

## XI. 결론

이 연구는 기능적 가치 대 미적 가치, 예술적이거나 장식적인 가치, 보다 중요하게는 공예품의 의도된 물질성에서 벗어나거나 그러지 않을 가능성에 있어 수작업으로서 공예의 한계를 고찰하고자 한다. 명확한 답을 제시하려 들지 않는 프로젝트 “새로운 종류의 자연?”은 사회적 조각으로 변화한 개념 공예의 대안적 방법론, 예술과 공예 사이의 공간을 탐색하는 일련의 도구를 제시한다. 여기에는 우리의 현재 소비 습관과 생산 전략이 미래 세대에 미칠 환경적 영향에 관해 질문을 제기하려는 의도가

분명히 존재한다. 우리가 사는 행성과 우리가 남길 의미에 관해, 우리는 아마도 혼란스러울 이야기를 우리가 창조하는 오브제에 새길 것이다. 그리고 언젠가 우리가 어떤 존재였는지 이해하려 노력하는 미래의 연구자들이 그것을 발견할 것이다. 더불어, 그 영향과 업사이클링에 기반한 사회적 참여 방법론을 설명한 다음, ‘퍼머플렉스’라는 잠재적 개념 틀을 제시했다. 상상력과 세상을 위한 배려를 염두에 두면서 우리 사회를 재발명하기 위한 도구로서 공동 창작의 개념을 발전시키기 위해서다.

### 부록 I - 프리드먼의 12가지 플렉서스 개념

1. 글로벌리즘(민주화 및 국가, 문화, 사회, 예술, 고급과 저급 문화 등의 경계 부재)
2. 예술과 생활의 일치(무너뜨릴 경계 부재)
3. 인터미디어(예술과 생활 사이의 장벽이 없으므로 당연히 나타나는 결과. 서로 다른 예술 형태의 단순한 혼합이 아닌 융합)
4. 실험주의(연구와 실험을 바탕으로 한 예술적 접근법으로, 협업을 작업의 주요 패러다임으로 삼아 예술의 정의와 전통주의의 개념을 혁신)
5. 우연성(다다이즘과 케이지의 영향으로, 미래 혁신적 현실로 발전할 수 있는 새로운 형식으로서 확고히 자리할 가능성을 만들기 위해 실험주의와 연결)
6. 유쾌(유머뿐 아니라 자유롭고 타협하지 않는 실험을 의미)
7. 단순성(진실과 아름다움 사이의 완전하게 우아한 관계. 미학이 아닌 수단으로의 미니멀리즘)
8. 함축성(최소한의 재료로 최대한 지적이고 감각적이며 감성적인 내용물을 시사하는 작업)
9. 모범주의(이론과 그 구성의 의미에서 귀감이 되는 작업의 완성도)
10. 특수성(구체적이고 자립적이면서 그 자체의 모든 부분을 포용하며 의미의 모호함이 없는 작업 방향)
11. 시간 안의 현존성(시간과 연결된 예술 작품 강조. 예를 들면 공연이나 시간과 더불어 분해되는 작품을 통해 비영구성 및 변화 등의 문제를 제기)
12. 음악성(음악 작곡 혹은 작업을 연주로 옮기는 행사용 음악처럼 악보를 사용하거나, 타인이 사용해 스스로 작품을 실현하는 지시문을 이용한 예술 작품. 플렉서스가 주장한 예술의 민주화 및 사회 행동과 연결되며, 누구나 예술가가 되고 작품을 실현할 수 있다는 신념 추구)

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MIGUEL JERONIMO

# A NEW KIND OF NATURE?

## AS A PROTOTYPE OF PERMAFLUX, A CONCEPTUAL AND SOCIALLY-ENGAGED ART PRACTICE

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2021, *PenhArt 2021 Cambodia Contemporary Art Fair* – sound installation “Home” and curation/organization of the art fair, Factory Phnom Penh Artspace, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2021, *From Disability to Visibility* – curation of group exhibition and contribution with various photos, sculptures and installations, Factory Phnom Penh Artspace, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2020, *The New Apsaras* – curation of group exhibition and contribution with various photo installations, Plantation Phnom

Penh, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2020, *EDJAI*, Bophana Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2019, Joss Vines street exhibition and art installation, as part of the Microgalleries’ *Disrupting Climate Disruption: a Global Day of Action*, and the Waste Summit organized by KAS Foundation, Various locations, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2018, *Plastic Kingdom* – curation of group exhibition and contribution with various photos and installations with everyday materials, Metahouse Cultural Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2018, *From roots to eternity, desire to clouds*, Strangefruit & Jam Gallery, Siem Reap, Cambodia  
2018, *IdentiCITY* – curation of group exhibition and contribution with a photo installation, Metahouse Cultural Center, Phnom Penh, Cambodia  
2017, *Distance in everything, the everything in me*, The Bookish Bazaar, Kampot, Cambodia  
2017, *I AM THE FIVE*, The Mansion, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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# I. INTRODUCTION

The idea for this research came from an interest in a multi-country project using waste as material for street installations reflecting on our modern lifestyle and its consumerism, consequent environmental damage and rising social inequality. A conceptual framework for the practice is proposed, with its influences discussed and a possible methodology described, followed by descriptions of a previous chapter of the project, *‘Joss Vines’*, and the proposal of *‘Luxury Creatures’* for Cheongju CraftCityLab.

