CAPSTONE PROPOSAL

INITIAL PROPOSAL

Coming into my Capstone studio, I knew I wanted to do something that was meaningful and personal to me. Just weeks before the semester started my grandfather who was very dear to me passed away, leaving my family and I with a feeling of loss. My thoughts about the man my grandfather was and that I would never get to fully understand the impact that he had on my life opened the door to gain a better understanding of my roots and what they meant for me as an individual. This led me to question why people felt this interest to know more about their family’s history. What I found was that the majority of people felt a tie to their kindred because they were able to identify with them and understand themselves better because of them. What I also found was that though genealogy research has gained increasing attention with the rise of more accessible records, there still seems to be a visual disconnect for what one’s ancestry means about their identity. I will conduct an exploration of current documentation methods as well as my own family genealogy to uncover my own identity through the lens of my ancestry. After conducting this research, I will create a visually interactive display that memorializes the impact that my ancestry has had on me.

FINAL STATEMENT

Kindred is a personal exploration of the methods in which we view ancestry that emphasizes the impact that genealogy has on one’s identity. While using unexpected documentation methods and McCall’s family genealogy, Kindred uncovers and tells a compelling story of identity through the lens of her ancestry.
WEBSITE // Ancestral Atlas

Ancestral Atlas uses map-based searching to help users find ancestral documentation that they are searching for. All information is organized location-wise and is viewed on top of the location.

WEBSITE // Ancestry

This website allows users to find ancestral documentation according to other information added by other users and larger databases. While researching people, leads appear that include possible links to other ancestors and connects you to families you may be related to.

WEBSITE // Historypin

Historypin is all user-generated material and based on either location or a point in time. This site relies on users to generate stories, photographs or links to relating websites in order to get a fuller picture of a location or event. Its focus is to create a community that cares about the past and the rich history that surrounds a location.

TV SHOW // Who do you think you are?

This television show features celebrities who are looking to learn more about their ancestry. As they learn more about their genealogy, they travel to different locations to experience the life that their ancestors once lived. The journey is story-based and heavily reflects the emotional weight that is carried through this life-changing experience.

BLACK VENUS // Mark Bradford

In Mark’s work he looks at mapping and history. He uses paint, string and magazine clippings on canvas to collage an in-depth narrative of a specific place in time. He takes heavily from his own experience and collects materials specifically from the places that he is mapping.

STADIA MEHRETU // Julie Mehretu

“Approximately eight by eleven feet, Julie Mehretu’s three separate pieces of her Stadia series seem to emanate, each from a slightly different center, with international flags and corporate logos traveling with packs of gestural lines and marks upon almost invisible renderings of stadium architecture. One can easily understand the metaphor of a stadium as a place where people gather to experience emotional and chaotic spectacles of struggle, often with winners and losers.”
MULTIMEDIA DISPLAY // Moodboard

In creating this multimedia display, I wanted something that utilized a collaged effect, allowing me to incorporate found material as well as painting. I also wanted to incorporate a grid into my work much like other mapping systems but, providing me a way to organize my work. This grid system reflects the structure that surrounds our ancestry but the different material that fills this grid reflects the variation across genealogies.

BRANDING // Moodboard

I want the branding to reflect the same collaged quality that the multimedia display takes on. This branding will be used in the video as well as any print collateral that is made to promote the exhibition. My thoughts are to utilize any found photographs of my ancestors and create a collaged portrait of my kindred or something of that nature.
BRANDING // Moodboard

Along with this collaged imagery, I’m thinking about incorporating knot-like typography to reference our tie to our ancestry. Outside of this idea, I want my branding to be clean, simple, and similar to the multimedia display. To unify my work, I want to keep my colors in the same neutral family of black and white.

VIDEO // Moodboard

Lastly, the video is going to be personal with little reliance on outside context (ex. Not a whole lot of “background noise”). This video will be a compilation of people-based information and purely storytelling. Similar to the branding, the video will be clean (outside from the use of found material) and have a “stitch together” quality to it, tying in my use of collaging in my multimedia display.
During my research, I began to look at different technologies that I could utilize to allow users to explore information further with the affordances of it being fast and interactive. After looking at many different augmented reality apps, I landed on Blippar, an augmented reality tool on mobile devices that allow users to dive deeper into understanding their environments. The following is a portion of my case study on Blippar and the affordances it would provide in my project.
EDUCATION

Blippar allows educators to create an immersive learning experience for students, using the
Blippar tool. Teachers also have the ability to
interact with the content, change styles, and
edit performance metrics. They can even share
and connect with other teachers.

