questions we should be considering. Your book & accompanying DVD will be innovative, so we can give ourselves a little "space of time" for development.

All the best,

Bob K.
Dear Mike

So sorry it has taken me so long to reply to your email and hope it is not too late to be useful.

Firstly, congratulations on the book proposal. I think what you have to say/show/illustrate is hugely interesting, challenging and useful, and think it would and should create great interest in the bereavement world - and we should include the adult bereavement care services/hospice world in this too.

Although, having hosted a series of practical workshops for practitioners, led by art therapists, was aware that most practitioners come from social work or counselling or nursing backgrounds rather from the creative side - which creates difficulties in that they are wary and diffident in terms of actually transferring what they learn/absorb into their practice. [Does that make sense? And is it relevant anyway?]

I would be really interested to read a book and wish you the very best of luck with it. However, in terms of writing something, I will be leaving CBN on 17 February and therefore feel that it would be inappropriate for me to do this. However, I'm sure that Alison Penny or our Chair would be pleased to help. I will forward your email to Alison and ask her to contact you.

Best wishes

Sarah Willis
Director, Childhood Bereavement Network
Appendix III
List of funding-sponsorship and support received

2006 May RAE Disbursements De Montfort University, Leicester - £2000
2005 March Arts Council England - £2,000
2004 December Funding De Montfort University, Leicester - £200
2004 July Awards For All Pictures From Life Project Grant £5,000
2003 March Arts Council England Pictures From Life Project Grant - £2,000
2002 December funding De Montfort University, Leicester - £200
2001 May Research funding De Montfort University, Leicester - £200
2001 February New Works and Commissions, Visual Arts East Midlands Arts - £1,500

Sponsorship Achieved
2006 September VAFT, Australia
2005 March Ruddocks Print Services, Lincoln
2005 January/February/March. Lincolnshire Lions Club
2002 September. Dean and Chapter Lincoln Cathedral
2002 September. Co-op Funeral Services
2002 September. Ruddocks Colour Printers
2002 April/May. Wilkinson's Cameras, Lancaster.
2002 May. Institute for Cultural Studies, Lancaster University
2002 February. Kodak Ltd
2002 February. Boots plc
2001 December. Konstanz University Germany.
Appendix IV
Pilot proposal

Pictures From Life | an alternative family album

Outline Proposal

Since the invention of photography, photographs have dominated our culture. We use photographs in every aspect of life and they remain a vital means of recording the people, events and experiences we value. The family album has become a universal symbol for memory. Its format is practiced and understood across the world, as a system of storage and retrieval. Offering tangible reminders of all that is good in our lives, the family album not only assists us in the process of remembering, but also in the practice of sharing with others these positive aspects.

Pictures From Life is a photographic project aimed at using the traditions of the family album, to give voice to the contrasting side of human experience, helping to raise awareness of a less familiar, often difficult and uncomfortable side of life; that of death and bereavement.

Through the creation of an alternative family album, Pictures From Life seeks to identify some of the issues and concerns surrounding bereavement. By harnessing photography's capacity not only to record, but also to express the ideas and concerns of the maker.

Pam Rycroft, committee member of the Pan Pacific Family Therapy Congress, Melbourne, Australia has written:

We have found in the past that the visual arts can pave a way to 'speaking the unspeakable'...it is refreshing to look at these difficult and painful issues through a different medium.

She goes on to say that photographs play a significant role:

[...] in the experience of loss and grief, a context in which words often fail us.

Pictures From Life | an alternative family album offers the opportunity for recognition and acceptance of a subject central and inevitable to us all. Through a considered series of workshops within schools, this project hopes, through creative activity, to examine issues surrounding death and bereavement in a positive, innovative and proactive way.

The Project

To produce either/or:

1. A large-scale (twice life size – approx. 20"x 16") Alternative Family Album as described in the outline proposal, which will be on permanent display and made available for open access within the school.

2. An exhibition based on the album theme, which will be on permanent display and made available for open access within the school.
Each project participant will be given a double page spread within the album or exhibition. In this space they will explore the notions of relationships and family, death and bereavement through the use of existing photographs or in the creation of new photographs. These can be combined with personal objects, writing or drawing to explore the project themes. The resulting artwork will be photographed for inclusion in the Alternative Family Album.

A range of techniques will be demonstrated and discussed enabling the participants to engage in an expressive form that they will feel comfortable with.

Aims and Objectives

- To highlight death and bereavement as an important subject for consideration and discussion.
- To promote a healthy attitude to death and bereavement through creative activity.
- To introduce photography as a language for self-expression and investigation. The project requires neither prior knowledge of photography or any artistic ability.
- To encourage self-expression and how that can dramatically impact on personal experience.
- To involve children and staff at all levels and parents/guardians (if they would like to get involved).
- To develop a sense of creativity and an awareness of the thought processes involved.
- To have fun.
- To produce a body of work that the children, staff and parents/guardians can be proud of.

