

**JEWELLERY DESIGN INCORPORATING CULTURALLY  
MATERIALS**

Thanakit jaisuda\*, Pornpimol Podjanapimol & Yongyuth Punparejit

\*First and corresponding author

Faculty of Fine Arts, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok, Thailand  
(thanakit@g.swu.ac.th, Poo01@hotmail.com, Yongyuth1313@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

Jewellery design incorporating cultural materials presents concepts and approaches to integrating cultural materials into contemporary jewellery design. It emphasises both the tangible and intangible values of materials, highlighting their significance as representations of identity, local wisdom, and ways of life within communities. Cultural materials are not merely physical resources, but carriers of narratives, history, and socio-cultural beliefs, which can be transformed into jewellery pieces rich in aesthetic and cultural meaning. The content of this article is derived from the author's compilation of data from related documents, books, and texts, along with an analysis of five research works conducted by the author on cultural materials and cultural jewellery design. The author has summarised and organised the findings as qualitative information for publication. The article is divided into three sections. First, understanding cultural materials: This section defines and explains the meaning of cultural materials, presents criteria for identifying materials as cultural, and explores the values of cultural materials. Second, challenges in incorporating cultural materials in jewellery design- this section discusses the criteria for selecting cultural materials for jewellery design, as well as the experimentation and testing of materials to enhance their suitability as jewellery components. Third, cultural materials and jewellery design- this final section presents ideas for contemporary jewellery design using cultural materials, highlighting their influence on the design process and evaluating the value and worth of jewellery crafted with cultural materials. This article will promote the design of contemporary and sustainable

jewellery with distinctive identities. Ultimately, this article serves as a testament that jewellery design using cultural materials is both a creative and social process, capable of fostering a dialogue between the past and the present while promoting significant aesthetic, cultural, and environmental values.

**Keywords:** *cultural materials, jewellery design, local identity, contemporary design*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, marked by rapid social, economic, technological, and cultural changes, jewellery design has transcended its traditional role as mere bodily ornamentation. It now serves as a "cultural space" that enables creators to communicate communities' identities, beliefs, and narratives through tangible materials and artistic forms. Within this context, cultural materials have emerged as valuable resources for their aesthetic and physical qualities and their symbolic, social, spiritual, and economic significance. These materials possess the potential to be creatively integrated into jewellery design in powerful and meaningful ways (Maldini, Stappers and Hekkert, 2020).

In Thailand, the growing interest in jewellery design using cultural materials aligns with contemporary craft movements and the creative economy, which aim to elevate traditional products through modern design innovation. This movement resonates with national development policies, such as the Bio-Circular-Green (BCG) Economy Model and the promotion of One Tambon One Product (OTOP), both of which emphasise leveraging local cultural capital (Creative Economy Agency, 2022).

Recent Thai jewellery design research reflects this trend. For instance, Phimki, et al. (2021) developed jewellery using reed mats to reflect the cultural identity of Chanthaburi Province. Jaisuda, et al. (2023) explored the use of locally distinctive ceramics for commercial jewellery design, addressing contemporary market demands. Likewise, the work of Kimsaeng and Siriwesmat (2019) focused on designing jewellery from leather materials that incorporates the identity of *Nang Talung*, (Southern Thai shadow puppet) leather craftsmanship. These examples highlight the growing role of cultural materials as key components in Thai contemporary jewellery design, helping to express local identity, distinctiveness, and conceptual narratives.

From a design theory perspective, using cultural materials allows for reinterpretation that respects traditional roots while creatively engaging with contemporary consumers. Designers are expected to go beyond selecting materials; they must also act as listeners, interpreters, and storytellers capable of understanding cultural contexts and transmitting those meanings with ethical responsibility (Risatti,

2007). Furthermore, this approach aligns with the global trend toward sustainability and authenticity. According to the Fashion Revolution Report (2023), contemporary consumers increasingly value fashion materials' cultural origins and traceability. Beyond aesthetics and functionality, they seek spiritual value and ethical participation in supply chains, including fair credit to artisans, sustainable local materials, and non-exploitative design practices.

