

# Constructing Recognition, Mobilizing Sentiment

## Lucila Quieto's *Filiación* (2013)

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A seminal work in the study of photography, Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida* unfolds as an extended meditation on the yearning for recognition promised by the photograph. In the wake of his mother's death, Barthes searches for a photograph that might reveal her "essential being" or "fundamental core" (Hirsch 1997, 3; 1). He recognizes this in the so-called winter garden photograph,<sup>1</sup> an image of his mother as a child, standing next to her brother. The author develops this study of photography in general (and of one photograph in particular) by prioritizing the sentimental power of this form:

[...] at the moment of reaching the essence of Photography in general, I branched off; instead of following the path of a formal ontology (of a Logic), I stopped, keeping with me, like a treasure, my desire or my grief [...] As *Spectator* I was interested in Photography only for 'sentimental' reasons; I wanted to explore it not as a question (a theme) but as a wound: I see, I feel, hence I notice, I observe, and I think. (Barthes 26)

The moment of recognition that Barthes discovers in the Winter Garden Photograph is theorized by Marianne Hirsch as issuing from a series of "familial looks," which "both create and consolidate the familial relations among the individuals involved, fostering an unmistakable sense of mutual recognition" (Hirsch 1997, 2). This structure of identification and likeness can expand across generations and beyond the family itself (53). Hirsch defines the family gaze as "the conventions and ideologies of family through which they see themselves" (Hirsch 1999, xi). The family photo album presents but also produces resemblances to be scrutinized and identified. As Barthes proposes,

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1 "I studied the little girl, and at last rediscovered my mother..." (Barthes 82).

the Photograph sometimes makes appear what we never see in a real face (or in a face reflected in a mirror): a genetic feature, the fragment of oneself or of a relative which comes from some ancestor [...] The Photograph gives a little truth, on the condition that it parcels out the body. (Barthes 126)

The family photo album thus functions as a site of sentimental construction, incorporating the spectator's gaze into its performance of intimate bonds, personal memory, and genealogical resemblance.

After the 1976–1983 military dictatorship in Argentina, thousands of individuals who were disappeared (kidnapped, detained, and executed) by the military regime remained unaccounted for. Memorial activism by family members and loved ones continued through the 1990s and 2000s, and many children of the disappeared underwent a process of filiation (*filiación*) to verify their genealogical connection to their parents. Since the early 2000s, artist Lucila Quieto, whose father was disappeared before her birth in 1976, has used the medium of photography to imagine and interrogate the possibility for forging relationships between children of the disappeared and their absent parents. In her 2013 series *Filiación*, Quieto intervened in the family photo album through the medium of collage, playing with the performances surrounding this photographic space of sentimental production to question the importance of photographs in claiming familial connection. This chapter posits that Quieto's interventions into the family photo album, as a visual stage for performing sentimental and genealogical attachments, initiates a process of societal and interpersonal repair in the wake of state violence and mass disappearance.

In the series *Collages, Familia Quieto*, one part of *Filiación*, Quieto manipulates this field of recognition to expand and (re)construct the familial gaze, positioning the family photograph as a site of potential repair. The images in Quieto's collaged family album simultaneously speak of personal (private) and collective (public) loss. Through techniques of collage and layering, these images illuminate a process of repair that does not cover over, deny, or seek to "heal" the damage left in the wake of the dictatorial regime's practice of disappearance. Rather, the images center loss while imagining new possible connections born out of familial, genealogical continuities. As I will argue, the effect of recognition invoked by the familial gaze in Quieto's work is central to the political force of the family photograph in the wake of disappearance, or systematic kidnapping and execution of citizens carried out by the military regime during the last dictatorship in Argentina (1976–1983).

