IOTA21

'FUTURING CRAFT' IOTA21 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS



FUTURING CRAFT TRIENNIAL **FUTURING CRAFT' IOTA21 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

EDITOR

DR Qassim Saad

'FUTURING CRAFT' IOTA21

CO-PRESENTED WITH: THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CURTIN UNIERSTIY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA Friday 17/Sep. WA Maritime Museum, Fremantle Sat. 18/Sep. Curtin University

PROCEEDING OF "FUTURING CRAFT" 2021 INDIAN OCEAN TRIENNIAL AUSTRALIA IOTA 21

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 17-18/September/2021, PERTH

ORGANISED BY THE INDIAN OCEAN TRIENNIAL AUSTRALIA IOTA 21 https://indianoceancrafttriennial.com/conference/

CURTIN UNIVERSITY, THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

https://about.curtin.edu.au/learning-teaching/humanities/ design-built-environment/

CONFERENCE PROCEEDING "FUTURING CRAFT" ISBN: 978-0-6452182-1-3

BOOK DESIGN BY: SARAH MANDICH

PUBLISHED 2021 THE INDIAN OCEAN TRIENNIAL AUSTRALIA-IOTA 21 PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRLIA

https://indianoceancrafttriennial.com/

ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO COUNTRY

The Indian Ocean Craft Triennial respects and acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters where we operate and present in Western Australia – in particular the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation.

We respect their culture, the Elders past, present and emerging; and give thanks for the continuing contribution they make to the life of this region.

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THE INDIAN OCEAN CRAFT TRIENNIAL-IOTA21

Founding Partnership



Jude van der Merwe Exhibition Curator & Project Leader

Jude van der Merwe has over 25 years' experience in the cultural and visual arts sectors and is an independent senior consultant specialising in cultural development, curatorial work, arts and culture policy and strategy and Public Art development and implementation.

She is current President of the World Crafts Council Australia; Senior Vice President of the World Crafts Council Asia Pacific Region and member of the Advisory Board Curtin School of Design and the Built Environment. Past board experience includes inaugural board member and Company Secretary of the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA.



Maggie Baxter Exhibition & Fashion Curator

Maggie Baxter is a textile artist, writer, independent curator, and public art coordinator. She first visited India in 1990 and maintains a textile arts practice in Kutch, Gujarat state.

Her book Unfolding: Contemporary Indian Textiles, which was the first book written on contemporary Indian textiles, was published by Niyogi Books, New Delhi in April 2015. The highly successful exhibition of the same name was held at the RMIT Gallery in Melbourne from March – May 2015 and at the Fremantle Arts Centre from July – September 2015. In 2003 she was the curator of 'Threads of Life: Textiles from India' for Global Arts Link in Queensland. As an artist she has exhibited regularly since 1984 in both group and solo exhibitions in Australia, India, Japan and UK.



Dr Qassim Saad Curatorial Advisor & Conference Convenor

Qassim Saad is an Iraqi industrial designer living in exile since 1991, holding a BA, MA and PhD in Industrial Design. He has taught design and been assigned for academic leadership roles since 1984 in Iraq, Jordan, New Zealand, Egypt, Germany, and recently in Australia. Qassim's understanding of design is providing the stimulus for future- looking, dynamic approaches to innovation, building on its nature as inter-disciplinary and applied knowledge culminated by creative practices.

Dr. Saad's research embraces creative practice outputs and traditional scholarly publications related to design and social innovation 'outside the centre.' His aim is to articulate future scope to empower societies, in developing countries, particularly achieving a better quality of life, through applying design methods and practices, as strategic tools, to facilitate their social systems mega problems. ORCID: 0000-0002-5641-9957



Carola Akindele-Obe Exhibition Curator & Festival Coordinator

Carola Akindele-Obe is an independent arts manager and writer with over 25 years' experience coordinating visual arts and crafts events in Australia, UK and Taiwan. A graduate of Glasgow School of Art, with a BA(Hons) Design in Embroidered and Woven Textiles, City & Guilds in Basketry/3D Woven Design, and Master of Arts Admin from UNSW, Sydney.

Carola has a depth of experience as a project manager for recurrent events including Biennale of Sydney (1998-2002), Sydney Art on Paper Fair (2001-2005), and Artopia WA (2005-2007). Carola is a co-founder of 'Maker&Smith' presenting skills exchange and promotion opportunities, including a short film festival, to enhance the craft sector in Western Australia.



Gerald Sanyangore Curatorial Advisor & Conference Coordinator

Gerald Sanyangore is an independent visual arts producer, curator and exhibition organiser. He holds a BA(Hons) Economics and Mathematics from the University of Liverpool (UK), and a First Class Honours in Psychology and Graduate Certificate of Business (Arts and Cultural Management) from Deakin University.

Gerald produced and curated Another Antipodes Urban Axis exhibition and its complementary BREACH African Film Program, the largest international exhibition focusing on contemporary African art and film ever held in Australia (2017). His curatorial work reveals alternative ways of viewing shared experiences, untangling complex histories and diverse narratives across cultures.



"FUTURING CRAFT" CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Dr Qassim Saad Conference Convenor

Gerald Sanyangore Conference Coordinator

Jude van der Merwe Exhibition Curator

"FUTURING CRAFT" TEAM

Dr Qassim Saad Gerald Sanyangore Jude van der Merwe Jo Malone Lola Faulkner

'FUTURING CRAFT' SUBMISSION AND THE REVIEW PROCESS

Key dates:

- Draft Submission to IOTA Conference organisers:
- Review complete:
- Final, revised submissions
- Registration to the conference
- Conference opening and presentation sessions

7 June 2021 5 July 2021 9 August 2021 15 August 2021 17-18/Sept 2021

The reviewing processes

All the abstracts were selected through a review process conducted by the IOTA organising committee. We are looking forward to receiving your draft submission emailed as a pdf file by **5 June 2021** and addressed to conference@indianoceancrafttriennial.com **NB the file size, including images must not exceed (20 MB).**

All papers will be processed for blind peer review with two reviewers per submission. Feedback from the review process will be communicated to you on the 5 July 2021. The final submission of the revised version of your work including high quality images and/or documentary movies due on the 9 August 2021.

How your paper will be published

All papers will be published in the online proceedings which will have an ISBN identification and be made accessible from the IOTA 21 website. Our goal is to produce conference proceedings that are professional and of a consistent quality, therefore we appreciate you carefully following the instructions outlined in the conference template guide.

Please note it is important that all published papers will need to follow the formatting guidelines. You can access template styles for Titles, paragraphs, and other styles directly from the Quick Style Menu that is part of the Home Menu in Ms Word (2007 and above). You can either write directly into the template or paste your finished text into it and select to 'match destination formatting' in the pop-up menu that appears when you paste in text. Do not change the predefined formatting settings in this document (such as paper size, orientation, margins, typeface, size, indents, spacing, headings, etc.).

The Conference Scientific Review Committee*

DR QASSIM SAAD, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA (Chair) Dr Anne Farren, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Bernard Kerr, Perth- AUSTRALIA Dr Boon Lay Ong, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Dr Christopher Kueh, Edith Cowen University-AUSTRALIA Dorie Millerson, OCAD University-CANADA Holly Story, Fremantle- AUSTRALIA Jane King, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Dr John Martin, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Jude Van der Merwa, curator, arts adviser- AUSTRALIA Dr Justin Marshall, Northumbria University-UK Dr Kevin Murray, RMIT University-AUSTRALIA Liz Williamson, Academic, Artist Dr Lynn Churchill, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA

Dr Michael Gray, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Moira Doropoulos, Curtin university- AUSTRALIA Dr Niklavs Rubenis, University of Tasmania- AUSTRALIA Dr Parisa Izadpahani, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA Dr Philip Ely, Curtin University- AUSTRALIA

*Alphabetic order

THE CONFERENCE ENDORSEMENT AND SPONSORSHIP ORGANISATIONS

Endorsement:

Curtin University, School of Design and the Built Environment



Funding Partners:



Department of Local Government, Sport



and Cultural Industries



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, **Regional Development and Communications** Office for the Arts



Australian Government Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program

THIS EVENT IS PART OF IOTA21: INDIAN OCEAN CRAFT TRIENNIAL SUPPORTED BY LOTTERYWEST



WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM







İOTA21



BUSINESS EVENTS PERTH

'Futuring Craft' An Overview

Dr Qassim Saad Curatorial Advisor & Conference Convenor

The conference aims to map contemporary crafts in the Indian Ocean region and to define the future scope of craft making. Current indicative research and creative practices will contribute towards the futuring of crafts across the region. The conference enhances the efforts of academics, craft-makers and curators to collaboratively engage, through critical analysis, and to challenge predominant conceptions linking crafts with the past, to move further towards addressing the notion that, "Craft needs to be seen as a quality of things of the future, rather than a thing of the past! It needs to arrive as elemental to a future economy and culture" (Fry, 2011, P. 139) In this context, we argue 'futuring' as a scope of employing individual characteristics to enhance the future transformation of our societies. As human beings, we rely on non-human things; these are the artefacts that we position as a central element in sustaining our physical and mental life. Futuring craft research aims to theorise creative practices and create experimental knowledge, to support the broadening of research practices into, for, and through craft practice (Frayling, 1993), as "[t]his scope is still relatively underdeveloped compared to mainstream design research" (Niedderer, 2014, P. 625). Building on the significance of crafts as value-driven within the existing economic paradigm, this approach is applied across the region as a reflection on transformation towards modernity, development, and beyond. We must acknowledge craft as an object of empowerment, as an artefact that interacts physically through its quality of making as well as through its sensory influences, as reflected through experience, emotion, and aesthetic pleasure.

The conference, which articulates the following five, overlapping, key themes, "explains the potential and value of research for the advancement of craft, both as a practice and discipline that is viable and relevant for the future" (Niedderer, 2014, P. 625). We invite broader responses from academic theorists, artists, practitioner craftsmen, designers, craft-makers, FabLab specialists, campaigners and activists, and curators. We welcome theoretical papers, practice-led presentations and case studies, as well as innovative presentation formats that might include media documentation of objects and makers.

TRACK-1: Futuring craft; geography and social context

This topic aims to explore the impact of interactional elements and their relationship with place, with respect to the maker and the created object, considering that "the craftsman is engaged in his material, and by inference, in the surrounding culture" (Metcalf, 1987). Arguments will be explored concerning the craft-making process as a physical and emotional intent that is influenced by a web of factors, taking into account the geopolitical location within a socio-cultural framework, as reflected in the context of the object and its aesthetic value, including functional properties. The topic opposes the postcolonial contexts which align craft-making with aid and economic development and, subsequently, neglect its local context and its essence as "an object of belief" (Fry, 2011, P 140).

This track includes many papers. They present and discuss broader social contexts in relation to crafts, artisans, and craft-oriented social groups:

Liz Williamson paper "Weaving Eucalypts Project: local colour from Indian Ocean countries." Liz's paper is an overview of historic eucalyptus plantings in Indian Ocean countries. It appears in the Weaving Eucalypts Project (WEP) alongside recent dialogues with collaborating practitioners, artists, designers, and researchers. The WEP presented at one of IOTA's major exhibitions at the Fremantle Art Centre. It explored the tradition of rag rug weaving, reflecting place and location. The process represents friendship, exchange, and expertise to create a community of practice across the Indian Ocean. WEP represented the involvement of a community of practitioners from around the Indian Ocean, all linked by an engagement with nature and a concern for sustainability.

Pragya Sharma paper "The Domestic Craft and the Artefact: Discovering Provenance, Exploring Interrelationships." The paper examines created artefacts and their classifications beyond aesthetics, such as functionality and slow design. These were formed under colonial influences. They continue in Indian middle-class households, represented through the creation of artefacts made by hand for daily use. Pragya offers a literature review and interactions with makers to unearth applications of artefacts as sustainable alternatives in the contemporary world.

Penny Smith paper "The Terroir of Terracotta..." This paper explores indigenous identity through the elements of clay cooking pots, fire, and food. Penny articulates the significance of traditional craft practices as the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. The study focuses on the challenge in maintaining the survival of this cultural heritage by creating a contemporary context for it. Penny illustrates a few examples of how this is happening and appeals to conferees to contribute to the story.

Shouryamoy Das and Sushma Iyengar paper "Reviving Indigenous Wool Craft of India." The paper addresses the challenges of traditional craft practices remaining intrinsically 'green', 'sustainable', and 'environment-friendly' under the influence of mechanized hand skills, man-made fibres, globalized markets, and degrading ecologies, which threaten their customary ethos. The paper aims to raise these issues in alignment with local efforts to revitalize the indigenous wool value chain in India.

Muhammad U. Rehman and Wafa Ali joint paper "Materiality, Craft As An Occupation, An Emotion And As An Object." The study looks at the various crafts that exist and the cross-pollination of these objects within our spaces, whether through fashion or textiles, or through the addition of elements within the living space. The authors articulate their experiences in facilitating and working with artisans from the northern and southern regions of Pakistan, addressing the making of the object and their sensibility designs across different geographical, climatic, and cultural regions.

Belinda Newick paper "Island Welcome: exploring jewellery as a gesture of welcome in response to Australian immigration policy." The paper utilised the method of neo-narrative techniques to link exhibition practice with theory and qualitative data via an in-depth panel discussion with three of the contributing artists and three guest speakers. Belinda addressed how gestures of welcome have been embodied, using the example of neckpieces made specifically in response to Australian Immigration policy. In this creative process the role of jewellery, as creative making practices intrinsic value is not confined to the materials from which it is made but extended to the possibilities of artistic expression, conceptual ideas, and symbolic engagement.

Bic Tieu paper "Designing the In-between: Traversing Biography and Place through Objects." This study articulates how ideas that emerge from a living, culturally melded experience can contribute innovative approaches to material design, craft, and making processes. Bic builds on her creative practices to illustrate insights into living at the 'in-between' of her current location, Australia, and her previous one in Southeast Asia.

Nada A. Basahih paper "Crafting the Kaaba Kiswa's, context and traditional practices." Basahih's paper enhances the audience's knowledge, through a historical review and visual representation, of the Kaaba and its attachable cover (the Kiswa in Arabic). This location and its components are considered to be the most significant material objects representing spiritual value and religious ritual in Islam. Nada addresses the richness of the traditional making process and its integration of traditional stitching with current weaving technologies to achieve the tradition of changing the Kiswa annually.

The joint paper of Zaid Saeed and Sahar Abbas title "Architecture of Place: The Role of Craft in the making of the Golden Architecture of Iraq." The focus is on contemporary architecture in Iraq and its multi-dimensional context in relation to place, culture, and identity. The authors select examples of buildings created by pioneering modern Iraqi architects from 1950-1979. The reviews address the influences of craft in forming an authentic architecture specifically in a society where crafts go back to ancient times.

TRACK-2: Futuring craft; education as art, design, and community of practice

"The term 'craft' seems to be one of the most debated terms in the art and design world in the 20th and 21st centuries, which is nearly always defined by what it is not rather than by what it is" (Niedderer, 2014, P. 626). Common practice sees continued debates concerning the position of craft as supplemental to art and/or to design, with education providing an incubation field for these debates to take place. Dominating assertions emphasise a lack of intellectual requirements for craft making and such factors influence the inferior status of the crafts, when compared to the arts. Similarly, the lack of use of technology, mass-production, and the economic value of crafts are major factors strengthening the position of design over craft (Niedderer, 2014). What, then, is the strength of futuring craft education?

The context of this track is craft education and the continued debate concerning its link to arts or design. Presented papers offered clips from different geographical locations, with broader practices in teaching:

Lynne Heller and Dorie Millerson contribution of the joint paper "Craft Pedagogy in Precarious Times." Arguing between craft and technology, this joint paper builds on an empirical study exploring the precarious nature of craft in a digital age. It also covers two challenges in digital craft pedagogy – proximity to the act of making and the distance enforced by a culture of lockdown and distance learning. In its conclusion, the paper addresses the roles of the international pandemic and distance teaching, forcing both the makers and educators into digital immersion. The authors leave us with major questions about how we can reimagine these oppositions and mitigate the effects of dichotomous thinking. Will nostalgia be a force for important conservation or will it be detrimental? And most importantly, what is our responsibility to students in the field of craft in the age of digital primacy?

Niklavs Rubenis and Rohan Nicol joint paper title "Crafted Futures: new teaching, learning and research for craft in the Australian tertiary academy." This paper provides an assessment of both the positive and negative aspects of changes in craft education, specifically here in Australia, which is following changes occurring in many other countries. Through several scenarios, the paper methodologically addresses tertiary craft programs' unrealised potential and their positive future. They have a capacity to play a serious role in contributing new knowledge on a range of issues, with the potential to engage nationally identified research priorities.

Jessica Priemus paper titled "Self-narrating weaving: Expressing traces of craft." The paper discusses the significance of engaging both textile artists and designers in

effective communication with users/weavers. It questions the multisensorial aesthetics of handwoven textiles, aesthetics that we may already comprehend, either explicitly or tacitly, when experiencing cloth. It also questions how textile design techniques amplify and materialise processes. Methodologically, the paper qualitatively maps specific sense experiences among two participant groups here in Perth and another group at Dhaka, Bangladesh. The researcher concluded that woven cloth can express a narrative of its own crafting, using specific textile techniques.

Veronica A. Larasati and her team presented the paper "Making Links: Crafting Creativity and Collaboration." The paper focuses on the socio-economic value of craft in Indonesia. It examines the significance of applying co-creative design ideas, and fair-trade principles as important aspects for export trade. The paper documents a project initiated to collectively build power among craft-makers by facilitating design thinking through arranged making workshops.

Annette Nykiel and Nien Schwarz paper titled "We Must get Together Some Time." This paper is a form of poetic writing, acknowledging the powerful collective experience of a number of makers and thinkers, made during their journey. They narrate their plans related to slow-making. The paper, part of the introduction to a forthcoming book about the group, contributes to the discourse and history of craft-making in Western Australia, weaving together presented stories concerning the slow-making place.

Susie Vickery paper title "Appliqué for change: Community engagement with women's health through craft and art." A practice-led documentation of Susie's engagement with communities in Australia and abroad. The practise focuses on using craft as a platform for discussions of complex health and social issues facing women in these communities. With aims to bridging people together through artwork, narratives, and skills.

TRACK-3: Futuring craft; materiality, consumption, lifestyle, and sustainability

The physicality of the nature of craft making offers an efficient response to environmental sustainability, concerning (1) the utilisation of local material resources, (2) the demonstration of creative practices to re-use and sustain local sources of material, (3) the effective utilisation of human power in the production of resources and available production techniques, and (4) ethical trade and consumption. Moreover, craft making plays a significant role, as an empowering agent, in social sustainability, based on effective practices concerning "social equality, social innovation, and socially embedded practices including social entrepreneurialism" (Brown, not dated). This topic aims to broaden engagement with craft as an object outside its aesthetic, functional and emotional considerations, to encompass its broader environmental and physical scopes.

This track offers broader contexts relating to craft and sustainability, presented through theoretical or practice-oriented papers:

Anne Farren paper titled "Crafting Sustainable practice in fashion." The paper raises the problem of the fast fashion industry's environmentally unsustainable practices. Anne applies elements of auto-ethnographical reflection from her journey as a maker and curator. She explores the space between craft and design as a re-assessment of the fashion object and its future. Anne argues that designers should evaluate traditional technology to transform the fashion industry through the adoption of a hybrid approach. The study concludes by addressing the significance of 'Fashioning Technology'. It creates a new aesthetic enabled by integrating digital technology into garments and exploring the potential for new materials to enhance the end-user experience and wearability.

Agampodi P. S. Mendis and Sumanthri S. paper titled "*Prestation stage in Sri Lankan Authentic Craft Souvenirs.*" The paper discusses the Sri Lankan 'Authentic Crafts Souvenir' (ACS) through the relationship between the craftsperson and the tourist. The authors employ qualitative research methods to address the lack of quality of the object; these relate to packaging materials, to the objectives of packaging and thoughts on branding, and authenticity communication. The paper concludes that there is the absence of a presentation stage when selling ACS as gifts to tourists and that it needs to be readdressed with the purpose of achieving the full potential of the travel experience.

Valerie Shaw paper on "The Power of the Recycled Object." The paper documents the author's use of recycled materials to produce and exhibit artworks. The author explores the social, economic, and environmental factors forcing post-colonial African nations to rely on recycled objects and materials in the production of artworks. Valerie narrates her creative experiences while living in her home country, Zimbabwe, which she left to migrate to Australia. She articulates the artworks contextually, and in their objectivity and materiality.

A team-leading by Sumita Ghose submitted poster titles "Reimagining the wool craft of India." Through text and visuals, the poster narrates team efforts involved in using wool as a material and its indigenous production techniques used to develop accessories and home products aligned with contemporary fashion. The documentation looks at work across broader pastoral communities to demonstrate how to employ design to enhance the pastoralist economy, adding value to indigenous production.

TRACK-4: Futuring Craft; digital media and production

This topic considers the utilisation of social media communication and digital production technologies to enhance the future transformation of the crafts, in terms of contexts, practices, and the making of crafts. The growth of the craft sector will rely on craft makers gradually adopting digital technologies in their practices to enhance the production and promotion of their products, to fulfil expanded consumer demands and to enhance their own financial benefits. This topic is meant to offer a platform to argue and question the role of digital media and its alignment with craft in terms of contexts, aesthetics, production practices, ethics, authenticity and sustainability.

This track addresses technology in craft production and communication. Presented papers offer insights into the role of digital making and social media in contemporary craft:

Justin Marshall paper "Craft-oriented hybrid analogue/digital practices; their values and our future relations with technology." This paper asks, what is the future of making? And what do we want our roles to be? Justin articulates in this practice-led work a hybrid digital/analogue making process; he investigates the aesthetic opportunities that digital design and production technologies hold for the craftsperson. The paper argues that our relationship with making technologies needs to evolve. We need to take advantage of the rapid development of emerging automation and machine learning.

Andreas Sicklinger and Habiba Shawkat collaborate in a paper "online Service Design for Craft innovation." The paper builds on the expanding interest in promoting crafts in the development agenda of social enterprises in Egypt. It argues for the need for collaboration between social enterprises, designers, and artisans to contribute to solving the problem of crafts extinction. The authors suggest the creation of a collaboration platform that supports effective linking of stakeholders, for the benefit of the craft sector in Egypt and abroad. Aliya Yousuf's paper "Traditional Craft and Skill in Digital Age." The paper aims to understand where craft and technology interconnect. It uses qualitative methods to analyse selected examples of student work from teaching practices in art and craft studios. It also explores how a lack of hands-on engagement has affected traditional art objects and art-making practices, specifically with the current enforced online teaching practices.

Deborah Emmet paper "Co-design dialogues through digital connectivity: sustaining future practice for traditional textile artisan communities in India." This paper discusses two co-design projects the author initiated between a Kashmiri artisan community in India and customers in Australia to produce two embroidered pashmina shawls. The paper follows a theoretical framework of co-design to consider the close links between consumers, and of users with makers, utilising broadly available digital communication technologies. Deborah concludes that the availability of direct communication with the user will empower artisans and provide a strategy for the sustainability of their craft.

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IOTA 2021; CURIOSITY AND RITUALS OF THE EVERYDAY



Jude van der Merwe Exhibition Curator and Project Leader IOTA21 President World Crafts Council -Australia VP World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region

This inaugural Indian Ocean Craft Triennial and *Futuring Craft* conference have been a long time in the making. The conference has given us the opportunity to take our time. To hear and learn from artists, academics and researchers from across our region and to widen our horizons.

This Indian Ocean region in which we live is rich in history and tradition. Hundreds of thousands of artists rely on their skills and material of their practice to create a viable living; and those skills and that economic imperative is often not well understood.

We are living in a time where contemporary and traditional crafts are sought after for the sense of connection they give us to the material world; and admired for the skilful use of material and idea. Craft is finding its way into top end galleries with much appreciation for the visual language employed by artists while at the same time, those exact skills are often under-valued in the marketplace and many places in the world are experiencing loss of skill and knowledge.

Will the increasing and unstoppable direction towards an algorithm driven artificial intelligence lead us to a society where the skills inherent in craft practices become irrelevant; or will those forces prompt us to realise and recall the primary human need for connection to the physical world?

Our hope is that the discussions and papers share within the conference will provide not only a wealth of experiences and information for all of us, but will help us craft a positive, viable pathway for craft in the future.

We are enormously grateful to all of those who have shared their knowledge and learnings; and who have invested their time in preparing significant papers for this conference. We are very pleased to have been able to present this conference in partnership with Curtin School of Design and the Built Environment and the support of our venue partners the WA Maritime Museum and Curtin University. The conference would not have been possible without the dedication of Dr Qassim Saad who supervised the call for papers and the process of peer review which has been so important.

SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, IOTA ENDORSEMENT



Nathaniel Quincy Belcher AIA (USA) Professor of Architecture I Head of School School of Design and the Built Environment Curtin University As the Head of School for the Curtin University's School of Design and the Built Environment within the Faculty of Humanities, I would like to express my full-throated endorsement and excitement for this Inaugural Indian Ocean Triennial (IOTA21) and the accompanying Conference: Futuring Craft. We are happy to participate in the collaborative efforts of artists, academics, and researchers engaged in the documentation, exposition, and exhibition of the making and remaking of our known world. Our region has strong traditional and emerging practices that offer unique contributions to our collective consciousness.

Our School has had an enormous impact on Critical Making Practices of this region. As generalists design and built environment professionals we contribute to the principal cognate disciplines of:

Architecture | Climate | Construction Management | CUSP | Design | Geography | Interior architecture | Project Management | Urban and Regional Planning. Craft and the authentic making of place are core to our past, present and the ongoing success of this engagement. The images, objects and spaces developed in this process are part of the human ecology and ethical responsibilities of our institution.

The unique value proposition of IOTA21 and conferences, like Futuring Craft, is their ability to create the narrative that establishes our collective futures. The collaborative partnerships, research investigations and human exchanges that emerge through these practices is invaluable. The strengths of promoting our scholars, makers, and leading researchers engaged in communication is critical to our selfawareness and social cohesion. The collective commitment to our common sustainable livelihoods recognizes actively 'futuring' the decolonization, decarbonization, and reconciliation imperatives of our time.

As global citizens we are contributing to Design and the Built environment solutions in addressing the complex challenges facing our world. The Spirit of our emphasis on collaborative partnerships and engagement with industry, government and our local communities will ensure that our research and teaching is recognized as salient, contemporary, and of the highest quality. Building on both our disciplinary strengths and cross-disciplinary collaboration we will be sought after as a partner of choice both globally and locally.

THE CONFERENCE KEY SPEAKER



Nyadol Nyuon was born in a refugee camp in Itang, Ethiopia, and raised in Kakuma Refugee camp, Kenya. In 2005, at the age of eighteen, she moved to Australia as a refugee.

Current Work:

Since then, Nyadol has completed a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Melbourne and worked as a commercial litigator with Arnold Bloch Leibler.

Nyadol is a vocal advocate for human rights, multiculturalism, the settlement of people with refugee experiences and those seeking asylum. She has worked and volunteered extensively in these areas with a range of organisations.

Nyadol is also a regular media commentator in these areas, having appeared on ABC's The Drum, as a panellist on Q&A and contributing to The Age, Sydney Morning Herald and the Saturday Paper, to name just a few.

In both 2011 and 2014, Nyadol was nominated as one of the hundred most influential African Australians. In 2016, she was the recipient of the Future Justice Prize.

In 2018 her efforts to combat racism were widely recognised, with achievements including the Australian Human Rights Commission's Racism. It Stops With Me Award. The prestigious award was in recognition of her advocacy and activism on behalf of the Australian-African and Melbourne's South Sudanese communities. Nyadol also received the Harmony Alliance Award for significant contribution to empowering migrant and refugee women, and was a co-winner of the Tim McCoy Prize for her advocacy on behalf of the South Sudanese Community. She also received the Afro-Australian Student Organisation's Unsung Hero Award

Industrialism over Craft

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In contemporary socio-political history, design knowledge has been applied to promote the production of handcrafts, which is treated as an important sector for its ability to support economic growth in developing countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. Design knowledge has been treated as a secondary layer to enhances the production of quality crafts ready for export to international markets, mainly in Western Europe. Developing postcolonial countries had neglected craft-making traditions in their societies, preferring modernist design practices, to transform their societies and achieve the benefits of modern industry.

In this talk, my aim is to introduce this topic through a reflection of my own experience as a maker, industrial designer, and design educator and researcher. I was affected in my early years by policies introduced in my home country, Iraq. These policies promoted the detraditionalisation of social, cultural, and economics to moved the country away from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. In this transformation, the traditional craft sector was neglected; yet, by continuing to following its ancient traditional methods, coupled with the use of new-generation skills, raw materials, and production techniques, it survived.

The maker

I am not by nature a storyteller. Instead, I am a maker of objects, and as a maker, I'm a good listener. This is because my culture, traditions, and experiences teach that it is good for a man to work hard, rather than talk too much! Nonetheless, I believe, with Mattingly, that "[narratives] help tell us who we are. They are perhaps our most fundamental form for communicating the sense of a life and thus a sense of the person who lived that life" (Mattingly, 1991, p237). We tell our narratives to make sense of experiences and to provide evidence for our practices, as "narrative is part of the phenomena of educational experience" (Clandinin, 1991, p260). It also functions to "render those experiences more sensible" (Mattingly, 1991, p235) to articulate thoughts and concepts during making. (Saad, 2013)

On the banks of the Euphrates, situated at the narrowest point between it and the Tigris, the other Mesopotamia River, is the city of Fallujah. I was born and raised there in a conservative working-class family consisting of grandparents, parents, and eight children, a normal-sized family for the area. In a working-class family in such a traditional society, the first male child inherits the family business. In our case, it was my father's furniture-making workshop. My professional furniture-making journey began in the late 1970s. I'm the second generation in this family business specialising in the production of modern and traditional home furniture. Although my role in the business ended when I left Iraq in 1991, fortunately, the business was revived and later expanded by my three younger brothers. My experience in furniture-making continues to influence my current practice as an industrial designer. I have maintained connections between the skills required for both professional experiences, affecting the way I link the process of thinking and doing and my quest to

¹This article presented by the author at John Curtin Gallery 'Speaker Series' on Wed. 20 Oct. 2021. https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/industrialisation-over-craft-tickets-168900422711

achieve perfection. I try to maintain the traditional values in the relationship between craftsman and client. My father advised me to look after our customers and provide them with what they wanted; he did not talk about the design of objects but instead insisted at all times on quality products with durability. Even the customers themselves seemed to be only concerned with durability, noting how our 'heavyweight products' continued to 'look like new, even after years of harsh use'. When I would ask about what style they were looking for, they were happy to cede control: 'do it to your own taste' ... you are better than us in such matters, and you know what we like.' This was true of both older and younger people (Saad, 2013). This 'can be described as a contract, a set of shared norms governing the behaviour of each party to the interaction' (Schön, 1983, p. 292).

Throughout the making process, the craftsman is involved intellectually, through his/ her senses and even emotions, to create close interaction between his/her body, tools and materials. This is the key to transforming the material into the final object, utilising specific making techniques. My practices and skills as a furniture maker developed mainly through observation, by imitating the master. I learned by following traditional methods embedded in our culture. (Saad, 2013).

Industrial designer

The 1970s could be considered the best decade in contemporary history in Iraq. On 'the surface', there was political stability and rapid sociocultural and economic transformation aimed at implementing modernisation, particularly in relation to socioeconomic principles. Since early 1970's policies issues to enhances self-sufficiency through industrial manufacturing of products, the era showed expansion establishment of state-owned corporations. Industrial design promoted as a modern job at high demand at that time. I studied industrial design at the University of Baghdad, graduating in the early 1980s. After graduation, I was employed as a lecturer of industrial design at higher education institutions. My furniture-making experiences had a formative and long-reaching effect on my subsequent work as a lecturer and professional industrial designer. The many skills I learned enabled the transformation of visions or design concepts to a final product. This is a life-developing capability, enhanced through advanced knowledge and practice.

In association with these skills in making, I developed through my study of industrial design a good sense for recognising cultural values, reflected in the designs I make for home furniture and other items. Recently my understanding of that period of my life has deepened, as I have come to better appreciate how it brought me at a very young age the enormous benefits of technology and construction skills. Relying on that experience, I continue developing my understanding of these products as social objects, their status much wider than mere form and function (Saad, 2013). In fact, my broadening design experiences have confirmed for me that 'the style of furniture changes as the individual's relationships to family and society change' (Baudrillard, 2002).

Practice-led Industrial Design

In the late 1980s, I experienced a transformation, from traditional making skills into the emerging technical and scientific approaches in industrial design. Having received a scholarship, I embarked on a two-year study in a Master of Industrial Design course. The program allowed me to explore transdisciplinary approaches, opening up opportunities to interact with mechanical engineering, social sciences, and education. The degree culminated with creating and building a new design promoting industrial principles of mass-production over traditional making processes. The MA project was responding 'again' to the self-sufficiency political policies of the time, forcing industry to utilise alternative local materials and manufacturing techniques to redesign everyday objects. The final design I produced, successfully meeting its functional classifications, and successfully registered as a new patent in 1992.

ID Research

New dimensions in my experience as a design researcher have emerged since 2005, when I started my PhD in Industrial design at RMIT University in Melbourne. My study aimed to theorise design context and practices and then create a framework of design discourses in Iraq. Its unique scope is theorising design discourses in developing countries, where design studies are extremely limited. The study broadly investigated design roots as contexts and practices in Iraqi society. Then, it engaged in reviews of national and international transdisciplinary resources, which postcolonial socio-political rhetoric have utilised to interlink emerging modern design and traditional crafts.

Here is a little historical context. European colonising nations and the USA offered assistance to the 'underdeveloped' world shortly after the end of WWII. This aid focused on transforming production technology from the West to the East to enhance efforts to improve living conditions in these countries. The United States led this movement through a program President Harry S Truman presented in his inaugural speech on the 20th of January, 1949: '... we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas' (Escopar, 1995, p. 36).

Reshaping the world after WWII forced newly independent Asian, African, and Latin American nations to cooperate economically and culturally to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism. The non-aligned movement culminated in developing countries on three continents. The movement's first meeting was held in 1961, and according to Mignolo, developing countries 'made visible the hidden face of modernity, that is, coloniality' (Mignolo, 2011, p. 52), and also addressed a politically complex scenario outside the tension of the Cold War. The non-aligned movement's major contribution to design discourses in developing countries was introduced through the promotion of 'Design for Development', when the Ahmadabad Declaration was issued in India in 1979. The declaration resulted from joint efforts of the United National Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID), and the Indian National Institute of Design (NID). The document clearly proposed the engagement of design with development as 'the right way' to do design in developing countries. The declaration's major principles articulated that:

(1) Design is a powerful force capable of improving the quality of life of developing countries' populations. (2) Designers should understand and recognise the values of their societies and reflect them in their designs. (3) Designers should utilise both local, traditional resources and modern science and technology. (4) Designers should collaborate with one another to ensure that collective identities are preserved and the priorities of these collective identities are met. (Ahmedabad Declaration, 1979)

Those 'revolutionary' principles utilised by many national governments in developing countries neglected the craft sectors in favour of applying emerging design discourses. Iraq was one of these countries.

'Futuring Craft'

In 2018 <u>Garland</u> magazine targeted the Indian Ocean, offering stories about encounters between different times and spaces. <u>Garland</u> (Issue: 10) used the concept 'Kaya', the Noongar word for 'hello' and 'yes' representing a statement of openness to encourage cultures to connect. The issue introduced stories across the Indian Ocean and showed objects that are exchanged between cultures, from Western Australia and across many Indian Ocean nations. My contribution to this issue was '*Perth Mosque: A cultural structure strengthening collective identity*', an article telling the story of the oldest Mosque in WA, built between 1904 and 1905. Perth Mosque is a cultural symbol offering distinctive proof of early Muslim immigrants' efforts to establish their own aesthetic style and preferences. Other factors influencing the mosque's design were the traditional and religious guidelines that all mosques must follow, as well as the available building materials, financial resources, and the building skills of those involved (Saad, 2018).

'Futuring craft' was introduced as a context for an international conference. It aims to theorise creative practices and create experimental knowledge to support the broadening of research practices into, for, and through craft practice. Building on the significance of crafts as value-driven within the existing economic paradigm, this approach is applied across the region as a reflection on the transformation towards modernity, development, and beyond. The conference is one of many other creative activities the 'Indian Ocean Craft Triennial 2021 (IOTA21) developed to map contemporary crafts in the Indian Ocean region and to define the future scope of craft making. It is inspired by current indicative research and creative practices and their contribution to the futuring of crafts across the region. Futuring craft enhances the efforts of academics, craft makers, and curators to collaboratively engage (through critical analysis) and challenge predominant conceptions linking crafts with the past – to move further towards addressing the notion that, 'craft needs to be seen as a quality of things of the future, rather than a thing of the past! It needs to arrive as elemental to a future economy and culture' (Fry, 2011, p. 139).

In this context, we argue that 'futuring' is a scope of employing individual characteristics to enhance the future transformation of our societies. As human beings, we rely on nonhuman things; these are the artefacts that we position as a central element in sustaining our physical and mental life. We must acknowledge craft as an object of empowerment, as



an artefact that interacts physically through its quality of making, as well as through its sensory influences, as reflected through experience, emotion, and aesthetic pleasure (Saad, 2020).

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TRACK-1: Futuring craft; geography and social context:



Weaving Eucalypts Project: local colour from Indian Ocean countries

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This paper discusses the Weaving Eucalypts Project on exhibition in IOTA21 and the involvement of a community of practitioners from around the Indian Ocean, all linked by an engagement with nature and concern for sustainability. The project references universal textile making by interweaving local colour, cultural connections and weaving traditions, supported by research into dye experiments with Australian eucalypts and their international dissemination. The project began in late 2019 with an invitation from Dr Kevin Murray to participate in 'Make the world again: textile works from Australia', an exhibition illustrating the capacity of textiles to connect cultures together with works that carried stories of cultural engagement and exchange. In response I invited colleagues in India and Australia to colour fabric with locally sourced eucalypts before weaving the fabric into panels.

Weaving Eucalypts Project references the tradition of rag rug weaving and reflects place and location while the process represents friendship, exchange, expertise to create a community of practice. For IOTA21, the project has been expanded to include more artists from Western Australian and from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Madagascar, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Thailand, all countries touched by the Indian Ocean and with 'local' eucalypts. Associated research documents plant dyeing in Australia since the founding of the British colony (1788) - Simeon Lord experimenting with native flora (1810); botanist, Baron Ferdinand von Mueller publishing dyes from Australian plants (1886); Jean Carmen publishing her experiments of 450 eucalypts species (1978); and Trendall (1981) and Hindmarch & Harrington (2002) documenting the colours from Western Australian eucalypts.

In these Indian Ocean countries, the first recorded plantings of

eucalypts took place in India when Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore planted 16 species to beautify his palace gardens in the Nandi Hills near Bangalore (1790). In the 1850's India and many other countries received plantings as von Mueller exported eucalypts seeds internationally advocating their planting to drain swamps that harboured mosquitoes to combat malaria. As eucalypts grow quickly, these countries have plantations for firewood, building materials, wind breaks but in some, they are regarded as weeds due to their invasive nature. This paper will give an overview of historic eucalyptus plantings in Indian Ocean countries represented in the Weaving Eucalypts Project alongside recent dialogue with collaborating practitioners, artists, designers and researchers. The colours represented offer a unique insight into place, location and the project brings engagement, exchange and a community together, all with stories of eucalypts.

Keywords: natural dyes, eucalypts, local plants, weaving, collaboration.

1. Introduction

This paper gives background to the Weaving Eucalypts Project (WEP) on exhibition at the Freemantle Arts Centre as part of the Indian Ocean Craft Triennial (IOTA21) in Perth, Western Australia in late 2021. The paper discusses the project's origins, early research into eucalyptus dye experiments from the beginnings of British settlement in this country, comments on historic eucalypt plantings in Indian Ocean countries represented in the project and a brief note on collaborating practitioners. More details of all practitioners, species used, location and colouring process will be available at the exhibition.

WEP is a collaborative project involving a community of practitioners from around the Indian Ocean. All participants have an interest in colouring cloth with natural dyes, concern for sustainability and engagement with the environment. The project references universal textile making by interweaving local colour, cultural connections and textile traditions of weaving and dyeing.

The project began in late 2019 with an invitation from Dr Kevin Murray to participate in Make the world again: textile works from Australia, an exhibition illustrating the capacity of textiles to connect cultures together with works that carried stories of cultural engagement and exchange. Dr Murray's exhibition proposal noted that "textile artists can use the unique capacities of their medium to make connections in a way that can become part of our world". As his brief called for work that connected cultures, I developed WEP to represent my connections with colleagues in Australia and engagement with practitioners and artisans in India.

To interweave local colour into my weaving, I invited colleagues to colour 2 metres of silk fabric with locally sourced eucalypts, colouring the cloth in a dye method of their choice (eg dye pot, eco bundle). Once returned to my studio and along with silk dyed in my studio by leaves collected in both countries, the fabric was ripped into narrow strips and woven as weft into a linen warp, weaving panels approximately 16cm wide x 120cm long.

The installation titled Cultural Shadows included eleven panels woven with silk dyed by Australian artists Holly Story (WA), Judith Kentish (Qld), Julie Ryder (ACT), Mary Burgess (Vic) and Ro Cook (NSW) alongside two panels dyed with my local eucalypts (NSW) and with leaves collected in India from Muli and Sumrasa Sheikh in Gujarat, Munnar in Kerala and Santiniketan, West Bengal. As with much of my recent work, these panels reference the rag rug weaving tradition and the Australian 'making do' and 'wagga' quilt tradition in using readily available, locally sourced colour but not repurposed fabric.



Figure 1: Liz Williamson Cultural Shadows 2020. Photo Ian Hobbs

The exhibition was to be in Vancouver, Canada in May 2020 as part of Crafted Vancouver but due to the pandemic was launched online in May 2020 and then presented at the Australian Tapestry Workshop in Melbourne, Victoria from 1 December 2020 to 4 March 2021 to good reviews.

'Make the World Again' is a reminder of the quiet breadth of textiles, displaying how tactile, personal, psychological, ecological, identity driven and conceptual the handcrafted can be.... (including) a beautiful series of 11 panels woven by Liz Williamson in which silk fabric has been dyed by different artists across Australia (and India). It literally and figuratively interweaves local traditions. (Miekus, 2020)

In 2020, the project continued with panels woven with fabric dyed by Chris Hutch, Blake Griffiths, Joanna Fowles and Andrea Larkin from NSW; Robyn Barrow, Siri Hayes, Rebecca Mayo, Ilka White from Victoria; Sue Hays in ACT and Anne Farren in WA. With the IOTA21 invitation more artists from Western Australia were invited - Penny Jewel, Annette Nykiel, Trudi Pollard, Nalda Searles, Katie West and from the Kimberley region Lily Chan, Diane Chungall, Cherry Smiler and Pat Torres.

Practitioners in Indian Ocean countries were also invited at this time. The final installation will have 60 panels woven from fabric dyed with "local" eucalypts by 51 collaborators in

eleven countries, all touched by the Indian Ocean¹. Weaving Eucalypts Project represents a community of practice linked by an interest in the natural world, the environment, natural materials and reflects place and location while the process represents friendship, exchange, expertise and a willingness to engage.



Figure 2: Trudi Pollard dyed Cambodian handwoven silk with leaves collected on her property in Bedfordale, Western Australia. Species used were lemon scented gum, eucalyptus cinerea, Jarrah and Marri also named Red Gum bark. Photo Liz Williamson. 2021.

2. Eucalypts Dye Experiments in Australia

This project draws on my research into the history of plant dyeing in Australia since the British colony was founded in 1788 to the present. As eucalyptus were native to Australia they were not known to Europeans until Captain Cook visited and mapped the Eastern coastline in 1770 along with Sir Joseph Banks who investigated local plants. Following Cook's visit, the British were interested in Terra Australis, the great southern land as a penal colony and as a source of raw materials. Captain Arthur Philip arrived in 1788 to establish the British colony at Sydney Cove with the first fleet of convicts and a commission to investigate the advantages of local materials and plants².

¹See list of Indian Ocean countries below.

² Philip was commissioned to investigate 'the flax plant found on the islands not far distant from the intended settlement, for clothing of convicts and other settlers and, also maritime purposes' namely sails for sailing boats. However, the flax found on the mainland was of inferior quality for these intended purposes.

In terms of textile dye history, Philip's settlement in Sydney Cove was established 70 years before William Henry Perkin's 1856 experiments led to the accidental discovery of aniline purple, a colour he called "mauve" which proved to be the first synthetic dye that could be successfully replicated. His experiment resulted in more chemical colours being made and the rapid shift from natural to chemical dyes around the world. This means that the Sydney Cove settlement existed for over seventy years before synthetic dyes were invented, so the colony had to rely on other sources for colouring cloth. It was probably a longer period considering the time the new dyes would take to reach Australia (expected to be the 1870's). Sources of dye for the colony were either indigenous, grown locally, traded or imported. This paper documents research into eucalyptus dyes only³. To date, my research has not found early communications between the settlers and Indigenous communities regarding local dyestuffs. Many researchers have proposed establishing a textile dye industry from plants indigenous to Australia, a seemingly visionary idea.

Once the colony was established, the British were interested in ascertaining the properties of native plants and what they could provide to benefit the community or be used for trade or export. Dennis Considen (unknown-1815), a surgeon on the First Fleet, experimented with plants to ascertain their therapeutic attributes. He experimented with eucalypts, making oils from red gum, yellow gum and peppermint to administer to the sick in an attempt to alleviate dysentery, scurvy and other diseases in the settlement – not dyes but pioneering work with eucalypts.

The earliest record that I have found of native plant dyes being used in the colony is by Simeon Lord (1771-1840). Lord was sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing 21 pieces of cloth, 100 yards of muslin and 100 yards of calico. Emancipated early, his first attempt at manufacturing dyes for cloth in 1812 failed. In 1815 Lord opened a woollen mill at Botany⁴ weaving, fulling and dyeing coarse cloths, blankets and flannels. He became known as the Merchant of Botany Bay and wrote several letters to Governor Macquarie requesting copperas and alum to use as dye mordants as he "was going to extract the dyes"⁵ (Gohl, 1985). Lord was known to have experimented with native flora "and the government was interested in the efficiency of the dyes procured from woods and shrubs of the Territory" (Ibid). His fulling mill at Botany "wove, milled, dyed dress and finished the cloth made (woven) and manufactured at the female Government Factory in Parramatta" (Ibid). My research has not discovered what local plants Lord used but he regarded his work of cloth manufacturing and dyeing his greatest contribution to the development of the colony' (Rowland, 1944 p 27).

The next important researcher was Baron Ferdinand von Mueller (1825-1896) who was the Colony of Victoria's Government Botanist (1853-1896) and director of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens (1857-1873). He was the first to publish a full account of dyes from Australian plants, presenting his research at the 1866 Intercolonial Exhibition of Melbourne and the 1867 Intercolonial Exhibition of Australia, both held in Melbourne plus he wrote citations on over 50 eucalypts species and contributed to many publications⁶. Von Mueller was a great advocate of eucalypts and responsible for exporting seeds around the world promoting their planting as a measure to drain swampy environments that harboured mosquitoes in an attempt to combat malaria. He also sent wood and distilled oil samples to international exhibitions and exchanged seeds and plants with institutions and individuals

⁵ Letter July 15, 1816 as s cited in Gohl 1985

³ Research into dyes from other Australian plants was also documented but not covered in this paper.

⁴The 1st mill in Australia run by a private operator to weave cloth.

⁶ Von Mueller contributed to George Bentham's '*Flora Australiensis*: a description of the plants of the Australian Territory, (commonly referred to as *Flora Australiensis*) a seven-volume flora of Australia published between 1863 and 1878 documenting over 8000 Australian species.

around the world. Many of the Indian Ocean countries received eucalypts seed and plants from von Mueller. Von Mueller is also regarded as the first to have discovered the beautiful reds of Eucalypts cinerea (Flint, 2008 p 24).

Chemists Maiden and Smith conducted experiments to test the potential for a local dye industry and both celebrated the wealth and diversity of local plants. In 1887, J.H. Maiden announced to the Royal Society of NSW that a yellow colouring matter existed in the leaves of the "Red Stringybark" Eucalyptus macrorhyncha (Carman, 1978 p 2). He published The Useful plants of Australia (including Tasmania) in 1889 and his chapter on dyes from Australian plants notes that "Australia certainly does not appear to be a land which can boast of its native vegetable dyes. But it is only fair to observe that practically nothing has been done in the way of experiments with our raw dyestuffs" (Maiden, 1889). Maiden's dye chapter listed 35 plants, their botanical name, common name, location and a very brief statement of the colour eg "E.corymbosa – this dark coloured kino (resin) contains a rich dye material of a reddish colour"⁷ (Ibid). The dye chapter included eucalypts with Maiden acknowledging experiments undertaken by von Mueller, Smith and others.

Henry Smith (1852-1924) worked at the Technological Museum in Sydney and trained as an organic chemist. In 1897 he extracted yellow dyes from several species of NSW eucalypts and continued the work began by Maiden in documenting the yellow dyes extracted from the leaves of E.macrorhyncha.

During the later part of the last century, a chemist, Henry Smith was very enthusiastic about the yellow dye he extracted from a few species of New South Wales eucalypts. He believed that that dye would be of great economical value to Australia. But the synthetic dyes were developed and his dream was not realised. A painter friend of his did use a yellow lake that Henry Smith had prepared for him. (Carman, 1987 p 77)

In 2018, I examined Smith's experiments held at the Museum of Applied Arts & Science (MAAS) in Sydney. These included framed examples of dye colours from E.macrorrhyncha from NSW and E.calophylla (Red Gum) from Western Australia.

Documents and archives created by Baron Ferdinand von Mueller, Smith and Maiden show detailed dye experiments undertaken to test the potential for an industry in Australia; all celebrated the wealth and diversity of local plants while Smith believed "that eucalyptus dyes would be of great economic benefit to the (then) colony of Australia" (Flint, 2008 p124).

In the 20th century, when chemical dyes were readily available, many took the challenge to research natural dyes. Having experimented for several years in Ballarat, Victoria, Eady Hart (1848-1931) perfected a natural dye range in her kitchen marketing them as Hart's Royal Dyes and in October 1921 "mounted a sensational public display of soft greys, glowing yellows, a strong black and a wonderful henna" (Bate, 2005). She received international coverage of her dyes with articles in two British publications - Work and Energy and the London Daily Express and with patents awarded in Australia, England, India and the USA, Hart "built a substantial laboratory to demonstrate the practicality of her process" (Ibid). In late 1921 Hart changed the name of her dyes to Hart's Australian Dyes presenting a display of "many fabrics of colours more natural and flower-like than those of rivals" (Ibid). Although Hart achieved technical success and won awards at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition in London, the company failed due to the vigilance and dominance of German chemical dye companies in the local market. (Ibid).

In the early 20th Century studio artists influenced by the arts and craft movement, made

⁷No details on fibre content of material dyed for tests.

and exhibited naturally dyed designs. The Southern Sphere review of the 1910 Melbourne Arts and Crafts exhibition noted that "one weaver exhibited hand woven rugs that attempted to marry a modern techniques with an Australian aesthetic using wools that were not only spun locally but dyed locally in the necessary faded tones that reflected the Australian landscape: "in soft tones of greys and pinks, greys and purples, and greys and blues, the hand woven rug is almost at its best" (Edquist, 2014). In 1928 artist and dyemaker, Eva Butchart woven a 'Rug' with gum leaf and nut motif in wool and cotton, now in the National Gallery of Australia (NGA81.2167) collection. Butchart (1875 - 1955) lived in Melbourne and was known for her decorative designs for homewares using dyes made from eucalypts (Butchart, 1930).

Jean Carman (1909-2005) was the first to systematically document the colours of Australian Eucalypts. In the early 1970's by liaising with State Forestry Departments Carman acquired eucalypts plant material to test in her home kitchen, tested over 450 species from each Australian state and New Guinea. She requested one ounce of leaves to be sent via the post, initially green leaves but later dry leaves as she found it made little difference to the resultant colour and dry leaves gave more consistent results. Carman published her extensive survey of eucalypts dye colours in 1978 in a book titled 'Dyemaking with Eucalypts', listing over 240 eucalypts species, locations and mordants used with the resultant colours described (no colour image). To document the colours found in Eucalypts was indeed pioneering research and "represented a substantial addition to the dyers red palette with the entry of a wide range of crimson, light red, rust red, orange tan, light orange and yellow colours" (Churchill, 1981). The publication of Carman's book coincided with an explosion of interest in craft, natural lifestyles and making by hand in the 1970's⁸.

In 1981 Carman wrote in a paper that she had "faith in the Eucalypts dyes and dream that in some way they may become important to the arts and crafts in Australia" (Carman, 1981). In 1987 she visited China as part of a delegation to Guangxi Autonomous Region in southeast China as a guest of the government for ten days. Eucalypts had been planted extensively throughout the province and it was thought that her research could be of assistance to the Chinese textile industry. In 1988 Jean talked about her relationship with Eucalypts dyes as "an obsession and a mystery" (Borschmann, 1994). In her 1994 interview for the People's Forest Oral History project, Carman elaborated on her belief that an industry could be created based on eucalypts dyes. "I think the more people who are willing to look at these dyes and who see how important they are to Australia and how much a part of Australia they are, will perhaps in time give them the public recognition they need" (Ibid). When reflecting on her dye experiments of the 1970's, Jean Carman stated that she had found -.... a hidden beauty that was just so unexpected and so rich in the colour tones and this gave me a greater appreciation of the eucalyptus, not only the eucalyptus but the wattles and other native plants because you never knew what they had hidden away in their leaves. It was almost a sense of reverence that something like this had been given to the world, to the people of the world, and what are we were doing, we're destroying the trees. We didn't know what we were losing in this beauty. I mean, people can look at trees and they are beautiful in their shapes and how they look in the landscape, how they look in the garden, how they flower. There's all this physical beauty that people see with their eyes, but few people are aware of what is still hidden from their sight.....it was a quest for beauty. (Ibid).

Carman's research and publications influenced others to experiment with eucalypts dye colours. Dyes from Western Australian plants: collated from a group project authored by Trendall (1981) documented a group project conducted in 1980 with more than 300 plants collected and tested for colour; 200 were indigenous to WA including eucalypts,

⁸ Carman's book became a reference for my own experiments extracting dyes from readily available plants to colour hand spun wool yarn for some of my first weavings in 1978.

with illustrations of the plants and colours described. Dyes from Australian Eucalypts by Hindmarch and Harrington (2002) documented research conducted in WA over a four-year period with over 300 species of eucalypts. Leaves from pot grown plants were tested with and without chemical (alum and chrome) mordants on wool with resultant colours printed in their publication⁹.

More recently, research into regional eucalypts species has been published in online databases or books. India Flint tested over 200 species of eucalypts plants from the Currency Creek Arboretum, SA and highlighted the potential of the eucalyptus species as a source of textile colour. Her book, Eco Colour is testament to the range, variety and beauty of plant colours. Flint's practice focuses on eco bundles and botanical prints and she is internationally acknowledged for her expertise, knowledge and teaching. Flint also writes that "there is an insufficiently exploited opportunity for eucalypts dyes to play a vital role in the Australian Textile industry today" (Flint, 2000 p 126).

Dr Sally Blake documented the colours of eucalypts (eucalyptus, angophora and corymbia species) at the Australian National Botanical Garden, Canberra for their dye colour and created an excellent website with details of the dye process, mordants, recipes with leaves and bark on wool, silk and linen (Blake, 2016). Working with the ANBG staff, she was able to accurately identify all plants, a common challenge for practitioners. "All of the colours are beautiful, and I think that any eucalyptus tree you have access to would be worth trying for colours" (Ibid).

In 2000, Ling San Lau published her research into Tasmanian eucalyptus on a site titled Exposing the true colours of Tasmanian eucalypt: an investigation into the commercial potential of Tasmanian eucalypt dyes (Lau, 2000). Lau investigated the commercial potential of Tasmanian eucalypts dyes, testing 29 species on wool with different mordants and finding that a wide range of attractive dye colours can be produced including bright yellows, fawns, olive greens, oranges and terracotta reds.

In light of the efforts of early botanists, chemists and all who experimented to document Australian plant colours, many have imagined an industry in Australia using locally sourced dye colourants. With the current renaissance of interest in plant dyes and eco colours used to express concern for environmental issues, there is great interest in using less chemicals. Whether this widespread practise constitutes a textile dye industry or not, use and practice in natural dyes is commendable and links contemporary to traditional indigenous practices¹⁰ and a more sustainable future. For individual artists and designers, Carman's idea of "hidden" colours is reversed as unique and beautiful eucalypts colour's are revealed.

3. Eucalypts in Indian Ocean Countries

This section gives brief comments on early eucalypts plantings in Indian Ocean countries represented in the Weaving Eucalypts Project¹¹ alongside collaborating practitioners. Aside from Australia, countries currently represented are Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Thailand with Madagascar and Singapore pending.

⁹ This is the earliest series of Australian experiments viewed by the author that attempts to show the resultant colour for each plant.

¹⁰ Not covered in this paper.

¹¹For all artists involved, I know many, others were recommended, some were ex-students, a few were sourced on social media; all communications were via email. For Australian artists I supplied the silk and covered postage; for international artists, if requested I've reimbursed fabric costs and freight; for NGO's who have eucalyptus dyed fabric in their range, I've purchased silk fabric directly.
As eucalypts in these countries were introduced, the plants have become hybridized by adjusting to local conditions and often assumed to be native.

Around the Indian Ocean, the first recorded plantings of eucalypts took place in India in 1790 when Tippu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore planted 16 species to beautify his palace gardens in the Nandi Hills near Bangalore¹² (Handa, 2002). According to one version he received seed from Australia; another source the seeds were from Europe¹³. The next significant introduction of Eucalypts was in the Nilgiri hills, Tamil Nadu in 1843 and by 1856 regular plantations of E. globulus occurred to meet the demands for firewood in various parts of the country (Palanna). The 1850's plantings of eucalypts in India and many other countries were with seeds received from von Mueller and as mentioned above, he was a great promoter of eucalypts, their qualities and versatile applications. In undivided India, plantings occurred in places where the British established tea plantations, with eucalypts planted as ornamentals alongside roads and rough terrain (Ibid).

Silk for WEP was coloured with eucalyptus leaves collected along a roadside in Muli, Gujarat and in the grounds of Kala Raksha, Sumrasar Sheikh, Kutch, Gujarat in December 2019 and in early 2020, in the Prantik district of Santiniketan, West Bengal and from tea plantations in Jorhat, Assam. Papri Basak, a practitioner in Santiniketan, contributed fabric dyed with local eucalypt. From my research all these are hybrids, a form of E.tereticornis known as Mysore gum and widely planted in Indian states in the 1960's.





Aranya Natural, part of Srishti, a social enterprise and welfare organisation in Munnar, Kerala has eucalyptus as part of their standard dye range with their swing tags stating that the colour is "Eye candy that is Soul Food". Eucalypts leaves collected in Munnar in February 2020 were E.grandis (common Indian name is Toolur and Flooded Gum in Australia) and Blue Gum from Top Station near Munnar. Mrs Jagada Rajappa, natural dye consultant in Hyderabad, Telangana is also a WEP collaborator and currently, four other Indians are expected to participate.

In Bangladesh in the 1930's Eucalyptus citriodora was haphazardly introduced into eastern areas on tea estates as an ornamental and then distributed widely by botanists, foresters and gardeners. Interest in other species of eucalypt was recorded in 1963 when some plantations were established (Ali, 2017). Bangladesh is represented in WEP by two NGO's working with local artisan communities. Aranya Crafts and Living Blue both have silk fabric and articles dyed with eucalyptus in their natural dye ranges, with Living Blue using stitched Shibori to create resist patterns in the dyed fabric.

Eucalypts were introduced to Ceylon, now Sri Lanka in the latter part of 18th century by planters with links to Australia and some of these were very successful as many magnificent trees still grow in and around tea estate gardens in central provinces (Bandaratillake). A more organized attempt was made in 1880 by the Hakgala Botanic Gardens in central Sri Lanka as staff obtained seeds of 50 species (Ibid). In 1931, the Forest Department introduced and raised eucalypts as forest plantation species for fuelwood for households, railway sleepers and industrial timber (Ibid). Sri Lanka is represented by emerging designer Eshadi Yaddehiarachchi, a recent graduate from the University of Moratuwa. AMMA, a social enterprise organisation giving work to women in central Sri Lanka has expressed interest.

Some sources indicate that eucalypts were introduced to Pakistan in 1867 however FAO¹⁴ documents indicate that interest rose in eucalypts when a fungal attack caused severe loss to local plantations (Ahmad). However, no substantial plantings occurred until the 1950's when exchange visits with Australia were organised (1955) and trials established for Eucalyptus tereticornis, E.camaldulensis, E.microtheca, E.melanophloia and E.citriodora, E.camaldulensis proved successful in the Peshawar zone as plants could be raised without irrigation.

Pakistani artist, curator and educationist, Noorjehan Bilgrami¹⁵ has contributed to the project as has Kiran Farooq Kahn Kakar from Beaconhouse University, Lahore¹⁶. Professors Dr Tanveer Hussian and Sharjeel Abid from the National Textiles University, Faisalabad also participated. Dr Hussain is highly regarded for his published research into eucalyptus dyeing which "found that fastness properties of cotton dyed with eucalyptus were better than many of the commonly used chemical dyes" (Ali, 2017).

Extraction and dyeing conditions of a natural dye from Eucalyptus camaldulensis were optimised. The dye obtained display fairly good saturation on cotton with medium to good fastness properties. It shall be interesting to see in the further work, whether the fastness properties can be further improved by mordanting or other fastness improvement techniques (Ali 2017).

Eastern Indonesia has some Indigenous species such as E.deglupta on Celebes, E.urophylla and E. alba onlong southern coast and E.pellita from West Papua (Pramono). Other species were introduced to East Java from Australia (E.globulus) in 1800 and during 1879-1882 more were imported for 'regreening' especially into mountainous areas in Central Java, followed by further plantings in East Java in 1911 and 1978 (Ibid). Novi Bamboo (eco printer) and Puthut Ardianto have both sent dyed fabric while Nuri Ningsih Hidayati of Marengga Batik has recently found some eucalypts leaves to dye with; all are from the Yogyakarta area in Java.

Planting of eucalypts in Peninsular Malaysia commenced in 1893 with seeds from Queensland with the first species planted being E.robusta with other species planted as ornamentals by the British colonizers at hill stations during the early 1920's (Sallah). In Sarawak, the Forestry Department tested eucalypts as plantation species (1979) but proved ineffective (Ibid). More recently in Sabah and Sarawak, Eucalyptus pellita has been grown in plantations as a high-value timber species for pulp production. WEP collaborator Edric Ong knew of E.pellita as a species grown in reforestation schemes in central Sarawak but unfortunately, due to pandemic travel restrictions he was unable to travel to these areas to collect leaves. However, a university colleague located a tree on campus in Kuching and supplied leaves.

¹⁴ The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, (FAO) has published documents on eucalypts by specialists in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand but unfortunately, they are not dated.

¹⁵ Bilgrami founded the atelier Koel, spearheaded the revival of handloom weaving, hand block printing and the use of natural dyes in Pakistan. She visited UNSW Art & Design for a print making residency in 2015 and gave a lecture on indigo.

¹⁶ In 2006 I visited Beaconhouse University, Lahore to teach weaving classes and meet the textiles staff including Kiran Kahn and it's been great to reconnect in 2021.

With the British occupation of the South Africa Cape Colony in 1806, exchanges of people and plants between southern Africa and Australia occurred (Tafokou, 2017). More eucalypts were planted (1850 to 1870) with von Mueller promotion to drain marshes and to produce strong wood, especially as it grew quickly in arid, warm areas where other trees would not (Ibid). Since then, there have been numerous plantations established around the country for firewood, building materials, wind breaks and other uses (Ibid). WEP participants from South Africa are Ira Bekkar, Claudia Dallabona, Kristen McClarty, Natasha Sale and Jane Schaille with all contributing beautifully coloured silks. McClarty commented that her village near Cape Town has "seven or so eucalypts species growing with some over 120 years and towering over the village".

Artists in Madagascar and Singapore have expressed interest but are to confirm while Chai Smanchat from Thailand, is dyeing silk yarn for the project. Documents state that *E.robusta (Swamp Mahogany)* has been widely planted in Madagascar and used for fuel and timber (Ibid); in Singapore, *E.deglupta (Rainbow Gum)* is in many locations and regarded as a Heritage Tree (National Parks); while in Thailand, *E.camaldulensis (River Red Gum)* has been planted since the 1950's (Masaki).

4. Conclusion

Weaving Eucalypts Project represents contemporary craft as a dialogue and collaboration with like-minded colleagues around the Indian Ocean. The colours represented offer a unique insight into place, location while the project brings engagement, exchange and a community together, all with stories of eucalypts. All have an interest in using natural resources to colour cloth, exploring as Carman viewed, the "colour hidden" in the leaves of local eucalyptus. Weaving Eucalypts Project represents an international cultural exchange, collaboration and dialogue through craft and colour.

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Author's Bio



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The Domestic Craft and the Artefact: Discovering Provenance, Exploring Interrelationships

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Presentation link.



Abstract. From ornate coverings to decorative edgings for garments, a continued practice in Indian middle-class households has been the creation of artefacts made by hand for daily use. Having a non-Indian provenance and forming one of the strong colonial influences, the techniques of crochet, tatting, lacemaking, and needlework come under the broad spectrum of domestic crafts. They are practised widely across the country – the act of creation and engagement with the craft, along with the memorised skill of making is passed on through generations, from mothers to daughters. This research is an inquiry into the rich provenance of these domestic crafts in a pre-colonial India, giving the reader a brief history of the techniques from 17th century onwards to well into the modern-day post-colonial state. The study also a discovery of craft and the artefact's interconnectedness with themes of domesticity and femininity.

The research closely examines the created artefact – discovering aspects beyond aesthetics such as functionality and slow design. Reflecting on the relationship between the domestic craft and the artefact, it studies the creation, use, care and eventual discard of this artefact; a stark contrast to the current proclivity for disposing off and replacing objects of daily use at a fast pace. Through literature study and interactions with makers, the paper entails case studies on artefacts that were originally developed using the above-mentioned techniques but have now become obsolete due to a shift in trends or entire replacement of the object with modern-day innovations. The study also attempts to unearth applications of these artefacts as sustainable alternatives in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Domestic craft, Artefact, Sustainable Design, Functionality, Domesticity.

1. Introduction

On a quiet rainy afternoon in a freshly independent India, the room is alive with the rich aroma of wet soil. Having just wrapped up her morning chores, she props herself on the wooden sofa in the living room, which is beautifully upholstered in a scallop-edged, handembroidered coverlet that she made before she got married. She starts where she left yesterday as if there has been no pause on the fabric where the needle had last pierced it. In the same rhythm, she continues the intimate action and reaction of her fingers with the needle and of the needle with the thread and of the thread with the fabric, painting a delicate embroidery in red, while humming her favourite song. She remembers the pattern, part of her muscle memory, of what she learnt from her mother at her maiden home. She is in no rush, slowly embedding her voice within the fabric but time moves on quietly and it is evening once again; she packs while looking forward to unpacking it all again the next day. (Sharma, 2021)

Borrowed from the coloniser's lineage, certain Victorian handcraft techniques, termed as 'Domestic Crafts' in the popular repertoire, have been an integral part of the Indian middleclass households for centuries now. With various skills coming under its ambit, domestic crafts strongly contribute to the material culture of the country and have been important in shaping the modern-day makers' movement. While discussing embroidery in the Indian subcontinent, where each region boasts of a distinct and rooted traditional craft, domestic craft practices are often relegated to an insignificant activity despite being practised by intergenerational women across the country. Delicately passed on from mothers to daughters, the techniques are almost native to an Indian woman's fingers, highlighting its significance in everyday culture.

Although the word Domestic Craft could mean anything that is created by hand at home, however, for a more focussed research, the group word in this study is explicitly used to refer to the techniques of crochet, tatting, and needlework including Anglaise Embroidery, Broderie Anglaise, crewelwork, whitework and other forms of needlecraft including handsewing. The study intentionally excludes the technique of hand-knitting that is primarily used for the creation of clothing artefacts, which would have broadened the scope of this paper. The artefacts in this research refer to objects created using the above-mentioned techniques and primarily used for the households' consumption or to serve decorative or functional purposes with no selling motive attached to the making of the artefact. Subtly emblematic of colonial nostalgia, the value of these artefacts was priceless and they often acted as precious heirlooms passed down through generations.

Textile artist and writer Clare Hunter speaks about this role of embroidered artefacts in her book 'Threads of Life' when she says that "Embroidery is often the last remnant of identity to be salvaged by the dispossessed" (Hunter 2019, 68). However, in recent times the domestic craft industry has been thriving, with makers turning their practice into small businesses and larger industries forming an important part of the Indian cottage industry. Although contributing significantly to the exports, this study excludes this trajectory of domestic crafts. As was found, there is limited scholarship on the Indian practice of domestic crafts and the artefacts created that not only served decorative purposes but were functional as well. This paper is thus an attempt to contribute to the scholarly research of domestic craft practices in India.

By studying samples created for everyday use, primarily focusing on non-clothing artefacts, the paper recalls the practice of domestic crafts in India from the 17th century onwards and unearth their sustainable aspects and the crucial role they play in subconsciously promoting a more responsible lifestyle. It becomes important to mention here that the purpose of the paper is not to suggest a revival but to add meaning to why one should bring the technique or the artefact back into practice if one must. The study investigates

questions like – How can domestic crafts of the past inform and reinvigorate today's use and maintenance of products inside the house and outside? How important it is to retain not just the technique but the artefact as well? To support the study of the domestic craft culture, the paper explores finer nuances by looking at the artefact beyond the product or the technique – the techniques were at times a means to arrive at the product and reflected the creative expression of the maker, the "uncredited legacies of creativity and innovation" (DeLong, 2021). The artefact thus becomes an embodiment of one's expression, while voicing the under-represented significance of domestic space as a construct for making and the closely associated concepts of domesticity and femininity, although not in much detail.

2. The Origins of Domestic Craft: Memsahibs and ayahs

The study of origins of the domestic craft techniques in India is rather ambiguous with the subcontinent subjected to colonisation by different colonisers at various points in history – the Dutch, the Portuguese and the East India Company, with the craft and the artefact acting as visible reminders of the colonial rule. There was cross-migration of not only people but objects, religion and culture that lead to the inadvertent birth of newer hybrid techniques that are further difficult to be categorised as a specific type. Thus, various hypotheses can be proposed for the emergence of domestic crafts in India in the last few centuries. The most probable one could be that after the 17th century, British women started accompanying men from England to settle in India. Called *memsahibs*, these young British women were married to British men, Anglo Indian men or in some cases in the early 1700s to Indian men as well, before such marriages were eventually banned to prevent inter-caste associations. These women had a slew of servants for various chores around the house and with their husbands busy in the outside world, had a lot of spare time to indulge. In the pursuit of decorating their new homes, they took up the Victorian craft of needlework as a leisure activity. The home as a confined space became an important context, hindering movement with limitations as well as offering opportunities to work, to decorate, to produce and to consume; the practice of domestic craft thus serving as a means to an end.

The *ayahs* (translates as Indian nursemaids or nannies in Hindi) are also deemed to be a huge part of the Victorian influence of domestic crafts in India. Often called colonial *ayahs*, Marshall (n.d.) describes them as "The Indian women who raised British children". *Ayahs* were usually older and widowed women, who worked both as a domestic servant and a nanny as well as provided "expertise to their *memsahib* about how to survive and thrive in the colonial environment" (Marshall, n.d.). Being an integral part of the British children's lives and the associated Victorian household, they must have been strongly influenced by their *memsahibs*' life and way of living. This resulted in an intense cross-cultural exchange although Conway (2016) referred to this as a "racial double standard", with the rampant practice of employing *ayahs* continuing well into the 19th and 20th centuries.

Between the 18th and mid-20th centuries, some of these *ayahs* made the long sea voyage to England, accompanying their *memsahibs* as affordable childcare onboard but upon their arrival in England, they were treated harshly and frequently abandoned, often left stranded with no work and return ticket for home (Addley, 2020; Conway, 2016). The *ayahs* had no formal contract of employment and were often dismissed without pay (Our Migration Story, n.d.). There were shelter homes supported by Christian missionary organisations that not only provided accommodation for abandoned *ayahs* but helped them find employment as well, for their journey back home (Marshall, n.d.). Figure 1 shows how the women engaged in pursuits like reading and needlework in the Ayah's home that housed over 100 *ayahs* including Chinese *ayahs*. This must have contributed to significant intercultural exchanges of techniques amongst the women community.





Figure 1: An English Woman (Memsahib) with a child and two Indian nannies (Ayahs).1905, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Bombay Photo Images [Mumbai].

Figure 2: Ayahs' Home in the primary stages of being run by the Foreigner's Branch Committee of the London City Mission. 1904, Digital Image. Reproduced from: British Library

The process of transference of the skill and influence from British women to Indian women and its finer nuances entails a detailed discovery. Victorian clothing incorporated elegant blouses with delicate collars and crocheted hemlines, scallop-edged underskirts – the precursor to modern-day petticoats worn by Indian women. This coterie of lace edgings, buttons and fine details as a way to embellish everyday clothing can be considered aspirational for the plain saree-clad *ayah* (forced to wear a shirt blouse for modesty concerns) to own such decorative clothing and coverings. The *memsahibs* in India vied for female connections and a sense of community in a colony, and with ayahs playing an indispensable part in their children's lives, it could be thought that the two forged close relationships, which lead to native Indian women learning the skill. It can also be hypothesised that women learnt the techniques from periodicals and magazines that British women carried with them which were later reproduced in domestic publications.

With the Britishers setting up new households in India, there was the introduction of elaborate furniture, which we now associate with 'colonial interiors'. Constituting detailed furniture like a three-mirrored vanity table, four-poster bed, peg table, chaise lounge, huge cabinet, dining table and the novel idea of a wardrobe or a dressing area, the Baroque and Rococo-inspired furniture was specially transported from England to India and was thus considered a precious commodity that needed protection. This led to everything getting covered with soft furnishings like doilies and table linen with exquisite detailing – reflecting refinement and taste, as emblematic of a colonising nation.



Figure 3: Two TV covers made between 1930-1942, demonstrating cutwork embroidery and crochet lace edgings. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Arora (2021).

Women clubs in post-colonial India were a strong visible remnant of a colonial era. It was a regular practice for the Britishers to set up cantonment areas wherever they went, the practice of domestic craft surfacing, with wives of armed forced men explicitly indulging in it as a form of community building. With the cantonments, fresh ideas of formality were introduced amongst the Indian community, a typical example being the drawing-room culture. This necessitated the decoration of certain parts of the home for the sheer purpose of welcoming guests and the act of hosting became an elaborate experience reflecting taste and delicate skills of the homemaker. The East India Company first established its foothold in Calcutta before moving to Bombay and thus few remains of Anglaise embroidery, a popular Victorian needlecraft, can still be spotted at an old dilapidated shop in the by lanes of Park Street in Calcutta (LBB, n.d.).

A similar hypothesis could be applied to European Jews who fled Babylon and reached the port of Muziris at the end of the 15th century. Called Pardesi Jews, they spread all over Kerala and their rapid expansion meant the birth of more Jews from inter-racial mixing with the natives (Thomas, 2018). Not just Kerala, some of the Jews also entered the country at Bombay and Calcutta, at different points of time in the history of their escape. They were followed by the coming of the Portuguese and then by the Dutch who maintained a close relationship with the White Jews while simultaneously coexisting with Spanish and Portuguese Jews in the same region (Thomas, 2018). Women from all these different communities practised crochet and fine needlepoint work and their symbiotic coexistence must have led to the development of these intricate skills. Such embroideries are also done in a village in Andhra Pradesh selling handmade items like the kippah, a head covering and afikomen that adorns matzah during Passover (Thomas, 2020). At the same time, there was the rise of missionary schools in South India as well as near Bengal, giving teaching to young girls in intricate lacework and needlework. One can still witness few remaining practising groups in Calcutta, Puducherry and Jew Town in Kochi in Kerala, although the number of women practising the technique has dwindled considerably, so much so that they are almost termed as vanishing crafts.

Although needlework and other techniques have their origins in antiquity, crochet is usually discussed as the youngest technique known to Britishers, as late as 1838 (Square, 2018). Scholars situate the provenance of crochet technique to be from Iran, China, Europe or South America, as old as the 16th century, with Scottish missionaries believed to have brought crochet to India in the early 20th century, and its earliest use in Islamic prayer rugs

and caps (Nainar, 2020; Square, 2018). They also formed a major part of Church vestments, ecclesiastical garments or other accessories. Originally a convent art and termed as 'nun's work', crochet techniques were taught by nuns to impoverished women during the Irish Famine of 1846, giving women the agency to create a sellable product to help them feed their families (Gordon, 2020).

In needlework, specifically hand embroidery, the motifs are a reliable way to trace the provenance of the skills. As was observed in some of the motifs, the hybrid identity of motifs speaks as much of the blend of European and Chinese influence as they speak of the maker's identity. Commonly done in brightly coloured threads, the motifs were inspired from flora and fauna; the flowers failing to resemble anything grown on Indian soil, which speaks largely about their mixed lineage. Usually done at corners, edges or in the centre of the textile, women kept on tracing the same decorative floral forms across generations, as if something out of memory – a flower that one is familiar with. Figure 4 shows two shaded flowers created using different techniques in regions in the country that are more than 1400 miles apart!



Figure 4: Anglaise embroidery with French knots and Satin stitch on a kurta sourced from House of Bengal Hand Embroidery in Calcutta. 2018, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Sharma (2021).

Poet and naturalist Diane Ackerman mention in her book 'A natural history of the senses' about touch being our very first sense and the first tool we use to register and remember the difference, a way to record heritage (Ackerman, 1991). Clare Hunter reinstates this surprise element of visual memory when she writes, "It is hard to believe that you can take a blank piece of cloth and, without drawing a mark, stitch such an intense medley of human history" (Hunter 2019, 121). Apart from floral and vegetal, repetitive geometric patterns were also embroidered, with intricate and elaborate borders. In the later half of the 20th century, shaded thread with colour gradient became a popular thread to embroider with as seen in figure 3.

3. Home as a Domestic Space: The Sacred Site of Practice

The minimal nature of tools and space required to practice the domestic craft as well as their portability were the main reasons for their widespread popularity among middle-class women, although Hunter (2019) blames the very portability of the artefacts in making them "more likely to be folded away and forgotten" (Hunter 2019, 293). Although the craft could be performed anywhere irrespective of the place, the home still formed the primary site of work. Regularly done alongside other chores, the maker would multitask

and engage in such pursuits while in a gathering with relatives or watching television with family, stealing those in-between moments. While some of the artefacts were made in the company of women, others were created in solitude. Almost like a visual metaphor of their life, the act of creating was a meaning-making expression with the women embroidering a part of themselves in the fabric.

In a colonised and later a post-colonial India, the act of making was emblematic of a woman's domesticity, the delicate and decorative process providing a sharp contrast to the outside world; the medium acting as a creative way of making sense of the tumultuous world outside the house. The meditative act of counting and repeating stitches to form a pattern was thus considered a good way to spend time. However, its domesticity is associated with a devalued status of the craft form as a "women's work, a pastime or simply a way of creating decorative items that find their use in the home" (Decorating Dissidence, 2019). Historian and writer Rozika Parker wrote in her book 'Subversive Stitch' about the craft acting as a source of pleasure and power for women, but also as a symbol of their powerlessness. (Parker, 1984). The feminised identity of the craft practice was evident; "Men remained, by and large, unexpressed in sensory materiality, not just uncertain but prejudiced against a language which had excluded them" (Hunter 2019, 290).

4. The Technique and the Artefact: Exploring sustainability

It cannot be possible that Gen X and millennials in middle-class households grew up without seeing any such artefacts around them. They invisibly dwelled in familiar spaces inside the house, in corners, the artefact almost merging with the product it was created for or intended to be used on. With the country largely witnessing a dry climate round the year, it becomes important in India to cover every object, furniture and the tiniest decorative piece, for regular maintenance as well as to prolong the life of the material. It was imperative that the newly-established colonial houses for Britishers had a cover for everything from the three-seater sofa and the dining table to the radio set, with the covering forming the most important function the artefacts served.

Art critic John Berger writes in 'And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos', "Home is no longer a dwelling but the untold story of a life being lived" (Berger, 1991) and thus the home is seen as an extension of someone's personality & taste and was deemed an ideal space to show off not just one's wealth but the wife's skills too with decorative objects, upholstery and hand-made interiors. Women indulged in creating elaborate coverings and ornamental fabrics especially for coveted appliances like the juicer mixer or a toaster that simplified everyday living and were aspirational to be owned by the growing new middle class in a post-colonial India.

