

Crafting Cultural Heritage

The making of artefacts is a core activity in society, the result of which contributes to the building up of our physical surroundings and material culture. Throughout history, craft skills have been highly appreciated and have often been seen as crucial component of a capable human. Despite this, the knowledge base that constitutes the actual making is often overlooked in research. What can we learn about things by learning about their making? How do different craft skills offer an understanding of its historical use? How can theoretical and methodological approaches be developed concerning the actual making? How can we study and understand craft as cultural heritage?

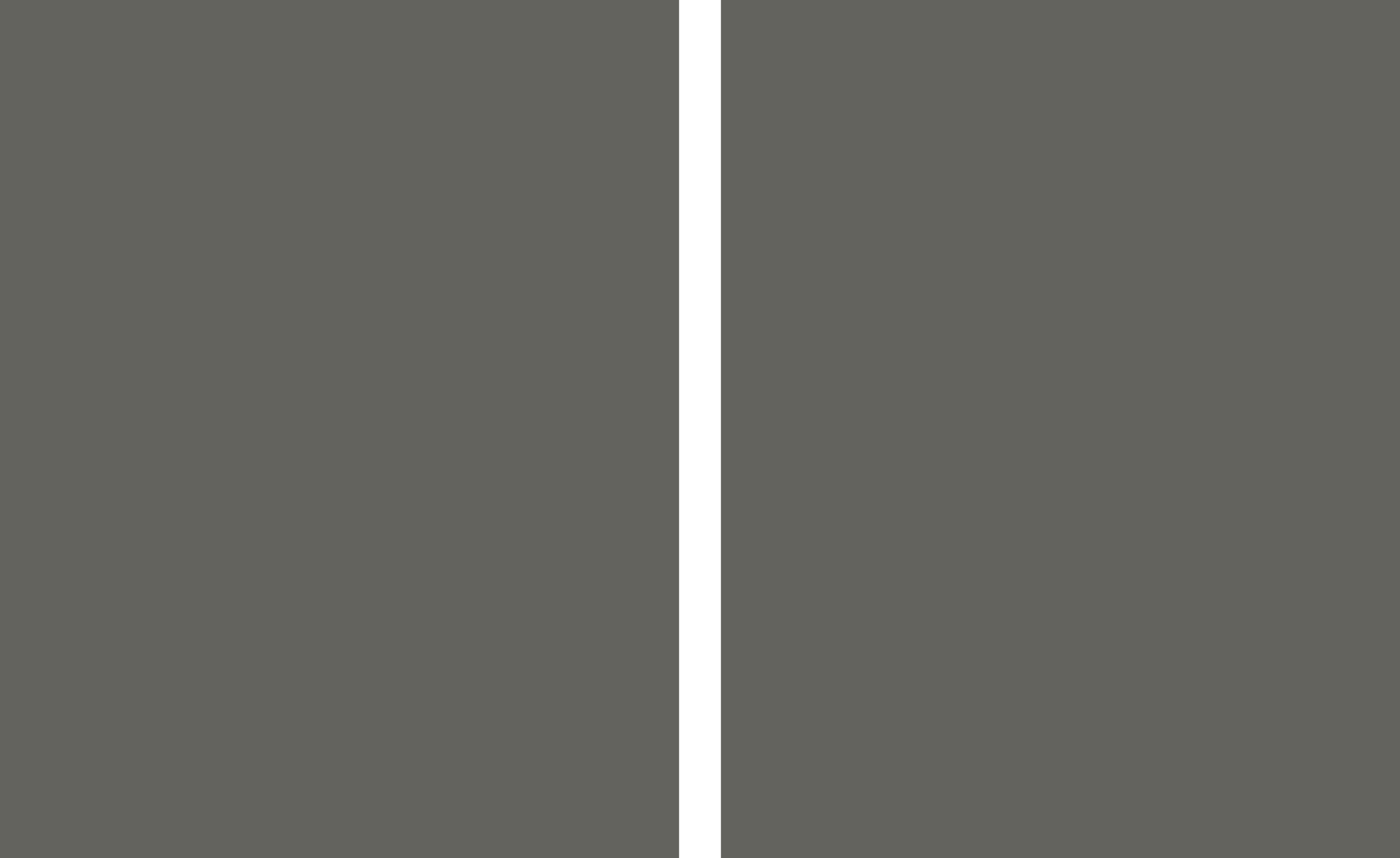
This book contains a selection of papers from the session Crafting Cultural Heritage at the Association of Critical Heritage studies inaugural conference Re/theorising Heritage 2012 in Gothenburg. The contributors are Anneli Palmsköld, Thomas Laurien, Eleonora Lupo and Elena Giunta, Gunnar Almevik, and Nicola Donovan. Their common interest are theories and methods of crafting that could benefit heritage studies approach to making.



CRAFTING CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited by Anneli Palmsköld, Johanna Rosenqvist and Gunnar Almevik





DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

CRAFTING CULTURAL HERITAGE



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

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Introduction

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"The knowledge base that constitutes the actual making is often overlooked in research in comparison to the attention the artefact has attracted historically."

Johanna Rosenqvist is a Senior Lecturer in the History and Theory of Craft at Konstfack, the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, Sweden, and Senior Lecturer in Art History and Visual Studies at Linnaeus University. She wrote her thesis, "An Aesthetics of Sexual Difference? On Art and Artistry in Swedish Handicraft of the 1920s and 1990s" (2007), in Lund, and has since continued to investigate the field of handicraft in relation to a wider field of cultural production. For example, in the research project Performative Handicraft at Lund University 2011-13 she explored the performative aspects of practical skills by studying how notions of gender are used to communicate craft.

Crafting Cultural Heritage

By Johanna Rosenqvist

This anthology is a compilation of papers presented at the Association of Critical Heritage Studies' Inaugural Conference "Re/theorising Heritage" at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden on 5-8 June 2012. The aim and scope for the conference was to re-theorise the heritage field by developing theoretical debates on related issues. After a short background, articles by Anneli Palmsköld; Thomas Laurien; Eleonora Lupo and Elena Giunta; Gunnar Almevik and Nicola Donovan, will be presented and discussed as contributions not only to a conference but to an emerging field of critical heritage studies.

The title *Crafting Cultural Heritage* was also the name of a session suggested to meet the challenge of the call of the conference and the then newly formed Association of Critical Heritage Studies to start forming a network of scholars from diverse disciplines to debate and discuss research in the

emerging field of contemporary heritage studies. Papers, presentations and sessions were encouraged to take an interdisciplinary approach – they were to avoid

site- and artefact-based definitions of heritage in a traditional sense and should pursue instead a range of methodologies and questions aiming at interdisciplinarity stemming from social science, scholarly traditions, natural science, and also areas such as artistic practices and the performing arts.¹

So we who are now the editors of this publication, Anneli Palmsköld, Johanna Rosenqvist and Gunnar Almevik, initiated and formed a session on the topic of *crafting* as a means of challenging the previous. In the session, the making of artefacts was identified as a core activity in society, the result of which contributes to the building up of our physical surroundings and material culture. We know that throughout history, craft skills have been

highly appreciated and have often been seen as a crucial component of a capable human. Despite this, we clearly see that the knowledge base that constitutes the actual making is often overlooked in research in comparison to the attention the artefact has attracted historically. In our session the participants were encouraged specifically to "discuss theories and methods of crafting that might benefit heritage studies' approach to making." The overall question asked was about how to understand craft as cultural heritage. And the answers we got were diverse as a whole, and yet specific in their scope and subject.

Cultural heritage is discussed from as many different perspectives as there are contributors to this anthology – but they all highlight the performative aspects of crafting and its implications. In UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, traditional craftsmanship is a specified domain. During the twentieth century museums and archives all over the world collected artefacts and documents of threatened or dying crafts rather than a living heritage, while craftspeople, craft associations, guilds and masters have been more concerned with the survival aspects. The economic and political aspects of the heritagization of cultural practices and geopolitical implications are rather marginalized or effaced in the UNESCO nomination process.² Cultural altruism is important in the motivation to seek UNESCO Heritage status. To care for a cultural heritage might be seen as a shared moral responsibility for today's societies as a tribute to the past while aiming for the future. Or perhaps even to engage in a distancing from the past.³ But who answers to either of these calls? And who is allowed to take on the responsibility? The decision-making is a highly institutionalized process and

a matter of different national interests within and between nation states. What is to become official heritage or not is a choice made in a highly professionally institutional and political setting. The process creates what has been called an "authorised heritage discourse".⁴ At the same time, this heritage is literally in the hands of the able-bodied person who can make or preserve it – or who can make it travel into the future. Sometimes there is a gap between what is worthy of 'heritagization' (the officially designated culture) and the popularly produced, conceived and consumed culture.

Apart from focusing on process rather than artefacts, this anthology has three main concerns – or mine fields – in the texts gathered here: the making, the mediation, and the musealisation. More than one text proclaims the importance of the mediating aspects of heritage institutions. The institution's involvement in safeguarding traditional crafts by transmitting craft skills has become increasingly important, paralleled earlier only by market demands and educational systems as guarantees for this transmission. It seems that craftspeople need to become involved in the work of heritage making not only as objects or informants.

To question what heritage is and what has been considered as intangible heritage, Anneli Palm-sköld focuses on the all-too-popular craft of crocheting. She uses it as a node to problematize hierarchical structures in the cultural heritage field. Her foremost case is the Swedish late-nineteenth-century context and its aesthetic debate concerning craft, industrial production and taste. The celebration of the handmade in the Home Craft movement would have made crocheting attractive as a part of the heritagization processes that were going on, but instead the technique was seen as immoral, something performed only by maids and women

of lower classes. Approved techniques like hand weaving, peasant embroidering and lacemaking were described as authentic, nationally important and beautiful. Crocheting was a contemporary, a modern activity which made it difficult to define it as part of the traditional craft and sloyd techniques worth preserving, while it is almost a congenial representative for the handmade, since no machine has been made that can produce textiles that look like crochet. But instead, Palmsköld argues, throughout the twentieth century crocheting was an activity connected to the private sphere and to women's social interaction, and as such was not quite official and visible.

Thomas Laurien's text comes from his doctoral thesis, and gives voice to the artistic practice of use and development of different textile techniques that can be grouped under the umbrella term *shibori* and could be regarded as a heritage worth nurturing and developing in Sweden. The word is Japanese in origin but is now used in international contexts. It has become an international term for a number of related textile techniques both old and new, irrespective of origin. It is not simply a matter of translating but rather performing different aspects of an overlapping cultural heritage. Laurien has invested his own artistic practice in in-depth observations and interviews to investigate the double standards of dealing with shibori and *knytbatik* (Swedish for tie-dye) – the latter, he found, with negative connotations. The interviewees' stories showed how different forms of cultural heritage are attributed meaning in present time – how they are created anew for different purposes. The study shows how different modes of performativity played an important role for the dynamics of the artistic activities performed, including exhibitions and workshops, and showed the importance of us-

ing the words *knytbatik* and *shibori* carefully in the course of creating new attractive spaces of action for collective and individual activities. In the artscape of the shibori practice to which the interviewees' practices belong – or in this case the "craftscape", as Laurien calls it – different forms of Japanese cultural heritage as well as contemporary cultural expression play significant roles, while still maintaining their integrity to create a distance vis-à-vis the different forms of cultural heritage they perform.

In their ground-breaking research project Contemporary Authentic, Eleonora Lupo and Elena Giunta focused on the revitalisation of some masters' craft knowledge in the city of Milan. Their study shows how design is relevant for defining new meanings for the heritage by the way it is disseminated and made accessible to people. Their paper defines how practice-based theory and a design-driven approach can be used to valorise intangible heritage forms. The concept of Contemporary Authentic recognises continuity in what the authors call "authenticity factors" as well as dynamic changes in the contemporary context. They are thus promoting a shift from the representation to the reproduction of intangible heritage, focusing on replicable modalities of "activation" and incorporation of those cultural legacies in the contemporary context. Their model insists on the "use value" of the cultural assets, considered as "open-ended knowledge systems".⁵ It proposes including a formalisation of the structure of performative and reproductive knowledge owned by the masters and their territorial and relational system, the implementation of a narrative documentation of masters' craft practices and techniques in an "endangered master list repository", a set of "activation actions", as well as the incorporation within the enterprise system.

Gunnar Almevik established the Swedish Craft Laboratory at the University of Gothenburg to bridge research and practice within heritage crafts. His text "From Archive to Living Heritage" expands on the paper presented at the Critical Heritage Conference in 2012, here further developed through the projects and experiences of the Craft Lab. The subject of his article is to do with aspects of documenting an intangible heritage. Almevik has a keen interest in methods, and here the focus is on participatory methods and methods that elicit sensory aspects of embodied skills. The research intersects craft research and heritage studies and takes an action oriented perspective on the safeguarding of intangible heritage. We are guided through projects in which craftspeople investigate crafts procedures and crafted objects. Being both the objects and the subjects of documentation, the craftsperson's sense of craft is acutely sharpened along side their senses: What is the exact sound to be listening for? What is the grip and turn of the tool, and how are my movements choreographed within a tight workspace? How can the documentation extend perception and consolidate the gains of perceiving? These are questions that occur as a result of an engaged craft, of crafting heritage in action.

Last but not least: In the thought provoking presentation "Sex, Death and Chocolate" at the Association of Critical Heritage Studies Inaugural Conference Re/theorising Heritage at University of Gothenburg, Sweden, in June 2012, Nicola Donovan took her artistic practice as a means for discussing the past, present and future of lacemaking in the industrial lace capital of Nottingham, UK. In her paper for this anthology, she boldly collapses the performative and performing aspects of making, illustrating the double promise of the small narratives in everyday practice and the possibili-

ties of the performing artist's practice. A creative gender perspective and theoretical underpinning enable her to see and make visible the pedagogical or art-educational aspect of the installations and performances she makes as a new way of dealing with or using heritage. This enables her and us, her readers, to dare to venture into uncharted realms of subculturally engaged collaborative creation, as well as the marketplace's common ground for the communities engaged in their discourses of identity. Her text points to the future emerging in social networking of co-participatory, multi-vocal epistemology of heritage.

Identifying the actions and articulating the knowledge, skills and traditions that go into a craft is a difficult process, and is brought to the surface in this last article as well as in the anthology as a whole. Action always speaks louder than words, and words will never be enough, but no one can keep us from trying to voice them.

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Craft, Crochet and Heritage

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"The fact that crocheting was a contemporary and modern activity made it difficult to define as part of the traditional craft and sloyd techniques worth preserving."¹¹

Anneli Palmsköld holds a PhD in Ethnology, and is a researcher and Senior Lecturer in Conservation focusing on crafts in the Department of Conservation at the University of Gothenburg. She has done research on topics such as material culture and making, textiles and needlework from historical as well as contemporary points of view, craft and home craft as idea and phenomenon, and sloyd and craft as cultural heritage. She has also conducted a study on the reuse of textiles.

Craft, Crochet and Heritage

By Anneli Palmsköld

Heritagization of Crafts

Craft as heritage has mainly been in focus for the Home Craft Movement¹ that was founded in Sweden at the end of the nineteenth century.² The main issue for the movement was questions on how to preserve historical craft and sloyd techniques that were not longer practiced, which to choose and how to make the craft knowledge useful in a contemporary context.^{3,4}

In this article crochet is in focus as an example of a technology that was not accepted by the Home Craft Movement and therefore did not come to be regarded as cultural heritage. It is therefore an analysis of what happens when something is appointed cultural heritage and why some are deselected and others are highlighted. The overarching question asked is: What are the effects of the dubious status of crocheting from a heritage perspective? Can we see them today, and if so, how? Sub-

questions are: What is crocheting and how has the technology been practiced in a Swedish context? Why was crocheting placed low down on the hierarchy of crafts and craft techniques created by intellectuals and others who were involved in the Swedish Home Craft Movement?

The theoretical starting point of the article is that making as crafting, sloyd and handicrafting are not *neutral* activities. Instead, they are embedded – situated – in a cultural, spatial and economic context that determines how they are valued and considered.⁵ Before the industrialization and mechanization of textile production there was only one way to sew, weave, embroider or knit – with the help of simple tools, bodily movements, and various grips. Industrial production created a distinction that marked the hand involvement and words like ‘hand-woven’ and ‘hand-knitted’ began to be used. The manufacturing process is of



Fig. 1. Swirl patterns on a table cloth made by crochet in the 1970s. Photo by Emil Palmsköld.©

importance, but so is the identity of the maker and the hands performing the work.⁶ This becomes particularly clear when handicrafts are analysed from a gender perspective⁷, but also from a class perspective.⁸ In the musealisation and cultural heritage processes that lead to something identified and designated as a heritage and important to preserve, there have been people with a middle- and/or upper-class background who have led the

work and made the crucial determinations.⁹ Those determinations were based on ideas on society, as well as on people and nature, which guided the collection, documentation and conservation measures.¹⁰ One can argue that institutions like museums can be regarded as containers for old and new ideas and paradigm shifts, for different discourses that are locked in and materialized in collections and activities.

The Home Craft Movement and the Creation of Cultural Heritage

Compared to more institutionalized practices like museums, the Home Craft Movement attracted members (mostly women) that were engaged in the work mainly on a voluntary basis. For pioneers like Lilli Zickerman, who founded the first official expression of the movement, the Association of Swedish Handicraft (Föreningen för svensk hemslöjd), in 1899 and was a prominent figure, the safeguarding practice was about designing products based on historical techniques and patterns that were attractive for the modern urban bourgeois customers. She organized the work by ordering hand-crafted commodities made by a network of crafters and sloyders living in the Swedish countryside and selling the products in a sloyd shop located in the centre of Stockholm.¹¹ The products were also shown in exhibitions such as the Baltic Exhibition in Malmö in 1914.¹² Later pattern sheets were printed and sold to inspire private people and schools to take up sloyd and craft.¹³ According to Zickerman the only way craft techniques could survive in a modern industrial society was to make them useful by making commodities that were desirable for the intended costumers. Special effort with aesthetic considerations was an important priority when deciding which products to sell.¹⁴ The aim was to create products of good design made with high-quality materials and on a skilled craft level.¹⁵

The *home* in *home craft* was by that time associated with small-scale production that took place in households instead of in factories. It was also, on a metaphorical level, connected to commodities necessary for homes and home decoration such

as interior textiles, furniture, baskets, bowls and weavings.¹⁶ From a gender perspective, home crafts were primarily connected to women and femininity defined and constructed by the modern bourgeois culture.¹⁷ The role of women in society and family was, according to this idea, to be responsible for the home and its interior decoration.¹⁸ The founders were fully aware of the multiple associations that could be made, even though the choice of name was the result of a compromise.^{19,20}

By using traditional craft and sloyd techniques and adapting historical patterns to modern design, the Home Craft Movement became a driving force in creating the idea of a Swedish national heritage when it comes to craft.²¹ During the first decades of the twentieth century, at least one home craft organization was founded in every Swedish region, working from the same concept as described above. Local craftpersons were identified and asked to make products that were designed with inspiration from historical patterns and sold in home craft shops under the trademark "Swedish Sloyd" (*Svensk Slöjd*). As a consequence, the Home Craft Movement had an impressive impact on the heritagization processes connected to craft and sloyd, as it had the power to choose which techniques were to be accepted as 'traditional', 'Swedish' or 'typical local'.²² The Home Craft Movement soon created a space in a metaphorical sense for accepted ('Swedish') techniques, a space that excluded other craft and sloyd techniques. One example is those produced in Sweden's Jewish, Sami and Roma communities.²³ Others were newer and more modern techniques that were considered of no historical or national value, and one of those was crocheting.

Swedish Sloyd – Traditional, Authentic and Typical Local

When creating history useful for the Swedish Home Craft Movement, concepts such as tradition, authenticity and identity were frequently used, which is still a common pattern when craft is discussed.²⁴ The history connected to sloyd and craft was distributed in several ways: in publications about handicrafts, in pattern books, through learning activities in courses and schools, through making and manufacturing, in grips and procedures, through tools and materials, flyers, displays and exhibitions, and not least verbally to customers, practitioners, students and others.

The concept of tradition was connected to time, and examples of craft techniques found in archaeological sites were considered most interesting as they could be inscribed in a national discourse. This was the case with the mitten from Åsle, found in 1918 and dated in the 1930s to the Viking age, which was made in a technique called *pin bond*.²⁵ Questions on how it was made and which technique had been used were discussed. However, Maria Collin, an author who published many works on textiles and weaving, had identified the technique and published an article about it.²⁶ Soon mittens and other items made of pin bond were sold as examples of "Swedish Sloyd".

Apart from inspirations from archaeological findings, the organisers of the Home Craft Movement often made inventories and overviews of local craft techniques that were still in use, or at least were known by craftpersons. Authenticity was connected to the materials used, to certain colours and to old ('traditional') patterns, and these aspects were a starting point for the modern design provided by the network of sloyd shops. Plant-dyed fibres,

threads, yarns and fabrics were valued higher than aniline-dyed ones – they were considered to form beautiful patterns and stood as a small-scale alternative opposed to large-scale production of "garish" and "loud" colours.²⁷ Together, these aspects were important starting points when the modern designed products could be developed, manufactured and offered to customers in the Home Craft Movement's various stores.

Another concept used was based on the idea that each geographic place had its own local handicraft or craft specialty that the home craft organizations were to identify in order to preserve and develop them.²⁸ Lilli Zickerman wrote about this idea of the "typical local" handicraft in the governmental investigation on home craft from 1917.²⁹ The starting point for the idea was "that one can observe the particularities and specificities when looking into how weavings or embroideries are designed in various localities".³⁰ Noting the differences and specificities linked to geography is one way to talk about crafts that are still used. Efforts to identify the historical techniques tied to places favoured the network of home craft shops that could use them in their marketing. Different designs and products were often given names based on their region of origin, for example embroidery techniques such as Blekinge seam, Halland seam and Anundsjö seam. In this way, every home craft shop was specialized in selling locally produced craft objects, with the exception of the shop run by the Association of Swedish Handicraft, which sold products from all over the country.

There are also other ideas and concepts that were important in the history that was created around sloyd and craft. One example is the idea that craft skills were common among people in the past,

and as such a collective rather than an individual knowledge.³¹ This affected the Home Craft Movement's (and cultural historical museums') interest in tying the manual production to named persons.³² Sometimes individuals were highlighted – those who had been considered particularly skilled in practicing certain techniques in a historical context. But most often knowledge and skill were identified with places and their history.³³

Another example is the idea that since the start of industrialization, craft had "been corrupted by modernity and the market", and that the quality and the aesthetic standard of the products had therefore declined.³⁴ This explains why the design and the adaption of the products for a modern urban market were so important for the Home Craft Movement, and why as a consequence it actually created a material conception of heritage.³⁵ The histories told about the commodities sold in the network of sloyd shops had an important function: they placed the craft in time (before industrialization), space (Sweden) and in social hierarchy (peasant society).³⁶ The sloyd shops worked as an accurate space for accepted techniques, materials, design and execution, with a thorough control of what was to be offered the customers. What was to be sold in the sloyd shops was a question that managers of the shops constantly had to deal with, and the trademark "Swedish Sloyd" literally labelled the accepted techniques, materials, patterns and design of the commodities on display.

From a cultural heritage point of view, the Home Craft Movement has been important as it has highlighted and emphasized the importance of knowledge about craft and sloyd, their historical background, technical possibilities, materials and designs. It has also developed an infrastructure of



Fig. 2: Crocheting in action. Photo by Emil Palmsköld.©

knowledge on craft procedures, a library of patterns and design possibilities and – often underestimated – it has provided accurate tools and materials necessary for sloyders and crafters. But this can only be applied to the techniques that were approved as part of the Swedish home craft. Others, such as crocheting, were left outside.

What is Crochet?

The technique of crocheting is defined as "needlework done by interlocking looped stitches with a hooked needle".³⁷ The technique requires yarn and a crochet hook in thickness that are adapted to each other.³⁸ In addition, the chosen yarn or thread must be appropriate and have the right thickness to achieve the desired result, whether it is a thin lace for the bed linen or a thick carpet to put on the bathroom floor. Crochet came into fashion in the early industrialised countries of the western world at the beginning of the nineteenth century, at the same time as cotton was spreading³⁹ throughout the same area during the era of colonialism and slavery.⁴⁰

The history of crocheting is not very well known and surprisingly few studies have been made compared to other textile techniques.⁴¹ The Danish textile designer Lis Paludan is an exception.⁴² The oldest pattern description she has found was published in 1824 in a Dutch ladies' magazine called *Pénélope*.⁴³ In 1844 the first crochet pattern book was published in Sweden.⁴⁴ According to Paludan there is no evidence or trace of crocheting in Europe before 1800.⁴⁵ However, since the text was published a crocheted silk purse dated to 1693 has been acquired by the Royal Coin Cabinet in Stockholm.⁴⁶ This shows that the early history of crocheting needs to be further explored.

Based on Paludan's work it is possible to describe the crochet practice from some distinct time periods. During 1800-25, patterns were published and a few collections of crocheted objects and samplers from the period are known.⁴⁷ Crocheting became commonly known and popular in 1825-50, and the production of pattern books increased.⁴⁸ In 1850-1900, patterns were published in magazines that were spread widely, contributing and respond-

ing to the increasing interest in crocheting.⁴⁹ During this period a modern needlework culture involving women had developed in connection with the bourgeois culture (in a broad sense), and crocheting was one of many textile techniques that were in focus. Books on needlework techniques were published in parallel with books on crocheting. Elaborate patterns were developed for home decoration and for personal use. The popularity of crochet continued, and in 1900-30 it was a very common craft practice.⁵⁰ The patterns and techniques used, however, were not as complex as in the earlier period. Paludan's historical overview ends at 1985, and she asserts that since the 1970s there has been an increasing interest for developing the technique in a more experimental way by using different materials, stitches and forms.⁵¹ Paludan was herself part of this development, publishing a pattern book about how to crochet in free forms.⁵²

By using crocheting technique and cotton yarn, white laces of different kinds could be created, similar to other lace making possibilities such as bobbin lace, needle lace, knitting lace or tating that were in fashion in the nineteenth century. *The Complete Encyclopaedia of Needlework* (1884/2002), one example of how the modern needlework culture developed and spread, declared that crochet

*is not only easy and restful, but also produces quick results. It can be used equally well for articles of dress and for the trimming of under linen and household furnishings.*⁵³

In a Danish handicraft dictionary from 1950 crocheting is explained to be simple and easy, and therefore widespread – so easy to practice in its simplest form that it can be performed by younger children.⁵⁴ Compared to knitting, crocheting is actually preferred for children because they do

not have to worry about dropped stitches. In addition, the same lexicon notes, it is suitable for both practical and functional items and for decorating homes and wardrobes.⁵⁵

When crocheting, the crafting women living in the middle and later part of the nineteenth century were able to produce objects of various kinds, such as points for bed linen, crochet hats, baby clothes, bibs, laces used in clothing, cushions, bags, shawls, tablecloths for pianos and tables, purses, slippers, children shoes, antimacassars, time strings, lamp mantles, baskets for business cards, bouquet holders, wrist warmers, laundry bags, brushes for silk fabrics, covers for hot water bottles, coverings, etc.⁵⁶ The popular and widely distributed weekly papers and magazines published crochet patterns, as in the increasing number of craft books.⁵⁷ The patterns were quite brief and the users were supposed to know how to manage the technique to be able to understand the making process, as "hands and movement are invisible"⁵⁸ in the patterns.⁵⁹ Some of the designers behind the patterns, the descriptions, the magazines and the books on needlecraft were well known by name (such as Thérèse de Dillmont), and could earn their living on the work.⁶⁰

Publishing activities played an important role for (female) readers, as the patterns "offered them standards of taste and propriety".⁶¹ The objects made from the different patterns reflected the aesthetic preferences of the growing contemporary bourgeois culture for home decoration and clothing.⁶² Pattern books and publications were part of the growing consumer society, and through them ideas of homes, modern material culture and femininity were spread. They played a significant role, as what was remade was: "not the material artefact itself, but the very making and consuming of the product".⁶³ Crocheting activities were soon to be

a common part of many women's everyday lives, and the results that were produced were visible in homes of different social classes. At the same time, for the actual making, yarns and tools were required – such as crochet hooks, needlework bags, sewing tables, yarn winders, needles and yarn holders. An infrastructure was built up to provide women with these necessary supplies for needle working.

