

serumpun

crafts across borders

Kalimantan | Sabah | Sarawak
11 Communities & Craft Practitioners

Project Logo



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Borneo Laboratory

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exhibition

curatorial statement

“Before the colonial governments came, we used to be Serumpun.” This was stated by Sujianto, the Ketua Kampong of Sekida Village in Jagoi Babang during our pan-Borneo research trip, to visit the communities we work with.

“Serumpun” means a bundle of grass that shares the same root. In this project, “serumpun” helps us convey how knowledge, wisdom and material cultures in craft across the borders of Kalimantan, Sarawak and Sabah connect together as a wider ecosystem. Today craft communities across South East Asia are facing a range of complex challenges. From climate change to increased youth migration, there is the need to find new ways to protect craft as a ‘cultural asset’ to pass onto future generations.

The serumpun exhibition presents 11 craft projects undertaken individually and collaboratively by artisans, practitioners and initiatives from across Sarawak, Sabah and Kalimantan. Each project in this collection has explored and responded to a contemporary challenge in craft through experimenting with new materials, ways of making and ways of sharing. Connecting these featured works are inspiring stories of innovation, creativity and education which invite us to reflect both inwards on the deep wisdom and knowledges that live in the hands of craft practitioners and artisans, and forward towards sustainable futures.

This exhibition, designed by and for Borneo’s craft communities, is the first of its kind hosted at the Borneo Cultural Museum. These projects and exhibition were supported by The Borneo Laboratory and The Glasgow School of Art, and supported by The British Council and the International Collaboration Award, 2022.

#connectingcraftspractices
#sustainabilityincrafts
#storyofborneocrafts
#InternationalCollaborationGrant

themes

5 exploration themes

THEME 01 | CHANGING LANDSCAPES

THEME 02 | ARTISANAL TRADE

THEME 03 | DOCUMENTATION

THEME 04 | INNOVATIONS

THEME 05 | YOUTH EDUCATION

participating practitioners

Salomon Gau (Miri/Long Moh, Sarawak, Malaysia)

Manai Jagoi - Rattan (Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia)

Tuyang Initiatives (Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia)

Manai Jagoi - Bidai (Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia)

Sepatokimin (Sambas/Singkawang/Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia)

Emily Jeneble (Keningau, Sabah, Malaysia)

Jennifer P. Linggi (Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia)

HANDEP (Palangkaraya, Kalimantan, Indonesia)

The Ranee (Kuching/Betong, Sarawak, Malaysia)

Rasmah Rumambai (Keningau, Sabah, Malaysia)

Sanggar Sarantangan (Singkawang, Kalimantan, Indonesia)

Serumpun Collective (Malaysia/Indonesia/Singapore/UK)



cultural assets and vernacular materials

In the “Cultural Assets and Vernacular Materials” (C&VM) programme, we engaged with a range of practitioners, artisans and communities to design and undertake projects to explore a key sustainability challenge in their craft practice. In total, 11 projects took place. The outcomes, be it a book, a workshop, a competition or a product series, were produced and carried out on their own journey of conversing with their respective communities. To date, we witnessed a number of heartfelt moments created from the engaged practitioners with their communities.

This year-long programme and research, delivered in collaboration between the Borneo Laboratory and The Glasgow School of Art, explored sustainability challenges and craft activism in communities across Borneo, and has been supported by the British Council International Collaboration Awards.

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@gsofa @BritishArts @my_british @britishcouncil @britishcouncilmalaysia

serumpun

project partners

THE INNOVATION SCHOOL AT THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART:

The Innovation School of The Glasgow School of Art is a leading centre for design teaching that applies Design Innovation to the key issues defining contemporary society. They examine design's role as a catalyst for positive change, and investigate its potential impact on people and places. Their students, faculty and researchers adopt a human-centred, research-driven design approach as they explore the "near future" and "next now" in search of actionable innovations. Not only that, they challenge traditional perceptions of design, and promote new ways of thinking, doing and designing, which applies to diverse and complex real-world contexts. Dialogue that drives innovation – the engagement with users, stakeholders, communities and organisations that shape collaboration – is a central part of their design process and philosophy.

BORNEO LABORATORY:

Borneo Laboratory is a creative agency and a Laboratory for Borneo Aesthetics. As a multidisciplinary platform for the experimentation of Borneo Aesthetics, they focus on aesthetic exploration that emphasizes collaboration and open dialogue. Since they began two years ago, Borneo Laboratory have held a number of regional collaborative workshop projects that have involved collaborators from France, Germany, the UK, Italy, Taiwan, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia over the course of 30 days. Thus far, their production covers products ranging from publication, documentation, crafts, curation and architectural design. Regarding Borneo Laboratory's collaboration, they have been consciously engaging people of diverse disciplines. Regardless it is a publication or building, it is crucial for them to see their projects ended up delivering empathetic experience while embracing universal value.

