

The Olive Branch

by

Houry Pilibossian

Presented to the  
Department of English & Communications  
in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts

American University of Armenia

Yerevan, Armenia

May 23, 2019

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Research Question</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The Olive Branch</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Installation #1</b> (المطبخ السوري بقيادة الشيف هوري) The Syrian Kitchen Led by Chef Houry)	<b>11</b>
<b>Installation #2</b> (Retrospection)	<b>16</b>
<b>Installation #3</b> (Bewilderment)	<b>18</b>
<b>Reference List</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>22</b>

## **Abstract**

The olive branch sheds light on the lives of a grandmother, mother and daughter. It looks into family narratives and culinary cultures through an intergenerational lens of storytelling. It is a research conducted through a set of in depth oral history interviews with the mother and the grandmother of the researcher, accompanied by journal entries from the researcher about the process. The research is presented through three art installation designed by the researcher. The first installation is a performance where the researcher will prepare stuffed zucchini (كوسا محشي), during which she will tell the stories from her family and memories from the latest visit to her birthplace. The second installation represents a retrospection through the researcher's memories and the current memories gained from her travels. The interactive portrayals play the role of memory between the past and present. Lastly, the third installation is a soundscape of the three generations telling different versions of the same stories. This installation is accompanied by photographs related to the stories and storytellers.

## **Introduction**

This study focuses on family narratives within a single hybrid family of Syrian-Armenian descent. "A hybrid is a mixture of two different things, resulting in something that has a little bit of both" (Hybrid dictionary definition, n.d.) as defined in Vocabulary.com. The same concept applies to a family that has a little bit of a Syrian identity and a bit of an Armenian one.

Kikumura reflects "the real motive for delving into my family's past was to learn more about myself and to feel a greater sense of continuity with my family"(Kikumura, 1986, p. 144). Family narratives need to receive more attention in different spheres of research. Specially studies that look at the psychological process of family interactions and how those affect the upbringing of children in the family. "As a group activity, the telling of family stories may be one way that families regulate social interactions. As reflections of individual and family beliefs, family stories also may be a way that representations of relationships are passed down across generations"(Fiese & Sameroff, 2001, p. 64). Every family has their own set of activities and belief system to follow during family gatherings. Some are expressed through food, others through direct contact between members of the family. Most of the time those direct and indirect interactions play a significant role in shaping an individual's identity. As Fiese & Sameroff put it "the study of family narratives emphasizes how the meaning-making process comes to life in family interaction and transacts with representations of family relationships" (Fiese & Sameroff, 2001, p. 102). Food rituals are part of the meaning making in families. Most of the time people crave a "home cooked" meal or their

mother's cookie recipe. This research will look into food rituals in a hybrid Syrian - Armenian family and how that affects the personality and identity development of those individuals.

As the researcher of this study, I share the background of a child of a mixed marriage; an Armenian father and an Assyrian mother. This mixture creates a multilayered cultural identity notion in the family narratives. Apart from the academic portion of the research, it also holds a self-study part through my research journey. As Hall puts it "This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's vivid phrase, 'individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless - a race of angels'" (Hall, 1994, p. 226). It's important to shed light on both inner (personal) and outer (academic) parts, to give the research more depth and meaning.

## **Literature Review**

**Ethnographic research** is collected through qualitative research findings. Life history research focuses on the life stories of individuals who lived a certain life experience or belong to a certain group for the most part. Cole and Knowles in their book *Lives in Context* talk about the process of doing life history research. They emphasize on the importance of having a guided conversation with the interviewee, finding meaning in their narrative, collecting artifacts and the responsiveness (Cole & Knowles, 2001). Focusing on the interviewee's life story is core to the process of information collection to give the research a backbone of real-life lived experiences. Life history research is done through in-depth oral history interviews. Portelli, a world

known oral historian in his chapter *What Makes Oral History Different* remarks “The first thing that makes oral history different...is that it tells us less about events than about their meaning” (Portelli, 1998, p. 67). Portelli also asserts the role of the orality of the interview itself and the possible threads and interpretations that are born from it (Portelli, 1998, p. 65). The interview transcript gives the researcher the chance to add volume to their research process. Oral history interviews are different from other interviews because the interviewer is not allowed to force answers out of the interviewee. In those cases, the most common reaction that an interviewee has when they don’t want to answer a question is to be silent.

**Silences** are a paramount part of an oral history interview analysis, because most of the time they are connected to a certain memory. Erin Jessee, talks about her experience with silences and the role of an oral historian in adapting to those situations.

Jessee (2013) shares from one of her interviews in Rwanda:

His (the interviewee) call for an ethics of silence is long overdue in the discipline, particularly the need for oral historians to develop ethical ways of probing silences to ensure their meaning and purpose is fully understood, and not merely assumed, by researchers. (p.220)

Any researcher has to be prepared to work around those silences and represent them in their narrative in a way that does justice to their interviewee.

