Thinking Through Heirlooms (Brighton, 5-6 Nov 26)

Brighton, University of Brighton, Nov 5–06, 2026

Pragya Sharma

Registration is now open for the Thinking Through Heirlooms Symposium that will run over the 5-6th November 2026, University of Brighton on our City Campus in Grand Parade.

Registration is for each of the days of the upcoming interdisciplinary symposium. This international event will bring together researchers and practitioners to examine alternative ways of listening to and reading heirlooms, deconstruct established ideas of what an heirloom is, and unlock new knowledge embedded within them.

The symposium anchors the heirloom (a subject less discussed but of growing interest) as a starting point to branch off into both object-based and theoretical perspectives, as well as personal reflections and artistic explorations across various media. We will have 30 speakers presenting papers, as part of 7 panels across the 2 days, addressing various aspects of the 'Heirloom' theme – rituals, heritage, material culture, craft practices, dress and textiles, photography and creative inheritances. As part of the presentations, there will be 5 performances as well, which highlight the interdisciplinary nature of the project. We hope that this conference will establish new theoretical, practice-oriented, and methodological foundations for future practice and research around heirlooms. We very much look forward to building an interdisciplinary network of researchers and practitioners dedicated to understanding heirlooms.

Programme

Day 1

9:30-10:00 Welcome & Registration

10:00-11:00 Keynote Presentation: Prof Soumhya Venkatesan and Lydia Donohue (University of Manchester)
Break
11:15-12:30 Panel 1: Material Legacies and Ritual Worlds
Chair: Jeffrey Abt

Heirlooms Beyond Lineal Time: Palestinian Cultural Heritage in an Era of Ruination (Nadia Dina Yahlom)

The Keys to the Main Locker: Gold, Trust, and the Staged Inheritance of Heirlooms in a Kolkata Bonedi Bari (Aishwarya Mukhopadhyay)

Scarcity, Care, and the Material Transference of a Kupaaya Kudukk (Hiba Kattissery)

Give Away Your Relics: Curatorial Project by Kate Street and Cecilia Bonilla (Kate Street)

Lunch

1:30-2:45 Panel 2: Cloth, Craft and Material Lives
Chair: Yunah Lee

Handmade Lace: Heirloom Object and Repository of Cultural Knowledge (Fiona Harrington)

Con Todo Mi Corazón: Materialising Love, Colonial Legacies and Family Histories in Inherited Garments (Isabel Mundigo-Moore)

Crafting Continuance: Upcycling as a Transformational Heirloom Making Practice (Kavitha Ravikumar)

Beyond Phulkari: Punjabi Textile Heirlooms, Partition Memory, and the Unremembered Trousseau (Anupama Dutt)

Break

3:00-4:00 Panel 3: Rethinking the Heirloom
Chair: Claire Wintle

anti-heirlooms: navigating 30 years of 'peace' (Helene Maria McCarthy)

The Family Jewels, Mother's side: a yellow scarf and other textiles (Matheus de SimoneMaciel)

The “given” sense of Voices All or None “as” a family “heirloom” (Tom Pryce)

Day 2

9:15-9:30 Welcome & Registration

9:30-10:45 Panel 1: Migration, Memory and Material Inheritance
Chair: Saumya Pande

Immigrants’ Heirlooms at the Borderlands of Memory and Material (Jeffrey Abt)

Bequeathed Identities: Ed’s Wallet (Alison Slater)

Heirlooms and Migration: An Investigation into the Embroidered Tablecloth within the Eastern European Jewish Community Across 3 Generations (Elena Solomon)

What Remains - On Objects Nobody Fought For (Tiziano Aramburo)

Break

11:00-12:15 Panel 2: Material Worlds
Chair: Megha Rajguru

Decorative Arguments: Contested Land in My Mother's Dining Room (Eileen Maxson)

The Inheritance of Absence (Hiya Deb)

Theorising a mould: inheritance of moulds and methods as heirloom in Bengals Terracotta Artisans (Bihan Das)

Aranmula Kannadi: The Paradox of Protected Knowledge and Heritage Preservation (Ranitha Ramesh and Pavol Sahadevan)

Lunch

1:15-2:30 Panel 3: Creative Encounters and Afterlives
Chair: Veronica Isaac

Re-imagining family heirlooms through creative practice (Rachel Maloney)

Ancestral Portraits of Descendants (Kamal Badhey)

The serendipitous return of a family photo album in an age of immaterial images (Harriet Atkinson)

The Afterlife of Suspense: Hitchcock, Canciani, and Between Two Words by Soore Vahe (Ali Darvish)

Break

3:00-4:30 Panel 4: Collective Inheritances
Chair: Kamal Badhey

When Sorry isn't Enough: In Search of Traces, Jewish Identity, and Belonging in Germany (Jill Strauss)

Living Vessels of Heritage: Tangible Spaces and the Sustenance of Intangible Heirlooms at the Sammakka Saralamma Jatara (Srikanth Gella)

Beyond the Family Knitter: Creating New Heirlooms Through Women's Craft (Shipra Kukreja)

Guilds Across Time (Christos Voutsas)

To Register

Please note that it is necessary to register for both days (you can attend one or both) and include dietary requirements as lunch and refreshments are provided:

Registration Day 1: https://www.ticketsource.com/centre-for-design-history-university-of-brighton/t-mjznrzr

Registration Day 2: https://www.ticketsource.com/centre-for-design-history-university-of-brighton/event-thinking-through-heirlooms-an-interdisciplinary-symposium-day-2/2026-11-06/09:15/t-zoxgyxk

Conference Organisers:
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Reference:

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