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Participatory methods in art

Exploring Hāfu Japanese identities through photography and 360°video.

Isaura Hernández Navarro

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ABSTRACT

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Isaura Hernández Navarro:
Participatory methods in art: Exploring Hāfu Japanese identities through photography and 360°video.

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I come from Latin America and my personal background is a mix of ethnicities, countries and cultures. Born in Costa Rica but a local in Finland. This duality of my own, encourage the creation of several projects on identity and self-identity.

Starting in 2016 with Uproot, photo series of mixed nationality couples living in Finland. The series dealt with being different in a relationship but choosing to overcome mental, physical and bureaucratic barriers together. Consequently, the idea for the photo series Selfhood emerged.

Utilizing the method of participatory photography, in Selfhood, the objective was to create a long-term photo project with the participants, who are half Japanese and experience our view of self-identity from the multicultural and multiethnic perspective.

Beside the photo series, the 360° video technique was used for the gallery exhibition planned for the project, in the second work: Lonesome. It includes the audience into an immersive experience of the participant's stories and the landscapes of their homeland Japan in a 360° space.

I conclude that participatory art proves to be a competitive method for multicultural and multiethnic identity research. This method allowed me to gain trust with the participants and more importantly to create a symbiotic relationship between the photographer, the camera and the subject.

Key words: participatory art, participatory photography, social practice, identity, 360° video, hāfu.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

I come from a diverse etnical and cultural background, and I have experienced the feeling of not belonging, not only in my home country Costa Rica but also in my current home Finland. The definition of my own identity became a subject of study and led me to create in 2016, Uproot. A project that explored the complexity of being in a multicultural or multiethnic relationship in Finland. The project expanded and slowly directed my attention towards multiethnic and multicultural individuals and their experiences in building self-identity.

The purpose of this thesis is to research the usability of participatory methods like participatory photography in long term projects involving multicultural and multiethnic participants. On the practical side of this thesis, the artwork will focus on half Japanese individuals.

On the next chapters I explore Participatory Art, including Social Art projects that connect with the community and make of the artwork a long-term relationship with its participants. The use of Participatory methods in art and social projects, including how American Japanese photographer Toyo Miyatake portraited identity during his detainment at war camps in 1942 and the collective Photovoice UK use of Participatory Photography in their multiple projects around the world, as tool for representation; the achievements and the different ways participatory methods have been approached and used to explore diverse identities with participants who are multi-ethnic and multicultural.

Using a Participatory Photography method, I shared with the participants a series of meaningful interactions and discuss one's view on multicultural identity. I focus my artwork and collaborate with individuals in Japan, who are half Japanese or second-generation Japanese. The participants have a diverse background, mother tongue and life experiences. Topics of identity, home and belonging, resonated in our conversations and allowed me to connect with them while sharing my own experiences of living away from my home country.

The identities that are form and expressed in the photographs relate to the theoretical composition of the self-identity. I explored the historical aspects of Japanese society and strike deeper into the understanding of Japanese identity.

As part of our Media and Arts degree, the practical phase of this research allocated an exhibition at Himmelblau Gallery in Tampere, Finland. The exhibition HOT FUTURES took place from 19.04 - 9.05.2018. The Selfhood exhibited project showcases photo portraits taken in different locations of Japan that connect the participants to their own life hoods. The process involves stories of their own personal upbringing, shared through interviews, where we were able to discuss openly and warmly.

And lastly, in Lonesome, which is 360° video, where I include the use of 360°cameras. This technique allowed me to bring a more fulfilling experience into the gallery space. I can "transport" the attendants to a faraway land throughout the digital world, in this case to Japan. The artwork focuses on the Japanese landscape alongside the experiences of the participants heard through an audio form.

2   METHODOLOGY

As I approached the challenge to explore the participants view of identity, show-cased by participatory photography; different kind of methods were considered. The first one been ethnography from an outsider / insider perspective (De AN-DRADE, L. 2000). Based on my position as an outsider of the "Half-Japanese" community and an insider from the multicultural and multi-ethnic community I used my knowledge to interact with the participants for the purpose of under-standing their community and the similarities within the members of it. This method allowed me to get a glimpse of their livelihood and to form a collective perspective of their commonalities in matter of the self-identity.

Parallel to this method, I applied interviews with the participants that focused on language, cultural background and experiences while growing up. On these in-terviews we recognized the participant self-identity and the relation that their eth-nicity has with their current life, community and environment they live in.

In addition, I interviewed two experts in the field of photography and film making: Lara Perez Takagi, Director of " Hāfu: The Film and Tetsuro Miyazaki, creator of Photo Project "Hāfu2Hāfu". The expert interviews are viewed as a reference to the approach these individuals took for their own work, both being members of the "half Japanese" community themselves.

The central part of these research is the use of participatory methods, on an ar-tistic research. On the next chapters the participatory method is analyzed with different cases that deal with the representation of the self-identity in a communal environment. As well as ethnography, where in my position I perceive the en-counters with the participants as wholesome (Hannula, M., Suoranta, J. & Vadén T. 2005 | 92-95).

3 THE DEFINITION OF IDENTITY

The self and one's identity are fields of study that date back to the beginning of the 1890's. The view that we owe to ourselves is not a simple description that can be shown in a few paragraphs. Identity is not a concept that can be connected to a single and consistent meaning, instead it morphs over time and changes from individual to individual. Identity is formed from different structures and systems around us; educational institutions, the current political and socio-economic situation, cultural values, background, ethnicity and even nationality, have a definitive impact on building the concept of ourselves (Fearon 1999).

Migrants, expats and multicultural and multi-ethnic individuals can have very different experiences on creating their own identity while growing up. For example: "Third Culture Kids are sometimes seen as slightly strange by the people around them. Having been raised in one dominant culture and moved to a second or even third culture they develop their own unique life patterns". (Dewaele, J. -. M. 2009.)

