

**this cloud may**      **b**      **r**  
**u**      **s**      **t**



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**Sean Patrick Campbell | Katri Heinämäki**

# **this cloud may burst**

*thoughts on the loss and preservation of memory*

edited by  
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# A memorial to memories

*Shalmali Shetty*

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One evening, my laptop shut down abruptly. On reviving it, I was confronted with the BSoD (Blue Screen of Death) and a boot-fail message. Hoping all my good deeds would come to my rescue, I began begging my laptop to restart. I was anxious about losing data accumulated over two years: documents, work, research, films, photographs, personal memories, collections, mundane notes, useless information, stray images.

Now extracted from my laptop, the internal hard disk rests in a cellophane bag, with its past inaccessible for the time being. My laptop was reinstated with a new internal hard disk and I received it as good as new. With this digital form of memory lost, I had to start retracing, revisiting, recollecting and reimagining, in order to retrieve the data from other platforms: external devices, emails, submission portals, clouds, social media, sticks, friends. In trying to remember, my own memory became a heap of information: unorganised, unrecognisable, flickering on and off, materialising in dreams, dissipating during the waking hours, intangible, amorphous, spectral. Now, some amount of that lost data is also lost to my own memory, sucked into the vacuum of blind spots.

# Goddess

Debi Banerjee

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দেবী

দেবি, screenprint on paper (2019)  
Remake of film poster, *Devi* (Goddess), Satyajit Ray (1960)

There was a large printed image on fabric that would hang in the hall landing of the house I grew up in. I remember it as orange. It is of a woman; her three eyes look straight at you, her face is serene but I am scared to look up at her. I run up the stairs as fast as I can looking only at my feet to avoid catching her eye. We all call her Ma, although she did not resemble our mother.

Many years later trawling the internet I come across a poster for Satyajit Ray's film, *Devi* (1960). This image pulls me back to that moment in my childhood as I rush past the woman on the wall hanging on the stairs.

# [haunt]itled

Sean Patrick Campbell

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A portrait of my grandmother, a haunted television, the *living* room of the house I grew up in. 1992. I must have taken the photo because of the height of the camera. Constructing the layout of the room in my memory, there is no other explanation for the perspective other than a child's vantage point through a lens. I was the only child.

It's a portrait of my grandmother, and a portrait of me. I'm on the television. I'm doubled, tripled. The flash reflected in the window, that's me. I'm in the grain of the image, Don DeLillo's 'universe of dots'. In my grandmother's eyes. A photograph inside a photograph, atop a record player.

All photography is performance. All photography is séance.

The space between two membranes is where photography lives – the material and the spiritual, the lens and the memory – and it is a haunted house. As I write this, my grandmother is 85, gratefully, joyously alive. However, this house is no longer hers. My grandfather, likely sat just out of frame to the right in his chair, seat worn from use, is gone. The chair is gone. The photograph acts as a portal, like the television in *Poltergeist*, like the television in the photograph. Tin cans with string for the living and the dead.

I am haunted by this photograph more than any other, because it represents a fissural space, a knife-edge of a lost future and a recovered past, like when you ask the IT guy to save the files on the hard drive you dropped, but the files are in the wrong place, they turn up with different names in the wrong folder. Memory and history, data reordered. Grain and bits, pulled apart and recombined.

# It was nice to meet you

*Katri Heinämäki*

The new pace of everyday life during the pandemic, and the feeling of time being suspended, have made me think of how past and present are entwined instead of the relationship between the past and the future. The future has always been unpredictable, but the pandemic has made it impractical to plan ahead forcing me to be more present. It has also revealed how most of our lives, and memories, disappear without a trace.

Social distance and the lack of human connection has made the encounters with other people special – something I once took for granted but are now so vanishingly scarce that they stay with me long after our brief meetings are finished.

The random chats are now attached to a single place and time. My neighborhood has become a personal archive of rare human encounters and a place that reflects experiences that qualify as lasting memories. A personal past molded by stagnant time.



A man with a hat shaped like a mushroom stood in front of his house. We greeted each other and when I asked him how he was doing he said he had come out of his bunker to get some fresh air and to see if the end of the world had arrived.

# Overlaps: Island Post Office

Jenny Brownrigg

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In the course of researching early twentieth century women photographers in Scotland, I began to notice periodic overlaps of subject matter, locations or even people in their photographs. From trawling their archives, I saw that Edinburgh photographer Violet Banks (1896-1985) and American photographer and folklorist Margaret Fay Shaw (1903-2004) had separately photographed the same post and telegraph office on the Hebridean island of Eriskay.

Their interest in this particular building remains unrecorded. Whilst Shaw was living on the neighbouring island of South Uist (1930-36), for Banks her stop on Eriskay would likely have been part of a wider independent tour as she documented life on the Hebrides.

