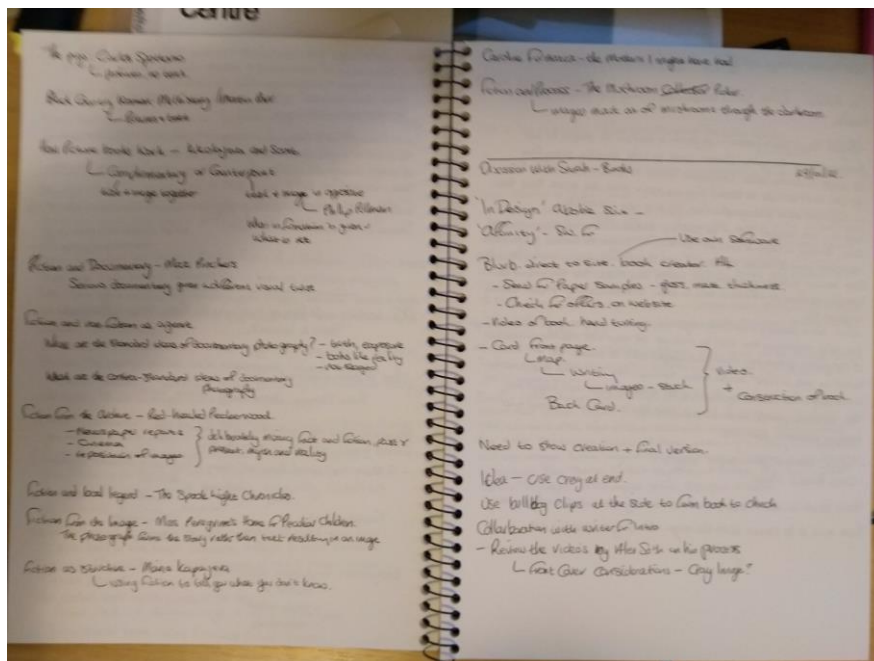
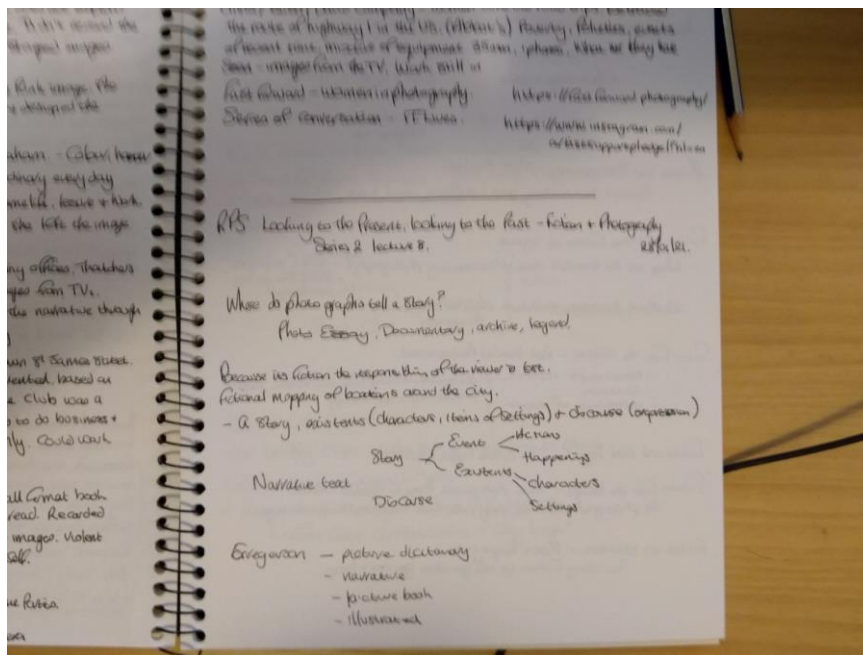


Lecture 8 Series 2



Looking to the present, looking to the past

Series 2 – lecture 8 Fiction and Photography

with Colin Pantall

Question: Where do photographs tell a story?

- Fiction from the Photo-Essay – Love on the Left Bank
- Fiction and Documentary – Max Pickers
- Fiction from the archive – Red-headed Peckerwood
- Fiction and local legend – The Spook Light Chronicles
- Fiction from the image – Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children
- Fiction as a structure – Maria Kapayeva
- Fiction and process – The Mushroom Collector

‘Each medium has a specific nature which invites certain kinds of communication while obstructing others.’ (Kracauer, 1960, p.245)

Fiction from the Photo-Essay – Love on the Left Bank





A story in photographs about Paris – the Paris of the young men and girls who haunt the Left Bank. They dine on half a loaf, smoke hashish, sleep in parked cars or on benches under the plane trees, sometimes borrowing a hotel room from a luckier friend to shelter their love. Some of them write, or paint, or dance. Ed van der Elsken, a young Dutch photographer, stalked his prey for many months along the boulevards, in the cafés and under the shadow of prison walls. Whatever may happen in real life to Ann and her Mexican lover, their strange youth will be preserved 'alive' in this book for many years.

