



# Handloom Textiles of Assam

**Stage 1 Project Report**

**Project Guide**  
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## MAP OF ASSAM



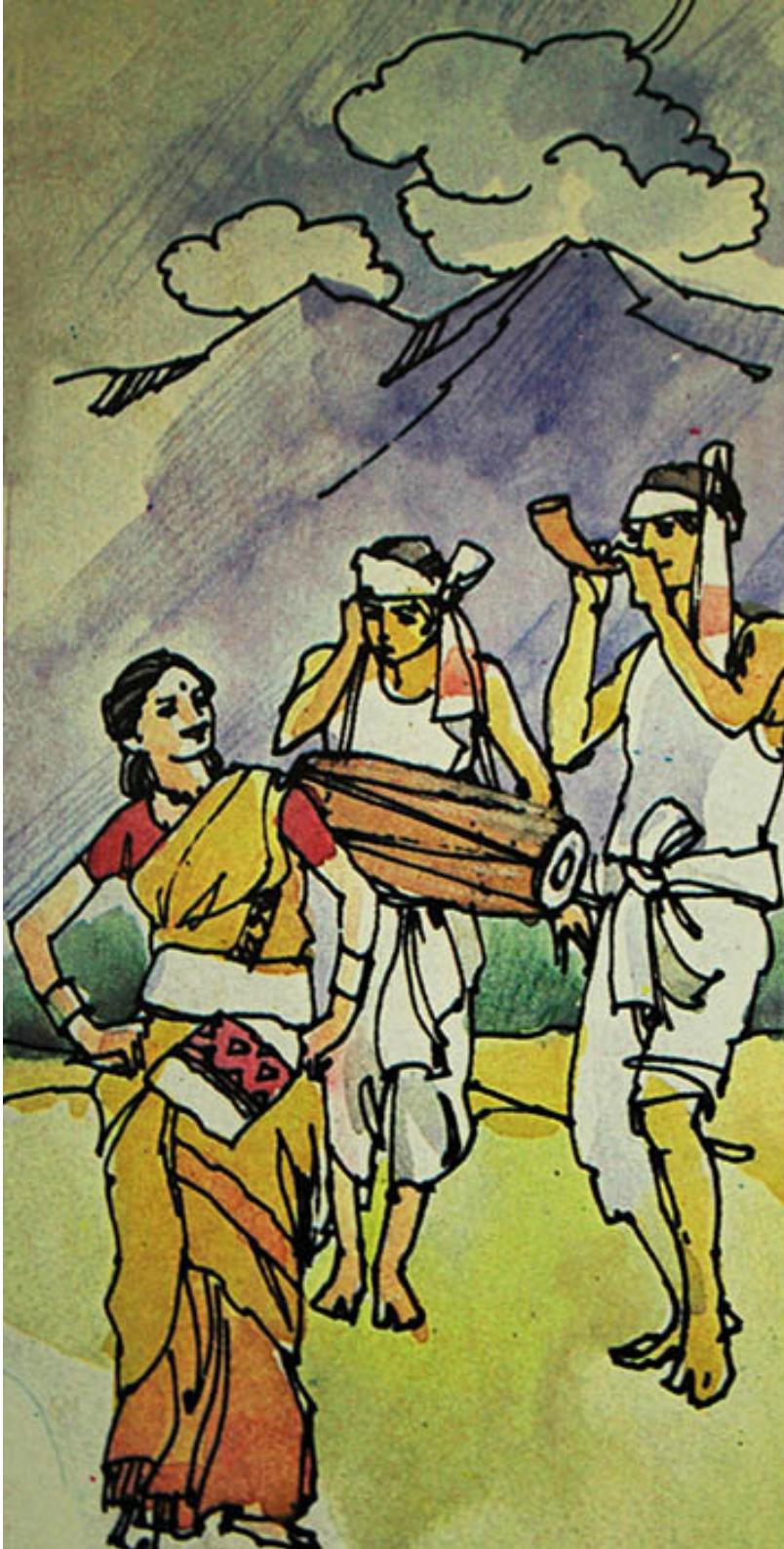
# Assam

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*"Assam is the biggest state in the northeastern part of India*

