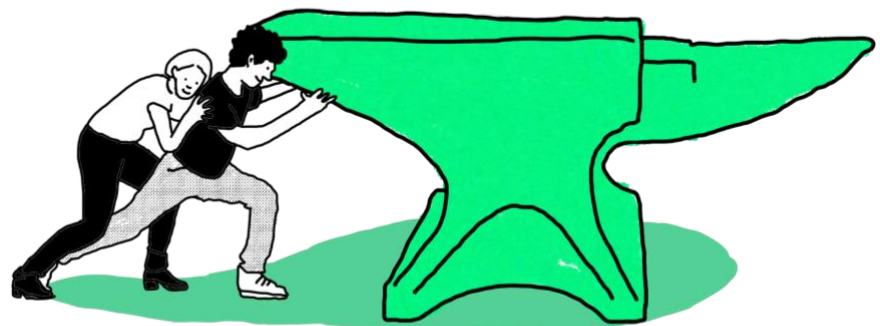




Heritage in EuroPe: new tecHnologies in crAft for
prEServing and innovaTing fUtureS

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**Report for policymakers with
strategies for sustainable craft
ecosystem management and heritage
preservation**



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About HEPHAESTUS

Working across the **regional craft ecosystems** of **Bassano del Grappa (IT)**, **Bornholm (DK)**, **Dals Långed (SE)**, and **Venice (IT)**, the overarching ambition of HEPHAESTUS is *to bring together cutting-edge technologies with traditional craft to co-create solutions in the form of a suite of tools, methodologies, and business models to make the future of European craft ecosystems socially, culturally, environmentally, and economically sustainable*. HEPHAESTUS will **test and evaluate solutions** co-created across the four regional craft ecosystems within a “**Future of Craft**” **Green Living Lab** situated in Bornholm, a Danish Island and regional municipality given the title of World Craft Region. Ultimately, the project sets out to create a **sustainable network** (especially including regional realities) of heritage sites, cultural and creative sectors, institutions, universities, local, regional and national authorities, enterprises, and other relevant stakeholders engaged in preservation of craft heritage that will take the project’s results, further adapt and deploy them in a broader range of craft ecosystems, and ensure a long- lasting legacy of the HEPHAESTUS project. The work of HEPHAESTUS is organized around six work packages, each responsible for one specific objective related to the overarching ambition, namely:

Objective 1: Develop new **sustainable business models** for the craft sectors.

Objective 2: Combine **cutting-edge technologies** with craft materials and processes to research and develop new applications and solutions for the digitisation and innovation of the craft sector to improve sustainability and social innovation.

Objective 3: Explore visions for the role of **craft in the future**, integrating emerging technologies and contributing to the circular economy, by engaging craft communities in a participatory ideation process.

Objective 4: Develop a **lifelong learning methodology** and a set of innovative curricula to equip craft-makers with diverse skillsets for innovation.

Objective 5: Establish a **Green Living Lab** for testing the HEPHAESTUS innovations.

Objective 6: To design and operationalise a **bespoke dissemination, communication, and exploitation** strategy.

To achieve these objectives, the consortium includes prominent universities, business schools and a private organization selected for their proven knowledge and expertise on craft heritage, craft materials, and the use of digital technologies and cutting-edge technologies in craft, the proposed innovative and original contributions as well as their trustworthiness. A unique value-added brought to the consortium is represented also by the group of third parties, including craft makers and craft associations, as well as Museums and Municipality representatives, from each of the four regional ecosystems.

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1. Executive Summary

This report illustrates the methodology developed within the Hephaestus project to research and promote craft ecosystem management and heritage preservation in Europe through policymaking. It does so by outlining the complex historical evolution of craft, as both a concept and a practice, and discussing the implications on the relationship between craft and other sectors. It then describes the state-of-the-art research on craft policy and addresses existing policy gaps, by considering current European policies on craft. Additionally, it presents the emerging insights from the fieldwork activities conducted within the Hephaestus project, including relevant themes for policy interventions. Finally, it presents the methodological guidelines that will inform historical analysis and participatory activities for the development of policy interventions.

Disclaimer

This document reflects only the author's view, and the European Commission is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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HEPHAESTUS project ID 101095123 is funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

2. Purpose and structure of the report

In order to provide policy suggestions on how to support selected traditional and authentic craft at risk of disappearing, we propose an iterative approach, departing from an analysis



of the historical changes in the role of craft, and their relationship with other sectors in the selected ecosystems.

The current version of this deliverable refers to the first stage of this approach (Plan), as presented in Figure 1. As such, it provides the theoretical (Section 3) and empirical (Section 4) basis for the development of the research activities that will lead to the design and development of **research publications** and related **policy suggestions**. Moreover, it introduces the **working definition of craft** and proposed **methodological guidelines** (Section 5) for the future development of the deliverable.

A subsequent version (In month 36 of the project) will report on the results of development of a **perspective on craft history**, as the theoretical baseline for the analysis of the historical changes of the role of craft. Moreover, it will present the results of workshops with craft-makers and other stakeholders conducted to clarify and discuss the most relevant areas for policy intervention within and across the four Hephaestus craft ecosystems.

The final version (published in **M48**) will report the results of the analysis of the four craft ecosystems based on the historical perspective defined. Finally, it will provide policy suggestions for craft preservation and support.

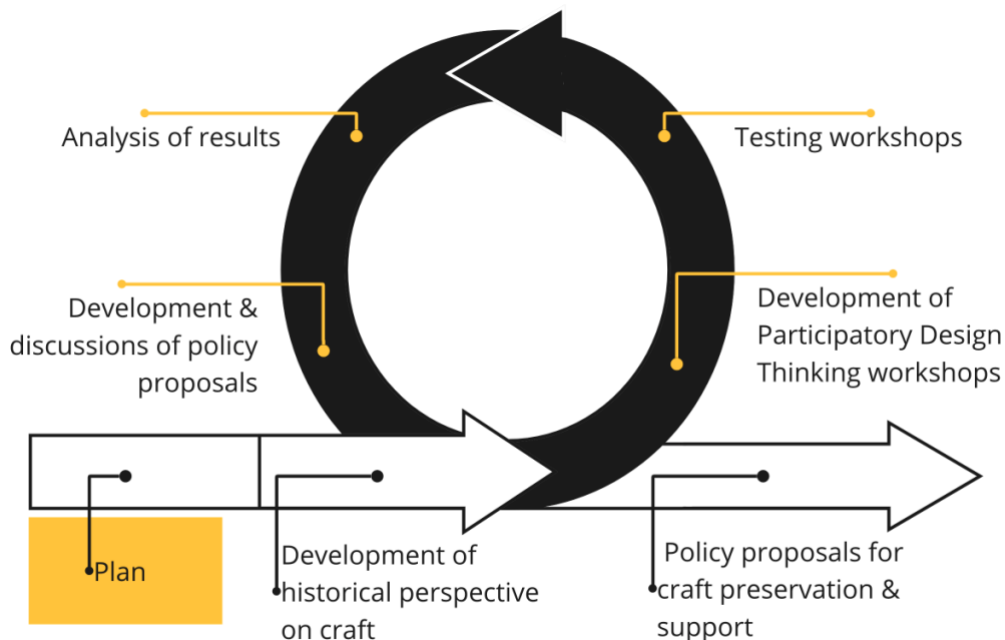


Figure 1 - Hephaestus iterative process for the development of policy proposals

3. Towards policies for craft ecosystem management and heritage preservation: an introduction

3.1 Historical changes in the role of craft

The word “*craft*” evokes, in most cases, a mental association with the figure of a craft-maker working on some object with his hands. This association is, at times, nostalgic and reminiscent of a “good life”.

