5.2 The Contested Meanings of Artistic Handicraft Products

Early versions of my social worlds/arenas map displayed a rather complex and broad notion of my situation of inquiry (Figure 4.6). The findings of analytical mapping indicate how contemporary notions of the meanings of artistic handicraft products and production are influenced by colonial narrations and art curricula closely linked to Margaret Trowell and, subsequently, though differently, Cecil Todd (see also chapters 2.2 and 2.3.1). For example, in the roundtable discussion on indigenous knowledge systems, Joan Kekimuri, an artist and art historian, argues for the need to explore artistic practice rooted in local culture and ancestral worship to dissect their relevance for social change in the present day but largely ignored:

> Whether you like it or not, that area [of cultural art making] is marginalized due to – in the contemporary Uganda – in the traditional art practices because of the connotations: colonial, educational, political, Christians. […] So, you can see that they have been branded, okay? (Dr. Joan Kekimuri, roundtable discussion 'Indigenous Knowledge Systems', 28/02/2019: 456–460)

Kekimuri affirms that traditional art practices have been marginalized due to colonization, (imported) education, policy decisions, and Christianization. Later in the discussion, another discussant claims that while most of the participants present are devoted Christians during the day, at night they turn to ancestral worship practices "made to be satanic" (571) by the "colonial masters" (556), linking artistic handicraft products with cultural practices that may still be performed under the radar, yet are affiliated with "pagan, uncivilized people" (558) in the public discourse.

Similarly, they are shaped by the UNESCO discourses and their local adaptions, for example, in the vocabulary used to frame artistic handicraft products in a cultural heritage framework. The Uganda National Culture Policy (2006: 7) links its definition of culture with a cultural heritage definition, whereby "tangible heritage includes monuments or architecture, art and crafts, sites, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic and historical interest". National, urban-based associations, too, adapt strands of the UNESCO discourses and fuse them with economic interests commonly associated with the creative industries and development agendas. More recently, tourism actors tapped into the arena as well, promoting sustainable and culturally sensitive tourism combined with what they frequently call 'authentically' African experiences, thereby altering the perceptions of artistic handicraft products and production. This position, albeit differently framed, can also be found among community elders and cultural leaders, whereas foreign-based and (often) foreign-run, private NGOs frame artistic handicraft products as culturally marked

accessories for people in the Global North, often with the claim that their consumption 'does good' because it supports women in need of empowerment in Uganda[2].

Through further theoretical sampling and analysis in a circular process of induction and abduction, I then created a series of *messy* situational maps (see chapter 4.4.1). The data I used to do this included policy documents and written project descriptions as well as formal and informal conversations with artists, art historians, socially engaged artist-activists, handicraft artists, volunteers in art projects, and participants of roundtable discussions on the subject matter. Based on the findings, the so-called *cultural crafts industry* was considered a relevant, suitable, and rather unexplored arena. In the situation of inquiry, the *cultural crafts industry* forms part of the cultural or creative industries. Although there are theoretical differences between the creative and the cultural industries (e.g., O'Connor, 2015), in the empirical data the terms are used synonymously. For reasons of traceability, I will use the term creative industries only. Though various conceptualizations of the creative industries exist in the literature, they are generally referred to as "those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill, and talent, which have a potential for job and wealth creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (DCSM, 2001: 5). It centralizes the individual as the originator of creativity and innovation. It further proposes creative expression with the potential for economic benefits linked with the juridical framework of intellectual property. While intellectual property here is proposed as universal, scholars such as Christiaan de Beukelaer (2017) consider the prevailing normative framework as responding to liberal democratic juridical systems, which would position this definition as being empirically grounded in and referential to non-African realities (De Beukelaer, 2017).

As part of the creative industries, the cultural crafts industry includes the area of the production, dissemination, and marketing of ethnically marked crafts. Involved actors in the empirical situation commonly refer to them as *cultural crafts*. Actors who belong to the cultural crafts industry are organizational actors such as the NACCAU or other formalized associations, foreign-run or -based NGOs, foreign and international cultural institutions such as the UNESCO, governmental institutions (both local/national and foreign), tourism organizations (here mainly in form of Uganda Tourism Association, UTA, and Uganda Tourism Board, UTB), and private (social) businesses. Independently organized (rural) handicraft groups, too, are positioned

2 In addition to many other places in the Global South. This phenomenon is often referred to as White Saviorism or the White Savior Complex. The term was made famous by Nigerian-American writer Teju Cole in his Twitter response to the documentary movie KONY 2012 by Jason Russell. It is frequently considered to be a neo-colonial practice, as it "has the tendency to render people of color incapable of helping themselves – infantile or hapless/helpless victims who survive by instinct. […] Any progress or success tends to result from the succor of the white individual, which suggests that escaping poverty or ignorance happens only through the savior's intelligence" (Cammarota, 2011: 244).

within the creative industries, though not necessarily always by the artisan groups themselves (see also chapter 7) and without being fully agentic (Clarke et al., 2018).

They all perform in the various dimensions in the contested arena and, as I argue, in civil society, thereby creating and (re-)negotiating new and old spaces, consent, and the hegemonic meanings of local cultural heritage. As such, I refer to the central arena of this research situation as the arena of *the cultural crafts industry in civil society*. Here, prevailing notions of civil society suggest a de-politicized space of parochial interests that aim to improve the lives of marginalized individuals and communities on the one hand (see also chapter 3.2). On the other hand, the organizational and associational activities seek to propose and promote suitable, culturally sensitive approaches for the (economic) development by simultaneously strengthening the linkages to the (assumed) cultural heritage and hence cultural development of post-independence Uganda. By conceiving civil society broadly as part of the state (Buttigieg, 1995; Gramsci, 2011 [1992]), as a space that cannot be separated from the private (Tripp, 1998; 2003), and as inclusive of ethnic activity (Kasfir, 2017), the various sites of artistic handicraft production can be perceived also from a civil society perspective (see also chapter 3.4). As such, the arena becomes a site of conflict, ownership, hegemony, and question of interpretative sovereignty on the meaning(s) of artistic handicraft products.

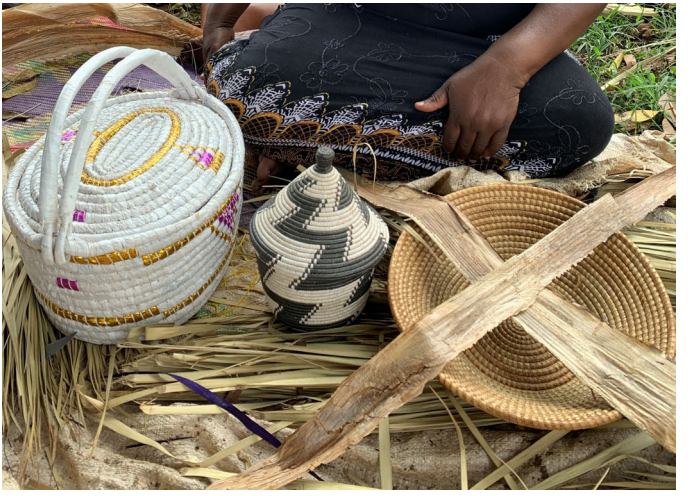
Framing the arena as a site of civil society broadly conceived and artistic handicraft products as boundary objects of contestation therein allow to address a series of questions of concern: How do rural and cultural civil society actors make meaning of artistic handicrafts? What kind of development do they seek and what is the role/agency of artistic products therein? How are artistic handicrafts, their production, and dissemination sites linked with issues of concern from the perspectives of handicraft artists? Which handicraft products are framed as cultural crafts by whom and why? Moreover, what is the role of international actors, discourses, and other elements in negotiating the meaning-making of artistic articulation of handicraft artists in Uganda?

With the artistic handicraft products of all organizational and collective actors' engagement being central to contestation and negotiation processes, these objects can thus be considered pivotal boundary objects in the situation of inquiry. Their constructed meanings run alongside the discourses on 'poverty eradication and economic development', 'cultural heritage', and the 'preservation of indigenous and traditional art forms', as I will proceed to demonstrate. Less visible are their roles in negotiating author- and ownership, in the worship of ancestors, as agents in negotiating positionalities within communities, and as convivial mediators that help to establish networks among individuals engaged with it.

Artistic Handicraft Products as Boundary Object

As I elaborated in chapter 4.4.1, boundary objects are entities – material and/or immaterial – that "exist at junctures where varied social worlds meet in an arena of mutual concern" (Clarke et al., 2018: 75). They are frequently found to be key elements for most social worlds in the situation that can make them "sites of intense controversy and competition for the power to define and use them" (ibid: 75). In what is to follow, I use the boundary object 'artistic handicraft products' as the departure point and linking, though contested, element for the introduction of the social worlds and organizations in the arena of cultural crafts industry in civil society.

Image 5.1: Example of boundary object artistic handicraft products. Here: Coiled wickerwork. From left to right: kwanjula introduction ceremony basket: banana fiber (obudeku), polyphone bags & wrapping paper; lidded storage basket in traditional shape: banana leaf stalks (obudeku) & polyphone bags; Buganda basket: banana leaf stalks (obudeku) & cane fiber (enjulu).



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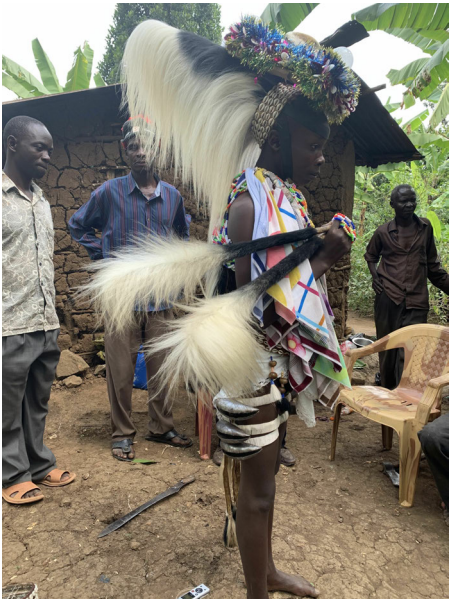
The boundary object artistic handicraft products include a wide range of products in various forms, shapes, functions, and aesthetics. They are made from different and changing materials (see for instance wickerwork products in Image 5.1) and include but are not limited to wickerwork, pottery, jewelry, products made from 'African' fabric (meaning waxed fabric with colorful patterns), woodcarvings, and

barkcloth products. In rural areas and in places little frequented by foreign visitors and expatriates, blacksmith products might be included, or uniforms designed and tailored for rituals and ceremonies (see also Image 5.2).

Image 5.2: Example of boundary object artistic handicraft, here: Imbalu Initiation Ceremony Uniform.



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The understandings and agency of the boundary object vary significantly among the social worlds in the situation of inquiry. They do, however, have common structures which, according to Star and Griesemer (1989), are conditional for boundary objects. In the empirical situation, the common structures associated with the boundary object could be reconstructed as inclusive of the following:

- They are contemporary interpretations of local forms of visual and/or material culture (e.g. *Kwanjula* baskets, 'African' fabric, rolled paper-beads).
- They are manufactured mainly by people who have been trained beyond formalized art training programs, in one or more of the following formats:

    - In (elementary) school (e.g. conversation with Harriett Natukunda and Sarah Bako[3], 25/02/2020; interview with Philip Kwasiga, 29/08/2018)
    - in NGO-run workshop formats (e.g. roundtable discussion Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019; interview with Bruno Sserunkuuma, 27/01/2020 and 23/08/2018, YouTube video "Beadmaking with Widows in Gulu, Northern Uganda", 15/10/2019; Mirembe Website, 28/11/2020);
    - at their homesteads, by older family members, or community elders (e.g. group conversation with members of Bunangaka-potters group, 25/02/2020; group conversation with Isiah and the hat maker collective from Ishibira, 27/02/2020; interview with Jackie Katesi,18/02/2020).
- They are mainly made from locally available raw materials, both natural and synthetic (e.g. photograph of basket tag at Banana Boat shop, 17/03/2020; Website Screenshot of *Colon Cancer Awareness Bracelet* of "Project Have Hope". 15/10/2019; group conversation with women wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020).
- Although some scholars and interview partners perceive an initial dynamic, the production spaces are – depending on region, handicraft, and local traditions – currently perceived as gendered spaces (independently of whether they were historically, see also Chapter 2.3; e.g. interview with Philip Kwasiga, 29/08/2018; interview with Dorah Kasozi, 28/08/2018, Website Screenshots: BeadforLife, 15/10/2019; The Dignity Collection, 15/10/2019; YouTube video "Weaving a Future – NAWOU and Uganda Crafts", 15/10/2019; Project SPACE, 09/10/2019; Pears of Africa, 28/11/2020; "Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda" Project Leaflet, 12/07/2020).

Situating the NACCAU as Case Study

During the empirical phase of my research, I focused on the NACCAU as a case study (see also chapter 4.4.2), which I will briefly present here and continue to focus on in more detail in the following chapter. The abbreviation NACCAU stands for the *National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association of Uganda*, which self-identifies as a member of the Ugandan creative industry. It was originally established in 1994 in the broader context of a Pan-African conference as the *Ugandan National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association* and renamed in 2003. Today, the NACCAU's main site of activity is its cultural crafts village, a space with workshops that serve as production, networking, and retail sites, allocated in a semi-circle around a green lawn in the heart of Kampala behind the national theater and across the street from the parliament building.

