

Claudia Ruiz Gustafson

Visual Artist

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Artist Statement

Historias fragmentadas (Fragmented Stories)

I grew up in a conservative middle class family in Perú, and moved to the US when I was in my twenties. As time went by and the last of my grandparents died, I felt compelled to bring attention to what I left behind, being the only person in my family who left her country of origin. This brought me to look deeper in my past; to explore the paradox of memory and the emotion of loss.

In my series, *Historias fragmentadas*, I create digital compositions that unsettle the images of the past in a way that allows me to look through the cracks. By tearing, juxtaposing and layering archival documents, fragments from my journals, and objects from my childhood, I have shed light on a personal story within an ancestral story that spans generations. Continuing the quest to re-merge with what I have lost, I use staged imagery, mostly self-portraits, to transport my physical presence into the spiritual past as seen in the compositions.

The conversation within this series, exposes the vulnerability of childhood, a longing for a time gone by, and the truths of a particular Latin American family. I have chosen, with these images, to release the voices and the haunting self-discovery that happens when I explored the stories behind iconic family photographs and their legends through my own personal mythology.