

## CETLD Design and Traditional Indian Manufacturing:

concluding thoughts: Marney Walker

As an undergraduate student, this project continues to provide me with a thought provoking context for my personal interest: to consider what it means to make things by hand: on personal, physical, psychological and social levels. An opportunity for continuing reflection on the experience of studying design where there is a strong emphasis on workshop based practice.

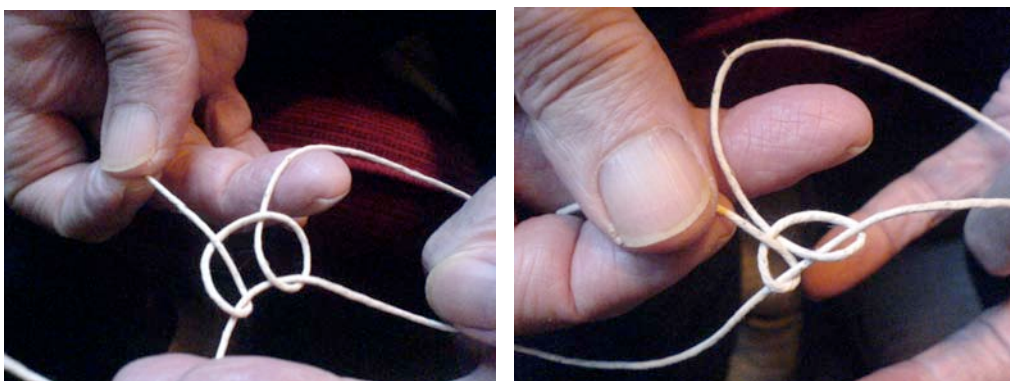
The context of the India project: focussing on Bangalore, introduced me to another culture where the two worlds of accelerated commercial development and centuries old traditional hand making skills live side by side. Themes that emerged from our initial discussions: (innovation through necessity; what it means to make things by hand; passing on skills, place based learning) we first explored in our local environment: the course we are on, the town we are living in, the atmosphere of excessive consumption. We were then able to test our ideas first hand in India with students in formal design training and young women practising crafts in a rural village.

Alongside our formal education this process gave us a place to learn without assessment or deadlines where we set our own criteria, timescales, meeting times and agendas. Our learning came from sharing each of our own enthusiasms, which began to merge and generate joint passions. We had access to the experiences and perspectives of the recent graduates as well as the insights, learning methods and resources provided by the project leader. We spontaneously set our own joint goals and projects including our self-funded trip to India.

A number of potential joint projects have come out of this group including two blogs, two books and ideas for a number of joint activities. The most frustrating thing is not having the time or funding to pursue these in more depth while our assessed studies continue to take priority.

Personally, it has provided me with a supportive and less competitive way to test and develop ideas. It has given me more meaningful insights into my particular area of interest: a considerable respect for the hand made, which is now the subject of my dissertation. The three sets of images below sum up some of the enduring impressions from the project

Passing on knowledge, doing things by hand



At home I asked my father to remind me how to make knots: "This is how I do a bowline on a bite: hold that end: like this over, like that, and through, like that, so it's a good thing for putting round your middle. for getting down a rock face. It could save your life"



In Bangalore: as part of one of my design projects. I was testing ways to keep precious text messages in a more permanent way, I had a ring hand engraved with the text: " your memory is full". During the half an hour it took him to complete this, he explained how he had been trained by his grandfather : " you need an inner motivation to learn patience and concentration. You could spend years learning but not acquiring the skill if you don't have the intention"

The hand: other levels of meaning



One of the methods suggested to us for developing research insights was to try something we had never done before. In Brighton I had my palm read in a gloomy cupboard by an infamous ageing seaside fortune teller. When we were India there were numerous on street adverts for palm reading. It occurred to me that perhaps there is a connection between the significance of hand making as a means of subsistence in India makes the hand a more obvious means of telling us about ourselves.

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