An exploration of cultural identity in creative practice
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World count (6246)
Abstract

My work is about the feeling of standing in between two worlds of my cultural heritage. To feel connected but at the same time not connected to them. The feeling of missing out in one of my cultural heritage because of the language that I do not fully speak. I use a traditional craft from that side to build a bridge to fill the gap. It is about combining my heritages and the connection/disconnection and fuse them together into one as I am a person of two cultures. By not putting myself in a box that the society wants me to fit in to, I challenge that norm also in my work. I transformed the traditional craft placed in a room of a house to become jewelry. The wearer is allowed to choose what kind of jewelry it is and it can be placed on many different ways. My work is about investigate the meeting of craft on a body, and body in a craft. Its about to invite the Thai practice to my Swedish practice and vice versa and fuse them together.

Key words: Identity, Cultural heritage, roots, tradition, craft, new context, jewelry, basket brading, lines contemporary jewelry, Cultural hybridity, shared knowledge, fusion
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**Introduction and background**

Because of my privileges of being part of two cultures it also caused a lot of confusion as a teenager. When I was younger I went to a school with a lot of classmates that came from all over the world. We never thought that we looked different from any other Swedish kid. But as you get older the adults in your environment start to make you aware that you do not have the typical blond hair with blue eyes and you start to try to figure out where you fit in society. I started to explore more of my cultural heritage from my mother’s side, which is the Thai side, to feel more close to it. I started to listen to Thai music and get more interested in my family history. While I explored this side of mine I didn’t fully feel that I belonged there completely either. Mainly because the language was an obstacle for me and nor do I look exactly like they do either. I felt like I was stuck in two worlds and not really fitting in any of them. So the confusions were not just how I looked like but also the feeling of belonging. The confusion in my teenage year had me thinking where to belonged and gave me the feeling that I needed to choose what kind of cultural identity to choose in order feel connected to a society. While I grew older I discovered that I did not have to choose what part of me I needed to embrace. I was lucky to have two cultures to explore more of and thanks to that I felt more privileged. My artistic practice reflects this dual identity.

I have chosen to work with my cultural heritage from my mother’s side in this project, which is a heritage from Thailand. I first learned and discover more about the culture the year of 2014, when I visited my relatives to learn more about their craft. I fell in love with a traditional braiding technique that is common there and is used to make baskets, boxes, bowls and trays by nylon thread and plastic thread. I fell in love with it because it is a versatile technique when it comes to shaping a tray or box and I enjoyed the repetition of the movement and how soothing it was. In addition to that, I felt like I was connecting more to my roots through a craft and by sitting next to my relatives and making baskets together, discussing about the technique we were using and passing down knowledge to each other through the craft. During that time I felt like the gap between my two cultures became closer and I felt more whole as a person through that experience. It made felt more confident knowing that I don’t need to fit in the social box that is characterized by the norm but that I had my own box to identify with and that was more than okay. I could shape that box exactly how I wanted, just like the boxes and trays that I made in Thailand.
I also want to show the craft that I learned in another context by putting it on to a body, experimenting with the technique and inviting more people to this craft. I see this as a tribute to my relatives, to the old lady, Mā Do, who taught me everything and a bit of my history. I have come to understand that the craft I learned in Thailand is my way of communicating and connecting with my relatives in Thailand. By doing so, I have built a bridge over the gap between me and my roots using the craft as a tool.

During my Bachelor degree I wanted to experiment and see how I could put myself into the craft and object, and make my own imprint by mixing my western heritage into it. I made trays and baskets in the traditional way but added silver detail on them to add something new and something that I could contribute with from my western side. In this Master project I
want to take this further and see if I can push this technique by putting it in another context, which is to adorn the human body.

As I challenge the traditional braiding technique I want to make jewelry that can be used on different parts of the body. My idea is that the wearer is allowed to choose what kind of jewelry it is and on what part of the body it should be, because it is one piece of jewelry that can be used in various ways. To make it more clear I think of it like myself, I come from different cultures but I am still one person in the end, just like the jewelry is one piece. I want to take the technique and put it in another box, to manifest that it is okay to push it further and that it doesn’t need to be used in only one-way just as I don’t need to choose just one cultural side. I want to push the norms of the use of the technique and what else it can do. As a box or a tray you place them inside a house, inside a cabinet or on a table. But by putting it on a body I want to show the craft to more people. To make it more available and to share knowledge and craft to people.