BRITISH COUNCIL:

The British Council is the UK's international organisation that fosters connections, understanding, and trust between people in the United Kingdom and other countries through Arts, Culture and Education. It works with people in over 200 countries and territories and has offices in more than 100 countries. In 2021 to 2022 the British Council reached 650 million people. The organization show their support by providing grant services in order to promote and seed exciting arts and cultural exchanges between the UK and countries in South East Asia – Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia. They hope that these grants help build long-term relationships and collaborations between artists, cultural professionals, creative practitioners and art and cultural organisations, hubs, networks, and collectives.

Website:

<https://www.gsainnovationschool.co.uk/>

<http://borneoartcollective.org/>

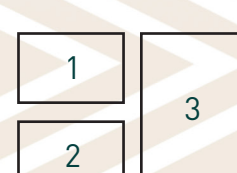
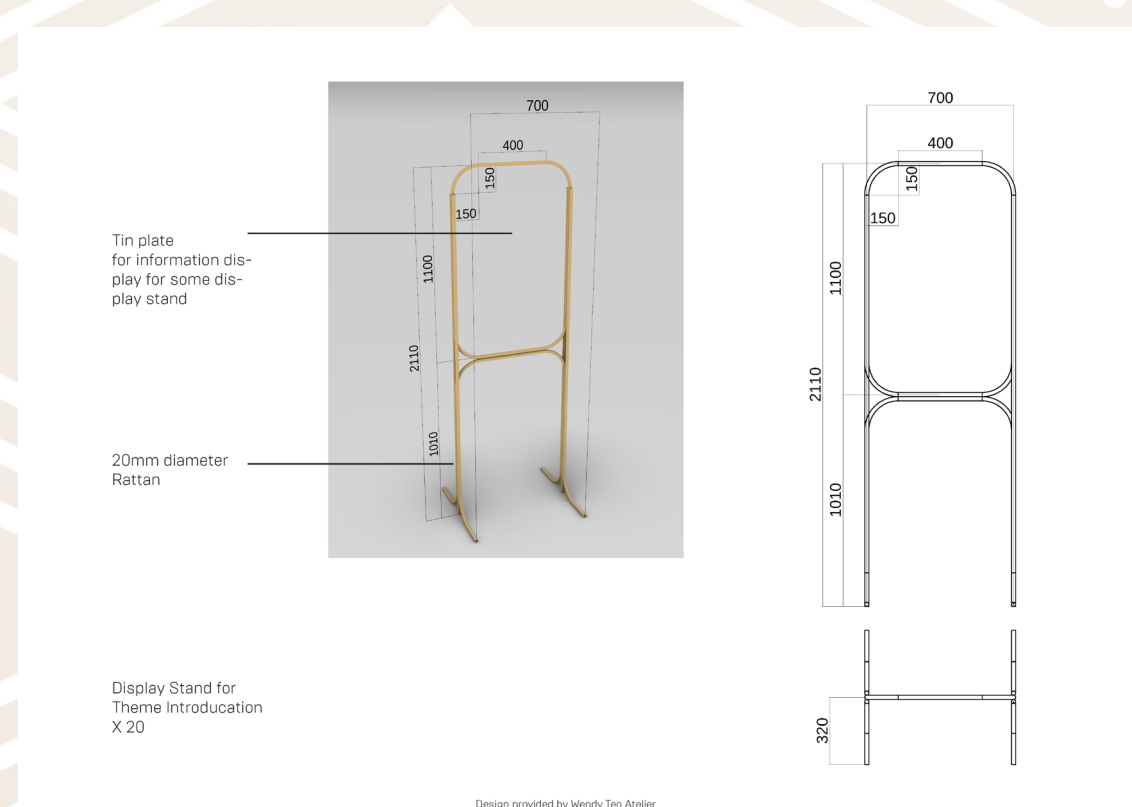
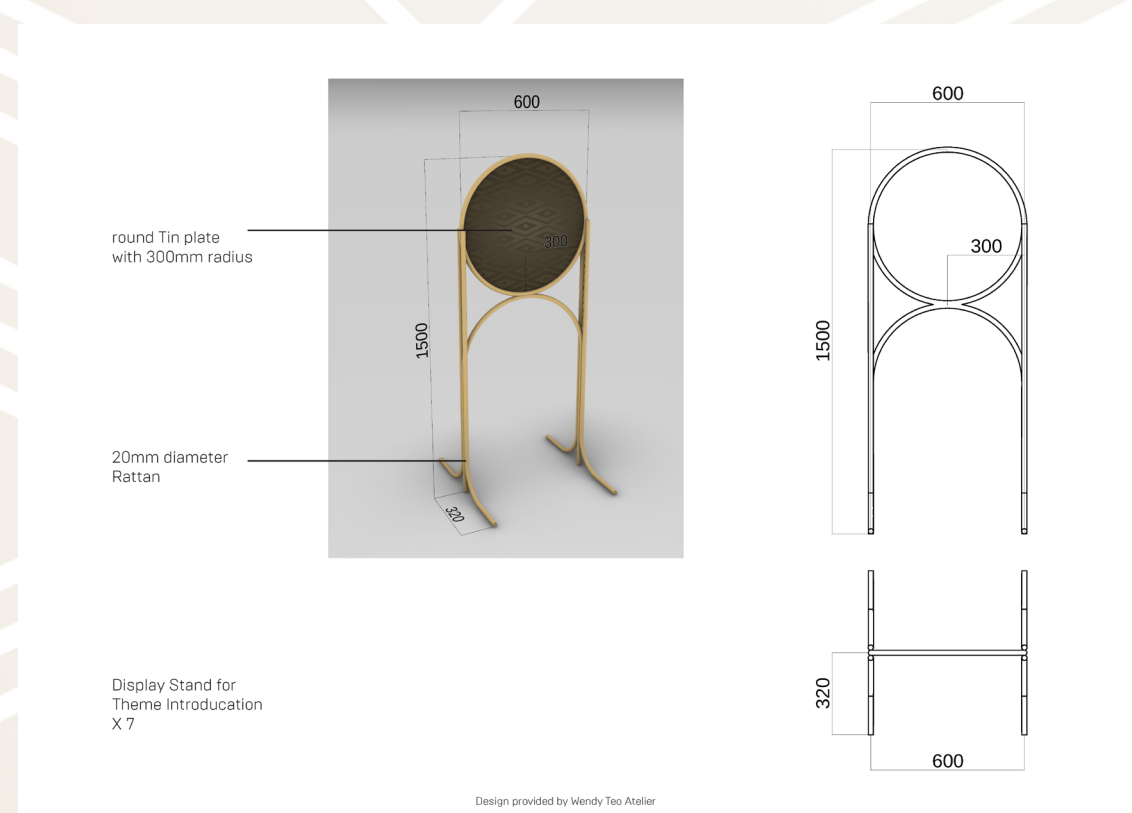
copyleft

