

MY FATHER, MY SELF:
A REFLECTION ON THE PHOTOGRAPHY ARCHIVE
OF ADRIAN FLOWERS

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Contents

Page number

1. Acknowledgements
2. Abstract
- 3-5. Introduction – research questions and methodology:
 - what is the value of a photographic archive?
 - to what extent are photography and memory connected?
 - Is it possible for the Adrian Flowers photography archive to be organised in a meaningful and practical way?

Chapter one:

- 6-11. Adrian Flowers' background
 - family
 - photography business

Chapter two:

- 12-17. Other Archives and photography collections:
 - Jason Wilde
 - The Hardman House
 - Sara Davidmann
 - Phillip Toledano
 - Amelia Stein

Chapter three:

- 18-24. Considerations of overseeing an Archive:
 - The challenge
 - Dilemmas encountered
 - Structure vs chaos
 - The Barn

Chapter four:

- 25-52. Concepts and Themes (in conjunction with practice-based element: The Archive Box)
 - Heterotopias
 - Materiality and photography (apples, still-life)
 - Notebooks
 - Photo albums
 - Portrait/Self-portrait
 - Mirror
 - Filing cabinet
 - Vase

Chapter five:

- 53-54 Responses via the MA showcase exhibition *In Sight June 2018*:
- What insights arose in the negotiation of the personal and the public?
 - The Archive Box
- 56-57. Conclusion
- 58-60. Bibliography

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Abstract

This MA by research study is a response to the archive of photography of Adrian Flowers, professional advertising photographer, my late father. The investigation through my personal photographic work seeks to express thoughts about the value of a photography archive, as well as the connection between photography, memory and its materiality. It also reflects literally and metaphorically on the self, and on my father's battle in later life with Alzheimer's disease, his preoccupations at that time, together with the inevitable connection between the condition and its impact on memory.

The study will engage on several levels: it will look at the ideas and subjects which were of interest to Adrian Flowers, while acknowledging that even with the close personal relationship, the broad scope of material challenges efforts to do it justice. However, with enough knowledge of the man and his career and interests, I hope it has been possible to find the essence of their significance, to him, to me and to a wider audience. This has been possible by extracting work by Adrian Flowers and responding to it by way of practice-based research in the form of producing my own photographs that relate to his work, and also exhibiting them, thereby allowing me to transfer sometimes intangible thoughts and ideas into tangible objects and spaces. The study will also look at examples of other archives and photographers working with personal subjects to ascertain their relevance and value.

What unimaginable reckoning has taken place that allows a person to act as if at home with the archive of lost time?

Dillon (2006: 106)

Introduction

This research study investigates the photography archive of my late father, Adrian Flowers. When I embarked on this journey over two years ago, he was still alive, yet was unaware of my intentions, due to his advanced Alzheimer's. At that stage I knew that there would be no possibility of collaborating with him on this project, nevertheless I am glad that I started before he died. It certainly eventually became a journey in coming to terms with his death, or at least finding a constructive outlet for it. Having decided that an archive such as his required attention in some way, whether in the form of cataloguing, exhibitions, a book or two - I then realized that the archive could not be researched in isolation and without the connection with the photographer behind it: the well-known eccentric personality, with his unusual way of thinking and doing things.

The methodology employed in this research has for the most part involved primary research into the Adrian Flowers archive, both through his photographs and written material in the archive; much of the material researched has not been used or published. I also look at archives and other photographic collections as secondary research, as well as literature concerned with photography, memory and materiality. Over the period of time through which this project has evolved, I have inevitably become more absorbed on a personal level, which has been essential for the discovery of the value of the archive, its meaning and significance to me, but also on a broader level and how I perceive it to be important beyond that. My father's battle with Alzheimer's inevitably had a huge impact on his memory, therefore my concerns with the research shifted over time to incorporate the ideas of photography and memory, and to what extent they are connected. Memory can be elusive and subject to error; one person's memory of a person, time or experience can be so different to another's. An archive of a person's belongings or their work and specifically this archive, is a

material presence of photographs, objects, cabinets, boxes and files. The archive and its materiality – its physical presence – became more than a record of the work that Adrian Flowers undertook in his 50 year or so career, it also became a story of his life and his preoccupations. The study is not concerned with his public facing work in the form of advertising photography, but mainly his photographic work in relation to his personal ideas.

The methodology for my enquiry also necessitated that I engage with taking my own photographs, in the form of practice-based research, as a way of connecting with my father and his work in a way that could not be expressed solely through words, and which reflects and comments on the archive material. The investigation responds by way of my personal artwork to the material contained in the Archive, as well as studying that archive material itself. It is as if I had to act as ‘medium’ on an almost ethereal level, between him and the medium of photography, though not being a photographer myself. The two aspects become blended and meet at a point where there is an understanding of the preoccupations for my father in his failing mind and memory. The practice element of the research is only effective if the reader/observer can relate to what is being expressed in the work.

When writing about memory or the ideas behind photographs, it becomes pertinent to have a physical presence of the object or person in order to evoke certain emotions. After all, if we do not feel anything, what is the point? Memory is associated with emotion and makes us feel a certain way that can be difficult to articulate with words alone. Or as advertising executive Fred R. Barnard (1927) famously said: “One picture is worth a thousand words”. From another point of view, photographs can be reassuring, but also ambiguous: an idea or image can be deceptive, and enticing, such as those used in advertising. The aim of this study is also to contemplate the apparent contradictions between the positive and the negative aspects of archival work. Where the demands on maintaining the archive had clearly become too onerous for Adrian Flowers, though never admitted to himself, so too does it remain for me, as the current custodian of the Archive. This issue is discussed in the section on ‘Dilemmas and difficulties’. The conclusions or findings in this research are relevant because they are

original insights made from an archive which has not been studied in any depth, and even here can only be examined initially on a superficial and perhaps other times on a more meaningful level.

Chapter One

Adrian Flowers background

Adrian Flowers was born in Southsea, Portsmouth in 1926 to Edward Flowers, a former Colonel in the Indian Army, later a businessman and ombudsman. Adrian's mother was Kathleen (nee) West, a talented violinist and a Christian Scientist. As the much younger child of four children, Adrian was the only child remaining with his parents and they lived in the same house where he was born until he was 19 years old. Adrian's great-grandfather was George West, who founded the photography firm of George West & Son in Portsmouth. Adrian's grandfather William West was also a noted photographer in the early 1900's. Adrian attended a private prep school in Southampton, then Sherborne in Dorset. He enrolled at the RAF to become a pilot, but unsuccessful with this then studied at the RAF school of photography, and then attended the London School of Photography in 1951. He assisted Zoltan Glass until 1955 after which time he set up his own studio in Dover Street, London.

Visual advertising techniques had a particular fascination for him since the late forties, although most of it was 'illustration' by painters at the time. By 1956, he obtained two Layton Awards (Design & Art Directors award – D&AD - did not start until 1959) and he was soon heralded as one of the top few in the 'still life' field. He subsequently won a competition involving only six chosen 'best' still-lifers to work on a large campaign for Australian canned fruit. From 1959 to 1989, he had his own studio in Tite Street, Chelsea, which was the base for his main body of work. This consisted of live subjects such as portraiture, beauty, fashion and still life: jewellery, food, sets and settings. He usually had the help of 3 to 4 assistants, and more, when working on large sets in larger studios.

In 1952 Adrian married Angela Holland. She later opened Angela Flowers Gallery on Lisle Street. They had 3 sons and one daughter. They divorced in 1973. In 1996 Adrian moved to south-west France with his wife Françoise Lina-Flowers where he lived for the rest of his life.

During the course of his long career Adrian Flowers undertook approximately 10,000 assignments, or 'jobs'. He lived and worked during a period in cultural history when Britain came to terms with the rise of consumerism and post-war economic prosperity, a fascinating social record of half a century during which the world changed, a study of society and advertising during its most productive era. All of this is woven into the history of the medium of photography in Britain, from Victorian times onwards.

On considering how best to approach the contents of the Adrian Flowers Archive of photography, it would appear that there are distinct photographic areas to explore, in a chronological manner, rather than in any order of importance:

Adrian Flowers' own family and G. West & Sons

I have discovered boxes of photographs, which until now have possibly not been seen for decades. Many of these would have been handed down to Adrian by his family, and no doubt he had little time to look at these, or at least to disseminate. His family came from a family of photographers, G West & Sons, who in turn have Archives in the Wessex Film and Sound Archive in Hampshire. This collection is in itself important historically as his family were living during the Victorian and Edwardian eras in times of great change and industrial advances, not least the invention of photography and developments in that area. Interestingly, my father did not speak often to me about the family background in photography, much of this has been brought to my attention in recent years: it appears that he either did not know much about it, or had dismissed the fact.

Editorial photography

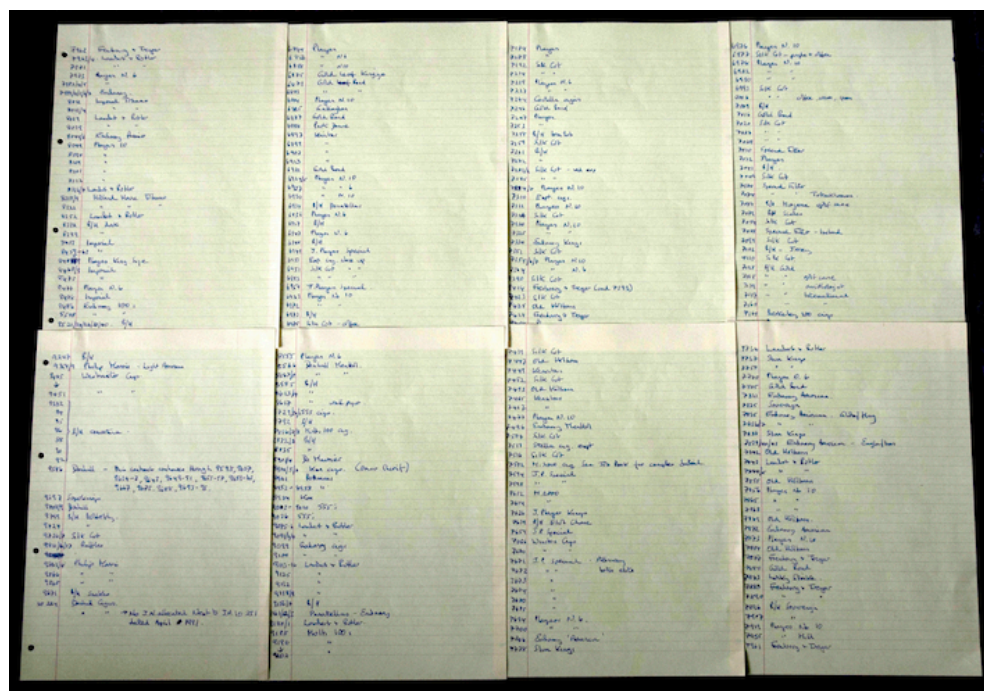
Photography for magazines and colour supplements for newspapers represent the professional work in the early days of Flowers' career, and superseded illustration to a large extent in the 1950, indeed it was used for illustrative purposes in editorial material in order to illustrate an article.

