Toward a Sustainable Future for Craft Traditions:
Education for Artisans of Kutch
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In the year 2021, discussions of sustainability abound, the National Federation of Handloom and Handicraft is promoting an Adopt a Loom program, NGOs laud collective efforts to uplift artisans and lend craft stakeholders a helping hand, and traditional artisans steadily leave craft as their primary source of livelihood (Tyabji, 2019). Now, more than ever, we need to question the essence of sustainability, and the value of craft traditions in India. This chapter will examine these questions through the microcosm of textile artisans who studied design in Kutch in a program begun as Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya in 2005 and from 2014 to the present operating as Somaiya Kala Vidya.

The Traditional Textile Ecosystem of Kutch

Kutch is a desert region of Gujarat state in India bordering Pakistan. Traditional textile artisans of Kutch created in a complex ecosystem. Weaver and Khatri dyer families worked together to create textiles. In weavers' families, women prepared warps, wove bobbins for wefts, and finished textiles by stitching together two halves and fashioning tassels on warp ends. Men wove the textiles. In Khatri families, men marked fabric with patterns for bandhani, women tied the resist knots, and men dyed the textiles. For the elaborate ajrakh printing process, Khatri men washed, printed and dyed fabrics, while women assisted in preparing the cloth and the resist and paste substances, and drying fabrics. Weaver and Khatri communities also worked interdependently to produce hand woven, resist dyed textiles. Weaving and dyeing were livelihood, and the primary producers bartered their fabrics directly to their end users for milk, animals and grains.

In artisan as well as pastoral and agricultural communities, women also stitched embroideries, and patched and appliqued quilts. They created these textiles for themselves and their families. Embroidery was never made for exchange or sale, but it had social value. Women stitched their own garments to express their identity and their expertise. They created personal contributions to their dowries and gifts for family and in-laws, which were valued as requisite social exchange.

Textiles were essential to expressing the identities of their users. The fibers, colors, and patterns of fabrics used for dress and home were specific markers of cultural heritage. Men artisans interfaced with their traditional clients, whom they intimately knew, usually through hereditary relationships. They knew when births, marriages or deaths in their clients' communities required textiles to mark those occasions, as well as the designs traditionally used. Artisans created for specific clients; they knew their tastes and desired to please them. Because textiles were identity markers, traditional designs were specifically defined and the allowable variations in styles

were minimal. Excellence was largely defined as replicating the tradition as skillfully as possible. Clients shared artisans' standards of evaluation and could see fine variations in how each individual artisan executed a woven *dhablo* or printed *ajrakh*. They recognized and appreciated the subtle personal signatures of artisans with whom they associated. Traditionally, men artisans did not work to earn, but to exchange. Beyond the milk, animals and grains for which their textiles were bartered, personal recognition and appreciation were also exchanged.

> *Maldharis gave us local sheep wool. We spun and wove and gave them cloth. In that system there was a sense of pride and ownership, like, this is my weaver; we also felt, we are making for Mejar so we will make it good.* ~Ramji Hirabhai Maheshwari, Weaver, Sumrasar, 2019

Women's embroidery, patchwork and applique expressed their own identities. Each community practiced a style that clearly identified it. Subtle variations further identified region, village and individual artisan. Creative innovation was an intrinsic element of value. Women examined each other's work and appreciated it on the basis of unique renditions of traditional styles. As Lakhiben explains:

> *We knew whose work was good. That is how embroidery increased and developed. Even today, I will see Devi has done something new and I'll think, it looks good, and I'll do something better.* ~Lakhiben Vanka Rabari, Kachhi Rabari Embroiderer, Tunda Vandh, 2008.

Whether exchanged for in-kind or social currency, traditional textiles had value. Artisans were in direct contact with those who would use their work. They shared understanding and evaluation of quality, and personal recognition was an essential incentive for creation.

The Advent of Commercialization

Industrialization disrupted the traditional eco-system. In the 1950s, as India began nation-building focused on rapid industrialization and traditional clients began to prefer newly available mass-produced goods over hand craft, weavers and dyers were forced to seek more distant, unknown markets. With industrialization, the concept of design as an entity, separated from the process of creating, was also introduced; trained designers were actively encouraged to intervene in commercializing craft, both as an inspiration to developing an Indian style, and to help artisans adapt to new markets. Industrially driven design used an industrial model, which assumed that the goals are to manufacture products in faster, cheaper and more standardized ways. At this point, hand-craft that had been culturally valued and exchanged in a local eco-system had to be re-valued as a commodity for a market economy. Moreover, whereas the focus of textile craft had been on creating the best, longest-lasting product for a known and respected user, the industrial focus was cost and efficiency.