Quieto has described her collages as “reparador”—a way of creating the images of herself and her father that she had previously longed for. “For me the work was reparative. I repaired this obsession I had for years [...]. Through a technical method I found a way to resolve my distress, my long-held fantasy” (Quieto quoted in Fortuny 2014, 88).<sup>2</sup> By aggregating images and parts of images to reveal genealogical continuity, Quieto treats the family photograph as a site of repair after loss. Within Eve Sedgwick’s theory of paranoid and reparative reading, repair constitutes an embrace of excess, an investment in re-assembling fragments into a type of whole that nonetheless bears the marks of its own construction. Borrowing from Melanie Klein’s definition of the term, Sedgwick emphasizes that it “is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one’s own resources to assemble or ‘repair’ the murderous part-objects into something like a whole—though, I would emphasize, not necessarily like any preexisting whole” (Sedgwick 128). In a queer aesthetics of repair, there is “a glue of surplus beauty, surplus stylistic investment, unexplained upwellings of threat, contempt, and longing cements together and animates the amalgam of powerful part-objects” (150). For Sedgwick, repair takes place through the constitution of alternative family ties (149). While the theorist discusses repair in the context of queer kinship, Quieto’s approach to repair and kinship suggests a public, distributed process of reconstructing generational bonds after loss.

This chapter considers how the familial gaze contributes to simultaneously personal and societal repair by expanding a visual field of relation, promoting a recognition of state violence and its reverberations within present and future generations. Reflecting on the family photo album within a volume dedicated to global sentimentality, the emotional arrangements and attachments implied by this form come to the fore. While conventional associations of familial photography as private, intimate, and emotional might typically consider this material as separate from the political sphere, Quieto’s work, among many other post-dictatorial projects that deal with the family photo album, shows how the personal, sentimental, and intimate are deeply intertwined with calls for justice, societal awareness, and the crucial step toward recognition in post-dictatorship Argentina.

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2 Translation A. C., in the original: “Para mí el trabajo fue reparador. Reparó esa obsesión que tuve durante años de no tener la foto. Ahora la tengo. Eso es buenísimo. Había cerrado un ciclo. Encontré en un recurso técnico la forma de resolver una angustia, una fantasía de muchos años.”

## Representing Loss in Dictatorial Argentina

*Collages, Familia Quieto* illustrates a process of repair that responds to the particularities of disappearance as a method of repression and violence waged at the level of existence. During the last military dictatorship (1976–1983), tens of thousands of individuals were kidnapped, tortured, and executed by the military government in Argentina. Regardless of their political commitments, the disappeared were characterized as “subversive” militants by the military regime. As Mara Polgovsky Ezcurra points out:

Although many of those forcibly disappeared were people engaged in political activism, many were not. According to CONADEP [Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas], the majority of them were working-class men in their twenties, 30 percent of the disappeared were women, a third of whom were pregnant. The seemingly random selection of men and women as victims of authoritarian violence was part and parcel of a repressive strategy that sought to generate fear among the populace. (Ezcurra 23)

Disappearance is a metaphorical description of the State's operation of kidnapping, mass execution, and denial of its victims' existence. Within this operation, the regime eradicated and systematically denied any official documentation of the victims' life or previous existence. Individuals were detained and tortured in concentration camps, and the bodies of victims were disposed of in mass graves or thrown into the Rio de la Plata. Hundreds of babies born in captivity were kidnapped and raised by military families. The military continuously declined *habeas corpus* petitions, and frequently targeted the individuals who sought information about their disappeared loved ones (Ezcurra 23; Taylor). Insofar as disappearance constitutes an erasure of physical existence and a refusal to recognize an identity at the bureaucratic, governmental level, the recuperation and reanimation of photographs attesting to an individual's life emerged as one form of radical resistance to this particular form of State violence.

In post-dictatorship Argentina, photographic portraits of the disappeared have come to possess multiple layers of political, historical, and ontological significance. The forces of familial recognition, resemblance, and loss in the family album attest to the political force of the sentimental in political debates and memorial activism in the wake of State violence during the military dictatorship. Since the first demonstration by the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo in

April 1977—who began their Thursday “rounds” in front of the Casa Rosada, the presidential palace in Buenos Aires, to demand information about the whereabouts of their disappeared children—the amplification and public display of personal photographs has accompanied protests, demonstrations, and occupations calling for justice during and after the dictatorial period (Rojinsky 2022, 78).

