

Creators & Keepers

Women weaving Europe



Universidad de Oviedo

Exhibition

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"Fostering socio-economic development and job creation in rural and remote areas through cultural tourism"



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27 - 29

Portugal
University of Aveiro

Bucos, Cabeceiras de Basto
Portugal
41°34'22.741" N, 8°2'20.505" W

Bed Blanket Coat "Manta da
Cama Coat"
Design by Helena Cardoso
handcrafted by the artisans
Bucos Women of Casa da Lã
group
2023

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19 - 22

Asturias (Spain)
University of Oviedo,
LaPonte Eco-Muséu,
Espacio Tormaleo, UriaXait

Les Regueres, Asturias, Spain
43°25'16.921" N, 5°58'24.082" W

Pillow Xalda Collection
Paz Mesa
2023

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30 - 32

Scotland (United Kingdom)
University of St Andrews

Helmsdale, East Sutherland
Highlands of Scotland
United Kingdom
58°7'12" N, 3°39'36" W

Hand Knitted Gansey Style
Woollen Blanket
Timespan Knitting Group
2005-2006

4



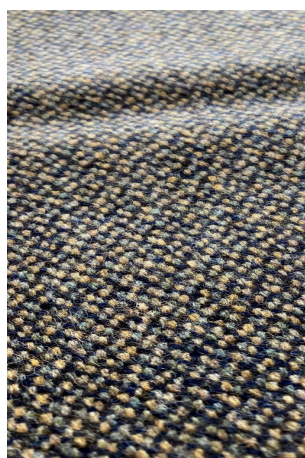
23 - 26

Asturias (Spain)
University of Oviedo,
LaPonte Eco-Muséu,
Espacio Tormaleo, UriaXait

Sobrescobio, Asturias, Spain
43°11'22" N, 5°28'2" W
Villar, Asturias, Spain
43°25'52" N, 6°02'09" W

Faltriquera
Laboratorio Biomimético ARBIO
and made by kÖs
2022

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33 - 34

Scotland (United Kingdom)
Applied Arts Scotland

Moray, Scotland,
United Kingdom
57°40'46.398" N, 2°57'24.422" W

Cullen Woven Tweed Cloth
Sam Goates of
Woven in the Bone
2023

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35 - 38

**Värmland (Sweden)
Region Värmland**

Brunskog, Arvika,
Sweden
59°39'25.531" N, 12°53'28.043" E

Skäktefallstrålar
(Rays of scutching tow)
Therese Henner
2020

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46 - 48

**Slovenia
Scientific Research Center
of the Slovenian Academy of
Sciences and Arts**

Upper Carniola, Municipality
of Žiri, Slovenia
46°2'31.988" N, 14°6'25.988" E

Decorative lace doily
Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking
Society
2023

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39 - 41

**Northern Norway
Museum Nord**

Lofoten, Norway,
Scandinavia
68°8'56.431" N, 13°45'34.764" E

Anna jumper
Lofoten wool
2022

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49 - 50

**Romania
Council County Maramures**

Țara Lăpușului, Vima Mare
village, Maramures, Rumania
47°29'37" N, 24°0'23" E

IE + ZADII
Dominica Stan and Stan Maria
(mother and daughter)
1960-1970

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42 - 45

**Italy
Turin Polytechnic**

Franciacorta, Brescia, Italy
45°37'12" N, 10°1'12" E
Treviso, Veneto,
Italy 45°40'20" N, 12°14'32" E

Manifesto Collection by
Cap_able
Rachele Didero and Federica
Busani (Cap_able)
2019

8



51 - 52

**Estonia
University of Tartu**

Viljandi county, Estonia
58°19'17.933" N, 25°43'36.844" E

A pouch made of a ram's
scrotum
Monika Hint
2019

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CULTURALITY



CULTURALITY is originated from the collaboration of 13 partners representing 9 different countries, each of them with a distinct field of expertise and a remarkable relationship with their local crafts. However, we are united by a shared vision: the significance of crafts as a potent catalyst for development in remote rural areas, where job opportunities and stable populations are often scarce. Our aim is to enhance the potential of these regions as destinations for high-quality, eco-friendly tourism that prioritizes sustainability and respects local communities.

- UNIOVI - University of Oviedo - Asturias (Spain)
- La Ponte-Ecomuséu (LAPONTE) - Asturias (Spain)
- Espacio Tormaleo (ESPTOR) - Asturias (Spain)
- Uriaxait LC (URIAXAIT) - Asturias (Spain)
- University of Aveiro (UAveiro) - Portugal
- The University Court of the University of St Andrews (USTAN) - Scotland (United Kingdom)
- Applied Arts Scotland and Scio (AAS) - Scotland (United Kingdom)
- Region Värmland (RV) - Värmland (Sweden)
- Museum Nord Foundation (MN) - Northern Norway
- Turin Polytechnic (POLITO) - Italy
- Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) - Slovenia
- Council County Maramures (CJMM) - Maramures (Romania)
- University of Tartu (UTARTU) - Estonia

To find out more about the project CULTURALITY, we invite you to our provisional website: <https://esartuniovi.com/culturality>. There you can learn more about general and specific goals, key points, concepts of the project, as well as the themes of the work packages, activities and news related to the project.

INTRODUCTION

In CULTURALITY we understand crafts as an indispensable identity element capable of characterising and highlighting a territory through its traditional culture and its links to the community that inhabits it. Crafts are inevitably linked to the territory because it conditions them from the inside out, for instance, through its specific needs and the raw materials that are available in the area: it determines their types, their shapes, their decorative motifs and, of course, their use. In turn, crafts can also influence the territory, creating unique cultural landscapes and distinctive social customs that form the basis of the local shared heritage. Thus, crafts are connected to the community because it shares relations with the oral traditions, verbally transmitted know-how(s) or peculiar ways of cooperation and interaction between its inhabitants.

Through this exhibition, the first joint effort of the members of our international and interdisciplinary consortium takes shape, and it seeks to offer the public an introduction to the ideals that gave rise to this ambitious project. We present to you a true declaration of intent that covers, despite its limited length, several of the fundamental pillars on which our efforts will be based over the coming years. The team of representatives from each of the countries that make up our partnership carefully and sensibly chose the objects that they considered would most effectively transmit the values that we wish to disseminate through our first activity as a group. In the detailed explanations that will accompany the pieces in the catalogue the viewer will be able to feel and understand the pride with which all the contributors speak about their very own artisanal traditions.

CULTURALITY understands crafts, of course, our aim is to offer a leading role to the crafts as they deserve want to share the singularities and values of our own artisan traditions. Our greatest aspiration is that, through our work, traditional crafts are no longer considered a thing of the past, but rather a source of pride and sustainable development for both the present and the future.

Firstly, of course, our aim is to offer crafts the leading role they deserve as containers of local traditions and ancient knowledge, regardless of their place of origin. Each of the participating countries has a rich legacy of artisans specialising in the production of pieces with particular characteristics, which makes them as interesting as they are

representative of their homeland. However, when selecting a theme for a modest inaugural exhibition such as this one, we could not just work with a research field as broad and ambiguous as "crafts" in general. That is where the idea of narrowing it down first came from. We immediately realised that this would be a great opportunity to highlight the fundamental role that women have played as creators, artisans, and protectors of our textile heritage and all its associated knowledge. This is another of our commitments, both short and long term, and one of the ultimate goals of the project. It cannot be a coincidence that in all the geographical locations that take part in this joint exhibition, this type of woven heritage is so strongly linked to the popular wisdom of women; women who knew how to take this rather homely duty that was, most certainly, just matter-of-factly assigned to them and create wonderful things with it.

Together we can find intertwined in the threads of this textile legacy not only a catalyst for the creativity of our ancestors, but also a testimony of their empowerment. Women from all places have been weaving a great collaborative patchwork piece for centuries, in which each culture has added its contribution, and it is the responsibility of our present-day creators to continue preserving and furthering this precious legacy. The underlying line of the chosen theme is based on this very concept: today's modern designers have quite often, managed to take over from their artisan ancestors and reinterpret their know-how in ways that ignite a new appreciation for their tireless efforts. Therefore, some of the participating countries have chosen not only to show us a piece that directly represents their textile artisan heritage, but to also bring out a second item that reflects their influence on their high-quality, artisan-based contemporary design. This continuity, although scarce, should always be taken as a breath of fresh air in a sociocultural context like the one we live in right now, in which globalisation and mass production are gradually and effectively killing the interest in learning and preserving this ancestral knowledge. The peculiarities of characteristic traditional textiles linked to the folklore of a certain geographical area have also been known to act as a promoter of the sense of belonging and community among the inhabitants, carried time and time again as a banner of their pride. Where it seems that individuality is constantly being diluted in pursuit of an increasingly ubiquitous homogenization, the nods to tradition in these contemporary garments never fail to make a powerful statement.

Both a well-preserved and respected past and a conscious present are indispensable parts of a future in which this knowledge is still valued and transmitted from generation to generation, as it has always been. That is what we hope to convey through this exhibition and, ultimately, one of our most ambitious goals.

WOMEN STITCHING TOGETHER

TEXTILE LEGACY FOR SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNITIES.

Women and textile. A historical relationship.

Although we can find geographical differences, international organisations estimate that around 60% of workers in the textile industry are women, reaching almost 80% in some regions (UNCTAD 2004; ILO, 2023). Many of these women occupy the most precarious positions, while the most qualified ones are taken by men. If we think about prestigious designers in the world of fashion, it is remarkable that many of the figures that come to mind are male. Although there are a much higher number of women in Fashion Schools (Pulido, 2019), their names remain diluted in the production chain (pattern makers, seamstresses, embroiderers...), and when they are recognised, they are often models. However, their presence is still the majority, and not only in modern industry. Women have been historically and, in all cultures, linked to the textile sector, whether in the domestic sphere to meet family needs or for moral issues related to “feminine aptitudes”, as well as within the productive sphere through artisanal work. Although in ancient times their presence was generally limited to work within the home or to those related to religion, such as making offerings or working in convents, already in the Middle Ages, their presence is documented as workers within guilds, especially in urban environments, but also within rural workshops in which other family members also participated (Rodríguez and Cabrera, 2019; Rodríguez, 2023). Subsequently, their incorporation into work during the Industrial Revolution began a long process in the manufacturing sector that continues to this day.

