

Unearthing our narratives: remembering, restoring, recreating

by

Arpine Ghambaryan

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	4
Abstract	6
Literature review	9
Research questions	16
Methodology	17
Artist statement	25
Film	26
Reflections on Process	27
References	29
Appendix	31
Consent form	31

*In loving memory of my grandparents, Paytsar (Lusya) Duryan and Zhora
Asryan*

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Abstract

This capstone project explores the relationship between place and memory, time and relations, human connections and personal stories by weaving intergenerational narratives of my mother, my grandmother's friend Shogik's, and mine. I created a film that allows each one of us to plant the seeds of our memories and give life to them as long as we have the privilege of carrying them with us.

This project is a conversation with myself and the world in an artistic way. The text and the film work together to produce a multi-layered narrative of my research, shedding light on the importance of personal stories for the production of knowledge. This project is how I deal with grief. I grieve my grandparents' passing, as I grieve about disconnecting from Jungliner, a neighborhood in Vanadzor where I used to create a significant part of my childhood memories. I explore the ways in which my childhood memories got constructed over time and became imprinted in my mind, forever reminding me of the power of that place.

Unearthing our narratives: remembering, restoring, recreating

2020: my first ever depression. Painful memories hitting me hard, remembering, analyzing, regretting...missing. My grandmother passed away on December 7, 2015, in the hospital at the age of 66. Her passing was quiet, unnoticed... or at least to me. I was just a kid. I was becoming 15 a day after her passing. I did not know what death was. I did not know how to grieve. I was emotionless. Or I just believed that she'd be back someday, that there was no way she was gone forever. I did not cry once at my grandmother's funeral. I did not cry long after her passing. I did not have any emotions. I just did not know what death was. I just did not know how to grieve.

My grandmother's last words were «չվախենաս, գնում եմ» (“don't be scared, I am going”). She told that to my mom minutes before she passed away when saw her daughter panicking because of sudden issues with breathing. She knew she was going to die long before the last few minutes of her life. My grandmother was a brave woman. She was a woman of extraordinary strength and resilience. She had endless love for all of us, and we had endless love for her.

I remember my grandfather repeatedly saying, «գյուղին դիպչի սառսալին»/“may this old woman get hit by a bullet”. He used to say that my grandma betrayed all of us. She left too soon. He couldn't believe it.

My grandfather passed away on September 3, 2021. He lived alone for six years despite all our attempts to make him come live with us. He gave up on his health. He started smoking

like he never smoked before. He did not care. He was scared of death, but he was waiting for it to come because his life had lost all colors.

This project is how I learn to grieve. It is how I try to process death.

I spent most of my childhood at my grandparents' house. It is ironic that I say "most of my childhood" because I stayed at their place for only a few days during the summers. But when I think about my childhood, I see the picture of my grandparents' yard, my grandmother's nicely cultivated garden, her delicious roasted potatoes with onions, and my grandfather's blue garage right in front of the garden.

As my grandparents passed away, I have been disconnected from that space physically but never emotionally.

This capstone is how I see, feel, and remember my childhood experiences, the smells, the tastes, and the sounds. And the importance of the place, of course, was shaped by my strong connection with my grandparents. It was they who made the place so meaningful for me.

The more I wanted to write this, the further removed I became from my memories. So, doing this project for my capstone became inevitable.

Literature review

The literature reviewed in this section looks at how self and identity get shaped, what memories are, and what it is like to work with difficult memories. My work focuses on the relationship between places and memories, as well as how different aspects of memory shape the way we construct and map space. As Kamanos wrote, “The very act of mapping is transformational” (Kamanos-Gamelin, 2005, p. 187). So, the literature I review also becomes the string with points that map Shoghik’s, my mom’s, and my stories, becoming central to understanding the very processes that these stories go through before being written and articulated.

