



Follow Lundh! Between Text and Context in a Photographer's Archive

By
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Abstract

No matter how well documented a life is, only shards, bits and pieces remain of what was once a vibrant person, with purpose, memories, feelings, actions and ideas. For any historian, these slivers are what remains and what can be used to access a past. This article presents a case study where the photographs taken by the photographer Gunnar Lundh (1898–1960) are in focus. The archive contains next to no written sources, and the information about the motifs is scarce. This is in fact the fate of many personal archives, especially those containing few written sources. The contact sheets Gunnar Lundh used in his business as a photographer provide some mostly routine and brief information, usually the year and sometimes where the photo is taken, in “Denmark” or “Skåne”. A majority of them are picturing anonymous individuals. The lack of information makes the archive of Lundh, in a sense, silent or mute. The purpose with my research is to investigate what happens to a photograph or a set of photographs when more contexts are added. By adding biographical knowledge it is possible to read the photographs. In this, I am using the art historian Joan M. Schwartz’s ideas about functional context. The process of adding context to an archive is a negotiation of the past that will contribute new dimensions in our collective memory, and also generate new, additional archives. There are options other than silence, and the inevitable reversion and degradation into oblivion for those silent, or mute, personal archives in focus here. A biographical method can however operate in the area between text and context, joining them together and thus letting the material speak.

Keywords: Functional context, Archival silence, Biography, Method, Photography.

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Introduction

The starting point of this article is the never neutral photograph. Every photograph is a result of a multitude of historical, aesthetic and cultural frames of references, as well as relationships, meanings and interests connected to the photographer (Batchen 1999: 9, Sandweiss 2007: 193). My goal is to contribute to the discussion about what happens to a photograph (or a set of photographs) when individual context is added (Kozloff 1992: 57–60). By using a biographical method and following the individual throughout her or his life, building knowledge of the individual fate, the different types of materials in the archive can be put into context, thus being able to break the silence (Mason and Zanish-Belcher 2007, Farge 2013).

The article investigates the archive in search of the motifs of the photographer Gunnar Lundh (1898–1960). After his death his wife Ester Lundh donated documents from their business to Nordiska museet in Stockholm. The archive consists mainly of photographs in various forms and a smaller amount of documents describing the everyday business of a photographer. The extensive category in the archive is copies of the photographs of Gunnar Lundh, arranged after his own categories.¹ Besides this, the contact prints constitute a large part of his personal archive. The collection amounts to about 10 000, where contact prints are glued to the sheets and provided with a number connecting them to a negative. The smallest category constitutes documents from his business, such as some correspondence with business contact in Europe and Sweden. This means that even if the archival integrity of the archive has been respected, it is difficult to gain an overview of the complete personal archive. In total, the amount of photos is about 300 000. In addition, some letters from Ester Lundh to the museum in the 1960s are preserved in the archive. Not much else is today known about why the archive was added to the collections in the museum and how, or even how it has been used.

This is in fact the fate of many personal archives, especially those containing few written sources. The lack of information makes the archive of Lundh, in a sense, silent or mute (Hobbs 2001). My undertaking as a cultural historian is to examine different ways to use the photographs taken by Lundh as research material. In doing so, the context is important in order to—in a sense—understand the material, its background and its origins.

The present study consists of two parts, where the first aim to give some general information of the life and work of Gunnar Lundh and describe biography as a research method. The second part will show how this method can be applied to his personal archive at Nordiska museet and how archival slivers joined together can offer a previously silent material a voice.

Life and work²

Gunnar Lundh was the fourth child of Sofia Elin Marie Andersson (1873–1939) and her husband, the well-known photographer Peter Lundh (1865–1943) in the parish of Väsby, just outside the small town of Höganäs in the south west of Sweden. The couple had five children; Arthur Benvard died seven days old in 1893 and was followed by Astor Benvard (1894–1970) and Anny Berta Linnea Evelina (1896–1944). Gunnar Herbert was born in 1898 and the siblings had a younger brother, Carl Erik, born 1909, who in 1921 died of a skull fracture acquired while playing in the harbour.

