

# PET Lamp

**NEW PRODUCT:** PET Lamp Bolgatanga in collaboration with The Baba Tree ·  
**INTERVIEWS:** Discover the experience of the artisans that have been involved  
in the PET Lamp Project · **EXHIBITIONS:** We show you the compilation of the  
best set ups · **FIND OUT MORE:** Unique insights into our project.

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## THANKS TO:

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## NOTE

It is custom in many Indegenous communities not to mention the names or view photographs of the decesed. Members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are respectfully advised that a number of people named in this publication and depicted in photographs have now passed away.

## COLLECTIONS

PET Lamp is part of the permanent collection of the following museums and institutions:

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. 2020.



Centre Pompidou, Paris. 2018.



National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. 2017.



M + West Kowloon Museum, Hong Kong. 2019.



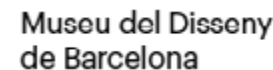
Denver Art Museum, Denver. 2014.



Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris. 2016.



Museo del Diseño de Barcelona, Barcelona. 2019.



MAK Design Lab, Vienna. 2021.



# EDITORIAL

Despite the challenges ahead, PET Lamp faces 2022 with optimism and confidence. The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have started to diminish, and our team, just like many of you, is learning to adapt.

Since the PET Lamp project started in 2012, improvisation, authenticity, creativity, and community have been at the heart of our efforts. These core values have enabled us to sustain a track record of resilience. Not only have we survived COVID-19 headwinds, but we have also managed to expand through doors that were only half open before the pandemic. As we step further into the new year, even amid persisting uncertainties, PET Lamp is more alive than ever.

We have been mastering the art of improvisation over the past two years. Creation is naturally a part of PET Lamp's DNA. As a result, our business model has undergone a strategic shift. The Milan fair was postponed twice following the cancellation in 2020. The absence of a physical presence at fairs, although disappointing, prompted us to elevate our online platform. Additionally,

transport issues, volatile shipping rates, and fluctuating raw material prices have complicated manufacturing and distribution. That said, in 2020 we successfully launched the PET Lamp Bolgatanga collection in collaboration with the extraordinary master weavers of Ghana's Baba Tree Basket Company. The Bolgatanga collection has become one of our best-sellers. As soon as one arrives at our studio in Madrid, another one flies out to a new home. We have recently created a smaller version in bright colors that will be on display at the Milan Fair 2022, which will happen exceptionally in June.

Our first Bolgatanga collection featured natural tones and black elephant grass fiber, creating an elegant and powerful testament to the weavers' skill. We wanted to showcase more of this unique talent and beauty by incorporating Africa's vibrant colors. What's more, the PET bottle connecting with the colored cables is prominent, compared with the more subtle placement in the first Bolgatanga lamp.

The pandemic made travel to new

workshops impossible at times and irresponsible at other times. Although the mobility restrictions seemed like a hurdle, they turned into an opportunity to deepen bonds with our existing partners, enabling us to build upon the numerous great moments we've shared. Reconnecting with collaborators will likely be a direction we follow over the coming years, and we're eager to return to Colombia, where the project began with weavers from indigenous communities along the Amazon River.

You may have already noticed our new logo on the cover of this newspaper. We teamed the redesign with a new interactive website, too. Click on "Inspiration" to see in-situs, narrowing the search by sliding the configuration bar to your preferred colors or the number of lamps to feature. And click on "Shop" to mix and match our shades to create your own PET Lamp installation with all the available stock online. We're particularly excited about the site and hope you have fun with it.

Visit [www.petlamp.org](http://www.petlamp.org) to learn more about the origin of our lamps, shop our

collection, and connect with our team. Thanks for accompanying us on our journey of creation!



*Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Madrid, February 2022*

# COLLABORATORS & TEAM

## Colombia

### Local partner:

Alejandro Tapias  
www.alejotapias.com

Alejandro Tapias  
Product Design

## Chile

### Chimbarongo local partner:

SiStudio:  
Paula Navarrete  
Verónica Posadas  
www.sistudio.cl



## Ghana

### Local partner:

The Baba Tree Basket Company:  
Gregory MacCarthy  
Bettina McILwraith  
www.babatree.com



## Ethiopia

### Local partner:

Salem's Ethiopia:  
Salem Kassahun  
www.salemsethiopia.com



## Japan

### Local partner:

Monomo:  
Sachiko Matsuyama  
www.monomo.jp



monomo

## PET Lamp

### In house team:



From left to right: Sebastián Chisari (Production), Sebastián Betanzo (Cofounder, Business & Administration), Irene Hurtado (Sales), Alvaro Catalán de Ocón (Cofounder, Art Director & Communication), Tomás Pettersen (Project Development & Sales), Alex Majagranzas (Communications & Graphic Design), Enrique Romero de la Llana (Cofounder, Product Development & Production), Ana Aguirre (Business Assistant), Almudena González (Production).

## Chile

### Mapuche local partner:

Ideartesana:  
Claudia Hurtado  
www.ideartesana.cl

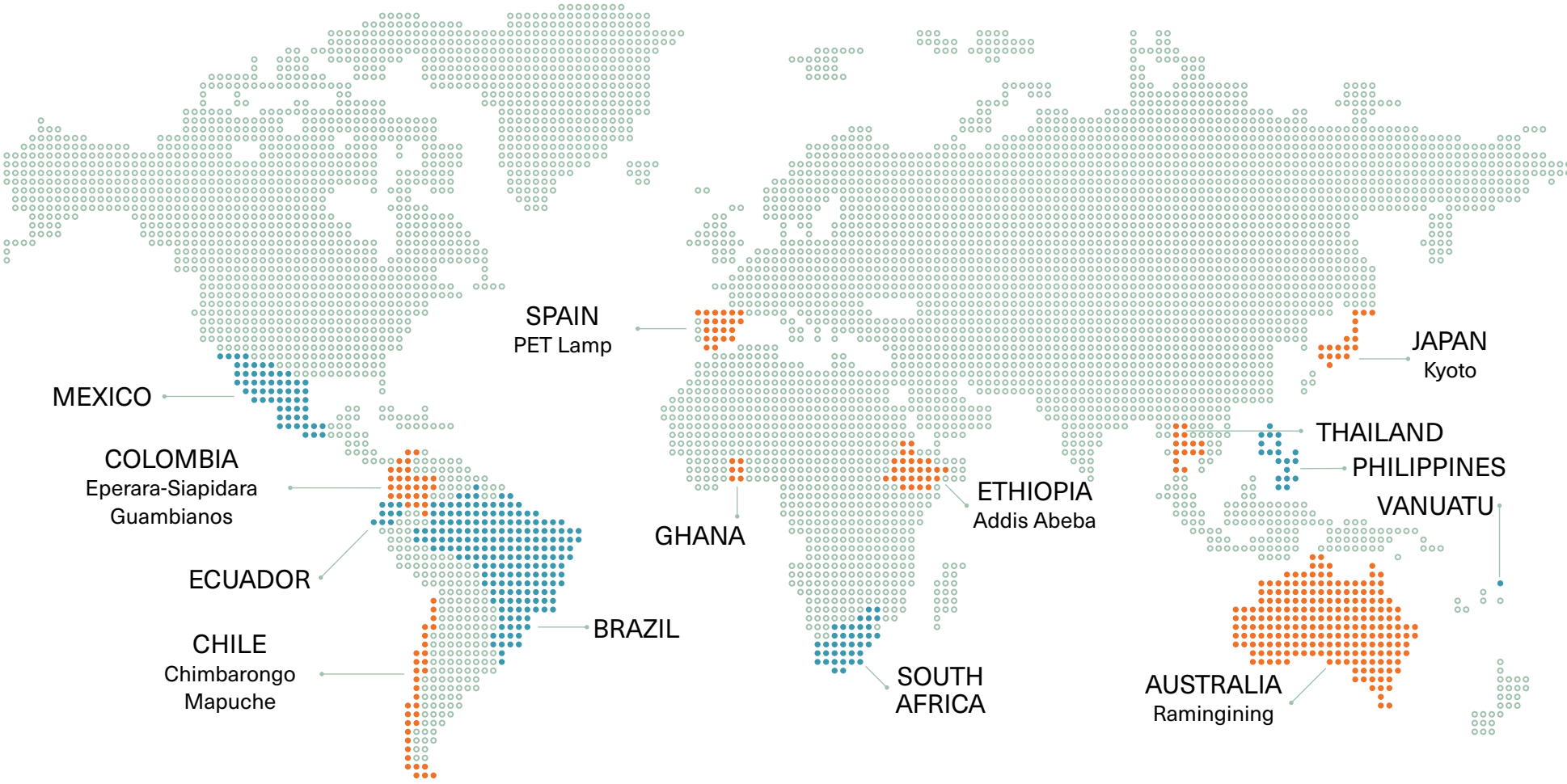


## Thailand

### Local partner:

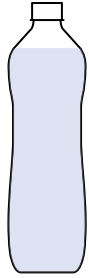
Traditional Bamboo Handicraft Center:  
Komkrit Borriboon  
www.tbhc1978.com



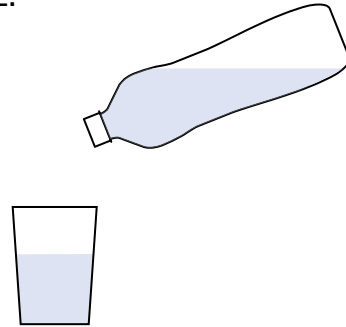


- HERE WE ARE
- HERE WE WANT TO GO

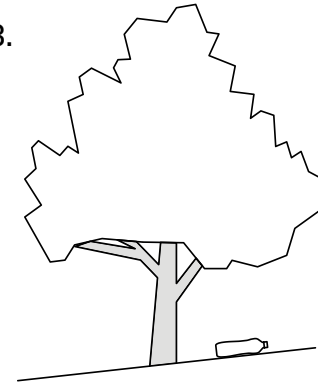
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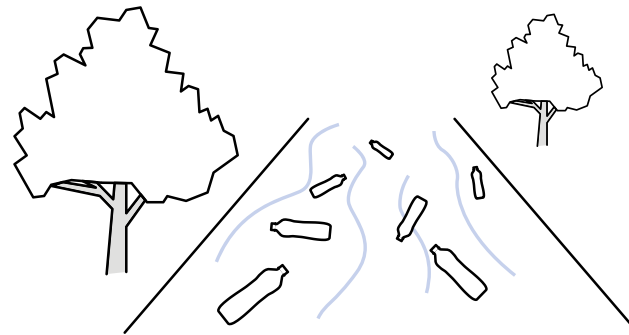
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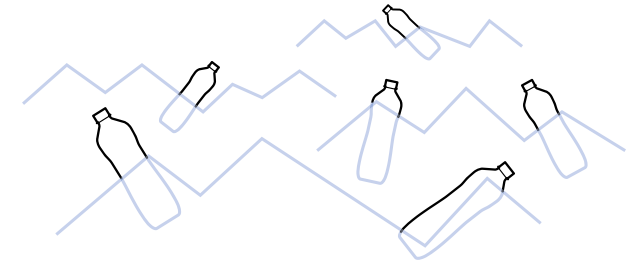
# THE ISSUE

In the summer of 2011, Álvaro Catalán de Ocón was invited by Hélène Le Drogou to be part of an attractive project focussed on the reuse of PET plastic bottles and to give his point of view as an industrial designer. A growing quantity of plastic waste was and still is invading every corner of the planet. In many locations there are insufficient resources to collect and recycle the waste and in tropical zones this problem has a unique aggravating factor. The tropical rains wash PET plastic bottles into the rivers, which in turn take them out to the sea. Once there, the bottles float on the ocean currents. Despite the size of this problem no country has yet taken responsibility.

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# 'WASTE COLONIALISM': WORLD GRAPPLES WITH WEST'S UNWANTED PLASTIC

One hundred and 41 containers filled with rotting plastic waste have been on a journey for more than a year. Scattered between Turkey, Greece and Vietnam, far from their origins in Germany, the containers' voyage sheds light on the hidden global trade in plastic waste.

Arriving in Turkey in late 2020, shortly before a ban on mixed plastic waste imports came into force, the containers quickly became the centre of a battle between traders, a shipping line, multiple governments and environmental campaigners demanding their return. Turkish authorities refused entry to the containers, leaving them in limbo. As they languished in ports across the country, the contents began to rot.[...]

The year-long saga of the 141 containers is a small slice of the international trade in plastic waste, the ugly underbelly of recycling in the global north. Plastic waste, especially mixed plastic from households, is frequently sent overseas to countries with lax environmental regulations, where it is melted into plastic pellets, dumped, or simply burned. [...]

Some of the countries listed among the world's top recyclers are also the biggest plastic waste exporters: Germany

was named the world's top recycler by the World Economic Forum three years ago, but exports an average of 1m tonnes of plastic waste annually, more than any other nation in the EU. [...]. "When you continue to consume more plastic there are only two ways to tackle the waste. One is incineration, the second is dumping. If you don't have dumping in your country then you should incinerate. But this has a carbon footprint, and many countries trying to cut carbon emissions don't want to incinerate their own waste," said Gündoğdu.

"Some of the top waste producers in Europe, like the UK, France and Germany have to find ways to deal with this issue. And the way they've found is exporting to poorer countries without effective waste management systems or environmental legislation and regulations. **This is waste colonialism,**" he said. [...]

When some of the containers of German waste were suddenly re-exported to Vietnam, campaigners sprung into action. Activists believe that the 16 containers sent last July to the port of Hai Phong were a test, to see if others could later follow the same route in order to dispose of the rotting containers entirely. But who authorised

their onward travel remains a mystery, especially as sending waste directly from an EU country to those outside the OECD is banned, and new controls on mixed plastic exports introduced last January require express consent from the Vietnamese authorities to import the containers. Vietnam's own ban on plastic waste imports is due to go into force in 2025, but it remains a popular destination for the global plastic recycling trade. There, workers are paid less than £5 a day to sort plastic into recyclable elements and non-recyclable. The former are melted down, exposing those nearby to toxic fumes. [...]

Vietnam and Turkey are two of a growing number of countries that have reported a sudden spike in plastic waste, after China's decision to ban waste imports in 2018 proved to be a watershed for the global trade. The decision "reverberated around the world", according to the United Nations, which added that nations in the global north "will, at last, have to face up to the true cost of their plastic addiction instead of shipping the problem to China, which has taken nearly half the world's waste since 1992".

"We've been sold a notion of 'don't worry, we'll recycle it' – and no one looked

at what recycling was like in China until three years ago," said Puckett. "We're putting out more plastic waste into the world, every day more than the day before, and there's no destination for it. It's now become a game of who will take it because there are mountains of plastic waste and it's not stopped." [...]

Matthew Gordon, an environmental researcher at Yale University [commented]: "South-east Asia clearly seems to be a hotspot, especially in the aftermath of the China import ban [...]. One of the reasons for this seems to be that when container ships travel from places like China to the US carrying manufactured goods, they offer extremely low freight on the return trip – otherwise they would be going back empty. So exporters in the US often find it cheaper to send plastics abroad than to deal with them at home." [...]

