

University of Tartu
Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Emily Celeste Watts

**The Muhu Slipper as a Cultural Object: an examination of the importance of place,
history, and attribution**

Master's Project

Supervisor: Lecturer Kristi Jõeste

Viljandi, 2022

Table of Contents

Preface.....	3
Introduction	5
Chapter 1: Methodology	7
Chapter 2: Project background and rationale	10
Chapter 3: Fieldwork.....	13
Chapter 4: The project and its production.....	16
Conclusion.....	26
Bibliography.....	27
Resümee	29
Annex 1: Process photos	30
Annex 2: small book text	34
Annex 3: front cover text	39

Preface

By way of background, I have been practicing handcraft for my entire life. I learned to crochet when I was six years old, though sadly that did not catch on quite strongly until I was a teenager, and learned to knit when I was eight. I began doing cross stitch, needlepoint, and crewel embroidery also at age eight. My actual sewing practice, of garments and the like, began both by hand and machine around the age of nine on my grandmother's 50-year-old Singer sewing machine. In the years since, I have added book binding, printmaking, tatting, weaving, and several other craft disciplines to my practice.

My family heritage is Norwegian, and I was fortunate to spend a few of my young years with a great number of my older Norwegian relatives from my extended family. Thus was born my desire to learn more about northern European/Scandinavian craft, knitting in particular. It was not until I was a teenager that I became interested specifically in Estonian handcraft. It is difficult to pinpoint when exactly this happened and what triggered it. I had a significant ballet teacher during that time who was a former dancer with the Estonian National Ballet; did she and I have a conversation? I used to point at a book, now long out of print, called *Folk Bags* by Vicki Square, but upon paging through it one more time there is nothing Estonian about it. There was a period of time where all that I wanted to knit was lace, perhaps this is when the Haapsalu shawl came into my sphere?

Regardless, it has been 35 years of making things, of which many have been spent in pursuit of knowledge of Estonian handcraft practices. I was first able to travel to Estonia in August of 2016 and I did not know what to expect. I had no knowledge of the language or geography, but my first task was to start making connections and other travel plans. A visit to Haapsalu seemed more than logical, and the intent was then to continue to points further to the west.

I have been a member of Rotary International, a multinational service organization, for many years and it is generally a good option for networking opportunities. There does exist an English language Rotary club in Tallinn, and so I reached out to them in late August of 2016 to request to attend a meeting; I received confirmation from the club secretary, a man named Robert Parsons. We met in person at that first meeting, and the subject of my travel plans arose.

I mentioned that I was disappointed to not make a stop on Muhu and with great kindness Robert invited me to stay with him and his family in their home on the island.

On that excursion I stayed for almost two weeks, and have gone back every year, often multiple times, for weeks on end. Robert and his wife, Krista, are my closest friends in Estonia. This extensive time in residence on the island, and their thoughtful assistance, means that I have also met many other folks on the island, including several engaged in handcraft practices. This is how I first became truly aware of the significance of the Muhu slipper. I had seen them in the various handcraft shops but had not yet been able to make the connection that they were tied so closely and specifically to one location. In the six years since I have also traveled to many other parts of Estonia and learned more and more about the folk costume traditions, including that on Muhu, and the entirety and complexity of that. This has helped me to land the slippers not just in a physical location, but to land them in a more abstract cultural location related to their role in the folk costume. It was all of these experiences that led to what has become this project.

Introduction

There exists a practice of national dress in Estonia; while there are many of these practices related to various areas, those from the island of Muhu are well preserved, recognizable, and of particular interest to me. One piece of this dress entails an embroidered slipper: the technical work of the embroidery is unique to the country and, beyond the framework of the embroidery techniques, the design of these slippers and the other practices that antedate them—blankets, stockings, and so forth—have been used to broadly evoke Estonian craft. Details strongly resembling this slipper appear on many items outside of the island, often not related to embroidery but instead in print or other forms. This essay is one part of a project that envisions to explore and examine both the human and commercial elements of how the embroidery practice itself currently exists, and the implications and potential responsibilities behind utilizing it. The accompanying practical project is an assemblage that presents handmade items related to Muhu and the art of slipper-making, presented in the form of an artist's book.

In this essay I will not attempt to explicate the details of the slipper-making process, nor the entire history behind them. For that there already exist many excellent resources; Anu Kabur's works *Meite Muhu päititegu [The Making of Our Muhu Slippers]* (2012), *Kopli Riina ja Mare [Riina and Mare from Kopli Farm]* (2017), and *Uuenidi Anu mustrid [Patterns by Anu from Uuenidi Farm]* (2015) are some examples. Instead, through this writing and the project the aim is to examine and illustrate the importance of location and attribution in a craft context. Originally, the impetus to begin this inquiry began by my discovering in an Estonian grocery store a pair of commercially produced socks that clearly take their design inspiration from the Muhu slippers. As I learned more about the history and provenance of the slippers, their presence and influence in this commodified way became of interest: how do the individuals creating these slippers feel regards this practice? What do the people of the island think of this product? When and how is it appropriate to utilize existing design aesthetics, and with what kind of attribution?

This is a complex topic that touches on many areas of scholarship, and so to accomplish this through the written component, I will reference a variety of scholars from the fields of folklore, library and information sciences, history, anthropology, performance studies, and craft. As the editors of *The Individual and Tradition* eloquently put it: "Inhaled, exhaled, and

transformed, tradition is both a resource used by the individual and a process enacted by the individual” (Cashman, et. al). I have found through this inquiry that this process of slipper making and the tradition behind it illustrates that statement with great profundity.

The individuals who participated in the fieldwork process and their views also influenced the development and design of the practical piece of the project, which takes the form of an artist’s book, a box of items that includes stitching of the kind practiced on the slipper, actual rocks from the island, a small descriptive book, and a handmade seed packet. Each of these items, and the idea of an artist’s book itself, will be more fully described and illustrated in the text to follow.

Chapter 1: Methodology

In this project, I will address one specific example of the commodification of this handcraft practice with the intent of recognizing the need for attribution and contextualization. This will help to focus attention on and analyze the various issues that come into play when commodifying an existing craft practice, removing it from its location-based heritage, and changing its very construction with little to no reference to its point of origin. To do this, first I will use several scholars, including Michael F. Brown's writings on culture, Alexander Langland's definition of craft, Jason Baird Jackson's theories on intercultural influences, and Adhi Nugraha's proposed analytical tool of "technique-concept-utility-structure-material" (Nugraha 21) as a structure by which to evaluate the appropriateness of modern adaptations of traditional craft. From this background, it will be possible to synthesize a guiding foundational principle regards shared craft history and its dissemination to a wider audience, removed from its origins.

