

My thesis work and research explore comfort and discomfort within the home and the family unit from the perspective of an adopted child. I utilize materials such as glass, fabric, and cast metal to discuss the fragility, comfort, and dissonance of my perspective on adoption. *Myself in the Seam* investigates the tenuous relationship between adoptive and birth parents, their connection to the child, and the influential potential within the nurture versus nature hypothesis. In my thesis, I will be describing my personal history as it relates to the work that I have created during my time in the MFA program.

I was born in Vail, Colorado in 1992 to two young parents who knew they could not take care of me in the way that they wanted. They decided it was best to put me up for adoption and I was placed with my adoptive family the day after I was born. When I was about 8 years old and I began thinking about my biological family and wondered who they were. I felt guilty for being a burden to my birth parents and on my adoptive parents for not being perfect. I also felt conflicted with my identity because I was created by one family, raised by another and it left me wondering who I resembled the most. This led me to ask my parents about my biological parents to hopefully reach some answers to ease the guilt, the pain, and confusion. They were candid with me but they didn't have the depth of information that I wanted, which allowed me to fill in the missing information with my imagination. It was, and remains, confusing as these people are strangers to me but my heart feels so connected to them.

Adoption is a complex psychological landscape that is difficult to describe to someone who has not been a part of the process. Through the book Birth Bond

by Judith Gediman and Linda Brown, I have come to learn more about the perspective of the birth mothers and other adoptees' stories. The book focuses on the psychological trends and stories of both adoptees and birth mothers and compiles them to discuss the complexities of adoption. Adoptees preternaturally have similar perspectives and feelings as I do, even though we have different lives and grew up in different decades. The book goes on to say,

“Adoptive situations and relationships are different from non-adoptive ones, not necessarily better or worse, but still different. [...] Adoption is built on problematic foundations, It occurs when the parents who conceived a child are unable, unwilling, or unfit to care for it. [...] For every adoptive mother and her joy, there is a birth mother and her sorrow.”<sup>1</sup>

Through my personal experiences, I realize that there are opportunities to discuss the complexity of identity, guilt, and emptiness especially in those involving adoption. One way I express these feelings is through my artwork as both a personal cathartic experience, and as a declaration of my experience. Through the process of art making, creation allows me to materialize internal perceptions and make them reality. I work with many materials, however, glass is a medium I return to for its dualistic qualities. It is transparent and opaque, light and heavy, fragile and strong. Similar to how I consider adoption, there is polarity and duality in glass. Glass becomes a perfect vehicle to discuss the nature versus nurture

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<sup>1</sup> Gediman, Judith S., and Linda P. Brown. *Birthbond: Reunions between Birthparents and Adoptees--What Happens after--*. New Horizon Press, 1991. p. 2.

paradigm and how these two developmental forces influence adopted individuals and define family for them.

For most people, the family is a central identity and family members are there for you through every step. While I did have a supportive and close family, I still felt that there was a void. The home was always a complex idea for me because I knew that my other half was out there. Through continued interest and research relating to my personal experiences the book Home — So Different, So Appealing which is an exhibition book of a show in which artists discussed the universal concept of home. A passage that I connected with states,

“Whether approached as dwelling, residence, or place of origin, home is one of the most basic concepts for understanding an individual or group within a larger physical and social environment.”<sup>2</sup>

This resonated with how I felt about my idea of family as being more than just a place, it’s about the people who live there and the experiences that come from that household. In addition to the home as a personal shaping tool, landscapes of familiar places have a lasting impression on individual identity.

My research is a documentation of the process of dissecting the multifaceted perspective of my adoption and the emotional hardships that come with building new relationships and maintaining the existing ones. I am researching the many aspects that frame adoption such as the technicalities, the emotions, and the connections between the families and the child. In addition to the home as a

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<sup>2</sup> Noriega, Chon A., et al. Home--so Different, so Appealing. UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press, 2018. p. 17.

personal shaping tool, landscapes of familiar places have a lasting impression on individual identity. Landscapes have an opportunity to influence how we form memories both as an individual and as a collective society. Personally, it is important to highlight the complexity influencing attributes that inform the experience of an adoptee that informs this sense of otherness in a world where people come from different backgrounds and upbringings.

