

Pilgrimage of Heritage

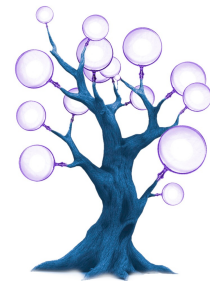
The distance between my father and me always made me wonder about my heritage. I had so many unanswered questions. My father didn't talk about his Sicilian family or ancestors, which made me even more curious. What was he hiding?

With the help of ancestry.com, and Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey, Immordino started her search. An Immordino group on Facebook lead her to a distant cousin, who became her guide. Setting out to find her family roots, what she found was a story she could not have imagined.

In "Pilgrimage of Heritage" the images begin with stories first learned of in books, and later informed by experience. Churches, village streets, and secret stone chambers are combined with portraits and fleeting figures, as well as abstractionist surreal interruptions. This emotionally and visually fraught multiverse reflects not only her travel across the world, but also her interior states of imagination. In Sicily Immordino felt she was destined to be there but did not belong; a prodigal child who was profoundly an outsider as well. She discovered that rather than Italian-American, she is Greek-Arabic-Middle Eastern-North African. "We are all so much more than we think." she realized. "And so much more connected." She left Sicily with a different life story than she'd arrived with, and in a way, a different self, which was somehow both more and less herself. That's the kind of paradox of narrative and consciousness that her constructed images portray and embody.

This is expressed through her painstaking layering of fragments of past and present, old and new, people, places, objects, and textures in a fractal compression that looks like life, a dream, and history. Images captured in Sicily were collaged or montaged with other elements in her purview, to tell a broader story, give context within germane historical eras, geopolitics, and prevailing mindsets. This conceptual structure is further expressed throughout the project as the suite of about two dozen pictures utilizes an array of techniques, materials, and processes, and come in a variety of shapes and sizes -- as genealogy is various, and as she finds her distinctive frames. She favors frames from the late 1800s, mostly wood and gold-plated brass, with convex glass, evocatively aged and lovingly restored, which is yet another way she has of making the old into something shiny and new.

By bringing what has been her signature compositional technique to bear on this intimately epic narrative, Immordino's style has found its spiritual home; the technique is inseparable from the meaning here. Her embrace of all processes mirrors her acceptance of all secrets, while her use of place is a metaphor speaks to how our lives are enacted against the backdrop of durable, even ancient places, impersonal cities and ancestral homelands.



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