

Practices of the Right to Opacity - Recipes for Artfulife

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A Thesis in the Department of Humanities

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities

at Concordia University

Montréal, Québec, Canada

September 2023

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

Practices of the Right to Opacity - Recipes for Artfulife

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This research creation is a way to access *the right to opacity*. This concept will not unfold through theory in a linear way since it moves in resistance to clear definitions. Instead, it will exist *in the midst* of an exploration and praxes around the conceptual proposition: *How can we collectively practice the right to opacity?* The way of this research creation is through the development of recipes/techniques/concepts meant to serve the formation of subjectivities, and the breaking fears and stereotypes of differences within various modes of existence and experiences, such as culture, forms of knowledge, learning, language, gender, and neurodiversity. I will be creating and practicing some recipes to offer examples of possibilities. The work will be offered through storytelling, recipes, events, and collective gatherings.

Many of the stories and recipes here deal with my experience as part of a community, coming from Syria displaced by the war, and becoming a refugee and immigrant in Montreal in the year of 2001. Yet my stories will move through and in between different aspects of this experience by not focusing only on one of the sides of what for me has many sides. I will explore the mother, the woman, the artist, the researcher, the event maker, amongst other figures that I find more interesting than staying only with the more common figures misrepresenting the violence of war: the victim, the sufferer, the refugee, the immigrant.

In this way I aim to access relations between and through new modes of existence, sharing and belonging. I ask how one can create these relations while staying close to values or qualities of existence within various environments? How to confirm and affirm a production of the self while movements in between communities remain smooth and flourishing in each encounter and yet open to shifting as needed. Example: when I talk about identities like the Kurdish, it is not only about the nationality; the Syrian, it is not only about the refugees; the Canadian, it is not only about me, the immigrant. Or is it? When I talk about these identities, I'm posing questions about access. How to access a quality of being within all of these identities, or within specific ones as needed, on a shifting basis. Other identity mobilities that this thesis seeks are: Being a mother while being an artist. Being an artist and a

neurodiverse academic with no urge to write. I ask: How can one still belong while performing non-typical practices? Why would we talk about war and not love?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first years of my arrival here in 2001, were the most challenging ones, it would be typical to say cold, but not only that, it was extremely cold, and how could I survive with no electricity where I rented (the person before me did not pay)? That was the second question. The first was what brought me here to the north pole (as I saw it)? The question that followed was why couldn't I open a bank account? No bank would accept until finally my new friend took me to one of the National Banks, as he knows them, and they accepted the account which was simply to pay my bills. That was a system that I could not understand back then. Now as I walk around and see ads of banks trying to attract newcomers; I am not sure if newcomers includes refugees.

Time passes and I find a way to follow deeper needs to create art around similar issues related to displaced people's experiences. It took a huge financial investment, loans that took years of work to pay off, which was finally done this July 2023. It took time, restless time, not only for creativity but also for visibility. I needed to demonstrate why one should listen to the stories I bring to and from communities of visible/invisible minorities. For me, it was a way to find a place in the home I am making and trying to belong to, through sharing the stranger's/other's stories; sometimes these strangers were, relatively speaking, telling my own story, as if it was a community story. When I told of the injustice against Kurds, I, as the Syrian, saw the otherness; when I told Syrian stories, I was separating myself from my own people, the Kurds; and when I brought stories of other communities, I was diving into otherness. There were always ways to be seen within otherness; ways to separate and make borders; ways to draw lines to arrange connection, and ways to build relations.

It took me two years to learn how to warm up spaces and stay warm during the winter, but it took me twenty years to learn how to write about issues that occupy my thoughts and to distill the urgent questions of contemporary life. Why is it that all borders are about alienation and not holding? How can we invent spaces not only for living but also for self- and community-confirmation? How can we do this without a need to go through identities of the self, or through framing a self that can belong and that can be seen? How can the lines of borders become something beyond a border; how can they become ways of drawing a boundary between where relational space begins and where normative space fades away? How can borders touch the

sharpness of difference and hold open livable spaces? These questions were not the only ones, but so many other questions came to a way of researching toward an *Artfulife* that was taking shape. Taking shape alongside the most generous people I feel lucky to know, research, and create with and whom I acknowledge.

Steven High challenged me to shift even further my sense of resistance in research creation. High was always present since I knew and joined the The Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (COHDS) during its formative period. Lynn Hughes was always supportive and was always there to soften hard lines through all the ways that I tried to take; she was one of the unique people who accompanied me through my journey since I started making art here.

I had and still have the chance to work with artist-philosopher Dr Erin Manning, my main supervisor, who enriched my journey through the world and through the world of academia, and pushed the boundaries of thinking further while reminding me within the midst that I could still do work that answers the needs of the work, instead of answering the typical needs of graduate work. I also learned that my existence needs blurred lines and border crossings between framed and marginalized spaces. These were needs for my quality of existence; needs to be included in ways I desired; and needs not to be defined through language. I can easily say that she carved the lines of my journey, making ways for me to understand/see sideways what I was doing.

Mayra Morales softened the work, made visible the in-between lines, and held the thoughts. Brian Massumi, the soft activator of doing within 3 Ecologies, sparked the work within the darkness of the forest where the little mint plant was trying to find ways to grow. Emma Flavian, the silent bee, sweetened the way. Cadu Mello gifted smiles on the way. Lea Rackley warmed the heart when needed. Dr. David Morris for his support to create new openings.

Rachel da Silveira Gorman received and perceived the work, and helped me launch it into the wider world.

My family gave me patience and engagement all the way, and lived the *artfulife* that we are inventing collectively over and over. They found ways that I might not see clearly yet but I can already feel, after all their difficult times with me, and my difficult times with them. The community was there in each exploration and creation, offering trust and a generous way to be on the side of the search for justice. My dear friends and sisters of our TASHT collective were there at the core of stories and doings and hand-holding. The ones whom I did not mention who still were at the core of the

becoming of creativity. All the fugitives whom I read within opacity held me and made possible the complexity of living the *artfullife*. I am thankful for these souls to continue breathing.

To those of you in academia, if you see this paper, that means a sideways opening has been made, and a new space for exploration and risk-taking and creation and experimenting has been opened. To all the marginalized ones and ways, you are much needed at this time, as we challenge and redefine how to approach and realize justice.

And finally, I am deeply grateful to the Miriam Aaron Roland Family whose generous award and financial support allowed me to focus on my research creation and eased the time for work.

DEDICATION

To my parents whom I have lost within the past two years, and with whom I could not share the work with, especially my mother who was eager to hear about the doing, and from whom I learned artfulness.

This work is a special gift for the soul of my brother Melek who was close to my heart, and who gave his life saving others by treating injured ones from the rebellion on a mountain; brave and extremely creative, a poet, a self-taught musician and singer; he left the a typical world plane during his final years at medical school to support justice and to preserve lives within opacity, as liberty continues to take shape.

Even as he faced brutal oppression, he never stopped envisioning a better future, and he still inspires, even within his absence. He was with me throughout my search for pathways to for resistance, justice and the fulfillment of needs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	VX
TABLE OF FIGURES	XI
FOREWORD	XII
PREFACE	XV
INTRODUCTION	1
THREAD (WRAP YARN) TO WEAVE: ON LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE FIELD EDGES	5
RECIPE: THE POWER OF SOFTNESS, OF SURVIVAL	8
THREAD: THE WAY OF THIS RESEARCH-CREATION	9
<i>Recipe as Way in Research-Creation</i>	10
<i>Outcomes of this Research-Creation</i>	11
A SERIES OF RECIPES	13
RECIPE: MIDST	16
<i>Story: In the midst of the midst recipe, a story in the midst of language</i>	17
RECIPE: PEOPLE ALWAYS NEEDS THE MIDST FOR LIVING	18
<i>Midst with-in modes</i>	19
Intense enters	19
Relief comes	19
RECIPE: HEALING...CANNIBALISM-CAPITALISM	22
RECIPE: A PERFECT ACCESS TO LANGUAGE	23
<i>Story: Architecting environments of relations</i>	26
1) SELF-REFLECTIVE EVENTS	31
Event at the Creative Space : <i>Si le lieu-meurt, il peut naître</i>	32
RECIPE: CAMOUFLAGE	40
RECIPE: WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO MAKE PICKLED CUCUMBERS?	42
2) HISTORICAL EVENTS	45
IN SYRIA	45
IN IRAQ	47
3) THE PROBLEMS WHICH CAME TO LIGHT IN THIS RESEARCH	52
A) MISREPRESENTATION	52
RECIPE: SHAMELESSNESS RECIPE	55
RECIPE: PERIPHERAL VISION IS THE TECHNIQUE	58
B) ISLAMOPHOBIA/XENOPHOBIA	61
C) BORDERS AND TERRITORIES, AND THEIR RELATION TO WOMEN'S BODIES	62
RECIPE: IN RESPECT TO A REAL DESIRE	67
4) WHY ME?	69
RECIPE: IN/VISIBLE MINORITY	73
RECIPE: PROPER SEEING	74
RECIPE: DIY MUSEUM OF DAILY LIFE	81
RECIPE: FOR A SELF-REFLEXIVE AUTOBIOGRAPHY	83
RECIPE: AESTHETICS AS POWER	91
5) EVENTS	94
Event: <i>The 8th wonder: clay oven making-collective gathering</i>	94
RECIPE: BREAD-MAKING, BREAD-BREAKING	105
<i>Why Bread</i>	107
RECIPE: A-VOID	110
Event: Weaving Stories	112
Event: Come wash with us	116
RECIPE: LISTENING TO ARTFULNESS	124
RECIPE: FOR ART AND THE ART OF LIVING	125

RECIPE: FOR WALKING THE SPACE	125
RECIPE: WAYS TO MEASURE	130
RECIPE: ART AS REVOLUTION	133
RECIPE: MAKE AN ARCH	134
RECIPE: TO INTEGRATE LIKE WATER	134
A BUNDLE OF RECIPES FOR SURVIVAL	140
RECIPE: THROUGH THE EYES OF 3 ECOLOGY	140
RECIPE: FREEDOM OF CHOICE	142
RECIPE: ESCAPE THE SHADOWING	143
RECIPE: LIVING EQUAL SPACES	144
RECIPE: BEING MORE THAN YOU	145
RECIPE: FOR AN ENCOUNTER	146
<i>Story: Less/more than human</i>	147
RECIPE: TO LET ..	148
RECIPE: HOW TO TALK TO PLANTS	149
RECIPE: FOR HOME MAKING	150
RECIPE: A RECIPE FOR WOMEN OF COLOR	150
RECIPE: PERFORM AS WEEDS	151
RECIPE: WATER YOU ARE	153
HOLDING RECIPES	154
RECIPE: REIMAGINING BORDERS	157
RECIPES: OF DECOLONIZATION	157
RECIPE: THE ART TO SUSTAIN THE SELF	158
RECIPE: TECHNIQUE FOR SURVIVAL	158
<i>Story: Melek</i>	159
RECIPE: FOR NEURODIVERSITY	160
RECIPES: FOR MAPPING	161
RECIPE: TO DANCE	164
RECIPE: COOKING FOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE	166
BIBLIOGRAPHY	167

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Basic event diagram example	5
Figure 2 Language tracing a meaning	16
Figure 3 Grandmother's traditional tattoo	28
Figure 4 Example of window at clay home	29
Figure 5 Missing Person Profile	37
Figure 6 Moment of young participants in the making	39
Figure 7 Moment of young participants in the making	39
Figure 8 The youngest participating little girl. (With her parents behind the camera)	40
Figure 9 Food preservation in progress, red pepper paste	47
Figure 10 The Iraqi Flag signed by Saddam Hussin and the recent flag	51
Figure 11 ISIS flag carrying religious slogan	52
Figure 12 Seeing within peripheral vision	63
Figure 14 Syrian Passport	73
Figure 15 Tanour from a Kurdish village in Turkey	100
Figure 16 Different hand made ovens	100
Figure 17 My children around the oven fire in my backyard	101
Figure 18 Oven at the Glasshouse Project, NY	101
Figure 19 Oven at the Glasshouse	102
Figure 20 Oven at the Glasshouse	102
Figure 21 At glasshouse NYC, summer 2022	103
Figure 22 Oven 1 at the 3E event in process	103
Figure 23 Process of Making	104
Figure 24 Diagram of the garden recipe example	106
Figure 25 Collective work at Longueuil event with farmer women	111
Figure 26 Collective work at Longueuil	112
Figure 27 Collective work at Longueuil	113
Figure 28 Tasht collective	116
Figure 29 Tasht collective left to right Khadija, Hourig, Come Wash With Us	117
Figure 30 Kurdish woman from a village	121
Figure 31 Woman fighter (from BBC news website) wearing a symbolic scarf	121
Figure 32 Vase with flower in front of window looking to a winter landscape	131
Figure 33 A house in Amude Town	136
Figure 34 A house in Amude Town	137
Figure 35 A house in Amude Town	137
Figure 36 My grandmother's neighbour door in my Town Amude	138
Figure 37 Plant	154
Figure 38 Kurdish woman?	157

Foreword

I met Khadija at the Senselab, at Concordia University; the exact date, event, or place, I don't remember. I guess I could go digging in hard drives or old websites and find some traces of us being somehow together at specific moments, and yet that would not truly spark my memory in a clear way. I want to honor how memory has this way of crafting its own feeling of how things happened. What I remember then, in this way, is many blurred moments that stitch each other together in non-linear ways, a multiplicity of splashed shots, an amalgam of planes coming together and overlapping. I remember Khadija in movements.

When I first read this text, I immediately wondered, 'how is it that I have communicated with Khadija so far?' Very rapidly, a cloud of many encounters with half words, smiles, qualities of body movements, colours, shared environments, textiles, practices, games, and stories came rushing, informing me that communication between Khadija and I had mostly been halfway, yet neither of us seemed to not get it. Trying to remember communication between us took me to remember that many times we actually communicated through silence or through unfinished sentences. A completeness was never needed amongst us to build practices and a life together.

When I finished reading the text, it was clear that it was full of those absences of language between words and phrases that Khadija carried with her so singularly, and the first thing I thought was: 'wait a second, I do speak this kind of language, I do get it!' Khadija then relayed her work to my hands when she had reached a limit of recipes and stories to tell, within this document. I have no doubt she'll continue writing these eternally in many different modalities.

Once that limit was reached, it was time to work the words differently, without taking away from them, their own mattering difference. Khadija's work was full, full also with the most magnificent absences. It gave a first impression of existing in a kind of halfway language and yet, I want to be clear, halfway language for me doesn't mean less than language, it means that it is a complex language of its own. The half here doesn't refer to less, but to the half we know of those other ways of languaging that language also is. Like my own Mexican inflected English for example, full of tinctures of Spanish and forbidden Náhuatl that live in my tongue and manifest through sounds

in any language I speak. Another layer of tincture comes from neurodiverse thought and languaging. As autistic myself and mother of an autistic son, I can affirm more and more, that there are so many other ways of languaging within language, as with any other language, it takes practice, it takes attuning, it takes curiosity and love. But mostly, it takes courage to meet it where it is, halfway in its route, in that place where it is still in the making, its creative middle from where it springs, full of unrecognizable novelty. It takes courage to level up with it and recognize its power and value.

More than translating the writing from the halfway language, what I did was a kind of transduction. For Simondon “*transduction* refers to a dynamic operation by which energy is actualized, moving from one state to the next, in a process that individuates new materialities”¹. I had to enter into the fullness of the apparent absences in words or into the way that sentences were crafted as labyrinths. I had to enter to those places and find in feeling what was expressed there in force, in movement, what it was doing and trying to do, I had to learn to listen to that and to trust that my listening would craft inexact yet approximately enough ways to pull into this text the impersonality of voices that were urgently singing, lamenting, reclaiming, and also asking to be respected, to not be captured in language, it was a difficult task and yet, in the most intense moments of it, I felt the joy of an adventurer, going for it with closed eyes.

Imagine you are given 5 random words, 3 of them have apparently nothing to do with the others. There’s some connective tissue that doesn’t match. You are supposed to do something with what is given to you without discarding any of the elements; however, these pieces given to you are part of someone else’s life’s stories. You move the pieces around, you close your eyes, you feel the stories out, you go for a long walk, the walk massages the process and suddenly, all sorts of sparks start exploding, and a virtual machine starts seeing a way in which the pieces fit together, without undoing the undoable and without imposing extra pieces. Like magic, a line that is not yours but of the pieces given emerges. Now imagine this process multiplied by each line in this text. I hope as a reader you can feel the many passages here built-in relay from Khadija’s multiple’s continuities which sometimes may mistakenly be felt as discontinuous.

¹ de Assis, Paulo. 2017. “Gilbert Simondon’s ‘Transduction’ As Radical Immanence in Performance”. *Performance Philosophy* 3 (3):695-717. <https://doi.org/10.21476/PP.2017.33140>.

What I have done here is not a collaboration but an entry into thought shared, thought mixed, thought relayed. I have been an emissary of Khadija's thinking here.

One very day in the middle of my journey not as a co-writer of this text but truly as a machinic emissary, I remember writing in my journal: "I'm working on Khadija's Thesis today. It feels so good, I'm halfway done, I think... Perhaps this week a first more complete and more legible (in this way) thing is ready. At this point I feel like an energetics deciphering machine!!!! Turning gears in strange ways to find an approximate phrase that may say something I think Khadija may say... it is a lot of fun and very interesting... to enter into language this way.

Mayra Morales

September 23, 2023

Preface

This text is a part of my artistic practice, to refuse a constant denial of the relay. To refuse the idea that a work has one author and only one. Here the relay is essential to walk-with and be more-than. A relay makes practices and creation collective; it is passed to others like a baton and others keep on building, not making it theirs but making it its own.

I want to keep the soul of oral history in the text. My intention is not to protect something but oral history was the only way we were supposed to practice our preservation as culture when I grew up and so I seek to build a continuity of that. Oral history for us was a way to escape repression. To protect my culture is not the interest but to keep alive how we grew up. When a door is closed then you escape through the window, you wouldn't stop to ask, you needed to keep moving in order to survive. The importance of oral history upon written language for me is that it is a way we learned and practiced keeping going, as a mode of survival.

Here in Canada, and in this thesis, the power of a predominant language was trying to push my work to a certain direction that felt strange; I couldn't connect with it. The formal way that research creation is demanded for a humanities program or for certain academic thinkers is usually expected to be done by following prescribed steps. For me, I couldn't follow steps. Doing this thesis was similar to when a child is learning to walk, the walking just moves, it doesn't follow predetermined steps. A child's walk is always moving with the environment.

I don't separate practice from living. This is where the notion of 'relay' comes in, there's a relay from life to art, from art to event, from event to the past, to the future, and to the writing that tries to respect oral history by not capturing into a form of language that would suffocate it. This notion of relay comes with every creation I do. Practicing relay gives me a way to do what I need to do. I learned this practice at Senselab. There's no separation between making art, daily life, and the *artfuliving* I do it every single day. Each is one more step. This writing is the same, it is not separated from my artistic practice. This writing is not a description of my artistic practice either, it is a continuation of it, a part of it, an along-sidedness.

I acknowledge that this research creation is a way to escape and remove any power directed toward the typically shaped ways of living, learning, and knowing. This direction that I chose to take in my research creation and creative life is the choice for a future that desires justice and the right to opacity, as I know it and carry it. It is a choice to ease the painful ways of doing; it is a choice to heal correctly.

Introduction

Riyad Al – Hussein said, “عيد للقبلة .. اعياد للقتل” (Hussein 52) "What do we do, if there is one feast for the kiss, and many feasts for killing, what do we do?" This thesis tries to become many feasts for the kiss through the figure of the *recipe* as community practices.

This research creation works in drawing lines between problems of exclusion and misrepresentation serving as connection threads that weave potentialities of movements as solutions to such problems. The lines will move between oral history and recipes as practices of what this thesis calls *Artful Life* (Manning, *The Minor Gesture*). The mode of this research will be an exercise of practicing a peripheral way of approaching the problems, in that way, the thesis will jump and bounce in a way that may feel all over the place, yet the reader is invited to find mobility of bouncing between a here, there, storytelling, practices, recipes and experience as contours that create a different way of approaching. The proposition is that such peripheral, all over the place needs to bring attention to different ways of learning and practicing stories to create other veins for *Artful Life*.

“Deleuze claims that standards of value are internal or immanent: to live well is to fully express one's power, to go to the limits of one's potential, rather than to judge what exists by non-empirical, transcendent standards. Modern society still suppresses differences and alienates people from what they can do.” Through stories, recipes and art events drawn in this thesis, a *production of subjectivity* (Guattari, *Chaosmosis* 1–32) starts shaping to give way to the expression of one's power immanent to the stories and events here unfolding, rather than to the standards that alienate us from the artful powers of difference which only create and reproduce the problems of misrepresentation and exclusion.

We know that the terrible can make us freeze, or run away, and can traumatize us. Understanding what we have gone through comes in stages. In this thesis, a *production of subjectivity* to move out of trauma requires two things: firstly, elaborating ways of knowing and feeling that acknowledge that the traumatic event is not simply localized in a here and now set of coordinates; secondly, being with the environment in a way that reconnects the senses, and allows us to get out from what I call 'survival mode'. Since my arrival in Montreal from Syria in 2001, I had to learn, and learn to unlearn, a survival mode to stay alive. Many feelings, experiences, and experiences started to unfold from there—where I was born, the way we lived, who I was and my artistic experience. The further away I was from the place I came from, in relation to when and where things had occurred, I started to know and understand what I had been through. Being here, in Montreal, away, gave me some clarity, and a second layer to move through the events. In this thesis some of those layers will come in the form of stories and will be weaved with recipes and practices. At a remove, and using a Western language in the Middle East, I could see that what I had felt and experienced as my daily life had also been political and historical events. War for me was daily life. I also want to declare that *I* here refers to my community, the experience I encountered is not personal here; my experience that weaves itself through research is tangled with the way I was seen and from within a community I belong to.

In the praxis of this research creation for *the right to opacity* I read again the words of Riyad Al – Hussein 's رياض الصالح الحسين

<p>Justice is to run with my love In the alleys of the world</p> <p>where guards won't ask me about my number Or my lost identity</p> <p>Justice is to throw myself into the vast sea Where I am sure that no one will grab me from my ear And lead me - once again to the grave</p> <p>Calming that suicide is not sanctioned by the canons And laws</p> <p>Justice is to eat my loafs quietly</p> <p>To go to the movies quietly To sing quietly</p> <p>To kiss my beloved quietly and die without noise</p>	<p>العدالة هي أن أركض مع حبيبتي في أزقة العالم دون أن يسألني الحراس عن رقم هاتفي أو هويّتي الضائعة العدالة هي أن ألقى بنفسي في البحر الشاسع و أنا واثق بأن أحدًا لن يمسكني من أذني و يقودني – مرّة ثانية إلى القبر بدعوى أن الإنتحار لا تقوّه الشرائع و القوانين العدالة هي أن أكل رغيبي بهدوء أن أذهب إلى السينما بهدوء أن أغني بهدوء أن أقبل حبيبتي بهدوء و أموت بلا ضجة (p66)</p>
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Within the process of the praxes and stories I will share in this document, the centrality of the stories will need a distraction from what otherwise would be a mere highlighting of problems as depicted in stories, these distractions will be other movements of the *Artful Life* and will come in the form of recipes, examples and practices shared. These de-centering distractions as techniques, I will call key-acts; in this thesis, the act of gathering, for example, is key to be seen and therefore key toward the justice that Riyadh Al – Hussein describes above. Entwined with my experiences of war as everyday life I have also learnt personally from dealing with my neurodiverse child, that in order to end an intense moment or a crisis situation, I had to find a distraction key act, word, or a game; something to diffuse the centrality of the problems in order

to focus on the act of living rather than suffering. After a few years, this distraction technique works less now and that is why I am testing other keys. The weaving in this research creation thesis is our difficult yet *artful life*. Together with the stories of everyday events I will also bring to the text, stories around neurodiversity to open the fabric and threads here shared.