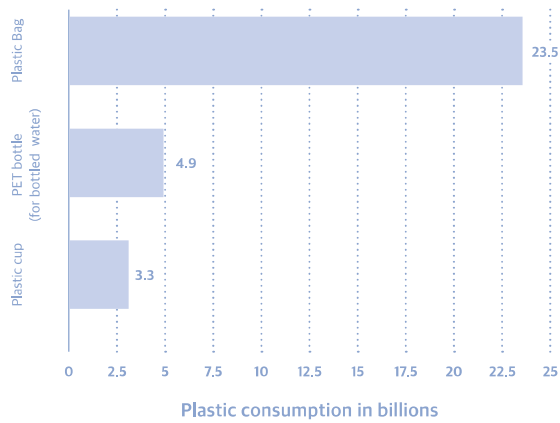
Overall, the motto of this paper is art-as-quotidian, quotidian-as-art, and to question the limits of the art/craft object. Which mythologies can emerge from it? It addresses as well the narrative of *‘A new kind of nature?’* (abbreviated to *‘NKN?’*) emerging from the waste we leave behind in post-humanity urbanscapes, attempting to imagine what if future archaeologists encounter the objects we use nowadays: which meanings they will decipher? This is the starting point for this research.

**KEYWORDS:**  
upcycling, fluxus, permaflux, conceptual craft, trashsphere, social practice, neo-dadaism, environmental activism, plastic waste, social sculpture, co-creation.

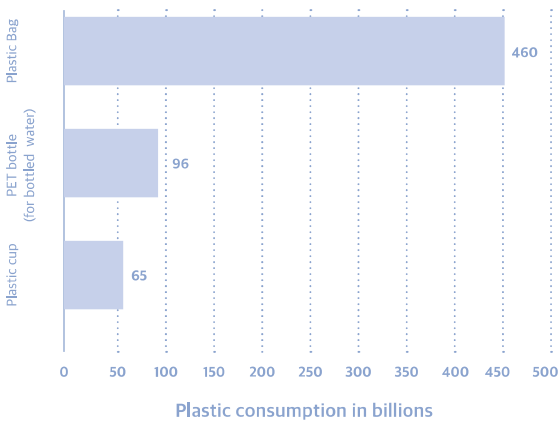
II. INFO ON WASTE IN SOUTH KOREA

According to the core-focus on using leftovers of consumption for art creation/ craft-making, addressing the current situation of waste management in the country is crucial. This project started in Cambodia, a country with severe lack of formal structures to deal with its garbage, recycling schemes being mostly informal and insufficient, streets filled with waste that often ends being burnt, washed away along the river or dumped in overflown landfills without proper treatment. This fact shaped *'Joss Vines'* with clean-up activities with the local community and long research on its recycling (link in bibliography).

In comparison, South Korea has an incredibly well planed and implemented garbage collection scheme, including recycling. (Note: pandemic travel restrictions also limit time in Cheongju to investigate common single-use plastics and co-create locally appropriate solutions, therefore this research had to be done remotely.) Despite being a clean and organized society, there's still an issue with single-use plastics and waste production as everywhere else in the world, with for instance 23.5 billion plastic bags used per year:

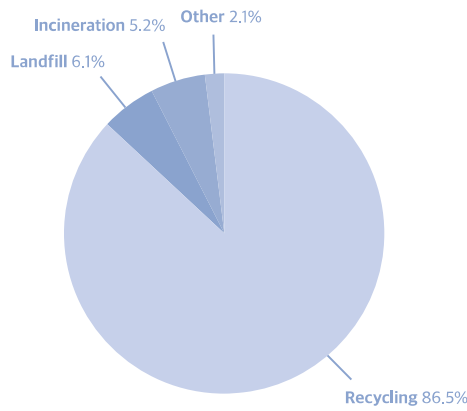


[Figure 1]. Number of single-use plastic items consumed in South Korea in 2019(In billions)  
Source / Survey by / Published by: Greenpeace  
Source Link : Green Peace - plastic South Korea, page 14  
Release date : December 2019 © Statusta 2021.



[Figure 2]. Number of single-use plastic items consumed per capita South Korea in 2019  
Source / Survey by / Published by: Greenpeace  
Source Link : Green Peace - plastic South Korea, page 14  
Release date : December 2019 © Statusta 2021.

On the other hand, South Korea has a remarkable recycling capacity and would be interesting for a future project to explore in-loco the experience of the local community's garbage separation and disposal behaviors, including following the process local authorities implemented to achieve such high rates of recycling.

