

ARTIST STATEMENT

My photographic constructions are an ongoing investigation of my family's history and my earliest memories. I am concerned primarily with the way memories become stories, and how those stories in turn subvert memory. I am especially obsessed with the stories told to me by the preceding generation - the stories I was told growing up, about my parents' childhood in Germany.

My parents, both Jewish, grew up in Berlin during the 1930's. As children, they witnessed the rise of anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany under Hitler. Both families were forced to leave Germany in 1939 after the racist violence of Kristallnacht. My father was placed on a children's transport and sent to an all-girls boarding school in England that made it a policy as part of the war effort to enroll some Jewish boys. My mother fled with her family to Shanghai, where they opened a Kosher restaurant in the Jewish section of that city - a ghetto sealed off from the rest of Shanghai and strictly controlled by the Japanese military.

In contrast to my parents' experiences as children, my childhood in suburban New Jersey and Cape Cod in the 1970's was marked mostly by comfort and television. We were isolated from other Jews and from Jewishness itself. The moods created by the stories my parents told me seeped into the walls and rooms of the houses we lived in.

My work explores this mood, and seeks to portray the gap between my experiences and those of my parents. These photographs are an exploration of the fragile, internalized way we retain memories from childhood. I am interested in the way memories are corrupted and revised, and, at the same time, I am interested in attempts to actually re-create memories and give them a visual form.

I use both family snapshots and family history as reference material for the constructions I build and photograph. These snapshots and stories are the blueprints for the subconscious truths I hope will emerge from the memories and the spaces I depict. Just as in a game of telephone - where a phrase will start out one way and emerge altered - our memories are shaped and changed by the stories we hear and the photo albums we look at again and again. By rebuilding these stories and images, and by reconstructing the spaces from which they originally emerged, I am trying to understand the gaps that exist between history and memory.