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Link to prototype: <https://figmashort.link/CkQSZC>

*Panagrapin: A Creative Reflection on Mourning Forest*



*The only reason I am able to move forward is because of what I see when I look back.*

Inspired by Kawase's *Mourning Forest* (2007), *Pangarapin* is an interactive prototype of a forest that returns the lost memories of our childhood. From talking to flowers, to naming clouds, to watching the seasons change over time, every time you hover or interact with the ordinary, you'll find something new.

This prototype was born on Figma with the love and labor of my partner, Tooni, and I. My work involved collaborating with Tooni to design a unique forest for every season, researching a visual identity we wanted to achieve, and writing dialogue that reflects the themes of *Mourning Forest* and our identities as marginalized creators.

Drawing reference to elementary school drawings from our childhood, we use image, dialogue, and texture to imagine a world that is free from generational structures such as colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism, all through the lens of a child. *Pangarapin* explores temporality, intimacy, and memory in order to liberate our minds from “the perfectionist” mindset and create for the love of creating.

## **Mourning Forest**

I was drawn to *Mourning Forest* because of how its intimacy redefined the documentary genre, demanded space for women in the film industry, and created a world where the audience could escape to. In traditional documentaries, we are shoved facts down our throats by a narrator. *Mourning Forest* is different because of how personal it felt – emotions could be felt and experiences were embodied by the audience.

In the same way, we wanted to create a sense of intimacy within the user by learning about Kawase’s practice. Kawase uses film as a medium to convey a sensorial experience in a way no other medium can. The world she built is shaped by the most vulnerable parts of her identity. In *Biographies of Loss* Eric Schoneveld describes how Kawase is able to articulate her truth. “Giving names to these things in the world is a way of giving birth to the world.” As a result, her presence is genuinely felt in the film. The act of naming and intentionality were what helped Tooni and I build our world. Giving the name *panagarapin* to our forest was what made it something memorable for us, to be felt by the audience.

The act of naming allows us to reclaim what was lost. It is stored in a way that can be held onto forever, refusing to be erased. Something we also want to point out is the choice to never reveal our character’s name – and the possibilities it opens up when we don’t name something. We hope to invite the audience to create a name for themselves. Curiosity is sparked about who this character is, where they came from, and what world they live in. To me, I see our character as a connection to the Earth,

and how nature could feel like a person because of the way it heals us. It's something we take for granted, but only appreciate when we're alone with it. There is so much we don't know about this Earth and the people around us. We can start by learning how to be more gentle.

At the depth of what is personal, can be felt universally. While we don't have the experience to recreate a film, let alone an entire forest, the shapes we used when building our forest weren't random, but made with the intention that they could be playful and repurposed. In *Fact, Fiction, and Memory in the Films of Naomi Kawase*, Rie Karatsu describes documentary filmmaking as a political act in the context of post-war Japan. What Kawase does differently is refusing to see politics as a binary, but as a creative space. *Mourning Forest* radicalizes the audience by flooding hearts with emotion.

My intention with *Pangarapin* is to radicalize the audience by restoring genuine memories of our childhood, the same way Shigeki's memories of his wife are slowly restored throughout the film. When leaders of capitalism and colonialism control everything we consume, we are conditioned into believing we have to get a higher education, abandon our dreams, and deform into somebody else in order to become part of that world. I want *Pangarapin* to activate a feeling of nostalgia and take the audience back in time to when they were a child. Underneath the layer of Tooni and I's art, they can envision those elementary school drawings they made when they were a child. The second someone realizes that, they have the potential to break free from society's norm and create a world of their own. Keeping these thoughts in our mind is what will help us make change.

### **Reflecting on my mourning.**

I gave our forest the name *pangarapin* because of a question Tooni asked me while creating: *What comes after mourning?* The first thing I thought of was dreaming.

In my mother tongue, Tagalog, there are two ways to say dream: *panaginip* and *pangarap*. When we say *panaginip*, we describe dreams as the world we experience when we fall asleep. But *pangarap* are dreams that are big ideas, abstract, and fueled with hope.

While creating, Tooni and I made a promise to not delete anything, but build on top of everything. In order to let go of the perfectionist mindset, we had to embrace the vulnerability of making something that was raw, and less formulaic. I found myself constantly retracing my steps every time I deleted something, until it was ingrained in my body to just work with what I have. The more time I spent understanding my process for this project, the more it started to feel like our own personal “fiction documentary.”

The point of this forest is not for it to be called “cute” or to be praised. It was made to be silly, to return a nostalgic feeling into the bodies of the audience. I wanted to highlight the relationship between humans and the Earth, and how it’s something that exists from the second we are born, whether or not we are born in the city, countryside, or middle of nowhere. If the Earth is able to stand firm in its beliefs despite the endless corruption, what’s stopping us from doing the same?

*I used to resent my way of thinking for being stuck in the past, but because of my desire to carry the dreams of all of my past lives, I want to create them into something real.*