Standpoint theory and positionality

“With whose blood were my eyes crafted?” (Haraway, 2004, p. 90)

Standpoint theory aims to explain the relationship between knowledge construction and power (Allen, 2017). Since society tends to value the knowledge produced by the dominant groups, mainstream knowledge production neglects to look at the viewpoints of the marginalized groups. Standpoint theory, however, strives to give importance to the knowledge constructed by the subordinate groups. Hence, it argues that the knowledge is partial unless it is accompanied by the knowledge generated by the non-dominant groups. As Donna Haraway notes, understanding of standpoint theory helps to produce oppositional and collective consciousnesses in oppressed groups. It aims to give the opportunity to the oppressed peoples to become collective “subjects” of research rather than only objects of others’ observation, data collection, naming, and utilization for the construction of dominant knowledge (Haraway, 2004). Sandra Harding argues that culture and politics often function as “prisonhouses” of knowledge. Yet they can and often

do also function as “toolboxes,” creating new perspectives and new ways of seeing the world to enlarge the horizons of our understandings and desires for a better life (Harding, 2004).

The idea of epistemic value also touches upon Haraway’s standpoint theory that questions knowledge production and understanding how it is created by who, as well as who benefits from it. Central to Haraway’s theory is the idea of vision, which determines how knowledge is created and through whose eyes it is projected. She reminds us to ask the question, “With whose blood were my eyes crafted?” (2004, p. 90). So, if vision is the pillar of situatedness, then the process of acquiring knowledge takes place within the frame of standpoints, pointing to individual ways of seeing and interpreting the world. Through this perspective, as Haraway points out, feminist projects aim to understand how power is constructed and exercised and challenge the ways in which knowledge is generated (2004).

The theory actually emerged from the Marxist argument that marginalized people have knowledge that is not accessible to privileged people. Marx argued that the proletariat has the ideal knowledge because their knowledge derives from their experience with oppression and struggle. In the 1970s, a group of feminists agreed with Marx’s idea that one’s social standing shapes what one knows and how one knows it. However, they believed that Marx’s theory was patriarchal and it overlooked women’s ways of seeing. They asserted that that belief system valued masculinity over femininity and positioned men’s voices as superior and women’s as subordinate. To investigate these issues, feminist scholars adopted Marxist theory to understand how it can be developed further to emphasize the value of women’s perspectives (Allen, 2017).

As Nielsen said, “Each of us comes from a different kitchen table” (Nielsen, 1998, p. 148). Now, as I write this capstone, I am aware of my standpoint, I am aware of where I come from, and how I use the knowledge I have acquired to shed light on women’s experiences, I

approach artistically what I have been trying to tell for such a long time. I have for a long time been convinced that these stories are not important, that I shouldn't even tell them. But then I understand that the mere telling of these stories is liberating. This is how I learn to speak, this is how I learn to live.

Self-study

I fear self-study — my body, soul, and senses react to the memory of its grip, to feeling very vulnerable, naked to the reader's eyes (Kamanos Gamelin, 2005, p. 184).

My work is, first and foremost, a conversation with myself. It is a journey I am willingly taking to learn myself better, to map my inner and outer worlds, and to transform myself. Self-study is scary, uncomfortable, and sometimes excruciating. It is a process when you ask yourself who you are and how you are who you are. As Lorri Nielsen described, we become our own inquiry subjects (Nielsen, 1998).

It takes a lot of courage to step on this path, but when you do, it opens up the bottomless field of freedom and creativity. My work in self-study is like stepping into the unknown but, at the same time, knowing what I need to do better than anyone else would ever know. In a book chapter on self-study and vulnerability, "The Sand Diaries," Kamanos-Gamelin wrote, "Understanding self-study involves 'becoming' your work" (2005, p. 184). I became my own narrative and my own story. I had the chance to revisit my deepest memories, sometimes even those that I buried unconsciously, with no intention of ever bringing them back. Dealing with difficult memories, however arduous, is also liberating indeed. It helps one to take off something that has been stuck in the chest for years.

As Kamanos-Gamelin described, self-study is a confirmation of what we already know. Beyond being informational, self-study is also both self-affirming and self-confirming. The transformation rests upon the awareness that our institutional, personal, and cultural stories shape our lived experiences (2005).

Doing this kind of research is like collecting parts of myself that have separated from each other, parts that I lost a long time ago and that shape who I am now. Those parts are all situated in the different corners of my mind, peacefully waiting for me to rescue them from being completely vanished. hooks spoke directly to me when she wrote, “The longer it took me to begin the process of writing an autobiography, the further removed from those memories I was becoming” (hooks, 1989). My memories seem less and less clear every other year. The desire to write this piece and complete it feels more urgent. I am afraid to lose these memories that shape who I am now. Yet, the same desire gets blocked by my inability to articulate my memories as I am blocked right now in writing this piece.