Academically, integrating cultural materials in design offers a platform for discussions on identity and challenges the dominance of universal beauty standards, which often overlook or distort the value of local cultures. Smith (2012) argues that contemporary design rooted in cultural heritage fosters conceptual diversity and resists the homogenisation of artistic expression caused by globalisation.

In conclusion, jewellery design through cultural materials is not merely a concern of material science or aesthetics but represents an interdisciplinary process that deeply connects anthropology, aesthetics, design, and sustainable development. This article presents a holistic understanding of cultural materials and proposes concepts and approaches for selecting, evaluating, utilising, and designing them into jewellery. It emphasises the importance of creative practices that bridge cultural roots and contemporary relevance through respectful, responsible, and innovative processes.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research was conducted following steps:

### *Data Collection*

The author compiled information from relevant documents, books, and significant texts concerning cultural materials and jewellery design. The data was gathered from reliable sources to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness, summarising, analysing, and compiling the information in a descriptive format.

### *Analysis of research*

The author analysed the content and information related to cultural materials and jewellery design from five research works conducted by the author, which include, first, Chanthaburi identity jewellery: Design to promote Chanthaburi province to be the gem city (2019), second, the development of jewellery was based on the identity of local culture in Trat Province (2021), third, contemporary jewellery design from Eastern Lanna identity (2024), fourth, study of cultural materials in the Sukhothai civilisation area for further development of commercial contemporary jewellery design (2025), and fifth, study and development of Bone China Jewellery (2019)

These research works are related to cultural materials and jewellery design, and the author summarised, analysed, and compiled the information in a descriptive format.

#### *Summary and organisation of data*

The collected and analysed data will be summarised and organised into qualitative information to facilitate understanding and publication in the form of an academic article.

### **Understanding Cultural Materials**

Cultural materials play a crucial role in understanding human societies' attitudes and diverse expressions. These materials encompass tangible substances, symbols, and cultural manifestations that hold historical, cultural, and social significance. Cultural materials refer to important materials within a specific cultural, historical, or artistic context, often examined in the humanities and social sciences as valuable resources for analysing human societies and their development (Smith, 2007). These materials typically carry symbolic, ritualistic, or social meanings and are commonly integrated into various creative disciplines such as architecture, fashion, and jewellery design.

Cultural materials are not merely decorative or functional components but vessels of stories, identity, and cultural values. Appadurai (1986) posits that cultural materials are more than tangible objects; they reflect worldviews, belief systems, and value structures of communities. Some materials may have limited economic value but carry immense cultural significance, such as handwoven textiles from ethnic groups or pottery created using traditional techniques, which reflect indigenous knowledge and accumulated cultural heritage.

Research shows that cultural materials represent more than production inputs; they are cultural units capable of expressing identity, reconnecting people to their roots, and adding both aesthetic and cultural value to design. Cultural materials are closely associated with Material Culture Studies, which explores the relationships between humans and objects. This discipline emphasises that materials are not lifeless but socially and culturally contextualised entities.

In the context of jewellery design, the author defines cultural materials as substances or objects that are associated with the culture of a specific group or community within a particular locality. These materials may carry historical value, practical uses, or religious and spiritual significance. Cultural materials are often incorporated into product design or artistic creation to transmit cultural sentiments and values across generations. Cultural materials include handwoven silk, traditional

ceramics, or culturally inspired decorative motifs that connect past and present social contexts.

Within the field of jewellery design, cultural materials can serve both as inspiration and as a resource for establishing the identity of a piece. This may involve recycling old materials, applying traditional techniques innovatively, or reinterpreting classical forms in a modern context. Therefore, the use of cultural materials is not merely the reuse of “old things,” but a thoughtful process of interpretation and re-meaning, driven by intention and vision.

