

EVERYTHING WE KEEP // Objects as Medicine

A 3-Day Visual Masterclass in Material Culture & Identity



Welcome to the Lab: Everything We Keep
September 25-27, 2026 | San José | Costa Rica



Welcome to the Lab: Everything We Keep

I am so excited to begin our journey together, and I want to thank you for your curiosity, responsiveness, and your willingness to **pause for a moment**.

Before we begin, let's talk about our **"silent objects."** These are things we have at home, items we sometimes don't even touch, **but have chosen to keep**. They aren't necessarily items on display; they don't always photograph well, and they weren't necessarily chosen for the center stage -but they were kept anyway. Within some of them, an emotional thought, a memory, or an unraveled connection is folded.

These objects are our Symbolic DNA. Through them, we will ask:

How does a collection of stationery, a box, or an old piece of clothing preserve previous versions of ourselves? And what can we learn about ourselves through what isn't said, what isn't seen, but simply remains?

Now is the time to begin your personal journey with yourself - a journey of search, discovery, and observation.

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Step 1: Quiet Observation

1. The Initial Memory

Sit quietly and ask yourself: **what silent objects are kept in your home?** Before searching, grab a pen and paper and write down the items that intuitively pop into your head - strictly from memory.

2. Wandering

Next, take some quiet time to patiently wander through your home. **Look into the drawers, the attic, and the quiet rooms** as if entering them for the very first time. Observe your surroundings with curious eyes; you will likely discover many more objects than you initially remembered.

3. Quiet Questions

Update your list, and as you spend time with each object, ask yourself—and them:

- **Where did it come from, and what is its independent story?**
- **What is it holding for me, and why is it still here?**
- **How does it make me feel when I get close to it?**
- **Why is it so meaningful, even if it defies logical explanation?**

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Step 2: Selection and Learning

Objects contain an entire world. From your updated list, I invite you to select 10 meaningful objects that you simply refuse to throw away.

After choosing your ten silent objects, we will take time to learn them:

1. Observation (5 minutes)

Dedicate 5 minutes to observing each object without distractions, in silence. Notice the changing colors, the materiality, the way the light falls on it, and any special marks it holds. Try to see it as if for the very first time. Afterward, write down an immediate list of your observations.

2. Learning the Object

Try to understand its history and essence:

How was it made, and what is it used for?

What other objects is it connected to?

What is unique about its design language, and what emotion or movement does it evoke?

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Step 3: Photography

We will photograph each of the 10 objects in three distinct states:

- In Context: As it is placed daily in its natural spot. If it lives in a closed box or drawer, photograph it closed, and then open it with the object revealed.
- Portrait: Out of context from its everyday environment, standing entirely on its own.
- Group Photo: A single photo of all ten objects together.

Tips for Photographing a Silent Object:

- Shoot from the heart: Treat the process with the respect and love each object deserves.
- Lighting is key: Place your shooting station in a well-lit spot, preferably using natural light, and avoid shadows cast by the camera.
- Background: A uniform background is recommended (though not mandatory).
- Angles: Place the object so its main front faces the camera. You can add photos from different angles if it has diverse sides.
- Camera position: Shoot using a mobile phone in a horizontal (landscape) position, with the capture button on the right. If the object is particularly long, you may turn the phone vertically.

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And what's next?

Closer to the workshop,
I will ask you to print the photos and fill out a form for each object...
this will happen right in the week before we meet.
You will also be asked to bring the 10 objects physically with you
(unless one is too heavy or fragile to carry - in which case we will make do with its photos).

In the meantime,
enjoy the process of choosing and exploring your objects.

See you very soon,

Efrat

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