As observed by scholars Ana Longoni (2010) and Nelly Richard (1994), the recontextualization of identity photographs and private snapshots initiated by the Madres marks an enduring practice of disrupting the bureaucratic and aesthetic conventions of photography. Richard observes that the photographs taken from family albums reveal a “latent tension between the past carelessness of the face that remains unaware of the imminent drama at the moment when the photograph was taken, and the present time from which we look tragically at the picture of someone who has subsequently become a victim of history” (Richard 2006, 166). In post-dictatorial memorial activism, Jordana Blejmar describes the development of a “memory of victimhood,” portrayed in part through family photographs. “Through these practices the relatives of the disappeared in particular aimed to make the absent present in public by showing photographs that proved the existence of individuals denied by the military regime” (Blejmar 117). In this context, photographs documenting the intimate moments and rites of passage of lives cut short by state violence were introduced into public space, joining a chorus of other photographs selected from family albums to attest to the existence of the disappeared and demand information regarding their whereabouts. Natalia Fortuny articulates, “family photographs are a space where the intersection between public and private history, between individual and collective memories and social history, is traced” (Fortuny 79).<sup>3</sup> In its wavering positioning between the public and the private, the family photo album captures significant, intimate moments and presents a record to be shown and viewed, both by those familiar with its subjects and by those positioned “outside” of the family.

This essay approaches the family photo album as a simultaneously public and private stage for sentimental attachment, arguing that the relationships, gazes, and moments of recognition framed and facilitated by this object can point toward political and societal repair. I propose that the particu-

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3 Translation A. C., in the original: “las fotos familiares son el lugar donde se traza la intersección entre historia pública y privada, entre las memorias individuales o de grupo y la historia social”.

lar type of recognition implied by genealogical and/or generational connection can open to active, collective processes of relating that establishes the groundwork for societal repair. In their expression and initiation of this particular type of recognition, the work analyzed in this chapter sets out the potential for collective repair that can take place within and between generations.

## Assembling Filiations

### Collages, Familia Quieto

The enduring generational impact of disappearance is distilled in Quieto's tripartite exhibition *Filiación*, presented at the Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti (housed in the ESMA, a former detention center) in 2013.<sup>4</sup> Quieto's photographic collages are a touchstone in the memorial art and activism of the post-dictatorship generation. Much of her work visually imagines, through assembled images, an encounter between family members of the disappeared and their loved ones. In her celebrated series *Arqueología de la ausencia*, included in *Filiación*, Quieto projected photographs of the disappeared onto the faces and bodies of their children, then photographed this virtual encounter, constructing an impossible moment of contact between generations. The images produce a space of reunion, emphasizing the power of sentimental attachment to reach across distinct historical moments and reassert severed familial connections. The images demonstrate the violent and enduring impact of disappearance, the intimate bonds that were cut off by the military regime's systematic and widespread repression. The series approaches the space of the image as a realm in which the horrific aftereffects of disappearance can be, if not transcended, worked through in a creative, even playful, manner (Blejmar 4). The hypothetical or imagined encounter conjures a curious anachronistic temporality of what might have been. Quieto has described this anachronistic effect of the montage, "that is not the past time of the photograph, nor that of the child holding the photograph of their absent parent showing it today. A third fictional time, which is not clear" (Quieto quoted in Fortuny 89).<sup>5</sup> This third, fictional time is created in part

4 See: <https://www.revistaharoldo.com.ar/nota.php?id=103>.

5 Translation A. C., in the original: "que no es ni el tiempo de la foto del pasado, ni la foto del hijo sosteniendo la foto de su padre ausente mostrándola hoy. Un tercer tiempo ficcionado, que no está claro".

by sustaining, illustrating, or emphasizing the absences and fragmentation created by the loss of a parent or loved one. Through assemblage, this work renders visible the process and act of creation evident in sourcing the family photograph, staging the act of projection, and capturing the moment of encounter.