While conducting my research, I looked to references not only in the visual arts but also in writing that discussed ideas about landscapes, adoption, and art. I was drawn to the book Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion by Patricia L. Price who is an Associate Professor of Geography in the Department of International Relations at Florida International University. It discusses people's relationship to landscapes and issues with territories specifically within North America. She describes in her book the complexity of claims to land when specifically examining the border of the United States and Mexico as a multilayered collection of stories. The border is one example of many histories colliding causing questions to be raised about citizenship, ancestry, and territories. Price discusses how we relate to place and how there are many layers of narratives, politics, and histories associated with places. I found this book to be important for my work as an influence because it describes how people have emotional ties to specific places that are distinct to that individual. Within my work, I am exploring how the landscape has been a contributor to my identity beyond just being associated with memories. The narratives we tell about places are formative to individual identity and sense of belonging. Price explains how there are

rich histories to places and if you were to look into that area, you will find other people's ties to that land. Home offers an opportunity to develop into a person defined by unique experiences. *Dry Place* describes how these narratives of land are a process of writing and rewriting stories and how real these practices are and yet it is a mental construct.

“How can we speak about something that isn’t really real yet at the same time whose effects are really powerful and palpable, of something that we wish were really real yet that we quietly know cannot be, something that is not even a thing at all?”<sup>3</sup>

As I looked from ideas of place I began researching writers and artists that worked through traumatic experiences. Within art, there is an opportunity to talk about difficult subjects in a cathartic way. An artist that has inspired my work goes by the name The Fandangoe Kid or Annie Nicholson. Her work is primarily text-based installations, clothing, and posters where she discusses taboos of death, grief, mental health, and gender constructs. Her work was influenced by the sudden loss of several of her family members due to a tragic accident. Through her work, we learn more about her struggles and pains of living day by day without her family beside her. Her pain and sense of loss is different from mine, however, I connect with her work because I had suffered years of feeling grief and loss without my biological family. She has inspired me to utilize text within my work to talk about these complex emotions. This led me to use neon

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<sup>3</sup> Price, Patricia L. *Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 3.

text within my work because of its bright light and quality of being a loud presence yet also a soft light. These contrasting elements are an important quality I incorporate within my process because many feelings and emotions I have concerning my adoption are dualistic and sometimes contradicting. Nicholson utilizes a similar method by using bright colors with such heart-wrenching statements. A piece that resonates with me, states, “I wish I could bottle all the intricacies of our love so those beautiful details never leave me.” (fig. 1) I enjoy how this statement is specific to her experiences but it can be shared by many who have experienced loss. My work is designed to similarly approach speaking about something specific that can be understood by many. This allows the audience to connect with the presented ideas in their way and allow a moment of empathy.

Another artist who has inspired me is Janine Antoni specifically her piece *Umbilical* (fig. 2). It is a cast sterling silver of family silverware and negative impressions of Antoni’s mouth and the negative space of her mother’s hand as she gripped the spoon. This artwork is influential to me because it addresses the maternal relationship between a mother nurturing her child by feeding them. Antoni states, “The silver spoon is an object that speaks of domesticity, ritualization and the fetishization of a tool used for a basic need.”<sup>4</sup> It made me consider how we can emphasize the importance of parental relationships and how nurturing children is oftentimes an under-appreciated role. Feeding others is a vulner-

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<sup>4</sup> Ball, Teacher. Instagram Post *Umbilical*, 2000. Janine Antoni. Think: What Is Passed down? *Instagram Online Stories and Posts Viewer - Picuki.com*, 2019, [www.picuki.com/media/1943565113476051471](http://www.picuki.com/media/1943565113476051471).

able and intimate role as there is a responsibility and trust with this simple action. In light of this, I wondered about the rolls of my two mothers having both provided me sustenance to grow, one while I was in the womb and one for the rest of my childhood.