As described by Dewaele and Van Oudenhoven in the International Journal of Multilingualism, Third Culture Kids that are exposed to different cultures and languages while growing; shaped their identity around these concepts and build their sense of belonging. As a Costa Rican, I was born in a diverse family and I always identified as a Latin when asked about my cultural identity. Even though Latins are from a very diverse ethnic and cultural background, most people will identify as Latin, without taking much concern on ethnicity or heritage. Only after moving abroad to a "homogenous" society like Finland, I could see a different view on my own identity.

Through the project Selfhood I was able to explore multicultural and multi-ethnic identity in a "homogenous" society, in this case Japan. When I asked the participants about their sense of Identity, most of them answer that growing up being different had a deep effect on how they behaved, spoke and saw themselves. The ones that grew up in Japan, needed to speak Japanese on daily basis and it proved important in order to be accepted. In contrast with the participants who

grew up abroad and expressed that it was not necessary to speak Japanese, but they could use it freely if they wished.

Another important factor on the views of Identity for the participants was their physical features. The participants who had more Asian traits in Japan faced fewer negative comments while growing up, while the participants that had more non-Asian physical traits faced negative comments or bullying in their early stages of life.

Their closeness to family also represented a strong connection on the forming of their identity. For the participants closed to their Japanese family, language and collectiveness proved more important than to those participants who had few or no contact at all to their Japanese side.

One aspect is clear, understanding our self and identity is a crucial factor to experience and understand day to day situations like thoughts, feelings, social interactions and behaviors. An individual's identity can even reflect a functioning society or culture (Haddock & Sutch 2003).

Identity is a concept that concerns society, in the cases of multi-ethnic individuals the weight of their heritage proves to represent a big part in the forming of their identity. This connection resonated with me and allowed us to connect with one another throughout the interviews. The perspectives one can build on identity are in constant change but for mixed individuals the search for a self-identity viewed as whole and not a mix of halves is the biggest concern they face.

Half Japanese and Nikkei individuals do not fit in the preform idea of a "homogenous" Japanese society where everyone must be equal to a certain extent. The sole existence of these individuals expresses a change to Japanese society, which leads to misrepresentation or under representation of mixed individuals in Japan. The consequences for the community can be isolation, shame and even exclusion. Therefore, one may feel the need to understand Japanese society and their view on Half Japanese or mixed individuals in order to understand mixed identity.

3.1 Japanese Identity

Japan is homeland to more than 120 million individuals today. But only over 1% of the population of Japan is from foreign origin. In comparison to USA where more than 13% of the population is from foreign origin. (Zong, Batalova & Burrows 2019).

Popularly Japan is known to be an ethnically homogeneous society, "The assumption that Japan is a monoethnic society is widely shared not just by scholars of Japan and the Japanese themselves but also by virtually everyone else". (Lie J. 2003). But, many ethnicities have co-existed in Japan for centuries. The principal ethnic groups in contemporary Japan according to researcher and professor Dr. Lie, include Ainu, Okinawans, Burakumin, Koreans, Chinese, and, of course, Japanese (main- stream Japanese, Yamato people, or Japanese Japanese).

Foreign National Residents by Nationality (2014 to 2016)					
Figures are from Statistics on Foreign National Residents. Counts of foreign national residents (medium-/long-term residents and special permanent residents) covered by Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. As of the end of year.					
国籍	Nationality		平成26年	27年	28年
			2014	2015	2016
総数	Total		2.121.831	2.232.189	2.382.822
アジア	**Asia**				
韓国	Korea, Rep. of	1	501.230	457.772	453.096
中国	China	2	654.777	665.847	695.522
フィリピン	Philippines	3	217.585	229.595	243.662
北アメリカ	**America, North**				
#アメリカ合衆国	U.S.A.		51.256	52.271	53.705
南アメリカ	**America, South**				
#ブラジル	Brazil		175.410	173.437	180.923
ペルー	Peru		47.978	47.721	47.740

Table 1. Foreign National Residents in Japan, Japanese Ministry of Justice.

Japanese society has not change abruptly over the years, but like any other society, its population is changing and evolving into a more diverse society. Factors like geographical and political changes have led to diversity in the country. Through immigration and colonization of the neighboring territories Japanese population started to change; therefore, different ethnicities settled down in Japan in the beginning of the 19th century, specifically South and North Koreans, Chinese and Taiwanese predominantly (Howell, D. L. 2005).

The Japanese identity build on the hereditarily and hierarchical years of the Shōgunate (1185 - 1868) marked an important period for defining what it meant to be Japanese at the time. The Shōgun was a definitive power that use the military to rule Japan, it also established powerful families and valued royal descend over anything else. In the last years of the Shōgun rule, two massive invasions of Korea were launched but failed around the year 1598.

Consequently, the Edo period arrived in Japan and in 1609 The Shōgun gave permission to one of the ruling clans, the Satsuma to invade the Ryukyu Kingdom, one of these islands known as Okinawa today. In this context the native communities of Ryukyu in Okinawa and the Ainu of Hokkaido were left out of the discussion and even segregated by the territorial limitations imposed by the Japanese early state of the 17th century (Howell, D. L. 2005.)

Still to this day the Ryukyu, the Ainu and other minorities do not fit the modern idea of Japanese society or identity. Consequently, during the Edo time, the Tokugawa rule as the Shōgunate. They implemented a lock down policy where no Japanese could not leave the country and trading was limited to Korea, China and the Dutch, who were given a special permission to trade.

During the Tokugawa period it was common to categorize people by status in a system called "koseki" and at the bottom of the pyramid lay the outcast communities. These communities faced discrimination, not only social but political as well, since they had to work in slave like conditions. The Burakumin were particularly discriminated. "Therein lay the virulence of modern discrimination: instead

of saying, in effect, "We have to hate you because you are outcastes," the commoners said, "We choose to hate you because you defile our community" (Howell, D. 2005.)

The Edo period marked an important time for literacy and growth in Japan, and it is the first time that foreign books were studied. Christian religion also entered Japan through the first missionaries coming into the country. Eventually more countries demanded to trade with Japan, consequently the country open.