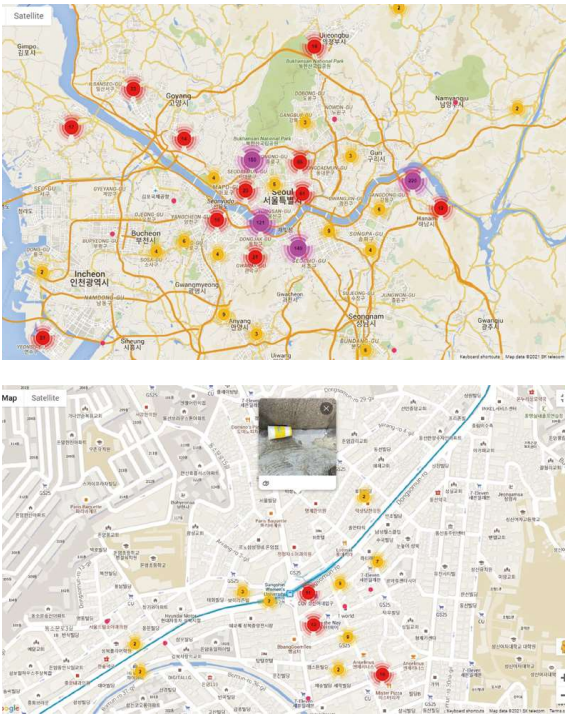


[Figure 3]. Tribution of waste disposed in South Korea in 2019, by type of method  
Release date : December / 2020 Region : South Korea  
Survey time period : 2018 / Supplementary notes  
\*includes mechanical, chemical, and biological intermediary waste processes © Statusta 2021.

Other stark contrast is the illegality of littering, with the streets being mostly clean. Although, using the open-data platform Litterati (in which users can document trash found on the street) is possible to have a glimpse on common discarded materials. Examples below, first picture in Cheongju, second in a nearby town:



In order to see the big picture, Seoul is the location with more data available:



Nevertheless, due to the exhibition venue and its rich history, the focus narrowed down to cigarettes.



### III.CONNECTION WITH FORMER CHEONGJU TOBACCO PROCESSING PLANT

The idea to address the previous life of the space comes from an interest in memory and the lived experiences of a place, in addition to using site-specific art as an acknowledgment of its transformation process towards a venue for cultural experiences. In itself, an act of upcycling as this research aims to advocate – with upcycling being defined as recycling into a product with added value.

The history of tobacco in South Korea is long, going back at least to the beginning of 1600s. This processing plant, built in the 1940s, was the largest cigarette factory in the country with 3000 workers, 32.6 acres of factory space producing 20 billion cigarettes annually. In its inception, the process of making cigarettes was mostly manual, creating a link with the idea of craft and skillful craftsmanship. The high quality demonstrated by the workers even reward them with a first prize in a national cigarette rolling competition:

Considering the importance of the former factory to the economy and social development, honoring its history and conversion, and the lack of other possible waste to re-use accordingly to the successful recycling policies in place, I propose for this chapter of *NKN?* the use of cigarette packs. Being unable to access the actual brands being previously produced in the factory, a brand called 'Luxury' was chosen, currently sold in the Cambodian market and which used to be marketed as originated from Korean (recently its packaging was change since the local distributor Vinton was partially bought by the conglomerate China Tobacco Guangdong Industrial Co).



Left: sample of brands once produced in Cheongju.

Right: collection of cigarette packs being used in this research.

Regarding addressing cigarettes in art production, as mentioned in the catalog of 2019's edition of CraftCityLab, artists such as Irving Penn and Damien Hirst got already interested in "what happens to this recreational substance after it has been consumed". Especially in Hirst's explorations of issues such as mortality, with Cho Saemi, author of the contributed article, describing the piece 'Dead Ends Died Out' made out of a collection of cigarette butts as a display of "countless stories. Each person who must have smoked one or more of these cigarettes likely all had their reasons. A habitually smoked cigarette, a cigarette smoked to relieve anxiety (...) a cigarette smoked to keep one's hands busy at a social event, a cigarette smoked at death's doors, and etc.; life's, or death's, reasons were on display." The grotesque creations

born of these leftovers can speak to our imagination, unveiling a complex tapestry of countless individuals' lives, their troubles and glimpses of joy, moments of reflective solitude or shared conversations while enjoying a cigarette. Without attempts of moralizing or condoning the act, addressing this has the potential to spark contemplations of the past, both individual and the factory itself. Also, the use of packs deviates from the already approached object of cigarette butts, and re-focus our attention to packaging, usually the most prominent waste we produce, besides incorporating a certain poetic quality from being the last artifact to be discarded after the whole pack is smoked. Can this be a starting point for craft-making?

## IV. INVESTIGATION ON THE LINKS BETWEEN CRAFT AND ART, ADVANCING CONCEPTUAL CRAFT

What defines craft? Is the physicality of an object made by hand? Can it be the manufacturing of a story or meaning, an artifact of the mind instead of a thing to touch? Some cultural agents have been preoccupied with the bridge art-craft in terms of practice, methods of production, ideas behind the work and, perhaps more decisive for labeling the object as artistic or craft, the target audience, place of use (or to be exhibited) and final goals. What are the limits of craft-making?