"Lazy Work"

Crocheting, however, did not meet with approval from all sides, especially in the aesthetic debate that took place in Sweden among the intellectuals of the late-1800s.⁶⁴ The debate was inspired by works on taste and aesthetic issues by the German art historian Jacob von Falke, as well as by works on aesthetics by the Norwegian art historian Lorentz Dietrichson.⁶⁵ The debate focused on the effects of industrialisation (the Machine Age) on society and on modern man. For participants in the debate, an important question was to discuss the new material culture that originated with industrial production, and how it affected the decoration of the modern home. The feminist writer and debater Ellen Key writes, for example, on knitting and crocheting in *Skönhet för alla* (Beauty in the Home) (1899/1996):

*People have also begun to realize that knitted and crocheted objects are rarely beautiful, and above all that it is abhorrent to give our rooms the appearance of drying attics by filling them with dead white blotches in the form of dust covers, tablecloths, and antimacassars, the latter—since they are crocheted—also catching on everything, thereby doubly abhorrent.*⁶⁶

Key's concept for a tasteful interior decor can be summed up in her own words: usefulness and neatness.⁶⁷ To this can be added authenticity, cleanliness, honesty and sincerity. The opposite of

the tasteless and ugly needlecraft products, Key notes, are the "simple, home-woven fabrics, carpets and curtains".⁶⁸ These are precisely the type of products, taste and aesthetic preferences that the new and modern Swedish Home Craft Movement was working on.

A similar position was stated by Lilli Zickerman.⁶⁹ Crocheting was, according to Zickerman, "lazy work" that could be performed while reclining,⁷⁰ compared with techniques such as bobbin lace, weaving and embroidery that were done with a straight back and good posture and which also require intellectual activity. Crochet was too simple in comparison, she said, which was reflected in the ugly result. It was also considered a useless luxury activity.⁷¹ Zickerman actively opposed crochet on the basis of work ethic and contempt for sloth and laziness, and she refused to sell products that were made from crochet in the Swedish Sloyd shop she managed. The same went for most of the local sloyd shops managed by the many regional home craft associations, although there were exceptions.

Others that took part in the debate were Sophie Adlersparre, founder of Handarbetets Vänner (the Association of Friends of Textile Art) in 1874, and Hedvig Holmström, who had been teaching female pupils at the Folk High School Hvilan since 1871.⁷² For Adlersparre, white cotton bedspreads made by crochet were a sign of bad taste, even associated with a bed made for a dead body.⁷³ She thought crocheting only gave the impression of real work, and the result gave a touch of discomfort in the interior design.⁷⁴ When looking closer, the execution of the technique looked clumsy, and the performance was mechanical.⁷⁵ Holmström agreed with Adlersparre's ideas on crocheting, adding a discussion on what she called "cosmopolitan" in contrast to "national" sloyd.⁷⁶ Within

the concept of cosmopolitan sloyd, crocheting was included together with other modern textile techniques, since the patterns changed with the fashion of the day.⁷⁷ As modern and fashionable, crocheting created similar objects that looked the same everywhere "in the civilized world".⁷⁸ The national sloyd, on the other hand, was similar to what Zickerman called "typical local", and Holmström argued for supporting craft and sloyd based on what was unique to a place or a culture.⁷⁹

The emphasis was on aesthetic and patriotic arguments. Since crocheting as a technique was considered fairly new in the west, it did not belong to the Swedish textile techniques of age and tradition Zickerman and others advocated and defended. It was simply not sufficiently Swedish and patriotic in the national trends that prevailed at this time. In addition, it was argued in the contemporary Home Craft Movement that crocheting had displaced more traditional and Swedish techniques such as lace braiding and needle lace. These textile techniques were held high in the hierarchy of craft and sloyd techniques that the movement, together with museum builders and researchers in the cultural historical field, took part in constructing. Built on ideas on traditions, certain folk practices in craft, and "notions of an 'unchanging' tradition located in the past and opposed to the modern", crocheting was not high ranked among textile techniques to be preserved and documented.⁸⁰

There is, however, an interesting contradiction when it comes to crocheting and the industrial revolution. The history of traditional handicraft that was created from a craft and sloyd perspective highlighted folk practices, and the actual hand-making of objects and products. The Home Craft Movement and the concept of Swedish Sloyd worked as a trademark associated with manual

skill and products made without machinery.⁸¹ Most of the textile techniques that were in focus for preservation activities could be produced industrially, while crocheting was still made by hand. Even today there is no industrial production of crochet products that has replaced handwork. When finding commodities made of crochet on the contemporary market, one can presume they are handmade by textile workers in a low-paid part of the world. Valuing the technique from this perspective, as something made by hand, it would have been an obvious choice to preserve it.

Authentic and Inauthentic Lace

Another aspect worth highlighting is the concept of authenticity when it comes to lace making. In literature on textiles and textile history, 'authentic lace' is a common concept used to distinguish lace techniques such as bobbin lace from knitting, crocheting and tatting.⁸² Authentic lace is said to have a long history connected to the elite classes in societies, and the techniques used to make them were needlepoint or bobbin lace ('pillow-made').⁸³

In *Identification of Lace* (1980), Pat Earnshaw defines lace concisely as "a lot of holes surrounded by threads".⁸⁴ A more elaborate definition of the term is that it

*covers all that great variety of ornamental open-work fabrics formed by the looping, plaiting, twisting or knotting of the threads of flax, silk, gold, silver, cotton, mohair or aloe, whether done by hand or by machine.*⁸⁵

The definition apparently covers many textile techniques that have been used for making lace, and crocheting is one of those. Earnshaw's aim is to teach collectors to distinguish different kinds of laces from one another, and she identifies four types: embroidered, needlepoint, bobbin, and

machine laces, embroidered nets and other "imitation" laces. These four kinds of laces form a timeline that starts by the sixteenth century and ends by the nineteenth.⁸⁶ According to Earnshaw, lacemaking achieved the highest quality before 1789 and the French Revolution, and after that it declined. During the nineteenth century, lacemaking became something that could be made by machines, and even if made by hand tended to imitate work of lower aesthetic value and quality. Calling some laces as more authentic than others implies a hierarchical structure of techniques. In this hierarchy of lacemaking, crochet techniques were considered imitations and therefore occupied the lower levels of the hierarchy.

Crocheting as Non-Traditional

Considered as tasteless, ugly and unsightly, and not authentically Swedish, crocheting was seen as something practiced by lazy and unenlightened people. It was so simple to perform that children could master it, not nearly as intellectually demanding as, for example, weaving and lacemaking (defined as bobbin lace). In the late nineteenth century it was associated with women from the lower and service classes, who read 'maid's novels' and weekly serials and collected pattern sheets and pattern attachments from women's and family magazines, exchanging patterns and sample collections with each other. For Lilli Zickerman, it was obvious that crocheting was not included in the Home Craft space, which was designed according to the ideas that there are different typical local techniques, skills and tangible expressions that have to be documented, preserved and developed into new products of interest for modern customers. Within the Home Craft space, 'Swedish' techniques such as weaving and lacemaking, basket crafts and the so-called regional embroideries held an obvious

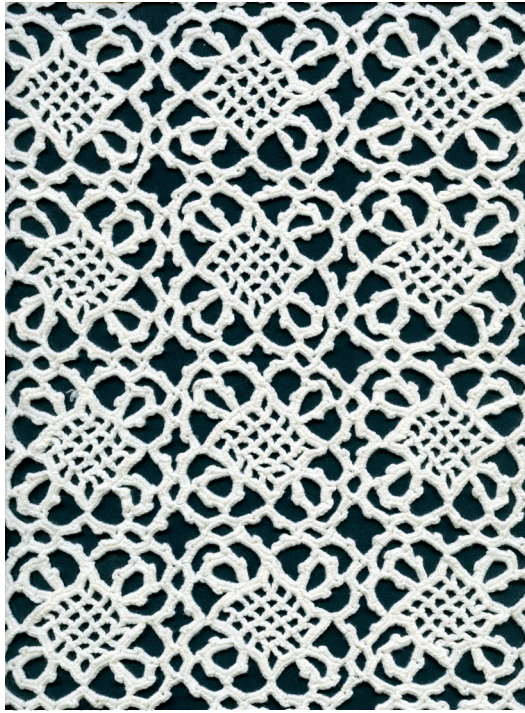


Fig. 3: This popular crochet pattern called 'the Bohus Star' was approved by the Home Craft Movement. Photo by Emil Palmsköld.©

place. The exclusion of crochet is also evident in the ethnologist Anna-Maja Nylén's classic book, *Swedish Handicraft* (1977), which treats crochet in only a few pages. Nylén describes crochet as a technology that quickly spread and rose in the folk context. She writes, "From the middle of the nineteenth century, locally distinctive crochet was used in folk costumes of a traditional popular character" and in "lace for bed sheets, pillowcases and tablecloths"⁸⁷ The technique was adapted and inserted in people's material culture and making processes, combining 'traditional' techniques and materials with modern ones.

With few exceptions, this happened only in recent decades because crocheting has had to step over the threshold created by the Home Craft Movement. One exception is the Association

of Bohuslän Crocheting, which was formed in 1932 at the initiative of Mrs Karin Stranne from Morlanda Manor in Orust. Through the association the crochet pattern named "the Bohus Star" became known (and approved) in home craft circles. As the network of sloyd shops run by local home craft associations also sold folk costumes and the materials for making them, crocheting clothing details became accepted. When the sloyd shops turned from selling finished products to materials, patterns and tools for customers who wished to make things themselves, still the focus remained on the approved techniques. The museum room was another space where crocheting was not welcome, apart from a few exceptions connected to folk costumes or to private collections and samplers. The choice of what would be collected in the Swedish cultural historical museums followed Arthur Hazelius's advice to his collectors, which he published in the 1870s: select the oldest and most decorated of objects to collect.⁸⁸ The collection he created was to become the Nordic Museum and the Skansen open-air museum in Stockholm. The concept of the oldest object is to be understood in a nationalistic context – the older the subject, the more Swedish and more traditional. Prioritization of decorated objects was an aesthetic choice grounded in a critique of the results of industrial production, and was shared by people connected to the Home Craft Movement like Lilli Zickerman, intellectuals debating art and aesthetics, commentators and people like Ellen Key.

Sloyd was considered folk art that required rescuing.⁸⁹ The same went for the decorated and historical objects that were preferred by people like Hazelius connected to the cultural historical museums that were being founded at that time.⁹⁰ But rescuing sloyd techniques required methods other

than those used in creating museum collections. Building an infrastructure to save the knowledge provided by crafters and sloyders meant making inventories of various techniques and objects created, educating new crafters, and providing them with raw material of high quality, efficient and effective tools and patterns created by artists and designers who guaranteed a high aesthetic quality. In the processes by which technologies, objects and knowledge are selected as worth preserving, or as heritage, crocheting has drawn a short straw, although it is an extremely widespread and common technique that has long had many practitioners. If one wants to know more about crocheting and its history, one has to use methods other than going through museum collections or searching for information in the Home Craft Movement.²¹

Crocheted Objects as Leftover Goods

In what follows, I will turn to a contemporary situation where crochet work has played a part. It takes place in the context of field work for the research project *Reusing Textiles: On Material and Cultural Wear and Tear*, an ethnological study of what people do with their used textiles and how textile re-use practices have changed from the mid-1900s to the present.²² As part of my field work, I participated in the sorting of different kinds of donated objects at a large, well-established flea market with a special section for textiles. The donated textiles are sorted in two stages before the price is labelled and the textiles chosen for sale are placed in the second-hand store. The sorting processes are intricate – sometimes automatically perceived, sometimes arousing emotions and discussions among those involved. This is a quote from my field diary:

There are a lot of textiles in motion. Among cloths, curtains, draperies, bedspreads and fabrics appear also fine crocheted lace and small sheer tablecloths.

[The volunteers] find it difficult to shuffle away fine crafts for the low price level prevailing at the flea market. Instead, all of those fine laces are collected in a separate box, a treasure chest, placed high on a shelf. I have the confidence to inspect the contents. "Women misused!"²³ said a passerby. Another fell in admiration for the beautiful work, saying, "So many hours...."²⁴

The laces described above were mostly made from the 1950s to the 1970s, a period when most of the married women in Sweden were housewives in charge of home and family. They are being donated now as the women who made and used them age and move to smaller homes or pass away.

The crocheted products have been regarded as leftovers twice – first by being sorted out by their owners to be donated to the flea market, and second by the workers at the flea market that put them aside. Nowhere have they fit. What will happen to the contents of the treasure chest? No one really knows. At the same time there are many other crocheted tablecloths, lace, curtains and bedspreads sold at flea markets, as well as on websites like eBay. During the project, I met many people who cannot help but buy and 'rescue' these fine crafts. One woman told how she has filled an entire cabinet with crocheted materials purchased at flea markets and auctions for next to nothing. Now that the cupboard is full she does not know what to do. This leftover supply of crochet lace and tablecloths testifies to skill in needlework and bears witness to values and context that have since been abandoned and changed. What remains is the delicate and well-made products, reminders of what once was – hand-crafted objects, some of which may find a new role by being reused in different ways. The laces in the treasure chest, for example, are material representations of a time when bedding such as sheets and pillowcases was something

women made themselves as part of a dowry instead of buying. The crocheted tablecloths that once were so central to the interior design context, and made the home look to Ellen Key like an attic for drying linens, are perceived by many today as superfluous and representative of the older and outmoded ideals of interior decorating. Crocheting and other textile techniques have for some been associated with the gendered division of labour, in a negative sense.⁹⁵ Additionally, laces have to be managed in ways that few are willing to spend time on today. These kind of material objects made and used in the twentieth century are more likely to be found in flea markets than as a result of heritage making activities.

Crocheting as an Uncertain Heritage

Crocheting is a technique that became widely practiced and fashionable soon after it was introduced in the early 1800s, even though it was criticized and excluded from culture heritage by the Swedish Home Craft Movement and cultural historical museums. The effects of this exclusion are many: the technique (and those who practiced it) have been neglected by cultural heritage institutions, researchers, schools and educational programs connected to or inspired by the Home Craft Movement, and also in publications of pattern books and historical overviews of textiles and textile techniques. Despite this, crocheting has been an important and appreciated activity in many women's everyday lives as something to do or create, producing objects to care for and arrange, and as part of the social life of groups who crochet together and exchange patterns.

The uncertainty connected to crocheting in a heritage context is mainly about the effects of the late-nineteenth-century debate concerning craft and sloyd techniques, which led to hierarchies among

different making processes and the results of those processes. Ideas about history, nation and tradition inscribed techniques in different discourses, leading some to be included and others to be excluded in the Home Craft Movement and museum collections. Aesthetic considerations and views were of importance, and intellectuals and debaters discussed these. They were concerned by the new and modern society, and the consequences of industrialization – especially the new material culture that was produced and spread, in one way or another, to people throughout Western society. The industrialized products – their design and execution as well as their colours and materials – were considered tasteless and ugly. Crocheting became a symbol of this new era, and occupied a low place in the hierarchy of craft and sloyd techniques. Techniques preferred were those considered to be 'traditional', 'Swedish' and 'authentic'. An underlying perspective in debating these questions and putting them into practice in the Home Craft Movement and cultural historical museums was middle-class people's conviction that they were obligated to foster lower-class people – to teach them good taste and approved techniques. When crocheting first came into fashion, it became a part of the female bourgeois culture. But soon it was widely spread, and at the beginning of the 1900s it was performed by maids and women of lower classes.

The concept of heritage presupposes the idea of "a modern distancing of the past from the presence".⁹⁶ The fact that crocheting was a contemporary and modern activity made it difficult to define as part of the traditional craft and sloyd techniques worth preserving. There is, however, a contradiction in the fact that crocheting is a technique that is handmade, since no machines have been made that can produce textiles that look like

crochet. The celebration of handmade rather than machine-made products in the Home Craft movement would have made the technique attractive as a part of the heritagization processes that were going on. In fact, crocheting has been an activity associated with domestic life throughout the 1900s, and to women's social interaction, and therefore not quite official and visible.

Today crocheting as technique and creative expression has received a boost that helped to unlock the old hierarchies created in the late nineteenth century and which had effects much later. For contemporary do-it-yourself practitioners, craftpersons and artisans, crocheting is one technique among many others to choose from. Crocheting has also enjoyed a renaissance in fashion, to be seen on runways here and there. In the fashion context, new spaces have been created for crocheting – spaces that are geographically located in low-wage countries and populated by poor workers living on the hand crochet fashion products sold in the western world. In conclusion, crocheting is a great example of how craft and making things is rarely a neutral activity; instead, it does matter who the practitioner is, how the craft is performed, what the results are, and the space in which the making takes place.

Acknowledgement

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Endnotes

1. The English translation of the Swedish word *Hemslöjdsrörelsen* is in this article 'the Home Craft Movement' after the Swedish folklorist Barbro Klein (Klein 2010).
2. Lundahl 1999 & 2001, Zickerman 1999, Rosenqvist 2007, Meister 2012, Palmsköld 2012a & b
3. Hemslöjdskommittén 1918, Zickerman 1999
4. One effect of the industrialization process during the 1800s was an increasing interest in manufacturing, materials and techniques (Palmsköld 2007).
5. cf. Haraway 1988, Palmsköld 2011, Rosenqvist 2007, Wilkinson-Weber 2004
6. Rosenqvist 2009, Föreningen för svensk hemsöjd... 1907:3
7. Palmsköld & Rosenqvist 2015
8. cf. Lundström 2005
9. Lundström 2005, Palmsköld 2012a, Ronström 2008, Rosenqvist 2007
10. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998
11. Zickerman 1999
12. Thorman 1914
13. Mönsterblad 1939-1963
14. Hyltén-Cavallius 2007, Rosenqvist 2007, Palmsköld 2012a
15. *ibid*
16. Föreningen för svensk hemsöjd... 1907:3
17. Lundström 2005
18. *ibid* 2005, Svensson & Waldén 2005
19. Lundahl 2001, Zickerman 1938/1999:39, Lundström 2005:145ff, Palmsköld 2012a:15f
20. The associations that were formed at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth have since changed quite radically. Today home craft is associated with 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) and with solving practical problems in everyday life – such as how to make a dishcloth, fix a broken bicycle, grow your own vegetables or brew your own beer (see for example Åhlvik & von Busch 2009).
21. Scher 2012:134
22. Zickerman 1918, Lundström 2005, Palmsköld 2007, 2012a & b
23. Klein 1999, Hyltén-Cavallius 2004 & 2007, Palmsköld 2012a
24. Wilkinson-Weber 2004:287
25. Arbman 1934
26. Collin 1917

27. Hylten-Cavallius 2015: 27
28. Hemslöjdskommittén 1918, Zickerman 1918, Palm-sköld 2012a & b
29. Hemslöjdskommittén 1918
30. The original text says: "att man kan iaktta särarter och särdrag när man till exempel studerar hur vävnader eller broderier har utformats på olika orter." (Palmsköld 2012a:26)
31. Palmsköld 2005
32. One example is Märta-Stina Abrahamsdotter (1825-1903) from Anundsjö. She was a very skilled knitter who made covers, cardigans, socks and mittens of her own design and in hand-dyed yarn. Her work became more widely known through a 1910 exhibition arranged by the newly formed Ångermanlands hemslöjdsförening.
33. Föreningen Bindslöjden was founded in Laholm in 1907, and its work was based on a long history of knitting for income that probably started in the fifteenth century in the parishes near the city. But within the inventories and documentation that was used in the work, no names of previous knitters were mentioned (Johansson-Palmsköld 1990).
34. Wilkinson-Weber 2004:287 and 289
35. Panella 2012:51
36. Wilkinson-Weber 2004:289
37. www.thefreedictionary.com
38. Palmsköld & Rosenqvist 2015, Paludan 1986
39. "Raw cotton imports [to England] increased from 4.7 million pounds in 1771 to 56 million pounds in 1800" (Yafa 2006:59).
40. Paludan 1986, Yafa 2006, Lemire 2013
41. Sandgren 2009, Haggren 2003, Paludan 1986 & 1995, Potter 1990
42. Paludan 1986
43. *ibid* 1986: 22 & 44
44. Hennings 1844
45. Paludan 1986:87
46. Wiséhn 2006:40, Sandgren 2009:15f
47. Paludan 1986:87f
48. *ibid* 1986:87
49. *ibid* 1986:88ff
50. *ibid* 1986:90
51. *ibid* 1986:91
52. Paludan 1980
53. De Dillmont 1884/2002:277
54. Andersen 1950
55. *ibid*
56. Björk 1944:6ff
57. *ibid* 1944:3
58. Makovichy sees "pattern as disembodied information" when pointing out the difficulties in using patterns without knowing how to perform the technique described (Makovichy 2010:12).
59. Makovichy 2010:12
60. Van Remoortel 2012, Paludan 1986:82f
61. Van Remoortel 2012:253
62. Hennings 1844, de Dillmont 1884/2002
63. Freedgood 2003:641
64. Sophie Adlersparre, founder of Handarbetets Vänner (the Association of Friends of Textile Art) in 1874, used the words efficiency, durability and neatness in an article published in 1880 that tried to define what is good handicraft (Danielsson 1991:197).
65. Danielsson 1991
66. Key 1899/2008:9
67. *ibid* 1899/2008
68. *ibid* 1899/2008:14
69. Zickerman 1999, Palmsköld 2007, Klein 2010
70. Hylten-Cavallius 2007:111
71. Paludan 1986:85
72. see Haggren 2003
73. Danielsson 1991:200
74. *ibid* 1991:201f
75. *ibid*
76. Holmström 1898:24ff
77. *ibid* 1898:24
78. *ibid*
79. *ibid* 1898:26
80. Dohmen 2004:15
81. Palmsköld 2012a
82. see for example Lowes 1908, Thorman 1913 and 1942
83. Lowes 1908:192
84. Earnshaw 1980:7
85. *ibid* 1980:7
86. *ibid* 1980:23
87. Nylén 1977:289. The original text reads: "Från mit-

ten av 1800-talet finns lokalt särpräglad virkning tillämpad på dräktplagg av traditionellt folklig karaktär” and ”spetsar till lakan, örngott och dukar.”

88. Hazelius 1873

89. Dohmen 2004:15

90. Palmsköld 2007

91. The same exclusion of crocheting took place in Denmark, as museums and the Danish Home Craft Movement did not think it worth collecting and preserving (Paludan 1986).

92. Palmsköld 2013 & 2015

93. This is an often-used reference to a work by Ellen Key, *Missbrukad kvinnokraft* (The Strength of Women Misused) (1896).

94. Field Diary 2009, Reusing Textiles: On Material and Cultural Wear and Tear.

95. Svensson & Waldén 2005

96. Holtorf & Fairclough 2013:199

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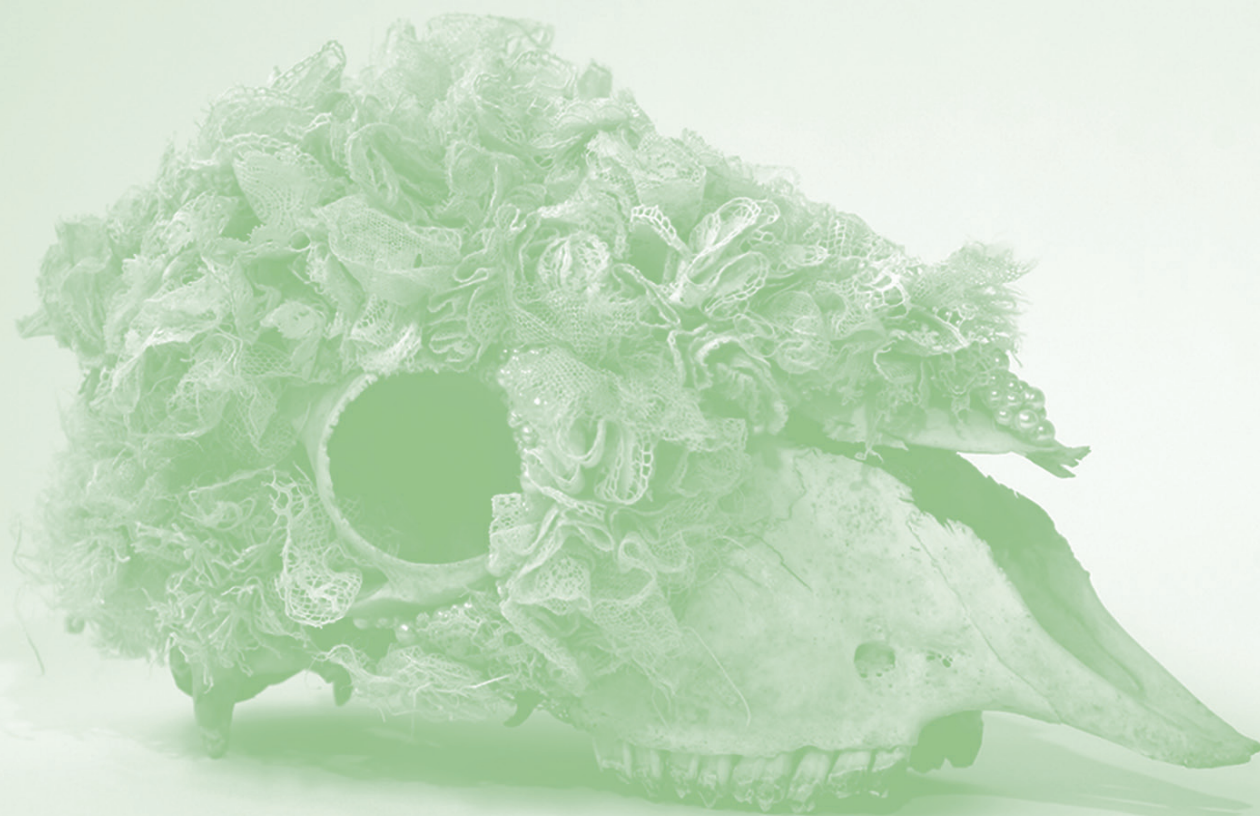
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Pleasure / Unpleasure

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"The word crafting embraces notions of skills and skilfulness; however, what is considered skilful can only be understood in each specific context."

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Pleasure / Unpleasure

Performing Cultural Heritage:

Voices from the Artistic Practice of Shibori in Sweden

By Thomas Laurien

Recollections

1. Konstpedemin in Gothenburg, late 1980's. At these newly opened art studios the recently graduated fine art student Ernst Billgren and the textile designer Boel Matzner have become neighbours. One day Ernst asks Boel: "What is the ugliest thing you know?" and straight away Boel answers: "*knytbatik!*"¹ "Good" – Ernst says – "Then that's what I'll work with".²

Before Ernst Billgren moves on to other 'low' materials and techniques, such as glass mosaic and cute animals, he actually creates some tie-dye based pieces of art. On large pieces of orange and bluish-green fabric with characteristically scattered tie-dye circles he paints deer, nude women, wild ducks...

2. Just a few years later, in the early 1990's, Boel Matzner becomes a professor at HDK – School of

Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg. One day the door to her room is wide-open and on the wall there has been hung an odd piece of textile material with crumpled, silvery, three-dimensional cone shapes and folds.³ Boel has recently attended an inspiring workshop where the world famous and charismatic Japanese textile virtuoso Junichi Arai demonstrated his own modernised version of something called shibori. Shibori is a centuries-old Japanese concept in the field of textiles that involves mechanical resist methods such as wringing, pressing and the tight sewing of the fabric used, as well as folding and squeezing the fabric in order to create patterning and relief structure during the course of the dyeing process. Several Swedish practitioners within different fields of textile art, crafts and design are starting to be curious about the 'new' shibori, which in some ways

resembles the Swedish approximate equivalent of tie-dye: *knytbatik*, but is obviously something else. But what is shibori – and why is it what it is?