In addition to *Arqueología de la ausencia*, the *Filiación* exhibition included Quieto's series *Sitios de Memoria* (2008–2012), photographs of former concentration camps made while the artist worked for the Archivo Nacional, and the series *Collages, Familia Quieto* (2012–2013). The latter series, and its interventions into the familial gaze is the focus of this contribution. In these images, the coherence of genealogy is constructed, challenged, and played with as Quieto splices together the faces and bodies of her relatives, staging scenes and reconstructing features of familial resemblance, suturing and emphasizing the absences left in her personal family after the disappearances of her father and uncle (Blejmar 137). The resulting images feature multiple cropped faces, at times distorted or enlarged, drawing attention to a particular feature or set of features between the faces. The construction of these images was carried out in part as an investigation into the genealogy of familial resemblance that might be evident in the features of her son. Quieto (2013b) describes the process as follows:

I grabbed the photos of my paternal family (my father's brothers), I took photos of my paternal cousins, of my son, of my cousins' children and of my only living uncle. I'm thinking about this idea of transmission, the genetic: to arrange familial traces through your/his family. To construct an image of the life my father couldn't have. From his oldest brother to my son.<sup>6</sup>

In *Collages, Familia Quieto* (2012–2013), collage is employed as a way to explore and construct resemblances between generations. These images are a means to visually imagine both how her family members would appear today, and to record how these familial traits might continue to appear in future generations.

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6 Translation A. C., in the original: "Agarré las fotos de mi familia paterna (los hermanos de mi papá), les hice fotos a mis primos por línea paterna, a mi hijo, a los hijos de mis primos y a mi único tío vivo. Pienso en esta idea de la transmisión, lo genético: armar los rasgos familiares a través de tu/su familia. Construir una imagen de la vida que mi papá no pudo tener. Desde su hermano más grande hasta mi hijo."

In an interview, Quieto (2013b) describes the endurance of disappearance, noting that her father's absence is not restricted to those who knew him personally, but will continue to impact future generations, including her son. The legacy of disappearance "doesn't finish with us, with the children of the disappeared. It's a story that will continue for at least one more generation [...] My son experiences the absence of his grandparents. Even if his story is different from my own, he thinks about and lives the consequences of disappearance and assassination."<sup>7</sup> Though the works in *Collages, Familia Quieto* are invested in constructing links and reunions, equal weight is given to the apparent disruptions and distortions caused by disappearance. In the conglomeration of faces and generations, the seams and divisions between disparate components are as central as the parallels and resemblances made legible.

One image from the series (figure 1), a sepia-toned photograph of four formally dressed figures, displays the artist's face surrounded by three faces of male relatives.<sup>8</sup> The faces share a color palette and, in their incongruent tone and scale, are clearly overlaid onto the apparently older base photograph. The composition reflects that of a classic family portrait, with three generations presented from the youngest in the foreground to the eldest in the background. The somber, formal tone of the background photograph is reflected in the expression worn on the faces, but their exaggerated size renders the image nearly comical. A hierarchical family structure and the suggestion of generational continuity that this format implies is thrown into relief by the constructed nature of this image. Meanwhile, the resemblance between the faces is made all the more obvious by their shared discordance with the background.

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7 Translation A. C., in the original: "no termina en nosotros, en los hijos de desaparecidos. Es una historia que al menos va a seguir por una generación más. Recién con la próxima habrá dos generaciones no marcadas por el genocidio. Mi hijo vive la ausencia de sus abuelos. Si bien la historia es distinta a la mía, piensa y vive las consecuencias de la desaparición y el asesinato."

8 To view this, and other images from the series, see: <http://www.infojusnoticias.gov.ar/especiales/lucila-quieto-la-fotografa-de-la-ausencia-58.html>.

Figure 1: Quieto, Lucila. "Collages, Familia Quieto." Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti, 2013



[https://issuu.com/ccmharoldoconti/docs/lucila\\_quieto\\_issuu](https://issuu.com/ccmharoldoconti/docs/lucila_quieto_issuu). Accessed: 20/04/2023. Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

Quieto's collages animate the unexplained and unexpected that amalgamation suggests, forging the discovery or creation of new resemblances and bonds within and beyond the family photo album. This operation is clear in another image from the series in which fragments of faces are brought together. Slivers of photographed faces appear against a base image. The separation between the two layers is obvious; each face is composed of two black-and-white fragments brought together through the artist's intervention. The act of merging or combining is on display, with features being slightly misaligned, and the differences of color tone made more evident in their juxtaposition. The method of the second image's attachment, a paperclip, features centrally. The paperclip is placed over both photographs, against a golden background on which the photographs are presented. The choice to illustrate the means of attachment and thus reveal the three layers of the background and two photographic fragments suggests a momentary coming together, framing the acts of layering and conjunction as experimental or temporary.

