

Reinterpreting Bedouin Shaabook Weaving Techniques and Materials through the Co-Creation of Omani Contemporary Jewellery

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Abstract

The goal of this practice-based research is to create new interpretations of traditional Omani Bedouin crafts to inform the creation of contemporary jewellery. According to observations made during fieldwork with settled Bedouin craftspeople, traditional Bedouin methods for tanning leather (using plant materials such as Galqa and Qarat) and the production of leather thread for weaving are described, as is the use of weaving techniques in the production of Shaabook (headpieces), Hebla (leather belts), and traditional homemade decorative trims (Talli, Siim, and Suffah). A collaborative/co-creation workshop with a group of settled Omani Bedouin in North Eastern Oman served as the basis for this research. Participants in the workshop had a variety of traditional weaving techniques under their belts. Working in teams, the participants wove modular elements that were then combined to form a neckpiece. Using reflective analysis, the issue of hybridity is investigated in order to establish a link between the past and the present in the creation of contemporary Omani jewellery pieces.

Keywords: Oman, identity, Bedouin, Shaabook, contemporary jewellery.

Introduction

The goal of this practice-based research is to create new interpretations of traditional Omani Bedouin crafts to inform the creation of contemporary jewellery. Craft methods such as leather tanning, the production of leather thread, and traditional weaving techniques were explored in this project through a co-creation workshop with a group of settled Bedouin craftspeople in North Eastern Oman. These were then used in collaboration with workshop participants to create 'new forms' of jewellery. This study focused on weaving techniques associated with *Shaabook* (headpiece, see Figure 1), *Hebla* (leather belts, see Figure 2), and decorative trims known as *Talli*, *Siim*, and *Suffah* in this project (see Figure 3). Previous research has referred to *Shaabook* as *Shabkah* (or net in English) (Richardson & Dorr 2003; Morris & Shelton, 1997). The Bedouin women explained that the name *Shaabook* was derived from the Arabic word "entanglement," which referred to the intricate weaving technique used during the workshops. *Shaabook* is a headdress that completely covers the hair with a plaited, whorled leather coiffure. Bedouin creates it out of leather and embellishes it with silver. The leather is usually studded with silver discs made by male silversmiths, the silvers were from smelting results of a variety of coins were used, including Maria Theresa Dollars, a 1780 silver trade coin used in the Middle East, with women weaving and stitching the discs to the product. The Omani Bedouin term for the leather belt worn around the waist to secure the loincloth is *hebla* (see Figure 2). It's made with up to eleven twisted leather threads. *Talli*, *Siim*, and *Suffah* are traditional handmade trims with a narrow strip of foil surrounded by a framework of braided threads that are used on the most heavily embellished parts of women's costumes. The *Suffah* is also used for embroidery (no mention of this in the literature) and date-collection baskets (Richardson & Dorr, 2003).



Figure 1. (a) *Shaabook* (front), (b) *Shaabook* (back)

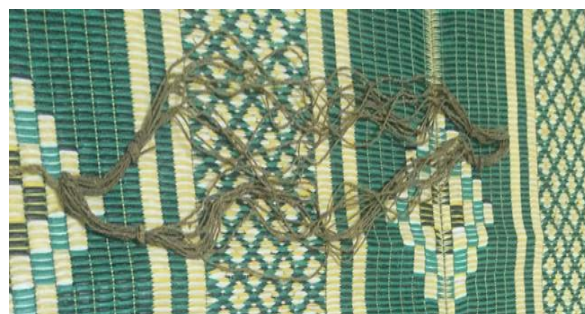


Figure 2. Loincloth secure (*Hebla*)

What exactly is traditional Bedouin jewellery? According to Perry (2013), jewellery worn in conjunction with traditional, national, or regional costumes could be classified as traditional jewellery. Silver is the primary material used in traditional Bedouin jewellery, as defined by both Ross (1978) and Forster (1998) in their research. Morris and Shelton (1997) claim that the Bedouin obtained the silver components from well-established male silversmiths. Other components, such as the leather parts of the *Shaabook*, were created by female Bedouin artisans. Traditional Bedouin

jewellery in Oman has remained unchanged for centuries (Richardson and Dorr, 2003; Mongiatti et al., 2011), but it is in danger of extinction as a result of the discovery of oil and subsequent change in the country's way of life (Richardson and Dorr, 2003). Changes in fashion, as well as an increase in silver's international value, have encouraged traders to purchase antique silver jewellery from Bedouins as a scrap commodity (Morris & Shelton 1997), which has contributed to the extinction of traditional jewellery styles worldwide.