*It is the land of a number of ethnic groups,  
each enjoys a distinct identity of its own*

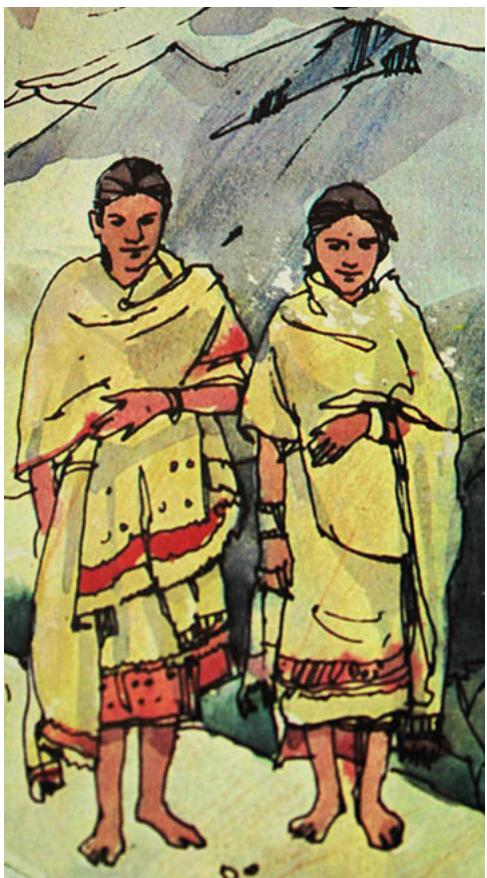
*These groups however diverse they seem in their customs and  
traditions have lived side by side for ages shared a common  
history and evolved in the process a culture that may aptly be  
called 'Assamese'."*