Research Question(s)

-An exploration of cultural identity in creative practice, can traditional Thai craft practices be fused with contemporary Swedish Jewellery practice?

Theory and context

The technique I’m working with is not only found in Thailand but in many different places around the world using different materials. In Sweden we have the Sami craft “rotslöjd” which means root craft. They use roots to braid their baskets and trays and in Thailand I was taught to use plastic and nylon thread. You can also find this technique in many African countries using sisal fibres, sweet grass, banana leaves and raffia.
In my Bachelor degree I stumbled upon a magazine called Hemslöjden and found, Gunnel Erikssons work of a necklace with birch roots.¹ She is working with the same technique as I am, often seen in Sami Craft to make trays and baskets as an original form. Gunnel Eriksson had shown me that you could take a craft that was meant to use in one way and be brave and create something else from that. Sometimes it feels like you can’t change a craft because of its history and tradition, but she made me see that you can do it and still be respectful towards that craft while just challenging its place, shape or/and material. This article planted a seed in my head and I got curious if I could do something similar one day with the material I was working with. That day was when I applied for this Master program, after years of having this idea of fusing my Thai side together with my Swedish background and placing the work in another context such as on the body.

Another artist that has inspired me along the way was Ahmed Umar when the class had a field trip visiting Oslo last spring (2019). After his presentations we got a chance to talk to him in his studio at Norske kunsthåndverkere.² In his studio he talked about this amulets that he made for his work called Hijab. The purpose was to protect you from evil and carry luck with you. It’s a Sufi protection practice and Ahmed Umar is Sudanese. The Sufi culture is not allowed to use their own traditions in Sudan. His work is mostly influenced by his cultural background in a society structure that is very strict when it comes to traditions and religion. With his work he is breaking that norm by making this amulets that is not allowed in Sudan yet he is still managing to value his family heritage with respect and pride while making

¹ Hemslöjden, number 2, 2013
² https://norskekunsthåndverkere.no/users/ahmed-umar
them. As me, he is using the craft as a tool to remember his legacy but lifting other questions that is important for him.

I read "The Location of Identity" several years ago, an article about Kayo Yokoyama³, a glass artist originally from Japan but immigrated to Australia.

"The lot of an immigrant is to be a stranger in both homelands".⁴

When I read the article, I could recognize a little bit of what she said in myself. In her work she talks about finding the feeling of home in different countries that she lived in. How to connect to the place you live in as an emigrant. In her works she work a lot with engraved trees and in her earlier series of work called Homeland she often had a chair in the middle to represent a home to sit in. How she has found her home looking out at the trees, sitting on her chair and feeling connected to nature and her surroundings. She later developed this further and instead of having a physical home she now finds her home more internally and unaffected by location and for this reason the chair in her work has disappeared.⁵

³ Kayo Yokoyama, "The Location of identity", Craft Arts Internationall, 2006
⁴ Kayo Yokoyama, "The Location of identity", Craft Arts Internationall, 2006
"It would be useless to turn one’s back on the past in order simply to concentrate on the future. It is a dangerous illusion to believe that such a thing is even possible. The opposition of future to past or past to future is absurd...." 

Simone Weil, a French philosopher, wrote this quote and talked about the importance to be connected with your roots. She also talked about how you could not simply ignore it because your past is like a red thread that you can’t disconnect from. Therefore embrace it, use it and make something from it. This links back to my Research Question to connect to my roots from my Thai side and the craft while I’m changing the craft in to a more contemporary Swedish Jewellery practice context. Although I change the shape of my work and context the origin is there. It has not lost its history but has just developed into another form. My view is that craft is not something static but that moves and responds to outside influences. Everything around us changes moves and evolves. Not only as a human being changes through life, your environment also changes, norms change and the society changes. Therefore I can see how my practice from my Thai side and Swedish side could be fused together because everything evolves around us because of the influences from the outside. As in this case is because of me being a fusion of two cultures and influences by my surrounding. I’m also challenging the traditional jewelry norms by not giving my pieces a specific place on the body, instead I let the wearer decide where the piece should be. The history of jewelry in Europe has been seen as a status symbol often of wealth and status in a society and the jewelry had their specific place on the body traditionally. I want to break that or change it. As a maker I have the power to say how my jewelry is supposed to be worn. I’m giving that

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7 https://www.nordiskamuseet.se/press/smycken
power to the viewer because I don’t want to be that person that puts my work in a box in this project. I want to see what happens if the viewers decide for themself what identity the jewelry has and see what happens in that meeting between them.

