



Looking In / Looking Out

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Background

Cultural theory and art history show that visual framing systems influence how objects and images are perceived and interpreted.

Existing Research

- Lucy R. Lippard – *The Lure of the Local*
- Argues that identity is closely tied to geography and the places people have lived. Lippard suggests that artwork grounded in specific locations can resist cultural standardization and highlight local narratives and histories.
- David Batchelor – *Chromophobia*
- Examines how Western culture historically associates color with excess, superficiality, or disorder while positioning whiteness as purity, rationality, and order, revealing how visual systems reflect cultural bias.
- Ariana Medina-Castillo
- Demonstrates how museum display practices—such as framing, placement, and curatorial interpretation—can shift the meaning of cultural objects by removing them from their original cultural or geographic context.
- Bridgette Jackson
- Finds that racial identity and implicit bias influence aesthetic experiences, suggesting that perception and interpretation of visual objects are shaped by broader social and cultural structures.
- Abidin et al.
- Research on engineered bamboo mat boards highlights that framing materials are not only structural supports but also carry cultural, environmental, and design significance.

Discussion

- Studio practice functions as a form of knowledge production: cutting, burning, weaving, and sculpting materials generate research insights, not just objects.
- Identity appears in fragments: manipulating canvas and food forms reflects how Filipino American identity is layered, relational, and shaped by memory, home, and diaspora.
- Memory and inheritance are embedded in materials: sculpted foods and domestic imagery reveal how cultural and family rituals carry emotional and historical significance, connecting past and present.
- Material disruption reflects how Filipino American identity is layered, relational, and shaped by memory, home, and diaspora.

Results

Key findings from the ongoing studio investigation include:

- Physical manipulation of canvas mirrors the fragmented and negotiated experience of diasporic identity.
- Framing systems such as mat boards and display structures shape meaning and visibility.
- Sculpted food objects function as emotional vessels, carrying comfort, tension, and inherited memory.
- Domestic Filipino American space creates both boundaries and belonging.
- The evolution of the project itself reflects identity's non-linear and fluid nature.

Significance

- Demonstrates art-making as knowledge production.
- Expands framing theory into domestic space.
- Positions material disruption as cultural analysis.
- Shows identity as layered and process-based.

Project Status

- This research is ongoing. The findings presented here reflect current developments in the studio process and may continue to evolve as experimentation expands.

Project Strengths

- Integrates theory and hands-on material practice
- Grounded in lived, autoethnographic experience
- Iterative and reflective methodology
- Connects interdisciplinary scholarship to embodied making

Other Limitations

- Subjective and experience-based
- Not statistically generalizable
- Focused on one individual's diasporic experience

Future Directions

- Expanding the work into installation-scale presentation
- Incorporating audience engagement or response
- Exploring intergenerational dialogue within Filipino American households
- Comparing diasporic material practices across communities
- Further examining institutional framing systems and cultural translation

Purpose

This project investigates how studio-based material experimentation can function as a method of cultural inquiry, specifically examining how visual, spatial, and domestic framing systems shape Filipino American diasporic identity formation.

Gaps in Research

- Studio practice is rarely treated as a form of knowledge production.
- Limited research examines material disruption in diasporic contexts.
- Food objects are rarely studied as emotional or cultural archives.
- Domestic immigrant rituals are often theorized but not materially explored.

This Project

- Treats cutting, building, sculpting, and weaving materials as research methods.
- Connects cultural theory directly to studio experimentation.
- Positions studio labor and material processes as a form of cultural inquiry.

