'Design' and the evolving tradition of Sanganer hand block printing: Formation and negotiation of artisanal knowledge and identities against the backdrop of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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Tradition has been described by heritage studies as a transformative process that is being 'enforced, reinvented, transformed, denied, or contested' (Varutti 2015: 1038), with heritage seen as a construct of the past, present and imagined futures (Smith 2006). The role of craft and design interactions in safeguarding and rejuvenating cultural practices has yet to receive adequate attention against this theoretical backdrop[1]. In order to discuss how design affects craft practices we studied Sanganer hand block printing's development amidst increasing design influences in post-independence India. We especially consider the way in which artisanal identities and practice, or intangible cultural heritage is formed and negotiated when engaged with specific design scenarios and actors; and by studying the varied attitudes and realities of contemporary Sanganer hand block printing from this interdisciplinary point of view, the paper offers new insights into a range of 'modern', 'traditional' and 'heritage' craft realities.

Keywords: Tradition, intangible cultural heritage, craft, design

Introduction: Intangible cultural Heritage (ICH) and evolving tradition

Over the past three decades we have seen a paradigm shift from sites, monuments and objects, or tangible cultural heritage, towards consumption and use to express culture, identity and politics (Waterton and Watson 2015). In its 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), UNESCO attempted to formally establish heritage as cultural process in terms of "(…) practices, representation, expression, knowledge, skills (…)" rather than merely a monumental outcome, redirecting its historical focus from expression to formation of identities UNESCO (2003). Despite the fact that ICH celebrates 'living' expression (Logan et al. 2015), the 2003 convention has been criticised for not sufficiently recognising contemporary expressions (Deacon et al. 2004) in its attempt to preserve diversity by

'freezing' culture (Alivizatou 2012). Moving on from this, Varutti (2015:1037) highlights a lack of insight into how communities re-appropriate and renew traditions in contemporary contexts, and how "…actors convey, legitimise and materialise their understanding of 'heritage'" beyond official or 'authorized' discourse. According to heritage scholars, Authorised Heritage Discourse "takes its cue from the grand narratives of Western national and elite class experiences, and reinforces the idea of innate cultural value tied to time depth, monumentality, expert knowledge and aesthetics' (Smith 2006, p299). Hence it generates an asymmetry between the values assigned by the official actors and those practiced by local communities.

Our study of the hand block printing communities of Sanganer, India provides empirical data on the preservation and development of craft practices in the contemporary context of exposure to various design scenarios and actors. In this paper we will argue that when the government, non govermental organisations, businesses, researchers and design schools describe different cultural practices as 'traditional', 'heritage' and 'modern', such authorized discourse tends to be visible. What crafts people say and do in their varied settings, on the other hand, leads us to conclude that tradition, in the evolving nature of Sanganer printing, is a term whose meaning largely depends on the speaker's relationships to technology, trade opportunities, identity and emergent craft entreprise. Far from being authorized it might be described as grass roots understanding or even deliberate strategies in order to distinguish one's practice from others.

To understand how this fits in with current thinking on globalization's role in shaping heritage and design discourses we offer a brief review of literature here:

Design, Heritage and Globalization

Globalization may contribute to new legislation or renewed interest in heritage in order to promote cultural diversity (Labadi and Long 2010). At the same time, it challenges local cultures through homogenisation, hegemonic expressions and asymmetries of power (Brumann and Cox 2009). Globalization has thus been described as exerting a substantial influence on preserving living culture while hindering the true processual nature of it (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Again, authorized discourse creates dichotomies between 'west and the rest', 'developed and the developing', 'us and them' (Telleria 2015), so changing ways of creating locality affects local identity (Scounti 2009). Nic Craith (2008:54) sums up these concerns when she enquires '… how one ensures that the process of globalization facilitates rather than eliminates local cultural heritages (…) and how (…) one enhances the local so that it becomes glocal and not obsolete?"