The Role of the Artist

- To support the children and staff throughout the project
- To be sensitive to any issues relating to the children and their parents/guardians.
- To facilitate concept development and creativity. This will involve showing and discussing work that relate to the project including experimental ideas sessions.
- To help the children feel at ease and give them confidence and encouragement.
- To provide all photographic equipment and lighting.
- To organise the design of the album in consultation with all project participants.
The Staff Role

It would be great if the staff of the school could be involved in the project at all levels. It is appreciated that this may depend on staffing levels and demands.

- To support the children throughout the project (where possible).
- To keep the artist informed of any issues that may affect a child's participation in the project.
- To liaise with the child/children's parent/guardian where appropriate.
- To be involved in the ideas sessions and to continue the project's momentum by discussing ideas outside of project sessions (where possible).
- To develop a sense of creativity in relation to the project.
- To have fun.

Mike Simmons © 2003
Pictures From Life is a unique arts led initiative for children and young people, which is designed to develop relationships in family death and bereavement through creative practice.

Organised by Tracy Wilson, the Child Bereavement Coordinator for the Children’s Fund Lincolnshire and hosted by the United Lincolnshire Hospital Trust, Pictures from Life has been created in collaboration with Mike Simmons and Bridget Skanski-Such, two qualified and experienced visual artists and teachers.

Hailed by Sarah Willis, Director of the Children’s Bereavement Network as ‘a beacon project’, Pictures From Life helps to strengthen family communication and reduce isolation.

“Tracy, Bridget and Mike really worked hard to help us through this sad time and they have really benefited.”

Pictures From Life: seminar

A half day seminar examining visual arts practice as a means of strengthening communication within bereaved families.

Speakers:
Sarah Willis Director of the Childhood Bereavement Network
Professor Paul H J H MBE De Montfort University
Gordon Riches University of Derby
Mike Simmons Pictures from Life Team Member

Lincoln Cathedral Centre - 17 Minster Yard Lincoln LN2 1PX

7th March 2005 - 9:30am - 1:30pm

Tickets £10.00 pp - includes morning coffee and lunch
Appendix VI
Pictures From Life DVD
Appendix VII
Pictures From Life Feedback

Comments from participants and their families:

"Tracy, Bridget and Mike really worked hard to help us through this sad time, and I feel we have really benefited."

"It has been good for my son to be with other children in the same situation."

"Pictures From Life has helped my son take about his mum to others. Something he has not done before the workshop."

"The workshop has enabled me to show my emotions and feelings about what has happened."

"When can we have something like this for adults."

Comments from seminar delegates:

"An excellent and thought provoking seminar. The project is well established and very beneficial to the children during the most difficult part of their lives. Thank you."

"Fantastic exciting work. It's really great seeing a quality standard of work for children and young people to treasure."

"Pictures From Life would seem to be a very valuable contribution to the community and helping children to come to terms with grief. Very useful, interesting and well presented."

"Really inspiring – excellent team work! I liked the idea of children being our experts and treating bereavement as normal."
Photography, Loss and Memory: a visual account of grief adaptation

Research Participant Information

Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for your time in reading this.

Monday’s Child

How the bereaved maintain a personal memorial to their dead within the home environment.

What is the purpose of the study?

Mike Simmons is conducting research for a PhD at De Montfort University, Leicester. This practice led study examines the complex internal and external human responses to the experience of bereavement, and interprets visually how the bereaved manage their changed personal, social, and cultural roles for themselves, and the people they encounter. Present Absence is one line of enquiry within this broader field of study.

Why have I been chosen?

You have responded to a request for research participation in the above named study, and expressed an interest in taking part.

At the initial interview arranged in reply to a request for volunteers, you will have been shown examples of the research outcomes to date.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a Research Participant Consent Form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.
What will happen if I take part?
By consenting to take part in this research you are agreeing to allow Mike Simmons access to personal information concerning your bereavement experiences and for that information to be collected in any of the following ways:

- Through interviews by the researcher
- Allowing photographic images to be made of personal objects
- Allowing photographic images to be made of areas of your home
- Allowing interviews to be video taped and or audio taped
- Allowing still images to be taken from video taped interviews
- Allowing transcripts and or extracts to be taken from audio taped interviews
- Being available for a further interviews should that be required

The initial interview will have identified your personal memorials within the home relevant to the research. It is anticipated that two further sessions will be needed, in addition to the initial interview. These sessions will take place at a mutually convenient time at your home address. One session will be needed to record photographically the private memorials you have, and one session for an in-depth interview concerning your personal bereavement experiences. Each session will last between one and two hours.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
All information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. This information will be used only for the purpose(s) set out in this statement and the research is conditional on compliance with the duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. No information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any other individual or organisation.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results of this study will be used primarily in partial fulfillment of a practice led PhD in Photography entitled: Photography, Loss and Memory: a visual account of grief adaptation. This will involve the research information being placed in the public domain in the following ways:

- Through exhibition of the work
- Through publication of the work in journals, books, reports or on the world wide web
- Through conferences, seminars or workshops
Through loan of the work for educational, health or community purposes

If the work you have agreed to participate in is used in any of the ways described, you will be notified with details of how you can view or obtain the published results.