A notable example is the work of jewellery designer Sarunya Yukongdee, whose practice clearly communicates “Thainess” through the deliberate selection of Indigenous, ceremonial, and belief-based materials such as dried flowers, silk, rattan, plated metal, beads, gemstones, and bamboo. These materials are not merely used as background elements but are reinterpreted into contemporary jewellery pieces that are both elegant and symbolically rich (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Jewellery designed by Sarunya Yukongdee.**

(Source: Salhotra, 2016.).

Classifying materials as cultural should not be based solely on physical characteristics. Instead, it must consider the broader cultural, social, and local knowledge systems that imbue these materials with significance. The criteria for identifying such materials require a nuanced understanding of the relationships between object, community, and cultural context. To support this, the following framework is proposed for identifying cultural materials;

*Cultural and community connection*

Cultural materials must play a meaningful role in a community's lifestyle, traditions, or beliefs. They are often used in socially significant practices such as traditional dress, rituals, or local artistic expression reflecting community identity and intergenerational knowledge.

*Symbolic meaning and narrative*

Some materials are valued for their physical attributes and the stories they represent. These could relate to historical narratives, beliefs, sacred qualities, or even social status. Such materials carry the emotional and symbolic weight of community expression.

*Traditional production and use*

Materials created through traditional methods such as natural dyeing, wood carving, or basket weaving represent the transmission of vernacular wisdom. Their use in original contexts (e.g., ceremonial decoration or crafting specific tools) reflects deep-rooted cultural continuity.

*Geographical and ethnic specificity*

Certain materials, such as tropical hardwoods or regionally distinct textiles, are inextricably linked to specific regions or ethnic groups. This geographical rootedness reinforces their uniqueness and authenticity as cultural artefacts.

*Social and economic role*

Cultural materials often serve as sources of community income through trade, exchange, or the production of crafts. Socially, they are used in gifting rituals or to express social status within the community, underscoring their functional role in social cohesion.

*Community and expert recognition*

Cultural materials may be recognised informally by the originating community or formally acknowledged through registration as intangible cultural heritage, such as listings by UNESCO or national cultural institutions.

To better illustrate this framework, Table 1 presents an example of classifying cultural materials using the handwoven *Lai Jok* silk fabric of the Phuan ethnic group in Lopburi Province. This ikat technique silk (mudmee silk) embodies local Thai communities' wisdom, lifestyle, and aesthetic values, especially in the northeastern region. Its complex production process, meaningful motifs, and ceremonial usage

elevate it beyond being a mere textile. Instead, it becomes a “narrative” that contemporary jewellery designers can meaningfully reinterpret and integrate into their creative practice.

**Table 1: Example of Classifying Cultural Materials: Phuan Ethnic Group’s Lai Jok Handwoven Fabric from Lopburi Province**

Criteria	Classification Details
Cultural and community connection	Used in religious and traditional ceremonies such as weddings and merit-making events, it signifies women’s social status.
Symbolic meaning and narrative	Patterns like “pine tree” or “mee kor” symbolise stability and ancestral connection.
Traditional production and use	Produced using handwoven ikat techniques, passed down through generations within the community.
Geographical and ethnic specificity	Found exclusively among the Phuan ethnic group in certain districts of Lopburi Province.
Social and economic role	It functions as a handicraft product, generating income for the community and a specific niche market.
Community and expert recognition	Registered as an intangible cultural heritage by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand.

(Source: Jaisuda)

The classification of cultural materials as described above enables researchers and designers to better understand the tangible and intangible values embedded within them. This systematic approach serves as a guideline for studying materials in conservation, development, and creative design rooted in culture, thereby promoting meaningful and sustainable cultural communication through objects.

Cultural materials are not merely resources for creating art and handicrafts; they also embody their originating communities' wisdom, lifestyles, and worldviews. These materials are crucial in bridging the past and present, communicating cultural values at a level that transcends mere external aesthetics. Generally, cultural materials can be understood through two primary value dimensions: intangible and tangible. These dimensions are intricately connected in constructing the meaning and beauty of an artwork.