Advertising:

Throughout most of his working life, Adrian Flowers worked for advertising agencies and this represents the staple of his paid work and the busiest and most productive period of his professional life. Some of these images are well-known, as they have been in the public domain, as billboards or prints in colour supplements. The concept of advertising represented the key interest for Adrian Flowers as a career in photography, stemming from an early exposure to *Life* Magazine at school. He was fascinated by the art of persuasion and bringing an art director's concept to life through photography was an enduring challenge for him. The expertise of photography, its identity, is deftly and appropriately used in advertising; the fact that what is seen in a photograph is not always what is there and good advertising photography is subconsciously enjoyed by an audience.

Even though Advertising photography was Flowers' foremost photographic output, I came to the conclusion in this study that the subject of advertising is such a vast area to consider in its own right, and that it warrants its own study if not at least one book, featuring Flowers' work alone. In an attempt to not be too superficial in my approach here, I expressed an idea of the weight of the advertising output in my showcase exhibition, by way of collating as many 35mm slides of advertising shots that had been copied and existed in the Archive, in order to give a sense of the extent of the sheer volume of work undertaken. It seemed impossible to express this in any other way. The scope and volume of work in an archival context is at first an overwhelming phenomenon to absorb; each image could be studied in great detail. Therefore the projection of these images represents a record of a small proportion of the commercial work undertaken by Adrian Flowers and almost becomes less about the images themselves with the meaning disassociated from its original intention: the relevance of the subject, object and context at the time when the image first appeared in public, its place in society, the demographic, the era – all relevant, and also transient, in the fast-paced world of advertising, susceptible to fashion and taste and the instant gratification of consumerism.

Each 'job' in the Archive, whether advertising or personal, has its own 'job number' (J.N), a system set up by studio assistants in the early days of Flowers' studio in the 1950s, a system which continued until the last jobs in the late 1980s. Initially I had intended to display a large print showing a photograph of several hand-written pages produced by Flowers' archivist, Brian Durling, who painstakingly listed all the job numbers from each assignment Flowers had worked on over his forty to fifty year career. The photograph displays the list concerned with the tobacco advertising jobs only. Seen as lists, the jobs become simply a record or archive, without any associated image. Yet the lists take on a life of their own purely as a reference to those jobs. Each reference number has an associated envelope with transparencies, negatives and polaroids from the set up and production of the job, and would be filed away in a filing cabinet.



Several yellow sheets of hand-written lists of Job Numbers (J.N) written by Adrian Flowers assistant and archivist, Brian Durling, listing some of the tobacco advertising jobs

It would seem that advertising work is often perceived with slight suspicion or ambivalence when it comes to discussion of the value of advertising's photography output; possibly this is to do with fact the public perception is that they feel they are

being persuaded to buy something to consume, especially when it may not be necessary, it often relates to a luxury purchase. Nevertheless, these images can also represent an aspiration; although while conveying an idea and bringing it to life, technically there is some artifice that takes place, with a manipulation in the image, adding to the notion that that the method and the content are somehow not real, and therefore not to be trusted. Advertising photographs are also fleeting in nature as they become dated as soon as the product they're advertising has become less noticeable, relevant or popular.

On consideration of Adrian Flowers Archive, the key to its importance is the contrast between the different types of work he chose to undertake and focus on for his own interest: the simplicity of the personal work, without artifice, as opposed to the skill and manipulation of the idea and contents of the advertising image, even though both types of images are mediated to a certain extent. The brief of an advertising job excited Adrian Flowers. He enjoyed the idea of being complicit in persuasion: how to make someone want to buy something and not because they needed it. As already mentioned, this was a fascination that went back to his school days, when he had the opportunity of looking at copies of *Life* Magazine. He commented later "some pictures were beautiful, others had a hardness to them. These were the advertising features". Adrian Flowers admitted later on that he used techniques learned from these ads to influence what happened in his family home. By that, I imagine he means that he could persuade his parents to buy things that they did not necessarily need or want.

In Adrian Flowers' words:

Advertising agencies have at last understood that images had to become more interesting to attract the attention of the public. They had to go from the natural to the supernatural, from the real to the surreal, in order to intrigue the onlooker and reach his unconscious in ways which had never been tried before in advertising. These sort of pictures are most effective and have high recall; but usually they are much too costly for the individual to attempt on his own. One would have to resort to painting!

Adrian Flowers (date unknown)

Portraits

Other important work in the Adrian Flowers Archive consists of portraits. Early in his career, these consisted of actors, dancers, artists. It is the portraits of artists that are possibly the most enduring, presumably because the artists' work lives on in a more meaningful, long-term way. Tastes also change, and art like photography may go in and out of fashion. Some of the early portraits were done out of a necessity and sometimes an exchange for artwork with artists particularly those who lived in St Ives, highly regarded and well-known. Again, this is an area of the archive which deserves its own detailed analysis.

Chapter Two

Other photographic archives and collections

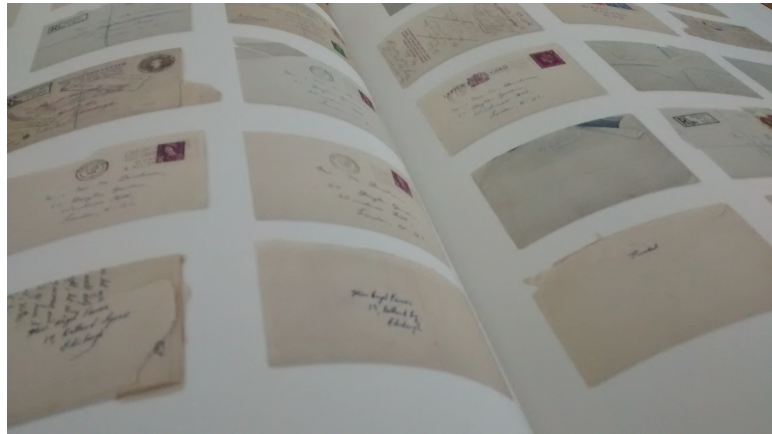
By way of comparison in terms of validity of an archive, it is helpful to look at other projects and archives undertaken by photographers of subjects that are personal to them, and that may be seen to have wider social significance. Jason Wilde (jasonwilde.com) has documented his parents' notes to each other and photographed these using paving stones as a background, symbolising their history through generations. This project is now a book. He has recognised a value of recording his parents' relationship through his mother's notes to his father, which are also evocative of a particular era because it was a time before technology, and notes were left on pieces of used envelopes. Wilde states:

Since the invention of photography our collective social history has been recorded on camera by countless photographers for all kinds of reasons. These photographic archives become windows into other times and places that help us understand ourselves and others.

Having looked at examples like this, it would probably be advisable to narrow down and focus on one particular area of Adrian Flowers' archive, as it is so vast, but it would almost be impossible to look at one area and not include another. It is also relevant to find out to what extent one area of his work informs another. The above cited project and others I have researched, are also not *about* photographers, but *by* photographers, yet their projects are very close to them on a personal level, so in this way provide a useful comparison to my study.

Another personal project which provides a useful comparison, and inspiration, is that of the archive inherited by Sara Davidmann from her mother, consisting of a family archive of letters, photographs and papers left from her aunt to her mother. Sara Davidmann used material from the archive to produce new work and an exhibition *Ken. To be destroyed* in 2014, later to be published as a book in 2016. The instructions left with the archive form the title. Therefore a discovery was made through these objects, which lead to a revelation. In the same way the Adrian Flowers archive has a

connection with written material in the way of notebooks: there may be more to reveal in time, and intrigue exists. Time is of paramount importance both in the sense that it takes time for the value of something to evolve, but also in order for a discovery to take place: it can take time to evaluate items physically, at first they seem so precious and then over time can take on a different perspective.



photograph (Francesca Flowers) from *Ken. To be destroyed 2016* by Sara Davidmann

A different kind of photography Archive and experience, and beautifully restored, is that of The Hardman House, in Liverpool, which contains and preserves the archive of Edward Chambré Hardman. The house is run by The National Trust and has been preserved in the way it would have been when Hardman was working as a portrait photographer with his wife at the house in the 1950s, where they lived and worked. This is a wonderful display of how a photographer worked, and if this had been a possibility for the studio of Adrian Flowers, it could have been a good solution for storage and display of his setup, and the work he undertook. However, the spatial qualities of such an Archive take on a different kind of relevance, the spaces exist in reality in front of us, not in the imagination or in the memory, as for example, with my memory of my father's studio.

It is particularly relevant for me, since I related and still do relate to the spaces of my father's studio, where I felt at home and grew up, watching him work and trying whenever possible to get involved. In the absence of photographs of these spaces, they have to a certain extent become indelibly printed on my mind's eye.

As described by Kuhn (2002: 128):

Perhaps memory offers a constantly changing perspective on the places and times through which we – individually and collectively – have been journeying? Perhaps it is only when we look back that we make a certain kind of sense of what we see?