# *Ethnic groups of Assam*

Source: Weaving dreams on their looms book by Assam handloom

Lalung



Dimasa



Deori<sup>°</sup>



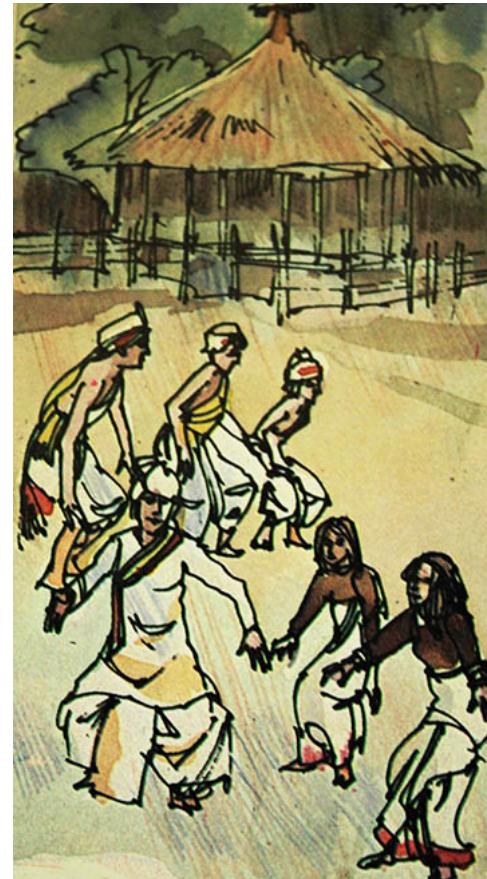
Rajbansi<sup>°</sup>



Kachari



Tai Ahom



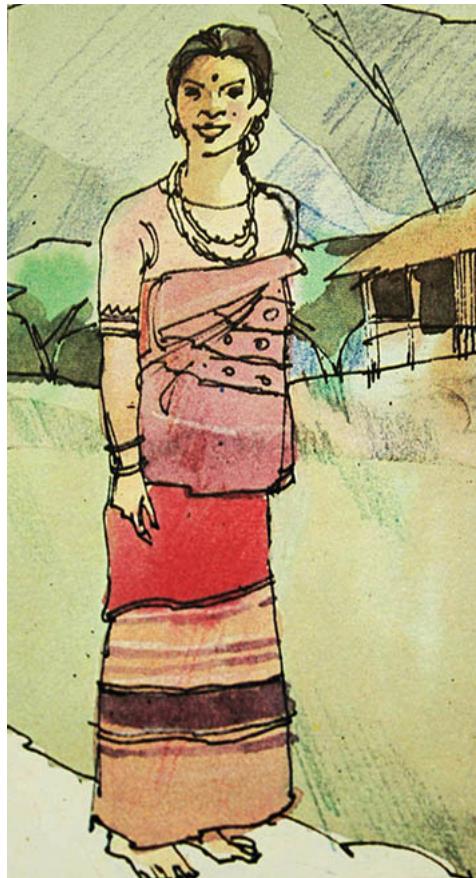
Sutia



Mishing

