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University of Southampton

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Winchester School of Art

**Proximities of Design: Social Design Practice in the Context of Contemporary
Oaxaca, Mexico**

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

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This research adopts ethnographic methods to locate and document a practice on social design undertaken in the context of Oaxaca in Mexico. The concept of social design in this context should be understood as an action of 'making together'. Thus, the practice is aimed at understanding local identity and exploring ways in which social design practice may generate changes, in socio-economic and political contexts, that could support local identities within artisan communities in relation to the global markets.

Through the practice of social design, the making of communities' cultural artefacts aims to favour the exchange of knowledge and values between communities and design practitioners so that, in a context of equality, this dialogue – as a practice of correspondence – may be assimilated by their social, economic and, perhaps, their political structure.

Through creative process and correspondence, workshops take place in two different indigenous artisan communities from the Mexican state of Oaxaca, where the socio-political context, values, and cultural heritage are also studied. As part of the practice, a group of artisans and six designers acting as facilitators participate in workshops, which take place two or three times a year over a three-year period. During this time, the relationships of trust, the exchange of knowledge and the techniques undergo a transformation until paths of common approach are reached, uncovering an exchange through the practice of design. Developing a greater awareness of the experience of the design process was important, as it relates to the need to develop adequate ways of framing

such experiences in the realm of the social action and the building of environments for design which I termed 'proximities of design', referring to the situations during the practice which describe a given framed environment based on my own reflections and knowledge of design.

Conversations between the design practitioners and the artisans, as well as the conflicts and debates among the designers, have been documented. The use of video, audio, photographs, transcriptions and notes that capture 'the making', the different gestural languages, attitudes and conversations have been used to record the process.

The research finds that social design practice can manifest itself in the approach and understanding of local communities, establishing an exchange of knowledge that may open new ways of supporting local communities and influence their markets on a global level. Moreover, this process opens new research avenues and joins a crossroads between collaborative work and the work of social design practice together with the field of material culture.

I structure the thesis by framing the work around social design practice and how, within this context, social design represents a possible tool for building resilient identities. In Chapter 1, I will outline my objectives and my practice, introducing key terms for my research. In Chapter 2, I situate my research in the concept of globalization and examine its consequences for community needs, in Chapter 3, I examine, in the context of Mexico, the social political factors that shaped the indigenous narrative and policy in Mexico and establish my humanistic approach to the people and objects involved in this research. In Chapter 4, I will describe how methodology was deployed through workshops explaining research and the development of fieldwork. In Chapter 5, I offer a more specific account of the practice itself, which involves a form of reflective communication for social design, developing collaborative interactions framed by the process of making things together: between people with different cultural backgrounds, economic systems and core beliefs. I structure transformative situations during the design process that I termed 'proximities of design'. The situations were undertaken with respect to people, places and materials, exchanging techniques and materials among participants. In the conclusion, I reflect on the thesis, delivering my final remarks and upholding the overall thesis with wider insights into the future of research in this field.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name:	Carmen Malvar
Title of thesis:	Proximities of Design: Social Design Practice in the Context of Contemporary Oaxaca, Mexico

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission

Signature:	Carmen Malvar	Date:	JANUARY 2021
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Just a note to mention all images on this document are my own work.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Focus and Scope

The research was conducted in the region of Oaxaca, Mexico. Oaxaca was chosen because it represents one of the most culturally diverse regions in the world. The indigenous artisan communities have a deep connection to place, and they are limited in resources; in addition, these places are severely marginalised. There are 17 ethnic groups living in the state of Oaxaca itself (93,000 km²), where 137 of the 364 known languages in Mexico are spoken. The territory is itself diverse, a mountainous region of great geographical complexity in the centre of Mesoamerica. The majority groups living there call themselves 'the people of the clouds' and 'the people of the rain'. Zapotecs, Mixtecs and their neighbours maintain traditions of African and European influence (De Avila, 2013).



Figure 1.1 *Family walking through the Oaxaca Mixtec Region. An example of geographical isolation.* CADA Foundation®, 2014.

Mexico has been defined since the Mexican Revolution by an indigenous policy of integrationist nature. This social and cultural policy has generated broad controversy as well as disunion from existing vernacular cultures. Social and political structures have successfully implemented a series of initiatives with homogenisation attempts; a few of these cases were applied to arts and artisans' heritage, an object of approximation and study reaching beyond a feeling of national culture to aim towards a unifying Westernised standard.

It is important to contextualize the cultural and historical narrative in Mexico, based in the history, culture and cosmovision of its original inhabitants. It is a story of conquests, revolutions

and the development of a heterogeneous contemporary Society, which has been through times, teased more or less gently, into homogenization by politicians and other forces of power. Mexico is a country of sharp contrasts in many aspects: a rich cultural and ethnical society, varying access to opportunities, large socio-economic differences, etc. Specially in smaller cities and towns, a traditional and patriarchal social structure prevails, with its balances of power based in position, accepted roles and gender. In my research, relevance is given to the attempt to integrate a combination of factors: cultural, social, economic, social and circumstantial elements happening in the complex Oaxacan region, including aspects of cultural and infrastructural isolation.

This dissertation is based on the fieldwork that I, Carmen Malvar, as design practitioner, undertook in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico during periods of time between 2013 and 2018. At the time I was, as I am today, a Design Practitioner and Strategist, involved in Academia and working in private practice for an international audience, and who took time aside from personal and professional duties during several months per year, to conduct Research off-and-on site for pursuing a Doctoral Degree.

During these years, in the context of the local and the growth of global economy, increasingly reaching more isolated places that could be defined up to now as capitalist cultures on the verge of disappearing, several workshops were developed in different local indigenous communities. By working with local artisans, the aim was to avoid the loss of their identity and fostering to reinforce their own communities using social design practice and sharing tools that allowed the creation and production of artifacts that could be integrated in a globalised market in case artisans were interested. Always through relationships of trust, the exchange of knowledge, the respect of their culture, techniques, crafts, designs and materials and the recognition of authorship and integrity of the work created in this specific context. The goal of this research is not the artifact or any other specific outcome because of these workshops, but the process itself to define the use of social design practice as a possible tool for building resilient identities.

I would like to emphasize that my interest as a Researcher was based on my experiences as a design practitioner and my role as such, was that of a reflective practitioner. I often encountered and was dismal about my perception of applied design, on the effect of economy on culture, on the disbalances provoked by Globalism. I was weary of the expansion of large companies in disregard of the communities where they manufactured. Through a deeper understanding of Malinowski's work I became interested in investigating ideas on his vision and analysis of ethnographic field work, envisioning markets as powerful tools for these communities, as means of better subsistence and as venues for their cultural expression. I asked myself: Why can't a real

exchange be generated between a globalised world and a local community, away from the vertical imposition of a relation of dependence and by addressing local communities as labour, working hands without participation in design decisions?

It is important to highlight that this project moves away from a colonialist perspective and tries to open new perspectives about design from non-western points of view.

My approach to this Project was not related to activism or help. The collaboration of local communities was necessary for my dissertation, but what we offered to them as facilitators in co-creation workshops was to work together, as an exchange among all the participants. Decisions were taken together in a democratic, communal and qualitative way. I endeavoured to generate a dialogue between design with and within communities, to bring out a product that represented them as an ambassador. I believed such task was only possible by generating a respectful correlation, a dialogue between two parties, by willing exchange, not by imposition.

I will now briefly summarise how this thesis will be structured:

In the current **Chapter 1**, I will next outline my objectives and my practice, describing the organization of my research around fieldwork and workshops, framing the thesis around social design. I will later introduce a broad outline of the problematics of the Project and a number of key terms for my research in the form of a glossary to clarify and further explain my work. Lastly, I will introduce social design through the actual practice/research, what it means and how I have been approaching it, engaging on what is important and how I will be projecting it into my own social design practice for the project.

In Chapter 2, I will situate my thesis in the context of globalisation locating more specific areas that are useful in understanding the particular situation in Mexico and its consequences for community needs. I also raise pertinent issues that impact the indigenous communities and their practices, highlighting that alienation due to globalisation has, to some extent, actually promoted the revival of community bonds. I articulate the way the workshops deal with globalisation as both a positive and a negative, revising how technological approaches hold much potential in that they help create a 'new space' for small communities to generate alliances and create a network of connections while still allowing cultural heritage to play an active role in community building. Within this context, social design represents a possible tool for building resilient identities. This is particularly important when regarding the power imbalances evident in social design practices that open the door to cultural imperialism; therefore, new contexts must be approached at a local level and must be guided by human relationships.

In Chapter 3, I will outline the social and political factors that have shaped the indigenous narrative and policy in Mexico and highlight how indigenous culture and people have been used as a part of a nationalistic nation-building process in post-revolution Mexico. By emphasising the significant social role cultural artefacts play in indigenous communities, I will highlight how cultural materials can be viewed as a reflection of the social and cultural transformation of a community helping them to build resilient identities. I will also establish how foreign processes can be adopted to suit the internal needs of indigenous communities and provide a platform for the transmission of group values and beliefs through their cultural artefacts. In this chapter, I also establish my humanistic approach to the people and objects involved in this research describing my underlying ‘philosophy’ offering more perspective into my own positioning over the course of my research on the following years,

In Chapter 4, I describe how a collaborative methodology was deployed through workshops. First, I will explain the aims of background and ethnographic fieldwork research learning about the oral tradition and its role in cultural transmission as well as understanding ethics and aesthetics through iterative, organically evolving processes carried out as reflective practitioner. I will also describe perspectives that help understand some challenges as social designer in building a collaborative process on the fieldwork that led to obtain a comprehensive cultural background and to gathering a team of local designers and how we all came to an agreement on selecting the communities.

A second section of chapter I will elaborate how methodology for workshops was organically developed encompassing a wider comprehension of cultural, geographical and idiosyncratic aspects that affected the development of fieldwork and provides a frame for next Chapter.

In Chapter 5, I will offer a more specific account of the practice itself writing about its context, aims and findings. I will document what happened during the field research and workshops developed in the Oaxaca’s communities during the four-year period and how the dynamics evolved between facilitators and artisans revising the outcomes. This will include practice methods, ethnographic/design practice ‘data’ and a visual index. I will curate a set of resources that together create a convincing and explanatory presentation in the form of catalog or dossier. In a first core I will focus on exposing ethnographic research, travel visits and interviews conducted through field work to meet activists, anthropologist artists and educators. In a second core I will offer a detailed account of workshops and facilitator’s meetings, which some will be described as case studies, offering brief accounts of situations which properly encapsulate the

idea of “proximities of design” which key to the design process. Those situations were undertaken with respect to people, places and materials.

In **Chapter 6**, I will deliver my conclusions reflecting on the thesis with my final remarks and upholding the overall thesis with wider insights on the future of research in this field. I will also share the reflections and impacts I encountered which I can impart to other design practitioners wishing to engage in similar work.

As I mentioned, I will describe on the following section how I organized my Research defined by these **three main objectives**:

- **First, to study the appropriate pathways for approaching local cultures through social design.** Within the prevailing non-Western discourse, social design has been viewed as a possible bolster for a resilient and transformed identity within the context of globalisation and the conflicts it presents between modernism and heritage.
- **Second, my objective was to explore how the practices of design could help us to better understand and know the local identity.**
- **Third, I wanted to explore ways in which design could support local communities in relation to global markets.**

To reach these three objectives, I programmed field work around three main phases, as described in the following section.

1.2 Practice Outline

As stated before, an initial part of this Research was extensive fieldwork and exploration conducted before workshops took place. Workshops held during visits to communities can be described in three phases of development, first, **Ethnographical research and community selection**, conducted first as exploratory visits, and second, as consecutive visits to develop one-day workshops at selected communities, identified jointly with the team of design practitioners. A **second Phase of Design Research**, understood as collaborative and an evolutive design process, developing scenarios for long-term engagement with communities was a main goal of design practitioners and a primary objective for this research-through-practice. A last phase **focused on Prototyping and fine-tuning Artisanal production, as well as initiated Market exposure**. Workshops were held with artisans to provide assistance and materials to produce samples, refining finishes and preparing objects to be marketable at Museum Shops and participating in

textile events at Oaxaca de Juárez. Other practitioners provided insights into marketing strategies to approach a wider, global audience.

Field work phases will be explained in further detail in Chapter 4 and 5, some studies describing the spatial arrangement, aims, results, and attendance by location and chronological order.

Extensive research in the form of fieldwork was conducted in February 2013 and 2014, as well as a series of first oral workshops held in February 2014 as well, which I would label as ethnographic exploration in a first stage of mapping the territory, both geographically and contextually. These workshops have been detailed on Chapter 5. These before actual workshops took place, in the form of meetings, interviews, visits and research travel through Oaxaca and its rural communities, San Cristobal de Las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico Distrito Federal, and Santa Clara del Cobre in Michoacán, in periods held between 2013 and 2014. These events connecting artists, artisans, thinkers, designers, anthropologists and former master artisans and teachers, kindled ideas, generated situations, discovered synergies, and allowed me a vast insight into Mexican culture, idiosyncrasy and complex cultural, social and political issues, relevant to contextualize this Research.

In Mexico, mastery of craftsmanship is well regarded and socially recognized, as often individuals, “maestros artesanos” that possess deep knowledge, have both a position of respect, are well-regarded and considered transmitters of ancestral knowledge in the community. These reflections reinforce the subtlest dimensions of the design practice in the present while also generating a critical perspective inside and outside its process (Marshall, 2014). As researchers, we needed the artisans not the opposite. The process, products and ideas are artisans’ owning and deciding what to do with them. The objectives and outcomes of the workshop processes are not determined by facilitators but the communities themselves.

The first contact in Oaxaca was made through an alumnus who had invited me to visit her at her native Oaxaca. An architect and designer, Fátima Guadalupe Díaz, she in turn introduced me to her mother, a senior DIF¹ official who facilitated transport logistics and contacts to local authorities during the first workshops at some communities.

During October 2013, I traveled to Oaxaca and from this base, gathered a group of experienced design practitioners, organically developing a collaborative structure through personal and

¹ The DIF is the National System for the Integral Development of the Family, a Mexican public social assistance institution which focuses on developing the well-being of Mexican families, and is spread throughout the country with different locations in each Mexican city.

professional connections, based in their involvement in projects and collaborations with communities and artisans

All the practitioners involved as facilitators had a shared interest in design as a practical action, grounded in years of experience with collective projects and communities of people from different backgrounds. In fact, there are designers involved in many social projects without imposing their skills. This mutual benefit also looked to improve and support democracy as a guiding value for collaborative design.

The role of this team was to participate in the workshops as facilitators, as a link, connecting their usual work processes and the workshops that would take place at later dates.

This project is undertaken with social design as its core of practice research while considering historical and cultural aspects. The practice aims to understand local identities and explore ways in which social design may generate changes in socio-economic and political contexts. This could help support local identities within artisan communities to access global markets.

For the research, I adopted ethnographic methods for locating and documenting these practices through photographs, video recordings, notes and transcriptions. I have taken a deep reconsideration with the material collected, trying to attend to the different elements and actions, especially those representing workshop activities. Through this journey, the event framing, or the 'proximities of design'.

There is also an important distinction I make between 'practice-based' and 'practice-led'. 'Practice-based' work is a form of making with outputs whereas 'practice-led' work may be informed by practice but places less emphasis on outputs. Practice-based research, by definition, is 'an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice' (Candy, 2006). Embracing a practice-based methodology, I focus on the process of doing and the outcomes of that process.

We were all intent on paying attention to the process through examining the material practices of 'doing design'. We also sought to become full participants and review, critique, and benefit from each other's learning skills. Our arguments in those early meetings opened space for a range of collective critical engagement, allowing us to express our own fears and excitements, as well as tensions and disagreements (see p. 218-219). Based on our previous practical experiences, we discussed how important it was to consider the situation as a whole, not directing too much attention to particular tasks but instead getting into the detail of spaces, bodies and emotions (proximities of design). We (the design practitioners) also discussed ways in which our position

with the project afforded us a certain maneuverability, for we were all clear that knowing and doing were inseparable from our practice.

George Marcus of the University of California–Irvine, reflects this same idea of prioritising process over end result when describing the contributions of contemporary artist Fernando Calzadilla to ethnographic research: ‘What Calzadilla makes clear is that the most substantive contribution of fieldwork to production is not in what the audience can literally see, but in constituting what he calls the internal narratives of the production’ (Marcus, 2010, pp. 83–94). With this concept of ‘internal narratives of . . . production’ in mind, comparing and combining the knowledge I gathered allowed me to graduate from strictly individualistic research – based on intangible knowledge – to a research in which the material is tangible and collectively transmitted (Gunn et al., 2013). During the process, I recorded the work patterns, behaviours and social mores demonstrated materially and through language. In the group dynamics, particularly, I took note of the expressions, beliefs and concepts communicated within the collective act. A well of information and existing knowledge thus opened, which I combined with my observations of power, hegemony, and trust in the communities (Creswell, 2013, pp. 94–95). By observing the process, culture and power relations surrounding the creation of artefacts my research presents a more complete understanding of the artefacts and their ethnographic significance, deeply rooted in the communities, their culture and their way of life.

1.3 Organizing research around fieldwork and workshops. Phases

1.3.1 Ethnographical Research Phase I

Twenty years ago, it was unusual for designers to share and adapt work methods from other fields, such as material culture and ethnography, or to question the impact of the process. This way of sharing knowledge, revealing reflections and generating ideas has become the predominant manner of performing in situations that encompass research on design and social problems.

In his work *Prototyping the Social*, James Hunt (2011) compares ethnographic practice with the designer’s profession regarding their respective responsibilities to society. Ethnography concerns itself with studying the present in detail, but it does not include intervention. Its aim is the production of descriptions, which are by nature retrospective. On the other hand, in the context of social design, designers *must* work with the facts of the present to shape the future. As Hunt (2011) asserts, most ethnographers perform careful interventions to accumulate knowledge of

the cultures they study. Bronislaw Malinowski, builds his model of ethnographic intervention on observation, later proposing a research method in which beliefs, behaviour, material objects and the constitution of social groups can be seen from the point of view of their interrelationship and this "functionalist" framework (Malinowski & De La Fuente, 1957).

Donald Shon's understanding can be used to bridge the gap between the distinct concepts of making and cogitation. Schön (1983) established the most scientific position of Gasparski (1990), **who contributed with a position on the practice that he called '*reflective practice*'** (Schön, 1983; Otto and Smith, 2013; Cross, 2000; Gunn et al., 2013). Shon thus proposed the need to generate an intuitive, singular process able to provoke reflection in conflictive, complex and uncertain situations (Cross, 2000). I defined my position during the research in that way, as reflective practitioner, which allows me to delimit the scope, format and direction of the following workshops based on the observation of the process and the development of each one of them.

The contradiction referred to by Victoria Novelo (2003) regarding the modernisation of traditions and the consequent loss of identity is present in the way the research is focused and on which all the field work is developed. The other workshops and the social design practice are based on the values that identify each indigenous community from the outset, and on these values represented by the artefact and its "process of making".

In the first meetings among design practitioners, we shared our experiences from previous projects, it helped us to draw a scenario about different artisans, craft techniques and communities to establish the guidelines for an initial selection of participants.

1.3.1.1 **Selecting communities**

In order to select communities, a first round of exploratory visits was conducted. Communities would be eventually chosen among those where designers had either established collaborations with artisans or ties - cultural, linguistic, relations - with these communities. These familiarities allowed to slowly gain trust on a newcomer –myself– with novel methods, and build upon existing relationships where no collaboration was done before, such as at the case of San Pablo Tijaltepec and Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.

Other criteria for selecting a community was craftsmanship quality, exposure to outside influences, market access and quality of their craft techniques, risk of disappearance of unique and local techniques. For pottery artisans, Colectivo 1050 suggested Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, for its local prehispanic technique with resin (tree sap) and its abstract, Pollock- aesthetic. At the final

preference of Maddalena and Ana Paula, the town of San Pablo Tijaltepec would be chosen for its unique handcraft embroidery technique, called “pepenado”, where Lita also had ties.

As part of Ethnographical Research, during **February 2013** I visited five towns in the vicinity of Oaxaca de Juárez, the Province’s Capital. The aim of these visits was to gain a peripheral view into the state of artisan communities, and to identify some collectives that might be suitable in generating synergy. Local crafts use simple materials such as clay, wood, and embroider silk and palm fibres. In the beginning, communities were chosen for their crafts, infrastructural access and for a pre-existing relationship between facilitators and local artisans. This last criterion would reveal itself as the most important factor in developing workshops over years to come.

The first town we visited **was San Marcos Tlapazola**, well known for its particular terracotta-style red clay pottery. Traditionally, San Marcos has long been a supplier of pottery to the Central Valleys and the Tlacolula market. Although there are about 300 potters in the village, they work sporadically. However, since the late 1980s these potters have been experimenting with new forms, which has led to better sales and recognition for the village. Artisans market their wares on market days at Tlacolula and most recently also at the crafts market at Oaxaca de Juárez.

Another town working with clay was **San Bartolo Coyotepec**. Local pottery is unique, not only because of its black colour, but also because of its texture. Artifacts are so fine and well burned that they become useless for cooking. However, for centuries pottery of Coyotepec has been recognized for its capacity to containing liquids. **Barro negro, as their ware is known, also has a very particular finishing process:** when pieces come out of the pit (as they are not fired in a kiln), polished pieces are glossy black and the unpolished ones have a matt grey finish. This process was developed after 1930's when the town’s economy was affected by sales of aluminium utensils, well pumps and both aluminium and plastic wares. Forced to innovate, potters began to burnish their pieces by rubbing stones against artifacts, which gave rise to the polished black clay that has made them so famous.

Nearly 95% of Coyotepec’s population is involved in barro negro production. Thanks to their robust sales, most of the potters live comfortably from their trade. Countless shops in Coyotepec sell local pottery and it is also known across the Country.

Other towns are well known for its wooden crafts, either of decorative and artistic or functional items, such as carpentry, furniture. **San Martin Tilcajete’s** artisans carve wood Alebrijes – mythological and zoomorphical characters- out of softwood. These carvings are mostly polychromed and are well known in other parts of Mexico. Initially, alebrijes made in the region

around Mexico City were wooden, while those made in Oaxaca were constructed out of paper and later on made of wood for durability. In Oaxaca the tradition of carving wooden animals was already very old, known as tonas, a heritage of the Zapotec culture, in whose cosmovision are spirits, nahuales, that serve as guides in the life of each person according to the day of their birth.

Embroidery is one of the most extended and characteristic pre-Columbian craft. Weaving is learned at childhood and it is very ingrained in tradition, as textile is considered a substitute for written text. It transmits a code written with threads, expressed through symbols, colors and shapes, and transmits cultural history, rank, gender, civil situation and social status. Mostly, weaving with waist looms is done by women, while standing loom is done by men as well. **San Pedro Cajonos** is well known for its Creole Silk crafts, covering the whole process of silkworm farming, spinning of silk threads, tinting with natural dyes, weaving fabrics and sewing, mostly of garments of daily or ceremonial use. At San Pedro I visited the Martinez Family and their WEN DO SED Association.

San Pablo Tijaltepec is a small village laid amidst the dry and rugged landscape of La Mixteca (in local language, mixteco Ñuu Savi). Shared by the states of Puebla, Guerrero y Oaxaca, it is a culturally rich region, with a separate political and economic organization. In spite of, or maybe because of its isolation, San Pablo Tijaltepec is unique for its embroidered cotton textile technique of Pepenado or Penado, a pick-up weave with gathered pleats with its afterwards embroidered with polychromed symbols of topography and nature. It is extremely difficult to access, as its road system is not kept, scarce and isolated. Here, local inhabitants mostly speak a dialect of Mixtec, and many of them, do not speak Spanish.

Facilitator Laura Quiroz - Lita – assists later on the community visiting to San Pablo Tijaltepec as she had an existing relationship with some group of female embroiderers there. These women conformed a group of regular attendees to the series of workshops I held and financed over four years, based on the notion of collective pattern, shape and weaving which would lead into formalizing an artisan collective. Currently, Laura Quiroz continues to work with this group of artisans from San Pablo Tijaltepec, Ñaa Ñanga Colectivo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, was born around this Dissertation and also invested its resources on this Collective, as a platform whose primary goal is to encourage and facilitate local artisans and suppliers to become part of the local and global economy.

After summer 2013, I returned to Oaxaca and continued gathering a team which evolved organically through acquaintances and coincidences, as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 4, Section 4.1.7 Gathering a team of designers.

I held a first official meeting with a multidisciplinary group of design professionals who would later become collaborators, either through lengthy interventions or by shorter appearances. On **October 2013**, I gathered Maddalena Forcella, Omar F. Fernández Lesur, Fátima Díaz and Eric Chávez for a first meeting. At this meeting, I shared my concerns and the theoretical basis of the oral tradition I had been working on as I will describe in detail in Chapter 4, Section 4.1. I also shared my impression of the first visits to the artisan communities, validating a proposal to approach communities through oral tradition after sharing a theoretical discourse which guided part of my Doctoral Research.



Figure 1.2 Omar F. Fernández, Maddalena Forcella, Eric Chávez and Fátima G. Díaz. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, October 2013.

There and at subsequent facilitators' meetings, I would generate discussions around the topics of co-creation and participatory strategies, listening to and poking colleagues to understand their local context, approaches, needs, aspirations, preconceptions and goals. We learned to work together even when I was not physically present, as we held video meetings and an active communication to share my Research goals and visions as workshops transformed. We mutually provoked each other into thoughtful discussions, which were documented in audio, video and multitude of notes, transcriptions and photos, as will be further described in Chapter 5. These often became evolutive landmarks in workshop development and set directions and strategies on processes and approach. Diego Mier y Tehrán was an articulate and grounded thinker and argued his reflections with valid perspective, clarity and vision.

Being Oaxaca well known for its crafts using a wide array of materials, I also visited **San Agustín Etla**, a village about 40 minutes from the city, set in the mountains. A place surrounded by mountains covered by oak, pine and pinewoods, as well as springs and water eyes. Here, a cooperative called, Coperative Taller Arte Papel Vista Hermosa, better known since its foundation

As La Fábrica de Papel de Etla, set originally by Finnish artists and where artisans produced handmade papers using sustainably-sourced natural fibres and traditional methods. I would source paper sheets from them, using then as a support for the expressive drawings later produced at oral workshops.



Figure 1.3 *Cooperative Taller Arte Papel Vista Hermosa. San Agustín Etla. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

To approach selected communities, and as part of my practice, I structured a series of workshops, and a group of artisans and seven designers – including me – participated in the workshops, which took place two or three times a year over a three-year period.

Before and after the workshops, I conducted meetings with the designers and the artisans to gather their reflections and to contrast my own. These meetings helped explore changes during the workshops, both in the practices and in the aesthetic perceptions of the artefacts selected; these changes were also analysed from a local cultural perspective.

I approached these workshops with the goal of questioning not only the existing social design practices in Mexican indigenous communities but also the historically established political parameters in those communities. Because of the fraught history of intervention in indigenous life, there was always an aspect of uncertainty in our own project, as we regarded the fatal consequences of past interventions and considered our own approximation as a delicate membrane that demanded our utmost attention.



Figure 1.4 *Power relations surrounding the creation of artefacts at the community centre.*
Meeting to present designers at the council of San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.

Cultural artefacts function as tools of connection between people, and for that reason, their value cannot be considered without regard to function or separated from the socio-cultural systems they belong to. The artefact builds meaning through its use, is integrated into experience and interacts with the symbology from which it derives strength – actions which allow it to carry the culture’s message (Balaram, 1995).

In his paper *On the Essential Contexts of Artifacts*, Klaus Krippendorff posits that respect for archetypes and beliefs is deeply entrenched in the collective subconscious, and this respect transcends all other collective interests, including production, consumption and industry (Krippendorff, 1995).

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Figure 1.5 *Infographics.* Adapted from *On the Essential Contexts of Artifacts* (p. 165), by Krippendorff, 1995.

As Krippendorff writes, '[T]he objects not only have orientation relating to the user, but they are also oriented in relation to places in the space built by other objects' (Krippendorff, 1995, p. 165). As such, it was necessary for us to maintain the social and cultural contexts where the practices took place, navigating *within* their territory while also making obvious the tacit knowledge held by both the facilitators and the indigenous peoples. Michael Polanyi writes,

If we consider the tacit knowledge as a central part of the knowledge, then we will know what to look for [. . .]. How the structure of tacit knowledge determines the structure of comprehensive entities.

(Polanyi, 1966)

Thus, our task was to transform tacit knowledge into explicit and transferable knowledge while leaving room for heritage as the enterprise of knowledge in the process – a value which Eva Brandt regards as both social and democratic (Brandt et al., 2013; Polanyi, 1966; Collis, 2010; Crouch and Pearce, 2012).

Writing in *Design Anthropology: Theory and Practice*, Gislev Kjærsgaard (2013) coined the term 'knowledge pieces' to refer to artefacts which enable the transfer of individual intangible knowledge to collective tangible knowledge. In this vein, I considered oral tradition itself as a knowledge piece since, for centuries, it was the only way of relaying and preserving the people's culture, values and belief systems. Through oral tradition alone, communities generated orientation patterns for conflict resolution and complex symbology systems, which provided both order and meaning, and formed their unique legacies. In his work on the Mayan Chamula community, Gary Gossen (1974) considered oral tradition a part of the 'ethnography of speaking', arguing that it is as vital to the maintenance of social order as systems of kinship and social organisation.



Figure 1.6 *Mixtec women gathering on the oral workshop. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

Considering the concept of intangible artefacts, the resulting craft samples displayed the reality of the collective imagery of community members and served as a medium for articulation between facilitator and artisan. In the oral workshops, women, children and the elderly from different communities expressed their oral traditions and mythology through drawings – which I summarised in a useful dossier (see Appendix B, p. 305. This way, the presented and represented material was transformed into items of tangible knowledge, which could be seen and handled in the following workshop.



Figure 1.7 *First Oral workshop held at Atzompa. Women drawing their remembrances and stories.* CADA Foundation®, February 2014.

Images and legends were collected in the oral narrative workshops, through which the indigenous culture of the people of the Mixtec explained their universe. Through their patterns, they expressed their own cosmos and vision of the world, like the cotton fabric worn by the woman in San Pablo Tijaltepec where the motifs contain figures born from symmetry of nature and abstraction of symbolic elements, like friezes and straight lines, all referred to pre-Hispanic times and a cosmic vision of their universe. So as their beliefs and vision get shared through their oral narrative so they do their stories and their cultural preferences. Through the images and legends collected in through their oral narrative, we shared a possible way of exchange and the allowance of a cultural approximation. Generating a negotiation of interest through their stories and cultural preferences, their compositions, transformations and wishes were reviewed, documented and discussed among all.

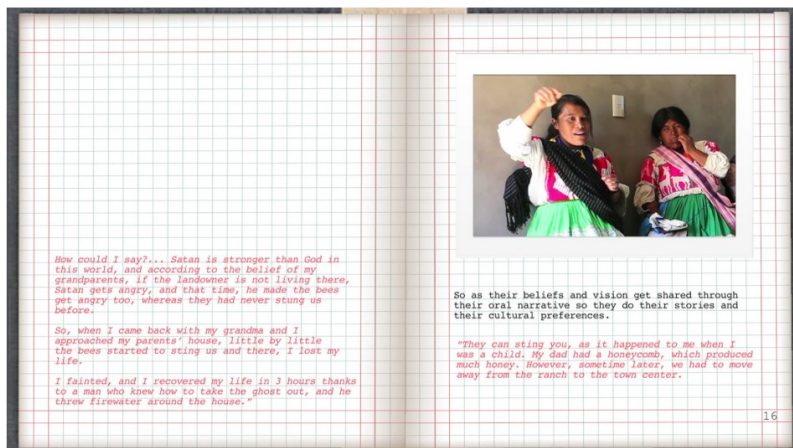


Figure 1.8 *San Pablo Tijaltepec oral workshop.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* p. 16, by CADA Foundation®, 2017.

Before starting workshops and in order to further research the role of narrative in cultural transmission, I travelled to **Tuxla** and **San Cristobal De Las Casas**, to meet poet and activist Ambar Past, introduced to me by Maddalena Forcella. Past had left her native United States to settle in San Cristobal three decades ago. She had deeply embraced local culture and she was an advocate for indigenist causes, using narrative, song and poetry as a tool. Interviewing her was revealing and surprising, evidencing for me a dual standard, on one hand she had a very critical position towards my Research as intrusive, but another, seemed to participate in the same system she criticized.

I also met and interviewed a Tzotzil woman, natural healer – chamana – and invoker – conjuror- Maruch Méndes. As a Shaman and soothsayer, she was a well-respected member of her community. I was certainly amazed to note the importance of words and the healing powers they commanded among these communities, and this fact also reassured me on my decision to approach communities through words and narrative.

During this month of February 2014, we held three narrative workshops at different communities, chosen from those we had visited in 2013 as part of the ethnographic phase. They usually lasted a half day, and I provided for materials and most often also covered food expenses.

The first oral workshops were held on February 8th at **Santa María de Atzompa**, joined by Omar Fernández and Fátima Díaz. As we had agreed on the previous facilitators' meeting, we approached the community through narrative. Local stories, personal stories, myths and legends, together with their imagery were captured on beautiful natural paper from the Etla Paper

Factory. Artisans were very receptive and participated with enthusiasm in the different activities around discussion and production, as children also did.

On February 15th, Omar Fernández, Maddalena Forcella, Fátima Díaz and I held a second workshop at **Santa María Yavesía**. As these artisans were familiar with wood working, narrative was focused in producing drawings on Etla paper with black ink. At this workshop, we paid special attention to the use and appropriation of space by attendees, the spontaneous gathering of people by age group and social rank, first around communally owned and maintained private, enclosed space, and later at a covered but otherwise open porched space.

A week later, on February 22nd, a third and last workshop was conducted at San Pablo Tijaltepec. As I mentioned before, reaching the village required a long and uncomfortable journey. As the community of weavers and embroiders usually work with color, facilitators decided to provide only black ink, so that partakers will experiment with another mode of expression where color wasn't their usual way of expression. An uncomfortable situation develops when men demand paid compensation for participants, thinking it was a government-sponsored activity and expecting they would be paid. Much was learned about local politics, expectations, dependency and custom.



Figure 1.9 *First Oral workshop held at Santa María Yavesía. Men and children busy at drawing.* CADA Foundation®, February 2014.

We also held remote meetings in May 2014 as I could not travel. Rut Martín did instead, attending two meetings and collecting data. Although I was not there, we managed to establish an effective communication to discussed our goals, reflections and visions on how to work with artisans, and fieldwork continued.

Once in Oaxaca, Rut set to classify the dossier and share my instructions. Between May and October 2014, I held important meeting and debate between the team. The debate pivoted around workshops as facilitator-designers and about a facilitator's roles.

We discussed about facilitators' time and their commitment, on their involvement on the process of workshops themselves, and during workshop development. We spoke about dedication needed to spur and imagine transformation. We all had strong views on avoiding a colonising, involuntary process, agreeing that the best way forward was by asking questions. This way, we pondered, the designer, leaving the centre, became a facilitator of a creative process in the community. It required a caution not to generate imposition, and it required a time of commitment. It was a discussion on polarized position: on the one hand, we should avoid assuming that there is a problem, because this is a Western view, and if we focus on how design can bring the people who work on the subject closer, they should be invited and should start by asking a question, in this case through invitation: "why don't you tell me a story" and using narrative. (See p. 223, Figure 5.58)

On the other hand, I held a strong position on keeping a 360° vision that allowed the process to reach an end at the productive chain. As I had been investigating, and concluded that more than a design proposal, my Dissertation was to propose a different approach to methodology.

Back in Oaxaca on October 2014, I led another facilitators' meeting. Usually, we met at cafes or public spaces, or at a colleague's studio space, and generally around a meal. We pondered on how to move from the community tacit knowledge to the cultural artifact as social mediator, aided by notes I had prepared and the compiled dossier for previous oral workshops, the question I asked: "How to move from community tacit knowledge to the cultural artifact as social mediator". At this meeting we updated information, discussed possibilities of approach for the following workshops, then scheduled February 2015. To foster collaborative processes, we saw it necessary to do exercises where tools could be shared, defining a process by exploring, getting involved in the technique and not set on a final objective in the form of an artifact at this point. We agreed on shapes based on memories and stories, deeming also relevant the use of the material, settling on the idea of a toy as a starting point, develop it organically as a result of working with materials, using different tools, and seeing their transformation and how artisans would negotiate among themselves, being used to certain uniformity and collective knowledge.

Another landmark decision was to stop developing workshops at Atzompa I developed new one at **Santo Domingo Tonaltepec**, located on the Mixtec highlands. Because of its marginal situation and interest of the Colectivo 1050 and their inhabitants. Insufficient roads and the town's isolation made it difficult for artisans to bring their products to far away markets. There, ceramics are still manufactured as in Pre-Columbian period, its craft left to two older artisans without

successors and thus, at risk of disappearing. Younger people leave their village to study or work or migrate looking for other opportunities.

I also started to research and document how design practitioners worked, both on their own and through the work they did with communities where we had started collaborations. This approach allowed me to articulate the significance of our collaborative work and to map colleagues, research participants and draw synergies, extending my network and meeting other persons who would offer first hand experiences on the technical training of artisans and techniques in Oaxaca and other parts of Mexico. Our conversations revolved around other pilot initiatives similar to mine, which had forefronted co-design and collaborative processes between design practitioners and artisans, such as Centro de Artes y Oficios Adolfo Best Maugard, K'un K'un², or PROADA³, or others who took over these lead, such as "El Camino de los Altos a.c." a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and diffusion of traditional textile culture, training of Mayan women weavers and the production of a collection of new designs in partnership with the French designers association "El camino" in San Cristóbal de las Casas, or Arroz con Leche, an initiative of Mexican designer Francisco Cancino to develop children's clothing to promote women artisans working from home, on the traditional techniques of Mexican handmade textiles.

November 2014 would be a very fruitful month, as I did travel extensively, meeting and interviewing artists and anthropologists like Ana Pellicer, current or former officials at CECATIS National Training centers, who were involved on either artisan collectives or in teaching craft, as will be elaborated on Chapter 4.

In early November, I would document Maddalena Forcella's techniques with natural dyes, a topic on which a leading expert, as well as we held a facilitators' meeting, for the first time, with samples we had commissioned from artisans at San Pablo Tijaltepec. Lita, Maddalena and I would then prepare coming workshops based on these samples, evaluating their process, issuing paths by which we would motivate artisans to lay their way ahead. These artisans, have already been participating on the previous workshops drawing their collective imaginary and we discussed on how to evolve from two dimensional samples to three-dimensional objects, in this case, soft

² K'un K'un is a pioneering workshop for Mayan weavers introducing new designs and contemporary sensibility into the production of textiles with traditional techniques using natural dyes.

³ PROADA is a Workshop Program for designers. A program directed by Sergio Carrasco where Maddalena Forcella was gathered as participant together with a group of designers. PROADA program was for the first-time program offered to designers where the identity and vision of the artisans were taken in consideration.

stuffed animal shapes, which could stand on their own. We thought it would be positive for the artisans to produce an artifact who could be scaled, represent their craftsmanship, provided income and acted as an Ambassador of their culture to a wider audience.

We also became aware of the importance of keeping a closer relation to communities we served, in between workshops. Maddalena Forcella agreed to lead a following workshop together with Ana Paula Fuentes, with Lita Quiroz acting as an interpreter between Spanish and Mixteco, strengthening her engagement to her own community.

1.3.2 Design Research Phase II

In January 2015, CADA Foundation® was constituted as a platform to foster and facilitate local artisans and suppliers becoming part of local and global economy while strengthening their local presence. With sustainable models in mind, it meant to assist artisan communities in dealing with environmental, social, and economic aspects view based on dialogue. It was also needed to structure a juridic and administrative body which could agglutinate collaborators – both design practitioners – and donating partners to provide funding for the social design endeavour that this Research Project had started.

Further time passed and I travelled back to Mexico in February 2015. I had developed much of the theoretical background and both ethnographic field work and the first narrative workshops had given me much information and insights. From this moment onwards, meetings and Workshops begun during February and March 2015 represented a great amount of discussion, development and revision on methodology.

We further would solve organizational issues, scheduling workshops and arranging logistical details to continue our work at San Pablo Tijaltepec and to start a new process at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, with the perspective and experiences we had gained previously. This time the initial workshops were held on three consecutive days, starting with narrative workshops, followed by universal toy discussion (see Appendix F, p. 331) and finishing on the third day with attendees' hand moulding small clay figures ready to be fired. We went back for two days, at the end of the month, to see recapitulate on the narrative workshops and see how work had developed. These workshops became milestone on my research work and they are fully detailed as case studies on Chapter 5 together with the pre- and post-reflecting meeting note.

As artefact gains the ability to provoke actions and generate responses, conferring it with social agency. Joanna Sofaer, in her work on materiality and identity, asserts that materiality carries a

meaning and medium on which social relationships become explicit and visible. I articulate meaning through matter, acting under its framework; thus, it is through matter that people communicate their identity. Without materiality, she believes, social relationships and their expressions would have little meaning, as there would be no mediating force (Sofaer, 2007). She writes,

Without material expression social relations have little substantive reality, as there is nothing through which these relations can be mediated. Art that is made of materials and which has a physical presence negotiates this extraordinary potential of materiality.

(Sofaer, 2007)

Various studies on the social dynamics of artefact exchanges show the importance of objects' social functions – whether through a relationship of offerings or a reciprocal one – in defining the identities they convey. For this reason, a community's cultural products cannot be relegated to simple uses and separated from identity and social context. As Balaram writes,

The cultural artefacts and systems acquire meanings integrated with the symbology from which they come. This communal way of participating and carrying that meaning, creating the value system, is actually what builds the culture of a community.

(Balaram, 2009, p. 131)

The potential of an artefact to convey meaning through its materiality thus creates the possibility for the sort of reflection I strive for in this project.

Perhaps the best example of a productive discourse around design emerged from the Ahmedabad Declaration of 1979, which enunciated the role of design in developing societies, coining the term 'design for development' (Balaram, 2009). The declaration was the culmination of a meeting hosted by India's National Institute of Design (NID) in Ahmedabad, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID), under the coordination of Chatterjee⁴. In many ways, this landmark meeting was made possible by the unique concern given to craft design in India's post-revolutionary years. Following the 1960s creation of the NID and Charles and Ray Eames's 'India Report' (1958), North American designers were invited to support India's transition towards an industrialization of their crafts. Their singular mission was not to imitate the developed countries

⁴ Asoke Chatterjee was the director of Indian National Institute of Design from 1975 to 1995. He promoted design education in India and is actively concerned with the future of artisans and hand activity both in India and globally.

but to research ways to approach local social problems with the help of local knowledge. Design practice was thus suggested as a method of tackling the social demands of India's rapidly changing reality, forming the basis for the founding of the NID (Ranjan, 2011; Ghose, 1995; Balaram, 1995).

Hervey Molotch, writing in *Design Anthropology*, discusses the object's capacity to transform the social structure and fabric. He claims that 'it is possible, indeed, to use objects not just to shed light on a particular place, historic event, but on the nature of history itself' (Molotch, 2011). These attributes of the artefacts allow for the deeper meaning which this research pursues: society showing itself rather than simply being reflected. Cultural artefacts have meanings that can generate emotions in the subjects, and therefore, any simple changes or mutations will only create future challenges for a society.

I already mentioned the link between materiality and cultural artefacts. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bordieu (1990) discusses the contrast between perceiving, understanding and acting which arises in field work. He considers this a result of cognitive processes guided by practical patterns of classification that help organize perception and structure action. In his recent work, *Making*, Ingold (2013) criticizes the style of most fieldwork, pointing out the constant overlap between written and visual notes. He argues that these studies are wrong to exclusively focus on the links between artefact and the social interaction it generates while ignoring the creativity of the production process. As Ingold puts it, studying that process means understanding it, thus exploring the links between perception, creativity and talent (2013). Similarly, Garvey (2011) believes in a collective process made possible through the exploration of the material, a 'process of touching, looking, stroking'.

At this Phase, field work was developed at three communities: San Pablo Tijaltepec, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and Santa María Yavesía.

After these workshops, I organized one of the most relevant facilitators meetings at Oaxacan Restaurant La Jicara. It was held on March 15, 2015. This meeting proved a great moment of reflection and inflection on our position as designers from a reflective and non-taxing position (see Chapter 5). The meeting marked the end of a first Phase of design workshops, where through making, dialogue and experimentation we exchanged with attending artisan's tangible and intangible tools and dialogue among facilitators and artisans was an organic progression of questions and answers with the intention of finding common ground and identifying crucial aspects for the artisans: how time and timing were understood in a different way, how relationship with nature was an important and common reference. On their difficulty to define

that producing a marketable artifact was a goal, and if this artifact should be unique, produced as copies, or seriated. On how younger generations were leaving their villages and the perils of lost identity that craftsmanship stewarded. We also noted how dialogue about craft transformed into more personal conversations about their approach to their craft, their process of learning and mastering their handwork. Issues of scale and packaging were also considered.

Time was an important factor, as artisans needed extended periods of time to assimilate concepts, to abstract them and to ideate away from folklorist imagery or foreign influences. A process of keeping craftsmanship while gaining design intent. For us as designers, it was important that artisans had freedom to develop, but at the same time, that they were aware of an objective, of tools available to them and to give them time and mental space to talk, to muse on their narrative and to reflect on this approach.

We held one more meeting on this last phase at Espacio 1050 Oaxaca on March 17th 2015, to analyse all the samples and to agree on how to proceed for the coming phase.

In our various encounters in the workspace, materials were always present in the form of random pieces, leftovers and samples. We always had fabric, wire and tools to work more precisely on cuts and shapes along with other materials.

We generated several prototypes with these new materials, attempting to connect disparate design ideas while also staying rooted in practice and leaving space for discussion and mutual learning. The resulting prototypes display a weaving-together of analysis and design and an interactive, hermeneutic process known as the 'task-artefact cycle'.

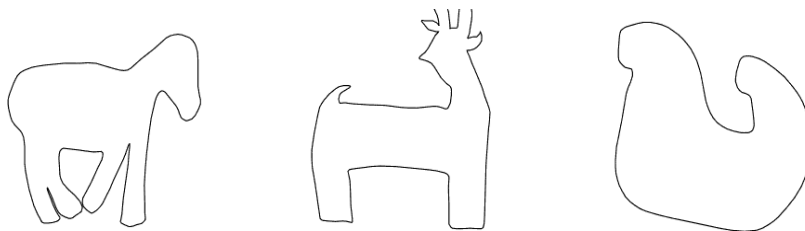


Figure 1.10 *Examples of the prototypes and shapes from the workshops. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2017.*

New expressions of the reality of a collective imagery of the members of the community from the oral narratives to the tangible artifacts are shared understanding the links between perception, creativity and tacit knowledge as knowing by design

Studies of plasticity in the making and the unmaking of objects, no worrying so much about the final process as the exchange of new scales and forms. Their tactic knowledge is combined with other incorporated elements originated in other different and diverse cultural heritages and contexts as new materials are shared originating new relations. Developing discussion of progression through materials and different surfaces volume and scale as artifacts have social attribute based on collective inheritance and cannot be separated from its entities system. Overlapping between written and visual notes, new material and forms are part of the phase, creating a link between the artifact and the social interaction that generates sharing their knowledge as exchange merges as an organic system of correspondence. The inheritance of the artisanal knowledge pass from generations through generations and the culture share group's own interest on exploring new avenues led them to respond with exchange and motivation. As we engage through conversations and reflections debating every decision before and after getting into the community. The participation as an inclusive process and democratic working environment. Reflecting together as times unfolds and diversity and richness of the outcomes creates deeper engagement within the relationships. Building a common objective, not simply a mere operation with materials predetermined to generate one or several creative outcomes. Design as a form of energy or vibration.

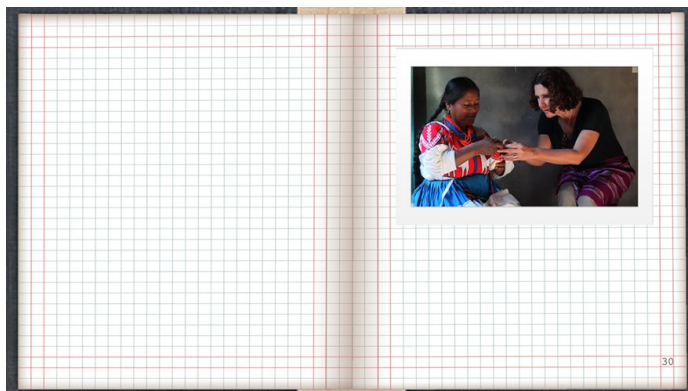


Figure 1.11 *Documenting travel notes and reflections as digital media.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design*. [Digital video], by CADA Foundation®, 2017.

The artisan simply modifies and reflects social preferences naturally. So, design happens as the artifacts reflects a vision of interaction with the own culture through time. Transforming from individual and un-tangible to collective and tangible through internal narratives of production as a reinforcement of the collective knowledge.

Using the artifact as a focal point, the context in which it is created, the techniques and materials use are analyzed as well as the existing link between artisan and artifact, and also the link between the artisan and his/her community that derives from his/her cultural heritage (Ornelas & Gregory, 2011).

Through this practice of social design, the making of the communities' cultural artefacts seeks to favour the exchange of knowledge and values between communities and design practitioners. In the context of equality, this dialogue, as a practice of correspondence, may be assimilated by their social, economic and even their political structure. With this practice, I am not looking to resolve any single design problem but instead hoping to trigger the artisans' cooperation and creative contribution.

1.3.3 Prototyping, Artisanal Production and Initiated Market Exposure Phase III

Workshops in this phase happened between June 2015 until March 2016, and took place at **Santo Domingo Tonaltepec** and **San Pablo Tijaltepec**, ending work previously made at **Santa María Yavesía**. These workshops had a clear objective for production and a market focus, in San Pablo Tijaltepec this reached a landmark by their participation of the Mesoamerican Textile Congress at the Textile Museum in Oaxaca, and its Expoventa- showcase and sale, a year later in October 2016. At this was important to focus on the semantic language of artifacts within the community, to assign context and market value. As facilitators, we believed in weaving together our design analysis and artisans' tacit knowledge in a series of prototypes that showed the interactive and hermeneutic process of the cycle task-artifact. This stage of the work was framed by the process of making things together, among people with different cultural backgrounds, social systems and core beliefs. Therefore, it was the fundamental field ground of composition that modulated and knotted this field into different layers of meaning, linking the activities I was undertaking with previous experiences and aspirations from the vision of the artisans themselves. I observed and noted their initial design suggestions and hesitations during the actual making process and after the projects were completed.

Otto and Smith (2013), in their book *Design Anthropology: A Distinct Style of Knowing*, address the practice of design as a process while also reviewing the contributions of Ingold (2013) and Gatt. Both authors suggest the existence of reciprocity, or the 'practice of correspondence' – based on the constant shifts of the people, the objects and the environments – as a practice of reflection in action.

It also considered fine-tuning Artisanal production, as well as initiated Market exposure. Some of the facilitators addressed practical business-related issues, like explaining value and pricing, market demand, commercial goods, commissions and transactions towards the end of my and CADA's involvement, around March 2017.

Connecting people with one to another. Reaching a momentum of full attention to development of tool processes, reflection and development of prototypes with several materials and technics, joining the design ideas while we keep the link to the practice, always ensuring it was a context for discussion and mutual understanding. Pleasures of the practice in the production as the power of the artifact's narrative wins over its function, reflecting the conception of the craft and technique used as the artisan simply reflects social preferences and a vision of interaction with their own culture, and the exchange transmitted through time and values exchange between communities and design practitioners. It also helped designers negotiate issues of democratic participation and social hierarchies so that in a context of equality, this dialogue was assimilated by their social, economic and political structure.

During this period of time, we scheduled several workshops that I described on Chapter 5. Artifacts have improved as in San Pablo Tijaltepec we have been invited a seamstress named Rufina to join our trips to the village. I also bought a new sewing machine for the artisans and Rufina fixed an existing one, as well as showed them about finish seams and to turn seams inside-out for flat and even finishes. We also brought with us different fabric samples. They were by now using three sewing machines, as Rufina has brought hers too. I commissioned 100 animals, each woman sews 25, to be delivered in time for the Mesoamerican Textile Congress in Oaxaca.

Artisans have by now consolidated a collective called Ñaa Ñanga, to improve their presence and representation at the Second Mesoamerican Textile Congress TEXTIM II. Museo Textil de Oaxaca which is also attractive as a market to be held later on, in October 2016. We would eventually stop collaborating as I run out of funding and I was not able to continue holding the team without payments. We didn't hold a final meeting to close our collaboration, and I considered my intervention was finished. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec was still under the tutelage of Colectivo 1050.

People started to be aware of our work and my project received interest from various parts and I trust we will be able to iterate the processes and adapt them to other communities, other facilitators.

The following year, in 2017 I developed a pilot training workshop at the Textile Museum in Oaxaca and also went back to San Pablo Tijaltepec in mid-June same year in response to Ñaa Ñanga's request to receive training on sales with an invitation for a celebrative meal at one of the artisans' home and were joined, for the first time since the first workshop, by men.

Eventually, a new workshop at San Pablo Tijaltepec was held on July same year, Rut Martin travelled from Barcelona with her own expenses and met Ana Paula, Lita and Rufina and they all travelled to San Pablo Tijaltepec to worked on documenting the outcomes, perfecting finishes and sizing.

During the first months of 2018 I returned once again to Oaxaca. I tried to recover and make an inventory of clay pieces and visit artisans. I travel to San Pablo Tijaltepec alone to meet at Rosalía Bautista's home with the group of artisans hoping will be more women in the group. I realized little by little they become close-door activities which benefited few. I expressed Lita my concerns. We ate Pozole and gathered samples made by the artisans at Camino de Los Altos. Unfortunately, the efforts we made with artisans at San Pablo Tijaltepec didn't have the same long-lasting effect.

1.4 Fieldwork issues and situation handling

As practitioner, my professional experience in project implementation led to base my dissertation on fieldwork, simultaneously working on the theoretical framework in which the research would be settled. I decided to do this in an organic way, as consequence of the strategy that I stablished with my role as a reflective practitioner. As such, I have taken observation and reflection as active processes that result in learning, the consequence of understanding each situation and the ability to change and adapt to each one.

The purpose was not to lead the workshops in a specific direction to get a defined final objective, but to understand how the process itself would define the approach for next workshops and phases, and to define, if the use of social design practice as a possible tool for creating resilience in the communities we worked.

The challenges I encountered were many, some of them being objective and others subjective. Objectively, the isolation of these communities and funding were main issues. Subjectively, grasping cultural differences for instance, in the concept and use of time and process, keeping an apolitical and discrete position against local people's wishes or understanding, and carrying on with research on and off site during a lengthy period of time in parallel to personal and

professional circumstances, were aspects I learned to navigate with. Other handicaps, derived from multiple factors, meant that the initial deadlines set for the workshops could not be met, mainly due to financial issues, as I was the one who financed most of the expenses derived from the development of this Research.

My role is to be a catalyst and strategist with a particular set of cultural conditions which allow me to navigate more or less at ease within certain cultural environments.

Being a foreigner, a “güera” (blond, which in Mexico means also European, or simply “non-native”) and a woman, and to avoid being considered patronizing or exert subtle “colonization through cooperation” or be seen as “forcing modernisation”; it was important to me that my role was that of a neutral observer, beyond my inner and private views, perplexities and surprises. I did not want to be seen or act as an Activist, as I am not an agitator. This research aims to generate reflection, not to claim rights, to bring forth unglobalised voices, to listen to them and to amplify them, so that they may be heard. The approach in this process to consult, listen, debate and contest former actions and to document a process.

It was a challenge to work in a new area in which there is no previous experience and to launch this research based mainly on field work. Once in Oaxaca, it was necessary to locate and visit different communities and artisans in order to assess what could be the best alternatives for working with them. There were many difficulties and challenges to this research. Access to the chosen villages was difficult, and the level of marginalisation in these regions was high. I defined these difficulties as experiences, viewing geographic landscapes, logistics frontiers and language barriers as part of the work. I also reflected on questions of gender, power and authority.

A team of local designers had to be formed by those who were experienced in working with artisans from indigenous communities and who knew, and valued, their ancestral techniques, so that they could be used in their work. This work was framed by the process of making things together, among people with different cultural backgrounds, social systems, and core beliefs.

The team of facilitators and collaborators in some cases did not receive any economic benefit from their participation in the project, which meant that in many cases they collaborated on specific activities, their continuity in the project being limited to their availability, time and interest. Journeys to the communities, sometimes with difficult access, meant that I had to rent a vehicle with a driver to transport the team, find and cover personal expenses derived from accommodation, allowances, food, and material for workshops. Only in the first visits to

communities' workshops took place thanks to the logistic assistance lent by the D.I.F. (Desarrollo Integral de la Familia) under the coordination of Fátima Díaz.

At one-point DIF demanded that my research had to be positioned within a favourable political framework that was far removed from the objective of the project itself and from the neutral stance that I had defended from the beginning of this Research. That is, based on not forcing an agenda or imposing an objective, but rather letting artisans decide by themselves how they would use information given and tools shared during workshops.

This was the reason why it was decided to dispense with aid provided by D.I.F., which made both logistics and financing workshops even more complicated. As a consequence, CADA Foundation®, was created as a platform whose primary goal was to encourage and facilitate local artisans and suppliers into becoming part of the local and global economies. By focusing on Social Exchange Through Design, it was born as a platform intended for Artisans, practitioners and designers. Through this action, I tried to raise funds and seek support to continue with both theoretical research and workshops.

On the other hand, due to all these circumstances, the initial deadlines were extended, which helped to create a long-term link, which favoured the perception of commitment. The indigenous artisan communities have a deep connection to place, the limited resources and the deep relationship between daily routine and their own tradition and values make this communities deeply bonded. It requires time, expectations, the involvement of trust and be open to unexpected outcomes. We designers are not saviors or experts but agents of change of we should approach the practice in the correct way. It takes a lot of time of listening and reflecting, debating and rewriting on the work developed.

My professional, personal and cultural background were key strengths for developing this project. I am originally from Galicia, a region in the northwest of Spain, where in addition to Spanish, Galician, a language specific to that region, is spoken. In Galician culture, communal and family values still remain, where there are rituals linked to food, sitting together to eat symbolizes acceptance, characteristics also present in Oaxacan culture. My family has maintained links with Mexico and Latin America for generations due to migration because of commercial and labour relations that Galicia maintained in those territories. Some of my ancestors and relatives came from the region, and I grew up knowing and appreciating their culture and gastronomy.

In this case, my rural Galician background granted comfortable understanding of governing structures, decision taking, roles, etc. As a designer and strategist, I had close referents within my

cultural background and professional training and practice, cultural constraints that allowed me to navigate more easily in certain cultures.