Photographs of the portrait studio and processing lab at The Hardman House, Liverpool, 2016
Photographs: Francesca Flowers

The Hardman House, Liverpool

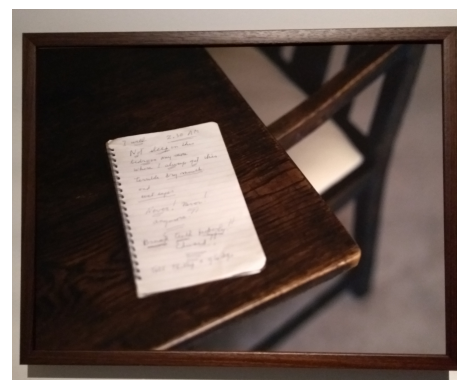
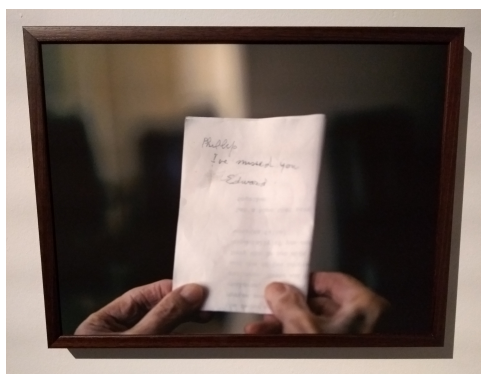
There is a situation for the type of archive such as The Hardman House, in the form of a museum, but maybe it exists on a more immediate level, appealing to visitors taking an interest in Hardman's life and the way he worked; of course these visitors are necessary to keep the house and its contents alive. No doubt the depth to its contents appears later on, when the physicality of the spaces take effect on our imaginations and the visitor wants to know more.

Therein lies another dilemma with the archive of Adrian Flowers. Without the physical overall 'container' of house or museum, how does his work become accessible? The archive I am concerned with keeping alive is much more hidden - the treasures are beneath the surface, threatening to become all-consuming. Walking in to its current home, it would not be obvious that it represents the archive of a photographer.

Phillip Toledano – *Days with my Father*

Phillip Toledano's book was published in 2010, and documents the relationship with his father through photographs, recording his father's moments living with dementia after the death of Toledano's mother. The photographs along with a blog received an overwhelming response from thousands of people around the world, much moved by the stories and photographs, testament to its emotional power. More recently, a new exhibition¹ has taken this idea further and features photographs from the book alongside another exhibition of photographs of Toledano himself, projecting different personas on himself, by way of somehow controlling his future.

This example is of course the most poignant for me, with the focus on a family member with dementia, with similar themes of recording notebooks written in by Toledano's father. The fact that my father was also a photographer, and kept so much material, becomes inextricably connected with his mental condition later in life, whether it was actually connected or not.



From exhibition: *Days with my Father* by Phillip Toledano (these photographs: Francesca Flowers)

¹ Phillip Toledano *Days with my Father* at Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, April 2018

Amelia Stein

Amelia Stein produces beautiful black and white photographs with meticulous attention to detail. Stein's biography states that 'absence and the passage of time' are recurring themes in her work. Of particular interest to me is the work she produced for a project called 'Old Boxes' for the RHA annual exhibition in 2012. The striking photographs show old cardboard boxes from her late father's optician practice, from the old shop, in the process of opening them and deciding what to do with their contents. Stein states that with another project called 'Loss and Memory', these images were made after the death of her parents, photographs of her parents' possessions, when she was clearing out places that were not their home.



Photographs by Amelia Stein, from *Loss and Memory* 2002

In an accompanying text written by Colm Tóibín (2002) for this collection of photographs by Amelia Stein, he explains so well the photograph capturing the aura of a person through their belongings

These photographs dramatise the mystery and ambiguity of things that once were full of meaning and usefulness and hope even, and now would not be missed. They have a withdrawn air, as though they did not expect too much from the future. But just now, in these moments when Amelia Stein photographed them, they have an odd, embattled dignity and a fierce presence. They are part of the urge to create a monument to those she has loved, to hold time still for a moment in a dim, sad light.

On discovering Stein's photographs, I have been able to make a clear connection in the meaning behind the photographs I have taken about my father, his photographs, his vase or his notebooks, and this will be discussed later in Chapter four.

Chapter Three

Considerations of overseeing an Archive: the challenge

During the course of this research study, I have encountered various dilemmas and difficulties, which I would like to explore and discuss. Initially the aims of researching for this project were to assess the importance of the Archive from a photographic viewpoint and its significance historically and socially. However, on further delving, along with the inevitable personal involvement the aims of the project led to a different path on a deeper level: to examine the personality of the man behind the Archive.

Adrian Flowers kept everything, in the last twenty years of his life, in The Barn, in south-west France. It was not just the obviously noticeable things he kept, like photographic equipment, a lot of it in duplicate, just in case one item wasn't working; approximately 10,000 photographic jobs, mainly advertising, in the form of transparencies and negatives, filing cabinets containing these jobs in envelopes, framed exhibitions, furniture, props, newspapers, photographic paper. As well as all this, there is a substantial collection of personal photographs: those of his family when he was growing up and those of his own family, his first wife, his children as babies, his babies being born, large prints on card. He had four children so there is a lot of material.

In addition, there are all the personal biographical items: letters (including copies he'd made on his fax machine of those he'd sent as replies), official and legal documents, his many hundreds of small notebooks, French carnets with small grid squares, they were the ones he favoured, they fit into his top left pocket of a shirt or jacket every day. In his latter years he would carry two or three of them bound together with an elastic band. I showed a photograph of my father to a friend whose mother had had vascular dementia and died a few years ago. He noticed the notebook in the top pocket; "ah, see? that's a sign of the onset of Alzheimer's".

Fortunately, the contents of the Barn had been carefully organised over many years by Adrian Flowers' dedicated archivist and friend Brian Durling, who I'm sure had

inadvertently become engrossed in Adrian Flowers' life and his history. It would have been impossible not to be drawn in. Every time I ventured into The Barn, it felt rather foreboding. With the sense of personal history and the fact that I had grown up in with contradictory behaviour and emotions due to a certain amount of instability both in the house where I was born, and in my dad's studio where many of the objects now surrounding me had been situated, in such a contrasting context. The associated emotions and confusion of all space converging, weighed rather heavily on my mind. It also at times seemed incongruous to me to see all this history of his life, transported to such a different location in rural south of France, which was supposed to represent a new start.

Structure vs. Chaos

The structure versus chaos juxtaposition is a recurring theme with variations which is played out in my mind when I think of Adrian Flowers and his Archive. It should be stated that I never heard him refer to the contents of the Barn as his Archive. He only ever referred to "The Barn". It was a sacred place to him, never to be seen without his permission, and even then under close supervision. The perception – and reality during a certain period - is that there existed a very disciplined structure in Flowers' commissioned advertising work, requiring a fastidious and accurately tuned brain. Yet when it came to the contents of the Barn, everything became chaotic, even though his plan was to eventually make sense of it all and give it structure. The superficial structure that can be seen from photographs of the Barn is represented by the boxes, crates and albums. However inside these boxes, the chaos is more apparent. It is as if the chaos in the boxes transferred to Adrian Flowers' mind and in turn to his notebooks. These will be discussed later.

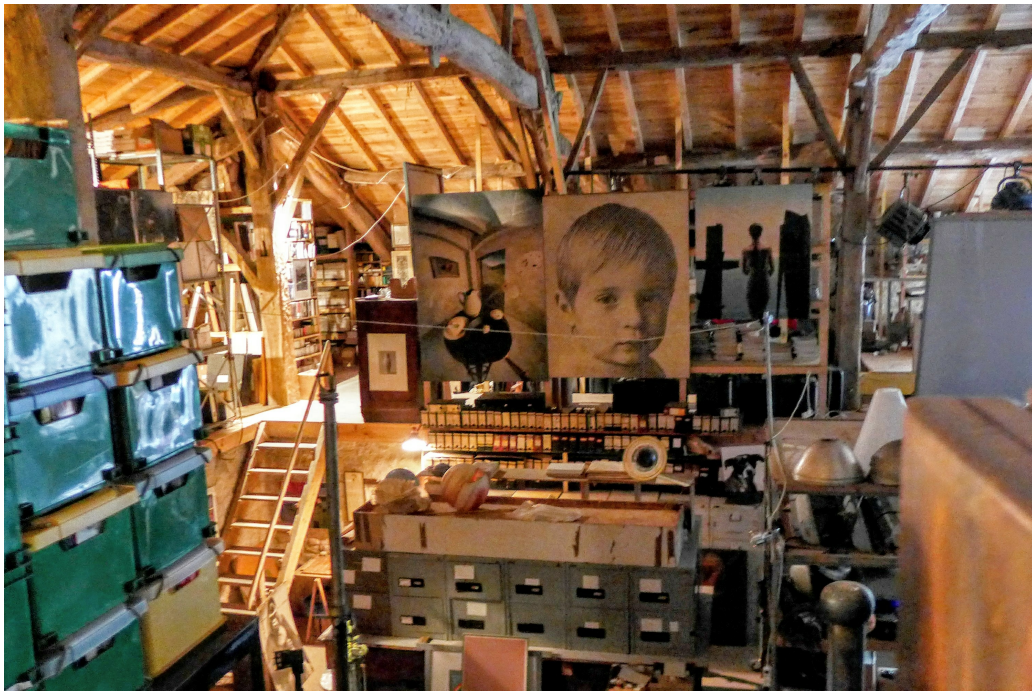
Returning to the dilemmas of organising an Archive of this magnitude: there is the consideration of the person involved being a close family member, and the sentiments that are associated with that close involvement. Can these be separated from the professional approach of overseeing the care and organisation of an archive? Indeed the family involvement may make it more difficult, as everything could appear to be

important; alternatively, being a family member may mean that one is too close to the project and cannot see what the most pertinent and valuable parts of the Archive are. There are personal memories of course, also the more general memories; time and eras when the photographs were taken. They have associated meanings and significance, possibly even repercussions, by way of times and memories that are mis-remembered, become embarrassingly out of date in their subject matter. This in itself presents levels of meaning that can be social, historical or personal. Unlike a written history, it was not necessarily an intended situation, it existed in its own present time, suspended in that time and in its own reality of the moment. The Archive takes on new meanings with the passing of time, as is bound to be the case with many archives.

