You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study.

The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site.

You are reminded of the following:

- Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright.
- A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement.
- A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
SECTION THREE

FRAMING THE FAMILY ARCHIVE

“PHOTOGRAPHY TRANSFORMS THE PRESENT INTO THE PAST
AND THE PAST INTO THE PASTNESS”

- SUSAN SONTAG (SONTAG, 2008, P. 77)

This section examines notions surrounding the archive—this broad term is fundamental to the scope of this research and, as such, has been divided into three parts. In the first part of this section, influential theories from Jacques Derrida (1995) examine the term archive through its physical and metaphorical representations. The second part to this section explores the concept of performing archives. This concept frames my examination of the role of analogue mediums within family archives—family albums and home movie tapes. Family photographs and VHS home movie tapes are the primary source materials for this creative arts praxis, and therefore, it is imperative to discuss their significance as archival objects that assist to strengthen family narratives and memory as framed by the literature in the previous section.

Derrida’s analysis of Archés and Archons of Archives

Jacques Derrida theories outlined in Archive Fever: a Freudian impression (1995) establishes two fundamental arguments for my research. Firstly, archives and the archivist are mutually dependent for their existence and survival. Secondly, archives are intrinsically tied to the technology that stores, records and captures the archival content. These concepts provide a framework to analyse the role of family archives and their relationship to memory. These frameworks will then enable the investigation into how new media has affected family archive materiality and the performance of memory in the context of my creative arts praxis. A substantial amount of literature (Steedman, 2002; Rand, 2010; Zyl, 2012; Borggreen & Gade (Eds), 2013; Boshoff, 2012) concerning notions of the archive draws upon Derrida’s (as cited in Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995) etymological examination of the word archive. Archival Fever: a Freudian Impression (1995) illustrates that traditional notions of archives are associated with
The word 
archive stems from the Greek word arché and has multiple meanings, including arché as “beginning” and arché as “rule” or “commandment” (Rand. 2010. p 207). Derrida (1995) further examines the Greek word arkheion—a word associated with “a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the archons [whereby] it is in this domiciliation, in this house arrest, that archives take place” (p. 9 - 10). This statement establishes the mutually dependent relationship between archives and the archivists. The significance of Archive Fever (1995), according to Susan van Zyl (2002), is that it delineated archives from “temporal, juridical and material…to the classical questions of time, space and power located a point of intersection between archive and archivist” (p. 41). In defining the archive Carolyn Steedman (2002) states that they “represent the now of whatever kind of power is being exercised, anywhere, in any place or time” (p. 1). This suggests that archives can embody both a physical place such as where official documents are stored or organised and a more fluid definition that “embraces the whole of modern information technology, its storage, retrieval and communication” (Steedman, 2012, p. 4). The term archive becomes a dynamic term that represents many sites—physical or metaphorical—where traces and fragments of the past are collected (Diamond, 2008; Steedman, 2012; McGillivray, 2011). Hal Foster (2002) supports this definition of archive by advocating, “an archive is neither affirmative nor critical per se; it simply supplies the terms of discourse” (p. 65). The term archive within the context of this research aligns with these discourses, and can be defined as the fluid representation of fragments and traces from the past that are preserved across physical or intangible locations that are intended to later be retrieved and accessed to reinforce mnemonic processes.

Archive Fever (1995) undeniably expanded the concept of the archive (Mereweather, 2006; van Zyl, 2002; Steedman; 2001). As a result, a greater emphasis on “microhistories and on alternative, nonmainstream, private and communal practices of memorialisation” (Rascaroli et el, 2014, p. 1) emerged. Ansel Boshoff (2012) extends these ideas by stating “a order is no longer assured", archives are in a continual state of change and transition and they are never fixed and closed objects (p. 638). Not only is material added and taken, but the content of the images can be seen from alternative perspectives that reveal something new (Boshoff, 2012). These ideas reinforce that memory processes are based on the archival information in its repository to piece together information in a transitional and on-going performance that assists to identify ourselves, locate our family and to understand the world. The relevance of this literature is that it maps notions of the archive that argue it is intrinsically bound to the technology...
that enables the archive to exist. As Derrida (as cited in Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995) contends “the technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivisation produces as much as it records the event” (p. 17). This is expressed by van Zyl (2002), as “the archiving trace, the archive, is not simply a recording, a reflection, an image of the event. It shapes the event” (p. 41). What van Zyl (2002) refers to is that the archivable evidence of the event now redefines the event because it can be remembered in the future in many new contexts—the archive materiality defines the way it is viewed, accessed and remembered in the future.