Sharing Spanish as a common language for all project participants facilitated communication, being able to converse directly and in a close and sociable way with most of the people I considered relevant to the research at a given time. This brought confidence, since the environment in which I approached them was culturally closed. Needless to say, I always did so show respect and sincere interest in them. The "proximities" of how those meetings were orchestrated were therefore relevant and I will explain on details in Chapter 5.

In the mid 90's I moved to New York, where I studied architecture, worked for years as an architect and designer for major international brands where my tasks focused on creating a global and strategic vision. This personal and professional background allowed me an international pool of resources and contacts, which contributed to formulate both a vision, an approach and a pool of contacts who could offer ideas, consult on specific issues, such as marketing, merchandising, sales venues and media.

Over the last years, I have been collaborating at Fashion Institute in New York and Pratt Design Incubator for Sustainable Innovation in New York, which has allowed me to be in contact with Academia and Research fields. My experience and my own design skills have been developed and honed for years under many different situations.

The more specific focus of my study became the practices: teaching and elaborating design studios dynamics. I do lead design research groups aimed at transferring knowledge to students from different cultural backgrounds, ages and ambitions. As a consequence, development of these processes is easier for me to execute, to do directly, and in a tangible way.

All these life experiences have given me a broad perspective of my Thesis project from its beginning and an understanding of that it would be essential for it, keeping together both human and professional parts in order to carry it out research.

Sensitivity and empathy were two very important points in the whole process. I knew that it was necessary to have a team of local collaborators who could guide me while respecting their own codes, rhythms and values, so the project always had an organic and respectful development. I tried to make my participation as subtle as possible. Thanks to the team of craftswomen, facilitators and collaborators who remained involved, despite all the difficulties and their participation in the project, it was possible to go this far.

In reviewing the arguments and analysis, I presented my role as a design practitioner, and my findings were identified by my own experiences based on my own understanding of design after years of experience as both a student and a professional. I combined this knowledge with action, considering how places, people and materials come together through the practice of design and learn to develop mutual correspondence.

In the framework of this Thesis, I found that, coming from a pragmatic background as design practitioner – who develops ideas based on abstraction, observation and interpretation of imagined or real situations -objects, needs, people who interact with whatever is produced or partake in the process of ideation – to develop a project I often had to over-intellectualise and argument what I knew by intuition and lengthy years of experience as a designer had experienced in co-creation. Understandably, this intellectual exercise and theoretical argumentation truly enriches and bases all Academic work when intellectual musings are not a justification of facts. Regardless – colloquially speaking – of what came first, workshops or intellectualization, it proved to be difficult, both for me as an author of unedited work, and for my reviewers, as there were no documented research precedents we could refer to.

A detailed account of field research and interviews is offered in Chapter 4, for background contextualization. Chapter 5 exposes preparatory workshops held with facilitators and workshops with artisans in a case study format.

1.5 Glossary of terms

In order to clarify and further explain my Research I have gathered, edited and created terminology which I used on my writing, in preparing workshops, in dialogue with other design practitioners and with peers in my field. Firstly, I must explain that these concepts are conceived within a framework of the field I master, which is Design, its strategies and processes, as well as factors that influence it: people, processes, materials, cultural appropriation and grasping of abstract concepts into making factual, concrete artifacts. Secondly, that within the discipline of Design, I was working amidst a process of co-creation, defined as a collaborative development to ideate new values in the form of concepts, solutions, products or services, which was collectively generated along with experts and stakeholders, design practitioners like myself, acting as facilitators, and artisans, as experts in their craft and in their ancestral and sometimes, intuitive knowledge.

I saw co-creation as collaborative transformation: we produced, proposed and shared ideas and we improved them together by loosely guided iteration, in the form of paid samples, whilst artisans choosing at all times which content would be adopted or discarded.

As terms define and mean different ideas in different contexts, both in intellect and physical realms, I shall enumerate them in the following section and define what they meant to me during my research process.

1.5.1 Proximities of design

Proximities of design refer to the situations during the practice as designer. They describe a given and framed environment defined by the way **approximation** among people happens, between people, places and their artefacts.

As I see it, proximities are the way to approach and contextualize in order to bring about the dialogue among all participants, not only in a verbal way, but also through gestures, movements, situations and physical distance among people, or in the way that material is used and artefacts are made.

I proposed and studied several new approaches to exchange and dialogue in communities (of artisans) – encouraging the emergence of new forms of social interactions through the making⁵. I operated under the belief that knowledge of the process of making can engender emotional connections which contribute to beneficial cultural dialogues, as well as the empowerment of communities and their legacies.

I call ‘proximities of design’ the specific framing of events during this investigation. The term ‘proximities of design’ also provided a platform for articulating individuality – whether communal or singular – and forged new signs of identity and collaboration.

Through these ‘proximities of design’, I tried to draw attention to the experience of processes involving diverse kinds of relations, interactions and dynamics experienced in the process of making things together, by people with different cultural backgrounds, social systems and core beliefs. “Proximities of design” concept has been key to the design process, those situations were undertaken with respect to: people, places and material.

⁵ Note: ‘The making’ is a rough translation of the Spanish word *hacer* and will be used throughout the dissertation to refer to the artisanal design process.

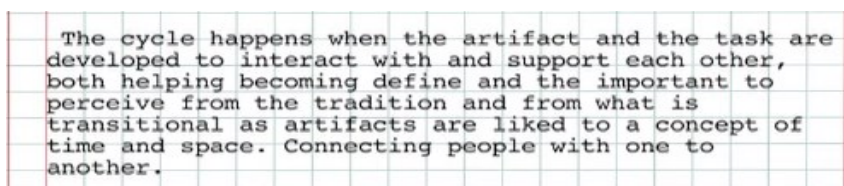
The importance of considering these situations is based on the involvement of an agreement with the flow of events as a progression of exchanges, and this practice of design helps us better understand local identity. It raised a question: How can we create an environment in which correspondence could be generated? I was aware of the importance of engaging in with all the senses, and in all dimensions with the environment that I was going to share.

Proximities of design are a consequence of participants' backgrounds as well as the knowledge about communities that facilitators had or gained as result of the previous ethnographic mapping. But also, proximities were determined by situations during workshops. Some of these were previously defined by the team, but their transformation was conditioned to how people and elements involved in the workshops reacted to this specific framed environment.

At the same time through reflecting on those situations, I suggested some limits to designers' roles and their implications on critical design practices (within social design). Each of these aspects is tied to the designer's role in developing trust required, as well as consistency through iterations of practice, and the task of reframing the familiar. This account focuses not only on how people relate to these events but also how other layers of meaning related to the situations are created to explore individual and collective agency.

The strong union of techniques and materials related to artisans and their communities is derived from a millenary cultural heritage, which also informs spiritual values, both individual and communal, that are integral in everyday life. In that sense, relationships as expressions of exchange are the focus of the social design process and are indeed the reason why the approach concerns actions, activities and gestures. Thus, I structured such transformative situations during the design process.

As tool for framing events, 'proximities of design', provides a platform for articulating individuality – whether communal or singular. This is a collaborative process, and the team draws from many different experiences. Relationships and the expressions of exchange are its most powerful tool and are the focus of the design process itself.



The cycle happens when the artifact and the task are developed to interact with and support each other, both helping becoming define and the important to perceive from the tradition and from what is transitional as artifacts are linked to a concept of time and space. Connecting people with one to another.

Figure 1.12 Text from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* [Digital video], by CADA Foundation®, 2017.

I divided proximities of design in three main categories: proximities of design through space-time, proximities of design through making, related to materiality, and Social proximities, related and based on people and their interactions.

1.5.2 Proximities of design through space-time, narratives within the spaces

To understand a given context, it's necessary to learn about their value system and their perception of the world and their place within it. It is important to define a peoples' "cosmovision"; it is a certain vision of the world, conditioned by the tradition that turns around the human beings and its present is all the activities of social life. It is related to space and the location of people, and the objects in it.

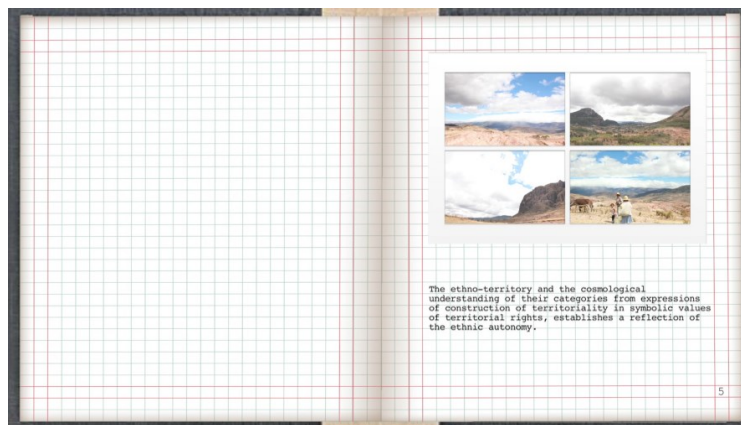


Figure 1.13 *Understanding the ethno-territory.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* [Digital video], by CADA Foundation®, 2017.



Figure 1.14 *Woman walking through the mountains.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* [Digital video], by CADA Foundation®, 2017.

An additional layer of meaning to this concept considers the particular Mexican – pre-Columbian-circular concept of time and space. For ancient Mexicans, space was considered inseparable from subjects or events, which would be verified in their occupation and navigation through space and its relation to power, hierarchy and trust during workshops. The pray is directed to a cardinal or nodal category. A threshold defines the border of public space and private realm – houses- or the cultural definition of distance establishes public, personal and intimate space.

The language of proxemics encodes meaning by relationship through and within the space, creating a direct link with people and objects, functioning as a proximal element in our practice.



Figure 1.15 *Relationships through and within the space. Left Santa Maria Yavesía. Right: Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2014-2015.*

1.5.3 Proximities of design through making (material)

Artifacts were not only considered a reflection of the community's culture and manifestation of social life, but an active constituent of it. Artefacts in the Oaxacan culture, are capable of motivating social relations. Through artefact's materials, colors and patterns persons expressed their own cosmos and vision, both physical objects themselves but also reflected in their artisanal techniques. With this in mind, we facilitated Social interactions through 'the making' using the artifact as triggers for opening discussions among all participants; initially these conversations versed on features and the processes of making objects, but later they became about very different issues as their own thoughts, personal opinions or experiences. This opened new ways for interaction and approximation and became a tool for stablishing new connections s that allowed new situations and linked workshops.



Figure 1.16 *Left: Photo of artisan Juanita explaining the traditional technique of pepenado. We often needed translation. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015. Right: Artisan Goya explaining the process of firing clay pieces. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*



Figure 1.17 *Symbolic meaning of space: use of public space displayed at the community centre in San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

This approach denoted close attention to detail and invited close inspection to transformation. By manipulation of materials into new formats, but using cultural heritage and techniques to achieve results, transformative outcomes came to be. These environments or situations were undertaken with respect to people, places and materials, by exchanging techniques and materials among participants.

I discovered two facts: that framing such events may contribute to resilience processes from an economic, social and political view; and that attention to the relevance of culturally inclusive methods resulted in stretching frontiers of shared actions beyond what they previously did.



Figure 1.18 *Sharing materials and knowledge.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* [Digital video], by CADA Foundation ®, 2017.



Figure 1.19 *Samples of the workshops in San Pablo Tijaltepec.* Adapted from *Libro 2 Proximities of Design* [Digital video], by CADA Foundation ®, 2017.

1.5.4 Social proximities around people

After workshops became more established, I encountered that both Civic and Religious Authorities managed some private and intra-community public rituals, which link their community to any outsider who receives an invitation to partake.

Multitude of exchanges are carried out between the authorities and the community in the performance of daily life around official matters in the political, legal, territorial, economic and social fields.



Figure 1.20 *Meeting with the local authority* [Digital video]. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.

Different individuals reacted differently depending on developed trust and empathy, reacting as well through their commitment across time, their involvement in both workshops and product development, and through their attitude towards sharing knowledge and results.

Developing and understanding body language meant settling in within the culture and taking cultural artifact and technique as a social and political transformer.

Both gestures and trust transformed as time and process moved in space and layers of symbolic time progressed. The more distant affective relationship was, the more contractual the exchange became.



Figure 1.21 *Sharing food* [Digital video]. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.



Figure 1.22 *Greetings and sharing food* [Digital video]. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017

Maintaining social and cultural context where fieldwork took place allowed to build trust through time and as relationships developed between both artisans and facilitators. Documenting events and letting myself be influenced by them, allowed me to later create my own space within such social groups.

1.5.5 Approximation

My research is based on the concept of *practice by means of design*. It is understood as a practice of correspondence (reciprocity) which I also call approximation. During the course of this investigation, I proposed and studied some new approaches to exchange and dialogue in communities of artisans – encouraging the emergence of new forms of social interactions through ‘the making’. I operated under the belief that knowledge of the making process can engender emotional connections which contribute to beneficial cultural dialogues, as well as the

empowerment of communities and their legacies. In this research, the practice of design is seen as a way of interpreting and 'approximating' a social group's values and thus developing feasible connections in the form of materials and artefacts. The structure of this social organisation is a system of interactions among people and between people, places and their artefacts, and it is the complexity of these interactions and relationships that tend to guide behavioural choices.

Approximation involves an agreement with the flow of events as progression of expression of exchanges. This concept of approximation coined by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues that 'approximation can be itself the possible translation' (Geertz, 1983). In my role as a practitioner and leader, I operated under Geertz's notion of approximation, therefore being constantly aware that every interpretation is subjective, and bearing in mind that it would allow a source of information for future actions.

In my view, exploring and documenting approximation through design provides a window into the distances separating indigenous design practitioners – who nowadays work as professionals in peripheral communities – and the aforementioned theoretical framework surrounding globalisation and cultural materials (Bonsiepe, 2005).

My goal is show how, through design, individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, communities can be strengthened, and changes be proposed based on mutual correspondence. I believe this process opens new research avenues – creating a crossroads between collaborative work, the work of design practice and the field of material culture.

In context, I believe the generation of correspondences and exchanges of artefacts will also expand market opportunities. Design holds incredible power to transform society as an act of creation. As Susan Yelavich posits in her book *Design as Future-Making*, acts of design and their generated consequences are, at the deepest level, political acts (Yelavich and Adams, 2014).

1.5.6 In-between

I understand "the in-between" as a context that allows reality to be transformed in a resilient way, through correspondence, dialogue and exchange taking place between participants during "social design practices".

The in-between becomes a situation generated by opening a dialogue based on interest from both artisans and designers. Artisans at indigenous communities are interested in knowing what is happening in the globalised world, while designers – or facilitators- are interested on how to approach tacit knowledge that exists in the artisans' manufacturing processes. This situation

occurs without impositions and happens when participants decide to adopt what is positive for each of them to evolve. It is a context that allows reality to be transformed in a resilient way, through mutual correspondence, dialogue and exchange that takes place between partakers.

I considered necessary to generate a way of thinking that went beyond origin and subjectivity and reflected on the process of articulating cultural differences, a crucial idea in the process of this research, explains how coming into the intermediate space, or the 'in between', in his terms, Bhabha (1994) was part of a necessary and mandatory review of our contemporary culture and was crucial to my process.

To post-colonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha, it is necessary to generate a way of thinking that goes beyond origin and subjectivity and that reflects on the processes of articulating cultural differences. Bhabha (1994) defends the basic 'in-between' space where the new concepts and values of a modern nation-people are not simply lineal. Such spaces, in Bhabha's terms, provide a platform for articulating individuality – whether communal or singular – and forge new signs of identity and collaboration. For Bhabha, coming into 'in between' is part of a necessary critique of contemporary culture – a radical re-evaluation of the concept of community.

Thus, I structured such transformative situations during the design process. These 'in-between' spaces, provided a platform for articulating individuality – whether communal or singular – and forged new signs of identity and collaboration. In her article 'Decolonizing Design Innovation', Elizabeth Tunstall expands on the theory of 'trans-culturalization', which sets out some core principles that social design must consider. The aim of social design, to Tunstall (2013), is *within* the established value system to generate a positive effect agreed upon by the participating parties. She emphasises that such exchanges must be accepted as dynamic and built upon an understanding of value exchange among the different cultures and systems of the parties involved. Furthermore, she urges the elimination of any circumstances that might generate disadvantage or power imbalance at the moment of the exchange itself.

Another relevant issue is how the 'in-between' space is generated during cultural transitions, as the place where creative exchange and cultural resilience become reality. It is in these moments that identity takes an active role, vindicating its existence and reordering the perimeters of communities. In this sense, the social structure can be conceived within a global framework as a system of interactions between people and for people, between their places and their artefacts.

1.5.7 Practice of correspondence

In context of the in-between, as previously defined, Practice of correspondence refers to a state that allows dialogue without fear or distrust, permitting an exchange of knowledge between all participants.

Designers, acting in their role as facilitators, together with artisans, shared common objectives, and transfers of knowledge prevailed. Their exchange was concerned primarily with the actions, activities, gestures and correspondences of social design practice.

Adams (2014) widens the scope of the current debate on participation through correspondence, defining this correspondence as inclusive of the spiritual and cultural values comprising the community's worldview. As Francesca Recchia (2011) says, the way to immerse oneself in the geography of values is nothing other than the creation of a dialogue.

In the context of my Research, it became evident that the generation of correspondences and exchanges of artefacts will also expand market opportunities. Design proved to hold incredible power to transform society as an act of creation.

1.6 Social Design

Both theory and practice of Social Design are steeped in challenges. On one side, Social Design is a human process that helps us to understand and converse within the world. Social Design, when put into practice and subjected to democratic ideals, can become a powerful socio-political activity that gives voice to local people.

I believe we cannot pretend to address this process in an abstract and global way. We must address the problems and challenges at the local level, where the exchange happens, with context leading the practice. Deeply committed human relationships should thus guide our behaviour, generating diverse actions and solutions which are invariably strengthened through the exchanges and dialogues of these relationships.

A search for these relationships demands a new approach and a new vision adequate to Social Design. We must generate experiences and establish an equality of values and actions, as well as provide as much time as needed to these processes, so that said relationships can consolidate and blossom. When collaboration happens, each participant needs to appreciate the time, interest, and dedication of each other. It becomes a matter of trust – the trust of each participant in themselves and in others (Novelo, 2003; Ranjan, 2011; Kester, 2011).

Design has a long history not only of commitment to addressing social and cultural issues, but also of creating controversy around the subject and intentions. In 19th Century William Morris, pioneer of social design in England, rejected forms of mass production, defending the recovery of arts and crafts from a moral standpoint – a desire to return value to manual production and to artisans themselves (Pellicer, 1995; Schumacher, 1973). Morris, however, faced a dilemma: on one hand, he was interested in the autonomy of the artisans in creating their pieces; on the other, contemporary English high society demanded his pieces without care for workers' social realities (Whiteley, 1997).

This dilemma becomes still greater on the 21st Century, in context of a capitalist globalised world, and most so, when a capitalist culture is involved in the process. Western design conceptualisation has become quite separate from the ideas of knowledge expression and exchange or to the adjustment to human cultures and their needs. This is particularly true in relation to traditional crafts.

For both the figure and role of the designer as someone that projects how to make an artifact, but not necessarily is involved in its making, and the role of an artisan that materializes directly an artifact, the making process opens a path for understanding in a mid-point. My purpose is to maintain the artisan processes, sustaining their cultural value so that they can be adapted to design processes, but as I have stated before, not as an imposition driven from a Western perspective, but as an objective to achieve. It is a tool that artisans incorporate to the extent that they consider, appropriating and adapting design processes to their own techniques and manufacturing processes, hence gaining a design perspective. From the "making", is important to maintain the community values intrinsic in their crafts.

Jorge Pellicer, in his publication *Los artesanos del Porvenir (Artisans of the Future, 1995)*, presents a case study of Santa Clara del Cobre. This project was planned and conducted in a public arts and craft school called CECATI 166, under the supervision of the American sculptor James Metcalf and his wife, Mexican artist Ana Pellicer. In their work, as social design practitioners, as well as their own art, Pellicer and Metcalf applied artisan production to support the resilience and cultural heritage of the community⁶.

Jorge Pellicer revisits the work of his close collaborator Metcalf, describing his as one of the best-known case studies of documented artefact production in Mexico. In Metcalf's mind,

⁶ I documented the legacy of CECATI 166 at Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán, México, and CECATI 133, San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, through visits to these locations and interviews with its surviving former Directors, Anna Pellicer, Luis Morales, and to Marina Sánchez and other Metcalf's close collaborators, as shall be detailed in Chapter 5.

La producción artesanal es un fenómeno de producción colectiva y puede florecer únicamente en las sociedades integradas igualitarias. Un objeto solo puede estar diseñado propiamente por el artesano, porque el diseño debe ser el resultado del oficio mismo.

Artisan production is a collective production phenomenon and can flourish only in egalitarian integrated societies. An object can only be properly designed by the artisan because the design must be the result of her own craftsmanship.

(Pellicer, 1995)

Pellicer and Metcalf's work will be explained in further detail in Chapter 3, The Articulation of cultural differences: indigenism, politics and social context in Mexico, Section 3.5, Resilience philosophy, and their thoughts will be further brought forward through the recordings of the Interview I made to both Ana and Jorge Pellicer, as I will elaborate in Chapter 5.

Approaching design as a social practice has helped me articulate a critical reflection which persists beyond the duration and location of the physical exhibition of a design process during "the making". Technique and material exchange among participants were a significant aspect of my reflections. All activities were performed in the field, which facilitated the participation of designers and artisans together as a multidisciplinary team, reinforcing democracy as the guiding value for participants. The relationships of trust, the exchange of knowledge and the techniques undergo a transformation until paths of common approach are reached, uncovering an exchange through the practice of design. Developing a greater awareness of the experience of the design process was important, as it relates to the need to develop adequate ways of framing such experiences in the realm of the social action and the building of environments for design or "proximities of design".

Through design, individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, communities strengthened and changes proposed based on mutual correspondence. I believe this process opens new research avenues – creating a crossroads between collaborative work, the work of design practice and the field of material culture.

Although today the term 'social' in the context of design is a broad label applied to *any* research projects focusing on environmental and socio-political issues, it must be noted that the challenges of social design practice are quite different between developing and developed countries. Concepts of involvement and time are viewed from fundamentally different perspectives, and issues such as access to resources and local support become more complex as the countries' economic and political contexts come into view. Bonsiepe (2005) and Papanek (1971) studied the

role of design in *peripheral countries* (Clarke, 2011). Papanek was concerned with understanding design from an indigenous culture perspective and Maldonado's analysis of the social situation demanded the enforcement of a strategy of deductive lineal development through the implementation of conditioning actions.

Modernism was presented as a thought process linked to an action that solved problems and imagined new futures under a universally rational approach. Later, this Modernist view was criticised for its lack of a realist focus on Society and its cultural referential. Ashoke Chatterjee, head of the Indian Institute of Design, criticised the conceptualisation of Design as arriving from 'richer lands', arguing that this incursion had no justification because the process itself evolved purely through consumer trends with no consideration of local cultural parameters (Ghose, 1995; Whiteley, 1997).

I find that pre-made solutions simply do not exist, as every context must be approached at a local level, relying on local people's support and considering the structure of the society. Likewise, the local challenges, macro-aspirations, cultural preferences, and stories of each community must be considered. Within the prevailing non-Western discourse, Social Design has been viewed as a possible bolster for a more resilient and transformed identity within the context of Globalisation and the conflicts it presents between modernism and heritage (Manzini, 2015; McCormack, 2016).

In the last few decades, collaboration between anthropologists and social designers has become more common, setting foundations for all sorts of projects. It is only recently that there have been some attempts at proposing a single vision for these similar projects (Marcus and Murphy, 2013). Today, many Social Design theory-of-practice discussions revolve around the integration of culture, society and economics, and the need for culture to be taken as an irrevocable component of design practice (Ghose, 1995; Novelo, 2003; Ranjan, 2011; Manzini, 2015).

Seeing as design opens and also closes opportunities within the economy through the involvement of artefacts and services – as Clive Dilnot (2005) argues – the implications of its actions and consequences must be understood as having socio-political transcendence (Yelavich, 2014; Balaram, 1995). Each new case study provides lessons, all of which can eventually be transferred to similar contexts if the support and contribution of local resources are considered (Abendroth and Bell, 2016).

Such assessments must be the starting point for building any common objective between the design practitioner and the local community. Designers as facilitators, together with the artisans,

shared common objectives, and transfers of knowledge prevailed. The exchange was concerned primarily with the actions, activities, gestures and correspondences of social design practice. Under these considerations, case studies for workshops and facilitators' meetings will be described in Chapter 5.

In my approximation, I tried to go further than the purely anthropological or ethnographic studies of persons, places or materials that could 'inform' a process of design, and instead of 'making design', I thus immersed myself into the everyday life of indigenous communities. There, I interpreted design as a practice of making what is material *and* what is immaterial. My observations of structure and frame in the field of practice, the values I found there and the decision to ingratiate myself fully have allowed me to, in retrospect, create a unique space where I could reflect on what the fieldwork gave me (Bourdieu, 1990), as a reflective observer respecting local agendas, approach, process and symbolism but issuing artisans an invitation to define ways to proceed and create with the proposals that we as facilitators would offer them.

My role as **reflective practitioner** allowed me to notice these areas of understanding and to adapt workshops from the different approaches and proximities of design established during my Research and Practice. To take the deliberate actions and correspondence involved in my social dynamic, it was of utmost importance that I, as facilitator, understood how our different backgrounds – different experiences, different ways of producing – influenced our actions and decisions. Failure to recognise this fact was one of the consequences of the lack of a deep understanding of how I was operating in the field.

The empirical work reported stems from several situations within the project. My practice includes a form of communication for speaking social design in a reflective way, based on my understanding of design after years of practicing as student and as a professional. In a relationship between knowledge and action (Schon, 1987) my practice enables me developing interaction and collaboration between people with different cultural backgrounds, economies and believes, while sharing knowledge and actions through the making of things together.

By exploring social design practice, my intention was not to identify a singular reason or solution but to generate a reflective discussion of the issues that I have raised standing of design after years of practicing as student and as a professional.

Victor Papanek, Gui Bonsiepe or Maldonado were among the first to establish a discourse on conceptualising design within modern society, these critiques and visions remain the *underlying premise* of design practice and the designer's role as a provider of services within a system and

they shared a concern for a responsible design practice. Based on this premise, the concept of social design practice in the context of this specific research should be understood as a service reflected by the action of ‘making together’, **a service that is developed from a community point of view and that transcends beyond individual levels.** Practice itself, which involves a form of reflective communication, developing collaborative interactions framed by the process of making things together through exchange, dialogue, and a democratic decision-making.

Our proposal as facilitators is always made by approaching the indigenous communities with humbleness and taking positions away from the role that designers have taken in the Western context, one of empowerment and colonisation through design.

This way of proceeding is key when people with different cultural backgrounds are involved in the process, often holding different social systems and core beliefs. It opens a possibility to find common grounds for all participants during a process that normally would not have been possible. Finding equitable participation for the team as a whole, or distinguishing if a defined and unilateral criterion had been used to establish the conditions for the practice are two aspects of such an approach.

A facilitator’s work should be based on listening, proposing and transforming what is received into new design, supporting and developing tools. Upholding the human side that brings all participants together, as well as achieving a predisposition to reception, exchanging knowledge and sharing values held by the indigenous community and the artisans with whom they work, do so as well.



Figure 1.23 *Making together at workshop.* San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

The making of communities’ cultural artefacts aims to favour the exchange of knowledge and values between communities and design practitioners so that, in a context of equality, this

dialogue – as a practice of correspondence – may be assimilated by their social, economic and, perhaps, their political structure.

One of the main necessary elements to evaluating and analysing the impact of an exchange is its reach and duration. As Lisa M. Abendroth and Bryan Bell (2016) note, the ability to generate situations of correspondence over time is one of the essential tools in social design and its practice. There must be sufficient time to bind a variety of participants, places, and artefacts and to build layers of meaning and correspondence among them. If facilitators and participants fully recognise this bond, they can potentially undergo a radical re-transformation in space and time, subverting the accelerated pace set by global market demand. The aim is to substitute the speed we are used to – which has dominated these decades of globalisation, introducing pauses that co-exist with the development of the practice and of knowing how to generate, build and extend stages based on long-term correspondences. In the specific context of Mexico and its indigenous communities, design practitioners must extend temporal expectations and understand the passage of time as a precondition for any deep ties of collaboration (Novelo, 2003; Ghose, 1995).

To develop this "practice of correspondence" it was necessary to invest enough time to establish a social and cordial relationship in which to offer a service, and develop the capacities to be able to dialogue, listen, analyse, understand and propose. Each time a new workshop was held, we managed those "proximities of design" that allowed us to continue working and maintaining a vital dialogue, a driving force behind a common transformation, both for facilitators and craftsmen.

Through the practice of social design and through a local approach with indigenous communities demonstrating how individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, this research showed how communities can be strengthened and how changes can be proposed based on mutual correspondence.

The practice developed during the different workshops is aimed at understanding local identity and exploring ways in which social design practice may generate changes, in socio-economic and political contexts, that could support local identities within artisan communities in relation to the global markets.

When considering the important criteria in engaging indigenous communities in participatory social practice design - "making" – "gatherings" - it is relevant to stress how through this Research I sought to involve selected indigenous communities, found in a state of geographical and

economic marginalization in relation to 21st Century Global context, where at some cases risked losing their traditional craftsmanship by being on the verge of extinction.

By use of social design practices that allows them to transform themselves in order to "survive" in a globalised world, we aimed to provide these communities and artisans with tools that would enable them to fight or adapt to change with a resilient attitude, and at the same time aiming to maintain, recognize and strengthen their cultural heritage.

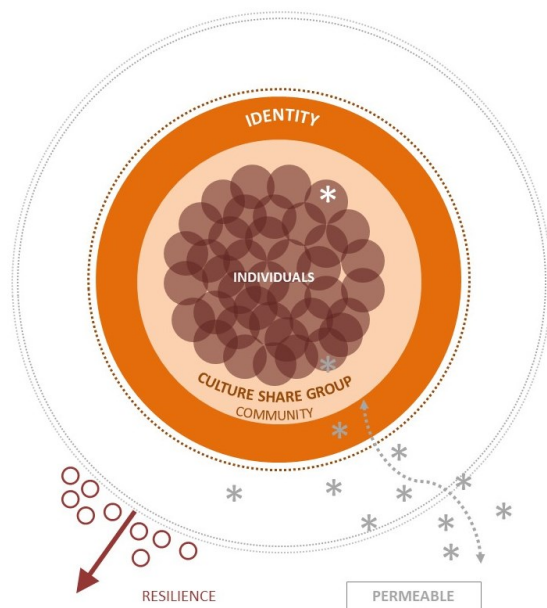


Figure 1.24 *Infographic: Communities' Permeability and Resilience.* Designed by Carmen Malvar and Rut Martín. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

The graph above represents how within a community, holding an identity clearly differentiated by its cultural legacy, there is not a complete hermeticism, despite the fact that often they suffer from marginality. There is always a permeability to any new intrusive global factor (tourists, designers...) with which they come into contact. Resilience is the community's reaction to these new factors.

Hence the importance of how we approach the community so that our intervention is respectful of their way of seeing things, a direct consequence of their cosmology, of their own culture which has been there for centuries and which must be approached with respect and never with the intention of changing their way of doing things. Communities decide what is best for them, what to adopt and how to integrate it, based on their ability to select what is best for themselves, adapting it and making it their own, not bowing to the impositions of.

The practice of social design was a tool, and the making of the communities' cultural artefacts sought to favour knowledge. The research finds that social design practice can manifest itself in the approach and understanding of local communities, establishing an exchange of knowledge that may open new ways of supporting local communities and influence their markets on a global level. Moreover, this process opens new research avenues and joins a crossroads between collaborative work and the work of social design practice together with the field of material culture. Social design represents a possible tool for building resilient identities.

1.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter I introduced my objectives and my practice, describing the organization of my research around fieldwork and workshops and framing the thesis around social design. I also introduced a broad outline of the problematics of my Project and described a number of key terms for my research in the form of a list or glossary to clarify my work. I also introduced social design through the actual practice/research, what it means and how I have been approaching it as a designer, engaging on what is important and how I will be projecting it into my own social design practice for this project. In the next Chapter 2 I will situate my thesis in the context of globalisation locating more specific references that are useful in understanding the particular situation in Mexico and its consequences for community needs. I also raise pertinent issues that impact onto the indigenous communities and their practices, highlighting that alienation due to globalisation has, to some extent, actually promoted the revival of community bonds. I articulate the way the workshops deal with globalisation as both a positive and a negative, revising how technological approaches hold much potential in that they help create a 'new space' for small communities to generate alliances and create a network of connections while still allowing cultural heritage to play an active role in community building and how within this context, social design represents a possible tool for building resilient identities.

Chapter 2 Globalisation and culture

The term 'globalisation' has appeared many times in academic discourses of the past decade, frequently seen as the main factor behind changes in modern society. Broadly, it describes a series of processes that transform social realities at an unprecedented speed; it expands flows of humans, raw materials, commodities, and information among remote areas of the world. From many theorists' perspectives, globalisation is nothing but a new extension of modernity – of capitalism in a new stage of development – constantly redefining the concept of a nation by de-emphasising physical and geopolitical barriers (Giddens, 1990; Novelo, 2003; Villoro, 1998; Franklin et al., 2000).

For Appadurai (1996), globalisation represents quite a new concept: substituting the concept of nation with a new framework of values by which we rule ourselves. While some critics discuss consequences of globalisation, namely, the homogenisation and uniformization of culture, Appadurai describes it as a new way for people, commodities, ideas, and information to flow, generating a common universe with a great many local differences (Franklin et al., 2000; Featherstone, 1995; Appadurai, 1996). Ramonet (1998) calls this the 'geopolitics of chaos', characterised as an indefinable transformation in power forms that generate new kinds of conflicts and threats, which disrupt old interdependencies.

In contrast to what Bhabha (1994) calls the 'progressive modernism myth', in the context of globalisation, the traditions that framed previous societies are declared obsolete while new models arise in an unpredictable state of continuous flow (Bhabha, 1994; Rollin, 2011).

Bhabha and Walter Mignolo, two key scholars in the postcolonial design discourse, suggest 'cultures of transience' – defined as social cohesion that contributes to resilience – as 'one necessary corrective' to the homogenisation patterns generated by globalisation. Argentinian sociologist Nestor García Clancini (1977) suggests a similar concept, naming such cultures 'hybrid cultures', as they rise in moments of historical transformation; to Canclini, there are no *pure* or *authentic* identities; rather, cultures exist within 'borderlines' (Canclini, 1989). Consequently, the right to justify and give privileges to an authorised power in 'peripheral' countries – as design theorist Gui Bonsiepe (2005) calls them – does not depend on the persistence of the traditions as such.

In the process of globalisation, acceptance of cultural and aesthetic characteristics of Western or developed countries (in Latin America, oftentimes this role model is USA) often symbolizes

economic development. Local communities' adoption of these criteria happens out of its original context and in many cases, brings with it a devaluation of their own culture and tradition, which is seen as something "of the past" that has not evolved, or as part of underdevelopment or poor economic conditions. This image of westernized models as a referent of transformation and development is further explained in Chapter 3, from Bonfil Batalla's vision of indigenism and his reflections in 1970 manifesto *De eso que llaman la antropología Mexicana* (On That Thing Called Mexican Anthropology)

Lo que llamamos atrasado, tradicional y rural no es el punto de partida de un desarrollo sino el profundo estrato de la civilización Mesoamericana. La relación de ambos polos nunca ha sido hasta el día de hoy armónica.

What we call backward, traditional, and rural is not the starting point of development, but, instead, the underlying stratum of Mesoamerican civilization. The relationship between the two poles was never, and it is not today, harmonious.

(Bonfil, 1987, p. 94)

Mexican philosopher Luis Villoro (1998) discusses how globalisation has caused a decline in the values and powers of nation states, and the struggle between nationalisms and ethnicities has weakened the capacity to maintain a homogeneous state. On the one hand, globalisation exists as a unifying state worldwide, and on the other hand, there is a surge in conscience of identity among peoples that existed previously in such an invented and imposed homogeneity. The alienation of globalisation has generated the revival of bonds between neighbouring communities, offering an alternative to the 'rational' thought of imposed cultural modernity. This experience contributes another meaning to society and our future, one with more promise, but it also imposes other needs. Market competition may drive the establishment of bonds within regional economies, but at the same time, it asks for close cooperation at a global level. This dynamic has proved a positive one, but overall, it was established favouring developed markets, making countries such as Mexico a future challenge. Within the context of globalisation, native identities such as those of Mexico's indigenous population risk marginalisation.

Developing workshops at these specific communities had, as one of its aims, to bring attention and to rise communities' awareness on the cultural value of their endemic and ancestral artisanal techniques, which were, in some cases, risking disappearance. Factors such as immigration, migration from rural to urban environments, lack of interest from younger generations in their own traditions and culture, in the process of seeing homogenization and global culture as

“evolution” challenged its continuity and transmittal. Cultural differentiation is a key element in this Research, as workshops were not led from a western design perspective, literally using techniques and methods regularly used by European or North American designers, which would not be applicable as such within Mexican indigenous communities where workshops were held.

Workshops are prepared knowing in detail each one of the communities’ culture and techniques. Facilitators and artisans meet while “making” artifacts and establish a dialogue and an Exchange regarding the practice, its process, problems, and challenges that arise during workshops. It is then, based on improvement needs for making, when proposals arise in response to specific needs. Knowledge is no longer a tool that is transferred directly to change artisans’ work processes, but communal participants’ knowledge is shared in order to create a solution, which is fully specific: for a given need, in that workshop, and a result of everyone's collaboration.

As facilitators, we often discussed how workshops should deal with or “use” globalization to what would be at the artisans’ advantage. Information we shared with the artisans was not only local and based on their own references. Purposely, they were exposed to other techniques, aesthetics and artifacts that were unrelated to their culture.

During the third workshop held at San Pablo Tijaltepec in 2015, we showed participants a series of black and white images of handmade toys, based on my idea of toys as accessible artifacts for all cultures, and that playing with toys is a transcultural human trait. (See p. 251 and Appendix F, p. 331)

By exhibiting these curated images, there was a desire to navigate popular culture at a global level with the intention of sharing with local artisans a universal language transmitted through doing. We offered the community images of what happened in other parts of the Globe through black and white photocopied images of artifacts. Some of these belonged to Asian cultures, others to different Latin American regions; some even were modern design objects such as an abstract Picasso puppet.

After observing these photos, artisans had to choose their favourite. Intuitively, they selected images of artifacts whose aesthetic was closer to their own cultural tradition. Through selection of the images, a dialogue between the artisans and the facilitators was established, helping to define a starting point on how to evolve the following workshop, on the ways in which one could work. This exercise proved crucial as it indicated a direction towards the project’s development, based on artifacts and pointing to next steps and to how workshops could be established.

In Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, utilitarian elements were also shown in a second phase. These objects had been transformed in other contexts for other uses, such as boiled egg cups. Artisans' observations raised questions and generated subsequent dialogue. By showing them these global references, a discussion was generated among artisans, and between them and facilitators. The former, from their deep knowledge of their own techniques and the later, from their vision as designers, both parties as professionals and knowledgeable about their roles and professions.

As such, homogenous culture, under the parameters of occidental culture, be counterproductive as soon as there is a justified resilience in local cultures and their values. It therefore poses a conflict if local cultures are ruled by a global design that does not arise from specific local histories. As Mignolo writes,

It makes more sense to think that the culture of transience will be governed by local histories, the sub-alternization of local knowledge, and an epistemological decolonisation as a radical critique of the 'beneficial for all' assumptions governing global designs, from a right- or left-wing perspective.

(Mignolo, 2000, p. 302)

The objective of the workshops is not to bring craft or a "developed" craft as design, of indigenous communities to global attention/markets, but to provide a service. To share with the indigenous communities' tools and knowledge of the practical field of design, so that they, according to their criteria, can incorporate it into their own artisan tradition. In some cases, an objective would be to show them how to improve the products' final quality, from the point of view of better resistance, durability or to facilitate the craft work by using better, higher quality materials: thread, fabric or clay to make artifacts. They were shown how to make a "more competitive" product but respecting their artisanal technique.

Facilitators also assisted on how to use these tools more related to Western design processes but applied from a "social design practice" and within these communities' context. During workshops, working with Artisanal techniques allow artisans to understand their operation in a wider, global context and assist them in preparing themselves for future projects or globalizing incursions, on their own terms. On occasions, outside designers or brands approached artisan communities without considering local culture or without communities' active participation in decision-making, either on the terms or outcomes of collaboration.

Designer and critic Bruce Nussbaum initiated the contemporary debate. He argued, [Should] we take a moment now that the movement is gathering speed to ask whether or not American and

European designers are collaborating with the right partners, learning from the best local people, and being as sensitive as they might to the colonial legacies of the countries, they want to do good in. Do designers need to better see themselves through the eyes of the local professional and business classes who believe their countries are rising as the U.S. and Europe fall and wonder who, in the end, has the right answers? Might Indian, Brazilian, and African designers have important design lessons to teach Western designers?

It is necessary to acknowledge as a contradiction to be accepted, that even if our participation was very calibrated and respectful of communities' own culture, it might produce an impact on those isolated communities that so far were not integrated in a globalized culture or economy. Our mere presence produced changes that we tried to foresee through "approximation" and "proximities of design", developed as different workshops were carried out. The use of design techniques that could have connotations related to a work system based on mass production, was adapted to workshop context and the craftsmen themselves, so that they could apply techniques based on their own needs, instead of artisans modifying ways of doing to adapt themselves to these new tools. That is why it was vital to apply them from the indigenous community's own context and not from the western vision of design.

Regarding the Latin-American context, and specifically the role of indigenous communities, Villoro (1998) asserts that culture has always been directed by *occidental* reasons – a scale for all cultures that must measure against a 'superior culture'. Villoro considers this concept exhausted in the present times and asserts that the struggle for resilience among states should take place with a new vision – as a unity of peoples, regions, and ethnicities. Rather than subordinate cultural richness and all its variety to one single 'superior culture', he believes in approaching it as an endless plurality of cultures. In the same vein, researcher, and anthropologist Victoria Novelo (2003), knowledgeable on the production processes of design and crafts, argues that within Mexico's specific social situation,

Las modas, los dictados de la sociedad contemporánea de consumo (global) y la agresividad manipuladora de los mensajes de los medios buscan, con su visión imperialista del mercado, afirmar la homogeneidad sobre la distinción en la personalidad de gente, objetos e ideas: un ciudadano mundial para el auto mundial parecería ser la consigna. La identidad aceptable por la cultura de las grandes corporaciones (y sus gobiernos) que dominan la economía mundial . . .

The fashions and the dictates of today's (global) consumer society, and the manipulative aggressiveness of the media seek, with their imperialist vision of markets, to assert

homogeneity over distinction in the personality of people, objects, and ideas: a world citizen for the world car seems to be the motto. The identity acceptable for the culture of the big corporations (and their governments) that dominate the world economy . . .

(Novelo, 2003, p. 12)

Thus, in the current conditions of Mexican communities, Villoro claims,

El reconocimiento del derecho a la diferencia de pueblos y minorías no es más que un elemento de un movimiento más general que favorece la creación de espacios sociales en que todos los grupos y comunidades puedan elegir sus formas de vida, [. . .] La vía hacia un Estado plural es una forma de la lucha por una democracia participativa en todos los ámbitos sociales.

The recognition of the peoples and minorities' right to difference is nothing more than one element of a more general movement that fosters the creation of social spaces in which each and every group and community is able to choose its ways of life . . . The path to a pluralistic State is one form of the struggle for a participatory democracy in all the social spheres

(Villoro, 1998, p. 7)

For the artisans, experience gained through their participation at workshops allowed them a new understanding: that based in deep respect and validating their culture and, they can participate in it, in their terms. Either adapting knowledge shared during workshops as a form of reaction, deciding not to sacrifice the integrity of their culture, or in case they are willing to transform it for their own benefit, to what extent changes will be implemented. These decisions become their own, according to their own cosmovision, culture and interest as a community. A specific resilience is produced, voluntarily adopted, not to be judged as positive or negative by any third parties.

In regards to San Pablo Tijaltepec's female artisans, they realized the importance of exhibiting their products at the Expo-Ventas⁷ organized by the Textile Museum in Oaxaca, even though at first, they were not motivated to go, because they did not like the food or the city very much.

⁷ Expo-ventas are trade exhibits organized around different topics, usually involving food and craft sales and craftsmanship demonstrations, in this case, organized by the Museo Textil de Oaxaca at their premises or at other local cultural institutions. Normally, organizers supply space and logistics and are paid a participation entry fee or an agreed in advance sales percentage. In the local context, craft sales were usually done at open-air markets, subject to haggling, without neither logistic support nor education activities (such as craftsmanship demonstrations) involved.

However, they found that attendees showed genuine in their embroidered blouses, being able to demonstrate and showcase in public their artisan techniques, in a context far from any intention of abuse by any of the participants. Artisans were able to sell the blouses at higher prices than they usually did, and the sales process was totally transparent. Facilitators developed a specific workshop to explain artisans all these details beforehand, giving artisans spaces to participate, express their opinion on sales issues, such as agreeing a percentage to be paid to organizers of Expo-Venta for participation, agreeing on their own earnings through percentage, without abuse or fraud. This transparency provided basic pillars to the process as a whole, helping to maintain trust and commitment established by each of the parties involved. (See p. 282, Figure 5.126)

On a broader scale, this socio-economic transformation with global proportions affects communities around the world, but Otto T. Solbrig (2001) points out that not all communities are affected in the same way, nor are all these changes perceived as positive for the communities.

Their cultural integrity is sacrificed as far as the community and artisans consider it necessary, and always based on their perspective and criteria, allowing them to adapt to possible changes produced by globalisation in a resilient way, and empowering them to react to these changes without impositions and in the way they decide.

The modernisation myth tends to view indigenous societies as *pre-capitalist* – in other words, as part of the history and economic evolution of Western society. Dating back to Adam Smith, Western theorists used ecological, and eventually Darwinist, metaphors to describe the natural history and development of the Western market system; in doing so, they held up indigenous societies as living proof of the scale of transformative progress. These narratives persist, painting indigenous communities as ‘backwards’ in relation to economic history when in fact indigenous societies less influenced by colonialism are truly *a-capitalist*, not *pre-capitalist*. These societies conform to an alternative socio-political system which makes little sense when viewed through the lens of Western values, history, and identity politics.

In the discourse descended from modernism, a new world is expected to orient itself around *individual* needs, with no abstract planning for *social* groups. The issue with this global perspective is that it assumes the existence of a ‘tabula rasa’ within every nation state, which frames cultural, socioeconomic and aesthetic scales with predictable, uniform patterns (Ghose, 1995; Acha et al., 2004; Villoro, 1998). Such patterns can only arise from a European capitalist lens, and thus, any discussion of cultural difference is done under a Western model. The result is a rationalist modernism developed mainly as an agent of social transformation, with certain

aesthetic peculiarities, a value system and a 'universal' context (Ghose, 1995; Novelo, 1976; Tunstall, 2013; Ranjan, 2011; Vukic, 2009; Villoro, 1998; Acha et al., 2004).

Novelo (1976) argues that because of the market's influence on a practice that both requires manual labour and is fixed to its geopolitical context, it is difficult to specify what a cultural artefact represents in Mexican society. Many peripheral countries see the practice of artefact creation as a valid option and a method for attracting global markets and interest. These countries are, as Ghose (1995) calls them, 'late comers' or 'slow learners' from the Western point of view. Culturally and socially, this translates into frustration and a loss of values and identity. A common dilemma has thus arisen in different Latin-American countries – the need for a deep analysis of identity as it relates to design, development and the cultural material – that is unavoidably linked to social and political discourses.

2.1 Connected communities

For rural communities, one of the great advantages of globalisation is the democratisation of communication, even at isolated and remote places with difficult physical access. They keep in touch through radio, even occasionally through internet, interconnecting local communities for support and information. As well, communities can connect with the world, share information, and, very important, they can receive payment from economic transactions or money remittances from emigrated relatives, who, although living abroad, support their families and communities from afar.

Thanks to this freedom and access to communication, through Facebook, for instance, communities were able to learn about and respond to Fashion Brand Isabel Marant's alleged case of plagiarism⁸. Being isolated today does not lead to isolation. Communication between

⁸ In 2015, a community in Oaxaca, Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, presented court allegations at national level against French fashion designer Isabel Marant, accusing the firm for plagiarism of their traditional xaamnixuy blouse. Marant had included a blouse with a very similar pattern to it, in her Spring 2015 Collection Etoile. She was subsequently also accused by a competing fashion house, Antik Batik, for imitating a pattern they had included in Bartra, a collection presented in 2014, taking Marant to the Paris High Court in France. The Oaxacan community didn't file for monetary compensation from Marant, but demanded acknowledgement instead. The issue was solved by Court ruling, stating that neither fashion designers had rights on traditional textiles, and by Marant's acknowledgement of "received inspiration from traditional blouses of Santa María Tlahuitoltepec, in the Province of Oaxaca, México". The firm finished the allegation by proposing an indirect dialogue with the community through the Mexican Embassy in Paris, and offering to potentially organize an exhibit in Paris on the community's artisans work and craft, which to my knowledge hasn't taken place. Eventually this situation would lead to Tlahuitoltepec, and other artisan communities, to request a

communities can help to strengthen each other (e.g., Marant or San Pablo Tijaltepec opinions). To claim their identity through that "distance" which they voluntarily adopt. They use technology and some aspects of globalisation for their own use.

People, with an easy-going kind of logic, believe that fast transport and instantaneous communications open a new dimension of freedom.

(Schumacher, 197, p. 53)

In the 1990s, many artists, activists and entrepreneurs shared the same vision: the great power of technological communication would combat the great international powers, helping ease the road for a way to live together (Deserris, 2011). The struggle between the indigenous world narrative and modernisation has always been viewed as a 'zero-sum game'. Thus, the possibility of a technological approach that generates common parameters for the transformation of indigenous communities is a key motivation of this research. The small scale of intercommunication between indigenous social structures allows them to be deeply rooted in a place. However, this does not mean that the contemporary possibilities for connectivity are lost on them. In certain cases, the isolation means they become a small web of interconnections, like a node of points in a social network that generates, by itself, a weave in which some points can attain wider connections with the outside world.

In this context, a variety of new and different local activities became possible and in fact arose – such as *Ojo de Agua Comunicaciones* in Mexico⁹. Guillermo Monteforte, one of its founding members, worked to introduce the voices of indigenous communities into the national political discourse. His organisation brought an experienced team to different indigenous communities so they can acquire the necessary technical skills to preserve – in video – their intergenerational memories, traditions and experiences while building bridges in and out of the community. At the same time, they provide the communities' media sources for the management, training, production, and sustainability of their projects.

Certificate for Patrimonial Protection to the Mexican Authorities, as will be further discussed on Chapter 5. Such cases have raised awareness of cultural (and monetary) value of traditional craft, and also opened discussions on collective property of creation and production, raising pertinent questions on a necessary legal framework to protect these

⁹ *Ojo de Agua Comunicaciones* is a communication project that seeks to promote equity and equality between women and men of indigenous communities, eliminating of all forms of violence and the collective construction of more democratic, just and egalitarian societies.

<http://ojodeaguacomunicacion.org/>

On the other hand, according to Bhabha (1994), the speed brought on by 'real-time' technological communication has increased the pace of idea and image exchanges, resulting in a reconfiguration of the 'nucleus' of the periphery. The result has been a deep process of redefinition, allowing big metropolises such as Tokyo, London and New Delhi to restructure themselves through common changes in design, aesthetics and culture whether they belong to 'first' or 'third' worlds (Kligman, 2007; Bhabha, 1994; Franklin et al., 2000). The very concepts that bind discourses on the cultural bases of national hegemonies – the transmission of cultural traditions – likewise seem to redefine themselves, whether organically or by agreement (Bhabha, 1994). These transformations, and the idea itself of a history in 'transition', give rise to relevant questions regarding the relocation of languages and cultural knowledge under the contemporary framework of globalisation.

For centuries, indigenous communities from Mexico, India or China have kept a continuous resistance to modernisation, isolating themselves to safeguard their identities and the heritage that their crafts hold. In many places in Asia or Latin America, whose crafts are handmade paper, the embroidery loom and the dyeing of natural indigo, they have avoided the frustration of seeing their cultural heritage go extinct by isolating themselves to this day (Abendroth and Bell, 2016).

Our research is based on not acting from that isolation as if it were a capsule. Our own presence, research, development, and vision of this project is still a possible globalizing factor. During investigation, all measures were taken to explain and affirm that photos of themselves and their work were going to be shown within the context of the thesis, but also that these images allowed uncontrolled exposure and the risk that someone could approach them to take advantage of their vulnerable situation and attempt to advantage at a personal level, ignoring community rights to decide. It was and is our intention, to consider that there is a positive effect from the enhancement of their own culture and traditions, to encourage them not to see it as something devalued and "past" from the point of view of "Western progress". Rather, there is a worldwide interest to maintain what is authentic and local, to study it and put it in value. But at the same time, that research itself exposes communities, showing a vulnerable reality that could be taken advantage of, abusing the precariousness of these communities and paying them an abusive price for their work, they could be exposed and susceptible to plagiarism. Although indigenous communities understand their cultural legacy as their own, they do not understand the need to create a copyright that guarantees their property in a globalized world, as for instance, through the use of a Legal Opinion, a Certificate of Patrimonial Right or *Dictamen*.

Like Canclini (1989), Bhabha and Mignolo both define the reality of cultures of transience and their productivity and richness precisely in the contexts of those ambivalent moments and *transition spaces* in history. While Bhabha's and Mignolo's visions of communities differ on some points, both agree on moving away from the 'tradition' as something untouched that, linked with the concept of 'authenticity', is used simply to fill museums with artefacts (Bhabha, 1994; Mignolo, 2000). On this, Mignolo explains,

Once it is recognised that the cultural homogeneity under Western global designs is as counterproductive as fundamentalist resistance justified in local history, a culture of transience is necessary . . . What cannot be dismissed is, to start with, the restitution of Amerindian philosophy of life and conceptualisation of society – neither with the intention of achieving an archaeological reconstruction of the 'original' or the 'authentic', nor with the academic and philological intention of producing knowledge to enlarge the museum but, rather, as an epistemic and political intervention in the colonial difference.

(Mignolo, 2000, p. 302)

The indigenous community cannot be maintained as untouchable and unchanging. the right to know how things are done elsewhere and to have it shared with them. Therefore, isolating them to protect their culture and traditions in order not to influence their culture is a decision made from a point of view outside the community, and could be seen as a form of marginalisation, not giving them the opportunity to adopt what they see as positive for their transformation.

My research was carried out accepting the reality of this globalised world in which communication plays a vital role. At the same time, respecting the willingness of indigenous communities to keep their distance to preserve their own culture and traditions, avoiding that this position leads to marginalization and precariousness. In my perspective, if they voluntarily adopt this isolation must not mean that they are cut off. In this case, it is a balance between the information they receive and share and their active and voluntary participation, for their own interest in the global processes. However, for these communities as for many others, it would be counterproductive to proceed to a transformation like the ones Bhabha and Mignolo suggest. If homogeneous power is maintained, then transitions will necessarily occur *through* concepts of global design. Instead of **the subordination of local culture to global design, my research indicates it makes more sense to think in terms of a culture of transience governed by local stories.**

The desire for recognition from other places takes the experience of history farther than a simple hypothesis.

Perhaps one of the more important dynamics of globalisation is that it continuously and radically restructures space and place. Put simply, globalisation is the result of two opposing forces that simultaneously open and close opportunities. On the one hand, dividing forces create hierarchies – often identifiable by spatial entities and enclaves – by which communities are exploited and besieged, or isolated, or simply denigrated. On the other hand, the connecting forces that globalisation brings can allow for transactions, exchanges, and solidarity among previously disparate places.

One could speak here of Phase III, Prototyping and artisanal production, as well as initiated Market exposure as a step from workshops to opening the community to markets.

The collective of craftswomen from San Pablo Tijaltepec, Ñaa Ñanga, once in Phase III after their participation in Expo-Ventas at the Textile Museum, saw a chance to manage the group's communication through social media and manage their appointments themselves using a mobile phone. Rosalía, the youngest of the craftswomen, asked Laura Quiroz to teach her how to use tools such as Facebook, and to manage sales of the group's products over the Internet. It was by the community's own interest and awareness these medias' existence, that allowed artisans to value them as positive tools that they can use to in their favour. In no case was this decision planned or considered in the workshops, but rather contacts with the commercial and sales activities themselves that woke the Collective's interest to learn about them, to be autonomous in their use and to do it independently.

This would not be possible under a westernised point of view in which the indigenous communities must be kept "encapsulated" and their role limited to that of artisans. In those circumstances they are often excluded from participating in the processes of commercialising their own products, from making decisions about them or from being able to connect with other circumstances outside those of their own community. This "encapsulation" limits their capacity for resilience and transformation to be able to face future interactions in a globalised context, leaves them without the necessary tools to do so and puts them in a situation of vulnerability.

In this vein, technological globalisation has supported small communities by helping them connect and find support beyond the limits of their own cultures; a network of connections allows communities, wherever they are, to generate alliances that transcend the local struggle for rights and values. Moreover, by giving communities a sense of identity and continuity within their own

history 'in transition', these interactions allow cultural heritage to play an active role. In sum, the result of these unifying and dividing forces is a 'new space'. While the form this space takes risks becoming overly restrictive or imperative, ultimately it has great social potential (Arnaut, 2011).

2.2 Social design and global context

Social design is a human process that helps us understand and converse within the world. Social design, when put into practice and subjected to democratic ideals, can become a powerful socio-political activity that gives voice to local people. We cannot pretend to address this process in an abstract and global way. We must address the problems and challenges at the local level, where the exchange happens, with context leading the practice.

In 2007, following a series of reflections on design in a social context, the attendees of the second Ahmedabad meeting proclaimed the role of design in developing countries. Among the countries invited to participate were developed countries including Russia, Germany, USA, and Japan and a great many developing countries including Argentina, Brazil, India, and Pakistan¹⁰. Intellectuals such as Papanek and Bonsiepe also participated in the meeting. They called for design to generate a value system consistent with the society of each developing country and criticised the hasty shedding of identity viewed as necessary in a global economy (Balaram, 2009; Ghose, 1995). In this vein, the Ahmedabad Declaration called for

(1) understanding the values of one's society and then defining a quality of life within its parameters; (2) seeking local answers for local needs by using local materials and skills, while making use of advanced science and technology; and (3) creating new values, addressing priority needs, and preserving plural identities

(Balaram, 2009, p. 1)

Turok (1988) praises anthropologist Victoria Novelo's (1976) work, specifically her analyses of production and artefacts, as well as the instruments and human relationships associated with craft practices. Important to this work, Turok (1988) and Novelo (1976) link the expressions of cultural knowledge embedded in *hacer* (the making) with the social and economic spheres that Malinowski and De la Fuente (1957) addressed years before, generating a common thread among

¹⁰ The conference was sponsored by UNESCO, UNEP and the government of India. The host was the Centre for Environmental Education in Ahmedabad. This declaration was written in the context of the United Nations Organization Education for the Sustainable Development Decade.

forms of artisan production, productive composition of the community and relationship with the local and national economy (Turok, 1988).