Introduction

In the process of dyeing fabric, patterning can be created if the dye is prevented from reaching the fibres. In this process a temporary or permanent three-dimensional structure can also be achieved.

Already two thousand years ago, the Paracas culture of today's Peru patterned fabric by using different resist dyeing techniques.⁴ Presumably, these different craft techniques have originated spontaneously throughout the world, but they have, of course, also been part of uncountable global flows where ideas, knowledge, material and goods have been set in motion.

There are historical resist techniques that are so complicated that we no longer have knowledge of these techniques; however, there are also techniques that are very simple to understand and use, and new, simple, as well as complex, resist dyeing techniques continue to come into being in our day and age.

This text addresses two different cultural heritages and their respective relation to an emerging Swedish artistic practice: the heritage of *knytbatik* that is experienced by many as problematic but necessary to take a stand on, and the heritage of *shibori*, which, in contrast to *knytbatik* is experienced as attractive and full of creative possibilities and challenges.

This text is *not* about cultural heritage in the wide sense of the term, that is, cultural heritage in relation to what humankind has created; on the contrary, the time perspective here is relatively short, only some decades in fact, and the sociocultural and geographical point of departure is a young artistic practice in Sweden that involves approxi-

mately fifty people only. Ten years from now this activity will have grown – or disappeared. If something is being created today that will be looked upon as a valuable cultural heritage in a hundred years' time is impossible to say.

This zooming in on maybe what is rather a narrow context enables us to see different shades and subtle distinctions (of meaning). At first glance a certain act of doing could be interpreted as *one* act, where there are actually a manifold of driving forces and even contradictory logics at play. "Juxtaposed to other objects, enmeshed in new relationships of meaning they [objects] become something new."⁵ When for example the acts of creating *knytbatik* and shibori are compared to each other, and the contexts they are part of are examined and compared, shibori stands out as different – and new, compared to *knytbatik*.

This study relies on prevailing postmodern theories and relativist views and perspectives in the field of Critical Heritage Studies, which, in turn, often point out that cultural heritage is not a neat little parcel with a distinct addressee but rather something constructed in the present in order to serve a variety of reasons. Cultural heritages act as resources that individuals and groups use more or less consciously in their quests for identity and in struggles for power.⁶

Austin's concept of "performative word" can also be used here in order to investigate and describe the important role language plays in processes of construction. What can we *do* with words? *Speech acts* bring something about; not only do utterances describe or claim, nor only are they true or false – but they also "govern and create change". The simple but often used example of a speech act that actually brings about change is: "I name this ship

the *Queen Elizabeth*". Another example of an utterance that under the right circumstances brings about or accomplishes something is: "I am sorry".⁷

During the last twenty years *performativity* has become a key concept within academic disciplines such as linguistics, theatre studies, ethnology, gender and queer studies; together with the concept of *performance* it has also come to play an important role in different artistic practices. It is difficult to define the concept of *performativity* in a concise and general way since it now belongs to so many different fields, but it is essentially used as a way to shed light on and better understand the *performative aspect* of language utterances or other symbolic forms of expression. The latter could for example comprise different sorts of intentional staging such as theatre, rituals, workshops,⁸ and exhibitions.

Another important theoretical perspective for this study is visual semiotics. *Knytbatik* and shibori are of course not only words charged with meaning, but they are also images, and, hence, visual *signs* that can constitute and become parts of shared and understood contexts.⁹ Since they can be used in communication it is of utmost importance that artists consciously steer which signs are to be activated *or* inactivated.

Earlier in the text it has been hinted that there might be *different* driving forces and logics at play in this story. *The other*, for example, seems to be present. This *other*, who is acting and thinking in a different way, who is it? Through use of language a useful but maybe even necessary *other* can be constructed. Without this construction it would maybe even be difficult to talk about a *new* practice?

What is meant by a Swedish shibori practice? Who is part of this practice? What do the members *do*? The answers to these questions will be discussed

later on in the text.

The problems to be addressed in this study have been 'sifted out' during the course of a number of recurrent meetings with members of the Swedish shibori practice. A series of ten semi-structured interviews were conducted between 2010 and 2012, where artists of different kinds shared their ideas and experiences with regard to this practice.

Who was I to choose for these interviews? Should the persons be picked randomly or according to some system of even representation with regard to age, education, and artistic discipline? In order to focus on prevailing conceptions of what are considered artistic values and in an attempt to encircle *best practice*, the so-called snow ball method was chosen. This established method of selection involves, in short, interviewees themselves suggesting other people who could be interviewed. By way of this method both early pioneers and practitioners, who, for different reasons, stand out as most influential today, could be located.

In addition to interviews *observing participation* was also used as a method when taking part in a free-standing professional development course in shibori. (This course has in fact served as the most important 'recruitment base' for the practice.¹⁰) In addition to this, I have attended a number of exhibitions and had informal talks with experts from outside the practice.

All the above mentioned methods and approaches have of course been influenced by my own role and background. The symmetrical relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee with regard to educational background and a shared sense of belonging to an artistic practice has of course influenced the interviews, for better and for worse. However, without this shared educational

and professional background it would not have been possible to get access to the professional development course in order to observe the practice as an equal participant.

As mentioned above, the geographical point of departure for this study has been Sweden. At the same time there is a hint of another important 'geographical location' in one of the opening recollections – namely Japan. This study shows that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate heritage discourses from globalisation discourses.

The issue of ownership has become a very complicated matter when it comes to intangible cultural heritage that transcends national borders. Safeguarding lists implemented by UNESCO in recent decades have sometimes even been used as tools for nationalistic purposes and nation branding.¹¹ One example of this today is the very infected battle between Indonesia and Malaysia of who is actually the *owner* of the textile technique: batik.

Maybe this difficult and questionable border between cultural heritage and globalisation is especially problematic in the context of contemporary artistic practice? Artists have long been taught the attitude of looking upon the cultural heritage of the world as an open archive where one can study, borrow and reuse whatever one thinks is interesting.

The anthropologist and globalisation researcher Appadurai has developed concepts for reflecting on and understanding the global archive and how the material in this archive is constantly being moved around. Appadurai himself does not use the metaphor of the archive but pictures a number of imaginary *scapes*, where nation borders are of less importance, and through which different kinds of global flows run.¹² Significant tangible institutions and societal structures, together with

mental conceptions of identities, influence the course of events. As an extension of this thought model it is possible to imagine an artscape¹³ or why not even more precise – a *textile craftscape*.

In the interviews connected to this study it is apparent that conceptions of Japan and Japaneseness are significant in the textile craftscape that the Swedish artists 'inhabit'. The leading role Japan takes affects notions and attitudes surrounding innovation, quality, craft, time and aesthetics. At the same time, however, too general conclusions regarding meaning-making and identity processes should probably not be drawn from these interviews. Many or even most people today are cultural hybrids and people may acknowledge and appreciate the role of Japan in a *textile craftscape* at the same time as they acknowledge and appreciate the role of Italy in a *gastrocape* and the role of the US in a *TV/Filmscape*.

In research on globalisation and cultural flows – which the practice of shibori is an example of – words such as *transmission* and *reception* are often used.¹⁴ These words appear somewhat neutral and cold, however, when used to describe the process of how cultural flows come into being, and maybe the word *appropriation* can therefore sometimes better describe the different courses of events? Someone may actively *want* a flow to come into being and emerge. Someone digs channels. Spaces are refurnished because something can be gained by someone here. *New* rooms, identities and action spaces can be created and there is an element of attraction in the process.¹⁵

Pleasure

Eva Lagnert, a key figure in the Swedish shibori practice remembers when she met shibori for the first time and how it affected her.

Shibori – well, I feel happy when I think of it. Of course, it has to do with in which way you encounter a concept. I have become fond of the word because I met it during my first visit to Japan in 1983, and it made a very strong impact on me.¹⁶ The impression of the textiles remained – as did the surfaces, the colours, the patterns, and the tactility of the textiles. They bulged out in a lovely way! Actually I was more interested in other things then, but I didn't forget what I had seen. So from then on I knew what was possible to do.

After some time Eva had the opportunity to set up regular courses in shibori at Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, where a critical mass of practitioners arose.¹⁷ Besides this group there are also a few other artists in Sweden who have found shibori in other ways. Who are these fifty or so people, why did they become interested in and start to practise this form of art, and what do they *do*?

The artists who, in different ways, belong to the Swedish shibori practice today are between the ages of thirty and seventy five. Almost all of them are women, which probably mainly represents the distribution of gender in the different artistic practices the artists originate from. The educational background of the artists most often includes four or five years of higher arts education, with one or more years of post-secondary preparatory arts education as a base for university studies. Many of the artists also list theoretical university studies, such as art history courses, in their CVs.

The persons drawn to shibori come from fields such as textile art, design, fashion, crafts, and costume design for the stage, architecture and handicraft. Parallel to their own artistic practice they very often also work or have been working as teachers at the most renowned higher arts institutions in

art, design, and crafts and/or at prominent post-secondary preparatory arts schools in Sweden.¹⁸ A number of them have received much sought after grants, scholarships and project fundings. All in all, many of the artists who have added shibori to their artistic repertoire should be considered as belonging to an *elite*.

Many of the artists have met different textile techniques on study trips, not necessarily only to Japan, but also to India or other regions of the world that are considered as having an abundance of living textile heritages; these include: Indonesia, China, and West Africa. Becoming part of the shibori practice in Sweden can then be a way to channel and give structure to the interest they have in 'global textiles'. Some of these artists have become interested in this practice and in courses because they have been curious to explore the possibilities this practice can offer in the form of new potential artistic tools and challenges. For others, the critical mass that has developed over time has been an appealing factor that has attracted new members to this practice.

What kind of shibori is being practised in Sweden today? The practice is not a practice in the sense that there are persons making shibori on a *day-to-day* basis – as art, or as craft, design or anything else. During the last few years a small number of artists have performed solo shows that were mainly based on different shibori techniques.¹⁹ Otherwise the practice has manifested itself through a number of group exhibitions.²⁰

It is difficult for many of these artists to really *practise* shibori. Many techniques are extremely time-consuming and even though most techniques do not necessarily require advanced dyeing equipment, the work involved is greatly facilitated

by having access to a well-equipped and spacious dyeing workshop. Establishing acceptable working conditions in one's everyday working life in order to work with shibori on a high artistic level is a threshold for many. However, if we wonder why the Swedish shibori practice is not more 'productive' than it is, the limitations of time and space do not suffice as an explanation. There must be something else 'interfering' here – which brings us to the subject of *values*.

The element of *pleasure* associated with the practice of shibori, and which many of the interviewees stress as being characteristic of this practice, is often combined with the element of *severity*, in the sense of the severe approach a practitioner him or herself chooses to adopt. In the beginning, one's encounter with the techniques and the different forms of expression is unreservedly delightful, and even magical:

I've had such powerful experiences when the pieces of dyed fabric are unfolded – and we can laugh about this in our courses. What takes place is magical! The pattern emerges when the dye reacts with oxygen, and this patterning process is not complete until the textile material is fully oxygenated [e.g. vat dyes and indigo].

I also really enjoy the weird boiling process. It's like being in a witch's kitchen [laughs].

I'm fascinated by the light that's in the cloth itself, the magic of it...the developing process.

It's so intriguing and fun...you test something: 'I wonder what'll happen if...ohh, this is what happened!'²¹

As time goes by, however, artists put their own demands on the creative and artistic works they produce – in the course of developing their *own* unique forms of expression. The fact that the course of events leading to finding one's own expression might be difficult actually becomes an

incentive in itself. Here an artist must have an intention, control, and will. One seeks resistance; one seeks something one can create resistance to. Having knowledge about the textiles made by the Masters in Japan and India for example, in combination with the codes of one's own professional community, forms a kind of standard here. One has knowledge of the refined and of the elaborate, and, not least, one knows what one does *not* want.

It's supposed to bleed as little as possible. Not so much 'Africa', so to speak. I strive for a kind of controlled shibori.

If you study old shibori [Japanese] it's obvious that it's not about chance. You know exactly how to tie and press to get...there is such exactitude.

Even though unexpected things happen all the time I try to be in charge. This also implies lifting this practice from anyone-being-able-to-do to placing shibori in a professional artistic practice context.

Ok, I can say: 'it turns out so beautiful!' – but what will I do with it?

I still mainly work with experimental samples, but I am quite harsh on myself. Something more than this needs to take place! I would like the shibori label to be up here somewhere [a descriptive gesture with the hand].²²

The notion of *chance* in contexts like these often seems to connote something negative. However, this does not prevent the artists from using *randomness* as a form of expression. Depending on artistic context, chance and the extremely imprecise can actually be what are desired. Either one is endeavouring to perceive and explore painterly qualities and possibilities such as the diffusely fluid and the layered, or one is endeavouring to employ the semiotic side of chance and the imprecise – that is, the 'low', the gaudy, and the disturbing. One uses an established underdog perspective, and, in doing

so, one may possibly depict, and challenge, hierarchies. One consciously plays with the concept of *the other*. Nevertheless, in both cases artistic intention and precision is very much at work.²³

What is the point of encircling and establishing values for an artistic practice that not even the members seem to have ‘daily’ access to – *in practice*? Does the practice maybe mainly have symbolic value? If so, what role does a symbolic practice play for its members?

In an earlier section it was mentioned that phenomena such as cultural flows, appropriation and performativity are active and necessary parts in the creation of new action spaces. Out of this spatial and symbolic insight and point of departure a fruitful metaphor was born, that is, the practice as a *front room*.²⁴ This metaphor can both be seen as confirming empirical data as well as serving as a trigger for raising possible sensitive questions to the practice.

In the Swedish peasant society of the past it was customary to have a so-called front room.²⁵ Regardless of lack of space this specific room was meant to be used only for certain special occasions. It could be used for celebrating special traditions or for when special guests were invited. Most of the time the room was not in use; most of the time it was not heated either – but it was always nicely furnished. Not everybody was allowed to open the door to the front room or to enter and use the room. Its function and value was first and foremost of a symbolic kind – and hence it became an even more important room.

The metaphor of the *front room* came into being during an interview and was tested immediately. Initially it was perceived as being rather *ornamental*, as something beautiful and flattering.²⁶ But it didn’t take long before the interviewer and the

interviewee realised its potential to inquire into conditions such as inclusion and exclusion. Sara Casten Carlberg spontaneously exclaims:

I think it's exciting, because I haven't thought it myself. I need to consider if I need to go to attack... right away...or to let it rest here [points to her head].

In the 1980’s, it had, as implied in recollection 1, become both problematic, and maybe even uninteresting, for professional textile practitioners of various kinds to perform something as profound as creating patterning and textural structure in the process of dyeing fabric. A group of techniques and forms of expression, labelled *knytbatik*, were considered unusable and were, in a way, put into quarantine for an indefinite period of time.

A few years later when the concept of shibori came in the picture a *new* space was needed so as to avoid any confusion between the two practices. A *front room* was created and new furniture was brought in. This meant giving the space a Japanese atmosphere, and so in this new *front room* an intangible Japanese cultural heritage was now being nurtured and taken care of; this heritage legacy was about addressing conceptions regarding crafts and forms of expression, as well as ideals and positive values concerning meticulous, time-consuming creative processes. Highly valued and acknowledged aesthetic sophistication as well as precision of expression and performance were also important aspects to be considered here.

People are given a key to the door – and thus access to the space, and even if you cannot spend much time in the front room, this room can be used for framing and storing dreams and expectations, and plays an important part in the individual artist’s quest for identity.

Unpleasure/Other

It gives me...the creeps.

Something disgusting comes to mind...something very unprofessional.

It's annoying when so many people are doing the same thing.

Woodstock fashion makes me nervous.

Majorca. The 1970's. T-shirts with big blotchy-like shapes on the front, bought on holiday. At first we [children] were proud, but gradually they felt ugly like.

Hippie-like and outdated...homemade...blurry and sloppy.

Something we made in the scouts...that big blotch... 'hey, let's do something fun!'

I feel a really deep sense of unpleasure!²⁷

Despite differences in age and background most members of the Swedish shibori practice seem to share memories and opinions regarding *knytbatik*. It seems as though *knytbatik* today is as charged a term as it was when Ernst Billgren asked Boel Matzner the question about *knytbatik* being ugly - twenty-five years ago. This suggests that a seemingly stable and lasting *sign* must have evolved.

Before we investigate this *sign* and its connotations further, we need to turn our attention to someone who has appeared in the story from time to time, that is, *the other*. This *other* who is attributed the role of representing the strange and often unpleasant – who is it? An artist visiting the International Shibori Symposium in the UK in 2002 recalls:

They tied and tied and tied – but without any thought behind what they were doing. I felt: 'No, I want to create and give it artistic expression,²⁸ and then it has to be done in another way!'²⁹

Making without thinking – which can also be a

desirable body-and-mind state in most practices – is then usually termed *flow*.³⁰ However, flow in artistic practice most often denotes very specific moments in the act of making – desirable moments when time and space seem to disappear and an artist experiences both intense concentration and absence all at the same time. And endeavour, control, intention often prevail, too.

The other is the one who makes without thinking – the one who makes without *wanting* anything with what is made – besides the obvious, that is, the one who is not aiming at artistic creation and expression. This making makes no demands, causes no distress, and can never go wrong. It is not difficult; on the contrary, it is easy and this enables the amateur to enter this arena.

In the case of shibori/ *knytbatik* the contours of *the other* is now emerging and its features originate from a number of different sources. We have *the housewife the amateur*, who, liberated from obligations to have to make a living, can be driven by pure care-free joy. This category does not have to relate to the practice from a professional perspective – it is purely a *hobby*.³¹

Then there is *the hippie* whose ideals consist of shunning order and planning, and who 'takes things as they come'. This is translated and expressed in aesthetic terms as the slovenly, the random, the haphazard.

As opposed to a professional practitioner, *the other* 'plays', and can play in his or her *leisure time*. Connotations from holidays, tourism and travelling now become part of the picture. The carefree hippie travels around the world – maybe spending his or her time on beaches in India, selling tie-and-dye to tourists; local people also produce tie-and-dye

and their products are bought by an increasing number of tourists. Of course it is not only about hippies and India. From the 1970's onwards tourists on charter holidays have brought home a kind of generic tie-and-dye from Majorca, Gambia, Turkey, Thailand and other countries.

Professionals don't travel in same way as *the other*. They are not looking for a lazy time in the sun nor quick adventures; they want to gain genuine knowledge. *The other* is also starting to appear on these professional journeys and is doing so in a positive and highly respected version.

*He lives in a small village in the Gujarat desert, where he and his wife and sons are sitting tying, and tying, and tying...*³²

Is this an exotifying gaze directed towards *the other*? Is the other as the *oriental* – to use Edward Said's concept.³³ Is the other voiceless, nameless, helpless, stagnant, and ruled by tradition? No he is not, the professional practitioner sees a highly respected colleague – a *Master* – there in front of her. This person has a name and runs a family business.

*His name is Mohammad Ali Mohammad Katri and he is the one who really got me interested in the craft and who made me understand and respect the skills needed. He is also very interested in developing the techniques and to share the knowledge he has.*³⁴

Even if production conditions are often simple, the level of craftsmanship is experienced as *unattainable* and the textiles one buys and brings home are treated as treasured master pieces.

So as we can see, *the other* exists in both a negative and a positive version and as an artist you don't want to identify with the *negative* other – and you don't think it's possible to attain the achievements of the *positive* other. However, both of these posi-

tions are of importance in the shaping of one's own artistic identity.

Deadlock

In our time and age *knytbatik* serves as a *sign*, and as such it seems to be surprisingly stable. For this reason *knytbatik* is very often used in various forms of popular culture. When this technique and form of expression pops up in theatre, film or music videos for example, it arouses the associations expected.

At regular intervals *knytbatik* also makes its appearance as a technique and form of expression in collections by the big Swedish clothing chain stores. In the summer collections of 2010, a couple of brands used *knytbatik* for very cheap blouses, tunics and beach dresses in thin materials – not only as a production method but also as a form of expression that can be *imitated* with the help of industrial printing techniques, so as to create 'an image of', rather than being the result of, actual tie-and-dye techniques.³⁵ Our minds go to easy-going, sun-drenched holidays on the beach – preferably abroad.³⁶ The clothes also repeatedly succeed in creating links to a cheeky, even provocative, subculture and a youthful 1960's and 70's, which has almost become myth.³⁷

On a general level it is the *tourist (holiday) / hippie* connotations that work best. Connotations to *the housewife* and *the amateur*, i.e. the 'low' and the unprofessional, are probably mostly made by people that are not part of the main stream – by members of the Swedish shibori practice for example. No doubt the prevalent meaning-making aspects of *knytbatik* can be annoying and problematic for an artist who either refuses affiliation with *the other*, or who does not, for different reasons, actively wish to integrate these connotations into his or her artistic work.

But to what extent do the meanings of *knytbatik* as a *sign* correspond to how *knytbatik* was communicated, considered and described in the 1960's and 70's? It is of course difficult to answer this question, but some DIY books from this period both confirm and negate the picture we have of *knytbatik* today.

In several books both an easy-going *and* a stricter approach is conveyed.

*Making knytbatik is exciting and sparks one's imagination. Even a person who does not have a gift for drawing or creating patterns normally gets successful results. [...] The possibilities of creating variations are immense and therefore you are always able to make new things. Maybe this is the reason why I will probably never get tired of playing in this way.*³⁸

*Relax for a while, stop thinking and have fun! Play with batik for a while, it's easy to make!*³⁹

At the same time the most important message of this particular book is to share and convey the systematic and complex so-called "Sara 13 method", developed by the author Sara Néa herself:

*The reason why the photos in general only show batik made with two dye-baths is that it makes it easier to understand how the patterning has come about. Nothing of importance is the result of chance here. Study the examples thoroughly and please add more colours subsequently, but remember that before you have achieved the right skills no master pieces will be created.*⁴⁰

A book published some years earlier conveys a similar message:

*The main rule for attaining a good result is carefulness. One can't just tie material around peas in an aimless, random manner.*⁴¹

*Try several different [sizes] and bear in mind that the result will be most satisfactory if the differences between distance and size are precise and distinct and do not feel vague and unintentional.*⁴²



Fig. 1. **Hippie kit.** All you need is....

Here the authors not only express an attitude towards the crafts process ("carefulness") but also aesthetic values ("not vague and unintentional").

It is also interesting to note that none of the books show or describe how to make the so-called *hippie swirl*, which has become a hallmark for hippie aesthetics, and the 1960's today.⁴³ Fig.1.

The unlocking

Even though the term *knytbatik* connotes a variety of meanings, including *the Hippie*, *the Housewife*, *the Tourist* and *the Amateur*, these meanings are nevertheless experienced as narrow and fixed. It is also apparent that *knytbatik* is also charged with meanings that can indeed be used in artistic creation but that can also be experienced as unwanted

and rather a nuisance. Context and intention are decisive factors for whether the meanings of *knytbatik* are to be seen as a resource, or a burden.

In addition to a few professional textile practitioners, who, twenty-five years ago, became acquainted with this 'new' Japanese technique and new Japanese concept of expression, there were people at Swedish cultural institutions, such as the Röhsska Design Museum in Gothenburg and the Museum of Textile History in Borås, who had made the same discovery.^{44 45} These 'museum people' – who enthusiastically paid attention to and followed the development of shibori internationally as well as in Sweden – became important in the process of establishing shibori as a new artistic action space where the meanings connoted to *knytbatik* were not a disturbing element. Eva Best, for example, recalls how Marianne Erikson, at that time curator at the Röhsska Design Museum, visited an exhibition where Eva showed "three-dimensional textile surfaces" and Marianne proclaimed: "But that is *shibori!*". Eva Best continues: "It was like that for a period of time...*everything* was shibori...". If words and acts are part of the problem they can also maybe be part of the solution? Marianne Erikson swung the bottle against the artwork and said: "I name this art *shibori!*"

We will now therefore turn our attention to the concept of performativity. This concept directs focus on what is *achieved* by an utterance or a staging, more than on what it means. The *effect* of speech acts and performances is the main issue here and the possibility of *change* (under the right conditions) is stressed.

Whether intentional or not, Swedish shibori practitioners occasionally find themselves in situations where the word shibori needs to be explained. A

common manoeuvre is then to compare it with *knytbatik* in rhetorical terms. The artist either starts by describing expressions, techniques and materials related to shibori. A reaction then might be: "Oh, is it like *knytbatik* then?" A practitioner of shibori then often continues by stating: "Yes, *but...*" followed by arguments on why shibori, even though there are similarities, cannot be compared with *knytbatik*. Or, the artist might start by saying: "Shibori is like *knytbatik*, *but...*", followed by the same arguments as in the first scenario. In this way a situation is created where all the positive features and qualities of shibori can be highlighted – at the expense of the features of *knytbatik*.

Of course, shibori is made when it is made – when dye, form, material etc. meet in a concrete tangible way – but of equal importance in the Swedish context is that shibori is also made during the act of speaking. On many occasions the words, as in the above examples, are placed in opposition to each other, thus enabling a *confrontation*.⁴⁶ Other times one tries to avoid them meeting at all. Kerstin Nilsson recalls what she, at the beginning of the 2000's, sometimes did in order to avoid confusion between shibori and the troublesome word *knytbatik*:

I talked about the technique and the material as shibori. 'What's that?' people would then say. 'Like tie-and-dye maybe, one could say.' '???' 'Or like the good old knytbatik, even though shibori is more advanced.' I used tie-and-dye as an in-between step and hoped that people might stop there.

There are, however, also practitioners who treat the dilemma of how the terms *knytbatik* and shibori are described in a more casual and pragmatic way. For Karin Lundgren Tallinger these terms are almost interchangeable:

I might choose to use batik if I want everybody to understand. Then it is batik [she laughs], and then

maybe I also want to use its low status...because it's fun to play around with hierarchies. But if you want to arouse a different kind of interest, to maybe add something exotic to the work – I then call it shibori...I think. But I could also ignore both knytbatik and shibori and instead talk about me 'painting' on the fabric.

So once again, what is gained by shifting from *knytbatik* to shibori? Sara Casten Carlberg summarises this well in the following explanation:

Shibori is a kind of batik. I almost always bring them up at the same time...I don't want to show off with the word. But I usually say: 'this kind of batik [i.e. shibori] is more about directions and decisions. Even though unexpected things may happen all the time I can hold sway, I can have a controlling influence!' That is what I usually say!

Most of the Swedish artists interviewed describe shibori in this way – as more advanced compared with *knytbatik*, and that the art form is about taking control of the process rather than being raptured by the work of chance. Shibori is also often described as extremely time-consuming and difficult, whereas *knytbatik* is considered fast and easy. This is how it has come to be. This is how *knytbatik* and shibori are being constructed, despite the fact that the DIY literature from the 1960's occasionally implies that it could also have turned out differently.

One could argue – as a number of Swedish shibori artists also argue – that the concept of shibori embraces a number of techniques that are not necessarily about tying i.e. *knyta*: to tie, as in tie-and-dye, and *for this reason* the two words are incomparable. However, in Japanese, the verb the word shibori is derived from has quite a vague meaning, and means: to wring, press, squeeze and the like. Similarly, at least as an experiment with the support of etymology, it is possible to open up the meaning

of the Swedish verb 'to tie' i.e. '*att knyta*', to have a number of meanings. A closer examination of the origin and history of the word *knyta* shows that it has *also* denoted actions such as pulling together, pressing, tightening, and winding around.

