



Pledge

An in-depth, systematic study of the *Juttis* of Punjab that serves as a powerful tool for social change.

Project Duration :
7-8 weeks, November 2018 - January 2019

Guide: Swasti Garg & Ranjit Konkar

Team : Simran Toor & Aavriti Khushwaha



How might we communicate the relationship between caste, material, and craftsmanship?

This project is a part of the Craft documentation course which has been an integral part of The National Institute of Design - Textile curriculum since the 1970s. This course aims to document crafts which have been left unnoticed and bring them to light. The documentation process applies various research methods and understands the crafts that are on the verge of extinction.

Not far from the city beautiful - Chandigarh is a village called Giddharbaha. My grandmother grew up there and I remember her telling us stories of the creation of the *Jutti*. I had always planned to go visit her village when a day suitable arrived. Ever since my foundation years, I knew I wanted to document this craft. Aavriti Kushwaha (My teammate for the project) has always been in awe of Punjabi culture. We decide to take this journey on together.



My Role

This project was carried out with my teammate Aavriti Khushawaha. Through the duration of the project I put on many hats. My grasp over the Punjabi language made me the lead communicator during ethnographic research. I was responsible for transcribing my daily notes for my teammate to read. I brought a systematic approach to conducting research. My keen eye for detail allowed me to document the work of craftsmen and visits to tanneries. I was able to explore skills of cinematography and film editing. Towards the end of the project I was the lead visual designer and focused on publication design and communication.



Project Timeline

A brief timeline of methods and steps involved in the making of "Pledge"

Project Plan



- Building a team
- Creating timelines

- Defining roles
- Evaluating strengths
- Identifying collaboration opportunities
- Identifying time constraints

Recruiting Tools



- Building strategy
- Identifying locations for field research

- Who are we going to talk to? (Experts, leathers workers etc)
- Building interview questions /conversation starters
- Insights from initial interviews to map out areas where the practice of *Jutti* is carried out.
- Contacting *Jutti* vendors, shopkeepers & stores

Context Building



- Discovering innovation & technique.
- Fact, figures, history around *jutti*.
- Defining reach

- Magezines, newspaper articles
- Craft documentation projects from previous years

- Defining intent of the project
- Defining Audience - "Who are we designing this for" ?

Discover



- Ethnography
- Research through design

- Fly on the wall
- Interviews
- Sketching/Photographs
- Footage
- Attending social events/festivals

Synthesis



- Interview Notes/Recordings
- Transcripts
- Decoding

- Defining leather production as a wicked problem
- Pointing out patterns and possible content touchpoints
- Looking at possible design intervention

Insights & Application



- Defining approach (leather advocacy)
- Order of chapters
- Hypothesis

- Identifying new goals & intent (defined project brief)
- Discussions/feedback with publication, craft and leather experts

Final Concepts



- Pledge - The *Jutti's* Of Punjab.....
- Pledge - The Photobook
- Pledge - The Shortfilm

- Studying existing short documentary films.
- Creating a storyline with existing voiceovers/recordings
- Cut! cut ! cut! (Editing)
- Exploring appropriate music
- Screening film and feedback

- Structure of document
- Publication design & layout
- Test Prints/Paper quality exploration

Field Research

Direct Observation

We observed the people of Punjab in their natural environment. This offers contextual data on people, situations, interactions and the surroundings.

Participant Observation

We conducted casual conversations in the natural environments of the leather workers. We were now involved in the discussions and could mould the direction of the discussions. The workers were also a little more comfortable with us now

Ethnography

We conducted informal and conversational, semi-structured, standardized and open-ended conversations with the leather workers. This provided us with a wealth of data that we later can sort analyzed. This also helped collect relational data

Case Study

We conducted an in-depth analysis of people, social events and jutti shops.



Research Synthesis

Research in the process of documenting *Jutti* can be classified under the following main headings:

People

The craftsmen of these Juttis all belonged to a scheduled caste, called Ramdaasias' also known as Chamar. The original term chamar is descriptive as it indicates the materials they worked with, it gathered many connotations associated with their marginal and often 'un-touchable' status.

