

## ***Other People's Pictures***

a documentary by Lorca Shepperd and Cabot Philbrick

### **Short Synopsis:**

Nine obsessive collectors share an unlikely addiction: snapshots that have been abandoned or lost by their original owners and are now for sale. Ready to pay hundreds of dollars for a single picture, they hunt for the images that feed their fantasies and quiet the voices in their heads. See what they find and learn why they want it in this surprising look at the little-known world of vintage snapshot collecting.

### **Long Synopsis:**

*Other People's Pictures* is a documentary about collectors who share an unlikely obsession – snapshots that have been abandoned or lost by their original owners and are now for sale. The film is set at New York City's Chelsea Flea Market where, every weekend, dozens of collectors sift doggedly through piles, boxes and bins of cast-off photos, ready to pay anywhere from a few cents to hundreds of dollars for a single snapshot.

While some collectors look at the snapshots as found art, others search for images that reflect events and themes in their own lives. One collector, Drew, explains that when he was a teenager, his mother joined a cult and got rid of all their family photos. As a result, he recreates family albums for himself with pictures of strangers that he buys at the flea market. Another collector, Dan, is Jewish and lost many family members to the Holocaust. He collects what he calls 'banality of evil' snapshots: average, everyday photographs of Nazis. In these startlingly jolly images, he sees the family memories that were stolen from his ancestors. A third collector, Fern, works as a counselor for the developmentally disabled. She searches futilely for images of individuals with Down's syndrome. "You just don't see them in photographs," she explains, "and the reason is that historically those people were institutionalized. Sometimes what's amazing about the photography is not what's there, but what's not there."

Many of the film's subjects find that collecting 'other people's pictures' helps them confront the darker aspects of human existence – familial trauma, social injustice, historical atrocity. Others simply appreciate the beauty, humor and mystery of these scavenged images. The uninitiated ask: Why buy someone else's family photographs? In *Other People's Pictures*, nine collectors try to answer this question as they hunt for the images that feed their fantasies and quiet the voices in their heads.

### **Filmmakers:**

Lorca Shepperd: Producer, Cameraperson, Writer

Cabot Philbrick: Producer, Cameraperson, Editor

Hub Moore: Composer, Musician

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If you are an individual interested in purchasing a copy of *Other People's Pictures* for personal use only, or if you would like to contact the filmmakers, please send an email to [info@other-peoples-pictures.com](mailto:info@other-peoples-pictures.com).