Struggling to survive due to the loss of traditional clients, most men artisans welcomed the guidance of designers. Key inputs to Kutch came from the Central Government Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation (HHEC), Gujarat State Handloom and Handicraft Department, and especially designer Prabhaben Shah from Mumbai. In 1965 Prabhaben worked for extended periods in Kutch, innovating on *dhablo* blankets, *ludi* veils, and turbans by altering sizes, colours, and materials to create a line of shawls, carpets and other urban-appropriate products that retained the aesthetic of the traditional Kutch textiles.

To participate in commercial markets, weavers and Khatris had to scale up production and develop business skills. Those who could meet the demands of scale and business acumen started workshops like mini factories. Weavers were trained by government agencies to use a fly shuttle, a mechanism that propels the shuttle in both directions with the simple tug of a handle to increase speed of production. In the early 1980s acrylic yarn was introduced. The synthetic yarn was easy to use because it is smooth, even and does not break easily, and production further increased. As customers found acrylic soft and inexpensive, demand in turn grew. This marked a major shift in the concept and practice of weaving. Weavers who had the economic means and infrastructure to scale production began to hire those who did not, and to focus on interfacing with customers.

Khatri bandhani and ajrakh print artisans responded similarly to commercial markets. To meet increased demand, they expanded the bandhani workforce by teaching women outside the Khatri community to tie for wages. Bandhani dyers began to work for wholesalers. Many printed the patterns and tied the white dots, dyed the fabric yellow, and tied a second time for yellow dots—the initial and labor-intensive part of bandhani, and gave saris, dupattas and yardage to merchants. In this production-oriented method, artisans did not think about the end result of their work, and merchants could quickly respond to their clients by dyeing the final background colour to their orders. Hand block printers initially produced bedsheets and yardage designed by Gujarat government and HHEC designers. Through government exhibitions and wholesalers, the distinct Kutchi ajrakh print became known. After an earthquake devastated Kutch in 2001, the community built a new village, Ajrakhpur, and many Khatri families relocated there. Proximity to the district capital coupled with growing consumer interest in natural dyes exponentially increased demand for ajrakh. Printers with capital became “master artisans,” a term used among artisan communities to refer to big producers, who usually no longer practice their craft but get it made through other artisans. Master artisans employed those with weaker financial status to print and dye hundreds of meters of yardage a day. Khatri master artisans also began to connect directly to customers by selling at exhibitions. They learned urban tastes, and this stimulated experimenting with a wide range of fabrics and developing fashion lines.

For women embroiderers, the commodification of what was understood as cultural heritage and art was even more dramatic. As embroidery was traditionally never made for consumers outside the community, nor for livelihood, industrialization did not immediately impact its creation. But periodic droughts and spiraling inflation

forced rural communities to seek supplements to the meager earnings of pastoralist, agriculturist, and professional male artisan incomes. Embroidered embellishment came into fashion, prompting traders, designers, and other middlemen to see business potential. They began to buy old embroideries to use in the new fashion, cultivating relationships with embroiderers. As contact with markets increased, economics leveraged culture and women began to embroider for wages for those middlemen.

Women rarely left the home and through embroidery they could earn without disturbing the social order that dictated that they remain at home. They worked on 'labour' embroidery, whatever local middlemen gave them, regardless of material and style. With the goals of faster, cheaper and more standard production, designs were printed onto fabric and threads were provided. Artisans only had to fill in the patterns. Women had no experience of transactional embroidery, no direct contact with end consumers of craft, and no experience in commercial valuation of their work. The pay for production embroidery was extremely low, even when more was promised. Opportunities to embroider for NGOs and designers improved rates. But even when women were allowed to set their own wages, they rarely earned as much as they could by other means of manual labour. The standard value for handwork was low. Up to the early 1990s women might earn only Rs. 10 per day. Many women were socially restricted. With few options to earn, they worked for whatever was offered.

When craft was commodified and artisans began making for an unknown clientele and earning in cash rather than kind, craft lost meaning and value. No longer expressing cultural heritage and identity, it was appraised in terms of labour. The incentive of shared understanding and value for excellent renditions of traditional products was superseded by calculations of materials and time. Personal recognition was far removed from production.