## **Intangible Values**

The intangible values of cultural materials refer to qualities that cannot be directly measured or physically touched but manifest through shared belief systems, spirituality, and collective memory within a community. Certain materials may function as religious symbols, talismans of faith, or items with deep psychological significance, such as sacred wood from revered sites, heirloom textiles passed down familial lines, or shells associated with local rituals. Moreover, cultural materials reflect local identity, encompassing indigenous knowledge, wisdom, and region-specific aesthetics. These qualities render the materials more than objects; they become carriers of cultural memory and symbols of ethnic or communal identity.

## **Tangible Values**

On the other hand, cultural materials possess tangible values that are perceptible through the senses. These include colour, which may indicate knowledge of natural dyeing techniques; texture, which reveals manufacturing processes such as weaving, carving, or glazing; characteristic scents deriving from local herbs or raw materials; and shapes that combine visual appeal with functional utility. Additionally, the transformability of materials and adaptability to modification, shaping, or combination with other materials constitute an essential aspect of their tangible value. This capacity allows designers to extend the physical worth of materials into contemporary creations that communicate effectively.

Contemporary designers must consciously acknowledge and comprehend these dual dimensions when integrating intangible and tangible values into design. This understanding is central to producing works harmoniously fusing aesthetic beauty with profound meaning. Materials chosen intentionally enrich a design's aesthetic dimension while simultaneously conveying stories, beliefs, or pride in originating cultures.

Particularly in the context of jewellery design, cultural materials serve not only as decorative elements but also as cultural mediators. They foster connections among the wearer, the creator, and the broader society. Therefore, material selection transcends mere technical processes, representing a deep cultural practice that can lead to valuable design outcomes.

## **RESULTS**

### **Challenges in Incorporating Cultural Materials into Jewellery Design**

In the contemporary era, jewellery design has expanded beyond merely emphasising aesthetic beauty to becoming a medium for communicating identity, beliefs, and

cultural values of individuals and communities (Dormer, 1994). Consequently, many designers have shown keen interest in utilising cultural materials as fundamental components in their creative processes, recognising that these materials are not mere objects but carriers of symbolic meaning and cultural memory. However, integrating cultural materials into the jewellery design context continues to face multiple challenges.

These challenges span various dimensions, including the material science aspect, such as fragility or physical limitations; design considerations, such as appropriateness in reinterpretation; and ethical concerns related to the relationship between designers and the originating cultural communities. Risatti (2007) argues that understanding the value of materials must encompass materiality, colour, texture, form, and transformability and symbolism, including beliefs, rituals, and the identity of the user community.

The use of cultural materials in contemporary jewellery design necessitates a careful, thorough selection process that comprehensively understands cultural, physical, and market dimensions. These materials are not merely raw inputs for creation but also embody narratives, indigenous knowledge, and social values. Therefore, their selection must systematically consider various interconnected criteria.

The criteria for selecting cultural materials for jewellery design are, first, cultural significance, second, physical suitability, third, safety and hygiene, fourth, processability and design flexibility, fifth, sustainability and ethics, sixth, commercial viability and seventh, uniqueness and identity. The details of these criteria are as follows:

#### *Cultural significance*

Selected materials should connect profoundly to their source culture, encompassing historical context, beliefs, or ritual roles. Some materials may be used on special occasions, such as merit-making ceremonies, weddings, or sacred rites, indicating their importance within the community. Moreover, materials should clearly reflect local identity and communal wisdom, ensuring that the final piece carries deep cultural value rather than superficial decoration.

#### *Physical suitability*

Materials intended for use in jewellery design must possess appropriate physical characteristics, such as size, shape, and weight, so as not to cause discomfort to the wearer. They should also exhibit durability, flexibility, and the ability to be shaped

or formed according to the designer's requirements. Compatibility with other materials such as metals, wood, or textiles is crucial for versatility and functional effectiveness.

#### *Safety and hygiene*

Since jewellery is worn closely with the body, selected materials must not cause irritation, allergies, or health hazards. Materials containing residual chemicals or those that may release toxins upon sweat, heat, or air exposure should be avoided. Furthermore, materials should be easy to clean to maintain hygiene and prolong the product's lifespan.