"But just as humans are, par excellence, makers and users of threads, so have they also come into their own as makers of traces with their hands”

A quote from Tim Ingold, who is a professor of social anthropology at the University of Aberdeen. If you read his texts, everything is regarded as lines and lines in everything around you in your life. He talks about how you can find lines on the human body and that it could be the lines of the palms on your hands, how you centre your body to keep balance in a line or the lines on your face changing through your life time. He is not only talking about finding lines merely on our body but you can find them in walking, weaving, storytelling, observing, drawing, singing, and writing. He is talking about a world where everything is interwoven or interconnected lines in everything around us. Everything we do in our present day we can always track back in history, a line that you could follow back and find your own timeline. Just as Simone Weil was talking about the roots and how your past is so important, and how you can trace your life like a thread or line. From ourselves who are created by lines, we can with our hands create other lines in objects, as I am doing with my plastic and nylon thread. As you can see in the pictures below you can see how I’m spinning the nylon thread over the plastic thread.

Image 16-18: Pictures were you can see how the nylon thread spins around a plastic thread

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The repetition of a movement. To spin a nylon thread over a plastic thread and to challenge the round spiral shape that the traditional technique has. In my Master project I also expose the inner thread to push and challenge the technique even more in order to try and give it a more organic shape and not so firm and strict as the old technique gave. By doing so I put my cultural heritage in a new context, from a box or a bowl to put it on other bodies/frames. To fuse the traditional Thai Craft with a more contemporary Swedish jewelrys practice. You can almost say that I am writing a story using my hands and the craft as a storyline.

”... the hand can also tell the stories of the world in it’s gestures and in the written or drawn traces they yield, or in the manipulation of threads as in weaving, lacemaking and embroidery”.9

This quote is from Tim Ingold fits my work so well because of the use of my hands I’m passing on a craft to others not only by talking about it but also by showing it to other viewers. The Thai practice has also been past down to me from my old lady’s, Mä Do, hands movement over to mine. Her life thread is now intertwined and fused in to mine as well.

I’m talking a lot about identity and the sense of belonging somewhere. As a teenager I was searching for a context to fit in to, to a place to feel connected to and to find a place to fit in the norm in the society. I almost felt that I was stuck in two worlds, feeling connected to both but at the same time lost. When you think of belonging somewhere many think about a home or a place. Michael Allen Fox, an Adjunct professor both in Australia and Canada, talks a lot about what makes a home a home.10

”There are thus people whose identities are intimately intertwined with home as a fixed reference point; others who believe themselves quite free of the bond of a home; those for whom home is a traditional and sacred place; and who encounter home anywhere, everywhere or nowhere”.11

This quote from Michael Allen Fox shows how you can see home in different ways and that you don’t only need to choose one of his examples in order to think of what a home is. I think

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11 Micheal Allen Fox. P6
you can combine them to formulate what a home is and mean to you. I also think this quote sums up a lot what he is writing in his book about different views of what a home can be. In today’s society we live in a very multicultural society were I think alot of people try to stay true to their heritage and at the same time try to fit in a new home and place. Tim Cresswell, a professor in social and cultural geography at the university of Wales, brings up similar topics as Michael Allen Fox.  

”Home is an exemplary kind of place where people feel sense of attachment and rootedness. Home, more than anywhere else, is seen as a center of meaning and a field of care”.

This quote goes well together with what Michael Allen Fox had said about what a home can be. As a teenager searching for a context to fit in I thought I needed to pick one culture and one way to be able to fit in the society. But as I grew older and when I got a chance to learn this craft from my relatives that connected us and was used as a languages between us I learned that belonging somewhere is not in a fixed place but can be felt in many ways and also in a motion of a craft together with people.