*Michaelson, R. (2021, December 31). The Guardian. Retrieved January 26, 2022, from <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/dec/31/waste-colonialism-countries-grapple-with-wests-unwanted-plastic>*

# PROPOSAL

We believe in reuse as the counterpoint to recycling. Our starting point is the profound contradiction hidden in every PET bottle: a very short useful life compared to the time it takes for the materials from which it is made to decompose, not to mention the energy used in its production and, when applicable, in its recycling.

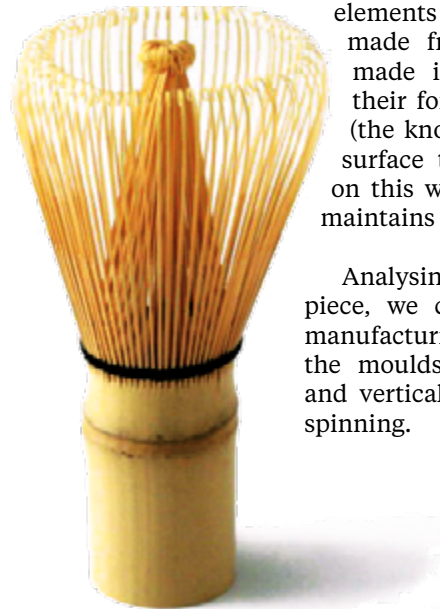
Nevertheless, they are a widely used product because they are undeniably effective, cheap and practical.

Our objective is to think about the validity of the object in the long term, and to prevent it from becoming obsolete after only a few minutes. The right use of the bottle would allow it to be transformed into a coherent, functional and desirable product for the market.

## INSPIRATION

The starting point for how to use the bottles came from analysis of the bamboo stirrer used in the Japanese bamboo tea ceremony since both objects have many elements in common: they are both made from a single material and made in one piece. Furthermore, their form has a structural element (the knot of the bamboo) and a flat surface that can be spun. Weaving on this warp, the piece acquires and maintains its desired form.

Analysing the bottle as an industrial piece, we can see in it traces of its manufacturing process. The lines where the moulds meet serve as horizontal and vertical references for cutting and spinning.



## DESIGN

PET bottles can have a second life. There are other ways to accomplish this, but we looked to fuse one of the most widely produced industrial objects with one of the traditional crafts most rooted to the earth.

The bottles changed from containers for liquids into ceiling lamps. We took advantage of the bottle top to join the electrical components to the lamp shade, the neck becomes the structure and the body of the bottle is a surface on which to weave. The principle of weaving is reinterpreted and the surface of the bottle is converted into the warp through which the artisan weaves the weft.

Just as a tracking number printed on the bottles neck tells us of its production, where it was bottled and its end market, the weaving created by the artisan tells us of its tradition through the fibres, colours and motifs.

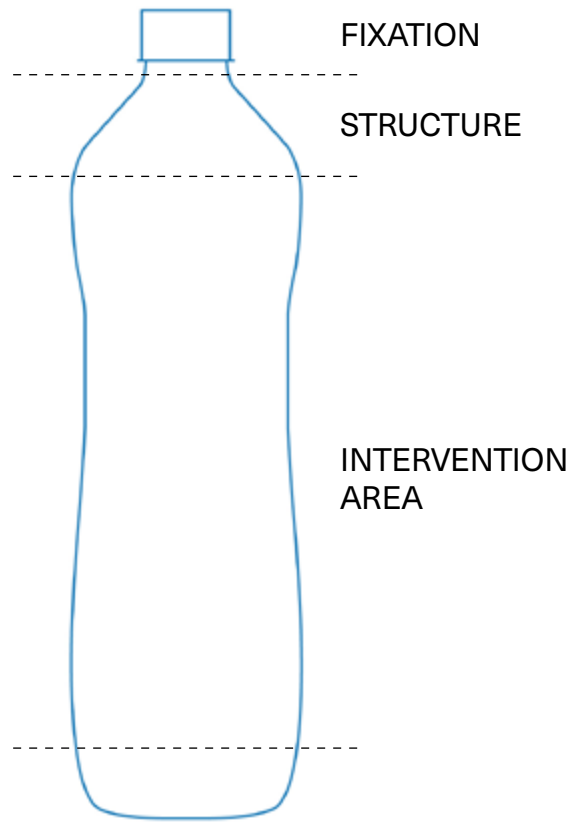
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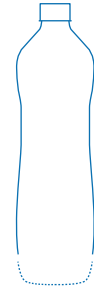
# HOW?

BAMBOO

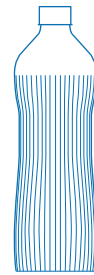
PET BOTTLE



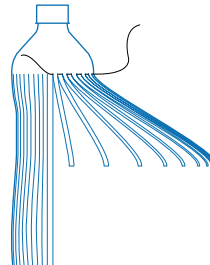
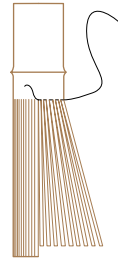
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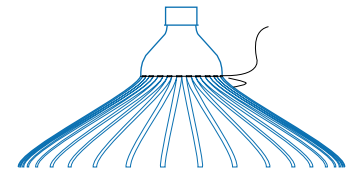
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# GLOBALISATION

## PET BOTTLES

One of the main reasons why we developed the PET Lamp project is the possibility of approaching a global problem (the waste from plastic PET bottles) using a local craft (the basket weaving tradition).

Basketry is one of the most ancient crafts and probably the origin of all textile arts worldwide. The process of interweaving different natural fibres for baskets and mat-making is one of the most universal craftworks. Authorities on the subject declare that there has never been a tribe in any part of the world that has not employed some type of basket.

Basket making emerged as a response to the human need for receptacles for storing, transporting food, etc. It also works as a way for the transmission of knowledge, securing the transmission of the symbols, beliefs and rituals of a culture from generation to generation. Analogously, modern PET plastic bottles have taken over our world as containers for liquids, replacing basketry and

pottery. These bottles also bear a printed tracking number that tells us about its production, bottling location and target market.

Throughout history, the uses of basketry have evolved to suit the needs of the moment, but with the arrival of plastics in the 1950s (and later on with corrugated cardboard boxes), the basket making industry declined and was displaced to become a purely decorative craft.

Nowadays, 100 million PET plastic bottles are used daily, of which only 1 out of every 5 is recycled. The rest becomes litter, goes to landfills or ends up in the ocean, polluting our ecosystem. This contrasts with traditional basketry, which uses natural materials that decay naturally and constantly. It takes 700 years for a PET plastic bottle to start decomposing. Bacteria, which usually break down organic materials, don't like petroleum-based plastics.

TRACKING NUMBER

COSMOGONY



# BASKETRY

Although basket weaving has been one of most widespread crafts in history, it is hard to date its origins. Archaeologists say that the oldest known baskets were found in Faiyum, upper Egypt, and appear to be approximately 10,000 to 12,000 years old. Basketry is not only older than pottery, but was its precursor. Pieces dating from the Neolithic period have been discovered in which clay had been moulded around a basket structure before being fired.

It is an interesting fact that while many other crafts have become mechanized, no one has ever invented a machine that can make baskets. Traditionally, basket makers gather and prepare their own materials. However, the increasing number of basket makers and the scarcity of native natural fibres has created the need to import materials.

The aim of our project is not only to obtain an attractive and desirable contemporary object mixing basket weaving and reused PET plastic bottles, but also to establish a working method full of anthropological overtones. We defend the importance of maintaining the traditional techniques of different

ancestral places giving artisans freedom to express themselves, while introducing our own vision of their work and techniques. That is how the identity, tradition and handcraft techniques of each culture that has participated in the PET Lamp project are imprinted on each lamp.

In order to preserve these concepts and thanks to the collaboration of local artisans, we have explored different types of basketry in the countries where we worked. “Coiled” basketry, crafted by our Ethiopian and Chilean Mapuche artisans, uses grasses and rushes. “Plaiting”, a technique used by our Colombian artisans, uses materials that are wide and ribbon-like, such as palms or yucca. “Twining”, which we explored in our Australian experience, uses materials from roots and fresh palm leaves. “Wicker” baskets are crafted from willow masterfully used by our Chilean artisans from the Chimbarongo region. The artisans in Thailand are specialized in Bamboo basketry techniques, characterized by its controlled production process, and our Ghana artisans work with a braided technique using local fibers crafted from flexible yet strong palms.

Top left: Rock art, 6000 B.C. Spain.  
 Bottom: A harvest basket from the tomb of Nakht, 1400 B.C. Egypt.  
 Top right: Late Archaic period, 510-500 B.C. Greece.



# COLOMBIA 2012

Colombia has the fourth largest territory of any country in South America and is the only one to possess both a Pacific and a Caribbean coast.

Colombia boasts an abundance of nature and is the second most biodiversified country in the world. This natural wealth is found throughout its numerous humid and fluvial areas, the Amazon jungle, Caribbean savannahs, Andean forests, etc.

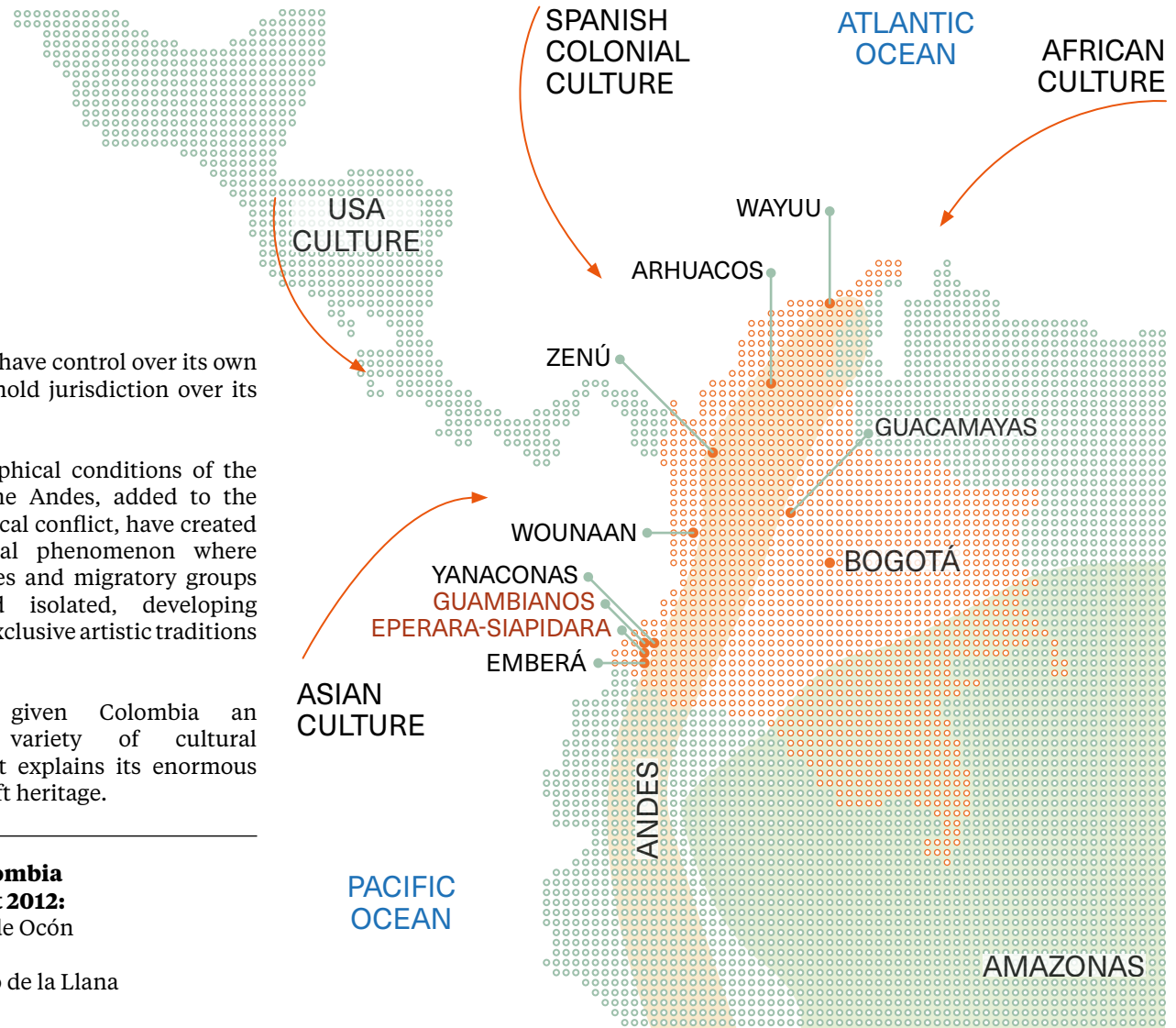
With a population of over 46 million, Colombia defines itself as a multiracial nation, with an ethnic mix of races, the majority of which come from Europe, mainly Spain and Italy. There is also a large population of African origin as well as smaller groups descended from Asia and North America. The indigenous population, which makes up 3.4% of the total population, owns 27% of the land and maintains a degree of autonomy to manage its community affairs, run its

health systems, have control over its own education and hold jurisdiction over its own territory.

The topographical conditions of the Amazon and the Andes, added to the prolonged political conflict, have created a specific social phenomenon where different cultures and migratory groups have remained isolated, developing particular and exclusive artistic traditions and customs.

This has given Colombia an extraordinary variety of cultural expressions that explains its enormous musical and craft heritage.

**Workshop Colombia  
Bogotá, August 2012:**  
Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Juana Miranda  
Enrique Romero de la Llana





## COMMUNITY

Through Artesanías de Colombia, an organization dedicated to the dissemination and preservation of the traditional crafts of Colombia, we had the opportunity to collaborate with artisans of two distinct ethnic groups from the Cauca region who had been displaced by guerrilla war to Bogota.

The Eperara-Siapidara are found in the littoral region, a hot zone of Cauca. In their surroundings they find the natural pigments and the “Paja Tetera” palm tree fibers for their weaving.

The Guambianos are an ethnic group from a cold zone situated in the central mountain range of the Andes. In their wool and cotton weaving they reflect the symbolism of their culture, a tradition that they have preserved from the Incas.

Weaving was a cultural practice in the

daily life of these communities, favoured by their natural environment. Promoting the tradition of weaving reinforces community and family bonds, building endurance for the indigenous culture. Weaving to these communities is also strongly connected with mathematical operations, natural sciences, geometry, etc. Artisans gather to weave and through this activity they relate with each other, observe each other’s work, they teach and learn, sharing and passing on this knowledge to the next generation. This way they keep alive their intangible cultural heritage that otherwise would dilute and fade away in the city.

In this first phase of the project we have tried to give these artisans, who are found living in Bogota in very poor conditions, uprooted from their land and their culture, a livelihood thanks to their traditional knowledge.



## MAKING OF: PAJA TETERA

The production process used in this lamp collection is based on a complex technique of plaiting with natural Paja Tetera fibres used in Colombian crafts.

Paja Tetera are long and broad fibres, similar to the ones taken from palm or yucca plants, which are then dyed, cut and woven along with the strips of PET plastic bottles on wooden moulds.

The colours and patterns woven by artisans of all ages transmit the intrinsic relationship between the traditions and the raw materials, preserving and depicting a range of ancestral pre-Hispanic motifs on the lamps.



Top left: Raw paja tetera.

Bottom left: Coloured fiber.

Right: Checking the combination of paja tetera with PET plastic.

Previous page: Marta Cesilia Cuchillo with her son at Artesanías de Colombia's patio, Bogotá.

