Rebecca D'Eramo

Those of Ours

"The potentiality of the past, rather than its form and actuality, may be what makes it into something both multiple and my own" – Rebecca Bryant $(2014)^{1}$

I have always been fascinated by the stories and the people in our lives that live before us, and the ways in which the different circumstances somehow connect in a moment that becomes the life that I know as my own today. With my work, I explore the past of my family, through the importance of memory, landscapes, objects and materiality, in an attempt to situate myself within this history.

Born to a Greek Cypriot mother and an Italian father, I have inherited a fairly turbulent family history, where certain members were royalty, others refugees, immigrants and first-generation children. Both my maternal and paternal grandparents grew up in countries at times of significant conflict and from this conflict, themes of movement, displacement, removal and return became common in my family's story. With these themes in mind, the materiality of my project became important. Almost the entirety of my work is made up of materials that are used when moving house and are also disposable: mobile and transient.

The subject matter of my work is made up of three differing yet connected visual aspects as well as an audio element of my grandmothers sharing their memories. These three elements are: landscapes, taken from photographs and made with layers of newsprint that are presented on light boxes made from cardboard moving boxes; family photographs, made from layers of newsprint, that recall invaluable Greek icons and are presented on light boxes made from suitcases, and a series of relief sculptures, made from polystyrene and layers of toilet paper, which become part of a frieze, referring to objects and various interior spaces, which I recall from my childhood.

The landscape series, 'Returning', refers to histories of removal and the longing or hope to return to a place or land. The portrait series, 'Continuing', after the meaning of my great grandmother's name, whom I was named after (Rebecca, meaning continuation), refers to the people who live on. The frieze series titled, 'Belonging', as objects often become a means of belonging in a history making personal possessions, belongings, rather than just objects. And a sound piece, 'Remembering', of my grandmothers recalling their memories.

Essentially my work focuses on the remains and the remembrance. The places, things and objects that survived after all the removal and displacement. My grandmothers' memories and stories are the most significant connection that I have with my family's past. Memory is fleeting and ever-changing, and yet it is what I depend on most in the exploration of my history. It is with this, that I attempt to express the stories of those before me, often with overlapping narratives involving Cyprus, Italy and South Africa, in a way that evokes the ephemeral qualities of memory. As is with memory, when the light goes out, the story is no longer revealed to us.

I have learnt through the process of making and through the exploration of the home, both from its location and landscape, as well as the objects and 'belongings' which make up its interior, that the history of my family is altogether mine because it is theirs, or as it is said in Greek, *oi dikoi mas* (those of ours).

¹ Bryant, R. 2014. History's remainders: On time and objects after conflict in Cyprus. American Ethnologist. 41(4), pp.681-697.

Returning

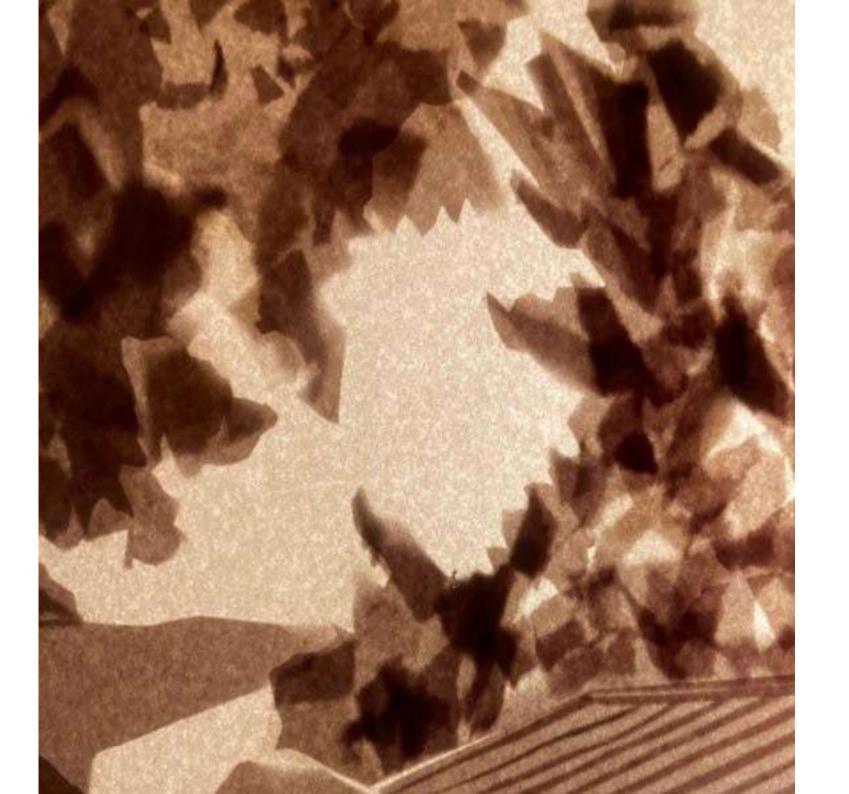




Figure 1 (300 mm x 215 mm)