In this relationship, design is perceived by some as a mediator for revival and continuity of tradition when creating glocalized objects (Maldini 2014), but its contribution deserves further scrutiny as to the balance of standardisation and differentiation as well as the power differentials and 'pluriversatility' of heritage[2] (Salazar 2010:145). DeNicola and Wilkinson- Weber (2016: 81) posit that designers contribute to a 'global hierarchy of values' through an 'increasingly homogenous language of cultures and ethics' (Cf. Herzfeld 2004), which accentuates power differences and creates a dichotomy of tradition and modernity. In their view, this discourse engenders new identities for artisans and designers, "traditional" and "benefactor and protector of the 'unmodern maker" respectively, as it seeks to balance authenticity and economic integrity (DeNicola and Wilkinson- Weber 2016: 82 -83). In India, craft and design have had a close relationship for some time:

Design and craft relationships in India

Martha Scotford in her introduction to the Indian special of Design Issues reminds us that 'Design' has been integral to craft development there since independence (Scotford 2005), with McGowan (2009) and Balaram (2005) highlighting the role of British officials and Art Schools in imposing Western techniques to improve 'native taste' (Mathur 2011:44). This marginalized Indian craftsmen (Balaram 2005) into 'native' as opposed to 'progressive' (Athavankar 2002: 44), and while the Swadeshi movement sought to stimulate endogenous production (Chatterjee 2005, Balaram 1989) Mathur (2011) argues that its rhetoric only reiterated the colonial division between traditional village craft and industrial design.

In post-independence India, design came to the fore once more when the Nation State responded to the global economy by adopting an industrial design strategy endorsed by national politics (Athavankar 2002). What started immediately after Independence with the publication of the India Report (1958) as part of Nehru's modernisation programme and later the Ahmedabad Declaration (1979) can still be seen affecting the country's National Design Policy in 2007 as it favours a global outlook (Balaram 2009). Consideration of local cultures and artisanal making were promised within these borrowed design models[3] in a bid to improve quality of life without losing one's identity to industrialisation (Balaram 2009), but such policy driven education did not, according to Ghose (1995) and Clarke (2016) promote endogenous development. Instead they created professional 'designer stars' who visited the marginalised craft sector for sources of inspiration (Ghose 1995). They differed greatly from the traditional Indian artisan who was not "treated as a demigod; (but who was) only one element of a cultural team (where) innovation as per se has little meaning" (Das 2005: 51). The new middle class designers hence emerged as 'creative elites and experts', as 'knowledge producers' and 'social mediators' tasked with using its products and appropriating them

to global market needs, with design as 'implicit patronage' (DeNicola and DeNicola 2012: 792-94). Athavankar contests that Indian design engagements have become a 'synthetic search for inventing cultural markers that reflect modernity as much as native identity… (without really) rediscover(ing) the roots in the traditions and try(ing) to evolve new expressions of modernity rooted in the local cultural context" (Athavankar 2002: 55-56).

Approaches to research

With design now permeating the Indian craft sector in government, NGO, educational and industry led initiatives, we will in this paper define 'professionalised practice' as design and 'generational activity' by artisanal communities as craft[4].

During ethnographic field-work, our research looked into recent development of Sanganer hand block printing in Rajasthan, by examining objects, practice and social and cultural context of this craft over a three month period in Sanganer, Bagru and Ahmedabad. Methods included interviews and observations of artisans at work in domestic operations and at manufacturing plants, to uncover life histories and information on aesthetic and skill traditions. Observation and interviews with design professionals were complemented by examination of material culture in museums, retail outlets, workshops and households. Finally deep immersion was sought as artisans at an NGO in Jaipur were shadowed over a period of three weeks to follow closely the design, manufacturing and selling process of their printed cloth.

Changes and Shifts in the Sanganer printing tradition

Just 10 miles south of Jaipur, in Rajasthan State, the 16th century village of Sanganer has become a bustling small town, where nearly every household has a printing table or is involved in hand block printing in some way. Particularly renowned for its fine block

printing on white cloth, operations now not only involve traditional Chippa[5] families but many migrants who came to the town in search of jobs.