#### *Processability and design flexibility*

Ideal materials should respond well to diverse design processes, including cutting, drilling, assembling, and shaping according to the designer's vision. They should accommodate surface treatments such as polishing, dyeing, or printing to enhance aesthetic appeal and variety. Blending harmoniously with other materials further facilitates innovative and contemporary design expressions.

#### *Sustainability and ethics*

In an era where sustainability is a central design trend, material selection must consider environmental and social impacts. Materials should be sourced without harming ecosystems, free from unfair labour practices, and ideally promote the use of recycled or biodegradable natural substances. Respect for the originating community's rights, proper acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge, and equitable benefit sharing are integral components of ethical design.

### **Commercial viability**

Designs must possess commercial potential to sustain themselves within the creative economy, regardless of cultural value. Materials should be suitable for reproducible production, have reasonable costs, and meet the target market's preferences, functionality, and emotional values. Moreover, the ability to add value through storytelling and the cultural meanings attached to the materials enhances market appeal.

## **Uniqueness and identity**

Quality jewellery materials should foster memorability and represent the brand or piece's identity. Cultural materials with distinctive features—such as indigenous patterns, unique craftsmanship techniques, or geographically rare materials—can become significant selling points. This is especially true in markets that prioritise authenticity and the narrative embedded within the product.

The selection of materials for contemporary jewellery design today goes beyond merely considering physical properties or aesthetics. It also encompasses cultural, ethical, sustainability, and market potential dimensions, especially when the materials carry symbolic meanings or are connected to the identity of local communities. Cultural materials have thus gained increased attention as essential components that reflect the narratives and cultural roots embedded in a piece.

However, some culturally significant materials may not be directly suitable for use as jewellery materials due to factors such as fragility or inability to be shaped. Therefore, Material experimentation is crucial for modifying or transforming these materials to enhance their usability without compromising their original meaning (Tonkinwise, 2011). Such experimentation may include testing for durability, dyeing techniques, surface coating, or combining with modern materials to augment design potential. Consequently, material experimentation and testing are vital in exploring cultural materials' feasibility as media for contemporary jewellery design.

Hence, the aspects of cultural material experimentation for jewellery are summarised as follows:

### *Physical and technical experimentation*

Physical testing of cultural materials involves assessing fundamental properties such as hardness, toughness, flexibility, tensile strength, heat resistance, and stability when exposed to moisture or sunlight. Many local materials such as plant fibers, bark, earthenware, or shell-based materials often require processes like drying, soaking, coating, or reinforcement to be viable for use in jewelry that must endure diverse conditions. Beyond physical testing, technical experimentation also includes evaluating the material's compatibility with other materials, such as metal joining, adapting forming techniques, dyeing, or carving. Designers must therefore develop material science skills alongside creativity to ensure appropriate application without diminishing the cultural value of the materials.

#### *Aesthetic and sensory experimentation*

In jewellery, materials must evoke an appealing and memorable tactile and visual experience. Experimentation with texture, colour, scent, or translucency is crucial for exploring the aesthetic potential of cultural materials. Designers may select materials with distinctive qualities for example, the natural luster of shells, the rough surface of banana fibers, or unique aromas from local herbs to create identity in the pieces and foster an emotional connection between the wearer and the cultural context the material represents.

#### *Testing in real-world contexts*

After laboratory experimentation, an essential step is applying the materials in real-world situations such as wearing, packaging, exhibiting, or trial marketing. This phase gathers experiential data from actual users regarding tactile response, ease of care, and cultural acceptance. Such practical testing also allows designers to receive feedback from source communities to refine materials and designs in alignment with authentic cultural contexts.

#### *Integrating values with creative experimentation*

Experimentation with cultural materials should not be limited to technical processes but must be integrated with a profound understanding of their cultural significance. The development of new material techniques, for instance, transforming fruit peels into translucent materials resembling amber, preserving dried leaves in a form akin to leather, or combining traditional materials with biotechnology, creates avenues for material innovation that respects cultural roots while fostering contemporary relevance.

