

## HOW-TO

### Develop participatory inventorying of textile Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs)

#### Problem

Textile traditional cultural expressions are often poorly documented, fragmented across household and cultural organizations. External actors (designers, companies, institutions) tend to work with partial or decontextualized knowledge, increasing the risk of misrepresentation or inappropriate reuse. Communities themselves may not fully recognize the diversity, variability, and contemporary relevance of their own textile heritage.

#### What we learned

Participatory inventorying, when coordinated by trusted cultural institutions, can function as both a safeguarding and innovation-enabling practice. In Valposchiavo, inviting families to bring their own *coperte poschiavine* for documentation transformed inventorying into a collective act of recognition, awareness, and knowledge production. The process strengthened community ownership while creating a robust knowledge base for future research and potential retro-innovation.



## HOW-TO

### Develop participatory inventorying of textile Traditional Cultural Expressions (TCEs)

#### Transferable solution

Treat inventorying as a **social and cultural process**, not as data extraction. Organize participatory documentation initiatives in accessible community settings; record both material features and lived histories; anchor the process in a museum or cultural organization capable of ensuring continuity. Use the inventory to build shared understanding and legitimacy. This can facilitate future design or product development initiatives but also ensure the viability of living textile heritage.



### 6.3.2 Design briefs as tools for consent and responsible representation

The project first experimentation with this tool took place in the context of a study visit that would have allowed students from an Austrian school to visit textile communities based in Val Camonica and Valposchiavo, to obtain inspiration for their end-of-the-year collection design project, to be publicly displayed during a fashion show in Vienna. While the collaboration ultimately did not take place, exchanges were structured through a **carefully designed project brief**, which functioned not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a **governance mechanism**.

Rather than inviting open-ended “inspiration” from Alpine textile heritage, the brief explicitly framed how local practices, materials, and skills could be approached. The brief required students to:

- engage with documented practices and skills rather than generic Alpine imaginaries,
- situate design proposals within the social and material realities of the territory,
- reflect on how products and narratives would represent local communities.

By doing so, the brief operationalised **consent** in an indirect but effective way: it constrained the design space to prevent stereotypical or romanticised representations and aligned creative exploration with the expectations and sensibilities of local actors. In this sense, the brief acted as a preventive safeguard against misrepresentation, while still leaving room for interpretation and innovation.

## HOW-TO

### Write designer brief for responsible heritage-based innovation

#### Problem

Designers often frame heritage as a source of visual inspiration detached from its social, material, and cultural conditions. This encourages clichéd representations, romanticized imaginaries, and design outcomes that fail to respect living practices or resonate with custodian communities. Designers may unknowingly reproduce misrepresentation or appropriation.

#### What we learned

Designer briefs developed within AlpTextiles when dealing with designers and fashion/design schools functioned as **mediating frameworks** translating ethical principles into operational guidance. By embedding contextual knowledge, representational constraints, and feedback mechanisms, briefs can enable creative exploration while avoiding misrepresentation.



## Transferable solution

Use the designer brief as a **governance device**, not just a creative prompt. Frame heritage as a living system of practices and skills; discourage folklorization explicitly; base briefs on documented inventories; and include moments for dialogue and feedback with communities or cultural intermediaries. Clarify from the outset whether outputs are exploratory, educational, or intended for further development.



**Lace & Lineage**  
Students of Istituto Marangoni Milano

**Garments as dialogue: weaving craft, code, and culture.**  
The pieces first showcased at Milano Unica are the result of a deep exchange between tradition and experimentation. Drawing from the **digital archives** of Polo Pasciavio (CH), ZRC SAZU (SI), and Stand Montafon (AT), students translated the visual and material language of the Alps into contemporary silhouettes. Crafted from a **hand-woven fabric** from **Tessitura di Valposchiavo** developed exclusively for **AlpTextyles**, made by blending yarns sourced from various Alpine regions, the garments express the underlying unity across borders and a commitment to sustainable making.

Traditional **Cantù lacework**, created by the Comitato per la Promozione del Merletto – Cantù (Cantù Lace Promotion Committee) in collaboration with designer Marco Fersino Ribeiro Amorim, adds a delicate yet resonant layer, bridging historic craftsmanship with forward-thinking fashion.