Craft is one of those activities that has been present in societies since prehistoric men started to **create simple objects through the manipulation** of wood and stones, and across time, as we will include in the next versions of the deliverables, it has acquired a multitude of specializations and multiple meanings.

But, within the several meanings the word “craft” presents today, those that are mostly used refer to the capacity to do something skillfully or perform actions and endeavors that require practice and training. However, since craft has been only recently an emerging academic field, the various definitions are scattered and not systematized. We intend to shed light on these in this deliverable.

The first “aulic” representation of craft can be found in the VII century BC, when Homer dedicated a hymn to **Hephæstus**, who taught the men glorious crafts, and whose gift permitted human beings to overcome their lives in caves to move into built and comfortable houses. The Greek word for craft is **tekhnē**, which Cooper (1993) explains as “the art of making present” that “brings a required object or event present to the human senses and so makes it available for use and understanding” (p.279); the individual who had tekhnē, the craftsman, was called a **demiurgos**. The term is a composed noun of the words **demios** (belonging to people) and **ergon** (work). In ancient Greece, a demiurgos represented a free man who, due to his ability to work through the use of his mind and his hands, was at the center of civic life (Sennett, 2008).

Through history, the **words to indicate and define makers/craft changed in meanings and form**, depending on social, cultural, economic, and geographical contexts. The word for tekhnē is translated in ancient Latin as “ars”, and the same word, with the same meaning, passed to the ancient French language.

The term “craft”, that have its origins in the Old German *kraft* and Frisian *kreft*, originally meant strength, power, and might. Only after the Norman invasion of England (1066) the word started to acquire the same meanings of the French *ars* : method, technique, skill, craftsmanship, trade, or profession, academic discipline, and it was also related to the liberal



or fine arts. Other words indicating craft are the Italian *artigianato*, and the German *handwerk*. Together with the terms that define it, the meaning and role of craft changed through history.

During the Middle Ages **craftsmanship was organized and defined** according to the competencies or the material craftsmen worked with. Craftsmen were part of and represented by guilds and corporations, that had the role of market administrators ensuring quality standards, equal prices, fair competition, and best work practices. Typically, craft work was carried out in workshops held and guided by a master, i.e. an experienced craftsman who could hire personnel and have apprentices. The workshop was at the same time a domestic place and a workspace, where all the professionals involved lived and worked together (Sennett, 2008). Labor was divided among the employees and apprentices, who learned by doing every aspect of their particular craft, by assisting and imitating the master. As in ancient Greece, being able to work through the mind and the hands was a valuable and central ability to different kinds of craft, and the modern difference between arts and craft was not felt nor perceived yet. Indeed, both artists and craftsmen were working with the model of workshops and apprentices.

Instead, the **dichotomy of arts and crafts** emerged during the Renaissance, and, while the organization of the workshops remained unchanged, the values associated with the work of craftsmanship changed. The renewed importance of culture after the ten centuries of the Middle Ages. Whilst in the Middle Ages creativity and genius were considered practiced, performed, and expressed through hands, during and after the Renaissance creative and intellectual skills acquired a superior axiological level compared to the technical and manual skills of craft-makers. Nevertheless, craftsmanship and the inherent organization of work were the only means of production until the Eighteenth century when the Industrial Revolution changed the modes of production and consumption, and then craft started to be defined as an opposition to new alternatives of production, rather than the dominant form.

Between 1750 and 1850, the role of craft in society changed again. The rise of factories, mechanized work, and mass production defined the meaning of craft as a politically coherent idea opposed to the new nascent industry, in contrast with the alienation of factories (Adamson, 2013). Craftsmanship was considered a mode of production that is more human compared to the industrial one, which allows one to create through hands while being in contact with the material world. Nevertheless, while the art sector during industrialization changed its role in society, redefining the role of intellectual and conceptual meanings of artworks, craftsmen struggled to keep up with the changes, in particularly during the Second Industrial Revolution, as they struggled to find a market for their products since they were substituted by cheap, standardized, serial, and mass-produced items. On the same premises of opposition to the industry was the idea of craft that emerged from the Arts and Craft movement towards the end of the Nineteenth century inspired by John Ruskin and William Morris: while implicitly craft was distinguished by arts, the idea of it was about traditional and human handwork, recalling a value of making that, with the mechanization of



work, was in danger to be lost. In the 20th Century, and in particular, after the II World War, craft was presented in opposition to (industrial) design, a hype

As of the 21st Century, **craft has re-emerged in society as impactful activity assuming several different roles and meanings**. It appears as tradition, territory, and identity (Toraldo et al., 2019), and part of countries cultural heritage, a set of tacit knowledge difficult to pass to future generations by only words. Craft re-emerged as a pastime or hobby, as well as small and independent forms of entrepreneurship through the DIY phenomenon and the emergence of platforms as Etsy (Kroezen et al., 2020). Furthermore, when craft is defined as doing something skillfully, it becomes the art to do something well, and craft re-emerged as a re-appropriation of the material world (Micelli, 2011) or a mean to re-enchant the world (Suddaby et al., 2017).

Even within Europe, craft activities find different configurations that are the result of historical, social, cultural, and economic events that shaped it, and in some cases, it means the **return to old techniques abandoned after industrialization**, in other cases the same techniques have never disappeared, or have been integrated with the industrial kind of organization, as the implication of wood bent techniques in the industrial production of chairs in Denmark, or the organizations of ceramic factories as Hjorth in Bornholm, where craftsmen worked and produced pieces exported in Europe without becoming a mechanized factory.

Craft has always been with us (Adamson, 2013), and even while struggling it resists, or emerges even where a precedent tradition of craft wasn't present or was perceived as "old peasant society", configuring itself as **an alternative to capitalism**, based on different values from profit maximization, efficiency and accumulation, and pursuing the idea of care, not only for the environment but also for the communities that live around craft. Nonetheless, as the interest in craft re-emerged in the last decades it became **a contested term**. Its malleability and versatility of use in different occasions turned it into an evocative word: craft is an approach to work, not only in terms of practice and organization but also in terms of attitude, and any activity requiring the application of patiently nursed and developed skills turns into a craft, as from surgery to video game development (Westecott, 2013), and where an activity implies to work through hands a violinists and a mechanic wear the cape of craftsmanship (Sennett, 2008).