The above text is taken from the original English language edition

I come to Saint Germain des Prés

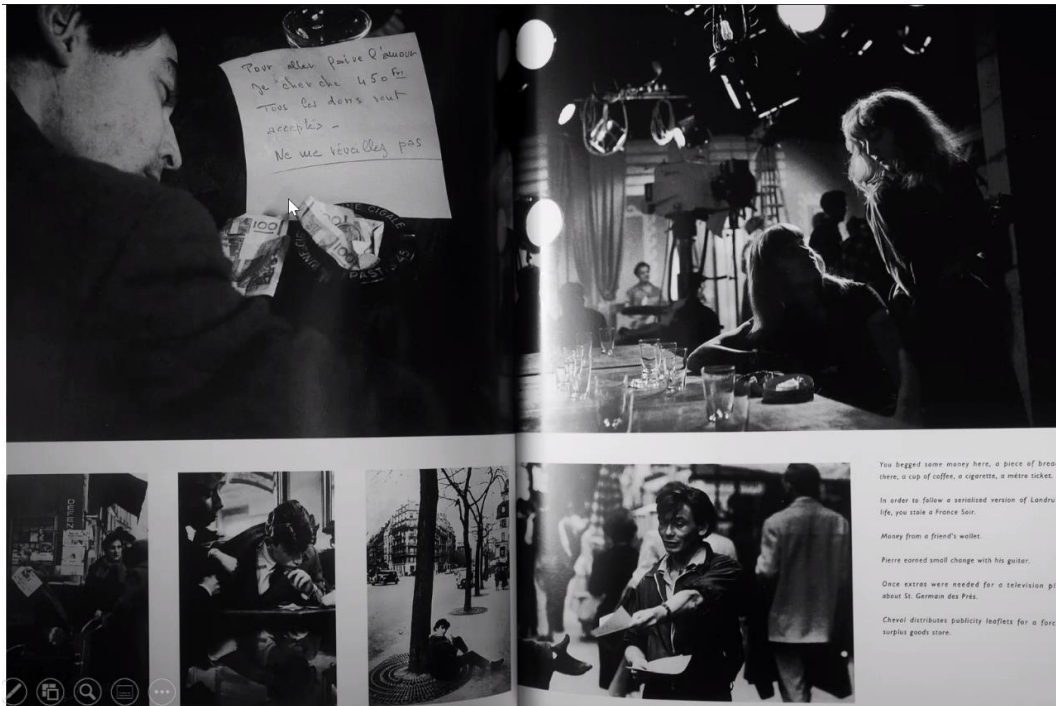
I had come hitch-hiking to Paris from Stockholm in the spring. For a time I hung around with two tramps. We used to sleep under a little boat turned upside down, on the quay near the Hôtel de Ville. During the day I wandered through the streets. One evening I walked along the Boulevard St. Germain des Prés. Near the Métro Mabillon I was jostled by a man who was far too well dressed. He bought me a cognac. He took me to several night-clubs. The jazz was indifferent. In one cellar I saw a girl with orange hair and black round her eyes. She wore slacks and a green shirt open at the neck. She danced like a negress.

The over-dressed man offered to share his room with me. "No thank you," I said. I spent the night on a bench on the boulevard.



The square near the Métro Mabillon where I met the over-dressed man.

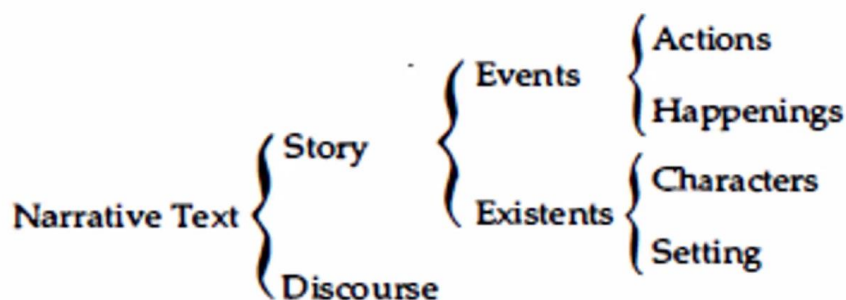


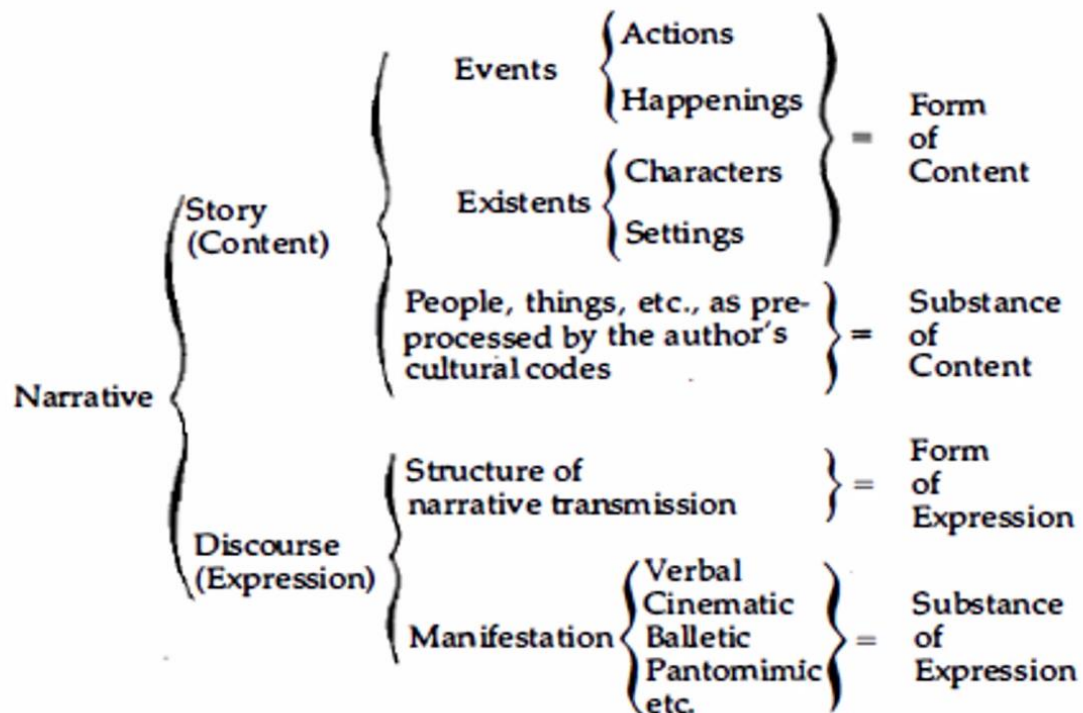


‘Structuralist theory argues that each narrative has two parts: a story (histoire), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (discours), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, the story is the what in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the how. The following diagram suggests itself:’

Seymour Chatman: STORY AND DISCOURSE: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film