Peter Lundh, or Peter P Lundh as he called himself, had opened one studio in 1886 in Skättekärr and another in 1892 in Höganäs. Later, in 1894, he opened a branch in Mölle and another in Arild in 1907. During this time, these were well-known and popular tourist destinations, attracting many visitors every year. Peter P Lundh is perhaps best known for his photographs of bathing and swimming people, and, most of all, the mixed sex bath in Ransvik (Olsheden and Olson 1967, Ranby 2013). Gunnar Lundh took part in the family business from an early age and learned the trade and art of photography both in his father's studio and abroad in Denmark and Germany, countries he during his life repeatedly returned to. During the 1920s he worked as a portrait photographer in Berlin, at a department store chain in pre-World War II Germany called Wertheims. The chain's largest and most famous store—and during the 1920s Europe's largest—was situated in Leipziger Platz in Berlin, and here Gunnar Lundh worked, taking portrait pictures (Rehnig 1999: 23–27). However, his camera lens was more directed towards picturing the everyday life in the streets of Berlin, photographs that are well represented in the material at Nordiska museet. It was during this time that he first became acquainted with the new photography technique: a small and handy camera that would become his hallmark, the *Leica* (Kross 1955: 118). He later returned to Sweden and settled in Stockholm, opening up his photography business and founding his photo agency, working as a free-lance reportage photographer. He sold his pictures to many different kinds of magazines, such as *Folket i Bild*, *Signalen*, *Metallarbetaren* and *Lantarbetaren* (see Bäckman in this volume). He also produced four illustrated books, the most famous of them being *Statarna i bild* published in 1948, which was a result of a more than ten-year long partnership with the author Ivar Lo-Johansson, who also wrote the text in the book. Two years later *Malmö* was published, followed by *Julotta* and *Midsommar*.

The years around the late 1930s and early 1940s were turbulent in the Lundh family. In May 1939 his mother died and left his sister Berta and his father to attend to the family business. However, this was not uncomplicated. Berta had since early adulthood shown signs of depression and mental illness, something her mother had coped with, nursing her daughter in their home. The death of their

mother triggered a psychosis, and Berta had to spend some time at the hospital in Helsingborg. Another setback for the family was the death of Peter P Lundh in 1943. Only a couple of months later, Berta Lundh committed suicide, leaving the family devastated. Now Astor and Gunnar Lundh shouldered the burden of attending to the family business in the south of Sweden, as well as Gunnar Lundh's own business in Stockholm.

During the early 1940s, Gunnar Lundh had met Ester Götilda Boman (née Carlsson, 1894–1969), a childless widow. The couple married in 1943 and Ester moved into Gunnar Lundh's apartment on Döbelnsgatan 35. From the apartment, his photographic business operated, leaving very little space for everyday life. Ester Lundh became, over time, involved in her husband's business, and even though she held a position as a clerical worker at an office in Stockholm, she spent time managing different tasks in the family business.



Fig 1. Picture of their home.

How and exactly when Gunnar Lundh met his future wife is not known. She had moved to Stockholm after her first husband's death, and just like Gunnar Lundh she grew up in the south of Sweden. There are many different stories about Ester Lundh; everyone is more or less to her disadvantage. She was accused of

being controlling and acquisitive, and her ordeals with Nordiska museet after the donation of her husband's photographs were many and confused.³

During the late 1950s, Gunnar Lundh's interest in photography decreased noticeably. Instead, he spent more time selling postcards and antiquities. At this time, his photographic collections, an image bank, had become famous and the amount of pictures it held was remarkable: some 290 000 black and white, and about 11 000 colour, photos. It was the first modern photographic image bank, where the customers themselves could choose from thousands of photographs (Nilsson 1984: 308, Mölleryd 1958).

