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Our Place: Notes on Love and Longing

by

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ABSTRACT

Our Place: Notes on Love and Longing is a 24 minute experimental documentary film. It features three meditations on a generous offer from my parents. It is comprised primarily of found footage from my personal and family archive – including photographs, video, and a 2020 zoom recording; as well as found footage from the political moment that began with the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and the economic and racial justice protests of 2020. It employs diegetic and non-diegetic sound and text on screen to give context to the visual and aural material that is presented. Through its use of repetition, variation, and the integration of a variety of disparate elements, the film encourages the viewer to participate in the process of framing, storytelling, and meaning making – something this political moment demands of all of us.

Arundhati Roy’s poetic idea of “the pandemic as a portal,” or a “gateway between one world and the next,” serves as an anchor for this film that is also about witnessing and framing personal and political transformation and uncertainty. Written and edited during the COVID-19 pandemic, the project is in an attempt¹ to represent how moments of personal transformation and political transformation can connect. It asks questions about the meaning of storytelling, as well as the importance of family and ancestors – biological and chosen – particularly as it relates to the choices we make about the material and conceptual legacies we inherit, build upon, innovate, and pass on to future generations.

¹ Still in process attempt; the text on screen “this is as far as we got” resonates on both the personal and political level. The future of the building, and my desire to transform family real estate holdings into a community oriented artist-activist project, has not transpired, yet. But articulating that vision is the crucial first step.

Project description

Our Place: Notes on Love and Longing is structured through three meditative vignettes titled: “labor,” “defiance,” and “love.” A ‘political portal’ that features found footage from the larger political moment unfolding in the United States amid the COVID-19 pandemic and the social justice protests of 2020 shuttles the viewer between each vignette. In this portal, I read aloud excerpts from the writings of three women of color I admire: Arundhati Roy, adrienne² maree brown, and Gloria Anzaldúa. On screen text helps give the presented material context, shape, and contour. An atmospheric soundscape adds texture and provides space to contemplate the material presented.

Static shots and darkness permeate this film. A witnessing, a being present with darkness, and confined space was an intentional aesthetic choice to express my interiority. Writing and editing this film during the COVID-19 pandemic, gives the focus on these types of images an added layer of resonance. As I write this paper, I have primarily stayed within the same five block radius for over nine months, day in and day out. The vast majority of this film takes place indoors. There are only three outdoor images: (1) the repeated image of the exterior of the building; (2) a wedding photograph; and (3) an image of me, as a child, looking at my family’s old restaurant, *Our Place*.

Light from the outside only enters through windows and the roof skylight in the “love” section, which ends the film. Working with darkness and the idea of a ‘womb portal space’ as an

² Lower case reflects how the author writes their name.

aesthetic theme helped me recognize how to sequence the available images for the telling of this story, so that it could end in light and the suggestion of rebirth, or of a sense of beginning anew.

These are ideas that I wanted to express for myself, after having gone through a significant, yet commonplace, life transition (divorce), as well as for the larger political moment and collective trauma we've been living through³ : the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and what scholar-activists like Ruthie Wilson Gilmore and Robin D.G. Kelley refer to as “racial capitalism⁴.”

Use of Text

With the use of video and photographic material from so many different time periods and styles, I needed a framing device for the piece. I initially tried voice over but absolutely hated hearing my voice. I left it in for an initial feedback session, but by the next time I showed it, I had replaced my voice over with white text on black video.

Writing has always come more naturally to me than filmmaking, and since this was a first attempt at making a piece this personal, using text was a way to make the process feel more familiar to me. I experimented with text in part because I could not imagine doing voice over for a piece that already felt too intimate and personal for my taste and comfort level. Text gave me the opportunity to be direct and own my story, while also maintaining some distance from it and the audience.

³ With varying levels of exposure and risk, based largely on race and class, and likely other areas of difference. See Pirtle, “Racial Capitalism: A fundamental cause of Novel Coronavirus Pandemic Inequities in the United States”

⁴ Ruthie Wilson Gilmore’s work is how I was originally exposed to this explicit framing; however, scholars like Robin D.G. Kelley cite Cedric J. Robinson’s 1983 work in *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* as a key text that unpacks this term.

At first, I played with text scale subtly. Some viewers picked up on it, and appreciated it; others found it distracting. With that feedback, I decided to push it further and make more of a legible choice. The innovation of using text graphically was transformative in the editing and writing process. I have always been interested in framing and storytelling, and I knew from earlier projects how much power lies in what we include and do not include in the frame.⁵ Moving text over video and around the frame allowed me to subtly speak to these ideas.

While it took a few months to get here, structuring the film around the three concepts: “labor,” “defiance,” and “love” helped me transition from a linear editing process to a nonlinear⁶ one, and ultimately helped me cohere these seemingly disparate raw materials and subject matters. I chose these words and concepts for their spaciousness and flexibility. I tried my best to infuse each of them with a sense of specificity, while also insinuating a resonance between and across concepts subtly through the strategic use of repetition.

Labor

Visually this section of the film is made of polaroid photographs – real and manufactured – that I framed on brown cardboard and surrounded by black video. Text on screen frames the photographs featured, and text also sits beneath the images, or replaces them. This section is bookended by expressionistic video footage of my father, sleeping. Primary sound of my father snoring and foley sound of a frying egg round out this section.

⁵ Organizations like the [Center for Story-based Strategy](#) and their trainings and publications have been formative for me in this respect. I attended trainings in 2013, 2014, and also served as a part time staffer from 2017-2019. Similarly, [Race Forward](#), publisher of *Colorlines*, also offered trainings on framing and storytelling as it relates to racial justice; I worked there from 2012-14.

⁶ My second advisor, kara lynch asked insightful questions about my editing process, and offered helpful suggestions for me to get to a nonlinear process in my editing approach.

The photographs are taken from my family's archive of our time owning and operating a restaurant in Jersey City called Our Place, which this film's title references. While a few photographs were originally polaroids, I manipulated the others in Photoshop to appear to be polaroid photographs. I chose this look and manipulation of media because it calls attention to the shape of the frame: a square, a way in which to look back at that particular time, and as a reminder to myself that as storytellers and media makers, we are always choosing what to include and not include inside the frame.

