

A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY
Feature documentary



RUN TIME: 87 minutes

RELEASE: 2024, USA

SCREENER

By request

TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/929172660>

(downloadable)

[Key images](#)

CREDITS

DIRECTOR: Rachel Elizabeth Seed

PRODUCERS:

Rachel Elizabeth Seed, Sigrid Dyekjær, Beth Levison, Matt Perniciaro, Michael Sherman, Danielle Varga

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

Kirsten Johnson, Maida Lynn, Hinda Gilbert, Robina Riccitiello

WRITER:

Rachel Elizabeth Seed

ORIGINAL SCORE:
Mary Lattimore

DIRECTORS OF PHOTOGRAPHY:
Joseph Michael Lopez, Rachel Elizabeth Seed

FILM EDITORS:
Christopher Stoudt, Eileen Meyer, Tyler Hubby, Will Garafolo

SOUND DESIGN:
Rune Klausen, Peter Albrechtsen

SUPERVISING EDITOR:
Maya Daisy Hawke

CONSULTING PRODUCER:
Judith Helfand

BIOS

Rachel Elizabeth Seed, DIRECTOR/PRODUCER Originally from London, Rachel Elizabeth Seed is a Los Angeles and Brooklyn-based nonfiction storyteller working in film, photography and writing. Her work has been supported by the Sundance Institute, Chicken + Egg Pictures, NYFA, Field of Vision, the Jerome Foundation, NYSCA, the Maine Media Workshops, the Roy W. Dean grant, the Jewish Film Institute, Jewish Story Partners, and IFP/Gotham Labs, among others. Formerly a photo editor at New York Magazine, her photography has been exhibited at the International Center of Photography and she was a cameraperson on several award-winning feature documentaries including SACRED by Academy-Award winning filmmaker Thomas Lennon. Rachel's writing has been published by No Film School, the Sundance Institute, and Talkhouse and she is co-founder of the Brooklyn Documentary Club, a thriving film collective with more than 300 members.

Sigrid Dyekjær, PRODUCER Sigrid Dyekjær has produced more than 30 documentary films. She is the producer of the Oscar nominated film *The Cave* by Feras Fayyad, 2020, where she won an Emmy for best producer and won a Peabody Award. She won best producer at Cinema Eye 2020 for *The Cave*, and was nominated for Producers Guild of America. She premiered her first documentary film with her new company, Real Lava, at Sundance 2022, *The Territory* by Alex Pritz, which won 2 Awards at Sundance, Audience Award and has just picked up its 25th Award. It was shortlisted for an Oscar as well as 3 Emmy nominations in 2023. She won an Emmy nomination for Best Producer 2024 for *The Territory*. The film received a Peabody award in 2023 and is produced with Darren Aronofsky. It was picked up by National Geographic. She is the Executive Producer on *Apolonia Apolonia* by Lea Glob, shortlisted for an Oscar 2023, and winner of 18 awards including IDFA, Hong Kong and Docs Against Gravity in Poland. The Film just secured US theatrical Distribution.

Beth Levison, PRODUCER Beth Levison is an award-winning producer/director based in NYC. Her most recent producing effort, *THE MARTHA MITCHELL EFFECT*, premiered at Sundance, launched on Netflix, and was nominated for a 2023 Academy Award (Best Documentary Short). Her previous film, *STORM LAKE*, which she directed alongside DP Jerry Risius and also produced (*Independent Lens*, 2022), was

shortlisted by the IDA as one of the best films of 2021. Other producing credits include WOMEN IN BLUE (*Independent Lens*, 2021), Emmy-nominated PERSONAL STATEMENT (PBS, 2018), and 32 PILLS (HBO, 2017). Levison is a co-founder of the Documentary Producers Alliance and a member of the Academy.

Michael Sherman & Matt Perniciaro, PRODUCERS Bow and Arrow Entertainment was founded in 2014 by Matthew Perniciaro and Michael Sherman to create a focus on artist driven narrative and documentary motion pictures. Bow and Arrow premiered *STOCKHOLM SYNDROME* at the 2021 Tribeca Film Festival. Recent films include Elyse Steinberg, Eli Despres, and Josh Kriegman's *THE FIGHT*, Michael Dweck and Gregory Kershaw's *THE TRUFFLE HUNTERS*, and Sam Feder's *DISCLOSURE* at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival.

Danielle Varga, PRODUCER Danielle Varga is an award-winning independent nonfiction producer who has been working in nonfiction film for over a decade. She produced *Bulletproof* (SXSW 2020) and the critically acclaimed documentary *The Hottest August* (True/False 2019), both of which are distributed by PBS Independent Lens and Grasshopper Film. She co-produced the award-winning and Oscar shortlisted film *Cameraperson* (Sundance 2016). Most recently, she co-produced the feature documentary *The Stroll* (Sundance 2023, HBO) and an episode for the PBS series *Art in the Twenty-First Century*. Varga was listed on DOC NYC's inaugural list of "40 Under 40" filmmakers to watch and was a Sundance Creative Producing Fellow.

