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The Order I No Longer Remember

Bridie Carey Bard College

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The Order I No Longer Remember

Bridie Carey



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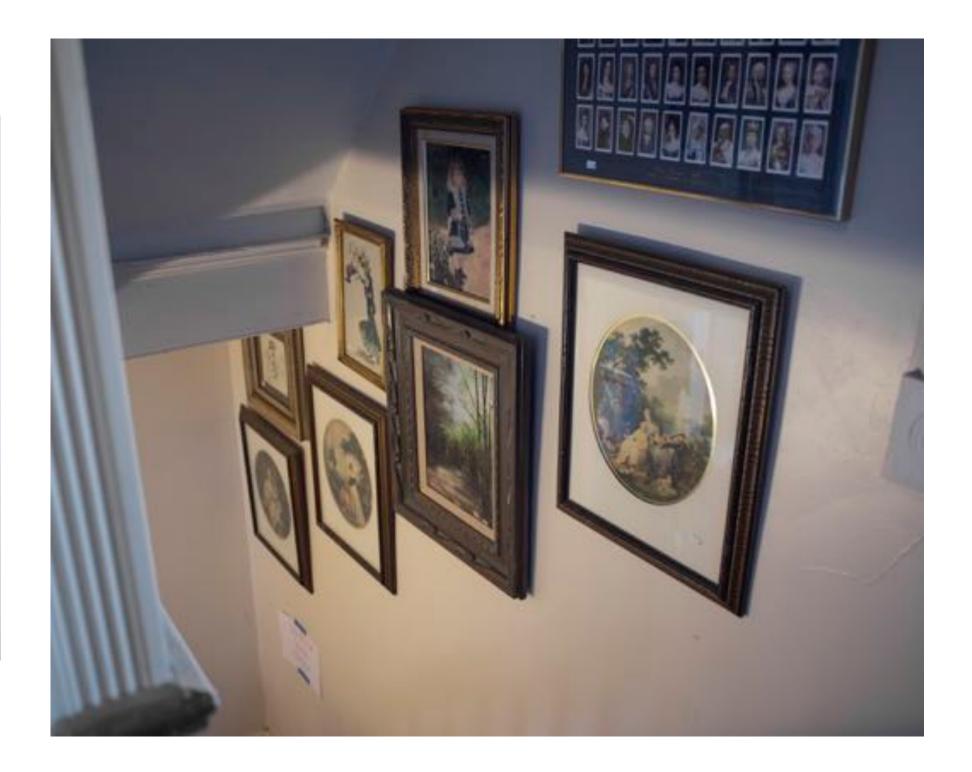