Figure 2 (460 mm x 305 mm)

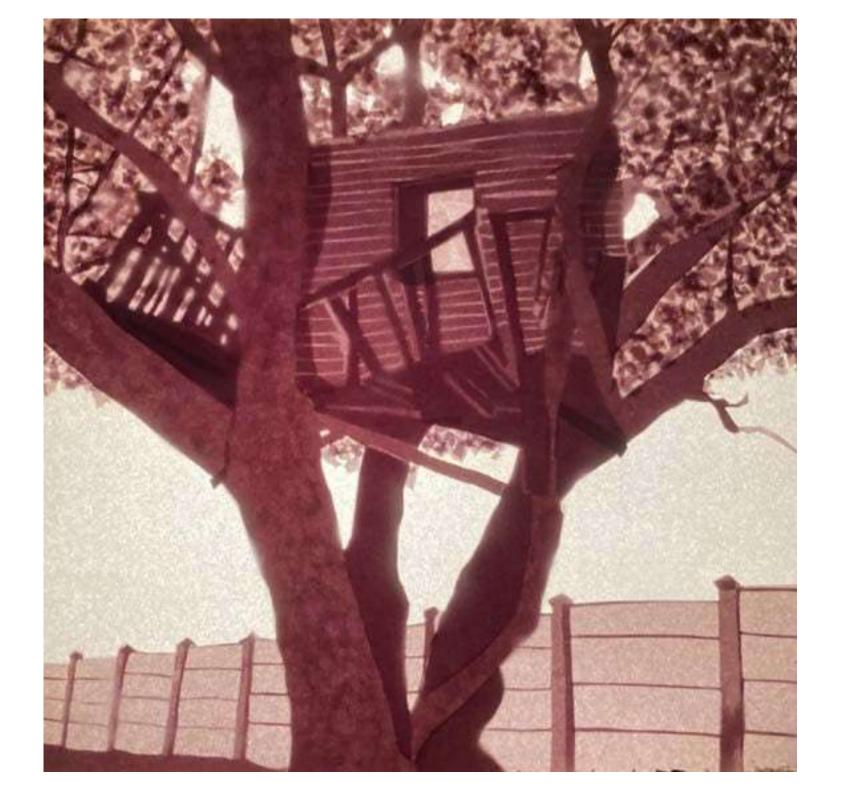


Figure 3 (390 mm x 370 mm)



Figure 4 (440 mm x 250 mm)







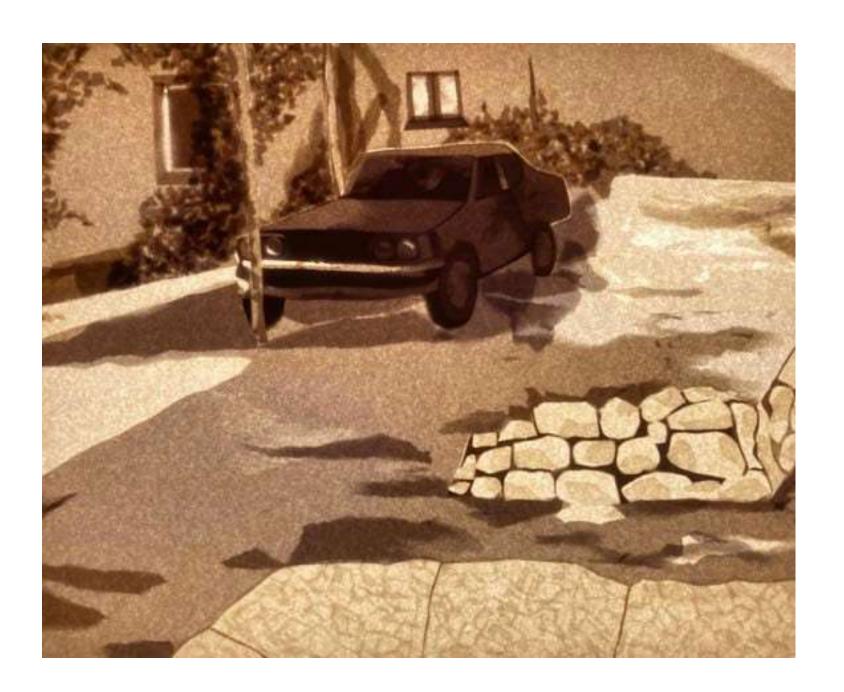
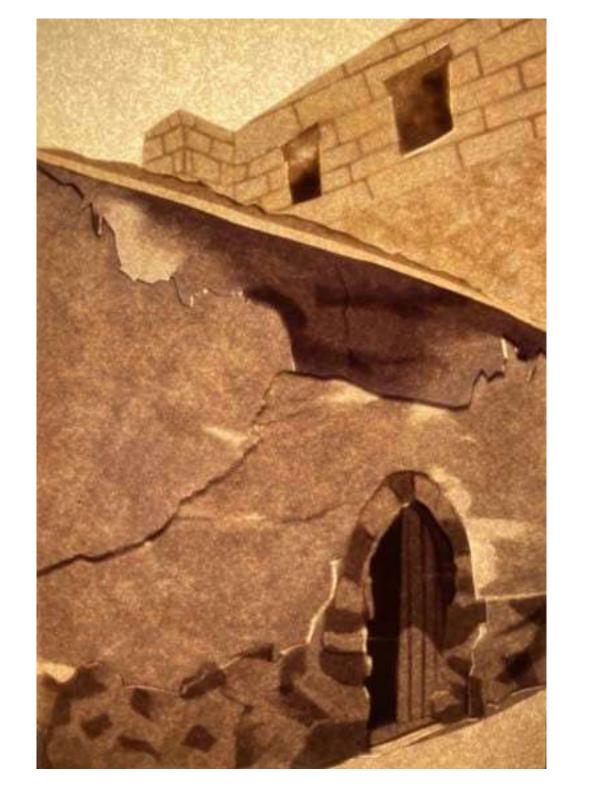
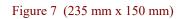