Shibori in Sweden *is* today something other than *knytbatik*. Neither has it sprung out of *knytbatik*. In that *knytbatik* is regarded as a construction, shibori now appears in a clearer light. By comparing shibori with *knytbatik* – in recurrent *performative negotiations* – a clearer picture is obtained of what shibori is and is not at this moment in time.

The notion of the Swedish shibori practice needing its own separate space – and the notion of it *being* a *front room* – then seems as reasonable as the notion of the two different practices not bearing the same name. The two practices do, however, have a somewhat unequal relationship in that *knytbatik* does not need shibori in the same way as shibori needs *knytbatik*.

New films and theatre performances where *knytbatik* flits past our eyes in the form of meaning-bearing props will probably continue to be produced. It is also likely that we will be able to buy cheap *knytbatik*-influenced garments from our major clothing chains from time to time. For this to happen the producers of film or of clothes do not even have to be aware of the existence of shibori. Shibori remains a reference without meaning, in this broad context. Nor is knowledge about shibori needed when *knytbatik*-like activities are carried out in schools, study circles or as hobby activities.

However, the Swedish practitioners of shibori can time and time again rake in the profit practitioners can gain as a result of change in meaning – when a comparison with *knytbatik* is made.

Profit in meaning

This profit involves being able to connect one's practice to Japan, a country that is acknowledged as a cultural superpower when viewed from a Swedish perspective of *textile craftscapes*. In this image of Japan, one's own powerful experiences of having looked through books and having visited exhibitions related to Japanese, traditional as well as contemporary, art, design and crafts – and maybe even experiences of study journeys to Japan – all blend together with the knowledge one has regarding the strong position this country has held in terms of avant-garde fashion and innovative textiles during the last thirty years or so.⁴⁷ As has been mentioned before, several interviewees associate Japan with aesthetic refinement, exactitude of expression and performance, and its deeply rooted, awe-inspiring values regarding time-consuming creative processes.

Affiliation with this excellence in the textile craftscape, that is, both material and immaterial affiliation, can be a resource that the individual artist in Sweden who finds this relevant for his or her personal quest for identity may benefit from and make use of.

As a resource this excellence can, together with high-tech products, computer games, anime, manga, Japanese cuisine etc., be inscribed into a larger academic and political discourse on branding. The epithet *Cool Japan* was coined in the early 2000's,⁴⁸ and a Japanese as well as international debate has continued with regard to how this, *per definition* ephemeral, 'quality stamp' can best be used and maintained when marketing Japan.

According to several interviewees, Japan as a place associated with innovation has come to be personified by the previously mentioned Japanese textile

virtuoso Junichi Arai (1932-).⁴⁹ Åsa Pärson, who was a young student at Väfskolan in Borås in the early 1990's, who got the chance to take part in a workshop with Junichi Arai, recollects:

We made shibori. He had brought some kind of special fabric that we fixated using heat. It was very inspiring! A whole new world opened up. You know, many were prejudiced about hand weaving for instance...but you are free to do what the heck you like!

Arai has been dedicated to moving textile frontiers for more than half a century; he has also been part of some of the enterprises that almost have institutional status in the textile world today; these include: Issey Miyake, Comme des garçon and Nuno, to mention but a few. He has also been important in the development of the forms of shibori that are three-dimensional. These new forms of expression vitalised the shibori practices in Japan, that is, both the small-scale crafts industries and the individual artistic practices. Three-dimensional shibori, where synthetic materials play a major role, also became a main attraction when the concept of shibori was spreading around the world in the early 1990's.⁵⁰

Excursion: Dalecarlia, Sweden

This text has examined how two different heritages influence an emerging contemporary artistic practice in Sweden: *one* problematic heritage (*knytbatik*) and *one* attractive heritage (shibori). However, there is another legacy that may be interesting to reflect on in this context.

Some Swedish traditional folk costumes today include parts that have been dyed and patterned in a *knytbatik*- or shibori-like way. Male costumes from the small towns of Mora, Orsa and Rättvik include a narrow and thin woollen scarf dyed in red, which

was in fashion until around 1870. In order to produce the characteristically decorative ring shapes, parts of the woven fabric were tied with thread in a careful and predetermined order before dyeing. In books about Swedish folk costumes these ring shapes are sometimes called spots, and sometimes called roses.⁵¹ These scarves are still being made and used today according to a model from the mid-nineteenth century.⁵² Fig.2.

Where did the impulse to adopt this technique originate? How is it that the expression was first and foremost located in a male sphere? The socio-historical answers to these two questions are difficult to find.

How is it that these scarves seem to have obtained their colour and shape so quickly, that the roses seem to have known their place from the very beginning? In this last somewhat speculative question there is a hint of disappointment expressing that the process involved lacked experimentation and development. The question not only exposes a contemporary view of creative processes but also probably puts the wrong demands on these nineteenth century craftsmen. The uniformity we experience when looking at the scarves that have been preserved could be explained by there only being a very limited number of specialists – so-called market craftsmen – who were actually engaged in the making of these accessories.⁵³ So why change a winning concept? Maybe their handicraft was also governed by harsh social regulations as to what one was allowed to wear? Maybe the scarves were part of a minutely regulated system of signs that signalled social and geographical relations?⁵⁴

This excursion does not have its point of departure in what members of the Swedish shibori practice have informed me about. On the contrary, as cultural heritage, as well as a part of some of today's



Fig 2. Shibori samples. A red-dyed woollen scarf specific to certain male folk costumes (made 2010 in Dalecarlia, Sweden), in front of a roll of unironed shibori-dyed cotton for a summer kimono (made 2010 in Arimatsu, Japan).

Dalecarlian folk costumes, these scarves seem to be rather unknown within this group of artists. However, what these scarves *do* achieve in this text is to raise an interesting question for future studies, that is: what kind of heritage and tradition is usable, and possible, as raw material in the construction of collective artistic practice.

Tying up

The story of how shibori has emerged in Sweden connects in many ways to the multifaceted title of this anthology: *Crafting Cultural Heritage*.

Firstly, much labour is required to make or *craft* Cultural Heritage. Local history and contemporary culture join with cultural flows in their search

for global ways. They often find their way through channels enthusiastically dug by people and sometimes end up far, far away as rivulets carrying cultural impulses. Today the speed of these flows and the impact they cause is greater than ever. Out of these flows we pick and choose whatever we find useful in order for us to carry out all the different identity projects we more or less consciously engage in. Bearing in mind that cultural heritage is a *making* process that communicates and is influenced by global trends and that the raw material for this practice is also gathered from all over the world, it follows that it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate cultural heritage discourses from globalisation discourses.

Secondly, the word *crafting* designates two meanings, that is, skills and shrewdness, and these meanings help us to understand how the Swedish shibori practice has developed and where it is today. The word *crafting* embraces notions of *skills* and *skilfulness*; however, what is considered skilful can only be understood in each specific context. In the context of the Swedish shibori practice the ambition to perform and produce *artistic expression* is an example of an articulated yet indefinable skill and is something that differentiates good from less than good, interesting from uninteresting, and maybe even the professional from the amateur. *Crafting* connotes *shrewdness*, and this shrewdness can be put to work in speech acts and other *performative* forms of communication and settings. By first *appropriating* the concept of shibori, and then confronting this attractive concept with the more problematic concept of *knytbatik* – in performative negotiations – professional artists have managed to create new artistic action spaces.

The Swedish shibori practice is a small and rather

young artistic practice and it is difficult to prophesy its future and in what way it will create a lasting impact. It is impossible to know whether individuals or groups of people are in the process of laying the foundations for what can be thought of as an interesting and important cultural heritage in the future (that is, if the concept of cultural heritage is used at all in the future).

In Sweden there have been ‘making activities’ that are related to shibori from a technical point of view. These are *knytbatik* with its close ties to popular culture and habits in the 1960’s and 70’s, as well as the kind of dyeing that was used to create patterning on specific accessories belonging to a few Swedish folk costumes during the 19th century. Both of these activities are actually still taking place today. *Knytbatik* is relatively often used as a visual semiotic *sign* in certain fashion contexts, and hobby activities arranged for children and young people occasionally include making *knytbatik*; and the tie-and-dye method used in folk costumes is still alive in those areas where folk costumes are of social importance.

The majority of the Swedish artists who belong to the new shibori practice do not, however, connect to or develop *these* cultural heritages. Instead they look in a more ‘inward’ direction, to their own artistic will, for clues and directions that are in harmony with the personal on-going will to create and express, and when they look in a more ‘outward’ direction, they look to traditional masters and contemporary virtuosos, whether these have been identified or remain anonymous. These inspirational role models inhabit a *textile craftscape* where geographic locations such as Japan and India are acknowledged as having centripetal force.

In the activity *crafting cultural heritage*, not only

the past, the present and the future are closely tied – but also the *here* and *there*. In addition to this we must also include *affect* as an important driving force to be able to fully understand these intricate processes, which also embrace sentiments such as pleasure and unpleasure. The story of the Swedish shibori practice illustrates this very well.

Endnotes

1. In this text *knytbatik* is treated as an emic concept situated in a Swedish experience and context, hence the use of italics. The dictionary translation is tie-dye.

2. From an interview with Boel Matzner, 18 August, 2011.

3. The person recollecting this scene from 1994 is the author of this text. In August 2011 the fabric was seen once more in the studio Boel Matzner had then, and where it was used as a sun screen, and as a souvenir.

4. Larsen 1976, pp. 48-51

5. Handler & Linnekin 1984, p. 280

6. Today this theory is being deployed by a large number of researchers within the field of Critical Heritage Studies. One proponent here is the often cited researcher Laurajane Smith (2006). Handler & Linnekin are other scholars who have been advocating similar thoughts on the concepts of tradition and authenticity (see note 5).

7. Austin 1962

8. One example from the shibori practice; Eva Lagnert shares a memory from when she attended the 1997 International Shibori Symposium in Ahmadabad, India: "I took part in a workshop that had a very interesting start. It was a workshop by Arai [Junichi]...with good people helping out. Really, you could say it was pure *performance*." Compare with Recollection 2, page 33. But under the proper circumstances less spectacularly staged workshops, courses and exhibitions also *do* something with the attendees regardless of whether anything specific is being said.

9. For a brief introduction to visual semiotics, especially in line with definitions by Søren Kjörup, see Nordström 1985.

10. "Shibori foundation course" at Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm.

This course has been given seven times since 2002, and an advanced course has been given five times. The free-standing courses have all been initiated and led by Eva Lagnert. There have been approx. twelve participants attending each course.

11. An example of such a list is the Intangible Heritage List which is the result of UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, ratified in 2003.

12. Appadurai (1995) originally proposed five scapes: *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*.

13. The globalisation researcher Harumi Befu, amongst others, has elaborated on the concept of the scape by Appadurai, and puts forward the conceptual use of *artscapes, musicscapes, fashionscapes, literariscapes* etc.

Befu 2003, p. 5

14. One example of this is the conference paper: "Ties That Bind: The Transmission of *Shibori* to the United States and Beyond", by Sharon Sadako Takeda, presented at the "35th International Symposium on the Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property", September 2011 in Tokyo.

15. There are many studies confirming this aspect, for example Condry 2006, Fornäs 2010 and Pellitteri 2006.

16. Eva Lagnert here joins a number of people from different artistic disciplines, who, during the last century have been on educational trips ("Bildungsreisen") to Japan. In the 1950's the architect Walter Gropius stated that Japan is a 'design course'. From the essay "Irving Penn and Issey Miyake" by Mark Holborn (1999).

17. In 2010, the Swedish Shibori Society (Svenska Shiborisällskapet) was formed out of this group of people. www.svenskashiborisallskapet.se/sv (18 December, 2015)

18. For example, Konstfack University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, HDK School of Design and Crafts at the University of Gothenburg, the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås, Nyckelviksskolan etc.

19. Eva Davidsson, Elsa Chartin, Kerstin Nilsson and Karin Lundgren Tallinger to mention some.

20. The group exhibition that has probably had the biggest public impact was "Invecklat/utvecklat" at Rosendal's Garden in Stockholm performed during the summer of 2011.

21. The quotes are taken from different people and des-

cribe shared conceptions.

22. Ibid.

23. Compare with the artist Ernst Billgren's intention from the late 1980's in Recollection 1, page 33.

24. *Finrum* in Swedish.

25. A phenomenon that in spite of harsh prescriptive critique during the Functionalism period survived and continued to shape the domestic lives of people in owner-occupied houses built from the 1940's to the 1970's. See (in Swedish): www.ne.se/lang/finrum, (2 August 2012).

26. Ricoeur 1977, pp. 50-54

27. The quotes are taken from different interviewees but put together in this way show surprisingly concordant opinions with regard to *knytbatik*.

28. *Gestalta* in Swedish.

29. The artist quoted here is talking about a large group of people visiting and taking part in the symposium and the adjacent fair. She thought they were 'British housewives'. "It turned into an industry, you know. Then I lost interest in shibori." the artist continues. Another artist who visited the symposium in Chile 1999 recalls: "There were a lot of Americans who were very interested and who seemed to have a lot of money but who were not practitioners themselves...or maybe they only had it as a hobby. But you didn't have to bother about them."

30. On the concept of *flow*, see Csikszentmihalyi 1990.

31. *Knytbatik as a hobby* implies what is being pursued in study circles, activities for children and young people (arranged by schools, scouts etc.) or what is made at home just for the fun of it.

32. Elsa Chartin's recollections from a journey to India in 2005.

33. Said 1978

34. The quote, by Elsa Chartin, is a direct continuation of the above.

35. To imitate characteristics of *knytbatik*/shibori by using printing stencils for example, is, however, not a new phenomenon. This was done already during the Japanese Heian period (794-1185). See Wada et al 1983, p.18.

36. The poster for the Swedish comedy film *En dag i Phuket* [-One day in Phuket] from 2011 shows the main character in a lotus position with a tie-dyed sarong.

37. Between 1967 and 1972 approximately 1750 shows

of the Broadway musical *HAIR* were performed. Already in 1968 the show was brought to a number of different countries where local casts spread the norm critical peace and love message, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HAIR#Broadway, 31 July 2012). The European première took place in Stockholm in 1968, (sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hair, 31 July 2012). Interest in *the hippie* today is still very much alive. As late as 2011 the Stockholm City Theatre put up a new version of the musical. An important visual component in the original musical was the costumes, and their colourful and flowy expression was also used for the original poster. For the original show at Broadway hundreds of metres of tie-dyed fabric were handmade by the artists Marian Clayden and K. Lee Manuel. Marian Clayden today plays a prominent role in the international shibori scene (www.clayden.com/mcbio.html, 30 November 2012). See Wada et al 1983, p.88.

38. Néa 1969, p. 7 (Thomas Laurien's translation.)

39. Ibid. p. 36 (Thomas Laurien's translation.)

40. Ibid. p. 40

41. Edenholtm & Åhlberg 1965, p. 20

42. Ibid. p.63

43. Somewhere in the world an industry has been created where tie-dyed garments (or tie-dyed look alike garments) destined for crazy fancy dress parties are being made, the sole function of which are to be loving and/or ironic signs for the hippie and the 60's. The visual design of the garments often contains the so-called hippie swirl. See: buttericks.se/product.html/batik-t-shirt-hippie?category_id=31, (31 July 2012) and www.partycity.com/product/hippie+costume+kit.do, (31 July 2012).

44. The word is present in the 1993 edition of the Swedish National Encyclopedia *Nationalencyklopedin*. Under the term *plangi* (of Malayan origin, used in Sweden from the 1950's onwards but almost forgotten today), shibori is briefly mentioned: "A Malayan word designating knytbatik, sometimes also used to describe similar dyeing techniques from other regions. In Japan the technique is called shibori and it is becoming known in Sweden under this name." (Thomas Laurien's translation.) The dictionary *Svensk Ordbok* published in 2009, however, does not contain the term shibori but does list other borrowed Japanese words such as *shiatsu* and *shiitake*, which are typical of the craze for spa culture and Japanese cuisine at the turn of the century.

45. Already in 1990 Marianne Erikson, at that time curator at the Röhsska Design Museum in Gothenburg, purchased the shibori piece *Tenku 5* by the Japanese artist Shihoko Fukumoto.

46. Notions, conceptions, attitudes, are placed in opposition to each other – *forehead against forehead* (Confront: from Latin *frons*, meaning forehead.)

47. For example, the front cover of the book *20th Century Fashion* – which aspires to tell the history of a hundred years of fashion – shows an Issey Miyake creation. See Mendes & de la Haye 1999. In recent years a couple of larger retrospective exhibitions that pay tribute to the so-called “Japanese fashion wonder” have been set up in cities such as London, Berlin and New York. For example, *Future Beauty: 30 Years of Japanese Fashion*, which could be seen in London 2010-2011.

48. McGray 2002

49. Some interviewees took part in one of the two workshops performed by Junichi Arai in Gothenburg and Borås in 1993. Others have met him during the International Shibori Symposia where he gave lectures and workshops. Some interviewees have also visited him in his studio in Japan.

50. The 1st International Shibori Symposium was arranged in Nagoya, Japan in 1992, and the 9th and latest was arranged in Hangzhou, China, in 2014.

51. Spots: in Ekström 1935. Roses: in Alm 1931.

52. See www.morahemslojd.se. >produkter>Moradräkt>roshalskläde (30 October 2012).

53. Conversation with Erik Thorell, curator at the “Skan-sen kläd-kammaren”, a costume museum in Stockholm, (24 October 2012).

54. For excerpts from several minutes from the 1600-1800’s, dealing with different kinds of dress codes, prohibitions and regulations, see: Norlind 1912.

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Contemporary Authentic

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"Activation aims at reproducing and transmitting cultural heritage through a sustainable re-contextualisation and re-use of its values, in particular incorporating its authentic qualities in the contemporary context"

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Contemporary Authentic

A design driven strategy for activating intangible heritage and craft knowledge

By Eleonora Lupo and
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1. Introduction: design for intangible heritage and craft knowledge

This text aims at defining a possible practice-based theory and strategy for an innovative and design driven approach (called 'activation') to valorise intangible and living heritage forms, in particular the craft knowledge incorporated and embedded in people and places (design activation for craft). This strategy of valorisation is also linked with the important role that craft practices can play in the dynamics of understanding and development of those places' quality, and with the processes of valorisation of the identity of a territory and a community of people that own the same craft knowledge (design activation through craft).

In the field of heritage studies, the contribution of design is still under estimated, even though it can be potentially relevant and distinctive in defining new meanings and ways to disseminate our

heritage and make it more accessible. In fact, in Italian design history the 'cultural approach' is recognised worldwide as a distinctive feature: this sensibility to culture, local skills and resources has a certain recognition in the reputation of Italian design abroad. In this context, the field of cultural heritage challenged and stimulated Italian design to develop an experimental research approach based on situatedness and sustainability: it distinguishes itself among others for its early advanced vision and original perspective in considering the cultural asset a territorial and community-based resource whose valorisation and experience can be designed, organised and enabled according to a logic of local development. Design focuses on processes by which cultural heritage generates value in terms of system and experience thanks to the adoption of an innovative, systemic and diffused vision of cultural patrimony in all its forms in or-

der to make its 'activation' socially and economically sustainable for the community through a participatory process.¹

Craft knowledge and skills, like traditions and behaviours, can be considered a form of intangible cultural heritage², here defined as 'typical knowledge'. Even if craft appears physically in objects or products, in fact it has an immaterial form whose visibility is critical: craft heritage is strictly connected with traditional material cultural heritage but includes immaterial values as well, which concern the skills needed for mastering crafts, as well as their symbolic meanings. It is often easy to save the physical product of craft (such as a handcrafted object), while saving all information related to the context, the handcraft abilities and techniques is much more complex.

Due to its process nature of "performance embodied in people"³, in order to be preserved, this typical knowledge needs to be continuously performed, taught and socialized – in other words, 'activated'. Typical and traditional craft knowledge could not avoid the interaction with the surrounding environment, its dynamics of exchange, production and fruition. When the context changes, it is therefore often necessary to re-contextualize it in a new context, transforming and adapting the knowledge and preserving its specificities. For this reason an effective activation process should consist of a collaborative process of knowledge sharing between the owner and the future users.

We define this concept as design driven heritage valorisation activation because it is a process that emphasises the 'use value' of the heritage. It moves beyond the traditional valorisation approach, based on the improvement of access and fruition of the patrimony (through exhibitions design or

use of technologies), to the 'innovation' of cultural heritage. Activation in fact aims at reproducing and transmitting cultural heritage through a sustainable re-contextualisation and re-use of its values, in particular incorporating its authentic qualities in the contemporary context (i.e. new objects, artefacts, services, events and spaces), creating new connections or a 'frame' of meanings and potential ambits where heritage can be activated, made dynamic, reproduced, renewed and re-generated (or 'actualised') in continuity with its tradition, but also in dialogue with the contemporary context. This dialectic between persistence and transformation, continuity and change, introduces the necessity of framing the concept of 'authentic', its recognisability and reproduction: the 'reproducibility of the authentic' is based on models of interpretation and representation of a specific heritage, whose authenticity factors (typicality, recognisability, etc.) are constituted by material and immaterial dimensions (artefacts, processes, techniques, knowledge). These factors can be 'extracted' from forms and processes of a specific cultural patrimony to become object and matter of design through cultural inventories in a documentary process orientated towards creative transformation and re-contextualisation, or an 'activation in continuity' that drives from traditional to contemporary, from a native authentic to an original authentic.

2. The 'craft heritage activation' framework of the Contemporary Authentic project

The Contemporary Authentic/Milano project⁴, developed by the research group Design for Cultural Heritage of Politecnico di Milano⁵ was an occasion to develop an articulated strategy of 'craft activation'. The Milanese craftsmen (henceforth often called simply 'masters') and their knowledge in its different forms (defined as performative and

productive⁶) have been considered an endangered intangible heritage in need of being ‘activated’ (from documentation to transmission, from fruition to use) and promoted under the brand of ‘Contemporary Authentic/Milano’.

The project, developed during the years 2010-13, is based on the complementary, intercultural and interdisciplinary nature of different forms of expertise, and includes national and international partners: Fondazione Cologni dei mestieri d’arte, working for the promotion of arts and crafts⁷; Università Statale di Torino, with experts in anthropology⁸; Politecnico di Torino, with expertise in local and territorial development⁹; Hong Kong Polytechnic School of Design, with experience in community and cultural development¹⁰; and the University of Barcelona, with experts in folklore, performance and museographical studies¹¹.

The project had the aim of enhancing the widespread but somewhat misunderstood and invisible presence of craft masters and intangible practices and knowledge still active in the Milan area with a territorial approach addressing local sustainable development as well. This in order to make more visible and accessible their value in terms of knowledge, technical and productive skills and make ‘re-usable’ their procedural, relational, performative qualities, size and spatial impact, through the creation of a complex system of promotion and dissemination identified by the brand ‘Contemporary Authentic/Milano’.

Contemporary Authentic, according to the activation strategy, in fact promotes a shift from the simple representation and elicitation of knowledge to the innovative reproduction of intangible heritage, focusing on replicable modalities of incorporation of those cultural legacies in the contemporary con-

text, thus insisting on the ‘use value’ of cultural assets, considered an ‘open-ended knowledge system’ for promoting a region as well.

Within this macro objective, many solutions have been developed to respond, through strategies and design tools, to the need of effectively documenting the intangible living heritage possessed by the masters (especially knowledge and its immaterial nature – i.e. relational, performative and territorial qualities), and activating, transmitting, renewing, revitalizing, re-using and socializing it in a sustainable manner in relation to authenticity, typicality and possibly inter-generational and intercultural exchanges.

Contemporary Authentic started from a documentation action aimed at both safeguarding and understanding these typical Milanese identity features through the development of a web-based visual and multimedia catalogue (or repertoire) of the masters and their knowledge (‘the endangered master list’). It then turned this catalogue into a system of diffused events and laboratories aimed at both celebrating the masters and helping to establish new relations and innovative re-contextualisation of their knowledge in the contemporary system (through pilot actions called botteghe and convivia).

3. Contemporary Authentic valorisation chain

In order to reproduce Milanese craft knowledge, Contemporary Authentic combined the chain of generation of cultural heritage related to craft heritage in Milan with the chain of the design driven valorisation processes.

The chain of generation of cultural heritage refers to those cyclical and evolutionary processes over time, identified by ownership, transmission, reproduction and eventually discharge and loss of

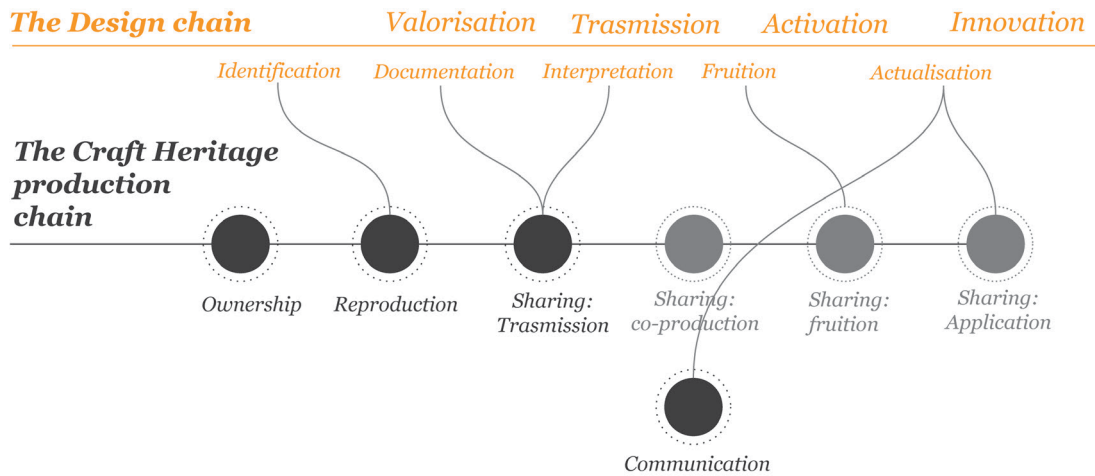


Fig. 1. The valorisation process. The chains of generation of cultural heritage and of the design driven valorisation processes¹², graphic by O. Mangiante

cultural practices, in which a negotiation happens (consciously, collectively, institutionally or not) in order to select which part of these practices is transmitted as heritage and in which form. The chain of the design driven valorisation processes instead refers to those deliberate enhancement processes that provide a heritage acknowledgement, safeguarding, documentation, interpretation, promotion, experience, transmission and innovation.

In the case of an intangible heritage and knowledge such as that of craft, characterised by a performative and procedural nature, the more these chains tend to overlap and coincide like the double helix of a strand of DNA, the more fruitful the heritage activation is because a deliberate design action can also become an action of generating cultural heritage, making synergic the processes that are naturally or historically determined with the processes that are activated artificially and by design. We

call this the ‘innovation potential’ of a cultural asset, in which we can insert, by the design strategy, a sustainable ‘delta of transformation’ in the evolving nature of intangible heritage so that the double helix behaves like a cyclical process of recursive and virtuous continuous generation and evolution.

In addition, the Contemporary Authentic approach distinguishes itself as an extended design driven valorisation chain: while many projects focus just on one phase of the valorisation chain (e.g. documentation, transmission or re-use of the heritage) Contemporary Authentic activated the whole chain of craft knowledge, from archiving to innovating the Milanese craft heritage and its touristic promotion. This innovation is based on an activation quality protocol that aims at establishing a set of tools, among which is the regional ‘craft production quality mark’ described in the following paragraph.