Experimentation and testing of cultural materials are vital processes that open creative possibilities for materials previously unused in contemporary jewellery contexts. These processes extend beyond physical and aesthetic considerations to encompass ethics, sustainability, and holistic appreciation of the communities that own these materials. Good design therefore, must embrace experimentation phases and remain open to learning from materials as living narratives possessing intrinsic stories and unique values.

### **Cultural Materials and Jewellery Design**

Jewellery design in the context of cultural materials is not merely the process of crafting aesthetically pleasing forms or meticulously assembling components. Instead, it is an act of interpretation, a translation of culture through symbols,

materials, and artistic elements to communicate the social, spiritual, and ideological values of the communities to which these cultural materials belong. The development of clear forms and concepts is therefore crucial, as it enables the creation of jewellery pieces that are rich in meaning, beauty, and social function.

One of the key characteristics of designing jewellery with cultural materials lies in highlighting the narratives and contexts embedded within the materials themselves. Local materials that have been used in rituals, beliefs, or everyday practices of a community carry unique histories and meanings. Utilising these in design requires deep cultural understanding and a respectful engagement with the traditional knowledge of the source community. This process should not reduce the materials to decorative elements (Maldini et al., 2020). Instead, design concepts should emerge within a contemporary framework that does not abandon cultural roots. Designers must be capable of traditional values with a modern design language, allowing the finished piece to resonate with today's audiences without diminishing its cultural significance. For example, motifs from traditional textiles can be integrated into minimalist jewellery forms, or fragile materials like dried leaves can be reinforcing with resin for enhanced fashion functionality.

Additionally, concept-driven design directly impacts the social impact it seeks to create. Jewellery crafted from local materials can foster cultural pride both within the producer communities and among consumers and serve as a source of inspiration for future sustainable design. Responsible material choices, such as utilising natural or recycled alternatives in place of plastics, align with circular economy principles and environmental ethics (Tonkinwise, 2011).

From this perspective, designing jewellery with cultural materials can serve as a medium for intercultural connection and communication. When a piece of jewellery conveys the story of a community through its form, colour, or surface texture, it enables the wearer or viewer to gain a deeper understanding of cultural diversity. This process enhances acceptance and respect for different values that are increasingly vital in contemporary society.

The design of emphasising jewellery using cultural materials integrates contemporary design with creative design practices, emphasising the reinterpretation of traditional materials to align with current contexts. This method goes beyond aesthetic beauty to communicate identity, belief systems, and the cultural values of local communities in a manner. Cultural materials are viewed as media that narrate stories of people, places, and time periods. Designers may reinterpret local materials such as naturally dyed fabrics, stones, bark, or traditional basketry into contemporary jewellery pieces that embody layers of cultural meaning, transcending mere physical attractiveness.

Such design processes also open a space for "dialogue" between the past and the present, encouraging users to question dominant Western aesthetic values

and to re-engage with local meanings and values. This contributes to a deeper understanding of community and ethnic identity. Moreover, jewellery design with cultural materials advances sustainable design by utilising local resources, reducing dependency on external materials, and reviving traditional techniques at risk of disappearing, such as weaving, natural dyeing, or carving. These practices help preserve cultural heritage, generate income, and instil pride in local communities.

Based on the above considerations, the author proposes the following key concepts commonly adopted by contemporary designers when working with cultural materials in jewellery design: first, deconstruction, second, appropriation, third, reuse, and fourth, complexity and contradiction.

*Deconstruction: disassembling and reinterpreting*

The concept of deconstruction provides a space for questioning conventional forms and meanings. Designers may dismantle the components of traditional objects, such as shape, patterns, or textures and reinterpret them within a new context. This approach transforms familiar materials into contemporary artifacts that challenge conventional aesthetic frameworks. For example, traditional stucco motifs may be reimagined as metallic surfaces or combined with natural materials to create unexpected textures, as illustrated in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Jewellery made from cultural materials designed under the concept of deconstruction**

(Source: Jaisuda & Santajit, 2023.)