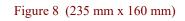
Figure 6 (310 mm x 240 mm)

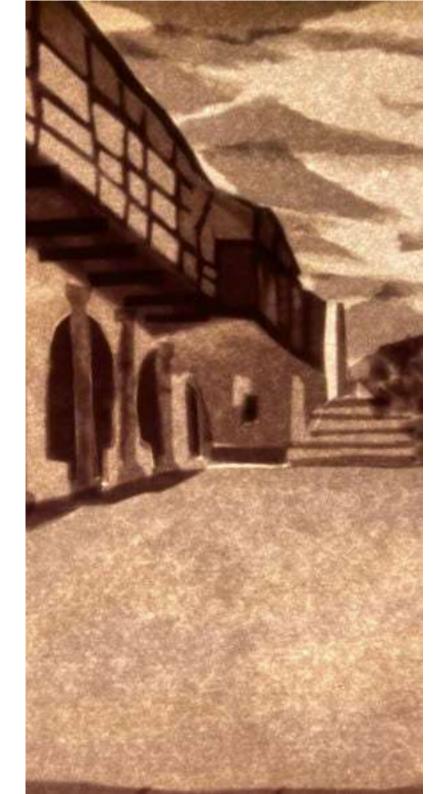


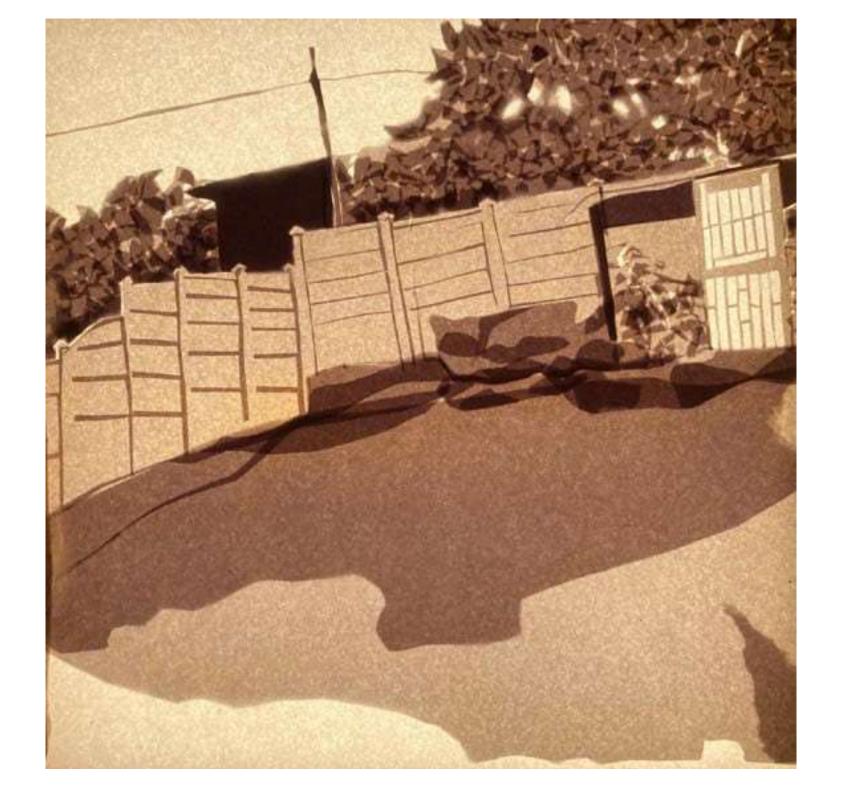


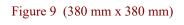


