

Texts are printed on pages facing each photograph.

Photo Captions:

Year of Daybook Daybook theme: Title of photo in Daybook – project/year

1990 *Canadian Women Photographers* (from *You Can't Hug Kids With Nuclear Arms* 1986 and "*One in five...*" *photographer as single mom* 1993)

Photography for me links the personal and the political, the private and the public. I use the camera to make connections, to encapsulate, image, concretize, record, remember, share, point to perceptions and relationships.

My life, my kids, my friends - at home, at work, in the community at large - are the themes of my art making. I place diaristic, intimate images within a cultural, political context. This approach also informs my work with The Montreal Health Press, a women's collective which publishes books on health and sexuality for mass distribution.

In the photograph on the right, my children's friendly, intimate interaction with the dove in a friend's home is a moment resonant with the symbolic implications of peace and hope for a more just society in a militaristic world armed to the teeth.

The main preoccupation of my camera over the years has been women's work as mothers. *Giving Birth is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering / Donner naissance n'est qu'un début: Les femmes parlent de la maternité*, my recently published book, combines photographs of the women of my community with excerpts from interviews with them. I use photography as a part of a process of reflecting on and understanding our lives as women.

1992 *Daughters/Mothers: "Doris and Nancy" Champagne Breakfast*

International Women's Day brought together Doris, a counselor and Nancy, a teacher, for our annual Champagne Breakfast. To sit at their table and experience their mutual delight brought me (and my camera) great pleasure.

"Doris and Nancy belongs in spirit to my recent project *Giving Birth is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering / Donner naissance n'est qu'un début: Les femmes parlent de la maternité*, in which images and text are combined in a dialogue about the work of mothering. Drawn from my interview/discussions with the women of my photographs, the text expands on often joyous and loving moments by pointing to complex social/personal issues not addressed by the still photograph. That text is understood in the image of "Doris and Nancy," where mother and child connect into adulthood.

1994 *Sisters: Greta and Auntie Dora, 1981* (from *Relations* 1981)

Greta had often talked about her wonderful 87 year old auntie Dora, whose memoires she was translating from German to English. When I heard that Dora was driving up in her orange Volkswagon bug for a visit, I couldn't resist being present with my camera. And when this moment of sharing affection, respect and energy over a fruit salad desert appeared across the picnic table from me, I was inspired.

My greatest joy in photography is making images of the bits of daily life that make it all worthwhile and bridge the gap of solitude.

1994 *Sisters: Vanier College Women's Studies Hike, Bromont, Quebec* 1991 (from: *The 50s / la cinquantaine* 1998)

Coming together from different departments/disciplines, we volunteer our time and effort to animate the College around issues of concern to women. We run a program of courses, team teach a course Alternatives for Women organize events around March 8, initiated a Sexual Harrassment Policy before it was common to do so, lobbied for an Affirmative Action Policy and so on. We also

make a community for ourselves with book nights, pot luck dinners and a yearly hike in the woods, where we not only share our exercise and the outdoors, but toss around a few ideas.

1996 Mothers: Alanna with Mara and Kyle (from: *Giving Birth is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering / Donner naissance n'est qu'un début: Les femmes parlent de la maternité* 1985)

Alanna: *We encouraged our son to express some of the so-called female qualities, his emotions, his affection, gentleness, etc. The very first day of school, he was 6 years old, he met a friend and when he hugged and kissed him, he was beaten up. He began to feel that only at home could he express his feelings, cry, be affectionate and gentle.*

Mara's treatment was different. She was frozen out, ignored if her peer group didn't approve of her behaviour. I recall her going to school in a dress and doing a somersault and being totally ostracized because she was showing her underwear.

So she can't climb a tree or do a somersault, and he can't be gentle and affectionate; they are both losing valuable characteristics.

“In 1878, the father of my two children, then 3 and 4, was killed in a motorcycle accident. Since then, while working at Vanier College in Montreal, I have been raising them, on my own.

At the same time, I have been photographing my friends and their children, usually during times of shared parenting – a visit, a meal together, a birthday party, a picnic. Our talk is often about mothering; we share experiences and advice, as well as problem of raising children in a society not organized around raising its young, our most important resource. Mothers are expected to be at home, yet the reality is that we must be on our way to work before the kids leave for school in the morning and can't be home at 3:30 when the school bell rings.

For three months in 1985, I interviewed the women of my photographs about mothering. The memories and the innuendos touched off by many years of photographs were the springboard for our discussions.

Our conversations always began with the photographs; we moved from what was included to what was missing in terms of our (often hidden) work as mothers. We were examining the joys and struggles of our lives within the larger, political and social context.”

