

Family secrets and memories - A personal exploration through visual arts

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Abstract

The thesis described the explorative and experimental, as well as personal process used by the author to investigate memories, thoughts and feelings brought about by the uncovering of a family secret.

The research questions were

1. How do family secrets and their discovery change the stories and memories about that family?
2. How does exploring this particular family secret change my perception of myself, my family, and the people in it?
3. What methods, materials and techniques will help me express these thoughts in my artwork?

The starting point for the process was a small collection of old family photos, out of which five photos were selected to be used as an initial inspiration. The photos were edited, modified and combined with various methods including painting, solar printing, picture transfer and knitting with materials such as paper, wool, glass and recycled objects including lace doilies.

Through experimentation, two approaches were found to be the most meaningful for the goals of this research: using pixelation to create a series of paintings with recycled materials and using a pixelated photo as a base for a knitted artwork.

Using traditional materials and meditative craft such as knitting was found to support the process of exploration and eventually acceptance of the past. Pixelated pictures on lace background were especially successful experiment.

Language: English

Key Words: family secrets, memories, mixed media, experiments

EXAMENSARBETE

Författare: Kristiina Lähde

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20

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Abstrakt

Avhandlingen redogör för den utforskande, experimentella och personliga process som författaren använde för att undersöka de minnen, tankar och känslor som väcktes i samband med avslöjandet av en familjehemlighet.

Följande forskningsfrågor låg till grund för studien:

1. Hur påverkar familjehemligheter och deras avslöjande berättelserna och minnena om en familj?
2. Hur förändras min uppfattning om mig själv, min familj och dess medlemmar genom att utforska denna specifika familjehemlighet?
3. Vilka metoder, material och tekniker är mest ändamålsenliga för att uttrycka dessa tankar i ett konstnärligt arbete?

Processen inleddes med en mindre samling äldre familjefotografier, varav fem valdes ut som utgångspunkt för det konstnärliga arbetet. Fotografierna bearbetades, modifierades och kombinerades med olika tekniker såsom måleri, soltryck, bildöverföring och stickning. Arbetet genomfördes med material som papper, ull, glas samt återvunna föremål, däribland virkade spetsdukar.

Genom experimenterande identifierades två arbetssätt som särskilt meningsfulla för undersökningens syfte: användningen av pixellering för att skapa en serie målningar med återvunnet material samt användningen av ett pixellerat fotografi som grund för ett stickat konstverk.

Användningen av traditionella material och meditativa hantverkstekniker, såsom stickning, visade sig främja processen av utforskande och successiv acceptans av det förflutna. De pixellerade bilderna mot bakgrund av spets framstod som ett särskilt framgångsrikt konstnärligt uttryck.

Språk: Engelska

Nyckelord: familjehemligheter, minnen, blandade material, experiment

OPINNÄYTETYÖ

Tekijä: Kristiina Lähde

Koulutus ja paikkakunta: Kuvataiteilija AMK, monimuoto. Pietarsaari

Ohjaaja(t): Felice Hapetzeder, Johanna Ketola

Nimike: Perhesalaisuudet ja muistot, henkilökohtainen matka menneeseen kuvataiteen keinoin.

Päivämäärä 7.4.2025 Sivumäärä 20 Liitteet -

Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyö kuvaa kirjoittajan tutkivaa, kokeellista ja hyvin henkilökohtaista prosessia paljastuneen perhesalaisuuden esiin nostamien muistojen, ajatusten ja tunteiden läpi.

Tämän työn tutkimuskysymykset olivat

1. Kuinka perhesalaisuudet ja niiden paljastuminen muuttaa perheen tarinoita ja muistoja?
2. Kuinka tämän kyseessä olevan perhesalaisuuden tutkiminen muuttaa käsitystäni itsestäni, perheestäni, ja perheenjäsenistäni?
3. Mitkä menetelmät, materiaalit ja tekniikat auttavat minua ilmaisemaan näitä ajatuksia taiteessani?