The era known as Meiji saw the fall of the Shōgunate and the rise of westernization. Many policies were implemented for Japan to compete in a global environment, school and transportation reforms were also put into place. After the positive aspects that the Meiji area develop for modern Japan, new invasions took place towards China and Korea. The territories of Taiwan and Korea stayed under Japanese rule for over 25 years.

Soon after the First World War started, where Japan participated as an ally to the "Triple Entente". The Japanese envision the war as an opportunity for geographical expansion and to showcase Japan as a powerful force internationally.

During the beginning of the Showa period Japan saw the rise of right-wing nationalism. Relations with US worsen, since Japan wanted to expand its territory once more. After many sanctions towards Japan the Second World War started, leaving one of the worst outcomes for the Japanese population in history.

After the 2nd World War took place, Japan took over 40 years to rebuild itself to the state that we know today. The Japanese identity build after the Second World War focused on the nationalist's ideas that perpetuated collectivism and traditional values over external influences and cultures.

In the Japanese society of today, you find a society that strives to follow certain image, etiquette and perspective in order to be successful and fulfilled the growing economic needs of Japan. "Taking various economic and social effects into account, Japan will have to further deepen its discussions on expanding the acceptance of foreign residents" (Okada 2018.)

The way this communities are treated can be compared to the acceptance of mixed individuals like Hāfu or Nikkei in Japanese society. They are often not recognized or accepted as Japanese citizens, even though they may have been born in the country and hold a Japanese passport. Mixed individuals in Japan face innumerable obstacles when looking for a job, renting an apartment or finding inclusive educational institutions. Most mixed individuals work in physical labor jobs and factory environments (Yamashiro, J. H. 2008.)

3.1.1 Hāfu ハーフ

The term *Hāfu* has often been used in Japan since the 1970's to indicate mixed-race Japanese who have one Japanese parent and one non-Japanese parent. (Oshima, K. 2014.)

Kimie Oshima (Ph.D.), a professor at the Foreign Language Department at Kanagawa University and avid researcher of multiculturalism in multi-ethnic societies states that the definition of *Hāfu* has carried negative implications like diminishing a person to merely a half. Terms like *Daburu* became an alternative during the nineties, stating that a person was not a half but a mixed of double culture and heritage, but the term is not commonly used as much as *Hāfu*. In 2015 BBC interview, Miss Japan pageant winner, Ariana Miyamoto stated "It sounds strange, but for us mixed kids, we need this word *Hāfu*. It gives us an identity".

PICTURE 1. Hāfu2Hāfu. Aiko from Costa Rica. Tokyo, 2017 (Tetsuro Miyazaki).

Today the term *Hāfu* is widely used by Hāfu themselves and others. According to Oshima, the term Daburo did not bring a positive view of multicultural and multi-ethnic individuals in Japan, due to the conformity culture that focuses on the standard rather than what stands out in the society.

3.1.2 Nikkei 日系

"The term 'Nikkeijin' literally means people of Japanese descent. The Japanese character sei means 'generation'. By adding a numerical counter as a prefix, as in Issei, Nisei and Sansei, first, second and third generations are designated." (De Carvalho D. 2003.)

Japanese immigration towards America (North and South) starts in the late 1890's and expands over the 1900's. In the first wave most, Japanese immigrants were escaping poor economic conditions in Japan, but most ended up working in farms and factories under slave like contracts. Around 1973 the last immigrant ship, with 285 immigrants aboard, arrived in Brazil. Marking and end to the emigration wave due to the uprising economic boom in Japan.

In the 1990's Japanese Immigration Law Regulations (Kondo, A. 2002) granted Nikkei a visa permit made on the bases of Japanese heritage. Many descendants from South America, especially from Brazil, Peru and Argentina, and the U.S. emigrated back to Japan.

PICTURE 2. The 110th Anniversary of Japanese Immigration to Brazil. Kami in Santos, Brazil. 2018 (Masayuki Fukasawa).

4   SOCIAL PRACTICE ART

Social Practice is a term used in art that highly values human interaction and the engagement of diverse communities into the art process, to spark or propose changes in our current social and political systems. It concentrates in the use of art methods for social and political change, involving the participants often in a long-term relationship; instead of a fast interaction with the artist, more common in other forms of art.

Works based on social practice art often aim to live outside the gallery and museum environments, due its purpose to have a greater impact inside the community. The communal approach in social art can be seen in artist Rick Lowe work "Row Houses", a political and social piece aimed to create safe and creative spaces for the black community in Houston Texas. (Project Row Houses 1993.)

PICTURE 3. Project Row Houses (1993-) social sculpture, Houston 2015. (Rick Lowe).

Rick Lowe viewpoint focus not on creating awareness about the issues within the community but instead to co-create solutions for the already recognized problems. Lowe, alongside a group of artists purchased a line of row houses in an area known for its conflicts and poverty; throughout the years the space transformed into art residencies, galleries, studios and a special area dedicated for the single mothers of the community in need of housing.

The project "Row Houses" exemplifies applied social practice art; that may not be fully understood in a museum or gallery environment alone. Artists and Photographers often look for public or uncommon spaces to reach their target audience.

As emphasized in the article: Built environment, creativity, social art. The recovery of public space as engine of human development (Onesti 2017.) "The relationship with artwork becomes an attitude of care towards a heritage which is recognized as a common good. Furthermore, sharing the same experience and the same sense of affection, people pass from feeling extraneous in the city to becoming a member of a community whose members recognize the same landscape as cultural heritage"

A symbiotic co-creating process were artists and participants can both benefit, is the kind of environment that becomes alive through social art works. This process often carries higher importance than the final product, which does not intend to devalue the existing creations and outcomes but rather to propose a higher value to the experience, knowledge and tools shared with the participants. The process can be intense in terms of the quantity of emotional charge put into social art projects, for the participants and the artist. Sensitive topics like poverty, inequality, discrimination, corruption and racism are often discussed, which compromises both sides into engaging a genuine discussion.