The text on screen is a condensed transcription of an interview I did with my father while working on my last film, *This Could Be...* In the final edit of that film, I limited the amount of information I shared about our family history as restaurant owners in Jersey City. I included only a few still photographs⁷, and ultimately did not use the impressionistic video I shot of my father sleeping while he patiently waited as I set up the filming equipment. I loved that section of the interview, as well as my impressionistic video, and I was disappointed to have left it out of that film.

When I returned to this thesis project after intuitively deciding to use a found footage⁸ approach in my own archive and beyond, this material was the first I approached. Including video and images of my father sleeping was important to me, because I noticed a pattern in our family photographs: a pattern of my father falling asleep wherever we happened to be. We all knew he needed and had to steal back sleep -- so much of his rest and leisure time was robbed by a cruel capitalist society that offers limited opportunities for immigrants. Returning to these raw materials first was also challenging. I remember sharing different vignettes with feedback circles

⁷ I give many of the same photographs more time and space to be contemplated in this film.

⁸ More on this process on page 26

and getting the well intentioned, but often deflating question of “how do these ideas relate?” Or, “where is this going?” It was only after the framing of “labor,” “love” and “defiance” that I was finally able to attempt to answer that question.

Lastly, the relationship between text and photographs in this section is intentionally playful, given that the subject is actually quite serious. Transcribed text like, “let’s go, your/father/need help!” with a picture of my dad covering over the text of “father” was a deliberate choice, since I wanted it to feel reminiscent of Madlibs. Madlibs was a common activity with my siblings, while we were growing up inside Our Place⁹ and the blocks around it during most afternoons and all day on weekends. I am curious to see if this type of aesthetic choice gives viewers space to swap out some of my specific images and ideas for ones that are more meaningful to them; I want the viewer to actively participate in the watching of this film, to make meaning of it, ideally with the raw material of their own lives.¹⁰

Defiance

This section includes 2020 zoom call footage, renovation ruins footage, nondiegetic video and phone call sound, and the repetition of expressionistic polaroid photographs captured during my 2020 zoom divorce. The meaning of the expressionistic polaroids is slowly revealed through the use of repetition, returning to it, and sharing a bit more about the context it was produced in each time I revisit it.

⁹ Name of the restaurant.

¹⁰ Perhaps the viewer can replace the image of my family with images of theirs. I can see this being developed further into a post screening exercise, assignment, or workshop icebreaker activity that encourages the viewer to critically engage with the material presented and refract it through their own experiences and lives.

Sound is primarily a sonar sound and car door closing loop created by my sound designer and collaborator, Mateo Galindo. I wanted to use the sound of the car door closing as a reference to the car ride that opens the film. One door closing, on loop, was an important emotional register for me to enter, since it helped me recognize which part of my relationship story I was ultimately aiming to tell in this piece. Sonar sound is an important element that is used throughout, meant to conjure the feeling of being in a womb.¹¹

This section is preceded by me reading an excerpt from adrienne maree brown's¹² writing: "What we pay attention to grows." I had initially thought I would use this quote elsewhere, or potentially even scrap it. After I had figured out the new framing mechanism, placing it in this section, where I dealt with the dissolution of my marriage, made it all the more poignant. I was telling myself to focus on the fact that this relationship as we knew it had ended, rather than focusing on the ephemera of our prior lives together. Our ending was what I wanted and needed to focus on at this juncture, so that I could get to a new beginning, especially as it related to how I would use this additional new space in my life – literally and figuratively.

Love

The *Love* section foreshadows a re-imagining of the use of the space that was once my shared childhood bedroom¹³, my nephew's bedroom, and my home office while I was married.

Compared to the static shots of the previous sections, this section has more movement, despite

¹¹ Mateo Galindo made various permutations of sonar sound and other sound elements included in this film so that different versions of it could be used in different parts of the piece. He stuck to the idea of pattern, repetition and slight variation.

¹² Lower case is intentional and reflects how the author writes their name.

¹³ Technically, as a child, my family and I lived on the floor right below. It's the same room, in a different, nearly identical apartment.

taking place in the same room. This section features a few video clips that are quite literally looped over and over again, much like life in lockdown has been.

These ‘scraps’ of video of the same space at different points of the renovation process are layered intentionally throughout this section of the piece to reference the past and potential futures of this space; (1) the room in darkness and as a storage space during early days of renovation; (2) the room in light; more or less empty, right before it got renovated; and (3) the room post renovation, in darkness, with the 2020 found ‘political portal’ images showcased on a computer monitor situated next to my nephew’s growth chart.

Palimpsests were an important touchstone for this section. The different functions of the space over time, and the layering of visual material, were purposeful and something that I wanted to honor in this project. I cling to a sense of history, place, and rootedness as a first-generation American born to immigrant parents from two different continents.¹⁴ The building in question is that for me – it is the place I’ve lived in the longest, for more than half my life; it is the first place my parents purchased with the fruits of their hard-earned labor; and it is the place they refuse to sell despite the near constant drone from real estate speculators who want to entice them to cash in on its ever-rising market value. Their ‘defiant’ refusal to surrender to growing market demand means this space has a future in this family that is still being written.¹⁵

The political portal that leads to the “love” section is longer than the previous portals and breaks with the prior portal pattern. This portal space is anchored by an excerpt from Chicana scholar and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa, “Nothing happens in the material world unless it happens first in the images in our heads.” I chose this quote because it is about the importance of

¹⁴ Earlier in this program, I collaboratively made a short film about my parent’s love story, “A House without Furniture” with Fernanda Faya and Zoya Baker.

¹⁵ My parents are slowly moving into the second floor and living between a few different places at the moment.

visioning and imagining. It has resonance for me on both the personal and political level. If we can't first imagine it, it can never come to fruition. Organizers and activists often talk about this, the radical imagination, as a critical part of the work to eradicate oppression. We¹⁶ must first imagine alternative ways of being, even if we can never get to enjoy them personally – passing on that vision is how the legacy of the work continues with the next generation.

The dark portal image that has repeated twice before has visual variation now; it overlaps with locked frame video of the room whose future is in question. With impressionistic footage of a roof skylight overlain on the image of the room, the 'political portal' now becomes a more dynamic 'womb portal' space.

The expressionistic skylight imagery in the 'womb portal space' is primarily complemented by two pieces of found sound. The first piece features Angela Davis on *Democracy Now!* sharing her impressions about the importance of this political moment especially as it relates to the passing of legacies. The second piece features Arundhati Roy reading an excerpt from her writing in *War Talk*, about another "world [that] is on its way," who she can hear "breathing." I layered this over the sound of my father snoring, referencing the labor section of the film, to suggest that this other world is only on its way because of the labors of love of so many before us.