(a)



(b)



(c)



(d)

Figure 3. (a) *Suffah* (from cloth threads), (b) *Suffah* (from date palm leaves), (c) *Talli*, (d) *Siim*

The definition of Contemporary Jewellery varies depending on the country and culture. Wallace et al. (2007)'s definition of contemporary jewellery is used as a guideline in this project. According to Wallace et al. (2007), contemporary jewellery is a rich craft discipline that aims to extend concepts of jewellery by embracing new and reinterpreting old materials, processes, and perspectives, all while challenging preconceptions about jewellery and its role in society. The social practice theme is firmly applied in my work. Starting from my family (my grandmother) and the women in the same village, I moved to other villages and then to another region. Moreover, I found one of the women who worked in craft, who led me to new thinking and working with a social group of women to create jewellery. My co-creation group applied different weaving processes (i.e. *suffah*, *talli* and *siim*) to achieve an effective outcome. My engagement with these women played a significant role in my practice.

It was previously seen that the social value, the creation process, and details of *shaabook* were learnt during the collection of oral knowledge from expert craftspeople with knowledge of *shaabook*. This section will describe the design process and collaboration with one of these experts. Although traditional jewellery has determined the Bedouin style for centuries (Morris and Shelton, 1997, Richardson and Dorr, 2003), it is in danger of vanishing (Rajab, 1997, Forster, 1998, Hawley, 2000, Mongiatti, Suleman and Meeks, 2011). I aimed to address this issue of maintaining tradition by reinterpreting the traditional techniques of Omani jewellery through contemporary jewellery to preserve some aspects of it whilst also demonstrating the contemporary relevance of traditional craft by situating it within a contemporary context.

This project attempts to connect different crafts to produce contemporary jewellery. It combines different techniques to celebrate the hybridity of traditional Bedouin jewellery and explore the relationship between the past and present. The research process included sourcing materials, adapting them and reassembling them to represent the methods employed in crafting traditional jewellery. The weaving leather thread acts as a metaphor for the jewellery worn by Bedouin from North A'Sharqiyah of Oman. Headdresses (*shaabook*) are examined to show how crafts employ different material sources that can be transformed into other forms.

Method

Co-creation is the joint, collaborative, concurrent, and peer-like process of producing new value (Brunner, 2016). Co-creating spaces are essential in exceedingly complex spaces and areas that fuel individuals' interests. Co-creation is a management initiative that brings a unique blend of ideas from different viewers or experimenters to generate new ideas. Within the design, it provides the prospect of extensive change as it alters the design's tools, methods, and nature (Pralhad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Figure 4 illustrates the change in thinking of different individuals at different times from 1980 to 2000. The planners' progress toward becoming translators of individuals' needs, not only the makers of

artefacts (Sander, 2005). People can be inspired by the influence of others and can benefit from a collaborative collection of different ideas through co-creation (ibid.).

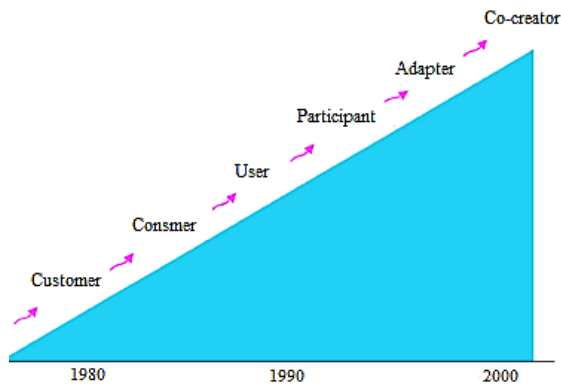


Figure 4. Changes in the way we think about people (Sander, 2005)

Co-Creation

Figure 5 illustrates my "co-creation" group. I used the snowball sampling method to reach my participants. I started with the two elderly women, W5 and W7, from fieldwork 1. W7 accompanied me to meet a young woman skilled in *Simm* (WS). W5 introduced me to another young woman skilled in *talli* (WT). W5 and WT introduced me to another young woman skilled in *suffah* (WF). A male participant (MB) was skilled at making basketry for collecting dates. He was interested in the co-creation group's interaction and volunteered to join the group. Our co-creation group was thus composed of six participants, excluding me, who were somehow biologically related. That is normal due to the family structures within the Bedouin community.