With its identity recently protected by the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act in 2010, Sanganer printing had been subject to numerous historical influences from Gujarati and Malwa printing traditions (Chishti et al. 2000, Intellectual Property India 2009) to Persian influences during the Mughal Empire and patronage by the Jaipur Royals (Ranjan and Ranjan 2007). As such, Sanganer printing was rarely confined to local communities, but very much exposed to global trade and colonial ambitions as well as the demands of its changing patrons.

Figure 1: A photograph of Jaipur, Sanganeer - Ka – Chopal taken between 1860-70s (the picture shows '*Haat wada*' (market place) near Hawa Mahal where the printers took their products to sell on the weekends), Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, CC0 1.0 Universal.

Sanganer printing was characterized by different colors and motifs depending on whom it was produced for (royals, priests, local community) as specific prints and colour schemes acted as identification for castes until the mid 20th century (DeNicola and Wilkinson- Weber 2016). Traditionally, a strong community of practice was visible in the production of printed cloth here as Sanganer Chippas, along with Muslim Rangrez[6] dyers and the wood block makers and Dhobis[7] worked together to produce a final piece. Accounts by Sir George Watt mention how the intricate nature of block printing in Sanganer, the 'very metropolis of calico printing craft' (Watt 1903: 247), contrasted with the intrusive design influences in the guise of innovation, where: "The designs have been stolen and imitated and prints at the tithe of the old prices are being thrust on the markets that formerly afforded the means of Sanganir calico- printers" (Watt 1903:249). Industrialization, bringing chemical dyestuffs, screen-printing and polyester

fabrics in response to changed local consumption patterns influenced the Sanganer printing tradition as much as did the Gandhian movement and 1947 independence. Printers in Sanganer still recall printing on the homespun *khadi* cloth championed by Ahmedabad based Gandhi to support the self reliant Swadeshi movement, while crediting Ram Lal Das with the introduction of screen printing technology to Sanganer from the same city in the 1960s. Our recent conversations with craftsmen in Sanganer thereby support Margolin's observation on the complex relationship between 'industrial' and 'artisan' in the first half of the 20th century in India (Margolin 2011).

In the 21st century, changes to product, knowledge, skills, practices and tools of Sanganer printing continue to occur in line with increased production demands. One such example is how the low wooden table (pathiya) is replaced by a longer table where a now standing printer manages to produce several yards of fabric at once. Artisans who used to print in their household now seek work in factories that produce 500- 600 pieces a day and experience division of labor with associated effects on community relations.

Figure 2: A low print table in Bagru

Figure 3: The long tables used in present day block printing, where several workers may work together as division of labor

Formation and Negotiation of Knowledge and Identities

Community sharing, Chippas vs. non Chippas and design ownership

Meeting the demands of the mass market brought great tension to community cohesion as the expanding industry brought economic benefits for local people but also migration, especially from Farrukhabad, Uttar Pradesh, as the industrialization of printing processes required labor for new processes. Most migrants do piece work in a factory for daily wages and the influence of such low-skilled workers is worth

reviewing as to its contribution to contemporary making traditions. In our study, one local Chippa member raised his concerns regarding sharing traditions with people coming from the outside and establishing business, constituting severe competition for Chippas when he explains:

> I'm not comfortable how other caste people have taken up our printing. These other caste people are not sensitive to our printing tradition and to our community as they think if they suffer; let them suffer. So they do not provide any means of help to us… the main Chippa people who used to do the printing have declined while other caste (jaati) people have taken up our position. (Ram Swaroop, personal interview September 2015)

Fellow Chippas expressed more liberal views about migration and saw printing as a democratic activity shared with everyone to the benefit and growth of the industry, with copying of traditional block prints in screen printing factories seen as a legitimate and cheaper market proposition[8]. In some sense, Ram Swaarop here revives a popular debate of the late 19th century in which Indian crafts were variably seen as a private and necessarily secret key asset for a craftsman's survival, or as a common cultural and political good for economic and social development of the nation (McGowan 2009: 65). Well over a century on from these opposing narratives that alleged backwardness of protective Indian craftsmen or sought national resistance to global industrialization in shared craft knowledge (McGowan 2009: 3 and Roy 1998), we may witness here how a member of the original Chippa community attempts to locate a perceived threat to his own community into larger debates around globalization and innovation, and the role and shape of community linked authenticity within that. Edwards (2016: 336-9) observed how recent environmentally motivated development initiatives to printing in Bagru have upset the Chippa community as they struggle to find a common approach.