This research also revolves around the idea of embodied knowledge and tries to explain how my experiences are constructed and situated not merely on an intellectual level but on a deeply emotional level that work together to produce a comprehensive understanding of my narrative. Catherine Derry defines embodiment as an inclusive term that does not include only one way of knowing, existing, or experiencing. She views embodiment as a way of knowing that goes beyond the intellectual, rational way of knowing that has traditionally been described before. It includes emotions, senses, and personal experiences (Derry, 2005). Williams and Bendelow believe that the meaning of embodiment is complex to describe because of its inclusivity. But they believe that knowledge is the domain of the mind, and it’s influenced by our emotions, feelings, and ways of expression (Williams and Bendelow, 1998).

I live through this project, and my body physically goes through these processes, even on a deep subconscious level, sometimes not allowing myself to take control of it. I live my project through my dreams every day, seeing pieces of it being projected into my routine reality. I carry my project physically, mentally, and emotionally, I become the embodiment of my project.

Ethnography and senses

The smell of insulin got replaced by the smell of smoke.

My memories, besides being sources of information about my past, are structured through and with the combination of senses. My research is, to a large degree, a work with my experiences which got shaped through the intersections of multiple sensations such as sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell, all of them being essential to what I choose to remember and how I remember. The understanding of sensory ethnography becomes central to weaving a comprehensive narrative of our experiences.

As Sarah Pink wrote in her “Doing Sensory Ethnography,” ethnography is the process of creating and representing knowledge that is based on the ethnographer’s own individual experiences. Although it does not claim to produce an objective reality, it aims to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are “as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations, and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced” (Pink, 2009, p. 8).

As Pink described, doing sensory ethnography presupposes taking practical and conceptual steps to revisit the ethnographic practices that invite the researcher to look at the new and established ethnographic research practices in terms of sensory perception, meanings, and values. It invites the researcher to address the effect of senses throughout all the steps of the research process, including planning, implementing, reviewing, and presenting (2009).

I consider senses as valid data for understanding and analyzing our narratives because they hold a great deal of meaning in them, reinforcing what we remember and how we remember. The perceptual systems not only overlap in their functions but are also subsumed under a total system of bodily orientation. Looking, listening, and touching, therefore, are not separate activities. They are just different facets of the same activity: that of the whole organism in its environment (Ingold as cited in Pink, 2009, p. 27).

As I analyze my senses, it seems like the tiniest sensory impressions slip through the cracks of my memory to bring back events that seemed long buried and forgotten and which now seem to appear large and real in my consciousness.

The smell is my strongest sense. My parents say that from a very early age, I used to smell anything I would see for the first time. I smell to remember, and I remember when I smell. My grandparents' house smelled like insulin for a long time. My grandmother had type two diabetes, and she had to take two shots of insulin a day. The smell was so strong that it got into each piece of furniture so that every time you opened a closet, the smell of insulin would get into your nostrils. The smell of insulin soon got replaced with the smell of smoke soon after my grandmother passed away. My grandfather started smoking like never before, and the furniture, too, started to smell like smoke.

My mother remembered the smell of greens in the house, when my grandmother was still with us. She loved greens. She would set the greens on the table in the balcony and chop them. Sometimes she would have Shogher as a company. The smells would spread through the house, taking over the other smells, turning the house into a garden.

These smells became so intertwined with my memories of the house that my brain can't help but take me back in time to travel in the past, every time I encounter these smells

Memory work

“Whatever befalls us in later life, those memories remain; it is as though childhood is a temporal extension of the self” (Marcus, 1992, p. 89).

The body is a memorial container. The idea of memory ‘work’ entails a play that involves memory and imagination. Sometimes the terms ‘doing memory work’ and ‘writing autobiography’ is used interchangeably. Memory is the intersection of narration and reflection of storytelling. It is a peculiarly open form, inviting broken and incomplete images, half-recollected fragments – all the mass and mess of detail (Hampl as cited in Mitchell and Weber, 1999). We learn not only to listen to tell our memories but also to listen to what our memories tell us.

Today I don't remember the same way as I did yesterday. And my memories will not be the same tomorrow. I might remember fragments that I had never remembered before. We write and revisit the first drafts of our memory work. The first draft is always filled with truths and lies, of fragments of reality and dreams. I consider this capstone project the first draft of my memory work. I allow myself to let everything out. I allow myself to create a memory draft that will be worked and worked on continuously throughout time. The importance of a first draft is to give shape to the confusion of memories that make a mess in our heads (Mitchell and Weber, 1999).