Derrida (1995) proclaims that this presents a conflicting double meaning by signifying a “topo-nomology [whereby, without the] archontic dimension of domiciliation...no archive would ever come into play or appear as such” (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995, p. 10). In other words, the technology that produces the archive also dictates how the archive is viewed, stored and accessed in the future. The relationship between the archive and the archivable content is mutually dependent and does not exist without the other. Using the example of E-mail compared to handwritten correspondence, Derrida (as cited in Derrida & Prenowitz 1995) argued that E-mail is “transforming the entire public and private space of humanity” (p. 17) by the re-appropriation of time and global structure. The authoritative notion of the archive is in question due to this dissemination away from a centralised space associated with authority, law and place. Suggesting that E-mail, or in a broader sense, new media dictates how we archive and therefore, it is no longer experienced in the same way. This concept can be applied when thinking of analogue photographic images, as described by Jaimie Baron (2014), “the past seems to become not only knowable but also perceptible in these images—they offer us an experience of pastness, an experience that no written word can quite match” (p.1). These ideas underpin my research by positioning the materiality of family archives as essential to the way archives are recorded, stored and accessed. These notions of the archive set the stage for this research to apply these concepts in relation to theories surrounding the family archive, and new media.

**Analogue Family Artefacts: performing the archive through media archaeology and materiality discourses**

Theories relating to media archaeology underscore essential discourses surrounding analogue mediums, including family photo albums and VHS home movie tapes. Jussi
Parikka (2013) proposes, “media archaeology starts with the archive [and] is a way to investigate the new media cultures through insights from past new media” (p. 2). This is particularly relevant to my research which investigates how new media has altered traditional notions of family archives and the affect this might have on the performance of memory. Parikka’s earlier text, edited with Erkki Huhtamo (2011), states that media archaeology is separate from the discipline of archaeology. Media archaeologists “rummage textual, visual, and auditory archives as well as collections of artefacts, emphasising both the discursive and material manifestations of cultures” (Parikka & Huhtamo, 2011, p.3). Ernst’s (2013) theories have particular relevance to my research by examining the archive at the intersection of materiality and memory. In Ernst’s (2013) view, media archaeology refers to “what remained from the past in the present like archaeological layers, operatively embedded in technologies” (p. 57). By aligning my research with these perspectives, my family artefacts used in this arts-based research are weighted with cultural and historical value. To provide a historical backdrop for the primary source materials in my research, I have separated this section into two parts—traditional family photography and VHS family home movie tapes.