4.1   Participatory Art

Participatory art is a method and art form that fails to represent itself fully unless the audience is actively participating in the processes; the different stages since its conception. According to: The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (Novitz 2001 | 161.) "Participatory art also affords to art theory the widely held belief that genuine art requires an active, contributory- usually considered and thoughtful-response on the part of the viewer…" The purpose of Participatory Art can be therefore described as to engage the audience in a deeper connection with an art piece or the collective creation of it.

The engagement that is possible with this type of art creation is the most intriguing aspect of it, making it a possible tool for learning. As described by art historian,

critic and professor Claire Bishop in the Book Artificial Hells (241-247); there is an interest on education by the artists that aim to change the relation between art and the academy.

Participatory Art created an interesting dynamic in the realm of education, where artists like Tania Bruguera and her "Behavior Art School". Her work was able to engage and create new opportunities for her students in Havana Cuba. The selected students provide reports and create their own projects using the acquired knowledge provided by Tania, in her home school political lessons. According to Bishop, the students works otherwise would not be selected and viewed on the prestigious exhibition. The works then become valuable; which transcends the establishment guidelines for the artist and the academy. Bruguera's focus was to keep the project open and available for the members of the community and for it to be showcased at Havana Biennale.
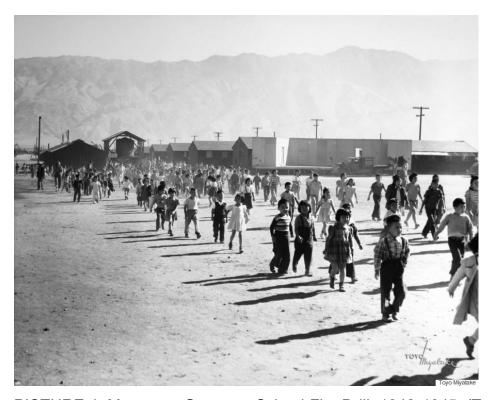
4.2   Participatory Photography

Participatory photography, a tool for empowerment, learning and perhaps even social change. As a research practice and method, participatory photography, involves the participants deeply into the artwork process. It aims to create a symbiotic relationship between the artist, the camera and the participants which reflects on the work.

This method focuses on the process rather than the exhibiting purposes, even the final stage may become a new layer for the artwork. This type of art making involves all the participants, even the audience, and makes them co- creators in the process. It particularly gives the possibility for the participants to represent themselves in their most truthful way and challenge traditional representations and power structures in photography.

Participatory Photography considers the community and environment where the project is held, it plays an important role for the development of the topic since the environment might affect directly the participant's life.

In the past, Participatory Photography has been a referential method of many forms, one case that I would like to highlight is Toyo Miyatake's Two Views of

Manzanar, where he exposes the living conditions inside the American concentration camp for Japanese and their descendants, Manzanar (1942-1945). (Florido. A. 2016.)
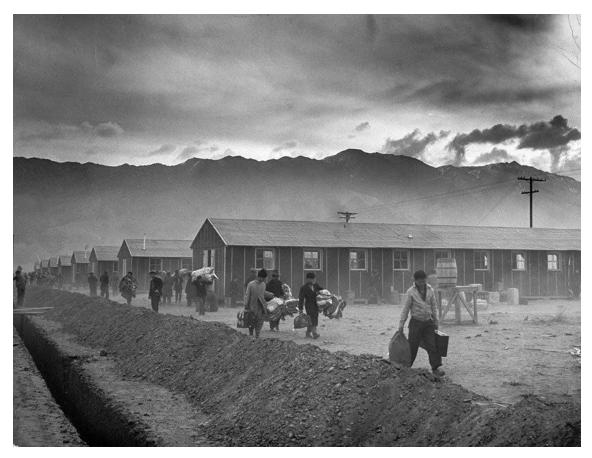

PICTURE 4. Manzanar Grammar School Fire Drill, 1942-1945. (Toyo Miyatake) Courtesy of Alan Miyatake.

Manzanar was one of the ten internment camps set across the USA back in 1942. On the narration by Yuri Tateishi, an inmate of the camp, she narrated how the Japanese community incarceration was sudden and abrupt. "When I think back on the evacuation, that's something you'd like to erase if you can, but it's a fact; we went through it. I'm unhappy about it, but I don't think I was really bitter." (Tateishi 1999).

Miyatake's approach to photography had elements that correlate with participatory photography in a subtle form, since he was one of the inmates at the camp. He introduced a lens with him and, with the help of carpenters and metal welders, build a body for it. At the beginning, he could only take images at dusk or night as a result of the security around. After getting caught several times, the camp officials granted him permission to shoot officially, consequently he opened his

own studio inside de camp; as part of the co-operative created by the inmates at the time.

PICTURE 5. Dust Camp. The LIFE Picture Collection/Getty Images. (Eliot Eli-sofon).

Miyatake was able to shoot mainly portraits at the local school or for the local residents. He captured the everyday life at Manzanar alongside commissioned photographers of Manzanar, Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange. In comparison, Miyatake photographs showed the "positive" side of Manzanar that encourage a rather likeability of the camp inmates, through a censored lens at the time. I find in his images the ability to represent the community's views and beliefs in a very subtle way.

PICTURE 6. Boys Behind Barbed Wire (Norito Takamoto, Albert Masaichi, and Hisashi Sansui), 1944. (Toyo Miyatake) Courtesy of Alan Miyatake.

His work is often criticized depicting that the images represent only "the positive aspects" instead of the harsh reality shown, for example, in Dorothea Lange's images at the time. As I may argue that the totality of his work does not qualify as participatory photography per se, but what Miyatake accomplished has a great significance for the core of this method, which aims for true representation and self-representation.

4.2.1 Ethics in Participatory Photography and Social Art

Participatory photography often takes on topics of inequality, discrimination and injustice. It is common that social practice artist and photographers work with marginalized groups or vulnerable communities, which raises ethical concerns on how to approach and interact with them in a respectful manner.