Waste

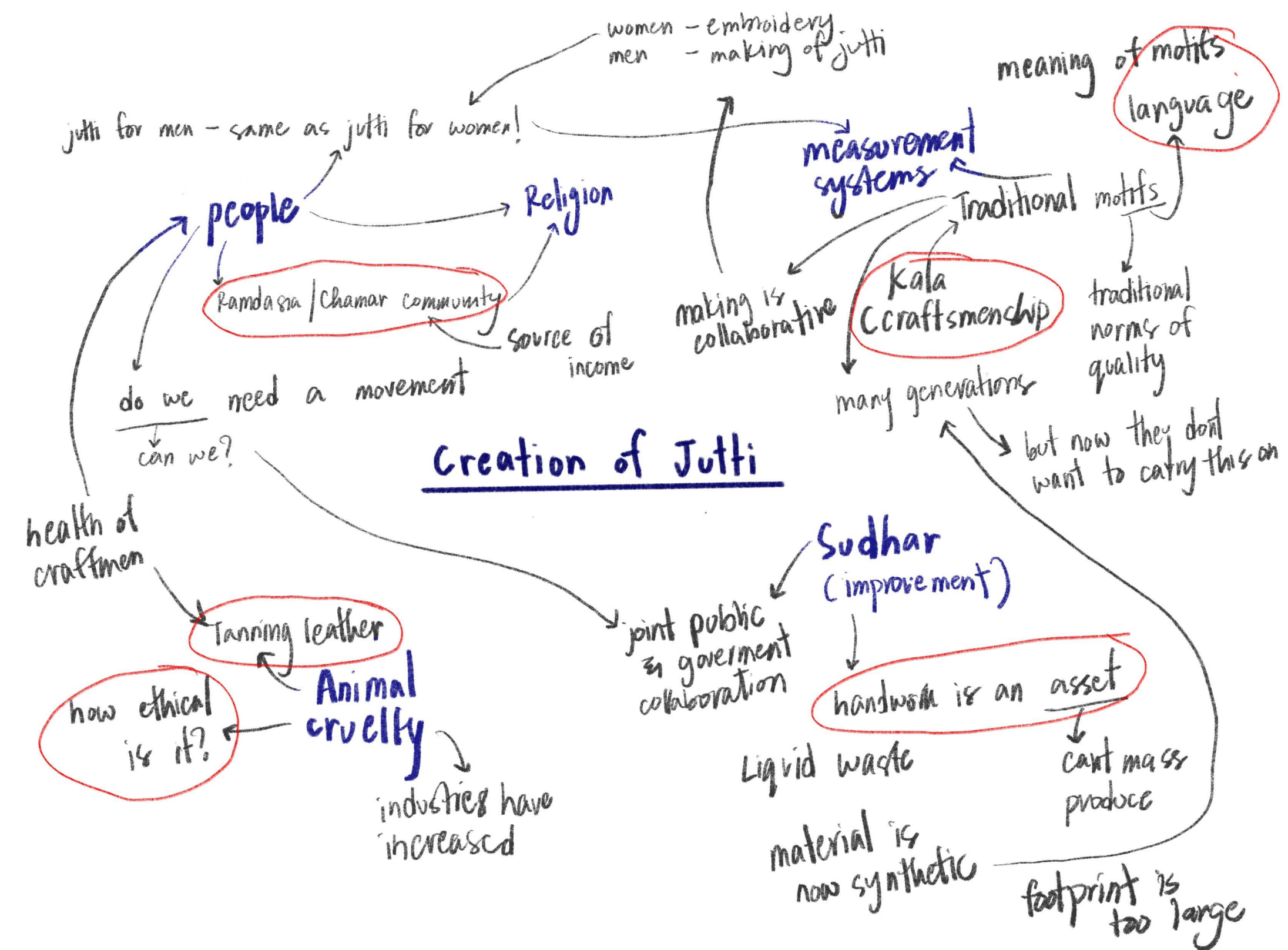
Approximately 40% hides are lost to shavings and trimmings. Tradition shavings could be reused because they used natural material for natural paint. Present-day, chemicals are used and have to be burnt or are sent to a landfill. Chemical runoffs into water bodies are also also an issue.

Unethical Leather

India's animal-protection laws are also rarely enforced.

Health Hazard

Turning skin into leather uses dangerous chemicals, including mineral salts, formaldehyde, and coal-tar derivatives. The workers have almost no healthcare and diseases spread fast.



Types of Audience



Paddler

A paddler dips his or her foot into the series and enjoys or takes in what is on offer. They come with the aim of just glancing through and experience. The paddler may come back later, with greater time & piqued curiosity to swim or deep dive.

A photobook has been created for the paddlers.



Swimmer

A swimmer interacts with the content intent on learning, discovering more & reaching a level of understanding & competency around the theme. They might want to dive deeper into the content once they have gained interest.

