
Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPOnline

Title: Modular Craft-Industry Collaboration: A Practice-Led Investigation into Authorship, Agency, and Material Knowledge

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Project abstract:

This practice-led PhD investigates how traditional craft practices can ethically and creatively intersect with industrial manufacturing. Through fieldwork in the UK and Costa Rica, the research explores how authorship, material knowledge, and cultural specificity are negotiated in collaborative production contexts. Data includes photographic documentation, field notes, informal interviews, and workshop outputs. The project develops a modular framework — the Exquisite System — to test how equitable, decentralised design methods can support sustainable futures. All data is qualitative, collected with participant consent, stored securely, and used only for non-commercial academic purposes.

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Modular Craft-Industry Collaboration: A Practice-Led Investigation into Authorship, Agency, and Material Knowledge - Initial DMP

Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work?

Question not answered.

Modular Craft-Industry Collaboration: A Practice-Led Investigation into Authorship, Agency, and Material Knowledge - Detailed DMP

Data Summary

1. Briefly introduce the types of data the research will create. Why did you decide to use these data types?

This practice-led research will generate a range of qualitative data, including:

- Field notes from observations, conversations, and informal interviews
- Audio recordings and photographs (with consent) of craft processes and workshops
- Workshop documentation, including co-created artefacts and participant reflections
- Design iterations, sketches, and annotated prototypes
- Research journal entries and critical reflections

These data types were selected because they support a situated, material-based methodology that foregrounds process, context, and collaboration. As the research investigates modular craft–industry collaboration, capturing embodied knowledge, material agency, and the evolution of co-created work is essential. Visual and narrative data allow these forms of knowledge to be recorded and interpreted meaningfully.

All data will be collected and saved in accessible, widely supported formats – including JPEG (photography), WAV or MP3 (audio), PDF/DOCX (text), and MP4 (video, where applicable). Photographs and recordings will be stored at high resolution where relevant to enable future interpretation and potential reuse. Physical samples (e.g. swatches or prototypes) will be documented visually and stored securely where feasible.

No third-party datasets or software are being reused, though the research does draw on publicly available texts and policy materials (e.g. Decolonising Methodologies, craft-industry research). These are referenced in the thesis but not incorporated as data.

Wherever possible, data that supports shared learning – including anonymised workshop reflections, process images, or examples of collaborative output – will be preserved for future access. This data may have long-term value for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers exploring ethical collaboration in cross-cultural and decentralised design contexts.

Data Collection

2. Give details on the proposed methodologies that will be used to create the data. Advise how the project team selected will be suitable for the data/digital aspects of the work, including details of how the institution's data support teams may need to support the project

Data will be collected through a combination of participant observation, field notes, photography, informal interviews, co-creative workshops, and the production of physical artefacts (e.g. prototypes, material samples, sketchbooks). These forms reflect the practice-based nature of the research, where insights often emerge through material engagement and embodied processes rather than structured data capture.

Digital data (photos, notes, transcripts) will be organised by field site and date, stored in clearly named folders (e.g. "Costa Rica_Sept22_StudioVisit"), and saved in both Google Drive and Kingston University's secure systems. Physical artefacts and sketchbooks are also part of the dataset and will be catalogued with simple reference codes. Naming conventions and version control are managed through consistent file labelling and periodic backups, but the system prioritises accessibility over formal data auditing.

Data quality is ensured through triangulation – reflecting on observations across sites and formats – and by integrating participant feedback wherever possible. Notes and reflections are dated and contextualised, and co-created outputs are reviewed with participants prior to dissemination. The informal nature of the data (especially during preliminary fieldwork) means that quality is framed in terms of relational depth, not scientific replicability.

Where appropriate, translators and bilingual collaborators will support communication – particularly in Costa Rica – to ensure that consent processes and participant contributions are accurately understood and represented. Translated consent materials will be provided in participants' preferred language, and informal conversations will be documented with cultural sensitivity.