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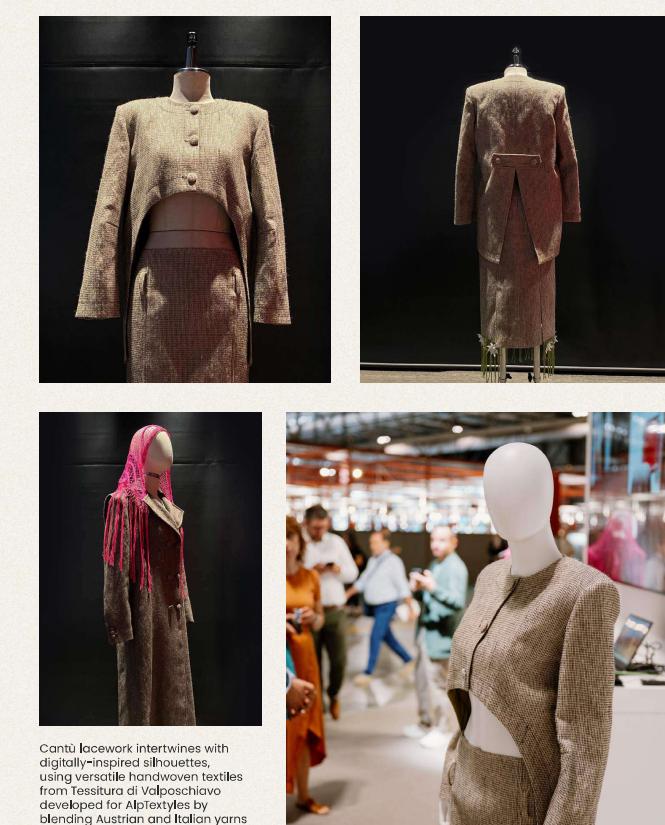
Tailoring | The Lab Srl  
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Cantù lacework intertwines with digitally-inspired silhouettes, using versatile handwoven textiles from **Tessitura di Valposchiavo** developed for **AlpTextyles** by blending Austrian and Italian yarns – a showcase of cross-border craftsmanship and narrative.

© AlpTextyles at Milano Unica 2025.


Source: AlpTextyles (2025), Young designers' Collection Scrapbook. Available on the AlpTextyles website.



**Coat-turned-knitted dress**  
Shuzo Matsuhashi with Stand Montafon

**Garments as journey: transforming from land to loom.**  
This garment transforms a structured coat into a fluid knitted dress — a symbolic shift that mirrors the journey of Montafoner wool itself: from heritage to reinvention. Designed by Shuzo Matsuhashi, this piece was created using Montafoner Tweed, a textile developed specifically for AlpTextyles by blending 50% Montafon Stone Sheep wool with wool from the Vorarlberg-based company Schöller. The fabric is woven in Höchst by Übelhör and spun and washed regionally in Tyrol, Austria — an entirely Alpine and chemical-free production chain rooted in sustainability and local craft.

Born in Tokyo and based in France, designer Shuzo Matsuhashi studied Textile Design at Tama Art University (JP) and Fashion Design at the University of Applied Arts Vienna (AT). His practice bridges traditional techniques and contemporary fashion, with recent experience at LOEWE under JW Anderson and the launch of his own brand in 2025.

This piece also honors the historic Montafoner Loden — an international staple now revived through a fully regional process using pure Montafon Stone Sheep wool. A nod to tradition, the resilience of local breeds, and the renewed vitality of a textile culture woven into the life of its land and people.




©Photos: Courtesy of Stand Montafon

Design  
Shuzo Matsuhashi

Textile | Montafoner Tweed  
50% Montafon Stone Sheep wool (weft)  
50% Schöller wool, Vorarlberg (warp)

Weaving | Übelhör — Höchst, Vorarlberg (AT)  
Spinning | Ferner — Unterberg, Tyrol (AT)  
Washing | Regensburger — Ötztal, Tyrol (AT)

Doris & Harald "Verner's"  
Alpine Culinary World (AT)  
[www.verners.at](http://www.verners.at)

**AlpTextyles**  
INTERTWINING CULTURES

**YDC**  
SCRAPBOOK



Crafted from Montafoner Tweed, this masterpiece transforms heritage textile into fluid contemporary fashion. Every stage — spinning, weaving, washing — occurred in the Alps.

@ AlpTextyles at Milano Unica 2025.

**AlpTextyles**  
INTERTWINING CULTURES

**YDC**  
SCRAPBOOK

Source: AlpTextyles (2025), Young designers' Collection Scrapbook. Available on the AlpTextyles website.



## 0 Bruno Motter with Stand Montafon

### Garments as fabric of place, purpose, design.

0 – Zero begins with a question: what if a garment could be made waste-and hands-free but retain the full meaning of its textile? Developed by industrial designer Bruno Motter at FH Joanneum in Graz with the support of Stand Montafon, it explores automation and native wool at the intersection of industrial design and alpine heritage.

Central to the project is **Loden**, a traditional felted wool fabric whose unique properties make it ideal for outerwear and hands-free assembly. Its compacted surface allows **open seams** while providing insulation, water repellency, and natural odor resistance. Loden transforms necessity into opportunity, turning a durable, functional material into a medium for design innovation.