**Traditional Family Photography and Domestic Photo Albums**

It is not within the scope of my research to provide a comprehensive historical overview of the development of photography. What this section intends to outline, are the relevant discourses on analogue photography and the family photographic album that relate to the performance of memory. The literature emphasises that analogue photography produced tangible artefacts of memory that mediate our engagement, experience and recollection of the past. An essential departure point for any research on photography and memory can be traced back to optical inventions, most notably the camera obscura—a device originally invented for artists around “2,000 years prior to its photographic application” (McQuire, 1998, p. 3). The projection of direct representations of reality was already conceivable through optical inventions. The key breakthrough in the 19th century for photography was in the production of chemistry that stabilised and permanently fixed the image (McQuire, 1998). The invention of photography in 1839 brought an exploitable method of producing a “photographic print from a negative onto a paper-based material” (Barthes, 2010, p. 20). Since the 1970s, the social significance and cultural impact of personal photography has grown exponentially (Van Dijck, 2008), whereby, sociologists and anthropologists began to acknowledge the significance of photography as a “cultural rite of family life” (Van Dijck, 2008, p. 60).
Seminal literature from Susan Sontag (2008) (originally published in 1977) and Roland Barthes (2010) (originally published in 1980) are cornerstones within literature surrounding photography and memory and which intersect directly with my creative arts praxis. Barthes’ influential book *Camera Lucida* (2010), critically analyses the relationship between analogue photography and mnemonic function. Barthes (2010) suggests that the photograph is essentially an object, where “technically speaking, photography is at the intersection of two quite distinct procedures; one of a chemical order: the action of light on certain substances; the other of a physical order: the formation of the image through an optical device” (p. 10). According to Barthes (2010), “photography, in a very orthodox manner, is a whole network of essences: material essences (necessitating the physical, chemical and optical study of the Photography)” (p. 21). This description of photography resonates with classical conceptions of memory described by Candida Smith (2012) as relying “upon a fusion of senses” (p. 2). The mental images referenced in the ancient art of memory as “the visual (if not hallucinatory) qualification of memoires preserved and images recollected, comes true in photography” (Haverkamp, 2010, p. 266). Barthes (2010) contends, “the Photograph’s essence is to ratify what it represents” (p. 85), whereby, this suggests that photography is a tool to expand the visual representation of memory.

An understanding of Barthes’ (2010) theories is useful when evaluating Susan Sontag’s (2008) research on the role of photography and mnemonic function. Sontag’s (2008) book *On Photography*, is another influential text for any research into photography and its relationship to aid memory. Sontag (2008) affirms that photography emerged after industrialisation as an acceptable daily activity that transformed society into “image junkies” (p. 24), further stating that “photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire” (Sontag, 2008, p. 4). The relevance of Sontag’s (2008) work is that it positions photography as a tool to collect tangible pieces of reality, that ultimately transformed photography into an entertaining and enjoyable consumption, in which everyone is addicted (Sontag, 2008). The essence of analogue photographs, according to Sontag (2008) is that

they age, plagued by the usual ills of paper objects; they disappear; they become valuable, and get bought and sold; they are reproduced. Photographs, which package the world, seem to invite packaging. They are stuck in albums, framed and set on tables, tacked on walls, projected as slides. (p. 4)

To apply these ideas within the family space, it can be said that families consume images in order to construct what Sontag (2008) describes as “a portrait chronicle of itself—a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness” (p. 8). These portable
archives were traditionally family photographic albums; they were constructed from objects in order to actively promote memory and a sense of belonging within families.

Figure 4. Hornum Family Archives, (2013). Photographer: Emily Hornum

Sontag (2008) and Barthes (2010) contend that a photograph can be interpreted by its indexical relationship to the past and as a physical object. This literature intersects with my research, firstly, by positioning analogue photography as an indexical and nostalgic reference to the past. Secondly, by analysing the material characteristics of analogue photography as memory objects that invite further narratives and story through inscriptions or placing them within photo albums (Figure 4). Photography has the capacity to freeze time, presenting an opportunity to re-experience lived experiences in more detail than most memories can achieve. With the death of my father when I was 10 years old, the role of the family archive with photographs of my father reinforces these ideas explicitly to me. The impact of a device that is able to record what is disappearing is “both a pseudo-presence and a token of absence” (Sontag, 2008, p. 16). On one hand, photographs and videos are tangible objects from the past that evoke recollection. On the other hand, these archives are a constant reminder of who is absent in the present. Drawing upon Sontag (2008) and Barthes (2010) seminal theories, Antony Bryant and
Griselda Pollock (2010) explain, “the photo-image [...] simultaneously inhabits its originating past and produces its perpetual resent” (p. 7). Suggesting that within a photograph lays a paradox—what has been and what is when viewing in the present. (Bryant & Pollock, 2010; Barthes, 2010). The relationship between photography and the presence of the past is reflected most clearly in Sontag’s (2008) text by stating “photographs turn the past into an object of tender regard, scrambling moral distinctions and disarming historical judgments by the generalised pathos of looking at time past” (p. 71). In this view, photographs are viewed as objects that invite a memory performance to revisit a moment from the past.