Craft and design are two elements by which an individual or a group of people are able to define themselves and set themselves apart as a type of cultural unit, as craft practices, while incorporating the vitally important intangible elements of history, knowledge, and skill, do exist in a final form physically in the world. Before moving further into a discussion of cultural identity and its expression through craft, it is worthwhile to address the question of how to define the terms "culture" and "craft". For the purposes of this discussion, we will begin from Michael F. Brown's definition of "culture": "an abstraction or analytical place-holder for shared behavioral patterns, values, social practices, forms of artistic expression, and technologies" (Brown 50). Most of Brown's categories are beyond the scope of this essay, and so we will focus on the parts of culture dealing with "forms of artistic expression" and "technologies". For a definition of "craft", it is possible to use Alexander Langlands' broad-based interpretation of the term, which comes in two parts. First, that craft is "power or skill in the context of knowledge, ability and a kind of learning" (Langlands 17) and second, that it includes "this notion that making has a spiritual element to it, that making fits within a wider understanding of who we are and where we are going" (Langlands 21). Between these two perspectives, it is possible to synthesize a foundational principle that a shared heritage of skilled artistic expression leads to communal knowledge and ability that helps to define the essence of a group

of people. For this reason, local, traditional craft practices are deeply tied to a sense of place and community. The act of taking this craft, either in elements or in its entirety, out of the context of its place of origin, should therefore be done with awareness and care. This shows respect for the importance of place on the development of craft and other heritage traditions: often a physical location has a meaningful impact on the aesthetics of handcrafts and other practices.

The commercialization of craft products is perhaps one of the most widely witnessed uses of a practice which has the possibility of removing the craft from its originating culture and context. There can be many reasons for this commercialization to take place: an individual artisan looking to create a self-sustaining, financially viable life by working for themselves and selling their own craft products to the public, often tourists; a location, be it a street, town, region, or country that strives to stand out from its neighbors due to the uniqueness of the local craft practices; or a business enterprise that seeks to identify its products with local or handcrafted traditions in order to differentiate its offerings or appeal to a certain market. None of these motivations are necessarily inherently wrong, but as mentioned before must be executed with awareness of the context and history of the practices being employed.

The act of using traditional culture or craft practices for commercial or social gain, of putting the practice into the view of a wider community, can have very beneficial effects. There certainly can come an increase in attention to a region by those outside of it now interested in the craft being produced, and increased attention can lead to practices becoming more popular and thus less in danger of the tacit, intangible knowledge embedded in them being lost. It can also lead to evolution and innovation in the practice itself, as new technologies and information are incorporated into the art. Jason Baird Jackson uses the term “diffusion” to encompass this shift from the local situating of a practice to a more widely distributed one. He states that “diffusion is a widely occurring process of cultural change involving the movement of cultural forms, values, practices, and technologies from one social setting to another” (Jackson 83), giving us a positive reference to the fluid nature of the sharing of cultural practices and their inherent interconnectivity.

There is some scholarly analysis to provide a framework when analyzing or creating the type of work that I reference with the slippers, especially when it is born out of Jackson’s definition of diffusion. In this case, Adhi Nugraha has created a tool which she calls TCUSM,

an abbreviation for “technique-concept-utility-structure-material” (Nugraha 21). In the use of this tool, she specifies: “When designing new object inspired from tradition, TCUSM tool guides the user to deal with the issues involved: what factors should be considered, what elements of tradition can be used in producing new objects/products, and how to combine tradition with modern elements?” (Nugraha 22). In the case of these slippers, and their other associated products, the TCUSM tool gives us a background to begin to analyze contemporary uses of these elements of culture and how they are, or are not, respected and represented. In the case of this definition, the “user” is believed to be the individual responsible for the creation or the design of the object, not necessarily the end user.

This locality, this grounding in space and time such as occurs on Muhu, is one of the most valuable parts of the interaction of craft and commerce. As Nugraha points out, there must be an element of sustainability in a craft practice to make it relevant (22). Which brings us back to the questions: how is craft used to create a sense of identity and place? What does it mean to take that craft and that aesthetic out of that place and time, and into a wider, more anonymous way of being? Who has the right to move it out of personal production time and space? What is the responsibility of the manufacturer to, in some way, preserve this idea of locality?

Other scholars have addressed these questions in various ways. There is, of course, the question of commodification in general. Peter Jackson refers to this by stating “[c]ommodification’ refers, literally, to the extension of the commodity form to goods and services that were not previously commodified” (96). Commodification, specifically of cultural goods, ideals, or practices is not inherently bad (see McIntosh, et. al.), but can have complicated and unexpected consequences. As those authors state, “[c]ultural identity is founded on tradition, lifestyle, values and protocol” (39); commodification may be done by an individual or an organization moving a piece of cultural identity to a wider sphere or audience without sufficient care for the importance of that tradition to a particular group. This relates to the idea of “diffusion” as referenced by Jason Baird Jackson: that “diffusion” may be a morally acceptable way of handling the fluidity of traditional handcraft and culture to adapt to the contemporary world in which it exists. And so where does this commodification of Muhu culture necessarily meet or cross the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable, from a human and a theoretical standpoint?

Chapter 2: Project background and rationale

The original slippers are made of industrially woven woolen fabric that is felted, and the slippers are then embroidered with wool thread. They are typically black, with a colorful assortment of daisies, cornflowers, and pansies, among other flowers, applied. They have a leather sole but, though many of my informants still wear their slippers outside, this is not always practical. The original slippers are quite low-cut, such that they can be easily slipped on and off. They, along with leather shoes, historically accompany the national costume specific to Muhu, but over the years have gradually become more commonplace. One stitcher, Informant B, made a comment that she considered that, as of 2022, they can be used for every day, but two or three years prior this would not be acceptable.

I was interested in these seemingly ubiquitous yet meticulously crafted slippers. In Tartu and on a trip to Tallinn in 2022 I thoroughly re-checked to make sure that my initial count was accurate; I was also interested because my first check of the tourist shops was prior to my weekends spent with an actual Muhu slipper master, learning the embroidery techniques and surrounded for hours on end by the slippers that she had made. During one of those lessons, she made a comment that was perfectly logical but intrigued me: she stated very clearly that actual slipper masters know what is well-done, and what is not. I was curious to see if now I could tell a difference.