It is important to keep a careful balance, though this can really only take place over a period of time. It is also important to remain mindful by remembering that even though there is an enormous amount of personal and family material – the personal being projects that Adrian Flowers felt close to, though he was adamant that Photography and Art be seen as separate entities – it was the professional advertising work that was important to him, both in terms of earning a living, but also for its subject matter and the challenge of the brief.

Contexts shift over time, and so what may seem important at one point, may seem less so at another. But the layers of importance also change over different periods, as with history, as cited in Edwards, Hart (ed.) (2004: 48): 'a curatorial dynamic that attempts to hold an uneasy sway of order over the chaos of things and their associated bodies of knowledge'.

The Barn



Adrian Flowers' Barn in south-west France from 1996-2016. Photograph: Francesca Flowers

Adrian Flowers called himself a 'stuff merchant'². The stuff to which he referred was in fact a Barn containing a life's work and belongings, imbued with meaning on so many levels: emotions, memories, achievements, missed opportunities, disappointments maybe. In the photograph I have taken from high up in the Barn, there appear to be scenes within a scene. The three panels straight ahead, represent three different eras and styles of work. It would not be possible to say now whether this was a deliberate choice to display very different styles and eras. If not deliberate, then possibly a subconscious reminder *to himself*, in summary, of the varied work over 40-50 years of his career. Nevertheless, the size of the work displayed would almost suggest it was attempting to be an exhibition, with an audience in mind. It possibly appears to be a contradictory idea whether admitted to by Adrian Flowers': the privacy of The Barn, alongside a need to exhibit his work and be recognised for what he did; the photographer as opposed to artist.

² Quote from Youtube film on Adrian Flowers by Luke Tomlinson
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHvMRSLqPuM>

The first panel on the left is a canvas print of a scenic background for one of many shoots for a large Le Creuset campaign, photographed in 1980. The image on the right hand side is a personal promotional photograph called *Nearing the End of the Millenium*, showing a model standing between two sculptures, one made of iron by Brian Wall and one made of wood by John Ernest. This would have been a backdrop and set that Adrian Flowers had already used in a homage to *Divers* 1930 by George Hoyningen-Huene , a photograph of his first son with his wife and child. There are deliberate artistic and photographic references here, sometimes eccentric and often witty.



'I can see the sea, Daddy' 1988 Adrian Flowers

In an article on photography referring to time, mortality and memory, Sean O'Hagan makes a similar connection to that which I make with my Barn photograph, a photograph he took of his dad's shed: *The Inside of My Dad's Shed/The Inside of My Dad's Head*, O'Hagan, (2013)

When my father was very ill a few years ago, and again just after he died, I photographed the interior of his garden shed on my phone and digital camera. The images, together and separately, feel like a portrait of him somehow – a portrait of the inside of his head and all the stuff he had collected there.

O'Hagan expresses a regret at not having used the Kodak instamatic camera he had found in the "everything drawer" in his family's house, to record his everyday life. No doubt the Barn is the same on a super scale. The connection that O'Hagan speaks of in this article resonates with me on another level too: the connection I also make with my dad and his vase, which I discuss later in this study.

Heterotopias

The Archive comes to life or has any meaning if there is an interaction with it, otherwise it simply exists and is stagnant. As soon as I am with the contents of the Archive and look at any of the work contained therein, a story begins to unfold, and as Bachelard (1994: 8) states: 'Space contains compressed time'; but is it more that the objects in space contain compressed time?

In another sense this idea is pursued in Foucault (1984: 46-49)

In any case I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time. Time probably appears to us only as one of the various distributive operations that are possible for the elements that are spread out in space

A useful discussion can take place in reference to Foucault's *Heterotopias*. While it is understood that there are distinct spaces in our lives, such as the house, outside spaces, private spaces, public spaces and work and spaces for relaxation; there are other spaces that may not be so clearly defined. I would suggest that The Barn is one of these. It contained objects and memories of other, more familiar spaces, to be taken out of their contexts and re-imagined, and almost locked away. Times and spaces became memories and experiences not to be visited again perhaps, or tampered with. For Adrian Flowers, time and the lack of it, was another preoccupation. Possibly The Barn and all that it contained, somehow represented for him a possibility of time standing still, as objects and photographs did not change or move, even though time continued to move on, quickly and irretrievably. As this happened, so too was the realization that without time, the contents that were in effect supposed to slow down

time, would not allow the time for them to be examined to a great extent, or particularly effectively.

Chapter Four

Concepts and Themes

Photography and materiality

In these days of digital photography, ease of production, immediate instant results and gratification, it is almost impossible to conceive of a time when digital photography did not exist. Previously, the materiality of a photograph was always present, and was always part of the process of producing photographs, and creating a photograph was so considered. So how much did this materiality or process of production have an impact on a photograph's meaning or its apportioned value? Digital photographs become almost dispensable, in their apparent transient nature, the ability to look at and edit so easily. Is the value the same and is it possible that it can be? There was a time when photography seemed so exotic, possibly some of that magic has dissipated.

Sean O'Hagan (2013), photography critic for the Guardian makes a statement that may well be a common theme:

as so many great photographers have told me the real editing takes place as you are shooting. I have never printed a digital photograph. They are stored on my hard disk in their hundreds, maybe thousands. This fills me with a vague anxiety.

Photography has changed so much in the last decade or so, where it had possibly been more considered, due to the cost of processing and printing, to the point where digital photographs are never printed, just as O'Hagan admits in the quote. I discuss this later in the section on photo albums in Chapter four. It is significant that he states a "vague anxiety"; whereas it is supposedly a comfort or reassuring in some ways to record everything we see, as if to stop that moment in its tracks, to help our failing memories or simply to show other people with pride, there is also an anxiety at not being able to keep up with the amount of photographs that can now be produced in this digital age. The quantity that can now be produced, and no longer printed, either because of cost issues as stated above, or due to storage issues, means that viewers look at photographs in a new way, either have to look at the back of a phone or look at a

‘slideshow’ on a computer.

Even though the quantity of material contained in the Adrian Flowers Archive is already substantial, much of it consists of duplicates. Interestingly, if digital photography and devices had been more prevalent at the time he was working, so much of his work could have been recorded more effectively in this way, to be stored on computer files. The physical storage of the analogue photograph becomes the object with its associated meanings, surroundings, influences at the time. The materiality consists of its innate qualities: how it was produced, what materials were used. The object is no longer just a photograph, or representation of something. Nor is it confined to its inherent materials of grain, colour, black & white, composition, size – whether it is framed, unframed, gloss, matte.

There is a connection between the materials Adrian Flowers used to display his work, and that of say the earlier days of photography and the embellishments that were used. In Flowers’ case, he had to make important decisions about the type of film he used for a specific job, and in his personal work the material he used to print his photographs. He also covered many of his jobs in different formats. For large posters (24/48 sheet posters), 10x8 format, but also 5x4, 2¼ and then he would most likely make copies of the originals onto 35mm as well. There is something about the vast collection: filing cabinets, the replication, repetition and copying that suggests a neurotic need to keep remembering and keep reminding.

Factors to consider when organising an archive of photography and the relationship between the viewer and the image are inextricably connected with the material qualities of the contents, and what they consist of. Of course the medium of photography and the way that photographs are taken, its technology and devices have changed so much since photography’s invention. The ultimate achievement in instant photography came about with the appearance of the Polaroid camera in 1947, providing an instant visual gratification, and no waiting for results. Even more accessible perhaps later on was the Polaroid SX-70, where the negative and positive were fused together into one neat package, rather than as separate entities of the

earlier Polaroids. It is possible that the very different way of experiencing the taking of a photograph adds or takes away from the memory of that moment. The Polaroid is a good example of the photograph as an object, which almost becomes more meaningful than the image displayed. Certainly with the more recent 'Impossible Project', the results may not be as good, it's fascinating that there was a demand for this kind of instant analogue photography once again, the materiality here is enforced even more. It is worth noting that Barthes said of Polaroid (1981: 9):

"Polaroid is fun but disappointing, except when a great photographer is involved". It is not clear what he meant by this, but it could be that "temporal anteriority" that he spoke of in his texts was challenged somewhat by the instantaneity of the polaroid.

Once digital photography came about, it replaced the requirement for the expense of having prints made or the expense of the polaroid, which was a one-off system as well, so there was no possibility editing the photograph. Although for some photographers, the risk element could be part of the excitement presented by Polaroid photographs. These days, the interaction and feedback are even more instant with the Instagram, although the materiality is not there, only in the 'materiality' of the hardware of phone or computer.

A useful explanation of Materiality exists in Rose (2007: 227) citing Edwards' explanation of Materiality with these categories:

1. Visual form, or content
2. Material form (properties or qualities of the photograph)
3. Presentational form – the way the photograph is presented
 - frame
 - album
 - box

An added material dimension adds a weight, metaphorically and literally to the photograph. In the same way that photographs in the past, around the beginning of the century, would have been embellished, either with ornate frames, in albums or

special containers. As stated by Batchen (2004: 96) "Photography is usually about making things visible, but these elaborated photographs are equally dedicated to the evocation of the invisible – relationships, emotions, memories." Similarly to Barthes (2000: 44-46) and his ideas about photography and death, "they affirm the close proximity of life and death, and attempt against common sense, to use one to deny the finality of the other". The strange sensation on looking at photographs of those close, dead or alive, somehow generates a moment of punctum: even if the person photographed is still alive, the moment of the photograph has passed. Punctum is a sensation which cannot be expressed in words and seems to resonate particularly with photography, simply because the camera records exactly what is in front of it, and disregarding any post-production that may have taken place.

In a similar way, the fusion of photography and space relating to the physical experience of the studio, combine to generate an all-encompassing experience. This can to some extent be found again in the physical manifestation of bringing my father's work together in an installation in the form of an exhibition, within new spaces, heterotopias perhaps – those spaces that exist outside of everyday spaces, in an effort to capture an elusive sensation of the studio and our relationship from the past.

