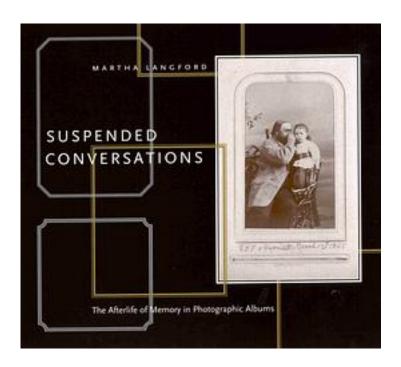
## Suspended Conversations



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In Suspended Conversations Martha Langford shows how photographic albums tell intimate and revealing stories about individuals and families. Unlike those who isolate the individual photograph, treat albums as texts, or argue that photography has supplanted memory, she shows that the photographic album must be taken as a whole and interpreted as a visual and verbal performance that extends oral consciousness. Albums are treasured by families, collected as illustrations of the past by museums of social history, and examined by scholars for what they can reveal about attitudes and sensibilities. Most agree that albums are stories that come to life in the retelling - but when no one is left to tell the tale, the intrigue of the album becomes a puzzle, a suspended conversation. Langford argues that oral consciousness provides the missing key. By correlating photography and orality she shows how albums were

designed to work as performances and how we can unlock their mysteries. Suspended Conversations brings to light a collection of photographic travelogues, memoirs, thematic collections, and family sagas compiled between 1860 and 1960 and held by the McCord Museum of Canadian History. Langford not only provides a fascinating glimpse of the preoccupations of previous centuries but brings photography into the great conversation of how we remember and how we send our stories into the future.
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