
Senior Projects Spring 2019

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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Remnants

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Understanding where you come from is never a linear experience. I began this project with the urge to dispel the cinematic portrayal of a romanticized and glorified 'wild west' and instead, I spent the last eleven months deciphering the stories and myths I was exposed to throughout my life by my family; perpetuated by the film industry. Growing up, I was told tales of the Bixby Ranch, a thousand-acre ranch in the middle of the Sonoran Desert that my grandfather worked, just as his father had done before. I went to rodeos and watched old westerns, fueling the mental picture I had created of dusty cowboys whistling and whooping at cattle from horseback on roundup. As I grew older, I realized that these narratives were only glamorized legends of praised cowboys, told from the viewpoint of my grandmother, my aunt, and my mother. Throughout this process, I realized that the driving force behind these accounts were all women, painting a picture of what it was like to be in an industry dominated by men. It was then that I realized that I was not supposed to make a film about these men, but unravel the myths around their lives with stories told by their wives, daughters, and sisters.

I began shooting my film in June of 2018 with the idea that I would make a talking head documentary on cattle ranchers in Arizona. Over a series of 9 shoots, my project evolved into a poetic exploration of my relationship to the industry and to my family's heritage. I shot primarily digital but as my understanding for the project deepened I decided to shoot 16 mm moving image portraits of the ranchers amongst their landscape. I began to understand the relationship that these ranchers had to the terrain and my own perspective of what the Arizona landscape meant to me.

Throughout my four years at Bard, I have taken a vast array of film history and production classes and in my final project as a Bard film student, I wanted to make it a culmination of the skills I learned from my time spent studying here. All of my aesthetic choices are representative of how I have matured into the artist I am today. I have been able to truly begin to perfect my cinematic eye and have begun to realize that cinematography is my true passion within filmmaking. Remnants is an ever-evolving piece and will continue to expand well after graduation as I continue to delve deeper into who I am becoming and what my past means to me.