

# Graduate Research Seminar – Thesis Outline

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## I. Background

I often draw inspiration from the physical distance between my family and me. I'm interested in the role images play within this distance.

In "Am I Missing Something?" (2018) I started visually exploring the feeling of being somewhere while not being there. For this short film I had my father, who lives in Curacao, send me videos of his surroundings and filmed myself looking at them. With this film I questioned myself if images could ever function as a substitute for a human relationship.

In the last year I made works that were mostly shaped by the feeling of homesickness. I made a photo book out of a 1-second video in which mosquitos are flying around in the sky and wrote a text about visiting my family. Sometimes I think of myself as merely a visitor, which bared an abstract resemblance to mosquitos flying around and visiting people where and when they can.

The film 'Last Time I Saw Grandma,' is made up out of filmed fragments of my last visit to Curacao while my grandmother was still alive. There are a lot of clips of my grandmother telling a story, reminiscing a memory. I would film her hands as she moved them very vividly while doing so. They're fragments of stories and memories, the context of them is lost due to this fragmentation.

A personal motivation for my graduation project is that my grandfather is still alive and full of stories and memories that I have access through via email.

My father's side of the family is from Suriname: a country I've never been to.

I didn't grow up feeling half Surinamese, and as I am white, I get a lot of questions about it.

His stories and memories help me grasp a part of my identity that I feel distant to.

The idea of reconstituting my grandfather's personal archive together with him does not necessarily mean that the outcome will be that I fully grasp this part of my identity.

I would rather look at it in a way that there's a gap inside of me and instead of trying to fill it I'm going to gaze into it.

Since this is quite a personal project, I would like to explore the larger context of it within my thesis.

Asking myself questions such as: what is a personal archive? What are other people's personal archives and how do they give meaning to it?

How do we 'speak' with an archive? What do we tell about it and in return what does it tell us?

## II. Thesis Statement

In this thesis I will explore the personal archive by approaching this subject through three different methodologies: A field research, a theoretical research and a creative written text in the form of a journal.

## III. What are you going to write about?

I would like to start my thesis with a playful and poetic field research by having conversations about the personal archive. I would like to talk to people with different kinds of backgrounds (for example a playwright, an architect, a feminist, etc.) to have a dialogue about what someone's personal archive is and how they think about a personal archive.

This will (hopefully) bring me to a lot of new insights and questions about my own personal archive.

These questions will lead me to the second part in which I would like to do a more theoretical research about how we 'speak' with an archive. Telling stories is a big part of understanding the context of an archive. Their historical context should be taken into account when interpreting an archive. How is identity connected to this?

In the last part I'll shift to my own perspective by giving insight into a journal I'll keep about how I select the moving images for my project, how I correspond with my grandfather and what my treasure hunt looks like.

## IV. Outline

### *The Personal archive*

Introduction: finding a personal archive

I. Field research personal archive

Perspectives on and interpretations of a personal archive

II. Theoretical research the personal family archive

Historical context, identity, how do we 'speak' with a personal family archive?

III. Journal

Journey of selection process

Treasure hunt / correspondence with my grandfather

Conclusion

## V. Bibliography

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