Narrative





Attempts at Picturebook Typology

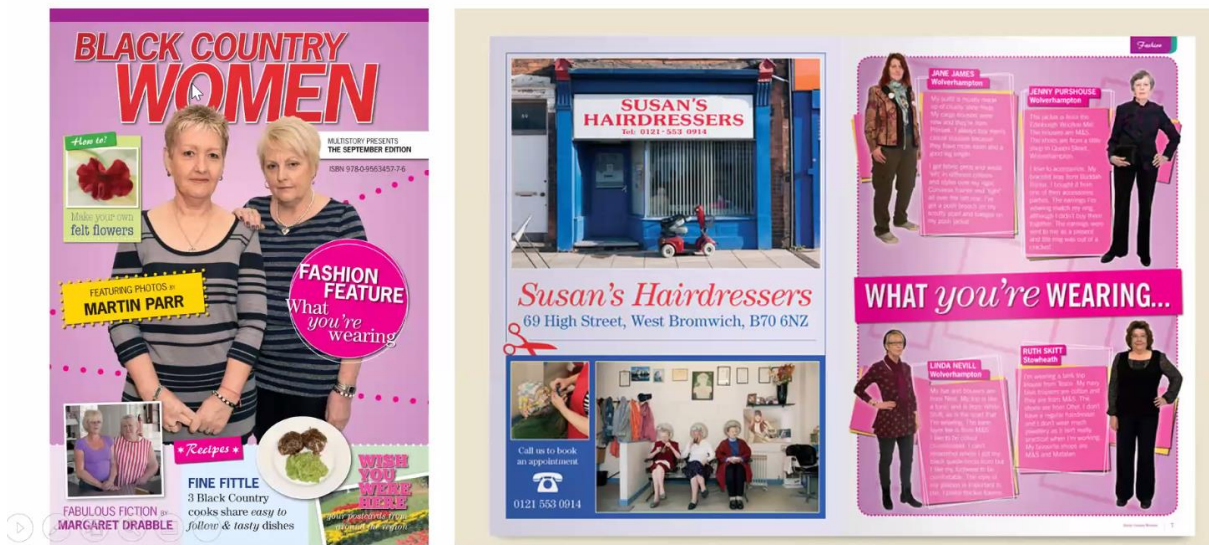
Some helpful steps in defining a picturebook typology have been made. Torben Gregersen (of Denmark) makes the following distinctions:

- (a) the exhibit book: picture dictionary (no narrative)
- (b) the picture narrative: wordless or with very few words
- (c) the picturebook, or picture storybook: text and picture equally important
- (d) the illustrated book: the text can exist independently²⁶

The Pigs: Carlos Spottorno



Black Country Women: Multistory/Martin Parr



WORD

narrative text

narrative text with
occasional illustrationsnarrative text with at least
one picture on every spread
(not dependent on image)

nonnarrative text

plate book
(ABC book,
illustrated poetry,
nonfiction illustrated book)symmetrical picturebook
(two mutually redundant narratives)complementary picturebook
(words and pictures filling each other's gaps)"expanding" or "enhancing" picturebook
(visual narrative supports verbal narrative,
verbal narrative depends on visual narrative)"counterpointing" picturebook
(two mutually dependent narratives)"sylleptic" picturebook (with or without words)
(two or more narratives independent of each other)picture narrative with words
(sequential)picture narrative without words
(sequential)

wordless picturebook

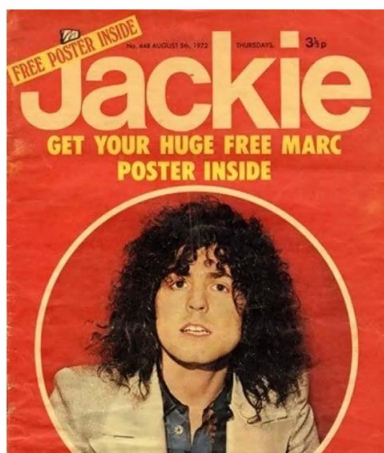
exhibit book with words
(nonnarrative, nonsequential)exhibit book
(nonnarrative, nonsequential)

IMAGE

Nikolojeva and Scott

[Olivier van Breugel — Artist > Not Another Publisher](#) McHotel

Jackie Magazine



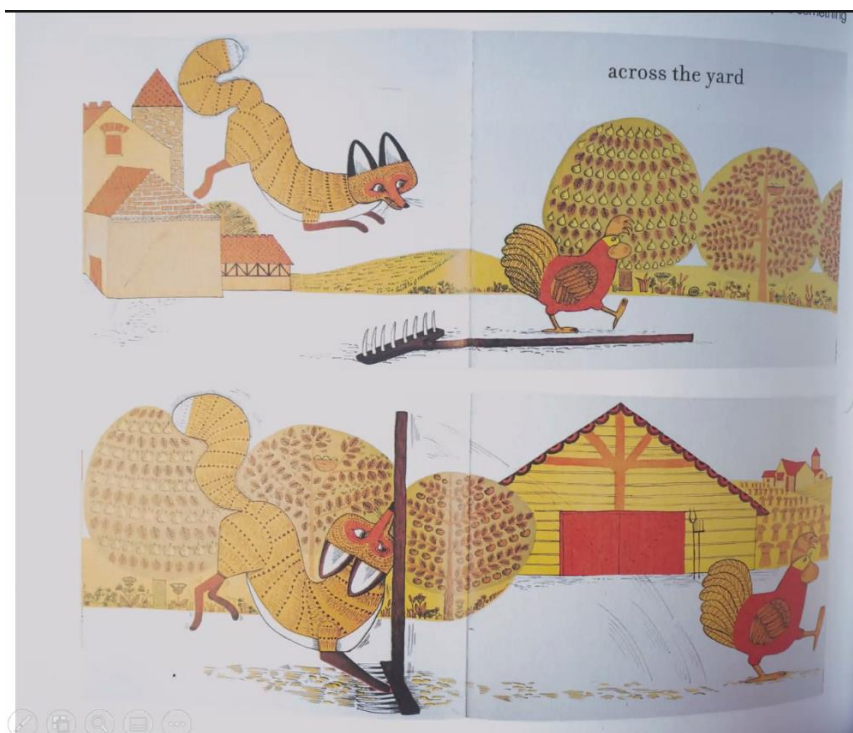
Complementary and Counterpoint

In *How Picturebooks work* (Routledge, 2000), Nikolajeva and Scott use the term 'complementary' for picturebooks where the images reflect and expand what is in the written text or where each fills the other's gaps. This is much harder to do than it looks, with the best leaving room for readers to make their own interpretations (Salisbury and Styles, *Children's Picturebooks*, 2012)