Jessica Hemmings, a professor of Craft history and theory in Gothenburg, gathered contemporary artists and talked to the designers who work with textiles and through their work talk about intersections of cultures and belonging to multiple cultures in different ways. I am working with the similar methods as they do to talk about exploration of cultural identity in creative practice, and see if I can fuse my to cultures together by taking a traditional object and shaping it to another object and putting it in another context. Not only breaking norms in the society but also breaking norms in my craft yet remain the respect and tradition in the objects and not being afraid to do so either. Margaret White, a woman with roots from Europe and married with a Maori living in New Zealand. Struggled to fit in the Maori society because she was white but she had the love for their culture and learned weaving in a Maori traditional way. All her life she been told that she didn’t have the right to teach the craft to other Maori people. I like how Margarete is breaking the norm in her society just so she can have her own right to her feelings. To feel like she belongs in a context that she feels comfortable in. She also has a bigger purpose and that is that she wants to carry

\[13\] Tim Cresswell, p24
\[15\] Jessica Hemmings, p129
on a craft that is being lost and a craft that people have less interest in anymore. Although she is not a born Maori, she does a great job at retaining a craft that is disappearing and although she is not a born Maori she feel connected and home there and no one can take away that feeling.

"Ideas about belonging to more than one place, which in reality results in a sense of connection to everywhere and nowhere simultaneously, are pertinent to society today more than ever".\(^{16}\)

A quote from Jessica Hemmings almost putting words in my mouth about the feeling of being connected to more than one place yet nowhere at the same time.

I think it is interesting how other artist’s approach this question of belonging and fitting in to a place but in different ways and contexts in their work. It shows that I am not alone with this way of thinking and that it is a question very current today no matter what background you have. You don’t necessarily only have to relate to these thoughts of belonging if you come from different cultures but just to have the feeling of not belonging to a social context. The feeling of connection to everywhere and nowhere at the same time seems to be very common. I also think that you can feel the sense of home in that middle state of being in two worlds and being more okay with it. The middle part is where you rootedness your both worlds into one and to me starts to feel like a solid ground to stand on. I also like how some of the artist’s break the norm of a traditional craft and putting it in another context but at the same time have a huge respect for the traditional practices of the craft.

**Method**

In my physical project I will assume a braid technique and materials that I learned to do in Thailand in order to make jewelry. I will later see if I can develop the idea of changing materials or make bigger jewelry and add more colors to the pieces using plastic and nylon thread. This will be an experimental time to see if I can develop and change materials or scale, yet retain the tradition and sense of belonging to a culture. In my project I will also bring back old work that I did last winter (2018) to Thailand to see the meeting between the

\(^{16}\) Jessica Hemmings, p 12.
new work in the old environment by documenting it by taking photographs. To investigate if
the traditional Thai practice can be fused with the contemporary Swedish jewelry practice at
the place where it all started for me.

New material
The reason to explore and use other material is because from the beginning my relatives used
bamboo when they made the boxes, but because of the moist environment in Thailand the
boxes could sometimes become moldy and would rot. With the bamboo they used a technique
more similar to weaving. They found the plastic thread and a new technique to make boxes
that would hold in the humid environment. They found this more sustainable because the
boxes and trays lasted much longer than the bamboo ones. Because they changed material I
am curious what would happen if I did it too. But in this case I want to try and keep the
technique while trying out new materials to see if I can keep it or need to change it too.

To achieve this I will do a workshop, inviting five people to explain my master project and
that I want each person to give me two materials each that I can work with. This time I will
choose the five people in my class in the different departments from textile, ädellabb, ceramics
and glass. By choosing my peers in the different fields that have knowledge of different
materials makes me challenge myself to work with materials I’m not used to. I feel like if I
choose the materials myself I would subconsciously choose materials that are easier to work
with than others and therefore not challenge myself as hard as if someone else gave me
different materials. I will give the workshop five days to work with, each person’s suggestions
of material per day to work with. I will document with the help of pictures and write down the
creative process while I work in a journal. After this workshop I will have to make a decision
if I will continue to work with the plastic and nylon thread for my master project or the other
new materials that was given to me during the workshop. However this workshop will not be
made before the spring exhibition. I feel like I needed to choose between if I wanted to
concentrate on experimenting with different materials or concentrate on experiment with scale
and color with the material I already was working on instead. I needed to pick one of the two
for the exam exhibition as an end result. I decided that I wanted to maintain with the same
material and focus on scale and color because I already tried to work with new material a little
during my master years. During spring of 2019, I collaborated with another peer and his work
by braiding his fan made from rattan with paper yarn and plastic thread to see the meeting
between his work and mine. At the course of mini max during autumn 2019 I experimented
with different shapes and materials such as paper yarn and metal wire. I wanted to go deeper in the traditional technique and material that I learned and challenge it even more than I have done before when it came to scale and colors. I felt like I wasn’t finish with that just yet and to go on and experiment with something else didn’t feel right.

