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Des 157

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Hmong Fashion Trend

For the ISEA project I want to design a website that will showcase my current undergraduate research project. Since I am still in the process of formulating my ideas and research proposal I don't have a specific theme yet; however, I do know that I want to document the Hmong Fashion trend from pre-1975 to contemporary Hmong fashion trend.

Problem of Statement:

There is a lack of academic resources about the Hmong in particularly about Hmong Fashion. Today, Hmong women are participating in Hmong fashion businesses and Hmong women are studying in Design at university level more than two decades ago. The research proposes to examine interview data and historical analysis to determine the relationship of Hmong fashion and Hmong women in the Central Valley.

Broader Impacts:

The proposed research expands on the existing academic works and collections of Hmong and fashion which will be a resource to all collegiate students, faculty members, researchers who are studying in similar studies in universities such as Fresno State, Sacramento State, Stanislaus State, and University of California of Merced that offers Hmong studies program or Hmong courses. This research about Hmong women contributes towards Gender and

Women's studies. In light of recent emerging Hmong immersion programs and bilingual programs in California and Minnesota, the research is a resource for educators in developing a cohesive curriculum. The launch of the Hmongstory 40 exhibit had brought Hmong and American audience together to learn about the Hmong history and culture. The research will contribute valuable data and analysis towards Hmongstory 40's Fashion Exhibit.

Background

The Hmong people are an ethnic minority in various parts of the world such as East Asia, Southeast Asia, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. Due to historical oppression and subjugation, there were multiple resistances and exodus that contributed in the widespread resettlement. Although Hmong has adapted their own autonomous identity around the world and languages had become unintelligible, Hmong clothing is a cultural marker of the Hmong identity that continues to unify the people.

Over 130,000 Hmong war-torn refugees resettled in the United States after the end of Vietnam War in 1975 under the Indochina Migration and Refugee Act (Vang 2010). Thousands of Hmong refugees incrementally continued well into 1980's, making United States their permanent home. By the end of 1980's, the Hmong was most populous in California, particularly in Merced and Sacramento of the Central Valley (Moore-Howard 1987). The Refugee Act of 1980 set uniform resettlement goals for public and private agencies to provide training programs and ESL education to better "facilitate rapid assimilation" and self-sufficiency (Miyares, 1998). Economic pressure and desire for familial support led to secondary migration into Fresno. Even with political pressure to assimilate in the new world, Hmong mothers continue to teach their

daughters the traditional arts of needlework and making their own Hmong outfits for the annual Hmong New Year Festival. The production of Hmong clothes is a Hmong women's self-sufficiency to earn income and ultimately pass down important and symbolic pieces of the Hmong culture (Hales, 2003).

Hmong fashion represents the ethnic identity, origin of region, history, and dialect spoken. Hales depicted that Hmong fashion businesses started informally, independently and relatively small, receiving products from relatives overseas for the Hmong consumers in the states. There has been large increase of Hmong women securing more businesses in sales in 2000 and 2010 compared to 1990 (Vang, 2012). The research is critical to examine the Hmong women in the Central Valley in concurrent with the Hmong fashion history and industry

Bibliography

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