Repeatedly, this significant and valuable number of women has gone unnoticed, leaving us with only a few names in our historiography, which is currently undergoing a review from a gender perspective. Together with great more contemporary designers closely linked to the European sphere such as Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel or Mary Qant, among others, we can corroborate the presence of women in relation to great textile milestones throughout all historical periods and in various civilisations. An early example of notable relevance is that of Empress Silingshi (circa 3000 BC), who is linked to the discovery of the most valued of fabrics: silk, which, like many other textiles, would go on to have great economic and geographical and social



Woman spinning during October calendar on a Psalter of Eleanor of Aquitaine (ca. 1185)

Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands



The textile linked to women as both an attribute and a tool: woman spinning and seducing a man. "Spinning wheel" by Adolphe Weisz (ca. 1850)

Liveauctioneers

repercussions, such as promoting economic development, but also connecting distant regions and cultures through trade routes (Quero and García, 2005; Postrel, 2020). Mythology is another important source in terms of female names and textile production, since the goddesses often weave worlds and destinies in different stories: Neith or Hathor in the Egyptian mythology, Ixchel or Coyolxauhqui in the pre-Columbian one, Nüwa in China, Sarantu in Hinduism, Frigg or the Norns in the Nordic sphere, or Athena, Hestia or the Fates in the classical antiquity, etc. Both in mythology and in the visual arts we can also observe how textiles are not only linked to the "feminine virtues" that concern the home and family, including domestic seclusion, marriage, temperance, care, etc. This assigned task and attribute is configured as a symbolic instrument at the service of women to achieve a certain goal. Continuing with Greco-Latin mythology as a relevant example for our case, we can mention instances in which weaving is used to resolve more mundane issues such as in the stories of Progne and Filomena, Penelope, Aracne, etc. (Dalton, 1996; Fernández, 2012). Finally, throughout history, textiles have been constituted as a practice at the service of women, valuing cultural knowledge that has implications in multiple aspects, and as a way to achieve a certain economic independence. However, it is important to keep in mind that this process of recognition of women has entailed and still entails numerous problems and challenges.

Independence and recognition or precariousness and oblivion?

Although, as we have mentioned, the presence of women in the textile production sector has a long history, their incorporation into factory work during the Industrial Revolution represented a turning point. Prior to this, women's work, as well as that of children, were very relevant to the family economy, but they were tasks that were carried out mostly at home and in its surroundings (Carner, 1982; Rodríguez and Cabrera, 2019). Although during the Middle Ages there was an advance with their participation in the guilds, among which their high representation in the textile industry stands out, in all of them the number of men was still higher (Rodríguez, 2023). It will be during the Industrial Revolution when the female presence is more evident in the productive sector.

The repercussions of this industrialised work on women's lives have been widely debated to this day. On the one hand, earning income contributed to greater independence and social mobility, making it possible to put aside arduous agricultural tasks and leave the family unit. At the same time, the importance of their work for family cohesion is alluded to by preventing the man or his children from having to emigrate to obtain more income. On the other hand, reference is made to the precarious working conditions, with long hours, poor pay, physical abuse, the increase in illnesses due to the repetition of tasks in unhealthy positions, the use of harmful products or poor hygienic conditions with overcrowding, and poor ventilation and lighting (Medina-Vicent, 2014; Berwal, 2021). As we have pointed out, although if a comparative analysis is carried out between traditional female and male industrial work, women's work may be perceived as less demanding in terms of physical effort, it

also entailed numerous problems. Likewise, even within the textile sector itself, their situation was even more unfavourable. Men, who had a smaller presence compared to women and children, occupied those tasks that provided greater remuneration and a certain social prestige. But in addition, when the same work was performed, men's salaries were higher (Arango, 1994; Medina-Vicent, 2014, Berwal, 2021). Although it has been suggested that this difference in the number of employees could be a sign of the valorisation of the knowledge and skills of the female workers, it must be taken into account that it is not the only factor to consider, since their situation of vulnerability and the availability of more abundant and cheaper labour, as shown by salaries, was decisive for their hiring (Carner, 1982; Arango, 1994; Medina-Vicent, 2014). Likewise, it is an area of work that, together with food, reflects their traditional role: clothing and nourishing (Sullerot, 1978).



In both historical visual documents and mythology, we can observe how this knowledge was passed down from mothers to daughters, also in the upper classes, who reserved certain tasks like embroidery for the maids while engaging in other activities like wool carding.

Illustration of women of different ages performing household task (cooking and spinning and carding wool) from *The costume of Yorkshire (1814)*

British Library

We find examples of this dichotomy between the improvements and the issues that textile work caused for women even in the workers' own testimonies. Thus, collections of letters such as those in *Farm to Factory: Women's Letters, 1830-1860* show very different experiences than those in others such as *The Lowell Offering: Writings by New England Mill Women (1840-1845)*. Among all the points mentioned, economic independence is perhaps the most widely discussed in the literature as a positive aspect. However, this monetary gain did not always have an impact on the woman's well-being. Usually, the money obtained was insufficient for subsistence and led to a precarious life. This salary was even scarce when it was part of the total family income, to which was added the salaries of the men and the children, who were also a labour force widely used in the manufacture of fabrics. In other situations, the money was used to finance the studies of the men in the family or simply did not belong to them. The response to this context of discomfort in various areas led to the emergence and organisation of numerous social mobilisations that represented important milestones in the fight for labour rights and gender equality during industrialisation. Those carried out in the countries where industrialisation and, specifically, the textile industry had greater relevance stand out, such as the northwestern United States or England. Some crucial protests were those of the Lowell Mill Girls (1834), the New York Shirtmakers' Strike or Uprising of the 20,000 (1909) or the Lawrence Strike or Bread and Roses (1912).

Women and children working at large cotton manufacturing machines

Wellcome Library, London



Dislocated precariousness and environmental damage. The consequences of a consumption system.

Unfortunately, this situation for women within the textile industry remains a reality today, transferred to other geographical points, where insufficient social and environmental regulations favour the perpetuation of harmful practices. For the most part, relocation within the globalisation phenomenon involves countries in East and Southeast Asia (Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, etc.), but also others such as China. Progressively, this practice has been growing and expanding to new areas such as Africa or Latin America (Racz&Thews, 2021), highlighting as an exponential element the end of the Multifibre Agreement (MFA) in 2005, which regulated global textile trade since 1974 (Bhattacharya, 1999; Nordås, 2004). We must also consider that the impacts of relocation are not only focused on the production chain, but also have worrying consequences at the end of the life cycle of the item, with the creation of numerous textile landfills far from places of consumption.

Textiles and women in non-european cultures.
"The Making of Silk Fabric" by Wang Juzheng
(Northern Song Dynasty, 960-1127)

National Palace Museum, Beijing



Although there is no doubt that this situation affects the entire community, it is the poorest classes and women who experience the greatest negative impact (UNITED NATIONS, 1999), because although they have traditionally preferred jobs in the tertiary sector over industrial ones, which are often better paid (Sullerot, 1978), they are the predominant force in the textile sector and those who experience the worst conditions (Marx, 2020). As happened in Europe and the United States during the Industrial Revolution, in these countries their incorporation into the workforce means new income opportunities outside the home, but at the same time, serious situations of precariousness. Once again, female employees face excessive working hours, disproportionately low salaries, lack of social security, repetitive tasks and a highly dangerous work environment, where the number of substances harmful to health and the environment is very high (Worker Diaries; Labor Behind the Label; Fashion Revolution, n.d.). According to research, workers in the textile industry have a greater predisposition to various types of occupational cancer, with a predominance of lung or bladder cancer (Singh and Chadha, 2016). This situation of unrest is often ignored and international reports continue to document a worrying general situation (ILO, 2014; 2023), despite instances of massive attention with media covered cases such as the fire at the Tazreen Factory in Bangladesh or the collapse of Rana Plaza, in the same country. The 2019 pandemic also revealed another reality that many women faced in the textile sector, with a predominance of temporary contracts that leaves them in a situation of vulnerability in periods of maternity, illness, or instability, as happened with COVID-19, when a large number of workers did not receive pending salaries or compensation due to the high number of sudden dismissals (ILO, 2020; WRC, 2021).

The pressure only increases because of an increasing demand, predominantly from Europe and the United States, which insist on increasingly shorter production times and lower prices. Although the clothing industry is the highlight of this issue, the pressure on production also includes those textiles intended for home decoration, which often reflect an increasingly changing fashion. Traditionally, trends used to spread from the most privileged to the least privileged classes, with differences between classes, roles, and functions, more gradually, but in recent decades there have been accelerations in these rhythms, which have direct implications for production. The growing relevance of the individual compared to the collective in contemporary times and the increase in the middle classes means that the "downward filtering" has been leaving room for new forms of diffusion, much more dynamic with theories such as Wiswede's "virulence" (Barreiro, 2006) in an increasingly volatile environment. Thus, we've gone from changes in fashion with extended periods of time and therefore with more spaced collections, to greater dynamism and multiplicity. Furthermore, fashion not only changes more quickly, but it is plural, providing different options depending on the taste of the individual (Lipovetsky, 1990), or the interest of belonging to a certain group, as Maffesoli explains in *The Times of the Tribes*. Chain production, of the Fordism characteristic of the Industrial Revolution, leaves room for a more diverse but equally excessive production, post-Fordism, or flexible production. That is, mass production, but not so much in series. In this context, ICTs play a crucial role, shaping the Third Industrial Revolution, with a growing capacity to process information thanks to advances in computing and thus generate new collections in line with market fashions. The "Just in



The textile industry and its pollution since the Industrial Revolution.
Barbour's flax thread works
United States Library of Congress's

time" (JIT, n.d.) criterion would define the new form of textile operability, reducing the quantity of each of the models, but launching different collections more frequently to reduce the risks of losses associated with larger collections and a longer manufacturing process, taking over a market with increasingly varied tastes. The sales would close a production strategy that ensures that the entire stock is sold, providing disproportionately reduced prices against which it is difficult to compete, thanks to the high profit margin due to the reduced production cost (Barreiro, 2006).

Along with relocation, diversification of production is a key element to cover this type of market. Through small factories, with subcontractors in charge of different collections, garments, or components, it is guaranteed to adjust the production scale to the various demands. Garments are no longer only manufactured far from the points of consumption, but the production of the same garment involves a multiplicity of productive units and places, even from the raw materials themselves. For example, before the garment is made, cotton has already crossed international borders (USDA, 2009; Racz&Thews, 2021). This system brings with it new complexities in terms of regularisation and deprecariousness of women's work, because although there are controls, these are usually oriented towards the largest companies and it is precisely women, especially those from lower social classes, who work for smaller companies (ILO, 2023).

A conscious textile production. Crafts and sustainability as a proposal for the present and future.