Scale and color

By working bigger in scale I want to challenge the form and structure even more. I want to go even further with the norm of a jewelry on a body to see what would happen if the jewelry wrapped around a body more than just a small piece on the body. I also want to add more color to this task because the original boxes and trays are very colourful with different patterns and I mostly worked with one or two colors before.

This is because I wanted to focus more on the shape and structures and changing the origin of a box to jewelry and changing the context from object that you have in a house to have the
object on a body instead. By putting the jewelery on a body I also expose the craft to more people than if it would have been locked inside a house. But I don’t just want to choose a color randomly but to think of a person while creating the new pieces and think of what type of color I see when I look at the pursen and create the new piece having a person in mind. In this case I will choose three people from the six models that was photographed in Thailand. From the three models I will make one new piece to each one of them inspired of how they wore my pieces. What they thoughts were about them and what colors I associate them with. I will use a syntehisa approach to choose the colors. Synesthesia means that some people with synesthesia can see colors when they see a number or while hearing sound they can see color in the sound. So I’m trying to see what colors my models have when I see them and thinking about them. I will restrict myself to choose four colors to each person to work with. I want to fuse them together and have the element of the traditional technique, material and color but give them new shape and form in the new work that I will create for the exam exhibition.
Thailand

I brought back some of my previous work that I made during the winter of 2018 to Thailand so it could be photographed in the original environment where the technique came from. I did that by having six people who live there wear the jewelry, in order to see how the meeting between the new pieces encounter the "old" environment. I started to present my work to them and asked if they recognized the technique and material. After the presentation they chose a jewelry to take home and get to know it more in peace and quiet. So they dare to try it out in different way without feeling sy or that they put it on in a way that they thought was wrong. I wanted them to explore the jewelry without any boundaries. Because it can feel awkward to stand in front of a camera with lots of people watching if you are not used to it and start to get to know the jewelry right there and then. I wanted everyone to wear black neutral clothes so the body pieces would be the main focus point. As I took the pictures I asked them some questions about how it felt to try them out at home, where they put the jewelry overnight, and how they felt wearing it front of the camera. By talking to them while taking the pictures I hoped to make them feel more comfortable in front of me. I also decided to take the pictures during the afternoon because of the soft light that the sunset gave. The sun went down so fast in the afternoon and because of that I just photographed two people each day right before the sun went down. I also photographed them in a rice field because my family have a long history of being rice farmers and I thought it would be a nice place to connect the place with my roots. With this trip I will not only see how the meeting between
the new pieces encounter the "old" environment, but also show the outcome in my six minutes presentation and also try to reflect if photograph will be one way to show my work in the exam exhibition.

While I was in Thailand I also investigated in other materials to work with to get in the mood of trying out new material and still use the same technique that I work with and see what happens. I wanted to give myself another task while I was in Thailand to challenge myself even more and to have an open mind for my surroundings, and that was to see if I were to find something else to work with. Because that’s how my relative started when they changed the material on the box from bamboo to plastic and nylon thread.
I started to work on a bigger piece made from riceax. While I was standing in the ricefield taking photos I got inspired to work with the material that we were standing on. I also wanted to see if it was possible to work with riceax and still use the old technique. Would it be possible or not? While I was working with the new piece I understood that I needed to work bigger to remain the technique and it came out in a way that I didn’t like in the beginning. But it grew on me after tossing and turning it around on myself testing it in different ways.

![Image 37-39. The outcome of my experiment with rice. First picture from the front, second from the side and third from behind.](image)

Sometimes you need to kill your darlings. In my case just postpone my workshop later in the future. I needed to see and prioritize what was important for me to go further with and in this case I wanted to explore more with the colors and scale in my jewelry. The trip to Thailand and the need to choose direction in my work gave me a lot of new ideas on how to go further in my project. It had me thinking of how I will go on with the spring exhibition. If I could use pictures as a tool to show my work or if I should have my work interact more with the visitors or not. To see if I’m able to fuse all my knowledge from my two cultures in my work. How far I can take and challenge my craft when it comes to scale and color yet retain the tradition and sense of belonging to a culture?

