

Experience as Expression

Summative Assessment

G10

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2020/3/4

Source of my experience with analysis:

Visiting my great grandmother at a family dinner.

My specific experience occurred on January 17th, 2020, when my family and I went visiting my great grandmother for dinner. During that dinner, my great grandmother talked about some of her stories when she was a child also when she was middle-aged, and it was fascinating to me as a young girl in an advanced, open-minded world compared to her being a suppressed woman during the big events within modern Chinese history.

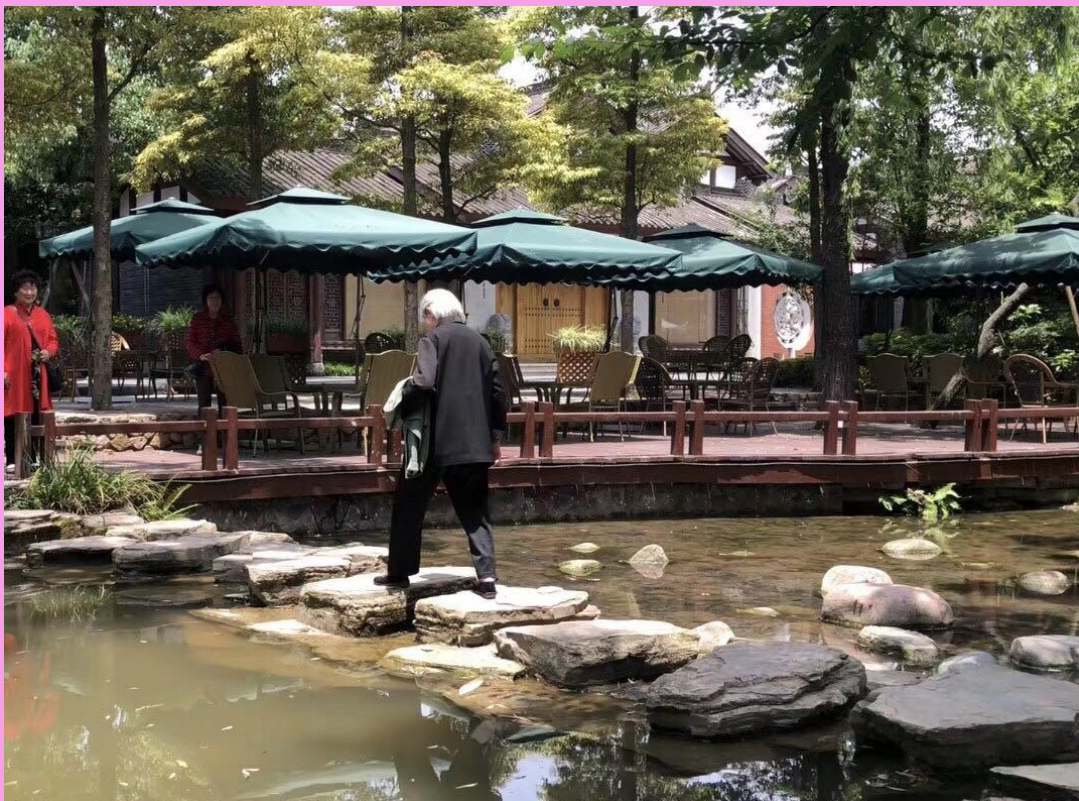
However, what truly makes me feel bad for my great grandmother is that she wasn't just any body, she used to live in a fairly wealthy family! In fact, she was born within a "Sichuan figure satin" family, and within "the four most famous brocade" of Chinese culture, Sichuan figure satin has the longest history. Ancient people referred such satin as "value of gold", you can tell how wealthy my great grandmother was since such clothes are manufactured very exquisitely that they were basically worn by the royal people. Her feet would've never touched the ground when she goes for entertainment such as to an opera because she always had those servants to transport her with her private rickshaw, which is basically the nowadays fancy, expensive cars.

More than that, she also knew significant people in Chinese history, such as Liu Wencai, a well-known landowner during the old times.

Nevertheless, her stories really touched me because of her loss when massive reformations rose quickly in China, then followed by the Cultural Revolution that made tragedies to all the wealthy families, including my great grandmother's. Her life got completely changed after those big events, and I reflected a lot on this experience of listen to her stories considering her losses in life, no matter wealth or identity or others, resonate with my findings in Kahlo's self-portrait, which also suggests her losses.