Most individuals strive at some point in their lives to look deeper into their identity, whether it’s cultural, national or sometimes even personal identity. Hall puts it as

“Identity is such a concept - operating ‘under erasure’ in the interval between reversal and emergence; an idea which cannot be thought in the old way, but without which certain key questions cannot be thought at all” (Hall , 1996, p. 2). He firmly discusses the importance of having an identity or belonging to a group based on class, race, gender or personal preferences. The important part of the identity search is the questions the individuals ask to find the answers to what’s identity to them (Hall , 1996, p. 4). Moreover, in her research Pollock studies people in the Pacific islands who have migrated from islands to Australia. Her main focus is food and transnationalism. She indicates, “Food is an identity marker that both links families overseas to their island home and distinguishes the two communities” (Pollock, 2009). Pollock discusses the importance of food that is prepared within the family with certain rituals attached to every meal, and the outsider food which is most of the time fast food chains. Through her interviews, she talks to many people about the associations they make with a certain meal when they have it on their home island and when they have it in Australia the land they migrated to (Pollock, 2009, p. 107). By the same token, in a study titled *Lifelines: matrilineal narratives, memory and identity* Attarian looks into the memories of five women sharing the same Diaspora Armenian identity. In a testimony from one of her research participants Attarian reflects, “It was amazing to see how such an insignificant and ordinary item as a candy took on the power of a talisman and transported us all into the realm of memory tinged with nostalgia; how it bonded us through Anais’ story and also symbolized a safe space” (Attarian , 2009, p. 193) Attarian discusses how sometimes objects that might not be important play a significant role after migration. They hold in them the memory and association with a

specific place in someone's life experience. And they begin to represent part of an identity that's being shaped after the process of migration (Attarian , 2009, p. 193).

**Subjectivity** in ethnographic research is key. The theme of this paper itself requires a certain amount of subjectivity since it's dealing with a precise family narrative and subjectively selected individual's story. In his book, Mansfield explores a variety of Freud's theories connected to subjectivity. The author focuses on the unconscious, feminism, overdetermination, and other aspects. He applies those theories to understand how subjective human psychology can be when it comes to identity and culture. He further explores the triggers throughout history that led humankind towards a specific path of opinion forming about their identity and others' identities (Mansfield, 2000, p. 34). Identity in those terms cannot be 100% objective, otherwise, it won't be faithful to the self or the culture that the individual strives to belong to.

**Memory** is the second main ingredient of this research process. Nadjie Al-Ali, a specialist author in transnational migration and the diaspora, talks about the experiences of Iraqi women's memories after the 2003 invasion.

Al-Ali (2018) implies that:

Memory is also subject to change and is both selective and fluid. History and memory are not merely about the past but dialectically linked to the present. Individual memories are complex constructions based on personal experiences, worldviews - political, religious, and ethical- and collective narratives. (p.138) conveying the role memory plays in identity shaping after certain life experiences and in this case largely focused on post-migration identity.

**Food** as mentioned before plays an integral part of specially the cultural identity or national identity. In a study conducted around the Indian culture in the UK, Roncaglia studies the Indian cultural restaurants that opened in the UK by Indian migrants. Most of the local associations are made to those restaurants identify curry as the representative taste of the Indian culture.

Roncaglia (2013) says:

The relationship with the territory articulates the character that society constructs for taste. Access to certain ingredients shapes our likes and dislikes, developing into a system of distinctions, discriminations, class and gender.

Taste is probably the most visible expression of ethnocentrism. (p.128-129)

She claims the role food or certain ingredients in a meal play to identify a culture by tasting their identity.

**Research creation** based on oral histories as a methodology. A researcher cannot tie the outcomes to one particular outcome however, they can have a few outcome possibilities while planning the interview. For life history research it is important to have visual artifacts to support the data collected during the interview. In a classroom project, Webster and Gravotta; a teacher-student collaboration, they work on an oral history project which had the outcome of a documentary. The students gained a better understanding of what oral history is through their interviews. They also went through the process of shared authority of the information they have with the interviewee to make sure they don't upset them (Webster & Gravotta , 2014, pp. 153-161).

**Photography** is influential in such research approaches because it conveys a different meaning to the viewer/reader. Photography provides the chance of visual memory activation and connection-making process. Schwärzler "Struth (a photographer) approaches his subject intuitively and embarks on his projects in an almost somnambulant and unconscious manner, obviously spurred on by a challenge he may not be able to name or to ground theoretically" (Schwärzler , 2016, p. 68)

**Performance** based on oral histories are powerful and reach the audience using a different medium to deliver the message. *Come Wash With Us* is a collective performance based on oral history interviews. The performers share a background of migration from the Middle East to Canada due to war in their home countries. They tell their grandmothers' stories doing laundry and how that tradition is passed down to them. The performance gives a chance to the audience to share their memories of laundry regardless of their background. This emphasizes the importance of transmitting memory from the individual to the collective to the global (Arshadi, Attarian, Baker , & Bilici, 2018, pp. 261-276).

### **Research Question**

In the scope of this research, the dual identity that I hold and its effects on the bigger context of cultural identity will be examined. How do family food rituals weave narratives that later on get transmitted intergenerationally to create meaning in the family narratives. How do memories of family narratives around meals affect the cultural formation of individuals, family members and the society where these individuals and family come from.

## **Methodology**

This study uses a combination of in-depth oral history interviews and archival documentations (photographs) from the interviewee. For this research I'm using qualitative research methodologies. Before conducting the interviews, I had to go and search for information about the interviewees and certain life events I want to ask about. In this process I delved into secondary research about the topic and events that had happened to have a broader idea. This process assisted me in formulating my questions on the spot during the interview(s) to add more context and clarity to the interview. The interview is just the raw material from which the research takes its head start. The next process after the interview is verbatim transcription. This process helped me reach out the answers I am looking for regarding my research question. It also opened up new sub question that emerged during transcription process. Following the transcription, the matching process begins. This is when I started to match my interviewees testimonials to secondary research or other results of primary research that I have. As it is raw material the videos and audios from the interview can later be used as verbatim proofs incorporated in a creative project including three art installations. This methodology is shaped to be a real-life example of whatever outcome any research can have. Since this research has an ethnographic essence, then people's life experience are important to study. Oral history interviews are one of the best mediums to get that outcome, because they provide truths and heartfelt testimonies that cannot be reached in other methodologies. See appendix 1 for the detailed interview guidelines.

