

'I spend 150 hours alone each week'

Madeleine Waller Photographer



### Aging Gracefully

This image is a reflection on my mother's house as a symbol of grief and attachment. My father, who died 18 years ago, built the home they shared. Despite the challenges of maintaining the property, she cannot bare to leave it. The house embodies her love, loss and memories of my father. Her attachment to it reveals the emotional depth of her relationship with the past and her determination to remain independent while navigating her aging physical limitations.



### Bugsy

My mother walks about 3km every day to feed carrots to a retired racehorse called Buggy. This daily interaction with nature forms a vital part of her emotional well-being. It offers her companionship and a way to help her stay connected to the world and manage her loneliness. Sometimes Buggy is the only being she will speak to in a day. Occasionally she will bump into a neighbour on her walks, these brief interactions highlight the importance of human connection.



Breakfast  
My mother has a slow quiet breakfast at the dining table, writing thoughts and notes from the previous day to help her recall daily tasks, dates, or to remind her when people have visited.



### Cryptic Crossword

Cryptic crosswords are a part of my mother's daily rituals and help her to maintain brain health and cognitive sharpness. They are ways for her to help preserve her independence and mental health.



### Huntsman

A huntsman spider who lives in various corners of my mother's bathroom fell or jumped on her shoulder one morning. She called me to come and see him and then lightly brushed him off to return to his usual spot. Her acceptance of sharing her space with the spider show her need to connect with nature but also her fierce pride of everything Australian, deadly or otherwise



### Water

In the heat of the Australian summer, my mother carefully conserves water—using rainwater tanks and buckets from the shower—to hose her garden.



### Knitting

My mother knits small Australian native animals for children at the local primary school. This activity helps her maintain a sense of purpose and connection within her community and a desire to feel needed.