It is also relevant to notice how images are placed, what their context consists of, whether it's on a shelf, a wall, in a cupboard. The physical containers of photographs can impart a life of their own and can change the emphasis of the photograph. In the same way that the material aspects of the photograph itself are important, photographs can be stored with care, or not: taking on scratches and marks, thereby transforming the photograph with its own new layer of materiality. Sometimes photographs become part of a background, forming an inclusion in the decoration of a home, often in hallways, where they are rarely scrutinised. However they hold an important presence, if they are photographs of people, there may be a sensation of being watched or looked at, which may – or may not – be comforting.

Photography and memory

I get my memories from other people

Since my father died, I have returned many times to the family holiday house in Ireland, often on my own. It's as if I'm trying to encapsulate, discover and also somehow reinvent the past. This place is supposed to contain good memories and holidays; I'm attempting to recapture a time I did not experience. It was there in the later discovered photographs: a past I did not know existed, or had denied, even though no-one could tell me about it. The times I did not experience with my father. By the time I was part of the family, he started to be around less. Nevertheless the 'proof' is there in those 35mm slides, in the Diana Wylie plastic sleeves, tucked away in filing cabinet drawers, which I was to discover only very recently and of course since my father's death. It would have been unlikely for him to have remembered that he had taken these photographs, let alone find them.

In a certain way, it was almost like a betrayal towards my parents that I had convinced myself somehow, through a culmination of memories and experiences, that my childhood consisted mainly of disappointing and difficult times, and yet here was proof of happier times. Why had I not remembered this? Perhaps it was simply because I was too young to remember. Yet painful memories are often those that are not remembered, suppressed memories, not the happy ones. Surely a child cannot lie in that instinctive way when a photograph is taken. Sigmund Freud's theory of 'screen memories' may come into play here, where there is a displacement of a significant memory, visual rather than verbal, that a child uses to filter memories, possibly if something is too painful to remember. The result is that all memories are submerged, whether good or bad, and one memory becomes embedded inside another. The result of this process can then lead to a false memory, or a mis-remembering.

Dillon (2006, p.49) sums this up well

one invents a universe out of unverifiable impressions and self-serving revisions. Once it has been locked into the prehistory of bereavement,

there is a kind of seduction to the memorial fragment: every detail becomes telling, each rescued object a reminder of a vanished era.

The 'seduction of the memorial fragment' is what the contents of an Archive become; there is a weight of memory and meaning bestowed upon its contents.

It is certainly a common thread in literature around the subject of photography and memory. In Kuhn (2006: 22) there is the discovery of 'how we construct our own histories through memory'. Discoveries such as these are surely what give the archive – particularly a photography archive - such significance and validation, in the universalising nature of grief, as personal as that grief can also be. Maybe it is of no significance that the Archive is of relevance on a larger scale, to others in an every day situation. To reinforce the phenomenon of photography and memory, Kuhn (2006: 15) discusses the idea of family photographs in context, and the possible conflicts that could be represented by them: it "points not only to the contingency of memories not attached to, but occasioned by, an image, but also to a scenario of power relations with the family itself." Possibly on showing the photographs I mention above to other members of my family would prompt very different reactions, depending on that individual's memory of the same occasion. Indeed Kuhn (2006: 13) suggests it is what the photograph represents, rather than what is in the photograph itself that is relevant: "to show what it is evidence of, a photograph must always point you away from itself". Maybe this the key to why photographs from the past, and in an archive are so important, because of their ability to freeze a moment in time and as a most powerful prompt for other memories.

By contrast, I remember an occasion possibly two years before he died, when my father showed me a large black and white portrait of his sister, who had died many years before. He had constructed a different story in his Alzheimer's state, whereby he said that she had gone missing and that everyone was worried about her. I did not tell him what had actually happened, as this would have disturbed him even more, and it was fascinating that there was no uncertainty as far as he was concerned about what he was saying. Of course this could be something he stated without the photograph,

but his story was possibly so vivid to him, because his sister is alive and young in the photograph.

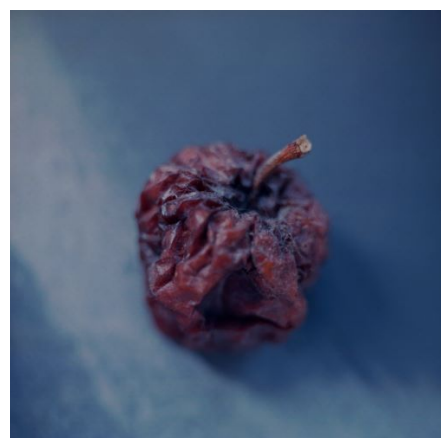
Apples

It would be impossible to look at the career of Adrian Flowers without looking at his consistent preoccupation with simpler objects, including fruit. Throughout his life, he continued this fascination that he enjoyed recording photographically; watching a piece of fruit change over time, or simply recording the simplicity of its inherent qualities and form. It was such a contrast to the sophisticatedly produced commercial work he undertook.

An image of an apple can be representing itself in a straightforward way: it is simply the object in front of us, being photographed, the signified object. Yet it is a perishable and organic object and therefore changes over time. An analogy I explored in the exhibition of my work included an apple photograph taken by Adrian Flowers, placed next to a shriveled apple that I photographed, in order to present an obvious contrast in the state of the apple, in the same way that the brain can eventually disintegrate.



Green Apple on White 1970 Adrian Flowers
(digitally remastered)



Fading 2018 Francesca Flowers

Flowers' often worked on his own 'experimental' work when he had gaps in

commissioned work, sometimes using sets that were already in the studio, and in the case of the following photograph, he used the backdrop of a pre-existing painting.

JOB	FILM	DATE	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCT
5584	2. HFC 4. HFC 2. HFC	10.11.66	Still life of apple on painting	Exp.



Apple and Grapes 1966 by Adrian Flowers

Apples appear to be a recurring motif throughout Adrian Flowers' life, in his personal work. One of the photographs he cites as a 'favourite' at a certain time, was taken in 1966. He placed a real apple in front of a painting of fruit, giving it a three-dimensional quality. This appears to be a precursor for a lot of his later commissioned work, featuring painted backgrounds and a fascination for perspectives from an early point in his career. There is also a clear fascination for the possibility of deception with photography and its connection with Surrealism, where an idea can destabilise the viewer, at first thinking they know what they're looking at then realising it might not be quite how it at first appears.



Painting by Emmie Ward (c.late 1800s)

With this in mind, I have been compelled to pay homage to my father's interest, and have photographed an apple which grew on a small apple tree in my garden, significant in that I could see it grow, then record it and freeze time, in a similar intention to the green apple above. This is a digital photograph, which illustrates the antithesis of the analogue setup Flowers would have employed. It is also not a professional shot, in that it is not photographed in a studio or with any kind of lighting setup. It is lit by daylight, and has a strong shadow falling to the left. In many ways this would not have been acceptable as a studio shot. There is a harshness in its reality, and if nothing else has been enhanced by being photographed digitally.

However, I wanted to understand the process of photographing an object in the way that he did, making that connection and returning to something pure in photography, in an age where almost anything is possible photographically. I often return to the idea and the object of the apple, as a preoccupation for Flowers as an image and also as a symbol. It is a simple, elemental form, and contradicts the complicated setups of advertising shots. It was an antidote to this work, even when the complicated jobs challenged him in a way that would nevertheless have been a positive experience for him.



Photograph: Francesca Flowers 2017



Knorr 'Van Gogh', 1988 photograph Adrian Flowers

Another example of a simple object is his photograph a tomato, which featured in Adrian Flowers' first exhibition at Angela Flowers Gallery in 1970. His work at the time is written about in the accompanying catalogue:

People rarely occur in Adrian Flowers' photographs; at least, in those photographs that he produces for himself, rather than for commission. But their presence is, paradoxically, felt in their absence. The objects he photographs, or a deserted landscape,

take on a human warmth from the sympathetic way they have been looked at, by the photographer, through the lens.

Overy (1970)

Hence in later life, the shots consist of simple ideas: bark, rust, fruit and the vase. This also harps back to the earlier days cited above, comprising simple objects of apples, tomatoes, lemons, eggs and thus the cycle of a life in photography almost came full circle. In a magazine interview mid-career, Flowers clearly explains:

I get endless pleasure from very simple objects and simple relationships. The essence, I suppose, is something mystical or magical. It's really complete in itself, and you feel if only you were one with it, you would be complete too.

(Flowers: 1975)



Adrian Flowers *Red Tomato*

In the same article he states: "I don't care if everybody is taking eggs and apples, those are the two most important!" Later in this study, I discuss the connection between Flowers' ubiquitous original object, his vase, which represents himself in many ways, and is not present in photographs as a person, but as a presence, as stated in the quote above.

The discovery through his varied work is that there is a continuous juxtaposition between simple objects and something not being quite what it seems, thereby almost challenging what photography claims to be.

Adrian Flowers "In the Round" at Angela Flowers consists of exactly 100 photographs, each circular in shape, by someone who uses the camera in almost a philosophical way to investigate the ideas of change, growth, decay, in-and-outness, reality and falsehood, front and back...

Russell (1972)

Mirror

When I spent time in my father's studio, I was slightly intrigued by the room next to the processing lab, and the studio. It was a narrow room where a large freezer box was situated which contained stocks of film, and on top a kettle and shelves with cups etc. On the opposite side was a long mirror with light bulbs running along the top, and a makeshift dressing table running along the bottom. This was where models would prepare their makeup and hair for photo shoots.