My research creation focuses on rebuilding my interviews and experiences through art. As Taylor puts it "Performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called "twice-behaved behavior" (Taylor , 2003 , pp. 2-3). Dealing with memories not only personal but also collective is challenging. Lynn Abrams in her chapter refers to it as "The production of memory stories, especially in relation to personal narratives, can require significant psychological and emotional investment. It can open up psychological fissures, prompting re-evaluation (sometimes for the first time) and revelation" (Abrams, 2018, p. 82). Representing memory through food, sound, photography and performance is how this research comes into being.

### **The Olive Branch**

The idea behind these installations started from an olive branch tattoo that I have on my right forearm. The tattoo was to honor my grandmother and the dearest thing she left gave me; food. Olives symbolize peace in Noah's ark and they represent connection to the land in the Palestinian reality. I believe those provide a good synthesis to my tattoo story. Because I'm connected to the land that is Syria through my grandmother's olive trees and at the same time my birthplace needs unconditional peace. My grandmother defines the family tree as the roots are the grandparents, the body of the tree are the parents and the branches are the grandchildren. The 3 installations represent parts of my existence and my memories. How I came into being who I am today based on my lived memories and family narratives. Whenever I taste my grandma's olives or olive oil, I become a poet without poetry. I'm just like the olive tree far away from home, far away from good olives, far away from my grandma.

**Installation #1** المطبخ السوري بقيادة الشيف هوري The Syrian kitchen led by Chef Houry



Figure #1 The Syrian kitchen led by Chef Houry

It's interesting to observe how people start talking about their deepest desires, darkest secrets and most shocking stories around food and specially while preparing food. My grandmother chose the kitchen as her space to teach me and my cousins about the importance of family. It was through this process that I became attached to cooking. But behind that lies a stronger fact of family togetherness, care and love. My grandmother raised us to respect each other while playing in her kitchen. She made us go crazy with our creativity, inside and outside the kitchen and showed us that we need to be strong. Being the eldest grandchild I was the master chef of my grandmother's kitchen, she calls it "المطبخ السوري بقيادة الشيف هوري", the Syrian kitchen led by chef Houry." By recreating that kitchen through this space I will give myself the chance to talk about my recent travel experience to Aleppo. The trauma I faced needs a safe space to come out and be sincere, it needs a distraction. It is hard

for me to sit down and talk about visiting my birthplace after 7 years of war. I need to reconstruct the story and distract myself by cooking to be able to fully share my story with my audience.

A combined performance and an installation while cooking stuffed zucchini (كوسا محشي). The performance space is circular in its general view or will be made circular based on the location. The audience will sit in a semi circle facing a table where the food preparation will take place. The performance will consist of the preparation part without cooking, because the preparation is the key to what my grandmother taught me.

The symbolism of stuffed zucchini traces back to one of the first meals I made entirely by myself when my mother was traveling. This is one of my favorite meals that has its roots in the Middle Eastern cuisine. Our family used to have a feast of different kinds of stuffed vegetables like zucchini, eggplants, peppers, green pumpkin and tomatoes. Recipes vary from one family to another, some people used different spices, others different cooking sauce. In my family, we prepare the stuffing first. 2 tbs of rice and for every 8 zucchinis 1/4 kg of beef meat per one zucchini. The meat has to be pinkish red with no white dots in it, that means no lipids. We mix the beef with short Thai rice adding the spices to them. Spices are 1/2 tsp black pepper, 1tsp allspice , 1/2 tsp 7 spices (Aleppo mixed 7 kinds of spices), 1tbs tomato paste, 1tbs sweet pepper paste, lemon zest, lemon and salt (based on preference), 4tbs corn oil and 4-5 garlic cloves. There's a secret ingredient we add based on my grandmother's recipe, which is the citronella plant. We mix them with dry clean hands, or using kitchen gloves to prevent any germs from infecting the food and us. Then we carve the vegetables, in this case the zucchini carefully without hurting its body on the outside.

Before carving it, we cut off the heads and dip it in salt, because according to my grandmother "it makes the carving smoother." Last comes the stuffing process which requires absolute attention to details. You stuff 3/4 of the zucchini only, "because the rice blows up and if you stuff it fully you ruin the shape of the zucchini" says my grandmother. The trick here is to save the cut heads of the zucchini and use them as covers since "doing so the stuffing will stay in." And the last decorative add would be carving vertical lines on the zucchini. Usually this is done using the carving knife which comes in several shapes. The purpose of this is to allow the flavors from the sauce to emerge with the stuffing. The zucchinis are then put in a pot add water to them, if you desire to have extra flavor you add tomato paste and lemon to the water. When the water starts boiling you add dried mint to give an explosion to your flavors.

For the most part the audience has no interaction with the performance. It will be scripted as such that I know they are sitting there and I know who I'm telling my stories to. There's no fourth wall between me and my audience. The last part after the meal preparation consists of audience interaction through sharing. It will be announced that they can approach the table close to the exit door with pens and papers and a recipe box. The purpose of the box is for the audience to share their own recipes with me. Through that they share part of their family heritage and cultural identity. Next to that will be a bowl of olives. Olives are the big title of this project and have a related story in the performance. I didn't like olives when I used to live in Aleppo, but after moving to Armenia they became an essential part of my diet. I won't eat just any olives; I always prefer my grandmother's olives. They gave me the taste of my birthplace in exile, that was how the feeling tastes. The audience will have the

chance to embody my story/stories by eating the olives on their way out. The audience will eat the olives that are brought from my grandmother's trees. That will symbolize my story running in their body.

