

Nazanin Oghanian – Artist Statement

Practice Overview

My recent work explores power relations and the ways in which women's bodies are controlled through the medicalization of their bodies and reproductive health. Specifically, this manifests in the points of contact between the individual body and societal methods of control, the individual traces such control leave embedded in memory, and how I feel my own embodiment. In my practice, I examine the intrinsically obsessive and repetitive nature of the gestures required to enact my own regulation. My work breaks down into discrete components of the auditory, visual, and gestural aspects of memory and control; each work delves into the extreme edges of these sensory and bodily components. Through use of audio, visual, and narrative strategies, I play with the slippages of my memory, and my body's story.

Project Description

Recent and ongoing series of work unfold the layers of control related to the medicalization of my body that began during my childhood in Iran. I interrogate the institutional space, objects and medications that were repeatedly used on and around my body— both physically and metaphorically —that have become the primary focus of my current art practice. On one hand, I focus on the fragmented translation of the medical language and space I was exposed to as a child, and on the other, on the objects, sounds and memories that continue to be folded into the narration of my experience.

A recent audio-video installation focuses on my childhood experience of being treated for the condition known as 'precocious puberty' — pubertal development earlier than clinical normative age of puberty. For seven years (from the age of eight to fifteen), I had to go to the hospital precisely every twenty-eight days to receive hormonal injections. Every month, while listening to the fragmented sounds of a nurse mixing and preparing the medicine and the needles, I waited on one side of a hospital curtain to receive the injections. The title of this work, milky uniform suspension, is the technical description of the correct viscosity of the hormonal liquid I could hear being prepared. The ways in which the sounds evoked my imagination of what I could not see, and how this continues to be folded into my memories of the medicalization of my body, are the focus of this work. By disassociating the visual and auditive elements of my video performance on separate sides of a hospital curtain, I explore the processes in which corporeal memory impacts identity formation.