In the exhibition and installation photographs of the work I created, as recorded in the accompanying practice based research Archive Box, I created a frame with lightbulbs around a mirror which is a reference to the enduring memory of the mirror with lightbulbs in the studio. The light bulbs created a critical light to focus the visitor who may look at themselves. On the other side of the mirror, there is a large print of myself, the print is the self-portrait mentioned a bit later, unexpected, looking out at the onlooker. This relates to a later idea in this study about the way we remember images, or how we like to be portrayed or for others to see us. A photographer can perceive something about a personality, whether they are known to the photographer or not – that is the skill – and it questions what other views may not dwell upon. The object of the mirror has been of as much interest to me and it was to Adrian Flowers. He liked to set mirrors up in different positions in whichever house he was living in. The mirror is something we all use on a daily basis to look at ourselves, and to look at our 'reflection'. Reflection is a useful word, as it is a noun and a verb. To reflect is to think about something, to consider it. When we look at ourselves, we see a mirror image, not what the camera sees. The camera sees us as we are seen by someone else. So is it a reflection of ourselves in both senses of the word? When is it a portrait, and when is it a reflection? This is the reflection of ourselves, as opposed to

the portrait and where the concept of the self-portrait becomes meaningful.

The mirror of course introduces ideas of narcissism and also that of the voyeur. Adrian Flowers believed that most photographers are voyeurs to some extent, the camera allowing the possibility of staring at the subject for longer than might be acceptable – either because it is a human subject, or even as a still life. If a camera is involved, maybe less questions are asked by the onlooker. As Flowers says:

Most photographers are voyeurs to some extent, I enjoy occasionally staring more than doing. I can also enjoy looking at old photographs, which if taken by me, or connected with my experience can bring about total recall, causing in me virtual reality to have more power than is healthy perhaps.³

As discussed in Foucault's *Heterotopia* the mirror represents a space between Utopia and Heterotopia, which is considered to be another space, with a combination of experience. It may be that other-worldly sensation that appears to be a fascination for Adrian Flowers, and in turn, myself. There is a connection with the relationship between reflection, portrait and self-portrait:

The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror.

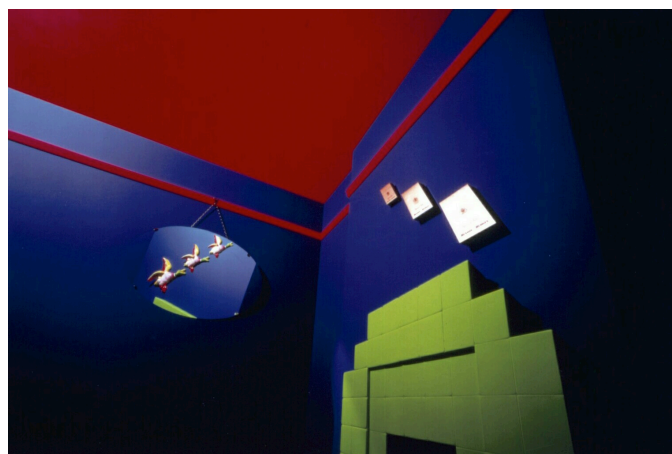
Lacan Mirror Stage

The connection between the Mirror Stage and later occurrences of the mirror image, first becomes possible as first relayed by Lacan, when a baby recognises itself as being complete in the specular body and image, in a coherent three-dimensional space, in the same way that the lens of the camera structures a frame in the photograph. There is a correlation here. Mirror therapy is an idea that is explored in the work of Padraig Spillane in his work *Throwing Back*. His photographs in a recent exhibition 'Naked

³ Adrian Flowers talk and slide show in 1996

Truth' at the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork, were concerned with how "technology has shaped our perception of ourselves, and how we are locked into our own reflection". I experimented with this idea to a certain extent in the *In Sight* exhibition, detailed later in this study. The dual idea of the mirror as the recognition and identification with an image, the person who looks at themselves, and also the alienation from it, in its context and self-consciousness, is almost a misrecognition. It may be similar to the idea of when we hear our own voice, it doesn't sound familiar, we might not feel it sounds right.

I find it more than coincidental in this fascination Adrian Flowers appeared to have with the mirror. The employment of the idea of the of the mirror was used in one of the most recognisable advertising shots that Flowers' photographed and set up for the very successful Benson & Hedges campaign in the late 1970s. Here again is a surreal idea and some magic: what looks like a mirror on the wall reflecting flying ducks becomes three flying packs of B&H cigarettes, and is actually a hole cut in a partition wall. This was achieved with special lighting and sets, no post-production.



Flying Ducks for Benson & Hedges. Photograph: Adrian Flowers

Portrait/Self-portrait

My experience of growing up with a photographer father meant that I was often being photographed, sometimes by my choice, sometimes by his. There may have also been a fascination on my father's part of having a daughter after three sons. A portrait taken when I was about twelve years old, staring in a posed fashion at the lens, was taken on large format 10x8 camera. I am including the Polaroid of this shot in the exhibition as it is the most striking of the series. It also makes a connection with the idea I produced as a homage to the photograph: repeating the composition and expression in a self-portrait so many years later, on a smaller medium format, with my father's camera, and some of his old film and set up with a cable release so that I could take the photograph myself.

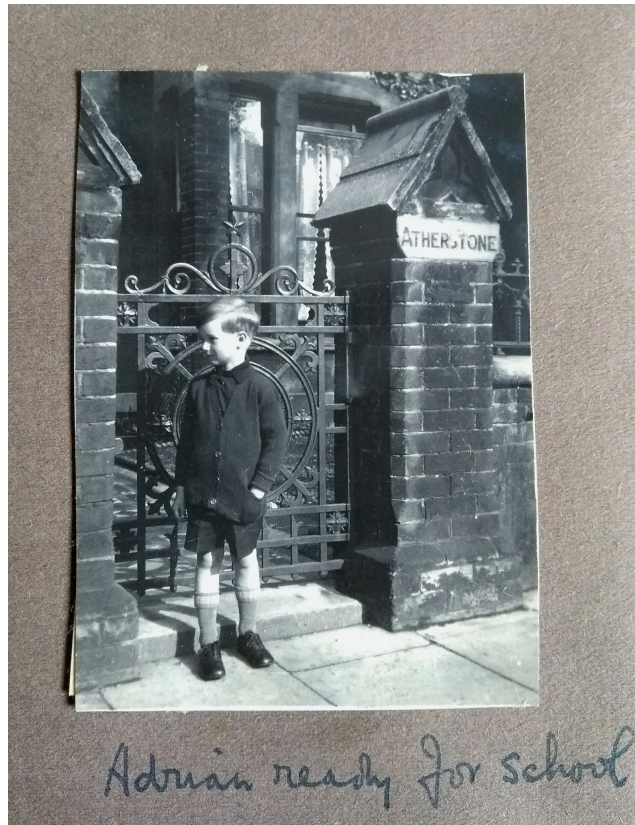
The film is Ilford Pan F and dates from July 1993. Of course I had no idea what results the film would produce if any at all. That was part of the exercise: allowing the materials of the film to have their own agency, allowing its own interpretation so that I could only have a certain amount of control over the photograph I was taking. This is a far cry from the ubiquitous 'selfie', instantly viewable, as expected, on a smartphone.

The above-mentioned agency involves a certain magical quality and also a connection to Adrian Flowers. The film and the camera that he would have used gave it an aura of connection and tangibility as with the photographs of the notebooks. Once again I am exploring the nature of the materiality and the weight of its presence, and what it would have meant to him. The Adrian Flowers archive contains this weight and presence, on a much larger scale, it was a comfort to him perhaps, though from the outside an observer might have been perceived it as negative in its suffocating nature of lack of structure. As time passed for him in his life, a comfort in materials that became too much to unravel eventually, and as time goes by in the present, the Archive presents a possibly onerous task to unravel. The results of self-portrait were intriguing. The numbering system on the backing paper of the film had penetrated the film, thereby showing the organic process of the film and its material properties which have changed over time and continues to change until it is processed.

The portrait to a certain extent portrays us as we expect to be seen, not necessarily the way we see ourselves. A portrait is someone looking at the camera, at the lens, at the photographer, even if it's a self-portrait. Maybe the portrait is trying to capture characteristics of that person, frozen in time, forever and to comfort – or haunt - after death. Barthes (2000: 9) states:

And the person or thing photographed is the target, the referent, a kind of little simulacrum, any *eidolon* emitted by the object, which I should like to call the *Spectrum* of the Photograph, because this word retains, through its root, a relation to “spectacle” and adds to it that rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead.

This idea of the “return of the dead” may seem morbid or unsettling. The latter can be true, as when we look at a photograph of someone who has died, that person is alive at that moment, and therefore real. Nevertheless, it stays static, unchanging, captured in a moment. If that person is smiling, this can be reassuring as a memory, but at the time it was fleeting.



Memories/Photo albums

The deception of photography can be of particular relevance in a family photo album – the events and gatherings which one likes to remember and display. Rarely, unless in a photographic exhibition, are disturbing images shown; there is no necessity for a disturbance. However, certain situations will have different memories for different members even from the same family. When discussing the social use of photography and its sociology, in *Un Art Moyen* (Bourdieu: p.247) concludes:

There is nothing more decent, more reassuring, or more edifying than a family album: all the particular adventures that enclose individual remembrance in the particularity of a secret are excluded from it, and the common past...

The physical action of placing prints in a photo album, represents a peace of mind, memories are stored away for safe-keeping. They are proof of a time that happened, people seen, children growing up. In this context the comparison between analogue and digital photography comes to the fore once again. There was a time, and probably

still is for a lot of people, where there existed a ritual of having a roll of film developed and printed and then placing the prints in photo albums. This in itself was a whole process, and the care that would be taken to do this was part of the ritual. These days, people take photographs digitally, on cameras and phones and we become spoilt for choice, possibly less discerning, and certainly lose the urgency to have the photographs printed. With automation and the ease of taking photographs, we are inundated with imagery; it becomes so commonplace. While photo albums become redundant to a certain extent.

An enduring memory I have of Adrian Flowers and his personal work, is the joy he found with having rolls of 35mm film developed and printed at his local processing lab near where he lived in France, when he had more time and no more commercial jobs. He would record the changing scenes around him where he lived and would take great pleasure (it seemed) in carefully filing away the 'snaps' as he called them, into albums. These albums became less substantial in weight and less attractive as the years went by, possibly indicating his deteriorating mind and eventual loss of interest due losing the simple mechanics of the action and also prior to this the carrying of a 35mm automatic camera around his neck. As his mind was deteriorating, the photographs were something he could hold on to, the visual confirmed an image that was disappearing in his memory. The focus of placing these photographs in albums was a ritual that probably felt secure and safe.