Bottom: Precolombian patterns woven with paja tetera.

## MAKING OF: PLAITING







Different steps during the weaving process.  
Bottom right: Team portrait during the workshop in Bogotá, 2012.



## THE SILENCES OF A COLOMBIAN PET LAMP

Ten years ago, it was all violence: flying bullets, murders, kidnappings and more murders and more corpses and who knows when it will all happen again.

The people of the village leave everything behind, the animals, the crops, their homes, and seek refuge far away, in “a big house, everyone together for three years”. There they stay, closed in. The UN and the Red Cross bring them food. Waiting. Existing and waiting, like in the village, because everything is there, around them.

Tired of waiting, some of them, the ones in most danger, go even further, to Cali, the big city. And one by one the others follow them. A new language, Spanish, a new word every day, that they repeat because they heard it. The misery, the administration, the fear of the dangers in the city, so many things so hard to understand.

Then they go together to Bogotá, where some think everything will be easier. It is cold, you need money for a roof over your head, everyone packed together in one single room, but together.

After so many forced and successive displacements, they’ve spent eight years in Bogotá.

Melida, Liliana and Sevilio already speak Spanish, admirably well, and their children go to school. They still weave hats and baskets to make a living. For five years they have formed part of a group of ten artisans from their village and they weave lampshades. With advice from Alvaro they have reworked the shapes, they re-cut and adapt the recycled plastic bottles; from the village, a grandmother has improved the finishes of the edges of the lampshades that fly to Madrid to become PET Lamps.

At the other end of the world, someone, after a day of varied but constant study (because that’s the basis of Western personal progress) switches on a PET Lamp to have dinner in their dining room, to read a novel in comfort in their leather armchair, to crawl around the floor playing with their toys.

Liliana, Melida, Sevilio, do you know all the stages this lamp has gone through, when you thought it was finished after

weaving it? Yes, Alvaro and Alejandro told us. Everything comes down to thinking about money and learning from books!

Thankful for having the PET Lamp that enables them to live, with nostalgia for “the Land”, which is what they call their past, worried about the grandson born in Bogotá who understands the language of the people but doesn’t want to speak it, they know they are changing but they feel protected by their mother tongue and by being close together. Or at least the adults do. But “school is bad”, says Liliana.

The first PET Lamp units they made were a surprise, at times something they didn’t understand, then there was relief and finally gratitude towards Alvaro and his group for letting them participate in a project they feel proud of.

Now, five years on, they are assaulted by contradictions their culture has not prepared them for. What does it mean to learn what you knew simply because you were born; learn what, make decisions about what, imitate who? Liliana remembers with nostalgia that simple

education, made up of imitation and oral messages, but she studies, endangering the principle of that inherent wisdom bequeathed to her by her culture. She wants to learn how the white people do it, and let her daughter learn when she is born, to give her a knowledge that she herself learnt by imitating and copying. In the course of our conversation, she realises that this text can be translated for the people of her village and the idea, still incongruent to her, frightens her. What does translate mean?

Inevitable cultural confrontations or contaminations that put their very essence at risk? The success of PET Lamp has ensured them a certain cultural adaptability they lacked when they left the Land. But adaptation is learning, and learning like the whites do, is that dangerous?

The Colombian PET Lamp has to travel around the world with the paradox of displacement that in some ways it embodies. It is salvation, nostalgia, pernicious changes for the artisans that make it possible. It bears five years of forced changes inside it. It is not just a

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Liliana Grueso.

product made by artisans in their homes, it is the work of people facing deep contradictions that just a few years ago they couldn't even imagine.

Their life framework and creative base are being questioned in exchange for their survival. The hope is that our beautiful lamp can act, as its artisans would wish, as a reflection on the meaning of life. Reproduction, re-cognition of an innate wisdom we are born with or the intellectual conquest of a baby who is born without knowing? Both visions are in the Antipodes!

In this beautiful object, the PET Lamp, silences are hidden that the Eperara-Siapidara would like to express, silences of violence, silences of gratitude to their co-inventors, silences of contradictions they can be aware of now that they no longer live in the urgent times of pure survival, silences of the very essence of their lives. Life, do they give it to you or do you learn it? It is not just a question of discovering different cultures, but rather living in another culture maintaining a mould of an innate culture, something which in their case is incompatible. The PET Lamp

has helped in their physical survival, they are aware of this deep transformation. But, how to disown the inheritance of their cacique, which requires immobility, for a people who shall always be displaced? Melinda knows, deep down inside, that she will not go back to her village. And she is resigned to that. Sevilio dreams and smiles, he knows that he'll go back with his wife Liliana and that everything will be as it was before. To be a place where the spiders bite him, to carry on making useless lampshades, a place where the light is "not the same". Being. A complete being bequeathed by birth.

*Hélène Le Drogou  
Proyecto Isla de Agua  
8th November 2017*



## THE WEAVERS: EPERARA- SIAPIDARA

Right: María Celina, Sevilio and  
Mélida Valencia.  
Bottom left: Manuela Dura.  
Bottom right: Emerita Chirimio.



## THE WEAVERS: GUAMBIANOS

Left: Marta Cesilia Cuchillo.  
Center: Domingo Ullurie.  
Right: Maria Stella Cuchillo.







# CHILE 2013 + 2016

The antagonism of the driest desert in the world and the majestic ice fields of Chilean Patagonia find a balance in the central valley of this 4,329 km long country.

The pleasant climate and the fertile soil make the central region of Chile into an ideal place for the production of the different natural fibres traditionally used in basketry.

Here, weaving has its origins in pre-colonial times and natives use supple but hardwearing fibres such as Ñoca, poplar roots and copihue.

With the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, wicker was introduced as an alternative to the native fibres. The newly imported techniques quickly turned it into the prevalent material for making furniture, baskets and decorative pieces.

Distinguished by its sobriety and lack of ornamentation, the basketry of the Mapuche people and of Chile's Central region mirrors discreet character of its people, who are strongly connected to the land and to the cycles of nature.

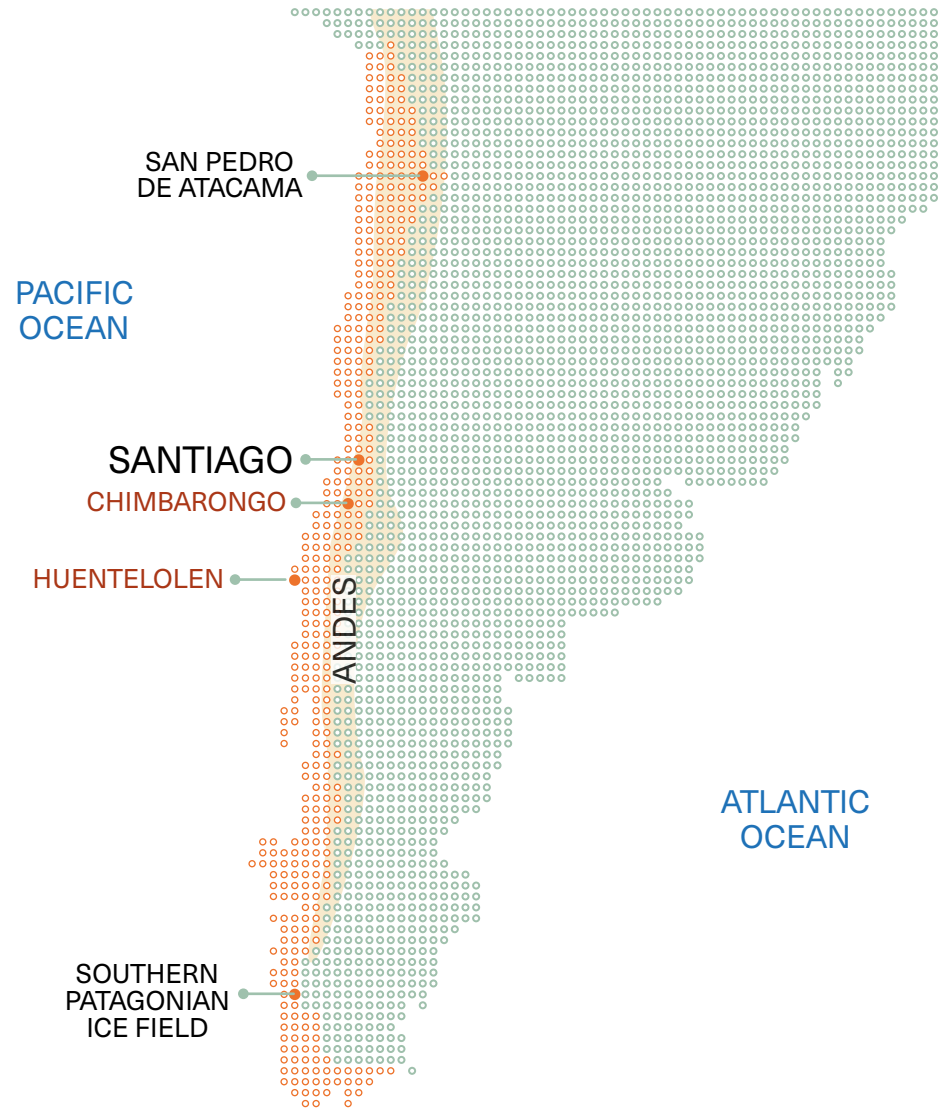
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### **Workshop Chile Chimbarongo, February 2014:**

Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Constanza López  
Paula Navarrete  
Verónica Posada  
Enrique Romero de la Llana

### **Workshop Chile Huentelolen, January 2017:**

Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Claudia Hurtado  
Paula Navarrete  
Enrique Romero de la Llana  
Verena Toskana-Lanzendorff







# CHIMBARONGO 2013

Chimbarongo is known as “The Wicker Capital” of the country for its long lasting tradition of wicker weaving.

This area of 35,000 inhabitants, 150 km to the south of Santiago, divides its economic activity between the cultivation of fruit, viticulture, and the production of wickerwork crafts. The latter has become widespread amongst the local population as a result of its heritage and the increasing professionalization of the activity.

This has culminated in the creation of an important annual fair where regional craftsmen exhibit and sell their most advanced and complex wickerwork creations. This has encouraged many craftspeople to involve their families in their activities and create little individual workshops of professional artisans.

As one of the main global producers of wicker, Chile has definitely offered us one of the most complete experiences in the basketry tradition and each of the processes it involves: the harvest of

wicker, storage and preparation prior to weaving. Wicker is famous for its flexibility, but still remains a quite rigid material, usually handled by men who work with wet stems to make it more flexible. Nowadays, Chilean artisans use their own tools to measure the width and thickness of the wicker stems.

During the weaving process of the PET Lamp, they use wood moulds, previously designed in Madrid, to maintain the shape, and specially calibrated stems that harmoniously join the plastic stripes of the PET bottle.

The challenge of this project is to achieve a contemporary design product that adheres to the principles and structure of traditional wicker work, with the hope that one day it could be transformed into an alternative form of social integration.



## MAKING OF: WICKER



Top left: A wicker plantation.  
Top right: Harvest of wicker left to dry at the sun.  
Bottom left: Splitting the wicker in quarters.  
Bottom right: Adjusting the thickness of the fiber.  
Opposite page: Carrying a bunch of wicker.



## MAKING OF: WICKER PLAITING

The method used to obtain the raw material is a key factor in developing this product. Here the material is available thanks to large plantations that enable the artisans to produce and make use of large amounts of wicker to work with throughout the year.

Once the material is collected, they work with it using a highly detailed plaiting technique to make rigid structures with different patterns and thicknesses.





Weaving together the PET plastic bottle with the plain wicker.  
Bottom left: Team portrait at Segundo's workshop.



## HAND-IN-HAND WITH ARTISANS

*Conversation with the anthropologist Constanza Miranda regarding an interview with the weaver Segundo Rodríguez.*

“Before, wicker didn’t give enough to “fill the pot”. It wasn’t profitable. You had to go out to the streets, they paid you badly. It’s the same problem today. There are few artisans left because they go to work in the country. And there I was, working in construction when the Spaniards found me. Paulita, in the times when I was working in construction. I asked permission from the boss (of the building site) and I showed them my work and they liked it. And we’ve been working with them up till today. Beginnings were not easy, because we didn’t have the patterns, you have to do all this with patterns. Crafts mean everything to me. It’s our work, I’ve been to other places. Thanks to the craft work I’ve been to other places. For example I went to Poland to a wicker work camp there. Here the authorities don’t do much for artisans”.

Don Segundo is an artisan that works with us at PET Lamp from Chile. He tells us that he has been working for over 40 years in Chimbarongo. He arrived there at 22 years of age with his grandparents and has always made wicker products to sell. He returned to the trade after a pause

to try out the construction industry, and could do so thanks to the chance to work on this new product proposed by PET Lamp.

*How do you see the situation, from a viewpoint as a scholar in anthropology and design?*

The story of Don Segundo really caught my attention. As he says, handcrafts weren’t paying him enough to “fill the pot” (Don Segundo, personal communication 2 November 2017). This situation is not uncommon for other artisans. Competition is stiffer because of the entry of cheaper international products that serve similar functions. They compete with things such as price and the latest designs and even include “Pop” designs. In Chile nowadays you can even buy handmade wicker products in shops and retail stores. Maybe it doesn’t have the same quality, but that depends on the person who buys it. Is it fair? Probably not, but we all know the market isn’t fair. How do we prepare our artisans for this new scenario? How can we make crafts last by generating openings to markets they don’t necessarily have access to? How can we generate practices that democratise entry into the market for artisans that don’t necessarily have a

network? In the interview Don Segundo says that he took time out to work in construction because he “had to fill the pot”. In other words, to make enough money to survive. In his own words, PET Lamp discovers him and gives him a new opportunity to work in a long-missed craft. In my opinion, being able to make markets accessible and democratise entry into them via design is a key factor in making crafts survive over time. I mention this because of what PET Lamp is doing, what’s being done nowadays by opening markets from Facebook and Instagram or even platforms like ETSY. The important thing is to provide networks to those who don’t have them so they can do the thing they most want to do and to stop the craft, which is a major asset for transmitting material culture, from being lost.

*Where are the key factors in maintaining a good long-term relationship with the artisan?*

In my experience, the key factor in generating a long-term relationship with artisans or members of a community has a lot to do with understanding their perception of value and the meaning of life. What’s important to the community of artisans (or to one artisan) in their

particular cultural context? What do they value? What are their priorities? How can we support each other? If there’s just one transaction to be done, for example: you make something and I buy it, it’s a relationship without foundations. It’s a relationship that can be broken because there’s no commitment involved. When we value the artisan as a system of knowledge and create a relationship of equality in the processes (without an imbalance of power), the relationships can be more fruitful. This creates a model of ongoing learning between the parties involved. If not, it becomes more of a “push, pull” model where the source of information dries up. If the source of information dries up, there’s no growth, nowhere to create, there’s nothing else to learn. I think that’s the key for organisations like PET Lamp. Generating models of continuous learning, where both parties learn from each other, generating a more symbiotic model.