initiative

Copyleft project is an ongoing design bank initiative that was being created during the road trip, to enable products made through bridging the donated design from designers that are well versed with the market needs, and the skills from the rural crafting communities that are lacking exposure and opportunities to the craft market. 100% of the revenue goes to the crafting community if there is any sale incurred.

Based on a conversation developed along the road trip, this proposed project will attempt to examine the relationship of craft in relation to its social production and contexts in the differing communities in Borneo.

The initial effort of this initiatives includes coming up with a number of designs by (Adeline Kueh, Wendy Teo, Gamia Dewanggamanik) made readily available for the crafting communities, which will be displayed during Serumpun exhibition



1,2 Design provided by Wendy Teo Atelier and made by Kalimantan rattan community
3 Design provided by Wendy Teo Atelier and made by Ibu Di'i with local pattern



changing landscapes

Climate change is having a direct impact on raw materials such as rattan and timber used in craft. Landscapes across Borneo are changing in ways that do not support nature resources to grow and thrive. Deforestation and land clearing are also leading to material shortages, forcing craft practitioners and artisans to adapt and explore the use of alternative ways of making that are in harmony with nature. In response to this challenge, craftsman and performer **Salomon Gau** explored alternative timber for his creation of Jatung Utang; and **Manai Jagoi** explored alternative fibres as a substitute or to complement rattan in their basketry.



artisanal trade

Opportunities to enter craft markets are not always equal. Factors such as access to education, training and financial support can impact the choices and livelihoods of craft practitioners and artisans, which impacts ways in which craft communities think and make. **Juvita Tatan Wan and the Tuyang Initiatives** explore this challenge in their project, which looks at practice in relation to loved ones, landscape and identity. In this exploration, bidai **Master Weaver Ibu Roslinda** facilitated a bidai competition, with the aim to explore craft identity through reviving traditional patterns and developing new patterns inspired by everyday life, Dayak Bidayuh narratives and Jagoi natural landscape. As the domestic market has begun to grow, it is more important than ever now to revitalise bidai identity that deeply represents the place.




