



May 18th, 12:00 AM - May 22nd, 12:00 AM

"Family Portrait: Insert Here"An artistic multi-media manipulation of familial cultural and racial identity exploration as a multiracial student.

Josie Szankiewicz
Western Washinton University

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Family Portrait: Insert Here

*Photograph printed with graphite pencil drawings, white pencil,
acrylic paint on watercolor paper*

By: Josie Szankiewicz

All lived in New York, immigrated from Galicia, Poland in 1910

Szankiewicz



Jose Szankiewicz

Artist Statement:

I have gazed deeply into every face of the individuals photographed in this family portrait of the Szankiewicz family. This photograph was most likely taken in 1923 in New York, shortly after the family's immigration from Poland. Though I will never know much of the stories of each of these individuals, I have constantly felt the pull to delve into the mystery of my family's history. Although I feel a clashing of cultural identities, due to my Japanese-American identity and Polish-Jewish identity, I begin to enlighten my family's history through the short annotations I provide surrounding each of the individuals within the photograph. The immigration officers at Ellis Island wiped the slate of lineage once my family crossed over into America. Neither of my great-grandparents spoke English. My grandfather, who is not pictured, was put into an orphanage shortly after the death of his mother, at the age of two. I ponder whether this family would accept me. I am not the same as they are, but we both face the issue of starting to figure out our position within this westernized society that we live in: America. If they did ever meet my grandmother Hideko, would they have shunned her, forbid her to live a life with my grandfather? Would I just be a mere object of the alienation between the two cultures of my lineage? I sit in with my family in this family portrait as I take with me the representation of my Japanese cultural identity through the wear of my grandmother's garments. *(Josie Szankiewicz 2020)*