As the DIY phenomenon emerged in the second half of the last century and even more in the last decades, craft activities started to swing from an idea of hobby or pastime to a form of small entrepreneurship. Craft is, furthermore, associated with **sustainable and natural production** where the adoption of traditional techniques, as opposed to industrial production, started to gain popularity in brewery and wine-making scenarios. This is called neo-craft (Gandini and Gerosa, 2023), and we will present it in more detail in the next paragraph. As craft is heritage and tradition, it also became almost synonymous with identity and territory, where productions are reinforced and infused by the senses of time and space of a given region (Holt and Yamauchi, 2019; Toraldo et al., 2019).



Contemporary **conception and materialization of craft are the result of historical, cultural, economic, social, and geographical implications and events**, therefore the very concept of craft can vary according to the region in the world it is considered, and not only this aspect determines different ideas of craft globally, but also within the European boundaries the practices, the meanings and the stories around it change drastically, where also linguistical differences make the attempt to identify craft a heavy endeavor. Not only craft and its translation might identify different kinds of practices, as it migrated from the English *craft* to the Italian *artigianato*, but nowadays craft pushes its boundaries towards other disciplines, and then craft, design, handwork, and art share elements, working practices, and characteristics through which craft-makers can swing or even feel represented by each term.

3.2 Current relation between craft and other sectors

3.2.1 Implications of the conceptual history of craft on its definition

Consistently with the historical evolution of the concept of craft, in literature, we find that the **craft sector currently lacks a universal and clear definition** (Bell et al., 2018) because it encloses a multifaceted and complex concept that spans a trade or profession, the creation of artifacts, cultural expression, and a process involving skill, craftsmanship, techniques, and materials (Risatti, 2007; Sennet, 2008).

For instance, as suggested by Adamson (2013, p.3), crafting is “the application of skill and material-based knowledge to relatively small-scale production” and its sector offers a wide range of interpretations, such as the concept of ‘**sustainable craft**’ working as a catalyst for sustainable transitions (Väänänen & Pöllänen, 2020) including the emphasis on the **maker movement** (Millard et al., 2018). Others have analyzed the craft sector’s relationship in organizational and work contexts (Bell & Vachhani, 2020). Moreover, the **craft can be found in various spheres**, ranging from winemaking, brewing, and distilling (Kroezen & Heugens, 2019) to craftsmanship found in design and fashion industries, personal luxury items, or machine tool manufacturing (Bonfanti et al., 2018).

These new phenomena and trends termed ‘neo-craft’ industries (Gandini & Gerosa, 2023) have recently emerged in the fashion sector, while somewhat stemming from the rise of craft beer brewing (Fox Miller, 2017). This is primarily due to technological advances which have supported the resurgence of small-scale craft manufacturing enterprises, and changes in lifestyle and ‘coolness’, the demand for different and new forms of work, all pointing towards a post-growth society (Land, 2018). Critics question whether this type of form serves stability and financial security and additionally, further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between ‘neo-craft’ in the context of organizational contexts, work dynamics, labor processes, and job characteristics and outlined by Gandini



& Gerosa (2013). In this relation, the “artisan brand” (Mulholland et al., 2022) has emerged, filling the consumers’ need for authenticity, transparency, sustainability, and exclusivity and it represents slow production, and continuity, inherently spreading awareness of the problem of over-consumption (Ocejo, 2022), which in turn realizes spillover effects of promoting craftsmanship.

However, in Hephaestus we do not engage in problematizing neo-craft nor work with neo-craft makers specifically.

Existing literature on craft does not shed a clear light on its complex conceptual origins related to *kraft*, *ars*, and *tekhnē*, but also inherits the historical tensions characteristic of the art and craft dichotomy. In fact, while some argue for an evident distinction between art and craft practices, others perceive the two as interchangeable and distributed over a continuum. More research is needed on this, and we plan to update the deliverable in month 36 on this topic.

In deliverable D6.2 we identify some of the current struggles, in particular in relation to Markowitz (1994) who argues that societal values and perceptions have historically elevated art over craft, resulting in **more positive associations with art in contrast to craft**. Hughes (2009) notes that the emergence of a hyper-industrialized, mass-producing economy has furthermore made the craft sector struggle to preserve its relevance, leading to a gradual **fusion of crafts and the art sector**. Therefore, as craft making is currently identified as being part of the cultural and creative sector, it undermines its differences to art, implicating an underappreciation and undervaluation of its importance and nature (leò et al., 2023).

Accordingly, the terms ‘art’ and ‘craft’ are currently often used interchangeably, leading to ambiguity and rather unclear distinctions due to subjective interpretations. For instance, this is evident from the perspective of ‘Aesthetic Creation Theory’ (Zangwill, 2007; Iseminger, 2004), in which the focus is placed upon the **aesthetic qualities** inherent in the process of creation. In this context, there is a shared journey involving the transformation of materials into objects with aesthetic value, which suggests an integrated continuum rather than defining craft and art as separate categories (Shiner, 2012).

Yet, critics such as Adamson (2019) emphasize the importance of **distinguishing between art and craft** rather than calling for the effacement of the boundaries. For the craft sector to be understood and recognized, ‘art’ and ‘craft’ should maintain their differences. As he states: “craft, as a cultural practice, exists in opposition to the modern conception of art itself” (p.2). Additionally, Shiner (2012) who provides a comprehensive view of the contemporary discourse around the blurring boundaries between art and craft and their relationship to design, argues for a **nuanced understanding of craft that recognizes its uniqueness** and specificity while nevertheless acknowledging its intersection and overlap with the art and design sector, which can invite for a richer and more inclusive understanding of craft.



3.2.2 Relationship between craft and other sectors

The lack of an agreed-upon definition of craft has profound implications on both **academic and policy attempts do provide a clear definition to the craft sector**, and, in turn, it poses a **challenge in the understanding of the relationship between the craft sector and other sectors**.

For example, Viganò et al., (2023) position craft in the Cultural and Creative industries (CCIs), hence addressing the relationship between CCIs and non-creative industries. They first include, as outlined by the EU (n.d.):“ {...} architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts, (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts. In this regard, they highlight the importance of the interconnectedness of **CCIs** and non-creative industries, encouraging a transition from categorizing traditional clusters, referring to the rooted segmentation of industrial production clusters (Comunian & England, 2018) to **taking a more dynamic, ecosystem perspective** (de Bernard et al., 2022). In this respect, while literature mainly focuses on policymaking in relation to CCIs (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005), there is a call for research exploring the role of CCIs and craft and their potential to connect and contribute to other sectors’ development.

The case of Viganò et al., (2023) also shows how the craft sector, as part of the CCI, can be **framed by taking the material – e.g. wood – and related production processes as a reference point**, to then understand the implications of considering craft as part of a broader social and economic ecosystem. In particular, through studying the wood industry of Val Gardena in South Tyrol, and its potential for bridging industrial, traditional craftsmanship, to innovative and creative production, the authors criticize the isolation of craft from other industries and argue that **craft knowledge can spread and contribute to the emergence of new high-tech products** and create new post-industrial clusters. In the same vein, another study focusing on ice cream makers and beer producers, by Fiorello et al., (2021) has shown how supply chain collaboration and knowledge sharing between craftsmen and their suppliers in craft production can be beneficial.