documentation

Traditional practices and ancestral wisdom are at risk of being lost in today's craft industry. For example, ways of identifying and treating different types of material, harvesting material in certain moon phases, and crafting motives with certain beliefs. New ways of documenting and archiving craft processes are vital to protect and safeguard these knowledges for future generations. This challenge framed archival projects by **Jennifer P. Linggi, Emily Jeneble** and the **Sepatokimin Initiative**.



innovation

Craft production is changing. In places, large scale and low-cost manufacturing and imports are replacing traditional ways of making craft by hand. In response to this competition, craft practitioners and artisans are innovating ways they promote and sell, as well as developing new processes and unique products. **HANDEP** developed an innovative approach to engage Dayak weavers through organizing an annual weaving competition; the 'Ratu & Putri Dare (Queen & Princess of Weaving) Competition'. This year, instead of choosing individual winners, HANDEP selects one winning village as Desa MAHA DARE (The Great Weaver Village) with an aim to revive the collective spirit among the weavers. Kuching-based, **The Ranee** worked with a community of woman weavers from Betong division, Sarawak, on their natural fibre crafts. Exploring and innovating plant matter as a viable craft material, this time experimenting with bark cloth, with the input from design collaborators **Bengkel TanJong**.



youth education

Education is a collective effort. Supporting and motivating young people to engage with and preserve craft practices is challenging as these knowledges and skills are often not seen to be as relevant now than they were in the past. There is the need to explore new ways and opportunities for older generations to educate and inspire young people to value and take up craft-based careers. In their projects, **Sanggar Sarantangan** collaborated with their local school and worked with young people to explore local jelai beads as part of their curriculum; and **Rasmah Rumambai** of **Rose Elly Craft** designed and delivered a workshop attended by all members of Murut Bookan village, which was celebrated at a festival scale.



emily jeneble

Crafts Practitioner | Keningau, Sabah, Malaysia

Emily Jeneble is a Salingkawang bamboo weaver and up grew up in the small village of Kampung Bau Lunguyan, Sabah. Determined to continue the legacy of both her parents and grandmother, Emily's work focuses on opening up opportunities for anyone, regardless of age and gender, to learn this weaving practice and create products from it. Since she was a young girl, Emily's mother would carry her on her back to collect raw materials for weaving. Reflecting on this childhood memory, Emily described the significance of this craft in her family:

"My grandmother is a traditional craftsperson, who makes all kinds of products to help our community. These items are practical necessities such as the sirung, a traditional cap among Dusun tribespeople, which helps people working in the rice fields to shield from the sun."

Book entitled Sejarah Kraf Anyaman Buluh Emily Jeneble (Emily Jeneble's History of Plaited Bamboo)

This book covers 3 main aspects of Emily's life as a craft maker.

The first covers the stories of her grandmother and parents who are bamboo craft makers from which Emily learnt her skills. The second covers all the different bag designs which helped to build her 'brand'. Several of Emily's design has won major awards locally and internationally including one from the World Craft Council. And finally, the third segment covers how Emily expanded her craft making business to her community including the growth of many other craft communities through their involvement with her.



salomon gau

Performer, Instrument Maker | Miri/Long Moh, Sarawak, Malaysia
Credits to: Salomon Gau (Lead Exhibitor), Ngau Bilong

Jatung Utang (Cultural Wooden Xylophone) Material Exploration

Salomon Gau is a musician and craft artisan, originally from Long Ilang, Baram, and now based in Miri, Sarawak. Deeply passionate about preserving his cultural heritage, Salomon has dedicated close to 20 years to researching, understanding and honing his craft. From undertaking apprenticeships with elders, to the sourcing and studying of materials – as a teacher, Salomon is also constantly learning. His talent and art form all started from performing the mighty warrior dance, to playing and learning the making of the Sampe', to singing Kenyah folk songs, to now playing and making the Jatung Utang (a traditional wooden xylophone) which has taken him close to 30 years to complete. Salomon is a celebrated traditional Kenyah Dancer and has performed with the renowned Hongkong Chinese Orchestra (2018). He was also part of the creative team and cast for Kelunan (2019), a musical-theatre production about the history of the Kayan and Kenyah people, produced by The Tuyang Initiative. Currently, Salomon is focusing his work on becoming a cultural guardian for the Kenyah people.