Given the enormous social and environmental impacts of conventional textile production, we should ask ourselves what opportunities the production and sale of artisanal textiles has to offer. In recent years there has been renewed interest in crafts from multiple perspectives. Within the textile sector, numerous projects related to women are being carried out, eminently focused on rural areas and developing regions, where crafts continue to be an important source of income for women and their families, especially in Africa and some areas of Latin America. Craftsmanship is thus seen as a way to address current global problems and orient us towards sustainability in its triple aspect: social, environmental, and economic. In Europe, this recovery is also mainly oriented to rural areas, where various conscious practices have been preserved in greater numbers: ways of doing things, knowledge about the environment, materials, or the characteristics of objects necessary to extend their useful life. In short, a heritage to look at to guide the future, valuing women and energising rural communities in the different territories.

In addition to the topics addressed in previous sections linked to social sustainability, to look for alternatives from craftsmanship and the territory, it is necessary to consider textiles from a holistic perspective, paying attention to the environmental effects of the current model. That is, the impacts affect the environment, and therefore have repercussions on human beings as part of the

ecosystem in which they live. A clear example is the impact of climate change on the natural resources on which women depend for textile production, with extreme phenomena and changes in weather patterns (UN WomenWatch, 2009).



Rural areas, women, and textile crafts.
"A woman weaving a blanket"
by Paul Kane (ca. 1850)

Royal Ontario Museum, Gallery of Canada

Traditional textile production implied -and still implies- a deep knowledge of local natural resources, such as plant and animal fibres for the manufacture of threads or dyes. Already from the beginning of production, with the obtention of resources, these textile practices resulted in a configuration of the rural territory through different artisanal cultural landscapes (Larrain and Tapia, 2022). Like this, a type of livestock dedicated to obtaining wool will create a specific space distribution and maintain a specific type of vegetation. An agricultural plantation will do the same, such as flax, hemp or cotton, or the plants necessary for their dyeing grown in some rural areas of Europe, such as madder or lavender. Although any action has an impact on the environment, these livestock and agricultural practices were conceived in a sustainable way, using, for example, techniques such as grazing or rotational crops, influencing the structure of the soil, vegetation, and biodiversity. Also, prior to the Industrial Revolution, the treatment of materials was minimal and the amount of energy used was much lower. However, these ways of doing things have been increasingly relegated and replaced by new activities within the linear economy.

Although it is a very broad topic with many particularities, we will analyse from a general perspective the negative consequences that the production of a contemporary textile object can generate in the current system and, from this, the possibilities that craftsmanship has to offer. Firstly, the extraction of raw materials for an exorbitant demand entails the overexploitation of natural resources, often in areas far away from consumption points. Subsequently, with its transformation or with the production of synthetic materials required to produce fabrics, many pollution emissions are released into the atmosphere, but there is as well as an impact on water, both due to its high use and the harmful substances that are discharged. We must consider that the production of a garment not only includes the making itself, but also the aesthetic accessories or dyeing, one of the processes with the greatest environmental consequences. The shipment of these goods, considering the relocation

and diversification of production, is increasing, in turn generating an environmental footprint with packaging and transportation. During its useful life, the consequences on the environment are related to issues such as excessive washing and the use of detergents that also end up in the water, along with the microfibers that are shed. Finally, in the contemporary linear economy, textiles are discarded, with difficult recycling as numerous components are used that cannot be separated and usually end up incinerated or accumulated in landfills located in the poorest countries (Carrera, 2017).

Faced with this culture of obsolescence, crafts can be an alternative, enrolling in a circular economy focused on reducing, reusing, recycling, and recovering to minimise waste and promote efficiency in the use of natural resources. However, we must approach this new perspective with better judgement, because as Donella and Denis Meadows already showed in 1972 in their book *The Limits of Growth*, "in a finite world, growth cannot be infinite" and with the current exponential growth of population and consumption, many of the a priori sustainable systems may end up not being so. An illustration of the problem in textiles is the case of dyes. Already in the Middle Ages, with a much smaller number of people, the harmful effects of dye shops were documented, with discharges into riverbeds or a large consumption of firewood to obtain energy (Rodríguez, 2023). Despite being more respectful in general, natural dyes also impact the environment, for example, in the areas reserved for their cultivation, the energy for their treatment, or in some cases, with the elements used to fix the pigment, etc. In short, any element, if used massively, may not be sustainable. This is one of the key points in which the recovery of textile crafts must be done consciously, from a holistic perspective, considering the teachings of the past and the discoveries of the present, while being accompanied by a change of consumer mentality. To achieve this, some intrinsic characteristics of craftsmanship can be highlighted as a positive, differentiating attribute and as an attraction. The most important one is the value of quality and durability, with pieces made with care, guaranteeing a longer useful life and timeless aesthetics. This fact, initially favourable, brings with it two indirect issues that must be also considered: the production of this type of garments is directly opposed to a manufacturing and consumption model where the benefit lies in continuous purchasing, in addition to the low salaries of the producer. If the number of productions is reduced in line with a reduced need to purchase products, jobs would also be lost. However, this balance could be restored if the value of each garment increased, which would result in better remuneration for the producer, even if fewer units were sold, something also in line with production times. At the same time, the consumer should adopt a change of mentality in which, despite a greater initial outlay, the durability of the product and long-term savings should be valued and thus differentiate real need from created need.

Related to the social sphere, another of the virtues of craftsmanship is resistance to cultural homogenization in a globalised world. As we have seen, the concept of fashion has changed over time, and today, personal taste has become relevant. The theory of "hybrid identities" (Hall, 1997) exposes how despite the existence of globalising tendencies, they share space with a reinforcement and recovery of the local produce. But often these artisanal spaces are taken over by large

textile companies, taking away a resource that belongs to the artisans. In a saturated market with aggressive marketing, even when the local produce becomes important, its creations are made invisible by the recreations of fast fashion. In this sense, rural areas can be presented as an opportunity for promotion, an empty space, where craftsmanship is established as an identifying and energising element. The dissemination of crafts could go hand in hand with renewed interest in rural areas with booming phenomena such as rural and experiential tourism linked to activities and the landscape. Another promotional element related to the social sphere is the dissemination of the ethics with which the creations are made, which must be coupled with the dissemination of the harsh reality of the textile industry for women and the environment. In both cases, it becomes essential to develop mechanisms that empower the consumer to discern between authentically artisanal products and those that use strategies such as "solidarity marketing" (Barreiro, 2006), greenwashing or imitation of artisanal production.

Faced with these great challenges, female artisans have been developing ways of cooperating that facilitate their insertion into the market and an increase of their recognition. The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW, n.d.) highlights that artisanal textiles are often linked to cultural and political resistance movements led by women in local communities, developing various projects at a global level, although many of them focused on Africa or Latin America, and, to a lesser extent, in Asia. This cooperative work facilitates their positioning as artisans, as well as social cohesion between women and the community in general. For example, through tasks such as spinning wool, a space of time usually shared with other heritages such as music, dance, or stories. Textiles are thus a common thread between different material and intangible heritages. We have another example of its great influence in the landscape, in this case through the ornamental motifs that decorate traditional architecture and that are often taken from fabrics, or with specific architectural types such as the fulling mill that are distributed in the territory. Furthermore, weaving has been an important means of transmitting stories, traditions and messages within a specific community or ethnic group (Latin American "arpilleras", the American Quilt, or the "women's language" of the Miao tribe in Asia) and it also plays an important role in religious ceremonies and rituals.



Agnieszka Golda, Jo Law, and Martin Johnson, "Twilight State and the Edges of Darkness", (2016)

Wherewithart

However, today, textiles are culture, but also industry and economy. Therefore, fusing craftsmanship with contemporaneity is an innovative solution to delve into. Along these lines, it is crucial that this collaboration is carried out with deep respect for artisans, ensuring equity and adhering to best practices, as dictated by the guidelines of international organisations such as the UNESCO Meeting between Designers and Craftswomen (2004). If done correctly, these working methods allow traditional knowledge to be merged with new approaches, such as the mechanisation or digitalisation of certain phases, market and consumer analysis, graphic design and dissemination, or the incorporation of new concepts such as transparency in the supply chain or the use of R&D&I or recycling materials, where women have been pioneers in the implementation of avant-garde technologies and practices (Fashion Revolution, n.d.), as well as new paths within contemporary art.

For a well-understood sustainable development.

Through this text, the complex interactions that the textile-woman bond has, as well as the repercussions of textiles in the social and cultural, economic, and environmental spheres, have been outlined. We have also considered the importance of both textiles as an isolated element and its implications in other cultural manifestations, material and immaterial from a cultural perspective. Starting from this integrative vision and the important challenges we currently face, the need to adopt solutions to problems with equally integrative approaches that promote sustainable development of communities is highlighted, while bringing special attention to women. But what is sustainable development? A term that has been used so frequently and lightly in recent years that its meaning has often been distorted and obscured. Therefore, we must remember that sustainable development must be understood and applied not only as exponential growth, in which the economic plays a predominant role, but as an evolution, an improvement that goes beyond the quantitative, focusing on the qualitative, (Cañal and Vilches, 2009), and considering the social and environmental aspects together, as already included in the Brundtland Report of 1987.

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PIECES

1



Asturias (Spain) University of Oviedo, LaPonte Eco-Muséu, Espacio Tormaleo, UriaXait

Les Regueres, Asturias, Spain
43°25'16.921" N, 5°58'24.082" W

Pillow Xalda Collection

Paz Mesa

2023

Wool

Wool processing from shearing to yarn, dyeing and weaving on a low heddle loom

40 cm length x 40 cm width

Paz Mesa had her first contact with textile crafts through her mother, who taught her how to spin the wool of her own flock of Xalda sheep; a task that she carried out together with her sisters. They later would give the wool already spun to a cousin who was a weaver, for her to make the garments. However, her work as a professional in the field began two years ago, after an eleven-year training period with different national and international artisans. She works mainly with wool, linen and silk: respectful, biodegradable fabrics, committed not only to the environment, but also to the well-being of animals and workers, as well as to the health of the customer. She tries to promote and disseminate more responsible forms of consumption, basing her brand on issues such as sustainability, ecology, territoriality and a circular, ethical and conscious economy.

The reverse side of the Xalda Cushion is made with organic Asturian wool in the natural brown tones of the Xalda sheep itself, and the front in a mixture with a warp of the same characteristics, combined with a weft of Extremaduran merino sheep wool hand-dyed with natural dyes in the Paz Mesa artisanal textile workshop. The filling is made of Castilian merino wool with an organic cotton inner cover. The wool was spun in Cuenca in the Wooldreamers spinning mill, which allows small quantities of wool to be processed, facilitating the work of the artisans, and achieving different results as compared to manual processing, which Paz Mesa also practises in other pieces. These small spinning



Paz Mesa

© Julián Rus

mills contribute to preserving native breeds, craftsmanship and the use of the available resources, since many times the wool is discarded because it cannot be processed as it does not reach the enormous quantities required. The fabric was made by hand on a traditional low heddle loom by the artisan. Although in this case the wool treatment is not carried out by Paz, the process begins with the shearing of the sheep itself and the selection of the fleeces. In the pieces in which the wool treatment is entirely carried out by the craftswoman, the next step is to clean the fleeces, fluff the wool or "escarmenar" in Asturian, carding, and spinning.