I create my artwork to act as a window into which I allow people to see into my perspective and experiences. I see my art pieces as a way to communicate with the audience the feelings and thoughts that I have when it comes to being an adoptee. This perspective is important because so regularly it is a misunderstood or even a generalized assumption. Many adoptees have feelings that are shared, however individual experiences offer different perceptions. For example, I was talking to my brother who is also adopted and he told me that he felt abandoned and unwanted. To a degree I can relate to this, however, his family had several children before him while I was the first child in my family. His sense of abandonment is heightened by the knowledge of the circumstances his family was facing. Neither of us feels that we would have rather been with our biological families as there is no replacing our family, but there is this unrest and the lurking feeling of wondering what things could have been like had we not been adopted. In response to this, I broke down what aspects of adoption were the most impactful:

1. Home as a shelter and mental structure
2. Landscape as an identity shaping tool
3. The family unit as a dynamic

#### 4. Societal understandings of adoption.

In addition to concept, the process of sculpting is important to the work I create as physicality and materiality bring a grounding element to my ideas. Adoption is complex and using materials such as glass, metal, wood, and fibers offer a place of familiarity. Selecting materials for conceptual value is significant to the work in order to convey meaning. For example, I choose fibers like fabric and wool offer associations with warmth and comfort which is important when my work focuses topics of family and the home. In addition to sculpture providing conceptual value, there is a healing component to the process of creation. Pouring a copious amount of time and materials for the soul purpose of creating art is a profound moment of effort for expression. In the book All About Process by Kim Grant examines why creation is important and its relevance to society. Art is a different form of expression and Grant goes on to state, “The artists’ labor is a means of objectifying thought and feeling, a belief that derives from his overall conception of art as the materialization of spirit.”<sup>5</sup>

During this last semester of my third year, we are facing the COVID-19 pandemic that has closed down the country. As of writing this, I am in my room in quarantine to prevent exposing myself to the virus. It has killed many people around the world and medical professionals are having a difficult time getting ahead of it. In light of the pandemic, my thesis show has been migrated from a physical show to an online show and I am forced to complete my show without the studio. It is

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<sup>5</sup> Grant, Kim. ALL ABOUT PROCESS: the Theory and Discourse of Modern Artistic Labor. PENN State UNIV Press, 2018. p. 37.



heartbreaking for me as I have worked for this exhibition to complete my masters for three years. Many works have not been completed and likely will not be until the virus has been rendered into a state of control. Until then, I have created watercolor renditions of my work as I imagine them to look once completed. Additionally, this virus's progression was rapid and I was unable to capture photographs of some of the work that suits my standards. Moving forward when discussing the work, there may be mentions of how I have not completed the work or that I do not possess photographs of the pieces and this is due to the current state of affairs.

*Home Sweet Home* (fig. 3) is a piece that focuses on the topics of a landscape as identity and home. The work possesses a soft texture where the fibers wrap around the topographies of the shapes. Resembling a geographical map, the forms jut out from their base creating peaks and valleys that weave between the ranges. The edges of the facets have a fuzzy aura coming off of it as some of the fibrous material is not tethered down. It has a sense of density with its scale reaching six feet and yet it has a lightweight feeling. Just by looking at the work, you can sense a softness, akin to a wool blanket, on your fingertips. I utilized wool as it is a material that has diverse applications and was utilized throughout history for its warmth and versatility to be used in many applications such as clothes and tapestries. It is also used industrially as a protective barrier layer to prevent surfaces from damage. I chose to use felt for these associations of comfort, home, and protection as I find my surrounding topography to be comforting to me. In addition to its representational quality, wool roving is a soft and insu-

late material that historically women utilized in their craft. This is important to the work to highlight the domesticity of the material to correlate home and landscape as synonymous. Through the creation of this piece, I am paying homage to the women in my family who have taught me to use my hands by showing me how to crochet, knit, and quilt.

The mountains that are depicted are based on the Rocky Mountain Range in Colorado, where I spent my childhood. This landscape is home for me as I spent many hours hiking and playing. This place is a part of my identity, as Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion has described as a personal narrative construct associated with the land. By living in a place and having experiences and memories associated to the land, place becomes significant to the individual and community. Price describes this phenomena as Topophilia which is defined as, “a distilled term, appropriate for my suggestion that landscape, narrative and identity are bound together in place.”<sup>6</sup> My work comments on our identities to land and it is beyond memory and at least for myself, about adoption, there is a tie to place wherever my birth parents are. It is reasonable to assume that individuals create strong ties to places associated with birth families in the case of adoption. When adoptees learn more about their families, understanding place is key to knowing where their heritage comes from and can inform the adoptee’s perception about them. For example, I knew that my birth parents lived in a small ski town called Breckenridge, which is not far from where I grew up and I imagined who they were based on the place they in which they chose

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<sup>6</sup> Price, Patricia L. *Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 28.

to live. These places influenced my idea about both my families and thus held high importance in my mind. As landscapes possess layers of soil and rock, so do my personal associations to the place I call home.