Some of the artefacts have been rendered obsolete because the appliance or the surface it was designed for has ceased to exist or has been replaced by a modern version. For example, table fans were an important element in middle-class homes and they were covered when not in use during the day or for extended winter months when they were stored away, a prevalent activity in dry Northern India. Such useful innovations are not problematic for this research although the artefact will be forever remembered. Additionally, it was not only the elimination of an object that rendered the artefact obsolete but with the rise of the middle class and higher disposable incomes, the act of preservation for longevity declined. The value of the coverings that elongated the life of the product has declined¬ whether it is a bigger one like a dining table or sofa cover to smaller ones like a remote or telephone cover. The reusability of the artefacts is a stark contrast to the modern default notion of disposability. In an era of planned obsolescence, contrary to the 60s, modern-day mindsets are wired to using things that can be disposed of rather than the ones that can be reused. The primary research for this paper involved unearthing artefacts created using techniques of domestic crafts, as found in the author's and her friend's homes. Eventually, four objects were closely studied and analysed to uncover important meanings in the modern post-colonial world.

4.1. Wrapping up a colonial excursion: A Sandwich cover

Picnic as a recreational pursuit and a popular summer pastime played an important role in Victorian culture. The working class indulged in informal potluck picnics in nearby parks while for the leisure class, it was nothing short of an elaborate affair, with portable items like lawn chairs, hammocks, and wicker baskets carried, signifying a way of "performing Britishness" (Victorian Trading Co., n.d.). The wicker hamper was a cornucopia of packed delicacies in tiffins and jars. An English staple in picnics, the sandwich (both sweet and savoury) was the most convenient, easy-to-make snack on the go that worked great for children and adults. During this time, like it was common for any other activity, there were etiquette guides telling you how to prepare and pack food for a picnic!



Figure 5: Scallop-edged hand-embroidered sandwich cover made in early 1980s. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Arora (2021).

A useful remnant of this British pastime, the above scallop-edged cover was custom made to pack and carry sandwiches (See figure 5). Made in soft cotton, this foldable cover was created in the 1980s by a woman when she was in her 30s, an embroidered replica of an original piece that she made in 1962. The cover is delicately hand-embroidered around the edges, near the threshold, to reinforce the ends so that the folds stay in place on top of the sandwich. As has been observed in most of the artefacts, women used to embroider on the threshold as a means of reinforcement but at the same time metaphorically symbolising her own defined boundaries with the house acting as a confined space. Like other colonial influences, this pastime too percolated down to Indian households, romanticising the idea of going on a picnic to parks or small getaways with friends & family. As important members of the Victorian household, the *ayahs* made preparations and accompanied them for such excursions and thus their close encounters with these covers can be traced. While the sandwich cover was a customised covering for one snack, Indian families have been using square pieces of cloth to wrap food in tiffin for their husbands and children. Fabric as a food covering was used extensively as a wrap for storing cottage cheese, leftover food, or making smooth curd from milk. As a washable material, its reusability was a key factor until the malleability, lure and disposability of plastic and aluminium wraps replaced the fabric wrap. It became the default way to wrap things like how people use tissues these days instead of carrying handkerchiefs or prefer buying the plastic bottle from a kiosk instead of carrying one from home. Both aluminium and plastic wraps have the potential to leak contaminants in the food that will eventually be consumed. The Freshwrap ads of the 2000s made us want to use it more, talking about how it was better than Aluminium which was presented as the sole competitor.

As seen today, not only was cotton a healthy covering on food meant for eating, but its reusability deemed it to be a more sustainable and environment-friendly alternative. The wrap is a subtle way of understanding how Indians slowly embraced the idea of disposability that offered convenience. The beeswax cloth wrap has gained resurgence in the last few years as a reusable healthier alternative but it has a long history with its use traced back to the time of Egyptians (SUSTOMi, 2018). Although a natural material, beeswax has a low melting point and thus is only good for storing cold food or at normal temperature. While an Aluminium wrap or a cling film are for one-time use only, beeswax wrap has a lifespan of 6-12 months if used properly and a fabric wrap could last you forever – it would eventually be upcycled for something else till shredded to bits in its end of life phase.

4.2. Before the tea gets cold: The larger-than-life tea cosy

Nowadays, tea and Indians go hand in hand but surprisingly that has not been the case always. A borrowed ritual, tea serving and drinking was an elaborate activity amongst the British community, with tea officially being Britain's national drink (Richardson, n.d.). With accoutrements ranging from teapots, decorative cups to chinoiserie-inspired matching saucers, coupled with small delicacies like tea cakes and pastries, this ritual was no short of a showcase of style, skills, and opulent hospitality. In today's time, this kind of elaborate tea drinking ceremony might be considered an act of slow living, an act of enjoying every moment with every sip of your tea! Tea cosy, a fabric jacket was used as an insulation to be put over the teapot to keep it hot. It was big enough to provide space for easy lifting without disturbing the pot or its contents. While the function was as basic as this, the surface of a tea cosy was used as a sartorial statement, imbuing the tea table with fun and flair. From embroidered to delicately painted or beaded, a closer study of its history takes one down a kaleidoscopic memory lane of exquisitely crafted tea cosies. Quintessential to British households, it was so decorative that in some cases it was inherited as a family heirloom! As Mary (n.d.) said that "When it comes to hearth, home, and traditions, it doesn't get any British than tea cosies."



Figure 6: Details of two tea cosies made in later 20th century. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Arora (2021).

Usually crown or dome-shaped and at times resembling a weird hat, modern-day tea cosies are hand-knitted or crocheted and they are sold as matching sets with other kitchen accessories like oven mitts, aprons, runners or tablecloths. Tea cosies are not only an inexpensive and decorative way to enjoy fresh, hot tea, but they are also ecological; they are reusable and can be washed when dirty. At a recent family gathering, the author encountered an expensive thermos flask becoming faulty and suddenly popping out, while pouring hot tea. Vacuum bottles do not end a lifetime, tea cosies do. Strangely, these cosies were the motivation behind the act of using decoration as an act of covering products inside the home, a typical Victorian idea (Mary, n.d.), as will be discussed in the next section. An important part of the tea table, the infusers can be thought of as ancestors to modern-day disposable teabags and although the discussion of handmade infusers would be relevant to the context of sustainable products, the research would fall outside the realm of this paper and is thus skipped.

4.3. A message, an insignia, a story : The humble embroidered handkerchief

The handkerchief or the hanky has a richer history of its origin than how they are used today or have ceased to be used. Men's and women's handkerchiefs had different purposes, with this useful piece of textile coming to rescue for the tiniest of purposes, ranging from removing a piece of food from your lip, cleaning eyeglasses, fixing lip colour, wiping extra ink off the pen's nib, or covering your nose of bad smell. Accompanying a men's formal dress, the handkerchief was a symbol of chivalry and charm while for a woman, carrying a handkerchief signified delicate nature and how they held it gave a hint about their personality. Often monogrammed and lace-edged, the handkerchiefs were customised to varying degrees and served purposes beyond functionality; as memorabilia, a remembrance, a keepsake. Containing stories of hope, heartache and happiness, the handrolled hem or edged with a crochet or hairpin lace, handkerchiefs were once considered so valuable that they were listed in dowries, as well as bequeathed in wills but are now almost extinct. "Handkerchiefs are really a record of history...[they] tell the tenor of the time, the mood of the country, what people were thinking and focused on", Ann Mahony says, as mentioned in Shoot (2018).



Figure 7: Three table napkins from a set of nine created by the author in 1999 as part of a school assignment in third grade. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Sharma (2021).

In the 19th and 20th centuries, everyone used to carry a hanky, like a must-have accessory – "from the most fastidious, high-born lady to the farmer in the field to the messiest kindergartener" (hearts-desires.com, n.d.). As a child, the author recalls how before leaving for school, the monogrammed scallop-edged hanky was pinned to her pinafore in the event it might come in handy; a lofty idea in modern times to carry around an unnecessary accessory pinned on one's chest for the sole idea that it might come useful! Fast forward into the later part of the 20th century, with the advent of disposable tissues and wipes, the handkerchiefs are seen as a cult relic (Shoot, 2018). Aiding to our convenience and being used in huge numbers mindlessly, these modern disposable handkerchiefs are creating more nuisance with their notorious journey from the public restroom to burgeoning landfills in India.

Finger and table napkins have had a similar history, replaced by big square tissues, from restaurants to home spaces. A good question to ask oneself would be if we need wipes at all. Although the sheer consumption of freshwater in the country when millions do not have access to clean drinking water cannot be argued, the rising landfills of India—the final resting place of what we chose to dispose of—are testament to the fact that there have been changes in consumption patterns that have led to this spike in the last one decade. Kitchen towels and tea towels faced a similar fate, gradually replaced by reusable synthetics wipes and presently with the trending natural bamboo wipes. One can still encounter the kitchen cleaning cloth in checks and stripes available in the supermarkets, but nothing comes close to the monogrammed linen of a time lost.

4.4. A decorative covering: The dainty doily

As delicate artefacts, doilies often embody reverence for tradition and a deep-rooted connection with the past (Sugarcube, n.d.). Regularly stereotyped as dainty decorative things made by old women in their pastime, doilies as we know today, served a very

different purpose in earlier centuries. As briefly mentioned in the previous section, tea cosies were the motivation behind the act of using decoration as a means of covering products inside the home (Mary, n.d.). Originally a fancy napkin and later termed as a 'dust-collector'(Gordon, 2020), it is worth understanding the purpose of this small textile beyond a decorative item sitting on the mantelpiece.



Figure 8: Range of doilies as discovered in the author's hone, acquaintances' homes and a colonial guest house in India. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Sharma (2021).

Usually worked in a circle, oval or a rectangular shape, this ubiquitous textile was found in every home, in every corner. Initially created using openwork or tatting and later in crochet because it was quicker, its appearance can be misjudged for expensive lace. Having the purpose of protecting furniture as well as for lining dishes while serving food, doilies evoked finery as well soaked up any condensation, apart from protecting the precious crockery from food or drink stains. Additionally, they were also used to cover water glasses, pitchers, fruit bowls – the quintessential items on a Victorian dining table were covered to protect from dust and flies, a pursuit that British households found extremely necessary while residing in India. This was before the introduction of refrigerators when things were stored out on the table area or in pantry cupboards. All these were part of a Victorian woman's home etiquette and such ideals were constantly being reinforced by 'how-to-do' publications in periodicals.

Placed in every corner, on every surface, under every cup, bowl or lamp, these doilies formed a key feature of a 'well-dressed' table in the 19th and 20th centuries that helped 'guests feel welcome' and acted as great conversation-starters (Salander, 2014). Investing time and labour in making these delicate items, the women were driven by the pursuit of creating a 'more elegant domestic environment' (Gordon, 2020). Doily-making eventually became a skill that young Victorian ladies from well-to-do families were taught and were even expected to have a stock of doilies in their hope chests to be used when they set up their home (Salander, 2014). Author Marge Engleman talks about the perfection and machine-made finesse of a doily as "Maybe their lives weren't perfect...but their doilies could be" (Gordon, 2020). Post-World War II, with economic constraints and an increase of workload for women, paper doilies slowly replaced handmade doilies. In the present day, one can see these neatly-punched scalloped-edged sheets lining saucers or dessert plates in old-world charm cafes and restaurants across the world, exuding a Victorian charm of a lost era.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

The present study elaborated on the possible origins of the craft in the last four centuries, and its close associations with British colonialism while discussing finer nuances of domesticity and femininity. Through the study of artefacts, the paper tried to bring to the surface the untold stories of the makers and their lives. Much of written history on crafts practices in India exclude the practice of domestic crafts and thus the paper was an attempt to contribute to this valuable scholarly research that largely remains stored as

material history, embedded in artefacts or with people as oral history. The artefact tells an unheard, anonymous story of the maker's life and thus narratives of these anonymous women need to be heard and known, to preserve the material identity of the domestic crafts and the artefacts.

The paper briefly illustrates how modern-day advancements have slowly replaced the ageold techniques of making, using, caring and disposing of a handmade textile, resulting in huge cultural ramifications. The strange fact that with the replacement of artefacts by modern-day substitutes there is the subsequent loss of a sustainable alternative, necessitates the need for the urgent discussion the paper attempts to initiate. The intention of the discussion is not to encourage readers to start using tea cosies or doily covers but to lend a critical eye to these artefacts, beyond an appreciation for the ingenuity of their making, in the pursuit that one might discover something lost, a story invisible, a story untold. The 'cultural colonisation' (Hunter, 2019) of the crochet and needlework industry in India with various factories employing women to create products for Western markets, further reinforces the need to preserve these domestic narratives.

With the artefacts remaining unseen and their stories unheard, they could be considered as 'orphan objects' (Hunter 2019, 293). The research discusses only four such artefacts but there are many more from the past that can be studied and understood from our mothers and grandmothers and people we know, whose histories need to be unravelled and recorded for progeny. In studying these artefacts within our homes, one must situate these not just in terms of historicity and domesticity or as a decorative piece from the past, but as a potential solution to our current problems. A closer investigation of our daily activities, our homes, to begin with, can help recall these precious artefacts as resources that lie hidden in various corners. Meaningful discussions with the makers, mothers and grandmothers, aunts and sisters can reveal interesting facts and help in reinforcing the value of these artefacts and the associated craft techniques.

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Author's Bio



Pragya engages as a design practitioner, academician, and researcher. Her practice encapsulates different aspects of sustainability including zero-waste design, domestic crafts, community & cultural narratives. Alongside academics and research, she runs a studio wherein she experiments with the techniques of crochet and hand-knitting to design and create contemporary pieces. The Terroir of Terracotta: An exploration into the production and use of traditional open-hearth clay cooking pots to demonstrate their importance as reflectors of contemporary regional identity and contributors to cultural heritage.

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This paper explores indigenous identity through the connecting elements of clay cooking pots, fire and food. Methods of making, firing and using traditional pots on open hearths, all reflect a diversity of narrative behind 'place-based' making. The wares represented here are just a small example of those groups who are still deeply embedded in their indigenous pottery making practices.

Traditional craft practices are perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. Different cultures have developed specialised clay pots for cooking, preparing and storing food that require the specific qualities of earthenware. The use of local materials and produce not only reflects the seasons, but also the region, creating a distinct culinary and pot making identity reflective of geographic location.

Distinctive earthenware cooking pots have evolved around the world through local necessity. In many countries, their design reflects the food cooked in them, and thus they become iconic emblems of that country. Many of these practitioners work intuitively to create objects of necessity during periods determined by the seasons. They are often women, with skills handed down from mother to daughter. Their techniques are basic, their equipment simple, but their expertise in what they produce is worthy of recognition. The challenge in maintaining this cultural heritage is in creating a contemporary context for its survival. This paper illustrates just a few examples of how this is happening and appeals to conferees to contribute to the story.

Keywords: ceramics, cooking pots, terroir, cultural heritage, identity

1. INTRODUCTION

Makers of bonfired cooking pots often work in remote regions of the world. They work intuitively within the rhythms of the seasons, taking what they need from their immediate environment and using techniques that often link them to their ancestral past. The remoteness of many of these makers and the impoverished circumstances they often find themselves in, ensure their invisibility and, as such, a wealth of information about family, identity and place is lost to the world.

Throughout Southeast Asia (Shippen, 2005), Africa (Barley, 1994), Papua New Guinea (Tuckson and May, 1982), India (Perryman, 2000), Fiji (Ewins, 1982), Indonesia (McKinnon, 1996), Ecuador (Molinaro and Burkett, 2014) and many other countries not so well accounted for, low-temperature, bonfired cooking pots are made in the same way. While each of the afore mentioned publications covers a comprehensive overview of a specific country's practice, there is to date no comparative study of indigenous pottery-making that could offer greater insights into their cultural significance within a contemporary context¹. The importance of the humble clay pot in revealing humanity's past has been well documented in the academic world. In unearthing fragments of clay cooking pots, archaeologists have learned much about what was cooked and eaten from the food remnants retained in the pot's absorbent walls. These clues have led to invaluable historical indicators of food production and processing; a sense of place and progress through barter and exchange.

Acknowledging hand-built, bonfired pottery as a valid occupation within the dominant ideology of contemporary studio pottery has proved problematic. The first problem is one of perception. Low fired, utilitarian bonfired pottery and the hand-building production methods that usually accompany these is often regarded as 'primitive' (Vincentelli, 2000). Whereas wheel thrown pottery that is fired to maturity (within the temperature ranges of 1100 °C - 1300 °C), is the usual definition of more sophisticated functional ware. Bonfired ware, on the other hand, only reaches temperatures of up to 800 °C making them porous and fragile.

The second problem is one of exploitation. While earthenware cooking pots have been in use around the world for hundreds of years, it has only been since the early 1950s that the sophisticated kitchens of the western world began using them. A number of kitchenware suppliers have been extolling the use of indigenous earthenware cooking pots from around the world for some time, and this has highlighted the problem behind their market development strategies. A number of suppliers are encouraging indigenous potters to use their traditional techniques to create forms that appeal to a western market. In some parts of the world, this has caused a change to traditional craft practices, whose practitioners are mainly women, making them under paid contract workers for national and global markets (Duncan, 2000).

¹Moira Vincentelli's book Gender and Ceramics: Old Forms and New Markets, is an exception.

The following paper explores these issues under the following headings:

Terroir and the Medium describes why location is such an important aspect of an object and its function. The connection to 'place' is a crucial part of the object's role in identifying culture and reflects not only materials, but technique, design and history. Also discussed here is the importance of the medium (as a specific clay type) and how it functions both in firing and cooking.

Of Pots and Potters illustrates the wares from Colombia, Brazil, Indonesia and Mexico as examples of how these pieces are made, by and for whom, and the economic and social ramifications of their products and production. Drawing comparisons between these wares helps to understand the connections each has with its indigenous history.

Current Trends: Threats and Opportunities concludes by outlining how each country is dealing with the ongoing production of traditional clay cooking pots in contemporary times. The wares from each country selected have evolved in different ways, illustrating a diversity of survival mechanisms.

2. TERROIR AND THE MEDIUM

The term terroir is being used here to describe a 'sense of place' (Seddon, 1997). A French word that cannot easily be translated, terroir is an important concept in viticulture as it relates the sensory attributes of wine to the environmental conditions in which the grapes are grown. Terroir lets us experience the history and traditions of a place (through our nose and palate) and allows us to reconnect with the land and the seasons. These descriptions not only apply to viticultural and agricultural practices, but terroir can also best describe the activities of traditional craft practices, or 'place-based' making' (Ryden, 1993).

Reflecting upon the French concept of terroir as relating to the land, the Italian term for earthenware pottery is terracotta and means 'baked earth'. These two concepts reflect the idea of place and cooking, and it is the nature of terracotta (or earthenware) as a medium that makes it unique in its role as a cooking pot.

2.1 Clay as Body

The general characteristic of earthenware is that it produces a soft, porous, non-vitrified body often of a coarse nature that is rendered impervious to liquids by the application of a glaze (Hamer, 1975). It is the porous fragility of low-temperature bonfired pottery that makes this medium unique in how it is produced and used in cooking. In order for a clay body to withstand the thermal shock of a rapid firing and the constant heating and cooling of the cooking process, it has be 'open'. An open clay body is achieved by the addition of non-plastic 'tempers' like river sand, that in conjunction with firing temperatures of as little as 800 °C, creates a non-vitrified body that is able to expand and contract upon heating and cooling without cracking, allowing the pot to 'breathe' (Barley, 1994).

It is the porosity of a fired earthenware body's minuscule air pockets that not only contributes to its ability to 'breathe' but also affects its absorbency. Many users of traditional clay pots believe that it is the absorbency of these pots that retains the flavour of cooking through repetitive use, thus creating a kind of memory (Wolfert, 2009) or a patina of taste². That clay pots have 'memory' is reflected in both the making process and in their use as cooking utensils. For example, forming faults that are corrected in the making process of

²Wolfert quotes a Turkish friend of hers as saying that 'if a clay pot recognises an old tenant, it will produce a delicious dish when you bring the pot back to life'.

a pot, particularly in the case of a thrown form, often reappear during firing.

Low-fired, bonfired earthenware cooking pots is a tradition in many cultures that belongs mainly to women (Vincentilli, 2000). Their techniques are simple in concept, but difficult in execution, most often comprising round-bottomed forms made with paddle and anvil, or coiled, pressed, scraped and burnished (McKinnon, 1996) – all of which might seem simple compared to mastering wheel-thrown pottery but in reality, requires a complex mastery of clay technology.

2.1. Working Fire

Across traditional pottery making communities, the role of fire as a working tool is clearly understood and mastered in both making and cooking practices. The potters discussed here understand how to control and stabilise their firings by the timely application of fuel. They know the importance of ash in both setting up their work and using it to insulate the pots once peak temperature is reached. They know when to smother a fire to induce the atmospheric conditions that blacken their pots, and they know by its colour when a piece is ready to be removed from the fire.

The cooking pots described here are primarily bonfired, with the exception of contemporary La Chamba ware from Colombia and the *cántara* (water carrier) from Mexico. The former are fired in a simple front-loading gas kiln, and the latter, in an updraft kiln comprising of a single, circular chamber in which the raw pots are carefully laid. The top of the stack is then covered in broken pot sherds to act as a rudimentary roof, and the fire is lit and fed below at the base of the kiln (Mindling, 2015).

Most bonfiring consists of stacking the pots together in a shallow depression of ashes from previous firings. Fuel (timber, rice straw, wood shavings, dried dung) then covers the pots and the pile is set alight. The ensuing fire is carefully managed by the application of further fuel, or by smothering the flames with ash or sawdust to create different fired finishes. Firings are fast and temperatures peak at about 800 °C.

3. OF POTS AND POTTERS

The pots presented for discussion represent ware from four different countries to illustrate the conditions in which they were produced, how they reflect their geographic location, their ancestral connections and the pressures of contemporary market expectations.

Clay pot cooking is not particularly new to first world kitchens. The practice was introduced to a ration-weary British public by cookery writer Elizabeth David in the early 1950s (David, 1951). The earthenware pots of regional France she recommended her readers use to enhance flavour and authenticity have become, over time, redolent of a sense of both place and history. For example, the cassoulet (whose meaning derives from the French cassolle, or earthenware vessel) has become synonymous with both the pot and a regional dish of beans, meats and vegetables³.

3.1. La Chamba, Colombia

La Chamba ware is a line of oven-to-table ware, recognisable by its smooth jet-black sheen, that has become increasingly popular within the global market. Trading as tierra negra™, the Scot Columbus company started importing pots from La Chamba, in the region of

³There is some controversy as to the origins and the ingredients of the cassoulet, with the regions of Castelnaudary, Carcassonne and Toulouse each claiming it as their own.

Tolima in Colombia, in 1992. These forms are made over simple, fired clay molds over which flattened discs of clay are laid and patted smooth while being stretched and formed to a uniform consistency. When dry enough to be popped off the mold, the piece is then finished off with coils as in an olla (a wide mouthed cooking pot with a round base) or sponged smooth for open bowls.

The black finish is achieved by applying a fine, iron bearing slip over the leatherhard pot and burnished with a river stone to a high gloss. Once fully dried, several pots are placed in 44 gallon metal drums and placed in

a simple, front-loading gas kiln. (Originally, La Chamba ware was wood-fired in beehive styled, adobe 'ovens' with pots being placed in large clay saggers⁴).



Figure 1: Casserole from La Chamba (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2021)

Once 800 °C is reached, the drum and its contents are removed from the kiln and sawdust is thrown over the hot pots. The combustibles ignite instantaneously, whereupon the flames are immediately smothered with a metal cover, creating a reduction atmosphere that results in the carbonised surfaces that characterise La Chamba ware⁵.

During the 1940s and early 1950s in Colombia, urban interest in national crafts grew as infrastructure improved and access to traditional crafts in regional areas became more accessible. With this came the demand for black La Chamba 'tableware' which differed from the pots traditionally made for cooking and storing (Duncan, 2000)⁶. Such is Colombia's pride in its pottery that no self-respecting restaurant serving the national dish of *ajiaco* would present it in anything other than La Chamba ware.

⁴Saggers are ceramic containers used in the firing of pottery to enclose or protect ware being fired inside a kiln.

⁵ Reduction is caused by starving the interior of the sagger (or metal drum in the case of La Chamba ware) or kiln of oxygen which immediately seeks to take it from the iron rich pots creating a dense black carbonised finish.

The Scot Columbus company claim to have a close working relationship with the women potters of La Chamba, with a fair-trade policy in place to ensure equitable returns for the potters. However, with the rapid growth of many other importers of 'ethnic' kitchen products, concerns of exploitation have been raised as a result of increased global market demands. This threatens to compromise both indigenous design styles and traditional working patterns (Duncan, 2000).

3.2. The Paneleiras de Goiabeiras, Brazil

The Potters of Goiabeiras, live and work in the state of Espírito Santo, and unlike La Chamba ware's international popularity, is unknown outside of Brazil. Within Brazil however, these robust black pots are very familiar and considered one of the country's greatest expressions of popular culture⁷.

The potters of Goiabeiras, in the neighbourhood of Vitória, capital of Espírito Santo, are mainly women whose production knowledge has been passed down from mother to daughter. Their techniques preserve all the essential characteristics that identify it with the practice of their ancestors, the Tupi people⁸ before the arrival of European colonisers and their African slaves. While the main activity is female, men help with the heavier aspects of the work like mining the clay and firing.

Clay is sourced from the Mulembá Valley and is an ideal combination of plastic clay and naturally occurring tempers of differing grades of sand. This composition provides the potters with a coarse, fairly short working

body that tolerates fast drying and rapid firing and cooling (Silva, 2014). Forms are made by punching into a mass of clay and pushing outwards, gradually working the clay to the required thickness with a cuia (a piece of shaped gourd). The form is scraped and further shaped until leatherhard when it is burnished smooth with a river pebble.



Figure 2: Caldeirão from Goiabeiras (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2021)

⁶ According to oral history gathered by Duncan, the practice of reduction began with the introduction of tableware (Duncan 2000 P87).

⁷The Craft of the Paneleiras de Goiabeiras was declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Brazil in 2006 by the Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN).

⁸ The Tupiniquim, a small ethnic group currently living in Vitória, are the only living representatives of the Tupi people. https://revistapesquisa.fapesp.br/en/the-last-of-the-tupiniquim/

Firing time is fast, and once maximum temperature of 600 °C – 700 °C is reached, pots are hauled out with poles. While still hot, a *muxinga*⁹ brush, pre-soaked with a thick treacle-like solution of tannin 'juice'¹⁰ is used to beat the pot all over, creating an instant localised reduction and penetrating the pot's pores with both carbon and tannins to seal the surface.



Figure 3: Potter making assadeira at Goiabeiras, Vitória, Brazil. (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2016)



Figure 4: Firing at Goiabeiras, Vitória, Brawil. (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2016)

Regional identity is embodied in the food of Brazil and the traditional clay pots from Goiabeiras have contributed to this, adding to the country's sense of its history, geography and culture. This is evident in eateries throughout the country where the national dishes of feijoada (assorted meats and bean stew) moqueca baiana and moqueca capixaba (both fish stews from Bahia and Espírito Santo) are usually served up in an assortment of baking dishes from Goiabeiras.

Through its cuisine, Brazil has managed to embrace many cultures and nations. Within contemporary fine dining however, chefs had always looked to Europe for culinary inspiration and hard-to-procure ingredients. This all changed some twenty years ago when chefs, trained in prestigious restaurants overseas, started becoming aware of their own indigenous produce. Nowadays, top restaurants often combine forgotten and neglected traditional ingredients and cooking techniques with the pots from Goiabeiras, thus ensuring an ongoing cultural connection to their ancestors within a contemporary culinary context.

3.3. The Potters of Lombok, Indonesia

On the Indonesian island of Lombok, potters also create a cultural continuum through process and work practices, despite the disruptions of social, political, religious, industrial change and natural disasters. Making clay vessels occurs throughout the island, and in the past pots were used as an integral part of daily life, both in the kitchen and for important rituals (McKinnon, 1996). The indigenous Sasak people of Lombok are a predominantly

⁹A local bush from the region said to have fire resistant qualities.

¹⁰ Bark from the red mangrove (Rhizophora mangle) tree is made into a liquid solution.

Balinese ethnic group that followed mixed belief systems of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Animism until the 16th century when they converted to Islam. By combining their pre and present Islamic practices, they created a syncretic religion unique to Lombok known as *Wetu Telu*, and it is the ceremonies associated with their interpretation of *Wetu Telu* that have ensured the survival of many of their traditional clay pots.

Rites of passage, rice cultivation ceremonies, water rituals and ancestral grave celebrations incorporate vessels that reflect their origins as storage jars, cookers, water pots and flasks. While these products are no longer essential for domestic use with the introduction of metal and plastic, they have maintained a crucial presence in the ceremonial life of the Sasak people.



Figure 5: Ceret (water flask) from Penujak, Indonesia (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2021)

Three of the 20 pottery villages of Lombok are situated in Banyumulek - in the west, Penujak in Central Lombok and Masbagik Timur in the east. The primary practitioners are women. The ware is paddle formed, coiled or constructed with pre-assembled parts; burnished; bonfired and treated to a similar post-fired, resin-induced reduction process as those of the *Paneleiras* de *Goiabeiras*.

Clay is still mined by hand with an intuitive knowledge determined by the clay's physical properties that include its taste and smell. Back in the village, clay is left to dry before being crushed, slaked, poured onto sacks to stiffen in the sun, then mixed with river sand to a malleable consistency ready for forming.

Once the ware is ready for firing (gauged by the degree of dampness in each item) pots are stacked carefully in a bed of ashes from hundreds of previous firings, kindling is placed in and around the wares and the fire lit simultaneously around the stack. Both men and women feed sticks and coconut husks into available gaps and as the flames reach higher, the pace quickens. Armfuls of rice straw are fed on top of the stack to create a thick layer

that acts, once burnt, like an insulating ash cap that enables the wood below to continue to burn at a regulated rate until a peak temperature of about 800 °C is reached (Smith, 2015).

At this point, pots are pulled from the fire with poles. Left to cool slowly they will remain a rich brown. Others are drawn from the fire while still hot, and covered in fine, dry rice bran as they are rotated. The bran ignites immediately to become a carbonised black speckle where contact is made. Other pots are partially sprayed from a spray bottle with a tamarind/water mixture, also resulting in a black-on-red speckle.



Figure 6: Some of the pots of Oaxaca bear similar resinous post-reduction finishes on some of their pots. Figure 6. Olla, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, Mexico (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2021)

Mexican pottery has a well-documented history with earthenware pots first appearing around the Purrón period, 2300 – 1500 BCE. Since then, Mexico's pottery history has been further enriched through a string of civilisations that have included the Olmec, Toltec, Maya and Aztecs. By 1526, the Aztec empire was finally overpowered by the Spanish and its population subjugated.

Despite political and religious disruptions, pre-Hispanic vessels were made in much the same way as they are made in Oaxaca today. Shaped by modelling, coiling or molding, pots are often slipped and burnished, fired in bonfires or simple updraft kilns. Every region in Oaxaca has developed its own production style, technique and firing procedure and ware is made not only for domestic purposes, but notably for the highly lucrative tourist market (Mindling, 2015).

Perhaps some of the best known pottery from Mexico comes from San Bartolo Coyotepec, situated south of Oaxaca city. *Barro negro* (black clay) pottery is recognisable by its smooth black, high gloss sheen and decorative open fretwork patterns.



Figure 7: Barro negro ware, San Bartolo Coyotepec, (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2018)

Completely decorative, these pots came about by exploiting an accident of under-firing. Originally, ware from this area comprised mainly of domestic pots with a matte, grey finish as ascertained by archaeological remains that date this work as far back as the Monte Albán period (around 500 BC). In the 1950s, a potter named Doña Rosa, devised a way to create the black metallic sheen so familiar with this pottery nowadays, by burnishing it and under firing it in a reduction atmosphere.

Because of its geographic remoteness, Oaxaca managed to escape much of 16th century Spanish influence that was to change the course of pottery production elsewhere in Mexico. These changes included the introduction of the potter's wheel, enclosed kilns, lead glazes and new forms for a European market, which in turn upset the clearly defined and respected role of women as prime producers. However, indigenous traditions not only survived colonisation, but are ongoing and the *cántara* and the *patojo* best illustrate why.

The *cántara* is a water jug ergonomically designed to be carried on a person's back, or side pannier style on a donkey¹¹. This example, using the techniques of her ancestors was produced by Gregoria Goya, who lives and works in the mountainous region of Mixtea in Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, whom the author visited in 2018.

¹¹ The *cántara* bears a similar resemblance to the Cuzco Bottle of Peru, dated 1000 – 1500 CE





A handful of coarse grit and a piece of broken tile make up Gregoria's turntable upon which she shapes a crude cone, thumps out its centre and proceeds to scrape and turn the inside of the pot with one hand, while patting and rotating the outside with the other. The walls of the pot rise as assuredly as they would on a potter's wheel. She adds the handles as she 'pulls' the pot walls, and finishes off the neck with a moistened shammy.

Meanwhile, the previously loaded kiln has reached temperature (approximately 800° C), and the pots are pulled out with poles while still hot and given a decorative finish with a resinous solution made from a pre-boiled mixture of native oak bark. This is spattered or sprayed onto the hot pot to create the localised carbonisation so distinctive of the ware from this area.

Gregoria's kiln, a simple updraft kiln built of local clay and stone, forges another ancestral connection, this time to the pre-Hispanic kilns found at Monte Albán and the nearby Zona Arqueologica de Atzompa. The second pot is the *patojo* or culinary shoe pot so named after its form (Dixon, 1963).



Figure 6: Patojo, Mixe Region, Oaxaca. (Photograph by Penny Smith, 2021)

The patojo is produced by the Mixe people, an indigenous group inhabiting the eastern highlands of Oaxaca who claim never to have been conquered by the Spanish. One of the more traditional regions of Oaxaca, people here don't speak Spanish and are very reserved with outsiders.

The patojo is coiled and 'pulled' to uniformity with an old corn cob on a similar turning devise as the cántara, and then bonfired. Also removed from the fire while still hot, the pot is then drawn upon with a resin-rich pine gall.

This is a clever piece of functional cookware. The comal (a large, round flat clay platter essential in the Mexican kitchen to cook tortilla) requires three points of support over an open fire – one of which is supplied by the toe of the patojo. In addition to supporting the comal the potojo can also contain beans, or coffee, which cook at the same time. The rim of the pot has a pouring lip and a handle that faces away from the fire for ease of handling.

4. CURRENT TRENDS: THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

These four examples of contemporary indigenous pottery-making are just a small representation of what is still being produced around the world. They are intended to illustrate how many of the traditional forms, and their techniques of production, are keeping the potters of today connected to their ancestral roots. Over time, many indigenous potters have had to adopt new designs to meet market demands. This has resulted in a broad range of designs - from the innovative and sensitive to high kitsch. While many might argue that industrialised globalisation is the highest threat to indigenous communities, it can also be considered an opportunity for some (Salehudin, 2019).

National recognition for La Chamba's potters came originally in the 1930s when roads connected Colombia's rural villages to urban centres. By the 1950s the concept of producing 'tableware' rather than simply cooking pots, emerged, and the association with the national cuisine of Colombia became firmly enmeshed with the pots of La Chamba. Nowadays, global demand for La Chamba ware has enabled the introduction of the hammer mill (for crushing clay), the electric throwing wheel and a specially designed gas kiln¹². The latter has been constructed with a lightweight refractory fibre within a metal frame, and has a front-loading, lift-up door for easier access. The design changes of La Chamba ware created by greater global demand and the more advanced technology for production has meant more men are making the pots, thus upsetting the traditional female driven production patterns. It remains to be seen how this affects the tenuous hold that La Chamba still has to its ancestral roots.

While the pots of the Paneleiras de Goiabeiras have not reached the global recognition of Colombia's La Chamba ware, there is fierce national pride associated with the clay pots of Goiabeiras and the national dishes of Brazil – so much so that the Paneleiras de Goiabeiras were listed within the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Brazil in 2006 by the Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN). In eateries around the country, these rustic pots contain the legendary *feijoada*, *moqueca* and the *barreado* – all of which reflect Brasil's regional foods and clay pot traditions.

Contemporary young Brazilian chefs like Thiago Castanho in Belém, in northern Brazil are these days creating fine dining experiences that highlight and celebrate indigenous

¹² https://www.mytoque.com/pages/how-la-chamba-pottery-is-made The online cookware store, MyToque, illustrate the gas kiln in their video on how La Chamba ware is made.

ingredients often in association with traditional tableware. Internationally renowned chefs like Alex Atala and Helena Rizzo from São Paulo, and many others, are attempting to educate their public to new culinary experiences using Brazil's unique indigenous ingredients. These chefs value their producers and are so fearful of future food sources, particularly from the Amazon, that many have established institutes and schools to ensure that ethical production and collection practices are upheld¹³. In a country troubled by political uncertainty, unsustainable environmental practices, poverty and now a world pandemic, these chefs are creating small ripples that will hopefully gather greater momentum over time.

Lombok has also maintained many of its Sasak indigenous pottery practices, despite political and religious upheavals, acts of terrorism, periods of famine and natural disasters. By the 1980s, Indonesian government development efforts began to ease the privations suffered by the Sasak people through the instigation of craft assistance grants. As the island opened up to tourism, many traditional craftspeople in the fields of textiles, basket weaving and wood carving began catering specifically for that market. In 1988, the New Zealand Project was instigated – a bilateral craft development project that was to include pottery. The New Zealand Project aimed at preserving traditional Sasak pottery forms and creating new ones, while simultaneously improving production techniques through clay processing and firing methods.

The indigenous Sasak pottery forms that have managed to survive are associated with deeply embedded life rituals. Because of their association with past domesticity, these forms have slipped beneath the religious radar of condemnation as 'pagan' pre-Islamic practices.

Unlike the popularity of *barra negro* ware, much of Oaxaca's indigenous pottery is less well known but, like *barra negro*, is nevertheless directly connected to its ancestral past. Many rural villages in Oaxaca owe the survival of their ongoing practices to geographic isolation and so continue to produce pots using age-old techniques. Others like the Mateo family (comprising of sisters, aunts and nieces), who live and work in San Marcos Tlapazola, just south of Tlacolula in the eastern valley of Oaxaca use their ancient skills to collaborate with contemporary entrepreneurs. In this instance, indigenous making and firing skills remain intact, but the Mateo family are very receptive to developing contemporary designs and marketing strategies and work closely with a contemporary design team from Innovando la Tradicion¹⁴.

In the event that 'traditions of making' change to such an extent that their roots are no longer evident, and the work bears no resemblance to past forms or functions, even symbolic recognition is better than none at all - as long as somewhere, someone is telling the story behind the pots and their makers. So often the anonymity of the makers denies the users of these wares the rich personal, historical and cultural meaning behind the pots they are enjoying.

¹³ The Instituto Atá is a registered non-commercial property with the Brazilian Institute of Industrial Property to highlight the work of local food producers, while encouraging production and consumption habits that are ethical and responsible. www.institutoata.org.br ¹⁴ Innovando la Tradicion is a multidisciplinary non-profit and a sustainable design project team based in Oaxaca City who work collaboratively developing new products and markets for local potters of Oaxca. http://www.innovandolatradicion.org/innovandoE

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Author's Bio



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Acknowledgements:

The author has a large personal collection of indigenous clay cooking pots acquired internationally over many years. The research into indigenous clay cooking ware - its sourcing, collecting, research and ensuing publication work, is selffunded.

Reviving Indigenous Wool Craft of India

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Presentation link.



Abstract. The practice of hand crafting, in its classical form, has evolved over centuries shaped by cultural adaptations to particular biomes. They have been embedded in a web of community inter-relationships and closed loop economies. Traditional craft practices have always been intrinsically 'green', 'sustainable', and 'environment-friendly' without explicitly attempting to be any of these. However, handcraft eco systems started to alter and lose their customary ethos when they began to collide with mechanized hand skills, man-made fibres, globalized markets, and degrading ecologies. Over time, the traditional knowledge of craft making slowly became alienated from both its ecological roots, as well as the vast social tapestry which anchored the traditional craft, as well as its maker. Today, the craft product has begun to ride over the craft process, and the consumer reigns over the creative craft producer.

Even as millions across the globe revisit the linearity of our economies and seek greater circularity in our systems of production and consumption, we craftizens¹ also find ourselves introspecting upon the critical cogs of our craft value chains that have escaped attention all these years. It is with this spirit that we shine the spotlight on India's wool – in particular sheep wool - which is found in abundance, but languishes both in the marketplace and within pastoral craft cultures from where it is rapidly fading. And introduce the reader to recent attempts to revitalize the indigenous wool value chain in India.

Keywords: Wool craft, Indigenous wool, pastoralism, desi oon, India

¹An increasingly common word in Indian context to imply craft loving/practicing citizens.

1. The paper introduction

This paper traces the journey of sheep wool in India. It looks briefly at the political economy and changing eco system of sheep pastoralism, showcases the living tradition of wool textiles and associated craft practices, brings out the impact of globalization on India's wool craft industry, and highlights recent attempts, by a range of stakeholders, to rebuild the indigenous wool culture and economy in India.

The authors of this paper have been involved in ground interventions on the wool economy for many years now. Shouryamoy Das has been involved in a two year long study on wool value chains across the pastoral regions of India. This study was commissioned by The Centre for Pastoralism. Shouryamoy Das has also led field interventions on local wool with Khamir in Kutch and now anchors a program that aims to develop a collaborative partnership of several noted wool-craft organizations across India. Sushma Iyengar has engaged, amongst many other things, with the craft economies of India. She draws upon the research and documentation that she had put together while curating LL, her experiences in working with craft artisans, pastoralists, and investigating local and small scale economies. Sushma also mentors the wool study and the wool program at CfP. She continues to lead and curate the Living Lightly exhibition project.

Millions of pastoralists graze India's forests, wastelands, grasslands and farm fallows. Some estimates place the number of pastoralists in India at 10-12 million; others as high as 34 million². They are a familiar sight by the roadside, as they migrate seasonally over hundreds of kilometres, across diverse terrains of the Indian subcontinent. The Himalayas, coasts, arid and semi-arid desert ecosystems and tropical forests, have, for centuries, cradled a variety of pastoral systems which essentially flourish in conditions that are sub optimal for agriculture. Across these varied ecologies, a vast genetic resource of sheep, yak, goats and camels have been conserved and bred by several pastoral communities of the country who manage a bulk of India's 74 million sheep, 400 thousand camels, and close to half of its 135 million goats³. It is not surprising then, that India is home to a unique wool culture, craft and economy which has got severely ruptured in today's globalized world, but bides its time and awaits the possibilities of a revival.

India, in fact, has the second largest population of sheep in the world, rambling across the alpine shrubs and meadows of the Himalayas, the vast arid plains of Western India, as well as the farms, forests and grasslands of the Deccan (South). This impressive army of sheep is one of the tireless cogs of our economy; they fertilize vast tracts of rain fed farmlands with minimal costs, offer food security to millions with their milk and meat, and their hide is used for crafting products of great elegance and durability. Pastoralists communities of India such as the *Dhangars* of Maharashtra, *Kurumas* of Telangana, *Rabaris* and *Bharwads* of Gujarat, *Kurubas* of Karnataka and *Gaddis* and *Kanets* of Himachal, *Bakerwals* of Jammu and Kashmir, the *Changpas* of Ladakh, the *Raikas* of Rajasthan, *Gadariyas* of Bengal and Bihar, to name only a few, have all traditionally reared and bred dual purpose sheep breeds - sheep that produce incomes from sale of animals as well as sale of wool.

The diversity of all these terrains has made diversity of breeds a necessity. In fact, the pastoralist's acumen in recognizing and selecting breeding males is legendary, and the scientific community is slowly coming around to acknowledge them as expert breeders and keepers of genes. Nurtured by approximately 10 million shepherds across many ethnic communities and cultures, all the native sheep breeds are flawlessly adapted to their local conditions and fairly resilient to climatic variability; Official records state that there are

'FUTURING CRAFT' THE INDIAN OCEAN CRAFT TRIENNIAL IOTA21

² http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/content/16735/pastoralists-at-the-crossroads/ ³ https://dahd.nic.in/about-us/divisions/statistics
forty three recognized native sheep breeds in India, while our own studies and experiences indicate there are many more such breeds – and a diverse range of wool fibres available.

India's large sheep population produces, on record, more than 40 million kilos of wool⁴, making India one of the top producers of wool in the world. However, it is ironic that while we boast of the second largest population of sheep in the world, and are one of the largest producers of wool, this is the only natural fibre in which we remain deficient! Till about 2-3 decades back⁵, all our sheep regions used to house a closed loop wool economy. However, over the past two decades, globalization and the ensuing trade and tariff policies caused a high degree of duress to these economies, as discussed later in the paper. The extent of stress on the local wool economy first came to the fore in 2015, during our research for Living Lightly⁶, a travelling exhibition on the lives and livelihoods of pastoral communities in India. Our research revealed the sharp collapse in the local regional and national markets. Shepherd after shepherd lamented that they were left with very few takers for their 'coarse' wool, and we would see their wool lying strewn on roadsides as they migrated with their flock across hostile highways and tricky terrains.

1.1. Storied Textiles From Pastoral Terrains – A Fading Heritage

Pastoral systems are one leg of the wool economy. The artisan community and the wool craft practices that accompany them, is the other. Wool artisans across pastoral landscapes have been deft at coaxing the unique characteristics of the fibre from the equally unique, native breeds. Historically, herding communities were themselves the wool artisans too, and though the herding and artisanal roles are largely performed by separate communities in many regions today, many herding communities and families continue to carry the skills to process wool and produce the yarn. While men harvest the wool using traditional shears, the wool is cleaned and hand carded largely by women. It is the crafting of the product – be it weaving, felting, knitting – which is then taken over by other inter-dependent communities or other members of the same community in the village.

India's indigenous wool industry houses an amazing array of crafting practices and this cultural industry has sustained rural livelihoods at little or no cost to the environment. A wide diversity of colour, texture, length and width of wool fibres have shaped simple, signature hand crafted, hand spun products across the country. And a range of wool artisans – hand spinners, weavers, felters and dyers have, for centuries, been integral to the indigenous pastoral practices, cultures and economies which have developed textile crafts of great elegance and utility.

For many pastoralist communities in India, wool is a sacred fibre, and with good reason, one may argue. Wool is an extremely versatile fibre - it insulates against harsh weather, withstands rains, can be crafted in many ingenious ways, produces high quality compost when it degrades, and provides thermal comfort in scorching heat and biting cold. Woollens also last long, need fewer washes and tend to repel all kinds of grit and dirt, making maintenance relatively simple and frugal. For mobile pastoralists who needed clothing that could sustain through long migrations, remain durable, and protect them from extreme

⁴ Basic Animal Husbandry Statistics-2019, https://dahd.nic.in/about-us/divisions/statistics ⁵ Nationwide wool study commissioned by Centre for Pastoralism (Unpublished)

⁶Living Lightly is a travelling exhibition that captures the lives of Indian pastoralists – their remarkable history of mobility, the eco-systems that nurture their life-world, their culture, science, art, spiritual moorings and the economics of herding. Even as the globe warms up and we all search for earnest shifts in lifestyles, and try to locate sustainable spaces within our own lives, it is perhaps time to educate ourselves on how pastoralists live lightly on this land, and their many contributions to our culture and economy.

climates, wool was indeed god-sent. Apart from pastoralists crafting resilient woollen products for their own use, they had always found a market for their wool and their woollen product. As noted by (Rao 1927, page 11)

Never has the Kuruba felt any anxiety for the disposal of his goods. He does not know where the demand comes from, but is always able to sell his wares almost at his doors

1.2. Blankets and Shawls



Figure 1: A Shawl crafted using Patanwadi wool in Kutch. Image courtesy Khamir

Not surprisingly, the traditional wool crafted textiles one finds across pastoral geographies in India are starkly similar in their use - though delightfully varied in their craft and technique. Take the ubiquitous coarse woollen blanket which was never traded but has always thrived because of necessity and a high local demand. It peaked in its use and production during the first and Second World War; and post India's independence, it continued to be procured both by the army and the railways. Within the pastoralist communities though, the blanket's rich roughness was embellished with woven patterns and always doubled up as a shawl. The Pattu, Bardi, Dhabda, Gardu, Kullvi Shawls, and the Gongadi – are all storied textiles of the pastoralist communities from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh respectively.



Figure 2: A Shawl being woven in a traditional loom in Kutch. Image courtesy Khamir

Until very recently, crafts and craft communities have worked with local materials, found patrons in their immediate communities, and shared a relationship of trust and symbiosis, not just with other human communities, but also with the natural environment. Wool artisans made products that withstood the test of time because they were masters of the raw material first, and skilled artisans second. Thanks to their legacy, their craftsmanship was centred on their deep knowledge of the fleece and the fibre, slowly gathered over generations. And the crafted product itself was a matter of knowing the user, their tastes, needs, and aesthetics which made crafted product special.



Figure 3: A heavily patterned Dhabda woven in Kutch. Image courtesy Khamir

Shamjibhai, a weaver from the Vankar community in Kutch, while speaking about the close patron- client bond they enjoyed back in time with the sheep and goat rearing Rabari pastoralists in their village Bhujodi, observed⁷:

It was not uncommon for a Rabari to come to the loom and count the warp threads to ensure the quality of the product.

The herders in the semi-arid parts of western India are known to be sticklers for quality, often challenging the meghwal marwada weavers to reach finer levels of finesse. Heavily patterned with extra-weft threads, the Dhabdas and the Pattus of these regions thus remain as one of the most intricately woven pieces of India's textile heritage, known for their versatility. A weaver takes a few months to produce the more intricate ones, with painstaking attention to detail which is reflected in the beauty and durability of these textiles. Dhabdas and Pattus are used as blankets but also serve as shawls, lightweight mattresses, and improvised sacks to carry stuff.

Similarly, the Bardi is a checked shawl of Rajasthan. Woven in a twill pattern, the Bardi continues to be exchanged as gifts on marriage occasions of several communities in Rajasthan.

⁷ Documentation of wool weaving craft of Kutch, undertaken by one of the authors, Sushma lyengar, for the travelling exhibition on pastoralism called 'Living Lightly'. Sushma lyengar is the lead curator of the exhibition



Figure 4: Two shepherds with piles of Gardus in the meadows of Himachal Pradesh. Image courtesy Peter Van Geit / Ultrajourneys.org

The Himalayan shepherds spend four to five months on the higher reaches of the alpine meadows; But the monsoon showers and cold nights find their able match in a Gardu ~ a dense woven woollen textile that has a felted finish which makes it impervious to cold rain and chilly winds alike. One reason why cheap plastic sheets have perhaps not fully displaced the wollen Gardu yet, as it has in the plains, is that plastic can only insulate from rain, but definitely not from extreme wind or cold as wool can. The *Gaddi* pastoralists from Himachal Pradesh have also gifted the world their popular Kullvi Shawl which are noted for their intricate weaves and highly stylised motifs.



Figure 5: A Gongadi and Thigh Spinning Spindle. Image courtesy authors

Similarly, the iconic Gongadi blanket is integral to the lives of sheep pastoralists and communities in the Deccan. The yarn is hand-spun with a charkha or thigh spun by women pastoralists, by using a spindle. The coarse wool yarn is then woven on standing pit-looms across the Deccan. Woven in both black and white wool of the native Dakhani sheep breed, Gongadis are popular amongst the shepherds as well as farmers of these regions who have traditionally shared a close relationship with the pastoralists who pen their sheep and fertilize the rain fed farms.

1.3. Rugs & Coverings

Wool craft artisans were always part of a closed loop value chain. They worked on local materials and produced goods for local consumption. The raw material was well understood, expertly crafted, and ethically sourced. The products and the processes, through which they were produced, evolved over generations - a unique coming together of refinement and functionality. They were more than just products-the wool and every use of it reflected community ethos; these products were also a result of several generations of interrelationships between the herding and the artisan communities. Quality was not compromised because it was a matter of reputation and a source of pride.



Figure 6: A Kharad on a Kharad Loom and with weaving tools. Image courtesy Khamir

Like pastoralist lands across the world, the semi-arid parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan in western India too, have a repertoire of nomadic looms. These very basic looms have often accompanied herders on their migratory trails, and have birthed rugs made of a tough weave called Kharads, each made to last a hundred years. The Kharad artisans, who belong to the *Meghwal Marwada* community in Kutch and in parts of Rajasthan, often also wove panels which were stitched to make heavy duty bags for carrying loads on animal backs. Similarly, the craft of felting wool was always a very localized, specialized craft – never making it to the trade charts! For instance, in Kutch, the *Mansuris* are known for their Felt craft, and though the felt artisan families have dwindled to a handful, the depth of the craft has survived. Felted textiles were historically used primarily as mattresses or as saddlery. Interestingly, the *Mansuris* are the only artisan community of India who continue to produce three dimensional felted animal covers and saddles. These saddles are markers of status and identity, and even today the erstwhile royal clans of Kutch and Saurashtra are willing to pay top dollar for these saddles.



Figure 7: Saddle felt from Kutch. Image courtesy Khamir



Figure 8: Jaan felt being crafted in Deccan. Image courtesy Living Lightly

Like the *Mansuris*, the *Nadafs* in Maharashtra are acknowledged as the masters of felt craft. In the Deccan regions of South India, felted wool continued to be in demand in rural fairs and bazaars and the art of felting wool into hard mattresses known as *Jaans* continues to thrive in villages of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

1.4. Array of Wool Apparels

Documented history of the wool story in India tells us that, for people in the plains and the middle classes, winter clothing consisted largely of cotton, and it was only around the 1920s that woollen clothes began to replace cotton garments as winter wear (Roy 2003). However, unknown to the mainstream of India, mobile pastoralists had already evolved a wide array of woollen attires that would be the envy of any fashion designer today. The skill and craft of the herders, spinners, weavers, felters, and dyers all converged at the hands of the clothes makers (from pastoralist families and communities too) who hand stitched coats, blouses, pants, head gear, caps, skirts, wraps and more.



Figure 9: A Dora being felt finished in Himachal Pradesh. Image courtesy Jen Hoover



Figure 10: An elderly woman in a Lahua in Uttarakhand. Image courtesy Shepherds of Himalayas

The weavers of Himachal, for instance, weave a thick fabric which was traditionally stitched into a Chola, a loose coat, held together with a long woollen rope called the Dora. The loose coat had enough room to carry a new-born lamb, herbs, and knick-knacks - all stuffed into the ample folds of the *Chola!* These days the weavers make Coat *Pattis*- a narrow width fabric which is stitched into stylish jackets. Yet another popular attire in the Himalayan State of Uttarakhand was the wool wrap worn by the women, almost like a saree. Called the *Lahua*, these wraps are not too popular anymore, and survive only in a few remote villages of the region.



Figure 11: Woven with extra-weft, tied and dyed and then embroidered Ludkis. Image courtesy Khamir

In Kutch the *Rabari* herders wear the tied & dyed black woolen ludki while the *Bharwad* herders wear the dotted tangaliyas – both part of a craft rich trousseau which young girls embroider and embellish with great care from the age of twelve.

1.5. The Sacred Cloth

For sheep herding communities in every region, the sheep and her wool sanctifies all their life cycle rituals, from birth to death. As noted⁸ by Shankar Ningappa Shannakoi, a Jhanda and a Gongadi weaver based in Kargaon village of Belgaum, Karnataka in South India:

On the third day of a baby being born, we have a ritual called Purudu. We place our wool in the cradle and cover it with a white fabric. The baby is laid on top of it. If a baby boy, we surround him with tools used for shearing and little baskets of wool. If a baby girl, we place our carding and spinning tools beside her. And their life as a shepherd begins!

⁸ Documentation of Gongadi, the local wool blanket in the Southern States of Telangana, Maharashtra and Karnataka, undertaken by one of the authors, Sushma Iyengar, and Khyati Vinod for the travelling exhibition on pastoralism called 'Living Lightly'. Sushma Iyengar is the lead curator of the Living Lightly exhibition



Figure 12: A Temple ritual performed on a Gongadi in Karnataka. Image courtesy Living Lightly

The Gongadis, crafted from the wool of the indigenous Deccani sheep, embody a mix of the everyday and the extraordinary ~ for instance shepherds wear the black Gongadi over their right shoulder, while priests wear it over their right, and the deities are clad within its folds during temple rituals, processions and festivals . A person's status is revealed by the distinct patterns of the Kada (hand woven border) and the Suncha (tassels) of the Gongadi. Then again, in southern Karnataka, the wool culture has inspired a unique three dimensional prayer flag called the 'Jhanda', woven with a double shaft. In Kutch, the shearing season is ushered in with a special prayer to the Bhediya Mata – the sheep goddess. The ritual is marked by a special offering of a black hand spun, hand woven cloth. This sacred cloth is fully made in a single day- at the crack of dawn, the wool sheared from the first sheep of the habitat is hand spun on a drop spindle, and the yarn is then taken to the weaver who waits in readiness at his loom. Well before dusk, the sheep goddess receives her freshly woven offering from the Rabari pastoralists and the Vankar weavers in a special evening ritual. Wool is also woven into the social fabric of *Gaddi* pastorals so much so that spinning is a custom in every marriage- the bride and the groom both are made to spin yarn as part of their marriage ceremony.

While the use and symbolic presence of wool craft and textiles in the socio-cultural rituals of pastoralist communities continues even today, their traditional garments and furnishings have largely disappeared. A textile heritage, co-created by pastoralists, hand spinners, weavers, felters, dyers, and tailors across the Himalayas, the Deccan and the arid plains of India, has got lost in piles of synthetic yarn. India's indigenous wool has always been considered to be too 'coarse' to be apparel grade; However, that apart, there are many other factors that have allowed synthetic fibres to replace woollen textiles in the lives of pastoralists and artisans themselves. Even as the process of making woollen fabric became specialized, it became more expensive in comparison to synthetic fibres which were far cheaper, thanks to the significant State subsidies that the man-made fibre industry

received from the early 1980s onwards. Synthetic fibres were enabled to penetrate the remotest of areas, making these fibres very accessible and affordable for traditional communities. Synthetic fibre was cheap, accessible, softer to touch, and aspirational; So, gradually the younger generation began to find clothing made of synthetic yarn a lot more appealing.

However, the final blow came with the surge of industrial look-alikes that began to flood the local bazaars. In the past two decades, textile products that were produced on power looms, using shoddy yarn – a mix of synthetic waste fibre, cotton fibres, and cheap imported wool – learnt to mimic the original woollen product designs with insidious precision. For instance, a 'fake' Gongadi could now sell at one fourth the price of the least expensive Deccani sheep wool, hand woven original! Not content with providing an enabling policy environment to imported wool and synthetic fibres, the government even joined the kill directly by distributing tents and alpine wear to shepherds in the Himalayas! It must also be said here that with the shrinking pastures, difficulties in accessing forage and barriers to mobility due to large infrastructural projects, many pastoralists have opted out of pastoralism. They are not as exposed to climate extremities as they were while they were mobile, and camping under the stars. And their changed lifestyles do not have the practical need for coarse wool textiles, as they did before.

1.6. Left out in the Cold

The full and enthusiastic adoption of cheaper, state subsidized, synthetic textiles by traditional wool wearers for their daily wear is only symptomatic of larger shifts in the political economy of textile trade in India. Conventional wisdom would expect India to be a powerhouse of woollen textiles. However, the ground reality cannot be more different - India spends up to 2000 crores of precious foreign exchange every year to import wool. How did this come to be?

Over the past three decades, India's wool market has moved completely to imported wools which are softer and of longer staple length. India's wool accounts for only 3% of the world's textile market. And is the only natural fibre in which we are deficient, despite the impressive heritage of our wool culture and the large sheep population.

Pastoralists from the Himalayas and the Deccan report that even two and a half decades ago, their wool fetched a market price that was almost equal to that of meat. However, two developments have had a crushing impact on India's indigenous wool. First, the elimination of tariff barriers on wool in the early nineties led to the Indian wool industry sector moving to the softer, longer staple wool from New Zealand, Turkey and other parts of the Middle East; Quantitative restrictions on woollen textile imports fell from 100 percent in 1988-89 to just 27.27percent in 1995-96. As a consequence, the import of Woollen Yarn & Fabrics expanded from 103 million rupees in 1999-00 to 1679 million rupees in 2003-04 - an astounding jump of more than 16 times in a space of 4 years! Similarly the Raw Wool imports too grew by 60% in the same five year period (Goldar 2005)

Over the last couple of decades, the trade of indigenous wool in Bikaner Mandi - India's largest wool market and aggregation centre - has declined to one-tenth of its turnover. Not surprisingly, the bulk of indigenous wool ends up on the roadside with few takers. This crisis has only deepened by the increased market share of synthetic fibres such as acrylic and viscose, which have replaced the use of wool – a short staple fibre that does not lend itself to industrial spindles which can take only long staple length fibres. Of the Indian wool that does manage to reach the markets - and all of it produced by pastoral communities - nearly 95% is used as carpet grade wool or as some form of bulk filling in blankets, with only 5% used in apparels (Government of India 2008).

Second, the growing demand for meat exports has resulted in governments promoting livestock breeds which are meaty and less woolly. In response, pastoralists have, over time, begun to cross their native sheep breeds with more 'productive' breeds (meaning more fatty), which are relatively lower on woolly growth; Not surprisingly, indigenous sheep breeds have reduced in proportion to the overall flock and, correspondingly, the production of local wool has also declined very sharply in the past two decades, across India. Policy shifts have thus led to increased dependence of the pastoral system on the sale of animals primarily for the meat trade. The dependence on meat exports is evident from the fact that exports of small ruminant meat has more than doubled in just six years - from 22,906 MT in 2017-18 to 10,083 MT in 2011-12!

Pastoralists have always been adept at and quick to cope with economic, ecological and political shifts by making studied adaptations to their migratory patterns, routes, and the sheep breeds they maintain. Naturally then, the big shifts they have made is in the sheep breeds they maintain. Riding on the growing export market for sheep meat, in the past 25 years, pastoralists have begun to replace their native breeds with cross breeds which have more fat, less wool, and are better able to traverse longer distances at greater speed. As a result, even though there has been a stark dilution of native sheep breeds, the total population of sheep in the country has actually doubled since India's independence and sheep pastoralism continues to remain a reasonably attractive livelihood proposition.

This dilution and reduction of native sheep, which are far more climate resilient than cross breeds, has also meant increased risk and expense for the pastoralists. Their dependency on exotic breeds has entailed more animal health care, and supplementary feed, in effect multiplying the carbon footprint by manifolds. While it has also led to the loss and dilution of precious genetic resources that are well adapted to climatic variability - by itself a matter of grave concern – the overwhelming emphasis on the meat trade has also pushed the wool economy into a state of utter neglect by policy makers, wool researchers, technologists, entrepreneurs, the markets and as a consequence, the consumers.

Despite all these changes, the carpet industry in India continued to grow through the years and became a significant consumer of the wool produced by herders. Bikaner, in Rajasthan, became the hub of wool trade and a large volume of sheep wool harvested by pastoralists from across India, would land in Bikaner. The wool of Magra and Chokla sheep breeds of Rajasthan, for instance, was considered the best quality carpet wool of India. These wools are valued for their lustre as well as their ability to retain shape even under compression, making them perfect for pile carpets. However, with wool from Australia, New Zealand, Syria, and China becoming cheaper and easier to access on the one hand, and synthetic fibres making inroads into the carpet industry, finer, flimsy carpets have begun to take over the carpet industry. And in the past decade especially, the percentage of local sheep wool in carpets has fallen from 70-80 points to a measly 15-20 points. With this abysmal fall in the use of indigenous wool, even by the thriving carpet industry, India's sheep wool is pretty much on its last breath.

So, while our wool trade has allowed imported wool to flood the market with relative ease, it has failed to acknowledge the fact that India's sheep numbers – even if it is not largely native anymore – it is, potentially, by itself, a large sheep wool economy!

1.7. Desi Oon: Readying for a comeback?

Is there no hope then, for India's sheep wool to make a comeback?

With pastoral and agricultural communities having moved away from wool, many wool artisans have found themselves at the crossroads. In a world rocked by the tides of free trade and globalization, where products invariably override the process, these craft artisans

could barely be expected to carry the burden of their tradition. While many of them moved to alternate occupations, including wage labour, some continued their craft, adapting to newer fibres including cotton, silk, and acrylic. And yet, despite being displaced from wool based livelihoods, in every sheep terrain of India, one can meet a critical mass of stolid pastoralists and artisans who have retained the knowledge, skill, technique and passion for shearing, felting, weaving, spinning and processing wool. They inspire hope and have displayed great enthusiasm for switching back to wool if it can bring them higher earnings. It is with these artisans and pastoralists that the Centre for Pastoralism has embarked upon a fresh journey to revitalize India's Desi Oon in the public imagination⁹.

Clearly, for sheep pastoralists and wool craft artisans to be able to earn an equitable living from their wool and wool crafts, the entire wool value chain will need to be infused with a range of enabling policies, fibre research and development, new investment in processing infrastructure, more inventive and contemporary uses for wool, design explorations for new processes and products, institutional collaborations, wool enterprises and entrepreneurs, receptive markets and consumer education! And through this journey, pastoralists and the wool artisanal community will need the patronage of urban and overseas consumers in their quest for equitable returns.

While this is clearly an economy waiting to be unfurled, our efforts to revitalize this economic, cultural and ecological loop of local wool is littered with challenges. We would like to dwell here on a range of strategies that are being crafted, keeping in mind local variations and diversity in pastoral systems, climates, wool, and wool craft. For example, the wool of the Himalayas is greasy and soft, while wool from the arid regions is coarse but not greasy. The processing of these two different kinds of wool would therefore naturally require appropriate adjustments in tools and techniques. It is equally critical that we keep an eye on the big, and the small. And so, while we try and reposition this wool in the regional, national and global markets, we need to reimagine ways by which we can reinvigorate closed-loop economies, localize the production and consumption of wool, and rekindle the texture of relationship that still lingers between pastoralists and wool artisans.

The Centre for Pastoralism in India, a recent institutional initiative to support pastoral livelihoods, is supporting efforts to conserve the indigenous wool eco system, and encourage reinvestment in the wool economy. Through research, advocacy, partnerships, outreach and field interventions, it is trying to enhance the potential of this fibre and prod it back into the public imagination. This journey to develop contemporary wool crafted textiles has been kick-started with support to a small group of pastoralists in Rajasthan with decentralized facilities to shear, clean and card their sheep wool. The dispersed nature of sheep herding and wool economies necessitates localized service points which can enable pastoralists to regain agency and provide better quality wool.

⁹ Hand spinning is a home based source of livelihood and is oriented to vulnerable women artisans who are single, older or due to social strictures to mobility unable to enter the wage labour market. This is a far more dignified source of earning for such women than any other alternative. The incentive for the pastoralist communities is that it maximizes their earning by providing yarn instead of wool and engages the entire family as it did traditionally.



Figure 13: Shepherds washing sheep at a facility established by Urmul-Rangsutra¹⁰ Image courtesy Rangsutra

With India's wool having lost its comparative advantage to imported wools, in part due to its inherent texture, it has become critical that the real and perceived feel of the fibre is enhanced, especially for application in textiles. To address the challenges of fibre coarseness, fresh efforts are being poured into softening the wool and leveraging the diversity of wool crafting skills by blending wool at fibre stage, weaving cotton & wool yarn blends, and innovating with the weaves.

¹⁰ Urmul (https://www.urmul.org/) is a network of organizations, working in western Rajasthan. Rangsutra (https://rangsutra.com/) is a company owned by a community of over 2000 artisans across rural India.



Figure 14: A variety of blended yarns developed by Khamir¹¹ Image courtesy Khamir



Figure 15: A Bhotiya artisan associated with Avani¹² weaves on a backstrap loom. Image courtesy Avani

¹¹Khamir (http://khamir.org/about/khamir/who)to strengthen and promote the rich artisanal traditions of Kachchh district.

¹²Avani (https://avani-kumaon.org/) is a community built on the principles of sustainability and local empowerment.

Given the diversity of tools and techniques found amongst pastoralist communities, in hand spinning wool, craftizens (craft artisans, consumers, craft organizations, lovers of craft) are being urged to rededicate themselves to hand spinning as well as small scale mechanized spinning. Apart from generating rural livelihoods, it lends the textile a distinct texture and ethic. However, the high costs of decentralized hand spinning is a killer, largely due to the time and labour involved, and the use of hand spun yarn becomes viable only for premium markets; it just does not stand up to the economies of scale. It is therefore equally essential that small scale spinning units be established in pastoral regions so that weavers and craft organizations have easy access to indigenous wool yarn at reasonable prices which can make it accessible to the commoners.



Figure 16: A felt bag designed and produced by Dakhni Diaries. Image courtesy Dakhni Dairies

Considering the enormous surplus of sheep wool available in India, explorations and innovations are underway to redefine craft techniques which have the ability to absorb large quantities of wool at lower costs. In a nationwide study undertaken by CFP, the craft of wool felting emerged as the real ace up India's sleeves. Felting is extremely flexible and can be used to produce a wide range of products and textiles in varying shapes and sizes. Felting in contemporary times is also used to make all sorts of accessories, toys etc. Its ability to absorb huge quantities of coarse wool is extremely high and the versatility of this craft also makes it a suitable solution for building insulation – both in terms of sound and thermal comfort. New explorations and experiments in wool felts for insulation, mattresses and handicraft products have therefore given cause for hope.



wool from the native breeds of india

Figure 15: The Desi Oon Logo. Courtesy Khamir

Desi Oon – Hamara Apna (Native Wool – Our Own) is the brand buzz that is gradually galvanizing local wool communities across the country. Stitched together by a collaboration of wool craft organizations, the Desi Oon campaign is gathering momentum and raising the consciousness of the State and citizens to the wool wealth that they hold. Multiple physical and online exhibitions on indigenous wool have been organized in the past four years, bringing together noted researchers, academics, and practitioners engaged in wool work and CFP is hopeful that these efforts can ignite the desi oon economy to flourish in all the sheep-countries of India.



Figure 16: Desi Oon Exhibition at Bikaner House, Delhi in Jan 2020. Image courtesy Khamir



Figure 17: A product created by Khamir for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021. Image courtesy Living Lightly



Figure 19: A range of home furnishing products created by Rangsutra for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021. Image courtesy Living Lightly



Figure 20: A checked shawl created by Kullvi WHIMS¹³ for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021. Image courtesy Living Lightly

¹³ Kullvi WHIMS is a self-help group formed by nine women artisans of Naggar village in Kullu Valley who work with the local wool and learnt spinning, weaving, knitting and crochet



Figure 21: A woollen blouse and a jacket inspired by traditional textiles developed for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021 by Khamir. Image courtesy Living Lightly



Figure 22: A shawl created by Shamji Vankar¹⁴ for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021. Image courtesy Living Lightly

¹⁴ Shamji is a noted weaver based in Kutch



Figure 22: A Jacket developed by Kalori Collective¹⁵ for Desi Oon Exhibition Dec-Jan 2021. Image courtesy Living Lightly

Pastoral animals play a significant role in seed dispersal, biodiversity conservation, and carbon sequestration. The wool produced and harvested in these extensive systems carry low ecological footprints, or should we say handprint? With climate change looming large and near, we need a fibre that is easy to maintain, has a negligible footprint, and can be processed into textiles in small decentralized setups. Desi Oon ticks all the boxes and gives us reason to believe that this is the fibre of the future. The larger indigenous wool economy goes beyond the fibre and entails last mile conservation of the entire value chain – beginning with ensuring access to forage; breed recognition and conservation; animal

¹⁵ Kalori is a collective of five young weavers from Kutch.

health; artisanal knowledge and skills in wool processing; craft practices; the artisans and pastoral livelihoods; and research & documentation of the pastoral systems and ethics of livestock keeping.. It demands policy shifts and transformative action – above all the collaboration and converging interests by a range of institutions. This is a steep and difficult climb on which the Desi Oon Hub has embarked on.

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Author's Bio



Sushma lyengar is a well known social worker. During the past three decades, she has founded and led organizations in the area of gender justice, indigenous cultures, traditional livelihoods, local governance, and post disaster rehabilitation including Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan. She is associated with many civil society organizations in India as a mentor and educator and is the president of Khamir, a platform for craft artisans which works with the ecosystems of their crafts, and an adjunct professor with the Centre for Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University. Her publications include Picture This! Painting the Women's Movement (University of Chicago, 2013). She is the lead curator of the exhibition 'Living Lightly – Journeys with Pastoralists' - an outcome of her longstanding interest and experience with indigenous communities, including nomadic pastoralists.



Shouryamoy is passionate about crafts and ecology. He had his formal education in engineering and finance. He quit the business world in 2014 after short stints in the Software and the Investment banking industries to pursue his interests in working with rural pastoral and craft communities of India.

Materiality, Craft As An Occupation, An Emotion And As An Object

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Abstract. "As human beings, we rely on non-human things; the objects that are central to the sustenance of our physical and mental life." -IOTA21 "Futuring Craft"

This statement resonated on so many levels when thinking about craft, its meaning and its value. Being an educator and a maker, we have seen and been part of the process, as well as in the making of craft. Working with the artisans from Gilgit Baltistan, Hunza, in the northern part of Pakistan to the southern region in Umerkot, and Thatta has made us see how craft has been a result of necessity where form-follows-function. Each craft practice varies due to its geographical, climatic, cultural differences, which further informs the medium it is made in, and these differences are evident in the sensibility of its design and other attributes.

Pakistan comes with a rich heritage and tradition in craft practices, simultaneously sharing with India as both are an outcome of one of the biggest migrations in history that took place in 1947. However, no matter how many similarities there are to both regions, there are also distinct differences as well. For the making of craft, the idea of materiality and its tactile nature is absolute in its making. Materiality is based around the concept of quality, which is how the artisan puts his/her soul, emotions and confidence in the process and into the materials used. It is this sentiment that gives the importance of traditional handiwork in contemporary craft practices some of which are applique work (Rilli,) block printing (Ajrak,) blue ceramic pottery (Kashigari) etcetera. This rich local craft also translates into the realm of interior spaces as well as architecture through wooden screens (Jharokha/ Jaffri,) marquetry, decorative gravestones of Makli and Chawkandi in Sindh as well as wood carved furniture from Chiniot. This craft crossover from wearable fashion to home textiles to interior architectural elements celebrates not just the artisan but their craft.

Craft, is therefore acknowledged as a means of empowerment, and co-exists with its monetary aspect. However, it is an object that interacts physically (with the act of making) and mentally (with the emotions that one goes through in the making) which are inherent in its design and gives the user the experience through emotional and aesthetic pleasure.

In this research paper we look at the various crafts that exist and the crosspollination of these objects within our spaces, whether through fashion, textile or through addition of elements within the living spaces.

Keywords: Subcontinental craft, materiality, consumption, object, emotion, occupation.

1. Introduction

Craft has a purpose. A necessity which may have started simpler but later on evolved to accommodate ornamentation. Now this process has become standard. In Europe and North America, the mention of textiles in Pakistan normally calls to mind the rather mediocre quality carpets mass produced in Pakistan for export to the West. The first rate scholarly volume accompanying an exhibition at Victoria and Albert museum in London in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the independence of Pakistan demonstrates the richness and quality of the other textile production in the area.

Craft has and always been a way to carry on traditions. It can be said that craft makers may bind themselves symbolically to the larger environment of family, friends, neighbours or other groups. Simultaneously at the same time, Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell argue that there are two main meanings for craft: significance of the craft objects and meaning incorporated in the making of the craft objects. Crafts are embedded with meanings through their creation, and they carry the symbolism of the maker and relationships with other people. Which reiterates the aim of the paper that any object made by hand with skill is not detached from connection between the maker and the object itself. However, in present times, to sustain the practice of craft and its continuity, it has taken more of a commercial approach where the artist / designer dictates the craft person. This in return takes away the bond between material and the maker which results in a mundane routine of just making and selling hence becoming a mere commodity. If we look back in history the subcontinent was at the forefront when it came to design, skill and aesthetics.

In (McGowan, 2005), she talks about the first great exhibition of singular ideas of Indian design that emerged in 1851 at the Great Exhibition in London. In 1880's and 1890's, British officials worried that traditional Indian design was disappearing in the face of rapid westernization. But their idea of what constituted 'traditional' design itself was new. Forged first at international exhibitions and then in the context of Indian artisanal and

consumer experimentation with novel combinations of foreign styles and objects. Indeed in latter which prompted British art officials in India to call for a return to tradition. But traditionalism in design was not just in reaction to Indian cosmopolitans tendencies; it tried to achieve its own, slightly different cosmopolitanism by indianizing western forms with the application of pure Indian ornament. In 1903, Viceroy of India, Lord Curozon opened an exhibition in Delhi of Indian artwares as part of the festivities associated with the coronation durbar of Edward VII. The exhibition focused not only on fine arts but on crafts in keeping with the orientalist assumptions that Indians were only capable of applied arts.

To determine what happened to create a single category called Indian design identifies two stages of change that took place. The concept first emerged in conjunction with the great exhibition, the Europeans observers identified key skills, sophisticated use of color and ornaments, which is essential to Indian design. The first expression of a singular idea of Indian design emerged in 1851 at the great exhibition in London in the glass exhibition hall. The Indian court occupied a central spot befitting India's status as the jewel in the British imperial crown. never before had such a range of things from the subcontinent been displayed in a single display in Europe.

Although Pakistan is only 70+ years old as an independent country it is the site of the earliest evidence of the settled society in South Asia, the Indus Valley, Mohenjodaro and Harappan sites dated from the fourth millennium BC. A sophisticated material culture was certainly in place there by about 5000 BC and a wealth of decorated pottery from the period has been excavated. Mohenjodaro has also provided us with the earliest actual textile samples from the subcontinent. In addition to the extraordinary antiquity of the indigenous textile tradition of Pakistan, the design, materials and textiles made in the various regions have been strongly influenced by the cultural changes brought about by successive influxes of outsiders. The whole of Pakistan has been subject to the movement of people from west Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. India has also experienced continuous movement of population within its own boundaries.

One of the most influential artists writing about the exhibition, Owen Jones called the opportunity of studying the Indian goods, 'a boon to the whole of Europe' and noted that all the artists he knew shared his opinion that 'the Indian and Tunisian articles were the most perfect in design of any that appeared in the exhibition' (McGowan, 2005)

In the 1600's, Queen Elizabeth granted the right to the East India Company (EIC) to trade in the East Indies. Akbar was the ruler of the Mughal empire at the time. In the 1700's the EIC dominated the global textile trade, establishing its centre's in Madras, Bombay and Bengal, as the Mughal Empire started its slow decline.

This led to the Arts & Crafts movement (1850-1920) which promoted craftsmanship and the use of locally available materials with the age-old dictum "truth to materials" which was a reaction against the Industrial Revolution (IR) (1750-1850) and mass production. The IR single handedly changed the textile trade. Production moved from Indian hand-weavers to British factories, lowering prices and increasing access. In 1858, the subcontinent was taken over by the crown: the British Raj started, ending with the Partition in 1947 which subsequently saw the birth of the two countries India and Pakistan. We also saw an introduction of various construction techniques such as the Barracks typology (Mountain Batt Barracks, Quetta, Pakistan) that was introduced for housing regiments in cantonment areas by the EIC after annexation, which indicates Karachi's status as an important military settlement. The Bangla typology (Flagstaff house, 1890, Karachi, Pakistan. Architect Moases Smokes) was a variant of the barracks. It was introduced as stand-alone, single family housing for the administrative staff. The Palladian style carried on the classical Roman vocabulary used to dress up building facades which indicated superiority of the classical western tradition. This led to the Christian zeal where there was a range of attitudes, both positive and antagonistic, towards local traditions and cultures. The architecture in 1857 Pakistan saw Church architecture becoming a symbol of colonial power. Gothic style was favoured over the earlier classical styles. In 1852 Trinity church was the first major church constructed in Karachi, Pakistan. In 1865 Frere Hall; the first Gothic building constructed in Karachi, Pakistan. Some of the Indo-gothic style architecture designed by architect James Strachan include the Empress Market, (1884) Denso Hall (1886) as well as the Merewether Clock Tower (1886) which till today dictate the urban architecture of Pakistan. Existing local construction techniques of "frame of heavy logs upon which short, interlaced wooden strips were placed to receive a thick layer of mud plaster", similar to that still used in Thatta, Pakistan are still used.

Nithikul Nimkulrat in her article Hands-on Intellect: Integrating Craft Practice into Design Research reflects upon her previous research where she talks about how in textiles as well as other material-designated disciplines, craft is understood not only as a way of making things by hand, but also as a way of thinking through the hand manipulating a material (Nimkulrat, 2010, p. 64).