Short-term Data Storage

3. How will the data be stored in the short term?

All research data – including photographs, field notes, transcripts, co-created outputs, and physical artefacts – will be securely stored and backed up during the project using two complementary systems:

1. Dropbox Pro: Digital data is continuously backed up and synchronised across devices via encrypted cloud storage and a local desktop folder. Dropbox version history enables recovery of earlier file states and mitigates accidental loss.
2. Kingston University secure servers: Essential project documents (e.g. consent forms, coded transcripts, DMP materials) are periodically backed up to KU's institutional systems to ensure compliance with university policy and safeguard against cloud-only risks.

Physical materials – including sketchbooks, material samples, and co-created artefacts – are stored securely in the researcher's studio. These are catalogued using simple reference codes and logged in a digital index that links physical items to field sites and dates (e.g. "PegSample_CR_Sep22_01").

Folder structures and file naming follow consistent conventions (e.g. "CostaRica_Sept22_StudioVisit_Photos") to support retrieval and traceability. The primary researcher (Shai Akram) is responsible for overseeing all storage processes, performing weekly checks to ensure integrity, backup, and access.

No sensitive personal or financial data is collected. However, ethical risks (e.g. accidental identification via images) are mitigated through anonymisation where appropriate (e.g. cropping images, omitting names). All data is held securely and only accessible to the researcher.

The project follows Kingston University's data management policy (<https://www.kingston.ac.uk/about/governance/policies-and-regulations>) and aligns with GDPR guidance. While formal ISO standards such as ISO 27001 are not in place, best practices for research storage and ethical security are being followed throughout the grant period.

3a What backup will you have in the in-project period to ensure no data is lost?

All digital data is stored in Dropbox, which provides continuous automatic syncing between local devices and secure cloud servers. This ensures that there is always an up-to-date backup of files both on the researcher's computer and online. Dropbox uses end-to-end encryption and is GDPR-compliant under its UK and EU terms of service.

In addition, key project files are periodically exported and saved to Kingston University's secure institutional servers as a secondary safeguard, particularly after major data-gathering activities (e.g. fieldwork or workshops).

Backups happen automatically via Dropbox and are further reinforced by monthly manual checks and archive exports. Physical materials (e.g. sketchbooks, artefacts) are stored securely and selectively digitised to support redundancy.

No sensitive or special category personal data is collected. Any potentially identifiable materials (e.g. participant photographs or workshop notes) are only stored with consent and are subject to additional review before any dissemination.

Long-term Data Storage

4. How the data will be stored in the long term?

Digital research data (e.g. photographs, field notes, transcripts, workshop documentation, co-created artefacts) will be retained for a minimum of ten years, in line with UKRI and Kingston University policy. These materials will be archived securely on Kingston's institutional systems, with appropriate access controls and metadata. Long-term digital storage will be supported by the university's IT infrastructure and overseen by the PI, ensuring continuity, traceability, and access beyond the life of the PhD.

Key data selected for preservation includes:

- Co-created design artefacts and process documentation

- Reflective and observational field notes from Costa Rica and UK
- Transcripts and recordings (with consent)
- Material samples with interpretive value
- Workshop outputs and participant contributions (where permission is granted)

Selection for preservation is based on relevance to the project's mission, scientific and cultural value, uniqueness, and non-replicability (Whyte & Wilson, 2010). Materials will be prioritised based on their potential for reuse in research, education, and policy development around craft, collaboration, and sustainable production.

Data will be appraised at the site and activity level – rather than record-by-record – using a set of transparent criteria linked to scholarly value, participant consent, and material uniqueness. Not all data will be retained. Where appropriate, descriptive metadata and anonymised excerpts may be made available through a future institutional repository or specialist archive.

No additional resources are required for deposit or repository fees at this stage. If suitable open-access repositories are identified later (e.g. for co-created artefacts or curated image sets), sharing will be guided by participant consent and IP considerations.

Data that cannot be shared – due to cultural sensitivity or lack of explicit permission – will be securely stored but excluded from public access. Where appropriate, summaries or anonymised reflections may be shared instead.

4a. Where have you decided to store it, why is this appropriate?

Digital data will be stored in two primary locations:

1. Google Drive (with encrypted access and versioning, integrated across devices); and
2. Kingston University's secure institutional storage systems, in accordance with university data protection policies.

This dual storage system ensures both accessibility for the researcher and long-term compliance with university data management expectations. Dropbox is also used as a redundant backup system during active fieldwork and writing periods, offering constant syncing and device mirroring. Sensitive files are password-protected and stored in non-public folders, and all materials are backed up regularly.

