

Crafts

LAB

HANDBOOK

DUTCH  
CENTRE FOR  
**INTANGIBLE**  
**CULTURAL HERITAGE**



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## Preface

In 2018 the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage took the initiative to set up the methodology of the Crafts Lab at the Holland Open Air Museum. This initiative is connected to Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven's call, to promote new uses for traditional crafts, as outlined in her vision statement 'Culture in an Open Society' (March 2018).

On the basis of four Labs conducted during the pilot phase (between September 2018 and March 2019) we developed a methodology that allows craftspeople to investigate innovation in their craft from a variety of perspectives in collaboration with artists/designers and vocational education students. In March 2019 all participants were invited to share their experiences in an evaluation of the Labs. Based on their responses we made a number of adjustments to the methodology.

This handbook (version 1.0), which is intended for museums that would like to work with the methodology of the Crafts Lab, describes the methodology, the participants and their role in the mutual collaboration. It also outlines the objectives and how these can be realised. We have illustrated this handbook using photos taken during all four Labs from the pilot phase\*. As far as the methodology is concerned, we specifically follow (in pictures) the structure of the 'Chair Matting' Lab.

We would be pleased to receive your feedback on this handbook. Over the coming years we hope to develop the methodology of the Crafts Lab further on, based on your experiences at your museum and we would like to share the new insights then once again with all of the participating museums that are keen to contribute to the sustainable innovation of traditional crafts.

— *Leo Adriaanse, director*

DUTCH CENTRE FOR INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

## Craftspeople can investigate the innovation of a craft in collaboration with artists/designers and students



'Chair Matting' Crafts Lab



'Paper Cutting' Crafts Lab

### \* LABS FROM THE PILOT PHASE

1. **Chair Matting** Crafts Lab with craftsman Rien Stuijts (De Stoelenmatter, Zundert), craftswoman Marrigje van der Dragt (trainee chair matting) Kees Heurkens (designer, Eindhoven) and Maarten Strang (designer, Arnhem).
2. **Paper Making** Crafts Lab with craftsman Leo Hoegen (De Papierderij, Utrecht) and Sabine Zwikker (sculptor/designer, Zutphen).
3. **Frisian Woodcarving** Crafts Lab with craftsman Erno Korpershoek (Atelier Het Snijpunt, De Knipe), E. Pietersen (sculptor/illustrator, Zepworks, Arnhem) and Mieke Lucia (textiles designer, Studio Mieke Lucia, Arnhem).
4. **Paper Cutting** Crafts Lab with craftsman Henk Kapitein (paper cutting artist, Urk), Rinke Nijburg (visual artist, Arnhem), Marieke Meijer (illustration and design, Arnhem) and Melissa van Limburg (Creative Industry student at ROC RijnIJssel in Arnhem).

# Background information

## Introduction

The methodology of the Crafts Lab was set up at the request of craftspeople. A number of crafts have been inscribed on the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands.

Each year the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage organises inspiration days for practitioners of intangible cultural heritage who has been credited to the Inventory. During these inspiration days focused discussions are conducted with the heritage field.

Over the past few years the Centre has noticed that in particular the current generation of craftspeople need advice and support to stay relevant to the present time and to ensure a future for their craft.

In recent years we have witnessed a growing interest in traditional crafts and the associated skills.

It looks like the crafts are back on track again. In her vision statement 'Culture in an Open Society' (March 2018), Minister Ingrid van Engelshoven also made clear that she attaches a great deal of importance to the future of crafts and called for the promotion of new uses for traditional crafts.

With the Crafts Lab we are attempting to put this into practice in concrete form. We believe that the craft-related museums in the Netherlands can make a significant contribution towards 'safeguarding' traditional crafts\* by facilitating the Crafts Lab.



\*Paper Making' Crafts Lab

## The development of new (design) products is not the preliminary aim of the Crafts Lab

## Methodology

The development of new (design) products is not the preliminary aim of the Crafts Lab. The Crafts Lab is geared towards research, positioning itself at the very beginning, the source of the creative process. This is the point at which a subconscious interest is awoken; the initial spark of an idea is kindled without any values or concepts being attached to it. A process that stirs up mutual interest and stimulates the sharing of knowledge. The Crafts Lab is a methodology for organising collaboration and interaction between various professional groups and training institutes whose paths would not ordinarily cross in their current practice, and who also sometimes no longer understand one another, as their use of language, the technical jargon, only seems to be aimed at their own specialist field and no longer reaches related fields. This is in spite of the fact that these different professional groups could learn a huge amount from each other within a research and design process.

In academic literature much attention is paid to the phenomenon of creativity: a complex term that can be interpreted in a multitude of ways. The most acceptable definition of it is currently: the purposeful production of something new. Surrounding the creative process there are perhaps a number of myths that would lead you to believe that this aspect of purposefulness should be avoided.