That Davis and Roy use their own voice to communicate in this 'womb portal space' is gesture toward understanding them, and their work in support of freedom movements, as conceptual chosen family. This is a marked shift from earlier political portals in the film, *where I read* excerpts from chosen family. It foreshadows a space for me to begin to more explicitly use

¹⁶ The "we" is very important, and part of the role of cultural workers, to create at least some shared understanding of the realities we are living through. Organizations like Movement Generation write about the idea of "building a bigger we" in their writings on a Just Transition away from an extractive economy, toward a regenerative economy that puts people and planet before profit.

my own voice and resources, too. In this section, my emerging voice and resources are embodied in the bedroom the “love” section occurs in, and the text on screen that asks many questions.

I began thinking more deeply about the concept of chosen family or ancestors while attending a January 2020 workshop facilitated by Ebony Noelle Golden¹⁷ on behalf of The Laundromat Project¹⁸. The exercise Ebony facilitated us through was about naming our teachers, our people, our ancestors, biological or chosen from whom we’ve learned. It was incredibly moving listen to a room of 40 or so participants, all of whom work at the intersection of culture and social change, describe the people and ideas that impacted their way of being and working in the world. A year later, and I am still unpacking the resonance of that question, and even made a film inspired by it.¹⁹

The “love” section of the film is where the repeated political portal images are given more space to be contemplated. Here they are more explicitly re-framed by my text voice. There are three pieces of found visual material: (1) still image of graffiti on boarded up building, with the text: “All mamas were summoned when he²⁰ called out for his mama” (2) a still image of a person wearing a pandemic mask holding a protest sign “Comida Sí, Renta No!” (3) video

¹⁷ Ebony Noelle Golden is a performance artist, scholar, and cultural strategist. She is the founding strategist and CEO of Betty’s Daughter Arts Collaborative. She is also on the faculty of The Laundromat Project’s Create Change Fellowship, of which I was a 2014 participant.

¹⁸ The Laundromat Project is an organization whose vision, mission, network of primarily people of color artists and collaborators, and programming has had an indelible impact on me as a maker working at the intersection of place, culture, and social change. It is a model for the kind of organization I would like to be part of starting here in Jersey City.

¹⁹ I realize only now that my interest in legacy and transition is also implicitly informed by the amount of change in leadership I experienced throughout my tenure working in social justice oriented nonprofits and artist/activist organizing in loose collectives. At times, these transitions were managed better than others. The ones that have been managed better, I’ll say, are the ones that have directly been able to name and anticipate transformation. This is also true in my familial experience, with the question of what becomes of the real estate business they’ve built and prefer to leave behind to their children and grandchildren.

²⁰ The ‘he’ being referenced in this case is George Floyd, who was murdered by Minneapolis police on May 25, 2020. Black feminists have been organizing to raise the visibility of how Black women are also disproportionately harmed by police brutality, and often left out of the mainstream narrative. For more, see [African American Policy Forum’s #sayhername initiative](#).

footage of the Minneapolis police precinct on fire during the protests against the police killing of George Floyd.

These images are inside a computer monitor, and the monitor is situated next to my nephew's growth chart, which is drawn on the doorframe of the room whose future is in flux. The mise-en-scène that includes darkness, with some light entering through the edges of the window shade is meant to suggest a sense of the external, public world consciousness entering into this private, home space. The sequence of these found visual social justice movement materials²¹ is meant to subtly foreshadow an emerging convergence²² I am observing between at least three different social justice movement frameworks including²³ (1) reproductive justice framework; (2) a Just Transition framework; and (3) a prison abolition framework²⁴.

Dani McClain's August 2014 *The Nation* article, "The Murder of Black Youth is a Reproductive Justice Issue" situates the aftermath of the police murder of Michael Brown in a new context, and beautifully unpacks the way the media focuses on the character of the "grief-stricken face of a parent" yet rarely does what a well-functioning media system ought to do in a well-functioning democracy: provide context and framing, a way of understanding the news of the day; especially when it happens in a well-documented pattern. McClain writes,

"Often such events are covered as a story about race, police violence, white supremacy, or laws that protect murderers from prosecution. But the killing of Michael Brown, like the killing of many Black people before him, is rarely framed as a feminist issue or as an issue of pressing importance to those who advocate for choice, self-determination, and dignity as they relate to family life."

²¹ Coupled with my added text.

²² Convergence is a word I use, but cross-pollination, or resonance may also be substituted.

²³ I say including, and there could be arguments made that it's broader than these three. These are three I have been observing and in relationship to through my work in social justice organizations, and my observations of the activists networks through which my social consciousness has been nurtured over many years.

²⁴ Both the Just Transition and the prison abolition strategy frameworks are discussed further on page 18.

McClain then cites the women of color reproductive justice collective, SisterSong, to define reproductive justice²⁵ as,

“the human right to maintain bodily autonomy, the right to have children and not have children, and *the right to parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.*”

I was first exposed to reproductive justice as a social change framework during my undergraduate studies, but my meaning making of that history and concept really happened over many years²⁶ through my work in social justice organizations and networks²⁷.

My film’s inclusion of the “All mamas were summoned when he called out for his mama” situated inside a computer monitor is a deliberate choice. So much of my social consciousness has been strengthened because of the everyday analyses my friends, colleagues, mentors, and chosen family share on social media²⁸, as well as in the social justice organizations I’ve been lucky enough call my workplaces in my early adulthood. I learned of the popularity of the “all mamas were summoned when he called out for his mother” language initially from a Facebook²⁹ group. Another member polled the group on ideas for a protest sign. She works in the solidarity economy, was new to motherhood, a child of immigrants from Latin America, and was residing in a mostly white and rural Western Massachusetts town during the 2020 racial justice

²⁵ Read Jennifer Nelson’s *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* for more documentation for the various ways in which different constituencies of the umbrella term of ‘women of color’ expanded the framing of reproductive rights to be more inclusive to economic justice issues.