The language that I use to write about my memories is different from the language that I have recorded my memories. Writing about my memories in English gives me the space to invent and recognize my second self – the self that I constructed over time.

Place attachment

Place and memory are two strongly connected entities. Space becomes a place when it entails meaning. Our ties to a place are cognitive because we involve knowledge, memories, beliefs, and experiences that make the place so meaningful (Scannell & Gifford, 2014). It is important to try to understand what exactly we are attached to in a place. Scannell & Gifford explain that researchers tend to focus on the social and physical qualities of the place “given that place attachments can be rooted in social ties or can stem from aesthetic or landscape features” (2014, p. 275).

Cooper describes that what keeps us attached to places is the continuity with important environments and people from the past (Cooper, 1992). The only connection we have with the neighbourhood of Jungliner now is Shoghik. We visit her sometimes, call her on a regular basis to see how she's doing, and every time I hear her voice, I remember my grandmother and the happy times when everyone was younger and in better health. Shoghik's existence itself maintains and strengthens the bond with the neighborhood.

Research questions

In the scope of this research, I examine the ways we remember and construct narratives and the ways we attempt to revisit our memories. My research also attempts to understand what has changed in Jungliner. How it has been reshaped through my mom's, Shoghik's, and my memories over time, as well as what senses attach us to this space.

Methodology

From the early stages of my research, I identified oral history as the main methodology of my study. I decided to incorporate the interview I conducted earlier with Shoghik for my oral history course with another interview with my mom that would work together on different levels to help me create a multi-layered narrative of their experiences.

I decided that a film would be the best medium to combine the interviews and the visual materials for the creation of a holistic representation of what each one of us feels about this place and how we talk about it.

Oral history and feminist research / I listen to recreate

Recording is dead until it's experienced. It's only when each listener walks through the landscape and brings their own unique set of memories, senses and understandings, senses and understandings to bear that what Samuel called the 'dialectic of past-present relations' can be performed (Butler, 2009, p. 3).

I first learned about feminist research during my junior year when I was taking an oral history course. It was a life-changing encounter that completely transformed my understanding of qualitative research and the ways I approached research making.

Oral history becomes instrumental in doing feminist research. It opens a pathway for collecting stories that cannot be collected in many different forms. The conversational style of interviewing creates a space where stories weave together to shape a narrative and, in this process, become the story of not only the narrator but also the interviewer. An oral history interview is not an inquisition but a conversation. In fact, the first and most important thing that the interviewer has to do is to listen. Allowing the space to breathe, letting the mutual

awkwardness be there and accepting your inexperience in doing this research is central to understanding the complexity of oral history (Terkel & Parker, 2003).

According to Alessandro Portelli, “Oral history sources are narrative sources” (Portelli, 2003). The ways in which the participant constructs their narrative(s) speaks about the extent to which they are willing to be vulnerable. Much of this depends on the interviewer to make sure they provide an environment where the participant trusts them and feels comfortable sharing their stories.

The recognition of oral history as a feminist methodology emerged with the knowledge that women’s lives have been obscured and excluded from traditional accounts of historical events. This idea was accompanied by the realization that oral history could be used as a tool to incorporate women in history, questioning the prevalent ideas of what is socially, politically, and economically important in a society that functions to marginalize women’s lives. However, Katherine Borland warns of the dangers that doing feminist oral history research can bring up. She points out the interpretive conflicts of oral narrative research, especially when the researcher has a feminist lens of analysis (Borland, 2018). It comes back to what Harding and Haraway argue about deeply understanding the narrator’s standpoint and positionality and thus, being able to spot the differences in your own interpretation of the narrative compared to what the narrator actually tells.

Oral history is not seeking the truth but rather what the truth means for each individual (Terkel & Parker, 2003). My choice of using oral history as a method of research was to see how we remember and interpret truths, what we remember, and what we choose not to remember. Spoken memory can be seen as a walk (Butler, 2009). It travels wherever your mind takes it to.

And we choose to allow those spaces to come forth, to blossom, and be spoken about. As Butler said, “Presenting oral history in public spaces can really make the landscape sing” (2009, p. 11).

