

Odyssey: Reflect in Grenoble

The ***Ancien Musée de Peinture*** and the photography of ***Odyssey: Reflect*** share some common points - one is that they are both left behind from people's memories. When I say "left behind", I mean that they exist daily within the community, yet people don't seem to take account of, and recognize, their presence.

This monumental library once held the dreams of discovery and learning for many. Several people financed this forgotten treasure for the advancement of others. For the Japanese-American in *Hawai'i*, this is one of the main ideas for which the community lives - "For the future of the children." In fact, this is how many immigrants from diverse cultures bear the difficulty of being in foreign countries, coming as it does with culture shock, including language difficulties, often low wages and hard physical labor.

I wanted to really think about the possibilities of how this unique and impressive space, the Library, and ***Odyssey: Reflect***, can specifically relate.

Thomas Hardy, a Frenchman who visited my atelier in early 2000 by chance, had lived in *Lahaina* on the island of *Maui*, the town I grew up in. He first showed me the original photographs. Some time later, when we met again coincidentally in a travel agency, he gave them to me. Thirteen years later, the first exhibition of ***Odyssey: Reflect*** was proposed to me on *Maui*. I felt this was a call from the people in the photographs to go back to *Maui*, to somehow link to the people on the island in another way.

These kinds of photographs originally existed, and still exist, in some households - and yet, as this time (before World War II) was not the best for Japanese-Americans, they tend to stay in a dark corner of the room.

My works, based upon the photographs, have been exhibited in diverse places - mysterious co-incidences (similar to my chance meetings with **Thomas Hardy**) have emerged, which signify, and perhaps shed light upon, the journeys of the people portrayed. Most people do not know, for example, that Hawai'ian Japanese-Americans played an important part in the liberation of *France* and *Europe* - perhaps they also came to *Grenoble*, or the nearby mountains, during World War II, and perhaps this showing in *Grenoble* will awaken memories of their journey.

I usually present this group of photographs in chronological order - Immigrant history from the its beginning in the late 19th centuries to just after World War II. The war is present, yet it is not the main aspect of my work. The Japanese military attack on *Pearl Harbor* drastically changed the lives of Japanese-Americans. In *Hawai'i* there were internment camps, yet only the community leaders were interned. This was because by the 1940s, Japanese-Americans had the largest community in *Hawai'i* - if they had all been interned, the community could not function. "Enemy – Alien" was the status applied to Japanese citizens, who were mainly first generation immigrants.

I prefer to emphasize five main areas: The idea of immigration, immigration itself, life in the Plantation period (which ended in 2016 on Maui, where these

photographs originate), World War II and afterwards, and life after the re-recognition of American citizenship.

The main focus of my work, however, is to question the relationships between individuals, couples and groups. The interaction of printed textiles with the archival photographs represents specific aspects of immigration; some textiles are French, American, and Japanese because *Hawai'i* was highly impacted upon by these and other cultures throughout history. These motifs represent the physical, psychological and contextual aspects of immigration as well as my own story, as a migrant who grew up in *Asia, Hawai'i* and *Europe*.

In this particular installation and exhibition in *Grenoble*, I am attempting to show the relationships in this idea: "For the future of the children." The emphasis, whilst sharing historical photographs, is given to the future.

For the first time I brought in earthly physical elements, namely soil and the ceramic pieces that I began working on in 2017. By doing this, I hope to create an experience that relates not only to walls and picture frames but also connects the spectator with the space and the people in the images.

My works are also about using different scales and materials to create an intimate and communal space. A meeting place for the public to meet not only the people in the photographs, but also the exhibition's creators, as well as being able to meet other artists:

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