Malinowski was a pioneer in realising the impact of markets on local cultures. The pressure and expansion of markets lead to a loss of value and identity, and to the abandonment of indigenous processes. Cases such as replacing traditional clay pots with mass-produced plastic containers imported from China, or the inclusion of popular foreign TV-cartoon characters like Mickey Mouse or Sponge Bob into local iconography are examples of the intervention of globalisation in markets and the influence they have on local popular culture.

2.3 Degeneration and loss of value in processes

The production; artisanal, industrial national and foreign turn out to be equivalent for the clients. However, due to the current conditions of international trade even the inhabitants of the Oaxaca valley are influenced in what they do, eat, dress and think by what happens in the West, due to imports which modifies the standard of living of the peasants of the valley and influences their real income, because imports damage the source of their real income. (Malinowski and De la Fuente, 1957).

How to approach the community was an important aspect during different workshops. Proximities of design would become the context through an appropriate environment was created, by sharing how to manufacture artefact, by how facilitators and craftsmen would sit together, through their dialogue about objects they were making, during discussion on techniques. Each workshop was different and adapted during its development to the specific situation, no objective was forced. I would call this method an organic process.

Bonsiepe (2012) uses several examples to capture the variety of meanings that the concept of identity carries in design and aesthetics. He derives his analysis and approach from several formal features of design methods – from the taxonomy of the products to the use of local materials – portraying identity in design and aesthetics as embedded even more in the process than the result. He tries to go farther than its conceptualisation through his social implementation and concludes that peripheral economies will have a future within the global economy when they are viewed as *social practice* and are understood as a whole socio-linguistic discourse (Bonsiepe, 2005).

Each new case study provides lessons, all of which can eventually be transferred to similar contexts if the support and contribution of local resources are considered (Abendroth and Bell, 2016).

While Bonsiepe's characterisations of design focused on the individual and social identities intrinsic to the process, other scholars refer to the design process in terms of the capitalist objectives it achieves.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, within the prevailing non-Western discourse, social design has been viewed as a possible bolster for a resilient and transformed identity within the context of globalisation and the conflicts it presents between modernism and heritage (Manzini, 2015; McCormack, 2016). Social design is a complex and multi-faceted concept which can be approached in many ways. This research is inspired by the practice of social design and aims to demonstrate the cultural exchange possibilities that such a process facilitates.

There have also been those who, with good intentions but nevertheless erroneously, have taken practices of social design in an incorrect direction, attempting to bring change to cultures, especially indigenous ones, that have their own resilience philosophies and processes. Following the internationalisation of social design practices – stemming from the advent of new actors with internationalist agendas – it is even more evident that social design can only emerge *from* specific local identities and local knowledge. But power imbalances are still evident and stand as a roadblock to this goal in every social design project to date (Mignolo, 2000). Designers increasingly seek out collaborations and interventions with places where the culture is vastly different from their own, pursuing 'radical proximity' to the cultures they approach and attempting to achieve new aesthetic categorisations (Cruz, 2014).

In 2010, in his blog on Fast Company, critic and educator Bruce Nussbaum opened this debate when he published an article titled 'Is Humanitarian Design the New Imperialism?'. He questioned the interventions of projects known for their use of social design, such as ProjectH and IDEO, which present themselves as focusing on resolving human differences through design. Provocatively, he asked, 'Are designers helping the "Little Brown Brothers"? Are designers the new anthropologists or missionaries, come to poke into village life, "understand" it and make it better – their "modern" way?' (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2). Indeed, despite their idealistic motivations to combine the moral calling to do good in the world with the power of design, these large organisations routinely fail to respect the value systems of the communities they try to 'help' (Nussbaum, 2010). ProjectH's long and winding project has become a case study in incoherence and general detachment from local reality. Nussbaum importantly highlights the need to question

the role of idealistic organisations with aspirations for global salvation, especially given colonial history. He also forces an important reflection on the impact of initiatives in the field of social design and how to measure it. The cases of ProjectH and IDEO have provided ample reason for doubt among designers interested in contexts in various stages of transformation or social isolation, where social interaction is required, and communities are often limited by scarcity of economic resources. Such projects spark all sorts of debates and ethical dilemmas, due not only to individual actions but also to misunderstandings linked to cultural barriers, which sometimes produce assumptions that shock and distort the beliefs and social mores of the contexts where they interfere.

In the case of IDEO and its *Guide to Designing for Social Impact* – one of the publications resulting from the meeting organised by the Rockefeller Foundation in 2008 – Tunstall (2013) criticises how Western organisations are presented as active agents in the design process, while organisations from ‘peripheral’ countries are presented as passive receptors of interventions. She believes these interventions overlook the design processes – deeply rooted in craft traditions – in those non-Western countries, which have allowed local cultural identities to survive the transformational processes of globalisation. Tunstall criticises the imposition of Western thought on non-Western problems and the negligence of ignoring local, non-Western perspectives as information sources. Thus, Tunstall argues,

[The] good intentions by IDEO, bringing design thinking and other non-native principles to India, Africa, or China, for example, risks becoming another form of cultural imperialism that destabilizes and undermines indigenous approaches coming out of other creative traditions.

(Tunstall, 2013, p. 2)

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have situated my thesis in the context of globalisation and examined its consequences for community needs, highlighting that feelings of alienation resulting from globalisation have, to some extent, promoted the revival of community bonds. Despite this, the homogenisation patterns produced by globalisation still risk marginalising native identities, such as those of Mexico’s indigenous population, and efforts to achieve resilience in these communities remains necessary.

The phenomenon of globalization tends to decontextualize the value of the local and to integrate it into a global and homogenizing culture that follows the Western model as a pattern, as if the natural transformation of any other culture had the objective of reaching the Western capitalist model. Modernization involves devaluing the traditional and local in order to value the global, through focusing on solving individual needs instead of those of social groups and brings difficulties for local economies in a global market competition.

Cultural differentiation is a key element in this research, the aim was not to impose a specific methodology or goal to reach during the workshops, but exchange the diverse knowledge that artisans and the team could bring. Facilitators and collaborators that took part in the process were designers, mainly Mexican born or had lived there for a long time, they had previously worked with indigenous communities and they had different background and international training. These characteristics of the team were key to putting into practice the established guidelines to avoid an approach from a colonising or westernised point of view. We learnt to share artifacts, aesthetics or design techniques that were unrelated to their culture, but tailored to the workshop's context and framing the 'proximities of design'. So that, instead being the artisans who had to change their way of doing things in order to use those new foreign tools, they were able to decide what they wanted to adopt and how they adapted it to their needs.

Our mere presence and participation are still a globalizing impact on those isolated a-capitalist communities, but at the same time our research is based on not acting from that isolation evolving where tradition may be preserved instead transforming. Communities may decide what they want to preserve or if they prefer a voluntary isolation, but it should not be imposed from any other culture regardless their opinion. One of the great advantages of globalisation is the democratisation of communication, for these rural and isolated communities it is an opportunity for sharing, for economical transactions, to get information at real time or to spread what is important for them without intermediaries who can misinterpret the intentions of the community or take advantage of its lack of information on some aspects. To have access to technology allows them to manage their own culture and traditions according their own values and goals and creates tools for resilience.

Chapter 3 The articulation of cultural differences:

Indigenism, politics and social context in Mexico

When it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of desire – the first milestone on the road that leads to dignity.

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967)

3.1 Imagined communities

This chapter will outline the social and political factors that have shaped the indigenous narrative and policy in México and highlight how indigenous culture and people have been utilised as part of a nationalistic, nation-building process in post-revolution Mexico. I will also establish how foreign design processes and methods can be adopted to suit the internal vision of indigenous communities and provide a platform for the transmission of group values and beliefs through their cultural artefacts. Another fundamental aspect to this chapter will be establishing a humanistic approach to the subjects and cultural artefacts involved in these indigenous communities.

It is important to contextualize the cultural and historical narrative in Mexico, based in its history, culture and cosmovision of its original inhabitants, conquests, revolutions and the development of a heterogeneous contemporary Society, which has been through times, teased more or less gently, into homogenization by politicians and other forces of power. Mexico is a country of sharp contrasts in many aspects: a rich cultural and ethnical society, varying access to opportunities, large socio-economic differences, etc. Specially in smaller cities and towns, a traditional and patriarchal social structure prevails, with its balances of power based in position, accepted roles and gender.

Historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson (1983) traces the 'origins of nationalism' through its reformulation of policies and popular culture, defining it as a sovereignty based on an 'imagined community' rooted in a 'homogeneous empty time' of modernity and progress. Philosopher and critic Frantz Fanon proclaimed the crucial importance of subordinate indigenous cultures asserting their cultural traditions and repressed histories. This process, however, must avoid the fixation and fetishization that suppressed cultural identities may generate within the

romantic colonial discourse of 'attachment to the roots', for this can cause a more insidious form of homogenisation through a modernist Western prism.

Historically, the expropriation of the values of indigenous communities has forced a process of self-objectification through the Western perspective and the creation of new categories of identity and territory. It is necessary to generate a way of thinking that goes beyond origin and subjectivity and that reflects on the processes of articulating cultural differences. The metaphorical movements of time and space require a narrative that moves between cultural and social formations and without a local causal centre. Bhabha argues such a narrative should be provided with its own authority, dispersing the horizontal structure which cultural movements have historically presented. The codes and languages articulated should go beyond a horizontal and sequential revision, giving authority to a 'non-sequential energy of lived historical memory and subjectivity'. Bhabha (1994) claims that '[we] need another time of writing that will be able to inscribe the ambivalent and charismatic intersections of time and place that constitute the problematic "modern" experience of the Western nation'. Both Fanon and Bhabha, in challenging the pervasive colonial epistemes, defining knowledge as Plato did: "justified knowledge as truth", opposed not only the lineal direction of Western history but also the temporal thread that history has established as an ordering criterion (Fanon, 1967; Bhabha, 1994).

Bhabha praises the provocative work of Mexican activist and artist Gómez Peña, who explored the dilemma of identity within peripheral cultures, reflecting on the concept of transculturality, and the intersubjectivity it provokes through a hierarchy of differences. Peña made obvious the common experiences of those communities with common interests and values within the post-colonialist discourse (Bhabha, 1994).

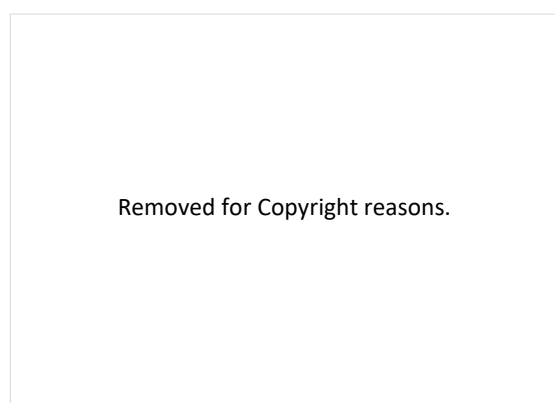


Figure 3.1 *The performance piece Undiscovered Amerindians.* Artist: Guillermo Gómez-Peña, 1992–1993. Exhibition at the MAM in Mexico City, 2017–2018.

In Mexico's situation, it is important to note the state has consistently attempted to generate a single cultural identity and aesthetic as an instrument for post-revolutionary nation-building. Through the exaltation of indigenous roots and folk traditions, the government sought to combine pre-Hispanic techniques, patterns and materials with modernist trends (López, 2010). Critics of Mexican post-revolutionary culture and society, like anthropologist Bonfil (1987), establish a critical discourse regarding the indigenous politics of the moment. They make obvious the clear dichotomy of realities in social structure – represented by a cultural elite more and more distanced and retired from the reality of the Mexican people and their racial and cultural contradictions.

The discourse surrounding the concept of identity, when in reference to Mexico, is unavoidably linked to indigenous politics. Such historical analysis has been based on several key studies – some of which remain unpublished in English – on social anthropology in Mexico, and a review of several contemporary works that make historical and political analyses from that same point of view. The studies summarised below are vital for establishing political and cultural actions in the fields of arts and design, which form the social base and scope of this research. It is important to point out that the post-revolutionary period reviewed here continues to attempt at generating a new culture through reinterpreting the patterns of the indigenous cultures – a homogenisation unsuccessful since the time of the Spanish Conquests between 1519 and 1521 (Aguirre Beltrán and Pozas, 1954).

3.2 Indigenism and anthropology in post-revolution Mexico

Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821 put into play two opposing forces attempting to confront the reality of the indigenous world: the first promoting a romanticisation of the indigenous past as a reaction against the foreign leanings of the old governing class and the second viewing this heritage as a bolster for the promotion of a nationalist spirit. It was the latter that came to shape the indigenous narrative and policy in Mexico, as well as the development of anthropological study. According to Villoro (1998), a group of intellectuals, educators, and politicians imposed their wish for a nation state – an 'ethnicized and culturally unified modern nation' – onto the multicultural landscape of post-revolutionary México (López, 2010). The desire to synthesise the different regional cultures and lifestyles into a single 'representative' one was always managed and produced by the dominant powers of society and, as such, truly consisted of the imposition of their lifestyle over the rest of Mexico (Villoro, 1998). This is a particularly complex task, considering Mexico as a heterogeneous reality, for instance, linguistically, Mexico

has 69 co-official languages, out of which 68 are indigenous and pre-Columbian, with 364 variants, in addition to Spanish.

In 1864, Francisco Pimentel, a writer, historian, linguist, indigenist and academic, was already talking about the separated reality of two different, and to a certain extent enemy, people (Villoro, 1998). In anthropologist Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán's words,

El individuo [. . .] no se siente pertenecer sino a su comunidad, a su linaje y a la tierra del linaje. No tiene conciencia de ser solamente un fragmento de un grupo étnico, más amplio que la simple sociedad nuclear cuando ese grupo excede las dimensiones de una comunidad. Mucho menos se considera miembro de una nación, abstracción que rebasa el mundo conceptual que abarca la estrecha cultura que tiene por patrimonio.

The individual [. . .] does not feel her belonging but to her community, her kin, her kin's land. She has no conscience of being only a fragment of an ethnic group, wider than the simple nuclear society, when that group exceeds the dimensions of a community. She even less considers herself as a member of a nation, an abstraction that exceeds the conceptual world that encompasses the narrow culture she has as heritage.

(Aguirre Beltrán and Pozas, 1954, p. 42)

Nearly every indigenist anthropologist cites Manuel Gamio and his 1916 book *Forjando Patria* (*Forging a Nation*) as the first practical implementation of anthropological science in Mexico and a founding document for Mexican indigenism. As Mexican anthropologist Julio De la Fuente declared in 1964, Gamio – influenced by the North American school of Franz Boas – made a series of remarkable additions to the social sciences and stood out for his compelling case that anthropological knowledge could be a precedent for social action (De la Fuente, 1964). For better *and* for worse, according to Bonfil (1987), Gamio's ideas 'have guided the indigenist policy until very recently'.

Indigenism, an ideology popular in many Latin American countries in the 20th century, perhaps took its strongest foothold in Mexico, where, from its incorporation into the 1917 Constitution onwards, it guided the relations between the governing class and indigenous peoples. What defined indigenists, of course, was their desire to celebrate indigenous culture as a part of the nationalistic narrative, while simultaneously working on behalf of the nation-state government to homogenise, assimilate and acculturate indigenous populations. To prominent advocates of the ideology such as Gamio (1916), indigenism had to be 'integral' – permeating not only throughout government policies and institutions but cultural policies and expressions as well.

Written during the tumultuous 10-year revolution (1916-1926), *Forjando Patria* was a manifesto for a Mexican national anthropology as well as a monograph on the nation's complex cultural politics. Portraying well the complex, and in retrospect problematic, position of indigenists, Gamio declared that 'knowledge of the population is basic for the achievement of good government' (Gamio, 1916). This premise, which was actively applied until the 1970s, formed the basis for an indigenist policy (Bonfil, 1987). Implicit, of course, is the notion that attempts at understanding and dignifying indigenous peoples are valuable only insofar as they are instruments of nation- and ethnicity-building. He wanted to transform the indigenous minorities – whom he saw as foreigners in their own country – into Mexicans (Gamio, 1916).

Gamio established the parameters for anthropological research as a method of confronting the social problems of indigenous groups and also conducted perhaps the first reassessment study of the indigenous people and their cultural symbols (De La Fuente, 1964). He called for the decisions and appraisal of indigenous peoples to be done from an integral perspective – considering biological, psychological, social and cultural factors. Gamio, in his first documented study of the Teotihuacan Valley, used a variety of analytical methods, considering different aspects of social life to apply anthropology outside the purely academic spheres. He asserted that the cultural manifestations of the population could not be valued from a single perspective and measurement – rather, they should be evaluated and measured within their own contexts – and that any comparisons to other contexts must avoid any standards of superiority and inferiority. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of this anthropological research, as declared in *Forjando Patria*, was always to identify which indigenous cultural traits were worth preserving in a new, unified nation state.

Often under Gamio's tutelage, several prominent figures in post-revolutionary Mexico continued the work of integral indigenism not only through anthropology study but also in fields of politics and education. Directly after the end of the revolution in 1920, politician and educator José Vasconcelos began educational reforms of the utmost importance – fighting illiteracy, increasing the number of public schools, and fostering rural education (Aguirre Beltrán and Pozas, 1954). As Secretary of Public Education from 1921 to 1924 and founder of the Department of Indigenous Culture, Vasconcelos appointed travelling teachers in a detailed plan for studying the Mexican peoples (Aguirre Beltrán and Pozas, 1954). In his 1925 book *Raza Cósmica (Cosmic Race)* – which set out a program and vision for a unified *mestizo* Mexican race – Vasconcelos showcased the utopian ideals of post-revolutionary nationalists (López, 2010).

Politician, educator and reformer Moisés Sáenz, in his book *México Íntegro* as well as his later works, is another invaluable reference in the current discourse surrounding multiculturalism and nationalism (Rivera, 2007)¹¹. Sáenz (1939) shared Gamio's integrationist view, and their combined influence guided the approach of cultural intervention during the 1920s and 1930s in its exaltation of what was popular – the aesthetic and structure of Mexican cultural identity (López, 2010). Gamio's influence in the field of anthropology also extended across México's northern border.

In the 1930s and 1940s, under Gamio's influence, American anthropologist Robert Redfield developed the trend of researching the knowledge of indigenous peoples by looking at them from different angles. In the Mexican states of Morelos and Yucatán, Redfield embarked on ethnographic, linguistic, archaeological studies in addition to the traditional physical and cultural anthropology of his forebears.

Along the same trend, in 1957 the Polish Mexican team of Bronislaw Malinowski and Julio De la Fuente published their anthropological work on market systems in the Oaxaca Valley. Their study of commercial relationships between neighbouring villages and states is still used as reference for field research seeking to combine social, anthropological and economic perspectives. Malinowski, considered the founder of the social anthropology and the first to incorporate theories of psychological functionalism into his work, arrived in Mexico around 1930, attracted by the social transformations generated by the revolution. His legacy is defined by his insistence on anthropologists immersing themselves in local culture and language. The organising feature of his method was the narrative: he went from one narrative to the next, following the relationships and interdependencies framed by them.

Malinowski and De la Fuente swore to a constant and reciprocal relationship between observation and theoretical analysis, especially given the problems arising from mere observation. They believed it was imperative to the value of collected material that the collection of new documents be guided by some organising principle. In Oaxaca, they departed from the purely aesthetic descriptions undertaken by other indigenists up to that moment – who set the artefacts on a pedestal from the lens of popular culture. Instead, they related their descriptions to the facts of the markets – consumption, distribution systems, logistics regarding transportation, communal forms of property and buying power. Malinowski, like many others before him, showed a concern

¹¹ Translator note: The word 'íntegro' has two main meanings in Spanish: the first one is 'complete, full' and alludes to the totality of something. The second meaning refers to people, and the meaning is 'honest'. The title of the book includes both meanings.

for social reform. In his work, he discussed the successes of such projects as artisan cooperatives in Atzompa and efforts to raise the working and living standards of Mixtec palm hat weavers¹².

Malinowski's work in Mexico was published in Spanish a full 15 years later than in English, with Julio De la Fuente helping to translate the original report. This first translation did not have the appendix, which included the black-and-white photographs taken by Malinowski and De la Fuente during their field work in Oaxaca; Mexican students of their work continued to lack access to these photos for decades after they were first taken. Sarah Drucker Brown, who published the 1982 edition of the book, was the first to appreciate the value of Malinowski's ethnographic visual material – which captured cultural identity and markets, and their relationship with artefacts in the context of México¹³. As Drucker Brown wrote in her valuable introduction, Malinowski's importance in the context of fieldwork in social anthropology is difficult to understate.

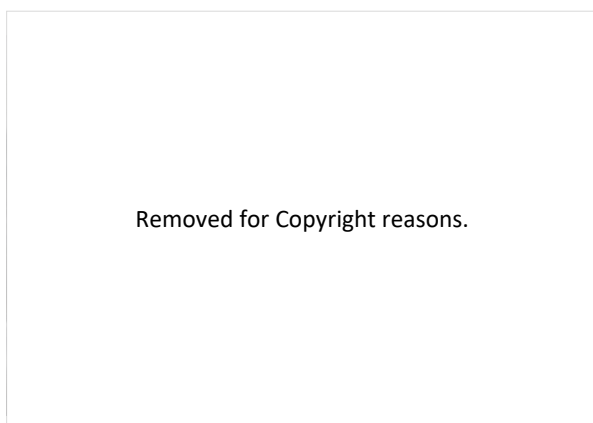


Figure 3.2 *The almud used to measure maize. To the left of the sack which contains maize is a tin measure, topped by a calabash scoop.* Adapted from 'Malinowski in Mexico. The Economics of a Mexican Market System', by Malinowski and De La Fuente, 1985.

Also, worth mentioning is anthropologist and archaeologist Alfonso Caso – director of the Instituto Nacional de la Antropología e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History) – who, a generation after Gamio, became the Mexican anthropologist of his time. Notably, he

¹² Those documents, and especially the visual supplement, are relevant because of their direct relation to my own fieldwork. In my mind, the functionalist methods in no way contradict a legitimate historical focus, as for Malinowski both analyses are possible in the same analytical context.

¹³ As the first, and one of the few, anthropologists to approach Oaxacan culture in a descriptive and reflective way, Malinowski's work – especially the images he and De la Fuente captured – was incredibly influential on my own. Only after Brown's edition in 1982 was the extent of his immersion in the Oaxacan market system appreciated or understood, and still to this day it receives little attention.

unified the various disciplines constituting the Science of Man, which up to that point were scattered in different private and public entities, without clear objectives to guide their work, and without coordination even among themselves. As an anthropologist like Gamio, Caso considered the study and knowledge of the past only as a means for modifying the present. In his analysis, Caso established the concept of community and group consciousness as the key to defining indigenous persons. To him, an Indian¹⁴ was

[. . .] todo individuo que se siente pertenecer a una comunidad indígena; que se concibe a sí mismo como indígena, porque esta conciencia de grupo no puede existir sino cuando se acepta totalmente la cultura de grupo; cuando se tienen los mismos ideales étnicos, estéticos, sociales y políticos del grupo; cuando se participa en las simpatías y antipatías colectivas y se es de buen grado colaborador en sus acciones y reacciones. Es decir, que es indio el que se siente pertenecer a una comunidad indígena.

[. . .] any individual that feels she belongs to an indigenous community; that thinks of herself as indigenous, because this group consciousness cannot exist unless the group's culture is completely accepted; when the group shares the same ethnic, aesthetic, social, and political ideals; when the collective sympathies and antipathies are shared, and she is voluntarily a collaborator in the actions and reactions of the group. That is to say, an Indian is whoever feels she belongs to an Indian community.

(Caso, 1953, pp. 145–181)

In 1940, he founded the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (National Indigenist Institute, or INI) with the goal of providing a basis for the anthropological methods to support regional and state projects on indigenous communities. The INI shifted the focus of interventions in indigenous communities away from solely education and local markets and instead towards integral action – a holistic and balanced approach jointly implemented across many societal and cultural structures. He was, in some sense, realising Gamio's idealistic vision for integral indigenism decades later. This required extensive knowledge of the specific lifestyles of each community, as well as continuous study of the changes induced by the methods used. This vision informed subsequent steps in the development of an integral policy, which came into place in stages following the founding of the INI. Below are some notes on his plans for literacy:

¹⁴ In Latin American contexts, both colloquial and written, and as I've pointed out before, "Indian" is used as a synonym to "indigenous", "native". Columbus, upon arrival in continental America, believed that he had landed in the Indies, which eventually was named "West Indies" – Indias Occidentales in opposition to "oriental Indies" the Indian Subcontinent, land of richness and spices. Amerigo Vespucci would eventually lend his name to this new land: América.

El entrenamiento de estos jóvenes consiste en cursos intensivos sobre alfabetos, metodología, traducción de textos indígenas y propaganda [. . .] El empleo de dibujos con la indumentaria y usos de la región permiten dar a estas cartillas un contenido local. Los veinte jóvenes así preparados forman misiones alfabetizadoras jefaturadas por un técnico en lingüística y trabajan, desde el primer día, con niños y adultos.

Los fines de la educación nacional [. . .] están orientados hacia la formación y capacitación de las generaciones jóvenes para que puedan realizar, en un futuro próximo, la modernización del país; la educación informal, así como sistematizada que se imparte en las instituciones educativas, están empeñadas en preparar los cuadros de técnicos capaces de alcanzar dicha meta. Además, el sistema educativo persigue otro fin: la unificación social y cultural del país para integrar la nacionalidad mexicana. Ninguna otra institución ha actuado con tan clara conciencia en la realización de este empeño como la educación; y el Estado, al fin, se ha decidido a llevar la escuela hasta las ayer inaccesibles comunidades indígenas . . .

The training of these children consists of intensive courses on alphabets, methodology, translation of indigenous texts, and propaganda [. . .] The use of drawings depicting regional apparel and customs affords local content to these booklets. These twenty youngsters are thus prepared to set up literacy missions, headed by a specialist on linguistics, who works from day one with children and adults.

The goals of national education [. . .] are oriented towards the training and qualification of the new generations so that they can carry out, in the near future, the modernisation of the country; informal education, as well as the systematised education in educational institutions, are charged with preparing cadres of technicians capable of achieving this goal. In addition, the teaching system pursues another goal: the social and cultural unification of the country, to assimilate the Mexican nationality. No other institution has acted with such clear conscience in the achievement of this goal, as education; and the State, finally, has decided to take the school to the, until recently, inaccessible indigenous communities . . .

(Instituto de Alfabetización en Lenguas Indígenas, 1945, pp. 140–160)

Finally, these integral strategies in education policy provoked an awareness through which the indigenist movement acquired prestige on a national level (Aguirre Beltrán, 1976). In 1940, Pazcuaro, Michoacán, became the elected headquarters for the first Encuentro Indigenista Interamericano (Inter-American Indigenist Summit) led by Moises Saenz, founder of the

Departamento de Asuntos Indigenistas (Department of Indigenous Affairs, or DAI) and pioneer of the multiculturalist discourse. These activities, which fostered cooperation between education and research interests, were among many other new attempts to approach and understand indigenous cultures at the time. While approaches transformed and indigenism took on new forms, this work was, at its core, directly influenced by Gamio. For decades, politicians, educational and social reformers and scholars in various fields shared the common belief that systematic studies of Mesoamerican civilisations, as well as contemporary indigenous society and culture, were vital to understanding and promoting Mexico's unique cultural roots. The indigenists were progressive reformers and pioneers of their fields who sought to distance themselves from the ethnic homogenisation pursued by the pre-revolution ruling class. Theirs is a mixed legacy but one that has laid the groundwork for all subsequent interventions and studies in Mexican indigenous communities.

3.3 Mexican aesthetics and design practice in the context of Mexico

Before entering into the area of social practices in relation to design in Mexico, it is important to first consider the transformation of readings of the popular arts, as this is unavoidably linked to the political context.



Figure 3.3 *May 1. protest for the recognition of the workers' labour rights, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

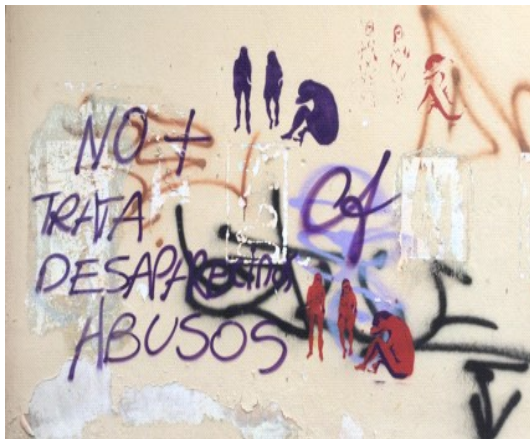


Figure 3.4 Stencil protest ‘No more human traffic, missing people, abuse’. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

‘Popular arts’ is a broad term encompassing handcrafts, decorative arts and folk arts – all captured within the Spanish word *artesanía* – and share the common traits of being generated by ordinary people, and displaying the depth and variety of Mexican cultural heritage. Often, the simple definition given is that popular arts are the ‘the traditional, materialistic and formal expression of the common people’ and those of indigenous heritage (Popular Art Foundation, 2010).

It is important to note that only after the first decade of the 20th century – in the context of revolutionary fervour and new nationalism – was the first known detailed study of Mexico’s popular arts conducted (Florescano, 2006). In 1921, Jorge Enciso and Roberto Montenegro organised the first Popular Art Exhibition at Chapultepec Park in Mexico City. A revolutionary first step toward Mexico’s nationalist modernity and aesthetic, with the approval of President Alvaro Obregón who saw this as an opportunity to craft a populist image for his regime. In 1922, several prominent artists led by painter Gerardo Murillo collaborated to compile the two-volume *Folk Arts in México*, which was published by the new government (López, 2010). Afterwards, popular arts and their relation to concepts of identity became objects of discourse and political debate – almost paralleling the rise of Gamio’s discourse. Gabriel Fernández Ledesma, in the introduction to his 1930 volume of popular art, wrote,

En la civilización de las máquinas y el imperialismo comercial, rebaja la nobleza de la función mecánica invadiendo dominios de producción manual que no deberían desligarse nunca de su expresión de intimidad [. . .] viene la competencia a bajo precio, la disputa de mercados [. . .] el total de las industrias de México genuinamente son productos manuales

[. . .] en los cuales confluyen una elaboración técnica perfeccionada, un sentido de belleza amalgamado al cuerpo mismo del producto, dejando satisfecha así una nueva necesidad común.

The civilization of machines and commercial imperialism reduces the nobility of the mechanical function, invading the domain of manual production that should never be separated from its expression of intimacy [. . .] follows the competition of low prices, the fight over markets, [. . .] the totality of Mexican industries are genuinely manual products [. . .] in which a perfected technical production coalesce with a sense of beauty fused to the very body of the product, thus satisfying a new common need.

(Fernández Ledesma, 1930, p. 1)

In compiling artefacts, Mexican intellectuals introduced a new discourse on the relationship between the aesthetic and imaginative force, and traditional myths. At the same time, educator and politician Adolf Best Maugard, who led the *Secretariado de Educación Pública* (Public Education Department) from 1921 to 1924, published his book on *Métodos de Dibujo* (*Drawing Methods*), which emphasised the social function of art. The Best Maugard method, designed for use in México's art schools, provided a theoretical foundation based on concepts of national identity, using the symbols he considered universal. With the aim of students producing 'purely Mexican' designs, Maugard based his primary exercises on seven graphic elements which were intended to create their own artistic language.

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Figure 3.5 *A New Method for Developing Creative Imagination*. Artist: Adolfo Best Maugard, 1923. University High School Journal 3, Mexico.

In the *Boletín de Secretaría de Educación Pública* (Bulletin of the Secretary of Public Education), Fernando Pontones wrote, 'Consider only that those people that have genuine expressions in their artistic representations are the only ones that can be considered of the first importance in the human artistic evolution' (Best Pontones, 1922, pp. 227–229).

In this same educational sphere, Saenz – initially sharing Gamio’s assimilationist vision – worked to directly share knowledge of the markets with artisans. His goals were twofold: to establish commercial links that would support the growth of productive communities while also generating a national aesthetic. The dual influence of these goals guided the direction of cultural interventions in the ’20s and ’30s and the exaltation of popular arts, aesthetics and Mexican cultural identity of the time (López, 2010).

Artisanal production after 1920 and during these first decades of the post-revolutionary, independent Mexico, had to confront two competing forces: the expansion of imports as a consequence of the country’s open-doors strategy with Europe and, of course, industrialisation. As we understand it today, crafts were always the pioneers of what was considered the ‘profession’ of design, but historically, the practices of these crafts were relegated to the background, overshadowed by the transformation of industrial processes. As a consequence, these creative practices and their associated skills – *hacer* (the making) – have been separated, with the common conception of the artisan becoming more associated with virtuosity than with the activities of design (Makovicky, 2011). Meanwhile, the artisans, usually in isolated places – where, among other things, the artisanal structure coincides with geography, turning it into a sign of identity – ensured the continuity of Mesoamerican culture (Florescano, 2006).

When artisan structures and native techniques of each of these communities disappear, so does a part of their identity and cultural differentiation. For this reason, our proposal is close to communities whose artisan techniques are on the verge of disappearing, as is the case of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, where the pre-Hispanic technique used to work with clay was barely maintained by a couple of artisans. Preserving them, from my research’s point of view, does not mean forcing the artisans to stay unchanged, but that they themselves find a place for this technique within the context of the 21st century. Our mission with these workshops was not to choose what to preserve or develop but issue a proposal so artisans can transform what they consider, but always respecting the existing technique.

As an example, this approach to work, at one of the workshops held in Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, we invited a craftswoman from another town to show local craftsmen her own technique in which clay was polished with a Stone. This way, craftsmen in this community become aware of such technique and can test putting it to practice. This allows them to decide if within their process of "making" this way of polishing clay provides them with any benefits, can evaluate if it is simple or if it improves the quality of their finished products. Therefore, each of them can decide whether or not to incorporate it into their way of “making”.

As discussed previously, Mexican powerbrokers, in their pursuit of national identity, both anchored and nullified popular art. In that sense, cultural artefacts have always been used as negotiating weapons; the value of each has been established according to local standards of authenticity and their ability to evoke national identity. The sheer fact that an artefact belonged to an indigenous community was seen as a key element of reaching a national identity (Thomas, 2002). With this understanding, Bonfil (1987) points out that official agencies used the discovery of archaeological sites and the commercialisation of indigenous artefacts as strategies to stimulate tourism.

Experts in Latin-American culture, such as Roa Bastos and Juan Acha, point out that the price paid by traditional methodologies to exist within their cultural context, an adaptation is forced as a general mechanism of an imposed, homogeneous system, without hindering or questioning its development. Historically, hegemonic societies have tried to manipulate those practices that do not conform to the national homogenising plan, sabotaging the evolution of any forms which question or alter a course set by the capitalist system. Some strategies have been ‘folklorisation’, the imposition of *ways of doing*, the manipulation of discourse to distort the meanings of cultural artefacts and the trivialisation of symbols and their deep and spiritual content (Acha et al., 2004; Roa Bastos, 1980).



Figure 3.6 *A documentary film in Oaxaca*. Artist: Vargas de la Maza, 1950. UNAM Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Filmoteca.

3.4 Anti-indigenism and post-indigenism

When Aguirre Beltrán entered into the field of Mexican indigenist policy, Gamio’s voice and legacy remained virtually unchecked. The two met in 1942 when Aguirre Beltrán was a physician in the town of Huatusco; Gamio encouraged him to publish his first book in 1946 – a historical study of

black people in Mexico. But over decades of work, Aguirre Beltrán departed from Gamio on some significant points of form and substance. From 1950 onwards, there was serious criticism surrounding the traditional studies of community; it was obviously impossible to approach and understand a community, or ethnographically describe it in a sufficient manner, from the perspective of attempting national unity. Realising this, Aguirre Beltrán wanted to conduct his studies of communities in full view of their isolated social structure, with no ambitions to alter or intervene.

Around 1955–1956, Aguirre Beltrán was able to establish, empirically, the existence of a real system of regions. He determined there was a centre – conditioned by the presence of a *ladino*, or mestizo race – surrounded by a ‘constellation’ of indigenous communities subordinated to it. Aguirre Beltrán’s model, sometimes called the ‘solar system’, was formulated directly from the empirical evidence collected in his research of the Tzeltal-Tzotzil region and other parts of México (Aguirre Beltrán, 1976). Two decades later in 1977, Ricardo Pozas, another prominent indigenist anthropologist, published a biography of a Tzotzil named Juan Perez as well as a detailed work on the Chamulas heights of Chiapas’ highlands. They made it clear that their precise analyses of organisational structures did not derive from Gamio’s ideas.

In their 1954 volume published by Alfonso Caso’s INI, titled *Métodos y resultados de la política indigenista en México (Methods and Results of Indigenist Policy in Mexico)*, Pozas and Aguirre Beltrán described the concept of a community mystically linked to its land.

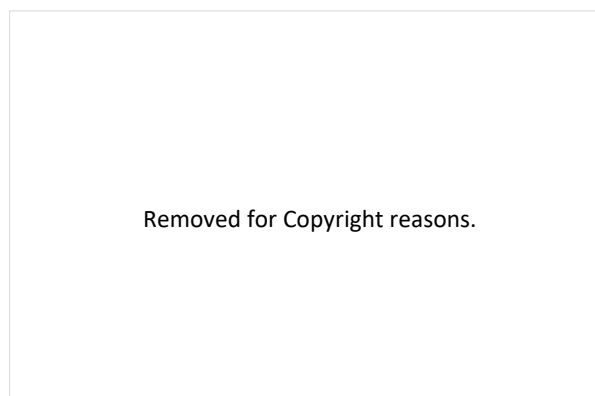


Figure 3.7 *The Healer and Shaman as María Sabina*. Artist: María Tzu, 2012. ‘Conjurios y ebriedades by Taller de Leñateros’.

This unity, as they described it, had no conscience of being a fragment of some larger ethnic group, and even less felt part of a nation, as the politics of the moment pretended. Their concept of community was entirely contained in the ‘nuclear’ society that the indigenous person felt

bound to; thus, the concept of nation held no meaning since it exceeded the indigenous person's sense of belonging. In this sense, Pozas and Aguirre Beltrán seemed to build off Caso's visions and theoretical framework while simultaneously critiquing the nation-building premise he shared with other indigenists of his time. In 1965, anthropologist Calixta Gutiérrez Holmes published an important follow-up to this new field of thought in her book *Los peligros de las almas* (*The Dangers of the Souls*), where she described the Tzotzil world of the Chiapas highlands

Bonfil Batalla, in his 1970 manifesto *De eso que llaman la antropología Mexicana* (*On That Thing Called Mexican Anthropology*), was the first in his field to systematically criticise indigenism and indigenist policy. The book took issue with the actions taken until that point regarding field research and its relationship with the indigenous cultures and national identity (Warman, 1970). Bonfil's work, particularly *México Profundo* (*Deep Mexico*), 1987 – which develops a discourse for the review and criticism of indigenist policy and anthropological practice in post-revolution Mexico – is probably one of the most significant influences on my inquiry. He argues that it is impossible to understand cultural features in terms of comparative values such as degrees of contemporary and traditional, or urban and rural, for these scales necessarily arise from the imposition of a Western perspective. Terms such as 'primitive', 'advanced', 'modern' and 'urban' do not correspond to true patterns of inner development.

Bonfil (1987) claims that cultural diversity is not the problem and indeed that Mexico has the potential to become a cultural capital. He argues that we need to return to the focal point of issues in Mexican society, the primordial problem: colonisation.

Bonfil (1987) established a break with the tenets of the indigenist policy and traced its lineal discourse (Warman, 1970). Meanwhile, he established an inflection point in relation to education, politics and the hegemony of the reigning Europeanism. He was continuously encouraged by the 1968 student movement and, later, the anarchist Zapatism of the time. Bonfil (1987) declared the need to evaluate different cultural expressions not along lines of simple comparisons and hierarchies of values – as had been the case before him – but through understanding each cultural expression *in their own context*.

Bonfil's review of indigenist policy starts with the latent national dichotomy set in motion by colonisation. He defines, on the side of the indigenous culture, what he calls the '*deep México*' – the undercurrent of Mesoamerican civilisation which refuses to accept imposition. He also establishes parameters for the resistance to imposed patterns through communally refusing innovation, even appropriating the dominant cultural elements as a *strategy* of said resistance. Another important point in Bonfil's work which established relevant parameters for my fieldwork

was the importance of establishing a vision near the perspective of the indigenous world and its realities.

Decades later, Villoro (1998) proposed another revision of Gamio's work, specifically his 'forging of a nation' concept, believing it should not happen through a homogenising assimilation of all the elements of the nation but rather through the search for, and development of, a 'multiplicity'. Villoro proposes,

Lo que se trata es de aceptar una realidad: la multiplicidad de las diversas culturas, de cuya relación autónoma nacería una unidad. Frente al Estado-nación homogéneo, se abre ahora la posibilidad de un Estado plural que se adecue a la realidad social, constituida por una multiplicidad de etnias, culturas, comunidades. Este Estado terminaría con el intento alocado de imponerle por la violencia un esquema pretendidamente racional. Tendría que ser un Estado respetuoso de todas las diferencias. Sería un Estado en que ningún pueblo, ni siquiera el mayoritario, impondría a otros su idea de nación.

This is about accepting a reality: the multiplicity of different cultures, from whose autonomous relationship a unity would be born. Opposite the homogeneous Nation-State, the opportunity now arises for a plural State that fits the social reality, made up of a multiplicity of ethnicities, cultures, communities. This State would end the crazy attempt to impose through violence a supposedly rational scheme. It would have to be a State respectful of all differences. It would be a State where no people, not even the majority, would impose their idea of a nation onto others.

(Villoro, 1998)

As Néstor García Canclini puts it, '*las identidades tienden a esencializarse y la pertenencia comunitaria se ha vuelto la principal garantía de los derechos individuales* [Identities tend to essentialise themselves, and belonging to a community has become the main assurance of individual rights]' (García Canclini, 2000, p. 109). Canclini's emphasis on 'assurance of individual rights' and Villoro's mention of 'the crazy attempt to impose violence' allude to the perils and exceptionally high cost of homogenisation imposed upon marginalised communities.

Anti-indigenism was a radical critique of the methodology that shaped the practice of anthropology in Mexico for decades. It rejected delineations between advanced and 'primitive' cultures, especially as such delineations provided justification for exploitation, erasure and appropriation. Above all else, it addressed the false narrative of harmony and formulated an

argument against a totalising, homogenised, nationalist approach by instead settling on multiplicity and difference as critical and natural aspects of social reality.

3.5 Resilience philosophy

Humankind has always forged communities with the desire to live together, generate common beliefs and develop cultural and political institutions. These structures emerge organically, creating one of the fundamental features of human civilisation – the communal expression of the marketplace (Papanek, 1995). Furthermore, the persistence of communal organisations in the economy and culture of indigenous people has always had a complex relationship with imposed homogeneous systems. This historically established conflict is due not only to the rampant penetration and destruction of existing indigenous cultures but also to their independent governing systems (Canclini, 2000; Acha et al., 2004).

Although the interest of this research lies in understanding local identity through the practice of social design, this section will survey the cultural transformation of the artisan in Mexico's indigenous communities. This is necessary to subsequently review their cultural material – specifically their artefacts – as expressions of exchange. As I already mentioned, Jorge Pellicer, in his publication *Los artesanos del porvenir (Artisans of the Future, 1995)*, presents a case study of Santa Clara del Cobre. This project was planned and conducted in a public arts and craft school called CECATI 166, under the supervision of the American sculptor James Metcalf and his wife, Mexican artist Ana Pellicer. In their work, as social design practitioners, as well as their own art, Pellicer and Metcalf applied artisan production as a way to support the resilience and cultural heritage of the community¹⁵.

¹⁵ Centros de Capacitación para el Trabajo Industrial or CECATI are industrial Work Training Centres, part of the Directorate General for Work Training Centres (DGCFT), part of the Administrative Unit attached to the Undersecretariat of Higher Secondary Education (SEMS) of the Mexican Ministry of Public Education (SEP). Their aim is to provide Mexicans with a wide range of technical work opportunities, to improve their outputs, their quality of life and aid at peoples' economic and social development.

CECATI offers above 200 courses, grouped into 52 specialties based on the different productive and service branches developed in the country. Most of the courses do not require an academic background, so the courses are aimed at anyone who can read and write, and offer a much-needed opportunity for communities with limited resources or affected by isolation.

Jorge Pellicer revisits the work of his close collaborator Metcalf, describing his as one of the best-known case studies of documented artefact production in México. In Metcalf's mind,

La producción artesanal es un fenómeno de producción colectiva y puede florecer únicamente en las sociedades integradas igualitarias. Un objeto solo puede estar diseñado propiamente por el artesano, porque el diseño debe ser el resultado del oficio mismo.

Artisan production is a collective production phenomenon and can flourish only in egalitarian integrated societies. An object can only be properly designed by the artisan, because the design must be the result of her own craftsmanship.

(Pellicer, 1995)



Figure 3.8 A sample of artisan jewellery from Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán, México, under the Metcalf and Pellicer direction at the CECATI 166 school of arts and crafts. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

I documented the legacy of CECATI 166 at Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán, México, and CECATI 133, San Cristóbal de las Casa, Chiapas, through visits to these locations and interviews with its surviving former Directors, Anna Pellicer, Luis Morales, and to Marina Sánchez and other Metcalf's close collaborators, as shall be detailed in Chapter 4.



Figure 3.9 Image of CECATI 166, after being abruptly closed by the government and directors Ana Pellicer and James Metcalf being forced to resign in the early 1980's. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

Cultural continuity processes in indigenous communities have relied greatly on each community's own mechanisms for transmitting cultural knowledge through generations. These mechanisms rely on cultural artefacts and traditions not only as ways to remember but also to enable the freedom to forget.

Several works on collective memory review and compare different communities' collective methods for associating knowledge of the past with the present, incorporating it into decisions about the future. Jan Assmann, a celebrated Egyptologist, shows that the collective memory of spatial and temporal elements, and the communication methods specific to each community, coexist on an existential level. Stored within them are the ideas, emotions, and values that define the identity and culture of the community. He thus demonstrates how the collective memory not only rebuilds the past but also serves as a template to organise the experiences of the present and future (Assmann, 2011). In a similar vein, Bonfil (1987) demonstrates how collective memory filters the perception of new elements, thus helping decide the degree and manner to which they are integrated into the community and cultural identity.

For most Latin-American indigenous cultures, and specifically for those in México, the popular creative and transformative artefacts become most tangible through socio-religious festivities and the artistic expressions they include. These unique artefacts hold within them memory of the creative features of the community and its cultural identity. These expressions are usually collective since individual acts are less malleable to history and social codes and therefore worse at reflecting them. Clearly, even if the Westernised vision achieves identification with the

artefacts on an aesthetic level, it still cannot touch upon the cultural information contained within the social conditions and community ethos of an artefact (Acha et al., 2004).

Anthropologist Marta Turok's studies are a benchmark within current works on Mexican craftsmanship and artisan production. Rather than categorising based on materials and resultant products, Turok (1988) describes the artisan's work as a reflection of ways of production. She sets forth a vision for new systems of artisan qualifications and production itself, believing that '*la producción artesanal de México enfrenta una nueva encrucijada ante los embates de la globalización* [artisan production in México faces a new crossroads in light of the onslaught of globalisation]' (Turok, 1988). She suggests protecting artisanal production by promoting it through travelling exhibitions and maintaining the quality of artisans through local competitions.

De entrada, aparece una contradicción de difícil solución: al modernizar tradiciones culturales con valor simbólico y de cambio, se despoja a los objetos de la identidad en que se fundamentan sus valores.

For starters, a difficult contradiction arises by modernizing cultural traditions with symbolic and exchange value, the objects are stripped of the identity in which their values are based.

(Novelo, 2003, p. 12)

Turok praises anthropologist Victoria Novelo's (1976) work, specifically her analyses of production and artefacts, as well as the instruments and human relationships associated with craft practices. Important to this work, Turok and Novelo link the expressions of cultural knowledge embedded in *hacer* (the making) with the social and economic spheres that Malinowski addressed years before, generating a common thread among forms of artisan production, productive composition of the community and relationship with the local and national economy (Turok, 1988).

For most of post-revolutionary Mexican history, the drive for a national narrative has entombed indigenous culture and traditions, relegating them to the past tense or worse, objectifying them through a primitivistic lens. In the process, they are denied possibility for change, and the transformation of their cultural artefacts is stymied. As Acha writes,

La idea de que lo popular, especialmente lo indígena es que debe permanecer idéntico a sí mismo, detenido en un punto anterior a su propia historia, está en el centro de uno de los mitos más características de la cultura occidental. [. . .] El artefacto popular está condenado a mantenerse originario y puro: si se transforma se pervierte, si incorpora

novedades traiciona sus esencias, adultera sus verdaderos valores y corrompe su autenticidad primera.

The idea that everything popular, especially everything indigenous, must remain identical to itself, arrested in a point previous to its own history, is at the centre of one of the most characteristic myths of the western culture [. . .] Popular artefacts are doomed to remain original and pure: if it is transformed it is corrupted, if it incorporates novelties it betrays its essence, adulterates its true values and corrupts its first authenticity.

(Acha et al., 2004, p. 157)

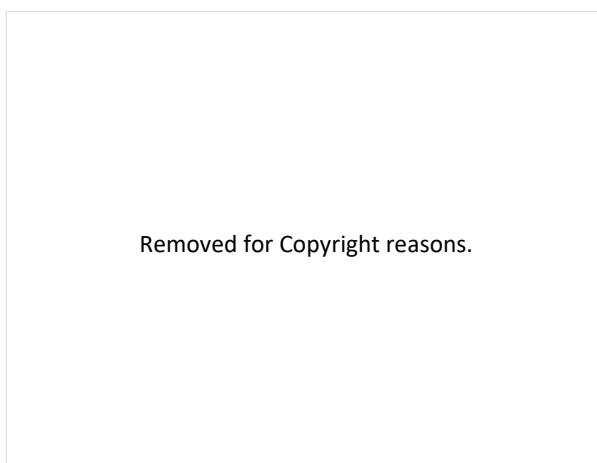


Figure 3.10 *Sample of Popular Art Detached from Its Ritual Base.* Artist: Margatira Corvalan, undated. Ita, Paraguay. Adapted from *Hacia una Teoría Americana del Arte*, by Acha, Juan; Colombres, Adolfo; and Escobar, Ticio. Buenos Aires, Ediciones del Sol, 1ª ed., 2004.

However, indigenous communities have their own processes – natural conditions for the transformation of the artefact and its mode of cultural expression – which answer only to the communities' need for continuity. The appropriation of foreign elements and processes is valid as much as it answers an internal need to adapt and is introduced according to the agreed-upon needs of a group with communal cultural affinities. Furthermore, as moderate as these foreign interventions might be, they can still disrupt and distort the cultural processes and their meanings:

Visto desde fuera un cuerpo/artefacto cultural tiene una exagerada fragilidad. Una pequeña presión es suficiente para lesionarla. Pero considerándolo desde dentro es

vigoroso y resistente: puede incorporar grandes pesos y soportar brascas sacudidas sin comprometerse su derrotero.

Seen from outside, a cultural body/artefact has an exaggerated fragility. A little pressure is enough to harm it. But considering it from the inside, it is vigorous and resistant: it can incorporate huge weights and bear sudden shakes without compromising its course.

(Acha, 1994, p. 235)

Communities themselves select which elements to maintain, incorporate or substitute. As shocking as this acculturation process may seem to outsiders – especially those accustomed to the myth of modernisation – it resolves itself naturally, typically producing well-integrated cultural expressions.

According to sociologist Caroline Knowles, 'Resilience is about people's ability to adapt to conditions generated by different tempos of social change, conditions which create ever-new forms of social fragility' (Knowles, 2014). Similarly, Tunstall suggests the need to accept a community's value system as something dynamic, not static; each successive generation must be allowed to negotiate for themselves the elements that constitute their values and culture. This means eliminating the labels that draw distinctions between 'popular arts' and design and instead focusing on what she calls 'forms of making' as the way communities make their value systems tangible to themselves and others (Tunstall, 2013). The acculturation process is fundamental to exchanges among cultures and to the transformation and continuity of communities (Shneider, 2013).

My approach and way of working throughout the whole research process responded to two guidelines, to which an approach would be jointly developed through discussion with the other design facilitators. Firstly, to Acha's approach, considering the cultural artefact from its interior, from the intangible value of the object as a carrier and transmitter of the cultural values of a people, which "preservation" from a westernised point of view cannot deny the possibility for change. Secondly, to proposing traditional techniques as the "form of making" referred to by Tunstall as something dynamic.

It was never considered that the making referred to by Turok and Novelo was something immovable and untouchable, as if the aim was to maintain everything related to the indigenous communities in an immutable state of preservation. Nor was it our mission to decide or select which parts were to be preserved or transformed, much less to approach it as a process of development. Since this would be using a limited perspective towards a specific goal, aimed at

achieving a westernised model, instead of accepting, as we did in all the research, that there was no goal to be achieved by the artisans and indigenous communities, but that it was they who would decide whether to transform something, to what extent they wanted to do so and for what purpose. At that point, it was the communities who would define their own models of resilience to the processes of homogenisation, using if they felt it was appropriate, the tools that had been shared with them during the workshops.

My position, therefore, did not involve active decision-making unilaterally set out to achieve pre-established objectives, but rather that through social design practice, joint decisions could be made, agreed to by all the participants in the workshops, facilitators and artisans. As a reflective practitioner, my mission was to observe and understand through reflection how to approach the following workshops, what tools we could share with the artisans so that they could use them if they considered it pertinent, in order to establish their own resilient actions and processes within a globalised scenario/context.

3.6 Expressions of exchange

Czech philosopher Jan Mukarovsky believes that once the artefact's primary functions are eliminated, its aesthetic functions begin to be highlighted, and its status in relation to the popular culture of the community is engaged (Mukarovsky, 1977). As mentioned, scholars who study indigenous cultures and the importance of craftsmanship make a direct link between the transmission cultural knowledge and tradition, and the artisanal production process. For any group formed in the periphery of the industrialised world – from Middle Age workshops to indigenous craftsmanship – the *community* is the context and medium in which to learn, where both aesthetic judgment and coherent style are developed according to the common values of a cultural group.

Thus, cultural artefacts both result from, and themselves symbolise, the creative expressions of a community. But while they have traditionally been linked to rural forms of self-sustainment and trade – economic systems in which use values prevail over exchange values – nowadays communities increasingly tend to produce their artistic objects for sale rather than for their own use. Artefacts and the right to their possession circulates in the economic system through the exchange of money, and at that precise moment – as Alfred Gell (1998) points out – the conceptual commodification of the artefact takes place. Production and consumption patterns are the basic elements of any market system; cultures vary in how these exchanges are structured and how they relate to the social membrane of the community (Gell, 1998).

Thus, tracing the artefacts' origins reveal the workings of the social structure they come from. This key insight seemed to drive Boas's detailed study on Mexico's local languages and Malinowski's studies on the market in relation to communities, both of which focused specifically on Oaxacan communities. Boas and Malinowski both occasionally used the method of observing many people interacting – often in a hectic marketplace – for long periods of time, attempting to decipher a social structure that went beyond mere coincidences. This allowed them to plan their studies and to generate an approach to a community and its ways of exchange (Murphy and Marcus, 2013; Malinowski, 1957).

Malinowski discovered a strange but unmistakable relationship between spatial and temporal elements and market fluxes. He came to understand that the markets were as much about sociocultural factors as they were about the tastes and preferences of the population in and around the Oaxaca Valley (Malinowski, 1957). Little by little, Malinowski was able to differentiate between traders, producers and consumers, thus defining a ranking of artefacts – separating them into primary production, native production, local crafts and imported goods. This allowed him to focus on the corn market fluxes, as corn set the price levels for other important goods such as meat, bread, vegetables and clay utensils (Malinowski, 1957).

The modernisation myth tends to view indigenous societies as *pre-capitalist* – in other words, as part of the history and economic evolution of Western society. Dating back to Adam Smith, Western theorists used ecological, and eventually Darwinist, metaphors to describe the natural history and development of the Western market system; in doing so, they held up indigenous societies as living proof of the scale of evolutionary progress. These narratives persist, painting indigenous communities as 'backwards' in relation to economic history when in fact indigenous societies less influenced by colonialism are truly *a-capitalist*, not *pre-capitalist*. These societies conform to an alternative socio-political system which makes little sense when viewed through the lens of Western values, history and identity politics.

In this research, artefacts are not seen as locked traditions but rather as cultural expressions – living, transforming and adapting. Under these parameters, their values may be transmitted through an exchange by generating a platform that allows the sufficient space and time for new social relationships to be established and new structures to unveil through design practice. The generated exchanges open and develop new forms of expression. This is a necessary *collective* process, as the exchange of values only occurs through cultural correspondence. This living condition of cultural knowledge and memory is capable of profound social restructuring – to

influence the very economic and cultural balance of a society (Kopytoff, 1986; Pellicer, 1995; Kester, 2011).

3.7 Design before design: approaching the people, objects and outcomes

Another fundamental aspect to this research is the humanistic approach to the subjects and cultural artefacts involved in indigenous communities. Building off Igor Kopytoff and others – who discussed objects as operating within a circulation of meaning – my work suggests other perspectives for understanding and establishing close ties with the indigenous community. In my research, I approach the complex processes of cultural continuity, and adjustment to change, as elements of resilience and identity. I attempt to find a connecting thread throughout the cultural materials of the community, which helps them to be understood as a reflection of socio-historical transformation.

Caroline Knowles (2014), in her ethnographic portrait of ‘globalisations backroads’, portrayed through everyday flip-flops, argues that characterising the movement of people and things as a ‘flow’ is erroneous – instead, she prefers to call it a ‘journey’. By following the journey of the artefact – the production and distribution lines where they move from one place to another – I endeavour to uncover and articulate the human and social relationships within which those operations occur. As a practitioner, I thus position myself at points throughout the transformation of the object in its social practice. In my reflection, I view the design as forming a narrative thread. This approach allows for a dual understanding of the social design practice: on the one hand, an act of resistance and self-definition, and on the other hand, a view of cultural continuity and transformation by means of the artefact. Hence, in this chapter I necessarily position *myself* in relation to the cultural artefact and social design practice.