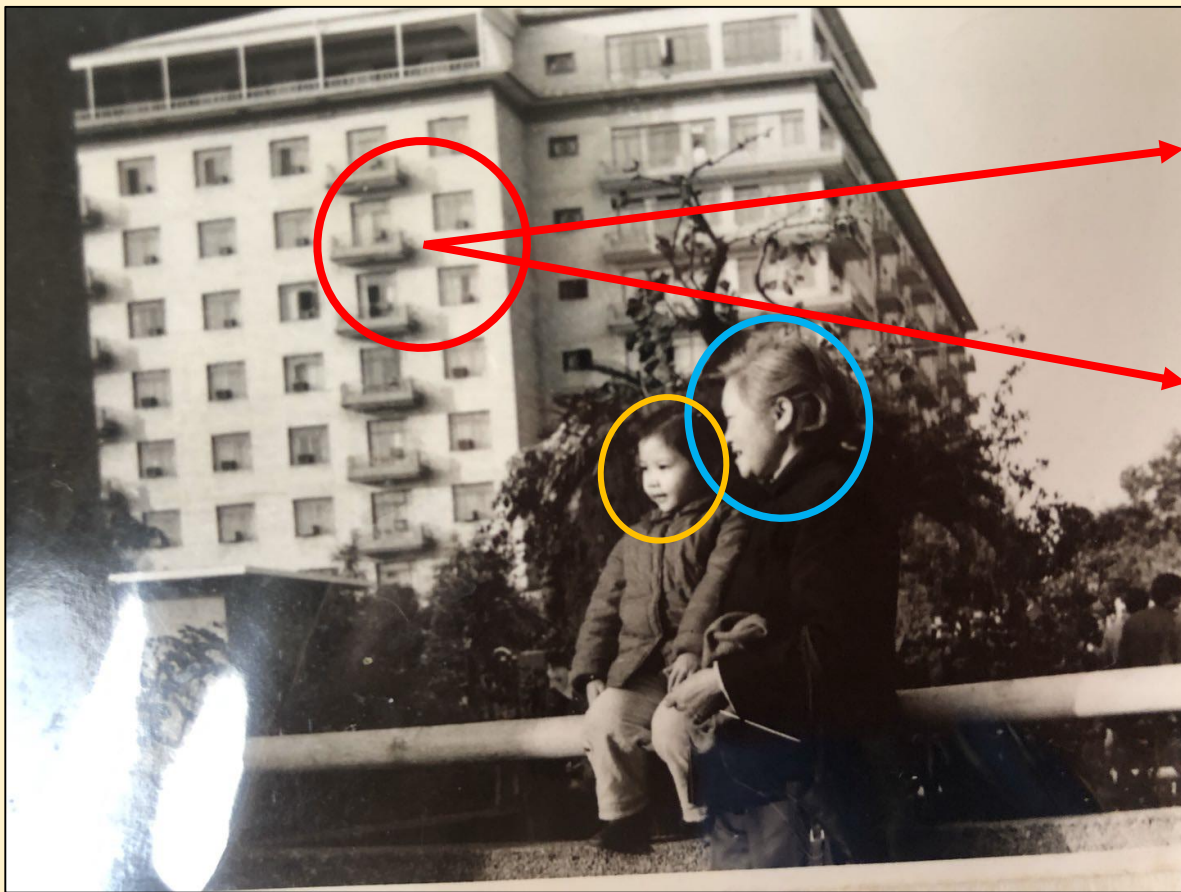
My great grandmother is currently 94 years old, born in 1926, the year of the tiger. Here are pictures of my great grandmother, she is enjoying her time in a park. As can be seen from the photo in the lower left corner, although she is old, she is still in good health and full of energy.



Here is my great grandmother taking a picture at Chun Xi Road, a modernized section in Chengdu with fancy shops and modern technology and styles.