Instead of using the conventional timber (Apo' and Baa'tilang), Salomon Gau explores accessible material around Miri city to enable the making of the Jatung Utang (wooden xylophone). The timber best used for the wooden xylophone is mostly found in the interior or hilly land like in the upper Baram. Conventionally, harvest of the timber needs to follow certain moon phase to enable the timber to be harvested on a reduced glucose level.

In this project, Salomon Gau explored 8 types of timber to make the Jatung Utang as replacement materials.



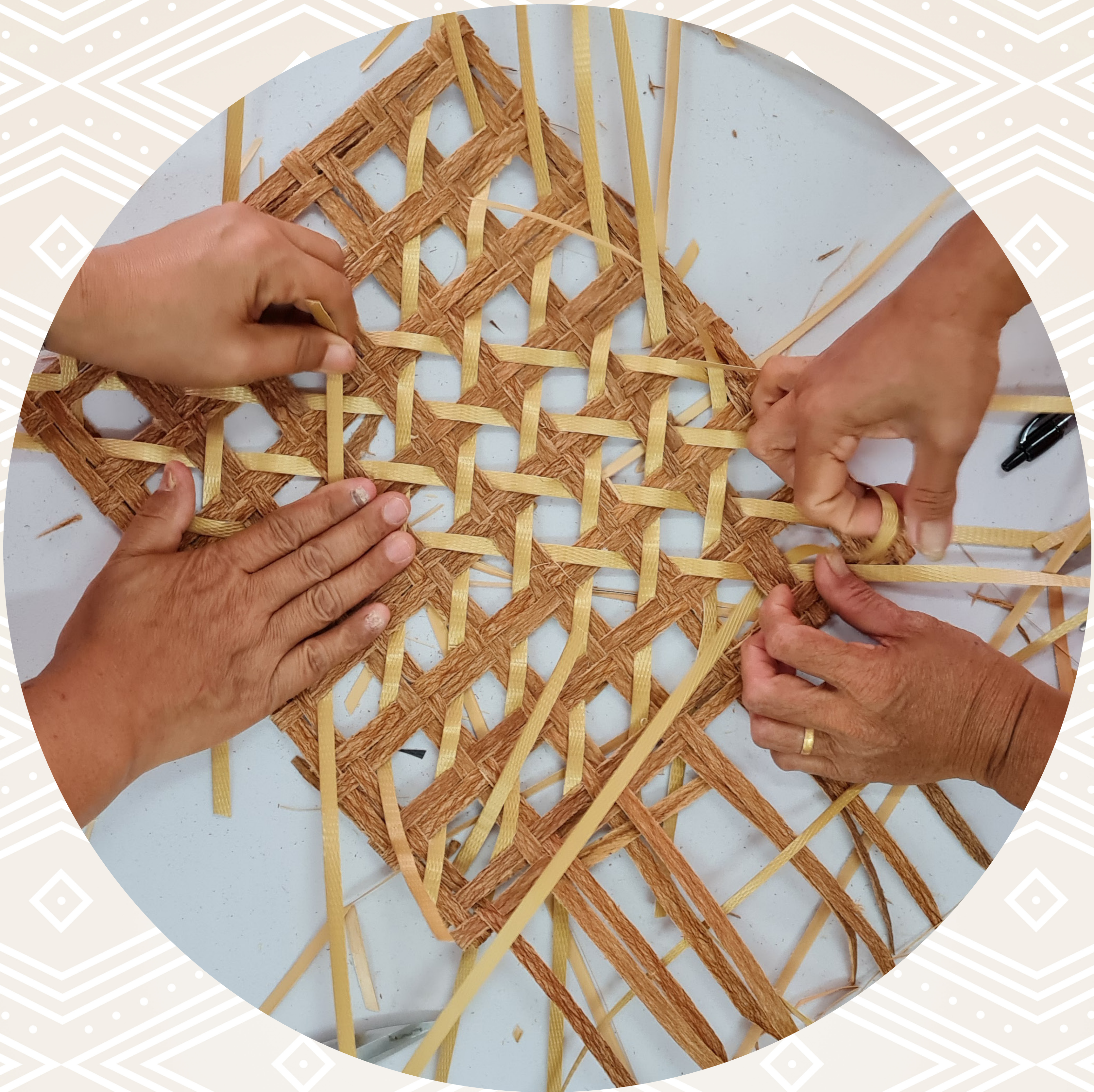
jennifer p.linggi

Crafts Activist & Researcher | Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

