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## **Moving Images of Home**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctorate in Philosophy at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

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## **[ABSTRACT]**

*Moving Images of Home* is a practice-based thesis that examines shifting concepts of home and belonging within the context of transnational migration. It extends contemporary notions of diaspora by examining the complex construction of affiliations between ethnic, national and sexual identities.

The video (creative component of the thesis), *You Are Here*, is an autobiographical, essayistic work which constitutes the main research. It is at once a partial historical record of my—and my family's—on-going experiences of migration, and a critical reflection on the intricate articulations of displacement and belonging today. The video attempts to locate home both physically and symbolically by foregrounding the camera's role in the construction of narratives of belonging. It considers the material generated by the camera as well as the camera's performative role as witness to unfolding narratives of displacement. Using the family archive, the video re-reads and retraces pivotal events in my life that have been recorded by the camera in order to uncover hidden or forgotten meaning and memories. In so doing, I suggest that the camera can act as a potentially transformative device within the discourse of belonging, and serve to reconcile the personal with the social, the everyday with history.

The written component of the thesis is a critical and reflexive analysis of the creative process which produced *You Are Here*, providing a contextual framework for the video. The writing is structured as a parallel text to the video. It unpacks the filmic text by exploring concepts of *betweenness* as it relates to notions of transnational belonging by firstly looking at linguistic and cultural translation as experiential modes of “between-belonging” for the migrant. This is then considered in relation to mobility and transit and their relation to geography and locations of belonging with particular attention to homeland. Finally, the notion of “queering” home-movies is posited as a means of further considering *betweenness* and offering an alternative reading of the narratives of familial belonging.



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The staff at the Rymer Gallery at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago for their assistance with the exhibition *Not on any map* (1999).



## **[LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS]**

**[Fig. 1]** Chris Marker, *La Jetée* (1962). France, 28 minutes. Paris: Argos Films

**[Fig. 2]** Vera Frenkel, *...from the Transit Bar* (1992). Canada, 31 minutes.  
Toronto: V-Tape.

**[Fig. 3]** Shelly Silver, *Former East— Former West* (1994). USA, 62 minutes.  
Chicago: Video Data Bank.

**[Fig. 4]** Paul Tana, *Caffé Italia, Montréal* (1985). Canada, 81 minutes.  
Montréal: Cinéma Libre.

**[Fig. 5]** Shigeiko Kubota, *My Father* (1975). USA, 15 minutes. Chicago: Video  
Data Bank.

*All other images are stills from:*

John Di Stefano, *You Are Here* (2010), New Zealand/Canada, 62 minutes.  
Chicago: Video Data Bank.