This methodology shares a lot in common with documentary photography and is mostly observed in community-based and participatory art projects due to its direct contact with the participants. The participants are often encouraged and involved into to visualizing their reality, even from the harsh end to the raw everyday life.

The method photovoice is a qualitative method used by researchers to document and expose the surrounding reality. It was developed in 1992 and used for the first time by Caroline C. Wang and Mary Ann Burris in China. (Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. 1994.) The project was aimed to create awareness of the struggles rural woman faced in the Yunnan province. The aim: to oppose local governmental decisions that affect the group direct and indirectly.

Some of the key elements on ethics, when working with diverse groups, have been collected by the participatory photography non-profit organization called, Photovoice UK, who named themselves after the participatory photography method photovoice.

Photovoice UK short manual on ethical principles provided guidance on ethical concerns and how to approach them as they appear throughout the art process. "The photographer should be able to let the participants represent themselves and frame the issues that affect them, challenge the traditional representations and put alternatives forward, and be open when dealing with personal choices or participants withdrawing the project." (Blackman 1992-2017.)

The manual also highlights the risks of exposing emotional or psychological content. Confidentiality and anonymity are widely discussed throughout the working process, allowing the participants wellbeing as a priority and to ensure closure for the participants involved.

In some cases, this practice as a form of art, can evolve into a method of income for the participants. In order to reattribute the community, social art projects can aim for the participants to retain full ownership of their individual pieces of art and workshops were participants are given the tools to continue their own process in fields like photography or entrepreneurship. As well as the implementation of different methods to produce products the participants can sell and use the funds for their own living expenses.

PICTURE 7. "Preparing for work" Photovoice, Education for Development. 'Street Vision'. Vietnam (Vo Cong Thang).

"Street Vision" by Photovoice UK is an example of ethical participatory photography positively applied. The project was active throughout the years 1998-2007 and aim to raise awareness about the thousands of children living in the streets of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam. The project showcased skills in photography for the young participants, as well as team building exercises that would serve as a base for their future studies or the possibility of employment.

The project served as a creative space for the participants aged 14-18, where they could experience new skills and see a different environment from their everyday life at the temporary shelters, where they lived. The process invested by the artist in creating an ethical environment is the core of making participatory photography a consistent method of representation for diverse individuals. "Photographs carry an ethical duty, not only for the participants in the moment but also, the future." (Levin 2009.)

A photograph alone can offer the individual a feeling of understanding, sympathy and relevance in the right context. If the artist is able to carry the work, make meaningful connections and offer a safe space; then the participant can create a self-representation of its own identity.

Participatory photography can offer representation. "A photograph not only supports a verbal argument against overcrowding, or starvation, or the preservation

of a way of life, it makes an anonymous person an individual, real, in the way verbal description alone cannot" (Klingensmith 2016.)

Beside the beneficial and positive aspects there are clear ethical concerns on how photography and visual methods are used. For example, surveillance, control, misrepresentation or even shame for the participants. (Prins 2010.) Prins case study involved countryside workers in San Salvador. Prins highlights the rise of shame and confusion among the participants when asked to photograph their own daily routines.

Overall visual participatory methods can offer a platform for the artist and the participants to expose political and social causes to a bigger audience, to create projects in art and to face different challenges in a communal way. Another considerable challenge is involving the audience into the participatory environment. Even though it was not possible to involve the audience on real time for the Self-hood photo series. Utilizing technology opened a possibility of involvement and deeper interaction rather than the expectation only.

By making use of the technology available I intended to give the audience a fuller experience by choosing 360° cameras.

4.3 Immersive 360° video and the participatory link

Visual images are engaging when they can evoke a variety of reactions to the viewer, but there is a way to immerse the viewer into the author's world in a more concrete way with the technique of 360° video.

The technicalities of a 360° camera are rather simple; a fisheye lens or multiple wide lenses attached that give the possibility to record moving images into a wider perspective, panoramic 360 degrees. But the most impressive characteristic of 360-degree videos is the fact that you can enclose your audience for a few minutes of their time into a world of your own. A piece of the artist mind perhaps, enclose into the virtual reality world.

The use of 360° videos into a VR environment gives the possibility to engage the audience into participatory action within the artwork, even though the audience is

not present at the specific location they are able to experience it and have an effect directly on the perception of the art.

As disclose by Charlie Fink, "VR and AR art will hardly be confined to galleries, and ultimately will be integrated into many of the things we view casually every day, like entertainment, advertising, sports, and medicine" (Forbes 2017.)

The recent growth of the usage of this technique represents a variety of new possibilities for the artist to integrate a participatory method alongside 360° video techniques.

PICTURE 8. Stills of Lonesome. Yokohama, Japan 2018 (Isa Hedez).

5 ARTWORK: SELFHOOD AND LONESOME

The need to develop a self-identity starts from the moment we are born and continues through our lifetime. Exploring the self and being able to find a place belong is a primary need. Personally, the incognitos of our self-representation are pillars to the develop of my work.

With the photo series Selfhood and the 360°video work Lonesome I hoped to create a common ground for individuals expressing their fears and insecurities of not belonging, in a place they call home. Utilizing the participatory method felt just right, as I could approach and share a common ground with the participants.

PICTURE 9 and 10. Installation images at Himmelblau Gallery (Isa Hedez).

5.1 Photo Series: Selfhood

Selfhood consists of a long-term participatory photo project where I interview and have casual chats with a variety of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic individuals about their personal and cultural identity. I travelled throughout 5 different prefectures in Japan, for 3 different periods of 1 month each, from the cities of Onomichi in the south west to Yokohama in the south east.

I interacted with the participants for a few days before shooting the images to-gether with their perspectives. In some cases, I stayed in the participants home for a few days, which gave me an insight into their everyday life.

5.1.1 Costa Rica

Aiko Takahashi Chinchilla was born San José, Costa Rica. Currently she is 40 years old and is fluent in Spanish and Japanese. Her journey in Japan started when she moved to Japan after marrying her husband, a Japanese cameraman, she met while serving as a translator for an NHK documentary film in Central America.