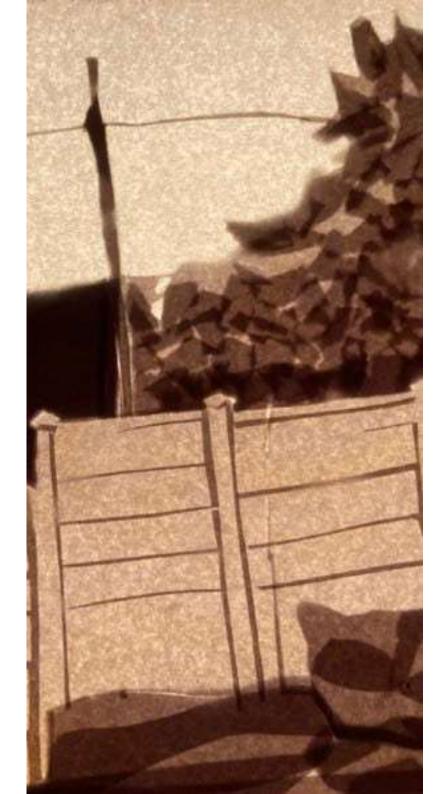


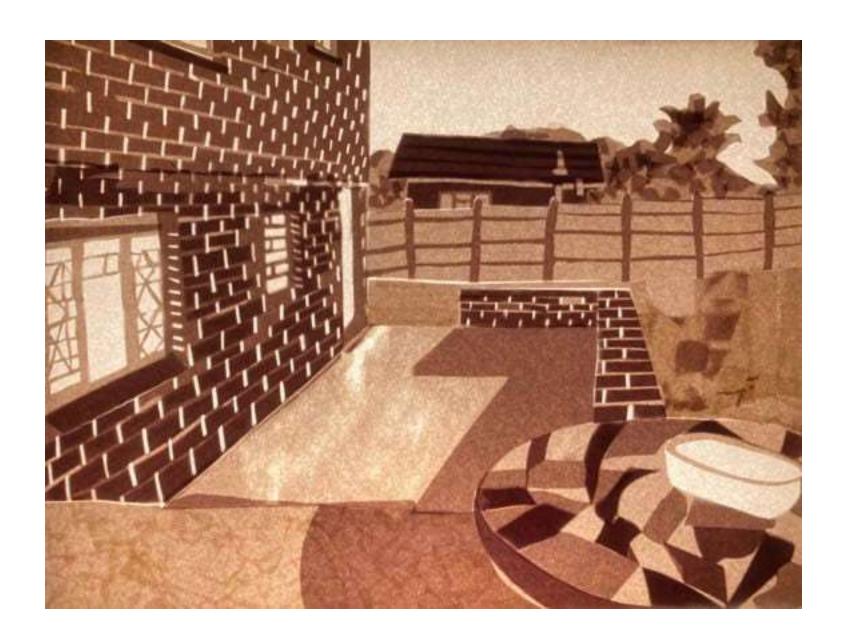
















Continuing



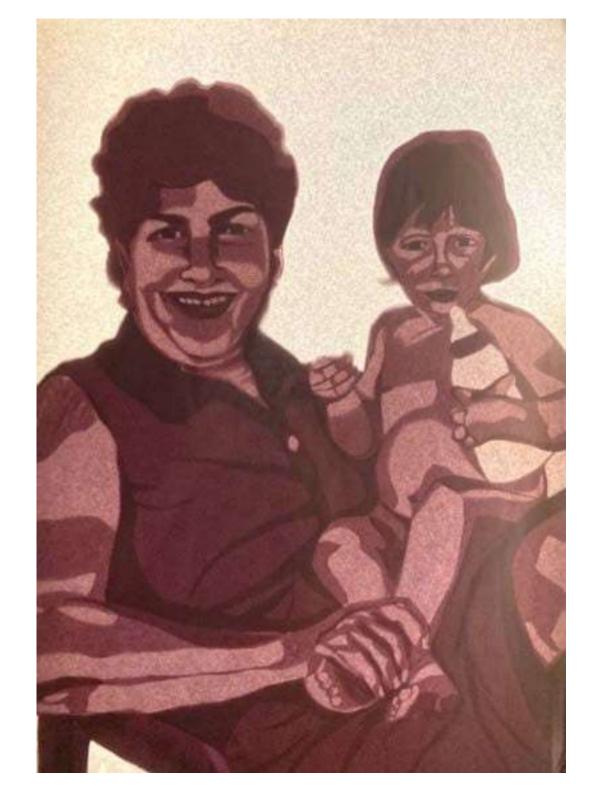
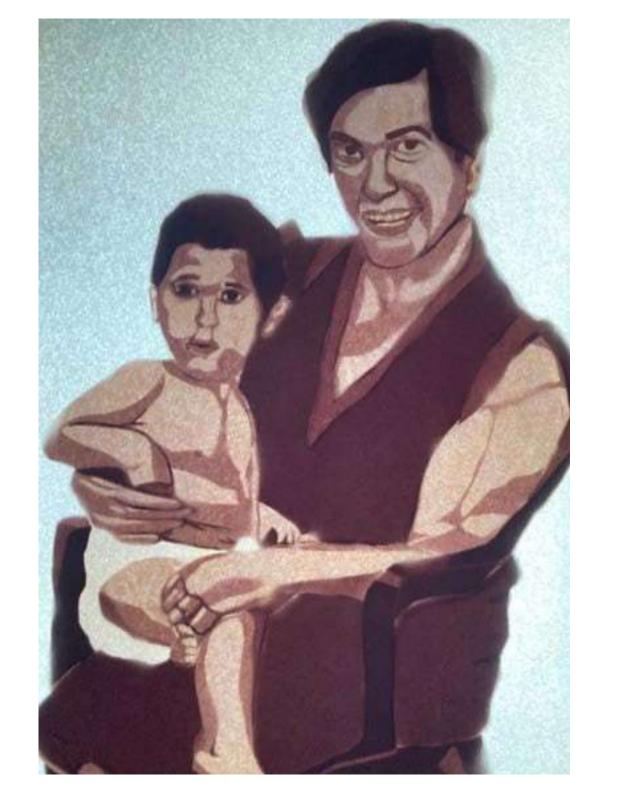