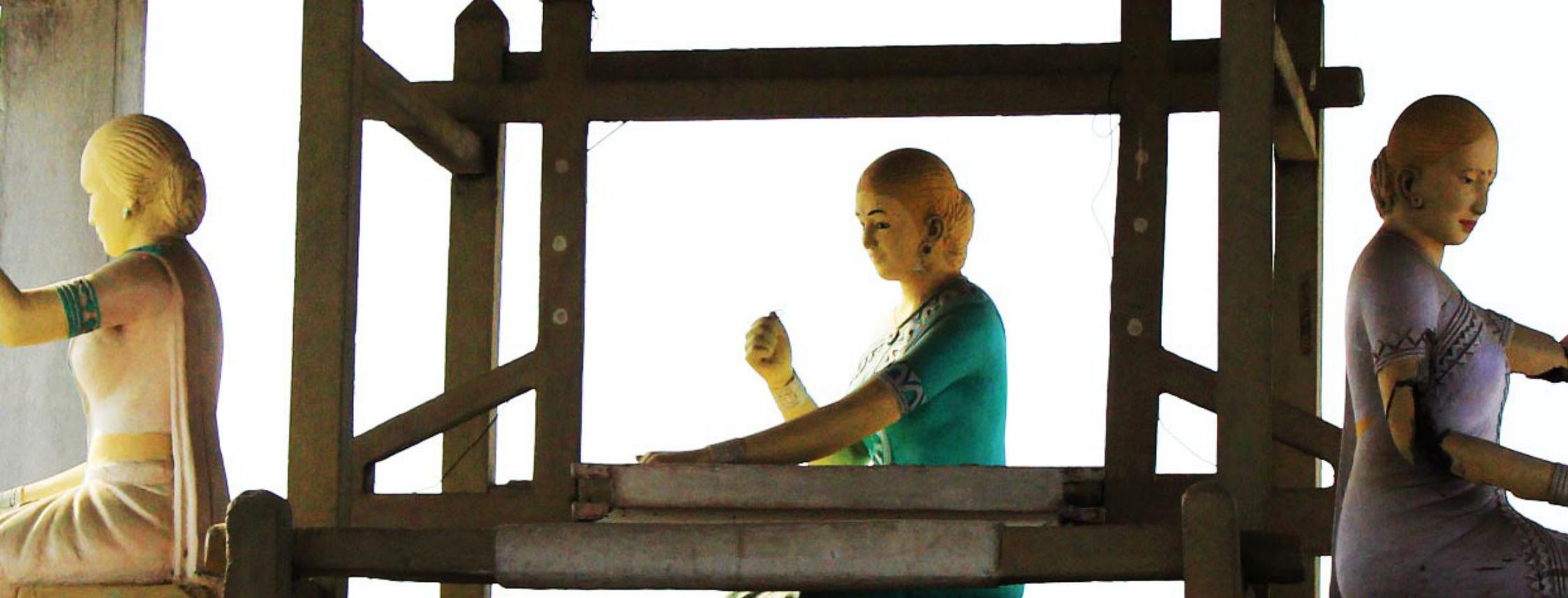


Rabha



Karbi



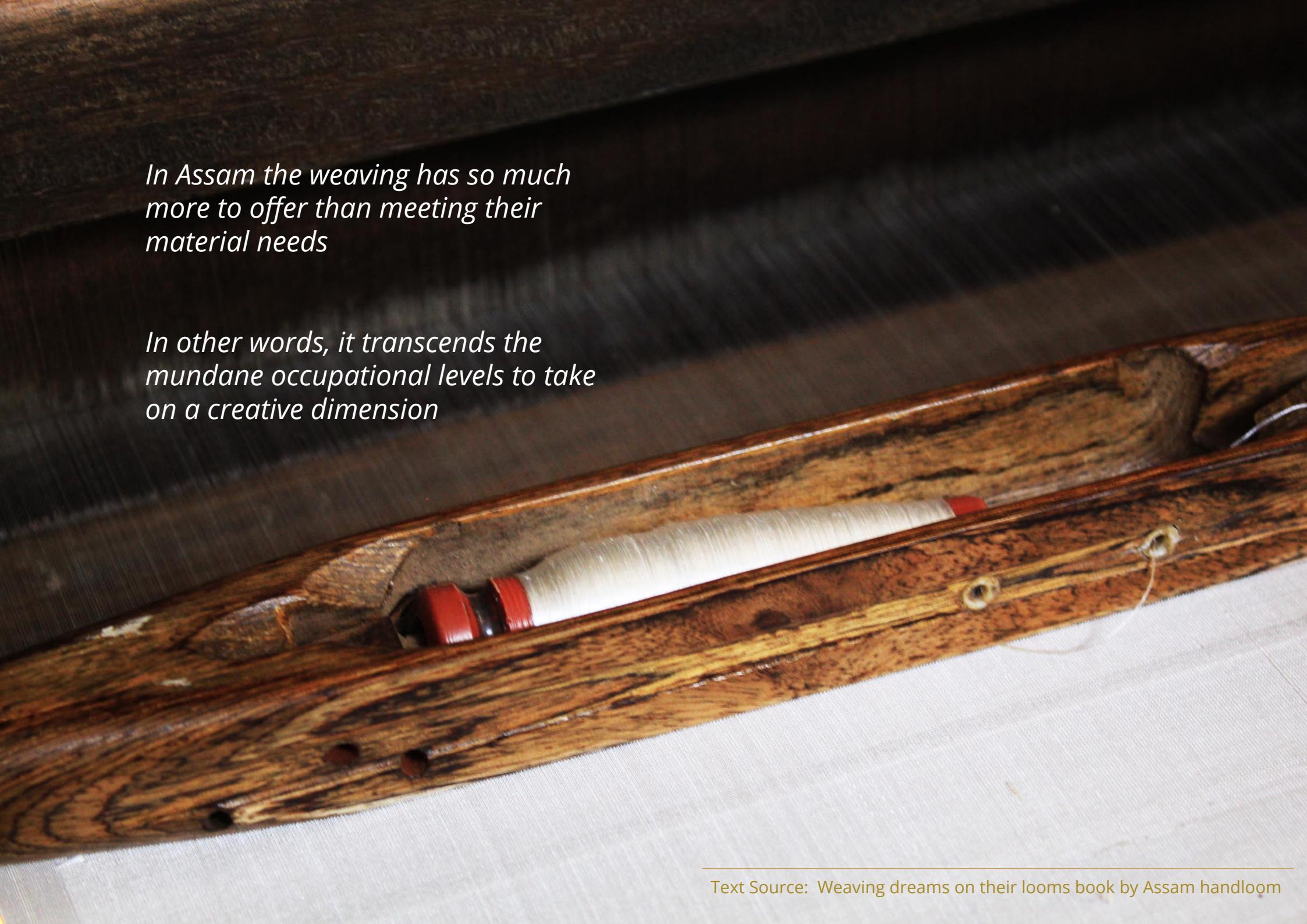


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*Assam Handloom weaving is so vast, so complex, so colourful yet it adorns a pristine simplicity and an infinite charm*

