

Paige Nicholas

The Past and The Present

How often do you look at photographs that were taken throughout your childhood that hold memories and stories that you don't quite remember?

This photographic project explores the memory of my mother. The work brings together family archival photographs taken by her and images I created of landscapes we visited as a family. The photographs I took recall the time we spent together with my two brothers, my parents, and sometimes just my mom and me. The family photographs span different moments in my family's lives.

I made these pictures of landscapes to help me remember my mom and the places we experienced together. My mom was my best friend-- she was there when I needed to cry and talk for hours about things I couldn't share with others. Incorporating family photographs kept her present in my mind, so I wouldn't forget what she looked like or lose track of her over time. I wonder what story my mom was creating and the events that led up to her capturing the image. We often make up stories that are similar to an actual event or based on what we can determine in the photograph. These old photographs bring me joy because they remind me of events forgotten.

Looking at family photographs that include my dad help me think back to a simpler time, free of worry. There are so many photographs my family kept of milestones that they make me reflect on different time periods, such as the freedom of imagination that I had as a kid. I think back to memories of vacations and long car rides, when we would ask that familiar question, "Are we there yet?" My dad would say no, but my mom would add, "No, but I got a good picture of you and your brothers while y'all were asleep." *The Past and The Present* allows me to reflect on how my mom wanted us to remember our childhood, as a carefree experience of good times together as a family.