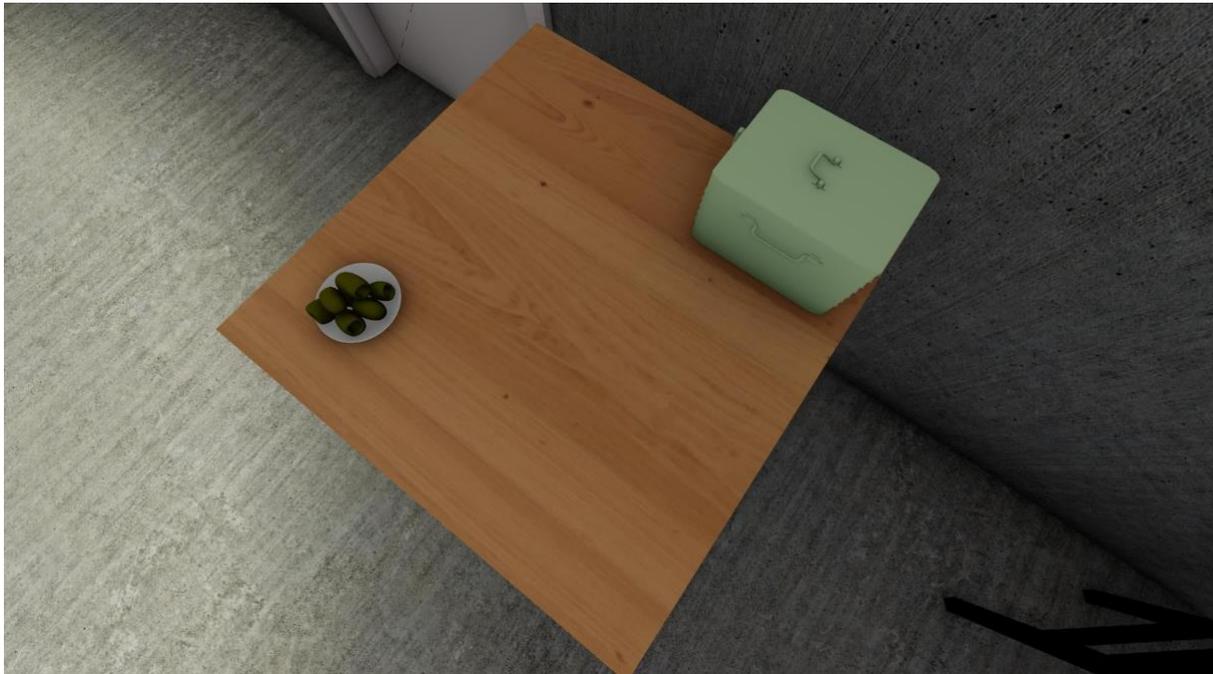


Figure #2 The olive and recipe table

The items on the table will be refreshed through the duration of the exhibit. The aftermath of the recipe will remain there to show what happened there. Half a lemon, the citronella plant, rice, the spices and garlic. "We always use fresh vegetables" my grandmother reminds us all the time; therefore the lemon will be replaced every day to stay fresh.



Figure #3 The cooking table

## **Installation #2 Retrospection**

“Retrospection” is a journey through my personal memory of my birthplace Aleppo. After being away for 7 years (July 2012) and revisiting it in (March 2019). The representations that I had clashed between memory and reality. I was expecting to see destruction and wiped out places but I didn’t expect to see a ghost town. It’s not that Aleppo didn’t have people, these people were unfamiliar to the places they were in.

This installation is interactive, meaning that the audience can play around with it. It consists of 40 pictures montaged in pairs in a before and after style. 20 black and white picture rather larger than the colored pictures. The idea behind the black and white photos is that they represent the present day Aleppo, places I had memories in. These places are streets, family memories and my school. Black and white were the colors I’ve seen these places in when I visited them. They have almost no one left in them anymore, or at least not the same people as in my memories. They have either moved to another country oceans apart, or passed away. In before and after formats usually the black and white is the old and the colored is the new. In this installation the tables have turned, because in my memories the past is more vivid in color than the present. These colored photographs are smaller in size because they contain a larger burden than the new ones. The amount of memories in the colored photographs is bigger, if they were the same size as the black and white one they would lose their capacity in telling a story. A smaller size will give the chance to the audience to see all the compressed emotions and memories within each frame.

These pairs will be hung on the wall by ropes, the black and white ones are the fixed background and the colored ones are movable. The visitors can move the colored photographs up and down using the ropes. The purpose is for the audience to fully experience these pictures separately and then read their togetherness when they are back on top of each other. Each picture represents a moment in time, when they are separate they can show different realities of a place. But when they go on top of each other, the montage shows the devastation, the loneliness and the aftermath of war.



Figure #4 Retrospection wall

### Installation #3 Bewilderment



Figure #5 Bewilderment soundscape back view

This installation aims to give the viewer is confusion mixed with clarity sometimes. This soundscape which is a mixture of audio recordings of three generations telling different versions of the same story. A bench will be set facing a blank wall, three speakers will be around the bench like a sound system. The speaker on the right will be my mother's voice, the speaker in the middle will be my voice and the speaker to the left will be my grandmother's voice. I'm in the middle because I'm the link between these two generations, and also I'm the story collector and uniter of both sides. Because I took it upon me to create meaning out of these stories, to unite them and give them a new perspective through this installation. The sounds will be accompanied by pictures from my childhood, my memories and pictures related to the three storytellers.