Custom Blippar classes allow the content to be up-to-date,
dynamic, and engaging. Students can also use
Blippar to bring areas of life with innovative content
and create their own classes and games.

*Help start an education revolution by
transforming classrooms and museums into digitally interactive learning
environments. Stake the imagination of students of all ages with textbooks
and materials that come to life with immersive experiences.

With Blippar’s powerful technology,
educators can seamlessly enhance
learning materials with digital content
that students can access using a
smartphone or tablet.*

ADVERTISING

Blippar provides a way for businesses
to advertise by providing an immersive method for
users to learn more about their product. This creates
a cost for businesses to pay for advertisements
through the use of augmented reality about the product,
they are passing media content through
this form of advertising.

FUTURE DESIGNS

The future of Blippar is in the hands of
Augmented Reality. They foresee that their
technology will reach different AR wearables such
as Google Glass, wearables, and even immersive
classroom technology. They feel that each
classroom device will have
Augmented Reality use.

ATTRACTION BUSINESSES

One of Blippar’s primary goals is to gain exposure from
potential business campuses that would like to
further their brand identity. To amplify the message of
Blippar, Blippar includes different graphics
identifying what we mention about using
image recognition technology in your marketing. To
an extent, this information seems a little tenuous,
however, it is brief enough to gain attention.

“Blippar deepens and inspires brand conversations and fulfills your marketing
objectives. We connect brands to people with
interest in their products or curiosity in
objects by deepening and inspiring
conversations through blippos in the
Blippar app.”
"Blippar enables a unique, interactive, authentic learning experience that relates to real-world 21st-century journalism. It is a teaching tool, and a content management system."

"Blippar is a game-changer. They have a unique approach to their product, and their team is very engaged with their customers. I believe they will be a leading player in the education technology market."

"Blippar is a great tool for teachers and students alike. It is incredibly effective at helping students to learn and engage with their material."

"Blippar’s platform is very user-friendly and intuitive, and it provides a unique and engaging learning experience."
KINDRED
PROPOSAL // To analyse and redesign the current way that we view ancestry in a way that is dynamic while emphasizing the impact that genealogy has on our identity. Though genealogy research has gained increasing attention with the rise of more accessible records, there still seems to be a visual disconnect for what real ancestry means about their identity. I will conduct an exploration of current documentation methods so that I may further develop a more reflective way of engaging with our family history.

GENEALOGY
- MAPPING - How can the "family tree" be taken and transformed to be more dynamic?
- MEANING - How can something that seems so separated from the individual feel more personal?
- PSYCHOLOGY - What does knowing one's ancestry mean to an individual?
- INSPIRE - What makes people want to dig themselves?

EXPERIENCE
- PERSONAL - How can I relate this to my family as well as encourage others to seek out their ancestry?
- UNCOVERING LAYERS - How can I dig deeper into individual documents?
- FILTERING - How can I filter information into more digestible pieces?
- SUBVERSIVE - How do you manipulate information to engage further exploration?
- EXPRESSIVE - Not only is this factual, but emotional as well, how can I provide perspective?

CONCEPTS
- EXPANDABILITY - How can this be added onto in years to come
- STORYTELLING - How can this be interpreted meaningfully through telling stories?
- OVERLAP - How do these events and people impact one another?
- IDENTITY - What does this mean about me?
- DYNAMIC/3D - How can something typically seen imply be seen differently?

AUDIENCE
- MY FAMILY - What will resonate with my family specifically?
- MYSELF - How does this help me better understand myself through viewing it?
- MY OFFSPRING - Again, can this change with time?

TECHNOLOGY
- AUGMENTED REALITY - Can users engage with this using technologies they already possess
- IMAGE RECOGNITION - Can face recognition as well as object and text recognition play a role in viewing?
- HANDMADE - How can my love for crafting, painting, drawing and printing be incorporated?
- VIDEOGRAPHY - How does the ability to see and hear stories transform the experience of knowing people?
1 // See
Since the Kindred project is primarily a visual representation of my research, the first expectation of the viewer is that they will see it, whether that is at a museum exhibit or having seen the promo video on the museum website.