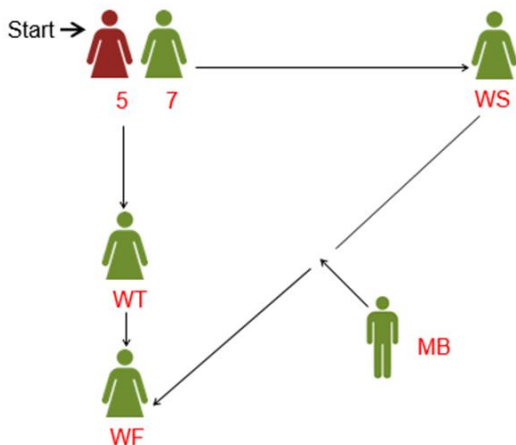


Figure 5. Visualisation of the co-creation group

The study describes a co-creation group of one settled Bedouin man and four settled Bedouin women, one of whom was born as a nomadic Bedouin. Arabs who migrated into the desert during the rainy season are known as Nomadic Bedouin. Settled Bedouin are Arabs whose migration status changed from nomadic to settled as a result of new national borders restricting free nomad mobility (Scholz, 1980).

For this research study, a workshop with five participants, including one settled Bedouin man and four settled Bedouin women, was organised. One of the women was a nomadic Bedouin by birth. All of the participants were skilled in traditional crafts, and they worked together to create the leather, which was then cut and woven. The workshop took place from August 1st to August 31st, 2016.

The group members were interviewed (via photo-elicitation) to learn more about their relationship with traditional Bedouin crafts. Photo-elicitation, which involves inserting a photograph into a qualitative interview, is widely used by visual researchers (Harper, 2002). Participants were shown photographs of traditional Omani jewellery, including *shaabook*, during the field research. The team's settled Bedouins were found to have little or no knowledge of traditional Omani jewellery. The formerly nomadic Bedouin, on the other hand, was familiar with the jewellery and knew *shaabook*. As a result, she was able to pass on *shaabook*-related knowledge and skills to the rest of the team.

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In this project, it was critical to identify specific people with a variety of skills who wanted to contribute to the project and to foster an informal atmosphere of trust among these participants. We eventually agreed to use leather in our work to improve our collective skills. The group worked together to reinterpret traditional weaving techniques and materials to create a series of modular elements that were then combined to create a contemporary jewellery neckpiece, which was then displayed at a one-day exhibition.

Discussion

Craft Process

This study of the traditional Bedouin tanning process involved the use of animal skin. Tanning leather was used to create a leather thread, which was then woven using traditional techniques (*Suffah, Talli, and Sim*; see Figure 3) to create a series of modular elements.

Tanning

A traditional tanning technique that is on the verge of extinction due to a lack of modern demand was used as part of this study (It has not been found previously the documentation of this process in the literature). In Oman, the expert woman who did the tanning is now very old, and no one in her family has any knowledge of the procedure. The steps are as follows: As shown in Figure 6, a desert plant called *Pergularia Tomentosa (Galqa)* is ground using stone while it is still fresh. The milky sap emitted by the plant's

leaves causes it to become watery and sticky (see Figure 7). The kneading process is applied to the outer skin surface (for nearly half an hour) using ground *galqa* branches to remove the hair from the inner skin. The entire skin is then soaked in water for one night inside a plastic container with the same *galqa* branches. It is important to note that these branches act as a chemical and should only be used for one night, as using them for a longer period of time risks damaging the skin. Surprisingly, the *galqa* allows for easy removal of skin hair by hand.