The colours and hues used are part of nature's own palette with tones of the wool itself, from almost black to grey or, mostly and in this case, dark brown from the Xalda sheep. The process of dyeing is also done with natural elements such as plants from their own garden, discarded elements or collected in the environment, avoiding highly toxic chemicals, both for human and environmental health. This process is usually carried out on white wool, often from Merino sheep, since the wool of the Xalda breed is mostly dark in colour. Likewise, wool treatments such as super wash spreading with acids and synthetic resins that coat the surface of the fibre, altering its properties, are avoided.

"Cushion" may come from the Latin "coxa", which means "hip", and "pillow" from the Arabic "khadd", which means cheek. Historically, it has been a piece with different uses: utilitarian for sitting or kneeling; ceremonials related to some religious practice; as an element of social distinction; or the purely aesthetic and decorative ones. Their use has been documented since Ancient Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, where we find them in numerous tombs, although it is in the Middle Ages, appearing in inventories, where we find greater similarities with current cushions.

Their materials vary from the most archaic and rigid ones such as stone, wood or ceramic to softer fillings such as cereal husks and seeds, straw, paper, wood shavings, natural latex, wool, cotton, etc. Its outer part can be made with wool, linen, hemp, cotton, silk, leather, etc.



Les Regueres, Asturias, Spain
© Xandru González

With the Industrial Revolution, the use of this textile piece spread to the popular and/or lower classes, and in turn, the appearance of synthetic materials pushed natural materials into the corner and cushions began to be mass-produced, especially in petroleum derivatives such as polyester or rayon, along with synthetic fillings such as memory foam. The ornamental dimension became relevant, with interior decoration and ascribing to different decoration and textile trends. The piece we present aims to bring back the use of local materials, with minimal treatment. It combines functionality with a timeless, long-lasting aesthetic, in contrast to the overproduction of the textile industry that champions a volatile fashion. The mixture of different natural fibres gives it differences in terms of softness and its design, being able to link it with the traditional Asturian "half felt" or "full felt" quilts that often presented geometric motifs.

The use of wool in Asturias was closely linked to the peasants, since the wealthiest classes imported fine cloth from the Netherlands and Castile. This wool, along with flax and hemp, was produced by the peasants themselves. Within the entire process we can highlight spinning, an exclusively female job in the "filandón" (a neighbourhood meeting), combined with other activities such as agriculture or community contacts in which, among others, songs were sung, stories were told and danced, thus bringing together many types of assets.



Workshop of Paz Mesa in Les Regueres
© Julián Rus

These practices were lost with the mechanisation of the processes, especially during the second half of the 19th century, at the same time that there was a new coming of other fabrics such as Catalan cotton, with a greater water impact, or fine wool from other breeds such as merinos. Nowadays, it is widely exploited unethically in other parts of the world, leaving Xalda wool relegated to the most mountainous areas of the region. Paz Mesa recovers the traditional practice with wool from her own herd from Xalda and from other livestock farmers in the area or from Merina, from organic livestock farms in Extremadura, avoiding the mulesing that is practised in a large part of the industry. Furthermore, the commitment to this type of native livestock farming contributes to the revitalization of the rural area, promoting the economy and helping to manage the rural landscape, another great cultural asset. This directly

affects the territory in environmental, economic, social, and cultural terms. Adapted to the local fields and climatic conditions of Asturias, the small Xalda sheep, with a straight or sub concave cranial profile and bulging eyes, played a relevant role in the Asturian rural economy, obtaining wool and meat. It has adapted to mountainous fields and climatic conditions, which allows it to survive and reproduce in an environment where other breeds might have difficulties. Its presence is documented by classical authors such as Strabo, or, more recently, by notable figures such as Jovellanos in 1782. However, in recent decades, the breed has been in danger of extinction due to competition from other larger breeds and the rural depopulation and although it is currently in a better situation than 25 years ago, it is still in danger.

Although Paz Mesa is originally from Las Caldas, she moved and established her workshop in the village of Puerma (Les Regueres), in the central area of Asturias. Its economy has traditionally been based on agriculture and livestock, although in recent years it has experienced an increase in rural tourism thanks to its heritage with landscapes that include mountainous areas, Romanesque churches, and "Indiano" houses. Specifically, the Paz workshop is located in an ethnographic complex made up of the dwelling-workshop and three granaries, which were moved, recovered, and rehabilitated. One of them from the 16th century, with polychromes that were restored by the artisan herself, whose work was recognized with the "Lliñu" award in 2022. For this work, Paz created the paints herself with mineral pigments based on chemical composition tests, with the exception of elements such as white lead, which she replaced with zinc.

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://pazmesa.art/>

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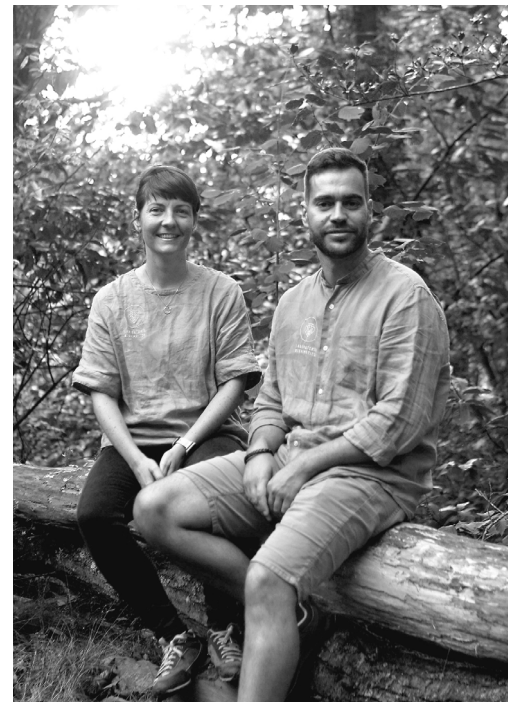
Asturias (Spain)
University of Oviedo,
LaPonte Eco-Muséu,
Espacio Tormaleo, UriaXait

Sobrescobio, Asturias, Spain
43°11'22" N, 5°28'2" W

Villar, Asturias, Spain
43°25'52" N, 6°02'09" W

Faltriquera
Laboratorio Biomimético-ARBIO (Marlén López and Manuel Persa) and made by kÖs (Constantino Menéndez and Yolanda González)
2022
Bagasse (beer residue), woollen cloth
Chopped or traced stitching on biotextile fabrics
23 cm length x 32 cm width

Marlén, biodigital architect and Manuel, biodigital designer and craftsman, make up the Laboratorio Biomimético, a project based on biomimesis, that is, on the attentive observation of nature, directly through field trips, or indirectly, with readings and documentaries. Through this observation and profound understanding, they seek to implement the solutions of nature, a designer with thousands of years of experience, to human challenges. One of the areas of the laboratory is ARBIO, dedicated to the production of biodegradable fabrics that the made by kÖs firm of Constantino and Yolanda uses to make some of its pieces. This collaboration is part of the key points of the lab, which seeks synergies with designers, experts, researchers, and the community in general. Constantino learned to sew with his mother and later trained in Fashion and Clothing. Inspired by his research and interest in textile history and historical recreation, he established the made by kÖs brand in 2013, combining traditional inspiration with contemporary designs, after a work of reproducing old pieces based on paintings and photographs with traditional scenes, especially from the 19th century. After a few years, Yolanda joined, who also began sewing with her mother, as well as with her grandmother and her aunts. She is in charge of reproducing the pieces based on Constantino's model, as well as the more business work, related to suppliers and orders. Her line of garments, with very selected projects, are produced on a small scale and locally, proposing pieces inspired by rural areas, village life and traditional clothing, incorporating current elements to give rise to handmade designer pieces.



Laboratorio Biomimético-ARBIO
Marlén López and Manuel Persa

Workshop of made by kÖs
Villar



Among the numerous biological adaptation solutions that we find in nature, ARBIO focuses on the wide variety of materials it uses to respond to design challenges. These biomaterials can be light, resistant, and biodegradable, and their study can open innovative possibilities in the form of manufacturing sustainable products and materials with a wide variety of structures and textures. Merging biology, technology, and design ARBIO uses agri-food waste along with natural binders (agar-agar, alginate, gelatin, starch) to develop, through research and experimentation, innovative, regenerative and 100% biodegradable solutions. In the case of the Faltriquera (pouch), we take the bagasse or beer residue (hops, malt, and barley) as the starter, which has been dried to control its weight, and glycerin and water are added to mix it by heating it and then letting it rest in a mould for about ten or fifteen days. Starting from this material, made by kÖs crafts a pocket bag (called Faltriquera) that combines innovation and tradition. The shape of the piece contributes to working with the material more comfortably, giving it shape to later decorate it with the chopping or remounting technique, in which characteristic triangles are used in many traditional garments that were used to curve a piece by cutting it, straight, giving rise to a motif called "ringo-rango". This decoration is made with merino wool cloth from León, where the artisan Miguel Cordero buys wool from Extremadura and León to fully process it, carding, spinning, and weaving on looms, and then dyeing it in Portugal.



made by kÖs

Constantino Menéndez and Yolanda González

The Faltriquera is a piece that is part of traditional Asturian garments, generally placed under the apron or skirt that had different openings (sometimes on the sides, sometimes in the front), to be able to access it, cinching at the waist with a couple of tapes. It came in different shapes, materials, and prints, depending on taste, age, marital status, purchasing power, the occasion, or the area of the region. The wool cloth, linen and the floral, geometric prints or embroidered initials always stood out. With this material, a contemporary vision is added to a piece with a long history. In the bio-textile sense of the design it was decided to leave the seeds in such a way that the origin of the piece was more noticeable. On this neutral base, made by kÖs adds ornamental details in very vivid tones of indigo blue and red, colours that were difficult to achieve and required a high cost, thus contrasting the richness and power of the colour symbolism with the waste of bagasse as the base material. This piece was also part of the Princess of Asturias Award 2023 exhibition.

Our era is mired in a system of linear production and consumption, in which we extract, produce, use and discard without considering the consequences. Based on a holistic vision of ecosystems with interconnected elements in which our actions have an impact on multiple levels, ARBIO and made by kÖs advocate a circular economy. They seek to reduce, reuse, recycle and regenerate resources to minimise waste while making a high-quality artisan product, prolonging its utility span. The material from which it is made, bagasse, is a food waste, so it contributes to disposing of waste as a resource. In addition, this is obtained from the local and craft beer factory Ordum, located in the rural Asturian environment. This piece therefore arises in line with the numerous scientific and international reports and warnings, and goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) regarding our production and consumption dynamics. Along these lines, craftsmanship is presented as a means to achieve this, at the same time as recovering and updating a cultural heritage, that of textiles linked to traditional costume. But in addition to the historical tradition of the pouch, the decorative motifs used, which can also be seen on other pieces such as vests or “denges”, go beyond textiles. It can be seen in granaries (“horreos”), churches, or baptismal fonts in different parts of the region.