Figure 1 (590 mm x 395 mm)



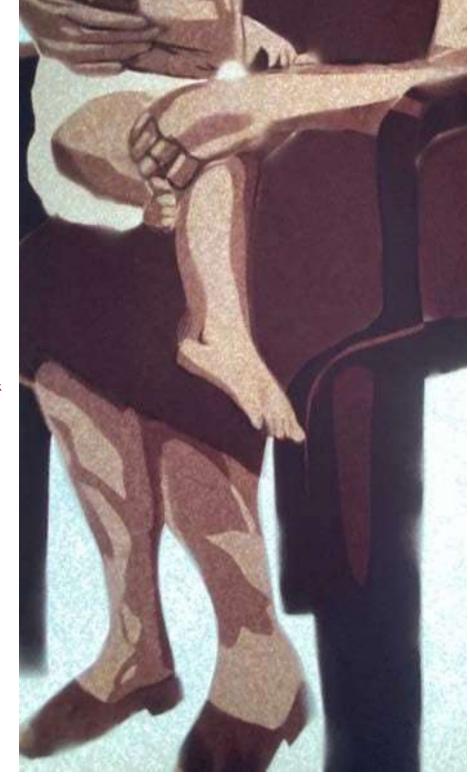


Figure 2 (610 mm x 410 mm)