Maya Daisy Hawke, SUPERVISING EDITOR Maya Daisy Hawke was editor on Oscar and double Sundance Audience Award-winning *Navalny* (2022), and *Sugarcane* (2024), which won the Sundance directing award. Supervising and Consulting Editor credits include *Joonam* (2023), *Black Box Diaries* (2024), and *After a Revolution* (2022). Her own experimental films have been exhibited at MoMi, Sundance, ICA Frames of Representation, LACMA, Camden International FF and IDFA. She is the co-director, with Joe Bini, of *Little Ethiopia*, a live documentary. She has been an advisor at seven Sundance labs, and a fellow at the Sundance non-fiction directors residency.

Kirsten Johnson, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Kirsten Johnson's most recent film, *Dick Johnson is Dead* premiered at Sundance 2020, where it won the Jury Prize for Innovation in Nonfiction Storytelling. The film won the Primetime Emmy for Directing and made the Oscar shortlist. Her previous film, *Cameraperson*, was also shortlisted for the Academy Award. Her camerawork appears in Academy Award winner *Citizen Four*, Academy nominated *The Invisible War*, and Cannes Winner *Fahrenheit 9/11*. She is one of the only 5% of women members of American Society of Cinematographers. Her next project is based on the Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Susan Sontag and stars Kristen Stewart.

Maida Lynn, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Maida Lynn is the founder of Facet, which embraces creative non-fiction filmmaking by visionary artists with unique aesthetics, pushing the cinematic form and exploring universal and timeless themes. She executive produced *THE SEND-OFF* (Sundance '16, SFIFF, SXSW, AFI Fest), and co-produced *THE RABBIT HUNT* (Sundance and Berlinale '17) and *ROADSIDE ATTRACTION* (TIFF, SXSW). Maida is the producer of the short film *SKIP DAY*, which premiered at the Directors' Fortnight and was released by The Guardian. Her credits as Executive Producer include Sam Green's live documentary, *A THOUSAND THOUGHTS* (Sundance '17), *THE HOTTEST AUGUST* (True/False '19), and *THE TUBA THIEVES* (Sundance '23). The feature documentary Maida produced, *PAHOKEE*, premiered at Sundance 2019. In 2022, she launched an award for independent producers in partnership with Dear Producer. Maida proudly serves on the board of directors of the Roxie Theater in San Francisco, CA.

CAST/KEY PARTICIPANTS

Henri Cartier-Bresson, Photographer

Gordon Parks, Photographer

Cecil Beaton, Photographer

Bruce Davidson, Photographer

Lisette Model, Photographer

Cornell Capa, Photographer + Founder of ICP

Brian Lanker, Photographer

William Albert Allard, Photographer

Eliot Porter, Photographer

Brian Seed, Photographer and filmmaker's father

Sheila Turner Seed, Photographer, Journalist and filmmaker's mother

Dick Robinson, CEO of Scholastic Inc.

LOGLINE

A Photographic Memory is an intimate, genre-bending portrait of a daughter's attempt to piece together a portrait of her mother, an avant-garde journalist and a woman she never knew. Uncovering the vast archive Sheila Turner Seed produced, including lost interviews with iconic photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson, Gordon Parks, Cecil Beaton, Bruce Davidson, Lisette Model, and others, the film explores memory, legacy, and stories left untold.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Filmmaker Rachel Elizabeth Seed was only 18 months old when her mother, renowned journalist Sheila Turner Seed, unexpectedly passed away. Driven by a desire to uncover what she left behind, Seed embarks on a journey to meet with people whose lives were touched by her mother. Using audio and photographic archives from her mother's career, *A Photographic Memory* is an investigation into the archive in search of remnants of a loved one, reconstructing their image in an attempt to get to know them. Sheila's intimate interviews with famous photographers including Henri Cartier-Bresson, Gordon Parks, Lisette Model and Bruce Davidson, among others, are brought to life via Rachel's reimaginings, further immersing us into Sheila's world as mother and daughter's worlds merge in unexpected ways.

LONG SYNOPSIS

Thirty years after her mother's death, photographer Rachel Elizabeth Seed discovers her mother's work — more than 50 hours of interviews with the greatest photographers of the 20th Century, including Henri Cartier-Bresson, Lisette Model, Gordon Parks, W. Eugene Smith, Roman Vishniac, Cornell Capa and Bruce Davidson. When Rachel threads in the audio reels and presses play, she hears her mother's voice

for the first time since she was a baby. Sheila Turner-Seed, a daring, world-traveling journalist ahead of her time, died suddenly of a brain aneurysm when Rachel was just 18 months old. Moved to uncover more of what she left behind, Rachel sets out to revisit her mom's subjects, family and friends, revisiting the photographers she interviewed decades before. As new truths emerge, Rachel builds an unlikely relationship with her mother through the audio recordings, photographs, and films her mother made during her brief life, crafting an imagined conversation through the cinematic medium. As she discovers the shocking secrets which may have led to her mother's untimely death, Rachel's ability to forge her own path hinges on how these revelations affect her own life. The film draws from footage of Rachel's visits to the photographers her mother interviewed, Sheila's award-winning audio-visual work, Super 8 family films, still photography, audio letters and journals, weaving together personal and photohistorical media to tell a universal story — about facing mortality and loss, the construction of memory and the restoration of a legacy. Along this path, Rachel explores the question of whether it is possible to get to know someone through the things they leave behind.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

In my photography and creative work, I am driven by the desire for connection. Perhaps this is because my mother died when I was a baby; I'm always seeking to reconcile this loss in my life. It's this drive that inspired me to make my debut feature documentary, A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY.

