

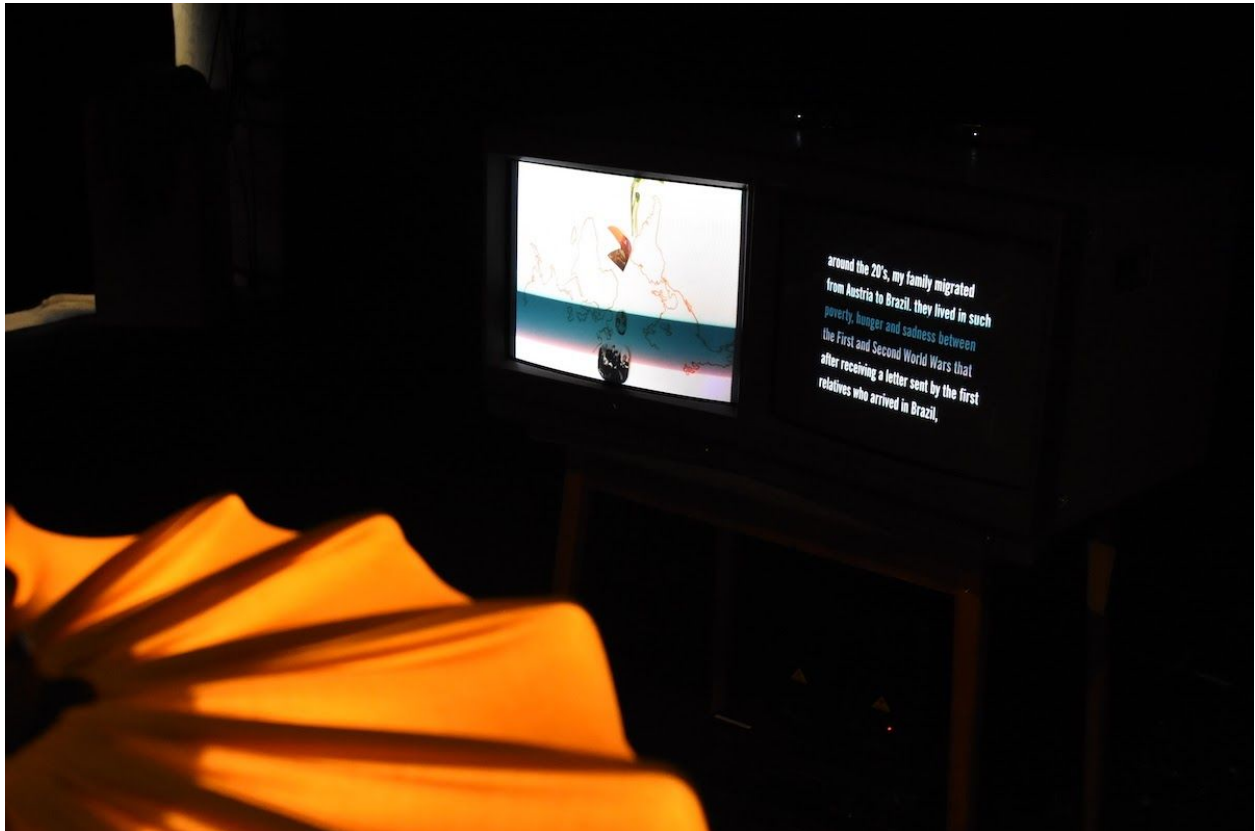
OMA PROJEKT 2021

two-channel installation

DV 4:3 (14 min)

<https://vimeo.com/503440772>

password: amo



OMA deals with some of the stories I heard about the women in my family, their migration from Austria to Brazil escaping poor living conditions in the aftermath of the First World War, and the continuation of their precarity in the promised paradise land.

The videos are shown on two vintage TV sets. The character that gives the title to this project, OMA, my grandmother, had two TVs in her living room, which she used to watch simultaneously, often to keep up with shows she had missed out and recorded.

A chair, a lamp, and a small side table with pen and paper complete the installation. By recreating the setting where OMA would take notes about the movies, soap operas and other shows she watched, her presence is reinforced by her absence. The protagonists of this work are the women in my family. Some of their names are fictional, descriptive, while others are real. Their life stories are told from

their perspective, focusing on their dreams, experiences, social conditions and their struggle against the limits imposed on them by society and reality. The use of text, the interplay of color, intensity and font styles as well as grammar rules, emphasize the roles and experiences of the characters. The colors of the text also reflect the time of the story being told: white for the post-war period; red for Mutti's birth, highlighted by her first ballet slippers; yellow to tell earlier stories, appropriating the aesthetics of the *Star Wars* opening crawl, a movie that premiered in the late 1970s; and darker red closing the work representing the opposite movement, the return from Brazil to Austria.



The cinematic references of this work go well beyond *Star Wars*, including sequences from *Jeanne Dielman*, by Chantal Akerman, and *What Even Happened to Baby Jane?*, starring Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. OMA's opening credits take their inspiration from the closing credits of *Ecstasy*, starring Hedy Lamarr. I reproduce some scenes from *Jeanne Dielman* placing myself as a character in the story. In these fixed shots, my repetitive motion doing household chores is meant to convey the feeling that the women in the story live trapped inside a cage. Although subtle, the sound resulting from that motion is also present, as in the film mentioned. The protagonist of the film

herself, played by Delphine Seyrig, is also a character in OMA Projekt. She is a housewife, widow, and with a child to raise, Jeanne Dielman gets intimate visits in the afternoon. Those visits last as long as the potatoes take to cook for dinner.



While the stories in OMA Projekt unfold throughout the 20th century, from the interwar period to my childhood, they deal with very contemporary issues: migration, precarious conditions of life, media influence, colonized behavior, among others. The sound design, combined with the old stories and the furniture installation, aims for a certain atemporality of the work.

The audio narration in Portuguese is left partially untranslated in the text, which may cause some discomfort to viewers who do not master the language. The difficulties of understanding a foreign language, experienced by OMA upon her arrival in Brazil and by me in Austria, account for some of the many difficulties of being an immigrant.

The material I use to tell these stories comprises original documents as well as reinterpreted/reinvented ones. I am not certain these to be veridical. There is no systematic research, no indisputable proof, nothing is certain, like oral traditions or secret family recipes which are passed down through generations.

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