The issue of materiality arises here once again and Willumson (2011: 63) in the context of its implications for objects such as photo albums in museums:

In choosing, sequencing, organising and captioning the photographs for the album, the person responsible transforms the meaning of selected images into an intensely individualistic expression.

Photographic albums transcend private, personalised circumstance when they are clearly marked by the traces of their owners and their practices.

Returning to the Notebooks image, it seemed a witty connection to print the image on canvas, since Adrian Flowers was very interested at one time in printing on canvas, and a body of work he exhibited, all printed on canvas, in 1988. This materiality of chosen texture becomes significant when associated with the notebooks, also self-referential, the present image that I have photographed, meets the contents and the material of the past.

The idea of photographs printed on canvas seemed to bemuse the exhibition-goers at the time of Flowers' exhibition in 1988, this practice having not been in evidence to any extent as it was a new process at the time. The perception from the audience's point of view was possibly that this material should be limited to use with paintings. Of course today, this process is commonplace; anyone can print their images on canvas and other materials, in what Batchen (2001: 59) calls 'the photograph's morphological possibilities'. With printing on canvas, is this somehow raising the status of a photograph, albeit subconsciously, in the customer's eyes? For Adrian Flowers this would have been an ironic message; that photography might somehow be taken as seriously as paintings, by being printed on canvas. It should be remembered that photography as an 'art form' in the decades when he was working, did not have the status that it now enjoys, at least in England.

Expectations vs Reality

In 1972 Adrian Flowers was invited to exhibit his own work at Angela Flowers Gallery, London, entitled *In the Round*, featuring one hundred pictures in round perspex frames, the roundel being the theme of each subject photographed. Though not considered by many to be his best personal work, it represented an achievement for him, and a challenge. Why he set himself the task of 100 pictures is not clear, but having done so, it was met. The final exhibition had to be designed to hang in a certain structure, with three rows of 6, 5 or 4 pictures.

Once I became custodian of Adrian Flowers Archive, which included *In the Round*, I thought it might be a good idea to revisit it so many years later. It had been exhibited twice in the United States, shortly after the exhibition in London, and remained crated up from its transportation.



On examination of the photographs, it was clear that the colour was much degraded and this was a huge disappointment. Yet again, this was a reminder of time passing and the transience of everything, the materiality that we sometimes rely on to last, and our erroneous memory of something, whether it is images or places.

This discovery was an essential revelation, which in part answered the question I had posed to myself; whether it is a worthwhile exercise to look after an archive – of any sort, but maybe especially photography, which is volatile, and susceptible to the effects of old chemicals, environment, processing and printing methods of a particular time. Then followed the disappointment of a discovery years later, where there had been an expectation. This will undoubtedly happen again: the expectation of what will be found in an archive and the reality, compared to the memory of what it was or the inherited memory of it.

“You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all... Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it we are nothing.”

— **Luis Buñuel**

Notebooks

Adrian Flowers always had a notebook in his shirt pocket and would be taking notes throughout the day. No doubt they were his aide-memoire for all manner of things but also a place to write about his philosophical musings on existence. The image of him with his notebook is an enduring memory and as such deserves to be mentioned and recorded. In this way, I decided to take a photograph of the notebooks, partly as a memory of him but also to honour the notebooks that were so important to him.

It is also a poignant reminder of his increasing battle with Alzheimer's, which he may also have eventually been aware of. Certainly when he started using notebooks, it was possibly as far back as the 1970s, when he would have used them to make notes. But in the later years of his life, his notebooks became essential for him every day, and he would be anxious if he mislaid any of them. I think eventually they became his confidante, not just a memory aid. He kept all of them, and I have deduced from the numbered label on each one that there are about 200. In my photograph I have recorded approximately 30-40 of these. I wanted to show them as an important subject in their own right, in a way that I think Adrian Flowers would have focussed on a particular seemingly simple object in his own personal photographic work, such as the photographs of fruit, or the Vase, or the photographs of bark and rust in later years, subjects which gave him so much pleasure.

Another dilemma I encountered was that of exposing the contents of the notebooks. At first I thought that what was written was private and for Adrian Flowers' eyes only. But curiosity will obviously prevail, and I decided that I would choose specific entries that could be displayed. The notebooks chosen could be displayed within a cabinet, once again contained as with so many objects and photographs within the Archive. The notebooks do not necessarily contain notes about photography; and photography

is stored in another way in containers. There is a contradiction and struggle between the two preoccupations.

In Batchen (2004: 95) he states:

One might regard the invention and proliferation of photography not only as a response to the “crisis of memory”, but also as a symptom or product of that crisis. The photograph reveals a loved one’s appearance, but the appearance provokes a memory that is hollowed out, disconnected from the social realities of its own production and also from those who are doing the remembering

The “crisis of memory” is what is significant here. With increasing accumulation, there was simultaneously an increase in the loss of memory. I found at times when I did have a chance to talk to my father about specific photographs, he could remember details clearly. But the context and relationship to his own life and the “social realities” as mentioned in the quote above, had perhaps become disconnected from the memories of the photographs. Barthes states: (2004 p..) Memory is 'posited as both artifice and reality' something perceived, invented and projected, all at once: “whether or not it is triggered, it is an addition: it is what I add to the photograph and *what is nonetheless already there*”.

For someone who was so photographically visually attuned, it's significant that written notes and notebooks became the most frequently used and relied upon prop for Adrian Flowers, as if an image could no longer be trusted as a reminder of something. Not that it would be as easy to take photographs on a daily basis instead of making notes, at least not in Flowers’ time. These days, it is commonplace to use a phone camera to ‘take notes’, - quicker and easier than writing things down - a reminder of something, a photograph being proof of something, and not susceptible to mistakes in translation or transcription. However, this is where materiality must step back.

Bate cites Freud’s discussion of the apparatus of memory (Freud, 1901 cited in Bate, 2010)

If I distrust my memory – neurotics, as we know, do so to a remarkable extent, but normal people have every reason for doing so as well – I am able to supplement and guarantee its working by making a note in writing. In that case the

surface upon which this note is preserved, the pocket-book or sheet of paper, is as it were a materialized portion of my mnemonic apparatus, which I otherwise carry about with me invisibly. I have only to bear in mind the place where this “memory” has been deposited and I can then “reproduce” it at any time I like, with the certainty that it will have remained unaltered and so have escaped the possible distortions to which it might have been subject in my actual memory.

Photographs of notebooks

The significance of the notebooks cannot be underestimated, therefore the images I have produced in my own practice, feature these notebooks. The two notebooks bound together in the pocket of a shirt my father used to wear, represent his reliance on these. There is a connection with the other photograph of piles of notebooks on the table, this time portraying the volume of notebooks, disembodied from any person or particular reference. This is where photography and memory cross over and cannot be disassociated. The notes in the notebooks connect the Alzheimer’s affected memory with the people featured in the photographs.

The narrow depth of field was important to show in the photograph I have taken, and of course represents a narrowing of the faculty of memory through time.

I photographed this setup on one of my father’s Hasselblad cameras, using an old roll of film, thereby creating the ‘aura’ of my father’s presence in the materials and equipment used. In his 1936 essay, Walter Benjamin argues that an artwork cannot be reproduced by mechanical means, for example with photography and maintain this possibility. However, in my example above, I have created the aura around the subject by using the equipment and the notebooks and have recorded them in a new setting and significance, at least to me and brings the materials and memory alive.

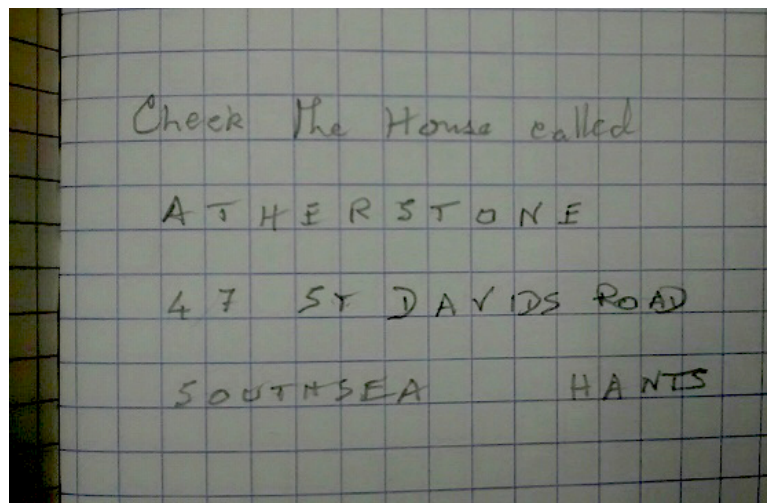


Atherstone Dictates 2017 Francesca Flowers



As time goes by 2017 Francesca Flowers

In one of my father's last notebooks, I found a statement:



This is a direct connection to Adrian's family. 'Atherstone' is the name of the house where he grew up, and became his focus towards the end of life, as mentioned above. This was a memory to hang on to, not a photograph but an idea and an address. It was his cycle of life, taking him back to where he was born. There was a strong pull to find the house where my father was born, but only after his death. The quote from the notebook above which relates to his family, was written when he had quite advanced Alzheimer's, in notebook No. 188.

The mystique of a writer's notebook seems still to be with us in this digital age. Perhaps it's because a handwritten original is unhackable – other than by traditional means, such as burglary.

Horne (2018: 32)

Filing Cabinet



Filing cabinets as they were in The Barn, Francesca Flowers

The containers for keeping photographs, whether they are filing cabinets, archive boxes or photograph albums represent a kind of ‘backing up’ of memories and information, a sort of hard-drive. They indeed seem to represent compressed time, and the look of them alone is somewhat daunting. Then inside the cabinets, some of the envelopes containing transparencies, negatives, of various sizes, are not necessarily in good order. Each envelope has a job number, as previously mentioned; yet there is no other information: no date, no names, or client information. All this is listed in other locations in ‘job books’ and diaries. Therefore a lengthy process of cross-referencing must take place in order to place each photograph in context.