Who monitors the research?
The research is monitored by specifically elected academic supervisors from the Faculty of Art & Design at De Montfort University, Leicester and by the universities Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for Further Information

Researcher:
Mike Simmons MA
75 Park Road
Mansfield Woodhouse
Nottinghamshire
NG19 8AU

Tel: 01623 472 102
Mobile: 07929 846511
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Supervisor:
Professor Paul Hill MBE
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Tel: 0116 257 7671
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De Montfort University Research Office
2 Castle View
De Montfort University
The Gateway
Leicester
LE1 9BH
England
Photography, Loss and Memory: a visual account of grief adaptation

Monday’s Child
How the bereaved maintain a personal memorial to their dead within the home environment.

Research Participant Consent Form

Having read the Research Participant Information provided you will now need to complete this consent form if you wish to take part in the above named research.

I agree to take part in the above research project. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Research Participant Information provided with this consent form, which I may keep for my records.
I agree to Mike Simmons recording and processing information about me regarding my bereavement experiences. I understand that this information will be used only for the purposes set out in the Research Participant Information and my consent is conditional on the compliance with its duties and obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:
• Be interviewed by the researcher
• Allow photographic images to be made of personal objects
• Allow photographic images to be made of areas of my home
• Allow interviews to be Video taped and or Audio taped
• Allow still images to be taken from Video taped interviews
I understand and agree that the results of this study will be used primarily in partial fulfillment of a practice led PhD in Photography by Mike Simmons entitled: *Photography, Loss and Memory: a visual account of grief adaptation.*

I understand and agree that this information will be held and processed for the following purposes:

- Exhibition of the work
- Publication of the work in journals, books, reports or on the world wide web
- Dissemination of the work through conferences, seminars or workshops
- Loan of the work for educational, health or community purposes

I understand and agree that if the work I have consented to participate is used in any of the ways described; I will be notified with details of how I can view or obtain the published results.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published. The identifiable data will not be shared with any individual or other organisation.

Withdrawal from study

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalized or disadvantaged in any way.

Photographic, Audio and Video recording

Photographic Images, Audio and Videotaped recording will not be used for any other purpose than for which informed consent has been granted. If the researcher wishes to use this information for some other purpose (e.g., in teaching) without specific consent related to that purpose, the participant must be contacted again with a request for consent to use that information for that other purpose.

Name: ....................................................................................................................

(please print)

Date: ......................................................................................................................
Appendix IX
Pictures From Life DVD
Appendix X
Comments from Conversations exhibitions

"Life is always a topic for conversation, but death we always seem to face in silence. Remembering those who have been part of our lives allows them to live again."

"I can now see the benefit of photography as regards bereavement. On a personal note, it has helped me to have a clearer picture of my own losses."

"On Behalf of the Lincolnshire Bereavement Forum can I thank you for sharing such powerful and beautiful work with us at Louth. Feedback shows great appreciation for your work and gave us an excellent opportunity to see the 'behind the scenes' work"

"I have found your work very powerful."

What more can I say...tears, thoughts, humanity, life, death...

Beautifully provocative and emotive.

"Thank you for a beautiful connection - incredibly moving."

"Extremely moving. Death is an emotional process to go through, and I have immense admiration for what you have worked through and achieved."

"Really excellent work. I can hardly control my feelings and tears."

"Thank you for sharing something so personal."

"Work like this helps to excavate the depths of common experiences."

Full of courage and dignity. Creative and deeply healing - beautiful

Truly outstanding work
Lenticular animation uses rows of simple lenses or lenticules to create the illusion of dimension or motion. The curved, top side of the lenticule (typically extruded or embossed) is the lens side. The bottom is smooth and flat it contains the image.

The various “stages” of the animation are divided into alternating rows to create a specially prepared interlaced image.

The interlaced image corresponds to the rows of lenticules and is printed on or laminated to the flat side.

The lens side acting like a magnifying glass enlarges only one portion of the interlaced image at a time. When the viewing angle of the piece is changed the rows of lenses enlarge only one stage of the animation at a time, creating the illusion of dimension or motion.

Illustration taken from the article Madness in Motion in Dynamic Graphics Graphics, p. 57, 2001
PHOTOGRAPHY LOSS AND MEMORY

a visual account of grief adaptation

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