This installation deals with the matrilineal folds of a story. How the female members of the family are the ones who carry these stories among them. Having the three voices together but separated through speakers brings attention to the importance of the individual and the collective. My grandmother chose me to be the link between all the generations in the family. She made sure I knew the stories and I delivered her messages to her children and grandchildren. My grandmother went through a tough surgery, that was the reason why I visited her in the first place. She made it through her operation, however, these stories have a heavier burden on my chest. Through these stories I attempt to reunite a family torn apart by war and life circumstances.



Figure #5 Bewilderment soundscape frontal view

## References

- Abrams, L. (2018). Talking about feminism. In K. Srigley, S. Zembrzycki, & F. Iacovetta, *Beyond Women's Words* (pp. 81-94). London : Routledge.
- Al-Ali , N. (2018). Memory, history, and contestations in present-day Iraq. In K. Srigley, S. Zembrzycki, & F. Iacovetta, *Beyond Women's Words* (pp. 137-147). Oxon : Routledge .
- Arshadi, S., Attarian, H., Baker , K., & Bilici, K. (2018). Come wash with us. In K. Srigley, S. Zembrzycki, & F. Iacovetta, *Beyond Women's Words* (pp. 261-276). Oxon: Routledge .
- Attarian , H. (2009, April ). Lifelines: materilineal narratives, memory and identity. Montreal : McGill University .
- Cole , A., & Knowles, G. (2001). *Lives In Context* . London : AltaMira Press .
- Fiese, B., & Sameroff, A. (2001). Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development. In *The stories that families tell: Narrative coherence, narrative interaction, and relationship beliefs*. (pp. 1-162). Wiley .
- Hall , S. (1996). Who Needs 'Identity'. In P. Du Gay, & S. Hall, *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1-17). London : Sage .
- Hall, S. (1994). Cultural Identity and Diaspora. In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: a reader* (pp. 222-237). London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Hybrid dicrionary denfinition* . (n.d.). Retrieved from Vocabulary.com: <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/hybrid>
- Jessee, E. (2013). Considering Silence. In A. Sheftel, & S. Zembrzycki, *Oral History Off The Record* (pp. 219-222). New York : Palgrave Macmillan.

- Kikumura, A. (1986). Family Life Histories: A Collaborative Venture. In *The Oral History Review* (pp. 140-144). Oxford University Press.
- Mansfield, N. (2000). Freud and the split subject. In N. Mansfield, *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (pp. 25-37). New York : NYU Press
- .
- Pollock, N. (2009). Food and Transnationalism: Reassertions of Pacific Identity. In H. Lee, & S. T. Francis , *Migration and Transnationalism* (pp. 103-114). ANU Press
- .
- Portelli, A. (1998). What makes oral history different. In R. Perks, & A. Thomson, *The oral history reader* (pp. 63-74). London: Routledge.
- Roncaglia, S. (2013). Tastes and Cultures. In *Work and Food Culture of the Mumbai Dabbawalas* (pp. 119-154). Open Book Publishers.
- Schwärzler , M. (2016). Blocked View and Impeded Vision An Affective Response to the Photographs of Maria Hahnenkamp and Thomas Struth. In M. Schwärzler, *At Face Value and Beyond* (pp. 55-72). Transcript Verlag.
- Taylor , D. (2003 ). Acts of Transfer. In D. Taylor , *The Archive And The Repertoire* (pp. 1-52). Duke University Press .
- Webster, M., & Gravotta , N. (2014). Co-Creating Our Story: Making a Documentary Film. In S. High, E. Little , & D. R. Thi , *Remembering Mass Violence* (pp. 152-170). Toronto : University of Toronto .

## Appendix #1 Interview Gridlines

### 1) Biographical Information

- a) Can you please tell me your name?
- b) When and where were you born?
  - i) tell me about your trajectory from birth till now
- c) Can you talk about your parents and their cultural background?
  - i) Tell me about your siblings.
- d) Can you tell me about your life before getting married ?
  - i) What did you study?
  - ii) Where did you work?
  - iii) How did you spend your days?
- e) How did you meet your husband?
  - i) Were there any obstacles because of his Armenian background?
- f) When did you get married?
- g) Were both of your parents accepting of this marriage?
- h) How many kids do you have?
- i) Can you tell me about your role as a mother with your kids?

### 2) Interviewee's mother

- a) How do you see your mother's relationship with your kids?
  - i) How did your mother play a role in your kids upbringing?
  - ii) Where did your mother during your kids upbringing
- b) What kind of a woman is your mother?
- c) Can you tell me more about her life before she got married?
- d) How do you remember your mother as a kid?

- e) Did your mother teach you how to cook?
- f) What is your favorite dish that your mother makes?
- g) Did your mother have rituals when she was cooking?
  - i) If yes, how do you feel these rituals have been passed down to you?
  - ii) How do you feel about cooking ?
  - iii) Who used to cook before moving to Yerevan

### 3) Life after moving to Armenia

- a) How and why did you move to Armenia?
- b) Did you know how to cook when you moved to Armenia?
  - i) Why did you learn cooking after moving to Armenia?
- c) What were the biggest challenges you faced when cooking in Armenia?
- d) We've talked about family meals before, can you tell me more about how you see the importance of these meals
- e) How do you feel your kids react when they eat a meal prepared by you?
- f) Do you like to cook?
- g) Is there a secret ingredient that makes your food special ?
- h) How do you feel your mom's cooking played a role in your cooking?
  - i) do you feel your kids were connected to your mother's cooking?