Figure 6. Pergularia Tomentosa (*Galqa*)



Figure 7. Grinding *Galqa*

To further manipulate the skin, the kneading process is repeated using a different plant called *Acacia Nilotica* (*Qarat*), as shown in Figure 8. After washing the clean skin (without fur), it is filled with ground *qarat* mixed with salt. As shown in Figure 9, the skin is pounded vigorously to smooth and colour it, resulting in the final quality of the leather. The kneading process is then completed by removing the *qarat* mixture from the skin and allowing it to dry for a few days.



Figure 8. *Acacia Nilotica* (*Qarat*)



Figure 9. Pounding Animal Skin

Leather Thread

To make leather thread, the dried skin (see Figure 10) is cut into thin strips after it has been tanned. The leather thread is made by simply cutting the leather into thin strips. It takes skill to complete this process because the skin is still hard and must be softened on a regular basis by lightly wetting it with water, as illustrated in Figure 11. The fact that not all leather is the same hardness adds to the complexity, as the resulting threads must be continuous and tight, with no loose links. They were encouraged to choose their favourite leather because leathers are naturally different in texture, colour, and smell after tanning, and they worked together in the workshop despite the fact that everyone worked on the same project.



Figure 10. The dried skin (leather)



Figure 11. Cutting leather to thread

The activity of cutting the leather was a great icebreaker that put the women in a creative mood. We shared some personal issues. The women were fascinated to see that I was travelling abroad to study and bringing my son without my husband. They asked me many personal questions, and I was happy to answer them because this built up trust with the group.

Talli - WT was a quiet 30-year-old woman. While I was engaged with these women, I learned more about them. She did not cut the leather to thread with the group during the first week. I asked what more they could do, but there was no response. The next day, WT, who had previously had some domestic problems, became more active within the group. She had previously made *talli* but had stopped after her domestic problems. That day, WT decided to bring her simple tool and asked me if she could use leather to make *talli*. She was happy to do it, and she continued even when I was not there. WT's sister said to me that WT even did *talli* at night. Also, I asked her if it was possible to add another material to the leather. She added the thread used in *talli*, which made her more interested. She made the most extended leather piece (*talli*) of all the group.

Suffah - WF also made decorations for Omani dresses. She tried to use leather rather than a thread in her work. It was such a beautiful pattern. It is worth noting that this woman was not convinced about using such materials for designing *suffah* as she designs *suffah* for traditional Omani dresses. She believed that a leather dress would be heavy, challenging to wash, and smell. In the current workshop, all the participants were encouraged to use their skills to create objects based on their weaving skills. W5 was an expert in leather weaving *shaabook*. She also created another traditional craft called *hebla*.



Figure 12. *Suffah* (from date palm fronds)
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

The man who lives in the same house was interested in our work, and at the end of August, he asked for some leather thread. One of his hobbies was making traditional Omani baskets. When he saw how we used leather in a different craft, he was keen to try to make a layer of a basket using leather thread. I asked him if it was possible to mix the basket leaves with the leather. In the beginning, he said that it might be challenging to get the same result, but he was eventually interested in the work as I encouraged him. It is interesting to

note that basket weaving is very closely related to *shaabook* in terms of *suffah* used in designing in the basket and the *shaabook* (Figure 12).

The outcome of cutting the leather was a brown coloured graded thread. The women used the thread in different crafts. I watched them, and I decided to work with them and make something. I thought about how I had used the leather thread to form spheres in the reflection work stage after fieldwork 1. I tried to design similar pieces related to the recent work we performed within a group. I showed the participants the technique I had used. It was amusing: each took a balloon, and we blew them all to the same size. We each wet our thread, using different shades of brown and quickly wrapped it around the balloon. Interestingly each thread of beads was made by different individuals. The next day we met, the women were surprised to see the unique bead designs after they burst the balloon. The group consisted of six individuals, including me, so there were six beads which I joined together with twisted leather thread made by MB (Figure 13).



Figure 13. The group's necklace of leather beads (56×16×8 CM, Leather thread.
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

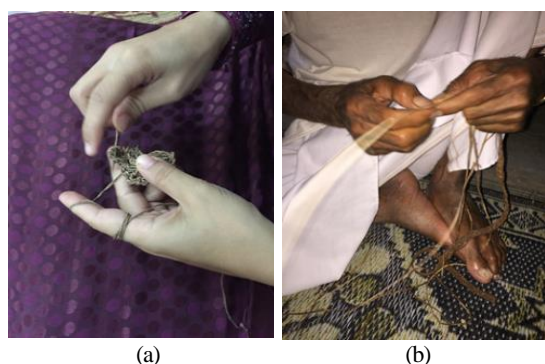
This section discussed the inter-relationship and interplay of different craft techniques and materials. The ethnography and participatory research have provided the essential findings for this study.