The architectural structure of the crafts village aims to imitate an imaginary village in rural Uganda (interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi from 26/01/2020). The walls of

3 Last names changed

the shops are painted in the fur-patterns of popular safari animals (e.g., giraffes, zebras, or leopards, see Image 5.3), hinting towards the main customer target groups. Their setup invites visitors to stroll around and pass by all shops on the compound. It is only at the rear end of the compound that the structure leaves the well-planned design. As the association grew, more shops were needed, and an open space next to the theater building was turned into additional workshop and retail space.

Upon entering the crafts village, visitors pass by two graffiti artworks by Ugandan artists Hatimax Sebintu and Fatuma Hassan, who participated in the *Walls of Water* project of Viva con Agua, an international NGO founded in Germany that sells bottled water there to finance the promotion of clean drinking water and sanitary hygiene in countries of the Global South[4]. The graffiti are to remind that *water is life* (VcA's mission), though several pieces do not specifically articulate the message directly. As the freedom of artistic expression was the guiding principle in the project, the organization resisted imposing any further instructions on participating artists[5]. In such close proximity to the crafts village, they mark a break with the scenery as they create a sharp contrast between the contemporary interpretations of *water is life* on the one hand, and the idyll of timeless, 'traditional' rural Ugandan life on the other hand.

The two graffiti (Image 5.4.) are in close proximity to the crafts village (right behind the left aisle of shops in Image 5.3). In the left scene, painted by Fatuma Hassan, a woman stands in the center. She looks towards the left and has her back turned towards the spectator. She is painted from her upper thighs upwards and seems to be holding something under her left arm. A second figure with human facial features is located on the right side of the scenery and is looking directly at the spectator. Unlike the woman, who seems to be walking towards the background of the scene and whose skin color is kept in natural brown tones, the skin of the second figure is purple and blue, potentially a reference to water. The background of this first scene is dominated by sharp, abstract, colorful forms and figures on the left side that become increasingly blurred further towards the right end of the scene.

Hatimax Sebintu's graffiti, too, includes two main figures: one on the left side of the scene and one in the center-right. The dominating colors here are saturated

4 Viva Con Agua (VcA) was founded by former professional St. Pauli soccer player Benjamin Adrion in 2005 after having participated in a training camp on Cuba. One of its foci is to promote hygiene and advocate for clean drinking water in cooperation with visual and performing artists. VcA Uganda, founded in 2015, is among the more established partner organizations and main organizer of the biannual music festival We love Youganda (Interview with VcA 09/12/2019). See also: https://www.vivaconagua.org/

5 As I was debating on an appropriate case study for this research, I conducted a telephone interview with the public relations director of VcA, who emphasized on the importance of artistic freedom in all VcA art-projects.

shapes of purple, blue, green, and brown, which are highlighted by two yellow flowers on the left side and one large yellow circle behind the head of the second figure. This figure, potentially a woman, is painted frontally from the shoulders up. However, above her nose, where the spectator would expect her eyes, the skull is cut off. Instead of eyes, a forehead, and hair, a flower is growing out of the head. The big yellow circle behind could be interpreted as a moon or the sun. Small black fish are in the background alongside blue stripes that remind of waves. They are the connecting element between the figure with the flowered head on the right side of the scene and the second figure on the left side. This second figure is painted from the side. Only the head is seen, which is painted in different shapes of brown with dark spots on the rims around the eye and the chin. The visualization reminds the spectator of the wooden masks that are commonly associated with traditional masks as produced and used by several ethnic groups in many regions on the continent. The hairline is marked by zig-zag forms in shades of green. Two large, cut-off yellow flowers visually connect it to the right part of the graffiti, both in terms of content (flowers) and color (similar to the large circle).

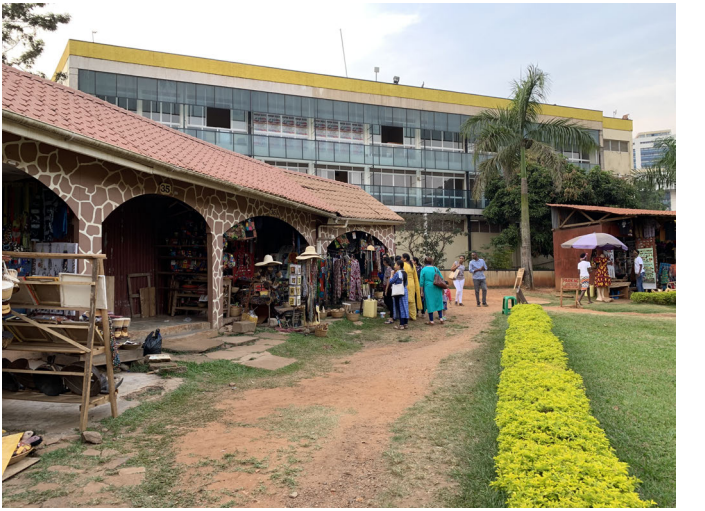
This brief description illustrates the compositional freedom with which Sebintu and Hassan, whose interpretations of *Walls of Water* may not be easily accessible to spectators of their art, expresses their interpretations of *water is life*. For the *Walls of Water* project, VcA invited the two Ugandan artists to work alongside one artist from Mozambique, two artists from Kenya, and three artists from Germany. For the mural project, they were invited to apply their art onto the walls of public buildings in Kampala, for example, the National Theater and the National Museum. The residence program found its highlight in the *Art creates Water* gallery exhibition. It was financially supported by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which allowed VcA to invite artists to deliver its message to the general public.

At the NACCAU, a very different and distinct notion of art and artistic expression predominates the scenery. The artists whose products are on display here frequently remain unseen and unnamed. Their stories and worldviews are not part of the artwork. Unlike the graffiti on the walls of the National Theater, art objects here are for sale, and their anticipated customer is – by and large – a foreign tourist who seeks to find a souvenir, something nice "that will remind you of your time in Uganda" (Roundtable Discussion Art in Intl. Development, 27/02/2019: 175). The emphasis, then, is less on the artistic expression of an individual or collective, but on the associated emotions and needs of the purchaser, as the following quote by David Hume shows:

> As an artefact of tourism, the humble souvenir serves many purposes. From the perspective of the producer, the souvenir needs to represent the culture and heritage of the tourist destination, that is, his or her home or part thereof: the more nodes of heritage that can be tastefully invested in the souvenir by the maker, and

recognized by the consumer, the better. An object made from a material indigenous to the tourist destination is a good start. If the object represents some aspect of the destination's heritage, then all the better, and, if it carries with it the mark of the maker, who happens to be a local craftsperson, then better still. In this transition, formerly utilitarian artefacts are altered through artistic imagination and may be bracketed somewhere between art work and anthropological artefact. (Hume, 2013: 2–3)

Image 5.3: The NACCAU shops and lawn with National Theater in the background and customers strolling around the compound.



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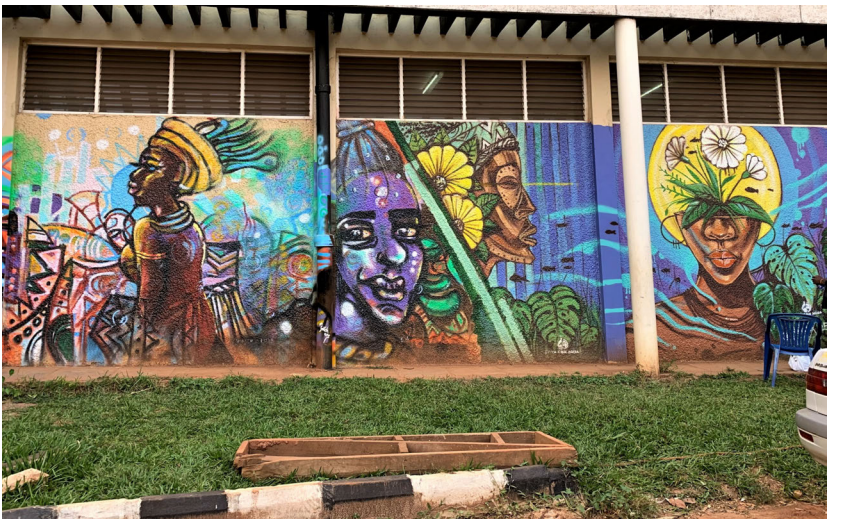
Indeed, if one observes the art objects on display at the NACCAU, the visitor will find artistic handicraft objects associated with the local material cultures: woven baskets in various shapes, sizes, forms, and colors as well as woven mats, jewelry made from hand-rolled (paper-)beads, wood carvings in form of masks (which are usually imported) or abstracted human figures, kitchen utensils and bowls, so-called *African* prints, and stuffed safari animals made out of the colorful patterned and waxed textiles[6] Africa has become famous for. Drums in various sizes are offered for

6 Design has a long and rich history in Africa (Nakazibwe, 2005; Pinther and Weigand, 2018; Preston Blier, 2018) However, the colorful prints that have become renown as 'African prints' are of European, particularly of Dutch, production. The designs were imported from other colonized regions and are witness to and result of cultural encounters and hybrids. They became popular among Africans and have since become associated with Africa. This, according

sale as well as barkcloth products. There are other art objects as well, but in the social world of artistically oriented handicraft associations and NGOs, these are closely associated with the local, indigenous cultures, and cultural heritage. By framing their products within the realm of cultural heritage, the meanings and adaptations of the boundary object become subject to the construction of tradition and its boundaries. This is both a strategy to situate the products as valuable objects and a burden, as it limits the aesthetic interpretations and hence the artistic freedom with it. Consequently, here, the development of "new art […] must take place within a milieu of existing practices" (Littlefield Kasfir, 1999: 16).

Image 5.4: Walls of Water Graffiti artworks by Fatuma Hassan (left) and Hatimax Sebintu (right), National Theater, Kampala.



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In addition to the obvious, David Hume's quote addresses a second important aspect regarding the boundary object artistic handicraft objects. By touching upon the ability of objects to be altered through artistic imagination, he emphasizes the processuality of artefacts. Their associated meanings change and evolve over time. Currently, they are situated "somewhere between artwork and anthropological artefact" (ibid: 3). My empirical findings, too, show how several social worlds, including the sub-world of art-academia and the international NGOs-world, the tourism

to critical scholars such as Tunde M. Akinwumi (2008), threatens the survival of actually authentic African fabric designs.

world, and the social world of art-oriented NGOs display and frame items as indigenous and traditional while really, they are contemporary in materiality and design.

As attentive as Hume's observations are regarding the interplay between artisan and customer, his elaborations neglect the political, discursive, and hegemonic dimensions of the ongoing negotiations and hence do not consider the power asymmetries at hand. Amani Maihoub (2015) takes a more critical perspective and emphasizes the struggles involved with the "discourses of political domination and resistance within the context of identity construction and the politicization of indigenous art and aesthetics [, which happen] at the visual level" (2). She further claims that there is no such thing as a "politically innocent" (ibid: 3) relationship between people and art objects. All parties involved have a particular interest, and since the relationship is more often than not directed by economic interests, 'tradition' becomes a loose concept that is bent to fit whatever it needs to 'do' in a particular moment in the situation, e.g., facilitate gendered empowerment or economic growth, artistic liberation, therapeutic activities, culturally sensitive development, or justify the need to protect tangible and intangible culture. All of those contested meanings are negotiated through and with the boundary objects *artistic handicraft products*.

5.2.1 (Visual) Art World

In the art world, artistic handicrafts objects primarily appear to be defined through their aesthetics, materiality, and their value for contemporary art by means of cultural inspiration (interview with Dorah Kasozi, 28/08/2018; roundtable discussion on *Indigenous Knowledge Systems*, 28/02/2019). This social world is composed of those people who make their living through and with art, including practicing artists, scholars, and students in art institutions and academies, curators, directors of galleries and other exhibition spaces, personnel at cultural institutions or residency programs (see also Figure 4.4, the early version social worlds/arenas map). It further includes, in part, artistically oriented NGOs and their staff. The latter also forms a sub-world, as their interests are often interlinked with those of (international) development actors and agendas.

'Art as a Tool' – Empowerment of Marginalized Others through Artistic Activity

During the interviews, informal conversations, and observations as well as the analysis of project descriptions of socially oriented art projects, I became aware of several professional artists who are engaged with handicraft production and production projects (e.g., the 'Arts Ability Uganda' project, Streetlights Uganda, the NACCAU, and the NAWOU). In these initiatives and associations, teaching artistic handicrafts to individuals who are marginalized in one way or another, can be reconstructed as a pivotal function of the boundary object in the sub-world of socially engaged artists:

> I touched on NGOs sponsoring communities briefly when I talked of paper beads […] But I did not have enough time, I just wrapped everything else into that, But you are right, we have worked with master crafts people to sharpen their skills, make more professional [sic] and appreciate standards of uniformity […] Most of them did not know and don't have the tools but there are those who managed to finish a prototype within a limited period of time. (Nuwa Nnyanzi, roundtable discussion on the Arts in International Development, 29/02/2019: 99–107)

In referring to the *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda Project* (2015–2019), Nnyanzi addresses how he and others ("we") have provided training to "master crafts people" to prepare them for mass production, "because one will want thousands of the same" (ibid: 105–106). These trainings are lead by a professional artist, who is in a position to lead trainings and workshops for "master crafts people" who are understood as being in need of further professionalization. "We" further refers to the NACCAU, which here is positioned as an NGO that sponsors communities by expanding their skills and knowledge. Here, Nnyanzi functions in the role of an NGO representative and an artist with an agenda to support handicraft artisans. In other cases, professional artists, too, engage with or are (co-)founders of associations. Alongside their individual artistic practice, they support the promotion of handicraft skills as well as the production, dissemination, and marketing of handicraft objects. Their common aim is to live off of their art and to relate it to the local culture. Furthermore, artists such as Nnyanzi share a common interest transforming society by means of art, forming a sub-world of art activists.