Counterpoint and Duet

Nikolajeva and Scott use the term 'counterpoint' when words and pictures tell different stories and provide 'alternative information or contradict each other in some way', resulting in several possible readings.

Philip Pullman... talks about counterpoint as 'the potential possessed by words and pictures in combination to 'show different things happening at the same time.'



Fiction and Documentary – Max Pinckers

Belgian photographer

Lived in Asia as a child

Developed a style that mixes documentary with fictional elements taken from film, especially Hindi Cinema (aka Bollywood)

The Fourth Wall shows Mumbai as a Bollywood set

People recreate scenes from their favourite movies – all of which correspond to Booker's Seven Basic Plots

Harshly lit

Contrast to Katherine Boo: Behind the Beautiful Forevers





Will they sing like raindrops or leave me thirsty?

Was a commission for a festival

Joined up with an organising rescuing 'lovebirds' from forced marriage/honour violence – The Love Commandos

Mixed staged pictures with newspaper spreads, matrimonials and images from Love Commandoes HQ

Combines love locations with abstracts and uses colour to differentiate settings

Serious documentary given a different visual twist



Fiction and non-fiction as genre

Recently, Stacie Friend has suggested that **we should understand fiction and nonfiction as genres**... According to this view, genres are categories in which we classify representational works that guide our appreciation of them “so that **knowledge of the classification** plays a role in a work’s correct interpretation and evaluation” (Friend 2012, 181)

<https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1434513/3/ATENCIA-LINARES,%20P.%20-%20PHD%20Thesis%20ARTS%20AND%20FACTS.%20EDITED%20VERSION.%20IMAGES%20REMOVED%200.pdf>

What are the standard ideas of documentary photography?

What are the contra-standard ideas of documentary photography?

NON-FICTIONAL/DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY*			
	STANDARD FEATURES	VARIABLE FEATURES	CONTRA-STANDARD FEATURES
Internal Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factual content (Things that happened in the world, e.g. every day scenes, social and political events, scientific content: ethnography, anthropology, medicine, etc. Nature, sports.) • Representation of real people, objects or scenarios. • Veridical representations ('honest' photography) • Documental (images not only represent real people and scenarios but we perceive people and scenarios as being concrete, real and existent) • Realist or natural style • Content put forward as being the case • Coherence between the content of the image and the title or narrative (if there is one) • Natural or little artificial lighting • Snapshot aesthetics • Little or no manipulation (colour and light retouching is frequent but not composition printing) • Research, educational or informative purposes • Small or medium format (except for landscapes and portraiture) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black and white or colour photography • High or low image quality • Outdoors or indoors scenarios • Long, medium or short exposures • Close-ups, wide-angle shots. • Digital or analogue photography • Long-format photography 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characterisation of actors or people • Staging (except portraits) • Re-enactment • Made-up or imaginary scenarios • Sophisticated pre- and post-production • Use of studio (except for portraits) • Unrealistic or surreal style • Very controlled and sophisticated composition and lighting conditions • Manipulation • Non-realistic or imaginative intent. • Incoherence between the content of the image and the title or narrative (if there is one) • Symbolic or metaphorical content.
Contextual features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category under which contemporaries place the work and institutional context: Journalism, specialised magazines (travel, nature, science, current affairs, medicine, etc.); scientific contexts, non-fictional books, family albums, yearbooks, etc. • Author's categorial intentions: intention that the work is judged against the works considered documentary or non-fiction. • Historical and social conventions (e.g. canons of objectivity, things that are considered scientific, etc.) 		

* This table does not mean to be exhaustive, it captures general features that may or may not change in documentary subgenres and it is made considering contemporary standards of documentary or non-fiction photography.



What are some non-documentary photographic practices?

What are the standard features of fiction in photography?

		Some non-documentary practices					
		Fiction	Pictorialism	Dada	Surreal Photo	Caricaturesque distortion	Abstraction
Some standard features of fiction in photography	Non-factual content	✓	(variable)	✓	✓	(variable)	✗
	Reference to cinematic style	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
	(Imaginative) Narrative	✓	(variable)	(variable)	(variable)	✗	✗
	Made-up content/scenarios	✓	✗	(variable)	✓	✗	-
	Presence of actors	✓	✗	(variable)	(variable)	✗	✗
	Impersonation or re-enactment	✓	✗	(variable)	(variable)	✗	✗
	Staging	✓	(variable)	(variable)	✓	✗	✗
	Sophisticated pre- and post-production	✓	✗	(variable)	✓	(variable)	(variable)
	Point of view shots	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
	Non-veridical representation	✓	(variable)	✓	✓	✓	✗
This table is not intended to be exhaustive							

Table 3 Non-documentary practices and standard features of fiction



Fiction from the archive – Red-headed Peckerwood

Story from the movie Badlands of 19-year-old Charles Starkweather and 14-year-old Caril Ann Fugate who killed 10 people in a 3 day killing spree.

Made famous in the movie, Badlands.