Photographic materiality is further explored by Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (2004), stating that the analogue photographic image is “a three-dimensional thing, not only a two dimensional image” (p. 1). Edwards and Hart (2004) argue

a photograph carries on it the marks of its own history, of its chemical deterioration, and the fact that it once belonged to a broader visual narrative, pasted in an album, the pages of which were, we can conjecture, repeatedly handled as they were turned, re-enacting its narrative in many different contexts. (p. 1)

This statement suggests that analogue photographic images exist in a three-dimensional, tactile state as objects, existing in time and space and thus as cultural and social experiences, whereby they become “enmeshed with subjective, embodied and sensuous interactions” (Edwards & Hart, 2004, p. 1). Family photographic albums have weight, tactility and the scent of the past, whereby they can be touched, held, shared on a lap, photographs can be taken out and people can share stories by writing on the pages or on the backs of the photographs (Haverkamp, 1993; Rose, 2003; Hulick, 1990; Schwartz & Przyblyski, 2004; Dahlgren, 2010; Sontag, 2008). Edwards and Hart (2004) assert that “these material characteristics have a profound impact on the way images are ‘read’, as different material forms both signal and determine different expectations and use patterns” (p. 3). As Derrida’s (1995) theories suggest, the archive and the archivist are intrinsically bound together—the materiality of the archive dictates the way the archivists embeds narrative onto the artefact and the way that it is experienced in the present.
By performing these tactile engagements and experiences with family photographs, it can be said that memory is reinforced and enhanced by reliving past experiences (Chambers, 2003; Edwards & Hart, 2004; Dahlgren, 2010). The photographs in Figure 5 and 6 are taken from my family archives—the handwritten inscriptions provides context, narrative and embeds them with an evocative presence of both the subject and the person who wrote on the back of the photograph. With the context of my research, not only were my family archives analysed and selected by their material properties but also, through the associated hand-written inscription, asking questions such as

- What relationship did the person inscribing the photograph have with the person or the event being photographed?
- What is being remembered in the photograph and why was it important to inscribe this photograph?
- When was the photograph written on?

These questions evoke the performance of memory by reading the inscription behind the photograph and add another layer to the reflexive relationship to the past that is supplied from the visual content on the front of the photograph. In the process of selecting source materials from my family archives to use in this arts praxis, I selected photographs with hand written notes to capitalise on the evocative and personalised notations as a way to emphasise the materiality of analogue photographs.
A large volume of research explores the role of the family album and its capacity to preserve family narratives and memory (Hulck, 1990; Rose, 2003; Petrelli & Whittaker, 2008; Guerlac, 2009; Livingston & Dyer, 2010; Haverkamp, 1993; Batchen, 2004). Anna Dahlgren (2010) critically analysis the collections of 19th and 20th century photographic albums held at Nordiska Museet in Sweden. Despite the limited scope of this research, Dahlgren’s (2010) theories can be applied to family photo albums generally. Dahlgren (2010) defines that the traditional role of family photo albums can be viewed both on a material and functional level, embedded within cultural practices of remembering. The social and cultural act of inscribing photographs coincides with the mass commercialisation of cameras in the first decade of the 20th century, which transferred ownership of photography from the professional studio to the role of the individual (Dalhgren, 2008). As further explored by Deborah Chambers (2003), “public discourses of familial heritage are authenticated and celebrated through this cultural form not only as blood ties, continuity and connection, but also as intimacy, security and spatial belonging” (p. 96). Photographs within the family photo album “are sequenced by narratives which structure meanings” (Chambers, 2003, p. 100). The role of the archivist therefore also takes a considerable turn, whereby the family photograph becomes an object to be archived, remembered and inscribed with narrative for future generations.