Objects give shape to the anthropological exploration of culture, opening many lines of inquiry when we peer to into the ways they intertwine with lived experience (Malinowsky, 1957; Knowles, 2014). When design is perceived as an ancestral activity taking place as far as human history reaches rather than as a recent occupation, our perception starts to change regarding what indigenous, or African, or Asian, or Latin-American design *is*, and the issues of design acquire a different shape.

This work emerges from a long discourse which questions the appreciation and consumption of culture from a Western capitalist perspective. Victor Margolin and Richard Buchanan, in the

introduction to their 1995 book *The Idea of Design*, quote Rajeshwari Ghose, saying that 'discourses on design are so overpowered by dominant first world methodologies that we must wait quite a while for new approaches to evolve and be cogently articulated'. Similarly, César Paternosto has shown that both anthropologists and art historians are bound to evaluate American antique forms from the perspective of their natural forms (Paternosto, 2013).

Victor Papanek is among the first to criticise 'design conceptualisation' in modern society. Papanek and Gui Bonsiepe argued over the role of design in 'peripheral' countries – as Bonsiepe called them – but they were united in their concern about finding a responsible use of design. Throughout his career, Papanek desired to understand design from the perspective of indigenous people, weaving his interest in the designs themselves with the vernacular forms – linked to places, materials and ways of production. In *Design for the Real World*, he criticised the profession for its affiliation with the concept of capitalist well-being – in its emptiness and mediocrity – and the lack of authenticity of Western society's objects (Clarke, 2011; Papanek, 1971). This critique of industrial society bore a striking resemblance to the vision which formed the basis for William Morris's arts and crafts movement in Great Britain 100 years earlier.

But anthropology had already seen the possibilities of artefacts – their ability to transgress, to self-modify, to stir the culture and to also cling to it. As anthropologist Nicolette Makovicky (2011) notes, the best artefacts have always been sublimated to mere harbingers of modern design, thus eliminating any other potential within the economy and freezing them in place, denying them the possibility of evolution. This generated a schism in the craft-making process, separating creativity from actual skills of craftsmanship – which, as always mentioned, was forever linked to what Alison J. Clarke (2011) calls 'manual virtuosity'. Thus, a long line of thought leaders criticised the tradition of judging the artefact's design from the perspective of Western markets and tastes. Through this lens, the culture of the object becomes a redundant factor, and the value of the process of *hacer* is lost. The training, the skill and the materials involved in craft-making should be understood as a dynamic practice of correspondence.

The sheer reach of the Western canon leaves creators of cultural artefacts in indigenous communities relegated to a second-class position within the world of high art. This has been a historical constant since even before the American conquest, affecting other expressions such as pottery and metalwork. This loss of appreciation for the indigenous cultural artefact has limited it, nearly without exception, to the fields of anthropology and archaeology rather than fine arts (Acha et al., 2004).

Salvador Toscano, considered Mexico's first researcher on Mesoamerican aesthetics, was throughout his lifetime interested in Mesoamerican art and expressions, approaching his research with the aim to configure an *indigenous aesthetic*. He adds an important critical view on the Western position, writing,

El estilo artístico es la fisonomía, la forma por la cual se expresa una cultura, su expresión psicológica peculiar; no existe, por lo mismo, un criterio de validez universal que nos permita juzgar el arte de los diversos pueblos en su desarrollo histórico, pues ni siquiera el ideal clásico de los griegos –tradicionalmente señalado como el momento más alto de la humanidad en el arte– puede reclamar tal título. No existen artes bárbaras e inferiores, pues los estilos artísticos no son mejores ni peores, sino diferentes.

The artistic style is the physiognomy, the way a culture expresses itself, its unique psychological expression; there is not, for this reason, a universally-valid criterion that allows us to judge the art of the various peoples in their historic development, since not even the classical ideal of the Greeks – traditionally agreed-upon as humanity's pinnacle in art – can claim that title. There are no barbaric and inferior arts, for artistic styles are not better or worse, but only different.

(Toscano, 1970, p. 13)

In this vein, Acha points out that in Western culture, artefacts largely remained attached to natural forms until the end of the 19th century while indigenous artefacts have maintained, from the beginning, a tendency towards abstraction.

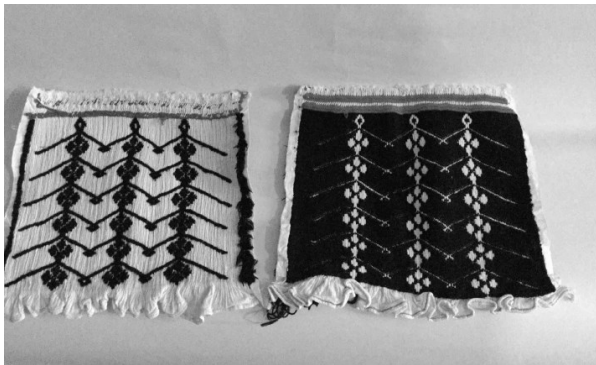


Figure 3.11 Mixtec textile samples. Iconography representing the landscape of the Mixtec highlands. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 3.12 *Interior of the Colonial Church of the Martyrs. Tlacolula, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*

Geertz (1983) identifies ‘the system of modern culture’ as a machine through which objects collected from non-Western cultures are classified in two main categories: the scientific, which terms them ‘artefacts’; and the aesthetic, where they become ‘works of art’. However, as Gell (1998) points out, if Western aesthetic theory is supposed to apply to ‘our’ art, then it must be equally applied to all:

It makes no sense to develop a ‘theory of art’ for our work and a different one for those ancient cultures that fell under the yoke of colonialism.

(Gell, 1998)

Acha (2004) warns how, in contemporary Western societies, aestheticism can be easily isolated from the different factors involved in artefact production (Acha et al., 2004).

3.8 Materiality and the biography of things

Expanding Geertz’s (1987) theory of division within the ‘system of modern culture’, Sofaer (2007) argues that historically, there have been two approaches to materiality. On the one hand, the prevailing art history discourse emphasises the way ‘objects provoke aesthetic responses’, and artisans and artists are perceived through their manipulation of materials. On the other hand, is the discourse of *material culture theory*, which is where I position myself. Material culture theory greatly emphasises the relationship of person to object, considering the artefact’s influence on communal life both locally and globally ‘by encoding or producing meanings’ – non-aesthetic responses as well as aesthetic reactions – creating or challenging the values attached to human relations.

In a 2002 volume compiled by Fred Myers, Christopher Steiner reviews the evolving theoretical arguments in this line of thought. Steiner begins with the Bourdieu's 1972 foundational text for anthropology and sociology, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, in which he argues on the object's ability to imply human conditions. He includes Hegel's work in the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which asserts that everything we do and are is a reflection of the process by which we also generate material forms. This theory was severely criticised by Miller, who questioned Hegel's assertion of the lack of separation between humanity and material.

Bruno Latour (2005) and Gell (1998) add a layer of argument on the object's ability to generate 'agency' – an attribute previously accorded only individuals. In doing so, they open a new discourse on how artefacts reveal complex intentionalities. Gell (1998) goes even deeper by exploring the psychology of patterns, of the control of knowledge and of the interpretation of meanings. Steiner (2002) opposed this line of thinking, arguing,

I have already suggested, a hasty reading of Kopytoff's model of the 'cultural biography of things' – which has become the dominant model for interpreting the movement of material objects through channels of trade and exchange – gives too much authority to objects and not enough to those who imbue objects with meaning. By shifting our focus from the 'disembodiment' of objects in motion to their embodiment in the sociocultural space of legal and judicial process, we can begin to see material culture once again as 'objects', without claims of subjectivity or personhood, whose meanings are opportunistically readjusted within the legislative framework of classificatory bureaucracies.

(Steiner, in Myers, 2002, p. 211)

Political theorist Jane Bennett, known for her work on nature and ethics in the environment, also credited the object's ability to generate agency, claiming that 'political theory needs to do a better job of recognizing the active participation of nonhuman forces in events' (Bennett, 2010).

According to Mexican anthropologist and educator Fernando Martín Juez, the object has several life stages. He writes,

[. . .] emociones cotidianas y signos comunes se adhieren a las superficies de los diseños, los embozan con aquellas metáforas que más convienen al sistema de creencias de las comunidades a las que pertenecen.

[. . .] everyday emotions and common signs adhere to the surfaces of the designs; they wrap them with those metaphors which are more convenient to the belief system of the communities they belong to.

(Martín Juez, 2002)

Artefacts are thus considered important sources of information to analyse not only for what they say about their contexts but also for the ways that people are affected by their attributes. These are the ideas echoed in Gilda Hernández's work on pottery (Hernández Sánchez, 2013), a great example of the works produced by the post-structuralist movement – which attributes the subjects' qualities to objects.

Anthropologist Paul Connerton claims that knowledge of all past activities of human beings is only possible through the material traces they have left us. Historical reconstruction, therefore, does not depend on social memory. On this topic, Bennett (2010) reviews Spinoza's work and says that he 'ascribes to bodies a peculiar vitality as every nonhuman body shares with every human body a conative nature'. Thus, artefacts allow for the exploration of how members of our society act, and in deciphering the way they are produced, we can reveal how their relations operate in many different contexts (Connerton, 1989).

3.9 The cultural artefact as a social transformer

Besides the various attributes reviewed in the previous section, artefacts have an important time dimension that allows us to document their past (Hernández Sánchez, 2013; Knowles, 2014). This time dimension has a different rhythm in Latin-America than in other cultural systems, a more conservative tendency towards pattern repetition, always marked by community dynamics (Acha et al., 2004). In the context of Oaxaca, this is precisely what 'cosmic time' means. According to Hervey Molotch, writing in *Design Anthropology* in 2011, limit artefacts' functions to stable or fixed entities, or as Baharam writes, 'they acquire meanings in use, become integrated in everyone's whole life experiences, and interact with the mythology from which they derive their symbolic strength' (Baharam, 1995, p. 143). Capitalism has interrupted the virtuous circle by which we create the objects that express an understanding of who we can be. This constitutes a loss of humanism at the hands of commodification and consumer brands. As such, the artefacts developed in my research will be considered cultural properties in relation to their role as historical witnesses, as their production will play a significant part in the social life of these rural populations.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined the social and political factors that have shaped the indigenous narrative and policy in Mexico, looking more specifically into how indigenous culture has been used as part of the nationalistic processes in post-revolution Mexico.

I have taken this humanistic approach in response to the capitalist economic framework, which takes important cultural artefacts and commodifies them to the point where they completely lose their socio-historical meaning. I also highlighted how cultural materials can be viewed as a reflection of the social and cultural transformation of a community. By uncovering the human relationships that occur in the production and transmission of cultural artefacts, I have identified a thread of continuity which understands cultural materials as a reflection of how indigenous groups have transformed both socially and culturally.

Using Gamio's holistic analysis of indigenous population in the Teotihuacan Valley, I have analysed how indigenous people and culture were utilised as instruments in nation-building and in the forging of a nationalist narrative in post-revolution Mexico. This indigenist policy also had the broader goal of assimilation, seeking to transform indigenous communities and integrate these groups into mainstream society. While this assimilationist policy distorted the cultural meaning of objects to fit a specific nationalist agenda, it has a mixed legacy because of the significant groundwork it laid for subsequent research on this area. From this evolved a post-indigenist approach, which sought to conduct studies on indigenous populations within the context of their isolated social structure and without any ambition to intervene or influence the community. This approach seeks to view cultural expressions within their own context and moves away from looking at indigenous communities through a Western framework, which forces delineations along lines of tradition, modernity and progression.

While it is important to acknowledge the risk of homogenisation and forced assimilation when studying interventionist approaches to indigenous communities, it is equally important not to romanticise indigenous cultures by viewing them as fixed traditions that are immune to innovation. Foreign processes and interventions can help address the internal needs of indigenous communities as long as these interventions are agreed upon by the group and equally provide a platform for the transmission of their values. I also established my humanistic approach to the people and objects involved in this research by emphasising the significant social role cultural artefacts play in indigenous communities, based in theoretical research on the complex historical,

cultural and social factors that have shaped what I found the realities of artisan training and craftsmanship.

Understanding of all circumstances that shaped the cultural context of artisanship would offer more perspective into my own positioning, formulating the aims and processes of workshops, how these cultural aspects would be grasped, understood and navigated. Such background would be placed into context and understood as a panoramic vision through observation and deep reflection on the many conversations, meetings and interviews I started in 2013 and over the course of the following years, in subsequent trips to Oaxaca and different parts of Mexico, which shall be described in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 Design as a practice of correspondence: the making

This chapter describes how a collaborative methodology was deployed through workshops, for the ultimate goal of designing processes of co-creation between design practitioners and artisans. A first section will explain the aims and results of background research and fieldwork that led to obtain a comprehensive cultural background and to gathering a team of facilitators. Context will be explained through community visits and interviews with relevant figures in the field of cooperation, Anthropology and formal Craftmanship training, and how participating artisan communities were selected.

A second section will elaborate on how methodology for workshops was organically developed, based in fieldwork and research and through reflective practice and observation into workshops by making and unmaking.

As described in Chapter 1, during February 2013 I visited five towns in the vicinity of Oaxaca de Juárez, for the sake of Ethnographical Research, meeting with communities where different crafts were mastered using red clay, black clay, wood, or textiles, specifically, of which two communities were working independently on the process and manufacturing of silk, and another in weaving, pleating and embroidering cotton garments.

Workshops were prepared through a series of meetings with design practitioners who collaborated as facilitators and documentalists at different episodes. These meetings offered me a valid audience to share my theoretical background research, contrast my findings against their insights, obtain local perspectives on training, other interventions, and co-design. We started using narrative exercises where both adults and children reflected folk tales, dreams and local stories on drawings or small three-dimensional figurines. As workshops proceeded, we focused our work on developing longer term projects in two rural communities, San Pablo Tijaltepec and Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, resulting in textile and ceramics artifacts, respectively. At these workshops, we encouraged artisans to use their ancestral methods within new contexts, either a change from two to three dimensional objects (from embroidered blouses to standing toys in the case of San Pablo Tijaltepec) or a change of scale (from large scale functional pottery to small-scale decorative items using pre-hispanic techniques in Santo Domingo Tonaltepec). We also proposed new materials or tools, but in all cases, artisans had the freedom to choose, reject, adopt, adapt or transform them.

Ultimately, information contained in this Chapter encompasses a wider comprehension of cultural, geographical and idiosyncratic aspects which affected the development of fieldwork, and provides a frame for Chapter 5, where the main two cases studies, workshops development and outcomes thus obtained are documented in detail. I believe conducted Metaresearch – extensive recordings, videos and notes- and analysis to decode these case studies can assist other design practitioners in formulating a design methodology and developing collaborative design workshops where they, as facilitators, can work together with artisans in other cultural contexts in co-creation processes.

4.1 Oral tradition and craft as cultural symbolism

I shall start by contextualizing the role of Oral tradition and craft as cultural symbolism in cultures where written language is not a predominant tool for knowledge transmission. Understanding the role of oral tradition and its relation to art, craft and aesthetics was a necessary first step to connect with Oaxacan artisan communities, as it was to understand its tradition, transmission, meaning and cultural value in past and present heterogeneous and culturally diverse Mexican society.

Oral and artisan traditions have been, for centuries, the way to transmit and keep alive these peoples' culture, values, cosmology, and belief system. They have generated orientation patterns for possible conflict resolution, originating symbolic systems to provide order and meaning to communities who practice them. Oral tradition and cultural artifacts are a manifestation of aesthetics, ethos and ethics, and it would prove to be of particular importance to understand them in the context of Mexican cultural history, both Indigenous and non-indigenous, as it has been intimated in previous chapters.

Within Mexican indigenous tradition, artifacts and their production techniques, their stories, songs, and legends are passed down from elders to younger people, as a part of their learning and as a way to perpetuate traditions from one generation to the next. Oral and graphic tradition are fundamental in societies, such as major pre-Columbian Mexican and Mesoamerican cultures (Olmec, Mayan, Mixtec, Zapotec, Aztec), where written word is not a common narrative instrument within a language where alphabet consisted in glyphs, drawn symbols, instead of letters conforming syllables and words. Thus, graphism and artifacts where these are represented are transformed beyond their pictorial and utilitarian qualities, turning them within its cultural

context, into a unique legacy rich in symbolism, like “books” and differentiating cultural and ethnic nuances among communities. Paraphrasing Gossen and Ambar Past,

Oral tradition should be considered as part of the “ethnography of speaking”. Oral tradition is important for the maintenance of the social order as are kinship systems and social organization.
“(Gossen, 1974)

“... a wise person is said to have: books in the heart” according to Robert M. Laughlin’s translation of a sixteenth-century Spanish - Tzotzil dictionary”. Incantations. Song, Spells, and Images by Mayan Women. (Past, 2005)

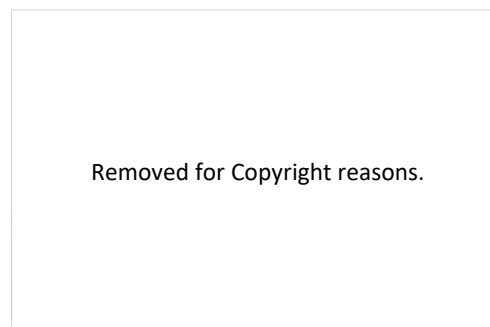


Figure 4.1 *Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America.* Adapted from *Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America*, by Elizabeth Hill Boone, 2011.

As these below images reflect, within Mesoamerican cultures, “...weaving (*and patterns contained in weaving*) is considered to be a form of script ...” (Hill Boone, 2011)

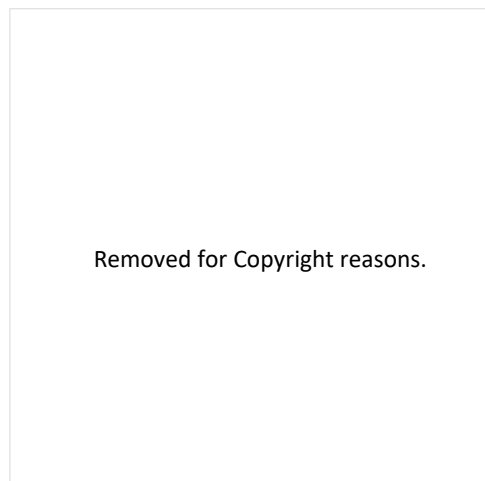


Figure 4.2 *Chuquibamba Textiles and their Interacting Systems of Notation.* Adapted from *Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America*, by Elizabeth Hill Boone, 2011.

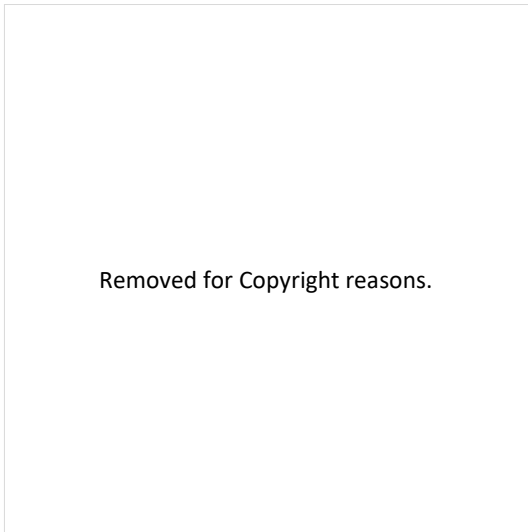


Figure 4.3 *Shawl. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Adapted from *Scripts, Signs, and Pictographies in Pre-Columbian America*, by Elizabeth Hill Boone, 2011.*

In a more detailed study on approach to communities and their oral tradition, as seen in “Chamulas in the world of the sun, Time and Space in a Mayan Oral Tradition”, (Gossen, 1974) and on “The Interpretation of Cultures” (Geertz C. , 2000) both Gossen and Clifford Geertz are quoted saying: “The community is ruled by its ethos which entails the ethics and aesthetics as integral elements of the community”. Geertz’s remark will be used as articulating concept for this Thesis study since, in an indivisible manner, the community is linked to the artifacts’ design through its uses and behaviour, as emblematic elements of its own personality and culture, which explains how ethics and aesthetics are at the core of these communities’ tradition, since symbols, graphism and artifacts are, in their own terms, documental elements for transmitting cultural legacy.

In approaching communities in general, and artisans in particular, by learning about and using their cultural symbolisms, aesthetics and images, and by presenting other cultural references through accessible and known objects, we, as facilitators, aimed to build mutual trust and respect to generate a constructive design collaboration at workshops. By understanding oral tradition as an intangible artifact, our approach was to develop a process where we would bring artisans from their collective narrative accounts into more individual accounts where a personal insight – be either interpretative or imaginative- could be expressed in graphic form, either as a drawing or as a three-dimensional figure, to be shared and contrasted with the group’s recollection and imagery.

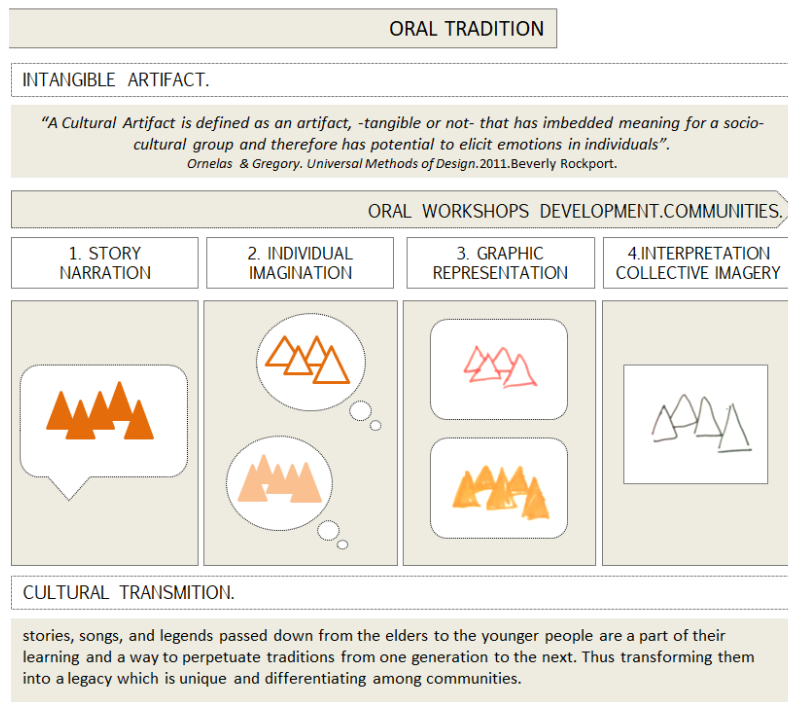


Figure 4.4 *Infographic of oral workshop development, Oral tradition as "intangible artifact".*
CADA Foundation®.

To establish dialogue, both among facilitators and with artisans, I need to establish a set of definitions of ethics and aesthetics, which would refer to the sets of rules and stylistic elements that were characteristic of a group, in this case the different communities which were approached during field work, who then worked with different materials and techniques, so that artisans' work would reflect and be a product of these communities' ethos.

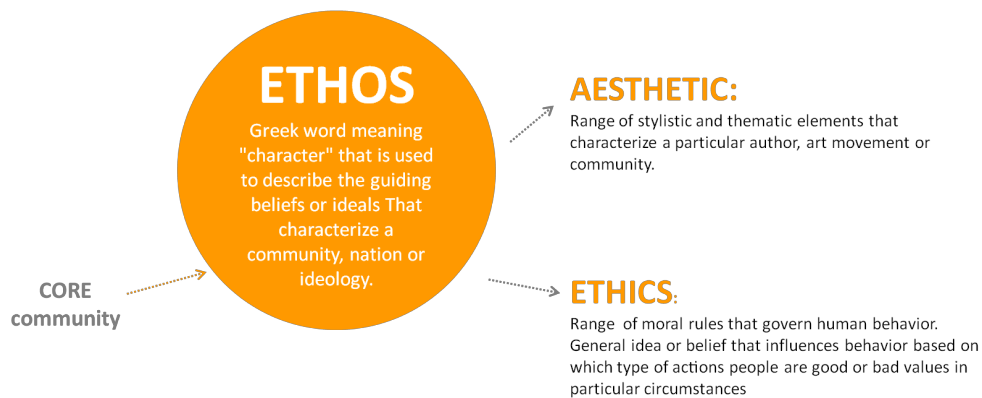


Figure 4.5 *Infographic Community's core; Ethos, ethics and aesthetic, CADA Foundation®.*

Note. Definitions from Dictionary RAE (Real Academia de la Lengua Española) Royal Academy of the Spanish Language.

4.1.1 Aims of the Workshop programme

The aim of the workshop programme as a whole was to develop processes for collaborative design where design practitioners, acting as facilitators, would collaborate with Oaxacan artisans with unique skills, developing an artifact which would be taken to market to a wider audience. Besides a general "goal" to produce an artifact, it was clear that bringing international attention to these crafts would also add value to these special techniques and financially support artisans at their work, especially given that these techniques seemed destined to extinction due to these communities' isolation and the small amount of people who still mastered these crafts.

I was inspired by Girard's wooden dolls, sold by swiss furniture and artifact editors Vitra and commonly found at Museum and gallery shops.



Figure 4.6 *Wooden Dolls Alexander Girard by Vitra®. Carmen Malvar's Private Collection. 2014.*

These figurines representing human and animal characters are widely known and appreciated as contemporary and atemporal objects, despite their design was created in 1952. The proposal was to produce a set of collectable characters, toys or dolls representing Oaxacan cultural oral history or a set of characters rooted in the collective imaginary, made of textile, wood and ceramic parts and packaged in crafted wooden boxes, in the shape of small “suitcases” that would travel globally to collectors anywhere. The Mixtec figurines’ artistic and craftsmanship qualities would allow these items to be sold at museum stores internationally and provide participant communities with a higher income that they could obtain locally, earned in a globalized commercial environment to a discerning audience.

Initially I thought of developing an object produced by different artisan communities within the rural areas of the Mixtec Highlands, in rural Oaxaca, known in Mexico as the cradle of unique craftsmanship. Such reputation is well earned by use of their ancestral techniques in ceramics, woodwork, metalsmithing, leather, weaving and embroidering, and their different use of materials rooted in pre-Columbian roots.

During the process of ethnological research, a first round of exploratory visits to artisan communities were held, followed by narrative workshops at three specific communities working with wood, ceramics, and textile, as will be further described on Chapter 5 at Case Studies. After these initial workshops at Santa María de Atzompa, Santa María Yavesía and San Pablo Tijaltepec, I discovered that a three-party produced object complicated logistics and the creative process itself, as participatory design should happen between three communities with differentiated

artisanal techniques. Facilitators working with these communities needed to be coordinated, the provision of the necessary materials had to be arranged, transfer of finished components to a community where a team of artisans would assemble and package finished pieces – parts- of a whole, needed to be organized

Challenging aspects also included the distance between these locations, lack of available transport and bad roads, together with the reality of linguistic diversity and challenge of metalinguistic communication, that is, cultural differences and lack of trust and acknowledgement of communities involved).

It also became clear to me that this process of collaboration and “assembly of parts” was contrary to my interest in focusing on developing a methodology that could be replicated, focusing on process over outcome. I gathered that in order to develop a method, collaborative design processes needed to focus on a limited and contained object, from and for the artisans, without turning them into labour force or serial manufacturers of components of a whole, regular practice in globalization.

For the purposes of my research, it was more interesting, and without a doubt, more useful, to develop a method of collective, democratic and participatory creative processes, that could be extrapolated in other cultural, geographical and social contexts, being adapted in other circumstances, for other teams of facilitators and groups of artisans elsewhere, offering them a tool they could tailor to their needs, interests and aspirations.

My initial idea matured by observing, understanding, and knowing the local reality and evaluating the effect of collective doing within these communities, offering a new and richer perspective.

As I have exposed, in communities which rely on non-written cultural transmission, form, colour, and graphism become tools to transmit history and culture. Applied to ritual or practical artifacts these become cultural objects as they transmit history, values, and symbolism. It is under this perspective, that speaking, as the “material” of oral tradition, becomes relevant as it will inform “the making”: shape, imagery, and material manifestation as artifacts. As consequence, we would later establish to approach workshops by narrative and by “making with the hands” and establishing a set of strategies which will be explained as follows.

4.1.2 Design identity, design development and approaching global markets

Observation on the rich cultural background of communities and the influence of foreign elements led to ask myself new questions: Can design identity be global without losing its local

value and meaning? Can the intrinsic value of local tradition -that of specific craftsmanship as practiced in these communities- be maintained and become global through a new design process? Answers to both enquiries would be discovered through the process of social design implemented, and by making and unmaking developed during workshops, facilitated by design practitioners but whose proposals were based on decisions and development led by artisans' needs, interests and processes.

Thesis Reviewers enquired during revision process whether the aim of workshops was to bring the craft of indigenous communities to global attention and market, and if so, if this could be done without sacrificing the integrity of the local culture. They saw a paradox, on how an "a-capitalist culture" such as the isolated communities where workshops were held, could or if they should, access global markets. It is not an easy question to answer as it encompasses a wider perspective, explaining the sociocultural and political organization of these communities, understanding what "a-capitalist and a-political" mean within these contexts. It would require taking a position in regards to cultural development or immobility, whether indigenous cultures should or not transform, assimilate or stay as they are, protected and preserved, as understood in Turok writing, as I have previously elaborated in Chapter 3.

As a personal standpoint, my role as reflective observer and facilitator was not to dictate what the community should do, if they should stay frozen in time or, should they transform, how. I saw my task was to propose and facilitate through creative processes, using my language, which is Design. This dialogue would be generated not based on imposing ideas, but as per these communities' expressed interests and needs. My approach would be developed throughout workshops both with local fellow practitioners and facilitators, and with the artisans at the communities themselves.

From my perspective and observation, given the limited economic conditions and perceived material needs of these communities, I saw it was possible for them to access wider markets, in order to obtain a fairer price reflecting the value of their craft and work involved in creating these artifacts outside of their own communities. This access was facilitated by patient product development and by liaising with institutions which were aligned and sensitive to artisans' given situation.

During the last workshops, focused on prototyping at San Pablo Tijaltepec, several techniques were introduced to improve quality in detailing and finish of woven and embroidered figures were shared, for example, introducing reverse seams to figures and using a sewing machine for stronger, more even seams, or introducing the use of patterns for size and shape consistency.

We approached the introduction of new elements with two targets in mind: our sensitivity towards craft, without compromising its authenticity and unique handmade qualities, and the artisans' self-determination in all processes. At all instances, it was the artisans who decided what to develop, market and who set prices for sale. Tools were offered and exchanged, contacts were made through the facilitators', but the decision of what to do with these means, were totally in the hands and under management and control of communities and artisans, for instance, an artisan collective was born, Colectivo Ñaa Ñanga of San Pablo Tijaltepec, a group of female weavers and artisans resulted from the workshops and started their online shop, as shall be reviewed on in Chapter 5.

Neutrality was maintained both from an individual and a designer' point of view, through my position within CADA Foundation®, entity I created to structure, legalize and in the future, fund and develop workshops. Being impartial, coherent, and transparent was necessary to adhere to the academic purpose of this Thesis, to gain trust. However, refraining in participating in local political or private discussions which I wished to forego, and my transparent communication were not always met with agreement by either facilitators or artisan communities.

4.1.3 Approximation through Design

The project was developed through parameters for approximation and implementing a system of exchange with the goal of supporting local economies and identities.

The first stage of my research involved facilitating, developing, testing and communicating different 'proximities' through design, as has been defined in Chapter 1, for which I had to conduct intensive field work and research in order to understand and contextualize historical, cultural and social issues relevant to the communities I would work with. As such, my role involved observing, participating in, recording, and evaluating processes of design transformation. Meta-research was documented and complied extensively, however due to the nature of this document, it's not possible to present coverage in its totality. However, some videos and audios in the form of Vimeo links are presented throughout the document and also compiled in the Appendixes and referred to contextually. (See List of Accompanying Materials).

4.1.4 Prioritizing process over outcome

I began my enquiries by considering the cultural backdrop, setting, and format for group exchange, which became my specific references to the activities and actions that occurred as I was preparing workshops. My role as an active participant in these practice-based exchanges

allowed me to develop my own process, in which I collected knowledge directly through design material.

All main workshops were preceded and followed by facilitators' meetings where we would lay out objectives, plan actions for workshops, during which we conscientiously documented events, participatory actions and reactions, design situations, annotated on the type, occupation and use of space, recorded participation by groups of people -the elders, the community leaders, women and children's involvement, reflected on outcomes, perceived emotional responses to activities – interest, curiosity, joy, trust, suspicion, expectations.

During the process, I recorded the work patterns, behaviours and social mores demonstrated materially and through language. In the group dynamics, particularly, I took note of the expressions, beliefs and concepts communicated within the collective act. A well of information and existing knowledge thus opened, which I combined with my observations of power, hegemony, and trust in the communities (Creswell 2013, pp. 94–95). By observing the process, culture and power relations surrounding the creation of artefacts, my research presents a more complete understanding of the artefacts and their ethnographic significance, deeply rooted in the communities, their culture and their way of life.

We would also resource materials, which I personally funded, and identify contacts who could contribute to a particular area of expertise, aiming at providing the community and the artisan collectives.

I saw an opportunity for both worlds, that of the designer – us, the facilitators – and the artisans, to generate a dialogue between local communities and global makers, producing an artifact what would be an ambassador of this dialogue through Exchange, not through imposition nor coercion.

Ultimately, I wanted to provide a service to participants, one that would strengthen their position as artisans and as designers. I understood a distinction between these two roles by stating the order in which “making”, and “ideation” happen in both stances. In my experience as a design practitioner, as designer, ideation, abstraction, and conceptualization, happens before the act of making with your hands before materiality. Artisans, on the other hand, create artifacts foremost through manipulating and deep and sometimes subconscious knowledge of materiality, a wisdom stored in their hands, learned usually from childhood, and developing changes through numerous iterations with small changes and slow transformative patterns dictated by functionality and tested by use.

4.1.5 Cross – cultural Approximation to Politics, Gender and keeping neutrality

Due to its importance, I should mention existing intricacies of balancing human relations within cross-cultural approximation. Due to the fact that within these communities a strong tradition of power management by Usos y Costumbres is exerted by elders, who are mostly men, it was important for me – a “*güera*” (literally, a blond haired person, as Mexicans call any foreign-looking white person, and a woman who had a quite different persona to the traditional role held by local women, both in physical aspect and in attitude)- to address any contact with the utmost care and by keeping a discrete, apolitical and neutral positioning. This approach was taken at all instances, i.e., preceding any introduction, ahead joint decisions between any members of a given community and I were discussed, or before establishing how a collaborative environment would be established. Going hand in hand with other facilitators who already were in contact with artisan communities and local authorities, being transparent at the aims, goals, methods, and approaches were all sensible and necessary actions.



Figure 4.7 *Visiting communities – questions of power, gender, and local authorities.* CADA Foundation®, 2014.

Usos y Costumbres is a very close social and political organization traditionally held in rural Galicia, where I grew up, as I was familiar with it, I could relate to some of its aspects. In Oaxaca, 418 municipalities, out of 517, are ruled by it.¹⁶, a communal organization granted a certain degree of

¹⁶ Canedo Vásquez, Gabriela. Una conquista indígena. Reconocimiento de municipios por “usos y costumbres” en Oaxaca (México). En publicación: La economía política de la pobreza / Alberto Cimadamore (comp.) Buenos Aires: CLACSO, marzo de 2008. -- ISBN 978-987-1183-83-8.

Under Usos y Costumbres, Municipal authority – called Sistema de Cargos o Escalafones - is held by two individual roles: the municipal president, and the commissary for common property, who leads the agricultural community, as well as commissions and committees who ensure all activities and need of the community are met. Citizens’ service in these

autonomy within the Mexican Government structure and which involves different aspects: political, cultural, approach to work, economic and sometimes, also communal ownership of resources. Such organization applies at Oaxacan communities where workshops were conducted.

Leadership is seen as a form of community service, organized hierarchically around a system of assigned roles and an Assembly. Municipalities are structured by a series of charges or ascending positions called Escalafón, based in community services, being nominated openly by assembly and without secret vote. This communal form of socio-political organization is apolitical because it does not depend on the existence of or participation in political parties, and by responding to local cultural and ethnic rules. Roles, assemblies, tequio (collective work, for instance construction and repair of road infrastructure water wells, maintenance of municipal buildings, organizing local festivities, etc.) are all communal chores, giving the individuals within a community a sense of belonging and identity.

The first approach I had with artisan communities was through a former alumnus of mine and a person who had contacts within the regional government, who liaised with local authorities who in turn summoned workshop participants, through their own channels and methods of communication, in their language. Community elders and Assembly members summoned women to participate. First meetings were held at communal spaces, under the gaze of community leaders. At first, they also took part, mostly as curious but passive observers.

commissions is done by progression from the lowest representation and responsibility towards the highest hierarchy and roles, held usually for a year and a half, and formally, are unpaid, being it a matter of Prestige within the community, gained through service. A citizen assembly also exists, which constitutes the maximum authority for decision making. Normally citizens who take part represent the families within these communities, most attendees are male. Women's participation happens in case women are heads of the household, such cases as for widows, single or separated mothers, or when another male member of the family cannot attend. Within the Municipal government, the organization establishes the following roles: President, alderman, council members, elders (mayores) and topiles (persons in charge of communal practical chores such as tequio, building, construction, etc). Communal roles start by being a topil or auxiliary person, then Elder, third council member (community Works), second council member (education, ecology, health), first council member (economic issues), then alderman and lastly, municipal president, being assigned any of these roles by public assembly and free of payment or salary.

Other three roles are important and designated by trust: mayor, treasurer, and secretary of the community. Other religious roles are the neighbourhood's assembly, who are in charge of caring for church buildings and for organizing religious festivities.

Communal property such as agricultural land is tended by the commissary and harvest is divided among the community or is sold for profit for the commissary's office.

This plea, although at first necessary and useful, proved to mislead the perceived objective of my first workshops, making community organizers and participants believe that my research was promoted and funded by the regional government, generating false expectations for compensation and causing not small tensions.

After a tense episode, I made it a point to communicate clearly – individually as a group, through the other facilitators who invited artisans at communities where they already had contacts and were known and trusted - what was to be expected from the workshops, what outcomes were foreseen, and how practical matters were to be addressed: provision of materials, expected monetary compensation for time or artifacts and samples produced, food, transport, etc. Slowly, when the purpose and outcomes of workshops were understood, mistrust was reduced. This reflected also in spatial arrangements, from wider, communal rooms, we moved into private spaces, being invited into homes of women who wanted to take part out of motivation or curiosity, but in a reduced group.

These authorities must approve of our activities and “give the women permission” to invite women to participate in workshops. Towards the last workshops at San Pablo Tijaltepec, as I will elaborate on Chapter 5, there was a change of men’s attitude and activities, as they accepted to be in charge of domestic activities usually in women’s hands – preparing food, housekeeping, taking care of children – to allow women to participate in the Textile Convention and Marketplace held at the Textile Museum. Also, there would be a change of attitude – of both men and women- towards women earning money without being handed money by men in their environment.

4.1.6 Dialogue and trust as basis for social design processes

Gaining respect and earning trust of the communities was a slow process, developed during the long period of time of relationships between individuals, over the four years during which workshops were held. The first series of workshops were crucial into the approximation of the community. This slow process was reflected in the way we related to each other – greeting, addressing each other, use and perception of personal space, the manifestation of personal trust and appreciation. I was aware in the past other designers had approached communities for isolated Projects without continuity and there were only very few instances of long-term commitment to projects, such as Camino de los Altos, a textile collaborative in Chiapas initiated by French textile designers, where Maddalena Forcella, one of the facilitators, was involved in the past, bringing to our workshops valuable experience.

Through the practice of social design and through a local approach with indigenous communities demonstrating how individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, this research showed how communities can be strengthened and how changes can be proposed based on mutual correspondence.

Through social design, defined in Chapter 1 and embedded within a practice of correspondence, social relationships were developed through time by means of dialogue, active listening, analysis, understanding and as basis of workshop proposals. After the first series of workshops where we established some proximities, every after a workshop was held these proximities of design allowed us to work maintaining and developing a dialogue and democratic participation in decisions, during workshop preparation with facilitators, adapting and evolving the processes during workshops themselves, kept open a process of mutual transformation, both for facilitators and artisans.

These first series of workshops allowed us to generate an inclusive process and a democratic working environment. We strove to develop a common objective, not to impose predetermined materials and outcomes with fixed objectives, but to listen to and respond to artisans' needs and interests, while documenting and reflecting on outcomes to determine the following step for the next workshop.

All aforementioned experiences proved that local sensitivities had to be navigated with care, as part of my approach to social design and constituting one of the pillars of my work and a main topic within all the facilitators' workshops with the aim of maintaining neutrality, separated from of political or economic agendas, effective and transparent communication of my goals, interests and objectives during the time workshops was established. I also communicated my will to develop continuity in further and future workshops within these and other artisan communities, after the first workshop was developed. The extensive recording of my research will be used, along with the amount of coverage -in writings, photos, videos, samples- I had produced, to disseminate this labour, to find funding for future workshops in the other communities I had visited, and to assist other design practitioners in establishing their own proximities through design.

4.1.7 Gathering a team of designers

As part of my fieldwork, workshops took place in two different indigenous artisan communities in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, held for a group of artisans, by myself and six other professional

designers – acting as facilitators – participated in workshops, which took place two or three times a year over a period of three years, between 2014 and 2017.

As I have elaborated in Chapter 1, my approach to researching in Oaxaca was two-folded, on one hand, an integrative approximation which was both theoretical and on another, a practical approach, developing fieldwork to understand and contextualize situations by developing personal relations with other designers, getting involved with and within the communities through empathy, reflective observation and ultimately, action. My research would not have offered the same results if I had not made a first approach either through contacts derived from a personal, professional and academic network, reaching a group of insightful and talented local design practitioners with experience and contacts at local communities, who took part as facilitators during fieldwork.

My first contacts to fellow designers were obtained through a fellow academician in New York, who advised contacting Maddalena Forcella, a textile designer working in Oaxaca. While first contacts to communities, by way of local authorities, was done through a Oaxacan designer, Fátima Díaz García, an alumnus, who had links to a regional government official.

Forcella, an Italian textile designer living in Mexico since 1987, first in Chiapas and then established in Oaxaca, had previous and extended experience in archaeological restoration in Italy, having trained as a textile designer in Mexico City and worked with textiles in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas. There, she co-founded K'un K'un, a pioneering workshop for Mayan weavers introducing new designs and contemporary sensibility into the production of textiles with traditional techniques using natural dyes.



Figure 4.8 *Maestro Federico and Maddalena Forcella revising work. Teotitlán, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, October 2013.*

Maddalena's perspective was quite enriching, as she had exchanged experiences and knowledge with weavers from different indigenous groups, teaching classes and qualifying courses mainly in Chiapas and Oaxaca both for government institutions and civic groups and associations in Mexico and Guatemala, such as Fondo Nacional para el desarrollo de la Artesanía, FONART; Programa Nacional de Culturas Populares e Indígenas, Conabio. She also had taught at Universidad Iberoamericana and at the Centro de Diseño, Cine y Televisión in Mexico City. Her previous cooperation in the design and production of artisan objects with national and foreign companies (Artefacto, Arroz con Leche S.A. in Mexico, Iris Von Arnim in Hamburg, Germany) and her directive role as Head of the Craftsmanship Development Department at Museo Na Bolom, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, gave Maddalena deep insight into the dynamics of creative and productive processes in the particular Oaxacan context.

Her experience revealed how close ties to weavers were developed through time, trust and respect, which she had gained as initial collaborative member of the Mayan weavers and designers association "El Camino de los altos"¹⁷.

Causally but not casually Maddalena Forcella, in turn referred me to Anthropologist Luis Morales¹⁸ at San Cristóbal de Las Casas. Long conversations followed, on the topics of Mexican history, cultural development, indigenism, anthropology and the role of craftsmanship in oral tradition, both intergenerational – family-led, informal training- and regulated training, as well about the role of CECATI - Centros de Capacitación para el Trabajo Industrial, Government training centres

¹⁷ El Camino de los Altos – ECLA- is a non-profit association established in Mexico as a result of a twelve-year collaboration between 120 indigenous Mayan weavers from five different municipalities in Los Altos de Chiapas, and French non-profit association El Camino, a group of eight professional designers, working together to create a premium quality textile collection. Among these designers was Madalenna Forcella, along with Veronique Tesseraud, founder of French weavers' association El Camino. The weavers of ECLA live and work in the Chamula, San Andres Larrainzar, Pantelho, Oxchuc, and Zinacantan municipalities spread throughout the mountains surrounding San Cristóbal de Las Casas, close to the Guatemalan border and in an economically underprivileged area.

¹⁸ Anthropologist Luis Joel Morales Escobedo (Luis Morales) works in the recognition of the Craft. Altos de Chiapas Region, and lives in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, where he served as Connecting Area Chief at CECATI No. 133 San Cristóbal de las Casas (Chiapas) Work Training Center. (Centro de Capacitación para el trabajo), training workers at several of the Chiapas state communities since 1970's. He had founded Colectivo and acted as a consultant in the CECATI No. 166 Documentation and Productive Process Case de Study. Founder and president of K'un K'un Talleres de Artes y Oficios in Workshops of Arts and Crafts in 1995 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, promoting the use of natural dyes in textile and Ceramics. He had also organized artisan groups in the region known as "Los Altos de Chiapas" jointly with Maddalena Forcella, Gertrude Garman, Mayte Bellato, Manuel Nuñez and Lucía Méndez.

for industrial work- in training generations of craftspeople in preparation for “industry-oriented jobs”, etc.

Through Luis Morales, I was introduced to artist Ana Pellicer, who is a well-respected sculptor and had been a cofounder and former Director, along with her late husband, James Metcalf a well-known American artist and master metalsmith, of CECATI 166 Best Maugard in Santa Clara del Cobre. This school, at the heart of metal craftsmanship in Mexico, had formerly earned reputation as best training center in the country.

As it often happens in Mexican contexts where a relaxed attitude prevails, a casual conversation and finding inspiring books at a dusty bookstore led to deeper conversations¹⁹, to getting acquainted and introduced to respected scholars, knowledgeable researchers, and like-minded individuals involved in cooperative and development actions within communities.

In due time Maddalena Forcella would also introduce me to Ana Paula Fuentes, a textile designer and former director at the Museo Textil de Oaxaca, who in turn would introduce into this early team, an American photographer and author of a book about Oaxacan pottery, established in Oaxaca, Eric Mindling. (See video of Maddalena Forcella:

<https://vimeo.com/489889314/1fe3c52389>)

Ana Paula Fuentes, born in Mexico Distrito Federal, had established a collaborative practice in Oaxaca. Trained as textile designer and an expert in knit and fashion knitwear design, she had vast experience working for Spanish and Mexican well-known fashion knitwear brands, and both a local and international perspective. Co-founder of the experimental “11011 studio” in Oaxaca City, she collaborated with more than twenty contemporary artists organizing exhibitions, performances, installations and concerts. As founder of “Artisana”, she had created a new craft product market network spanning Mexico and had finished in 2012 a six-year tenure as Director at the Textile Museum of Oaxaca (Museo Textil de Oaxaca), where she kept strong ties.

¹⁹ I had found a dusty copy of an out-of-print book at a San Cristóbal de las Casas bookshop. The book was “Artesanos del Porvenir”, by Roberto Pellicer, focusing on the work of James Metcalf and Ana Pellicer at the Santa Clara del Cobre Centro de Capacitación CECATI 166. I mentioned this finding to Maddalena Forcella, who happened to be a friend of the author and of anthropologist Luis Morales, whom I would interview in the course of the following months.



Figure 4.9 *Meeting with Ana Paula Fuentes.* Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, October 2014.

Fuentes had developed, promoted and marketed crafts for La Flor de Xochistlahuaca, a cooperative of 37 indigenous Amuzgo weavers from Xochistlahuaca, Guerrero and collaborated with Erick Mindling in formulating and conducting study travel tours for international weavers, scholars and a general public interested in visiting Oaxaca's rich cultural and vibrant artisan communities. (See video of Ana Paula Fuentes: <https://vimeo.com/489888880/a05b5371ab>)

Eric Mindling, photographer and writer, was also a private ceramic collector and an expert in Mexican traditional pottery. Founding member of *Innovando la Tradición*, a creative and collective platform where craftsmen, designers and artists shared skills, knowledge and stories, he had documented the actual practices of pottery in 65 different communities in Oaxaca, reflecting his research in "Barro y fuego. El arte de la alfarería en Oaxaca", a reference book on the topic, product of a two-year long research process, offering a panoramic vision of Oaxaca's pottery past, present, and insights into its possible future. The team proceeded to grow, and Eric Mindling also brought along into the team two other designers and ceramists: Kythzia Barrera and Diego Mier y Terán who were members of an artisan cooperative, Colectivo 1050.

Kythzia Barrera, an Industrial Designer with strong and innovative approach to social and sustainable design, was co-founder of both *Innovando la Tradición* and ceramists' Colectivo 1050, where she had succeeded in supporting the development of pottery communities around rural Oaxaca. Her personal approach bridged art, craft and design to foster social and human changes, with focus on sustainability, simultaneously sharing with Diego Mier y Terán an honest approach and an open discourse in their collaborative work with artisan communities, separated from a more conventional – designer-centered- positions. (See video of Kythzia Barrera: <https://vimeo.com/489879902/09bbf58a88>)

A graphic designer and university instructor interested in social and ethical dimensions of design, and its power as an agent of change, Diego Mier y Teran ran the Utopia workshop at prestigious

Universidad Iberoamericana, on the topic of Philosophy of Design, believing in the power of design to transform Mexican Society. In fact, these ideas resonated with my Research interests. Also, co-founder and director of Innovando la Tradición, and member of Colectivo 1050, he collaborated at Estudio Frutas y Verduras, doing graphic and editorial design. Diego, a sharp mind with deep and argumentative train of thought, characteristically volunteered valuable critical views during facilitator workshops, and well as contributed reasoned opinions about collaborative structures, artisan workshops, co-design processes and cultural approximation. (See video of Diego Mier y Terán: <https://vimeo.com/489893081/2e2d02ad46>)

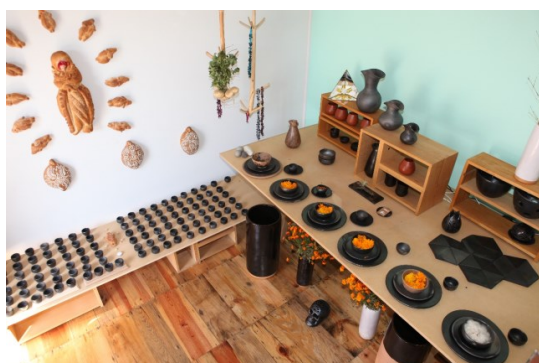


Figure 4.10 *Samples of Black tile artifacts at Colectivo 1050. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

Diego and Kythzia would eventually introduce me to Omar Federico Fernández Lesur, an Architect with experience on wood working. He joined the team for a while, as he had a standing collaboration with a group of wood artisans at Santa María Yavesía²⁰. Eventually his professional agenda would prevent him from participating more fully and his collaboration came to an end, remaining as an open-ended collaborator, with common interest and to this day, as we both remain open to renovate mutual cooperation if opportunities arise.

A key collaborator at San Pablo Tijaltepec would be Laura Margarita (Lita) Quiroz Ruiz. Trained as a Design Engineer, she would become the main liaison with this community and its textile

²⁰ Omar Federico Fernández Lesur, Architect and Teacher Universidad Iberoamericana at Puebla y la Universidad Mesoamericana, at Oaxaca, he trained at Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico City. He designs and builds architecture, interiors and furniture projects, and participates in several social programs like Santa María Yavesía's furniture workshop and the LAB U.C. group. As a member of the restoration team at the former Convento de Santo Domingo de Guzmán in Oaxaca, and the restoration of the Capilla Abierta in Teposcolula, the structural restoration of the Templo de Santo Domingo de Guzmán in Yanhuatlán he had extensive experience working with craftsmen, traditional techniques and contemporary uses and needs.

artisans. Her previous work at "Centro de Diseño de Oaxaca, for the "Universidad Tecnológica de la Mixteca" as a researcher had positioned her as a documentalist, having produced documental videos about crafts in Oaxaca as a tool for inter-cultural dialogue from a community perspective. She also had directed a documentary audio-video "Ñaa kiku isaa y kiku sama" "Mujeres tejiendo nuestra cultura", "Women weaving our culture", which showcased both production process and design elements in traditional textile works of San Pablo de Tijaltepec used by its female artisan community (see video <https://vimeo.com/89625876>). Lita Quiroz would also become a powerful voice to defend the interests and copyrights of artisan communities and got involved in requesting Patrimonial Protection on the San Pablo Tijaltepec embroidery, symbols and techniques, as will be further explained in Chapter 5. (See video of Lita Quiroz: <https://vimeo.com/489889708/e8ff439d66>)

As will be further analysed in Chapter 6, as practitioners, we all had a common interest in design as a practical action, grounded in years of experience with collective projects and communities of people from different backgrounds. In the first meetings among design practitioners, we shared our experiences from previous projects. We were all intent in paying attention to the process through examining the material practices of 'doing design'.



Figure 4.11 A team meeting at the municipal market of Tlaxiaco. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

Note. An important logistic destination for local market trading (in the Mixtec region), an obligatory stop in our way to the highlands.

Other local collaborators had more discrete yet useful roles, liased with community leaders, assisted as photographers, recording the events, or acted as translators, facilitating workshops with children. Others were impromptu chauffeurs, interpreters of local customs and languages, solvers of practical matters, or mediators when circumstances got tense, as was the case with Eric

Chávez Santiago²¹, fourth-generation weaver, and collaborator at the Oaxacan Textile Museum, a young graphic artist Ludovica Morales²², musician and communicator Paul Mijangos²³, colonial and postcolonial historical researcher Hugh Atkinson, political speech writer and editor Emmett Werbel and photographer Marco Valentino, who did some video coverage and documented selected travel and workshops.

I also counted with the valuable participation of Rut Martín, architect, fellow colleague and professor, a keen researcher based in Barcelona, she collaborated with her insights and dealt with documental organization, infographics, recordings, and took part as facilitator at onsite workshops and meetings with communities and facilitators during Spring 2014 and Summer 2017.

All forementioned collaborators would play different roles at stages in the development of this Thesis, offering me a unique and perspectival framework, an understanding of previous or current collaborative structures between these groups and communities, aimed at conserving and validating oral, artistic and manufacturing traditions in Oaxaca. Our interactions provided me with a better understanding on how to navigate and establish real co-creative communities, through the shaping of a functional facilitators' team and development of collaborative workshops. As I led these professional as facilitators, we would partake and share during periods of time, either as

²¹ Weaver Eric Chávez Santiago is a fourth-generation textile artisan. He wove his first carpet as a young 12-year-old, and encouraged his parents to work with natural dyes. He is a university graduate and worked at the Museo Textil de Oaxaca (M.T.O) as education director, coordinating different social collaboration programs, involving designers, cooperatives and groups of textile craftsmen in their Oaxaca's communities. He set other initiatives, workshops and exhibitions of textile craftsmanship, in which guests master weavers and textile craftsmen from Oaxaca, other Mexican regions or foreign countries are invited to share their techniques.

²² Ludovica Morales is a young graphic artist from Oaxaca, with tzeltal cultural and language traditions, who collaborated as facilitator in the children workshops. She was raised in San Cristóbal de Las Casas where she finished her Primary education. In 2004 she collaborated with her artwork in the book *Losha* (Editorial Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, PACMYC, CONACULTA, CONECULTA).

²³ Paul Francisco Mijangos, a social Communicator, photographer and musician from the Academia de Música Fermatta is versed on Música Popular Contemporánea in Mexico City. He joined exploratory visits and assisted as photographer. As Head of Social Communication Departments for several government agencies like the Comisión Estatal de la Juventud (CEJUVE) or the Brigadas Bienestar de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social y Humano (SEDESOH) of the regional government. He was also involved in institutional communication strategies for special projects, commercial brands, political parties and institutions and was a contributor to Radio programmes, such as "La feria" Carrusel Cultural de Antena Radio del Instituto Mexicano de la Radio (IMER) and his contributions for Canal 22 in the Distrito Federal are his most notorious accomplishments.

constant participants or during brief collaborations, helping me build a relevant and solid understanding of the local panorama.

My own personal and professional background also allowed me an international pool of resources and connections, which contributed to formulate a vision, an approach and a collection of contacts who could offer ideas, consult on specific issues, such as marketing, merchandising, sales venues and media. (See video of Carmen Malvar: <https://vimeo.com/489894499/7fb6d4d35e>)

This international set of experts would also contribute ideas on future dissemination, commercialisation and distribution of any resulting artifacts, if communities wished to expand their sales to a more global audience for exposure and improved sales earnings. Within this context, I got in contact with Benjamín Villa, specialist in emergent market's research and consulting, on the world-wide design, production, and distribution process. His work focused on developing merchandising and copyright for his clients, among those were several international musea such as MOMA, TATE Gallery, and New York's Metropolitan and commercial chains such as Harrod's, Pylones or ALDEASA. Benjamín Villa also managed copyrights for authors like Miró, Picasso, Kandinsky or Pedro Almodóvar, and therefore would be an experienced advisor on further marketing and sales at museum venues.

Lately, a small team of collaborators helped to give final touches to this document to conform with comments issued on the Examiner's Joint Report. Rut Martin and Nuria Widmann, Guatemalan architect and researcher with an understanding of Mesoamerican culture and its idiosyncrasy, would proof-read, revise and edit some parts of the document with both a local and an international perspective in mind, while Priscila Gächter would assist in formatting the document. Rosa Chapela de la Campa assisted in great help in video and photo edition, as well as with the organization of visual documents. I am certain the large amount of documentation I produced and accumulated over these years of Research will be brought to light in the near future. It is my desire that documentation gathered during all phases of this Dissertation, such as photographs, videos, and prototypes, among others, will be used in the future for the project dissemination. Selected materials will be translated to Spanish, edited and the layout organized so that they can be exhibited and information can arrive to a wide public. An itinerant documentary exhibition of Design workshops will be produced together with round tables, seminars, papers, and workshops at different academic and artisan training institutions. As there are no published references on this topic, I trust my Research can provide insights for other design practitioners interested in this field.

4.1.8 On how designers come to agreements

Once the designer facilitators' team had been established and first meetings were conducted during the month of October 2013, it was jointly decided that oral narrative would be the best way to approach communities, being an intangible artifact and vital part of local cultures' oral transmission of wisdom, craft, history and cosmological vision. Narrative, in this context, has been considered *Immaterial* cultural heritage by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:²⁴ *"Intangible and cultural Heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity"*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 24 , the team of facilitators met and decided to base their work in the oral narrative as a means to approach the community through the artifact.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, design workshops were conducted in the indigenous communities of the Oaxacan state in Mexico, whose creative and artisanal processes are in danger of disappearing. Most of the villages we visited in the periphery were easy to access for visitors and were open to creating resources for distant markets without any awareness of the friction and devastation of their own cultural heritage within this process. In contrast, we outlined a process of design to empower the social and political structures of the villages.