The 2022 survey has confirmed the initial fact, that I have not found a single shop catering to tourists that does not have at least one pair of these slippers in stock. Some have dozens. What I have now started to notice, however, are some subtle differences. There is one similarity: whether this was agreed upon, or simply the market, the slippers are all in the €95-€110 range. Some shops have them in a pile, in a basket or some such on the floor. Others display them more like a traditional shoe store, on slanted shelves with each pair separated by several centimeters and the size labeled on the front of the shelf. One shop, near the Viru Gate in Tallinn, contained a large, oval table in the middle of the floor with several movable small shelves of varying height to add dimension. On the table were one each of the Muhu slipper, a leather shoe, a juniper spoon, a piece of Seto crochet, a piece of ironwork, a pair of knit gloves, and so on. Another, closer to the Town Hall Square in Tallinn, had a wall of small, back-lit, glass-fronted display boxes, each perhaps 30cm by 15cm, with one object in each one. Most of

these contained jewelry or pottery, but one had a pair of Muhu slippers. Some of these aesthetic differences certainly relate to the differences in the aesthetic of the stores themselves; however it is worth noting the different design and display choices made by each of the shops. A more full examination of this commercial relationship would be a welcome addition to the scholarship.

This lead to some follow-up questions. The process, according to multiple informants, seems to be that one learns the embroidery and then makes the slippers, a logical place to begin. Then one must find a store and reach some sort of agreement that the store wants the product that you have produced. The final piece here is that I am told that the stores typically only pay when the product is sold. All of this potentially disincentivizes handcrafters, but also shows the demand for this product, which many of my informants have said is remarkably high. It also explains a great deal of the discrepancy between both quality and display.

With all of this said, it is impossible to talk about the Muhu slipper without also talking about the ways in which it is possible to enact that first step, to learn Muhu embroidery. Some things to note regards my experience of this are that I do not live full-time in Estonia, my Estonian is not excellent, and at the time of this writing the world was still enduring the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic; all of these facts made my ability to find an instructor complex. In March of 2022 I was able to secure lessons with a slipper embroidery master, Sirje Tüür. She has been embroidering for decades, but also has been practicing leather-work for the past four years or so and is experimenting with combining leather accessories, particularly handbags and boots, with the traditional Muhu embroidery on wool.

The general consensus from the slipper masters that I interviewed is that there are, from time to time, workshops available though one stated that she believed that if there are ten participants in the workshop, only 1-2 would continue embroidering in the future. This makes it clear that the slippers are the product of individuals who had to find a master somewhere willing to teach, and have practiced long and hard at this particular discipline.

This situation leads us to the idea and appeal of commercially-produced socks in the style of the Muhu slipper. This version of socks are machine-woven and pre-packaged, taking inspiration from the Muhu slipper. This sock is black, low-cut, with the opening for the foot surrounded by brightly colored cornflowers, daisies, and strawberries (see photographs 5 and 6 for representative images). At the time of purchase for the original pair of socks, September of

2017, the Suva label on the socks that was made for hanging them for display at the market did not mention Muhu; they were simply labeled “Eesti Etno”. In February of 2022 another examination of the packaging was enacted, and at that time they were labeled, albeit on the back, as “Muhu”. In addition, Suva has expanded their Eesti Etno line considerably though still patterns from the Muhu national costume dominate the line. Though this situation of representation and attribution does seem slightly better, that original pair of socks reminded me again of part of the initial question, what opinion do Muhu residents, particularly those still stitching the slippers, have of these socks from Suva?

As I do have connections on Muhu, it may be clear that I wanted to pursue this line of inquiry to the best of my ability. Once I was accepted to the University of Tartu and had decided to attend, it seemed obvious that something related to this would be my project. My original objective was multi-faceted. I wanted to learn this embroidery from a master slipper maker, preferably on Muhu, so that I could more fully understand the original slippers. This has certainly been accomplished, and was as enlightening as I would have expected it to be. I wanted to explore this question of place and identity: when you take a craft out of its native habitat, what happens to it? Thus, I have tried to cleave to a more global sensibility and the fact that trends travel and evolve. And finally, what do Muhu residents think of the situation: of the slipper pattern being taken and used on a multitude of other items bearing no particular resemblance to the slipper itself?

Chapter 3: Fieldwork

In planning fieldwork for this project, it was necessary to keep several considerations in mind. The first was the logistics of travel both to and on the island, as traveling to the island required coordination with the friends with whom I stay, and they are not always home, or able to be home when I would like to arrive. Prior to official fieldwork commencing, I had asked many Muhu residents their thoughts over the years, but to the best of my knowledge I, and my friends, had not yet connected with a current slipper-maker. Official fieldwork began in late January of 2022 and, while this was not at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, while scheduling interviews I was still receiving refusals due to concerns about illness. Finally, my Estonian was not yet fluent enough to conduct the interviews in Estonian, limiting the possible options that I would have to select and engage with research participants.

I scheduled several trips to the island, and conducted other interviews in Tallinn, Tartu, or online. My greatest interest were individuals still making the slippers, as I assumed that they would have the strongest feelings regards this situation of commercialization, diffusion, and attribution. As noted, it was important to learn to make the slippers myself to more fully understand them and their heritage, and so an instructor was needed as well. I concurrently gathered names of individuals peripherally related to the craft community in some way. The thinking was that these individuals would have insights into the other piece of the puzzle which was, what happens when you take a craft object away from its point of origin, but then also completely change its form, construction, and, to some extent, aesthetics? Also included in the list were more Muhu residents to interrogate related to this phenomenon. Finally, the plan was to include some folklorists for more of a theoretical underpinning to my questions.

I was able to travel to Muhu five times and Tallinn twice. This official fieldwork took place between December 2021 and April 2022. It is possible to say that unofficial fieldwork has been ongoing since January of 2021, which is when I first began seriously investigating with various individuals their thoughts on the slippers, the use of the Muhu motifs, and the importance of correct attribution. Informants have been based on Muhu, as well as in Tallinn and Tartu. As described above, the final list was a diverse mix of individuals: some were directly involved in the creation of the slippers themselves in a fairly traditional fashion; some utilized the theory and general aesthetic to re-think the genre; and one is engaged in the

marketing and promotion of Estonian handcraft in general. Most interviews took place in person, though for various reasons including Covid-related concerns, travel logistics, and the language barrier, some occurred either via video chat or email. In total, six individuals were officially interviewed, some on multiple occasions. Many asked that they not be identified by name in this final document, and so are referred to generically as “Participant A”, and so forth. A complete list, with as many personal details as possible, is included with the bibliographic information.