Nevertheless, if you want to develop a methodology, a format and its content are of essential importance. Capturing the creative process in a diagram may appear to puncture the romantic myth of inspiration. However, each phase of the creative process has its own pitfalls and obstacles. For the participants in a Crafts Lab, the creative process is like going for a hike without a map. They work together in the Lab

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to explore an area that is unfamiliar to them, but by questioning each other they uncover a process, a usable route, a map. There are, however, four different perspectives for approaching and describing the creative process. These are:

### Qualities

The qualities a creative person needs to ensure a creative process runs smoothly are examined.

### Ingredients

Models have been developed for creative processes in which all elements or participants are described in relation to one another.

### Stages

An artist does not always follow the same process. He or she grows and goes through different stages in his or her artistry.

### Phases

In addition to specific ingredients, a creative process also always includes a time aspect. When is what done within a creative process? We call these the phases of a creative process.



'Frisian Woodcarving' Crafts Lab

ent order during the process. However, if we nevertheless want to use the model as an explanatory basis, we can say that Step 1 of the Crafts Lab's methodology, as we employed it in our pilot, covers phase 1 to (at the most) phase 7 of the creative production model.

Phase 7 of the creative production model is the moment in a creative process at which it narrows. In this phase it is suddenly possible to consider new ideas in a conceptual framework, one next to another and describe their different requirements to be satisfactory.

Phase 7 therefore, already forms the prelude to a more definitive development and detailing of a brandnew idea or format. Phases 8 to 11 of the creative production process form Step 2 within the Crafts Lab's methodology.

See the diagram of the creative production model at the bottom of this page.

For the Crafts Lab we have taken Nirav Christophe's more detailed 'creative production model' from 2006 as a basis. Within this model various aspects of an investigation by different collaborative participants can be conducted at the same time, resulting in a stimulating group dynamic within a Lab.

This is not a linear model; the different phases can also be repeated or performed in a differ-

## Crafts Lab in brief

The Crafts Lab is an initiative of the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage. As a non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Centre is an inde-

## Creative production model

Nirav Christophe, 2006

phase 1	phase 2	phase 3	phase 4	phase 5	phase 6	phase 7	phase 8	phase 9	phase 10	phase 11
sensation	realisation	preparation	saturation	frustration	incubation	intuition	illumination	evaluation	verification	acceleration
initial meeting and familiarisation with the participant team		explanation and exploration		working experimentally		sensing ideas	initial meeting and familiarisation with the participant team		explanation and exploration	
Step 2 starts out with a summary of the assumptions and new ideas of Step 1						Developing ideas, testing ideas, final adjustment				

# Background information

pendent part of the Holland Open Air Museum. The main task of the Centre is implementing the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003: ratified in the Netherlands in 2012). Craftsmanship, more particular the skills and the knowledge, is a manifestation of intangible cultural heritage.

An important characteristic of intangible cultural heritage is that it evolves over time and as it passes through the generations, each generation makes the cultural heritage their own, by giving new meanings to it. The practitioners of intangible cultural heritage are at the heart of the 2003 UNESCO Convention and for this reason it is also the craftspeople who are at the heart of the Crafts Lab.

Via the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands the Centre maintains a great deal of contact with craftspeople and has noticed that there is a real need for direct support when it comes to securing the future of (safeguarding) their crafts.

The Crafts Lab's aim is to look for ways to make the (traditional) knowledge and skills from crafts relevant to the present time. Innovation is the means and the Crafts Lab provides the methodology.

## What does the Crafts Lab do?

Museums connect craftspeople, vocational education students and artists/designers within the Crafts Lab to promote cross links.

The Lab aims to bring the different links in the production process together so they can develop innovative ideas in collaboration. This takes place through the exchange of knowledge during a concentrated working period.

## Form and duration

The Crafts Lab is a hybrid method between a workshop and a thinktank.

The Labs consist out of 8 to 12 weekly meetings, organised and facilitated by museums. Each Lab involves three to five participants, including the craftsman or craftswoman, each of

whom brings their own knowledge and expertise as a starting point. The focus is placed primarily on encouraging exchange, the transfer of knowledge, experimentation and the investigation of traditional production methods through the organisation of new partnerships. In each case, the initial meeting at which participants can get to know one another takes place at the museum organising the project. In consultation with the museum, the participants in the Lab select a suitable location that works best for them: this may alternate between the museum, the craftsperson's workshop, the artist's/designer's studio, a participating training institute or somewhere else. The space must, however, be suitable for the craft in question to be practised freely.