In this regard, new business models (BMs) have emerged for existing craft companies and artisanal productions. A BM articulates the architecture of how the company captures and creates value (Teece, 2010). Bonfanti et al., (2018) explore three strategic directions of Italian craft firms: Digital manufacturing, open innovation, and servitization. **Instead of viewing evolving technologies as a threat, craft firms should adapt to them**; open innovation can accelerate knowledge transfer and the new acquisition of skillsets and toolboxes, by involving external stakeholders and partners. Lastly, to add value and meet the customer’s expectations, it is crucial to offer **new alternative services related to the products**. This can be done through direct engagement with customers, involving them in the design-making and manufacturing process, or offering workshops and tours (Piancatelli



& Ricci, 2022). Additionally, as Huang & Anderson (2019) argue, incorporating tourism into the BM is proposed; it can help tackle the ‘inheritance crisis’ and inspire the creation of new traditions and ideas linked to the craft and the environment, which attracts visitors to remote and unique locations for novel experiences centered around the product.

In conclusion, drawing the relationship between the craft sector and other industries is a complex endeavor, because of its multidisciplinary nature and the challenges in defining it. Existing classifications and distinctions of related sectors hinder the possibility of identifying market and development opportunities when connecting craft to other sectors, which offers an opportunity for scholarly inquiry into how craft knowledge can enhance sector spillovers, signaling directions for economic development and the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, there is a need for further studies delving into the craft sector’s potential as a bridge to innovation in both creative and non-creative industries, and exploring new business models that embrace both entrepreneurial craft approaches and traditional pathways.

Therefore, our approach departs from the recognition of the cross-industrial and cultural nature of craft practices to develop policy suggestions for craft ecosystem management and heritage preservation. This recognition is also reflected in our understanding of the relationship between craft and policy development. In the review of the literature, we have found 3 main definitions of craft that we are analyzing in Hephaestus: artistic craft, heritage craft, and craft in manufacturing. These will be further explored in subsequent iterations of this deliverable.

3.3 Policy development for craft ecosystem management and heritage preservation

In this section, we analyze first how policy regulations have been approached, and then review the current EU proposal for protecting and valuing craft.

3.3.1 Policymaking for craft preservation

Implementing policies that **preserve craftsmanship** is of foremost importance, as it can address issues such as the **exploitation of skilled workers by machines**, adaptation of small-scale businesses to changing consumer trends, and catalyze change (Weber et al. 2008; Al-Dajani and Marlow 2013; Roy & Sarkar, 2023). From an organizational perspective, crafts-based ventures provide **new forms of organizing that contrast bureaucratic and conventional ways of production processes** (Roy & Sarkar, 2023; Fitzmaurice et al. 2020; Kuhn and Galloway 2015). These craft organizations can **captivate the post-industrial society** with authentic work and progressive change (Steedman and Brydges



2023; Suddaby et al. 2017). Craftwork is a vital part of the informal economy and is not just a job, but a continuous practice (Roy & Sarkar, 2023).

Craftsmanship is not only important for creating high-quality products, but it also plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage. Artisans and craftsmen are crucial in ensuring that rich cultural traditions are not forgotten. They revive traditional crafts, preserve ancient techniques, and celebrate the diversity of cultural heritage through their dedication and skill. Cultural heritage includes the customs, traditions, and artifacts that define a society's identity. It is a testament to the creativity and ingenuity of our ancestors, telling stories of their struggles, triumphs, and unique ways of life. Preserving cultural heritage is imperative for future generations, as it allows them to connect with their roots and understand the collective human experience (EU European Commission, 2023).

The current state-of-the-art policy for craft preservation is around 'Geographical Indications' (GI) which establish protection for intellectual property rights concerning specific products, whose essential qualities are intricately tied to the production area (Economy of European Commission, 2023). In November of 2023, the Craft and Industrial Geographical Indication (CIGI) Regulation entered into force in the EU to ensure the geographical indication of traditional crafts is protected in the EU and globally (European Commission, 2023) and is planned to start working by the end of 2025.

3.3.2 New EU regulation for protection of IP

The new Regulation (EU) 2023/2411 establishes a single unified EU title for the protection of craft and industrial product names across all EU countries. This title is granted to products originating from specific places or regions, possessing qualities, reputation, or characteristics essentially linked to their geographical origin, and involving at least one production step in that area. The procedure to register GIs and their labeling is the following: producers' applications are first examined by national and local authorities, and then the [EU Intellectual Property Office \(EUIPO\)](#) decides on the registration. Once obtained, the craft and industrial producers will be able to display a distinct logo on their products to showcase their protected Geographical Indication names. National authorities will especially help SMEs by providing personal assistance in their application process and lower registration fees.

This Regulation marks a significant achievement in the protection of the names of European craft and industrial products that rely on the originality and authenticity of traditional skills from their regions.¹ The new regulation aims to support the development of Europe's rural and other regions by providing incentives for producers, especially SMEs, to invest in new authentic products and create niche markets. EU Craft and Industrial producers will also have easier access to seek international protection for their products' names, enhancing



their global competitiveness.² The Regulation seeks to retain unique skills and traditional know-how that might otherwise disappear, particularly in Europe's rural and less developed regions. Regions will also benefit from the reputation of the Geographical Indications by accessing economic diversification and hopefully experiencing a boost in tourism, and their economic recovery. This new mechanism will not just help traditional products from less-developed regions to become known, attract tourists, and create jobs, but it will also make consumers more aware of them, ensure fair competition for producers, and help them fight counterfeit products. The labeling of the products using the logo will enable consumers to identify Craft and Industrial products with specific characteristics linked to their geographical origin, helping them make informed choices when purchasing these products.

3.3.3 Policy gaps and emerging recommendations

Academic literature suggests that artisans and craft enterprises require more policies that support their work to remain competitive and sustainable, even with the policies that are planning to take place in 2025. According to Rennstam et al. (2024), craftspeople and craft enterprises need additional policy actions that are tailored to their specific needs. The industry demands substantial interventions in the areas of employment, grants, and training/skills. Enterprises report excessive tax burdens on labor and demand more attention to recruiting new generations of artisans. Research by Pratt et al. (2019) has shown that the industry has limited capacity to articulate network-related policies due to fragmented interests that often penalize the entire industry. Craftspeople do not seem to receive adequate material and symbolic compensation for their work and lack access to better working conditions, which often results in self-exploitation tendencies. This makes the craft industry susceptible to crises in ways that other manufacturing industries are not. The absence of policies that promote the protection and reproduction of the unique skills and know-how that characterize the craft industry exposes the whole industry to the loss of competencies and talents that are almost impossible to replace, especially in niche production and traditional or artistic crafts. Furthermore, for policymakers, it is often difficult to map and know the impact of craft in the local ecosystems, as the current economic codes do not allow for mapping the phenomenon (see deliverable D6.6).

