

Video Description

Home Squat Home Generations Before Me

A note: The first film contains bright, rapidly blinking lights that may be difficult for some viewers. The lights occur from around 3:10 until 8:35.

A plain black space, facing down into a half-open cardboard box. The top flaps animate open, revealing the box is empty. Now, the bottom of the open box becomes a video screen with a cellphone camera's view into leaf-filled tree branches against a sky with thick, grey clouds. The cellphone camera sweeps down to a view of tall downtown buildings in the distance that are framed by the trees.

Text appears on screen, "Crab Park. Unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Selílwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations, Canada." The cellphone camera continues downward, landing on an unzipped lime green tent on a hill.

The person with the cellphone camera walks toward the tent, steps in. A hand unzips the flap on the far side and pushes it up and back. From in the tent, sitting down, the downtown buildings are now framed from the bottom by a large, tangled blackberry thicket. After a few moments, the person steps out onto the grass and dried leaves, and stands. The view moves above the blackberries to reveal a city street, then a train track with a still train, colorful shipping containers stacked two high, and then the downtown buildings and a parking lot where a big tent city previously stood before it was dismantled. A few cars race by. The cellphone camera tilts down toward a discarded, striped bag in the grass, then back up to focus in on a handful of berries jutting out from the bramble. The berries are in varying stages of ripeness, one with brand new, hard, green drupes, and only one that is fully ripe, purple, and full at the center of the cluster. A hand reaches in to pluck the ripe berry and holds it up, one small droplet of juice settled on their fingertip.

The hand rotates the berry around, each drupe individually reflecting a patch of sky. Text appears to the side of the screen:

“HO's
letter
to
generations
before
ME”

As the hand displays the berry, the apostrophe s and “letter to generations before” fade away as HO and ME float toward each other, forming “HOME.” The hand moves ever closer to the cellphone camera until it fills the screen, blurry, then dissolves into a black screen. Now, the box

is gone, and we are positioned within the tent. A mesh window is open, and a shadow puppet play animating the speakers' stories is cast along the smooth, taut surface of the tent's rainfly, framed within the outline of a tent window. The light source is one small, white light. A very brief fade to black occurs between images. The puppets are made of paper cutouts. The objects described in the story are either cutouts or made of dark or colored outlines on transparent pages. The characters and objects appear in a variety of ways. Sometimes, they are static on the screen. Other times, they roll across the screen. Some of the characters are operated as puppets with movement. At times, the perspective roams around, moves in close, investigating, but mostly, the view is still.

The first story begins with cutouts of skyscrapers, one with gauzy, glassy windows. Then, a series of numbers flip into view, 1 through 11, but with no number 4. After a brief fade to black, the number 4 appears, much larger than the other digits and cast in blue light. The 4 is replaced with the Chinese character 死. Then, a figure lain to rest on her back, a cutout of a candle as large as her, a yellow-orange flame. The storyteller's hand will interact with the candle and the body as the story moves forward. Their imagination will come to life as a large, dark sheet with cutouts: floating and blurry old photographs from the Korean War and people labouring during the colonization of Korea, and five-pointed stars.

In the next story, the screen is filled with the whirring blades of a large fan. It will stop with a bolt of lightning at the center that grows, pulses, and flickers. Each fan blade has its own cutout shape: an eye, a mouth, a nose, and an ear. The perspective moves in, and the eye cutout gazes back at the viewer until a cloud of smoke descends. Lights continue to flicker behind the fan as it attempts to spin, one halting, lurching inch at a time. As the story builds in intensity, layers of the fan image stack upon each other, creating a surreal, trapping sensation. A rich business owner will appear, a fat man, his belly overtaken by a human skull. One eye socket filled with a crystal chandelier, and the other with a plush chair, nearly a throne. The scene becomes chaotic, with the fan popping in and out of view, the lights pulsing and floating high and low, giant cracks and fissures growing in a building's foundation. After the building cracks, a the foot of a woman will appear and fill the screen. Within each toenail appears the skull of a person who was also trapped in the chaos: arms raised, mouths gaping in screams. Her big toe polish remains, a stark red against the building's rubble.