Archival material

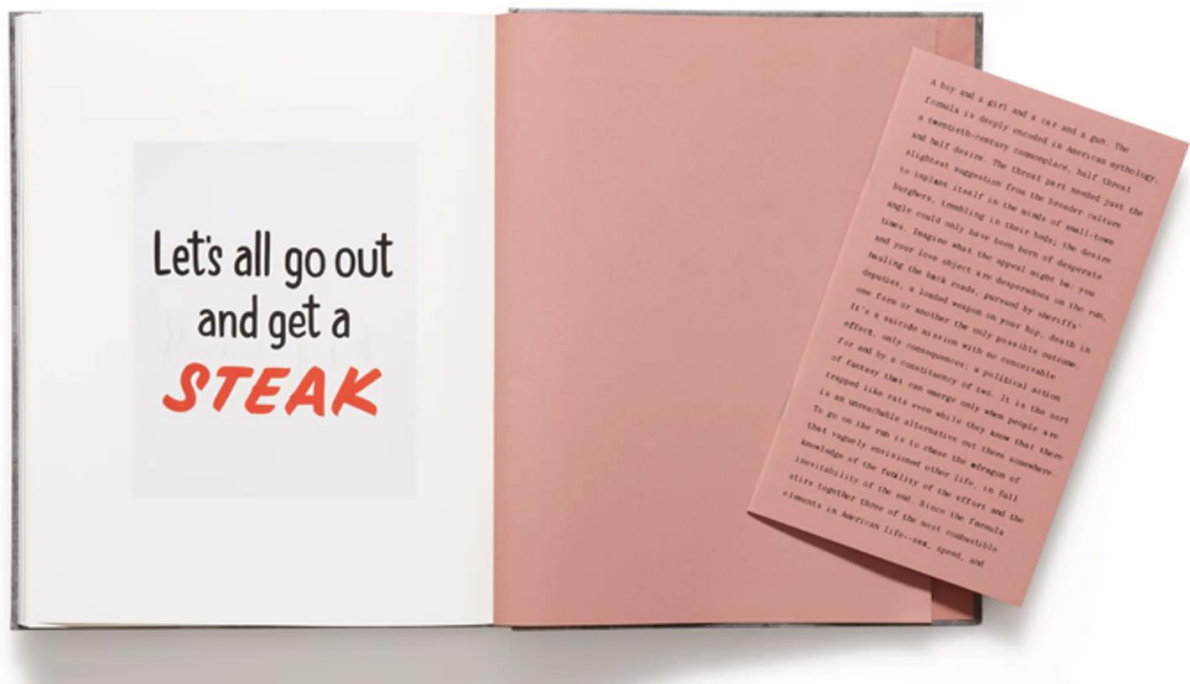
Documentary Material

Forensic Material

Journey

Remakes a myth





- From a technical perspective, the photographs incorporate and reference the techniques of photojournalism, forensic photography, image appropriation, reenactment and documentary landscape photography. On a conceptual level, they deal with a charged landscape and play with a photographic representation and truth as the work deconstructs a pre-existing narrative.
- *Redheaded Peckerwood* also utilizes and plays with a pre-existing archive of material, deliberately mixing fact and fiction, past and present, myth and reality as it presents, expands and re-presents the various facts and theories surrounding this story.

Fiction and local legend – The Spook Light Chronicles

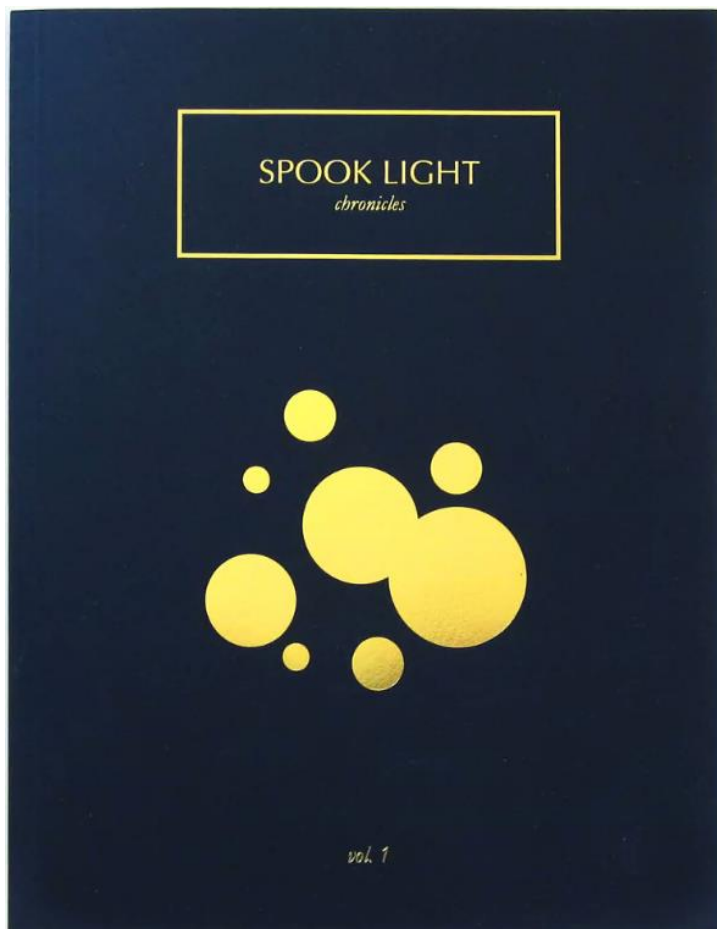


Use text, portraits, appropriated images and found photographs to tell a story

The story of the Spook Light

Has a base in the Ozark Hills

Uses stereotypes of hillbilly country



Spook light, spook light,
Where are you tonight?

