

Enduring Heirlooms

Connecting Inherited Material and Trauma

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I find fierce passion to be the unifying factor amongst all ADPDers.

Final project done for Interdisciplinary Art and Design Practices, taught by Malkit Shoshan in Spring 2021. Enduring Heirlooms addresses a type of grief that many children of immigrants experience. The grief of lost oral history when family members refuse to speak about their past or as they grow old and pass away. The grief of undeveloped relationships with extended family who live far away, community, language, recipes, traditions, and heirlooms. And how this grief manifests as a lack of understanding of the self, identity, traits and traumas, and internalized shame. In my curatorial approach, I'm attempting to close the gaps and create a reminder for future generations to better understand themselves by exploring their genealogy using family heirlooms.

The website EnduringHeirlooms.com encourages open access ownership of family heirlooms. The platform includes a timeline, map, and archive of relics that eventually link shared origin stories. Users can upload images and descriptions of various family heirlooms like amulets, traits, language, recipes, etc., and map their migration across lands. Eventually, with more aggregated data, users searching for information about family heirlooms will be able to parse the database and discover similar matches, connecting missing links in their genealogy.

I began with my own family heirloom, a silver amulet derived from Iraqi-Kurdistan which protects the wearer and her children from illness and death. The amulet has kabbalist inscriptions of angel and demon names, magic squares, and a six-pointed star. The talisman's inscriptions tell the story of a woman scorned and one of the first arguments in humanity, "arguments" being a common theme attached to the object...