My work as an artist, photographer, photo editor, curator, writer, arts community founder, and cinematographer have greatly informed my knowledge and aesthetic sensibility in the media arts, paving the way for this film project and for my transition from photography to filmmaking. From 2004-2011 I created an audio-visual series about motherless women, interviewing and photographing 40 women and girls around the world, but it wasn't until I turned the camera on my life in A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY that I began to make sense of my loss. As I just turned the age my mother was when she died, it is also a personally timely project. I hope for the result to be cathartic for myself and for an audience who relates to losing someone close or being estranged from a parent. At the same time, I aim to memorialize my mother's legacy as a woman ahead of her time who contributed to the canon of photography history. She died in her prime but left an undeniable mark through her work and great compassion for humanity. This legacy would be forgotten without this film.

What excites me aesthetically about A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY is the challenge of weaving the archival footage, photographs and audio along with contemporary footage together in a cohesive, artistic whole. Using my mother's raw interviews with photographers as a thematic backbone, I draw from 100 years of our family's Super 8 films, still photographs, contact sheets, letters, my mother's journals, her journalistic tear sheets, and the footage I have shot of my own life and journey. My aim is for the disparate elements to transcend their individual meaning in order to tell the greater story of my search to know my mother, and through that, to make sense of life's ephemerality. I have always been interested in the space where "real" elements are woven together to create a fabricated reality, which is both indisputable yet non-factual, representing my objective vision.

The film will play on the tensions between remembering and forgetting, recovery and loss, and the probing of relationship and portraiture through lost archives, juxtaposition and cinematic form.

PARTNERS

The film has been supported by the Sundance Institute, NYFA, NYSCA, Jerome Foundation, Field of Vision, Women Make Movies, Chicken + Egg Pictures, IFP, ICP (the International Center of Photography), Scholastic Inc, the Roy W. Dean Grant, Jewish Story Partners, the Jewish Film Institute, the California Film Institute, DOCNYC's Only In New York, the Sheffield Meet Market and others.

PRESS COVERAGE

DEADLINE

Interview with John Ridley, Co-Hosted by Matt Carey for Doc Talk
<https://deadline.com/2024/04/john-ridley-rips-nelson-peltz-disney-1235874213/>

INDIEWIRE

Inclusion in Note to Distributors: These 5 True/False Film Festival Titles Deserve a Home Now By
Susannah Gruder

https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/true-false-film-festival-documentaries-deserve-us-distribution-1234962296/#recipient_hashed=b640482516bc811c529dabd0287d59f68aeb3f2668cf633844a1f176803b9c14&recipient_salt=801687d008e74d7c3c064c7b6ffd91a82237312b46e029f_e18f6ea134e1c187a

INDIEWIRE

Inclusion in Doc Feature "The 2024 True/False Film Festival Brought a Parade, Sperm Donors, and a
Weekend of Documentaries to Missouri"

By Carlos Aguilar

<https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/2024-true-false-film-festival-spermworld-docs-1234961220/>

THE LAST THING I SAW

Inclusion Festival Dispatch

By Nic Rapold with Eric Hynes

<https://soundcloud.com/the-last-thing-i-saw-film/ep-232-eric-hynes-on-first-look-truefalse-24-flyin-g-lessons-knits-island-there-was>

THE MOVEABLE FEST

By Stephen Saito

<https://moveablefest.com/rachel-elizabeth-seed-photographic-memory/>

THE MANEATER

By Sarah Woods

<https://theman eater.com/review-a-photographic-memory-explores-the-philosophies-of-photography-through-the-lens-of-motherhood-and-self-discovery/>

ROGER EBERT.COM

By Robert Daniels

<https://www.rogerebert.com/festivals/truefalse-2024-a-photographic-memory-there-was-there-was-not-three-promises>

UNSEEN FILMS

By Steve Kopian

<http://www.unseenfilms.net/2024/03/photographic-memory-2024-truefalse-film.html>

KATIE AT THE MOVIES

By Katie Carter
<https://boxd.it/5YzJcL>

91.7 WXXU // NPR

By tt stern-enzi
<https://www.wvxu.org/arts/2024-03-18/documentaries-that-celebrate-truth-and-truth-seekers>

SALES CONTACT:

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ALL OTHER INQUIRIES:

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