

# 21 years, 2 months and 24 days

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## **Abstract**

My great, great grandfather, Charles Benson died alone in a hospital ward in 1937. All that physically remains from his 79-year life is his hospital file, tied together with a white ribbon bow and wrapped in butchers paper. Headlined on the front cover is the word 'Insanity'. By contextualising the few known traces of my great, great grandfather within an historic framework and understanding of the times, I have sought to become my great, great grandfather's proxy. In doing so, *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* will explore what can be reasonably imagined as the lived experience of my stigmatised and subsequently abandoned, ancestor.

The writings and studies of scholars Howard Becker, Erving Goffman, Kai Erikson and David Rosenhan are investigated, allowing myself to make an educated guess on how labelling and social deviancy affected people's responses to Charles and consequently, his life. Visual phenomenology – meaning making and life history narrative theory is explored through the works of Joel Sternfeld, Mishka Henner, Dinu Li and Richard Misrach. In doing so, *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* discovers how the memories, stories and events of the past, interact with present day realities to visually represent a lived experience. In doing so, providing a link between the institution of the early 1900s in Queensland then and now. Ultimately, the work aims to give my great, great grandfather a defending voice.

### **Statement of Originality**

This is to certify that this paper has not been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, this research paper contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made within the research paper itself.

Matthew Long  
25 October 2013

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## **Introduction**

In 1865, the Queensland Government founded The Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum as the first publicly funded institution, to provide care and treatment to the mentally ill and intellectually disabled in Queensland (Finnane 2008, 1). No longer were Queensland's insane sent to Sydney, as Queensland now had its first, State owned asylum. Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum would continue to operate for over a century. From its earliest days, the asylum was filled with the growing number of immigrant settlers who would come to call the new colony of Queensland their home (Finnane 2008, 1). One of the early immigrants institutionalised at the asylum was my great, great grandfather, Charles Benson.

Through photo-documentary practice, *24 years, 2 months and 24 days* seeks to privilege the imagined voice of Charles Benson. By presenting the most likely experiences of his life, the project's objective is to investigate the life history of my working class ancestor. In particular the project seeks to interrogate the process that led to my great, great grandfather's abandonment for 21 years, 2 months and 24 days in institutionalised state care. The research question underpinning this project is:

Using the agency of photographic documentary practice, what can be reasonably imagined as the lived experience of Charles Benson, from his accident in Mount Morgan, to his death at Brisbane's Goodna Hospital for the Insane.

This research paper will commence by introducing my great, great grandfather, Charles Benson and contextualise the themes and issues related to his residency at the Goodna Hospital for the Insane. The paper will then discuss labelling theory and investigate the possible stigma attached to Charles as a consequence of being viewed as 'mentally ill'. This is followed by an exploration of my studio methodology, a blend of both visual phenomenology – meaning making and life history narrative theory – as a way to interpret and produce my great, great grandfather's projected lived experience. Finally I will discuss my process in producing the work, particularly, how the analysis of my data collection, along with the selected visual practitioners and scholars, allowed for the project's visual conclusions.

## **Chapter One: The Life Turning**

### **Background**

Growing up as a child in the Central Queensland town of Rockhampton, I knew of my family ties in the small historical mining town of Mount Morgan, 30 kilometres south west of Rockhampton. However, it was an ancestral history I had not concerned myself to explore. In 2013, upon hearing of the environmental impacts on the town caused by the now abandoned mine site, I began to investigate the consequences of the mine's legacy. However, upon discovering a family journal written by my grandfather in 1994 (figure 1) the research took a different direction. In this journal, I read of the experiences of daily life for my working class ancestors and of the town's labourers, during both its rise and fall as a prominent gold and copper mining town.

### **Charles Benson**

Of particular interest in my grandfather's journal, was the story of my great, great grandfather, Charles Benson. An immigrant from Sweden, Charles suffered a fall in 1912 from a railway bridge while walking home along the tracks after a shift at the mine. Because of the resulting head trauma, a warrant was issued for his admission to the Goodna Hospital for the Insane in 1916. This is where he was to live the remaining 21 years, 2 months and 24 days of his life. Unfortunately, my grandfather writes no further information about his grandfather after Charles's admission to the hospital and his story was at risk of being lost through the legacy of time and the consequences of stigma.

The story of Charles Benson will never be known. The meanings he attributed to institutional life died with Charles in 1937. The facts that remain are retained in the narrative of others. However, by following a traditional historic line of archival searches, descendant interviews, site visits and with the privilege that comes from being a descendant of Charles, I have sought to extrapolate these findings and project a lived experience onto Charles Benson.

### **Goodna Hospital for the Insane**

The Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum was the earliest public institution to provide care and treatment to the mentally ill and intellectually disabled in Queensland (Wolston 2013, 4). Founded in 1865, the institution would grow to be the largest, single mental health facility in

Australia by 1950. With a daily average residency of 2500 patients and a staff of 800, the total number of patients admitted into the hospital over its 120-year history exceeded 50,000 (Finnane 2010, 2).

During the hospital’s history, the institution was constantly renamed, reflecting the changing practices in the treatment of mental illness, seen in table 1 (Finnane 2008, 43). However, the conditions that gave birth to the original asylum continued throughout the many incarnations of the hospital. Conditions driven by fear of the deviant as being an aggressive or dangerous person who had not yet committed a crime, but whose imprisonment was justified by their threat to society (Finnane 2008, 56). Charles Benson was one of those people.

<b>Years</b>	<b>Hospital Name</b>	<b>Phase</b>
1865-1909	Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum	Asylum: Institutional separation, segregation and isolation, founded on confinement and separation of the insane.
1909-1937	Goodna Hospital for the Insane	Moral Treatment/Therapy: The hospital as a self-contained way of life.
1938-1962	Brisbane Special Hospital	Mental Hygiene: Drug and medical therapies.
1963-2001	Wolston Park Hospital	Psychiatric services: The hospital as an element in an integrated and reintegrating service. Trend towards deinstitutionalisation and community based services.
2002-	The Park Centre for Mental Health Treatment, Research and Education	Decentralised care services, reflecting on rehabilitation and recovery, through inpatient care, mental health research and education.

**Table 1.** The changing names and practices in the treatment of mental illness at Queensland’s largest mental health institution.

### **Charles Benson in the time of Moral Management**

For all of Charles Benson’s 21 years at the Goodna Hospital for the Insane, the hospital was under the management and supervision of an English trained psychiatrist, Medical Superintendent, Dr Henry Byam Ellerton (figure 2). From 1909 to 1937, Ellerton undertook the phase of moral management at the hospital. Ellerton sought to transform the hospital from a convenient dumping ground for the ‘decrepit and people incapable of cure’, to an institution that looked upon insanity as a product of an immoral or defective social environment (Evans 2003, 99). Accordingly, Ellerton believed patients would be improved in an appropriate and elevating environment (Wolston 2013, 9). However, hospital conditions deteriorated, resulting in a Royal Commission of Enquiry into the parlous state of the hospital, one year before Charles Benson’s admission in 1916 (Evans 2003, 99).

Under Ellerton's authority of moral treatment and the provision of a 'pleasant environment', the grounds became gardens as the site was opened to visits from patients' friends and relatives (figure 3). Further, mealtimes became opportunities for social improvement, as table seating for four replaced benches and mass tables (figure 4). Paintings and photogravures hung from the walls and potted plants were placed on sideboards (figure 5) (Finnane 2008, 44). Music would play through the wards as an improver of spirits and mentality and the role of employment and recreation became customary for the treatment of patients (Finnane 2008, 44). As a result of the *Royal Commission on the Management of Goodna Hospital for the Insane* (1915), cosmetic changes were introduced to building design (Evans 2003, 108). Importance was placed on having well-lit and ventilated wards (figure 6) with adequate bathing facilities (figure 7) and reasonably sized rooms with sufficient openings to views of the outside landscape (Wolston 2013, 9). Ellerton became preoccupied with the architecture of new wards and the outside beautification of the asylum grounds and playing fields (figure 8-9) (Evans 2003, 99). Yet despite the hospital's new benign, pleasant landscaped exterior, its interior belied a place where patients were strictly controlled and managed (Wolston 2013, 11). For decades to come an emphasis would continue to be placed on confinement and isolation in a self-sufficient community, rather than treatment or care (Wolston 2013, 11).

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

My grandfather writes in his journal that after the fall, Charles began to suffer bouts of amnesia and during these lapses, he would become confused and frustrated. From the subsequent notes made in his hospital files, it may have been that during these periods, Charles Benson regressed into a time from his childhood in Sweden. My grandfather states in his journal, that Charles Benson's wife, Alice Ester Benson, (Granny Benson) had no trouble looking after him during his episodes of hallucinations and delusions. However, other members of the community and particularly his father in law, Richard Glover (figure 10) were worried he may become physically abusive and bring harm to Granny Benson or himself. As such, complaints were made to the local police concerning his unusual behaviour. A warrant was eventually called for under a magistrate's order for his admission into Rockhampton Reception House (figure 11) (a temporary lock up for the 'disturbed' in the Rockhampton area for mental assessment) before being moved to Goodna Hospital for the Insane. This event marked the start of Charles Benson's labelling as 'mentally deranged' (Goodna Hospital for the Insane 1916, 1). Furthermore, it became the label that would, in many respects, determine society's response to my great, great grandfather and the life he was to live for the next 21 years, 2 months and 24 days.

