Claremont Colleges
Scholarship @ Claremont

CGU MFA Theses | CGU Student Scholarship

5-14-2011

Stories of Loss and Gain

Amy L. Huynh
Claremont Graduate University

Recommended Citation
Huynh, Amy L., "Stories of Loss and Gain" (2011). *CGU MFA Theses.* Paper 22.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_mfatheses/22

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the CGU Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in CGU MFA Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Amy Ling Huynh
Artist Statement

My work is about the inevitability of change and the concomitant longing for stability. It explores various manifestations of loss – death, physical distance, erasure – and the desire to hold tight to something that is already passing. The videos in this body of work convey intensely personal narratives about cultural assimilation, sexual orientation, and departure, in hopes that my own vulnerability can reveal something that is not identity-specific but human.

Impermanence is woven throughout my work because it has been woven throughout the fabric of my upbringing. As a child, I regularly went to Buddhist memorials, which lasted several years after the death of a loved one. These experiences compelled me to contemplate the passage of time. Since then, they have led me to reflect on the mutability of memory, as well as what remains present when we sift through these memories. The meditative quality of my videos shows this influence, and my thought processes, ever inclined toward life cycles and transience, strongly reflect this aspect of my development.

Languages are constantly evolving, being forgotten, or even becoming extinct. Being a first-generation American-born Chinese, my interactions with my family, laden with language barriers, have subtle undercurrents that mean more than what can be expressed in words. Their meaning is tied to my family's struggles as refugees and their hopes for better opportunities for their offspring. This is all tied to my sense of identity, assimilation pressures, and family expectations. It includes pride and disappointment; the joy of great achievement in a new country coupled with regret for what passed in the old; the unconditional love of a parent who cannot fully accept her lesbian daughter. These complex combinations of conflicting emotions emerge in some of my videos.

In daily life, I view my reality through my internal camera lens, composing the picture before me, juxtaposing images, and being hyperaware of how I am experiencing time. Video enables me to question linearity, play with tempo, and suspend movement. By creating my own soundtracks, I control the pacing and rhythm in sound as well as image. Thus the visual and auditory elements work in conjunction to further my explorations of change.

Reaching into an individual experience, there is potential for the revelation of common experience. I am interested in situations that make my vulnerability public, in hopes of recognizing the interconnectedness in my own life and the possibility of dispelling our illusory yet very real sense of shared isolation. Despite the fact that there are multiple ideas in my practice, they converge at the point where we meet one another in these changes and face the reality of our own mortality.