Tongji + ArtCenter students design with artisans to revive traditional crafts and create social impact.
Co-Creation Across Cultures

In FUTURE CRAFT China, a collaboration between Tongji University College of Design & Innovation in Shanghai and ArtCenter College of Design in California, student teams collaborate to envision new opportunities for design to revive craft traditions and create social impact with artisan communities in Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces.
Opportunity: Keep Heritage Vital
China has achieved extraordinary levels of economic growth + development; yet with such stunning gains, what risks being lost? As China continues to advance, how might we bring traditional Chinese craft into daily life?

Co-Creation: With Artisan Communities
Co-creation is the heart of the FutureCraft project. Collaborate with artisans to understand their needs & aspirations, and how design can best make an impact.

Outcomes: Preservation through Innovation
Design lifestyle products, lighting, furnishings, home goods, brands & spaces that extend craft traditions to new sectors, contemporary Chinese & global markets.

Social Impact: Next Generation | Urban+Rural
Envision new opportunities to connect urban and rural, to make cultural heritage relevant to the next generation, and to create new markets that sustain communities.
Social Impact Design Process

“Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer’s toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success.” - Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO

Starts with empathy & understanding:
Human connections and empathy are the heart of the design process to create social impact.

Co-Creation: Design WITH, not FOR
Understand challenges, envision opportunities & ideate together WITH our partner community.

Seek Key Opportunities for Impact:
Shift from a mindset of problem to opportunity, and from scarcity to abundance.

Human-Centered Experience Design:
Consider both the needs of the artisan and the end user’s total experience to create an emotive impact.
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**Crafts Field Research**

- Kickoff & Research
- Opportunity & Direction

**Synthesis & Direction**

- TRIP 1: Jan 6-14
  - Hangzhou Area: Design/Materials Library by Pinwuh
  - Bamboo, Paper, Metal, Wood
- TRIP 2: Jan 17-20
  - Suzhou Area: Ceramics, Silk textile, Gardens, museums

**Project Review 1**

- Project Review 1: Research synthesis & insights
  - Opportunity Area / Mission
  - Concept / Design Story
  - Initial Design Direction

**Ideation**

- Narrative Experience

**Spring Festival**

- Feb 13th - Feb 21
  - AC Student Break
- Feb 22-24
  - AC - Culture

**Develop Designs**

**Project Review 2**

**Refine Design**

**Final Design Implementation**

**Final W April 11**

**TUES APRIL 10 - REHEARSAL**

**WED APRIL 11 - PUBLIC FINAL**

- Model / prototype of final design
- Presentation: visual + verbal storytelling
- Exhibition / Wall graphics
- Implementation strategy

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Research traditional artisans, as well as innovative design studios, spaces & brands, to understand the depth of Chinese craft.

5 nights (Jan 9-14) in Hangzhou & Zhejiang province: Design X Craft forum at Pinwu’s Design Library; Kengo Kuma’s Folk Art Museum; traditional crafts from tin & copper, to wood & bamboo, to natural dyes, parasol & paper-making

3 nights (Jan 17-20) in Suzhou and Yixing, where traditional gardens, silk textile & ceramic crafts flourish. Field trips in and around Shanghai to see both cultural heritage & cutting-edge brands such as Shang Xia
Bamboo + Wood: Weaving, Veneers, Joinery, Carving

Paper: Paper-making, 3D Pulp & Fibers
Structure + Skin:
Parasol, Kite, Lantern

Ceramics:
Porcelain
Terracotta
Metal: Hammering, Casting, Wire

Textile: Weaving, Dyeing, Embroidery
Research question: How to bring crafts back to daily life? How to reconnect with cultural heritage?

4 Lenses

Cross-Pollinate: Seek opportunities for cross sector collaboration, for connecting rural + urban, younger + older generations.

Amplify Impact: How can design create value for artisans & their communities?

Digital X Craft: What can handcraft + digital tech bring to each other?

Materials Matter: Seek considered use of natural resources & sustainable materials innovation

“I think the best protection for the preservation of craftsmanship is innovation... Only if traditional culture can become contemporary culture, can the past be reconnected with the young generation.”

Jiang Qing’er, Shang Xia
CEO & creative director
Take time at the end of each day to write & reflect on what you learned from the research.

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

**Reflect**
Each evening, reflect on the day & catalog your field research notes. Based on your collected observations, what is your key question or insight for the day?

**Photos**
Be sure to back up your photos and organize by craft type.
Document the craft process. Seek to understand the craft’s cultural significance.

Step 1) Document the Craft
Diagram each step, from raw materials to making process. Use drawing + photos.

Step 2) Interpret
What properties make this craft unique? How does it connect with cultural heritage?
Capture the essence of the craft with your own collage interpretation in your sketchbook. Try techniques of: collage with craft materials, photo montage, translucent layered paper, folding or stitching...
As a class, collectively create a physical catalogue of the crafts, materials & processes.