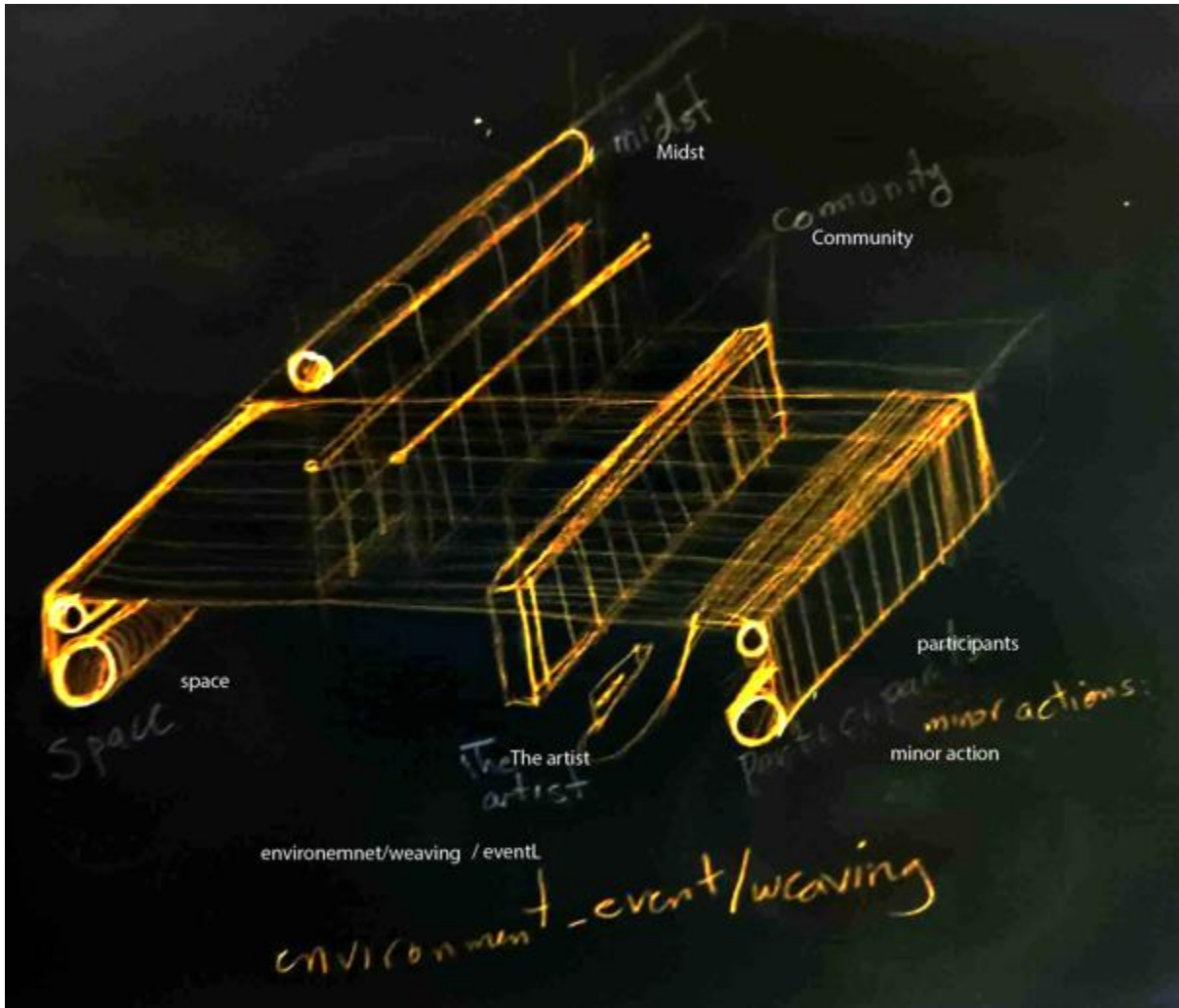


Figure 1 Basic event diagram example

Thread (wrap yarn) to weave: On language and knowledge field edges

In this research, one of the issues I had to face was the distance between myself and language in understanding and defining the injustices that I had experienced. Many of these experiences, around the distance between language and myself, were simply there at a time when they could not yet be defined. I felt violence, discrimination, and

so many other things, but I could not put my finger on it: the list, as I now know, is long. During my PhD I joined various research groups like SenseLab, now 3 Ecologies, and The Oral History group, where I found different languages that helped me navigate differently, through the journey of the experiences I relay here. I am grateful for all those encounters through creating, reading, and gathering in different research groups during my PhD. These encounters somehow allowed for a translation in language and thought of the felt events I experienced, into ways of conceptualizing and making nameable experiences that didn't feel like reducing my to inaccurate misrepresentations. With these encounters, what had been simple ideas became more defined; this allowed me to connect events and experiences of my life back home more clearly; somehow, what was lived became clearer due to the thinking and conceptual weaving which accompanies experience, in the figures of stories, events, examples, practices, as displayed through the weaving of this text. Although I resonate with Damian Baca when he writes that "theory serves those that create it..." (19) I still had to find a way to connect theory and my own experience while situated here in Montreal. As uneasy as this task sometimes was, I found a *middling way* to work on it. Initially, I felt that the necessity of connecting my own experience with theory was an imposed academic request, which I could not fulfill through the years of my research. I felt a great resistance inside of me as a response to how, as a researcher and artist, I was feeling forced to perform my experience in a way that I felt asked me to define my experience as a problem, rather than focusing on the way I exist and navigate through the complexity of my experience not merely as a problem but as a life.

I thus aim to *translate* as a middling way to navigate the weaving of this text, transducing through practice, my experience in a readable way, in hope to better unfold the injustices I faced and felt, and consequently contribute to finding ways to

create a proliferation of solutions by offering creative modes of justice and empowerment. At the SenseLab, now 3 Ecologies, I found philosophical discussions and readings around the production of subjectivity, oral history, and around the creative work of Lygia Clark. These ideas and practices were able to inform what had been the edges of many creative ideas in my past artworks. Art theory, as I encountered, did not seem to connect to my processes, while postcolonial feminist and practices did, especially as I found in the work of Saidiya Hartman. Also, reading around aesthetic experiences of daily life, aptly described how feelings could be shaped into an artistic praxis, and highlighted the real need that stood behind the process—the drive that pushes a practice from a felt sense of importance to artistic output; in my case, an instinct and desire to record. My art was part of the formation that helped me weave a connection between lived experience and an understanding of it.

The best example I can give for this, is a project titled *Behind walls-maps*, in which I needed to add testimonies from those who lived through their statelessness in relation to a changing demography, and consequently of the map of where they lived. I later found studies around oral history and visual art that nourished the way this project was done for which the emphasis was in the preservation of oral histories through ethical practices. For me, I simply wanted to create a chance for participants to recreate conditions in relation to stories within a creative environment. In terms of ethics, I interviewed people in my communities where I had trust relations. I changed their voices and as some were carrying fears of family safety, no names were revealed. When I think of academic ways, I feel the right thing was done as needed mainly because I know the history and lived it, I also cared about the stories and what each individual wanted to share was respected in relation to what the process of creation

had to offer mainly through talking about daily life difficulties of the stateless based on each one's life. Some talked about various issues such as no access to education, health care, ownership, travel, marriage, or simply access to jobs.

Recipe: the power of softness, of survival

For this recipe, let me depart from a simple look at a flower which finds its way to pass through the hardness of stone.

If we assume that the flower is unable to find its way through stone simply because it is soft and softness is unable to make its way through a hard surface such as that of the rock, then we are making the flower a victim of the stone's hardness. On the one hand we are aligning softness with incapability. We depart with an assumption of something being unable which associates it with victimhood. With these movements of aligning and assigning corresponding labels to softness we deny the opportunity of discovering what else softness may do. We are giving pre-assigned value and we may think that the flower has only one predetermined way of existing and expressing itself. By doing this we are not giving the flower a chance to teach us other modes of existing, we are not giving it a chance to find its way through the rock, which we will find it manages to do repeatedly. Each time the softness of the flower and its desire for survival surprises us by actually finding its way through the rock.

For me, pre-assigning a not-being-able description to a mode of existence subsumes such mode to the role of victimhood. In this way the assumption of not-

being-able is parallel to victimhood. From my perspective, these alignments go further: things perceived as 'not-being-able' also do not align with a 'typical way of knowing'-- 'not being nor doing' exists outside of singular and typical ways of being and doing. In my experience as a mother of a neurodiverse child, there is a parallel assumption of aligning disability with a 'not-being-able' label which in short builds a perception of a mode of existence as 'unable'. This mode of existence is seen as an unable in relation to both thinking and doing, which in turn disqualifies and devalues it, as not smart. In short, assuming a mode of existence as unable reduces our capacity to 'see it' as more than the typical assumptions that come bound to such labels and this is problematic.

We are used to not perceiving the smartness of a tree, or how the way that a tree talks, can preserve the whole forest. Of course, trees are smart! Otherwise, how is it that trees know what toxic is, what space they can occupy, or keep learning how to try to stay alive? What defines our bodies' borders between ourselves and that of a tree or a forest?

Thread: The way of this research-creation

To be able to create a living, and vivid research-creation, I would like to be read as *embodying* certain academic terms, rather than citing or applying them. The terminologies found here may not be what is expected to be seen in this written text, nor where and how such terminologies are supposed to appear.

I ask that you think of this method as the appropriate way for me to conduct this research-creation. I can only understand terms as they connect to my experience. As

such, what is intended in this text, is the creation of an experience that will render the terms vivid, rather than a descriptive application of terms. I may use words that appear to me blurred, interwoven, in interchangeable ways, skewing their distance from one another and asserting their relational continuum to me, in the way that they lead to each other—such as but not limited to methodology / technique / recipes, for the creation or production of subjectivity / healing; resilience; survival / living; islamophobia / xenophobia; knowledge and insight / collective work / stories / understanding / connections.

The recipes / techniques might work for certain people and may work not for others; if one of the recipes does not work, it is time to move to another one, or to invent a new one. These concepts are pushing the capacity of imaging new recipes if you wish to explore further the *artfulife*.

Recipe as Way in Research-Creation

Simple reflections on the making of things, can simplify ideas of what art can do and what art goes through. When we make something as a routine or in an ordinary way like food, or wine or even, when we tell a child a story; we might not see the aesthetic elements through which care and meaning are embodied. Maybe these elements won't reveal themselves to the mind, as we can only see the materials at the center of what is visible or as an outcome while it is done, but if we care for how, to, with, for whom it is offered, then a specific meaning will come to be created, and a pinch will shift what is happening and what one can perceive as happening.

Outcomes of this Research-Creation

The outcome of this research aims to be a contribution for those who are not seen, and those who are oppressed. It will contribute towards:

1. reforming subjectivity.
2. healing, through the use of memories/storytelling, daily life activities in creative making environments.
3. developing shared memories/stories that will be instrumental in breaking fears and stereotypes, through collective creation.

One of the main focuses of these recipes is centered on how to connect communities of newly-arrived refugees and the forcibly displaced who have been through situations of violence or war—especially women. The research will cover issues that came to the surface in local Canadian communities, from the start of the Arab Spring in the Middle East, Syria, and Iraq in 2011 to the present.

Doing so, the research-creation process will go through a few main points:

1. self-reflective.
2. historical events.
3. the problems which came to light in this research, namely:
 - misrepresentation
 - islamophobia
 - borders and territories, and their relation to women's bodies.
4. my personal stake in the project, or "why me?".
5. the methodology/technique /concepts/recipes, and along with other artists
6. recipes/concept

the creative work: recipes as a conceptual technique for the creation of an artful life,
and the outcomes of the research-creation.

A Series of Recipes

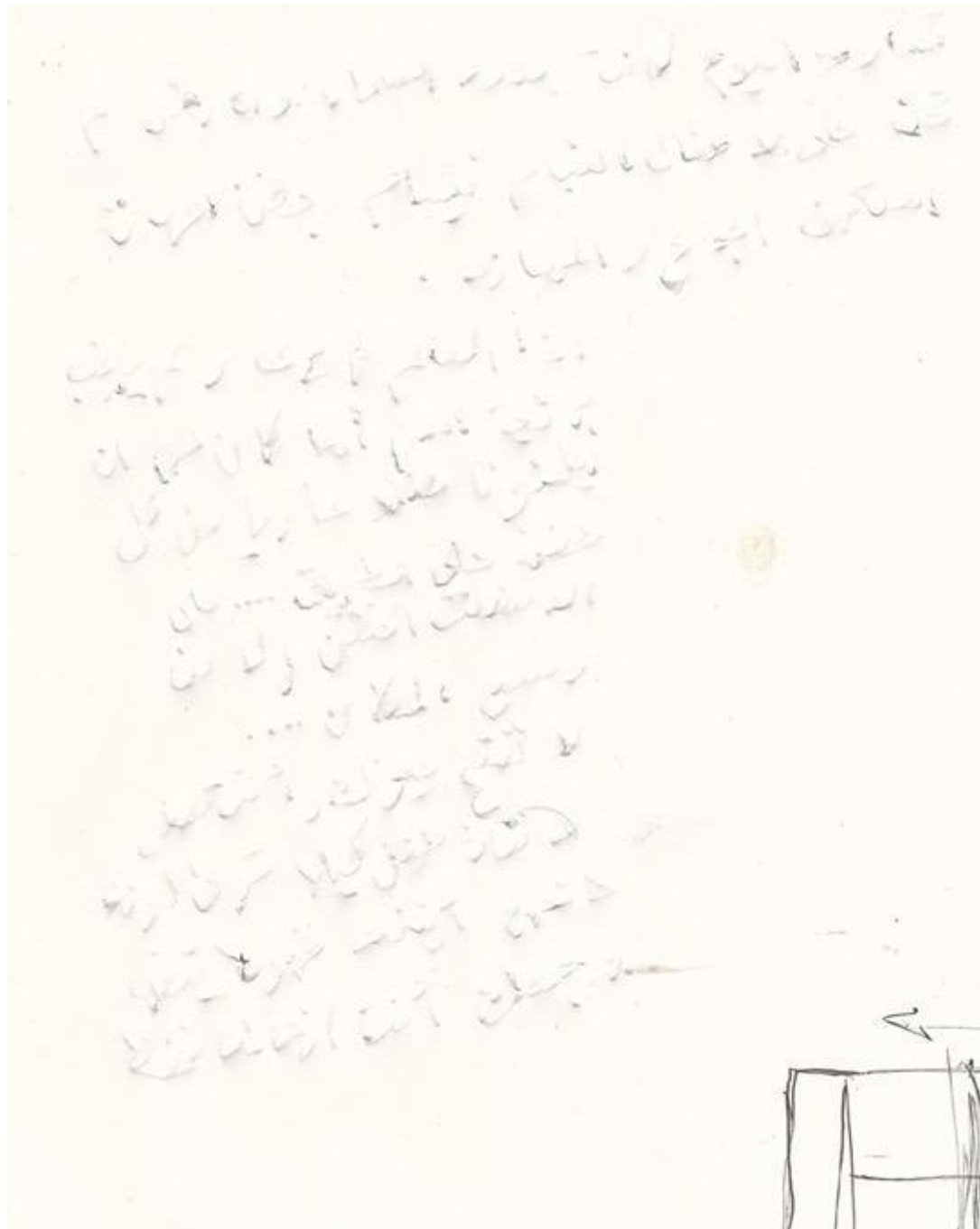


Figure 2 Language tracing a meaning

I started this research-creation project with many doubts as to how I could or should work, and how to narrow down the scope and sites of urgency of the research. What

was the most pressing problem, now? Was it the war back home, which forced so many Syrians to flee and become displaced, and caused many other unsolvable problems, such as people to this day being stuck at the borders? Or should I focus on the problem of refugees, and of their relationship to their hosting society? And what about the most vulnerable through this entire journey: the women, the children? What about the genocides: the ethnic one of the Yazidi, and the cultural one in the Kurdish part of Syria? Choosing only one problem to take on was like asking a mother which of her children to save if they were found drowning.

As the research process continued, I kept shifting between these many points of focus, but found myself falling into the cycle of the very problem I was researching and saw myself becoming framed by it. This became very clear when I began to share my work to get familiar with newcomers and tried to break through the fears and stereotypes that often accompanied their presence. These fears and stereotypes can be seen through the work on *Orientalism* by author Edward (Said), in which he tries to answer the question of why, when we think of the Middle East, for example, we have a preconceived notion of what kind of people lives there, what they believe, how they act, even though we may never have been there, or indeed even met anyone from there. More generally, *Orientalism* asks how we come to understand people, strangers who look different to us by virtue of their skin color. The central argument of *Orientalism* is that the way we acquire this knowledge is not innocent or objective, but the end result of a process that reflects on certain interests.

The tendency from outsiders was to approach my work by framing it (and myself, by extension) through a single lens, and through a preconceived interest that was not necessarily mine, or the work's. The problems I was researching, and exposing, were deeply imbricated, and the work sought to remain in and bring to light

the complexity of that imbrication, but the impulse on the part of the audience was to reduce the work to a single narrative—of islamophobia, or of representing Muslim identity, or of the victimhood of women, and so on. Like this, I was constantly approached through the lens of a pre-constituted image popularized by the media, which carries the assumption that all immigrants coming to Canada have one simple identity, defined by their religion. This produces a collective imagination which perceives all Muslims as a unified identity and erases the various differences between and within each country of origin—as if one could sum up and reduce the Christians of Africa, South America, and Europe under the same umbrella. Most pressing then, was the need to confront and deconstruct the ideology that all Muslims were terrorists.

What came to be revealed through my work is that the central fear, at the core of intolerance and stereotypes, is not the fear of Islam itself, but the fear of the “other,” a fear with deep historical roots that comes from the unknown. Fear of extremist Muslims is not unique to the West: we fear them too. Muslims killed our family, and still do. Fear in the face of difference, recast as the unknown, is not unusual; and yet, when connection happens between people, closeness can facilitate the growth of tolerance for what “other” is and can be. Such facilitation allows us to feel difference in its richness. In this sense, we must realize the dangerous effect of *misrepresentation* in the media, in its stoking of difference as threat, then we must create a new understanding across communities that difference is richness, and key to the vividness of a society. This education can begin as early as childhood, as children will carry and grow their beliefs into the world.

Recipe: Midst

Midst is one of the words in the English vocabulary that I cannot pronounce, its vibration tickles under the skin of my body and yet I want to work for this recipe from the midst of what is called, “the eastern world” which is a phrase filled with its own chain of assumptions and stereotypes which together ensemble no other than ‘whiteness policing the cracks’ (Manning, “The Being of Relation” 2).

Assumptions and stereotypes of races named by colors build up a senseless arc, or a glass house in the midst of a desert. Amid such construction there’s a hidden desire to show the capacity of being able to create the unusual. A glass house makes no sense for what the needs are in a desert; it is not even enough to fit the extremes and imbrications of those who need justice or of those who claim to make justice. The *midst* is what confuses and scratches on top the glasshouse edified also with all made up terms and languages that limit the richness of difference, its creativity and variation of expression and which at the same time, can’t even see or live the environments that surround such differences.

Midst of the quality of life; of a body that can't fit well and can't exist and live any so-called-normal nor any of the extreme of what the so-called-typical has made for itself.

Paradoxically, such a midst is the only space in which one can function and exist when our differences more-or-less seek to find a world and places to fit. Difference in its richness seeks the *midst* of the rainbow of differences when rains of emotion or environment feed its existence.

Midst is where a little tree grows weaving itself with the net of fences and stands up to hold the fence even stronger and changes what fences can do or mean acting then as a neurodiversity completely merged within an environment.

Midst can simply be a place or events or an action. A minor sound is a major drive for ideas in a classroom; when the sound of the lecture disappears while the pen scratches a paper as the music of learning, thinking, and finding other ways. In this midst of minor sounds, to be neurodiverse means to live multiple worlds while at the same time sensing the world's tiniest gesture as major. What is sensed is what exists, what is known is what is lived and felt, and this could be sensed, lived, and felt multiply.

For me, the real doing is within the *midst*; where the real beginning-end is the midst...that is how there are endless ways to become.

Story: In the midst of the midst recipe, a story in the midst of language

In the *midst* of many languages, I never fully accessed my mother tongue 'Kurdish', nor I ever felt as if I belonged to the mastered language in my past home education, 'Arabic'; nor have I ever felt access to the official languages here in Quebec. This history has certainly marked me as an accent carrier in both 'English' and 'French'.

This is very connected to memories of my well-respected grandfather becoming deaf, during the French mandate for Syria in the 1940s, as he tried to protect a woman being harassed by some soldiers in front of his store, in Durbassya Northern Syria.

As the incident was happening, he got out of his store to protect this woman, but the soldiers pushed him in and closed the door just after butt-stroking his head causing an injury that left him permanently deaf.

Since then, his name became Shikhmouss Alatrash/in Arabic, and Şêxmûsa Ker/in Kurdish, which means 'the deaf Shikmouss'. We believed that being deaf was the reason my grandfather talks were minimal; we never heard his stories and rarely his voice. Perhaps these losses, these partial accesses to language, is some of what moves in the *midst* of 'the accent carrier' that I have become. However, I'd like to make an emphasis in that this story doesn't define a wholeness of my experience with language, just one of the many sides which create my own difference in richness in this area.

Recipe: People always needs the midst for living

People who live difference always need a *midst*. Those who think-feel differently need a *midst*. Those who feel the lights and smells of the world. Those who do not have sounds for the voices in their bodies. Those whose minds talk about these feelings: the neurodiverse, the people of color, gender minorities, minorities, and survivors for whom difference can be the light that makes living possible.

Midst with-in modes

Intense enters

At a moment of change out of a little world everything multiplies, the weight of a feather is backbreaking the heavy mountains .. movements, sounds, smells, become the monster that consumes you painfully till the end of every single cell .. time passes and breathing we forget .. air can't find ways to enter and sooth the body .. the thresholds are spaces of comfort, for the undesired one, for when doors are shut violently has become the ordinary .. made up spaces start to be offered, alternative spaces of action for existence.

Relief comes

That feeling of heat starting in the hands, feeling it moving through you .. the first breath of the rebirth as you feel it again .. as the first time a seed germinates, you come back to you .. a need to put out the heaviness in each part of you and each part of the surrounding .. then you rest for another moment to come .. the moment of crossing as it happens carries estrangement .. smells strongly, estrangement of the other and be the other and be seen by the other .. the estrangement of thoughts born from feelings from the way to know.

Midst is limitless spaces of what Glissant demands for the world,

Je réclame pour tous le droit à l'opacité. Il ne m'est plus nécessaire de "comprendre" l'autre, c'est-à-dire de le réduire au modèle de ma propre transparence, pour vivre avec cet autre ou construire avec lui. (Glissant, Introduction à une poétique du divers 53–54)

Midst is the shifting sphere within the capacity of living in an ableist world.

Midst allows the shifting in between problems that need to be addressed to be seen.

Midst is the way of living, as beginnings need full power, and ends become powerless, and these will never be the center of our movement.

Midst is the living with a beginning and an end co-existing for a future.

Midst is where survivors feel/test their mending's happening and are able to imagine a future as sideways opened and not defined at any point.

The demand is to let it be the way of living.

Remember that at the edge of any ending and any new beginning, there is a midst.

As an immigrant who never fully experienced the past home, nor the new home, the capacity of being in the midst creates a rich continuation where there is an emergence of forces for new ways to create a present base for the future.

The personal recipe of the midst is detachment of all places and land. Fully owning the midst with past/beginnings that are memories to enrich now and shape ways for a tomorrow which ends is in continual research and making. In the midst we find a model for the formation of new modes subjectivity within everyday life, in a creative mode of being, of becoming as Manning reminds us,

When something does, new relational fields are forming, and with them, new modes of existence. A new mode of existence brings with it modalities of knowledge. These modalities of knowledge are not yet circumscribed— they are transversal to the modes of operation active in the relational field. (Manning, The Minor Gesture 30)

Midst is made of things that happen to pull the body, straighten it up to make it stand and let it melt with the earth when you fall; it will always be with and within yourself.

Midst is a denial of borders; it is where encounters take place with longing and desire for relations. The midst blurs separation and makes the mountains and the sky

touch each other, with no hierarchical assignments. The midst has full access to the quality of the 3 ecologies, as proposed by Guattari: production of subjectivity, the intertwined social and environment (Guattari, *Chaosmosis* 1–32); war can harm trees, and humans, taking away the quality of the person's humanity when taking lives away, when it makes a victim, it makes an-other a criminal.

Midst is made of spaces of art and stories, of spaces of comfort where difficulties can be survived. Top to bottom where anything living, feeling, or existing, can find that the next is there, in the midst of a movement that offers other ways to exist in difference.

Midst is another way to exist, if you are a minority in your own home, you will be a minority in every place you inhabit; except in the midst, which is not a place but a state of being that can be generated simply by your nature force.

This *midst* is where my work began; but by the time I reached my final proposal, other issues had revealed themselves to me, such as the violence women faced, and their victimization in the eyes of the West. Yes, Middle Eastern women face oppression. However, beyond victimhood, they/us women are also in a constant struggle to change their/our lives; and what they/us have achieved or done is so enormous, yet so unseen by others—like education; like access to work; like activism. These achievements bring new struggles to the fore; educated women are constantly required to make compromises in order to access work, and thus have double duties at work and at home. The question is not merely about who has access to work, but how to support women on a daily basis, and in deciding their own life's path. The changes are slow, but their daily resistance is powerful. The point is to recognize these minor struggles and achievements, as they are the key to reforming subjectivities and,

as I attempt to show in this research-creation, to show, explore and add a kind of artful quality to living.

Recipe: healing...cannibalism-capitalism

when a body is consumed by violence, a life of yours and thousand lives are taken.

The eaten body will go through a cycle that takes over yours

You need to watch its growth, its wellness.

remember the eaten are the ones who will survive and will be preserved in all stories.

your existence

The only thing seen by others is the body, but never be summed up to it nor dissolved within

when you are eaten, you are freed from what you could be reduced to, and only you and the whole of you remains non reducible, not erasable only eaten

You become the tree, the earth, and the life after life.

all what cannibalism could produce is you and only you as they are announcing its failure to erase.

Recipe: A perfect access to language

gather a collection of ideas, vocabulary (preferably that you can't pronounce), some extract of passion for creativity (can be replaced by frustration or experiencing of violence)

Then this mix can be put out with the body, on paper, or thrown out there in space. or simply within you.

Add a little bit of your skin color, and to get a sharper flavor, connect it to racism and a desire for real inclusion.

Now warm it up slowly with the *poetics of relation*, let it warm up slowly, you will start to see many hands supporting to keep the warmth, a collective will start to form.

a smell and a texture of empowerment will be felt.

then run to an open space and share what you got; let the world test touch and read your language.

you will be the language of today tomorrow it can be another one.

