

NARRATIVES OF THE POSSIBLE



Louise Taylor

County Durham, United Kingdom

Wombling: Archiving Dad

“A personal photographic project celebrating my dad’s methodical approach to cataloging his life, inspired by index card filing systems.”

Accordion folded book; printed photographs and paper.

Artist’s Statement

‘Wombling : Archiving Dad’ is a very personal project and a bit of a departure for me in terms of style.

My dad, John Taylor, died unexpectedly almost eight years ago, in 2013. He was our family’s mechanic, handyman, builder, plumber, accountant and all round problem solver. He had a tool for every job and had that ‘thing’ for every occasion, meticulously organised in his garage and

workshop. Dad was both a collector of things and an extraordinarily thorough cataloguer and note taker. He had drawers packed with 'useful things', alongside collections of everyday objects and photographs, to catalogue and record many aspects of his everyday life. These collections were in part mundane, like the huge water cooler bottle filled with miniature shampoos from every hotel he ever visited, thousands of cigar wrappers and beer bottles, and every credit card ever issued. Some collections were poignant vignettes of restoration projects and home improvement, punctuation points in a life lived, as cars and motorbikes were painstakingly stripped and rebuilt to their former glories. And some of the collections carefully remembered and recorded every pet that we shared our lives with as a family.

It wasn't always clear what John planned to do with his collections. There was talk of building a glass bottle wall, making a credit card collage and a wine cork pin board but none of these transpired. As my mum prepared to sell their house, and to embark on the fearful task of emptying the loft that groaned with Haynes manuals, and the flotsam and jetsam of John's life, I set about archiving the collections before his 'treasure' was binned, recycled, scrapped or sold. The books presented here are the first stage of my archival mission, which is a work in progress.

The three indexical inspired books are made in the colours of the Lambretta scooters that were my dad's passion. Known as ALE, YELLOW PERYL and STINGRAY, he raced these bikes as a young man in the 1960s. He restored them more recently, and competed in vintage bike trials up to the day before he died.

These catalogues of things are strangely beautiful in their own way, and offer me and my family a chance to celebrate his methodical approach to life in book form.

Biography

Louise Taylor is a British photographic artist living on the edge of the North Pennines in rural County Durham, North East England. Since graduating from University of Westminster, London in 1996 she has worked and travelled widely. Her work, documentary in style focusses on rural issues, people and place, and is rooted in a strong connection to the land. She is a founding member of arts collective Wideyed, and has taken part in prominent international photography festivals such as FORMAT, UK and Mois de la Photo-OFF, Paris. She has received awards and bursaries, participated in international arts residences and has exhibited internationally. She also develops and delivers participatory photography projects with schools and other community groups, most recently a Wideyed project - Home Time - working with care home residents and isolated/shielding people in our communities on a project that documents their experiences through the pandemic.

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