The interview with Shoghik was my first interaction with the method of oral history. I did it for my project in the oral history course, and ever since, I have referred back to it not just once throughout my studies. The interview explored Shoghik’s beautiful friendship with my grandmother by looking at what she remembered from the friendship that lives on in her memories. The interview with her was also filled with spatial significance. She told stories about the places in the neighborhood where she had important memories with my grandmother.

The interview with my mom was one of the hardest interviews I’ve ever had. I had a terrible anxiety attack before the interview, and the only thing I was thinking about was how to make sure not to evoke painful memories that might possibly trigger her. But apparently, the interview with her was one of the most heartfelt conversations we had ever had. We had a chance to create a space where we allowed each other to be vulnerable, cry, and question ourselves. It made us revisit our deepest memories and have a mental walk through Jungliner. At times we sat in silence for a few minutes without having a single thought going through our heads. But at some point, one of us would break the silence by bringing up the most valuable memories that we thought we had forgotten a long time ago.

The intimate insider / I ask from the people who know the best

This project discovers and analyzes forms of qualitative research, in particular being framed under the theory of insider research, which touches upon ethnographic methods of study. The understanding of insider research is central to explaining my situatedness in this research project. Insider research offers a perspective of how the research views the participants,

perceiving their role in research not just as informants but as friends or family members “who share an intimate concern with data” (Taylor, 2011, p. 7). The idea of insider research lies on the foundational basis of knowledge creation by a researcher who is assumed to have greater access to information, participants, and data than the researchers outside of the research setting. Insider research, however, is not faultless, nor should one assume that as an insider, one suggests the only true way of seeing and interpreting the culture. This project does not attempt to produce an absolutely correct investigation. Still, it incorporates elements that explain my way of looking at the culture and interpreting it from a unique standpoint. The intimate insider research, however, looks at how the role of a researcher does not imply totality in their position as either an insider or an outsider, given that the boundaries of such positions are often blurred (Taylor, 2011).

Drawing as a self-study / I draw to remember

“There exists a hermeneutic dialectic between lived life and art: art interprets life and life interprets art” (Derry, 2005, p. 51)

I always loved drawing. Although I wasn’t always great at it, I thought I found something incredibly soothing in drawing. Later on, I discovered that it wasn’t just drawing that made me fall so much in love with art creation. Over time, I discovered my strong inclination to interpret life through different forms of visual arts: photography, filmmaking, and crafting. I remember things visually, I speak to the world visually, I feel visually.

My parents registered me for art classes when I was 10 years old. The very first painting I did in art school had the honor of being hung on one of the walls of my grandparents’ house. It was a painting of a ship in the middle of the ocean and a beautiful sunset shining in the background. It wasn’t the most aesthetic piece of art in history, but it was done by 10-year-old

Arpi, and my grandparents were proud of that. It stayed hanging there even when we sold the house to the new owners. It probably stays hanging there till now. I hope it does.

The drawings I did for my film helped me to access memories, write in a more embodied way and give the viewer that multi-layered intellectual/emotional connection to my experiences. Before moving on to explaining how drawing became a part of my self-study, it is important to understand why I consider embodiment as a significant component of my project. Understanding how it became a part of the discourse around my work is important.



Figure 1 A drawing of the tree and the taxi stand, or simply my grandfather's workplace.

Artistic modes of representation have helped me understand and express my findings in embodied ways, and drawing was one way of doing it.

Film and visual anthropology / I film to revisit

“Film is an expression of experience by experience” (Husserl as cited in Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 155).

Filmmaking has always been a distinct way of storytelling that I considered to be so complicated and yet amazingly liberating. Visual anthropology is a subfield in anthropology that uses visual media, such as photography, film, video, and other forms of media, as a tool for researching, representing, and communicating cultural or individual practices, perceptions, and beliefs. It is an interdisciplinary approach that combines anthropology with media studies and visual arts. It is considered an umbrella concept that encompasses all aspects of visible and pictorial culture, with ethnographic film as merely one part of a larger whole (Banks & Ruby, 2011).

One of the key principles of visual anthropology is the idea of reflexivity, or the awareness of the researcher's own perspective and biases. Visual anthropologists recognize that the act of creating visual media is itself a form of cultural production, and they strive to be transparent about their methods and the cultural context in which their work is produced.

