

DAYS ENDING IN WHY

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These works were made in memory of Helen Zrubek, who raised me as her own.
And Miwa Yamada who toughened me up.

I would like to acknowledge the guidance of my thesis supervisor Penny Cousineau-Levine.

I thank my MFA family, Jessica Bell, Stanzie Tooth, and Florence Vallières for keeping me alive
and (relatively) sane.

And Dan Gold. You know what you did.

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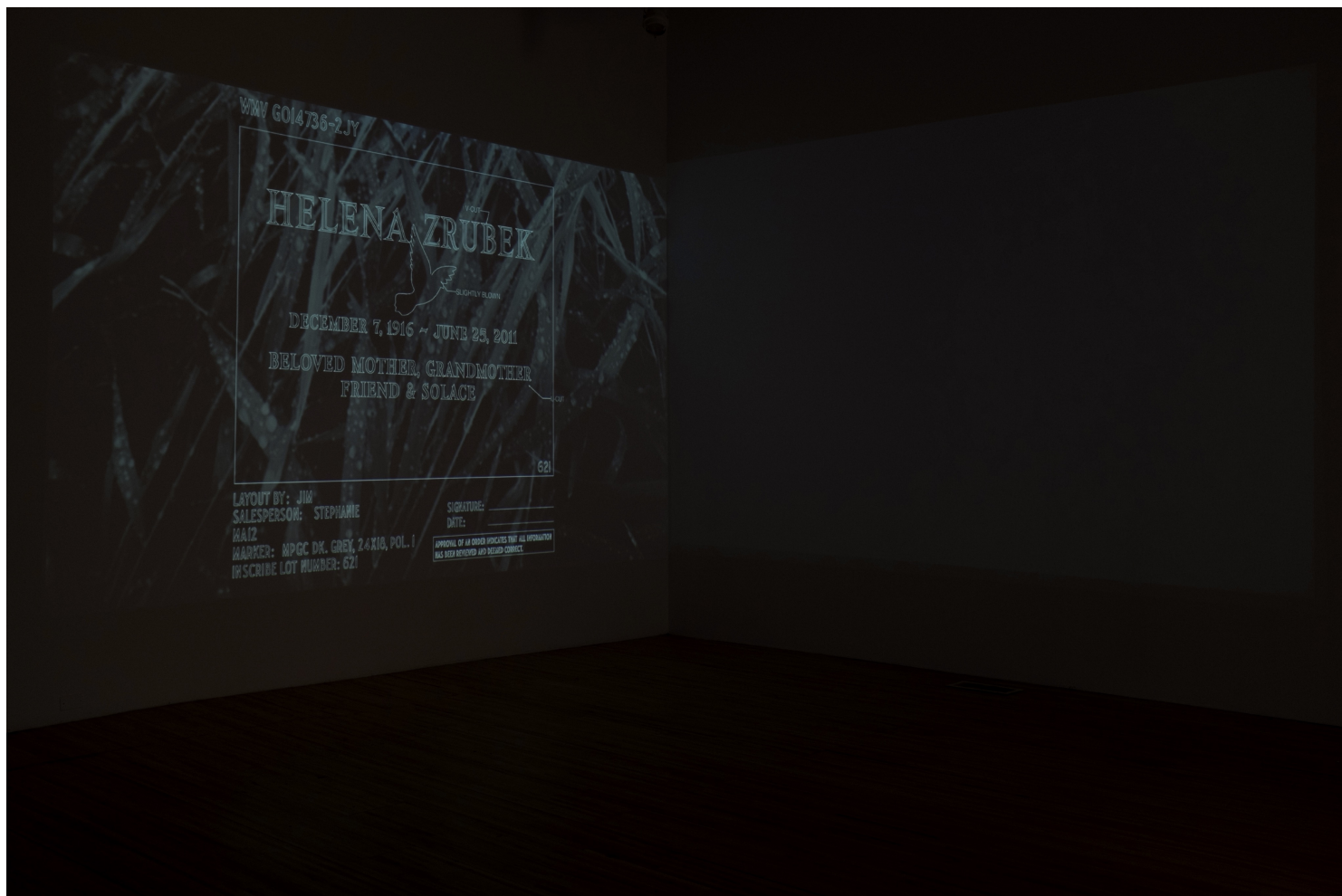
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ABSTRACT

In *DAYS ENDING IN WHY*, interdisciplinary artist Julia Martin identifies the schism of her autobiographical practice: deep melancholia and absurd irony. The fragmentation of the works presented knowingly resist cohesion, instead, through their arrangements and the potentials of space between them, they carry on conversations with one another. Rooted in the personal narrative, the works span across multiple mediums; photography, film, installation/sculpture, and literature. Martin emphasizes both the tragic and the comedic, pacing the show as a play between the two. Also, there are cats.