As professional artists, they turn to what they know best in order to support others – art. The main aim of using 'art as a tool' is to equip those marginalized groups of people with vocational skills, thereby focusing on poverty reduction through production of high-quality crafts, as the following quote displays: "[W]e keep focusing on […] is the crafts […]. [Women and the youth] are actually the majority in the production process. And one of our roles is to help create more opportunities of employment" (interview with Richard Kawere, then CEO of UTA, 11/03/2020: 193–196). The target group of empowerment and skills training projects are often women with a low socio-economic status who spent limited time in the formal education system. They are considered hard-working and caring. There is a consensus among project leaders, policymakers, and development workers as well as in development agendas and the public discourse that the health and future prosperity of children are dependent on women and their successes (Goodwin et al., 2005; Heaton, 2015; Mkandawire et al., 2022). In this rationale, it is essential to empower women with low socio-economic backgrounds. It merges economic empowerment with gender equality.

The empowerment strategy applied here operates at the intersection of gender and class, sometimes disability (Crenshaw, 2022). In both international as well as

national (development) discourses, women are generally considered responsible for the education and upbringing of children. The assumption is that if a woman is well and healthy, so are her children. Therefore, empowering women means investing in the future of whole communities, regions, and nation-states. Its narratives extend well into the arena of the cultural crafts industry in civil society:

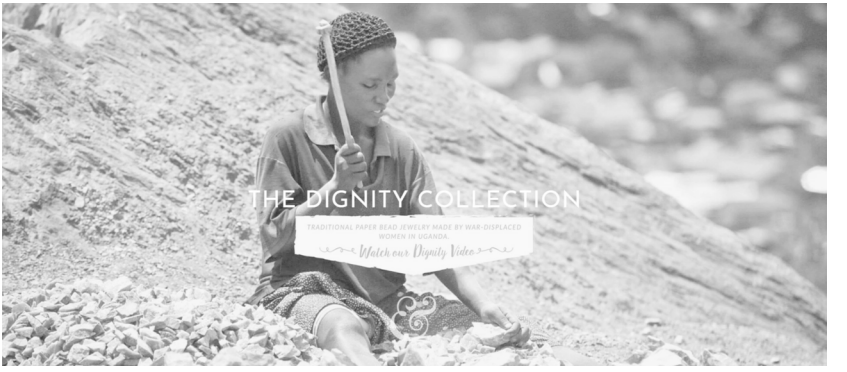
> NAWOU mainly partners with women producer groups of the handmade crafts, involving women infected and affected with HIV/AIDS, those with disabilities, single mothers, widows, survivors of gender based and sexual violence, women with no access to adequate education due to discrimination where parents chose to educate the boy child over the girl child, and women who have not had the opportunity to receive economic empowerment in their lives. (NAWOU, 2017: 4)

Here, a number of reasons why women are marginalized are offered. Those reasons can be broadly clustered into health-related reasons and the associated consequences in society on the one hand and gender-related reasons associated with structural discrimination on the other hand. The solution offered associates the boundary object artistic handicraft objects with economic empowerment. From this perspective, handicraft products are framed as being a useful element that helps with the achievement of the economic liberation of marginalized women. In doing so, unlike in the story Katesi tells about her grandmother, wickerwork activities do not bear meaning in themselves, nor do the art objects produced. They become valuable objects not because of their aesthetic, social, or cultural value, but because of what they potentially do for the women who produce them.

The marketing of the handicraft objects follows a similar pattern. The notion is that the purchase of the products helps the (women) artisans restore their lives in dignity, as Image 5.5 shows. This screenshot from 2019 served as the landing page for the collection of handicraft products from Uganda of a U.S.-based organization then called 'Fashion & Compassion', now 'BraveWorks'. It shows a woman sitting on a hill surrounded by bare soil and rubble. In her right hand she holds a small hammer, with which she works the stones in front of her. Her feet are bare, and the blue shirt she wears is full of dust. In the center of the photo, "the Dignity Collection" is written in white capital letters. The subtitle states "traditional paper bead jewelry made by war-displaced women in Uganda". It is also a link to a promotional video made for the 'Dignity Collection' (see Image 5.5). The subtitle merges the two seemingly conflicting positions regarding the boundary object: it combines the position of artistic handicraft objects being 'traditional' and hence 'culturally significant' and 'indigenous' – thus the preservation of ethnically-marked cultural heritage – with the notion of 'art as a tool' that has the capacity to lift marginalized individuals out of poverty.

At the same intersection of gender and class, men are often constructed as violent, absent, engaged in polygamous marriages or relationships, or addicted to substances. In the discourse strand around (women) empowerment through handicraft production, men are framed as incapable of providing for the family. Implicitly, this assumes them to be in charge of providing, which feeds into heteronormative gender roles that understand men to be the major breadwinners and women to be in charge of the household and the children. This implicit normative assumption can also be found in the NAWOU catalog. Even though in the NAWOU quotation above men are not explicitly mentioned, the attentive reader immediately understands that perpetrators of the "gender based and sexual violence" (NAWOU, 2017: 4) are indeed assumed to be men. In my research, I did not specifically focus on gender dynamics. However, the empirical findings demanded the consideration of gender constructions and discourses around gender-based roles, which play an important role in the situation in general as well as with regard to the handicraft objects. Therefore, I elaborate on the role of gender in greater detail in chapters 6 and 7.

Image 5.5: "The Dignity Collection – Traditional paper bead jewelry made by war-displaced women in Uganda", 'Fashion for Compassion' Online Shop.



©Fashion and Compassion, 15/10/2019

In the interviews I conducted, socially engaged artists often argue with key biographic incidents, in which artistic expression and production led toward a positive outcome for one's own life. Bruno Sserunkuuma, for example, finds the motivation for his engagement with the NACCAU in particular and women empowerment projects in general in his own biography (private conversation 08/2018). It was because of his hard-working mother that he was able to attend school and later university. Today, to honor his own mother and other mothers in the country, he is engaged with projects in which women are trained as artisans. During my several visits to his

own office and studio space at Makerere University, he always kept some wickerwork in the form of (table-)mats and baskets for sale. He refers to artisans as craft makers, artists, and as "custodians of the traditional knowledge" (interview from 23/01/2020: lines 36–37). To him, crafts are both the embodiment of local material culture and an important tool for poverty reduction. It is another example of how seemingly conflicting positions strengthen each other when merged within the narrative of 'art as a tool'.

Fred Batale is the founder and director of an association called 'Arts Ability Uganda' (previously Disability Art Project Uganda, DAPU). With his project, he aims to train and empower people with disabilities in Kampala through artistic engagement. In a video interview from December 2015 with Deutsche Welle (DW), Batale speaks about his motivation to establish the association. People with disabilities, Batale says, are not visible in public debates and, according to the artist, are socially excluded.

The association evolved significantly during the past years and is currently constructing its own office and workshop building. In addition, although the artistic objects resulting from Arts Ability Uganda are quite different in form, material, and function from the handicraft objects previously discussed (Batale and his colleagues also use music, dance, and drama), here, too, art is considered a tool:

> I thought, because I had some knowledge in art and design, I thought I could use this as a tool, in order to empower [other] people with disabilities, to get the skills, which they can use [unc.] to sustain themselves. (Fred Batale in: Schwarzbeck and Getmann, 2015)

In the founding principles of the association from 2013, this notion of art as a tool is concretized in two ways. First, it seeks to create economic stability for people with disabilities with the aim of "lift[ing] them off the streets" (DAPU, 2013: n. p.). Second, it aims to "lobby and advocate for disability rights through art projects" (ibid).

While all associations and initiatives have multiple and complex reasons for their engagement with artistic handicraft production, many align in perceiving art as a tool for individual poverty reduction. In addition, in several interviews (particularly in expert interviews) and the roundtable discussions, the same narrative and wording of 'art as a tool' emerged frequently and became an important concept for further theoretical sampling. The notion of 'art as a tool' manifests itself in three strands: (1) The first strand assumes that raw materials for handicraft products are inexpensive, and hence the potential for significant economic gains is high. Here, art as a tool is used to generate income. (2) In the second strand, art as a tool means to empower individuals psychologically. In the narration about her grandmother, Katesi elaborates on how she seemed happy when weaving, as it was time for herself. Among members of Arts Ability Uganda, art is used for lobbying and to render

people with disabilities visible, which aims at improving their living conditions and their subjective well-being. In other cases, psychological empowerment refers to dealing with psychological trauma (e.g., Kiwojolo Creations). This last aspect, however, must be considered with caution. While artistic engagement may indeed be described by artists as therapeutic in and of itself (Kasozi, 2019) and can intentionally be used as such (Malchiodi et al. 2011), my empirical data does not allow for any conclusions drawn of possible mental health benefits in artistically oriented projects. This neither was the focus of my research nor did any actors or elements in the selected case studies emphasize this aspect. Therefore, I will not address it further. (3) The third strand regards the notion of 'art as a tool' as a foundation for innovation. As creativity and innovation are closely connected to engagement with the arts, the arts are seen as an essential foundation for inventions in other areas (technology, digitalization, etc.) to be developed. The following quotation from an interview with sculptor and art historian Philip Kwesiga indicates this very well: "[E]ngineering starts with drawing on the ground" (Interview with Philip Kwesiga, 29/08/2018, 239–240). While for Kwesiga this strand is essential, he also criticizes that the interconnectedness and interdisciplinarity of art and other disciplines are not understood by policymakers and ordinary people alike:

> And they've been tossing around arts and design in secondary school, almost to the extent of removing it. And they're looking at new things. Literature, they're looking at technology. But they're not looking at technology of crafts, you know. And they don't see the connection. Because […] if they knew that there was a connection between making a better craft and making a good technology in order to make a good craft, then they would have embedded it. But they don't. They don't think like that. Very, very very very limited, few people think like that. (Interview with Philip Kwesiga, 29/08/2018, 286–293)

Linking Artistic Practice with Tangible and Intangible Culture

Particularly in a second important sub-world, the art-academia sub-world, many artistic handicraft objects are strongly affiliated with the local cultural tangible and intangible heritage. They serve as an inspiration and are said to ground contemporary art in the local cultures[7]. Especially also in the late 1990s and early 2000s – a few years after the re-establishment of the monarchies as cultural institutions – a significant number of art scholars began to discover *indigenous* art forms as a source of inspiration, as the following quote emphasizes:

7 See, for example, Samson "Xenson" Ssenkaaba's performance and installation Musisi. Musisi means earthquake. In the installation, the earth is symbolized through pieces of bark cloth stitched together with raffia strings. In addition, he used baskets filled with coffee beans and empiki seeds that symbolically refer Baganda culture their materiality (Chikukwa et al., 2016).

> There were all these efforts, undergraduate and post-graduate students going back to study material culture, the pre-colonial material culture as sources of inspiration, you know. And it reached its epics, with its peak […] those Ph.D., I think it was two-thousand-twelve, two-thousand-thirteen, where he […] did a studio Ph.D., and explored the potential of his heritage, and discussed and said: No, when I was an undergraduate student, you know, I was denied the opportunity to study my culture, to use my culture as a starting point. (Interview with Kizito Maria Kasule, artist and art historian 29/08/2018: 315–322)

In this sequence of the interview, Kasule elaborates on how developments in politics and civil society from roughly the 1990s on had influenced artists to investigate the local material culture to find inspiration for their oeuvres. Especially the last sentence of the quotation indicates a paradigm shift in thinking about artistic handicraft products. Here, they are not framed within the context of economic development but as an important source for the constitution of an identity. Throughout the course of the interview, he continues to talk about other art scholars during this period to take on a similar turn. While doing so, Kasule speaks about using one's own culture as a starting point. It emphasizes the processuality of cultural expression, which is a perception of the boundary object that not all sub-worlds in this social world, let alone in the arena(s), share. Other interview partners emphasized the meaning of artistic handicraft products for the identity of artists in particular and the national identity in general. Some interlocutors specifically elaborated on the interconnectedness between political events in Uganda and the exploration of the local cultural heritage of professional artists in Uganda, as the following quotes demonstrate:

> Francis Nnaggenda. […] when he returned […] the political situation was not very good, and many expats had of course left. […] And when he came back, he picked interest in the notion of improvisation and he started using the resources around us, without waiting for, you know, all materials to come from the art […] suppliers from the west and he encouraged, you know, improvising. (Interview with Venny Nakazibwe, 29/08/2018: 76–85)

> […] when the kingdom was restored in nineteen ninety-four, there was a rebirth. Since then […] there has been an increased interest in these indigenous culture [sic]. And that explains as to why also during the nineteen nineties, there was that continued, emerging, powerful interest in the study – you know – the study of – in the jewels of these indigenous artefacts, art objects, analysis of the different cultural practices. (Interview with Kizito Maria Kasule, 29/08/2018: 408–413)

Indeed, in the 1990s, the student numbers at the art school increased (Nagawa and Siegenthaler, 2022), and several Ph.D. projects around the turn of the millennium

indicated a strong interest in (re-)discovering local and indigenous art forms and their implications for contemporary artistic practice. There is Venny Nakazibwe's (2005) dissertation on the continued and changed use of barkcloth in Baganda over time, for example, or Philip Kwesiga's (2005) study on the production and use of pottery in Nkote. Sunananda Sanyal (2000) explored two generations of artists trained at the Makerere art school and their exploration of indigenous objects, materials, and social memories. Richard Kabiito's (2010) search for integrating Ganda indigenous knowledge into contemporary art is another example, and so is Kasule's own dissertation (2003) which focuses on the renaissance of contemporary art at Makerere University.