Vivian Sobchak has an interesting stance on the idea of the relationship between humans and film. She argues that film is a unique medium that engages with our senses and perceptions in a particular way. She contends that the experience of watching a film involves a complex interplay between our sensory perceptions and our cognitive processes (Sobchak, 1991).

As Vivian Sobchak describes it, cinema uses modes of embodied existence (seeing, hearing, touch, movement) as the engine, the substance of its language (1991).

My film attempts to unfold and recognize multiple layers of senses that work together to give life to stories in a way that our narratives become conversations with one another, filling the gaps in each of our memories.

Throughout my studies in filmmaking, I made two significant films that inform the film I made for my capstone project. These films became central to this project in helping me situate myself through my evolving critical lens, as well as formulate the methodological frameworks for my research-creation. The explanation of the artistic choices I made in these films is central to understanding how I made the choices in *Does it Feel Like Home?*

The first film I made is a documentary called [*Home*](#). It portrays my grandparents' house in Vanadzor and incorporates my mom's voice, constructing a narrative based on her stories about the house. The idea of making this film was inspired by the oral history project I did with Shoghik in my Junior year. I made the film during one of the most emotional times my family experienced. My family had to sell the apartment, and the new owners were about to move there. We would go to the apartment every week to sort out the items and prepare for the arrival of the new owners. Central to this film is the idea of coffee drinking, a ritual once widely practiced by my grandmother and Shoghik.

The film incorporates some shots from the balcony, a space where the ritual was practiced, having my mom, aunt, cousin, and me involved in the coffee drinking. The space is private and intimate. The shots of the coffee table hide the faces of my relatives, positioning the coffee cups at the center of the shot, giving the viewer the freedom to go back and reflect on their own memories of being a witness to or an active member in such practices.

The second film that has had a significant impact on shaping this project is a short documentary called [*The Other Side*](#), filmed in the Charbakh neighborhood in Yerevan. It is a

neighborhood I currently live in. I unconsciously made it as a continuation of *Home*, again having the idea of coffee at its center. Portraying different spots in Charbakh, the film primarily focuses on the coffee-drinking practice of the women in our yard. The film shows a public space where four women sit together and have coffee, eat sweets, and have their children sitting around with them, running and playing. Although the space is public, the women have declared it as a private one. One that is clean, neat, and cozy.

Home has shots of the empty benches in the yard (similar to those in *The Other Side*), where women used to sit, drink coffee, and gossip about different matters. My grandmother, however, was always reluctant to be in that space. She used to think that if four and more people were involved, the conversation would turn into malicious gossip. Ironically, the coffee space in the Charbakh neighbourhood involves four women whose interactions, from what I have observed, were not always based on equal power dynamics. The conversations around the table were, at times, not based on women's empowerment and liberation but were silent testimonies of their conformity to the patriarchal norms. My film demonstrates those parts of the conversation that were closer to my memories of this culture. Therefore, my editing choices were based on the discussions that reminded me of the healing and empowering functions of gossip. I cut off the parts that I thought reinforced discriminatory views and hate talk, leaving only those that I deemed similar to my observations from my childhood.

The films have many shots of children, who are central in connecting me with this research. It is, to a greater extent, about drawing parallels in the documentation of these kids' and my own involvement in the ritual: being physically involved in the setting but not participating in it.

Artist statement

I am scared... of myself, of the art that I am creating, of time, of space, of people. At times I speak to myself with the voice of my past, sometimes, I respond to it with the voice of my present. But no matter which voice turns out to be louder, it's still my voice... it doesn't cease to be mine. Creating this film was like listening to both of these voices and doing my best not to question their validity. I just listened. I sensed. I recreated.

My film is a reflection of my mother, myself, and Shogher: A reflection of all our types of selves that do not cease to exist all at once and recreate themselves. Our voices work together, sometimes question each other, most of the time agree with each other, and all of the time listen to each other.

Although I have memories mostly from my grandparent's house, I made a conscious decision not to include shots of the house (even though I could do so using the shots from the film *Home*). Ever since we sold the house, I felt disconnected from it. The house became just a memory that lost its physical existence in my reality. It exists in my mind, I can sense it, remember it, and walk in it, always mentally but no more physically. The privacy of the house and the deep emotional sensations that the house evokes in me cannot be represented in any form or mode anymore. The visual aspects of the film include shots from the neighborhood, exploring the places that have their imprint in our memories, reminding us of how they used to look like and what meaning they hold for us.