Prosessin lähtökohtina toimi valikoima vanhoja perhevalokuvia, joista viisi valikoitui tämän projektin inspiraation lähteeksi. Valokuvia käsiteltiin, muokattiin ja versioitiin erilaisilla menetelmillä kuten maalaus, aurinkoväri, kuvansiirto ja neulominen. Kuvia yhdistettiin eri materiaaleihin, mukaan lukien paperi, villa, lasi ja kierrätysmateriaalit kuten pitsiliinat.

Kokeilun tuloksena kaksi lähestymistapaa osoittautui merkityksellisimmiksi tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteiden kannalta: pikseloitujen kuvien yhdistäminen maalaamalla kierrätysmateriaaleihin, sekä pikseloidun kuvan käyttäminen neulotun taideteoksen pohjana.

Perinteisten materiaalien ja käsitystekniikoiden, kuten neulomisen, todettiin tukevan menneen tutkimista ja lopulta myös hyväksymistä. Vanhojen pikseloitujen kuvien yhdistäminen pitsitaustaan osoittautui erityisen onnistuneeksi kokeiluksi.

Kieli: Englanti

Avainsanat: perhesalaisuudet, muistot, sekatekniikka, kokeellisuus

Table of Contents

1	Introduction and background	1
2	Research questions	2
3	Family secrets in research and in art.....	2
4	Methods, materials and techniques	7
4.1	The artistic process	7
4.1.1	Initial experiments	9
4.2	The symbolic and visual meaning of materials and techniques	17
4.2.1	Lace doilies, knitting and fabrics	17
4.2.2	Knitting as a therapeutic activity	18
4.2.3	Working with photos: abstraction, pixelation, solar exposure, picture transfer	18
5	Conclusions	19
	References	21

1 Introduction and background

Everyone has secrets, big or small. Some are deeply personal; some have an effect on larger groups of people. The process for this thesis work started from a discovery of a family secret from over 70 years ago, a secret which had its roots in poverty and shame, and which had changed the lives of many people in my family.

I set out to investigate the long shadows of secrets, mostly from a very personal point of view: how the discovery of the secret changed my perception of my family and my memories.

In the early 1950's my maternal grandparents decided to give their youngest daughter, Arja, up for adoption and to keep this a secret from everyone. Only my grandfather's brother appears to have known. They had four older children, one of whom had been adopted by my grandfather's sister, but this previous adoption was openly known by everyone in the family. My mother is the eldest.

The family was relatively poor. My grandfather was a factory worker, and my grandmother had tuberculosis and consequently was in and out of hospital. The older children were much of the time with various relatives or in institutional care. The decision to give up the baby for adoption can be easily understood, as can the secrecy at the time. My grandmother passed away before I was born but I did know my grandfather. I have many memories of spending time with him and felt I was close to him. I mourned him deeply when he passed away a week before my eleventh birthday, very suddenly from my point of view. He had cancer but I just had not been told.

At start of 2024 Arja's adult children, a son and a daughter, found us and got in touch. Arja had passed away without finding her birth family, although she had briefly tried years ago.

Emotions started at disbelief, turned from happiness of gaining new cousins to sadness for the lost time, and for never knowing my aunt. After that came anger. I was, for several weeks, actively steaming mad at my beloved grandpa, tears-in-my-eyes angry because he chose to not tell his adult children that they have one more sister somewhere.

After I calmed down a little bit, I wanted to understand all of this better. Why do families keep secrets and what effect do the secrets have on the family members. Personally, I

started to question everything I thought I knew about my family, including my own memories. What do I really know or remember? How much of my memories are things I've misremembered, misunderstood or completely made up in my head? How important is it to know what memory is "real" or "true" and what isn't? How much does it matter?

As I was trying to find the answers through old stories and photographs, I realised I needed to work through this via art. The familiar faces started to change, fade and re-emerge in my mind, and I wanted to ruminate on that visually.

2 Research questions

In this deeply personal project, I started to explore the following themes:

1. How do family secrets and their discovery change the stories and memories about that family?
2. How does exploring this particular family secret change my perception of myself, my family, and the people in it?
3. What methods, materials and techniques will help me express these thoughts in my artwork?

