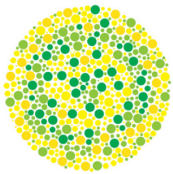
Museum of the Ordinary Things

Project by Eko Prawoto

Exhibition and event series at
Cemeti – Institute for Art and
Society

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Cemeti Institute
for Art and Society

Museum of the Ordinary Things (MOThi)

Eko Prawoto

Agriculture is one of the foundations of the culture of the Indonesian archipelago. The proximity to and understanding of nature has fostered a close relationship with nature and an awareness of how to live in harmony.

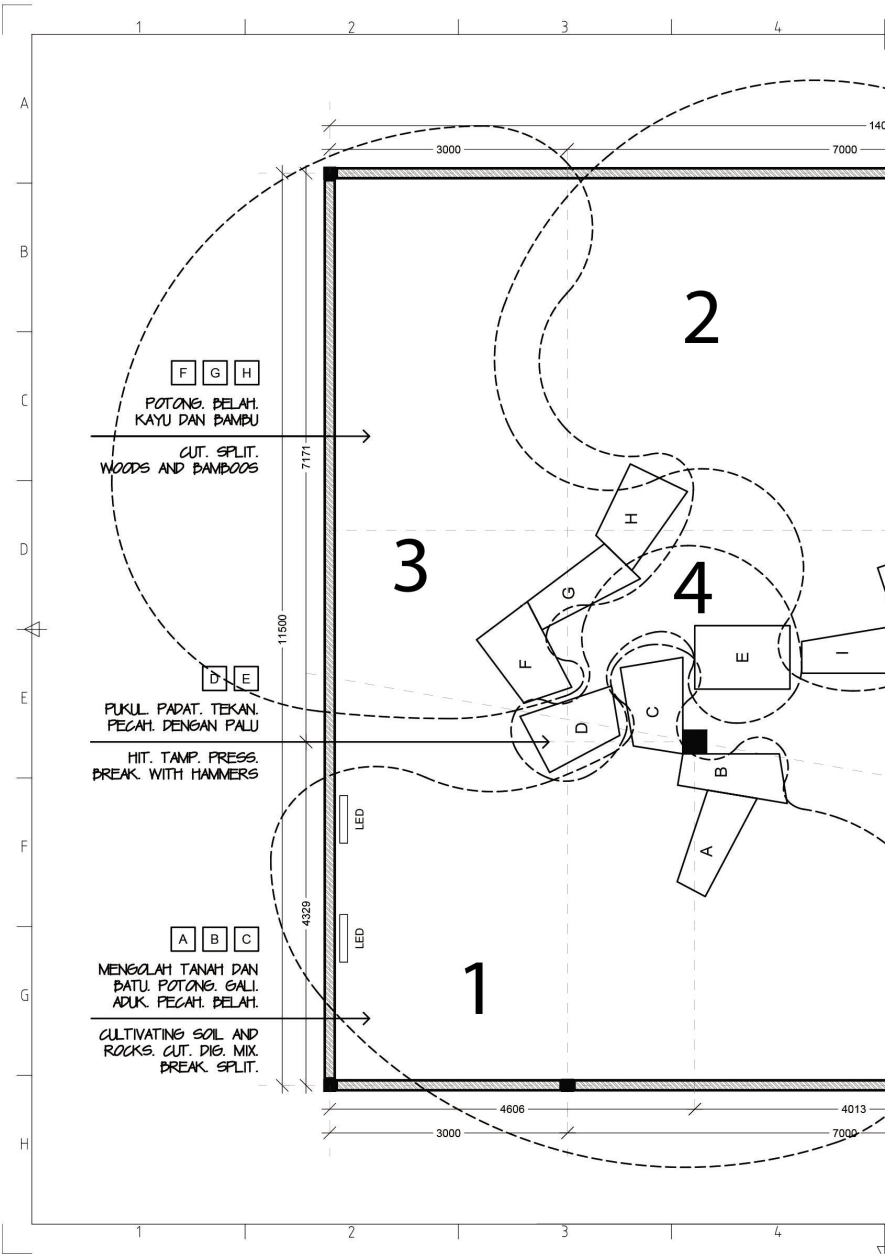
The need to improve and to make daily practices easier is a universal creative force within every culture. This force contains the ability to cultivate nature and to make tools.

