

Hmong Songs of Memory, Hmong Threads of Life Exhibition

An Exhibition of Traditional Hmong Music and Textiles

Victoria Vorreiter

Hmong Exhibition Size = 700 square feet

Hmong Exhibition Collections:

- 1) Introductory Map and Text
- 2) Photographs
- 3) Musical Instruments
- 4) Garments of Four Subgroups
- 5) Hmong Textiles
- 6) Artifacts
- 7) Shaman Altar
- 8) Hmong Songs of Memory Ethnographic Film (2016, 75 minutes)
- 9) Hmong Songs of Memory Book (2016, Resonance Press, 281 pages)



The **Hmong Songs of Memory, Hmong Threads of Life Multi-Media Exhibition** represents an in-depth, integrative archive amassed by Victoria Vorreiter, an American researcher, documentarian, and musician, for over a decade. The exhibit comes to life through a variety of dynamic forms—extensive photographs of daily and ritual life, a film and recordings, a comprehensive collection of musical instruments, artifacts, and full sets of

1) Introductory Map and Text Panel



2) Photographs (40 items)

This photographic display offers viewers an intimate glimpse of the villages, lives, culture, and rites of the Hmong of Laos and Thailand as they move through the passages of the seasons and the cycles of their lives.

Photographs (18" x 12") with Matt, Frame, and Glass (29" x 26")

Captions and Descriptions: Each photograph is identified and the scene is thoughtfully described.



**Xob Lwm Vaj Demonstrates *Qeej* Skills at the New Year Festival
Ban Khun Chang Khian, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand**



**Shaman Qhua Yaj Honors Spirits
Phongsali Province, Laos**

3) Musical Instruments (22 instruments / stands / labels)

Secular Instruments: Mouth Harp, Fiddle, Side-blown Flute, End-blown Flute, Folk Clarinet, Single Reed Pipe, Multiple-Reed Pipes (Qeej)

Sacred Instruments (2 sets – One set for display on stands, one set for display on the Shaman altar):

Divination Buffalo Horns, Sistrum, Ring Rattles, Gong, Cymbals, Funeral Drum

Stands: Custom-made for each instrument. Made of a laminated Formica base in black matt and slender black steel rod supports. Designed so the instruments seem to float.

Labels and Photos: Each instrument has a descriptive label and a photograph of a musician playing it. (Labels include: Local name, Hmong group, instrument type, size, source, date, materials, function)



4) Traditional Clothing: Garments, Jewelry, Accessories

Full attire for a family (father, mother, son, and daughter) of the four major subgroups of Laos and Thailand

White Hmong: Father (7 items), Mother (10), Son (6), Daughter (7)

Striped Hmong: Father (5), Mother (8), Son (5), Daughter (6)

Blue Hmong: Father (5), Mother (7), Son (5), Daughter (5)

Black Hmong: Father (5), Mother (6), Son (5), Daughter (6)

Text Panels:

Overview of Hmong garments (1 item)

Identify each group and describe its textile tradition (4)

Mannequins: Elegant custom-made bamboo supports with a wooden base (fumigated, dyed in matte teak brown, and laminated). Mannequins are constructed with removable units to facilitate the dressing process (e.g. Two arms are made of four bamboo segments that slide into one another). When dismantled, mannequins are stored in individual sturdy bags, identified by tribe and person, for easy storage and shipping.



Hmoob Dawb (White Hmong)



Hmoob Txaij (Striped Hmong)



Hmoob Ntsuab (White Blue)



Hmoob Dub (Black Hmong)

5) Textiles

Skirts (15 items)

Baby Carriers (8)

Woven and Batik Cloth Rolls (7)

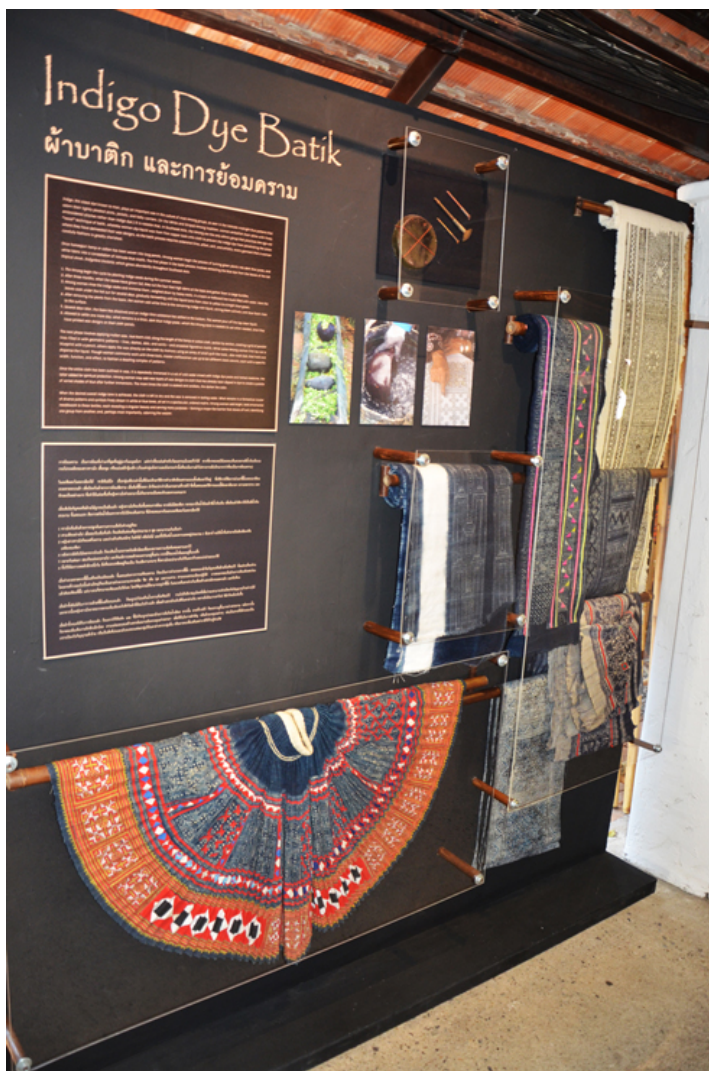
Embroidered Hats (5)