In the black-and-white foundation photograph (figure 2), four young boys, again in formal clothing, pose for a family portrait. In the overlaid fragments, only three of the faces are supplemented with a sliver of what is presumably each subject's adult face, from a photograph taken later in time.

The photographic fragments supplementing the three faces emphasize the fourth child's bare face, unadorned and visible in its entirety. The young boy's face appears exposed, solitary and arrested in time. The collage suggests various relations between the faces and bodies held within its wide frame, from familial and generational bonds to the shades of resemblance contained in one single face over a lifetime. The image appears as a test or study, a comparison of the younger and older faces of the boy's siblings in order to predict how he might appear as an older man. The four figures are placed next to more recent, color photographs of Quieto's family members, inviting a comparative look that includes the multiple faces of a family. Bringing together and overlaying this multitude of faces, expressions, and gestures, the composition reflects a projection of shared traits between these figures, uncovering a common familial appearance through the act of aggregation.

Figure 2: Quieto, Lucila. "Collages, Familia Quieto." Centro Cultural Haroldo Conti, 2013



[https://issuu.com/ccmharoldoconti/docs/lucila\\_quieto\\_issuu](https://issuu.com/ccmharoldoconti/docs/lucila_quieto_issuu). Accessed: 20/04/2023.

Reproduced with the permission of the artist.

Identifying resemblances in the family photo album contributes to the presentation of a family narrative that is intimate and linear, establishing a type of temporality shaped by family togetherness. In her introduction to Agustina Triquell's recent study of the family photo album in Argentina, Elizabeth Jelin asserts, "A long time may pass in which nobody looks at these photographs.

Nonetheless, their existence is a guarantee of permanence and continuity of familial temporality” (Jelin 15).<sup>9</sup> The very existence of a photographic record connects the family to previous lives and suggests the preservation of these images for family members (and familial gazes) to come. This temporality undergirds many other familial imperatives, such as procreation and the preservation of a name. The guardians of these records, those who create, assemble, organize, and maintain family albums, archive the relations and moments in the familial history that merit visual preservation.

The family photo album constructs the family unit by recording and furnishing the personal and societal narratives of genealogical coherence. As Marianne Hirsch writes,

the family photo both displays the cohesion of the family and is an instrument of its togetherness; it both chronicles family rituals and constitutes a prime objective of those rituals [...] As photography immobilizes the flow of family life into a series of snapshots, it perpetuates familial myths while seeming merely to record actual moments in family history. (Hirsch 1997, 7)

This coherence is actively constructed and maintained through the acts of capturing, selecting, and including, as well as the refusal or exclusion of images recording particular moments, relationships, or individuals. In other words, the family album speaks not only of the moments it presents and preserves, but also of the scenes and faces that it does not. A logic of selection determines how the family appears. In Pierre Bourdieu’s configuration:

The images of the past arranged in chronological order, the logical order of social memory, evoke and communicate the memory of events which deserve to be preserved because the group sees a factor of unification in the monuments of its past unity or—which amounts to the same thing—because it draws its confirmation of its present unity from its past: this is why there is nothing more decent, reassuring and edifying than a family album. (Bourdieu 31)

The family album works as confirmation of unity or coherence over time, chronicling rites of passage, significant moments, and images of togeth-

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9 Translation A. C., in the original: “Pueden pasar largos períodos en que nadie mira esas fotos. Sin embargo, su existencia es garantía de permanencia y continuidad del tiempo familiar”.

erness. Although Quieto's work speaks of an experience of loss shared by a generation of children of the disappeared, this work is intently focused on the disappearance of her own father, its reverberations within her own family tree. Mariana Eva Perez notes in the introductory text to the *Filiación* exhibition catalogue, "Lucila observes and shares the rituals of other orphans but insists: How would *my* father be today? His eyes, his mouth, not just any eye socket, not just any set of teeth, not just any poem that speaks of eyes or a mouth."<sup>10</sup> By detaching the family photo album from its status as a space of determining a collective personal history, for instance through play, fragmentation, and layering, this record becomes a site of enormous potential for the active, creative (re)construction of relationships, narratives, and bonds.