Weaving

In Figure 14, It can see how the leather threads were rolled up and used as raw materials for weaving after they were produced. In this project, participants were encouraged to use their weaving skills to create objects that they could then sell. Those with expertise in leather weaving on *Hebla*, for example, were able to instruct the others in the transformation of *Suffah*, *Talli*, and *Siim* using leather thread rather than palm leaves and coloured wool, which were used in the traditional technique, as depicted in Figure 14.



Figure 14. Leather thread



(a)

(b)



(c)



Figure 15. (a) *Suffah* (leather only), (b) *Suffah* (leather with date palm leaves), (c) *Talli*, dan (d) *Siim*

Co-Creation

Auto-ethnography - Before I started the workshop, I met with the woman who introduced me to the settled Bedouin in the preliminary research. We had several meetings where we

discussed the possibility of my bringing the expert woman's relatives to conduct the workshop in her house. The research on co-creation needs to go beyond the individual customer's experience and the relationship with others (Helkkula et al., 2012). The date and time of the meeting were organised in the expert woman's house. A total of 8 women attended the meeting when I explained the idea of the workshop and asked if they would be willing to participate. Firstly, I made decisions regarding how many people the group needed and who this group should be comprised. We integrated the women into a social environment to create an informal atmosphere by sitting on the floor in a close circle and learning everyone's names whilst sharing Omani coffee with dates and fruit. At this stage, I listened to the women's inspirations when they saw the material (leather), photos (traditional Omani jewellery), and objects (*shaabook*) and wrote notes about their responses.

For this research study, a workshop was organised. W5 had been born a nomadic Bedouin who was settled. In addition, the rest of the group members needed to be born and settled in Bedouin. All the participants were skilled in traditional crafts, and they cooperated to produce the leather and then cut and weave it into thread. The workshop lasted 20 days, some 40 hours, from the 1st of August 2016 to the 31st of August 2016 in North Eastern Oman. After agreeing with the whole group on the date and time of the workshop meetings, I chose persons who had agreed to be part of this workshop. Also, these women did not have any extra work during that month because it was summer vacation. We integrated the women into a social environment based on their experiences (Sanders, 2001). The group's everyday activities were also involved (Sanders, 2001).

The first participant in the group was W5 from fieldwork 1. Meeting each woman tends to generate a random conversation. I linked their talk about their crafts (weaving) with the leather thread, which could be woven into other weaving crafts. I used snowball sampling again in fieldwork 2 to select another participant. Their conversation regarding traditions led me to select the second woman from the co-creation group who had a craft skill called *siim* (WS). The co-creation group was then expanded with other participants (women) besides the (WS). It was then noted that two more women had skills in creating *talli* (WT) and *suffah* (WF). A male participant (MB) became interested in the interaction between the co-creation group's participants and voluntarily offered to join the group. Our co-creation group was thus composed of five participants who were somehow biologically related.

I asked W7 to arrange a meeting with the WS. She said we could go at any time and that there was no need for an appointment. She said these people welcome guests at any time. The Bedouins believe that any guest is a guest of God who is warmly welcomed. It took one hour of driving in the woman's car to reach the *Bediyah* desert. The landscape is a beautiful, open desert, away from the city, where the camel and sheep were grazing (Figure 16). The community demonstrated their hospitality by introducing me to their

relatives. The relatives knew that a guest was coming, and we all shared our food. I was feeling of being at home. Upon our arrival were welcomed by WS, who indeed demonstrated her hospitality. She first introduced me to her relatives who, according to Bedouin culture, had been informed about the guest's arrival. It was part of the Omani culture in general and Bedouins in particular. It did not take long to prepare lunch for the unexpected guests, and we then all shared and enjoyed our food together. Appreciating the methodological interaction is part of my approach to working with this community.