4. The craft activation quality protocol

Contemporary Authentic promoted a protocol of craft knowledge activation that is based on an articulated strategy:

- *Craft knowledge visualisation tools* to represent, for each craftsman, his 'master-knowledge system' through different narratives and analytical models: these tools (from visual models to video documentaries of the endangered masters to the online repository) work not only as documentaries but focus on eliciting and transmitting the procedural, relational, performative qualities, skills and abilities of a master (and his knowledge) in an engaging way (see master-knowledge system model and video narrations described below);

- *Dynamics of knowledge activation* based on 'sharing relations', which means establishing relations of knowledge sharing between the master's knowledge system and the local community system (designing models of cultural offer, experience and participation of the craft heritage; see *convivia* described below), and between the master's system and the entrepreneurial and industrial system (designing models of production and innovation of the craft heritage, in new artefacts and processes; see *botteghe* described below). These dynamics usually act on three axes (taking different forms): the spatial axis (i.e. 're-contextualisation' of the craft heritage), the temporal axis ('actualisation' of the craft heritage) and the procedural axis ('incorporation' of the craft heritage);

- *Craft production quality mark and brand*: Contemporary Authentic joins the values of a brand to those of a quality certification system. Today brands are often a distinctive element for a region: they represent the identity of places through a strategic positioning and offering of the values of a city

or region starting from a corporate image (naming, logo, message, symbols) based on characteristic local features and qualities. The brand makes it possible to create a relationship between the place and its potential visitors that relies on the region's reputation and perception. In this frame, Contemporary Authentic has already started to function (and will be improving) as a brand to promote the local craft skills of Milanese masters as a distinctive value for the city of Milan¹³.

The concept of quality, on the other hand, is still more commonly used to refer to products or production than to geographical areas. Quality certification is usually associated with a warranty of conformity to norms, procedures, requirements that products or production processes should fulfil (i.e. safety certification, or process efficiency in the Italian system¹⁴). However, quality can refer to a territory in few cases, like the one of typical products whose origin is protected by different norms and marks in EU law¹⁵: PDO (Protected Designation of Origin), PGI (Protected Geographical Indication), or TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed). These typical productions, regulated under a scheme of product quality policy that is based on recognized skills, methods of production and ingredients linked to their geographical origin¹⁶, are in any case related only to the agricultural and food sector and not to craft, with some exceptions¹⁷. Other quality systems connected with locations concern environmental quality, whose certification testifies some parameters of sustainability in tourism (both in attraction and hospitality)¹⁸. Finally there are artisanal quality marks that certify distinctive traditional productions, but often without links to a specific location¹⁹.

Contemporary Authentic, mixing the values of a place and those of a craft production into a 'situ-

ated craft' aims at becoming a quality certification for the innovation of the typical craft production of a territory, and Milan in particular. Above all, Contemporary Authentic strives to make the methodology for certifying traditional production synergistic with branding strategies, to communicate new tourism and development opportunities of a city. This process has just started, and hopefully through further development it will represent a collective intelligence of a territorial productive system able to exploit its knowledge strengths and owners and certify the quality of the more virtuous productive behaviours. It will also work as a quality warranty for the cultural sustainability and respectfulness of the new craft production.

- *Touristic itineraries and cultural offer* of craft heritage: these actions respond to the objective of sharing craft knowledge with the community system. In the context of the expo that will be held in Milan in 2015, Contemporary Authentic established the first prototype of itinerary of Milanese craft knowledge as a tourism offer in the city, with the objective of celebrating and making visible and accessible to a wide community the territorial milieu that generated the tradition of Milanese craft.²⁰ The itinerary, suitable to implementation, includes the studios and workshops of Milanese craftsmen surveyed by the project. This itinerary is still in the initial stage and should be further promoted by a specific communication campaign and signage, and developed by digital applications that will better link the online repository with an augmented in-place experience of the region by using the anytime/anywhere ubiquitous accessibility paradigm typical of a 'smart' heritage.

- *Authenticity/innovation matrix for craft activation evaluation*: this matrix, which responds to the

objective of sharing knowledge with the entrepreneurial system, has been developed for evaluating the grades of authenticity and innovation of new craft production processes. It is based on the identification of authenticity factors (material-formal and intangible-procedural) of a typical craft knowledge that can be used as inputs and drivers for a process of innovation, which sustainably negotiates between persistence and transformation, continuity and change, without being prescriptive. In fact, it is open to multiple combinations, represented by the different percentages and the visual images 'I' of the brand that are shown in the label. Within the processes of reproducibility of the authentic it will simply function as a warranty that a certain grade of authenticity has been preserved and combined with innovation in the realisation of a new product or process and as a system to trace and make visible this authentic knowledge and its origin in the whole productive chain. It has been exemplarily used for the development of the nine concepts in the Contemporary Authentic concepts catalogue.²¹

In this framework, Contemporary Authentic aims to become established and familiar as one structured intervention methodology that is replicable and repeatable in other contexts for craft knowledge activation, just as it has been tested in the Milan prototype.

5. Contemporary Authentic innovative findings

In order to develop the whole methodology, Contemporary Authentic Milano has been structured in several research phases that included various activities conceived to produce specific and tangible outcomes.

From a scientific point of view, the phases have been:

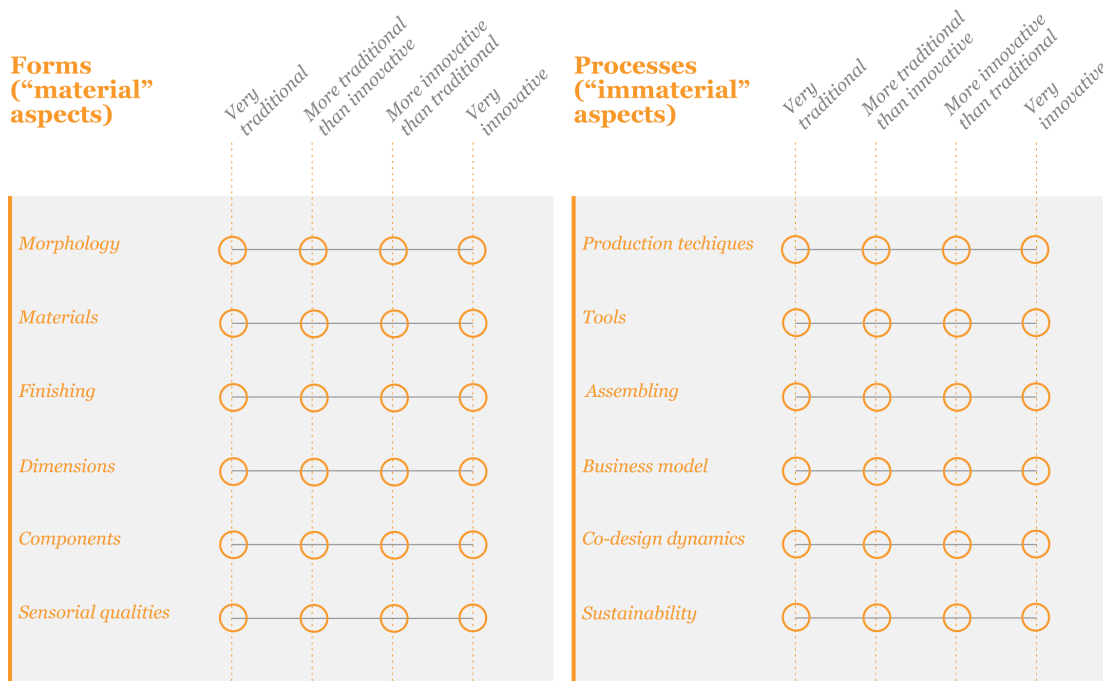


Fig. 2. The authenticity/innovation matrix²², graphic by O. Mangiante

1. Theoretical research: defining the research theoretical and methodological frame (i.e. model of masters-knowledge system);
2. Desk and field research: developing the repertory of good practices (case studies) and the list of Milanese masters;
3. Envisioning: developing the scenario handbook, including the design-driven strategies and modalities of the masters' knowledge system activation;
4. Action-research: developing pilot applications for the research findings and scenarios in the realisation and production of the Contemporary Authentic Repository, the Contemporary Authentic brand and the public events (Convivia, workshops/Botteghe, etc.) for knowledge activation.

The relative innovative outcomes developed are:

5.1. The master-knowledge system model²³

This is an info-graphic model to visualize the master's knowledge system, its relations and knowledge activation processes within the territorial dimension. This descriptive model has been used as a visual tool for collecting the qualities of the typical knowledge owned by each master and its activation dynamics already active (it is available online for each master). Beside the analysis, it also supported the design of new activations.

Two main types of variables are visualized:

- The spatial dimension (or location), represented in the model through the concentric areas that enlarge the horizons of observa-

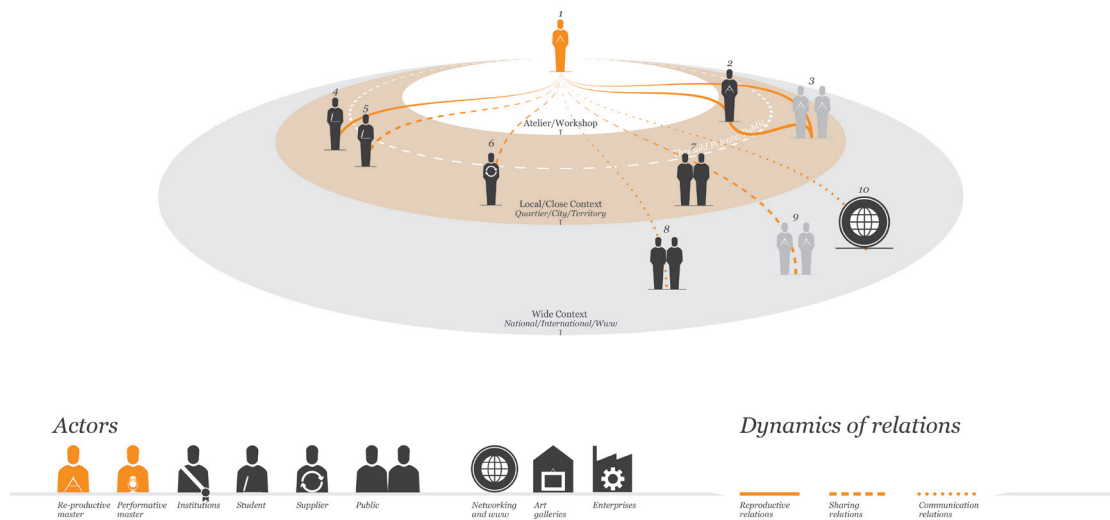


Fig. 3. The Master-Knowledge system mode²⁴, graphic by O. Mangiante.

tion from the primary nucleus (core level) of the master (typically his studio or workshop) towards the wider region (from close context such as the neighbourhood or district up to the intangible web);

- The relational dimension of the master (or dynamics of knowledge activation), which includes reproductive, sharing and communication relations, and is visually represented by different lines (dotted, dashed, etc.) connecting the master with his network of relationships at different spatial scales.

5.2. The repertory of good practices of craft knowledge activation²⁵

This catalogue has selected, investigated and classified case studies of processes of cultural transformation relative to some ‘craftsmanship masters’ in various parts of the world and various sectors (spaces, product, fashion, food) and their inte-

gration into the contemporary context in various forms and modes (i.e. identity matrix of a territorial area, drivers of economic and social development, integration in new production and distribution systems).

Case studies of good practices (i.e. samples of knowledge that have been re-socialized) are selected and organized using evaluation criteria both territorial (Milan area, national or international) and thematic (local identity and typical knowledge, reproductive knowledge or master, performative/relational knowledge or master), and for their potential for transferability to other contexts or types of knowledge. The research has considered and used the term re-socialize to rethink the complex system of relations (of production, reproduction, use and communication) that revolve around the practice to establish better conditions to allow the activation of knowledge in order to re-place it

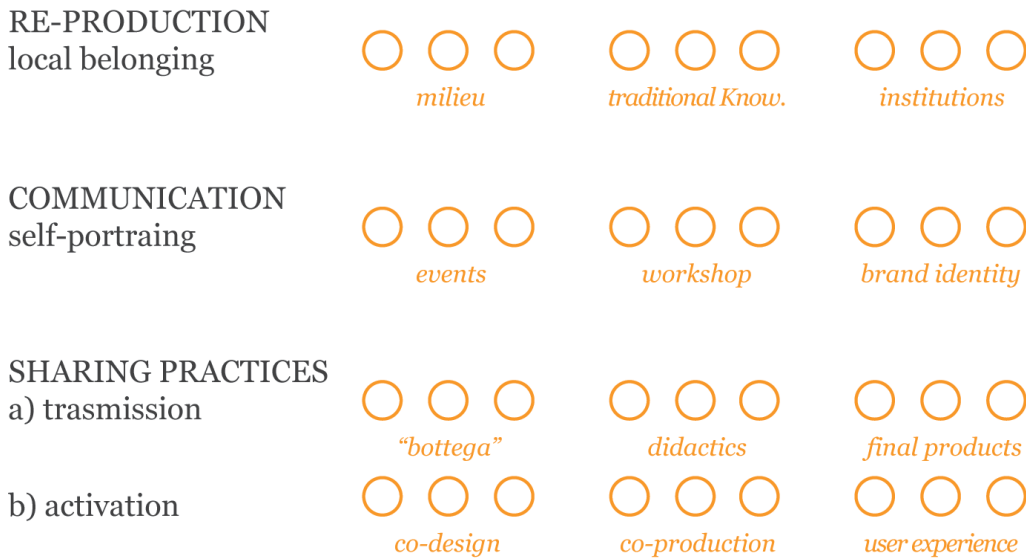


Fig. 4. Evaluation matrix for Good Practices.²⁶

in the social system between its utilitarian value and its cultural value.

The case studies were collected by all partners involved in the research process. Together the cases form an atlas of examples, rigidly evaluated on the basis of a matrix system that provides the size of innovation. Starting from the dynamics of knowledge activation, transfer and sharing and according to the theoretical framework of research, the best practices have received a specific assessment for each topic of interest, from the local roots to self-representation, from craft education to re-socialization.

Observing the cases, it was possible to formalize a 'set' of natural or induced actions that were able to keep alive the practice and to actualize it (e.g. the network of schools, viral communication via the web, the use of local raw materials, etc.). It was also

possible to sketch a series of 'master portraits' that characterize the relational model of masters according to the bias towards one form of knowledge transfer or another (i.e. master-guru, master-adviser, implicit master, master-as-service and so on).

Therefore, the purpose of the matrix was to identify 'virtuous' elements/dimensions in order to name them and to fill a list of plausible activation strategies 'to be inserted' into the endangered masters cases, a sort of collection of transformations that might be appropriately allocated due to the desirability of the re-socialization processes. This is properly the final aim of Contemporary Authentic, as an experience of 'restitution' and re-socialization (also mediated, as mentioned, and shaped by documentation and communication, as designed) of an intangible system of knowledge and living human treasures.

5.3. Endangered Milanese master list²⁷

This is a list of endangered Milanese masters, collected according to specific selection criteria and documented on visual basis, in order to refer to them for further valorisation and activation activities.²⁸

The main sources for selecting the Milanese masters have been the register of historical shops and workshops in Milan provided by the Comune di Milano-Productive Activity Area, the register of handicraft enterprises provided by the Milan Chamber of Commerce, and the calendar of festivals and performance events in Milan in order to identify reproductive/relational masters.

The following main criteria are used to make a preliminary census of Milanese masters:

1. Type of knowledge owned by the master, as defined by the research frame: re-productive or performative/relational knowledge, considering their overlapping.
2. Dynamics of activation of knowledge, i.e. reproduction, sharing and socialization, referring to the spatial-proxemics metaphor of representation used in the visual model of the master-knowledge system. The list objective is both to document which dynamics are already carried out by the masters (basically they maintain and reproduce their core knowledge), and to identify which other dynamic of knowledge sharing can be improved, promoted and supported (dynamics of socialization and communication related to local community or the business community).
3. Application areas of knowledge – classified as spaces, objects, fashion, food in order to not reflect specific product areas or types of material handled and instead include both types of reproductive and performative knowledge.

4. Milanese typicality degree, considering if a master/knowledge can be considered Milanese due to its type of activity with a clear belonging in Milan (e.g. panettone, Ambrosian chant, etc.) or because of a typicality acquired over time (e.g. a shop that becomes a reference point for Milan for a particular type of manufacturing or category) and recognition by the neighbourhood.

From an initial list of more than eighty masters that have been contacted or visited for a first evaluation, only fifteen (due to budgeting constraints) have been selected for close observation, conducted by visiting the workshop, photo and video recording and direct interviews.

As mentioned, the research is focused specifically on the methods of transferring practices in that ‘formative-educational situation’ that historically is defined as learning by ‘apprenticeship’. Therefore, from the perspective of design-driven development, the masters practices were ‘observed’ with a mode of inquiry that is both analytical and interpretative, the one of video also used as a mnemonic pre-text. This, according to Piredda, conceives the audio-visual language as a real epistemological model for registration/construction of reality. This is clearly visible in the fourth outcome of research: a process of re-telling the masters and their knowledge through ‘video narration’.

5.4. Masters video narrations²⁹

For three masters that have been considered of relevance for all the selection parameters, short video documentaries have been produced in five episodes, with the objective of documenting each master and his story (portrait), the context in which he works (from the smaller context of the studio to the larger one of the district, city etc.),

	TYPE OF MASTER	TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE	LOCATION		TYPE OF MASTER	TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE	LOCATION											
FILATI <i>Vito Angelillo</i>			v.le De Sanctis, 47	DOLCI SICILIANI <i>Carlo, Maria e Donatella Freni</i>			v.le Torino, 1	FALEGNAMERIA <i>Costante Casulleroti</i>			v.le Palermo, 8	TIPOGRAFIA <i>Pietro Oberli</i>			v.le Thom de Reel, 19			
BRONZI <i>Daniela Ragatti</i>			v.le Cosareto, 5	CORNICI <i>Titti Coccaro</i>			v.le Imbonati 15/3	LUBRIFICAZIONE <i>Carlo Chiusa</i>			v.le Certosa, 45	BOCCE <i>Adolfo Pascagnella</i>			v.le Piero Colonna, 9			
CORNICI <i>Pippo Basile</i>			v.le Antonio Tolomeo Privalato 14	VETERINARIA <i>Alessandro Grassi</i>			v.le Piranesi, 29	ARGENTIERE <i>Aldo Citerio</i>			v.le Orrefici 26	LEGATORIA <i>Jana Pistini</i>			v.le Tibaldi, 3			
TESSUTI <i>Carlo Balzar</i>			v.le Salsini, 4	RICANO <i>Pino Grasso</i>			v.le Simone Oranigo, 22	BOTTONI <i>Emanuele Coletto</i>			v.le Bagatto, 1	ARROTINO COLTELLINAI <i>Andrea ed Edo Polli</i>			corso di Porta Romana, 94			
TIMBRI E TARGHE <i>Umberto Bernasconi</i>			corso di Porta Ticinese, 18	CALZATURE <i>Biagio Laera</i>			v.le Casale, 23	MARINETTE <i>Compagnia Colla</i>			v.le Oglio, 18	CICLI E MOTOCICLI <i>Famiglia Rossignoli</i>			corso Garibaldi, 65/71			
TIMBRI E TARGHE <i>Ermanno Bernini</i>			piazza Bertarelli, 4	PANETTONI <i>Angelo Marchesi</i>			v.le Santa Maria alle Forze, 11/A	MONTAGGIO DELLA CAMPANA A SISTEMA AMBROSIANO <i>Mario Corno</i>			v.le San Vittore, 25	LISCIO AMBROSIANO <i>Linda Rocchi</i>			v.le Olio, 11			
ABBIGLIAMENTO PER COMUNITA' RELIGIOSE <i>Elisabetta Bianchini</i>			v.le Edolo, 9	LEGATORIA <i>Gabriele Marchesi</i>			corso Magenta, 31	ARGENTIERE <i>Marco Dabbene</i>			largo Treves, 2	DORATURA E LACCATURA-CORNICI <i>Franco Schiavelli</i>			v.le Milano, 8			
FIORI E DECORAZIONI <i>Raimondo Bianchi</i>			v.le Montebello, 7	MODISTERIA <i>Laura Morelli</i>			v.le Moscova, 60	FELLICERIA <i>Giancarlo Dalleria</i>			v.le San Damiano, 4	ORFICERIA <i>Cesare de Vecchi</i>			v.le Montenapoleone, 8			
ARGENTIERE <i>Puolo Boggiali</i>			v.le Torino, 24	CANTO AMBROSIANO <i>Puolo Massimini</i>			par. Sant'Antonio, 15	GIPSOTECA <i>Mario Dessi</i>			v.le Montello, 4	SARTORIA TEatraLE <i>Nadia Venegoni</i>			v.le A. Alessandri, 14			
BARBIERE <i>Franco Rompierti</i>			v.le Gerolamo Merone, 3	ABBIGLIAMENTO E ACCESSORI IN TESSUTO <i>Franco Mazzari</i>			v.le Santa Tecla, 3	PENNE <i>Famiglia Ercolossi</i>			corso Magenta, 25	ARGENTIERE <i>Carlo Valle</i>			v.le Valotino, 17			
MODISTERIA <i>Lorenzo Borghi</i>			v.le dei Piatto, 5	ARGENTIERE <i>Renato Miracoli</i>			v.le Burignone, 3	PANETTONI <i>Famiglia Faccioli</i>			v.le Montenapoleone, 8	GELATERIA <i>Famiglia Vio</i>			piazza Diaz, 1/A			
FIORI E DECORAZIONI <i>Lucia Carbogatta</i>			v.le Argonne, 12	ABBIGLIAMENTO E ACCESSORI IN TESSUTO <i>Giuseppe Millet Cuppa</i>			v.le Crocigiani, 8	MOSAICI E MARMI <i>Enrico Fanfani</i>			v.le Meucci, 19	ORFICERIA <i>Filippo e Marco Villa</i>			v.le Muziani, 23			
TAPPEZZERIE <i>Cesare e Sabrina</i>			v.le Nissimato, 27	ARGENTIERE <i>Giovanni Morandino</i>			v.le Alce Chianelli, 11	UNIFORMI <i>Leonardo Fraizzoli</i>			v.le Pogliaghi, 5							

Fig. 5. List of endangered masters surveyed by the project.

the modality and potential for reproducing and transmitting his knowledge. The episodes are all available online through the digital repository.

These documentaries are not simply video recordings (a basic strategy level present in many other projects³⁰ on which Contemporary Authentic built its model), but ways to explore and visualize articulated processes concerning typical craft knowledge as an emblematic form of contemporary intangible heritage. Therefore they are integrated by different visual layers of info-graphics and tools that mix different media and data based on the idea of timelines and layers³¹. The objective is to create a descriptive system of all the components that are in the back-stage (that is the process, the knowledge, the relations) using a metaphor of layers on a timeline that can translate visually the depth of the tacit knowledge recorded.

This various work of mediation and trans-media-

tion can be described with a climax of terms: translation, visualization (intended as the translation of dynamic images) and transmission. Is in the interest of the discussion to try to trace their mutual boundaries. Translation is an activity comprising the interpretation of the meaning of a text (the 'source' or 'in-coming' text) and the subsequent production of a new text, equivalent to the original one, in another language (the 'final' or 'out-coming' language). The term 'translation' indicates not only the act of translating, but also the translated text that results from this activity. For these reasons, some scholars and theorists have often preferred to avoid the ambiguity by using a different term such as 'the translate', or the expression 'translating activity' (activité traduisante) or 'translating operation' (opération traduisante) and so on.

In Contemporary Authentic, the translation coincided with the identification of a coherent way

of writing the screenplay – writing that tackled the technologies in the sense of both the means that record/return the knowledge and the modalities that socialize it: "In particular, digital media have introduced a dialectical process between linear and reticular, between verbal text and iconic text"³². Translation is re-writing, with a discursive strategy, in accordance with a communication project that, in the case of Contemporary Authentic, is the nature of the socialization practice in the 'apprenticeship' modality.

The term visualization is here understood as 'putting into pictures' a thought, a memory, a projection. Therefore, the word is used as a synonym for the term representation: in the visual arts, representation means precisely an image born from the creative mind that, through any kind of technique (architectural, sculptural, pictorial or otherwise) becomes an object that can be communicated to others. In the case of the Contemporary Authentic, the audio-visual medium is designed to be used on the web, an alternative channel to traditional media such as film and television. The challenge of audio-visual products for this research was totally devoted to enable the visual emersion of all the intangible contents embedded in a master's practice: a work of construction and re-construction (also including archive material) of the submerged 'backstage' related to the knowledge of the master and his history.

Finally, transmission (from the Latin *transmittere*) means to pass from one person to another, from one place to another, from one time to another, from generation to generation. From the latest etymology: to communicate information through any vehicle. Documenting the knowledge transmission during the 'apprenticeship' meant to re-build playback situations of practice suitable for telling.

5.5. Botteghe Contemporary Authentic³³

Contemporary Authentic triggered (in a teaching incubator) three 'simulate' workshops in which the masters worked for a week with a small group of apprentices (design students) in Milan, simulating the model of the Renaissance workshop known as a bottega. In a dynamic encounter of trans-generational and inter-disciplinary (including design, applied arts and crafts) *in vitro* knowledge transfer, the audio-visual tool has been tested as a means of collecting and re-purposing knowledge with a docunovel approach.³⁴

The design workshop goal has been to make explicit the 'use value' of three selected endangered masters' knowledge (Costante Cavalleroni, carpentry; Alessandro Grassi, glasswork; Piero Oberetti, typography) in new cultural formats, enabling both the dimension of fruition/experience and the dimension of incorporation/innovation of those typical forms of knowledge. The process was led by Siu King Chung, a visiting professor from Hong Kong Polytechnic³⁵, and involved forty-five master of interior design students.

The first goal of this action-research activity, addressing the knowledge sharing with the transmission and production system, was to support a new dialogical form of contact between masters and students, craft and design, heritage and innovation, based on mutual respect and a learning-by-doing approach. In order to achieve this mutual understanding, the photo stock-taking technique has been used to observe, map and interpret the craft knowledge processes. The maps realised were visual displays to unveil and discuss, during the meta-design phase, the authentic qualities of the craft knowledge and its potential, and to generate, share and negotiate with the masters new visions and opportunities. This has been a very delicate



Fig. 6. An example of photo stock-taking map.

and complex process in order to respect the masters' skills.

The second goal was to design new and innovative contemporary authentic products and processes based on heritage. The nine design concepts developed³⁶ exemplify the different approaches adopted in order to innovate peculiar aspects of craft knowledge. Beyond the dichotomy of the material-formal and immaterial-procedural aspects of the authenticity/innovation matrix for craft activation evaluation, the design concepts achieved changes of typology, merceological sector and ambit of application of craft (from typographical printing to portable lamps or temporary exhibition design, from glass windows to lamps and furniture); changes of business model (online communication and promotion, co-creation with end users); changes of production process (usage of waste material, different use of tools, imperfections and finishing).

The design results of the whole process were officially presented in May 2013 at Spazio MIL -Museo

Industria e Lavoro e Archivio Giovanni Sacchi in Milan³⁷ with a public conference and exhibition.

5.6. Contemporary Authentic Milano 'Convivia'

This research action, addressing knowledge sharing with the wider community system, has been conceived as a public symposium in which two formats (addressing different audiences, experts/stakeholders and the general public) have been tested:

- *Craft dialogues*: panel discussions to support dialogue between masters, academics, design foundations and associations for craft, with the aim of exploring the limits and potential of the current state of art;
- *Craft shows*: live performances and curatorial exhibitions, with the aim of promoting, disseminating and making known to the general public the contemporariness and liveliness of craft.

The convivia aims at establishing temporary but cyclical platforms to alert society to the relevance of craft as heritage and contemporary cultural pro-

duction. In latin *convivia* means spontaneous people gathering for informal meals and discussion.

The first prototype of *convivia* was held on 18 May 2013 at the Spazio MIL - Museo Industria e Lavoro e Archivio Giovanni Sacchi in Milano.³⁸

5.7. Contemporary Authentic Milano Repository³⁹

An online database⁴⁰ has been designed to make accessible all the research outcomes like the visual and narrative documentation and transmission of masters' craft practices and techniques, the best practices, the concept catalogue, and so on, in order to depict and provide to the public a permanent narrative and polyphonic information system about Milanese masters.⁴¹ The repository is graphically coherent with the brand and corporate image developed for the project and the interface allows the interrogation of the documental apparatus composed of different sources and media (photo, video, texts, info-graphic).