Furthermore, Geoffrey Batchen (2004) investigates the significance of photographic artefacts including daguerreotypes, tintypes, lockets and intricately embroidered frames with objects, inscriptions, flowers or hair clippings. Batchen (2004) describes that these highly subjective, personal and emotive artefacts were generally a symbolic representation of a lost loved one, produced in an attempt to “extend the act of remembrance” (p. 14). To contextualise the relationship with family archival objects and the processes of memory, Batchen (2004) concedes that
memory, a ghost of the past, is continually conjured, brought back to life, as a real component of the present. Shuttling us back and forth between past and present, slowing down our perceptions and drawing them out, or speeding us toward an ideal future, these photographic artefacts are like time machines. (p. 97)

These ideas intersect with my research by reinforcing the material relationship with media to reinforce, supplement and enhance memory. The tangible evidence that is acquired from the past fundamentally reinforces what is to be remembered in the future. With this understanding, analogue photographs are objects that enable the interactions of recollection and remembrance—“memory is generated as an emotional exchange between an evocative image ensemble and a receptive viewer” (Batchen, 2004, p. 97). Family photo albums are not directly referenced in my arts praxis, yet, it is pivotal to analyse the traditional formats of family photography and how these have shaped family archives to date. Literature from Dalhgren (2008), Chambers (2003) and Batchen (2004) affirms that photo albums provided a tangible site to represent, share and preserve family history and narrative for future generations evoked through a performance that engages with the archives materiality.


Literature in this section evaluates the family home VHS tape through a media archaeological lens. Personal home movie footage is integral to numerous installation works that have developed through this creative arts praxis. It is important, therefore, for this theoretical framework to investigate the role of family movies in influencing individual and collective identity. Family movies operate within a framework that interlinks archival studies, media studies and photographic and film theory. Only recently have scholars paid interest to the amateur filmmaker and the abundance of repositories called home movies, which are increasingly believed to hold value as artefacts that provide insight to the past (Zimmermann; 2008, Cuevas; 2013, Anderson; 2011, Odin; 2014). Rascaroli, Young & Monahan (2014), in the introduction to their edited anthology Amateur Filmmaking (2014), contend that the heightened interest in home movies by scholars, film theorist, artists and historographers is due to “a greater emphasis on the importance of microhistories and on alternative, nonmainstream, private and communal practices of memorialisation” (p. 1). Roger Odin (2014) explains that home movies have acquired “educational, historical and economic value [and] have found their place as archival documents in museums, films and historical documentaries (p. 251).
Patricia Zimmermann argues the home movie functions within families like an ethnographic record “serving a ritualistic role in the way families construct themselves and their sense of a shared past” (as cited in Anderson, 2011, p. 88). These ideas are fundamental to my research by underpinning the role of family movies to contribute to our memories, and ultimately, our sense of belonging and identity within social and family constructs. Karen Ishiuka and Patricia Zimmermann (2008) draw together a diverse group of scholars, archivists, filmmakers and video artists to explore the significance of the home movie as a historical artefact. These authentic documents of family domestic life were not intended for public distribution—they were recorded as subjective “auto-ethnographies, generated from the point of view of participants” (Zimmerman & Ishiuka, 2008, p. 20). This text highlights that home movies are “fractured, always incomplete, historical memories [that reveal] sociological, aesthetic, economic and cultural spaces of the places and time periods in which they were created and of the people who created them” (Zimmerman & Ishiuka, 2008, p. 18 - 19). My father owned and operated the camera and therefore, the VHS home movies in my family were primarily taken from his perspective. Although he is absent in front of the lens, his presence is still obvious by the role of director that he plays behind the lens.