In addition, several contemporary Ugandan artists embed tales, traditions, local perceptions of aesthetics, and materials into their artworks (e.g., Sanaa Gateja, Samson "Xenson" Ssenkaaba, Jackie Katesi, Fred Mutebi, Lilian Nabulime, Bruno Sserunkuuma, and Acaye Kerunen)[8]. In an interview with Jackie Katesi, who self-defines as an artist who merges painting into sculpture in form of woven installation sculptures, she explained her motivation to use weaving techniques the following way:

> I am a sculptor but I concentrate on weaving. Why weaving?! It's a beautiful story behind it. […] It started back in the 1990s, when I grew up with my grandmother. I grew up with my family, but as an African tradition – sometimes they would take you to the grandparents in the village, for you to be acquainted with life and you learn the local things because most things in town are not. […] You know as a child growing up, there are moments when they would introduce you to housework and sometimes you are getting stubborn, but the [grand]mother would be like: "You have to learn these things! These are basics of life". So, when she said this, she would sing a song, a traditional folk song [sings the song]. I loved the melody – I did not understand the words but I basically loved the flow. So, I discovered one thing about my people in the village. These are people who moved their lives on certain things. For the women, it was basically weaving. […] If she [my grandmother] had a problem, she would go and weave. Weaving was more of a companion, more of a friend, more of a hope, more of a sister. […] When you would see her weaving, you would see her happy […] She had no time, but if you would see her weaving, you would know this is her free time. (Interview with Jackie Katesi, artist 18/02/2020: 9–53)

Katesi, whose stage name is *the Kalange*, touches upon similar topics as, for example, Kwesiga. Here, too, (re-)discovering the local material culture, the material culture

8 For a detailed elaboration on how art-related concepts are applied in this study, on Ugandan art in general as well as political and social readings of artistic expression, see chapters 2.1 and 2.3

of *her people in the village* serves as a departure point for the development of a contemporary style, rooted in weaving techniques associated with the boundary object. At the same time, the quote above touches upon several other issues as well, and it is worthwhile to stay with them for a moment. The traditions and techniques Katesi applies are rooted in the practices of *her* people – meaning the people in the village, her family, and her community. She grounds her artwork in her childhood memories and associates them with local and indigenous traditions. In doing so, she also frames urban life in Uganda as detached from those very traditions, stating, "They would take you to the grandparents in the village, for you to be acquainted with life and you learn the local things because *most things in town are not*" (ibid: 14, emphasis added). Furthermore, in Katesi's elaboration, artistic activity becomes a sanctuary – especially for the women in the village:

> These are people who moved their lives on certain things. For the women, it was basically weaving. […] If she [my grandmother] had a problem, she would go and weave. Weaving was more of a companion, more of a friend, more of a hope, more of a sister. […] She had no time, but if you would see her weaving, you would know this is her time. (ibid: 46–53)

In this sense, artistic engagement with the production of boundary objects has both a relational and a social function in addition to functional and aesthetic characteristics. The boundary object here is fully agentic in form of a strong material agency: the artistic handicraft objects and their production practices "transform and impact the specific way in which reality discloses itself for human beings" (Kirchhoff, 2009: 206). According to Michael Kirchhoff, subjects (X) and material culture (or a technology) (Y) can co-constitute behavioral activity – for example, weaving. The agency of the material culture and the creative engagement with it, according to Katesi, result in weaving, singing, and happiness. Furthermore, they communicate with third parties. In this particular case, Katesi understood that whenever her grandmother sat down to weave, she, and everyone else *"would know this is her time*". Among the independent handicraft groups, artistic handicraft production is also a social, relational, and at times spiritual practice (see also chapter 7). For Katesi, the rootedness of the techniques with her people gives her work authenticity and individuality while simultaneously situating it within the family, traditional life, and community and hence bridges dichotomies of rural and urban, traditional and contemporary, as the previous quote demonstrates.

Similarly, Bruno Sserunkuuma visualizes folklore music in his art to address health questions around HIV/Aids. By doing so, he navigates through different art forms that lend a language to community members to discuss sensitive yet crucial public health issues (see also chapter 5.2.2 on the subject matter):

> So, I tell stories, my pots tell stories. So, one time I listened to a local musician, who […] was talking about a snake in the pot. Eh – like sometime back people used to cook from clay pots. So, you go back in your home [sic], you find – the pot you cook from – there is a snake! In that pot! So, what do you do?! […] So, I listened, it was in the local language, in Luganda, then I started composing and asking the same question and – what – like, what he was saying: the snake in the pot. If you try to kill the snake, because pottery is fragile, you may break the pot. […] He was leading that to HIV/Aids – […] we contract Aids through sex, and sex is part of life. Should we give away with sex? Should we kill the snake? What do we do?! (Interview with Bruno Sserunkuuma, 23/08/2018: 164–180)

All professional artists I spoke to regard artistic handicraft products as local and valuable art forms. They are framed as culturally indigenous and carry indigenous knowledge. At the same time – and in part for those very reasons – they are sought as adequate tools for the empowerment of marginalized groups and economic development, especially of women with low socio-economic backgrounds. It merges two seemingly conflictual positions and currently is one central dominant conceptualization of the boundary object.

5.2.2 Artistically-Oriented Handicraft Associations and NGOs World

Culturalization of Artistic Handicraft Objects

Reste Kaddu Lwanga – one of the founding members of the NACCAU and its current secretary-general – stated that her motivation to co-found the association was "to make a statement" in opposition to government (observation protocol from 19/02/2020). According to Lwanga, government failed to invest into the cultural sector and to support artists and artisans politically, structurally, and financially. As we are sitting in her shop talking, a woman approaches Lwanga's shop, looking around, screening the products on display. Lwanga greets the woman with the following words I have heard so often when at the NACCAU, "You're welcome, take a look at my shop". She does not have much time, the woman answers, and she is looking for something for her daughter – a souvenir to bring back to her. "Something small", she adds. Lwanga mainly sells paintings in addition to some necklaces and hand dyed and waxed 'African' fabric. The fabric seems to have caught the woman's attention, and Lwanga immediately gets up and places a pile of fabric of different colors and shapes upon the table. The woman touches it with her fingers, praising the quality and the beauty of its patterns. After a few seconds, she asks about the price. Reste replies, thereby emphasizing the quality of the cloth as if to justify the asking price. Suddenly the woman appears to be no longer interested. Now she is looking to excuse herself: "Unfortunately I don't have much money [with me]. And I am really only looking for something small – for my daughter". She tells us that she

will look around some more and might return later. While the woman walks away, I ask Lwanga whether she thinks the woman will return. Her answer is "No". The woman is looking for something that she, Lwanga does not offer: "Something small for her daughter".

In associations such as the NACCAU, the boundary object is an object of constant negotiation between the ideas and skills of artists and artisans on the one side, and customers' tastes and international discourses on the other side. In this brief encounter it becomes clear that whatever Lwanga has to offer does not suit the interest of the potential customer. She is looking for something small and inexpensive to take back home. Lwanga offers larger items in form of paintings and fabric which has not (yet) reached the status of a souvenir craft which would require additional steps to be taken (e.g. taking the fabric to a tailor, measuring, sewing, and fitting). A souvenir, here, needs to submit to the characteristics of being handy in size, low in financial investments, and aesthetically appealing to the woman and her perception of her daughter's taste. Lwanga quickly understands that the art products in her shop do not respond to the imaginaries of a Ugandan souvenir of her customer, yet tries to convince the potential customer by praising the quality of the fabric and the authenticity of its manufacturing process (hand dyed and waxed).

In this brief encounter, the associated meanings with the boundary object of Lwanga and her potential customers do not match. For they need to represent both: the local cultural heritage as understood from the artists/artisans' perspectives, and as understood from foreigners' perspectives (Hume, 2013). It needs to present the aesthetic and decorative quality that attracts the foreigner's eye, while it also functions as a reference to a regional site and local cultural expression.

To do so, artistic handicraft objects are always at risk of being romanticized and exoticized as being representative of an authentic, rural *African*[9] lifestyle, which is situated on the peripheries of development and represents the pre-industrialized and pre-modern, 'natural' life of peasant people. To do so, products are branded as *traditional*, as made from *organic* or *recycled materials*, *handmade* as well as by individuals or groups in rural areas (see also Image 5.6). This othering process frames

9 It must be stated here that many associations and NGOs I investigated in one way or another are sensitive to the diversity of the African continent and the people that inhabit it. However, it also became clear that in many cases, especially regarding the imagination of rural African life, the narratives fall short to differentiate. The Mirembe project for example promotes handicraft products with the label Made in Africa, when, indeed all products for sale in their online shop were from Uganda (by June 2022 the website design had changed, the slogan disappeared). While in some interviews interview partners were clear in their intention that souvenirs were to help visitors to remember Uganda, others favored the expression remember Africa and added that items sold at the crafts market came from several African countries. Furthermore, foreign tourists are often unaware of the differences of local material culture, they would then add.

Ugandan handicraft products as objects of an *African* tradition and tribal culture from a tourist perspective (Merali, 2022). In this process of negotiating meanings, Lwanga choses the narration of manual labor in affiliation with quality which could be further elaborated into a story of authentic, indigenous products. Anitra Nettleton (2010: 56) observes how artistic handicraft products, here in form of baskets, that refer to "African histories and memories" with a concocted "African aura […], belong within a particular space of production denoted (and fenced off) as 'authentically' African, because it is not industrialized, and therefore apparently not 'modern'". The visual components of artistic handicraft products mark the borders between rural and urban, tradition and modernity.

Artistic handicraft objects as agents of sustainable development

However, handicraft products are also framed as agents of sustainable development by actors such as project funders, the UNESCO, and members of the art-academics sub-world. A means to protecting and conserving the environment by re-use of raw material, as bearing the premise of lifting poor individuals, mostly women, out of poverty. The tag text on the coiled basket in Image 5.6 powerfully demonstrates how the dominant discourses that frame the boundary object in this social world are interconnected:

> Traditional Uganda Baskets – These beautiful baskets have been hand woven by a women's group on the slopes of the Rwenzori mountains in western Uganda. Made out of Millet straw, Banana fibre & Raffia & coloured with natural dyes extracted from plant material. PURE NATURE. (Banana Boat, 2020: n.p.)

The tag is printed on manually pressed paper. Its woodchip texture and its colors – a piece of ivory-colored paper glued on top of an umbered piece of paper – are purposefully chosen for their naturality. The left rim of the ivory-colored top paper is framed by abstract designs. The product title "Traditional Uganda Baskets" of the item for sale is printed in bold letters. Here, the artistic handicraft product offered is framed by the term 'traditional'. In addition, the (potential) buyer receives information about the origin of the product and producers ("the slopes of the Rwenzori mountains"), the materials used ("millet straw, banana fibre & raffia […] natural dyes extracted from plant material") and the producers, who remain homogenous as a women's group.

I took this photo at one of the Banana Boat shops. Banana Boat is a private business that "follow[s] the principles of Fair Trade" (Banana Boat, n.d.). As previously mentioned, the borders between NGOs, associations, and (social) businesses are often blurred, especially in the realm of the cultural crafts industry. As a business, Banana Boat presents itself as ecologically sustainability-oriented. It emphasizes the importance of recycling and the use of natural fibers and dye. At the same time, the

founders and owners Suni Magyar and Ralph Schenk, self-describe their business as socially responsible by providing "work opportunities for local crafters, small entrepreneurs and women's groups" (ibid: n.p.). As demonstrated in the product-tag text, the positioning of the products for sale in their shops and how the business positions itself are surprisingly similar to artistically oriented non-governmental and non-profit organizations. Here, too, the lines between the 'traditional' and the 'contemporary' are blurred; products are not sold by the artisans themselves, and the emphasis on economic gains for (women) artisans an important asset of the marketing strategy. Importantly, Banana Boat also emphasizes ecological sustainability and hence links the boundary object with a new(er) emphasis in the development realm on climate protection.