On the other hand, and in line with Scarse's (2012: 123) findings on how tradition may

be irrevocably affected, Sanjay Chippa describes how design copying weakened the community of practice in Sanganer:

> …because of the work precautions also the work relationship (with Rangrez dyers) diminished. After the fashion oriented industry came into the business we had to keep the designs we make to ourselves as others might copy it. So eventually the whole process (dyeing and printing) started to happen in one place. (Sanjay Chippa, personal interview, September 2015)

The copyright concerns of the modern fashion industry are contrasted here with the sharing and production practices of home based craft. As blocks once owned by the community belong to external buyers or factories, printers are now more conscious of who they work with and where, and ever larger orders demand industrialized production practices. While the idea of producing for a specific clientele is not a 21st century invention (Edwards 2016: 83), one can argue that the quantities now involved change 'the material relationship of production and exchange… subsumed within the structure of caste and community' (Venkatesan 2006: 68) where the core relationships of people, material and ideologies were bound up by kinship, caste systems and occupational relationships. Now the mediators in charge are fashion buyers and designers with collective identity of craftsmanship increasingly overshadowed by business clout. The sheer volume of designs commanded and promoted by the companies not only affords design business privileged access to craft but also transfers power from local makers to (inter)national industry, in parallel to McGowan's observation on the effect that exhibiting and publicizing craft objects in the 19th century had on existing systems of knowledge transmission (2009:65), in other words, on intangible heritage.

Artisan as a creator vs. artisan as a job worker - occupational displacement

Master artisan Prabhati Lal's comparison of practices and identity within interdependent community of practice and for isolated pieceworkers illustrate the effects of present day production on labor, lifestyle and creativity of an artisan:

> The earlier relationship is better for the industry because everybody was specialized in that particular industry. So the work was defined. Rangrez had a different job, we had a different job. They dyed the fabric and gave it to us. Earlier the dhobis were involved but nowadays they are not involved much. These days things are complicated and also a headache. Everything is urgent work now. But earlier nothing was urgent. We did work more leisurely. Even with little work we were satisfied that time. Now it's all export orders and bulk production. Earlier we had an artist feeling; now it's just a job. (Master artisan Prabhati Lal , personal interview, October 2015)

Sanjay Chippa here affirms Nita Kumar's observation on the importance of leisure time to an artisan's identity (1988: 92) and goes on to mention the disintegrating effects of these new work relationships on specialist skills and traditional knowledge. By referring to the Indian proverb *" Dhobĩ kã kuttã ghar kã na ghãt kã"*, which translates as "the washerman's dog belongs neither to the house nor to the washing place", he describes that a loss of fixed roles in his community of practice led to jacks of all trades and masters of none. He further contemplates how this recast relationships, work satisfaction, embodiment and connections to place and materials when he continues that

> "If you are perfect in doing something you should stick to that. (…) In our culture things come generationally. That time they had in-depth knowledge. Right now we don't have that. Why? Because we are interested in the new developments (…) before, community wise work was defined (…) and everyone was satisfied. But now everything's got mixed up. (Sanjay Chippa, personal interview September 2015)

This development of a business oriented design and manufacturing approach for craft is, perhaps surprisingly, accepted rather sanguinely amongst some new design businesses in Sanganer: Brij Udaiwal who hails from a traditional printer family and now runs a successful business unsentimentally states:

> Look! Nowadays it's not craft, it's purely a business. And we are producing 10,000 of meters. So the relationship between the printers and us are purely commercial. (Brij Udaiwal, personal interview, September, 2015)

Hitesh, a young businessman also hailing from a traditional printer family says he's interested in managing the business and not in printing as a practice, so he oversees and runs a plant for other printers. The new generation of business minded individuals like Hitesh, seem to see the traditional work relationships and artisanal role replaced out of a timely requirement as it was unfit for contributing to today's printing industry. This fits with modern India's ideology where the importance of caste diminishes , replaced by a new professional class system (Balaram 2011). In Sanganer, we witnessed this ideology in practice when meeting Hitesh on a recommendation of Hitender, who, while similar in age and business attitude, is an entrepreneur from a non printing family near Delhi who had gained industry experience in screen printing and garment manufacture before turning to block printing in a small workshop in Sanganer. Hitender, the incomer, and Hitesh, the Chippa, clearly consider one another as immediate peers in craft businesses based on heritage.