Predicated in the examination of the slippers’ origin, the practical piece of the project began with an interest in creating a book contextualizing the Muhu slipper on the island, within the culture of the island, and celebrating the practice’s interconnectivity to Muhu and its inhabitants. I had seen, as mentioned previously, in many circumstances this practice being displaced without context: either completely, in slipper form in souvenir or craft shops, or simply the motifs being taken and used on socks, pillows, tote bags, or other small items. I was interested in creating a piece that would pull together the various threads of culture of the island, the food, the craft, the nature, the people, the history, and weave a tapestry upon which the slipper as a craft and as an expression of place/people/identity could be situated.

The island and its culture have deep roots that are not going to be swayed by a sock company in Tallinn utilizing their pattern for a line of socks that celebrates all of the diversity of Estonian craft heritage. As more than one informant stated, Muhu does a very good job of promoting themselves as it is, which is certainly the case. One, Informant A, a female slipper-maker in her late 50s living on the island, made a comment that Muhu is very small, and the individuals there cannot necessarily tell people what to do. In general, all fieldwork participants were satisfied with the way the island was represented, which was not necessarily the outcome that I had expected. Thus the question can become, what place does the Muhu slipper have as an object in the minds of not only individuals on the island, but individuals who perhaps have no firm connection to Muhu as a place? How can that be represented fairly? In this context, “fair” may be construed as simply acknowledging the originating location, though could also be much more extensive than this. Some options may be to include maps of the locations; photos of the areas from whence the practice comes; or a paragraph (or longer) of explanatory text regarding the history and geography.

In the Eesti Käsitöö handcraft shops there do exist kits to knit patterned gloves or mittens from various regions. These kits do a particularly admirable job of educating the consumer, by including a one-page summary of the history and significance of the project inside the box containing the materials. Perhaps it is clear, however, that any of these options, or the many others that are possible to think of, would need to be chosen based on their appropriateness related to marketing and packaging: it would be impossible to include a one-sheet of information with the Suva socks, for example. All of this being said, the current state of the Muhu slipper, and Muhu embroidery in general, is robust and diverse even without additionally educating the consumer. This I feel confident in saying, though in the course of my interviews and now my own practice I am absolutely certain that I was able only to reach the tiniest fraction of individuals working within this form in creative and interesting ways.

In the end, the project accompanying this paper is not necessarily a traditional “book”. More and more, that seemed to be completely unnecessary and redundant. Rather it is an artistic reaction to the world relationship to the slipper that involves the socks that began this inquiry but also how it is represented in the world.

Chapter 4: The project and its production

What has evolved through scholarly research and several months of fieldwork is an investigation, an exploration, of what it means when I mention Muhu slippers to various individuals today, which warranted a shift in the final form of the project. Thus this project is not a book, as far as being what in the bookmaking world is considered a “codex”, what Alisa Golden defines in her own book/codex as thus: “The codex is the classic, Western-style book, the commercially produced book that we most often find in bookstores” (Golden 146). As mentioned, that as a form began to feel not just unnecessary but repetitive, and certainly not expansive enough to encompass the diversity and creativity that I experienced on the island.

Inspired by the artists with whom I was able to work and interview, as well as my time on the island, I began to consider what it would mean to create an artistic reaction to the world’s relationship to the slipper, involving the socks that began this inquiry but also Muhu as a place. I still think of it as a book, but this is an expansive and artistic definition, more defining a “book” as a collection of words and ideas: how would it be possible to put together some small representation of the place from whence they come? This takes us into the complicated realm of the “artists book” (or “artist’s book”, “artists’ book” or “artist’s publishing”, depending on the reference), a full discussion of which is outside of the scope of this essay. However, some background context is helpful. While the history of the artists book is very long, the term is generally considered to have been put into common usage by Dianne Perry Vanderlip in an exhibition catalogue entitled “Artists Books” written in 1974 (White, 227). What exactly this term means has been an area of discussion before and after that moment, particularly from a library or librarian’s standpoint, most succinctly put by Louise Kulp when she states that “[d]efinitions of artists’ books are as varied as the books themselves” (Kulp 5). She does go on to utilize what is also this author’s preferred definition: “This author favors the definition found in *Descriptive Cataloguing of Artists' Books* published by ARLIS/UK & Ireland . . . [i]t defines an artist's book as ‘A book or book-like object in which an artist has had a major input beyond illustration or authorship: where the final appearance of the book owes much to an artist's interference/ participation: where the book is the manifestation of the artist’s creativity: where the book is a work of art unto itself’” (Kulp 5). One strong example of such a book, and one that is similar in composition to the project that accompanies this essay, can be found in the

collection catalogue of artists' books (term theirs) of the Frick Fine Arts Library at the University of Pittsburgh (formatting theirs):

Broaddus, John Eric. *Memoirs of a Dragonfly (Satyricon)*. New York: The artist, 1972. 1. Carrying case, with book, confetti and dried roses; col. ill., 20x 32 cm. Frick – Cage – N6537/B7M3/1972

Tempera, ink, marker, watercolor, scotch tape, metal carrying case containing dried roses and confetti punched from text block. Book wrapped in cloth decorated by the artist and bearing a signature and the title of the work. This altered book is from the beginning of Broaddus' career. The artist manipulated a modern edition of the *Satyricon* by punching and cutting holes in the pages and adding color. He collected the punched-out confetti pieces and incorporated them back into the work. A metal carrying case which houses the metamorphosed volume has a clear layer creating a space in the bottom of the box. In this space two dried roses and the confetti pieces reside. When the plastic is rubbed with the cloth that wraps the book, the static electricity created causes the confetti to dance. This effect continues for several minutes after the rubbing has ceased, giving the appearance that these bits of paper are live creatures. (University of Pittsburgh 6)

This catalogue/reference guide as a whole is also a valuable resource for examining more fully the phenomenon of the artist's book. It was against this type of background that the form of this project began to develop.

Mentioned earlier is the fact that, in some craft shops, it is possible to purchase a variety of Estonian glove knitting kits. This selection includes many patterns from Muhu. I find nothing wrong with this, other than it is an obvious indicator of the commercialization of heritage, a conversation that I had with several people involved with this endeavor. Though it should not be overlooked that these kits do make the mittens, gloves, and socks more available to a wider swath of consumers, including those who cannot afford a full-price pair, or perhaps simply would like to knit a pair themselves. As several of my informants pointed out, in this way they are beneficial in simply spreading a broader knowledge and appreciation of Muhu craft across Estonia and beyond.