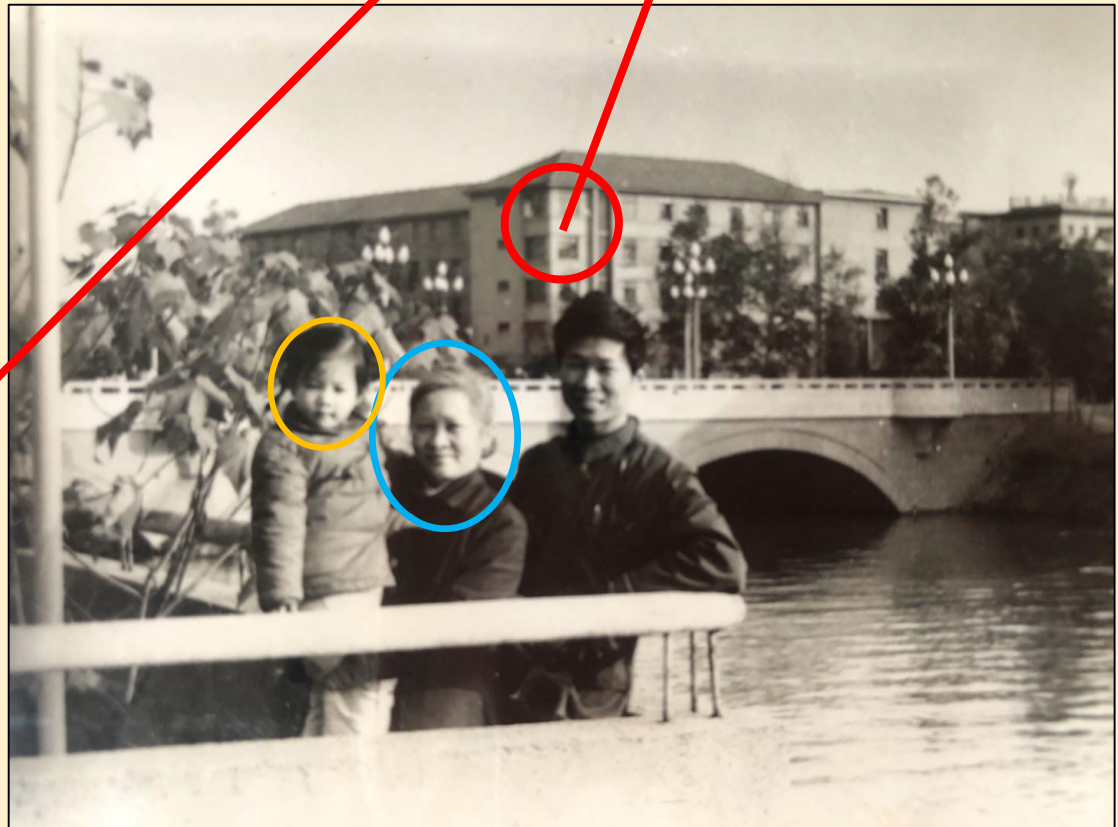


These pictures were taken while we celebrated her **91-year-old** birthday 3 years ago. Due to inconvenience of getting to her current villa and other daily factors, we may not visit her very often, I even managed to take these pictures only from the right opportunity.



The first 5 Star ranked hotel in Chengdu—Jin Jiang Hotel

These are some older styles of architecture/resident apartments before Chengdu has officially underwent larger modernizations, from these you can tell how long ago it must have been.



Here are some very old black and white photos taken closing to the 80s in Chengdu, the elder but vigorous looking woman is my great grandmother in her fifties, and the young girl is my mom approximately 3~4 years big. They were enjoying their grand daughter and grandmother times.

Prior Announcement:

Referenced photos would begin to be applied in the following slides for explaining certain of my great grandmother's life background. The photos were selected after I shared them to my great grandmother to see if they were appropriate to represent her actual background, and her overall opinion towards the photos was:

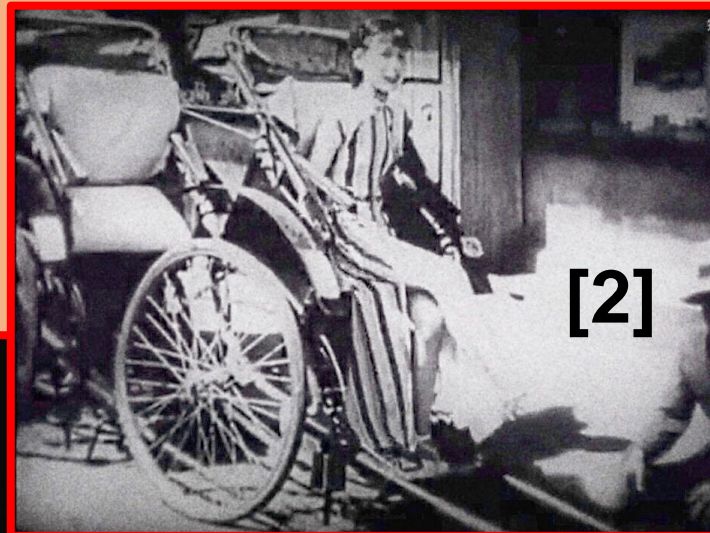
“They are qualified enough for telling my background.”