Craft is thus "a means for logically thinking through senses" (Nimkulrat, 2010, p. 75) This understanding follows the notion of craft as "a way of thinking through practices of all kinds" (Adamson, 2007, p. 7) and "a dynamic process of learning and understanding through material experience" (Gray & Burnett, 2009, p. 51) She further emphasises that through the knowledge of craft, or how a material constructs an artifact, is not necessarily available in words or illustrations, practitioners are required to perform individual practices and observations while working with materials (Rowley, 1997). Hence, the process of making material objects by hand can be identified as one way of thinking intellectually (Sennett, 2008, pp. 149-153).

Similarly designs, materials and techniques practiced in various parts of Pakistan have been in response to the influences brought through the cultural changes from the arrival of outsiders; however, the influence is only reflected in the visual appeal and familiarity of design. The practice of making and the processes never changed, but the meaning got altered and the emotion was left behind. The subcontinental region has seen massive movements of people from the west for e.g. Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia as well as a continuous migration of population within the boundaries.

Craft as a means of thinking through making things by hand (Nimkulrat, 2012) has played a considerable role for over two decades, the interventions and influences only changed the aesthetic value or not but the making and meaning remains a vital part of the process.

Due to the technological advancements during the twentieth century making by hand that has been the core of Indian textile industry got replaced by mass production. 1903 was the time when hand weaving, embroidery and printing that was admired and valued by Watt had seen its last days. Partition of 1947 further ended the craft practices that had once placed such an important role in everyday life in the subcontinent. This massive displacement caused a significant impact on the craft traditions in textiles in both the newly emerged nations of India and Pakistan.

2. Materiality And Emotions In Making Of Craft

For the making of craft, the idea of materiality and its tactile nature is absolute in its making. Materiality is based around the concept of quality, which is how the artisan puts his/her soul, emotions and confidence in the process and into the materials used. It is this sentiment that gives the importance of traditional handiwork in contemporary craft practices in the sub-continental region, some of which are applique work (Rilli,)

block printing (Ajrak,) blue ceramic pottery (Kashigari) etcetera. This rich local craft also translates into the realm of interior spaces as well as architecture through wooden screens (Jharokha/ Jaffri,) marquetry, decorative gravestones of Makli and Chawkandi in Sindh as well as wood carved furniture from Chiniot.

Recently an exhibition on the Gaj, titled, *Gaj: Colors of the Rainbow was curated at Mohatta Palace Museum in Karachi, Pakistan* is an ode to the hand embroidered shirts made by women all over Pakistan, dating back to over a century old. In an article online by Hareem Fatima, "Mohatta Palace opens its arms for art and craft; exhibits Gaj" could not have come at a more appropriate time. It talks about the background from a historical and geographical point of view emphasizing on the importance and differences within the *Gaj*. But to our benefit shed light upon it from an experiential perspective, "The exhibition on *Gaj* is not just beautiful embroidery done with extreme care and finesse. Women from Sindh take immense pride in adorning it, for it is also a non-verbal form of communication and in a lot of cases, "a protective talisman."

The motifs, compositions and colours that form the *Gaj* narrate a woman's status in the society, which includes her marital and social status. It symbolises what she takes pride in, her joys, dreams, aspirations and the tribe she associates herself to. Often embroidered together by mothers and daughters, *Gaj* is an important heirloom for the Sindhi communities that bond over its embroidery sessions." The emotion and bond that is built over in the making of *Gaj* is a testament to the very foundation of how something so humble yet made with intentions of love and warmth that hold the very essence of the maker(s) which gets passed on to the wearer as a form of blessing woven into each stitch. 'The craftsman is engaged in his material, and by inference, in the surrounding culture.' (Metcalf, 1987)

In (Guènon, 2010), he talks about, "Modernism is usually seen in terms of rationality: slogans such as 'form follows function' and 'truth to materials', and an investment in the rigor of abstraction. Yet it had another side too: a world of ideas that emphasized such ineffable terms as expression, spirit and mysticism. This link of thinking which has its roots in the turn of the century, aesthetician Henri Bergson and the theosophy Helena Petrovn Blatavsky leads eventually to the figure of Rene Guènon. A French metaphysician, Guènon (like many of the thinkers and artists associated with theosophy) turned to eastern religion as a source of universal spiritual values. Hinduism was his first and most non-western influence, but when he decided to leave Europe behind for good in 1930, he went to live in Cairo, adding Islam to his study of world's religions. In the following text, Guènon considers the relationship between spirituality and craft, seizing on the metaphor of initiation as a link between the two. Of particular importance to him is the Indian notion of svadharma, a Sanskrit term which might be translated 'one's own way'. For Guènon, initiation into craftsmanship was a means of following this individual destiny- a paradigm of truth to oneself, and one that runs counter to the fluidity that characterises modern life."

Reflecting upon Guènon, and how he has described or analysed craft, addresses on the same notion of the making of craft, that it evolved from the need and created through the idea of forms-follows-function but that does not mean it is devoid of aesthetic and design. Simultaneously the making is not a mindless activity but rather a communal one and that too done with thought. With every stitch the maker/ artisan puts his soul into the end product. With every carve a carpenter makes adds his / her soul into the furniture or fixture. Each piece made reflects the maker's own experience and own aesthetic.

Materiality in craft has always been connected with the need, everything that was made was out of necessity and even though what we see and call handicraft was not void of emotion. Whether it was embroidered, or carved, out of wood, it was always made to serve a positive need in the daily life of the people; they also act as a vehicle of self-expression

for they reveal a conscious aesthetic approach. The word used when applied to craft cannot be looked at from a materialistic point of view. Especially in this, mind and matter cannot be thought of as separate but rather as one entity, as such, the objects need to be looked at, touched with a response to feeling of emotions and connectivity in its use. Each craft has its own beauty which comes from the intimacy it holds between the maker and the user. As these pieces are lived with and are part of everyday life.

In (Sôetsu, 2010) she has formulated a few questions about craft and how she sees it, what she understands and the meaning and purpose behind its aesthetic value. In one of the questions she asks, how many different kinds of crafts there are and answers it by identifying two main categories.

2.1. Folkcrafts and Artist Crafts

Folk Crafts being the overarching umbrella has the guild crafts and industrial crafts whereas, Artist Crafts is subdivided into Aristocratic Crafts and Individual Crafts. She then further defines these subdivisions into:

- **Folk crafts-** unselfconsciously handmade and unsigned for the people by the people, cheap and in quantity.
- Individual Craft or Artists Craft- made by a few, for a few, at a high price. Consciously made and signed.
- Industrial Craft- such as aluminium saucepans, etc., made under the industrial system by mechanical means.
- Aristocratic Crafts- e.g. Nabeshima ware in Japan under the patronage of a feudal lord, or Stanley Gibbons in England.

These definitions clearly give a better understanding and the differences between each, however, to consider Folk crafts being cheap and in quantity would be a wrong interpretation. Folk crafts have more value and these crafts are usually made for a loved one or someone dear to the maker. It does not come under the consideration where economics are concerned or of its monetary value.

In the same chapter, (Sôetsu, 2010) 24: 168, she has asked and replied to the question about the value difference between an artist/ designer craft and folk craft. According to her, "individualistic beauty is lower in individual craft as compared to the folk craft, as in artist/ designer craft because the person is more self-involved in him/herself and because of which he/she goes against the law of nature". In other words an artist/ designer craft has little or no connection with tradition. In addition, if one looks back to examples and products of humble artisans, they are far more refined and finer than the works of artist/ designer. Just because the craftsman is uneducated and lacks any formal training is not the reason that produces beauty in the work, rather on the contrary it comes from other sources like the natural material, natural process and important things accepting the heart.

If we think about what Soetsu has said clearly supports the importance of the craft and the craftsman and the value that it holds is far superior and refined as it comes from the understanding of the materials and the emotion that is connected with it. The intent and need to engage in a selfless activity for another in itself increases the value of the object as well as the skill of the maker is heightened and every mark every stitch that goes in the making changes the meaning of the piece. Handicraft is rightly described as the craft of the people. In India, craft is not an industry as the words are commonly understood; for the product is also a creation symbolising the inner desire and the fulfilment of the community. Craft has always been a communal practice; the people came together and shared their everyday life common joys and burdens of life. It is here where sharing these practices and translate them through a stitch on a fabric. The artisan is an important factor in the community, the artisan, made for those who he/she knew and did not make it for selling. Craft what we know always has and had been made with emotion, it always had soul as it was made as a token for the loved one. Craft was never made out of the need for livelihood but rather as a need to share and pass on. Out of a million coloured strands of tradition filled with songs and verses, legends and myths that were woven into a rich creative and forceful piece. The various pieces of handicraft whether metalware, pottery, mats or woodwork clearly indicate that while these are made to serve a positive need in the daily life of the people, they also act as a vehicle of self-expression for they reveal a conscious aesthetic approach.

To further support the premise of the paper (Niedderer,Townsend, 2010) in their article Craft Research: Joining Emotion and Knowledge talks about the unique strength of craft. which has been summarised by Risatti, "Functionality combined with an ability to express human values'', beside Risatti Margtts sees craft as "free radical spirit which at the moment gives the work and its maker their remarkable quality". This remarkable quality of craft seems to emanate from the emotion bestowed on craft objects both by the maker within their creation and by the owner through possession, display and use. The aspect of emotion is rarely discussed when it comes to craft but it is intrinsic to the maker, which usually comes from a place of intuition and personal place and integral to the creative process. The articles from Neidrere and Townsend provide a great insight in regards to emotion but then it does not give a clear distinction between emotion that is put in the making or the experience of the maker and the user.

Craft these days is seen being displayed in museums and art galleries as artifacts, but then they get devoid of its main purpose of usage, which is dependent upon touch and feel. Even though their importance and the making of it is given, the humanization element that the object holds is lost and ends up a piece behind the glass under controlled environment.

The difference between craft being made earlier compared to how it is made now, was never connected with the idea of a commercial venture, that is why it had or has memory and nostalgia and for that reason it is referred to as heirloom because of the emotion that is attached to it. The emotion or memory that is attached to these individual pieces was created for a certain reason for e.g. like a gajj, or a bokhano (a man's shoulder scarf) or a phulkari shawl was when women of the community got together in the evening discussing their everyday stories and together working on a piece/s transferred the emotion with each stitch that they made, because that is what made it special but then all this is disappearing now very quickly.

Craft became an object after it leaves its owner for whom it was originally made for and exchanged hands from an everyday use item to a decorative piece on a wall. The value or emotion that it held gets lost and becomes more as a material object for the owner. However, the essential characteristic of craft cannot be detached which comes from empathy of human touch and emotion.

3. Craft As an Occupation and As an Object

While an *activity* may be defined as a general class of basic activities, an occupation is framed by personal interests, desires and values. According to Polatajko et al., an activity becomes an occupation if the activity is personally meaningful and specific to a person. An

activity has to possess at least the following qualities to be considered as an occupation: It is perceived as doing by the individual, it is goal-oriented and purposeful, it carries meaning for the individual and it is repeatable.

If we try to make sense of the above it talks about an activity that is carried out by an individual, which has purpose and is being done with a goal and can be repeated multiple times, which the practice of craft is and requires. The repeated act further improves and builds upon the first and keeps developing whether from an aesthetic or skill perspective and brings more meaning to the maker and user. However, this repeated practice also is now beneficial for the crafts person who has moved beyond individual pieces to the demand of the industry for the improvement of his/ her livelihood.

Thus, in this regard, an occupation took birth high up in the mountains of the Hunza Valley in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, where women carpenters are breaking taboos in the region. This opportunity arose when in 2003 the non for profit organisation called Aga Khan Cultural Service Pakistan (AKCSP) identified that the 800 year old Altit fort that perches up high in the mountains of the Mastuj, Hunza Valley, was in danger of toppling off.

"To encourage the participation of women in local economic activities, and the restoration of the Altit fort, a pilot project under the name of Ciqam took birth to provide young women from impoverished households access to skills, training and income opportunities. Till today, more than 80 women of Mastuj work in carpentry and site surveying and have been trained as painters, polishers and mechanics. Women between the ages of 19 and 40 are designing, cutting and polishing wood for construction materials and furniture pieces as well as successfully making doors and windows." (AKDN, 2021) This wooden craft has been sustained by the locals as they identified a need at that time.

Their distinct style of architecture in the region has been influenced by two religions being practiced namely Islam and Zoroastrianism. (Ibbotson, 2018) says that "stepping across the threshold of a Pamiri style home, guarded by the horns of a Marco Polo sheep, you enter into a world intricate with symbolism. Pamiri houses typically have one main room, which is divided into three distinct areas. The floor and the hearth represent the earth and inanimate world. There are then two raised areas, one for sleeping and the other for dining. The roof of the house is flat, light comes in through a skylight surrounded by four concentric wooden squares. The top square which is the one first touched by the rays of the sun represents fire. The other three squares symbolise the remaining Zoroastrian elements: earth, water, and air. Five wooden pillars hold up the roof that represent the five pillars of Islam (faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and Hajj.) These columns are decorated with intricate patterns holding true to the craftsmanship of the artisans in the region. The size of the house dictates the number of beams required to support the roof, but the number is never picked at random; they invariably serve a spiritual purpose. The two main transversal beams represent the material as well as the spiritual world. If there are six beams, then they stand for the six directions (north, south, east, west, upper, and lower) or the six prophets held in high regard in Islam. If there are seven beams it would represent the seven heavenly bodies, the first seven Imams, or the seven holy immortals. The exterior of the house is painted white, making it stand out from the dusty grey-brown hue of the mountains that serves as a backdrop. White represents the light, for purity. The dominant colour of the interiors of the Pamiri house that are adorned with carpets, tapestries, embroideries on table cloths (maiz poosh), pillow covers (takkiya ghalaf), and other decorations is red, because red is the colour of the sun, fire and flames." Red is also favoured as it is one of the natural dyes available in the region.

Much like the women of Mastuj the women of Gul-e-Gulmit, Hunza are also keeping the craft of carpet weaving alive through the Women's Vocational Training Center as well as Gulmit Carpet Centre. This not only helped keep the craft alive but also aided them in

financial stability. The main economic activity for the women was carpet weaving *soumak* and *kilim*, spinning *tikmai*, knitting, making woollen cloth (*shu*) for quilts, blankets, hats, leg warmers, socks, long woolen shirts, sweaters, embroidered coats, and the *Chitralli* style cap. Invariably the craft led to a sustainable means of production of an object, financial stability as well as honing of skill.

4. Conclusion

Despite the availability of viable alternatives, craft has remained over the years a popular form of activity. "Craft and anything handmade is never devoid of emotion and connections with the physical and the emotional will always remain." (Kazi, 2021) Craft production continues to be used for economic purposes, as tangible benefits are gained from the end products of crafters' labour Schofield-Tomschin and Littrell (23) argue that there are two main meanings for craft: 1. significance of the craft objects and 2. meaning incorporated in the making of the craft objects. Crafts are embedded with meanings through their creation, and they carry the symbolism of the maker and relationships with other people.

Craft has always been an activity where the hand and the eye are in sync. "Art as Experience", which addresses the mutual relationship between hands and eyes operating both the doing and the perceiving – "[a]s we manipulate, we touch and feel; as we look we see; as we listen, we hear". This statement affirms the importance of craft practice and the actual making of work in contributing to knowing through immersive sensory experience. [T]ouch delivers invasive "unbounded" data, whereas the eye supplies images that are contained in a frame... [A] neural network of eye-brain-hand allows touching, gripping, and seeing to work in concert. (Sennett, 2008, pp. 152-153)

The above account illustrates a view similar to Dewey's (1934, pp. 89-91) insight on how the making of objects has its unique quality and due to its tactile nature keeps the senses engaged. No matter how industrialization has impacted the growth of the world and now technology is taking us 100 steps forward, it cannot take away the need to connect on a human level and these humble objects that we revere and keep safe as part of our memories work as unspoken words. These objects/ artefacts are like an extension of us and our loved ones, and they bear witness to our lives lived with them.

Craft is very much connected to emotions which further strengthens the occupation of the very same. As hinted previously, the way forward for craft in the sub-continental region is to find a unique system to sustain it. To keep the tradition of making through various crafts one has to diversify the product, making it more relevant to current aesthetic and trends, but not losing the essence behind making. Yes, the meaning and the emotion becomes secondary or lost but to sustain is integral to any craft before revisiting and reconnecting the emotion in the making. Innovation in tradition is key according to the present times, for the new generation to connect and find their place within it. The future of craft within Pakistan is to sustain it, to find ways through which it can be sustained. Strive to create unique and imaginative products which cater to the market and at the same time, are a means of livelihood for the artisans involved. Keeping in mind the need of the day without diluting the essence of craft and putting emphasis on skill.

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Appendix

An online interview was conducted via Google Forms. The interview questions and responses as as follows:

Full Name: Madiha Kazi

Occupation: Craft and textile designer, consultant for sustainable livelihoods.

Could you briefly introduce yourself?

Textile Designer specializing in working with artisan communities around the country to help them transform their craft skills into marketable products.

My forte lies in identifying different indigenous skill-sets, designing craft products that make use of those skills, developing training curriculum and conducting skill-enhancement workshops. After graduating from Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in 2007, I have been part of several organizations that work with artisan communities across rural Sindh.

I am proud to have led over 10 development programs where I managed to have an impact on the lives of more than 12,000 women working in carpet weaving, block printing, traditional embroidery, applique, basketry and coiling.

Since the Pakistani textile industry is mostly print driven, what motivated you to get into the Pakistani craft sector?

I was lucky to have gotten a chance to work closely with handloom weavers and artisans working in the craft sector during my time at IVSAA. This made me realize the huge potential in exploring the crafts as a designer after graduating.

I started work with a development organization based in Sindh where I visited villages, mapped the craft artisans and fell in love with the diverse textile practices. The books that we had studied came alive. Age old crafts were still being practiced in the villages. I then got a chance to take the work to an exhibition in Delhi the same year and our embroidery and workmanship was labelled museum quality by textile experts. I never really looked back to the commercial textile sector, took the road less traveled exploring the various textile forms in Pakistani crafts sector.

How has Pakistani craft evolved from when you started to now? Did it evolve for the better? Has there been any progress to its understanding and development in artisans?

The Pakistan crafts sector is a diverse area and surely has evolved during the last ten years since I started.

I have seen various organizations give out training to the craft sector which has worked well in most cases. The impact is seen with a lot of artisans from Punjab especially Bahawalpur and Multan running successful craft enterprises. Even Sindh has seen a successful rise in independent producer groups.

Although the markets are limited, the craft sector is still dealing with exploited labour due to nonimplementation of laws and fair wages is still an issue that needs to be resolved. Crafts are still somehow surviving.

A lot of effort has been put into understanding and development of the craftspeople from financial literacy to design training. Constant orders and marketing is needed for the artisans to keep producing. craft fairs like Daachi, and lok virsa have gotten the artisans into direct linkage to the market quite successfully.

Has the materiality of Pakistani craft changed in terms of purpose, craft as an object and craft as a way of life?

The lifestyle has evolved and with that the usage of all material things, the crafts that were produced for the households to be used on a daily basis are now become ceremonial or ornamentation objects. The shift is seen in everything from clothes to everyday objects. Even in the rural surroundings craft objects are now not being used as they were 10 to 15 years back. Thus in order for the crafts to survive they need intervention to be included in the current evolved way of life.

In your opinion, what is the impact of interactional elements and relationships that are placed
on the maker and the created object?

The love of its heritage, craft practitioners are proud of their inheritance; they have an association with the practice which for some dates back thousands of years. Something they have learnt from their elders and will be passing on to their next generation.

The created object is more than just an object for the artisans; it holds years of knowledge in itself. All handmade craft objects have stories involved, each color, each motif, each pattern or material used has a reason for being there. Also direct personal association of the maker to the piece, each stitch, each weave being a hand movement.

Is the craft-making process and intent still as physical and emotional? Has the intent influenced change by a web of factors? (Sindh, a Gajh sown at the birth of a baby girl)

Most successful craft people now realize the difference between commercial and personal production. There would always be two types of crafts he produces, one for personal use and one for commercial. This comes with an understanding that the commercial selling crafts need to be fast produced and made market friendly according to the ever changing trends and demands. They will still be producing the highly traditional pieces for the dowry and home décor but use the same skill of embroidery to make kurtas for office going women.

Craft and anything handmade will always remain physical and emotional, there are hands involved and a lot of personal attention. They realize that earning through the craft will ensure its sustainability otherwise a lot of practices which weren't commercially successful have been lost.

Author's Bio



Muhammad Umer Rehman is an Associate Professor at Indus Valley School of Art and Design, Karachi, Pakistan. He identifies himself as a maker instead of a fashion designer. He completed his B.Des at Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design affiliated with La Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisenne. He then did his Master's at Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah Georgia, US. Umer had the opportunity to work for some leading designer brands, honing his skills in design before taking teaching as a permanent career path. He has two decades of experience in the field of fashion. His research includes innovation in design through zero waste, sustainability in tradition through creative approaches, fashion history and materiality, connecting traditional practices with present day needs.



Wafa Ali is an Assistant Professor at the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture in Karachi, Pakistan. She is a design aficionado who aims to promote designing safe spaces via interior design interventions with her freelance practice. Her research interests revolve around topics such as phygital commercial interior spaces, retrofitting interiors, bio-materials and finishes as well as craft in interior spaces. When she is not facilitating cognitive development or designing, she is found dabbling in various things such as drawing, graphic design, DIY projects, and travelling the globe.

Acknowledgements:

The authors would like to hereby acknowledge the cooperation of the many individuals and institutions who generously assisted with the realization of this research paper. In particular: Professor Emeritus Shehnaz Ismail, Madiha Kazi, and Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture.

Island Welcome: exploring jewellery as a gesture of welcome in response to Australian immigration policy.

Belinda Newick

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This presentation will explore how gestures of welcome have been embodied, using the example of neckpieces made specifically in response to Australian Immigration policy. The inquiry employs neo-narrative techniques to link exhibition practice with theory and qualitative data via an in-depth panel discussion with three of the contributing artists and three guest speakers.

The panel discussion will interrogate the exhibition concept exploring the intersections of material specificity, emotion and narrative. By working within the context of jewellery, there is a direct relationship between the artefact and the body, transmitting meaning not merely or only for adornment.

The creative component—Island Welcome a nationally touring group exhibition of welcome neckpieces, that I have curated seeks to bring attention to asylum seeker issues. It investigates how contemporary jewellery is applied as a gesture of welcome via expressions of Australian values through curatorial and craft practice.

The role of jewellery in this creative artefact and exegetical inquiry is positioned in the art/author contemporary jewellery field, in which its intrinsic value is not confined to the materials from which it is made, but extended to the possibilities of artistic expression, conceptual ideas and symbolic engagement.

Keywords: jewellery, materiality, immigration, socio-political, cosmopolitan acceptance.

1. Island Welcome panel discussion.

Island Welcome— a national touring group exhibition of welcome neckpieces that seeks to bring attention to refugee and asylum seeker experiences of arrival —will offer a critique of the efficacy of curatorial and craft/art practices and their potential to impact on and offer commentary within the socio-political sphere.

With reference to welcome garlands gifted in many traditional islander cultures, seventeen artists were commissioned to make a neckpiece, lei, or garland interpreting the theme of welcome whilst considering current Australian immigration policy.

Island Welcome provides for the inclusion of diverse yet collegiate voices, making neckpieces that predominantly share a dialogue with the body and communicate at a physical level. Each neckpiece in the exhibition holds narrative potential and explores how multi-faceted visual and tacit knowledge expresses the emotions of the maker. The terms garland, lei and neckpiece are interchanged in the writing determined by the artist's choice of term ascribed to their individual artworks.

There is an insight and intrinsic material specificity that each artist brings to the making process, informed by years of tacit knowledge. How objects hold value is inherent in the selection of materials, the careful considerations and decisions that preclude the hand-making labour of threading a shell onto a silk cord, soldering a link in a chain, soaking, dyeing, and manipulating found materials to achieve the desired form. As scholar Christopher Tilley (2002) suggests, "material culture can be a conduit to cultural expression and objects may be understood as embodiments of culture rather than mere tools enabling everyday functionality and economic activities" (P.26). By working within the context of jewellery, there is a direct association with the relationship between the artefact and the body transmitting meaning not merely or only for adornment. The role of jewellery is positioned within the art/author contemporary jewellery field.

"Island Welcome aims to facilitate a quiet contemplative experience of adornment as a vehicle for political discourse, empathy and shared humanity" (Newick 2017)

1.1.2 Practice led panel discussion:

This panel discussion will investigate ways in which gestures of welcome are embodied in the curatorial practice of Island Welcome. This practice-based project applies participatory observation and response from contributing artist's, through the context of the exhibition, curatorial practice and the artist's material thinking in response to the exhibition brief. Drawing on the exegetical research of my Master of Creative Industries, the aim of the panel discussion is to explore the social theory of cosmopolitan acceptance, by opening a discussion with the panellists to identify both individual and collective narratives examined through their craft practice.

Discussion of current Australian immigration policy and concepts of Australian nationhood with contributors from Western Australia contributes to the social narrative both nationally and specifically within the Indian Ocean region.

Panel Moderator: Curator, Jeweller and Arts Educator Belinda Newick (VIC)

Panellists: Contemporary Jewellers, Mel Young (NSW), Lauren Simeoni (SA), Vicki Mason (VIC) Melissa Cameron (WA) Marziya Mohammedali (WA) and Dr Anne Farren, Curtin University, Deputy Head of School; School of Design and the Built Environment; Faculty of Humanities. Questions to be discussed include:

- How have gestures of welcome been embodied in the craft and curatorial practice of *'Island Welcome'*, in response to Australian Immigration policy?
- How do personal migration stories/connection to Australia document experiences of welcome?
- How can embodied materiality in craft practice express complex social issues such as global displacement and elicit emotional response?
- How might migrant, refugee and asylum seeker experience in the Indian Ocean region and nationally be amplified via craft practice?
- How might the methodology of cosmopolitan acceptance in this creative project be applied to other craft practices and connect with makers, educators and the public nationally and internationally?

My research draws upon interdisciplinary methodologies to analyse the relevance, position, and value of the creative artefact. Specifically looking at social acceptance towards asylum seekers in Australia, cosmopolitanism, and contemporary art jewellery theory. Curator and scholar Adamson (2018) considers that, "materiality is a place where raw matter and human purpose align where the objective and the subjective come together as a foundation for social importance" (P. 155).

Practices of cultural welcome —specifically the welcome garland/lei known in the lexicon of jewellery history and praxis as experienced in the context of tourism and travel—is compared to the restraints experienced by asylum seekers and refugees, upon arrival to Australia.

Kantian theory specifically the third definitive article 'The Law of World Citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality' underpins the concepts explored in this paper. Drawing connections to theories of 'the right of the stranger to not be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another' (Kant 1795). The concept of acceptance and universal hospitality is framed by a set of civic responsibilities as a human being living in a cosmopolitan democracy.

Through his theories of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, scholar Nikos Papastergiadis (2012) argues that imagination and arts practice can "create new modes of relating to others, and present another way of seeing the world as a whole...Find the gesture of hospitality and there lies the cosmopolitanism...it starts with every small gesture of reciprocity" (P.196-197).

All the contributing artists by means of their thoughtful gestures of welcome demonstrate a capacity for cosmopolitan acceptance. In curating and participating in Island Welcome I argue that the artist's perspectives position these makers as cosmopolitan innovators. Theorist David Held suggests that,

A citizen with a deep cosmopolitan consciousness, therefore, occupies a critical position in transforming the cosmopolitan ethos into national political policy. We would argue that people who show 'cosmopolitan acceptance' have the potential to challenge the construction and maintenance of physical, social and symbolic boundaries against asylum seekers (Held 2002 P 59).

Island Welcome interrogates what we value as Australians, in terms of how we treat and

accept others and the exhibition provides a space to consider aesthetics to draw a viewer to a provocative theme via the medium of narrative jewellery. In this way, the exhibition becomes a site of social learning and the curator has a significant role in building a community of practice that connects artists and the broader scope of the galleries and institutions where the work is presented to the viewing public. As contributing artist Boyle (2020) expressed, "our most powerful tool is our work...making pieces doing shows like this creates a space where we can then talk to an audience, open the discussion in the community" (Research interview).

Questioning the panellists, I will examine, how material specificity, the agency of authorship and socially engaged practice, communicate artistic intent. The aim is to better understand the individual creative conceptual and material processes that contribute to a collaborative project and to document and share the artist's opinions to identify divergent views and neo-narratives in creative expression.

All the contributing artists were selected as practitioners with demonstrated rigorous material and conceptual practice both nationally and internationally in art jewellery practice. Each responded to the exhibition brief in a profound way, enacting specific materials to express sensibilities to reflect their own experiences of welcome, to refer to their own migrant stories, and to help to express their feelings about the state of political decision-making in Australia. These panellists will become informants in the knowledge-making process by the insights they bring to their understanding and practice of their craft shared in the conference program.

Curatorial and craft practice converge in *Island Welcome* to engage a universalist approach to human rights and the capacity to extend gestures of welcome. By practicing cosmopolitan acceptance in the context of narrative jewellery, there is a direct association with the relationship between the artefact and body to transmit meaning and an opportunity to convey empathy, compassion, and care for those seeking asylum and new beginnings.

To discuss this topic, the contributing artists will argue that it is through this gentle activist enactment, — *Island Welcome* — that they are able to present their own gestures of welcome, thereby contributing to the political, social, and cultural discourse. The aim is to bring awareness and new perspectives, and to apply humanizing principles to value systems of cosmopolitan acceptance. Our gentle activism is non-confrontational and we offer up jewellery as a gift for welcome and exchange.

The West Australian, guest speakers will contribute their contribution of knowledge to the discussion on how craft/art practice might engage a universalist approach to human rights and the capacity to extend welcome, both nationally and internationally.

An accompanying digital resource **www.islandwelcome.com.au** documents the project.

1.1. Panellists:

Melissa Cameron, is an artist, from Perth, WA. She holds a BA in Interior Architecture and a Postgrad Dip. in Jewellery Production from Curtin University, and an MFA in Jewellery and Metalsmithing from Monash University, Melbourne.

Melissa creates socially aware / protest art. She often makes with domestic objects that are familiar to, and which act as a proxy for, the human body, which is also the main venue for the display and dissemination of her primarily wearable messages.

She has exhibited worldwide, with solo exhibitions in Australia, Japan and the USA. Her

works are in several public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, the University of Iowa Museum of Art and Cheongju City Collection in South Korea. Her writing appears on *Art Jewelry Forum* and she is the former chair of *Metalsmith Magazine's* Editorial Advisory Committee. She has presented papers in Australia, Europe and North America, had residencies in Europe and the US and received grants in the USA and Australia.

Marziya Mohammedali (they/them) is a migrant wordsmith, photographer, designer and artist. Their practice focuses on narratives of dissent, identity, migration and transition, working for social justice through multidisciplinary creative practice. They are currently the Deputy Editor of Jalada – A pan-African writing collective, and they have exhibited their art and photography work internationally. They are currently undertaking a PhD at Edith Cowan University focusing on identity, protest and photography, and live in Boorloo on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja.

Vicki Mason, Australia (born New Zealand) completed a Bachelor of Arts in Classical Studies at the University of Otago and a Diploma in Craft Design from Otago Polytechnic School of Art (Jewellery) before working at Fluxus workshop. She has a Master of Philosophy degree (Research) in Gold and Silversmithing (ANU 2012).

Her studio jewellery practice includes; short series production, exhibition work and teaching. Mason has been awarded many grants and awards including the Australia Council for the Arts Barcelona Studio residency, in 2014. Her work is held in both public and private collections including the Shanghai Institute of Visual Arts, Shanghai, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney and the Art Gallery of South Australia. She interviews for Art Jewelry Forum, the international online platform for contemporary jewelry and is on the board of the World Crafts Council – Australia.

Belinda Newick is an artist whose work explores cultural hybridity, place and social engagement. Newick maintains a diverse practice as a studio based contemporary jeweller, as an educator at Melbourne Polytechnic in the Jewellery and Object Design program and as an independent curator and writer. Newick has a BA in Art (Jewellery and 3D design) from Curtin University WA. She spent six years in South Australia at JamFactory Contemporary Craft and Design, Gray Street Workshop and Zu design jewellery + objects, before settling in Melbourne in 2005.

Newick is a currently undertaking a Master of Creative Arts (Melbourne Polytechnic). She has been the recipient of two grants international grants, an *Asialink Residency* in Sri Lanka 2004 and in Kerala, India 2001. She has exhibited in Asia, New Zealand and the USA and is represented in galleries nationally. Winner of 2019 *Lynne Kosky Award for Contemporary Jewellery*, Victorian Craft Awards. Newick is the curator of *Island Welcome*, which has been touring nationally since 2017.

Lauren Simeoni is an Adelaide artist and has a BA in Gold and Silversmithing from Canberra School of Art. She completed a Design Associateship at the Jam Factory, a mentorship at Gray Street Workshop in Adelaide and at the Gate 8 workshop collective. She has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas.

In 2017 Simeoni completed an international arts residency with the Yiwei Art Foundation in Shanghai, culminating with a solo exhibition at the San W Gallery China. Simeoni has a diverse creative practice; she teaches and guest lectures at universities, curate's public programs and actively participates on art and design related boards and projects. Simeoni is the Arts Co-ordinator at the Women's and Children's Hospital Foundation, Adelaide SA.

Melinda Young is a visual artist and craftsperson, living and making on Dharawal Country, in NSW. Her work spans jewellery, textiles, installation & interactive public art projects. She

has a Master of Visual Arts from Sydney College of the Arts and is currently undertaking a cross-disciplinary PHD in Human Geography and Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. Young has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas since 1997, recent exhibitions include *isolate/make: Creative Resilience in a Pandemic* at Australian Design Centre, Sydney & *The Waterhouse Natural Science Art Prize* at the South Australian Museum. Her work is held in public collections in Australia and Norway & has been included in numerous publications. In addition to her jewellery practice Young engages in work as an educator, curator and writer, she is currently an Associate Lecturer at UNSW Faculty of Art, Design & Architecture.

2. Selected Island Welcome neckpieces:



Figure 1: Vicki Mason Garland for Azizeh, 2017, bamboo, powder coated brass, cotton, silk, various base metals. Photo: Andrew Barcham.



Figure 2: Azizeh Astaneh Wearing Garland for Azizeh 2017. Photo: Vicki Mason



Figure 3: Mel Young Groundfall Lei, 2018, shells, sterling silver silk thread. Photo: Fred Kroh



Figure 4: Lauren Simeoni Girt, 2017, Flag, beads, thread. Photo: Fred Kroh



Figure 5: Belinda Newick Hope, 2018, Stainless steel mesh and wire, 925 silver. Photo: Fred Kroh



Figure 6: Manon van Kouswijk Holding Us, Holding Oz, Holding You, 2018, clay, thread. *Photo: Fred Kroh*



Figure 7: Kath Inglis Lei from the welcome mat, 2017, Faceted segments hand cut from used thongs, silk thread, sterling silver, patina. Photo: Kath Inglis



Figure 8: Jess Dare Untitled, 2017, powder coated brass, stainless steel cable, sterling silver. *Photo: Grant Hancock*



Figure 9: Lucy Simpson Gulay, 2019. kangaroo leather, found objects. Photo Fred Kroh



Figure 10: Alice Whish Crossing the shore line, 2018 Porcelain, silk thread Photo: Fred Kroh

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Authors Bio





Belinda Newick is a contemporary jeweller/artist whose work explores cultural hybridity, place and social engagement. She is an educator at Melbourne Polytechnic, in Jewellery and Object Design, a curator and a Master of Creative Arts candidate, at Melbourne Polytechnic. Newick is the curator of the nationally touring exhibition Island Welcome.

Acknowledgements: Attendance and participation in the conference has been supported by Melbourne Polytechnic, specifically the Jewellery Department, Creative Arts and the Master of Creative Industries Program. Supervisors: Dr Adam Casey, Dr Bin Dixon-Ward, Dr Ben Cittadini. Program lead: Caz Guiney.

The Island Welcome contributing artists: Jane Bowden, Liv Boyle, Michelle Cangiano, Maree Clarke, Jess Dare, Anna Davern, Nicky Hepburn, Kath Inglis, Pennie Jagiello, Manon van Kouswijk, Sim Luttin, Vicki Mason, Belinda Newick, Lauren Simeoni, Lucy Simpson, Alice Whish, and Melinda Young.

Thank you especially to Melissa Cameron, Vicki Mason, Lauren Simeoni and Mel Young for their creative input both in works and the panel. Their personal insights and creative practice informed this discussion.

Designing the In-between: Traversing Biography and Place through Objects

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This paper examines how biography and the culture of place can inform strategies and processes in the designing and making of object-based works. By place, I refer to concepts of the geographical loci of home and place. In articulating biography, I draw upon my personal narrative and identity as an Australian of Southeast-Asian descent. By examining the hybridised, transcultural experiences of my Chinese-Vietnamese lineage and Australian growing-up, I reveal both a visual vocabulary and methodical framework for translation into object-based works. To date, there are few contemporary jewellery and object-making practices that respond to Australia's relationship to Southeast Asian migrants. As a contemporary craft designer and maker, I want to contribute to this dialogue through a deliberate visual language of an artistic, plus craft and design, practice.

In this paper, I will show how ideas that emerge from a lived, culturally-melded experience can contribute innovative approaches to material design, craft and making processes. Reflecting on my own identity, familial migration histories and woven connections of a life lived in-between cultural spheres, provided a visual and material framework for this ongoing dialogue of a shared experience. I analyse a collection of personal objects against my personal cultural background to connect with broader themes of identity. Through these analogies, I developed a creative and experimental combination of animation and digital applications which ultimately guides my visual form in my creative processes. I illustrate my insights in living at the in-between from the perspective of an Australian of the Southeast Asian diaspora.

Keywords: Contemporary Craft, Cultural Hybridity, Design, Objects, Personal Narratives

1. Introduction

This practice-led paper examines the notion of in-betweenness expressed as cultural hybridity by exploring my personal narratives and geographical loci of home and place as strategies for designing object-based works. The notion of the home, place and objects are discussed in the context of the studio investigations and further informed by object theory and 'third space' identity. Third space hybridity as theorised by Homi Bhabha are ideas about cultural hybridity as a synthesis of two cultural spaces to form a third are significant in contextualising my own experience of living within and negotiating between multiple cultures. These junctions between the research, studio practices and personal narratives inform the logic in developing a visual language that conveys my personal intercultural intersections of living in-between.

To develop the visual language of my cultural multiplicity, I begin with my migrant background, the home and how the collections of personal cultural objects connect to broader themes of identity. A close analysis of these collected objects in the home framed within a taxonomical chart development, led to a series of crucial graphic and object making experiments. These tests become a methodology through which, informed by the iterative action of Donald Schön's reflective practice, produced the design of a visual pattern and resolved in metal objects.

2. Personal Narratives:

2.1. Background

The geopolitical effect of the Vietnam War led to one of the largest modern exoduses of 1978–1979 (Grant 1979). The fall of Saigon in 1975, political turmoil and discrimination led to my parents' decision to leave. By escaping on a boat and landing at a refugee camp coincided with my birth in 1979. Thus, my place of birth has been a constant reminder of exit and in-betweenness, a biographic and migration story shared by many. This theme has been addressed by well-known Chinese-Australian artist Guan Wei. Wei has responded to the immigration and refugee crisis in his 2013 mural painting, The Journey to Australia, commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney. The painting vividly depicts a fleet of overcrowded refugee boats moving towards the Australian shorelines. The scenes and imagery are layered with Indigenous people mixed with local flora, fauna, and juxtaposed with military helicopters and naval ships combined using mythical and folklore devices. Wei asserts his perspective using the metaphors of his visual iconography to comment on the colonial history and immigration policies. Wei's aesthetic approach by compressing imagery from different histories is distinctive, for he is critiquing the conflicts between cultures. Like Wei, I am searching for a language that represents my negotiation between my intercultural experiences.

The narrative I am finding through my research and design processes is one that relates to myself, my family and migrant communities. The background formation connects with my family history and our arrival to Australia as refugees. The impact of this has made me re-think my identity, place and cultures. Diaspora scholars recognise the forces of migratory shifts and how they increasingly affect cultures and identities. In this passage, the critical cultural theorist, Homi Bhabha's writes from his personal experiences of migration, "I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, become a time of gathering. Gatherings of exiles and emigrés and refugees, gathering on the edge of 'foreign' cultures." (Bhabha 1990, 291) These words by Bhabha capture the universality and complexity of cultures and identities endured by many from the forces of colonisation, globalisation and migration. Bhabha's words are still relevant today and distill what it means to be uprooted, displaced and living in another

land. My personal history and experiences mirror some of his ideas. In particular, I connect with Bhabha's 'Third Space' theory, defined as an in-betweenness and translation that emerges from the traces of two other cultures. (Rutherford 1990a) The in-betweenness I articulate comes from my mixed, multi-cultural experiences of my Chinese-Vietnamese lineage and Australian upbringing. I speak from within the perspectives of living many cultural spaces. Space as defined by the eminent scholar, Nikos Paspastergiadis, "both a transformative force and a field that is transformed by the interactions that occur within it." (Papastergiadis 2000, 52) What Papastergiadis reveals is the intricacy endured by migrants in the dynamics that occur. In my work, I am presenting how I articulate third space identity as a Southeast Asian Australian woman.

2.2. Home and Objects.

In this section, I explain the importance of my personal collection of objects from the home. The home is a critical space as it connects my identity to my cultures. I am interested in how it conflates notions of identity and how it can provide a broader understanding to living in-between. The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, in his examination of domestic spaces and how they link to human reverie states, the house "is our first universe." (Bachelard 2014, 26) My identity strongly connects to the home. I was born into an immigrant family of Chinese and Vietnamese heritage and family whose lives were part of the late 1970s Vietnam War exodus. My family settled in the Sydney suburb of Fairfield West in the 1980s. Fairfield City has 121 cultural groups including the largest enclave of people with Vietnamese and Chinese ancestry. I draw on my personal history and perspectives of living between the eastern and western sphere as a Southeast Asian Australian woman to show how designing in-between emerges from my sense of cultural hybridity.

The home is a site and repository of objects, it demarcates the boundaries of my cultural differences. Within the micro, I am engaging with my Southeast Asian cultural lineage, and from the macro, I am negotiating within my Australian identity. My earliest memories of collections of objects were souvenir gifts from Vietnam and China (Tieu 2021, Fig. 1). These domestic objects were lacquer vases with gold leaf and mother-of-pearl inlay, small amulets in the shape of Buddhist deities, Chinese paper cuttings and magical Taoist paper amulets. In contrast to my cabbage patch doll¹, their designs and materiality intrigued me, and led to a wonderment about history, family and magical places. An analysis of these objects can expand ideas of representation and identity. Furthermore, they provide context to my background and how personal experiences with objects can shape our understanding. Early works by Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton studied the role between person and object transactions. Their book, The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self, focused primarily on objects in urban households and their relationship to the selfhood. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton recognised the home ecology as symbolic signs and interpretations of the world. (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981, 121-45) Understanding object and the self can provide a platform to interrogate personal meanings and biography.

¹Cabbage Patch Kids were popular dolls produced by the Coleco Industries in 1982, sold on the market in the 80s. They were the longest doll running franchise in the United States.



Figure 1: Bic Tieu, Picture box of some of my childhood objects.

I believe objects play an influential role in our lives. Our first relationship to inanimate things, as pointed out by child psychoanalysis Donald Winnicott's theory of transitional objects and transitional phenomena, informs us that we imbue symbolic meaning onto objects from the infant stages of development. Winnicott's theory reminds us that we are strongly connected to objects from an early age to form a psychological bridge in developing understanding of self and others. Our domestic environment can further tell us about ourselves. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton's saw intertwining connections between domestic objects and their influences on the continuing self (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981). Csikszentmihalyi writes that the home:

is not just a utilitarian shelter but a repository of things whose familiarity and concreteness help organize the consciousness of their owner...home contains a symbolic ecology that represents both continuity and change in the life course and thus gives permanence to our elusive selves. (Csikszentmihalyi 1993, 25)

Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton stated that objects acquire significance through contact, "objects in the domestic environment are meaningful only as part of a communicative sign process and are active ingredients of that process." (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981, 173). The objects I grew up with in my home connected me to other histories, heritage and cultures.

These objects created wonder and curiosity through their design and material. They were strangely familiar and exotic as they presented similarities to cultural elements within my immediate Australian environment. For example, I saw other forms of Chinese paper cutting during Chinese New Year celebrations. These visual elements were part of my cultural heritage. They connected my family to their traditional homeland. Objects which have moved between geographical spaces have been explored by Maruška Svašek. Svašek's book, Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions engages with a series of case studies that reveal emotion based on object agency across time and space. For example, how the connection through objects, bought as gifts to the new destination by migrants from their original homeland, can "increase a sense of a continuous transnational self." (Svašek 2012, 17) Through the connections to these objects in my home, I am left with the traces inherited from other places. These objects reinforce the validity of my Chinese-Vietnamese cultures. Svašek's research pointed out how objects allowed migrants to feel less displaced and connected to their homeland. Similarly, through these objects I was able to connect to my heritage. They are a reminder to how I absorb and

negotiate my transcultural identity.

2.3. Collections of Amulets

My reason for narrowing the research focus to a group of personal objects collected from Australia, Vietnam and Japan, was to interrogate how they motivate and create connections to identity (Tieu 2017-2021, Fig. 2). These objects are forms of amulets and originate from Buddhism. Every Chinese New Year festival, my parents would attend the Chinese Buddhist temple in Bonnirigg, a South Western suburb in Sydney. After attending the various deities, praying and burning joss sticks, they would collect paper amulets, also known as magical Taoist paper for every member of the family. Magical Taoist paper, related to ancient Chinese sorcery, typically have written magic symbols on strips of yellow paper. Their function is to protect and ward off bad omens. On receiving the new amulet, I would return the previous year's which is then burnt. This cyclical ritual connects my life to my original culture. Over the years, I would also receive these magical amulets from my grandparents in Vietnam. Whilst living and studying traditional metal and lacquer between the years of 2009 to 2011 in Japan, I discovered that these talismanic concepts existed in Japan. In Japan they are known as omamori and omikuji. I was really surprised how I connected with Japan through this shared tradition. Svašek's notion of the 'transnational self', applies to my experience, as these objects connected me to my home. They reminded me of my culture in receiving a magical paper from my family and created a sense of connected boundaries. The Japanese amulets operated for me as a metaphorical sense of home. Furthermore, their physical design and function were a reminder and connection but also "allow[ed] momentary experiences of non-fractured identity." (Svašek 2012, 17)



Figure 2: Bic Tieu, Personal collection of different amulets from Australia, Vietnam and Japan.

The attraction towards these amulets provided a sense of home and security. I was drawn to the religious parameters embodied in their designs because of the similarities of Buddhism. Amulets come from sites of temples and shrines, primarily serving for protection and luck. In addition, these amulets operated as souvenirs, gifts and mini effigies. Eugene Swanger, expert in East Asian philosophies and religion, wrote about the shifts in the design over time and place. (Swanger & Takayama 1981) What this observation revealed is that the object's purpose and function have changed over time, they are in a continuous flux. Learning about the object's multiplicity, meaning and auspicious references, and how they participated in this continuous change, made me realise how identity is always in motion. In locating these intertwining stories of life and collecting objects, I am presenting an alternate and extension of the transnational self. The amulets in my collection are situated between human and object histories. Object biography evolves from material studies and people's relationship to things. As Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall state:

people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and objects are tied up with each other. (Gosden & Marshall 1999, 169). My background in design and my approach to understanding things prompted me to create a visual chart. Inspired by Carolus Linnaeus's taxonomy in plant classification, I thought it was an effective way to analyse my collection of amulets. His taxonomy was a systematic scientific method to identify and group organisms. I was inspired by Linnaeus's method to identify each object and list its physical characteristics and operations. This process enabled the development of concepts to inform strategies in the studio development. In addition, the taxonomy set up a reflective framework that allowed for critical inquiry through material and design experimentations.

The taxonomical chart (Tieu 2017–2021, Fig. 3) describes and documents each object. For each object, I listed its name, country of origin, description, size, material, how it is activated, and its purposes. In visualising this information, keywords are drawn from this analysis. These keywords (highlighted in bold uppercase text) allow for expansion in the literature around these concepts and how they connect with micro notions of the personal and the home, through to the macro ideas of migration, cultural identity and theoretical zones of cultural hybridity. This heuristic approach led to a series of studies that ultimately guided the development and creation of the visual language I sought to express.

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Figure 3: Bic Tieu, Taxonomical Table Analysis of Collection of Objects.

In researching jewellery and miniature, I encountered Sim Lüttin's project, *The Temporary Nature of Things*. Lüttin's project of making one item of jewellery or object a day over a year inspired the idea of thinking reflectively. In her project, the outcome was a reflective record of making 366 pieces, one for each day. (Long & Jacquard 2008). Lüttin's approach strongly resembled Donald Schön's theory on reflection in action. The combination of both thinking and doing proceeds through repetition. A series of circumstances is negotiated whilst understanding the problem as it arises. (Schön 1983, 50). I understood Lüttin's method as a reflective task. I saw this iterative process as a strategy to create nonverbal responses by interpreting and synthesising concepts, research, and literature—this way of working led to a thoughtful and intuitive engagement in the making. I made 24 objects (Tieu 2017, Fig. 4) over five months. Like sketches, I interpreted them in jewellery and small hand-held forms.



Figure 4: Bic Tieu, Object a Week, 2017, copper, eggshell, Japanese lacquer, shell, sterling silver.

3. Methods: Experimentation from Graphics to Ply

Reflecting on the series of jewellery and objects made, the dominant structures which emerged were container-like forms with strong geometries and influences of floral anatomy. I decided to work with the peony flower for its visual cultural reference to China, Vietnam and Japan. Further to this, flowers are seasonal and cyclical. They reveal beauty and speak about impermanence, reproduction and decay. I was seeking diverse forms of expressions through the movement and fragmentation of the peony structure. I used computer vector illustrations to draw the peony. Using this program suggested the possibility of direct translation to animation.



Figure 5: Bic Tieu, Peony Exploding, 2017, film: selected still frames. Photo: the author.



Figure 6: Bic Tieu, Moving Magnolia, 2018, film: selected still frames. Photo: the author.

Developing the potential from graphics into animations, I began experimenting with some floral forms. The above shows a few selected works in still frames. The first table shows the peony flower (Tieu 2017, Fig. 5) drawn using outlines of the petals. Each frame shows the transition of the peony anatomy moving apart. Similarly, a group of magnolia flowers (Tieu 2018, Fig. 6) is represented moving across the plane and gradually intersecting, forming a cluster. The intersections of these floral lines metaphorically echo different spatial encounters. Furthermore, the movement echoes the politics and change that can occur with migration. Each animation produced different visual ensembles nuancing how migration can disrupt an identity through change, represented by the pulling apart of the floral motif. Viewing these motion graphics captured the complexities associated with identity.

In addition to working with traditional flowers native to Asia, I decided to work with floral motifs within my Australian culture, such as the kangaroo paw flower. The layering of the repeated kangaroo paw flower informed the material translation. Creating these illustrations on a digital surface allowed the format to have two-directional paths. The first path remained digital, which allowed for the recording of renderings. The second path is adapted for laser cutting, creating an opportunity to enter the actual material dimension. Each flower was laser cut, lacquered and assembled into a stack. I found that the lacquered layered object was solid, inflexible and did not communicate the liminal movement when compared to the animation. The work's obscure form inspired me to reconfigure the lacquered plywood stack.



Figure 7: Bic Tieu, Comparisons of the Kangaroo Paw Flower as vector illustrations to assembled object. 2018 film: selected still frames, plywood, Japanese lacquer. Photo: the author.

By pulling apart the dense lacquered structure (Tieu 2018, Fig. 7), my objective was to reconstruct new forms with more fluidity within its structure. I cut the object into two halves and gently broke apart the work. I re-imagined the kangaroo paw, like a hand metaphorically touching the various cultural spaces within my Australian identity. This process of deconstructing the object created variation in composition for reassembling. The new configurations (Tieu 2018, Fig. 8) in ply were yet still static. For this reason, I decided to return to metal. In working with metal, the medium allowed more flexibility to alter, distort and construct.



Figure 8: Bic Tieu, Kangaroo Paw brooches, 2018, Japanese Lacquer, Plywood, Shell, Sterling Silver, Photo by Fiona Lu

4. Theory: Intercultural Crafting and Domestic Memories

In developing my work, the notion of in-betweenness was explored and informed by the notion of third space identity. This theory occupies an area across postcolonial studies and is explored in Bhabha's influential book, The Location of Culture. In developing his concepts of hybridity, he takes into consideration the inequalities between the coloniser and the colonised and interrogates the problems that arise. Through his first chapter, the notion of cultural difference and cultural translation is explored to critique hybridity. In an interview, Bhabha states:

But for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. (Rutherford 1990b, 211)

It is this productive space which I identified with my personal cultural multiplicities. I built on from Bhabha's view of 2 original traces, by considering living between my Chinese, Vietnamese and Australian cultures. I showed that through living between these 3 cultures new ideas in the studio practices emerged.

Food culture and practice is significant in my Chinese side of the family. My grandfather owned a Chinese bakery and later on a BBQ pork shop in Vietnam. Chinese festivals are consistently surrounded by family gatherings, food preparation and eating. In the home, a large part of my memory of my youth included peeling kilograms of small school prawns, breaking stems from hundreds of leafy vegetables and the continuous never-ending of washing and cooking rice. I would argue that meanings can be forged through the mundane actions of daily routine discovered through daily customs. Sera Waters refers to this particular mode of production as repetitive crafting. Waters describes this "as a dexterous, laborious, where the relationship between body and material is bound by long periods of concentrated time" (Waters 2012, 71). Furthermore, Waters explains, "repetitively crafted works effectively shifts from critiquing culture from the outside and instead build connections within." (Waters 2012, 75). Through repetitive actions and working with traditional domestic modes of food preparation, I am opening space for thinking about the world in a different way. Waters reminds us, that immersive making may be understood as activating an interconnection between body, material and mind.



Figure 9: Bic Tieu, Vietnamese herb (rau dang), mint and tape object. 2020. Vegetables, masking tape. Photo: the author.

Part of the studio work included outsourcing hundreds of laser-cut floral motifs from 1mm plywood. For example, I had hundreds of kangaroo paw vector motifs drawn onto a template for cutting. The plywood has a protective seal of masking tape on both sides. On receiving these cut-outs, I spent many hours removing the tape. Instead of discarding the tape, I created a pile in which a small mound eventually formed (Tieu 2020, Fig. 9). This acted out the breaking of leafy herbs where I would create a pile of discarded veggie roots. Removing the tape echoed domestic filial duties connecting my immigrant home. The layering of the floral tape created an ambiguous form evoking a lightness, a sense of impermanence and childhood memories connecting the home.

Through the different approaches to experimentation, using the graphic and laser-cut offered various visual outcomes. I was simultaneously thinking through a process of movement in animation which I was referring to in earlier works (Figs. 5 & 6). I also worked with other floral motifs that were familiar to me, including the rose and tea leaves. I chose these images for their symbolic and metaphorical references. For example, the rose is an image I strongly associate to the front garden beds with suburbia Sydney. Tea is a beverage we drink daily in our domestic environments. Furthermore, tea leaves originate in China and through ancient trade routes, have dispersed across the continent. I lacquered some of the laser-cut roses and played with stacking different compositions. This action is also a strong reminder of picking and washing vegetables. The layering of the roses replayed the actions of my personal domestic culture at home. These visual ensembles also captured how migration can disrupt identity through the change and pulling apart of the floral motif. These motifs captured the tension and forces characterised by migration.



Figure 10: Bic Tieu, Roses in 3 stacking compositions, 2018, laser-cut plywood, Japanese lacquer.

The intersections created from material experimentations led to a decision to work in metal. Schön argues that there is a critical junction of reflection in action, "reshaping strategies, understanding of phenomena, and ways of framing problems" (Schön 1983, 25). I understood this as intercultural crafting. Approaches and methods from my personal cultures that inform new meaning. Personal and cultural methods interpreted the complexities and dynamism to articulate identity in pleural spaces. These iterations further developed the surface structure as a way of constructing meanings connected to identity.

Once I had decided to work in metal, I developed a pattern inspired by plants endemic to my cultures. The compositions were informed by drawing from the experiments (Figs. 5–10). I chose to work with forms of tea leaves, peonies and magnolias in the medium of grey metal alloys. Grey is a colour that is made by mixing black and white. The mixing of two colours provided a metaphorical perspective of the in-betweenness I experience of living between cultures. This in-between concept is investigated through the lens of Bhabha's third space theory. Bhabha speaks of the in-between to explain the complexity of hybrid identities. In tackling these zones, Bhabha's opening to his book, The Location of Culture, questions, "how are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc)?" (Bhabha 1994, 2) My in-between space is transcultural, one that negotiates my Asian and Australian cultures.

The film-maker and cultural thinker Trinh T. Minh-ha offers the colour of twilight to think about immigrants and their conflicting negotiations. She quotes, "twilight: two lights. Two countries; two worlds." (Trinh T. 2011, 66) I responded to this atmospheric colour described by Trinh T. The ambiguity of time, being neither totally dark or light. Moving through the change of light reminds me of how I move between my home cultures and Australian identity. In particular, when Trinh T. says:

Having constantly to negotiate between home and abroad, native culture and adopted culture or more creatively speaking between the here, there and an elsewhere. Every voyage is the unfolding of a poetic, the departure, the cross over, the far, the wandering, the discovery, the return and the transformation (Trinh T., n.d.).

Trinh's explanation of grey is as a visual transition of the blurred boundaries of living two cultures. This liminal connection is further explored by the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. Kurokawa uses grey as an ambiguous concept to theorise the notion of symbiosis. Kurokawa develops the term Rikyu grey to capture a particular essence. Below is his description, We found that when space was analysed and segregated according to function, the ambivalent, multivalent spaces that had existed in its peripheral and border areas in an undifferentiated, unarticulated state were sacrificed to a cold, clear rational analysis by function; in the process, space lost its essential nature. In our cities, in our buildings and even in our lives, it is the mazelike, the secret, the ambiguous area which may even seem a little sinister, that lends charm and charisma, that excites us and arouses our expectations (Kurokawa 1991, 69)

In his exposition of the colour grey, Kurokawa refers to the multiple meanings created through intersecting spaces. Kurokawa's Rikyu grey made me think of identities absorbing and becoming one in the way he describes spaces and cultures. Working with the metal in the studio, the heating and manipulation would constantly affect the appearance of metal. Metal seemingly was the right medium to speak about living between and interculturally. A final group of object-based works are made in metal alloys of copper silver and gold. Through the manipulation of motifs in metal, patterns of sheets are formed. These patterns are semi-transparent like the networks found in plant fractals. I also experimented with folding the flat metal sheet into right angles. This folding eventually led to the design of prism forms. Angles added to the dimensional space and varied the perspectives. Viewing through a prism negates surfaces and boundaries. This mirrored some of the complexities of identity when living through multiple cultures. Nikos Papastergiadis understands the fold as a conceptual cultural mediator in diasporic translation, by which, he states "Concepts such as hybridity and intimacy have taken us closer to the tension points, as different cultural worlds jostle together to form new worldings." (Papastergiadis & Trimboli 2017, 566) Through their visual dimensions, I am presenting a view that is tangible and articulates my intercultural in-betweenness.

The two objects resolved from this practice-led research are three-dimensional hollow structure in the form of rectangular prisms. The semi-transparent sheets are made of a myriad of intersecting motifs using selected floral motifs endemic to my cultures. These shapes include tea leaves, magnolia and peony flowers. The patterns produced from combining these floral shapes merges into an ambiguous surface design. The first object (Tieu 2018, Fig. 11) produced an unexpected root-like surface structure, whereas the second object (Tieu 2019–20, Fig. 12) created surface qualities reminiscent of blood vessels. Within the capillaries of the surface pattern, a layer of silver is melted through the connecting lines, like blood running through vessels. This visually created another layer, and depth behind the black and grey motifs.



Figure 11: Bic Tieu, Object #1, 2018, sterling silver. Photo: Gavino Pili.



Figure 12: Bic Tieu, Object #2, 2019–2020, copper, gold, sterling silver. Photo: Gavino Pili.

5. Conclusion

The transformative actions of combining interdisciplinary approaches resolved in a personal visual translation that articulates my experiences of living between cultures. In combining my visual cultural references to materials and informed by theory, I have developed sheet metal into object-based works which are symbolic of my Australian-Southeast Asian identity. These ideas are investigated in the paper and explored through the combination of traditional and contemporary craft processes for new translations. I am investigating new kinds of cultural objects representing the types of hybrid and multiple cultures, life experience and identity that have become so common today. It is important to note that my work engages with a facet of Australia's complex cultural diversity. It contributes to the ongoing dialogue towards understanding and further the diversity of cultures that represent our nation. This presents opportunity for further research. Through this work, I am identifying familiar and relatable strategies for designing a blueprint for objects that can link people with their heritage through the shared of cultural expression.

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Author's Bio



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Acknowledgements: I would like to acknowledge that this research came from my PhD dissertation at the Australian National University. The research was also supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.

Crafting the Kaaba Kiswa's, context and traditional practices

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Presentation link.



Abstract. The cladding of the Kaaba (Kiswa) has maintained a high level of importance since before Islam. This has been the case since this sacred symbol was built, which has taken the shape of a cube from the outside. Interest in the craft of weaving the covering of the Kaaba has appeared throughout the historical ages, as it has had a religious dimension since the beginning. In the pre-Islamic era, making the Kiswa became an honour both in terms of religion and as a political, social and economic symbol. This significance extended until the emergence of Islam (Al-Half 2017), as the cladding of the Kaaba during the pre-Islamic period was considered a ritual of veneration and righteousness. As such, it was performed twice a year when individuals could dress it up as a gift or fulfilment of a vow. From then on, Muslim interest in the practice increased, both from individuals and rulers in various historical eras, because of its representation of religious affiliation and ideological loyalty. The extent of accomplishment by making the covering of Kaaba also reflects closeness to God and fulfilment of religious duty (Al-Rugi 2000). Hence, this research aims to study the weaving of the 'Kiswa' represents context and style across different Islamic periods to date, and the associated decorative and aesthetic values and religious rituals by focusing on different cultures that expressed interest in and took great honour in weaving the covering of the Kaaba. Among them were Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Egypt had become distinguished for its manufacturing of weaving the Kiswa over long historical periods since the beginning of the tenth century AH. The Kaaba was covered with different kinds of the high-quality fabrics, including leather, brocade (luxurious silk), Coptic and Yamani Burud, depending on the countries or individuals responsible for the design. This continued until the crucial historical moment of the covering of the Kaaba in 1924 in

the era of King Abdulaziz Al Saud, who established a private house for making the Kiswa in Makkah Al-Mukarramah (Al-Ruqi 2000). He commissioned the most skilled male dressmakers to weave it, and the best types of silk and strings of gold and silver were used to weave the sophisticated patterns representing verses from the Quran associated with vegetation ornament shapes covering the Kaaba.

Keywords: Kiswa; Kaaba; Making; Craft; Islamic ornamentation

1. Introduction

The Kaaba was, and still is, appreciated and cared for by many Arabs, both before and after Islam. They used to honour it, sacrifice for her and celebrate happy occasions there. Although the sacred house is the first house that God established for the worship of the believers, it did not receive a spot of respect, appreciation and prestige like the Kaaba. In Islam, God made Kaaba the first Qibla¹ for Muslims, so they respected it and turned to it five times a day during prayer. The Kaaba is located at the heart of the Grand Mosque in Makkah, where people gather to perform their rituals as can see in figure 1. They circumambulate it day and night without interruption, except during prayer (Alharamain. gov 2014).

The first construction of the Kaaba was in the era of Prophet Ibrahim, with the help of his son, Ismail. It was a cube-shaped building that was hollow inside. The prophet Ibrahim made it with two doors, one from the east and the other from the west, and had no roof (Alharamain.gov 2014). After that, some restorations took place; a roof was constructed for the Kaaba, three huge columns were added inside and a door leading to the roof of the Kaaba was included as reflected in figure 2. Historians have varied opinions in mentioning the dimensions of the Kaaba, which is a natural difference arising from the difference of the measurement unit which is (arm). As it was measured in the history of the Kaaba between (46) to (50) cm. However, recently the excepted arm measurement is (48) cm (Reasah Alharmain 2021). Since the meter and its parts are the languages of measurement understood in the current period, the Kaaba was measured by the Hajj Research Center at Umm Al-Qura University, and it was as follows: from the northern wall is 9.90 m, western wall 12.04 m, southern wall 10.18 m, and eastern wall 11.68 m; and the height is 15 meters (Reasah Alharmain 2021). The ceiling of the Kaaba is covered from the inside, and one side of its walls is covered with green silk curtains with squares, in which the following words are written: (God, whose glory is revered). It is covered annually; and washed twice a year, which makes it different from other shrines, whose clothing is not changed periodically or taken care of as much as the Kiswa.

¹ According to Dazdarevic (2012), qiblah, Qibla /'Kıblə/: is the direction of the Kaaba or House of God, towards which Muslim turn when they are praying



Figure 1: Mustafa, The names of the Kaaba in the Holy Quran. 2018, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Almrsal.



Figure 2: Yassin Abdullah, Snapshots from inside the Kaaba. 2016, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Imorched.

The importance of covering the Kaaba dates back to the pre-Islamic era and pertains to concern and esteem for the place. The importance of covering the Kaaba continued after the coming of Islam for several reasons. Firstly, in terms of religion, Muslims considered it an Islamic ritual that must be performed, as God authorised its veneration in His saying: (That and whoever honours the rituals of God, it is from the piety of the hearts). It is a form of worship closeness to God Almighty. As well as Thanked God for making it a Qibla for worshipers from all corners of the earth to receive. In terms of identity, it is also a sign of the identity and sanctity of the place. It is one of the most important and prominent manifestations of veneration and honour for the House of God. Finally, politically, the wisdom behind the covering of the Kaaba is a source of pride and honour and a manifestation of the dignity of Islam and Muslims, as well as intimidating the enemies.



Figure 3: History of the Design of the Kaaba Covering (Kiswa). 2021, Author Adaptation
2. The History of the Design of the Kiswa of the Kaaba

The Kaaba is the home of purity and the sacred house of God. It has a lofty status of religious sanctity among all Arabs in pre-Islamic times and all Muslims after Islam. Therefore, kings and princes competed for honour by covering it over time. Historically, the covering of the Kaaba passed through several successive periods, as shown in Figure 3. In the beginning, the first person who covered the Kaaba **in the pre-Islamic** era was the Yemen king, Tubbaa Al-Humairi, when he visited it for the first time in 220 BC (Al-thagafi 2020). Certain accounts of historians studying the history of the Kaaba have mentioned that Al-Humairi covered the Kaaba with Khasf² and then Maafir³, which was attributed to a city in Yemen where the Maafir cloth was made (Al-Ansari 2007; Al-thagafi 2020). Following that, he covered the Kaaba with Milaa⁴ known as Rabitah and Wasael, a redstriped Yemeni cloth garment (Al-Zahrani 2014). Additionally, the Kaaba was covered with leather and Coptic⁵ by Al-Humairi's successors and many others after them in the pre-Islamic era (Al-Ansari 2007), as it was a religious duty and a great honour. Because of this, there were different times set for changing the Kaaba Kiswa during the pre-Islamic era. For instance, it was covered on Ashura, a day on the first Hijri⁶ month of Muharram, followed by Ramadan and the Dhul-Hijjah, which was the first day of Eid Al-Adha. Lastly, the Kiswa change day was transformed on the Dhul-Hijjah, and the practice of covering the Kaaba continued from that time to the present day.

In the Islamic era, the annual tradition of covering the Kaaba with a new Kiswa continued for several centuries, but the timing was different from one era to another, and the number of coverings varied from two to three. For example, in the ninth century AH, after the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet Muhammad once covered the Kaaba with Yemeni clothes of red and white colours, and the Caliphs⁷ followed this tradition. (Al-Ansari 2007) explained that the righteous Caliphs and sultans competed to dress the Kaaba throughout history. The Caliphs were known to have the Kaaba covered with Coptic clothes, following the Prophet Muhammad. The Caliphs used different kinds of fabrics and colours for covering the Kaaba. In addition, during the time of the rightly guided Caliphs, the Kaaba was covered twice a year, once with the Egyptian Coptic, a thin white garment made in Egypt, and once with the Yemeni Burud⁸, (Al-Ansari 2007). The reason behind two or more coverings for the Kaaba was the quality of the fabric and its intolerance to the intense heat, droughts and wind in the region. According to Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni (2021, 16), "one of the essential things these Caliphs did for the Kaaba was to set up endowments to finance the manufacturing of the fabric and shipping it to Makkah."

community" (Afsaruddin 2018).

² It is thick clothes (Al-Ansari 2007).

³ According to Al-Ansari (2007), It is a type of Yemeni fabric.

⁴ Milaa knowing as a soft, thin garment, come from Yamen (Al-Zahrani 2014).

⁵ It is a thin white garment that was made in Egypt (Al-Ansari 2007).

⁶ "Hijrī calendar (AH) or Muslim calendar, dating system used in the Islamic world for religious purposes. It is based on a year of 12 months: Muharram, Safar, Rabi al-awwal, Rabi al-Thani, Jumada al-awwal, Jumada al-Thani, Rajab, Sha` ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhul Qa'dah Dhul, al-Hijjah. Each month begins approximately at the time of the new moon, and these months are alternately 30 and 29 days." (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2021).
⁷ "Caliph, Arabic khalīfah ("successor"), in Islamic history the ruler of the Muslim

⁸ Burud is a "striped cloth with an admixture of kazz silk, striped cloth with yellow stripes" (Serjeant 1948, 77)

In the Umayyad era (661–750), the covering of the Holy Kaaba was given great attention. It was covered with brocade (silk) on the day of Ashura and with Egyptian Coptic at the end of Ramadan in celebration and preparation for Eid al-Fitr by caliph Mu'awya Bin Abi Sufyan (Radwan 2019). One of the distinctive additions in the Umayyad era was that the Kaaba was perfumed with a beautiful scent of amber and musk. Mu'awya used to send perfume to the Kaaba twice a year, during the Hajj⁹ season and in Rajab, to perfume the Kiswa during every prayer (Al-Deqn 1986). The caliph also assigned some servants to serve, care and attend to the covering of the Kaaba.

In the Abbasid era (750–1517), the Kaaba was covered using the finest types of silk; for some years, it was covered three times a year (Radwan 2019). They used to make the covering of the Kaaba from red brocade, white Coptic cloth, white brocade and black luxurious silk (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021). The use of black material prevailed and has been the accepted cloth to cover the Kaaba until now. Also, in the Abbasid era, the Kiswa was made in the city of Tenis in Egypt, which had a great reputation for its precious textiles (Al-Deqn 1986). However, there was a real fear of the Kaaba collapsing under the weight of all the Kiswa layered with so many coverings. According to Al-thaqafi (2020), the Kiswa was layered on the Kaaba, one on top of the other, without removing the old ones, which led them to become heavy or worn out. As a result, in 160 AH, the old Kiswa was removed by Caliph Al-Mahdi, who ordered that the Kaaba should only be covered with one covering at any time, and this has continued to be the practice even today.

In the Mamluk era (1250–1258), the first Egyptian covering of the Kaaba was in 1260, by King Adh-Dhahir Pipers, the first Egyptian King (Okumura 2012). After that, the Kaaba was continuously covered throughout the year (Figure 4). Competitors, such as Yemen, Iraq and Persia, failed in front of the Egyptians' adherence to the honour of covering the Kaaba, which was also politically motivated since the covering is evidence of power and influence in the Islamic world (Al-Ansari 2007).



Figure 4: Sumiyo Okumura, Kaaba door curtain, dated 1516, Bursa Grand Mosque. 2012, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Okumura

⁹ haj, hajj /hædʒ/: Usually the Hajj the religious journey to Mecca that all Muslims try to make at least once in their lives (Dazdarevic 2012).

At the beginning of **the Ottoman era (1299-1923)**, Egypt's submission to the Ottoman empire did not change the Egyptian tradition of covering the Kaaba in black. On the contrary, Egypt's flaunted the trimmings of the covering of the Kaaba and its accessories, unlike the predecessors (Figure 5), and celebrations were held for this occasion. In general, Egypt was interested in the outer Kiswa. At the same time, the Ottoman Empire alone was responsible for financial support in making the Kiswa for the inside of the Kaaba. Hence, Egypt started making all the inner and outer Kiswa, which lasted until 1706 AD. After that, Istanbul specialised in weaving the inner covering of the Kaaba. In addition, after the thirteenth century AD, the textile industry became more advanced, which led to the development of the typical materials and techniques used in the craft of making the Kiswa for the Kaaba to ensure that the Kiswa would survive and endure for a whole year without wearing out (Radwan 2019). However, the covering of the Kaaba was subsequently affected by French colonialism in Egypt. The Kiswa was not sent to Mecca during the presence of the French campaign in Egypt. Therefore, the Ottoman Sultan ensured that the Kiswa, which was made in Istanbul, was sent to Mecca in 1798.





In the Saudi era, Egypt continued to send the covering of the Kaaba annually after Muhammad Ali Pasha took over the rule of Egypt. It was interrupted only a few times due to the First World War and a crisis between Egypt and Saudi Arabia (Haggag 2015). After that, King Abdulaziz ordered the establishment of a factory to cover the Holy Kaaba in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in the Ajyad region in 1927 (Al-thaqafi 2020). Most of its employees were Indian technicians and a few Saudis. In the same yea, the Kaaba was covered with the first Saudi Kiswa (Al-Khiliwi 2020). In 1977, a new factory for cladding was established, equipped with the latest equipment and capabilities necessary for the production of cladding while maintaining manual production due to its technical value and honour in practising the sewing of the honourable Kiswa (Al-Khiliwi 2020).

3. Process of making the Kiswa

In 1927, King Abdulaziz ordered those workers and technicians from India specialising in weaving and embroidery be brought to make the covering of the Kaaba. They were to teach the tailors of Saudi Arabia the honour of blessed profession of weaving and embroidery

the Kiswa. These technicians came with the dyes and loom needed to make the cladding, and their work continued until 1933. After that, the management of the factory was appointed by Abdul Rahman Mazhar, who arranged the foremen of work according to their specialisations. There were about 40 teachers, and their followers were 20 workers, bringing the total number of workers from India to 60, all working with a few trainees of Saudi tailors (Al-Ruqi, 2000). Because of this, at first, they worked on the covering of the Kaaba for six consecutive days inside the factory, not going out except on Fridays to visit their families. The work was done inside the factory in the form of successive rosettes. Some of the men worked on embroidery and others on the fabric. That way, the work was completed on time and in the required manner (Al-Ruqi, 2000). This continued throughout the first year of opening the factory.

The tailors of the Kiswa of the Kaaba are distinguished by their long experience, accuracy, and high craftsmanship in their work. However, there is no room for individual creativity on their part. Because the design of the Kiswa is distinguished by its unified, non-renewable shape. As it is possible for the tools to change and develop to produce a high-quality livery that is tolerant to the climatic conditions of the place, but for the design, it remains in its current form. Thus, Saudi tailors continued the profession of sewing the honourable Kiswa, and it became an honour for them to pass it on from generation to generation. Through teaching their children how to embroider the covering of the Kaaba.

Throughout the centuries, Kiswa was produced using a wide variety of fabrics, colours and designs, a task that is regarded as sacred and combines the precision and creativity of craftsmanship. The Kiswa of the Muslims for the Kaaba consisted of eight curtains of black silk embroidered with linen, each 26 cubits long and 90 cubits wide (Haggag 2015). Each of these curtains had a 12-cubit-long belt. The curtain for the door of the Kaaba is decorated with wires coated with gold. In addition, the craft of making the covering of the Kaaba is characterised by a unique Islamic style of geometric pattern, floral and epigraphic motifs, and these motifs were mixed to show their 12 cubits-long aesthetic and creative values of perfection and splendour. Two craftsmen were designated to dynamically organise these three elements according to mathematical and engineering rules to harmonise and fill the sides of the Holy Kaaba in different ways, such as gilding, embroidery and colouring.

The craft of making the covering of the Kaaba has great significance, which is reflected in the materials used in its making and their quality. For example, the Kiswa is made from five pieces of natural silk dyed in black and connected to each other, with each piece covering one side of the Kaaba and the fifth used as the curtain for the door. More precisely, approximately 244 blocks of natural light beige-coloured silk reach the Al-Kiswa factory an annual with a length of 3000 m (Joseph 2010). The silk threads are dyed black, stored and prepared for weaving. Many rigorous laboratory tests are done to ensure colour stability, dye uniformity and the strength and quality of threads. Al-Khiliwi (2020, 2) clarifies that one garment of the Kiswa consists of 48 pieces, each of which is 14.5 m long and 100 cm wide. This garment is made from 670 kg of white silk, which is dyed black inside the factory, and it consumes 720 kg of dyes and acids. Also, the Kiswa has a thickness of two millimetres and its insides are lined with a durable white cotton cloth. The cost of the entire process is 17 million Saudi riyals, which is approximately 4 million US dollars. All this is in a nine-month-long process of making a new garment consisting of over 450 miles of pure Italian silk threads to shape the Kiswa (Al-Deqn 1986; Joseph 2010).

The craft of making the Kiswa goes through several important processes to ensure the quality of production. The first is **the dyeing department**, which undertakes the removal of suspended matter in silk threads using hot tubs with special chemicals mixed and weighed at specific percentages, which constitute an alkaline medium to remove the glue as shown in figure 6 and 7 (Al-Deqn 1986; Al-Zahrani 2014). After that, the silk will be washed several times with water to ensure the stability of the desired colour (Al-Deqn 1986). They are also

responsible for the quality, purity and desalination of groundwater, which is reflected in the quality and texture of the silk when it is washed and then dyed (Al-Zahrani 2014). This is followed by the process of dyeing it black and green after removing the waxy layer that covers the silk threads as in figures 8 and 9. This lining is dyed black for the outer curtain trim and green for making the interior Kiswa. The amount of natural silk required for by Kiswa is 670 kg (Al-thaqafi 2020). Some colour-stabilising chemicals are added. These chemicals protect the colour from lighting, washing and friction (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021). "The threads become stable so that it can bear a whole year of exposure to the hot sun of Makkah and the touch of the multitudes of circumambulation" (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021, 18).



Figure 6: Adnan Al Balushi, Fine silk threads, brought all the way from Italy. n.d., Photograph. Reproduced from: Sekkamag



Figure 7: Draping of the Kaaba. 2018, Photograph. Reproduced from: Gulf Life



Figure 8: Raed Al-Lehyani, Process of making Kiswa. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Raed Al-Lehyani.



Figure 9: Kaaba Kiswa Factory. 2008, Photograph. Reproduced from: Getty images.

After that, **the laboratory department** ensures that the silk and cotton threads meet the required standards. Many different tests are conducted on the threads to ensure their strength, durability and resistance to abrasion and climatic conditions. Likewise, silver-plated threads were used to determine their extent and fit. Some research and experiments are necessary for this. It is worth noting that the outer and inner Kiswa are made of one type of natural silk, but the thickness of the yarn from which the outer Kiswa is made is three times that of the inner cladding to ensure durability and to bear the factors of nature. Previously, natural silk was imported from China and Japan, and after that, it was

imported from Italy due to its high quality (Al-Deqn 1986).

This is followed by **the manual and automatic weaving department**. **The hand-weaving section** consists of two main halls, one for weaving the outer cladding and the other for making the interior cladding. This section contains a number of jacquard handlooms that highlight the writing in the form of an engraving on the outer fabric of the covering as can be seen in figure 10. Among some of the phrases that were inscribed on it are as follows: (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah), (Mannan¹⁰, Hannan¹¹) and (Glory is to Allah the Great) as in figure 11. The Saudi Kiswa added some expressions with the woven inscription, unlike the Egyptian Kiswa, which had only one phrase (There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah). More than 200 male Saudi craftsmen participate in the weaving process. They inherit the craft of making the Kiswa from generation to generation with pride and honour in practising this profession (Radwan 2019). Despite the presence of machines, hand sewing is preferred for its perfection, beauty and accuracy in manufacturing Islamic calligraphy and decorations with an artistic touch.



Figure 10: Adnan Al Balushi, Dyed black, the silk threads are weaved. n.d., Photograph. Reproduced from: Sekkamag.



Figure 11: Abdulrahman Almosallam, Mecca. 2013, Photograph. Reproduced from: Behance.

In **the automated weaving section**, the factory is equipped with advanced Jacquard machines, which weave Qur'anic verses on black silk as well as on ordinary cotton made for printing verses and embroidering them with gold and silver. (Al-Zahrani 2014). The most advanced machines speed up the weave process (Figure 12). These machines consume 9,986 threads per metre to weave the Kiswa in record time, not to mention the cotton linings for the Kiswa (Al-thaqafi 2020). This led to faster production and improved performance in quantity, quality and form, with reduced cost, effort and time (Al-Zahrani 2014).