3 Family secrets in research and in art

The theme of family secrets is multidimensional and has been researched from different viewpoints at least in the fields of communication studies and sociology. Researchers have investigated why secrets are kept, when they are revealed and what happens when secrets are found out, as well as how all of this influences the family relations, and the individuals involved.

A researcher of family and relational communication Anita L. Vangelisti, (1994, pp. 116–117) states in her article that secrets serve at least four functions in the family context: they create and maintain intimacy, build and maintain group cohesiveness, protect family structure, or protect family members from social disapproval or rejection. In the case of my grandparents, it feels logical to assume they were aiming to protect both themselves and the rest of the family from potential disapproval and shame. Decades later, my

grandfather's decision to continue to keep the secret could be interpreted, at least partly, as a desire to not upset the family structure by introducing knowledge of a previously unknown sibling.

In another article A. Vangelisti et al., (2001, pp 22-23) found that out of possible motivation to share a family secret, one factor stood out: important reason to divulge the secret. Without a specific, important reason to share, many people would choose to keep the secret. In the cases, such as here where the secret was seen to be intimately connected with the person keeping it, and where the secret was also something which could cause negative feelings or backlash, a major factor was whether the person felt the secret would be met with acceptance. In my grandfather's case he perhaps felt there was no specific reason why he should share the secret, and he might have feared for a negative reaction and resentment from his children.

Sociologist Carol Smart (2011, pp 543-545) notes in her article that discovery of things such as adoption can result in "a rewriting of the family story". Smart also suggests that families are to large extent collections of memories, and when these memories turn out to be incomplete or false, it can have a big impact on a person's self or identity.

When secrets are found out from a third party, rather than from the person keeping the secret, communication researchers Kromka and Dillow (2024, p. 281) found that in that situation an individual may feel betrayed and question why the information was not received directly from the family member in question, and that in these cases relational strain can be particularly intense.

Both results describe quite well my own reaction. Finding out about this secret has made me question my own memories about my grandfather and my family, and I have felt betrayed by him indirectly because he chose not to disclose his secret to his family. The phrase "rewriting of the family story" feels very relevant to my artistic process, even if my tools are more visual than verbal.

The theme of secrets in the family has also been explored in visual arts. Naturally the meaning of a work of art is not necessarily explicitly disclosed to its audience, and each viewer interprets the visual through the lens of their own experiences. Below are some examples of artists whose work I felt to resonate with this theme, and the interpretations of the work mentioned are mine.



Figure 1. "The Family". Acrylic on paper on canvas. 213,4 x 213,4 cm. Paula Rego, 1988

Paula Rego (1935-2022) painted frequently domestic scenes with strange, unsettling undertones, suggesting untold secrets. An example of this is her painting "The Family" (1988). In the painting a male father/husband figure is either manhandled or helped by his wife and daughter, as another daughter watches on. There are other strange elements in the picture, such as a painting of St. George slaying a dragon in the background. The daughter by the window could be seen as standing guard, making sure that no outsider witnesses whatever it is that is going on in the painting.



Figure 2. *“Mama, Mummy and Mamma (Predecessors #2)”* Acrylic, transfers, colored pencil and charcoal on paper. 213,4 x 274,324 cm. Njideka Akunyili Crosby, 2014

Njideka Akunyili Crosby (b. 1983) combines painting and collage in her work, and as a result her art has a layered feeling of combining past and present and the different cultures of her childhood in Nigeria and current life in the USA. Her painting *“Mama, Mummy and Mamma (Predecessors #2)”* (2014) portrays a woman sitting at a table with various pots and pans, as well as several photos where one is a portrait of a woman, probably one of the predecessors. On the wall behind her there’s another portrait of a different woman, and another wall is plastered with photos and magazine cuttings with more people and faces. The woman at the table seems resigned or pensive, and the name of the artwork hints at tensions or weight of expectations coming from the family. The predecessors are looking at her, potentially disapproving or otherwise wishing to control her life. On the other hand, the woman in the painting is looking away from the predecessors, possibly wanting to escape the weight of their expectations.