### 4) About the kids

- a) How do you feel your children react to their hybrid identity?
  - i) Do you see certain behavioral patterns? difference in how each one of your kids inhabits their identity?

b) let's talk about whether you see any connections between the duality/multiplicity/hybridity of the identities and the reality of living with different cuisines in our daily life  
Do your kids enjoy cooking?

i) If yes, how so? Can you tell me specific stories?

c) How did your mother play a role in your kids upbringing?

d) Can you tell me about your kids reactions to Syrian or Middle Eastern food?

i) Did your kids enjoy their paternal grandmother's cooking?

e) Can you tell me about your kids reactions to Armenian food in Armenia?

f) Which one do you think they like more and why?

g) Do your kids cook for you?

i) If yes, do you enjoy their meals?

ii) How do they prepare them?

h) How is your Husband's family's meals different than yours?

## 5) Cultural Representation in Armenia

a) We know that for the past few years a lot of Syrian-Armenians opened restaurants with Syrian menus. How do you feel about the cultural representation of food in Armenia?

b) What do you think is working and why?

c) What do you think is not working and why?

d) You're not of Armenian origin, how did you/ or did not adapt to Armenian food?

e) What's the difference for you between Western Armenian food and Eastern Armenian food?

f) If you could change one thing in a Syrian restaurant of your choice what would you change?

6) Mother-daughter relationship

- a) How can you describe your relationship with your daughter?
- b) Being the one carrying hybrid identities, which one do you think your daughter connects to more?
- c) How did your mother affect your daughter's upbringing?
  - i) Can you tell me a few stories?
- d) Do you feel that your daughter and mother have a good connection?
- e) What personality traits does your daughter share with you and your mother?
- f) Do you feel that your daughter is connected to certain foods?
  - i) If yes, why do you think so?
- g) Do you think you daughter likes Syrian or Armenian food better?
- h) Did she use to cook with her Armenian grandmother?
- i) Do you believe in the grandmother – mother – daughter relationships?
- j) What do you think about the intergenerational connection between grandmother - mother - daughter relationships.

## **CONSENT FORM**

**Capstone project:** The Olive Branch

**Student Researcher:** Houry Pilibbossian

**Researcher Contact Information:** [houry\\_pilibbossian@edu.aua.am](mailto:houry_pilibbossian@edu.aua.am)

**Capstone director:** Dr. Hourig Attarian

**Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:** [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am), 060 61 2769

You are being invited to participate in the research study on family narratives through the lens of culinary culture. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the student researcher.

### **A. PURPOSE**

I have been informed that the purpose of the project is to understand family narratives and culinary culture through an intergenerational storytelling perspective. As such, I understand that the focus of the interview will be on my personal life experiences and on mother-daughter relations. Being the researcher's mother and a research subject for the purpose of this project.

### **B. PROCEDURES**

I understand that the interview will be conducted in my home or another appropriate place to me, and recorded on audio and/or video. As a participant, I will be asked to explore information from my personal life that is connected to the purpose of this study. I have been informed that interviews will take approximately two hours, however, I am free to stop at any time, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the project at any given point. I understand that if I wish to extend the interview for more than two hours, I will be provided that opportunity.

### **C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

I understand that sometimes telling a life story can be upsetting and emotionally difficult. I have been informed that I am free to stop, take a break or discontinue at any time. This research is conducted for a capstone project which will be submitted to the American University of Armenia, College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

### **D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

As a participant, I will have access to all the recorded and transcribed data for verification purposes. Throughout the project, if and when the material produced is in Arabic, I will have the opportunity to review and verify the English translations.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at any time without negative consequences.

I understand that the data from this project may be published in print or digital format for academic purposes.

In terms of **identification and reproduction** of my interview (**please choose one**):

I agree to **disclose my identity**. I understand that my identity may be revealed in any publications or presentations that may result from this interview. **I understand that I may mask the identities of other persons appearing in my narratives if I so choose.**

I agree to the reproduction of sound and images from this interview by any method and in any media for academic purposes, which may a digital presentation, documentary clips, etc.

**OR**

I understand that my participation in this study is **confidential** (i.e., the student-researcher and the course instructor will know, but will not disclose my identity). **I understand that I may mask the identities of other persons appearing in my narratives if I so choose.**

I agree that while data from my interview may be published, no sound or images from it may be reproduced.

**For archiving purposes (please choose one):**

I agree that transcripts and/or recordings of my interview will be stored at a local archive for long-term preservation. I understand that the researcher will contact me for further details and additional permission once the archiving considerations have been defined clearly.

**OR**

I understand that once the research project is completed in May 2019, the audio and/or video recording will be destroyed by the student researcher (though a copy of the interview may be given to me).

**In cases where family photographs or documents are scanned or photographed (please choose one):**

\_\_\_ I agree to let the student researcher copy family photographs and documents for use in her research and for their being archived with the interview recording. I likewise give permission to let future researchers use these images in their publications.

**OR**

\_\_\_ I agree to let the student researcher copy family photographs and documents for use in the student research project only.