2 // Observe
After noticing the multimedia display, the viewer would be expected to observe or perhaps read the placard next to the display. This would give the viewer a greater understanding of what they can do to further dive deeper into my ancestry.

3 // Receive
As the viewer spends time around the display, a notification is sent to them asking if they would like to download the Kindred App to dive deeper into the story of McCall’s ancestry.

4 // Interact
After accepting and downloading the app, the viewer can then interact with the display and app at different vantage points.

5 // Explore
These different vantage points allow the viewer to see information differently through augmented reality, providing a unique and interactive experience. These interactions captured by the app can be saved and further explored later by the viewer.

6 // Inspire
As the viewer learns more about McCall’s ancestry, the hopes are that they will be able to relate to her story and want to explore their own ancestry to learn more about their own identity.
TOUCHPOINTS

I // Multimedia Display
The primary portion of Kindred is a multimedia display on canvas that is 6ft tall by 9ft wide. Contrary to the typical linear way we view ancestry in a family tree, the piece is a dynamic graphic representation of McCall’s ancestry in Eastern North Carolina over the past 10 generations. It expounds upon four towns that are pivotal locations containing impactful events in her family’s ancestry (represented in the four large squares). Within each town are collages of images pertaining to that location.

II // Augmented Reality App
The Kindred App that accompanies the multimedia display allows access to more information about McCall’s ancestors and the impact that it has had on her family and identity. Using both image recognition technology and augmented reality, the user’s phone allows them to dive even deeper into the power of ancestry.

III // Promo Video
To promote this piece, the Kindred video reaches the users on a more personal level, explaining the motives and impact that this project has had on three generations of McCall’s family. Sharing one similar narrative, McCall, McCall’s mother, Debra, and her grandmother, Grace, describe the importance of their ancestry and the deep and lasting effects that it has had on how they perceive themselves as individuals.
Audience // My Family

The audience that this piece will be reaching is primarily my family. Because the interactive display is a compilation of my families history, it would act as a memorial to them. My hopes is that this piece would inspire other viewers to conduct their own exploration of their genealogy to help better understand one’s kinship and it’s effect on their personal identity and relationships.

Exhibit Location // North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh NC

I have chosen this to ideally live in a museum setting in an exhibition dealing with identity. The North Carolina Museum of Art creates the perfect environment for the interactive display to live in because it reflects the current location of my family. It also would be embracing of it’s reflective and artistic qualities while encouraging of it’s technological exploration into the arts arena.
Ideation // Display creation

This display will be 6ft by 9ft and contain imagery found researching my ancestry. The materials for the display include 12 lb outstretched cotton duck, photographs prints, and paint. I will create and construct it in my garage, and utilize materials like plywood, adhesives, and found magazine clippings. The construction on this began over spring break and lasted about 2 months until its completion. It has over 6 layers of material covering it.
“Beginning this process, I had to rig up a way for me to be able to paint on this canvas, so using string and pins, I hung it from the ceiling of my garage. I rented a projector from the IT Lab and used that to project my initial outlines of what I thought this piece was going to look like. From there, I began adding different material and paint to the piece that reflected the geography. The more colorful areas reflected the denser areas of where my family once lived. There are some hidden events that are referenced to, one being the origin of where my family came from prior to the United States, and where most of my family ended up. Having done this, it is clear to me that my family gradually migrated to where they could receive an education and better work, landing them in a more populated region.”
The last part of the process was to hand cut these four major towns that contain my family’s history. These are the towns of Richlands, Magnolia, Rose Hill, and Jacksonville. I used the plotter to print the outlines of the town grids, then cut them and proceeded to collage the inside of them with all of the found material that I had collected pertaining to each town’s story. Many of the information was either found on online databases, from research my Uncle Mark had collected, or drawn from my Grandmother’s book that I read. After constructing these images came the task of placing them onto the multimedia display. This was challenging because they would often get lost on the light background. After many attempts, my solution was to paint the ocean a darker blue, deconstruct the frames from around the towns (those were used to reflect the same grid motif that I used in the rest of the collage) and paint black frames around the towns. Using mod pugue and other adhesives, I glued these towns to the piece. Lastly, my father and I stretched the canvas onto a handmade frame, built black frame to go around it and added rope that connected each town to three specific location on the map. I used red rope for this to resemble blood ties to that land.
The final project turned out nothing like I initially expected, yet portrays everything that I want it to. It shows the complexity of moments that built my family and who I am over an extensive period of time. Though not all of these moments are captured here, the ones that I saw as most important were. This vibrant display reflects the richness of the tapestry that has been woven from hundreds of years. I am proud of the way that this primary portion of the Kindred project turned out and am excited to see how it impacts my family and others.
Ideation // App