¹⁰ The Mannan (للنَّانُ) is the one who is tremendous in giving (Azam 2014).

¹¹The Hannan (الخنَّان) is the one who is merciful to His servants (Azam 2014).



Figure 12: Raed Al-Lehyani, Process of making Kiswa. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Raed Al-Lehyani.

Next is the **printing department**, which plays an essential role in the process of making the Kiswa, where Islamic motifs and Quranic verses are printed on the belt of the Kaaba. In terms of fonts, complex Thuluth Arabic calligraphy is used. (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021, 18) state that "the Thuluth style of calligraphy is considered the most artistic Arabic calligraphy kind." This font was developed by a Saudi calligrapher named Abdul Rahim Amin (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021, 18). This calligraphy is surrounded by a frame of Islamic motifs that are repeated on all claddings. Each shape is about 10 cm wide and is known as a glass decoration as can be seen in figure 13 (Al-Khiliwi 2020, 20). Then the dyeing, according to Al-thaqafi (2020, 1),

"This section prepares the weaving using two sides made of solid wood, and the white raw fabric is pulled between them. The plain silk is then placed on top and the belt of the Kiswa is printed on it before the Kaaba's door and the embroidery are added. Workers use silkscreen printing for the Qur'anic verses with white and yellow ink."

After that, the artisans will place thick cotton threads over the decorations printed on the black cloth, as shown in figure 14, after which they will begin the necessary stitches and domes using silver wires coated with gold.



Figure 13: Raed Al-Lehyani, Process of making Kiswa. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Raed Al-Lehyani.



Figure 14: Jumana Al Tamim, Kiswah Al Kaaba: A piece of art. 2013, photograph. Reproduced from: Gulf News.

The **belt department (embroidery)** places different-density cotton threads in the lines and decorative elements imprinted on black tissue, with a technical observation of how the origins of embroidery and prints on fabrics stretch on the weave. Then the skilled technical cadres begin the necessary stitches and stuffing of the dome using silver-and gold-coated wires (Al-Khiliwi 2020). The work in this section is done manually so that embroidery is done to fill in the written letters and highlight them according to their size (Al-Deqn 1986). This embroidery process goes through four stages. First, the lines written with threads will be identified. Second, the craftsmen will be stuffed the fabric will be stuffed with cotton threads until it becomes prominent. This is followed by dressing the filling with yellow cotton threads to make it prominent and consistent with the silver wire covered with gold. In the last stage, the craftsmen perform the sewing process using gilded threads over the letters for their final, beautifully embroidered form (Figures 15 and 16) (Al-Deqn 1986). Thus, this manual operation performed by Saudi men is "considered as a work of art in which combine precision with visual beauty executed in such designs and with Arabic calligraphy patterns" (Alashari, Hamzah, and Marni 2021, 19).



Figure 15: Raed Al-Lehyani, Process of making Kiswa. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Raed Al-Lehyani.



Figure 16: Raed Al-Lehyani, Process of making Kiswa. 2021, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Raed Al-Lehyani.

Furthermore, the covering of the Kaaba includes some accessories produced from this section, including the belt embroidered with Islamic motifs in gold and silver, which is 47 m long, 17 lamps and four Surat Al-Ikhlas ¹² placed in the corners of the Kaaba, 16 pieces for the belt of the Kaaba and six pieces of various sizes below the belt, in addition to the outer curtain for the door of the Kaaba and the largest piece on one side (Figure 17) (Al-Zahrani 2014). This curtain is seven and a half metres high and four metres wide. It is made of pure natural silk lined with raw fabric and decorated with Islamic motifs, with inscriptions of Quranic verses in prominent embroidery and covered with gold-coated silver wires (Al-Khiliwi 2020).



Figure 17: Kiswa of the Kaaba. 2019, Digital Image. Reproduced from: Lebanon360. Figure.

Finally, the **department of Cladding Sewing (assembly of pieces)** is no less important than the other sections since it undertakes the process of assembling and connecting the pieces. The members of this section assemble all the parts of the cladding together to install it from all four sides, including the installation of additional gilded pieces, such as the belt, lamps and the curtain for the door of the Kaaba. All of this is done using the latest international equipment specially designed for the assembly of cladding pieces (AI-Deqn 1986).

4. Conclusion

The Kaaba has an ancient history and legacy, across several eras before and after Islam, from the era of our prophet Abraham to this day. Each of these eras was characterised by their veneration and care for the Holy Kaaba and in terms of attention to its covering. The types of fabrics, their quality used in the making of the Kiswa and the multiplicity of colours used in them varied with each era until it settled on the black colour and was

¹² Quran Chapter 112, Surah Al-Ikhlas

distinguished by it. Previously, Egypt had the largest share of making the covering for the Kaaba, embroidering it and sending it to Mecca after its completion. This was done during most of the eras, including the Umayyad, Abbasid, Mamluk and Ottoman eras, before the manufacture of the covering for the Kaaba moved and settled in Makkah al-Mukarramah in 1346 during the Saudi era.

The stages of sewing the covering for the Kaaba pass through several technical and operational sections. The first section in the production of the covering of the Kaaba is the dyeing section, followed by the laboratory section to ensure the quality and durability of the silk threads and their compliance with the required standard specifications. This is followed by the manual and automatic weaving department. The manual sewing section sews over the words printed prominently on the quilt, and the automatic weaving section prints the words on the fabric. This is followed by the printing section, where Islamic motifs and Quranic verses are printed, followed by the embroidery section to fill in the written letters and highlight them with gilded threads. Finally, the assembly section of the pieces focuses on installing and connecting the pieces.

The Kaaba has a significant place in the hearts of its devotees, especially as it is the Holy House of God, the purest location in the Islamic world. It is a symbol of Islam and Muslims. Therefore, the covering of the Kaaba is distinguished by a unique Islamic style in its decoration that highlights its aesthetic and spiritual values. The covering also uses Arabic calligraphy to embroider a group of Quranic verses and phrases glorifying God. Hence, we find that the covering of the Kaaba presents a beautiful example of Islamic decoration and Arabic calligraphy. Saudi Arabia has the honour of manufacturing Kiswa, and it is distinguished by the precision of implementation and the splendour of manufacturing. The artisans passed on the honour of weaving and embroidering them from generation to generation.

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Acknowledgement

The researcher acknowledges Curtin University support in financing the conference registration fees.

Architecture of Place: The Role of Craft in the making of the Golden Architecture of Iraq 1950s-1979s

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Abstract. Architecture is a multi-dimensional representation of place, culture and identity. An authentic architectural work is seen to be a reflection of a spectrum of values and principles derived from the place and culture and presented by makers, designers and architects. Craft-making has always been an inspiration for place-makers "Architects" as for the genuine values and principles reflected in the craft that defines the identity, place and culture of an Architecture. The period between 1950s-1979s witnessed the golden age for architecture in Iraq. Local craft had an evident influence on the architecture of this period. This study demonstrates the influence of craft on forming an authentic architecture that celebrates place and identity in the period between 1950s-1979s. The study presents the work of three predominant architects, namely, Rifat Chadriji, Mohamed Makiya, and Hisham Munir and discusses the influence of local craft on forming the identity and authenticity of their architecture. The main contributions include identifying the influence of craft on the architecture of that period. Also, discussing the role of craft in forming an authentic architecture "Architecture of Place", as well as discovering the methods and techniques of craft implemented in the elements and objects of that architecture.

Keywords: Architecture; Identity; Craft; Socio-cultural Impact; Local Character

1. Introduction

Architecture is a reflection of place, culture and identity. Every architecture has principle drivers and sources of inspiration either initiated to fulfill a need or to celebrate a particular aspect (Herrle and Wegerhoff, 2008; King, 2004; Czumalo, 2012). The drivers of architecture vary between cultural values, living needs and inherited techniques (Alfoldy, 2012; Alkan et al., 2010). Techniques, in particular, craft-making have defined the features and characteristics of architecture of place throughout history (Alkan et al., 2010). Craft in architecture has been seen as a definer of a place and a presenter of its social context, cultural values and geographical settings (Alfoldy, 2012; Alkan et al., 2010). This study discusses the influence on craft-making on the architecture of Irag between 1950s-1979s. This period, in the history of Iraqi architecture, remarked the golden age for many of the scholarly, local architects and researchers (Al-Khalil and Makiya, 1991). The reason lay in the quality and uniqueness of the architectural production resulted in this period and represented by a set of genuine master-piece architecture of public buildings, landmarks and urban spaces (Al-Khalil and Makiya, 1991; Bemhardsson, 2013). The period between 1950s-1979s witnessed a thriving condition in the adoption and implementation of craft techniques on the local architecture of Iraq, as the first cohorts of architects had returned from various architectural schools around the globe, each with a vision for forming the architecture of place in Iraq and all with a believe in the importance of local craft-making in forming the architecture of place in Irag (Hussein and Al Slik, 2019; Jackson, 2016). The proper implementation of the inherited craft-making in the design of those architects and the creative employment of local craft techniques had resulted in the formation of masterpiece architectural outcome that have successfully reflected the local identity and formed a genuine architecture of place.

Accordingly, this study aims to discuss and demonstrate the influence of craft and craftmaking on the generation of the golden architecture in Iraq between 1950s-1979s. The study showcases the architectural work of three predominant architects of this particular period and studies the impact of craft and craft-making on creating a unique and genuine architecture, that is the Architecture of Place.

The paper overview the golden age of architecture and discusses the drivers and factors behind the emergence of this period in section 2. Section 3 presents the architectural production of three predominant architects in the period between 1950s-1979s and discusses their architectural work as case studies in this paper. Section 4 demonstrates the influence of craft and craft-making on the architecture of those famous architects and analyzes samples of their architecture in relation with craft techniques and methods. Section 5 concludes this study and suggests further research.

2. The Golden Architecture of Iraq

The golden period of the Iraqi architecture emerged in early 1950s after discovering oil wealth in Iraq, which encouraged the government to allocate many resources to develop the capital Baghdad and other cities (Kirtikar, 2011; Nooraddin, 2004). Similarly, the first cohorts of Iraqi architects had completed their architectural studies in the United Kingdom, USA and Europe (Nooraddin, 2004; Marefat, 2008). Those architects returned to the homeland with a passion to join the proposed governmental developments as well as to convey and practice the knowledge and experience that they have gained throughout their studies. Most of those architects were influenced and impressed by the Modern Architecture Trend which is the architecture of simplicity and clarity (Hussein and Al Slik, 2019; Pieri, 2008). However, they have worked on redefining the features and characteristics of this trend to reflect the geographical settings, social and cultural identity of the place (Pieri, 2013; Ali and Tareq, 2016). The late 1950s period witnessed the

opening of the first architectural school in the capital Baghdad. The school was established by the returning architects, particularly, Mohamed Makiya who is one of the leading architects of this period. The presence of competent architects with proper skills and experience, also, the establishment of the first architectural school in the capital were the main drivers for the emergence and thriving of the golden architecture between 1950s-1979s (Pieri, 2013; Ali and Tareq, 2016; Chadarji, 1991; Chadarji, 1985).

The first attempts of forming a genuine architectural paradigm for the city of Baghdad were based on the concept of forming a local identity (Chadarji, 1991; Pieri, 2013; Ali and Tareq, 2016). Architects of that period had recognized the significance of defining a unique identity for the emerging architecture, an identity that presents the architectural trend of that era, as well as reflects the local values of the place (Chadarji, 1991; Nooraddin, 2012; Danby, 1987). The critical need for a genuine architectural identify, at that time, was derived from the absence of a clear and evident architectural style related to the city of Baghdad or the country in general (Nooraddin, 2004). Therefore, the architects of this particular period have worked, in their designs, on reflecting the features of the place and celebrating its local identity (Chadarji, 1991; Danby, 1987; Pieri, 2013).

Architects such as Rifat chadarji, Hisham Munir and Mohamed Makiya were pioneers in founding and defining a genuine architectural style for the capital. The style was established on the principle of celebrating the cultural and social values of the place in a modern and creative approach influenced by the features and characteristics of the global Modern Architecture movement (Al Siliq, 2008; Pieri, 2008). In their designs, the architects of the golden period were keen to implement local construction techniques, materials and methods, all applied in a unique configuration of spaces internally and externally (Nooraddin, 2004; Nooraddin, 2012). The architectural designs, at this age, reflected a strong and evident identity of place in a modern and creative configuration of spaces and elements (Chadarji, 1991; Danby, 1987; Pieri, 2013). The attempts of those architects in early 1950s were the first spark for the emergence of a genuine architecture paradigm which soon began to appear in many examples within the city of Baghdad and other cities.

The motives that encouraged the architects of the golden period to add a local character in their design was the evident need for creating a local identity of place (Pieri, 2013). An identity that celebrates the cultural and social settings of the capital Baghdad and other cities (Danby, 1987; Pieri, 2013; Chadarji, 1991). Another motive was the desire of the government and society to develop the existing infrastructure of the cities to fulfil the contemporary requirements of the era (Pieri, 2008; Al-Hasani, 2012; Wright, 2008). Also, the openness of the Iraqi society at that time on the world has influenced the general recognition of the importance of architecture in shaping the image of the modern city (Marr, 2018; Nooraddin, 2004). Another motive was the rich Iraqi cultural heritage exemplified by the unique vernacular architecture, building elements, and the inherited art styles (Al-Thahab et al., 2014; Razzouqi, 2005; Chadarji, 1991). All of which were start points for the creation of an architecture of place derived from the rich architectural heritage and reflected in a genuine and creative fashion (Chadarji, 1991).

The ambition of forming modern architecture that celebrates the character of the place had resulted in the founding of the first school of architecture at the University of Baghdad in 1959 (Nooraddin, 2004; Pieri, 2008). The school was established by the first cohorts of returning architects, mainly Mohamed Makiya, Abdullah Hassan, and Hisham Munir. The department headed by Mohamed Makiya addressed the challenges of urban expansions, the need for a modernized local architectural identity, and the re-planning of housing and public facilities in the city of Baghdad (Bemhardsson, 2013; Nooraddin, 2004). The school focused on addressing the Iraqi architectural heritage such as local building features, materials and local techniques of craft and craft-making in configuring the external and internal envelope of buildings and spaces (Nooraddin, 2012; Pieri, 2013; di Azad Hama Ahmed, 2018). The school successfully conveyed a genuine vision for the creation of a unique architecture paradigm to the young architects, which substantially influenced the thriving of the golden period in the years that followed.

Craft and craft-making had a significant role in achieving the desire for the formation of a local identity of place in the architecture of this period. Craft and craft-making played a central part in filling the gap between the concept of modernity and the spirt of local architecture (Nooraddin, 2004; Pieri, 2013; Chadarji, 1991). Architects of the golden period implemented the rich inherited craft techniques in the design of building elements and spaces (Adnan et al., 2021; Al Siliq, 2008). The unique ornaments, elements and craft products were adopted in the design of those architects in a contemporary and modern fashion (Pieri, 2013). Craft makers and skilful builders were employed to produce genuine compositions of façade elements, wall screening and detailed ornaments (Nooraddin, 2004; Pieri, 2013). Each with a unique style, the pioneer architects of the golden period had integrated the features and characteristics of local craft within the design of buildings and spaces (Chadarji, 1991; Ali and Tareq, 2016; Chadarji, 1985).

The influence of craft and hand-made work started to thrive on the facades and elements of the newly constructed buildings (Chadarji, 1991; Nooraddin, 2012). The city of Baghdad started celebrating a novel architectural fashion characterized by modernity and featured by genuine craft-work that reflects the identity and heritage of the place (Pieri, 2008; Elsheshtawy, 2004). Craft-work such as the unique brick compositions on the façade of buildings, arched configurations and hand-made elements was the main contributor in the formation of a genuine architecture (Pieri, 2013; Chadarji, 1991). Craft-making was not limited to the building elements only, craft work was adopted in the design of furniture and decorations by some of the pioneer architects of this period (Chadarji, 1991). Craft and craft-making had a tangible influence on the formation of a genuine architecture fashion in the period between 1950s-1979s, a fashion that celebrates the identity of the place and reflects its cultural and social values in a contemporary and innovative manner (Nooraddin, 2004; Nooraddin, 2012; Pieri, 2013).

3. Architecture of Place

The extensive efforts and the outstanding vision of the pioneer architects in the period between 1950s-1979s led to the emergence and thriving of a unique architectural production reflected on main public buildings, urban spaces and cities infrastructure. The architectural production was characterized by a distinct identity of place and a genuine architectural style, that is so-called "Architecture of Place" (Chadarji, 1991; Danby, 1987; Nooraddin, 2004; Nooraddin, 2012). This section illustrates case studies of the architectural production between 1950s-1979s. The section showcases the distinct architecture styles of this period, and also, demonstrates the influence of craft on the production and thriving of this architecture. This section will be followed by an analysis of craft-work and craft techniques that have been implemented in this architecture, in section 4.

3.1. Place and Identity: The Architecture of Makiya

Mohamed Makiya was one of the first pioneer architects of the golden age. Makyia obtianed BArch from Liverpool School of Architecture, and then, PhD Architecture from Kings College, Cambridge. Makiya had returned with the first cohorts of architects to the capital in 1946 (Smith, 2017a; Dabrowska, 2015). The architecture of Makiya were characterized by the tendency for conserving the inherited local architecture, however in a contemporary and innovative manner (Al-Thahab, 2013). As the founder of the first architecture school in the capital and one of the pioneer architects of the golden

period, Makiya had a tangible influence on the emergence of a genuine architecture style throughout his outstanding work and his role in educating the following cohorts of architects (Smith, 2017a; Kultermann, 1980; Radoine, 2017). The work of Makiya had adopted the values of local architecture and was influenced by the principles of Islamic architecture (Khan, 2015).

One of the masterpiece works of Makiya was the Khulafa Central Mosque in the capital Baghdad. The project was a redevelopment of a heritage site of an Abbasid mosque built in the early 10th century (Khan, 2011). The purpose of the project was to design a contemporary mosque that reflects the identity of the heritage site, as well as preserves the still standing original Minaret of the mosque (Toler, 2014; Magazachi, 2021). The redevelopment proposal of Makiya aimed to design a contemporary mosque that celebrates the traditional character within the growing urban fabric of the capital (Magazachi, 2021; Toler, 2014; Khan, 2011). Figure 1 presents the Khulafa Central Mosque.



Figure 1. Photographs of the Khulafa Central Mosque in the capital Baghdad Sources: (Magazachi, 2021; Toler, 2014)

In Khulafa Mosque design, Makiya depended mainly on creating spatial configurations that reflect the traditional identity of the place using local building materials, craft techniques, and traditional building elements (Khan, 2011; Khan, 2015; Al-Thahab, 2013). The elements and spaces were designed in an innovative manner to reflect a contemporary style that celebrates the traditions (Alnemaa et al., 2019; Makiya, 1990). The design adopted local building principles such as the yellow clay brick, woodwork, and arched elements in various compositions within the external and internal envelope of the mosque. Also, the original Minaret had been refurbished (Toler, 2014; Magazachi, 2021).

Craft and craft-work had a central role in the formation of the unique compositions in the design of Makiya. The sophisticated compositions of patterns and geometries on the external and internal surfaces of the mosque celebrated the spirit of the place and the

values of its culture (Nooraddin, 2004; Makiya, 1990). The ornaments on the surfaces of the arched bays, the Arabic calligraphy inscriptions, and the compositions of unique geometries were the production of craft-makers and skilful craftsperson (Makiya, 1990; Magazachi, 2021). The hand-made compositions, in the design of Makiya, reflected a strong local identity in a genuine architectural style.

Another masterpiece work of Makiya was Rafidain Bank. The proposed development located in Kufa city, southern Iraq, was to construct a public facility within the expanding fabric of the city (Makiya, 1990; Sultani, 2015). Makiya, the designer of the project, took advantage of the opportunity to celebrate the local architecture of the place again in a distinct and contemporary style (Makiya, 1990; Al-Thahab, 2013). The Rafidain Bank building was designed on the principle of an open-plan central space encompassed by administrative spaces, reflecting the simplicity and transparency principles of Modern Architecture. Nevertheless, the external façade was designed to reflect the distinct features of the place, such as the unique arched compositions that celebrate the architectural heritage of the area, as well as the distinct local clay brick (Sultani, 2015; Makiya, 1990; Radoine, 2017; Smith, 2015).

Craft-work, in the design of Rafidain Bank, contributed in the formation of a distinct architectural production on the external and internal levels of the building. Starting from the unique Iron Motifs of the main gate to the outstanding hand-made arched compositions on the sides of the building and ending with the distinct clay brick geometries, all of which were the production of skillful craftsperson. Figure 2 presents photographs of the Rafidain Bank building in Kufa city, Iraq.



Figure 2. Photographs of the Rafidain Bank in the city of Kufa. Source: (Smith, 2015)

3.2. Modernity as an Opportunity: The Architecture of Munir

Hisham Munir was one of the influential pioneer architects in the period between 1950-1779. Munir obtained B.Arch. from the University of Texas at Austin, and M.Arch. from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He returned to the capital in 1957 and formed with other architects the Hisham Munir & Associates architectural firm which was responsible for designing an abundant number of important public buildings (Toler, 2020 ; Alsammarae, 2017; Sultani, 2019). Apart of that, Munir was one of the founders of the first architecture school in the capital. Munir looked to the past as an inspiration and to the present as an opportunity. The architectural production of Munir adopted an approach influenced mainly on the principles of Modern Architecture with a particular reference to the local identity (Toler, 2020 ; Sultani, 2019; Alsammarae, 2016).

Awqaf Building was one of the outstanding architectural works of Munir. Located in the capital, the administration building provided administrative spaces that all open to a traditional courtyard. The design of Munir addressed a distinct fashion of architecture that treats the elements of the building as masses of sculpture featured by purity and clarity (Sultani, 2011; Sultani, 2013; Toler, 2020). Munir paid notable attention to the creation of unique compositions of vertical and horizontal masses that interact with light and shadow resulting in a distinct visual experience for the users. In between the masses, distinct ceramic motifs were placed, acting as screening walls between the main façade and the outer space, and also enhancing the interaction of mass and light (Sultani, 2011; Sultani, 2013). The distinguished ceramic motifs on the facades of Awqaf Building and the sculpture-like building masses presented another distinct integration of craft-work and craft techniques in the architecture of this period. Figure 3 illustrates photographs of Awqaf Building.



Figure 3. Photographs of the Awqaf Building in the city of Baghdad. Source: (Toler, 2020)

Amanat Al-Asiema (Mayor's Office Building) was another masterpiece standing in the capital. Munir, in this project, presented a novel example of integrating the features of modernity, traditions and monumentality, as illustrated in figure 4. The design of the administrative building took the character of domination and control with the massive sculpture-like masses of concrete (Munir, 1985; Sultani, 2016). Aiming to emphasize the identity of the place, Munir used traditional elements in a symbolic manner through craftworks such as the intricate brick compositions, unique iron motif, and the ceramic mesh covering windows in a modern interpretation for the wooden work of the traditional window element "Shanasheel" in the capital (Munir, 1985; Sultani, 2016). Although the work of Munir tended to reflect modern Architecture, nevertheless, the architectural production of Munir presented a unique approach for integrating craft and architecture for celebrating the local identity.



Figure 4. Photographs of Amanat Al-Asiema in the city of Baghdad. Sources: (Toler, 2020)

3.3. Modernity in a Traditional Style: The Architecture of Chadarji

Rifat Chadriji was one of predominant pioneers, in the period between 1950-1979, and perhaps the most influential one. Chadarji introduced a novel architectural paradigm that deeply abstract and implement the inherited traditions of the place in a modernized and creative manner. Chadarji studied architecture at Hammersmith School of Arts and Crafts, UK. He returned to the capital in 1952 and joined the proposed development projects in the capital. He also taught for years at the architecture school of Baghdad University alongside his architectural practice (Smith, 2017b; Al-Mallak, 2021). The architecture of Chadarji introduced a distinct approach for showcasing the identity of place through abstracting genuine traditional compositions and redefining them into highly sophisticated craft work (Nooraddin, 2004; El-Shorbagy, 2010; Nooraddin, 2012; Al-Mallak, 2020). Federation of Industries building was a masterpiece architecture standing in one of Baghdad's urban centers. Chadarji presented an outstanding architectural work marked by uniqueness in the formulation of the architectural form and the configuration of its spaces. The work celebrated the traditions of the local architecture in what looks like an abstraction of a Fine Art painting, all presented in a sophisticated architectural paradigm (Sultani, 2014). Figure 5 showcase photographs of the Federation of Industries building. The traditional clay brick walls on the two wings of the building façade act as "flying walls" separating the main surface of the building from the front arched compositions (Chadarji, 1991). The outstanding geometry of the flying walls was the production of advanced craft-work and skillful craftsperson. Also, the distinct arched compositions with different proportions reflected modernity and innovation in what is like a process of making concrete sculptures. Federation of Industries buildings marked a distinct architectural fashion that celebrates innovation and traditions based on a deep abstraction of Fine Arts principles and techniques (Sultani, 2014).

Another public building was the Iraqi Scientific Academy located in the capital. The building celebrated the distinct approach of Chadarji in architecture. The design of Chadarji blended the advancements of Modern Architecture and the features of Traditional Architecture (Smith, 2016a; Al-Mallak, 2021). On the façade of the building, unique arched compositions were placed, one time in the form a distinct geometry of brickwork, and another time as a piece of sculpture made of concrete, that is the symbol material of Modern Architecture (Al-Mallak, 2021). Again Chadarji presented another masterpiece example of a novel architecture fashion that addresses the features and values of the local architecture in a modernized style.



Figure 5. Photographs of Federation of Industries Building in the capital Baghdad. Sources: (AI-Malak, 2021; Smith, 2016a)

Craft-work, in the architecture of Chadarji, manifested itself in two main forms that are Geometry and Sculpture. Rifat Chadarji was influenced by his friend and master Jawad Salem who is a prominent artist and sculptor (Chadarji, 1985). In his book, Chadarji expresses his deep admiration to the work of Jawad Salem in Fine Arts, and in particular Sculpture (Chadarji, 1991; Chadarji, 1985). This was reflected on the formation of the distinct concrete compositions in his design, which appear as sculptures casted by skillful craftsperson. Geometry, on the other hand, was a distinct feature in the design of Chadarji where the distinguished and composite brickworks celebrated the identity of place, all made by skillful craftsperson. Figure 6 illustrate photographs of the Iraqi Scientific Academy.



Figure 6. Photographs of the Iraqi Scientific Academy in Baghdad. Sources: (Smith, 2016a)

The outstanding architectural production of Chadarji was not limited to public buildings. His distinct approach to architecture of place was evident in a smaller scale. The residence of Hamood was one example of a masterpiece architecture at that time. The design of Chadarji presented the principle of a "House" in novel fashion, that celebrates the rich traditional values of the place (Al-Mallak, 2021), as illustrated in Figure 7(a). Another distinct example is the residence of Chadarji himself, where he presented his distinct vision to architecture, that is modernity and innovation blended with features and characteristics of the place (Smith, 2016b). Figure 7(b) presents a photograph of Chadrji's residence.



Figure 7. (a) Photographs of Hamood Residence, (b) Photographs of Chadarji Residence. Sources: (Al-Malak, 2021; Smith, 2016b)

Chadarji's most iconic work, and perhaps the most iconic work in the region, was the Liberty Monument in Tahrir Square-Baghdad. This work witnessed a clear convergence between Architecture and Craft. The mission was to design an iconic monument in the heart of the capital celebrating a new chapter in the history of the country (Al-Murabit, 2014; Aldihaisy, 2015). In an outstanding vision, Chadarji decided to work closely with Jawad Saleem in designing the monument. Chadarji designed the bases and the flying rectangular tablet only, in symbolism to liberation signs. While Saleem, the sculptor and artist, designed the distinct sculpture compositions in reflection to the rich history of the region (Al-Murabit, 2014; Chadarji, 1991; Mahmood, 2012). As demonstrated in figure 8.



Figure 8. Photographs of Liberty Monemunt in the center of the capital Baghdad. Sources: (Al-Murabit, 2014; Aldihaist, 2015; Mahmood; 2012)

4. Craft-work and the Architecture of Place

Craft-work had an evident influence on the formation and development of the Architecture of Place. In section 3 prominent case studies, in the period between 1950-1979, were discussed and the relation of architecture and craft was highlighted in the work of the pioneer architects of this period. This section analyzes the main types of craft-work that had been implemented in this architecture, and also, discusses the role and influence of these types on the creation of the Architecture of Place. In the period between 1950-1979, five types of craft-work were popular. As the following:

- Geometry (Geometric compositions): this type of craft-work is one of the most influential techniques used by architects to manifest the identity of the place and its values.
- 2. Motifs: another form of craft-work, mostly Iron Motifs, used by the architects to articulate the rich history of the area, as well as to perform a specific design purpose.
- **3. Ornamentation:** a traditional form of craft-work used by the architects to add a district character to the elements and features of the design.
- **4. Calligraphy:** another traditional craft technique used by the architects to address a specific articulation of the place.
- 5. Sculpture: a distinct craft technique used as a concept and principle in the design of the pioneer architects to celebrate the identity of place in an innovative and unusual manner.

The hand-made craft production added a unique dimension to the architecture of this period, which is genuineness and authenticity. Figure 9 illustrates a thematic analysis of the main craft techniques.





Figure 9. Photographs of Libreaty Monemunt in the center of the capital Baghdad. Footnote: all paintings are the work and analysis of Authors (sketching pen and water color technique)

As presented in the thematic analysis, craft-work appeared in various forms and events in the production of the Architecture of Place. Craft techniques had been implemented for different functions, one time as a representation of culture and identity, and another time for a specific purpose in the design. In all its forms, craft appeared to celebrate the spirit of place and its values. From the distinct geometric forms to the innovative adoption of sculpture techniques, the architects of this period had recognized the value of defining an architecture that is a representation of place, where craft-work was a main driver.

The Architecture of Place, between 1950s-1979s, manifested a distinct paradigm of architecture that perceives craft-work as an important tool in defining the identity and features of place. This perception was evident on the architectural production in this particular period, and therefore, this study attempted to highlight the role and influence of craft on the creation of the Architecture of Place.

5. Conclusion

The period between 1950s-1979s witnessed the emergence and thriving of the so-called "Golden Architecture" in most of the Iraqi cities and in particular the capital Baghdad. This study attempted to showcase the masterpiece architecture of this period through presenting the architectural production of the pioneer architects in this distinct point of history. The study discussed and demonstrated the role of craft and craft techniques in forming a genuine architecture fashion that reflects the roots and values of the place, as well as celebrates the presence. The study revealed the following points:

- The pioneer architects, in the period between 1950s-1979s, recalled the traditions of the place by invoking local craft-work and craft techniques in their design. Each with a distinct vision, those architects perceived the essence of defining a genuine identity of place. An authentic identity that reflects the values and features of the place.
- Craft-work, in the architectural production of this period, had taken five main forms: Geometry (Geometric compositions), Motifs, Ornamentation, Calligraphy, and Sculpture. The hand- made Geometric compositions were the common craft production followed by Motifs, Calligraphy and Ornamentation in different percentages. Sculpture as a concept and technique was evident in many examples, in particular, the work of Rifat Chadarji.
- Craft-work, in its different forms, represented the spirit and identity of the place. The hand-made craft and the local craft techniques had a direct influence on the formation of an authentic architecture fashion in this period, where buildings and spaces had celebrated the values and traditions of the place in a distinct and wellpresented Architecture of Place.

Further studies are recommended on the role of craft in forming the identity of architecture on a regional scale in attempt to discover similarities and differences of approaches in different geographical location.

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TRACK-2: Futuring craft; education as art, design, and community of practice:



Craft Pedagogy in Precarious Times

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Abstract. In this paper, we discuss embodied pedagogy and digital technology through the lens of precariousness. Our findings draw from an in-progress Canadian research project titled *Thinking Through Craft and the Digital Turn* (CDT). We are investigating how digital technology is integrated into post-secondary craft studios and curriculum as well as how the community engages with or perceives the digital turn. In Canada, studio craft is taught in a small number of post-secondary art and design programs. Students, faculty and technicians in these programs explore the relationship of handwork to digital technologies daily with varying degrees of access to tools and facilities. Due to a lack of research available on craft and digital pedagogy in Canada, our project is tasked with furthering our understanding of the adoption of digital technologies—tools, methodologies and networks—and how they intersect with traditional processes.

With the advent of an international pandemic and distance teaching, makers and educators have been catapulted into digital immersion. This development has lent further urgency to our project. By offering up insights from across Canada, through research findings and data captured from surveys of faculty, students and technicians at post-secondary institutions, we look in depth at aspects of precariousness and precarity, specifically *Downloading Risk and Responsibility* from institutions onto individuals; *Loss and Opportunity* within digital ubiquity; the issue of *Shiny New Toys* destabilizing traditional craft practices; and the *Seismic Shift Online* as a response to the threat of the pandemic.

Keywords: craft, pedagogy, digital ubiquity, embodiment, precariousness

1. Introduction

In this paper, we discuss embodied pedagogy and digital technology through the lens of precariousness. Our findings draw from an in-progress project titled *Thinking Through Craft* and the Digital Turn (CDT).¹ We are investigating how digital technology is integrated into post-secondary craft studios and curriculum as well as how the community engages with or perceives the digital turn. The research was incubated in the real-world experiences of teaching in post-secondary craft studios as digital tools, processes and networks became pervasive. The pull of digital primacy, with its connotations of supremacy over a material orientation, is changing our teaching and practices significantly. Through anecdotal evidence we saw that craft studios, made up of a community of students, faculty, technicians and their attendant institutions, were reacting to and, in limited ways, effecting digital ubiquity within the university environment.

The CDT research project started in 2019 and has its roots in pilot projects from 2017. Throughout its duration we have delved into various aspects of craft and the digital turn; however, this paper will focus on craft pedagogy in precarious times and the socioeconomic concept of precarity. The global pandemic has increased our sense of the persistent insecurity and fundamental changes that have taken place in craft practice. When the pandemic hit, much of what we did routinely in the studio was suddenly ported online and we were forced to deliver craft education at a distance, unavoidably confronted by massive change, much of it digital in nature. These changes dovetailed with and expanded our original research directions, necessarily reorientating our foci and leading to new understandings of our data and experiences.

We used the phrase precarious times in our title purposefully rather than the term precarity, to signal our focus primarily on embodied pedagogy, digital primacy and the events of 2020. However, it became apparent in surveys directed to faculty, technicians, administrators and students that we were looking at many faces of precariousness and that precarious times exacerbated precarity. A scholarly focus on precarity is recent. The word has only been used regularly in academic discourse since the 2000s, but the frequency with which it has been evoked has risen dramatically over the last 20 years as it became associated with critiques of neoliberalism (Choonara 2020, 427; Millar 2017, 4). Sharryn Kasmir in her encyclopaedic entry on precarity states that the word "manifests as a distinctive phase of capitalist development associated with neoliberalism" and that "it alters class relations and therefore it transforms collective identities and politics" (2018, 1). Precariousness, on the other hand, denotes "a general, pervasive ontological condition of vulnerability, displacement and insecurity" (2018, 1). Life is intrinsically precarious, as evidenced all too dramatically by the current international health crisis. Pierre Bourdieu, acknowledging the deep ties between these two terms, suggests simply that precarity² is "this rational management of insecurity" (2004, 85). So, the word precarity is contemporary; however, an instinctual understanding of precariousness as fundamental to the human condition is ancient.

¹This research project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Government of Canada (40685). It is a collaborative effort between Emily Carr University of Art + Design (ECUAD) (Hélène Day Fraser, Keith Doyle), Alberta University of the Arts (AUARTS) (Mackenzie Kelly-Frère), OCAD University (OCAD U) (Lynne Heller, Dorie Millerson, Kathleen Morris, Travis Freeman), Sheridan College (Sheridan) (Gord Thompson) and NSCAD University (NSCAD U) (Greg Sims).

² Bourdieu was referring to the term flexploitation when he wrote this. He attributes this terminology to "a speaker here" (2004, 85) at the conference he was attending in 1998 when he delivered these remarks. The academic community has settled on the word precarity since that time.

The discourse about precariousness and precarity has expanded to include a wide array of theorizing in various academic fields (Waite 2009, 413). Regardless of specific orientations, one of the fundamental defining features of the dialogue is the question of whether the nature of precarity is subjective, objective or both. Charles Masquelier in his journal article "Bourdieu, Foucault and the politics of precarity" suggests that "precarity has both an objective and subjective dimension" (2019, 136). He outlines Michel Foucault's theories of governmentalization, a mode of precarity politics that ensures self-regulation. Following on, he outlines an understanding of Pierre Bourdieu's theorization of the socio-economic mechanisms of the concept which further incorporates both the subjective and objective aspects of precarity. According to Masquelier, each of these thinkers³ provide us with "a unique understanding of the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in the contemporary operations of power" (2019, 136). Bourdieu in his chapter "Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now," a fundamental text introducing the concept of precarity into the academic world, says; "Objective insecurity gives rise to a generalized subjective insecurity which is now affecting all workers in our highly developed economy" (2004, 83). To use an all too current metaphor, insecurity is virus-like in nature. Once again Bourdieu summarizes; "Added to these effects of precariousness on those directly touched by it there are the effects on all the others, who are apparently spared" (2004, 82).

Our findings reiterate the necessarily intertwined objective/subjective manifestations of precarity. Whether it is generated by insecure work situations or changing job status,⁴ be it born out through statistics or emotion, it is tightly entwined in our professional and artistic identities, the social, economic, political and cultural spheres and the futures we can imagine. Craft is also implicated in unpaid, invisible and often gendered labour, which plays a significant role in sustaining precarity for all (Black, Miller & Leslie 2019; Schmidt 2020). Objective/subjective labels do not have much currency in the face of gender and race politics—the personal is political.

As dire as the word precarity, as outlined so far, sounds, we want to recognize that some theorists propose that this state of precarity has revolutionary aspects and is not just an abject label characterizing a marginalized group. Kasmir notes that Marxists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest that being pushed out of "the Fordist/[Keynesian]-era social contract...enables a politics of self-determination" and they "glimpse liberation in precarity, as new social arrangements and expectations emerge" (2018, 7). In the article "The Precarious Concept of Precarity" Joseph Choonara demythologizes some of the standard notions offered by academics. He references Stevphen Shukaitis (2012) who writes that the Italian movement known as operaismo ("workerism") proposed that precarity was "an escape from the authority of capital and the state—an assertion of the right to subtract oneself from their control" (2020, 430). Further along, Choonara maintains the relationship of precarity to economic swings is not as forgone a conclusion as one would expect. Strong economic growth leads to more voluntary worker mobility, aka precarity and he goes as far as to suggest that "we ought to consider a 'curse of stability' alongside the scourge of precarity" (2020, 436).

³Voicing a counter opinion, Kathleen M. Millar contends that Bourdieu, along with Guy Standing, author of a well-quoted book *The Precariat* (2014), "place labor at the center of their conceptualization of precarity...distinct from Judith Butler's understanding of precariousness as a generalized condition of human life" (2017, 4), suggesting through this distinction that Bourdieu and Standing are seeing precarity as objective and Butler as subjective.

⁴Choonara calls this "'job status insecurity'—fear of the loss of valued features of the job" (2020, 441).

Professional craft, in real-world practice and as taught in our post-secondary studios, is entrepreneurial in nature. Students are schooled in individualized, small-scale production and counselled that they will need to set up workspaces, maintain industrial safety standards, keep the books, market the work, drive their creative development and save for their old-age and/or ill health, if they do not want to be dependent on—best case scenarios—badly frayed government safety nets. Craft is the poster child of precarity, a role often embraced by its adherents rather than decried. Steven Threadgold in his article "Creativity, Precarity and Illusio: DIY Cultures and 'Choosing Poverty'" argues that shrinking labour markets "have provoked young people to manufacture their own pathways to creating a meaningful life" (2018, 159). If working for others entails taking on risk, responsibility, unstable working conditions—in short, precarity—why not just work for yourself?

Millar in "Toward a critical politics of precarity" contends that "precarity, although often deployed as a critical concept, can smuggle in a conservative politics—conservative in the broad sense of seeking to preserve the status quo" (2017, 2). She argues that the supposed security of employment that was touted after World War II was focused on white, male, unionized labour in the Global North and was only a reality for a limited time, population and geographical area. The nostalgia for secure employment versus what most people really experienced in their work lives means that the focus is on a privileged working class, leaving little energy for other issues of social inequity (2017, 1). Traditional craft too, at times, has been considered a conservative force, with its emphasis on artisanal, slow production and working by hand in contrast to the liberating aspects of digital tools and processes. Both the critique of precarity and craft nostalgia can have us longing for a past that never was.

Precariousness, in its guise or variation of precarity, insecurity, vulnerability, has many faces. Through our focus on craft pedagogy and digital ubiquity, we will discuss four specific conditions that we have identified through our research:

- Downloading Risk and Responsibility from institutions onto individuals, a key characteristic of precarity, was reported regularly by faculty and technicians in craft studios as the pedagogy and integration of new digital technologies took place outside their job expectations/compensation or was left to often one individual in a department.
- Loss and Opportunity addresses the precariousness of craft methodology as educators try to assess the impact of digital ubiquity on more traditional mechanical and hand methods of making.
- Shiny New Toys references the practice of inserting, often expensive, digital equipment into studio settings without the proper financial, technical and administrative support and future planning to keep the equipment state-of-the-art, leaving technicians and faculty vulnerable and uncomfortable.
- Seismic Shift Online analyses the ways that the pandemic has left us not only feeling precarious in terms of our health and even our lives but has also accelerated a move to digital primacy, complicating the idea of embodied teaching and making, a bedrock of craft methodology, leaving many educators and students uncertain of the future of materials and process-based teaching in post-secondary institutions.

2. Methodology

Data for this study has been drawn from two online surveys conducted in 2020–2021. The first, directed at faculty and technicians across Canada and the second directed at students based in one institution.⁵ The initial survey aimed to establish a historical timeline of digital adoption and engagement within post-secondary craft-based programs. It was sent to over 230 faculty, technicians and staff currently or retired from working in postsecondary craft-based programs at 29 institutions across nine provinces and one territory. Contact information was obtained through institutional websites and our own professional networks. Individuals identified hold a range of roles at their institutions varying from tenured or permanent faculty and technicians to part-time or contracted positions. An English and French version of the survey was distributed online from January to August 2020 and completed surveys were collected from 50 individuals working at 13 institutions in seven provinces.⁶

The survey consisted of 11 open-ended questions aimed at uncovering the evolution and adoption of digital technology in craft studios and labs in post-secondary programs. Some questions asked for specifics such as which tools, terminology and learning management systems have been used while other questions asked who initiated the adoption of digital technology and how is it integrated into the craft curriculum. Respondents⁷ were also asked who operates digital tools, who has access to them and where digital production is located. Observations were requested on student, faculty and technician engagement with digital technology over time and what challenges and/or affordances are currently perceived. The data was analysed using coding to identify themes.

The second survey was directed at undergraduate students studying craft-related courses in the Material Art & Design program at OCAD University from 2020-2021. This survey is ongoing and consists of both qualitative and quantitative questions.⁸ The student perspective provides alternative narratives and augments the comments and considerations of the faculty and technicians. In it we ask over 50 questions that range from attitudes towards online learning during the pandemic to inquiries about how the respondents envision the future of craft.

3. Downloading Risk and Responsibility

The subjective acculturation of precarity is particularly evident when considering creative workers who tend to see themselves as autonomous, independent, self-actualized and

⁵ In Canada, the majority of post-secondary undergraduate studies in craft are taught in publicly funded colleges offering two- to three-year diploma programs and four-year degree university degree undergraduate programs leading to a bachelor's degree in art, craft or design, depending on the institution. Craft-based programs are in community colleges (also known as cégep in Quebec), comprehensive universities, as well as five art and design focused institutions of different scales and locations across the country (AUARTS, ECUAD, NSCAD U, New Brunswick College of Craft & Design (NBCCD) and OCAD U). Disciplinary based craft studios or programs offered vary at each institution by media (e.g., ceramics, jewellery, textiles etc.) and location in a Faculty (e.g., art, craft, or design). Master's programs specializing in craft or material practice are offered at three institutions (AUARTS, NSCAD U, Concordia University) while other graduate degrees available across the country are interdisciplinary in nature. Private institutions which specialize in specific disciplines also offer technical certification. All programs collect tuition from students.

⁶ Of these 13 institutions, there were seven universities (AUARTS, Capilano University, Concordia U, ECUAD, OCAD U, University of Manitoba), five colleges (George Brown College, Georgian College, NBCCD, Sheridan, Vancouver Community College) and one private institution specializing in glass (Espace VERRE) represented.

⁷The respondents were given the option to be attributed or anonymous and asked how they would like to be identified.

⁸ As this is a work in progress, we will be reporting on individual reflections rather than statistical data.

artistically motivated rather than precarious (Anderson 2019; Bain & McLean 2013; Comunian & England 2020; Kovesi & Kern 2018; Threadgold 2018). Thus, creative educators, mirroring their professional training, adopt one of the key characteristics ascribed to precarity. They accept "the individualization of risk and responsibility" (Masquelier 2019, 137), further encouraged in post-secondary institutions through academic traditions that call on faculty, along with teaching and research loads, to manage the university or college through requirements of service. This internalized ideology leads the individual to often solve their own problems rather than turning to the administration of their institutions for support. With the advent of digital ubiquity, it became evident to many craft faculty that engaging with emerging imperatives would mean taking on the responsibility of educating themselves, equipping their departments, ensuring development and continuity of new pedagogy and doing their best to futureproof their students. Furthermore, they felt the responsibility to effect deep change but wielded little of the real power—money and authority—to do so, leading to a sense of their own and their studios' precariousness.

This acceptance of individualized risk and responsibility became obvious when we asked our respondents whether the use of digital technology in their craft programs originated with practitioners, bottom-up (e.g., faculty, technicians, students), or institutionally, topdown (e.g., IT department, administration) or in a combination. The majority reported that it was bottom-up, with the corresponding sense of risk and responsibility that comes with implementing change. While the notion that faculty are experts in their fields who should drive technical development may align with the view of university/college administration, faculty are not usually in a position to allocate funding for course releases, professional development, or software training required for digital currency.

The expectation for most respondents is that their digital learning takes place on their own time and at their own cost with varying access to funds for professional development. Faculty outline their extensive formal and informal professional training in craft, but most are self-taught in learning digital processes and/or have taken short workshops. Some faculty describe using their own funds to buy or make machines and learn software. Others are able to learn while on sabbatical leave. Even when finding the time to learn themselves, some faculty may prefer not to teach digital processes if there are others who are more digitally focused. As Karin Jones, Head of Jewellery Art and Design at Vancouver Community College describes:

I took a weekend Rhino⁹ course, ... [but], to be honest, I don't have a passion for sitting at the computer, ...so never really dove into it. In the meantime, we decided that we could hire the instructor who taught the weekend course I took, to teach 10-12 classes to our students.

Even at institutions where administration funds professional development, the question of finding time and the pace of introducing changes was noted. The pressure to keep up to date with digital methods is considered a challenge while teaching or running a program. As Jones indicates:

One major challenge is that... people in the Vancouver jewellery industry who are really experienced with digital technology are extremely busy and well-paid, and many don't have time to work as instructors. On the other hand, existing faculty have limited time to learn. We have ... excellent access to professional development funds and some time (1 month a year), but... this is often the only time faculty have for their own artistic practice.

⁹ Rhinoceros is a 3D computer modelling program.

Faculty engagement with digital production may vary depending on their experience and technical interests. In several cases, respondents stated that an individual faculty member has taken on the responsibility or been hired to develop and teach digital content. Relying on one faculty member to deliver digital content rather than a group puts tremendous pressure on that individual and means that the knowledge may be lost if they leave the institution. Paul Robert, Assistant Professor, Media Arts; Chair, School of Craft + Emerging Media at AUArts describes the agency that an individual needs to drive digital development:

[It's] ... usually the work of one passionate individual... [who] has to have the vision and persistence to overcome bureaucratic obstacles and demand the resources to achieve the very thing they were hired to do!

While administrators, who determine the use of funds, may invest in providing digital communication through learning management systems such as Canvas, Blackboard and Brightspace, their ongoing support for purchasing digital tools, training and adequate technician hours varies. Some faculty indicated the need to repeatedly advocate for funds:

"Grassroots" practitioners consistently need to make the case for investment, and integration into pedagogy to move our digital capabilities forward. (Rebecca Hannon, Associate Professor, Jewellery, NSCAD U)

In contrast to most respondents, Paul McClure, Professor of Jewellery at George Brown College, outlines how jewellery industry partnerships have enabled software training for faculty and students. McClure reports that, "80% of faculty are proficient with the digital software and tools we teach" but he also indicates that finding "...time to engage in meaningful digital [professional] development" is still a challenge.

As indicated, the expectations of digital expertise among the faculty can be a source of pressure with limited time or funding allocated for training or upgrading skills. The need to train can also conflict with time held aside for professional practice or research. This condition can lead to reliance on individuals to be the chosen "expert" in a faculty and/or the need to continually advocate for funds to support digital development in a program to ensure their own and the field's relevancy, a prime concern of the precarious.

4. Loss and Opportunity

As discussed above, both the idea of precarity and that of craft carry the burden of nostalgia and conservation. The classic construct of precarity harkens back to a time that for most of the world and even most of the population in the Global North, never did exist (Waite 2009, 419). In a comparable manner, "historical notions of craft" are being questioned, particularly disrupted by digital primacy (Weida 2010). Existential and artistic concerns surfaced in our research about loss and the increasingly threatened nature of embodied craft as it shifts from the hand/mechanical to digital tools and processes, with craft pedagogy as it has been typically practiced, also challenged. However, the corollary of precariousness/precarity is opportunity (Choonara 2020; Kovesi & Kern 2018).

As traditional craft pedagogy relies on hands-on access to materials, tools and equipment in order to develop technical skills and embodied knowledge, respondents shared perspectives on the balancing act of teaching both analogue and digital methods of making. Concerns were raised by faculty and technicians over the potential loss of handson experimentation, play and accidents inherent in craft practice. Students, however, indicated that they use digital design as a creative approach for brainstorming and visualization, describing it as an efficient way to experiment at low cost. Asked how student engagement with digital technology has changed over time, respondents referenced both increased and fluctuating interest along with some resistance. Students' engagement with digital technology was described in relation to the accessibility of digital equipment, time allocated to learn digital skills, material or production costs and relevance to students' career goals. Some faculty described a spectrum between students who are drawn to digital design and production and others who may be less interested:

...students were quite resistant to digital training initially but have recognized the value to their practice and employability. Many adopt these technologies as a matter of course, others find it doesn't suit their practice for reasons known only to themselves. (Ken Vickerson, Associate Professor, Jewellery, OCAD U)

Equally, as craft pedagogy involves an in-depth practice of working directly with materials and tools, students may have chosen their disciplines to focus on making by hand, or as one faculty member suggests:

I think with so many aspects of contemporary life "online", and being attached to a computer screen, our jewelry students really value and love the tenacity required to master analog hand skills. [Increasingly], it gets harder and harder to find places where one can learn to make something –completely– from beginning to end. (Rebecca Hannon, Associate Professor, Jewellery, NSCAD U)

Some articulated what is lost when a maker is separated from the material and means of production. With outsourcing digital production either to a technician or outside an institution comes a lack of risk taking or as one retired faculty member explains:

Sending a file to the digital printer side-steps the excitement, surprise and discovery of a possible dyepot interaction that was not foreseen. Digital tends to eliminate the accident of material processes, and those accidents are often what makes a work live... (Frances Dorsey, Associate Professor, Textiles, NSCAD U)

The need for direct engagement with digital tools was expressed across the craft disciplines represented. One instructor describes a research environment where hands-on access is a priority and where, when they add new technology, "[Research Assistants] come in and hack it/repurpose it/reconstitute it/break it" (Aaron Oussoren, Sessional Instructor, Industrial Design, ECUAD). Direct engagement with digital production may not be possible for students at each institution. One technician describes the importance of working directly with digital tools:

I think it is critical for people to understand that these aren't 'art making machines', that there is a high degree of skill and craftsmanship required to truly use them to their full potential, and it isn't as simple as hitting the 'art' button. (Peter Redecopp, Educational Art Technician, Media Arts, AUArts)

Despite limited direct access to digital production tools, students described the opportunities that digital designing gives them to experiment and take risks, while saving time and money on materials. One student described that digital design methods enable them to work "out of the box" (Justine Yan Yee Fong) or for another, "It fills a gap I have in my artistic ability which results in a visual clarity" (Anonymous, Study ID 7). With this facility can also come independence, as this student explains:
It allows me to try out ideas (like sketching) without making physically, and work more autonomously, e.g., editing photos, mocking up screen prints, etc. (Moraa)

As seen in these responses, digital designing gives students the ability to experiment with low risk, to predict an outcome and then change or undo their work in a way that may be difficult with actual materials. For these students, this low risk is not seen as a lack of experimentation but rather as an opportunity for the imagination.

5. Shiny New Toys

The subtitle "Shiny New Toys" refers to the practice of inserting digital equipment into studio settings without full consultation with faculty and technicians. This can happen when the administration responds to government or enterprise pressure to tool up for a digital future or when corporations in sympathy with neoliberal ideals of education use pedagogical environments to develop their industrial capacities. Conversely situating critical digital tools outside of the studio learning environment in centralized production centres that more resemble an outsourcing service than a classroom, removes maker agency. Craft methodology is a primary engagement with materials, tools and processes and relies on a practitioner's intimate knowledge of these fundamentals. Materiality is often a primary impulse in the creative process and tools become extensions of a person's body, thus the term embodied making and to follow on, embodied pedagogy. Lack of control or direct involvement with digital tools, as some of our findings indicate, leaves the maker/teacher/technician vulnerable and at a disadvantage. Precariousness/precarity works in lockstep with vulnerability (Waite 2009, 420), so the shift to new methods, environments and equipment engenders precarity through changes in job status alongside generalized anxiety and excitement.

The location of digital production tools varies in each institution with some equipment such as 3D printers or Jacquard looms placed directly in craft studios while other tools are situated in specialty centres, labs or maker spaces. Outsourcing digital processes such as digital fabric printing may be optional or facilitated as part of the curriculum. Placing an expensive digital tool such as a 3D printer in a craft studio which may have clay dust, metal filings, or heat from torches may run counter to the best conditions for the machine's use and yet the need for a direct hands-on engagement with a machine or tool is understood as an essential tenet of craft pedagogy. Limited funds for replacing equipment and technical support hours, along with safety concerns can affect the ability of students and faculty to have direct access to digital machines for their own experimentation.

Where digital production happens in craft studios, the ability to access these tools is typically determined by technicians who may fully operate or supervise their use in addition to their duties to run the rest of the studio. Students may have direct instruction on digital design software from faculty but then provide files to technicians who operate digital machines for them. Limits on who controls the machines can be driven by the need to avoid breakage and support as many students as possible. As one technician explains:

...Technicians and Class Assistants operate digital equipment with some student support involvement. Access is limited due to the rigorous maintenance needs and complex, careful operation requirements. If the digital equipment is misused ... it will adversely affect numerous classes and students. Training requirements are too complex for the volume of student access and there is not enough time to train each student ... to use machinery without help. (Anonymous, Study ID 85) Technicians, as craft practitioners, come to their jobs with a depth of technical knowledge of their materials, processes and tools. The need to use digital production methods may or may not be part of their own practice or work-related experience. For some, there is encouragement for training and opportunities for collaboration while others experience frustration with the expectation that they will learn on their own time:

Technicians have been given zero training on digital technology and must learn outside work hours - this has completely discouraged any learning in this area. (Anonymous, Study ID 34)

Technicians and faculty report that they learn from each other through informal conversations, collaborations or workshops. Zimra Beiner, Assistant Professor in Ceramics at AUArts describes "making a crude 3d printer for extruding clay in 2017" with a colleague that was then remade in several different ways and is still in use. In another case, technician Peter Redecopp recounts learning from other institutions what not to do in order to maximize students' access. Where possible, students' ability to operate digital tools themselves depends on taking a related class, completing specific training or being supervised by a technician.

If access to digital tools is so limited in many institutions, does this form of education prepare students for independent practice as makers or primarily as designers for others? Will they have the technical knowledge and ability to afford and operate their own tools or need to rely on outsourcing to others? In addition, will their lack of direct engagement limit the ability future makers have to experiment and take risks associated with craft? As well as the costs of providing access for students, updating software, replacing digital machines and integrating content into curriculum takes time and financial investment. Buying a new shiny machine is only the beginning of the process.

6. Seismic Shift Online

While the rush to transfer content online and think of new innovative digital solutions might provide opportunities for some, it will inevitably leave many behind. (Comunian & England 2020, 121)

With the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, many post-secondary institutions in Canada moved their studio courses partly or entirely online depending on public health recommendations. With this, digital primacy took a giant leap forward. To protect ourselves from our deepest vulnerability, the threat to our personal health and potentially even our lives, we physically distanced, becoming much more reliant on communicating through digital means. Before the pandemic, post-secondary institutions were well on their way to moving as much course work as possible online given the financial duress that the education industry was under in a neoliberal ecosystem but within craft-orientated, practice-based studios there was still a strong sense of the need for embodied practice and pedagogy with access to studio-based tools. The necessity of this sudden, dramatic shift online has accelerated digital ubiquity and primacy, leading to more uncertainty and precariousness, albeit with the potential to expand digital craft pedagogy.

The shift to teaching craft studio courses online was a new and anxious experience for most faculty members. Studio courses were rapidly redesigned to be taken at home without specialized equipment. Faculty were under pressure to purchase digital tools to teach with, learn how to use them and prepare teaching materials in rapid succession. Technical skills that could be demonstrated easily in a studio setting became highly challenging and laborious to recreate in self-made videos. The opportunity for conversation, answering questions and the general camaraderie of studio demonstrations was no longer part of the process.

From a student perspective, some appreciated being able to control the pace of the video demonstration, to re-watch and be able to see details. Others described the limitations of a video to express physical properties, when they "can't feel the texture of some materials, as well as the understanding of the size and thickness of the real object" (Yuna [Lei] Zhang) or that watching a video delays or disrupts the opportunity to ask questions and interact with others.

Another disconnect was the inability to "apply the newly learned skill or technique immediately after being taught" without the "material to work with, equipment, or studio environment" (Anonymous, Study ID 8). Working at home was problematic for many students due to limited space, tools and materials. Sourcing materials and tools that might be easily found in a studio was challenging for students due to the pandemic lock down, shipping delays for online purchases and the added expense. Student experience was also affected by their year of study in that those closer to the end of their program reported being able to use their digital design skills to advantage in online classes while those in their first or second year of study expressed a keen sense of loss in not being able to access studios to learn fundamental technical skills.

Increasingly, students experience precarity in balancing full- or part-time work with their studies. As one student explains, the flexibility of online course delivery was an "advantage" and a "blessing" while working full-time (Jessica). Despite this affordance, most students described a profound lack of connection to others that led to a lack of motivation, depression and concerns over their ability to be technically proficient. When asked about the future of craft, responses varied from seeing "endless possibilities" (Jessica) to "bleak, if isolation and lockdown continues" (Anonymous, Study ID 20). It is to be hoped that the return to studios might re-engage and connect students while retaining some of the flexibility they encountered in online delivery.

7. Conclusion

Throughout this paper we have drawn from theoretical positions and the reflections of our community to look at how craft pedagogy has fared and been impacted by the digital during times of precariousness and through the influence of systematized precarity. We differentiated precariousness from precarity, looked at the intertwined nature of subjective and objective precariousness/precarity, the revolutionary possibilities of precarity and the nostalgia that infuses both the concept of precarity and craft practices. Specifically, we have looked in depth at *Downloading Risk and Responsibility* from institutions onto individuals; *Loss and Opportunity* within digital ubiquity; the issue of *Shiny New Toys* destabilizing traditional craft practices; and the *Seismic Shift Online* as a response to the threat of the pandemic.

The paper also rehearses stereotypical dichotomies such as craft versus digitality; embodiment versus distance; autonomy versus precarity. Our question for the future is how can we reimagine these oppositions and mitigate the effects of dichotomous thinking? Will nostalgia be a force for important conservation or detrimental? Foremost what is our responsibility to students in the field of craft in the age of digital primacy?

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Acknowledgements: We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Government of Canada, as well as the CDT team and the following post-secondary institutions: OCAD University, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, Alberta University of the Arts, Sheridan College, NSCAD University, and Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Board. Thank you to previous participants, survey respondents and research assistants from different phases of the project. For more information, please see http://www.craftandthedigitalturn. com/

Crafted Futures: new teaching, learning and research for craft in the Australian tertiary academy

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Abstract. Recent closures of courses and programs across the tertiary sector have been preceded by amalgamations and absorption into larger homogenous programs. University funding metrics require increased student to teacher ratios that have significantly changed student experience and altered established pathways and models of practice. Craft disciplines do not realise adequate measurable value and impact, relative to our colleagues in sciences and social sciences. These serious challenges invite thoughtful reform. To remain viable, craft will be required to contribute deeply considered responses to critical issues across social, ethical, cultural, political, and material imperatives, as well as other forms of innovation. This paper will present several scenarios where tertiary craft programs do have unrealised potential and a positive future as demonstrated through the capacity to play a serious role in contributing new knowledge on a range of issues with potential to engage nationally identified research priorities.

Keywords: craft; change; impact; innovation; reform

1. Introduction

This paper draws on a variety of material including experience of its authors drawn from working across three universities (and VET¹ and industry) over 20 years. We acknowledge that this is written from a certain perspective, and in some sections of this paper we perhaps take a generalist view largely due to a lack of resources that bolster the argument. Our intention, therefore, is to share some insight to the trends, challenges, and opportunities that we have witnessed and faced, and touch on how these may impact the wider sector. The paper has been chunked into headings to help signpost the complex and competing conditions of craft within the university context. At times it may appear disjointed but the aim here is to generate discussion, albeit lofty and unresolved as some of the thoughts and observations may be.

The paper commences with an overview of key issues within the academy such as impacts to teaching, research, administration, and the changing culture of practicing craft within a tertiary studio setting. We then make some broader observations on the Australian craft sector as a context for universities to operate, and then present ideas on where university programs may need to head if they are to achieve the miracle of remaining viable while continuing to also serve stakeholders.

2. Challenge and change in the tertiary sector

2.1 The place of craft in the academy

Studio craft can be associated with enduring foundations that include values, histories and networks that guarantee the place and intrinsic value of the crafts (Luckman & Andrews 2020, 5; Cochrane 1992, 411-13). There is a suggestion, however, that contemporary crafts and its practitioners are the custodians in a living 'museum of skills' and that craft professionals are charged with responsibility to protect their crafts. This is perhaps a nostalgic vision (Veiteberg 2017, 71) from which parallels can be drawn to justifying craft's place within Australian universities. Arguing that craft's value purely resides in providing a museum of skills is out of step with the mission statement of any contemporary university where strategic directions relate to the much broader remit of nationally identified research priorities, and in response to a rapidly changing world.

Granted, the museum of skills can be leveraged as a platform or tool kit from which to launch projects that generate new knowledge that make speculative and emergent realities tangible. As practitioners and academics, we know that progressive elements of the crafts are indeed advancing our material and visual culture and that the best work we experience applies craft methods as a lens to interrogate a wide array of important problems that include social, political and other issues. Craft disciplines are a place of innovation (Cutler 2008) and change, and as dynamic as the worlds they inhabit and certainly not a backwater that serves as solely as a museum of skills. As Catherine Rossi has written: "... is a 'museum for skills' even desirable, let alone achievable, given that museums are generally sites of preservation rather than innovation?" (Rossi 2014, 61).

With craft's roots in tradition, there is propensity to align with current ideas around cultural, social, and environmental sustainability (Walker 2021, 185; Fry 2009, 157) however the capacities of craft within the academy only have relevance if it can be applied to issues

¹ Vocational Education & Training

that emanate from beyond the object and studio.²

2.2 Teaching and learning craft

As the discipline evolves so too does the teaching and learning of craft in the tertiary sector. This has changed significantly in the last couple of decades—some changes are regrettable and others welcome. The rate of change across the board is increasing over time and academics frequently express the difficulty experienced in managing the relentless waves of reform. Evidence states that constant change, coupled with everincreasing time pressures and competing workload priorities,³ contributes to a slew of negative occupational-related problems such as stress, meeting performance criteria, increased managerialism, and work overloads to name just a few (Lee, Coutts, Fielden, et al. 2021; Crome, Meyer, Bosanquet & Hughes 2019). Not only does this impact the people negotiating these changes, but it has also further knock-on effects for opportunities to incrementally refine programs as they are under the pressure of constant wholesale program reforms in the guise of efficiency measures. Like the changing craft sector, the role of the academic within this context has changed. The autonomy of academics and even disciplines to develop comprehensive programs is now diminished through centralised curriculum design and shared programs. The central challenge for craft education lies in balancing program integrity, disciplinary depth with program flexibility and student experience while achieving financial viability of program offerings.

2.3 Shifts to research

Academics are being encouraged to shift focus, time, and energy away from teaching through a need to amplify research outputs. This is because schools' colleges/faculties and universities themselves are principally ranked on research performance. This has also been challenging for the art school (Adams, Barstow & Uhlmann 2016) where prior forms of 'practice' can be confused by academics as 'research' with no prospect of impact or measure by existing metrics. So, immense amounts of time are being required of academics to shift their work onto a research footing where impact can be demonstrated in contributing to research priorities.

2.4 Administrative load

Administrate creep—and workload generally—has increased significantly in the university sector (Millar 2019; Kenny & Fluck 2019; Cannizzo & Osbaldiston 2016; Boyd 2014) particularly around work health and safety (WH&S) with an obvious impact on teaching and research undertaken in studio and workshop environments. Travel and fieldtrips including gallery visits and any off-campus activity and visitors requires documentation and approvals. Committee work and other service within and external to the university make

² Nicola Morelli's notion of 'design beyond the object' offers a starting point in which to shift a discipline-based practice such as craft toward a model that is problem or issue-based. A specific and singular focus on, for example, technique, skill or hangovers from 20th Century such as form or function could be defined as disciplined-based and might sit within the frameworks of an 'old practice'. Broader universal issues and crises stemming from cultural, political, social, or ethical dimensions—an ecology of practice—could be defined as problembased and would be entering territory of a 'new practice'. Although Morelli has shaped this around design, and has also called for a "...wider view of design as an activity of social innovation...", craft sits well within this context.

³Generally, academics are employed on a 40/40/20 workload split. This equates to 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% service to the discipline, sector or school through committees, boards, community engagement and the like.

further demands on time available for teaching, research, supervision and planning.

2.5 Challenge to studio culture

Contact hours with students have diminished considerably over time. Across the sector there have always been differing approaches and ideas between institutions and programs to delivery of teaching and learning (Winikoff 2016). The trends generally have been towards studio classes of 3-4 hours per week of scheduled class time per unit/course, which is considerably different to that which existed in many tertiary art schools from the 70's through to the early 2000's, which can be referred to as the tertiary apprentice model. Many of these programs were established by European masters who themselves had completed apprenticeships and/or formal studio focussed training. Many operated an open studio class 9 – 5 Monday to Friday.

Today, semesters are predominately 12 weeks so a student may only have 36-48 hours of contact with a lecturer per semester and share that attention with up to 20+ peers. This could potentially equate to 1.8 hours of one-on-one time per semester were the lecturer's attention to be divided equally between students. Today's students experience a very different model to that of their lecturers experience—and this results in a very different outcome.

2.6 Information flows

Despite the changes, students continue to produce exciting and intelligent work. There is a noticeable shift in the type of work made and this could, in part, be attributed to less depth over time in manual skills and the development or refinement of discipline-specific techniques. However, program change has also improved the depth and rigour of critical theory and conceptual rigour that students are exposed to. Coupled with unprecedented access to information that recent generations have through the digital revolution, students are making work that has stronger conceptual foundations in general than previous generations. The scale of technical learning is often less in scope due to time constraints, but students are still immersed in highly cooperative and collaborative environments where information is shared, and ideas are worked through more rapidly. This can result in the development of greater independence, and critical and creative sophistication in their projects. This is an important shift aligned with an Australian Government working paper released in 2019 titled *Creative Skills for the Future Economy*. It clearly states:

There is a growing expectation that workers will need more '21st Century Skills', including creative skills, higher-order cognitive skills, system-thinking skills, as well as interpersonal, emotional intelligence, and collaborative skills (Australian Government 2018, 5).

2.7 Decreasing undergraduate pool

The viability of craft education in our universities is under question. In a world obsessed with instant gratification people seem less willing to dedicate several years to learning a slow craft discipline.⁴ This may be a factor in the lower numbers enrolling in programs. Once competitively sought-after places in programs are now often unfilled. Craft programs are also subject to capacity constraints. For instance, few jewellery or furniture studios can host more than 20 students at once. Glass blowing even less. So, when universities identify

⁴ Covid 19 saw many people turn to creative outlets such as craft, so there may be hope for a rise in the future. Pre-covid evidence suggests however that professional craftspeople are in decline (Throsby & Petetskaya 2017; Heath & Pascow 2014; Throsby & Zednik 2010).

a minimum class size of 40 for example, to remain viable, the project of undergraduate craft education in the tertiary environment begins to look tenuous. Survival will require a willingness to let go of firmly held ideas and will require generous and enterprising approaches to finding new ways of doing things.

2.8 Access time

Craft requires access to facilities and traditionally schools have afforded generous access beyond normal business hours. Art schools are at their best when they are able to nurture an atmosphere of shared interest and exchange that we experience as a community of practice. The studio is a rare and wonderful atmosphere and most of us were introduced to that as students through our places of study. In the university environment that is fixated on new knowledge, it can be useful to conceptualise the studio as a lab where ideas are pursed in relation to a hunch and the outcomes evaluated by the maker and their peers though critique, discussion, refinement and further development. This is under threat from seriously reduced access hours. In a world now hyper vigilant about workplace health and safety, the risk averse workplace environments have led to the closure of some school studios after 5pm and eliminated or reduced weekend access in many instances. The ontological framework craft has been built on is being recast by shifts in the way university spaces are being managed. How we respond will shape the way we pursue our projects through craft in the future.

2.9 Working students

Today's students work and some will hold several casual jobs. They will frequently say this is why they are unable to be in class or attend on campus to undertake independent studio work outside scheduled sessions. This may represent lost opportunity for its clear that consolidation of learning and mastery of skills is difficult without consistent and sustained focus on practice.

2.10 Old space vs new space

Digital space has also had an impact on the physical studio. It is common for all students in a university studio to be in distinct worlds absorbing information through multichannel platforms in addition to that provided by the facilitator. In this way a cohort is no longer sharing a learning experience jointly and moderating that in real time, where they cooperatively and collaboratively negotiate a shared and differing perspectives relating to the material at hand. Today's studio is folded with digital worlds that can complicate things yet can have productive benefits (Nortvig, Petersen, Helsinghof & Brænder 2020). The real time community of practice that was previously so central to craft education in universities is now significantly different and complex. The closure of classrooms in 2020 as Covid 19 spread saw many studio classes go fully online. Digital platforms provided the studio space. While not the subject of this paper, the ramification of this shift saw the physical studio loose considerable ground in relation to student teacher ratios, physical infrastructure and space, as well as other elements of teaching and learning that were previously considered to be fixed notions. Covid 19 has changed the very nature of studio teaching (Winters 2020, McKewen 2020, Guy 2020).

3. Insight from the academy

3.1 Contributions are clear

The university sector in Australia has made a noble contribution to the studio crafts (World Crafts Council—Australia 2019) since the 1970's, investing in studio craft despite

it being one of the smallest of disciplines in any university. Teaching and research in craft is resource intensive and difficult to scale and so requires some form of subsidy because it is simply not viable unless strategically supported. This has always been the case. Grace Cochrane notes that many university workshops set up during the 70s that supported craft were mostly off the back of student unions (Cochrane, 281). When the Howard government introduced voluntary student unionism in the 2000s, it deprived a revenue stream that supported arts-based initiatives. This was further to longstanding incremental cuts by the Federal Government to education combined with 0% public investment between 1995 and 2005 (Benton, 2020). As such, the contribution that our universities have made to a niche sector—and one that is difficult to quantify—is clear. Given the formative role the university sector plays in shaping Australian craft, it is important we are aware that change in the university environment will flow through the craft sector.

3.2 Changing conditions

The changed conditions within the universities (fees, funding, teaching, and learning models, etc) over time will require stakeholders across our sector to acknowledge the role universities play has changed and decide if and how they may respond. Manual skills development, such as rote discipline-specifics and a focus solely on techniques, will no longer be core business of universities in the way it was previously. It is simply not viable to sustain. TAFE, apprentice models and training organisations will need to step into the gap. The National Craft initiative (NCI) report identified that there is significant demand for training (Hutchinson 2016). The fact that universities are not in the business of vocational manual skills training perhaps opens a business proposition for providers outside the university system. The sector will need to adapt to a new reality where universities have begun, and will continue to focus on, specialist teaching programs that emphasise the development of critical skills above manual skills—it is clear these are obviously connected and inseparable (Sennett 2008, 20-21) but to pragmatically achieve this will require multiple institutions/organisations working together.

3.3 Research with impact

The fact is that high quality research with clear impact will be essential to survival of craft programs in our universities as a result of funding models and other performance metrics. Therefore, research on select projects that target identified metrics where institutional strengths exist—and which have clear impact beyond the gallery—will take greater focus over the difficult and costly exercise of teaching people the applied skills required to being a craftsperson. Academics have and will continue to shift towards research models that coalesce around themes of shared focus where they work cooperatively and collaboratively on issues and problems.⁵ Keely Macarow makes this clear:

... it is no longer enough ... to address "tricky questions" through representation, illustration or conceptual responses alone. Our imagination, lateral and creative thinking and material practices are also needed for experiments and solutions for reconciliation, social, ecological and health justice and innovation (Macarow 2019).

This approach is essential to achieving scale and visibility in partnership with stakeholders beyond the academy. While academic craftspeople will still engage in independent practice

⁵This collaborative and shared approach may also become the norm for much larger collaborations with international universities. Covid ¹⁹ has broken geographical borders down even further and a trend has emerged of universities from disparate parts of the world banding together to deliver digital conferences around shared themes.

that is shown in galleries, research that has impact that can be counted in metrics will increasingly be conducted by collaborative and cross disciplinary teams through projects that employ craft methodologies as an instrument to both define and resolve problems. Research will be less about the object and turn to what is achieved by the object. In this way craft research will shift emphasis beyond the object into the realm of affect.

3.4 New worlds for undergraduates

Undergraduates who enter this brave new environment will no longer be focussed on being inducted into a guild where they learn how to make craft. Instead, the new craft programs will place emphasis on learning how to see, understand and change their world through craft. The subjects delivered in undergraduate programs will increasingly connect and channel the latest thinking developed in research hubs on important issues though research led curriculum. In this way, students will be inducted into a community of scholarship and build skills that lead them to advance to a research footing where they are able to develop greater independence and eventually extend the bounds of knowledge in the area themselves. If this is where we are headed, perhaps not everything is so grim.

4. Other worlds ...

4.1 Meanwhile in the other worlds

The future of craft is also certain to be shaped by the actions of stakeholders beyond the academy. The wider sector ecology has its own challenges. We have certainly made high achievements especially given the modern movement is relatively young, but our wider industry ecology is fragile and not as developed or operationally integrated as it could be.

Craft Australia was disestablished in 2011 (Murray 2015). It had been restructured in 2003 when it moved from Sydney to Canberra. As the peak representative body for the sector it was charged with the task of advocacy, research and lobbying and also published the peer reviewed journal *Craft + Design Enquiry*. With its closure there is no singular designated national body. There are other important organisations such the *World Craft Council— Australia* but sector development is obviously difficult without a dedicated centralised body as an instrument of leadership that the craft sector requires for coordinated strategy, advocacy and development.

The Australian craft and design centres $(ACDC's)^6$ network is inclusive of peak organisations representing the sector from across Australia. These organisations provide a distributed network but lack the resources and mandate that would enable them to align their operations and realise a comprehensive national vision. The market for craft produce is also small and a need for enterprise skills mean practitioners can have little knowledge of the market context for which they are producing. There are also very limited intellectual property rights for craft and design producers in Australia (Hutchinson 2016). In addition, the craft industry lacks sophisticated critical discourse (such as that previously provided by *Craft + Design Enquiry*) and the industry as a whole is relatively insular and disconnected from wider international communities, media and markets.

4.2 Graduate attributes for the other worlds

⁶ Artisan (QLD), Australian Design Centre (NSW), Australian Tapestry Workshop (VIC), Canberra Glassworks (ACT), Central Craft (NT), Craft (VIC), Craft ACT (ACT), Design Tasmania (TAS), Form (WA), Guildhouse (SA), Jam Factory (SA), Sturt Gallery and Studios (NSW), Tactile Arts (NT)

It has always been the case that graduates of university craft programs have pursued a wide variety of career pathways. The knowledge and skills they attain through their study varies between schools, individuals and over time. Yet a basket of skills acquired through a craft program can be flexible and transferable in ways that see many able to make valuable contributions across social, cultural and commercial spheres.⁷

4.3 Domains of craft

The lack of definitive definition of craft inhibits progress on initiatives and programs that seek to establish policy, funding models and other instruments to foster the sector. The risk is that the crafts seemingly have a desire to elude definition to the point of eluding their own existence. The definition of craft continues to shift and has regional specificity, varies globally, has traditional and contemporary elements, is aligned with design and also art with is increasingly collaborative and shaped and mediated through digital platforms and images. The plasticity of the word craft is reflecting the contexts it is use in (Lovelace 2018). Another example includes the realms of professional craft, academic craft, folk craft and hobby crafts. The distinctions between these realms prevent definitive definition and things have only gotten foggier with the proliferation of craft brewing.

4.4 The university in this context

Within the university environment it is difficult to advocate and argue support for a discipline that is so fractured and difficult to define. This is why craft has increasingly been absorbed into larger homogenous programs (Nicol & Rubenis 2015, 2016) and why there is a trend towards specialisation and majors being disbanded. To protect our craft disciplines we have made them invisible to the bean counter at college or faculty level. The by-product is that this has also made craft disciplines increasingly invisible to prospective students who live in the other world and shop for degrees and majors by name. Once the discipline is buried within a subject list; its days are numbered. Think of the impact of placing journalism into an arts degree with no identified major or study plan. Students are not in a position to assemble an appropriate sequence of subjects that construct a logical subject selection to facilitate competent progression through study—it risks becoming an ad-hoc choose your own adventure with no clear pathway.

5. Discussion

5.1 Where to next?

By no means is this paper comprehensive and we recognise there are many gaps. We are also not intending to take a negative position, quite the opposite as the skills acquired through craft practices are life long and provide opportunities for individual agency and to sit outside of conventional systems. Largely what has been outlined here centres on the place of university art and design schools within the craft ecology which occupies the academic aspect of the craft realms. This ecology comprises of a range of stakeholders that makes for a complex terrain.⁸ The quality of linkages across the ecology provides the

⁷Those that study craft may not necessarily become craftspeople and can go into many areas. For example: community, policy and government, building, education, design, activism, entrepreneurship, business, marketing, designer/maker, tradesperson, artist, festival and event management, curatorship, cultural and social organisations, etc.

⁸ Studio craft ecology comprises, but is not limited to: universities, TAFEs, organisations, ACDC's, awards, prizes, retailers, suppliers, patrons, collectors, museums, galleries, craftspeople, grants/funding bodies, collectives, studios, infrastructure, etc.

conditions for our relative success in between regions and globally. To facilitate this we could take lessons from Porter's classic economic tome, "the competitive advantage of nations". One illustrative case study discusses sector competitiveness of the Italian design and manufacturing industry where Porter describes their success in the 70 and into the 80s as being based on the inherent quality and alignment of 'factor' and 'demand' conditions (Porter 1990).⁹ This could be applied in this scenario.

In the absence of a central leadership, the university sector is perhaps in a strong position to conduct research and undertake engagement with government through research that specifically advances created factor conditions that influence government's policy to enhance the craft sector. The demand conditions could be the responsibility of ACDC's, for example.

It is important for the sector to discuss and negotiate roles and responsibilities to enhance sector coordination. Schematic overview provides a way to do that and provides clarity and shared expectations around roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the sector. Having looked at the state of things in universities and across the sector we can see trends and gaps and ways forward emerging. Our discussion presents goals that we see as viable and valuable for the university sector to achieve.