Biography as Method

Archives have always been about power and power relations: the power of those establishing or imposing the archive, the power of those handling the archive records, the power of setting up an archive inventory and making decisions about what and what not to save and, of course, the power of the researchers and public who study the archival material, interpreting and analysing it (Berger 2013). This is hardly anything new; a common notion in archival discourse is that what ends up in the archive mirrors the powerful of society. The power-less constitutes a large group whose voices are silent or unheard in the remains of the past. This silence of course also implies a voice, silenced or denied the opportunity to speak (Carter 2006, Derrida 1995: 7). But the records themselves also possess power. They hold information about events, people, transactions, and agreements. Their format can force information to be presented in a special way and exclude other types of data (Schwartz and Cook 2002). There are limits to what an archive can provide regarding information about the material stored therein. Some information will be unconditionally lost, misinterpreted or misunderstood (Thomas, Fowler & Johnson 2017). To approach such a rich photographic material as the one Gunnar Lundh left behind proved to be somewhat of a challenge. The 300,000 pictures cover a period containing great social changes, but they carry next to no information to the future. A great majority of them are anonymous and my initial research questions evolved around how a cultural historian could use this as research material (Aspers, Fuehrer & Sverrisson 2004).

Gunnar Lundh founded and built his business during a long time and he organized his images according to needs he discovered with his customers in different categories. The categories were labelled with metadata which composed a search way into the photographic collection. The label "Women" has several sub-categories, for examples "Women in the wind" and "Working types". The categories changed with time, some, like the category "Agrarian" was most active during the about ten-year long partnership with Ivar Lo-Johansson, while "Italy: shadows" contains only a few.

The contact sheets, made of beige light cardboard, can hold as many as 40 pictures, which are glued to the sheets in the same order they appear on the negative roll.⁴ All in all, the collection of contact sheets amounts to about 10 000. The information on the contact sheets differs over his active years as a photographer. Generally, during the early years, the information was more substantial, providing knowledge about when and where—sometimes even with a name of the individuals portrayed, thus also covering the who-part. Further down the lane, the annotations on the contact sheets became routine and brief, sometimes not providing any more information than the year—and sometimes not even that.

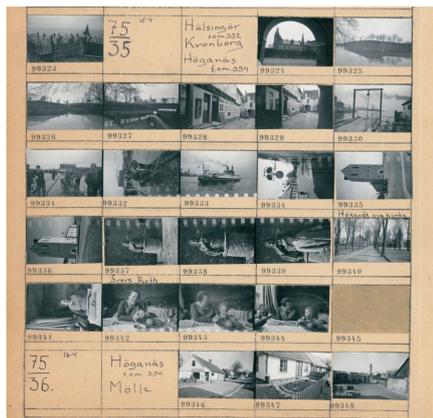


Fig 2. Fig 3. Two different contact sheets.

The contact sheets can be used as a path through the life of Gunnar Lundh, but they also work the other way around. By following the photographic trail, it is also—to some extent—possible to borrow the eyes of the individual and see what he saw. The individual lives her or his life in society, in a specific culture, and is surrounded by a world together with other individuals. Nevertheless, society can also be traced in the lives of the individuals (Ambjörnsson, Ringby & Åkerman 1997: 8–9). This dualist relationship is a way into material that is otherwise silent, or mute.

No matter how well documented a life is, only shards, bits and pieces remain of what was once a vibrant person, with purpose, memories, feelings, actions and ideas. For any historian, these slivers are what remains and what can be used to access a past (Douglas & Mills 2018, Petersen 2007: 24). Even if the Gunnar Lundh archive is well stocked with photographs, they are next to anonymous. By adding biographical knowledge, it is possible to read the photographs. In this, I am using the art historian Joan M. Schwartz's ideas about functional context (1996, 1995):

[---] photographs are documents, created by a will, for a purpose, to convey a message to an audience. To understand them as the product of actions and transactions, either bureaucratic or socio-cultural, we must return them to the action in which they participated. It is their functional context that transforms photographic images into archival documents.

In her texts, Schwartz describes how she has used diplomacy to approach photographic collections. In short, she illustrates how she, initially, needed to choose paths that led her away from the motifs and focus instead on issues discussed within the field of diplomatics, such as conventions, protocols and formulae. These have traditionally been used to study and determine the authenticity of diplomas and official charters, as well as increase understanding of the processes of document creation, information transmission and relationships between content and "reality" (Duranti 1989, Edling 2004, Bringéus 1990). With this, Schwartz could begin to place photographs (or perhaps rather photographic collections) in different contexts, contexts they otherwise lacked. I found this way of approaching Gunnar Lundh's photographs a rewarding way to process the "silence" that surrounded most of his photographs; it led me first away from the photos and then back again. The study of how to read different archival materials is not only a study of how to read a "text" but also a study of how context can be added to different personal archives.

