
Same Journey, 3 Generations

My three-part video installation is about my Turkish migrant worker family in Germany, who filmed their annual visits to their old homeland Boyabat in Sinop. Filmed at different times, in the 70s, 80s and 90s, and with different technologies, with VHS, Mini DVD and the Iphone, the same locations appear again and again: the street, the village, the house. Within the video installation, the same locations are compared with each other and the similarities and differences are presented.

My main focus is on understanding why the generation of guest workers took up the same locations as their grandchildren. Given the circumstances, completely different issues also arise. People in the 80s and 90s had limited opportunities to make recordings, whether due to the limited storage capacity of VHS tapes or the high cost. My generation, on the other hand, mainly takes pictures for publication on social media. Nevertheless, we have captured identical motifs. One example of this is a road sign 80 kilometers away from Sinop. I took exactly the same picture of this sign in 2017 as my father did in 1999. Although there were similar road signs back then, they both chose this exact spot. I wondered what their respective intentions were.

It all started when I found old VHS tapes when I was clearing out an apartment. I digitized them and watched the recordings for the first time. While watching them, I noticed that many of the recordings had parallels to those I had filmed in my parents' home town. I made a note of the recurring locations seen in the videos and created categories such as: Village, gardening in the field, etc. At the same time, I asked my family members what their intentions were for the recordings. The guest worker generation (my grandfather) filmed to quench their homesickness and to show their homeland to new acquaintances in Germany. The second generation (my parents), on the other hand, filmed to show their relatives in Turkey the way to Sinop. With this knowledge, I developed the first prototypes to compare the recordings in real time. I noticed that even the image sections were often identical. During the brainstorming phase, I asked myself what project should emerge from this.

I started by shortening my material and limiting myself to the essentials. When working with personal material, it's easy to forget that people who are not familiar with the subject matter often don't know how the individual people relate to each other. I therefore created an outline for my video that enables a logical link between the recurring characters. Through testing, I came to the conclusion that I wanted to make a generational comparison, regardless of my personal perspective. I don't want to tell the viewer directly what to think or how to interpret a scene. Instead, I want to offer various possible interpretations that encourage reflection, as family is a universal topic. I merely want to provide assistance to help people better understand what they are seeing. This is how my video installation with a live performance came about.