The next story begins with a blank, black screen and cutouts of glittering, colored lights floating around the space. A tower appears, murky sky surrounding it, and the scene is framed by the jagged edges of broken building from the story before. The image shifts from red to yellow to blue to green, mixed in with flickers, flecks, and strands of multi-colored flashes of light, and back to red. The colors then morph and meld, with ever-changing colors in the foreground different from those in the background, not hectic, but like being inside a dancing rainbow. As the sky colors continue to shift, the lone tower will remain blue for some time. As colors will be described, the tower will, again, shift to match what is described. The blinking and flashing lights later become frantic in energy. An arrow appears at the bottom, wavering from left to right, an indicator of air quality. The story concludes with the tower disappearing, one of the storyteller's hands appears holding a KN95 mask. Their other hand grasps the other side of the mask, and it's brought up toward the shadow screen, filling the screen and dissolving to black.

The next story begins with sounds of children playing soccer and a plain black screen for some time. When the light is turned on, a tent with green grass is unfolded, and two fingers appear, wearing cutout shoes, kicking a soccer ball. The ball is returned by a light kick from the storyteller's fingers, and the shoed fingers kick it again. Then, inside the tent with a cutout TV, hands grasp and press colored buttons and a joystick on a transparent video game controller. Later, a cutout bug on a stick—an earwig—as large as the storyteller's hand makes its way onto the screen, jumping, hopping, exploring. The earwig will become a storyteller for several lines. The insect is illuminated first by a red light. The objects in this story are brightly colored and vibrant, the earwig, a dark shadow. The story concludes with the earwig watching over a mass of her yellow eggs as a mob of angry, stomping people appears in front of the insect. Then, fade to black.

After some time of black, the light returns, this time floating higher up and emanating thick rings of orange and yellow light. The light grows larger, making it feel as if we are walking closer to the sun. The earwig appears, resting on a leafy branch, then it fades to black. A giant cutout of a human eye with lush eyelashes fills the frame. As it blinks closed, the screen is black. When it opens, the pupil and iris are filled with a collection of colorful cutout tents all pitched on the grass in front of an endless, grey downtown cityscape. As this story concludes, the eye will turn a ghastly yellow, and the lid slowly flutters shut.

The next story reveals purple-blue streaks of rain falling upon the tent. But the image is distorted so that when the storyteller's legs walk into the scene, they appear to be standing on the side of the tent. They take small steps into the frame, step away, and return. The giant eye returns, and now the tents are all obscured by their tarps and the beating down rain. As the eye opens, a royal blue puddle of water will grow and grow and rise up as if to swallow the tent city before it blinks again. Then, a large blue drop falls into blackness: a drop of rain or a tear.

The next story begins with tall tufts of green grass just beyond the tent. A person's legs walk into the center of the screen. They step back and forth anxiously, and they scratch each calf with the opposite foot. They wear a short mini-skirt. They will raise the skirt, and a stream of yellow unfurls toward the ground, between their legs. Then, a cutout stream of a fish, a turtle, the sun, and rain clouds follow down. Then, a curvy woman, eyes closed, and arms resting on her belly on the ribbon. The ribbon returns back up, from sun to turtle to fish to yellow. Fade to black.

The story next focuses on a soup bowl. With each age the storyteller mentions, they put in a spoon with that number cut out of the bowl of the spoon, stir, and remove. The earwig on a stick appears. It twirls and sways, landing finally in bright green grass with flowers. As the song starts, a sheet with raindrops will dance onto the screen and off the other side. At the bottom of that sheet, a woman with an umbrella. Mountains fill the landscape, and the raining sheet returns, moving carefully across the screen as she climbs the mountains. Now, an urban park, the woman in the rain walks through. The park scene is shifted to the side and replaced by a seemingly endless line of skyscraper cutouts. The woman in the rain returns. As the song continues, zoom in on black buildings, each one with a pink or purple eye atop it. The woman and rain walk across again. The skyscrapers shift to the side, replaced by a vibrant grassy field

with flowers, plants waving in the breeze. A person lies down into the grass, and the earwig hops upon their head. The view moves closer and closer to the cutout of the lying figure, their head taking up most of the view. The lines cut out for their eyes and ears provide slivers of a window to the greenery behind them. The perspective pulls back, and a gauzy darkness of the eye blinking falls upon the scene to close.

The view pulls back to reveal the darkness is the bottom of the box. It fades out, and we zoom out of the box. Its top flaps fold gently closed again.

Home Squat Home Generations After Me

A plain black space, facing down into a half-open cardboard box. The top flaps animate open, revealing the box is empty. Now, the bottom of the open box becomes a video screen showing two bare feet atop a weathered log on a gravelly ground. The cellphone camera quickly tilts up from the camera operator's feet to reveal a lime green tent, unzipped but nearly closed.