PICTURE 11. Aiko in her current hometown, Kamakura. Japan. Artwork title: Costa (Isa Hedez, 2018).

I got in contact with Aiko trough the Facebook page of Costa Ricans in Japan. On March 16th of 2018, I spent the day with Aiko, at her home and in the sur-roundings areas of Kamakura, Japan. She took me to her local temple and hiking trails, as well as around the city of Kita-Kamakura, where she has been living for

the past 3 years. As I was getting to know Aiko a bit more and the atmosphere was relaxed, we started our conversation on identity.

Aiko said: "Yo soy de madre costarricense y padre japonés. Toda la vida había vivido en Costa Rica, pero hace siete años me casé con un japonés y ahora vivo en Japón. La educación primaria y secundaria la recibí en la Escuela Japonesa que queda en Moravia. El tema de identidad cultural es algo que me concierne profundamente, pues en cierta manera me siento extranjera tanto en Costa Rica como en Japón."

Which translates: "I was born from a Costa Rican mother and a Japanese father. All my life I have lived in Costa Rica, but 7 years ago, I married a Japanese man and now I live in Japan. My Primary and Secondary education were in a Japanese Educational Institute in Moravia (San José, Costa Rica). The topic of cultural identity is something that concerns me deeply, since in a certain way, I feel an outsider in Costa Rica as well as in Japan"

Our conversation was fluent, and it covered topics from Costa Rica to recent political changes in Japan. I could relate to Aiko, as I am Costa Rican myself but when describing the dualism of having two nationalities, cultural backgrounds and languages Aiko's thoughts were new to me. Aiko expressed several times how living in Costa Rica, as comfortable as it was, evoke in her the feeling of not fitting. She shares with me her bullying experiences and how she dealt with feeling different in Costa Rica and Japan. Aiko currently works as a certified translator for live events and other activities. There is no language barrier for her.

The next participant is Emi Arimoto who was born San José, Costa Rica as well. Emi is in her 20's and is fluent in Spanish and English; she understands Japanese but is not able to speak or write fluently.

I met her on March 13th, 2018 in Asakusa, Tokyo. She recently has moved to Japan with her father and is studying Japanese language at a local academy in Tokyo. On the day we met she narrated a bit of her story to me. Born from a Costa Rican mother and a Japanese father, she grew up in Costa Rica.

PICTURE 12. Emi after a stroll around Asakusa. Artwork title: Rica (Isa Hedez, 2018).

As our conversation grew deeper into the topic of identity, Emi states that she has embraced both of her sides and where she is from was not particularly a concern for her since her family, home and boyfriend are in Costa Rica. As the years went by, she grew curious about her Japanese side, therefore she decided to move to Tokyo with her father and experience Japan in a different way than before.

5.1.2 Finland

Asa Kawamura grew up in Koivukylä, Finland. She is in her 20's and is fluent in Finnish and Japanese. I contacted Asa through her Instagram account, she stated in her Instagram profile that she is half Japanese. She is very open to talk about her ethnic background and like to share her experiences with others.

PICTURE 13. On a cold evening in Helsinki, by the sea with Asa. Artwork title: Finland (Isa Hedez, 2018).

During our conversation Asa expressed that she spoke Japanese when she was 5 years old, but during her adolescence years she stopped since there was no one she could speak to. Her dad moved to Finland after University and consequently marry her mother who is Finnish. Asa's father is an artist and mostly communicates in Finnish language.

When talking about her experiences visiting Japan, Asa highlights that people usually speak to her in Japanese but in bigger cities like Tokyo or Hiroshima, they changed to English. When communicating with her relatives from Japan Asa stated that the use of formal Japanese (Keigo) represents an obstacle for her, therefore she sometimes avoided contact due to language difficulties.

In Finland, generally she does not face any different treatment but occasionally she gets asks if she is half Chinese or Asian. Her family is international, as some of her relatives live in different countries around the world.
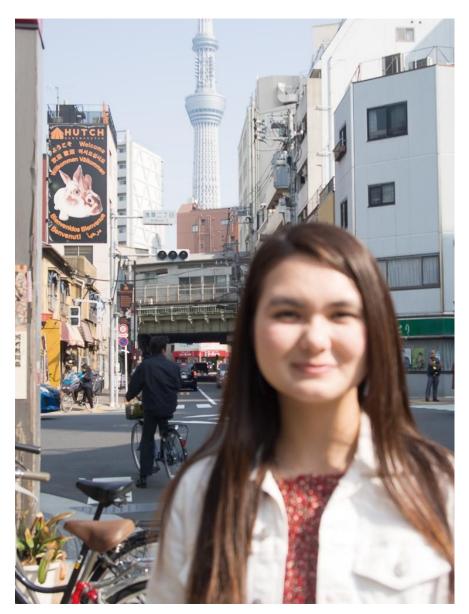
Slowly throughout our conversation we discussed work culture, quality of life and equality in Japan vs. Finland. For Asa, these factors represent a big part her identity and have a big impact on why she identifies as an earthling. She states that choosing a side would feel very shallow since she feels the need to honor both her Japanese and Finnish side.

5.1.3   United States of America

Mei Seymour also known as Mei Komatsu was born in Yokohama, Japan. She is in her early 20's and speaks fluently Japanese and English. I met Mei through a common Japanese friend and she gladly accepted to meet me in Asakusa, Japan on March 13, 2018. My first encounter with Mei was very relaxed and comfortable. We decided to walk around the main temples in the area and share some of our thoughts on Japan.

Even though our conversation started slowly Mei shared her story with me. She went to public high school in Japan where she faced some issues for example, being asked if she was dying her hair lighter or being asked why her face was different. Her sister went to the same school and Mei acknowledged that she opened the path for her, as she was known as the sister of... so her teachers and classmates did not treat her particularly different.

Mei's official last name in Japan is her Japanese last name, but her father wanted her to embrace her English last name as well. For her being called Komatsu instead on Seymour represented a different identity, even a small change had a big impact in herself. One of the issues that she feels quite close to is the fact that in Japan people ask her very personal questions because of her mixed background.