*Collages, Familia Quieto* conveys the simultaneously intimate and institutional function of the family photo album, which both captures and constructs societal and generational continuity over time. In this series, collage becomes a method of inquiry into the resemblances and continuities that shape the family photo album, and into the social expectations requiring this performance of intimacy and continuity. By actively constructing and deconstructing scenes of familial togetherness, the series incorporates the viewer in the process of uncovering and recording the recognition of traits running throughout Quieto's paternal family tree. Attending to the intimate sphere of the family photo album, this work exhibits otherwise intimate, familial memories to the public eye, isolating the features and gestures that speak of familial relatedness and continuity over time.

## Sentimentality and the Family Gaze

The continuity, resemblances, and attachments presented within the photo album are shaped by sentimentality, the affective force that holds the album's faces and moments together. The family photo taps a sensory, fragmentary memory of a loved one's presence from the photograph's surface: "contemplating a photograph in which she is hugging me, a child, against her, I can awaken in myself the rumpled softness of her crêpe de Chine and the perfume of her rice powder" (Barthes 77–8). Barthes's search for his mother in photographs,

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10 Translation A. C., in the original: "Lucila observa y comparte los rituales de otros huérfanos pero reclama: ¿cómo era, cómo sería hoy mi padre? Sus ojos, su boca, no cualquier cuenca ni cualquier dentadura ni cualquier poema que hable de unos ojos o una boca".

and for photography in the face of his mother, are shot through with the sentimental attachment that guides the experience of recognition, and the network of 'familial looks,' within a family photo album.

In any context, the act of showing and viewing a family photograph or album involves recognition, misrecognition, and the (re)construction of narratives that link public and private histories. While searching through photographs of his mother, Barthes expresses (perhaps in desperation): "If I were ever to show them to friends, I could doubt that these photographs would *speak*" (Barthes 76). For Barthes, the networks of recognition and remembrance that determine to what extent a photograph might "speak" are delineated by intimate, sentimental attachment. In contrast, Quieto's reassembled family photo album invites viewers into this network, opening the familial look outward toward a collective and public experience of recognition. The collaged photographs speak to a wider collective and general experience of loss, while centering on the private and enduring loss of a loved one.

The family photograph is vital to recording and preserving the traces and absences left after the disappearance. Quieto's work reassembles and expands the familial gaze, inviting viewers into the recognition and reconstruction at work in the family photo album. Presenting fragments of images of the artist's family, the album illustrates the process of searching for genealogical resemblance between Quieto's disappeared father and uncle, and her son. In its emphasis on exposing the fragmentation of the post-dictatorship family album, this work reveals how the violence of disappearance continues to affect the personal and familial networks of its victims through an insistent and enduring erasure.

Quieto's reconstruction and exhibition of the family photo extends what Marianne Hirsch describes as an inclusive, affiliative look that "draws the looker into this network of familiarity" (Hirsch 1997, xiii). Hirsch writes, "the family is in itself traversed and constituted by a series of 'familial' looks that place different individuals into familial relation within a field of vision" (53). The process of recognition involved in the familial look is mutual and reciprocal, and configured differently depending on one's relative closeness to or distance from the family pictured. Understood as constitutive of a reciprocal familial gaze, the family photo album can be seen to assemble a collective viewership, organized by this reciprocal recognition. If the familial look "is not the look of a subject looking at an object, but a mutual look of a subject looking at an object who is a subject looking (back) at an object," the public presentation of the reconstructed family photograph answers anonymity with

a mutual look of recognition (Hirsch 1997, 9). In this light, the experience of looking at any family album establishes a field of reciprocal gazes made available to the viewer by the form itself. This field is established through the recognition imparted to the viewer in the album's insistence on genealogical continuity.