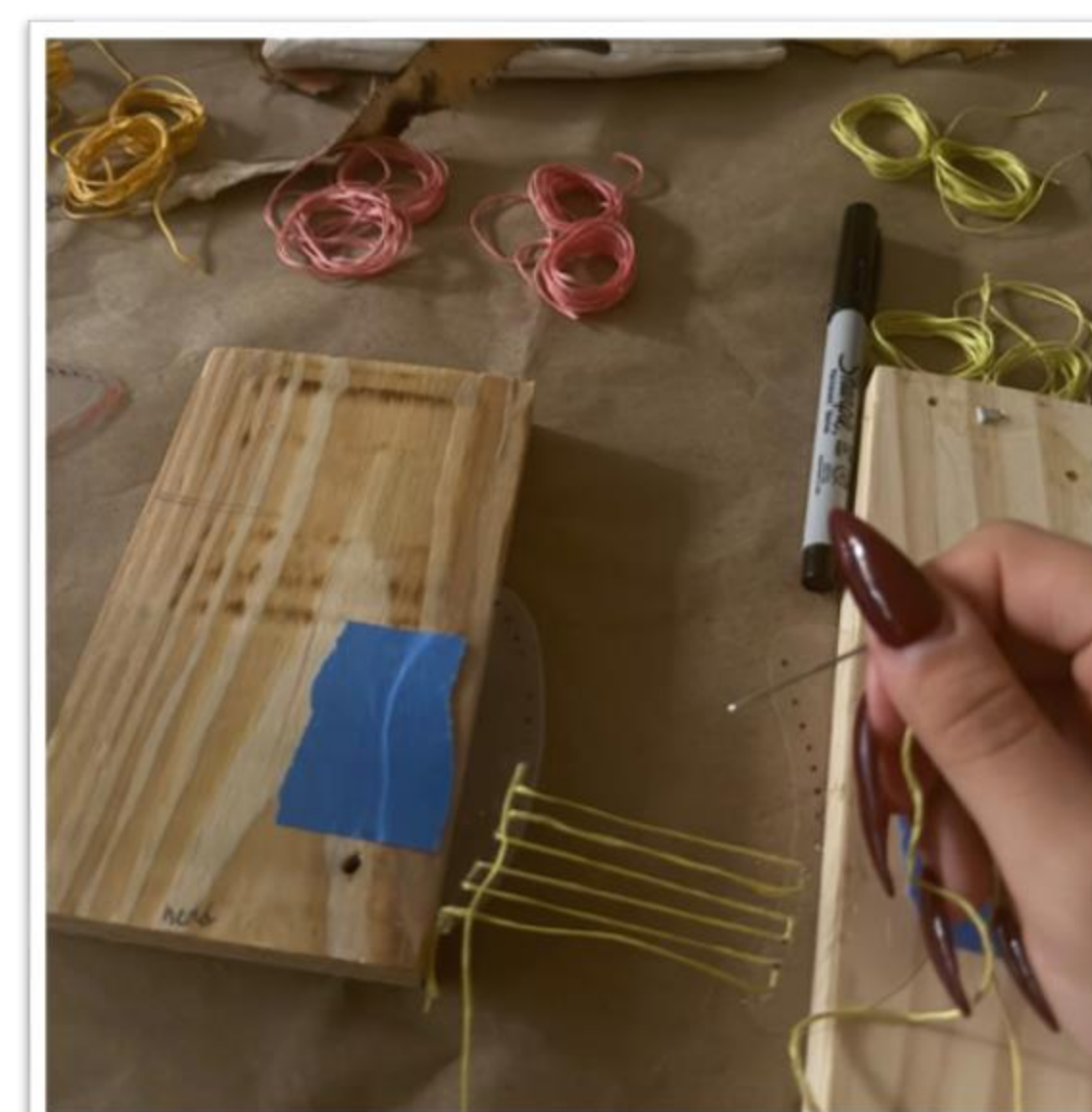