5.2 Methodological tool

The opportunity lies in craft's potential as a methodological tool of enquiry in extension to being a creative platform. Craft is prone to holding an internal dialogue. Its practitioners frequently are speaking to themselves. What is said is often valuable and will hold weight when the work is done to connect that dialogue across wider circles. To illustrate this point there are two current but very disparate examples, both related to craft, that sit at opposite ends of the spectrum. The first is the Australian Government's heavy investment in advanced manufacturing (Australian Government 2021). Craft has links to innovation, as already noted, and can be seen as an agile and experimental practice where the studio acts a laboratory where ideas, concepts, experimentation, and then the applications to actual tangible endeavours, can be developed.¹⁰ With a manufacturing agenda that has a pillar focused on Recycling and Clean Energy, combined with a swell of movement within university research clusters focused on materiality and issues around resources, there is opportunity here to leverage an already established wealth of knowledge. The other example is the rapid rise of people up taking craft as an activity considering the pandemic (Fairley 2020; Australia Council for the Arts 2020). Although this might only be at a fundamental level—and may come at odds with a downfall in enrolments in craft at tertiary level—it does however illustrate there is a genuine hunger to engage in making and craft-based practices. This could well be described as the 'factor' and 'demand' conditions.

5.3 Expanding spheres

We have discussed the need for craft to extend itself beyond the object into a forum in the wider cultural and commercial spheres. The ways of thinking and acting we employ in craft

⁹ **Factor conditions**: Includes natural conditions (abundant timber/wool/gold/etc) and created conditions (educated professionals/infrastructure such as glass centre/studios, etc); **Demand conditions**: Includes a sophisticated local market that pulls through innovation; **Government policy**: industry development initiatives employed that have potential to enhance competitiveness.

¹⁰ The late Robert Foster who founded Fink! is a prime example of how craft can be integrated into advanced manufacturing and how distinct products can then have mass-worldwide appeal.

are transferable to the task of orchestrating spaces, places and experiences as well as enterprise, business and management.

5.4 Speculation and proposition

The speculative and propositional nature of craft has been touched on. It has been said that the arts provide a low risk setting to lay out blueprints for a world under construction. This describes a notional and reflexive space where trial and error are embraced as a means to sense our way into and through the world. This can be applied a vast array of issues, such as climate change, to contribute new and novel findings but will require broader community engagement (the object as the facilitator) and be linked to various partners/ stakeholders that also argue or align with national/international research agendas.

5.5 Flexible craft

Craft is accessible, porous and inclusive and diverse. We have noted that this is in part of the reason it is so difficult to define. Craft's flexibility provides a rare opportunity for individuals to materially engage in an articulate manner with the artificial landscapes/built environments that surrounds them. The vast majority of spaces, places and environments we inhabit are authored, or have been significantly altered, by us. To make inroads is beyond any one individual but craft has a capacity and potential to link these people, places and entities.

5.6 Shared hubs

The diversity of craft practices accommodates many ways of working and communities of practice feature significantly in the cannon of craft. Shared facilities and sharing of knowledge have been common across time. Standards of practice were set down by guilds and studio facilities are places for sharing infrastructure, knowledge and critical discourse. These embed in craft the skills for collaborative and cooperative practices and research. Skills we hear, and know, are in demand.

Partnering with other stakeholders to provide a wholistic approach and clear pathways will become necessary to contribute, and remain viable, within a changing and increasingly unstable world.

But perhaps the biggest question we need to ask ... are we prepared to make this change?

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Self-narrating weaving: Expressing traces of craft

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This paper responds to the conference theme of Education, using designed woven textiles to increase social engagement with cloth construction. Over the past decade, textile artists and designers have increasingly attempted to engage users/wearers with visual evidence of creating processes through the use of various supporting media. Brief and curated videos of textiles being crafted are commonly exhibited through social media channels, and advertising copy is increasingly engaged with construction details, such as maker, origin, technique and materiality. This paper intends not to disregard the production of this additional media, but to propose a turn to utilising the crafted textile itself as the site for further user engagement. This paper gueries: What are the multisensorial aesthetics of a handwoven textile that we may already comprehend, either explicitly or tacitly, when experiencing cloth, and how can textile design techniques amplify and materialise processes? Using a series of self-woven textile samples, surveys were conducted across Perth, Australia and Dhaka, Bangladesh, where participants were asked questions regarding their interpretation of each textile. The research investigates the characteristics of cloth that may increase personal engagement and allude to the event of weaving and how this interpretation may vary between two different locations within the Indian Ocean region. The evaluated results establish how the spatial, temporal and personal aspects of a constructed fabric might be amplified. Through the outcomes of creative practice and qualitative interview analysis, I posit that woven cloth can express a narrative of its own crafting using specific textile techniques.

Keywords: textiles; weaving; process; Australia; Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Just as it is possible to go from any place to any other, so also, starting from a defined and specialized field, can one arrive at a realization of ever-extending relationships ... traced back to the event of a thread. (Albers 1965, xi)

There are traces in handwoven textiles that inevitably indicate the provenance of cloth. Hints of making processes, through incidental marks and irregularities, narrate the story of loom, fibre, cloth and the hands that crafted it. This paper examines the subtle, multisensorial aesthetics of handwoven textiles that we may already comprehend, explicitly or tacitly, when experiencing cloth and amplifies them to express a narrative of textile construction. Through the outcomes of creative practice and qualitative interview analysis, I argue that woven cloth can educate the wearer or user of crafting by implementing specific textile techniques. The objective of this research is towards the future development of cloth, to render it capable of amplifying the spatial, temporal and personal aspects of its making.

Throughout the past decade, there has been accelerating interest in fashion and textile practice—specifically, in the importance of knowing the provenance of garments¹, a push for wearers, driven by issues of social and ecological concern, to become 'more informed and maybe even a little more imaginatively connected with the manufacture and distribution of our clothes' (Fletcher 2013, para 1). Traditionally, users and wearers might rely on external media narratives on garment tags, and web and social media platforms to acquire information on the construction history of a woven cloth or garment.

This research proposes a turn to utilising the woven textile itself as the site for further user engagement. The invisibility of cloth and clothing production in the global North arguably disrupts textile literacy and trust in making processes, as 'trusted human connections get severed when things are scaled up: it's impossible to sustain relationships across a colossal, globally spread, multi-part supply chain' (Fletcher 2013, para 2). As weaves become smaller and less organic, almost simultaneously, the information regarding the creation of cloth grows increasingly hard to grasp because of a lack of exposure to making processes, and hence, visibility of construction. My research aims to increase wearer engagement with weaving, using cloth as a conduit for connections.

Following 29 semi-structured interviews conducted in Perth, Australia, and Dhaka, Bangladesh, this paper explores how people might identify how a woven textile was constructed. The research identifies the aesthetic markers that best indicate traces of the weaving process and woven textile characteristics through thematic analysis of qualitative interviews. Using John Ruskin's Gothic characteristics (1854) and self-collected interview data, the relationships between each trait are mapped, testing the textile as a site for aesthetically expressing the traces of making.

1.1. Geographical location

Two locations² within the Indian Ocean region were chosen for this research—Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Perth, Australia—because of their geographical proximity and stark

¹This notion was made popular by Fashion Revolution (2013 – present) by their campaign, Who Made My Clothes? Each year, on the anniversary of the Rana Plaza garment factory collapse in Bangladesh, people are encouraged to reach out to designers and ask for greater transparency on production details.

² I had also chosen Bangladesh as I was already operating a fair trade clothing label, *Bhalo*, where production took place in Thanapara, rural Rajshahi, Bangladesh, so had become familiar with the landscape and culture.

differences in levels of production and consumption of textiles. In Australia, we rarely walk down the street and observe evidence of garment-making processes, because 'garments, which may have been designed and manufactured in different locations, are typically shipped to a retailer who then sells the items to an identified but anonymous consumer' (Gwilt and Rissanen 2011, 75). The garment and textile industry in Australia has dwindled to a handful of small-scale boutique producers after the offshoring³ of garment and textile manufacture, as 'globalisation of the later twentieth century saw the movement of factories themselves to countries previously of colonial interest' (Murray 2015, 225), seeking countries with the 'lowest wages and standards in order to maximise profit'⁴ (225)



Figure 1: (*R*) Map of Bangladesh showing Dhaka and Thanapara village location, part of greater Rajshahi (Priemus, edited ArcGIS image 2021).



From personal observations, textile construction is more visible across Bangladesh than it appears to be in Australia. From visits across greater metropolitan Dhaka and rural areas⁵ between 2008 and 2015, it was possible to observe people weaving and stitching in their homes.⁶ Not only does the engagement with traditional textiles appear to be relatively

³This was also the longer-term consequence of Australian government policy changes, reducing import duty on cloth and manufactured goods, implemented in 2000-2001. ⁴ A series of tragedies involving the garment sector has occurred in the past two decades, including building collapses and factory fires. The Rana Plaza Collapse in the outskirts of Dhaka on the 24th of April 2013 was the deadliest of the disasters, revealing "the dangerous conditions that textile workers have to endure in order to meet the demands of Western companies" (Murray 2015, 225).

⁵ Places within Dhaka where home weaving and embellishment were observed between 2008 and 2012 includes Dakkhin Khan, Narayanganj, Mirpur. Places in rural Bangladesh where home weaving and embellishment were observed between 2009 and 2015 includes villages located within Tangail, Savar, and Rajshahi areas.

⁶Types of weaving observed included cotton textiles including *lungi*, and *gamcha*, silk *benaroshi*, and silk and cotton *jamdani*. Forms of popular stitching include *nakshi kantha* (recycled sarees hand-stitched together to form blankets) and other embroidery of textiles, as well as forms of embellishment such as *karchupi* beading on to sarees for sale.

high,⁷ but Bangladesh is also a major international exporter of ready-made garments. Bangladesh is 'the number two apparel producer' (Thomas 2019, 52) globally, with 'fifty million people depend[ing] on the garment industry' (Rahman cited in Thomas 2019, 53) out of a population of around one hundred and 67 million people (World Population Prospects, accessed 20 October 2020).⁸ Alongside the physical presence of textile construction for both export and local use, an understanding of cloth appears to develop further with the presence of textile-making songs, literature, films and even popular television shows and commercials.⁹

Comparatively, social engagement with textiles in Australia is less significant, particularly with traditional cloth and weaving. Despite undergoing centuries of colonisation¹⁰ and annexation (Ghosh 2001; Ehrlich 2020), Bangladesh retained much of its traditional textile production and use. However, discussing traditional textiles in the land now known as Australia brings some issues. Indigenous weaving and fibres are still produced, despite years of dismissal born of European cultural hegemony following colonisation.¹¹ Limited 'Australian' stories, poems or songs exist about making textiles in terms of our particular hegemonic culture.

Initially, the decision to conduct the interviews in Bangladesh was based on a desire to conduct a cultural comparison between Perth and Dhaka. The hypothesis was that in Dhaka, the epicentre of global production of ready-made garments, and with a long history of textiles and weaving, residents would know more about textiles than in somewhere like Perth, where levels of textile construction exposure are comparatively low. However, given the inconclusive results, the limited number of surveys and the qualitative leanings, it became evident that the saturation point had not been achieved to make such claims. Additionally, undertaking a cultural comparison of two sites from an insider perspective of one (Perth) and an outsider of another (Dhaka), is inherently flawed. As an outsider, I am not wholly familiar with socially established codes of a Bangladesh native that may be used to convey and make meaning (Geertz 1973). For these reasons, the cultural comparative approach was shifted, and the approach became more about narratives of weaving detected in the moment, than about a focus on participant background and experiences. Hence, the study became focused on developing a framework for designing educational textiles, considering both locations, without comparing or contrasting.

1.2. Methods

The research discussed in this paper is taken from my postgraduate studies. In preparation for the research discussed in this section, I hand wove a number of 12 cm x 12 cm textile

⁷ All 15 interview participants from Dhaka could name at least one significant Bangladeshi textile, with 60% able to name three or more. This is contrasted with Perth interview participants, where only 11 out of 14 could name one textile, and only 14% able to list three or more. Of the Perth interviewees, only 2 out of 14 were able to name an actual textile type, rather than just a material. For example, 6 out of 14 listed 'wool' as their only answer. ⁸ Twelve out of fifteen interviewees (or 80%) had a relative who is or was involved in the textile or garment industry.

⁹ Participants P09 (21 years old) and P10 (20 years old), both raised in Dhaka, specified that they had seen weaving on television but not in person. This indicates that even though many weaving techniques are mainly visible in villages or fringes of the city, there is still engagement with processes through media.

¹⁰ Colonial India included the region now known as Bangladesh (Roy 2013).

¹¹This was reflected in the Perth interviews where only one participant out of fifteen named specifically Indigenous weaving or fibre techniques when asked about traditional textiles.

samplers, aimed at amplifying different temporal, spatial and personal aspects of making. Ten textile samplers were chosen to be given to interview participants. Twenty-nine faceto-face semi-structured interviews (Patton 2002; Crouch and Pearce 2012) were conducted as a method of data collection around cloth narratives. Fifteen interviews were conducted in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in December 2016 and fourteen interviews were completed in Perth, Australia, in June 2017. The aim of the interviews in both locations was to capture the experiences and perspectives of the research participants as they interacted with 10 different woven textile samplers.

The interviews were conducted in three parts. The first section of each interview commenced with background questions, asking interviewees to define personal details, such as age, gender, location, cultural identification, education and employment.¹² Second, participants were asked questions focusing on their experience with making textiles, exposure to cloth construction and their experiences consuming textiles and textile products. Third, participants were asked questions related to the 10 woven textile samplers, about their construction history and materiality.

The questions that elicited the most significant responses and that were used for analysis in this paper included: How do you tell how something is made apart from labelling? If you purchase online, is your knowledge of [how something is made] limited? Which of the following increases a garment or textile's value to you—price, origin, time taken to make, skilfulness, material type or techniques used? What do you call this [textile sampler]? In what order was it constructed? How many metres of yarn was used to make it? How skilled was the maker? And, what is the raw material used to construct it?

Using notes taken during the interviews and playback of the interviews, the main themes were sorted into the 10 sampler categories, and then coded into three categories, based on Anni Albers' hierarchy¹³ of weave, yarn, and colour (1965). The information was then transferred to a chart (Figure 3) and themes were categorised under Ruskin's six Gothic characteristics (discussed in 2. Theoretical influences, below), and relationships established between them. From this, the interview transcriptions were analysed again using prominent keywords¹⁴ from the chart aimed at bringing forward specific participant responses. Using these methods of coding and analysis, the five aesthetic markers began to emerge.

¹² By adjusting the questions slightly, this not only influences the way questions are interpreted but allow the question to be tailored to the person (Ary et al. 2010; Crouch and Pearce 2012). Originally, the idea of collecting background data was to further understand how demographics might influence interpretation and response, but eventually this level of study proved to fall outside of the scope of the greater research.

¹³ Anni Albers' hierarchical '3 elements of weaving' was also applied to produce the samplers, prioritising texture (weave), then yarn, then colour (1965). Albers' hierarchy worked on the philosophy that the weaver should prioritise texture — or structure— and then yarn, with colour only as a third consideration, to express the more spatial and temporal aspects of a textile.

¹⁴ An example of keyword search, while looking for participant responses on gradient, searching words more likely to be used, such as 'shaded,' 'gradual' or 'change.'



Figure 3: Coding of the interview response data, categorising themes and relationships using Ruskin's six Gothic characteristics

2. Theoretical influences

This paper draws not only from literature and theory on weaving, but also from architecture and construction.¹⁵ Ruskin and Spuybroek's Gothic ontology is applied in relation to woven textiles, to analyse the interview data and inform the development of my own five aesthetic markers. John Ruskin¹⁶ (1819–1900) was an English critic of art, architecture and society.¹⁷ The Gothic, predominantly represented through England by its churches built in the late Middle Ages,¹⁸ expressed a poetic of construction (Frampton 1995; Hendrix 2012), through 'the juxtaposition of non-structural geometries with the structural geometries of the architecture' (Hendrix 2012, 6). Through its 'characteristic "handwriting", the linear networks, surface patterns, geometrical articulations, and spatial interpenetrations' (2012, 6), it represented an architecture in which form often contradicts function (2012). Ruskin defined the six characteristics of Gothic architecture as: rudeness,¹⁹ changefulness, naturalism, grotesqueness, rigidity and redundance (1854). Together, these characteristics

¹⁵ The emphasis on architectural theory in this thesis is due to my academic background. Between 2001 and 2021 I studied, practiced and lectured in Interior Architecture.

¹⁶ Ruskin's 19th century essay *On the Nature of Gothic Architecture* (1854)¹⁶ is acknowledged as the most well-known writing on Gothic architecture.

¹⁷ Ruskin was also a "painter, photographer, botanist, early environmentalist, philanthropist and social reformer, who vehemently criticised both industrialisation and capitalism" (Figes 2019, para. 2)

 ¹⁸ Development of the English Gothic style occurred between 1180 and 1540 (Hendrix 2012).
¹⁹ This is primarily referred to as *Savageness* in the writing of Ruskin though I have decided not to engage with this term due to its problematic associations.

create an architecture of imperfection and variation (Ruskin 1854; Spuybroek 2011). Architect and author Lars Spuybroek's commentary on Ruskin in his 2011 *The Sympathy of Things* offers a contemporary exploration of sympathetic²⁰ forces present in the Gothic that infuse people and objects. Spuybroek aimed to define a new aesthetic for the digital age by examining the romantic notions present in Ruskin's writings. Ruskin suggested an aesthetic philosophy able to bridge multiple disciplines, including architecture, design, art and craft, with a focus on the woven textile sampler's spatiality and changefulness and the inevitable imperfections created by the person behind it.

This research also draws on the theory and practice of Bauhaus designer and weaver Anni Albers, whose practice utilises 'the weaver's grid ... not as a cage or limitation, but ... [as] structure for experiment' (Chadwick 2018, para 4) because 'simplicity is not simpleness but clarified vision' (Albers 1965, 47). Through the understanding of this simplified grid, we can detect when a thread diverges from it—with variation and changefulness becoming evident. Albers spoke of both the value of one designer and maker and the importance of balance and unity in design.

3. Amplifying aesthetics of (a) weaving

Through analysis of interview results, a series of visual and haptic markers were identified that tended to instigate further dialogue around textile construction. It was found that engagement with the construction history of the cloth emerged through an increased sense of variation and changefulness, leading to the development of five aesthetic markers of my own: rhythm, contrast, exaggerated scale, gradient and imperfections.

3.1. Rhythm

The first aesthetic technique explored in this cycle is rhythm, drawing attention to patterns resulting from the repetitive actions of making. The rhythms of weaving have a repetitive regularity to them, as does the physical grid of the textile itself.²¹ It was predicted that samplers that mirrored the structural grid of weaving through the (graphical) intersections of two 'threads', such as Sampler 1 (Figure 4) would replicate this best because rigidity is not only expressed through repetitive structural parts, but also as the energy between components (Ruskin 1856; Spuybroek 2011). Sampler 1 aimed to represent a changeful, cyclical rhythmic pattern of working. This was similarly interpreted by interviewees:

I think it started from here and went there and you know, it was alternating the whole process. Then it went this way, this way and then it went to the other way. (P09 - Q6.1.1.5)²²

Sampler 1 employed a designed framework to reflect the rhythms of making, reflecting the rough variation (Spuybroek 2011) of the maker's hand. When an interview participant was asked how they could tell how a textile or textile produce was made, they replied:

The little flaws in the stitching if it's a hand-sewn, anything made by a machine, you

 $^{^{\}rm 20}$ Sympathy is defined by Spuybroek as "what things feel when they shape each other" (2011, xvii)

²¹Ruskin is not concerned with an unchangeful repetition, born from an obsession with order and control. Rather, he states that "...great art, whether expressing itself in words, colours, or stones, does not say the same thing over and over again" (1853, 174).

²² In response to the interview question: Q6.1.1.5 In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

Here, imperfections imply handmade, and indicate that a primary understanding of the regularity of weaving is necessary in understanding how something deviates from the repetitive, cyclical motions and grid-like structure.



Figure 4: Sampler 1, originally designed to amplify rhythms of making (warp and weft) and represent the physical grid itself (Yarwood 2020)

3.2. Contrast

The second technique, contrast, involves aesthetically differentiating components from one another to emphasise spatiality. The accentuation of structure using contrasting threads is used in the design of all samplers used here because it amplifies structural and spatial qualities, emphasising a typical woven form. Participant responses demonstrated that the regularity of *Sampler 4* (Figure 10, section 3.4.) is effective in differentiating warp and weft:

On one side, the white threads are fixed and then vertically the colour threads are being pulled. (P08 - Q6.1.4.5)²⁴

Despite the subtle contrast, Sampler 4 is still able to express rhythm through consistency.

²³ In response to the interview question Q5.4: How do you tell how something is made apart from labelling?

²⁴ In response to the interview question Q6.1.4.5: In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

Contrast does not need to be dramatic—it can still act subtly to differentiate threads spatially.

There is both rigidity and pliability (Albers 1965) to textiles because they have an 'inherent capacity to form structural relations between components' (Mitchell 1997, 325). This flexibility is evident in Sampler 9 (Figure 5). Created to highlight material and tool junctures, the sampler acts as a tectonic record (Frampton 1995) of its creation. It employs an unpredictable rough variation (Spuybroek 2011) in its colouring. The loose weft moves both physically and optically, appearing like waves, reinforcing the textile's 'amazing pliability' (Albers 1959, 3). A participant commented on the variation:

This one especially, because the colours are uneven and there are parts which are white and have colour on them, and they just stood out more against the white. (P27 - Q6.1.9.5)²⁵

Despite the 'unevenness' and changefulness present in this sampler (Figure 6), the contrast between warp and weft is still determined. Like the samplers discussed in the rhythm section, a deviation from the typical grid of weaving can highlight the initial rigidity.



Figure 5: (L) Close up of woven textile Sampler 9, with contrasting red warp threads and variation in weft threads (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 6: (R) Design illustration of Sampler 9 as an example of Gothic-like rigidity—the contrast between warp and weft indicates structure, while the weft indicates wave-like movement (Priemus 2021).

Through enlarged weft yarn in Sampler 5 (Figure 7), contrast is achieved against the thinner warp. The weft in Sampler 5 is visually heightened through exaggerated scale and generates interest through the presence of the colourful gradient. The unspun, chunky roving contrasts with the 8-ply cotton warp. The contrast allows the warp and weft to be understood as separate components, reflected through interview participant statements:

The two things are different. The yarn and the cotton are different. (P06 - Q6.1.5.4)²⁶

²⁵ In response to the interview question Q6.1.9.5: In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

²⁶ In response to the interview question Q6.1.5.4: How many metres of yarn was used to make [the textile sampler]?

The dark-coloured thick wool was the first, and then the white was second, and it was tied at the end. $(P25 - Q6.1.5.5)^{27}$

Here, contrast achieved through scale allowed participants to comprehend the rigidity and relationship between components, with warp and weft variances alluding to different actions and processes of making.



Figure 7: Sampler 5 detail (Yarwood 2020)

3.3. Exaggerated scale

The third aesthetic technique proposed is *exaggerated scale*, a way of making the usually invisible visible and amplifying texture. When the repetitive act of intersections is enlarged physically through oversized yarns, it invites the wearer or viewer to consider the textile as spatial. As a way of amplifying the narration of textile construction, an enlarged weft thread was designed to act as a (more visible) directional line. Participants were found to recognise the weft thread as a singular looping thread:

This is the single thread. This is running from here. This is making a loop here like there is no edge that has been cut. So, it is running like this. So, I am seeing that it is a loop. It looks like it is ... just a shaded single thread that started from here and ended here. (P14 - Q6.1.5.5)²⁸

By making the weft hyper-visible, its role as a component is amplified and can be more

²⁷ In response to the interview question Q6.1.5.5: In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

²⁸ In response to the interview question Q6.1.5.5: In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

clearly followed by interview participants. Lines in the Gothic are not static—they are active and show behaviour as if it were alive, a "ceaseless melody"; linear figures that seem to have come to life, connect to each other, and form patterns' (Spuybroek 2011, 15). Sampler 5 uses exaggerated scale through thick unspun wool roving as weft as an enlarged line, able to be detected and visually and haptically followed.

The use of excessively sized roving²⁹ (unspun wool) in Sampler 5 may be likened to Ruskin's sixth characteristic, redundance and brings back a fullness—shifting away from ultra-efficiency and a sustainable aesthetic (Thackara 2013) that has become overly thin.³⁰



Figure 8: (L) Sampler 5 (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 9: (*R*) Sampler 5 illustration highlighting the journey of a thread, utilising exaggerated weft scale and gradient (Priemus 2021).

3.4. Gradient

The fourth aesthetic marker is *gradient*: the subtle gradations in texture, materiality and/or colour of components to highlight changefulness. In this section, I refer to the organisation of a weaving grid, examining how gradient may be used to amplify mutability and signify chronological order. During weaving, a shuttle moves left to right, right to left, looping the weft thread back and forth of what is essentially a very long line. Participant interpretation of Sampler 5 (demonstrated by the participant response in Section 3.3) aligns with my initial design idea (Figure 9) of highlighting the weft as a continuous loop through colour and scale. A colour gradient was chosen to show a progression to things, the repetitive motion of weaving the weft, left then right, progressing forwards in a seemingly

²⁹ Exaggerating scale in a practical textile has limits. During the design of the samplers, I undertook a kind of 'disciplining' (Albers 1959), ensuring that the textiles stayed functional. On reflection, the roving used in Sampler 5 is not representative of what would be used in a future phase of this research.

³⁰ I posit that an excessive, enriched and 'redundant' textile experience is not at odds with an ecologically and socially responsible production ethos, as it provides greater opportunity to embed traces of the making process and therefore instigate dialogues and imbue it with (tacit) understandings.

predictable trajectory—twisting and turning and repeating.

The gradient employed in several samplers utilised colours, forms, textures and yarns regarded as 'natural'.³¹ These delicate changes increase connection to place, feelings of slowness and quality.³² Originally designed to reflect origin, the weft of Sampler 4 (Figure 10) was dyed using the leaves and bark of several native Australian plants from the garden of my family home. The imperfection and slowness present in the process of hand dyeing with plant dyes are etched on the sampler through irregularities and small variations in the weft.



Figure 10: (L) Sampler 4 detail (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 11: (R) Illustration of Sampler 4 design, in which order and contrast between warp and weft threads, though appearing 'natural' and subtle, was detectable by participants (Priemus 2021).

Apart from Sampler 4 reading as 'natural', its subtle gradient also clearly narrates its order of construction:

Woven through starting from here and then you can see the change in each one ... it changes colour. (P24 - Q6.1.4.5)³³

Working here with ancient technology, using plant dyes and plant and animal yarns, imbued a slowness that gives space to interpretations of change. In weaving, it becomes evident that yarn needs to adopt a particular speed of change—not too fast, yet not too gradual.

³¹ Privileging of the 'natural' was obvious through interview responses, with participants claiming increased valuation; "the material – if it is a natural like cotton or silk it's worth more" (P18 - Q5.3)³¹, personal preference; "I sort of lean towards the natural fibres" (P25 - Q5.4)³¹ and ideal characteristics; "It's really soft, so maybe it's either cotton or wool. Just something natural" (P18 - Q6.1.8.7)³¹. Although discussions of value lie outside of the scope of this research, the potential of this analysis is with the differing interpretations of order and time.

³² Spuybroek describes Naturalism in the Gothic as "an index of the 'intense affection' of the Gothic workmen for living foliage"³²(2011, 5). This fondness for flora and the natural world is reflected in *Sampler 4*.

³³ In response to the interview question Q6.1.4.5: In what order was [the textile sampler] constructed?

Sampler 3 (Figure 12) was made using indigo dyed cotton yarn, dyed at one-metre intervals to show scale. The line between indigo and white was meant to be clean; however, some transition points were blurred. Though Sampler 3 was not designed to employ a gradient, because of the inconsistencies in hand dyeing, it was interpreted that way. Comparing Sampler 4 with Sampler 3, one participant stated:

Yeah, I think that you can see the gradient a little bit more [in Sampler 4]. [In Sampler 3], it's like an abrupt change whereas this one [4] and the other ones, it's more of like a gradual fade out so you can see it a little bit more and you can imagine what might have happened. (P21 - Q6.1.3.3)³⁴

When asked what would help make the change more noticeable, the participant stated:

A longer transition? It's quite short. ... the gradient. (P17 - Q6.1.3.9)³⁵

The finding is that comparatively abrupt colour changes do not imply the same sort of continuous narrative to participants when comprehending the path of components. The need to elongate the gradient is of importance here.



Figure 12: (L) Sampler 3 detail (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 13: (*R*) Illustration of Sampler 3 concept, showing idea of longer transition (gradient) between colour changes in warp (Priemus 2021).

The intention of selecting a gradient was to tell the story of the weft, to assist the weaving in recounting its creation—the traces of the journey. A gradually changing shaded weft was used as wayfinding for participants. Participants could both observe and feel their way through. By highlighting the weft thread as a separate component, and giving an order to it, it can be imagined to continue snaking back and forth rhythmically, over and under the tensioned warp. A mixed tempo of weaving is present here—dyeing, drying, winding and weaving back and forth—reliant on natural rhythms and bodily time.

³⁴ In response to open-ended discussion after interview question Q6.1.3.3: What tools were used to make [the textile sampler]?

 $^{^{\}rm 35}$ In response to open-ended discussion around the value of textile Sampler $^{\rm 3}$

3.5. Imperfections

The fifth and final aesthetic technique, *imperfections*, is a characteristic that not only infers the presence of a person behind the loom, but also gives the threads themselves a sense of vitality. The human imprint is capable of creating further intrigue and value (Ruskin 1859). Examples of 'human-ness' and rough variation were not difficult to locate in the samplers, given the mistake is something that happens accidentally when hand-weaving. When something is imperfect, it embodies a relatability, accessibility and informality—encouraging play, inviting touch and evoking interest. Imperfection gives a sense of irregularity and acts in opposition to regularity, allowing participants to identify patterns. Hence, irregularity and imperfections are considered a way to disrupt the grid, and ultimately, embed a kind of personality into cloth.



Figure 14: (L) Sampler 6 (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 15: (*R*) Sampler 8—tiny imperfections visible through weave and colour (Yarwood 2020).

The initial question here may be: why is it useful to feel traces of the maker, a person, through cloth?³⁶ It was not until after the interviews that one participant highlighted that they thought I should have asked not just *how* the samplers were made, but *why*. Participant 28 mentioned that the motivation behind the making is important to the narrative—whether or not it was a labour of love or labour by force. Similarly, Participant 22 mentioned:

I give more points when I think that love's gone into it. So even though it [Sampler 5] doesn't look as intricate or detailed in the thing of it, but because of the story I've got in my head of how it's made and the personality I am, well, I feel like they're more skilled. Because I like this little old lady sitting on her veranda. (P22 - Q6.1.5.6)³⁷

Knowing that signifiers of the person as happy (Ruskin 1859) or content (or even present at all) are valued, I examine the ways that this personality is expressed best through woven textiles.

³⁶ As cultural theorist Susan Luckman states in the text *Craft and the Creative Economy*, "within the discourses of ethical production and consumption, variously evoked, lies a deeper and more profound human connection with ... making and the handmade. Throughout history, the process of making has been bound up in rich affective assemblages, full of enchantment" (2015, 75).

³⁷ In response to interview question Q6.1.5.6: How skilled was the maker [of the textile sampler]?



Figure 16: (L) Sampler 8 (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 17: (R) Illustration of Sampler 8, showing inked selvedge (through touch) and the blue replaced weft yarn (Priemus 2021).

The interpretation of the samplers as having unintentional errors aligns with the intended ideas as presented in Cycle 3. The effect here, while planned, was a random and permanent etching of a mistake typical in hand-weaving. Errors were intentionally highlighted in Sampler 8 (Figure 16) through dye on my fingers each time I had to correct a weaving error. The following comment was made concerning Sampler 8:

Because of the design and the unevenness of blue. That one running down the middle, it doesn't look very intentional ... it looks like there are little mistakes on there. (P27 - Q6.1.8.1)³⁸

As evident here, there seems to be a threshold for the acceptability of mistakes, dependant on personal preferences. Some interview participants found the mistakes unappealing, interpreted as an error and lack of skill by the artisan.

As discussed in Cycle 3, for Sampler 7 (Figure 18) I repeated the process that I used to make Sampler 8, photographed the sampler and used it to plan the location of loop piles, or 'finger loops'. The responses included:

Are these designs or mistakes? [laughs]. Seems like a mistake! [laughs] I guess if this is handmade, then the person is not skilled, seriously [laughs]. Yeah, and this is the handmade wool, and the person is not skilled. (P08 - Q6.1.7.1)³⁹

Meanwhile, other participants preferred these 'flaws' as a signifier of the handmade, assigning greater value. This is supported by the practice findings in Cycle 2, identifying unintentional irregularities in cloth that some may find endearing. As reiterated through

³⁸ In response to interview question Q6.1.8.1: What do you call this [textile sampler]?

³⁹ In response to interview question Q6.1.7.1: What do you call this [textile sampler]?



Figure 18: Detail of the tactile finger loops in Sampler 7 (Yarwood 2020).

Through the experiments here, odd excrescences appear at particular points. There is a certain grotesqueness in learning about the inner workings of things. Exposing the inside, what is meant to be hidden, evokes a sense of deviating from what is 'proper'. Spuybroek stated that imperfection is necessary to a Gothic ontology, and when this 'crudeness' becomes in excess, 'the result is a grotesqueness that can be either humorous or monstrous' (2011, 41). Much like the phrase 'airing dirty laundry', there is a curiosity evoked from such improper displays, leading to an endearment—of finding authenticity and traces of the human, or in the case of Sampler 10, traces of a sheep. When presented with Sampler 10 (Figure 19), participants stated:

Dammit! Might as well have brought a pet sheep! (P20-Q8.1.1.1)⁴⁰

You've got the smell of it. The wool when you feel in its natural form because of the lanolin, it's quite greasy. (P20- Q6.1.10.1)⁴¹

Sampler 10, made with unwashed and unprocessed Merino wool, speaks of its material origins through multiple senses. The lanolin on its fibres feels oily, the smell is pungent, and specks of dirt and excrement feel abrasive in comparison to its softness. This sampler acts as a connective experience—telling a realistic story about wool and the origins of where raw materials are sourced. Through the interviews, I confirmed participants to have a multisensorial response to the sampler, using smell and touch to render feelings of mild disgust. It is a bodily reaction to the grotesqueness of how things work, which can be humorous in its excess and deviation from the norm, yet somehow giving a kind of relatability to the sampler.

⁴⁰ In response to open-ended discussion around all textile swatches

⁴¹In response to interview question Q6.1.10.1: What do you call this [textile sampler]?



Figure 19: (L) Sampler 10 detail (Yarwood 2020).

Figure 20: (R) Design illustration of Sampler 10, showing scale, and change through colour and texture, yet unable to capture the multidimensionality and grotesqueness of the sampler (Priemus 2021).

As mentioned during the discussions revolving around exaggerated scale, Ruskin's redundance is described as 'an accumulation of ornament' (1854, 34), verging on the ridiculous (or grotesque, even). Redundancy appears not only through its excess, but also through its ability to shift back and forth in a playful manner. The deviations that erupt from such play inevitably create a sense of changefulness and could evoke a sense of empathy between wearer and cloth.

4. Conclusion

Following the analyses of interview results, it was found that engagement with the construction history of the cloth emerged through an increased sense of variation and changefulness. This led to the development of five aesthetic markers of my own:

- rhythm—drawing attention to patterns resulting from the repetitive actions of making
- contrast—aesthetically differentiating components from one another to emphasise spatiality
- exaggerated scale—a way of making the usually invisible visible and amplifying texture
- *gradient*—the subtle gradations in texture, materiality and/or colour of components to highlight changefulness
- *imperfections*—amplified variation, irregularity and informality as a way to disrupt the grid, encouraging play and inviting touch.

Much like Ruskin's Gothic characteristics (1854), the five aesthetic markers do not sit alone; there are intersections and interrelationships between all elements (Figure 21). The evaluated interview results demonstrated the interconnectedness of each aesthetic marker.



Figure 21: Drawing of diagram of findings, the framework for future designs (Priemus edited by Butler 2021).

Overall, analysing interview discussions concerning change or mutability (Gibson 2015) was beneficial in highlighting cloth's characteristics of flexibility and constant movement. By amplifying the movement of the components of a textile, participants were able to trace the order in which it was made. By following the line of weft yarn, as a wayfinding device, participants could follow the 'event of a thread' (Albers 1965, xi). If the research question posed in this paper was *How do we tell how a woven textile was made*, then the answer might be *through the multiple dualities present in itself*. Through banal repetition, we can observe change; through order, we can observe irregularities; and through the smooth monotony of the machine, we may feel the rough variation of the hand. Variations in the design elements of repetition, materiality, scale and colour saw the five aesthetic markers merge, crossing over into different expressions of temporality, spatiality and personality. Together, the characteristics present in the woven samplers were capable of provoking engagement and readability through their imperfection, variation and mutability.

This project represents a practice in redirecting creative energy back into design; to educate the wearer or user through the textile itself, rather than relying on written narratives of making via marketing copy. Beyond this research, a design framework and resulting lengths of cloth will be developed, to show the potential of each of these markers to be used to emphasise haptic traces of the spatial, temporal and personal aspects of handwoven textiles.

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Author's Bio



Jessica Priemus is a multidisciplinary designer and academic at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. Jessica's work explores how materials may be designed to emphasise traces of the making process, with an aim to incorporate visual and tactile richness into contemporary design.

Acknowledgements: This project was funded and supported as part of my doctoral thesis within the School of Design and Built Environment, Curtin University, under the supervision of Dr Annette Condello and Dr Anne Farren. This project is generously supported by DGLSC and DPIRD, the City of Mandurah and Lotterywest IOTA21.

Making Links: Crafting Creativity and Collaboration

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Abstract. As unemployment figures continue to rise in Indonesia, the 8th United Nations' SDG, which promotes inclusive and economic growth, employment, and decent work for all remains relevant today. The creative industry is one of the most influential sectors, where creativity and innovation play an important role as key drivers to economic development. In Indonesian contexts, the strategy is to develop and increase the number of SMEs by connecting communities and promoting local products rich with identity and culture. However, in order to mitigate against the exploitation of local culture, a critical, and democratic approach to creative initiatives must consider the context and those who work within it. This paper explores how the economic livelihoods of craft-makers in Indonesia can be improved by developing appropriate collaborations, promoting co-creative design thinking and fair trade principles as important aspects for export trade. The Making Links 5 project was initiated to collectively build power together with the craft-makers by facilitating design thinking through making workshops. The collaborative team of five women from the UK and Indonesia brought a wealth of knowledge about design thinking, jewellery-making, fair trade, collaborative learning, craft cooperatives and International export. Initial workshops took place in 2019 in Jombang, East Java, a rural area famous for its recycled glass bead making. Unfortunately, further physical workshops were prevented due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to stay connected the Making Links team experimented and tested methods, toolkits and resources, developed to train trainers in Indonesia through organized activities virtually.

Keywords: Collaboration, Creative Design-Thinking, Craft, Fair-trade

1. Introduction

Craft and Craft-making has the capacity to empower. It inhabits everyday life through both action and object, manifesting itself in functional, decorative and symbolic objects that reveal stories of cultures, identity and place. The idea of craft-making is seen as a way to reconnect the mind and body; with the buying of craft often signifying a desire for authenticity, for experiences, and for ethical and sustainable consumption. Within the socio-economic landscape of emerging and developing countries, Craft is one of the significant employment categories after agriculture, with a great deal of activity existing within the informal economy (ILO 2018).

The economically marginalised are people or communities who are restricted to the lower or peripheral edge of the economy, who are prevented from participation in mainstream economic activity by factors beyond their control. (WFTO 2020)

Although many craft-makers (also referred to as craft producer / workers / artisans) within these contexts have specialist craft-making skills they do not often have creative design, marketing and presentation skills, and market access and as a consequence remain in a marginalized position within the craft value chain.

Craft-Makers, based on the employment relationship, can be classified as Craft Workers and Craft Producers. Craft Workers are all those who have an employment relationship with another party or an enterprise. It's called an employment relationship when the worker does not own the product, receives materials and work instructions, and does not bear financial risks of production, whilst Craft Producers are those who make, grow or process products for the buyers. They own the product and directly sell to the buyers with no employment relationship with another party or an enterprise (WFTO 2020). Despite the employment relationship difference, in cultural contexts where rote methods of teaching are the norm, artisans often rely on copying existing products because of a lack of confidence and inability to integrate ideas with market needs. Creative design skills supported by market knowledge are needed to generate new product ideas. In order to depart from the issue that imitating or making minor changes to others products is not ethical, even for business survival reasons, there is a need to develop initiatives that introduce and discuss 'Design' as a process and not an end product. When everyone imitates, then the space for business development is limited, with the selling price being the only competitive point, which often leads to inferior quality. The solution to this problem requires craft—makers to develop creative thinking skills that will enable them to generate original design ideas that can be realized through their craft-making knowledge.

There have been many social-craft initiatives situated within emerging economies, often instigated by government development agencies, NGOs, and charities which aim to enhance opportunities for communities. The social-craft initiative activities are ranging from one-day technical skills workshops to marketing strategy training. The majority of these initiatives has great intentions but do not always provide sustainable futures for the craft-makers. The reasons for this can be very complex and not in the scope of this paper to discuss.

The Craft industry in rural areas of East Java, Indonesia has its own complexity and heterogeneity from socio-economic landscape to cultural context. To sustain craft futures in this area, with the envisioned concept of sustainable partnerships through capacity-building workshops that open up wider market opportunities it is important to understand and surface both contexts; the context creative-making happens and the context the products of that creative-making will be situated and consumed. As solidarity is our common concern which emphasizes mutual empowerment, self-determination, and emancipation (Hales, et al. 2013), so that the interventions become successful, collaboration and partnership must ensure that hierarchical power dynamics are mitigated against and that activities undertaken are done with participants and not for them (Spinuzzi 2005).

The **Making Links 5** research project, discussed in this paper, situates these key factors at the center of its methodology and creative activities in order to create a democratic and meaningful framework.

2. Making Links 5: Craft Value Chain

The **Making Links 5: craft value chains** research project is set within the context of the United Nations eighth sustainable development goal, which promotes inclusive and economic growth, employment and decent work for all (United Nations 2015). It responds to the specific targets which support entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation in order to encourage the growth of micro, small and medium enterprises in the promotion of local culture and products.

2.1 Project Overview

The overarching aim of this project, supported by Research England's, Global Challenge Research Fund, (Global Challenge Research Fund 2018) is to improve the cultural and economic livelihoods of craft -makers within specific development contexts where strong links have already been established. Through the application of co-creative participatory design thinking activities, which have been undertaken both as physical events and through virtual online digital methods the ambition is to establish a sustainable model /system for a long-term route to market (including export) in the development of new artisan craft products.

Initial research work was undertaken in Jombang, East Java, a rural area famous for its well- established recycled glass bead making. However, since 2000, this industry has been decreasing, leaving two-thirds of the community with precarious lives and uncertain business continuity. Design innovation and new markets can be used as a strategy for long-term sustainability of the community (Zulaikha and Brereton 2011). With a prepared methodology and structure, an intensive 3-day collaborative workshop with 18 artisans was successfully facilitated. In order to ignite individual creative agency, collaborative and democratic knowledge sharing was established, resulting in four prototype collections of new jewellery products combining glass beads and metalwork suitable for exhibiting with international export potential.

The collaborative team of five women from the UK and Indonesia bring a wealth of knowledge about design thinking, jewellery-making, fair trade, collaborative learning, craft cooperatives and International export. The outcomes from the physical activities in East Java undertaken in the first year of the project will not be discussed in this paper but can be accessed in the previously published Making Futures VI journal paper (Hanson, Cave and Zulaikha 2020).What is important to note here is that through reflecting on the outcomes of the field work carried out in Jombang, East Java, the team recognized that if a sustainable system was to be achievable that future development of the project depended on ways that workshop facilitators could train others who then train others to create a snowball effect. The project team was successful in securing a further 2 years of funding, which provided the opportunity to explore ways to do this. Subsequent activities and initial findings are provided in the case study section of this paper.

2.2 Responding to the Global pandemic

The project is now in its third year and although initial work was situated within East Java in Indonesia, the need to respond to the global pandemic through digital online activities, provided the opportunity to expand the reach with current activities also taking place in Ecuador and Peru.

The core team of researchers and collaborators first connected in 2017 through an earlier Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funded project (Dearden 2018) and have had the opportunity to work together physically both in Indonesia and the UK. Having established strong professional and personal relationships enabled them to work effectively through the expanded virtual platforms that have become the norm since the start of the pandemic. The diversity of experiences and working practices that team members bring made it possible to deliver meaningful activities to craft-makers through cumulative testing and refining of resources and toolkits. How this was done will be the focus of the case study section of this paper. What became very apparent is how the situation imposed by the pandemic required a new approach to ways of working, which has provided opportunities to extend networks and increase participation in a way that just working physically would not be possible.

3. Methodology

In the field of craft and design, in developing countries, specifically in a rural area, craft -makers are often seen subjugated as only technical workers for designers.

In contrast to this, within countries with greater developed economies 'Design' is seen as a process which is inextricably linked to craft making. The term Designer/ (Craft)maker is established and understood to mean someone who has the creative agency to generate ideas, innovate, make decisions and utilise craft skills in the realisation of end products. (Hanson, Cave and Zulaikha 2020)

This project aims to provoke the creative agency of craft-makers, to ignite their confidence to think creatively and understand that everyone can design. Rather than using a topdown approach, we choose participatory action research methods (Swantz 2008) through collective based design thinking and making workshops with collaborative approach. We want to propose an approach where knowledge production is more decentralized, different from the common capacity-building workshop, where participants only act as passive learners where they absorb information exposed by people who are considered experts.

3.1 Collaborative Approach in Collective Learning

Participatory research has long held within its implicit notion of the relations between power and knowledge (Gaventa and Cornwall 2006).This method enables people to empower themselves by the knowledge construction gained through the action and reflection process (Gaventa and Cornwall 2006). Acknowledgement of power relation in this method is fundamental, not only for participants but also the facilitator. In the context of Indonesia's education system, where participants are often positioned as passive learners or as Freire said, submerge in the culture of silence, the main characteristics are powerlessness and fear to express one's own thoughts and feelings (Freire 1986). As an effort to transform into a better learning method, the relation of knowledge and power between the facilitator and participants must be established equally and in a dialogical manner. Collective learning with a collaborative approach devised with appropriate toolkits is fundamental, so that the participants are actively involved in the activities, have the confidence to express their feelings, and communicate their ideas. To achieve the aims of the Making Links 5 project, effective and mindful communication is important so that everyone involved in the activities can build trust and meaningful relationships with each other. Another key element of this workshop is ensuring this is a safe space where everyone can comfortably share their thoughts and feelings. Participants were encouraged to share ideas without being afraid to be judged. The diverse ideas generated through lateral thinking are emphasized more in this workshop. For facilitators it is also important to acknowledge local context (geographical, economic, political, social, and cultural) and their positionality (refers to how power and social position shape one's identities and access in society). All parts of our identities are shaped by socially constructed positions and memberships to which we belong and which are embedded in our society as a system (Misawa 2010). With this deeper and critical understanding when we work together with different communities and contexts, we can create a more democratic learning environment.

3.2 Design Thinking through Making

Design thinking provides a methodology to think 'outside of the box' through frameworks that ask questions and challenge assumptions. The definition of Design Thinking here refers to applying a designer's sensibility and methods to problem solving, no matter what the problem. It is not a substitute for professional design or the art and craft of designing, but rather a methodology for innovation and enablement (Lockwood 2010). It starts by understanding the context as inspiration, followed by ideation, then implementation. (Brown, T 2008) Design Thinking also enables us to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success harmoniously (Brown 2008). We naturally develop thinking patterns based on our experience and knowledge we're exposed to. As Jean Piaget proposed about learning theory (Piaget 1964) where knowledge is composed of schemas, (basic units of knowledge) used to organize past experiences and serve as a basis for understanding new ones, if repetitive activities become embedded, it can potentially limit us from developing new ways of seeing, understanding, and solving problems. With design thinking established as a framework, we are able to provoke the participants about new ways of generating ideas.

Thinking is not only expressed by text, it can also be expressed through everything we make (Raijmakers and Arets 2015). By facilitating participants in design thinking through making in a co-creative environment, participants can create, express, and disseminate thinking and translate it into various media and it's carried out alternately in a rapid iterative process. To avoid making decisions too early and allowing a non-sequential and holistic way of exploring concepts and ideas through the use of experimental sketching, material testing, and prototyping, that can lead to unexpected outcomes (Norman 2013), facilitator act in assisting them by asking further questions so that participants can identify more alternative possibilities and solutions.

3.3 Training Trainers

In the first year of the Making Links 5 project the two project leads and 3 collaborators worked with 18 artisans in a physical space in East Java. Prototypes for the basis of four jewellery collections combining glass beads and metal components suitable for the export market were developed and through continued remote collaboration, product refinement has been undertaken. Final samples and marketing materials are in production for launching at the International Top Drawer Trade Show, London, UK in September 2021. However when the whole team reflected on the workshop outcomes during the postworkshop discussion in relation to the ambition to create a sustainable model, it was clear this couldn't be achieved only by the activities facilitated by 2 individuals that had travelled halfway across the globe. This stimulated the initial discussion about ways that workshop facilitators could train others, who would then train others to create a snowball effect. By developing this approach we envisaged being able to build capacity and give greater representation and power to those who would both participate and facilitate in future initiatives.

The Making Links 5 team began to explore ways they could actively embrace this strategy, identifying different groups, organizations and networks that could be recruited to participate in training workshops. At this stage it was still envisaged that activities would be done physically within the identified contexts. Early in 2020, initial development of resources and toolkits began that would be used to train trainers when the world was catapulted into the Covid-19 pandemic, momentarily bringing everything to a halt.

4. Case Study

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that affected the whole world from early 2020, further physical workshops were prevented. Staying connected in these uncertain times, the team continued to initiate and organize activities virtually; experimenting and testing methods, toolkits and resources. With totally different landscapes—physical and virtual, different approaches, structure, and methods for workshops were formulated. Although the delivery mode was different, these two types of workshops basically focus on several things, including: brainstorming, exploring ideas from existing products, idea development, and iterative idea development. In the physical workshop where a democratic environment through the group dynamic is immediate in the way participants work and discuss collectively, the virtual workshop differs because participants exist in their own physical environment and with collective sharing more difficult to achieve. A democratic approach was more emphasized during the brainstorming and sharing session where everyone is embraced to share their thought and story behind their work with other participants asking questions and giving critical feedback and compliments. The virtual workshop utilized the tools provided on digital platforms-from mind brainstorming (using Simple Mind, Google Jam-board and Miro) with screen sharing (ZOOM), giving everyone access to each other's thoughts and ideas simultaneously. These activities, distributed power, allow us to collectively build power together in the context of creativity where everyone is brave and empowered in expressing their creative thinking without fear and feeling inferior.

4.1 Access, Experience, and Knowledge in Virtual Activities

COVID-19 has been recognized as a global pandemic as it has spread in most of every country in the world with almost 173 million confirmed cases (WHO 2021). This pandemic makes human interaction limited. Shared spaces including public places, companies, and schools have to be closed to prevent the massive spread of the virus. Current situation has suddenly and abruptly forced education to engage in such a digital transformation. Since then, most activities have to be carried out at home and transformed into online meetings and classes that can be accessed online. Devised with the innovation of technology, virtual learning brings new possibilities and solutions in the world of education. However, so that it can run optimally, virtual learning must be supported by supporting devices such as software (applications that facilitate teleconferences like ZOOM, Google meet, or Whatsapp) and hardware (cell phone, computer, webcams, microphones, and internet networks). This condition makes many online meeting or video conference applications vital as almost all of the world population uses them as tools so that they can communicate virtually (Pratama, Kassymova and Duisenbayeva 2020).

As an adaptive response to the current pandemic situation where we were forced to stay at home, the team has been experimenting with a virtual design thinking workshop. The team started to change the whole concept of the workshop into a virtual framework. The idea of creating and planning the virtual workshop was possible because all team members have the privileges of having sufficient prior knowledge, experience, and access to digital platforms so that the shifting from physical to virtual workshops is not that difficult. In terms of infrastructure, team members have met the requirements of both hardware and software. On a daily basis team members have been familiar with using devices such as cell phones and computers. Also in terms of internet connection, team members are privileged as they live in urban areas with relatively good internet access networks so they can subscribe to internet providers with good network speed. In addition, in terms of software, almost all team members have experienced remote work so we are quite familiar with teleconference applications. For the interactive tools used for group brainstorming activities, the team tried different tools based on team members' experience.

In running this virtual workshop, access, prior experience, and knowledge are very important aspects because we have to find tools that are suitable and able to accommodate the needs of activities in design thinking workshops ranging from material presentation, brainstorming, to iterative idea development. In looking for tools that exist in the digital platform, workshop planners/facilitators must be able to imagine how to optimize these tools so that they can facilitate the activities optimally. Besides all of those aspects explained before, other aspects that must be considered when choosing tools in running virtual workshop include:

- User friendliness which affect how everyone involved in the workshop can operate the tools
- Accessibility of tools where all tools used should be free of charge/open source so that everyone can access.
- Facilities available in the tools such as meeting room capacity, screen share mode, recording tools, chat rooms, unlimited time, multimedia sharing (audio, video, or image)
- Cost effectiveness related to internet data

This collectively collected experience and knowledge combined with available access lead into a great collaboration between team members so that they were able to formulate the workshop structure and toolkits. In practice, even though the team is already quite familiar with these virtual learning supporting tools, before delivering the workshop, a simulation and trial process is necessary as technical problems such as internet connection and difficulties in operating applications will inevitably still happen.

5. Virtual Online Workshop

The starting point for the development of toolkits and resources to be used within a virtual learning space began with an analysis of the analogue resources used in the physical workshop in Jombang, East Java in 2019. By deconstructing these we were able to identify and classify component parts of the 'Design' process and explore creative activities that would be understandable within the artisan communities we were ultimately trying to reach. A project website would be used as a learning platform to access resources and to facilitate sharing, exhibiting and documenting research (Making Links 5 2020). Although this is still a work in progress, the design toolkits form an important part and are catalogued under the following headings:

• Introduction to Design as a process

- Idea generation and Research
- Model making and prototypes
- Recognizing trends
- Quality control and Final presentation

When working in the field it is crucial to prepare and structure content, however it is also important to be agile during the workshop and to respond appropriately, making changes and adjustments to the flow and content if the situation and response of participants require (Hanson, Cave and Zulaikha 2020). Within the virtual workshop landscape, being agile in the moment is much more difficult to achieve and therefore iterative testing of the structure, content, delivery platforms and technology was required in order to gain knowledge and refine content.

5.1. Making Links 5 – Design Thinking Workshop Activities

Design is a process that needs practice, but does not have a singular, linear or finite set of rules. It requires idea generation, research, making prototypes/samples, problem-solving, testing materials, and final production. By presenting creative activities using design toolkits, craft-makers are provided with a framework which enables them to explore their own creativity and develop design skills that will help them generate original ideas for new products.

In the series of virtual workshops discussed in this paper the activities devised and delivered are illustrated in Figure 1, and are situated within the following sub categories.

- 1. Stimulate Creative Thinking
- 2. Analysis of Existing Product
- 3. Idea Generation
- 4. Iterative Idea Development
- 5. Idea Generation
- 6. Feeding Creativity



Figure 1: Stages of The Making Links Design Thinking Workshop source: Making Links 2021

Within the workshop delivery structure, each activity involved 3 stages:

- Activity Explanation
- Active participation and execution
- Feedback and discussion

5.1.1. Workshop 1 : Family Members

Before the virtual design thinking workshop was conducted and launched with a wider audience, the team held several trials. The main objectives were to test structure, time scale and flow, clarity of presentation of toolkits and digital technology. It also provided the opportunity to make improvements and facilitated the training of the first workshop trainers. The UK team developed the first set of toolkits and tested elements of these with family members early in June 2020. ZOOM was used as the virtual platform with 2 facilitators and 2 participants joining the session from 4 different locations. This first trial highlighted the need to make a workshop schedule that listed each stage of the activity, how long was needed, who would lead, screen share, monitor time and record session.

5.1.2. Workshop 2 : Making Links Members

The UK team facilitated the first full trial with the 3 women from the Indonesian team acting as the participants. They had no knowledge of the content prior to participating, experiencing in the way subsequent artisans might. The different backgrounds of participants, Zulaikha (Academic and Researcher from ITS), Febryanti (Co-ordinator and

translator for the Tungjung Women's Creative Project), and Larasati (Graduate Designer) allowed multiple positions and perspectives to be acknowledged. Held in June 2020, the workshop was delivered in 3 x 2 hour blocks over 3 separate days. At the end of each session, facilitators asked the participant to share their impressions and insights from the session.

5.1.3. Participants' Observations

Participants' observations included:

- Time Scale
 - o Time needed to participate in workshops required considerable commitment. This might be a challenge for future participants.
 - o Some activities would require more time in order for all participants to contribute to discussions.
 - o There must be contingency in the schedule to accommodate any problems with digital technology.
 - o Time keeping is vital so that the workshops run efficiently and to planned schedules.
- Facilitators
 - The workshop concept created an ambience that embraced all participants and provided opportunity for everyone to express their thoughts and ideas.
 - o It was delivered with enthusiasm and fun so that the participants didn't feel intimidated or pressured but engaged in every process with excitement.
 - o Facilitators participated in a co-creative way throughout the activities. This removed hierarchical barriers creating more equal power dynamics.
 - o Facilitators gave appreciation and constructive criticism with consideration of participants' background and context so that the participants felt valued and motivated to improve their work.
- Toolkits
 - o The toolkits stimulate participants' creative potential so that they can explore new ideas rapidly.
 - o Visual resources are easy to understand and accommodate participants with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
 - The toolkits enable participants to connect with things around them as creative inspiration for developing new ideas.

5.1.4. Workshop 3 : Design Alumni and Lecturer-ITS

Workshop 3 was undertaken with Design Alumni from the Institut Teknologi Sepuluh (ITS) in Surabaya, East Java and was held in July 2020. Two of the participants from workshop 2 became the trainers/facilitators for this third workshop. This training was attended by two design alumni and one design lecturer, so all had a design education background. The training was split into 2 x 2 hour sessions on separate days with two weeks between the first and second meeting.

As in the previous workshop, the six activities illustrated in Figure 1 were undertaken. The facilitators used Google Jamboard for the Stimulate Creative Thinking activity to replace the 'Simple minds' mapping tool used in the trial. This open source application allowed collective group brainstorming / mind-mapping using post-it stickers. Facilitators participated co-creatively, reinforcing a democratic environment, and strengthening the message of collective learning. Despite having a design background, in the participants' workshop evaluation they stated that the ideas generated as a result of the activities were ideas that they had never thought of before.

5.1.5. Workshop 4 : 45 Design Students and Lectures (ITS)

Workshop 4 was organised by ITS in Surabaya, Indonesia and was hosted in May 2021. Fortyfive participants attended the workshop, consisting of undergraduate design students, design lecturers, and a few non-design students. The facilitators/trainers consisted of 2 participants from workshop 2 and 1 participant of workshop 3. Unlike the previous workshops this one was delivered in 1x3 hours and 1x1 hour sessions. Activities 1, 2, 3, and 5 were held in the first session, while activities 4 and 6 were undertaken as 'homework' and then reviewed and discussed through a 1 hour feedback and discussion session a week later.

Although delivering the creative activities with 15 times more participants was a challenge, it allowed the team to test accelerating the online strategy for greater capacity building. Having more people resulted in less opportunity for verbal discussion and therefore additional digital tools was introduced. As this event was delivered more than a year after the pandemic had begun, new interactive tools had been tested and the team had greater experience in using breakout rooms in video conferencing software. To ensure that every participant had the opportunity to share ideas, the MIRO interactive whiteboard application was used so everyone could see each other's ideas visually. The advantage of using MIRO in this workshop was the reduction of time allocated for the verbal sharing of participants' work. However, the ZOOM break-out room feature was applied to several stages to allow more intimate discussions with other participants. The breakout rooms were supported by volunteer design students who had been briefed earlier. They played crucial roles in helping participants upload images to MIRO, provided explanations of the workshop instructions, and moderated the discussion sessions.

5.1.6. Workshop 5 : The Hybrid Workshop with Rural Craft-Maker

Workshop 5 was held in June 2021 with rural craft-makers in the village of Plumbon Gambang, Gudo District, Jombang Regency, Indonesia. This 2 day workshop was conducted in a hybrid mode; both online and offline. Participation was limited to ten people because of the pandemic, with 5 hours allocated to activities on Day 1 and a single hour on Day 2. Participants were divided into small groups of 3-4 and joined the workshop through ZOOM from 2 separate places. Each group was supported by design students who had attended workshop 4, to assist with clarification of workshop instructions and operating the digital technology.

The facilitators were located in Sidoarjo and Surabaya, Indonesia, and in Sheffield and London, UK. It was the first time all participants had experienced a hybrid workshop. The introduction of ZOOM and MIRO in this context provided opportunities for participants to develop digital skills and understand how this mode of communication could be positively applied to other contexts.

As in previous workshops, all stages of Making Links Design Thinking were undertaken. The Team observed the following:

• The sessions allowed participants to confidently express their opinions and present unique ideas without worrying about being criticized.

- Facilitators assisted them by giving provocative questions so the participants explored diverse ideas by examining the characteristics of objects.
- The circle activity enabled the participants to think and generate ideas in a short time. The images that were created reflected familiar daily objects seen by the craft-makers.
- Initial ideas generated for the mood board activity were based on the interesting things they liked. However, the facilitator reiterated the importance of visual research to observe detailed qualities in form, colour and texture. This enabled participants to choose images not just based on what they liked but in response to other criteria.



Figure 2: Making Links' Snowball Effects source: Making Links 2021

6. Conclusion

Given the unprecedented global pandemic the activities undertaken by the Making Links project team have engaged a variety of participants (Figure 3) from different social and economic backgrounds, providing new creative learning experiences through both online and hybrid modes of delivery.

Key insights from participant evaluation feedback highlighted the following positives:

- Creative activities provided new insights, experiences and ways of thinking.
- The workshops were engaging and had a positive atmosphere.
- Participation was not dependent on having any previous design training.

- The review and discussion stage following each activity was essential.
- The ideas from other participants were really important and helpful.
- Gaining appreciation and understanding of how idea generation leads to the emergence of new potential products.
- Feedback from facilitators was crucial in widening understanding and individual perspectives.
- Positive feedback increased self-confidence in participants helping them to optimize design potential based on their own experience and context.



Figure 3: The Online Workshop Statistics. source: Making Links 2021

One of the main obstacles in organizing online workshops, especially in rural areas, is the availability and stability of internet infrastructures and mobile data. Workshops can only run smoothly and effectively if a good internet connection and adequate hardware is available or provided. Using a laptop or PC is recommended above cell phones as it provides greater flexibility when uploading and viewing multiple images. Familiarity and testing of digital interfaces by facilitators prior to workshop sessions is essential. Inevitably, delayed response due to technological constraints occurred during the workshops because of unstable Wi-Fi connections and participants or facilitators needing to run several digital applications simultaneously.

Feedback and Discussion time is essential at every stage, regardless of participant numbers. This was the most significant thing highlighted in evaluation feedback forms, and was linked specifically to feelings of being encouraged to generate new ideas without worrying about being judged and criticized Therefore, future facilitators need to focus on giving appreciation and constructive feedback for participants' work whilst thinking about the potential for increasing the value of an idea, as well as building a productive and discursive atmosphere for everyone. There is great value in bringing together participants from different backgrounds and experiences in order to maximise learning opportunities. The co-creative strategy enables the amplification of knowledge-sharing through peer to peer feedback and discussion.

The team is fully aware that these workshops only serve a small part of the entire design process and acknowledge it is only the starting point. Additional stages of design thinking and the design development process need to be implemented into a series of continuous workshops with the same strategy. The team will expand structures, methods, and toolkits so that collective knowledge sharing and creative development can have wider scope and reach diverse audiences from multiple contexts and backgrounds.

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Author's Bio



Veronica Larasati is an Industrial Design Graduate from ITS, Surabaya. She is an independent designer who is interested in exploring sustainable local crafts such as textile and jewelry. She's also a worker-member of Sanggarè (Creative Studio Cooperative) and currently developing worker co-op experimentation focusing on democratic collective-based economic organizing.



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Maria Hanson is Reader and Principle Lecturer in Jewellery and Metalwork at Sheffield Hallam University. She is Course Leader for MA Design; supervising post-graduate and PhD students alongside undertaking research and practice. Since 2014 she has worked on a number of projects funded by the EPSRC, AHRC, and Research England.



A graduate of The RCA, London, Laura Cave has over 20 years' experience of working co-creatively with artisan craft-makers in emerging economies. She is the founder and director of Just Trade Ltd supplying over 300 retail outlets in the UK and internationally, including independent boutiques and leading Museums and Galleries.

Acknowledgements: Research England - GCRF for supporting this project for 3 years. Sheffield Hallam University, Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology and Just Trade UK Ltd. Great thanks to all collaborators, craft-makers in East Java, workshop participants, and design students.

We Must Get Together Some Time: slow-making stories

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Abstract. We are eleven slow-makers who form the artist collective *We Must Get Together Some Time* (WMGTST). We are makers riveted by a feather spinning idly on a thread of spider silk.

A multi-disciplinary group of thinkers and makers, we share philosophical commonalities. Some of us exhibited in the 2016 *field working slow-making* (FWSM) exhibition co-curated by Annette Nykiel and Nien Schwarz. Since 2019, WMGTST has been getting together on-line, in small gatherings, and at week-long bush camps and artist professional development retreats. We understand we occupy unceded land. We organise workshops with regional creative practitioners, and guided walks with scientists specialising in the local. These encounters are pivotal for our group, who are relationally embedded in place. We notice the breeze has strengthened; a frayed feather becomes a kite.

Unafraid of getting lost in spaces of not knowing; our making is entangled with nature. We commune with the non-human; we think with materials. We stitch, steam, coil, dye, write, take video and sound recordings, form with clay, and solar print. Samples of place are posted long distances representing an enduring interchange of materials, ideas, and emerging strong, rich stories. Sometimes, bright threads of collaborative encounters punctuate the larger cloth of the collective.

As part of IOTA21, the collective is exhibiting and leading related slow-making events. This paper is part of the introduction to a forthcoming book about the collective and contributes to the discourse and history of craft-making in Western Australia by weaving together our stories about slow-making place. The forthcoming book *We Must Get Together Some Time* relates local stories about slowmakers who are unafraid of getting lost in the spaces of not knowing (Baas and Jacob, 2004) while working with materials in enlivening ways. Our sensory rich, hopeful, and respectful collective way of slow-making may provide a model of professional arts practice in a world that is reeling from disasters and in which art academics and schools, former pillars of creative research and futuring craft, are deemed redundant.

As the lead author of this paper, I introduce myself as Annette Nykiel, an interdisciplinary maker with a long association with rural and remote Western Australia and a passion for being on the Country. Earlier in life I was a geoscientist, now I am a slow-maker who practices field-based research methodologies (noticing, gathering, note-taking, mapping) to create natural bush-dyed and hand-stitched textiles, finger-plied string and woven vessels.

In 2018, I completed a practice-led doctorate that investigated alternate forms of articulation to relate stories of place-making, as narrative or object, and added threads to the complex meshwork and herstory of the Country. After my studies I felt isolated, adrift from a community of practice. In 2019, I invited like-minded Western Australian makers and thinkers to join me in a collective. The aim of this group that became *We Must Get Together Some Time* (WMGTST) is to make in response to outdoor places and to share our skills and associated life stories in-situ. The collective has been in process for almost two years. First getting together with each other at our artist camp in Yalgorup National Park (September 2020), followed by structured artist retreats at Dryandra (November 2020) and Broke Inlet (April 2021). Week-long excursions into regional areas have helped prepare us for a group exhibition and related community workshops and story-telling events. This paper reflects on the roots of ideas and conversations that have led to *We Must Get Together Some Time*, and our model of practicing slow-making through active and passionate long-term creative engagements with non-urban places and non-human worlds.

A reviewer's comments on the draft of this paper challenged us to ask, "can slowness translate into a product or is it about the personal experience of making and being according to this ethic? Is the slow-making we practice similar to other slow practices?" Do our stories about field work and resulting slow-making add to the discourse of craft? These are good questions that we will address.

We are artists riveted by a black and white feather spinning idly on a thread of spider silk.

We Must Get Together Some Time includes myself, Dr Nien Schwarz, Dr Nandi Chinna, Helen Coleman, Dr Jane Donlin, Sharyn Egan, Todd Israel, Dr George Karpathakis, Dr Perdita Phillips, Michelle Slarke, and Dianne Strahan. We are a multi-disciplinary team of 11 artists from the Kimberley, Great Southern, Peel and Wheatbelt regions, and the Perth metropolitan area. Nine women and two men, having rich life experiences and a diversity of cultural and educational backgrounds. Some of us have science degrees and extensive field work experience. A few have established artistic and academic careers. Others are emerging practitioners. Not all the artists knew each other before getting together. However, some worked and studied together, and others schooled their children together. Some of us exhibited in the 2016 *field working slow making* (FWSM) exhibition, co-curated by Annette Nykiel and Nien Schwarz (discussed below). We are all very different, yet at the core of the collective, we all share creative practices based on field walking, field work and slow-making in response to our individual and collective encounters with Western Australia's inland and coastal regions.

We work with diverse materials and methods including textiles, natural materials, found objects, ceramics, video, and words to create finely crafted works. We are making unique, lively and vibrant things (Bennett, 2010) as part of the complex fabric of being makers, not

necessarily intended for sale, but certainly products of our processes. Our stories of making are entangled: embroidered, steamed, coiled, dyed, filmed, written, formed with clay, printed, and stitched (Figure 1). Sometimes, bright threads of collaborative encounters embellish the larger cloth of this collective and spin off in other directions with short-listed proposals for major public artworks, shared residencies, co-authored papers and this book in process.



Figure 1: Bright threads of collaboration. Spinifex a stitched poem (detail) 2020-1 Nandi Chinna (text) Jane Donlin (stitch), linen cloth, Eucalyptus ssp. dye, cotton/linen threads, 24 x 30cm. Image courtesy of the artists.

Our slowly-crafted works and stories of their making elicit conversations with others and invite responses to questions and concerns about the Australian bush, rural communities, and the natural and cultural materiality of place in these precarious times. Our stories add local voices to the lexicon of Western Australian art. Many of us have links to Edith Cowan University, once renowned for its textile and painting bush camps and site-specific sculpture surveys (no longer offered). We have close links with the artist and Western Australian State Living Treasure Nalda Searles (DGLSC, 2015) who co-led ECU's textile camps, which ironically few of us were able to attend. Nalda participated in our ECU 2016 *field working slow making* project (discussed below). Annette has travelled thousands of kilometres and worked in the field with Nalda and has written a catalogue essay for her

2021 Finders Keepers exhibition. Unlike tertiary art camps, We Must Get Together Some Time is a collective of thinker-makers (Garland 2021) getting together to make slowly.

How did *We Must Get Together Some Time* start? What exactly is slow-making and does it have anything to do with craft and rituals of the everyday? Is slow-making a way of making-being or just for making products or a craft in itself?

In discussion with my PhD supervisor Dr Nien Schwarz, we identified several local artists who conduct field work. The exhibition *field working slow making* emerged, featuring the work of eight Western Australian field-based slow-makers who "extend conversations about non-urban places through creative praxis" (Schwarz & Nykiel, 2016). Several artists created works in the gallery and engaged with the public, sharing knowledge about materials, techniques and bush places that inspire.

Post-exhibition, artists involved commented that we must get together some time and later we developed an exhibition proposal for *We Must Get Together Some Time*, which was accepted to participate in this Indian Ocean Craft Triennial (IOTA21). In preparation, *We Must Get Together Some Time* organised regional excursions discussed below with the goal of leading hands-on workshops and exhibiting new works in a self-titled multi-venue exhibition in Mandurah, October-November 2021 (Figure 2). In 2022, the exhibition will tour our regional artists' hometowns and in the vicinity of *We Must Get Together Some Time* field work locations.



WE MUST GET TOGETHER SOME TIME

exhibition

October 17 to November 14 2021

Nandi Chinna • Helen Coleman • Jane Donlin • Sharyn Egan • George Karpathakis • Todd Israel Annette Nykiel • Perdita Phillips • Nien Schwarz • Michelle Slarke • Dianne Strahan

two Mandurah venues

CASM and ManPAC

Full details

www.lethologicapress.org/WMGTST

and bookings

ManPAC Mon-Fri 10-5pm & CASM Wed-Sun 10-4pm 5 & 63 Ormsby Tce Mandurah

other events



exhibition opening • full day progressive regional gallery tour • artist talks • book launch • artist in residence • Koolbardi Bidi Garden tour • listening walks • bookmaking, writing, botanical dyeing, stitching, making natural pigments and cyanotype workshops



Figure 2: Exhibition flyer, We Must Get Together Some Time. Courtesy of Perdita Phillips. Main image: Nien Schwarz We Must Get Together, 2020. Diverse handmade clays and glazes. Various firing temperatures. Image Nien Schwarz.

Is a body of new works for exhibition a product? Can the social engagement of skill-sharing workshops and touring exhibitions be considered a product?

As support for the arts continues to wane, and ecologies are threatened, WMGTST's initial conversations identified the need to collectively support our artists and respond to the threats to WA's global biodiversity hotspots. The stimulus of new opportunities with dedicated time and space to develop new works in natural settings was regarded as essential. The collective's objective to facilitate ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration within the group and with other regional artists, scientists and communities was perfect timing.

I was motivated to join We Must Get Together Some Time because it was an opportunity to work with like-minded artists from different disciplines in a process in which we 'get together' to share ideas and skills, and form collaborations. (Nandi Chinna, poet)

The collective, formed only months before the upheavals of COVID, proved prescient by providing a valuable support network during the isolation of lockdowns. It continues in this role, providing hope, respect, and stimulating work-in-progress feedback. On-line conversations combat the tyranny of distance. "I think this project is even now more timely and I expect it will help us find a way through this crisis even just by connecting and by our artmaking" (Michelle Slarke, group email, 30 March 2020). The collective, with its associated bush excursions, exhibition and hands-on community events, provides a creative focus and underpins changed rituals of pandemic life. Lake Grace artist Michelle Slarke commented "it saved me during COVID, having a focus; going to the lake everyday". Michelle's photographs (Figure 3) of her daily circumambulations of a constantly transforming salt lake on the family farm aroused much group discussion and research into algae and dryland salinity.



Figure 3: Michelle Slarke, (2021) Algal Drawings, Eagles' Nest Lake. Images courtesy of the artist and Nien Schwarz.

Discussions and gatherings have allowed skills to be shared, materials to be exchanged and friendships to flourish within the shifting restrictions of quarantine, and job precarity and losses.

The title [WMGTST] is timely; it suggests a promise, a promise that in these uncertain (and destabilising) times may not be able to be realised, not face to face, not just yet, not in the foreseeable future. And - ironically so - we must resort to technology for communication. Now, with the global threat of economic collapse, the focus on slow, whether making, walking, writing, gathering, contemplating, as a sustainable practice becomes more relevant than ever. Thinking about slow under current circumstances perhaps becomes an important cultural activity and a social responsibility. (Jane Donlin, group email, April 2, 2020)

The collective is also very much about practising writing—a number of us have been deeply involved in co-writing and editing. It's collaborating on texts, considering words, not just actions, that is defining our position as makers and slow-makers. Writing and researching slowly and collaboratively is also an intrinsic part of telling our stories, adding intellectual rigour to the richness of being slow-makers. Writing is a form of making and making is a form of thinking. (An extended discussion here is beyond the scope of this paper and will form a chapter in the book, but see, for example, Bird Rose (2013), Mountz et. al (2015), DeSalvo (2014) on slow scholarship and slow writing, Stengers (2018) and Owens (2013) on slow science). Jasmine Ulmer (2017) succinctly summarises the history of the slow-movement and the slow ontology of producing differently. Maikel Kuijpers (2017,2019) and Tim Ingold (2000) write of the embodied, ecological entanglement of materials, skilful practice and making that is far richer than the technical execution of a pattern or design. We make-think-write differently with these slow scholars.

1.1 What is slow-making?

According to WMGTST colourwoman Helen Coleman (pers comm), slow-making is "finding time in our 21st century [capitalist rat race] world to create works of intrinsic value, works that honour traditional skills handed down through generations and welcome the passing of time as a friend".

Slow-making is thinking with materials, understanding where and how they formed, taking care to notice our encounters, our movements and our situated, relational entanglements in the ecology of the world (Donna Haraway's worlding (2016)). Slow encounters are sensate, ethical, agentic and two-way touching. Slow-making within our collective places emphasis on active and passionate long-term engagements with non-urban places, where the artists respect and respond sensitively to an ecology of place. Slow is a way of thinking and becoming not just the speed at which, a process is practiced. WMGTST field walker Perdita Phillips explains:

My thoughts about slow-making are mulling over slow recovery, repetitive actions, the role of walking and talking and walking and listening...the way slow-making can be porous and playful...how slow acts can create their own times and place...dealing with the intensity that can be taken up into meditative objects...Very much like the recurrent references to grasses, earths, text fragments, impressions, stitching, other ways of recording changes. (group email, April 2, 2020)

Spelling 'slow-making' with a hyphen opens up the differential between slow thinking and making (borrowing from Erin Manning, (2016)). The hyphen is a differential gesture to indicate a two-way encounter within an ecology of practices, hence slow-making is also an encounter with making slow. Difference is the repetitive rhythm rather than a binary separator that in-acts (Manning, 2016).

I am making new lake pigments each day, testing things I haven't worked on before, and slowly grinding my stockpile of samples. To say this work is 'slow-making' is very apt, as each step in the process can take days to weeks! The techniques are ancient and help me feel connected to artists through the ages as well as the natural environment. (Helen Coleman group email, 31 March 2020)

Slow-making is an active (sometimes activist), ethical model of critical thinking with materials that inspires and supports a passion for understanding. Thinking slowly, doing slowly, making slowly, and writing slowly are disruptive, diffractive, connected and follow natural rhythms in a liminal space between person and place. 'Slow' moves towards quality, connection, and Deborah Bird Rose's (2013) "ethical mutualities"—attentiveness, care, sensing time, place, and deep ecological relations in collective encounters. The breeze has strengthened, the dancing feather has become a kite. Slow-making is taking time to notice, to wonder and to honour nature's ecologies that are rapidly changing.

1.2 Introducing slow-makers

Annette Nykiel and Nien Schwarz have drawn on their geoscience fieldwork experiences to coordinate the collective's field-based activities. In terms of making, **Annette Nykiel** brings people, place, and plants together. Her vibrant matter is worn textiles and gifted cloth, which she recycles. She embeds these unwanted skins with stitched and dyed stories inspired by her bush journeys. Her slow processes of gathering windfall for natural dyeing, plying threads, printing with plant matter and stitching aim to acknowledge knots of connection between the human and non-human (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Gifted cloth coloured in shared dyepots with Dryandra Woodland plant windfall. Image Annette Nykiel.

Nien Schwarz interrogates relationships with the earth beneath our feet and the global quest to support a growing human population (Figure 5). For Nien, "material is meaning; material is the context through which to prompt questions about survival and the real cost of what we consume".

Parallel to teaching environmental art for two decades I've worked as a bushcook and fieldy, supporting geoscientific expeditions in remote areas. Fieldwork provides opportunities to reflect on extractive economies and collect earth from geological strata disrupted by human activities. My installations and paintings include maps and earth matter...to prompt consideration of deep time, land use practices, and unsustainable lifestyles fuelled by fossils and waste-generating economies. In 2020, ceramics and weaving emerged as dominant forces in my practice. I now identify as a craftivist; my slow-making emerging through this collective as a form of activism aligned with solidarity, environmentalism and third wave feminism.



Figure 5: Nien Schwarz We Must Get Together with Bunbury Basalt, 2020 (detail), porcelain, oxide, handmade Bunbury Basalt glaze, 1260°. Image Nien Schwarz.

"Myself, one species amongst others" (Figure 6) is **Nandi Chinna**, the poet.

Slow-making is at the core of my writing practice. Using my body as a research tool, I walk (cycle and kayak) in particular places over time, using my senses to encounter the multi-layered experience of the environment and engage with a diversity of species different to humans. I use the principles of slow-making to create poetic metaphors for my experiences and encounters with the natural world in an attempt to communicate the process of forming temporal and spatial relationships with places and living beings.



Figure 6: One species amongst others. Text by Nandi Chinna. Image Annette Nykiel.

Drawing on a thirty-year career in botany and chemistry, **Helen Coleman** is best described as continuously absorbed in the rigour of extracting colour through exacting scientific methods. The new knowledge she generates about locally derived colour is generously shared with anyone interested. In addition to common garden plants and foods, Helen explores plant and earth pigments in the biodiversity hotspot that is southwest Western Australia. Blending ancient and contemporary techniques, in Helen's hands organic and inorganic matter is transformed into unique dyes, pigments, inks, paints and pastels. Helen has an endless quest to make a true red (Figure 7).



Figure 7: The quest for the true red continues, a dyepot reflecting a source of the bark. Image Annette Nykiel.