PICTURE 14. Mei standing on the sidewalk, with Tokyo Skytree on the background. Artwork title: United States of America (Isa Hedez, 2018).

Particularly an issue in Japan, the representation of Hāfu in the media tend to be very stereotyped. Mei explained that the image of Hāfu in Japan can be described as: Western, Attractive (model or in the entertainment industry) and young. An image that she does not feel represented with, furthermore an image that is not inclusive.

5.1.4 Peru

Guisella Ashimine was born in Peru, she is in her 50's and owns a Peruvian restaurant in the coastal city of Onomichi, Japan. She lives alongside her husband and family, who gladly welcome me to their home and hosted me for a few nights. I meet with Guisella at her restaurant, where she tells me how she came to Japan.

Guisella came to over to Japan when she was 20 years old. She speaks fluent Spanish and advanced Portuguese, also she can communicate in Japanese. The environment in her restaurant is very international, Portuguese and Spanish and mixed of Japanese language can be heard throughout the night.

PICTURE 15. Guisella posing proudly at her restaurant, De Kusina. Artwork title: Almost Home (Isa Hedez, 2018).

Her brother Luis Ashimine is also at the restaurant. He is in his 40's and lives in the same city. He speaks fluent Spanish, Portuguese and can communicate in Japanese.

Alongside Guisella, some of her family members moved to Japan as well. Here I met Luis. Luis is a factory worker in the local industry of Hiroshima prefecture.

Growing up as Second-Generation Japanese in South America, Guisella and Luis did not speak Japanese while growing up.

They explain to me the struggles that they went through at the beginning of their life in Japan. Their appearance differentiated them from the locals, and the only available jobs were in construction, food and the service industry. Nowadays, they argue, that the struggles have ceased down. They can fit in the Japanese everyday life, even though they are not seen as Japanese.

PICTURE 16. Luis getting ready to have dinner at De Kusina. Artwork title: Peru (Isa Hedez, 2018).

5.1.5 Argentina

Hideto or Naka as his friends called him, is a Japanese descendant that grew up between Okinawa and Argentina. He is in his early 30's and speaks fluent Japanese and Spanish. Naka lived in Okinawa till he was 5 years old and later moved to Argentina with his family. Some of his memories while growing up are related to be the only Japanese kid at his school, in the community of Florencio Varela, Argentina.

He, alongside a few of his friends opened a YouTube channel called Japatonic TV, where they often hold shows about the life of a Nikkei in Japan and curiosities about their everyday life in Japan for the Spanish speaking community. I found them trough their YouTube channel and contacted them about the project to what they agreed to meet and share their stories with me.

PICTURE 17. Thoughtful Naka, in the middle of a conversation at a pub. Artwork title: Argentina (Isa Hedez, 2018).

Through their channel I came across videos about their life as Latinos in Japan. In the video "YO, NIKKEI ARGENTINO - Ser de familia Japonesa en Argentina [Nihon Vlog 46]" which translates to ME, ARGENTINIAN NIKKEI - Born from a

Japanese family in Argentina. Naka discussed alongside Fuchi, Ricardo and Jin what it feels like to be different in Japan and Argentina.

Naka expressed: "I am a weirdo with Japanese face in Japan. I am often perceived as a foreigner with an Okinawan accent". Fuchi continued, "The life of a Nikkei is difficult, you do not feel good in either place" When asked about the name of their country; Naka, Fuchi, Jin and Ricardo where doubtful between "Nihon or Nippon" but ended up screaming without doubt Argentina. Consequently, they burst into laugh and looked at each other with a sense of guilt.
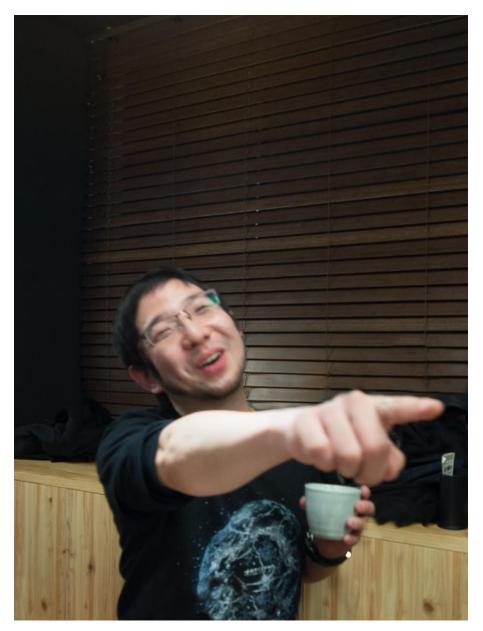
On December 12th, 2017 I joined a group gathering organized by Naka in Tsurumi, Japan. The meeting had an informal mood and was attended by the YouTube channel followers and friends. Naka forms part of a lively Latino-Nikkei community in Tokyo. As the night continued, we got to explore more in depth the view of the Nikkei community on identity and their opinions of living in Japan while being different.

Overall Naka does not encounter language barriers in everyday conversations, reading Kanji is difficult for him. He works at his brother's electricity company full time and creates content for his YouTube channel, Japatonic TV. He is married to Lore Nakandakari, an Argentinian who met him in his early teenage years. They live in Tsurumi with "Doctor Gato" (their cat), but they constantly expressed the desire to go back to Argentina one day. Due to work and the economic situation they have decided to stay in Japan and try to adapt to the Japanese environment for now.

The second participant from Argentina-Japan is Jin. He is in his late 20's and comes from an ethnically Japanese family. I met him through Naka, on December 12th, 2017 as well. He appears on Japatonic TV, YouTube channel as well. He shared his thoughts and showed me a glimpse of his life in Japan.

Jin remembered being called "Chino" while coming back from school. Kids will shout racial slurs to him from the school bus. He did not want to be in Argentina right at those moments. Jin expressed that Japanese society in the 90's in Argentina was very strict, it encouraged people to follow a certain standard of what it

meant to be an Argentinean Nikkei. There was verbal violence at times, and it seem like the rule back then.