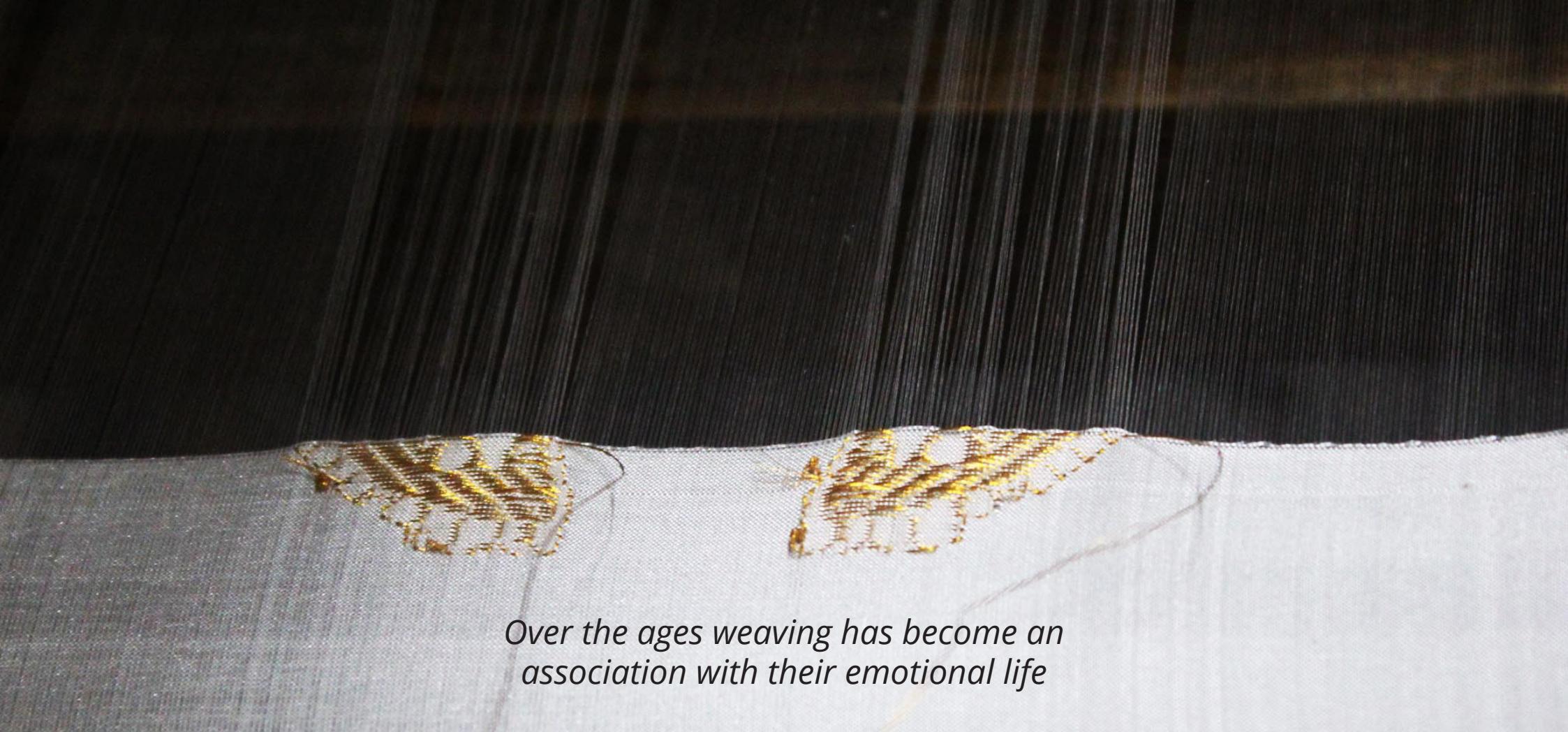
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Text Source: Weaving dreams on their looms book by Assam handloom



*In Assam the weaving has so much more to offer than meeting their material needs*

*In other words, it transcends the mundane occupational levels to take on a creative dimension*