In her paper on contemporary South African baskets and their constructed meanings, Anita Nettleton makes similar observations:

> Most of the objects for sale in these markets are handmade, and often (but not exclusively, […]) by people living in the rural areas. The differentiation between rural and urban, tradition and modernity are easily lost sight of in such an environment. Yet, they form the base of both development and promotion of indigenous crafts. (Nettleton, 2010: 56)

In this quotation, she refers to a dichotomy that artistic handicraft objects and the artists and artisans who create them bear – between tradition and modernity and between rural and urban. While it might be easy to lose sight of these lines in the constructions of meaning making processes associated with artistic handicraft practices and practitioners, it is elementary to consider the discursive hegemonic power of those who produce, reproduce, and manifest – in short, construct them. The implications and consequences thereof will be further discussed in chapters 6 and 7.

Whether it is the NACCAU, the NAWOU, or Banana Boat, all legal entities I investigated emphasize that the production site of the boundary object is a site of manual labor. In addition, they construct artistic handicraft production as a gendered space in which first and foremost women receive the support needed to 'work themselves out of poverty' – the strand of the boundary object that argues with the contribution of artistic handicraft products as important for economic development and empowerment. It further associates poverty rurality, with gender-based violence, and/or with disrupted biographies, for example due to forced migration. This notion can also be found in the NACCAU mission statement in which it is proclaimed that the "local cultural heritage is [the] foundation and inspiration through which

[we] promote, preserve and transform Uganda's visual arts into a vibrant sector for education, employment and poverty alleviation" (NACCAU, 2021)[10].

In some of its activities, the NACCAU seeks to cooperate with actors from the private sector and/or local branches of international organizations such as the UNESCO and the Uganda National Commission for the UNESCO, which co-determine the perception of the boundary object in this social world. Recent project collaborations include a UNESCO-led project called *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda*. This project was funded by the government of the Republic of Korea, headed by Uganda National Commission for the UNESCO, executed by the NACCAU, and operated between 2015 and 2019. The objectives of this project were myriad, and many relate to the 2005 *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. The project partners highlighted the diversity of the material cultural heritage and sought to enhance the quality of products and support artisans (primarily women, see also Image 5.6) in establishing marketing strategies for their products the creative industries. Ultimately, the aim was to enable artisans to create economic gains through their work and to deliver proof of the importance of their contribution to the Ugandan economy.

Image 5.6: Basket tag: Traditional Uganda Baskets.

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10 I will further elaborate on the NACCAU, its activities, objectives, agency, and relevance for artistic handicraft products as well as its potential and limitations in chapter 6.

A second example is the *Marketability of East African Cultural Crafts* project of the Uganda Tourism Association (UTA) – a private sector institute – in cooperation with Eco Tourism Kenya, which operated from 2020–2021. It was funded by the German Society for International Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) in the interests of supporting people with little or no formal education to foster the quality standards of their locally manufactured products. In Chapter 6.3, I will elaborate on the role of these project-elements in the situation. In the social world of artistically oriented handicraft associations and NGOs, these two projects support my overall observations regarding the conceptualizations of the boundary object. Taking nuances into consideration, artistic handicraft products here are, by and large, debated alongside the discourses on poverty eradication and as a tourism-oriented heritage construction – namely as a site of interest for tourists to remember the authenticity of *the real Africa* as framed in form of traditionalized and culturally ethnicized artistic products.

The social world of artistically-oriented handicraft associations and NGOs has significant overlaps with the (visual) arts world and increasingly with the tourism world which – at times – makes it particularly challenging for actors in this world to position themselves beyond dominant frameworks (see also chapter 6). This social world includes formalized local organizations, such as the NACCAU, as well as social-businesses that operate with similar rationales. They are distinct from the international NGOs world insofar as one of the common interests in this social world is to gain funding from international NGOs. I begin this chapter with a description of the collective actors I summarized here under "associations and NGOs" before I display the meanings associated with artistic handicraft products and production in this social world. In doing so, I provide some empirical examples that demonstrate how the boundary object is understood and negotiated within this social world.

The need to differentiate between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other associations and legal entities is closely related to the establishment of the United Nations and its various bodies and agencies (Willets, 2009). Especially in the development realm of the postcolonial-era, NGOs began to play an increasingly important role in the spheres of civil society, *good governance,* and sustainable economic growth (Neverdeen Pieterse, 2010, see also chapter 3.2). In theory, *non*-governmental organizations (NGOs) are independent from the government and thus also not steered by governmental but by parochial interests (Woldring, 1998). In reality, however, non-governmental organizations are not only shaped by governmental decisions, they depend directly and indirectly on governmental support and cannot at all times be separated from the states (Ferguson, 2006; Fowler, 2012; Gramsci, 2011 [1992]). Still, dominant civil society strands conceive NGOs as *the* spaces of civil society (Edwards, 2011b); Despite heavy criticism of the development focus of NGOs in the Global South and their contribution to "unfavorable conditions for rural social movement emergence" (Isgren, 2018: 180). This orientation towards sustainable de-

velopment often de-politicizes the discourses on civil society and development and emphasizes humanitarian assistance that alleviates the symptoms rather than addressing the roots of societal challenges (see also chapter 3.2). Unsurprisingly, then, from a local perspective, NGOs are often understood synonymously with funding organizations from the Global North, and many local associational bodies depend, directly or indirectly, on foreign (funding) partners in one way or another:

> Civil society is the (…) site – we call them – those people who advocate for community development, for example those you'd find helping our teachers associations or other associations in terms of like office**, in terms of salaries, in terms of other programs, based on external funding. The NGOs. The non-governmental organizations**. […] We will be training to position the visual arts in the international market. So, they give us – they will give us some funding to be able to train, like we have already done like I've always done with the producers. How they can improve on their products. (Interview with Nuwa Nnyanzi, artist and vice-chairperson NACCAU 26/01/2020: 398–406, emphasis added)

Unlike NGOs that usually have a small member base and cooperate with foreign organizations, associations in Uganda are frequently urban and member-based organizations. They may or may not be profit-oriented. Frequently, they are not entirely non-governmental although they might conceptualize themselves as such. Oftentimes, they are affiliated with governmental ministries in one way or another. Associations such as the Uganda Tourism Association (UTA), the National Association of Women's Organizations Uganda (NAWOU), or the National Arts and Cultural Crafts Association Uganda (NACCAU), for example, serve as umbrella organizations and promote the interests of their members or member organizations or private businesses alongside running projects or permanent programs (such as the NACCAU crafts village run by the NACCAU). The NACCAU itself is affiliated with the Uganda National Culture Centre (UNCC), which operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), and its members may be in multiple positions in more than one legal body, which further blurs the borders between them (Ferguson, 2006).

The Uganda legal system differentiates between for-profit and non-profit social businesses. The latter can be incorporated into an NGO (TradeLab, 2019). The lines between non-profit and for-profit remain blurred which results in profit-oriented businesses being able to operate as social businesses. The main legal difference is that for-profit businesses, even if they operate in a socially oriented way, are not obligated to reinvest their profits towards the good of the general public. In the cultural crafts industries, this leads to creative combinations whereby an enterprise chooses to market its products using the same strategies as NGOs, but, as in the case with

Banana Boat, conceptualizes 'empowerment' as paying handicraft artisans for the products they purchase and then resell.

Local, artistically oriented organizations vary in size, aim, and structure. Most of them, as is the case with the association investigated, are influenced by globalized and oftentimes simultaneously foreign-dominated structures. However, much as they adopt vocabulary and concepts that frame the meaning of artistic handicraft products, they may also create agency by negotiating the associated meanings of their products.

5.2.3 Cultural Crafts Industry Funding Arena

The most important arena identified here is the previously introduced cultural crafts industry in civil society arena. In addition, my analysis directed me towards a second important arena of concern, the cultural crafts industry-funding arena. In chapter 2.3.3, I discussed the contested significance of the Cultural Turn in Development, thereby introducing three strands of conceptualizing it in development work. In spite of dispute around the whereabouts of the Cultural Turn (Labadi, 2020a), one of its major impacts is the establishment of funding possibilities for artistically oriented (development) initiatives and projects in the Global North (Nagawa and Siegenthaler, 2022; Stupples, 2011; Stupples and Teaiwa, 2017). The previously mentioned *Walls of Water* project, funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs is an example for this, as are the 2020 Kampala Art Biennale (KAB), co-funded by the EU, the Swiss Art Council, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the annual Ngalabi Short Film Festival, funded by the Goethe-Zentrum.

Since the ratification of the 2005 UNESCO Convention in 2015, the cultural crafts industry was also able to benefit from project funding from industrialized countries. One example is the previously mentioned *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda* project that received financial support from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) of the Republic of Korea. The *Marketability of East African Cultural Crafts* project was funded indirectly by the German government through its development agency GIZ, and the *Handicraft and Souvenirs Development Project* (HSDP) received US$1.5 million from the Geneva-based international Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), an initiative that supports the development of the 'least developed countries'. It is noteworthy that many projects related to the cultural crafts industry in Uganda are financed directly or indirectly by foreign governments. However, since this is not the focus of the study at hand, I will not further elaborate upon the subject matter.

The division presented here is not accidental. In the beginning of my research, cultural institutes, and culture funds such as the Alliance Francaise, the British Council, and the Goethe Zentrum, as well as the Dutch Prince Claus Fund, appeared as elements and organizations in my data and on my maps. However, the more

focused I became on artistic handicraft objects and the artisans who produce them, the less relevant cultural institutes became. They are conspicuous in their absence insofar as these organizations and institutes focus on art projects, residences, and programs. In terms of the boundary object, they become relevant actors when dealing with historical artefacts, preservation, exhibition, and the question of the archive.

Yet, their absence in my research situation can also be understood as part of the dynamic that differentiates arts and crafts as two separate yet related dimensions of the creative industries. This finding surprised me as did the 'emergence' of the UNESCO as an important organizational actor in my data. Moreover, it was not only the UNESCO as an organization that proved to be a powerful actor in the situation. Alongside the organization, its discourses on the safeguarding of cultural heritage and the protection of cultural diversity must be regarded as fully agentic and very influential in many social worlds.

The Creative Industries Funding Arena is a site of important power asymmetries whereby those actors that have funds decide which narratives will prevail. In my research situation, this arena is mainly shaped by the social world of foreign governments that always also consider inner interests when providing funds for the cultural crafts industry, by the UN-world, the tourism world, the international-NGOs world, and by the UNESCO.

While associations such as the NACCAU may be member-based, the membership fees do not cover the expenses, which forces collective actors to submit to funders' narratives on authentic African crafts, UN agendas of sustainable development, or the UNESCO discourses on safeguarding cultural heritage through its commodification. With regard to the situatedness of contemporary artistic handicraft production in civil society in Uganda today, the funding of culture and the individual interests of funders must be considered as co-constitutive in the postcolonial realities of the Ugandan creative industries.

5.2.4 The UNESCO

With the 2005 *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* and its four overarching goals, the UNESCO introduced the first international treaty that "provides a policy framework to create dynamic creative sectors. Parties are developing sound policies and measures to support every stage of the value chain, involving not only the culture sector, but reaching across, [sic] economic development, employment, finance, education and many more" (project leaflet, Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, 2020: n.p.). The core of the convention, which Uganda ratified in 2015, is the recognition of the dual nature of "cultural goods and services" as being more than "mere commodities" (ibid). Rather, the UNESCO states, they "also carry meaning and values, shape opinions

and foster mutual understanding" (ibid: n.p.). Alongside the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, the 2005 Convention serves as an important point of reference. Throughout my empirical data, in interviews, roundtable discussions, on websites, or in project documents, references to tangible and intangible cultural heritage are made frequently. Furthermore, the protection and promotion of local cultural customs are pivotal in all social worlds. Among independent handicraft groups, the protection and promotion of handicraft skills are often referred to as being a cultural responsibility; it is "generational" or a "spirit" (e.g., group conversation with members of the *Imbalu* Initiation ceremony costume designers from Bubyangu, 27/02/2020: 460–469; group conversation with members of Bunangaka-potters group, 25/02/2020: 507) while in urban, internationalized social worlds, the terms 'cultural heritage' and 'indigenous culture' prevail.

Lynn Meskell and Christoph Brumann also attest that the UNESCO has a considerable symbolic weight, which can "be converted into power and material gains in many domains" (Meskell and Brumann, 2015: 22). Labadi (2020c) understands the UNESCO's power to be discursive rather than financial. This is particularly true for the World Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger. Their 'major currency' is the prestige and interest that comes with the listing, as the World Heritage Fund has

> [i]ncreasingly limited means to support nominations and conservation measures. The underlying assumption and precondition for listing is that the nominating nation itself is capable of conserving the site, and, with the prestige of a World Heritage title, it is indeed often much easier to attract investors and donors. (Meskell and Brumann, 2015: 26).

The UNESCO's strategy is not only applied in inventorying heritage sites and practices. In my research situation, the UNESCO highlights the economic potential of the creative industries and their contributions to the gross domestic product of any given country. It frames creative activities as contributing to sustainable development, and sustainable development as being interdependent with cultural diversity. Again, it does not fund activities and projects directly, but by emphasizing the importance of supporting the creative industries, the likelihood of attracting funders increases (see also chapter 6). According to its own estimations, the creative industries can make up to 11% of a country's total employment (Uganda National Commission for UNESCO, 2020). This, however, includes publishing, film, music, and audio-visual media, as well as sports and other forms of entertainment.