### **Labelling Theory and Social Deviance**

From his seminal writings on the sociology of deviance, Howard S. Becker argued that a person moves from a normal role in society into the role of a deviant when others perceive and define them as such. Becker (1963, 9) states that:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of the rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label.

Thus, as Charles Benson's frustration, confusion and perceived threatening behaviour was interpreted by his local community as interfering with his functioning within society, the social process of his labelling began. Kai Erikson, also a sociologist in the field of deviance, argued that there are 3 phases of the labelling process: confrontation by local audience empowered

by numbers or authority, judgment by those in positions of state power and/or medical authority and placement, usually within a state supported institution that reflected social values and medical advancements of that time (Cullen 1974, 125). In tracing the lineage of these events with my great, great grandfather, confrontation took place between Charles Benson, his family and the representatives of Mount Morgan community and local police. From here, judgement of his deviancy was determined by a magistrate and assessment of his mental state took place at the medical facilities at Rockhampton Reception House, upon which Charles was noted as “suffering counts of insanity - mental derangement” (Goodna Hospital for the Insane 1916, 1). With the label being applied, Charles was then confined as a patient of the state’s mental hospital in Brisbane. Combined, these processes brought along with them a number of consequences of such a placement, particularly stigmatisation of him and his family (Cullen 1974, 123).

Erving Goffman in his book *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (1963, 14-16), described stigma as a:

Special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype... [an] attribute that is deeply discrediting... that reduces the bearer... from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one... We believe that a person with a stigma is not quite human... We tend to impute a wide range of imperfections on the basis of the original one... We may perceive his defensive response to his situation as a direct expression of his defect.

Therefore, through the label of ‘mentally deranged’, the stereotyped or stigmatised behaviour implied with a mentally ill person, would override Charles Benson’s previous identity as a parent, worker, neighbour or friend (Haralambos 2008, 335). It appears that this label now determined my great, great grandfather’s social position. Despite Ellerton’s efforts to alleviate the stigma attached to the mental illness (Wolston 2013, 11), notions associated with mental health hospitals as custodial dumps for the weak, worthless and genetically defective, continued to outweigh any concern for the therapeutic plight of the mentally afflicted (Evans 2003, 102). It is reasonable to assume that during that period of the early twentieth century, Charles too was socially and personally isolated. My great, great grandfather, set apart in a distinct category to separate ‘him’ from ‘us’ and as stated by Rogers (2010, 29) in *A Sociology of Mental Health and Illness*, experienced depersonalisation, rejection, abandonment, isolation and disempowerment. Stephen Moore in *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives* (Moore 2008, 315) states that according to Goffman:

Once someone is labelled as mentally ill, others then treat the person differently, reinterpreting what the 'mentally ill' person says or does... meaning that whatever actions the person undertakes will be evaluated with the knowledge that the person is mentally ill and therefore, what they say or do cannot be taken at face value... The views of the mentally ill person... are not counted as equal to the views of a 'normal person'.

A study in 1973 by David L. Rosenhan, provides support for the academic arguments of Becker and Goffman in arguing that once the label of mental illness has been applied, it is not only difficult to remove, but that the behaviour of the labelled is viewed only through that label. In Rosenhan's study, researchers presented themselves voluntarily at US mental hospitals, posing as sufferers of feigned symptoms of psychiatric abnormality (Rosenhan 1975, 54). The only lie the volunteers were to tell, was that they were hearing an unfamiliar voice from the same sex as the researcher that said the words, "empty," "hollow" and "thud" (Rosenhan 1975, 56). Upon admission to the hospital, the pseudopatients immediately dropped all pretence and acted as they normally would. This included note taking in open public areas about their observations of the wards, the patients and staff. No suspicion was raised from the staff. When Rosenhan examined the medical documents after the researchers were discharged, it was noted "patient engages in writing behaviour" was common (Rosenhan 1975, 61). Rosenhan believed that the staff saw this behaviour as evidence of their condition and their presumed condition as reason for the behaviour.

Through Rosenhan's study, it is reasonable to assume that if nurses were not familiar with Charles's traits, such as his broken Swedish accent, this may have been seen as behavioural. On February 14 1931, the ward nurse in attendance to Charles Benson wrote in his file:

Hallucinations of sight and hearing delusions of persecution. Talks to imaginary people. Goes about wringing a cloth. Disruptive and mischievous. The ward worker has an impediment in his speech. Physically good (Goodna Hospital for the Insane 1916, 2).

It is worth noting, that at the time of the abovementioned report, Charles had been incarcerated for 15 years. Talking to imaginary people would be a behaviour adopted by any sane person in response to this trauma. Once in the hospital, any of Charles Benson's behaviours – whether or not they could have been considered reasonable for the circumstances, may have been used as a justification for labelling him as mentally ill. (Moore 2008, 315).

In regards to *21 years, 2 months and 24 days*, I cannot know for certain Charles's life, nor why or how people responded to him. What I can do is make an educated guess based on the writings and studies of scholars such as Becker, Goffman and Rosenhan. Today we are more aware of the values, understandings and historic conditions that prevailed during those times. Therefore, it is reasonable to project a scenario onto Charles's life of the recurring theme of assumed isolation and abandonment. In attempting to capture the imagined isolation, I was influenced by Mishka Henner and his work, *Astronomical* (2011) (figure 12-15).

Henner's *Astronomical* is a scale model of our whole solar system across 12 volumes, with the width of each page representing 1 million kilometres (Austen 2012). Page 1 of volume 1 begins with a 2 page spread of the sun. It is followed by nothing but blank, black pages until a tiny speck appears that is Mercury on page 63. Planet Earth appears on page 155. Like Mercury, Earth is dwarfed by the expanse of darkness surrounding it. The blank pages continue, only interspersed with the remaining planets when appropriate. The work eventually ends with Pluto, 6 billion kilometres later on page 6,000 of volume 12 (Austen 2012). With this work, Henner has been able to not only demonstrate, but allow the audience to experience with the physical turning of thousands of pages of uninterrupted black, how lonely, isolated, vast and surrounded by nothingness we are (Austen 2012). In getting to know my great, great grandfather, I have been consumed with the aching aloneness he must have felt. Like Henner, Charles's solar system revolved around the infrequent visits of doctors, nurses and family members. With the further confinement to Ward 10, Charles Benson's time can only be imagined to have been consumed by a black void. In an attempt to give the audience an experience of the immediate, personal, and intellectual isolation that Charles Benson may have experienced during his 21 years in Ward 10 at Goodna Hospital for the Insane (Rogers 2010, 194), I too have sought to represent the vastness of time (figure 16-17).

## Chapter Three: Research Methodology

### Visual Phenomenology – Meaning Making

Phenomenologists hope to understand the meaning individuals give to phenomena, emphasising the way that humans classify and make sense of the everyday social contexts (Haralambos 2008, 15). *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* seeks to portray the assumed trauma of my great, great grandfather and capture his most likely lived experience.

By gathering information from the Queensland State Archives, my grandfather's family history journal and interviews with my great aunt in Mount Morgan, I have developed a historic understanding of that period. Additionally, by holding the belief that each of us has subscribed to social scripts that allow us to share responses to familiar phenomena, I have in many ways, become my great, great grandfather's proxy, assuming the lived experience of Charles Benson and projected my meanings onto his life. I am aware that this can be no more than supposition and therefore, to some degree merge with fictional storytelling. Nonetheless, I cannot help but feel that my great, great grandfather would have shared many of the meanings I have established if I had gone through the experience.

The project attempts to make sense of and interpret the phenomena that Charles Benson may have brought to his experience. Admittedly however, it remains within the imagined realm. By blending my response with common sense, an historical sensibility, an anthropological eye and critical thought, I have been able, as argued by sociologist Charles Mills (1959, 6) to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society. As such, I can understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for my great, great grandfather. This then is the foundation premise to *21 years, 2 months and 24 days*. In reading the work of Joel Sternfeld, I have been given a glimpse into how the affective dimensions of meaning making can be captured within visual practice.

Joel Sternfeld's, *On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam* (1996) comprises 50 photographs of infamous crime sites around the United States (figure 18-21). Unsettlingly normal and ordinary, yet they are sites left behind after a tragedy has occurred and hidden stories left invisible (Levitt 2001). Sternfeld (1996) discusses the background to creating *On This Site*, claiming:

I went to Central Park to find the place behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art where Jennifer Levin had been killed. It was bewildering to find a scene so beautiful... to see the same sunlight pour down indifferently on the earth... It occurred to me that I held something within, a list of places that I cannot forget because of the tragedies that identify them... I set out to photograph sites that were marked during my lifetime. Yet, there was something else that drew me to this work. I think of it as the question of knowability. Experience has taught me... that you can never know what lies beneath a surface or behind a façade. Our sense of place, our understanding of photographs of the landscape is inevitably limited and fraught with misreading.

