

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Draft 01 Version 02

13th Oct 2022

by Aitan Ebrahimoff

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO MAKE?

“I haven't got several identities: I've got just one, made up of many components combined together in a mixture that is unique to every individual.” (Malouf 2000)

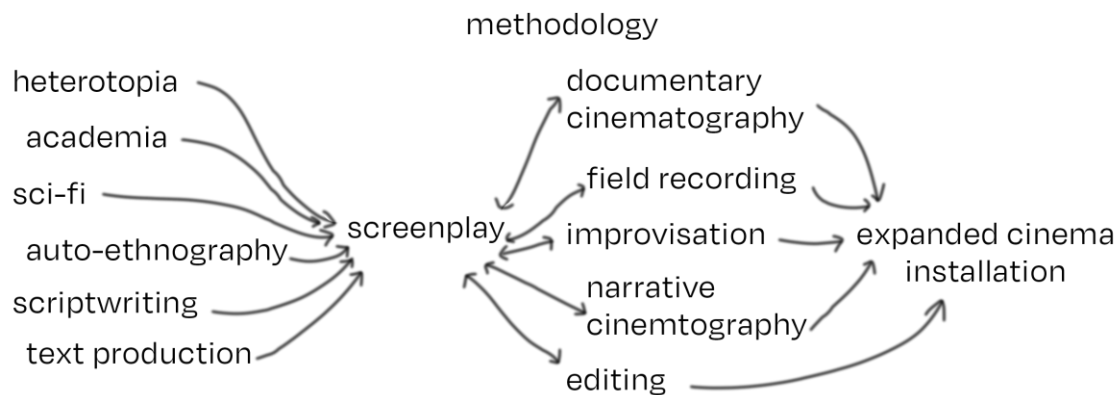
“The heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible.” (Foucault 1984)

As a filmmaker and video artist with a background in Anthropology, how can I use the tool of auto-ethnography to build fictional worlds? How does one even conduct ethnography on oneself? What are the ethical concerns of importing personal memories, pre-memories, and the memories of others, into fictional realms? How does science fiction, speculative fabulation, yes all SFs (Haraway 2021), relate to the diasporic experience? How can Foucault's heterotopia be brought to life through cinema in aid of other stories?

These are questions I aim to explore through artistic research with a view to create an expanded cinema installation. By digging into my personal archive and prehistory I aim to substantiate my scriptwriting with personal raw material. I call this process Purge. Until recently my artistic output has been single-channel videos and films designed for cinema conditions, where the audience is physically separated from the cinema projection or LCD screen at an objective distance. Purge invites the viewer to physically step into a deconstructed film; a space where text, image and sound are disjointed but flow rhythmically together.

HOW DO YOU WANT TO MAKE IT?

This point of departure follows a Duchampian reflex whereby “the definition—and thus also the method of the work of art is determined again and again during the artistic process.” (Slager, 2015, p28). I thereby understand artistic research to be an iterative process in which the method and output inform one another until the installation is created. It is an iterative process that, ideally, refines itself to create the most concrete result.



I call my methodology Purge. Purge is an anthropology of today using first-hand material. I will dig into personal archives, record lengthy interviews, and express the real and unreal histories erased from memory and stored in my body. It is formative, fragmented. As Kolk observes, “[the] different sensations that enter the brain at the time of trauma are not properly assembled into a story, a piece of autobiography.” (2014, p223). I am discovering the output of Purge as I progress.

It comes from a place of curiosity, resonance, and a desire to build an enduring research-based practice. Artistic research is “characterized by the continuous movement between fluidity and rigidity, ...non-discipline and discipline, the particular and the universal.” (Slager, 2015, p33) The personal is the gateway to the universal. Purge delves into personal material.

WHAT IS YOUR TIMETABLE?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO MAKE IT?

Purge and the formal separation of the key cinematic elements (image, sound, text) allow the viewer to go beneath the surface of the film. What happens when the viewer is physically situated or surrounded by disparate elements of cinema's language? It also offers the possibility of juxtaposing elements and allowing the installation space to encompass "several sites that are in themselves incompatible." This formally relates to my main theme of the diasporic experience, where several elements are composited in a single identity. In my case...

"I scour my memory to find as many ingredients of my identity as I can. I then assemble and arrange them. I don't deny any of them." I too shouldn't deny the multifaceted parts of my identity: British parents, Mother with Polish grandparents who spoke Yiddish, father with Iranian parents from Mashad and Tehran, an artist/filmmaker, a non-practicing irreligious Jew.... All these factors combine to form an individual, to make a rich tapestry. How can these layers inform my characters in fictional settings? How could I import personal biographies into fictional agents?

WHO CAN HELP YOU AND HOW?

RELATION TO PREVIOUS PRACTICE?

For the past three years my videos and shorts can be classified in a genre I call utopia apocalypse. [describe, explain, examples previous works]

Purge comes from the gut. As a bodily process, it involves exporting inputs with the addition of the host's saliva, fat cells, DNA and so on. Culture shapes experience but it is also embodied. Purge, the next chapter in my practice, relates to exorcising deeply embedded body memory.

My first experiment in disjointed cinema, or resituating cinema by separating its core elements, is through chem peel (2022) an audio-visual installation, I staged at murmur, Amsterdam. The central image was shot on 35mm through a car window as the sun set in Tropea, Italy. The granular texture and oily color palette refer to impressions of endless summer drives. The still image was spatially extended through sound, and an accompanying vinyl wall text describe elements beyond the frame. Interestingly, the image gave me the sense that a protagonist will soon enter the frame, or perhaps just left. I think this engages the viewer in a new way, giving them space to formulate their own impressions and narratives, unlike more dogmatic narrative filmmaking.

RELATION TO A LARGER CONTEXT

REFERENCES

Bogadnovich, S 'MS Slavic Siren' (film)

Foucault, M (1984) *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*/"Des Espace Autres".
Published by French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* in October, 1984.

Haraway, D (2021) *Staying with the Trouble*

Maalouf, A (2000) *On Identity*, trans. B Bray, The Harvill Press, London

Ursula Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag of Fiction*.

Slager, H (2015) *The Pleasure of Research*

Sun Ra's *Space is the Place* (film)