A more significant change came with large scale production. Industrial based manufacturing and design 'intervention' began a process of separating concept and execution, resulting in the perception of artisan as skilled technician. 'Intervention' further implied a value hierarchy: that designers have valuable knowledge, while artisans have less-valuable skills. The identity and value of an artisan changed. No longer autonomous creators, artisans became either businesspeople or workers.

When craft was pushed into the world of industrialized scaled-up production, the structure of artisan societies changed from horizontal to vertical. Traditionally, when each artisan family had hereditary clients, individual artisans enjoyed relatively equal social status and competition was minimal. When economically stronger individuals became "master artisans" and employed community members as workers, they gained higher social as well as economic status. The perception of the artisan as worker was reinforced within artisan communities as well as from external perspective, threatening to reduce the value of hand work to merely that of manual labour.

Design and Business-Management Education for Artisans

Concerned that commercialization was changing the fundamental identity of craft, devaluing it for the artisans who made it, and devaluing artisans themselves, in 2005 I began a program of design education for artisans. Through a close association with artisans spanning over 30 years, first through years of research for undergraduate and two master's degrees and then through co-founding and advising Kala Raksha, I had understood that the personal factor was intrinsic to the value of craft. I believed that the reason for attrition of artisans was that from their perspective, contemporary craft production does not generate enough recognition, nor enough income for the effort that it requires.

The intention of the education program was to enable artisans to regain creative agency and to operate successful businesses in contemporary markets. Assessing the contemporary arena, I felt that skill would no longer be enough to easily establish recognition, but that focus on the traditional aspect of craft and creativity in innovation could activate recognition and revive value (Frater, 2019).

The year-long course teaches traditional artisans to recognize and value their cultural heritage and to innovate within its parameters as they define them to reach contemporary markets. The concept is to take traditional knowledge as a pre-requisite and provide what is understood as higher or specialized education directly to artisans. By learning to innovate within traditions, artisans can ensure integrity in their cultural heritage. By connecting to contemporary markets, they can gain recognition as well as income.

In 2003, I received an Ashoka Fellowship to develop the program. With further support from UNESCO and the Development Commissioner Handicrafts, it was launched it in 2005 as Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya (KRV), in Tunda Vandh, Kutch. After eight years of directing KRV I felt that the program had reached its limit in that venue. The campus had been surrounded by Asia's largest coal-fed thermal power plant. The parent trust did not have the financial resources to sustain the existing program, while I felt a need to expand. To build the program into an institute, I joined forces with the K.J. Somaiya Gujarat Trust to begin Somaiya Kala Vidya.

Figure 1

Initially, guidance was enlisted from master artisan advisors—respected and established members of Kutch artisan communities—to ensure relevance and success. The program draws from key aspects of traditional learning systems (Frater, 2020) and an understanding of artisan lifestyles, so that artisans can attend and benefit from the course. The design course curriculum comprises six two-week courses spread over a year. This structure was determined in a curriculum development workshop held at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2004 as an Ashoka Fellow Exchange program. Two weeks is the maximum time a working

artisan can viably leave his or her work; six sessions cover the material needed to learn to develop a collection; a year ensures that students can absorb what they learn. Students and faculty live together, interacting intensively for the two weeks. Respecting social norms of Kutch, men's and women's classes of the program are held separately. There are no age restrictions nor formal education pre-requisites for admission; classes comprise traditional artisans ranging in age from 17 to 80.

The impact of four decades of commercial production in Kutch was that artisans born in the mid-1980s or later are conscious of the importance of craft skills but have little cognizance of their traditions. Because tradition as a source of identity and inspiration is a foundation of the program, the year-long course begins with a session conducted by master artisan advisors in which students examine traditional textiles and the masters discuss traditional practices, relationships and value along with traditional aesthetics. Dr. Ismailbhai Khatri, for example, will explain how his family created a Malir for a Maldhari and delivered it to his village in Banni, how it was exchanged for goats or ghee, and how the motifs of the Malir narrate Maldhari life. Throughout the year, professional visiting design faculty work in tandem with local faculty—artisan design graduates chosen for their knowledge of both tradition and design. For the fifteen years that the program has operated, each cohort of students has reconnected to their traditions and grown to value salient aspects that define tradition and to use them as standards in evaluating new work.