About Her Early Life

Due to the limitation of collecting actual photos of my great grandmother herself and her early condition during old China, some photos are referenced from reliable sources with contents in those photos that closely resemble to her living conditions, so you may have an idea how it was approximately like for her. **Referenced photos are boxed with red**, **preserved and available photos are boxed with green**.

These would be the vehicles my great grandmother's family possessed for their ways of transportation. The rickshaw would be applied for more minor situations, such as going for an entertainment, except her entertainments would've been very formal and fancy for the normal residences.

Transportation



Cars would then be applied under more formal situations, such as can be diplomacy, long distance travels, etc.. But according to my great grandmother, she rarely used the cars; instead, it was mostly used by the more prestigious members of the family, such as her grandfather.

Appearance



These are of course **not paintings of my great grandmother**. However, these portraits do resemble how she would've looked like when she was young. Notice the smooth and soft textures of the clothes, the delicate patterns, organized hair style, and the traditional styled backgrounds, they nicely correspond to how my great grandmother would appear even on a daily basis. More than that, from what she shared through these portraits, not only she would look like these figures, she wouldn't even get dressed with the same set of clothes on the second day, and her clothes are all high-end customization, the most fashionable clothes at the time, which shows her wealth and strong identity.

Continue

Referenced photos are boxed with red
Preserved and available photos are boxed with green



小姐住房 Young ladies' boudoirs

- 刘文彩有三个女儿，大女儿早年病逝，二女名刘宛兰，三女刘宛惠。
- Liu Wencai had three daughters, the oldest died in the youth, and the elder was named as Liu Wanlan and the youngest Liu Wanhui.

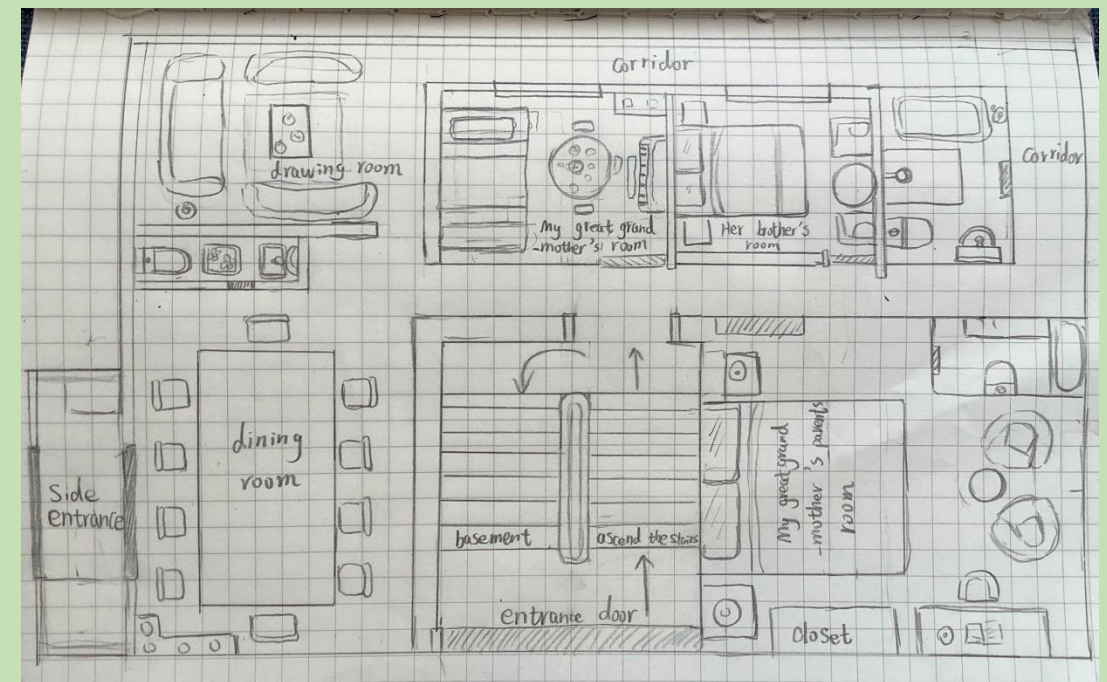
This room belongs to the family of Liu Wencai, a well-known landowner whose one of the daughters (the third daughter) was classmate with my great grandmother. Liu Wencai's family was actually even wealthier than my great grandmother's, but they both possessed, in general, the similar furniture and possession settings.



