

# Legacy: Alzheimer's Stories

by CARA LEE WADE

March 24–June 30, 2017

**A**lzheimer's disease is a progressive disease that destroys memory and other important mental functions. These changes are severe enough to interfere with day-to-day life. In Alzheimer's disease, the brain cells themselves degenerate and die, causing a steady decline in memory and mental function.

My Grandmothers (Gram and Granny) were both diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 1999 within months of one another. They lost the ultimate battle in 2004, again within months of one another. As a result, I have become obsessed with absorbing my Grandmothers' and consequently my own past. As they struggled to retain their identity and their memories, I am now determined to gather them and add them to my own. The result is this imagery.

I have collected items and locations belonging to and inspired by my Grandmothers as well as my own physical and mental inheritance. Using these everyday things along with my memories and those given to me by members of my family as well as a vast collection of family photographs, I have built narratives within the frame. Through the years and through the course of creating, some of the narratives stray, and thusly this has become a reflection of myself to a much greater extent than I could have imagined and I have realized just how deeply rooted in my past I am.

On a conscious level, I still find myself tormented with anger and helplessness, sadness and fear. On



another level however this has become a healing venture.

Although I am still often overcome, I am beginning to find peace.

All of the images in this ongoing series were made from August 1999 until the present. Images were captured with a 1947 4x5 Graflex Press camera and archivally printed in editions of 25.

*Cara Lee Wade*

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Using traditional black and white techniques, as well as alternative and digital methods, I attempt to tangibly express the circumstances that both plague and stimulate me. Whether documenting lives on the fringes, assuming the role of the subject, or an anonymous example of a demented cultural ideal, I try to present the sources of my joy and my pain, hoping to invoke in the viewer an emotional response.

Born in Oklahoma, my military father took my family to places all over the country which initiated my interest in diverse subjects. During my academic career, I studied many things, everything from Musical Theatre to Archaeology...ultimately receiving my Bachelor of Art degree in English Literature. My first photo class in 1998 was an elective during my senior year of undergrad...a fluke. From that first experience in the darkroom, I knew my world was changed. I received my Master of Fine Art degree in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2004, and began teaching shortly thereafter.

I believe that all Art derives from aspects of the self, be that personal experience, reactions of

the heart, or the dark and light places in the mind. Everything that an artist creates can be traced back to a profound experience in their life. This is where true inspiration lies.



As an artist, I continue to exhibit regionally, nationally and internationally, most recently in solo shows: *Insidious Charms* at Crestwoods Gallery in Roanoke, Ind., and at Garrett Museum of Art in Garrett, Ind., as well as group shows at the New Orleans Photo Alliance in New Orleans,

La., PhotoPlace Gallery in Middlebury, Vt. and the Griffin Museum of Photography in Winchester, Mass. I am currently Associate Professor of Photography and Digital Imaging at University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Ind.

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Manchester University Gallery 101 is located at the Fort Wayne Campus.

Gallery hours are M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m., when classes are in session. Free Admission.

For gallery information, contact Ejenobo Oke, Director of Galleries, at [roke@manchester.edu](mailto:roke@manchester.edu) or 260-982-5334.