To promote the development of the entire chain of activities, long-sighted and strategic policies would be crucial for the industry, such as more advantageous taxation regimes and support for the growth of the economy (Pratt et al., 2019). Protecting the production of flexible micro to small-batches, specialized techniques, price-setting behaviors, and different tools for craft goods' artisanal, authentic, and aesthetic production (Roy & Sarkar, 2023) is also essential. Roy & Sarkar (2023) argue that economic and social capital helps entrepreneurs face challenges and identify opportunities in a start-up context, implying that even craft entrepreneurs need financial/monetary rewards to deal with scarcity when establishing their ventures. Roy & Sarkar (2023) have suggested measures aimed at reducing fiscal burdens and taxes on labor.



4. Hephaestus fieldwork, emerging themes and preliminary definition for policy intervention

4.1 Hephaestus fieldwork: first year explorations of craft ecosystems

During the first twelve months of fieldwork and explorations the Hephaestus Team has identified and mapped emerging themes and possible areas for policy interventions. The specific activities which have informed the emerging themes described in section 4.2 are addressed in detail in project Deliverables 5.1 and 6.4.

First, Deliverable 5.1 reports on the establishment of a network of municipalities, heritage sites, and museums participating in the Living Lab. The document covers the Living Lab principles, the context of Bornholm, and the Hephaestus project's craft ecosystems. The document outlines the EU context, the project's objectives, and the relevance of Living Labs to promote circular economy in the European craft sector. The key activities undertaken by the Hephaestus project to establish a network participating in the Future Crafts Green Living Lab start with a stakeholder and risk analysis followed by communication to inform stakeholders about the project and to prevent the risks described in the risk analyses. The highlighted communication activities are a kick-off event in Venice and Bassano del Grappa, then an event in Bornholm, initial meetings with Maker's Island Secretariat and interested craft makers, a call for craft makers through Facebook and email, and visit and talks with the different museums.

Second, **Deliverable 6.4** describes the establishment of a craft network by the Hephaestus consortium. The document highlights the objectives behind forming this network and showcases the accomplishments made in engaging partners, stakeholders, and policymakers. Various activities, including events, workshops, and communication initiatives, were undertaken in the initial 12 months to involve stakeholders – over 210 craft-makers, 270 artisans, 42 craft association representatives, 66 entrepreneurs from cultural and creative industries, 80 academics per institution, 20 policymakers, and about 740 members of the public participated in these activities. The document describes specific events such as the workshop at Salone dell'alto artigianato in Venice, the focus group in Bassano del Grappa with several craft-makers, scholars, and policymakers from the Municipality of Bassano del Grappa (CDBG), the workshops in Göteborg and the future Symposium Establishing a craft-driven sustainable NEB cluster, the workshop in Bornholm and the meetings with the craft associations in Venice and Bassano.

The activities described in the two above mentioned deliverables have constituted an essential entry point to learn about practices, trends, challenges, and envisioned futures



characterizing the craft ecosystems of Bassano Del Grappa, Bornholm, Dals Långed and Venice. As such, the fieldwork conducted represents the basis for an initial screening of emerging themes for possible policy interventions described in the next section.

4.2 Emerging themes and possible areas for policy interventions

4.2.1 Economic sustainability

Tourism plays a vital role for the economic sustainability of craft makers, especially in Bornholm and Venice. We can observe that craft makers often act as a kind of bricoleur (Levi-Strauss, 1962), exhibiting multifaceted talents and engaging in diverse occupations to ensure their financial viability. While this approach affords them a degree of independence and stability, it also presents inherent challenges, as visible in Dåls Langed, where aspiring artisans often face difficulties in prioritizing their craft practice among other activities. Mass-produced products often undercut prices of crafted products, and the lack of local raw materials leads craft makers to explore alternative sources from outside (e.g. in Bornholm). Yet, as viewed in Bassano del Grappa, the uniqueness and authenticity of crafted objects along with their traditional crafting techniques, engender a steadfast consumer demand, suggesting a positive relationship with economic resilience and stability within the community.

4.2.2 Education & knowledge transfer

Especially in the Italian ecosystems it is possible to observe knowledge transmission through family structures, meaning that new generations often follow the craft education of their formers. This suggests that preservation of craftsmanship is closely related to heritage and traditional techniques. In Bornholm, a Professional Bachelor program offers students the possibility to specialize in craft making. Yet, there is a need for acquiring business skills, such as branding, business development and project management. Additionally, in Venice, there is a noticeable scarcity of skilled artisans to provide mentorship and to perpetuate traditional craftsmanship. Dåls Langed offers art and craft residencies, which are also used for dialogue, workshops and reflection, but it was highlighted that there is an ongoing desire for increasingly non-academic settings and opportunities.

4.2.3 Technology & Innovation

It becomes obvious that the ecosystems demonstrate a nuanced interplay between tradition and innovation within the craft community, underscored by the integration of modern



technology such as 3D printers, laser cutting etc., provided by local institutions or FabLabs like Open Wood in Dåls Langed. A willingness for integrating digital innovations such as Social Media is expressed, however, often requires high costs and time investment. It is often favored to use old techniques and an adaptation appears to be difficult for some. For this reason, some craft makers are hesitant towards the integration of new technological tools and practices. It is noticeable that there is a need for more training and education activities focusing on the introduction of new tools, and on the development of new business models, especially regarding upcoming institutions such as FabLabs.

4.2.4 Community, Space & Place

All ecosystems show a deep sense of community and culture, through sharing resources, knowledge, tools, and machines. Moreover, craft makers are exchanging ideas and developing friendly relationships with one another, which leads to collaboration and partnerships. Places such as personal workshop spaces and traditional factories still create a split within generations (Venice), whereas in Bassano, places like a shop, an exhibition and cultural space and a production lab have enabled the creation of partnerships which extend traditional boundaries. In Dåls Langed, it was possible to observe a conflict due to the gentrification of the area, leading to an increase in housing prices and a divide between villagers and craft makers.

4.2.5 Identity & Heritage

Identity is created and preserved through traditional techniques and workmanship. Many craft makers, especially in both Venice and Bornholm experience a feeling of belonging, community, and cultural identity, which is highlighted through a shared passion. Also, collective craft activities and projects such as ceramic making in Bassano help strengthen identity. Historical narratives and the effort through years of dedication and experimentation contribute to a common sense of identity, which is reflected in the value communicated to consumers. This is very visible in Venice, where crafted creations are viewed as tangible expressions of Venice's illustrious history and cultural legacy. Furthermore, the feeling of identity is not only grounded in the craft practices per se, but it encompasses a broader spectrum, such as being more inclusive towards the environment, and the entire societal landscapes.

5. Proposed guidelines

To offer policy recommendations for safeguarding endangered traditional crafts, we propose an iterative approach. This begins with analyzing historical shifts in the role of crafts and



their interconnections with other sectors within targeted ecosystems.

Sections 3 and 4 have respectively offered theoretical insights (Section 3) and empirical insights (Section 4) to inform further research activities, which will culminate in policy proposals. This section introduces a working definition of craft and methodological guidelines for future development of the report. In particular, the proposed methodological guidelines constitute the basis for (1) the development of an historical perspective on crafts, (2) the design and facilitation of workshops with craft practitioners and stakeholders, aimed at identifying key areas for policy intervention across the designated ecosystems, and (3) the development of related policy suggestions.