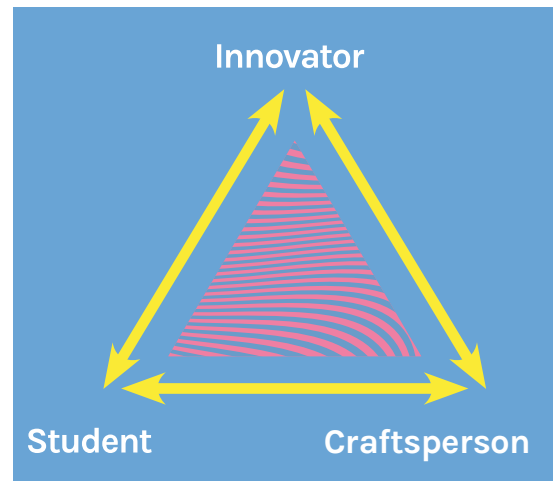
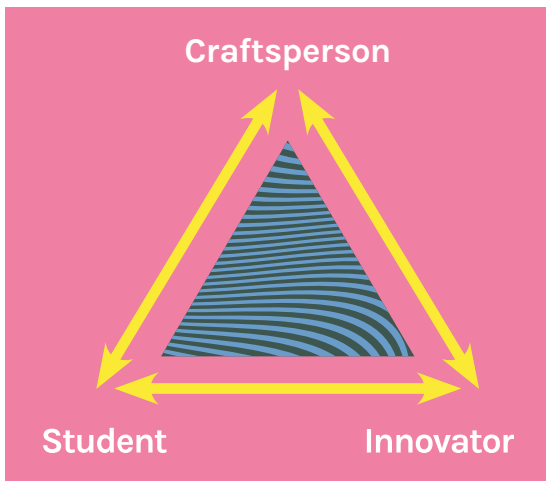
## Lab partners

The craftspeople who are striving to safeguard their craft are the starting point for each Lab. During the course of each Lab the participants focus on one craft and work on a specific aspect of how to give that craft a future. Suitable Lab partners are sought depending on what the craftsman or craftswoman wants to look at. The aim is for at least one student from a training institute and one innovator (in Step 1 this is an artist/designer) to participate in each Lab.

The triangular diagram showing the craftsperson, student and innovator or, more precisely, the dynamic exchange between these three people, is the starting point for the Crafts Lab model.

This model, based on the creative production model, has been divided into two steps\*. Step 1 has in turn been divided into six phases, which in practice overlap with one another. At the start of Step 1, during the first two phases, the craftsperson is at the top of the triangular diagram. He or she takes the lead by teaching the other Lab participants the basic skills and techniques of his or her craft. In the third and fourth phases of Step 1 the other participants set to work with this basic knowledge. By practising and trying things out, the initial questions to be investigated arise naturally. In the fifth and sixth phase the innovators get a sense of what the possibilities they envisage for the craft might be, but cannot clarify what

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these exactly are at this stage.

Phase 7 signifies the moment of shift in the Crafts Lab. This is the phase in which the innovators take over the lead from the craftsperson. The questions “Who? What? Why?”, which were a source of frustration initially, have been crystallised: “You only see it when you know!” i.e.: “To ask a question is to answer it”.

In Step 2 of the Crafts Lab the roles of the participants change. The guidance of the process has now passed on to the innovator and the craftsperson accompanies the participants in their joint search for innovative possibilities.

## Tangible and intangible cultural heritage

Many forms of intangible cultural heritage are closely associated with objects, buildings and/or places. Tangible and intangible cultural heritage are inextricably linked. This is made clear in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Con-

**Heritage bearers have a need for collaboration with museums, as museums can support them effectively with the safeguarding of intangible heritage**

## Museums can broaden their role as custodians of our cultural heritage

vention talks about intangible heritage ‘as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith.’ Take, for example, the craft of the miller: the miller would not be able to practise his craft without a mill to work in. The costumes worn for the Dutch Carnival festival are another example, as are the crosses and processional canopies used in religious processions. The place where intangible cultural heritage takes place is also important. For example, a parade needs spaces where things can be built, as well as a parade route. When historic objects are used, in a procession for example, museums often prove to be essential partners. The role played by Museum Catharijneconvent in safeguarding the tangible cultural heritage associated with the tradition of St Martin’s Day is a good example of this.

From the point of view of heritage bearers (the practitioners and makers) there is a need for collaboration with museums, as museums can support them effectively with the safeguarding of intangible heritage. More than that, museums can become part of the cultural heritage communities.

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The Zeeuws Museum, for example, brings traditional costume makers and experts together with designers so that they can inspire each other to keep this heritage alive.

For museums, activities relating to intangible cultural heritage present an excellent opportunity to respond to the constant changes in society, e.g. with regard to social issues such as diversity. By working together with heritage bearers (e.g. keepers, custodians and practitioners of intangible cultural heritage), museums can bring together different people and consequently forge a direct connection with the makers and keepers of cultural heritage. In addition, museums gain an additional function as a place for meeting and exchange.

## Caring for cultural heritage

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage are closely linked. Objects are made and traditional craftsmanship is needed for this. Monuments, cultural landscapes and collections are the result of first-rate knowledge and skills, which in some cases, have been passed down through generations. Objects and places often play a central role in traditions in all kinds of ways. It is about what the heritage means to people and the meaning they assign to it. This applies to tangible as well to intangible cultural heritage. And, in both cases, caring for the heritage is of crucial importance, if it is to be passed on, and if it is to function in the dynamic society as we live in nowadays.

