

Life's Tiny Perfect Moments

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'Life's Tiny Perfect Moments' is a clay relief sculpture; the tree of life branches out to encapsulate memories from my grandparents' homes. After losing three of my grandparents in 2019, it came time to sell their homes. Losing them was hard, selling their homes was like losing them all over again. After they passed, we spent every weekend packing up their belongings. Being in their homes with my relatives, sifting through boxes of memories, kept them alive. Being in the rooms where I played cards with my Nonno, cooked with my Nonna, and had tea parties with my Pa, gave me a physical connection to them. Once we sold their homes and said goodbye to those rooms forever, it felt like I was losing that connection and officially saying goodbye. In my Nonno and Nonna's backyard was a big apricot tree. This tree was a massive part of my childhood.

I don't remember a summer when I wasn't eating fresh apricots, nor a winter that I didn't have apricot jam. Saying goodbye to their home also meant saying goodbye to the tree. I knew I wanted to depict a tree in my work, the symbol of the tree of life was a perfect fit. The tree of life is a recurring symbol throughout many works of art, but most famously in Gustav Klimt's, *The Tree of Life*. The symbol has many meanings across different religions and mythologies. However, the meaning of the symbol which inspired my piece derives from Turkish mythology wherein trees symbolize rebirth, growth, and development.

The Tree of Life symbolizes the earthly connection between the heavens and the underworld. The roots of the tree hold humans on earth, as the tree's branches reach into the sky, connecting the dead with the living. I depicted myself as I am now, kneeling at the foot of the tree. Resting high in the branches are rooms from my grandparents' homes, capturing memories they gave me as a little girl. A segment of a poem I penned, is depicted around the edge of my sculpture, deepening this meaning. My sculpture was going to be an in-the-round sculpture; however I was unable to achieve the authentic form that is identifiable as the tree of life.

To resolve this, I reworked my plan to sculpt a relief. Along with form, changing my type of sculpture gave me another opportunity to enhance the unity, balance, and the meaning of life and connectivity. The wood I sculpted the tree onto was round, and moving images were projected onto my work. The circular format serves as a metaphor for 'the circle of life', explaining that we are all connected from birth, to after death; there is no beginning nor end. The projections enhanced this metaphor, showing the real memories my work alludes to, giving a deeper insight into the emotional depth of my work. Tiny, perfect moments of my grandparents holding me with love, is what plays on repeat in my head when I think of them. As I can no longer hold them, nor sit in their homes, this piece is a tangible reminder that even though they are gone, the love they have gifted me will live on forever.