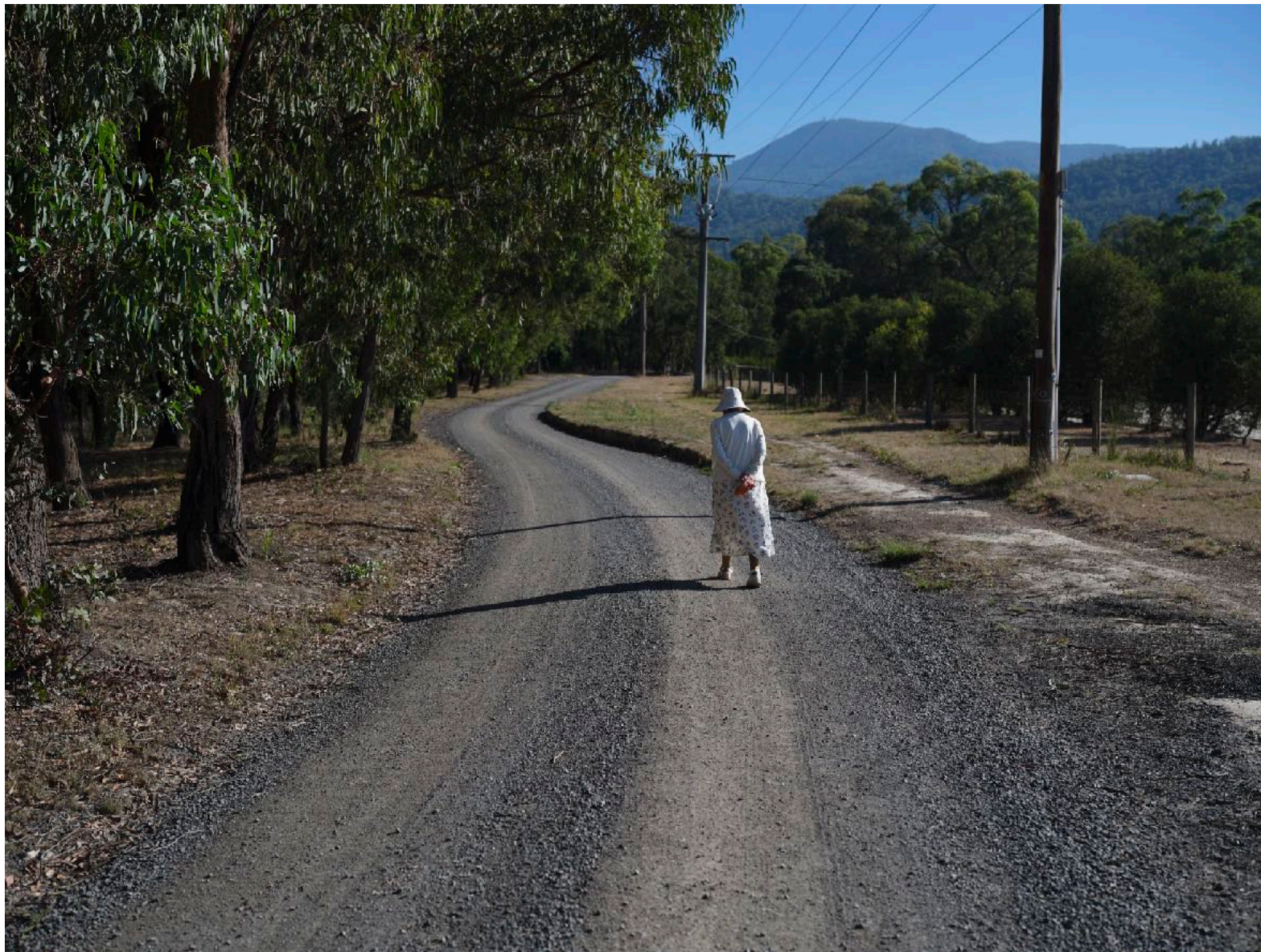
### Garden

My mother's garden is her sanctuary, she spends as much time as possible trying to maintain it. Her generational attitudes of "getting on with it" and her reluctance to ask for help mean that her ability to keep up with the garden has become a challenge. The garden embodies her connection to my late father, and her relationship with nature. Maintaining it has become an act of defiance against aging and isolation. The garden is not just a physical space but a living testament to her identity, love, and determination to preserve what she holds most dear.



Video of TAA

My mother watches old footage from her days as an air steward with TAA Airlines. Revisiting these images connects her happy memories of a past life.



### Daily Walk

My mother walks along the gravel road near her home every morning to feed a retired race horse. This daily routine helps her to stay active and connected to nature.

This project explores aging, memory and connection in a world defined by rapid social and technological change. The work focuses on my 90-year-old mother as she navigates life alone in rural Australia. Through an intimate portrayal of her daily routines this series of photographs reflects on questions of independence, belonging, and resilience in later life.

I live in the UK and we both struggle with the emotional and physical distance between us. Her refusal to engage with modern technology such as smart phones video calls and email reveal a generational tension: the struggle to remain connected and relevant as technology reshapes how we live and relate to one another.

These images are reflections on her house and garden as symbols of grief and attachment and a way for me to process my inevitable loss. My father, who died 18 years ago, built the home they shared. Despite the challenges of maintaining the property, she cannot bear to leave it. The house embodies her love, loss and memories of my father. Her attachment to it speaks to the emotional depth of her relationship with the past and her determination to remain independent while navigating her aging physical limitations.

Through this body of work, I hope to explore the boundaries between holding on and letting go, tradition and progress. What does it mean to age in an era that prioritises speed and innovation, and how does identity endure within the quiet rhythms of everyday life. It is both a personal reflection on family and a contemplation on the resilience of women navigating change on their own terms.

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About Me Portraiture is at the heart of my practice. My work focuses on identity and examines the complex relationships between humans and the environments we inhabit. As a photographer, I am naturally curious and love to listen to people's stories and bring them to life. My intention is to make a connection and have a genuine exchange with the individuals and communities I photograph and to portray them as authentically as possible. I specialise in intimate natural portraits and aim to draw out the in-depth and noteworthy of everyday life.

In 2025 I was shortlisted for the Wellcome Photography Prize. I have worked for a range of editorial, commercial and private clients and my work has been published and exhibited widely including; The the V&A Museum of Childhood, The National Portrait Gallery, Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize Portrait of Britain, Portrait of HumanityThe Guardian, and the Sunday Telegraph. I have several books of Portraits published including *East London Swimmers* by Hoxton Mini Press, *Sister Brother* by The Wind in the Trees and *Portraits*, by the Swedenborg Society.

I also work in education delivering specialist creative photography workshops to children and schools.

*"There is tenderness in her portraits, too, that Cartier-Bresson would surely have recognised. Once when asked his advice on portraiture, he replied 'we must respect the atmosphere which surrounds the human being' I think Madeleine Waller has done that, in doing so, captured an atmosphere, a sense of place and the individuals who give it meaning." Portraits Introduction by Sean O'Hagan.*

*"London Based photographer Madeleine Waller has a gift for drawing out the human, quirky and noteworthy in everyday communities." The Guide, Guardian*