The project is part of Bruno's bachelor thesis, whose work investigates the connections between material, process, and human experience. Large geometric panels are joined with a **threading system of ropes and straps**, transforming assembly into an expressive gesture and functional constraints into defining design features.

**The garment unfolds like a rhythm of Alpine architecture:** overlapping rectangular panels that move with the body, sheltering and guiding its wearer. Beyond clothing, **0 is wool in motion**, intelligence in structure, care made tangible – a continuous gesture linking body and landscape with craft.



Design  
Bruno Motter

Textile | Montafoner Stone Sheep Loden

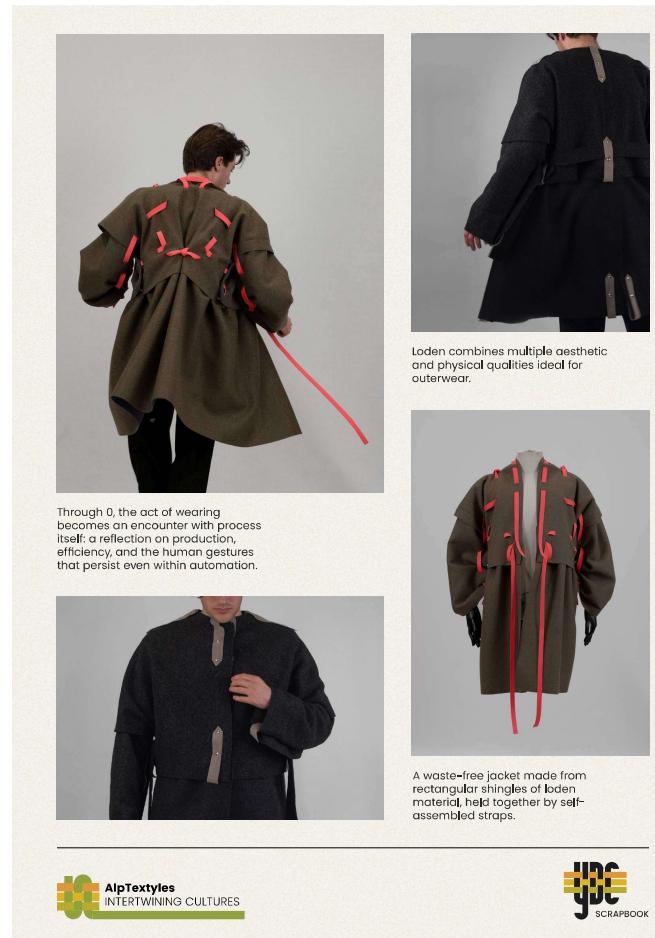
Loden production | Kreutner Loden – Hart im Zillertal, Tyrol (AT)

Cleaning | Regensburger – Ötztal, Tyrol (AT)

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©Photos: Courtesy of Bruno Motter



Source: AlpTextyles (2025), Young designers' Collection Scrapbook. Available on the AlpTextyles website.

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### 6.3.3 Ethical codes and documentation as instruments of recognition

Within AlpTextyles, ethical codes were considered as **practical instruments to structure relationships** between heritage custodians and external actors involved in design, education, and product development. An ethical code, in this context, does not function as a legal contract or an intellectual property instrument. Rather, it is a **shared reference document** that articulates principles, expectations, and limits governing how living heritage practices may be engaged with, represented, and valorised.

Within AlpTextyles, this approach was exemplified by the experience of **Intrecci (Monno, Val Camonica)**. The Association originated as an informal collective of women artisans, initially known as the *Donne dei Fili*, whose practices revolved around weaving, wool work, and shared making within the public community space **Ca'Mon**. In its early phase, the group did not perceive heritage protection primarily as a legal or economic issue. What required safeguarding was not a set of isolated techniques, but **a way of “doing together”** grounded in hospitality, horizontal knowledge sharing, and collective care for a shared space.

As the group's activities expanded through collaborations with designers and schools, increased public visibility, and participation in regional and transnational projects, a shift occurred. Members progressively recognized that their textile knowledge carried **cultural, identity, and potential economic value**, and that external collaborations required clearer rules to avoid misunderstanding, misappropriation, or overload.

It is at this stage that the **ethical code** was co-created. It was conceived as a **negotiation tool**, designed to operate *between* informal practice and formal legal protection. Concretely, it served to:

- **Declare shared values**, including responsible creativity, living tradition, collective authorship, and care for relationships.
- **Clarify internal responsibilities**, acknowledging different skills while reinforcing collective decision-making.
- **Regulate access to knowledge**, specifying under what conditions techniques, models, and practices can be shared with external actors.
- **Set recognition and attribution criteria**, particularly in collaborations with designers, institutions, and enterprises.
- **Align collaborations with real capacities**, explicitly recognizing the voluntary and non-industrial nature of the group and refusing partnerships that would generate excessive organizational burden.