5.1 Towards a Hephaestus definition of craft: a working definition for policymakers

As shown across sections 3 and 4, Craft is a concept that defies a univocal definition due to its multifaceted and complex nature, encompassing various dimensions such as trade or profession, artifact creation, cultural expression, and a process involving skill, craftsmanship, techniques, and materials. The conceptual history of craft (Section 3.2.1), the difficulty of framing craft in one specific sector (Section 3.2.2; see Deliverable D6.6 for a detail overview), the complex and evolving policymaking context (Sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2; 3.3.3), as well as the emerging themes resulting from the first year of fieldwork (Section 4.2), altogether make evident the multidimensionality and complexity of the concept of craft. As such, the lack of a univocal definition of craft can pose **significant challenges for academia and policymaking**, hindering efforts to understand its relationship with other sectors and develop effective strategies for its promotion and preservation. This ambiguity also reflects historical tensions, such as the dichotomy between art and craft, which has led to varying perceptions and valuations of craft practices.

To address these challenges and harness the potential of craft, Hephaestus partners choose to adopt a comprehensive approach that encompasses craft's diverse manifestations and historical roots. First, this includes providing a **working definition of craft**, which can serve to provide a provisional scoping of the phenomenon, while maintaining flexibility to emerging modifications, in line with the evolution of the Hephaestus research endeavors. Second, it implies understanding existing **typologies of craft**, as different manifestations of the phenomenon, which may vary across different regions and disciplines. Third, it requires developing an **epistemology of craft** that acknowledges its unique characteristics while also recognizing its intersections with art, design, and other fields (Figure 2).



HEPHAESTUS Framework

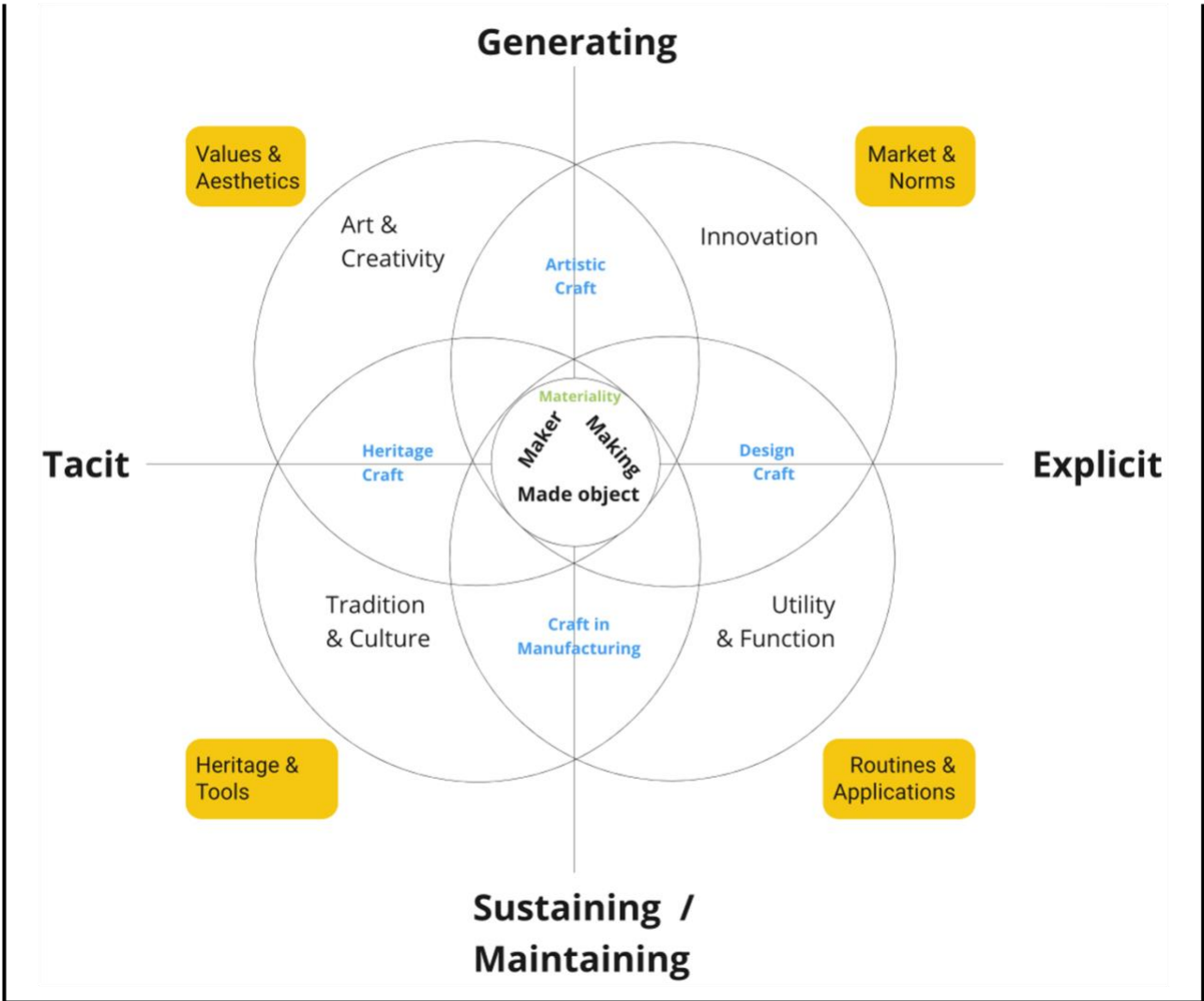


Figure 2 - Hephaestus Framework

In particular, by **exploring how knowledge about craft is constructed and understood across different contexts**, researchers and policymakers can gain insights into the diverse ways in which craft is conceptualized and practiced. This includes recognizing the tacit knowledge embedded within craft traditions, understanding the role of education, economy, communities and spaces in passing down craft skills, and acknowledging the cultural and social significance attributed to craft practices.

On this premise, we provide the following working definitions of craft:

*Craft as the form of manufacturing - from Latin: manus (hand) and facere (making) - in which the components of **manual work**, mastering of **tools and technique**, knowledge of the **materials** meet with an **intentional symbolic value**, and become*



an object. This ranges from individual productions in small ateliers to component productions in larger manufacturing processes.

This definition will serve as a starting point for the outline of the methodology introduced in Section 5.2. Figure 2 provides a visual example of the relationship between the working definition, the typologies, and the epistemology of craft, developed on the basis of the preliminary literature review (Section 3) and fieldwork (Section 4). All together, they constitute what we refer to as the **Hephaestus Framework** which will be further developed through the project and presented in subsequent iterations of this deliverable.

5.2 Methodology for the development of Policies on traditional and authentic craft preservation and support

5.2.1 Historical approaches on the role of craft

The preservation of craft as cultural heritage stands at the core of the Hephaestus project, whereby craft can be understood through the techniques of traditional artifacts as well as the processes of artistic craft and manufacture craft characterizing the proposed working definition. The methodological approach for the historical analysis of craft draws from diverse research methods as proposed by Decker et al. (2015) and approached with a historiographical reflexive lens (Decker et al., 2021). This methodology seeks to unearth the often-silenced voices that have shaped craft community dynamics throughout history. By examining the four modes of inquiry outlined in business history, we aim to guide future research directions (Decker, Hassard, Rowlinson, 2021).