My first task was to find a way to reach the individual behind the photos, and by combining Schwarz's functional context and a biographical method, the photographs revealed themselves in—not a new—but different light. By using the life span thematic, my goal is to show how time, ideas, ideals, things and individuals are in constant motion, that is, the conditions and the practical space an individual has at her or his disposal is not constant during a life span. This can, of course, also be seen as a typical microhistorical approach; both the individual and the structural perspective will shed light on the living conditions for the photographer during this period. The microhistorical approach will make it possible to challenge the general history of this time. Simply put, this means

“asking large questions in small places”, to quote Charles Joyner (Joyner 1999: 1, Svensson 2006: 25–26). The biography of Gunnar Lundh is more than just the basic facts like education, work, relationships, and death; it portrays his experience of these life events—through his photographs.

Archival Slivers

Researchers working with historical source material often use metaphors about their work with collecting and analysing the material, metaphors like trying to lay a puzzle with many pieces, or working with fragments, shards or traces (Harris 2011, Steinrud 2008: 33–34, Nilsson 2000: 21, Lennartsson 2001: 26). Although these metaphors are, in many cases, outworn and filled with platitudes, they are still operative. Working with historical source material, doing fieldwork in the past and analysing documents or other analogue material is often initially experienced as moving around in a fragmentary world, where the pieces will hopefully be joined together, thus engendering a bigger picture. It is important for the researcher to acquire as much knowledge as possible about the context from which the source material he/she is using has emerged. To gain knowledge about the time period in focus is equally crucial. Keeping both the individual and structural perspective in the research process is what constitutes the research process (Svensson 1993: 60, Telste 1993: 57, Lundgren 1990: 45–47, Frykman 1977: 16–24). In this process, it is not possible to know what kind of information every archival sliver will bring to the research, which makes it difficult to discard traces before they are found (Planck & Steinrud 2017).

This wide and eclectic research process required me to choose paths in and around the source material that sometimes lead me away from my initial research question. This meant that I needed to move away from the photographs and motifs and rather focus on adding other types of documents, often from archival institutions other than the one in which the photographer’s archive is kept. The biographical method, in other words, took me firstly into the world of the photographs of Gunnar Lundh, secondly away from them and his photographic business and, thirdly, back again.

Besides the photographs, a wide range of source material has been used to map and recreate the life of Gunnar Lundh. The most evident source material consists of information from various public records, such as church records, national registration, school records and taxation information as well as newspaper articles and literature he himself had written. Through different kinds of censuses, details emerge of his early travels and sojourns abroad—where he, mostly in Denmark and Germany, studied and worked as a photographer between the wars. People around Gunnar Lundh were also followed in the same way: his parents, siblings,

some relatives and friends. His father's business was especially in focus, since it could shed light on his early years as a photographer and his childhood as part of a family business (Olsheden & Olsson 1967, Ranby 2013).

In his personal business archive, some written documents describe the business he had built as a photographer. The correspondence between Ester Lundh and Nordic Museum after his death chronicle a situation where the museum was to take what they wanted from the mutual home of Ester and Gunnar Lundh at Döbelnsgatan 35 in Stockholm and arrange for the disposal of the objects they did not want to take to the museum.⁵ Many of the photographic instruments were incorporated into the collections, and the photos (negative rolls, contact sheets and photographs) and a smaller amount of written documents ended up in the archive, according to the idea of separating objects from documents (Hedström & King 2004). The written documents reveal some information about his business and his ideas about how to run it, but they are predominantly financial documents. The majority of the documents in the archive are photos: negative rolls, contact sheets and pictures arranged in different categories.⁶ His life was also put into context by using the fate of other photographers active during the same period, and in some cases, individuals who met Gunnar Lundh in person were traced and interviewed.⁷

By following an individual throughout her or his life and building knowledge of their individual fate, the different types of materials in the archive can be put into context and are thus able to, so to speak, break the silence. The study of how to read different archival materials is not only a study of how to read a "text" but also a study of how context can be added to a personal archive. In this constant reciprocation between the individual and the structure, the photographer and his (in this case) life can be found. I will show an example of how the biographical knowledge of Gunnar Lundh in turn increases the ability to interpret his, mostly anonymous, images.