### **PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION**

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

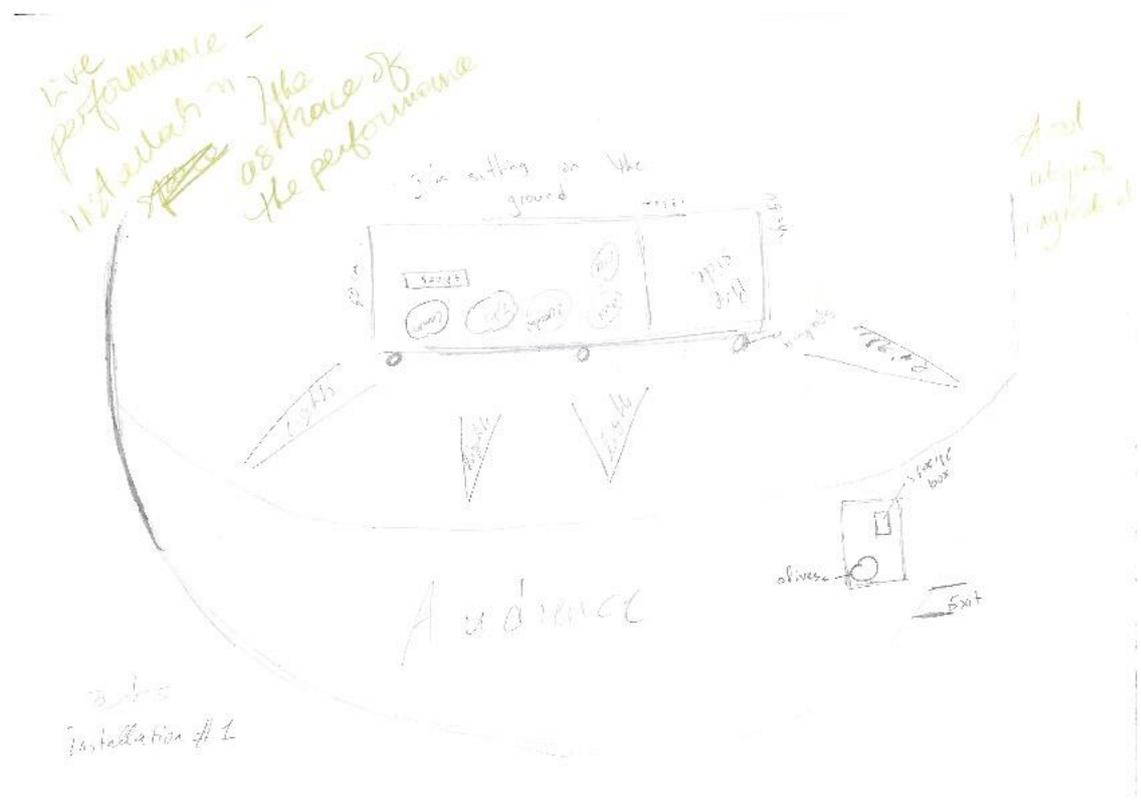
NAME \_\_\_\_\_ (please \_\_\_\_\_ print)

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions or concerns about ethical issues in this research about your, please contact Dr. Hourig Attarian of the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at AUA (tel.: 060 612769, email: [hourig.attarian@aua.am](mailto:hourig.attarian@aua.am)).

