

Finding my voice in practice-based Research
Looking at Shattered Reflection: a story in three parts

Tanja Sakota

Shattered Reflection is a short documentary that considers the filmmakers familial and collective trauma of forced migration. How does one trace and access memory that has no archive? It involves finding gravesites that are now parks, streets that have been renamed, apartment blocks that have been converted into factories, locations that are now inhabited by people who have no recollection of what lies within the memories of the walls. The memory of the past lies locked in the locations and sites, silent and frozen in a moment in time that is no longer visible.

The aim is to trace the steps in an attempt to unveil the secrets that are hidden within the walls, pavements, streets and forests. Using an experimental autoethnographic film format the film challenges conventional methods of representation as the locations and landscape act as active characters within narrative construction. The film does not follow a logical sequence of cause and effect that evolves around characters that embark on a narrative that moves towards a conclusion. Rather, the film represents the fragmentation and inconsistency that is apparent with the act of remembering. Using different narrative structures (poetry, the masked interview and self-reflection) the filmmaker re-imagines the invisible traces that were erased by redefining borders, she takes a visual journey into invisible memory.

Biography

Tanja Sakota is an author, filmmaker, artistic researcher and associate professor at the Wits School of Arts, Film and Television Department. Coupled with more than 20 years of experience in academic teaching, her practice-based research focuses on memory traces as they become accessible through architecture, sites and locations in landscape and city spaces. Her upcoming monograph *Uncovering memory* proposes innovative ways to approach pedagogy using sites of tormenting memories as the backdrop for artistic research.