Connecting across the Pacific

In FUTURE CRAFT Japan+Thailand, the 11th annual Pacific Rim collaboration between ArtCenter College of Design in California and Tama Art University in Tokyo, Japan, students and faculty from both schools collaborate to envision new opportunities for design to create social impact with artisans in Northern Thailand, in partnership with the Lanna Culture & Crafts Association and the Thai Ministry of Industry.
FUTURE CRAFT:

Contemporary Design Meets Thai Craft

How can design extend Northern Thai “Lanna” craft traditions to global markets? How might handcraft & digital technology intersect? How can we embrace natural materials innovation?

Cross-cultural student teams design contemporary home goods—small-scale furnishings, lighting, tableware & soft goods—driven by new applications of eco-fiber and Lanna craft techniques.

A two week field research trip to experience Northern Thailand’s rich craft heritage—including weaving, metal, lantern-making, natural fiber & wood artisans—lays the foundation for fresh design.

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www.designmattersatartcenter.org/proj/future-craft-japan-thailand
Thailand Design Research Trip
Artisan Survey > Workshop > Co-Creation

WEEK 1
Visit range of crafts
Seek design opportunity

WEEK 2
Insights + design direction
Co-creation with artisan

Synthesis
Concept Pitch

Develop, Model & Iterate Designs

Midterm
ACCD > Kyoto

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How might we:
Cross-pollinate design X craft?
Build empathy & understanding?
Create value for stakeholders?

Sketchbook
Draw, collage, write ideas and questions so that your sketchbook becomes a tool for inspiration and inquiry.

Collect Materials
Gather samples of materials, textures, patterns and colors.

Reflect
Each evening, reflect on the day, catalog your field research notes and back up your photographs. Based on your collected observations, what is your key insight?
Observe + Document a Craft

What is the essence of a craft process? Note the individual steps, materials, and properties in each stage of the making process.

**format:**

**Dimensional Sketchbook**

Capture the essence of the craft with a 2D/3D interpretation that fits into your sketchbook. For example, explore layerer drawing, collage, folding, carving away, stitching...

**due:** ___

**Three sketchbook spreads**

one spread/artisan, for three (3) artisans.
Materials & Making Exploration
Explore the unique qualities of a material or process with the intention of expressing something new.

format:

Hand-held Object
Construct a hand-held object that expresses the essence of a craft/material from your perspective as a designer. Your object may be functional, conceptual, or push materials innovation.

explore:
Use material(s) you’ve gathered. Consider form & tactility. Try to: join different materials; invent a tool to manipulate a material differently; combine a manufactured object with a craft technique (weaving / folding / etc).

due: ____

“Made by hand, the craft object bears the fingerprints, real or metaphorical, of the person who fashioned it... Made by hand, the craft object is made for hands.”

Octavio Paz, Convergences
Speculate thru Drawing

Choose one material/craft and ask:

• What are the unique properties of this craft process or material? (For example, flexible, waterproof, compostable, soft).
• In what new applications could this material be most compelling?
• Based on your observations, what can you create with this craft/material that relates to the body?

format:

Draw, Ideate, Collage ideas at the scale of the body, for example interior elements, soft goods, illuminated or functional objects. Fill two sketchbook spreads with ideas.

due: _____
Design Opportunity Mind Map

Sketch & write on large paper & post-its:

- **Step 1 - Attributes:** For 6 materials/crafts: unique qualities, limitations & insights.
- **Step 2 - Ideate:** Draw ideas that grow out of the unique attributes and insights from each craft. How might we add value?

Select 3 Potential Artisans

Discuss criteria to filter down to 1 craft with faculty.

“Re-Mix” Ideation

To generate new ideas, cross your craft with:

- another material/craft
- a digital or industrial process
- new market, global lifestyle, scenarios

format:

BrainWriting: Write/sketch on post-its solo > Discuss & build on ideas > Post on large paper > Repeat
Sketch Ideas for Co-Creation
From your "What-If" mind-map, develop the ideas you’d like to test in collaboration with your artisan partner. Sketch ideas for:

• forms to explore
• material innovations to try
• designs for home goods & lighting furnishings & soft goods ideas etc.

Get & Assemble Making Supplies
Prepare: any materials, tools, supplies. You may want to mock-up a mold, buck, or framework to use during the making process.
Exchange
Share a small gift with the artisan & show your portfolio if appropriate.

Try
With the artisan’s guidance, try different craft techniques hands-on.

Make Together
Share your sketches with the artisan, and sketch ideas together.

Understand
Understand how the artisan learned their craft, and its history & cultural significance.

Value
How can we help create value for the artisan? (Increased income, recognition, international markets, new ideas, etc)
Present to Artisans
Sat Sept 17 in Chiang Mai
Distill the past two weeks into a compelling presentation defining your team’s FUTURE CRAFT project direction.

- Your take on Design X Craft
- Research Insights
- Design Opportunities

Please be sure to connect the craft process to the design future you envision.

**format:**
- Keynote Presentation (6 min)
- Display Materials & Making
- Dimensional Sketchbook

This presentation will become the foundation of your **Concept Pitch, Tu Sept 27 at Tama** along with first draft of team process book - printed.