Like Sternfeld, after visiting the sites of my great, great grandfather, I found it difficult to see the landscape as I had seen it before. The sites had now taken on new meaning, through my connection to Charles Benson and his connection to the site. Without the accompanying contextualizing text in *On this Site*, the images could be misread as being tranquil images of the urban, suburban and rural landscapes. Furthermore, since there are no visible traces of the horrors that have marked the sites, nor are there official sanctioned memorials, the viewer is initially confronted by an aesthetically pleasing landscape of familiar places (Levitt 2001). However, upon the reading of the text, the reading of the images changes dramatically. The viewer now seeks to interrogate the smallest detail, benign or romantic lighting now take on new dimensions and the apparent peacefulness become tinged with silent screams and unrealised violence.

### **Life History Narrative Theory**

Geoff Shacklock in *Life History and Narrative Approaches* (2005) argues the importance of defining the difference between a life story and a life history for the purpose of social research of a lived experience. He states (2005, 156) that:

A life story is a personal account in the teller's own words, that is, a personal story which is selective and contingent upon remembered events, upon which a clear and ordered record of a personal truth, consisting of both fact and fiction can be provided. On the other hand, a life history provides an analysis of the social, historical, political and economic contexts of the life story conducted by the researcher.

Charles Benson died in 1937, alone in Ward 3 of Goodna Hospital for the Insane. Apart from Granny Benson, no friends and relatives were notified, nor was an obituary placed in any newspaper. Barely remembered by his contemporaries, most of what he thought, said and did is lost. No personal items of his remain within the family, nor are there any photographs of him and those who experienced Charles first hand have died also. What remains are images of Granny Benson in her older age (standing lone on their property in Mount Morgan),

Queensland State Archive medical and public curator records from the Goodna Hospital for the Insane, my grandfather's family history journal, an unmarked burial ground and the land in which he worked and lived on. From within these scant items, meanings are embedded and remain hidden. However, contextualising these few known traces of Charles Benson within an historic framework and understanding of the times, has allowed for a life history to be developed on what was most probably the lived experience of Charles Benson. By combining the small narrative that remains with the medium of photographic documentary practice, I am able to explore the memories, stories and events of the past, against the present day realities and visually represent the assumed experiences of my great, great grandfather (Shacklock 2005, 156).

In *The Mother of all Journeys*, Dinu Li combines collaboration and life history and narrative to create a visual memoir, revealing the distance between a remembered time and place against its current day reality (figure 22-25) (Parr 2007). Examining the memories of his mother, from her journey from rural China to Manchester during the mid 1950s, Li combines collaboration with his mother, life history and narrative research methods and phenomenology, to understand the duality between his mother's subjective memories and the structural environment (Shacklock 2005, 156). LeFeuvre (2007, 89) argues that the dialogue between the present and past, allows the audience to place themselves within the frame of the image and as such, are able to understand their own and other people's lives. LeFeuvre (2007, 89) continues that Li's work:

Simultaneously considers the micro scale of a past shared by a mother and son... explored through a journey from England to China and on the macro scale, of a voyage from China to England that reflects shifts in the political economy. These two conversations are informed by remembering the past through knowledge of the present.

Most of the sites remembered by Li's mother have since been made vacant, demolished or redeveloped. The sense of vacancy gives these places a poetic tone, in which Li purposely keeps devoid of people. This allows the audience to feel the presence of his mother and her narration within the images (Beem 2005, 91). Like Li, I too have kept my imagery absent of people, to reinforce the duality between the personal and universal and as Li discusses in *Photo District News* (2005) while "unearthing our personal history, there are other histories in that very same space. The photograph is not just about our own experiences, but others' as well." Likewise, *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* doesn't just represent Charles's story, but may also exemplify many others who have endured time at Goodna Hospital for the Insane.

## Chapter Four: Process

From the oral histories of Charles Benson's life, I sought out the sites of significance, meaning and life turning from his personal life story. Through the framework of labelling theory and methodologies of phenomenology and life history narrative, I aimed to photograph the sites through a metaphorical visual language, allowing the audience to see his most likely lived experience, as I came to see it. The further blending of evidentiary artefacts (figure 26) and archival family pictures (figure 27) through the project, thus turn journal entries and hospital files into a shared visual experience of Charles's past events (Baer 2002, 8). By also allowing the collection of photographs to be combined with narrative text, the audience is given the opportunity to fully discover the life history and possible lived experience of my working class ancestor, who through an unfortunate event, was disabled, labelled, stigmatised and eventually, institutionalised and forgotten.

The moral outrage I have experienced at the lack of attention, the isolation and abandonment in Charles's possible lived experience, has driven me to give my great, great grandfather a defending voice. Fundamentally, this project provides a link between the present and past, or rather the institution of the early 1900s in Queensland then and now. Just as landscape photographer Richard Misrach shifts the traditional picturesque American landscape to the political and environmental, questioning our past actions, I too began to challenge my approach in my image making to allow the audience to question, if they had lived the life of Charles, what would they have experienced?

### Landscape as Metaphor

Misrach traces the connections between the experience of past events, commonly social, political and environmental issues, with the aesthetic photographic image across several of this series, including *Battleground Point* (1999) (figure 28-31) and *Desert Cantos* (1979-) (figure 32-35). The resulting work is cinematic, dramatic and metaphorical in its visual language (Zipern 2002, 1). As cited in *Crimes and Splendors* (Tucker 1996, 16), Misrach thinks of himself as a "pissed off citizen" and continues on to say:

My main problem with [Ansell] Adams' perfect unsullied pearls of wilderness, is that they are perpetuating a myth that keeps people from looking at the truth about what we have done to the wilderness.

By shooting the desert as metaphor, Misrach carefully chooses the time, season and weather conditions under which he wants the landscape to be photographed in (Tucker 1996, 20). He selects whether the sky is clear or turbulent or whether the ground appears white, yellow, blue or pink. He selects whether distant terrains are prominent or invisible and all in all, finishes with a mix of intense desert light and atmospheric conditions in vast variations (Tucker 1996, 21). Misrach refers to his photographs as the “anticipated moment” and goes on to say, “you see some possibility, so you set up. I’ve sat for four to five hours waiting for something that never happened” (Tucker 1996, 21). These conscious and considered choices dramatically affect the resulting picture and its subsequent meanings and metaphors. Just as Misrach seeks out individual images that work on descriptive, aesthetic, thematic and metaphorical levels, I too approached my imagery in this way, through the ‘anticipated moment,’ uniting isolation, abandonment and despair with the central theme of landscape as metaphor.

### **Portrait of Charles Benson**

The visual conclusions that I have made from my findings, like Misrach, needed numerous experimentations to discover the right lighting conditions for my desired tone and language. I investigated whether it was best to shoot at dawn, morning, midday, afternoon, dusk or night (figure 36-38) and through this experimentation, I settled upon either dawn/dusk, which achieved rather romantic pink hues, or night, which gives on the contrary a haunting, sinister and isolated feeling. I then decided that the end work would start with a landscape of the area in which Charles Benson and Granny Benson first met in their younger years while fossicking for gold. The scene would be taken at dawn when the sky was at its most romantic. From the first image, the remaining four would gradually disperse in colour and the sky darken, as the following images of the accident site (taken at dusk, the time of Charles’s fall) and through the process of his subsequent labelling, until the final and darkest image, Charles’s placement at Goodna Hospital for the Insane, ensued. Through the chronological order of events and their gradual degradation into black, the images conclude a foreboding phase approaching of isolation, abandonment and despair (figure 39-43).

### **Changing Formats**

Like Misrach, I seek to allow audiences to build a connection with the imagery and draw them into the experience of past events. To do this, along with the shooting of landscape as metaphor, Misrach maintains a very high quality of detail and resolution in the photographs, by utilising a large format 8x10 view camera. At the start of the project I began to challenge my

approach and changed from digital 35mm SLR for a 4x5 format view camera. I felt the 35mm horizontal format not only gave the content of the images a common, almost snapshot amateur aesthetic, but it also did not correlate the high detail and resolution I was needing in the imagery. By using the large format camera, I was well aware of not only its cumbersomeness and lack of ease, but the high cost of film and limited frames available to me outside in the field. As a result, I was very economical in the photographs I was making. Not only was I waiting for the 'anticipated moment', but I had to be extremely considered in the content and composition of the images as well. Before the release of the shutter, I would have to ask myself the following questions: Does this potential image ask what I want it to say and does it tell of the experience I believe Charles endured? In a sense, this process forced me to slow down, consider and reflect on the experience before the lens and how Charles would have most likely responded.