Accessibility would also be an important selection criterion, especially for the first exploratory visits.

²⁴ The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

Source: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage²⁴ (ICH) 2003, Global
<https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/TVETipedia+Glossary/lang=en/filt=all/id=723>



Figure 4.12 *A road section to reach Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, being repaired under collective work. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*

Though the challenges and difficulties were many, we decided to focus on those difficulties as temporal experiences that could inform the design process. We recognized them as defined by geographic landscapes, logistic frontiers and obvious language barriers and let them lead us to consider questions of power, gender and local authorities. We realized over the three-year period that it was fundamental to bringing into view the politics of design, including the systematic placement of politics beyond the limits of design's frame. As Margolin (2002) observes, 'if designers are going to realize the full potential of design thought, then they should also learn to analyze how the situations that frame design practice are themselves constructed'.



Figure 4.13 *Visiting Santa María Yavesía with Omar Federico Fernández Lesur. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.*

Another crucial criterion for selecting a community was craftsmanship quality, exposure to outside influences, market access and quality of their craft techniques, risk of disappearance of unique and local techniques, and scale. For pottery artisans, design practitioners initially looked for communities who worked with smaller pieces. Although Eric Mindling and Colectivo 1050 suggested Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, for its local pre-Hispanic technique with resin (tree sap), its abstract, Pollock- aesthetics and his marginal situation. Maddalena and Ana Paula agreed, the

town of San Pablo Tijaltepec should be considered, due to its unique handcraft embroidery technique, called “pepenado” where facilitator Lita also had ties.

First, we led a series of exploratory visits at five communities, out of which we conducted initial workshops at three among those first visited.

First workshops consisted on oral narratives which would be expressed by attendees in either drawings or small modelled figurines, held at several communities at different times: Santa María de Atzompa, Santa María de Yavesía, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, San Pablo Tijaltepec.

Finally, I focused in developing prototypes at two Mixtec communities, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec, both in the Oaxaca Valley, using the cultural artefact as both the catalyst and mediator of the research.

These two communities had entirely different social realities and ways of expressing them. However, on the geographical and cultural level, they represent a common realm in which the artefact plays an important role in the social fabric of the community – as an essential part of social life and a witness to changing contexts and social evolution.

Santo Domingo Tonaltepec is one of the few communities where pottery is still being produced the same way as in the pre-Hispanic period, and thus, Hernández (2011) believes it to be a glistening example of cultural continuity.



Figure 4.14 *Panoramic of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, 2014.



Figure 4.15 *Some artisans arriving by communal car to the city hall at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec for the workshops. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

Isolated from broader society, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec retains its idiosyncratic ceramic practices. In three of the villages of this community, including Río Blanco Santo Domingo Tonaltepec, the pigments come from the bark of certain trees which are rich in tannins. They use oak bark to produce a pigment that is then poured drop by drop over the clay pot or jar while it is still hot from the oven. The liquid crackles as water evaporates on the hot clay surface, leaving only the red russet colour of the tannins (Mindling, 2011). The production of this pottery involves several dimensions of the artefact's cultural substance: the organisation of the production, the way distribution is attempted and lastly, the use itself (Arellanes Meixueiro and Simón Reyes, 2011; Hernández Sánchez, 2013).



Figure 4.16 *Samples of Clay pieces from Santo Domingo Tonaltepec storage at the CADA office. CADA Foundation®, 2016.*

In San Pablo Tijaltepec, or *tu' un savi de San Pablo Tijaltepec*, community members produce a variety of fabrics and traditional forms through embroidery and *pepenado* – pick-up weave and gathered pleats.



Figure 4.17 *Some samples of pepenado displayed at the community centre in San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*



Figure 4.18 *A sample of gathered pleats and embroidered deer from San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

Historically, women produce them for either domestic or ceremonial use; knowledge of this craft is passed down from mothers to daughters (Turok, 1988; López, 2010; Ortiz Escamilla, 2012). San Pablo Tijaltepec textiles display elaborate graphic and figurative designs with great mastery of scale; without any written directions, these textile goods are produced with a high degree of sophistication. As artefacts of cloth and thread, they hold special significance not only as social objects but also for their deeply personal nature. As Peter Stallybrass observes, clothing ‘has an indisputably intimate relationship to persons – not just their appearance and social identities, but even their gestures and smell’ (Stallybrass, 1996, p. 183). Therefore, it was crucial to pursue approximation with reverence for the individual character of these artefacts.



Figure 4.19 *Clothing relationship with social identity: women from San Pablo Tijaltepec wearing their traditional and handmade clothes.* CADA Foundation®, 2014.



Figure 4.20 *Panoramic view of San Pablo Tijaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, 2014.

There are common threads between both communities. Residents of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec live with precarious resource access, poor communications, and a high level of marginalisation in the socio-political sphere (Ortiz Escamilla, 2012).

Seeing craftsmanship and the situation of local artisans at both communities, I saw it as critical to acknowledge textile and ceramic as materials which, once transformed into artifacts, would go on to perform deeply personal and critical functions. The roles the artefacts would play and the meanings they would hold were intrinsically multidimensional.

However, the geographic and socioeconomic realities of these territories threaten hopes for the future production of such ‘time capsule’ artefacts, as the humans for whom such objects connote meaning are forced to contend with their environments. Their artefacts are quite difficult to market because of their seclusion from any major roads or marketplaces (Hernández Sánchez, 2013). Consequently, at present, due to their isolation, they also represent examples of communities on the verge of disappearance.



Figure 4.21 *Road conditions at the access to Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, 2015.

The so-called traditional artefacts of these communities are still crafted using pre-Hispanic methods although their shapes and decorations have been significantly changed in many cases, and accordingly I do not solely focus on the strictly pre-Hispanic constructions (Hernández Sánchez, 2013; De Ávila, 2013). Over time, some artefacts have kept their original dimensions and forms, and some have changed while still maintaining the old ways of production and use (Balaram, 1995). Furthermore, their production has always played an important role in the rural life of these communities (Pellicer, 1995). Considering the complex role, they play as historical witnesses, the artefacts of these communities can really be considered cultural *time capsules* (Hernández Sánchez, 2013).



Figure 4.22 *Woman and child embroidering in a street.* Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, October 2013.

4.2 Process as Method

As I have described at the beginning of this Chapter, developing a Methodology was based in ethnographic research through artifacts, learning about oral tradition and its role in cultural transmission as well as understanding local ethics and aesthetics, through iterative, organically

evolving processes carried out as a reflective practitioner. Followed by gathering a group of local designers as co-facilitators, field work visits to artisans and communities were made for referential understanding of local conditions. In consensus with local design practitioners acting both as facilitators and reflective observers, we selected and approached communities. By developing a series of workshops for co-creating artifacts, we jointly developed and documented a methodological approach to collaborative design processes, offering artisans new techniques, materials and approaches based on their artisanal techniques.

As stated before, an initial part of this Research was extensive fieldwork and exploration conducted before workshops took place. Phase I focused on Ethnographical Research, both in theory and literature, as covered on Chapters 2 and 3, and through field work, meeting key figures in the development of craftsmanship and training, anthropologists, artists, and artisan communities by interviewing artists, ethnographers, anthropologists but as well through exploratory visits to selected communities, conducted first as exploratory visits, and later, as consecutive visits to develop one-day workshops at selected communities, identified jointly with the team of local design practitioners I had gathered.

A second phase was dedicated to Design Research, understood as collaborative and a transformative design process. Developing scenarios for long-term engagement with communities was a main goal of design practitioners and a primary objective for this research-through-practice, to define a methodology of approximation and processes to be used, ultimately generating three-dimensional studies and artifacts.

Last phase developed prototype and artisanal production through iterative workshops, where the group of design practitioners working together with artisans aimed continuing developing methodology and generating a series of samples.

I focused on fine-tuning Artisanal production, as well as initiated Market exposure for both artisans and their wares. Workshops were held with artisans offering assistance and providing materials to finish samples, refining finishes and preparing objects to be marketable at Museum Shops and participating in textile events, such as The Second Mesoamerican Textile Congress and Expo-venta (temporary sale and technique exhibition) at Oaxaca de Juárez. Other practitioners provided insights into marketing strategies to approach a wider, global audience.

4.2.1 Phase I. Ethnographical Research and Communities Selection

As described previously in Chapters 1 and 3, ethnographical research started by understanding the social, political, and cultural background which shaped circumstances met in Oaxacan

communities I met. This theoretical background was based in extensive literature and continued through practical field work on aspects of Design and Artisanal Production, either formal or informal. I started this stage by identifying, interviewing key figures in the development of craftsmanship and training, anthropologists, artists and artisan communities whose insights and experience would add perspective and ground my approach to workshops, informing my decisions regarding practical aspects and their consequences.

4.2.1.1 Ethnographical Literature Research

Several ethnographical issues were researched through extensive analysis of literature: that of ethnography of spoken language, of interest in Oaxacan culture due to its important oral tradition, as well as the relationship between aesthetics and ethics in Mixtec context.

I have already elaborated, on introductory part of this Chapter, how oral tradition is the vehicle for cultural transmission, becoming itself an intangible artifact, and how artifacts become cultural objects as they transmit cultural history, values, and symbolism. It is under this perspective, that speaking, as the “material” of oral tradition, becomes relevant.

Due to the importance of oral tradition and to ground part of my fieldwork, I set to interview a poet and writer focused on studying and recording cultural manifestations in Chiapas. One of the persons whom I first met and interviewed, as I already mentioned on Chapter 1, was the artist and activist Ambar Past, a woman, poet and Founder of Taller de Leñateros²⁵ (The Woodlanders’ Workshop).

Past was born in Durham, North Carolina, USA, in 1949, eventually making her home in the Highlands of Chiapas’ rural hamlets where she learned to speak Tzotzil Mayan. She was culturally active, participating in the formation of The Mayan Writers Centre in San Cristóbal de las Casas, a cultural society established in 1975, aimed at strengthening, highlighting, and spreading values of the Amerindian popular culture, including songs, spells and legends. She also helped organize and run other cultural and artisan groups, such as SnaJolobil, a weaving cooperative for Mayan

²⁵ Taller de Leñateros. http://www.tallerlenateros.com/gaceta_web/eng/gazette.htm

Publishing collective operated by contemporary Mayan artists in Chiapas. Founded on 1975 by poet Ámbar Past, Taller has published the first books written, illustrated, printed and bounded (on paper of their own making) by the Mayan people in more than 400 years. Among its multiple objectives it is worth mentioning their aim to document, advance, and promote the native and popular cultural values: the native languages literature, the visual arts, the painted codex. Leñateros work on rescuing old and near extinct techniques such as the extraction of dyes from wild herbs, and the recovery of native languages.

artisans, the Mayan writers collective SnaJtz'ibajom, presiding over the literature association Libros Prehispánicos A.C.

She has had an important role as a collaborator of Sociedad Indígena de Chiapas²⁶, a cultural institution aimed at preserving control over its own cultures and achieve a creative state of peace and order, with security and food sovereignty, justice and dignity as established in the 169 OIT agreement, under the terms of events around self-determination in the region. Self-describing its mission: “promote and support activities that strengthen the integral development and the quality of life that Chiapas indigenous people deserve, as well as join in the scientific and humanistic projects and programs that work on the humanity’s settlements by means of a deeper relationship with Mother Nature that ensures and improves life in our planet”. These activities involve, within the local context, taking a political stance as well, partaking as an activist in civil associations. Her first writings were published in Tzotzil in the collective book *Slo'iljchiltaktik* (Autobiographies of Tzotzil Women), 1978, and *Bon*, a bilingual (Tzotzil-Spanish) manual for Mayans on natural dyes, in 1980. Past has also published several books of poetry in Spanish, most recently the title *Huracana*. In regards to her anthropological recordings on local culture, for the past 30 years she has collected, recorded, and translated Tzotzil ritual poetry, published as bilingual anthologies by Taller de Leñateros, *Conjuros y ebriedades*, 1998, *Incantations by Mayan*

²⁶ Sociedad Indígena de Chiapas. <http://culturadelosindiosmayas.mex.tl/frameset.php?url=/intro.html>

Sna Jtz'ibajom “Cultura de los Indios Mayas A.C.”, Founded on 1982 under the name of Sociedad Indígena de Chiapas (Native Society of Chiapas) and legally constituted on May 23rd 1983, thanks to the initiative of pioneering Tsotsiles and Tseltales translators, and important figures like Rosario Castellanos, the poet Jaime Sabines, languages Doctor Roberto Laughlin from the Smithsonian Institute, and several national and international anthropologists, linguists, Institutions and Foundations. The Sociedad has supported different aspects and moments of the work to preserve control over the own cultures and achieve a creative state of peace and order, with security and food sovereignty, with justice and dignity as established in the 169 OIT agreement.

Women and a music CD-book, *Disco de los Conjuros*, and (in press), *Bolom Chon*.



Figure 4.23 *Model of Chamula Oral Tradition and Cosmology, Language, Cosmos and Social Order.* Adapted from *Chamulas in the world of the Sun. Time and Space in a Maya Oral Tradition*, pag. 233, by Gary Gossen, 1974.

Note. The chart shows a representation of how to generate and establish spatial and oral parameters in the narrative.

References to these works and publications, among other supporting materials, the book “Chamulas in the world of the Sun. Time and Space in a Maya Oral Tradition” (Gossen, 1974), were used as models to develop the oral workshop methodology in this Thesis.

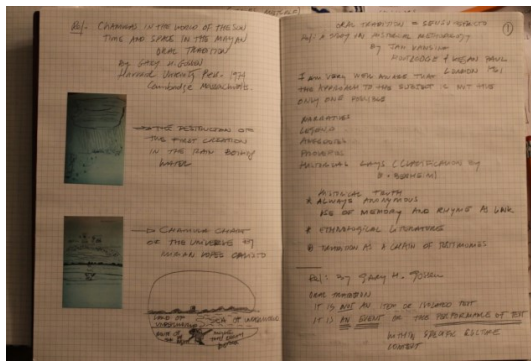


Figure 4.24 *Spatial and oral parameters in the narrative.* Carmen Malvar field notebook.

Other interviews, with relevant educators, artists and trailblazers who had been involved in craft training at government-run centres in Michoacán and Chiapas, such as sculptor Anna Pellicer, and anthropologist Luis Morales, co-founder of K'un K'un, will be further described on the following sections. Notes and videos documenting my interviews and meetings with social designers working with artisan communities in San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Oaxaca, offer valuable perspective into my approach and methodology development. (See Vimeo of Ana Pellicer and Luis Morales: <https://vimeo.com/489872162/c084d5f4e8>)

4.2.1.2 Design Ethnography Research

At this phase, research relied in fieldwork conducted to gain perspective into regional artisan communities, their particularities and approach to making, based on my experience and tools as a designer, to assist me in selecting communities would be interested in participating in field research and would benefit from our joint work.



Figure 4.25 *Exchanging knowledge, analysing samples, and understanding work by artisans of San Pablo Tijaltepec.* Facilitators Maddalena Forcella, Laura Quiroz and me. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

Throughout my career as a professional designer, the specific focus of my academic interest became the practices of teaching and articulating design studio dynamics. In my interdisciplinary courses, students design everything from full-scale travelling installations to workshops like mine which foster collaborations between designers and artisans. I lead design research groups and transfer that knowledge to students with different cultural backgrounds, ages, and ambitions. I considered all these experiences when planning those first meetings with design collaborators and indigenous artisan groups for this project, always seeking the right conditions in which collaborators will feel comfortable enough to express themselves.

My approach to work addresses some of the open issues at the heart of design theory and practice which I mentioned in the introduction, contributing to the ongoing debate. The design qualities I bring as knowledge sets are identified by experiences. The empirical work reported here stems from several situations within the project. The practice itself involves a form of reflective communication for social design, which is based on my understanding of design after years of practice as a student and as a professional. Combining knowledge with action, I develop collaborative interactions – framed by the process of making things together – among people with different cultural backgrounds, economic systems, and core beliefs.

I characterize my practice through its potential for transformation at the social and economic levels and its ability to strengthen cooperation and democratic values. Within the context of this research, it was not my quest to solve any single design problem but instead trigger artisans' cooperation and creative contribution. Under these visions, my fieldwork had to identify communities where future workshops could be held, gathering a team of like-minded local design practitioners who would become a team of facilitators for necessary community service.

4.2.1.3 From narrative to three-dimensional artifacts: Process, Method and Outcomes

Based on research and on facilitators' experience with communities based on oral tradition for cultural transmission, we saw it convenient that experimental methodology should be implemented in a series of Oral workshops which would analyze, interpret and evolve cultural artifacts based on oral popular narratives.



Figure 4.26 Artisan Nazaria choosing images from children results from previous day First workshops. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

“A Cultural Artifact is defined as an artifact, -tangible or not- that has imbedded meaning for a socio-cultural group and therefore has potential to elicit emotions in individuals”. (Ornelas & Gregory, 2011)

The oral workshops were useful as a way of relating community and artifact through oral tradition, considering the later as an *“intangible artifact”* and using it as an expression generating element that the workshop’s participants will materialize into drawings – graphic expressions. Drawing is a means of communication equivalent to writing; it is a language used to tell a story. These drawings that show reality or the collective imagery of the members of the community serve as the articulating medium between facilitator and artisan to interpret and produce the tangible artifact that we were striving to reach and that should be the result of an evolution of the community’s expression: its ***ethos***.



Figure 4.27 Carmen Malvar with artisan at Oral workshop. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Tunstall (2013) suggests that a community's value system should be accepted as something dynamic, not static. Therefore, we prioritised eliminating the labels that drew distinctions between popular art and design and instead focused on 'forms of making' as defined in Chapter 1, as the way communities make their value systems tangible. We thus focused on the semantic language of artifacts within both indigenous communities, reflecting on our own perception of the chosen images. By undergoing the process of selection, we were discovering personal tastes linked to participants' own cultural references.

Based on background research, I established that Oral workshops would be developed to approach the communities and documented following the nine points of the methodology detailed in "Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking" (Bauman and Sherzer, 1984) and "Threads on Ethnography of speaking" (Shuy, 1984).

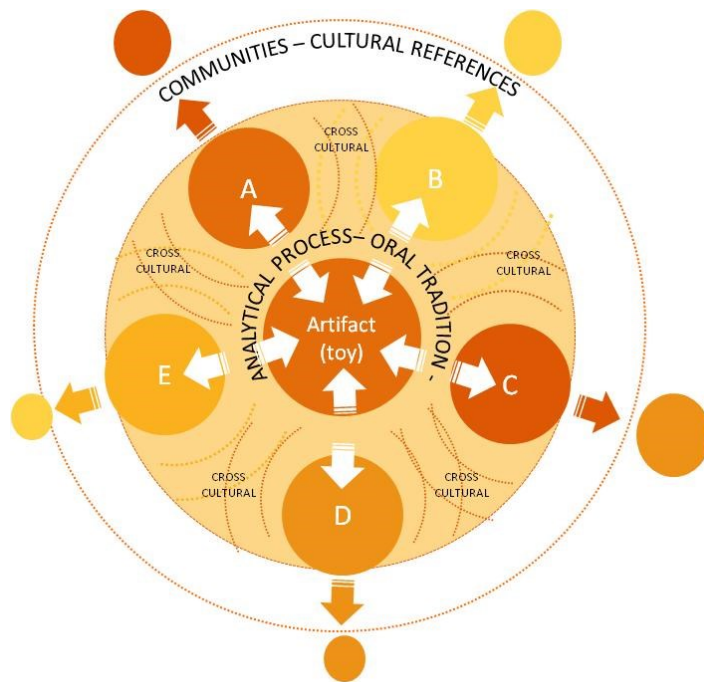


Figure 4.28 Infographics: diagram of relations between the different communities and their cultural references through the artifact. CADA Foundation®.

Note. Intangible - the oral tradition and the narrative.

Tangible - objects produced with artisan materials and techniques unique to each community.

Tactically, as design facilitators we decided on these actions: Workshops will be conducted with several generations, mainly women and children, who will collect the oral narrative through

drawings. There will be a selection of series of drawings that can serve to develop common characters and stories. This will be the starting point for the next step, in which the tangible characters/elements will be devised using each area's specific crafts to produce the different pieces that make the story up.

After the exercise of community approach through oral narrative and its form of expression was materialized in drawings, these were analysed. The materials thus selected were, during the design phase, the articulating bond in dialogues with artisans. It is important to stress that, in this context, the artisan belonged in the same community where each of the workshops took place, and therefore shares the same "ethos" bond with the community.

4.2.2 Phase II. Design Research aimed at developing methodology through making and unmaking

In pondering over how to be of service as a design practitioner and as a researcher in applied design methodology, I asked myself the question: How can social design generate a positive effect *within* an established value system? As Tunstall (2013) explains, such a system must be accepted as dynamic and that all parties involved should assume that there will be values exchanges among their cultures and systems. Furthermore, she emphasises the importance of eliminating any circumstances that generate a situation of disadvantage during exchange itself.

Gradually, we achieved sufficient credibility to constitute a small working group. We were aware that we were dealing with human beings who were not going to leave behind their emotions, duties, and memories among other elements when they came to participate with us. Ranjan (2011) sees how social design, when put into practice and subjected to democratic ideals, can become a powerful social and political activity that gives voice to local people. As already noted at the beginning of Chapter 1, we could not pretend to address this process in an abstract and global way. We had to address the problems and challenges at the local level where the exchange happens, with context leading practice.

Consequently, we organised the work around a common project. This created an informal structure to transcend public-private lines, relying not on competition but on collaboration, certainly also a new form of communication. We raised questions and issues from the workshop and helped these reflections inform our logistical discussion of the next meeting place, time, and day. The project was an invitation to base my understanding of design that allowed us to enter in a form of community with others.

I have commented on Chapter 1 how deeply committed human relationships should guide our behaviour, for they generate a diversity of actions and solutions which are invariably strengthened through the exchanges and dialogues of the relationships. Thus, myself and my fellow practitioners created bonds that allowed the participants to come closer together; our cohabitation was high on empathy and participation allowing us to coordinate decision-making and action and promote accountability. When people from across a community form local relationship around shared tasks trust is built and the social fabric is strengthened (PROADA, 2002; Lazcano, 2005).

In his paper *Product Symbolism of Gandhi and Its Connection with Indian Mythology*, which describes the spiritual and material aspects of design within the Indian context, Balaram (1995) discusses the power of the artefact's narrative over its function, specifically with regard to everyday artefacts. Rather than purely deconstructing form, he insists that the narrative must be understood *through* characteristics of manufacture, morphology, infrastructure, and decoration. He writes,

All of us could be said to be at home in different territories [. . .] according to our experience of familiarity with them. Those using the same [. . .] share a common territory. The territorial imperative of semantics suggests that people who live in the same territory more readily accept each other's messages than those belonging to different territories. This imperative implies that people by themselves do not just talk to each other. The symbolic qualities of the material things they associate with always speak with them.

(Balaram, 1995, p. 135)

Therefore, design is justified as critical to understanding communication and inter-relation within communities. In his analysis, Balaram (1995) notes that communication neither emerges from isolated systems nor is received through one isolated channel, but it rather argues the importance of the 'multidimensional message' defined as a message delivered through multiple means, especially aesthetically and is comprehensive in its *totality*. Artefacts of everyday use that carry the socio-cultural stories which are, perhaps unknowingly, passed down through generations can therefore be understood critically as objects carrying a 'multidimensional message'.

4.2.2.1 Design situations or 'proximities of design' as eliciting transformations

In this section, I will focus on the specific design workshops, which took place about twelve months into the project and marked a transition from the initial (inquiry) phase to the current

social design practice phase. I will now refer to ‘situations’ or ‘proximities of design’ which occurred at these workshops, describing a given situation based on my knowledge of design and on the reflections to understand how a given artefact was made. We started the journey by reflecting on the very theoretical framework for understanding activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of design practice which are laid out in previous chapters. Could the practice of design help us better understand local identity and how could we create an environment in which correspondence could be generated? We were aware of the importance of engaging with all the senses and in all dimensions with the environment we were all going to share. As I mentioned in the introduction, Adams (2014) widens the scope of the current debate about participation through correspondence, defining this correspondence as inclusive of the spiritual and cultural values that constitute the community’s worldview. As Recchia (2011) says, the way to immerse oneself in the geography of values is nothing other than dialogue creation.

We (the social design practitioners) asked the group of artisans – who displayed interest and uncertainty in equal measures – how they thought we could work together. Many discussions within the project revolved around the invitation to all participants who could be interested. We replied and discussed further possibilities and, in this way, jointly decided how we could deliver the results of our design process. The few women who initially turned up showed us a playful curiosity and high capacity to improvise. We immediately moved from a public space to a more private working environment. These meetings and workshops have been detailed as Case Studies on Chapter 5.



Figure 4.29 *Working group entering artisan Juanita’s house where the first series of design workshops would take place. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*

As mentioned in Chapter 2, if homogeneous power is maintained, then transitions will necessarily occur through concepts of global design. How can we think in terms of a culture of transience governed by local stories rather than the subordination of local culture to global design? In Chapter 3, I referred to both Jan Assman’s (2011) notion of cultural continuity and Pellicer’s

revisiting of Metcalf's work on the how to enhance cultural continuity through design practice in indigenous communities. Assman emphasises how the process relies greatly on each community's own mechanism for transmitting cultural knowledge inter-generationally. These mechanisms are dependent on cultural artefacts and traditions as ways to remember; indeed, collective memories serve as a template to organise present and future experiences.

We tried to consider the following aspects: spatial limits and geometry, form, and repetition of the same stories. This exercise provided an important view of how stories and collective memory differ: some did not focus on the stories themselves but rather followed their own imagination according to visual memories; some experimented with the medium itself. We tracked and measured everything we could measure about the community craftsmanship, from young people to old.



Figure 4.30 *The wall packed with Xerox images did not display any obvious order with drawings from oral workshops. A nearby workroom space was used for constructing 3D figures. Carmen Malvar, Omar Lesur. Santa María Yavesía. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*

4.2.2.2 The appropriation of new elements

By the end of the second day of design workshop, the participants had completed the selection of their local stories and transferred them to a new dimension of narrative that would inform the design through 3D experimentation with new materials. As dimensionality and scaling connect with the participatory design tradition, diversity of representations (texture, geometry, surface, material etc.) was necessary for conveying different aspects of design. Important design decisions were made in the transitions between representations and scales, and those played a crucial role. The new physical artefacts were coded in a language that cannot be separated from the medium itself and communicated complementary aspects of the design process. We identified strong narrative elements in the way design representations were combined and how the artefact was

experienced from different scales and angles to induce various scale models using different materials and techniques (Telier, 2011).



Figure 4.31 *Clay exercise as sample of a 3D study.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

We (the artisans and facilitators) started the third day of workshop by discussing the project in all its aspects, as a group. Several participants said they interpreted the activities in a different way we anticipated and were unsure about various aspects of it. The artisans felt unable to create new designs, so we (the facilitators) suggested that they refer to those they knew instead; however, the complexity of the embroidery patterns and ceramic processes were a significant barrier for all (facilitators and artisans).

Part of the workshop was dedicated to reviewing previous designs. We were already months into the project. The group of artisans and designers gathered and divided the work so that the group of artisans selected some objects and references different from those worshiped in the iconography of the artisan's own community. We worked on a series of key images based on cultural objects.

Around them were photos of objects selected randomly from different materials and cultures. One of the skills I gained as a design student was the ability to gather inspiration and references. During the early stages of the project, while I was developing and gathering the knowledge which constituted the previous chapters, I was also gradually building a collection of images to serve as alternative sources of inspiration for the workshops.



Figure 4.32 *Some alternative sources of cultural exchange through a selection of samples. Folk toys from Japan. San Pablo Tlaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

We displayed the images (in black and white) on the wall during the third workshop and asked the artisans – including myself and the other practitioners, as we reviewed the samples together – to gather those images that inspired them the most.



Figure 4.33 *Artisans of San Pablo Tlaltepec observing chosen images, printed in black and white from universal toy selection gathered by me. San Pablo Tlaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*

How and when can we consider the appropriation of foreign elements and processes valid? Bonfil, Novelo and Acha largely agree that appropriation is valid insofar as it answers an internal need to adapt and is introduced according to the agreed-upon needs of a group with communal cultural affinities. They all point out how communities themselves select which elements to maintain, incorporate or substitute. As shocking as this acculturation process may seem, it nevertheless resolves itself naturally, producing well-integrated forms and results. However, these workshops went one step further, generating not only an exchange but also a transformation of the material.

Knowledge was combined, and elements originating from various heritages and contexts were incorporated together.



Figure 4.34 *San Pablo Tijaltepec artisan Rosalía. Cloth doll made during workshops. Based on external references using ‘pick-up, pleated and ruffled’ technique. San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*



Figure 4.35 *Some samples of 3D study using ‘pick-up, pleated and ruffled’ technique from design workshops results. San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*

4.2.2.3 **Artifact transformation through collaborative creation processes**

As we understand it today, crafts were always the pioneers of what was considered the profession of design. But historically, the practices of these crafts were relegated to the background, under pressure from the evolution of industrial processes. Hence, creative acts and the associated skills of *hacer* – the making – have been separated, with the common conception of the artisan becoming more associated with virtuosity than with activities of design (Makovicky, 2011). From the beginning, we wanted to materialise stages, jointly speculate on the possibilities, and consciously avoid being too critical.



Figure 4.36 Image references used in design workshops in San Pablo Tijaltepec. Left. Artist: Paul Klee, 1925. *Untitled (Big-Eared Clown)*. Right: Artist: Alma Siedhoff-Busher, 1924. *Two cord and Wooden Dolls*. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

As an artifact has to be positioned in a particular setting to make sense and realise the intention and vision of the artisan, how then does the process of making unfold, as the artisan engages with objects totally different from those who worship the iconography within the artisan's community? Although the objects and figures do not change, their meanings experience a shift when they are transferred into a different cultural context. Kuchler (2011) studied the transformative effect of an artefact's production being moved from one material to another, as it alters work relationships and everyday life.

There are elements of iconography and worship in the artisans' communities whose meanings have not changed since the prehistoric times. That said, some objects transform when they enter a different cultural context, and within the same cultural context, aspects of design appropriation can be observed.

Using research and design, the cultural and emotional values of the communities involved with the technique and the artifact should be maintained. This becomes a challenge since the new family of products to be developed must combine them, searching where those values converge or diverge, and, also, the necessary ones to appeal to a global commerce must be integrated.

Based on these guidelines, methodologies previously used in research are selected. In these methodologies the artifact is the articulatory element of the research. "Cultural Artifacts as emotional catalysts and social mediators in Design Research" (Ornelas and Gregory, 2011) "Artifact Analysis" and "Contextual inquiry" (Martin and Hanington, 2012).

I also noticed how organisational routines took shape as the makers produced recognisable, repetitive patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors. An artefact-centred understanding of the design process reinforces a common misconception about routines – that they implicitly embody determinism.



Figure 4.37 *Organisational routines during design workshops: Artisans Rosalía and Rosario being observed by the oldest member (grandmother) sitting in a routine circle dynamic for activities during design. San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*

At the local communities' workshops, I conceived the cultural artefacts as social and essentially non-commercial; they are linked to different concepts of time and space and, as discussed, heralded social attributes based on collective inheritance and the actions generated around them. In this context, the designers, which I term 'facilitators' – myself included – considered their mediating role essential to the potential knowledge exchange (Adams, 2014) and came to the conclusion that the sharing process achieved during workshops lead to learning and promoted the empowerment of collective knowledge.

There was an agreement on the importance of full attention to the development of tools, processes (including future workshops), reflection and evolutionary development of prototypes (Blomberg and Karasti, 2013). It was also crucial that generated knowledge was spread to other women within the communities, as it occurs naturally with traditional methods of textile production since women gather in each other's homes to communally embroider or spin. Such example was recorded with one of the artisans sharing her technique and it is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform.



Figure 4.38 *Experimenting with new materials artisans had never used before.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

In his landmark anthropology text *How Societies Remember*, Connerton (1989) introduces English philosopher Michael Oakeshott's distinctions of moral forms, especially as they are applied in new contexts. He quotes Oakeshott's argument that 'one is the reflexive application of a moral criterion and a kind of morality that is a habit of affectivity and behaviour'. This understanding of the application of moral criteria as 'reflexive' rather than 'principled' or 'incorruptible' complicates the endeavour of an exchange. Yet the exchange in social and cultural contexts remains a necessary step to confronting local and global transformations. Broadly, what I strive for with approximation is to develop a set of requirements and schema for work stages and practices (Otto and Smith, 2013). However, a moralistic intervention is not enough in many cases, as Papanek points out in his book *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change*. Papanek explains,

Years of experience have convinced me that 'instant experts' never work out. When foreign experts are brought to developing countries and faced with new problems, they frequently can provide answers that seem both sensible and workable. Their apparent ability to penetrate to the nub of the problem is illusory: unfamiliar as they are with the cultural background of the country, religious and social taboos, economic givens, and many other local considerations, they yet deliver an answer that appears convincing. [...] three weeks later the people on the ground quickly realize that, although they have solved the problem as stated, their 'solution' has resulted in twenty or thirty new problems.

(Papanek, 1971)

Thus, our challenge was to build a collaborative process that is neither moralising nor blindly reductive.

In sharing the process and analysing the existing situation, I was aware of the need to balance my perceptions of traditional versus transitional elements (Bannon and Ehn, 2013; Simonsen et al., 2014). During the collaborative process, I kept myself independent of the artefact and the community and maintained clear distinctions between the roles of involvement and non-involvement. Our interdisciplinary collaboration did not, at any moment, attempt to join items of knowledge about an already defined reality to create alternative design possibilities. Instead, our engagement was based only on generating an exchange of images and interest from different realities by constructing, composing and transforming several kinds of knowledge, social behaviours and design practices (Gunn et al., 2013; Adams, 2014, pp. 20–24). The shared expertise of our multidisciplinary team ranged from graphic designers, textiles designers to product designers, all of whom with years of practice on the field and based in fundamentally different knowledge systems and provided pertinent opinions. This aspect was fundamental to setting objectives, achieving a balanced decision-making process, and resolving problems as they came up (Bratteteig et al., 2013, pp. 117–144).

It was essential that I, as facilitator, was prepared to improvise, as I needed to quickly adjust our plans to respond to confrontational situations. Being open to tensions as they arose – ready to explore difficulties and mistakes in the process and encourage group reflection – allowed for a deeper and more collaborative learning process. Indeed, despite our best efforts, many factors contributed to tension and discomfort within the group. Even though the participants assumed the sessions to be fruitful, not all of them had the same perspectives on specific aspects, nor did they all attribute the same value. However, I ultimately found this diversity and richness in perspective to be powerful; helping participants see situations from a different lens reduced their insistence on convention, thus revealing unpredictable possibilities.

Participation was best fostered when all the participants were included in the process and felt part of the common objective by helping define it and having a voice in the results (Blomberg and Karasti, 2013; Bratteteig et al., 2013). In the goal of generating a democratic and empowering work environment, I considered principles such as mutual respect for differing knowledge and a commitment to openness, as well as reflection, as ideas developed. Such example was recorded with one of the artisans sharing her technique and is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489900016/def06d81cf>

Alongside the use of traditional materials in new ways or the introduction of new materials or methods, workshop spatial consideration -that is, the use of space and the dynamics both materials and space generated on human interactions- was observed and recorded during Meta-research.

Throughout Workshop Design processes, I was thinking about the symbolic meaning of space and its impact throughout the design process, observing the interactions between behaviour and the physical environment and the social identities of the artisans' communities in relation to their environments.

The ways we – design practitioners, artisans, and authorities, when they attended our meetings- ended up using open and public space differed a lot, not just by site or type of space but also by uses themselves. From public squares to institutional buildings, bodies and spaces were in dialogue, and we witnessed different relationships between participants and their environments. Our encounters were not confined to a space or even a village; rather, we relocated often during our three years of work. The appropriation of spaces by our design process was causally related in an organic and fluid way to our relationships with the perimeters and objects.



Figure 4.39 *Working in public squares.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 4.40 *Working in institutional buildings with our group.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

John Zeisel (2006) describes how designers, in their creative processes, are very much like researchers, by conducting their work *within* well-established 'environment-behaviour' to achieve greater design creativity and research efficacy.

I was interested in the constant activity of the participant and keenly observed and annotated body language, particularly relevant when linguistic and cultural translation and interpretation are required. The human body is a rich resource for its ability to inform and inspire meaningful and interactions and to wander in search of physical location. Materiality provides great opportunities for studying our embodied selves. Throughout the process, we were interested in exploring the operations of power and resistance at the micro level of the individual home and small community, analysing modes of securitisation and fortification utilised in the interest of wealth and power and documenting the ways in which space and place are being transformed by changing socio-economic and cultural demands. I will elaborate further on spatial dynamics and appropriation of space.

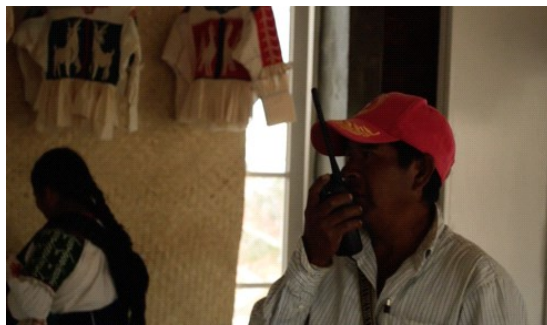


Figure 4.41 *Operations of power at the small community: authorities communicating the arrival of facilitators at the first workshop. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

4.2.3 Phase III. Prototyping, artisanal production and market exposure

Using research and design, the cultural and emotional values of the communities involved with the technique and the artifact should be maintained. This becomes a challenge since the new family of artifacts to be developed must combine them, searching where those values converge or diverge, and, also, the necessary ones to appeal to a global commerce must be integrated.

The facilitators, and other professionals with experience in several different artisan techniques, will analyze the creation process with the artisans of each community, following the methodology developed during Phase II. The focal element for this dialogue is the cultural artifact itself. The methodology should be sustainable as much from the socio-cultural as the economic and environmental points of view, and it must allow, in a permeable way, its adaptation to each of the

artisan's communities. The workshops will be documented as part of a methodological study applied to the cooperative design of objects linked to traditional culture.



Figure 4.42 *Exchange of knowledge: artisans from Atzompa sharing and explaining their work to other artisans of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and facilitators. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2016.*

The goal in this phase is to outline prototypes made also with materials that may eventually become detached from the traditional in inter-communal and interdisciplinary communities. They should be the result of a design process participated by the artisans and the facilitators by establishing a dialogue about the use of the technique and its application to different materials.



Figure 4.43 *Exchange of tools and techniques with artisans at workshop. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2016.*

The aptitude for prototyping production of the selected materials will be studied as much from the point of view of its development and for the viability of its commercialization as from the feasibility of its manufacturing so it can be produced by the artisan's communities. The prototypes will be used in an early evaluation of the ideas proposed by the participants in the generative research. They also enable the analysis of its constructive feasibility and a timely feedback so the necessary iterative changes can be implemented.

The prototypes offer an answer based in the aesthetics, form, interaction, usefulness, and emotional content, and will serve as models to establish and develop the preparation techniques for the new family of products. Under Luis Joel's guidance and drawing on his knowledge about artisan production.

For the analysis of its commercialization, there will be a study of the market, the distribution routes, and the trade strategies at real points of sale as well as the e-commerce virtual platform.

Based on these guidelines, methodologies previously used in research are selected. In these methodologies the artifact is the articulatory element of the research. "Cultural Artifacts as emotional catalysts and social mediators in Design Research" (Ornelas and Gregory, 2011), "Artifact Analysis" and "Contextual inquiry" (Martin and Hanington, 2012).

An experimental methodology based on social design would be implemented in a sequence of workshops based on a series of concepts which defined courses of action. We would produce design situations to elicit transformations, through organic workshop development. Connecting to artisan traditions offered insight into craft, its transmission, while the act of making and unmaking showed a way to form and transform material through manipulation, for practical uses and charged of cultural symbolism. As workshops transformed, we witnessed and recorded these transformations observing how artisans appropriated new elements offered at them. Transformations generated by dialogue and using space were studied. Changes occurred in personal exchanges and relations among facilitators and artisans. These concepts shall be elaborated upon on the following sections.

Prototyping cultural artifacts would serve as research and evaluation channels.

The materialization of a product, both from its formal realization point of view as from the functional one, is a form of transformation. It allows checking whether its production process, the materials used, the way it works, its aesthetic, and its final effect agree with the proposed initial conditions for its execution.

This process will be sued during phase III. That is the moment when the facilitators will outline creation guidelines for the product families do be developed. Having an artifact in a development process allows for the continuation of the initial proposed research from the original artifact.

Instead of acting as agents of change, we considered the design process itself as a system whose dynamics followed the rhythms of flow and which, through a complex network of connections, had the power to generate new forms of social relation, spatial, temporal and material values.

Within this design, opportunities for agency generated themselves in vital ways; however, the pursuit of a collective goal remained paramount.

In keeping with the structure of the oral workshop and design workshop, graphic representation of knowledge was shared in an open context, allowing for participants to share and compare freely. The workshops went one step further, generating not only exchange but also transformation of material into prototype. These processes of transformation were undertaken to further understand the artefacts within their contexts. Thus, tacit knowledge and elements originating from various heritages and contexts were incorporated.

As we focused on the semantic language of the artefacts within two indigenous communities, which often carry complex symbolic meanings, in this vein, Ian Ewart (2013) proposed a concept of knowing by design. Nigel Cross analyses Ewart's concept, writing,

Continually doing the same thing makes it increasingly habitual and less likely to change. Designing does not therefore require a special designerly way of knowing, but depends instead on a designerly way of doing: design on-the-job, rather than in the mind [. . .] Design, in other words, does not exist per se, but only as a part of the performance of making. (Cross, 2000, pp. 96–98)

Consequently, we focused on workshops through the making and unmaking of objects, generally deemphasising their forms to give relevance to collaborative process.

4.2.3.1 Artisanal production and initiated market exposure

I already mentioned this dissertation developed further collaborative workshops at two different artisan communities. Artisans and social design practitioners all worked together on experimenting with new materials that artisans had never used before, taking them apart, cutting, shaping, and unravelling them. These processes eventually would lead from prototyping into a defined and selected family of artifacts that communities, if so wished, could arrive to broader markets, ensuring better economic returns according to the craftsmanship value of whatever was produced.

Workshops were to be adapted to establish a viable work method in which the artisans could participate in the development of a family of products, while discussing, studying and implementing a commercial message and market strategies to introduce these families of products into broader markets.

Both distribution and commercialization of designed products meant to be specified during this phase. The study and definition of the commercial message, of the commercialization and of the market strategies will be developed from an informative point of view: the sales of the products should be backed by the knowledge of the origin and the transformation of the objects. The commercialization platforms should also be used to communicate the project's inherent values and, ultimately, transmitted through the objects.

4.2.3.2 Materials and the adaptation of tasks

We considered physical properties such as texture, geometry (size, location in space, etc.) and material (weight, flexibility, quality). We also considered dynamic properties; material artefacts can engage with all senses. The workshops were dependent on these early experiments, for they helped make tangible the worldviews of the participants. We were also able to chart a path forward based on this material exploration. We encouraged the artisans to take control and experiment and not worry about the outcomes, emphasising that exploring new materials is valuable. This experience built upon each of our own background knowledge and sense of proportion, composition, and form.

In our various encounters in the workspace, material was always present in the form of random pieces, leftovers, and samples. We always had fabric, wire, and tools to work more precisely on cuts and shapes and other materials. The artisans enjoyed the tactile and visual nature of the process and felt confident and collaborative while creating new forms together.

In our conversations with the artisans, they were noticeably confident in choosing colours and shapes. Every process within the community of San Pablo Tijaltepec involved using colour – mostly through yarns or pigments – and they were deeply knowledgeable about considering its uses and application.

4.2.3.3 Iterative design for prototype development: artifact, task and problem solving

We (artisans and designers) generated several new forms through new tools and materials, attempting to connect disparate design ideas while also staying rooted in practice and leaving space for discussion and mutual learning.



Figure 4.44 *Some samples of the resulting prototypes.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2016.

The resulting prototypes display a weaving-together of analysis and design and an interactive, hermeneutic process known as the ‘task-artefact cycle’ (Carroll et al., 1991).

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Figure 4.45 *The ‘task-artefact’ cycle.* Adapted by Carrol et al., 1991.

This cycle happens when the artefact and the task are mutually interacting and mutually reinforcing, both developing each other and defining themselves independently. As Tone Bratteteig writes in the *Handbook of Participatory Design*, ‘A task implicitly sets the requirements for the development of artefacts to support it; an artefact suggests possibilities and introduces constraints that often radically redefine the task for which the artefact was originally developed’ (Bratteteig et al., 2013, p. 97). Later on, she further defines the purpose of such a cycle: ‘[To] actively involve users in the analysis as active subjects, and the analysis becomes not only a joint activity of understanding the contextual conditions for the design, but also an activity of exploring opportunities for change’. Indeed, the scenarios and interactions we facilitated were always unpredictable, only becoming clear in a very gradual manner. As Jesper Simonsen (2014) likewise believes, this natural cycle of gradual production is essential to the design process. We, the participants, understood that the task was defined by the artefacts we had at the beginning of each session and redefined by their further iterations. Bratteteig writes, ‘[Their] understanding of their artefacts is determined by the tasks for which they are using the artefacts’ (Simonsen et al., 2014, pp. 27–28).

4.3 Picturing sounds and movement of the making in context: representation of observation

The video footage we produced shows some of the different working environments. Watching excerpts of the process should give the reader a more holistic sense of the practice. My intention is to show the material as an object, show its identity, reveal the context of its use, show its material quality, and display how the body reacts to it.



Figure 4.46 *Working environments: open space and private home. Initiation of workshops. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2014-2015.*

As Mieke Bal (2013) pointed out, the aesthetics of figurative images also have a political potential, not necessarily thematically but in their effects and ability to trigger visual memories. To Bal, their political efficacy lies in their ability to make meaning on the different grounds of any semiotic system. In the editing process, I tried to focus on those details that are important to the meaning of the project yet would not be obvious to a spectator unless pointed out.

I particularly explored how sound and movement operate in conjunction with person and material in the search for the material's identity. Sound and movements are always expressive, as they bring together internal and external elements.



Figure 4.47 Stills from excerpts, picturing sound and movement through the material. ‘Pick-up, pleated and ruffled’ technique (*pepenado*). San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

Moreover, sound and movement are indispensable as ways to understand meaning, for they are fundamentally affect-based. Indeed, Bal defines sounds as ‘nothing but movement’ (Bal, 2013, p. 83). This approach allowed me to escape the trap of the viewer identifying with ‘the other people’ – referring to those represented – thus cancelling the difference between self and the other. Bal (2013) warns against this trap, and Dominick LaCapra (2001) coins the term ‘empathic unsettlement’ to describe it. This danger was constant in my mind and in the minds of my fellow practitioners throughout the process. In considering LaCapra’s concept, I tried to curate a selection of excerpts which maintain awareness of a ‘distinction between one’s own perceptions and the experience of the other’ (Bennett, 2010, p. 8). The narrative must be shaped by the ‘how’, instead of the ‘who’ or ‘what’, since it must be dominated by the form and its transformation – thus rendering useless questions of voice, authority, and authorship. This narrative manifest itself not only through narration but also through camera and audio techniques emphasising certain aspects of the participants and the materials. Jay Ruby argues that the desire to entertain can eclipse the original intention of informing an audience. Thus, cooperative, collaborative, and subject-generated films are a response to the need for a rethinking of authorship (Ruby 2000). As Ruby notes, ‘[T]he audience’s role construction of meaning in (ethnographic) film is a complex one . . . On the other hand, there are the larger questions concerning the role of the reader/viewer in the construction of meaning’ (Ruby, 2000, p. 181). Such example of exploration was partially edited online and can be revised in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/490534957/94ca57693f>

4.4 Group creativity and the collective choice

In these last pages of this final chapter, I introduced perspectives that helped all of us social design practitioners to understand our challenge as social designers in building a collaborative process that was neither moralising nor blindly reductive. As such, it was necessary to maintain the social and cultural context where the practices took place, leaving room for heritage as the enterprise of knowledge. The practice itself involved a form of reflective communication for social design, developing collaborative interactions framed by the process of making things together: among people with different cultural backgrounds, economic systems, and core beliefs. I characterised this practice through its potential for transformation at the social and economic levels. As I mentioned before, we were not looking to resolve any single design problem but instead trigger the artisans' cooperation and creative contribution. We structured transformative situations during the design process that I termed 'proximities of design'. The situations were undertaken with respect to people, places, and materials, exchanging techniques and materials among participants.

Transformative situations were indeed the product of a system of exchanges through which the making of artefacts became a shared experience. We generated ways of gaining knowledge and answering some questions including whether the practice of social design promotes attributes that strengthen communities. Can this practice of correspondence be assimilated by artisans' social, economic, and political structure? We established ways of supporting local communities to influence their markets while also opening new research venues between collaborative work and social design practice within the field of material culture.

Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

5.1 Documenting Processes and outcomes: Meta-research

In this Chapter, I have curated a set of resources that together create a convincing and explanatory presentation in the form of a catalogue or dossier. This includes documentation of the design process and prototypes, as well as writing about the context, aims and findings behind the artefacts. I also offered brief accounts of situations which properly encapsulate the idea of 'proximities of design' and which were key to the design process. Those situations were undertaken with respect to people, places, and materials. At the same time, through my reflections on those situations, I suggested some limits to the designer's role and discussed the implications of those restrictions for a critical design practice. On this section I will focused on exposing Ethnographical Research conducted through field work to meet activists, anthropologists, artists and educators who had extensive experience working with artisan communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas.

This structure helps situate the practice clearly as scholarly research. My aim is to articulate a critical reflection which persists beyond the duration and location of the physical exhibition of the design process. Technique and material exchange among participants were a significant aspect of these reflections. For us, the design practitioners, traditional academic reporting is an insufficient format to present our research. To control and expand the dissemination of the work, we talk about the process, but writing about it cannot do it justice. I believe that examining some snapshots from the process, reading the reflections on the research, and beholding the artefacts themselves will give the reader a more holistic sense of the practice. Developing a new a form of communication about design, based on 'eliciting situations', enhances its potential for transformation.

Therefore, my focus was to use design as a research tool to prompt observers to see themselves in a different light and to question their parameters. As sociologist Richard Sennett writes, 'The making lies at the heart of the artisan identity and her measure of creativity and artistic authority' (Sennett, 2013).

In order to structure events and offer the reader a better understanding of this Dissertation, and due to the fact Research was developed over an extended period, in episodes between 2013 and



Figure 5.2 *Mapping. Table and work study of Carmen Malvar during the process of research and selection of toys as a cultural artifact for the development of methodologies. New York. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

From a design-practice point of view, I struggled to organise the material to show how it helped conduct and structure my research. In the end, I organised documentation in relation to content and objects in several case studies so that I could present and describe the main characteristics and location of the process and offer basis for judgment. The fundamental structure spans a variety of settings – both physical environments and social-organisational settings – from long before the workshops, to the process itself, to long after. I evaluated the different cultural expressions not as along lines of simple comparison but, as Bonfil Batalla suggests, by understanding each cultural expression in their own context.

5.1.1 Exploratory Research Travel and visits

Between 2013 and 2014, I conducted field research, which necessarily required travel across Mexico. In order for me to meet and interview communities, designers, anthropologists and master craftspeople who had been involved at several CECATI, government crafts training centers or with community or artisan development programs. Travelling by public transportation over long distances was time and energy consuming, but offered the possibility to gather first hand impressions about the country, political issues, its people at daily activities, different human settlements and landscape.

5.1.1.1 **2013 – February. Site visit to San Marcos Tlapazola (Tlacoula de Matamoros, Oaxaca)**

February 8th, I travelled to San Marcos Tlapazola with Fátima G. Díaz and Paul Francisco Mijangos. We met the artisans of the Santiago family.

The aim of the visit was to make an analysis of commercial logistics, the observation of the process of the trade technique, the study of its accessibility and marginality index.

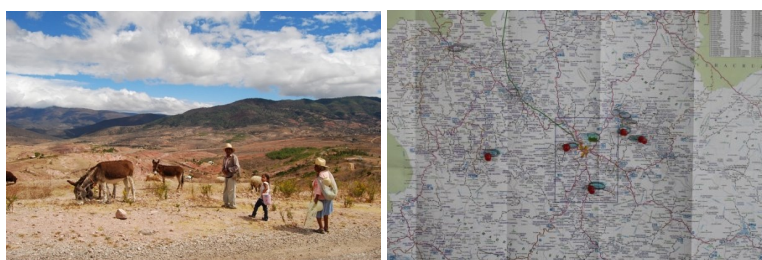


Figure 5.3 *Left: Research and visit area based on located communities, Oaxaca. Right: Oaxaca region map with the areas of field work marked. CADA Foundation®, 2013-2014.*

The towns in the state of Oaxaca are representative of the Zapotec population and the crafts they make. Like the town of San Marcos Tlapazola, which is famous for the red clay pottery it produces.

It is a small rural community that is located approximately one hour from Oaxaca City and 10 minutes south of Tlacolula de Matamoros²⁷. The clay of this town is particular due to its terracotta style with different intensities of red.

There are about 300 potters in the town but they work sporadically. However, since the late 1980s the village potters have been experimenting with new shapes, leading to better sales and recognition for the village.

The potters make each piece by hand. Each piece they make is an exceptional work that demonstrates their great craftsmanship, although they do not use a potter's wheel. These artisan women protect a very old tradition. Women work non-stop as they take care of every step of the process. Each of them mixes the clay, shapes their piece and bakes it.

²⁷ Encyclopedia of the Municipalities and Delegations of Mexico. Corresponding section to the state of Oaxaca: <http://www.inafed.gob.mx/work/enciclopedia/EMM20oaxaca/index.html>

The traditional forms are pots, pichanchas, saucepans, trays, beaters and comales. Innovative potters also make pots, plates, serving dishes, sauce pans, piggy banks and teapots.

In conclusion, due to its proximity to the city of Oaxaca this is the most exposed area to market access. In the surrounding landscape a great deforestation due to the continuous burning of firewood to cook the mud. Great openness by artisans that reflects continuous exposure to foreigners and foreigners when dealing with outsiders.



Figure 5.4 *Artisan woman working with the red clay pottery. San Marcos Tlapazola. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

5.1.1.2 2013 – February. Site visit to San Martin Tilcajete (Ocotlan, Oaxaca)

February 15th, I travelled to San Martin Tilcajete with Fátima G. Díaz. We met with the artisans Florencio Sánchez and Paula Sánchez

The aim of the visit was to make an analysis of commercial logistics, the observation of the process of the trade technique, the study of its accessibility and marginality index.



Figure 5.5 *Artisan with a piece of wood carving. San Martin Tilcajete. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

San Martín de Tilcajete is about thirty kilometers from the city of Oaxaca, it is the town where alebrijes are born, representations of imaginary animals carved in wood in a combination of bright colors.

The meaning of alebrije comes from three words which are: Joy for its colors, Witch for mysticism and Embije which means to dye or paint something red.

The knowledge for the elaboration of wood carvings is a process that is acquired from generation to generation. They live among the stacks of copal logs, with the tools, the painting or the process itself: the carving, the painting and the display of pieces for sale within their homes. Thus, children and young people learn this trade from the oldest. The inhabitants of Tilcajete are born and grow closely linked to the elaboration of figures as part of the family environment.

First, the piece of copal wood is chosen, which being resistant is at the same time suitable for cutting first with the machete and then with a knife and blade. The wood is dried and cured to prevent it from being damaged later by moisture or insects. Then it is carved little by little, with patience, anticipating in the artist's mind the alebrije that will be born with the skill of its carver. Finally, it is carefully painted using very vivid colors such as red, blue, pink, green, adding spots or shapes to make it look even more magical.



Figure 5.6 *Wood cutting process.* San Martin Tilcajete. CADA Foundation®, 2013.



Figure 5.7 *Artisan painting the alebrije.* San Martin Tilcajete. CADA Foundation®, 2013.

It is one of the communities most related to international trade. It is very close to Oaxaca, it is a common souvenir among tourists, maximum openness of the community to outsiders and used to exhibitions. Openness towards collaboration.

In the 1980s, the promotion of handicrafts from Oaxaca made possible the promotion of carvings from Tilcajete, which increased sales and the development of talents. Currently, the elaboration of these crafts is the base of the economy in Tilcajete. In some houses everyone works in the carving, painting and marketing process.

Other visits were made to other Zapotec and Mixtec towns with the same technique, around the vicinity of Oaxaca de Juárez: San Antonio Arrazola and Santa Cruz Xoxocotlán, where artisans mostly produced artifacts oriented at the tourist and souvenir markets and which were not interesting for this research.

5.1.1.3 2013 – February. Field trip to San Pedro Cajonos (Villa Alta, Oaxaca)

February 22th, I travelled to San Pedro Cajonos with Fátima G. Díaz. We met with the artisans of the Martinez Family and the Wed Do Sed Association. They work with Creole Silk as a whole process: silkworm farming, silk thread, weaving.



Figure 5.8 *Artisan working with Creole Silk.* San Pedro Cajonos. CADA Foundation®, 2013.

San Pedro Cajonos belongs to the district of Villa Alta²⁸, within the northern sierra region. Its population, mainly Zapotec, is known for its original indigenous crafts. San Pedro is one of the towns that make up the silk road trilogy, in the municipality of San Francisco Cajonos.

²⁸ Locality catalog of Oaxaca. Microregion Unit.

<http://www.microrregiones.gob.mx/catloc/Default.aspx?buscar=1&tipo=nombre&campo=mun&valor=&varent=20>

We visited a group of artisans dedicated to the production of silk shawls, dresses and jewelry, represented by the artist Moisés Martínez who currently forms together with his brother José Martínez Velasco and his family the Wen Do Sed Productores de Seda group, who raise their own silkworms, both wild and cultivated.

The challenge for the Martínez family and all silk producers in the Cajonos region is undoubtedly to find the right markets for the sale of their products. The process from the rearing of the worm to the dyeing of pieces with natural dyes takes months of work that are justly reflected in the prices.

Worm breeding: there are two types of worms: Creole and "improved", the latter are not born directly from the butterfly but are purchased from a dealer. There are subtle differences in color and touch between the silks produced by both types, being that of the Creoles softer and with a more irregular colour. Once the worms are formed, the rearing work is to keep them well fed with leaves from the mulberry tree. After three weeks, the worms stop eating the leaves and change their color to a transparent green. That is the signal that indicates that they are ready to form the cocoons with the silk thread. The breeder accommodates the worms on oak leaves and waits for the worms to do their homework.²⁹

Spinning and Weaving: the spinning process begins when the cocoons of the worm are boiled to form a yarn. During boiling and washing, the Creole worm cocoons lose their yellow color and turn white. The spinning process is done manually with a winch or with a mechanical pedal device. Little by little the balls of silk thread are formed ready to go to the warper.