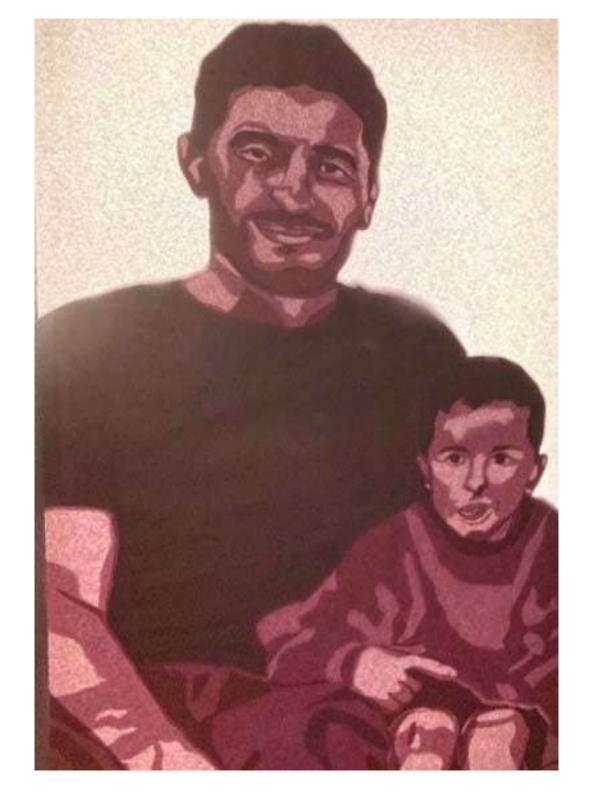


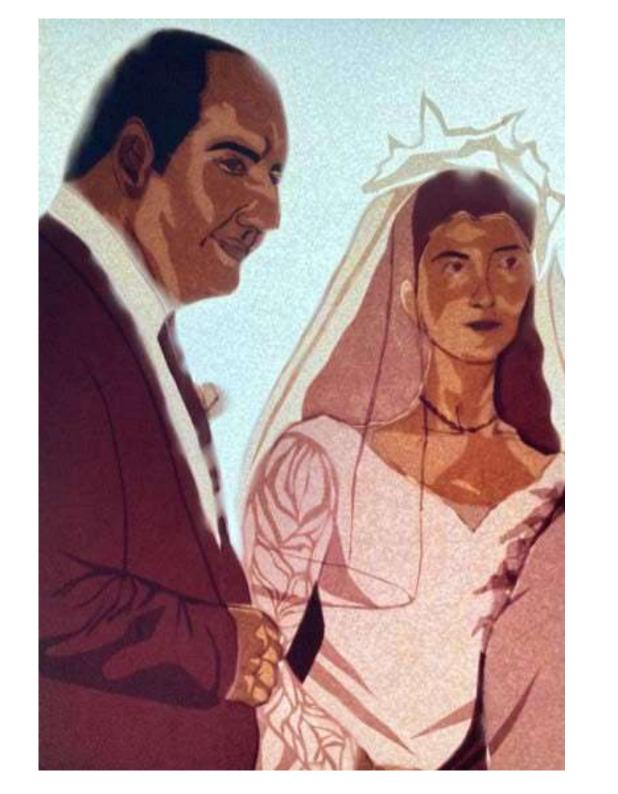


Figure 3 (590 mm x 395 mm)





Figure 4 (600 mm x 415 mm)



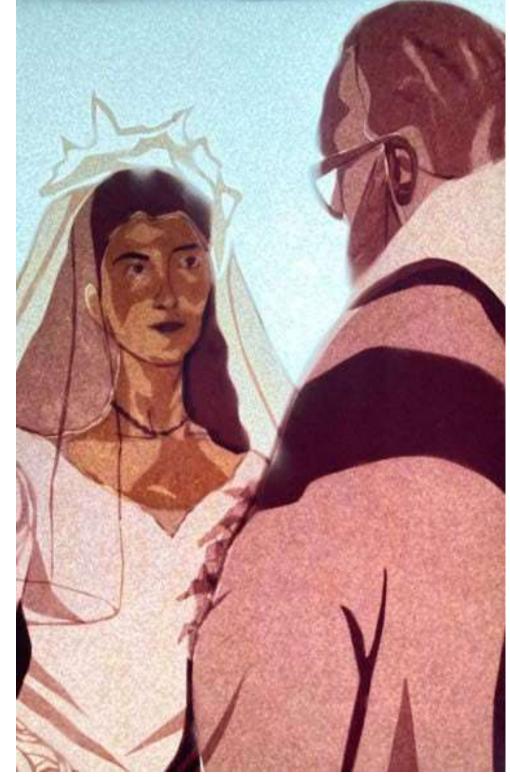


Figure 5 (700 mm x 470 mm)



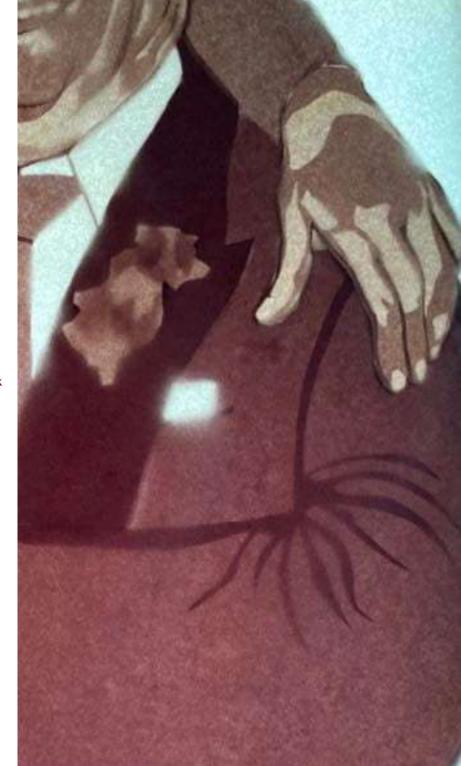
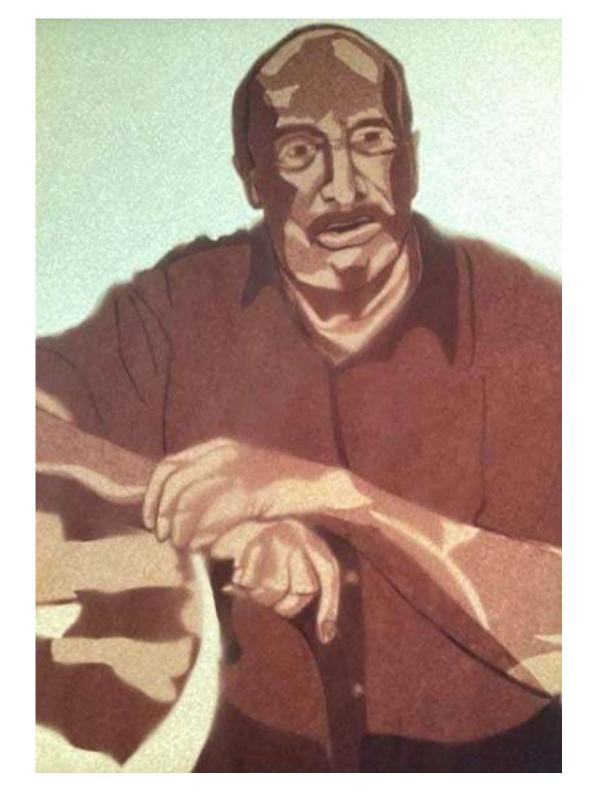