Traditions die out if they are not observed and objects lose their significance if we neglect them. The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands focuses on caring for our tangible cultural heritage. This is interlinked with intangible cultural heritage in all kinds of ways, from the craft of the miller to Marian pilgrimages and from restoration to use. Preservation can therefore only be considered in the context of a combination of the two. The form is not possible without the content and vice versa. Close collaboration with the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage is necessary and worthwhile if our care for cultural heritage is to grow successfully with the dynamics of our society.

Arjen Kok, senior researcher at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (in: *Immaterieel Erfgoed als proeftuin van een mondialiserende samenleving - Kennisagenda 2017-2020*)

The Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage believes the methodology of the Crafts Lab can provide an important stimulus for actively exploring how crafts can be 'safeguarded'.

## Safeguarding

It is important firstly to define the concept of 'safeguarding' clearly, as safeguarding is more than just conserving and transferring knowledge. When it comes to intangible cultural heritage safeguarding means protecting, but also providing space and opportunities for change, progress and development. Intangible cultural heritage is always living heritage; something that changes under the influence of social and cultural dynamics. If we want to keep our intangible cultural heritage alive, such change can even be regarded as a key prerequisite. Safeguarding therefore means giving a future to (the function of) intangible cultural heritage.

Museum conservation is one aspect of safeguarding, but knowledge transfer, the dynamics of change and innovation could also form part of museum policy.

If museums were to include these tasks in their remit, they could expand their role as custodians of our heritage. By opening their doors, not only to regular visitors but also to current social developments, they change the role of the museum. Accepting this role would undeniably allow museums to keep pace better with the spirit of the times. As a 'testing ground' they would be fulfilling an important task at the heart of society.



'Frisian Woodcarving' Crafts Lab



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## Objects from the museum repository can be a starting point for a Lab

### The museum as a Lab

Museums play an important role in safeguarding our heritage. They are experts when it comes to preserving valuable objects. But preservation is only one aspect of safeguarding, the other two are knowledge transfer and innovation. Objects from the museum repository can be the starting point of a Lab. In this way, the collection is brought into the current era and brought up to date. Furthermore, by organising a Crafts Lab, the museum can position itself as a breeding ground, as a place where various target groups that you want to connect to as a cultural organisation, can meet and exchange knowledge. A Crafts Lab can therefore serve a number of primary objectives within a museum.

## Each craftsperson produces unique, handmade products



'Paper Making' Crafts Lab

### Objectives

The Crafts Lab creates links between craftspeople, vocational education students and artists/designers to promote cross-fertilisation. It aims to bring the different links in the production process together to encourage the exchange of knowledge and innovation during an intensive working period.

The central link within the Crafts Lab is the craftsperson him/herself. Craftspeople make up the core and without them a traditional craft production process is impossible. However, to guarantee that that process can be continued in the long term, we need training institutes that offer their students the chance to become proficient in a craft and absorb the specialist knowledge that craftspeople have built up.

The second link therefore comprises committed training institutes and young craftspeople; they are essential if crafts are to survive in the longer term. Without them these crafts have no future.

The third link in this chain is made up of innovators. In Step 1 these innovators are usually artists/designers: people who have a natural ability to think outside conventions, but who have respect for craftsmanship and, above all, recognise its added value and the wealth of possibilities it offers.

After all, to achieve innovation in relation to a craft, you need sparring partners who are keen to think along with you, but who are also willing and able to offer differing perspectives. Each Lab therefore looks for sparring partners who are prepared to challenge and ask 'difficult' questions. In Step 2 marketers can also be included in the chain in the place of artists/designers.

## Each Lab therefore looks for sparring partners who are prepared to challenge and ask 'difficult' questions

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These three links form a common production chain that is capable of maintaining itself and, above all, rejuvenating itself with an eye to the future. By connecting these three links, it is possible to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and create an environment of inspiration and innovation, and that is what the Lab aims to do.

## One Lab, five results

Besides safeguarding the future of the craft by setting up the Lab, the participants also have an opportunity to achieve individual objectives. Vocational education students learn from the design methods employed by artists/designers or the strategies that marketers develop to promote products. Artists/designers in turn learn a great deal from the technical approach and knowledge of materials that the students and craftspeople bring to the Lab.

**1** As the initiator of the Lab, the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage expects knowledge and expertise to be secured and hopes the Lab will serve as a springboard for innovation in the area of crafts.

**2** Participating craftspeople can learn from the conceptual way that artists/designers (the innovators) look upon things. Furthermore, participating in a Lab that has been organised by a museum feels like a form of support and promotion of their craft to the craftspeople involved. And because they feel supported, they are more inclined to step out of their comfort zone.

**3** The craft related technical educations expect to acquire in-depth knowledge and expertise associated with crafts and seek contact with (craft) product designers.

**4** Artists/designers expect to learn from the craftspeople about materials and their techniques and about questioning techniques and materials, as well as the work in progress.