Finding Voices: The Case of the Disappeared Girl

Gunnar Lundh was active at a time when photographs became more common in people's lives. Having been a once in a lifetime event, mostly reserved for the affluent, it had now become available for the great majority of people. Pictures and images have always been an important part of human communication, even more so when the medium became more accessible (Sparrman, Torell & Åhrén 2009: 12–13, Rittsel & Söderberg 1983). Working with visual culture, close to the images, will add context to the archive as a whole as well as to the pictures themselves. One of the key notions is one of *visuality*, which focuses on questions concerning what

is made visible, who sees what, as well as the connection between seeing, knowing and power (Hooper-Greenhill 2000: 14). Approaching the large photographic collection of Gunnar Lundh with these perspectives, the images are put into focus. Seeing and understanding or analysing the photos are two different ways to approach the images. Every photograph is a reference to a “reality”, to something that is or has been, a reflection of time and space. In order for the interpretation of a photograph from a past to be as credible as possible, it is necessary that it is placed into a relevant historical and cultural context (Arvidsson 2009: 183–184, Rydén 2006, Burke 2001: 30–32).

Gunnar Lundh depicted numerous people. In the vast majority of cases, they are anonymous. The information on the contact sheets differs during his active years as a photographer. Some faces return on a regular basis. They age, and some get married and have children. Life is documented in various ways in the photographs. One of the faces that recur among the pictures is a blond girl in a curly pageboy haircut. There are never any annotations about where the pictures are taken or who it is. This is another silence in the archival material. Every so often she pops up, sometimes alone, sometimes with what could be her family, surrounded by perhaps her mother and siblings, sometimes alone. In the contact sheets, it is possible to follow her from a small toddler to a teenager during the 1940s. Then she disappears and from the 1950s onwards and is not to be found in the contact sheets or among the photographs in the Gunnar Lundh archive.

Following the photographic trail of her early life, it is clear that she is someone close to the photographer. She means something to him. Is it possible to figure out who she is? Is there a way to approach the photographs to unveil its secrets? Is it possible to see more in the pictures of the blonde girl than is, at first, visible to the naked eye? Will more information about the photographs of the girl change the visual experience of the photographs?

I approached the photographs of the girl with a four-way method, or possibly a four-way perspective is closer to the actual way I worked with the photographs and the motifs. Finding the girl among all the contact sheets was the first, basic and primary task. Working my way through the nearly 10 000 contact sheets, running through the small photographs looking for the now so well-known face and characteristic airy blonde hair. Even though I thought I was thorough, I missed her several times, and working my way through the contact sheets numerous times proved necessary. Like all research based on archival sources, this was time consuming and patience-testing, but it left me with a solid base consisting of the photos of the girl and useful knowledge of the photographer’s life as it was told through his contact sheets. His travels, recurring individuals, preferred motifs and different assignments and missions were made visible when walking through the trails of his life.

Mapping all the information from the contact sheets about the photographs of the girl made it possible to see when he met her and the number of photos he took of her. This was difficult since the information is scarce. Overall, the only information that could be found was the year the photographs were taken. In general, this is not surprising. Our photographer was not particularly generous with information about the different photographs. What can be expected when going through the contact sheets is the year and, in most cases, where the photographs are taken, but the last is not valid for those he took of the blonde girl. Instead, the surrounding photographs can be used as a clue to where he was located, at least approximately. Looking at those taken before the ones with the blonde girl and those he shot after will in some cases give some useful information. Mostly, he seems to meet the girl in Denmark, or in the south of Sweden. In some cases she seems to be in Stockholm, judging by the surroundings. Nevertheless, it is interesting that there is so much silence around the photos of the girl. The amount of photos of her contradicts this silence and in many cases enhances the silence and makes it louder than in other cases in the contact sheets.



Fig 4. Contact sheet with "Skåne" and then nothing but obviously he is in Copenhagen.