When I started thinking about rendering oral history in written form, I felt the resistance of generations of my Kurdish community, who carried stories in the form of speaking. I felt their resistance being erased by this push toward writing as the necessary

modality of transmission. This does not mean that writing does not have or add value; it was simply not the form that confirmed my past lived experience. These oral stories were carried through my family's lives in more than spoken words; they lived in embroidery, in imagination, songs, symbols, tattoos, it was a real daily practice of resilience and preservation. In his words Shadi Akbarian, in relation to oral storytelling says,

The kilams, the narratives of the dengbêjî tradition, are very important for Kurds, for whom they are not fables or tales. All the dengbêjs we interviewed stated that, as kilams, their narratives are based on real life, they constitute a rich resource for Kurdish national identity. (Akbarian 113)

Akbarian goes on showing us the importance of the orality role in the Kurdish people's life, as cited from his essay, Serhat Resul Çaçan emphasizes that “dengbêj does not ‘sing’ but ‘tells’ the kilams” (Akbarian 98). The word ‘dengbêj’ means ‘singer’ however, the way I translate the word dengbêjî from my kurmanji language means exactly: “voice-tales”. If we think about this, we can see how important this voice is as a voice of Kurdish culture and history; it is what was taken away from them by violence. To Leyla Neyzi, “the lack of recognition of the Kurdish language by the Turkish state throughout the 20th century led to a heightened consciousness about language, oral tradition, music and performance” (3); this can also be the case in other Kurdish regions, Syria, and Iran. The Iraqi side had a similar history; all these I won't be able to cover now yet are worth mentioning.

لم احب الكلمات طوال عمري ولا الكلام
ولم احب الشعر كله احبته بموسيقاه ...
الكلام احبته بقصصه بتكوينه الصور
احببت الكلام بقوله الحقيقة

ممسكا بيد الصمت الى عالمي الى عالم الاخرين الى العالم الاخر

حين يحبو وحين يترنح محاولا تعلم المشي

وحين يركض دوما يمسك بيدي منتظرا ان لا الهث وراءه



Figure 3 Grandmother's traditional tattoo

My grandmother's image above was taken by me in 2006, this is a real living archive. In colors of the woven carpet that my mother gifted me, I remember weaving this in our backyard and as kids we would do a few lines. Traditional tattoos were done by a needle, women's breast milk, and a special stone's (black) powder.

Oral history took so many creative forms; not merely oral. I state again that such orality carries what was taken from us: language and written Kurdish. I thought about how to maintain this resistance, this refusal to be erased, and how to protect oral stories in my research-creation, and I came to think that the most suitable way would be to share these stories as a written text through the methodology of self-reflexive autobiography, and to put these critical reflections in the form of recipes as a creative outcome that not only embodies stories but invites more stories to come. As I've said before, it is important to reiterate that my 'self' is not mine alone, and my experience is not personal: it is that of my community. It is the consequence of 'being made part of' certain minority communities, and of the injustice faced by my own community, the

Kurdish, the refugee, and the Canadian immigrant. These recipes as outcomes are samples within what Glissant stated: “We clamor for the right to opacity for everyone” (Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* 194).

Story: Architecting environments of relations



Figure 4 Example of window at clay home, from my mother cousin in Kurdish village in Turkey

Looking at how our houses in the northern Syrian region were built, we can see that the windows are designed to let the light in for us to be able to see and to remain healthy. In a place that gets as cold as here in Canada, wider windows are better so

that more light can come in since grey days are so often. Within this design, there is a balance between keeping the homes warm and keeping light coming in; these factors have been thought of. On the other hand, if it is a hot place, such as the one where I used to live in my past home, under such conditions, windows are designed with the thickness of clay, making walls of around 60 cm., this thickness created a good balance between the need for light and the need to reserve indoors with cool air. Clay as a material, made it possible to smoothen the temperature by spraying some water and creating air flow. This offered better temperatures, which were sustained by clay walls which would make temperature changes much slower than with other materials.

Houses in the past were made with clay; now, they are all made with concrete. To keep concrete houses colder or warmer requires more demands in terms of energy and costs, plus ecological resources are mostly not available, especially since a majority of people are living in poverty.

Architects used to build houses with the thickness of walls. These thick walls would allow the creation and shape of vertical windows with additional space for plants, in turn, this would create good conditions for perfect growth potential for the plants which in turn would soften the internal heat and lights. With this in mind we can shift our perspective from mere function to what something does in its aesthetic function as well. Besides, the plants in these thick walls/windows, would be mostly herbs that would repel insects trying to enter into the space.

Through a reflection on how an architecture of homes can consider a wholeness or an ecology of relations as temperature, well-being, air qualities, light, plants, insects, functionality, and aesthetic functions amongst many others, we can see the importance of the environment and how living can carry a caring for possibilities for better living.

Artfulife is created in this architectural way, choosing local affordable or even free materials which are easy to shape. *Artfullife* considers how materials we use may be integrated or merged with, environmental needs, and other elements.

If we transpose this example to creative acts, we can learn from this generous opening, that creative acts can offer and bust a critical way of living through an aesthetic of living and thinking with a more than, which considers larger ecologies of relations in its creations. Such an aesthetic of living asks us not only to see with our eyes but to also see with our mind, with our heart, to seek those ecologies of relations.

Another example can be found in sculpture. In sculpting, we remove part of the materials with which we are working, to be able to shape the sculpture within the space. Such space, void, and air, created by the act of removal, will be a line of contact with the materials. What really shapes the sculpture is both the materials and also the space surrounding them, the materials shape, while the surroundings co-form.

It is always important to understand how past practices can offer learning ways, not only about history but also ways to learn in the learning and how steps can be done and undone or redone in the right way. This way of seeing allows new spaces to be ready for values and ways of living to exist.

How to function

That beehive of memories,
collect its honey in a lonely moment.

Collect it

To test it

to see it

To believe it

bees have one life to give for the life of the whole beehive and to pave ways for a
continuous journey to the field of flowers that will not stop ..

bee be .. be bee .. bee you be what you know

what you can

what you imagine

See the lies of all lives given for the land, for the idea of owning it ..

all lives are taken but to the land

there is only the truth to see

they dump the rests of the pain of the loss in mothers' hearts;

wrapped in shallow pride ..

the lie of honoring the land by giving lives

The land has no thirst for lives.

no giving is for a land.

the land simply wants to continue forming life after life.

The lie we believed made us the third world and the poor ones, to believe that our obedience is the way to access knowledge, to admit that someone's noble cause is saving us from not having the capacity of living our dreams nor the capacity to do the imagined.

reading in between generations reveals the real need, shows where the thin thread is that was easy to cut.

it started with a need for a prophet and a need for God, a need for a hero, a need for a well written book to follow, a method to do

they lied, turning children into numbers of makers, of soldiers, of civilized citizens to show the way to be as others desired

In between countless and counted there is a hair distance ..

just don't be measurable or countable.

1) Self-Reflective Events

One of the main artists I can connect to in this research creation is Lygia Clark². As an artist she believed in what art can offer. In the same line of thinking of what art can offer, I planned a few public performative collective encounters:

- A. Along with the *VIVA Art Festival* in the summer of 2022.
- B. With *Langues Pendues*: the 8th wonder garden from 2021 to 2023, a series of workshop events and performative works took place in relation to the question: how to move the relational encounter away from the center? A few different creation laboratories, voluntarily positioned on the outskirts of the big city, within the city of Longueuil. My own interest was to be engaged with only French speaking communities as an important aspect to feel a belonging to a community within the peripheries. In addition, there was a strong desire for decentralization, and sharing stories with different communities in unusual spaces. Many activities were offered as activities that could be carried and continued by participants at their place; that way the work could continue collectively at their own spaces.

The importance of practicing oral storytelling was that it was a preservation technique in my culture. This importance was doubled for me, by a desire to belong to this place

² Lygia Clark was a Brazilian artist best known for her painting and installation work. Clark co-founded the Neo-Concrete movement. From 1960 on, Clark discovered ways for viewers (who would later be referred to as "participants") to interact with her art works. Clark's work dealt with the relationship between inside and outside, and, ultimately, between self and world.

and land and at the same time, give back the gifted life that I have now, by practicing, not only what kept us alive in the past, but also what will preserve my life and my small family now and in future. My gift in this event was the reviving of the practices that native people had as a way of life, and as a way of passing knowledge and values. Such is the way that I practice. Through this practice I also try to better understand belonging to this land as a permission for life to continue, and that's essential for my own feeling of home comfort.

Event at the Creative Space : *Si le lieu-meurt, il peut naître*
(If a place dies, a place can be born too)

In one of the creative public encounters that was held at the **Creative Space**, in St Catherine Street in Montreal, I performed the act of embroidering names to access the feeling of safety. For this event, I started embroidering names of missing women in Montreal. I started reading the names, talking to people about them and asking questions. These women went missing because of who they are based on their race or color, or gender? These encounters went through questions posed to random people around that space, those who had time. We would sit and open a conversation about what they know about missing women, especially native women. I read some names and the description of each woman. I meant to reflect on how in order to search for these women they were reduced to a simple appearance describing a few lines to sum up a person. I was asking participants if they could find someone in the crowd who might have a similar description to one of the missing persons that I shared with them. Once one of the participants told me that it could be you or 'me' according to the description: brown hair and eyes, wearing black with light brown skin.

While there is a good intention to find them or find their bodies, a second violence is committed in these descriptions. In most of the cases, the few lines offered can be related to anyone we might know, the lines were not very informative to know who they were trying to find.

Of course, I was waiting for a kind of connection or any way to confirm a connection that I could see with these missing women and bodies, but what I am mostly hoping for is a feeling of real safety. Arriving to Canada came with the offer of a safe place, but how can I be safe in a place where a missing woman can be me or anyone seen as 'the other' or as having 'other ways', thus being seen as unfit or as not belonging, which puts us at the threshold of not being accounted for, susceptible to go missing. An example of a description of missing women can be found in Fig. 5, there we can see that this missing woman can be me or anyone passing by that you may know.

Missing Person Profile

Last Name	Bouchard
First Name	Lucie
Age (at disappearance)	42
Height	160 cm / 5ft-3in
Weight	62 kg
Case number	44961024003

Clothing	
Type of clothing	Coat
Clothing colour	Beige
Type of clothing	Jeans
Clothing colour	Blue
Type of clothing	Sweater
Material	Wool
Note	Dark wool

Figure 5 Missing Person Profile

When I asked a participant to find if the description matched anyone that they could know, what was highlighted was how generalization was created. The discussion sought to think with and talk to people, to find ways of connecting, or going even further with into deeper conversations as it happened with some other participants I met, as was the case with a university professor who was passing by, and to whom I asked:

Have you ever discussed this issue or learnt about it at school or in spaces where learning happens? The conversations were long or short, based on the interaction and the moment of the encounter. Some people ended up participating in embroidering the names of these women, taking time to feel them and connect. Then these embroideries were included in a creative circle. What stood out for me in this creative circle were: the bright colors, the clothing we transferred to connect to each other, the acts to map and connect us with the missing ones, in a way that they are not forgotten, in a way that tries to be with, but the most important for me, was the minor gesture to learn with participants and make seeing possible. I know that this way will not make us find these missing women, but it will certainly provoke ways to create awareness toward this and find ways of other things that can be done for these missing women but also for the ones who are not missing. The separation of missing bodies and not missing ones, is still one of the ways in which colonized bodies and practices still find ways to separate based on differences. Care might sometimes be sufficient *to access the feeling of safety*.

The question that kept coming to mind for me in relation to missing women was: How could I seek belonging or feel justice as a woman of color, minority, and refugee here, in this land to which I arrived, if a native woman still faces injustice? How can I talk about me as a woman of color having a deep connection to these women who faced violence for whom they were, this connection with all women who flee war and violence of tyranny, or patriarchal society in their past homes either as inherited or as encouraged by colonial practices? The acts of violence might be different, and so are languages, and yet, the act of violence still remains the same, based on differences and colonial practices. What patriarchal and colonial ways do to control?



Figure 6 Moment of young participants in the making



Figure 7 Moment of young participants in the making



Figure 8 The youngest participating little girl. (With her parents behind the camera)

I created other events, where I continued the practice of embroidered names of missing women and where I had an open discussion with participants not only about these women but also about how and why they went missing so that we could find roots to this problem. What are possibilities to stop this violent practice?

I believe that looking at documentation of performative pieces can be made in a way that means that something has to be experienced, by sharing stories, around such experience, incomplete ones. This relational performance that finds its continuity

through different events, is becoming the care given to the participants to search for fuller stories or at least to know more or educate more about these practices in relation to violence, evident violence but also unseen violence. What we needed exactly, was to unveil the roots of the problem.

To discuss or find ways to change or undo the harm is impossible; carrying guilt produced by violence is neither what support means for the ones who experienced it. Rather, the work grew as an offering of seeds for thought and the need for change.

Even though I had some images showing the activities that were part of these events, and stories or conversions that were recorded, as Laura Levin tells us, “the space of the document’ is the primary site of performance” (Levin 31) and the actual work is not a documentation space. Since the practice was real performative work, documentation with an outsider eye was not my choice. In her text around documented performance, “In Vaughan’s review, as in many other analyses of the performed photograph, ‘performativity’ stands in for, on the one hand, the self as a cultural construct, and on the other, for a sense of free will and choice in the way that identity is enacted.” (Levin 31) The point here is how easily this can be generalized. There is no one single story that can be reflected in one single way in contemporary performances, for I believe these events as performative acts, are much more than what a created image can represent of it; in other words, it is limiting to have documentation of the performance as representing the real performance which happens in an ecology of relations through conversations, through the will to engage and care, through embroidery and learning. Only in a relational environment like this, is where we could all develop a feeling of care on a different level. The event itself contributes to the representation of thinking; and yet, there is no one way to sum up history, culture, and value in one single representation. Even if a larger picture which

can represent an issue, a culture or identity, may in part be needed, such an image can't fully represent the complexity of an ecology of relations. My point here is similar to the example I gave above: did the police description really tell us who was missing? We may have access to a partial trace of information, but certainly is not fully what conforms to the complexity of things, events, stories, issues, and problems. In order to share a story mixed with a desire to build a sharable version of the self—since there is not a singular version, nor a whole—, a place and an environment need to be kept alive in a mode of vivid life.

What I'm trying to explain here has to do with a problem for this research-creation, of the practice of documenting participation as typically seen: "If the photo is a sign of time, of time's passing, Jones and Phelan seem to argue, then it is an ideal medium for communicating the sense of loss that is at the heart of subject formation." (Levin 35)

In the performance event *Si le lieu-meurt, il peut naître*, I was acting both as photographer and photographic subject, but the photo is not necessarily the 'ideal medium' here, but what happens in and through the performance event. The way I see it is that through the proposition of the event there is a staging of bodies that keep changing roles: some take the role of hands making while others are listening to stories. Stories in their oral way, take the role of potential toward growth and carrier of memories of the various communities. As collective memories, stories include loss, longing, and resistance. Adding the quality of each story to the other story is what becomes the collective performance; it can't be localized in a photograph; it exists in what moves and grows within the lived layerings of the event. During this event, what was said in one story was missed in other stories, so it is not even a complete thing. And yet, we owned the stories, and we were related on many levels. On the other

hand, something else is produced: a *production of subjectivity* which becomes embodied within collective bodies represented by names, through our present bodies, but also through the missing ones as the conduit for moving the collective and the space we were all part of. The documented image created in this encounter was not really needed, what truly remains from the event are the traces of it, that live in stories which will be carried by participants; that is the real documentation, and it is a living one, as such, it can die or grow, but mostly, it can create ways toward a decolonization of real life in practice.

Recipe: Camouflage

Camouflage as a mechanism, as a way to exist.

Camouflage the person you wish and want to feel safe within.

Reform the missing image that you wish to be, and you wish to be within.

Camouflage the desired time of being seen and not being seen.

Do it when you need: to be able to reshape.

You need to be recognized not by the victimhood nor by empathy; but by being in your own skin.

Camouflage is a need to reveal things and stories you are not able to share otherwise.

Share when you need to come to the front, not when you are asked to.

To camouflage through the *creation of environments* is a way to belong and understand where you are when you are shaped by and shaping others.

When doing is a necessary process for your broken self to retain its parts, such doing needs time to reveal its own power.

Environments are needed to do so.

Environments can be created or can come from the centre of the self-retaining.

As we camouflage, the only power one has is vulnerability, do not be afraid of it, nor be ashamed of it.

We just need to have it revealed, as it sometimes is, or come in a pause.

Camouflage is the way we shape and reshape a desired life and the desire of life.

Note: When thinking on the concept of the fugitive, the idea of camouflage came to mind as if both ideas needed to be put together. A good example of camouflage can be found in plants which need colourful flowers to be able to keep fertilization as done by bees; the camouflage of colorful flowers is not only a way to survive, but also a way to be preserved within nature and preserve more nature.

“Fugitive publics do not need to be restored. They need to be conserved, which is to say moved, hidden, restarted with the same joke, the same story, always elsewhere than where the long arm of the creditor seeks them, conserved from restoration, beyond justice, beyond law. (Harney and Moten [2013](#): 63)

Garden environments for this as well as for other events, were created as a camouflage technique for care and for existence. We know it within the skin, we don't think of it only as a technique of defense, but we see it also as a way to adapt and re-shape as needed. E.g., when an insect pretends to be a leaf it is not because the leaf is stronger, but a trick needed for living, using distraction as a technique. The technique shifts as it unravels conditions and plays and performs as an example of existence. The camouflaged skin in garden environments is made of stories, planting,

food, gathering. The camouflage technique is not only external, but it also keeps us creative. In Laura Levin words,

Camouflage is not only a theatrical disguise that we adopt when it suits us – that is, for the purposes of self- preservation. In fact, this term can describe the very foundations of human subjectivity: how identity is, both consciously and unconsciously, constituted through space. (7)

Recipe: What will you need to make pickled cucumbers?

Ingredients:

- Fresh cucumber
- Salt
- Water

Note: Each cup of water has a tablespoon of salt. (The way I do it is by adding 1 cup of vinegar as well)

How to prepare:

Start with a small amount of fresh cucumber, wash it, and set it aside. Then put the cucumbers inside a glass or plastic jar, until it is full. Leave a little space in the jar between the fillings and the cap. Add the salty water until it is full. Optional: you can add a tablespoon of sugar to speed up the pickling process. Finally, add a light layer of oil to the water to prevent any mold from forming. You can add some grape leaves to give the pickle an acid taste. You can also add a few hot papers, although for this pickle I prefer green cucumber or some garlic cloves. Close the jar tightly and place it in a warm place until the pickling process has accelerated.

Conserving cucumber is an example of becoming one from all the ingredients. The pickle is the whole of ingredients coming together and becoming one.

It is important here to feel the idea of the collective for *the production of subjectivity*, nothing is by itself while at the same time, many different ingredients can become one new thing.

An example of a collective comes to mind: a plant needs a way to attract insects to be pollinated since pollen must be moved from a stamen to the stigma. When pollen from a plant's stamen is transferred to that same plant's stigma, it is called self-pollination. For its part, flowers provide bees with nectar and pollen, which worker bees collect to feed their entire colonies. While collecting pollen to feed themselves, bees provide flowers with the means to reproduce, by spreading pollen from flower to flower in a process called pollination. Like this we can see that by taking care of itself nature also takes care of others. This is an example of an environment created as a camouflage technique for care and for existence, not merely for an individual but for a larger collective.

These examples are ways with which we can learn how collective processes for a way of living, more than as an individual, can offer a conservation for other lives and reform them, while at all times, it can shift between becoming a collective body or remaining individual, or both at the same time.

Note: How could we talk about the future of our planet and our lives, considering that we owe our whole existence to plant lives, not to mention the collectivity and collaboration of such life and existence with bees as pollinators?



Figure 9 Food preservation in progress, red pepper paste as another way to pickle

2) Historical Events

In Syria

I will provide a brief background on the Syrian war and the forces that propelled Syrians to cross the border as refugees. According to Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami, the Arab Spring turmoil was sparked by Tunisian Mohamed Bouazizi's act of self-immolation, whereupon "this mass revolt raged against state repression, elite corruption, poverty and inequality" (35).

Furthermore, spontaneous demonstrations erupted quickly, and expanded to Egypt, Yemen, Oman, Libya, and Morocco. The Revolution reached Syria on March 15th, 2011, when residents of the southern city of Daraa began to protest the torture and death of a young student, a child of thirteen years old, who had written the slogan "al-Shaab Yureed Isqat al-Nizam" ("people want the fall of the regime") in condemnation of the Bashar al-Assad leadership (Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 36). "The government response was too violent; consequently, protests expanded and spread across the country" (Cooke 14).

The regime's systematic abuse of the Syrian people, who were mostly protesting peacefully, sparked a call to fight back. In 2012, the UN referred to the escalating Syrian situation as a civil war. "The war included the regime which attacked civilians who were poorly armed to defend their families" (Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 78). The conflict began between the Assad government, together with its allies, and various forces opposing the government. Jihadism flourished, lending the regime

an excuse to escalate the violence. As Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami state: “militarization was not solely a natural human response to regime brutality; it also grew from the logical realization that civil resistance was not enough, that the regime would only go if forced” (80).

The war involved several different groups: “the Syrian government and its allies, a loose alliance of Sunni Arab rebel groups (including the free Syrian Army), the majority-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Salafi jihadist groups (including the al-Nusra Front) who cooperated with the Sunni rebel group, and the Islamic State or Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)” (Rosefielde and Mills 170).

The Syrian revolution—also called the ‘Civil War’—assumed a more international character as more armed groups got involved. In 2014, a coalition of NATO countries commenced air strikes against ISIL. Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah supported the Syrian government, while certain Arab countries supported the Islamist rebel fighters.

International organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the Commission of Inquiry (COI), have accused the Syrian government, ISIL, and rebel groups of severe human rights violations, including the massacre of civilians.

Many people fled their homes, seeking safety in other cities, or took refuge in neighboring countries. Others risked their lives seeking to cross European borders. The conflict has yielded one of the worst humanitarian crises of our contemporary moment, with more than half the human population killed or fleeing—and the suffering continues.

In Iraq

In 2014, ISIL entered Sinjar, home to the Yazidi Kurds. The Yazidi are considered the purest among the Kurds: they do not mix with other ethnicities, and have kept their religion, culture, and language, despite years of discrimination. Nelida Fuccaro describes the Yazidi as “an ancient indigenous Kurdish faith: . . . Northern Iraq has been considered the heartland of the Yazidi people at least since the 12th century, when Yazidism started to revive among sections of the Kurdish population of the Shaikhan district” (564).

The consequences of war on the Yazidi can be observed to this day, even after the claims of ISIL’s defeat, particularly on women and children. Some children were brainwashed and used against their own families and had no access to help when they were taken away from their mothers. They were given different names when placed in orphanages in Northern Syria; they are untraceable, and no record of their past identity survives.

I can tell the story of a family whose child was kidnapped at four, and who was only returned to them after years, when he was seven. By then, he had learned how to use weapons, and they witnessed the display of his violence and extreme rage, mixed with uncertainty as to how to connect back to his family, when they no longer spoke the same language. Women carrying children of ISIL men were forced to abandon their children; some mothers had to leave their own community and Iraq to protect their family. The efforts on the part of communities to reintegrate those who came back from displacement through the ceremony of Rebirth could never include these displaced children, who stood as a symbol for the lives lost to the war. About

three thousand children are still missing—many within the camp in northern Syria, many of them Yazidi.

In 1991, after the gulf war, the Iraqi flag law was approved and the phrase *الله أكبر*, 'God is great' was placed in Saddam Hussein's handwriting. It was his signature and intention to remain president, he was trying to assure his religious tendency all the time even when he used Chemical weapons against Kurds in Halabja in the 80s, he named the campaign, Anfal. 'Al Anfal', literally means *the spoils (of war) La huitième sourate, ou sourate, du Coran qui décrit la victoire de 313 adeptes de la nouvelle foi islamique sur près de 900 non-musulmans*. The latest Islamic extremist group, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in 1999.

In the following two images we see that the Iraqi flag has a handwritten 'alla akbar' signature by Sadaam Hussin, former dictator of Iraq. The flag next to it is the most recent flag with the same text but now written with computer font.



Figure 10 The Iraqi Flag signed by Sadam Hussin and the recent flag

The following image is the ISIS flag, similarly, carrying a religious slogan for the creation of an image:



Figure 11 ISIS flag carrying religious slogan

These two examples show what remains hidden behind religion: on the one hand, a getting away with or escaping from wrongdoing; on the other hand, the act to commit violence and speak in the name of God. As a result, there's a gain in people's support. Simply adding God's name on the flag can create a certain belief or it can block any discussion, as religion is not subject for discussion in that society, and defying this can have great consequences.

When we look closely at these practices we see the mentality behind them, and how that somehow worked. Even in the new flag of Iraq, we can see they did not remove the words by Sadam Hussein; instead, they simply changed the font. Who would dare to change it and face people's anger? Many Iraqis have disputes around it. They kept it since its religious value has more importance, but here, a question arises: what does it mean to save the gesture of the dictator on the flag and like this give value to his legacy? Here, the flag becomes a symbol to send a sign to people, which also creates a kind of credibility among those who aimed to serve and join them in the name of Allah.

Apart from this, what is created in the world is fear of outsiders. Visually, these words, which look like drawings, are saved in minds to represent the enemy; and yes,

they mean the enemy, even for their own people. The problem with this perception is that anyone who is from that place is seen through that image, as cruel, as the enemy. Media screening simplified information also serves as a power that feeds such fear and even augments for it toward political gains, in need of such fear to their own benefit.