> Yes, Chippas have been doing this for 300-400 years. But it doesn't matter anymore. The work only matters now. I don't mind who's involved in this and whether it's a Chippa or someone else. And I don't mind if anyone comes and learns it too. As long as I can get the right quality and order quantity that's enough for me. (Hitesh Sonawa, personal interview, September 2015)

These new entrepreneurs may profess a degree of disinterest in traditional identities but their role is more transformative than simply bringing existing traditional craft

expressions to a global market. By rewarding production of the 'correct' quality and quantity but irrespective of the maker's background, Hitesh and Hitender help contemporary craft gain a degree of politicized agency in which elected engagement with global skills and technologies replaces born-into entitlement as gate keepers of living heritage.

Effects on the local knowledge systems and practices

The observation of artisans in Sanganer revealed de-skilling and loss of traditional knowledge but also addition of new knowledge to local culture. While Evers and Wall (2011: 361) highlight that contemporary abundance of knowledge creation comes at the expense of indigenous knowledge systems, we witnessed in Sanganer a rather pragmatic approach to informing traditions based on contemporary market demands. Gan Sham Ji, one of the master printers says "I am happy to go with the changes with contemporary designs but still practice it with the block printing technique…I get to learn things from the organization (he works for)". Tradition is observed and replaced selectively here as the artisan's skills are used to print designs supplied by a design director.

Another example of how strategic the use or rejection of traditional knowledge can be is the age old Chippa technique of 'tapai', or sun bleaching that gives brightness to Sanganer printed cloth. Since this process requires time, space and a lot of water, it has been widely abandoned in the commercial work of Sanganer printers in favour of chemical detergents. It is however still used regularly in state competitions and therefore showcased as living heritage by the national prizewinners at national and international events[9], where awardees proudly present their local community. It thereby provides an interesting case of culturally recognizing commercially obsolete skills at government and community of practice level.

Figure 4: A sun bleached fabric (on the right) along with a fabric done with synthetic dyes (on left). The sun bleached fabric is a Safa (turban) for men made particularly for the Gurjar community who used to work on animal husbandry. The fabric is a typical Sanganer print of Syahi-begar (red and black) pattern done with natural dyes.

Economic Integrity vs. Tradition

The passing down of knowledge as a generational activity is challenged also when a new generation favors opportunities of entrepreneurship over the practice of printing, as is the case with Hitesh gaining an MBA in Operational Management. This can be seen as a successful artisan strategy to continue tradition in line with Varutti's understanding of tradition "as a transformative process… [that] brings to the fore the very nature of heritage as something inherently harking back to the past, yet also inevitably adapted and reinterpreted to make it relevant and significant in the present and in an imagined future" (2015: 1038), foregrounding a very conscious orienting of heritage towards emerging market opportunities.

We therefore see the evolving nature of Sanganer printing as tradition contested, reinvented and transformed through technology, new trade relationships and the rise of new entrepreneurs.

A company trying to preserve some of the traditional community of practice is leading Indian retailer of block printed textiles Anokhi; it maintains long-term relationships with printers, attempts to balance heritage considerations with commercial appeal, and enforces strict ethics on design copyrights:

> …we aim to provide work throughout the year for the printers we work with… (but they) are actually able to work with anybody else if they choose on other designs. We prefer not to let them use our own designs for someone else which has happened on occasions. (…) It's important to know what's behind the cloth… a symbolic relationship…how the techniques have been used. Who's been printing them… (whilst acknowledging) you also have to make desirable products

otherwise nobody will buy them. It can't be perceived as charity or this is a traditional craft… the end product has to be something everybody wants to buy. (Rachel Bracken-Singh- Anokhi, personal interview September 2015)