### **Experimentation**

Initially, the project was looking at the environmental impacts on the town of Mount Morgan caused by the now abandoned mine site (figure 44-45) and with the town's degeneration (figure 46). However, the scope of the project had a significant tightening with the approval of the 'freedom of information' documents from the Queensland Government concerning Charles's hospital files. Upon reading the documents, I realised that the story was about Charles and prominently, how the impact of his life turning (the fall) changed the rest of his life. The hospital notes say very little, but in doing so, say a lot. Only two A3 pages long, the first page details the generic admission information like 'physical and personal description', 'history of present attack' and 'medical certificates', while the second page details notes from nursing staff and doctors about his behaviour, mental and physical condition and any treatments during his residency, of which there are only 29 entries over his 21 years at the hospital. Analysing these entries reinforced my readings on labelling and social deviance theory, the lack of care and attention, abandonment, isolation, disempowerment and depersonalisation, occurring on an almost daily basis over the full 21 years. The comprehension of this experience for Charles had to be a major component of the project, upon which I experimented in numerous ways to successfully translate the assumed isolation and abandonment into the visual.

At first I had each hospital entry written out beside each image (29 entries for 29 images) (figure 47-48), however, I did not get the feel or comprehension of the long stretch of time between the nurses' entries nor the sentiment of the passing of time. I then experimented

with a 9 metre long timeline that started at Charles's admission date and progressed in monthly increments (interspersed with the respective 29 entries) until his death 21 years later (figure 49-50). Although the timeline worked as a graphical and statistical element, in terms of giving a sense or experience of passing time, abandonment and isolation, the work had to progress further onto another level. Finally, while contemplating Mishka's *Astronomical* (2011), the idea was brought to me about introducing a projection of motion pictures, with each slide representing one day of Charles's residency. With the passing and audio 'tick' of each slide, along with grey text and blank, black background, I feel the work now demonstrates the intended aims and allows the audience a comprehension of the full 21 years of isolation and abandonment at Goodna Hospital for the Insane.

## **Conclusion**

Venturing into the imagined life of my great, great grandfather Charles Benson, I came to realise how alone, isolated and despairing the final chapters of his life could have been. The moral outrage I have experienced at the lack of attention and abandonment from both his family and the hospital has driven my incentive to give my great, great grandfather a defending voice. In doing so, I have established meanings, like each of us generate in our attempt to understand experience. These meanings have provided me with dialogue between the present and past and in particular, the institution of the early 1900s in Queensland, then and now.

Viewed at the time by society as weak, worthless and genetically defective, Charles Benson's final resting place became an unmarked grave that is now below the eighteenth tee of Wolston Park Golf Club. With no funeral being held, let alone family and friends being notified, is it hoped that *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* has challenged the stigma placed on people who have been labelled as social deviants. In doing so, I now pay my respects to you, Charles Benson, a labourer, parent, neighbour, friend, husband and great, great grandfather.

## Images



**Figure 1** Matthew Long, *the Long Family History Journals* 2013



**Figure 2** Gailes Gold Club, *Dr Henry Byam Ellerton* 1909



**Figure 3** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *Lewis House (Male Wards 8 and 9), McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) and gardens 1938*



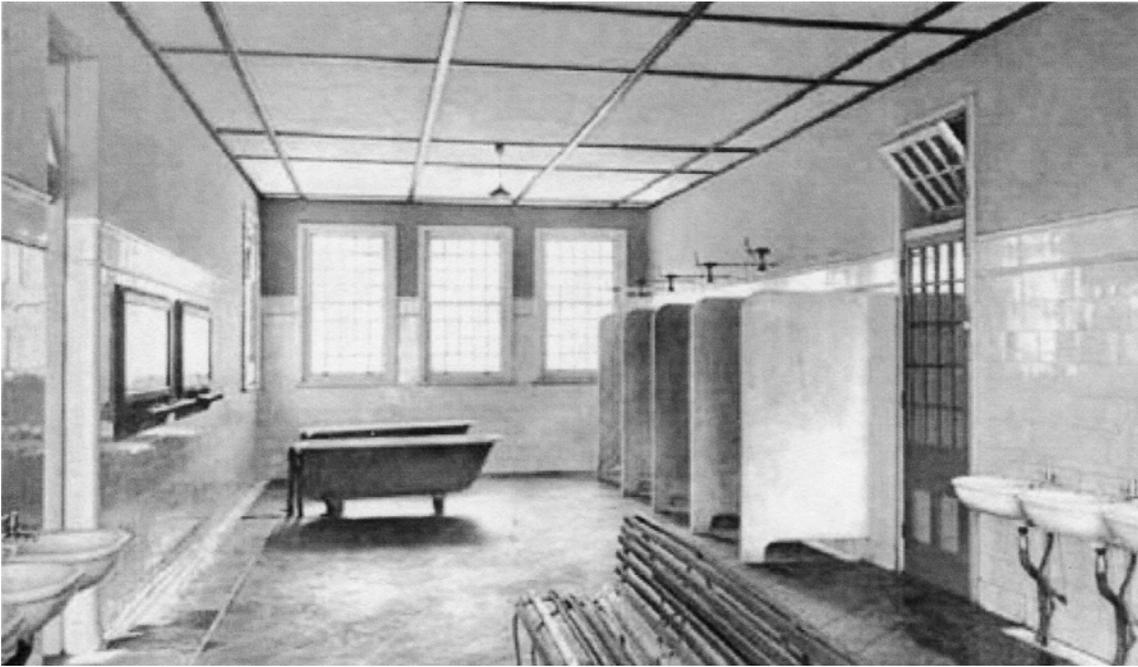
**Figure 4** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) dining room 1916*