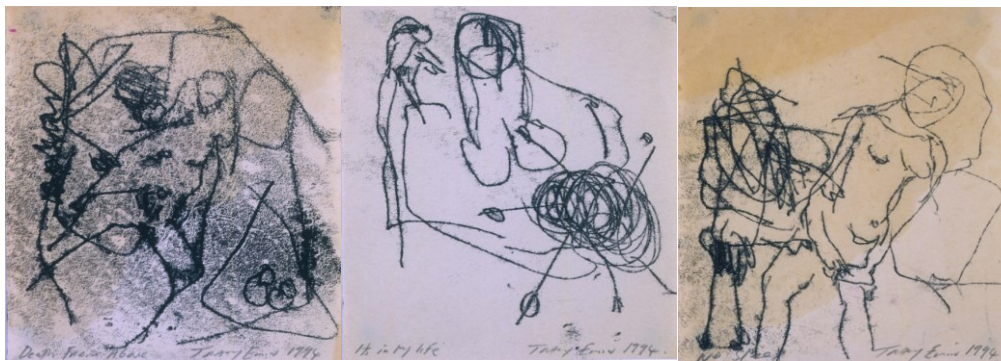


Figure 3. Three examples from the series "Family Suite", from left to right "Death from Above", "Its in my life" and "No sleep". Monoprints on paper, each 11,60 x 10,60 cm. 213,4 x 274,324 cm. Tracey Emin, 1994

Tracey Emin (b. 1963) uses autobiographical subjects, including family, in her work. Her series "Family Suite" comprises of 20 monoprints originating from her childhood memories. She works in multiple media including prints, painting, drawing, installation and embroidery. Her work seems to acknowledge the uncertainty of memories and the complexity of family relationships. The monoprints are haunting, at the same time there's something childlike but also something very grown-up, perhaps hinting that she experienced or saw things as a child she's only understood later.

In my own artistic process, as I was working through the photos, physical artifacts and various memories, the feelings emerging were a mix of positive and negative emotions. The original anger gave way to more nuanced feelings of sadness, of bittersweet happiness from pleasant memories and from finding new cousins, and on the other hand grief, missing my grandparents and other deceased loved ones, and finally some empathy, trying to understand what my grandparents were going through as young parents when times were very different. In the artistic process when contemplating what approach, mood and techniques would work for expressing these feelings, I stumbled upon the article by the philosophers Brady and Haapala, (2003, p. 8) and found that to be quite helpful:

"With melancholy, the displeasurable or negative aspects lie in feelings of loneliness, emptiness, sadness from loss, and the fear or dread that sometimes accompanies longing. The pleasurable aspect comes primarily through reflection, when we dwell on happy memories..." The article describes melancholy as being between the positive and negative, a complex feeling which is often linked to reflection and self-awareness as well as to awareness of loss and the passage of time. Images which are described as

melancholy are typically also thought beautiful. In melancholy time allows us to find beauty in the inevitable sadness of life. This concept of melancholy supported my process, especially in seeing that sorrow and anger do not rule out beauty.

4 Methods, materials and techniques

4.1 The artistic process

My artistic process centered in the beginning around the previously stated research questions, and especially the first two:

1. How do family secrets and their discovery change the stories and memories about that family?
2. How does exploring this particular family secret, change my perception of myself, my family, and the people in it?

Much of my memories are linked to old family photos, so I used them as a physical starting point. This eventually focused most on my maternal grandparents and especially my grandfather, whom I both remember and had a relationship with before he passed away when I was ten years old, and who was the main secret-keeper in the family. I started to explore ways to rework these pictures to reflect both the multitude of feelings this process had brought up, and the ways my memories had evolved. Creating new versions of old and familiar photos by the various methods discussed in this chapter helped me to work through and analyse some of the personal feelings and thoughts I had, from anger and resentment to melancholy and acceptance.