Rachel Bracken-Singh, the design director of Anokhi explains what it takes to promote traditional block printing in a commercial context, and describes the need to see tradition as open and malleable in order to achieve authenticity in contemporized craft[10] without losing cultural significance. Anokhi does not classify its prints as either contemporary or traditional because "(…) how do you draw the line about what was actually traditional (…)? How many years did it have to be in circulation before it's traditional?" (Personal interview, September 2015) Anokhi's understanding shows a pragmatic stance on the adaptation of cultural expressions to local and global contexts, advocating that 'new' becomes part of the repertoire of Sanganer tradition gradually, without the need to categorize clearly as new or old. It interestingly focuses on products rather than process, so foregrounds tangible over intangible heritage which represents those cultural processes and activities undertaken around the material culture of Sanganer printing (Smith 2006:3). The swing tag of a pleated Anokhi bolero purchased in 2015 describes: "(…) The print on the fabric is an original creation of Anokhi and is protected under copyright laws around the world", indicating that the 'originality' of Anokhi prints is "authorized", with design rights taken away from the printer by placing it within global business regulations.

Other issues of new business realities become apparent when observing how printers work with large retail company FabIndia, India's largest private platform for products made using traditional techniques, skills and processes. It claims to link 55,000 craft based rural producers to modern urban markets, and prides itself on creating 'a base for skilled, sustainable rural employment, preserving India's traditional handicrafts in the process'.[11] When talking about the pressure of a 70,000 meters printing job

acquired from FabIndia, Hitesh however highlights a possible disconnect between the demands of global markets and the capabilities of emerging family businesses and their domestic facilities:

> "(…) if we don't give the order on the deadline they ask for a 5% discount. After 15 days it's 10%. After 20 days 15%. We have a lot of pressure to produce. After one month (if they cannot deliver the order) the delivery is cancelled. Also we can't sell this in the normal market even if it gets rejected. We have to keep the fabric in stock for six months to one year before releasing it to the market… that's a lot of risk. (Hitesh Sonawa, personal interview, September, 2015)

In addition to the enforced delay with which abandoned design lots might enter the domestic market and thus become part of 'new traditions', local productions techniques are often unsuited to match the quality demands of large job lots:

> "Earlier, FabIndia wanted us to do this color. (shows a fabric of lime green with a floral pattern) I did this sample earlier this year (in January). But now when we did it again this is the color we got. (Shows a darker hue of lime green) We can't achieve the lighter shade because it's the hot season now. So they rejected the order they were supposed to give us." (Hitesh Sonawa, personal interview, September 2015)

The design and designer in Sanganer printing

In contemporary Sanganer we were also able to study the multiple roles which designers play in influencing local practices. We found designers outsourcing their designs to the local artisans, working as in-house designers who delegate and work with artisans, and finally artisans who undergo formal design education from institutions like the Indian Institute of Craft and Design.

The central role of communication at this craft-design interface became apparent during an observation of artisans working with graduates of an elite Indian design

school on hand block and screen printed textiles for the domestic market, the context here being the problem of color bleeding on a block printing job.

> Designer 1: Who's saying there are no faults in this then I will show them the faults. If the print is still wet don't put another block on the wet print. Let the print dry first. Look at this-the color is bleeding.
>
> Designer 2: This looks like the fabric has been washed many times. This is the exact problem of wet on wet printing.
>
> Artisan1: (showing the head block) This is the head block. There will be differences in the intensity of the print. This is not screen printing.
>
> Designer 1: If you always tell me that this is hand block printing and not screen printing, then I will never come up with any products to tell you if this is right or wrong.
>
> Artisan 1: Please listen to me also. In this process there is no machine. So there will be mistakes.
>
> Artisan 2: Leave that (with disappointment)
>
> Designer 1: Listen to me. I agree this is a manual process- so there will be mistakes. I can bring dupattas (shawls) … printed with such perfection. Then what would you say? You always keep telling me this is hand work, but the customer will not take this story.
>
> Artisan 1 talking to artisan 2: Whatever she says you listen to her and let the outline dry.
>
> Artisan 3: So what about the production then? It will take more time.
>
> Dye master: If you give good quality then you will get more orders then more production. Then 'malik' (the owner) will increase your wages.
>
> Artisan 4: it's actually the problem of the fabric quality.
>
> Designer 1: Whatever the fabric you just follow the directions. Stretch the fabric and try to secure it with more pins. You have pinned it loosely.