At present, no formal external repository has been identified. However, if the final research outputs (e.g. co-created artefact documentation, anonymised transcripts, or visual datasets) are deemed of long-term scholarly value, they may be deposited in a recognised design or craft research archive. Any such decision will align with participant consent and institutional policy.

Physical data – such as sketchbooks, material samples, and co-created objects – will be catalogued and stored securely at the university and/or within the researcher's studio archive. These items will be documented digitally and referenced accordingly in the final thesis.

This storage approach is appropriate given the hybrid and materially embedded nature of the research, which includes non-digital artefacts as core knowledge contributors.

4b. How long will it be stored for and why?

Research data – including anonymised transcripts, process documentation, photographs, and records of co-designed artefacts – will be stored for a minimum of 10 years following project completion. This aligns with standard UKRI and institutional data retention policies, which recommend a 10-year minimum to support future verification, re-use, or audit if required.

Certain outputs (e.g. anonymised fieldnotes, photographic documentation of unique cultural practices, or collaborative workshop outcomes) may be retained beyond this period if appraised as having significant historical, cultural, or scholarly value. These decisions will be guided by relevance, uniqueness, and potential for future research or exhibition. Where appropriate, extended retention will support transparency, potential follow-on studies, and broader knowledge-sharing with the craft, design, and academic communities.

4c. Costs of storage – why are these appropriate? Costs related to long term storage will be permitted providing these are fully justified and relate to the project Full justification must be provided in Justification of Resources (JoR)

No additional storage costs are anticipated beyond those already supported by the institution and standard cloud-based services used throughout the project (e.g. Kingston University's secure storage systems and Dropbox, which I already use with

automatic backup). These are sufficient for securely storing and managing digital data during and after the project. Physical data (e.g. notebooks, artefacts, sketches) will be stored securely in my studio workspace, with no additional cost to the project. Should any longer-term digital archiving or dissemination costs arise (e.g. for curated datasets, repositories or public-facing exhibitions), they will be modest and will be justified in the project's final JoR, if applicable.

Data Sharing

5. How the data will be shared and the value it will have to others

The data will be shared primarily through the PhD thesis and selected peer-reviewed outputs. Full field notes and original recordings will not be made publicly accessible, as they contain sensitive, context-specific information and personal observations not intended for broad distribution. However, excerpts from interviews, images, and workshop outcomes will be shared in curated formats where consent has been obtained and the material contributes meaningfully to the Exquisite System framework.

The value of this data lies in how it grounds abstract concepts in real-world contexts, providing tangible examples of collaborative authorship, material agency, and decentralised production. These illustrative case studies serve as evidential anchors for a new approach to craft-industry collaboration, and are likely to be of interest to design researchers, cultural institutions, and policy-makers working on sustainable production models. Data will be shared in line with ethical agreements and participant permissions, with no additional repository charges anticipated.

5a. How the data will enhance the area and how it could be used in the future?

This data contributes to growing discourse around sustainable design, distributed authorship, and the role of material culture in shaping ethical production models. By documenting real-world case studies of collaborative making — from artisan studios to industrial settings — the data enhances understanding of how values such as care, locality, and craft knowledge operate within hybrid systems of production.

In the future, this data could support comparative research into craft-industry relations across regions, feed into curriculum development for design education, or inform policy thinking on circular economies and cultural heritage preservation. It offers both theoretical and practical insights for academics, curators, designers, and those working at the intersection of design, craft, and socio-economic transition.

5b. Releasing the data – advise when you will be releasing and justify if not releasing in line with AHRC guidelines of a minimum of three years. If the data will have value to different audiences, how these groups will be informed?

All digital materials (e.g. field notes, photographs, workshop documentation) will be securely stored and retained for a minimum of three years post-grant, in line with AHRC expectations. Given the qualitative and context-specific nature of the data — including informal fieldnotes, visual documentation, and co-created artefacts — it is not appropriate to make full datasets openly available. Instead, relevant excerpts will be integrated into the thesis, academic publications, talks, and curated outputs, providing illustrative value while preserving participant confidentiality.