Living Conditions/Living Qualities

These photos are from the Dayi Liushi Manorial Museum, located in Chengdu, Dayi county.

This would be a general outlook of my great grandmother's house floor map based on her description as I called her on phone.



This however is only the main floor of her house, there are still other floors.

Continue

Referenced photos are boxed with red
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Valuable and Preserved Possession

Due to the horrible reformations that occurred during that time period, much of their properties were confiscated by the communist party, and not much were left for them. This exquisite fan, however, belongs to my great grandmother and it survived from the crazy movements. This seemingly normal fan means a lot to me.



This fan was made by a famous calligrapher Liu Fuyao in qing dynasty. He made this fan and dedicated to my great grandmother's family. From what he wrote on the fan, my great grandmother's family was very respectable.

百度百科



刘福姚

刘福姚生于同治三年甲子二月二十一日 (1864年)，卒年待考。清代状元。原名福尧，字伯棠，一字伯崇，号忍庵，一号守勤。广西桂林人。

本名	刘福尧
别称	刘福姚
字号	字伯棠，一字伯崇 号忍庵，一号守勤

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So far, the previous (including this current slide) slides are showing my great grandmother's wealth and identity based on daily-life aspects.

Continue

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Education

This picture shows a group photo of a class of girls in a middle-year female school. **It's wasn't my great grandmother's class**, but she was educated in the same school as all the girls were in the photo.



The year is 1942 in this photo and these students are in grade 12, which my great grandmother by that time was 16 years old, and would be in the same grade as in the photo in 1944 when she is 18 years old.

时间	周一	周二	周三	周四	周五	周六
6:20-6:50	早操					
8:00-8:50	国父纪念周	算术	英语	国文	英语	算术
9:00-9:50	算术	英语	算术	算术	国文	国文
10:00-10:50	英语	国文	国文	英语	国文	物理
11:00-11:50	物理	生物	生物	物理	物理	生物
13:00-13:50	历史	公民	历史	军事训练	历史	
14:00-14:50		地理	体育	历史	地理	
15:00-15:50	体育		体育		体育	
16:00-16:50	课外活动					

A schedule that covers courses for one week that time. Available courses were—

- Mathematics
- Biology
- History (Chinese specifically)
- English
- Physics
- Military training
- Chinese
- Geology
- PE
- Citizen class

Her previous school is now currently the Chengdu Shude Middle School, which is a targeting, renowned middle school in Chengdu. During the old China, education for females was really challenging unless they have enough money. According to statistics from 1927, rate of illiteracy of entire Chinese population was 83%, and if consider the ratio for the female only, it was 98% high! Girls were hardly educated. In addition to that, private schools were paid with lots of silver dollars, which is currency made of silver, and people in general couldn't afford such expensive tuition. So, her opportunity in getting educated also proves her social level during that time period.

Continue

Referenced photos are boxed with red
Preserved and available photos are boxed with green



There are 12 zodiac symbols associated with the Chinese Lunar Calendar.

My great grandmother's Chinese zodiac is the tiger, it's also her favorite animal. In Chinese culture, people whose zodiac is tiger are stubborn, tough and independent. They are very proud of and have full confidence in themselves. They are naturally strong and tenacious and never bow down to others. They do not like to obey other's order.

These characteristics are very similar to my great grandmother's personality. She's really proud, stubborn and never let others help her. Also sometimes she is mean to others. Perhaps it was because she had been a great lady in her youth that she still retains some traits, such as her contempt for the laboring people, whom she thought to be born to serve others.

Continue (With some other facts about her and her life)

My great grandmother enjoys watching romance-themed stories or TV shows, and she possessed this interest even since she was a child. She yearned for love and romance, which later turned very sad for her since her husband, my great grandfather, died indirectly from the Cultural Revolution for him being suspicious and so was locked in jail and eventually died in jail.

Nevertheless, with the final settlement of the major reformation movements, my great grandmother lost many in her life: wealth, identity, husband, parents...and it affected her daughter's generation too, my grandmother, who was rejected by all universities regardless of her very good grades only because she was defined with "bad components". "bad components" refers to the family background being bad for it being wealthy.