Continuing my work in fibrous materials, I created a piece titled *From me to you* (fig. 4) to highlight the inter-connective nature of roads that can be used to unite individuals or to keep them apart. The work has a delicate feeling as it sways with the room's breeze with a gentle set of lines running across the surface in a long panoramic ratio. The quilting batting has an off-white color, reminiscent of raw cotton, and has a smooth, even surface as a result of industrial production. It was important to make use of quilting batting for its soft and insulate qualities to highlight the warmth and barrier that quilts have between the two faces of fabric. Using techniques for felting, I detailed thin lines that made the streets of my hometown that led to my birth mother's hometown. I am interested in the blending of places to unionize their associations. In this case, the hybridization of starting places speaks to my family heritage and how roads connect everyone. Linking these places was important to me as I feel bound to my birth family physically. As mentioned before, quilts are a family tradition that I have carried on and find the use of those materials appropriate when discussing family and heritage. The batting is also the insulative material for quilts that is often unseen but provides the warmth similar to my birth families being unseen yet are sources of comfort to me. This work has a soft-spoken quality as the lines are delicate which makes it easy to overlook, similar to how easy it is to overlook the individual lives of others. Utilizing traditional materials in an experimental

process continues the conversation of personal narratives creating emotional connections to the land. Even though I have not been to my birth mother's hometown, I still feel connected to it through my birth family. By drawing the lines of places of provenance to myself and my birth mother, I am showing a direct connection with her.

I have been conflicted about how I feel about heritage and the environment as defining and influencing factors in my life. For a long time, I believed that heritage did not have a lot of influence beyond physical attributes, as I found myself to behave just like my adoptive parents. However, my opinion has since shifted after getting to know my birth mother a little bit. Years of self-convincing that I couldn't possibly have anything in common with my birth parents came into question during our first conversation. The way we speak and sound is eerily similar to me and I can hear parts of her voice that remind me of my own. These works were created to counter my lifelong beliefs and open my mind to the possibility of possessing attributes.

*It's the Vermonter in You* (fig.5), is a piece that delves into modern day reunions within my own adoption and communicating through text messages. The work is made out of bright white neon tubing with the front of the letters being painted black to imitate the text on a cell phone screen. The words stretch across the wall as one continuous sentence as it was as a text message. This work comes from my many years of hoping and dreaming to reconnect with my birth mother and build a relationship with her because I have felt that it would fill a place in my heart that had been void. I have recently begun to talk with my birth mother

after all these years of separation and silence, through phone calls and text messages. So far it has been slow and we are getting to know each other but some precious moments have come from these short interactions. There was one that stood out to me and made me tear up because it made me feel like I was accepted as her own. We were messaging back and forth about things we liked and we agreed on a lot of opinions to which she responded, “It’s the Vermonter in you.” At that moment I felt that I belonged, that I was a part of her family. I had never considered myself as a Vermonter before because I had never been there but it made me consider that as a part of my identity. I wanted to bring this text into my work because it encompasses the emotional complexity that comes with adoption and discusses heritage.

Taking inspiration from the conversations I’ve had with my birth mother, I began to consider our relationship and how I feel about my adoption. I created the work *How long have you been carrying that moment?* (fig. 6) to talk about this burden that we place on ourselves, the weight of guilt, loss, and labor. It is a video documentation of a performance, projected on to the wall, in which I am carrying a seven-pound, solid glass form which resembles a seed, over the mountain pass between Copper Mountain and Vail Mountain. My birth mother went to a small mountain clinic in Copper presenting with severe abdominal pains. Upon swift examination, the doctors quickly found that she was in labor and had to be rushed over to Vail Hospital which was a twenty-minute drive away. Up until this point, she had not known that she was pregnant and at that moment, everything changed for her. I think about how terrified she must have

been and that I forever changed her life. I wanted to focus on that moment of realization and impact that it must have had. It was important to me to recreate the trek between these two places to pay homage to her sacrifice. I reenacted the imagined labor by carrying the glass piece to recreate my own perception of labor and document my burden as she must have carried for years after the fact. The hike was fifteen miles and took seven hours, one minute, and thirty-seconds to complete.