The film is separated into seven sections: a general overview of the neighborhood, the River, the Pavilion, the Tree, the Shack, the Garden, and the ending. Each of these sections describe the places in the neighborhood that have symbolical value for me and for the other

participants. The stories we tell about these places are personal, encompassing a huge spectrum of emotions that we all we willing to share.

The film starts with my mom's voice saying «Վերև»/ “Up.” That's how she used to call my grandparent's house. The neighborhood is positioned on a higher altitude, that's why she called it Up. She would say «գնում ենք Վերև»/ “we go up”, to indicate that we are going to my grandparents' place. It is followed by my voice, questioning it, and then saying that for me that place is called «սասնաց տուն»/ “grandma's house.”

Our stories are narrated in a conversational style which resembles the key principle of oral history interviews. The conversational style allows us to be intimate with each other, and opens up a space for us to understand and listen to each other especially deeply.

The sections are separated from each other with a black screen that allows the viewer to take a break, and be prepared for the following section. Each section has a particular song that I felt would be able to communicate well with the overall message of the story. The songs are how I feel those stories, how I imagined them in my head.

For me, the point of telling these stories is not to tell true stories but to reconstruct those moments we lived through. The narratives that are being continuously molded and shaped through each of our experiences form a peculiar understanding of our existence in that space and our relationships with it.

Film

<https://youtu.be/dK9CoUBh4Pc>

Reflections on Process

This has been the longest film that I have created. The editing process was exhausting but I edited it the way I felt it. Creating the film, along with writing this piece, involved a lot of emotional investment, that at times felt unbearable to hold. I became intimate with my research like never before.

The process started pretty much all at the same time. I started doing research, thinking about the details of the film, doing the interviews, collecting data and filming all at once. These processes were complementing one another, which gave me a profound understanding of research creation. The creative process of this work has been the most rewarding one. The creative choices I came up with were part of my data collection, since I kept revisiting my memories continuously, listening deeply to the stories that the other participants recalled, and taking notes... as many as possible. I got to listen to stories that I never got to listen to during my grandma and Shogher's coffee sessions.

Going back to the neighborhood, meeting the people who have had their unique imprints in my childhood memories was an experience like no other.

I was unsure if my film did justice to my mom, my grandparents and Shogher. But as I first showed the film to my mom she said "Arpi, this is Jungliner in its entirety." Her only worry was whether it would make sense to a stranger watching it. But to me, the point of the film was to make it as authentic and close to our feelings as possible.

I had moments when I was unable to explain to anyone what this project was all about. But I also had the most epic aha moments that made me really understand my gut feeling when making the decision to do something as intimate to me as this project.

Why film? Because there was no other way, I could immerse the viewer into my world other than through a film. Film was the only way I could communicate, the only way that I could show who we are, and why we are who we are.

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Appendix

Consent form

Չամաձայնութեան հավաստագիր

Չամաձայնագիր մասնակցելու դիպլոմային ծրագրի իրականացման Չայաստանի ամերիկյան համալսարանում: Սույնով հավաստում եմ, որ համաձայն եմ մասնակցել ՅՄՅ Չումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Չուրիկ Ադդարեանի (հեռ.՝ 060 612769, Էլ. հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am) ղեկավարությամբ Արփինե Ղամբարյանի կողմից դիպլոմային աշխատանքի նախագծի հարցազրույցին:

Նախագծի նպատակը

Տեղյակ եմ, որ այս նախագծի նպատակն է ուսումնասիրել հիշողությունների միջոցով երկու սերունդների կողմից անհատական պատումների կառուցումը: Արփինե Ղամբարյանի անցկացրած հարցազրույցի նպատակը մարդու՝ տեղանքի հետ հուզական կապը և հիշողությունների կարևորությունը լուսաբանելն է ընդհանուր նախագծի համատեքստում:

Ընթացակարգը

Չասկանում եմ, որ հարցազրույցը անցկացվելու է մասնակցի տանը կամ մեկ այլ պատշաճ վայրում, և տեսագրվելու և/կամ ձայնագրվելու է: Որպես մասնակից ես պատմելու եմ Վանաձորի Ջունգլիներ թաղամասից ունեցած հիշողություններիս մասին: Տեղյակ եմ, որ հարցազրույցները տևելու են մոտ մեկ ժամ, բայց այդուհանդերձ մասնակիցները կարող են որևէ պահի դադարեցնել հարցազրույցը, հրաժարվել պատասխանել որևէ հարցի, կամ որևէ պահի դուրս գալ նախագծից: Չասկանում եմ, որ եթե ցանկանամ հարցազրույցը երկու ժամից ավելի երկարաձգել, ինձ այդ հնարավորությունը կընձեռմի:

Ռիսկեր և օգուտներ

Չասկանում եմ, որ այս հարցազրույցը իր մեջ ներառում է իմ անձնական արժեքների և կարծիքի կիսում, որին կվերաբերվեն առավելագույն խնամքով և հոգատարությամբ: Տեղյակ եմ, որ ազատ եմ կանգնելու, դադար տալու և չչարունակելու ցանկացած պահի: Չարցազրույցին մասնակցելը չի ներառում որևէ ռիսկեր:

Մասնակցության պայմանները

Որպես մասնակից ինձ հասանելի կլինեն ձայնագրված և գրի առնված տվյալները՝ դրանք ստուգելու նպատակով: Նախագծի ամբողջ տևողության ընթացքում, ես հնարավորություն կունենամ վերանայել ու հաստատել անգլերեն թարգմանությունը, եթե նյութը հայերեն է:

___ Հասկանում եմ, որ որևէ պահի կարող եմ հետ վերցնել համաձայնությունս ու հրաժարվել մասնակցել նախագծին՝ առանց բացասական հետևանքների:

___ Հասկանում եմ, որ այս նախագծի տվյալները գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով կարող են հրատարակվել՝ տպագիր կամ թվային տարբերակներով:

Իմ հարցազրույցի ինքնության բացահայտման և վերարտադրման առումով

— համաձայն եմ բացահայտելու իմ ինքնությունը: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը կարող է բացահայտվել այս հարցազրույցի արդյունքում հրատարակված նյութերում կամ ելույթներում:

— Համաձայն եմ գիտաուսումնական նպատակներով այս հարցազրույցի նկարների ու ձայնագրությունների վերարտադրմանը որևէ հաղորդամիջոցով (վեբ կայքեր, վավերագրական ֆիլմեր, և այլն):

ԿԱՄ

___ Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ մասնակցությունն այս ուսումնասիրությանը գաղտնի է: Հասկանում եմ, որ իմ ինքնությունը չի բացահայտվի, այլ ցանկացած հրապարակման կամ ներկայացման մեջ, կօգտագործվի ծածկանուն:

___ Համաձայն եմ, որ չնայած իմ հարցազրույցից որոշ նյութեր կարող են հրատարակվել, սակայն ոչ մի ձայնագրություն կամ պատկեր չի կարող վերարտադրվել:

Այն դեպքում, երբ ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ կամ փաստաթղթեր են նկարվել կամ սկանավորվել

___ Համաձայն եմ, որ ուսումնասիրություն անող ուսանողը պատճենահանի ընտանեկան լուսանկարներ ու փաստաթղթեր նախագծի շրջանակներում օգտագործելու համար:

ՈՒՇԱԴԻՐ ԿԱՐԴԱՑԵԼ ԵՄ ՎԵՐԸ ՇԱՐԱԴԻՎԱԾԸ և ՀԱՍԿԱՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ԱՅՍ
ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆԱԳՐԻ ԿԵՏԵՐԸ: ՀՈԺԱՐԱԿԱՄ ՀԱՄԱՁԱՅՆՈՒՄ ԵՄ ՄԱՍՆԱԿՑԵԼ ԱՅՍ
ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅԱՆԸ:

Մասնակից՝

Անուն ազգանուն (խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) _____

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ

Հարցազրույց վարող՝

Անուն ազգանուն (խնդրում ենք գրել տպատառ) Արփիկե Ղամբարյան

Ստորագրություն _____ Ամսաթիվ

Եթե որևէ պահի հարցեր կունենաք ձեր իրավունքների վերաբերյալ, որպես դիպլոմային ծրագրի մասնակից, կարող եք կապվել ՀԱՀ Հումանիտար և հասարակական գիտությունների ֆակուլտետի դասախոս դոկտոր Հուրիկ Ադդարեանի հետ (հեռ.՝ 060 612769, Էլ.հասցե՝ hourig.attarian@aua.am):