Figure 16. Open desert
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

The purpose of the visit was then disclosed to the woman and her entire family; a discussion related to weaving was initiated. We were then introduced to the tools (manual machines and materials) for weaving in their house yard. Nylon thread is the primary material used, and it makes the object as shiny as a manufactured product (Figure 17). Moreover, I understood that its gloss offers protection against decay and the colour is appreciated by those living in a hot, desert climate. Western perspectives might see this differently. Hanson and Levick-Parkin (2016) pointed out a similar observation when they mentioned a group of Zanzibar artisans and their most beautiful woven bags made of natural materials. In their opinion, the object was then rendered less valuable when it was sprayed with a high-gloss varnish.



Figure 17. Nylon thread
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

Discussion

The interesting case as the women themselves had identified a problem in selling the traditional crafts they made, such as camel trappings, camel neckbands, and saddlebags. WS said that the people would not easily accept changes in traditional form and colour. This argument was suggested as well by Al-Zadjali (2009) in her thesis about Bedouin rugs. The methods for weaving these products are full of symbolism and meaning. In the last few years, the modernised carpets have forced weavers to abandon their craft, as it is not economically viable when forced to compete with the imported carpets industry. Additionally, local people seem unable to find rugs that meet their needs from amongst the locally hand-woven products, which creates a demand for imports. She also found that new motifs were not always welcome. These women decided to invent new functions of weaving, with cloth pieces called *siim* (Figure 18).



Figure 18. *Siim* is a cloth lace
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

One woman demonstrated the weaving process of her *siim*. However, after careful observation, as a designer, I judged the trade-off between the object and the time and effort involved in producing it was unbalanced in terms of outcome. She used nylon thread, making the product as shiny as a manufactured product. Quite simply, the process took too long to produce a good product. The success of this product will be temporary, i.e. until a company can copy the design and sell it cheaper. However, it must be admitted that the women's products were successfully sold and were popular in the market. I felt the women had created a straightforward tool to do the weaving, which involved a lot of time and effort, but the final product had little value because nylon thread had been used. The locally-made tool was constructed from two pieces of wood sloped on two long steel tubes and raised on plastic cans. (Figure 19).

There are other cloth pieces called *suffah* and *talli* made by women, and they used industrial thread and were popular in the market because they copied the original design for a reduced price. It raises some interesting questions regarding intellectual property in the context of crafts, but that provides a subject for a future research project and academic paper. Testing the concept of a product built or its early release, sample, or model is a process known as prototyping; a process the product designed is allowed to act as an object that can be either replicated or drawn from it. For this project, the initial model of the object design needed experience so that the designers (co-creative group) could be allowed to see the

product in action before finalising and perfecting it. I planned to start with WS to make a prototype. Firstly, I showed her the leather thread. We discussed the material as WS was unfamiliar with it. She did not know what the leather was, but her mother quickly explained. She said that it was leather that she used for tanning. The prototype used the same techniques and tools but used leather thread instead of the nylon thread she used to make *siim* (Figure 20).



Figure 19. *Siim* tool (two pieces of woods sloped on two long steel tubes, stood on plastic cans)
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.



Figure 20. *Siim* made of leather thread
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.

Presenting the prototype was very useful at this stage. First, it allowed the group to understand how to deal with leather. Second, it inspired the starting point for the co-creation workshop. It became natural for the group to ask me if they could use leather thread in their craft. "It's not where you take things from – it's where you take them to" (Luc Godard, 2017). In the beginning, WS said that it was challenging to work with leather and that nylon thread was easier to weave. She said that weaving it would not be possible, and no one would stitch leather in their work. When she started to put the thread in her tool, firstly, she was annoyed by the smell and texture of leather. The intense pressure that she used with the leather was the same as she used for the artificial thread, and that caused the leather thread to break. In her weaving, she kept the work tight with much effort. Then, the leather weaving part became noticeable. She was excited about the new result, but she did not make a long piece of fabric as she

believed it was useless to do so. She thought that because no one would embroider leather in their cloth, there was a greater chance of the fabric breaking (Figure 21).



Figure 21. The outcome of the *siim*
Photographed by Amal Al-Ismaili, North Sharqiyah, Oman, 2016.