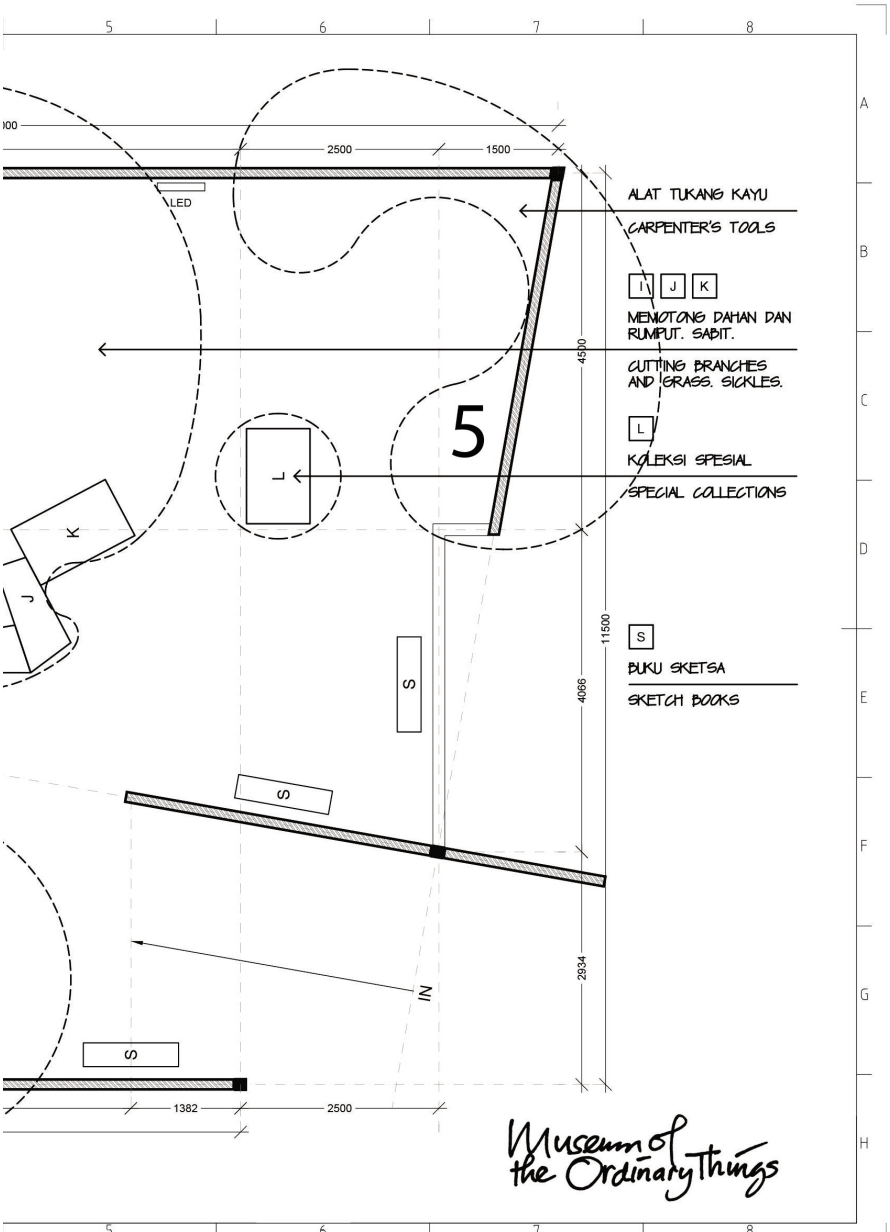
However, the creation of these tools as well as their function are currently in an unstable condition. Not only can we see change, improvement, development, and refinement in their form, material, and design; also the pressures brought by technological change and the global market are increasing.

The village is being "forgotten" as a source of knowledge, because generally we assume that the city is the only place of progression. If we would explore the agriculture of the village a bit more carefully, there is a lot of local knowledge that may be interesting and important for us to look at again. The village is not something from the past or slowly fading, there are many modest forms of wisdom and unique abilities. The ability to create tools is an example that might inspire city people, who would more often identify as consumers rather than producers.

The spirit and the skill inherent in the ability to create something are important to actualize independence and equality in cultural interaction. Collecting these farming and carpentry tools started from a dedication and a desire to learn about the positive values embedded within them, as well as their interconnectedness with other fields. Tools are not merely material objects: they contain knowledge, skills, struggles, ideas, as well as village stories.