**Conclusion**

With my craft I can show that it is possible to challenge traditional crafts and practices. To transform them and challenge them in the technique, material and context yet retain the sense of belonging to both of my heritages cultures. My work has been to investigate and explore if
this project is possible to fuse my Thai craft practice together with contemporary Swedish jewelry practice in one. This exploration of my cultural identity has shown me even more that despite its new function and context of the Thai craft you can trace and follow the historical red thread to its original place, it has its own storytelling just as you and me. This feeling of feeling connected yet disconnected do not only relate to those with multi cultural heritages but also to them who has felt like they are stuck in two different worlds despite their background. It can be related to people with the feeling of just not fitting in a society were a certain norm are not meet. Jessica Hemmings quote is very current today because all of the human being are different in one way or another.

"Ideas about belonging to more than one place, which in reality results in a sense of connection to everywhere and nowhere simultaneously, are pertinent to society today more than ever".18

I don’t see my physical work only as my finish work to exhibit but the journey before is equal important. Such as the exploration of the material, technique and to challenge its boundaries of my Thai practice and to experiment the jewelry position on a body, to invite the body in to the jewelry. I challenge the traditional jewelry norms by giving the wearer the choice to place the jewelry on their body themselves to explore the work and not me having decided how to wear the jewelry from the beginning. I also collaborate with my relatives in Thailand and meet their reaction and listen to their thoughts about the work. I’m sharing the meeting between two cultures with pictures and create new contemporary jewelry inspired from the people I collaborated with in Thailand. I’m not just inviting the Swedish practice to see and experience the Thai practice but also inviting the Thai practice to experience the contemporary Swedish jewelry practice too. I’m pushing and challenging the eyes of society, the norms of traditional practices and myself to think bigger and outside the box. My work will always be between the different practices yet being a part of both. Craft is not something static but that moves and responds to outside influences. So does everything around us in life. As a person you change through your life, your environment changes, norms change and the society changes. Therefore I see my work moving towards contemporary jewelry practice context because my craft has been changing due its response to outside influences, which in this case is my Swedish cultural heritage, and fusing them together with my Thai side.

18 Jessica Hemmings, p12.
Just as I am spinning around the traditional Thai craft practice, like my nylon and plastic threads are spinning around each other in my work, I fuse them together with contemporary Swedish Jewellery practice by spinning and twisting them together into one practice. As my old lady, Mä Do, transferred her knowledge of Thai Craft through her hands to mine I also transferred my knowledge and thoughts of contemporary Swedish jewelry to her and the fusion to you. I learned that belonging somewhere is not in a fixed place but can be felt in many ways and also in a motion of a craft together with people.

Image 40: Mä Do, My old lady holding my jewelry in Udon Thani
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Images
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Image 2. A close up of the pattern that appers when you use the brading technique in a traditional way. Photographer, Tina Domeij, 2014
Image 3. You can see the spiral shape it gets when you are building up your work. Photographer, Tina Domeij, 2014
Image 4-6: Old work from by bachelor exam were I added silver details to my work on the more traditional trays and boxes to add something from my western side. Photographer, Tina Domeij, 2016


Image 10: Gunnel Erikssons neckless, Hemslöjden, number 2, 2013


Image 12: Ahmed Umar's Amuletts from Oslo, Photo Tina Domeij, 2019


Image 14: Kayo Yokoyama, House and trees, Sanctuary serie, Kayo Yokoyama, 2008


Image 16-18: Pictures were you can see how the nylon thread spins around a plastic thread, Tina Domeij, 2014

Image 19: Collaboration with a peer from The research lab deparment. Harry Parr-Young, 2019.


Image 21: Experiment before the exhibition Mini max with metal wire. Tina Domeij, 2019


Image 25: Pa Doy in Udon Thani. Tina Domeij, 2019

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Image 29: Leo in Udon Thani. Tina Domeij, 2019

Image 30: Mä Do from Udon Thani. Tina Domeij, 2019

Image 31: Presentation of my master project and my body pieces in Thailand. Tina Domeij, 2019

Image 37-39. The outcome of my experiment with rice from different angels in Thailand. Tina Domeij, 2019
Appendix

Reflection
Due to the pandemic this year a lot of changes had to be done in the last minute this spring that I don’t think anyone in the class was happy about. Put we had to accept, adapt, change and find new ways to solve the problems that emerged. I think we all did a great job over all.