With that as context, I will broadly describe the project in its final form before elucidating more fully the thinking process and the actual physical production of each piece. In this artist's book, I am using a nearly identical box to the one within which those glove and mitten kits are housed. Inside the box is a pair of the original Suva socks that sparked this

conversation; a small pouch of rocks from Muhu; seeds for one of the flowers visible on the slippers contained in a custom-designed envelope highlighting the colors and flowers utilized in the embroidery; and a short, handmade/handbound book. Inside the book is printed another piece of my writing that is much less academic, but rather a description of the island and the crafters that I have met (see Annex 2 for the full text; the formatting has been changed from the printed version to better present here as a document). With that inside, the box is closed with a piece of hand stitching that I have done in the style of the slipper embroidery; I would like to make it clear, it was my teacher and not me who designed and drew it. This piece of embroidery wraps horizontally around the box as if a belt, holding together the top and the bottom of the box. This also references another piece of the Muhu traditional costume, that of the woven or stitched belt. Provenance for all the items included was one of the main considerations in the creation process, given the emphasis on location and attribution. Visual and tactile aesthetics were also a major consideration in the composition of the final work. Photographs are included in-text here, and process photos may be found in Annex 1.



Photograph 1: paperboard box



Photograph 2: Eesti Käsitöö knitting kit

The original box was sourced from a paper purveyor in Tallinn who supplies many of the boxes used by local craftspeople. Unfortunately, somewhere in transit it suffered some marring that made it unacceptable to use for the final project; additionally, as other items were added, it proved larger than would be appropriate. The final box is a smaller form factor, from a generic paper supplier, though made of the same paperboard material. The choice to use this as a container for the project as a whole came from the use in the knitting kits: it references a

removal and commodification of another piece of island heritage. It is possible to make the argument that these kits are not vastly different from the commercially produced Suva socks, though the kits do make a strong effort to contextualize and attribute the origins of each design.



Photograph 3: top insert (see Annex 3 for full text)

Inside the top of the box is a small piece of text introducing the idea of the Muhu slipper and includes a photo of one pair made by one of my local informants. This was added with the understanding that this essay may not always accompany the finished project, and thus some additional context was necessary. As a small piece, it proved highly challenging to produce correctly with a print quality and size that were acceptable. For this, and all of the printed pieces included in the final product, I was able to access the services of a local design/print shop who did shepherd the design through nine iterations.



Photograph 4: stitched band, holding box

The stitched band on the outside of the box is pictured here. While not an actual slipper, it utilizes materials and techniques that would be used in their production. The materials included in the making of it were sourced on Muhu; it was stitched over the course of many hours both alone and with the presence and aid of my teacher, Sirje Tüür. It began as a simple piece of the black felt out of which the Muhu slippers are made, with a design drawn onto it. After the embroidery was completed, the edges were finished and a satin ribbon closure added. The ribbon was one given to me by one of my Muhu-based informants.



Photograph 5: Suva socks



Photograph 6: reverse side of Suva socks



Photograph 7: hand-stitched Muhu slippers

Above are photos of the socks from Suva that were the original project inspiration. The photos are of the front and of the back of the socks with their packaging intact; the back of the packaging reflects the updates to the product that now references the fact that the design inspiration is from Muhu. Photograph 7 is a photo, taken by me in April of 2022, that was added on the inside top of the box, of a pair of the original slippers to provide context as to the design inspiration for the socks, and for the project as a whole.



Photograph 8: linen pouch



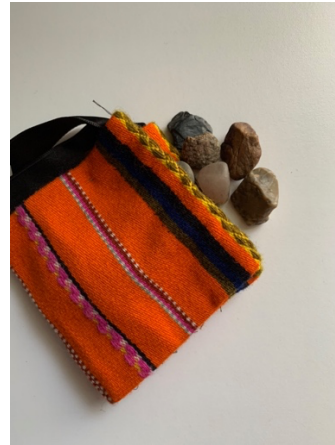
Photograph 9: Linen pouch with stones

This is a small pouch, sewn by me, made of a linen-blend fabric in black. The color choice was for two reasons: one was to not visually compete with the other colorful items in

the box, and the other as black is a color that traditionally is used in designs of Muhu origin. Inside (figure 9) it contains stones from Muhu that were gathered throughout the fieldwork process, at each location in which I met with an informant. The intent here is to provide an actual physical piece of the place from whence these slippers come, once again referencing the importance of origin and attribution.



Photograph 10: original pouch



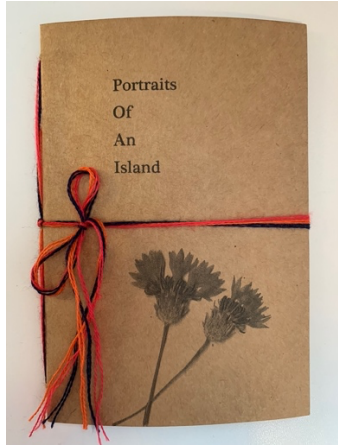
Photograph 11: original pouch with stones

This piece of the project became one of the more difficult and sometimes contentious items. In my original plan and design, I had a desire to use a fabric that was itself from Muhu and ideally one of the fabrics historically used in the traditional Muhu costume, and that original fabric pouch is pictured above in photographs 10 and 11 for reference. This fabric was sourced by the main Eesti Käsitöö handcraft shop in Tallinn, again run by the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union; they provide a wide variety of fabrics for making traditional costumes from across Estonia. The weaving of these fabrics is not my specialty or specific research interest for this project, and so the original intent was to find and interview a weaver working in this space, a task in which I was unsuccessful. The next best option seemed to be to go to another expert resource, though in the process of review both the color choice and the authenticity of the fabric were questioned by several sources, and in the course of production the aesthetic of including such a boldly colored item no longer seemed to fit with the overall finished product. As a result, the decision was made not to include this piece but instead the more neutral black pouch pictured prior.

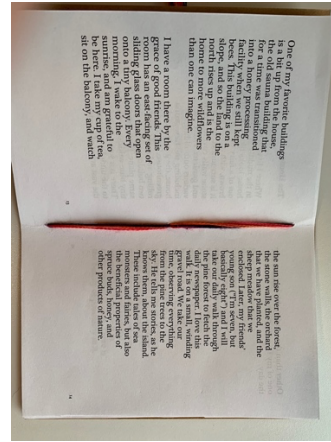


Photograph 12: cornflower seed packet

The exterior of this seed packet is stitched with thread in colors referenced in *Estonian Knitting 1: Traditions and Techniques* (Pink, et. al, 105) as official Muhu colors. This was done for aesthetic reasons and to ensure that everything contained in the project (excluding the box, photograph 1) included a handmade and stitched element. This was another interesting and unexpectedly complex piece of the assemblage as there exist so many diverse elements on a relatively small medium. First, while I have been sewing for many years, I do not have a great deal of experience in working with stitching on paper; deciding on a proper stitch tension as well as how to finish the thread ends without negatively impacting the look of the paper itself took some thought and practice. Second, printing on such a small envelope proved challenging. The professional printers with whom I work were unable to devise a feasible solution, and so again in this instance achieving the desired final result required a great deal of experimentation. Finally, sourcing the cornflowers themselves, drying them, and preserving them so that they would remain protected and intact on the packet itself required some practice and experimentation with different mediums that would not impact either the visual look of the flowers or the paper of the envelope itself. The decision to use the cornflower stemmed from its prominence in the slipper design as well as its prevalence in Estonian iconography in general. Per the State website, eesti.ee, the cornflower was chosen as the national symbol of Estonia in 1968 and officially adopted in 1988.



