Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance

Since its invention, photography has been inextricably tied up with remembrance. Photographs recall family, beloved friends, special moments, trips, and other events, speaking across time and place to create an emotional bond between subject and viewer. *Forget Me Not: Photography and Remembrance*, on view at the International Center of Photography (1133 Avenue of the Americas at 43rd Street) from June 17th through September 4th, 2005, focuses on this relationship between photography and memory. It explores the practice of strengthening the emotional appeal of photographs by embellishing them with text, paint, frames, embroidery, fabric, string, hair, flowers, cigar wrappers, butterfly wings, and more, to create strange and often beautiful hybrid objects. This exhibition will feature approximately sixty-five such vernacular objects: extraordinary works of art created by ordinary people.

The exhibition explores the various ways in which people preserved memories in photographic form, keeping these memories from becoming merely historical documents. This endeavor is manifested by decorated images, mostly portraits, all of which draw attention to the physical
presence of the photograph, and intend to elicit the presence of its subject. *Forget Me Not* gives the viewer a feel for the struggle to preserve the memories evoked by these adorned photographs.

The exhibition, featuring international objects dating from the mid-nineteenth- through the late twentieth century, is presented in collaboration with the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York and is the ninth in the series “New Histories of Photography.” It is made possible by the generous support of The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. *Forget Me Not* is based on an exhibition originally commissioned by the Van Gogh Museum, and will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue, with a 25,000 word essay in English by the exhibition’s curator, Geoffrey Batchen. The catalogue is a co-publication of the Van Gogh Museum and Princeton Architectural Press.