J.N. Andrews Honors Program

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TE AMO MUJER

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Abstract

"Te Amo Mujer" is a documentary film project exploring the story of Don Gustavo Jiménez, an old man who lives in a small village in the south of Mexico, and the grandfather of the filmmaker. The film seeks to use the narrative of Don Gustavo to explore the question of why we live where we live. The thesis of the film—or more accurately the suggestion, as the film is a very personal work—is that **we live where we do, and how we do, out of love for the people that are closest to us.**

Methodology

The methodology for "Te Amo Mujer" was three-fold, following the established structure for documentary filmmaking:

1. **Pre-production,** in which I made arrangements for the filming of the documentary, including research, funding, preparation of equipment, and detailed planning of the five-month trip under the close advising of Professor Kim.

2. **Production,** which involved a five month stay in the south of Mexico, recording observational footage, interviews, and B-roll of my grandparents, while keeping detailed production notes and communicating with my advisor regarding process, potential narrative arcs, and challenges.

3. **Post-production,** in which I am editing the footage with the guidance of my advisor. Carefully selecting from the store of footage I accumulated, I am crafting a narrative, combining my design and storytelling skills to create not only an engaging story but also a high quality visual experience. As I near completion of the project, I am preparing the film for showings in the area and under the guidance of my advisor will prepare it for broader distribution to the public.

Process

The style of documentary that I was pursuing for the majority of the production was that of **cinéma vérité**, a style that favors observational footage over a strong narrator's voice. It was my intent to find a story that was currently in progress, and to use that as a vehicle for exploring my roots, seeking to understand why it is that I have found myself so far from the birthplace of my parents.

I concluded my trip with 113 hours of footage, along with extensive notes on themes, stories, and possible narrative structures. Selecting down from that amount of material has involved **a deliberate process of decision-making**—evaluating the various themes, stories, and the ability of the medium to communicate them in an effective manner.

The final style of the film, **a blend of cinéma vérité and reflective narration**, was chosen to match the strongest narrative for the medium, that of my grandfather's love for his wife.

Concluding Reflections

When I began the project in fall of 2012, I had it in mind to answer the question of **why I live where I live**—why it is that I live so far away from my extended family and the birthplace of my parents. I wanted to learn something of my ancestry—to understand the larger narrative of my family—and the effects of my family's relocation on my sense of identity. I wanted a story that would be worth sharing, and that would resonate with an entire generation of immigrants' children. **What I found instead was a much smaller, and yet universal story.**

Bibliography/Inspiration

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