²⁶ Especially while working at the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) and being exposed to human rights and economic and social rights framing. There I worked alongside lawyers and policy analysts who, even if they didn’t say it in these words, believed in the radical imagination, and that policy and meaningful enforcement mechanisms, crafted by those most affected by injustices could point a way forward. Cathy Albisa, one of the founding Co-directors always cited her work supporting women in the welfare rights movement as part of the reason why she pivoted to a human rights and economic and social rights framework. My experience working here, and how the organization also worked hard to embody direct democracy within the work place still guides me and the work I aim to do locally in Jersey City, moving forward.

²⁷ Including media justice organizations and networks, like MediaJustice, Allied Media Conference and more.

²⁸ It should be noted that I tend to have offline relationships with people first; meeting at workplaces, conferences etc..

²⁹ Center for Story-based Strategy’s Advanced Training alumni and community of practice Facebook group.

protests. She wanted to engage her neighbors, and she sensed that her new status a mother was the easiest way to build an initial connection with them. Others agreed.³⁰

This thread piqued my interest, since I was already revisiting my family archive footage and intended to include the opening scene of my parents learning they would be grandparents again. Could this be a way forward for bringing the personal and political together? I searched the phrase and realized that the phrasing had spread far and wide – in protest images, articles, blog posts and more.³¹ Was this the moment that Dani McClain had beckoned for in her article, way back in 2014? A google search revealed there were many visual options, including some with mothers of different racial and ethnic backgrounds holding protest signs with permutations of the phrase, “All mamas were summoned when he called out for his mama.”

I appreciated that the image I chose did not include people, and that it became de-specified to a rallying cry that foregrounded a social and cultural relationship: mama and child. I chose this particular image – graffiti on the plywood of a boarded up building – because it spoke to me on a number of levels. The boarded up building made me think about our old restaurant, Our Place – had we still operated it, would we be taking the same precautions?³²; it made me think about shop owners protecting their property; it made me think about how the history of

³⁰ From the exchange I was able to observe, it seemed like the mother had already seen some of the “all mamas were summoned” language present in social media posts and beyond.

³¹ There are also fatherhood offshoots, “fathers against fascism” that are also very interesting. I limited my film to motherhood as a concept because I wanted to focus on the role of women and women-led movement work, because men tend to fill our collective consciousness.

³² Thinking too of the immigrant and people of color business owners along Lake Street in Minneapolis, having to face the media on what they thought of the violent turn in the protests following the murder of George Floyd, and how many were able to navigate their response with a strong moral compass and grace that values life over property. Aside from reading news stories, I also was getting this in my social media feed, since many of social media contacts are acquaintances who are based in Minneapolis, by virtue of where my ex-partner started his career.

policing in America has everything to do with the rise of *the concept of property rights*;³³ it made me think about how the plywood overlain with graffiti sometimes renders even the immigrant and people of color owned businesses as a ‘contested space’ for the work of freedom and abolition.

The next image in my film’s political portal features a person in white-N-95 mask who holds a protest sign that reads “Comida Sí, Renta No!” and in smaller handwriting: “join the LA Tenants Union.” I chose this image because it clearly shows protest and pandemic; and the references to the bread and butter issues the pandemic has laid bare: food and rent. It puts them in a conflict with one another, especially when money and work is scarce.

The placement of this image after the “all mamas were summoned” image helps expand the visual narrative sequence into a subtle reproductive justice frame. If we are implicitly talking about the “right to parent our children in safe and sustainable environments,” then in these (pandemic) times that also means “Yes to Food; and No to Rent.” I chose this particular image because it is bilingual. I intentionally did not translate it³⁴. It reminded me of a conversations I’ve had with my Spanish-speaking friends, and our³⁵ Spanish-speaking tenants during the pandemic. If friends or tenants were not working, or working less, I had to ask them if they had money to meet their basic food needs before they met their rent payments, even if that was against my family’s own economic self-interest.

³³ I could make references here to our abhorrent histories of people as property: Black people who were enslaved, coverture laws limiting the rights of women through marriage, or to communities and histories where property rights do not even exist as a concept.

³⁴ A subtle reference to the groundbreaking work of Gloria Anzaldúa who is quoted in the portal that precedes this section.

³⁵ My parents are local, small-time landlords in Jersey City. Many of their tenants speak Spanish as their first language, or are bilingual and bicultural.

The last “political portal” image that is given more space to be contemplated in the “love” section is news footage of the Minneapolis police precinct on fire. I chose this image since it is memorable; it is seared into our public consciousness because it is newsworthy, it is spectacle, it demands our attention. It’s meaning is contested; for many it may elicit fear and anxiety. For others, it may mean righteous indignation, and the fury of those whose families have been brutalized or abandoned by an exploitative society.

Fire like the close-up fire sequenced in the repeated political portals punctuating this film, also means passion, the slow burn of showing up to the oftentimes unglamorous and less newsworthy work to bring about social change, day in and day out. This is the kind of work that is often in the *private spaces* of social movement work,³⁶ and is rarely covered and documented by our media system.

The snippets of fire in this film are also meant to conjure up the ritual of storytelling; and both fire and storytelling carry in their essence a means of transformation. In the “love” section I intentionally layered images of transformation and storytelling, in this case fire and renovation ruins. Overlain on this is white circular text, “suddenly everything is on the table,” leads to the first and only upside down text of the piece: “how can this space” that sentence transforms into an arc that becomes upright, “be used for...making LOVE public?”³⁷ a refrain that echoes a long tradition of understanding “beloved community” and the idea of a “love ethic,” that undergirded movements for social justice³⁸.

³⁶ See *Counter Institutions: Activist Estates of the Lower East Side* for an architect’s perspective on the role of private-public of the social movement building or office space. It features another building I “grew up in” at least figuratively, the Peace Pentagon, where the Paper Tiger TV and Deep Dish TV offices once were.

³⁷ A reference to a Cornel West quote, “Justice is what love looks like in public.”

³⁸ Grace Lee Boggs books, talks, and birthday celebrations at the Allied Media Conference were often framed around this idea. Yet, it is referenced in so many works it is hard to pick just one.

By bridging these ideas of familial love and a broader love for humanity³⁹ as an *action*⁴⁰ expressed through *doing our part* to bring about social justice, I wanted to re-envision and foreshadow new potential uses of this space that interweave the different legacies I inherit from my biological and chosen ancestors, to conjure the legacy that I will ultimately play a part in handing off to the next generation, no matter what unfolds in my life personally.

