

ONLY NATURAL 2025
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CHEJELO

CRAFTING COMMUNITIES

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GRADUATION PROJECT 2023
National Institute of Design Ahmedabad, India.

CONTEXT

The project utilises local knowledge systems as well as resources indigenous to India to create textile art rugs in the village of Chuba to empower the local community with skills and bring forward their aspirations for the future in the artworks. Done in collaboration with Echostream Design, Pvt. Ltd and Gurung Crafts community.

WHAT

Building skilled communities through tools and processes of crafts.

HOW

By using local resources (Gaddi wool), frugal techniques (Hand-felting) & indigenous wisdom (local stories).

WHY

To empower rural economies and ecologies through crafts for sustainable future living.

WHERE

In the village of Chuba in Sikkim – the smallest state of India

PROCESS

Design Philosophy and Practice in the
project and project outcomes.



Frugal Tools;
Junu Gurung, a craftswoman using a frugally made spray bottle from scrap in the craft process.



A New World;
Showing the craftswomen internet access for advancing the craft process.

TOOLS

Efficiency through Frugality

The project involved designing low-tech, easy to make tools that would be suitable for the region allowing for optimised use of local resources and a low carbon footprint. New digital tools and internet search were introduced to the craftspeople to widen their understanding of crafts and culture.



Future Workshop;
Prompt Cards & Centering workshops to discuss what kind of Futures do they visualise.



Colour Workshop;
Understanding colour through participatory workshops suited for the community.

WORKSHOPS

For Capacity Building

A number of workshops were designed to enable the craftspeople to devise stories for a future they want focussing on sustainable methods of living. Answering questions like - **What is human to us?** **What objects do we want with us in the future?** The community learnt material, colour and sketching skills for the first time.

FROM WORKSHOPS TO VISUALISATION TO MATERIALISATION TO PROTOTYPES

Capacity Building and Skill
Development at each level.



TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS

A series of handfelted textile art rugs created using tangible resources of local Indian Gaddi wool and indigenous stories of the craft community.

Chejelo in Gurung language is the equivalent of hello, and is the only word that the Gurung craft community of Chuba remembers from their native language.

CHEJELO is a collection of handfelted woollen textile artworks.

The Project showcases series of art rugs created with the local stories of the native community and all the things they wish to take forward for the future.





SAI SAI

Dancing towards the Future

Of all the things that one could take ahead; the artwork merges all the things that the women like to do and safeguard for the future.

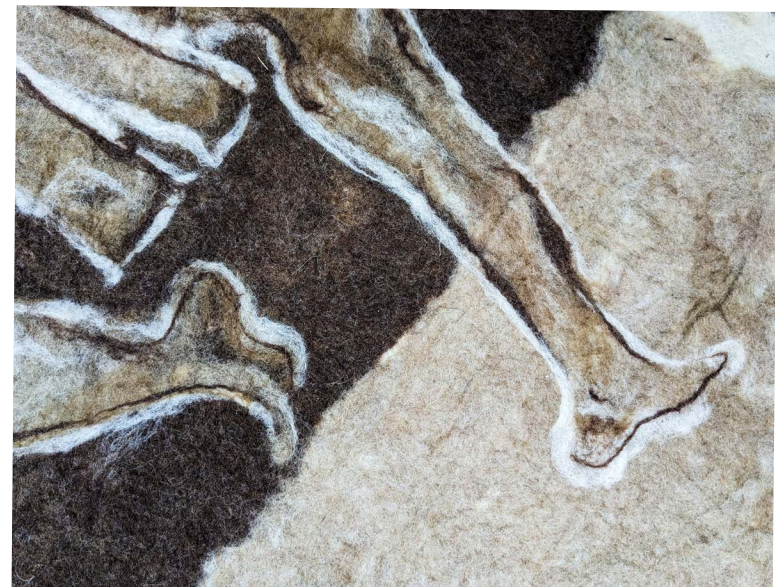
The lighted Chemi is representative of the Buddhist faith, with the Hasiya in one hand and maize in another - symbolic of the farming skills of the woman adorned with jewellery, dancing into the future. The bindi is a common ornamentation.

The gesture of feet is from the Dasai dance step that occurs on the beat of 'Sai Sai' - meaning 'thats right!'

Size: 70 inch x 45 inch

Technique : Hand-felting

Material : Gaddi Sheep Wool







Chemi ; the revered Buddhist lamp, an important part of worship for the women.

Anaaj ; that feeds the children, families and animals alike.

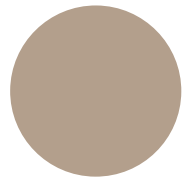
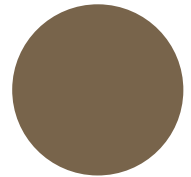
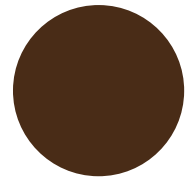
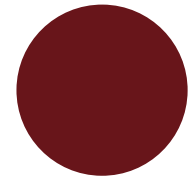


Hasiya; a farming tool that is used by the women at home.

Makai; a staple that is grown and consumed in Chuba.

Bindi ; worn by the Gurungs during celebrations and on

Dancing steps to beat of Sai



OTHER PROJECTS & OUTCOMES

2023-2024



CHUBA KO PHOOL

The flowers of Chuba.

This woollen rug carries the floral diversity of the village of Chuba making it a library of local flora.

Size: 70 inch x 45 inch

Technique : Hand-felting

Material : Gaddi Sheep Wool





KHUKHURI

The weapon of the Gurungs

The *Khukuri* is an important tool of the Gurungs. Each and every family has a khukuri that has been passed down from previous generations.

Traditionally used during war, the *khukuri* today is used for daily purposes of cutting meat, wood, during *havan* and other such purposes.

The tiny crooks and holes near the base of the blade, were originally carved for the blood to flow down the weapon.

Size: 70 inch x 45 inch

Technique : Hand-felting

Material : Gaddi Sheep Wool





HEALING PLANTS

Medicinal Plants of Chuba

The rug displays Chuba's healing plants; each having soothing and medicinal properties that have been identified and orally passed on to the next generations.

The healing plants are symbolic of indigenous medicinal knowledge that exists within the community.

Size: 70 inch x 45 inch

Technique : Hand-felting

Material : Gaddi Sheep Wool







Communities are made of individuals, individuals are made of identities and each identity is made of stories.

Crafts have the potential to bring them out.



Discarded yarn turned to artwork of a pastureland in the hills as the Gurungs are a pastoralist community.

Thank You.