*PET Lamp seeks to work hand-in-hand with artisans. How can we strengthen the processes of CO-DESIGN?*

This is a really important point! Previously design was conceived of as the designer doing something for others. Nowadays, the idea of work from the

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## THE WEAVERS: CHIMBARONGO

anthropological perspective is to achieve the design of multi-vocal products and experiences. I mean, experiences and products that represent “many voices”, many points of view. And that means going back to what I said before, it’s very important to work with communities, hand-in-hand, consider them as systems of knowledge where we can learn. The learning flow is two-way, without any imbalance of power. Anthropological tools enable us to manage concepts that lead to this type of relationship being created. To creating more fruitful relationships by understanding the cultural specificities and managing the biases. Design is strengthened when these tools are used in the field. More ethical processes are generated, which represent the values of all those involved and set out to decolonise the process itself.

*Constanza Miranda  
PhD in design with a  
specialisation in Applied  
Anthropology from the NC  
State University of the USA  
November 2017*



Top: Segundo Rodríguez.  
Bottom left: Rodolfo Castro.  
Bottom right: Juan Valenzuela.









# HUENTELOLEN 2016

The heart of the Araucania region is the home of the native Mapuche people. It is located approximately 400 km south of Santiago de Chile. This population is undergoing a slow process of integration with the rest of the country. In this area we met a group of talented women artisans eager to share their valuable traditions with the rest of the world: the Ñocha Malen Collective.

Together we ran two workshops in Huentelolen: the first one with the support of SiStudio, our local partners, and the second one with Claudia Hurtado from Ideartesana, who is currently in charge of managing and strengthening our relations with the artisans.

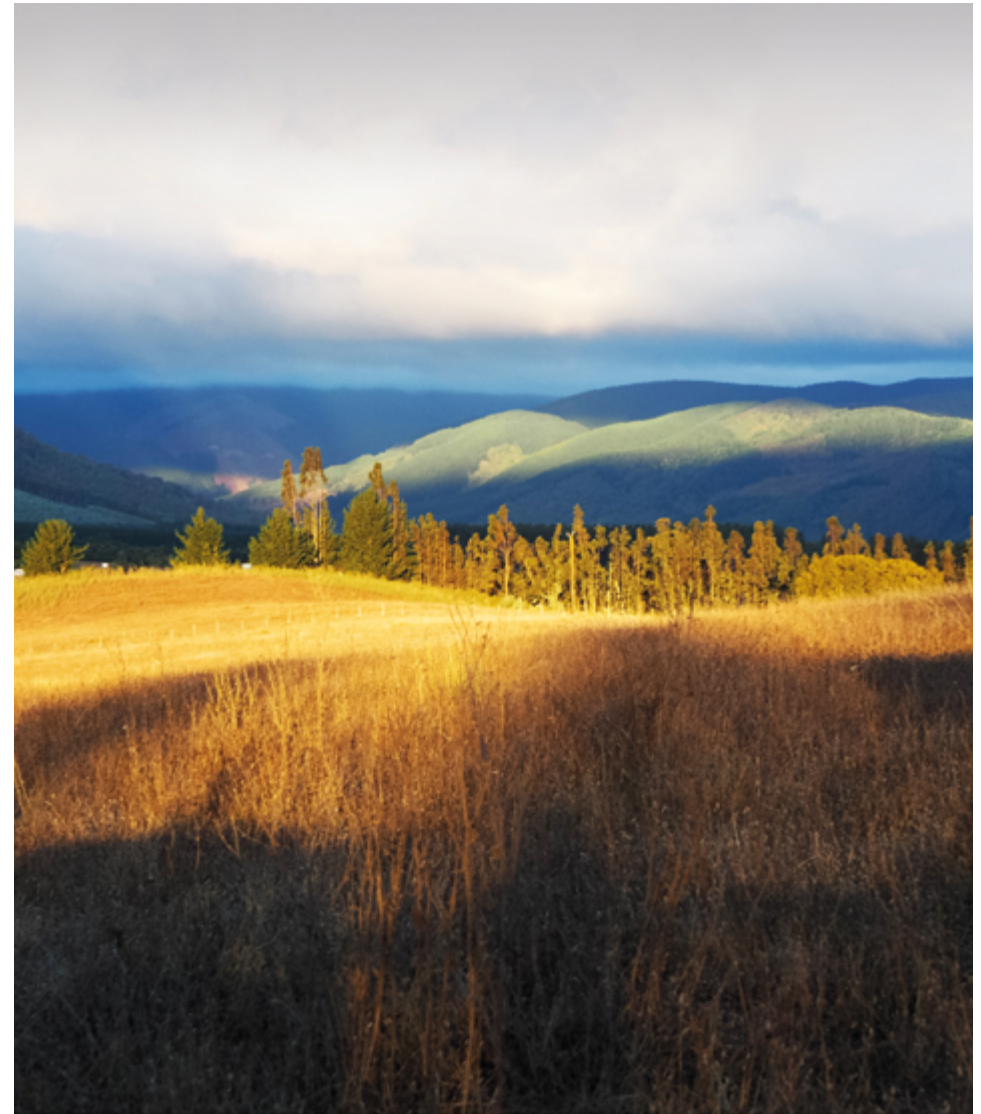
The opportunity to work with women in the community of Ñocha Malen was fascinating. As usual, the workshops taught us all the process until the final piece: The artisan women use a natural fibre called ñocha. They collect it, boil the leaves and dry them. Ñocha fibre is ready to be woven and shaped as desired.

Each PET Lamp receives the creative and personal imprint of its artisan who can freely apply the colours and

conserved techniques. These women started by learning and practicing PET bottle cutting and then weaved the PET strips and the vegetable fibre using wood moulds to preserve the previously studied and established shape. The artisans' talent and commitment to the learning process enabled this initiative to become a long-lasting project.

The resulting collection explores a social community environment, a native fibre and an ancient technique preserved for over 500 years.

The experience proved to be successful since it represented an incentive and a gesture of acknowledgement to very talented craftspeople who live in the so-called Red Zone of the Mapuche conflict. PET Lamp Mapuche is the proof that projects full of hope can be born in an area stigmatized by conflict and can contribute to improving the image of such a beautiful region. The array of personal stories and dreams now appear woven into the PET bottles with each new stitch weaved with the ñocha fibre.



## MAKING OF: ÑOCHA

The Mapuche collection is the outcome of the collective work of a group of female artisans who produce their own natural fibres in the surrounding area.

The fibres, which are traditionally used to make baskets, have been adapted along with the techniques to make these lamps.

After cutting, drying and dyeing the materials, the artisans then work on the different patterns. They roll the fibres together with the strips of PET plastic bottles around dry grass, which acts as a filling, exploring a range of muted colours to make a balanced and at the same time unique product with smooth and sensual weaves.



Left: Ñocha left to dry at the sun.  
Center: Splitting the ñocha fibre to adjust its width.  
Right: María Inés in her ñocha plantation.  
Opposite page: Fields around Huentelolen.

## MAKING OF: COILING





## THE WEAVERS: MAPUCHE

This page, from left to right: Juana Maribur,  
Cecilia Millanao and María Inés Aniñir.

Opposite page, from top left to bottom right:  
Fabiola Millanao, Eliana Rodríguez, Mariela  
Maribur, Lucía Rodríguez, Gloria Maribur, Rosa  
Hauiquiñir, Delia Maliqueo and Cristina Maribur.



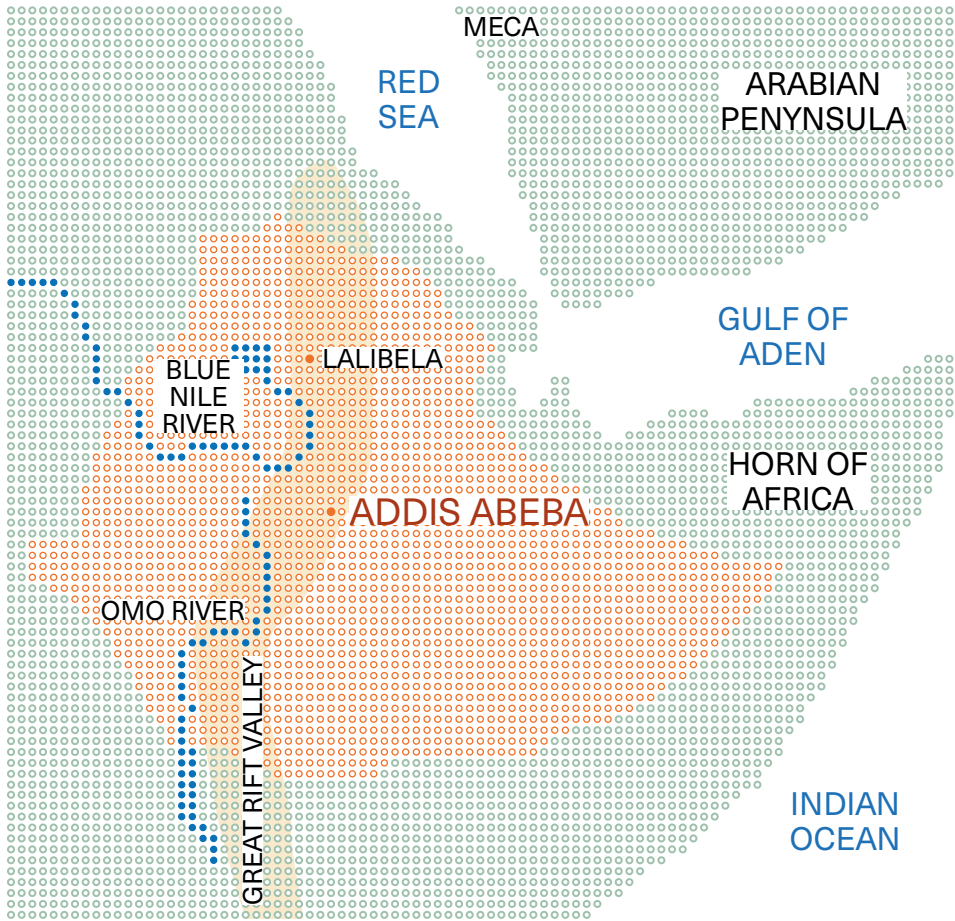








# ETHIOPIA 2014



Ethiopia is the African country with the most UNESCO World Heritage sites. It has a population of more than 80 million. It is the second oldest nation in the world to embrace Christianity. It has its own calendar and its own time zone. There are 18 different languages spoken in the country, the most common of which, Amharic, is a language with a unique alphabet. And if all this was not enough, ancient Abyssinia was the only African nation that was not colonised by a foreign power.

Ethiopia is also the third biggest exporter of coffee in the world and the place where it was first discovered 1,000 years ago. Eighty-five percent of the population of the country make a living from its production.

We find ourselves face to face with a unique country within a complex African jigsaw puzzle. It is a richly varied country, full of contrasts in its geography, cultures, traditions and personality.

The ethnic groups of the south of Ethiopia, which developed along the axis of the river Omo, are considered among the most ancient in the world,

maintaining much of their original identity. Their ancestral ways of life and rituals are an echo of the most distant past of human history; the aesthetic tastes for the care and adornment of the body of each ethnic group are some of the most striking in the world. Each population has maintained its social cohesion through its own communal rites, which still persist today.

The north of the country is notable for being the cradle of Orthodox Christianity and for some extraordinary artistic/religious combinations. From the Coptic heritage and the Ottoman tradition, these complexes are situated in Bahardar, Gondar, Axum and Lalibela. In this last site can be found eleven churches carved out of solid rock.

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### **Workshop Ethiopia Addis Abeba, November 2014:**

Sebastián Betanzo  
Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Emily Cosentino  
Salem Kassahun  
Enrique Romero de la Llana



Alvaro Catalán de Ocón with Banchyayhu during the workshop in Addis Abeba.



## COMMUNITY

The colourful basket weaving of Ethiopia has a long tradition and is common in rural parts of the country with the Muslim city of Harar being one of the most famous for this craft. The traditional baskets of Ethiopia are categorised as “coiled” baskets.

The baskets play an important role in the culture and society of Ethiopia and are seen as functional, decorative and sacred elements throughout the country. Generally made by women, the design comes from their own imagination. There are no guidelines or instructions to help in the design of these intricate and colourful pieces, the women simply decide on a pattern and apply it from memory. The skills of basket making are passed down through the generations from mother to daughter.

The materials used are usually grasses and palm leaves which are dyed with other natural materials.

In this context, Salem Kasshun has positioned her shop to specialise in basketwork and after creating her own group of workers has achieved a greater flexibility and capacity for experimentation. For PET Lamp the characteristics of production and work practices of Salem Kasshun’s shop are ideal conditions in which to conduct the project, while also time offering the possibility of making a personal challenge a reality: to modernise and to make this traditional Ethiopian craft known internationally.

## MAKING OF: COILING

What makes this collection so special was the desire to experiment, adapt and reinterpret concepts. The very flat design of these lamps was inspired by the shape of one of the most typical Ethiopian baskets, which is made with plant fibres and used to serve *injera*, a traditional flat, circular Ethiopian bread.

The concept behind these baskets was reinterpreted and adapted for this collection, adding the bottle as a central part of the structure. The idea behind the weaving process is to create different patterns by rolling natural fibres around dry grasses while constantly seeking a vibrant mix of colours.







From left to right:  
Banchyayhu Mulualem with her daughter Mahilet.  
Kenenye Lemma.  
Worknesh Arega.  
Tsega Dereb.  
Kasech Demeke.

## THE WEAVERS







## AN OPORTUNITY FOR ETHIOPIAN HANDICRAFTS

“I have to mention her name: Her name is Emily Cosentino, a very very nice and pleasant American woman who lived here in Addis Ababa with her family. Somehow, she ran into this PET Lamp project. She came to me and said ‘There is a company that makes lamps out of baskets. Would you be interested if I contact them?’ That is how we came to know the PET Lamps.”

*Salem - You own a handicraft workshop and a shop in Addis Ababa. Could you tell us how it started?*

We started around ten years ago with a vision of creating employment for people and of highlighting Ethiopian handicraft. In Ethiopia we have a lot of handicraft like pottery, textile, basketry and jewellery. We thought if we could make appeal to the modern buyer, then the world would know about it.

*What kind of infrastructure do you have? Are the workshops and the store in the same compound?*

Yes, artisans, gallery, office... everything is in the same compound which is about 500 m2. We have different corners with different artisans’ groups (jewellery, textile weavers, basket makers, etc.). People like that because they get to see the artisans at work.

*Do your clients have the possibility to meet the artisans?*

Yes. We encourage that. One of our strong vision is not only to create employment but to highlight Ethiopian handicraft and to share it. When customers come, they get to visit the artisans, to interact with them, they get to see what they are doing, they get to talk to them and it is good for the artisans as well, so they get to see that their product is appreciated.

*How many artisans work there?*

Overall, we have about 30 to 35 people including 8 working on the PET Lamp project. They were trained by Alvaro and his team and they know exactly what is expected from them. They are very good at it. Some women work from home because they have young children and they must be looking after them. They bring their basket every Friday but prefer to stay at home, which we encourage. For those who come to work, they like it because they have created a sort of community. It is a sense of pride. They have a job and a place to go to instead of staying home.

*Baskets are seen as functional, decorative and sacred elements. How did you perceive the idea of making a lamp out of a basket? Was it difficult to understand*

*the concept?*

Actually, more than the basket, the surprise was the plastic bottle. The plastic bottle incorporated into a basketry was really amazing. I thought that would be a nice idea. We started working on it, the expectations, how strong and perfect it had to be, the importance of the shape, all that was really exciting. And additionally to that, it goes with our vision and with what we believe in: allow people to know about Ethiopian baskets through PET Lamp project.