So many cats.

INSTALLATION PHOTOGRAPHS



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, AFTER FRIDAY, (still) Multimedia projection, diptych. 18min, 2 x 178x115", 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, *AFTER FRIDAY*, (still) Multimedia projection, diptych. 18min, 2 x 178x115", 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, *AFTER FRIDAY*, (still) Multimedia projection, diptych. 18min, 2 x 178x115", 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, *AFTER FRIDAY*, (still) Multimedia projection, diptych. 18min, 2 x 178x115", 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, room in collaboration with Florence Vallières (window piece), installation view, *SPILLED MILK*, (altered objects), 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, Book work, 9x12", unbound, multiples (3 copies), installation (on table), 2015



THE NOSTALGIST

300+ instant film prints, 3.5 x 2", inside acrylic box 12x18", installation (on plinth), 2013-2015



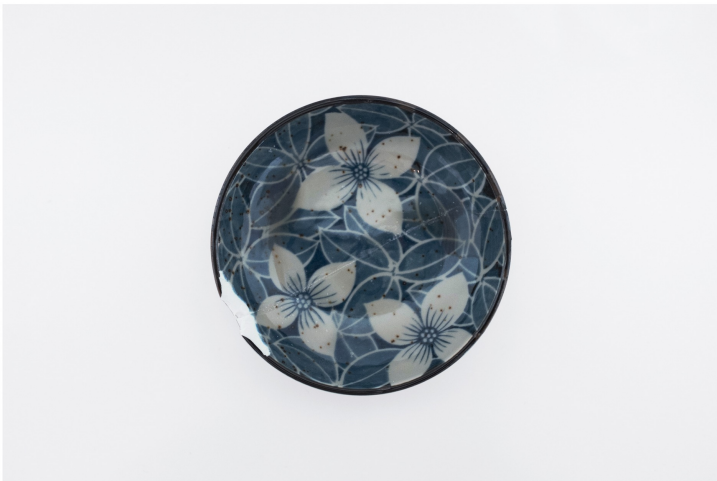
DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, Axené07, Gatineau, 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, installation view, Axené07, Gatineau. 2015



INDIVIDUAL WORKS



FURTHER MISFORTUNE, or MIWA WAS ALWAYS RIGHT, 4 of 6 bowls, broken and fixed. each 3", made in Japan, altered object, 2015



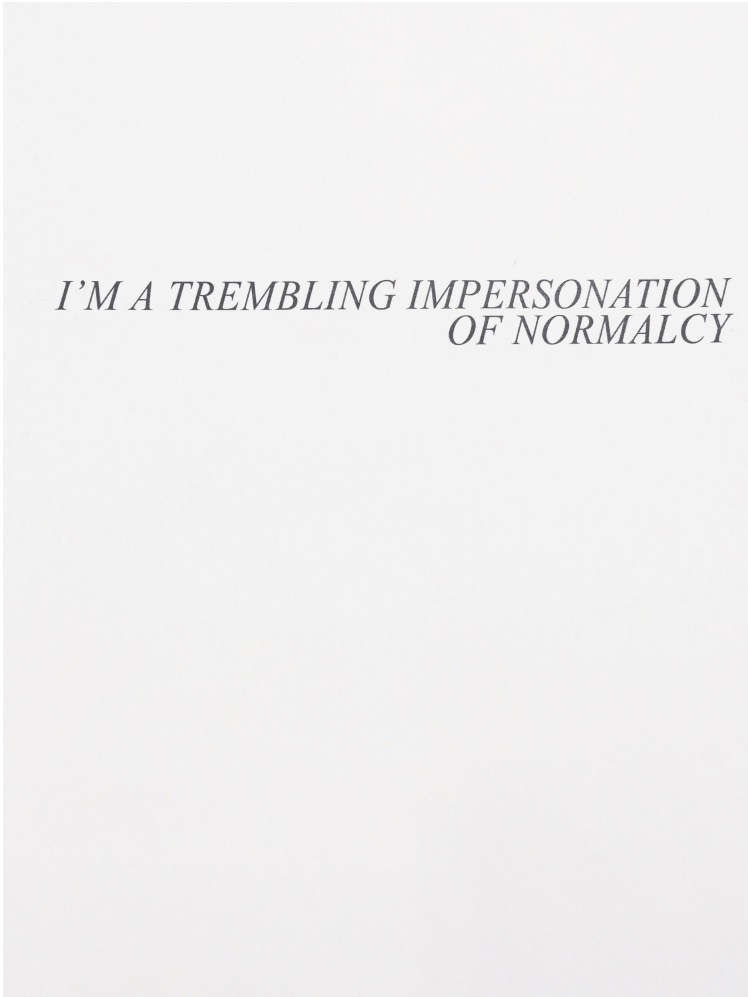
SPILLED MILK, milk pitcher broken and rearranged (3.5x5"), altered object, 2015