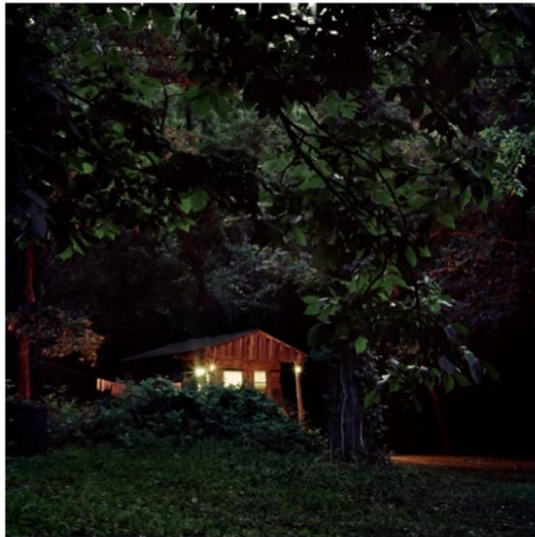
Are you in the trees,
Or in plain open sight?

Will you come by name,
a howl into the night?

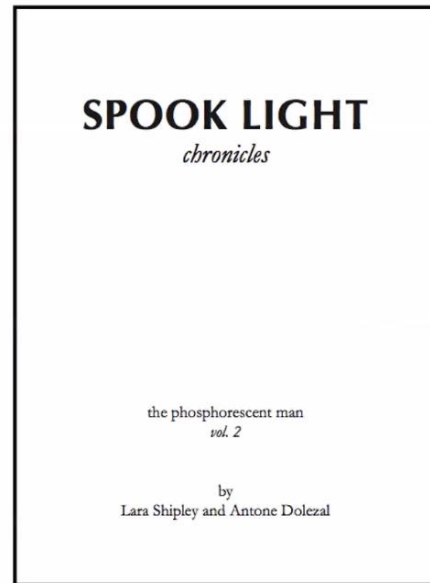
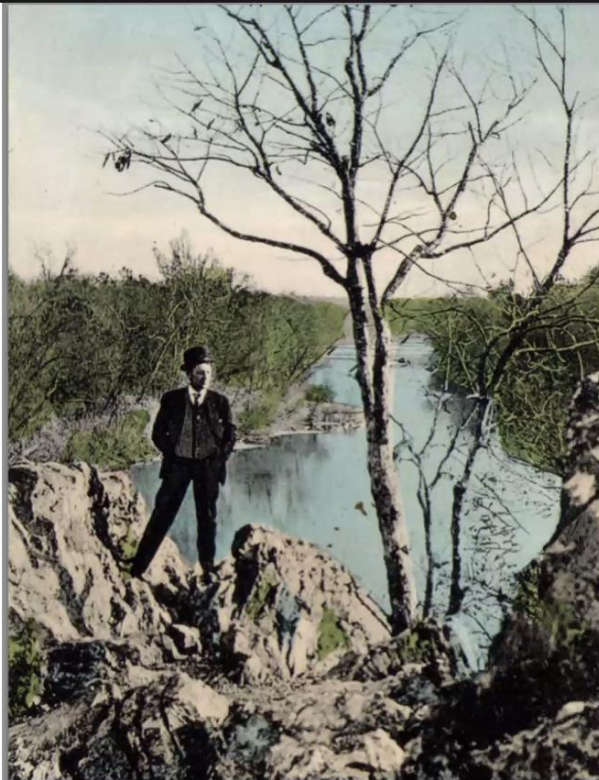
Let's do a little dance,
Give us a good fright!

Is there another world?
We'll follow if we might.

—the last song of *Spooky Meadows*

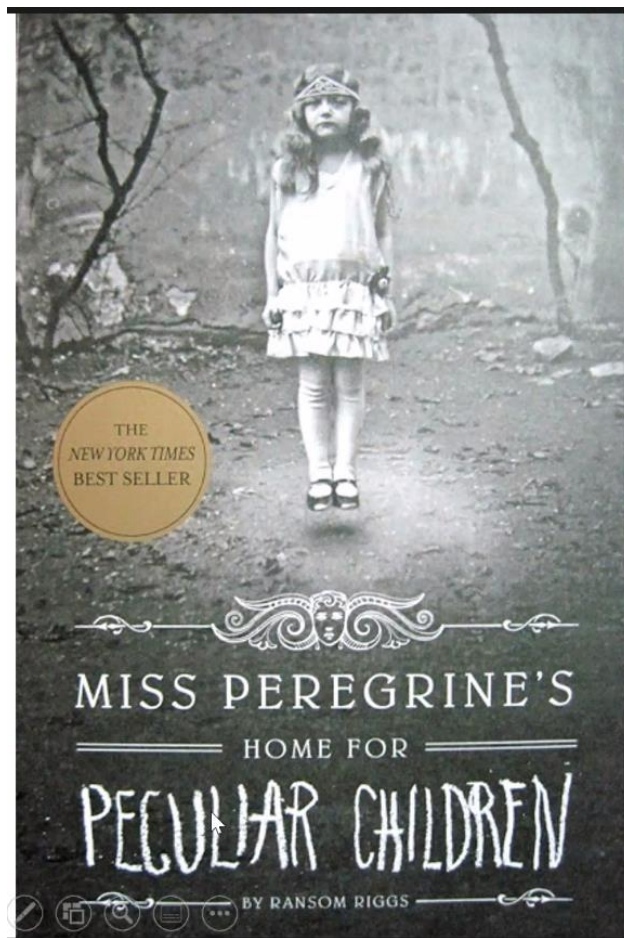


Suddenly the room was filled with the sound of awe and bewilderment. There was a quick shuffling of feet followed by screams. Above the heads of visitors a pair of glowing hands floated about the room, with the ghostly apparition swaying to the recording of a devilish theremin. It was often said among spectators that if the light didn't shine, Spooky would.



