



Artists' Moving
Image Network



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Adonia Bouchehri Interview Transcript

Voice: Adonia Bouchehri, FLAMIN Fellowship artist 2020-2021

00:06

I work across a range of different media. The final outcome usually is a single channel video, but there's a lot going into it and the process. I work with CGI animation, and writing always plays an important role, as well as live action footage. And these elements, I'm weaving them together to create this work.

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I think I'm always really concerned with thinking about the kind of images we live by and we grow up with - how they affect us and our lives and our perception. And I often think about images as coming to inhabit the body and having a really strong physical effect on the body, and that is always something that really interests me. So that's also how I often start, I start with an image or a few images that have this really strong physical effect on my own body, and I start to ask questions about these images. Why do they have this effect? Does it have something to do with me, or could that also be related to larger societal questions? And that's kind of the starting point to investigate an image or number of images and think about the properties of that. And then really go into this research phase. Now, what does it signify? What does it point to? What does it mean for the place I live in? That's always for me a really interesting point of departure.

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I feel like my approach is so much informed by a visual arts background and I happen to work with the medium of video because that makes sense to my way of thinking - because it's very much about the layering of different lived experience, memory and imagined spaces. And that can be seen quite clearly in my most recent film *Jello* where there's a blending of those different spaces - of imagined spaces, remembered spaces and quite ordinary habitual movements.

02:30

The project I'm working on with FLAMIN is based on the memories of my mother, who was from Iran, and she lived there until the age of 15. And as a result of when the revolution happened, she and her family had to flee. I grew up with those stories that she used to tell. They are really close to me, although it's something that I haven't experienced myself, and they've affected my imagination quite strongly. And that is something I'm extremely interested in, in these moments of something that feels very close and at the same time it feels foreign because I haven't been to the country. So I'm trying to investigate these moments, this layering of memories and imaginations. The aim for the film really is to take

all this into account and create a work that works with these rememberings and mis-remembering - the gaps between that and really diving into these different layers of lived experience.

03:34

I think that I have these very strong visual images that have come from some of the stories my mother told me when I was younger, and that really stayed with me. And up until recently I've never questioned them that much, these images, and they were almost part of my own memories - it sometimes almost felt like they were my own memories. For example, this one story my mother tells about these nightmares she had of large ants crawling across a carpet. That was a memory, I always found extremely fascinating from very early on and it was very, very visual to me. I could really see those large ants crawling across these Persian carpets. And there are a number of these kinds of examples. I do think about this whole process as a weaving together of these different moments, of these fragments. It is a fragmented work, it's working together fragments. And that's why I'm actually working on a tapestry at the moment, which is for my mother's memories, as well. So I'm recreating this tapestry. So in a way, I'm reconstructing something, but also newly constructing something because it will be unique and different.

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Being on the FLAMIN Fellowship has been a really rich experience for me, because I usually work in this quite internalised way. I usually work from my bedroom, and I have all these ideas, and I have these objects, and I have images and I work on CGI animation. It's very kind of private and internalised before I then branch out and you know, step outside. This has been a really different way of working because from very early on, I had to communicate the project in its different stages. And I had mentoring sessions with Pinky Ghundale, which was also really, really great, because it was someone who had a different view on the project - a different way of engaging with it, asking different questions. I had to make myself much more explicit earlier on. And then also the monthly workshops where I had just a few moments to explain the project at each session. But that was really, really good and it really helped me to formulate the work for myself and also see what are the responses of other people? What are the questions other people ask? So to be in dialogue with other people, I think the project from that has probably grown in quite a different way, maybe, from the way I would have had, if I just had have been alone working on it by myself.