*Over the ages weaving has become an association with their emotional life*

When a girl etches a floral design on a Bihuan, a gift to be given to her beloved on the occasion of the Bihu festival she naturally, puts her heart into it. And the design on the Bihuan, etched with the coy love of a maiden heart, becomes eventually a spiritual creation.



flower



inspiration from the motif



flower



inspiration from the motif

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*A tribal girl nearly always relates each floral design with a flower she is familiar with. In fact, the designs they execute have a meaning of their own. In some cases, the designs narrate the tale of tribal migration*

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# Colour

*Every ethnic group guided by its cultural variables chooses the colours of its own*

*Each group considers a certain colour or some particular colours which becomes an exclusive possession which no other group can lay claim to*





*The more one goes downhill, the more these contrasts tend to dissolve into serene smoothness*

This gradual colour transformation from the sharp to the smooth is due to the changes in environment and economic patterns



*The weaving culture starts with the incoming of the Bihu festival*

# Motifs and Designs

## FLORAL AND PLANT MOTIF

*The floral and plant motifs offer unlimited scope for the adornment of textiles.*

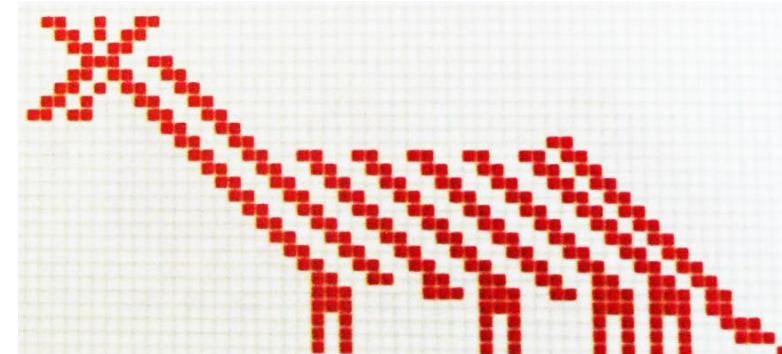
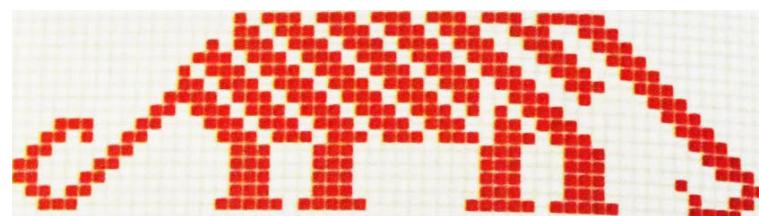
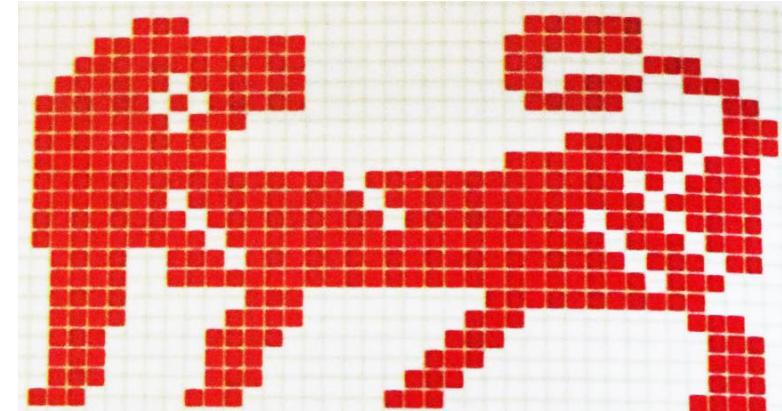
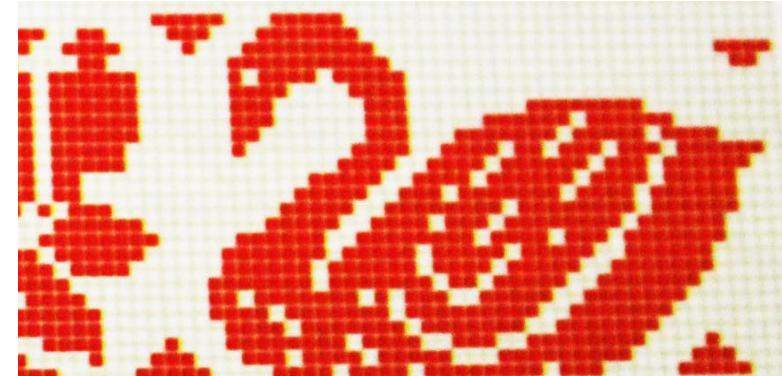
*Flowers form the simplest and smallest configuration to those with well-defined petals.*