Appendix #3 Installation #1 Sketch

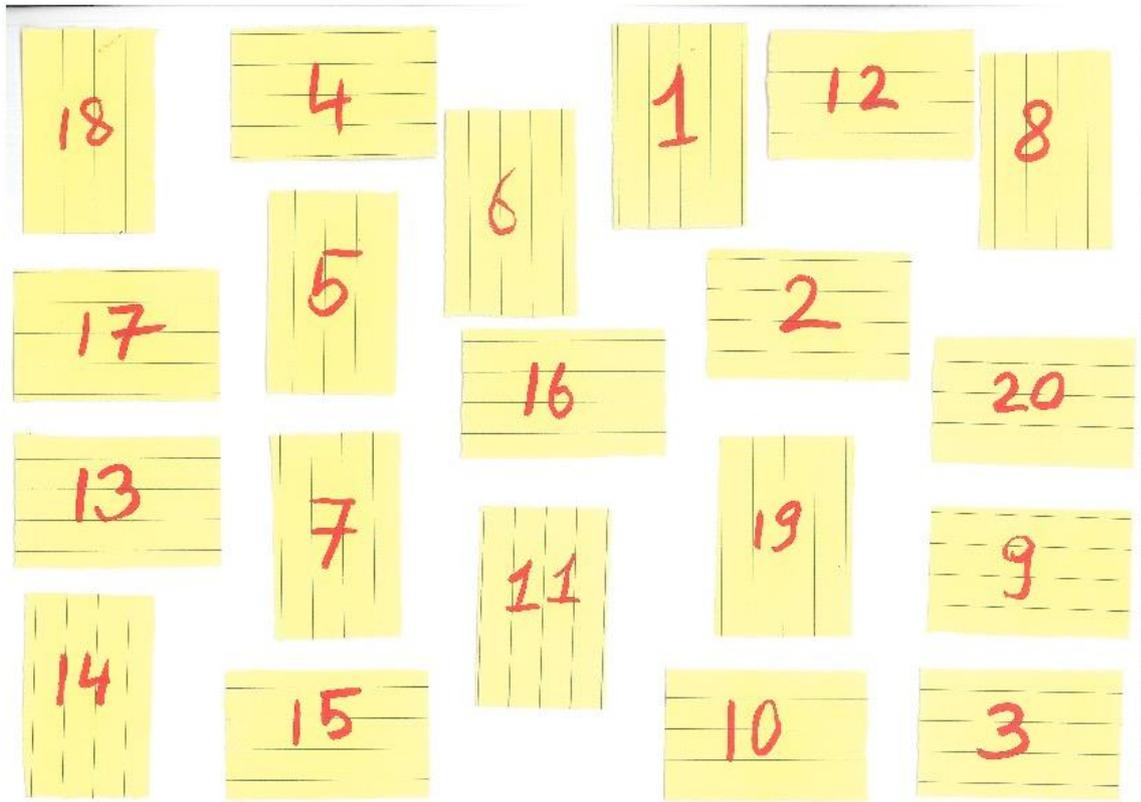


Appendix #4 Installation #1 items

Item	Specification	Quantity
Table (for cooking)	W=60 cm L= 135 cm H= 50 cm	1
Spot lights	Yellowish light	4
Table (for the exit)	For the recipe box H=70 cm W= 60 cm L=80 cm	1
Stool	W= 40 cm L= 40 cm H= 35 cm	1

Chairs		20
Recipe box		1
Papers for recipes	A5	50
Pens		5
Zucchini		8
Rice		1 small bag
Meat		1/4 kg
Spices	salt, black pepper, allspice, 7 spices	*based on the recipe
Lemons		2-3
Citronella plant		1
Tomato paste		150g
Pepper paste		150g
Corn oil		350ml
Garlic	in cloves	6
Cutting knife		1
Carving knife		1
Table spoon		1
Tea spoon		1
Zester		1
Kitchen gloves	in pairs	4
Bowl	for the meat mixing	1
Small Bowl	for the olives	1
Olives		350 g
Microphone	*if needed based on the location	1
Speakers	For the microphone *if needed based on the location	1

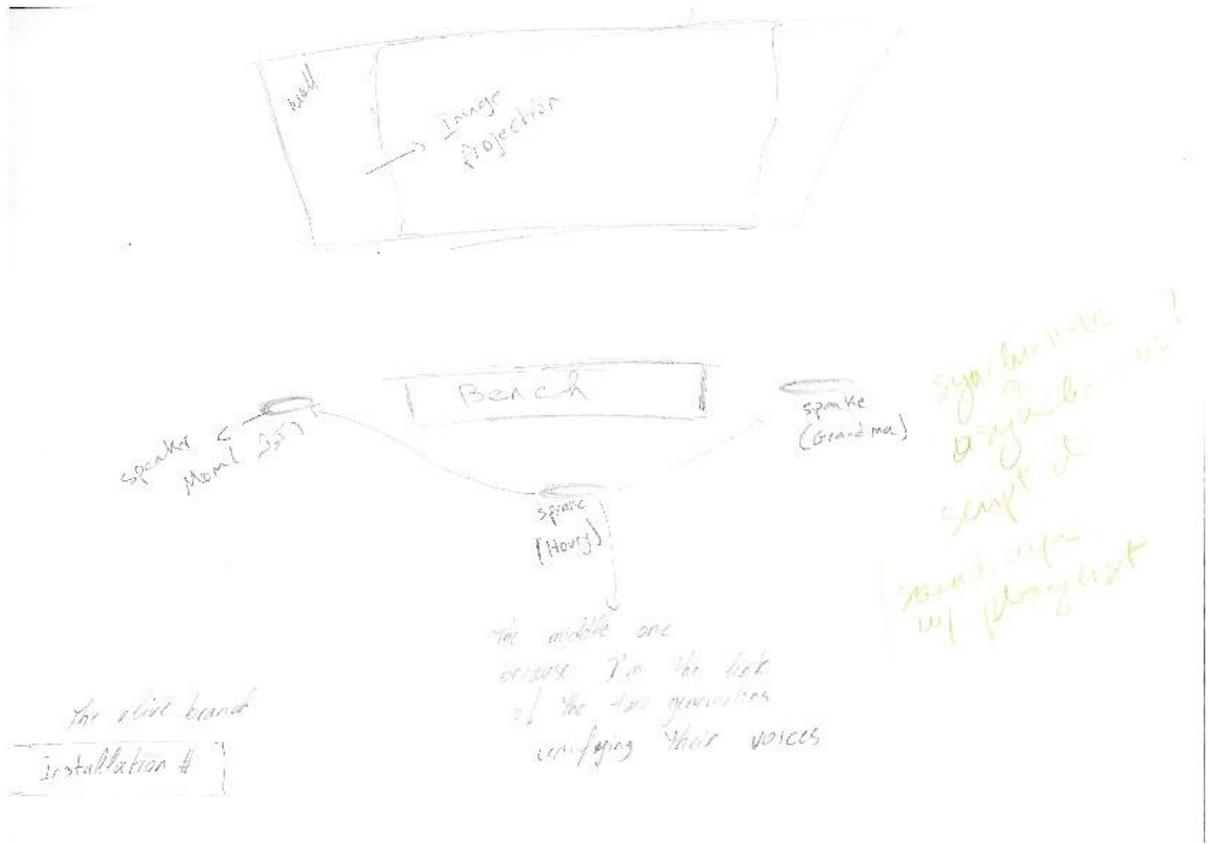
Appendix #5 Installation #2 sketch



Appendix #6 Installation #2 items

Item	Specification	Quantity
Black and white photos	A2	20
Colored photos	A3	20
Rope	For hanging the pictures	2 meters
Rolls	for the ropes	20
Paper punch		1
Scissors		1
Double sided tape		1 roll
Steel tape		1

Appendix #7 Installation #3 sketch



Appendix #8 Installation #3 items

Item	Specification	Quantity
Speakers		3
Projector		1
Computer/laptop	one for each speaker + one for the projector	4
Bench		1