Jane Donlin has strong associations with her German heritage, traditional textile crafts, including spinning and weaving, and the history of guilds. Through threads and stitch, she seeks to communicate something of her response to her non-urban Australian environment, and to look into the aesthetic and poetic content of the handmade object. Jane values relationships between other makers and the support they offer one another.

Jane Donlin, collaborating with Nandi Chinna, is bringing poetry about spinifex to life in stitch and cloth (Figure 1). Ironically, Jane has not experienced a spinifex plant in the wild. Her exacting stitch is tightly constrained on cloth with unruly edges that are rough and frayed. Does this contrast between surface and ground reflect how she feels as a European migrant in this vast landscape?

Sharyn Egan, a Noongar yorga, makes stories about her local balga (*Xanthorrhoea preissii*) 'supermarket' supplying food, paint, fibre and inspiration. Sharyn creates ochre paintings and sculptural forms from resin and woven natural fibre to celebrate the ancient balga (Figure 8). Her slow-making stories comment on her deep sense of loss and trauma associated with her forced removal from her Country and family.



Figure 8: Sharyn Egan Untitled (2016) detail from balga resin painting on board in field working slow making. Image Annette Nykiel.

Todd Israel focuses on the body. "I am an elite athlete, so I am intrigued at the relationship between the moving limb in reality and how I can express it in fibre." Time, body, skill, and repetition are intrinsic (albeit in different ways) to the performance of the elite athlete and to the process of working with natural fibre for this slow-maker.

George Karpathakis works in a variety of screen production genres, including drama, experimental and documentary. His career includes filming slow-makers Else van Keppel/King, Perdita Phillips and Nalda Searles. He now has the camera trained on us. He is producing a film based on our artist camp and retreats (Figure 9). George's current work involves working with found objects gathered over many years walking the city streets – his landscape – to produce small sculptural assemblages and photographic series.

Perdita Phillips, the wanderer, uses the lenses of detailed interdisciplinary understandings to bring awareness of natural places that need to be respected and responded to. The work of Phillips asks us to listen to and work with the places and more-than-human worlds around us. Phillips has exhibited widely, creating 'anticipatory aesthetics' to widen the potentials in a narrowing world.

Michelle Slarke is the custodian of a Great Southern salt lake which is becoming sacred to her (Figure 3). Her practice is interdisciplinary, and includes installation, mixed media, environmental works and permanent works commissioned for public places. Text is an important component, including a cross-over to writing works of non-fiction and fiction. She uses materials intrinsic to a site, subject, or concept and diverse, non-traditional methods. "Heritage and art follow similar ways of working."



Figure 9: George Karpathakis has the camera trained on us (with Michelle Slarke), Yalgorup National Park 2020. Image Annette Nykiel.

Dianne Strahan's slow-making responds to the life force of flora around her. Examining plants and collecting leaf litter while walking bush tracks and streets around Narrogin and stopping along the side of the road when travelling instils in Dianne a sense of serenity and connectedness with nature. The material she collects is revered and used on a daily basis in her eco dyeing and botanical printing arts practice on paper, cloth and stones (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Dianne Strahan slow-making, bracken on stone. Image Annette Nykiel

1.3 More widely ...

Others inform our artist collective—a series of entangled relationships in a geo-bio-sociopolitical cultural ecology. Noting that 'geo' includes litho-hydro—the weathering surface, a liminal space shared by body and place. Voices interject from the pages of the wellthumbed books we share. Tim Ingold (2011), a wayfarer amidst meshworks of the weatherworld, gestures in weather patterns to Erin Manning (2016) entangled in the ecology of practice thinking with Isabelle Stengers (2005, 2018). Interrupting is *kulbardi* the magpie carolling from the trees and the sentinel *karrakin* (black cockatoo) calling a raucous alarm from a *wandoo* branch (*Eucalyptus wandoo*—a white gum). Handwritten notes taken at south coast author Sarah Drummond's and expert dyemaker Penny Jewell's workshops flutter in the breeze from an open window.

As the collective's artists make with fellow writers and theorists in mind, our thoughts might wander to threads steeping in old jars lined up in the warmth of sun-drenched wall, or a line of stitch added to freshly dyed cloth, redolent with scents of eucalyptus. Fingers busy in repetitive rhythm plying string from a piece of silk dyed in the same dyepot. This string becomes a necklace that will be exhibited, gifted, and worn. The silk was mailed from one artist to another. We recall that dyepot of tuart leaves (*Eucalyptus gomphocephala*)— serendipitous windfall and parrot prunings—simmering over a shared campfire as slow food cooks and stories are told at the first artists' camp we shared.

Materials and stories travel to those members in the collective who can't join us in person, spanning the vast distances from the Kimberley to the south coast (approximately 3000 km). Cloth dyed locally and mailed on to be stitched or perhaps redyed. Earth samples ground and added to glazes or mulled into paint and ink. Some by request, most as a shared moment of place for those of us who cannot visit each other; a slow sharing of materials, ideas and strong, rich stories overcoming the tyranny of WA's vast distances between communities. These samplings of place are tacit, relational, ecological encounters that add rich layers to the stories of the collective.

Nandi, your writing about place transported me. And Fitz [Fitzroy River/Mutawarru] sounds positively verbaciously rich. Your daily wanderings under big sky country and fieldwork processes of noting and wordsmithing observations, ideas and the body in place is rich, rich, rich. The anticipated dyeing and stitching collaboration with Jane Donlin would be wonderful, awesome in fact. Can you collect some small quantities of geological material for me? A tbsp of 4 different samples would be great. I can then incorporate them at some point into my work. (Nien's email to Nandi, 29 March 2020)

Slow-making within a collective based on sharing place, materials and time is a richly layered ecological practice. Materials include body, place and weathering surface and therefore the wider ecology of the planet. However, thinking with Stengers (2005, 2018) and Manning (2016), an ecology of practice becomes the art of thinking, feeling, doing and practicing process. In this layer of ecology, the individual (maker-thing) may emerge from the tension between knowledge and value as more than a reducible sum of the parts material, artist, process, environment. These 'things' are agentic, vibrant matter neither product, object or subject (Bennett, 2010) or necessarily an outcome of material and process (Barad, 2007). The maker is biologically and materially more-than human (Figure 6).

To lie full-bodied in estuary sand, to listen to what the estuary says, this is the important work of the world. Nandi Chinna

Within the collective ecology of practice, artist retreats are pivotal for a group relationally embedded in place, who share philosophical commonalities but make work structurally, materially and conceptually quite different. Structured interdisciplinary artist retreats provide a professional development (PD) model when supported by local gatherings of small groups of artists/thinkers, scientists, online discussions and an exchange of materials. The structured retreat model supports mentoring and core activities in the field: time to research and develop nature-inspired artworks through slow walking, slow-making, slow-cooking and the sharing of local knowledge, skills and outcomes in a supportive professional environment with few distractions.

The subject matter and premise of We Must Get Together Some Time and that of IOTA21, and the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of artists involved, is particularly relevant in this time of upheaval, triggering reflection on how we spend our time and with whom, our connections to Nature and the value of the creative arts. (Nien Schwarz, pers comm)

Martins Tank (Yalgorup National Park), in September 2020, was our first collective artist camp—a loosely structured four-day camp where the artists could meet and get to know each other better. Some of the artists travelled from the city to join for a day, others camped on site.

This camp was a good icebreaker, although we concluded that the emerging slow-making processes and collection of associated materials and methods would benefit from basic

facilities (cooking, washing, shelter), and dedicated workspaces, but still in a bush setting with opportunities to share our activities with other local makers.

In November 2020, we got together at the Lions Village in Dryandra Woodlands in an unseasonably cool week that ended with the first hot, extreme fire danger day of summer. This site comfortably housed a week-long residential retreat that included a large hall set up for working without worrying about ants and things blowing away. We structured this retreat, timetabling schedules to meet and to present and consider work in progress. Concepts and ideas were presented and critiqued in a supportive way. Our open day for local artists to visit included casting their knees in clay and incorporating local materials of their choosing (Figure 3). We shared early morning walks and evening meals. A table supported a shared library, including field guides of local trees, plants and birds, books on dyeing traditions, stories of trees and forests, scientific papers about fungi, and some of the artists' exhibition catalogues and publications. This structured residential format was more successful with shared and private spaces to work and to think, and a social atmosphere around the table in the evenings as the group dynamic shifted to storytelling. The woodland area was encountered by wanderers gathering, observing, taking notes and photographs. Another retreat was planned, and we were successful in attracting funding for targeted professional development.

In April 2021, the serenity and the fecundity of the off-grid Claire House, Camfield, and its surrounds on the edge of Broke Inlet within earshot of the Great Southern Ocean were shared just before the winter storms began. Most of the artists from the collective attended this residential retreat and were joined by local thinkers—writers, artists, botanists and ecologists with a common interest in sharing research and telling stories about people, plants and the places that we all respect and respond to.

The kettle is on, banked embers stirred, flames lick across fresh logs. Sleepy morning greetings are uttered, hands extend to the fire's warmth. Chilled fingers cradle coffee cups as boots and jackets are donned. The wanderers straggle down through wind-bent paperbacks, catching the first glimpse of Broke Inlet's still water. It is still and quiet in those moments before dawn, the wind has swung offshore and dropped to calm. The boom of surf no longer heard but perhaps felt in subtle vibration through sand. A kookaburra fluffed up on a branch in the 'peppy tree' above my head breaks the silence, answered by another in a marri tree further inland, and a magpie more distant again. The occasional sleepy chirp in the canopy swells to a chorus of cheeps and twitters as the sky lightens and warms. (Annette Nykiel, April 2020)

This first morning of a week-long artist retreat with a full program of guided walks, talks, workshops and critiques from the collective and with local artists, scientists, writers and thinkers started with local artist and co-owner of Claire House Colin Story, who introduced us to the inlet and its stone fish traps. We returned to share slow-cooked porridge together. Shared meals are an intrinsic ingredient in getting together and supporting each other. Slow food using local ingredients is important to Nien Schwarz's practice and she volunteered to cater for this retreat. The lovingly prepared diverse array of dishes was valued by all with many of the invited local presenters extending their visits to share meals with us. These sensuous feasts being lively, agentic, messy transformations not merely translational products of cooking (Figure 11). "My body is singing!" exclaimed Helen Coleman.



Figure 11: Lingering with the locals over a slow feast. Image Nien Schwarz.

This structured PD retreat was very busy. There were moments of tension. Makers sought stillness through solitary wanders. There was time in between activities for cloth to soak and transform in the inlet's brackish water. Slow looping conversations lasted long into the night. Slow conversations, where the silence speaks loudly, and the non-human has time to interject (we are joined by squeaking rodents scurrying down the flue under the fireplace). Nandi Chinna reflects:

the focus on slow-making offered many practical ways of incorporating slow-making into our art practice, from deep listening, slow walking, working with plants, and the superb preparation of healthy and delicious meals. I came away from the week's workshops tired and inspired, and ready to apply many of the practices I have learned to my own life and art practice.



1.4 How can a retreat's collective energy (often frenetic) be slow-making?

Figure 12: The collective energy of slow-making during Penny Jewell's eco-printing and dyeing workshop. Making a scarf gifted to Nien. Image Jan Cornish.

Bird Rose (2013, p. 6) reminds us that slow work is "not only in the sense of taking time, slowing down, and doing things mindfully, but also in the sense of living in the present temporalities, localities, and relationalities of our actual lives." It is the latter sense that is practiced when we retreat to the beautiful National Parks of Western Australia (Figure 12). Dianne Strahan reflects:

to have had this week out of my everyday life to learn new techniques and connect with new people was very special to me...Hearing people talking from their different perspectives about the land we live in was an almost disconcerting experience. Even though I tell the world that I am attuned with nature, I now realise that I take the world around me for granted in so many ways... The generosity of everyone...the sharing of knowledge, thoughts and ideas, listening to people talk about a diverse range of things connected to the arts and science, the interaction between people...a wonderful week indeed.

Taking time in the rituals of the everyday to notice small things (Figure 13) and the rich diversity amongst a seemingly repetitive sameness, it is the small changes in rhythm or pattern that attract attention and are connected. These knots of difference coalesce into vessels and become the fruiting bodies for new ideas and understandings both physically



Figure 13: a gathering of small things—fruiting bodies become vessels. Image Annette Nykiel.
At these waypoints, seeds and spores may burst forth. Many germinate but only one or two mature into the threads of a story or progress to thinking with materials and making slowly.

The frayed spider silk breaks and the *kulbardi* feather drifts up against the sun-drenched wall.

Emerging slowly is our body of work steeped in the rituals of process and the serendipity of wandering, collectively and individually, in spaces of not knowing—indeterminate and asyet-unformed (Manning, 2016).

Our collective is developing as a successful model to unite multi-disciplinary makers and support the making of finely crafted slowly-made works. The collective model of engaging on-line, at small gatherings, at structured artist camps and professional development retreats transcends the isolation of sheer geographical distances and Western Australia's hard border closures. *We Must Get Together Some Time* creates a niche in the everyday for creatives to keep making, caring, sharing and learning.

The collective is not without its trials. However, the tension between threads and the mended tears gives the cloth of the collective its strength. We have attracted multiple competitive grants and been short-listed for major public artworks, which suggests that the collective model of mentoring has merit with our peers. As to whether slow-making is a 'regional movement' or can translate into a product or adds to the discourse of craft, these were not the original intentions of this collective. However, the reviewer's comments on the draft of this paper, the collective's forthcoming book about our slow-making stories in WA, and the ongoing success of the practice model are inviting more questions for us. We are thinker-makers who practice the rituals of the everyday, slowly, and approach life with an ethical mutuality while sampling place. We carry the thinking, doing and skilled handling of materials into the not knowing spaces of the future.

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Author's Bio



Independent artist-researcher, Annette Nykiel, PhD, wonders about the interdependence of ecological systems including her own in local heath, wetlands and woodlands. She uses gathered natural materials to relate to the materiality of non-urban spaces while wandering amongst urban, regional and remote areas as a geoscientist, artsworker/manager and fibre/textile artist.



Nien Schwarz, PhD, taught sculpture and environmental art at ECU for 18 years. Geoscience and interdisciplinary interests inform the making of installations intended to provoke consideration of human relationships to the ground, particularly mining, agriculture and urban encroachment. Always asking: "Why are we not building more respectful relationships with Earth by living more sustainably?

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that we live and work on unceded Aboriginal land (Walmajarri, Noongar) and pay our respects to the land and its people.

We would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement from the members of the We Must Get Together Some Time collective.

We would like to thank our blind reviewers for their support and feedback and Michael Wingate for reading the final draft.

This project is generously supported by DGLSC and DPIRD, the City of Mandurah and Lotterywest IOTA21.

Appliqué for change: Community engagement with women's health through craft and art

Susie Vickery

Abstract. Community art projects are an opportunity to use craft as a platform for discussions of complex health and social issues. With thoughtful facilitation, they bring together people, history and skills to answer questions about challenges to wellbeing. Textile artist Susie Vickery has worked on community art projects in India, Nepal, Mexico and Australia, among others. Each project brings women together to examine an issue, share personal experience, and use traditional local art and handicraft skills to create installations, artworks, costumes and props for theatre performances, and interactive games for festivals. These participatory art and craft projects can serve to unite, inform and empower marginalised groups.

Keywords: Community, craft, women, health

1. Introduction

Anjali Aama cuts words out of recycled saris with intense concentration. She has never sewn before and sits up at night practising how to cut with scissors and how to hold a needle while her family sleeps beside her. She is proud of her final sari and its appliquéd message: Stop Rape. (Figure 1) Not only is she learning new skills, she is also discussing issues around gender-based violence with her fellow community art project participants.

Community projects show the power of craft to unite and inform. Susie Vickery, a textile artist and handicraft consultant, has worked with projects in India, Nepal, Mexico and Australia in which women have used craft to discuss complex health and social issues. All the projects called on existing art and handicraft skills to create installations, artworks, costumes and props for theatre performances and interactive festival games.



Figure 1: Anjali Amma in her sari, Dekha Undekha, Mumbai. 2015, Photo by Manasi Sawant

2. India

Anjali lives in Dharavi, Mumbai, one of the largest informal settlements in Asia. Over several years, Susie worked on two projects run by SNEHA, a non-government organisation working to improve the health of women and children. The projects used textile art to discuss women's health, both physical and mental, and the problem of gender-based violence.

The first project, in 2012, was Dekha, Undekha: A year of Conversations about Art and Health. Three artists, ceramicist Anjani Khanna, photographer Sudharak Olwe and Susie Vickery, worked with community groups over a year to create artworks to fill a 'home', commenting on different issues that came up in discussions with health professionals and counsellors. One of the participants, Sunita, made an artwork showing her experiences of domestic violence. She decorated a gas stove, wrapping one gas burner with colourful thread to show when all was peaceful in her home, and the other with black thread when she was being beaten and the food burnt. (Figure 2) Mehzabeen made a cupboard crammed with embroidered emoticons to represent her own conflicting emotions, but also showing the small space she lived in and the reality of having very little private space. (Figure 3) It is common for a whole family to live within 13 square metres in a densely packed group of homes. The group also stitched healthy and unhealthy food in fabric and thread and made dolls to show their sources of tension, including access to water and money and family expectations. The exhibition was shown over two weeks in a school hall in the community. The response was overwhelming, with more than 3000 visitors. Neither participants nor visitors had ever visited an art exhibition and none had ever created art. It was an

empowering experience and they spoke of the excitement of being able to explain their creations to visitors.



Figure 2: Sunita's Domestic Violence Stove, Dekha Undekha, Mumbai, 2012, Photo by Neville Sukhia



Figure 3: Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham, Sometimes Happy Sometimes Sad, Dekha Undekha, Mumbai, 2012, Photo by Neville Sukhia

SNEHA followed this up with a bigger art event, The Dharavi Biennale, over several venues in the same area with many different artists and community groups. Susie worked with a group of women on two artworks. Provoke/Protect was a response to the fatal rape of a young girl in Delhi. Working with Susie and fellow textile artist Nika Feldman, women appliquéd protective and warning symbols and slogans onto recycled saris. Domestic violence counsellors and a policewoman who dealt with cases of rape and gender-based violence led discussions. Political leaders were criticised at the time for blaming the victims for their dress and behaviour and the participants in the workshop were encouraged to discuss these issues with their community and to question the idea that rape is a woman's fault. The group modelled their saris in a photoshoot reclaiming safe spaces for women, and then in a fashion parade for the community to raise awareness about gender-based violence. (Figure 4) Anjali Amma proudly wore her Stop Rape sari. In a follow-up project, Mapping the Hurt, women turned the community's gender-based violence mapping project into a stitched quilt. They made a large map of their area, marking the sites where violence was known to have occurred. Working with recycled jeans, they each took a section of the map and embroidered and appliquéd it with roads and houses. The sections were sewn together and sites of known violence marked with stitched bottle caps. (Figure 5) Both artworks were shown as part of a larger exhibition, the Alli Galli Biennale, for three weeks in 2015. It was a huge success with over 9000 visitors and global media attention.



Figure 4: Kismeti Jaiswar in her sari, Provoke/Protect, Mumbai, 2015, Photo by Manasi Sawant



Figure 5: Mapping the Hurt, Mumbai, 2015, Photo by Susie Vickery

3. Mexico

In 2016, Susie was invited by anthropologist Jenny Gamlin to develop a community art project with indigenous Wixarika Mexicans. The community wanted to look at maternal health through textile art and decided to depict the development of the fetus through pregnancy, as both a learning tool for women and an opportunity for wider community understanding. They made nine large models of pregnant women with soft sculpture models of the growing foetus. The models were decorated with healthy foods and traditional indigenous Huichol protective symbols worn during pregnancy. The group also made appliqué panels of the myth of their creation from corn. Wixarika people are highly skilled in embroidery and beadwork and both men and women joined in the making of the creation panels. The finished artworks were exhibited at a fiesta held for the surrounding villages. (Figure 6)



Figure 6: Wixarika pregnant models. 2016, Photo by Susie Vickery

4. Nepal

Susie has worked for over 20 years in southern Nepal with the Janakpur Women's Development Center (JWDC), a Maithili art and craft income generation project. In 2017, the members were invited to participate in the Women of the World festival in Kathmandu. Working with the centre's founder Claire Burkert, Susie and the women developed a play describing their transformation and empowerment since the centre began. Despite having never acted in their lives, the women designed and made the props and performed the play. They travelled to Kathmandu to perform at the festival, something that they would never have been able to do before working at the centre.

In 2018, JWDC women worked with health researcher Joanna Morrison from University College London to explore diabetes in their community. Diabetes is a major public health problem in Nepal and they wanted to raise awareness and clear up misconceptions about it. Joanna organised a public art project for the Wellcome Trust public engagement with science programme and invited Susie and Claire to help create another play relevant to the topic and to organise a two-day festival for the local community to spread information. They worked with the JWDC over six months. Large painted costumes of healthy and unhealthy food were made for a play in which they battled for control over a greedy man. In a giant painted snakes and ladders game, players climbed the ladders after eating healthy food or exercising, but slid down the snakes if they ate unhealthily. Other games involved knocking over unhealthy food with vegetable-printed beanbags, or fighting ones way through giant toy cigarettes, sweets and ice creams out into a healthy world.

The play was performed in 19 nearby villages in March 2019 and in the following week a two-day festival was held in the centre of Janakpur. (Figure 7) Throughout the festival the women performed the play and ran exercise classes with painted papier-mâché dumbbells. (Figure 8) The visitors were able to play the health related games and health workers gave free diabetes tests and advice.



Figure 7: Jeevan Shakti village play 2019, Photo by Susie Vickery



Figure 8: Jeevan Shakti festival. 2019, Photo by Anuj Adhikary

5. Australia

In 2020, Susie and Sultana Shamsi worked with Community Arts Network, Perth, with a group of refugees from the Middle East to embroider their stories. Each woman stitched a panel telling the story of her journey from her homeland to Australia using embroidery and appliqué. Even though they came from different countries and were of different religions, they shared common experiences of violence and flight. (Figure 9)



Figure 9: From Al Watan to Home. 2020, Photo by Susie Vickery

6. Craft, participation and health

All these projects harnessed women's existing art and craft skills to develop community art projects that reflected on physical or mental health. The main feature of community projects is that a group comes together to create an artwork, each making a small part of the whole. Participants who are not confident in their skills or ideas are able to work alongside and learn and be inspired by others. The group are working together to a common end. (Figure 10) This is where the projects differ from income generation or individual art production in which the maker works alone towards a single outcome.



Figure 10: Strength in Unity, Provoke/Protect, Mumbai, 2015, Photo by Manasi Sawant

The other benefit of a community art project is that it isn't for commercial purposes, but for people's own community. They don't need to worry about the time it takes, whether it is worthwhile to reproduce, or whether their product will sell. All the competitive elements of normal commercial or art production are removed and only the communal working towards a common goal is left.

In all of the projects that Susie worked on she found that initial reticence and divisions of religion, caste or class could be overcome when the group had worked together for a length of time. Women were united in making the project succeed. They learned from each other and helped each other with skills and design and with healing. They were proud and empowered by their work and of being able to pass their new knowledge and skills on to their communities.

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Author's Bio



Susie was a theatrical costumier but after moving to South Asia worked as a craft consultant with community projects in India, Nepal, Tibet, Myanmar, Mexico and Turkey, responding to local materials and traditions.

Susie creates embroidered animations and automata inspired by these projects. Since returning to Australia, she has facilitated art workshops with local Aboriginal and refugee groups.





TRACK-3: Futuring craft; materiality, consumption, lifestyle, and sustainability:



Paper Title: Crafting sustainable practice in fashion

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Presentation link.



Abstract. Making fashion represents the interface between technology, garment and the body, however far too the value of traditional technologies is forgotten. Designers have the opportunity to transform the fashion industry through the adoption of a more innovative approach achieved through a process of reassessment and merging of old and new technologies to create hybrid forms of production. This paper examines how the application of traditional craft-based practices and new technologies can be combined to improve sustainable practice in fashion design, production consumer experience.

I use auto-ethnography in the form of reflections on my own practice as a curator and educator to explore the emergence of a new approaches to the design and making of fashion. I approach these investigations into the re-assessment of the fashion object and its future as an insider, or 'native'. 'Fashioning Technology', an exhibition which I curated is used as a case study. This exhibition brought together work by makers who are addressing the need for more sustainable approaches to fashion design and production. These designers explore the avant-garde, creating a new aesthetic enabled by the adoption of a hybrid approach to the application of technology to garment making and the crafting of more sustainable practices in fashion.

Keywords: Fashion; textiles; technology; sustainability; craft

1. Introduction - the craft of making

Craft is understood not only as a way of making things by hand, but also as a way of thinking through the manipulation of materials (Nimkulrat 2012). Research provides evidence that making integrates mind, body and material (Aktas 2019, 56) Making garment not only aligns with this description of craft but also represents an interface between technology (tools), garment and the body however far too often we forget about the value of traditional technologies. This paper examines how traditional craft based practices or old technologies are being integrated with new technologies and creating hybrid forms of practice that will support not only sustainable practice but also enhance end-user experience of garment.

Robert Bell, who was Curator of Craft and Design at the Art Gallery of Western Australia (1978 – 2000), described a craft revival as emerging in Australia in the 1960s. (Bell 1989) Thirty years later with craft practice at its height, Bell initiated the Perth International Crafts Triennial. A further thirty years on we are experiencing a revival of the arts and craft movement (Edelkoort & Fimmano, 2020) being celebrated through the Indian Ocean Craft Triennial (IOTA21). My life as a maker and educator mirrors this cycle: commencing in the 60s with the making of garment strongly influenced by the street fashion revolution and craft practices of the time; teaching art and craft through the 70s, establishing a studio practice in the 80s; and becoming an academic and curator which has culminated in the co-curation of a fashion event for IOTA21. I draw on my experiences as an insider or native to reflect on the topic of 'crafting sustainable practice in fashion' and to write this paper.

From the late 1980s the value of craft was diminished in the arts and was reflected in the closing of facilities and courses in the University sector. Its value was lost in the rush towards a new millennium and the adoption of new technologies. In recent years the significance of the craft of making has re-emerged. The resurgence in focus on traditional craft practice over the past 10 years is reflected in major events such as Sydney Craft Week

2. Crafting Sustainable practice

Current practices in the fashion industry are resulting in more than half of all clothes globally ending up either burnt or in land fill within a year of being made. (Reucassel, 2019) According to Harvard Business Review, fast fashion Spanish brand Zara can design and distribute a garment to market within fifteen days. Zara has 650 stores in 50 countries and creates approximately 40,000 new designs annually. (Ferdows, 2005) The dominance of the fast fashion production and supply systems has resulted in a literal flood of garments onto the market which undermines not only the future of the planet but also the industry itself.

According to José Teunissen (2014, 14) it is essential for the fashion industry "to critique the present fashion system with its consumerism and its excessive and barely sustainable production methods and to embrace new technologies, resulting in new ways of imagining fashion". In 2015 leading international trend forecaster, Lidewij Edelkoort released her 'Anti-Fashion' Manifesto outlining reasons why she felt that the current fashion system is obsolete. The manifesto and subsequent presentations on the topic have raised many questions that challenge all aspects of the fashion industry including approaches to marketing, advertising, design, production and distribution. Edelkoort also confronts educators with a need for review and change presenting a philosophy focused on "textiles, garment-making and the imminent revival of couture. It's time to simply celebrate clothes." (Edelkoort. 2015) Alison Gwilt (2011) also recognises the stronger relationship between garment and wearer found in the practice of couture hold the key to a more sustainable fashion industry. While in the past fashion has not always been recognized as a 'responsible' industry, change is emerging. in the In the new millennium the practice of fashion has become increasingly influenced by the rapid growth in awareness of environmental, economic and social issues related to the impact of human occupation of planet earth. The concept of conservation has become a critical consideration in fashion with changes needed to garment design and production processes. In developing the student engagement in sustainable fashion principles and practice at Curtin over the past twenty years there has been a progressive development of the modelling of student experience. The early iterations of the pedagogy focused on upcycling, recycling and rethinking garments. This integrated elements of conservation of materials and ideas. At Curtin as program lead I was in a position to introduce a new unit, Sustainable Fashion, as part of a course restructure in 2010. This unit engages students an examination of the challenges presented by key fashion commentators and sustainable practice. Figure 1 illustrates the model that has evolved for guiding student engagement in a practice led examination of sustainable fashion. In the Model for Sustainable Fashion attempts to map the domains for student experience however the reality is in practice that these elements will and should be fully integrated.



A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE FASHION

Figure 1: A Model for Sustainable Fashion (Anne Farren 2017)

3. Crafting old technology

We might assume that the solutions to waste lie in the development and application of new technologies, however I argue that it is the application of technology that needs to be reviewed. In speaking of the place of technology in fashion's future, Tomes (2016) quotes Edelkoort who states

We already know how to produce new textiles with biotechnology. However, the imperative of it all is to go to the humble beginnings. We are looking at techniques from centuries ago, from the beginning of time, actually, but we interweave them avant-garde. It's very exciting!

Investigation into innovative application of old technology is being carried out by both researchers and everyday makers re-thinking of the design and making of fashion

and resulting in the avant-garde approach referred to by Edelkoort. The application of Zero Waste is not new concept. Design and production technology in garment making historically focussed on the principles of conservation of cloth or zero waste. Examples of this include the Japanese Kimono involving minimal cutting and no waste of the cloth in the formation of the garment and the Indian Sari, a cloth draped onto the body rather than being cut and tailored. The hand-crafted cloth was a precious commodity and not something to be wasted. More recently fashion designers such as Zandra Rhodes in the 1970s and Yeohlee Teng in the 1980s investigated zero waste design with the zero-waste fashion movement profile raised significantly through the research of trailblazers, such as Timo Rissanen and Holly McQuillan.

McQuillan has revolutionised garment design through a hybrid application of technology to the achievement of zero waste in garment design and construction. Most important is her foundation research into new application of old technology. In 2019 other Curtin fashion staff and I attended a workshop held in Perth, led by McQuillan, who presented us with a pattern based on a Bronze Age Danish coat – or as I described it, a 'BAD' coat. During the workshop McQuillan took us through a series of simple but innovative interventions that transformed this ancient pattern into contemporary garment forms. This was followed by demonstrations of how design development could be further investigated via the application of digital technology.

Investigation into traditional garment design and production technology is an integral part of the fashion course at Curtin. In 2005 I hosted a fashion component of a student study tour to India. Industry colleague Maggie Baxter facilitated a workshop with Kirit Dave a designer with the Shrujin Trust NGO based in Kutch¹. Part of the workshop included a demonstration by Kirit, of the pattern-making process for a pair of traditional Indian pants. The drawings of the 'pattern' that I drew during the workshop are illustrated in Figure 2. This pattern is still used by Curtin staff as an example of both traditional practice and zero waste.

¹Shrujan Trust runs a not-for-profit organization working with craftswomen in Kutch to revitalize the ancient craft of hand embroidery. Now the Shrujan Living & Learning Design Centre https://shrujanlldc.org/



Figure 2: A Model for Sustainable Fashion (Anne Farren 2017)

Jill Morrall (ne Crabb), one of the fashion students who attended the 2005 India Study Tour, was inspired by the experience of the traditional garment technology and applied the new-found traditional knowledge to the development of her final collection and a long standing focus on sustainable practices in her design and production processes. Jill cut multiple shapes from the fabric to eliminate waste, with motif components machine embroidered together to form the cloth and a seamless garment. Her work integrated both old technology and new methods of making; a hybrid approach illustrating the 'avant-garde' described by Edelkoort as being necessary to the future of fashion.



Figure 3: 'Dubara Dubara' graduate Collection, 2005. Jill Morrall (ne Crabb) © Jill Morrall

The world now faces the challenge of exponential growth in waste as a result of excessive garment production, consumption and careless disposal. A response to addressing some of these factors has seen the emergence of 'Make do and Mend' initiatives offering similar advice to the original World War II UK Government rationing campaign. (Second World War Posters) The Swedish multinational clothing retail company H&M provides an example of how the retail fashion industry is responding to the global impact of fashion waste. H&M now include on their website a section called 'Take Care: Tips and hacks on how to repair, remake and refresh your clothes to make them last longer'. According to Armstrong (2021) for the last three years H&M have been running a pilot "repair and remake" service for their club members. This equates to clothing being 'embroidered or patched to tap into customisation trends' (Armstrong, 2021). Curtin fashion graduates are taking up the challenge. Following completion of the fashion course at Curtin Claudi Janse van Rensburg established her label 'Clawdi' which recycles discarded blankets to create coats, a process reminiscent of what my mother described doing as a young woman following the end of the Second World War. Recent shift in awareness of the issues associated with waste has resulted in changes to how young people are responding. This is demonstrated by young innovators such as Curtin graduates Claudi Janse van Rensburg and Molly Ryan who along

with colleague Shannon Itzstein have established Fibre Economy an organisation focussed on changing consumer awareness and attitudes about fashion. (fibreeconomy.com)



Figure 4: 'Blanket Coat' Clawdi (2019). Photo: Claudi Janse van Rensburg. © Claudi Janse van Rensburg.

4. Crafting hybrid practice

A new generation of innovative designers are crafting hybrid forms of practice that reassess the application of both old and new technology to fashion. Holly McQuillan's recent research into zero waste is particularly significant because she examines not only the application of traditional sources of zero waste patterns but is also integrating new digital technology such as CLO3D that facilitate virtual sampling and the customisation of fit through the creation of a customer avatar. Similarly Leonie Tenthof van Noorden explored the merging of craft and technology in her work to create bespoke garments for her graduate collection called This Fits Me.

It is a system that allows people to design unique and personalised fashion through 3D body scanning and generative algorithms. A virtual garment is generated based on a 3D scan of the body of the customer, who can add a personal touch by customising the generative design of the garment. (Kuusk 2016, 25)

While digital technologies support the co-design process with the customer and the cutting of components the making is completed via a process of skilled traditional hand construction technology. This research supports interrelations between the traditional crafts of tailoring associated with bespoke making and new digital technologies. (Kuusk

2016, 224)

Curtin Fashion Research HUB collaborated with the Department of Food and Agriculture (DAFWA) through an Australian Research Council (ARC) funded project "Innovative Solutions for Wool Garment Comfort through Design" 2006-12 that included the investigation of garment customisation through the application of body scanning of the wearer and 3D knit technology which facilitated the production of an entire seamless garment on a Shema Seike Wholegarment[®] knitting machine. While the commercialisation of our system was not achieved because of the high labour and technical support needs associated with the system, our research demonstrated the potential for this integrated design and production system to reduce waste and improve user experience through improved fit and customisation.



Figure 5: Seamless whole garment production (c2010), Department of Food and Agriculture WA, Wool Desk + Curtin Fashion HUB.

It was interesting to discover that in 2020 the H&M Foundation Looop project was applying similar principles to those investigated by the Curtin-DAFWA research team ten years earlier. The non-profit H&M Foundation together with research partner HKRITA (The Hong Kong Research Institute of Textiles and Apparel) and Hong Kong-based yarn spinner Novetex Textiles developed the Looop Project. They have set up a design and production unit using body scanning and 3D knitting technology in a special centre situated above the H&M store in Stockholm, which in a day uses a technique that dissembles and assembles old garments into new ones; it cleans and shreds old fabric, spins it into yarn, and then knits into a new product. (H&M, 2020) Curtin Graduate Jessie Mitchell works on the Looop project and in conversation spoke of the labour and hand work that is still required for the production of a garment via this system.

changing the way we design, make and consume fashion

According to Bradley Quinn, industry consultant and author of key texts on fashion that have examined the significance of new technology and materials in fashion:

Right now, technology is sparking revolutionary, earth-shattering changes in every aspect of the fashion industry. Parametric design programmes, evolutionary algorithms, advanced imaging technologies and artificial intelligence can radically disrupt clothing design, while 3D-printing, synthetic biology and biotech have the potential to create a new production paradigm (Quinn, p. 6, 2016)

Quinn anticipated a future for fashion that is emerging as a reality. Imagine growing or printing your own garments.

print your own garment

3D printing technology not only presents new design potential but also significant reduction in manufacturing waste. 3D printing can provide:

- customise fashion objects designed to specific customer needs
- on-demand production print only what we need when we need it.

These elements have given 3D printing the reputation of being a sustainable manufacturing method. 3D printing systems are also capable of reusing plastic waste that is converted into printing filaments.

The possibilities for creation of customised 3D print garment is being explored by individual designers and studios. Formed in 2011 by Nancy Tilbury and Ben Males Studio XO has profiled the creative potential of 3D print technology. They are known for the creation of Bubelle, the emotion sensing outfit worn by performer Lady Gaga and because of the intense labour involved in the creation of their work describe it as a new form of couture. (Compton, 2014) Young designers are also inspired by the possibilities of 3D print. In 2015 student Danit Pelig embarked on a year-long journey to find a way to print a 5-piece fashion collection as part of her graduate collection at Shenkar. Using soft materials and flexible patterns, she printed this collection at home using easily sourced equipment. In 2016 she launched a jacket with a vision for customised garments to be accessible to all, however admits that when it takes 100 hours to print this is not yet feasible.

grow your own cloth

Imagine growing your own garment. In 2004 Western Australian textile designer and artists Donna Franklin did and 'grew' a beautiful fungi garment. These early investigations needed a substrate however I believe that they contributed to the stimulation of more recent research into the application of other fungi forms to create cloth. Suzanne Lee is a UK researcher who led the way for investigations into bio cloth. She initiated work with the 'skin' that develops on the top of the drinkable kombucha tea brew that many people consume to improve their gut health.

Recently bio products have been developed from mycelium, the root of the mushroom. One product, MYLO has was created by Californian based company Bolt Threads. The bio leather has been profiled by Stella McCartney one of the first designers to use Mylo. She is a designer who is recognised for he works toward redefining luxury by never using animal leather, skin, fur, or feathers in her collections.

5. Fashioning Technology

The concept of wearable technology and the integration of technology into garment has long been explored with the work of Steve Mann's work in the 1980s (Mann 2017) often cited as laying the foundation for this field of research. In 2004 colleague Andrew Hutchison and I hypothesised regarding the potential for a base garment to be activated through the integration of smart digital technologies that would allow transformation and customisation to suit individual needs. While seventeen years later we have come closer to crafting these new and more sustainable forms, there are few commercially available examples.

Further research into the relationship between technology and garment was facilitated, in October 2014 when the Fashion Research HUB hosted "Fashion Futures Symposium: Keeping Technology Relevant" with Keynote Bradley Quinn. Quinn is an internationally recognised author of key texts that have examined the significance of new technology and materials in fashion. This symposium built the foundation for our collaboration on the curation of an exhibition for Perth Fashion Festival in 2016. The exhibition, *Fashioning Technology*, presented a range of works that featured the crafting of new technologies into garment. The exhibition also focussed on investigations into sustainability, value and performance of wearables and featured hybrid forms of production.

Fashioning Technology profiled garments developed by Curtin Fashion Research HUB alongside international research being carried out at the University of Technology Eindhoven (UT/e), work from Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology and creatives such as Clara Daguin and Leonie Tenthroff van Notden. The exhibition presented works that integrated:

- **Smart Materials** the application of Coolcore's innovative hollow yarn technology a biologically safe "Earth Friendly" performance fabric and bio materials.
- **Smart Technology** integration of a UVF sensing and warning system for the wearer. This work also contributed to the UVear Project led by Prof. Steffen Walz (Professor of Design).
- Smart People making was a collaboration of garment design by fashion student Gemma Peovitis (2016) Cancer Council WA SunSmart project, technical staff Joanna Quake and Amy Hickman and Project lead Dr Anne Farren.
- Wearer Well-being featuring the work of Martijn ten Bhömer & Pauline van Dongen and Kristi Kuusk, Eunjeong Jeon, Martijn ten Bhömer and Jesse Asjes into the enhancement of wearer well-being; Curtin's fashion team research into wearer comfort and performance in sportswear through design.

Embedded within traditional garment making is an artisanal and craft based culture. The designer is supported by a team of skilled makers required to realise their idea. Behind the application of much technology lies craftsmanship. In Figure 6 below, careful crafting of the conductive threads was required to ensure that the electrical system worked. This UV sensor system was integrated into a SunSmart garment design by student Gemma Peovitis. The sensor responded to UV light and provided immediate feedback to and potential warning to the wearer of potential over exposure.



Figure 6: 'Sun Smart' outfit (2016) Designer: Gemma Piovetis, Construction: Joanna Quake, Fashioning Technology Exhibition. Photo: Greg Woodward.

Figure 7: UVF sensor system using Arduino unit with conductive threads hand stitched into garment panel. (2016) Maker: Joanna Quake Photo: Joanna Quake.

Sustainable materials is emerging as a key considerations in the transformation of fashion, resulting in new types of fashion materials being made from organic matter or recycled waste. In future, use of organic materials will be widespread, even making it possible to compost whole garments when they are discarded. *Fashioning Technology* featured the work of a Jasmine Nielson a recent graduate from Curtin, who developed garments using fragments of bio cloth created from kombucha (Figure 8). The application of these new materials are reliant on both innovative and yet the delicate handcrafting of materials into garment. During her studies Curtin fashion student Jasmine Neilson engaged in fieldwork with Nanallose, a Western Australian based company. Nanallose had been recently set up by Perth scientist Garry Cass, to investigate the development of new forms of cloth using wine and beer waste materials. Jasmine Neilson worked with Nanollose² on the development of

garments using the natural bio fibres made from the waste materials from beer and wine production. Neilson established a relationship with the company and worked with them as part of her research into sustainable design practice for her graduate collection.



Figure 8: Kombucha garments (2016) Designer: Jasmin Nielson. Fashioning Technology Exhibition. Photo Greg Woodward

Sustainability is also being investigated via the application of 3D printing technology. This medium not only presents new design potential but also the opportunity for significant reduction in manufacturing waste. The crafting of sustainability in fashion can be greatly enhanced though the merging of old and new technology. In 2014 Nancy Tilbury from Studio XO predicted that "fashion future will be like fashion past" (2014 AEG The Next Black, 39:39) and that involving a hybridity of old and new tech would overwhelm fashion like a tsunami. New technologies such as 3D printing are also now being applied directly to the generation of garment forms, however in the past was limited in its application to garment by the stiffness of the materials and forms that could be created. New materials and design thinking have resulted in the application of digital technologies that allow the creation of flexible surfaces and new possibilities for the production of wearable forms. W230 Studio is a project of Western Australian based design team Simone Leonelli and Michela Paolucci, Italian designers based in Perth, Australia. W230 studio explores the relationship between science and art and technology and takes a cross disciplinary approach. Their mission is simple and driven by a hunger to experiment with new combinations across different materials and production processes and aims to inspire the development of a new generation of forms and aesthetic values. Recent work has focused on fashion garments with a view to include an innovative application of 3D print. (www.w230.net) The work

² Nanollose is now operating as Nanollose Microbial Cellulose (NMC). The early exploration into wine skins led to the development of a tree-free viscose rayon fibre. This fibre has now been successfully spun into yarn, which was used to produce knitted garments. Nanallose claim it to be the world's first tree-free viscose.

created by W230 for Fashioning Technology, *Future Vision*, was constructed from 3D printed elements that were tessellated together via handcrafted links to enhance the flexibility and end-user experience.



Figure 9: Future Vision, 2016, W230 Studio, Fashioning Technology Exhibition. Photo: Greg Woodward.

6. Craftsmanship and the Human Experience

The significance of 'craftsmanship, the way a garment is made, the quality of its construction and the physical experience of wearing it...' has become part of contemporary fashion practice (Teunissen 2014, 23). *Fashioning Technology* featured key works by researchers at the University of Technology Eindhoven (UT/e) who lead research into humanistic design in garment enhanced by the integration of digital technology; 'Vigour', a stretch sensing healthcare cardigan by Martijn ten Bhömer & Pauline van Dongen and 'Well-Be' by Kristi Kuusk, Eunjeong Jeon, Martijn ten Bhömer and Jesse Asjes, both therapeutic wearables designed to treat a variety of physical ailments. *Fashioning Technology* illustrated the significance of craftsmanship in the context of wearables designed to enhance health and well-being.

"Comfort and wearability are significant factors in garment design and construction with components and conductive threads requiring careful hand stitching into place. Works such as 'Well-be' and 'Vigor' and 'Sun Smart', demonstrate the importance of traditional craft practices in the creation of wearables designed to enhance the wearer experience." (Farren 2016, 3)

Comfort and wearability are significant factors in garment design and construction with components and conductive threads requiring careful hand stitching into place. Since establishment of the Fashion course at Curtin in 2001, my aim has been to provide learning experiences for our students that will encourage them to contribute towards shaping the future of clothing. Through the unit Technology & Dress students explore new materials and the application of old tech in new ways. The course introduces students to the latest research and applications in the fields of: Materials Technology - in the form of bio textiles such as Kombucha leather and bio plastics; Digital Production Technologies - including laser cutting and etching and 3D machine printing and freeform pen 'drawing'; Integrated Digital Technologies - the digitisation of fashion through interactive electronic wearable tech using mechanisms such as Arduino Flora units. Students select a field in which to conduct research and apply the findings to the design and crafting of wearable forms. Their research is also guided by the consideration of the integrated sustainable considerations and practices illustrated in Figure 10.



Figure 10: Hybrid practice, merging old and new technology: A Sustainable Fashion model. (Anne Farren 2012)

This model was developed as part of research carried out in association with the Australian Research Council project "Innovative Solutions for Wool Garment Comfort through Design" at Curtin's Fashion Design & Research HUB. Research examined the application of new seamless knit technology to establish more sustainable practices associated with wool in the fashion supply chain and included examination of not just new technologies, but the recognition of the value of those that have gone before, in particular the traditions of hand knit, taking the best of both worlds (Farren, 2012). This Model is now applied to the delivery of fashion at Curtin, guiding the overarching principles of Sustainable Design through three core units, Sustainable Fashion: Garment & the Body and Technology and Dress. Curated exhibitions such as Fashioning Technology (2016) have provided opportunities to further research and profile our focus on hybrid practices in fashion.

7. Conclusion

Since its commencement in 2001, the Fashion course at Curtin has supported student engagement in the investigations into the creative application of new materials and technology that supports sustainable changes to industry practice. In their final year of study, our students are provided with the opportunity to pursue their own focus for their capsule portfolio collection. Increasingly we find our students migrating to both sustainable and hybrid forms of practice. The fashion program at Curtin fosters a hybrid approach to practice that engage students in the use of materials and the application of technology. Hybrid practice integrating the application of both traditional and new technology is investigated with a primary focus on ensuring that our graduates utilise sustainable materials, apply sustainable design practice and sustainable production systems. With our student practice always involving engagement in the haptic experience of hands on making.

Recent Curtin graduate Emily Cooper's work as illustrated in Figure 11, provides an example of hybrid practice. Emily wrote in her monograph "There is something about the atmosphere of Berlin and the technical movement that has intrigued my use of materiality inspired by electrical media". (Copper 2021, 3) She draws her inspiration and materiality from architecture, furniture, street style and digital technology. Hand crafted quilting was informed by electrical circuitry patterns, while other forms such as 'Exposure LED' which integrates digital technology and coding that drives the LED light pattern component of the garment.



Figure 11: (L) Connectivity Collection 2020. (R) Circuitry Outfit & Circuit-board bag 2020. Designer-maker Emily Cooper. Photos: Emily Cooper

Emily Cooper is a young designer whose practice reflects the prediction of Tilbury of Studio XO, who suggests that we are heading toward a "brave new world of fashion" that will be driven by "computation, mechanics, hybrid design" and describes 'generation digital' as consumers who will generate the demand for adaptable 'vessels' (2014) that are transformed by integrated technology and facilitate sustainable consumption through customisation and the reduction of demand for multiple forms.

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Author's Bio



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Prestation stage in Sri Lankan Authentic Craft Souvenirs

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Abstract. This research discusses the prestation stage of the gift giving process model of Sherry also known as the 'Sherry model' and adopts it to retail between craftspersons and tourists. The prestation, includes the act of giving and the response to the gift, this stage adds value to the authentic crafts souvenir(ACS), as it is the actual gift exchange stage between donor-recipient, in this case the Sri Lankan Authentic craftsperson and the tourist. The gift (ACS) is highly regarded by tourists as they are tangible, sentimental, and cherished objects of a memorable experience, and also considered as an 'intangible reminder or golden memory' of a travel experience. Yet, within the context of Sri Lanka we learn that ACS lacks qualities of the prestation stage which tourists seek. To inquire on this further a qualitative research was employed to achieve a better understanding about souvenir producer's (craftsperson's) interpretation on the prestation stage when ACS are sold as a gift. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to inquire about the current practices and the understanding on the prestation stage among craftsperson. The interviews were conducted with pre-planned questions that involved current packaging solutions, materials, objective of packaging, thoughts on branding, authenticity communication and prestation stage. The collected data was tabulated and analyzed according to answers and special remarks made by craftspersons. Learnings showed that the craftspersons lacked knowledge on their craft being a souvenir and the importance of packaging it. Their focus was only on the product protection aspect due to economic restraints. Thus, the learnings from this research concludes the absence of the application of the prestation stage when selling ACS as gifts to tourists and that it needed to be re-addressed with the purpose of achieving the full potential of the travel experience.

Keywords: Authenticity Craft Souvenir, Crafts, Gift Packaging, Tourism, Prestation

1. Overview

A tourist seeks authenticity throughout the local people and the society due to the tourist's in-authentic experience in the contemporary society and purchases souvenirs as a memento to recall the travel experience. As a ritual, a souvenir is purchased when a person moves from one place to another across various cultures or when someone is moving away from a particular place or status, or when someone arrives at a new place or status, or when someone returns to the original place (Gordon 1986). Nevertheless, the travelers' concern when purchasing a souvenir revolves around it being a decorative handicraft, its creativeness, uniqueness, durability, packaging, thematic appeal and the hospitality of the salesperson (Anuar et al. 2017), thus values the authenticity and its retails appeal. (Kim and Littrell 2001) Kim and Littrell categories these souvenirs based on the tourists' influence as; ethnic products with cultural symbolism, a generic handicraft, and a symbolic marker (2001). From a holistic viewpoint we can understand that the tourist and the purchasing decision is biased to the concept of authenticity being genuine, real and true connections with the culture and tradition of the region (Akhoondnejad 2016). Yet, in tourism studies we see concerns on how these products are moderating the traditional art as well as the evolution of the ethnic art and handicrafts for tourist's consumption and commoditizing those products for this purpose. Nevertheless, souvenir research discusses studies of shopping, tourism retailing, handicrafts, authenticity, material culture, gift-giving practices and consumption (Swanson and Timothy 2012) as important considerations when producing souvenirs. Furthermore, souvenir studies explains that tourists are attracted to unique products, brand names, logos, location of stores, and the bargaining experience at the destination where they purchase souvenirs not only for themselves but for others they are in relationship with (Akhoondnejad 2016). Thus, emphasises on the retailing aspect of the souvenir and as a gift either to oneself or another.

To keep with the authentic experience of the tourist, one must consider the authenticity and gifting aspect of the souvenir the tourist purchases. There are three stages in gifting; gestation, prestation and reformulation (Sherry, Jr. 1983). During the gestation stage, the concept of a "gift" transforms into a tangible object. The prestation stage highlights the act of giving and response to the gift. The reformulation is the final stage of the gifting process and the rejected gift becomes a vehicle which can realign the relationship of the donor and the recipient. If we consider the purchasing decision of a souvenir by a tourist among the above stages, the prestation stage can be considered important as it emphasises the retailing aspect with the gift giving and response to it.

Within the context of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Handicrafts Board (SLHB) also named "Laksala" guarantees that the crafts available in their gift and souvenir boutiques are authentic. To achieve this most craftspersons and producers are trained and taught by the National Crafts Council (NCC) of Sri Lanka and aligned to two other government institutions; Sri Lanka Handicrafts Board (SLHB) and National Design Centre (NDC). NCC is responsible to produce well trained craftsperson who understands the authentic value of the souvenir products and evaluates craftspersons work annually via an exhibition '*Shilpa Abhimani*' where they are acknowledged through awards and the opportunity to part-take in local and international craft workshops. NCC also provides the raw materials and financial support. SLHB on the other hand is responsible for marketing of the authentic crafts souvenirs(ACS) produced by the local craftsperson (registered with) NCC under their brand and gift and souvenir boutiques *Laksala*. SLHB attracts tourists through the middleman (tourist guide) and cater to nearly twenty types of crafts categories of NCC including *Jewellery, Clay work, Cane, Lace work, Thalkola / Thalakola, Batik, Traditional mask, Coconut shell crafts, Brass work, Jute* (De Silva 2019)



Figure 1: Sample images of Sri Lankan crafts and packaging. source: Author

As a significant place where Sri Lankan ACS go to the hands of tourists, *Laksala* plays a pivotal role concerning the product protection via its packaging yet fails in the gifting aspect. The current packaging solution for all of these crafts only contains primary and tertiary solutions. The primary packaging is a bubble wrap that guarantees the product protection and tertiary catres to the *Laksala* brand via a craft bag. The gifting aspect is absent due to the lack of a secondary packaging. Similarly, when a Sri Lankan ACS goes to the hands of tourists via a craftsperson, we see the absence of a secondary packaging and sometimes only a primary packaging is used. Thus, the expected outcome a tourist seeks within the travel experience is partially solved as these ACS lack the gifting aspect which is usually embedded in retail (secondary packaging design). This paper discusses the current situation of the prestation stage and inquiries (and limits to) the craftsperson's viewpoint when selling ACS to tourists.

2. Literature review

2.1 Authenticity, souvenir and gifting

Souvenir authenticity is explained in three ways such as objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity and constructive authenticity is object related and the existential authenticity is experience related, while constructive and existential authenticities are very subjective (Akhoondnejad 2016). From a tourists view point objective authenticity implies with the originality of the object a tourist expects, for the product (in this case craft) to contain a local essence, it to be created by craftspersons and the overall production to be in high demand due to its genuineness. The constructive authenticity depends on the tourist's viewpoints and perspectives. Here tourists do not expect a genuine product but prefer a modern handicraft as an object s/he meets during the travel experience. Existential authenticity on the other hand is intangible and relates to the experience. The feeling of satisfaction gained with the purchase, and mostly related to the local people in the shop. Tourist himself admires the emotional experience among the local context (Akhoondnejad 2016). This paper focuses on objective authenticity, where we learn that the tourist seeks originality within a specific context (in contrast to own context) and seeks genuineness in what is purchased. As a concept authenticity indicates genuineness, reality and truth as three qualities and connects to a tradition and culture. Thus, a craft with the local essence and, created by craftspersons themselves can be considered as an authentic souvenir craft.

We also learn within the craft industry, authentic crafts are valued by tourists as a memento or souvenir of the country they visited. A souvenir is highly regarded by tourists as they are tangible, sentimental, and cherished objects of a memorable experience, and also considered as an 'intangible reminder or golden memory'. In literature we learn that there are four types of souvenirs; 'totality souvenir' that represents the place attached to the whole travel experience, 'linking souvenirs' are household goods attached to the visit (e.g. kitchenware, rugs or apparel), 'life souvenirs' are what evoke the nostalgic feeling and memories of the past and most of the food items or toys that were part of the childhood could be examples. And 'pilgrimage souvenirs' that represent the very specific place and famous icons (e.g. the Eiffel Tower or the Grand Canyon) (Swanson and Timothy 2012). Therefore, one can underline that souvenirs and especially authentic craft souvenirs (ACS) come in different forms and sizes, it is valued, purchased and gifted by tourists to recall the memory of the country they visited or from its point of origin. It also can be considered as tokens of gifts to tourists by craftspersons as the ACS is purchased for himself to recollect their visit and sometimes even share that feeling with loved ones. Thus, this transaction between the craftsperson and tourist can be conceptualized with the attributes of gift giving.

2.2. Prestation stage within the stages of gifting

(Sherry, Jr. 1983) has explained three stages of gift-giving via the gift-giving process model. This model is widely accepted and adopted by a number of researchers (Price, Arnould, and Curasi 2000), (Lekkumporn 2014), (Davies et al. 2010), (Jackie Clarke 2008), (J. Clarke 2007). The three stages are gestation, prestation and reformulation. The gestation stage is the first stage of gift-giving where the gift transforms from the conceptual stage to the tangible stage. Except for the gestation stage, the prestation stage and the re-formulation stage are significant for the re-alignment of a relationship. During the prestation stage the donor tries to strengthen the relationship between himself and the recipient. The expected responses of the recipient could be the satisfaction or disappointment of the recipient. The evaluation of those responses decides to re-align the relationship between the donor and the recipient. If the responses show disappointments, the relationship needs to re-align through the re-formulation stage. During the reformulation stage, the donor can directly understand the recipient's expectation and the relationship can realign by exchanging the gift. Nevertheless, the donor tries to infer the correct expectation of the recipient during the prestation stage. To enhance the value of the gift it can be handed over at a ritual ceremony or at an arrange time or at a special place. The other opportunity to increase the value is by leveling the self-effacement and self-aggrandizement of the donor by wrapping the gift. That implies the significance of wrapping the gifts and transpicuous expression of social relationships. The value of the aift partially expresses the weight of the relationship and partially shows the changing nature of the social relationship (Sherry, Jr. 1983)The literature related to gifts have shown the significance of wrapping the gift and (Rixom, Mas, and Rixom 2020) and explains the influence of the recipient's attitude towards the content of the gift.

Souvenirs are purchased during travel due to three main purposes. Souvenirs could be purchased as a gift, as a memento of travel experience, or as evidence (Wilkins 2011)This study focuses only on the gifting purpose of souvenir purchasing which fulfills the tourst's travel experience. Therefore it is significant to concentrate on the prestation stage when gifting an ACS. It is also important to note that ACS purchased from the country is not just a product purchase but also is a gift from the craftsperson of the country they visited. Therefore, when the craftsperson becomes the donor of the gift-giving the tourist becomes the recipient. As the donor, the craftspersons need to consider the prestation stage while gifting the souvenir to the tourist. Thus, the relationship between the craftsperson and the tourist strengthens due to the satisfaction of the gift he received. Therefore, the prestation stage needs to be addressed with the purpose of achieving the full potential of

the tourist's travel experience.

2.3.Craftsperson; souvenir supply chain within the context of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island with a unique and attractive destination to travel and is the context for this study. According to the annual report of the Sri Lanka Tourist Board (2018), the number of tourists arriving to the country has increased. This unique island consists of UNESCO world heritage sites, beaches, national parks, traditional arts and crafts etc. and the travelling tourists have enhanced the value of this travel destination. To catre to this tourist, numerous souvenir suppliers are located around Sri Lanka. There are four types of purchasing points within the context of Sri Lanka: souvenir producer(SP) also considered as the craftsperson, souvenir retailer(SR), souvenir vendor(SV) and Middleman(MM) (most of the time the tour guides). SP meets the tourists within the cottage industry or at their own shop giving provision to tourists to see the manufacturing process guaranteeing the genuineness of the product. SR has a permanent location to sell the product and meets the tourists when they visit the retail shop. Among many retail shops Laksala managed by the SLHB is considered as the most important retail shop that a tourist rarely misses to visit. SV on the other hand sells the ACS at flexible locations and meets the tourists mostly along the street or at exhibition stalls yet, we experience SV playing the role of SP depending on the (rural) location. Within the souvenir supply chain MM plays an important role as he introduces SP, SR, and SV to tourists in the form of a tour guide. MM understands the tourist as he spends longer periods of time and directs the tourist to appropriate purchasing points, nevertheless, this introduction of purchasing points is mostly based on commission-based agreements, thus, loses its genuineness. In summary we learn that it is the SP and SV specific to 'Laksala' that guarantees the authentic value of the sourverios. Due to time limitations the scope of this research is focused on SP within the context of Sri Lanka.

To achieve the full potential of the tourist's travel experience we learnt that ACS should contain prestation attributes and highlighted that it strengthens the relationship between himself and the SP in this case craftspersons. It was also noted that the expected response should be satisfactory if not this relationship needs to be re-aligned at the next stage (re-formulation stage) thus, to infer the correct expectations during the prestation stage. This meant enhancing the value of the craft by leveling self-effacement and self-aggrandizement by wrapping the gift before it goes to the hands of the tourist. The literature related to gifts showed the significance of wrapping the gift to influence the recipient's attitude towards the content of the gift. Thus, to keep with the correct expectations during the prestation stage, the ACS should be wrapped. Yet, we observed that there is no special packaging solution made by craftspersons. To inquire on this further the research was conducted to learn the current practices and the understanding on the prestation stage among craftsperson to catre to the full potential of the tourists travel experience when visiting Sri Lanka.

3. Methodology

The research was initiated with a discussion on authenticity and the importance of it to a tourist when purchasing souvenirs as a memento to recall the travel experience. Souvenir was further defined as a gift and discussed within the prestation stage of gifting. The prestation stage was compared to retail between craftspersons and tourists (as a value addition between donor-recipient). Thereafter, we observed the Sri Lanka souvenir supply chain and learnt that it lacks secondary packaging and sometimes uses only primary packaging. Thus, the expected outcome a tourist seeks within the travel experience is partially solved. The research hypotheses on considering the prestation stage, the tourist may gain a holistic travel experience. To examine this further, semi-structured interviews

were conducted to inquire about the current practices and the understanding on the prestation stage among craftsperson when supplying ACS to tourists. Within this research 'selling an ACS to a tourist' is interpreted with 'gifting an ACS to a tourist'.

3.1 Sample and method of Interview:

The souvenirs supply chain identifies a). Souvenir retailer, b). Souvenir vendor and c). Middleman, d). Souvenir producers this research is limited to the latter. A qualitative research was employed to achieve a better understanding about souvenir producer's (craftsperson's) interpretation on the prestation stage when ACS are sold as a gift. The data was obtained by using personal, semi structured in-depth interviews and participants observation. The sample group was selected via convenience sampling method and included 5-25 year experience in souvenir selling to tourists, trained and registered with NCC, and obtained a National award/s for their crafts. A total of thirty craftspersons represent twenty crafts categories across 12 districts (out of 24) with 14 female (47%) and 16 male (53%) (Annexure 01). The semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted between January and April 2021.

The interviews were initiated with a preplanned set of questions directed to craftsperson on ACS, prestations stage and their current packaging. The interviews were digitally recorded and conducted in Sinhala language for an average 40-30 minutes. They were conducted during working hours in various selling points such as exhibition stalls, craft-workshops, own retail shops, crafts villages. At the completion of the interviews the questions were tabulated and analized with predetermined answers (based on the interview), and with provision to document the special remarks made by the craftspersons (Annexure 02). This tabulated data was quantified to determine the responses and then analyzed and discussed.

3.2 Structuring of questions to achieve objective via interviews

The aim of the interviews was to understand the craftsperson's comprehension on the prestation stage when selling ACS to tourists. To achieve this, the interview data was categorized and compiled into four questions under two objectives that needed to be fulfilled in this research.

Objective 1, was directed towards the craft and the craftsperson. The craftsperson's knowledge on the craft being an ACS is important when selling to a tourist. We learnt via literature that ACS is valued by the tourist to gain an authentic travel experience. Yet, during the interview we learnt that the craftspersons had a misconception of what a souvenir is and mostly what an ACS is. Thus, the second question was formulated to inquire how they packaged a craft to a tourist. By inquiring on how they pack helps us understand if the craftspersons recognize their craft to be valued by the tourist. *Objective 2*, was administered towards packaging solutions. When inquiring about the packaging solutions they use, it was identified that the craftsperson's had a misconception on what packaging is. For example, when questioning if they have a packaging solution for the crafts, they replied "no" and then questioned whether you use anything to wrap the product, they replied "yes, we use old newspapers". Thus, the second question was formulated to inquire about any special packaging that they use for tourists. By inquiring on the packaging solution we are able to understand the type of packaging used in the prestation stage.

In summary the objectives and questions of the semi structured in-depth interviews were:

Objective 01- Inquire the craftsperson's awareness of the craft they produce to be a souvenir:
- 1. Can the crafts you are producing fall into the category of ACS or a souvenir?
- 2. How do you pack your craft when purchased by a tourist?

Objective 02- Inquires about their current craft packaging practices when selling to a tourist:

- 1. What is the packaging solution used when selling?
- 2. Do you have any special packaging when you sell your craft as a gift?

4. Results and Discussion

It was observed that 33% of craftspersons acknowledged and confirmed that the crafts produced by them fell into the category of ACS and 20% did not. Meanwhile 47% partially acknowledged their craft to be an ACS. Among the 33% SP09 confidently states his traditional masks are ACS but when inquired about the packaging he states "I separately wrap the parts of the mask with old newspapers and put it into a polythene bag. My concern is to protect the product while packing and don't consider the beauty of it. Even though tourists purchase the product as a souvenir to give to someone, I do not give any special packaging". While SP19 packaging is "polythene or craft paper bag sometimes and I sell my products through FB page, Shops, Exhibition" strongly ignores the importance of packaging as his crafts have a good demand in sales, and further states "Tourist are more concern about the product authenticity and my traditional 'pan-malla' and 'habiliya' (Traditional wallet and purses) carters to that". In general when we review the responses among the craftsperson who acknowledged their crafts to be authentic souvenirs, we learn that they pay very little attention to the need of a packaging as most consider the product protection and their sales value. On the other hand, the majority of respondents did not acknowledge their crafts as authentic souvenirs (even though they were), for example SP17 stated "my product range includes purse, bags, table matts, wall-hanging, Habiliya (traditional wallet), cake boxes, pencil cases, Jewellery boxes made of Talakola leaves... Yes I produce souvenirs (showing wall hangings) this is it" and categorized her crafts ignoring the rest, she defined souvenirs to be beautiful ornamental objects. Nevertheless, among this 47% most did not consider the need for a special packaging. As an overall outcome of the questions directed to fulfil the objective 01, we learn that the majority of the craftspersons do not know if their craft is an authentic souvenir and the demand it holds. Thus, this lack of knowledge on the variety of souvenir options and that a souvenir can be presented as a gift

It was observed that 86% of craftspersons used general wrapping of the craft or either did not use a special packaging when selling to tourists. The packaging made of polythene related materials, brown paper bags, crafts paper bags were used as secondary packaging while old newspapers were popularly used as primary wrapping to provide product protection. On the other hand 7% of craftspersons such as SP18 designs their own packaging and he states "I make sure my crafts are presentable. When people see my brass-ware craft inside a glass box on a wooden stand covered with velvet cloth, it conveys a very rich look. I am indeed very pleased to see such a value addition to my crafts". But, further states "I only produce these packaging at the request of the tourist". Craftsperson SP20 too produces packaging but only to a selected craft range which he considered to be "ornaments... I use Thalakola or handloom material for this range" he acknowledges the importance of gift packaging as a value addition and states the he struggles to have a continuous supply of packaging, thus "the existing packaging I am using is transparent ziplock-bag even though I personally don't like it because it is not environmentally friendly and does not add value to the product". Among the 7% who have tried to add presentation value via a packaging solution, create their own packaging while a few exceptions work within a small network of other craftspersons. Meanwhile, the rest of the 7% do not recognize the importance of special packaging. By considering the 86% and the latter 7%, we learnt that they used packaging for general use/ only a primary packaging solution. And most of these solutions do not go beyond cardboard, paper, brown-paper, newspapers, craft paper, craft board, Polythene related wrapping and bags. We also see the common use of *thalkola/ thalakola/ Gallahapan* as natural material locally grown. A summary of the existing material is included in table 01.

Existing packaging solution/ material	Souvenir producer (Craftsperson)	
Cardboard boxes	SP 08, SP 18, SP 21, SP 29, SP30	
Paper bags	SP 04, SP 10, SP 16, SP 20, SP 24, SP 30	
Brown paper bags	SP 03, SP 10, SP 17, SP 22, SP 25	
Old newspaper (as a wrapping material)	SP 09, SP 14, SP 27	
Natural Material	SP 18, SP 23, SP 29	
Velvet boxes	SP 28	
Crafts paper / Crafts board (bag or box)	SP 01, SP 07, SP 12, SP 13, SP 19	
Polythene related packaging (As primary or secondary packaging)	SP 01, SP 02, SP 05, SP 06, SP 11, SP 14, SP 15, SP 22, SP 24, SP 25, SP 27	

Table 1 Existing packaging solution/material

The reasons, they stated were the economic factors, time factors, product weight, lack of knowledge in marketing and their belief towards the need of a packaging solution to their craft. Holistically, we see the existence of packaging solutions yet, the gifting aspect is absent. We can come to a conclusion that the craftspersons do not understand the value of their crafts as being authentic thus, ignores the presentation (secondary packaging solution) as an attribute in the prestation stage. The tabulated data on the interviews is included in Annexure 02. Thus, the learnings from this research concludes that the absence of the application of the prestation stage provides a partial travel experience to the tourists. The research conceptualized the craftsperson becoming the donor and the tourist becoming the recipient since the ACS purchased from the country is not just a product purchased by a tourist but also a gift from the craftsperson. When selling ACS as gifts to tourists the relationship between the craftsperson and the tourist strengthens due to the satisfaction of the gift-receiving. Yet, due to the findings it is noted that prestation stage needs to be readdressed with the purpose of achieving the full potential of the tourist's travel experience. In conclusion, to identify the significance of having packaging for the ACS, first a craftsperson should know what a souvenir is and recognize the value of the craft.



Figure 2: a). Wall-hanging on display_example of what a craftsperson considers a souvenirs and b). Handcrafted Wooden Tea set_example of a link souvenir). source: Author

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Sample profile of selected Craftspersons Existing Customer type No. ACS product District packaging Local/ foreign materials Jewellery -1 Crafts board, SP 01 terracotta, hand Colombo Local & Foreign 7 Years Polyethene loom 2 Nuwara SP 02 Cane 5 years Polyethene bag Local & Foreign Eliya 3 SP 03 Lacework Badulla 35 Years Brown paper bags Local only (Thalkola/ Thalakola) 4 SP 04 Kurunegala 20 Years Paper bags Local & Foreign Thalkola bangles 5 SP 05 Clay work Polvethene Local & Foreign 6 years 6 Polyethene bags, Male SP 06 Batik Colombo 20 years Local & Foreign box 7 SP 07 Batik Kandy 30 years Craft paper bags Local & Foreign 8 Foreign (Laksala, Box with small SP 08 Batik - Wall hangings Gampaha 12 Years Crafts Lanka) handle 9 Wrap with newspapers/ Paper Male SP 09 Traditional MASK Galle 15 years Local & Foreign bag 10 Brown paper bag, Male SP 10 Traditional mask Galle 28 Years Paper bags Local & Foreign 11 Polyethene bag/ PPE bags Male SP 11 Batik Matara 5 year Local & Foreign 12 Male SP 12 Coconut shells Colombo 9 years Craft paper bags Local & Foreign 13 Craft paper bags and paste SP 13 Lace work Colombo 5 Years the printed logo Local & Foreign sticker 14 Shopping bags, Male SP 14 Clay water bottle Kurunegala 35 years news paper bags Local & Foreign 15 Less Polythine SP 15 14 Years Lace work Kandy material bag Local & Foreign 16 Thalkola/ Thalakola SP 16 Colombo 42 Years Paper bags Local only 17 Brown paper bag, SP 17 Thalkola/ Thalakola Gampaha 7 years white paper bag Local only 18 Natural Materials, SP 18 Brass work Male Mathale 12 years Box Local & Foreign 19 Craft Paper, SP 19 Thalkola/ Thalakola 17 years Polyethene Local & Foreign 20 SP 20 Batik Kurunegala 5 Years Paper bags Local & Foreign 21 Male SP 21 **Coconut Shells** Kurunegala 20 Years Board and boxes Local & Foreign 22 Polythene / Brown SP 22 Male Batik wall hangings Kandy 20 Years paper bags **Highly Foreign** Grass, handmade 23 Online market- local paper, banana SP 23 **Coconut Shells** Male Gampaha 25 years leaves and foreign

Annexure 01- Sample profile of selected craftspersons

24	Male	SP 24	Batik	Kalutara	15 Years	Paper bag and sellopane packing	Local & Foreign
25		SP25	Lace work	Galle	50 years	Polythene / Brown paper bags	Local & Foreign
26	Male	SP 26	Jute	Kandy	50 years	I am not using	Local & Foreign
27	Male	SP 27	Traditional Mask	Kegalle	20 years	Wrap with newspapers/ Polythene bag	Local & Foreign
28	Male	SP 28	Jewellery - Silver	Colombo	20 years	Velvet jewellery boxes from pettah for low prices	Local & Foreign
29	Male	SP 29	Cane	Kegalle	15 years	Card Bord , Natural material	Local & Foreign
30	Male	SP 30	Thalkola/ Thalakola	Colombo	10 years	Paper , Board	Local & Foreign

Annexure 02- Sample of the tabulated questions and answers

Tabulated questions and answers Objective 01- Inquire the craftsperson's awareness of the craft they produce to be a souvenir				
	Well	Partially	Not	
SP 01				"Yes, I make souvenirs. I mainly make jewellery. They are made using local ingredients such as red clay, batik and handloom fabrics using local techniques. My products are bought by foreigners as every day wear as well as souvenirs. I also buy these products to give as gifts "
SP 02				"I am selling a basket made of rattan. So it takes to put something. One is not so essential commodity. If you want to buy souvenirs, then you need to know some flowers together. I have no intention of doing so at present "
SP 03				"I create handmade lace tablecloths, table mats and more. It was from our mother that I learned to do these things. A lot of things were made while my mother was there. Not much work like that now. If so made souvenirs. Not working now. At present it is made like a tablecloth, one costs around Rs. 35,000 "
SP 04				"I make a wide range of designs. They are made from palm leaves and leaves. Some of them can be sold as souvenirs. I make bags, purses, rings for general use. So wall hangings could sell as souvenirs "
SP 05				"I create crafts from coconut shells. I have made an ornemental of Lord Ganesh like this and little children will like it. There is no proper need to buy such designs made from coconut shells. I don't think it can be sold as souvenirs "
SP 06				"Yeah, some of the products I make sell wall hangings as souvenirs."

SP 07				"I use batik technology to create wall hangings, saris and batik fabrics. Of these, only batik wall hangings are sold as souvenirs"
SP 08				"I only create batik wall hangings. They are sold as souvenirs. "
SP 09				"Yes, tourist come to my place and purchases the traditional mask as a souvenir, and I am producing only masks. I separately wrap the parts of the mask with old newspapers and put it in to the polythene bag. My concern is on protecting the product while packing it and I do not consider the beauty of it. Even though tourist purchases the product as a souvenir to gift someone, I do not give any special packaging"
SP 10				"I only create traditional masks. Foreigners come to my workplace and look at the way they are created and buy them, recognizing that they are unique to Sri Lanka. The masks I make are bought as souvenirs. "
SP 11				"The masks I create are foreigners who like to buy them because they are designs that can only be bought in Sri Lanka. They love to visit the workshop and see how I make and buy them and they remember them as something bought in Sri Lanka. "
SP 30				"Obviously the ayurvedic sandals I make are bought by foreigners as souvenirs.These ayurvedic sandals made from Japanese jabara, arecanut leaves and reeds have a unique scent. Foreigners also like that smell. This design can be called a medicine sandal. Due to the uniqueness and eco- friendliness of Sri Lanka, it adds an unforgettable memory to foreigners. "
Objective 02	2- Inquires ab	out their curr	ent craft pac	kaging practices when selling to a tourist
	Yes, specially concern on gift packaging	No special concern on gift packaging	No packaging	Special remarks
SP 01				"packing a craft product is important to, Make the product more appealing and Box has to be transparent and

	Yes, specially concern on gift packaging	No special concern on gift packaging	No packaging	Special remarks
SP 01				"packing a craft product is important to, Make the product more appealing and Box has to be transparent and the product should be visible to increase the value"
SP 02				"No I do not put the product in to the packaging, because I am selling a bag made of cane material."
SP 03				"I put my product on Brown paper bag and but I prefer transparent box and the product should be visible to increase the value, Once I created table cloth worth 35000 rs, I sold it to retailer. I did not create special packaging and he did packaging for it"

SP 04	"We create packaging with paper materials and we make it by ourselves, packaging is important to protect the product. Forigen customers coming to my place and retailers also coming to my place but I still did not concern about special gift packaging"
SP 05	"I use Polythene, Shopping bags for pack the crafts and that's the only packaging I have"
SP 06	"Currently I have board box and Polythene bag; I think packaging need to enhance the product value. I give the same packaging for all the purchasing items"
SP 07	" I do not think the packaging is important to sell my product, I believe product should be more fine finish and traveller attracted to the product than packaging. Once I created packaging when for them and it did not work out well"
SP 08	"If we use packaging it is Clean and user friendly for the buyers. I sell my products through Laksala, Crafts Lanka, Exhibitions, but I do not give special packaging which can apply for gifts"
SP 09	".I have not concern more on packing the traditional mask. I believe packaging can a) Protect the product b) Make the product more appealing. Local customers and foreign customers come to my place and I do not give any special packaging when they purchase it for gifting "
SP 10	" I create traditional masks and tourists purchase my product as a souvenir. I wrap the product with the old newspapers and that protects the product well. I don't want to give more packaging because tourist will throw it due to heavy weight when he is supposed to fly "
SP 11	"Yes, I understand theproduct looks more attractive and increase the quality and protect the product. But I don't use special packaging for gift selling . sell my products via : Exhibition, Facebook page, personal network, Laksala, Thilakawardane shop"
SP 30	"I sell my products at Online shops, urban Island, Diyatha Uyana shops, Good market and I use packaging made of board , Paper. But I "

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The Power of the Recycled Object

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Presentation link.



Abstract. As the world population explodes, new technologies have introduced the prolific use of synthetic materials into the mass production of disposable utility and other objects. This non-biodegradable market has grown extensively, and discards and rubbish dumps world-wide, grow to extraordinary, unrelenting proportions.

Concurrently, another metamorphosis has taken place. In 1917 artist Marcel Duchamp exhibited a found object, an upside-down urinal titled 'Fountain' under the name of R. Mutt. This 'sculpture' caused deep discussion and consternation in academic and artist' circles, relating to the relevance of found objects, possibly seen from different perspectives as an art form. This event initiated the beginning of innovative, artistic use of discards and found objects, continuing throughout the 20th century and beyond.

Many African countries attaining independence from colonization during the 20th century, have suffered economic decline and political unrest. This has resulted in abject poverty, disease and disappointment for many populations hoping for a better future under an indigenous regime. The gap between the wealthy, the middle and lower class has grown to extraordinary levels in some countries, and dissident voices are often silenced through nefarious means. This paper highlights how the use of found objects and discards, have afforded cheap materials to underprivileged, and other artists in Zimbabwe. This has not only offered a source of income but enabled the voices of the people to be heard through the production of courageous, powerful socio-politically motivated artworks. The author, 3rd generation African, immigrating to Australia in 2010, focuses on a selection of indigenous Zimbabwean artists, the authors' own work and reference will also be made to the 'Live 'n Direct' Exhibition held at the Zimbabwe National Gallery in 2010.

Valerie Shaw: Shaw immigrated to Australia at the end of 2010, following a lifetime in the Visual Arts studying Fine Arts, Textiles

and Design, exhibiting, documenting, researching, curating and educating. She is an award-winning artist and sculptor and retired senior examiner of Visual Arts and Extended Essays for the IBO schooling system. One element of Shaw's Art Practice was documenting the deteriorating situation in Zimbabwe, the fear and uncertainty changing into concern and indignation. Her conceptual political works, mainly sculptural, include many recycled materials, sourced from industrial sites, dumps and their farm environs. Newspaper cuttings, photography, personal observations and development of concepts were closely documented in an extensive Visual Diary, still a work in progress. She utilized her artworks and in-depth documentation to archive the corruption, oppression and plight of the indigenous people and her own experiences leading to their departure from Zimbabwe. This exercise became a therapy, an outlet for fears and indignation. This research paper references primary source material and reliable sources.

Keywords: Sculpture Recycled Objects Socio-Political Statements

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe in the early 1700's, the estimated world population was 682 million¹, (www.worldometers.info) expanding rapidly to over 7 billion by the end of the 20th century. With the development of fast, efficient methods of travel and transport during this period, different countries and communities were connected, colonization took place on a large scale, and trading between continents and countries became common practice.

With the continuing rapid increase in the world population and demand for cheaper utility and other items, this inter-active trade encouraged the invention and production of bigger, more innovative machinery, processes, and technologies to keep pace with growing markets. Synthetic materials and plastics were invented, affording cheaper and quicker mass production of disposable utility and other objects. Subsequently, the supposed advancements in technological production has possibly become the planets worst nightmare. This cheap, non-biodegradable market has grown extensively, and discards and rubbish dumps world-wide, continue to grow to extraordinary, unrelenting proportions.