Fiction from the Image – Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children

- Collected archive/found images
- Wrote about them on a blog
- Wanted to publish a collection
- Instead he wrote a novel
- Used images as foundation for characters
- Used images to develop plot lines
- Photographs were central to the book
- Topped NYT best-seller list and sold 1.5 million copies
- Made into an average film by Tim Burton



Fiction as structure – Maria Kapayeva

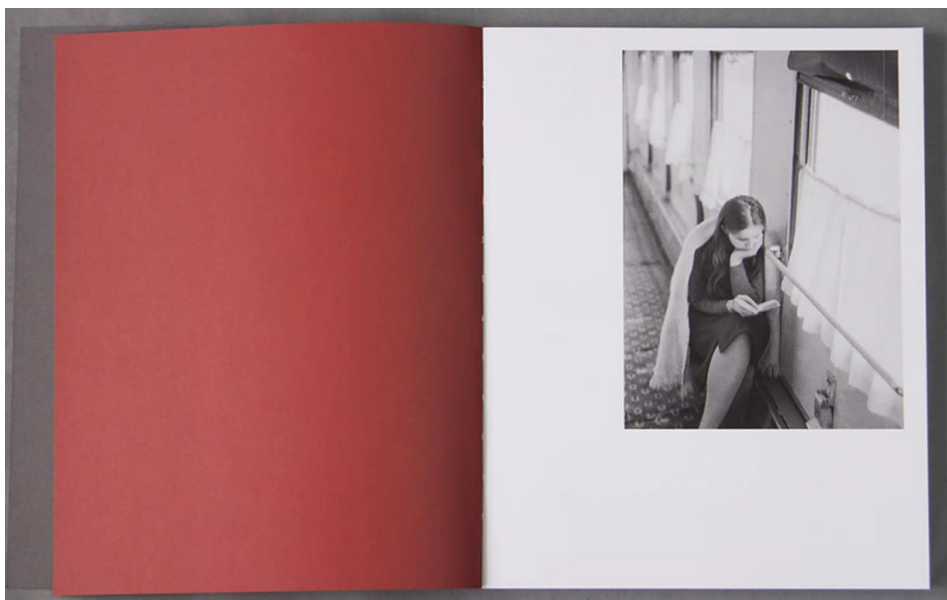
‘But how to establish the exact moment in which a story begins? Everything has already begun before, the first line of the first page of every novel refers to something that has already happened outside the book.’

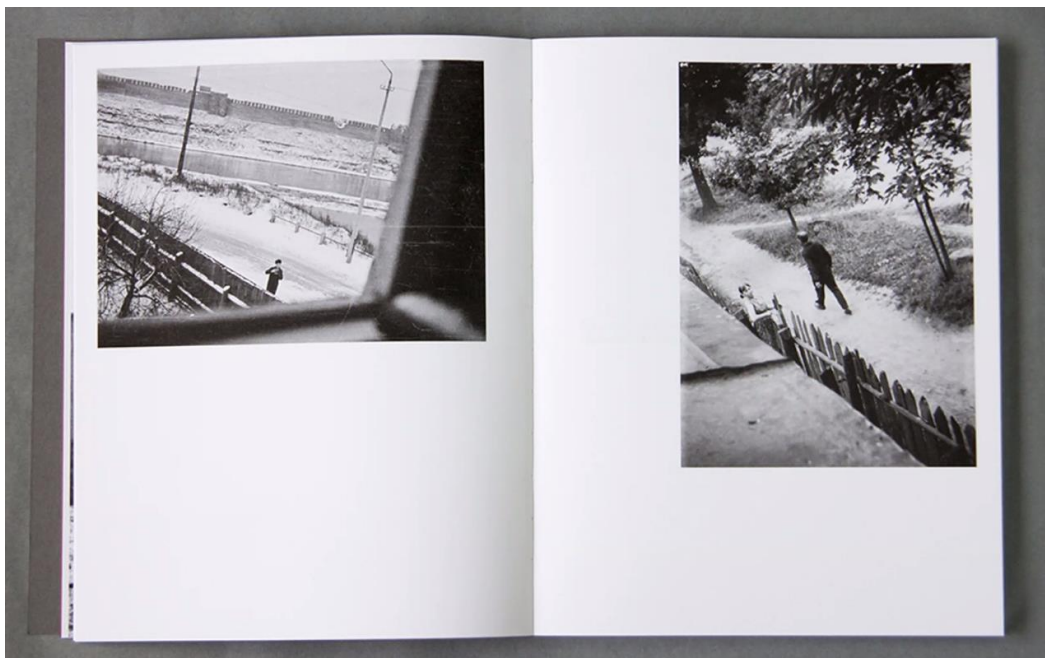
Italo Calvino – *If on a Winter's Night, a traveller*

‘Dropped in after this are pictures from a box of negatives Kapajeva found at her parents’ house in present day Estonia,. These images are culled from 200 rolls of film shot between 1966 and 1974, before Kapajeva was born, made when Estonia was part of the Soviet Union.

...the images are a kind of attempt to know her father as he was, before he became a father, to impose a narrative on him as a man in a place at a time.’

<https://photomonitor.co.uk/book/you-can-call-him-another-man/>





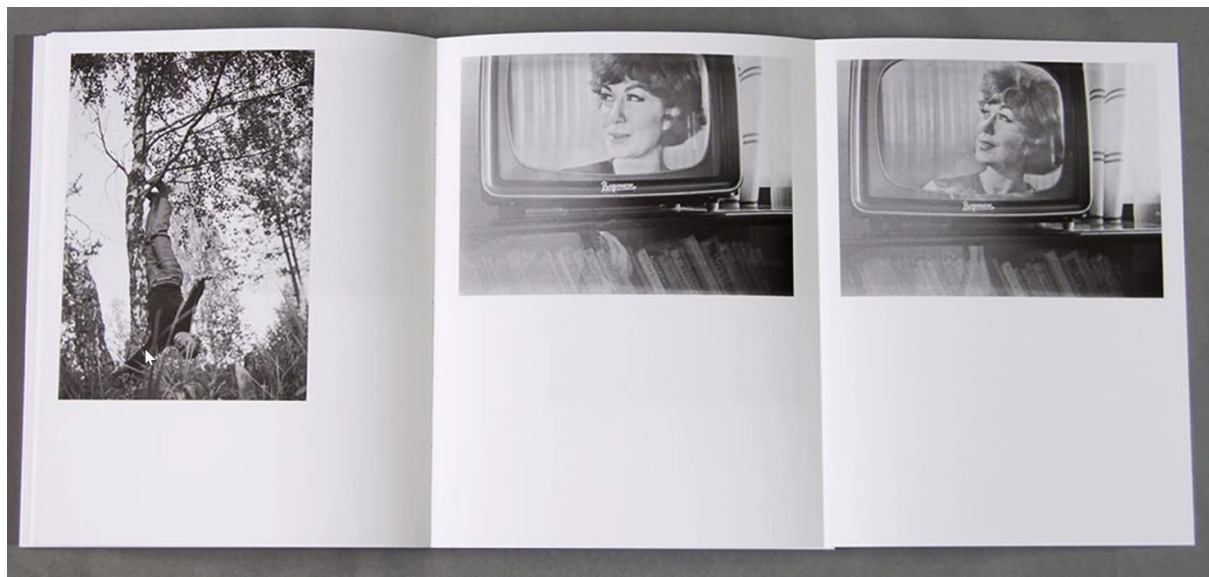
The narrative is borrowed from Calvino.