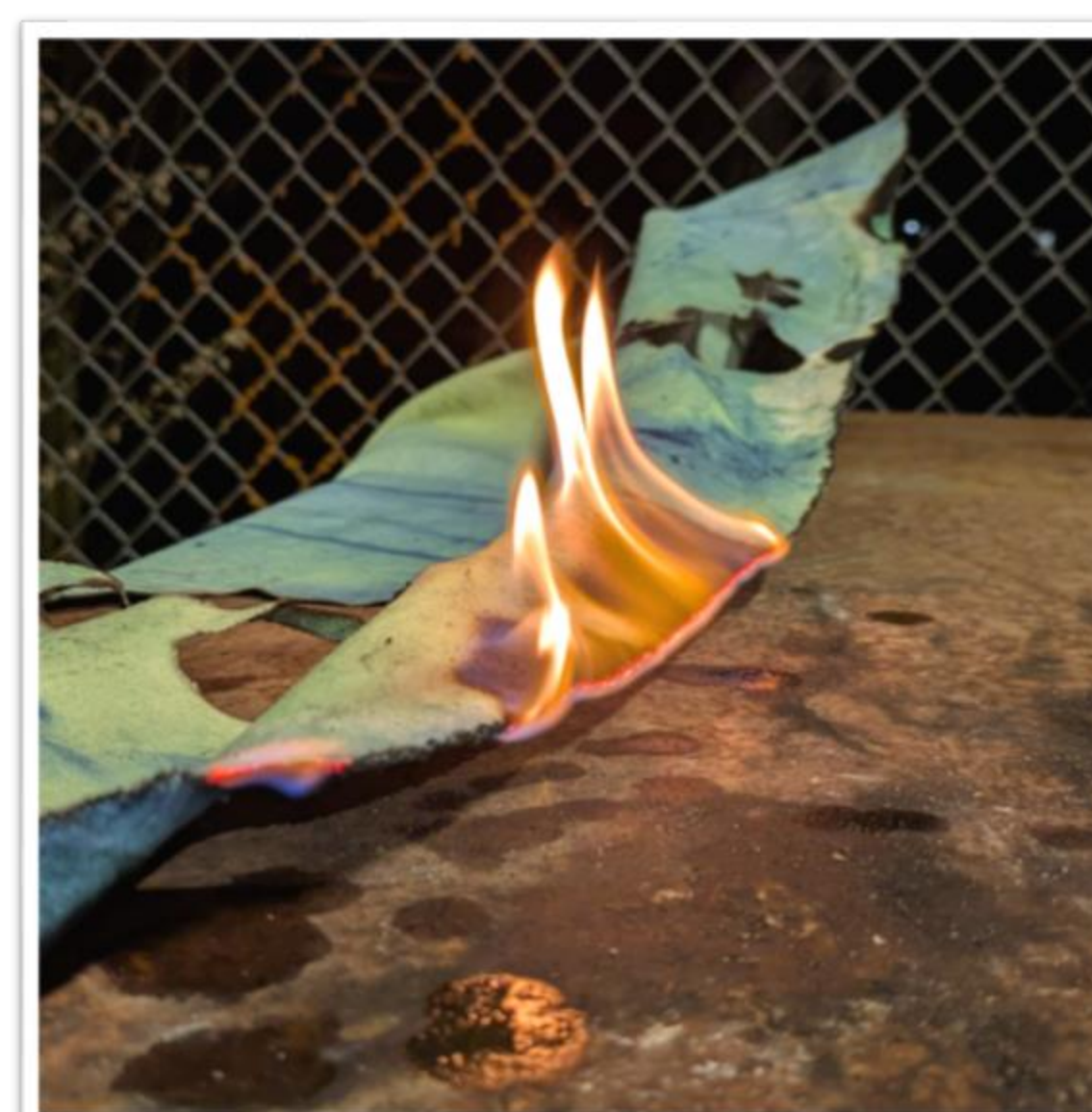
Purpose