Bachelard (2014: 77) cites Henri Bosco’s *Monsieur Carre Benoit a la champagne* where Carre-Benoit possesses an affection for his filing cabinet:

Here at least was something reliable, that could be counted on. You saw what you were looking at and you touched what you were touching[...] It replaced everything, memory as well as intelligence. In this well fitted cube there was not an iota of haziness or shiftiness. Once you had put something in it, even if you put it a hundred or ten thousand more times, you could find it again in the twinkling of an eye as it were.

Vase



Photograph: Steve Ibb

For many years I searched for a suitable permanent subject for my own purposes of experimentation and meditation. It had to be simple, obvious, exclusive, personal, easy to handle and transportable. I was always interested in containers and vessels. My favourite painter was Morandi in whom I recognised a kindred spirit. I also wanted to acquire a collection of object of vessels by which I would relate repeatedly inbetween-whiles. Eventually I settled for a kind of a vase and subsequently different versions of the same in different materials and with slight differences in outline.⁴

Adrian Flowers had several vases made, from the same template and in different finishes. He wanted an ordinary sort of object that was a container of some kind; not to be particularly beautiful, not intricate in design, but just a simple shape that was in some way different from the obvious. The top, wider than most other vases, is more like a pitcher, which conveys the idea of easy escape for the contents. Flowers' cited Robert Graves reference to Pandora's Box on his book on mythology and how it would have been a sealed vessel that if opened would release all the evils of the world, leaving only one thing – hope. Flowers' would take one of his vases with him when he travelled, either for holidays or on photo shoots for jobs. He would place the vase in a location, often not immediately noticeable. It was if the presence of the vase

⁴ Adrian Flowers' handwritten notes to accompany an Exhibition of Photography by Adrian Flowers, exhibition at the Saville Club, 4th April 1986.

represented his own presence in a place, without being obvious. Selfie as Vase. In support of this sentiment he said: “My purpose in these vase pictures, apart from relaxation, has been to discover and recognise character and presence in different quite ordinary situations.”

Of course there is the more obvious connection between Adrian Flowers and his vase. He used the simple image and outline for his letterhead, in order to replace his name. The empty vase suggesting ‘Flowers’, though at one stage he claimed that the connection was coincidence. The letterhead won an award (British Letterhead Award 1981) and was also noted by art director Paul Arden in a review of his book *It’s not how good you are, it’s how good you want to be*. He discussed how the idea of photographing a flower and making it look beautiful is commonplace and obvious, and here was an idea to do the opposite: in the article Arden (2004) quotes a friend: “Whatever you think, think the opposite”.

I would like to suggest that the vase as well as representation for Adrian Flowers as himself, is possibly also a representation of broader ideas, albeit subconsciously, of femininity and love. It possesses a gentle outline and is intimate, depending on its setting, yet inanimate. It is a combination of how he wishes to be perceived in a setting but also a silent acceptance – nothing controversial – as can be perceived with advertising. The Vase also returns to the idea of a container, and self-contained, recalling the possibility of a structure that was sought after but possibly not achieved.

The vase reappeared in my practice work and was included in the exhibition showcase. It was reimagined and brought alive once again, in 2D and 3D, both with photographs in new situations, and also as a prop on which to have images projected. With this idea, the various elements of Adrian Flowers’ work were combined in new settings and in ways in which I hope he would be interested and amused.

Morandi connection

No doubt the gentle and serene quality of Morandi's paintings with which Flowers' felt a 'kindred spirit' was to do with an emphasis on beauty with simplicity and a deeper significance. The stillness of the objects and the muted colours are meditative and focus on the quality of light employed, both in painting and photography.

"It takes me weeks to make up my mind which group of bottles will go well with a particular coloured tablecloth," Morandi once reflected. "Then it takes me weeks of thinking about the bottles themselves, and yet often I still go wrong with the spaces"⁵



Giorgio Morandi, *Natura morta* 1943
Oil on canvas, 28 x 42.5 cm

⁵ The quote appears in an online article for a book by Joel Meyerovitz: *Morandi's Objects*

MA Exhibition Showcase: 'In Sight'

The space available at the Sidney Cooper Studios presented an opportunity to compartmentalise the ideas I chose to present. This was important, as my Research study is concerned with distinct as well as overlapping themes, threaded together by the person who represents the subject and essence of the project. In this way, the practice element of the Research has been valuable in clarifying ideas.

The first physical space was concerned with photographs I had produced photographically in response to my father's preoccupation with his notebooks, as memory aid, particularly in the latter part of his life as a result of Alzheimer's disease. Two of the photographs were printed on canvas; thus representing a connection to the materials that Adrian Flowers had used at a certain time for one of his own exhibitions. The set-ups I constructed and photographed, taken with his old stock of 120mm film on his Hasselblad camera, and the printing on canvas are connections to him and in that way represented his presence for me.

On the other side of the wall, two large poster prints were hung; one of Flowers' well-known photographs of a green apple, digitally enhanced and printed for the purpose of this exhibition and then hung next to my photograph of a shrivelled apple, once again representing the effects of Alzheimer's on the brain, in another symbolic suggestion – a knowing reference to the subjects that Flowers himself was interested in, though possibly not as far as making an image as an analogy of the deteriorating brain. His subject matter has inspired the idea, inadvertently, and I hope is still respectful of the original idea in its own right. These prints were reasonably large: approximately 80x80cms; it was necessary that they have a real presence and impact, and almost three-dimensional. Certainly larger than life.

In the next area, blacked out with drapes, there were two slide projections: one was concerned with a selection of the advertising jobs that Adrian Flowers shot over the course of his career. The other projection exhibited the interior of the Barn and its contents, as described in my thesis. By exhibiting these two projections side by side in

the same space, the result of his work and the representation of the physical background that enabled the work to take place at the time were juxtaposed, and therefore dependent on each other. To a certain extent, these projections summed up in a two-dimensional way, the essence of the Archive.

The slideshow of the professional work was projected onto one of Adrian's vases, presented at a tilt and submerged into the top of a chest of drawers. The drawers represented storage of some sort, and that which cannot be seen from the outside – possible connections with the storage in his Barn. The vase meanwhile, often seen and used as a receptacle for flowers, and as an ornament, is askew. The purpose of this was to show that the Vase as representation for Adrian Flowers himself is no longer here, at least not alive, and becomes ghostly in its appearance. However it absorbs the photography that its designer was involved with on a professional level.

In the space situated diagonally from the space with the projectors, there was a mirror with lights around the edge, as found in theatres. I constructed this as a direct connection to the description referenced in the section entitled 'Mirror' in this project. By constructing a memory in reality, the materials come forward into the foreground, almost like constructing a reality out of a dream. I also hoped and expected visitors to sit down in front of the mirror and take a 'selfie', in order to continue the earlier mentioned idea of the mirror as frame, complete, self-perception and to acknowledge the ubiquitous selfie that surrounds us, whether we're involved or not; social media being the most obvious repository for this.

Responses to work in the exhibition

By placing some of the roundel pictures from *In the Round* in situ at the exhibition, there was an interaction between visitors and the work, which had a completely different experience and outcome to what may have been expected. The work was there as a reference to the photograph I had taken of a stack of photographs on a plinth – a tangible reference. Visitors were intrigued and wanted to look at the work in more detail and lifted some of the photographs off from the pile. The reaction to the

faded and affected colours that I had been concerned about, was surprising. It seems that people enjoy the authenticity of the photograph as it has become, over time. It was felt that this was more genuine and of the time, than if the photographs had been reproduced to show their true original colour.

The response to most of the work was positive and visitors were quite moved at times, by the particularly poignant and personal aspect of the notebooks and the connection to memory loss, as well as the exhibitions concerns of connection between daughter and father.

The Archive Box contents

The archival box which accompanies this thesis contains my practice-based research material. The box is self-referential to a certain extent, in that as well as containing my work in response to the Adrian Flowers archive, it also makes reference to boxes that are used in Archives of many sorts to contain photographic or indeed any archival material.

Conclusion

The process of looking at and discovering an Archive of any sort is a revelation and also an inspiration. To look at the archive of work by a close family member inevitably involves discovery on many levels, sometimes pleasant, sometimes disturbing. The process has revealed that however important or significant certain images are, with their associated materials, whether in their content or what they represent in historical terms, their overall meaning as a total collection must also have restrictions imposed to a certain extent, and having a personal involvement may not be the best way to approach it. There is no doubt that this archive encapsulates a tremendous array of skills and material in so many areas of subject matter and ideas, and therefore cannot be dismissed. The personality of the photographer behind the archive enjoyed a wide range of interests in photography and this should be studied in more depth.

It is difficult to gauge the longevity and significance of an archive in advance, and only the passing of time will prove its worth. The value of the Adrian Flowers Archive is certainly significant or fascinating to a specific group of people, whether students or enthusiasts of photography and advertising, as an educational resource, and anthropologically through huge changes in society over a certain period which the Archive covers. The advertising material alone should be stored effectively and appropriately so that it can be accessed as a resource of historical interest, if not as a resource on how advertising ideas were realised together with great expertise in photographic skills. It has been useful to look at other archives and photography collections; these are well organised and carefully attended to. Literature encountered on this research study relating to photography and memory has been revealing and at times reassuring as it confirms ideas as well as opening up possibilities for further research.

On a personal level this study has been a journey of discovery, involving my own work, and there is an overwhelming conclusion that to whatever extent the work contained in the Archive is a resource and worth studying, the mass of material contained therein represents something more onerous in the task of unravelling and disseminating. At times during the process, it became important to realise that its presence be kept at a

healthy distance. Like living in the past, the history of the archive and the person it represents can take over the living of the present; almost in the same way that looking at a photo album can take one back to live in that moment, for a moment, the album is then closed and that is how it should be. The concomitant position of photography and memory will always exist, with varying significance, depending on the context.

In purely practical terms the Adrian Flowers Archive requires good resources to keep it going with any meaning and relevance: space, money, time and a team of people to organise it. Without these, it is an impossible undertaking and time expended on it could become counter-productive.

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