Photograph 13: small book cover



Photograph 14: inside binding

The book is tiny in page numbers, at only 28 pages, but also somewhat in size; it measures 4” x 6” (approximately 10cm x 15.25cm). The book is printed on 100# matte paper to give it a sense of weight, with a custom cover of brown paperboard. The binding was designed and adapted after one learned from Alisa Golden, the “Single Signature Binding” (95).

Given everything that I have just argued, there are many pieces of this that may seem complicated. The box that I use makes sense as it signifies a removal and commodification of another piece of island heritage; in fact, I might argue that this assemblage is no different than the Suva socks except they take a different type of human skill and effort to accomplish and cost €30 without factoring in my labor in the stitching. I believe that the socks should be obvious, as they relate directly to the piece of stitching on the outside. The rocks mean that there is a literal piece of Muhu that someone could have, as well as a reminder that these socks came from a specific place. The seeds are a reminder that we, as stitchers, always take our inspiration from nature, and from whence the inspiration for the slipper designs come. The book is what explains all of this, with a personal portrait of the island.

It is unlikely that this version could be scaled to something commercially viable, nor necessarily should it be; as referenced earlier, the commodification of any part of culture comes with many questions and considerations. However, with thought and collaboration with some of the many talented crafters on the island, it may be able to. There exist examples of craft kits that cost much more and take much less effort; if there was a strong marketing push in the proper direction, it may be a possibility to market something like this as, indeed, a commodity. There is one example that I have found of a much less elaborate piece being sold in Stockholm

for €50; it involved one piece of fabric, and ten pieces of embroidery floss. It is difficult to say what the market here is, though again, with effort, it may be possible. If not, then the future could be scaling the product down and finding a market there. The place to be cautious, however, is to make sure that if there was an option to commodify, and not simply have this be a complicated sort of installation piece of art, so one is doing the thing against which I just argued: taking advantage of the Muhu heritage without the buy-in of the islanders. Another avenue for consideration is to leave this project as either a one-off or very limited-edition artist's book and take it as a template for use in other locations in order to illustrate their unique beauty as well.

Conclusion

Through this process, it has become clear to me that the Muhu slipper, and its makers, are safe. It has also become clear that I came from a different perspective: my initial question was whether taking the Muhu motifs and utilizing them out of context was acceptable, and what the islanders, particularly the slipper masters, thought of this. What I have seen is a brilliant, creative, resilient community that does not fear adaptation, diffusion, or commodification. In fact, they welcome it, to an extent. I brought a pair of (unused) Suva socks to every interview, and, far from being as shocked as I was, these socks were met with equanimity. The usual response was something like “yes, those exist, and it is nice that people in the grocery store will see Muhu patterns” (informants B and C). I was still told by several informants, and one stated it with particular clarity, that if you want really high-quality and original Muhu slippers, you must order them from Muhu women (Informant B, April 2022).

What is unclear is how we protect places that are not secure, and conversely, how we lift them up. By looking at Muhu, and its practices, it may be possible to see and find ways to make other parts of Estonia more visible, and to preserve their handcrafts should we so choose. It is possible. My teacher stated that if there is someone who is very interested and really wants to, then he or she will also find a place and a way to study. We need to help build pathways to find those ways to study, as well as continue to celebrate the exceptional handcraft that is happening not just on Muhu, but across Estonia.

Bibliography

--. University of Pittsburgh Frick Fine Arts Library. *Artists' Books*. <https://www.haa.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/other-research-guides/artists-books.pdf>.

Brown, Michael. 2004. Heritage as Property. – *Property In Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy*, edited by Caroline Humphrey and Katherine Verdery. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 49-68.

Cashman, Ray, Tom Mould, Pravina Shukla (eds.). 2011. *The Individual and Tradition: Folkloristic Perspectives*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Golden, Alisa. 2011. *Making Handmade Books: 100+ Bindings, Structures & Forms*. New York: Lark Crafts.

Hadi, Nurjahan. 2019. "Transformation of a Traditional Textile Craft: a Case Study of Nakshi Kantha." A Master's Thesis. University of Tartu. https://dspace.ut.ee/bitstream/handle/10062/67017/Hadi_Nurjahan_2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Jackson, Jason Baird. "On Cultural Appropriation." *Journal of Folklore Research* 58, no. 1 (2021): 77-122. muse.jhu.edu/article/783863.

Jackson, Peter. "Commodity Cultures: The Traffic in Things." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 24, no. 1 (1999): 95–108. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/623343>.

Kabur, Anu. 2012. *Meite Muhu päititegu [The Making of Our Muhu Slippers]*. Türi, Estonia: Saara Publishing House.

Kabur, Anu. 2017. *Kopli Riina ja Mare [Riina and Mare from Kopli Farm]*. Türi, Estonia: Saara Publishing House.

Kabur, Anu. 2015. *Uuenidi Anu mustrid [Patterns by Anu by Anu from Uuenidi Farm]*. Türi, Estonia: Saara Publishing House.

Kulp, Louise. "Artists' Books in Libraries: A Review of the Literature." *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 24, no. 1 (2005): 5–10. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27949342>.

Langlands, Alexander. 2018. *Cræft: An Inquiry into the Origins and True Meaning of Traditional Crafts*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

McIntosh, Alison J., Tom Hinch, and Takiora Ingram. 2002. "Cultural Identity and Tourism." *International Journal of Arts Management* 4, no. 2: 39–49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41064754>.

Nugraha, Adhi. 2010. *Transforming Tradition for Sustainability through 'TCUSM' Method*. Paper presented at InSEA European Regional Conference, Rovaniemi, Finland.

Pink, Anu, Siiri Reiman, Kristi Jõeste. 2016. *Estonian Knitting I. Traditions and Techniques*. Türi Estonia: Saara Publishing House.

Sifford, Harlan L. "Artist Book Collecting and Other Myths of Art Librarianship." *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 1, no. 6 (1982): 174–75. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27947021>.

White, Tony. "The Evolution of Artists' Publishing." *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 33, no. 2 (2014): 227–42. <https://doi.org/10.1086/678548>.