Adding even more to the conformation of this created image, Hollywood, through the film industry and the representation in movies, creates over and over again, images of oversimplified characters, who are the violent ones, adorned by weapons of distraction. Out of many examples, one of the most paradoxical ones, is exemplified in the following: once, in a film representing Kurdish speakers, I heard characters using Arabic languages; not only was the film not even interested in knowing the people they were portraying, but also, it needed to portrait them, as an otherness, as one single enemy. There was no effort whatsoever to do the necessary research nor to find actors who spoke the Kurdish language. This reflects how value, and a system of value is created, as a lens through which a lot of people is seen as one single body—which is merely a needed product to add extreme suspense in movies and mediated narratives—on top of that, such production is an easy one, because the media has done enough to serve this image already.

The latest war that resulted in the displacement of Ukrainian people was a real example that showed obvious racism when there was comparison and acceptance based on religion as it is evidenced through the comment of Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov to journalists: "These are not the refugees we are used to; these people are Europeans, . . . [t]hese people are intelligent. They are educated people . . . This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their

identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists." (CBC News)
This was a perfect mix of racism and islamophobia.

To finalize his racist comments, the Prime Minister expresses: "In other words, there is not a single European country now which is afraid of the current wave of refugees." (CBC News) What about here in Canada? No wonder why when we look closely at the situation here in Canada, refugees are mostly perceived and seen as a threat, domestic terrorists, and extremists. Furthermore, this fear is constantly pushed by the media and used by policy makers like Trump's law, which prohibits access to people from certain countries to enter the USA.

Up until now, people cannot visit countries like Syria, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran. These places are where our families' parents and where the most vulnerable people still remain. Would this be said directly one day? If so, will we still be here to hear and see it happen?

3) The Problems Which Came to Light in this Research

These violent events are intertwined with certain contemporary and local problems, with direct effects upon refugees and their insertion into their hosting community. I will go through the main issues, examining each one through examples, and with the intent of creating suggestions for other possibilities to approach them differently through research-creation.

a) Misrepresentation

In 2015, Canada opened its doors to Syrian refugees. Since then, about forty thousand Syrians have settled across the territory. In 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump closed the USA borders to immigrants from Muslim countries. An increase in hate-motivated actions across North America followed soon afterwards, as people from Muslim countries were seen as a threat to American society.

Accordingly, Muslims in North America, faced islamophobia and racism based on stereotypes representing Muslims as terrorists, an impression fed by media narratives; for instance, the reporting of a Syrian passport found near the body of an assailant during the November 2015 Paris attacks created a portrait of the refugee-as-terrorist—even though the passport did not, in the end, belong to any of the attackers. Such fine details fail to make the headlines and are only included further down the spectacularized media story, which serves to create an overall impression of a Muslim threat.

In contrast, the January 2017 mass shooting at a mosque, in the district of Sainte-Foy in the city of Québec, was not widely deemed to be a terrorist act; perhaps because the suspect apprehended, Alexandre Bissonnette, was a white Quebecer, with far-right leanings, and thus did not fit the perception of the terrorist-as-Muslim.

After the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks and the sexual assault of local women by a group of men (some of whom were refugees) in Cologne in January 2016, the RCIS work report warned of the “gendered representation of Syrian male refugees as security threats, with an absence of women’s voices” (Tyyskä et al. 13). The report further noted the absence of stories presenting Syrian men in a positive light. The media thus plays a large role in distorting the image of Muslim people through misrepresentations; they consider Islam as a singular culture or ethnicity and represent ideas of extremists as if they were representative of all and all Muslim thought. The fear of extremism thus becomes the fear of Muslims.

Another point to mention is the consequences of these misrepresentations. They push and gift extremists a chance to use identities and resistance ideas to trap people into joining them under the name of protecting the Islamic, as Amin Maalouf shows us in *In the name of identity*, because “[i]t presupposes that “deep down inside” everyone there is just one affiliation that really matters, a kind of “fundamental truth” about each individual, an “essence” determined once and for all at birth, never to change thereafter” (2), and explains what it can do as “a recipe for massacres” (5). Maalouf adds that, “people often see themselves in terms of whichever one of their allegiances is most under attack” (26). I have been watching many social media’s ideological propaganda videos using Muslim identities of newly arrived Syrian refugees in Sweden—whose children were taken, claiming the Swedish government

stole their children because of who they are. This is also what the community talks about here among the refugees, especially among uneducated ones.

One of the most recent and salient examples, in my view, of the need to tell the whole story and to educate the public, is the cancellation of Nadia Murad's talk. In 2021, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate was invited to speak at a book club where teen girls from various secondary schools could meet female authors. The Toronto District School Board cancelled the event since it could foster islamophobia. Murad is a member of Iraq's Yazidi community; she was kidnapped by ISIS in 2014, at the age of 19. ISIS executed, and sexually exploited six hundred civilians in her village, including her mother and six of her brothers. Murad wrote her powerful story of escape as one of seven thousand Yazidi women, and as a survivor. Murad meant to share the story through a discussion on her book and her own journey of survival but saw her talk getting cancelled on the basis of its potential stoking of Islamophobic sentiments in the audience.

And yet, doesn't the cancellation itself carry the implication that the terrorists who kidnapped, killed, raped, and destroyed the Yazidi communities represent all Muslims? What then about the Yazidi? What space remains for their stories? I am of Muslim descent and ISIL killed many of my family members too. Where does my experience fit? Isn't it that women's stories, or minorities' stories, don't matter, even if they've experienced genocide?

A jointly problematic is the media's tendency to represent Middle Eastern women solely through extreme images: either as sexualized victims or, on the other end of the spectrum, through the desexualized and masculinized image of the resistance fighter. These two extremes do not do justice to women. Not only do they

not include minor modes of resistance, but they also ignore the full story of the genocide.

Recipe: Shamelessness recipe

Shame is a collection of stones on the shoulders, a fear of crossing or telling what you need. Shame of a body experiencing unwanted touch; the touch of something that wants/tries to separate the body from the soul. When you are marked by how you are seen, who sees you? Measure the shame made by shame makers and try to undo it.

What shame does is that it creates an open door for the shame to keep sneaking in. Shame always manages to come in whenever it wants, but if the door is the problem, then make another door! Note: make a different door from the door that shame has done for itself. Put down the walls of the self. Walls are the things that prison the self and construct one. Concrete walls were sharply defining the space of the given land, a clay wall extended from the given land, rain melted it so it could be rebuilt in a confirmation of belonging to one's home and to confirm that walls are alive for the hands building it.

With no shame you can cross all your borders, to be the bird you once wished. There will be no way to lose, to be a symbol, to become the land that no one can own, you become mother nature with all the seasons of *artfulife*.

The recipe:

S

H

A

M

E

M

A

H

S

S soul: can't fit the body anymore, can't access lightness.

H hiding: behind, under, within is where tearing can be, where darkness can get you into further darkness.

A alone: carried by you, unrepeatable you, it makes you sink into it so you fit a fest that won't let the rest of you find your way.

M mend: cut it piece by piece, through it in the air, let the wind take care of it and shape a way for mending a new becoming...cutting is healing too.

E entry: it will take you to the unknown, a wanted one, an unknown that can be hard and challenging, and whenever you are lost, a new way will hold the soul, mend it to open up a new entry where you can find you.

The culture of shame is constructed by many elements embedded into daily practices to make it harder to undo. Honor is to be earned—It should not be reduced to the body,

to the land with a desire to be owned—, to make sure that power can shine in the darkness of owning.

As Laura Rodriguez Castro writes of Aboriginal feminism in Colombia, alongside the traditional feminist claim that “the personal is political” lies a secondary truth: “what is not named does not exist” (22). She asserts that

to understand the body as territory is to awaken women’s consciousness to the historical experiences and structural oppressions of the body—which include patriarchy and coloniality. In recognizing these historical experiences and structural expressions, the body becomes a site of resistance, transgression, and creation (341).

She proposes a way forward:

In working from a decolonial praxis, I strategically undermine the ways in which women’s bodies and women in the developing world have been respectively constructed as ‘objects’ or as ‘victims who need saving’ by focusing on the intimate relationships of the body-land (342).

It is important to acknowledge these women as victims of violence; but, ignoring their many forms of resistance other than carrying weapons—such as fighting for education, for work, and for life choices—only serves to reduce women to their bodies, again. Women’s contribution to their family’s economy is massive.

Most women are committed to keeping their families from hunger, and work very hard to own their way of living, which their society still tries to control; and this of course in addition to their contribution as activists for political and social change. To reduce women’s role in the Syrian war or the Yazidi genocide as victims of sexual violence submits them to the same frame in which ISIL aims to keep them: as sex slaves and bodies whose submission symbolizes the claiming of the land.

This is what Saidiya Hartman shows us in the experience of slavery, citing James Scott: “a significant aspect of maintaining relations of domination consists of the symbolization of domination by demonstrations and enactments of power” (as cited by Hartman 8). The representation of victimhood only further serves those already in power.

Recipe: peripheral vision is the technique

Practicing peripheral vision:

To see is to look forward, with focused eyes on the problem. At the same time, the environment has to be seen, changes and movement has to be seen .. multiply the way to see more clearly, not in one step, it needs patience, it needs to envision coming into different focus points. There is no separation between the three: eyes, focus points, environment.

It is amazing how *artfulife* does that .. at the core of this research creation and creative practices which are about and for neurodiversity, which can be found in a peripheral vision’s practice. The movement around the center—where problems are found—, allows you to see it. Why I bring all these things together, is to be able to work the problem. To be able to work on a problem we need to see the environment and its movement, it takes different shapes, it moves; seeing that is part of the *artfulife*. To bring oral history to life, the truth comes to life, and it will be clear what was wrong there. *Artfullife* has this way of re-working it, not the way that is given to us but in different ways, otherwise we may only reinforce the problem.

Inclusion needs a peripheral vision recipe, as I have learnt recently since my vision is reduced while reading, I started to learn natural ways to correct my eyes and one of the most interesting ways I found is peripheral vision, through an exercise, to relearn seeing the surroundings as we focus on only a point we need to see and read. The goal is to focus on a point while paying attention to the surroundings, especially movements; this technique helps to restore the vision. When I think of the way my thesis gets completed and how difficult it has been to ignore certain issues related to displacement, it makes sense now, to focus on the problems this research creation is working on while bringing up the surroundings and movements related to the issues within a peripheral vision.

Our peripheral vision has evolved to serve us well. It is very good at picking up objects and movement in dim as well as bright light, which allows us to escape from an approaching danger quickly. We become skilled in seeing and feeling more than a close era; we see and feel the environment.

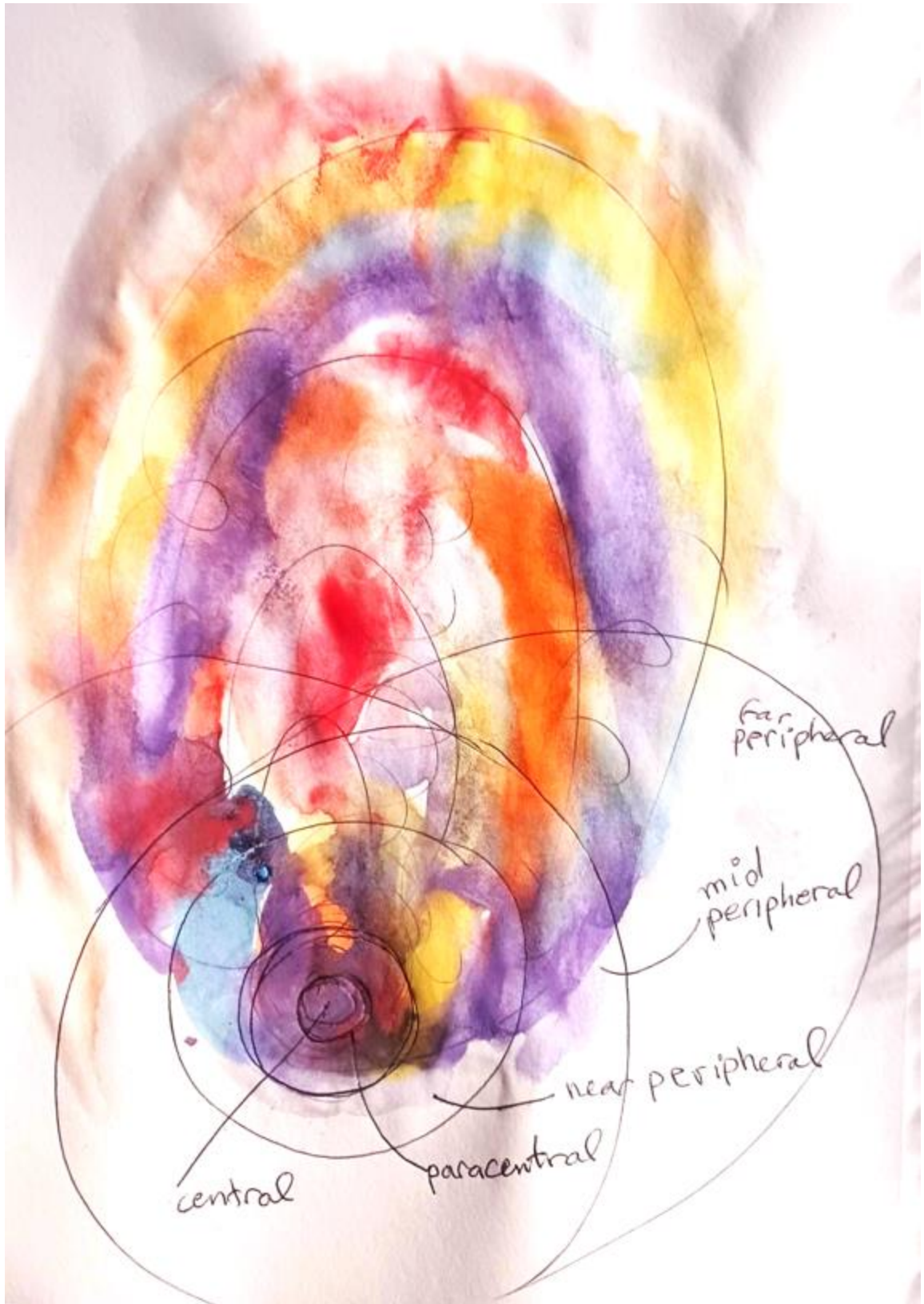


Figure 12 Seeing within peripheral vision

b) Islamophobia/Xenophobia

Newly arrived refugees in Canada found themselves represented through stereotypes and met with uncertainty. These issues were the result of colonial practices, and a lack of knowledge, on the part of Canadians, of their real stories and cultures. The term “Islamic terrorist” has been used since the 1970s; it became popular when journalists and politicians publicly reintroduced it following the September 11 attacks. As a propagandist terminology, it emphasized and transmitted an affect of fear, which served to support the power of the elites.

According to Frédérick Nadeau and Denise Helly,

how this will play out in the future is open to speculation, but the tendency is visible and will undoubtedly gain momentum, in Quebec as elsewhere, considering current national and international contexts. Political and ideological landscapes are changing, leading to new alliances between previously antagonistic social actors, as new common enemies emerge. (14)

The rejection of Syrian newcomers in their host communities must be seen in the context of the history of islamophobia, especially in Quebec. Frederick Burill states that the rise of Islamophobic sentiment in Quebec is usually lumped together with the Western world’s response to the September 11 attacks, or with the debates on secularism in France. However, as Burill goes on to state, the hate ideology witnessed in Quebec is actually unique, and must be considered not only as a reflection of Western imperialism, but also within the context of the Christian nature of Quebec’s society in the twentieth century. In basing our beliefs of the “other” on essentialist notions of race or religion, we may expect to see potential conflicts arise out of our own irrational fears (Islamophobia in Québec, 2017). “This experiential dislocation,”

says Keefer, “involving a fear that safely distant horrors might unpredictably translate themselves into one’s own most intimate space, is compounded by the thought that the appalling transposition would be carried out by people who are our fellow citizen—but also, in secret, deadly enemies” (As cited by Shahzad 1). This ostracization produces a delay in integration. While women remain in the front lines of public life, they can be distinguished as “other” through their language, skin color, and in particular, their wearing of the Hijab. This lack of access to social life can create, through a feedback effect, a resistance to change and difficulty of integration on the part of newcomers—in particular for the first generation—which can create deep generational conflicts with the family, particularly, again, for women, who are expected to care for and transmit traditions and cultural values from their home country. This is partly why it is so important to listen to women on these matters: their stories reveal details that only those who survived can bring.

c) Borders and territories, and their relation to women’s bodies

As we know, violence extends beyond its “proper” time and place, overflowing through its aftermath; attention to its process and continuity is critical for survivors. To represent Yazidi women solely as the victims of sexual violence in the aftermath—as sex slaves—is to reproduce the same reduction into the body performed upon them by ISIL. To say this is not to erase the specificity of the violence experienced by women in this war, or the way violence against women was utilized, where the violation of women’s bodies was not only typical gendered violence, but also used purposefully to

break the familial structure, and thus the community, and to showcase power and control over the community and its land. The stories of these women, in Iraq and Syria, highlights a long history of women's bodies turning into battlefields, growing tethered to and symbolic of their land, and its borders. Although some men have experienced similar violence, to similar ends, it seems to me more significant to focus on women, following Shanks and Schull's assertion that "many women find themselves living without protection in a culture of violence fed by conflict and social chaos" (1). Women are the most vulnerable party, and those most likely to remain within cycles of violence continuing at the borders, or in the refugee camps. In addition, many of the women who have arrived at their place of refuge still don't have the right to tell their story: many are still ruled by their past, male-controlled culture, or are spoken over by men, or the media, who come to control the telling of their story, and the shame this silencing brings carries and rolls over into their daily lives.

Silence is one of the main methods of colonial control. If we want to contribute to the healing of refugees, and towards a real path of integration within a hosting society, women must be prioritized. Stories must come from women, and we must reveal their contribution within the family, as women are the main force behind a family's healing. We must see their resistance.

The connection between bodies, land, and extraction is well-studied; particularly in North America, where this intersection is key with regards to Indigenous communities. Indigenous women, says Cabnal, use the term "*territorio cuerpo-tierra*" (body-earth territory) as a political statement to connect the landscapes of their bodies to the defense of their territorial lands (Paredes as cited by Altamirano-Jiménez 1). Women can't own their body and consequently land, this can also be seen through the gender asset gap: "The available data on land ownership, nonetheless, illustrates our

main point: the gender distribution of land ownership in Latin America is extremely unequal, with women rarely representing more than one-quarter of the landowners" (Zaragocin 932). The colonial's access to territory was through elimination. "For native and scholars in settler colonial studies, the process of elimination is a territorial project in that space that is produced by settler colonialism between natives and non-natives and the elimination was gender-based" (Sofia Morgensen as cited by Zaragocin, 377). The example of Colombian native group Epera, brought by Zaragocin can demonstrate the relation between women bodies and land, called place-death here,

gendered geographies of elimination from which we can understand place-death and women's bodies, territories that further complicate and resist linear narratives concerning expected futurity of indigenous death in at least two ways. First is that elimination is a highly gendered process whereby Epera women carry the burden of cultural and physical reproduction. Second, gendered embodied accounts of elimination, such as those experienced by Epera women, deflect elimination as solely place-dependent, pointing toward cultural death as an equally important factor. (388)

I draw a connection between these Indigenous concerns and the conditions of the Middle East, where the gendered issue of bodies and land also moves deeper than its established practice of forbidding the passing of land to women (since the males carry both the name and thus the ownership to the familial land). Segato argues that,

structural gendered violence, whether it manifests in the household, on the streets, or as the result of non-state violence, is an expression of the attempts made to recover the territorial sovereignty lost through capitalism. In this context (...) the state competes with parastate institutions for the control of territories and bodies. Thus, gendered violence cannot be reduced to the woman question without depoliticizing the impact of colonial modernity and the way in which bodies are subjugated. (As cited by Altamirano-Jiménez 217)

Two contrasting practices violate the rights of women regarding body and land: on the one hand, women are forbidden ownership of land; on the other, their bodies, as

symbols of fertility, come to represent the land, as guarantor of life. Thus, when ISIS abuses women's bodies, violating them in order to destroy Yazidi society itself, I see parallels to the condition of First Nation women who may face the same violence; with missing women in Canada being majorly Native.

Segato observes that territorial restructuring not only produces expansive economic transformations, but also inscribes power over women's bodies (As cited by Altamirano-Jiménez 217): abusing women's bodies becomes a way to claim the land.

As Tuck and Mckenzie show,

colonial violence has and continues to structure the conditions under which Indigenous women's life and death occur. Universal accounts of gender violence and embodiment neglect the situated realities of historical alternative and spatial sedimentations of power. (As cited by Altamirano-Jiménez 36)

To decolonize is thus urgently to listen to women's voices, to see their contributions beyond their reduction to the body, and to use their account as a resource for knowing, and as a first step toward healing and empowerment.

Note: when we fight islamophobia it is not a defense for any religion, what we mean to say is that fear feeds on an image of threat created by assigning to such image, as if it was only one thing, a religion, skin color, differences, or anything that can prove an assumed relation to an image of threat and thus justify the fear to the savages and violent others. All this as we know, functions to keep power operations, which makes power structures in place, more able to control and empower an ableism that can be on great scales, but also in minor scales. This way we can be trapped in double standards and reproduce violence; while we try to access justice or support, we can actually be wiping away the other existing struggles by superimposing our own preconceived thinking upon the struggle, or by existing resistance forms fed by fear or the media, all justified by the desire to support.

As an example, when law 21 came, the division was obvious, and people who supported it were in favour of certain communities, while opposers to the law 21 were defending these communities; this is a big problem when we don't not have a clear vision of the problem and are trapped by the fears. I believe the issue has to be separated from communities and religion and connected to human rights. By enforcing certain practices that can be injustices for individuals and certain minorities, who have different values, especially women and children, it can create serious exclusion for women in the workplace and the way they raise their children and there can be so many other consequences which would need another thesis to cover them and for this reason I will not go through here.

The example of the reaction to support covering women's hair when wearing hijab or niqab, is the freedom of choice, an individual one to follow certain ways to practice a religion. But it shouldn't be taken toward an extreme, it should not shift to a support toward covering women's bodies; I saw many activists sharing the fashion of hijab and bodies covered as a way to support which can do more harm than support as so many women are struggling to fight the control of their bodies as they are forced to wear it. The point is not covering or not, it is that a choice can be taken. Personally, I see all religions as a base for morals; as a Muslim woman I have benefited from certain guidance that contributed to the way I live and practices that I value, at the same time, there is much more to value, and many women of my generation refuse to acknowledge that some inherited values are not ideal for our values need to change with the now, such as the phrase: 'two witness female voice is equal to one male voice'.

To complicate this even further, we can't reduce what women are fighting for to only call it their own choices. There is a real need to see what those choices are in difference to merely pretending to look like choices that offer freedom superficially.

Whiteness is every move toward overseeing, toward propertying toward segregation. It is the overseer, with its open maw, unable, except in total violence, to perform a marked differentiation between what possesses and what is dispossessed because difference, paraontologically, refuses both. It is the polite neighbour who watches from the curtained window to keep you in your place. (Manning, "The Being of Relation" 3)

Recipe: In respect to a real desire

The little girl I was never grew up; the little body is still felt ..

the little space I need to breath did not expand

watching women carrying weapons ..

reduced to being the hero,

equally reduced to being poor ones ..

this is how they are seen.

They are women who want to stay alive and get access to the *artfulness* of life as they desire it to be.

The ones who can see the wrongdoing and have a voice to tell

who have a pride that covers the sun light and weakness to take us down to the earth and still survive

the freedom you wish .. is not mine.

My freedom is the path I take to plant a seed for me, for the whole, and the way I am.

My revolution is not to be equal; your space is not mine.

My revolution is to get the space I can, and feel to be within, where I can become at every single sifting needed; spaces will still remain open for every mode of me, for the dream I can create so I can be.

We can learn that all problems are going back to the un-wanted bodies facing violence and elimination from land to confirm a power in place, to create hierarchies based on gender, color, and many differences, as a base for the act of violence: literally and or morally.

4) Why me?

I was born in Northern Syria. Growing up, we were told by my father that the Yazidis used to be our ancestors; the “original Kurds,” those who never abandoned their culture and religion throughout their continuous resistance to brutal violence and genocides. Being Kurdish, we were not allowed to speak our home language in public spaces. We were denied the practice of our basic rights based on the culture we carried; we were considered outsiders, the “other” within Syrian society. We would rarely—I remember this happened only once—get the chance to have distant meetings with our family members on the other side of the Turkish border, greeting each other from our respective sides.

When I arrived in Canada in 2001, I began to reflect on those experiences as a practice of reimagining identity, a process which led me to develop new ideas and strengthened my resolve to work for social change. I believe that sharing my story, and the wounds I have sustained, may serve as a basis for an open conversation, which in turn will lead to a greater understanding of those experiences—for others and for myself. The conflicts currently ongoing in the Middle East continue to influence my daily life here in Canada, as they do the lives of people from other diasporic communities in that region. When I entered the doctoral program, the project I had in mind centered itself on how memory can serve newcomers in Canada to introduce their values and culture and reduce their distance with locals. It felt important as Middle Eastern newcomers to have the chance to be seen in other ways than only through the lenses of war and violence, as terrorists or victims, as an abstract flow of people crossing borders disparately, or as a single unified and reduced identity of “Muslims”.