Masters of Craft!
The first obstacle was how we were to build our exhibition when we just had one meeting before with the whole class, talking about our placement in the space that we had in the White Sea and Seminariegatan. During that meeting we were just talking briefly of were each person would like to place their work and at that time it was not a done deal. We weren’t able to have another meeting because of the new restriction of just be a certain number of persons in a room at school. So this exhibition became a big “Mini Max” situation, a course we had in August 2019. During the Mini Max course we had 15 minutes to take up our work and no one else were allowed to be in the space when you were in there. So the first person had the whole room to choose a good space and the last person had to be happy with the little space that was left and adapt after everyone else. Because of the pandemic and the new restriction we weren’t able to have the two working days of setting up our work in the space either because we weren’t allowed to be there at the same time. We got a schedule were we had three hours each to put up our work. I guess the Mini Max experience came in handy for this situation because we handled it really good and people were not as stressed as you might have been. During Mini Max the class never though that we would encounter a situation like that in real life ever. We were so wrong.

I knew the time frame of three hours was not possible for me and I know many had a hard time setting up their work in only three hours. Despite all the preparation before to make the building time shorter and more efficient it was still very difficult to just have three hours to build up your space. I came earlier anyway because I needed help from Magnus to set up four-meter long shelf on the wall and I also needed to paint two walls that were eight meters long and four meters high. This took me nine hours and I really would have needed some more hours to make the second layer of paint on the wall but decided not to. Mainly because there wouldn’t be anyone to see my work live and the first layer of paint was enough for just taking pictures and film of for the digital exhibition. First I thought to ignore the paint
completely though we weren’t showing the exhibition live but I’m glad I did it anyway. It created a nice room for my work and the colour made a big different when all the other walls was white. The colour added a nice change in the exhibition as a whole and showed that the exhibition was not only in the White Sea but that it continued in the Seminariegatan.

Placement
When in comes to placement of my work I was really happy and wouldn’t have changed much in it this time. I placed my work so you only saw the pictures first when you came in to the exhibition and to be able to see my jewellery you needed to go around everything to be able to see them. I wanted the viewer to move around my space in both directions without feeling it was a backside and a front. The yellow paint created my own space and the feeling of like you were standing with the people on the pictures with them in the rice field. The only thing that I come up with that I would have changed is that I would have moved the jewellery away from the picture a bit. So it was half of a meter from the pictures so that you could move around the jewellery more. Now the jewellery was touching the pictures and there was no space at all. The shelf on the wall was places high up with boxes on top. I wanted them to be visible but not take to much space and therefore placed them high up because the photographs and the jewellery were the main focus point in my work but still remember their origin of the craft that was the boxes. My work were suppose to be a interactive space were the viewer was able to try my jewellery on so I could take a polaroid picture of them and place the picture on the wall that would grow with more pictures over time. Showing that you could wear my jewellery in many different ways and that was an on going process while the wall was growing with Polaroid pictures. I’m a bit sad that I didn’t have that chance for my exam work to do that.

Images 1-2 both sides of my work. Seeing the photos on one way and my jewellery in the other direction. Image 3: The yellow wall with my four-meter long shelf with the original craft that I learned from the beginning. If you look closely you see one Polaroid photo too. (Image 1-2 by Albin Händig. Image 3 by Tina Domeij)
Digital exhibition

The digital exhibition on Konstfacks website was a really nice idea were our work was filmed and us telling a little bit about our work. But I do get annoyed when I see the film because I don’t think you get the feeling of my space as I wanted. When you move around my space in the exhibition the yellow walls put you in a mood with the pieces. I wanted the viewer to feel the warmth of standing on a warm place in the afternoon feeling the sun almost against your face before it goes down next to the photographs on a rice field. I felt like the White Sea and Seminariegatan was giving a to cold impression and I wanted something warm. But at the film just get a short frame of it. Of course it super hard to get the same feeling of an exhibition into a film but it’s a bit annoying when you vision a feeling or something and then you feel like its not really there. There are also two frames in the movie that are black for a second. I don’t mind the last one but there is one in the middle almost. When I first saw the film I thought it was the end but then it continued on, so I was afraid that people would think that was the ending. I also wish I had a chance to make the speech all over again. But in the end it is just small things I got annoyed over. Because I think they did a great job consider the time they had and it was not a lot of time they had. I also started to ask my friends what they thought about the film and everyone thought is was a really good one and said it gave a very clear view of what I was doing in my project and that they didn’t thought about the small things I did. So that was nice to hear and to get another perspective on the film.