**Figure 5** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) day room* 1916



**Figure 6** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *Kinsley House (Male Ward 7) dormitory* 1936



**Figure 7** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) bathroom* 1916



**Figure 8** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *gardens and rockeries at Male Ward 5* 1913



**Figure 9** Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *patients constructing Ellerton's cricket ground 1911*



**Figure 10** Photographer unknown, *Richard Glover*, date unknown

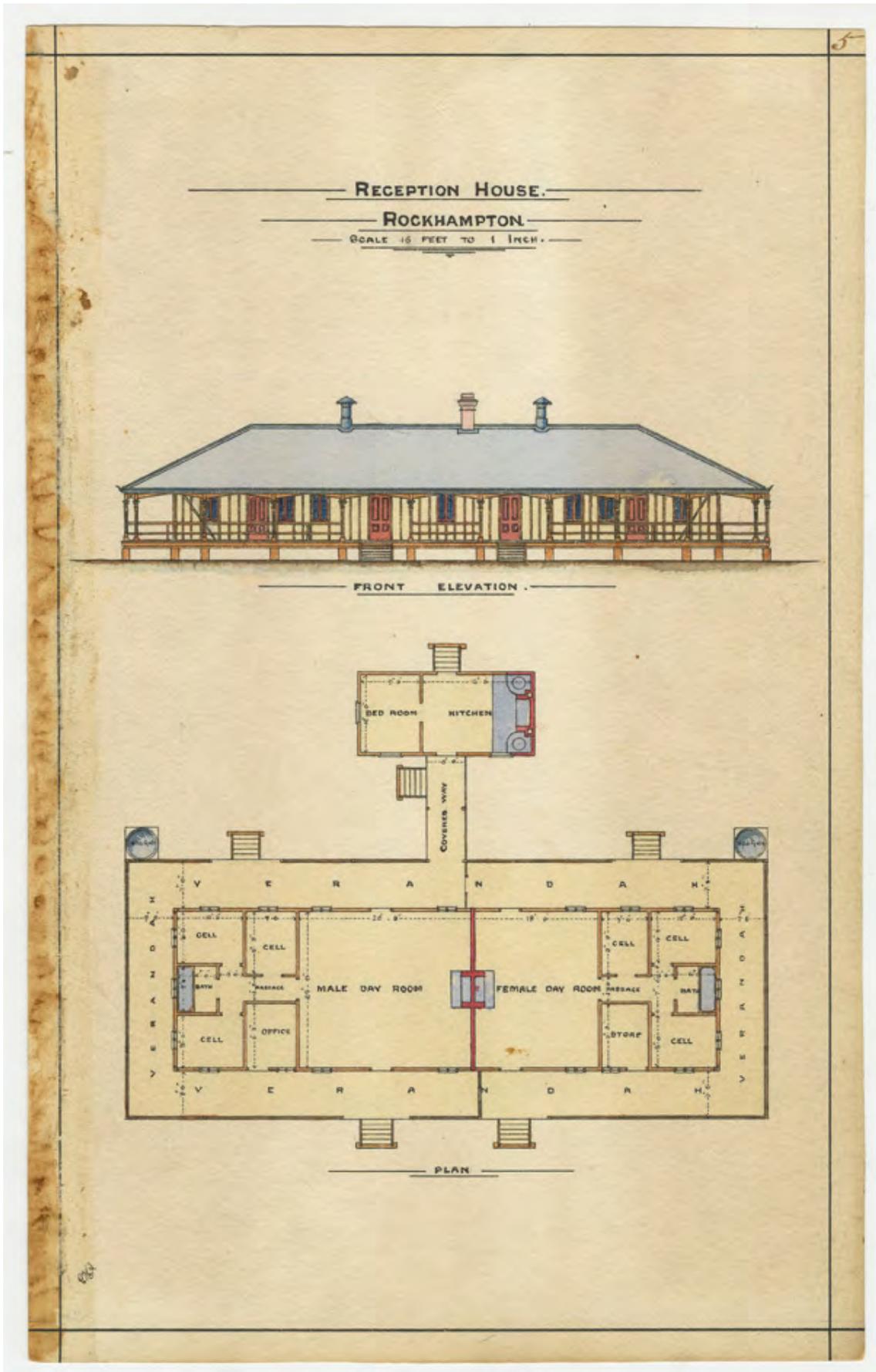


Figure 11 Architectural drawing, Rockhampton Reception House 1883

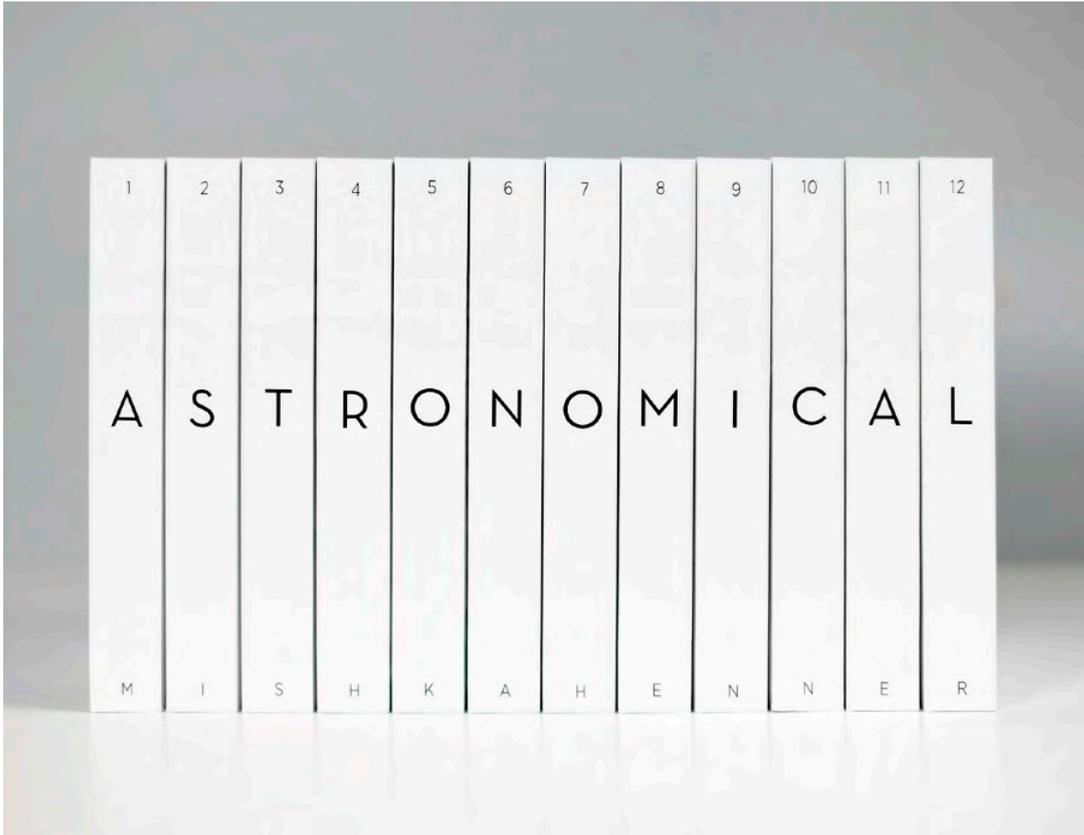


Figure 12 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011

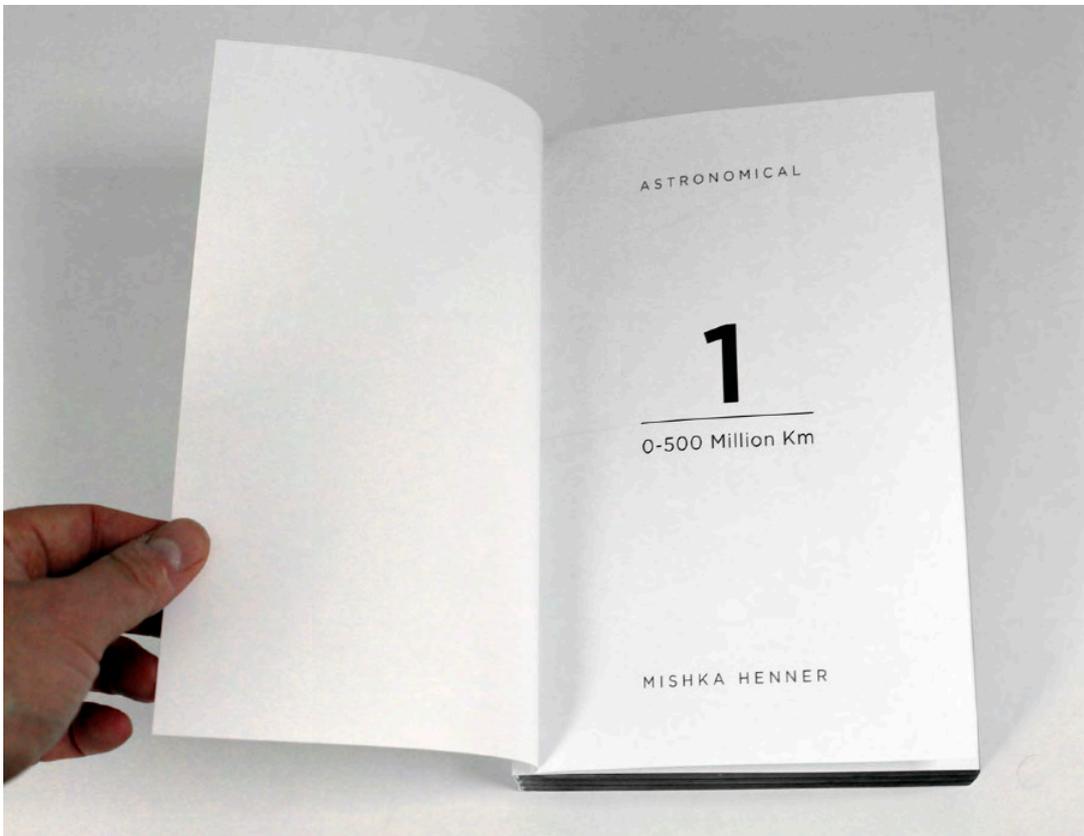
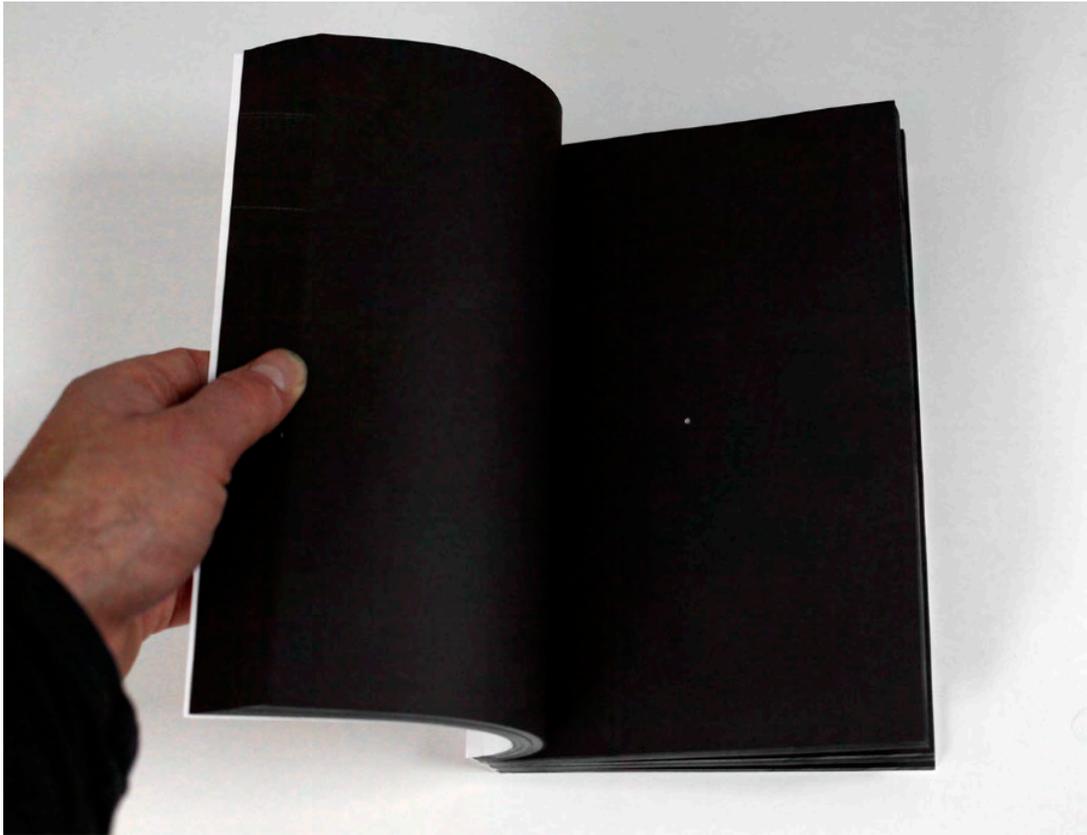