Text in the “love” section is both straight and relatively linear to more graphically dynamic, and often becomes circular within the frame. I chose this as an aesthetic strategy in this section to recall the idea of legacy and what we inherit from previous generations’ labor. My parents’ proposition that kicks the film off – have a baby and we’ll give you the building⁴¹ – is also about legacy and inheritance. Rather than material assets and wealth, the Angela Davis audio excerpt refers to the legacy of visions of abolition, freedom, and justice. The arch of the text is meant to subtly say that we can shape change⁴² and legacies.

The majority of the text in the “love” section is filled with questions, with some space to beckon answers. The question, “What **new** can grow in the shell of the old?” echoes phrases from anarchist texts and practices that espouse the importance of “pre-figurative politics,” “geographies of the future,” or “participatory democracy,” that are a challenge to the status quo of current social relations. Scholars Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson offer that pre-figurative stances embody a political commitment to “acting *out* social alternatives”. Personally, these phrases and ideas resonate because they came to me in the writings and teachings I was exposed

³⁹ Especially those who are most impacted by injustice

⁴⁰ bell hooks writes about love as action in *All About Love*.

⁴¹ I had been having conversations about wanting to purchase the building from them at an under market rate that I could afford, prior to when the film begins.

⁴² This echoes in adrienne maree brown’s work on Octavia Butler, the science fiction writer. adrienne maree brown and Walidah Imarisha edited an anthology of science and “visionary fiction” writing called *Octavia’s Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, featuring writing by activists and organizers. They open their presentations with the idea that “all organizing is science fiction, we are creating a world we haven’t seen”.

to in my early media making and activist days with community media organizations like Paper Tiger TV, Deep Dish TV⁴³, and our work covering and participating in the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations, all of which ultimately brought me to this graduate program.

Other questions follow: “How do we expand our notion of family?” which is then met with the repeated found footage image of “All mamas were summoned when he called out for his mama.”⁴⁴ The question “How do we reproduce life-giving legacies?” followed by the incorporation of the found footage image of “Comida Sí, Renta No.” Lastly, the question “How do we DIVEST from life-taking legacies?” is followed by the news footage of the Minneapolis police precinct on fire. “Which life-giving forces do we INVEST in instead?” This one was a reference to prison abolitionists’ calls to #defundthepolice, and fund social goods and services that meet basic human needs instead, like housing, healthcare and education. In other interviews on *Democracy Now!* Angela Davis speaks about abolition as a feminist methodology, because it seeks to invest in economic and social needs that nurture life.

The ideas embedded in the prison abolition movements’ DIVEST/INVEST strategy framework are also found in the Just Transition movement’s strategy framework. According to groups like the Climate Justice Alliance, the Just Transition strategy framework grows out of the history of communities of color and low income communities who both work to “stop the bad,” in our globalized economy and “build the new” or “resilient and life-affirming local economies.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Working here first as an intern then as staff, digitizing and distributing the archive of over 25 years of radical media was how I first learned of Arundhati Roy’s work.

⁴⁴ This is a subtle reference to my re-thinking about the building as a ‘creative baby’ at this point; a political and creative project to be mothered and nurtured through the material and conceptual legacies I have inherited.

⁴⁵ One excerpted reading that I ultimately left out of this piece was from the writings of an organization called, Movement Generation. Their Just Transition zine includes the following: “Economy means management of home, how we organize our relationships in a place. But management of home can be good or bad depending on how you do it, and to what ends. The purpose of our economy could be *turning* land, life, and labor into property for a few,

The answers to the questions in my film are still being written by courageous activists and organizers. I placed them here, in the film, and in this new extra space in my apartment, to foreshadow that this space could be used for exploring and enacting possible ways forward in response to these questions and the political upheavals we continue to survive.

A saying Philadelphia based organization Media Mobilizing Project often includes in its presentations and other engagements is “movements begin with the telling of untold stories.” I’d add that movements get stronger and more unstoppable when our stories and solutions become networked across time and place. The emerging convergence of social movement strategy frameworks like reproductive justice, a Just Transition, and prison abolition, share at their core a fundamental questioning about our political economy: about what is valued, what matters, what is given resources, and what is not. They are fundamentally about protecting and nurturing life, in all its forms.

Inequality in America is shaped by many unjust systems; yet the discriminatory policies and practices embedded in our housing system is one that has well documented history, that also intersects with my ‘now’ and potential near future. That so much of wealth is determined by inheritance – of material assets, of debt, and that I could stand to inherit a building⁴⁶ that the market currently values at \$850,000⁴⁷, was and still is completely mind-boggling. It was

or *returning* land, life, and labor into a balanced web of stable relationships. Economy does not mean money or exchange, or financial markets, or trading or Gross Domestic Product. These are simply elements or tools of specific economies. Economies (“how we manage our home”) can be measured in many ways: How healthy are the soil, people, water, animals? How much wealth is generated? Who owns the wealth? What even constitutes wealth? Is it money? Well-being? Happiness?” This writing, this questioning, while not explicitly in the text of the film, does find resonance in the question the film ends with, and that potentially my next project(s) begin with in the future.

⁴⁶ With the current caveat being that I have a baby, who implicitly, I would then hand it down to...

⁴⁷ My parents purchased the building in the 1980s, during rampant divestment from Jersey City – for \$60,000. They were defiant, in this way, investing in a place “the market” perceived as risky because of which communities lived there.

important to me to unpack legacy and inheritance and to begin to put myself in the frame while doing so.⁴⁸

The “love” section is inspired by bell hooks’⁴⁹ *All About Love*. I wanted to create a piece that sits within a legacy of understanding love as a concept connected to broader humanity and justice, not only romantic, familial, or interpersonal love we are used to seeing depicted in the Hollywood and mainstream media system. That felt important to me for a variety of reasons – both for processing my future after a devastating break up, but also to honor the legacies that brought us together to begin with, since me and my former partner met and forged a connection despite living in different states, places we hadn’t even visited before, because we were drawn to a similar vision for a more just future, and to the role that media and storytelling plays in building that future.⁵⁰

Ultimately, the abstractions and concepts engaged with in this piece are intentionally loose and open. I chose not to fill in all the blanks – hoping that these openings in the text and in the frame stay with the viewer long enough to contemplate themselves, their loved ones, their longings for new ways of being together, their own material and conceptual inheritances and legacies.