As I've said before, these simplified images only serve to dehumanize newcomers, reducing their complexity to stereotypes—oftentimes for the sake of presenting a more entertaining or palatable media story, and to serve political powers.

In addition, in 2014, ISIL attempted to occupy the Northern Syrian region, where my family lives. As it was protected by the SDF, their attempt to fully occupy my city failed; but they did succeed in taking some villages. My parents, sisters, and other family members left Syria, and took refuge in Turkey, with many of them making their way to Germany, Sweden, the U.K., Switzerland, U.S.A., and Canada.

In Kurdish culture, stories were a way to preserve who we were, and our only way to connect with our past. It was a way of resisting the atrocities against our community, culture, and language. The poverty in our community was intense. In addition, basic human and intellectual rights were denied to us, to the point of refusing children the right to bear their Kurdish names, based on the tension between our community and the state.

It is very much a part of the fabric of communities that value oral ways of knowing. These contested accounts are stored within genealogies, within the landscape, within weavings and carvings, even within the personal names that many people carried. The means by which these histories were stored was through their systems of knowledge. (Tuhiwai Smith 70)

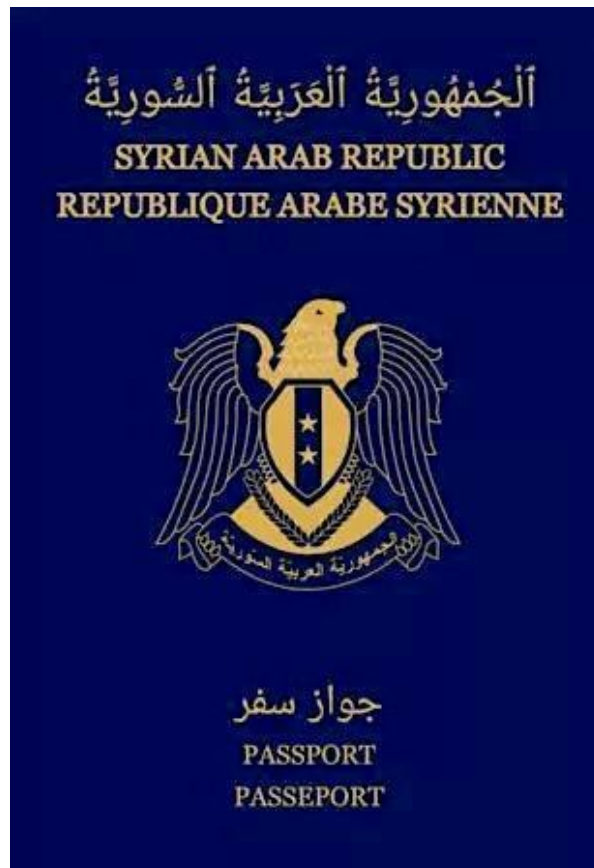


Figure 14 Syrian Passport

Marking a passport with a nationality, erases all of the communities and marginalizes them .. it is a sum-up-to-whole political act. Syria is a collection of minorities, Kurdish is one of them, Arminian, Durzi, Assyrian, Esmaili, Alaouite, etc., in addition to minorities within minorities.

I must also say this: the Syrian war that the world knows, did not simply escalate with the revolution. The war had been there, in my region of Northern Syria since I was born. The war was Turkish soldiers pointing guns at us every time we would visit my grandmother in another town, about fifteen minutes away by car. War was when, as children of fifteen, a security agent came to investigate my peers and I at school, asking us individually, in a darkened science lab, about our loyalty and submission to the regime. War was soldiers entering our homes and villages and shooting whomever

they wanted if they suspected them of being a hidden PKK member of the Kurdish rebellion. War was the machine that killed my brother when he started singing Kurdish songs in a language forbidden by the state, and war ate my cousins' injured bodies in the winter as they fought for freedom on the cold Kurdish mountains. Only one of them came back; the others were lost. War was when these bodies were not carried back to us, and no grieving was allowed, and how stories of their loss come in many different versions and give no possibility whatsoever for collective healing. War happened not only when you heard about it; it was there, unseen, as we were unseen. All of this is the "me" I write with and of: the one who carries many, and who happened to be a refugee, too, once, and who here paves a way towards healing through creativity.

To say, "why me?" is not a justification: it is my attempt to honor the time and support my committee has given me. I owe them access to a full account.

"[E]xterior and interior are relative; they exist only through their exchanges and therefore only by virtue of the stratum responsible for the relation between them" (Gilman 49). The way I see borders in any form—body, home, land, earth, is as an illusion and as an imaginary division, it drives toward a formation of belonging to a community, to a country, to a school, to a family, to what is considered to be alive and a living way, talking, expressing, learning, knowing; borders tend mostly to be used in a cruel way. Borders can serve a certain purpose and can be useful sometimes, but they can be cruel too. The skin, the wires, the lines on maps, known ways of living, of making, seeing, the surface of earth, the atmosphere, all these can be seen as borders, but: can one really tell where the division starts and ends? It is usually said that where a right start is when another right ends, with this perception, an end is the beginning of organizing a relation. But when a relation becomes a form of care, we

can give back to the relation its full potential; then, borders become not only blurry and forgiving, but also creatively connecting.

Recipe: In/visible minority

I heard about visible minorities for the first time here in Canada, I used to be just a minority. Well, that does not make a big difference, besides the claim of being visible is far reaching since I already am visible, all it takes is just: an accent, skin, hair, face, shape, gender, religion, culture, value. The question of the invisible is dragged and forced here? Systemic racism, cruelty, language, exclusion, and fears brazing in our faces daily becomes the question.

What if undoing the visible opens up possibilities to the right to opacity? Within opacity, one can own skin color, value, the ethical and be more than all of that, not simply being summed up to one, nor simply being a whole. Opacity is a way to exist and live within a collective, within all differences and similarities. Opacity is the possible access to the whole worlding as an environment that blurs lines and allows *borderlessness* while moving in between all these modes. Opacity is in the peripheral vision where *seeing* is .. it is the movement that clears the focal point.

I see it in Erin Manning's words,

Whiteness polices the cleave, threatened by the crack. The cleave multiplies, appearing in every instance where the ground begins to shake with difference. The threat intensifies. What appears: the cleave itself, a difference without separability of a problem for thought. This problem is identified with a form, a racialized body. But in actuality, what is targeted is not the body itself, it is the

*no-body*³ the problem for thought exposes, the “no humans involved”⁴ of its appearance-disappearance. (Manning, “The Being of Relation” 2)

Recipe: Proper seeing

Cracks can't simply be signs of destruction or breakage, they are possibilities for growth, for new lives with a strength we don't encounter otherwise. Cracks don't take away the balance from where one stands, nor do they fail anyone; they are opportunities for dances. Fears are not within cracks or lives becoming within cracks; fears are within your forcing closure.

The challenge that research-creation poses is in that it needs crafting itself: it asks us to create the conditions for a new way of addressing a question, and to follow it through. While the design of research-creation is process oriented and not prescriptive, it can hopefully still lead to solutions to problems faced by communities.

The recipes of my research-creation are gifts that accompany daily life and amplify the complexity of the everyday. They are for those with whom I dream, those I carry with me and whose lives are intertwined with mine. More recipes might come, as needed. As stated above, this approach to research-creation does not seek to solve problems; yet I do hope it will allow its participants to live a fuller life as a result of their engagement, and to foster a collective access to the world.

One example of this type of research-creation in practice is the garden. A garden is often an individual space that only trusted people can use. Therefore,

³ Denise Ferreira da Silva “No-Bodies - Law, Raciality and Violence” in Griffith Law Review Vol 18, 2009, Issue 2.

⁴ ”No Humans Involved - An Open Letter to my Colleagues” in Forum N.H.I - Knowledge for the 21st Century “Knowledge on Trial” Vol 1, No 1, fall 1994.

entrance into that space assumes an existing relation as a base between the participants. Gardens are often spaces established by community members, so that each experience within the space may grow meaningfully, both for the individual and the community at large. Gardens offer opportunities for play, food, talks, comfort, observation of nature, and other ways of engaging, both with people and with the living environment. One concrete way in which this space might be used for creative work is through the sharing of recipes of care, which could be used both for plants and humans.

But how would this research-creation project be affected if a bird was attracted to this garden space, and began to sing? Would more birds be drawn to it? Would this elicit bird stories for the human participants? Would anyone notice? The point of this example is that a typical research-creation project might not include all the details which participate in the novelty of a situation, but the participants do live them through, in the practice. Life within this paradigm is full of experience, and full of artfulness; it thus readily lends itself to interdisciplinary study, and to an outcome that services relations within communities. The interdisciplinarity of the project invites the public to engage in the complexities of differing cultural values and allows individuals within different communities to grow their relationships. The aesthetic value of the work lies in its provocation of memory and discussion that may invite a re-thinking about spaces: how we interact with them, how they interact with us, and how to be included within them, and feel this inclusion newly.

Some guiding questions of this research-creation project: what experiences can happen in a community that can't happen when an individual is acting alone, and vice-versa? How do relations shift? Will the spell of the event spin its own story, after it is done? More precisely, narrowing it down to the main **question**: Can art cut through

the fears fabricated by the (differences) of the newly arrived—especially refugees—and of those of the host society too? Can art be an instrument for fostering social change and breaking stereotypes, through shared stories and memories? And how can art contribute to ending colonial practices, particularly those related to women, and the use of their body and offer real safe spaces? How can these spaces produce engagement by the neurodiverse and creative environment?

By engaging communities, an individual and collective remembering for future potentials for relation will emerge. When stories and memories are shared, stereotypes might be broken by un-understanding. Besides listening with, the negative sense of exclusion experienced among newcomers can shift. The existing historical fear of Muslim people, fostered by the media and rooted in racism; and we may acknowledge this problem simply by getting engaged in a conversation with one another, and not be limited by given images. We need to establish new ways to produce tolerance and to create new relationships between and within communities, thus decreasing the potential for conflict by creating openings for new modes of encounter, listening that can offer new modes of seeing.

Another crucial question for this research creation project has to do with the aesthetic of ethics. To be ethical through this project I need to address the following questions: who is deciding on ethics for each research? What are the benefits? to whose advantage ethics works, is it for the institution legal protection or is it serving knowing ethically? The answers to all these questions, and other questions can come in the way through events, through the ongoing quality of each research; all this is what makes an aesthetic of ethics.

During my artist residency at the MAWA artist center, in Winnipeg in 2018, I met some newly arrived refugees while also meeting some Syrian friends. I talked to community's members and found myself in a situation where there was an urgent demand for the refugees who had just recently arrived and who were still in pain for not being able to save the children left behind under ISIS control and the rest of their families. Even more drastically, some families were separated from each other as they were taken to different hosting countries. They were mostly the Yazidis and wanted to have their voice out. Almost everyone I met was looking for at least one family member. There were not enough Kurmanji translators and refugees had to talk in Arabic, since that was the only language for translation available. Despite many other problems, the survivor's connection to language was one of the main ones, the lack of access to their own language to express themselves, made them feel captured and forced into having to speak Arabic, and thus change their culture, religion, and life.

According to the "Yazidi Resettlement in Canada-Final Report 2018", led by Lori Wilkinson, talking to the translators, took people to reliving their traumas; no trust was built as witnessing was accompanied with fears while doing some academic and government's studies (Wilkinson et al. 7-8). I also question how the report was performed? Secondly, the fact that Arabic was not mastered by the Yazidi since it was not their first language was not accounted for, nor that most of them were not educated; these factors make it so that a real conversation can't truly happen. On top of that, many newly arrived refugees were still trying to find money to save their family members; the sense of safety was not really there. To get hostages free, a payment has to go through ISIS and this complicates getting help even more. ISIS turned the young boys into soldiers to be used to kill their own families and community, they were weaponized; females used in so many ways, older women did serve at home from

daily chores up to sex services. In some online interviews a woman said that they forced her to give her blood to an injured ISIS soldier, despite being old and very weak; this was mainly their life, not truly theirs but given to someone else.

When it comes to having their voice out, it is beyond my understanding how the ethics at the end benefits legally protects the researcher but not the soul of the issue. How is it that academic research didn't and still doesn't consider the former points mentioned above? Why weren't the ways of this kind of research changed in respect to the witnessing that these survivors experienced? Was this really the therapy they needed and was it truly given to them? How was a report like this granted access to the community? How could all journalists, ethically reveal identities of survivors and give details about them? What do researchers or ethical committees really know about the community, their culture or religion to give permission to follow through? How to respond to the real need, the need of the community or of the researcher finding truth? How to inform a different ethics to the community deciding to follow a generalized role and logic that does not always respond to the most urgent needs?

Another problem is that while in academia, strict common rules exist to prevent sensitive information from becoming public—to protect vulnerable people whose information is not safe to divulge—, in the media all is published: details, personal images, identity, where people live; all these details can be used to locate a victim and consequently some survivors, mostly females, and then receive threats to be captured and against their lives. Who is doing the research might not be the issue, but certainly a researcher needs good knowledge around the community, at least their historical experiences and culture to start with.

An example that comes to mind is what follows in the report: “Since their culture and religion are endogamous, they do not accept converts (Arakelova, 2010) and

those who marry outside the group are no longer considered Yazidi” (Arakelova as cited by Wilkinson et al11). Then the report goes on saying that: “Yazidis are often falsely believed to be Kurds. They are not Kurds; the Yazidi have a culture, religion and dialect that are different from those practiced by the Kurds” (12). For us Kurds, we still see Yazidis as our ancestors. My religious father accepted my sister's marriage based on his own Kurdish identity. The second point is that, although the dialect is different, we still have the same kurmanji, so we actually speak the same dialect. Practices of separation were always encouraged by colonialism in its desire to not relate Kurds to any indigeneity nor to allow Kurds any way to connect to the land, while Yazidi were one of the populations. For me all these are historical disputes with no proof, since we are talking about a nation which has had its history and culture erased through so many attempts; however, the stories we heard from my father as children confirmed at least for me that Yazidis are our ancestors. And yet, to show the complexity of this even further, my sister and her Yazidi husband were not allowed into the community anymore, as my sister is from a Muslim family. I question how ethical it is to have hundreds of years of dispute summed up by Wilkinson's et al.'s report interviewing a few families. Why should I trust the translators? Why should I accept this study as a fact and reject what we lived or heard?

One more point mentioned in the “Yazidi Resettlement in Canada-Final Report 2018” that can lead to ethical considerations needing more reflections, is that many females were excluded, even when they are the main victims. The reason for this exclusion is that when interviewed by male interpreters, many female refugees coming from a conservative society, would not open up with a full story; when openness is missing, the impact can be dramatic, and inaccurate results produced. In the mentioned report, ethics were applied to give legal protection to the university and the

researchers; and yet it felt like the survivors were not the priority? When it comes to harm, not acting is more harmful, a child can be circulating for years in between—what they call—the slavery market or by being weaponized. No rescue or repair can be done. Safety is offered, healing is not accessed; this means that we save bodies, only.

Note: a word is not simply a word, nor a space is .. I examine, explore, and go through ways as they reveal themselves in the research, what is working today, may not do so another day, everything has its own life and has to be lived through. I hope readers are walking with me here, and every single one will have its own ways in the ways that I am drawing here, they will live their own ways, work it out, and when it really functions, they will know it. This research creation is really a living collective one. Each one will access an outcome in their own way, it is not granted for everybody. This is actually opacity at its best! Very clear for the person that accesses it, but you cannot touch it with a hand, it is like air, you breathe it, but you can't touch it. This is how the 'plain abstaining' السهل الممتنع works, and how neurodiverse creates *artfulife*. Plain abstain is a literal way to translate the term in Arab and it means something super simple but it doesn't come in words. The simplest thing and yet very complex, something that you know but eludes you. Which is just living the *artfulife*. *The spark that brings the plant to come out, but not in the planting of the seed.*

Recipe: DIY museum of daily life

Room one:

Living room: places we used to sit at the corner where a child becomes a plant. In the middle of the sofa, I became a cat. Sometimes it is not the light of the sun in the room; the warmth comes from stories and play. The spaces of comfort come from the softness of love and being loved with no conditions, the living room is the core of *home*.

Room two:

Kitchen: jars with all the herbs collected for sharing and story time. These herbs were touched; they already fed so many insects they can feed the rest of the hearts too, one just tells a story, another can just be the listener. Preserving food that can survive the full season, keeps what the summer sun offers, and spices it. It will conserve the grown ripened vegetables and fruits. They might need senses of preservation for an environment to feed later, the need is the main ingredient.

Room three:

The bedroom: bedtime, talk time. These relations making collecting dreams for the coming days.

Room four:

The garden: when digging the ground for life's continuity and in search for a capacity for living and for growing, a belonging can root; can find ways in life. The garden always has open arms for hugs, just get in .. have the trust to enter ..

Room five:

The basement: is deep in the heart, in the memories where all images of moments are, various ones are kept in, they can be ways to shape, ways to survive, to resist, to tell, to be. It is up to us to find these images down there in the deepest part of the basement of the heart; it is up to the luring to starve and steal a glimpse in it.

Everyone knows destruction leads to a new construction.

Growing comes in between painful experience and resistance; otherwise, life is wiped. We know that destruction has no beginning or end nor does construction, but the sharpness of certain events makes each of them visible as a way to witness and signal the living.

That's why we invent something people call hope ..

the ability to see and feel something to come

The numbness of the body as violence happens.

Numbness as the parasite plant grows and makes sure that the hosting plant is powerful enough to feed and carry it.

The colonial pretended to be on the side of goodness and finds itself on the side of lifelessness.

What makes the fears grow in or carried in a skin color? A prayer, a body, and the imagined? Fears grow as one submits to being made to see, not what is seen; therefore, it tries to diminish what is thought to be its carrier.

Recipe: for a self-reflexive autobiography

The recipes are the way of the work, but they are not a premade methodology, the work, and each recipe and even the way of the work finds itself in the unfolding of the work. It shapes itself, starting in opacity which takes its own complexity and from there it starts shaping its own way, conforming the recipes more and more, which would actually be a good way to understand the production of subjectivity.

Through the unfolding of this work, as I grew to better define my own experiences, they became a way to connect to others. In this sense, I find that the form of a self-reflexive autobiography is the most appropriate way to move through this research-creation and the issues it raises. Denzin, in relation to Indigenous modes of research, writes that an embodied experience of spirituality and of a relationship to the natural world are fundamental to Indigenous conceptions of knowledge, and that, for Indigenous scholars, the purpose of research is not “the production of new knowledge per se,” but the development of pedagogical, artistic, political, and ethical perspectives guided by Indigenous principles and informed by the conviction that “the central tensions in the world today go beyond the crises in capitalism and neoliberalism’s version of democracy” (13).

While Kurdish and Syrian culture is not itself based on spirituality, it is still deeply rooted in ancient practices and ways of life; and the way we lived is a residue of a long struggle to protect our identities and cultures. While recipes function toward an artfulness that makes life livable, they allow for each moment to reach its own intensity of potential. Each recipe models different methods or techniques, whose learning is rooted in the sharing of stories through recipes. Recipes as techniques here are to foreground the malleability of processes. The use of narrative flows naturally

with the use of oral storytelling in my practice and serves as an essential way of expressing who I am and where I come from. As Sally A. Kimpson puts it, “autobiographical narratives also create an opportunity for us to construct ourselves and our research in ways that may be of methodological and political interest to others struggling with alternate forms of representation of the lives of marginalized people” (As cited by Brown and Strega 73). The use of recipes as a conceptual technique, but also as a refusal to fall into what is usually performed in formal writing, is partly due to my long struggle with the use of language. Kimpson adds: “autobiography is a powerful tool for making visible the everyday and embodied world of women’s lives.” (As cited by Brown and Strega 73)

Also, feminists and postmodernists have long recognized the distant voice of the objective observer/writer to be “a fiction ... a mechanism of power which ensures the domination of certain accounts” (Jones as cited by Brown and Strega 75). Autobiography, Kimpson continues, “will also be a way of foregrounding the experiences of those researchers whose marginality is linked to race, sexuality, class, gender, age, and (...) ability” (As cited by Brown and Strega 92). The narrative research presented here is an account intended to (re)form subjectivity, and to break stereotypes. Kimpson explains that telling “the stories of others, then shifting to my own, renders visibility to the process of meaning making” (As cited by Brown and Strega 76). We know that stories are a powerful way to be seen, as Fanon puts it, “to speak is to exist absolutely for the other; to exist is to be seen properly” (As cited by Cooke 167). Stories that aren’t told will be lost, and no lesson will be learnt from them.

My most recent work, *Birds crossing borders*, consisted of a series of interdisciplinary, socially based artworks, including storytelling and participatory art, which aimed to create collective learning environments and foster opportunities for

closeness and understanding. In this body of work, I created workshops, talks, collaborated within a performance, presented in public spaces like streets or backyards, and in events where the artistic encounter was followed by conversations.

The work aimed to create artistic spaces out of daily life activities of Syrian communities. Within various forms of interaction and collective making, the event shifted the ways in which stories could be shared and reminded of the importance of orality in storytelling. The quality of the event, where discussion and food were shared alongside improvised performative conversation, offered an ease and comfort that allowed for different ways of relating to the artistic space than the usual modes of interacting with and within a gallery space and other spaces such as a back yard or an academic setting. Emotions were triggered by the encounters between the participants and the senses—touch, smell, vision. This sensual engagement brought a sense of familiarity which I found became an essential instrument for change, learning, and understanding. These events shifted the act of telling stories from an intimate, personal process, to one in which individual and collective memory could be shared within the public.

The process focused on growing social engagement and inviting collaboration between individuals and communities in the creation of participatory art. There is a force around the nature of my research that pushed the work to go through the community and ask questions that come from that encounter and go with that as a form of knowing that is practiced in living everyday life. Erin Manning's description of similar modes of practices at the 3 Ecology project, elaborates:

In the ethos of metamodeling, the question of the transversality of transdisciplinarity activated in the propositions below must therefore always be understood to exceed the site of the university and of any other factories of knowledge. The propositions are about living, about following a knowing that must always remain out of bounds. They must be understood not as a

reclaiming of the site of knowledge as we live it but as an operation of transversality that challenges all that we have come to understand as knowledge, including our account of interdisciplinarity. ("Radical Pedagogies and Metamodelings of Knowledge in the Making" 4)

The choice to work on these questions and processes through my creative practice, and to use my work to foster connection, came to me naturally; it feels like an essential part of my praxis as an artist. After experiencing the quality of encounter within this event, I decided that the writing in this research-creation project had to find a way to keep the orality of the practice of storytelling alive, and thus chose to engage mainly in the thinking and creating of recipes to work through the questions that emerged; not necessarily for an artistic outcome, but through an artistic process and toward *artfulife*—with the recipes standing as a testing and working out ways of living.

Manning summarizes how the artful “can develop techniques for intuiting how art becomes the basis for creating new manners, new modes of collaboration, human and nonhuman, material and immaterial” (*The Minor Gesture* 52). When a new vision about our daily life is created, the artful nourishes and pushes the imagination towards possibilities: ‘Art as technique, as ways’. (Manning, *The Minor Gesture* 13–18, 25) The artful here is about extending beyond an object toward what Manning calls an “aesthetic yield.” (*The Minor Gesture* 13, 81) Through co-composing, a real relation emerges, and this is how to deepen or create belonging, or how to blur borders and how we see the self both in collective settings but also alone, since we carry the creative power within us.

Knowledge built here brings to light a process in which truth partly or fully exists, as communities get full access to power and to creative and self-empowering shifting relations, truth is revealed differently while other truths may be created. Michel Foucault states that “Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of

‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true” (As cited by Mason). He goes on to say that “power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives” (Foucault as cited by Mason). Collective creation of daily life as *artfulife* can be accessed through the power of meaning making, sharing, and existing as one can and wish to.

Once again, the recipe format or figure in this research creation project, offers a kind of knowledge that is carried by collective creation and oral storytelling which is instrumental in activating a transformation of our subjectivity. Subjectivities, in this work, are defined as a quality of being, based or influenced by personal feelings, tastes, or opinions, and as a quality of existing in someone’s mind rather than in the external world. For me, this is the difference between oral history and history. A personal image that is built feeling for existence from the inside, in my mind it exists before I present it. In a person’s mind, rather than as an imposed image coming from the external world; this is the real creation of subjectivity that can happen with oral history different from what otherwise would be an imposed subjectivity from a merely historical perspective. Self here is seen as community.

When stories connect with one another, there’s an attempt to get closer to the truth and the understanding they can offer, they contribute to breaking stereotypes apart. Erin Manning writes that collaborative art “creates operative strategies for mobile positioning that takes these new forms of knowledge into account; it proposes concrete assemblages for rethinking the very question of what is at stake in pedagogy, in practice, and in collaborative experimentation” (*The Minor Gesture* 27). Storytelling, in its collaborative sense and quality, can form understanding; it does not sum up individuals nor does it separate from a group, instead, it moves in between, which

means that storytelling's collaborative nature, even when it is not direct collaboration, moves the centre as needed with respect to differences. It does this rather than dictating and excluding unwanted differences and consequently confirming power. Storytelling is empowering and it includes. Its essence is collaboration and a sense of collective work: human and non-human.