**5** Craft-related museums in the Netherlands can adopt the active role that the Holland Open Air Museum and the Dutch Centre for In-

tangible Cultural Heritage have taken in relation to the Crafts Lab, as a format for examining and documenting the changing role of museums.

## Participants

Before a museum takes on the organisation of a Crafts Lab, it must be aware that the craft world is just as richly diverse as the rest of the cultural world. Each craftspeople produces unique, handmade products.

Craftspeople know their own value, but they are looking for appreciation of their knowledge and skills. When putting together a team of participants for a Crafts Lab, respect and a willingness to exchange knowledge are essential to achieve a working partnership. Together, the participants form a research team. Mutual interest and complementary qualities and/or a complementary vision are the basis for assembling a good Crafts Lab team.

The museum that wants to organise a Crafts Lab must determine, in consultation with the craftspeople, which aspects of the craft in question are to be investigated within the Crafts Lab. Once this has been clarified, it is possible to consider what kind of an artist/designer is needed to investigate this specific aspect. From there on, it will be a natural development finding vocational students to link up.



'Paper Cutting' Crafts Lab

# Background information

## Craftspeople

What is a craft? Although there is no readily available definition of a craft there are a number of clear criteria that make a craft and the resulting products distinctive:

- A craftspeople is able to transform a raw material into a finished product;
- A craft has a historical and cultural basis;
- A craft is something you learn by repeated practice. By repeating the action, you develop muscle memory. It is often claimed that it takes 10,000 hours to learn a craft, which equates to five years of work (Richard Sennet, *The Craftsman*, 2008);
- A craft involves working with your head, heart and hands;
- Craft products adapt to the demands and circumstances of the consumer/market;
- A craft product contains traces of the maker's hand, as every product is unique;
- Craft takes time. Craft products are made with care and attention;
- The craft forms the basis of every creative process.

## Vocational education students

Students from the craft related technical educations become acquainted with the various aspects of a craft. By investigating the materials and techniques from a conceptual perspective, which is characteristic of artists/designers, the students learn the basic skills of the craft. They question both the craftspeople and the artist/designer.

With regard to knowledge of materials and techniques, the student is only at the beginning of his/her career, but has usually had a better introduction to this area of knowledge than young artists and designers. In the production chain, that the Crafts Lab is aiming to achieve, it is the craftspeople who are fully at ease with the materials, the techniques and

the skills.

## Artists

Artists arrange visual aspects (colour, form, space, texture/structure, organisation and composition, light/shade, material) until these create any meaning (a narrative) to them.

## Designers

Designers arrange visual aspects until these create some kind of practical value in terms of usability or visual signalling etc.

In daily practice, there is no longer a big difference between artists and designers. The boundaries between these two specialist areas have been broken down over the past few decades as a result of interdisciplinary projects and digital media. In current art education, however, less and less attention is being paid to coping with materials and techniques, that is to say the craft side of the arts, the making. Knowledge of techniques, skills and the characteristics and expression of materials has been pushed into the background in art education. As a consequence, visual aspects are increasingly ordered on the basis of conceptual principles.



'Chair Matting' Crafts Lab

# Guide

Innovation requires research, but starts with the exchange of knowledge. Innovation is a dialogue, an interaction and a cross-fertilisation between different disciplines and areas of expertise. It is a process in which perspectives, traditional craft techniques and technical developments are combined to create new insights. To organise a sustainable production chain and bring about an innovation in a craft, all participants of a Lab, i.e. the craftspeople, the vocational education students and the artists/designers, are essential.

## Crafts Lab checklist

When setting up a Crafts Lab, a museum needs to ask the following questions:

### 1 Which craft is in keeping with the museum's profile?

Reference points here may include the museum's objectives, the wider (craft-related) collection or specific parts of the collection that are not often displayed at present, but which nevertheless have an interesting history.

### 2 Which craftspeople could be linked to this project/are willing to participate in a Lab?

Often a museum that holds a collection relating to a certain craft will already be in contact with practitioners of that craft. In addition, the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage now has contacts with a large number of craftspeople in the Netherlands through the Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Netherlands (and, more widely, the Network around this). If required, the Centre will be happy to advise and provide support when it comes to selecting craftspeople.

### 3 What aspect(s) of the craft should the research focus on?

Possible aspects to research include: materials, techniques, product form, product identity and, at a later stage, product placement. Starting with an interview with the craftspeople, possibly followed by a second interview, allows the starting points for the Lab to be clearly defined from the outset. It may be that a project naturally shifts its focus to another subject or aspect, and it should be allowed to do so, but it is interesting to monitor and archive the various steps taken and developments made within the Lab.