Because the communist party was founded at the time, and it began by brutally persecuting the capitalists, my great grandfather was persecuted to death by them for his family background—his family was warlord, so my great grandmother lost her father when she was very young. This was the cruel, ruthless political environment at that time.

In conclusion, her loss in her life makes me feel terribly sorry for her. However, I admire her very much. Her strength and tolerance were the most important strength to protect and support the whole family in that time. Even though she lost so many things, she faced life bravely and worked hard to support her son, daughter and her young brother to grow up by herself.

Through analyzing my experience, I have considered my personal experience from multiple perspectives as a way of thinking about how it may inspire and inform exploration and expression through art. They are presented in the following two slides:

Imitational: My great grandmother's story truly amazed me, and as a person that underwent the Cultural Revolution, she was even brave enough to share her experiences with me. So, I can create a naturalistic portrait of my great grandmother that captures her features that she still possesses positive attitudes towards life, despite of her tragic losses in the past.

Expressive, Cultural: Create an artwork that expresses how the entity or value of the massive changes during the Cultural Revolution differs towards people from different social classes, since people definitely possessed different attitudes towards the events based on their different initial financial situations.

Institutional: Create an artwork that shows respect, admiration, and even gratitude towards the current, modern Chengdu Shude Middle School, which used to be my great grandmother's middle school that educated her with a different name, yet still remains its "glory" since the past even after the massive reformations.

Social: Some considered the wealthy people, the "capitalists", as the negative forces in society because they're too rich, and that everyone should instead stay equal with a fixed mind set. I can create an artwork that reveals this sort of corrupted mind set—capitalism as evil and should have equalization—that may still even exist within our current societies.

Formalist, Cultural: I can use the formal qualities to compare my great grandmother's living conditions through use of textures, colors, forms, etc. to those with the normal living conditions, presenting her strong identity.

Expressive: Create an artwork that expresses my great grandmother's regrets and hatred towards the reformations during the Cultural Revolution, which she used to live under wonderful conditions, but later were destroyed and lost due to those reformations. For that, my great grandmother expressed her strong and negative opinions to me as a victim from the Cultural Revolution.

Humorous: Create an artwork that depicts the scene of my great grandmother "condemning" one of her current maid, who she may still consider as a "nobody" servant during her younger ages, which despite of her mean attitude, it's funny to think that no one in the current society would treat others, no matter of their identity, as if they would during the old times.

Humorous, Social: Create an artwork that still depicts how my great grandmother condemns a maid, but reveals the static traditional mind set of the elderlies and their overall negative opinions towards actions of the young people (Her maids are younger and more open-minded than her, which she with her old ways of thinking would often find their behaviors disturbing and unacceptable to her, and this can be true even with other elderlies).

Expressive: Create an artwork that expresses my great grandmother's level of respect within society before reformations had occurred, using her current preserved fan and her statements related to her living conditions as my direct influence of the design.

Imitational, Conceptual: Create a naturalistic portrait of my great grandmother while using elements that imply the concept of loss, loss of conceptual things, such as identity, wealth, love, and life. This can be done in a way influenced by the idea of pessimism along the findings from the critical review of Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* which I concluded Kahlo's loss in her life. Also, I can be influenced by the work of Vincent Van Gogh *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*.

Revised and Expanded Objectives

For my Grade 10 Semester 2 artwork, I will create the naturalistic portrait of my great grandmother while using elements that imply the concept of loss. Such concept can be expressed through the application of juxtaposition and symbolism as I discovered from Kahlo's self-portrait, which I would juxtapose unrelated subject(s) with the naturalistic figure (all subjects in the design will be naturalistic) of my great grandmother in close proximity similar to Kahlo's work, and at the same time, such unrelated subject(s) would have its symbol that is closely related to my great grandmother's identity or her life. However, instead of a portrait with a face-to-face angle of view, I'm considering an approximate 45 degree angle of view from the sides that can help capture a wider understanding of her appearance, while I want to do this within a relatively macro scale, which makes her further away from the audience as expected, and it can suggest the idea of pessimism. Lack of geometric elements will be a focus of the design for it to show the discord and random fate of my great grandmother and her surroundings. And lastly, I plan to use a limited colors (it would still stay natural, but the tone and surroundings would have color limitation, so it's not low abstraction.) for showing the concept of loss.

Objective Statement—To create a naturalistic portrait of my great grandmother while employing elements that suggest the concept of loss as a result of the sudden and tragic reformations (Cultural Revolution).

References (of the referenced photos)

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