When I did the performative *8th wonder - hanging gardens*: I started by introducing historical information about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, with meaning created and or inspired by this history. The ancient gardens were considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Many theories persisted regarding the structure and location of the gardens. Some researchers proposed that the gardens were built within the walls of the royal palace at Babylon, the capital of Babylonia (now southern Iraq), and did not actually “hang” but were instead “up in the air”; that is, they were roof gardens laid out on a series of ziggurat terraces that were irrigated by pumps from the Euphrates River. Traditionally, they were thought to be the work either of the semi legendary queen Sammu-ramat (Greek Semiramis, mother of the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III, who reigned from 810 to 783 BCE) or of King Nebuchadrezzar II (reigned c. 605–c. 561 BCE), who built them to console his Median wife, Amytis, because she missed the mountains and greenery of her homeland.

The *8th wonder performance* to plant seeds with participants and naming a plant to take a life journey with them was a collective act of care, they shared stories about whom they named the coming plant after, as if they would gift it to them. The performance was an open space for trust and sharing what story or feeling would come while planting. As the participants walked away, they continued the performance with a colorful mashed paper pot and seeds that were given to them during the performance; the rest of the seeds and performance life was in their hands. Like this,

the performance continued collectively by each participant, by seeds, by memories and what we felt then, each at their own s/pace, even if participants didn't directly know that; there was a collective care performed along with who we thought was a stranger.

The Syrian writer Khalid Khalifa asked in his latest Guardian interview, "I want the Syrians to reread history, and to ask who expelled the Syrian Christians and Jews from their city – who are the children of our country – and who thwarted their great industrial project and their attempt to be part of the civilised world? The question today is, who decided that democracy is forbidden to this country?" (As cited by Safi) These questions occupied the mind of many Syrians, who are now refugees around the globe themselves. Now while being here in Canada, these questions are not so different from here, just switch names of communities. These questions are not related to place, they are related to domination taking differences, as a power to divide, expelled to deprive them from their human sense and to eliminate not only bodies but culture and histories.

To be able to access land and community at its core, I chose stories for their power and the way they can carry the power of the storyteller at the time stories confirm the storyteller's belonging, knowing, and listening to; these are the most powerful ways toward practicing empowerment and a formation of subjectivity. The way stories bring historical events within daily life, as caring memories, carrying people past knowledge, processing it, and re-feeling it within today's environment, is how one confirms existence. It offers the truth by the teller as seen or felt, recreating a wanted image by the teller that we can't see otherwise; this is the marginalized reforming their own images. It is exactly what my creative work carries and offers with environments; to augment what needs to be done, to push boundaries of possibilities for more

possibilities to come, for more confirmation within an aesthetic space created, as a way to mark such confirmations.

Stories are the key to connection and relation. They can create new sensations and environments that allow us to imagine and interact with each other's narratives and subjectivities. As Gregory Minissale writes, "stereotypes break down easily in conversation with real people. Art can unite people and create a space to share insight. The psychology involved in the production and reception of contemporary art represents an important opportunity to understand how we construct new knowledge about ourselves and the world we live in today" (xiv). It is true that these recipes were created for and with the communities, thought with, aiming in particular towards healthy relationships and understanding between the newly arrived refugees (and their culture) and their hosting communities; but it is also other kind of difference that instead of suggesting division it seeks to bring into gatherings to offer listening toward understanding and getting to know about not necessarily the other but difference itself.

Looking at Quebec's social context and the particular fears and stereotypes that can be found here, the space created by art becomes crucial for experimentation. "It is often assumed that difference can be transcended into a common language of humanity, one that would be the "same" in its entitlement of rights and privileges" (Moosa-Mitha 42); and yet, it is also true that it is only through our differences that we can sprout and be enriched.

Recipe: aesthetics as power

How many times the power of aesthetics has changed our lives in a wanted and/or unwanted way? The Trojan Horse is one of the old ones; a Greek story about how they entered the independent city of Troy to win the war. In the canonical version, after a fruitless 10-year siege, the Greeks constructed a huge wooden horse, and hid a selected force of men inside, including Odysseus. The aesthetic delivered through the shape and created images can be stimulators for change as Haroun Faroki has shown us through images of revolutions (“Harun Farocki”). Images can be notes of energy and matter which cross and shape people and are able to transform; a question arises: how to produce images to talk to the body, not only images, but sculptural environments as well? And as Farocki describes images as ‘his comments on the world’. How do we comment on the world?

For me, the most obvious lesson here is that you can trigger and win trust through beauty and creative ways through what immediation, of the event can offer, where no planning is done beforehand; let the given forces shape the process and relations among the gathered humans and things.

“Immediation is a relational technique. It exceeds mediation, troubling the very idea that an event requires the external force of mediation” (Manning et al. 10). Anna Munster adds that, “[i]mmediation, while directly felt, lies in differencing movements of the felt” (14), participants will feel the power of making, and how the recipes techniques work, in changing the ordinary within the creative event. “Techniques are required for making immediation felt. Techniques for immediation do not simply generate new things or objects. Instead, they find and enact different ways to live in and with the world, different *ways to world*” (Manning et al. 12).

Now, let me share some dimensions of aesthetic experience as I've come to encounter through performative events and gatherings around stories:

- Intellect. Using knowledge to find meaning and it is related to the level of experience by the participants. What to exchange, where it will go, what it feels like, how it works for everyone? These are just simple openings to knowledge to appear.
- Communication. Bringing skills, sharing and exchange is essential in the process of what tales will come; individuals, communities, or just a story that comes to the surface. The experience we can build through as we meet and relate more. To be engaged within a dialogue with multiple views.
- Perception. How to perceive the aesthetic aspect is through a relation between space, stories, and created relations. The texture is rich, with all who come together: plants, insects, soil, stories, and food, and much more to encounter.
- Emotion. What is taken into account through the experience appreciation, beauty of the space, of the relation, and perceived meaning; all these are fertilized ground for coming feelings.

The process of aesthetic creation is a part of the creative process, which is the focus of this social engagement and collaboration, enlisting individuals and communities in the creation of participatory art. Aesthetic dimensions are on various levels: visual, ethical, or even relational. It is stated that between "a body of knowledge coming from an external source and the questions and intuitions that surface from within is what education about aesthetics teaches us and I confirm it comes naturally while allowing a real process to form." (Lachapelle et al. 22) The relational existence of stories within

the aesthetical gives access to a forming of subjectivity, to access feeling, to thinking and engaging not only perceptive ways but also to activate the mind for possibilities and reimagination of the self all within the process and the doing.

As Plato identified more than two thousand years ago, “artists do not simply communicate ideas, they make ideals *appealing*; artists do this in part by trafficking in the emotions, and by utilizing enticing features of arts such as rhythm, rhyme, melody, color, and so on” (As cited by Roholt 13). The aesthetic here is seen not only through the artistic object, but also in the insight it yields. The recipes are used as concepts and applied through the practice of ordinary activities. The activities may take the form of events through which the recipes can be practiced and function as art; but will do so through practices of daily living. An example of this can be found in the recipes’ preparation process for events and bread making-gathering that was created in July 2022, and which in 2023 is still ongoing, to build collectively a clay oven at the 3E (3e); the desire was to offer openness for future encounters.

5) Events

Event: *The 8th wonder*: clay oven making-collective gathering

It is important to remember the rich meanings of indwelling and immanence and how they are beautifully entangled for the production of subjectivity, giving a voice to the event, like that these terms are core to the event, thus it's also part of what triggers collective memory:

- Indwelling, the definition is to be permanently present in (someone's soul or mind); possess spiritually. (Oxford English Dictionary)
- immanence in philosophy and theology, the term applied, in contradistinction to “transcendence,” to the fact or condition of being entirely within something (from Latin immanere, “to dwell in, remain”). (Oxford English Dictionary)
- Another meaning of immanence is the quality of being contained within, or remaining within the boundaries of a person, of the world, or of the mind. (Wikipedia)

This event was crafted around making an oven for future bread making gatherings. In my experience, bread making is a core part of the experience of being displaced; particularly for those who have lived through difficult times, and thus only had access to homemade bread. One of the stories I heard once was from a mother whose children refused to eat the new hosting place's food; in response to this, she made an

oven and home bread to make her children feel at home at the refugee camp. As well, for many cultures, bread is seen as a “divine gift of life” (Snyder 84). As a familiar food, it bears potential for memory and story.

The clay oven event at 3E was a collective work, along with mainly other three women artists and thinkers: Erin Manning, Ifeoma Anyaeji, Shaya Ishaq, Cadu, and other participants, as a first attempt to making an oven out of clay, for coming gatherings as others could and still can join later within the process.

In reflecting on the experience, from a functional, familiar, and more typical perspective, our endeavour came to failure, as the oven did not stand the northern Québec rain and therefore re-integrated back into the land. However, the experience of building it was the real event, the gathering, what it made us feel all together. And even though I did good research and had good ways to do the work, with the collective, I decided not to instruct nor to seek for perfection. If I’d followed a method, the whole thing would have fallen outside the concept of what an event, as a gathering process can do, differently from prefabricated expectations.

What happened is that the oven fell outside from what an expected oven looks like, however, it fell into what else an event can do, in this case, for example: doing and learning with oven making techniques, sifting the earth, wanting to get the clay with all the hands squeezing and touching wet clay .. all feelings of patience, of frustration, of hoping it would work. And yet, the oven wanted other ways, the gravity was very strongly loaded with the weight of the clay, and excess water in the clay was not drying in the humid weather that surrounded us, there was not enough sun to work the clay.

This failure wanted to teach us that different conditions were needed, and the oven’s needs were not offered; the event at the 3E was more for the gathering and all

the stories that came with oven making; while the oven melted into the ground, something else emerged. A sense of resistance was not needed, we were women who shared a lot of stories intertwining and had connection points. Perhaps the desire for having questions and stories was stronger than the oven's existence. There was a movement in between the oven, the making, and the stories of our togetherness. We hear the phrase a lot that failure is a success, and yet, after this event, I could see and feel the relevance of such phrase, failure is a success, not from the point of view of a typical functional oven, but from the point of view of the event. The success of this failure was confirming we were not where we were used to be: where we lived in the past was a different place from the one where we wanted to build, the soil was entirely different and had other stories than our own, and the environment was also different than what we would have expected, even the needs to make the oven between the participants were different, but all those differences were participating in the way that the event was teaching us how to build together. I could feel as if something was telling us: 'you can keep your accent and still belong here too': look for the way.

Despite the knowledge that we may think we already have regarding land; one can still learn about the land. The more you know, the more you belong. We can learn for example that language is just a material for daily life and an accent is the way you use such material, or that the color of the skin of the body is just one more of the different tones of the earth/land. Failure here became a way to understand belonging, even more than to understand inclusion, it became an opportunity to reshape, rethink, relive, and to feel how even if we come to *life* carrying traumas, we don't have to live them now. We can see the environment now and live it; this is how our existence is confirmed.

A second iteration of *The 8th wonder* event took place under the name of *Tannour*, at the Glasshouse Project in New York, on July 15th, 2022, with artists collaborators Lital Dotan, Eyal Perry, and local communities and families (“Khadija Baker/ Tannour”), just after a few days of the north event at the 3e; the conditions were more bold than the gathering at the North at 3E. We found an environmental invitation to collaborate with surrounding materials, we had very fine local clay as we were not allowed to collect it from public spaces (we were actually asked to leave), and one of the local clay shops donated what we needed. We managed to collect grass from around the road, as we were walking back to the space to build. The oven had better conditions to become and function as a more typical oven. Once I left the residency space in New York, Lital and Eyal told me that they built an open home for the oven to last longer.

The gathering around this oven making was as good as in the previous event. It was especially very beautiful to see neurodiverse children who refused to touch the clay’s texture, softness, and messiness while others loved that exact quality. Together with touching or not touching preferences, the eyes were following; I know a child who did not touch the clay with his hands and still could feel the texture of the clay. No touch was needed, and actually I could see that same excitement in the eyes of all children and their parents around the event.

The stories that came around were in between bread making, and the locals’ interest for oven making, in between what I as Kurdish, Syrian, and Canadian, and all participants brought in, each with a different story with which some identities would cross one another.

Going back to what the project did at the North at the 3 Ecologies, even if I had no desire to play the expert, nor to be at the centre of building an oven, nor

representing a culture, or bringing my own memories of my childhood, and even if certain moments were traveling toward all of that, what really happened was what the event wanted, the whole of it, what was happening and where it took us. And it managed to do that while teaching us that it was not about making a perfect oven. The event asked for what story would be told later? In the end, the oven degradation was part of the process, it went back to earth but certainly after telling us: where are the conditions? What of the life of the event is preserved from the whole process?

Thinking the event through the 3 Ecologies:

Author Félix Guattari talks about the “ethico-aesthetic aegis of an ecosophy [as an intricate collaboration between three ecologies]: social ecology, mental ecology and environmental ecology” (*The Three Ecologies* 41). For *The 8th wonder*:

The social was at the core, it took the attention to the artfulness.

The environment did not go through details, but at the same time it was the one that created a chance for learning, adding, and deciding how to process.

The ethical aesthetics as a production of subjectivity, accounts for a mental ecology, beautifully processed in so many ways: with all the stories, memories, processes, senses stimulation through touching—even with the eyes, through smelling wet straws and clay mixture, and hearing the sound of the squeezed and banged clay, all this together with the laughter of a wellness produced by letting it be and saying ‘let’s make it’, whilst listening to each other.

I know that at moments I wished to take over the making to go back to the design I had previously created through my research, but I would gladly avoid this, when possible, to allow full access to other participants. There was no way to create a life with an ecological sense of the process, without giving a chance to questions

like: What should we do? How do we solve this? What shape will it be? And in between the questions, all other elements came through, nourishing and offering joy .. as we learnt also that nature, of all things, goes the way it needs to go, not as forced, or formed. There was a listening to other ways rather than to what we'd consider more natural ways of doing and being; thus, there was an abandoning of typical powers, of the transparent, so that we could find within opacity, other ways, in between the cracks.

Note: Reflecting on language, the experience of making a clay oven felt similar to language, when forcing the work to be done.



Figure 15 Tanour from a Kurdish village in Turkey, from my visit after becoming Canadian, 2006



Figure 16 Different handmade ovens



Figure 17 My children around the oven fire in my backyard



Figure 18 Oven at the Glasshouse Project, NY

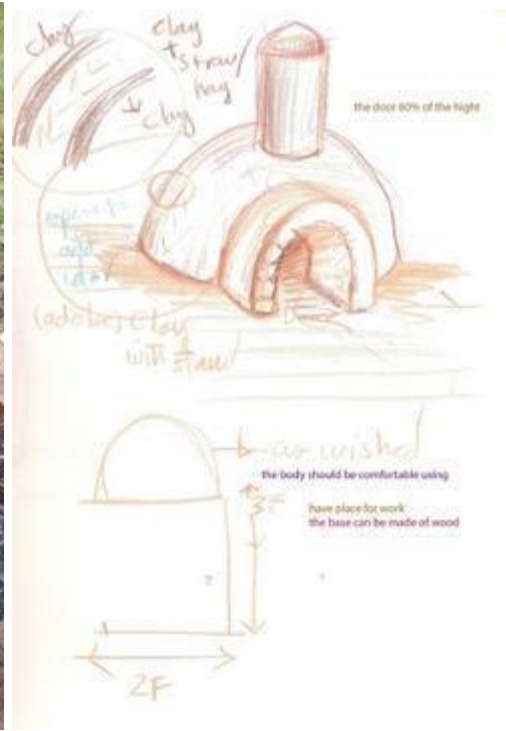


Figure 19 Oven at the Glasshouse



Figure 20 Oven at the Glasshouse



Figure 21 At The Glasshouse NYC, summer 2022



Figure 22 Oven 1 at the 3E event in process



Figure 23 Process of Making; makers, left to right: Cadu, Nora, Erin, Xece, Shaya, Ifeoma

Recipe: Bread-making, bread-breaking

We usually celebrate the taste of food, not who made it; even less attention is given to the process of cooking and the collective knowledge that comes with it. Questions arise asking for recipes mostly around measurements and elements (quantity) to be added. Quantitative recipes anyone can have, but would everyone access a qualitative (quality) recipe? What taste do we get in ingredients, and if the amounts change? Besides knowing when to add certain ingredients, how do we know other matters like: What kind of heat a recipe needs or time engagement? What time to get ready? When to eat? How much time is low heat or higher? Etc.

Maybe not as obvious for everyone, but the process is importantly bold, especially for the ones who make food. Equally important is that as one element changes, we should expect different changes and outcomes. *Bread-making, bread-breaking* is an event for the future, as a continuation of the *oven-making* event. In this event, we will start from the encounter, and go through it as a process, inviting full engagement in all aspects of the bread-making experience. In addition to the daily life focus of the event, there is an aesthetic focus within this work. Participants will be invited to engage with the materials used to make bread and be encouraged to share any insights that arise not necessarily only around bread making.

My expectation with the format of an event is that it may create environmental stimulations to cultivate knowledge (e.g., learning to make bread). However, my approach is more multi-dimensional than merely sharing knowledge. Within this event process, **a conceptual approach to daily life activities will create social relations through three main elements: events, collaboration, and stories.** As part of the event, and as an outcome, I will create a **diagram** of the 'research journey' throughout,

given the open-ended nature of the project, I consider the design of this creation to be emergent. Apart from being an art object by itself, the diagram seeks to collect—through insights that the process will produce—, an understanding of various values, aesthetics while forming new meanings, and new stories shared. The multi-dimensional form of the event will transit between story exchanges, performance, and the cultivation of an event where meeting, learning and creation is made possible; all this in a space that, as an intuitive condition for the event, will need to be similar to daily life.

The diagram will take form during the work in three ways: relational, creative, and experimental. I believe that this approach will open itself to possibilities and allow the work to express within its *right to opacity*, where untypical ways can come to the front, exist, and be valued as outcomes of processes of different creativities.

In this *bread-making* event, the focus is on the *production of subjectivity* in a creative environment through meaning making, that can be more than cultural and personal values, to actually put these to test and experimentation, not necessarily to gain value, nor to assess this production, but to learn and see various needs for the production of subjectivity as an attempt to access the *artfulife*. The drawing below is an over simplified example of a few elements that come to mind, based on some of my previous garden events:



Figure 24 Diagram of the garden recipe example

Why Bread

Bread is the main part of a meal in most cultures, making it a familiar food that everyone can share. Also, for most cultures, bread is an important symbol of life, “a divine gift of life” (Snyder 84), bread has social importance and is a symbol in the life stories of many. In war or violent situations, the absence of bread emphasizes the brutality of the acts of violence against civilians, since on top of everything, it becomes a hunger war. For those living in poverty, bread is the main food accessible to fill children’s stomachs. It is often subject to state control, when governments limit the seeds that are used to produce the ingredients for bread. Bread is also religious; or at least, it is for some people in respect to their religion.

In the context of my own history, the grain of which bread was made, was the first to be affected by pollution. This was the case in the Kurdish region of Al Jazeera, in northern Syria, during the Iraq war, when oil fields were burned and pollution was driven into our region through dusty storms and toxic rain, which caused burning of plants and fields around the region.

In my experience, when arriving at a new place, bread can be the first thing we look for to feel comfort and to feel at home, it can also be the first difference and novelty

we encounter either with estrangement or surprise. In daily language, bread can be used to build relationships.

This project will enable collective bread making in a public space. After a clay oven has been built to make and break bread, participants can continue sharing bread making experiences and stories at the setting, or simply enjoy sharing tips and flavours from their own bread making ways.

Most importantly, this could also be an important mode of encounter with newly arrived refugees, by getting involved in a public space, new relationships can be offered with a sense of closeness. Relations are easier in a bread making and eating setting, and it can facilitate a mode of learning together that doesn't depend on language. Participants can be invited to bring their own ingredients as well if they wish to make their own bread.

Making an oven is the central piece of my research-creation project. The ideal oven is a mobile one, made from materials found at the site where it is built but also it becomes a site in itself, for making, using clay, cement, brick, wood, etc. This oven is proposed to have a small size to offer an intimate encounter for 2 or 3 persons, so that it can provoke closeness and conversation. The estimated size is 1X1M for each oven.

When attempting to define art, Beardslly writes: "One kind of definition of art is a functional definition; one kind of functional definition is based on aesthetic experience: an artifact that affords an aesthetic experience is a work of art" (As cited by Roholt 14). When a daily activity, such as making bread, is practiced collectively in a public space, and carried out through an artistic event so that it functions as a connective point for participants, it becomes a work of art. Beardslly continues:

The principal features of a conceptual work of art is the idea, conception, or meaning. . . The dominant view of the value of conceptual art is cognitivist in

nature; conceptual works of art are valued for the ideas that constitute them; those works are intended to make one think. (As cited by Roholt 14)

Recipes function as meaning-makers to access *artfulife*. Relation allows us to begin to know each other, and to tolerate our differences. As Beer explains,

the environment has a transformative effect on the learner, by allowing him or her to independently synthesize new information within the context of that specific learner's existing knowledge, thereby shifting and adding to constructed ideas in order to create new knowledge. (Beer et al. 29)

According to Steven High, “a ‘good’ collaborative project works in much the same way. Community-university collaboration need not begin and end with the recorded interview” (As cited by Miller et al. 29). Deciding what and how much to include within the creation process, and how to bring people’s stories about in the way they deserve, is the theoretical focus of the *Bread-making bread-breaking* project. Janesick observes that

oral history with its immediate face to face orientation and supplemental documentary evidence helps to provide a path to understanding behavior, its motivations, and this for both interviewee and interviewer. Thus, oral history becomes particularly useful to qualitative researchers for we are documenting multiple histories, or multiple individuals, to make sense of our world. Experience and what sense we make of experience are critical. (Janesick 113).

In my view, the importance of oral history lies not in its use of ordinary, day-to-day language, but in its rendering of the encounter as a whole, and its emphasis on personal voices. My work has not always been documented or recorded; it doesn’t take the form of interviews, but is rather a real practice of storytelling, and of sharing memories within communities. As an artist, I do not need or desire to represent others’

voices; my goal is to make these voices heard in an artistic way—one that offers new opportunities for understanding.

Through the event, the familiarity of bread making bears potential to call forth memories and stories. The event will function as art. As I have argued in this paper, when a daily activity like making bread is collectively practiced in a public space and carried out via a creative event so that it functions as a connecting point for the participants, it becomes an artful event.

Recipe: A-void

There is a sea of distances between death and life.

There is a distance of one single letter on the passage between the darkness of the womb and the darkness of the tomb.

Lit it with the *Artfulife*.

No one should be reduced to a body, even gods are not unities.

No one should be reduced to a whole; even black and white images have all ranges of colors.

Reduction and exclusion are a way to the void, a-void such spaces, and multiply.

“Race is not a certain body. It is no-thing to the degree that it names a problem, not a person” (Manning, “The Being of Relation” 2).

Do you think it is not my wish to not be distanced by language? I really wish to feel in the wording as you know, and feel in your words, not that I want to master them

but to have full access to you. These wishes are a desire for relation, that tries to become other than worldly.

Words are never bordering .. the distance in between feeling me and you are a language of value differences that can still be and lived fully. The key is not to fall in the void of what languages and systemic languages might create.

To be able to belong to the social, my little garden becomes the world. It teaches me how to know this land, what can survive, and what this land tastes like.

A land that tastes the dandelion and clover and its gifted seeds to be the nourishing memories of the past to future ..

Transiting between a single family to the social and to the environment; those are the ways that take us to where belonging can happen.

Can't we learn inclusion from insects, from colors as seen in earth as it changes in different places; where no languages are demanded; where they inhabit gardens with questions to live and to give a life full of possibilities?

Event: Weaving Stories



Figure 25 Collective work at a Longueuil event with farmer women



Figure 26 Collective work at Longueil in the community garden of a daycare in a Community Center



Figure 27 Collective work at Longueuil in the community garden of a daycare in a Community Center

Again, stories and memories can happen with peripheral vision which helps us train vision for problems we encounter within our communities and social environments. The focal point as the problem and the environment as the peripheral vision can teach us that through stories, we can find and access different dimensions of the truth. How can this other dimension of the truth serve our beings to find a way to reach its highest potential?

The *Weaving Stories* event has a key outcome of highlighting the intercultural potential of including day-to-day activities within creative events, workshops, and artistic gatherings, and the capacity of such an inclusion to shift ideas and perceptions—so that those seen as the “other” (as threats, or as victims) and members of the host society can spend some time together, in the course of which they may learn to listen to and truly get to know one another.

Performing familiar activities together creates a site of encounter in which two persons may share stories they would otherwise not be likely to share. The space is created, the stories shared, and **the possibility for connection and relation between participants** are the true outcomes of the work of this minor gesture for openness and potentiality. Manning writes that,

the differential, the active hyphen that brings making to thinking and thinking to making, ensures that research-creation remains an ecology of practices. This ecology of practices needs a punctual proto-event such as the minor gesture to bring its potential into focus”. (The Minor Gesture 13)

The new ways of experiencing encounter and collective making carried out in my project are the sort of practices Manning talks about when she writes that

practices that think multiply are many: they can be activist practices, environmental practices, social practices. They can involve child-rearing, social work, teaching, playing. They can take place on a park bench, in the city, in the classroom, in the kitchen. To think multiply is to think in the register of the hyphen, of the differential, in the complex field of study opened up by the undercommons. (The Minor Gesture 24)

These kinds of encounters are not centered on an individual and are not about making an object; they are about what we take with us, and what the encounter does to us; about the shifts in meaning, and in feeling. These kinds of effects are art’s work. Art can allow us to revisit the world through personal and collective ideas. How we

visualize the imaginary, and how this visualization culminates when it is shared, is crucial: such visualizations offer the senses the chance to generate new emotions, which in turn cause us to think, to act, and to acknowledge each other's pain, happiness, needs, and confirmation. We may thus speak of art as 'adding understanding'. The learning process and our emotional responses constitute essential instruments for change.