The Kindred App that accompanies the multimedia display allows access to more information about McCall’s ancestors and the impact that it has had on her family and identity. Using both image recognition technology and augmented reality, the user’s phone allows them to dive even deeper into the power of ancestry.
These are some Lo-Fi screen designs in the beginning of my design process based off of my wireframes that I drew. Something that changed in later designs is the map journey that the viewer see when scanning the entire piece as well as the way that the information would be viewed and organized within each event node. Rather than having it all on one continuous scrolling page, I later created a wheel that breaks down that information and I also further developed how that information could be viewed on the map through the phone screen.
1 // Main loading page

Upon opening the app, the camera on the user’s phone is utilized so that the app can recognize specific images on the canvas. Once recognized, the app produces the information significant to that specific image which can be accessed in the icons that appear at the bottom of the screen.

2 // Wheel

When the icons are clicked on at the bottom of the screen, a wheel containing different icons appears signifying varying types of information.

3 // Wheel detail

3. Maps, excerpts from McCall’s grandmother’s book, articles, videos containing interviews, pop culture events and music, and photographs can be accessed from different images recognized on the multimedia work.
4 // Augmented map

When an icon is clicked on, most information is overlaid using augmented reality allowing the user to interact with the multimedia piece on a more interactive level.

5 // Map zoomed

As the user gets closer to the piece with the app, the augmented visuals alter and allow a more exploratory view of the information.

6 // Map information

When the user gets close enough to the canvas, the app reveals specific information about the original icon selected.
Ideation // Promo Video

To promote this piece, the Kindred video reaches the users on a more personal level, explaining the motives and impact that this project has had on three generations of McCall's family. Sharing one similar narrative, McCall, McCall's mother, Debra, and her grandmother, Grace, describe the importance of their ancestry and the deep and lasting effects that it has had on how they perceive themselves as individuals.
**Video // Script**

Who am I? (at together) Is who I am simply defined by my actions, my beliefs, or my circumstances? Or is “who I am” constructed by something bigger? A giant web that interweaves across time and explains why I am this way.

Could we be predestined by our ancestors; determined by a compilation of moments, challenges and trials, characteristics, and choices that precede us. Does this undeniable tie through kinship contain more than just shared blood, but a way of life that has transformed our fate?

And yet certainly we are not left entirely to the vices of our genetic makeup. Certainly we are more than just who our parents were or who their parents were. Certainly we have an opportunity to make this life our own; determine our own fate through our own choices. But just what part of our genealogy is unavoidable?

This is a story of a condemned criminal, a soldier powered by conviction, an addict consumed by his addiction, a single mother who stood up to conventions, and of men and women fueled by faith (I might change this up some). This is my story. This is who I am.

This is my kindred.
Video // Final

The final video aims to do more than just encourage people to come see the Kindred project but also go a research their ancestry on their own. I am proud of the way that this video turned out and I think it lends to the storytelling quality that I want my project to have through this collage of different people talking. Most of all, this was a way to bind my grandmother, mother, and I closer together in creating something that summarizes where we all came from.
The final brand was one of the first things that I worked on and if given more time, this would be something I would work a lot longer on. My initial idea was to have the idea of my family and it ended up being tied into my multimedia display.

Ideation // Branding

LOVE REFLECTIVE IMAGE OF MY FAMILY
TOGETHER TO FOR A FACIAL
IMAGES OF REPO
OF A MAP OR A JUDICIOUS PLACE
THAT FILL THE MAP.
The final iteration of the Kindred mark incorporates the same square grid that is used in the multimedia display. This reflects the idea that our ancestry uniquely fills to create a larger picture.