- To examine how material experimentation reflects Filipino American diasporic identity formation, memory, and relationships to place.

Research Questions

- Central Question:
"How do the boundaries of being raised in a Filipino American home influence my emotional connections to food, landscapes, and my representation of them in paintings and sculptures?"
- Supporting Questions:
 - "How can altering canvas reflect fragmentation?"
 - "How can disrupted landscapes convey distance from homeland?"
 - "Can sculpted foods hold inherited memory?"
 - "How does Filipino American upbringing shape relationships to food and space?"

Process Images



Methods

Participants

- Autoethnographic focus on artist-researcher.
- Filipino American raised in Florida.
- Ongoing studio collaboration with mentor.
- Materials treated as active agents.

Materials

- Canvas (cut, torn, burned, weaved)
- Embroidery thread
- Hand-built clay food forms
- Constructed mat boards
- Paint + gesso
- Weekly written reflections

Analysis

- Qualitative, interpretive reflection
- Comparative review of structural vs disrupted works
- Emotional response tracking during making
- No statistical analysis conducted

Phase 1: Structural Framing

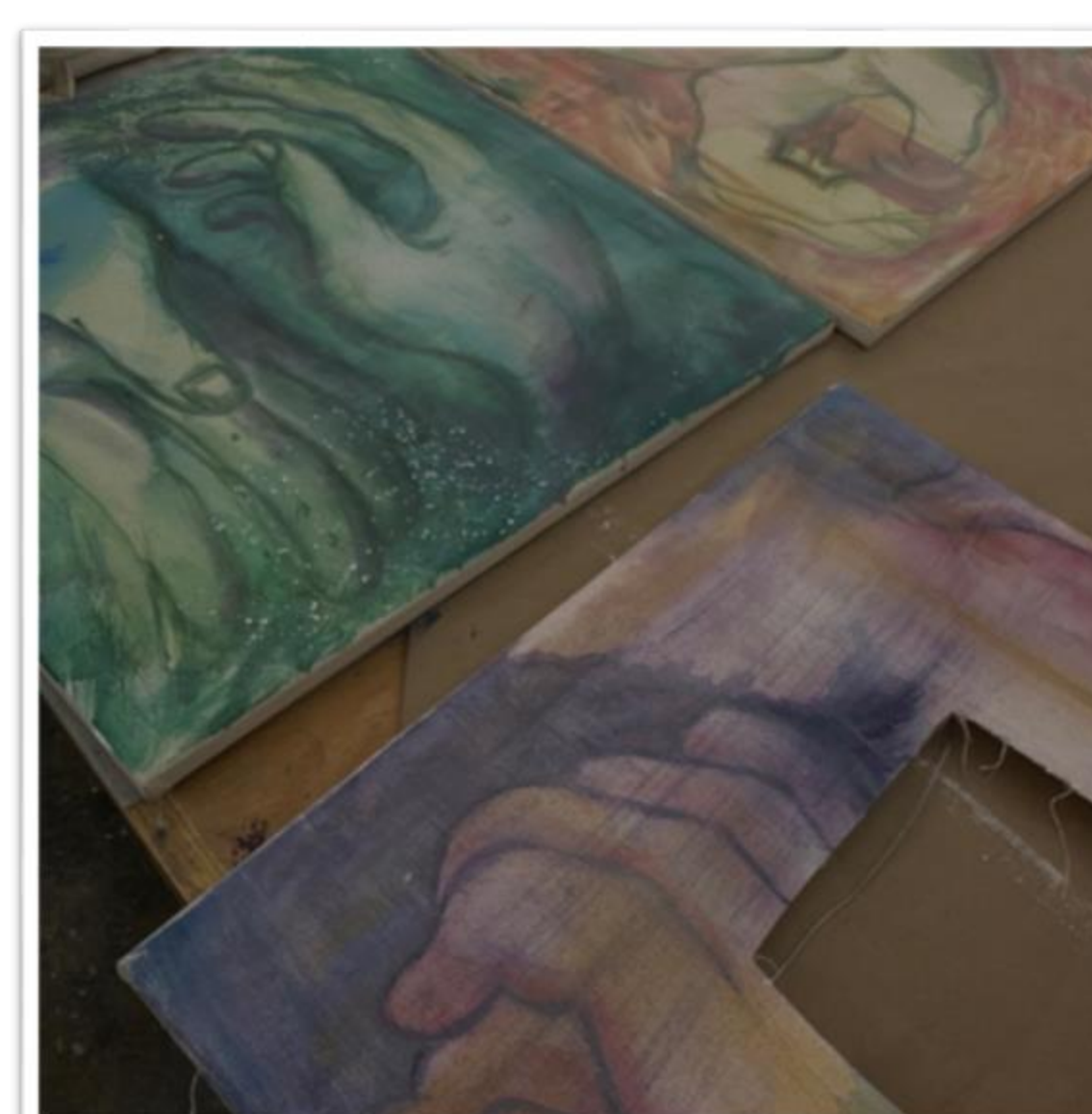
- Mat boards were constructed in the Arts Teaching Lab, focusing on **presentation systems and institutional framing structures.**

Phase 2: Conceptual Development

- Weekly scholarly reflections informed the project's **theoretical grounding.**
- Project direction shifted from structural framing toward **surface and material experimentation.**

Phase 3: Material Intervention

- Gesso-prepared canvas was manipulated through cutting, tearing, and burning to produce experimental paintings. Canvas fragments were then cut and interwoven with embroidery thread into clay sculptures of childhood Filipino foods, linking material experimentation with memory and cultural identity.
- Process was cyclical: reflection → making → conceptual shift.



Conclusion

- **Looking In / Looking Out** shows that making art can be a way of learning — not just presenting ideas but discovering them through physical engagement.
- As my research mentor cuts into canvas and recreates foods from their home, the process becomes a space of exchange, allowing reflection on memory, inheritance, and how culture is shared and reinterpreted.
- By tearing surfaces and reshaping familiar domestic forms, the work challenges simplified ideas of Filipino culture and opens space for layered experiences of intimacy, distance, mentorship, and lived experience.
- Identity is not a single, fixed image. It shifts depending on who we are with, what we inherit, and what we carry forward, forming in fragments, relationships, and quiet negotiations between past and present.

References

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