Steve Anderson’s (2011) theories on the home movie are strongly linked to Zimmerman’s (2008) by suggesting, family home movies have been deemed a privileged status in terms of “archival preservation and their active function in family identity formation” (p. 99). Home movies arguably are presented in the same fashion as photography in terms of aesthetics and content (Odin, 2014; Anderson, 2011). Zimmermann’s (2008) and Anderson’s (2011) notion of the home movies are significant to my own research by establishing them as valuable artefacts from history that can reveal complex layers of familial life, and social practices that provide a sense of connectedness to our past lives. Home movies generally recorded events the operator believed were worth celebrating or documenting such as birthdays, weddings and holidays (Zimmerman & Ishiuka, 2008; Anderson, 2011). My home movies were taken with the aims of recording our childhood and recording visual documents to send to my mum’s family, who lived in England and my dad’s family, who lived in Denmark. In some of the original footage from my family home movies, my mum is shown introducing one of these video message by declaring, “I hope you get to know the children a little more, and get to know their personalities”. Some of my family home videos are unscripted moments of our lives, and others are scripted performances such as my mum’s videos messages and my father organising us to smile, pose or stand in front of the house or a picturesque landscape. Peter Forgacs (2008) contends home movies are the observing of visual narration, “a type of
psychological autobiography, a ritually organized record of life events in a subconscious and/or conscious form" (p. 49). However, Odin (2014) disagrees with Forgacs (2008) by highlighting that the home movie can be separated by gaps of a few minutes, to several days or months. The footage on these tapes are connected by the fact that they belong to the family history, in which “we are caught in a chronological sequence, but not in the narrative—this is precisely the structure of the family album” (Odin, 2014, p. 18). Similarly, the footage used in my research has become removed from any chronological sequence or narrative, and therefore the audience is left to decipher the visual codes to piece together their own story. Ataman’s work **fff** (2010) (Video 1), exhibited at London’s Whitechapel Gallery exemplifies these discourses on home movies and assists to locate my own work with other arts practitioners working with similar ideas conceptually and technically.


Ataman installed ten varying sized video monitors playing different genuine cine-reel footage and each accompanied with its own unique score composed by Michael Nyman. In this darkened room, the film reels are “played simultaneously in the same space to
create an operative cacophony of sounds and sight” (Sandison, 2009, p.1). However, when the viewer moves closer to the installation, it becomes possible to decipher between the separate scores (Andress, 2009). *fff* (for found footage) was created from a collection of 1950s and 1960s home movies shot by two English families—the Fryers and the Howards whose fathers worked for the Royal Aircraft Establishment and were involved in testing the effects of flight and G-force on pilots (Moser, 2010). In *fff* (2010), Ataman has combined fragments of footage (Figure 7) that “reveals the strange congruencies between public and private lives, and in other moments the original context of the film footage is not as clear” (Moser, 2010, p. 1). Parallels can be drawn to my own family archive, which was created as a private record to be shared between family and close friends—that is, until they are integrated within this research and exhibited within gallery spaces where their context is even further removed.

![Figure 7. Kutluğ Ataman, (2010), *fff* (video still)](image)

According to Odin (2014), after the introduction of large-scale digitisation processes, the “small-gauge celluloid images acquired a nostalgic look” (p. 251). These characteristics are similar to some of the video works in my installations where I have spliced and edited fragments from my home movies. By doing this, the intention is for the audience to piece together these fragments of footage to construct a narrative from the visual clues presented in the work. This on-going performance with family archives, such as home movies, reflects the processes of memory that operate in similar ways. As the audience
piec e together these fragmented visual clues from my family footage, they are situating mental anchors that relate to their experiences and knowledge of the world through the nostalgic moving footage on screen. Ataman has edited the videos in varying formats with the intent to dislocate and fragment the viewers reading of the visual content. As Gabrielle Moser (2010) describes, *fff* (2010) “points to the constantly evolving nature of our personal and official histories, which are never complete or pure, but are always works-in progress” (p. 2). In Ataman’s view, this work “tries to reflect how your memory works—it is a constantly evolving puzzle, and it is how we assemble our personal mythologies” (as cited in Aspen, 2009, p. 1). This visual representation of the workings of memory is particularly poignant to my research and intersects theories surrounding the archival and non-archival processes of our memory.