(from the preface to *Giving Birth is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering / Donner naissance n'est qu'un début: Les femmes parlent de la maternité*, published in 1987)

1997 Women and Community: Art and Daily Life

Here we are, the three of us sitting in Greta's dining room at her type writer, our art work on the couch in the distance. We were preparing a printed version of “Art and Daily Life,” which Greta Nemiroff, Alanna Horner and I had presented at Dazibao Photography Gallery in Montreal in 1982, for the book *Women and Men: Interdisciplinary Readings on Gender* (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1987).

Asked to give a gallery talk during the exhibit of my project *Relations*, I approached two of the subjects of my photographs to collaborate with me on a presentation about the overlaps in our approaches to art work. In “Art and Daily Life,” we interwove discussions about our differences and connections as artists using different media, with readings from Greta's fiction and slide projections of my photographs and of Alanna's paintings and drawings. For all three of us, the substance of our artwork is rooted in our daily lives and in our continuing friendships.

Working on this project together was very stimulating and helped us to articulate our ideas about art-making, life and feminism.

1998 Women / Earth / Gardening: Malvina, Quebec

I am not one to glamorize or romanticize the complexity of nature. But this image speaks of the connection, uplift and nourishment that I find in its seasonal rhythms and vast open spaces. The eye can wander far. I return year after year, having refused, after a 3-week winter stay in 1971, to go “back

to the land” in a permanent way. For me, Malvina is associated with slowing down the pace, rest, restoration, shared parenting, reading, and preparation for teaching. Sharing that feeling with close friends is an extra bonus.

1999 *Girlfriends: Tea Party, Montreal 1983*

Part of the joy of having kids around the house is the directness with which they play out their preoccupations - in front of my eyes -- or the camera, as in this case. Young girls share a tea party and an exploration of femininity, trying on roles they associate with womanhood. In fact, they are already aware that the camera/image is part of that process.

2000 *Passages: Judy Mitchell, Bowmanville, Ontario (from *The 50s / La cinquantaine 1998*)*

For me, “passages” evokes not ritualized tradition, but the more subtle transition, movement, and of course change as we grow up and older... a broadening of experience. There is an open-ended quality to this image: Judy walks independently, with purpose and determination, into the darkness and mystery of the muddy forest and towards us as we look past her into the light beyond. For the moment, we are outside defining relationships and roles.

I love the ability of photography to track the people of my community through the transitions of a lifetime, and I continue to collect images that speak of our journey through these many passages.

2000 *Passages: Marion Wagschal, Montreal, Quebec*

Painter Marion Wagschal in her studio in the early '80s: poised between images of herself as she might have been and as she was, while facing the unknown territory ahead. Through all passages and transitions, she continues to work in her studio and challenge the art world, as well as inspire countless others as a teacher.

2001 *Cultural Connections: Wedding Party Spring 1995*

Connections and fusions... across generations, traditions, cultures, continents. What a privilege to participate in Chimwemwe and Faye’s wedding celebration in Doug and Nellie’s back yard here in Quebec; and what a privilege to feel Chimwemwe’s awe and respect, as he concentrates on hearing / learning a traditional rhythm from Malawi sounded out by his mother Nellie.

2002 *Women and Food: Vanier College Women’s Studies potluck dinner, Montreal 1995*

Here we are, staff and teachers of the Women’s Studies Department, sharing a potluck dinner in Marilyn's dining room.

At Vanier, we organize courses and activities around women's issues for the community; we also meet periodically to discuss books, dialogue with speakers, go for hikes, undertake facials, and generally amuse ourselves and expand our horizons.

On this occasion, Greta Hofmann Nemiroff tells us about her experiences at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace in September 1995. On behalf of the Joint Chair of Women Studies, Carleton and Ottawa Universities, and of the Sisterhood is Global Institute, Greta gave two presentations. She comments:

While I have always been interested in women's lives everywhere, I wasn't always certain about how I "fit in" to the global picture. My experience in Beijing, where I met, listened to, and spoke with women from all over the world, gave me a strong sense of our commonalities and our differences. Today, my courses at Dawson College on women and development are based on the interest and connections established in 1995. And in my current position as president of the Sisterhood is Global Institute, I have the honour and pleasure of developing program proposals with women who had come to the Beijing conference from Nepal, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Jordan. I am increasingly convinced that until all women are liberated, none of us is free.

2003 *Balancing Acts: View From the Rock, Autumn 1994*

Poised at the edge of a Newfoundland bay, Shirley embraces the sense that everything is possible. She stands rooted on rock carved by years of water surging to shore in an eternal cycle of tides, sometimes fierce, sometimes gentle. Her open arms repeat the shoreline, the rockscape both near and far: a human figure in balance with the contrasts and textures of water, sky, rock. We imagine the wind, the big air - the human presence in confident, yet delicate, balance.

Subject and photographer also play out balancing acts - choice of moments, of relationships to be defined by the image, reflects what is cherished both.