*After Ethiopia, the team went to Japan and last year to Australia. What do you think about the PET Lamp project itself? Do you feel part of the project?*

Yes! Very much so. When the clients come, walk around and see the women working on the lamps, we tell them about the PET Lamp, about the fact that they are going to be shipped to Spain... They get excited. It gives us a chance to explain what it is and how it is a global project, that other people are doing the same in other countries with the same material. They like the idea that it is a global project and we do feel part of it!

*Has the PET Lamp Project changed something for you?*

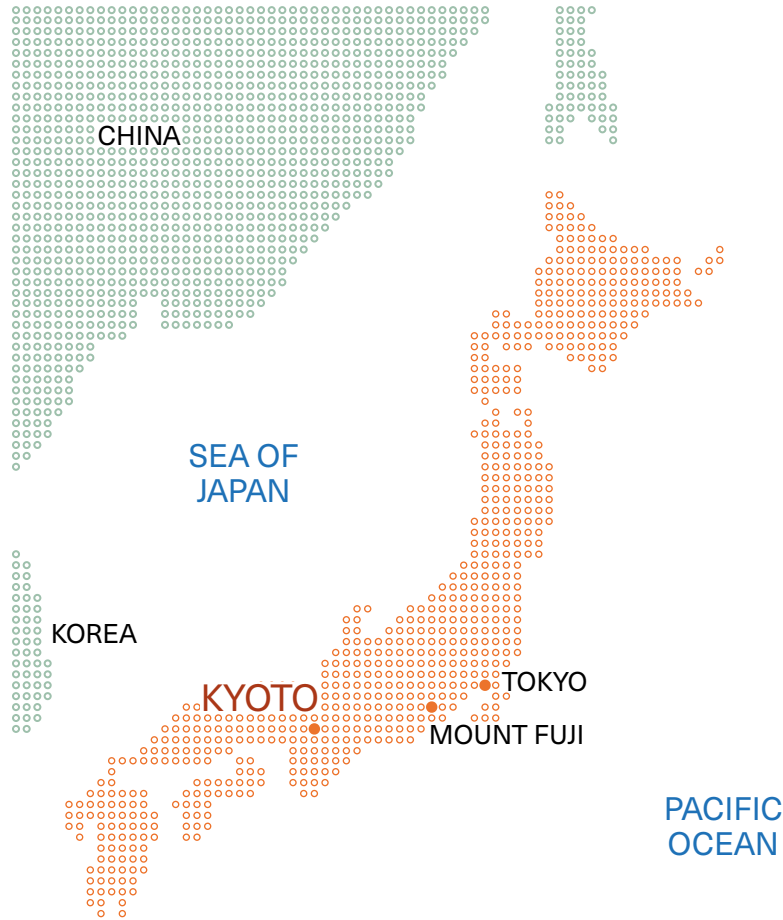
Well, it is a sustainable source of work and income. We don’t have to worry

about how we are going to sell them. We don’t have a problem with baskets in Addis Ababa because there is always a need for them but it is extremely time consuming. You can’t produce one every day. However, working on the PET Lamps ensures us a consistent income. The person who is working on it is definitely going to earn an income so it is good in that sense that we have that security of work. It also helps to communicate to the world about Ethiopian products. That is a bonus! And Alvaro, Sebastian, those guys are wonderful guys, I like them!

*Marina Gross  
Interview with Salem Kassahun  
November 2017*



# JAPAN 2015



Japan, in Asia's far east, first encountered Buddhism in the late 6th century, which was introduced from China after spreading from India. Many Chinese and Korean craft techniques and inventions followed, including paper, ammunition and ideograms, along with new philosophies like Confucianism. Japan's openness to other civilizations eventually came to an end, when, from the 17th to the mid-19th centuries, Japan cloistered itself from the outside world. This policy was so isolating that Japanese society developed in unique and often magnificent ways.

Many bamboo objects, including baskets and musical instruments, have been found preserved in Shōsō-in, the 8th century treasure house. Since then, bamboo found its way into every part of people's lives, as a building material, for weaponry like bows and arrows, and even as fishing and farming tools.

Eventually, bamboo became an essential material in tea ceremony culture as it developed during the 16th century, when every tool used in a ceremony, including the décor set around the room, was considered to convey important and holistic expressions of aesthetics, values and hospitality.

In the ancient capital of Kyoto, where many of Japan's most elaborate fine crafts were established, highly delicate bamboo craftsmanship became one of the city's signature industries, and master artisans passed their skills and titles—along with their pride—to successive generations.

It's natural that bamboo was treasured as a material even in ancient Japan, as its durable and elastic nature offers strong, straight fibres that keep their shape in dry and humid conditions. For that reason, bamboo has been planted in Japan's mountains and gardens to fulfil Japanese aesthetics since ancient times.

Bamboo forests became neglected when industrialization and rationalism began replacing bamboo tools with plastic ones, while the holistic arts and philosophies of the tea ceremony faded in the everyday busyness of modern life.

It is not difficult to imagine what has since happened to bamboo artisans.

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## **Workshop Japan Kyoto, July 2014:**

Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Sachiko Matsuyama  
Special thanks to Minoru Watanabe



## MAKING OF: BAMBOO

The method used to obtain the wide variety of sizes and shapes of these pieces was only possible thanks to the artisans' extensive knowledge of bamboo and its potential.

Bamboo is often used in many aspects of Japanese culture, one of which is traditional crafts, where it is employed to make flawless structures that seduce the eye.

The bamboo fibres are separated and cut one by one to create the structure using elegant and discreet designs. The balanced and subtle aesthetic may look simple, however mastering this technique requires meticulous attentions and many years of apprenticeship. The tremendous dedication of the artisans is another factor; they are involved in the entire process, from selecting the raw materials and preparing them to the complex work of weaving and finishing the product.



Different steps in the preparation of the bamboo before weaving, and Alvaro and Sachi at Chiemi's workshop.

## THE WEAVERS: KYOTO

Left: Chiemi Ogura in her workshop.

Right top: Chiemi Ogura.

Right bottom: Hideaki Hosokawa.



## KYOTO, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

### Monday 20th October 2014

“Sebastian, can you fly to Tokyo with a new set of PET Lamps tomorrow?” Alvaro is asking his colleague in Madrid over the phone at the office of 21\_21 Design Sight and it is Monday evening. The opening of the exhibition is on Thursday evening...

I have invited Alvaro to the opening of the exhibition *The Fab Mind: Hints of the Future in a Shifting World* in which I have placed his 21 pieces of PET Lamps as a leadoff work of the exhibition and which warmly illuminate Tadao Ando's sharp concrete slab. He has arrived but the work hasn't. Due to a shipper's error the crate is stuck at Frankfurt airport and there seems to be no chance it will make in time. There is no direct flight from Madrid to Tokyo, we were searching which airport might be the smallest and safest to reduce the risk of losing the crate during transit, we picked Helsinki, Sebastian checked in on a Finnair flight arriving in Tokyo on Thursday early in the morning. 21\_21 staff prepared everything they could to clear customs as quick as possible and waited for Sebastian at Narita International Airport, the installation crew was standing by at the gallery. At 4.50 pm the

light was lit and welcomed the reception guests at 5pm.

But there was another PET Lamp. I was waiting to see if it would arrive or not – a first PET Lamp prototype made in Kyoto. When I invited Alvaro to the exhibition in Tokyo, he was just about starting his first trial of PET Lamp with Japanese bamboo basket weavers in Kyoto which is a homage to the materials and techniques which inspired the PET Lamp Project at the very beginning – the tea whisk of the traditional tea ceremony. I have agreed to include it if he will finish it in time but I knew it would be a tough nut to crack.

Another reason is that I also researched Japanese bamboo crafts through my own project *Editions in Craft* (partially based in Stockholm), exploring new ways to work with bamboo. That was a couple years earlier. What we witnessed then were artisans with prejudices, a lot of pride and firm views about tradition. Uniquely in Japan, and especially in Kyoto, a rigorous tradition around ceremonies and specific scenes of the daily living rituals is maintained, therefore the artisans are encircled by the system to secure their high end

economical system. The Japanese gave up everyday commodity bamboo product making to the country that produces much cheaper alternatives, therefore most of artisans recognize themselves as artists. It is difficult to criticize their strategy and the market, however their closeness and unwillingness to take risks and test the new ideas and markets are frustrating.

As expected, Alvaro confronted the same problem and more specific ones when working with them. However with his passion and enthusiasm he managed to create a beautiful prototype in the end that was included in the exhibition. But to be honest, the Kyoto PET Lamp was missing that tension and exhilarating shared authorship which is the absolute power of the PET Lamp project. Kyoto PET Lamp was dominated by the maker but in a very quiet manner and isolated from the other lamps. I was interested in including this prototype because of this obvious cultural difference and wanted to question the pros and cons of the Japanese craft tradition. As the exhibition's subtitle *Hints of the Future in Shifting World* suggests, I see PET Lamp as a hint for the future but at that stage

I was unsure about the Kyoto PET Lamp. Therefore, this prototype has served its purpose for the exhibition but not for the final PET Lamp as a product as planned, Alvaro and the team are still finding their way.

There are few younger generations updating traditional craft products for more contemporary living in a stylish way and there is a strong emphasis on nationalistic vocabulary. I do hope some of them would see the larger picture as Alvaro sees it, as basket weaving is a globally shared skill the evolution of which should be participated without fear of giving different shapes and mode in our globalized times.

### Sunday 5th, November 2017

*Ikko Yokoyama  
Curator of design and architecture,  
M+ museum Hong Kong*





# THAILAND 2018



This year Thailand was the country in charge of interpreting the technique developed by Alvaro Catalán de Ocón to turn PET plastic bottles into PET Lamps.

Bamboo, the chosen complementary material –typical of the Southeast Asia region– is worked with precision and careful detail by the best craftsmen of the country.

As in previous occasions –through a methodology based on field research, prototyping and on-site workshops– PET Lamp developed a collection of lampshades in collaboration with the Traditional Bamboo Handicraft Center, a foundation supported by her Majesty Queen Sirikit that enjoys a distinct reputation in the field of handicrafts in the country.

PET Lamp Pikul takes its name after the *Mimusops Elengi*'s flower. Also known as Spanish Cherry tree, it is a tropical tree found in the forests of this region of Asia. The flower grows in a geometric pattern inspiring the traditional Pikul pattern which can be found in many of the crafts around Thailand.

This material requires the skill and mastery of three craftsmen, each one specialized in one of the techniques of the manufacturing processes required to make each lamp.

The first craftsman calibrates the width and thickness of the strip to achieve the required shape generated by the natural curvature of the material. An hexagonal base frame is created as a warp on which a second craftsman weaves the traditional Pikul pattern with coloured bamboo strips. Once the drawing is applied, a third craftsman structures the lamp with two rigid rattan rings.

The character of Thai basketry tradition comes from the artisan's calmness which is reflected through extremely precise and balanced pieces.

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### **Workshop Thailand Phanat Nikhom, June-July 2018:**

Sebastián Betanzo  
Álvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Special thanks to Komkrit Borribon and Nunnaree Panichku.



## PIKUL FLOWER

Top: Pikul flower, *mimusops elengi*.

Bottom: Bamboo leaves through the workshop blinds.

Next page: The pikul flower gives the name to the traditional hexagonal basketry pattern. Despite the flower draws an octagonal shape, it applies to the basketry as an hexagon mash.



## MAKING OF: BAMBOO

From raw bamboo to dyed strops: Different steps in the preparation, calibration and dyeing of the bamboo. The leftover bamboo knots is still a valuable material.



## MAKING OF: HEXAGONAL PLAITING

The choice of bamboo for this collection means a lot of hard physical work for the artisans, and is a living expression of their skills and precision.

To build the structure, the bamboo is dyed and cut into fine strips, which are

then carefully woven by three different artisans along with the plastic strips.

Here the artisans use a mould to weave the lamps and give shape to the structure, which they then decorate with hexagonal and floral patterns.



Once the basic bamboo mesh is woven, coloured strips are applied onto it to draw the patterns. A reinforcement is woven on the top part to both strenghten the lampshade and finish the pattern weaving.

Opposite page:

Strips of bamboo are arranged tangentially to create a cicular opening on which are woven the plastic strips afterwards.









The bottom part of the weaving is cut straight to finish the lampshade with a raw bamboo reinforcement.

Bottom: The weavers team with Komkrit Borriboon and Nunnaree Panichkul.



## THE WEAVERS: PHANAT NIKHOM

From left to right:

Step 1: Making the grid.  
Kannika Chalong and Somkhid Kotadee.

Step 2: Adding the color strips.  
Pimphan Sridee and Phayom Arruno.

Step 3: Applying rigid bamboo rings.  
Chantana Chalong and Aumporn Somboonsatcha.







# THE PIKUL COLLECTION

For the very first time after 8 collections, PET Lamp is available in floor, table and wall versions. These new typologies of lamps have been developed

specifically for the Pikul collection.

The family grows and it makes it using the black steel tube as a link between the three new versions, just like a drawing

in the air, highlighting the lampshade and its delicate and complex basketry technique.



# GHANA 2019

Bolgatanga, one of the most remote towns in Ghana, was the location chosen to develop the PET Lamp 2019 project.

In the heart of the Upper East Region and just a few kilometres from Burkina Faso, Bolgatanga is known as the “city of baskets” and is also the capital of the Gurunsi people, who have lived and controlled this territory along with small parts of southern Burkina Faso and northwest Togo, for centuries.

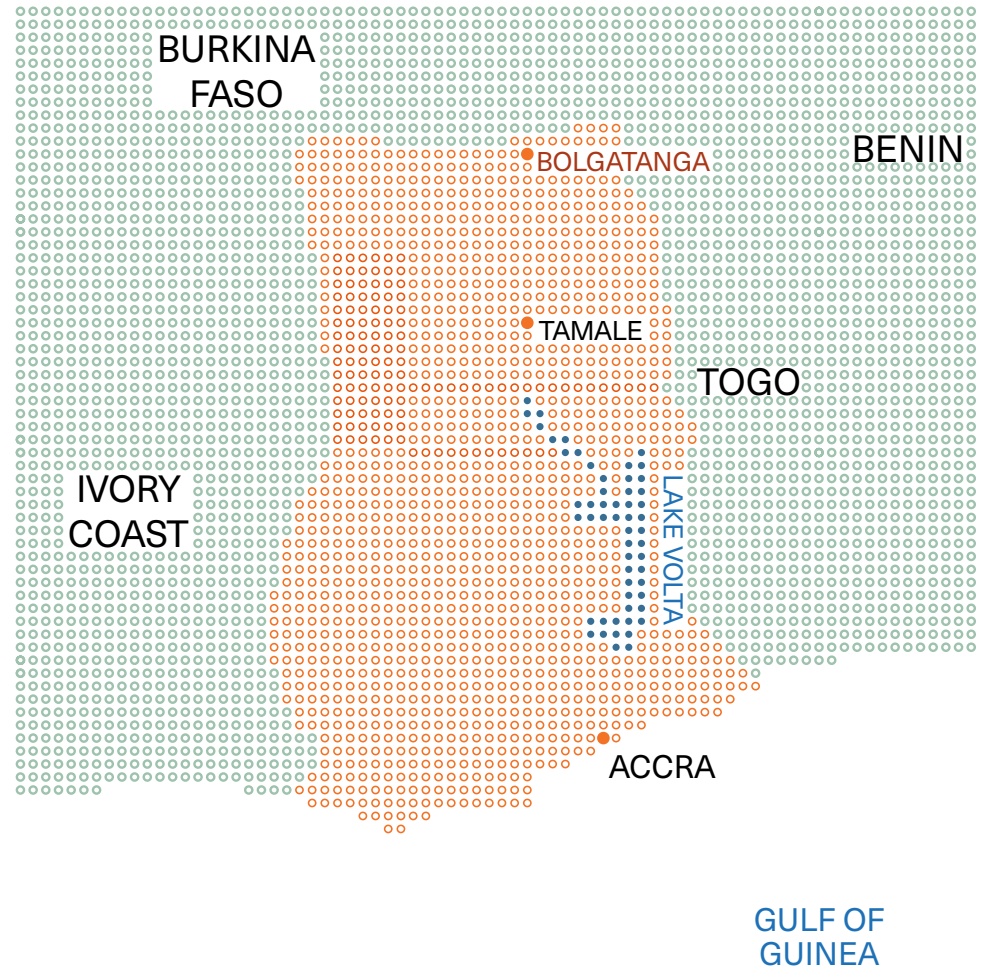
The importance given to basket weaving in this territory is one of the main reasons why we decided to go to this remote corner of Africa to develop a new PET Lamp. Traditional basket weaving is regarded not only as a tool for day to day life and a livelihood for this people, it also helps to provide greater social cohesion and embodies the values expressed in their culture. All this makes basketry the biggest industry in this region.