Workshop of the Laboratorio Biomimético
Sobrescobio

The Laboratorio Biomimético lies in a natural space in Redes, located in the central-eastern area of Asturias, declared a Natural Park in 1996 and a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 2001. It has magnificent natural and cultural values, making this perfect laboratory space for biomimicry. Its mountainous landscapes, in addition to having an important ecological value, have also sparked recent interest in rural tourism activities, diversifying the historically used cattle and livestock farming practices and subsistence agriculture. On the other hand, the made by kÖs workshop is in Villar, belonging to Castrillón, a council located on the central coast of Asturias. A rural environment that was once closely related to livestock farming and maritime activity in the most coastal towns and to a lesser extent agriculture, but which with the establishment of the National Steel Company (ENSIDESA) gradually abandoned this practice. The establishment of artisan workshops like this thus contributes to diversifying the economy and returning to the local.



Sobrescobio
Asturias, Spain



Villar
Asturias, Spain

Author: Llara Fuente Corripio

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://laboratoribiomimetrico.com/arbio/>

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<https://www.instagram.com/madebykos/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe6z8IOOLCU-QFL3RwFm4Qg/videos>

https://www.facebook.com/madebyKos/?locale=es_ES

3

Portugal University of Aveiro

Bucos, Cabeceiras de Basto, Portugal
41°34'22.741" N, 8°2'20.505" W

Bed Blanket Coat "Manta da Cama Coat"
Design by Helena Cardoso handcrafted by the
artisans Bucos Women of Casa da Lã group
2023

Wool with burel rags and natural silks rags
Manual wool processing from shearing to yarn,
tailoring and handloom weaving
107 cm length x 58 cm shoulder line width x 119 cm
sleeve line width approx.



Helena Cardoso is a Portuguese designer and visual artist. Cardoso has worked since the late '70s, with several artisans specialising in different handmade techniques and materials in northern Portugal, especially traditional Portuguese crafts. Cardoso has been active in the areas of product design, fashion design, interior design, jewellery, social design and visual art. Regarding her work at villages, Cardoso officially started, in 1982, her partnership as a tutor with the Commission on the Status of Women –CCF (nowadays it is called CIG- Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality) and worked to support groups of women in underprivileged villages in northern Portugal until the present day.

In 2010, Cabeceiras de Basto City Council invited designer Helena Cardoso to work with artisan women, resulting in a set of new contemporary pieces (some of which use industrial wool), while maintaining the traditional way of making them. The designer was inspired to create the Manta da Cama Coat, which uses ancestral weaving skills –the chequered pattern–, but replaces the colour palette (blacks, oranges, and browns) with a monochromatic one (white and black) with brightly coloured accents using rags of burel.

The designer has been developing artistic pieces and eclectic clothing using ancestral hand-weaving skills. The wool used for the coat's warp comes from sheep from Cabeceiras de Basto, while



Helena Cardoso
© Maria Bruno Néó



Artisans of Casa da Lã group
©Maria Bruno Néó

the wool used for the weaving comes from Covilhã, because it has textural properties that are more suitable for contact with the skin. The wool from Cabeceiras de Basto's octane rams is processed by hand at every stage, right up to spinning.

Weaving is an "ancient art common to almost all cultures. Weaving was born in the context of sedentarization and the need to cover the body, assuming from an early age a symbolic, social and economic character beyond the utilitarian" (Saber Fazer, N/A). "In rural areas, weaving was a subsidiary of farm work and was practised by women for self-consumption" (Perdigão, 2002). Weaving in Cabeceiras de Basto, as a rural village, was used for many home textiles, such as bedspreads, rugs and blankets. Thus, knowledge is repurposed for novel applications, diverging from conventional household utility to serve as practical attire suitable for outdoor and urban settings, thereby facilitating the transmission of insights from traditional rustic blankets to contemporary urban fashion designs.

Between the mountains of Cabreira and Marão, in an extensive valley that is more than 18 kilometres long and 8 kilometres wide, right on the banks of the River Tâmega, lies Cabeceiras de Basto, one of the oldest and most historic municipalities in Minho. A land with a landscape in which the Minho and Trás-os-Montes coexist. This municipality is relatively isolated in terms of public transport access to the various urban centres, and can only be reached by car. This municipality inherits several houses, including manor houses, most of which date back to the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Casa da Lã is located in the parish of Bucos in the building of an old elementary school. Bucos is 11 kilometres north of Cabeceiras de Basto, 36 kilometres northeast of Guimarães and 46 km east of Braga. There is recurrent migration in this region, with people tending to emigrate in families to countries in Europe such as France, Switzerland, and Luxembourg, returning only at retirement age. The population is therefore characterised by age group, with a predominance of elderly people, as confirmed by the National Statistics Institute. It is the female population in this age group that has knowledge of wool and weaving.



Workshop of the artisans from
Casa da Lã group in Cabeceiras de Basto
©Maria Bruno Néó

Overall, in 2017, there were more women than men in the municipality, 52% of the population. With the integration of women into the labour market, there has been a decrease in the birth rate in the municipality, which, together with emigration, has resulted in a decrease in the population. We can also add that in terms of employment, women in this municipality are at a disadvantage, with 505 of the 800 registered job seekers in the municipality being women.



Cabeceiras de Basto, Bucos
Portugal

This is part of a PhD research that is being developed by Maria Bruno Néo with the supervisory team Prof. Luís Mendonça e Prof. Susana Barreto, under the FCT scholarship 2022.11272.BD in ID+ the Research Institute of Design, Art, Media and Culture.

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

Zet gallery interviews the designer Helena Cardoso
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R20UsXKeDxA>

Marco Carvalho interviews the designer Helena Cardoso in Canal Macau
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsQ4SlghZFc>

<https://cabeceirasdebasto.pt/museu-terras-de-basto-casa-da-la>

4

Scotland (United Kingdom) University of St Andrews

Helmsdale, East Sutherland, Highlands of Scotland
United Kingdom
58°7'12" N, 3°39'36" W

Hand Knitted Gansey Style Woollen Blanket
Timespan Knitting Group
2005-2006
Wool

Scottish traditional hand-knitting methods and patterns
200 cm length x 190 cm width approx.



The Timespan Knitting Group was established in 2005, to preserve Scotland's traditional knitting heritage related to the sea and share it with people of all ages. Over the years, the group has kept this fascinating aspect of Scotland's heritage alive by teaching the younger generation and creating a range of gansey-themed knitwear and gifts, including cushions, teddy bear jumpers, hats, ganseys, and more. Timespan is proud to have two gansey blankets in its collection, which will be part of a new project supported by the Esmee Fairbairn Collection Fund. The project aims to provide a new perspective on climate justice, sea extractivism and exploitation, and gender and inequality. The group meets weekly at Timespan in Helmsdale. The knitters played a key role in initiating the Moray Firth Gansey Project, which ended in 2012 and contributed to the highly acclaimed Scottish Diaspora Tapestry in 2015.

The group has created a wonderful artisan blanket, with each knitter contributing one square. The result is a beautiful map of patterns from the Moray Firth fishing district. The blanket can be displayed as a wall hanging, accompanied by an annotated map with the names of the ports. This hand-knitted blanket reflects the symbolic patterns found in traditional fishermen's jumpers or ganseys. Each square depicts distinct patterns from a particular port or harbour along the Moray Firth region, from Buckie in the southeast to Helmsdale in the middle and Wick in the far north. In total, there are 35 squares representing distinct patterns from ports along the Moray Firth in East Scotland.



Timespan Knitting Group



Workshop of Timespan Knitting Group
Helmsdale

Many fisherwomen were accomplished knitters and produced ganseys that were works of art. They would knit in their spare time, whether waiting to deal with the herring catch on the quayside or standing at the door chatting at home. In some areas, women did contract knitting of stockings to supplement the family income. A Guernsey sweater is designed for longevity, with identical patterns on the front and back enabling it to be worn both ways. If excessive wear occurred, such as around the elbows, the cuffs and sleeves could be unravelled and re-knitted - often in a different shade of yarn. Some fishermen were lucky enough to own a "Sunday best" sweater for special occasions and a lighter-weight Guernsey sweater for the summer, knitted in three or four-ply yarn in a different colour like pale grey or fawn.

The gansey was a geographically distinct and practical garment, being closely knitted, retaining the natural oil of the sheep for insulation and waterproofing on board wet boats and stormy seas. These easily recognisable patterned jumpers were worn by fishermen from the late 18th to mid-20th centuries. The fishermen's sweater, known as the Guernsey sweater (or in dialect *gansey*), developed



Helmsdale, East Sutherland, Highlands of
Scotland
United Kingdom

over 400 years ago, during the reign of Elizabeth I when wool was first imported from England. It can be traced along the coastlines of Britain from the Channel Islands to the north of Scotland. Traditional Guernsey sweaters are hand-knitted in five-ply yarn and in blue (using indigo, the natural dye) to imitate the fishermen's natural working environment of the sea and sky. They are seamless and knitted in the round using four or five double-ended steel wires or pins. Sadly, these unique designs could identify fishermen who had been washed overboard so that they could be returned home to their families for burial. The garment's design and patterns provide insulation, water, and wind resistance because the Guernsey sweater is so tightly knitted. Wool is also highly absorbent, and because it releases water slowly, it cannot easily be washed off the wearer's back.

The group meets regularly at Timespan in Helmsdale, which used to be a thriving herring fishing port, exporting salted herring to the West Indies, the Baltic, Ireland, and Europe, and trading locally. The harbour is still in use today for visiting yachts and for shellfish harvesting.