I made the glass piece the same weight I was when I was born to function as a parallel to the physicality of her bearing my weight. The glass piece was especially important for this work as it was meant to represent myself as a baby. Being made of clear glass, it absorbs the environment around it to assume its surrounding as to comment on nurture versus nature. It is made of glass and is not made from the environment that it is placed in, however it projects its surroundings. Additionally, I created a shape that resembled that of a seed and a womb to reference the beginnings of life.

My body ached and my muscles became weaker throughout the performance from the heaviness of the glass piece. I feel guilty for causing her both physical and emotional pain, for tearing into her body and heart. This work functions to both help myself overcome the overwhelming sense of guilt, the painful memories of my past, and to empathize with my birth mother in the best way I know how, through art.

Paired with the video piece is an installation of a table with warm white, neon text that reads, "How long have you been carrying that moment?" (fig. 7) Most

people have lived with the pain, guilt, regret, shame, or other emotions that are tied to a moment in their lives that have been following them. I have been carrying this moment with me since the moment I thought about how I may have impacted my birthmother's life in a negative way. I remember how my perspective shifted from a fairytale to an overwhelming moment of depression and anxiety. Could I have caused someone so much pain that it was near unbearable? Together, the installation and the video act as a diptych proposing how even a small object or moment could have an impression when imposed on one person. The moments that we carry our whole lives become so heavy, it's too much to bear. How many times have we relived that moment? I have allowed it to shape and change who I am. I have allowed this moment to have more power over me than any person has ever had. Why do I allow it to be so powerful?

*Between Us* (Fig. 7) is an installation of a table that is in the shape of a trapezoid created out of pine wood to reflect that of the interior of a home with the neon running around the perimeter of the table. There are three place settings comprising of hand thrown ceramic plates and bowls, blown glass cups, sewn placemats, and hand carved eating utensils. The ceramics are a soft, egg shell white where you can see the swirls of where the hands had shaped the pieces. The blown glass wear has a thick bottom and a mottled surface reminiscent of rippling water. The dinner table in my family has always been a focal point within my family where we talked about our days and things we learned in school. It was a time I looked forward to growing up because it was family time. In adoption circles, there is primarily a trifecta of people that create a special link and

have a role to play, like that of a family. The child and the mothers. They are forever bound together in a maternal bond, unionized by the blend of families. I have always felt drawn to my birth mother because of the physical connection and has been a part of her for the months as a fetus. The separation from her left a gap in my heart and her absence was ever-present. I have noticed that many adoptees have felt that this separation has been more of a traumatic experience and presents life-long struggles such as abandonment issues. In my case, I have felt that there was someone missing and I missed my birth parents dearly. That connection, like other accounts from other adoptees, never diminished.

This piece represents the coming together of individuals to share a meal. It is an opportunity to learn from each other and discuss a variety of topics. In a way, this installation embodies a dream I've had since I was a child where my two families could come together and function as a unit.

I began considering the literalness of family and how we define who constitutes family. My mother always told me I was the product of two families and couldn't have been the same without that unionization. I wanted to tease out the associations of heritage being a blend. I created a photographic series called *Bloodline* (Fig. 8-12) in which a quarter inch line was tattooed with nothing but my blood from the top of my right middle finger, up my arm, across my chest, and down my left arm to my finger tip. I am emphasizing the idea of a bloodline that runs through me bringing it to the surface of my skin as a statement of connection and familial ties. Tattooing was an important process as it is a way of mark mak-



ing and a form of identity declaration. In the case of my tattoo, since it was created with no ink and was only created with my blood, it faded away slowly returning to the skin. The temporary quality is important for this work because I wanted to utilize only my blood to discuss the significance that blood is our life source. Blood is one of the most precious substances we create as it functions to bring vital nutrients across the body. Similarities can be drawn to how family members often support one another and bring vital care to each other. Blood also carries valuable genetic information that separates your own from everyone. If my blood were tested to cross reference for genetic similarities, it would only point to my birth family.

The line draws along to contours of my body, connecting my hands visually, unionizing sections of myself as I am concatenating two bloodlines. The full circle moment of adoption is that acceptance that bloodlines fall into two family trees as adoptees have a place in both and are significant. I have always been fascinated with human obsession of heritage and I've come to realize through my thesis work that it is the pursuit of understanding where we come from. Human nature is finding a place of belonging and I'm beginning to understand that more through the method of creating art and building a relationship with my birth family. It is a long process to find resolution on the borderline of families.