To monitor the four Labs from the pilot (Chair Mating, Paper Making, Frisian Woodcarving, Paper Cutting), these were all recorded in the form of photographs and films. As part of the Lab all participants were interviewed for the films:

**Frisian Woodcarving** <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/nl/ambachtenlabfrieshoutsnijwerk>

**Paper Making** <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/nl/Ambachtenlabpapierknipkunst>

**Chair Caning** <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/nl/ambachtenlabstoelenmatten>

**Paper Cutting** <https://www.immaterieelerfgoed.nl/nl/Ambachtenlabpapierknipkunst>

### 4 Which artists/designers can participate in a Lab?

In response to the answers provided by the craftspeople, as an organiser you can scout out which artist/designer could participate in the Lab concerned. Consider the extent of a potential participant's interest in the craft and whether he or she is open to a (critical) dialogue and working collaboratively. The aim is to initiate a joint research & development project, a cross-fertilisation and the exchange of knowledge. He or she must be able to reflect respectfully on the various aspects of the craft and use these reflections as new starting points in different phases of the research.

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## 5 Which vocational education training institutes can participate in a Lab?

A strict annual schedule is employed for each training institute. In practice, there are only deviations from the schedule if the party making the request resolves or handles all the organisational issues. From the pilots the Centre has learned that the request made to a training institute must be very specific. Be aware that the travel distance and the associated travel time is an important factor for students. For the training institutes themselves the schedule, the day of the week and time of day, the course module and the sequence of the meetings can be determining factors when deciding whether or not to take part. It is therefore a good idea to look in your own region initially both for the craftspeople and for potential participants and training institutes. It is easier to make connections in this case and, with an eye to the future, it is also easier to maintain these relationships. In the first instance, the focus is on senior secondary vocational education training institutes, but for some crafts it would also be possible to consider higher vocational education training institutes.

## 6 What is the museum's role as the host of a Crafts Lab?

A museum 'hosts' the Crafts Lab, but the Lab does not have to physically take place at the organising museum. Invite the participants to the museum for the first session, brief them together, show them around, outline the background to the collection's history and explain the objectives of the Lab. The requirements in terms of the location of a Lab depend partly on

**The several national Inventories of Intangible Cultural Heritage can support Museums in their search for contact with craftspeople**

the partners within that Lab. Where are they coming from? Travel time and accessibility are important factors here. What is a suitable location to work in for the craft in question?

Each craft has its own specific requirements with regard to the place of work. By no means all activities can be carried out in a museum environment. Take this into account when looking for a suitable location to work in. If vocational education students are taking part, the training institute concerned could prove to be a good location.

## 7 How is a Lab monitored and archived?

The Crafts Lab has the character of both a workshop and a thinktank, in which all participants play an active part. This means a private place is needed for the work, one where the participants can experiment freely without being disturbed by the public. The Crafts Lab therefore does not have an immediate public function. How can you nonetheless involve interested parties (museum visitors and other museum colleagues) in the progress of a Lab and give them an insight into a design process? In the case of the four pilot Labs at the Holland Open Air Museum individual film clips were made in which the participants were briefly interviewed about what was going on in the Lab. These clips were published on various social media and on the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage's website. In addition, a photographic report was produced for each Lab, placing the emphasis on the interaction between the participants. The film clips and photographic report could also form part of a final presentation (exhibition) or other publicity events and subsequently be incorporated into the museum archive. Discuss the options for communicating about the Lab beforehand with the participants, particularly if they want to publicise their activities themselves on social media, for example.

# Guide

## 8 Present a Lab or not?

The presentation of a Lab within a museum can serve a number of purposes. Firstly, a museum can use a Crafts Lab to further develop its social role as a place for the development and transfer of knowledge. Preservation and presenting objects is just one side of the museological coin. Modern knowledge transfer takes the form of a dialogue – it is a two-way process. If you manage to bring about this exchange within a museum, you maintain a different kind of relationship with your visitors and your collection. Objects from the collection produced using traditional crafts may be the subject of a Crafts Lab. In this way you are linking these parts of the collection to the present day, which may be a trigger for starting such a dialogue. In addition, a museum can give the craft a platform by presenting developments within the Lab and dedicating symposiums and seminars to it. Such an event brings practitioners, stakeholders and interested parties into contact with each other. In this way the museum also acquires a function as a platform that allows these parties to get to know each other and exchange knowledge.

### A Crafts Lab allows you to link parts of your collection to the present day

The results of Step 1 of the Crafts Lab are primarily experiments with different approaches and material samples, in some cases an early model or a rare prototype. Step 1 of the Crafts Lab (phases 1-6) lifts the lid of the creative production process, but in terms of tangible results is too limited for an exhibition.

The rudimentary measures taken in Step 1 can, however, provide a basis for discussions with the curators (internally within the museum) and the participants' peers (externally). A presentation covering several successive Labs provides the perfect opportunity to bring these different stakeholders together: craftspeople, artists, designers, students and curators.

## 9 Who supervises a Lab and how?

A Crafts Lab can be launched relatively easily by a person who is at the heart of the museum organisation and familiar with the various facets of the museum's policy. The interview with the craftsperson in question and the briefing with the other participants can be conducted by this central person. Scouting and selection of the other participants are the responsibility of the designated supervisor. Placemaking within the museum can be handled by several individuals from the museum organisation in consultation with each other (including an education or communication employee, for example). The above depends in part on the organisation's make-up.