How do you read a story?

How does it end?

What if doesn't end?

How do multiple worlds overlap and collide and emerge as something new?



'Do you believe that every story must have a beginning and an end? In ancient times a story could only end in two ways; having passed all the tests, the hero and the heroine married, or else they died. The ultimate meaning to which all stories refer has two faces; the continuity of life, the inevitability of death.'

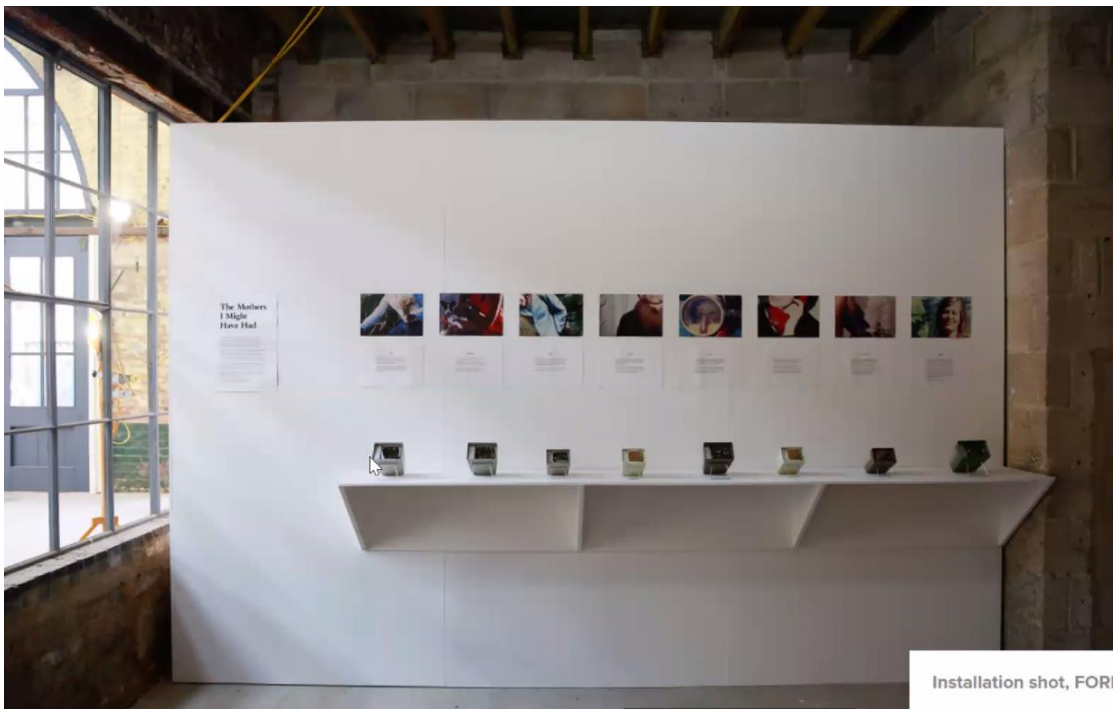
Caroline Furneaux: The mothers I might have had



Eve
prev / next



Françoise
prev / next



Installation shot, FORMAT19

Fiction and process – The Mushroom Collector

- Worked in advertising
- Became disenchanted
- Became a father
- Started selling mushrooms
- Started using the darkrooms
- Combined fatherhood, mushrooms, darkroom and advertising experience and made...
- The Mushroom Picker

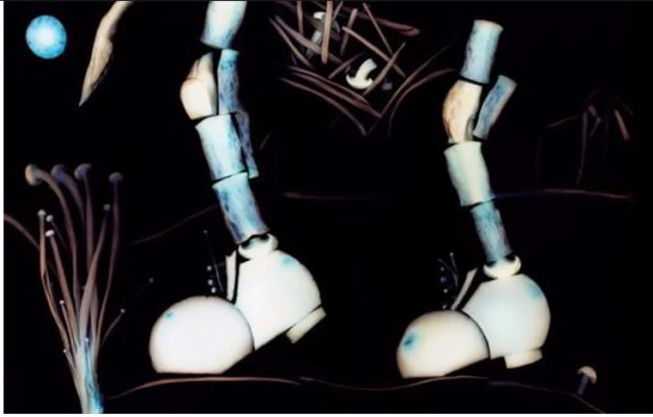


Concealed by ferns sat PENNY BUN,
by day protected from the sun.
On most clear nights she'd gaze with love
upon the shimmering stars above.

Tonight she didn't dare in case
the Picker spied her golden face.



Rising up without a sound
from fungi networks underground,
her friend the Gypsy formed a cluster
with Scarlet Cup and Rosy Earthstar.



Through the wild green thickets
in the distance
stalked the Picker with persistence.

He crept along with quiet purpose,
boots swift across the moonlit surface.

He clenched a stick,
sharp and slim,
and a basket to put the mushrooms in.



He should be
careful
not to pick
a mushroom that
could make him
SICK!