Figure 13 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011



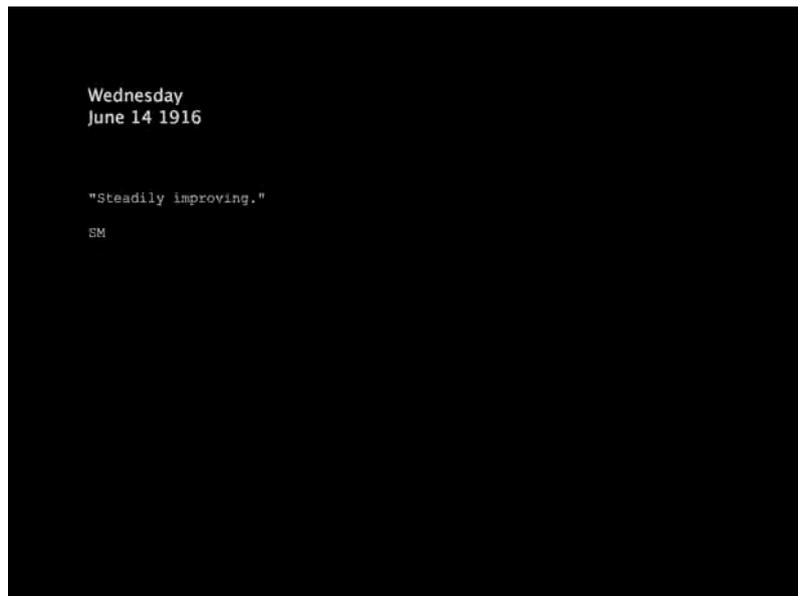
**Figure 14** Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011



**Figure 15** Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011



Figure 16 Matthew Long, still captures from 21 years, 2 months and 24 days 2013



**Figure 17** Matthew Long, still captures from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



Central Park, north of the Obelisk behind the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, May 1993.

Jennifer Levin and Robert Chambers were seen leaving Dorrian's Red Hand, an Upper East Side bar, at 4:30 A.M. on August 26, 1986. Her body was found beneath this crab apple tree in Central Park at 6:15 A.M. that same morning. An autopsy revealed that she had been strangled. She was eighteen years old when she died. Chambers, who was nineteen at the time of the crime, pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter.

**Figure 18** Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996



82-3 Austin Street, Pew Gardens, Queens, New York, November 1995.

Kitty Genovese was repeatedly stabbed outside her apartment in the early morning hours of March 13, 1964. Thirty-eight people heard her cries for help. Although the attack lasted over half an hour, not a single person called the police until after she had died.

**Figure 19** Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996



The Happy Land Social Club, 1599 Southern Boulevard, The Bronx, New York, June 1993.

The Happy Land Social Club was a popular, unlicensed Honduran social club. On March 25, 1990, Julio Gonzalez was thrown out of the club for quarreling with Lydia Feliciano, his former girlfriend and a Happy Land employee. He bought a dollar's worth of gasoline, poured a trail of gas from the street through the club's single doorway, ignited it, and left. The fire killed eighty-seven people. Lydia Feliciano was one of five survivors.

**Figure 20** Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996



Metro Bus Shelter, 7th Street at E Street, Southwest, Washington, D.C., April 1995.

Yetta M. Adams froze to death sitting upright in this bus shelter across from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C., on November 29, 1993. The forty-three-year-old mother of three grown children had reportedly been turned away from a homeless shelter the night before.

**Figure 21** Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996

I lost my grandfather when I was 3 and my father when I was 5. Granddad contributed large donations to help build schools in our towns and villages. When he died, hundreds of students past and present turned up, gathering with family and friends. Many people took turns to carry his coffin whilst others carried flags or played instruments. Grandma explained if we all walked together with granddad, his spirit would always find his way home.



Hua Ning Ts'un, Kaiping, Guangdong, China.

**Figure 22** Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007

I was the first girl to get engaged. Your dad used to wait for me after school, but there were other boys interested too. They used to throw scrunched up paper balls at me with their names written inside.



Mum's old classroom.

**Figure 23** Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007

Your father and I both had jobs making underwear. He worked in the factory stitching English words into the waistbands on men's pants. I brought work home, cutting loose threads from bras and breast-feeding Chun Yu at the same time.



First home in Hong Kong

**Figure 24** Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007

I was always in poor health as a young girl. Everybody in my village thought I had inherited a misfortune from my past life. My mother thought my luck might change if I got married. Our relative set out looking for a nice boy from a respectable family. There were one or two local boys, but they lived in mud huts. Being quite fussy about cleanliness, I was advised not to bother with them. A distant aunt knew of one house in another village that had patterned tiled floors and decided your father would be the ideal boy.



Parent's marital home.

**Figure 25** Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007



Figure 26 Matthew Long, from 21 years, 2 months and 24 days 2013



Figure 27 Matthew Long, from 21 years, 2 months and 24 days 2013



**Figure 28** Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #2* 1999, chromogenic print



**Figure 29** Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #8* 1999, chromogenic print



**Figure 30** Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #15* 1999, chromogenic print



**Figure 31** Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #14* 1999, chromogenic print



**Figure 32** Richard Misrach, *The Santa Fe* from *Canto I: The Terrain* 1982, chromogenic print



**Figure 33** *The Shuttle Landing*, Edwards Air Force Base from *Canto II: The Event* 1983, chromogenic print



**Figure 34** Richard Misrach, *Submerged Snack Bar, Salton Sea* from *Canto III: The Flood* 1984, chromogenic print



**Figure 35** Richard Misrach, *Encrusted Tracks, Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah* from *Canto XV: The Salt Flats* 1984, chromogenic print



Figure 36 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013



Figure 37 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013



**Figure 38** Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013



**Figure 39** Matthew Long, *from 21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



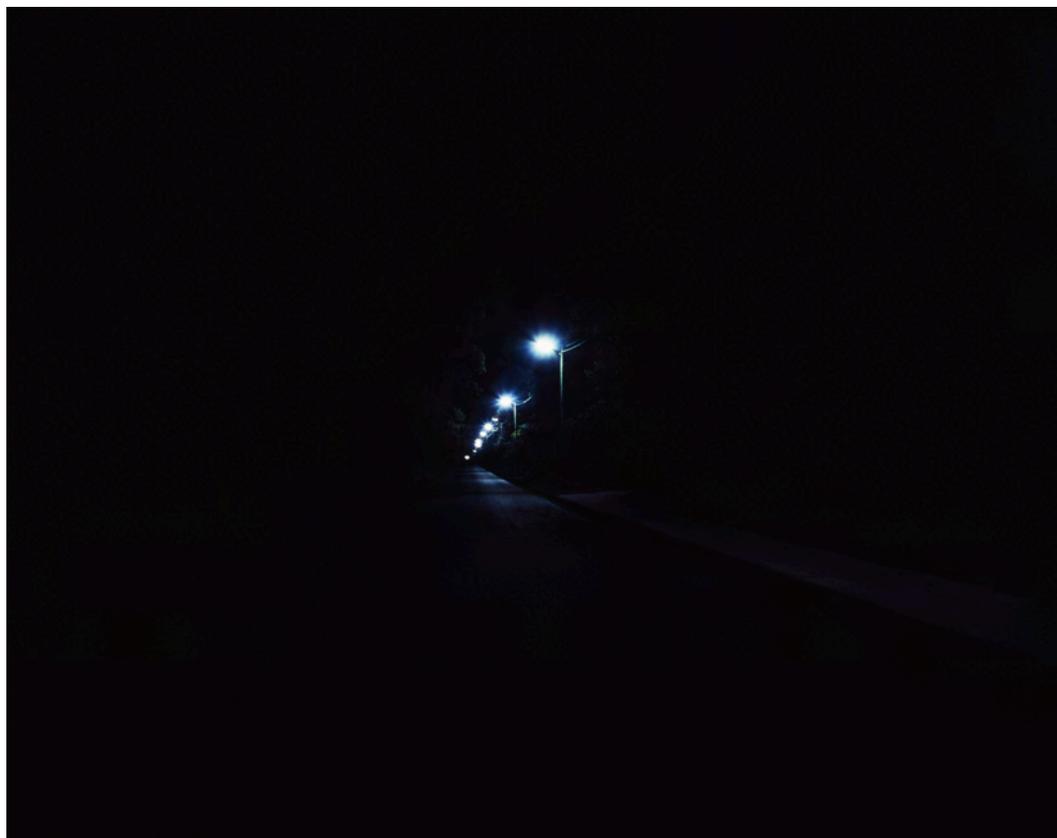
**Figure 40** Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