CONSERVING MURUT & DUSUN MOTIFS AND PATTERNS THROUGH VISUAL DOCUMENTATION

Jennifer graduated as an architect from Oxford Brookes University, UK. After working in London and Brunei she returned home to Sabah, Malaysia in 2004 to pursue her first love - art. As an artist, she was involved in many group exhibitions locally and internationally. In her role as the Director of the Sabah Art Gallery for 12 years, she is no stranger to the art scene and has worked extensively with the creative communities. Having produced several publications on heritage skills, Jennifer continues to explore and research on culture through architecture, design and art. The primary motivation for her obsession is a desire to increase appreciation of these sadly waning ethnic craft skills and to preserve the knowledge for future generations by producing reference material of Borneo's traditional culture.

The relationship of people and culture is strengthened by learning and the handing down of knowledge and skills from one generation to another. Traditionally, indigenous knowledge was passed down verbally or learnt by observation. Some cultural documentation has been done but usually for administrative records or for academic research. For knowledge to be transferred effectively, the receiver must be able to fully comprehend the information through direct experience. Many of the older craft communities are not literate and written words are not the preferred method of sharing. This explains her approach to visually documenting aspects of local culture. Her focus for the C&VM project is conserving the Murut and Dusun motifs and patterns used in bamboo craft making through digital documentation and incorporation of the motifs into new products made from modern materials.



the ranee

Crafts Practitioner | Kuching/Betong, Sarawak, Malaysia

Credits to: Rosemarie Wong (Lead Exhibitor),

Ar.Ivy Jong & Johnson Tan (Design Collaborators- Bengkel TanJong)

Exploration and innovation of plant matter as a viable craft material

Rosemarie is a designer and entrepreneur based in Sarawak. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in printed textiles for Fashion (Central St. Martins, London) and Diploma in Interior Design (Chelsea College of Art and Design), Rosemarie has a lifelong passion for indigenous handicrafts and heritage buildings. As the owner and creative designer of The Ranee Boutique Suites, The Marian Boutique Lodging House, The Granary and Ranee Artisan Gallery, Rosemarie has a mission: to create, connect and collaborate with local artisans to raise awareness and inspire change in the areas of preservation of crafts and heritage. Ar. Ivy Jong is the founding director of Atelier Timur Sdn. Bhd. The first elected female chairperson of Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia Sarawak Chapter. Johnson Tan is an architect who has recently returned to Sarawak after years of working in Australia and China. Currently attached to Zhejiang University of Science and Technology, he teaches architecture. Together, they set up Bengkel TanJong to explore design and craft beyond architecture.

3-Bark table-lamp is a collaborative effort between a trio of urbanite designers and the rural crafts women of Betong, Sarawak. The objective, to create a contemporary design lamp with the traditional bark cloth, and as its name suggests is a composition of 3 woven lampshades, set at various heights on an elegant marble base.

The lamp spreads a warm, intimate glow, and the open weave allows this light to filter through and create interesting patterned shadows and luminance. The veined marble and polished stainless steel stand with LED lights provide a strong textural contrast to the rustic woven shades. The intricate warp and weft weave consists of bark cloth strips interspersed with boxstraps, and overlaid with even finer strips to create a delicate lattice pattern.

The bark cloth has always been an understated material, we hope through this exercise to showcase its beauty, potentials and viability as a craft material, and hopefully revive an interest in its making.



sepatokimin

Craft Activist | Singkawang/Sambas, Kalimantan, Indonesia

Singkawang Songket - Credits to: Yohanes Arya Duta (Lead Researcher), Wisnu Purbandaru (Asst.Researcher), Gabriella Manurung (Textile Practitioner), Imaniar Rizki W, Katrina Rahmavika (Visual Designer)

Crafts Practitioners: Rohani, Adi (Singkawang Songket Weaver), Nadzifah Sub'in Dedare (Sambas Songket Weaver), Rahmat (Sambas Suri Maker), Andri (Local Practitioner)

Songket Singkawang: A Fragment of Songket Melayu History in Kalimantan

Sepatokimin is a community-driven initiative that seeks to empower marginalised communities across Indonesia through creative economic development by supporting human, social, intellectual and financial capacity-building.

This creative documentation follows the life story of a husband and a wife that had a major role in the development of Songket in Singkawang: Nurhayadi and Rohani. Born and raised in Sambas, West Kalimantan, Nurhayadi learned to weave and make weaving tools from an early age. He later moved to Singkawang to work for a Songket weaving business owner. When the factory was closed in 2000, Nurhayadi's collection of weaving pattern technical drawings and vast knowledge of tool-making made the craft sustained in Singkawang.