The choice of a database system with data selection and articulation modes driven by users is intended to further exploit the opportunities of knowledge transmission, mediated and transformed by the relational systems that they cross: "The medium always transforms the existing forms of relationships [...] it works 'shaping' the reality in order to communicate it"⁴². The view of the online audio-visual, by selecting as entry point a master or according to the narrative topics by which the individual video story is structured (i.e. the master, history, processes, barriers and potential, curiosities), is repeatable. The process generates a kind of silent production of imagery and knowledge: the space of the user and that of the author of the audio-visual mix in a third one, an area of memory that is dynamically re-written in each fruition sequence.

At different levels and with different impacts, all

research actions of Contemporary Authentic have been aimed to re-introduce the practice, embodied in the person of the master, into the social system by promoting the production of new use value, taking into account the potential of heritage development, considered as a cultural chain intrinsically innovative.

5.8. Evaluating the territorial dimension and impact of high-quality knowledge processes

Craft knowledge activation is conveyed to the geographical territory and impacts practice again. From the body of good practices emerges the issue of territorial roots (related to the masters and their studios), which expresses itself in a series of topics such as the milieu, the historicity of knowledge (the story and the culture of the place), and the relational/territorial network (or relations with local influential actors in the field of local culture and institutions). The relationship between the master and these elements is a long-term result. The micro-system master/studio, in a certain period of time (long enough) and often through generations, is able to weld emotional as well as cultural and social ties with the places, the people and the institutions on the basis of these bonds. That defines the territory within which their art develops.

The concept of typical knowledge exceeds that of typical product (either craft or culinary) and therefore can be framed in the craft production quality mark and activation protocol.

It is arguable whether a process of 'generational deposit' can establish tangible and intangible ties with the territory of belonging. This process, called geo-localization, has been modelled on the research with the master-knowledge system model. As mentioned, the display model of knowledge represents synoptically, and from a relational point

of view, the diversity of levels involved (the context, the specific cultural assets and the system of user and the community of reference). The key action of this analysis/representation is the highlight on the reciprocal interactions among the levels and the elements.

5.9. Knowledge transmission evaluation

By the phenomenological observation of the various models we can conclude that the quality of knowledge plays its own role in the specific interaction with its territorial system, which ultimately contributes to its own birth and survival. On the other hand, the geographical territory is enhanced not only by products but really in terms of capital, due to (typical) craft practices and performance that are 'placed' in it. Returning to the subject of quality protocol and brand of craft practices, the research enhances the 'territorial capital' (which definitely and precisely describes the quality of placed-knowledge), both intangible and living, turning it into an indicator of evaluable parameters according to the evidence from good practices.

As mentioned, the current artisanal quality marks certify distinctive traditional productions often without linking them to a specific location or considering the social dimension of the phenomenon. Otherwise, the 'Contemporary Authentic/Milano' quality mark intercepts the potential of a geo-social system that is expressed in the evaluation of the following parameters:

- *Depth of generational deposit*, or vertical extent of the relational plot (transfer of knowledge among teachers and other local actors, trans-generational or gender steps and intercultural hybridization);

- *Horizontal extent of the geo-relational plot* ('territorial colonization' and exploitation of

deposits of raw materials, local recurrence of processes and products);

- *Presence and frequency of recursive master/context processes* (phenomena of mutual survival and definition)

These parameters serve as quality policies for the typical knowledge that should be based on recognized skills and processes, methods of reproduction and 'relational' ingredients, obviously not to forget the geographical origin.

In order to test this quality model, each endangered Milanese master involved in the research process has been evaluated with the aim to put in evidence one or more weakness of the system: this work is fundamental to the 'Contemporary Authentic' model of intervention/enhancement. In the case of Milanese masters, thanks to this evaluation, it has been possible to predict the opportune design actions for each master, addressing specific activation on one or more levels of the master-knowledge system model (i.e. some masters were challenged in the documentation and narration phase, others in the transmission phase).

With the common goal of expanding the design, by connecting the masters with new players or re-articulating their territorial system of relationships, in the case of 'Contemporary Authentic Milano' the field of craft knowledge is being re-activated by means of two types of 'pilot actions': reproductive actions⁴³ (botteghe) and experiential-communicative actions (convivia).⁴⁴

The research demonstrates that at the end of the actions, structural changes in the relational models of the involved masters are observable. The convivia has enabled their knowledge and practice by improving the assessment of the territorial (intangible and living) capital, and therefore increased

the overall quality of their typical (craft) knowledge in a fruitful exchange with the context.

6. Conclusion: towards a critical mapping and a smart craft heritage

Craft has never been as central to the cultural discourse as it is today. It seems to be accessible, genuine, democratic and fashionable, but is probably often misunderstood. Exactly for this reason a critical mapping is needed. As previously mentioned here, craft can be intended as both a form of heritage and a form of contemporary cultural production. On one hand there are the concepts of craftsmanship – typical and traditional knowledge and living intangible heritage owned by people (the craftsmen) and localised in a specific milieu. On the other hand there is the concept of workmanship and the forms of contemporary production processes of making represented by the makers, auto-producers (supported by technologies), that are challenging the industrial production with small-series production and unique pieces without any reference to tradition. These two visions of craft are not necessarily dichotomically opposed. In our understanding of craft, according to the Contemporary Authentic strategy, framework and protocol, craft encounters design to innovate its processes and is nurtured by heritage to keep its authenticity. Digital technologies can play an important role not only in the development of new productive processes, but in the establishment of a ‘smart’ diffused system and platform of visualization, narration, sharing and collaboration of the craft heritage activation, enabling augmented in-place experiences of the craft intelligence of a territory, shaping an intangible geography of cultural contents superimposed on the physical reality.

Acknowledgement

The paper is the result of a collective work, anyway E. Giunta is responsible for the editing of paragraphs 3 and 4, while E. Lupo for paragraphs 1, 2, 5.

Endnotes

1. Lupo 2008a, 2009b, 2009d.
2. Intangible heritage, according to the UNESCO definition, is a kind of distributed knowledge, often not represented or manifested in distinctive or emerging and spectacular forms but a valuable expression of typical creativity embodied in people and rooted in activities and places.
3. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004
4. www.contemporaryauthentic.com/. The repository collecting all the results is online at archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/.
5. Scientific coordinator: Eleonora Lupo. Project manager: Elena Giunta. Researchers: Sara Chiesa, Ilaria Guglielmetti, Orsetta Mangiante, Ece Ozdil, Neva Pedrazzini, Sara Radice (<http://designforculturalheritage.wordpress.com/>). The Politecnico team also included Walter Mattana, Francesca Piredda and Lorenzo Ameri (from the research group Imagis).
6. Lupo 2008
7. Alberto Cavalli (Director), Alessandra de Nitto, Federica Cavriana, Emanuele Zamponi (www.fondazione-cologni.it).
8. Valentina Porcellana.
9. Federica Corrado.
10. Siu King-chung (www.hkcmp.org/)
11. Josefina Rui Roma, Josep Mana Oller.
12. Lupo 2012
13. The Contemporary Authentic brand image has been designed by Orsetta Mangiante.
14. www.imq.it
15. ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/index_en.htm
16. REGOLAMENTO (CE) N. 510/2006 DEL CONSIGLIO del 20 marzo 2006 relativo alla protezione delle indicazioni geografiche e delle denominazioni d'origine dei prodotti agricoli e alimentari (che sostituisce il precedente n°2082/92) (www.trueitalianfood.it/uploaded/)

reg_510_2006.pdf)

17. www.marchiovaltellina.it/marchi-collettivi

18. For example, some Italian networks of small villages are promoted and communicated under brands like “Bandiere arancioni” (www.bandierearancioni.it/) or “Borghi più belli d’Italia” (www.borghitalia.it/), which also act like quality manifestos: they prescribe a list of minimum quality requirements for admission to the network and to benefit the brand’s visibility and reputation.

19. See for example Dergano Officina Creativa ww.derganofficinacreativa.it/, Segno Italiano, www.segnoitaliano.it/, Segno Artigiano, (accessed 2 November, 2012).

20. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/itinerari/

21. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/catalogo/

22. Lupo 2012

23. This activity has been coordinated by Elena Giunta and Eleonora Lupo, with graphic elaboration by Orsetta Mangiante.

24. Lupo and Giunta 2011

25. This activity has been coordinated by Neva Pedrazzini and supervised by Elena Giunta and Federica Corrado. All partners contributed case studies.

26. Giunta-Corrado 2012

27. This activity has been coordinated by Sara Radice and supervised by Elena Giunta. Interviews have been conducted by the research group of Ilaria Guglielmetti, Elena Giunta, Eleonora Lupo, Orsetta Mangiante, Neva Pedrazzini, and Sara Radice.

28. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/masters/

29. This activity has been scientifically directed and coordinated by Walter Mattana and Francesca Piredda (research group Imagis-Movie design <http://www.movie-design.org>), with the collaboration of Lorenzo Ameri and the Movie Design Lab of Politecnico di Milano (scientific coordinator Dario Sigona, project manager Davide Grampa).

30. See for instance: www.aess.regione.lombardia.it/reil/, www.memoro.org/it/ (accessed 2 November, 2012).

31. A similar example is the carpenter (the Art of Making Project) vimeo.com/30698649 (accessed 2 November, 2012)

32. Piredda 2008, p. 64

33. This activity has been coordinated by Elena Giunta and curated by visiting professor Siu King-Chung from Hong Kong Polytechnic. Tutors for the workshop were PhD candidates Elena Ascari, Ece Ozdil, and Lucia Parrino.

34. In opposition to the term docufiction; cfr. Piredda 2008, p. 69.

35. Scientific coordinator of the Community Museum Project (www.hkcmp.org/cmp/)

36. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/catalogo/

37. www.spaziomil.it/index.htm

38. www.spaziomil.it/index.htm

39. This activity, in its conclusion, has been conducted by Orsetta Mangiante, appointed researcher responsible for the design and implementation of the platform, with the contribution of Giorgia Lupi.

40. archivio.contemporaryauthentic.com/

41. A similar example is www.sardegna.digitalibrary.it/ (accessed 2 November 2012).

42. Piredda 2008, p. 72

43. Realized in November 2012.

44. Realized in May 2013.

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From Archive to Living Heritage

Gunnar Almevik (2016) From Archive to Living Heritage. Participatory Documentation Methods in Crafts. In: *Crafting Cultural Heritage*. Ed. Palmsköld, Rosenqvist & Almevik. Gothenburg: Univ. pp. 77-99.



"The value of documentation lies not only in the resulting media but also in the learning process for those who carry on a tradition"

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From Archive to Living Heritage

Participatory Documentation Methods in Crafts

By Gunnar Almevik

The idea of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH), in which traditional craftsmanship is identified as one of five domains for safeguarding, is based on a people-up system with appropriate community-based methods to elicit local heritage values. However, by far the two most highlighted implementation tools on the operational agenda are “the urgent safeguarding list” and “the representative list,” the methodology of which we are familiar with through western museum tradition. Critical research has revealed how the international procedures for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage revolve around a list of selection and display, subordinated to national and regional political interests.¹ Yet the operational directives for implementation do provide other less conventional tools. There is support firstly for exemplary methods of working with intangible heritage, secondly for participation

of communities and groups in non-governmental organizations and centers of expertise.² These latter participatory tools reflect the principles and objectives of the convention, yet they are far from being the ones in focus.

The subject of this article is the documentation of intangible heritage, whose safeguarding is a core activity. Grounded on the fact that perceiving precedes predicating, documentation directs what is to be safeguarded. There has to be an awareness of the world before it can be made explicit and communicable. An ambiguity in the regulated heritage practice is that documentation is put forward as expert knowledge.³ In the ICH convention texts, nations are obliged to establish documentation institutions for their intangible cultural heritage and facilitate access to them. What about participation? How will these expert institutions pick up and extract the invariants of people’s intangible

heritage? As Randall Mason states:

*Rhetorically, we all agree on the call for more participation.... But it will take real changes in professional attitudes as well as continual testing of new, context-appropriate methods.*⁴

What context-appropriate methods do we need to involve craftspersons⁵ in documentation of craft procedures and crafted objects within their scope of competence and sense of heritage? How can we design for participation in heritage conservation and museum practice?

The context of research is provided by the Swedish Craft Laboratory, which is a socially committed craft research center at the University of Gothenburg. The center was established in 2010 in cooperation with heritage organizations, craft enterprises, and trade organizations to empower craftspeople in the complex processes of making, in fields where craftsmanship has lost influence in design and planning. The general agenda of the Craft Laboratory is to bring research into practice and involve craftspersons in the processes of inquiry.

The results that are presented and reflected upon in this article originate from four different documentation projects with the common objective of developing useful documentation methods within traditional crafts. The research is practice-led and experiential, using practice as an arena for inquiry and the methods of practice as methods of inquiry.⁶ The documentation projects are designed differently and differ from one another primarily in the position of the craftspersons in the action of documentation. The projects are concerned with methodologies that elicit sensory aspects of embodied skills, and with participatory procedures in documentation involving craftspersons and maker communities in the agenda.

The research intersects craft research and heritage studies and takes on an action-oriented perspective on the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.⁷ Concepts and perspectives are influenced by environmental dynamics, and the methods-in-action draw on community-oriented conservation and collaborative craftivism.⁸

The text takes off from a craft documentary, used as a critical example in accordance with which the museum practice is further analyzed. In this first section of the article, documentation of crafts is put in historical context and analyzed in relation to its epistemology, as the methodology is subsumed to interiorized perceptions within heritage conservation and museum practice of what is considered knowledge and what is possible and desirable to know about. The following section is practice-led and presents and reflects upon results from collaborative documentation projects carried out within the Craft Laboratory.

The Director's Cut of Tradition

The regional museum in Västerbotten has produced artistically refined records of traditional crafts and cultural environments through the medium of film. The film *Liesmide* ("Scythe Forging") documents the work of two brothers in Hötjärn, Lövånger, in the region of Västerbotten.⁹ The film starts when the two brothers, who have learned the craft of forging scythes from their father, enter the old smithy and start to prepare the iron. The timeline follows the procedure step-by-step from cutting up the iron to forming the scythe and welding and hardening the steel. There is no sound from the actual environment. The voiceover narrator presents information on the blacksmith's terminology for tools, procedures, and parts of the scythe in a pedagogical manner.

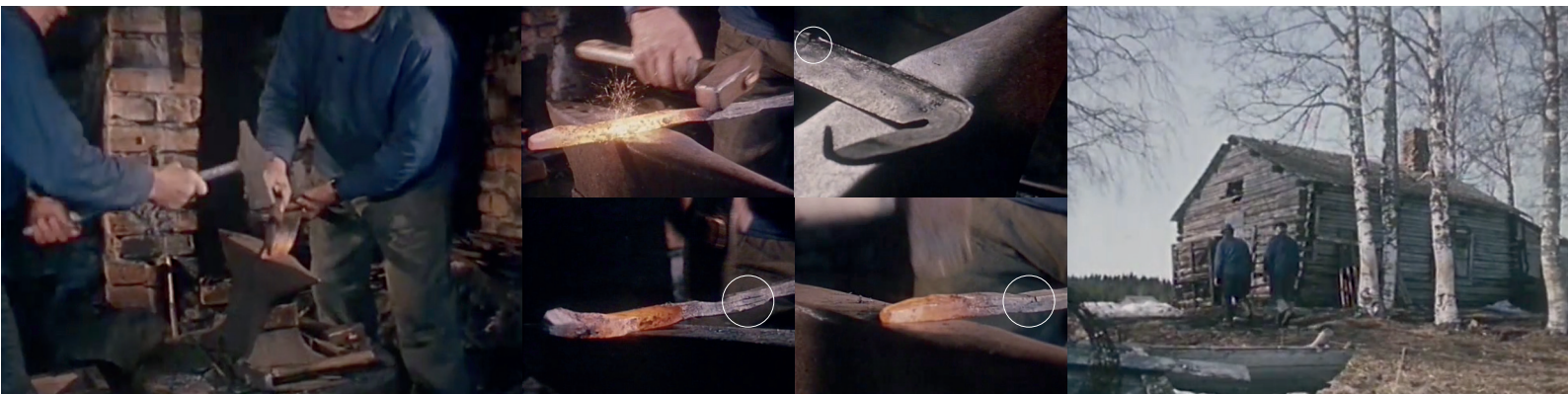


Fig 1-6. Pictures from the film *Liesmide*. The two brothers who demonstrate the forging of scythes in the film once assisted their father in smithy. From a smith's perspective, the film shows a break in tradition. The iron is worked very hard, sometimes at far too high a temperature, and sometimes cold. The welding does not hold and there are cracks in the scythe blade, which means that it would not withstand the strains of real use.

The blacksmiths Patrik Jarefjäll and Otto Samuelsson have studied the documentary and tried to learn the forging procedures through this craft film. The content of the film is reduced to 18 minutes and 17 seconds, fragmented into 151 clips. The real forging process that Jarefjäll and Samuelsson re-enacted took approximately six hours to perform. Essential information had been cut out and the editing had displaced procedures in the timeline in a way that disconnected the record from reality.

This peculiar craft is framed as a heritage object and transformed into archive material. The craftsmanship is interpreted and displayed by museum officers to whom the dark smithy and glowing and sparkling steel seem a mystery. Even though procedures are outlined in order and a narrator pedagogically informs us about sequential steps

and terminology, the attentiveness to the presence is weak. In the crucial steps of annealing and tempering the steel, the narration states that tacit judgments are made but does not disclose the content of these judgments.

To better see the colors of the annealed steel, the father [of the brothers] had shutters on the windows of the smithy to better see the colors. He judged the temperature by the color. [Next sequence] The scythe is polished with a piece of a brick. This is done to see better if the tempering has succeeded.¹⁰

The meaning behind and beyond the present craft is mysterious hideouts of tacit knowing. Each sequence in the film is given the same value, each repetitively following the previous one to achieve the end product. The documentation creates an aura of heritage and evanescence, instead of being keenly alert to the sensuous aspects of the making process to bring these material objects into being. What



Fig 7. 1933, Olle Homman at the Nordic Museum taking notes and making drawings of the logs from the old chapel in Gråträsk, Norrbotten. In the background the new chapel is under construction in the traditional log timber technique. Photo by John Granlund, the Nordic Museums archive.

is the right color of the steel? What is the sound? What is the grip and turn of it and how are the movements choreographed in such a tight space? How can the documentation extend perception and consolidate the gains of perceiving?

The Pastness of Crafted Things

During the last century, museums and archives in Sweden have collected a considerable amount of artifacts and produced records referring to threatened traditional crafts. Of the seventy million collected objects in public museums, cultural historical objects represent the majority.¹¹ The historical interest in crafts is notable through the many tools, work equipment, and even whole workshops taken into museum custody. The artifacts are labeled with identity and provenance but there are very few facts about how to *use* the tools or manufacture the objects.

Contemporary critical research uses historical

collections and records to expose the discourse of heritage production and the historiography within traditional museum disciplines such as ethnology and archaeology.¹² A common interpretation is that heritage production in the early twentieth century was tangled up in the modern project. Modern society was waiting at the door, and it was urgent to document the past for the benefit of future research.¹³ It was feared that traditional culture and craft would become extinct unless safely placed in archives, museum collections, or reservoirs like the Skansen Open Air Museum in Stockholm. Safeguarding meant producing documents for archives and collecting artifacts for museums, and in the process removing obstacles to the development of modern society.

Karin Gustavsson shows in her research on ethnographic fieldwork how the museum disciplines shaped their culture of knowledge and ideas about scientificness.¹⁴ Gustavsson reveals that the in-

ventory forms and drawings in field expeditions functioned not primarily as representations of—in this case—peasant building culture and craft, but as practical operations for establishing order. The documents, the collections, and the archives were things that brought clarity to the situation of uncertainty and confusion that prevailed when knowledge about the complex peasant culture with its traditional crafts was to be saved for posterity. Safeguarding was an act of representation, but with a *selective gaze* for the past that systematically disregarded the present.¹⁵ The living traditions were only interesting if they could mediate something antique or as a reminiscence of things in the process of disappearing. The craftspeople are anonymous and presented as a *collective abstraction*, using Edward Said's term, to represent worker heritage, peasant culture or the pastness of craftsmanship.¹⁶

Documentation of craftsmanship in the context of heritage practice is rooted in academic studies of material and visual culture, and approaches phenomena and artifacts “with the text as a filter”.¹⁷ What is lost from this perspective is, according to Tim Ingold,

*the productive processes that bring artifacts themselves into being: on the one hand in the generative currents of the materials of which they are made; on the other hand in the sensory awareness of practitioners. Thus processes of making appear swallowed up in objects made; processes of seeing in images seen.*¹⁸

Dead Denotations of Craftsmanship

Many craft communities and advocates have a reluctant attitude towards documentation and any type of representation of their crafting knowledge.¹⁹ Documentation in heritage practice faces a tension with the practical knowledge tradition that rejects the dualistic idea that one may have knowledge without having the ability to apply or

implement this knowledge. In the mind of many craftspeople, knowledge is personal, tacit, rooted, and transmitted through living traditions.²⁰ You cannot have knowledge without having experienced and mastered the making or performance.

The reluctance about documentation and written instructions also refers to seemingly uncomplicated *do-it-yourself* (DIY) instructions and to scientific management and *methods-time measurement* (MTM) used in industrialization.²¹ There is a tension between professional and amateur experience, and between worker and manager perspectives. Motion studies of craft work have been criticized as dehumanizing to the maker into a biological automat, and reducing complex making processes into a series of sub-tasks that can be preformed by unskilled people. Documentation may symbolize the transformation of craft production into mass production, by transfer of knowledge between workers and from workers into documents, machines, and mechanized procedures. Thus documentations speak the language of industrialism.

In the museum context, craft has been made synonymous with the crafted object, and the making of things, if considered at all, is reduced to comprehensive procedural rules and sequential steps in line with the methods of scientific management. It is rare to find efforts at expanding the understanding of the sensory aspects of making and the complexity of skills that connect things and beings. An illustrative example is the documentation of crane-sawing in the region of Halland from the 1930s made by museum officer Albert Sandklef. The published documentation consists of eight pages, 2900 words, and seven black-and-white photographs, which is the most extensive documentation ever made in Sweden of this peculiar sawing in tandem by hand.²² The record seems to



Fig. 8. The crane-saw is a large saw managed by two or more people to cleave logs into boards by hand. The noun crane has been interpreted as referring to the figure and movement of the large bird of that name: the saw's handle resembles the bird's long inclined neck, and the movements of the person managing the saw are like a crane's dance in spring. Photo by Albert Sandklef. Hallands kulturhistoriska museum.

be very accurate and thorough, with illustrations of the process, the tools, and local terminology. However, the documentation becomes what Richard Sennett refers to as a *dead denotation*: “These verbs name acts rather than explain the process of acting”²³. The presentation focuses on the visible constructions and the easily observable and recordable steps and elements in the process. Essential information to actually perform this craft procedure is missing, such as how to sharpen and balance the saw, the complexity of plumbing and wedging the saw incision, or the rhythm and coordination of the sawing motion.

Tacit Knowing

What is the nature of craftsmanship? How can this knowing-in-action be captured and represented in a meaningful way? William Morris refers to tradi-

tional craft skills as “the art of unconscious intelligence”²⁴. The implicitness of skills and knowing-in-action is commonly referred to as *tacit knowledge*, a field to which Michael Polanyi has made major contributions. His statement that “we can know more than we can tell” suggests an expanded perception of human knowledge.²⁵ To Polanyi, knowledge is first and foremost personal, and we use tacit knowing when we make intelligent use of our bodies as instruments.²⁶ We rely on our bodily judgments while attending to things of the world, and we undertake actions that respond to governing principles without attending to these principles. This intelligence does not exclusively refer to crafts, and thus Polanyi focuses instead on how scientists use tacit knowledge to tackle research problems, to pursue solutions and anticipate discoveries.²⁷

To rely on a theory to attend to things of the world



Fig 9. Patrik Jarefjäll in forging action. All the focus is on the steel and the knowledge-in-action has effectively been interiorized as a tacit vehicle to produce. Photo by Lars Heydecke.

is to *interiorize* a tacit framework for our acts and judgments. To document would be to reverse this process of interiorization from tacit knowing to focal display. *Articulation* means a deconstruction of the tacit framework that governs our actions, and this process of enlightenment may be destructive to the functional use: “By concentrating attention on his fingers, a pianist can temporarily paralyze his movement”.²⁸ Polanyi recognizes the need for analysis so that improvements and adjustments can be reinteriorized for better practice, yet bridging this *communication gap* may be done only “by an intelligent effort”.²⁹

According to Richard Sennett, craftsmanship is transmitted in accordance with the motto “Show, don’t tell”, and he furthermore examines different forms of telling.³⁰ Sennett, however, like Polanyi,

assumes that telling means putting one’s knowledge into words through speech or writing. Sennett recognizes different genres for how to specify and articulate (derived from different expressive instructions to prepare the dish Poulet à la d’Albufera). Tim Ingold argues that

*we can tell of what we know through practice and experience, precisely because telling is itself a modality of performance that abhors articulation and specification... To tell is to be able to recognize subtle clues in one’s environment and to respond to them with judgment and precision... It is rather to trace a path that others can follow.*³¹

How can we expand the conception of telling, and find what Susan Sontag urges us to seek—a relevant descriptive language that attends to the sensuous aspects, the actual appearance, and how it does whatever it does?³²

Participatory Documentation:

From Gaze to Action

In 2010-11 the Swedish Craft Laboratory and National Property Board carried out a survey of the state of traditional craftsmanship in Sweden, focusing on heritage crafts involved in curating places of cultural historical significance. Thorough interviews, dialogue seminars, and questionnaires answered by makers, entrepreneurs, trustees, consultants and conservation officers evince a situation where the craftsmanship is excluded from the increasingly formalized procedures in procurement and management.³³ Documentation skills and participation were elicited as important means to empower craftspeople in the complex processes of making things, in fields where craftsmanship is reduced to a means of production. The survey was followed up with two conferences on documentation, with workshops focusing on actors' perspectives on this key activity in heritage conservation.

The survey and gatherings around documentation showed that craft communities are weak and many practitioners feel lonely in their efforts to maintain skills and develop their practice. The small companies have lost family traditions, and face problems supporting informal training and transmission of craft knowledge.³⁴ These small or micro craft companies demand already trained and skilled craftspeople. The investment and risks involved in apprentice training, combined with the reluctance of the younger generation, highlight the need for alternative forms of learning and transmitting. Notable is that the survey does not show a protective guild spirit; on the contrary many craftspeople and companies demand networks and forums for sharing experiences with others. The main competition consists not of other craft companies but of alternative industrial products and methods. The

survey shows a gap in communication between craftspeople on the one hand and developers and managers on the other. The makers with traditional skills call for increased understanding of their crafts and a position to participate early in the process, while developers and managers demand presentations and quality assessment of skills and crafted products. The makers find that traditional techniques and materials are being outcompeted by new industrial products because they cannot prove the qualities and formal eligibility of their ways of doing things.

Heritage conservation is a negotiating process with formal checkpoints that require communication skills.³⁵ Increased emphasis is placed on all participants negotiating why and for whom things are produced and preserved, and considering the different meanings for different groups of people. Many craftspeople experience a gap between the scope of their competence (what they possess the knowledge and skills to do) and the scope of their practice (what they are expected and assigned to do). People's expectations for craftsmanship have diffused into their view of construction work as merely a means of production undertaken by a reluctant workforce that needs to be instructed by heritage experts and guided in the art of restoration by thorough construction drawings and specifications. This top-down managerial attitude will rather enlarge the erosion of knowledge, and limit the development and transmission of craftsmanship.