### **Appropriation: Borrowing and recontextualisation**

Appropriation emphasises the selective borrowing of elements from traditional cultures into contemporary design, without severing ties from the original cultural roots. This approach requires a deep respect for and understanding of the originating community. Designers may incorporate culturally significant symbols, forms, or materials and adapt them to contemporary aesthetics. For instance, the flowing-water motif found in traditional textiles from Nan Province can be integrated into modern jewellery design, while preserving its narrative and cultural context at an appropriate level, as shown in Figure 3.

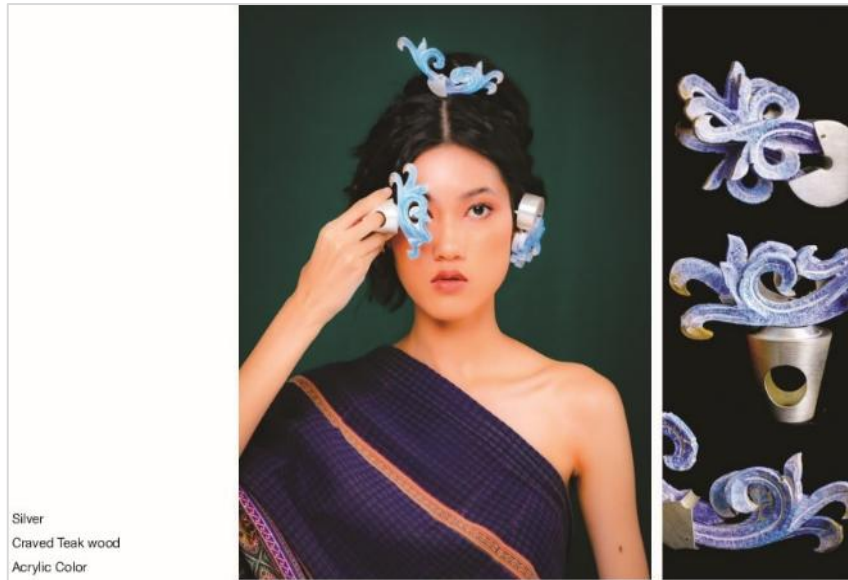


**Figure 3: Jewellery made from cultural materials designed under the concept of appropriation**

(Source: Jaisuda & Santajit, 2023.)

#### *Reuse: Repurposing and cultural upcycling*

In an era of resource constraints and environmental concerns, reuse has become a vital strategy for sustainable design. By transforming discarded materials, industrial by-products, or elements from traditional crafts into new creations, designers reduce waste and enhance these materials' cultural value and meaning. For example, ornamental wood carvings salvaged from discarded furniture can be repurposed into contemporary jewellery, as depicted in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Jewellery made from cultural materials designed under the concept of reuse**  
(Source: Jaisuda & Santajit, 2023.)

*Complexity and Contradiction: Embracing plurality and tension*

This concept focuses on creating interest through diversity and contrast. Designers may juxtapose the meticulousness of traditional crafts with minimal modern forms, or pair contrasting materials such as wood and metal, rough and smooth surfaces, or vivid colours with neutral tones. Such approaches allow for the expression of multidimensional narratives and reflect the complexity of contemporary cultural identities with evocative power, as depicted in Figure 5.



**Figure 5: Jewellery made from cultural materials designed under the concept of complexity and contradiction.**

(Source: Jaisuda & Santajit, 2023.)

The summarised and proposal offered by the author offer a practical framework for communicating the value of jewellery crafted from cultural materials. Such jewellery is not merely an ornamental object serving aesthetic purposes; it acts as a powerful medium for conveying stories, beliefs, and the identity of local communities to wearers and audiences alike. As discussed previously, the values embedded in culturally inspired jewellery can be categorised into five dimensions: first, cultural and historical value; second, symbolic and spiritual value; third, social and community value; fourth, environmental and sustainable value; and fifth, contemporary communicative value.