SPILLED MILK, milk pitcher broken and repaired (3.5x5"), ceramic fragments, altered objects, 2015



BAD THINGS MADE BETTER (GO ON, PET ME... WASN'T THAT NICE?)
Diptych, Furs, Recycles from Vintage Coats. *Bunny*, 9x12" panel Muskrat (assembled),
framed without glass, 2015



DAYS ENDING IN WHY, Book work, 9x12", unbound, 2015



THE NOSTALGIST
300+ instant film prints, 3.5 x 2", studio view, 2013-2015



STARS SUPER NOVA IN MY SOLAR PLEXUS
Photograph (sparkler), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



SOMETHING OF AN END
Photograph (bloom), 20x26", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



YOU HAVE A LOVELY HOME
Photograph (spider), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



DO YOU LIKE MY SWEATER?
Photograph, 20x26", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



WE ARE ALIKE, YOU AND I (diptych)
Photograph (hair), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



WE ARE ALIKE, YOU AND I (diptych)
Photograph (fur), 16x20", inkjet print, unframed, 2015



COMING DOWN
Photograph, 42x56", inkjet print, framed, 44x58.5", 2015

LIST OF WORKS

GALERIE JEAN-PIERRE LATOUR

SPILLED MILK (series of three)

I. Intact Pitcher, Ikea, Installation

II. Broken and arranged pitcher, Ikea, Installation

III. Broken and fixed pitcher, scattered dishes broken irreparably. IKEA & Dollarama dishes, superglue. Installation, 2015

GALLERY ONE

DAYS ENDING IN WHY (book works)

Book work, unbound, multiples (3 copies), installation (on table), 2015

MISFORTUNE or MIWA WAS ALWAYS RIGHT

Six Ceramic dishes, 3", made in Japan, broken by cat. Ceramic, superglue, installation (on 9x9" floating shelves), 2015

BAD THINGS MADE BETTER (GO ON, PET ME... WASN'T THAT NICE?)

Diptych, Furs, Recycles from Vintage Coats. *Bear*, 11x14" panel *Rabbit* (dyed), *Bunny*, 9x12" panel *Muskrat* (assembled), framed without glass, 2015

DAYS ENDING IN WHY (framed prints)

Series of 20 text pieces, 9x12", inkjet print on drawing paper, framed 11x14", 2015

MULCH

hand-torn paper with print, installation (on floor), 2015

COMING DOWN

Photograph (mother), 42x56", inkjet print, framed, 2015

YOU HAVE A LOVELY HOME

Photograph (spider), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

WE ARE ALIKE, YOU AND I (diptych)

Photograph (hair), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

Photograph (fur), 16x20", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

BUT I HAVE A GREAT PERSONALITY

Photograph (butterfly), 30x40", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

OBVIOUS FORESHADOWING

Photograph (broken pitcher), 8x10", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

STARS SUPER NOVA IN MY SOLAR PLEXUS

Photograph (sparkler), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

DO YOU LIKE MY SWEATER?

Photograph (foliage, folded), 20x26", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

SOMETHING OF AN END

Photograph (bloom), 20x26", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

DOES THE PET STILL WANT TO PLAY?

Photograph (cat), 24x32", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

A CONVERSATION

Photographs (bird & foliage), diptych, 8x10" & 5x7", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

WHITE NOISE

Photograph, 11x14", inkjet print, unframed, 2015

GALLERY TWO

AFTER FRIDAY

Multimedia projection, diptych. 18min, 2 x 178x115", 2015

THE NOSTALGIST

300+ instant film prints, 12x18" acrylic box, installation (on plinth), 2013-2015

ARTIST STATEMENT

I live for the punchline.

There is power in controlling one's narrative, and tragedy can be turned into a dangerous kind of comedy. My practice is concerned with memory, the body, and loss. I am consumed by the potential of the manifestations and transformations of melancholia into the field of art as a form of alchemical catharsis. My work is grounded in the autobiographical narrative in which there is no assured safety of a story told in retrospect; alluded to is a precipice and a practice which explores my passage along it. The success of the work is contingent on the balance of harrowing setup and absurd apogee; this is where my practice intersects with comedy. I make it clear that I am in on the joke, that I walk this line with a deliberate irreverence.