There we found the perfect partner for our collaborative project: The Baba Tree Basket, a company set up by Gregory MacCarthy, that has promoted and preserved the traditional basket weaving

work of the Gurunsi community for over 15 years. The Baba Tree community is made up of over 250 artisans who weave with local straw and Elephant grass, the most popular basket weaving material used in northern Ghana which is imported from the wetter south of Ghana, mixing in each piece the Gurunsi weaving traditions with an up to date and more modern language thanks to the introduction of the waves characteristic of this process, which gives each basket a unique dynamism and rhythm.

Each and every master weaver we collaborated with and who continue to weave these lamps leaves his or her own imprint and style on their pieces, to make a collection that is full of unique details and features. Each lamp poses a new challenge for them, where they can give living form to a vital part of their culture and display it on a global market.

This workshop was one of the most rewarding we have worked on to date. We discovered a country full of surprises and were able to enjoy a close and easy-going relationship with the artisans, from whom we learnt the secrets of a technique full of riches. The experience also allowed us to open a window to enable them to update their traditional basketry by integrating PET bottles, which are a real and ongoing problem in this part of Ghana.



**Workshop Ghana  
Bolgatanga, October 2019:**  
Sebastián Betanzo  
Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
Enrique Romero de la Llana



## MAKING OF: ELEPHANT GRASS

This page:

Different steps during the preparation of the raw material. The elephant grass fibre needs to be split in two and rolled to get its characteristic spiral shape. The natural fibers are dyed in vibrant colors as well.

Opposite page:

Saturday morning is dyeing day in Bolgatanga. Big pots with different colours are prepared to die the fibres and each artisan gets his grass ready for the following week.







## MAKING OF: PAKURIGO WAVES

Pakurigo Waves is the name of this specific technique applied by a few master weavers of The Baba Tree team, which consists of shaping the basket weaving in “waves”, providing this unique and peculiar movement. The Pakurigo Waves have been combined with local PET plastic bottles to make this new collection.











Making these big lampshades requires up to one week weaving by a experienced weaver. The patterns are the weaver's choice and they all have a meaning reflecting the local stories and cosmogony.



Right:  
2019 team portrait. Gregory, founder of The Baba Tree, together with Bettina, Azure and the weavers involved in this collaboration.



## THE WEAVERS: BOLGATANGA



Top left: Anamolika Azure.  
Top right: Mary Anaba.  
Bottom left: Atule Abentara.  
Bottom right: Mary Asoba.

Next page, from left to right:  
Lizy Nmaa Akolgoyine, Celina Nmabila Apasinore, Matilda Ben.

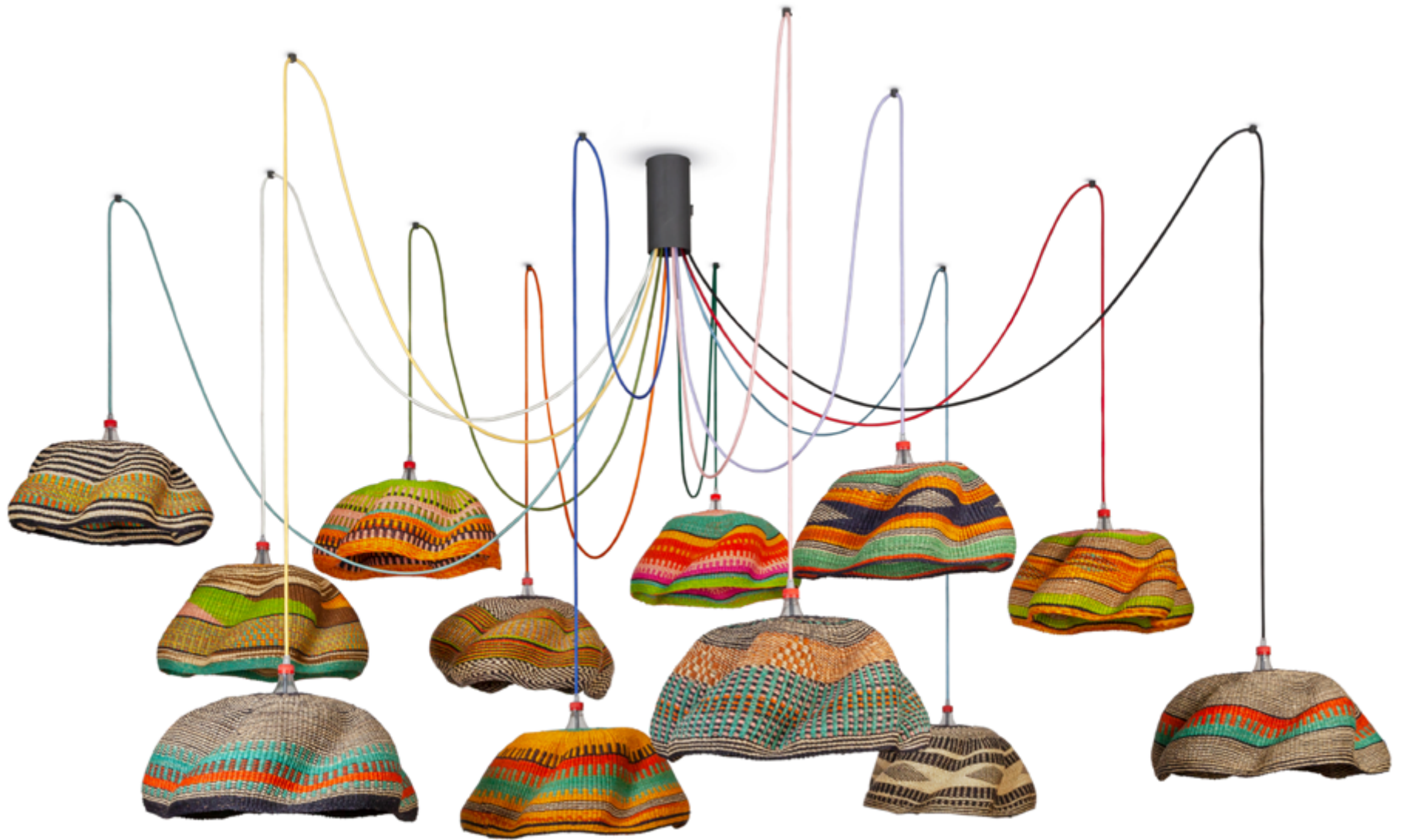












# AUSTRALIA 2016

For almost 65,000 years, the Aboriginal population of Australia lived in complete isolation and conserved a unique culture and ecosystem.

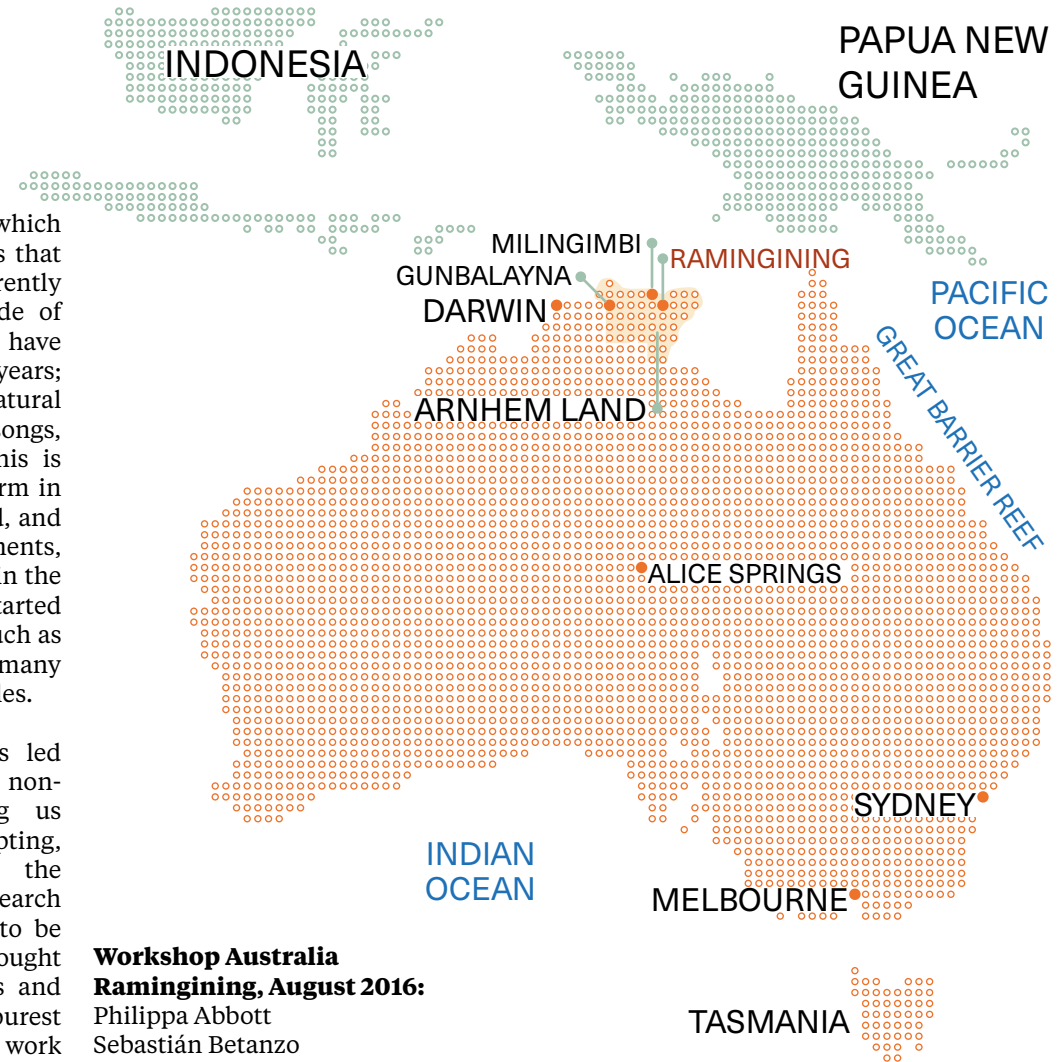
Upon arrival of the Europeans at the end of the 18th century, the Aboriginal community was made up of a number of tribes that shared a worldview where the physical (the earth), the human and the sacred were totally integrated.

The Aboriginal vision was not taken into consideration by the colonists, where the European perspective predominated: exploitation of natural resources, accumulation by status, in which human superiority (European) overrode other considerations to create a society that was highly individualistic.

This vision clashed with the culture of Aboriginal Australians, in which space and time are a continuum, where the population develops in open space as a community, in which there are often no superior figures but rather a people where everyone has their role and connections to the earth are contingent on the spiritual life. This process can be seen in the “Dreaming”, stories that talk about

the early times, the creation, in which the tales are timeless, with lessons that are always valid and shown differently in each present. They are a mode of communication and teaching that have been orally transmitted over the years; some of them find outlet in the natural world, and are expressed in songs, dances, paintings and textiles. This is the great Aboriginal wealth: the form in which their knowledge is expressed, and not the creation of large monuments, cities or written works. It was only in the 70s that the Aboriginal peoples started to make use of permanent media such as canvases and acrylic paints, where many paintings resemble traditional textiles.

These fundamental differences led to a gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, leaving us with the task of discovering, accepting, transmitting and programming the knowledge of local peoples. In the search for this wealth, and to enable it to be valued by many more, we have sought communities where the traditions and worldview are conserved in their purest form. We had the opportunity to work together to take these paintings and give them back their living form as textiles.



**Workshop Australia**  
**Ramingining, August 2016:**  
 Philippa Abbott  
 Sebastián Betanzo  
 Alvaro Catalán de Ocón  
 Enrique Romero de la Llana



## INTRODUCTION TO ABORIGINAL CULTURE

Our very first encounter with the duality of the country where we were going to develop this part of PET Lamp project was while researching different Australian maps. In a night satellite view we could see concentrations of inhabited areas along the coastline, giving the sensation of an empty inland territory.

To our surprise, a second satellite map revealed plenty of lights throughout the inland area, as a sign of the supervised fires the indigenous people manage inside the bush. The two parallel forms of life inspired us to create a sort of imaginary Australian map, where the PET plastic bottles represent the urban cores and the weaving recalls the Aboriginal reality.

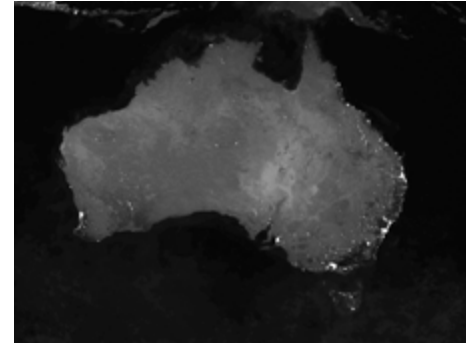
Another of our major influences was the moment when we confronted highly sophisticated and expressive Aboriginal paintings found firstly at the Quai Branly Museum in Paris and later at the NGV in Melbourne. These were mainly paintings from the Deserts area which started to appear in the 1970s when the artists were given canvases and acrylic paints. The visual approach of many of these paintings is strikingly more similar to weaving techniques than to the brush stroke: crossed overlaid or parallel lines, great concentric circles and spirals, etc.

Impressed by the visual strength of the paintings, we aimed to imprint the woven piece with the very same graphic symbols from which it seemed to have come from.