2003 *Balancing Acts: Conchita and Lulu, 1979 (from "Single Parents," *Giving Birth is Just the Beginning: Women Speak about Mothering*, 1985 exhibit / 1987 book)*

For me this image continues to speak of the tension for parents between holding on and letting go. We negotiate a delicate balance in a world where the reality is that kids often come home from school before Mom gets home from work. Yet the key stands as a tribute to the trust between them, as the youngster straddles between shadow and light, between the safety and comfort of her mom in the distance and the responsibility of being an independent young person. Lulu's assured look of quiet confidence and resolution is bolstered by that key around her neck.

Gary Michael Dault comments in *Children in Photography: 150 Years*, that the key "becomes an insistently symbolic key, a key to the kingdom of her future womanhood." We can only wonder about what balancing acts face her ahead.

2004 *A Sense of Home: Saturday Morning, Bowmanville, Ontario 1999*

From a place of warmth and comfort, Judy and Tom face the world. The photograph hinges on the disjuncture between the intimacy of the bedroom and the chilling world events encountered through the mass media.

Most striking is how the eye of the camera is welcomed into this home. The ease and trust of our relationship provides me with a sense of home too. Judy, who has embraced my photo work since we met in the mid 1970s, continues to play a major role in my images.

2005 *Matters of the Spirit: Morin Heights, August 2001*

Not distant or otherworldly, matters of the spirit - the stuff of life - are grounded, for me, in the palpable. Hence, perhaps, my continuing involvement with and delight in photography - an evocative medium that bridges material and non-material realms. In referring to, interpreting and constructing a visible, social world, photography heightens our awareness of the richness of the moment and of the spirit that infuses it.

This image suggests a lifeboat - powered by our own agency, independence and strength, providing security, sustenance and support in an uncertain environment.

2006 *Fashioning Ourselves: Three Generations, Ste Anne de Bellevue, Quebec, June 2000*

We fashion ourselves within an ever-changing social context. Photography also fashions images and memories.

Three generations gather for an official wedding photograph, for the portrait that celebrates and confirms connection and continuity. I capture an informal moment, as the family observes the bride adjusting her gown for the professional's camera. The first of the next generation is expected at the time of writing this - another step in the process of (re)fashioning personal and communal identities.

The multiple generations depicted here are poignant to me... my own family line ruptured by the Holocaust of World War II. Haunted by loss, without grandparents or great grandparents, we re-fashion ourselves to a new world.

2007 *Breathing Green / Treading Lightly: Castle Mountain, southwestern Alberta 2000*

The magnificent heights of Castle Mountain, so adored by skiers, are accessible to walkers like us in the summer. We are in Alberta close to the British Columbia and Montana borders, at the end of the North Run ski trail about 930 ft /283 m from the mountain's peak 7,463 ft / 2,273 m above sea level.

Relaxing on a ridge, the valley opening up beyond, my sister-in-law enjoys the open space of the mountain environment embracing her. We are poised on a crest of the Continental Divide: an unmarked path which, traversing borders from the Canadian Rocky Mountains through the US, Mexico, Central America, and along the Andes in South America, divides the flow of water between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Our energy is restored not only by the visual pleasure of this spot, but also by the power of nature's forces and our humble position in it all.

2008 *Neighbourhoods: Living Room, Montreal 1985*

Before sexual harassment policies were common in academe, Vanier College Women Studies teachers and staff, volunteers from many departments, pioneered the development of a Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedure.

As colleagues, we were neighbourly in our approach to our feminist work, working through problems together. This image captures a challenging moment as we explored the competing priorities of defending syndical rights in the context of protecting victims of harassment.

Our work in the early 1980s became a model for other institutions. Revised several times since 1st adopted in 1984, it has been expanded into the Human Rights Policy since 2005.

2009 *Food for Thought: Eating Healthy, Eating Wise: Taking Care, Montreal, March 2003*

I love how Tzippy is isolated here at the stove, seemingly in her own world, absorbed in the preparation of a meal, all the burners going.

No longer providing for our families on a daily basis, we now face the new challenge of keeping a kitchen going as single women – so we often gather around meals at each others' homes... Tzippy recalls:

When Judy returned to Montreal after her brother's funeral in Alberta, I wanted to offer my presence and support. I prepared a meal with the thought in mind that a meal cooked and served is such a practical way to "take care;" the setting, too, is a natural opening for reminiscences and reflection. When she started using her camera, I was struck afresh with her love of recording the precious passing moments even when an event had shaken the form of her life. Later, when she gave me this photograph, I reflected on how I got back in more than equal measure, the meal I had prepared.

2010 *Imagining Women: Creativity and the Arts: Creative Endeavours 1995*

Montreal painter Marion Wagschal, a close friend since our student days in the 1960s, is caught in a shaft of light during my visit to her studio. She stands close to her painting *Burning Spoons* (1994), in which she sits bolt upright in bed as her mother naps. Marion remarks about the work:

It's all about memory—many of the memories of our family have gone up in flames.
I feel privileged to have captured a moment that crosses generations and recalls the absence in my own life of family members and mementos from pre-Holocaust Europe.