I hope that an engaged, and perhaps even ‘defiant’ viewer may ask, why isn’t the labor section, titled love, instead? It could just as well be, in my opinion, because familial love from men in a capitalist and patriarchal society, is often framed by the work they do outside the

⁴⁸ I am thinking mostly here about integrity, accountability, and taking meaningful action where I have power, control, and resources at my (potential) disposal rather than just performative action. These were also courageous conversations I had with my ex-partner; and he was often more visionary than me on some of these questions and contradictions.

⁴⁹ Also intentionally lower case; this is how the author spells their name.

⁵⁰ We met initially at the National Conference on Media Reform in Boston, but really forged a deeper connection across our friend groups at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit.

home to provide economic security. In *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* bell hooks underlines this point:

“Today’s male worker struggles to provide economically for himself. And if he is providing for self and family, his struggle is all the more rigorous and the fear of failure all the more intense. Men who make a lot of money in this society and who are not independently wealthy usually work long hours, spending much of their time away from the company of loved ones. This is one circumstance they share with men who do not make much money but who also work long hours. Work stands in the way of love for most men then because the long hours they work often drain their energies; there is little or no time left for emotional labor, for doing the work of love. (94)”

These reflections resonate well in my experience of familial love. While not explicitly in the text of the film, my dad saying “you’re next” to me after the unveiling of my brother and sister and law’s pregnancy announcement gift⁵¹, spoke to this the most. He had absolutely no idea that my marriage was on the brink of dissolution, and had been for months, and possibly even years at that point. The nature of our familial relationship has always been marked by the “long, long hours” he worked,⁵² and the altar of martyrdom we, as a family created around that narrative (and reality) of the sacrifice of his body, his energy, his life for us, and I’d add, now, for a large part of his sense of self. Working on this film, and reflecting on feminist writing and analysis makes me want to continue to explore and respond to the representation(s) of masculinity in capitalist, patriarchal culture, and contribute to the work that hooks’ *The Will to Change* outlines that many feminisms have stopped short of: the specific ways in which patriarchal culture also wounds and cages men. Still too, this culture of martyrdom, workaholism, also describes the activist and organizer cultures I’ve been exposed to, and also embodied and emulated in my early adulthood, like my partners, peers, and many colleagues have done as well. It is a symptom of a larger cultural problem, and something I’d also like to respond to in my work moving forward.

⁵¹ Pregnancy announcement gifts are ways for children to tell their parents that they will become grandparents.

⁵² Chosen or forced choice; it can go either way.

Looking back at my time in this program and the creative inspirations and influences I draw from, I remember how impactful I found Michele Citron's use of repetition and fictional storytelling strategies to explore complex trauma and family relationships in *Daughter Rite*. How about Iñárritu's use of found sound collage, and restriction of sight and looking to emulate the trauma(s) shown and not shown during the media coverage of 9/11? I remember too, how curious I found big white text quotes from Frantz Fanon on screen to be in *La Hora de los Hornos*. We can do that? Just plop our politics and polemics right on screen as a way to suture together different visual material? Or how I loved the Arabic text on screen, layered like a palimpsest across the filmmaker's mother's naked body, in Mona Hatoum's *Measures of a Distance*, not to mention Hatoum's use of correspondence as a way of relaying information, coupled with helpful silences. Or how in *Homage by Assassination* the horrors of the outside world – in that film's case, the Gulf War – inevitably seeps into to any creative project, so beautifully depicted by Elia Suleiman. Or how Jill Godmilow's *What Farouki Taught*, made me think about the mundane ways in which we can easily and effortlessly use our labor for harm, by 'just doing our job,'⁵³ and without even seeing the consequences of our mindless, quotidian violence – until the mirror is held up, or there's a psychic break cultural moment, like we are living through now.

I am also influenced by popular culture. The way Terence Nance's *Random Acts of Flyness*⁵⁴, a 6-part late-night TV series on HBO, boldly and beautifully embodies the nonlinearity of Internet culture, and how divergent stories and ideas are interwoven is a creative inspiration.

⁵³ I remember too, now, learning of Hannah Arendt's work in my undergraduate studies. Her work documenting the rise of Nazism, and what she calls the 'banality of evil.'

⁵⁴ Interestingly, IMA alum Emily Collins animation company Mighty Oak worked on an episode.

The use of sampling and looping that is derived from Hip-Hop, experimental and electronic music culture⁵⁵ is also a huge influence in this piece, both because it is the kind of music I often listen to while media making⁵⁶, and because of the limitations of gathering my own original footage during a global pandemic, with no clear end in sight. The resourcefulness of that DIY ethos that grows out of creative constraints and its relationship to the early roots of Hip Hop culture in the South Bronx has been well-documented.⁵⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic demanded a new level of creative resilience from me. It hit me with a lot of uncertainty about whether I would be able to realize my initial thesis idea. I intended to produce a screenplay I wrote called, *The Invitation*⁵⁸. I had never written, directed, or produced a narrative film before, and the prospect of doing something so new seemed daunting even before the pandemic. In March 2020, knowing that COVID-19 pandemic would likely impact us for years to come⁵⁹, I decided to pivot and revisit footage I shot in 2019. Over the course of many months of introspection and haphazard reading of books I have read before, seemingly endless consumption of news articles and social media commentary, I slowly started seeing the footage I shot in a new way, and decided I wanted to refract the new era and

⁵⁵ For me, and for my sound collaborator, Mateo Galindo. He used short samples, delay effects and other manipulation techniques with a Boss SP303 Sampler.

⁵⁶ There's a Spotify playlist for this project; and when collaborating with Mateo, I sent him various songs and artists that served as an inspiration. One of the samples he shared – the polaroid stretch sound, got the "I feel like Solange" accolades from me. I didn't even know that could be possible! Mateo cites the genre Musique Concrète as an inspiration.

⁵⁷ In academic articles and classes that I've taken as an undergraduate at NYU, in work, workshop, and training settings I've attended at conferences and symposia. See Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*. Jeff Chang co-founded [Colorlines in 1998](#), and recently returned to [Race Forward, a former employer of mine](#), as Vice President of Narrative, Arts, and Culture.

⁵⁸ *The Invitation* is a coming of age story that takes place on Halloween, and engages issues related to identity, authenticity, and cross-class encounters, within immigrant and first-generation American communities in present-day gentrifying Jersey City.

⁵⁹ I have my partner, who works in health and safety, to thank for this foresight, given that we are all surviving the fallout of the gross mismanagement of the early days of the pandemic currently.

collective trauma we were all living through with the still video images I had already gathered from the renovation of my apartment.