To explore what is embedded within them, is not as simple as the process of collecting them. A more thorough and serious research needs to be done. However, at this moment, collecting the objects is needed before they become more marginalized, before they are lost or even forgotten. Particularly, because there is a real possibility of loosing the skill of making in the next few decades. The diversity of the tools' design is visually amazing. It is such a simple process that produces these modest tools. The common objects presented here are part of the collection of the Museum of the Ordinary Things, a small node located in the village of Banjararum Kulon Progo that invites us to preserve the roots of culture, both in the past and in the future.


1
2
3
4
F G H
POTONG. BELAH. KAYU DAN BAMBU
CUT. SPLIT. WOODS AND BAMBOOS
D E
PUKUL. PADAT. TEKAN. PECAH. DENGAN PALU
HIT. TAMP. PRESS. BREAK. WITH HAMMERS
A B C
MENGOLAH TANAH DAN BATU. POTONG. GALI. ADUK. PECAH. BELAH.
CULTIVATING SOIL AND ROCKS. CUT. DIG. MIX. BREAK. SPLIT.
LED
LED
3000
7000
7171
11500
4329
4606
4013
3000
7000


5
6
7
8
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
2500
1500
LED
ALAT TUKANG KAYU
CARPENTER'S TOOLS
I
J
K
MEMOTONG DAHAN DAN RUMPUT. SABIT.
CUTTING BRANCHES AND GRASS. SICKLES.
4500
5
L
KOLEKSI SPESIAL
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
S
BUKU SKETSA
SKETCH BOOKS
11500
4066
2934
IN
1382
2500
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The collection that is presented here contains various kinds of tools, from different makers and time periods. A research finding more detailed and accurate information is yet to be done. The categories and groupings described below are based on the tools' functions or users. Although this may feel inconvenient, there are also advantages: it creates an open space for appreciation and interpretation of the objects, especially their design or aesthetic.

The tools are grouped into the following categories:

1
Tools that are used for processing or for working with soil and stone. Different natural conditions, consistencies, and soil characteristics all need particular kinds of tools. For instance: the width of the hoe's edge or its angle is very much related to the characteristic of the soil. Likewise, for splitting or digging stone or hard soil, there are various designs. It will certainly be interesting to research this thoroughly.

2
Tools to cut twigs, leaves, and rice paddies. Farming and raising livestock are the main forms of domestic labour in the village. Activities include cutting leaves, preparing the field, or, more specifically, reaping rice and other grains. The position of the body, the object and the nature of the job, inform the production of various tools. It will be interesting to learn and explore the effectiveness of a certain design, the convenience of its use and its social meaning –which can be related to its origin, reputation or the blacksmith who made it.

3
Tools for cutting and splitting wood and bamboo. Trees, the origin of wood, are very important for life in the village. All kinds of items are made from wood or bamboo, ranging from small objects to building constructions. There are many tools with which to work with and manage these materials. Most of them have a long history in relation to the development of culture and technology. For example, many centuries ago, the ancestor of the ax was made from stone. This ancient trail can still be found in the much more modern version used today.

4

Tools for hammering, compressing or compacting. Their working principle has not changed since ancient times, as it has a broad function: swinging a heavy mass to gain a great momentum of collision. Handling a stone is believed to be a manifestation of an early form of technology or tool used by humans, which subsequently developed by adding a handle. Although its function is basic, it stimulated the production of various forms and sizes. Demands of accuracy and safety as well as convenience generated different designs.

5

The tools for woodworking. From wooden buildings to smaller elements such as windows, stools, household appliances and tools are very present and tangible in our culture. The tropical rain forest, with its diverse types of wood, generated the need for various wood processing methods and techniques. From cutting, splitting, shaping, connecting, and combining, to smoothing wood, all need a tremendously complicated set of skills. Woodworkers and carpenters use many tools. Their practice requires the resulting object to be accurate, neat and strong. In addition, knowledge about the characteristics of materials and about construction techniques are also needed. That is why it is usual and understandable that a carpenter needs various tools to work.

Colophon

The *Museum of the Ordinary Things (MOThi)* is a growing collection of traditional hand-held tools for agriculture, wood and bamboo carpentry, initiated by architect Eko Prawoto (who designed Cemeti's current building).

MOThi is a collaboration between Cemeti-Institute for Art and Society, Eko Prawoto Architectural Workshop and the Laboratory of History, Technology and Design Studies FAD UKDW.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.cemeti.org/maintenanceworks/eko-prawoto

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