Here we witness the designer as an imposer of new practices, with only the manual job of printing left to the artisan while he receives design and color palette and is even uninvited to bring to bear his traditional expertise technically. This reality somewhat irritates the agenda of development agencies like UNESCO, and higher education institutions like Pearl Academy, Indian Institute of Craft and Design (IICD) and

National Institute of Design India (NID) who promote the 'designer as a mediator', much akin to the common interpretation of the Eames' conception of design bridging the gap between tradition and modernity (Mathur 2011). An academic at NID reiterates this point when saying that

> "(…) to a large extent we are telling our students… whenever you are working with the established craft tradition the first step is the humility to understand what their vocabulary, language and culture is. Instead of imposing your ideas on them you encourage them to arrive at solutions based on their vocabulary, methods, processes and techniques.". (Swasti Singh Ghai, personal Interview, October 2015)

What we observed in Sanganer is not likely a rogue example of bad practice, with many parallels documented elsewhere (e.g. Bundgaard 1998: 171), and questions on how market driven design standards can ever give tradition sufficient time to evolve rather than being dictated to, remain.

Attempts to bridge this gap and encourage living heritage have been made by providing formal design education to artisans so that they may become designers, makers and entrepreneurs in one combined role. The story of Kushiram, a young graduate of IICD, Jaipur shows how a gap between traditions and modernities might be overcome to create living heritage. His contemporary designs of florals, geometrics and motifs such as automobiles do not fit the traditional Sanganer repertoire. On the one hand, his work could be considered traditional Sanganer printing as the prints are being made by a traditional artisan (authorship confirmed), who is based in Sanganer (place-based significance confirmed), uses traditional methods (technical authenticity confirmed) and understands the complexities and intricacies of such printing (embodiment confirmed). Kushiram has followed a contemporary design process by looking at actual objects around him, and he attributes his new-found motif confidence to his formal design education. Crucially, he remains traditional in his making practice

and does not (yet) engage in the large-scale production typical of design interventions described above, with the challenges they bring. Instead, he has found confidence to conceptualize modern life into non-traditional motifs, and to use traditional techniques to place these on contemporary objects such as bags and shirts in order to appeal to a contemporary clientele that values local tradition and living heritage. One might say that he indeed manages to 'enhance the local so that it becomes glocal and not obsolete' (Nic Craith 2008).

Figure 5: Automobile print design on shirts and bags

Conclusion

In the midst of Sanganer printing adapting to 21st century consumer demands, we recognized constant negotiations between tradition and innovation, with design as a determining factor in various guises: Whether the designer's authority to develop Anokhi's 'new originals', the struggles of FabIndia's designers to achieve scalability within the constraints of domestic artisanal production, or the contemporary motif of a car traditionally printed by a design educated artisan, design scenarios and actors were found to be behind tradition's development as living heritage. Some of these scenarios are in line with Reeves and Plets' (2015: 212) assertion that in authorized contexts those 'who control the interpretation of heritage control heritage narratives', but we saw glimpses also of more community driven craft negotiation:

Some traditional artisans in our study identified and sought to reframe the entire practice of Sanganer printing as their distinctive cultural property, thus linking living heritage chiefly to their identity. At the same time Ram Swaroop's and Sanjay Chippa's businesses prosper through merely manufacturing commissions from outside design actors.

Others like Hitesh and Hitender embrace a manner of authorized discourse on heritage when they adapt traditional practices to the supply chain demands of new market opportunities, accepting associated power relationships and their inevitable impact on living heritage. In doing so they negotiate between grassroots efforts (individual or communal) and authorized notions of craft presented to them by actors of the design industry, with their emphasis on extraneous quality and production standards.