*The simplest floral motif found is a small circle or dot with short radiating lines on all sides.*



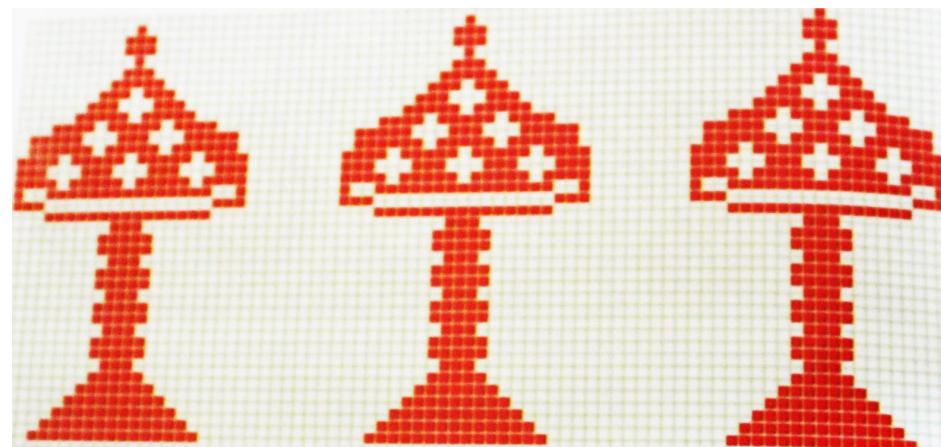
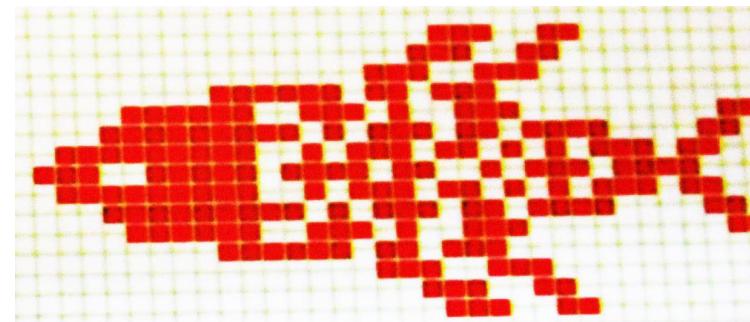
## ANIMAL AND BIRD MOTIF

*A variety of animal motif like butterfly, peacock, elephant, tiger fish etc are cleverly adopted in stylized form with a minimum of lines occupy an important place in the textile design of assam, particularly in the case if tribal textiles.*