Continuing with concepts of identity sourced from different inspirations, I created *Two different kinds of love* (Fig. 13-14). This work is composed of two glass baby bottles with cast silver nipples and white screw caps. The baby bottle nipples are distinguished from each other as one nipple is an artificial nipple and

the other is a casting of a real nipple. There has been a long argument of which is better, and in my perspective, there is not one that is better than the other. The important measure is how the maternal power is utilized and it becomes a guiding light in most people's lives. I have been fascinated by the idea of the maternal influence in shaping a child and how unseen forces shape who we are. *Two different kinds of love* is a piece that offers a comparison of two different childhoods. Neither one superior but remain vastly contrasted. The nipples are cast, pure, silver as they are precious. Silver has a strong and long history with humans as it has been used for utilitarian wears and for value trades. Sterling silver has been a symbolic gift to newborns in order to bring love to the newborn. The saying, "born with a silver spoon in their mouth" referencing the privilege of being born into a place of wealth and bountiful luxuries. It's difficult to not feel that way in my life. I have been given every opportunity imaginable and I see this piece as homage to that gift. This work has not yet been completed as of now but will be in the near future.

The final work in my thesis exhibition *Nurture/Nature* (Fig. 15) is a piece that encompasses the overarching ideas and the essence of the show. It is a warm white neon piece that wraps around a cylinder that wraps around the surface of the cylinder. The neon illuminates in such a way where it looks as if it were being written. The power source lights up the neon from one end of the word to the other, following the glass tubing. As the line wraps around the letters, they write into each other in a delicate pattern, "nurture nature nurture nature nurture na-

ture.” Pairing with *Two different kinds of love, Nurture/Nature* is a piece that proposes two influencing spirits that both have their place in an adoptee’s life.

The words are from handwriting I collected from letters written by my birth mother and adoptive mother. It is significant in this piece to represent the words from my mother and birth mother to show the partnership between them as a formed family unit. My adoptive mother’s handwriting inscribes “nurture” while my birth mother’s, “nature”. It is essential to bring the sense of the individual into the work to highlight the people who act as the foundation within adoption. The neon wrapping itself around a pillar inscribing the words speaks to the cycle that is within adoption. One cannot exist without the other. Having the words mounted to a pillar gives it a structural quality of strength and centeredness. Pillars support buildings and are metaphorically referenced as major supports or focal points in conversation. I see these two forces as being my support system. I chose to utilize neon for this work because of it’s quality of light being that of consistent and beautiful color. Neon has a presence that is meant to shine bright through the space, casting its glow on to everything(the surrounding space). The way neon brings words to life, into a 3D space, is unlike any other material.

My thesis show, *Myself in the Seam*, is a conversation about perceptions of family, home, environment, landscapes, and how we emerge as individuals from these influential components. My art gives opportunity for viewers to consider the diversity of family, love, and identity. Voicing my story allows others who share similar experiences to think about their own lives and potentially heal from the pain. Advocacy is not the main goal of my work, however, I believe that by

sharing something as personal as my life allows others to see the perspective of another. My work is a cathartic experience to allow for healing and understanding of the complex situation that is adoption. This experience has given me more insight not only within myself, but within others. Getting to know more about my family through this process has been challenging yet rewarding. Moving forward, I plan to continue this conversation through art and writing as it is dear to me. This thesis work is a product of learning to sit within myself and to reflect on my perspective on adoption. In the future, I hope to include others in my research but for now, my own perspective is what I know best and it has been a beautiful experience getting to know it more.

COVID-19 has created an environment of loneliness and lack of purpose in a way. I am devastated by my inability to finish the work I set out to make this year. Seeing everyone's lives be impacted by the current state of affairs has been tough and traumatic. My work speaks to trauma, environment, and community which have become more important to me now than ever before. This global pandemic took away so many of my opportunities like my thesis show, commencement, my graduation trip, and uprooted my regular day-to-day lifestyle. What is important is that moving forward, I will be able to look back on this time and learn from them. I may not always have a studio, or access to one, and I will still be able to make art. I have created renditions (Fig. 16-19) of what the show would have looked like if it had not been for the pandemic. I am proud of the work that I created even if it will be exhibited online and as of now, I'm not sure when the work will be completed. I will complete it as it means more to me

to finish than to just receive a degree. The situations that we are placed in don't make us who we are, rather it is our actions and conviction that set us all apart.

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