Author: Jacquie Aitken

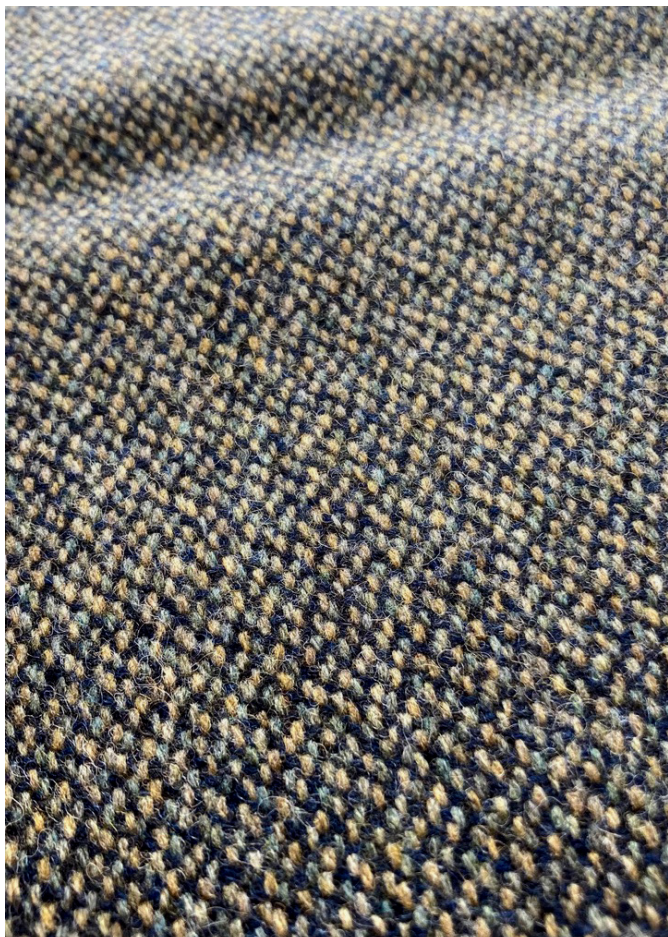
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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://timespan.org.uk/>

5



Scotland (United Kingdom) Applied Arts Scotland

Moray, Scotland, United Kingdom
57°40'46.398" N, 2°57'24.422" W

Cullen Woven Tweed Cloth
Sam Goates of Woven in the Bone
2023
Wool
Woven on a 1948 Hattersley Domestic Dobby Loom
(semi-automatic foot treadle loom)
100 cm length x 75 cm width

The weaver draws inspiration from the landscape and rich culture of Scotland. As Sam stated: "I follow a well trodden path that continues to draw connections between the diverse Scottish landscape and the cloth that I make".

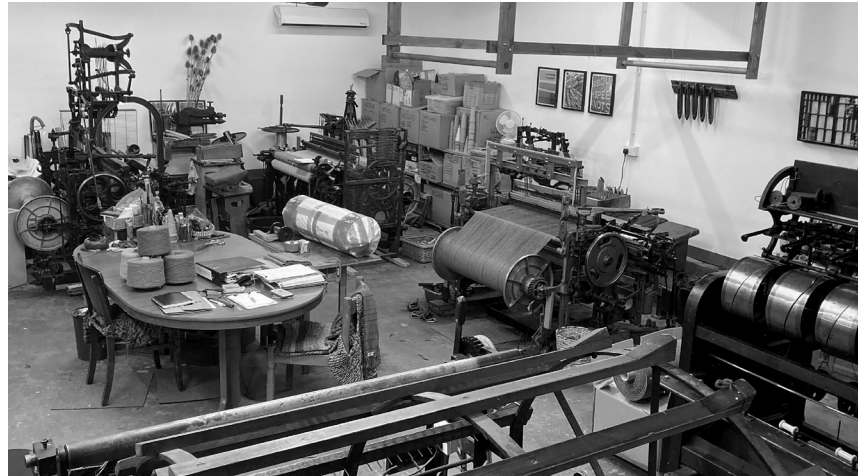
Weaving woollen cloth has been an essential part of Scottish life for centuries, evolving from handwoven domestic production of the 17th century to mechanised mass production during the Industrial Revolution. Classic cheviots, rustic homespun-style tweeds, robust Estate tweeds, as well as the finest woollen cloths remain a staple of the Scottish textile industry. They provide warmth, protection, style, and comfort, while also reflecting craftsmanship, provenance, and individuality amidst a world of mass production. While pockets of mechanised production developed in the Highlands and north east of Scotland, thousands flocked to the newly established mass production mills in the lowlands.

Claiming to be the oldest firm of loom makers in the world, Geo Hattersley and Sons developed the Hattersley Domestic loom in parallel with a whole range of sophisticated specialist textile machinery. Originally developed for export to the colonies in the late 19th Century, the Hattersley Domestic is a compact, semi-automated foot-treadle loom. While evolutions in textile manufacturing grew at a higher pace with the advances in water, steam and coal power, the Hattersley Domestic ensured pockets of production remained in remote rural settings where individuals and communities could continue to produce commercial cloth and remain on the land.



Sam Goates
Woven in the Bone

Workshop of Sam Goates
Moray



Cloth holds deep meaning for humans and has a tradition of connecting people to places and communities through colour and pattern. In a world of mass production and homogenised culture there are those who appreciate craftsmanship, provenance and individuality. The Moray Firth region in Scotland has a rich history of domestic and commercial textile production, ranging from knitted ganseys for fishermen to the finest cashmere for export.

Scotland has a rich and distinct heritage of woven woollen cloth. The Moray Firth region, characterised by its sea, serves as a constant source of inspiration for the weaver's cloth, reflecting the changing moods of the sea through gentle twills and choppy herringbones. The region also boasts a history of textile production, including the Marshalls factory in Buckie, where women made fishing nets on pedal-powered weaving looms.

The heart of the Moray Firth region is the sea, who's changing moods (colour, energy and character) are a daily reminder of the undulating challenges and joys of life and making, as well as a constant source of inspiration for gentle twills and choppy herringbones. The Moray Firth region has a long history of both domestic and commercial production of wool and textiles from the complex knitted ganseys for the fishermen to the blankets of the district mills and the finest cashmere for exporting around the world. Less well known perhaps is the Marshalls factory in Buckie where women made fishing nets on pedal-powered weaving looms, so a mini-micro mill at a fishing harbour is perhaps not as incongruous as it might seem.

Author: Samantha Goates

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://www.instagram.com/woveninthebone/>

<http://www.woveninthebone.com/>



Moray, Scotland
United Kingdom

6

Värmland (Sweden) Region Värmland

Brunskog, Arvika, Sweden
59°39'25.531" N, 12°53'28.043" E

Skäftefallstrålar (Rays of scutching tow)

Therese Henner

2020

Linen yarn

Handwoven in weft-faced rep with picked patterning, shading in like-sided *rölakan* technique
79 cm circumference x 6,5 cm width

Crafter Therese Henner creates textile arts and crafts with handweaving as her main focus with several other practices and interests such as natural dyeing. She has deep roots within her tradition, and experiments with and develops new techniques. She lives and works in her ancestral home village, with a studio at the local heritage association's open-air museum, Brunskogs Hembygdsgård in Brunskog, Arvika, Sweden. Therese creates textile arts and crafts under the name Sirli Textil, making unique works and utility textiles for both private use and public environments. The craft of handweaving is the main focus for Therese's work and artistry.

Techniques in weaving that are of especially interest to Therese are tapestry and pick-up techniques such as *rölakan*, *rya*, *HV-technique/woven transparency* and *pulled warp*. Shuttled weaving techniques and traditional patterns that are of frequent use in her woven expression in *rosepath*, *monk's belt*, *dukagång* and *overshot weave*. Natural dyeing and eco-print are also a part of Therese's craft and artistry, and plant-dyed yarns are often used in her weavings. Inspiration for her works is drawn from nature's own shades and forms, structures, and phenomena, but also from her local and Swedish cultural heritage, with traditions in weaving techniques, material, and historically crafted objects.



Therese Henner

The curved form of the necklace has been achieved by the handweaving technique called "pulled warp". This technique gives the possibility to create texture, design, and form both two- and three-dimensional objects by handweaving. The necklace is woven out of 100% linen yarn in both warp and weft. The blue tones are a blend of newly produced Swedish yarn and leftover yarn from the local handweaving association. The material for the inlaid rays in the pattern is natural linen, hand spun out of the short fibres, the scutching tow. This yarn is an inherited treasure that was spun by the artisan's great grandmother, Ruth in the early 1900s. The fibre was grown, prepared, and spun by hand in Brunskog, where the artisan grew up.



Workshop of Therese Henner
Arvika

Throughout the ages people in the majority of cultures have adorned themselves with jewellery for different purposes. Ornaments to wear on the body for emphasising one's status, attraction, affiliation, or religion. Historically and traditionally, jewellery has usually been created through craftsmanship in hard natural materials such as bone, stone, wood and metals. In our culture and craft tradition, the textile material and the woven craft have not been the most common to create jewellery. Woven products such as decorative bands have traditionally been used to adorn clothes etc. but this cannot be seen as jewellery in the traditional sense. In this context, a piece of jewellery is an independent decorative object to be worn on the body for personal adornment, an object that has no practical function to fulfil in relation to other clothing or the like. These woven necklaces are statement pieces that can be worn together with a variety of clothing from simple everyday wear like t-shirts, blouses, and shirts to fine evening wear dresses. These necklaces feel soft to the skin and due to the flax fibres they have a nice heavy drape.

Alongside wool the flaxen fibre and linen yarn has historically been of great importance in Sweden and our region, Värmland and flax was once one of our most important crops. During the middle of the 19th century, linen production was at its largest in, and in some parts of the country linen formed the backbone of the economy. In 2019, linen yarn spun by Therese's grandfather's mother, Rut Olsson, was found in a storage room in her family farm's residential building. This flax was grown on the family property at the beginning of the 20th

century and has been prepared and spun by Rut herself. Like many women and housewives at this time, Rut herself also wove the textiles that were needed in the home. Many of Rut's handwoven and other textiles are preserved in Therese's childhood home and have been a great inspiration for her desire to learn to weave and for her textile artistry today. The linen yarn in the necklace *Skäktefallstralar* consists partly of the homespun *scutching tow* yarn Therese found after her grandfather's mother Rut Olsson. A thought Therese has carried with her since she first started creating textile jewellery is how we value the textile material and products today. Considering the production of the textile thread and the large amount of resources that go into production of textiles, both natural resources and labour effort, we should value textiles just as highly as we once did. Just as Rut and the generations before her did. The labour efforts in textile production may be somewhat less today, but the impact on the environment is enormous due to the industrial production and our overconsumption. The jewellery form, which has an area of use that has traditionally been seen as profitable and that's been made from materials that we've normally seen as the most valuable, may be one answer. By giving textile material, in this case Ruts linen yarn, a jewellery form like this necklace will be seen as precious and cherished once again.