Figure 6 (720 mm x 500 mm)



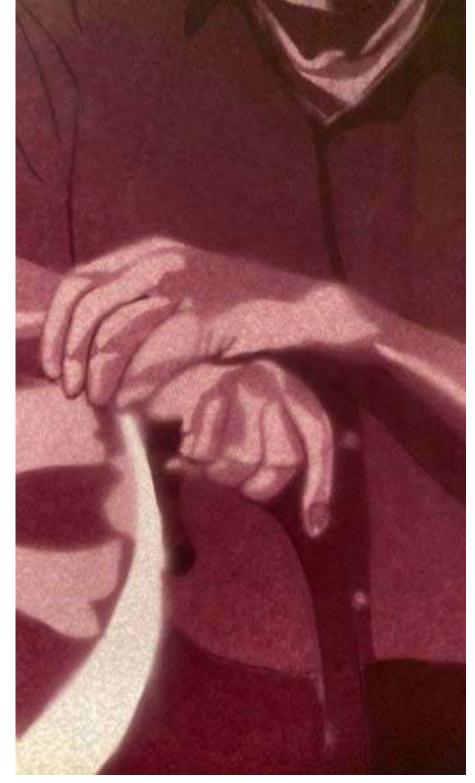
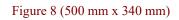
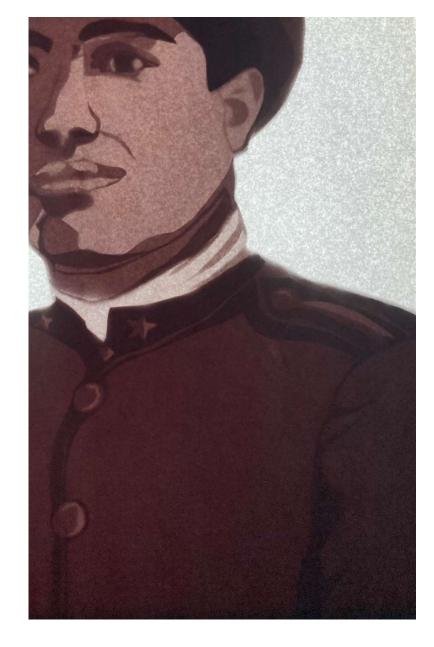


Figure 7 (515 mm x 360 mm)