A photobook and a short film has been created for swimmers.

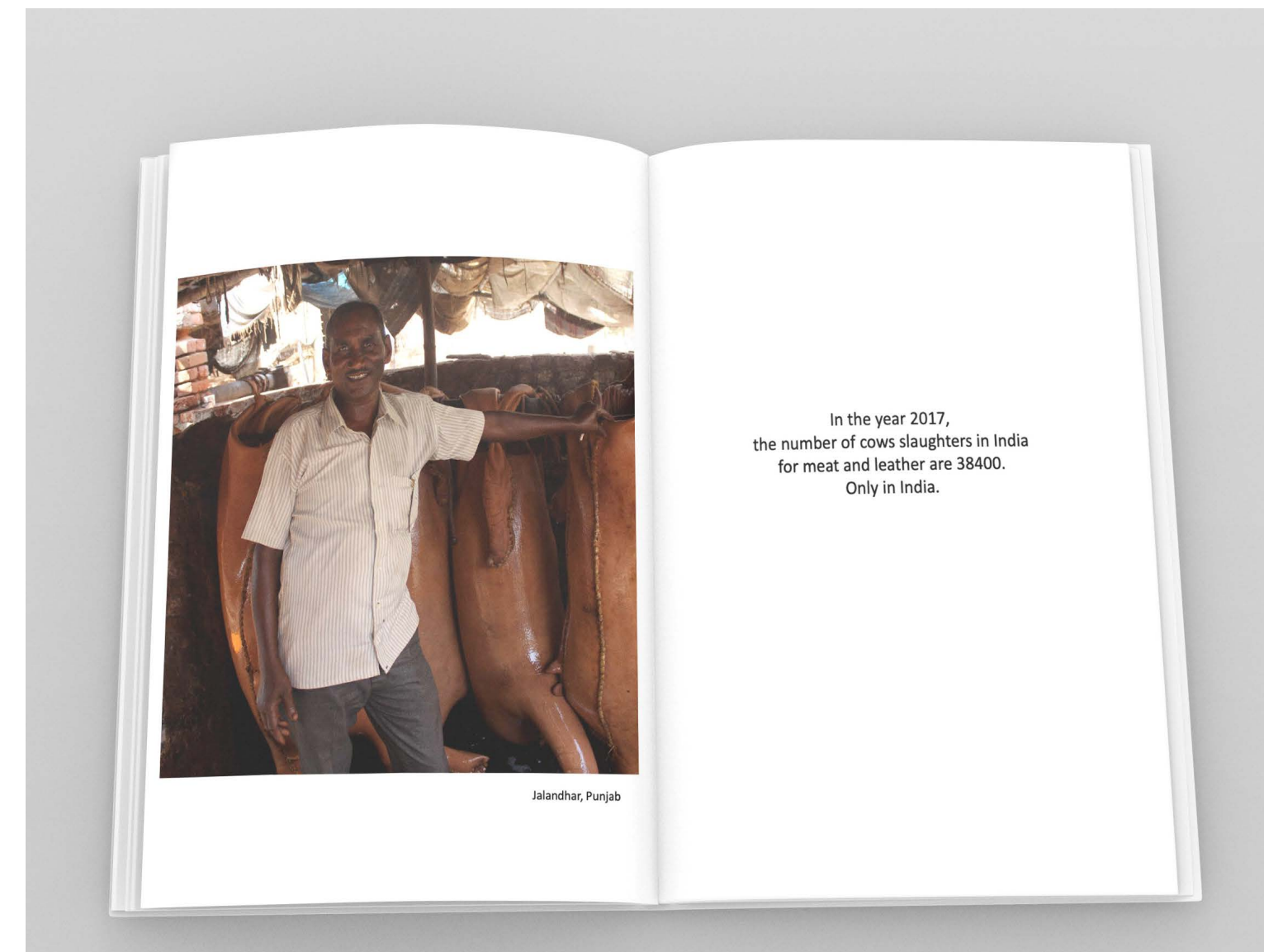


Diver

A diver takes a deeper approach, exploring, diving deeper into the content, looking to learn and understand as much as possible on a certain topic. They do not fear from too much reading.

A photobook, short film and a 7 chapter book have been created for the divers.

Photobook



Film

The short documentary has been directed and edited by me during the project. It catches the essence of and the process of *Jutti* making. What the viewer realises during the film is that there is a layer of harsh realities that is exposed as the film moves further



[The full film can be viewed here](#)

Pledge - Book