Beyond promoting the economic potential of the creative industries, the UNESCO also seeks to preserve the diversity of cultural expressions through co-funding the restoration and maintenance of cultural sites and landscapes, and by inventorying sites, practices, and products as well as customs, ceremonies, and traditions

as tangible or intangible cultural heritage. Barkcloth making, for example, was declared Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2008. Furthermore, as Meskell and Brumann (2015) suggest, it has received significantly more attention since then.

After the colonization of present-day Uganda, barkcloth, which had been known among the Baganda to be the fabric of the royals and the dead (Nakazibwe 2005), almost disappeared entirely and was rediscovered by artists and designers only recently. Especially in the Baganda, many people I spoke to referred to barkcloth with pride, highlighting its significance by referring to its UNESCO listing. Although I did not speak with any official UNESCO representative or staff member in Uganda, it was present – physically or discursively – almost everywhere I went. In the UNESCO realm, the boundary object is a driver of economic growth as well as a vehicle to promote *social inclusion* and *cultural diversity*, though without specifying what exactly this entails, as the following quote from a project leaflet shows:

> The results of the creative industries mapping study undertaken by the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO in 2009 indicates a high potential for Uganda's design/craft sector to foster economic growth, job creation, export earnings and to promote social inclusion, cultural diversity and human resource development, provided key skills in creative design, artistic product development and marketing are improved upon. (UNESCO 2015: n.p.)

Here, artistic handicraft products serve both an economic interest and a social interest. Interestingly, economic interests by and large outweigh social and cultural notions in this quote. This becomes particularly prominent in the last part of the sentence, which also serves as the rationale for the project promoted in the leaflet, the *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda* project, as further elaborated on in chapter 5.3. Improved skills in design, product development, and marketing are doomed pre-requisite aspects that do not relate to cultural diversity or social inclusion. On the contrary, a neoliberal thought of improved marketing and higher levels of innovation dominates the UNESCO's position most taken with regard to the boundary object that, in a subtle yet sharply formulated way, presents handicraft artists and their products as unprofessional.

In the quotation above, this becomes apparent in the wording "provided key skills […] are improved upon". The visual components of the leaflet support this notion. At first glance the cover image appears as an arrangement of colored forms, a pixel art filter blurs the lines and makes the recognition of the products on display unless the spectator knows and recognizes the forms, impossible (see right part of Image 4.1). The item most identifiable is a basket, which covers the upper half of the image. The blurriness of the image strengthens the proposed need for improved skills, as the handicraft products in its current artistic elaborations do not suffice to be at full display. The title of the leaflet further strengthens this analysis: "Strength-

ening the artistic, design & marketing skills of Ugandan women professionals". Here, too, we find the articulated need for improvement on several levels. First, artistic skills are to be strengthened. This refers to the technical skills needed to produce an artefact. In addition, the articulated need to strengthen design skills can be understood as an appeal for more innovation through new designs, materials, forms, and patterns. Lastly, marketing skills are to be improved as well.

During my conversations with independent handicraft groups, I was told that the participants of a weeklong training that was offered as part of the *Strengthening the Sustainability of the Creative Industries in Uganda* project were taught how to calculate an appropriate price for their products. The calculation strategy considers the costs of material, the working hours of the artisan, transportation, and marketing costs. However, group members considered this calculation unrealistic. Their local customers oftentimes have little money themselves. Frequently enough, artisans are in immediate need of money, and hence at times sell their products below the buying price of the raw materials they used. Raw materials, I am told, are often natural products. However, since they do not readily grow where the artisans live, they need to be purchased anyway. Furthermore, the increasing mobility of people shapes their artistic production, including the materials they use.

This economization process of the boundary object can be understood as a condition of neoliberalism, in which "the enactment of government policies relies increasingly upon the self-empowerment of capacitated citizens and self-organized communities in marketized relationships, which position cultural heritage as a resource" (Coombe and Weiss, 2015: 43). "In heritage studies", Coombe and Weiss further write, "neoliberalism is used as a generic adjective for states, policies, and economic practices, a process of economizing heritage goods and/or promoting socioeconomic development in competitive global economies. It is often conflated with economic globalization and the instrumental expansion of international tourism" (ibid: 44). Indeed, it appears that the positions taken by the UNESCO in the situation of inquiry center around economic activities with and through the boundary object framed as tangible or intangible cultural heritage. In this logic, too, the ongoing improvement of skills and techniques, as well as the development of innovative assets that stand out in a competitive global market are as necessary as the entanglements with the tourism sector.

With Clarke, the omnipresence of the UNESCO as an organization – as an entity that produces important documents which become discursively influential in the situation, and because of its status as the expert on culture (Meskell and Brumann, 2015) – indicates that it is a powerful actor in the situation. The UNESCO is fully agentic in generating consent for the current status quo to the point where members of the women's wickerwork group took from a training workshop that "once we work hard in our crafts business, they are global. We want to produce in bulk so that we are globally recognized as Uganda – and to preserve our culture" (group conver-

sation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 296–297). The boundary object is conceptualized as sufficiently agentic in facilitating change in the lives of handicraft artists on the condition that they work hard enough, which indicates that if they fail to improve their livelihoods, it is because they have not worked hard enough.

I return to this issue when I elaborate on the overall discourse on the boundary object and its creators in chapter 5.3. While the UNESCO may play a pivotal role in shaping the discourse around the boundary object and consent in the situation, its framing of artistic handicraft products is not shared by all relevant social worlds that I introduce in this chapter. In the art world and its sub-worlds, the position is contested because it limits the perceptions of local material culture and (re-)colonizes the discourse around artistic freedom by submitting it almost exclusively to neoliberalist market theory. In the minoritized social world of independent handicraft groups, notions of the previously mentioned responsibility for the boundary object through a 'generational spirit' or of handicraft products facilitating conviviality (Nyamnjoh, 2017b) are important. Moreover, at the NACCAU, members apply strategies that attempt to benefit from the UNESCO discourses by submitting to them and simultaneously liberate themselves from prevailing hegemonic power asymmetries by establishing new alliances.

5.2.6 The Tourism World

In the tourism world, the boundary object serves as an agent to tell a particular story about Uganda's culture, authenticity, and cultural heritage. Here, the boundary object is framed within the concept of *memorability:* "For every tourist that comes to Uganda, we interact with [and] look for things we call *memorability* – something to remember" (Interview with Richard Kawere, CEO of UTA on 11/03/2020: 148–149). The memorability aspect is important for tourists to have a reminder of their (positive) experience in Uganda that they will share with friends and family. In addition, Kawere also relates tourism to societal transformation. For him, the engagement of tourism with artistic handicraft products, producers, and associations such as the NACCAU has the following meaning:

> [O]ur focus is to transform the livelihoods of those people. It's not only about the tourists, it's also those other products like the mat – which are highly demanding also in other markets because they are highly organic materials. […] So, they are also on high demand, meaning that if we put an effort here, we would be able to transform a specific life. And tourism, in essence – apart from being a business – its main essence is to cause transformation of the society. […] So, the whole entire – why tourism industry is attached to the crafts, emerging as a result of; One (1) is the demand of the sovereigns by the tourists that come to the country; two (2) is the

> need to work with producers to transform their lives. Because as they transform their lives, it's the tourism industry that actually benefits in the end. (ibid: lines 167–178)

The Tourism World is among the social worlds of significant importance for the dissemination of artistic handicraft products. In addition, the linkages between the arts, cultural initiatives, and tourism in general are plenty. After all, it is cultural differences in architecture, clothing, cuisine, rituals, and ceremonies among others that create a feeling of being in a different place for tourists. In the situation of inquiry, the tourism world plays an important role in the negotiation process of the boundary object, predominantly in two ways as I will proceed to demonstrate:

(1) During the analysis of texts and visual material from websites, it became apparent that the international NGOs world is currently primarily a sub-world of the tourism world. In the research situation, international NGOs are by and large privately founded NGOs. Often, they are the result of an initiative of a few individuals who came to Uganda as tourists or volunteers. The appreciation for the aesthetics of artistic handicraft products in combination with the desire to help people change their economic situation for the better make the core ingredients of these privately founded NGOs. Founders either form (women's) groups to start manufacturing handicraft groups or buy from existing groups and resell them abroad. An example for the former is the Mirembe initiative of three Israeli volunteers of the TEN Brit center (Focus group discussion with Assoc. Prof. Kizito Maria Kasule, Dr. Justine Nabaggala and Dr. Joan Kekimuri, 23/08/2018), an example for the latter is the project PEARLS OF AFRICA, a German based initiative that works jointly with "60 Ugandan refugee women of the Emmanuel Group in Kampala, Uganda" (PEARLS OF AFRICA website, retrieved on 28/11/2020). Hence, they are an important social subworld for many handicraft artists. The product designs in these groups are heavily tinted by the taste of the project founders and the targeted market – a market interested in unique and ecologically sustainable manufactured, small(er) design products from low-income countries through which they can *do good by purchasing goods*.

Already in 1994, Ingrid Thurner wrote about the linkage between souvenir art and the mechanisms of tourism and observed how "souvenir trade – like tourism – obeys to the economic mechanisms of the society of the travelers, not of the society of those being travelled to" (Thurner, 1994: 1, my translation). This reminds one of Trowell's reference to creating products for foreigners (Europeans) who seek "things with an African flavour" (Trowell, 1937: 44). In this sub-world of the tourism world, foreigners not only seek things with an African flavor but by establishing organizations, they also actively participate in the construction of what are considered *authentic,* natural Ugandan craft products. Potential customers are encouraged to purchase their products not only because of their aesthetic and artistic value or the story they tell about places far away, but importantly also because purchasing them means help-

ing individuals and communities who are considered dependent, poor, and without agency. One such example is the previously mentioned former landing page of the "Dignity Collection" of the U.S. founded organization *Fashion for Compassion* (see also Image 5.3).

(2) (Local) associations such as the NACCAU actively reach out to actors and organizations in the tourism to form alliances. Throughout interviews, group discussions, and conversations with individuals from academia, from artistically oriented civil society organizations as well as with art-activists, there was an overall consensus that the current government, and in particular the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in charge of Culture, does not promote the interests of individuals and groups engaged with arts and culture. As a result, two strategies emerged. The first strategy is to put pressure on governmental bodies, to invite members to all events, and to create visibility (e.g. roundtable discussion on 'Art in Intl. Development', 27/02/2019: 635–664). The second strategy is to seek alliances elsewhere. The NACCAU becoming a member of the Uganda Tourism Association (in 2018) can be considered as implementing this second strategy, as the following quote indicates:

> Ordinarily, you will find that the crafts production, in terms of legislation and laws in Uganda, falls under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Works. They [the NACCAU] were not being helped that's why they wrote and requested to us if they could come and be part of our congregation. So, we accepted them about two years ago, and have been studying how best to support that sector. (Interview with Richard Kawere, CEO of UTA on 11/03/2020: 206–210)

The tourism world frames the boundary object artistic handicraft products as souvenir art and as such within the narrative of *memorability*. This concept is not limited to handicraft objects for sale in crafts markets, souvenir shops of safari lodges, and in airport shops. It is also true for the cultural experiences during a visit to Uganda. The photograph of two posters (Image 5.7), both by the Uganda National Culture Center (UNCC), visualizes this narrative very well. At first sight, the big green circle in the middle of the posters catches the attention of the spectator. It is reminiscent of a circle reticle used, for example, in telescopes or microscopes, and just as with the scientific instrument, the circle and the lines that run towards its center help the viewer focus on relations between elements as well as distances between and among them.

In both posters, the green circle is located in the center and white lines move away from it toward the edges of the posters. Within the lines, there are photos of people engaged with cultural activities. In some images, there are drums while in other images people appear to be in movement, dancing. Around the saturated green circles in the center of the posters, there is a second, more transparent outer

green circle. This second circle lays a green filter onto the colors of the images clustered around the center. In the center of the right poster, bold white letters read "culture for sustainable development".

It includes five scenes. Out of these, three are in a single section of the reticle each, one image stretches over two sections, while the last and largest image covers most of the upper half of the poster. The latter is the image of a man in a white shirt. He wears a hat and holds an instrument with strings. Spectators only see the neck of the instrument. Behind his left upper arm, there are some beige lines, which could be straw or other grass fibers. Apart from the fibers, the background is black. Light falls onto the tip of his nose, lips, and chin from above, which suggests that the musician is currently playing a concert.

The second largest image located in the lower left corner is divided into two by a white line. Here, the spectator sees a man wearing an orange shirt and blue pants. He sits on the ground with his mouth open as if he is speaking. In front of him are four items in beige-brown wooden colors. They are assorted in a line; three of them have a red number painted on them, surrounded by one blue circle and two blue lines, one above and one below the circle. The item farthest to the right is lighter in color. The man is either kneeling or sitting on a green lawn. In the background, there are branches set up vertically in the shape of a cone.