For instance Denk gallery organized group shows entitled “Conceptual Craft”, featuring artists such as Lynn Aldrich, Jeff Colson, Ashley Hagen, Tim Hawkinson, Nova Jiang, Jared Pankin, Ephraim Puusemp, and Pontus Willfors. As per their statement, all of them “are united by a similar preoccupation with labor intensive, studio-based practices, and inventive uses of materials. In an era of art production still driven by the conceptual turn, these artists harness intention and concept without sacrificing the deliberate materiality, technical ingenuity, and facility, involved in the execution of object making.”

So what defines craft? The hands that craft? Having a functional purpose? Being interleaved with a history and culture? Often the categorization of artwork or craft comes from a preconceived idea of high-art, focused on thought and perhaps even detached from the interest on the physicality and modes of its production (or craftsmanship). The ultimate example would be the instruction art of Sol LeWitt, which manifests his pure interest on

thought and enables him to create artworks consisting only on sets of instructions to be implemented by others, devoid of the touch of his own hands – even if with a heavy focus on the process itself. As he stated, “In conceptual art, the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work”.

Dematerializing the art object also had the consequence of focusing on more time-based, interactive and ephemeral art practices, breaking barriers between producer and consumer and the quasi-sacred value often given to artworks, opening the doors for more exploration freed from the aesthetic expectations of something done by a high skilled, almost untouchable, artist. This and more artistic inspirations will be explored in later sections of this paper, while now the focus will be given to craft itself.

Colloquially, it's often defined as something created with the solo interest on the physical aspect of the object, its function (in case it's a tool to be used) or its beauty (if it's a decorative object), often by someone skillful in terms of his/her mastery use of hands and carrying a heavy cultural weight, representing a tradition of a certain region or community. But, nevertheless, considered non-exhibition material by a so-called art museum, an outdated idea that has CheongjuCraftBiennale standing as a perfect example of antidote. A book such as “Shy Boy, She Devil, and Isis: The Art of Conceptual Craft” addressed the same question, presenting a range of artists/ craftsmen and women that “are distinct in

their move away from the functional and toward the “purely” sculptural. (...) a bold conceptual shift and an erasure of the boundaries separating craft from fine art.”

What I would like to argue is that, playing between these two fields, is possible to further advance the use of art/craft as a tool for co-living, as an informal practice that gathers people together to make something that reflects on society, breaking the barrier creators/audience and, more importantly, between individuals themselves.

## V. REFLECTION ON THE THEME FOR THIS EDITION, TOOLS FOR CONVIVIALITY

As stated in the CheongjuCraftBiennale website regarding this year's theme, "It is time for us to ponder how contemporary crafts can deliver a message of healing and hope to people in a rapidly changing society buffeted by the winds of materialism and globalization as well as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic." As addressed by Ivan Illich in *Tools for Conviviality* (1973), the industrialization of our society and consumption patterns disregarding the depletion of natural resources created a mode of living where happiness is a feeling derived by individual possession instead of a shared feeling emerging from co-living. He stressed the need for finding ways to overcome barriers between differences and embrace a common existence, including with the natural world.

Personally, and connecting with the theme of waste production previously mentioned, is interesting to find approaches to art/craft production that take these two variables into account. First, a co-creation mentality where art becomes social practice and people from the local community are involved in its production. And second, a prioritization of the idea/concept as main product of art while reducing use of new resources, using waste already produced by our society as raw material always having an underlying reflection on social/environmental issues. This methodology also intends to emphasize objects of everyday life (in the end, we cannot escape consumerism and what we buy and use in our quotidian), while fictionalizing a new narrative for them. Devaluing the quality of execution in the

final object can also be a way to democratize art production, engaging common citizens in creating something together independently of their skills and (or lack of) artistic background. This will be expanded in the next two sections.

This research also took inspiration from the social movement GenerationC that emerged in Cambodia during the Covid-19 pandemic and based in the concept of Conviviality as well, namely the need to use this time of crisis to re-think a new way of living together. "An innovative and resilient society can only emerge from a strong social fabric. This interconnection between all individuals will enable the emergence of new ideas, creativity needs diversity and discussion to breed. Conversations that are enriching always come from exchanges of counterarguments in harmony, resolving differences in peace towards higher levels of understanding and common ground. This is the principle of common creativity. To face today's psychological, social and environmental crisis there is an urgent need to work together as one." Art, or craft, can be indeed a way to bring people together to discuss different ideas and find common ground, with various artistic references to borrow inspiration. As said by Alain Caillé, a French sociologist and philosopher, "Convivialism is the name given to everything which (...) contributes to the search for principles that promote human beings to strive for better cooperation and progress together, in full awareness of the finitude of natural resources."