## 10 What is the duration of a Lab?

### Step 1 of the Crafts Lab

The participants meet 8-12 times over a working period of 8-12 weeks. In the pilot, six hours were scheduled for each meeting. Due to the intensive nature of the collaboration, this proved to be more than enough. As some crafts are more labour-intensive than others, an adapted schedule may be necessary in some cases.

Step 1 comprises the launch phase of the joint investigation. During the initial meetings the craftsperson still functions in the role of a teacher. He or she explains the basic principles of the craft and teaches the relevant skills. Once it is up and running, the research fans out under the direction of the innovators.



Initial meeting and introduction

# Guide

It is possible that a Crafts Lab will end after Step 1: the potential for innovation has been explored and new ideas may or may not have emerged, but there is no immediate reason to develop these any further. This decision is guided by the vision of the craftsperson him/herself. Documenting and presenting such an outcome of a Lab is also important, of course.

If there is a basis for developing the results further, Step 2 of the Lab begins.

## Step 2 of the Crafts Lab

Step 2 of the Crafts Lab is geared towards developing the previously formulated conceptual ideas and sketch models resulting from Step 1. From this point on (phase 7) the research focuses on how the traditional techniques and skills relate to the new insights acquired. Is the craft capable of generating new forms? Are the traditional techniques still adequate? Do new skills need to evolve as a result of the development set in motion or is there a need to look for other, new material applications? By answering these questions one by one, the participants can take the conceptual ideas from Step 1 and develop them towards realistic goals.

With this in mind, in Step 2 a new innovator is also invited to participate in the Lab. This is a creative marketer who can examine the different phases of product development with the participants to ensure the craft production chain is also economically sustainable and profitable.

## 11 What are the costs of a Crafts Lab?



Working experimentally

The Crafts Lab format is based on the persons taking part (mostly self employed persons) being paid to participate. In the pilot an amount of € 37.50 per hour excl. VAT was taken as a basis. There is a fixed amount set aside for materials, while variable costs, such as a travel allowance for each participant, also need to be included. It is also advisable to record each Lab in some way, by means of film or photographs. Both of these media are compatible with any media strategy an organisation employs. In the pilot a sum of € 5,000 was set aside for this (film + photography) for each Lab. In total, the costs for Step 1 of the Crafts Lab amount to approximately € 15,000 incl. VAT.

The budget for Step 2 of the Crafts Lab is more difficult to capture in such a calculation model. Step 2 covers phases 7 to 11 of the creative production model. During this step the team of participants works on further developing the findings resulting from Step 1 of the Lab.

This may cover test installations, prototypes, material samples, teaching method, etc. The number of hours needed for this cannot be specified in advance.

In Step 2 the composition of the team of participants in the Crafts Lab may change. The craftsperson will remain the same, of course, but a marketer may now be added, for example. It is possible to estimate how many hours the team of participants will need in Step 2 on the basis of a questionnaire. The questions are:

- What aspects of Step 1 do we want to develop further in Step 2?
- Who can support us at this particular stage and who can help us out on this?
- Which materials and techniques do we need?

**All participants sign this agreement, which sets out the intentions and aims of the Crafts Lab in question**

# Guide

## 12 How are the agreements on a Crafts Lab documented?

To give a Crafts Lab a legal basis, the Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage has had a (model) collaboration agreement drawn up. All participants sign this agreement, which sets out the intentions and aims of the Crafts Lab in question. It also documents the rights and obligations of the participants, what the collaboration covers and the proprietary rights to the ideas and proposals that emerge from the collaboration. The organising museum also signs the agreement, as it is one of the participants in the Lab. The museum waives ownership of the ideas or proposals that result from the Lab, in whatever form. In addition to the collaboration agreement, the organising museum also has an engagement agreement for each participant. This sets out the conditions for participating in a Lab, the payment that each participant can claim and the travel allowance. Both agreements form part of this handbook (appendices).

## 13 What are the considerations in the area of design and communication?

The Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage has developed the Crafts Lab as a way of supporting craftspeople in their desire to carry out research and development. Innovation is the only way to further develop the knowledge of craftspeople and safeguard it for the future. When the Crafts Lab was launched the graphic design studio Ontwerphaven came up with a design. It is important for the Lab to have its own image, separate from that of the Centre and the Holland Open Air Museum.

The idea behind the design is that a craft is dynamic and can open up unexpected insights and perspectives. This design forms an integral part of the Crafts Lab; templates for banners, flyers, etc. have been appended in various sizes. The intention is that each museum participating within the Crafts Lab will use the same design in its publicity materials relating to the Crafts Lab, both in digital and print form.

This has been laid down in the licence agreement. Participating museums are free to integrate these templates, etc. with their own visual identity.

## 14 What is the licence?

The Centre regards the methodology described in the Crafts Lab Handbook (version 1.0) as one that can be developed further in collaboration with other museums. As far as possible, the methodology (version 1.0) will provide the basis for the Craft Lab to be organised, taking regional differences and the specific prerequisites associated with certain traditional techniques into account.