The image to its right is the sole black-and-white image in the poster. Not only the colors but also the fact that the person in the photograph looks directly into the camera lens hence also at the spectator make this image stand out. The man in this image wears a dark shirt without sleeves, patterned pants, or a skirt around his waist, and a belt decorated with shells around his waist. He wears many beaded necklaces around his neck and right arm. Assumedly, he wears more beaded necklaces around his neck and left arm as well, but this cannot be seen here. In front of his chest, he wears a row of handkerchiefs made from cloth neatly assorted next to one another. They cover most of his torso from the front. He holds his lower right arm at a 90-degree angle from his torso, and with his hand, he holds a bar with a fuzzy, furry top. His head is covered by a flat hat tight to the rear of his head. In the background, we see another man wearing a similar outfit. While we do not see the upper body of this second man, we do see this man's thighs and two objects in the shape of an eclipse with a horizontal opening throughout the middle of the object. They are bells made from iron. Only a spectator who recognizes the outfit knows this as the costume worn by *Imbalu* initiation candidates – an initiation ceremony of the (Ba-) Gisu in Eastern Uganda.

In the image above, the spectator sees several drums and people playing them. They are standing and appear to be in the process of playing their drums. They hold drumsticks in both hands; the man in the foreground has his right arm up in the air while his left arm and hand are just above the upper rim of the drum. In the background, there are two more people in a similar body posture, indicating that,

possibly, they not only play the drum but also do so in sync. Behind the drum players in the background, there is a green hedge, and even further away, we can see the white walls of a building and four windows. The photo is thus taken outdoors, but very likely in an urban setting.

All drum players in this image wear similar clothes: a white shirt with red fronts, black pants with a red stripe on the side, and black gaiters with bells around their lower legs. Around the rear part of their waist, they wear red bast skirts, called *mpina*. The drummers look towards the left of the scene. The attentive viewer might see that the last image in the upper right corner of the poster could be a different detail of the same photograph.

In it, we see four women in a row from front to back and another drummer in the background, standing in front of a similarly green hedge. The women wear brown skirts with colorful patches, green shirts, and brown and colorful necklaces in addition to a beaded headband around their heads. The three women in the fore- and midground are moving, likely dancing. Their upper bodies are leaning in towards the front. Two of them look straight toward the right of the scene (potentially toward the drummers), and the person in the middle looks straight into the camera. The fourth woman in the background cannot be seen well. However, there is a drum right in front of her, which may be an indicator that she is a drummer rather than a dancer.

Considering the details as elements of the same photograph, the dresses, the dancing, and the drumming, the indications are quite clear that this photography was taken at a *formal baakisimba*[11] dance. Baakisimba is both music and dance in the tradition of the Baganda. Today, interpretations of the so-called village baakisimba (*baakisimba ey'omukyalo*) are used for sacred and secular purposes, while all other baakisimba performances are *formal* (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2014). According to ethnomusicologist Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, formal baakisimba groups outside of the *kabaka*'s palace only developed after the 1940s, "when the *badongo ba kabaka* (king's musicians) began to perform outside the palace, and especially in the 1960s after the abolition of the Buganda kingdom" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2014: 125). With the abolition of the kingdoms, baakisimba lost an important performance space and part of its function. In addition, Nannyonga-Tamusuza's writings indicate that the emergence of formalized groups further disconnected it from its socio-cultural functions. In post-independence Uganda, baakisimba, particularly

11 It must be noted, though, that most baakisimba groups combine baakisimba with other dances, especially with nnankasa and mbaga. Nnankasa, a "fast, and therefore exciting" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2014: 126) dance, has become increasingly popular and is performed during festivities such as weddings, graduations, conferences, and so-called beer parties (mu birabo). For detailed elaborations about baakisimba, I refer to Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza's Baakisimba: Gender in the Music and Dance of the Baganda People of Uganda (2014).

promoted by the *Heart Beat of Africa* group, became a national rather than an ethnic dance.

Baakisimba became detached from being a performative cultural expression of one ethnic group. This, Nannyonga-Tamusuza writes, had implications for the costumes, too which started to emerge more frequently in black, red, and yellow, the colors of the Ugandan national flag (see also Image 5.7). It was during this period, too, she further states, that baakisimba "became an art form and ceased to be an intimate and vital aspect of living among the Baganda as before" (ibid: 126). This is relevant because it describes how the meanings of cultural practices, here baakisimba as performative cultural expression, combined with material culture and design of the costumes worn during the performance.

Furthermore, it is especially relevant because it addresses several questions that accompanied me throughout my research. First, it asks about the meaning of art. Nannyonga-Tamusuza suggests a rupture between art and culturally meaningful activities which also asks what and when is art, about its meanings and purposes, and about its relations with the people who developed or inspired the development of it. Second, what are the linkages between professionalization on the one hand and a decrease in informal and spontaneous baakisimba dance events on the other hand? This relates not only to performance but also to the costumes, and it extends to the question of the situatedness of artistic handicraft products. Third, if indeed baakisimba ceased to be "an intimate and vital aspect of living" (ibid: 126) within a cultural group, then why does the Ugandan National Cultural Center (UNCC) print it on a commercial poster that promotes "culture for sustainable development" (UNCC, 2019: n.p.)? This brings me to the title of the poster: How do cultural expressions, here in form of music and dancing, relate to sustainable development? How can they relate, especially when experts such as Nannyonga-Tamusuza suggest that their meanings have long shifted away from their situated cultural attachments and hence political and societal functions to new associated meanings primarily as entertainment?

In her monograph, Nannyonga-Tamusuza relates baakisimba dance and music to gender roles among the Baganda. In doing so, she seeks to explore why women were denied access to drum beating. Possible explanations include elaborations on linkages with female menstruation and its perception of women being unclean during their menstruation period. In their study about pottery practice in the Ankole region in western Uganda, William Kayamba and Philip Kwesiga (2016, 2017), too, found taboos around women's participation in expressive handicraft practices in relation to their menstruation. They write, "It was strongly believed that when a woman under menstruation extracts clay, her pots would also fire with red strips [...] Menstruating or pregnant women are, often, not allowed to extract or manipulate clay, and sometimes, even to touch unfired vessels" (Kayamba and Kwesiga, 2017: 45). How do such gendered roles inform notions of sustainable development

as presented in the poster? In the discourse around culture for sustainable development, those critical moments potentially bearing conflict remain largely absent, and hence position the boundary object as artefacts detached from culturally situated embeddedness.

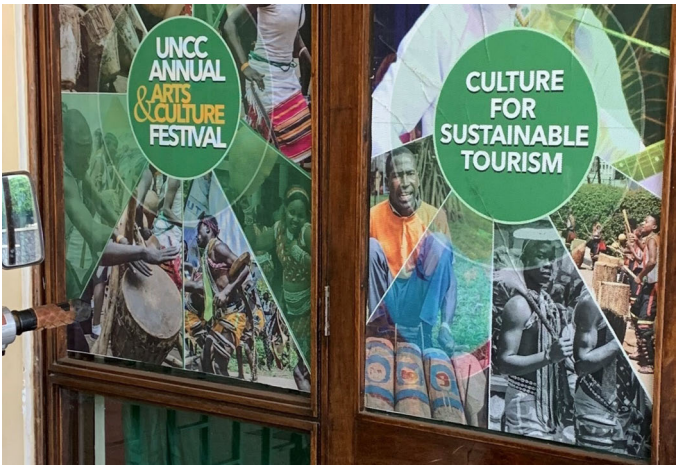
A different reading about why women were denied drum beating connects the act with the manifestation of power (an understanding that is also shared by e.g., Reid, 2017). Since women already have the power of giving birth and hence embody the role of being the 'mother of a nation', allowing them to beat the drum would mean "to assign women extra power" (Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2014: 130), which was to be prevented. In contemporary practices, women re-negotiate their role in baakisimba as well as in pottery making. Some women have become *ngalabi* players (ibid; personal conversation with Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, November 2017) and in doing so, ruptured the status-quo.

"For many social theorists and anthropologists, culture is the glue of social cohesion and [...] this glue comes unstuck under the pressure of tourism" (Hume, 2013: 2). In this quote from the introduction of *Tourism Art and Souvenirs. The Material Culture of Tourism,* David Hume refers to Davyd Greenwood and his perspective on the impact of tourism on the host-country's material culture in form of the arts and crafts of the local communities. Hume challenges this notion by arguing that if an artefact or a ritual is indeed "communication and social cohesion, and it has endured many generations without drastic change to its meaning and purpose, then it is likely to be robust enough to communicate between different cultures" (ibid: 2). He then proceeds to elaborate on the communicative agency of material culture in the form of artefacts and their meanings for the craftsperson who made them on the one hand, and the tourist who consumes it on the other hand. This co-constitution of meaning associated with the handicraft product is shaped by information provided to the tourist about the materials, the historical values regarding the aesthetics, and the skill set needed for its production, as well as the embeddedness in local historical cultural practices.

Yet, the tourism world is not primarily occupied with the dynamics and processuality of cultural expression. In the here discussed poster, cultural expressions are fragmented, cut and pasted together in an assemblage around one major target – to make tourism sustainable. The logic applied here suggests that art – performative as well as in form of material and visual culture – is consumed by visitors, who, through their consumption, help to protect and preserve the cultural heritage. Through the analysis, it becomes apparent how the social sub-world of international NGOs could be understood as partially belonging to the tourism world. Their narratives reinforce one another and mutually build on each other. In addition, organizations such as the UTA and the UTB play an increasingly important role when it comes to the negotiation of associated meanings of the boundary object. Unlike any other social world, in this world it is clearly articulated how artistic handicraft artists are con-

sidered prospective clients that ensure the survival of the interests of the tourism world and hence as powerful and agentic (interview with Richard Kawere, CEO of UTA, 11/03/2020).

Image 5.7: UNCC Commercial Poster 'Culture for Sustainable Development', National Theater, Kampala.



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5.2.7 The Minoritized Social World of Independent Handicraft Groups

Collective actors of the artistic handicraft groups-world oftentimes live in the peripheries around large cities or in rural areas. They are independently organized in the sense that they are not registered as a group, an association, or a business, nor are they affiliated to any formalized group, be it non-governmental, governmental, or faith-based. They usually lack any materialized documentation about their existence apart from their artwork or the materialized documentation produced by non-group members. In most cases, they do not have a permanent workshop or studio, nor do they have any marketing materials, let alone online representation on social media platforms or a website. The groups I met with were structured and organized quite differently. The sisters Harriett Natukunda and Sarah Bako[12], who live in Mbale, work as a pair and feel affiliated with their congregation at church. The hat makers' group was established by Isaiah Wandera[13], who continues to be the

12 Last names changed
13 Last name changed

leader of the group of approximately 30 members: 27 women and two men. The *Imbalu* initiation ceremony uniform designers' group is led by community elders and cultural leaders of the community. It has a chairperson who is also a local politician and a vice-chairperson who is also the treasurer. Furthermore, the group is guided by the *umukuuka*[14] (meaning grandfather or elder) who holds a position similar to the *kabaka*, and hence is sometimes referred to as *umukuuka kabaka* or *umukuuka bamasaaba* (the Gisu or Bagisu sometimes also self-refer as Bamasaaba). The group members regard him as an important teacher and cultural archive.

The group of potters I met used part of the house and court of one of its leaders as workshop site. Like most groups, they aim to purchase jointly raw material in bulk, and similar to the hat-makers group and the *Imbalu* initiation uniform designers, they also share their profits. The women's wickerwork group was initiated by an elderly woman who taught community members with the purpose of 'passing the skill' on to the next generation. After her death, others joined the group. Together they decided to work in public so new potential members might see them and gain an interest. Particularly among this group, members emphasized that products were not only used for sale, but could also be used at home, emphasizing the practicability and relevance of their work: "[…] to make such they [community members who might join] can also make some products for their own use in their homesteads in the essence that if they may have not sold the product, they can use it still in their homesteads" (group conversation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 273–276). Similarly, one potter from the pottery group explained that pots had frequently been used for barter trade:

> From time immemorial. Still, right from our forefathers, they [the forefathers] would exchange these pots with other communities such as Busiu for millet, cassava, yams, matooke – in times of hunger [as well as] other foods and items they did not produce yet needed them. So they would bring us children food and we ate an grew up. (David Khatuyu[15], group conversation with members of Bunangaka-potters group, 25/02/2020: 510–514).

Here, the boundary object is conceptualized as functional object for self-use, for cooking, or for purposes of barter trade. A basket or bowl made of *obukedu* (banana

14 At the time of the re-establishment of the monarchies in the 1990s, the Gisu or Bagisu people refused to appoint one single cultural leader as king, as they, according to the literature studied, have long been "administered at clan [rather than at tribe] level" (Shero, 2017: 159). When pressured to appoint a king, the Gisu decided to adapt "their own word for king, Umuhinga, and named the appointed, Umukuuka – the grandfather or elder" (ibid), which reinforced the rejection for central authority and instead emphasized the value of "elder leadership at the clan level" (ibid).

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leaf stalks) and *enjulu*[16] serves the function of smashing Matooke, others are used as tray tables or smaller baskets with a lid for storage, especially for rice and groundnuts. Pots might be used for cooking, for water or local beer storage and cooling as well as to give away to special guests (Kayamba and Kwesiga, 2016; 2017). The hatmaker group members use hats and brooms they make, or flowers for decorative purposes.