## VI. INSPIRATION FROM FLUXUS, NEO-DADAISM AND THE IDEA OF SOCIAL SCULPTURE

As stated in the first two bullet points of their manifesto: "Fluxus is an attitude. It is not a movement or a style. Fluxus is intermedia. Fluxus creators like to see what happens when different media intersect. They use found and everyday objects, sounds, images, and texts to create new combinations of objects, sounds, images, and texts." Various artists in the 50s-70s in USA, such as John Cage, returned to the Dadaist ideas first posed by Marcel Duchamp with its ground-breaking sculpture 'The Fountain', consisting of an upside-down urinal: the playful use of quotidian objects as raw materials for art, the discussion around what constitutes the boundaries of what art can be. Dada posed as an anti-art movement to address the chaos and absurd of a time of war (Duchamp's Fountain was first submitted, and rejected as non-art, in 1917, amidst the First World War), its anarchism manifesting the downward nihilist state-of-mind of society at that time. The Neo-Dadaism of Fluxus can be better described as a rise from the ashes, an optimist, even if equally critical, approach to the same techniques and intentions, using creativity and humor as transformative tools to engage society in art. Its conscious use of common materials, also in the core of the European-based Arte Povera movement (meaning 'poor art'), functioned less as an aggressive push against the art market but more as a joyful inclusion of everyone in its creation. Also following the dematerialization of conceptual art as a way to include events or happenings as a sort of inclusive performance art: Alison Knowles created "Make a salad", turning the

mundane act of (literally) making a salad as an object of art, with the assumption that any gesture, if done in full awareness, can be performatic and meaningful. The artwork was finalized when the salad was complete and offered to the audience. Later the iconic Marina Abramovic, created 'The artist is present' where she simply stay still and invited viewers to sit across the table in front of her, maintaining eye contact without talking. It's also important to note that this focus on awareness can't be separated by the impression Asian figures such as Zen Buddhist D.T.Suzuki had in western audiences and artists at that time.

The focus on common materials, and the interest in mixing art fields themselves embedded in the concept of Intermedia (proposed by artist Dick Higgins and perfected by South Korean artist Nam June Paik, inventor of video-art and incorporating it in installations that defied categorization), laid the foundation for the underlying principle of all Neo-Dada: blurring the boundaries between art and life. George Maciunas, one of its core agitators, described as "dismantling the pretensions that accompany the notion of the artist. It is "directed against art as a profession, against the artificial separation of a performer from audience, or creator and spectator, or life and art". Philosopher John Dewey described artists as experiences-creators and their audience as co-creators: "We become artists ourselves as...our own experience is reoriented." Also a crucial idea of conceptual art (Henry Flynt described as 'post-cognitive') is the overcoming of a reflective



attitude towards reality to, in its place, focus on creating novel realities. This idea is relevant for this research in the sense of seeing the artwork not ending in the object exhibited but instead being prolonged in whatever gesture a viewer performs in his/ her everyday life afterwards and that carries the significance of the artwork. Its value lies in the potential possibilities triggered by the experience. In the concrete example of *NKN?*, this means that the artwork is still happening in case an exhibition goer remembers the message of reducing waste and decides to change behavior – seeing his/her gestures, if done consciously, as the performance art they can be. Boundless creativity and socially-engaged imagination, exactly as Fluxus taught us. (*More on Annex I*)

In this sense, Fluxus also introduced the idea of artwork as *fluxkit*, something to be used (as often craft is), the viewer turned into a user. Ultimate collaboration. Other innovation brought to the creative process was implemented by Cage, who included chance in his works, influenced by the Taoist I Ching, or Book of Changes, in order to take the artist's ego from the final work. If art can be non-egotistic and somehow embedded with an interactive purpose (usually more associated with design than an artwork in a museum with a “don't touch” sign), done by anyone to be used by everyone, using whatever materials without the “holiness” attached to a masterpiece from someone like Picasso, what is then the role of an artist?

German artist Joseph Beuys, also a Fluxus founding member, believed it was to transform society. He coined the term social sculpture consisting on language, thoughts, actions, and objects that affect the world. Being a political artist, he saw society as the ultimate work of art, and an artist in everybody. In every act in our life, a contribution to the whole. In one artwork, he made an arrow with 7000 stones pointing to an oak tree, stating that each stone could only be taken from its original place by planting an oak tree somewhere else with the stone being moved to its side – therefore arguing that the artistic object is complete only when citizens engage in a positive act in their surroundings. In this case, co-creation being quite literally a stepping stone to social engagement.

## VII.BEING ARTISTIC CO-CREATION AS SOCIAL PRACTICE, FOCUSING ON UPCYCLING AS AESTHETIC AND CONCEPTUAL TOOL

By definition, “Social practice is an art medium focusing on engagement through human interaction and social discourse. (...) [It] focuses on the interaction between the audience, social systems, and the artist or artwork through aesthetics, ethics, collaboration, methodology, antagonism, media strategies, and/or social activism. Because people and their relationships form the medium of social practice works – rather than a particular process of production – social engagement is not only a part of a work's organization, execution, or continuation, but also an aesthetic in itself: of interaction and development. Social practice aims to create social and/or political change through collaboration with individuals, communities, and institutions in the creation of participatory art.”