We, as the founders of this method, are always keen to be informed about the progress of your Lab and, in particular, any specific developments.

## 15 Who can provide more information?

Museums that are interested in organising a Crafts Lab can contact Frank Hemeltjen, the Crafts Lab coordinator at the Centre, for additional information at:

[f.hemeltjen@immaterieelerfgoed.nl](mailto:f.hemeltjen@immaterieelerfgoed.nl)



# Guide



Crafts Lab Paper Cutting



Crafts Lab Paper Making



Crafts Lab Frisian Woodcarving



Example presentation Crafts Lab Chair Caning

## Guide

## Example calculation for Step 1 of a Crafts Lab

	number	6-hour meetings	hours/km	subtotals		
FIXED COSTS		preparation (internal)	8 weeks/40 hours	320	tbd	
		participants	3	3 pers./6 hours/ 8 meetings	144	5,400.00
		payment for materials		lab-dependent		500.00
		studio hire	6x	lab-dependent	150 per part.	900.00
		photography	2x	2 meetings		850.00
		film	6x	5x social media items/1 film		4,200.00
					11,850.00	€11,850.00
TRAVEL COSTS			travel costs 0.19/km			
		30 km return		8 x 60 km	480	91.20
		30 km return		8 x 60 km	480	91.20
		30 km return		8 x 60 km	480	91.20
		student travel costs	2	75 pp/month		300.00
					573.60	€ 573.60
					excl. VAT	€12,423.60
					21% VAT	€ 2,608.96
				<b>Total</b>	<b>incl. VAT</b>	<b>€15,032.56</b>

## Example calculation for Step 2 of a Crafts Lab

	number	comment	subtotals			
PRESENTATION		banner design	6	template available	600,00	
		banner printing	6	200 per unit (6 estimated here)	1,200,00	
		exhibition set-up		video screens, plinths	2,000,00	
		invitation design		template available	200,00	
		invitation printing			250,00	
		miscellaneous			500,00	
					excl. VAT	€ 4,750,00
					21% VAT	€ 997,50
				<b>Total</b>	<b>incl. VAT</b>	<b>€ 5,747,50</b>

## Acknowledgements

Crafts Lab Handbook, version 1.0

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Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage

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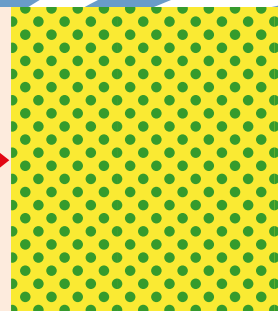
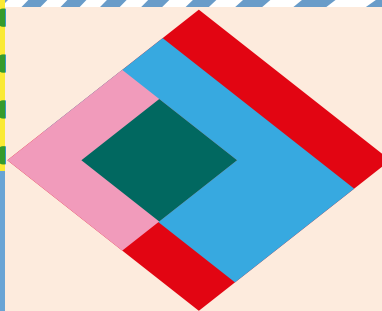
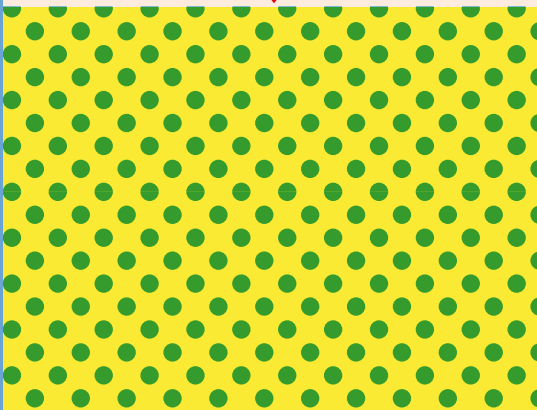
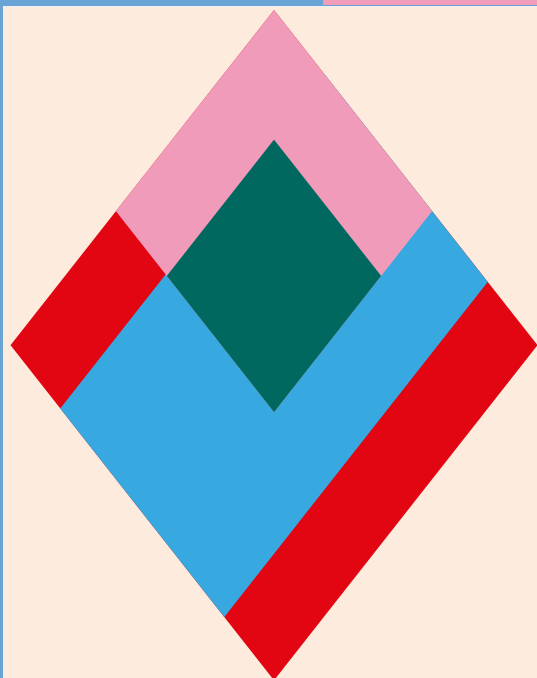
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