**Figure 41** Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



**Figure 42** Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



**Figure 43** Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013



**Figure 44** Matthew Long, *work in progress (pollution in Mount Morgan's Dee River)* 2013



**Figure 45** Matthew Long, *work in progress (pollution in Mount Morgan's Dee River)* 2013



**Figure 46** Matthew Long, *work in progress (degeneration of Mount Morgan)* 2013

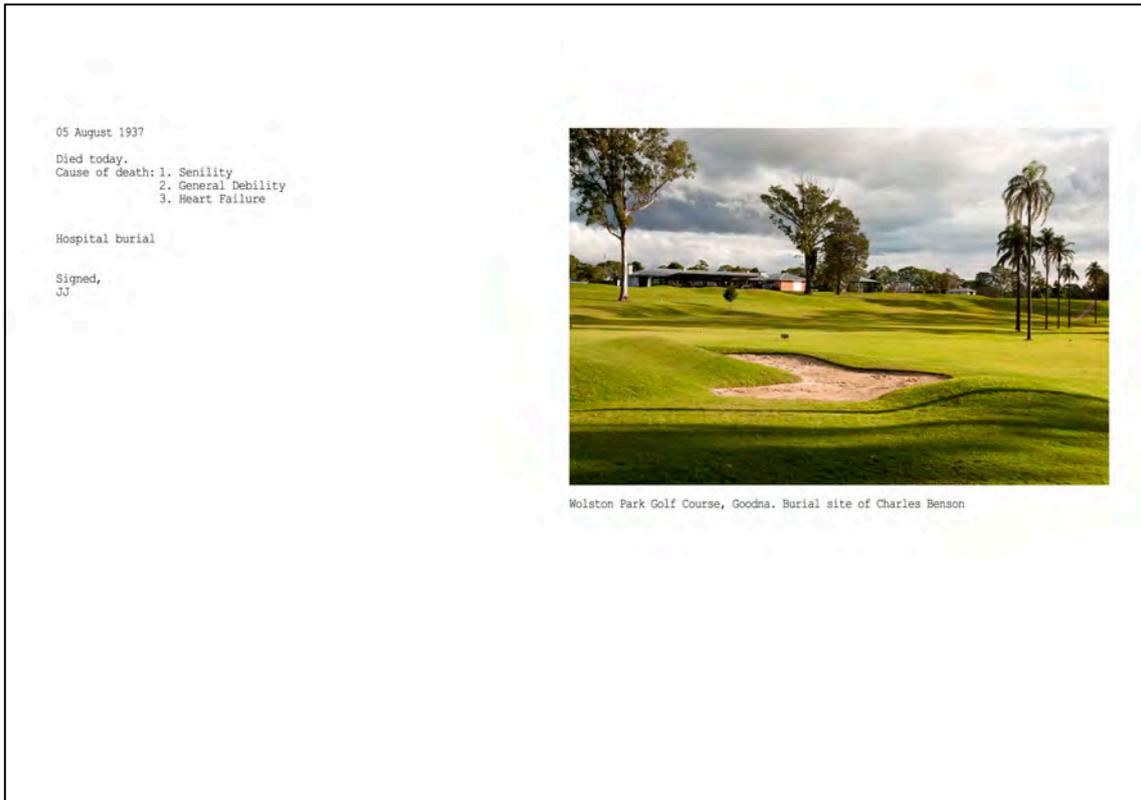


Figure 47 Matthew Long, work in progress (experimentation) 2013

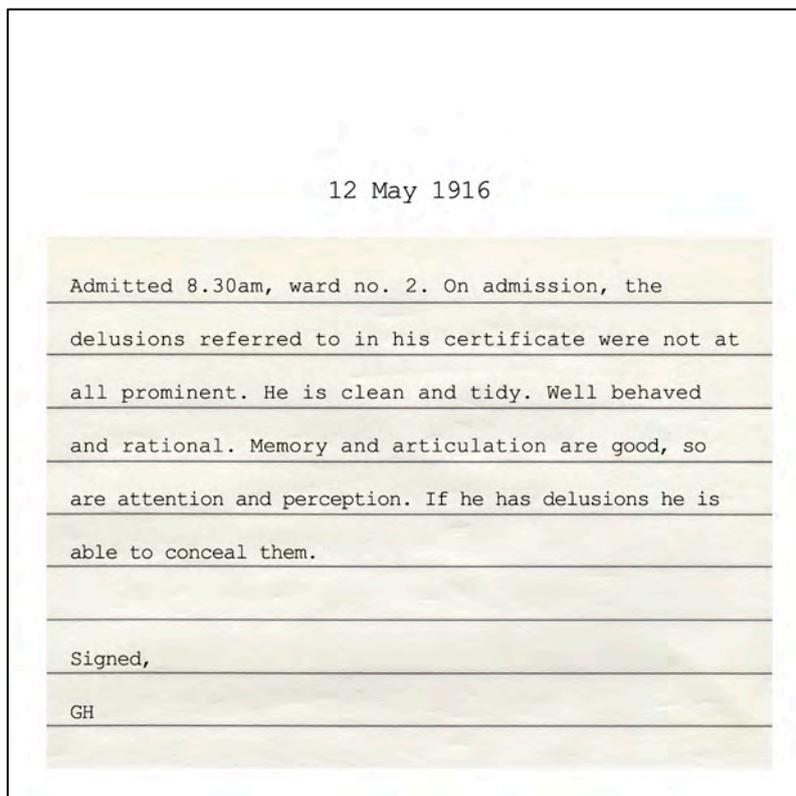


Figure 48 Matthew Long, work in progress (experimentation) 2013

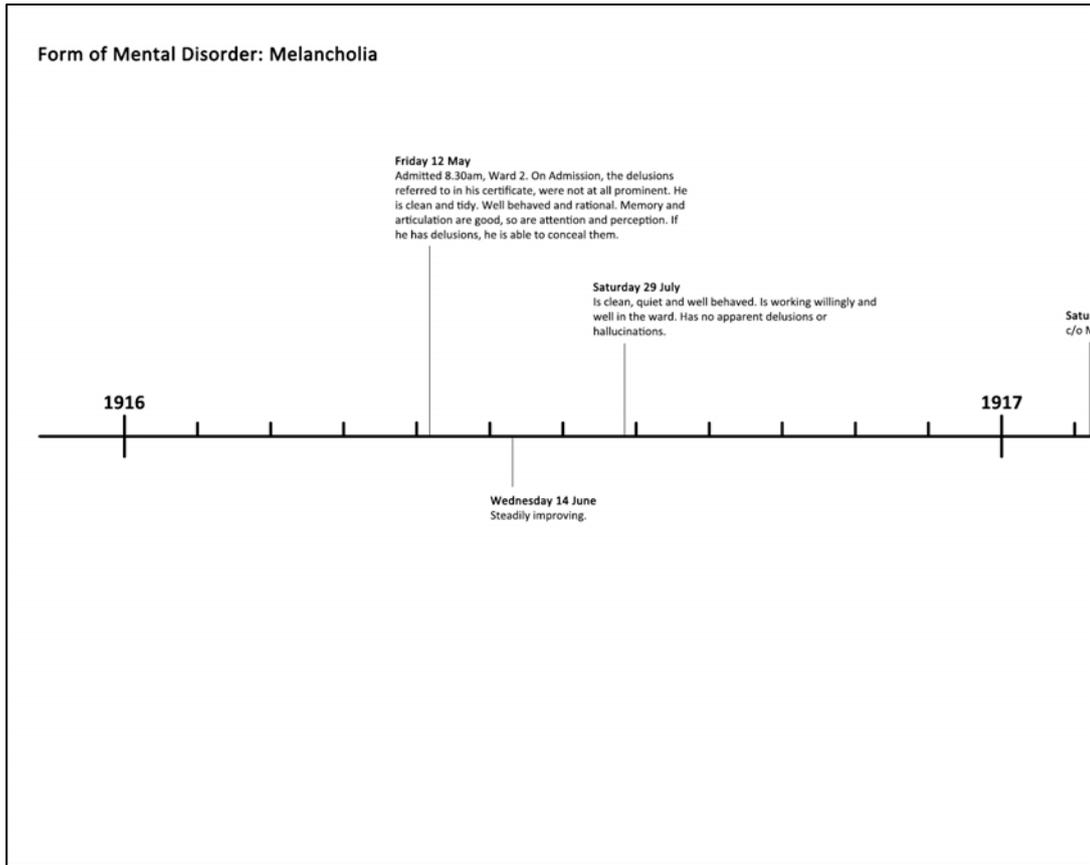


Figure 49 Matthew Long, work in progress (experimentation) 2013

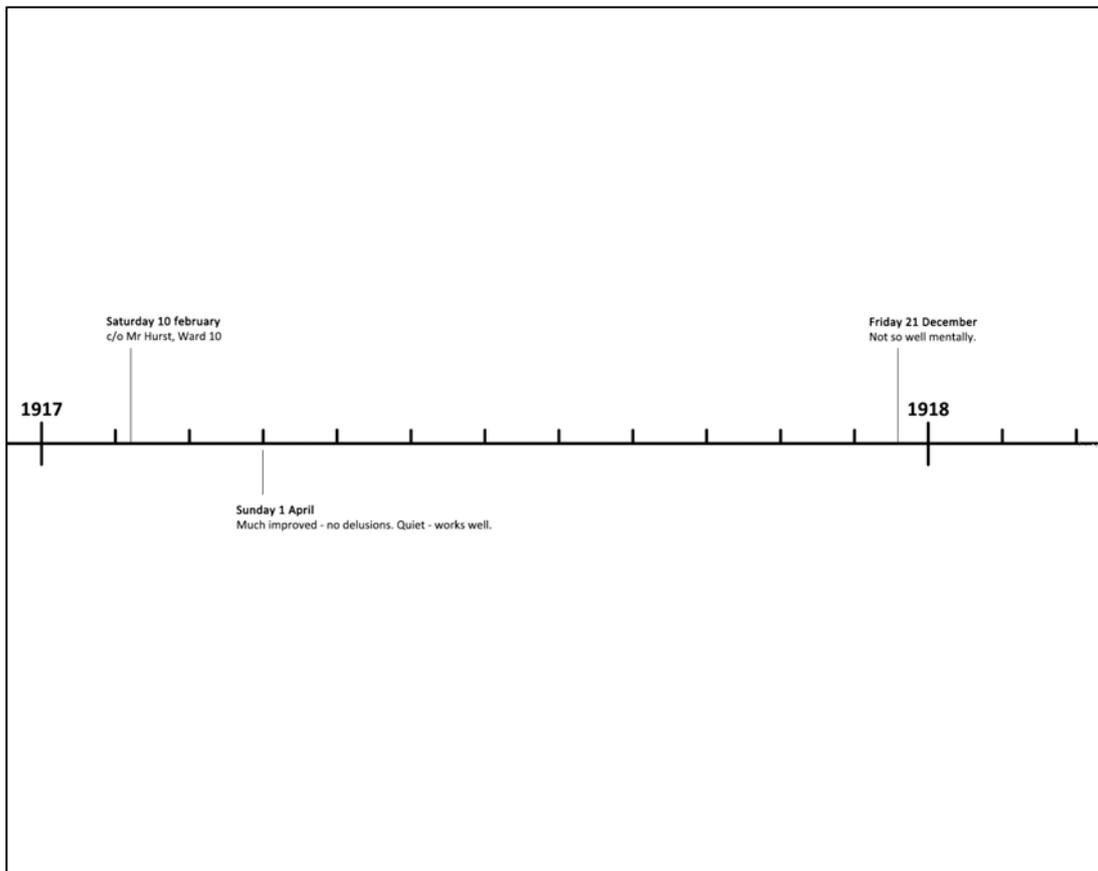


Figure 50 Matthew Long, work in progress (experimentation) 2013

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## Image References

- Figure 1 Matthew Long, *the Long Family History Journals* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Personal collection.
- Figure 2 Gales Golf Club, *Dr Henry Byam Ellerton* 1909  
Source: Gales Golf Club. 1909. "Dr Henry Byam Ellerton." *Queensland Picture Connections*. 2005. <http://libraryhack.anotherbyte.net/pictures/view/112340>
- Figure 3 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *Lewis House (Male Wards 8 and 9), McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) and gardens* 1938  
Source: Sunday Truth. 1938. "Lewis House (Male Wards 8 and 9), McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) and gardens." *John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10462/deriv/134817>
- Figure 4 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) dining Room* 1916  
Source: Goodna Hospital for the Insane. 2013. "McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) dining Room." 1916. *Queensland Police Academy*.
- Figure 5 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) day Room* 1916  
Source: Goodna Hospital for the Insane. 2013. "McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) day room." 1916. *Queensland Police Academy*.
- Figure 6 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *Kinsley House (Male Ward 7) dormitory* 1936  
Source: Finnane, Mark. 2008. "Wolston Park Hospital, 1865-2001: A Retrospect." *Queensland Review* no. 15 (2):48.
- Figure 7 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) bathroom* 1916  
Source: Goodna Hospital for the Insane. 2013. "McDonnell House (Male Ward 10) bathroom." 1916. *Queensland Police Academy*.
- Figure 8 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *gardens and rockeries at Male Ward 5* 1913  
Source: Finnane, Mark. 2008. "Wolston Park Hospital, 1865-2001: A Retrospect." *Queensland Review* no. 15 (2):45.
- Figure 9 Goodna Hospital for the Insane, *patients constructing Ellerton's cricket ground* 1911  
Source: Finnane, Mark. 2008. "Wolston Park Hospital, 1865-2001: A Retrospect." *Queensland Review* no. 15 (2):45.
- Figure 10 Photographer unknown, *Richard Glover*, date unknown  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Personal collection
- Figure 11 Architectural drawing, *Rockhampton Reception House* 1883  
Source: Queensland State Archives. 1887. *Rockhampton Reception House*. <http://www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au/Search/ItemDetails.aspx?ItemId=1622768>
- Figure 12 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011  
Source: Henner, Mishka. 2011. "Astronomical." *Mishka Henner*. <http://www.mishkahenner.com/Astronomical>
- Figure 13 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011  
Source: Henner, Mishka. 2011. "Astronomical." *Mishka Henner*. <http://www.mishkahenner.com/Astronomical>
- Figure 14 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011  
Source: Henner, Mishka. 2011. "Astronomical." *Mishka Henner*. <http://www.mishkahenner.com/Astronomical>
- Figure 15 Mishka Henner, from *Astronomical* 2011  
Source: Henner, Mishka. 2011. "Astronomical." *Mishka Henner*. <http://www.mishkahenner.com/Astronomical>
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- Figure 17 Matthew Long, still captures from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
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- Figure 18 Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996  
Source: Sternfeld, Joel. 1996. "On this Site: Landscapes in Memorium." *Steven Berkowitz – Educational Pages*. <http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/joelSternfeld/>
- Figure 19 Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996  
Source: Source: Sternfeld, Joel. 1996. "On this Site: Landscapes in Memorium." *Steven Berkowitz – Educational Pages*. <http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/joelSternfeld/>
- Figure 20 Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996  