The possibilities afforded by the various artistic media deployed in the research-creation process allows the research components to be performed and disseminated through alternative ways of knowing. They also permit a variety of forms of citation and/or attribution, extending Garis' insight regarding performative ethnography that a valuable way "to know" is "to do". (Chapman 14)

Event: Come wash with us

Another example of collective work was the event *Come Wash With Us: Seeking home in story*, that took place in August 2-4 in 2019 at The Saw gallery in Ottawa. The work was created in collaboration with the TASHT⁵ collective, which I'm a part of. Its members-collaborators did a series of performative storytelling installations, where a space was open to participants to share stories. The collective shared stories around washing clothes; this was a way to see how washing can shift when accompanied with stories and in public spaces. Even how hearing water and touching it together with every single element in the collective performance, along with participant's stories

⁵ TASHT a transdisciplinary collective of four women. Shahrzad Arshadi, Hourig Attarian, Kumru Bilici, and me. The members of our collective originally come from the Middle/Near East. Having lived in a volatile region before calling Canada home, all four of us have inherited memories of atrocities from our families, just as we have lived ourselves through civil wars, military coups, bloody revolutions, and political repressions. It is these inherited and lived difficult memories that also have become the fabric of both our individual work in our respective disciplines and the broader canvas of our projected collective work.

pushes the social toward an undoing of the image of women—especially typical Middle eastern images, of victim or gender-based roles. The stories of war that were around, focused on oppression, but were at the same time about resistance. The conversation moved around ways of connecting to each other and a powerful relation was created with participants.

Secondly, for women to wash and share stories in a public space was a way to empower the female's body, taking over that specific public space. Shifting intimate spaces and public spaces from one to another, through stories and simply by being there with one of the traditional ways of doing laundry, and to see women do home labour and engaging the public, giving it value to see its historical and social dimensions, besides giving value to the work women do. At least it did for us and empowered us as the collective of TASHT women.

One of the main points that came out was how much we shared and the many similarities around washing that we encountered. This was an encounter within the opacity of minor gestures like washing, hanging, or telling, to pave a feeling of inclusion, which we aimed to access seeking home in stories.



Figure 28 Tasht collective left to right Khadija, Hourig, Shahrzad, Kumru, Come Wash With Us



Figure 29 Tasht collective left to right Khadija, Hourig, Come Wash With Us

For me most of the time, here and back home, I feel in others, and especially in institutions, a desire to put me in a category; usually under a general label of “the marginalized” that has never responded to my actual needs. In Syria, such a technique served to exclude me, and to deprive me from my basic rights; here, it is a way for the institutions to gain political power, and to fortify an image of social progressivism. Paradoxically, this has at times benefitted me; it is in part how I came to be pursuing a PhD. But thinking of this usually leads me to ask if I was really seen in the selection; if the institution is truly trying to answer my needs, or simply reaching through me for generalized solutions. This question, I know, resonates powerfully across marginalized constituencies. Categories are ways of looking-at, not listening-to. The strategies of inclusivity are not usually designed for the marginalized, nor do they usually work; rather, at least for me, they tend to reproduce intense memories of exclusion based on my difference, and obedience to established powers; they perpetuate segregation, drawing an ever-sharper line between myself and others. They seem to suggest that I am incapable of choosing my communities, or of jumping between their different priorities. But problems of color, race, and gender cannot be sliced and treated separately; they are of one body. Its parts have different functions, but the whole-body and its organs feed each other; and when even one grows healthy, it can become a great support to the rest. Therefore, I think that recipes as concepts/techniques are mechanisms to reform subjectivity. Subjectivity is here understood in the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari, which understands it not as given, but as *produced*. As it is summed up in *A Thousand Plateaus*,

In effect, in the rich domain of personal relations, what counts is not the capriciousness or variability of the individuals but the consistency of the relations, and the adequation between a subjectivity that can reach the point of delirium and qualified acts that are sources of rights and obligations. (452)

They offer a good summary of the practice of *the production of subjectivity* through this passage: “a schizoanalytic approach serves to begin such a healing process. Its major task is to destroy the oedipalized and neuroticized individual dependencies through the origin of a collective subjectivity, a non-fascist subject-anti-Oedipus” (Seem 22–23) Recipes of/within art events transform active forces, movements, and environments, into a desired set of relations, led by the process of each participant’s skills. In knowledge as a minor gesture, a new understanding is created, and another life can be felt. As Manning suggests,

the minor gesture is the activator, the carrier, it is the agencement that draws the event into itself. It moves the nonconscious toward the conscious, makes felt the unsayable in the said, brings into resonance field effects otherwise backgrounded in experience. It is the forward-force capable of carrying the affective tonality of nonconscious resonance and moving it toward the articulation, edging into consciousness, of new modes of existence. (The Minor Gesture 7)

What is carried, felt, actualized through the event and as each element is an important actor, it activates a *production of subjectivity* that differentiates from the assumption that subjectivity pre-exists as the maker of formatted identity. Fanon affirms that, “[t]o speak is to exist absolutely for the other; to exist is to be seen properly” (As cited by Cooke 167). What is more simple and real than connecting to others through your own story? The practice of daily life and the recipes offer a space where storytelling becomes an aesthetic gesture that can become art but is never product oriented. The process includes flexibility, thoughtfulness, and exchange through the sharing of stories and artmaking.

Events engage the senses: the touching of hands while preparing the dough, the listening to trees and birds while working on the art, the feeling of water when washing clothes, etc. One or a few of the listeners may be learning and contributing to

the story, asking questions, or commenting, or simply listening with care; if some do not listen, or miss a part, they will still be in the environment, and may find many other elements to be affecting them. Neither the artist nor the art object will be the center of the event; each element will have a chance to participate in the exchange, to educate aesthetically, and to enable us to see our daily life more closely, through the artist's eye and through the collective making. All of us have an equal chance to be at the core of an event if we need or wish it. What the recipes propose is to practice oral history through art/events, rather than being a method of mere gathering of information or data. The recipes offer everyone involved a chance to know, to understand, and to learn as a collective.

When orality and art merge, especially within daily life, a new image of what life can be is created; an image that carries the normal to the *artful*. For example: to conserve food for a year is a form of knowledge, and it is an art when it creates meaning, when stories accompany its process and create an environment. Therefore, this how this research creation, with co-composition as its main practice through the use of recipes, aims to achieve these modest goals: to amplify those practices that continue to exist, despite the homogenized images which seek to eradicate their force of differentiation; and to undo the stereotypes and misrepresentations propagated by these images, through knowing and learning from each other.

Another simple example: a piece of fabric, a scarf, with colorful flowers. This scarf, the traditional scarf worn by Kurdish women, has now become a sign for Kurdish women fighters. The minor gesture here is not the scarf itself, but the quality of variation the scarf brings for those of us who know it as an emblem of the everyday. The scarf confirms not just identity, but a continuity with our grandmothers' resilience, and with other forms of fighting in which Kurdish women have been engaged

throughout our history. “What’s important is to recognize that that has been the case— because that recognition allows you to access a whole, varied, alternative history of thought” (Harney and Moten 109–10).



Figure 30 Kurdish woman from a village



Figure 31 Woman fighter (from BBC news website) wearing a symbolic scarf

Oral histories preserved us, the Kurds, as they did many other communities. It was our way to pass on a forbidden language and culture, and to preserve pride about who we were, passing on stories that the state could neither control nor erase. Growing up, Newroz, our new year's story, was not something we read; it was told through various stories. And on Newroz, despite how difficult everything was, we always felt full of the desire to celebrate. It was an essential day in the year, confirming not only our existence, but also our access to freedom. We celebrated in dance, gathering, eating; in theater pieces, in nature; in full knowledge that consequences would follow, like clashes with security agents, who attempted to stop our feasting.

Recipe: listening to artfulness

Artfulness will open doors

create doors,

imagine one.

Make a wish for one, and this is the least to believe.

Wake up! To access the *artfulife* every single awakening, start with passion for the day, with a need to wake up, with an environment to break fears of trying, of exploration, of pushing boundaries, of not feeling alone even when you are and bordered.

A making of the day and each day has to follow needs; this offers access to artfulness.

When an imagined ordinary carry you within an aesthetic yield that you can feel or see, and/or be, it adds up to you and to the ordinary.

Artfulife has the power of showing you with your own eyes and with the surrounding eyes, a feeling of relation and togetherness.

Artfulness teaches you a lesson of comfort, of beauty and meaning making, while pushing you to move toward the coming future, it also gives an easier way and power to live its movements in the midst of all the world.

It contains self-explorations in its hidden/unseen capacities.

It tastes as learning does, it knows where and when a detour is needed when the next shift needs to come into life toward *artfulife*.

Let orality be life and the moving force for listening.

To listen is to know or try to know, through listening, that what's happening takes the form of a dynamic of finding and creating relations.

Listening can add a tone to your voice, to your own voice of other voices, and can open up a real world, a collective one.

Recipe: for art and the art of living

Art can easily be shifted to become a luxury and create voids when reduced to an object. And artists can know and feel this after each work of art is done; to not reduce it, it is important that art can offer a meaning within the creation and that feelings around this can shift. In that sense, it has to exist at the middle of *artfulife*.

Artfulness is collective, it brings you and the surroundings closer; it also brings the past and present for tomorrow, closer.

Recipe: for walking the space

If an idea, a sentence, a value, a way, is not finished or nor clear here, just keep walking, you will find a space where it takes you, while you keep walking, you might even find out that you don't need the rest of it and yet you can enjoy the learning of the walk as you do.

An example of walking through language and inclusion based on creative work for social change and public spaces:

I sometimes think that the worst invitation to show an artwork comes when it is posited as if it is doing the artist a favor to show work. The creative act of the artist

does not only need a space, but it also needs relations. It is a collective work for communities, for everyone.

During the spring in May of 2023, I started an installation with ATSA, which is an organization that according to their website, their mandate is as follows:

ATSA is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1998 by artists Pierre Allard and Annie Roy. The pair create transdisciplinary works and events for the public realm that take the form of interventions, installations, performance art and realistic stagings. Their actions are born of a desire to raise public awareness of various social, environmental and heritage issues that are crucial and that need to be addressed. To sway both the public and the media—in short, to motivate as many citizens as possible to take an active role in improving society—ATSA marshals artistic quality, a playful, imaginative outlook, impactful media exposure, and key messages backed by sound, thorough research. (atsa)

The kind of work advertised here needs care; the concept has to be lived and practiced, with the public, but also with invited artists. The work cannot exist just to add a number of works or a number of artists who desire inclusion or who need listening spaces to engage; these spaces must offer quality and attention to language, values, ethics, etc. It needs to be understood that participating in these spaces, for an artist, is not a mere opportunity to be counted as, but to truly be included and that such inclusion requires care.

Although I have worked with wonderful people, the following seeks to deepen our critical views to bring more awareness to the significance of meaning making in artistic spaces as a continuous invitation for critical issues to be practiced. According to their website, the mandate continues:

ATSA's approach is to ensure that the aesthetic and symbolic statements of its art also serve as tools for interaction and education. Its artistic creations—always provided free of charge and designed to draw people closer together—are one-of-a-kind experiences from both a sensorial and a humanistic standpoint. They are educational and intergenerational, and

question the urban landscape, promoting exchange and reflection in the public realm.

ATSA is a creative, pacifist and responsible movement committed to producing and promoting events which help advance the causes of sustainable development and the fundamental rights of humanity and of nature. (atsa)

As a constant recommendation, when we carry responsibility, it is important to treat each project with full respect to the story it carries; this is how real listening happens. Listening is a way for inclusion. Minor action has meaning, so all the process must be considered, starting from the preparation to the end, including all involved: environment, viewers, participants, artists, organizers, representation, and language amongst much more; collective care is required for this.

From my perspective, the aesthetic is the main leader in art, and it should not be limited to the visual, nor language, or the ethics of the artist-exhibition space's relation and so on. In my experience, when my work was vandalized within the public, I did not get an immediate report in relation to this nor afterward; I felt like there was no care at all. I wouldn't mind the participants going far with the work, since this sometimes is part of participating in public spaces. However, when I just received images and damaged work delivered to my place by the end of the exhibition, as if that was ok, or as if it was fine to not mention or talk about the situation, I felt like the full commitment to inclusion was not truly practiced. The uncertainty overwhelmed my body as I was asking when this happened and never got an answer. As an artist I had to live with uncertainty, as I was forced to ask about the damage in the work, when this happened; on top of that, I never got an answer. What the exhibition did, instead of the feeling of being included as an artist, was to offer me: even more uncertainty

around public spaces—which are the spaces where the work I produce to confirm my existence is mostly presented—, unhealthy inclusion, and poor representation.

As much as a work of art may have desires of what it can do with the public and within a public space, it is also important to know the artists who also need to feel empowered and need to know that they are not merely a number or one more color to add to the palette. As important as artwork might be, artists need to know that they are not reduced to their work to just be seen as filling space, the art and the artist here are the voice of a community and possibly also, the voice of injustices that need to be heard and listened to within real action. How would this voice be in public spaces and how it would be listened to, in all aspects, by the presenters, matters.

I want to offer examples of the language used during meetings around this issue:

- ‘Damaged work does not matter since it is possible ‘I can’ make more’. A phrase like this is equal to saying that my labour is taken as typical and insignificant, as such it confirms the image of the poor value assigned to the labour of an immigrant.
- ‘The work is not a piece that costs a fortune, or cheap to make’. This reduces the work to an object and assigns to it merely monetary value, ripping it from any other type of value, in short, it devalues the work of art and therefore the artist.
- To mention that ‘an artist is expensive, or another is on demand’ suggests that the ones who are presenting or available for presenting are the cheap ones, the ones who have no work, the ones that can be used to fill our spaces with.

All these examples ripped off the mandate in terms of valuable meaning making. Most importantly, this experience, as a critical view of the practice of mandates in reality, can be an example to reflect on the general systemic inadequacies within the theme of inclusion and of those who try to work around inclusion and represent communities.

I can't deny the excitement to be presented at the centre of the city, as random unexpected engagement of people is made possible; however, there was also a sense of entertainment, as forced in that public space.

This experience brought me back to the first job I got as a designer upon my arrival to Canada. In the beginning, I felt super lucky as I was comparing myself to other refugees and immigrants in the sense that I was working in a space that somehow was related to my education in fine arts; this was an unusual experience for a refugee or an immigrant, at least of all people I knew.

The working space was paradoxical, a mix of various backgrounds: Arminian, Turkish, Jewish, English, French, me Kurdish-Syrian and more, so that we did not get to talk amongst ourselves with all the historical conflicts and coexistence of each one's community. I was paid less than a half of the salary of the other designer I was working with. Besides having no benefits for the first year I did this job, the jobs in my profession I did back home didn't count, similarly to most newcomers' experiences. Despite all this, I still felt lucky to be able to build up experience here, but after a year and half I demanded for a better salary to feel the potential of betterness. Of course, my demand was refused, and I got an offer to courses, to bring new skills to the place, but only on my own time, which was very little since I was working from 9am to 6pm.

During the work season I would do it over time, and I had no right to refuse. The experience I had is similar for most newly arrived people, with some exceptions. Well, at least that's the way I saw it then, all this added to being a girl/female immigrant (I was still a refugee then), of color, with limited language experiences as it was my second year. I refused to continue the work under these conditions, so I was sent home.

My refusal to work under unjust conditions ended my opportunities and I lost my employment insurance. Now almost twenty years later, I am facing an experience within creative spaces that jeopardize feeling safe. I take change-making very seriously since the most significant change for me is toward survival and it matters.

On the spot, when I was there and heard the language around the value of each artist, it really shocked and hurt. me. But I am not a refugee now, nor is there a lack of languages, nor I had no Canadian experience, even in comparison, the artists who were mentioned as expensive and on demand, had similar career paths to mine and our work was presented many times alongside. This is not to deny that the festival included many backgrounds and multicultural artists and that beautiful public spaces were created. However, under the carpet, were values shaking these images that needed care.

I wonder if those feelings of shock and hurt were brought by my first experience working here. Perhaps that served as a reference for the way I saw missing values, or perhaps it actually helped me to recognize, and yet, the feeling was, “hurting” as Brain Massumi describes pure emotions of an infant “[a] feeling begins in an unplaceable unperceived, and never really ends. Hurts don’t die, they just linger and resurge” (326).

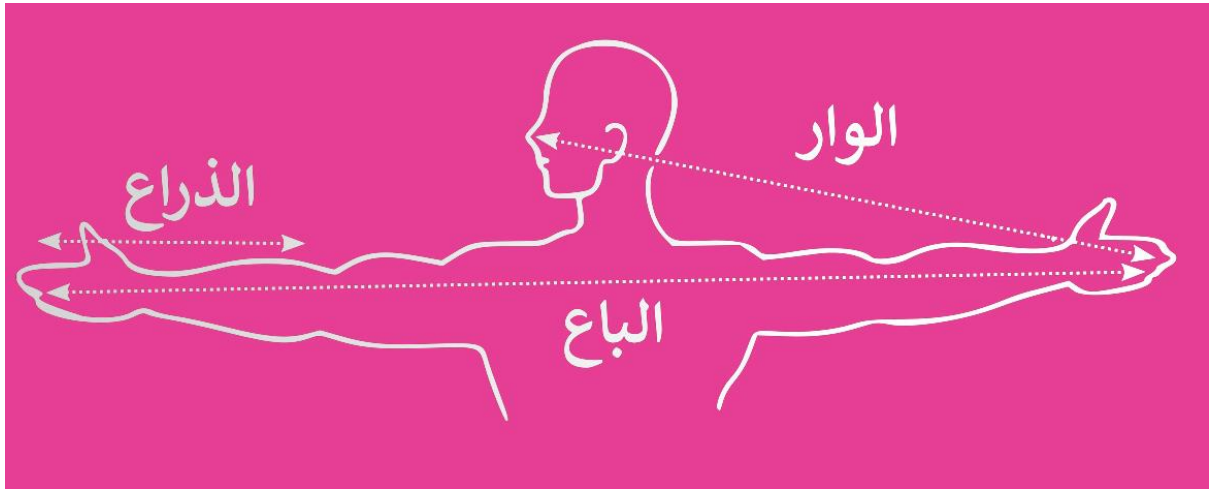
Recipe: ways to measure

Measurement of living has to remain with bodies:

When you are a foot’s distance from danger: cross borders like a bird.

When you are a finger’s distance from each other: consider a relation.

الباع: و هو أكبر المقاييس، وطوله المسافة بين نهايتي اصبعي وسط اليدين عندما تكونان منفردتين على آخرهما - و 1.



وليكن باعك طويلا لتنتمي الى مسكنك و كن كشجرة الجوز في البلاد الباردة



شبر واحد كافي لتغرق في التعصب



When you are an inch away from home, find it within you, within a plant, see it growing foot by foot and gift a sense of comfort.

Knowledge emerges through discovering and acknowledging what relates to us. When we really meet a person, and touch their story, a shift happens within us that interrupts the simple projection of a stereotype or an image upon them (e.g., as with the projection of terrorism upon the Muslim body), and allows for an new and genuine understanding to grow between an individual and a collectivity. In perceiving Muslim refugees, “we do not see what we see” but, as Maris Bustamante reminds us, “what we have been made to see” (168). The importance of this project lies in acknowledging a colonial past, and in taking this knowledge forward, creating a future: in finding counsel within each other as strategic means to work through issues that we could not resolve on our own. A possible answer to a problem in the area of the visual seems to be that: “You don’t have to look for new images that have never been seen, but you have to work on existing images in a way that makes them new” (“Harun Farocki”).

Finding and reframing the artistic practice in daily life and highlighting artfulness within it to recreate new images, is what this research creation seeks to emphasize.

Recipe: Art as revolution

Art as revolution is a response to a now in which we live in so many injustices, a form of resistance and real fight for *the right of opacity*. Gender limitless definitions, freedom, communities, minorities, survival of genocide, race, skin colors, colonialism, environment, animals, all these enquiries and many more, are strongly related in the way that are extremely susceptible to face injustices. For such reasons, creative ways to deal with these matters, can't be ignored as a movement within art itself, as a mode that might be created in each situation, to make livable ways in the face of injustices.

We saw the Syrian Revolution in November 2012, when four girls had wedding dresses and walked in the old Damascus shopping street (which is the most conservative place in the city) (Barnard). We saw how Nadia Murad tried to escape 8 times after all she had witnessed, the killing of her family, the genocide; her way to find hope and the need to survive was more an instinct to live, through this will to live, she imagined escaping and she did it (Murad); this is how one practices the art of living, to live an *artfulife*. When women in Tehran Street cut their hair waving it in the air to announce their freedom and resistance, a collective work is done, they are performing the need for freedom. Art and aesthetics are more obvious in singing slogans but sometimes more is needed, to act beyond words, like how in Dams Street, people danced collectively. All these have been peaceful ways to create a mode in which one can get out of an individual form to emphasize that no one is separated from the group; even when the authorities took individuals singularly, they became an icon for a group and in turn, a trigger to boost the act even more; who is the next person to join the dance?

Recipe: make an arch

Without inclusion university becomes a lab where superior and good ones aim at protecting the poor, or at solving their problems.

So many scholars and feminists celebrated our Kurdish women carrying weapons, the whole world did; this happened on a larger scale only when it was related to ISIS, a power in the struggle that was related to the world of whiteness, they called themselves first world. We don't speak about deep problems until war and violence take place .. until displacement overwhelms, until destruction shreds bodies on the street. We don't look at places where struggle can start or where injustice is so bold; we wait for violence to guide us toward the next justice. These practices are still a way to resist, but acts are needed, to go to where problem roots expand and not wait to see the problem growing into a tree to then cut it .. before it reaches the foundations of the construction of at least safety rather than justice ..

Recipe: to integrate like water

A plant's cuttings were asked to become plants for next year to preserve the beautiful plant

They were offered these luxurious conditions for all their needs were: light, warmth, and water

They thrived and flowered a beautiful Lemon Scented Geraniums plant.

This is the perfect integration, they said

.

I saw the beauty of the flower, I smelled that unique fragrance of its flowers

I appreciated the plants' flowering

Flowering was pushing energy to preserve and to seed later. It was closing the connection to the land .. if no roots come it is the death of the plant

plants are tricked by giving them perfect conditions to not having to perform a certain way and instead take time to root, to connect to with this land which is to become their home

their life was shortened, they failed other flowers and insects they promised to be with

.. don't be pleased with the integration idea, search for the pleasure in rooting ..



Figure 32 Vase with flower in front of window looking to a winter landscape

Darwish in *The law of fear*, a poem said long time ago:

محمود درويش في شريعة الخوف

ينظر القاتل إلى شبح القتل , لا إلى
عينيه , بلا ندم . يقول لمن حوله : لا
تلوموني , فأنا خائف . قتلتُ لأنني خائف ,
وسأقتل لأنني خائف . بعض المشاهدين
المدربين على تفصيل التحليل النفساني على
فقه العدل , يقول: إنه يدافع عن نفسه.
والبعض الآخر من المعجبين بنفوق التطور
على الأخلاق , يقول : العدل هو ما يفيض
من كرم القوة . وكان على القتل أن
يعتذر عما سبب للقاتل من صدمة !
والبعض الآخر , من فقهاء التمييز بين الواقع
والحياة , يقول : لو وقفتُ هذه الحادثة
العادية في بلاد أخرى غير هذه البلاد
المقدسة , أكان للقتل اسم وشهرة ؟
فلنذهبنُ , إذن إلى مواساة الخائف
وحين مشوا في مسيرة التعاطف مع
القاتل الخائف , سألهم بعض المارة من
السَّيَّاح الأجانب : وما هو ذنب الطفل ؟
فأجابوا : سيكبر ويسبب خوفاً لابن
الخائف . وما هو ذنب المرأة ؟ قالوا :
ستلد ذاكرة . وما هو ذنب الشجرة ؟
قالوا: سيطلع منها طائر أخضر . وهتفوا:

الخوف , لا العدل , هو أساس الملك
أما شبح القتل , فقد أطلَّ عليهم من
سماء صافية. وحين أطلقوا عليه النار
لم يروا قطرة دم واحدة ...! وصاروا
(Darwīsh 7) ! خائفين

If we look at one of the most recent disasters, the earthquake that happened on February 6, 2023, in Turkey and Syria, we witnessed a bold example of how practices toward otherness can turn into racism.

When one of the survivors was asked by his rescuer: why didn't you talk when I was calling? He answered that he was afraid that his accent would reveal his Syrian identity, and no one would save him. The way I see this is similar to the experience of refugees entering European borders and being treated differently based on where they were coming from, judged by one's limited view and assumed superiority; an act like this, claims who deserves to live.

Another example was Aya, the miracle baby. She was the only one of her immediate family to survive the massive earthquake, baby Aya, who had just been born in the rubble of a collapsed building to a mother who had died. She was still connected to her mother when she was found. Despite the cold she survived since babies who lack oxygen are exposed to cold to keep them alive. All the conditions together saved this baby. We witnessed through media⁶ how thousands of people offered to adopt her. Wow someone is finally counted; why is that? What about war survivors, what about the ones in refugee camps, and the ones at borders for years

⁶ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-earthquake-miracle-baby-aya-b2279595.html>

hoping to cross, what about other babies, or the rest of the families? Or the most challenging question: what about babies of ISIS who are forgotten in the Northern Syria camp in the least human conditions going through a process toward weaponization?

