

Items that are kept must be stored. This is the issue with collecting. Some people cannot tolerate the build-up of objects that are not essential to daily life, cannot be used, serve no purpose. If personal memory is insufficient then the past is simply lost. My mother has been one of these people for my entire life. It always devastated me that so much of her past was lost, especially since her memory leaves much to the imagination. She surprised me once by telling me, "in my teen years, I saved every bag from any shopping trip that I enjoyed. Every movie ticket stub and every passed note felt more precious than gold." But after countless moves and shifts in economic security, she adopted a new, streamlined mindset that she would only keep things that she would be unquestionably willing to move with. I've chided her many times over the years for getting rid of the dress she wore to marry my father, despite the fact that they have been divorced essentially my entire life. "Why would I keep that old thing? It's not like you or your sister were going to wear it."



The things deemed worth keeping are often put away, buried in closets or attics or basements, and only brought out in bursts of nostalgia. Bags of postcards, shelves of binders, and bins of keepsakes waste your space. You might have the memories, but you can't even see them. They're there, somewhere, inaccessible.

The problem with memory is that you cannot see it. But memory lives in everything. Items that are kept must be stored, but they can be stored on the walls, in collage, in art. Keepsakes can be arranged into something beautiful, can be a personal installation of remembrance.