Therefore, this paper proposes a collective Neo-dadaist process of co-creation and transformation of banal and discarded materials into works of conceptual art, following a participatory aesthetic as described by Suzi Gablik: “A central aspect of new paradigm thinking involves a significant shift from objects to relationships... Then meaning is no longer in the observer, nor in the observed, but in the relationship between the two. Interaction is the key that moves art beyond the aesthetic mode.” And I would add, provides a sense of community. An upcycled methodology supports the conceptual base of the final pieces in order to raise awareness to our current waste situation while using art in a socially-engaged way, following a democratic approach of including people from different

backgrounds independently of skills. This doesn't intend to devalue the rich history and culture behind craftsmanship but rather extend it towards a new form that takes into consideration a priority of the idea and its use for furthering a message (and the co-living proposed by the Convivialism).

A potential methodology can then be described as:

1. Research on the habits of the local community, engagement activities with schools, interviews with small businesses and common citizens, collection of information on the type of trash it's produced and possible symbolism;
2. Informal agreements with citizens and businesses to separate the selected garbage and collection for further use in the artworks;
3. Engagement of a local artspace as venue for production, exhibition, etc.;
4. Experimentation of possible sculptures and installations in co-creation with the community, using methodologies such as human-centered design for brainstorming. The results from this step are titled *prototypes*, artworks that don't focus on the quality of execution or the final result, but rather prefer to be artifacts of the process, and tools to be used to advance the ideas proposed. Potential, but not exhaustive, strategies for this creation are: focus on repetitive use of a single object such a single-use plastic to achieve unity in the final piece, play with ideas such as contrast of textures or rigidity of objects, colors used that can achieve a particular message, and including the concept in the process of making it (e.g. connect the different objects within each other in order to represent the chain of consequences our actions have on the world);

- 5. Photoshoot with the result artworks (or *prototypes*) in urban spaces, street as the most democratic exhibition venue;
- 6. If the waste used can be recycled, allowing this dismantling of the piece furthers the time-based and ephemeral character intended, while contributing to more recycled materials getting back into circulation;
- 7. Discussion and planning on how to exhibit and what to include (the objects themselves, photos within public spaces, pedagogical information on the social topic addressed, performances, sound and video installations, interaction with the viewers such as “do your own artwork” using the materials displayed);
- 8. Presentation of the project in awareness raising activities in schools, community centers, etc.;
- 9. Collection of feedback, creation of social media initiatives related to the topic and advance informative contents to a wider audience, other ways to engage viewers in “using” the artwork (*prototype*), talks or workshops;
- 10. Also based on social media (e.g. use of hashtags with the project name), asking audience to report new habits influenced by the artwork, as performance. In addition, promoting the habit of keeping certain objects of our most common waste to upcycle into art.

This process can be expanded to a wider conceptual framework that connects Fluxus with environmental action: *permaflux*.

## VII. ADVANCING A MANIFESTO FOR A PERMAFLUX METHOD OF ART (OR CRAFT) CREATION

Following the above ideas, I'm interested in the development of a conceptual social practice using upcycled materials rather than art being another form of depleting natural resources, with a focus on the participatory aspect and after-effects in the audience/co-creators' behavior (as performance). Some core principles:

- a revival of the spirit of democratization of art in terms of value, venue, materials and skills;
- post-conceptual/contemporary practice following social rather than aesthetic mandates;
- inspired by circular economy and permaculture, i.e. re-using outputs of systems to feed as inputs to other systems (generally speaking, a zero-waste process) addressing one's *trashsphere*, the summary of our existence through all the objects we leave behind, upcycling them to reduce our ecological footprint and achieve simplicity and affordability over execution and artistry;
- focus on conceptual craft-making, the value of the artistic object is not on itself but the idea that intends to convey (accepting further environmental gestures from the audience, if done consciously, as part of the artistic object—art doesn't limit itself in the physical realm but rather in the world of possibilities);
- therefore the art object is not a “do not touch” artwork but a *prototype* to be used, like handcrafted objects such as bowls, lamps, hand-fans or clothes are

meant to be used;  
- belief on the Fluxus idea that everything can be art and everybody is an artist (and activist), first by accepting quotidian in the artistic realm, and secondly by promoting art as a tool in the transformation process of any individual into a global and engaged citizen (as argued by Convivialism).

It's also relevant to acknowledge the idea introduced by Gene Youngblood, who saw the artist as an ecologist, one who deals with environmental relationships: “the act of creation for the new artist is not so much the invention of new objects as the revelation of previously unrecognized relationships between existing phenomena, both physical and metaphysical. So we find that ecology is art in the most fundamental and pragmatic sense, expanding our apprehension of reality.” The natural flow of art or any other human activity can be described by its initial concerns with form or surface appearances, followed by the examination of the structure of forms and the desire to comprehend the totality of relationships between forms, that is, places or space. Furthering this idea, *permaflux* also shifts the focus from creation of new objects to the creation of new functions and/or meanings to pre-existent objects such as plastic waste. In a way, literally searching for a new plasticity to it. Let's not forget the initial definition (taken from Wikipedia) of ‘plastic arts’: “Plastic arts are art forms which involve physical manipulation of a plastic medium by molding or modeling such as sculpture or ceramics.” Therefore the process of



art/craft-making can be described as:

1. Form – garbage or waste object with artistic potential (surface, appearance, aesthetic of the potential craft);
2. Structure – story of the object or its materials, trigger of ideas and building block of a new concept (fabricating a new story for the object, craft turns into conceptual craft);
3. Space – world/mind, waste in the physical space is upcycled into art in the psychological realm, meaning (and possible call-to-action for behavior change) triggers this conversion, craft-production becomes meaning-creation.