Examination and meeting with opponent.

The presentation of the examination went well considering the circumstances. I manage to talk a little about everything from my project and highlighted the most important ones. At first I did a presentation that was going to be 20 minutes. But again we had to change the format because we were having our examination through Zoom. From the beginning I planed to set up a setting on the floor at Mandelgren or Svarta havet depending were we should be. I wanted to create a space just like in Thailand were we sit on the floor and talked about life or created craft. I wanted to sit on the carpet that I would have laid down with pillows with the opponent to let her have an experience from my home in Thailand. But instead we had to do it through Zoom and make the presentation five minutes shorter, which was a lot harder then I thought it would be and was afraid I would take away something important that I wanted to talk about. But overall it went well I think.
I really liked my opponent, Marcia Harvey Isaksson, and I wish the time we had together were longer. It felt like that we just scratched the surface of my project when the time ended. I wanted to talk deeper about my methods and the material that I used. Also after the opponent there was a Q&A. In the beginning I got really good questions to answer but in the end it felt like the focus shifted to something else then my work. There was a lot questions about sculptures and I don’t know that much about it and it is not my field. I wish we could have taken that little time that we had to actually talk more about my work and go deeper in to it then me start thinking of sculptures for the first time and what it means to me. I understand that we have to think in other perspective in our work and broaden our thoughts. But when you shorten the time from the original time, you want to talk about your work as much as possible.

Gustavsbergs Konshall
How could I have changed and experiment more in my installation with my work? This was something I would have done in the spring exhibition but that was taken from us and cancelled. Then we got a chance to do it at Konstfack at Stockholm Craft week. All my hopes came to life and I started to think how I could change it. But that too was taken from us later. Now we had Gustavsbergs Konsthall to show our work but not in the full scale we wanted due to lack of space. I’m so grateful for this opportunity but at the same time a bit bitter about the other ones that was taken from us.

At Gustavsbergs Konsthall my work will consist of the three photographs, three jewellery and the yellow wall. I had to scale it down and take away the Polaroid photos, boxes and the four-
meter shelf due to the lack of space they have. The photographs and jewellery will be shown next to each other and not behind of each other this time. I took away the wood plinths that were attached to the photos because I was afraid that the photographs would be damaged and not completely straight if I moved them. I placed the photographs on cutting discs instead so it would be steadier to move. They will be hanging on a wall and it will be very interesting to see how it will look like when moving them from the middle of a room to a wall. I think it is important to try different placement of your work and see if it has more then one setting. This time we will see if it is possible to scale down a work and place it in another way to see if you loose something in your work or if is possible to just show a part of it and keep the core of it. We will see in the opening day how it looks then.

Feelings
This spring has ben super weird. In January and February you were so hyped and excited about the spring and everything that came along with it. To finally be able to show your work that you been working on for two years and sharing the experience with your peers, friends, family and other viewer. Not sharing it through Zoom. To be distance your peers and knowing that you feel the same things they do when everything got cancelled and changed through everything and not be able to talk in bigger groups about it. Not even comfort each other with a simple hug when you see each other at school. It feels like no one have seen the work you been working on for the past two years. The award of everything we worked for feel like it went without anyone notices it, or you. That feeling sucks! We got feedback that the digital exhibition reached a lot of people and even outside Sweden and that’s great! But the information came from a second part. I think I would have felt differently if the people that have seen our work came to us personally or gave us the feedback themselves somehow. Now if feels like no one has seen it at all and your hard work didn’t matter.

You try to be happy about the small stuff, like that we had access to be at school if we needed to, when our catalogue was finish and came out really great, when we got a chance to exhibit at Gustavbergs Konsthall, show our work at Klimt02 and more things that I cant remember now. But this spring have been super tough on all of us mentally. After the examination at the 8th of May I felt empty and the sadness came after we celebrated with some drinks via Zoom and after the Zoom meeting you sat in your home alone and thought that, that was it. A big anticlimax. I appreciate that many of our professors try to cheer us up and are doing their best and their support has been amazing and super important during this hard time. I know in the
future we will be super good at solving difficult problems in our field and we have become quick thinkers to make the best of what you got and be great artists. But for now I can’t escape the feeling of emptiness, lack of creativity in my practice and a feeling that your work was not appreciated enough and got the recognition that it deserved. Because me and my peers work is amazing.