This is not to put into question the saving of the baby, instead what comes into question is who really counts and why? Will this baby bring luck, will she make the saver a hero? Or maybe she is becoming a token that assures the goodness of someone who cared, someone caring then, may prompt a feeling of being superior due to the saving someone assumption. The question is not a denial to the emotion or love accompanying this act. Certainly, love is there, but what drives the act: is it really love or care? or is it a kind of support that is within transparency as it does not detach from a need to be seen and counted as hero, as superior, as better?

What kind of identity will be welcomed, a limited one as created by the new surroundings, or one limited by the assumptions of where one comes from? Maybe what one desires to be, or what a place will make anybody be? What makes someone to be valued? To be born in this place, or another place? What constitutes a difference? How is it that one place makes a little child become a collection of things to form a personality, together with their social, their historical and their personal unique collection of their experience of being.

Daily ways of living may be similar: we love, we work, we build, we do so many things as everyone else in the world. And yet, we are also not fully similar in ways that fragmented differences become key on how to be in this world but also in the way of being excluded. To be a passenger through the tunnel of life and death; what marks we leave behind is what counts.

How can there be changes to practice and feed more movable understandings based on all possible differences including differences of values, cultures, and capacities? When stereotypes are the source of fears, stereotypes serve the unknowing and misrepresentation of others. Stereotypes can be felt in the myriad of ways that seek to justify racism, islamophobia or any kind of discrimination and exclusion based on fears. Absolutely nothing would actually make sense unless someone is prepared for created images; in other words, what Glissant taught us about what is it to be reduced to transparency,

[t]hey suggest that the self's opacity for the other is insurmountable, and, consequently, no matter how opaque the other is for oneself (no myth ever provides for the legitimacy of the other), it will always be a question of reducing this other to the transparency experienced by oneself. Either the other is assimilated, or else it is annihilated. (Poetics of Relation 49)

how refugees are reduced to stereotypes of whatever suggests them as terrorists, savages, uneducated, etc., is a form of allocating the other, into the transparency that Glissant talks about. This reduction is not only reducing the other but also reduces thinking, limiting it; where no opening is allowed, there will be no way to reach the so much claimed humanity. I came here to Canada, with zero language, zero economy, zero family and friends, but the question is: can I really be reduced to this zero? What I carry or will be able to contribute to this place may be minor; yet collective minors may be an immense treasure to places, to environments; it can be a gift to thank for the given safety and dignity.

A Bundle of Recipes for Survival

Recipe: Through the eyes of 3 ecology

To practice living while preserving the difference of recipes is what makes it possible to test and taste modes every single time.

Let it be collective, shared with a flavour of desired relation, then it can be a chance to create layers for new images, moving ones that can fill cracks with the form of lives in its differences and like this, multiply the world as we know it.

know

A home dies if its inhabitants leave, Darwish said



Figure 33 A house in Amude Town



Figure 34 A house in Amude Town



Figure 35 A house in Amude Town



Figure 36 My grandmother's neighbour door in my Town Amude

Recipe: freedom of choice

Undoing separation is urgent in respect to justice within the right to opacity and the first step is to remove the self from the frame that has been practiced. Justice has been misunderstood as a practice of washing away the guilt of wrongdoing in the past, but it can't be that since nothing actually does that; it has also been a way to distance someone's rights from other's rights; let me explain. I see it in the example of Bill21 in

Quebec, which seeks to remove religious symbols in public spaces. Acting against this bill, some people started sharing images of fashionable women wearing scarves and/or calling it beautiful to show their solidarity. This act doesn't confirm a woman's choice but a covered body; it focuses on the wrong thing. What about other women's choices who don't want it or who are forced to cover as their society and culture wanted them to?

Opposing this bill was a way to show the racism within it, or to advocate so that the right to access could be guaranteed, or to fight for freedom of choice; it was not about defending the scarf itself.

The issue was mistakenly focusing on religion while many communities were a target of this bill whose true aim was excluding all differences and values, a way and method to systematically create citizens and standardize a uniform for the kind of beings that can transit public spaces, only to guarantee access to power, and enforce exclusion and hierarchy.

Recipe: escape the shadowing

Shadows exist and confirm the body hit by lights and confirm light too; one shadow two shadows three shadows. How many one can get is measured by being hit by light from more angles.

How can one live only to be shadowed?

The absence of light, the darkness, where bodies are mere shadows and colors are absent to claim the fakeness of people of color.

When the soul and the living, lack sensing the light .. Light is a way to become, a way to do, to think and to live properly.

The light is not white, nor opposed to opacity, it is a mix of a colorful rainbow and all its ranging colors in between. It gives each existing cell its unique color and visually amuses the more than.

Recipe: living equal spaces

Ideas can be eaten by memories.

Bodies can squeeze the soul; devour it.

A language can erase a history when imposed; it can take away the right to exist in more than a body; and it is one of the ways in which injustice is made.

The body can become a finger when this hurts, but it can be a thought that shines.

Feelings need to access land in various ways, ways that are found in the truth to be faced.

New knowledge is found, new stories will be born.

When anger is burning the body; I am smoke.

The desire to be put outside on the other side of a line of someone's fears.

To be put in that middle is painful existence re-forming.

It takes the right to opacity to escape and live.

Recipe: being more than you

When you are grass, a quality is born.

You are stronger, you bend and never break within nature;
you rise to the sun.

When you are a cloud, you are shaping all the time,
you fall down to give life, to be eaten as you become, to be drunk by as you have been
collected.

Your endless rebirth and flying again with the wind: when no wings matter and no land
matters, then you access your full freedom.

*

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And when you are a tree, land matters.

When its hardness is appropriate; it allows you to retain your standing, at the same
time that the amount of softness allows breathing, when land is loose enough, it allows
rooting, and hard enough to preserve life.

When you are a tree, you offer birds a place for singing their songs and you let nesting
be.

When you are a tree, your green means being born, and brown naked stems mean
hope for coming to life again.

When flowering is the aesthetic that is created, —to taste, to see, to feel, and make senses fully awake, without even knowing it—, it allows living, once more.

When you make meaning of the minor, it is resistance, and you access *artfulife*.

To write a story no pen is needed, write with your voice, and let the wind take it to who is willing to listen.

Scratch any surface with what you wish to say and with a language of feeling, a language of wanting.

Recipe: for an encounter

Today I went to a library since finally I was able to get out of the cave I've created.

At the library there was a body sitting beside me, moving his legs for the first 15 minutes. I was not able to work feeling his movement. He was 15 meters far, but his movements were within my peripheral vision and they were felt. Finally, he came toward me, with his headphones in a scrambled knot that he was unable to undo, so he found the courage and asked me to help him. I was the perfect person to ask and finally he settled in slowly as I went to grab a headphone for myself. He felt me leaving after he just adjusted, so he asked If I was leaving, I said 'no, I will be back', I knew that he wanted to keep what had just adjusted now in his peripheral vision. I felt he was relieved when I went back to work this time .. I was able to find music for work. What a bright space ..

Story: Less/more than human

My little brain couldn't grasp the fears, nor the imperative of a denial of the self, while visiting my uncle's village in Turkey, with my mother, when I was 6 years old. They were so afraid to speak our language or tell anyone who they were; **they were told and taught to hate who they were**. According to villagers, at school they were told 'if you are a Kurd, you will grow a tail', so children learned this denial at an early age. In Syria, it was no better than this, we were excluded from so many basic rights, we were a minority (I only experienced this as I moved to Damascus University to study there, while in my town in my own experience, we were the majority) ..

Years passed and here in the Canadian city of Montreal, I was introduced to myself as a 'visible minority' which is not too old as a definition, I remember once I wanted to get access to the NFB (National Film Board of Canada) and I called them to see if I was eligible to the 'visible minority program'. I did not fully understand it, they too were unsure of where I would fit as a Kurdish Syrian; in the end, I was excluded, because it was opaque as to where exactly I could fit. As much as I was invisible as a minority in Syria and denied access to many rights, I am also here, the name has changed to being a visible minority.

I became a visible minority since I have an accent on me and since my skin color foregrounds me as visibly different, these apparently visible differences (from whose perspective I wonder?) make me named as being from the third world which is the war maker and the one who deserves sympathy and pity. Due to all this and more, we are always placed in between spaces that need a transition.

Ironically, war can be a chance for us to be seen. Before the Syrian war most people did not know where Syria was, 'just a country on the west of Iraq's borders', with Iraq's reference, people would know how to locate us, since Iraq had war much before us, since the 80's.

I always existed in the war that was moving around the land. My skin color is transitional since it ranges between black and white. The sun did not gift my hair the golden color, nor did dark nights lay their elegance on my skin .. I am never enough for any place, never enough woman, never enough colored, never enough citizen to any country. I am not black enough to be within places where language is the system's way for anti-racist acts. I am not white either, to get that as privilege and use typical ways to enter the system. I was not a slave, and my genocide is not recognized. We will not fit within languaging; we are the leftover, until new needs for justice will be felt, seen.

I own the shades of my fears, of how only extreme violence can turn faces toward injustice. Not enough pain is visible, not enough genocide is recognized, not enough bodies were taken, not enough bodies have suffered; I am the countless/matter-less.

Recipe: To let ..

Let yourself fall as a stare in a glimpse.

Let your body go and pass the desire, to be freed of what you have been taught.

Never tie your dreams to the sky, let them be born in you.

Live in a black and white photo of whom you want to be in timelessness, in daylight.

When the light fingers reach deep into the skin,
keep its scars, make them the star you want to reach for a desired indwelling.
When your borders are closed, be the river, make your way into solid rocks,
take your time, so that softness of yours can shape you.
Get into the ocean, the only space that offers the profound space for life, for all the
ones who are looking for a refuge.
Cross your pain and arrive.

Recipe: how to talk to plants

P. You are my mother.

F. Yes, I am. I will be your caregiver.

P. And I will try to give you back vegetables. I might not give back, not sure.

F. I will still care for you.

P. You can still enjoy my green color, touch my soft leaves. Smell the earth as you
water me. And if vegetables come you can eat my children. I will give them to you, to
be in your body and to nourish it. Watch them grow and choose the moment when
they can taste the best and when they are juicy.

A plant manifests life and love.

++ The event is collective, full of fabric threads, and the focus is on other than humans,
plants, birds, insects. The focus is on the relation, on the more than.

Recipe: for home making

Learn from birds, straw by straw a home is made.

Learn from spiders, make it from your own body.

Learn from ants, make it for the future.

Learn from bees, make it collective.

Learn from mothers, make it within you.

Learn from the nomad, make it where you can survive.

Learn from children, make it playful.

Learn from the philosopher, make an idea.

Learn from the artist, imagine it.

Learn from the homeless, make it a way to escape.

Learn from refugees, make it where it is safe.

Learn from trees, make it where roots can grow and breathe.

Learn from clouds, make it everywhere they can be.

Learn that 'if one home dies another is born'.

Recipe: A recipe for women of color

If someone's fear is within you

a shift is needed, a real one, to shift the self from being seen to being the one who really is.

Women of color entered a space where they were promoted for an equal chance in life by someone who thought they were colorless creatures.

A colorful woman brought her palette and colors, all of them made of past, present, and future, of all seasons, of all ages, of all of what she has been through, of all the ways that she has been seen and not seen, and of all of her ways to live a life that has no beginning nor end.

She became a light that shifts all lights to be her.

Once in a dark spot, she will shine,

once in light, she will shed,

once in the cold, she'll warm the heart,

once in a rainy day, she will be slurred with water,

once in a lonely moment, she is the world.

Once you are the world you are you,

I am her, I am not a woman of color,

I am a colorful woman .. the sun loves my skin in the summer and winter makes it shine .. I am the daughter of earth.

Recipe: Perform as weeds

I know that where I came from is a little rural town, and the way it was created was so that we only had what were essential needs, in all aspects of life. Grass was for animals to eat, if you had a neighbour with animals, they would come to collect the green waste or we, the children, would deliver it. The grass that dried after the harvest was for clay to be mixed with, either for annual preparation or to build a new clay home.

We would have new clothing for feasts, usually twice a year so as a girl, it was two dresses; we were lucky since we had my father's textile shop, and my mother was a tailor. But we still desired the ready-made, since it was promoted as more beautiful and since that was only for the rich. How has the industry managed to increase and to shift the sense of beauty? We were made to see certain kinds of beauty and accept it more than others; it also shifted with time. There is always a strong power in aesthetics as a commodity, that can shift our choices.

In my garden in Canada, to cut the grass is not a question of beauty; it wasn't even needed, but my neighbour kept asking me to do it, for the mere reason that it was bothering him. The way I was keeping the grass, from my perspective, was more an ecological or economic choice. Grass needs water and care to keep adding more seeds. I decided to promote clover over grass, to stop watering and give nature the job. Keep a bit of the wildness of weeds. If I think what makes us destroy nature easily, is getting far from it .. I am getting closer.

Back in my town in Syria, everything had a full life, a transformable one, I learnt from my mother, we would keep passing clothing from the older to the younger, until it wouldn't be wearable anymore; then it would get another life, together with other fabric pieces, they would either become a cover, or anything else to use at home. The last stage of a textile's life was for cleaning. It wasn't until the textile started to fall apart that its life would end.

Everything has a quality of weed, every one of us and every weed is there for a reason. I learnt that the Common Dandelions that disturbed my neighbour the most, were there as the ground needed them to be softened. The plant goes away once the job is done. Work the soil, besides: it is edible.

A garden is a good example of a body without organs.

Recipe: Water you are

be water, be shaped by the surroundings and remain who you are

escape when you are not contained within

no need to prove who you are, no need to prove an identity; prove what you can do and be the imagined you, the desired you to you. Amin Malouf says, "my identity is what prevents me from being identical to anybody else" (10). He also continues claiming his belief that he is multiple; "identity can be what prevents me from being taken with the whole, into a generalization of what one identifies with, but also an offer for exclusion from" (10).

Swing in between what can define belonging, how much time one needs? How many generations? How many skins and life one needs to cross and be seen? What measurement of injustice will make someone stop and listen?

++++

Holding recipes

It looks like children wear their school's uniform to level up to the social appearance. Tracing for them a closed line, they call it a drawing, which they fill with the choice of color .. What causes the illusion of holding in place and creativity to push toward multiplying the same way? An aesthetic becomes witness, and an illusion of ethics becomes mere capital and multiplying the illusion becomes currency. Does equality really work? What about different needs that are not equal?

When language is part of what enforces violence. An external language is forced upon people whose mother tongue is different than that of a majority in a given society, where is equality here? Multiplication of the patterns of the same, grows in a negative way, reaches the border of the domestication of otherness, and pushes the singular way of a capacity for doing. No wonder why we are surrounded by multiple houses with the same design and mass production is what we live in now. It becomes the aesthetic in art, a way of living, a way of thinking, a way of how the system moves and deepens existing problems.

The capital arms become the guidelines for citizens to fit into that uniform of language, of religion, of black and white labeling its justice .. holding becomes essential, it exists within the resistance, within the colorfulness of skin, of religion, of cultures, of languages. Holding is the way to create creativity, holding each other and yourself. Holding is the path Erin Manning takes to pave the sideways, is Adam Wolfond's pacing beyond the capacity of languages and movements of thought in life; is in Mayra Morales' meeting the ground, dancing for a next standing up and for the coming cycles of needed movements as the ground is the best holding in dancing. It

is in Cadu's heaviness and slowness of moving the care of his childhoods within the brothers' and sisters' childness with us all.

Holding is to hold to the creative way of living to learn from the D.R, from the needs, from the feeling of maintaining differences, and having them as a learning arc for life. The holding of life is to be able to know what justice means for blackness, for colors, for genders, for others. Hold to and own every single failure as it is the way to empower. Let the difference be exposed out for you, not to create a show for others. Living the differences, my accent in language, an incapacity to access, is the mirror for seeing the world and undoing it. In holding there is a continuous search to find an anchor for comfort, to minimize the world's pain, to be able to perceive your otherness with open eyes, to see and listen. Holding is a minor gesture.

Depending on good conditions, a hug can begin holding when a relation has crossed a created border. It carries acceptance, it has the quality of feelings and safety, borders can be softened, and hold a need to cry, through a feeling of relation and a need for touch from that new space.

A story that opens doors for truth, for a living truth, and not a dead one, made up of carefully carved stone, a truth that can have all colours, it needs to be in for all. It will never be taken and seen one way, if it is a truth, it will be felt right and yet differently for everyone, every time an encounter happens. It is moved by environment and relation; it remains always a truth and the stories will keep reproducing it every time it is needed. Orality of stories is creative and is a key to reach the soul of that truth.

Care is a two-way movement, my child's needs are my work, and I keep searching for how to care for them in everyday life. My search and ways around life are his shifting relations to the world and these feed powers for the coming search and

days. The needs, the love, the caregiver needs, all these shifting in the relation while also shifting the relation. Giving is for a time to come to feel the present, to be able to feel living and taste it. My son's needs can feel like a heavy burden, daily searching to bring qualities to a growing child, but it brings quality to learning together how to live, and thinking of the surroundings, even to feel and know that self-push can be a boundary.

My child has shifted my thinking, shifted my ways of living as it shifted ways of working. This becomes a departure point to keep moving. I have seen myself and the environment in relation to his shifting, I started to find comfort in myself, even with its extreme difficulties. His neurodiverse being shows the world, me and around us that we become one and whole so beautifully. It drives me both toward depression and toward extreme happiness, both shifting pushing each other, finding that moment of comfort worth full life. Without this difference I would never get to know myself.

He became a wasp, for the flowers of life.

Holding is a survival technique.

It simply deals with things in constant attempts to understand differences and the heaviness within opacity. It doesn't need modes of sharp images since it is the abstract in life. Knowing it well comes from a relation that offers a comfort zone, for differences to be seen as creative ways, and for a living in that difference to be possible. Differences can be defined in many ways; each way is formed by the need to soothe the senses. If needed, a body may try to cross a threshold, although it might want to be at the threshold to mark itself.

Recipe: Reimagining borders

Borders can force in many ways, but forces can be shifted to become crossing spaces instead of a cut or to merely separate. My body became a female body and gave another body. It did not cross the body, it merged out from another form of life and continuity.

A language is never alone within one community; a language always carries otherness and eats of it to be able to breathe.

A land opens its borders for a need of passages for food, humans, ideas, thoughts, languages, etc., we name them borders, animals just live them and have no cut; they still carry the quality we strive for, and we forgot a long time ago when we were tricked by civilizations managed by powerful ones who fed their power by the creation of borders.

Toward another side, cross cultural borders, is it breaking it or transgression? Does it hurt or heal, what if it is a distraction paving ground for a new construction .. it is the quality that determines who one is and of which side of the border one comes.

Recipes: of Decolonization

In the middle of doing

In the end of the self

In the beginning of sorrow and undoing

Acts in every step

An act for removing ones from the centre

of removing centres

be in the air, be in you ..

it is not pieces of land, and we don't have the power to own it,

it owns us and owns our lives.

To be grateful to it, we will not need to exclude, nor do we need revolution time, every day is a revolution and a manifestation for what we owe each other.

Recipe: The art to sustain the self

It is not only time that will be drawing bodies, feelings line by line, breath by breath that moves and surpasses the imagined ..

How would anyone imagine closeness to the truth, knowing and doing, if they haven't been at least by the edge of blackness?

When the mind refuses to follow language's grammar and wants to keep misspelling, then own the words you got ..

the point is not to break the rules of grammar, but to own your words.

What is language other than that?

Recipe: technique for survival

Feeling is the point of departure; it is the mechanism for movement. To access the survival mode, listen to the self and voice out the story you tell. The body needs to be

in the story, it has the movement of feeling fill it up, empty it and tighten it, listen to lessen it.

That is in you, to sustain the living body and soul.

Own the pain, live it, and dump it in your memories.

Don't forget that memories are survival boats taken to safety beaches when a smuggler wants to sell you to the sea.

They have a deal, to feed the greediness of the blue, let the blue become the sky, you want to be rich.

Freedom is there, we just need to find the justice to take us there.



Figure 37 Plant

Story: Melek

Self-taught himself music and to write poems as well.

Despite the difficult time at home and his family wanting him to be in medical school, he never gave up on music even when his father broke his precious instrument.

He used to hide his book under the *matalas* to feed his mind and strength looking for justice. He was so active and brave in Turkey at a time when announcing his Kurdish Identities was a great risk.

Melek produced his 2 albums secretly and with basic equipment. He formed a group called Amed, with other students, while witnessing that there was a big atrocity against civilian Kurdds.

His family don't know how he disappeared and in images I saw him operating an injured person.

He went to treat injured rebels in the mountain where his body was eliminated.

He was promoting life wherever he went with music, poems, painting, and love.

Recipe: for neurodiversity

Living in anxiety of the world being so big and feeling the need for so little to bare senses multiply becoming the environment screaming at you.

Limiting to the known, to the familiar, to what has been sensed before and offers comfort is at the top of the needing list and it has to be followed with a care for not reducing to what one can bear.

It is not about offering a possibility to reduce, nor for achieving a hierarchy, not always at the front, but at the background, in spaces where speech can't be heard but smoothed by little air moving and passing by.

the passage in the void:

amazed by color =====trembles with it.

love musical noise =====can't accept it.

then look at any one in the middle of their eyed and confront=====eyes have sunglasses

we are given a choice===== already done

we carry it within, in and out=====it is planned

I doubt =====troubled by whose god

face cruelty ===== it is justified

I will taste life, smell it, then we will be awarded by over feeling=====name it

The background music moves thought, I cannot hear other voices=====silence is ordered

Recipes: for mapping

I have made the work closely with Megahri, a newly arrived refugee in 2018, in the reflection of a map, in relation to space and to the body, which is the central space here; the rest of space can be within memory's space. Crossing borders is an act within the map; it is done by the body, but borders can't divide those who crossed and those who are left on the other side, in real life experience. A person that goes through different places, has strong ties to those places, through remembering. There are collective places of memories, in the present, and where home is imagined.

Dance was the trace of a body around a place, as fragments of places that were significant in her life while in Syria and Arminine spoke words. While dancing here she makes tracks of her life there. I have a dancing body always as a center, and geographic places around, are simply moving within it and crossing it. It's not the body that crosses borders, it's the opposite.

There are two kinds of maps, one is a tool that serves as an informative instrument, and most of the time it carries a political aspect of the dominant power. The second is the map that we have within us, what we carry in terms of culture, memory, languages, and relations within communities and becomes even more complicated to reflect it on our daily life.



Figure 38 Kurdish woman

کول جیهان

Concepts, ideas, acts, care, learning, and much more .. they have to be shared, in any kind of form that it may take: to be out, to be seen, felt, heard, known, and thought

with. For me, there are two ways to share: either doing it creatively or having it in words. I am not a wordy person and I have no full access to my mother tongue, so the creative is a full language that can do what my relations need. When ideas talk, they feed the soul of being seen and being heard. It is always hard to be reduced to what I can say in words or how I back up my being with others when in words.

Writing as if life and experience were to talk and write in action, and as if what we'd had experienced would need approval from mastering ways in academia; to be worthy of what knowing means, to be worth talking and thinking with .. this is not that, what we read of what intellectual and past writers have offered us, are not worthy for me, not at all, what is worthy for me at least, is a rhythm of sharing that can't reach me, even if it shows me many ways for acts that I have done, it puts them in words, but why do I need it in words? Or in connection to theory? I leave that for historians, for research in words, for whom the visual, the act, and other ways, are not their language.

Recipe: to dance

Dance collectively, never dance alone, feel the environment, feel the memories in the body, feel the feelings, let the ritual do its magic.

Dance is essential for life and for a vibrant one .. the body knows itself in movement, expression of the capacity to read feelings, or sensing the space to change, the space as the body occupies it forgets who you are, and what is surrounding you, as you become one.

Dance is essential to freedom .. in the conservative society I came from there was no way to touch a stranger's hand .. no way to express happiness in open spaces or for lovers to meet .. except in the collective dance.

In dance, the collective one, you enter the group by choosing the right moment, and immediately you become part of the whole, while you feel the full self, you are the group too .. you can trick the social and catch the hand of the loved one, shoulder by shoulder moving with a promise announced. Together, expressing joy and a real moment of connection within the social.

Birds dance to access, to offer female beauty, to start and give life, in a way called breeding, and I call it preservation for the coming dance.

Dance is a form of living.

Dance is always collective, it is a way to be in the group, part of the whole body, the environment is important, to see and sense the self and to sense being part of it as the movement is also guided by that.

Dance is power, a power that says that you are never alone, you can be part of the space of a group to shape and change; that's why it is always a sign of revolution.

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Recipe: cooking for academic practice

To cook ingredients are needed, certain ones go together, mint enhances the taste of raw tomato, and green paper balances its acidity. The feeling of cooking exceeds a recipe. Each time you cook it is a new one. You have the way to do it, as a way traced on an unpaved road to a rural place, you will arrive somewhere, if you are lost. It will be a new exploration.

If you want to repeat the same recipe with exactly the same measurements, that will be only your assumption because you will never stir the same way. More or less spreading of spices .. you invite each time a new recipe, you take risks for a new taste, you do it with care, you contribute to what you have learned from the community, and you own it. Whether you know it or not, all this has happened and much more that is just not seen.

It is a real academic way, you took long ways of knowing, you pushed its ways so that you'd be the transformed ingredients .. all that based on past knowledge you might need to cite or not, it is certainly done there and will have a taste becoming..

love can be taught

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