Working on and modifying of images, especially my grandfather's face, also made me reflect on my own identity. If he's not who I thought he was, how does that impact who I am?

The theme of protecting family and self from shame through secrecy and keeping up appearances influenced some of my visual and material choices described later.



Figure 4. Photos A, B, C, D, E from the family albums of the author

I went through many old photos and chose a few which felt the most meaningful for this project: my grandparents' wedding photo (Photo A), two photos of my grandfather with his brother, both as children (Photo B) and as older men (C), and two headshots (D and E) of my grandfather.

My grandparents' wedding photo (A) symbolises to me the start of their young family, when future was still clear. My grandmother was already expecting my mother and looks radiant.

My grandfather and his brother were close in age and clearly each other's confidantes, my great uncle was also aware of the secret adoption at least by the time my grandmother passed away, possibly even earlier. According to family lore, photo B portrays the two brothers as young street musicians begging for money from wealthy people, although naturally we can't be sure whether that is true. Photo C has the brothers sitting together probably in some kind of family gathering, possibly a birthday.

The two headshots (D and E) of my grandfather as a young, handsome man show him at the age when he was a young man, a new husband, a young father who had to make the difficult decisions of giving up two of his five children to adoption. The pictures of my young grandfather have been visible in my parents' home and in my own home for so long, that by now they are more familiar to me than the face of my grandfather as an older man when I knew him.

I decided to play and to experiment with these photos with an open mind and see what meaningful would come up. I was not aiming for any particular outcome, but rather wanted

to see if I could create something which would feel relevant for me, for the changing family story, of for the many feelings or thoughts surrounding this theme in my head.

4.1.1 Initial experiments

I created different versions of the photos in a picture editing programme, experimenting with abstraction and removing details, pixelation, posterization, adding and removing colour.



Figure 5. Experiment: Quick paintings of photos D and E

I painted simple, mostly black and white versions of the two portraits of my grandfather, purposefully leaving out much of the detail, to see where that would lead. They felt like a step to the right direction to continue the exploration with. I could still recognise the familiar pictures, but I was interpreting them in my own way.

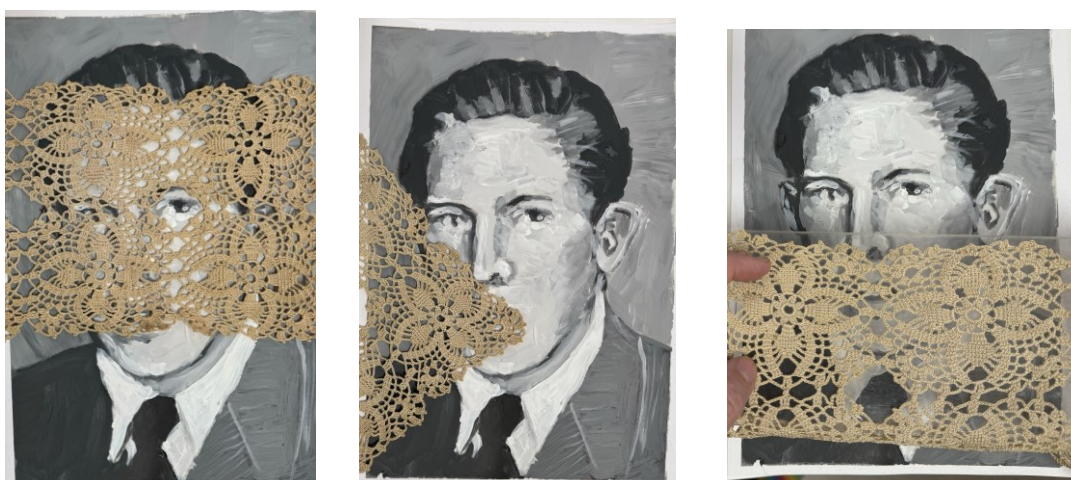


Figure 6. Experiments with lace and painting of photo D.

