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PPPGA 591K

langer

A little
gallery

*Inspired by my
herriage and created
with love*



DISCLAIMER:

I am in no way a professional, nor do I engage in digital art as a hobby. This work represents my first attempt at creating digital art and has been marked by a significant learning curve and thoughtful exploration. Each illustration took an average of 8-12 hours to make.



I knew that my culture was being erased,
I wrote an essay about genocide,
But I don't even speak my language.

I heard we have relatives in Kashgar,
Relatives I probably will never meet,
My aunt has fond memories of them,
I hope they are alive.

DESTROYED MOSQUES

It is always the dissonance between,
“I wish I could do more” and,
“I just want to be happy.”

always strive to learn more about my culture,
But the more I learn, the more pain I feel,
The more hate I encounter.





THE IDEA

This project is very close to my heart. In academic circles, most conversations about my culture revolve around the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang and Kashgar, China. More than a million Uyghurs are reported to be in concentration camps, and government policies include arbitrary detention, forced labor, suppression of religious practices, political indoctrination, severe ill-treatment, forced sterilization, forced contraception, forced abortion, and several instances of sexual abuse (Amnesty International, 2018). Chinese government statistics reported that from 2015 to 2018, birth rates in the mostly Uyghur regions of Hotan and Kashgar fell by more than 60% (Amnesty International, 2018).

While people are dying, international organizations remain inactive, and governments keep using the genocide to contest power. In front of our eyes, we are witnessing how stories are slowly re-written, artifacts are disappearing, and culture is appropriated and assimilated.

With this project titled “I am Uighur”, I am taking myself back to a place down memory lane where thinking about Uighur heritage was associated with colours, music, and joy. It was about shyly watching people sing and dance. About storytelling, passing down knowledge and collectively making food. This is titled "I am Uighur" and illustrates a series of 5 illustrations along with Uighur ornament designs on the cover of the project that all exhibit some of the elements of my culture and heritage that I wanted to honor and celebrate with this artwork. The artwork is accompanied by a brief explanation about what it represents. Please enjoy.

Zhit: a path to memory



"Zhit" translates to 7 flatbreads, a significant element in Uighur culture and my family tradition. It is believed that when making zhit, the fumes and aroma from deep-frying the flatbread connect us to the spirits of our loved ones, transmitting love, positive thoughts, and blessings.

Zhit plays a crucial role in funeral rituals. After preparation, people sit together, pray, recall memories of the departed, and wish them well. The bread is always separated with two hands and distributed among everyone, who are also supposed to eat it with both hands.

The ingredients for zhit are simple and historically available in the Central Asian region: water, yeast, flour, salt, sugar, and kefir/yogurt or milk. The texture can vary from crispy to soft. People always make them in odd numbers, usually seven or nine. In addition to being a key part of the funeral ritual, zhit is made on various occasions based on people's traditions.

In our family, we make zhit in times of worry, anniversaries of those who passed, and before making important decisions.

Uighur Yurt



The origin of yurts is contested and blurred through history. Their significance is shared among many Central Asian people including Uighur's and Kazakhs.

There are documentations of yurts used by the Scythian people (Uighur and Central Asian ancestors) around 440 BCE (Evers, 2023).

Dutar

While there is controversy about its origin, **Dutar** (or also called **Dotar**) is the main plucked instrument across Central Asia. It can be found in many shapes and styles, but Uighur Dutar is the largest in form (Xiao, 2017).



Uighur dress



Uighur dress and fashion is intertwined with their history as traders across the Silk Road.

Women traditional wear is composed of embroidered long-sleeved dresses that billow out at the waist. Popular embroidery motifs include pomegranates, arabesques, moons, and geometric patterns.

Gold, reds, and black are the most popular colour combinations, although pinks, greens, blues, purples, and even tie-dyes also feature. To complement these dresses, girls put their hair into several braids and it is believed that the longer the hair, the more beautiful.

REFERENCES

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RAHMET

“THANK YOU”

A D I Y A B A R A T O V A

APPENDIX

Ingredients:

- Flour - 400 grams
- Milk - 200 grams
- Vegetable oil - 100 grams
- Butter - 30 grams
- 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar
- A pinch of baking soda (0.2 grams)
- A pinch of salt (0.2 grams)

Instructions:

- Mix high-grade flour, sugar, and baking powder for the dough.
- Heat milk with butter until butter dissolves.
- Sift flour with salt; create a well, add soda, vinegar, and mix.
- Pour warm milk into the flour, knead elastic dough, let it rest for 20 mins.
- Divide dough into 8 pieces, roll into thin flatbreads.
- Fry in hot oil until golden and bubbly.
- Drain excess oil, serve.

ZHIT RECEPIE