

I saved you from obscurity, others are not so lucky (2007)

Statement

Alison J Carr

If a found photograph is a riddle that cannot be solved, then how can we talk about the content of the photograph? If we will never know the details of the moment that the shutter opened, the names or the places in the image, then what is the appeal of that photograph?

A found negative offers further mysteries – has the photograph ever been printed? If so, how big was the photograph, how did it look, were they dearly loved images carried around, prints forgotten at the back of a drawer or large framed photographs? The desire to find out the answers to these questions, to solve the photographic riddles becomes more pertinent to me than what the photograph looks like.

This piece of work explores that desire by presenting photographs from negatives found in a flea market in Paris, printed on an old fashion fibre-based paper in a box fit for jewellery, but with a portion of the centre of the image carefully removed with a scalpel. The benevolent gesture of saving these images is conditional.

The hole has other meanings too. By taking out a crucial part of the centre of the photographs, even less is known. The story is obviously unfinished. There are details that remain, that suggest feelings, places and people. But the hole gives the viewer licence to complete the picture themselves. The photograph, therefore, is whatever you want it to be.

This piece of work is a multiple and I have produced 100 numbered boxes with one of the six photographs in each.