Simultaneously, the six course modules—Colour; Basic Design; Market Orientation; Concept, Communication, Projects; Collection Development and Finishing; and Merchandising and Presentation— teach different methods of innovation. The strengths of the program are local orientation and sustained educational input (Chatterjee, 2007). Schedules accommodate cultural practices. Courses are conducted in the local language, draw from local traditions, and are taught using hands-on practical methods as much as possible. Between courses, the local faculty members visit students in their homes to ensure that they have understood course material and can implement it in practical homework assignments. The year-long duration of the course ensures that students absorb, retain, and use what is taught. They learn to look beyond technique to using technique in visual language.

In a conscious effort to build an alumni community, the program includes an alumni jury at the end of each course, and a family jury after the sixth course. Alumni and family listen to presentations to understand what students have learned, ask questions, and offer critiques. This ensures that the community is dynamically engaged and invested in the education program. Finally, students present to a jury comprising design and craft professionals.

After directing the design course for eight years, I observed that nearly every graduate could create a unique, aesthetic collection, but everyone could not successfully operate in an appropriate market. I realized that to reap full economic benefit, business and management were also needed. In 2013 with an Executive- in-Residence partnership with Ashoka, I developed a post-graduate course in Business and Management for Artisans (BMA). This is an extension of the program;

graduation from the design course is a pre-requisite. Also modular and practice-based, the BMA course is nonetheless more left-brained. For artisans, it is both demanding and very rewarding. The course emphasizes the importance of ownership, responsibility and ethics in business and management.

Both courses end in public events. Graduation programs, held in Kutch, include a professional fashion show and draw thousands of enthusiastic viewers, compelling them to value craft and artisans in new ways. BMA students plan and implement exhibition/ sales in higher-end urban venues, immediately confirming increased value.

In effect, the courses re-imagine traditional systems in an appropriate contemporary form. Master artisan advisors teach students about traditions, as children once learned from elders; teaching weavers, printers and dyers together revitalizes the interdependence of weavers and dyers in producing traditional textiles; and enabling direct interface between artisan designers and urban markets reinvents the system of direct contact with hereditary clients.

As of 2019, 181 artisans had graduated from the design program, and of these 16 had also graduated from the post graduate BMA course. Of these, 47 are weavers, 34 are ajrakh printers, 2 are batik artists, 38 are bandhani artists, and 76 are embroidery artists. Among these, 82 are women and 115 are men.

The Benefit of Innovation

Over the past five decades, I observed that in Kutch the industrial model of commercialized craft— and its assumption that craft must scale up to succeed— contributed to the perception of the artisan as worker. A key objective of the educational programs is to encourage individual expression as an alternative path to success. Each year, students have grown to value creative innovation. Within the protected time and space of the course, they enthusiastically experiment to develop their own unique interpretations of shared traditions. Among 197 graduates, there has been virtually no duplication of designs.

Moreover, as artisans have innovated within their traditions, the market has expanded to accommodate diversity, and many graduates have enjoyed success. Four in-house assessments conducted by the institute in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2019 indicate that virtually all artisan graduates continue to practice their traditions. Nearly all report significant increases in income through craft. Ninety-five percent of graduates say that their income has increased from 10-300%. Among the community, artisans note that anyone who has taken the course has built a bigger house and workshop. About 45% of artisan designers have purchased cars since graduation. Graduates have found markets for their new products and designs in established companies such as Fabindia and urban boutiques such as Artisans Mumbai. They have sold saris, stoles, dupattas and shawls to designers including James Ferreira, Ritu Kumar and Donna Karan. Increasingly they have online presences through social media accounts and online boutiques such as Jaypore.com, Gaatha and Etsy. They have participated in Lakme Fashion Week, the International

Folk Art Market and the Victoria and Albert Museum Fabric of India Exhibition. A number have received awards including The World Crafts Council Seal of Excellence, Crafts Council of India Kamala awards, the Government of India President's award for Craftsmanship, and the International Folk Art Market's Living Tradition Award. An added benefit to the community is reduction of the sense of scarcity of buyers and competition among graduates. Traditionally, when artisans had fixed hereditary clients, they had no concept of competition. Vying for contemporary markets, community members began producing the same products, resulting in a sense of competition for limited consumers. Graduates have observed market expansion and more widespread economic success in response to diversity of design.