PICTURE 18. Jin at a pub pointing out after a friend's joke. JIN 人 (Isa Hedez, 2018.

As the evening continues, I joined Jin and his friends to a karaoke night. A group of diverse looking people arrived, and a lively chat started. Jin's friends are Argentinean, Nikkei and Japanese who speak Spanish. Some Japanese words popped up in the conversation, but the environment is very Latin. The songs started to play, mostly Japanese songs, and as the evening continues, we talked about politics, news and Latin topics mostly. When touching the topic of Identity,

most of the participants agree that balancing both sides is the only way to embrace life in Japan.

Jin is fluent in both Spanish and Japanese. At the time I met him, he lived in Japan but has moved back to Argentina in early 2018, claiming that he feels at home there.

5.2 Lonesome: 360° video work

Beside the photo series, the 360° video technique was used in the second stage of the project. Aimed for the gallery exhibition planned for the project, in this case in the form of a 360° virtual reality work I touch upon the experiences of the participants, by taking their audible quotes into the 360° landscape.

Here the audience can feel city of Yokohama through the eyes of a *Hāfu* while hearing personal experiences of the upbringing of the participants as multi-ethnic and multicultural individuals. The work was made in collaboration with TAMK Smart Art Fund and is included in the virtual gallery of the HOT FUTURES exhibition.

PICTURE 19. Gallery goers viewing the 360° video with audio. Himmelblau Gallery, 2018 (Isa Hedez).

6 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this thesis is to research the usability of participatory methods, specifically participatory photography in long term projects involving multicultural and multiethnic participants.

The artistic methods of Participatory Art and Participatory Photography can bring to light issues that affect multicultural and multiethnic individuals, particularly in this case, individuals within the Japanese society. Methods that involve face to face and long-term interactions, like Participatory Photography, have offered the possibility for the participants to get out of their routine and open a discussion on identity.

Even though, the creation of a self-identity is based on a variety of external and internal factors throughout Social Art Projects and Participatory Photography participants had the chance to explore and visualize a representation of their current identity.

Most importantly sharing experiences with other pairs of their community created a communal feeling where Participatory Photography served as a platform for interaction and personal connection, not only from photographer-participant but from participant to community.

The contrast of the usage of participatory methods is that the freedom of the method also creates irregular ways of using it. Since Social Art has little to no boundaries on its practice, Artists can interpret their own version of Participatory methods. This leads to misunderstanding of the term and confusion, even for the participants of a project. Participatory methods serve as a good option for qualitative research, but the lack of guidelines and freedom of interpretation makes this method very unreliable on its results.

Alongside research and ethical practices Participatory Photography projects and Participatory methods can be develop into an interactive platform for communities with language or cultural barriers, seen in my interactions with the Nikkei Portuguese and Spanish speaking Latin communities in Onomichi and Tokyo, Japan.

Overall the highlight of these projects was the personal interaction with the participants, which lead to interesting developments and created an inclusive environment, where we could speak freely and openly. Not only the practical side of the project had an impact in myself but also the theoretical research gave me an opportunity as an artist to complete a journey of my own personal identity search.

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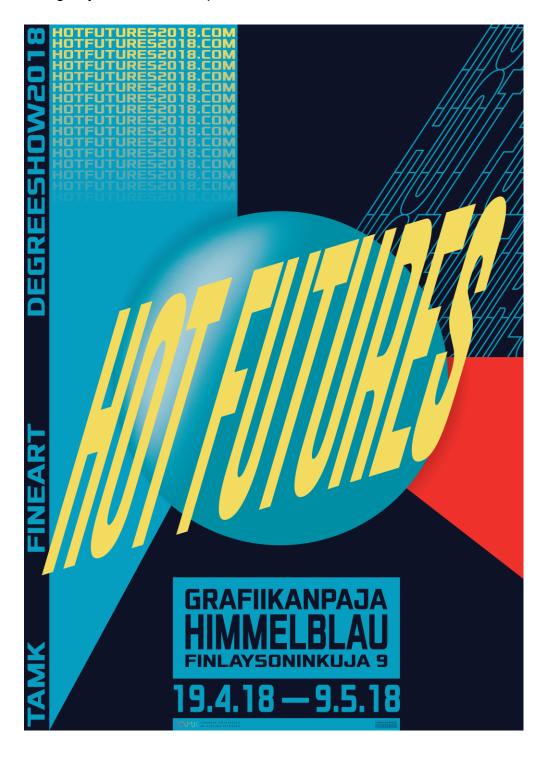
APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Poster

Exhibition HOT FUTURES

Gallery Himmelblau, Finlaysonkuja 9

Dates: 19.04.18- 09.05.18
Design by Armando Tranquille

Appendix 2. Artwork Statement

ISAURA HERNANDEZ
1995. San José, Costa Rica.

I come from Latin America, a place in the warmth surrounded by the sea and mountains. Five years ago, I moved to the land of a thousand lakes commonly known as Finland, in order to explore, and I found another homeland. In my photographs I include topics like immigration, cultural behaviors and human emotions. I want to inspect the complexity of being human in this modern society, focusing on multicultural identity through my lens.

I am driven by the wish to retribute to my community, to shorten cultural gaps and erase barriers that divide us humans. As an artist I want to research, photograph, and create for my own curiosity, and to advance our knowledge together as a society.

On my graduation piece I direct my attention towards mixed nationality and multicultural individuals, specifically in Japan, and how they perceive the concept of identity. I hope to find the meaning of belonging by deepening my understanding of the definition of identity. My photographs want to embrace uniqueness by emphasizing the different layers that shape us humans, from the flesh to the bone towards our invisible sensitive consciousness.

The need to find an identity starts from the moment we are born and doesn't leave us throughout our lifetime. Meanwhile, for me exploring the self and being able to distinguish from the other continues to be an inspiration to my work. I hope to create a common ground for individuals expressing their fears and insecurities of not belonging, in a place they call home.