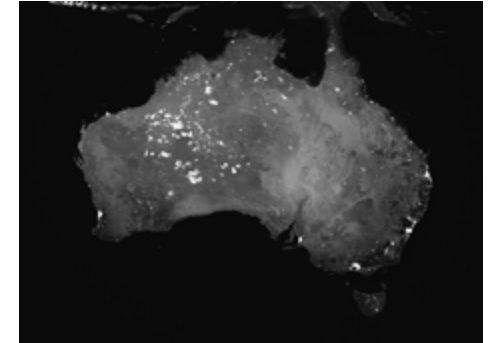
Aboriginal art originally had ceremonial purposes and a sacred aura, with a great spiritual charge. Always hidden from the public view, its modern period is marked by the dissemination of the art pieces to the international audience, considered by them as an uninitiated public. Nowadays, traditional forms and techniques, such as bark paintings and engravings on rocks are evolving and coexist with the new materials including acrylic and canvas, in order to enhance the artists' repertory.

The major focus of the indigenous people's lives is the spiritual approach called the Ancestral Realm, generally referred to as the "Dreaming", which comprises their life forces, cosmologies and belief systems. The ancestral forces lie in the land itself which is considered the source of physical and spiritual nourishment of each generation, hence the strong connection between the people and their lands.

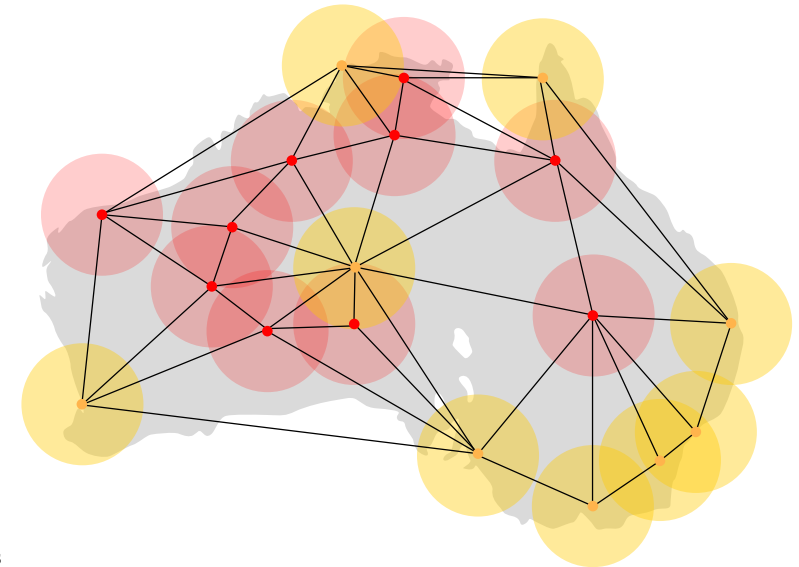
The Aboriginal culture still preserves numerous languages and dialects that



Satellite view of Australia at night: lights



Satellite view of Australia at night: lights and fires



- City lights
- Aboriginal fires



along with the visual literacy inspired by the Dreaming represent another mean of transferring the knowledge from one generation to another. The Aboriginal art takes its major themes from the amazingly rich spiritual realm and it mainly consists of paintings, sculptures and weaving of fibres.

Interestingly enough, our final piece scarcely takes its references from the characteristic painting of the Arnhem Land, but from the Deserts' visual language. In the Northern Territory, where this part of PET Lamp project is developed, one can find the bark paintings on sheets of flattened eucalyptus bark. With an ephemeral character provided by the natural outdoor materials employed, these paintings usually have cross-hatched patterns, known as rrank, which are based on ritual body painting.

The new techniques incorporated into 1970s' paintings and their public dissemination gave them a larger format which also encouraged collaborative work. Similarly, our piece turns into a social work made by weavers in specific kin relationships who share the same spiritual realm and therefore, the same inheritance of images, seen as a traditional form of copyrighting.



Left: George Tjungurrayi  
Bottom, from left to right:  
Darby Jampijinpa Ross  
Nyurapayia Nampitjinpa



# CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

Different landscapes approaching to Ramingining  
by car from Darwin.  
Bottom left: Ramingining airport terminal.  
Right: Melinda with a hunted goose.



# MAKING OF: PANDANUS

This page: Collecting the fresh pandanus leaves from the palm tree.

Next page: Gathering roots and leaves for colouring the fibers.

Next double page: Peeling off the pandanus leaves and getting ready the pigments for boiling the fibers. Coloured pandanus leaves lent to dry at the sun.







## MAKING OF: SINGLE LAMPS

Top left: Two weavers checking the PET Lamp Newspaper.  
Bottom left: First rows of the single lamps.  
Right: Betty checks the plastic stripes before starting weaving.  
Next page: Mary and Judith with their final single lamps.





Mary weaving the bond between her two single lamps.

## ABORIGINAL FAMILY BONDS: MARY AS A TWIN

After taking part in the indigenous people's daily routine in Ramingining, and gathering all the necessary materials, such as the natural fibres and roots and PET plastic bottles, we held a workshop together with eight indigenous weavers. From the very beginning, they started working on their own individual lampshades, building round figures based on their traditional mats, which perfectly match the round shape of the PET bottle.

Once all the bottles and natural fibres acquired shape, we had nine beautiful circular lampshades, with their characteristic hanging fringes. Nine pieces patiently handcrafted by eight weavers? Mary, one of the weavers, was holding two pieces instead of one. She immediately explained to us that, as twin sister of David Gulpilil, the most famous Aboriginal actor, she has a dual vision of the world and all her creations have a twin piece.

At this very moment, the nature of this family bond turns into a strong reason to connect the two pieces through some sort of umbilical cord. Our idea of this kind of link takes the form of a tightly woven sort of plait. We thought of adding some extra pandanus fibres onto this which allowed us to merge every individual piece together. The dual piece obtained by interweaving the fringes is the clear illustration of Mary's particular reality and at the same time, of the strong nature of Aboriginal kinship.

Apart from this technical approach, contemplating "Yukuwa" (Feather string yam vine), 1984, an artwork by Frances Djulibing, served us as the conceptual starting point of bonding together the lampshades. Yukuwa suggests a type of family tree, showing kinship lines and the way family groups are tied together. The resulting piece had the aim of revealing these bonds through a co-design creative process.





## ABORIGINAL FAMILY BONDS: STRING MAP

We contemplated “Yukuwa” (Feather string yam vine), 1984, an artwork by Frances Djulibing for the first time at the National Victoria Museum in Melbourne. Its visual lightness and in-depth reading immediately caught our attention. Since our very first idea was to bond together the lampshades into one piece by using the hanging fringes, this work of art served as the conceptual starting point.

This feathered string represents the Yukuwa, a type of yam vine that is an important totem of the Yirritja moiety. More than the physical representation of a yam vine, the Yukuwa suggests a type of family tree. The kinship lines are an interpretation of how indigenous groups are tied together through relationships of family, clan and kin.

The Yukuwa also symbolizes renewal of people and land. It is expressed in body painting designs, song lines, dance, weaving and various ceremonies. Yukuwa is often used for ceremonial purposes of

clans gatherings. The feathered string is used as part of a dance, brought into ceremony by dancers and displayed as a form of identification. Once the ceremony is complete, the Yukuwa is carefully saved until the following one.

In our case, one of the weaver’s family bonds with her twin brother encouraged us to take a deeper look into the wide array of Aboriginal links and map out an interpretation of the relationships between the participating weavers. They proved a fast understanding of the concept which got materialized thanks to their know-how and a versatile weaving technique. Therefore, the joints in shape of plaits and the merging surfaces meet their interpersonal links as well as graphic symbols used in the indigenous paintings.

“Yukuwa” (Feather string yam vine), 1984, an artwork by Frances Djulibing.



## ABORIGINAL FAMILY BONDS: DIVING INTO THE COMMUNITY

The decision to link Mary's pieces into a single one represented a new source of inspiration for creating new bonds. On this basis, we start to explore the rich and complex universe of Aboriginal relationships that goes beyond the traditional blood tie. Elements such as one's skin colour, language, territory or the different generations act both as nexus of union and frontiers between communities.

Far from being a homogenous entity, the Aboriginal culture encompasses numerous distinct languages and dialects as one of the main markers of identity. Each of these languages embraces very representative elements such as kinship patterns, traditions, beliefs, laws and art styles and consequently, they have come to act like natural frontiers between clans or communities.

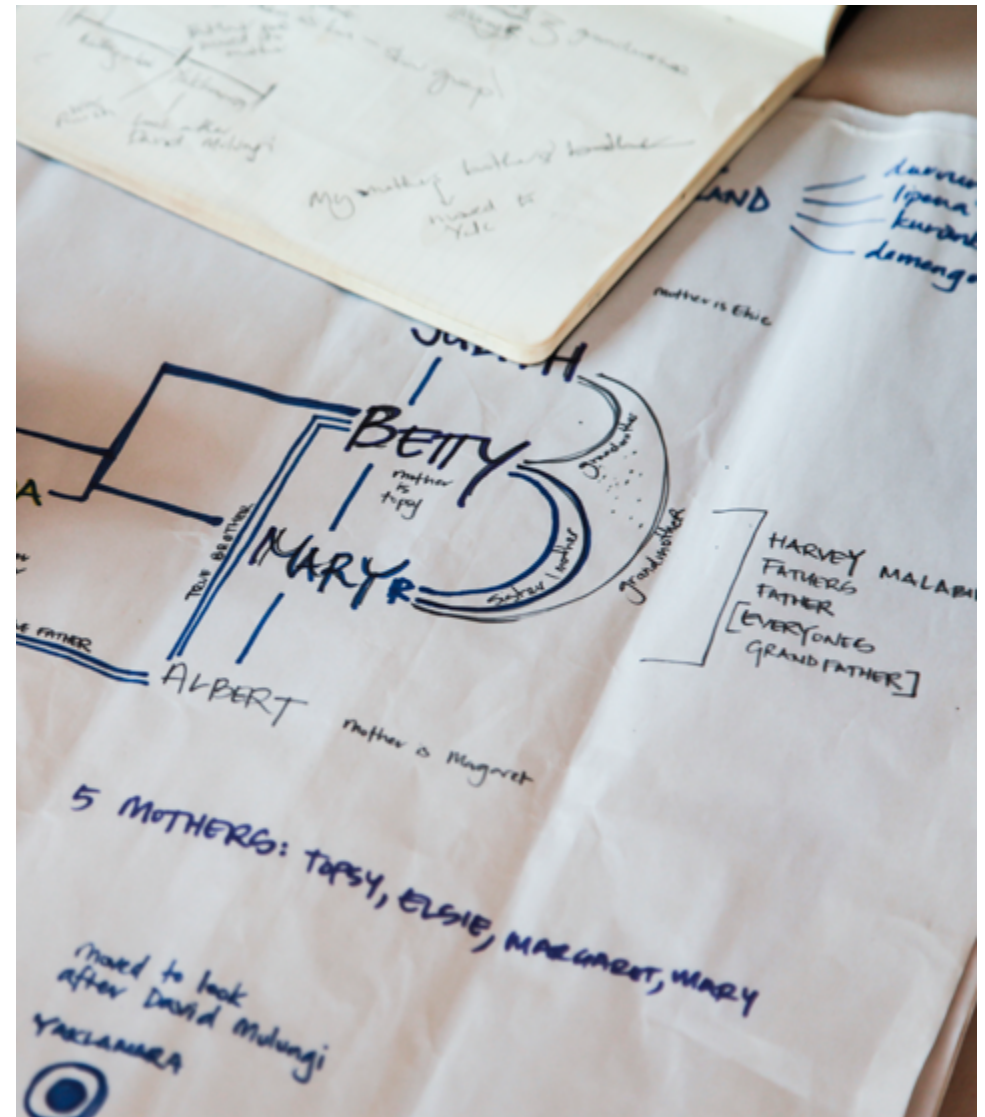
Moreover, as part of their spirituality, the indigenous people are involved in a special relationship with their lands and certain animal species, so each person has an individual totem animal. The link is so strong, that for some time after someone's death, neither the name of the

person nor the name of the linked animal can be depicted or voiced.

Beyond the traditional family and kinship networks, we take a step forward to develop our own interpretation of the wide array of links between the weavers taking part in the workshop. Inspired by the Aboriginal links, we take the decision to bond together the individual pieces into one, as if the coloured fibres represented different kinds of relationships. Thus, the distribution of the lampshades meets the interpersonal ties as well as the imagery of a topographic map.

The larger format of this new approach results in a model of community, collaborative work. It brings together people from the same clan, who share very specific kin relationships and a common spiritual realm.

We lived a truly genuine experience of cultural immersion during 45 days, so we were adopted by three of the weavers: Álvaro was adopted by Mary, Enrique by Lynette and Sebastian by Evonne.



# MAKING THE LINKS







## RAMINGINING: SIDE LINKS

Like a mat with different cores interlinked by using a complex weaving technique, the final lamp reveals an astonishing resemblance to the Aboriginal paintings and topographic map of their lands.

Our proposal to link the individual lampshades is creatively solved by the weavers who depict natural elements rich in associations. Surprisingly, the visual language of the piece is more akin to the one used by the artists in the Deserts (vast central, western and southwestern deserts) than to the local one on the Arnhem Land (Northern Territory), mainly bark paintings.

Once finished, we could contemplate the visual alphabet of the piece including various graphic symbols. The cores in concentric circles, like infinite spirals, usually indicating a camp, a site, may

be seen as the different Aboriginal communities; the meandering lines in between circles may refer to lightning, rain or vines and recall the level curves of a topographic map; the U-shapes, usually indicating a person or an ancestral being in human form, remind us of the meandering billabong, an oxbow lake in Australia, an isolated pond left behind after a river changes course; the small interlayer surfaces may represent in turn the numerous water holes found on their land.

There is a certain degree of visual and conceptual similarity between the weaving technique and the aboriginal painting methods. The wide range of natural tones of the fibres compose a balanced colour palette that seems to be inspired in the colours of the earth out of which the materials come.