The opening scene of the film was shot in mid-February 2019, at my parents' birthday celebration, hosted at my sister's house. I had just returned from Chicago with a 'birthday gift' for my parents from my brother and sister-in-law. It was a 'pregnancy announcement gift,' and as the video footage shows, my parents – especially my mother – were elated with the news of a second grandchild finally on the way. My footage is a locked shot that features my parents, my maternal uncle, and his son, my cousin – who is also filming and framing the moment from a slightly different angle, on his phone. Off-screen but audible are my brother and sister-in-law,⁶⁰ who live in Chicago and are expecting their first child together. My sister goes in and out of my camera's frame, and her husband and son are off-screen and also audible.

Additionally, I filmed locked shots of the renovation of my apartment a few times a week from February-May 2019. I had just purchased my first camera set-up a few months prior. When I look back at the time, I can recognize my filming process as a meditation on the slow transformation I was going through personally, since I was also separating from my partner of six years while our apartment was undergoing a renovation.

During the summer 2020 racial justice protests, I also started pulling images and video from the web, including images of Confederate Statues being toppled, brands like Aunt Jemima and Land of Lakes removing their racist insignia, audio of President Trump saying "Stand Back and Stand By," during a 2020 presidential debate, audio of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez' passionate "I am somebody's daughter, too" speech – particularly a clip where she says "this is happening in a pattern."

⁶⁰ They are on Facetime, and in earlier cuts it was clear that there was another screen present.

I ultimately let go of all of that footage, and decided to stick with repetition and revisiting, the three images that signaled a fresh new turn rather than the frothing and stoking of white supremacist violence, or a taking down of monuments memorializing racist legacies. We have heard too much of that, and as adrienne maree brown writes, “what we pay attention to, grows.” I was able to let go of those elements because of my creative community’s generosity of spirit. This film was primarily conceived in the editing room and in generous feedback conversations with responders, especially with my first advisor, Andrew Lund and second advisor, Kara Lynch, and a feedback collective of IMA alumni I am a part of called The Roominator.⁶¹

Looking back, I realize I spent a lot of time figuring out what I needed to include about my relationship to make our marriage and subsequent divorce legible to an outside audience. What story was I trying to tell and why? What was important include in the frame? Did I need to include that he lived in Minneapolis for the first year our relationship? That the Skype and screen share and google documents helped us sustain and deepen our connection? And that when I would visit, I would regularly run by the corner where George Floyd was killed by police? How about footage from the #icebuckethack that my ex-partner and I made in 2014 as a way to raise funds for Ferguson, in the aftermath of the police killing of Michael Brown? How about that we got married despite a deep skepticism for the institution of marriage itself, and did it, in some ways to maintain the below market rate rent we got as family members and tenants of my parents? Did I need to mention that we lost Erick’s mother to suicide? Or that gender identity and expression was becoming a question that Erick needed to explore? How about that we

⁶¹ Members who have given feedback at different times include: Anna Ozbek, Kim Baglieri, Claudia Valencia Zamora, Reiko Tahara, Kajia Siirala, Lingyun Zheng, Betty Yu, Rahul Chadha, Rachel Brown, and Zoya Baker.

adopted the most amazing dog, Orion, who we continued to co-parent during our separation and the COVID-19 pandemic?

I tried including these elements, and ultimately responders did not know how to make emotional sense of the material I presented. Once I identified the framing device for the film, and started editing nonlinearly, I realize that I didn't *need* to include any of these things in the text of the piece, but considering all these elements ultimately helped me get to a new place of a healing after such a significant life transition.

I chose to tell this story with this particular mix of media to embrace a way of being I admire: do it yourself (DIY) culture and the 'rasquachismo' aesthetic. Doing a lot with the little we already have at hand has permeated both my home life and my professional life at social justice nonprofits, which are often underfunded and yet tackle some of the biggest social issues of our time. A DIY culture and aesthetic sensibility informed my first practices with media making as a member of the video collective Paper Tiger TV in the early 2010s, and as I contemplated my journey as a media maker, I knew I wanted to honor that lineage and legacy.

Artists, cultural workers and scholars, Amalia Mesa-Bains and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto of the Chicano Arts Movement refer to this particular set of aesthetic "sensibilities" as "rasquachismo." I first learned of this term as an art theory and practice from my thesis sound design collaborator, Mateo Galindo, who worked on projects documenting the Chicano Arts Movement while he was a student in the IMA program. While I am not Chicano, it is a familiar way of being to me, one that I have witnessed and appreciated in my working class immigrant parents. In fact, a few of the images and video clips that ultimately found their way to the cutting room floor of this piece feature my dad embodying this "survivalist" sensibility. Whether it's video of him in his beat-up SUV with unique gear shifts only he knows how to operate, or a

photograph of his homemade bifocals made from two different types of glasses, this way of being – of doing the most you can with what you already have – is quite literally in my DNA as a person and now, I can also say, as a media maker as well.

I thought a lot about what it would mean to work with found footage at a time when many of us were sheltering in place to slow the spread of the virus. I expanded the idea of found footage to not only include found footage from current public consciousness and internet culture, but to also include found footage from within my personal archive, particularly from projects I had worked on recently.

Once I decided on a found footage approach from my personal and familial archive, the cutting room floor of my last project, *This Could Be...*, was the first place I started. I knew while editing that film that I had essentially started another project. I was including a lot of older material from our family restaurant, even though the film was primarily about my parents' most recent business endeavor: local real estate in Jersey City.⁶² In order to make that particular film project cohere, I had to let go of the restaurant storyline, which included some of my first memories in this city. I also had to eliminate the thread that so many of my viewers had asked about – where is my voice in the question of what comes next for a rapidly gentrifying city? *Our Place* ultimately feels like the first part of that answer, but by no means a complete one. I anticipate working on an epilogue to my thesis⁶³ that engages some of these issues,⁶⁴ both on and off screen.

⁶² They have been small mom-and-pop landlords since the early 2000s, and as the city rapidly redevelops, their property holdings have been in the crosshairs of both speculators, and neighborhood activists, many of whom are more recent transplants.

⁶³“And...” is a framing for the epilogue that I’ve been thinking about since my second advisor, kara lynch helped shine a light on treating that as a concept I’m working through just as much as the other words and concepts my thesis focuses on: labor, love, defiance.