The pursuit of Songket Singkawang history leads us to Sambas, where we listened to stories of Songket Melayu that tied to the history of three Islamic kingdoms in the north of Borneo island: Kesultanan Brunei, Kesultanan Sarawak, and Kesultanan Sambas. As a cultural textile that is shared among many cultural groups across islands and nations, we can see the dynamic of Songket evolution through time and regions, and all the challenges it faced to be relevant today.

The technique, tools, and stories around Songket Singkawang were documented and presented through an interactive website page. This project is also the first fragment of "Antologi Temurun", an initiative in documenting traditional material culture of Indonesia through creative storytelling and various media.



sepatokimin

Craft Activist | Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia

Jagoi Rattan - Credits to: Wisnu Purbandaru (Lead Researcher), Yohanes Arya Duta (Asst. Researcher), Gabriella Manurung, Imaniar Rizki W, Katrina Rakhmavika (Practitioner team) Sujianto (Sekida Community Leader)

Crafts Practitioners: Di'i, Anik (Local Crafter)

Material Archives - Rattan Material

Discovering Rattans Material in Jagoi Sekida is a documentary project to archive vernacular cultural assets - rattan used by the Bidayuh Jagoi community in Sekida Village, Jagoi Babang, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Sepatokimin Initiative tried to identify this potential that has been commonly used for many generations for their daily household. Being the largest rattan-weaved producer, almost 80% of Sekida village members can do this artistry; however, the scarcity of this resource has been a prominent issue for the past years since the massive palm oil plantations have spread all over the areas.

Rattan has more than 600 known species worldwide, yet each region has its local name for each type, and to date, there has yet to be any effort to distinguish each kind scientifically in Sekida. During our research, we took some specimens and worked with the botanical research center to discover each scientific name, which led to finding alternative methods to breed these species. We also conduct creative documentation from each type of rattan and the end products made from each species; thus, more people may become aware of these conditions and start a collective effort to tackle these issues.



HANDEP

Craft Activist | Parangkaraya, Kalimantan, Indonesia

HANDEP is a leading social enterprise and sustainable brand in Indonesia that works with indigenous artisans and smallholders to create an alternative sustainable village economy that aligns with ancestral wisdom and local resources. The name HANDEP is borrowed from the Dayak Ngaju dialect, which as a whole means “the spirit of working together and helping each other as a family or community.” Our work is centered around this philosophy, Randi said:

“We are reconnecting the people closest to us, to not only the lands and forest around them but to their long-lived tradition and values, in respect of nature and to preserve the world they live in, as it should be.”

Desa MAHA DARE

In their project, HANDEP has developed an innovative approach to engage current and future generations of Dayak weavers through organizing an annual weaving competition since 2020, i.e., the ‘Ratu & Putri Dare (Queen & Princess of Weaving) Competition.’ In particular, the competition aims to foreground and renew interest in raising awareness of rattan weaving preservation and empowering women weavers in Central Kalimantan. This year, under the C&VM Project, Angela Mayrina and HANDEP Team are reinventing their approach. Instead of selecting individual winners, they choose one winning village as Desa MAHA DARE (The Great Weaver Village) to revive the collective spirit among the weavers by creating a high-value sculptural piece that speaks of this renewed spirit. While pushing the weavers to innovate and advance their traditional crafts and improve public appreciation, the competition also encourages multigenerational collaboration and facilitates knowledge transfer from the older to the younger generation of weavers.



rasmah rumambai

Crafts Practitioner | Keningau, Sabah, Malaysia

Credits to: Rasmah Rumambai (Lead Exhibitor) and Elmie Georgey (daughter and assistant)

Transferring of the skill of beadcraft of the Murut Boakan

Rasmah, an accomplished bead artisan has been making traditional bead accessories, a skill she learnt since young from her mother. Prior to the C&VM project, Rasmah made bead accessories to sell during cultural fairs and also to her friends. Through C&VM she decided to start teaching her skill to others apart from her daughters to ensure the continuation of the knowledge.