The second perspective is to establish the centre-periphery in the motifs, to look beyond what the photographer wanted the observer to see, further away from where the sharp part of the image takes the observer (Bringéus 1990). What did he want us to see and what did he consider to be less important, forming a background to the motif? Where, geographically, are the photographs taken? Is it possible to unveil the location? Some of the photos are easy to locate, for example, the city of Copenhagen, outside Tivoli. The girl is smiling, primary school aged, looking away from the photographer; her gaze disappears in the distance. She is holding an ice cream. The sun is shining. It looks like they are on an outing. Perhaps it is the amusement park that is the goal of their trip?



Fig 5. Picture of the balcony at Döbelnsgatan 35.

A couple of years further down the lane, the girl is older, possibly in her early teens. She has the same haircut, and it is easy to recognise her, since she and the photographer regularly met, at least according to the contact sheets. She wears a light blue floral pyjamas and her hair is a bit in disorder. She is just about to take a bite of a biscuit and is holding a cup in her right hand. Like most children, she seems to be more focused on chewing and wrinkles her face toward the sun rather than keep track of her cup—it leans a bit. In the background there are houses and the rail of the balcony, but also the façade of the house, where both the colour and the ornaments are visible. This small sliver of information provides us with information enough to point out that the place must be the balcony belonging to the apartment of Gunnar Lundh at Döbelnsgatan 35. The view reveals parts of Rådmanngatan, a crossroad to Döbelnsgatan. The light is coming from the east; perhaps it is morning and she is having breakfast on the balcony?

The background of the photographs provides meaningful information in the puzzle that hopefully will bring us closer to the story of the girl in the pictures. In one of the pictures, she is sitting outside, at a white garden table; she is writing a postcard holding a pencil in her right hand. She is leaning over the table, pinching her eyes against the sun. In the background is the sign of Gunnar Lundh's parents' business, "Turistmagasin" the sign should say (Ranby 2013). In the following pictures, she is putting the postcard in the mailbox. The girl also appears in pictures with the family of Gunnar Lundh: his parents, his sister. In



Fig 6. Lindstrand family in Hällerberga/Orrefors glasbruk.

some photographs, she is modelling with a scarf or with a fish-pot over her head and face. In some pictures she is smiling and playing with the props; in others she is looking away from the camera lens, with a serious almost sad face. In one of the photographs, a middle-aged woman can be seen holding the fair-haired girl's hand. The girl has the fish-pot over her face and is smiling and perhaps laughing. She is looking in the same direction as the woman. The woman is not a stranger; she is one of the recurring faces among all the people in the contact sheets. She shows up early among the photographs; with neat and handsome writing her and her husband's names have been written on the contact sheet, and later so is their son Ola's. The woman in the picture is actress Kristina Lindstrand, between 1929 and 1946 married to the artist Viktor Emanuel "Vicke" Lindstrand. She seems to be quite familiar with the girl, as well as the rest of her family. The family is pictured on the staircase to their home in Hällerberga where Vicke Lindstrand was working at the Orrefors glassworks in 1928. The persons around the girl can also bring important pieces of information that will be of help in solving the puzzle; this is the third perspective with which to view the material.

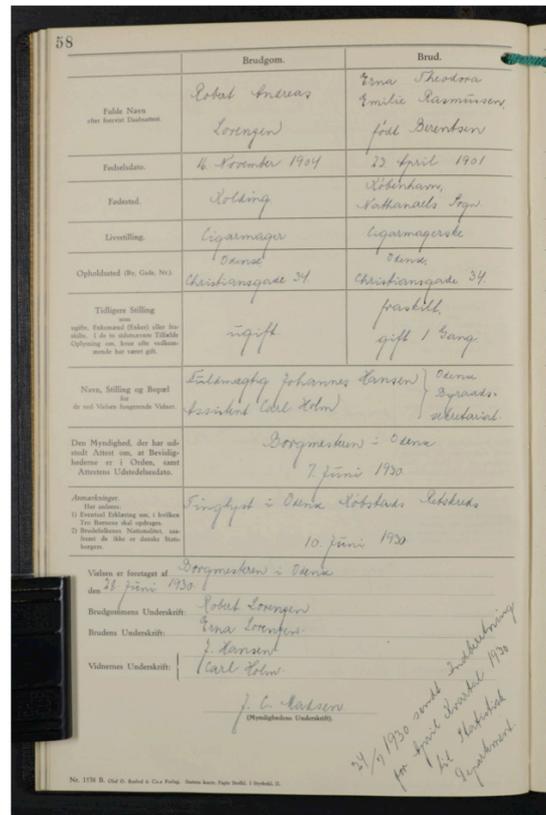


Fig 7. Marriage records.