As part of my exploration, I sourced various thrifted materials which reminded me of my grandparents and of their generation in general. One of these is crocheted lace doilies which seemed to be present in all the homes of the elderly people when I was a child.

The lace, for me, works as a visual metaphor for keeping up appearances and for keeping secrets. Figure 6 above presents some of my photo notes of trying out ideas on how to use the doilies.



Figure 7. Experiment: Solar print of photo A.

I created negatives from the photos and experimented with solar printing, starting with paper as the substrate. Figure 7 shows the only successful early attempt with that.

The solar printing pictures show the brushstrokes of the printing liquid, which, with the slightly soft-focus quality of the print, evokes a feeling of melancholy which feels right for the purpose. The beauty of the original image is still there, but softer, like a fading memory we are already aware of losing.

Solar printing on paper is a very subtle change from the original photo, so to create some more layers of meaning the next step is to try the same technique on old linens as well as on some wooden objects. Amount of sun in the Finnish winter has made experimenting challenging, so more experiments with solar prints will be made as the spring progresses.



Figure 8. Experiment: Picture transfer of photo 2 on old mandolin

My grandfather played mandolin also later in life. I wanted to include that somehow to this process and after asking around managed to find broken, painted, unplayable old mandolin. I removed some of the paint and used image transferring liquid with a laser printed version of the photo B. The result is presented above in figure 8. As with the solar print, I liked the ghost-like quality of the image. In the process of questioning my family's memories I have also appreciated the things I do know and remember. One of those things was my grandfather's ability to play a tune with almost any instrument he got in his hands, from mouth organ to balalaika, and linking to his musicality in this way felt right.

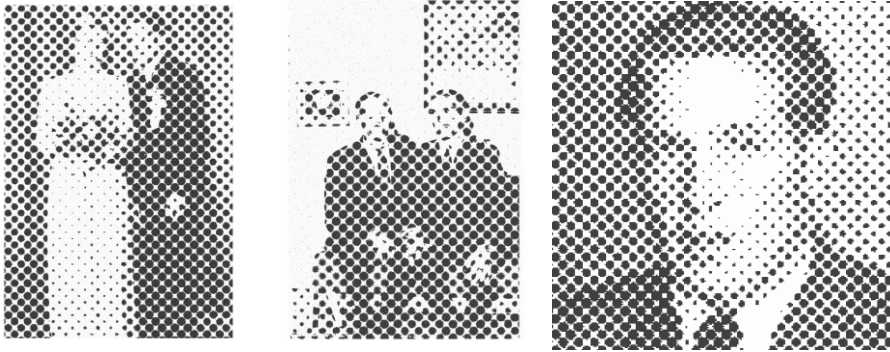


Figure 9. Pixelated versions of photos A, C and D

In my quest to find visual expression for the idea of memories eroding, distorting and being reformed, I found simplifying photos through pixelation to be meaningful. Pixelation removes detail and forces our mind to fill in the gaps, to imagine things which in reality aren't there. Pixelated photos no longer have meaning when looked at from a close range, and the picture is only revealed through distance.



Figure 10. Knitted wall hanging based on Photo D

The pixelation also reminded me of knitting patterns, so I decided to explore creating a picture by knitting. Using Photoshop and the Stitch Fiddle (<https://www.stitchfiddle.com>) I created from photo D a square black and white knit pattern, (224 stitches by 300 rows) with the intention of knitting a wall hanging out of wool. The finished work will be roughly 120 x 120 cm and will be backed up with fabric to allow for hanging without stretching it. The knitting work is still ongoing at the time of submitting the thesis and can be seen in Figure 10.



Figure 11. Experiment of photo D, acrylic paint on lace doily

Lace doilies felt increasingly relevant material to this project. I envisaged a portrait painted directly on the doilies, but after the experiment shown in Figure 11, I decided that this was not giving me the effect I wanted. I was envisioning painting on multiple layers of doilies, having the bottom layers visible through the top layers, and that would have been too time consuming for this project. This idea will go to the list of things to be experimented with in the future projects.