#### *Cultural and historical value*

Jewellery made from cultural materials can be seen as a form of “cultural documentation” that records local narratives, traditions, rituals, and ancestral wisdom passed down through generations. The use of materials once integral to ceremonial contexts, such as fragrant woods, sacred red cloth, or ritual shells, strengthens the connection to cultural roots and expresses local identity through the artefact.

#### *Symbolic and spiritual value*

Many materials carry specific symbolic meanings within their cultural contexts. For instance, colored stones may represent life energy, textile colours may denote social status, and woven patterns may reflect familial structures. Thoughtful and respectful integration of these materials into design processes allows jewellery to serve as a vessel for spirituality and sacred significance.

#### *Social and Community Value*

Using community-sourced materials in jewellery design contributes to local economies, enhances the dignity of local artisans, and fosters cultural pride. Especially when the materials involve traditional craft techniques such as natural dyeing, hand weaving, or wood carving, the jewellery becomes a means of empowering and sustaining community heritage.

#### *Environmental and Sustainable Value*

Many cultural materials, including plant fibres, naturally tanned leather, and fruit peels, are environmentally friendly. Through reuse and adaptation with contemporary techniques, such materials promote responsible design practices and offer long-term sustainability models in jewellery making.

#### *Contemporary Communicative Value*

In contemporary design, jewellery made from cultural materials provides a platform for dialogue between past and present, tradition and innovation. Such designs invite reinterpretation through various creative concepts such as deconstruction, appropriation, and complexity, enabling profound communication on both artistic and socio-cultural levels.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This article analyses and elucidates the concept of “cultural materials,” focusing on their role as tangible and intangible resources in contemporary jewellery design. These materials are not merely raw craft components but also carriers of identity, belief, and local narratives. Their integration into jewellery design elevates the work beyond decorative objects, positioning it as a meaningful medium for cultural communication. The article proposes criteria for classifying cultural materials and explores diverse approaches for their application in contemporary jewellery through various creative design concepts.

The content reveals that incorporating cultural materials into jewellery design is a complex process involving a deep understanding of the source culture,

the physical properties of the materials, sustainability, and ethical considerations regarding the use of community resources. The author proposes seven criteria for selecting cultural materials: cultural significance, physical suitability, safety, design potential, sustainability, and unique identity. These criteria help designers make systematic and responsible material choices. Moreover, experimentation with cultural materials, such as testing for durability, adaptability, emotional communication, and practical usability, is critical in fostering innovation rooted in cultural heritage. Simultaneously, it opens space for creative reinterpretation through design concepts such as deconstruction, appropriation, reuse, complexity, and contradiction.

The knowledge derived from this study can be applied across multiple dimensions, first, education and Design Learning: The concept of cultural materials and the multidimensional criteria for their selection can serve as a framework for teaching in jewellery design, contemporary crafts, and art. This approach encourages students to recognise the cultural value of materials, not merely as physical substances but as carriers of meaning. It also supports ethical design practices that respect local cultures and traditions. Second, community development and cultural preservation: the framework for classifying and applying cultural materials in jewellery design can be valuable for communities to understand better the local resources' economic, cultural, and environmental significance. It encourages the preservation of traditional knowledge while providing new income opportunities by creating handcrafted products infused with contemporary ideas. Third, design entrepreneurship and local branding: Jewellery entrepreneurs can apply concepts such as appropriation and reuse to develop new products that are meaningful and socially responsible. Storytelling and local identity embedded in the design enhance the product's unique selling proposition (USP), making it stand out in the market while effectively communicating cultural values on an international scale. Fourth, policy and creative economy development: This article can serve as a resource for government agencies and cultural organisations to formulate policies promoting cultural capital. The emphasis on sustainable use of community materials helps establish a culture-based economic system. Examples include initiatives to bring culturally grounded products into the Fair Trade Market or to incorporate contemporary design approaches into the OTOP program for broader cultural and commercial impact.

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