Importantly, the code does not claim ownership over techniques in a conventional intellectual property sense. Instead, it articulates a form of **collective custodianship**, consistent with UNESCO's understanding of living heritage and with WIPO-inspired approaches to collective and *sui generis* protection.

The Intrecci ethical code highlight that establishing formal organizations through participative processes is a first step into facilitating third party's responsible engagement with custodian communities.



By documenting values, limits, and expectations, the code:

- protects the group from extractive collaborations;
- provides a stable reference point for designers and institutions;
- and prepares the ground for future protection tools (collective marks, documentation systems, community protocols) when and if they become relevant.

For Alpine textile heritage communities, ethical codes can be understood as **lightweight but powerful governance devices**, adaptable to different stages of organizational maturity, and capable of translating global principles of consent, recognition, and shared value into locally meaningful rules.



## HOW-TO

### Draft an ethical code for textile heritage communities

#### Problem

Heritage communities often engage with designers, schools, or companies without clearly articulated rules or shared expectations. This can lead to asymmetric collaborations, unclear attribution, unintended appropriation, or overload for small groups relying on voluntary engagement.

Additionally, third-parties often find it hard to identify who can 'speak for the community' when the community is not formally organized.

#### What we learned

The Intrecci experience in Val Camonica demonstrates that ethical codes can operate as **intermediate governance tools**. Co-developed within the community, the ethical code clarified values, limits, and conditions of access to knowledge, while remaining flexible and evolutive. Rather than claiming ownership, it articulated collective custodianship and provided a stable reference point for external collaborations.



## Transferable solution

Develop an ethical code as a **collective self-definition exercise**. Start from shared values and practices; clarify what can be shared and under which conditions; make recognition and attribution explicit; and articulate acceptable forms of shared value. Treat the code as a living document that guides collaboration without freezing practices or requiring immediate legal formalization.



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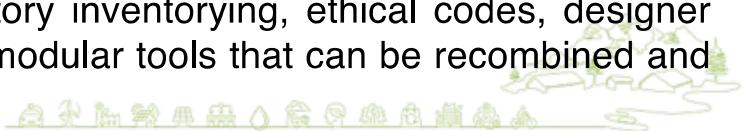


## Conclusions

This output started from a simple but demanding premise: **heritage-sensitive and circular textile products cannot be developed using the same logics that underpin conventional sourcing, design, and production models**. Working with local fibres, traditional knowledge, and living textile practices requires different points of departure, different sequences of action, and different forms of coordination between actors.

Across wool, flax and linen, and natural dye plants, AlpTextyles has shown that Alpine textile heritage should not be approached as a repertoire of symbols or narratives to be added downstream, but as a **structuring resource** that shapes material choices, value-chain configurations, and development processes from the outset. Practices historically rooted in parsimony, the use of local resources and by-products, short and cross-border value chains, and collective knowledge transmission are not relics of the past. They provide **operating logics** that remain highly relevant for contemporary sustainability challenges.

Rather than proposing a single model to be replicated, this document has articulated **transferable formats and development logics**. Material libraries, participatory inventorying, ethical codes, designer briefs, and cross-border matchmaking have been presented as modular tools that can be recombined and adapted to different territorial contexts.



What can be scaled is not the products themselves, but the way in which problems are framed and addressed: starting from material realism, embedding circularity upstream, and organising respectful collaboration with heritage custodians.

A central insight of this work is that **replicability depends on intermediaries**. Museums, cultural institutions, natural parks, clusters, design schools, R&D laboratories, and business support organisations play a decisive role in translating heritage resources into viable development pathways. They act as connectors between agriculture, craft, industry, and design; they reduce risk for SMEs; and they provide the governance infrastructures needed to balance innovation, safeguarding, and shared value.

Finally, this output has framed responsibility not as a constraint, but as a **condition of durability**. By adapting international principles on consent, recognition, and shared value to the specific realities of Alpine textile heritage, AlpTextyles demonstrates that responsible heritage-based innovation is both feasible and productive. When heritage is treated as a living system of practices, skills, and relationships, innovation becomes more grounded, more resilient, and ultimately more meaningful for territories and markets alike.



## References

This output builds on several deliverables and reports developed by AlpTextyles partners, all available at the [AlpTextyles](#) website.

Other references inspiring this work include:

- Made in the Alps (2023), Territorial brands' uses of the image of the Alps. ARPAF-III Research Report and emlyon business school.
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- UNESCO (2023), Guidance Note, Economic dimensions of intangible cultural heritage safeguarding under the 2023 Convention. Available at <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/68297-EN.pdf>
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