

"I am not my brother"

It came out of the clear blue. I received a phone call from the University of Oregon Department of Art letting me know that the festival organizer wanted to personally speak to me. Within an hour they had called the Department of the Register with a second attempt to contact me.

I had long since forgot about the festival. I just sort of sent off the project at 11pm on the deadline. I was very excited when I found that filmmakers and digital arts from all over the world were involved in the event. Having my work shown at one of the world's top film schools was really a bonus.

"I am not my brother" was produced spring term 2005 in a class called Video Art. The assignment was simple. We had to produce a 5-minute video that was a 'video diary'. I watched about 30 hours of family footage to create a deeply personal story about my life.

The title is ambiguous in nature. It is a reference to Cain's response in the book of Genesis saying to God that he wasn't "his brother's keeper". It is also in reference to the fact that my parents often felt disappointed in my lack of success as compared my older brother who speaks 6 languages, has two masters degree with one in history and a second in international law.

I tried to use as little in the form of digital effects as possible. I used a mirror to get a reverse effect, hitting fast-forward play to get a distorted image, rewind-play to get a reverse effect and tapping off the screen to get a grainy effect. I learned that computers are a nice tool but not the only tool for a digital artist.

Additionally, "I am not my brother" was featured in last year's OpenLens regional film and video festival at DIVA. I remember sitting in the back row watching the piece feeling very uncomfortable. My whole life was on the screen for the world to see. I think the project was a bit overwhelming for the folks who came just to be entertained. My life is, well, personal. I wasn't trying to do anything more than just comment on the darkness of my past and the lack of acceptance I have received as an artist from my family.

Most flattering is that two of my instructor's use my project as an example of quality work. Each day for about 6 months I would sort of smile as I walked by Lawrence Hall at the University of Oregon to see "I am not my brother" on display on constant loop as one of a select few projects produced by University of Oregon Digital Art's students".