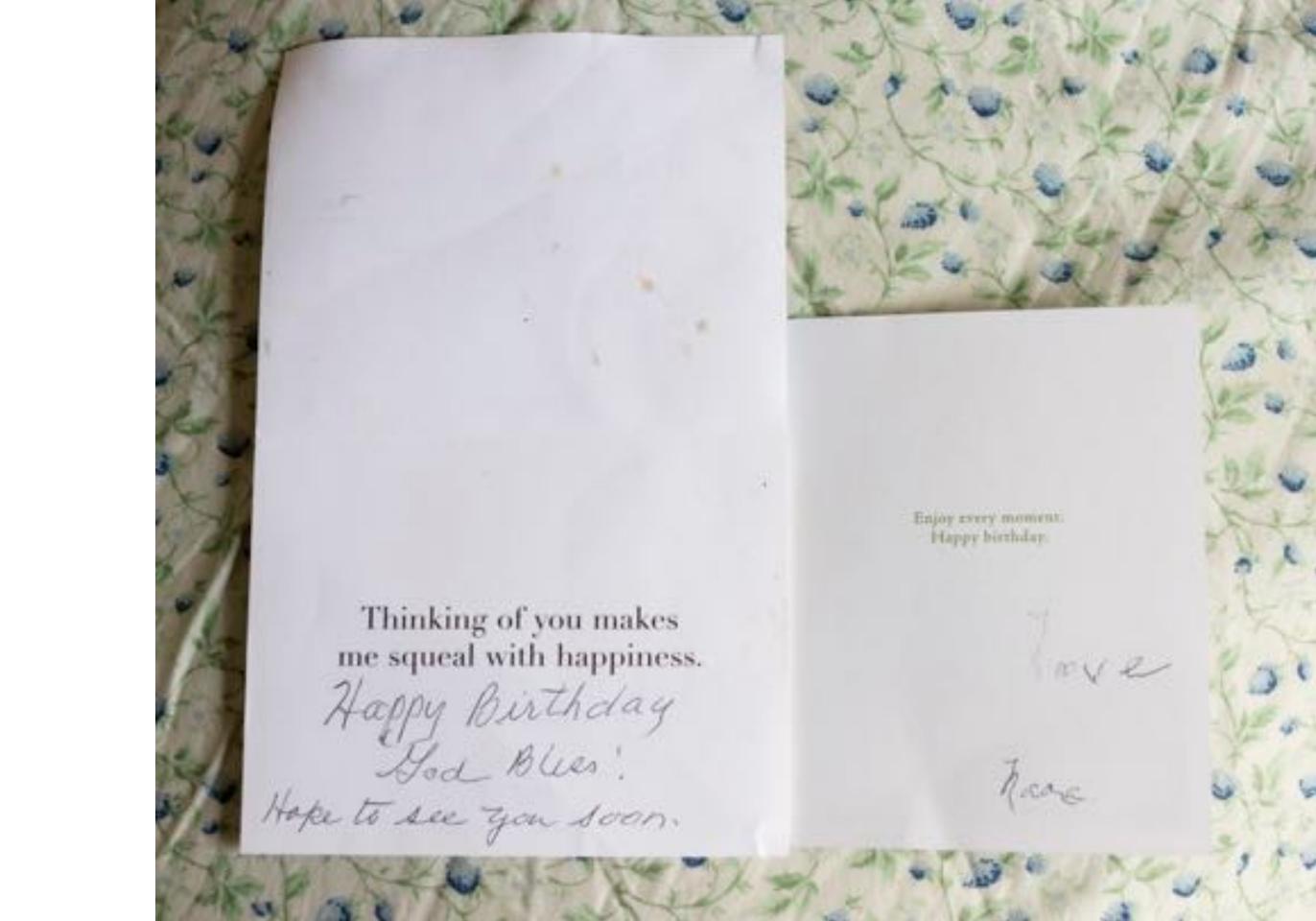
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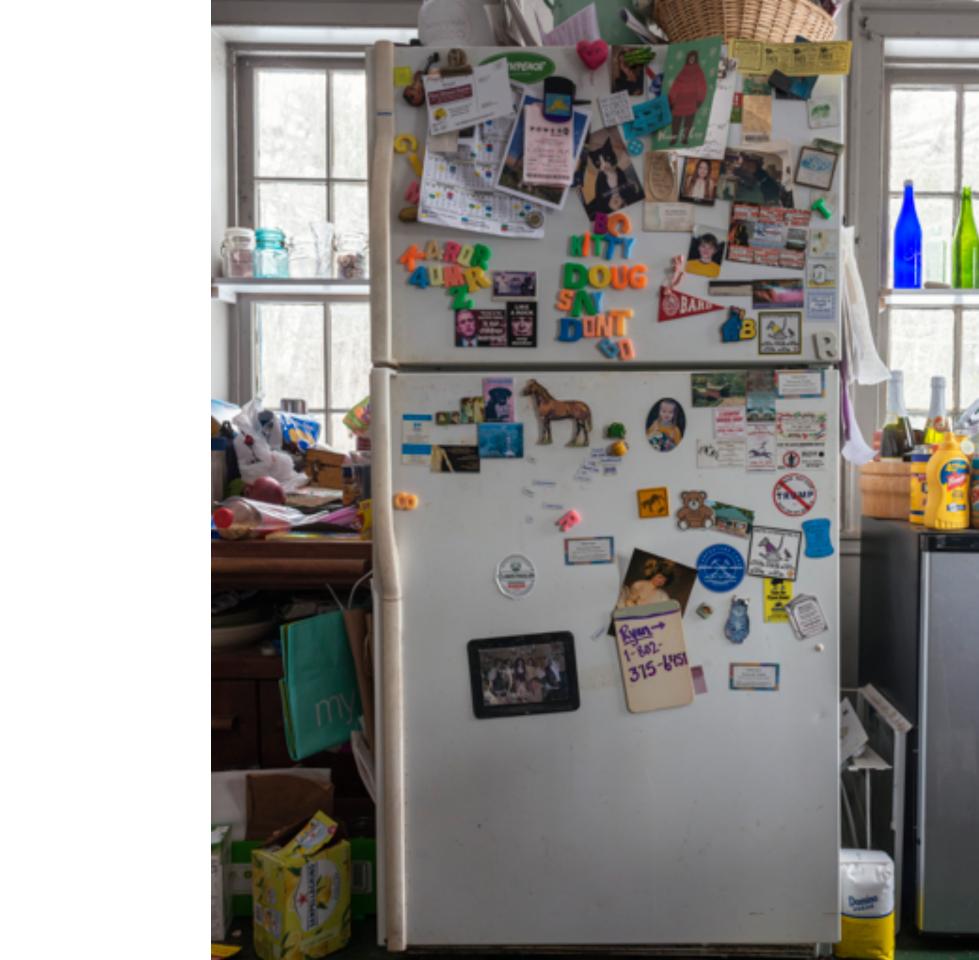
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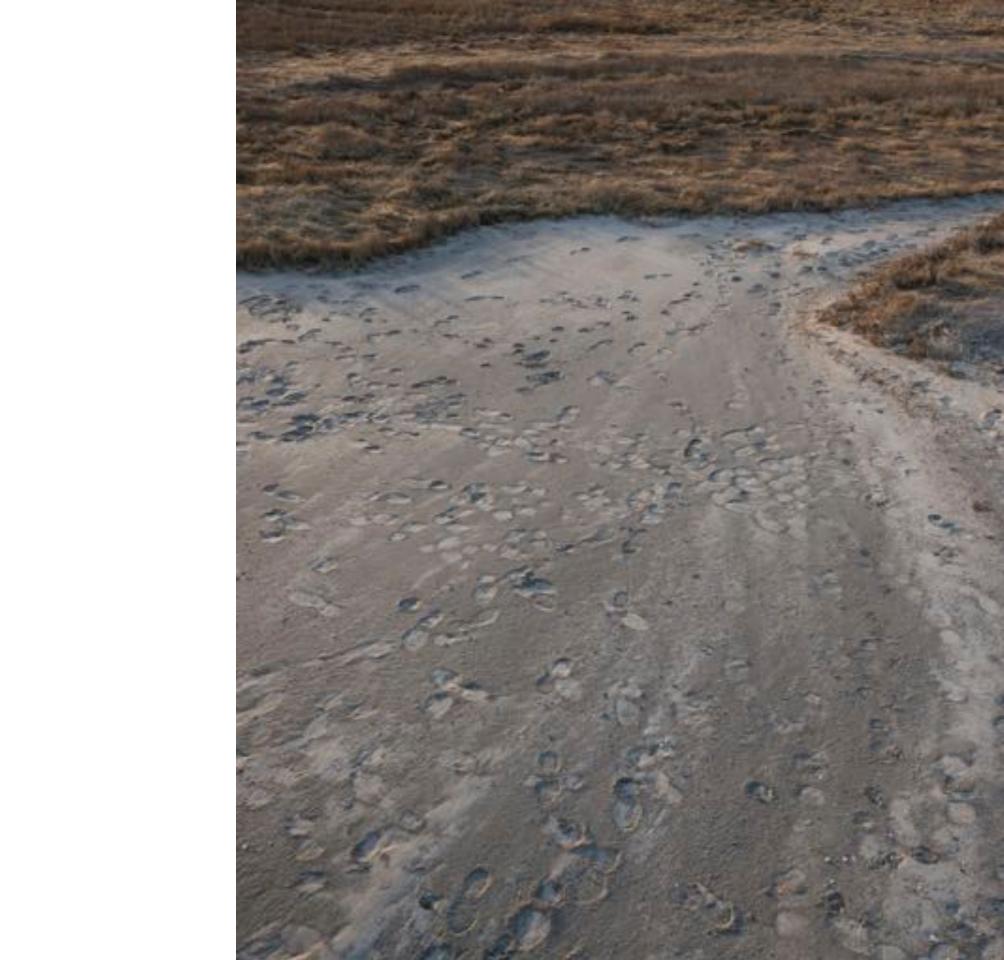