Documentation may be a core activity in challenging this problem—to evoke the actor's tacit awareness, to make traditions transparent, and to place on a communication level the many different ways of anchoring judgments and actions in the past. Siân Jones and Thomas Yarrow underline in their research the need for better understanding of



Fig 10. Learning by interviewing, working, recording and reflecting on Sjur Nesheim's craftsmanship in traditional carpentry of framed doors. From the left, Sjur, Tomas Karlsson, Jarle Hughsmyr, Trond Oalann and Emil Småland. Photo by Roald Renmælmo.

how different forms of expertise and skill coalesce in their material interventions in heritage objects: "Different experts do not simply provide different forms of knowledge about a stable object: diverse skilled practices literalize different kinds of material object".³⁶ Expert knowledge does not simply exist as perspectives; craftspersons have different techniques at their disposal that we need to elicit and understand: "[A] hammer and chisel literally offer different points of leverage to a pen and paper".³⁷

Craft Laboratories

The Craft Laboratory used this survey as the point of departure for a research and development program funded by the National Heritage Board and eight of the Swedish regional heritage organizations. The objective has been to investigate and

develop documentation methods for craftspeople within heritage conservation. The operating agenda of the Craft Laboratory was also developed to join the program with supporting learning activities and allocation of resources. Firstly, a seminar series on methodologies in craft research was arranged with a focus on research documentation. The seminar was open to craft practitioners and researchers and attracted many participants. The seminars dealt with topics such as time-space geography, interview techniques, filmmaking, auto-ethnography, procedure analysis and notations, terminology, and concepts in performing crafts.

Another initiative was the development of a course on crafts film. The course was intended to help craftspeople involved in a project use film to docu-

ment their work. Each course comprised four intense gatherings to learn techniques in filmmaking. The emphasis was on sound recording and the process of editing. The participants looked at and discussed old and recent examples of crafts film. The main part of the course was hands-on supervised work with an individual project.³⁸

An action that has strengthened the program for craft documentation and also developed the Craft Laboratory is a form of short-term scholarships for craftspeople. Each year two general scholarships support craftspeople in investigating a problem or developing materials and methods from their craft fields. The scholarships target practitioners with employment or self-employment in a trade of production or conservation but with narrow scope for reflection and investigation. The model is adapted from medicine, where academic hospitals in Sweden provide research grants to practitioners at the clinics to investigate clinical problems and methods with scholar supervision. The grants are short-term, the assignments strictly delimited, and the recipient required to present and communicate some kind of product of knowledge. The results have been presented as articles, reports, books, and films, as well as open workshops and exhibitions. Subjects have included the making of curved frames in interior carpentry, recipes for traditional casein painting, traditional pollarding in cultural landscapes for leaves feed, the use of scythes in grass lawn maintenance in historic gardens, and types and forging methods of medieval building nails.³⁹

Scholarship recipients are encouraged to let their practice play an instrumental part in the inquiry. Investigating the method of doing is similar to traditional action research in the sense that the researcher is a subject undertaking actions that are at the same time the research object. Analytical fric-

tion is created by moving between observation of matter, *self-observation in action*, and self and *participant observation over action*.⁴⁰ Documentation is essential to make this kind of investigation transparent, self-reflected, systematic, and communicable.

Don't-Do-It-Yourself Methodologies

One of the projects, *Between Craftspeople*, explores how documentation through interviews and participant observations can be used as tools in lifelong learning. A total of seventeen craft masters from Sweden and Norway have been interviewed by younger but skilled craftspersons with an interest in learning more about their crafts. The project was motivated to contest the socially alienated "armies of one" and self-sufficient D-I-Y culture, influenced by Otto von Bush and Lisa Anne Auerbach's socially committed "Don't-Do-It-Yourself" methodologies, and to create arenas for sharing knowledge and collaborative craft development.⁴¹

The circumstances of these encounters have varied and thus the narratives differ in scope and depth. One interview took place one-to-one at a kitchen table over a couple of concentrated hours. Another narrative proceeds from a collaboration that has been running for years. Several narrations are concluded from project cooperation and elicit many craftspersons' experiences. The results were presented in a book that includes the craftsperson's own description of their meetings, and discusses craft methods, materials, and tools.⁴²

The aim for these craft documentations differs from conventional research-driven interviews and participatory situations. Here it is about what I need to know to be capable to do the same thing myself. The interest is not primarily the biography of the master, how the craft is caught up in the life history of the person, trade or society. The interest in this



Fig 11-12. Encounters in the project *Between Craftspeople*. To the left: Anna Johansson in dialogue with Tykko Loo about the production of wooden shingles (stickspån). Photo by Anna Johansson. To the right: Ulrich Hjort Lassen and Oddbjørn Myrdal investigating tools for timber frame work. Photo by Nils-Eric Anderson.

project has not been the interpretations of meanings behind or beyond the actual craft, but the skills, intentions and constraints of the productive processes.

The discussions between the craftspeople have dealt in particular with the words themselves. How can we talk about a craft? When has the hard plaster dried to “exactly the right level” before it can be scratched with a nail board? What words describe the feel of good graft wood? What judgments lie behind this? Articulation of tacit knowledge is not a simple act. Chris Rust stresses the personal dimension and disputes “the idea that people’s tacit knowledge can be somehow extracted and made explicit in the form of rules for all to employ” as

being “fundamentally misguided”.⁴³ However, the words may function as guides for capturing previous experiences, and for connecting and re-enacting knowledge by memory. The question is, how should the words be used?

Sympathetic Illustrations

The craftspeople that produced the documents have struggled. During the process a series of seminars were held to pick up and discuss experiences. The first question that turned up was: “For whom am I writing this? Is it for somebody already familiar with the craft, or for a general audience?” The answers concluded were: Write for your peers. Write to your future self, when you have forgot-



Fig 13-14. Herman Krupke in plant propagation action.

ten the multiple information of this present, and write to capture the knowledge you would need if asked to produce by this particular procedure after a long time without practicing it. And perhaps also write to a customer trying to judge the invariants and qualities of this craft by the price.

A frequent problem is that the crafting subject and narrator misses touchstone references, as this type of internalized knowledge has become self-evident and habitual. Some also tend to adapt traditional motion studies and produce dead denotations, naming acts. The step-by-step progression communicated by commands and technical terminology may cast an illusory spell over the manual work.

The gardener Tina Westerlund, who participated

in the interview project, has struggled with how to express *sensory judgments* like the “right sound” that the master gardener Herman Krupke listened for when he propagate peonies.⁴⁴ How hard may the water be when cleaning the roots? He looks and feels the root to find the right spot to do the breach. But what is the feeling of “the right spot”? The result in this case may be enlightened by Richard Sennet’s concept *sympathetic illustration*. An expressive instruction becomes a sympathetic illustration, according to Sennet, when the focus is put on the hardest procedures, and the agent selects and demonstrates the essential steps. Tina combines images and texts, where the visual language is focused on the posture and handgrips showing the challenges for dexterity, while the text

is associative with similes using *like* or *as if* to guide and get hold of the reader's experiences:

*The writer of instructional language who makes the effort of sympathy has to retrace, step by step, backward knowledge that has bedded in to the routine, and only then can take the reader step by step forward. But as an expert, he or she knows what comes next and where danger lies; the expert guides by anticipating difficulties for the novice; sympathy and prehension combine.*⁴⁵

Tina Westerlund is still concerned with the attentiveness to embodied sensations in gardening crafts. She has continued with craft research in doctoral studies, and initiated workshops for gardeners to explore a language to evoke acquaintanceship with the domain of plant propagation and sensations in making. A conclusion may be that the value of documentation lies not only in the resulting media but also in the learning process for those who carry on a tradition, and to those who soon will be in the position to pass down the knowledge to the next generation by embodied instruction.

Attending to Senses

In the stone quarry of Glava in Värmland, roofing shingles of shale have been produced since the eighteenth century. The stoneworker Sigvard Nyström is the last in the tradition, and he has no successor to pass down this knowledge on to. The quarry is used to bring milled shale in masses for construction work and the shingle production is not in permanent demand. The professional filmmakers Anette Lykke Lundberg and Joakim Jalin have produced a documentation of Nyström's skill at producing roofing shingles of shale.⁴⁶ Nyström is the subject of the documentary, but he has also participated in the planning, and serves as narrator in the film for his depiction and reflections of his own craft performance. The aim of the documen-

tation is to interest and instruct younger stoneworkers to this particular work.

The film explores above all the importance of sound to this particular craft. The filmmakers planned the documentation together with Nyström and followed him from the blasting of stone from the appropriate stratum through the procedure of choosing and cutting the slabs to the shaping of the shingle. Nyström gives explanations while working and comments on the sensory dimension of judgments in the process, for instance how to split the slabs into thin shale plates:

*You have to be very careful and have a light hammer and hit it very carefully and look closely and listen as you go...to hear because you hear like when it's stuck and then you might have to turn the slab and go the other way.*⁴⁷

One can follow Ingvar in his work and the meaning and reflection upon the different qualities of the sound:

*Here you have to listen to the resonance and follow this crack very carefully so it doesn't end up wrong... You can feel it, or you can hear that the tone is a little subdued, then I have to try with another chisel.*⁴⁸

*Here you can hear that it's stuck rather fast now... if I hit too hard now it will break...here's that firm sound again...have to try to go back...there it sounds a bit looser...get help from another chisel.*⁴⁹

*Now it ought to crack apart soon and then it normally sounds a little like a click...there it came loose.*⁵⁰

In amateur films, the sound is commonly a glaring weakness. In this case, sound is attended to and carefully recorded with several microphone units for the narration, the sound from the work and the environment. The sound recording was processed and edited with its problematic frequency range from the hard and high tones of the hammering



Fig 15-16. Sigvard Nyström in action in Glava Quarry, cleaving the shale slab into roofing shingles. His judgments of sound direct his actions. Pictures from the film.

on stone. Donk, donk, donk, donk: represented as text or a series of mute photographs, this procedure would be meaningless or at least trivialized, as if it were a manual task without judgments or analytical thoughts.

A general conclusion from this outset is the advantages of a documentation approach where the framing of presence does not excessively depend on interpretation at the moment of action. Audio-visual documentation of the subjects may call our senses to an awareness of what they have seen and heard and noticed in the environment and the spatial-temporal interaction of bodies, tools and materials, without converting the information into a different mode.⁵¹ According to Gibson: “Descriptions, spoken or written, do not permit the flowing stimulus array to be scrutinized. The invariants have already been extracted. You have to trust the original perceiver.”⁵² Documentation by means of motion pictures and a good representation of the sound extends perception and “consolidates the gains of perceiving.”⁵³

Plastering and Blogging

Documentation has, at least from a Swedish perspective, been central to the expertise of museum professionals and heritage conservators. International guidelines and national legislation for heritage conservation urge that any action in listed heritage should be based on historical survey and scientific record. However, craftsmen are normally not involved in the documentation during hands-on maintenance or restoration activities—even though they make most of the decisions, have the greatest impact on the final result, spend the most time on site, are closest to the source material, and contribute unique skills to interpretations of historical records and diagnosis of damages. Documentations of building restoration have an overwhelming focus on the object while documentations of actions are limited to questions of what and when. Craftpeople who want to learn from or take on the work of precursors demand records of how and why things were done.

One of the projects investigates the craftspeople's use of a blog as a platform for documentation of a restoration project. The case in this project was the restoration of the decorative plaster elements of the rendered façades of the late-nineteenth-century county governess residence in Umeå, in trustee of the National Property Board. The craft-based documentation was specified already in the procurement documents and priced in the contract. Two of the masons from the company, Jonny Jonsson and Pelle Vestberg, who were awarded the contract were interested in the project and familiar with social media and common digital technology, were given the assignment to update "The Mason's Blog" with pictures and video from the daily work.⁵⁴ The blog was active for two seasons, 2013 and 2014.

The objective of the blog was not to be a personal venture but a platform for documentation and information transfer within the team managing the process. The blog was set up on a free blog site. The masons received instruction and support in uploading pictures, videos, and text descriptions from an iPad to the blog. The iPad had a wireless connection on the scaffolding and became part of the mason's toolbox. Their documentation assignment was to record and publish the essentials in their working procedures following the general questions: How are the procedures in the restoration done? Why are they done in this particular way? What have I learned? What deviation is made from the intended procedure or previous workmanship? Why this deviation? What would I have wanted to know from a documentation like this?

The blog, in contrast to the static inventory form, accumulates a reflected documentation in chronological order and with possible thematic tags. The blog may be developed in a linear order and yet be

rhizomatic, with tags and hyperlinks. Other social media platforms may be used to integrate many different media and augment the narration of crafts with film, photo, collections or 3D models.

As the blog in this case was a public space, the masons had to reflect on their actions and put their tacit awareness on a communication level. The social medium allowed the masons on the building site to communicate with the team of building consultants, managers, and material suppliers. The trustee was located in Stockholm, approximately 600 km from Umeå, and the material supplier a further 500 km away in southern Sweden. The blog also fostered communication with peers and communities of interest to the masons. Since the completion of the project, the blog has had a linear timeline with documents that can be downloaded and compiled into a conventional documentation report. The social media could be used to inform and invite the local community to the restoration space behind the covered scaffolding.

Approaching Presence

Let us finally return to the documentary of the blacksmiths in Västerbotten. As an action of research, this documentary about the making of wrought scythes has been analyzed, used, and evaluated as a learning resource by two trained blacksmiths, Patrik Jarefjäll and Otto Samuelsson.⁵⁵ The methods of investigation and research documentation are reconstructive experiment, film record, time-space geography, and model making. The old craft film provides the hypothesis of the historic craft and also how to perform the reconstruction. In the process of forging, two pieces of steel are amalgamated and transformed into a scythe. Nothing more is added or taken away. The hypothesis to the reconstruction is first tested by shaping and transforming clay models. The objec-

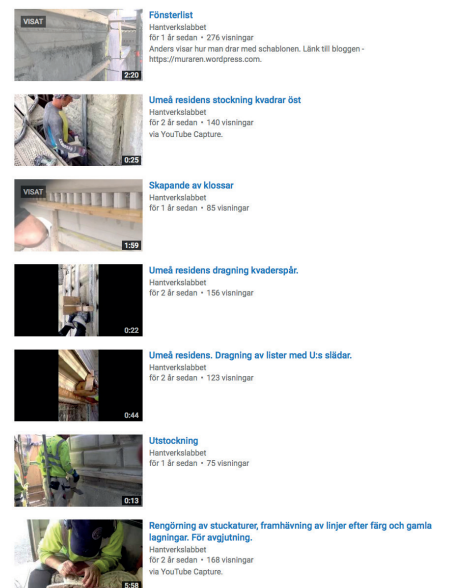


Fig 16-18. The mason's blog of the restoration of the county governor residence in Umeå. By Pelle Vestberg from Wordpress and Youtube.

tive is to envision the changes in form in relation to the actions of forging, and to foresee the coming steps and possible difficulties ahead in the process.

The reconstruction is performed in a production environment that corresponds to the historic smithy. The forging practice in the reconstruction becomes a practice of inquiry. Billy Ehn has stressed the relevance of this type of *autoethnographical method* for craftspersons when exploring their own field of practice. He defines this approach as “a method for cultural research where you are using your own experiences, as a starting point or as examples of more general conditions. You are both the subject and the object of observation”.⁵⁶

In reconstruction, the smiths Jarefjäll and Samuelsson have to adopt the critical mind of the researcher, and as researchers use the craftspersons’

abilities to connect with the site environment and perceive and scrutinize the invariants of embodied actions. John Gibson’s theory of *environmental dynamics* and concept *object affordances* may elicit the craft’s particular contribution to historic inquiry.⁵⁷ There has to be an awareness of the world before it can be put into words, and the embodied action creates an awareness providing other kinds of affordances. The noun affordance pertains to the environment that provides the *opportunity for action*. Affordances require a relationship to the *situated environment* from which the contingencies of actions derive. According to Gibson’s theory, when we perceive an object we observe the object’s affordances and not its particular qualities. The craftsperson’s great challenge is to keep at the same time a retrospective and prospective sense of occurrence, and to make use of the oscillation between *inferen-*

tial logical thinking and an embodied creative flow.

During reconstruction video was taken with automation and auto-perspective in order to collect data on the very fast and sensory judgments used in forging procedures. Film is operative in producing a representation that does not extensively depend on interpretations or translations in mediating. The film frames routine actions and bodily aspects that may be internalized and hidden—even for those who possess a particular ability.

The method used to analyze the forging procedures in the film is *time-space geography* as created by Torsten Hägerstrand.⁵⁸ Conventionally, motion studies reductively break down a process into procedures and sub-tasks, while time-space geography highlights the connectedness of the bodily movement in time and space. The perspective elicits craftsmanship as contingent upon a skilled person's presence in time-space and restricted by the *constraints of capabilities, authorities, and networks*. Skillfulness is not exclusively tied to the maker's genius and intentions, nor carefully guided by universal rules of thumb or predictable behaviors. Skillfulness grows from attentive practice in the face of constraints and bundles of the paths of beings and things in time-space.

David Pye characterizes craftsmanship as *workmanship of risk* and states that “the quality of the result is not predetermined, but depends upon the judgments, dexterity and care which the maker exercises as he works”.⁵⁹ These judgments are not always verbally articulated, resulting instead from a sensory choreography of hand, eye, ear, and brain.⁶⁰ The craftsman needs a craft strategy above the maxims, the comprehensive formula and instructive set of rules, to manage the cybernetic process and judgments of the immense range of

qualities, referring to David Pye, “without which at its command the art of design becomes arid and impoverished”.⁶¹ However, in a craft such as forging sharp tools, Jarefjäll and Samuelsson cannot attend to and assess the different qualities as they work. The different procedures and tasks are not statically categorized and thus appear in the flow of movements. By time-space geography they can shed light on the affordances in the many cybernetic turns and feedback grounded in the knowledge of perception in this particular environment.

The reconstructive experiment could conclude that the wrought scythes that are made in the film documentary lack some of the essential qualities needed to be used as scythes. The blacksmiths work the material very hard—stretching, bending and welding the scythe—sometimes at too high a temperature, where a considerable amount of steel is burnt off. This is visible from the many sparks of iron around the material. The steel in the welding does not always seem to have been fused. The surface has oxidized and the texture is porous with notably enlarged grains in the material structure. These old blacksmiths are not carrying on a functional tradition, but rather exposing a break in tradition.

The filmmakers have not paid interest to whether the brothers carry the tradition of their ancestors, and they obviously lack the expertise necessary to judge general craft procedures in forging. The aim of the documentary seems to be a nice and accessible story. The film becomes a medium for transforming a peculiar craft into a historical object, rather than creating a connection to this situated reality. The rural setting, the faded colors, and the neutral speaker create a deterministic aura of evanescence and function as simulacra of harmony between intangible heritage and museum practice.



Fig 19-20. Patrik Jarefjäll and Otto Samuelsson in the smithy at the Craft Laboratory, Mariestad. Photo Gunnar Almevik.

From Archive to Living Heritage

In the theoretical knowledge tradition represented in museum practice and heritage conservation, the act of interpretation is essential and sometimes ontologically amalgamated as an essence of knowledge. Reflection may become acts of attribution. Interpretations in the hermeneutical tradition commonly presuppose that the meaning is something beyond or underneath the present action. Documentation of craftsmanship needs to seek what Ulrich Gumbrecht defines as a *production of presence*. To Gumbrecht something present is tangible for human hands, implying that it can have an immediate impact on human bodies: “Therefore production of presence points to all kinds of events and processes in which the impact that present objects have on human bodies is being initiated or intensified”.⁶²

There is an old saying, “Let not the cobbler go beyond his last,” meaning that craftspersons should stay within their scope of competence. Documenta-

tion has been and still is considered an expert skill within museum practice and heritage conservation. The results of the research and experimentation within the Craft Laboratory show that documentation may empower craftspersons and communities and function as a core activity to facilitate new forms of learning and transmission of craft knowledge. Whether the craft is considered a traditional production method, a heritage practice for curating historical objects, or an element of intangible heritage, the practitioners and owners of this craft knowledge and expertise need to be part of the negotiations. Experience from the creativity of the productive processes and possession of tacit knowledge in the actual making is an advantage—being attentive to and aware of the things of the world.

Museums could gain new relevance by developing participatory documentation methods to support craftspersons and maker communities in their investigation of craft-related problems, the creation of learning resources, and the transmission of their

craft knowledge. Advocacy is not enough. Documentation may also function as self-authentication for declaring their knowledge, traditions, and sense of intangible heritage. Museums and heritage conservation need to re-think the archive and stop hegemonizing documentation practice if they are to engage a broader audience and support essential co-craft strategies in the weak and endangered craft fields.

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Endnotes

1. Hafstein 2009 and 2014, Smith 2006
2. UNESCO 2011
3. CIDOC 2012:2, Lettellier 2007:17, CIPA 2004
4. Mason 2008:113
5. In this text I use the gender-neutral noun *craftsperson* instead of the common word *craftsman*. The noun *craftsperson* is presented as synonym to *craftsman* in the Oxford English Dictionary and etymologically traced to the 1920s. The plural form may be *craftspeople* or *craftspersons*, where the later alternative depicts a group of individuals rather than an anonymous collective of people. These words have a performative function: they act upon people's identity, sense of acceptance and perception of skilfulness. Traditional craftsmanship is not all about skills. Skilfulness needs to be understood in the social context of tradition. I claim that many cultures of traditional crafts have great challenges. Michael Polanyi recognizes the social construct of tacit knowing by interiorization: "To interiorize is to identify ourselves with the teachings in question, by making them functional as the proximal term of a tacit moral knowledge, as applied in practice. This establishes the tacit framework for our moral acts and judgements" (Polanyi 2009:16). The indwelling in tradition and interiorization of knowledge combined with reluctance about documentation and critical inquiry may obscure dysfunctional or even unethical components of the practice. Eva Silvé and Ingrid Bergström have shown how skilfulness and professionalism within traditional building crafts have components

related to perceptions of modernity and masculinity (Berglund 2009:205, Silvé 2004:15). To be skilful may imply the ability to use tools and materials adapted primarily to the male body. To become a good *craftsman* is very much about learning to behave like a *craftsman*.

6. Rust et al 2007, Wood 2006
7. Sjömar 2011, Palmsköld 2012, Molander 1996 and 2015, Wood 2006
8. Ingold 2013, Gibson 2015, Sully 2015, Deacon 2012, Hennessy 2012, von Bush 2013
9. Tegström and Ågren 1971
10. Ibid
11. Kulturrådet 2009:21. In an earlier survey, Museiutredningen, from 1994 the amount of artefacts in public museums counted 65 million objects.
12. Bengtsson Melin 2014, Palmsköld 2007, Hammarlund-Larsson et al 2004
13. Nilsson 2000, Gustavsson 2014
14. Gustavsson 2014
15. Ibid
16. Said 1993:156
17. Stoklund 2003:15
18. Ingold 2013:7
19. Almevik 2014, Tesfaye 2013
20. Dormer 1994, Adamson 2007, Ingold 2013
21. Sandrone 2007, Adamson 2010
22. Sandklef 1953:32–39
23. Sennett 2008:183
24. Morris 1877:241
25. Polanyi 2009:4
26. Ibid 16
27. Ibid 24
28. Ibid 18
29. Polanyi 1966:6
30. Sennett 2008:181
31. Ingold 2013:109–110
32. Sontag 1966:13–14
33. Almevik et.al 2011, SFV 2011, Ipsos 2011, Lindblad 2012
34. Olofsson 2014
35. Munas Vinas 2006
36. Jones & Yarrow 2014:7
37. Ibid

38. Many of the films are presented in the Crafts Lab's YouTube channel and also downloadable from the University of Gothenburg's media database GUPEA.
39. Appelgren 2014, Källbom 2012, Stenholm Jacobsen 2012, Seiler 2013 and Helje 2016
40. Schön 1983, Molander 1996
41. Auerbach 2008, von Bush 2010 and 2013
42. Almevik et al 2014
43. Rust 2004:76
44. Westerlund 2014
45. Sennett 2008:186
46. Lykke Lundberg, Jalin & Nyström 2011
47. Ibid timeline 8:34–19:06
48. Ibid 16:25
49. Ibid 17:20
50. Ibid 19:00
51. Gibson 2015:215
52. Ibid 249-251
53. Ibid
54. See: www.wordpress.murarens
55. Almevik, Jarefjäll and Samuelsson 2013
56. Ehn 2011:53
57. Gibson 2015:119
58. Hågerstrand 2009
59. Pye 2009:4
60. Ehn 2014:40, Rose 2004:79
61. Pye 2009:7
62. Gumbrecht 2006:18

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Sexuality, Deathliness, and Chocolate

Nicola Donovan (2016) Sexuality, Deathliness, and Chocolate: Talking, Making and Performing Nottingham's Lace Heritage. In: *Crafting Cultural Heritage*. Ed. Palmsköld, Rosenqvist & Almevik. Gothenburg: Univ. pp. 103-117.



"Crafted objects in this particular (theatrical) retail environment, resulting in not only relational heritage but the creation of new witnesses to Nottingham's lace heritage."

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Sexuality, Deathliness, and Chocolate: Talking, Making and Performing Nottingham's Lace Heritage

By Nicola Donovan

I am an artist who makes things and struggles with the point of making aesthetic objects when the globe is already full to bursting with the material detritus of humanity's existence. However, I have to make things – I cannot help it and am driven to fiddle and stick, stitch and draw, fix, paint, knit, cut, and create artistic problems to solve. I am also a person who finds the kind of everyday, spontaneous and informal conversation that occurs on the bus, in a queue at the supermarket, or with other browsers at a street-market to be absorbing and inspiring. These modest dialogues often reveal 'snapshots' of rich personal narratives and in Nottingham I discovered that amongst locals, the city's now almost extinct lace industry is a significant theme.

This chapter is about a project that aimed to locate the possible relevance of personal art practice to communities in Nottingham by bringing

together physical, 'made' artworks with informal dialogic encounters. Reported and analysed here are three versions of how I tackled combining the 'made' and dialogical aspects of my work to create a new, more socially engaged practice. The three versions comprise the collaborative creation of a Nottingham lace inspired costume for a dominatrix and burlesque performer, a series of 'market-stall' installations, and a chocolate lace-making performance event. All these events and activities aimed to create conditions or environments that would encourage the emergence and recognition of 'small' narratives related to Nottingham's lace industry. The theme of 'small' narratives, a term borrowed from Laurajane Smith,¹ runs throughout the discussion and indicates the everyday, perhaps mundane but nevertheless rich personal stories that tend to be overlooked in official versions of Nottingham's lace heritage.

To support my view that the dialogic interactions – indeed ‘small’ narratives – that emerged during these installations and events can be understood as ‘performing Nottingham’s lace heritage’, I refer to the concepts of ‘performance’ and ‘performativity’ as theorized by Judith Butler and Erving Goffman. I also draw on the disruptive scheme of the ‘carnavalesque’ to suggest that ‘small’ narratives and ‘performances of Nottingham’s lace heritage’ can disturb its dominant, official versions. Furthermore, I note that the intention of this disturbance is to make space for the recognition of Nottingham’s unofficial heritages, alongside those of the official or authorized versions that are evident in the city’s contemporary urban landscape.

A Lace Archive

To situate the collective events and dialogical aims of the project, this discussion now turns to its genesis in the East Midlands of England, where at the terminus of a long, red tiled corridor in a still corner of Nottingham Trent University is a cool, shadow-swept room. It is the new home of an archive dedicated to a delicate, luxury fabric produced in and around Nottingham since the second half of the eighteenth century. Company sample books of lace borders and trims, caught with ochred gum to fading yet still intense blue cobalt pages, reveal a story of active industry and commerce. In imitation of a musical score, these snippet samples are arranged as staves, their engineered holes and raised nodules notations of a temporal passage in history. They are the end product of almost two centuries of hardship, bloodshed, inequality, exploitation, brilliance, technological innovation and mechanical poetry.