Anokhi, one of the design retail businesses in our study provides authorized heritage discourse in its Museum of Hand Printing in Amber by following an active acquisition policy of contemporary designs displayed alongside historical textiles. As a business, Anokhi was found to locate heritage at material more than process level. FabIndia on the other hand market themselves as highly responsible for their producers which in our study was however seen in potential conflict with the sheer scale of their design scenario.

Finally, Kushiram's case; a design-educated artisan turned entrepreneur highlights opportunities for retaining traditional manufacturing processes while developing products and aspects of its inception (or design) in ways that at times radically break with traditional motifs; he has formed an identity based on the dual roles of designer and print artisan, and his business can be considered as an example of a grassroots strategy to bring craft heritage to modern design scenarios, albeit at a small scale.

This encouraging example of an artisan empowered by design education into a 'designer-maker' and 'entrepreneur', cannot mask wider concerns over social exclusion and loss of traditions in the current construction of the living heritage of Sanganer printing. Our study found evidence of deskilling and loss of knowledge when artisans as piece workers had to deal with the 'separate and autonomous knowledge' of designers

and businesses (DeNicola and Wilkinson- Weber 2016: 87), sometimes devolving the care for traditions entirely to outsiders.

Our examination of the varied landscape of contemporary Sanganer handprinting then offered new insights into a distinct range of craft realities between traditional and modern, grass roots and authorized narratives. We witnessed construction of heritage through consensus and dissonance where artisans as 'tradition bearers' (Nic Craith 2008: 67) and government officials, designers, researchers and businesses chose, emphasized or ignored aspects of heritage in direct response to their specific negotiations with places, identities, artefacts and practices.

We conclude from our study that such negotiations can work well where involvement of tradition bearers actively mitigates against unbalanced hierarchies or power relations, thus assigning importance to grassroots strategies of artisans constructing their own 'heritage' in line with Varutti (2015). We certainly witnessed amongst Sanganer artisans a remarkable adaptability to negotiate between the 'old' and the 'new', accepting degrees of contemporary and global culture as part of living heritage in order for tradition to continue.

Notes

[1] With certain exceptions like Makovicky's (2009) Slovak lace making example which discusses tradition and modernity but from an ethnological context.

[2] Salazar (2010: 145) points out that 'instead of one universally accepted meaning, the significance of heritage(…) is characterised by 'Pluriversatility: (…) be it natural or cultural, tangible or intangible' where he encourages to acknowledge the needs of various parties and their interests in 'glocalisation' of heritage as part of sustainable heritage management.

[3] The American designers Charles and Ray Eames' recommendations to include traditions and skills of local crafts adhering to an endogenous approach to look 'inwardly' rather than 'outwardly' for design education model (Eames and Eames 1997/1958).

[4] For a detailed analysis of design in the traditional context and design in a professional industrial context see Balaram (2005, 2009).

[5] Chippa is the name of the community who undertakes traditional block printing.

[6] A Muslim dyeing community

[7] Washermen

[8] Although Sanganer printing has attempted to protect its tradition by registering under the Geographical Indication (GI) Goods Act which allows printers to take legal action against the infringement of products produced and sold under the name of 'Sanganeri Hand block printing'. However, during the field study we observed that not a lot of printers are fully aware of the GI, and how GI supports them in safeguarding Sanganer prints and how it boosts marketing and sales activities under the guise of the GI tag.

[9] The Government of India gives away a national award assigning a 'master craftsman' status and a cash prize to those craft work can be called as 'masterpieces' via a tough selection process with thousands of entries each year. It is regarded as the highest recognition given to any craft producer by the Indian Government. The judge board consist of bureaucrats, museum staff members and experts from NGOs, where the selection is said to based on 'historicised' craft production (Venkatesan 2009).

[10] Apart from being a successful business, Anokhi also maintains a local museum- Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing tries to 'educate' people including artisans when the traditional printing techniques become 'fragile' due to modern manufacturing. (Available at: **http://www.anokhi.com/museum/home.html**)

[11] http://www.fabindia.com/company/

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