Figure 12. Broken glass of the photo A artwork.

For the next experiment I chose recycled 92 cm x 72 cm picture frames, attached doilies to the mounting board and painted the mirrored, pixelated version of photo A on the inside of the glaze glass. Figure 12 above shows the lesson learned along the way – lifting the glass from too close of the edge is not advisable. I contemplated using some of the shards glued on top of the lace but wasn't convinced I could do it in a manner which would be both visually pleasing and strong enough to avoid further accidents by falling pieces of glass. I had several similar frames and glasses available, so I considered the option of replacing the glass and redoing the painting.



Figure 13. *“The wedding portrait”*. Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025

Instead, I decided to use the broken glass. I filed down the sharp edge of the glass and experimented with some additional lace. Figure 13 shows the final version of the artwork. The three-dimensional effect of the lace coming out of the picture feels like memory becoming tangible, as if this was the actual hem of the wedding dress. The accident added a new interesting layer to the artwork.



Figure 14. *"The secret keepers"*. Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025

I worked simultaneously with several frames using the same approach, and Figures 14 and 15 present two more works in the same series.



Figure 15. *"Jaakko Armas"*. Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025

4.2 The symbolic and visual meaning of materials and techniques

Working through the different experiments and materials produced more understanding towards my third research questions:

3. What methods, materials and techniques will help me express these thoughts in my artwork?

The goal in selecting materials and techniques for this project was to expand my horizons beyond what I normally work with, and to see how the natural properties and limitations of the materials support and enhance my vision.

4.2.1 Lace doilies, knitting and fabrics

In my memories of my childhood, the women in my grandparents' generation were always working on something with their hands. If they weren't cooking or baking or gardening, they were knitting or crocheting something. My paternal grandmother enjoyed crocheting small table coverings, doilies and other mostly decorative things.

Practically doilies have been used as a means of covering furniture from wear and tear, but as design historian Gordon (1996, pp. 298-299) discusses, domestic decorative objects like doilies were strongly linked to societal expectations of propriety and domestic management. Thus, for me, the lace doilies are a perfect symbol of "keeping up appearances".

Using thrifted, hand-made doilies also adds meaning through the people who have made them. There's memories and intention behind each hand-crafted piece, even if we don't know what exactly they are, who made them or where they were intended to go. I also enjoyed using unfinished pieces as I personally am not a very handicraft-oriented person, and I have started many handicrafts with best of intentions and never finished them. Those pieces are now part of something meaningful, and I feel grateful for all the makers involved whether they finished their work or not.

4.2.2 Knitting as a therapeutic activity

Another traditional craft strongly linked to my grandparents', and parents', generations in Finland, is knitting. As a craft it's more practical than making lace doilies, but still strongly linked to the societal expectations of what is proper and expected.

Knitting a picture of my grandfather as a process has felt therapeutic. As I have worked through it line by line, it has both allowed and forced me to think about my grandparents, their circumstances and choices, and gradually helped me to shift my thinking from anger to understanding.

This aligns well with findings by Kraatari (2017, p.199) in her cultural policy PhD thesis, that handicrafts and cottage industries, such as knitting, served as a tool for both remembering and forgetting in post-war Finland. Crafts were therefore not only practical means for managing the lack of resources, but also a way of processing loss and trauma.

4.2.3 Working with photos: abstraction, pixelation, solar exposure, picture transfer

Memories change and fade, and it may not be easy to know what is real and remembered, and what is imagined and reconstructed from stories – or from photographs. Art historian Geoffrey Batchen (2004) explores in his book *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance* the relationship of photos and memories and even asks whether photographs are replacing memory and memories. Now, over 20 years later, that question is even more pertinent as we all carry a camera with us all day and sometimes it feels we concentrate more on taking pictures than on making memories by experiencing the moment.

Working with photos, changing them through abstraction and pixelation represented to me my shifting memories. By redesigning the photos, I am rebuilding my relationship with my family history and memories as well as working through and reclaiming my identity as a descendant of these multi-faceted people.