It follows Higgins (in “Fluxus experience”) when she argues that “Art gives things this meta-reality (that is, transcendent reality) by “redirecting the ordinary” toward significance. It's about bringing everyday objects alive, recycling it into metaphors and perpetuating its experience back in the everyday life of the audience, every gesture a performatic act.” Nevertheless, a key principle of *permaflux* that makes it distance itself from other conceptual art is that it does not require highly intellectual thought to be perceived by the audience. If the artwork is targeting social transformation it cannot be based in an extensive baggage of ideas or knowledge of art criticism. The work needs to be direct, triggering both the imagination of a child and the will of a socially-conscious activist. The *NKN?* is then an example of *permaflux* in action.

## IX. “A NEW KIND OF NATURE?” AND ITS CAMBODIAN CHAPTER “JOSS VINES”

The starting point is imagining a post-humanity world where, due to climate change and environmental destruction, garbage took over. With this basic premise, the main intention is to comment on the current modern lifestyle based on consumerism and disregard for the climate crisis, while having a playful attitude within the creative process and following *permaflux*. The project is divided in chapters, first was in Phnom Penh and entitled “*Joss Vines*”, second is in Cheongju, with the third planned for an art residency in Nepal next year.

Extra Joss is a popular energy drink in powder being sold in Cambodia but unavailable in many other countries. Informal and low-paid workers with extensive working hours drink it in order to stay awake, with the little yellow packets being left behind in construction sites and

on the streets. This speed and stamina required for modern urban living is impacting environment in an overpowering way, fed as well by the increasing inequality between low-paid jobs in construction work and the luxury condominiums being built (where the workers could never dream of living).

This project imagines a post-humanity future where trash conquered the cities once lived by humans, with vines made by packets of Extra Joss growing on top of abandoned structures or crawling on the side of vacant buildings. Rather than pretending to be a dark foresight, this work aims to playfully construct a fictionalized image of the world where, perhaps, future archaeologists will try to understand which kind of existence their ancestor urban tribes had.



The process of creating the vines themselves, with each packet carefully cut and interlocked to the next one, functions as a metaphor to the environmental consequences of our actions as consumers. A chain reaction from the act of buying until the package or leftovers of the product end up in a landfill or ocean.

At the same time, Joss is also the name for the traditional incense sticks Asians burn in temples, borrowing another layer of meaning to the vines. Which faith in this current system and consumer society are we relying for our future? Maybe one day the Joss Vines will conquer us, or perhaps one day we will stop believing and quit consuming energy drinks to work so hard and finally have a good night of sleep. And offer some rest to our planet as well.

In this first iteration of the project, communal activities were also included such as a clean-up activity in the street of Phnom Penh where the installation was placed, and which was heavily littered with trash; and a presentation of the project in a Waste Submit organized by a local organization with conferences and exhibition related to the topic. This further the intention of using art as an engaging social practice to raise awareness where process is more valued than the final result.

## X.THE KOREAN CHAPTER “LUXURY CREATURES”

As explained in this paper, for this research a brand called “Luxury” was chosen as raw material, with this decision involving various reasons:

- it creates a link to the previous location of the project, which is intended to continue to happen between following chapters;
- embeds in the object something from the journey of the artist himself, addressing the restriction of not being able to live within the local context for enough time to go through the whole research process with the community and the use of found garbage in the same city, overcoming this challenge by using an object that has connection with both Korea and Cambodia;
- takes advantage of the brand name as a satirical comment on the products we use that are disconnected to our need of survival but rather a search for pleasure or escape, social status and acceptance. It's this desire that drives our economy, in one hand supporting it by creating jobs and elevating the social-economic status of low-income workers, but in the other not taking into consideration the basic fact of finitude of natural resources and the rapid destruction we are creating with our habits and modern comforts;
- following the previous argument, it's very interesting to notice that art, often described as a 'luxurious' pursuit and discriminated against in times of crisis such as this pandemic (e.g. cuts in cultural funds), was responsible by the sophisticated conversion of the Cheongju tobacco factory into a cultural center, focused on the economic development

by production of intangible value such as artistic experiences instead of creating more consumable goods (parallel to what's being argued by this research in terms of meaning-creation instead of object-production);