Figure 22. The outcome of weaving



Figure 23. (a) and (b): contemporary necklaces

Suffah, *Talli*, and *Siim* were woven by the team members using traditional home-made trims and braided threads, which they learned from their instructor. During the co-creation workshop, there was a heated discussion among participants about the appropriateness of using leather. After that, there was a discussion to try to find common ground on the subject of contemporary jewellery design. It was suggested to the team that they use the same materials that were used for *Shaabook* in conjunction with their weaving skills to create contemporary jewellery, which was interpreted in this workshop as a relationship between the past (i.e.

Shaabook) and the present (i.e. necklace). The objects woven by the group (see Figure 22) were finally combined to create a necklace that was a hybridization of the various crafts used during the production process, as shown at Figure 23.

One-Day Exhibition

Eid Al-Fitri and Eid Al-Adha are two Muslim festivals that take place during the course of the year. During these occasions, the majority of women in Oman wear their jewellery. Following the completion of the workshop, the necklace was displayed during Eid Al-Adha (December 2019) in the home where the workshop had taken place. For the event, the necklace was hung on the wall to create a natural environment in which those in attendance could "test" and "feel" the piece. This was inspired by early visits to settled Bedouin women as some of them displayed their jewellery collections by hanging them from the walls.

Conclusion

During the co-creation workshop, we attempted to create a new form of hybridity that was unique to us. Combining crafts from *siim*, *talli*, and *suffah* with a chain of *hebla* was a new manifestation of craft hybridity for us, so we combined all of the available participants' skills to create the final synthesis jewellery, which was a new manifestation of craft hybridity. The outcome was that these woven artefacts made by the group were transformed into beads. These beads were then wrapped individually with *hebla* as a chain to finally assemble and combine the different crafts in a hybrid form to produce the contemporary jewellery (i.e. necklace). The combined elements, such as the leather thread, were used to project a specific value or social context. The final artefact was a unique co-creation; the product of one specific group who combined their skills. This hybridity is grounded in previous artefacts, particularly *Samt* necklaces, where coins such as Maria Theresa Dollars, Saudi Riyals and Indian Rupees were utilized to create necklaces. Using traditional materials (such as the leather thread used in *shaabook*), this design reinterpreted traditional *hebla* and other crafts (such as *siim*, *talli*, and *suffah*) while also occupying a space between traditional and contemporary modes of expression.

Even though the necklace was displayed in an unfamiliar shape to the audience because *siim*, *talli*, and *suffah* craft originally weaved by thread not leather, there was no outright rejection or opposition to the piece in the exhibition. The work sparked lively discussions, and each member of the audience had their own point of view or opinion on the various items on display. One of the points of view was that the necklace was a variation on the traditional silver necklace (*samt*). In the case of the traditional silver necklace (*samt*), this point of view can be seen as a continuation of the sense of traditional jewellery in contemporary design. This acceptance was significant in that the items did not appear to disrupt the existing culture and were accepted by the audience, who touched and wore them during the performance. Additionally, the items' form, shape, colours, smell, and texture gave them a 'sense of heritage' or a classic feel, which

was accentuated by the use of traditional materials. In relation to this exhibition, the most valuable thing to note is that the participants were pleased with themselves when they saw their designs garnering significant attention and being worn by others. Six participants were recruited through snowball sampling for a co-creation workshop. Traditional crafts such as *suffah*, *talli*, and *siim* were practised by all participants. In the workshop, participants were encouraged to cut and weave leather. I gathered this thread and wove an object with it. After that, I designed and created two necklaces using woven leather thread.

The first significant piece was a necklace made from leather thread, which was exhibited in the house of one of the women on the occasion of Eid. This artefact generated a good deal of discussion and was generally considered acceptable in terms of Omani culture. By re-imagining the *shaabook*, it was possible to use the same material (leather thread) to represent it in a different way than it had previously been (i.e. in the form of a necklace).

For the purpose of producing contemporary jewellery, various craft skills, such as leather tanning and weaving techniques, were linked to a co-creation group. According to the findings of this research, traditional Bedouin jewellery has been in risk of disappearing for quite some time now. Because the elderly participant stated that she and her family were unfamiliar with the specifics of the traditional tanning process, it is assumed that modern methods of tanning do not produce the same distinctive quality and colour of leather suitable for *shaabook*. Co-creation has been interpreted by the participants as a means of bridging the gap between the past and the present.

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