Abstracting the photos through pixelation removes detail. Observed from a close range the pictures lose meaning, and only black and white dots can be seen. Only from a distance can the picture be seen and understood, and the shades of grey imagined. Our mind rebuilds

memories and fills in the gaps in a similar manner as our brain works with incomplete images.

Solar exposures are an old method and reflect passing of time. They produce a soft image where the sharpest details are lost, resulting in a melancholy feel in the picture. Brushing the liquid onto paper or linen leaves brush marks and adds to the ghostlike feeling of the image, and using various substrates with the solar printing adds further layers of meaning.

Picture transfer allows reproducing photos on various untraditional materials and objects, as the example of the mandolin showed. This is likely to support my future work with installations, to bring in new layers of meaning.

5 Conclusions

The artistic processes described in this thesis reflect my normal work processes when working around a specific theme. In my previous career I have worked with innovation and ideation processes, where it is normal and expected to first create a large number of ideas and concepts, most of which are expected to fail, and then narrow down to a smaller group of things and to deepen the work with them. This approach has influenced my work as an artist.

I experiment with different approaches and materials and learn as I go. Typically, many of the experiments will not result in an artwork which would be included in the exhibition of the current project, but they may contribute towards another work later.

I started the work with around 20 photos but after initial experimentations decided to narrow down to the selected five. Out of those five, three stand out as the inspiration for the majority of the artwork presented here. This means many meaningful pictures were left out, including pictures of the generations after my grandparents. I believe I will continue exploring my family, its stories and memories through them at a later stage.

I intended originally to work mainly through painting, installations and solar printing, and the idea of knitting took me by surprise. It immediately felt very meaningful on multiple levels as discussed before, even though I have never considered myself as a knitter. As a method it is time consuming and slow, but nevertheless I intend to continue exploring its possibilities as a part of my practice.

When I continue working with solar prints, I intend to experiment in future projects with combining prints on linen with other fabric arts such as hand sewing and embroidery.

The concept of pixelation and using pixelated photos as a starting point for art was not something I had planned from the start, but that seemed to come closest to my original thought of exploring memories and how they change. Pixelated pictures are only meaningful from afar, and they allow, and force, our brains to fill in the gaps. They do not show us the full, detailed picture, but perhaps they show enough.

My personal journey through my memories and family history is not finished, but this part of the journey has helped me find acceptance and compassion towards my ancestors and their choices. It has also brought me new knowledge of materials and new ideas on how to work with them. I look forward to traveling some more with both my ancestors and with these materials in future projects.

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List of figures:

Figure 1.	“The Family”. Acrylic on paper on canvas. 213,4 x 213,4 cm. Paula Rego 1988	4
Figure 2.	“Mama, Mummy and Mamma (Predecessors #2)” Acrylic, transfers, colored pencil and charcoal on paper. 213,4 x 274,324 cm. Njideka Akunyili Crosby, 2014	5
Figure 3.	Three examples from the series “Family Suite”, from left to right “Death from Above”, “Its in my life” and “No sleep”. Monoprints on paper, each 11,60 x 10,60 cm. 213,4 x 274,324 cm. Tracey Emin, 1994	6
Figure 4.	Photos A, B, C, D, E from the family albums of the author.....	8
Figure 5.	Experiment: Quick paintings of photos D and E	9
Figure 6.	Experiments with lace and painting of photo D.	9
Figure 7.	Experiment: Solar print of photo A.....	10
Figure 8.	Experiment: Picture transfer of photo 2 on old mandolin	11
Figure 9.	Pixelated versions of photos A, C and D	12
Figure 10.	Knitted wall hanging based on Photo D.....	12
Figure 11.	Experiment of photo D, acrylic paint on lace doily	13
Figure 12.	Broken glass of the photo A artwork.	14

- Figure 13. "The wedding portrait". Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025 15
- Figure 14. "The secret keepers". Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025 16
- Figure 15. "Jaakko Armas". Acrylic, recycled materials. 92 x 72 cm. Kristiina Lähde, 2025 16