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In China, collectivism refers to the notion of everyone coexisting in a system or group and sharing a collective self. One of the illustrations is the concept of mother-child symbiosis. This project documents the stories of four new generations who had conflicts with their mothers when they were growing up, based on their own childhood experiences. It represents the various values of two generations in today's Chinese society and shows the unhealthy symbiotic relationship inside the family. Explore weaving and sewing techniques to demonstrate bonding and connection. I attempted to challenge two generations to reconsider the collectivism that underpins family authority.

TOPIC

Motherhood
Childhood
Collectivism
East-Asian family
structure/
relationship

METHOD

Collecting
Simulating
Sewing/ Textiling

MEDIA

Collecting
Simulating
Sewing/ Textiling

↔ With Maya Ober

After having an insightful dialogue with graphic designer and feminism activist Maya Ober, my thoughts on the context and audience of the work were reflected by her opening query regarding the narration language in the video essay. She mentioned, 'If the target group is Chinese mothers, Mandarin with English subtitles might be appropriate. It now seems more targeted toward the Western market.'

She was worried that, despite my story's compelling nature, racist stereotypes about Chinese and Korean (East Asian) moms in western culture were reflected in the story's portrait of motherhood. She refers to the 2000 American television series "Gilmore Girls," in which a strict Korean mother enjoys planning her daughter's life. This reminds me a lot of the dominating mother figure in my project.

Looking back at my video essay, I intended to contrast my mother's domination in the intro by using the ordinary image of a typical mother. The following inquiry is, 'Are there mothers who are supposed to be ordinary?' What qualities should a mother have? In what ways can one be a "good mother"? According to the mass media, a mother is portrayed as being unselfish, devoted, kind, diligent, and romanticising motherhood. This is the ideal mother. Society has constructed these images. Then is the stereotype of an "East Asian mother" a "bad mother"?

Her unique perspective made me realise that the study's direction can be introduced into additional perspectives to discuss, such as gathering and analysing images of mother figures who appear in Chinese television and film, then contrasting them with East Asian mothers in the Western context, which presents a more complex challenge.

↔ With Francisca Aninat

About the same language issue, Francisca's comments brought up Mona Hatoum's work. *Measures of Distance* (1988) This video piece has a couple of layers. Hatoum reads aloud in English letters that her mother had written to her in Arabic as the text scrolls across the screen. Slides of Hatoum's mother taking a shower were used as the background images. Shows a very close but complicated mother-daughter relationship. The Arabic and English parts of the soundtrack have been given equal emphasis, 'creating a difficult and alienating situation for a Western audience who have to strain to follow the narrative' (Hatoum, 1997)

Arpilera 3 by Francisca was made using discarded fabrics and newspaper fragments that she found at a market in Santiago, Chile. As a revision of the traditional Arpilera and a reframing of social history, she rips the parts apart and roughly sews them together. Arpilera are often constructed from inexpensive materials like burlap and rags. To make a living, women get together to create and sell them. Arpilera usually illustrates poor living situations and scenes of demonstrations that the government has suppressed in order to express strong political themes. It's interesting how the relationship between *Arpilera 3* and my work might be interpreted as reframing oppression's past. Francisca's use of materials got me wondering if I could keep digging up and displaying my childhood memories using my old clothes or writings to naturally reintroduce people to my personal history. Francisca added that when crafting, the peace and detention of hand stitching allowed her to hear her inner voice clearly.

Maya Ober

Maya Ober is an activist, researcher, educator, and designer, based between Buenos Aires and Basel. She is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Social Anthropology, the University of Bern. Her research focuses on the feminist practices of design education emerging at the seam of activism and the institutional. In 2017 she founded depatriarchise design, a non-profit design research platform she currently co-runs with Nina Paim, with whom she also co-directs Futuress, a feminist learning community and a publishing platform.

Francisca Aninat

Santiago, Chile. 1979. BA in Art History from the University of Maryland; BA in Fine Arts from the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile and MA in Fine Arts from the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (London). She lives and works in Chile, where she teaches at the Universidad Alberto Hurtado. Exhibitions include in London, Chile, Mexico, Bolivia and Puerto Rico. She recently exhibited a major installation in the buildings of the historic San Juan de Dios Hospital in Santiago, the first hospital to be established in Chile.

Reference List

1. Hatoum, M. (1999). *Measures of Distance*. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hatoum-measures-of-distance-t07538> (Accessed: 20 September 2022)
2. Hatoum, M. (1997) *Mona Hatoum*. London: Phaidon.
3. Aninat, F. (2008). *What Lies Beneath: Women, Politics, Textile*. [Online Exhibition]. Cambridge. Available at: <https://artspaces.kunstmatrix.com/en/exhibition/9188904/what-lies-beneath-women-politics-textiles> (Accessed: 20 September 2022)