⁶⁴ “Development without displacement” is a framework I was first exposed to while working at Partners for Rights and Dignity (formerly, National Economic and Social Rights Initiative or NESRI for short). We had partnerships in

Making art that's connected to personal and political trauma and resiliency has offered some level of catharsis, or at least some way to release the pressure valve. With that in mind, my primary audience for this piece has been myself. The creative constraint of being in thesis mode during a global pandemic, not to mention personal⁶⁵ and political upheaval, gave me the opportunity to consider my recent past and future in a new light. As I work out the mission and vision for the next phase of how the extra room in my apartment⁶⁶ gets used, I anticipate sharing this film with others who may be part of the still-to-be outlined project. This film is an offering to share a sliver of where I come from, and a foreshadowing of a potential future of where I am going.

This film is a place to start a conversation and build trust⁶⁷ with others who are interested in interrupting harmful legacies, and repatterning the legacies we inherit for the greater good – which to me, always includes centering the wisdom, vision, and the lived experiences of the most marginalized and vulnerable. Given my rootedness in Jersey City, I intend to continue to build relationships with the various mutual aid networks that sprang up during the pandemic, and the activists who have been interested in campaigning locally around housing, land use, and spatial justice issues.

In addition to myself and a community of potential collaborators, I also implicitly made the thesis film as a conversation starter with my family, particularly my parents. The refrain that's looped at different points in the “defiance” and “love” sections, my ex-partner asking

Baltimore, and during my tenure there I helped produce the publication *Community + Land + Trust: Tools for Development without Displacement*.

⁶⁵ Divorce and my parents aging, simultaneously dealing with chronic health issues while trying to plan the legacy of their business.

⁶⁶ The scope may change, as conversations with my family and the future of the family real estate investments progress. Since the extra space in my apartment is what I have control of at the moment, that is the language I will use for the purposes of this paper, and why I focused on one room in the film.

⁶⁷ Through vulnerability.

“have you told your parents yet?” and my response “not yet” references how I actually navigated disclosure and emotional intimacy with my parents at the time of my separation and eventual divorce. When the film opens, and throughout the early stages of my separation, I was keeping my parents intentionally out of the emotional life of my relationship. The layers of our relationships to one another – child/parent, tenant/landlord, family business founders/prospective successor – had become too much to wade through. An act of defiance, of not keeping them in the loop at that important juncture, fundamentally shifted our way of relating to one another.

After sharing my thesis film with them, we are finally beginning a new kind of conversation about that time period and our future together as a family, and the layering of our relationships to each other⁶⁸. It is a conversation that is still in the early process of unfolding. Only through the visual language of the film were they finally able to realize how terrible the timing of “you’re next” and “if you have a baby, we’ll give you the building” actually were for me given what I was going through, “by myself” as they put it. At the moment, I am still processing this unfolding conversation, because I really did not anticipate the film would open up familial conversation in a meaningful way; and yet I am grateful and hopeful about it deepening and transforming our relationships with each other. Beyond this close circle of family, friends, and prospective community collaborators, I do not have specific intentions to distribute this film widely at this juncture.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ That I have a political reservation about, since they are landlords now. Responsive and relatively fair landlords. I had two questions in earlier drafts of the film that I ultimately took out: Can there be a good landlord? Can there be a good cop?

⁶⁹ Perhaps this can change, if some of my material reality projects connected to the future of the space/building become viable. Other audiences could be groups with memberships like Resource Generation, Solidaire, and other progressive donor networks that explicitly organize people with wealth and assets to redistribute those towards social justice work.

Should that sentiment change, I will need to clear unlicensed material, since this film project does use unlicensed copyrighted materials in three forms: (1) reading of excerpts from women of color writers and public intellectuals; (2) found sound of Angela Davis and Arundhati Roy; and (3) repeated images “All Mamas were summoned when he called out for his mama;” “Comida Si, Renta No;” and TV news footage of the burning of the Minneapolis police precinct. My fair use rationale for using these pieces is that the uses are transformative. The excerpts are all under one minute, I provide attribution for each, and I read them all. The images have been transformed because they are framed in a new context, twice over; first, by the placement in a computer frame and in the setting of the room – hinting at a new meaning; second, by the use of text around these images to create new connections and meaning beyond what is included in the original frame. Despite my fair use foundation, I might decide to seek express permission from copyright holders. If denied, then I would then consider other means of portraying the ideas being expressed. I would prefer to keep content that was created by others, especially those I see as chosen ancestors, since it speaks to my desire to create a multivocal piece; a piece that aims to both be introspective, as well as sensitive to the outside world and the conceptual legacies I carry with me through my labor⁷⁰ and relationships.

This production process has been by far the most nonlinear I have embarked upon, and in many ways, perhaps the most trying to date. On previous projects, I started with a pretty clear path and sense of structure and purpose for a project. This film came to life in the editing room and in feedback loops in a way I have never experienced before. It was a labor of faith, of

⁷⁰ Past and present. I first learned of Arundhati Roy as an intern turned staff member of Deep Dish TV. Similarly, the Angela Davis clip on Democracy Now! also reminds me that the news show’s early roots were entangled with Deep Dish TV, too. Speaking of legacy, Deep Dish TV is no longer a living and laboring non-profit, and rests as an archival website of over 500 hours of programming of what historian Howard Zinn described as “People’s Video History.”

continuously showing up, even in the midst of deep self-doubt, limited resources, and massive social and cultural uncertainty. I never knew if I was on the right path, but I just had to keep showing up for the project.

Ultimately, this process has taught me a lot about resiliency and the importance of feedback, support, and mentorship when my internal voice is still finding its means of expressing itself. I have so much gratitude for the people⁷¹ who have been in my creative corner, with so much generosity, curiosity, and consistency, as I walked this often unilluminated path. If I take one thing moving forward for all the work⁷² that lies ahead, it is that mentorship and community make all the difference during any type of labor of love.

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⁷¹ Advisors, mentors, creative community, friendship and family—including furry family.

⁷² Having the space and time to explore my creative voice from a completely new angle – experimental documentary – has made me more confident about eventually making my original thesis idea, a narrative script – another way of working I have never tried before. See footnote 7 for more information about my original thesis idea. This also holds true for the vision of the transformation of the mission of the building (and potentially family business) another project I have never undertaken before.

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