> *See, if it's a common thing, my neighbor can also make it… Today we think, Puroshottam is this, Dahyabhai is that, Prakashbhai is that. If all three are different, Dahyabhai will get his customers, Prakashbhai will get his, I will get mine. All of this is because of education.*
> ~Puroshottam Premji Siju, Weaver, Bhujodi, 2019

Changing Values: The Evolution of Artisan Designers

Perhaps more important, in a real sense of development, artisan graduates' perspectives and values have changed. As the number of artisan design graduates in the circumscribed Kutch region has grown, a new genre of artisan has emerged—the artisan designer. These graduates differ from artisans and urban designers, in that they both design and produce. Today there is a community of artisan designers. While this might be likened to the emergence of designer makers, in the context of Kutch it is more a return to the pre-industrial identity of artisans, who conceptualized and fabricated their textiles and marketed them to consumers with whom they exchanged recognition as well as goods.

In a 2018 discussion of goals, weaver designers articulated that they now measure success in terms of the ability to independently negotiate contemporary markets, as well as in terms of recognition within the community and in target markets. They also value being able to use their creativity and having a voice. Strikingly, not one weaver spoke of success in terms of money (Frater, J. 2019). Dahyalal Atmaram Kudecha (2018) explained how this sense of values had evolved through design and business education and ensuing economic success, "My early goal was money. My goal was to educate my children. Now, it is to be my own person."

In 2019, during an evaluation of fifteen years of the course, artisan designers elaborated on how education and earning attractive incomes had enabled them to define values.

> *More than money I felt I should enjoy it. When I started, I earned RS 700 weaving while I was earning RS 1500 in the company. I didn't go back to the company for money, I went where I found satisfaction. My outlook changed. Now, I don't want 100 pieces; I want 10. And I want 10 customers, who will come to me because they have heard my name or seen my work.*
> ~Puroshottam Premji Siju, Weaver, Bhujodi, 2019

Our soul has to be content. It's not about a nice car, a nice house, an airconditioned bungalow. You should be able to sleep peacefully at night. ~Khalidbhai Usman Khatri, Ajrakh artist, Ajrakhpur, 2019

SKV education brought change in my life, not just money but respect. Preservation of tradition is a part of it. In the very first class, master artisans teach us. In one day, we begin to think about something we will think about for the rest of our life: our value and the value of our craft. Now I am known and respected. And along with business I have a good life with my family. ~Dahyalal Atmaram Kudecha, Weaver, 2019

Figure 2.

Nurturing Tradition

Continuation of a tradition rests on the next generation of artisans. If they see a good future in craft and of their own volition work as artisans, traditions will prosper. Building appreciation for tradition is a foundation of the courses. Graduate artisan designers have grown to genuinely care for their heritage as intrinsic to their own identity and recognition, and they understand tradition as a common good. This has been a key factor in strengthening and sustaining craft traditions and has encouraged the next generation to practice. Perhaps the greatest success of education for artisans in Kutch is the return of the next generation from urban jobs and industries to craft as an excellent option for livelihood, rather than a last resort.

I asked my son to study further, and he said, 'What will I do after graduation? I will take a job where only my boss and colleagues know me, and however much I work I will earn a salary. If I work in the craft sector the whole world will know me. And I will get maximum return from my inputs.' ~Dahyalal Atmaram Kudecha, Weaver, Bhujodi, 2016

Those who come here get new direction. Seeing the graduates, artisans have come back from working in industries to weave. Some work part time, some have started their own weaving. They have begun to join craft. ~Prakashbhai Naran Siju, Weaver, Bhujodi, 2019

Value and Sustainability

The cultural economist Arjo Klamer, who studies the value of craft, finds that crafts are deeply embedded in culture and are endowed with a multitude of intangible values. Klamer (2012) argues that craft traditions are cultural heritage, evolving with time to narrate the history of makers and users. Created by individuals, they communicate the spirit of the creator and enable personal connection between maker and user. The original ecosystem was sustainable precisely because artisans had direct, personal connections to the end users of their work. They found appropriate economic return, as well as satisfaction in their work. When the ecosystem was disrupted by industrialization and commercialization, craft traditions

were devalued from cultural heritage to commodities, and the next generation lost incentive to continue their traditions, threatening sustainability of those traditions.

Envisioning an ideal, sustainable contemporary craft ecosystem, which he terms a Creative Craft Culture, Klamer (2012) describes three essential spheres:

On the supply side is a strong sense of tradition, recognition of masters, a spirit of creativity, innovativeness and entrepreneurship, and a strong sense of collegiality among artisans. Artisans have a clear sense of mission and core values to promote and sustain quality, and young people view the creative crafts as a career worth striving for.