Why did they choose to document this island post office? Perhaps the two women photographers saw it representing one of the ways in which modernism had begun to infiltrate the traditions of highland and island life. The functions of post and telegraph office had been grafted, like a strange hybrid, onto a thatched, traditional blackhouse. Shaw has taken a series of three photographs of the building, with life and the seasons circumnavigating it. These are held by National Trust for Scotland at Canna House, Shaw's home. A woman and her cow walk past in one photograph. Children stand in the open door of the blackhouse behind the post office in a second photograph. Whilst the whitewashed walls of the post office are apparent in one, it is back to the bare stonework in another (Image 1). The sandy ground is turned over in one image; whilst holding a crop in another. Shaw noted on a duplicate of one of these photographs, held in Isobel Grant Photographic Collection [1], that the post office was one of a series of 'slightly scattered houses'. Banks meanwhile, sets her camera slightly further away and to the right of the post office, below the small rise of scrub ground it sits upon. Her photograph, *View of thatched cottages, telegraph office*, (c.1920-1930) (Image 2) which can be found in Historic Environment Scotland Collections, captures the building in mid distance. She chooses to show the telegraph wires shooting out from the poles and rising upwards to the top left of frame. In the house behind the post office, like one





**Image 4**

*Post Office and Tower, The Clachan, Empire Exhibition, Scotland 1938*  
Printed by the official souvenir manufacturers, Valentines & Sons Limited  
(Dundee and London)

The phenomenon of this island post office continues with one further iteration, taking it from island periphery to city life. It appears to have inspired a heritage copy as part of An Clachan, 'The Highland Village', at Glasgow's 1938 Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park. Official Empire Exhibition ephemera, in the form of postcards and small souvenir cards, again bought on eBay, show the post office, illustrating the same style of stone walls and thatched roof. This time it was part of a larger blackhouse. The whitewash can be seen to extend slightly past the first door of this building. The surface delineation moves to bare stone, denoting that here the remaining section of cottage had a different function – that of a bookshop.

One postcard (Image 4) in particular shows the fiction of the scene, asserting the past and future simultaneously. Beyond the trees, the futuristic art deco of Tait's Tower of the Empire can be seen, surpassing the original dichotomy of the modern telegraph versus traditional cottage, by creating a further anomaly of architectural dissonance.

A further postcard (Image 5), is entitled 'Royal Party interested in Post Office window, An Clachan, Empire Exhibition, 1938'. King George VI is in frock coat, with Queen Elizabeth II, dressed in white formalwear following. As King of the United Kingdom and the Dominions of the British Commonwealth, this official visit to Glasgow, then known as the Second City of the Empire, signified his place as its Sovereign.

This short analysis creates transversals between origin (the island post office in its cultural context), original artefact (documentation by Banks, Shaw and unknown photographer),

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# BIOGRAPHIES

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## DEBI BANERJEE

Debi Banerjee is an artist and researcher. Her research interests include archival practice, workshops, and the history of art school education. She was Researcher for *New Wave: Materials, Methods and Media, Glasgow School of Art 1965-1985* (2015) and teaches a post-graduate elective at Glasgow School of Art. She has published journal articles in *Visual Culture in Britain* (2020) and *Studies in Material Thinking* (2017). Other recent projects include: *Top Lodge*, *Map Magazine* (2020), *Massive Thanks* with Aniel Piasecka (2019), *Paleo Futurists* with Daniel Brown and Jenny Hogarth, various projects (2016-2018), *Unknown Outcomes* with Kirsty Hendry (2016).

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Sean Patrick Campbell is an artist and musician living and working in Glasgow. Through his lens-based practice he interrogates the inherent symbiosis between landscape and mythologies – personal, cultural, political. Rituals, including those of the analogue photographic process, the invocations of moving image, incantations of atomic words and the power of uncanny objects form the interlocking parts of this inquiry into the physical and psychic structures that surround us. He's always looking for ghosts.

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## KATRI HEINÄMÄKI

Katri Heinämäki is a Finnish photographer and visual artist living and working in Austin, Texas. She works with photography, text and found materials. She is a recent art school dropout whose work focuses on questions concerning time and our perception of it, and how visual memory, personal experience, and history are intertwined.

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Shalmali Shetty is pursuing her second postgrad with an MLitt in Curatorial Practice (Contemporary Art) at the Glasgow School of Art (2019-2020) and University of Glasgow, supported by the Charles Wallace India Trust Scholarship. She has previously worked as an editor, writer and researcher for various art magazines and platforms based in India and has recently curated exhibitions within Glasgow. She intends to coalesce her background in art practice and theory in the production of the curatorial.

**Curatorial Practice** (( Contemporary Art ————— ))

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