Given the inherent challenges of accessing archival records in the craft sector, which is typically characterized by disorganization and a lack of systematic preservation (Decker, 2013), we advocate for qualitative methods such as interviews and ethnography. These approaches not only address the absence of documented traces but also recognize the significance of context, both within craft enterprises and local communities, in shaping narratives and socio-economic structures (Cumming, Bridgman, 2016; Suddaby et al., 2023).

Through a historiographical reflexive approach and a plurality of research methods, we seek to establish a conceptual framework that bridges business history with history, visual studies, and organization studies. This approach not only enriches our understanding of craft as a sector but also positions it as a transformative force capable of reshaping social imaginaries (Decker, Kipping, Wadhvani, 2015). By leveraging insights from analogous fields, we aim to offer a new perspective on craft, one that underscores its potential as an alternative mode of organizing for the future.



The fieldwork is conducted within the four ecosystems - Venice (Italy), Bassano del Grappa (Italy), Bornholm (Denmark), Dals Långed (Sweden), which have been selected for their well-defined boundaries, historical continuity, economic relevance, and cultural importance of craft.

Among the research methods employed, the historical approach relies on previous research based on **historical and contemporary ethnography**, carried out in parallel as outlined in Gasparin and Neyland (2018). This is based upon a combination of ethnographically-inspired qualitative methods of fieldwork (observations, interviews, secondary data analysis), and design-mapping methods using a comparative fieldwork research protocol for mapping the controversies (Venturini & Munk, 2021). Such mapping is conducted with the following research objectives:

- observe craft ecosystems' socio-economic and cultural infrastructures in the making
- capture the current urgencies of craft ecosystems, as voiced by the members of the ecosystem and especially in relation to sustainability and digitisation
- understand the degree of resistance or acceptance of digital and cutting-edge technologies and sustainability actions by the members of the ecosystems;
- capture historical and contemporary identities;
- map values.

To analyse selected traditional and authentic crafts at risk of disappearing the **classification of risk provided by UNESCO**¹, is selected as the analytical framework. The latter includes a wide array of indicators grouped according to categories of threats, including *negative attitudes, demographic issues, decontextualisation, environmental degradation, weakened practice and transmission, cultural globalisation, new products and techniques, loss of objects or systems and economic pressure*. The research is based on the documentation of materials, knowledge and the know-how of traditional techniques and materials which are important to preserve craft heritage and to mobilize this heritage as a source of inspiration for innovative work.

The data analysed to investigate the social, cultural and political history of the ecosystems include the historical archives (for the Italian case, e.g. Museo della ceramica, local craft associations; Archivio di Stato Venezia, Archivio di Stato Verona, Archivio di Stato Vicenza, Archivio Comune di Bassano, Archivio Rubelli, Archivio della Manifattura Chini, Archivio Storico Musei del Veneto, Archivio Paoletti, Archivio Lanerossi; for the Swedish case, e.g. The Craft Laboratory Archive in Mariestad, Archive of Föreningen för Svensk Hemslojd, Archive of Steneby Skolan, Riksarkivet, Archive of Historiska Museet; for the Danish case, e.g. archives of Bornholm Museum, Bornholms Højskole, Makers Island, Bornholms Ø-Arkiv, SVFK Kunsthåndværk Arkiv).

¹ <https://ich.unesco.org/dive/threat/>



This specific data sources allow to investigate and understand diverse elements and dimension of craft history within the selected ecosystems, including:

- the materials that have been traditionally sourced and used in the ecosystem,
- how the materials have changed over time (raw materials, provenance, etc),
- changes in the craft processes (e.g. wood fire vs. electric oven)
- changes in the socio-cultural and economic structures of the ecosystem.

5.2.2 Participatory approaches for policy intervention

Participatory approaches are gaining popularity in research methodologies. These approaches allow the researched subject or participant to get more involved in sharing their stories, tacit information, or other kinds of knowledge that involve deeper meanings. Moreover, such approaches are considered beneficial for research contribution to policy making because they involve all stakeholders' opinions and needs in the research process, considering important information for policy building. As such, **policy developed under participatory-based conditions can favor the identification of community values, assets, and place identity** (Van Assche & Chien Lo, 2011). This is particularly relevant in the context of the craft sector, as the involvement of craft makers in participatory processes – as well as of other stakeholders, such as citizens or local government representatives – can favor the identification of tacit knowledge as well as the emergence of relevant controversies.

Among participatory approaches, **Art Based Methods (ABR)** refer to art-centered activities chosen by the researcher to address questions of the unseen and inaccessible forces that drive human behavior (Gerber & Siegesmund, 2022). Art-based research can provide a **reveal of individual and collective embodied knowledge that traditional research methods often cannot access**. Co-created participatory arts-based approaches can be used to shift power dynamics between the researcher and the rest of the groups, leading to a more trust-based relationship and unveiling more meaningful data discovery (Bagley and Castro-Salazar, 2012; Greenwood, 2012; Jackson 2018; Cunsolo, 2013).

ABR enables the development of new insights and in-depth knowledge on complex questions that are difficult to measure and verbalize otherwise, while also connecting with the broader audience (McNiff, 2018), uncovering the complexity of the relationships between actors, places, and things in the field. In this regard, Patricia Leavy (2014) pointed out that “the arts may be used during data collection, analysis and/or dissemination” (p. 2). Previous ABR work has highlighted the innovative methods for data collection and representation (Lafrenière & Cox, 2012), to co-create it with the field participants (Tarr et al., 2018), data on empowerment processes (Bagnoli, 2009), data representing the findings of the research (Bartlett, 2015), reflexive accounts (Skukauskaite et al., 2022), and reflections on the embodied experiences of working in the art co-creation (Vacchelli, 2018). Working with ABR



has also given voice to young participants (Lyon & Carabelli, 2016) and to those who are marginalized (Bagnoli, 2009).

In the context of the craft sector, this can contribute to convey and coordinate information from the different stakeholders involved in craft policymaking, supporting the identification of consensus and controversies among the different parties involved (Gillibrand et al, 2023; Van Assche & Chien Lo, 2011; Healy, 1997). They allow communities to express themselves more clearly, sharing their unaltered stories and providing a more approachable basis for accessing concerns that are harder to address (Gerber & Siegesmund, 2022), such as the latent fear from artisans of being swamped by cheap goods and stealing a heritage because of mass importation (Hughes, 2013). Moreover, these methods can also facilitate engagement between local actors and outside organizations, which can strengthen the role of local actors in peacebuilding and development initiatives.

In this regard, there are successful examples of art-based approaches being used in research for policymaking. One such approach is proposed by Sharafizad et al. (2023) implementing the Draw, Write, Reflect (DWR) method with traditional research, for exploring adults engaging in academic careers. This method offered participants a combination of visual and oral methods to gather data in a more personalized approach based on their preferences, thus aiding researchers in obtaining more valuable and practical input on the experiences of female academics in their careers for designing and implementing policies aimed at promoting gender equity in academia. Another successful example of an art-based approach is the study by Kado et al. (2023), which used visual elicitation techniques such as Rich Pictures to uncover tacit perspectives and complex social phenomena of leadership in health professions education.