Interviews conducted

Informant A, a female slipper-maker in her late 50s living on the island; two hour in-person interview in February 2022.

Informant B, a female slipper-maker in her late 40s living on the island; one hour in-person interview in April 2022.

Informant C, a female slipper-maker in her early 60s living on the island; one hour in-person interview in April 2022.

Informant D, a female slipper-maker in her 30s-40s living on the island; email interview in April 2022.

Sirje Tüür, practicing slipper-maker living on the island and my teacher; multiple in-person 2-3 hour long interviews with more conducted via email between February 2022 and April 2022.

Liivi Soova, one founder of the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union; one hour in-person interview in March of 2022.

Resümee

Muhu suss kui kultuuriobjekt: koha, ajaloo ja omistamise tähtsuse uurimine

Eesti regionaalsetest rahvarõivatraditsioonidest pakuvad mulle erilist huvi Muhu omad, mis on hästi säilinud ja äratuntavad. Muhu naise rahvarõivaste juurde kuuluvad tikitud sussid, mille valmistamisel kasutatav ainulaadne tikkimistehnika on muutunud Eesti käsitöö omamoodi sümboliks. Sussidel kasutatavaid või neid meenutavaid motiive kohtab sageli väljaspool Muhu saart ja ka trükitud või muul kujul.

Magistriprojekti praktilise väljundina valmis kunstnikuraamatuna vormistatud assamblee käsitsi valmistatud esemetest, mis tutvustab Muhu susside valmistamise kunsti. Koos projekti kirjaliku osaga uurib see tikkimise hetkeseisu, seda kujundavaid inimlikke ja ärilisi faktoreid ning selle kasutamise tagajärgi ja vastutusega seotud küsimusi.

Kunstnikuraamatut ja kirjalikku käsitlust ühendavaks teemaks on asukoha ja omistamise olulisus käsitöö kontekstis. Tegemist on kompleksse küsimusepüstitusega, mistõttu tugineb kirjalik osa folkloristika, raamatukogunduse ja infoteaduse, ajaloo, antropoloogia, käsitöö ja *performance*'i uurimise vallas avaldatud töödele. Praktilise osa vormistuslik lahendus kujunes koostöös inimestega, kellega välitööde käigus kokku puutusin. Karbikujulisest kunstnikuraamatust leiab Muhu sussidel kasutatud tikandi, saarelt pärinevate kivikestega koti, raamatukese ja kotikesega tikanditel sageli kasutatud rukkilille seemnetega.

Jõuan järeldusele, et Muhul tegutsevad käsitöölised ei pea oma loomingut seostamist Muhuga oluliseks. Nad hindavad kohalikku kultuuri tugevaks ning peavad seda väga heaks, et inimesed käsitööga mistahes viisil kokku puutuvad. Kohalik käsitööelu on elujõuline. Uurijaid võiksid kultuuri toetamist jätkata ja samas leida viise, kuidas tunnustada saart, kust see pärineb.

Annex 1: Process photos



Photograph 15: first stages of embroidery



Photograph 16: continued work



Photograph 17: the original socks with their handmade counterpart



Photograph 18: the handmade book with one of its referents



Photographs 19-22: process photos of the book binding, making, and design

Annex 2: Small book text

The Island

Muhu is a small island off the west coast of Estonia. It is the third largest island in the country, lying between the mainland and Saaremaa, the largest island in the archipelago. Ferries to and from the island run every 30 minutes when everything is going well and indeed, the buses that take the ferry continue on to Saaremaa, after a brief stop in Liiva, the village one encounters upon entering the island. But this is practical, and not the entire picture.

There are many stories, much history, and of course, handcraft. Let us explore.

The Ferry

The ferry to Muhu is huge, and efficient. Seemingly endless lines of cars and cargo trucks get slotted into lanes at the port in Virtsu, on the mainland. People get out of their cars, mill about, socialize. But when that boat begins to pull in, it is all efficiency. A stream of vehicles pours out of this massive boat, speeding off to their next destination. Then it is our turn. Our vehicles pour in, directed by the ferry staff who see this every half hour. Hundreds of cars, and within minutes, we are off. Should you choose to get out of your vehicle for the 30 minute ferry ride, you can head upstairs from the auto deck, where all sorts of wonders await. An R-Kiosk, one of Estonia's signature convenience stores. A buffet. An order-what-you-will restaurant line. Seating galore. A play area for the kids. But best of all, windows. Windows completely surround this upper human deck, from which one can watch all of the beauty of the water rushing by. Or, if one heads to the front of the boat, it is possible already to see the island.

Heading to the front, the view is beautiful. The island begins as a small, dark line on the horizon, at the end of an expanse of moody, choppy sea. The boat speeds forward. The sky can be any color, depending on the season and the weather. It may also be gray, and moody. Or bright blue, with a few small clouds dotting the sky. The island begins to get bigger, now a more prominent dark line on the horizon. Fifteen minutes in, the ferry returning to the mainland passes by, its

wake causing even more waves in the ever-changeable sea. It is possible to walk outside, to the very front of the boat. Here, there can almost be a sense of fear. It is so open, the water so strong, and the wind as though it could blow you right off the boat. But this sense of nature, of openness, as the island rushes towards us, is exhilarating.

The port at Liiva approaches. Rocky beaches on either side, cars eagerly awaiting their turn, some port buildings lurking a bit behind. We all return to our vehicles. The ferry pulls in, gaping maw of the auto deck slowly opening as we slow our speed, and meet the island. It is time: we are here.

The Village

The first village one encounters on the island is Liiva. It sits immediately on the one road from the ferry terminal. Here one can continue west, towards Saaremaa, the big island, or turn north on another main road on the island. This crossroads is delightful, particularly in the summer. Here is the island traveler's Mecca. There is a relatively new Coop supermarket that replaced the small one from my early days on the island. Its parking lot seems massive. On the south side of the road is a restaurant serving burgers and pizza. Across from that, though, is even more.

Here, all sorts of treasures exist, particularly during the summer months. The fish market is somewhat known to have the best candied nuts available. Muhu Leib has its original store there. As a bakery, while they produce many products, where they truly shine is in their leib. It was a warm loaf of Muhu leib, fetched at 07:00 before it sold out, that introduced me to this beautiful food. A dense, hearty, fermented rye bread, it is a miracle of nature. Muhu Leib makes it transcendent. Half a dozen varieties or more are available, from plain to my favorite, a seeded version featuring additions of pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, and sunflower seeds. But get there early: everyone knows that this is some of the best foodstuff on the planet.