Figure 1: Getty Images, 2017 (www.bbc.com/news) 'A Rubbish Story'²

China's Mega Dump, "spans an area of almost 700,000 sq. meters with a depth of 150 meters and more than 34 cubic meters" (www.bbc.com/news) It is dumps such as these that provide rich pickings of recycled and discarded objects, becoming a precious commodity in the creation of artworks

Zimbabwe is no exception. After Independence from Britain in 1980, a country once known as the Breadbasket of Africa, has degenerated into another failed state under dictatorial rule. Rubbish and discards can be found everywhere as the economic crisis worsens, not allowing for basic amenities such as rubbish collection. In Figure 2 ironically, we see a heap of rubbish opposite a pharmacy, and in Figure 3 opposite a sports club. These two places are usually synonymous with good health, not fly infested rubbish dumps which can become the cause of ill health and disease.

However, indigenous artists in Zimbabwe rummage through these heaps of rubbish and other larger dumps, in the hope of finding discards of interest which may be useful in the production of sculptures. The poor also scavenge these dumps in the hope of finding discarded food or something of use.

² Figure 1. Getty Images 2017'*A Rubbish Story:* China's Mega Dump, Jianquinguv landfill in Shaanxi Province China bbc.com/news/world-asia-50429119. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50429119²



Figure 2: Photography Valerie Shaw 2010, 'Civic Pharmacy'



Figure 3: Photography Valerie Shaw 2010 'Postals Sports Club'

2. The Introduction of Ready-Mades in Europe

On the 9th of April 1917 artist Marcel Duchamp submitted an 'artwork' to "the un-juried Society of Independent Artists Salon which claimed they would accept any work of art"³ Under the pseudonym R. Mutt, Duchamp submitted an upside-down urinal titled 'Fountain'. Although this 'sculpture' was not accepted, in-depth discussion and consternation ensued in academic and artist' circles, relating to the relevance of found objects, possibly seen from different perspectives as an art form. Jon Mann refers to Beatrice Woods thoughts:

Beatrice Wood, a close follower of Duchamp's "recognized the ground-breaking power of the work ..."Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object.' Duchamp's use of 'ready-mades' and the 'Fountain', initiated the beginning of innovative, artistic use of already existing objects." (Jon Mann, 19.05.2017 (www.Artsy.net)

Over time, the acceptance of ready-mades, recycled and found objects in Europe and world-wide, opened-up a new, innovative chapter in the creation of artworks.

Zimbabwe is no exception. After Independence from Britain in 1980, corruption, misuse of funds and the building of a one-party dictatorship, led to economic failure, massive devaluation of the Zimbabwe dollar and total disregard for the upkeep of power and water systems. Rubbish and discards can still be found everywhere, as the economic crisis continues in freefall, not allowing for basic amenities such as waste collection. In Figure 2 ironically, we see a heap of rubbish opposite a pharmacy, and in Figure 3 opposite a sports club. These two places are usually synonymous with good health, not fly infested rubbish dumps which can cause disease and poor health.



Figure 4: Duchamp, Marcel, 09.04.1917, 'Fountain', Photography Alfred Stieglitz⁴

This paper researches the impact of found objects and discards, affording cheap materials to underprivileged artists in Zimbabwe, and enabling dissident voices to be heard through the production of courageous, powerful socio-politically motivated artworks. The ability to source free materials has also provided a source of income, for some of the most innovative art practitioners.

Shaw reviews a selection of artworks created by indigenous Zimbabwean artists to include the authors own political work. Reference will be made to the 'Live 'n Direct' Exhibition held in the Zimbabwe National Gallery in 2010. Many of the sculptures on exhibition, included the prolific use of recycled and found material, due to the unavailability or excessive cost

⁴ Jon Mann, 19.05.2017. Marcel Duchamp, "*Fountain*", https://www.Artsy.net/article/artsyeditorial-duchamps-urinal-changed-art-forever. Photograph Alfred Stieglitz. Image via Wikimedia Common

of art materials. The lack of foreign visitors and demise of art markets has also impacted negatively on the art fraternity.

2.1. Conditions in Zimbabwe

Problems have been eloquently revealed in a newspaper article in The Zimbabwe Financial Gazette in 2002, "When a revolution eats its children" written by indigenous journalist Sydney Masamvu:

"When a revolution is about to crumble, it begins to eat its own children. Many more Zimbabweans, in one way or another, will be victims of this regime as it suffers an inevitable ignominious exit......Zimbabweans however foolish they are, have not asked for anything outside this world. They just want to live decent affordable lives and be governed properly. They don't eat rhetoric or propaganda...... no wonder a majority of Zimbabweans have literally become scavengers and destitute in their own country." (Masamvu Sydney, 14-20th 10.2002, Pg.15)

It stands to reason that the arts as a whole would suffer severe consequences in dire economic circumstances. However, resilient and innovative art practitioners, gallery owners and foreign embassies have worked tirelessly to support the arts and artists, and the arts remain an important part of Zimbabwean culture. Economically strapped artists have exploited the use of fragments and re-cycled objects, in some cases, exposing the sociopolitical conditions in Zimbabwe.



Figure 5: Photography Valerie Shaw, 2008. "Zimbabwean One Hundred Trillion Dollar Note"

3. Reviewing Selected Zimbabwean Artists and their Extraordinary use of Recycled Material

3.1. FREDDY TAURO



Figure 6: Tauro, Freddie, 2001. 'Untitled' (Detail Fig. 6) Photography Valerie Shaw

This unique sculpture, created entirely from metal objects collected from dumps, probably in the industrial areas around Harare, gives an insight into Zimbabwean social life. Indigenous women have always been very industrious and creative, many of them sourcing knitting machines, particularly from those migrating elsewhere, turning them into a source of income to assist their families.

A well-considered collection of rusty metal objects has been welded together to create an engaging sculpture. A section of an old-fashioned, rusty typewriter acts as a foundation for the knitting machine bed. With the keys missing, the stays act as an innovative choice for the knitting machine needles. An old bolt creates the head like structure, and a small tin bowl the 'knitted' cap, a popular item used by many Zimbabweans.

Compositionally, the artwork shows a strong understanding of positive and negative space and the balance between solid form and linear aspects. The open weave fencing material hangs downward as the knitted article takes shape. The welding is raw, the rust reflective of the conditions under which it has been created.

3.2. SHEPARD RAYMOND

Unfortunately, there are no references on the internet pertaining to this artist, and despite enquiries the author has been unable to locate him. This is possibly due to the

unstable conditions in Zimbabwe, the lack of power, internet, and communications. This sculpture purchased in 2002, needs to be recognized as both an extremely powerful and relevant comment on the socio-political conditions in Zimbabwe, the considered and creative use of scrap metal, and possibly the creators own condition?



Figure 7: Raymond, Shepard, "Alone", 2002, Scrap Metal, Photography Valerie Shaw⁵

This sculpture speaks for itself. The use of raw scrap metal has become a powerful tool reflecting the demise of this dejected, disabled, and exhausted figure. The structure has been carefully considered using strong angles to portray instability, the weary torso falling forward onto the crutch. The right hand holding a handkerchief to the brow of the hopeless form. The negative space, contrasting with the dark, pathetic figure strengthens the desperation and isolation of the image.

The decision to leave peeling, pock marked cream paint on the rusted metal in selected areas, has been well considered highlighting the degeneration of figure and clothing, with no governmental support systems in place to assist those less fortunate, and medical facilities less than adequate.

This is no new concept, history repeats itself.

⁵ Figure 7. Shepard Raymond, "Alone", 2002, Scrap Metal, 32mm x 300mm x 180mm, Photography Valerie Shaw. Private Collection Valerie Shaw



Figure 8: Bruegel, Pieter, 1559 "The Fight between Carnival and Lent" Page 27, 28. (Detail Fig. 8)⁶

"The artworks of Peter Bruegel the Elder, a 16th century artist, also documented current, socio-political situations in his work. "Moreover, the intense vitality of his art and its underlying pessimism become comprehensible when viewed against the historical background of his time. For Bruegel lived in a period of acute pollical and religious strife" (Kay 1969:6) This observation could have been written about the above work of Shepard Raymond.

In the authors opinion it is unlikely that Raymond would have had access to historical references and would have been influenced solely by the current situation in Zimbabwe. The use of recycled scrap metal has been pivotal in creating the desperation and rawness of this sculpture.

3.3. JOHNSON ZUZE

Zimbabwean artist Johnson Zuze explains his methods of artmaking, his interests' and related concepts:

"I collect items of urban junk: wire, glass bottles, plastic, rubber and the like and skilfully join them into harmonious sculptures of birds and animals where each portrays character and humour. The idea is to give new existence to daily objects providing them with a lively unexpected presence beyond their primary use and into a poetic dimension." and further relates to using "elements of colour and texture using bottles, rubber casing, synthetic leather and other objects and weaving them in." (Johnson, Catalogue, Pg 6)

⁶ Figure 8. Pieter Bruegel, "The Fight Between Carnival and Lent", Kunsthistorisches, Museum, Vienna, "Bruegel", The Colour Library of Art, Paul Hamlyn, (The Hamlyn Publishing Group, England 1969) Page 27-28

Margaret Kay, 'Bruegal', The Colour Library of Art, Paul Hamlyn, (The Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, England 1969) Pg.6

Johnson Zuze, 2018, "ZUZE'S KINGDOM' Exhibition Catalogue, Gallery Delta, Harare, Zimbabwe, (Compilation Vimbai Mangoma and Derek Huggins 03.2018) Pg. 6



Figure 9: Zuze, Johnson, 2018 "APOCALYPSE", Photography David Brazier⁷

In the catalogue forward, Zuze's 2018 Exhibition, Juliane Ineichen said 'Zuze's Kingdom' Exhibition should inspire us all to start the conversation and take action in the fight to reduce our environmental impact Zuze's work shows us also that waste can be a resource" (Ineichen, 03.2018, Page 2). This is currently happening in Zimbabwe, with the extensive use of discards for creative purposes, and to some small degree assisting the reduction of waste material.

Figure 9. Although size has not been recorded in the catalogue, it appears that this large, statuesque sculpture of a prancing horse, utilizes a considered collection of recycled objects, supporting the size and nature of the subject. Recycled fencing uprights have been twisted into rhythmic shapes encircling the horses' body, creating movement. The horse's muzzle, the side and main headlight of a motor vehicle and moulded scrap metal completing the head. Glass bottles, supported by metal and wire create the arching neck

⁷ Figure 9. Johnson Zuze, 2018, "APOCALYPSE", Recycled Objects, "ZUZE'S KINGDOM" Exhibition Catalogue, Page 6. (Derek Huggins Email to author 16.03.2021), Gallery Delta. Photography David Brazier

and numerous discards complete the interior of the horse.

The use of twisted scrap-metal and different gauges of wire, adds movement, character and expression to the prancing horse, as does the wide-open mouth, and anxious eye. The title of the artwork, 'Apocalypse, 'and visible signs of distress in the sculpture, presenting a powerful expression of discomfort and possibly disaster. The interpretation of the word apocalypse in the Oxford Dictionary (1976 Pg. 43) refers to a "grand or violent event", possibly using the anguished horse as a metaphor for the unstable Zimbabwean situation.

Zuze works with a broad range of recycled material to include electronic gadgets, finding and selecting anything that may be useful in his art practice. He collects much of his material from a dump site in Chitungwiza, a township near Harare, attempting to clear his community of useful waste that is not regularly collected. This can be witnessed in 'APOCALYPSE' sculpture which contains utility items such as bottles and materials from old fences.

3.4. JOHN KOTZE'

John Kotze' was initially trained as an engineer, subsequently developing into an artist of significance. Although painting is his preferred medium today, he created some extremely dramatic and unique artworks relating to the Zimbabwean economic situation in 2007 / 2008 and shortly thereafter. Using unimaginable recycled material, in the form of obsolete Z\$20, 000 and Z\$50,000 notes, Kotze recreated the iconic Victoria Falls.



Figure 10: Photography John Kotze', "Zimbabwean \$20,000 Banknote"2008⁸

In Kotze's words:

"The theme of the exhibition was "Bread" the word is also slang for money...... At that time Zimbabwe was going through some of the worst inflation the world had seen. A common headline in the newspapers at the time was "Dollar Falls" and this gave me the idea to create the literal "Dollar Falls". I then decided on the ironic use of the 20000- and 50000-dollar notes as they both had the iconic image of Victoria Falls on one side of the banknote." (Kotze 24.04.2021)

⁸ Figure 10. Photography John Kotze', "Zimbabwean \$20,000 Banknote" 2008, (Kotze' Email to author) John Kotze, (Email to author 24.04.2021)



Figure 11: Kotze, John, 2008"Dollar Falls - The Smoke That Plunders". Photography David Brazier⁹

The Victoria falls was also known by the locals as the "Musi-Wa- Tunya" – "The Smoke that Thunders", hence Kotze' use of "Smoke that Plunders" as a sub-title referring to the fall, ongoing devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar.

Due to rampant inflation and the continued de-valuing of the Zimbabwean dollar, new notes were printed on a regular basis and old ones became obsolete. The curator of the NGZ, Harare's, '50th Anniversary Exhibition', Heeton Bhagat, assisted Kotze' by applying to Gideon Gono, the Governor of the Reserve Bank for permission to use, and kindly supply obsolete bank notes, for an "artwork project ... The National Gallery duly received a box measuring approximately 1 cubic metre filled with 'bricks' of these two banknotes in mint condition" (Kotze' 24.04.2021)

⁹ Figure 11. John Kotze', 2008, "Dollar Falls – The Smoke that Plunders", 5 X 12 meters, NGZ "50th Anniversary Exhibition", Bank notes and natural Calico cloth, NGZ, Harare, Photographer David Brazier. (Kotze' Email to author 24.04.2021) John Kotze' (Email to author 24.04.2021)



Figure 12: Kotze, John, (Detail) 'Dollar Falls -The Smoke that Plunders' 2008. Photography David Brazier¹⁰

Kotze' projected the image of the bank note of the Victoria Falls onto a twelve- meter length of calico cloth, transferring the exact design onto the cloth, and thereafter attaching the bank notes in line with the transferred design.

Kotze explains, "There were so many notes that we could only use a fraction of the donation from the Reserve Bank in the artwork. I remember doing a rough calculation then, showing that all the banknotes used in the artwork were enough to buy only ONE loaf of bread at the time of the exhibition" (Kotze' 24.04.21 Email)

Sometime later, a visiting Finnish film crew wanting to document the 'Dollar Falls' artwork, were turned away by the ZNG, having been informed that it had been 'destroyed'. Kotze' was unaware of this until approached by the film crew, wanting to document another of his works "Gono with the Wind", in Kotze's personal collection. (Figure 13) Kotze had created a portrait of the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Zimbabwe, Gideon Gono, who has recently left the position due to his inability to "control the raging inflation during the years before". Kotze' used some of the bank notes left over from the Reserve Banks donation, for this portrait of Gideon Gono. According to Kotze'. The title relating "ironically" to the film, "Gone with the Wind", a love story released in1940, now relating to the value of the Zimbabwe dollar, "Gono with the Wind", and worth little. Kotze' recalls

"This is why I called it "Gono With The Wind". I was referring not only to the firing of the

¹⁰ Figure 12. John Kotze', 2008. "Dollar Falls – The Smoke that Plunders", (Detail), 5 X 12 meters, Bank notes and Calico cloth, ZNG, Harare, 2008. Photographer David Brazier. (Kotze' Email to author 24.04.2021)

governor whose signature is on those banknotes but also to the value of our national currency disappearing up in smoke. I used some of the leftover banknotes from the previous artwork ... HIFA usually had a permit to avoid censorship for the duration of the festival and I remember the Gallery staff were somewhat nervous about the artwork until they got the permit just before the festival started. I do not have the title or theme of the exhibition if there was one. No date either" (Kotze' 24.04.2021 Email)



Figure 13: "Gono with the Wind" 2008 -2009. Photography John Kotze^{'11}



(Detail Fig.13) Photography John Kotze' 2008/2009

This iconic, ironic portrait is a powerful and striking example of how the use of carefully selected recycled material, directly relating to the concept, empowers the concept with undisputable credibility.

The decision to approach the Reserve Bank Governor for obsolete bank notes to be included in an 'art project', is possibly one of a kind. John Kotze's conscious decision to use recycled banknotes, exposing the source of the rapid devaluation of the worthless Zimbabwe dollar in such a public domain, proved to be extraordinary and courageous. It is a privilege to document work of this magnitude both in concept and creation.

3.5. THE "LIVE 'N DIRECT" EXHIBITION

National Gallery of Zimbabwe 26th May – 30th July 2010 Page numbers were referenced from the "Live 'n Direct" Catalogue but the author (Valerie Shaw) chose to use her own photography of theartworks due to the poor quality in the catalogue. On 02.03.2010, artists

¹¹ Figure 13. John Kotze', 2008, *"Gono with the Wind"* and (Detail of Fig, 13) 3 x 5 meters, Black Drill Cloth 2008 -2009, HIFA, (*Harare International Festival of Arts*) NGZ. Photography John Kotze' (Kotze' email to author 24.04.2021)

received an invitation via Email from the NGZ to exhibit in the 'Live 'n' Direct' Exhibition at the ZNG from 26th May – 30th July 2010. (See Appendix A).



Figure 14: "Live 'n Direct Exhibition" Catalogue Cover, 2010.¹²

The following directive was included in this email, "The National Gallery of Zimbabwe is proud to host the first edition of Live and Direct; a definitive showing of current Zimbabwean Art designed to coincide with the FIFA World Cup in South Africa." (Sibanda, 2010 Pg. 3) "A well-researched catalogue will be published accompanied by a number of choice critical essays" (NGZ 02.03.2010) Unfortunately, the expected crowds did not venture from the world cup into Zimbabwe, promotions had been costly, and NGZ was forced to produce a radically modified catalogue sometime after the event. Only a price list was initially available. The author contacted the librarian of the NGZ and was informed that a catalogue had recently been archived for the 2010 "Live 'n Direct Exhibition", and the author received a downloaded copy via email on 10.03.2021 (See Fig. 14)

"Burning issues of Democracy flared up in sometimes-unseemly ways for a nation known for its restraint and orderliness bringing Zimbabwe to the brink of social disorder. The Land issue is tied up the pluralist one; the situation was further compounded by the economic meltdown and astronomic inflation Every sector has suffered

¹² Figure 14. NGZ, *"Live n' Direct Exhibition"* Catalogue Cover. (Emailed to author 10.03.2021 by Joseph Fushayi, Librarian, NGZ)

Sibanda, Doreen, 2010, "Live 'n Direct Exhibition" Catalogue, Page 3. (Executive Director Zimbabwe National Gallery), (Also sent in Email to artists 02.03.2010) Gutsa, Tapfuma (Curator),2010 "Live n' Direct Exhibition" Catalogue, Page 2, (Joseph Fushayi (NGZ Librarian), Email to author10.03.2021) (NGZ Email to artists/ author 02.03.2010)

including the artist community due to the absence of visitors from abroad and scarcity of viable galleries" Catalogue, Page (Gutsa, ZNG Email to artists/ author)

Some world class, powerful and meaningful work, mainly using recycled material and discards did not get the exposure it deserved. The ongoing presence of policemen at the exhibition did not make for comfortable viewing. (See Appendix b)

Whilst researching this paper and accessing more information on the exhibition, it became apparent that the projection for the catalogue had been vastly reduced. Of the 109 participants there were photographs of only 28 artists' work, and the promised papers did not come to fruition.

In the authors opinion, the most disturbing and confrontational sculptures on the 2010 'Live 'n Direct' Exhibition were omitted, or photographs were taken from a distance, lacking detail.



Figure 15: Moyo, Mercy, 2010, 'Shadows and Cracks of the Past.' Photography Valerie Shaw¹³

3.6. MERCY MOYO

This decaying, submissive body, created on a recycled wooden board, with wire, scrap metal and clay, lunges forward, the unforgiving chains dragging the body down. A skeletal hand clings to a rusty metal support and the front shoulder leans heavily on a rusted pole. The support beneath the pole appears to be an old wheel rim. The back leg devoid of 'skin', thin

 ¹³ Figure 15. Moyo, Mercy, 2010, "Shadows and cracks of the Past'", "Live 'n Direct Exhibition",
 26.05.2010 – 30.07, 2010, NGZ, Harare, Zimbabwe. Photography Valerie Shaw 05.06.2010

and emaciated revealing the 'bone' with the body disintegrating on site, leaving elements of decomposition scattered on the wooden board. The sculpture created with material, recycled from rubbish dumps, overwhelming Zimbabwe, and clay from the land itself. This broken figure, created with clay, rusted chains, pillars, an old lock, twisted wires, weights, and the rim of a vehicle, which has resulted in a destitute, provocative and pathetic image relating to the decline in conditions in Zimbabwe.

3.7. GARETH NYANDORO

First prize at the "Live 'n Direct' Exhibition" was awarded to Gareth Nyandoro for his artwork "National Recylenziliation". Nyandoro "mainly uses found objects to produce outstanding pieces of work". (Sibanda/Gutsa, 2010, Pg. 38.)



Figure 16: Gareth Nyandoro, 2010 "Recylenziliation", Mixed Media, "Live 'n Direct" Exhibition, ZNG, Photographs Valerie Shaw July 05.06.2010¹⁴

"Recylenziliation", could be viewed from both sides, an improvisation of a shop window. The title of the work a combination of 'recycling' of materials and the need for 'reconciliation' in a divided community? For sale in the shop window, old shoes, strips of rubber to make shoes, bicycle inner tubes and other objects appear to be a direct comment on the period, 2007 – 2008 when Bata Zimbabwe stores, renowned for their economical and very popular shoes, had in fact run out of shoes. Notices were pasted on their windows asking to buy back cheap rubber shoes called 'bubble-gummers', obviously to re-cycle into 'new' shoes. The window frame is created with flattened, recycled Coca Cola cans. This combination of recycled material comments on the unavailability of basic utilities, such as shoes.

3.8. STEPHEN GARAN'ANGA

Using pieces of scrap metal and discards, in Figure 18, an intricate landscape of Zimbabwean life has been carefully crafted by Garan'anga. Figures walk across a recycled wooden board, trampling on painted flags from different 'first world' countries. (Possibly unimpressed with the lack of assistance from external sources). Figure 17, an indistinct photograph from the catalogue.

 ¹⁴ Figure 16. Gareth Nyandoro, "Recylenziliation", Mixed Media, "Live 'n Direct Exhibition",
 26.05.2010 – 30.07.2010, NGZ, 2010, Photographs Valerie Shaw 05.06.2010

Stephen Garan'anga

Stephen Garan'anga is a multi-faceted international visual artist who uses his work as the vehicle through which he explores the aspirations, the dreams and the threats inherent within and beyond the geographic, political, racial and cultural boundaries of his identity, my country and my continent.

He seeks opportunities for conversation and creativity with other artists and various cultures.

His works have made him a household name in metal sculpture, threedimensional works and painting.

His art pieces hang in various galleries and stand in numerous art gardens worldwide.



Stephen Garan'anga Mawonero Angu Metal

Figure 17: Sibanda/ Gutsa, 2010, "Live 'n' Direct "Catalogue, Page 28



Figure 18: Garan'anga, Stephen, 2010 "Hidden Agenda" Photography Valerie Shaw¹⁵

 ¹⁵ Figure 18. Stephen, Garan'anga, "Hidden Agenda", Mixed Media, "Live 'n Direct Exhibition",
 26.05.2010 – 30.07.2010, ZNG, Harare, Zimbabwe. Photography Valerie Shaw 05.06.2010

Created in recycled, rusted scrap metal, figures carry items on their heads and by hand. A small figure pushes a wheelbarrow laden with heavy metal objects 'tied' to the barrow with metal straps. An air filter from a vehicle acting as a wheel. (Left Detail, Fig. 18) Welded layers of cogs create the woman's skirt and a flattened tin can, her body. Scrap metal piping shapes the arms and legs of all traveller's. (Figure. 18)



(Fig. 18) Photography Valerie Shaw



Figure 19. Photography Valerie Shaw (Detail 1 and 2,)

Two small figures carry a tiny coffin made from scraps of tin painted white, inferring the death of another child (Detail 2. Fig.18). The life expectancy in Zimbabwe, affected drastically by poverty, the lack of amenities and medical facilities, particularly around 2005 – 2010. (See Appendix c) The only method of transport, walking and carrying or pushing objects with the shortage of fuel and therefore public transport. Garan'anga has used a diverse and considered selection of found fragments and recycled objects to create this human Zimbabwean story.

Figure 19. Detail 1 and 2 Fig. 18, Photography Valerie Shaw 2010

3.9. PETRONELLA CHEKERWA



Figure 20: Chekerwa, Petronella, "Lamentations" 2010 (**Detail 1. Figure20.**) Photography Valerie Shaw¹⁶



Figures 21 and 22: (Detail 1 and 2) Chekerwa, Petronella, 'Lamentations', 2010 Photography Valerie Shaw¹⁷

¹⁶ Figure 20. Chekerwa, Petronella, 2010, *"Lamentations"* Mixed Media, *"Live 'n Direct Exhibition"*, 26.05.2010 – 30.07.2010, ZNG, Harare, Zimbabwe. Photography Valerie Shaw 05.06.2010. Size not given.

¹⁷ Figures 21 and 22. (Detail 2 and 3 of fig. 20), *"Lamentations"* Mixed Media, *"Live 'n Direct Exhibition"*, 26.05.2010 – 30.07.2010, ZNG, Harare, Zimbabwe. Photography Valerie Shaw 05.06.2010. Size not given.

This powerful mixed media sculpture, created by female artist Petronella Chekerwa needs little interpretation- it is a woman's story. The re-appearance of shackles and chains in this exhibition tells the ongoing story of oppression, incarceration, violence and freedoms lost, as does the title 'Lamentations'. Hands protected in the front pocket of the woman, rising from the belly appearing to ward off impending violation, as does the large rust coloured hand holding a pointy metal object for protection. A 'blood- stained' bandage protects an injury on the shackled arm, which holds a role of obsolete bank notes, a horn protrudes from her side, as she arches her back trying to avoid the dagger. The anguished face cries out for help. The situation untenable.

Multiple recycled materials have been used in this sculpture. It is created mainly with pieces of rusted scrap metal, welded together, supported by old tins, chains, rubber hands, old boots, obsolete money, animal horns, fabric and garden implements. This courageous female artist has successfully interpreted her opinions relating to the dire, family living conditions in Zimbabwe in 2010. This is ongoing today. The use of recycled material has been pivotal to the success of this monumental sculpture.

3.10. VALERIE SHAW



Figure 23: Shaw, Valerie,"Protect our Children – Protect our Future",2010, Photography Valerie Shaw¹⁸



Figure 24: Detail. Unable to get this information going straight across images

Shaw is a mixed media artist and sculptor, with recycled and found objects an integral part of her art practice. She has been influenced by her life in Africa and the ingenuity of the peasant population, who bind and weave their 'huts', chicken runs and fences, nothing goes to waste – recycling and reusing is a part of their lifestyle.

Amongst other concepts, Shaw has concentrated on social and political comment, having witnessed 'man's inhumanity to man' first-hand. She has produced in-depth visual diaries, including relevant newspaper articles, development of concepts and photography to plan

¹⁸ Figure 23. Shaw, Valerie, 2010. "Protect our Children, Protect our Future", Mixed Media, 600 X 450 X 500 mm, "Live 'n Direct Exhibition", NGZ, , 26th May – 31st June 2010, Harare, Zimbabwe. Photography Valerie Shaw Collection of the artist.

and record her experiences and the general situation in Zimbabwe.

Figure. 23 was the second garment created by Shaw relating to the safety of children. The first one was dedicated to her granddaughter, who was involved in an attack on their family home in Harare, Zimbabwe in 2003. (See Appendix d) The second dress, created in similar style and materials was created in relation to the challenges facing children worldwide due to abuse, poverty, and malnutrition. Recycled wire and mosquito netting was used for the gathered skirt, with a soft, comforting underskirt created in net fabric. The bodice has an armorial foundation of chicken wire and mosquito netting sourced from Shaw's farm, again lined with soft net.

Scrap metal accessed from a local electrical manufacturing company supports the garment. Thin aluminum plate was sculpted to create a lace like, decorative effect for the collar, and the cuffs. Embroidered pink flowers enhance the top creating a childlike quality. Crochet work, using the cotton popular with indigenous woman, softens the harsh reality around the hem of the skirt.

In Figure 24, Detail 2. The use of safety pins to finish the back, a metaphor for safety, security and protection. Wool, zinc and copper wire, binds the garment carefully together (Fig. 24 Detail 2 and 3)



Figure 24: (Detail 2 and 3)) Shaw, Valerie, "Protect our Children -Protect our Future" 2010. As in Fig. 23



Figure 25: Shaw, Valerie, "Domestic Protective Clothing", 2004¹⁹

This 'garment' was created in a time of anxiety, fear, and trepidation whilst Shaw and her husband were still on their farm and facing intimidation and uncertainty. How does a woman protect herself on an isolated farm? A scrap metal and chicken wire foundation was created and embellished with protective belts of scrap metal with spikes. Layering of different materials were created mostly with household items such as upholstery tacks, old nylon pantihose, recycled tea bags, kitchen aluminum foil, sequins, safety pins, and embroidery thread. Embedded in the left front bodice, a pair of scissors for protection cut from metal, and newspaper headlines collaged into the collar. The neckline was created in similar fashion to Figure 20, creating a feminine touch. Combining the hard scrap metal with softer items associated with women and the home, creates a strong but vulnerable relief work. Shaw is interested in history and genealogy, belief systems and the relationship between word and image. She finds using recycled and found objects fits with her philosophy that 'without a past there is no future', and found objects already having a 'past life' can be recycled to be part of the future.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion: The artworks presented in this paper merely scrape the surface of the extraordinary resilience and exceptional artworks produced by indigenous Zimbabwean artists and crafters. Zimbabwe has a history of craft making which in the past was directed at tourists, who invested in the pottery, weaving, sculpting, crochet work,

¹⁹ Figure 25. Valerie Shaw *"Domestic Protective Clothing"* 2010. Recycled Material, 88 x500 x 120mm. Photography Christophe Canato, November 2019. Collection of the artist.

jewellery, woodwork, welding, and soap stone carvings. Unfortunately, due to declining economic and unstable political circumstances from the early 1990's onwards, the art market had almost collapsed with the arrival of 2000ad.

With President Mugabe's dictatorship and support faltering, opposition supporters were growing in vast numbers. On 25th of May 2005 the Government of Zimbabwe initiated "Operation Murambatsvina" (Clean up filth) to quell the opposition, and the art and craft vendors were targeted together with others, and their livelihoods destroyed:

"Harare was among the worst affected cities: police action was brutal and unannounced Sculpture parks along the main roads, which have been there for decades and feature as a tourist attraction in guidebooks, were smashed. Beautiful works of art on roadside display, created out of stone, wood and metal some standing up to two meters high, were smashed. Vendors, who have been operating in the same places without complaint or interference for their entire working lives, were confronted with riot squads without any warning, were rounded up, arrested, and watched helplessly while their source of livelihood was destroyed". Zimbabwe "Operation Murambatsvina" Sokwanele. Posted 18th June 2005. (See 8.5 Appendix e)

Artists across the board struggled to make a living. However, their determination to survive and to continue their trade under very difficult circumstances is commendable. With the help of art galleries, foreign embassies, patronage and sponsorship the art and crafts have survived, and in many cases the works have become the voice of the people. For many artists, the lack of finance and materials forced artists to look elsewhere. Recycling, which had been in their creative vocabulary for years, now became a very dynamic and significant aspect of their art making processes. The author believes that recycled materials and found fragments, will continue to play an important part in the development of world class artworks in Zimbabwe and other countries around the world. As the world strives to contain the growing mountains of rubbish and discards, hopefully the idiom " one man's trash is another man's treasure" (https://www.english.stackexchange.com/questions) will assist to some small measure in addressing this situation.

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APPENDIX

1. Appendix a.²⁰

A section of the invitation sent to artists inviting them to participate in the "Live 'n' Direct Exhibition at the ZNG May – July 2010:

"The National Gallery has decided to release this pent-up energy through an audacious Exhibition to coincide with the World Cup in South Africa. It has decided to un-theme the exhibition so that the artist has the greatest freedom of creativity in order that Zimbabwe may show the world what its artists have to say at this juncture in time getting into and under the flesh of the nation, searching for answers, questioning and interrogating the human psyche, offering suggestions, raging and affirming human resilience" (NGZ, 02.03.2010.)

It also stated that a "well-researched catalogue would be published accompanied by a number of choice critical essays", there would be a call out to artists interested in submitting essays and photo documentation would be initiated using "local practitioners in consultation with Kwanza, as well as artists" (NGZ ,02.03.2010)

A First Prize of US\$ 10.000, Second Prize of US\$ 5,000 and Third Prize of US\$ 3,000 were on offer, which encouraged 109 artists, struggling with the current economic crisis to submit work.

Unfortunately, due to the unfavourable economic and political situation in Zimbabwe very few visitors ventured into Zimbabwe after the world cup. The result was disasterous. When the author immigrated to Australia at the end of 2010, no catalogues had been published, essays never eventuated, and on the opening night there were rumours that there was no finance for the winners. A much smaller online catalogue was created more recently, which the author managed to access.

2. Appendix b.²¹

In this exhibition, artists had heeded the call to get "into and under the flesh of the nation searching for answers, questioning and interrogating the human psyche, offering suggestions, raging and affirming human resilience", (Sibanda, 2010, Page 3) but to no avail as it was seen by few. When the author visited the ZNG on several occasions it was silent, with a sprinkling of visitors viewing the artworks. There were groups of policemen surveying the exhibition at all times.

The author believes that this was due to the unexpected power of the work submitted, making direct references to the disastrous situation in the country, and the ruling party making their presence felt. The author was given permission by the attendant at the front desk of the ZNG, to take photographs as an exhibiting artist and educator. The author felt uncomfortable with the constant presence of the police closely watching the few visitors viewing the exhibition. Despite the uncertainty the author took photos of what she deemed were the most meaningful works on display.

²⁰ Appendix a. NGZ, "Zimbabwe Project: Live 'n Direct" 02.03. 2010, "Invitation to artist". Emailed to artist Valerie Shaw/ author by NGZ. (Emailed to author by Joseph Fushayi, Librarian, NGZ, 10.03.2021)

²¹Appendix b. Doreen Sibanda, (Executive Director, NGZ) *"Live n' Direct" Exhibition "* Catalogue, page 3. (Emailed to author by Fushayi, 10.03.2021)

3. Appendix c.²²

"As a part of their research initiative entitled Zimbabwe's Crisis and Future, CGD Fellows Todd Moss, Michael Clemens and Stewart Patrick have articulated and analyzed the many political, economic and social catastrophes that have characterized that country's decline since 2000. These calamities include: the severe contraction of the economy; a doubling of the percentage of the population living in poverty; organized violence perpetrated by the government; the breakdown of basic services; the erosion of the country's economic foundation and the massive emigration of professionals.

To this list we can now add another tragedy: Zimbabweans have the horrific honor of having the world's shortest life expectancies. According to the WHO's recent <u>World Health</u> <u>Report 2006</u>, and as reported in the <u>BBC News</u>, Zimbabwean women have an average life expectancy of 34 years; men on average do not live past 37. Most shocking however, is the rapid decline these figures represent - average life expectancy for women in Zimbabwe has declined by two years in just the last 12 months. What a stark reminder of the human faces of economic and political crises!" Fortunately, life expectancy has increased in recent years, but is still unacceptable. Poverty and disease, lack of any support mechanisms, lack of adequate medical facilities' together with lack of employment and high prices in Zimbabwe still needs to be urgently addressed. (CGD Blog Post, Todd Moss,Michael Clemens and Stewart Patrick 2006)

DISCLAIMER

CGD blog posts reflect the views of the authors, drawing on prior research and experience in their areas of expertise. CGD is a nonpartisan, independent organization and does not take institutional positions." CGD Blog Post, Todd Moss, Michael Clemens and Stewart Patrick 2006.

²² Appendix c. Todd Moss, Michael Clemens, Stewart Patrick, "World Health Report" 2006, BBC. News

3.1 Appendix d.²³



These two pages out of Shaw's Visual Diary related to the attack on her family, and was her way of processing and coming to terms with what was happening in their lives and that of the country they called home – Zimbabwe. Initially Shaw created a small armorial dress for her infant granddaughter. Thereafter a second dress was created, viewing this event from a world perspective where children everywhere are at risk. Z\$ 5,000,000 at that time was worth little with the daily devaluing of the Zimbabwe dollar. The young family traumatized. This event leading to their decision to migrate to Australia.

4. Appendix e.²⁴

"On 25 May, Africa Day, the Government of Zimbabwe began an operation labelled "Operation Murambatsvina". While Government has translated this to mean "Operation Clean-up", the more literal translation of "Murambatsvina" is "getting rid of the filth". The operation has continued throughout the month of June, and has affected virtually every town and rural business centre in the country.

From Mount Darwin in the north, to Beitbridge in the south, Mutare in the East and Bulawayo in the west, no part of the nation has been spared the impact of what could be termed a slow-moving earthquake; every day the nation awakes to find more buildings have fallen around them, more families have been displaced. Families are often having their homes and possessions ruthlessly burnt to the ground, or are given a few hours to remove what they can save before bulldozers come in to demolish entire structures and

 ²³ Appendix d. Herald Reporter, "Family looses \$5 million jewellery to armed robbers",
 31.01.2003. The Herald, Harare Zimbabwe. Pages 13 15, from the authors Visual Diary.
 ²⁴ Appendix e. Sokwanele, "Zimbabwe's Operation Murambutsvina" – An Overview and Summary, 18.06.2005. Relief web.int/report/Zimbabwe/Zimbabwe-operation-murambutsvina-overview-and-summary
hundreds of thousands more have lost their sources of income in the informal sector.

The Government, under the auspices of the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises Development, began by arresting 20,000 vendors countrywide, destroying their vending sites, and confiscating their wares. Thousands more escaped arrest, but have lost their livelihoods. This process took one week in the first instance. Harare was among the worst affected cities: police action was brutal and unannounced. Sculpture parks along the main roads, which have been there for decades and feature as a tourist attraction in guidebooks, were smashed. Beautiful works of art on roadside display, created out of stone, wood and metal some standing up to two meters high, were smashed. Vendors, who have been operating in the same places without complaint or interference for their entire working lives, were confronted with riot squads without any warning, were rounded up, arrested, and watched helplessly while their source of livelihood was destroyed" 35 This destruction continued country wide.

Author's Bio



Shaw, Valerie. Self portrait

Valerie Shaw: 4th generation African, immigrating from Zimbabwe under duress, 24.11.2010. Shaw, an awardwinning, conceptual, mixed media artist, sculptor, educator, curator, and researcher holds an Honours Degree in Visual Arts and Diploma in Textiles, Printing and Design (Lyle Taylor Scholarship). Departmental head, Visual Arts in 3 private schools in Zimbabwe, senior examiner with the IBO world schooling system in visual arts and extended essays 2005 - 2017. Schools Festival Director, Allied Arts, affiliated to Zimbabwe National Gallery 2008 – 2010. Shaw's research and practice includes documentation of oppressive, sociopolitical situations, promoting the therapeutic value of creativity, teaching, and supporting those with disabilities, depression, and loneliness. Shaw's interests include photography, genealogy, history and the undeniable link between the 'word' and the 'image'.

Reimagining the wool craft of India

Sumita Ghose, Ghatit Laheru, Shouryamoy Das, Jen Hoover & Nisha Subramaniam Desi Oon Hub, Centre for Pastoralism shouryamoy@gmail.com

Presentation link.



Abstract. A collaborative partnership of craft organizations with support from the Centre for Pastoralism, have, in the past two years, begun to reimagine desi oon (indigenous wool), and the wool craft of India. Working with pastoralists, hand spinners, weavers, dyers, felters, and local fabricators, they have developed iconic apparels/home products which sit with contemporary fashion. This collection has emerged after a study of local fibres, products (apparel & furnishings), skills, and pastoral cultures. The team has undertaken experiments and innovated by blending fibres and yarns to create fresh fabrics.

The initiative sought to:

- Develop the potential of indigenous wool from the different pastoral regions of India, and create new opportunities for pastoralists to add value, process their wool, and better sustain their livelihoods, while considering its local potential for value addition and processing with relevance to the pastoralist economy.
- Develop and create fully handcrafted textiles from the indigenous wool of five regions in India, which are production friendly, saleable, and enhance both the economy and creative potential for craft artisans.
- Unlock and celebrate the story of India's indigenous wool, its journey over centuries, the shepherds and artisans who have nurtured these woolly breeds, the fibre and its crafts, and highlight the contemporary challenges they face.

This visual presentation will display narrative panels, craft products which have been developed as a part of the collection, present the processes which led to blending innovations and design solutions. This presentation will showcase efforts of some of India's best craft organizations, as they breathe new life into the value chain of indigenous wool.

Keywords: Indigenous wool; Design; Blending; Sheep breeds; weaving

1. The Paper introduction

Indian wool craft is varied in techniques and rich in diversity. The wide varieties of fibres, staple lengths, and textures as well as local climates have shaped the indigenous crafting practices and products (Ahmed, M., 1996). Many such crafts practices, techniques, and products are considered outmoded today and over the past three decades, these practices have found it hard to retain their feet in an era of homogenized globalization (Ramdas, S.R., 2012).

1.1. Desi Oon Hub

The Desi Oon Hub is an informal collective that has brought together initiatives from different parts of the country to showcase glimpses from the glorious wool craft of India by both, employing traditional skills and fibres, and adapting them to contemporary, urban needs. As a part of this exercise the partners developed iconic apparels/home products which sit with contemporary fashion. This collection is spread across five native sheep breeds and their fleece from their unique ecosystems.



Figure 1: A map to mark the geographical extent of the project

This collection has emerged after a study of local fibres, products (apparel & furnishings), skills, and pastoral culture. The team has undertaken experiments to blend fibres & yarns to create fabrics. Some of these include blending the wool of the native sheep breed from Kutch, a semi arid region in the west of India (Gujarat), with the indigenous short staple length cotton from Kutch called Kala Cotton; the famed Deccani sheep wool with silk in Telangana, South India; Wool from the Pahadi sheep breed in western India with silk, and blending the Himalayan Kathi sheep wool with Himalayan hemp in Uttarakhand.

The initiative has sought to:

- Develop the potential of indigenous wool from the different pastoral regions of India, and create new opportunities for pastoralists to add value, process their wool, and better sustain their livelihoods, while considering its local potential for value addition and processing with relevance to the pastoralist economy.
- Develop and create fully handcrafted textiles from the indigenous wool of five regions in India, which are production friendly, saleable, and enhance both the economy and creative potential for craft artisans.
- Unlock and celebrate the story of India's indigenous wool, its journey over centuries, the shepherds and artisans who have nurtured these woolly breeds, the fibre and its crafts, and highlight the contemporary challenges they face.

This visual presentation displays narrative panels, craft products which have been developed as a part of this collection, the process of attempting different kinds of blending experiments as well as other design solutions, testimonies and expressions of the artisans and the pastoralists, and a film on the Indigenous wool of Kutch. This presentation showcases efforts of the shepherds, craft artisans, designers, and some of India's best craft organizations, as they breathe new life into the value chain of indigenous wool.

1.2. Khamir: Raising Stakes of Pastoral communities

Khamir is based in Kutch, has been working to revitalise and revive the craft practices of Kutch since 2001. Kutch lies at the extreme west of India. It is semi-arid, and large swathes of the land are flat, making it appropriate for sheep herding. The Rabaris, Jats, Sindhi, Gadhvis, Jadejas, and Bharwads of this region have long nurtured the local breeds and their fibres.

Khamir started work to revive the Desi Oon economy in 2017. Khamir, as a strategic decision, started investing in hand spinning of the region. The Rabari herders of the region are excellent spinners, and it was important to ensure that their stake in pastoralism, their local sheep breed and the wool economy was conserved and promoted... Khamir organized spinning workshops in 14 villages for 335 women in Kutch. More than 100 of these spinners have become regulars and have taken up spinning as a sustained economic activity.

1.3. Aana Jaana and Kullvi WHIMS: Everyday wool, enchanting wool

Aana Jaana and Kullvi WHIMS work with the Gaddi community of Himachal Pradesh. Gaddis are both herders and practitioners of wool craft in Himachal Pradesh. Himachal Pradesh produces one of the softest wool in India and wool is considered holy by locals and an important element of the cultural fabric, so much so that spinning wool is a wedding ritual. HP is famous for its Kullu Shawl while knitting sweaters, slippers and brightly patterned socks out of synthetic yarns is also common. Weavers produce various types of woollen fabrics, including a wrap dress worn by women, and the other a dense fabric used as a blanket by shepherds; both known as *Patu*. A vibrant local economy still exists where the *pattu* is woven for festivals and weddings, but woven with a blend of imported wools and acrylic yarn.

The ties between the pastoralists and the settled communities had historically contributed to a vibrant wool economy. Kullvi WHIMS' initiative is inspired by these ties and rooted in the ecological, social and cultural contexts of the land. Kullvi WHIMS sources wool from shepherding communities and works to build capacities in grading and separating during the shearing process. The artisans wash, pick, card and spin the fibre. The hand spun, sometimes plied, yarn is naturally dyed using local flora. Extensive research in collaboration with Aana Jaana and fragments of oral histories has gone into developing an eco-friendly and vibrant palette of natural dyes. The women then weave or knit the varied shades into products for urban markets. WHIMS' design and collaborative approach is centred on building and exploring relationships between the artisans' craft heritage and modern design influences.

Aana Jaana adapts traditional sock designs for a contemporary, urban market by applying the motifs to lightweight accessories such as legwarmers, slippers, and fingerless mitts. The collection is made with hand spun wool in natural colours and with naturally dyed accents to create a softer colour palette. Aana Jaana's future plans include developing house wares and other items out of the shepherds' *pattu*.

1.4. Rangsutra and Urmul: Service stations and processing

Pastoralism plays out on the extensive lands. Any centralised facility for shearing or cleaning sheep before shearing is sub-optimal since centralised facilities tend to be geographically inaccessible for most herders. In such scenarios, it is essential to develop service stations which take into account the migratory routes and seasonality of shearing to station facilities which can be used by herders. Urmul, Rangsutra's sister organization, and one with many years of experience of working with local communities in Rajasthan has set-up service stations in three villages of Lunkaransar region including tanks to wash sheep. These tanks have been located based on discussion with herding communities and other villagers. They are close to sources of water and water disposal systems. Thanks to these tanks the herders are able to fetch better prices for their wool and the pre-processing of the wool has also become simpler. Women herders are able to sort and grade the sheared wool more easily, and after carding, they spin it on charkhas - spinning wheels - right in their villages. A few people from the community have learned to weave, and fabric is woven for different purposes - for local use as well as for sale in nearby towns as well as far off cities.

This project has thus far helped 300+ families to improve their earnings from wool processing, spinning and weaving of products. The community is very positive about the future of this project.

1.5. Avani: Blending and Dyeing

Avani is based in Kumaon, Uttarakhand. Avani works with local communities including the Shauka community which is highly skilled in spinning and dyeing wool. Avani has researched and experimented with a variety of local dye sources and enhanced the range of natural dyes.

Avani has, as a part of the collaborative, worked to blend Himalayan wool with the coarser wool of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Avani also worked to dye the blended wools in three natural shades of Indigo, Yellow and Red. These blends were then spun to produce stunning yarns.

1.6. Dakhni Diaries: Conserving the felt craft of Deccan

Felted products are popular in the Deccan plateau. The Pinjara community are the dominant felt artisans of Deccan. Some Dhangar pastorals of Maharashtra have also taken up felting. These artisans make felted mattresses known as Jens or Jaans. These mattresses are thick and hard, and the artisans claim that these products easily last a generation. Dakhni Diaries and Mitan, led by Gopi Krishna, are well known initiatives, respected for their ability to delve deep into the life and livelihood of pastoralists and the craftspeople, empower the craft traditions with inventive designs, and remain authentic to the local fibres, skills and techniques.

Dakhni diaries has recently begun fresh initiatives/innovations with the felt artisans in North Karnataka, part of the Deccan stretch in South India and has reinterpreted the felt craft to produce a much thinner textile which has been used to develop a range of accessories.

1.7. Moving Forward

The Desi Oon hub aims to keep on innovating and collaborating with each other, research institutions, government bodies, rural communities, technologists, and entrepreneurs to build an ecosystem of indigenous woollen crafts. Currently the Desi Oon Hub is an association of eight noted organisations and hopes to expand its membership to other institutions that are working on indigenous wool and have a decentralised approach to the wool economy. The Desi Oon Hub is also collaborating with the noted IIT Delhi on developing appropriate technology to serve the needs of the indigenous wool. The members of the hub have also been discussing ways to brand indigenous wool and wool craft, drawing from its roots in pastoral and artisanal communities and systems. An exhibition for the winters of 2021-22 has been planned while a digital presence in terms of a website and social media channels is being worked on. Last but not the least, the hub intends to advocate with the central policymakers to support the indigenous wool economy. We hope that with appropriate investments, the indigenous wool of India will reach its true potential and become a fibre of the future, a fibre that is a flag bearer for the local decentralised model of production and self-sufficiency promoted by Mahatma Gandhi (Kumar, S., 1996).

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Visual References

Images to complement this presentation have been collected <u>here</u>.

Author's Bio

Lead Author

Sumita Ghose is the founder and managing director of Rangsutra, a social enterprise which works for socio economic development in rural India by engaging both: the community and the market. Rangsutra is owned by over two thousand artisans- most of whom are rural women. Rangsutra provides design, marketing, technical and organizational support needed to make crafts and allied rural industries into viable enterprises, so that they provide regular village based employment to rural artisans.

Prior to setting up Rangsutra in 2006, Sumita lived and worked in different parts of rural India, primarily in Western Rajasthan with the URMUL Trust in Loonkaransar Bikaner, for over 10 years working with rural communities for social change and economic development.

Sumita has a Masters degree in Economics and in Conflict Resolution. She is a recipient of several fellowships, and awards, the latest being the Nari Shakti Puraskar, awarded by the President of India, on 8th March 2016. She is a Yoga practitioner and a certified Yoga teacher.

Co-authors

Ghatit Laheru is the Director of Khamir. He has a Post Graduate Diploma in Management of NGOs from EDDII. He also has a Masters in Journalism studies. He has been involved with indigenous fibres such as Kala cotton and desi oon of Kutch for many years.

Shouryamoy Das is passionate about crafts and ecology. He had his formal education in engineering and finance. He quit the business world in 2014 after short stints in the Software and the Investment banking industries to pursue his interests in working with rural pastoral and craft communities of India.

Jen Hoover is an artisan and researcher based in California in the US. She works with wool producers in Himachal Pradesh, India, with a focus on supporting traditional shepherding and textile practices.

Nisha Subramaniam is the founder of Kullvi Whims, a SHG of women artisans. She has been working with traditional weaving and pastoral communities in Himachal Pradesh for more than 8 years. She studies historical linkages and viable systems for these communities to operate in and be a part of in contemporary settings. She is also a doctoral student and part-time faculty with Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology. Nisha's research work in the domain of traditional craft communities in India, explores how artisans perceive modernity and how they can engage with it in a way that evolves contemporary artisanal practice. Her engagement with design students looks at developing pedagogical methods for students to interact with craft communities in ethical and sustainable ways.



India is home to a wide variety of wool fibres and crafts. Therein lies huge potential

Desi Oon Hub- an informal collective of craft organisation - to share knowledge, ideas, develop technology and promote wool crafts

- Members come from all three pastoral landscapes of India









Innovations in

- Processing and service stations : Rangsutra and Urmul
- Spinning and Blending: Khamir
- Reviving dyeing and developing products based on traditional skills and textiles: Kullvi WHIMS and Aana Jaana
- Rethinking the felt craft of Deccan: Dakhni Dairies



Way forward

- Developing an identity for local wool drawing from pastoral and artisanal roots
- Advocacy based on ground research
- Consumer education/ promotional events- Online and offline
- Development of appropriate technology through collaborations with IIT D, WRA etc.





TRACK-4: Futuring Craft; digital media and production:

Craft-oriented hybrid analogue/digital practices; their values and our future relations with technology

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Presentation link.



Abstract. This paper focuses on a hybrid digital/analogue making project that sought to investigate the aesthetic opportunities that digital design and production technologies holds for the craftsperson. It is presented as a demonstration of how a disruptive craft-based approach to engaging with digital making tools can act as a stimulus to reconsider the relationship between hand and machine, and our wider relationship with technologies and how we assess their role and value.

Through challenging some assumptions about what digital technologies are 'good' for, it proposes a digital craft ethos that aspires to: fidelity not accuracy, sensitive making not efficient manufacturing, affective not effective technologies, to augment existing practices not replace established ways of working, uniqueness not infinite replicability, and continual 'hands-on' interaction with tools not full automation.

Taking this digital craft ethos beyond the boundaries of the sector, the paper will conclude with an argument that our relationship with making technologies needs to evolve. If we continue to only use an established industrially focused myopic lens to view and assess the value of all technologies, (i.e. their productive efficiency, their speed, and their ability to accurately achieve predetermined goals), then as automation and machine learning have an increasing impact on labour markets and work, questions arise such as; what is the future of making? and what can, and do we want, our roles to be?

Keywords: craft, digital, CNC, technology, labour

1. Introduction – Digital making and a Digital Craft Ethos

The integration of digital tools into craft practices is now well established, with over 25 years of research and practice in the field, see Johnson (2017) and Shillito (2013). Within my own research practice, e.g. see Autonomatic research group (2003-14), this ongoing project continues my interest in investigating the aesthetic opportunities offered by digital technologies. This work is underpinned by a broader consideration of the role and significance of technological mediation within craft practice, and associated debates concerning, value, authenticity, the handmade, craftsmanship and skill, e.g. McCullough (1996), (Pallasmaa (2009), Ingold (2013).

The paper presents a series of wooden tableware and associated drawings that I created using various configurations of computer aided design (CAD), specialist toolpath software, computer numerically controlled (CNC) milling, a smart pen, a cutter/plotter, watercolour painting and traditional wood carving techniques in order to create hybrid surfaces which are not easily categorized as digital or analogue, so questioning the role of the hand and of mediating technologies in a creative making practice.

Work by other practitioner researchers in the UK have used aspects of the technical approach taken in this project, including: the use of CNC milling for the creation of surface pattern for ceramics (see Bunnell in Zoran (2015)) and the exploration of toolpath software as a creative realm by Masterton (2007) in producing one-off metalwork pieces. In addition, Jorgensen (2013) has explored the capture of hand gesture to create unique glassworks. Most recently Grimshaw (2017) has documented the use of CNC milling in the production of wooden tableware pieces. However, the specific way in which technologies, processes and materials have been orchestrated in my work presented here is new.

As this project explicitly explores the relationship and interplay between hand and machine, or between the analogue and the digital, it could be framed as a 'hybrid practice' (Zoran, 2015). This notion has been explored and interrogated by Human Computer Interaction (HCI) focused researchers: e.g. Devendorf & Rosner (2017), Devendorf & Ryokai, (2015) and Kim et al (2017). However, their strategies have tended towards the theoretical and/ or underplaying the value of resolved material outcomes as intrinsic to their approaches or to the validation of their conclusions. As a craft practitioner researcher, I have both an inclination to creating work that can have value as outcomes-in-themselves and as manifestations of physical evidence that supports any research claims being made.

An underlying premise in all my digital craft projects is that tools can be considered not as neutral means to predefined ends, but as active and constructive elements within the creative making process. As such this project is framed by the proposition that digital production technologies can be translational rather than reproductive (i.e. they do not simply reproduce virtual designs, but can play an active and essential part in the characteristics of the final physical forms). I would argue this is a particularly open morphogenic craft-oriented mindset, and distinct from the hylomorphic way in which designers and engineers approach this toolset to fulfil predefined goals (Ingold, 2013).

Moreover, and inspired by Wallace's 'unpicking of the digital' (2014) in which she challenges assumptions and strategically reverses expectations about what digital technologies are 'good' for, I propose a digital craft ethos which aspires to:

- fidelity not accuracy
- sensitive making not efficient manufacturing
- affective not effective technologies
- augment existing practices not, replace established ways of working

- uniqueness *not* infinite replicability
- continual 'hands-on' interaction with tools *not* full automation.

This reframing of technology in terms of role and value will be returned to in section 4 of the paper when I use reflections made during the undertaking of this project to instigate and inform a wider discussion focused on the future role of human making in an increasingly automated world that is currently being envisioned and discussed by many, e.g. Susskind (2020) and Benanav (2020). This will include reflections on some of their propositions for the ways in which this change in relationship between labour and economic value will impact on individuals and wider society. It will move on to outline how technologies, especially those associated with production, are commonly considered through an instrumental lens which can be situated within a positivistic philosophical tradition and aligns with the needs and aspirations of an industrial economic model. Drawing on the Pragmatic theory, an alternative conceptualisation of technology by McCarthy & Wright (2007) will be briefly outlined and used to reframe the debate over the trajectory of technological development. Finally, I will return to my proposition for a digital craft ethos and speculate on how this could provide a structure to reimagine forms of interaction with technologies/tools driven by principles that move beyond pure instrumental efficiency, towards a more holistic perspective that seeks to rebalance the current consumer-oriented measure of value with the benefits of making things for the people who produce them (i.e. the value and satisfaction of making as a purposeful and meaningful activity).

It is worth emphasising here, that what is described in sections 2 and 3 of this paper is not intended to be propositions of what future making practices might involve or look like. I am conflating a practice-based research project and its outcomes with a speculative discussion in section 4 as an example of how making practices can be a mechanism for generating new propositions as well as new works. I would argue this 'thinking-through-doing' is an approach to generating ideas that craft practitioners and researchers may recognise and feel some affinity with.

2. The Ambiguity series

2.1 CNC milled tableware

My underlying intention for this series was to create final CNC milled oak pieces that have ambiguous surface characteristics; combining and contrasting analogue and digital aesthetics, while using an entirely digital means of production. The strategy to achieve this was to contrast a seemingly hand carved top surface with an explicitly digitally generated and cut underside. One of the benefits of CNC milling over other forms digital manufacture is the wide degree of flexibility it affords (i.e. material selection, cutting tool shape and size, toolpath creation and cutting speeds). This provides the maker with an array of opportunities to create a wide variety of unique surface patterns and textures.



Figure 1: Three axis CNC milling machine used for all production.



Figure 2: Screen Shot of toolpath generation (note: the list of numerous different cutting regimes and tooling parameters.).



Figure 3: Fine cutting the top surface prior to surface texturing

Using some form of analogue input (i.e. hand drawn) was a key aspect to the project and for this an Anoto pen was used. This technology was developed for physical note taking and uses physical paper printed with an ultrafine dot pattern and an ink pen with a highresolution camera that can read the dots and so locate the position of the pen on the paper at any point in time, this allows physical notes to be translated into a digital pdf format. I used this capability as a mechanism to capture physical drawing (see Figure 4) in a vector format and these were then used to generate toolpaths with no loss of fidelity/ detail (i.e. all the nuance and irregularities of the hand drawn lines were retained (see Figure 5). Though similar, and it could be argued even more subtle, translations of physical gesture into a digital format could have been achieved with a Wacom tablet, iPad and apple pencil or similar, the act of making an analogue mark on a physical piece of paper seemed an important aspect of the process and aligned more faithfully with the project's ethos. The 2D line drawings were then projected onto the 3D form of the CAD models and the toolpaths generated were used to cut these drawn lines into the wooden forms (see Figure 6). It is through this novel approach to generating toolpaths that hybrid surfaces which are not easily categorized as digital or analogue were created.



Figure 4: Anoto pen used for analog drawing.

Figure 5: Drawing converted into a tool-path for milling.

Figure 6: Milling machine accurately reproducing hand drawn lines.

In contrast, the underside surface of the pieces exploits and celebrates the software that generates toolpaths to create complex surface patterns and textures. In distinction to aspirations in design engineering that seek to reproduce a digital design as accurately as possible in physical form, this approach explicitly aims to subvert the software's mission to create optimum toolpaths to efficiently reproduce CAD designs. A range of techniques where deployed to achieve this, including; deceiving the software by mismatching settings with the actual tool shape and sizes used, and projecting tools paths onto a virtual model that was slightly different from the physical pieces. Through this approach a visual language can be created that is clearly digital in origin and is rooted not in predetermined design work, but is born out of the mediation of the technologies (both hardware and software) used (see Figures 6 & 7).



Figure 7: Surface patterns created through software optimisation of toolpaths.

Figure 8: Underside of dish with milled surface pattern.

Figure 9: Completed dish, underside.

I created a range of pieces of tableware within this subproject, each utilized the hybrid hand drawing method, as described previously, on their top surfaces. Their undersides were used to explore the range of surface textures and patterns that can be created through varying the parameters within the toolpath software (i.e. I did not design the patterns themselves, but controlled the way in which the software calculated optimum cutting regimes to generate the final designs). Thus, the work seeks to embody native digital design with a hybrid analogue/digital approach.



Figure 10: Bowl, Platter and Dish. 2018.



Figure 11 & 12: Oval dish, 370x260x60mm, CNC milled, rust stained oak.

2.2 Digital 'Drawings'

As a parallel activity I developed a set of digital prints to accompany the milled pieces. The imagery is based on the toolpaths generated by the software to control the CNC milling machine for each of the pieces. The intention was not to create direct illustrations but to use this as an alternative strategy to explore the visual language that the software generates in its mission to optimize the paths that the cutting tools will follow. Figure 13 illustrates this, the initial tool paths clearly show the 'inaccuracies' of the analogue hand drawn input, but as they are iterated by the software they are resolved into geometrically perfect straight lines and arcs. In utilizing and celebrating this tension between the analogue and the digital these drawings contribute to the wider concerns of this body of work.





Figure 13: Drawing on Small Bowl, detail.

Figure 14: Drawing on Small Bowl, A1 Digital print. 2018.

3. The Interference/integration series.

3.1 CNC milled work

To complement the previous series, this set of wooden pieces, and associated digitally augmented hand painted watercolours, don't seek to be ambiguous about their making processes. They explicitly combine established handcrafting techniques (i.e. hand carving and painting) with digital production processes (i.e. CNC milling and digital plotting) to create hybrid analog/digital artefacts. Through these works I sought to create a conversation between hand carving and milling and begin to articulate a language that is recognized as distinct and is neither quite (hand) made or (machine) manufactured. This aspiration led to new work flows that were more complex than used in the previous series and required an extended timescale and pace. They also necessitated a greater attention to both digitalphysical interface and the natural irregularities of the materials used. As such they embodied risk at more points along the whole timeline of the making process.

The creation of the 3D work started, not as it did previously with a CAD model, but sourcing green (unseasoned) wood and using traditional techniques and tools (i.e. axe, adze, spoke shave and chisel) to carve bowl and platter forms (Figures 15 & 16). These were then left to season as, unlike carving which is made easier by using green wood, milling can produce poor surface qualities. The forms were then scanned using a white light scanner (Figure 17) to produce highly detailed digital models that captured the cut marks and other surface texture of the bowls (Figure 18). Other photogrammetry based scanning techniques were explored, but even sophisticated and expensive set-ups did not capture the level of detail required.





Figure 15: Traditional green wood tools and techniques were used to carve bowls.

Figure 16: 1st stage completed bowl left to slowly dry to season the wood.



Figure 17: Scanning bowl using a white light scanner to produce high definition digital models.

The scan data was used to create surface models of the physical forms. It is worth noting here that there was no need to address the challenge of creating an accurate and cohesive full 3D models of the bowls, all that is required to create toolpaths that fit to the bowls' surfaces are surface models of either the topside or underside of the bowls, depending on which I was intending to mill (see figure 19). This strategy exemplifies the distinction between a design engineering mindset when using the digital toolset, which aspires to a direct correlation between virtual CAD model and physical world, and hence would strive to produce a perfect full scan of an artefact. In contrast a more pragmatic digital craft approach seeks to identify strategies to achieve a particular task, with no aspiration or need to produce this correlation between the digital and physical.

Working in CAD/CAM software, in this case Fusion 360, a variety of cutting regimes were explored and toolpaths generated that mapped onto the scanned bowls' surfaces (see figure 20). When the position and tool origin of the physical forms are aligned to those in the virtual environment (see figure 21) then surface patterns can be milled onto the surfaces of the bowls that do not eradicate these hand carved surfaces but follows and overlays them (see figures 22 & 23). In this way the strategy deployed sought to produce physical artefacts that integrate the analogue and the digital, and so be truly hybrid in nature.



Figure 18: Cut marks and other surface detail picked up by the scanning process.



Figure 19: Wire frame of surface CAD models, mended, scaled, and oriented.



Figure 20: The generation of toolpaths (shown in blue) that follow the surface of the scanned forms.

To reflect on the way in which this process aligns (and misaligns) with established understandings of a craft practice, while the workmanship of risk (Pye, 1968) is still unquestionably present in the early stages of hand carving, it does not exclusively lie in this stage of the making process. The risks that are distinct, and worthy of recognition in this hybrid method, are in the practical and conceptual aligning of the digital with the analogue. At this boundary, where the static and unyielding digital world meets the material vicissitudes of living wood there is a negotiation in which aspirations of accuracy, and the reproducibility of a digital form, give way to seeking fidelity and sensitive synthesis. So, although there are aspects of the digital at play, there are no undos and no option to start over. Each piece is therefore a one-off, bringing together a particular piece of green wood uniquely carved, with a toolpath that maps only onto that form, in a particular way, at a certain point in time. Assumptions of speed and efficiency in the use of digital tools are confounded by the strategies used here. It is not that there is always a different, and accelerated, pace to a craft practice that integrates digital technologies, but that the rapid and more time-consuming aspects that make up the composition of the whole design and production process are often re-orchestrated.



Figure 21: Aligning the origins of the physical bowls on the milling machine to those in the toolpath software.



Figure 22: Digitally generated surface patterns cut onto the bowls that follow the form of the hand carved original.



Figure 23: Detail of milled underside of a bowl illustrating the interplay between digitally cut surface texture with irregular hand carved form.

A range of oak tableware was created in this series each using differing combinations of hand carving, tool size/shape and CNC cutting regimes to explore digital and physical mark making, with the aim of developing a vocabulary for a new hybrid language synthesizing hand and machine aesthetics (see figures 24-28).



Figure 24: Round Bowl, 320x260x100mm, hand carved and CNC milled rust stained oak. 2020.



Figure 25: Arrow Bowl, 420x160x40mm, hand carved and CNC milled, rust stained oak. 2020.



Figure 26 & 27: Long Platter, 450x155x45mm hand carved and CNC milled, rust stained oak. 2020.



Figure 28: A selectin of hybrid surfaces and textures from across this series of pieces.

3.2 Hybrid Drawings

A hybrid drawing accompanies each of the wooden pieces and like the previous series, the imagery has been derived from toolpaths. However, there is a distinction in the processes used to generate these works. The starting point is the creation of traditional watercolour drawings which are then overdrawn using a digitally controlled plotter/cutter which was adapted to hold a variety of pen types and sizes, so extending the repertoire of marks achievable (see figure 29). Unlike many of the toolpaths generated in the Ambiguity series from CAD models of bowl forms, the toolpaths generated from the far more geometrically complex hand carved bowl scans resulted in a much richer and less predictable set of surface patterns (see figures 30 & 31). Broadly this set of drawings seek to find a sympathetic integration of the digital and analogue, rather than set up a tension or dichotomy, (see figures 32 & 33).







Figure 29: Graphtec cutter/ plotter used for the production of 2D in this series.

Figure 30 & 31: Round Bowl & Long Platter hybrid drawings (detail)



Figure 32: Long Platter hybrid drawing, A1 watercolour+pen plot. 2021

Figure 33: Round Bowl hybrid drawing, A1 watercolour+pen plot. 2021

3.3 Returning to the digital craft ethos.

In this interrelated series of work I have sought to gently challenge the expectations and assumptions that are commonly made in relation to digital tools and their attributes and characteristics.

To return to the digital craft ethos proposed in the introduction: Fidelity *not* accuracy, sensitive making *not* efficient manufacturing, effective *not* effective technologies, augment existing practices *not* replace established ways of working, uniqueness *not* infinite replicability, and continual 'hands-on' interaction with tools *not* full automation, I hope the work presented here demonstrates a number of ways in which this ethos can play out in terms of both process and outcome.

The next section will move onto outlining the recent, but not new, debates and concerns associated with developments in technology, especially automation and machine learning, and their impact on the need for human labour and the future of work.

4. 'What will people do all day?'

4.1 Automation, machine learning and the challenge to future work

In recent studies 30% of both US and UK workers think that their jobs will be replaced by robots and computers in their life time (Susskind, 2020). This kind of anxiety of technological 'progress' is clearly not new. The Luddites loom breaking in the late 18th and early 19th century Britain is one of most cited examples. However, the framing of this movement as anti-new technology per say is an oversimplification of their response to the way in which a capitalist system was using new weaving technologies to devalue their craft skills, subvert standard labour practices and threaten standards of living (Thomis, 1970).

These kinds of anxieties tend to focus on technology as a 'substituting' force, where technologies replace people (i.e. automation), rather than as a 'complimentary' force, where technologies augment people skills, both physical and cognitive. As Benanav (2020) suggests, "Automation is distinct in that it fully substitutes human labour, rather than merely augmenting human capacities" (p.6). Within the context of the UK both forces have driven productive (used in its broadest sense) efficiencies and so powered economic growth for over 200 years. Similar impacts can be recognised in other industrialised nations, even if timelines are dissimilar. While technologies have supplanted many job roles over this period in the UK, efficiencies have improved productivity, so average incomes have risen and demand grown, and this has increased the size of the overall economic 'cake' by over a 100 times in the last 300 years (Susskind, 2020). In addition, new jobs roles have arisen out of a technologically changing landscape to replace older ones with a trajectory from low skill, repetitive manual labour to higher skilled more cognitively focused and higher paid work. This has resulted in, uneven, but broadly improving living standards across the UK population. It is recognised that this is part of a far more complex set of sociopolitical forces (and exploitations) that play out at a global level, but the main point being made here by Susskind is that at a macrolevel, until very recently, the 'complimentary' technological force has offset the impact of the 'substituting' force and it's detrimental impact on employment.

However, there have been rapid developments in machine learning (i.e. artificial intelligence/AI) over the last decade or so, where the capabilities of machines systems and are no longer based on encoding existing human knowledge, but are rooted in the ability to process massive sets of data through increased computing power. Whereas the first 'purist' generation of developments in machine learning were based on mimicking prior human knowledge, this second-generation AI is more explicitly 'pragmatic' and task-orientated,

driven by the aim to achieve a goal in the most effective way, rather than using previous (human) ways of doing things as the basis for developing methods and strategies. This second wave of machine learning brings an increased number of tasks in reach of being more effectively achieved by machines than through human actions and decisions. This is resulting in an ever-increasing list of human skills, expertise, and job roles which machine learning and automation are, or will soon, challenge. Whether it is robotic manufacturing systems, self-driving cars or cancerous melanoma identification systems, there is a growing unease that the balance between the 'substituting' and 'complimentary' forces of technology is shifting irreconcilably, and we are moving towards a new era in which there will not be enough work for everyone to do. To bastardise Richard Scarry's seminal work, 'What *will* people do all day?'



Figure 33: Adapted, with kind permission, the cover image of 'What do people do all day'. Copyright, The Richard Scarry Corporation AG.

Speculations on the opportunities and challenges created by this step change in technological development have been numerous and varied. Dystopian futures are envisioned that are increasingly socially and economically divisive in which a small elite class have very high standards of living. For the rest 'data inputting' becomes the most significant new job opportunity, resulting in improved AI systems, and as a consequence reducing further the economic viability of, and hence need for, human skills, knowledge and experience; driving the value of the value of their labour down further. More utopian visions of a 'post-work' society are often tied to the creation of some form of universal basic income (UBI) and propose a 'leisure society' in which the dream of an equitable and prosperous 'post-capitalist' global future for all is realised (e.g. Bastani, 2020). Most theorists sit somewhere in-between, recognising the scale of the challenge to existing

economic models and social structures, but also suggesting there are possible routes to preferred futures that at least aspire to be equitable (e.g. Susskind, 2020).

4.2 Narratives of Technology

Although diverse in political inclination and socio-economic modelling, whether positive or negative, measured or optimistic, literature in this field tends to focus on the impact and implications of technological change with limited consideration of the underlying conceptualisation of technology. This frames debate and discussion around strategies for living well in the future and tends towards a reductive mechanistic conceptualisation of technology. The value of technologies is most commonly measured in quantitative terms; for their speed and/or efficiency and linked to productivity and so directly, or indirectly, to financial benefit. This is a characterization of technology that sits broadly within the positivistic scientific tradition, aligns with the aspirations of modernity manifested through an industrial economic model, and as discussed earlier, has been one of the principal driving forces of market economies over the last 200 years. It is therefore unsurprising that this 'common sense' functional conceptualisation is so pervasive and potent when considering all technology, including the digital and associated machine learning and automation.

It would be disingenuous to argue that this way of framing the role, application and value of technology has not had, and will continue to have, huge benefits to individuals, communities and wider society. The prospect of an increase in the efficient creation of services and products, brought about by AI and automation, that lower the barrier of access to the point they are universally free, is unquestionably a goal worth aspiring to (Mason, 2019). This is with the proviso it is believed that this is a realistic future scenario in which the beneficiaries of market and consumer driven economies will relinquish their economic power and control!

However, as briefly sketched out earlier, this framing tends to limit the recognition of the impacts of technology to the instrumental. Broadly, it considers technologies in terms of practical means to predetermined ends, a way of achieving a particular task. Bound up with this is also a sense of a 'technological imperative' (Chandler, 1995) in which technological progress has its own momentum, so what can be developed, will be developed, with limited consideration of impacts beyond the particular task to be achieved. More specific to this paper, productive tools, digital or otherwise, have been aligned to objective measures of speed, efficiency, productivity and accuracy, and interactions that are procedural, effective and deterministically repeatable. This is often expressed in ethically neutral aphorisms such as 'they are just tools' and 'they just help get the job done.' This framing has a simple logic that neatly sidesteps the need to fully recognise the complexity of real-world situations in which distinguishing and isolating causes (means) and effects (ends) is often difficult, or even impossible.

There are differing theoretical frameworks that provide alternative characterisations of technology that recognise, and seek to understand, the wider implications and significance of technologies as mediators of our experience of being in the world. Drawing on the Pragmatic philosophy of John Dewey McCarthy and Wright (2007) argue that we don't just use technology, but we live with it, we *experience* it; it has emotional impact and significance in our lives. Their work explores the *feltness* of our experience of technologies. From a Pragmatic perspective, knowing, doing, feeling, and making sense are inseparable.

"Dewey's perspective on human action—the key to understanding felt experience—is that action is situated and creative. There can be no separation of means and ends." (McCarthy & Wright, 2007 P 17)

Furthermore, Dewey emphasises that:

"... means are not merely neutral ingredients of a plan: they have inherent values and disvalues...The choice of means, in short, enters into and qualifies the nature of the end." (Scheffler, 2012 PP 230-231).

This revaluation of the relationship between means and ends challenges the neutral instrumental perspective and creates space to think more broadly about the implications and consequences of taking a particular course of action and application of technology.

McCarthy and Wright also promote:

"The pragmatist approach to aesthetics and opens up for us the possibility of aesthetic experience in work, in education, and in interaction with technology, not just in interaction with high art objects" (2007 P 19)

This inclusive consideration of aesthetic experiences to include enriching and fulfilling interactions with technologies, further reframes how we measure the value of a technology both to end-users/consumers, and as significantly, to makers/producers.

Aligned with this perspective Pacey (1999) argues for a move from a limited 'objectcentred' consideration of technology, linked to procedural task-oriented approaches, to a broader 'people-centred' approach that recognises the value of care, context, personal fulfilment in productive labour, and the significance of the interrelationship between consumption and production (using and making).

4.3 Return to 'work'?

For many commentators, including Susskind and Bastani, a future without viable work for large sections of the population is inevitable and hence they believe we should plan for a new 'leisure-society', made viable through some form of UBI system. But within this proposition is the underlying implication that there is an explicit distinction between work and leisure, and that work is defined only as wage labour and that endless leisure is a universal aspiration. This limited definition of work, understood principally as monetary exchange for labour within a market economy, not only ignores a range of other modes of exchange (e.g. skills swaps, gifting etc.), but also underplays other physical, psychological and social aspects of work. It does not take full account of, or appreciate the satisfaction, dignity and wellbeing that can be gained through being usefully and meaningfully productive and has been articulated by many, for example Richard Sennett (2008) when he reasserts the aspiration to make things well as end in itself, and William Morris (1884) when he argues for a socialist future in which all labour should be attended with pleasure. I have purposefully selected two authors closely associated with the crafts alongside reflections on my own hybrid craft practice, to frame this argument concerning the value and meaning of work, because craft (work) is now undertaken, and often defined, as both work and/or leisure. Whilst I acknowledge there is always a risk of idealizing craft, I would argue that within craft practices there is recognition of the significance of the process (the means) of making, both in terms of satisfaction it gives to the individual and to the quality of the outcome (the ends). And this, as Sennett (2008) argues, is independent of the economic measurements of the value of the labour involved.

Therefore, if there is a broader consideration of how the values of being 'productive' are assessed in the future, framed by a craft-oriented ethos, then terminologies such as 'work' and 'leisure' maybe redundant, and the baggage they bring with them unhelpful in nurturing preferable new ways of living.

4.4 Conclusion - Crafting Futures

It has been proposed here that if an alternative Pragmatic lens is applied when developing and using technologies, whose ultimate goal is **not** to remove the need for human input/ labour, then this creates the potential for a parallel mode of technological engagement that changes the current dominant emphasis: from effective (efficient) to affective (i.e. felt), from focusing on the ends to recognising the significance and values of the means, and from concentrating on people as consumers/end users, to a greater appreciation of their role as producers/makers. This perspective reasserts the role of technologies as complimenting rather than substituting human skills and experience, it aligns with the 'digital craft ethos' that has been proposed here, and seeks to assert the value of people being productive as a route to wellbeing.

I argue would that thinking more carefully about *all* the ways in which technologies can create value could lead to different avenues of technology development and provide opportunities for richer relations with our future tools. I would also contend that this does not discount the role of the digital, but it requires the mindset of the craftsperson to help direct us along a path of sensitive, appropriate, and humane technology development and adoption. One of the ways this may be manifested is as new forms of digital/analogue 'hybrid' practice?

This is a vision of meaningful productive work and use of technology that can be aligned with the ambitions of William Morris and the wider Arts and Crafts movement, who, as a response to the injustices of the first industrial revolution, sought to create more ethical and equitable manufacturing systems that promoted dignity and wellbeing within a labour force. This movement may not have succeeded in developing a sustainable economic model in the context of an industrial economy in which labour power was a key component, however, in the context of an impending future in which AI and automation has the potential to remove the need for, and hence the value of, human labour from significant areas of the economy, then there is the possibility to revisit the aspirations of the Arts and Crafts movement. Through a Pragmatic characterisation of technology alternative modes of production can be imagined, that are complimentary to AI controlled automated systems, but are less tied to market economics and valued as much for their human centred process (the making) as for the final outcomes (the products).

So, to conflate Susskind's (2020) book title 'A World Without Work: Technology Automation and How We Should Respond', with Morris's (1884) lecture title 'Useful work versus useless toil', should our mission be; 'Technology, automation and move to a world with only useful meaningful work?'

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Author's Bio



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Online Service Design for Craft innovation

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Abstract. Traditional crafts in Egypt have succeeded in bringing the rich history of the country to the modern fast paced contemporary life. This is achieved when artisans apply traditional techniques to craft products to be used in everyday life. The purpose of this paper is to contribute to promoting activities that develop traditional crafts in Egypt. The traditional crafts scene in Egypt is guite alarming. There are more than two hundred traditional crafts in Egypt, after the disappearance of 70 crafts while 30 other crafts are about to die, this makes it crucial to support the 100 crafts which are fighting to survive. (Ghazali, 2018). Recently, there has been a growing interest in promoting crafts in the development agenda of social enterprises in Egypt. The collaborations between social enterprises, designers and artisans can contribute significantly in solving the problem of crafts extinction. In order to support this argument, interviews and case studies were conducted, along with a survey of 105 participants. Product Service System will be implemented to create a platform which will enable all stakeholders to work effectively together. This platform is a website that aims at promoting collaborations between designers and artisans. It will also provide open access for Egyptian crafts to the international market.

Keywords: Traditional Crafts; Product Service System; Online Platform; Connecting Stakeholders.

1. The paper introduction

"This item is handmade" is a label that celebrates human creativity and individuality. This label tells the story of a very long journey of hand skill. This skill makes the item very unique to the extent that family members pass it down from generation to generation. The uniqueness of handmade products can never fade away because the hand can never make the same item twice. This is why owners of handmade products feel special when possessing these products.