Brunskog, Arvika
Sweden

Arvika and the west parts of Värmland is a region where art and handicrafts have a long and strong tradition and that's still largely present today. At the turn of the century 1900's, many Swedish artists came to the area and an artists' colony, Rackstadkolonin, was established. The new ideas and expressions these artists brought with them along with the well-established and skilled craftsmanship that already existed here have contributed to the well-known arts and crafts area Arvika is today. The arts and crafts are greatly appreciated here by both practitioners, residents and visitors and are seen as a great asset and strong brand for the area. Arvika also has Sweden's oldest arts and crafts cooperative, Arvika Konsthantverk, established 1922. The cooperative runs their own shop in the city, where the members sell their works and have exhibitions. Arvika was and is a place where artisans operate rooted in tradition and at the same time change and develop their own language in form and expression. Therese has been a member of Arvika Crafts for several years and now works in the spirit of the tradition for arts and crafts that exists in Arvika. At the same

time, she develops her own expression for form in a contemporary context with innovation in traditional weaving techniques. Therese has her weaving atelier at Bruskogs Hembygdsgård, the local heritage association open-air museum outside Arvika. This is a place where old houses and buildings have been moved and rebuilt in a natural environment, to preserve knowledge and traditions about how we lived in our built in the old farming society and in the age of self-sufficiency. Gammelvala, meaning the old world, is one annually arranged event, a festival week during the summer where the old way of life, crafts and traditions are displayed in a real-life environment. Here production from preparation to spinning is shown and handweaving can be viewed in the weaving house. The natural and beautiful environment, the community on the homestead and the living traditions contribute to her joy for creating within the textile crafts.

Authors: Jonas Walsøe and Anna Insa Vermehren

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://www.facebook.com/sirlitextil>

https://www.instagram.com/sirli_textil/

<https://arvikakonsthantverk.se/medlemmar/therese-henner.html>



Northern Norway Museum Nord

Lofoten, Norway, Scandinavia
68°8'56.431" N, 13°45'34.764" E

Anna jumper
Lofoten wool
2022
Wool

Manual wool processing from shearing to yarn, dyeing
and knitting
50 cm length x 40 cm width approx.

Textile artisan Ragnhild Lie discovered that most of the wool from the area was being sent out of the country while people were knitting with foreign-produced yarn. This led her to reclaim the wool and cultural heritage in the craft. With a background in working with wool, Lie decided to establish a workshop centred around sheep, wool and craftsmanship on her small farm. In 2013, she introduced the first 6 wild sheep to the farm. Lofoten Wool was founded in 2014, with sustainability at the core of everything they do. Their commitment to quality, both in design and product, forms the foundation of their work. Lofoten Wool believes in a short production line with local roots that take into account and continue old handicraft traditions. They shear their own sheep and take care of the cultural landscape through traditional grazing techniques. A modern garment with a new design based on a historical knitting tradition is the result.

Traditional practices with wool have developed to yarn production, and a substantial progress in knitting patterns and techniques. They also try to use as much of the sheep as possible: from making soap from the fat, liver pate from the meat, lamb roll, *pinnekjøtt* (traditional dish), and skin and yarn from the wool. The yarn is spun at Hillesvåg Ullvarefabrikk in Nordhordland before it gets dyed in Lofoten Wool's workshop using natural colours, some of which come from traditions dating back to Viking times. The garments are hand-knit by local artisans, showcasing a love for craftsmanship and sustainability.

Ragnhild Lie
Lofoten wool
© Ingvil Valberg



Without sheep and wool, people would never have been able to settle in the north. Wool, the raw material, is regionally distinct because of the unusual climatic conditions of the Lofoten Islands in Norway, north of the Arctic Circle. The wool comes from an old sheep variety "gammelnorsk sau". The "gammlenorsk sau" sheep variety is extremely hardy and robust, thus tolerating the conditions outdoors all year around. They have a unique property of gaining as much of 40% of their body weight as fat and mobilise it during winter. Techniques of both fishing and wool treatment have been passed down through generations contributing to a distinct local expertise in both. This variety of sheep is most likely to be very similar to the one the Vikings had. Humans have learned countless techniques of weaving fibres and threads into textiles, and today knitting has become very popular, especially in Scandinavia. With just a few needles and some yarn, one can create useful and beautiful garments.

Workshop of Lofoten wool
Lofoten
© Ingvil Valberg





Lofoten
Noruega
©Eivind Natvig

Located at 68° north, the Lofoten Islands present a geographical environment characterised by dramatic coastal landscapes of steep mountains emerging from the ocean surface. The rugged terrain, towering peaks and fjords, are complemented by a network of fishing villages that can be found along the coastline. Today, the islands also enjoy a rich tourist industry. Visitors from all over the world come to experience the stark landscape and the people who live in this harsh climate. Natural resources play a pivotal role in local craftsmanship and traditions. The cold, nutrient-rich waters surrounding Lofoten sustain a diverse marine ecosystem, providing a vital source of livelihood for the islanders. Historically, fishing and stockfish production have been central to the economy, culture, and survival of people. Warm clothes are essential in this climate. Local traditions in Lofoten are deeply intertwined with the geographical environment and resource utilisation. Festivals and rituals often revolve around the cycles of nature on land and sea, underlining the community's dependence on these elements for sustenance and cultural identity. To understand the interplay between the unique geographical properties of the Lofoten Islands Arctic situation and the socio-cultural fabric of Lofoten, we need to understand the connection between the inhabitants and the environment.

Authors: Jonas Walsøe and Anna Insa Vermehren

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://lofoten-wool.no/>

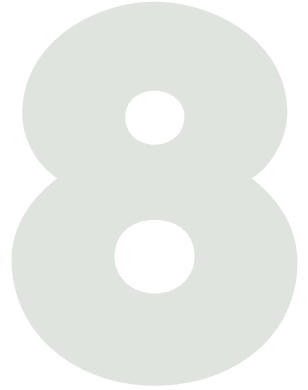


Italy Turin Polytechnic

Franciacorta, Brescia, Italy
45°37'12" N, 10°1'12" E

Treviso, Veneto, Italy
45°40'20" N, 12°14'32" E

Manifesto Collection by Cap_able
Rachele Didero and Federica Busani (Cap_able)
2019
Cotton yarns by Filmar Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)
Knitwear, Jacquard
43 cm length x 51 cm sleeves length x 46.5 cm
chest width



Inspired by a discussion with a UC Berkeley engineer on privacy and human rights at the Fashion Institute of Technology, Rachele Didero developed the idea of combining crafting in fashion and computer science. Subsequently, Rachele met Federica Busani, current Co-founder of Cap_able, and together they decided to transform this project into a start-up, a cultural, as well as entrepreneurial, tool to promote and facilitate innovative actions by young people, in this case young women. Usually, it takes the form of a trig able to enhance networking actions between designers, young entrepreneurs and production districts to encourage their entry into the broad community of sectoral production and to enable the intersection of solutions for the execution, commercialisation and dissemination of design focused on ethic concepts also in order to foster good practices in social issues due to micro-commerce and tourism. Through this start-up they proposed to stimulate a new type of neocraft production in their territories, but also connected with a rural sustainable initiative, the Filmar Better Cotton Initiative (BCI).

The starting point of the project is spinning, knitting and jacquard, techniques for the production of textiles for clothing that can be traced throughout the history of personal artefacts. The encounter between a long-standing traditional technique and the contemporary concept is resolved in the use of a technological innovation that lies in the creation of a system capable of transposing images (called adversarial patches)



Rachele Didero and Federica Busani
Cap_able



Workshop of Cap_able

onto a knitted fabric that can be used to detect people in real time. Using computer vision, tested with the most common of the object detection system tools (YOLO), a simple action on the pattern taken by the knitted yarn allows privacy to be safeguarded. The specialised needs of the start-up stimulate further collaborations with various stakeholders who in turn specialise in actions that coincide with the project's broad mission: manufacturers of sustainable and certified yarns, specialists in technologies related to controversial topics such as personal data privacy. In this way, a valorization of various production clusters and their employees, skills refinements and connections between hard skills and behavioural changes is realised.

The Manifesto Collection feeds on the liveliness of research promoted by international training programmes and exchange agreements between cultural institutions for the promotion and improvement of design and production culture in higher education. It poses itself as a response to the industrial crisis by bringing knitting back to a semi-craft scale, which can be placed in the category of new craft, not just by relaunching its production, but by assigning it new meanings. It consists of knitted garments that protect the wearer's biometric data, without the need to cover the face. This second facet of the project deals with the exquisitely contemporary and highly topical problem of the use of facial recognition systems, the storage of biometric data, their use and the ensuing debate, an issue that is often underrepresented despite affecting the majority of citizens around the world.

Historically and anthropologically, we can state that the manufacture of yarns represents one of the most significant threads in the history of mankind, as well as one of the most common objects in everyday clothing to defend against the cold and heat and to communicate personality through the way one dresses. The variants and different applications testified by findings over the centuries range from "home" production for domestic and family use, to high quality artefacts. Furthermore, the production of yarns and their processing developed from a domestic scale, for subsistence in rural areas, to the networking of small domestic workshops enabling production districts to be defined, to the development of more or less industrialised

systems, until the crisis that affected the whole of Europe from the 1970s onwards. Over the years, production delocalization practices and competition from Asian markets have pushed some companies to specialise in high quality processing and in some cases to focus on environmental and social sustainability issues. In some realities, the production chain has focused, also by acquiring raw materials from abroad, on renouncing the use of chemical additives that are useful in the production process but harmful to the natural environment, the workers and the end users. Even in the absence of binding European regulations and in the context of unclear policies in green labelling, some companies, including Filmar, which supplies the yarns for the collection, have initiated corporate policies aimed at sustainability that have favoured collaborations with other companies and implemented employment in the area. It represents a good practice of international exchange and contact between ways of managing shared problems, declining them on a local scale, in abandoned or underestimated areas, through adaptation to the specific sensitivities of the user public.



Franciacorta, Brescia
Italy
© Fabio Ingresso

The Manifesto Collection is produced in two geographical areas with a strong and long-standing vocation: the area of Franciacorta, around the city of Brescia (north-west of the country), and the area around Treviso, in the northeast of Italy. For yarns, the Franciacorta area is characterised by the presence of dedicated manufactures since ancient times. Silk, cotton, linen, hemp, are the materials historically worked in the area, linked to crops and worm breeding, in a rural before industrial context. In the Franciacorta area there are several small museums, with an anthropological slant, that bear witness to the spinning and weaving activities traditionally rooted in the territory, including the machinery of small manufactures. The second area concerns the knitting cycle, located in the northeast of Italy, in the area around Treviso. Also, it is a long-lasting district, which saw the establishment of many small factories after the Second World War, which mainly employed female labour, coming from rural areas. The workshop used, Maglificio Pozzebon, with a history of more than fifty years, professes the mission of a focus on product quality and the creation of a pleasant and engaging work environment for the employees, who are involved.



Treviso, Veneto
Italy
© Krzysztof Golik

Author: Elena Dellapiana

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://www.capable.design/>



Slovenia Scientific Research Center of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts

Upper Carniola, Municipality of Žiri, Slovenia
46°2'31.988" N, 14°6'25.988" E

Decorative lace doily
Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society
2023
Linen
Bobbin lace
20 cm length x 20 cm width approx.



The Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society was founded in April 2004. It has more than 100 members from Žiri, its surroundings, and other regions. It focuses on education, organisation of exhibitions, and promotion of bobbin lace. The Society is the main organiser of the annual Slovene Lacemaking Days in Žiri and the co-founder of the Čipka dežele Kranjske (Lace of the Carniola region) brand.

The doily on display is a handmade lace product made by crossing, twisting, and weaving linen threads attached to a bobbin. The process follows a pattern a drawing on paper attached to a cylinder cushion in a wicker basket or on a wooden base. In addition to linen, which is used for the doily on display, the craftsmen make bobbin lace from cotton threads, silk, wool, artificial materials, metal threads and even ropes. Lace is used to adorn clothing and fashion accessories, church and home textiles, and representative spaces. It is also an inspiration for artistic creations in fashion, contemporary visual arts, design, architecture, and culinary design. Doilies have been particularly used to protect furniture surfaces from heat or scratches caused by crockery and for decoration.

The bobbin lace used for the doily is called "Slovene lace". This name began to be used during the World Wars for lace in which the traditional patterns were supplemented by the versions of Slovene folk ornamentation. Slovene lace was therefore also referred to as

“lace with a national character”. Lacemaking was allegedly already widespread in the Slovene lands in the 16th century among the nobility and in monasteries for decorating ecclesiastical textiles. In the second half of the 17th century, it became a domestic craft; the sale of bobbin lace was documented in Ljubljana (current capital of Slovenia) and Idrija (a town with a mercury mine, a UNESCO World Heritage Site). In the second half of the 19th century, lace production began to decline with the exception of Idrija, from where it then spread to the Poljanska Valley (where the lace doily comes from), the Selška Valley, Tolmin, and Gorizia, and later to other parts of present-day Slovenia. Despite the activity's decline in the 1960 due to the employment of women and the machine production of lace, it continued to spread throughout Slovenia until the end of the 20th century, albeit mostly as a leisure activity and much less often as a source of income. The knowledge of bobbin lacemaking has been passed down from generation to generation in schools and courses. Most bobbin lace makers are women. There are currently around 120 active lacemaking societies, sections, and groups in Slovenia. Additionally, three lacemaking schools operate in Idrija, Žiri and Železniki. Lacemaking is presented at the Lacemaking Days in Železniki, the Idrija Lace Festival, and the Slovene Lacemaking Days in Žiri. The making of Slovene bobbin lace is inscribed in the Register of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Slovenia and in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society, which made the doily on display, is registered as the bearer of this tradition.



Workshop of Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society
Upper Carniola
© Slovene Ethnographic Museum Documentation



Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society
© Cvetke Žiri

The area of Škofja Loka, where the society of lacemakers comes from, is located in the northwestern part of Slovenia. The town of Škofja Loka has been the historical centre of the Poljanska Valley and the Selška Valley. It is known for its castle, mediaeval town centre, and the Škofja Loka Passion Play, which has been inscribed on the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage list. The valleys have been famous for the ironworks and linen production, both of which declined as early as the 19th century, but the heritage is well preserved in museums and at the tourism events. The Davča Tourist Association (in the Selška Valley) organises the annual Flax Dressers' Day with a presentation of flax production and processing, and the Loški Museum presents linen production, weaving, dyeing, lacemaking, and other important



Upper Carniola, Municipality of Žiri
Slovenia
© Matjaž Tavčar

traditional crafts from the area. Local traditions are also presented at lacemaking days in Žiri and Železniki, Charcoal Burners' Day at Stari Vrh, old-style skiing and cycling events, traditional fairs, and other festivals. The Poljanska Valley spreads along the Poljanska Sora River in the southeast of the Gorenjska region. It is surrounded by the Polhograjski, Škofjeloški, Cerkljanski and Rovtarski mountains. It has around 12.500 inhabitants who live in Gorenja vas, Poljane, Žiri, and smaller settlements or villages. The main employers are the shoe factory in Žiri and the marble quarry in Hotavlje. Inhabitants also work in agriculture (mainly cattle breeding and cheese production), tourism, and small business. The largest town is Žiri at the end of the valley. It has been known for its traditions of shoe and lacemaking. The shoemaking tradition gave rise to the Alpina factory, which has made a name for itself around the world with sports footwear. The art of lacemaking has been preserved for almost 120 years by the Žiri Lacemaking School and promoted at the Slovene Lacemaking Days organised annually in April by the Cvetke Žiri Lacemaking Society.

Author: Saša Poljak Istenič

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

Interview with the members of the Bobbin Lace Society Cvetka Žiri
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkhMHfMofyE>



10

Romania Council County Maramures

Țara Lăpușului, Vima Mare village, Maramures
Rumania

47°29'37" N, 24°02'3" E

IE + ZADII

Dominica Stan and Stan Maria (mother and daughter)

1960-1970

Wool, cotton, hemp

Wool spinning, weaving, embroidering

40 cm length x 70 cm width, 25 length x 47 cm width

The items are part of a girl's traditional costume. Historically the girls of the ethnographic area of Lăpuș used to wear such clothing attire as daily outfit, but with the passing of time the traditional costume is worn only on special occasions such as on holidays, weddings, etc.

The traditional costume is one of the most important manifestations of traditional culture, the result of the creative effort of a whole community and a real identity brand. The dominant note of the elements that compose the Romanian folk costume is the use of white fabrics made of natural fibres (plant and animal). Particular attention is paid to the long and difficult technological processes of producing clothing elements in the world of the traditional village, weaving a whole system of beliefs and customs in this regard. The traditional production of costumes relied on local resources such as wool, hemp, linen, and cotton.

The most relevant piece of this attire and the element that establishes the genesis of the Romanian folk costume is the shirt, which synthesises the most traditional elements and, at the same time, the most numerous artistic elements of ornamentation. In traditional spirituality, the embellishments that are used to decorate the shirt are not just decorative signs, but they have a much deeper spiritual meaning and play a protective role for the person wearing the clothing item. The symbols and various shapes embroidered on traditional costumes embody the identity of the people in a mixture and contraposition of sacred and mundane, faith and pagan superstitions, creative genius and practical functions.



Stan Maria



Dominica Stan with her grandsons



House and workshop of Dominica Stan and Stan Maria
Vima Mare village



Țara Lăpușului, Vima Mare village, Maramures,
Romania

They reflected a way of living marked by wisdom and efficiency that relied on making the best of what one has. It narrates a tale of resilience, continuance and survival, love, faith, strong intergenerational bonds and profound communion with nature. Hence, the costume becomes more than an object holding deeper valences as places of remembrance and heritage.

The village of Vima Mare is part of the ethnographic area of the Land of Lapus. The rural legacy of the village encapsulates traditions that reiterate ancient Dacian belief mixed with Christian rhetoric that have been preserved and passed on from generation to generation since the dawn of time. Local economy was historically based on animal husbandry, horticulture and the traditional agriculture of the village was based on a circular economy mechanism similar to what we nowadays call permaculture. The great majority of the current population of the village still earns a living practising the same kind of agriculture.

The artisans are deceased, however the crafts techniques are encapsulated in living heritage and one of her descendants will attend the meeting, narrate their story and embody the legacy.

Authors: Monika Hint and Elo-Hanna Seljamaa

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://www.cjmaramures.ro/en/county-council>

<https://peasantartcraft.com/rural-romanian-lifestyle/romanian-textiles-rural-maramures/>



Estonia University of Tartu

Viljandi county, Estonia
58°19'17.933" N, 25°43'36.844" E

A pouch made of a ram's scrotum

Monika Hint

2019

Ram's scrotum, woollen and cotton fabric,
bone and metal accessories

Tawing, sewing, cutting, smoothing, drilling

18 cm length x 13 cm width

Monika Hint, an student of the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy, runs her own studio, Koordikamber, in Koordi farm in Viljandi county. Collaborating with fellow artisans, local farmers, and hunters, she uses bone, horn, leather, wool, and other natural, often recycled materials to create products that build on and develop further traditional technologies. Koordikamber also offers courses and workshops.

Tanning and tawing are traditional leather processing methods in Estonia. While tanning requires vegetables or flour, alum and salt are used in tawing. Until the beginning of the 20th century, these skills were widely practised domestically, though there also existed village tanners.

During the 17–19th centuries leather pouches made of ram's scrotums were used as money bags and tobacco pouches. They were tanned along with the skins and decorated with applique, beads, copper rings and fabric. Nowadays the pouch is suitable for coins, cellphone, pipe, dice, tobacco, talisman etc.

Sheep farming was spread across Estonia and tending to these animals was a women's chore. Sheep and rams were typically slaughtered in the autumn around the feast of St Michael (September 29), which marked the end of the agricultural season. The skins of animals were preserved over the winter by means of salt and processed in the summer when water



Monika Hint

© Mariana Hint-Rääk

Workshop of Monika Hint
Viljandi county
© Riho Hint



was more readily available, and it was easier to dry the skins. Cleaning and unhairing, for example, were often women's tasks. When a ram was killed, not only its skin was tanned, but also the scrotums, which were used to sew coat pockets and pouches. It is the form of the scrotum, among other things, that fascinates the artisan Monika Hint. Seeking to make the most of this material, she combines skin with textiles for durability, functionality and looks, and with details made of bone, which is another favourite material of hers. In addition to rye, wheat, barley, and oats can be used to process leather. Flour tanning is one of the oldest tanning technologies in Estonia and is particularly suitable for sheep and ram skins.



Viljandi county
Estonia
© Monika Hint

Monika Hint's studio Koordikamber is located in Kibeküla village in Viljandi county in the southern part of Estonia. Her aim is to keep the production process as nature-friendly, local, simple and resource efficient as possible. This means using as few resources as possible, recycling as much possible and minimising waste. In fact, much of what she works with is waste: byproducts and materials that others have no use for. Thus, she collaborates with local farmers and hunters, who provide her with leather, horns, and bones that she processes by means of traditional methods. The pouches made in Koordikamber are organic for the simple reason that nowadays only organic farms keep rams, i.e. uncastrated male sheep. Monika Hint uses scrotums that come from a small organic farm in southern Estonia and are delivered to her maybe twice a year in batches of approximately 10. Because this raw material is so precious, and the traditional techniques used to process it tend to be time-consuming and labour-intensive, Monika Hint makes artefacts out of ram's scrotum only a couple of times a year. While these products are of high quality and exclusive, they come from an ethos of subsistence that for centuries used to define rural life in Estonia.

Authors: Monika Hint and Elo-Hanna Seljamaa

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To learn more about this initiative or artisan:

<https://koordikamber.ee/>



Universidad de Oviedo



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