Organising the bead workshop was a first for Rasmah as well as the Murut Boakan community in her kampung (village). She garnered the support of the Murut Boakan Association as well as the Village Chief. This excitement and belief led to Rasmah being given a plot of land on the community grounds of Kampung Delayan Lama, Sook, her hometown. Rasmah will now look for funds to build her gallery and workshop where she plans to showcase many Murut Boakan artefacts as well as continue with her bead accessories classes.



sanggar sarantangan

Crafts Community | Singkawang, Kalimantan, Indonesia

Learning together, making together: exploration of jelai beads

Sanggar Sarantangan are a creative community from Habang, Sagatani Village in Singkawang - West Kalimantan. The name is inspired by the Lake Sarantangan in their village. Two generations ago, Sagatani was a little village surrounded by lush rainforest and the majestic Sarantangan Lake. However, gold mining activities brought negative impacts to the village. The forest was cleared and the land was excavated; leaving massive pits scarring the landscape. The clear lake is now polluted with mercury and other toxins from the mine.

The Sanggar was first established due to ongoing concerns of the challenges faced by the young generation in their village such as youth unemployment & limited economic opportunities, high-rate of school drop outs due to involvement in illegal mining activities (locally known as *dompeng*), lack of access to higher education / no space for the younger generation in from the village to learn about their own culture and participate in positive activities. The sanggar has for the purpose of creating awareness and understanding to the young generations in the village of their cultural and natural assets.



manai jagoi - bidai

Crafts Community | Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia
Credits to: Roslinda, Koperasi Hasta Karya, Deddi, Rino and Roy

Bidai with Local Motifs

Whilst rattan-based craft in Jagoi Babang (in particular bidai) remains a promising commodity with a consistent demand from the Malaysian market; conversely across Indonesia it remains fairly unknown. In this project, bidai Master Weaver Ibu Roslinda facilitated a bidai competition, with the aim to explore craft identity through reviving traditional patterns and developing new patterns inspired by everyday life, Dayak Bidayuh narratives and Jagoi natural landscape. As the domestic market has begun to grow, it is more important than ever now to revitalise bidai identity that deeply represents the place.



manai jagoi - rattan

Crafts Community | Jagoi, Kalimantan, Indonesia

Credits to: Jembelia Ania, Fitri Nurjana, Roslinda, Di'i, Lusia Si'an, Paula Livia, Rusmiati Apu, Sujianto, Geovani Jebat

Woven Products with Alternative Fibers

Rattan weaving practice in the Kindau village of Jagoi Babang has survived many generations where its knowledge and skill continue to regenerate. Almost every family can weave, old and young. Rattan is an important vernacular material for the local communities and is deeply attached to their everyday life. However, it has been increasingly difficult to obtain the material because much of the land and forest has been cleared for oil palm plantation.

With the growing concern of the scarcity of raw material, the Manai Jagoi team brought together twenty rattan weavers from Kindau village to explore locally accessible materials to complement their staple material which is rattan. The project showcase the artisans' ability to utilise various types of rattan and other natural materials.



the tuyang initiative

Craft Activist | Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia

Credits to: Juvita Tatan Wan (Lead Exhibitor), Adrian Jo Milang (Community Manager),
Cultural Practitioner: Suzy Imbah, Iban - Kapit; Rosiah Rinai, Lun Bawang - Long Tuma;
Jonita Ayat, Penan - Long Nen

Slow Craft

Established in 2017, The Tuyang Initiative is a social enterprise based in Miri, Sarawak that is committed to ensuring continued cultural awareness of Borneo's indigenous people and cultural heritage. Having left their village of Long San, Baram to pursue their individual careers; founders John Wan Usang and Juvita Tatan Wan experienced a deep physical and cultural disconnect. Inspired to return to their roots, this father and daughter duo established and grew the initiative, which takes its name "Tuyang" from their Kenyah language, meaning "friend". Juvita has 15 years of regional and international experience in diverse roles such as business development, product marketing and audio-visual production, and currently leads the Tuyang Initiative team. Their core ambition is to ensure Malaysia's indigenous cultural guardians gain access to opportunities that support meaningful and sustainable livelihoods and they are able to thrive and lead efforts for cultural continuity. The arts and creative management company also provides indigenous cultural consultation, curates exhibitions, demonstrations and showcases.

What if cultural practitioners were given the luxury of time to imagine and create? What if they were not pressured by external briefs or deadlines to deliver "products", returning to the ebb and flow of their environments in making something meaningful to them? Will they create something with greater artistry because they are following their natural rhythm - from time to harvest, to water levels, to material availability - the way it has been done for hundreds of years?

Inspired by the intent of moving traditional cultural practitioners away from the growing push into mass production methods, The Tuyang Initiative through this project will give three craft practitioners in different areas of craft and geography, the space to:

- a) Shift mindsets away from mass production to artisanal craftsmanship
- b) Reconnect with their own cultural expressions and traditions, continue their slow craft practices and document their knowledge
- c) Exploring alternative value chain creation to benefit the wider community and their craft