Here among the seventy-five thousand items I sought inspiration for a study of the display and

interpretation of Nottingham lace, which were to be realized as a body of artworks. Early searches in the archives unearthed pattern books, sample folios, design work and assorted evocative objects such as a crumbling leather salesman’s case dressed with shattered locks and packed with doll-size miniature portfolios, and a nineteenth-century lady’s lace handkerchief, possibly stained by post-mortem dermal emissions. All of these discoveries, including some truly exquisite lace samples, were potential gateways to study grounded in the visual arts, yet it was the handwritten pages of a wages ledger that ignited its flame. Leather-bound and chalk-dry to the touch, this marbled book records in tight, handwritten and inky script the individual and collective economic value of a mid-twentieth-century lace-producing workforce. Documented within its pages is a clipped life history of Miss Ellen Javes, who alone amongst her colleagues was referred to by her forename, Ellen, and its diminutive form Nelly. Miss Javes disappears from the ledger in 1957 and as she was an informally addressed employee at the very bottom of the pay scale, I assumed that she must have been a young woman or girl who left to marry.

However, research reveals that Miss Javes was an elderly spinster with no living relatives who died while still employed in what was probably a menial capacity such as a cleaner. So far the details of Miss Javes’s existence remain unknown but this sketched narrative of her personal history instigated my exploration of alternative epistemologies through making, installation, performance and conversation. Furthermore, as an apparently undervalued and overlooked worker, Miss Javes represents the ‘small’ narratives of Nottingham’s lace heritage, and my encounter with her story determined my search for ways to recognize and

explore knowledge from the edges or boundaries of authorized discourses.

Of course Laurajane Smith's work on the Authorized Heritage Discourse is highly significant here and I apply it also to other authorized discourses such the 'art-world'², the cultural world and complex hierarchies within the retailscape. So I draw on examples of hierarchical positioning within discourses and employ concepts of 'normativity', 'performativity' and 'social performance' as analytical devices. An insistent 'dialogic' heartbeat maintains my position within these paragraphs as one of counter-elitism, which I demonstrate in the following discussion. Thus I now proceed by relating how this project offered perceptions of Nottingham's lace heritage as an inverted stack – a levelled dialogic platform from which the voices of all might be heard, respected, recognized and valued.

About a City:

Robin Hood Hogs the Heritage Pie

It is apparent that the Midlands city of Nottingham relies heavily on its associations with the legendary figure of Robin Hood for its sense of heritage identity: City Council insignia proudly bears a be-capped profile of the famous forest-dwelling outlaw, and even Nottingham's 'heritage plaques' are painted 'Sherwood green'. However, Nottingham has another industrial heritage that includes bicycle and cigarette production, as well as the mechanized manufacture of lace textiles. For more than two hundred years, this now nearly extinct lace-making industry has shaped the geographical, physical, cultural and social landscape of Nottingham, but it seems that there is scant attention paid to this aspect of the city's heritage. Certainly there is evidence of what Pearce³ and Samuels⁴ might call 'ambient' heritage, such as a plaza complete

with public artworks in the regenerated district known as 'Lace Market' and lace-patterned concrete cladding on the new Nottingham Contemporary art gallery. However, architectural conservation in this elegant, trendy and historic district, where lace is no longer traded, prioritizes such attractively grand and 'important' buildings as the Grade II-listed Adams Building, named after its philanthropic, devoutly Christian and wealthy industrialist owner.

Thomas Adams's lace factory would have overlooked the now vanished slums of Narrow Marsh, where the majority of low-paid lace workers lived until its demolition in the 1930s, but here there is no civic recognition; unlike the Adams Building, there is no sign of a green heritage plaque to mark this site. Along with the material absence of Narrow Marsh's architectural small narratives is an apparent lack of concern with the life narratives of the people who worked for the major lace industry players. Moreover it is clearly possible to locate information about Nottingham's prominent citizens such as Thomas Adams and his equally prominent architecture, but what seems to be far more difficult is to locate versions of Nottingham's lace industry from the perspective of the ordinary citizen – that is, its small narratives.

Lace No More

I imagined that in tandem with the albeit relatively minimal recognized tangible heritage of Nottingham lace, there must be some *intangible* heritages – that is, unauthorized knowledge existing at the edges of this industry's authorized version of its past⁵ that might be shared somewhere in the city. However, as there is no longer a publicly available collection of Nottingham lace and material associated with the industry in the region, access to



Fig. 1. “Lace is Ace” market stall installation December 2011.

prompts or focal points is very limited, so I wondered where the people of Nottingham might engage with, or perform their subjectivities as constituted by, a lace-making heritage. With the aim of offering informal spaces for the exchange of ideas, memories, knowledge and perspectives relating to Nottingham’s lace heritage, and using an array of artworks and objects made with Nottingham lace as prompts, I set up a series of installations in the everyday retailscapes of outdoor street markets.

These installations took the form of conventional market stalls but with added banners declaring the title of the installation scripted in Nottingham lace: *Lacepoint*, *Laceworks*, *Love Lace*, and *Lace is Ace*. And so that visitors would not feel under scrutiny or obliged to participate, I attended to drawing or making items for the stalls by hand or by using an old sewing machine.

In creating these *Lace* market stall environments I hoped to encourage conditions where power between ‘actors’ could, in a Foucauldian⁶ sense, be elastic, contingent and open ended, and thus mark out poly-vocal and dialogical terrain in which multiple epistemologies and discourses of identity might be shared. This ephemeral and temporary territory could then be a site for what is, according to Cover,⁷ a ‘true’ version of *interactivity* whereby participants do not just respond predictably to a guided text or activity but actually assume authorship, thereby creating new, possibly disruptive texts. Interactivity, according to Cover’s version, is collaborative and cooperative. So in the case of the *Lace* market stall events, visitor participants might respond to the prompt of a displayed object but from there on any further text would follow a course developed from dialogic interaction between the ‘actors.’

Harrison⁸ describes this process as ‘relational heritage’ that is enabled, and which emerges from a four-part dialogical interaction among ‘people, objects places and practises’. Indeed, for several visitors to the stalls the lace merchandise and market setting triggered stories about their connection to the Nottingham lace industry. And it was clear that for many, local and individual identity is drawn from this, which as the industry is more or less dissolved causes great distress for some⁹. I felt greatly privileged to be a party to this freely given knowledge and to learn so much, but I didn’t know what if anything I could do to ease the anger and upset of these people. ‘It [the lace industry] mustn’t just disappear without a trace’ was the refrain, and it is clear that many people closely connected with the lace industry felt that their life’s narrative, *their heritage*, was being erased. What became very apparent at the *Lace* market stall

events was that people with identities drawn in some way from the lace industry want those identities to be heard and seen, want their stories to be aired in the present – want, in essence, to be witnessed¹⁰. Therefore I concluded that the most useful thing to do would be to generate witnesses from people who had not yet encountered or engaged with Nottingham's lace heritage, as well as continue to 'mark out terrain' for small heritages – i.e. alternative, dialogical epistemologies to be heard and *performed* as legitimate heritage.

License to Perform Heritage

As Jackson & Kidd¹¹ observe, until their own study of the subject and subsequent publication of an edited book, there had been scarce academic attention paid to the use of performance in heritage contexts. Among the chapters on theatrical or drama-based heritage performance and visitor engagement in museums, Rees-Leahy¹² discusses her focus on the simultaneity and permeability of performing and being performed to, which might be interpreted as meaning the everyday practices of interacting, participating and relating. But unlike my *Lace* outdoor market installations, she situates her observations within designated heritage sites and institutions, so the performances and performatives that she discusses are shaped by the normative contexts in which they take place. So given Rees-Leahy's expert view, can the performances or interactions among visitors to the *Lace* market installations be understood as being within the field of 'performing heritage'?

Smith's¹³ discussion of heritage performance proposes that the thoughts, emotions and actions of daily life ensure that 'meaning making' in heritage performance is grounded in ordinary reality. However, like Rees-Leahy Smith's discussion

that is largely concerned with visitor experiences to designated heritage sites, Smith acknowledges that performances, or acts of "being" and "doing",¹⁴ take place beyond them. In their introduction, Jackson & Kidd¹⁵ draw on Schechner's 'broad spectrum' approach to Performance Studies, in which he considers activities such as entering a museum and participating in guided tours as performance. Indeed Schechner's position legitimizes performances of everyday life, such as chatting at a street market, by recognizing that both linguistic and philosophical perspectives, such as those of Judith Butler,¹⁶ Andrew Parker¹⁷ and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick¹⁸, along with the social theory of Erving Goffman¹⁹ and Neal Gabler²⁰, 'agree in the assertion that people are performing all the time, whether or not they are aware of it'.²¹

Inferred from this snapshot of the literature that the everyday interactivity and dialogical discourses are taking place at the *Lace* installations can be understood as 'performance', but there still remains the question of whether these can be known as performances of 'heritage'. It seems that much of the relevant literature links heritage with cultural sites, institutions, traditions, rituals and practices that can be thought of as distinct from 'non-cultural' everyday life. However, if heritage is thought of as a responsive concept aiming for democracy, counter-elitism, inclusivity and interculturalism, it could, according to Gabler, like Art become indistinguishable from everyday life and thus collapse divisions between the 'cultural' and 'non-cultural'.²²

In a discussion of 'object performance' in relation to museums, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett observes that museums are rising to meet the 'challenges of presenting new knowledge that is not collection based'.²³ So in this case 'new knowledge' could, be

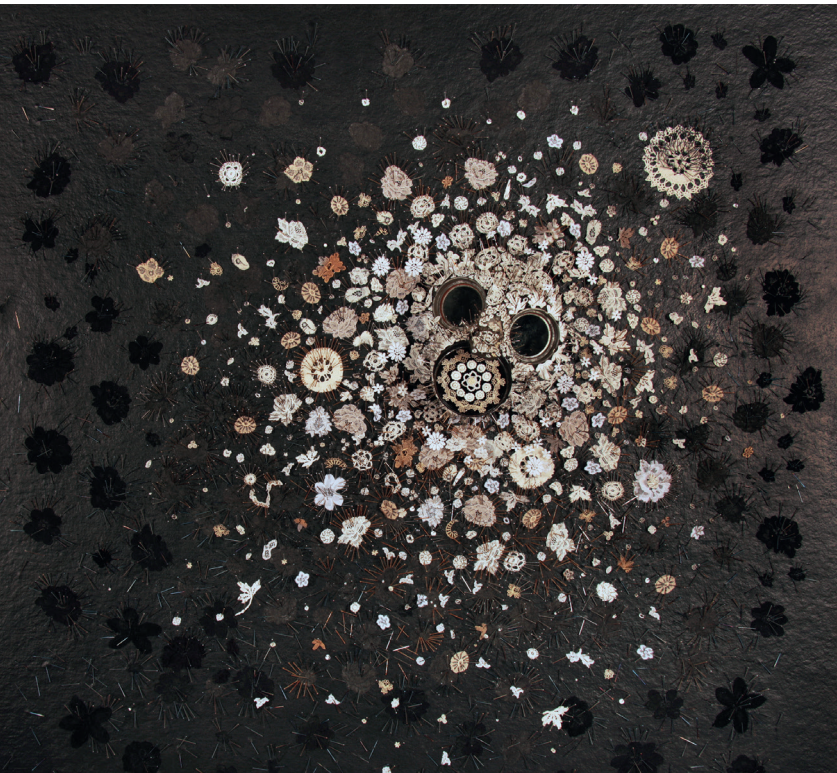


Fig. 2. “Cryptocephalus” 2009 by Nicola Donovan, mixed media. Photograph by Marko Durka.©

presented within so-called 'non-cultural' environments as ephemeral performances of the everyday, i.e. four part dialogical encounters that embrace objects, but which also produce Nottingham lace heritage as an inclusive, temporal product beyond the museum. In this scenario heritage as a responsive concept then becomes truly democratic and multi-perspectival. Thus what is heritage is decided *by* the individual *for* the individual and from the individual's point of view.

For the time being this argument establishes the validity of the *Lace* market stall installations as legitimate performances of Nottingham's lace heritage, and that heritage itself emerges from these

dialogic, relational and self-defining performances – that is, heritage is not only performed, it is created and even evoked.²⁴

A Gothic Turn

Alongside the *Lace* market stall events, another event had also been planned that attended to attracting audiences from the broad reaches of 'Goth' and alternative cultures. This approach evolved from the first market stall installation entitled *Lacepoint*, which attracted a group of young Emos²⁵, a youth-oriented sub-cultural style that shelters beneath the 'black umbrella'²⁶ of alternative Goth culture. These young visitors revealed a shared interest in 'phantasmagoria' and 'Gothicism'²⁷ that is perhaps evident in the more sinister aspects of my work, such as *Cryptocephalus*, with its black latex surface punctured by masses of tempered steel pins that fix to it a World War Two child's which gas mask, opened out much like a dissected frog.

Along with *The Dowager*, a sheep skull dressed with tattered lace and faux pearls, *Cryptocephalus* attracted the attention of the Emo group and in so doing alerted a realization that this study could be focused at a particular group with a common interest and with which I feel some affinity, rather than try to reach an entire population.

In support of this view, it was encouraging to note that in Hooper-Greenhill's work on how museums might reach diverse communities she notes that a person situated within a community will have expert knowledge of its needs, values and interests, and therefore that person is in a position to establish what is relevant to their community.²⁸ Therefore, although I do not necessarily fit the stereotype, I 'fall in' with some aspects of alternative 'Goth' culture, such as aesthetic preferences, a pen-

chant for Gothic literature and being at ease with the outwardly odd, marginal, or unconventional. These sympathies, or affinities 'call out' similarly inclined audiences and hopefully new witnesses to Nottingham lace heritage. Furthermore, although heritage institutions in the UK have made efforts in recent years to include exhibitions that target sub-cultural groups such as 'heavy metal' enthusiasts, 'Steampunk' and 'bikers'²⁹, nothing as yet appeared to have focused on the broad spectrum of 'Goths' complex culture. Also, it seemed that the excessive and immediate aesthetic of the Gothic canon that has informed this genre from its early literary roots through twentieth-century film and post-punk style could give form and image to what I wanted to articulate as an artist about the darker, hidden aspects of Nottingham's lace industry.

Goys, Birles and Others

As well as being known for its morbid aesthetic tastes, Goth culture is also liberal and actively welcoming towards diverse sexualities, thereby embracing the marginal and offering shelter to the outsider. Indeed the performance of gender and sexuality is a key aspect of Goth identity. Hooked into Goth dress styles are fetish elements for all genders, such as tight lace corseting and bondage, PVC, rubber and leather, along with a fierce feminine version of the vampire dominatrix. Necromantic, perhaps nostalgic Victorian style is also prevalent and a preponderance of lace parasols, full skirts, lace trimmed blouses, gloves and bonnets, top-hats, canes and coat tails may be seen parading among those gathering at Goth festivals and events.

An example of complex gender performativity was witnessed at Whitby Abbey during a visit to the UK's best known Goth festival, 'Whitby Goth



Fig. 3. "Dowager" 2010, Nicola Donovan, mixed media. Photograph by Marko Dutka.©

Weekend'. Walking through the Abbey ruins I noticed a group of eight women dressed in 'Victorian' style, complete with curled hair, corsets and bonnets. The women were taking turns to take photographs of their group and so it seemed helpful and friendly to offer to take a photograph of all of them together.

By this time I had realized that the women were in fact men who were not only performing certain versions of Victorian inspired womanhood through their dress but also enacting performativities of femininity: Dorothy for example, sat elegantly with stockinged knees together and daintily shod feet to one side, Carla, in a full skirt and cor-



Fig. 4. Nottingham lace dressed skeleton doll.

set vamped it up with hands on tilted hips and a shoulder thrust towards the camera, yet Amanda, although perhaps the most prettily presented of the group posed, stood and moved in what might undoubtedly be understood as the normative ways of masculine performativity.³⁰

Thus Dorothy and Carla re-iterated the citational performatives of feminine subjectivity, that is, gestures understood by social and cultural consensus to be feminine, while Amanda re-iterated those of masculine subjectivity, despite performing *front-stage* as a woman. Although these utterances and acts might have appeared a little bizarre, or even disruptive of conventional cultural and social expectation, in part they constituted the multiple

subjectivities of these individuals, that is, as men, as men performing ideas of Victorian-ness, and as men performing femininity.

Showtime: Retail Theatre of “Love Lace”

With the aim of reaching out to Gothically inclined audiences and in order to observe autoethnographically³¹ the interactions, performatives and performances of open air markets, I took a stall at an Alternative Village Fete that was a *skewed* version of the traditional village fete, intended to attract biker, ‘alternative’, and Goth visitors.

I made and displayed a variety of artifacts for the stall, including a “Cryptocephalus” panel, along with decorated birdskull and lace accessories, and a chainmaille dressed sheep skull, which represented the expensive and middle ranges of my merchandise; the Art and the objet d’art. In the cheaper range were toy plastic skeletons that I had dressed in little Nottingham lace skirts and bandanas; one was dressed in a bridal outfit complete with veil. The least expensive items, at two pounds each included brooches made from plastic skeleton hands and plastic eyeballs, becuffed and encircled with frilled Nottingham lace.

Every item was accompanied by a dated and signed handwritten label listing the materials used, which in each case included Nottingham lace. Although many people seemed interested in the high and middle ranges, it was the small skeletons and brooches that quickly sold out and an extra table was made available so I could be seen making more frilly eyeballs, hands and skeletons.

The humorous aspects of the cheaper items seemed to appeal to visitors and perhaps contributed to the carnivalesque atmosphere of the day and *marketplace* behaviour; indeed some visitors playfully



Fig. 5-6. "Nottingham Chocolace" public performance 2012.

posed with the lace lashed plastic eyeballs covering their own eyes, or other, more intimate body parts.

In their discussion of field work undertaken at car boot sales by cultural geographers Gregson and Rose, Goffman's concept of the social acting and theatre of everyday life is used to demonstrate how sellers and browsers adapt their behaviour to 'fit' the roles that society expects to be played out in that context.³² They note the performance of roles modelled on marginal, dodgy dealing television characters such as Del Boy Trotter and Arthur Daly, along with the hawker, peddler and the 'roll up, roll up' fairground tout.

I witnessed something of this market environment 'front-stage social acting' in my own performance at the Alternative Village Fete, where I too played a certain role as an 'upbeat' extrovert market vendor, who joked around with the campy Ringmaster and generally joined in with the fun of subverting

the idea of the traditional village fete.

Visiting 'shopper' participants too joined in with these marketplace performances, contributing rejoinders and thereby authoring the 'script', albeit within what might be construed as cultural conventions of this particular retail theatre environment.

Here then, it might be seen that according to Goffman's theory, we acted within a structure as players, who along with the other actors/players in that environment, performed a certain heritage of outdoor marketplaces³³. Performatively, however, in this everyday theatre of 'fictions' our subjectivities were re-iterated, as though through gesture and utterance we could not help but 'cite' or betray the 'facts' of ourselves – our subjectivities as masculine, feminine, camp, macho, young, middle aged, buyer, seller, browser and so on. Like a palimpsest our performativities seeped through the bold text of the day's social performances.



Fig. 7. 'The Ringmaster,' Alternative Village Fete, 2011.

In the physical space of the Alternative Village Fete it was apparent that several visitors were 'lace initiated' but most were not. However, at the stall visitors often opened conversations with others, discussing the display but also relating and witnessing each other's stories – offering small narratives that initiated the un-initiated through dialogue. Here the intentions of *Love Lace* were crystallized: the text – i.e. dialogue among participants/visitors – came to be authored through their interactivity in relation to the lace-related, crafted objects in this particular (theatrical) retail environment, resulting in not only relational heritage but the creation of new witnesses to Nottingham's lace heritage.

The Twisted Textile

In tandem with the market stall installations I set up a Facebook page under the name 'The Twisted Textile' with the intention of maintaining an informal, 'live'(ly) textual and visual space for Nottingham's lace heritage. Working with an idea that these 'new kind[s] of social space' in which 'embodied performances' take place could be an effective way for interested parties or participants to engage in dialogue and perform textually, I posted a few starter items such as images, articles and comments³⁴. The page quickly gathered a following and at the 'alternative village fete' contact cards bearing details of the Twisted Textile page disappeared fast from my *Love Lace* stall – indeed visitors posted messages and comments that evening.

In the virtual, textual performance space of the Twisted Textile, gesture and utterance are perceptible, although as might be expected they are expressed differently than in physical space. Certainly nuanced physical performatives, such as delicate hand movements or chin stroking, are concealed from view; however, through text and image performatives of speech can seem to imply gesture. The Twisted Textile page remains active, largely through the participation of people other than myself, and I hope it will continue to be a forum, or perhaps a virtual everyday theatre, for visual and textual performances – that is, for *relational heritages* of Nottingham lace.³⁵

Black Widow Burlesque

Alongside the *Lace* market stall series, work was underway with Miss Venus Noir, a celebrated burlesque dancer, to create a Nottingham lace-inspired stage costume for her interpretation of the black widow spider's mating ritual.

Miss Noir's performance was scheduled as the

headline event at “Warped – Nottingham Lace Shadow-side”, and marked the opening of a Nottingham lace-themed exhibition of contemporary art and historic artefacts entitled ‘Lace Works’ at Nottingham Castle Museum and Galleries in November 2012.

Clearly performance in this case differs from the everyday performances discussed here so far, and is instead according to Bial, a tangible rehearsed event within the bounds of space and time that presents artistic actions, such as a play, concert or burlesque³⁶. In his 1986 article ‘Performance’, Noel Carroll notes that in the 1960s some performers who sought to resurrect populist theatrical forms such as circus, cabaret and comedy rejected the predominance of culturally superior and ‘serious’ plays³⁷. As Willson notes, burlesque seems to emerge when society takes itself too seriously or is anxious and becomes ‘po-faced’. She cites the frantic, work ethic driven careerism of the 1990s as a trigger for the emergence of the ‘New Burlesque’, and current social, cultural and economic anxieties as fuel for its continued widespread popularity.³⁸

Dressing Miss Noir in a costume made from and inspired by Nottingham lace was intended to explore notions of performing heritage according to Bial’s definition of parametered, rehearsed, artistic presentations by a performer for an audience.

The spidery theme was chosen to reflect the language of lace production where ‘webs’, ‘silk’ and ‘spider’ are commonly used terms, and also to reflect the activity of throwing out lines of communication to create a web of dialogue, which has been an intrinsic aspect of this investigation.

Academic staff from Nottingham Trent University collaborated with Miss Noir and me on the project, which required them as ‘un-initiated’ to



Fig. 8. Miss Venus Noir performs the Black Widow Burlesque 2012

engage with and develop research into Nottingham lace. This inevitably found its way into their dialogue with students and studio projects, thus further disseminating stories of and encouraging identification with the local lace industry. This was heartening but the really exhilarating aspect of this particular project was the network contact that Miss Noir made with her communities and the enthusiasm with which, as a non-local, she embraced Nottingham lace heritage.

Although uninterested in museums she visited Nottingham Castle Museum and Galleries to see the displays dedicated to Nottingham lace. After some time spent pensively in front of the glass

cases she commented quietly, "People's lives have just been forgotten, haven't they?" This encounter resulted in Miss Noir beginning her own search for the small narratives of Nottingham's lace industry, which along with her involvement in my project she reported to many Burlesque communities, thereby generating a 'buzz' of interest.

Willson claims that burlesque, a performance with sex at its core has to a large degree now entered the mainstream. Nevertheless, many burlesque performers work on the periphery of the sex industry as lap dancers, pole dancers, dominatrices and strippers, and can be, understandably, difficult to access without an 'insider' such as Miss Noir. Miss Noir's online activity in the form of Facebook posts and 'tweets' has energized the interest and engagement of her colleagues, thereby helping to create an enthusiastic following, some of which has connected to and interacted with the 'Twisted Textile' page. So, along with epistemologies created from dialogue taking place within social networking spaces, new witnesses to Nottingham's lace heritage are also emerging.

Lacing heritage with chocolate

To extend participation in discourses of Nottingham's lace heritage and develop the range of witnesses I combined Nottingham lace imagery with the lure of chocolate. "Nottingham Chocolate", a live performance of chocolate 'lace-making' sought to build on themes of dialogism, participation, interactivity, and performativity. Its location at The Tourist Information Office in Nottingham's city centre usefully offered an ideal combination of Nottingham's heritage and a retail context. Dressed in Nottingham lace aprons and matching chocolatier/artist berets, I, and two others began work in the shop window.

Our work referred to the factory production line of Nottingham's lace industry yet unlike industrial manufacture, we created and gave to visitors the unique chocolate lace drawings inspired by historic lace motifs. As we stood outside in our eccentric outfits cooling the chocolate lace we attracted many more visitors and soon ran out of chocolate.

The subject, and materials and our activities prompted people to talk and ask questions about what we were doing; overseas visitors in particular were keen to hear about Nottingham lace, and as with the market stall events, people conversed not only with us but also with each other.

It seemed that in this chocolate scented, retail environment the dialogic interactions taking place embodied the exchange and recognition of knowledge owned, offered and accepted by participants. Moreover, Harrison's model of heritage as dialogic practice was demonstrated by the numerous heritages, or 'small' narratives that emerged that evening from each relational dynamic, performance and performative.

On Reflection

It is perhaps difficult to accept that fugitive, ephemeral dialogue that exists only in its moment of expression might be the embodiment of valid knowledge, or heritage. Certainly, I have been asked many times how performative dialogic encounters in which I participated have been captured; is there a video, a sound recording or photographs, where is the evidence? There is no evidence, not in the accountable, measurable sense; there is subjective experience which may be remembered, recounted, or documented ethnographically but like a shadow, what is produced during a nuanced, multi-sensorial, matrixical dialogic encounter, or performative performance cannot I believe, be trapped.

I am often quizzed about how I might use the data or personal stories ‘gathered’ from conversing with others, what might they become, will they provide the content for tangible, exhibitable artworks?

In many ways these questions seem irrelevant as the encounters themselves can be argued as ephemeral, conversational artworks, a now recognized practice in performance and socially engaged art.

However it is interesting to note the institutional expectation of ‘gathering’; of somehow coming to own the narratives of others and doing something ‘useful’ with it. I am uncomfortable with the notion of harvesting this data and using it to create tangible artworks or other cultural products, this idea seems exploitative even though some of it is used here to demonstrate and justify a process. The point of initiating dialogic encounters and performances at the “Lace” market stall events and “Nottingham Chocolate” is to create space where stories, accounts, perspectives, and thoughts valued, aired, shared and heard; a place for ‘small’ narratives be recognized and valued. I conclude here by stating that through the development of a socially engaged practice that combines ‘making’ and ‘dialogue-ing’, I have, while recognizing the value and indeed pleasures of exhibiting within the gallery context, discovered a further purpose for my art beyond it.

Endnotes

1. Smith 2006
2. Danto 1964
3. Pearce 1998
4. Samuel 1994
5. Smith 2006
6. Foucault 1981
7. Cover 2006
8. Harrison 2012:57
9. Colls 2002
10. Gibbon 2008
11. Jackson & Kidd 2011
12. Rees-Leahy 2011
13. Smith 2006
14. Schechner 2005:22
15. Jackson & Kidd 2011:2
16. Butler 1997
17. Parker 1995
18. Kosofsky Sedgewick 2003
19. Goffman 1999
20. Gabler 2000
21. Schechner 2005:22
22. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995
23. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:50
24. Harrison 2012
25. Ryan 2010
26. Brill 2008:5
27. Evans 2003
28. Hooper-Greenhill 1994
29. Respectively Birmingham Museum and Galleries, Kew Gardens and Tattershall Castle
30. Butler 1993

31. Goffman 1999
32. Gregson & Rose 2000
33. Goffman 1999
34. Rees-Leahy 2011
35. Harrison 2012
36. Bial 2004:52
37. Carroll 1986
38. Willson 2008

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