Natural Dyes: after weaving and embossing, the pieces are ready for dyeing with natural dyes. Pericón, Brazilian wood, indigo and cochineal grana are the base to obtain dozens of tonalities.

Interesting to observe the process of the silk thread. From the origin of the worm to the young. It is a holistically structured environment in an organic way both in the tasks and in the manufacturing process. It is a more remote community but equally friendly and open to any type of collaboration. Very structured.

In this area for some years, the ancestral techniques of silkworm rearing, as well as the weaving and dyeing of garments made with this precious material, have been recovering and promoting.

²⁹ Silk production in San Pedro Cajonos <http://viernestradicional.impacto.org.mx/blog/la-produccion-de-seda-en-el-san-pedro-cajonos/>



Figure 5.9 *Spinning and weaving process to obtain Creole Silk. San Pedro Cajonos. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

5.1.1.4 2013 – February. Field trip to San Bartolo Coyotepec (Centro, Oaxaca)

In this same month of February, I travelled to San Bartolo Coyotepec with Fátima G. Díaz. We met with the artisan Armando Magno.



Figure 5.10 *Artisan Armando Magno. San Bartolo Coyotepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.*

The municipality of San Bartolo Coyotepec is located in the Central district of the Valles Centrales region, in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. The black clay of Coyotepec comes immediately to mind when mentioning the pottery of Oaxaca. It is one of the most famous pottery towns in Mexico. It is also the largest in Oaxaca, with some 700 households actively producing.

The color of black clay is due to properties of the clay itself and not to colorants. The soil that is used to extract the mud is cleaned to remove all impurities, which can take up to a month to soak and set the mud apart from the rest of the soil. After this process, each piece takes around twenty days to finish.

Traditionally, clay is molded into plates balanced on rocks, so that it can be worked by hand. Large pieces, such as pitchers, are formed from the base, adding clay as the piece grows. After they take

shape, the pieces are put to dry in an insulated room to protect them from changes in temperature.

Drying can take up to three weeks. If the piece is to be polished, it is polished when the piece is almost dry to have a glossy black finish. The surface of the piece is slightly moistened and then rubbed with a curved quartz stone. This compresses the surface of the clay and creates the metallic shine and dark color during baking.

The pieces are then fired in holes under the ground or in wood ovens, using wood fire. When they come out, the polished pieces are a glossy black color and those that were not polished have a matte gray finish.



Figure 5.11 *Artisan proud of the process. The clay is prepared with a secret, non-disclosure technique.* San Bartolo Coyotepec. CADA Foundation®, 2013.

Very sought-after mud. Community very exposed to the market. About 95% of the population participates in production. Thanks to its robust sales, most potters make a comfortable living from their craft. Countless stores in Coyotepec sell local pottery. It is possible to visit the artisan market in the center of town, next to a large tree, as well as the market at the entrance of the town.

The current production has lost its usefulness and functionality, gaining in the decorative aspect.

5.1.1.5 2013 – February. Visit to San Pablo Tijaltepec (Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca)

I also travelled to San Pablo Tijaltepec with Fátima G. Díaz. We met with local women through the local authorities' filter. They work embroidered textile (pick-up weave and gathered pleats) and vegetable fiber (palm).



Figure 5.12 *Territory of San Pablo Tijaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, 2013.

San Pablo Tijaltepec is located in the Mixteca region in the state of Oaxaca. Its territory consists mainly of hills. It is found in coniferous forests and rivers. Unfortunately, this natural environment has recently been affected by the exploitation of resources, especially the felling of oak and ocote trees for domestic use and construction.

According to the National Population Council, in 2015, the municipality was classified with a very high degree of marginalization, which is why a large number of its male population has emigrated to other places in search of employment. The women are left to take care of the children and the domestic animals. They dedicate themselves to the activities of the field, the home and the realization of the craft work.



Figure 5.13 *Artisan women in San Pablo Tijaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, 2013.

Previously there were certain symbols to distinguish young women from older women, such as the position of the seam on the blouse or the assembly of the skirt. If the skirt is made up mostly of colored fabric, it tells us that it is a married woman, while if it has less color, it is a single woman. The white part on the skirt represents the man and the color the woman.

The fabric used as canvas is blanket in natural color and the threads required for embroidery are usually acrylic yarn. The embroidery of the blouse is known as gathered *pepenado*, since for its elaboration each row of basting is embroidered separately and at the end of the design the

threads are pulled gathering the base fabric to give way to the representation of deer, birds and elements of nature in geometric form.

The embroidery of the deer is inspired by a religious figure from the Mixteca and is the most embroidered element by the women of San Pablo Tijaltepec. Textiles are created by women under the precept of the sense of community, that is, they are collective patterns and as such must be respected. Girls are taught from an early age to embroider, and later to make the blouse.

Very difficult access, road in very bad condition, poorly connected, isolated. A culture in which its original language is maintained, a variation of Mixtec, many do not speak Spanish. Difficulty communicating even though we met one of the women Juanita who facilitated the dialogue though. For my interest the participation of the local government became obvious. Impressive technique.

5.1.1.6 2013 – February. Visit to San Agustín Etla (Etla, Oaxaca) Taller Arte Papel (Paper Art Factory)



Figure 5.14 *Paper Art Factory*. San Agustín Etla. CADA Foundation®, 2013.

We also visited the Paper Art Factory in San Agustín Etla. This art center located in a former hydroelectric plant uses native plants to create paper for kites, bags, jewelry and more.

San Agustín Etla, nestled in the mountains, is a town that is about 30 minutes from Oaxaca. A place surrounded by mountains covered by forests as well as springs. Its landscape has been a source of inspiration for many artists, painters and craftsmen.

At 1700 meters above sea level is the old Vista Hermosa hydroelectric plant in San Agustín Etla, Oaxaca. The current headquarters of the Taller Arte Papel Vista Hermosa cooperative, better known since its foundation as the Etla paper factory.

An initiative of the plastic artist, patron and cultural provocateur Francisco Toledo, the cooperative stands out for being a community project, of artistic collaboration, ecological and

self-sustaining. Unlike others of the same type, in this place handmade sheets of paper are made, of various types and thicknesses, from the extraction of natural fibers from trees, plants, barks and flowers in the area, as well as from other parts of the world.

Everything, with sufficient knowledge of the local flora to avoid breaking the environmental balance of the community.

Each fiber is cooked for two to three hours to soften and then it goes to grinding on trays. The colours are added at the time of grinding to obtain a uniform pulp, which is then taken to racks to form the leaves. Nopal slime is added to make the paper flexible. To give color, cochineal grana is used, a parasitic insect of the nopales; indigo blue, an aquatic plant that turns into a fine powder after various processes; the achiote fruit and the pomegranate. The production of paper is carried out in a traditional way, with instruments such as a Dutch pile, pots, buckets, racks, felts, a press and clotheslines. The water necessary for alchemy is also reused, which is why the procedure is ecological.

The objective of the workshop is to specialize in the production of four or five types of paper that can be used for artists. Notepads, sketchbooks, invitation paper, envelopes, artist boxes and stationery in general are also made. The importance of learning these techniques is that it has served the community to start and create its own source of income.

The number of craft centers is impressive in Oaxaca.

Travel revealed many aspects of relevant and contemporary political, economic and social issues. The Mexico I observed was a vast, heterogeneous and complex country. As a foreigner, I kept a prudent approach to political discussions and other social issues I saw affected communities: both rural and urban. Controversial issues such as poverty, access to opportunity, drug and human trafficking, migration and their effects in local societies were part of my impressions, which I recorded systematically. Using video and photographic coverage afforded me a wider perspective into local reality and circumstances, and giving me a more vivid impression and recollection than merely writing.

I found graffiti and decorative arts gave insight into cultural appropriation, as manifestation of popular culture on topics that mattered to normal people at their daily life

As I have intimated in Chapter 1, visits were aimed either at the community as a whole, or at specific and relevant persons, in order to observe local circumstances, make contacts and evaluate potential synergies, and are presented in chronological order as follow.

5.1.1.7 2014 – February. Chiapas and Communities in Oaxaca.

February 6th, I travelled to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas together with Maddalena Forcella, we Travel to Tuxla and then to San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. On February 7th we encountered with Artist Ambar Past.

My aim was to gather first-hand data, to generate evidence from it making a claim to knowledge. Engaging critically with existing literature and through discussions with others researchers and practitioners that may be less known in the global area whose work has been produced in the context on Latin America and in particular within the context of widespread economic culture in some regions of Mexico, would enrich my discussion of cultural value an identity.

During my interview, poet Amber Past explained her work, as an activist taking part in this civil associations, dedicated to promoting art as a cultural expression, including theatre activities to strengthen local identity and vision, enriching the old and new cultural values, and broadcasting and strengthening the indigenous cultural values of Altos de Chiapas, through the anthology of oral tradition. Her position was of highlighting local identity through keeping culture static and intact, without contact to foreign influence.

For past, an important part of her activism is to promote the teaching of reading and writing in Tzotzil and Tzeltal languages among the indigenous children and youths of the Altos de Chiapas in order to strengthen their cultural identity, as well as concerns for dissemination of environmental, cultural and educative values through radio activities for the benefit of local communities. Part of these associations' role includes preserving, documenting and broadcasting cultural traditions of the Maya people.

Past's comments when I spoke about my research intent were aligned to the theories of Turok, and navigated from unwelcoming to accusatory. An invitation to eat at her house ended in a tense conversation. Maddalena Forcella, who had taken me there, defended the legitimacy of my approach, unrelated to colonialism and to any intentions of economic exploitation of local communities.



Figure 5.15 Visit at *Ámbar past home*. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.

Note. From left to right: *Ámbar Past* (Poet and founder of Taller de Leñateros), Maruch Méndes (Shaman and soothsayer), Maddalena Forcella, Javier Balderas Castilla (Indigenist lawyer and manager of Leñateros).

5.1.1.8 Chiapas / San Cristóbal de las Casas February 2014 /Interview to Luis Morales

I also meet and interview Luis Morales, director at CECATI 133. Morales is an anthropologist, who had co-founded K'un K'un together with Maddalena Forcella, a local Arts and Crafts Workshop that manufactured rugs and wool jackets using local textiles and working with regional artisans. With a social anthropology approach, this textile design collective engaged with weavers and embroiderers from San Juan Chamula, Tenejapa. Around 20 artisans participated in the workshops they held on natural dyes and traditional Mayan designs, assisting weavers on design, quality control, pedal loom and dyeing techniques. Morales was also a friend of Jimmy – James-Metcalf, Ana and Jorge Pellicer, CECATI 166 directors and co-founders at Santa Clara del Cobre ³⁰.

³⁰ During the documentation process about Oaxaca and the production workshops in October 2013, I found by chance the book *“Los artesanos del porvenir” (The Artisans of the future)* (Pellicer, 1995) brought a new perspective to the dissertation, and became key reference in the project. This book by Jorge Pellicer was based in a case study at Santa Clara del Cobre, a project planned and conducted in the CECATI No 166 by James Metcalf and Ana Pellicer, in which they asserted and re-claimed artisan production as opposed to the industrial processes, not only for its collective value but as the motor of their reality, the only valid pre-condition for the true industry, based in the implementation of the basic crafts and supporting crafts. Pellicer's book revisited the work of close collaborator and practitioner James Metcalf, describing one of the best-case studies known and well documented on artifacts production in Mexico—more precisely in Santa Clara del Cobre. Discussing the book with Maddalena Forcella would spark an introduction to Luis Morales he was witness and close friend of Jorge and Ana Pellicer and James Metcalf. Morales tried to implement the same approach to educational structure, echoing work previously done at CECATI 166, presented on Pellicer's book, contributing to a relevant sample of production and reinforcement of communities through the design of arts and crafts.

My interview to Luis Morales centered on three counts, his work at CECATI 133, his work with artisans, as founder of an association dedicated to textiles, K'un K'un, and his reflections on Mexican anthropological literature I had researched.

The fact that he was a trained Anthropologist working with social design and artisans, was of interest to me. I intended to discuss issues related to anthropological questions within local contexts, to contrast and evidence my theoretical framework, specially discussing works published by Mexican Anthropologist Beltran and Pozas and which were only available in Spanish. We discussed work by early educators Adolfo Best-Maugard and reformer Dr. Moises Saenz (1888-1941), research developed in Chiapas by Calixta Guiteras Holmes and her publication *Perils of the Soul* (1965) as well as widely published work by Dr. Robert Carter Wilson (1995).

Our discussion assisted me in gathering evidence and a theoretical framework to local circumstances. After an interview which extended until dawn, Morales expressed that he understood my own research as continuation of CECATI's initial spirit, seeing me as an unearther of the project K'un K'un, that he started 30 years ago together with Maddalena Forcella his former wife. He would go on to discuss in detail the indigenist movement about Moisés Saenz, Bonfil Batalla, explaining the ideas of Juan Villoro, a philosopher in support of the Zapatista movement.



Figure 5.16 *Anthropologist Luis Morales during our interview.* San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.

5.1.1.9 **2014 March 10 -14th Travel to Jalisco. Visit to Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, Guadalajara Campus.**

Tec de Monterrey, or formally, Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, is a private higher education institution, considered among the best universities in the country. Originally founded in Monterrey, in the northern side of the country, Tec has branch campuses across the nation. My goal was to conduct a workshop on awareness on production chains and artisanal training,

sponsored and promoted by CONAFOR (Conservation, Restoration and sustainable use of Forest Resources). There, I would introduce the case study of Santa Clara del Cobre CECATI No 166 during the period it operated under Ana Pellicer and James Metcalf direction, as a model of comprehensive training for the artisan production.

5.1.1.10 2014 November 1st Oaxaca, Textile Museum

I returned to Mexico on November 2014 back In Oaxaca, I attended celebrations at the Textile Museum and at the local cemetery, following local customs. The Day of the Death Celebration (Día de Muertos) is a Mexican holid

ay celebrated throughout Mexico, in particular the Central and South regions. A national holiday, it has roots in Mesoamerican cultures, syncretizing a cosmological vision on life after death with the Christian celebration of Day of all Deceased and All Saints' Day. Scholars trace the origins of his Mexican holiday to an ancient Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. Originally only celebrated in Central and Southern Mexico, it became a national holiday in the 1960's as part of homogenizing governmental policies.

In Mexican culture, on this day families honour their dead, pray, make offerings and gather to help their deceased in their spiritual journey after death, viewed as a natural part of the human cycle. Día de los Muertos in Mexico is a joyous day of re-encounter with departed relatives and friends. Tradition calls for building private altars called *ofrendas*, gifts, honoring the deceased using skulls, marigolds, and food and beverage offerings, visiting graves and oftentimes holding celebrations at the Cemetery at night.



Figure 5.17 *Death day installation.. Suspended marigolds would form an atypical yellow canopy above attendees. Oaxaca Textile Museum. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.18 *Traditional altars with a Crucifix, burning candles, photos of loved ones, food offerings and yellow marigolds. Celebrations reach their highest point at night. Oaxaca Textile Museum. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

5.1.1.11 2014 November 6th San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas



Figure 5.19 *Drawing: Carmen Malvar. Map tracing travel conducted during this Ethnographic Research phase. CADA Foundation®, October and November 2014.*

Note. The map/route shows the places where visit with the intention of gathering data in preparation for the future workshops: Oaxaca City/San Cristóbal (Chiapas)/Santa Clara del Cobre (Michoacán).

In subsequent travels across Mexico, I learned about its current political and cultural issues. Graffiti often reveals social reivindication of unsolved issues. Some demands at the time the recovering of 43 missing students at Ayotzinapa, a group of abducted boys who attended Escuela Normal Rural de Atequiza (Public Highschool of Atequiza), in Guerrero, one of the regions most damaged by drug trafficking in Mexico who dissappeared on Sept. 26th, 2014. Investigations eventually resulted in the finding of 3 corpses. The rest are still missing and investigations continues in spite of official versions to close the case, under claims of mass murder and incineration by a drug cartel. In Mexico, issues as poverty, immigration, drug and human trafficking

have a strong impact in social and individual wellbeing. It remains to date, a quite controversial case.



Figure 5.20 *Graffiti over church wall claiming the 43 mexicans students missing.* San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.



Figure 5.21 *Waiters at a café.* San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

Note. In general, people in Mexico are friendly, especially when they work in the services industry. Their genuine smiles are expression of their kindness.

5.1.1.12 2014 November 8th.

In my second visit, Luis Morales scheduled a visit to CECATI 133 in San Cristóbal, as he was still in office as Chief of the Area. During his tenure as Director, he tried to recover what had been done and achieved at Santa Clara del Cobre's CECATI 166. At the training centre, he introduced me to a goldsmith and artisan Aurelia Zebadua who had been a student under apprenticeship of James Metcalf before CECATI 166, where she learned jewelry techniques for casting lost wax melting. She worked as a teacher for *lost wax melting* and we discussed craftsmanship and saw samples of her work and techniques. Such interview was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489942190/b2e1afecc4>

Morales would join me some days later in Michoacán, for a joint interview I would hold with him and Ana Pellicer. Such interview was recorded in video format and is partially edited online by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489872162/c084d5f4e8>



Figure 5.22 *Maestra Aurelia Zebadua on her demonstration on lost wax melting and student working at CECATI 133. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.23 *Interior spaces at CECATI 133 In San Cristóbal de las Casas, depicting metalsmithing artisans at work. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.24 *Visit to CECATI 133 at San Cristóbal las Casas where an artisan Zarina Sanchez Zebadua works at her bench, using wax molds and other fine metalsmith techniques taught by teachers trained at CECATI 166. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

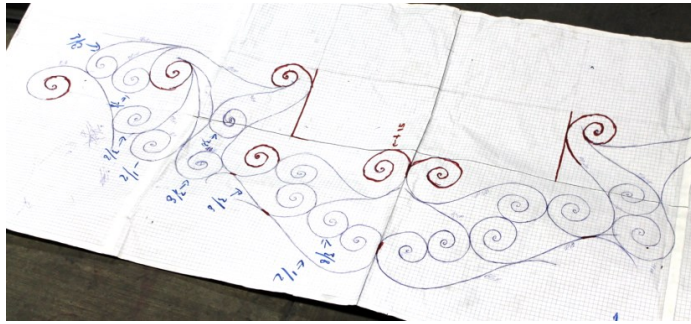


Figure 5.25 Visit CECATI 133. Drawing uncoated class. San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

5.1.1.13 2014 November 9th San Cristóbal de las Casas

Visit to El Camino de los Altos Project, their workshop and shop, where I met its designers. Ana Paula Fuentes and Maddalena Forcella had strong ties through their cooperative work, founded by French artisans working with local weavers.

5.1.1.14 2014 November 10th San Juan Chamula

During this trip, I also visited San Juan Chamula, Chiapas. A Tzotzil town in the highlands of Southern Mexico outside San Cristóbal de las Casas. This community also uses a system of Usos y Costumbres, a self-determined way of ruling. Their approach to cosmological and oral tradition has been revised by many anthropologist, but these documents have never been published in English.

Chamula inhabitants keep their customs alive and dress in their traditional clothes. Women wore a beautiful local wool textile that they spun, wove and dyed black. They felt and brush it vigorously to create a fascinating textile, which they use as skirt. Men wear a garment similar to a tunic in the same fabric (Morris 2012).



Figure 5.26 The town of Chamula and its inhabitants. San Juan Chamula, Chiapas. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

5.1.1.15 2014 November 11th Travel from San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, to Santa Clara del Cobre, via Morelia (Michoacán)

My next travel by bus took me from San Cristóbal to Mexico City, a 15 hours road trip. The journey would continue to Morelia, in the State of Michoacán, for another 5 hours. I would further drive to Santa Clara del Cobre, to meet Ana Pellicer at her residence. A long journey to interview an artist



Figure 5.27 Typical lake views of Cointzio, with its Isla del Borrego, in area of Morelia, near Pátzcuaro and Santa Clara del Cobre (Michoacán). CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

5.1.1.16 2014 -November 12th. Meeting Ana Pellicer. Fomer Director CECATI 166. Best Maugard

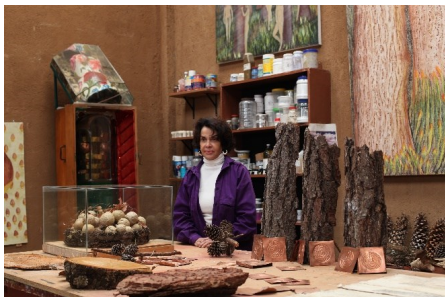


Figure 5.28 Ana Pellicer in our interview. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

Interviewing sculptor Ana Pellicer proved fascinating. She contextualized past and present artisan situations, needs, state of affairs and potential, speaking from the rich tradition and history of craftsmanship in Mexico, from precolumbian eras, how shared learning lead to the construction of collective knowledge, on empowerment. She shared with me key bibliography I used to my theoretical approach to my Research. Such interview was recorded in video format and is partially edited online by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform:

<https://vimeo.com/490532721/7609b3ec60>

My research gained better understanding of the theoretical framework for her research, from one of the ground breakers and main characters of technical training in the 1960s and 1970s. Ana Pellicer, herself an accomplished sculptor, with pieces at the Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno in Mexico Distrito Federal - creator of *La máquina enamorada*, for instance- spoke about the history of her project Artisans of the Future (Pellicer, 1995) shared with Metcalf, and other like-minded intellectuals and anthropologists.

Together, they believed in the power of design and craft as a means to elevate Mexican artisans and expose their knowledge and art to the world, generating better artifacts of more market value and allowing artisans a way to earn a living through their craft.



Figure 5.29 Ana Pellicer's living room. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.



Figure 5.30 Personal collection of tools of James Metcalf. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

Pellicer, a reputed sculptor, started her career in Mexico City. Later, she met, married and partnered with James Metcalf, moving to Santa Clara del Cobre. Metcalf was an accomplished artist from New York, son of artists and an accomplished stained glass artist, he had trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and Central School of Arts and Crafts in

London, and had studied ancient metallurgy in Mallorca. He had served in the Second World War, losing some of his fingers. Metcalf lived and worked in Paris from 1956 to 1965. From there, he arrived in Mexico in 1966, invited to mount an exhibition at the Palace of Beaux Arts in Mexico Distrito Federal.

He would move to Santa Clara del Cobre in 1967 with Ana Pellicer, arriving with an English Edition of Theophilus book "The various arts: medieval treatise on painting, glasswork and metalwork", dated 1847, and a truck full of tools he had brought from his atelier in Paris.

Metcalf fell in love with Santa Clara, as he discovered in this rural community, crafts and techniques dating Precolumbian times Pellicer and Metcalf found themselves immersed in the artisan community, working with them, experimenting and training. An interview from *Dos Artistas en un Pueblo de Artesanos*, by López Zuckermann was partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/490238219/2d659ad825>

Both artists founded several schools in Santa Clara del Cobre. In 1973, they received the support of the Ministry of Popular Culture and opened La Casa del Artesano, offering training to Santa Clara coppersmiths beyond traditional training they received as apprentices in local workshops or *talleres*. Both founders managed to help the community perfect their traditions by innovating through the creation of daily utilitarian objects in silver and copper. Later in the 1970s, La Casa del Artesano closed.

In 1976, Metcalf and Pellicer began teaching classes in their home. All the while, deep tensions continued to exist, not only within the artisans' community but also between ancient and modern techniques and styles of work, dress, jewelry, and, at its essence, community life.

In 1976 Pellicer founded with Metcalf the Educational Action Center 67, which would later become CECATI 166 Adolfo Best Maugard under the auspices of Mexico's Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretary of Public Education). Teaching different techniques of metalsmithing and jewelry making at all levels of production, the school incorporated traditional and European forging methods, they taught blacksmithing, casting in both lost wax and sand, machine tools, lathing, enamel work, stone cutting, and electroplating. All those techniques opened multi-faceted new horizons of artistic and commercial opportunity to Santa Clara artisans.

Ana Pellicer, thinking of the town's women, introduced the teaching of jewelry. Metcalf became a well-regarded artist in Mexico and his adoptive town, designing the torch for the 1968 Olympic Games. The torch, cauldron and Pellicer's The Enamored Machine, 1976, were manufactured by local artisans at Santa Clara, which consolidated local inhabitants' trust in the couple.

CECATI 166 became an unprecedented training centre in its kind. Its aim: to train and perfect artisan techniques working with copper and silver metalsmithing, Jewelry and Woodwork. Metcalf introduced new technology and techniques -such as the thick edge- and invented tools such as the Turntable for Leveling. He was fascinated by local techniques, which he believed had been lost in Europe 5,000 years ago and remained intact in the work and craft of Santa Clara's artisans.

This center was innovative to larger extent, being the sole training center to include a daycare center for trainees' children, creating a social community ties among the artisans based in shared knowledge, respect, fairness and collaboration.

In 2002, a Michoacán branch of Mexico's Teachers' Union took over directorship of the school, displacing Metcalf and Pellicer. The move was highly politicized and its consequences spilled over into extreme community tensions and division between the copper artisans and the former directors of the school. The training center became closed by force, due to intrigue and political reasons. Presumably, due to jealousy and envy.



Figure 5.31 *The forest Pellicer and Metcalf planted in Santa Clara del Cobre.* CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

5.1.1.17 **2014 November 13th – Interview to Marina Fraga - Former Area Coordinator.**
CECATI 166 Adolfo Best Maugard (1995)

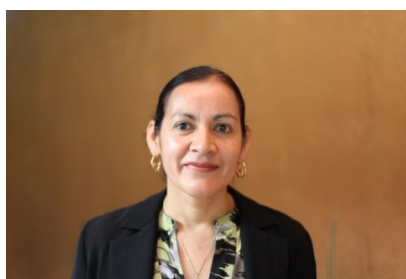


Figure 5.32 *Marina Fraga, former director at CECATI 166.* Ana Pellicer Private House, Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

During my interview to Marina Fraga, she remembered Directors James Metcalf and Ana Pellicer as wise and generous teachers, dedicated to craft. She pointed out they had been, as mentors, genuinely interested in training craftspeople in fine craftsmanship, teaching new techniques, mastering, perfecting and validating ancient methods. The artisan collective was happy. However, unnamed schemers – political intrigue- manipulated gullible people and generate discontent among them, arguing that they were being abused: “rich people were using them for their benefit as cheap labour”. A riot was orchestrated, lynching and destitution fell on then directors Metcalf and Pellicer. Such interview was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489939510/f25c4cf831>

5.1.1.18 November 14th /2014 Field Visit Former CECATI 166. Adolfo Best Maugard, interview with Carmen Pinoco and Director: Miguel Ángel Alcantar García

At Pellicer’s instance I scheduled an anonymous visit to CECATI 166 at Santa Clara del Cobre, making a phone appointment without warning the current Director of my research background and interests. I had been warned by Ana Pellicer of the development of events and my aim was to research the state of affairs at present times in a visit that should appear to be spontaneous. I did not tell officials at the training center, about my background research and the real purpose for being there.

Images below and following page are a testimonial of the current condition and state of abandonment of CECATI 166 to date after it was closed up by Government and resignation was forced upon Directors James Metcalf and Ana Pellicer. Visit and Marina Fragas’ interview are jointly edited online by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform:

<https://vimeo.com/489939510/f25c4cf831>



Figure 5.33 *Entrance to and gardens at CECATI 166. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.34 *Traditional Santa Clara forge pit at CECATI 166. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.35 *Still workshop interiors at CECATI 166. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

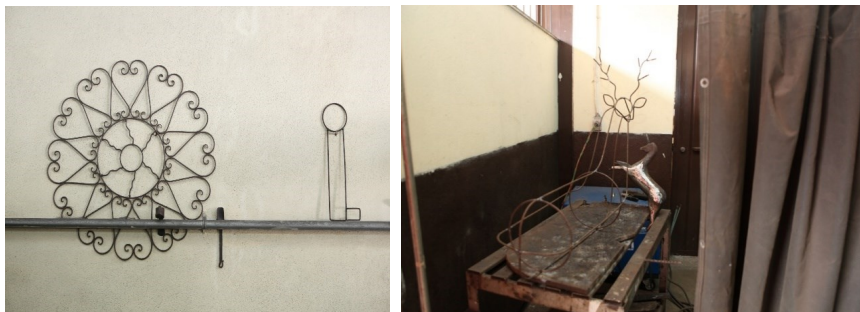


Figure 5.36 *Some samples of 1970's pieces, left at workshops, both finished or unfinished. An incomplete deer structure, left to languish and rust. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.37 Fine pieces showing the quality of craftsmanship, left on the ground to tarnish or piled up, at a room under lock and key. No current student has access to see, study or analyze these pieces. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.



Figure 5.38 Fine examples of wrought iron, zoomorphic door handles abstractions of a bull and an armadillo. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.



Figure 5.39 Detailed craftsmanship in an Edge with openwork and a pendant, examples of jewelry and the production of fine decorative objects. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.

5.1.1.19 **2014 - November 15th Visit to Familia Hernández Cooper Workshop. Four-generation Artisan Family.**

While at Santa Clara, I visited a family of copper artisans: the Hernández family. They have been working with hammered copper for four generations, starting with Mr. Gilberto Hernández. Now, the next three generations of blacksmiths and artisans work together led by Napoleón (65 years old, and son of Gilberto), Saul (40) and José (12), already an apprentice at his young age, to learn their craft, using an ancient pre-Hispanic process.

I was referenced to them by Ana Pellicer, who in the past, had ceded machinery to them. These tools had belonged to late artist James Metcalf, having these allowed them to work at a different scale producing new artifacts. These objects are now exported and sold to an appreciating, national and international audience.

They explained their techniques, which I documented as a video, not included in this Thesis, and showed me around their workshop. I would present them with a video documenting their processes, which includes melting metal inside a pit in the ground, filled with ash, as a gesture of gratitude and in exchange for my visit.



Figure 5.40 *Napoleón and Saul Hernández preparing the forge. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.41 *A young apprentice hammering a copper bowl by hand. Tools and hammers are build and created specifically for hammering special pieces. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.42 *Hammering copper is a painstaking job requiring rythmical and armonious hammering, applying controlled force, with precision and dexterity. I noted Hernández's artisans do not count hammer blows. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*



Figure 5.43 *Three generations of artisans at the Hernandez' workshop with Carmen Malvar. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

5.1.1.20 November 15th. /2014 Interview to Ana Pellicer and Luis Morales at the artist's house in Santa Clara del Cobre.

With a wider perspective given my contextualization of her theoretical research on Mexican cultural history, from Best Maugard to the idiosyncracies and fine print, I prepared a list of questions for Ana Pellicer, Former Director at CECATI 166 and Jose Luis Morales, Fomer Director and Head of Area at CECATI 133.

The interview would be filmed and edited . This video recording has included parctially in this thesis Meta-research. It was published by CADA Foundation® and is available under open password protection on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/489872162/c084d5f4e8>

This questions would develop into a deep conversation about tradition, history and development of technical and artisanal training and its political context.



Figure 5.44 *Sculptor Ana Pellicer and me at Peciller's home. Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

5.1.1.21 **2014- Sunday November 16th. Visit to Patzcuaro-Morelia**

A further study trip to Patzcuaro, also in Michoacán would be made by Luis Morales and I. This town is well known for its crafts in metalworks, textiles, basketry, woodworking, lacquer, miniatures, toys and stone carving. Eventually the trip would be extended to Mexico DF, to meet with fellow designers, some gallerists and museum curators.

5.1.1.22 **2014 November 17th. Interview with gallerists. Mexico City-Café La Gloria, Condesa District**

I met and interviewed Sol Vargas, Institutional Coordinator at Museo de Arte Moderno Conaculta, Marcos- Maren Villaseñor, joined by Luis Morales. Transcripts of this meeting have not been included in this Thesis.

5.1.1.23 **2014 November 21st Oaxaca Close UP Field Work Final Stage**

After this travel and research done at San Cristobal, Michoacán and Mexico City I traveled back to Oaxaca, where a first meeting with designers would be held, gathering for the first time what would be a team of facilitators for incipient CADA Foundation®.

2013 and 2014 proved to be a very intense and fruitful period for field work, providing me with invaluable insight and connections. I never foresaw I would meet and interview so many people who had been in the past, and were, at present, key figures involved in developing an approach to training artisans, who worked with artisan communities and had been involved in showcasing their unique craftsmanship to other artists or to the general public. These findings generated unforeseen synergies: to gain perspective, knowledge and understanding, bibliography and references of first edition books (no translated to english).

I also could gather a team of facilitators, , to contact artisans and start developing oral workshops at rural communities. These workshops, their location, aims and achievements, but most important, the relationships developed between participants and knowledge on how all these factors affected Design processes, will be described in the next section

5.2 Workshops and facilitators' meetings

Previous section focused on exposing Ethnographical Research conducted through field work to meet activists, anthropologists, artists and educators who had extensive experience working with artisan communities in Oaxaca and Chiapas.

I also interviewed gallerists and business owners who had specialist knowledge or interests in cultural artifacts, techniques and craftsmanship both at national institutions or in the private sector.

This research implied extensive travel and a respectful, honest, and open look at Mexican culture and its people.

This section portrays a detail account of workshops and facilitators' meetings, some described as case studies where workshop development and outcomes are described in detail. Being it a very extensive collection of recordings, videos, photos and notes, a selection of the most relevant information is offered. Some of these videos are available on open platforms such as Vimeo and have been cited throughout the document. The completed list can be consulted on the Appendix D, p. 325.

Workshops and facilitators' meetings notes are described in chronological order and belonging to Research Phases described in Chapter 1 and Chapter 4: Phase I: Ethnographical research and community selection; Phase II: Design Research; Phase III: Prototyping, Artisanal Production for Market Exposure. Some workshops are fully documented as case studies. Such Meta- research can surely assist other design practitioners in formulating and developing their own design methodologies adapted to circumstances and local cultural contexts in co-creation processes.

5.2.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops

"Histories are important for the role they play in sustaining or even creating collectible identities". Vansina (1961).

A series of Oral Workshops were held in February 2014. Those were an ethnographic exploration in a first stage of mapping the territory, both geographically and contextually. These happened before actual design workshops took place.

My aim was to create a visual and narrative summaries that express individual perspective as well as community approach towards tacit knowledge, making things visible and exchangeable. Simultaneously, this allowed me to use them as trigger towards dialogue and mutual understanding on the future upcoming design workshops

In these oral workshops, women, children and elderly from different communities expressed their oral tradition and mythology through drawings which I summarized in a useful dossier (see Appendix B, p. 305). Images and legends were collected in these oral narrative workshops where motifs containing figures born from symmetry of nature and abstraction of symbolic elements. Through the images and legends collected we shared a possible way to exchange and the allowance of a cultural approximation on the future design workshops to come.

5.2.1.1 Oral Workshop 01/Santa María de Atzompa, Oaxaca February 8th/2014.

12 months into the Project

½ day workshop/ First (oral) workshop after Ethnographic Phase I

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Omar Federico Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Fátima Díaz (Logistics).

PROXIMITIES OF DESIGN

Social

The town belongs to Oaxaca Centre municipality with 21,000 inhabitants, is about 6 km from the centre of the State. Mostly dedicated to making pottery. The pottery is an importance activity and exported to USA and markets all over Mexico. All members of the family including children work on the production as the main income source.

An important strategy for their market has been the introduction of lead-free glazing in the pottery well known for his green colour and glazing, and for the use of the pastillage technique.

Connections with community are made by Omar Federico Lesur who knew some of the artisans and ask them to join us for a workshop. No more explanation by phone is given and no payment for time spent on the workshop is expected.

Language spoken in the town Zapotec and Spanish. No translator needed.

Space

The gathering happens inside open patio, it is an official public building from the municipality.

The team and the participating, mostly women, take chairs and use a big open and inclusive circle to place them.

In the second part of the workshop, the tables are placed in the centre of the circle and moved the chairs closer. The use of space is constrained to the area designated in the open patio lend by authorities.

Material

Plastic tables and chairs provided by the municipality in the community.

Coffee machine, coffee, milk cookies, sugar, water, cardboard cups, handmade paper from Etlá paper factory and colour waxed crayons.

Camera, audio and recording device.

All material provided by me.

Clay is not use in any moment.

FLOW OF FRAMED EVENTS

Process

We (facilitators) approached the community through oral narrative using as a guide the research material discussed in Chapter IV adapting them to the actual conditions of the research.

The facilitators (including myself) introduced the project to the participant in a simple and nearby way.

First, we invite them to share stories or legends verbally. We (facilitators) shared what we are doing as professionals and we will do as well with the upcoming workshops in other communities. We also explained we would share the outcome drawings to all of them.

The stories had been told by other members of the community and that have passed from generation to generation orally.

Secondly (after 2 hours and a coffee break), they all are invited to draw their stories to transform from oral narrative into drawing by hand of their imaginary (2D) with colour crayons on paper.

Organizational Routine

First, we all (facilitators and artisans) sit on a chair. The sitting arrangement is led by the artisans and there are some children sat on their knees.

Some notes on the verbal stories are taking by facilitator Maddalena Forcella the event last 2 hours approx. (For some of the story narrative samples, see Appendix B, p. 305).

In a second part of the workshop (2 hours approx.) as an unspoken organization routine, artisan move tables to the centre of the chair circle.

Distribution of materials among participants and coffee to start second part of the workshop.

Dynamic

Around 30 artisans take part: older members of the community, middle age adults (mostly women) and some children in a very participatory way.

Atmosphere of trust and exchange is created. As one of the women starts telling the legends, the rest bring encouraging versions or add details, environment becomes relax and natural bringing dialogue among all participants.

The team and participants from the community are enthusiastic, total involvement of children and adults.

They all share coloured crayons. There is an informal close up and thank you message from team. We promise to share the final dossier with them.



Figure 5.45 *The circular dynamics of chairs.* Santa María de Atzompa, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.



Figure 5.46 Crayon Drawing from Delia Olivera Perez 58 years old. Oral Wokshops. Santa María de Atzompa, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation ®, February 2014.



Figure 5.47 Atzompa artisans at the oral workshop. Santa María de Atzompa, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

5.2.1.2 Oral Workshop 02/Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca, February 15th/2014

12 months into the Project

1/ 2 day workshop/ Second(oral) workshop after Ethnographic Phase I

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Omar Federico Fernández Lesur, Maddalena Forcella and Ludovica Morales.

PROXIMITIES OF DESIGN

Social

Santa María Yavesía is a municipality of 472 inhabitants, of which 27% speak an indigenous language.

50% of the population has a primary education and only 15.95% has a secondary education. It has an illiterate population of 10.48%, mainly older adults.

This community has an extraordinary natural wealth.

Language spoken in the town Zapotec and Spanish. No translator needed.

Space

The initial conversation with local authorities happens in a large space provided by the authority. The community uses it for music classes, workshops and other activities.

Material

Handmade paper from Oaxaca, ink and brushes. Camera, audio and recording device.

All material provided by me.

FLOW OF FRAMED EVENTS

Process

We arrived, we spoke with the authorities and we introduced ourselves and the project, and the reason why we were visiting the community.

Our introduction to authorities was based on the idea of creating an activity to trigger community's imagination and to be able to study possibility to access the market with different products

Stories were told among the community and drawings were made

We close up promising to return with the result of the drawings compile from other communities so they can see how others draw and what kind of stories they share

Organizational Routine

First, we introduce ourselves and in a big circle they tell the stories and later, with the help of all the participants, circles are established around tables where adults and children order their stories and transmit them on paper.

We did not carry colours, but brushes and black ink, with the same type of paper that had been bought in the paper factory San Agustín Etla.

We worked with the intention of knowing the stories of adults and children, and we wanted to focus on the shapes and eliminate the colour

Dynamic

About 40 -50 members of this community take part, counting among them grown men, women and children.

As stories were told people took part and got involved with enthusiasm with very positive and participatory response

Conclusions were analysed at May 14th and Oct 28th meetings. (See May 14th and Oct 28th meeting at page 220)



Figure 5.48 Men and woman sitting waiting turns to share stories. Oral workshops. Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.



Figure 5.49 Large space provided by the authority. Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.



Figure 5.50 Materials. Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.



Figure 5.51 Women drawing. Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

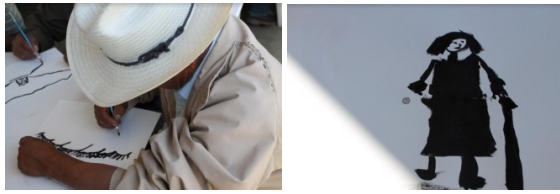


Figure 5.52 *Left: Men drawing with brush and ink at Santa María Yavesía. Right: Drawing from oral workshop. Santa María Yavesía, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.*

5.2.1.3 **Oral Workshop 03/San Pablo Tijaltepec, Oaxaca February 22nd/2014**

12 months into the Project

1/ 2 day workshop/ Thirth (oral) workshop after Ethnographic Phase I

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Omar Federico Fernández Lesur, Fátima G. Díaz, Maddalena Forcella , Laura Quiroz (Lita) and Ludovica Morales

PROXIMITIES OF DESIGN

Social

San Pablo Tijaltepec is located in the Mixtecan region in the state of Oaxaca. With approximately 2279 inhabitants, it is the most remote, the most marginal, the least exposed to the outside of the three communities. As I commented in the previous mentions of the village, they use embroidered textile, (pick-up weave and gathered pleats) is called *pepenado*.

Local authorities rule by a self-governing system called “*usos y costumbres*”. This system is based in customary and traditional rule of law, where community leaders decide upon mandates, rotating obligations, duties and positions of power and decision-making, held usually by men.

People in these communities are sometimes convened by either local authorities or government to attend meetings with foreign visitors.

Their language is Mixtec. Translation is facilitated by Laura Quiroz

Space

The workshop took place in the open air, in the public area of the community building, as has already happened in the other communities.

Material

Handmade paper from Etlá, brushes and black ink.

Camera, audio and recording device.

All material provided by me.

FLOW OF FRAMED EVENTS

Process

We arrived, we spoke with the authorities and we introduced ourselves and the project, and the reason why we were visiting the community.

Our introduction to authorities was based on the idea of creating an activity to trigger community's imagination and to be able to study possibility to access the market with different products in a near future

We started with an oral narrative with around 30-40 women, a narrative of legends and childhood stories, and continued on to drawing on paper with ink.

We could not close properly (promising to return with the result of the drawings compile from other communities like other workshops)

Organizational Routine

Always the routine for gathering has tendency to create a circle although the existing space of the village did not allow for it and we worked around small tables provide by authorities

As the community of weavers and embroiders usually work with colour, facilitators decided to bring black ink, so we could experiment with another mode of expression where colour were not the guiding principle.

As this workshop was called by the authority artisans normally assume that they are paid for their time by government and it almost feels an obligation to attend. Therefore, when calling through the DIF (National System for the Integral Development of the Family), which depends directly on the local government of Oaxaca, the indigenous community of San Pablo Tijaltepec, (all the women) left their work at home and on the field to attend the workshop. Therefore, they considered should be paid. This misunderstanding caused great tension. Husbands demanded money for their wife's time. We explained that we were not from the government, nor did we come for the government, that we were professor and researching, they demanded a high

amount of money to return to their places of origin. Finally, an agreement was reached, and the van originally lent us by the DIF with the driver made several trips to bring some of the women closer to their places of origin.

Dynamic

This particular case generated a very uncomfortable situation. From the beginning we could feel the artisans were not happy with the workshop although took us a while to figure out the problem.

The reaction of man from the village become aggressive and demanding. Very uncomfortable for facilitators and all involved.

We decided to call through Juanita one of the artisan woman that offered her house for our next workshop.

Conclusions analysed at May 14th and Oct 28th meetings. (See May 14th and Oct 28th meeting at page 220).



Figure 5.53 *City hall centre at San Pablo Tijaltepec. San Pablo Tijaltepec, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*



Figure 5.54 *Left: Participants at Oral Workshop in San Pablo Tijaltepec. Right: Two artisans from San Pablo Tijaltepec at Oral Workshop. CADA Foundation®, February 2014.*



Figure 5.55 *Woman holding her drawing.* San Pablo Tijaltepec, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation ®, 2014.

5.2.2 Phase II. Design (Research). General Reflective Meetings

A series of Preparatory and Reflective meetings and discussion between facilitators took place between May 2014 and February 2015 in Oaxaca Center (after Oral Workshops).

These meetings happen before the actual Design Workshops (scheduled for February/March 2015).

The summaries shared here is an overview of those discussions and reflections. All main points of reflection are mentioned.

All meetings have been documented through audio recording, video and photographs.

All expenses for the team of facilitators, resources or material and books are provided by me.

Each meeting duration approximate 2 hours long.

No direct transcripts are shared in this research.

5.2.2.1 Oaxaca City, Meetings dated May 14th and October 28th/2014

15 and 20 months (respectively) into the project

Dinner time/ Public Restaurants

Facilitators

Rut Martin (May 14th), Carmen Malvar (October 28th), Fátima G. Díaz, for Logistics, Kythzia Barrera, Diego Mier y Terán, Omar Federico F. Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Ana Paula Fuentes and Laura Quiroz (Lita).

Actions

These meetings are held either in rental spaces, centric cafés or at facilitator's studios and usually around a meal.

In these specific meetings:

- We classified and recollected the results of oral workshops (all the tangible material.) A printed dossier with the classified drawings was created. (See Appendix B, p. 305)
- All drawings have been made on handmade paper from Etlá Paper Factory some with colour crayon (Atzompa) and some (Yavesía and San Pablo Tijaltepec) with brush and black ink.
- Name and age of all participants were written on the back of each drawing documented. Drawings were classified by community, they were all photographed, photocopied and mounted in compile dossiers and copies were share between facilitators and participatory communities where the workshop took place. All copies were printed in black and white.

Summary

These meetings set the bases towards the upcoming design workshops (see p. 236 and p. 248).

Bases for reflection and views of the facilitators/designers towards the communities.

All participants speak up and main areas are revised as bullets point as follow:

- Avoiding the pre-determination that communities have a problem, because this point of view is a Western imposed vision.
- Acknowledgment that is a fact these cultures are in crisis and we must be cautious on how to approach them.
- It is a fact that artisans seek transformation and increase of sales in their work. It is relevant in his context how my 360º vision on market strategy is brought as important part of the project as how may allow the process to reach the end of the production chain as case study.
- It is clarified once more that I propose an approaching methodology to social design practice not a design proposal.
- Team revise and focus on how design can bring people together when we all work together and who all participant's opinion should matter.
- The need of an attitude of equality, recognizing our own needs (those from the designers) and seeking a point of common approach based on skills and knowledge; skills and knowledge from the side of the artisan, who shares his knowledge and technique, and

design told from the side of the designer who shares tools such as: research, analysis, editing, (synthesis) all through the approach through new tangible material (artefacts).

- Open reflection and self-criticism as how we are incline towards an unconscious colonization as how we come with aesthetic codes set by Western influences. How (from the outside) it is easy to imagine transformation. As to avoid this colonizing and involuntary process, **the best way is to advance by asking**. So, the designer leaves the centre, he becomes a facilitator of a creative process in the community. It requires caution not to generate imposition, and it requires a time for commitment.
- How important is to set clear bases for invitation to participate bringing and asking questions. The key is in communication, how we decode and invite them to participate. If there is a positive case scenario, an approximation through questions as: ... "Why don't you tell me a story?" and to see how one progresses through questions of where the community wish to go.
- Important revision over the designer's approach towards artisans:
- Designers go to artisans looking for their expertise, to design and learn.
- The commitment of designer looking through the development and engagement with the community. This case scenario is more expose to criticism since it is a sensitive (social) issue.
- The importance of the commitment over time, over the process and the future development. Designers, anthropologists, historians have been often coming and leaving without reflecting on the impact and creating false promises without any follow up afterwards.
- With the results of the Oral workshops (Dossier in hand): I asked the question "How to move from community tacit knowledge to the cultural artefact as social mediator".

Some conclusions and notes

- The position of the facilitator is one more clarified.
- It is proposed to analyse through the collected memories and stories the process during the design workshops.
- It is clear that the starting point are the stories elaborated through the oral workshops and looking for the idea of a toy as a starting point.
- The exchange of new materials is also important.
- The importance of seeing the transformation and how it is traced.
- Dates for next workshops are scheduled.

- Important not to set an end goal. Do not confine the process to observation but exploring and getting involved in the technique.
- During all this period of time, a follow-up is maintained in San Pablo Tijaltepec by Lita (Laura Quiroz). She keeps a *liaison* with artisan Juanita, one of the local artisans.
- We (all facilitators) decided to inform the artisan that the project is not financed by the government to clarify the project is from a university. We (facilitators) decided to explain that my role is to develop a project with them (the artisan) so we can work together and eventually sell to outside markets the product. It is discussed how to inform women.
- Clarity in reporting objectives through the beginning and through the end is debated.

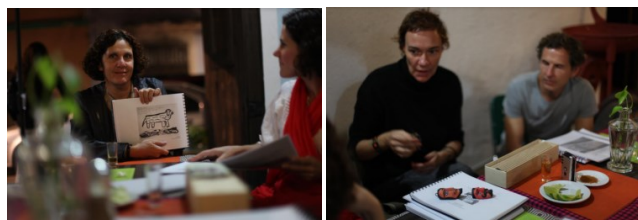


Figure 5.56 Left: Maddalena holding Oral Dossier Results at Facilitators Meeting. Right: Facilitators Meeting at Cafe Antigua. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, October 2014.



Figure 5.57 Cover of Oral Workshops Dossier. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

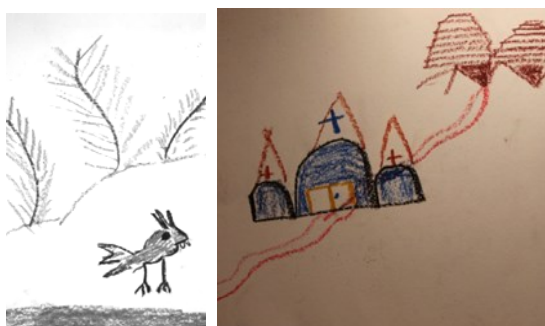


Figure 5.58 Drawings from the Oral Workshops Dossier. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

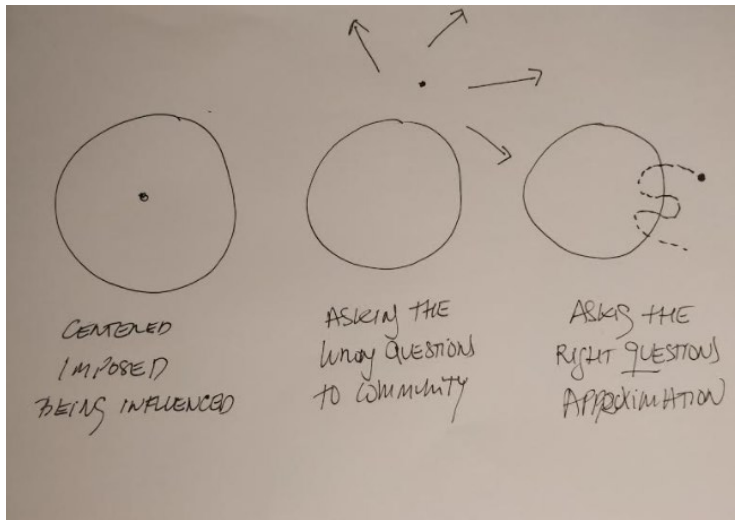


Figure 5.59 Diagram of off-centre position in relation to communities in our approach. Left Circle shows Centred Imposed Position. Designer being of influence. Middle Circle shows designer off-centre asking the wrong questions to community. Right Circle shows designer with an off-centre position asking the right questions, creating a dialogue and approximation. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.

5.2.2.2 Meeting Oaxaca City, November 2nd/2014

21 months into the project

Day Time /Colectivo 1050 Studio's space at the Office Terrace

Facilitators

Kythzia Barrera (Founder Colectivo 1050), Carmen Malvar.

Actions

Revision of images from toy selection and artefacts gathered from different cultures and periods of history in order to share in upcoming workshops.

Revision of pottery typology from Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and other samples from other communities that work with clay from Oaxaca State.

Scheduling of workshops for Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.

Summary from Meetings (May 14th and October 28th)

Discussion about proposal from Colectivo 1050 to change community (we change from Atzompa for Santo Domingo Tonaltepec)

Proposal of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec as new community to develop workshops. This new community is proposed in substitution of Santa Maria de Atzompa (Atzompa is already a commercial destination for tourism with an existing market exposure).

Santo Domingo Tonaltepec has a marginal infrastructure. All main access roads are blocked from driveways the fore access to the community is difficult creating more isolation. (See p. 144, Figure 4.14)

Area is deforested and erased land by old tradition of slash and burn.

Because of the marginal situation of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and the request of support from the own community, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec is chosen. This village produces a pottery which is made exactly as in pre-conquest period and is endangered of disappearance.

The craft is only practiced today by two artisans (Margarita and Goya) and knowledge is not transmitted to new generations because younger people leave the village to study, work or migrate. Potters have difficulty commercializing their products since is far from main communication road and markets.

Few are dedicated to selling some of the pots on local markets, there is no agriculture beyond the minimum subsistence.

Some conclusions and notes

- The decision of working with Santo Domingo Tonaltepec is solid and I include notes to notify Atzompa and organize a visit leaving a copy of the Oral Workshop dossier explaining the reason no to continue with them. Omar is close to the Atzompa community and we will discuss the decision. We conclude Omar would support the idea but we both (Omar and myself) should go back to the community to pay respects and explain.
- We schedule new workshop dates for this new community, three days are proposed from Wednesday to Friday. We agree will do Oral workshop in a different approach and more intense since the community not only asked for market exposure but also support on their crafts
- Discussion on the time needed to dry and burn the pieces in order to considered the scheduling and process.

- The constraints of scale and sizes of pottery at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec are taken as a challenge due this community creates bigger pieces.
- We decide to share all this notes on our next meeting with the team



Figure 5.60 *Carmen Malvar and Kythzia Barrera during the meeting. Revising artifacts and universal toys dossiers and books. Studio Space Colectivo 1050, Office Terrace, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

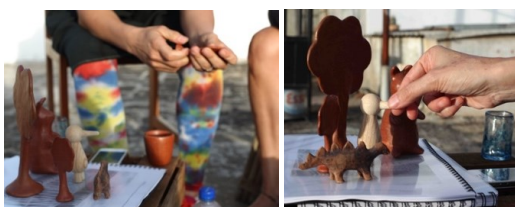


Figure 5.61 *Revision of images from toys and artifacts from different cultures to select to show at workshops. Studio Space Colectivo 1050, Office Terrace, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*

5.2.2.3 Oaxaca City. Oaxaca November 3th/2014

21 months into the project

Night Time/RestaurantS

Facilitators

Maddalena Forcella, Omar Federico Lesur, Carmen Malvar.

Actions

Revision on latest decision (together with Colectivo 1050) about the collaboration with the new pottery community.

Details to travel with Omar to Atzompa to return compile drawing dossier from Oral Workshops and explain the decision to the community.

Summary

Discussion about case studies references in Mexico on social design.

Revision with Maddalena Forcella over the main cases studies In Mexico that are close to our vision; **PROADA**.

The work of Sergio Carrasco is also revised as the author of compilation on artisan's iconography

The case study of Santa Clara del Cobre with James Metcalf and Ana Pellicer (see p. 103) and the project of K'un K'un (see p. 134) are also revised as our main references in Mexico.

Some conclusions and notes

- The decision of developing more information and research over case studies mention during dinner.
- We make the decision about working with Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and speak about the details to travel with Omar Federico Lesur back to Santa María de Atzompa to notify.
- Setting up next meeting to revise samples from San Pablo Tijaltepec brought by Laura Quiroz to Oaxaca Center.

5.2.2.4 Oaxaca City. Oaxaca November 5th/2014

21 months into the project

Day Time /Maddalena Forcella's Design Studio

Facilitators

Maddalena Forcella, Laura Quiroz (Lita) and Carmen Malvar.

Actions

We revised some of the toy images I am compiling from different countries and time periods to share in the future workshops with communities.

The first samples has been provided (brough by Lita) from the community of San Pablo Tijatepe , where we will be developing the next workshop on textile.

We also revise Cordry's Book; *Mexican Indias Costumes* as one of the most completed reference existing today (published in 1968) to review information on San Pablo Tijaltepec Textiles.

Summary

These artisans, have already been participating on the previous workshop drawing their collective imaginary.

The portfolio and the previous work that Maddalena Forcella have developed with PROADA is reviewed. Workshop on sensitization for designer that are willing to work as facilitators in communities.

Preparation and discussion for the coming workshops at San Pablo Tijaltepec is debated. We analyzed some of the samples from beautiful textile work provided by some of the artisans San Pablo Tijaltepec.

We begin to explore how we could proceed to move from 2D to 3D.

Some conclusions and notes

- It is important to keep a close link to the community between workshops time frame. Maddalena Forcella will be leading this workshop together with Ana Paula Fuentes and Lita Quiroz helping with the translation from mixteco language and providing the link with her own community.
- Studies of possible 3D transition are being explored.
- Dates for next workshops are tentative schedule.
- Preparation from Chiapas trip is all prepared by now (see p. 200 for Chiapas and Michocán Field Trip summary)



Figure 5.62 *Carmen Malvar, Maddalena Forcella and Laura Quiroz analysing San Pablo Tijaltepec samples. Maddalena Forcella's Design Studio, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*



Figure 5.63 *More samples of textile work provided by some of the artisans from San Pablo Tijaltepec. Maddalena Forcella's Design Studio, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2014.*



Figure 5.64 *Left: Sample of a 3D study using the 'pick-up, pleated and ruffled' technique study with San Pablo Tijaltepec artisan sample. Right: Cordry's Book as reference (Cordry, 1968). Maddalena Forcella's Design Studio, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, November 2014.*

5.2.2.5 Oaxaca City, November 20th/2014

21 months into the project

Dinner time. Space: Public Restaurant

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Omar Federico F. Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Fátima Díaz (Logistics), Kythzia Barrera and Diego Mier and Teran

Actions

I have returned from my trip to Chiapas and Michoacán (See p. 200)

Conversation with the team about the Field Trip to Chiapas and Michoacán I am reviewed and shared Santa Clara del Cobre as an example of community empowerment and mention about the interviews to Ana Pellicer (see p. 200). A method established where the power of design and craft as elevated Mexican artisans exposing their knowledge and art to the world, generating better artifacts of more market value

The case studies on social design in Michoacán is shared by me through contrasting with documents and material provided by Luis Morales (anthropologist based in San Cristobal de las

Casas, Chiapas) Some documentation from Morales is based on training programs considered references for future studies on the impact of our upcoming workshops. (See *Measuring Impact Chapter 6*, p. 294).