Where anonymised excerpts are used, participants will be informed during the consent process and will retain the right to withdraw their contributions prior to dissemination. In cases where broader sharing might be appropriate, access will be considered on a case-by-case basis and subject to ethical approval and participant consent.

This strategy ensures that the data retains long-term value for scholarly interpretation while respecting the relational and situated nature of the knowledge gathered.

5c. Will the data need to be updated? Include future plans for updating if this is the case.

The core datasets collected during the PhD — including fieldnotes, photographs, interview excerpts, and co-created artefacts —

will not require updates, as they reflect situated and time-specific research encounters. However, there is potential for future complementary data collection through follow-up visits or comparative fieldwork, particularly if significant contextual shifts occur (e.g. changes in local policy, materials, or production systems). Any such additions would be treated as new data, with appropriate ethics clearance and consent procedures in place.

5d. Will the data be open or will you charge for it? Justify if charging to access the data

The data will not be made openly available in full due to its qualitative, sensitive, and context-dependent nature. However, findings derived from the data – including selected anonymised excerpts – will be shared through public-facing outputs such as the thesis, published articles, talks, and exhibitions. These outputs will be freely available wherever possible, though access may be subject to journal or publisher terms. No charges will be applied for access to the original data, though any future requests for bespoke access or consultancy would be managed on a case-by-case basis.

5e. Financial requirements of sharing – include full justification in the JoR

No additional financial resources are required for data sharing at this stage. The research outputs – including selected anonymised excerpts – will be disseminated through the thesis, talks, publications, and exhibitions, which fall within existing project resources. As the primary data is qualitative, non-standardised, and not intended for open repository deposit, no repository or long-term storage costs are anticipated beyond institutional provision. If bespoke access requests arise post-submission, they will be considered case by case but are not expected to incur substantial cost.

Ethical and Legal Considerations

6a. Any legal and ethical considerations of collecting the data

This project involves qualitative data gathered through interviews, observations, and photographic documentation across a range of informal and formal settings. All future data collection will follow Kingston University's ethics guidelines and the approved consent procedures. Participants will be informed of how their contributions may be used, with the option to remain anonymous, use a pseudonym, or be credited by name. Consent will be requested not only for participation but also for the potential long-term storage and sharing of anonymised excerpts where relevant.

Where participants cannot be re-contacted (e.g. in earlier informal fieldwork), their contributions will be anonymised and treated with care, or excluded from detailed representation. These early field visits were not framed as formal research encounters at the time, but have subsequently helped shape the research direction. All such materials – including notes, photographs, and reflections – will be handled in line with current ethical standards, and no identifiable or sensitive information will be included without consent.

Data that touches on Indigenous knowledge, sensitive craft processes, or cultural heritage will be treated with heightened ethical attention. No craft techniques or personal narratives will be shared in publications, exhibitions, or talks without explicit permission, and efforts will be made to ensure culturally appropriate representation and attribution. Additional legal considerations such as copyright and intellectual property will be discussed with participants where co-created outputs or unique designs are involved.

6b. Legal and ethical considerations around releasing and storing the data – anonymity of any participants, following promises made to participants

All new data generated during this project – including interviews, photographs, notes, and co-created materials – will remain under the copyright of the researcher (Shai Akram), with Kingston University acknowledged where appropriate in accordance with institutional policy. In cases where data is co-created with participants (e.g. workshop artefacts, design outputs), ownership and attribution will be discussed directly with contributors, and any public release will be contingent on informed, documented consent.

There are no plans to release raw data publicly. Instead, excerpts may be used in anonymised or summarised form within the thesis, academic publications, or public talks, with clear contextual framing. All participants are given the choice to remain anonymous, be referred to via a pseudonym, or to be credited by name, with these preferences confirmed via consent forms.

Where consent cannot be confirmed retrospectively, data will be fully anonymised or excluded from public outputs.

Given the situated and often informal nature of the fieldwork, particular care is taken to ensure data handling aligns with promises made to participants. No sensitive data will be published or archived without explicit agreement. The full dataset, including fieldnotes and photographs, will be securely stored in accordance with Kingston University's data management policy, with access restricted to the researcher and supervisory team. There are currently no plans to license the dataset for reuse beyond what is disclosed in the thesis or academic dissemination.