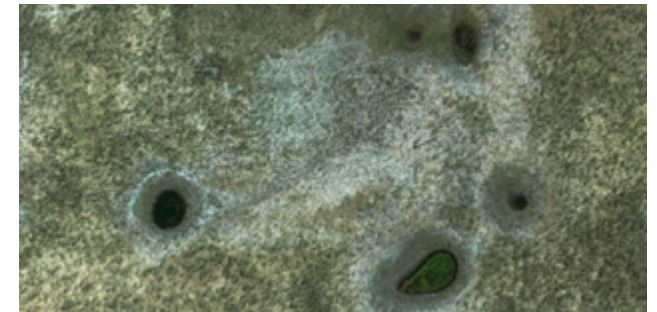
**ABORIGINAL ART**



**PET LAMP**



**ARNHEM LAND**



# PET LAMP RAMINGINING 1

**PET Lamp Ramingining: Bukmukgu  
Guyananhawuy (Every family thinking  
forward) 1**

**Weavers:**

Lynette Birriran Djambarrpuyungu  
Mary Dhapalany Mandhalpuy  
Judith Djelirr Liyagalawumirr  
Julie Djulibing Malibirr Ganalbingu  
Melinda Gedjen Liyagalawumirr  
Betty Matjarra Garrwura  
Cecily Mopbarrmbr Marrangu  
Evonne Munuyngu Mandhalpuy

**Materials:**

Pandanus (Pandanus sp.), natural dyes, PET  
plastic bottle

**Dimensions:**

19.5 x 472.0 x 432.0 cm

**Date made:**

July 2016

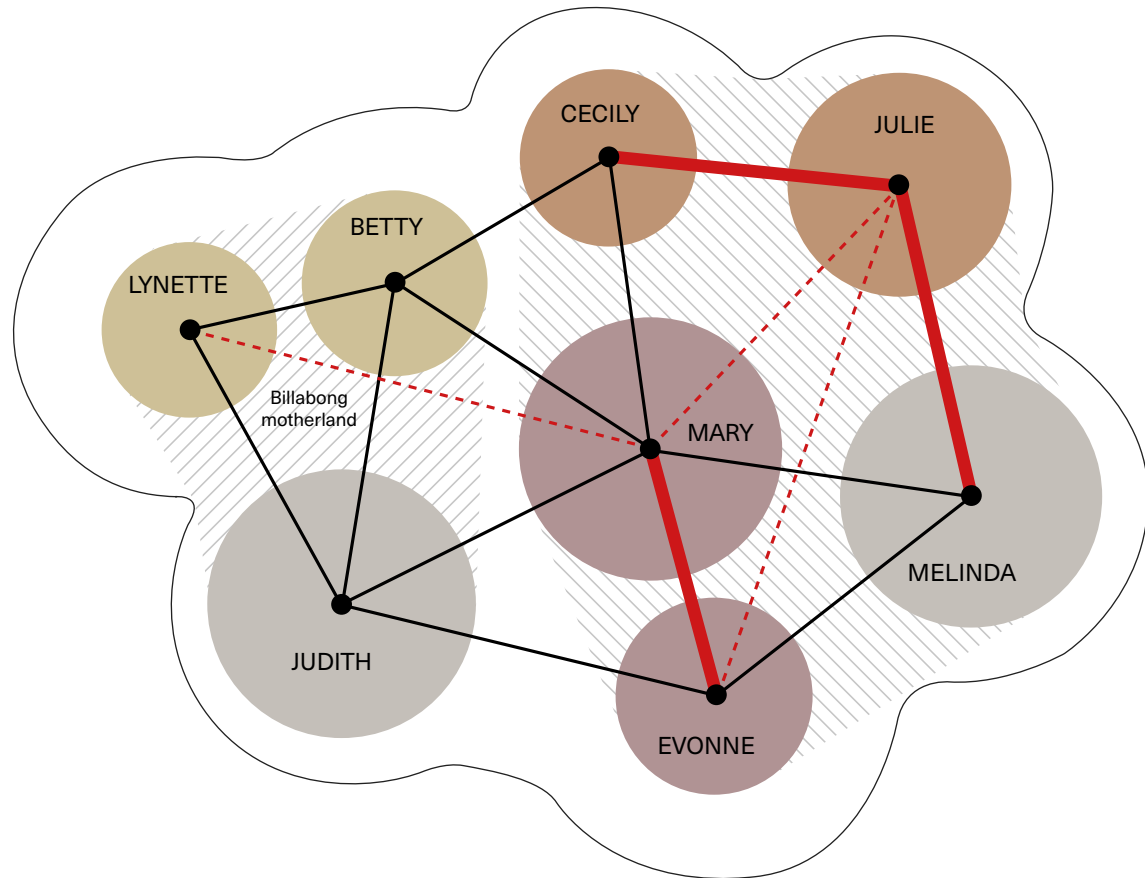
**Place made:**

Ramingining, Australia





- Incidental link
- Family link
- - - Family link 2nd degree
  
- Totem: Two and sisters
- Totem: Goose
- Totem: Rainbow snake
- Totem: Crow
- Totem: Crocodile
  
- ⊘ Billabong
- ⊘ Ramingining



# PET LAMP RAMINGINING 2

**PET Lamp Ramingining: Bukmukgu  
Guyananhawuy (Every family thinking  
forward) 2**

**Weavers:**

Lynette Birriran Djambarrpuyungu  
Mary Dhapalany Mandhalpuy  
Judith Djelirr Liyagalawumirr  
Julie Djulibing Malibirr Ganalbingu  
Joy Gadawarr Dabi  
Melinda Gedjen Liyagalawumirr  
Betty Matjarra Garrwura  
Cecily Mopbarrmbr Marrangu  
Evonne Munuyngu Mandhalpuy

**Materials:**

Pandanus (Pandanus sp.), natural dyes, PET  
plastic bottle

**Dimensions:**

19.5 x 550 x 400 cm

**Date made:**

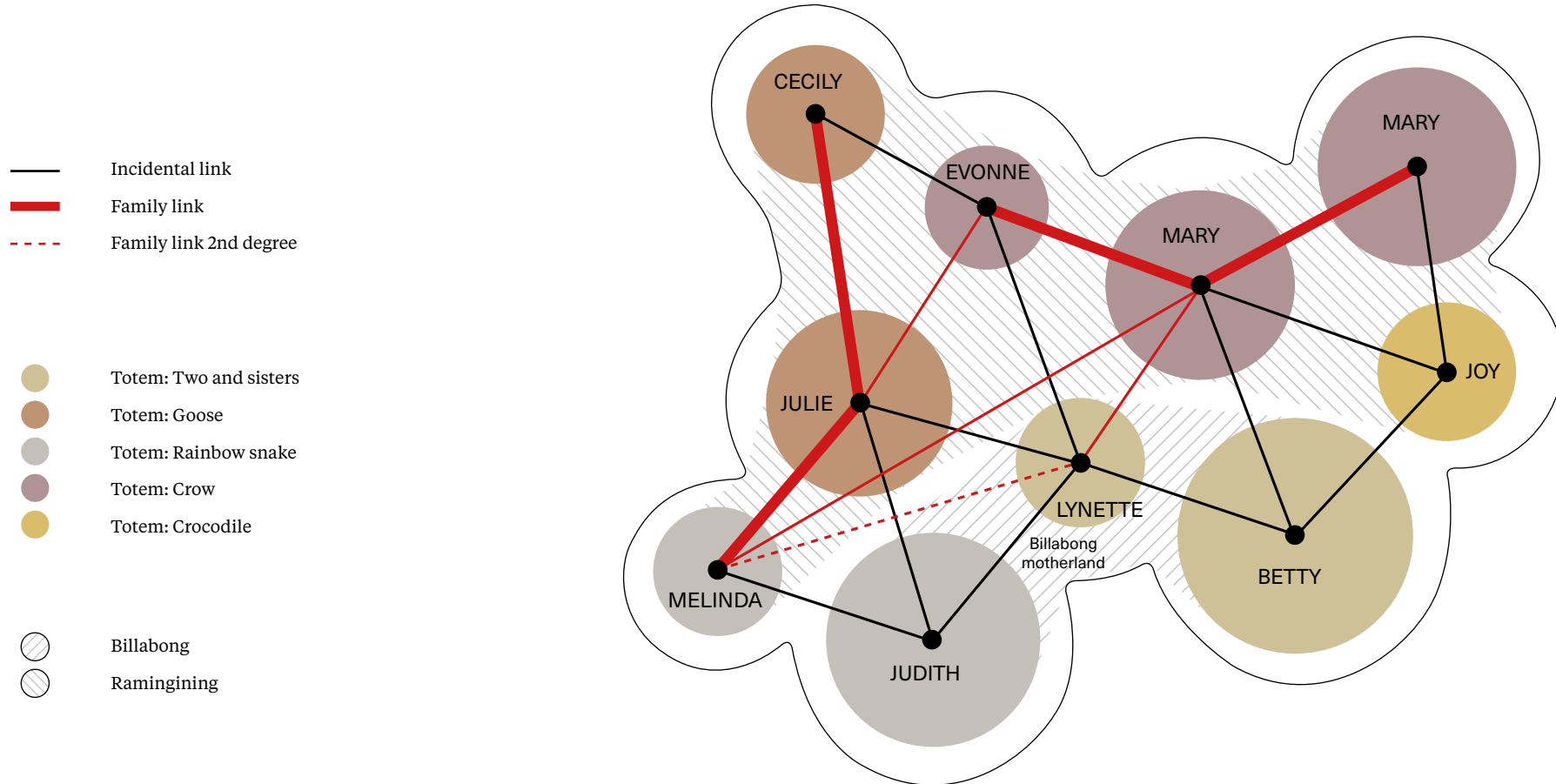
August 2016

**Place made:**

Ramingining, Australia

**National Gallery of Vicoria collection.  
Melbourne, Australia.**





BIRRIRAN GUYULA, Lynette  
DHAPALANY MANDHALPUYŊU, Mary  
MUNUYGU MANDHALPUYŊU, Evonne  
MATJARRA GARRAWURRA, Betty  
DJILIRR LILIPYANA, Judith  
GEDJIN LILIPYANA, Melinda  
DJULIBING MALIBIRR, Julie  
MOPBORRMBRR DHALTHANGU, Cecile

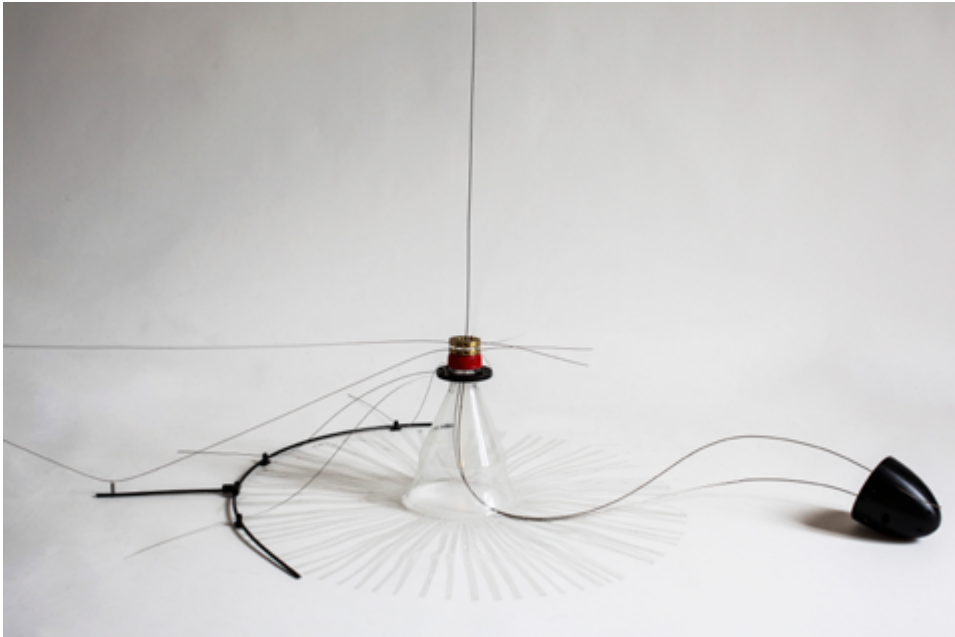
## THE WEAVERS: RAMINGINING





## MAKING THE LAMP

We designed a complex system that fulfills both hanging and lighting purposes. As a sign of respect to the piece, the applied system has a non-aggressive and reversible intervention. We aimed to subtly integrate the system and adapt it to the textile visual language of the piece in a way that the lampshade keeps being the protagonist. Therefore, the lamp is not a conventional light source, but an illuminated object which offers a revealing shadows play on the ceiling and a new perspective of the complexity of the material.





# AWARDS & EXHIBITIONS



**CODESPA** first prize 2013 in the category of SME (small and medium enterprise) for the social involvement of the PET Lamp project. Codespa Foundation is an international development NGO with a mission based on valuing and respecting the dignity of individuals.



Design for Development Award in the 4th Ibero American Biennial of Design (**BID14**) by DIMAD Madrid. BID the most important event of contemporary Ibero-American design worldwide.



Selected as **DESIGNS OF THE YEAR 2014** by the London Design Museum, the world's leading museum devoted to every form of contemporary design.



German Design Award

Nomination for the **German Design Award**, 2015. The German Design Award identifies and presents unique design trends, awarding projects that truly represent pioneering contributions.



**Architectural Digest Spain Prize** as Upcoming Talent to Studio Alvaro Catalán de Ocón, 2014. Architectural Digest is a leading international decoration and design magazine.



Silver Award of the Committee of **Shanghai for Art and Design** 2016. Ideas in Action brings together multidisciplinary projects linking conceptual and practical strategies of design.



PREMIOS DELTA 14  
Plata

Silver **Delta Award** 2014 by ADI FAD Barcelona. ADI-FAD is the oldest and most recognized Spanish institution dedicated to design since 1960.



Finalist in the category of **Best Innovation Project**. Ecoembes is a Spanish organization taking care for the environment through packaging recycling and ecodesign.

## 2021

Producto Fresco, Madrid.  
Madrid Design Festival, Madrid.  
Lichtteam Showroom, Switzerland.  
Bonne Arrivée, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris.  
MAK Design Lab, Vienna.  
Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milano.

## 2020

Producto Fresco, Madrid.  
Madrid Design Festival, Madrid.

## 2019

(no) more watse, Poland.  
Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.  
Madrid Design Festival, Madrid.  
ACdO/ stand Maison & Objet, Paris.  
Super (vivencias), Logroño.

## 2018

Private Choice, Paris.  
Producto Fresco, Madrid.  
Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.

## 2017

NGV Triennial, Melbourne.  
ACdO/ stand Maison & Objet, Paris.  
Craft becomes modern. The Bauhaus in the making Bauhaus, Germany.  
Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.  
20 years of creativity Salone Satellite, Milan.

## 2016

Infinite Installation West Bund Art Center, Shanghai.

Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.  
PET Lamp exhibition Centro Cultural La Moneda, Chile.

## 2015

Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.  
Vivir con un icono COAM, Madrid.  
Heineken ARCO Art Fair, Madrid.

## 2014

Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milan.  
Waterweavers Bard Graduate Center NY, New York.  
21\_21 Design Sight Issey Miyake Foundation, Tokio.  
Producto Fresco, Madrid.

## 2013

Rossana Orlandi Fuorisalone, Milano.  
Piet Hein Eek Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven.  
Old Customs Helsinki Design Week, Helsinki.  
The Conran Shop London Design Week, London.  
Merci Paris Design Week, Paris.  
Sala Vinçon, Barcelona.  
Vitra Haus, Basel.  
Expoartesánias, Bogotá.  
Show me Gallery, Portugal.  
Just Mad Design, Madrid.  
Casa Decor, Madrid.  
Producto Fresco, Madrid.  
Fuera de Serie Centro-Centro, Madrid.



“Las 99 PET Lamp de La Sala Vinçon”.  
exhibition at Vinçon, Barcelona



Rossana  
Orlandi

CENTRO  
CULTURAL  
LA MONEDA

21\_21

DUTCH  
DESIGN  
WEEK

HELSINKI DESIGN WEEK  
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Bard  
Graduate  
Center

MAISON  
& OBJET  
PARIS

MADRID  
DESIGN  
FESTIVAL



VitraHaus

TRANS-  
DESIGN  
2016

ngv

TATE

SaloneSatellite



MAD

Show me

La Sala Vinçon





Exhibition at VitraHaus,  
Weil am Reim, Germany



Exhibition "Craft becomes modern. The Bauhaus  
in the making" at Bauhaus Dessau, Germany



PET Lamp Collection at Private Choice, Paris



PET Lamp Bolgatanga, Denia, Spain



PET Lamp Pikul Set, Madrid, Spain







“Infinite Installation” at Trans Design  
2016, Shanghai Art and Design, China



**PROJECT & SHOP:** [www.petlamp.org](http://www.petlamp.org)

**MEDIA:** @PETLamp / #PETLamp