Moving on from the bread, however, next door we also have the handcraft market with a host of beautiful items ranging from delicate jewelry to heavy wool socks knitted in one of the

traditional Muhu color schemes of orange and black. Beyond that, we have the true gem, at least in the summer months, Muhurito. This seasonal pop-up restaurant is a riot of color, an assemblage of trucks and seating and clearly a lot of love. One truck provides gorgeous, thoughtfully created burritos. They have also expanded to another truck, which happens to contain a pizza oven imported from Italy. Order the salmon pizza. It seems unlikely, but is delicious, and features salmon smoked on the island by the father of the owner. Settle into the eclectic open-air seating to watch the ferry traffic pass by.

The House

Where I live on the island is in the middle of a forest. The house looks like something out of a fairy tale. Small, brown, with a thatched roof, it is surrounded by low loose-stone walls covered in moss, and gardens. There are various outbuildings, including the new sauna house, the garage, and a greenhouse. The land is rolling and rocky, and so no two buildings are on the same plane. In the spring, tiny blue wildflowers abound. There is a sort of calm quiet to the undulating terrain, and the vast array of gardens. One of my favorite buildings is a bit up from the house, the old sauna building that for a time was transitioned into a honey processing facility when we still kept bees. This building is on a slope, and so the land to the north rises up and is the home to more wildflowers than one can imagine.

I have a room there by the grace of good friends. This room has an east-facing set of sliding glass doors that open onto a tiny balcony. Every morning, I wake to the sunrise, and am grateful to be here. I take my cup of tea, sit on the balcony, and watch the sun rise over the forest, the stone walls, the orchard that we have planted, and the sheep meadow that we enclosed. Later, my friends' young son ("I'm seven, but basically eight") and I will take our daily walk through the pine forest to fetch the daily newspaper. I love this walk. It is on a small, winding gravel road. We take our time, observing everything from the pine trees to the sky. He tells me stories, as he knows them, about the island. These include tales of sea monsters and fairies, but also the beneficial properties of spruce buds, honey, and other products of nature. Other than the sunrise, this is one of my favorite parts of the day.

The Studio

Sirje Tüür is a master Muhu slipper maker. She is also, by some grace of the universe, my teacher. Her studio is situated in a small building adjacent to her home; the entire complex is more compact than at The House, but with a similar feel. Walking into the studio is a marvel. Around the perimeter of the main room are supplies; I love walking into another fiber artist's studio. As practitioners, we keep varieties of material around, but organize it in many different ways. There is the beauty of possibility in it. I believe that we keep so much around us just because of this: we never know when we will need a certain thread, or yarn, or fabric, or whatever materials we are working with. We also see the world through this lens, and so a material may catch our eye and, with no clear purpose, we save it.

The real beauty is the middle of the room. There is a large table that fills the space, and it is covered in dozens of Muhu slippers that she has made. The array of designs and color palettes is unreal; I had never seen so many of the slippers together at one time. The sense of mastery and artistry is visible. It is between these two spaces, the raw materials and the finished products, that we wedge our chairs and I get to learn.

Embroidery is not my main practice; I have been knitting longer, and with much more regularity. I have, however, been embroidering for over twenty years. Sitting there, it was like nothing. Sirje stitches with more speed and consistency than I could ever hope for. Her patience with me is remarkable. The embroidery done for the Muhu slippers has a certain technique that is somewhat different than what I have done before. It has a certain rhythm to it, as do all handcrafts, and I still struggle to master it. Yet she sat with me for hours, watching me struggle to make a poppy flower, or a cornflower, or a strawberry blossom (which are still the most difficult for me) lookprint correct. Watching me lose that rhythm over and over. Showing me again. It is a practice I will have for the rest of my life, and gives me even more appreciation for the slippers that I admire so much. She is making me a pair. This seems another grace of the universe, having lived the skill and artistry behind them.

The Museum

There is an amazing museum on Muhu. It is, conveniently, called the Muhu Museum. The word “museum”, however, has never seemed to do it justice. It can be easy to default to the idea of a “museum” as something like a building that encases something defined, likely specific. The Muhu Museum is so much more. It spans a huge amount of property, and several buildings with different histories and purposes. There is an old schoolhouse, historic windmills, and an exhibition space that creates displays focused on various aspects of Muhu culture. It also, very importantly, encompasses Tooma Farm, which is the birthplace of the writer who made me fall in love with Estonian literature. His name is Juhan Smuul, and the book that captivated me is “Antarctica Ahoy”. It is certainly worth a read. He is known for his evocative depictions of the sea, and this book is no exception. It is a combination personal journal and what we may today call a travelogue. Recall our ferry ride: the sea is a massive influence on an island this small.

Beyond that, however, my connection to the museum is that some of my fieldwork was done there. I was lucky enough that another Muhu slipper master volunteers there, and was willing to assist. At the time of our interview, the exhibition space was dedicated to examples throughout decades of Muhu embroidery in all of its iterations. Here we had blankets, baby clothes, the list goes on. But of course, there were slippers.

This exhibition space is small but mighty. The curation is brilliant, and it is hardly possible to imagine how beautiful the other exhibitions may be. The entire campus of the museum is a microcosm of all that is Muhu. They manage history on many levels. The landscape is quietly beautiful, with the rolling terrain, mossy stone walls, and low thatched-roof houses that we have seen before. We will leave you with that, and the hope that you explore more.

The End

Annex 3: front cover text

The Muhu slipper: a small introduction

There exists a practice of national costume across Estonia that is specific to various regions; in this box of items, the focus is on one piece of that type of costume from the island of Muhu, just off of Estonia's west coast. This piece is an embroidered slipper, and various elements of the island and the slipper are included here with the hope of providing both background and context.

The original slippers are made of industrially woven woolen fabric that is then felted, followed by embroidery with woolen thread. They are typically black, with a colorful assortment of cornflowers, daisies, and pansies, among other flowers, applied. A photo of some examples is included here, again for reference and as a visual aid.

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce the thesis and make the thesis public

I, Emily Celeste Watts

1. grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis

The Muhu Slipper as a Cultural Object: an examination of the importance of place, history, and attribution

Muhu suss kui kultuuriobjekt: koha, ajaloo ja omistamise tähtsuse uurimine

supervised by Kristi Jõeste

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the thesis specified in point 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, under the Creative Commons licence CC BY NC ND 4.0, which allows, by giving appropriate credit to the author, to reproduce, distribute the work and communicate it to the public, and prohibits the creation of derivative works and any commercial use of the work until the expiry of the term of copyright.
3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in points 1 and 2.
4. I confirm that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Emily Celeste Watts
11/08/2022