

Flag ASMR:

5 channel Sound Composition/Installation:

Duration: 10 mins 20 seconds.

Wooden Box textured by strips of the American Flag (manufactured by Anley, Made in China), miniature tabletop flag attached to subwoofer.

On Sept 11th, 2001 I watched the twin towers falling with my father. Glued to the TV. A silent demolition. An American reality TV show. In the weeks that followed, I started to see American flags everywhere. Especially from immigrants of all colors, flying the flag out of a sense of fear of appearing to be on the wrong side.

The sound of the twin towers falling in my memory is silent. Filmed from far away. As the second plane hit, there was no sound on TV. I heard the sound via the sound of my own heart beating and the breath of the newscaster trying to be as professional as possible as they had to report a major catastrophe in real time, live in front of the world.

Flag ASMR is the attempt to recall a memory. An attempt to close a schism caused by a fear of the lines people cross and the fears of uncertainty, harm, and danger. What is the sound of a silent memory. The sound of it being touched, taken apart, and reordered.

I recorded the sounds like an ASMR video. The sound of me “interacting” with the flag. The flag became an object that was activated by other objects. Hands, scissors, the brush.

By the end, as I was listening back to the sounds I recorded, the sound of the flag didn't seem calming at all, but rather to take on characteristics of the memory itself. The imagined sound of the twin towers falling. The high frequencies of the paint brush against the flag started to sound like bodies of water, the New Jersey Waterfront looking towards Manhattan. And from that, I decided to extend that narrative and my memory with sound.

~ **Kai-Luen Liang**

Flag, a piece of fabric most often rectangular with distinctive design and colors that often is associated with the country with were born or/and we live in.

A representation of a particular identity.

Memories imply our past, our experiences, that are stored in our senses, in our bodies and our psychic.

FLAG ASMR, an Installation of 5 channel Audio and the display of a box covered by cut strips of the American Flag reconstructed and covered with white paint.

I personally feel that Kai- Luen Liang installation transports us to a critique of the acquired identity as former “foreigner/alien” or children of “foreigner/alien”, that we both experienced as Asian and Mediterranean.

My memories brought me back to the initiation /procedure to become an American Citizen.

The pledge to the American Flag and to USA as the new mother country.

With my fingers crossed, I pledge to give up any support to my native/mother country in case of war. Was I really pledging for that? In my heart I was pledging to never allow any war to happen and I believed with my new acquired rights to vote, I could make a difference.

Deep down my core, I was afraid the pledge was creating new borders: us and them.

We have the rights, they don't.

My family and friends that I left in what I considered “mother home/country”, became they.

Was I pledging to become a traitor to my own past and descendants? To my present?

Cause “they” are still alive and “they”always be in my memories and my present.

I naively believed that I wouldn't allow that to happen, that now I could make a difference.

Kai and I shared the memories of 9/11 when USA, and the world stood still, watching what seemed to be an impossible tragedy unfolding in our lives while witnessing to what seemed a sci-fi film. It became our new reality.

Within hours American Flags (made in China) were on display everywhere, including on top of cars. God Bless America, United We Stand stickers were everywhere.

Kai's memories were that in certain neighborhood you would have been considered unpatriotic and looked with suspicion if you didn't display an American Flag. Especially if you were from Middle East descendants.

All the former "foreigners" felt obliged to purchase and to display a flag for the anxiety and fear that they could be pointed as the enemy. Because after all, once a "foreigner", if you look or sound different, you always are a "foreigner"

FLAG ASMR, awaken our sensorial memories, the reactivation and reconstructions of our experiences and internal representations of our lives and those moments that changed our perspective and relations to one another.

We hear the sounds in 3 different phases, like in 3 different passages of times.

Firstly the soft touching of the flag as you would within the intimacy of a loved one; then the cutting of the flag...like the cutting, the break up of a relationship that doesn't work any more. Thirdly the sound of the brush painting the color white over the flag.

The necessity to create a new canvas to start a new narrative.

The sounds of all the actions take us to an awareness of those moments and the aliveness with our emotions.

With our eyes closed with experience, we relive, our most intimate fears, hopes and how our impermanence of what life really is.

The power of FLAG ASMR installation is awaking us to the awareness of our memories.

It pushes us to remember that our past make us who we are right now.

The now we all are in, right now. The global state of emergency, caused by the *virulentus* (poisonous) that has no borders.

So, indeed United We Stand to remember that nobody is a "foreigner/alien" and our pledge is not to a flag or a country, but our pledge is to life, to humanity and to the only mother: EARTH.