On the demand side is significant local demand as well an international interest, a well-developed distinctive taste for and appreciation of creative quality (usually implying people who are intimately acquainted with the world of creative crafts), and a willingness to pay.

The third sphere is strong intermediaries, intensive discussion of the works of creative crafts people, modern guilds, special shops, journalists, scholarship and fairs.

Education has generated artisan designers of Kutch, who remarkably resemble Klamer's creative craftspeople. However, though successful, artisan designers still struggle with the contemporary markets to which they have access. The mismatch arises from the construction of artisans as workers who need help rather than as creative individuals, and the absence of appreciation of the creative quality that Klamer describes. Buttressing artisans with efforts to uplift them and lend helping hands may contribute to the continuation of production of hand made goods, but not to sustaining creation of valued cultural heritage.

Elsewhere in the World

Examining educational projects for artisans in other regions of the world provides insight into understanding sustainability of craft traditions. Three examples, each in its own cultural context, serve to clarify elements that have contributed to the success of the program of education for artisans of Kutch. An analysis follows the three examples.

1. Osogbo: From Craft to Art in Nigeria

Victoria Scott (2020), who lived for a decade in Nigeria, relates the evolution of a vibrant contemporary art tradition in the country. Traditional wood carving, wall painting, weaving and resist dyeing in Nigeria were dedicated to religion, but colonialism eroded those traditions. In 1961, just after Nigeria gained independence, Ulli Beier, a German scholar working in Nigeria began to think of creatively reviving local culture and traditional art in contemporary form. He established a center in the town Osogbo to draw out artisans' expressions of contemporary life. His workshop structure accommodated local lifestyle; his teaching methods were non-interventionist. Although traditional artisans' individual renditions were recognized

within the traditional styles of their communities, Beier introduced a new concept of individuality. The artist community enthusiastically grew. Beier marketed the emerging artists' work for them by showing it overseas and in the expat community in which he lived in Lagos. He published a book *Contemporary Art in Africa,* in which there was a chapter on Osogbo. By the 1970s faculty members of Lagos University began to collect Osogbo art, and after 1980 when they had become wealthy from oil, Nigerians started collecting too. The artists became successful, built good homes and studios, and taught younger people as apprentices. They learned to take their work to Lagos to show it and developed their own clientele. Today Osogbo is known as a center for contemporary Nigerian art.

2. Multicolores: from Weaving to Rug Hooking in Guatemala

American textile artist Mary Ann Wise (2020) narrates her experiences working in Guatemala. Wise visited Guatemala in 2006, soon after a landslide devastated a village in which her business partner was volunteering. Wanting to help, she organized trunk shows of traditional textiles in the USA. An NGO with whom she worked asked her to teach. Wise held workshops on rug hooking techniques for job-work Mayan weavers. Although she was told that individualism was not a value in the artisans' culture, she observed that each artisan worked individually. She focused her next workshops on traditional design and innovation, and Mayan weavers learned design and rug hooking techniques simultaneously. Wise developed a curriculum based on six basic principles of design and using a format of workshops, she taught them to be designers. Each artisan student developed a recognizable style within months. Wise and her partner founded a social enterprise that marketed the work of program graduates internationally and promoted the project through tours to Guatemala. Thinking of sustainability, in 2012 they launched a year-long teacher training course. The women artisans formed Multicoloures, a Guatemala non-profit that today independently runs tours and sales contributing over 70% of income, as well as classes. Graduate members have become recognized in their regions. They rarely repeat designs and command good prices. Tour and market success rely on emphasizing individuals.

3. Oaxaca: Conscious Developments for a Targeted Market

Robert Sturm (2020), who has lived for extended periods in Oaxaca, observes the development of craft traditions there. Oaxaca, a state in southern Mexico, is a popular international tourist destination in which culture and craft are major draws. However, most of what is deemed "traditional" was developed for a commercial market in the 1950s, as an attempt to create a national identity. In the weavers' village Teotitlan, artisans were encouraged to make tapestry technique art pieces for the export and high-end domestic market. As weavings are woven separately, there is little incentive to work in scale. But for the most part, the tourist and even curatorial demand is for what is perceived as traditional. Weavers' identity is not invested in the new "traditions," so they weave common designs. Innovation has largely been organic and locally initiated. However, recently two institutes founded by the Alfredo Harp Helu Foundation, which heavily patronizes Oaxacan craft, have begun educational initiatives. The *Museo Textil de Oaxaca* and Andares—a shop of good quality craft aimed at the discerning buyer—have both held workshops. They

asked artisans what they wanted to learn; thus, the focus of workshops has been technical. But the institutes have also taught management, business, and how to expand product lines. Artisans have adapted new techniques to their own styles. Individuals have emerged and been rewarded with both recognition and increased income. In turn, the institutes have cultivated diverse clientele.