Source: Source: Sternfeld, Joel. 1996. "On this Site: Landscapes in Memorium." *Steven Berkowitz – Educational Pages*. <http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/joelSternfeld/>
- Figure 21 Joel Sternfeld, from *On this Site: Landscapes in Memoriam* 1996  
Source: Source: Sternfeld, Joel. 1996. "On this Site: Landscapes in Memorium." *Steven Berkowitz – Educational Pages*. <http://www.berk-edu.com/RESEARCH/joelSternfeld/>
- Figure 22 Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007  
Source: Li, Dinu. 2007. "Hua Ning Ts'un, Kaiping, Guangdong, China." In *The Mother of all Journeys*. United Kingdom: Dewi Lewis Publishing.
- Figure 23 Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007  
Source: Li, Dinu. 2007. "Mum's old classroom." In *The Mother of all Journeys*. United Kingdom: Dewi Lewis Publishing.
- Figure 24 Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007  
Source: Li, Dinu. 2007. "First home in Hong Kong." In *The Mother of all Journeys*. United Kingdom: Dewi Lewis Publishing.
- Figure 25 Dinu Li, from *The Mother of all Journeys* 2007  
Source: Li, Dinu. 2007. "Parent's marital home." In *The Mother of all Journeys*. United Kingdom: Dewi Lewis Publishing.
- Figure 26 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
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- Figure 27 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
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- Figure 28 Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #2* 1999, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Battleground Point #2." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013 <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 29 Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #8* 1999, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Battleground Point #8." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013 <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 30 Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #15* 1999, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Battleground Point #15." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013 <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 31 Richard Misrach, *Battleground Point #14* 1999, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Battleground Point #14." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013 <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 32 Richard Misrach, *The Santa Fe* from *Canto I: The Terrain* 1982, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1982. "Santa fe." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013 <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 33 Richard Misrach, *The Shuttle Landing, Edwards Air Force Base* from *Canto II: The Event* 1983, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "The Shuttle Landing, Edwards Air Force Base." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013. <http://fraenkelgallery.com/portfolios/desert-cantos>
- Figure 34 Richard Misrach, *Submerged Snack Bar, Salton Sea* from *Canto III: The Flood* 1984, chromogenic print.  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Submerged Snack Bar, Salton Sea." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013

- Figure 35 Richard Misrach, *Encrusted Tracks, Bonneville Salt Flats, Utah* from *Canto XV: The Salt Flats* 1984, chromogenic print  
Source: Misrach, Richard. 1999. "Encrusted Tracks, Bonneville Salt Flats." *Fraenkel Gallery*. 2013
- Figure 36 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 37 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 38 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 39 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. "21 years, 2 months and 24 days."
- Figure 40 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. "21 years, 2 months and 24 days."
- Figure 41 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. "21 years, 2 months and 24 days."
- Figure 42 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. "21 years, 2 months and 24 days."
- Figure 43 Matthew Long, from *21 years, 2 months and 24 days* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. "21 years, 2 months and 24 days."
- Figure 44 Matthew Long, *work in progress (pollution in Mount Morgan's Dee River)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 45 Matthew Long, *work in progress (pollution in Mount Morgan's Dee River)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 46 Matthew Long, *work in progress (degeneration of Mount Morgan)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 47 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 48 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 49 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.
- Figure 50 Matthew Long, *work in progress (experimentation)* 2013  
Source: Long, Matthew. 2013. Work in Progress.

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