In the last will and testament of Gunnar Lundh, the first piece of information about him having a daughter shows up. Since children born out of wedlock did not inherit from their fathers at this time, her presence in the will is one of the few remaining public traces of their relationship. The information in the will makes it possible to trace his daughter, Jytte, who at that time was married and living just outside Copenhagen.

In 1929, Gunnar Lundh became the father of a girl, Jytte. The mother was Erna Theodora Emilie Rasmussen (née Berentsen), from Denmark.⁸ She chose to give birth anonymously, which was possible in Denmark at this time. She later retracted her anonymity, and this makes it possible to follow Jytte's childhood. Erna Theodora Emilie Rasmussen married Robert Andreas Lorenzen when Jytte was about one year old.⁹ Gunnar Lundh never lived together with his daughter and her mother. Jytte grew up with her mother, stepfather and siblings, both older and younger. From the written documents, it is not possible to say anything about Gunnar Lundh's and Jytte's relationship. She is barely mentioned in the remaining

documents in the archive, and this only when the organisation of their household is mentioned.¹⁰ Pictures of the home at Döbelnsgatan 35 over the years show no traces of anyone else living there apart from Ester and Gunnar Lundh. There are no guest rooms, not even a spare bed that could function as a place dedicated to Jytte.¹¹ What the photographs can tell us is that he regularly visited her and her family in Denmark, and that she sometimes spent time with his parents in Höganäs or with him in Stockholm. She met his friends, and she must have been very far from the secret she seems to be in the written information of the archive.

Among the photos of Gunnar Lundh, a large number of pictures depict Jytte. The pictures constitute a photographic trail, where a daughter's presence in her father's life can be traced. Judging by the frequency, their contact seems to have declined during the latter part of the 1940s. Perhaps the war and the fact that she was growing up worked against their relationship, or perhaps he entered a new stage in life when he married in 1943.

Knowing who the girl in the picture is, and adding up the puzzle pieces, can another pattern appear? I started to see new things in the pictures, and accordingly interpreted the motifs differently. Moving from text to context and back again added further dimensions to the interpretation of the photographs. Finding Jytte was also finding more voices in the archival material, uncovering more plausible stories (Burke 2001: 32–33).

Memory Lost and Found

It is not clear what exactly was brought back to the museum from Ester and Gunnar Lundh's apartment, and following the correspondence between Ester Lundh and the museum officials, it is obvious that she had little or no knowledge of what finally was incorporated into the museum collections. Any documentation describing the process was never produced and it is not possible to know what the considerations of the museum were when—and if— they chose documents and object. Have any documents been disposed of, and if so, which and why? Why the photographs were added to the collections in the first place is also unknown.¹² What we do know is that the museum contacted Gunnar Lundh when his father passed away, exploring the possibility of a donation of his photographs to the museum.¹³ It seemed like he turned them down, and in the end the photographs of Peter P Lundh ended up at Höganäs museum. Perhaps the enquiry laid the foundation for an idea Gunnar Lundh had early on to involve Nordiska museet in saving his photographs.

The accounts of the story behind the archive, the persons in it and behind it, are lost. Slivers of information are to be found in different archival collections, and together these pieces will help build a context and help in analysing the content.

To create a perspective of one's own is a part of the research process, establishing a perspective of one's own. However, since this is information researchers need to know to help them work with the content of the archive, the information needs to be available, when it does not, the researcher needs to unveil it, over and over again. For every new sliver found, the archive is changed, expanded and magnified. Voices in the previously silent material can be heard and more stories can be added to the already known (Ernst 2008: 30–33, 65–69). This is a dialectic relationship and a cumulative process; the more one knows about the life of Gunnar Lundh, the more the content in his archive can be accessed. Furthermore, the more we know of the archive and the photographs in it, the more we learn about the photographer, his life and the period during which he was active.