5.2.3 Hephaestus example of art-based research

The aim of Hephaestus is to take a step forward by developing a long-term commitment with artists and craft makers alongside our research group. ABR examples in our project are represented by the exhibitions presented throughout the project's first year. In the first exhibition - Atmospheres of Craft - opened during the Kick-off event in Bassano del Grappa, the key questions informing the Hephaestus research were presented by the artists in the form of video documentaries, enhancing the experiences of research participants (Lafrenière & Cox, 2012). Specifically, in the assemblage of the videos and preparation of the exhibition, ABR was mobilized to move from a 'context of discovery' to a 'context of presentation', which consists of a paradigmatic re-envisioning of generated data representation (Bagley, 2008; Bartlett, 2015) in ways that exposed unfinished thinking and open questions. The exhibition was opened by a presentation made by the artists together with the researchers. Here, the artists explained their process, their intention, and how they intended to involve the communities through the exhibition. It consisted of 4 rooms: the memorabilia room, the moving images room with a video per ecosystem, the postcards'



room (Figure 3), and a sound room with a sound machine to hear the ecosystems.

The opening and closing of the exhibition offered occasions for investigating both aesthetic and political controversies in the ecosystems, as the experience of the artists' exhibition by craftmakers from all ecosystems provoked intense sensorial and verbal reactions. The Nordic craft makers that had traveled to Italy to join the project meeting found themselves thrown into a mix of local politics. The mobilization of artistic practices in an exhibition, with their unfinished thinking, allowed us to invite our communities to critique and gave us researchers the space to renegotiate meaningful interactions with them. As a result, we started to work with the artists' videos as a form of community engagement.

After the exhibition, we organized a meeting in each ecosystem with stakeholders and the craft ambassadors, namely craft makers representative of each ecosystem. The meeting was set to last for three hours. We started the meeting by presenting the scope of the project, what the plan would look like for the next 4 years, the agenda, and the aim of the workshop. Specifically, we mapped out in smaller groups the stakeholders, struggles, identities, and areas of intervention for each ecosystem. We divided the stakeholders and the ambassadors into groups to map out struggles, and concerns, and to co-create the next direction of the research (Images 8 and 9). In each ecosystem, we generated a compelling amount of data, active participation, and concrete recommendations for future activities.

This workshop, and in particular watching the short movie, allowed to initiate an in-depth conversation with the people we were mostly aiming to achieve an impact for, who started to share feelings, knowledge, and ideas on policies. As such, this work served as a test bed for future development of workshops that can rely of ABR for further emergence of relevant themes and data for policy suggestions. In particular, in future iterations the continuous relationship with the artists will involve reflection and knowledge sharing on the result of the historical analysis, thereby supporting critical discussions on craft ecosystem management and heritage preservation.

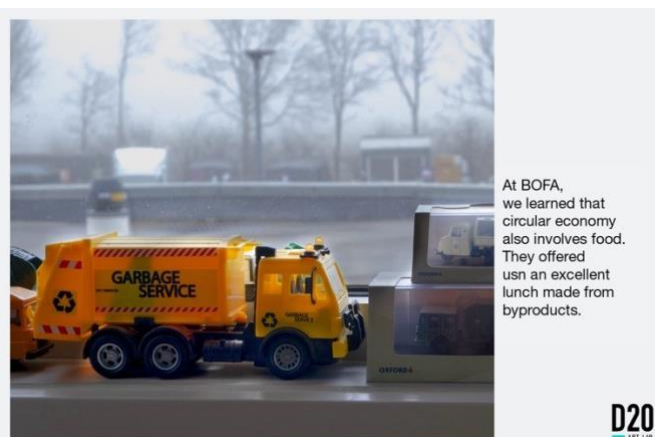


Figure 3 - Example of postcard from Hephaestus exhibition



Figure 4 Workshop in Bassano del Grappa, Italy

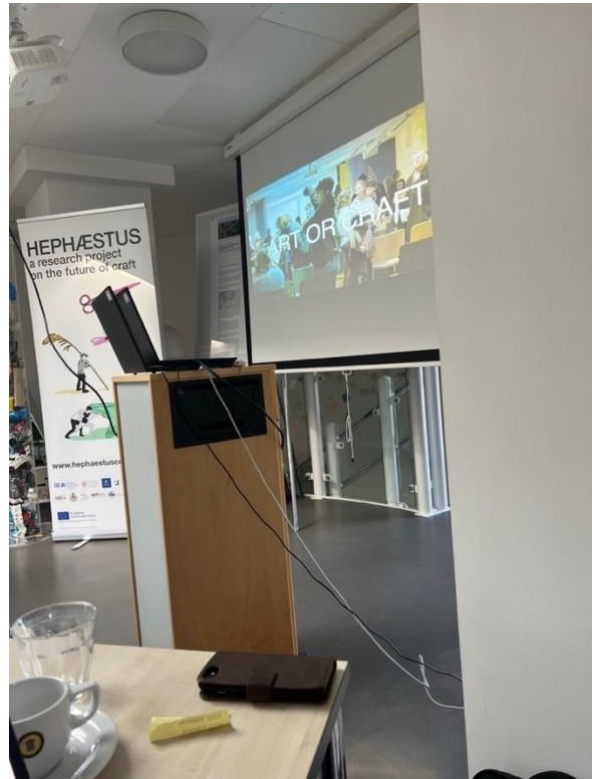


Figure 5 Workshop in Bornholm, Denmark

Concluding remarks

To conduct a comprehensive historical analysis of craft within each ecosystem, a multifaceted approach to data collection is essential. This involves approximately 50 interviews per ecosystem, engaging a diverse range of stakeholders including active and retired craft-makers, historians, local workers, policymakers, established retailers, and others involved in the craft value chain. These interviews will provide valuable insights into the evolution of craft practices, the socioeconomic context, and the challenges faced by practitioners over time. Additionally, organizing ABR workshops within each ecosystem will foster dialogue between researchers and selected craft-makers, facilitating discussions on pertinent themes and further enriching our understanding of craft dynamics.

Gender dynamics within the ecosystems will also be examined, with a specific focus on identifying any existing disparities. This information will be integrated into an educational toolbox aimed at promoting gender equity within the craft sector. Furthermore, observing collective actions such as community events and trade associations' meetings will shed light on the collaborative efforts and social dynamics within each ecosystem. By documenting central issues of debate and analyzing how agreements and disagreements unfold around these topics, we aim to capture the complexities of craft governance and decision-making processes.

In addition to primary data collection efforts, relevant secondary sources such as media coverage, public events materials, and other available documents will be gathered to complement our understanding of the historical context and developments within each ecosystem. This holistic approach to data collection will enable us to construct a nuanced historical narrative of craft, highlighting its significance within diverse communities and informing future policy interventions aimed at preserving and supporting traditional craft practices.

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