Discussion about the dossier edited with the results from the Oral workshops.

Discussion on the methodology of approximation and how things are going to be develop up to the next level. I do speak the need to document this approach through video, photo, audio and notes as part of the process.

Summary

We (facilitators) again mentioned the importance to remove ourselves from the centre as designers therefore we should not give opinions neither judgment. Our position as designers should be as far from the centre as possible and collaborative.

We reflected on the cultural and the social values over the results from oral dossier drawings as the compile of drawing dossier recovered some stories from the villages and we considered a good milestone to initiate an approximation as design process:

- The iconography of nature is mentioned as a constant collective imaginary in all communities Transcultural and timeless as nature related (animal, landscape) as possible element that unifies.
- There is no need to evaluate neither judge the stories, just to acknowledge them and to reflect on them. The coherence of those reflected values and how the artisan decides to honour them all are important factors to consider.
- To extract those values and aesthetics and create parameters to unify and at the same time open to diversity. Creating universal parameter that transcends time (past, present, future) and culture.
- How do we keep this unify sense of collectiveness?
- Dialogue through the drawings as starting point considering their techniques and evolving into possible 3D study of volumes.
- Revision once more on the decision on why to work with brushes and ink over paper.
- It is recalled how important it is to delve into the dimension of colonization as an involuntary process. We should avoid the word “recovery” (of oral tradition) or “rescue” as a Western view and we agreed on the expression of “approximation”.

The commitment with the communities is also discussed. We all agreed a minimum for a deep social engagement it is said that 5 years. We also discussed the need to be clear with the communities.

Development of products is also discussed, mentioning the importance of dialogue and relationship through the technique and the artefact's material.

Discussion on whether the ending is defined and shared as the default ending, avoiding imposition.

To acknowledge difference as we (facilitators) are defined by the process and we are not looking to give a meaning to those volumetric studies, on the contrary the artisan does not understand the open process. It is better to start from an open question to create argument and discussion through exercises in 3D.

The design process is limited by the stories of the people, their power and hierarchy that themselves establish.

The team's concern to what extent do they get involved with the communities? For how long? Since for the communities' objective the end goal is to sell. The agreement of to be clear to the communities and communicate the process along the way. At least 2 years of work are mentioned but usually turn out to be 5 in the product line and communities' objectives.

The criticism on designers as usually they arrive to communities, take photos, learn the technique and leave.

The next dynamic of the workshops is mentioned. We propose to "frame" the artefacts inside a box that opens and tells stories through artefacts (toys).

It is finely developed in three communities that right now have incoherence in the time stages since Santo Domingo Tonaltepec has been added later by petition of Kythzia Barrera and Diego Mier y Teran and the community itself.

We (facilitators) agreed about 2015 to continue workshops. A dialogue with nature as a universal element is proposed. Try a volumetric in 3d and check what happens when we have the pieces.

We decide to pay for the samples but not for the artisan's time

Some conclusions and notes

- We schedule February-March 2015 for Design Workshops.

- We all agreed a minimum for a deep social engagement it is said should be at least 5 years.
- The oral stories reflected should be shared with other communities.
- We (facilitators) all agreed it is not possible to “improve” someone’s learning or education because all people are born with capacity for originality of mind. i.e.: the deciding whether or not they wish to be influenced by us.
- We agreed the relationship with nature could be a starting point as a way to generate a universe through the results of the oral workshops. We look for a narrative objective that can be past, present or future, something that speaks universally. Extracting aesthetic and narrative values. Opening up diversity and complexity and trusting people and values.
- Approaching timeless values as nature related (animal, landscape) as the elements that unifies and are present on the oral narrative.
- We (facilitators) are aware we should apply our design tools, like the analysis, throughout the entire process.
- Showing a way of approach without imposition, establishing the process as an aim not the final product. We (facilitators) agreed do not create imposition.
- To clarify we do not work with the government. Historically is proven government does not give continuity to projects. The agreement of being clear to the communities and communicate the process along the way. Demand for clarity by the team.
- It is defined one step further, by containing artefacts within a small wooden box. The stories are not just those of the grandmothers each should have their own story.
- Stories are the starting dialogue.
- Stories are very powerful and built us as communities. Stories can reinforce both social skills as well as conflicts as they can reinforce negative patterns such as gender marginality.
- Design tools should be shared during workshops.
- It is decided to pay for the pieces and not the time, as well as the meals and we talk about the possibility of presenting the project in the city of Oaxaca once it is finished.

5.2.2.6 Meetings around Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Preparation for Design Workshops February 4th, 7th, 15th/2015

Under suggestion of Colectivo 1050 and a clear request from the community to develop and reinforce their crafts, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec was included as part of this research practice (Santa María de Atzompa is replaced). (See pag. 221, Nov 2th/2014)

Therefore, the workshops with Santo Domingo Tonaltepec were scheduled later in relation to other design workshops (San Pablo Tijaltepec and Santa Maria Yavesía).

We (facilitators) already had directions on how to approach the communities after oral workshops and discussion meetings, nevertheless based on the fact the community needs to re-evaluate their own craft's continuity as few artisans were practicing pottery, we scheduled some additional meetings to revise our proximities of design for this specific community.

Overview Meetings dates; February 4th, 7th, 15th/2015 One year into the project

Several locations

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Omar Federico F. Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Kythzia Barrera, Diego Mier y Terán (Founders Colectivo 1050) and Laura Quiroz (Lita).

Actions

- Scheduling workshops dates for the new community Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
- Revisiting workshops process and dynamics established on previous meetings.
- Revision and analysis of commercial samples brought by me such as; cables, magnets, wires and paper types available on the market to implement on artefacts all supplied by me).
- Revision of toys collection designed and marketed by others also some toy design books provided by me.

Summary

How to approach this specific community through the oral tradition as this is a first time and a new process. A tentative structure is discussed base on the fact the community needs to re-evaluate their own crafts as few are continuing practicing the technic. Debating ways of introduction, the specific workshops at this specific community.

Considerations over this community and their own tradition on working directly with 3D forms as an important factor.

Notes on creating unifying activities through stories and narrative. It is important to revise what kind of stories.

Importance of time as a way to develop trust (Colectivo 1050 has been already spending time with the community) trust has been gained through Colectivo 1050 relation with the community in the past.

The need of an explanation on how are looking to develop artefacts that can be sell into the market as this is a clear request from the artisans.

Asking the question: “... are you interested?” to get them involved in our process.

We discuss what kind of story we (the facilitators) could ask to artisans so we can invite them to participate.

To move from drawing to tell the stories on 3D through clay. To revise the artefacts and talk about them.

To include the references of toys gathered by me from other markets and cultures as samples of popular toys, mid-century toys, figurative toys, abstract...

How to share our (conceptual) design tools (synthesis, analysis, references...) to create exchange with artisans.

Debating how and what to record and document during the process.

Some conclusions and notes

- We (facilitators) again note the importance of applying our design tools, like the analysis, throughout the entire process.
- Oral narrative workshop. Collaborative and transformative design process, developing scenarios for long-term engagement with communities.
- How to approach this specific community by days overall process:
 - I. Day 1: Stories: What will you tell your children? (directly with clay).

For 35 children and approximate 12 adults. All already summoned by Colectivo 1050. We will ask the children to tell us about the animals they have in the community and to invite the adults to share through clay a story for their kids.

- II. Day 2: The universal toy reference dossier is delivered.

It is discussed: “Why do you like it?”

Artefacts from the stories will keep adapting to clay and children will exhibit their artefacts to adults.

III. Day 3: Editing what is produced, polishing, finishing.

Also working on the form, eliminate excess elements.

- We agreed to plan one more workshop series to reach the same timeline than other workshops.
- A day for burning of the pottery will be scheduled as pieces will be splashed as the artisans use oak bark to produce a pigment that is then poured drop by drop over the clay pot or jar while it is still hot from the oven. Such an event was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform:

<https://vimeo.com/489911949/e8e8b43d79>

On the same meeting Maddalena Forcella expresses her doubts about our next workshop in San Pablo Tijaltepec with textile. We have already developed an oral workshop and we are planning to do the first design workshops with the collection based on their own drawings (collected in the Oral Workshops' drawing dossier) (See Dossier Appendix B, pag. 305)

Maddalena shares her concerns as textile challenge the transformation from 2d to 3D.

We have to consider the complexity and the symbolism of their iconography about animals, for example the deer.

We as designers should share our designer's tools and work together to transform without losing their identity, focusing also on the scale and exploring new patterns, therefore we (facilitators) proposed explore a narrative beyond the existing context taking into account the dossier from the oral workshops and the importance to adding the toy references as **external references** as another tool to share with the artisans. (See Design Workshops pag. 232 and pag. 245)

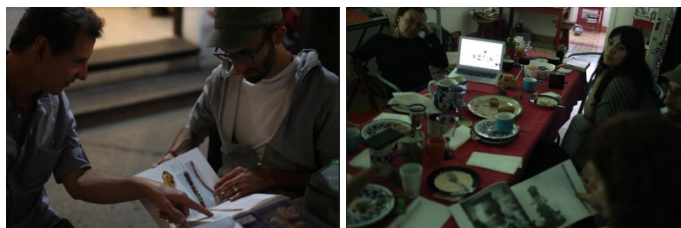


Figure 5.65 *Meetings before Design Workshops.* Several locations in Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®. February 2015.

Design Workshops followed with a first stage of experimentation and dialogue with the exchange of tools (tangible and intangible) that runs between February 2015 until March 2015 and

culminates with the meeting in La Jícara Restaurant on March 14th and a later meeting at Colectivo's 1050 space on March 17th 2015 (see pag. 255 through pag. 258).

5.2.3 Phase II. Design Workshop (Research). Proximities of Design: Case Study 01 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec

At this phase of the project an experimental methodology was implemented in a sequence of workshops as case studies based on a series of events or proximities of design which defined courses of action. We (facilitators and artisans) together would produce design situations to elicit transformations, through organic workshop development.

Connecting to artisan traditions offered insight into craft, its transmission, while the act of making and unmaking showed a way to form and transform material through manipulation, for practical uses and charged of cultural symbolism.

The technique of each artisan was not determined by the existing materials or tools in front of them but by their conceptual sense of community ; during this design process, the artisan modifies and reflects social preferences. The process of social design thus allow us to reconceive of materials and cultural materiality . Such complexity is inherent in the structure of the artisan creates making the previously invisible structure visible within a community.

The objective of creating an artifact that participated in the essence of the initial one, but with a new series of characteristics that allowed it to adapt to new and different conditions for which it was being developed, avoiding the part that links it exclusively to the place where it is produced and becoming universal. To enable cultural and emotional values attached to the intangible artifact to not be lost, but to share them with the facilitator so they in turn can transferred to the new object. These situations will be elaborated upon on the following case studies;

5.2.3.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Design Workshops (Part I), Oaxaca. February 11th, 12th, 13th/2015

One year into the project

(3 days) ½ day workshop / First time new process

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Kythzia Barrera, Ludovica Morales, Diego Mier and Teran.

Notes

- This time the initial workshops were held on three consecutive days, starting with narrative workshops, followed by universal toy discussion (inspired by a book of wooden toys and samples of soft toys supported on legs by the use of a wire skeleton).
- The second day we directed the conversation towards toys as universal symbols and on the third day we finished with more attendees' hand moulding small clay figures ready to be fired.
- Tactically, as design facilitators we decided on these actions: workshops will be conducted with several generations, mainly women and children, who will collect the oral narrative through drawings first and clay later.
- There will be a selection of series of drawings that can serve to develop common characters and stories.
- This will be the starting point for the next step, in which the tangible characters/elements will be devised using the specific crafts to produce the different pieces that make the story up.
- After the exercise of community approach through oral narrative and its form of expression was materialized in drawings, these were analysed.
- The materials thus selected were, during the design phase, the articulating bond in dialogues with artisans.

PROXIMITIES OF DESIGN

Social

Santo Domingo Tonaltepec is one of the few communities where pottery is still being produced the same way as in the pre-Hispanic period, and example of cultural continuity.

With around 300 inhabitants, isolated from broader society, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec still retains its idiosyncratic ceramic practices.

In three of the villages of this community, including Río Blanco Tonaltepec, the pigments come from the bark of certain trees which are rich in tannins.

They use oak bark to produce a pigment that is then poured drop by drop over the clay pot or jar while it is still hot from the oven. The liquid crackles as water evaporates on the hot clay surface, leaving only the red russet colour of the tannins the production of this pottery involves several dimensions of the artefact's cultural substance: the organisation of the production, the way distribution is attempted and lastly, the use itself.

Today only two craftswomen work the clay. This community has no trade, neither artisans that can carry out the technique to the younger.

Among other participants were Nazaria, Antonia, Goya, Demetria, Margarita and Irene among others. Although, most of the named ones remained constant through the process

Space

The gathering happens at outside and inside of public space offered by the municipality of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.

Both spaces are official public spaces the team and the participating, mostly all members of the community take participation.

Material

Coffee machine, coffee, milk cookies, sugar, water, cardboard cups, handmade paper from Etlá's paper factory, black ink and brushes.

Camera, audio and recording device.

Cardboard bases to classify clay artefacts (A4 size).

Clay (provided by artisans).

FLOW OF FRAMED EVENTS

Process

I. Day 1

There is an introduction through a game creating a human circle where everyone introduces their names.

Break out on group ages.

The team presents the project to the participants in a simple nearby way.

Children remain on the open soccer field and adults are invited to go inside the public building, we make the distribution of materials (paper, ink and brushes) among all children.

We ask the question: "Tell me what is happiness for you..." , "What kind of nature and animals inhabit in your community?"

First children worked on paper, later they moved to clay creating all kind of shapes and animals.

Adults are invited to go inside the public space (into the building) and we asked the question about “what story you would you tell your children ...?”

Adults worked directly on clay 3D.

After midday we break coffee to start second part of the workshop.

We gather all participants and adults present their work to the group.

II. Day 2

We (facilitators) talk about today’s activities and revise the work of the day before.

I bring A4 Carboard to children to be able to place their artefacts on the cardboard bases and write their name as well.

Adults continue with their story contextualizing them with other elements and 3D.

The children present their stories adults.

Adults get inspired by the children’s approach to imagination ideas and the children’s imagination become the trigger component for the adults.

We (facilitators) continue to work with adults and children.

We break the activities to share coffee.

After the approximately 30 minutes break, we (facilitators) introduced the references of toys and directed the conversation towards toys as universal symbols.

We asked them the question: “What brought your attention to this particular toy? “Why do you choose it? “, Why do you like it?”

Adults worked with a figure that they chose, plus others that they liked on the wall.

The universal toy reference dossier is delivered; It is discussed why they liked it, why it will be sold, its history adapted to clay.

External references are shown in the form of universal toys.

III. Day 3

The day starts with a breakfast from facilitator’s reflection on the two days before.

We are aware we need to approximate to the community through their technic and recovering their tradition, we are aware the process is slow since there are no skills on this community (only two artisans remain with the knowledge).

We continued working with children and adults.

Children explore outside in the soccer space with the facilitator Kythzia who brings a glass ball as toy artefact and as a mediator for dialogue. Such activity was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform:

<https://vimeo.com/489931786/b49d285b76>

They are asked to travel to the future, “Where would you like to travel? The children recreate a trip into the future with clay creating more work and using the cardboard base with animals from day before.

Adults are invited to get inspired by children stories and work with scale to create a story themselves with clay figures.

What is produced is polished, finished, also working on the form, eliminating (editing) excess elements.

Organizational routine

I. Day 1

We created an introduction with a human circle asking everyone to join us and play.

We separate after the introduction. There are 35 kids that remain on the open space and sit in a big circle on the floor. As the children sit on the floor some of the facilitators sit with them.

The large group of adults organize inside as an unspoken organization routine, artisan and facilitators move tables to the centre of the space and create a circle of chairs. Meanwhile the adults work directly on clay. At first, their artefacts were very big scale.

Adults present the pieces. They stand up while the others remain sit or close to the artisan while presenting.

II. Day 2

We invited again the approximate 35 children to the open space into a soccer open field space.

Adults are inside the official building.

Adults' influence from the (small) scale of children's work trigger them to work also smaller scale.

Children return to their animal and stories. The cardboard bases allowed the children to frame their ideas in a tangible manner as a container where they place their artefacts and told their story.

During the break we share coffee.

After the approximately 30 minutes break, we (facilitators) introduced the references of toys and directed the conversation towards toys as universal symbols.

The craftsman learns by copying objects from history.

III. Day 3

The timeless imagination is open an express easier on the children than adults. A kid named Rocío was asked to explain her story to the adults showing how with little piece of clay there was a huge imagination.

The adults were invited to listen and used the children's imagination and scale to work on their own pieces. After the children's narrative, the adults lowered the scale of the pieces

Later on children were asked to depict a trip, some did it with artefacts from the previous day.

Dynamic

I. Day 1

The team presents the project to the participants in a simple nearby way.

First day playing into the big human circle, all participants played with open attitude and a happy engagement.

Some participants already knew facilitators Kythzia and Diego (Colectivo 1050) this made the atmosphere more relax and trustful therefore atmosphere of trust and exchange is created.

Meanwhile kids were playing outside with the clay the adults work directly on clay as well as in the pottery community what they think and imagine is transformed directly into 3d through clay.

When we gathered all participants and adults to present their work to the group it was a very long and formal protocol for them to speak up.

II. Day 2

We asked them to choose a drawing that they liked from a series of images representing different toys as universal symbols and they all choose always Mexican popular toys among avant-garde, or other types of references as they did, I was clear they chose images they are familiar within their own culture.

Sharing coffee creates as well a relaxed atmosphere.

The team and participants from the community are enthusiastic, total involvement of children and adults.

III. Day 3

As the children introduce the story, the rest bring encouraging versions or add details to their later work.

Environment becomes relax and natural bringing dialogue among all participants.

We (artisans and facilitators) agreed will be important to get the pieces fired so we can proceed and try to get to the same level from other communities' workshops.

We (artisans and facilitators) agreed we could work with the fired clay pieces around the splashing only with the adults.

We (facilitators) scheduled a meeting for review and conclusions on Feb 24th /2015.



Figure 5.66 Meeting with Kythzia and Diego before departing to Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. Café at Oaxaca Center. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.



Figure 5.67 Public space offered by the municipality of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. Playing as introduction to the workshops. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 5.68 *Circular dynamics.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 5.69 *Children share their clay shapes and animals.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 5.70 *Clay artefacts placed on A4 Cardboard.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 5.71 *Children clay sample.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

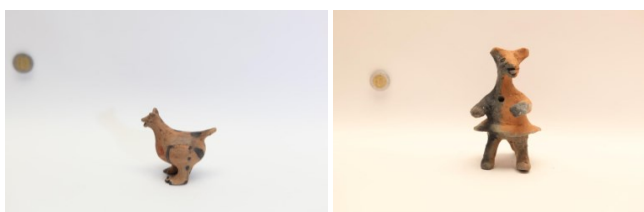


Figure 5.72 *Burned Pieces. March 9th.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

5.2.3.2 Meetings around Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Design Workshops (Part II), February 24th 2015

After the first series of workshop at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec we decide to revise the results to refine way to approximate to the community as well as evaluate the results. As this community demand support for the training of the pottery among new artisans interested the workshops extend into another series of workshop also by own interest of Colectivo 1050 since their plan was to keep working long way with this community into their commercial activity to give them access to markets.

Meeting February 24th 2015/ One year into the project

Office Terrace Colectivo 1050 / Night Time

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Kythzia Barrera and Diego Mier and Teran (Founders Colectivo 1050).

Notes

- The workshops with Santo Domingo Tonaltepec were scheduled later in relation to other design workshops.
- We agreed we will do another workshop series, since Santo Domingo Tonaltepec had a more delayed process than the other communities we were working (San Pablo Tijaltepec and Santa María Yavesía) as they were already experimenting with samples.
- We (facilitators) already had directions on how to approach the communities after oral workshops, discussion's meetings and the first round of workshops (above), nevertheless, as based on the fact the community needed to re-evaluate their own craft's continuity, we all (artisans and facilitators) agreed to schedule some additional series of workshops and meetings to revise the approach for this specific community.

Actions

- Revision and analysis of artefacts developed on previous workshops (February 11th, 12th and 13th).
- Scheduling for new series of workshops dates (February 26th and 27th).
- Revisiting workshops process and dynamics established on previous and new coming workshops.

Summary

Revision how the children talked with adults on the previous workshops and the importance of the intervention with the children to trigger adult's imagination.

Example of artisan named Goya who has gotten the inspiration from an ox from one the children's craft.

Reflections on the transformation of artefact's scale throughout the workshops.

We (facilitators) comment on the artisan's response to the universal toys display on the wall (black and white images) as we did in San Pablo Tijaltepec.

We asked: "Why do you choose it? ", "Why do you like it?".

We (facilitators) questioned how to proceed, we agreed we need to return and to keep working with the community before getting into conclusions.

Proposed process for upcoming Santo Domingo Tonaltepec new workshops as follow:

- Synthesize all pieces created on our first round of workshops and expose them on the wall.
- Define some "trigger words" (happy, sad, drunk, scare...) to make the upcoming workshops more playful. Trigger words would be applied into the new figures' process.
- Questioning all together as a group (artisans and facilitators) "What kind of skills are we developing together?".
- Talk with the artisans to not be afraid to failure and to not worry about how the piece gets finalized (the finished).
- Emphasize values over narrative.
- To simplify forms and be open to error (do not stigmatize errors).



Figure 5.73 *Revising and analysing artefacts developed on previous workshops. Meeting at Colectivo 1050 Office Terrace. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*



Figure 5.74 *Meeting at Colectivo 1050 Office Terrace. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*

5.2.3.3 **Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Design Workshops (Part II), Oaxaca. February 26th and 27th/2015**

One year into the project

(2days) ½ day workshop / Second series of Workshops

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar and Kythzia Barrera.

Some conclusions and notes

- This time the second series of these initial workshops were held on two consecutive days, recapitulating on the narrative workshops and revision of worked developed and followed by universal toy discussion.
- Tactically, as design facilitators we decided on these actions: workshops will be conducted with several generations, mainly women and children, who will collect the work developed in the previous workshops. There will be a selection of the pottery developed the previous workshops and would serve to keep developing common characters and stories.
- This will be the starting point in which the tangible characters/elements will continue transforming and evolving using the specific “trigger words “to produce the different pieces that make the story up.
- Some samples of Trigger Words (happy, sad, drunk, dead, pregnant...) were shared on pieces of paper for the artisan to choose freely.
- After the exercise of community approach the results collected were fired days later (March 9th), this event represents the close up of this phase, articulating bond in dialogues with artisans. Such an event was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489911949/e8e8b43d79>

- All results and reflections are summarized on following meetings schedule March 14th through May 3rd /2015. (See p. 258-263)



Figure 5.75 *Left: Kythzia and me reviewing results from first series of workshops. Right: Kythzia and Diego reviewing the Trigger words cards over the table at Colectivo 1050 Office Terrace. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*

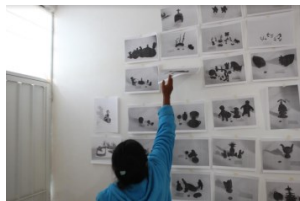


Figure 5.76 *Artisan collecting the image from her work from previous workshop. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*



Figure 5.77 *Display on the table of result from clay samples and material from workshop. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*



Figure 5.78 *Revising Toy Dossier with artisan Goya in our way to drive her back home. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, February 2015.*

5.2.4 Design Workshop (Research). Proximities of Design: Case Study 02 San Pablo Tijaltepec

This time the initial workshops were held on three consecutive days. Time is not measure by occidental way but by flows of events and some breaks to share coffee or food.

Woman has been already elaborating samples commissioned by us as the intention is a collaborative and evolutive design process, developing scenarios for long-term engagement with this community.

Tactically, as design facilitators we decided on these actions:

- Workshops will be conducted with some of the participants from the oral narrative through drawings on the previous oral workshops.
- It would be a series of drawings that will serve to develop common characters and stories.
- This will be the starting point in which the tangible characters/elements will be devised using the specific embroidery to produce the different pieces.

After the exercise of community approach through oral narrative and its forms of expression were materialized in drawings they will be analysed. The materials thus selected were, during the design phase, the articulating bond in dialogues with artisans.

5.2.4.1 Santo Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshops (Part I), Oaxaca. March 2nd, 3rd, 4th/2015

13 months into the project

(3 days)

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Ludovica Morales, Maddalena Forcella, Laura Quiroz (Lita) and Ana Paula Fuentes.

PROXIMITIES OF DESIGN

Social

San Pablo Tijaltepec is located in the Mixtecan region in the state of Oaxaca. With approximately 2279 inhabitants, it is the most remote, the most marginal, the least exposed to the outside of the three communities.

As I commented in the previous mentions of the village, they use embroidered textile, (pick-up

weave and gathered pleats) and vegetable fiber (palm). Their language is Mixtec.

Among the women initially involved were Rosario, Francisca, Guadalupe, Juanita, Sebastiana, Natividad, and grandmother.

Among them they are called each other "*tia*" (aunt)

Space

The gathering happens inside private space offered by one of the artisans named Juanita. Her house is on the village of San Pablo Tijaltepec.

Exposed concrete walls are synonymous of wellbeing and prosperity. Some open holes for windows are without frames. No running water.

Toilet always outside the house.

Few chairs and with a table and a bed are ready for us.

Material

Coffee machine, coffee, milk cookies, sugar, water, and cardboard cups.

Oral drawing dossier printed and bound.

Universal Toy selection by Carmen (Xerox) printed.

Multi-colored thread, canvas fabric, wire, porexpan, plasticine, cork, felt, metal mesh, wooden sticks and markers.

Camera, audio and recording device.

Embroidered textile (pick-up weave and gathered pleats) samples previously commissioned to the artisan woman and paid by me.

FLOW OF FRAMED EVENTS

Process

I. Day 1

In our way to the village, we discussed some important issues about the privacy and the use of camera.

Also, the fact historically this community had a bad experience with some institutional initiatives that promised them machinery and other tools and never follow up with them.

We were aware how we will be introducing the project was important fact in this coming workshop.

After the big misunderstanding with the oral workshops, artisan Juanita offered her house (see Section 5.2.2 Phase II Design Research General Reflective Meetings, p. 220)

A total of 7 woman arrived first day (Sebastiana, Natividad, Francisca, Guadalupe, Rosario, Juanita and grandmother).

We (facilitators) introduced the intention of working on a design research project. Project is also explained as in response for community's own demand to access and sell pieces into outside markets. The introduction is made with a thread and a skein telling stories to each other as a way to break the silence and share what I like what I do.

The dossier with the recompilation from all the oral workshops from all communities is shared on a table while we also review and comment on the iconography and drawings.

Drawings are discussed together while we offer coffee (provided by me).

We (facilitators) moved to a second part of the workshop's process where we explained and showed some new materials we brought from the city and we invited artisans to experiment and work together with shapes (3D). The materials thus selected together with their own drawings (collected on the dossier) become the articulating bond in our dialogues with artisans.

The new material and revision of their own drawings and stories (at the printed dossier) trigger artisan's imagination.

While we made together the shapes, we (facilitators) also inquired about their relationship with their embroidery technic.

We (facilitators) asked questions as: "If your embroidery could travel, where you would like it to go...Oaxaca, Mexico?".

As artisans responded we also explained and talked about markets, products, family of products, ways of payments, how the pieces are sold on those markets and the role of money and exchange.

We commissioned embroidered (paid) samples for next day, suggesting that they could incorporate into the pieces in the second day of the workshop.

We clarified that we (facilitators) would pay each sample piece (200 Mexican pesos) instead of the time for attending the workshops to avoid also patronage (very much used by government).

II. Day 2

The team of facilitators meet in Tlaxiaco while having breakfast, reviewing the process for the day.

I shared some taxonomies with the team:

Suggesting the iconography (figures) from their daily routine: dog, the cat from the oral dossier. They worked with figures that they recognize. What they see. Their routine.

The application of design tools introduced by the us (the facilitators) as: analysis, experimentation and references working through new materials and images from universal toys. The finding.

The possibility of exchange with other artisan communities through their work. The joy.

We propose women, as first exercise, to tell a story for their children (same as Santo Domingo Tonaltepec). Each woman narrates a story that eventually will be implemented in a tangible character as we share some design tools (like editing, abstraction...).

We break with a reflection on the work developed.

After the break, images are set and fixed on the existing concrete wall.

An edited selection of images of universal toys is presented (folk toys from different cultures, avantgarde, Asian influence, etc). Women are invited to choose an image they like from the wall.

We review artefacts made in other places introducing the idea of the toy as universal artefact and about family of toys, explain the objective towards the market as we asked them the question: "What brought your attention to this particular toy?", "Why do you choose it?", "Why do you like it?", "What image do you like?" (This round of questions was also formulated at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec)

Second round of informal questions as we together (artisans and facilitators): "Why does it catch your attention?", "How would you reproduce it?", "How would you apply your embroidery?".

We talk about continuing next day.

III. Day 3

Reflecting informal meeting having breakfast in Tlaxiaco. We will continue working same process as day before.

The idea of using same trigger words as used in Santo Domingo Tonaltepec workshop

In this particular community, since they work is mainly 2D, we decided to focus on working with play dough on face expressions, and we discuss if same of the results could be possible to move into fabric and how.

Emphasize that the end form does not matter for now allowing error to be part of the process.

Second part of the workshop. We motioned on the idea of the 2 pieces together (couples), dog and cat or man and dog, and introduce how family of products sometimes are easy to sell. We do as a set of couples as a group concept. Talk about them, introduce the premise of how it is sold, how a single piece does not help much.

There is talk of dates of the next commissioned sample.

Samples are paid 100 Mexican pesos for the small ones, and 200 Mexican pesos for the bigger samples of embroidery.

We (facilitators) share the intention with the orders, also approximate measures of the bags.

Lita (Laura Quiroz) will continue to visit them in March and April for sample collection.

Organizational routine

I. Day 1

The artisans bring samples of their embroidery. Their small children always are with the women and stay throughout the workshop's time.

Woman bring always a (plastic) bag where they keep samples and material for sewing and working on their embroideries. They are constantly returning to their embroidery (hand craft) to keep creating as conversations happen or silence and breaks on process occur.

Some artisans, like Guadalupe, came and realize was not a government activity (where she gets paid and free food) and demanded both to us. We explained once more time we were no government. She stayed for first day workshop but next day did not return.

Drawings are discussed together and helps through the identification of their own drawings

Stories are shared one by one creating a long thread as we keep sharing the thread keeps getting longer.

As we invited to imaging, in a reflection with new material that we brought from the city, we sat on the floor over palm carpet they use to sleep and work (called “petate”).

We talked about their embroidery and one of the artisans (Juanita) shared a demonstration. Such a demonstration was recorded in video format, is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform: <https://vimeo.com/489900016/def06d81cf>

When we asked questions about the city, many of the women did never left the mountains where they live. Most did not know what a (store) museum looks like.

When we requested embroidered (paid) samples for next day, we knew this will be of their interest since they constantly were trying to sell their pieces to us. We clarified the artisans we would pay each sample piece not the time they spend at the workshop. We wanted to be sure we establish a different kind of relationship than the government usually does.

II. Day 2

Tlaxiaco is a village closer to Oaxaca Centre and a market destination for communities on the mountain. We booked rooms in a small hotel (covered by me). It is the closest place to San Pablo Tijaltepec where we can stay.

The market is a place for gathering, eating and disusing in preparation for the day ahead.

While having breakfast on the market place, reviewing the process for the day, we analysed that they use animals a lot, it is part of their everyday world, with which they identify as part of their cosmology and believes.

Sharing taxonomies with the team allow to enumerate trigger elements to the coming practice (after reflecting on the day before).

Women are usually arriving at the same time do as a smooth dynamic.

Ludovica prepares the collected images of selected universal toys and place them on the wall while the rest of facilitators sit and talk to artisans exploring their characters from first exercise.

III. Day 3

Expressions with the play dough, they also use the yarn and then the cloth to bring out those characters a little (the expression of the face). The same is done with the animals too, and also create some playful characters.

We suggested to synthesize the volumes and expressions of the new forms as the mountains, which are their frets, which they use on their sleeves.

When we requested embroidered (paid) samples, we knew this will be of their interest since they constantly were trying to sell their pieces to us. We clarified the artisans we would pay each samples piece, not the time they spend at the workshop since the collaboration was proposed as an exchange of knowledge and ideas to reinforce their exposure to the market without losing their identity.

Commissioned samples are made reinforcing the idea of continuity and commitment. Samples with a smaller scale, also some samples fabric bags are ordered (same used by El Camino de los Altos).

Dynamic

I. Day 1

When we (facilitators) introduced ourselves, the women demonstrated a great curiosity about us as family member. They wanted to know in a very direct way if we have a “man” with us, if we “have children”, “how many children”, “how old we were”...

A big hermeticism initially and little conversation. Shyness and a lack of trust is showed.

As we keep sharing the thread keeps getting longer, the women started to smile and playing along.

When we asked “if your embroidery would travel...?” they showed surprise and uncertainty, the lack of references was a big difference between facilitators and artisans.

There was a great uncertainty over the concept of sell, market and money.

The identification of their own drawings in a book, as they considered the printed dossier, and the curiosity shown over the other communities’ work was important.

II. Day 2

The inviting questions were again done as way to establish conversation and dialogue.

The women maintain their hermeticism and they are shy to ask and to proceed.

It is difficult for them to ask questions to the facilitators.

Artisans go on to choose the universal toys in silence, they do still show little trust.

III. Day 3

The exercise about face expressions take them by playful surprise and they react happy and in a spontaneous way.

They react very playfully and fully engaged.

Every day the complicity grows although still long way to go to gain trust.

They react very positive to the idea of us (facilitators) coming back. They (the artisans) also show engagement with the commissioned fabrics that Lita will bring to Oaxaca City in the following weeks.

*We scheduled a meeting for review and conclusions on March 14th/2015 with the team in Oaxaca City (see p. 258).



Figure 5.79 *Facilitators on our way to San Pablo Tlaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.80 *Telling stories to each other through a thread and skein.* San Pablo Tlaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.81 *Sharing the dossier.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.82 *Images are set and fixed on the wall.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.83 *Artisan women with their selection of Universal Toy Reference.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.84 *Having Breakfast in Tlaxiaco and Reviewing the Toy Reference Dossier.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.85 *Working with play dough on face expressions.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

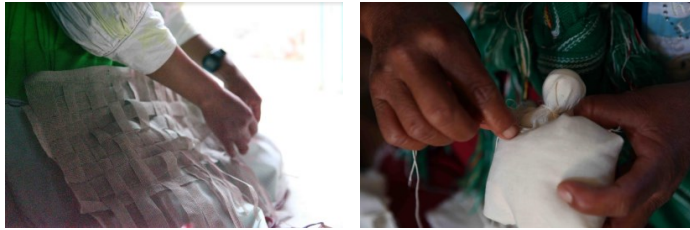


Figure 5.86 *Experimenting with new materials.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.87 *Diversity of Material to Experiment.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.



Figure 5.88 *Samples of Nature Abstraction from artisan's textile samples commissioned for the Design Workshops at San Pablo Tijaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

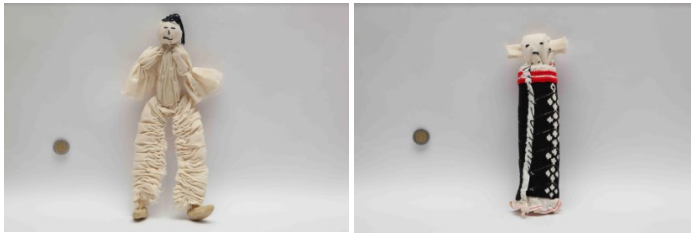


Figure 5.89 *Results experimentation with 3D.* San Pablo Tijaltepec Design Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

5.2.5 Phase II. Design (Research). General Reflective Meetings II

Meetings between March 14th and May 3rd 2015 in Oaxaca Centre after (first) series of Design Workshops reviewed the process and new results in preparation for continuation for a second round of design workshops. (See p. 265)

A series of Reflective meetings and discussion between facilitators took place.

The summaries shared here are an overview of those discussions and reflections.

All main points of reflection are mentioned.

All meetings have been documented through audio recording, video and photographs.

Meeting duration approximate 2 hours average each.

Meetings are held either in public spaces like centric cafés or facilitator's studio, usually around a meal.

Meal expenses during meetings at restaurants and cafes are always covered by me.

No direct transcripts are shared in this research.

5.2.5.1 Oaxaca City, March 14th/2015

25 months into the project

Dinner time/Public Restaurant (La Jícara)

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Fátima G. Díaz, (Logistics), Diego Mier, Omar Federico F. Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Ana Paula Fuentes and Laura Quiroz (Lita).

Actions

- In these specific meeting dates for future actions are scheduled.
- A summary of the workshops is made, Designer's attitudes and disposition are reviewed.
- We reflect, classify and recollect the results from design workshops already developed.
- The meeting set bases towards the future design workshops (series II, see p. 265) and bases for reflection about the facilitators/designers' position towards the communities throughout the project.
- We (facilitators) revise progress and outcomes up to date.
- All participants speak up and main areas of our design practice are revised.

Summary

We analyse and discuss ways to ask questions to the artisans. The revision is based on which are the appropriate questions to ask, not imposing exercises. It is a very important topic; looking through the question, the right question that guide the artisan's community and may trigger design situations. In some cases where artisan ask very specific question some cases is difficult to elaborate a narrative without imposing, takes time and the sense of time in the community is different, the timings are different between activities. The question must be broad, and thus be able to shorten it if necessary and the shorter the question becomes a tangible example happens (usually the most common) this last scenario we (facilitators) consider we are already influencing the process.

Discussion again how challenging for all it is to get used to the process, how to articulate an abstract question that we all can answer through practical exercises without imposing.

Revision of the circle diagram of the designer's position being influence without imposing. How we all ask questions with our own hands answering in the same way and without creating an imposition. We (facilitators) discuss the option of process of interacting without generating a change. Being influential without imposing, leaving the centre.

All the communities in which workshops were held, on the last day (third day) the presence of dialogue generates trust. The artisans like Goya at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec started sharing her personal issues and also her home when we went into the event for burning the pieces or the artisan Rosario at San Pablo Tijaltepec said that she had only been practicing for eight years, and that she did not embroider well. We then start understanding the time value and the dialogue of trust.

We talked about the issue of paying for the artisan's samples (paying on request). Maddalena mentions how in the community of San Pablo Tijaltepec shows a pressure for money as the samples are elaborated. Artisans want more money each time and they keep doing new samples without consulting. Artisans do not understand well that they are just process samples not final products. This must be again clarified with the artisans.

There is also important open discussion to address and talk the great difference between the concept of a unique piece and a replicable piece. Also, the issue of scale and making a family, (ej; if it is a musician then it is a music band.) But we (facilitators agree the suggestions are artisan's ideas, are in fact their own suggestions).

Introducing concepts and comment on them as: the concept of the market, necessary in this dialogue. Why to be exposed to the market is necessary so sell and the clear social consequences of poverty, on the new generations having to leave the villages to look for work.

We revised the case of Xochistlahuaca³¹ where Maddalena and Ana Paula has been working in the past and both mentioned how they worked very specifically, with colours and design over two years. There was an important part, in which women are very aware of their possibilities and also, they were already organized as a group. We mention how this sample is a successful case as artisans were gaining confidence with time.

Some conclusions and notes

- We are clear we are generating a work methodology and we are not at the centre. All agreed have to be very cautious. Establishing a relationship of equity, equality is important.
- We agreed it is not good using authority and voice, it is important not to be influential in that sense. Introducing the tools and honour this process, let them have a voice, ask the concrete questions, walk from where they want. That is the process.
- The relationship with nature is very present and clear as a trigger element and questioning and dialogue is key in getting in the design situation.
- We would need a deep reflection through the specific questions that guide the relationships allowing more time for dialogue, that administration of the times and the compromise with the communities.

³¹ La Flor de Xochistlahuaca is a cooperative of Amuzga women from southern Guerrero. They make textiles with traditional designs and transmit the traditional art of the backstrap loom among the new generations of the municipality of Xochistlahuaca: <https://www.facebook.com/LaFlorDeXochistlahuaca>

- All the communities showed a presence of trust through the time spent on the communities with them.
- It's a fine line between influencing and suggesting. Influence is where you allow them to open the picture. Taking care to open a panorama to them.
- The result of the workshops is that what is produced, the feeling is that the end result belongs to them. It's a good thing, a sense of empowerment and belonging.
- The samples are made keeping a link, the importance of an order, of a commission for them. They want to sell.
- Reflective practitioner: It is the attitude and methodology that we are using, the attitude of the designer. Observing the result of the process, and from its aesthetics and market, expressing interest in what gives them feedback. There is no value judgment on the part of the facilitator, but stimulation and acceptance.
- This accompaniment in the workshops, supported by our design tools, in opening the space to see another way to open a window for them and let them be the ones who mainly work and experiment.
- It is important that you can work freely but at the same time explain that there is an objective, and give tools to work, and give ourselves the time we need, give it time to speak the stories and to reflect on the approach.
- This has been a key meeting, which closes a first round of crucial workshops the oral workshops. It has been a design phase based on experimentation and dialogue with the exchange of tangible and intangible tools.
- These communities are not only reaching in the need for something new as stimulus. It is not only a need in the indigenous community, it is a need in the communities in general.
- We set for the March 17th to revise all result samples together at Colectivo 1050's office space.

5.2.5.2 **Oaxaca City, March 17th /May 3rd 2015**

Day Time/ Colectivo 1050 Office/Store

25/27 months into the project respectively

One-hour meeting

Facilitators

Carmen Malvar, Fátima G. Díaz (Logistics) Diego Mier, Omar Federico F. Lesur, Maddalena Forcella, Ana Paula Fuentes, Kythzia Barrera and Laura Quiroz (Lita).

Actions

- This meeting is held a facilitator's studio Colectivo 1050.
- In these specific meeting an exhibition display with the summary of the workshops' artefacts is made.
- We reflect, classify and recollect the samples resulted from design workshops. All samples result from the three workshops are display on the studio's big office table.
- Visit from DIF 's representative (National System for the Integral Development of the Family).

Summary

All facilitators debate how to continue, we talk about manufacturing parts in which both communities manufacture components. The option of adding additional material elements to the process, this will increase cost.

We (facilitators) talked about scale, the possibility of making puppet-style toys and possibility to hand them as decorative elements.

We talked about the idea of a product family combining the work from the communities and the possibility of combining the results of each communities (samples and some prototypes). We proposed revise them all again in June (after the next series of design workshops coming. (See June 21st Meeting Summary, p. 269)

The importance to address and talks the great difference between the concept of a unique piece and a replicable piece. It is a process of scale, of making a family of products which we considered another future phase.

We (facilitators) talked about the production process ahead; how many pieces, sizes, scales, the issue of additional costs, having doubts on how to market the artefacts, if we could make pendants, or numbered boxes in small series, etc. We talk again about costs, finances, what can be charged for parts and for samples based on experience that the team has.

We all agreed the questions of scale market analysis and all other aspects of the product within the market were not our priority.

DIF (National System for the Integral Development of the Family) and its representative (Fatima's mother) arrived to the Colectivo's office space to revise the sample collection gathered and to witness the full potential of the pieces as a collection and project. Her presence denoted a need for claim of authorship, expressing interest on claiming credits for the work achieved (she was the

person offering the support for the logistics, car and driver). Her support made her understand she had been gaining rights over the project. I have decided from the initial phase of the project any political affiliation should get involved in the project since is clearly separated from the academic goals, therefore the use of the car loan and the driver was eliminated from our resources, this will have an important impact on my already low budget. Ultimately this decision created tensions with DIF up until new government took over office.

Some conclusions and notes

- At this meeting the entire collection of resulting samples has been displayed and we discussed and reviewed the aspects of scale, the issue of size and weight measuring the relevance and possibility on combining the pieces from one community to another.
- Reinforcing the meaning of the project as the question of scale and the need to locate artefacts in a market it is not our priority. We return to focus into the methodology. The phase to commercialize is there, but we have it as a next step.
- The use of the car loan and driver is eliminated (this will have an important impact on my budget for future workshops) and the concern that there is a cost associated with this long-time committed project.
- We (facilitators) revised all samples and we agreed that each of the communities would continue exploring more prototypes, more samples independently but we will continue regular meetings to inform, discuss and document.
- We were all clear neither DIF (National System for the Integral Development of the Family) and any other political affiliation should get involved in the project since is clearly separated from the academic goals.
- Between all this time we (facilitators) continued collecting commissioned samples directly from the artisan's communities. These commissioned samples continued with the parameters that have been established in the last meetings (March 14 /17).

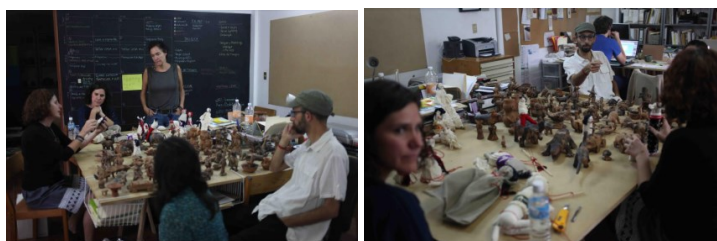


Figure 5.90 *Revising results after Design Workshops.* Colectivo 1050, Office Space, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.

5.2.6 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production

After last meeting we held at Colectivo 1050 Oaxaca on **March 17th / 2015** the team Maddalena, Ana Paula, Omar, Kthyzia and Lita met on **May 3rd** at a house I had rented at Calle Hidalgo, in Oaxaca. I couldn't attend in person, so we held video meetings. Diego also joined virtually from Mexico City.



Figure 5.91 *Video meeting at the house in Calle Hidalgo. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, March 2015.*

We took on the topics of scale, considering the artefact could be proposed as a toy, or a family of toys, and the challenge of how to keep them erect, especially on textile. Issues about the market access and other constraints, but also, I was concerned about expenses and time involved. We needed to find further funding to proceed. Some of these notes are already summarized on the previous pages.

As we continued working on the stories which we had produced around drawings and images. We often had intense conversations mostly addressed on the first meetings documented on the previous pages.

The design workshops had catalysed dialogue and generated questions and relationships. As I already mentioned on the Introduction of this research, the interaction among participants bolstered dialogues about techniques, materials and re-making of artifacts. The democratic activity gives voice to local people. Macro aspirations of the community get reflected and discussed. The formation through experimentation of any given artisan and their innate ability to transform defined by these workshops in which the use of the oral drawings and the artefact is set as trigger to interaction among artisans and facilitators which culminated in the exploration of new skills and eventually a series of new textile and pottery artefacts to come.

5.2.6.1 Artisanal Prototyping and Production

We start a new stage of developing and iterating prototypes, sharing tools that allow the production of artifacts that could be integrated in a globalised market as was artisan's interest as well and defining social design practice as possible tool to building resilient identities.

The goal in this last phase was to start outlining samples and prototypes made also with materials that may eventually become detached from the traditional in inter-communal and interdisciplinary communities. The result of a design process on the previous workshops, have already established a dialogue about the use of the technique and its application to different materials. The aim was always to avoid the loss of their identity and fostering their own communities.

Therefore, commissions were made, requesting smaller scale samples as well as bags to keep and package them similar to ones produce by El Camino lo Los Altos.

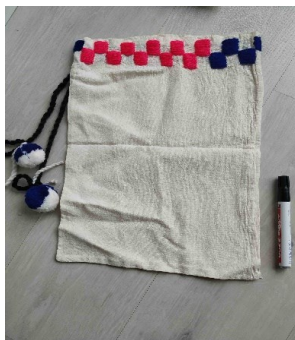


Figure 5.92 *Sample of packing bags commissioned to San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*

We introduce the idea of producing a set of families: two collectible figures, to improve sales. We had a grasp concepts of sales, cost calculation, revenues, how a serial product would improve sales.

The aptitude for prototyping production of the selected materials was studied as much from the point of view of its development and for the viability of its commercialization as from the feasibility of its manufacturing so it could be produced by the artisan's communities.

The prototypes offer an answer based in the aesthetics, form, interaction, usefulness, and emotional content, and served as models to establish and develop the preparation techniques for the new family of products.

We resumed workshops and on **June 2nd and 3rd 2015** Diego would return to Santo Domingo Tonaltepec with an assistant to pick up samples and hold another series of two days' workshop. We (facilitators) already had decided each community should elaborate their own artefact independently, and new samples were commissioned again at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec. On this workshop Diego and his assistant Fernanda followed on the production of the previous workshops, they also talked about prices and quality, welcoming the objects of the first burning through photographs and dossiers and they were asked ... "how do you feel to see these works?".

They talked about size, the bigger it is the more expensive it is to move, they talked about scale.

The subject of markets is introduced, the idea of hanging the artefacts or how we can improve to sell better. Diego shared some images of utilitarian, decorative ceramic objects and asked the question ... "what is the difference you see between those finished objects on the markets and the product that they have developed so far?"



Figure 5.93 *Artisan Nazaria and facilitator Diego, revising utilitarian and decorative commercial pottery at workshops in Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. CADA Foundation®, June 2015.*

They reflected together seeing their objects in the dossier and looking for the utility of the object while improving the details and talking about the concept of family as a product and as a whole. At the end of the two-day production workshops a selection of artifacts was made (which would be later fired on the kiln).

On **June 17th 2015** a new facilitators meeting was held at my rented space at Calle Hidalgo. Tijaltepec samples brought from Tlaxiaco were gathered and evaluated. Maddalena, Laura Quiroz, Ana Pula and I were astonished at the vast number of items; from finger puppets to small bags to hold toys.

We edited this array and decided to work with fauna, as animals are represented as embroideries on Tijaltepec feminine garments. We acknowledge the developing sense of creativity, which being developed by these women, while we discussed again how packaging should be addressed in

preparation to travelling there for the next two days for a fourth visit a and a new workshop series.



Figure 5.94 *Meeting at Calle Hidalgo on June 17th. Lita, Ana Paula, Maddalena, Omar and I.* Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

During **June 18th and 19th 2015**, workshop was conducted by Maddalena, Ana Paula, Laura Quiroz and me. Rosario has offered this time her house and chairs and table are already spatially organized to welcome the workshop.

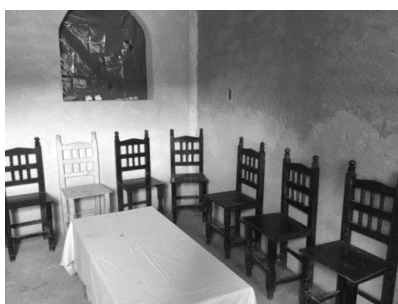


Figure 5.95 *The house of Rosalia prepared to hold workshops.* Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2015.

We see samples also some dolls but mainly animals, and we discussed how to use embroidery and ideas for packaging. We introduced the fabrication of templates to continue reproducing the animals that begin to have three – dimensional qualities although finish details still need to be solved. Woman still sew by hand, and we would eventually recruit seamstress, meeting her several times in Oaxaca for advice and taking her twice to Tlaltepēc over the following months to come, to train woman, repair a sewing machine and show them how to use it, how to draw and assemble a three-dimensional pattern, how to insert filters, etc.

Workshops are for now on very prolific with many samples provided by the woman as they start experimenting with embroidery at different parts of these figures: on the seams, body, etc.

Complicity and camaraderie develop, it is my birthday and I share cake and launch with the artisans and facilitators.



Figure 5.96 *Sharing cake on my birthday.* Design Workshops San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, June 2015.

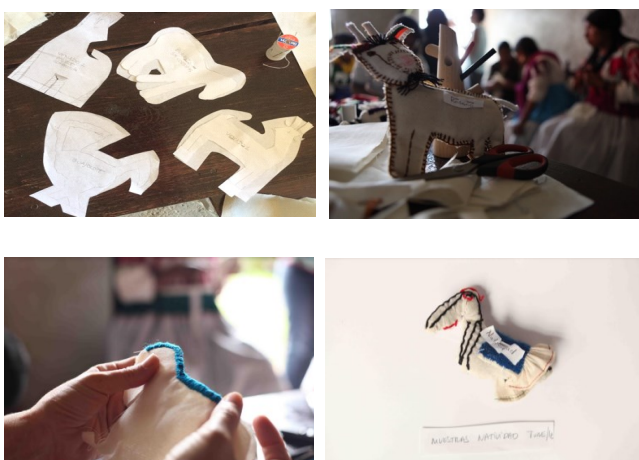


Figure 5.97 *Cuts and shapes developed at workshops with women of San Pablo Tijaltepec.* CADA Foundation®, June 2015.

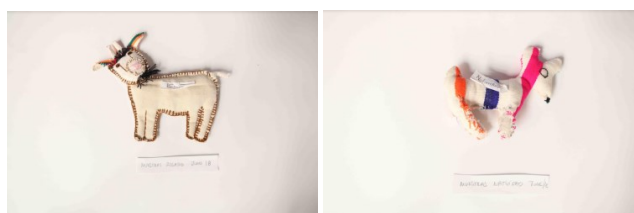


Figure 5.98 *Various samples, animals' figures, embroidery in a variety of shapes and finishes.* Design Workshops San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, June 2015.



Figure 5.99 *Proximities of Design Building relationships through Social Design.* Design Workshops San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, June 2015.

We have one more **meeting on June 21st / 2015** and revised the outcomings. We have a very interesting meeting, another inflection point in developing workshop methodology, we bring out again the issue of scale packaging and bringing the artefacts to market. We are aware of the big leap in development artisans at *San Pablo* Tijaltepec have made, from narrative to abstraction, using new methods and materials, changing from 2D into 3D, animals they see as part of themselves as they merge from their blouses, addressing scale, finishing qualities and packaging. We decided not to condition the design process to commercial criteria and work under the editing parameters of the existing samples made so far.

We analysed all pottery samples and textile and wood samples and to agree on how to proceed. Diego and Kythzia expressed their problems with their agendas and the close termination of their collaboration. Weather communities would manufacture a component of a finalized artefact within a package similar to a small suitcase, which was abandoned as an idea due to many logistic reasons including the fact wood and clay communities will need funding to get new team to continue working on those communities.

The biggest achievement we can identify is that artisans have appropriated their prototypes as **extension of themselves**, projecting from their bodies, and that we have succeeded in refraining from imposition although tools have been exchanged, and these have made possible to achieve these results.



Figure 5.100 Team meeting: Omar, Kythzia, Diego, Ana Paula, Maddalena and me. Private residence of Kythzia and Diego, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, June 2015.

5.2.7 Artisanal production and initiated market exposure

Workshops held between October 2015 until March 2017 took place at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec, ending work previously at Santa María Yavesía. These workshops had a clear objective for production and market focus.

On **October 17th and 25th / 2015**, we held meetings with two seamstresses in Oaxaca, to attend packaging issues and define details for cutting patterns. Also, we were looking to define a strategy to implement patterns for cutting shapes in order to replicate them without scale variation.

The first meeting was on **El Casa**³² a cultural centre placed sponsored by Mexican artist Francisco Toledo. The centre has an atelier of production well known for their *afelpado*³³ technic, they had prepared for us some packaging samples that we later disregard due to complications on lead time and cost.

³² Located in the town of San Agustín Etla - just 15 kilometers north of the City of Oaxaca - CASA defines itself as a plural forum that strengthens reflection and analysis. The CASA Founded by Francisco Toledo and is focused on artistic experimentation and exhibitions and workshops. https://oaxaca-mio.com/atrac_turisticos/vistahermosa.htm

³³ *afelpado* is the process that transforms woven wool into a dense fabric, with the fibres closely attached to each other. Wet flocking uses heat, agitation and moisture to shrink and compact the wool fibres. <https://www.handweavers.com/the-wool-process>



Figure 5.101 *Afelpado Workshop. Meeting to discuss the commissioned samples for the Project: Maddalena talking to the workshop managers. Casa Arts Centre, Etlla, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, October 2015.*



Figure 5.102 *Commissioned packaging samples with afelpado technique. Casa Arts Centre, Etlla, Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, October 2015.*

The second meeting on **October 25th /2015**, a woman named Rufina, met us at Maddalena's studio. She has collaborated with Maddalena and was handy using a sewing machine, together with weaving, embroidering and deep knowledge of fabric elaborated with a loom. Rufina brought ideas and suggestions for solving finishing issues, improving the figure's volume, solved seams etc.



Figure 5.103 Seamstress Rufina Ruiz, Santiago and Maddalena Forcella reviewing the pieces brought from the latest workshops in San Pablo Tijaltepec. Maddalena's Studio, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, October 2015.

Later that month Laura Quiroz (Lita), Maddalena and I met. We will celebrate the following meetings at the space I had rented at HUB Oaxaca, a space for multidisciplinary artists and start-up companies in the centre of town. I have collected by then a large number of books, samples and material over the course of my work

Laura Quiroz (Lita) brought more animals figures from San Pablo Tijaltepec. We were impressed with their development and had only minor issues to solve, such improving seams. Lita went back with new commission for paid samples. We had another meeting with Rufina, where Maddalena and her solved detailing, enclosures and we decided it should be necessary to use a sewing machine for finishes, leaving embroidering for decorative elements such applications some large animals have.



Figure 5.104 Laura Quiroz (Lita) and Maddalena Forcella reviewing new samples commissioned and brought by Lita from San Pablo Tijaltepec. HUB, Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2015.



Figure 5.105 *HUB office rented by me to gather the pieces and samples and research material. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, 2015.*



Figure 5.106 *Some samples of resulting prototypes from San Pablo Tijaltepec. HUB in Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, October 2015.*

In November 2015 we had much activity. On **November 18th and 19th**, we held a two-day workshop at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec to elaborate of finishes, bringing a new ceramist tools, soften edges and adding the constrains of parameters like packing size (a wooden box) to revise scale and packaging issues. We gathered to work around table full of samples, women are commissioned to produce 4 sets of animal couples and the intention of commissioned 150 pieces in the near future. I fund the pieces and their firing as well.

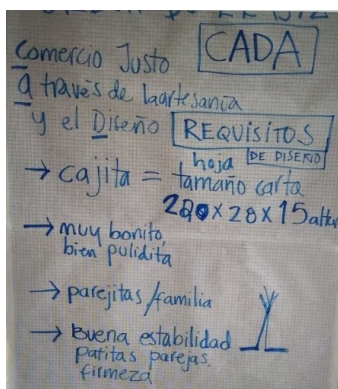


Figure 5.107 Notes from the Santo Domingo Tonaltepec workshop. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.



Figure 5.108 Artisans Goya, Demetria and Margarita working on the production of pieces. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Workshops. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.



Figure 5.109 Sample and example of possible packaging in wooden box. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Workshops. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.