It is crucial that the materiality of the works is true to their content and speaks of origin. It is freeing to play with what does not feel precious, experimenting with process through multiple iterations of one concept and mediations of a single image. Drawing paper is used in text pieces, pad-perforations still visible, cell phone images have been transferred to the instant film surface to preserve them as objects, and magnified in large prints or projected to expose their flaws. The domestic materials in *Misfortune, or Miwa Was Always Right*, (Installation of broken and fixed dishes) speak of the home, object record, and the body grounded in the material.

The work is, in the most reductive of terms, personal, but there are larger universal themes that emerge. In using iPhone photographs, either in projection or transferred to the instant film surface, I am commenting on the ubiquity of images, and the photographic vernacular in which we are, particularly in this age of Instagram, so fluent. I wish to further examine our connections to these devices as contemporary personal archives, keepers of our communications and visual records. In creating physical objects I am resisting the intangible nature of the disposable digital image. The images on the instant film surface suggests the singular object, yet the process—digital projection onto the surface within a secondary machine, done usually well after the event, reiterates the notion of the multiple; the image that can be made and remade.

In displaying fine art prints taped to a wall, and text prints made on drawing paper, I intend to question notions of preciousness—the single large (42x56”) print of my mother, *Coming Down*, is finely framed, but the image itself, again, taken with a cell phone, breaks down upon closer inspection. Like those of Thomas Ruff's *JPEGS*, 2007, pixels and digital artefact disintegrate and become pointillist. Here it is not only a comment on the structure of the digital photographs, the purposeful use of low-fidelity image capture and processing refers to the content of the images: their subjects are slowly coming undone.

Beyond my interest in democratic materials and methodologies, ideas of bodily degradation are foundational to the work and process. Objects found and broken, either by chance or purpose, find themselves existing in simultaneous states; having been mended, and still bearing the imprint of the event, they are scarred. The duplicated found portraits (*Ambivalence*, in *After Friday*, 2014), one broken, speak of another unexpected process--the photographic

transfer onto the porous porcelain surface: it is not just the glass that has shattered but the portrait itself. It is an expression of a state of ambivalence, and a metaphor of the performance of normalcy.

The act of photographing is form of agency, to take a picture is to claim possession of and authority over something that is otherwise elusive—a trace of the tenuous and uncontrollable. My use of photography has shifted from a forceful, concept-driven series work to a more intuitive image practice that resembles my writing process. Playing with original vernacular images and momentary interjections of culled media, I've allowed for bodies of work to emerge, for image/text relationships to form over time through emotional erosion. What is obvious washes away through neglect. When I refuse to immediately impose on the image unforeseen connections are revealed and subtlety and subtext find room in the work. My prose has long relied on a similar methodology, I write in pieces and allow them time to expand or remain fragments. My hand is most strongly felt in the edit, in pacing, the mixing and remixing of image and text.

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes writes of profound recognition in a photograph, that a single image can contain so much of its subject, that to view it is to be immediately filled with the sense of the familiar (Barthes, 1981, 72). I assert the same recognition can be felt through the written word. Text has the capacity to contain a trace of a voice, an essence of the writer in that moment of writing. I believe, too, that we can come to a state of both recognition and identification in the reading. To read a message from a friend we immediately hear their voice in our minds. Text allows for pluralism; our identities contain multiples. We perform aspects of ourselves and our tones and styles change accordingly. The work *Days Ending In Why*, Book, 2015, contains every voice I write in, placement on the page or screen signifies tonal register, as does use of capitalization, typeface and italics. This is a kind of evolved onomatopoeia. I believe these are visual strategies for conveying a sound, for controlling the synesthetic potentials of the text medium. Confession, revelation, conversation, instruction and non-sequiturs all function within the works discussed to present a portrait in vignettes. If image is embodiment then text is voice.

The notion of the multiple is overtly content in this body of work. Repetition is seen in images, in duplicates of the Instax objects, printed and projected photographs, as well as in the texts of *AFTER FRIDAY* (projection) and *DAYS ENDING IN WHY* (unbound bookwork). Reiteration, too, is a trope in contemporary writing. Ordinary phrases when written/spoken and repeated can suddenly take on increased significance, inversely; a word or phrase repeated too often can lose all meaning. I walk this line, at times intending to cross it. As I write in my support paper, trauma manifested can become weightless in the ether. I feel now that to replicate is to obliterate.

My practice has grown to embrace absurdity, existential and comedic, as mode of survival. In this work I have transformed mourning, melancholia and depression into dark comedy, not through the passive transfigurations of time, but through an application of will. In

sequencing, phrasing, composition, tone and the formal qualities of image and prose, I can process terrible events in such a way that they elicit an antithetical reaction.

When you laugh, I know I have you.