

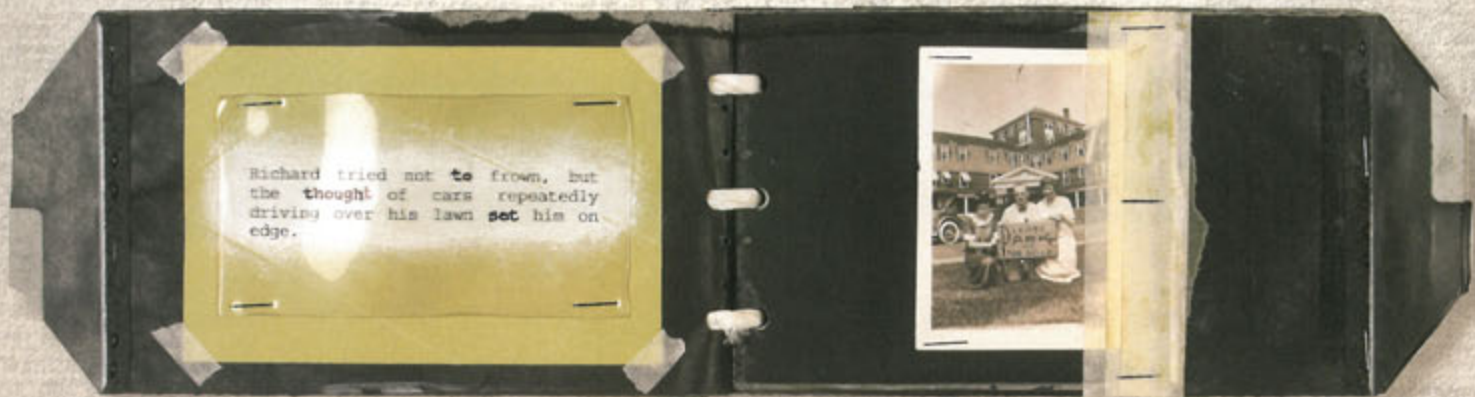
by Melody M. Nuñez

I've always been fascinated by vintage photos, especially the ones for sale in antique stores and thrift stores. I treasure my family's old black and white photos of relatives from days gone by, but the vintage photos for sale really pique my curiosity. Who were these people? What were they like? And how did these photos end up for sale? Surely family or friends would want to hold onto these fascinating windows to the past — wouldn't they? ⇨

I've also been known to throw caution to the wind on a regular basis and use my best art supplies. I use the embossed leather journal. I use the beautiful papers. And sometimes, I use original, one-of-a-kind vintage photos in my artwork.









It's unlikely that I'll ever know the real stories behind these photographic treasures, but that certainly hasn't stopped me from adopting them, or in this case, from making up stories that I think might apply to the images. And while it's clear that my imagination often gets the best of me, I like to think that I'm giving these "discards" new life.

Here is an excerpt from inside cover of the album: "This album is filled with pictures of my fictitious family. Unknown people captured in photos I found in antique stores, thrift stores and flea markets. I've never met them, and have no blood ties nor shared genealogy, but I do respect and honor them nonetheless. I don't know their stories, but seeing them gaze out of these photos makes me wonder and imagine. I've created my own stories for them, and hope that these adopted family members of mine know they may be somewhere far away, but are not forgotten."

Many artists working with vintage photos will scan or copy the images and use the copies in their work. I often do that myself when working with one-of-a-kind photos. However, I've also been known to throw caution to the wind on a regular basis and use my best art supplies. I use the embossed leather journal. I use the beautiful papers. And sometimes, I use original, one-of-a-kind vintage photos in my artwork — as I've done in this album. Every photo is the original. Sometimes my muse just won't accept substitutes; though that is a choice every artist must make for herself.

So if you've been collecting vintage photos and aren't sure what to do with them, consider making a fictitious family album. Gather some materials, and then study the photos — and listen to the stories they whisper to you. This album could also be created with images from your own family and would make a wonderful gift for that special someone who has everything.

## TECHNIQUE

Create the body of the book and the inside pages with the paper jackets from Polaroid 4"x5" land film. Punch three holes in each paper jacket, which will allow you to "bind" the pages together with ribbon. Glue and staple the jackets together to create a book, gluing the back of one jacket to the top of another, and repeating until all jackets are connected. Thread ribbon or bias tape through holes, and knot loosely so that the pages can be turned.

*Please note: It's best to assemble the book after all pages and spreads are complete.*

## Cover

Wash a rectangle of white gesso onto the cover; stamp text using black StazOn ink (larger letters: Grunge alphabet by Fusion Art Stamps; small letters: antique lowercase by PSX). Cover text with a piece of transparency film that's had its edges heated with a flame — staple transparency film over the text box using black staples. Use a gold metallic marker to create the gold edge, and accent the cover with metallic rub-ons where desired.

## Inside Pages

To create the caption/story page, cut a rectangle of your desired material (I used cardstock, decorative paper, wire mesh, player piano paper, metal tape, ribbon and fabric on the different pages) to create a backing. Create a text block highlighting the photo, and print out onto transparency film. Trim to size, and heat the edges with a flame (do this over a sink). Wash a rectangle of white gesso the approximate size of the text box onto your backing and let dry. Affix the transparency film text box to the backing with staples, centering the text over the white rectangle. Glue the entire backing piece onto the page using a glue stick or double-sided tape. ←•

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Charles tried to be a doting father to his two young daughters, but couldn't shake the feeling that a son would be better suited to his temperament and interests.



Buster and Tommy weren't just boys on tricycles - they were fighter pilots. They zoomed through the air and shot down the enemy, until Mother called them home for supper, that is.



## fictitious family album

windows on another place & time

To create the photo page, glue the photo down and accent as desired. I've used silver and colored staples, sewing tape, ribbon, player piano paper, rhinestones, masking tape, charms, metal tape, vintage buttons, gold metallic pen, and pennies to embellish my pages. The text font is Courier. ✂

Melody M. Nuñez is an artist and writer residing in Orange County, California. She's a regular contributor to Somerset Studio and Legacy.