In *Collages, Familia Quieto*, the gazes that traverse the family extend beyond the network of individuals actually pictured within the album. In this work, a public of viewers is invited into the process of identifying, recognizing, and reconstructing the filiations and intimate memories that illustrate a deeply personal and ongoing experience of loss after disappearance. In their public exhibition, the images address a public who will recognize the collective experience of loss distilled in the individual family narrative that the collaged album presents. Without experiencing the sentimental attachments or affective force of this loss, the viewer becomes involved in the search for genealogical resemblances between the faces presented in the photo album. In this way, the album extends an invitation to search for and identify resemblances beyond the community of viewers who are part of or intimately acquainted with the family. The filiation between the photographed subjects becomes evident when various faces are placed side-by-side. However, the urge to identify and visually locate genealogical connections between the subjects of the photographs is challenged by a collage practice that interrupts the transparent coherence of the photographic image, placing certain heads on other bodies to create cartoonish amalgamations.

*Quieto* includes the viewer in the process of constructing the intimate spaces, looks, and memories that constitute the reassembled whole of the family album. The images suggest a private or loving gaze, regardless of a lack of familial connection between the subjects and a viewer. In their encounter with family photographs, the viewer becomes involved in the recognition of even unfamiliar faces and moments. However, without personal knowledge or familiarity with the faces presented in the album, a public's experience of recognition is limited to the album's mediation of the resemblances it presents. In this case, the relative knowledge or familiarity with the contents of the album determines to what extent the family photo album might speak of a symbolic familial narrative or a particular, personal one. While implicating and involving a wider public in the reciprocal exchange of gazes initiated by the family album, *Quieto's* project intertwines narratives of public and personal loss that punctuate Argentina's dictatorial past.

The public's lack of sentimental familiarity with these memories, which would otherwise define the significance of certain photographs, allows the series to speak to a general and distributed experience of loss. In other words, the viewer scrutinizes the fragmentation inflicted by disappearance on one single familial unit, but their estrangement from these specific memories and subjects results in a recognition of loss that is not personal but general and indicative of an experience shared by thousands of families across the country. By extending the field of recognition beyond the network of the family, Quieto's *Collages, Familia Quieto* conveys the impact of disappearance to a network of viewers that includes both those immediately affected by disappearance and those who encounter it through its representation, as future generations will.

The sentimental force of personal memory suffuses the experience of looking at a family photo album in which the viewer is represented, or intimately acquainted with its subjects. Encountering the narratives and images held within the family album typically involves piecing together in memory the narratives that the photographs capture, seeking to recognize oneself and/or one's relatives within the frames. Ordinarily, a family photo album is shown to viewers who are represented within it, at least passingly familiar with its subjects, or personally connected to a member of the family it documents. An experience of recognition, and misrecognition, thus undergirds the family photo album, and informs the way in which its contents can implicate a viewer, regardless of their personal connection to the particular family it exhibits.

### **(Mis)Recognition and Repair**

The act of creatively reconstructing what has been left unknowable, inaccessible, and destroyed by state violence constitutes a process of repair. Creative practices that unfold through a kind of suturing emerge in the work of children of the disappeared as a process of inter-generational healing or processing the trauma suffered by their parents' generation. The creative and constructive practices carried out by this "postmemory" generation, the children raised in the wake of atrocity, "use visual images—especially photography—imaginatively as a means for (an illusory) suturing (of) themselves into the narrative of the previous experience of their family members" (Rojinsky 2017, 189). Similarly, Quieto's interventions into the photographs of her loved ones suggest that the construction of recognition can be reparative and creative. Echoing Sedgwick, the faces that Quieto assembles through collage do not appear like

any kind of preexisting whole, but rather bear the outlines, tears, and residual marks of the process of compilation. Where Quieto collages the faces of loved ones and family members together, the amalgamation of parts is positioned as a site of repair and potential discovery of familial continuity.

Most spectators who encounter the images in *Collages, Familia Quieto* will not recognize (or remember) the moments and individuals presented within the album. However, through the medium of collage—which selects, isolates, and recontextualizes certain faces and features—the viewer can access a type of superficial recognition by establishing synchronicities between the individuals presented. In this work's exhibition, the viewer participates in the effort to piece together resemblances between the faces of disappeared loved ones. The experience of deciphering the photographs presented in this collaged album takes place through a public process of recognizing the features and faces that reappear across various images. Despite a lack of intimate familiarity with the relationships and individuals presented, the viewer nonetheless might come to recognize unfamiliar faces through their repeated appearance in this work. As the recurrent appearance of certain faces in this series renders them gradually familiar, the coherence of the family album is revealed to be as constructed as the collage.