Aprons and Belts (5)

Weaving and Batik Tools

Text Panels: Describe a) Weaving, b) Indigo Dye Batik, and c) Embroidery





6) Artifacts

A number of artifacts illustrate photographs in the exhibition: Courting Balls, Crossbow, Shaman Ritual Sistrum, Baby Carrier, Ritual Healing Scale, Ritual Paper Money.



7) Shaman Altar

Altar (35" x 74")

Bench (44" x 22")

Shamanic Paraphernalia: Horns, Gong, Sistrum, Cymbals, Ring Rattles, Shaman Veil, Spirit Money, Scissors, Paper Punches, Ritual Sword, Incense, Offering bowls (6 items),



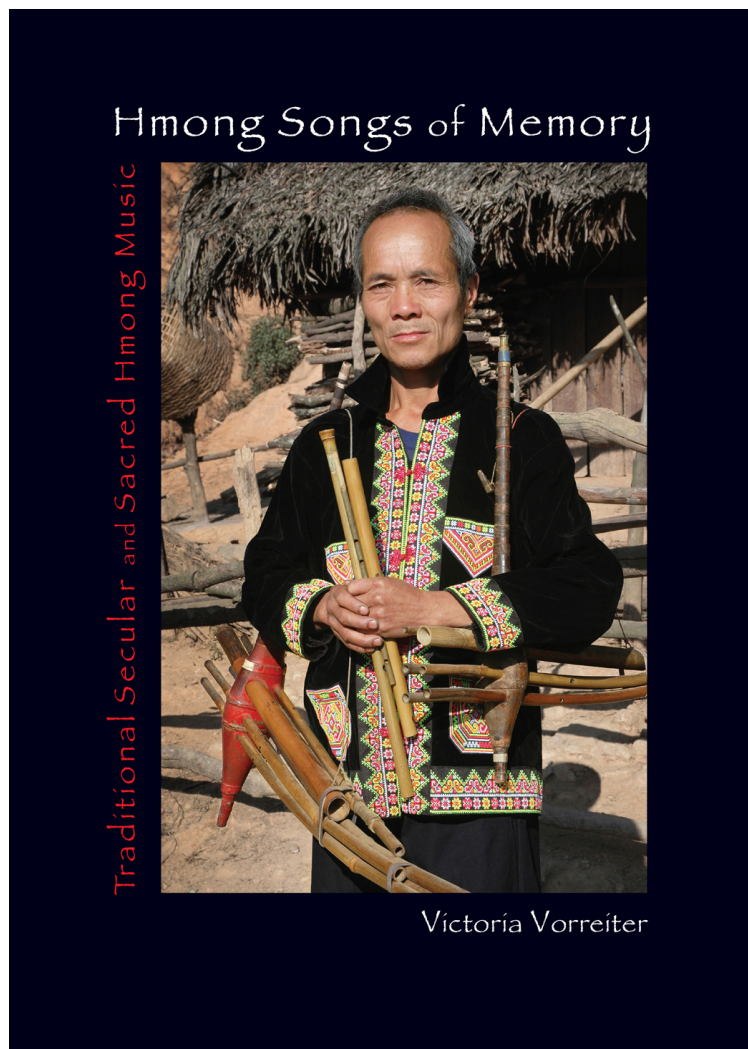
8) Hmong Songs of Memory Book

The **Hmong Songs of Memory Book**, a collection of essays on Hmong culture, magnificently illustrated with over 350 color photographs, presents vivid accounts of Hmong musicians, shamans, healers, ritual specialists, headmen, craftsmen, and villagers as they reveal the primal power of music in celebrating the wheel of life. Hmong sacred music is shown through the prism of a full shamanic healing ceremony and explored through such subjects as “Hmong Origins,” “Shamanism,” “Spirits,” “Souls,” “Hmong Cosmology,” and “The Sacred in the Human World.” (2016, 281 pages)

9) Hmong Songs of Memory Ethnographic Film

A looped version of the film will play during the exhibition to bring the Hmong sonic environment to life.

The **Hmong Songs of Memory Film**, which accompanies the book, is a rich visual and sonic experience set against a rural backdrop of remote villages in northern Laos and Thailand. Cycles-of-life music is performed through songs, leaf, fiddle, mouth harp, flutes, reeds, and the *qeej* multiple free-reed pipes. Sacred chants and percussion instruments animate a full shamanic healing ceremony. The lyrics of all vocal, instrumental, and ritual pieces are cited in Hmong and English. (2016, 75 minutes)



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