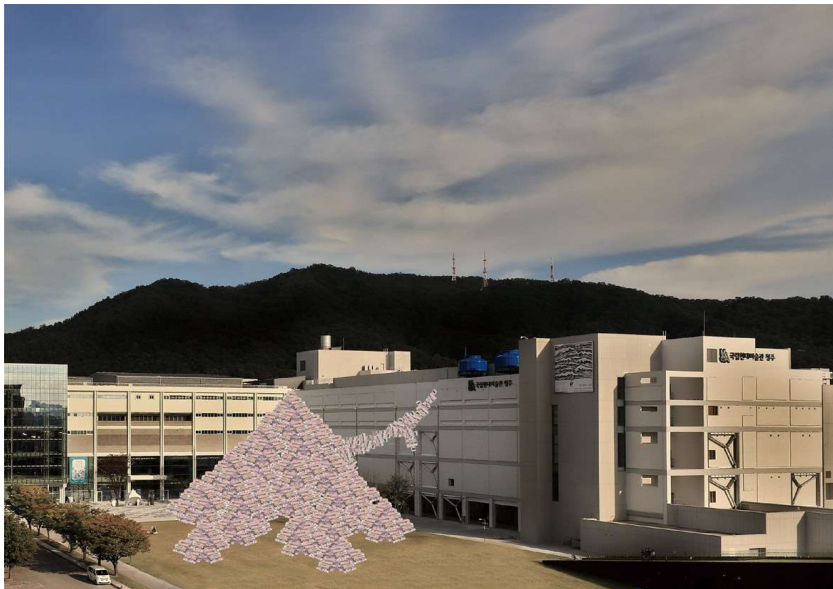
- getting back to the cigarette pack chosen, is also interesting to address the fact that is menthol, often wrongly considered less harmful for our bodies than conventional cigarettes, and that is presented using the deliberate choice of the color green, more commonly associated with ecological endeavors despite continuing to be an object of desire and consumption with obvious consequences for both our body and planet;
- lastly, despite the importance of collective action and political will to tackle the climate crisis we are facing, it's also relevant to stress the role of personal responsibility. We cannot have the luxury to wait for collective action without crafting the ethical ground that arises from individual actions towards the common good, including realizing our own habits and patterns of consumption and its consequences to the planet, our *trashsphere* as an artifact of our own footprint and impact in the world. We cannot escape the fact that we participate in this system of capitalism and waste, so the choice of these cigarette packs includes the fact that most of them were consumed by the artist himself and his close group of friends, function as a honest token of acceptance of responsibility and acknowledging the impact of our own lives, family, friends, coworkers;



The project can be presented as a mix of different mediums, from actual sculptures out of the cigarette packs to illustrations or photo-manipulations that convey the imagery of post-humanity waste creatures occupying our urbanscapes:



Imagining an application in an abandoned street scene.3100–3000 BC



Imagining an application on the Cheongju Tobacco Factory

# XI.CONCLUSION

This research tried to reflect on the limits of craft; as a handmade practice, in its dimensions of functional value versus pursue of aesthetic, both artistic and/or decorative value, and more importantly, of the possibility (or not) of getting away from the deliberate materiality of the crafted object, addressing the question of until when we can still call it a ‘craft’. Not aiming to provide a definitive answer, the project ‘*A new kind of nature?*’ proposes an alternative methodology towards a conceptual craft turned into social sculpture, and a series of tools to navigate the space between art and craft-making. With a clear intention of raising

questions on the environmental impact our present consumption habits and production strategies will have in future generations. Both to our physical planet and the meanings we are leaving behind, the perhaps confusing stories we imprint in the objects we create and would be one day found by future researchers trying to understand what we were. Moreover, after describing the influences and a socially-engaged upcycling-based methodology, a possible conceptual framework, entitled *permaflux*, was proposed to advance the idea of co-creation as a tool to re-invent our society, with both imagination and care for the world in mind.

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## Annex I - Friedman’s Twelve Fluxus Ideas

1. Globalism (democratization and lack of boundaries between nations, culture, society, art, high and low culture, etc)
2. Unity of art and life (there are no boundary to be broken))
3. Intermedia (a logical consequence from the absence of barrier between art and life, it’s a fusion rather than just an aggregate of different art forms together)
4. Experimentalism (artistic approach based on research and experiments, innovating the concepts of conventionalism and what is art, collaboration as main work paradigm)
5. Chance (influence from dada and cage, connected with experimentalism in order to create new possibilities that can crystallize in new forms that evolve to future innovative realities)
6. Playfulness (not only humor but also meaning free and uncompromised experimentation)
7. Simplicity (the stripped-to-the-core elegant relationship between truth and beauty, minimalism in terms of means and not aesthetics)
8. Implicativeness (the work should imply a maximum of intellectual, sensuous or emotional content within the minimum of material)
9. Exemplativism (the quality of a work exemplifying the theory and meaning of its construction)
10. Specificity (the tendency of a work to be specific, self contained and to embody all its own parts, no ambiguity of meaning)
11. Presence in time (emphasis on time related artwork, questioning issues like impermanence and change, for instance with performances, pieces that degradate with time, etc)
12. Musicality (artwork that use scores like a musical composition, like event scores for performance based works, instructions that can be used by others to realize the work for themselves, with a connection to the social activism and democratization of art that fluxus has and the believe that anyone can be an artist and realize a work)