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The archive is the act of remembering put into material form. Both personal and institutional archives are an attempt to create a physical memory. But undoubtedly the archive, like memory, is insufficient. No matter how hard an individual or institution tries, it is impossible for either memory or archive to be complete or unbiased. The natural way to combat this is to obsessively document, organize, and categorize. Institutions, individuals, and families all develop different ways to document. But the document of a moment is a fraction of the moment itself.

I have spent the last year examining institutional collections, rummaging through estate sales, and the places I've called home. I have been watching the way we categorize our own and others' lives. My Nana sees her house as a house full of junk, a burden, one she will undoubtedly pass onto her children and grandchildren. But to me, her house is a photographic playground. In every box of junk, there is a mini archive of things someone chose to keep. Her home resembles a house museum. The downstairs is functional and set up to be lived in, yet is frozen in time with its wood paneling, 60's wallpaper, and green carpet. The upstairs is storage. It is filled with shelves and boxes of things. Things that have lost their function but not the memory of their function. They are not to be seen on a daily basis but they are always there. They exist to be looked at and gone through, to make the viewer imagine or remember their original purpose. They exist for me on a lazy afternoon to sift through the way one might wander through a museum.

Nana's house was my first museum. It was a place I went to look at things and be curious. It has shaped the way I look at museums, collections, and archives. For me, an archive does not have to belong to an institution or an important figure. It is simply an attempt to document the past. The impulse to document and collect is what interests me. We document for many purposes but ultimately to remember. But what we remember or want to remember is not always the truth. What is clear to the creator of a document is not always apparent to the viewer. As viewers of archives, documents, and collections we create stories that can end up being far different than reality. This work is my exploration of the archive, memory, and collecting. It is both an examination of archives and a creation of my own.

For Mom and Nana

I would like to thank everyone who helped me thought out the process of making this work. Thank you to An-my Lê, Gus Aronson, Adam Ferrucci, Susan Andreas, Briauna Faulk, Barabra Ess, and all of the Bard Photo department. Thank you to my family; my parents, my brother Seamus, and my Nana who let me photograph every inch of her house without question. And lastly thank you, Aurora Amidon, for letting me turn your bedroom into my studio amidst a global pandemic.

