



Candie Tanaka  
Off-Site Storage Provider

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**ARTSPEAK**  
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Jane Lee on  
Candie Tanaka

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fast-forward button, stopping randomly when something catches my eye. My attention starts to wander after a couple of seconds but suddenly, I recognize something – New York City. It is an unmistakable view, one that we've all seen in countless films, photos, TV shows and travel guides. I know where I am and I am interested in looking at these pictures, but I quickly discover that there are dozens of photographs of almost the same thing. I imagine the photographer standing in one spot and slowly turning, recording the city bit by bit. I can't help but think, why take so many pictures of almost the same thing? What does that kind of obsessive recording mean? What becomes the memory: what you've photographed, what your eye has seen, or will your memories become what you get back from the photo lab, two, three weeks later?

I print a couple of black and white copies from the microfilm machine. The last time I used one of these things was probably for a last-minute research essay. I look at the pictures that I've chosen, thinking about the impulse that's made me pick these ones in particular. It feels strange to be making copies of somebody else's photographs, making some kind of distant connection to an experience that could only be theirs.

This other machine is the microfiche projector. You can't move quickly through these pictures like you can the ones on the microfilm reader, and there are only 24 reproductions of photographs, this time in colour. I am not used to looking at snapshots in this way – the machine almost demands that one examine the image as it enlarges the minute details of the microfiche. I become slightly lost in the screen, viewing the individual reproductions as if they were not static – I start making up conversations and stories in my head, thinking about what it would be like to be there. This is kind of like the opposite of the previous experience. Instead of whipping through a million photos, I am able to contemplate the details of each one here, to look in the corners for clues. It strikes me that even though the two machines do two different things I have somehow managed to insert myself in the images presented by both. Somehow, in spite of my initial reticence, these photos have managed to engage me.

I leave the gallery, microfilm copies in hand. It's been an odd experience, seeing someone's snapshot collection presented as archived, researchable material. Apparently, there is a place called Iron Mountain, a bizarre underground network of storage spaces tucked away in an abandoned mine, somewhere in America. On their website there are pictures of the staff all working away at their desks in

a cave-like setting. It reminds me of the Flintstones. The pictures that I have been looking at are stored in this place, and I can't help but wonder: what else do people keep hidden down there, what other memories are waiting to be examined?

Visit [www.ironmountain.com](http://www.ironmountain.com) for more details.

**Jane Lee**

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