Sylvia Nannyonga-Tamusuza (2001; 2014), Amanda Tumusiime (2012), and Dorah Kasozi (2019) all demonstrate how women in Uganda, as individuals or in groups, use art to (re-)negotiate their role(s) in contemporary society. In the situation of inquiry, and in one independently organized wickerwork group in particular, women use the agency of artistic handicraft production to enhance their visibility in public, to "attract other members in the community", so they are "compelled to also join our group and also learn" (group conversation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 268–270). Here, the boundary object of artistic handicraft products, too, is understood to bear the potential to be an agent in leaving poverty behind. However, unlike in other social worlds, overcoming poverty is not an individual but a communal task. As such, sharing knowledge, sharing time, and sharing, materials, and by doing so, establishing coherence and conviviality become important strategies to reduce poverty.

While poverty reduction is important, it does not dominate the conceptualization of the boundary object in this minoritized social world. In the situation of inquiry, they could also be considered implicated actors rather than a social world (Clarke et al., 2018). For reasons presented in chapter 4.4.1, I consider them as a marginalized or minoritized social world. Clarke, Friese, and Washburn (2018) conceptualize implicated actors as actors who are not fully agentic in the situation, who are spoken for rather than spoken to (2015), or who are visible only discursively or without being able to speak (see also Spivak, 1988). SitA renders implicated actors visible which is an important step for social justice-oriented inquiry. However, if the agency of implicated actors and their positions are not actively sought, it also risks reproducing epistemic violence in the research situation (Brunner, 2020).

Furthermore, especially in the publics of postcolonial reality, implicated actors may actually *be* agentic in a different dimension in the situation (Ekeh, 1975, 1992, 2012). In other words, independent artistic handicraft groups may be invisibilized by dominant social worlds and discourses, yet they remain agentic in the situation. Their members can be respected cultural leaders who are conceptualized as 'authentic' leaders in their communities, their products appreciated for their aesthetics and practical purposes, and their knowledge as invaluable for the cultural identity of a

16 Apparently, cane fiber used to grow around Mbale region but is nowadays mostly imported from Baganda region. According to the women, most swamps there have been destroyed due to land scarcity while others who grew them locally had sold their land.

people – and remain entirely unaware to other social worlds. While their positions may not be received in the major (internationalized) discourses, they do build alliances with individual actors who promote their interests, at least to some extent, and who recognize their knowledges as indispensable for the development of local epistemologies and praxis. Therefore, the empirical findings make a strong case for their conceptualization as minoritized social world rather than as implicated actors without agency. Alongside conceptualizing the boundary object as practical for personal use, I was able to reconstruct two additional major understandings, which I turn to next:

Artistic handicraft products and their agency in building conviviality

Among independent handicraft groups, the agency of artistic handicraft products is used to build social networks. Those networks serve several functions: they can be social security or financial support networks or they can be networks of empowerment, networks of exchange, and networks of hope. During my conversation with the hat-maker group (Image 5.8), Isaiah told me the story of a man from a nearby village called Nalugugu he referred to as the *munjankole man*, who had conned members of group and the larger Ishibira community. According to Isaiah, the man had appeared in 2017 and collected 200,000UGX per person. "He promised to take members to Kampala", Isaiah tells me,

> With the assurance that their livelihoods would improve. Unfortunately, he disappeared with people's money. […] So, I sat them down and taught them the hand crafts. Then they started realizing some small revenue hence meeting their small needs like buying salt and sugar. (Isaiah Wandera[17], group conversation with hat-maker collective from Ishibira, 27/02/2020: 125–130).

Isaiah had learned weaving techniques from his mother's sister as a child. She mainly made hats and mats. Isaiah first observed her work and eventually began to copy her techniques. As a grown man, he continued his aunt's work, initially with his wife only.

However, after the consequential experience with the *munjankole man*, he saw the need to teach others as well and initiated the group with which I was able to meet[18]. The foundation of the group was, according to Isaiah, a response to an existential threat, and is considered a joint step towards financial independence. For Isaiah, this is related to the wellbeing of community members, who experience self-potency

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18 I usually met a few group members and was never sure how much larger the groups actually are. Sometimes the group members themselves did not know, either. Here, some group members were attending a funeral nearby, some of the attendants joined our discussion after, others left early.

in the group. During the conversation, Isaiah also talks about the financial security network the group has established through the joint work.

The group started saving money together for the joint purchase of raw material. It occurred that they were not able to accept an offer because they did not have sufficient funds to make a series of samples that customers sometimes request prior to be willing to make a deposit. However, when provided the opportunity to buy material to make a sample for a potential customer who intended to order 400 hats for a coffee plantation, the group decided to dedicate the savings to spend it on malaria medication for community members, especially children:

> In addition […], at that time when this client came, much as we had some little saving in our group, we used it on treating malaria in our children since it was a rainy season and there was a malaria outbreak in our community. So – there is no way we could use that money to buy the materials to make him hats. (Isaiah Wandera, group conversation with hat-maker collective from Ishibira, 27/02/2020: 102–105)

Here, artistic handicraft products can be interpreted as a means to build community and a social security network. Through the joint activities of weaving hats, members of the hat-maker group also weave a social network, and joint savings, although put aside for joint investments, can also be used to the benefit of individuals in the group. Even more so, the quote indicates that in times of need helping group members is considered more important than expanding the work of the collective. The group meets up to three times a week but at least once and always on Mondays. At times, there is no material, and "if there is no material, we just meet as a group and discuss as a group" (ibid: 180–181).

The women's wickerwork group (Image 5.9) was established by a woman who has now passed away. Her name was not mentioned in the conversations. She trained several of the group members still active in the group, and made sure that they, too, share the acquired skills with other women. While some did learn handicraft techniques in elementary or primary school, most women were taught either by group members or other individuals. Mary Kato[19] connects being taught with social relations and an act of love or friendship: "I learned these things from Buganda. I had moved from this village to Buganda region where I met some women who loved me so much and encouraged me to learn these things" (Mary Kato, group conversation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 77–79). Because the other women had 'loved her so much', they wanted Mary to learn the skills. Caring about another person was a prerequisite for wanting to teach her handicraft skills. Caring and teaching are thus closely connected. Here, the associated meanings of the boundary object are primarily relational: becoming an artisan is the result of

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someone else caring about them and sharing knowledge, which then becomes joint knowledge. Mary then started teaching others as well. She says that if she trains others, they can "earn something – like – money. [And] money can help them to meet other needs" (ibid: 110–111). Only together can they move ahead. They work together twice a week and under the tree of a churchyard. Joint learning and sharing knowledge are considered pivotal:

> Each of us has unique skills and talents in the way we do the work. What one knows is different from what the other knows, thus bringing us to work together to complement each other. Another thing is one member may be aware of the sources of materials yet others don't know, thus coming together [means] to be able to share the sources, get experience. (Margaret Katushabe[20], group conversation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 261–264)

Image 5.8: Members of the women's wickerwork group from Supa working underneath a large tree on a churchyard close to the nearby road to Pallisa, so others can see and join.

© Anna-Lisa Klages, 28/02/2020

In addition, by working in public they reach out and motivate other women to join the group:

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> It [working in public] is also to attract other members in the community to join us. So, once we are in a group like this, if somebody passes by and sees us, if they are interested, they are compelled to also join our group and also learn. (ibid: 268–270)

Working together and sharing knowledge establishes trust among the group members. Rather than feeling threatened that others might copy their ideas, they consider it essential to share knowledge about where to get material, how to apply and improve techniques. One important aim for the women of the wickerwork group is to improve their quality of life by earning additional money. From their perspective, the boundary object brings them together as poverty is something that can only be overcome together. Moreover, while it could be argued, then, that the boundary object could be considered more as a 'tool' (see also chapter 5.2.1), here the emphasis is on how members of this group (and potentially beyond) connect through and with the boundary object in their particular situatedness:

> We all need to work together to come out of poverty because – [if] you will find your fellow woman badly off, she joins us when she sees us. We fight to come out of poverty. […] Thus, we are not selfish with our knowledge but instead we choose to share it with other people. (Sarah Akumu[21], group conversation with women from wickerwork group from Supa, 28/02/2020: 272–276)

Artistic Handicraft Objects as 'Generational Heritage Spirit'

To reach the working site of the *Imbalu* initiation ceremony costume designers, potential customers, meaning parents of adolescent boys who will participate in the bi-annual rite of passage into adulthood, at times must travel great distances. Bubyango, the village where the group meets, works, and where most designers and artisans live, is located on the northwestern slopes of Mount Elgon, just below 2.000m above sea level.

After our arrival, we learnt that we were not the only ones who move to Bubyangu this way:

> They [customers] know that this is the center in Bugisu region and when one sees another putting on [the uniform], they ask where they got it from and they are directed to this place, so, they move while inquiring until they reach here. Also, this place is well known in the whole of Bugisu region for making these crafts, so they are easily directed to reach us. (Musa Atim[22], Imbalu knife blacksmith, group conversation with members of the Imbalu Initiation ceremony costume designers from Bubyangu, 27/02/2020: 460–464).

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The work of the *Imbalu* initiation ceremony costume designers is deeply embedded in the customs and rituals around the rite of passage from boyhood into adulthood among the Gisu or Bagisu people in Eastern Uganda. Therefore, becoming a costume designer not only demands artistic skills and creativity, but ritual knowledge and the possession of a "generational heritage spirit" because the knowledge "is living from generation to generation" (Abdul Malukhu[23], group elder, group conversation with members of the *Imbalu* initiation ceremony costume designers from Bubyangu, 27/02/2020: 526–528).

Among the initiation ceremony costume designers, it is imperative to teach all children who are considered male. The costumes (also referred to as uniforms) themselves are an important actant in the rite of passage, as they make "the boy look so handsome! When he is dancing (…) The candidate should look different with decorations to attract" (Hamza Okot, ibid: 37–38). However, the uniform does not have aesthetic purposes only, but is to be considered as one of many features of the *Imbalu* ritual, in which the blessing of the ancestors for the rite of passage is of central meaning (see also chapter 7.3). Ancestors are not only considered present, but it is important that they be in favor of the initiation. Only then will they provide support for the candidate. In preparation of the ritual, community members assemble bamboo, prepare the house, sacrifice a goat, brew local beer, and prepare meals for the festivities. The uniforms (see also Image 5.2) are a composition of contemporary and historical elements and designs, materials, and assets (I will elaborate on the various design components and the different roles the costume has in chapter 7.3). The process of making a uniform could take two days, provided the designers are "extremely free" (ibid: 129–130). A uniform is not made by one person but by several designers, with "each one [working] on a unit piece of the uniform" (ibid: 132). In the conversation, I learn that the same group also makes the drums used in the festivities and the knives needed for the circumcision, which is an essential moment during the ritual.

Among members of the group are a number of community elders. This includes local politicians such as the information officer, and the defense secretary LC1[24]. The group itself is chaired and co-chaired by three cultural leaders, one of whom also holds the role of treasurer of the group. The members of the *Imbalu* Initiation uniform designer group are highly respected members of their community. For them, making the uniforms is at times a burden, as it comes with a number of challenges, but it also fills them with pride to be the people responsible for the successful rite

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24 LC stands for Local Council. LCs are supposed to be elected governments at district level in Uganda, ranging from LCI (at village level) to LCV (at district level). Levels in-between include LCII: parish level, usually composed of five to ten villages; LCIII: sub-county level, which includes a certain number of parishes; LCIV: county level. The LCIV is elected by the LCIIIs. All LCs have executive committees headed by a chairperson.

of passage for so many community members. After all, although they are not at the center of attention during the festivities, their work, their communication with the ancestors, and their knowledge regarding how to receive ancestral blessings are pivotal for the successful rite of passage of up to 400 boys per year.

The boundary object here is a means to make the participants of the ritual stand out – through both dress and sound. Making them stand out is conceptualized as necessary means for good communication with the ancestors. Therefore, it is both a privilege and a burden to the group members, who carry a lot of responsibility for the community and to maintain *Imbalu* as, with Nannyonga-Tamusuza, an *intimate and vital aspect of living* among the Gisu. Consequently, then, one of the most important reasons for members to have joined the group is the sense of belonging and of 'generational cultural responsibility' that was referred to as "the spirit of circumcision" (522) or as "generational heritage spirit" (528) during my meeting with the group, as summarized by Abdul Malukhu with the following words:

> We found our great grandparents doing it, they died and left our fathers trained, from them, we also learnt [the] crafts. They learnt from – it's a generational skill. One generation teaches the other and it goes on like that from generation to generation. […] It is compulsory to every son that is born in the family. It is like a spirit or a taboo. […] So, with this culture, even when the son went to school, they are still convicted by the spirit of circumcision and driven back home to learn these things. (ibid: 512–523)

When considering the perceptions of the boundary object in the minoritized social world it becomes clear that, while all groups also engaged with artistic handicraft production, it is one of many aspects of meaning making in this social world. At the same time, their positions remain widely unconsidered in the overall discourse on artistic handicraft objects, the sites of their production, and the artisans who make them as they importantly contribute to both the acknowledgment of artistic handicraft objects and their various functions for handicraft artists and an empirically grounded notion of civil society (see also chapter 7).

5.3 Conclusions
Social Worlds, Boundary Objects, and Hegemonic Power

In this chapter, I introduced the empirical situation of my research alongside and the collective actors I found to be significant in shaping and negotiating the meanings of artistic handicraft production in the arena of the cultural crafts industry in civil society in present-day Uganda. In doing so, I elaborate how social worlds perceive and conceptualize the boundary object artistic handicraft products. Although I do