When collecting archival slivers, bits and pieces and trying to join them together to form answers to both old and new questions, other stories from the source material emerge. These stories were not the centre of attention but still make and form the red thread of long-lost life stories. One of these stories is close to Gunnar Lundh and his daughter Jytte. Astor, the older brother of Gunnar, left Höganäs to attend Lund University the fall semester of 1913. He broke some kind of record, and in just three semesters managed to win a baccalaureate in literature and economics and stayed one extra semester studying political science with excellent grades.¹⁴ The life of Astor Lundh takes place just outside the more public life of his brother, although he, just as his brother, took photographs and even entered and won some minor photographic contests.¹⁵ He later moved to Stockholm, worked in libraries, and was active in different political and artistic organisations. Sometime around the early 1920s he met Alva Jakobsson, who was working as a salesclerk. In late August 1922 their daughter, Ulla-Britta, was born.¹⁶ The father recognised Alva as his daughter, but the couple never married or lived together. Traces of their relationship are visible in the photographs of Gunnar Lundh. There are some photographs of the three of them, together with a handful of photographs taken of Ulla-Britta. When Astor Lundh passed away in August 1970, children born out of wedlock still did not inherit from their fathers, even if the father had recognised the paternity. He was in other words in the same position as his younger brother a decade earlier. A year before Astor Lundh passed away, he arranged for an amount of money to be bequeathed to the mother of his daughter, his daughter and granddaughter in his last will and testament.¹⁷ One conspicuous difference is visible between the two cases of children born out of wedlock: whereas there is virtually no information about the daughter of Gunnar Lundh, Jytte, in the contact sheets, the names of both Alva and Ulla-Britta are carefully written down in connection to every contact copy. This together with

information in wills and testaments, probate inventories and memories the traces of both Alva Jakobsson and her daughter Ulla-Britta are possible to follow. This story cannot be found using only one of the source materials available. In this case, the sum of the parts will be higher than what the parts can individually bring.

These pieces of information are lost memories in a personal archive that is silent or mute. I have argued that the personal archive of Gunnar Lundh is silent or mute. However, a biographical approach to the photographic material can operate in the area in between text and context, joining them together and enabling the documents to speak; it allows them to be heard—to be found. The process of adding context to an archive is a negotiation of the past, a negotiation that will contribute new dimensions in our collective memory, and also generate new, additional archives. There are, in other words, options other than silence, and the inevitable reversion and degradation into oblivion for those silent, or mute, personal archives in focus here. A biographical method can however operate in the area between text and context, joining them together and thus letting the material speak.

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Notes

1 The photonegatives are physically stored in different places, keeping them separate from other document is due to the dangers of cellulose nitrate.

2 The information about the life of Gunnar Lundh derives from church records, tax records, census records, probate inventories and records from *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (bind 24) at Riksarkivet, hospital records and newspaper articles.

3 Diariet, Ämbetsarkivet, NMA.

4 In some cases, the order has been reversed compared to the negative roll.

5 Diariet, Ämbetsarkivet, NMA.

6 Some of the pictures were exposed to water entering the archive facility due to heavy rains in the summer of 1988. The damaged photographs were dried and are still a part

of the archive, stored separately from the others but still arranged in the same way the photographer once labelled them. (Archive after Gunnar Lundh, NMA.)

7 Four different individuals were interviewed: three men and one woman. Worth mentioning is that all of them were children or young adults when meeting Gunnar Lundh.

8 København, Sokkelund, Rigshospitalet sogn, Kirkebøger, Kirkebog 1929–1930, fødte kvinder.

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Archive after Gunnar Lundh

Stockholms stadsarkiv (SSA):
Stockholms rådhusrätt
Kungsholms församling

Stockholms läns landstings arkiv:
S:t Eriks sjukhus

Lunds universitet (LU):
Filosofiska fakultetens arkiv

Helsingborgs stadsarkiv (HAS):
Höganäs församling
Väsby församling
Helsingborgs stads församling
Helsingborgs rådhusrätt

Region Skåne, regionarkivet:
S:t Maria sjukhus

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