Quieto initiates a dynamic movement between the relative familiarity and incomprehension that punctuates the experience of viewing a family photo album. A process of misrecognition, or frustrated recognition, is thus bound up in the genealogical coherence sought by a viewer confronted with these images. A tension arises between repetition or familiarity that is gained in the viewer's encounter with multiple images of the same faces, on the one hand, and an impossibility of knowing or remembering the subjects and moments presented in these images, on the other. Beyond simply opening the pages of a family album to a viewership beyond that of the family, these collages expose the frustrated and fragmented process of constructing familial coherence through the act of selecting, compiling, and preserving images. Nonetheless, this estrangement from the intimate history that the album displays does not impede the possibility of the public's recognition of, perhaps identification with, the absence woven throughout this record. An awareness of disappearance as a simultaneously collective and intensely personal experience foregrounds a search for coherence presented in this work, which signals the continual process of repair and reconstruction after the disappearance of Quieto's father.

Quieto's work expands the familial gaze by visibly reconfiguring the genealogical, generational, and chronological coherence that typically structures

a family photo album. Centering the gaps in the family photo album left after disappearance, this collaged album frustrates sentimental recognition that is limited to and by the exclusively familial gaze, opening instead to a form of recognition that is open, constructed, and creative. The familial gaze unfolds in this series across and despite the limits, gaps, and interruptions inflicted on the family by state violence, revealing expanded possibilities for identification in a creative construction of family that incorporates a community of viewers and generations to come in a process of recognition that involves confronting the persistence of gaps and erasures in the formation of coherence.

## Conclusion

In the exhibition of a collaged family album to a public, the familial narratives and intimate knowledge that this form typically presents are supplemented by a recognition of the shared and symbolic impact of familial loss. A process of recognition and reconstruction is at work in the comparative and affiliative looks facilitated by the collaged format. Moments of recognition and estrangement create an experience of relative closeness or distance depending on the viewer's own orientation to the subjects, faces, and narratives exhibited. In Quieto's reconfigured family photo album, the relationships and settings that are intimately woven into the family narrative are exhibited, connecting these images to a shared, general, and in some cases individual awareness or experience of disappearance.

Quieto's collages mobilize recognition toward possibilities for reparative justice in the wake of disappearance. In these images, personal and collective recognition become central to forging a collective understanding of the past that will facilitate social and societal repair through the transmission of knowledge to future generations. *Collages, Familia Quieto* locates this process between the personal and public, between recognized and fabricated resemblance, demonstrating a potential for repair that is never completely sutured. These collages articulate both public and private memory, framing what is known and recognizable as only ever partial and fragmented.

The family photo album is both a mediation of the shared, collective family memory and a medium through which those who are "external" to the family may come to know or recognize the intimate, sentimental histories it presents. Quieto's approach to the family photo album attends to the gaps and fabrications within the family narrative, illustrating how the coherence forged both in

personal memory and public history is largely constructed and shaped by the demands of the present. Similarly, the dynamic relationship between personal, familial narratives and public memory shapes how the post-conflict generation processes, represents, and lives with the past. In Quieto's collaged study of resemblance, a public will recognize these subjects and their relationships speculatively; the disparity between those who know and remember the faces presented in the album and those who do not establishes the dynamic movement between public and private, the personal and the political, that this series traverses.

By assembling and exhibiting familial resemblance, a process of recognition informs how the images included in *Collages, Familia Quieto* configure a collective understanding of disappearance that is simultaneously intensely individual. Sedgwick maintains that "hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates" (Sedgwick 146). In its address to future generations and family members, this series works through recognition to enact a reparative, hopeful process of transmitting collective awareness to post-dictatorial generations. Through the formal possibilities of collage, this series constructs new relations and modes of understanding the fragmented, obscured, or forcibly erased past. By intervening into the coherency of family photographs, the collages assert that a reparative influence of hope is not restricted to the future, that considerations of the past must involve the reconstruction of sentimental attachments and political awareness.

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