

Reflective Essay

The Creative Project I am submitting is a short film/video art [<https://youtu.be/rNq1jIzkSIo>] named “Triggers”. Incorporating scholarly research into my practice has given depth to my artworks, there is a background in every piece of art I make that makes them bigger than the physical process used to make them, the beauty of their aesthetics, or the emotional connection I have with each artwork. During my time in CSUSM, my professors have encouraged to utilize the library resources and to research for credible, substantial sources of knowledge to expand the meaning of my work.

For this particular short film, I wanted to talk about how living somewhere between two places feels, physically and mentally. As an immigrant, oftentimes I struggle with culture shock, displacement, loneliness, and emotional anguish. As a first gen Mexican daughter, I battle with family dynamics and cultural expectations. With this project, I tried to find a way to contrast this duality I live with every day. However, I did not have the right words to describe this. During my Research To Production class, Professor Arnold invited me to talk to our librarians and visit concepts of Broder Studies that could guide me in the right direction. She also mentioned that there could be artistic influences as well that could help me with my vision.

Some of the sources that acted as inspiration for “Triggers” were books, online websites, other films, and articles. The Library’s “OneSearch” option was particularly helpful in my research because it allowed me to narrow down the results and focus on the type of content that I was looking for: Video Installation, Immigration, and Video Art.

“Interviews with Independent Filmmakers” by Scott MacDonald is a compilation of interviews with independent filmmakers. They tell their experiences in the industry and outside

of it. Artists share with the readers the moments when they fell in love with film, what things they had to do to "make it" in this field, their struggles, and their inspirations. Michael Stoltz, one of the professors I asked help with for this project, recommended me this series and I am very thankful that the library had copies of this book! Learning about other filmmakers' creative processes has been really inspiring and eye-opening. There are methods to find inspiration that I would have never thought about.

Getting to read about the artists' journeys and the steps they had to go through to make it was comforting and encouraging. It makes me feel better about pursuing a career in film and video arts. On the other hand, "Jáaji Approx." is a short film by filmmaker Sky Hopinka. In this film, Hopinka experiments with text, imagery, sound, and color to portray the relationship with his father, and the distance between him and his memory of him. This was particularly helpful since I wanted to incorporate the differences in languages in my experiences in the United States, the distinction between English and Spanish, the social dynamics in here and in Mexico.

In the article, "'It Doesn't Matter How Good the School Is If You Don't Learn to Socialize': Latinx Immigrant Students' Testimonios of Coping with Social Isolation in High School." Jenn M. Lilly talks about Latinx immigrant youth's coping mechanisms against the stressor of social isolation and how understanding these processes can be vital to their functioning and overall well-being. After Professor Arnold suggested I dig into the sociological aspect of my Midterm project more, I stumbled upon this research that mentions the struggles that Latinx immigrant youth go through when coming to the U.S. such as leaving family members, and in many cases, peer networks behind in their home countries, which may be particularly vulnerable to the stressor of social isolation, which has been linked to a variety of adverse health and mental health outcomes and behaviors. It was really validating to read about

the testimonies and results of this study since I tend to self-critic my own struggles based on being an immigrant student. This research made me want to talk more about these experiences in my own work.

[Link to the short film: <https://youtu.be/rNq1jIzkSIo>]

Works Cited

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