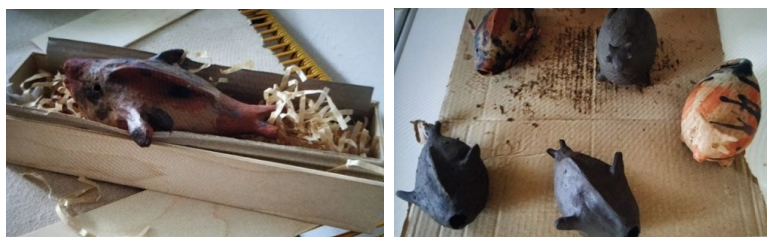


Figure 5.110 *Samples burned and in process for burning.* Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Workshops. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.

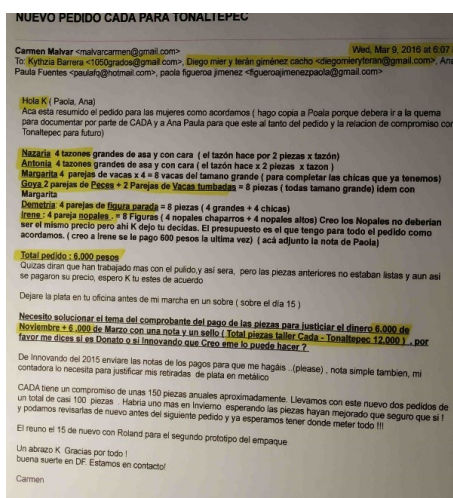


Figure 5.111 *Correspondence with Colectivo 1050 over follow up and payments covered by me on commissioned pieces at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec on November 2015.* CADA Foundation®, March 2016.³⁴

³⁴ Text: “... Nazaria 4 tazones grandes con asas y cara (El tazón hace por 2 piezas)/ Antonia 4 tazones grandes con asas (El tazón hace por 2 piezas)/ Margarita 4 parejas de vacas total 8 piezas/ Goya 2 parejas de Peces + 2 parejas de vacas tumbadas = 8 piezas/Demetria; 4 parejas de figuras total 8 piezas/ Irene 4 parejas de Nopales = 8 piezas/ Total pedido 6, 000 mil pesos mexicanos. Necesito solucionar el tema del comprobante del pago del pago de Noviembre de 6000 mil pesos + 6,000 Marzo. Total pago de piezas 12,000 doce mil....”, Marzo 2016.



Figure 5.112 *Sample variations of Cup with Face by Artisan Nazaria. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Workshops. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.*

All material result is brought to HUB Oaxaca on **November 26th and 28th 2015** to be revised and commented with the team. Before going back to the communities, we revised samples to determine what finish had most success potential.



Figure 5.113 *Right: Clay samples on the floor. Left: Kythzia and Diego reviewing fired pieces commissioned. HUB Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.*



Figure 5.114 *Result of some orders of the November workshop already burned and finished. Some of the production was lost by breakage of the parts and lack of follow-up in the burning because they did not have sufficient resources to follow. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Workshops. CADA Foundation®, November 2015*



Figure 5.115 *Reviews of commissioned samples from San Pablo Tijaltepec. Maddalena Forcela , Lita and visitor Fatima Diaz at HUB CADA office. HUB in Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, November 2015.*

March 2016 we also have much activity. On **March 4th and 5th**, we held a two-day workshop at San Pablo Tijaltepec to elaborate of finishes in preparation for the upcoming production of samples. Woman by now consolidated a collective called Ñaa Ñanga as mid-October brought exiting events for the group as they were invited to be present at the Second Mesoamerican Textile Congress TEXTIM II. Museo Textil de Oaxaca which is also attractive as a market to be held later on, in coming October 2016. Participating at the TEXTIM II was a mesmerizing experience for the San Pablo Tijaltepec women, they asked me to fund their production to assure material and secure sell and I did commission and fund the production of 100 textile toys (25 animals for each artisan) They also asked me to fund a new sewing machine and their travel which I did with the contribution of Antonio Lorente (Tucho) a close friend from Spain who donated his money as I was already without any resources left of my own.

Most of the woman never left the village, and their fear and excitement soon gave away their sense of empowerment and success not only in economic terms as they made very good sales at the Expo, but also their ability to challenge their family structures leaving men in charge of families , home and cattle for some days, but also the sense of being able to challenge their initial prejudices and gain exposure through participating both at the consisted in Conferences and a Pop Up sale at Centro Cultural San Pablo at Oaxaca City, Mexico. As the event was organized by the local Textile Museum, many textile collectors asked for commissions for some garments which engrossed their collection due to the great interest that this novel technique had gained. Visitors at the fair showed their fascination for their garments and their technique.



Figure 5.116 *Natividad and Sebastiana reusing their old sewing machine arranged by Rufina.*
San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.



Figure 5.117 *Natividad taking patterns out of shapes.* San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.



Figure 5.118 *Rufina choosing colours and shapes through a textile embroider in the Tijaltepec artisan community.* San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.



Figure 5.119 *Some samples of resulting prototypes from San Pablo Tijaltepec with the use of sewing machine for finishing.* San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.



Figure 5.120 *Working together. Exchange of tools and techniques with artisans. San Pablo Tijaltepec Workshop. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.*

During **March 7th and 8th 2016** we also held a two-day workshop at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec. We hosted a CADA workshop shared with Colectivo 1050. We revised the fired samples that I have commissioned and had workshop with other artisans from the region focused on finishes. It was also important that other craftsmen become aware of the technique to preserve and empower their cultural manifestation. Such an event was recorded in video format and is partially edited online and by invitation-viewing in Vimeo Platform:

<https://vimeo.com/489922999/75bb96dd7e>



Figure 5.121 *Exchange of knowledge: artisans from close community sharing and explaining their work to artisans of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and facilitators. CADA Foundation®, March 2016.*

On **October 2016**. The Second Mesoamerican Textile Congress TEXTIM II was held at Museo Textil de Oaxaca which is also attractive as a market. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec was already under the tutelage of Colectivo 1050 and my resources were very limited by that time. It was impossible for me to keep working on the project without any funding support although I was still engaged on different initiatives through CADA Foundation® to raise some funding and awareness for the continuity of the project. I would eventually stop collaborating after the fair We didn't hold a final meeting to close our collaboration, and I consider my intervention finished.



Figure 5.122 *Exhibition sale of the Second Mesoamerican Textile Congress in Oaxaca. CADA Foundation®, October 2016.*

The following year, in **2017** I travelled back to Mexico, this time, I attended an exhibit held in February at the Hotel Galería Casa Comtesse in Mexico, DF. In this event sales were also successful and they kept a small selection for their gift shop.



Figure 5.123 *Exhibition display case at Hotel Comtesse in Mexico, DF. CADA Foundation®, March 2017.*

During **March 17th and 18th 2017** I developed a pilot training workshop at the Textile Museum in Oaxaca. I presented the proceeding of work done at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec, as we had accomplished more progress at both villages. About 10 designers attended, and their interest arose from their own work at different communities. This workshop was presented by Ana Paula Fuentes, Lita Quiroz and I. The following days we met again to organize documentation and Lita produced a video to start a crowdfunding for the collective rising around \$3,000 USD. By then, Ana Paula is holding a directive role at CADA Foundation®.



Figure 5.124 *Pilot training workshop at the Textile Museum. Oaxaca Centre. CADA Foundation®, March 2017.*

We three went back to San Pablo Tijaltepec on **March 2017** in response to Ñaa Ñanga's request to receive training on sales, productive chain processes and commerce, led by Lita. This time we received an invitation for a celebrative meal of *Pozole*³⁵ at Sebastiana's house. For the first time since the first workshops, men joined us. Men started to be aware of the earning potential coming from their women, and this, we perceived might have a small impact on domestic power balances. We explained them about financial results, how to evaluate and project sales, how museum charge a commission on sales held at their premises. We also came to an agreement on expenses I had incurred and payments that needed to be funded. The artisan asked me again to bring Rufina to help them improve their blouses; proportions, lengths and sizes had to be improved.



Figure 5.125 *Greetings arriving to Sebastiana's house after sales in Oaxaca Centre. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.*

³⁵ *Pozole* is a traditional and very popular recipe or dish of Mexican cuisine or gastronomy. The recipe consists of a broth or soup of corn kernels (originally the variety peanuts) to which are added ingredients such as meat -pork and chicken the most common-, vegetables and spices that vary by region. <https://recetapozole.com/>

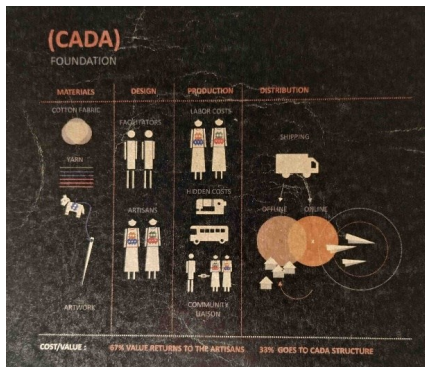


Figure 5.126 *Infographics designed to explain the production chain of artifacts to clients and artisans, by Rut Martin. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.*



Figure 5.127 *Sharing food offered by Sebastiana (Pozole) in Sebastiana's house with family and husbands. Training workshop on revenue, sales, commissions and percentages. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.*



Figure 5.128 *Artisan Rosalia who leads the collective Ñaa Ñanga and her aunt Natividad. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, 2017.*

Eventually one more workshop at San Pablo Tijaltepec was held on **July 27th 2017** Rut Martin travelled from Barcelona under her own expenses to join Ana Paula and Lita and they worked on documenting the outcomes, perfecting finishes and sizing. Lita has organized for the artisans another Pop-Up sale and Workshop at Oaxaca Centre which will happen on October 2017. Rosalia, one of the younger artisans, made a technique demonstration at one of the sales at the city.

The artisans also succeeded in getting samples of their work into the Permanent exhibition and their Ambassador Animal Toy could be bought at the textile Museum of Oaxaca

During the months of **2018** I returned once again to Oaxaca. I tried to recover and make an inventory of clay pieces I had commissioned and paid at Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and travelled alone from Oaxaca to San Pablo Tijaltepec, meet Lita at Tlaxiaco and visit Rosalia who had already built a dedicated space to work and sew at home. We went over the results of the animal toys and also brought some samples of textiles from *El Camino de los Altos*.



Figure 5.129 *Women in the last workshop held by me observing a textile from El Camino de los Altos at the new construction of Rosalia's house. New women who have been invited to participate arrived. San Pablo Tijaltepec. CADA Foundation®, June 2018.*

The woman wanted me to hold another workshop but I was unsatisfied with how events had evolved. Workshop started as open events for the whole of the community, but little by little they became closed-door activities which benefited a handful of artisans only. We made efforts with artisans but San Pablo Tijaltepec did not have the same long-lasting effect as El Camino de los Altos. I agreed to hold a last workshop at San Pablo Tijaltepec, under the premise that other women would be included. The first time four other women arrived, but they did not continue and it was not clear if they lost interest or if the already established collective Ñaa Ñanga was not interested in sharing knowledge or gaining competitors in their own village.

This last time we met at Rosalia's home, we also share *Pozole* cooked for all of us and men were sharing it at the open space as they were laying down comfortable under the trees close to Rosalia's house (family and relatives). It was the first time I could feel I was not a stranger to the community.

5.3 Social design as way to approach local culture

How did we approach the local culture through social design? In short, this was a slow and arduous process. The indigenous artisan communities have connection rooted to place; limited resources, and a deep relationship between daily routine and cultural traditions and values, making for deeply bonded communities.

Therefore, our approach required time, measured expectations, trust and an openness to unexpected outcomes.

Methods were defined through careful interpretation and evolution of previous workshops, through discussion with other design practitioners, adhering to a role of facilitators and where my own role was that of a reflective observer, whose goal was to open artisans to a self-oriented process of discovery on what they did with their craft, offering tools on how to do it, and proposing venues on where to commercialize their goods if that is what they wished for.

We considered physical properties such as texture, geometry (size, location in space, etc.) and material (weight, flexibility, quality). We also considered dynamic properties as material artefacts could engage with all senses. The workshops were dependent on those early approximation case studies described in detail in this chapter together with the detailed reflections taken on the meetings held before and after for they helped make tangible the worldviews of the participants. We were also able to chart a path forward based on the material exploration. We encouraged the artisans to take control and experiment and not worry about the outcomes. We all experienced technical challenges since these were new materials and forms for us all. More importantly, materiality was not only a technical property but an element to trigger ideas, exploration, and creativity. The task was helpful because it exposed problems and insecurities. Many of the artisans felt frustrated and shared problems they encountered with the material. We responded with advice and suggestions. With these suggestions and their own creative processes, they were able to produce a stunning range of samples and for us the designers to understand artifacts, their meaning as finished objects and the cultural transmission they embodied through making.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

Knowledge of all human activities in the past is possible only through a knowledge of their traces.

(Connerton, 1989)

6.1 Summary

This thesis has been a long journey of almost five years, from the selection of Oaxaca as the place to establish the research to the end of the dissertation document. There has been great effort at all levels, from the resources necessary to put it into practice to how to get to the communities with which we worked, which involved traveling long distances, in some cases through difficult access routes. Also, the economic cost of logistics (purchase of materials for workshops, travel expenses, etc.) was a key factor in the time it took to complete all the phases of the project since it was necessary to stop until we could have enough budget for the development of the next phase. On a human level, the team was formed almost in a natural way; the facilitators, craftsmen and collaborators, who continued to the end, were those who were really involved in the project and valued the enrichment, shared knowledge and experiences with the rest of the participants. They went from being complete strangers to creating a bond of trust, which was vital for the project's successful development. Along the way, there was a large number of people who tried to join the team but did not establish commitments with the rest or did not share the objectives and values that were required. The fact that the deadlines were longer than initially anticipated allowed us to create a project with a long-term commitment, at a pace more in line with the times with which local communities could feel more comfortable and confident.

The whole research was a learning process for all of us, expectations about the project were evolving and becoming less ambitious in quantity of communities to work with, the number of workshops that we held, the amount of time, human and economic resources involved, but as time passed by, we realised that from a qualitative point of view, the project was stronger and more involved with the community. Human relations were woven during the years through the power of 'making' together, people that once were stranger were invited to their home, greeted with hugs, they took food together and shared smiles and stories.

I felt that it was important to define how craft has historically been fully submerged in a system of exchange that provides, for designers, a way of thinking about and implementing design that

highlights the relationships involved and the reciprocal aspect of design practice. I firmly believe that being able to create this environment for exchange and trust was key to understand Social design practice as a Practice of correspondence. During workshops, different situations, defined as “proximities of design” among people, related to time and space or to the process of making together, transformed in order to create a framed environment that allowed the approach among all of them through the respect to: people, places and material. Social Design practice should be based on democratic, qualitative, communal exchange and decision-making. All voices partake in all decisions, seeing Design not as a colonising agent but as a platform to decolonise by design. I often notice a lack of non-Western voices in the international design discourse I’m familiar with, and believe that it is necessary to represent equality in decision making and opinion. As designers, not imposing is crucial: we must not arrive at places where we have not been invited to come, and thread lightly.

With the intention to stimulate a discussion about the future application of the outcomes of my work and demonstrate the dynamics of the workshops through ‘proximities of design’ during the process, I have shown how, through design, individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, communities strengthened and changes proposed based on mutual correspondence. My research opens new venues triggering artisans’ cooperation and creative contribution. Although my research was focused on the Mixtec communities of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec of the Oaxaca Valley, these situations should be transferrable to other contexts where a sense of community of any type functioning within a structure with core values prevail, albeit some adaptation.

6.1.1 5.13 Revisiting the main objectives

During the course of my Research, conducted extensively through both framing theory and ethnography and grounding both through field work, both to gain context and perspective and through workshops held during a period of four years, I defined three main objectives of the research that in brief are approaching, exploring the role of Design to understand culture, and how Design can introduce local culture to globalization.

Elaborating on these three main goals, a **first objective was to study the appropriate pathways for approaching local cultures through Social Design.**

The use of craft as Social design practice provided a system of exchange among designers and artisans. The designer’s role in this ‘making together’ context that we established for the workshops, is as provider of services, and was framed through dialogue and from a community

point of view that transcends beyond individual levels. The workshops were organised in order to manage the appropriate social, material and spatial 'proximities of design', the aim was to create democratic environments of trust and commitment that allowed the approach to local cultures as facilitators, away from the role that designers have taken from a western point of view that use design as a tool for empowerment and colonisation.

Probably Phase I; Ethnographical research, was key to understand local communities' culture, their customs and idiosyncrasy was essential to be able to approach local cultures in a respectful way, taking into account their values and their way of understanding the world. Cultural differentiation is a key element in this research, the aim was not to impose a specific methodology or goal to reach during the workshops, but exchange the diverse knowledge that artisans and the team could bring. Facilitators and collaborators that took part in the process were designers, mainly Mexican born or had lived there for a long time, they had previously worked with indigenous communities and they had different backgrounds and international training. In some cases, they joined the workshops artisans of other nearby communities to share their techniques, their way of working, the materials they used. This allowed us to work from a cultural approach that was close to them and easily opened avenues for dialogue. Questions were posed and proposals made which were resolved openly and democratically among the participants. These characteristics of the team were key to putting into practice the established guidelines to avoid an approach from a colonising or westernised point of view.

It was also important in the process of approaching the communities, that our role as facilitators was focused as reflective practitioners. We acquired continuous learning through observation that allowed us to establish the proximities of design necessary in each workshop or adapt them during the course of each of them. It allowed the team of designers not to act from a pre-established criterion, but rather that each action and decision could be adapted to that specific situation and community. The position of the facilitator during the workshops was not to impose, but to promote dialogue and the participation of all, using the artifact and its making process to pose questions and proposals in which everyone felt free to express their opinions, to give their point of view as equals, to promote the Exchange of knowledge, tangible and intangible tools. There was no value judgment on the part of the facilitators, but stimulation and acceptance as a tool for framing events during the social design practice.

I believe that one of the keys that allowed our approach to artisans was that the research was not intended to achieve a specific benefit and once obtained we left. Rather, our objective was the development of the process itself, which allowed facilitators and artisans to share ideas and knowledge, but also emotions and memories over the course of those years. These deadlines may

seem very long from the culture of the transitory in which we live immersed in capitalist environments, but the long term was one of the keys to establish a commitment between the entire team of facilitators and with the communities, it gave credibility to the project and security to the participants.

The second objective was to explore how the practices of design could *help us* to better know and understand local identity.

Looking back on the main objectives of my research, I have demonstrated how design practice can help understand local identities. Through workshops, facilitators were able to get in contact with the oral tradition of the community, in some cases by the use of artifacts or images that opened questions about their own cultural references and totally foreign ones. Artisans and facilitators established dialogues and exchanged skills, and by using traditional and new techniques and materials, they were able to incorporate traditional culture in a series of prototypes. It was important to establish the appropriate context of equality and correspondence during the workshops, as it allowed for creating situations for discussion and mutual learning, as well as exchange of values and knowledge. An example was the learning of new techniques of pattern-making and sewing that allowed the artisans to turn the drawings representing their oral traditions into prototypes into three-dimensional figures decorated with the graphic and figurative designs they traditionally embroider on their blouses.

The role of the facilitator in these workshops was always intended to be non-intrusive, always maintained from a neutral position that would allow decisions to be made throughout the process through dialogue and equality, showing and building respect for the community. The impact of the 'proximities of the design' in the practice has been argued. Different situations were created during the workshops regarding the space, the people involved and the materials used. These changed not only in the different workshops but also during the course of each of them, and parameters such as trust, exchange or dialogue also transformed. This variation of the 'proximities of design' influenced the decision-making during the design process as consequence of a better knowledge and understanding of the local communities we worked with.

As result of the reflective practitioner role that was adopted by the designers, they were able to learn about the local culture of each different workshop through the observation and artisans' participation, how these proximities could evolve to promote trust and dialogue among them. As example of this transformation of those proximities, the space where the workshops were held changed from being initially within a public communal space provided by the authority where the team of facilitators brought food to being conducted at the home of one of the artisans where she

invited the team to eat. In this context, the participants' trust between them evolved, new fields of dialogue opened and new commitments acquired that allowed design decisions to develop and craftswomen to adopt new responsibilities. (Adams, 2014). The exploration of situations or 'proximities of design' help us better understand local identity through places, people and materials through the exchange of techniques and materials.

The creation of trust through dialogue during the course of the workshops is reflected how artisans began to share not only their point of view or their proposals about the design process or the materials, but also began to share personal comments, which opened new paths for interaction and get a wider perspective about their concerns and their expectations. Some of these comments made us reflect on the impact of our research, not only among the participants, but in the social or economic organization of the community, and helped us to understand better potential changes in their local identities and work according it. Such as when Sebastiana, one of the artisans from San Pablo Tijaltepec, shared that if she could earn enough money from the sale of her products, she would like to buy a car.

Another challenge encountered was bridging the design practitioners' vision on equal opportunity, to the artisans' vision on their own role within the community. Particularly, on the case study at San Pablo Tijaltepec, design practitioners observed the generation of "insider" or "exclusive" circles with access to new ideas, training or materials facilitated in workshops, in order to reserve these benefits to a smaller group, held as competitive advantage against other artisans in the same community, using knowledge and resources as exclusive privileges and not willing to share them with the wider artisan community.

The third objective was to explore ways in which design could support local communities in relation to global markets.

Turok and Novelo link the expressions of cultural knowledge embedded in *hacer* (the making) with the social and economic spheres that Malinowski addressed years before, generating a common thread among forms of artisan production, productive composition of the community and relationship with the local and national economy (Turok, 1988).

This is particularly important when regarding power imbalances evident in many Social Design practices that open the door to *cultural imperialism*; to avoid this, varying contexts must be approached at a local level and must be guided by human relationships, where trust is gained through time and respectful cultural approximation on both sides – that of the community and that of the design practitioner who intervenes – and beyond commercial opportunism.

The result of this social design practice approach, based in trust, equality and dialogue and keeping their own cultural heritage as main guideline for the workshops, is that artisans had the feeling that the artifact as final product, belongs to them. It created a sense of empowerment and belonging, instead feeling they were mere working force for creating one more consumption item for western targets.

As to ways in which design could support local communities in relation to the global market, the implementation of a system of exchange with the goal of supporting local economies and identities is necessary. The practice of design through the workshops has resulted in the design and materialisation of artefacts that maintain the imaginary and the traditional techniques of the community, avoiding an intrusive and cultural domination role of the designers. Acting as facilitators, we were able to establish a commitment and create the right situations to exchange tools and knowledge, allowing these communities to select what they decide to use, to change or to ignore according their own interest.

The result was that the artisans were able to build resilience to global markets by the incorporation of foreign techniques, but adapted by the facilitators to what the artisans demanded or suggested during the workshops in order to improve the final product and that they have customised and made their own. Also, the production of these artefacts for commercialisation or the use of technologies, as social media to promote and manage the selling has been carried out independently by the group of artisans, which has caused changes in their family routines, such as men staying in childcare or women increasing their income.

Within the prevailing non-Western discourse, social design has been viewed as a possible bolster for a resilient and transformed identity within the context of globalization and the conflicts it presents between modernism and heritage.

Within this context, Social Design represents a possible tool for building resilient identities. Productive discourse regarding design in developing countries has developed since the Ahmedabad Declaration of 1979. However, while the precedent for discourse centring around identity and social practice has been formed, detailed critique of past design practices is still necessary to shape the future of design.

Technological approaches hold much potential in that they help to create a 'new space' for small communities to generate alliances and create a network of connections while still allowing cultural heritage to play an active role in community building.

To finalize the ideas contained in this Section, I would like to stress that my Research's objective is to generate reflections among fellow design practitioners, not to claim rights. Also, my goal is to lend a voice to those in the field, practicing Design out of an Urban and Global context, and listen to them and their keen reflections and observations. While my strategic plan during this Research is logistical, commercial, while its process it allowed for developing tactics, to receive and offer advice, to listen, to understand the unspoken rules of culture, to debate ideas and to approach people with respect and interest, all of which is documented during years of research and fieldwork, and while writing and amending this Thesis.

6.2 Continuity, Measuring impact, legacy and Fields of future social design practice

6.2.1 Continuity

Although the research related to my thesis had to be concluded, there was no formal closure with any of the communities with which we worked with. Due to lack of time and resources, it was not possible to give continuity to the Santo Domingo Tonaltepec project, despite the collaboration of the facilitators, the lack of means made it impossible to collect the product of the second burning and make a joint reflection with the artisans and facilitators on the outcome of the workshops. The facilitators, Kythzia Barrera and Diego Mier y Terán with the Colectivo 1050 were already developing projects in the Santo Domingo Tonaltepec community, promoting traditional pottery with the local community, so it was decided not to duplicate efforts and focus on the San Pablo Tijaltepec project.

It is very important to be able to establish long-term projects that strengthen all participants and the intention of the work carried out cannot be called into question, an adequate forecast of resources to ensure continuity and commitment to the communities, which without the adequate means is non-viable.

The San Pablo Tijaltepec project could be continued for a longer time and a final artifact materialized that was carried through to the commercialization phase. This was not the final goal of the thesis, but it did mark a turning point in the project. Various topics could be followed up with the facilitators through the workshops; the elaboration, the process, the finishes, the materials, the time management, the problems among the artisans. Reflection with the facilitators continued; Ana Paula, Lita and Maddalena, on how to continue after the successful participation in the Expo-venta craft fair of the artisan collective of San Pablo Tijaltepec, calling

itself Ñaa Ñanga. It was proposed that Ñaa Ñanga expand the training to other women in the community in order for them to be in charge of transmitting the knowledge acquired, either under the stamp of this group, or by creating a new one, which generated certain disagreements among the artisans. Due to the lack of resources and the additional effort it entailed for the team, it was decided to postpone it, leaving it as an open and necessary process.

The process opened many other avenues parallel to the research carried out by the collaborators: anthropologically, the work of Luis Morales that needs follow-up and financial support to study the impact of the workshops on the community at a social, economic, gender level. The objective of the CADA foundation, as well as that of the social design school that is being founded Chiapas and the publication of the thesis and the book is to disseminate the project, obtain financing and be able to return to Mexico to offer new workshops and give continuity to the projects started, bringing the work team together again.

The anthropological opinion on the San Pablo Tijaltepec blouse, which was promoted by the team of collaborators in this investigation, is another point that opened a deep debate on the right to identity of indigenous peoples through their designs, on their expressions cultural, about pre-Hispanic techniques that are now necessary and current topics, despite that were not the objective of this thesis.

The Colectivo 1050 and facilitators talked about organizing a round table between the two communities that requested an anthropological opinion, and a debate in Oaxaca to continue discussing the issue of misappropriation of crafts.

Further follow-up in Oaxaca was pending, due to lack of support and financial resources to continue paying people, organizing workshops, without academic or financial support to continue the research.

6.2.2 Measuring impact

The social design practice has had an impact on the social and economic aspects of the community. The impact of these changes is something to study in detail, to assess whether it is something positive and whether some consequences could be derived from it. The lack of financial skills challenges the artisans' capacity to derive maximum benefit from the opportunities that do arise. For instance, after the workshops, artisans organised several displays and sold their works. They were confused and disturbed, and some were even angry at the lack of knowledge of the exchange system. Working from the basis of trust the team of facilitators had developed with the women, we were able to organise, promote and represent the artisans.

A potential for future research is the 'measurement' of the impact on the artisans' community, as it is crucial to this field. The development of some new strategies and to open debate about methodologies of 'how' and 'what' to measure for those fully engaged with the social design practice is necessary. In this sense, I believe that one of the key questions is not the meaning of the category 'social design practice' but rather the question of engagement and correspondence. This should not be another attempt to turn design into another kind of 'specialty' or rescue humanitarian Western discourse but rather an inquiry into the fundamental components of what social design should serve.

Evidence on the effectiveness of the approach of this work is still limited and is difficult to assess, but this research suggests that substantially greater progress could be made if social design practice were centred on a common agenda to initiate collective impact. As I explained in Chapter 4, I encouraged the participation of all and did not restrict involvement on any grounds. During discussions about the heritage and the community system, it became clear that none of the community members were fully aware of the danger of possible scenarios of exposure to intrusive and potentially non-ethical approaches. We are already affected by larger structures of societal life, such as gender, foreign policies, among others; social problems do not arise only from social sectors, and our practice as social designers should relate to those aspects of our lived experiences. These kinds of projects usually tend to focus on independent actions, and they are not often brought together with a common agenda – not because it is impossible but because it is so rarely attempted (Kania and Kramer, 2011).

In a voracious capitalist economy where consumerism has set the standards of well-being, it is necessary to vindicate a reflection within our processes and us. In the tradition of making and without the need to be associated with the past, the process is a transformative one in itself. It adds another layer of time and another way of measuring, allowing reflection and dialogue within ourselves and with the world surrounding us. We are leaving behind to the new generations' societies based on immediacy with no meaning for memory. It should be essential to foster critical and analytical visions so new generations can assume roles and leadership. Through making, individual attributes and agencies can be promoted, communities strengthened and changes proposed based on mutual correspondence. This research demonstrates how the process opens new research venues and a new generation of correspondences and exchanges that will also expand to market opportunities. The presence of elaborate processes in an artisanal way reminds us not only of where we come from but also of where we could go. It has the potential for transformation from social to economical levels, eliciting cooperation and enhancing democratic values while triggering the artisan's communities and their creative contribution to our society.

Ñaa Ñanga is the collective founded by the artisans of San Pablo Tijaltepec. For four years, CADA Foundation, a non-profit civil organization, collaborated with some women from San Pablo Tijaltepec in an exchange through social design whose objective was to provide the tools for artisans to be able to revive the traditional techniques present in our clothing and for them to Through the reinforcement of our cultural heritage, of our "know-how with our hands" we will achieve self-sufficiency and a position in the market structure.

Today, thanks to the social exchange that took place with the CADA Foundation, the group of women that make it up have consolidated ourselves as the Ñaa Ñanga collective, an independent, organized and trained collective to foster a collaborative work structure and business development.³⁶

A collaboration was established to assist them with a communication strategy: they chose a figure for their logo, the Ñaa Ñanga brand was developed, a digital presence for marketing and they were provided with advice for the relationship with merchants.

They obtained a digital presence on Facebook, taking the initiative to generate and maintain the profile of the group on this platform. Rosalía Bautista García, the youngest of the artisans, requested the help of Lita to set up a sales platform through the Internet, to understand how Facebook worked and the value and responsibility that this platform assumed as a social media. Rosalía's intention was to be able to manage it autonomously by her own.

They were also provided with a mobile phone so that they could communicate and establish contacts themselves.

The use of technology, access to information, communication capacity and autonomy that it can provide is a consequence whose impact should be evaluated, what changes it produces and at what levels it acts is one of the consequences to be studied.

The presence of the San Pablo Tijaltepec women at the expo-ventas and their pieces generated a lot of expectation in the textile museum in Oaxaca and in the congress, the acceptance that the sale price of the products was higher than the price usually established was also very relevant from my point of view. In this sense, we worked with the artisans on total transparency about the price of products, blouses, dolls and textiles. The price was intentionally increased to provoke a discussion of the effort that manual labour actually had and the breakdown of the price of the materials, the fees of the artisans, the percentage of the museum and of a minimum percentage

³⁶ Self-description of Colectivo Ñaa Ñanga de San Pablo Tijaltepec, at their Facebook Information page: https://es-la.facebook.com/pg/blusastijaltepec/about/?ref=page_internal

for CADA, that never was charged, since CADA had paid in advance for the work of the artisans in order to protect the economic return of the women before starting.

After the expo-ventas, despite the fact that at first, they were reluctant to attend in person, the artisans realized the importance of their participation in this type of craft fairs to generate income. The Textile Museum had also commissioned them a blouse with high quality materials, to be exhibited in the permanent collection of the museum, a demonstration of the value of the artisan work of these women and the cultural legacy that their technique and knowledge entail.

The impact of the economic contribution of women in the community, the social effect on men, who had to remain in charge of the care of children and homes for a few days, established a totally unprecedented situation in the social context of the local community.

All these aspects, as well as the technology use, open up new questions that I would like to be able to answer in future research work with the team.

Both on a personal level and for the team of collaborators, I consider that the issuance of the anthropological opinion on the San Pablo Tijaltepec blouse caused an important impact, of course for the San Pablo Tijaltepec community, for all indigenous communities and for the right to identify themselves through their designs and on their cultural expressions. But it also had a deep impact on the team, many questions about our participation were opened, as well as the relevance of our opinions for local communities, the difficulties we deal in acting objectively, without making value judgments that did not correspond to us, but on the other hand, after five years of close relationship with the artisan community they were not so alien to us.

After the success obtained in the Expoventa, there was interest on the part of an Oaxacan commercial brand that approached to artisans close to the Ñaa Ñanga collective who had attended the fair and asked them directly for their collaboration, taking advantage of the interest that their presence and their embroidery had generated. Some facilitators and members of the communities said that it was an honest support for women, others disagreed saying that they decontextualized the embroidery, used it in other garments and the integrity of the San Pablo Tijaltepec blouse was lost. The facilitators were never intended to manipulate, coerce, or influence the artisans. In the hearts of the facilitators, there was the desire that the communities themselves demand an opinion to facilitate the protection of their artistic heritage, the iconography of the blouses, as part of their identity, as had happened previously in the town of Tlahuitoltepec that demanded the anthropological opinion after the controversy generated by the case of the Isabel Marant brand. As a consequence of the point of view of some of the facilitators,

a letter was drawn up on behalf of the community, demanding protection from CADA Foundation and the Alfredo Harp Helú³⁷ Foundation to defend the identity of the indigenous communities.

I was very surprised by the political turn that the issue began to take, and by the position of referee and watchdog that was being assigned to me as the founder of CADA, moving away my research work and my neutral position that I had endeavoured to maintain from the beginning: that the community was supported from its cultural heritage, but maintaining a neutral position, that the communities decided what they wanted to do with the workshops, with the tools that were proposed to them, with the design and production decisions, with their approach or not to markets, etc.

Both the commercial brand and the communities asked me to intervene on their behalf, which led to a lot of tension and disappointments. My position was and is, to remain neutral at all times, without giving an opinion on whether the collaboration offered by the trademark was honest or not, generating differences between the facilitators when my position was not to intervene and remain in a neutral situation, receiving requests both from the communities and from the company interested in supporting their cause, before which the thesis, outside of its objective, opened a discussion on the right of the communities to cultural and artisan heritage, which supported the communities in their doing but did not to give an opinion or take sides between the company or the communities.

Finally, the opinion was requested by the authorities and was drafted in June 2018 by the anthropologist María del Carmen, who also made the protection opinion related to the case of Isabel Marant, and who acted as a collaborator and advisor to CADA and in title staff during the thesis work.

Aunque hace algunos años la confección de esta blusa respondía al uso local, hoy día, existe un mercado fuera del municipio que busca la compra y/o venta de estas creaciones. Las mujeres de San Pablo Tijaltepec, de manera individual o grupal (no refiere a una organización especial o comunitaria exclusiva) han optado por distintas opciones para responder a estas demandas de carácter artesanal que forman parte de sus ingresos actuales. Esto, como parte de las dinámicas comunitarias actuales, ha causado algunos desacuerdos, conflictos y replanteamientos en cuanto a la enajenación de su patrimonio cultural.

(Castillo Cisneros, 2019)

³⁷ The Alfredo Harp Helú Foundation promotes actions for the good of the people of Mexico with programs in the fields of education, culture and sports. It stands out for providing support to artisan workshops, from training, infrastructure improvement, exhibitions, publications and incentives for production. <https://www.mio.org.mx/fahho/>

Although a few years ago the making of this blouse responded to local use, today, there is a market outside the municipality that seeks to buy and / or sell these creations. The women of San Pablo Tijaltepec, individually or in groups (does not refer to a special or exclusive community organization) have chosen different options to respond to these artisanal demands that are part of their current income. This, as part of the current community dynamics, has caused some disagreements, conflicts and rethinking regarding the alienation of their cultural heritage. (Castillo Cisneros, 2019)

Finally, the long-term objective is to support the artisans in creating a sustainable niche in the global market. Success would be a reliable income for the artisans, together with recognition of the history, culture and skill that is embodied in their work. Whether the artisans would lead this engagement through the co-operative business model, which is popular and prevalent in Oaxaca, or through individual means is yet to be determined (and their lack of financial literacy skills makes it pre-emptive to decide at this point). Developing scale is a significant future objective for designers taking over future research on this field; indeed, success could be measured by creating a sustainable model that could be replicated by others on any region where indigenous communities express their desire to maintain their traditional modes of living and making while retaining ownership over their designs and histories.

6.2.3 Fields of future social design practice

I have been revising fields of interest for designers that may arise from the thesis. I think an interesting one is the designer's own role as a facilitator. The function of the designer is not the one that is instilled in the Western educational centres. The designer has to adopt a new role in which their mission is to be a link between craftsmen and their traditions, their culture, their techniques and materials and the global market in which their 'products' would be marketed. The design and manufacturing processes nowadays are generally separated and delocalised. The designs are created by and for Westerners, but they are manufactured in non-Western countries. In our case, the design and production processes are unified; it is the craftsmen themselves who assume both functions and therefore can control the entire process, modify it and adapt it to their needs or those of the market. In terms of the opportunities created by this research in particular, I hope many designers involved in social and political projects should see this project as a practice of correspondence into social, economic and political structures. It would be useful to explore how other communities might respond to a similar approach and to find methods to measure the

transformation as a means of major driver of change and valuable promoter of an ethical and democratic way of living.

I would like to note that I only found a few relevant examples described in sufficient detail to inform my own research, and I was sure to note them in my work. As an educator for many years, I consider that many design schools use the term 'design', 'social design' or 'social design practice' as an ideology to justify another source of selling product within the needed markets. Private and expensive degrees, master programs and 'design research labs' are sellable materials today. These programs grow as a strategy to position themselves and with the intention of selling 'design' as another source of profitable income. The lack of academic knowledge in the area of social design practice was sadly surprising. On the positive side, a parallel development in design for social practice and design for education is slowly growing mainly out of the walls of the design schools.

For design educators and designers in general, I consider that this research provides a case study that I hope will be useful for practitioners and social design researchers, allowing them to open new research avenues and join crossroads between collaborative work and social design practice work together with the material culture field. For those adopting a practical approach while working creatively with communities, conflicts can arise not only as a result of individual action but also because of misunderstandings resulting from cultural assumptions. It is therefore necessary to make harmonious (attuned) and ethical decisions encouraging everyday people to perceive the situations around them in a different way. No one can determine our role in the future, but I challenge skilled social design practitioners to continue finding ways to initiate this shift in practice.

6.2.4 Legacy

As I mentioned before, I would, after the first workshops, encounter a challenge in being an individual financing a larger Project, and realized it was wise to structure an entity with legal and financial backing to further develop my research and for further developing this and other future projects within communities. As such, CADA Foundation would be born.

CADA Foundation is a platform that promotes and disseminates the research carried out in the context of this thesis and the projects developed in indigenous communities. It helps to connect institutions, communities and individuals who are interested in providing financial or resource support for its dissemination or exhibition, academic collaboration or other way to support the project and the team.

Therefore, the mission of this platform is to share the necessary information to establish, in a viral way, a sustainable model from the environmental, social, and economic point of view based in a dialogue with the different communities' artisan approach and developing design strategies during the process as well as in the production and distribution chain .The goal is to foster and facilitate, for the local artisans and suppliers, becoming part of the local and global economy, without the loss of identity, and helping to reinforce their own communities.

After the publication of the thesis, the publication of a book is planned in which the experience lived throughout the research process and the workshops is scheduled. The objective of this book is the dissemination in universities and centres related to social design, to show a practical case study of social design. The book will be published in English, Spanish and eventually Mixtec, so that it can reach not only an international audience of universities and design professionals, but also institutions, local educational centres in Oaxaca and throughout Mexico, the communities involved and future designers who may arise from them, so that they do not feel this investigation as alien, but as something with which they can identify.

For me, the opening of the exchange center in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, would be the main legacy of my research, a place where would be possible to give continuity to the work carried out for more than five years in Mexico. Where through the synergy of professionals that has been created during the research process of this project, all with extensive experience in fields, such as social design or anthropology, can give continuity to the various avenues of research that have been opened during these years. A place where processes can be documented and design practitioners, academics interested in social design practice and students who want to approach social design from the perspective and vision with which this research has been worked can be brought together.

Finally, to say that this thesis is not an end, but rather represents a beginning.

Appendix A: Footage

A1. Chapter 3: The articulation of cultural differences: Indigenism, politics and social context in Mexico
A1.1 Indigenism and anthropology in post-revolution Mexico
A1.1.1 Selection of Malinowski images
A1.1.2 Spiel by María Tzu [Sound recording]

A.1 Chapter 3: The articulation of cultural differences: Indigenism, politics and social context in Mexico		
A.1.1 Indigenism and anthropology in post-revolution Mexico		
Selection of Malinowski images		
Figure A 1.1.1	Removed for Copyright reasons.	<p>Scales used to measure <i>chile</i></p> <p>Malinowski, B. and de la Fuente, J. 1985. <i>Malinowski in Mexico. The economics of a Mexican market system.</i></p>
Figure A 1.1.2	Removed for Copyright reasons.	<p>A <i>regatona</i> sorting eggs</p> <p>Malinowski, B. and de la Fuente, J. 1985. <i>Malinowski in Mexico. The economics of a Mexican market system.</i></p>
Figure A.1.1.3	Removed for Copyright reasons.	<p>A barter transaction</p> <p>Malinowski, B. and de la Fuente, J. 1985. <i>Malinowski in Mexico. The economics of a Mexican market system.</i></p>

A.1 Chapter 3: The articulation of cultural differences: Indigenism, politics and social context in Mexico

A.1.1 Indigenism and anthropology in post-revolution Mexico

A.1.1.2 Spiel by María Tzu [Sound recording]

A.1.1.2.1

Record

'Para que la lagartija no coma al frijol'

Removed for Copyright
reasons.

Taller de Leñateros. 2012. *Conjurios y ebriedades*. [Sound recording]. Spiel by María Tzu.

Transcription

Voz/Voice: Maria Tzu

Grabación/Record: José Santos Velázquez, en/in CESC (1999)

Tsotsil: María Tzu

Versión en español/Spanish version: A.P.

<p>Toja bol jba yu'un tajmek ti mu xch'i li jchenek', Kajval.</p> <p>Ta xla j ti jun jcho be, ta xia j ti jun chenek' yu' une, ti jun Chone, ti jun uts'uts'ni'e, Kajval.</p> <p>Pero mu x-ech' ti jvi'nal. Mu x-ech ti vi yelan une, Kajval.</p> <p>Pero yu'un ta xanav avu'un ta Banumil, ta vinajel, Kajval.</p> <p>Kajval, Jtot, Pero ventainbun me.</p>	<p>Es muy pobre por cierto La que no le crece el frijol.</p> <p>Este animal, Esta tu lagartija, Kajval, Se acaba la única milpa, Se acaba el último frijol.</p> <p>Pero mi hambre no se acaba. Mira nomás cómo me tienes.</p> <p>Es por tu culpa, Kajval, que anda ese animal aquí en la</p>	<p>It is very poor indeed The one that does not grow the beans</p> <p>This animal, this is your lizard, Kajval, The only milpa is finished The last bean is finished.</p> <p>But my hunger does not end. Just look how you got me.</p> <p>It's because of you, Kajval, who walks that animal here on Earth</p> <p>Take me into account, Kajval, within your plans.</p>
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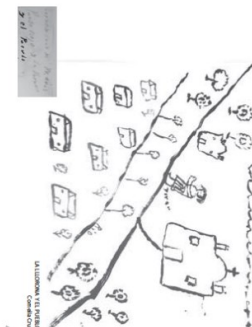
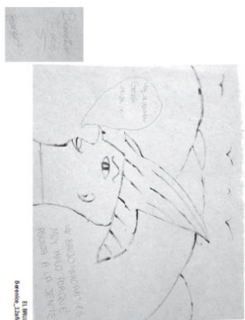





Appendix A: Footage

	Tierra. Tómame en cuenta, Kajval, dentro de tus planes.	
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Appendix B: Drawings dossier compilation

These are the drawings made in the communities in the first oral workshops representing traditions and tales. Places: Atzompa, Santa María Yavesía, Santo Domingo Tonaltepec and San Pablo Tijaltepec. Participants aged 3 to 84.

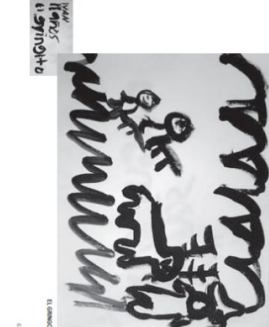
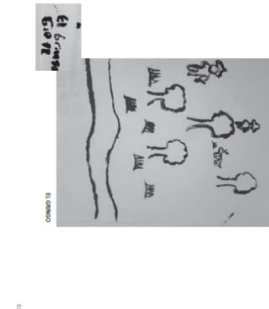
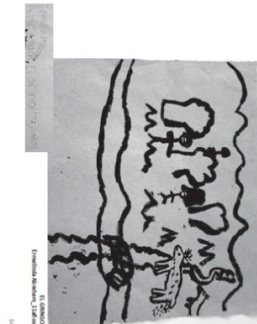
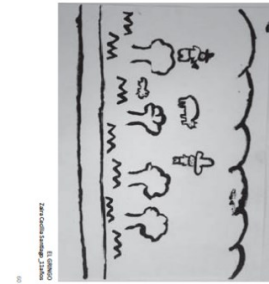
B1. Chapter 5: Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops	
B 1.1.1 Drawings representing traditions and tales	
B 1.1.2 Atzompa 8 Feb 2014. Oral tradition- Drawing	
B 1.1.2.1 La llorona	
B 1.1.2.2 The temple/The magic rock and the water	
B 1.1.2.3 Matlacihua. The lady with the feet of a rooster or a mule	
B 1.1.2.4 The elves	
B 1.1.2.5 Those who change heads	


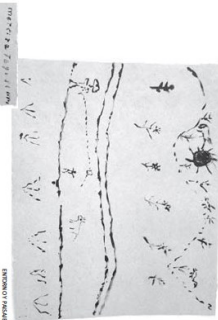
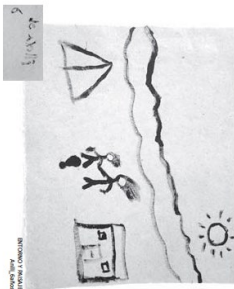



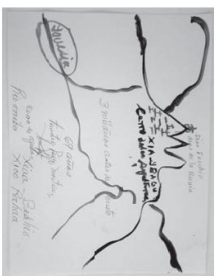

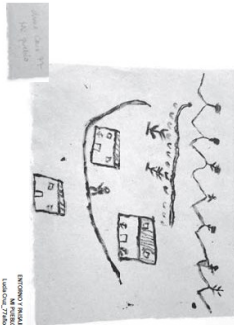
B.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline		
B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops		
B 1.1.1 Drawings representing traditions and tales		
 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>
 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>
 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>	 <p>19</p>

B.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops

B 1.1.1 Drawings representing traditions and tales

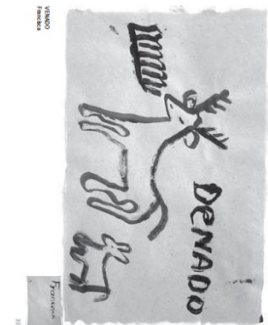
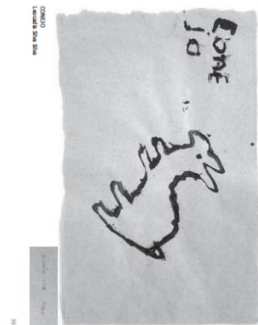
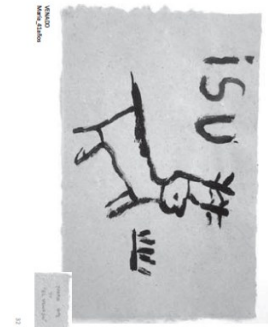
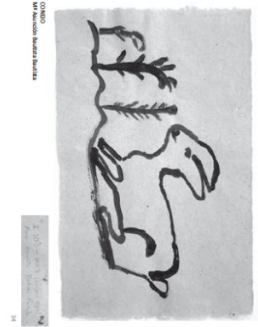


B.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline		
B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops		
B 1.1.1 Drawings representing traditions and tales		
 <p>11 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>12 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>13 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>
 <p>14 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>15 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>16 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>
 <p>17 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>18 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>	 <p>19 Miguel Ángel Buenos Aires Argentina</p>

B.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops

B 1.1.1 Drawings representing traditions and tales



B.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
B 1.1 Phase I. Ethnographic (Research). First Oral Workshops	
B 1.1.2 Atzompa 8 Feb 2014. Oral tradition- Drawing.	
B 1.1.2.1 La llorona	In the versions they told us, she is riding on a horse or in a horse-drawn cart, wears a white dress and is all resplendent. Dogs howl when they see her go by.
B 1.1.2.2 The temple/The magic rock and the water	They told us about a place on the outskirts of the town, where there is a hill (a stone) that turns into a lake so that those of the neighboring town cannot pass. There are versions of the stone that have water below, a lake. The church is believed to have a lake below.
B 1.1.2.3 Matlaciuhua. The lady with the feet of a rooster or a mule	She makes the men get lost at night, when they return home drunk, the lady attracts them to isolated places where there are thorns and leaves them lying there. You can't see its feet, but later you realize that they are not human feet. A lady said that Grandpa Chano always got lost.
B 1.1.2.4 The elves	They are naked children; they are children who were not baptized. They do mischief. A lady related the story of Etla Castle, according to which a man dreamed that the elves asked him to build a castle, the man said he did not have the money to do it, and the elves told him that they were going to give him everything. Then the man built the castle but all the money he makes belongs to the elves: there is indeed a

Appendix B: Drawings dossier compilation

	building in the shape of a Walt Disney castle, the headquarters of a loan company.
B 1.1.2.5 Those who change heads	There was a couple, every night the lady went out. Once the husband realized it, he followed her to a place where he saw several people gathering and changing heads. By ringing the bell before sunrise, the characters turned their heads back. When the lady sees that her husband discovers her with a man's head, she doesn't have time to change her head, and she dies of shame.

Appendix C: Selection of Samples

C1. Chapter 5: Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples
C.1.1.1.1 Colgantes
C.1.1.1.2 Tazas de Café
C.1.1.1.3 Contenedores
C.1.1.1.4 Veladora / Botanero
C.1.1.1.5 Set 1- Muñeca
C.1.1.1.6 Set 2- Vehículos
C.1.1.1.7 Set 3- Animalitos
C.1.1.1.8 Set 4- Ángeles
C.1.1.1.9 Set 5- Dinosaurios
C.1.1.1.10 Set 6- Músicos
C.1.1.2 San Pablo Tijaltepec Samples

C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples	
C.1.1.1.1 Colgantes	
 	

C.1 Chapter 5	Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples	
C.1.1.1.2 Tazas Café	
<div></div>	

C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production

C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples

C.1.1.1.3 Contenedores














C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples	
C.1.1.1.4 Veladora/ Botanero	
<div></div>	

C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples
C.1.1.1.5 Set 1- Muñeca

C.1.1.1.6 Set 2- Vehículos


C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples	
C.1.1.1.7 Set 3- Animalitos	
 	
C.1.1.1.8 Set 4- Ángeles	
	

C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production
C.1.1.1 Santo Domingo Tonaltepec Samples
C.1.1.1.9 Set 5- Dinosaurios
  
C.1.1.1.10 Set 6- Músicos
 

C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.2 San Pablo Tijaltepec Samples	
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C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production

C.1.1.2 San Pablo Tijaltepec Samples



C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production	
C.1.1.2 San Pablo Tijaltepec Samples	
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C.1 Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

C.1.1 Phase III. Into Proximities of Design. Prototyping and Production

C.1.1.2 San Pablo Tijaltepec Samples



Appendix D: List of edited recording

D1. Chapter 5: Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
D 1.1 Additional material
D 1.1.1 Interview with Ana Pellicer about Santa Clara del Cobre.
D 1.1.2 Visit to CECATI 133 (Training Center for Industrial Work) in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas.
D 1.1.3 Visit to CECATI 166 (Training Center for Industrial Work) in Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán and interview with Marina Fraga (Former Area Coordinator).
D 1.1.4 Juanita explains technique. San Pablo Tijaltepec.
D 1.1.5 Picturing sound and movement through the material 'Pick-up, pleated and ruffled' technique (pepenado). San Pablo Tijaltepec.
D 1.1.6 Burning result pieces of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
D 1.1.7 Exchange knowledge between artisans from different communities. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
D 1.1.8 Interview with Ana Pellicer and Luis Morales.
D 1.1.9 Playing with children to trigger imagination. Oral workshops - Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
D 1.1.10 Interview with Maddalena Forcella. Textile designer/Design practitioner.
D 1.1.11 Interview with Ana Paula Fuentes. Textile designer/Design practitioner.
D 1.1.12 Interview with Carmen Malvar. Social design practitioner and researcher.
D 1.1.13 Interview with Diego Mier y Terán. Graphic designer/Design practitioner. Founder Innovando la tradición – Colectivo 1050.
D 1.1.14 Interview with Kythzia Barrera. Industrial designer/Design practitioner. Founder Innovando la tradición – Colectivo 1050.
D 1.1.15 Interview with Laura Margarita Quiroga (Lita) – Community Liaison.
D 1.2 James Metcalf Interview
D 1.2.1 Excerpts from <i>"Dos artistas en un pueblo de artesanos"</i> . López Zuckermann, R. (2014)
D 1.3 Documentary: "Ñaa kiku isaa y kiku sama", "Women weaving our culture", by Laura Quiroz

D1. Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline
D 1.1 Additional material
D 1.1.1 Interview with Ana Pellicer about Santa Clara del Cobre.
https://vimeo.com/490532721/7609b3ec60
D 1.1.2 Visit to CECATI 133 (Training Center for Industrial Work) in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas.
https://vimeo.com/489942190/b2e1afecc4
D 1.1.3 Visit to CECATI 166 (Training Center for Industrial Work) in Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacán and interview with Marina Fraga (Former Area Coordinator).
https://vimeo.com/489939510/f25c4cf831
D 1.1.4 Juanita explains technique. San Pablo Tijaltepec.
https://vimeo.com/489900016/def06d81cf
D 1.1.5 Picturing sound and movement through the material 'Pick-up, pleated and ruffled' technique (pepenado). San Pablo Tijaltepec.
https://vimeo.com/490534957/94ca57693f
D 1.1.6 Burning result pieces of Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
https://vimeo.com/489911949/e8e8b43d79
D 1.1.7 Exchange knowledge between artisans from different communities. Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.
https://vimeo.com/489922999/75bb96dd7e
D 1.1.8 Interview with Ana Pellicer and Luis Morales.
https://vimeo.com/489872162/c084d5f4e8

D1. Chapter 5 Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
D 1.1 Additional material	
D 1.1.9 Playing with children to trigger imagination. Oral workshops - Santo Domingo Tonaltepec.	
	https://vimeo.com/489931786/b49d285b76
D 1.1.10 Interview with Maddalena Forcella. Textile designer/Design practitioner.	
	https://vimeo.com/489889314/1fe3c52389
D 1.1.11 Interview with Ana Paula Fuentes. Textile designer/Design practitioner.	
	https://vimeo.com/489888880/a05b5371ab
D 1.1.12 Interview with Carmen Malvar. Social design practitioner and researcher.	
	https://vimeo.com/489894499/7fb6d4d35e
D 1.1.13 Interview with Diego Mier y Terán. Graphic designer/Design practitioner. Founder Innovando la tradición – Colectivo 1050.	
	https://vimeo.com/489893081/2e2d02ad46
D 1.1.14 Interview with Kythzia Barrera. Industrial designer/Design practitioner. Founder Innovando la tradición – Colectivo 1050.	
	https://vimeo.com/489879902/09bbf58a88
D 1.1.15 Interview with Laura Margarita Quiroga (Lita) – Community Liaison.	
	https://vimeo.com/489889708/e8ff439d66
D 1.2 James Metcalf Interview	
D 1.2.1 Excerpts from “ <i>Dos artistas en un pueblo de artesanos</i> ”. López Zuckermann, R. (2014)	
	https://vimeo.com/490238219/2d659ad825
D 1.3 Documentary: “Ñaa kiku isaa y kiku sama”, “Women weaving our culture”, by Laura Quiroz	
	https://vimeo.com/89625876

Appendix E: Film Bitacoras by Carmen Malvar

E1. Chapter 5: Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline	
E 1.1 Proximites of Design Bitacoras	
E 1.1.1 Proximities of Design: Context	
<p>A cultural, social and political compendium of Oaxaca State/Mexico.</p> <p>https://vimeo.com/226083387</p> <p>Pasword: CHIAPAS</p>	
E 1.1.2 Proximities of Design: Practice	
<p>Exploring parameters of exchange as measure of values within the organic system.</p> <p>https://vimeo.com/225862972</p> <p>Password: OAXACA</p>	

Appendix F: Why Toy

F1. Chapter 1: Introduction

F 1.1 Design Research phase II

F 1.1.1 Why Toy




(CADA)

Proposal of Fair Trade and Community Enhancement through Design and Crafts


The use of EDUCATIONAL TOY as "Design Artifact".

EDUCATIONAL TOY. Why?


"**TOYS** are like other human artifacts insofar as they lend themselves to multi-faceted human behavior. It is not surprising, therefore, that the study of history reveals that they have had many functions, and they have often appeared both in adult ritual and in children's play at the same time." *1


Folk toys
Traditional Artifacts



HUMAN CONDITION. Tactile perception




Tactile perception in humans is a way of communication with the environment, but also to establish links to objects, to animals and to people. Through contact perceive and transmit sensations and feelings.




HUMAN INTERACTION. Open to share

CURIOSITY

The game is a process by which it arouses curiosity and one of the main bases of learning. *2





Toys are part of the memories of childhood and are associated with an emotional bond.

"...Today this toys and decorative objects communicate to us the powerful spirit of an unusual and highly imaginative people.....The objects communicate directness, simplicity, and firm spiritual beliefs, as well as humor, whimsy, tragedy, and love." *3

EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

F1. Chapter 5: Field research. Interviews and workshops timeline

F 1.1 Design Research phase II

F 1.1.1 Why Toy

Recycled
Materials

CRAFTMANSHIP




The handmade process adds the artifact a cultural value and tradition as well as "exclusivity" due to be made one by one by the craftsman and never be exact to another.

Recycling of materials and techniques to be used in different ways than the usual designs.*

RECYCLED MATERIALS. Out of context

EDUCATION
CO-CREATION

CO-CREATION System- Materials - associations
EDUCATION: Re-discovering new/old geometries
Information - Cataloging - Exploratory learning









CULTURAL
IDENTITIES
+
ENVIRONMENT

" In a general sense, all trends within modern culture focused on finding artistic and literary idioms that expressed the reality of the times and wich acted as witnesses to " the new", while at the same time creating a new lifestyle and types of social relations that emphasized peaceful co-existence between nations " should be add to this quote: , identities, cultural groups.*4

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