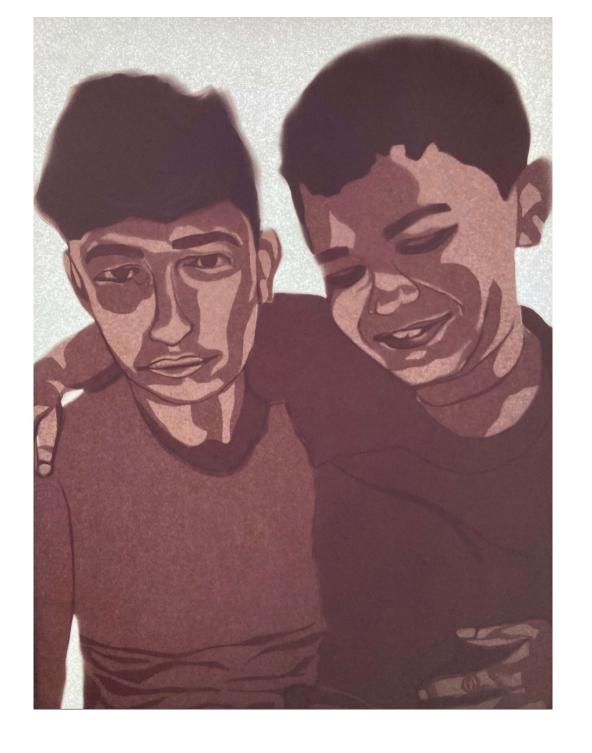


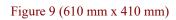




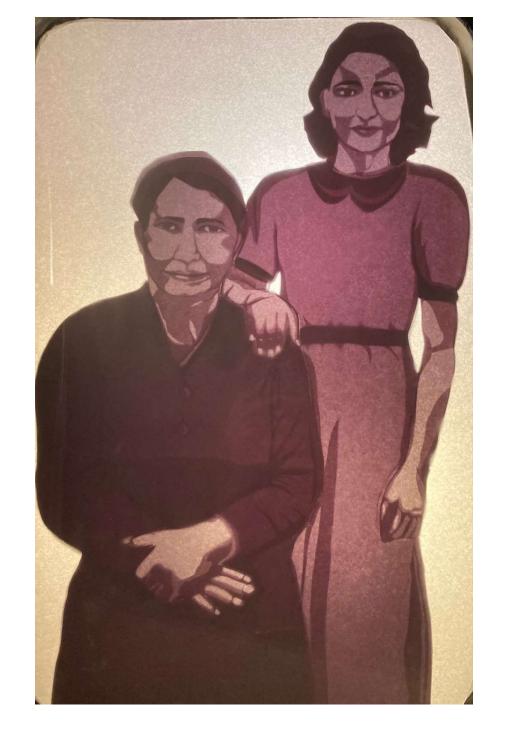


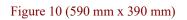














Belonging



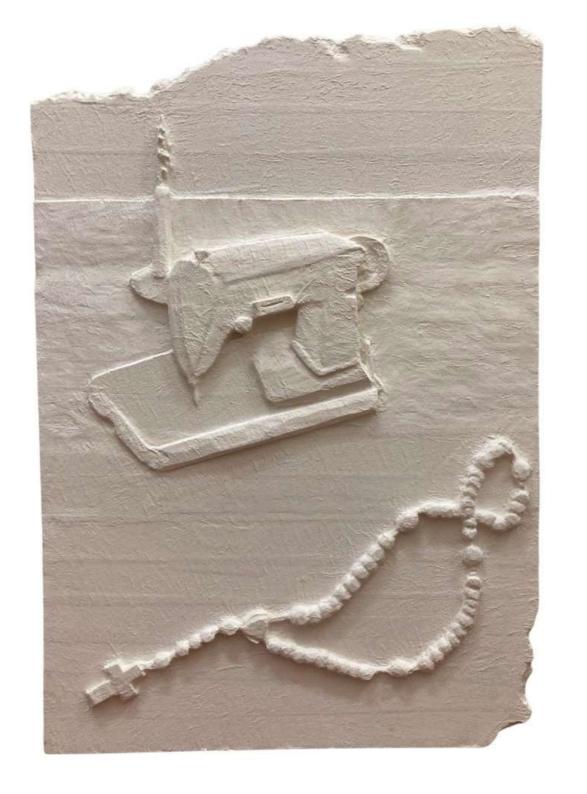




Figure 1 (1480 mm x 1000 mm)





Figure 2 (1500 mm x 1000 mm)

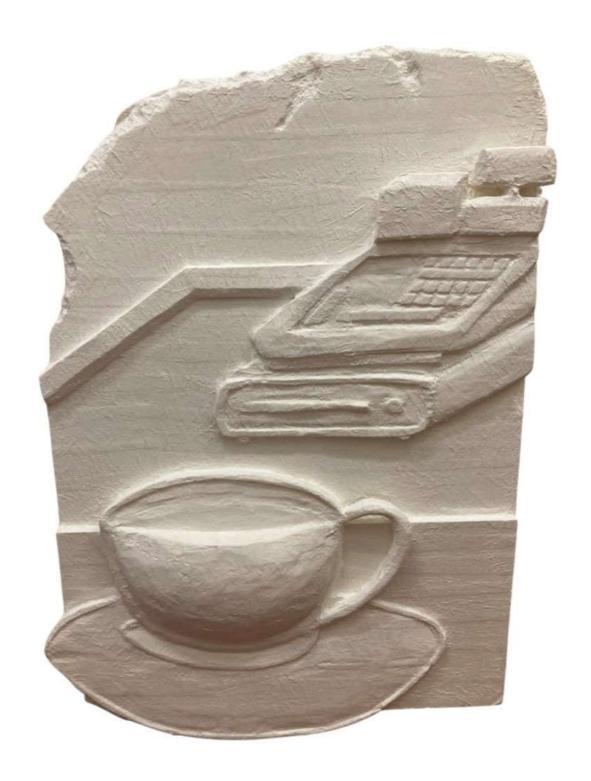




Figure 3 (1500 mm x 1000 mm)





Figure 4 (1330 mm x 1000 mm)





Figure 5 (2000 mm x 1500 mm)





Figure 6 (2000 mm x 1500 mm)









Yiayia Stavroulla

A sound piece titled, 'Remembering' plays in the exhibition space and is made up of recordings of conversations that I have had with my grandmothers as they recall their memories and share them with me.

Sound Piece:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TKOStERxO0VviTtd nCYHOjrIS-5qM Re/preview?usp=sharing

(If the link does not work, I have uploaded the sound piece onto Vula under the 4th Yr Exams Nov 2021 assignments tab.)

The sound piece plays from various speakers placed throughout the exhibition space. As the viewer moves closer to certain pieces, the audio becomes clearer. This creates dislocation, disassociation, and movement within the space.