**Raw Materials:** Collect raw material samples. Note: what are their special properties? where do they come from?

**Process Samples:** Collect samples of the craft in process. Note: diagram the steps of the making process

**Craft Object:** Purchase a small example of the final craft object. Note: How is this object uses in daily life? What is its cultural/historical significance?

**Artisan:** Photo of the artisan at work. Note: a direct quote from the artisan (what they love about the craft? hopes for future?)
Design X Craft Forum

Yuhang Róng Design & Material Library:
Róng in Chinese means to fuse. PINWU’s ‘Handmade In Hangzhou’ core philosophy is fusing traditional crafts & contemporary design.

One-Day Symposium
A symposium to interact with Hangzhou designers & artisans, learn about PINWU’s craft research & collaborations, and share curiosity about crafts/design/material.

Collective brainstorm/mindmap:
As a group, explore a range of ideas around a key question: How to embrace craft into design thinking? How to guide a creative process from the craft to contemporary objects?

With special thanks to:
Hosted by PINWU’s Zhang Lei & Jovana Zhang
Co-organized by Richard Hsu, Faculty, Tongji

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Whole Studio Opportunity Workshop
Sketch & write on large paper & post-its:
- Share research observations, insights and challenges
- Define opportunity areas
- Crossing exercise:
- Pair Challenges x Resources to generate possibilities
- Ask “What If?”
- Select potential artisan(s) to focus on

Opportunity Areas
- An opportunity area is a stepping stone to idea generation.
- An opportunity is a rearticulation of problems or needs in a generative, future facing way.
- An opportunity area is not a solution. Rather, it suggests more than one solution. It defines a space of possibility in which to generate solutions.
- Opportunities start with the phrase “HOW MIGHT WE...?” to suggest a mindset of possibility.

Source: IDEO Toolkit for Human Centered Design
What are craftspeople’s main aspirations and challenges?

Photo Sharing:
Ask craftspeople to share their photos, as a tool to talk about their hopes for the future.

Aspiration Cards:
Print a set of images ahead of time & gather aspirational images from magazines. Ask participants to choose 3 cards that represent what you hope for your future. Ask, what did you choose and why?

Tips:
Gather direct, unfiltered quotes. Ask “why” 5 times, to get to the real why.
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 “What if” ideas & 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.)
Refine Focus - Design

Distill the past two weeks of research to begin to develop your project direction. Please be sure to connect the craft process to the design future you envision.

Design Story

What is a compelling story that helps someone understand what drives your design, it may include:

- A big idea ("concept")
- Goals that the design is trying to achieve (pragmatic and emotional)
- Inspiration for form
- Narrative of user experience
TALISMAN: Digital X Craft

A Talisman is a small object that is thought to have magical powers.

Make a hand-held, sculptural object that expresses your design story and/or the essence of a craft from your perspective as a design team.

Create a beautifully crafted object that is small enough to hold in one hand:

- Cross-pollinate digital + handmade processes
- Explore materials combinations
- Develop form from initial inspiration
- Appeal to your target audience through form & tactility
Visualize design ideas - though sketching, digitally and mock-ups.

In what new applications could this craft/material be most compelling? Consider the unique properties of this craft process or material (for example: flexible, waterproof, compostable).

To generate new ideas, cross a craft with:
- another material/craft
- a digital or industrial process
- new market, global lifestyle, scenarios

Target Audience Storyboard of how your idea can both support the artisan, as well as the experience of the end user.
Project Review 1
Tues Jan 30 (Week 4)

Digital presentation (6-8min):
- Our Team
- Our FutureCraft Philosophy ("Why")
- Opportunity ("How might we?")
- Research Synthesis, Key Insights & Co-Creation (What inspires you?)
- Design Story / Concept
- Initial Design Direction: Sketches
- Mock-Ups (What will you design?)
- Target Audience/Scenario (consider both craftspeople & end user)

Physical Display:
- Sketchbooks & artifacts from research
- Talisman
- Craft Catalogue

Kelly Kim presenting...
Chinese Innovators
- Pinwu: handmadeinhangzhou.com
- China Handmade: chinahandmade.com (artisan/design encyclopedia)
- Shang Xia: shang-xia.com/home / established by Hermes & Jiang Qiong Er
- Stellar Works: stellarworks.com / creative directors Neri&Hu: nerinandhu.com
- ZaoZuo: zaozuo.com / creative director Luca Nichetto

Global Designers Embracing Craft
- Americas: Campana Brothers, Artecida Design with Conscience
- Europe: Patricia Urquidi, Werner Aisslinger, Benjamin Hubert, Marcel Wanders
- Japan: Issey Miyake, Yamakawa, Isamu Noguchi

Social Impact Design Methods
- Creative Action Toolkit by Frog Design: www.frogdesign/CAT
- Delft Design Guide: Design Strategies and Methods
- IDEO.org Fieldguide to Human Centered Design: www.designkit.org
- Models of Impact: A Strategic Business-Design Toolkit: www.modelsofimpact.co