Text appears on screen and reads, "Lynn Headwaters. Unceded territory of the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) and Tsleil-Waututh (selilwitulh) Nations, Canada."

The person with the cellphone camera steps toward the tent, pushes a flap away, and ducks inside. A hand unzips the far side of the tent, granting access to the rainfly. Two hands reach out, unzip the rainfly. The cellphone is thrust outside. A sweeping view of the grey, rocky ground, and just beyond, a hill covered in low plants and towering trees. The bright sunlight creates a rainbow flare across the screen. The cellphone camera turns, evergreen trees now filling every inch of the video screen within the cardboard box. Branches sway gently in a light breeze. The cellphone camera turns further to spot tree-covered hills in the distance that rise majestically up toward light clouds. The view circles smoothly back in an arc, stopping before reaching the tent again.

Now, the two feet stand on a rocky river bed, with light bouncing and reflecting off the ultra-clear water's surface, creating shadowy shapes. The view tilts upward and dissolves into video of two hands cupped together tightly, holding a palmful of water. The hands rise up from the river, nearly touching the camera. Text appears to the side:

“HO's
letter
to
generations
after
ME”

As the cellphone camera nears the hands, the apostrophe s and “letter to generations after” fade away as HO and ME float toward each other, forming “HOME.” The hands retreat as everything fades to black.

Now, the box is gone, and we are positioned within the tent. A mesh window is open, and a shadow puppet play animating the speakers' stories is cast along the smooth, taut surface of the tent's rainfly, framed within the outline of a tent window. The light source is one small, white light. A very brief fade to black occurs between images. The puppets are made of paper cutouts. The objects described in the story are either cutouts or made of dark or colored outlines on transparent pages. The characters and objects appear in a variety of ways. Sometimes, they are static on the screen. Other times, they roll up as if cut into a scroll. Some of the characters are operated as puppets with movement. At times, the camera roams around, moves in close, investigating, but mostly, the view is still.

During the first story, nearly all of the action is represented by cutout images. There will be an interaction between the storyteller and a child. The child is shown as a puppet, and the storyteller is represented by their own hand, moving and interacting with the puppet child and the objects.

The next story begins with a woman figure, hands on her head, mouth open wide in a yell. She is in front of a blue background studded with drops of water shooting out in arcs from around her. The whole image shakes and wavers.

In the story following this, a real hand will appear, dropping coins one by one into the outline of a large wine glass. Then, the glass flutters back and forth, agitated, flopping recklessly in front of the shadow play's light source. Next, the storyteller's hand holds up a cutout in front of the light, letting it fall backward and away when its part of the story has been told. A wealthy dinner guest is represented by a dinner plate with large prawn and lemon wedge, cutlery, and a sweeping mustache. A Cinderella ice sculpture will melt in a series of cutouts held up one at a time, each more melted than the one before, and each being dropped backward out of sight. Later, a Cinderella puppet dangles by a string, twirling in a glass of red wine. The story ends with the glass of wine tipping over completely, consuming the twirling Cinderella.

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Next, a brief narrative is spoken over a blank black screen.

The next story begins with the screen filled by a bright red human heart, pulsing forward and backward to represent a steady heartbeat. A woman's shirt, within the heart, marches forward. It disappears, and the heart continues pulsing forward and backward. It is replaced by a red maple leaf, then the pulsing heart returns. Then, the storytellers' hands: one delivers a Valentine's card with a red heart to another hand and wraps it in a lace ribbon. While one still

holds it, the other unties and removes the ribbon as carefully as it had been placed. The heart card moves closer and closer, begins to pulse. A butterfly flies behind it, the shape of its wings matching the curves of the drawn heart. It flaps and flutters, then slowly flies away. The heart pulses. The heart card is then replaced by the human heart, red with purple blood vessels on its surface. After the story concludes, the heart pulses faster and faster as the energy builds. Then, cut to black.

The next story begins with tall tufts of green grass just beyond the tent. A person's legs walk into the center of the screen. They step back and forth anxiously, and they scratch each calf with the opposite foot. They wear a short mini-skirt. They will raise the skirt, and a stream of yellow unfurls toward the ground, between their legs. Then a cutout stream of a fish, a turtle, the sun, and rain clouds follow down. Then, a curvy woman, eyes closed, and arms resting on her belly on the ribbon. The ribbon returns back up, from sun to turtle to fish to yellow. Fade to black.

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