Common Contributions to Success

The examples from Nigeria, Guatemala and Mexico, coupled with the design education program in Kutch, illuminate elements critical to genuine sustainability of craft traditions. In all four programs, focus has been on artisans as creative individuals. All four were initiated by people outside of the cultures of the participants—the intermediary in Klamer's model. In Nigeria, Guatemala and Kutch, regional upheavals facilitated initiation of new concepts and endeavors. All the intermediaries understood, respected and valued the traditions of artisans, even if they were recently developed, as in Oaxaca. In all four examples, the education programs focused on the art aspect, encouraging the development of individual styles, the personal quality that is central to the value of craft traditions. In all four regions, a non-interventionist teaching method conveyed respect, and artisan students benefited economically and socially.

The Craft Consumer, An Essential Participant in the Creative Craft Ecosystem

Where Osogbo, Multicolores and Oaxaca examples differ from education for artisans in Kutch is that they all simultaneously developed products and target markets that were primarily international. The intermediaries were thus central to ensuring the markets. Education for artisans in Kutch is unique in that it aims to ensure sustainability by targeting a domestic market to which artisans have direct access. This provides the prospect of learning to innovate appropriately, and increased independence and sustainability.

Addressing the challenges artisan designers face with their markets begins with understanding craft consumers. The essential characteristics of hand craft are diametrically opposed to large-scale production. Crafts Council of England studies in 2010 and 2020 confirm that in the UK, people who consume craft are not interested in mass production (McIntyre, M. H. 2010, 2020). UK Craft consumers want cultural consumption. They seek authenticity, experiences, and ethical and sustainable creation. They choose craft because of its meaning and human connection. The 2010 study showed that craft buyers consider craft a new way of signaling connoisseurship. The 2020 study indicated that they are increasingly maker focused. In short, scaling up hand craft with the industrial objectives of faster, cheaper and more standard production will not likely meet the needs of craft consumers seeking ethical creation, authenticity, and human connection.

The phenomenal success of the International Folk Art Market| Santa Fe offers further insight into craft consumers in the global north. Craft can be purchased locally across the USA, or online. Yet for sixteen years, people have flocked to this weekend event. A key feature of the Market is that artisans are present to sell their

work. We may surmise that the huge response illustrates a value for the opportunity to meet the maker, the human connection of craft.

Conclusion: Toward Sustainability

In Klamer's Creative Craft Culture, a domestic market is essential to a sustainable craft ecosystem. Unusual in the developing world, India enjoys a robust domestic market. However, the perception of value for craft as cultural heritage, creative expression and human connection has not yet dominated craft buying in India.

Education expressly for traditional artisans has enabled artisan designers to approach economic and cultural sustainability. Artisan designers cherish their traditions as cultural heritage, innovate appropriately for contemporary markets, and confidently command value for their creative work. Within their communities they are recognized and respected as successful creative individuals and enjoy satisfaction as well as increased income. The next generation now sees craft as an excellent choice for livelihood.

Targeting an already established market brings the daunting challenge of re-inventing the perception of craft. Efforts toward a sustainable ecosystem must now focus on cultivating cognizance of the values of craft and fostering independence of artisans. In a sustainable craft ecosystem, makers and users must share values centered in cultural heritage and individual interpretation, and artisans must have access to those end users. When artisans are directly connected to their markets and depend on them for survival, they will creatively innovate in appropriate ways.

The role of the intermediary in this ecosystem is as facilitator and educator. Intermediaries can educate consumers to understand the value of craft. They can also educate and guide artisans, rather than intercept direct access. The great pause and requisite social distancing of the 2020 pandemic has brought tremendous upheaval. The intermediary can now choose to use this challenge as an opportunity to re-value the personal connection of craft and reimagine traditional systems of distribution in order to bring genuine sustainability to craft traditions.

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