

**Memorycombing as Practise - Memory and Memorialisation – a submission
for the International Women's Writing Association Conference 2026**

My research into the process of writing memoir has focussed on the influence of memory on form. In the same way the sea brings to the shore and transforms organic material and discarded objects, writing personal narrative reveals and uncovers.

I have developed a theory and practice called *memorycombing* as a method of excavating and understanding memory by working with archive, found objects and physical landscapes to create a path that is creative and instinctual. The research examines how memory resides in the physical; in places and objects that can be awakened within the sensory body. The theory is underpinned by studies on memory derived from the writer Marcel Proust's experience of eating madeleines dipped in tea, which invoked intense and vivid memories of his own childhood that he believed gave him access to the pure artform. Recent scientific studies on memory have confirmed Proust's findings.

Memorycombing explores how writers of personal narratives seek memories that possess this quality of luminescence. By working with archive, photographs and interviews, memoir creates what Lily Dunn has called 'a third space' with the potential to transform writers, their subjects, and readers.

Memorycombing in its practical application is an art project that creates a tableau of objects that evoke vivid sensory memories from the past. These objects may be archival or found and are photographed with accompanying fragments of typed text using active imagination.

Seeking the hidden voices of the feminine in my own memoir the research explores memorycombing as a method of *écriture féminine* as proposed by Hélène Cixous in her essay, *Laugh of the Medusa* (1975).

The research explores how this practice can be developed and used by writers and artists to access memory.

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