Traditional crafts are not yet recognized as an official sector of trade. This is because the logistics of this sector lacks established standards since the whole craft business is relying on the artisan himself, he is the one who needs to produce, market, sell and develop. (Awad, 2011)

There are some features which characterize traditional crafts. First, it is among the professions which can adapt to and develop with humans across different contexts. Second, the number of artisans in the workshops is relatively low which is around 10 artisans. Third, it is highly related to art and thus needs high traditional hand skills. The capital of the workshop business can be calculated by the simple tools the artisan owns. (Awad, 2011)

Traditional crafts made by local artisans represent the domestic language of society, which is an indication of the common understanding of the community of meanings and symbols. Each craft was developed to serve a specific need and each symbol was designed to communicate a certain meaning. Tribes used to be represented by symbols which are drawn or appear in a form of embroidery on the textiles they wear. As a result, crafts are being used to maintain the folkloric sense of a society, even without understanding the whole historical background of each craft. The symbols are interpreted as a historical element for each country (Kouhia, 2013).

In Egypt, the craft sector is facing multiple problems in the marketing and distribution of products. This is due to the strong competition between crafts on one side and imported industrial products on the other. This is also due to the lack of knowledge about the market needs and demands results in producing products that are not needed in the market. This led to the wholesaling of the craft products and reducing the artisan profit margin. In addition, artisans lack the knowledge of the different means and possibilities needed to export these products. Other reasons include the inaccessibility of the needed material as well as low investments in this sector (Awad, 2011).

Usama El Ghazali, founder of Yadawaya – an organization aiming at preserving the traditional crafts in Egypt - travelled all over Egypt to collect information about the different crafts. He mapped all the traditional crafts in the form of an atlas for Egyptian handcrafts, stating the available crafts in each city. According to the Craft Atlas, 30 crafts have already disappeared and around 76 are on the way to disappear (Ghazali, 2018).

2. In between craft and design

In between folkloric traditions and innovation, designers are constantly trying to place themselves, aiming to maintain the link between traditions and innovation. They do that through reinterpreting the traditions which are inherited by the artisans and targeting recognition within the global market.

Designers are seeking to mediate between the modern and the traditional. Traditions need to be protected and maintained. This protection will allow the traditional elements

to live longer and be persevered across generations. Designers work on figuring out the best way for the traditions to be presented in the global market. The concept of modernity is considered to be the responsibility of the designer. Hence, the designer is acting as a moderator between creating modern trends that fulfill the demands for preserving the traditions (DeNicola & Wilkinson-Weber, 2016, P.82-84).

Communication between designers and artisans can be complicated at some points. Artisans can change the instructions of the designers. Designers can perceive this as the artisan's rejection to follow their recommendations, or it can be interpreted as the artisan's reflection on external factors. (DeNicola & Wilkinson-Weber, 2016, P.89) For better communication, artisans have to trust designers and go with the design flow. Meanwhile, designers should develop new ways to communicate their designs to artisans and accept some irregularity because of the nature of human labor production.

Crafts can play a role in the economic empowerment of a country by reducing poverty as well as preserving traditions. To reach this combination, designs have to be both produced through traditional crafts and marketable. This is thought to be the best way which will allow designers to design and artisans to produce (Suzuki, 2005, P. 23).

What the Chinese and the Egyptian cultures have in common is that the craft sector is dated back to the start of both cultures. Both of them have different crafts that are inherited through time. The role of design in developing traditional crafts has been discussed in the Chinese culture literature. The discussion is very relevant to the Egyptian traditional crafts market as articulated in the following four main points (Zhan,Walker, Hernandez-Pardo, Evans, 2017):

- There are different ways which document the crafts industry and preserve it from a historical perspective like in museums but no one is inheriting the technique. This is why it is important for designers to inherit the crafts from previous generations who were experienced in handcrafts.
- 2. There is a need for traditional crafts to get more people exposure which is achieved through design adjustment in the form of service, interaction or participatory design.
- 3. Developing the techniques of crafts production by introducing new means of technology and innovation which can make the craft production easier and accessible.
- 4. Creating value and improving entrepreneurial skills through establishing partnerships between designers and artisans in order to identify demands of the market and visualize them in contemporary ways that are later executed by the artisans (Zhan, Walker, Pardo, Evans, 2017).

2.1. Insights

Based on the collected data by the author from field research, some insights have been developed. The data was collected through interviews with the stakeholders of crafts production in Egypt, i.e., artisans, designers and organizations. These insights will be presented in three main sections: designers, artisans and organizations.

Three different locations were selected to interview artisans. The first location was the Fustat neighbourhood in Cairo which is regarded as one of the main locations of pottery in Egypt since it is known to be home to traditional artisans. A pottery school is located in the neighbourhood where some designers are learning pottery. In this neighbourhood, four artisans were interviewed along with a pottery instructor in Art Jameel institute. The second location was Tunis village in Fayoum where a pottery village is located. A total of eight interviews were conducted there. The first interview was conducted with Evelyne Porret, the founder of Tunis village. Seven artisans from the village itself were then

interviewed. The third and last location was Kilim village in Kafr El Sheikh where three interviews were conducted with artisans who were already working or used to collaborate with designers.

The reason for choosing to interview these stakeholders is their achievements as well as their influential role in this sector. Artisans are the main power in producing and teaching the craft. Designers will be the link to identifying and understanding the market needs, while enterprises mediate between artisans and designers, in case the connection does not exist.

Design proved that it has the potential to develop traditional crafts and open new markets to the crafts. It can address new target groups and help in developing production techniques and merge between different crafts.

As for quality, it should be highly considered in order to be able to reach the right market segment. Quality entails that there should be consistency in the craft production. One of the great aspects that can allow a lot of development in the craft sector is to create a bigger room for the designers to experiment in order to reach new approaches to promote the crafts market other than the traditional approaches. One of the main elements in developing crafts is to attempt to export their products and create a great international acceptance for them while respecting the fair-trading systems.

2.1.1. Designers:

There are a number of challenges that face designers in the crafts market such as communication problems with artisans. Artisans are usually using terminologies related to the craft, which remain unclear to the designers. Designers need to build a strong relationship with the artisan they are working with to make communication easier. As for quality, artisans are able to produce very high quality, yet it is easier for them to reduce the quality and sell more. While designers are very selective towards the quality. Authenticity and uniqueness within the traditional crafts are still very inspiring for designers. Lack of experimentation is another problem that faces designers as new designs require some experimentation, i.e., trial and error. These experimentations require time and effort but not all artisans are willing to spend this time. Additionally, time management is very important because some artisans may easily miss deadlines. Also, it takes a long time for them to trust the designer. Another common challenge is the one-man show as it is a very common problem within design start-ups. Designers try to play all the roles; marketing, production and design. In some cases, this can work but in many other cases, this is very hard to achieve and sustain.

2.1.2. Artisans:

As for artisans, they face the problem of the Inaccessibility to some of the materials needed for production. Another challenge artisans face is Industrial competitions as craft products are competing with the cheaper and higher quality industrial products. Additionally, they need to secure a source of money. They also need to work with designs that can be easily implemented. This is why designers need to know the limitations of any craft. It is important for artisans to guarantee that the craft they are practising still has the potential to be taught and passed down to their children.

2.1.3. Organizations:

As for the entities which are working on crafts development, they are aware of the importance to link crafts and design. These entities are working on finding opportunities to export traditional crafts. They are also aware that craft products should be well marketed.

They prefer working with the same designers every-time because it is easier for the organization and the artisan but it limits the amount of creativity.

2.2. Challenges in the Sector

In this section, a number of challenges facing the crafts sector in Egypt are introduced and discussed. The first challenge is not inheriting traditional crafts by younger generations. This is one of the most common and worldwide problems facing traditional crafts. There are a couple of reasons that lead to the spread of this problem. Crafts are originally coming from the rural areas as these crafts were invented to serve a specific need, yet with time they were replaced by the industrial products. The new products are relatively cheaper than the handmade ones which made the local demand for the handicrafts decrease. This situation led some artisans to start finding new professions to be able to survive. Artisans sent their children to learn other disciplines rather than traditional crafts to be able to secure them more and better work opportunities.

Another challenge is tourism problems in Egypt. Tourists are highly attracted to traditional crafts. In Egypt, Tourism used to be one of the main pillars for the Egyptian economy before 2011. The flotation of the Egyptian pound resulted in the increment of the raw material and this affected the end price of the crafted product. Additionally, according to the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, Covid-19 has highly affected the tourism industry in Egypt. In 2018 before the pandemic Egypt managed to create total revenue of 174.1 billion EGP from the tourism which is calculated as 15% of the country's GDP (Egypt: OECD TOURISM trends and policies 2020: Oecd library) with 48% increase of international arrivals. All of this has been negatively affected after the lock down due to the pandemic and having Egypt red flagged destination from some of countries affected the crafts sector among many other businesses.

Another challenge is that artisans are highly attached to their workshops. This attachment is a double-edged matter. On one hand, it is one of the very powerful elements for any crafts because it grants full commitment to the production process. On the other hand, this attachment requires people to approach artisans in their workshops in order to make their work visible. This highly affects the market exposure negatively as artisans are not trying to move to new markets.

One of the main challenges in the craft sector in Egypt is artisans' level of education. Generally, artisans are positioned on a very wide spectrum when it comes to education. As mentioned before, many crafts originate from rural areas, and the level of illiteracy in rural areas is relatively high according to statistics released in 2014. For example, Assyut, an Upper Egyptian governorate, suffers the highest rate of illiteracy at 30.2% especially among master artisans. On the other hand, it is common to find many artisans who can read and write, some with high school degrees and others with post-school degrees.

Lack of documentation is another important problem, which the traditional craft sector in Egypt is facing as nothing is documented or published. Artisan's information is highly scattered and finding the right artisan is about experimenting until the right one appears. This affects the prices of the products in that the same product can be priced differently in each and every area according to the retailer and the artisan. This also results in the Inaccessibility of the needed artisan for the designer.

The limited variety of products also may be called on stage. Generally, artisans are aiming to sell their products to foreigners and export them. This mindset gave the crafts the essence of souvenirs and this makes it very challenging for local inhabitants to buy this stuff.

The gap between designers and artisans is also a possible challenge for the crafts sector.

Artisans are very highly qualified in the techniques they are using. Meanwhile, in many situations, the designer is lacking a lot of knowledge in the craft and even if the designer tried to study this craft, the gained knowledge will never be comparable to that of the artisan who grew up with this craft. This gap in experience results in some designs that are inapplicable for the artisan. Also, artisans sometimes prefer not to experiment and try new things especially if it will affect the workshop production.

Last but not least, culture perception also affects the crafts sector in Egypt. Higher social classes prefer industrial products and deride handmade as poor, cheap and consequently low level. Yet, for the monthly income for many, artisan work is still playing a very big role in the Egyptian economy, some could survive better than others.

3. Applying Product Service System

It is important to facilitate the communication between designers and artisans. It has been observed that the existence of a moderator that works to bridge the gap between designers and artisans makes communication easier. As a result, the concept of an online platform has been chosen for this paper as it will have the capability to solve the problem of communication and connect the crafts sector stakeholders better together.

In order to be able to fill the gap between artisans and designers, the third main stakeholder will take part in this equation which is the organizations who have already been working with artisans for some time. This party is very important in the crafts sector in Egypt as it is filling the needed gaps. Organizations primarily have either business or charity backgrounds. The focus of this paper will be on the business organizations. These organizations are already working with traditional crafts and they are trying to sell their products. In addition, they have already built trust with artisans. They are also guaranteed to have technology access since not all artisans will have this privilege. This is why organizations are considered to be the perfect link between designer and artisan.

Design is still a very new field in Egypt, which makes it hard for traditional industries to understand its significant impact. The only way to be able to deal with this situation is to highlight all the successful collaborations and document them in order to encourage more craftsmen to collaborate with designers.

3.1. Challenges in the Sector

The Craft Hub is an open platform that aims at preserving traditional crafts in Egypt. The platform is designed to bridge the gap between designers and the organizations working in the craft field. The aim of the platform is to facilitate collaborations between designers and artisans through the hosting organizations in order to create newly designed products using traditional crafts. The collaboration can be either by creating a new design according to the demands of the organization or by creating a design context on which the designer can collaborate to get the ultimate design. The hub will give the opportunity for organizations to announce events and outsource designers.

The main focus of the hub is to get high quality designs. This will be achieved by having the option of creating a profile for the designer and for the organization which will enable both of them to work together. For example, the organization has to prove the work of the designer and the designer has to connect to the organization society. After the confirmation from both parties, they will have an online contract which could be signed remotely.

This website will work as an online guide for all collaborations happening in the field of

Traditional Crafts. This will facilitate access to the desired entity and document all the initiatives, which will help in preserving traditional techniques of craft making.

This combination will facilitate international collaboration as well. All the organizations will be easily accessible for online outsourcing. The organization and the platform will work as a middleman which will guarantee the reliability, capability, quality, durability and consistency of the crafts.

The interaction flow of the website was tested, through creating a design call from the social enterprise who will act as a mediator between designers and artisans.

3.1.1. Purpose:

The purpose of testing the platform is to understand the communication flow between designers and social enterprises. In addition, communication needs to be tested between designers and social enterprises because there is a very huge number of craftsmen who do not have access to technology. The core of the communication is to be able to develop designs for artisans who are not aware of the importance of designs to their crafts. The platform helps in clarifying and understanding the requirements of producing designs without the existence of the designer.

In order to ensure that the communication will be through a medium which is the platform, there is no direct contact between individuals as communication will be online.

3.1.2. Procedures:

Yadawee had a project vacancy that allowed the author to conduct the test. The organization was on the lookout for new designs to exhibit at Ambient (an annual exhibition for crafts and accessories in Germany). It was specifically looking for textiles and scarves designs. Yadawee stated that it was looking for designers who are aiming to get exposure for their work and exhibit it internationally.

Through a website mockup, a connection between two designers (Alaa Gamal and Norhan Mansour) and Yadawee was made. After understanding the task through checking the prototype-website, the designers were informed about the required task through online messages, pictures and voice notes.



Figure 1: Project page - The Craft Hub



Figure 2: Initial Design by Alaa Gamal

Yadawee successfully received the designs and the production took place in order to be exhibited in Ambient. Designers were missing information about the textile characteristics and how it interacts with the paint.



Figure 3: Instant messaging - The Craft Hub

3.1.3. User tests Results

Two designers who participated; Alaa Gamal and Nourhan Mansour. Nourhan Mansour, one of the designers who participated in the user tests, managed to create designs which could be implemented due to their simplicity and applicability using silk printing. The designs were exhibited in the Ambient 2019 annual Exhibition in Frankfurt/Germany. The design created by Alaa Gamal, the second designer who participated in the user tests, was hard to implement due to its complexity as it was merging between two different crafts. Also, time constraints prevented her from implementing her design.



Figure 4: Final Products from the designed patterns scarves and aprons - By Yadawee
The results of the user tests highlighted the importance of improving communication between stakeholders. For example, the brief of the design should be more specific and clearer. Also, the craft technique, the user, place of display and end product need to be mentioned clearly to the designer before starting. Unfortunately, Yadawee was unable to mention all the needed information from the very beginning. They stated they needed new designs, but the information was not clear and this affected the engagement of the designers. Also, Yadawee was late in their responses to designers. This resulted in receiving an applicable design meeting their demands and production capabilities only from one designer, while they lost the other designer.

It is important to mention some other social Enterprises that expressed their interest in participating in the user tests. Aga Khan foundation, for example, stated that the concept of the website is highly needed and there is always a need to find the right designer who is willing to make crafts products. The Creative Mediterranean community for designers also promised to provide the list of the designers they have on their network. As for Yadawee, it participated with the scarves and textiles design.

3.2. Prototyping

The existence of the social enterprise was mandatory during the process as it was easy to communicate. However, there was the problem of late responses from the social enterprise which created a negative impression as the designers started to lose interest. This negative impression is highly connected to the concept of communicating online as the user usually expects fast responses from online platforms. Therefore, there was a need to create a calendar through which all team members can keep track of the workflow and create notification when they have a question which needs a fast reply.

The test also revealed that there is a bigger number of crafts which are not under a specific social enterprise. As a result, the upcoming test was focusing on how to create the connection between designers and artisans directly.

There is a big number of artisans who are not tech savvy. As a result, a second testing of the concept of an online platform was needed to be able to identify the artisans willing to use an online application to promote their craft.

Before starting the test there are some requirements that need to be fulfilled for the test to take place. First, the designer will mainly be the one who will ask for production, until reaching a point where the artisan is aware of the need of a design. Second, since crafts workshops do not have computers, there is a need for a mobile application as the possibility of having smartphones at the workshops is higher. Third, the application must be in Arabic. Finally, the application needs to have a very detailed orientation for the craft as it needs to guide the designer through the craft's details step by step. This will help the designer send a production request that is very clear for the artisan so it can be manufactured easily.

Pottery was chosen to be tested because it is one of the crafts that is widely spread in Egypt where there are different communities for potters. In addition, the production process is long and consists of more than one aspect and different steps so this makes the testing process applicable to other crafts as well.



Figure 5: Mobile Application Arabic version

3.2.1. Purpose:

The purpose of this prototype test was to create a direct communication between designers and artisans. It also aimed at creating a medium where artisans can fully understand the design form. This was implemented through breaking down all the details of the craft and walking the designer through the same process of filtering the design to know how to execute it exactly.

This prototype testing also helped in understanding the artisans' rationale to accept working online. The test also helped in assessing if the artisan would be able to follow the same design depending only on the technical drawing without the involvement of the designer.

3.2.2. Procedures:

Two artisans participated in this test. The first artisan is from Fustat, Cairo. Although he inherited the craft, he works from time to time with designers. The second artisan owns a workshop in Tunis village, Fayoum. He is well educated and he works as a pottery workshop supervisor in university.

Both artisans received designs from the three designers who participated in this test: Alaa Gamal, Soha ElSewerky and the author. Designers were requested to communicate their designs through technical drawings (all sides), digital rendering and a picture of the finishing Designers tested the application prototype and they chose all the details of the production after the designs were uploaded to the application with all the different means of visualization along with the designer choices. The prototype was then given to the artisans who were requested to implement the designs without any interference or introduction from the author.

3.2.3. Results:

The results of the test were discussed from the artisans' perspective. Mr. Gamal, the artisan from Fustat, got introduced to the application through Haitham Hedeia who is one of the pottery supervisors at the Fustat Art center and a pottery instructor at Art Jameel school. Mr. Hedeia was acting as a mediator between the application and Mr. Gamal. After understanding the concept, the artisan started to interact individually with the application and understand the designs which he will implement.



Figure 6: The artisan is being introduced to the application

3.2.4. Reflection:

The results of the test showed that the technical drawing needed to be printed especially with "messy" crafts. This is because the artisan's hand was full with clay and he was in need to check the measurements. The outcome was very similar to the technical drawings. Mr. Gamal, the artisan, was interested in the platform and the clearly requested: "What is this application, can you download it for me?"

The role of the mediator, Haitham Hedaia, was crucial in delivering the information to the artisan and to make sure that he was following the same design created by the designers. This is because the artisan might have the tendency to make changes in the design which was managed by Mr Hedaia. He stated that: "This application will have a great effect on exporting traditional crafts and in connecting Egyptian Crafts with the international market directly".

As for Mohamed Abouzeid, the second artisan who participated in the test and the owner of a workshop in Tunis Village, started directly to interact with the application and implement the design. The design was implemented correctly without any interference from the designer.



Figure 7: Mohamed Abouzeid interacting with the application

Abouzeid is already at a very advanced level of understanding the designs. He is a smartphone user and is already selling some of his products on Etsy. This made him very open to the idea of using an online application. He is a workshop supervisor at a design school which made him aware of all the details of the design without the need for any guidance in the process.

This clarifies that the role of the mediator between the designer and the artisan is essential in the time being in order to be able to control the production process and bridge the gap between the artisans and the designers.

4. Conclusion

The Traditional Crafts field in Egypt is complex where different social, cultural, economic and even political aspects come into play. There are no final or fixed solutions to the problems the traditional crafts are facing. The Craft Hub was designed to deal with some problems in the field such as the lack of crafts database in Egypt and the limited scope of the traditional crafts market. The reason for selecting these two problems to solve is that they can help in solving other problems in the future. Although the platform is still under testing and development, the concept of innovation and expanding the field is welcomed by the users. Further research will be investigating the potential of Egyptian crafts in the international market. The key to the success of this platform is the endless expansion of the database through continuous updating and adding more crafts. Also, the platform will need to be supported by the mobile application because this will support the online project discussion. There should be collaboration with the government to include as many artisans and social enterprises as possible.

The online platform test demonstrated acceptance and collaboration from all the involved stakeholders. Artisans with limited experience with technology were capable of being involved in the process. The artisans who will use the platform will need to have a background in technology and be capable of interacting through distance. The existence of a mediator is very important to help ensure the work quality. There should also be quality control systems that protect the quality of the production from the artisan's side and the design applicability from the designer's side.

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Paper Title: Traditional Craft and Skill in Digital age

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Presentation link.



Abstract. Due to the advent of digital technologies both art and art objects have undergone huge changes. This paper explores how lack of hands-on engagement has affected the traditional art objects and art-making practices, whether it is important to maintain this boundary between traditional and digital art and art-making, and further how this affects learning and teaching. The intent of this paper not a critique of modern technology and the advancement of digital gadgets, but an exploration of the manner in which it is used in art education.

In this paper my 15-year experience as a 3D studio instructor has been taken as a case study, with an attempt to try and understand where craft and technology interconnect. It further explores various ways technology can be integrated with craft, defined as making by hand. This paper is based on qualitative study of personal notes with reviews from international sources.

Keywords: integrated technology, traditional crafts, traditional teaching methods

1. Introduction

During the last two decades, a noticeable shift has been observed in the balance between concept, visual and technique, due to decades of postmodernist¹ research and practice. Concept has become the dominant factor, taking away the attention from the technique

¹Post-modernist: also spelled Postmodernism, in Western philosophy, a late 20th-century movement characterized by broad skepticism, subjectivism, or relativism; a general suspicion of reason; and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power. (Jacques Derrida, 1989)

and visual. In cultures where traditional crafts are still being used and practiced, craft making practices lent significantly to art and the art making process. Due to the recent shift towards more conceptual and technologically advanced art making processes, these craft-based art-making practices have suffered. Remote controls and touch screens are relatively new technologies, but they have influenced the lifestyle and the general behavior to the point where pressing buttons is considered a tiresome task and voice commands are a preferred mode of interaction. Students who have enrolled in higher education during the last eight to ten years have grown accustomed to engaging with their environment digitally. They bring this approach with them in the studio classes as well, where they either do not understand how to work with the traditional medium, or interact in a superficial manner. On reflection, this reluctance towards interactive engagement in the studio not only results in weak learning of form, concepts and craft; it also deprives them of exploring the relationship of materiality of a form.

The act of making things by hand can help refine motor skills and develop critical abilities as well as problem solving skills. It further helps an undergraduate level student to express his/her ability to imagine a world with his/her hands and look around in a fresh and positive way. This generation is too enclosed in their own bubble of digital world, so they don't observe the environment or allow them selves to be exposed to it. This results in lack of interaction with artisans, their craft and indigenous material specific to our South Asian region. In a broader context, this leads to no new development of techniques, process and creative ideas to propagate the craft forward.

Traditional art making and craft in the subcontinent entails social interaction. For example, a potter never works individually; he/she accepts the clay that has been wedged for him/her to create his/her final form. Similarly, a photographer also depends on post-processing for the final image generation. With technology growing at a fast pace, the need for interaction and sensory engagement is rapidly disappearing. The feel of tactile learning² is becoming more of a fear than being an opportunity to engage and interact with surroundings, (Essays, UK, 2018). But in today's world, tangible is not the only way to learn. With this digital age, new tools have been introduced to learn and develop the human brain including sensory and spatial engagement as in the case of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR)³ and Virtual Reality (VR)⁴.

The need to create and communicate is a basic human instinct. But the thought arises how art educators choose to incorporate the digital with traditional, as these will affect the way art and craft is taught in any institution. Since technology is here to stay, it needs to be incorporate as mandatory part of teaching practices. This will help encounter any adverse effects while at the same time harnessing its potential for deeper learning.

2. Paradigm of Skill and Craft in Digital age

In today's digital world, the need to understand the difference between skill and craft has become even more important and more evident to understand the differences between new skills and traditional skills. Through that understanding one can be clear to what degree we can apply them in the developing country like Pakistan where the studio teaching still

²Learning by doing "John Dewy"

³ It is an acronym for "Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response" (which is not officially classified as a condition by the sciences) that is first bandied about on the internet around the close of the first decade of the 2000s.

⁴ An artificial environment which is experienced through sensory stimuli (such as sights and sounds) provided by a computer and in which one's actions partially determine what happens in the environment, 1987

happens with traditional skills and craft. To understand the balance between traditional studio practices, where students already come with some or more understanding of today's digital tools. But the application of these digital tools is limited to data collection or for social media interaction. How can these new skills (information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy), be incorporated in 3D studio teaching and learning without making any obstruction to the traditional skills (working with hands, the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance). The process of working with materials itself is more fun and leaves a long lasting experience, which they can relate to and apply in their respective fields.

The reason I believe that Object Base Learning (OBL) is important as it defines the multi layers of learning and teaching can happen within a single object study, where the maker, skill, craft, idea and technology not only become part of studio learning but teaching also. When the students start the enquiry about traditional crafts, materials, and techniques, it will take each student into a different journey. Thus enabling the learner/student to start asking various questions; why? Where? How? And When? These questions will further lead the student towards multiple solutions and ensure using their own individual skills. This digital platform provides an open access for the students where they can choose to explore different levels of making/ craft, creativity. Some might take a path towards craft research, craft of the object or the maker or a historical context or it can lead to new technologies where students might start to enquire how crafts can be reconstructed with this new digital technology. Going back to basic meanings of; Skill: the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance, Craft: skill in planning, making, or executing: dexterity.

Thus we have established two different aspects of studio learning. The way forward is how to connect and bridge the gap between digital and hands on-learning by understanding the importance of both areas/fields. An interesting aspect was discovered during the examination of content about the technique and operational aspects of computer programs/ application, that digital coding is considered as a skill or a craft of making and developing these new program (Sennett 2018; Dufva 2018) "where a programmer is also a craftsman." (Bassam, 2006). So, it is important to note over here that the default settings of the app limit the possibility of chance and intuition. The object that is created works on two levels: The functional – its working and its form -the semiotic – the meaning it communicates through its function and form. Then one must investigate the part that mark making plays here. Keeping the above argument forward, one needs to see the role of apps are in this process, whether it is functional or semiotic. Khan is talking about the choice of software and student's ability to work with that software (2016).

Since the purpose of this study is to investigate enabling student engagement and learning in this fast changing environment of digital technology, I will investigate how students can be engaged in the 3D studio with materials and traditional crafts. Over the years, I have discovered that students prefer to engage with digital technology in the studio classes as well, they either don't understand, or they are hesitant to interact with traditional materials and methods. Traditional crafts have stopped growing with technology because students are unable to connect with traditional materials and techniques. We need now need to devise strategies to create a balance between digital technologies and traditional craft activities.

In Pakistan, there are two divergent schools of thought, one focus mainly on westerncentric conceptual art, and the other focuses more on conventional approach to art production based on technical expertise. The emphasis on conceptual aspects may lead one to neglect, that material skill establishes a system of cognitive enquiry, which is not possible without material investigation. They do not understand the importance of making meaning out of creating art based on technical skills or appreciate how it allows audiences to relate to art as more than an object of beauty. Therefore, the skill should be used to inform the process of enquiry and development rather than letting it take precedence over concept or visuals. Art is a balance; creativity is the process of arriving at that balance.

3. Traditional 3D studio

In studio, the learning happens by working together, seeing each other work, listening and questioning each other, and taking suggestions from our peers. This traditional 3-D studio environment helps students to reflect back on their projects and make confident decisions without feeling uncomfortable with the feedback. Students are more independent and self-sufficient. Peer learning and collaboration happens and dependency on the teachers reduces. The 3D studios encourage creativity and promote interdepartmental integration. Students work and learn at there own pace without any time constraints. Student centric learning happens using the traditional techniques and skills, where materials chosen by the teachers are true to tradition, local, cost effective and recyclable. Studio time is of the essence where collaborative learning happens and is important. There is a close relationship between the teachers and students, where teachers are quite aware of the weaknesses of individual students. Students have the opportunity to discuss ideas multiple times. Art, Design and Architecture are all human centric fields. The absence of this connection creates a void between the teacher and student, compromising the very concept.

Field trips are always an essential part of studio teaching, helping students establish a working bond with the artisan. New ideas emerge from these visits, which benefit both the student and artisan/ craftsmen. Exposure to the work environment, economic status of the craftsmen, zeal of that craft, all are factors, which are observed by the students first hand. As it has already been observed, there is a huge gap that has been created between the traditional teachers and the digital students. This gap is resulting in a deficit use of traditional materials by students and thus contributing to the decline of these crafts and their development in today's industry. New digital technologies are very important for evolution of art, design and architecture but one cannot dispense with indigenous traditional crafts and skills. Gardener (1983), Dewey (1934) has mentioned that craft and skills are important contributors for the brain development and for the future development of new technologies. Although digital age offers many definite advantages, however the realm of traditional crafts and skills is too diverse and monumental to be overshadowed by these digital tools.

Art as therapy is being used by well established ceramist artist⁵ and as well as endorsed by psychologist in today's time. The older and younger generations need to be well versed in both the design methodologies in order to coexist and prosper in the future. Some of today, digital tools that are widely used such as, Google books, sketchpad, computer, mobile phone and many more provide instant solutions to the students. This instant gratification has created a disconnection where the material itself seems tedious, laborious and time consuming. Example, working with clay will make them understand what kind of natural clay is available, the behaviour of clay under different conditions, limitation possibilities that can be achieved with that material. They can use the digital to gain theoretical knowledge about any given materials properties (clay), but will be unable to provide practical knowledge and understanding about its physical properties, which they need to experience in order to work with clay. A digital screen is unable to differentiate between wedged and unwedded clay lump. Wedging and kneading can be observed through a video but the tangible feeling of moisture when you handle clay is lost unless you explore it physically. Every individual reacts to clay differently and this cannot be explored till you

⁵ShaharZad Alam, Abeer Asim, Nabahat Lotia.

touch it and create with it. The therapeutic aspect of clay is an important physical quality that can only be experienced through sense of touch. "Craft creates intimate relations between problem solving and problem finding, technique and expression, play and work". (Sennett, 2008)

In spite of the students being heavily invested in digital tools, there is a general lack of interest in using these same tools to get information about the craft practices in Pakistan. This may be because of lack of critical thinking and problem solving, query based learning in the initial schooling years. This may also be a reflection of lack of exposure or shortcomings in our art and design education system.

4. A case study of 3D-studio on digital platform

In order to understand how a 3D studio (clay) would work within the limitations of a digital platform in a developing country, a case study was conducted. The entire theoretical framework was based on Digital phenomenon⁶. The discussion revolved around the journey into this virtual realm, how different teaching pedagogies, methodologies, digital tools and approaches can be used to engage students on the digital platforms, while looking specifically at 3-D Studio, where the main focus is on traditional skills and crafts. In order to teach and explore a practical, hands-on subject on a digital platform proved to be a challenge for the instructor as well as the students. The first challenge was because of the hesitation encountered during the interpretation of 2D to 3D through digital dominion. Secondly, the physical barrier between the instructor and student further complicated situation.

A complete shift from full time face-to- face studio teaching required a review of the observation of the process digitally. Material and craft based assignments previously taught in the 3-D Studio, using materials and tools in the workshop could no longer be carried forward. A whole new system of achieving the same learning objectives and outcomes had to be devised. Assignments had to be structured and organized in a totally new way, due to the non-availability of tools in students' homes. Materials like clay could no longer be used for facilitating projects on-line. This also compromised the exploration of other traditional materials such as wood, plaster of Paris, metal sheet and natural clay.

The emphasis of 3-D studio lies on both technical and creative problem solving methods; therefore, the challenge was how to facilitate a similar experience for the students using a different mode of teaching; through digital technology. It was important to keep a check on how students were using these digital tools to facilitate their digital skills but at the same time be aware of the traditional crafts and skills and hands-on learning as well. Initially the suitable digital tools were explored for a practical base teaching and learning. Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Google classroom, Zoom, Moodle, Schoology, Blackboard and Edmodo are some used in Pakistan.

The methodology of action research was applied to observe the change in the methodology of teaching face-to-face studio to online studio forum. The limitations of digital tools were explored and some new positive avenues came to light. Time constraints were no longer an issue as research became easy, and documentation became exciting. Students learned these digital tools and applications independently, adapting very easily. These avenues challenged the tried and tested teaching methods and strategies as well as traditional way of studio teaching and learning as giving feedback became tedious and inconsistent and rushed on these digital platforms as there was no fixed studio. Peer learning was also

⁶ Digital phenomena: Digital phenomena are unable to exist without the digital environment; they are dependent on some characteristic of the digital environment.

compromised as the physical environment turned into virtual, making visual comparison and learning impossible. The manual skills got limited on 2D surfaces, while manipulation of visual images, documentation of the process and video formats became the focus in the 3-D studio. It remains to be seen whether we have transitioned successfully from the conventional teaching mode to digital mode or are we trying to adopt the same objectives and outcomes on a new Digital platform. It may also turn out into a hybrid way of teaching a 3D studio where it switches to blended learning.

Incorporation of digital tools into teaching methodology was initiated with a demo tutorial for the students, explaining the brief in detail, illustrating with previous examples. Google Classroom made it easier to give summative feedback to students; tedious calculations of grading became fast and could be shared individually. It also made sharing ideas from teachers effortless except they were only visual. Google Meet and WhatsApp platform was used for instant feedback and to disseminate emails and detailed documentation and presentations.

As Pakistan is a developing country these digital tools had limitations; unpredictable connectivity, fluctuating electricity, which disrupted the live sessions and discussions repeatedly, economic factor, shared devices among siblings. Another drawback to this teaching and learning was that peer interaction could not be achieved. Even though there were some venues and platforms like live streaming on different Apps, where students interacted but that cannot replace the benefit of a physical interaction. Looking at the 21st Century teaching and learning, facilitating individual student needs to accommodate the eight multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983)⁷ is an essential need of present times. This approach will ensure that each individual learn according to his or her strengths and abilities. These issues can be addressed successfully using a digital platforms due to its wide spread application and usage.

The project discussed above is specifically designed to cater to the 4Cs of 21st century skills inculcated through Art Education: Creativity, Critical thinking, Collaboration and Communication. The on-line platform necessitating the new teaching methodology catered only to Creativity, Critical-thinking and Communication, while Collaboration could not be achieved in the same manner as in a face-to-face situation. While conducting this case study, I was compelled to apply the 21st century learning skills for my own pedagogy. Flexibility, Leadership, Intuition, Production and Social Skill, generally considered students' domain, applied to me as well as I also became a learner in the new process.

From a student's perspective this teaching and learning methodology required an increased stamina and concentration level. Multiple reasons can be cited for the above like lack of proper working space, difficulty in purchasing of tools, understanding constitution of the relevant material and digital fatigue. Both understanding and acquiring skills was compromised, therefore, the end product could not be judged purely on the merit of traditional skill. Manual work, which is an intrinsic aspect of traditional teaching, was reduced substantially and subsequently taken over by visual images. In order to make the process manageable, the size and scale was reduced considerably resulting in a complete shift in the core objectives and outcomes. Even though students understood the content and requirements of the project they struggled with the practical process of model making. Students as young adults are using digital gadgets, which are evolving their way of thinking. Through this kind of learning experience, their motor skills are significantly compromised and they may not be able to acquire or appreciate traditional skills later on in their professional life.

⁷Theory of multiple intelligences

As a researcher, I found that universally we are still trying to find balance between the craft practices and the digital world. This is true for researchers, art educators and art institutions alike. The digital tools in today's age have influenced the process of artmaking. I have personally observed the influence of these technologies at Beaconhouse National University (BNU) but the right balance between understanding skills and usage of digital tools could not be effectively achieved in Department of Visual Studies, University of Karachi (KUVS). This may be due to economic factors, as these digital tools could not be incorporated in a State University, as there are financial and administrative constraints. The students may have faced the same anxiety as us teachers with these changing teaching methods and strategies, from in-person to virtual environment. The additional challenge for students has been to use hands-on techniques with traditional materials while not having access to specialized tools in the workshop environment and studio technician input. Students' unfamiliarity with the tactile materials and their properties was exacerbated with the excessive use of these digital tools, therefore, the use of traditional crafts and skills has become minimal. Digital tools are still a relatively new field for art educators in Pakistan and the domain needs to be explored in greater depth.

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Author's Bio



Aliya has been associated with Art education since 2006 and is currently working as Assistant Professor and a sculptor. In recent works she has incorporated and challenged art making in the digital realm, experimenting with the new age technology, effort to combine traditional materials with new techniques. This paper focuses on the changes brought upon in the craft industry due to this digitalization.

Acknowledgement:

Many thanks to all my friends and students who supported me in my new journey; especially to Farah Rizwan and Yasmin Zehra Salman for their constant support and help in editing my paper.

Co-design dialogues through digital connectivity: sustaining future practice for traditional textile artisan communities in India

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Presentation link.



Abstract. Traditionally textile artisans in India created products for their local communities but a shift by rural village populations to larger urban centres has resulted in a disconnect between artisans and consumers of their handcrafted textiles. Discourse between textile design researchers within the theoretical framework of co-design increasingly advocate direct links between consumers, or users with the makers. They believe that the textile or garment has more intrinsic value if the maker and final user know each other, and so adding to the sustainability of the item. Co-design theorists Elizabeth Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers consider that digital connectivity has developed a more global inclusion in design. The proliferation of cheap smartphone technology over recent years in India has revolutionised communication access for traditional textile communities. Artisans, like others in India's lower socioeconomic sections of society, now have access in one device to digital communication, the internet and a camera that was previously beyond their financial capacity. In this paper I will discuss two co-design projects that I initiated between a Kashmiri artisan community in India and customers in Australia to produce two embroidered pashmina shawls. Digital connectivity between the inter-cultural participants was integral to this co-design project particularly as it continued throughout COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions. Based on a co-design approach the customers connected with artisans through digital communication including WhatsApp and Zoom. Digital communication enables inclusivity between participants with differences in language and culture. This availability for direct communication with the user will empower the artisans and provide a strategy for future sustainability of their craft.

Keywords: co-design; Indian textile communities; digital connectivity, handcrafted textiles; traditional textile artisans

1. Introduction

Digital connectivity has increased our capacity for communication, for real-time interaction between people from all corners of the world. But, as asked by Ravi Agrawal (2019) in India Connected does digital technology have the potential to transform the lives of those from less developed sections of Indian society including those in craft communities? Building on my own business experience over 20 years of working with artisans in India I completed a Master of Design (Emmett, 2015) where I interviewed artisans from different textile communities in the Indian states of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kashmir to learn of their viewpoints about their position and crafts in contemporary India. In concluding the research in 2015 I found that overall, at that time, artisan communities had been excluded from technological development in India (Litrell, 2010) lacking access to computers and the knowledge of how to use digital communication despite the widespread availability of connections with technology throughout India even in remote areas. However in these few years since, the proliferation of cheap smartphone technology in India has revolutionised communication access for traditional textile communities. Artisans, like others in India's lower socioeconomic sections of society, now have access in one device to digital communication, the internet and a camera that was previously beyond their financial capacity.

In June 2018 I visited the home of two brothers, Ghulam Hassan and Ghulam Mohammed in Srinagar, Kashmir. They learnt sozni embroidery by watching their father embroider and have been doing this embroidery on pashmina shawls for 25 years working for around 12 hours per day for six days a week. Neither have received formal education and can only read and write a little however they are masters of their needle-work. Ghulam Hassan and Ghulam Mohammed discussed the current state of the industry of handcrafted shawls. They spoke about competition from machine-made shawls and the reduction in quality of their shawls due to demand by merchants for cheaper products. Yet the two brothers love their craft and hope that their quality hand embroidery has a future. The brothers suggested that quality could be maintained if the customer had direct contact with them and could order a shawl to be made. Ghulam Hassan's son, Wasim was also at home, he has taken a role in his father's work using his education and communication skills to sustain the business. His role is to get embroidery work from both the local and export market. We discussed the possibilities of having direct contact with customers through digital technology like social media to bypass middle men, like merchants. Ghulam Hassan added that they preferred commissioned pieces of high quality embroidery that they know will be appreciated and they will receive agreed remuneration.

From this meeting with the Ghulam brothers and Wasim I was inspired to initiate projects adopting a co-design approach whereby customers or end-users of handcrafted textiles from Australia could engage with an Indian artisan community to co-create a textile piece. The customer's input begins at the beginning of the project while within the context of the community's craft. Strategies to be developed will factor in language and cultural differences as well as geographic distances between the participants. The aim is to reinterpret conventional co-design that evolved within structured, industrialised societies to be applicable in artisan communities that belong to the unstructured, informal economy of Indian society. As a consequence enhance new relations and connectivity between artisan communities and their customers. Given the physical distances between the participants, particularly in this COVID-19 era of travel restrictions digital connectivity is key to the outcome of the projects.

Although the focus of this paper is on traditional shawl artisans working in Kashmir from my discussions with these artisans I have found many common concerns shared by artisans in other textile communities throughout India. Each of these communities specialize in a specific textile handcraft technique of embroidery, printing or weaving. Although their skills vary they share common concerns about the sustainability of their crafts in modern India.

2. Textile artisan communities in India

Traditional craftspeople form the second largest employment base after agriculture in India (CEIS, 2011). Their skills are learnt as apprentices or passed on by family members outside the mainstream educational system. Their work is often interrelated with agriculture or other activities. For example, in Kashmir the shawl embroiderers sit in their *hamans* (heated rooms) during the long winter months and embroider while in spring and summer they mix their embroidery work with agricultural planting and harvesting activities.

The flexibility of roles performed by an artisan is apparent throughout an entire textile artisan community. Usually a textile community will be based around a key technical process that requires highly developed skills like weaving or embroidery. Linked to this technique are pre-processing and certain post processes that require varying levels of skills. For example, for both weaving and embroidery yarn is dyed while the completed pieces are sent for washing. The community is a network of artisanal businesses who are interconnected socially, culturally and economically. There is a flow of knowledge due to community bonds either among generations of the same family or through their apprenticeships and training. While each artisanal skill is applied independently there is a tacit knowledge by all the artisans of the processes required to produce the textile piece.

To understand this artisanal traditional knowledge in India there is a need to examine the organisation of their communities which is not static but evolving subject to external and internal influences, economic and political. A feature of artisanal production for a specific product is clustering in one geographical area, usually a town, rural area or city neighbourhood. Artisans with specialised skills collaborate to sustain the craft's production. Working from their homes or in local workshops there is no managerial structure as in large industrial organisations. Previously the artisans conceived the concept for the product, sourced the raw materials locally and created the product. Their customers were known to them so there was a relationship between the user and maker while the product was not available for mass distribution. A shift by rural village populations to larger urban centres, for alternative work, in India resulted in a loss of markets for the artisans. While changing dress preferences, competition from machine-made products and global brands has reduced the incomes of the traditional artisans throughout India.

From my own experience as a designer initial contact when sourcing artisans to work with in India is frequently an agent or business broker based in the city. With these middlemen or facilitators' control of the marketing of the artisanal products a disconnect has developed between artisans and the consumers of their handcrafted textiles. In the Foreword of Designers meet Artisans, Indrasen Vencatachellum, UNESCO Chief, Section for Arts, Crafts and Design, (2005) discusses the need for a designer to act as an intermediary between the artisan and the consumer, "a 'bridge' between the artisan's know-how and his knowledge of what to make" (p. v). The craftsmanship of traditional textile communities using their culturally inherited techniques is being used in new contexts for a global market. Artisans are prepared to adapt their skills to create new products that are more sellable to a wider reach of contemporary consumers in response to the intervention of designers from outside of their communities. But unfortunately the traditional craft context and inherent design practice from within the communities is made redundant while new markets do not necessarily transpire into financial sustainability for their products. In turn the younger members of the artisan communities do not find incentives to continue working within their craft and cultural heritage.

Therefore the focus of the co-design projects is not on the artisan/designer relationship

but instead the end-user of the artisanal handcrafted textile. Through conversations with customers or users of Indian traditional textiles I have found that they love and cherish the products that they have. In planning the co-design projects I first spoke with Australian collectors of these textiles whom I had met through business and textile interest groups. While their emphasis was on the actual textile pieces rather than the artisans who made them, the financial value seems to be of limited concern but instead their association with the textiles whether through family bonds or personal experiences and memories. They are interested in the cultural significance and artisanal story behind the making of the textiles, "The history of their craft make the product much more valuable and interesting than a generic machine made product" (Survey, 2020).

3. Co-design strategies and digital connectivity

Discourse between textile design researchers within the theoretical framework of codesign increasingly advocate direct links between consumers, or users with the makers. They believe that the textile or garment has more intrinsic value if the maker and final user know each other, and so adding to the knowledge and sustainability of the item. Co-design theorists Elizabeth Sanders and Pieter Jan Stappers consider that digital connectivity, like the use of smartphones and social media, has developed a more global inclusion in design, "we can collaborate anytime and anywhere through our connected devices" (Sanders & Stappers, 2014, p. 28). They see this move in co-design where the user's lived experience is valued, and shared knowledge possible between participants through digital communication as significant for the future of co-design.

Sanders and Stappers discuss how access to technology like the internet bring designers, makers and users closer together breaking down existing company power hierarchies as control is given to the customer or end-user. They consider this particularly relevant to the mind-set of internet age participants. "The new generations are having an easier time in distributing and sharing the control and ownership. This change in attitude is largely possible because the internet has given a voice to people who were previously not even a part of the conversations" (Sanders & Stappers, 2008, p. 9).

Co-designing in this context is a shift from "a company-centric, efficiency-driven view of value creation" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2009, p. 1) that was oriented towards European and North American industry of the 20th century. The change to more humancentred, collaborative design this century has resulted in companies thinking about value creation in response to consumer experience. Prahalad and Ramaswamy, of the University of Michigan Business School, suggest this has resulted from the sharing of information through communication technology. Use of digital platforms encourages networks of consumers with common interests, skills and experiences to communicate openly "without geographic constraints and with few social barriers" (Prahalad et al., 2009, p. 7). Although the skillsets and experiences differ between the users and artisans this notion of shared communication without preconceived inequalities of status is important for the co-design projects. A method for communication and consultation over an extended period had to be in place for the co-design projects to proceed. The practice of craft where skills and expertise are developed slowly over time enabling "an enriching experience, allowing for growth, sustaining narrative, and evoking an emotional response" (Sandberg, 2013, p. 4) create a connectivity for the user with the maker. This 'slow fashion' model involves the user in knowing from where materials are sourced and how the clothing is made. While being on the ground within the artisan communities would have been preferable for me as the researcher digital connectivity became essential due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The transfer of knowledge between the project participants in Australia and India became totally reliant on digital technology.

The first two co-design projects commenced in May 2019 and are now near completion. The handcrafted textiles for these projects are embroidered, hand woven shawls involving two Australian women, Deb and Jane who are passionate about these shawls and an artisan community located in Srinagar, Kashmir, where the shawls are created that I am connected to through family and business relations. These shawls are woven from pashmina sourced in Ladakh and then embroidered. Only the fine needlework of *sozni* embroidery is suitable for pashmina shawls, Deb's shawl is an example of *neem jama*, where some areas of the base fabric are visible while Jane's is *tuki jama*, fully embroidered.

From my observations of textile artisans' communities their fundamental core revolves around the relationships between the artisans. Relationship building is significant to the co-design strategy for the projects, it's about the users' engagement in the entire process from the initiation of the design with their input and then continued interaction. Eighteen different artisanal process specialisations interact to produce a shawl within the Kashmir shawl community. The artisans' traditional knowledge of shawl design and these processes is integral to ways of learning in this community. To sustain this knowledge and its implied cultural heritage within the co-design projects, the shawl designs retained the context of traditional Kashmiri shawl motifs and techniques. Not difficult when the Australian participants already have an appreciation of these shawls.

When developing a methodology to conduct the co-design projects in this complex, interrelational artisan community the inclusion of the Australian participants was carefully considered. The relevance of emotional attachment, storytelling and collaboration between user and maker to sustainability and co-design cannot be underestimated. "Designing objects with the capacity to be loved and cared for engages the user in a dependant relationship that has the potential to evolve over time" (Sandberg, 2013, p. 3). As a way of introduction between the project participants I videoed the Australians, Deb and Jane each explaining their ideas and reasons for the proposed shawls. Deb related the story of how she developed a passion for Kashmiri shawls after saving up and purchasing her first shawl and how she intends to leave each of her children a shawl. "I treasured it so much that I became almost addicted to them in that I felt like I was creating an artistic but also a cultural heirloom for my children" (Anderson, 2019). Jane, who already has a large collection of Kashmir shawls, recounted that she grew up surrounded by beautiful things that belonged to her mother. "I just like to have things that are individual and beautifully done by hand because it makes them more unique and makes them more special to me because someone has put their love and their care into them and they're more original than things churned out by the hundreds and everybody has the same thing" (Rich, 2019). While some established co-design methods and tools like the use of colour cards and photographs were employed new approaches were also devised different to conventional paradigms of co-design. In these initial videos Deb and Jane conveyed their input for each shawl with a focus on design and colour. While Deb was specific providing colour cards and images of traditional shawl motifs that she preferred Jane discussed colours for the shawl and embroidery but acknowledged the skill and experience of the artisans, "I like them to make those really final decisions because they will know what looks best" (Rich, 2019).

After applying a voiceover translation in Kashmiri the videos were shown on a laptop computer to the *naqash* or shawl draftsman, Mohammed Yusef Bhat and *sozni* embroiderer, Abdul Majid, the main artisan participants in the co-design projects. By watching and listening to the videos of Deb and Jane relating their stories the artisans began to share in their experiences while learning firsthand about the users' ideas for their shawls. Further into the projects Zoom meetings between the participants were proposed to continue this interaction.



Figure 1: Abdul Majid and Ayaz Hakim watch Jane's video. source: Deborah Emmett

From the outset the need for facilitators to be involved in the co-design projects was essential. In conventional co-design the project facilitators are usually a designer and design researcher who develop a strategy for those stakeholders involved to interact in the project. While my participation as the design researcher followed this convention I asked a member of the Kashmir shawl community to also be a facilitator in the context of strengthening relationships between the co-design participants, not to intervene as is the norm by middlemen, further distancing the artisans from those who use their products. An additional benefit was that the facilitator, Ayaz Hakim speaks both English and Kashmiri enabling translation between the participants. Facilitators for the co-design projects who are from the textile communities seem preferable as not only do they have knowledge of the craft but also relationships within the communities. Their positionality within the specific community creates a perception of equity recognised by the artisans involved. For the future sustainability of the research co-design strategies their presence is instrumental.

Soon after the initiation of the projects, on 5 August 2019, the Indian government revoked a constitutional provision granting certain autonomous powers to Indian-controlled Kashmir. As reported in the *Washington Post*, "The move has raised worries of fresh armed conflict in an area that has already suffered decades of violence" (Parker, 2019). On making the announcement India cut off mobile, landline and internet services to the Himalayan region while, beforehand, thousands of Indian troops were deployed to Kashmir. Kashmir residents remained largely cut off from the rest of the world for close to six months. So it is ironic that the success of the co-design projects dependent upon the support of using WhatsApp, Zoom and social media for direct communication between the project participants was no longer available to the artisans.

Despite this setback in the projects' planned digital interactions, the shawls were woven, dyed and the designs printed on the shawls using wood blocks by the *naqash*, Mohammed Yusef Bhat ready for embroidery, according to Deb and Jane'cs earlier input, during this period. When the digital blackout was lifted in Kashmir we recommenced communication between the Australian and artisan participants in June 2020 although by that time a COVID-19 lockdown was enforced! We used WhatsApp, Zoom and emails to continue sharing knowledge, experiences and design progression between Deb, Jane and the artisans. While a benefit of this communication was that the participants were placed on an equal footing through the separation of technology, lack of digital expertise and device quality presented issues in visual representation of the shawls. All participants were genuinely interested in meeting each other via Zoom and a mutual respect was evident. However camera movement from the hand held smartphones by the artisans resulted in a lack of image clarity and given the slowness in application of the handcrafted techniques little progress could be seen during the time the Australian participants were watching.

When developing a co-design project with inter-cultural participants the question of value is relevant, culturally the way the artisans think and their customers think is quite different. Will co-creation bridge the gap between the two for shared values to be created at the point of exchange? Just as an individual's interpretation of a product is subjective and values culturally specific so can individual's values differ relating to context and materials used. While the artisan participants have a tacit knowledge of the complete design process in creating a Kashmir shawl even if not personally involved in every step, the users can only be brought into the design process at certain stages and lack experience of techniques specific to the production of these textiles. The fact that this information was shared digitally further confounded the interactions. This is not isolated to these co-design projects to address issues of values among participants in *Rekindling Values in Participatory Design*, "This pervading concern for values also influence ways we work with stakeholders, such as how we facilitate the negotiation of design dilemmas that arises from conflicting values" (p. 2).

The dialogic summary of the following narrative documents the project participants' lived experiences of the design processes' sequential nature over several months. Firstly a number of issues arose concerning the embroidery colour sampling for the shawls that had to be resolved. Initial WhatsApp video meetings between the embroiderer, Abdul Majid and the Australian participants were unsuccessful because Deb and Jane were unable to differentiate the embroidery thread colours from the black design stencil underneath. This was exacerbated by the poor quality of images taken with Majid's cheap smartphone. A suggestion by our Kashmiri facilitator, Ayaz Hakim eventually solved the problem. He discussed the common practice where sozni embroidery is done on a cheaper fabric like cotton or wool dyed the same colour as the shawl to sample different embroidery colours in a simple paisley design, or similar, without the stencil behind it, the small embroidered piece of cloth is called namoodache. Majid implemented a version of this practice on the edge of the shawls completing two combinations of embroidery colours in small freehand paisleys and leaves on the two shawls so the thread colours could be seen without the background stencil. He sent images by WhatsApp of these freehand embroidery examples to Deb and Jane. These WhatsApp design interactions took place over a number of months with a final resolution in December 2020. Some changes in embroidery colours were made; cream and orange was added to Jane's shawl after Majid suggested that her original colour palette was too limited. Jane agreed and again emphasized that she considers Majid will know the most effective way to place the embroidery colours together. Deb was pleased that she could see the embroidery colours more clearly and after several conversations about different pinks to be used followed Majid's advice. Her original pink was too similar to the base colour of the shawl, a darker shade of the same pink was chosen to create contrast.



Figure 2: Shawl embroidery with the wood block. stamp behind. source: Abdul Majid via WhatsApp



Figure 3: Freehand embroidery on the shawl border. source: Abdul Majid via WhatsApp

The design ideas for the two shawls were refined throughout the design process through consultation between the co-design project participants with the assistance of the facilitators. The necessity for these interactions to be wholly digital raised further issues but eventually methods of resolution were determined to enable the final products to be created. This flexibility requires emergent and dynamic strategies for inter-cultural codesign projects that can be negotiated through dialogical and visual processes.

Once colour sampling is complete the customary process in the Kashmir shawl community is that only one artisan embroiders a shawl to maintain consistency of technique. Working since November Abdul Majid has been embroidering Deb's shawl that has a very subtle palette of colours. Jane's shawl is being embroidered by Majid's cousin, Rashid, also a master *sozni* embroiderer. To complete this heavy embroidery on the shawls takes eight to ten months. Despite the devastation of the Indian population from COVID-19 in 2021 and ongoing lockdowns the artisans' work has continued as they embroider in their homes. During this time we have received some short WhatsApp videos of them embroidering, again image quality is poor.

Remuneration for the shawls was discussed at the commencement of the projects. A significant aim of the co-design projects is financial sustainability for the artisans, costing of the shawls needed to be transparent and payment had to go directly to them. In textile artisan communities usually a middleman like a broker or shop owner, who market and sell the handcrafted products, pay the artisans for their work often at a very low rate. Payment is made in stages that spans over the time taken to complete the product. After breaking down the costs of the shawls' production for the different Kashmir shawl artisans involved in the co-design projects the amounts were shared with Deb and Jane. It was agreed that the shawls would be paid for incrementally during their production as

is the customary payment model in artisan communities. However direct payments to the artisans averts the need for middlemen. As the Australian participants had previously bought these shawls they were aware of the cost and understood the financial value in such time-consuming, skilled work and expensive materials. Increasingly proponents of handcrafted Indian textiles advocate that consumers must be educated about the skill and time taken by artisans to create a textile piece and be prepared to pay for these expensive items. As textile historian Jenny Housego (2003) writes, "Craft people should not be frightened of charging good prices for their work. If they are to stay where they are and not move to other activities, then they have to ensure a good standard of living, and one in which their children will be happy to follow" (p. 57). Again digital technology assisted in the interaction between the co-design participants as direct payments were made by Deb and Jane through electronic bank transfers to the artisans at different stages of the shawl production.

The Australian participants in the co-design projects have acknowledged not only the skill of the artisans but the length of time the process takes. Their interaction with artisans from the Kashmir shawl community from the inception of the shawls has provided Deb and Jane an understanding of the patience and dedication of those craftspeople following 'slow fashion' practices. This connection with those who appreciate and use their craft gives the artisans confidence about future possibilities including their interpretation of, and ability to design which in turn sustains their textile practice. Certainly all the participants have a story to tell about these two shawls which I intend to record once the shawls are complete.



Figure 4: Jane's shawl embroidered by Nasir Majid. source: Ayaz Hakim via WhatsApp



Figure 5: Deb's shawl embroidered by Abdul Majid. source: Ayaz Hakim via WhatsApp

As the first two co-design projects draw to a conclusion I am, as the design researcher, reflecting upon what I have learnt with the aim of planning future co-design projects. I need to determine if the method used, supported by digital connectivity, is sustainable for the artisan communities. Digital technology has enabled communication between the inter-cultural participants that would previously been impossible but has been contingent upon the involvement of supportive facilitators. The Australian participants were able to be involved from the initiation of the projects with their input included according to conventional co-design methodology. However the artisans reliance on inferior quality smartphones as their only digital devices made visual representation of the processes involved in the making of a Kashmir shawl. Eventually these problems were resolved. Moving forward I consider that different complexities would arise with different artisan community co-design projects so the methods devised for each project must remain emergent.

The proliferation of smartphone technology over recent years in India has revolutionised communication access for traditional textile communities even in remote rural localities. In an interview Ravi Agrawal claims that in 2019 nearly half a billion Indians have online access, a huge increase from only 20 million in 2000 (Agrawal, 2019). It is evident in India that the use of smartphones to access communication apps, particularly WhatsApp, is pivotal, particularly as the population is increasingly migratory moving around the country for employment and education purposes. In the context of artisan communities smartphones permit straightforward communication between the various interconnected participants in the craft's production. While on a broader scope, using this technology to transfer knowledge skills, training in business operation as well as product development would seem of great educational value to artisans working in a contemporary market. Communication with the users of their products be it designers or customers in India and beyond is now accessible creating new opportunities of collective creativity.

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Author's Bio



Since 2002 Deborah has used her design background to work with artisans in India to develop a range of textiles. She completed a Masters in Design at UNSW and is currently a PhD candidate at the university, her research area is codesigning with artisans in India. Deborah lectures in design at ACU in Sydney.





SECTOR DISCUSSIONS:



Sector Discussions: Three focussed sector discussions focussing on Relationships, Communication and Education in the 21st Century Facilitated by the World Crafts Council Australia

Dr Kevin Murray, Secretary World Crafts Council Australia Mr Bernard Kerr, Board member World Crafts Council Australia Ms June Moorhouse, CEO Community Arts Network WA Ms Carola Akindele-Obe, Exhibition Curator and Festival Coordinator IOTA21, Partner Maker + Smith

Abstract. There are pressing issues facing the craft sector in Australia and our region today. Education, communication and relationship ethics are among them. The World Crafts Council Australia presents three sector discussions in partnership with Community Arts Network WA to create pathways through these issues.

Keywords: Education, communication, community, relationships

Session 1 Relationships: How to create value in the world

FACILITATOR – MS JUNE MOORHOUSE

Extending our craft practice beyond the studio involves relationships in the public sphere. Collaborating with communities, questions of authenticity, sourcing of ideas and materials, impact on the environment and connection to country, all surface when our practice beyond the private realm. Can we juggle it all? How do we add value to others, the planet, our/craft practice and our own lives?

The session was primarily geared to give participants an opportunity to talk about the issues that had bubbled up for them throughout the day. The focus of many of the speakers and panels on Day 1 had been the social value of craft - its place in our personal lives and the lives of communities; how it does and can impact on people - the importance of making and creative expression in human existence. This was reinforced by the short presentation regarding CAN's work and the reference to some key projects. People were really animated and keen to share. Issues that they highlighted were:

Social and cultural opportunities

- Recognising people in states of vulnerability personally, in our communities, across the world. The importance of responding to people's needs (including our own) with grace and respect.
- Craft as a point of connection that allows a gentle entry into working with others but

also offering powerful expressions of resistance to racism, inequality and addressing the disconnection from culture & identity that many now experience - feeling (and being) disenfranchised;

- Craft provides 'slow time' that encourages reflection; the materiality of making that grounds and connects us to ourselves and others; contributing to health and wellbeing
- The vital place of First Peoples in the country's cultural life and building up our knowledge and understanding of intercultural communication.

Makers connections

- Networking opportunities reignited and more chances for makers to organise; a new crafts community (aka Crafts Council) fit for the times.
- People so energised by being in a room together again, talking about the things that matter, sharing ideas
- Newcomers needing info and support to begin to connect; learning how to navigate the system; where to connect with community-based practice etc

Education

- Flaws in what's happening currently; all focus on the technical but students lacking conceptual skills and critical thinking; we have lost good people and resources from teaching institutions
- The focus on STEM in schools that encourages gender biases and diminishes the importance of the arts

Other

- Gender disparity in crafts community where are the men?
- Craft in the digital age

CONCLUSIONS

The group became particularly animated about the potential of craft to counter the feeling described as 'the precarity of the world' intersecting in global issues of inequality; cultural and racial division; COVID responses; digital divides; privilege and access. We turned to the idea of craft as a universal language and the maker as the NEXUS, creating connections by bringing our whole selves to the work: our wirin [spirit}, koort [heart], kaatadjin [knowledge]

The opportunity craft offers to connect through doing and the opportunity to share stories as we make; it can be at the heart of being able to hear the shocking stories of what has happened on this land and allow healing - it is a fundamental salve to the ills of the world at the moment. This is at the heart and soul of what we know but it is struggling to find a space to flourish in the structures and institutions of the day. How do we hold this larger picture and relate it to the bigger ecology?

There is a real opportunity at this moment in time - there is huge interest in the things that craft and making offer. We need to trust in changes little by little that impact the world around us. IOTA is 40 exhibitions of people using traditional crafts to make new works to address the challenges of the world in which we live.

Session 2 Communication: How to stay connected and visible as a community

FACILITATORS - CAROLA AKINDELE-OBE AND DR KEVIN MURRAY

Most people in the crafts feel that their work has little profile in the wider community, compared to sport, and other art forms such as visual arts and music. Since the defunding of Craft Australia, the national platform has been left to World Crafts Council - Australia, managed entirely by volunteers. How can we increase the visibility of craft and grow its recognition? How can we stay connected and help each other, across the country? Besides the established social media, such as Instagram and Facebook, how can new platforms like Padlet and Obsidian help us work together, more visibly?

The discussion was divided into two topics as follows:

Make craft more visible We discussed Instagram in particular. This was seen as critical to having a profile as a maker. There were concerns that we become too dependent on platforms like Instagram, which makes us vulnerable to their decisions. A change in the algorithms can affect who sees our work.

The lack of a representative body for craft in Western Australia was lamented and compared with eastern states, which each have an organisation advocating and promoting craft work. The World Craft Council is little known in the sector - however, through IOTA and the efforts of Australian President Jude van der Merwe and editor of Garland magazine Kevin Murray, that appears to be improving. (Most of the attending group had not heard of either prior to attending the IOTA21 conference).

It was noted that independent initiatives such as Maker&Smith's directory and film festival of short films about makers, making and materials offer small steps to improving visibility and appreciation of craft skills in Australia and overseas through touring. While the three examples above mostly preach to the converted, they were noted as being a source of inspiration and confidence for the sector, and contribute to 'connection' too. Again the virtual world and the physical worlds were compared; and that annual events such as Open Studios continue to be worthwhile in tandem with social media and online selling platforms.

Connecting with each other The pandemic has opened up many possibilities for videobased meetings. There was much discussion about the limits of this in teaching craft techniques. New tools were introduced, including Padlet and Obsidian. There was a great interest in having workshops to become more familiar with these tools. A diversity of channels seemed important to counter our vulnerability to the Facebook monopoly.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

To have opportunities to share information about communication channels. This would include updates to popular channels such as Instagram and Facebook, as well as an introduction to new tools and training. This could be an online gathering as a World Crafts Council - Australia event. Perhaps, also a Knowledge Bank.

The physical and virtual gathering at conferences or meetings such as IOTA's was vigorously encouraged and the use of virtual meet-ups using better platforms than Zoom, such as Airmeet.

SESSION 3 Education: How to keep teaching craft when tertiary courses are cut

FACILITATORS - Bernard Kerr, Dr Kevin Murray

Education reforms in the late 20th century have seen craft education flourish in the university sector. We now have an unprecedented generation of practitioners with postgraduate degrees. But the recent round of funding cuts prompted by the COVID pandemic has seen craft departments close or suffer severe reductions. The perception is that craft workshops in universities are no longer "under the radar" and vulnerable to further unilateral budget decisions. At the same time, there has been growth in online education, even in crafts. Many makers at least supplement their knowledge through YouTube. What is the ongoing value of formal tertiary craft education? How can it adapt to the changing climate of funding cuts?

OVERVIEW

Dr Kevin Murray, Editor of Garland Magazine and Secretary of the World Crafts Council -Australia was introduced.

He provided the forum with some historical context about the teaching of Craft in the tertiary sector in Australia and its nature and trajectory. Kevin talked about The Whitlam government's introduction of the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme and the broadening of educational possibilities for many in Australian society and the expansion of Craft education in the university sector in the late 1970's. Subsequently the Dawkins report the introduction of income contingent loans for tuition costs through the Higher Education Contribution Scheme the conversion of all Colleges of Advanced Education (CAEs) into universities, and a series of provisions for universities to provide plans, profiles, statistics in order to justify courses and research.

As a result, undergraduate student numbers increased dramatically as universities were given economies of scale and craft courses were introduced in may Australian universities, especially those that had been CAE's. These offerings have gradually been eroded due to issues of economic rationalism.

The audience was asked who has a qualification related to a craft discipline awarded from a university and from TAFE. Discussion ensued about the nature of the experience in terms of learning about knowledge and skills related to the craft disciplines studied. A general agreed perception was that the TAFE and the University sectors did not work well together as they presented fundamental differences in their methodologies of education and assessment of proficiency.

TAFE graduates applauded the skills they were taught but felt the quality of education related to conceptual understanding and small business skills was not well taught. University graduates lamented the teaching of skills in relation to craft disciplines. General consensus was that conceptual and critical thinking needed to be taught in tandem with craft skills.

Kevin outlined some of the possible values linked to formal tertiary craft education at university.

Participants responded to Kevin's outline and added to these points stressing:

• The changing nature of employment and the importance of teaching financial

and business skills at both TAFE and university.

- The rise of interest in craft as wellbeing and possibilities within the sector for a diversity of practice.
- The relationship between contemporary art and craft and how craft operated in a complex web of connections and levels in a society and should be actively supported by government.
- The importance of human warmth and connection linked to craft disciplines and how this needed to be acknowledged in any tertiary craft educational curriculum.

The question was asked about craft departments and workshops in tertiary education losing funding and closing down since the 1990's in Australia and whether they need to operate differently?

Discussion centred around developing some articulation between TAFE and the university sector and expanding private providers to 'expand the field' Some participants seemed to think that tertiary craft education was becoming increasingly divorced from the veridical nature of mid 21st century life and a post pandemic world. The perceived need to introduce more complex digital machinery and respond to a rather non –existent manufacturing industry was also examined and found rather wanting.

Kevin shared some insights about the concept of the development of the "thinker-maker" role and the Knowledge House for Craft. Such networks were seen as a way forward.

CONCLUSIONS

- Craft was seen as rather difficult to define and operated in a range of fields in our society. It includes Craft practiced as a hobby, folk craft, professional craft and 'academic' craft such as may be termed 'conceptual craft' in the context of contemporary fine art practice.
- Individuals studying a craft discipline at a university did not necessarily need to aim become a craft practitioner as there are many diverse pathways available that might use the knowledge and skills in a range of contexts.
- Participants stressed the value of craft education in our society. The importance of craft education in primary and secondary schools as well as at TAFE and university was seen as a positive indicator of a healthy and civilized culture.
- The future of Craft education in Western Australia needs to be better articulated and pathways explored between the TAFE sector and universities.
- Universities should reinstate craft degree courses
- Economic considerations need to be examined in the broadest context and understood as not only relating to the manufacture of objects.
- Participants celebrated technology including the ability to efficiently and effectively communicate with others and to research and inquire.
- The place of online education was seen as a positive aspect as long as it did not preclude face-to-face interactions and could be used to broaden the educational experience for craftspeople.

Author's Bio

CAROLA AKINDELE-OBE

One of the curatorial team for IOTA21, Carola Akindele-Obe is an independent arts manager and writer with over 25 years' experience coordinating visual arts and crafts events in Australia, UK and Taiwan. A graduate of Glasgow School of Art, with a BA(Hons) Design in Embroidered and Woven Textiles, City & Guilds in Basketry/3D Woven Design, and Master of Arts Admin from UNSW, Sydney.

Carola has a depth of experience as a project manager for recurrent events including Biennale of Sydney (1998-2002), Sydney Art on Paper Fair (2001-2005), and Artopia WA (2005-2007). Carola is a co-founder of 'Maker&Smith' presenting skills exchange and promotion opportunities, including a short film festival, to enhance the craft sector in Western Australia.

BERNARD KERR

Bernard Kerr is a WA-based practicing artist, largely working in the field of ceramics. An active contributor to the visual arts, craft and education sectors, Bernard is a board member of the world Crafats council – Australia and Chair of the Ceramic Arts Association of WA. exhibits regularly and is an experienced specialist in the International Baccalaureate. He has been the Curriculum Leader for the Arts and Coordinator for Theory of Knowledge at Scotch College in Perth, Western Australia and the Director of Teaching and Learning and Coordinator, Middle School at Binus School, Jakarta, Indonesia. Bernard also works for the International Baccalaureate as a Field Representative and Workshop Leader in Visual Arts and Theory of Knowledge. Currently he is working in the Technical and Further Education sector, specialising in Ceramics. He also runs his own educational consultancy in Perth. Bernard will speak at Craft-Re-Work about the international ceramic exchange that saw Tamil ceramicist Kasirajan Subbaiah come to share the tradition of making terracotta horses, for the Habits of Horses community art event in Midland and Mundaring in 2017.

Dr. KEVIN MURRAY

Kevin Murray editor of Garland magazine, in partnership with World Crafts Council – Australia. He is coordinator of Sangam: A Platform for Craft & Design Partnerships, which developed out of a three-year initiative of the Australia Council which develops standards for best practice in design partnerships in the region. In 2000-2007 he was Director of Craft Victoria where he developed the Scarf Festival and the South Project, a four-year program of exchange involving Melbourne, Wellington, Santiago and Johannesburg. He is author with Damian Skinner of Place and Adornment: A History of Australasian Contemporary Jewellery. Recent international touring exhibitions include Joyaviva: Live Jewellery across the Pacific and Welcome Signs: Contemporary Interpretations of the Garland. He is currently Senior Vice-President of the World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region and teaches at RMIT University, University of Melbourne and Swinburne University. He edits Garland magazine, a quarterly publication about craft and design in the Indo Pacific.

JUNE MOORHOUSE

June Moorhouse has over 35 years professional experience in the arts, working in senior management roles and as a consultant across all artforms. She currently leads CAN (Community Arts Network) in an innovative job sharing arrangement with her colleague Monica Kane. June's early posts included inaugural Executive Officer of the Community Arts Network, Victoria, Director of Fremantle Arts Centre, General Manager of West Australian Opera and Manager of Culture for the City of Fremantle. June's long-standing consulting practice supported many arts managers and organisations with strategic and business planning, organisational development, research and consultation, policy development and mentoring. June has served on a range of community, state and national governing bodies and is a recipient of an Australia Council Fellowship.

FUTURING CRAFT

Welcome to the Futuring Craft conference presented by the Indian Ocean Craft Triennial in collaboration with Curtin University School of Design and the Built Environment.

human rights. Bringing together academics, makers and the craft sector from Australia and countries of the Futuring Craft addresses matters that traverse craft from design, environment, economies and fundamental Indian Ocean and beyond, the IOTA21 conference supports the themes inherent in the IOTA21 international exhibition 'Curiosity and Rituals of the Everyday'.



7



Friday 17 September

FRIDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

WA Maritime Muse	um, Fremantle Victoria Quay, Peter Hughes Dr, Fremantle V	A 6160
8.3o – 9.3oam	Registration Presentations take place in the NWS Shipping Theatre. Please be seated by 9:30am	
9.30 – 10.00am	каха • Introduction: Jude van der Merwe • Welcome to Country: Marie Taylor	
10.00 - 11.00 am	Keynote Address: Nyadol Nyuon Session Chair: Nat Belcher, Head of Curtin University School of Design and the Built Env	onment
11.00 - 11.20am	Morning Tea, served upstairs in the Function Centre and Balcony	
11.20am - 12.30pm	Rethinking, re-focusing and revitalising the 'craft' agenda in education. • Dr Lynne Heller & Dorie Millerson Craft Pedagogy in Precarious Times • Dr Niklavs Rubenis & Dr Rohan Nicol Crafted futures: New teaching, learning and r Session Chair: Bernard Kerr, ceramic artist and teacher	search for craft in the Australian tertiary academy
12.30 - 1 .30pm	Lunch, served upstairs in the Function Centre and Balcony	
1.30 – 2.25pm	 How do the places we live in reflect the objects we make? Liz Williamson Weaving Eucalypts Project: local colour from Indian Ocean countrie: Susie Vickery Appliqué for change: Community engagement with women's health t Session Chair: Jude van der Merwe, IOTA Co-Curator 	rough craft and art.
2.30pm – 3.25pm	Reviving, creating spaces, and cultural livelihoods: Ballarat to India. • Ms Tara Poole Is Ballarat a Creative City? • Ms Sushma lyengar Reviving indigenous wool craft practices of India Session Chair: Maggie Baxter, IOTA Co-Curator	SECTOR DISCUSSION (Boardroom) Relationships: How to create value in the world. Led by Community Arts Network. Convened by the World Crafts Council Australia. Session Chair: June Moorhouse. (Preregistration required; capped at 16)
3.30 - 4.00pm	Afternoon Tea, served upstairs in the Function Centre and Balcony	Geri Hayden Noongar Healing Dolls Project (Function Centre)
4.00 - 5.00pm	Regional Arts WA networking function (for regional arts delegates only)	
4.00 - 6.00pm	Free time	
6.30 – 9.00рт	101A21 Opening Celebration at Fremantle Arts Centre includes dance, music & performance. Food trucks and bar service.	

SATURDAY 1	3 SEPTEMBER 2021			
Curtin University				
9.00am – 9.30am	Registration Open			
	Room 201 BLDG 501 Education Building	Room 202 BLDG 501 Education Building	Room 203 BLDG 501 Education Building	John Curtin Gallery
9.30am - 10.30am	 Fast fashion and hybrid approaches to textile production. Dr Anne Farren Crafting Sustainable practice in fashion. Ms Jessica Priemus Self-narrating weaving: expressing traces of craft. Session Chair: Mary Ellen Cliff, Maker&Smith 	 Architecture of Place: Identity and Authenticity. Richard Brisbane Manser Processes, design intent and outcomes in contemporary bamboo architecture Mr Zaid Saeed & Sahar Abbas Architecture of Place: Influence of Craft-making on the Golden Architecture of Iraq between 1950s-1979s. Session Chair: Dr Qassim Saad 		'Curiosity & Rituals of the Everyday' will be open: 11am – 4pm.
10.30am - 11.00am	Morning Tea in Level 2 Foyer, Education Bu	ilding 5o1.		
11.00am – 11.55am	 Innovate or die: protective tools for craft and indigenous knowledge. Mr Shouryamoy Das Reimagining the Wool-craft of India. Ms Penny Smith The Terroir of Terracotta: An exploration into the production and use of traditional open hearth clay cooking pots Session Chair: Maggie Baxter 	 (Re-locating the) Power, politics and agency of craft practice through slow making and sustainable making. Dr Annette Nykiel & Dr Nien Schwarz We Must Get Together Some Time: our slow making. Mrs Valerie Shaw The power of the recycled object. Session Chair: Jane King 		ARTIST TALKS Melissa Cameron Monique Tippett Jan Griffiths Garry Sibosado With: Jude van der Merwe
12.00pm - 12.55pm	 Gestures of Welcome; exploring jewellery as a gesture of welcome In response to Australian immigration policy. Belinda Newick, Marziya Mohammedali (WA) Mel Young (NSW), Vicki Mason (Vic) Melissa Cameron (WA), Anne Farren (WA) Convenor: Belinda Newick Session Chair: Thelma John 	 The importance of local context in the co-design of collaborative frameworks and signalling sustainable value. Veronica Larasati, Ellya Zulaikha, Maria Hanson & Laura Cave Making Links: Crafting Creativity and Collaboration. Agampodi Mendis Presentation stage in Sri Lankan Authentic Craft Souvenirs. Session Chair: Prof. Ted Snell 	SECTOR DISCUSSION Communication: How to stay connected and visible as a community. Preregistration required (Capped at 16) Convened by the World Crafts Convened by the World Crafts Council Australia Session Chair: Dr Kevin Murray	CURATOR TOUR Maggie Baxter
1.00pm - 1.45pm	Lunch in the Level 2 Foyer, Education Build	ling 501.		

SATURDAY Curtin University	I8 SEPTEMBER 2021			
	Room 201 BLDG 501 Education Building	Room 202 BLDG 501 Education Building	Room 203 BLDG 501 Education Building	John Curtin Gallery
1.45pm – 2.40pm	 Fashion, design, aesthetics and survival. Mrs Nada Basahih Crafting the Kaaba Kiswa's: Context and traditional practices. Mr Muhammad Umer Rehman & Wafa Ali Materiality, Craft as an occupation, an emotion and an object. Session Chair: Anne Farren 	 Hybridised, transcultural experience as innovative approaches to making. Ms Bic Tieu Designing the Inbetween: Traversing Biography and Place through Objects. Ms Pragya Sharma The Domestic Craft and the Artifact: Exploring interrelationships in a post-colonial India. Session Chair: Gerald Sanyangore 	 SECTOR DISCUSSION Education and the future: How to keep teaching craft when tertiary courses are cut. 1.45pm - 2.15pm Preregistration required (Capped at 16) Convened by the World Crafts Council Australia Session Chair: Bernard Kerr with Dr Kevin Murray 	Exhibition open
2.45pm - 5.40pm	 Beyond aesthetics and the handmade: crafting in the age of digital automation and machine learning. Dr Justin Marshall Craft-oriented hybrid analog/digital practices; their values and our future relations with technology. Aliya Yousuf Traditional Skill and Craft in Digital Age. Session Chair: Dr Qassim Saad 	 Inclusive co-design using digital technologies, connectivity, and sustainability. Ms Deborah Emmett Co-design dialogues through digital connectiv sustaining future practice for traditional textile artisan communi in India. Prof. Andreas Sicklinger & Habib Shawkat Online Service Design fo craft innovation. Session Chair: Prof. Ted Snell 	ARTIST TALKS • Yee I-Lann • Madhvi Subrahmaniam • Anniketyni Madian vity: Session Chair: Jude van der Merwe ities a	
3.45pm - 4.00pm	Afternoon Tea in the Level 2 Foyer, Educa	ion Building 501.		
4.oopm – 4.3opm	PLENARY and WRAP UP in Education build	ng. All invited.		
5.00 – 7:00pm Details are subject to change. Correc	You are invited to the opening of MAELSTF	0M at Nyisztor Studio, 391 Canning Hig	jhway, Palmyra 6165	
cover Provoke Protect – Kismeti J	laiswar, 2013 at Dharavi Biennale. We are Not	Animals, We are human beings. Photo co	urtesy Susie Vickery.	
iotal The curter from of the moun occan can	Offersteet entrouge to the second sec	urtin University	Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries	Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications Office for the Arts
Australian Government	macy Grants Program	WESTERN BUS AUSTRALIAN EVE MUSEUM PER	INESS REGIONAL WAS	World Crafts Council



'Futuring Craft' The Indian Ocean Craft Triennial IOTA21