## STRUCTURAL MOTIF

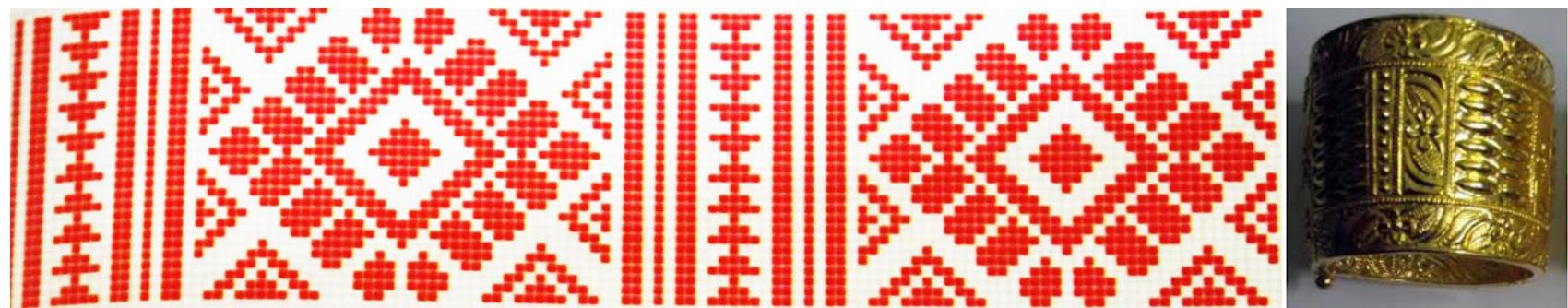
*A great influence of material culture is often marked in the textile tradition of Assam. Artifacts and material objects used in the socio cultural life of the people are adopted for ornamenting the textiles.*



## GEOMETRIC MOTIF

*Diverse elements of nature seem to be the main source of inspiration so far as ornamentation of textile is concerned.*

*It is believed that the wonderful unity, orderliness, harmony of line and curve, the symmetry of form and shape which are all intrinsic characteristics of nature have inspired the geometrical designs.*



# Motifs on textiles



*The choice of colours differs, so with the choice of motifs and designs*

The motifs and designs executed on textiles are of many kinds and shapes – floral, geometric, etc. Some designs and motifs are used by certain ethno-cultural groups, some common to all.



## The eighth point star

The eight point star with floral motifs has to come been accepted as a standard textile design both by the highlanders and the people of the plains speaks of the quiet but very important cultural integration that has come about over a long period of time in Assam

## Kingkhaap

This style is inspired from the Ahom dynasty and signifies the royalty and magnanimity of the erstwhile kingdom. The design consists of two lions facing each other





## Phooldaani°

This style is from the flower bouquet. This design consists of a stylised vase with flowers.



Mayur

This motif is inspired from Peacock. The design stylisation compromises of replicating patterns as well as reflections of the same motif



## Mogor

This motif is similar to paisley.  
This is one of the evolved designs  
which has been accepted widely  
within the culture





## Kaziranga

One of the most commonly used motifs is the Kaziranga style which, according to the local craftsmen and experts derives its inspiration from the wildlife of Kaziranga. As part of the motif a Rhino and a deer are woven onto the silk garment.



## Gach

The motif of a tree is one of the most common patterns found in the Assamese traditional garments. The shape is often represented in a geometrical manner and the shape and design varies according to the expertise of the weaver.

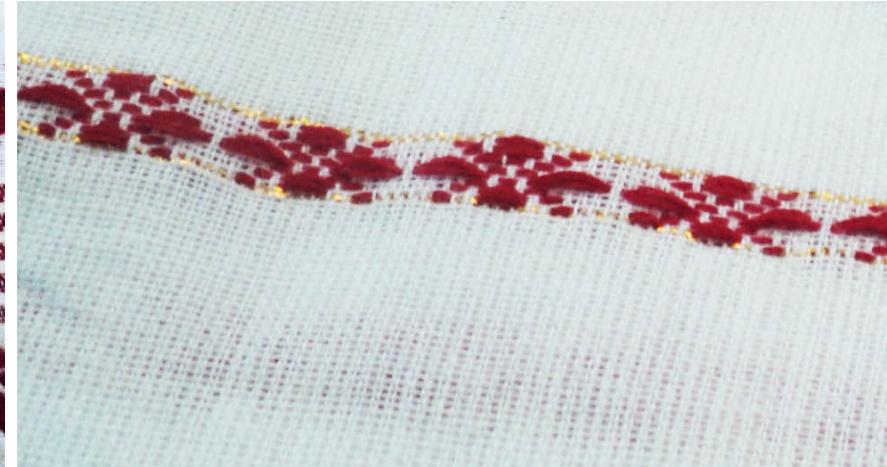
Text Source: [www.dsource.in](http://www.dsource.in)



## Ghot

The motif is inspired from the water bearing traditional brass vessel





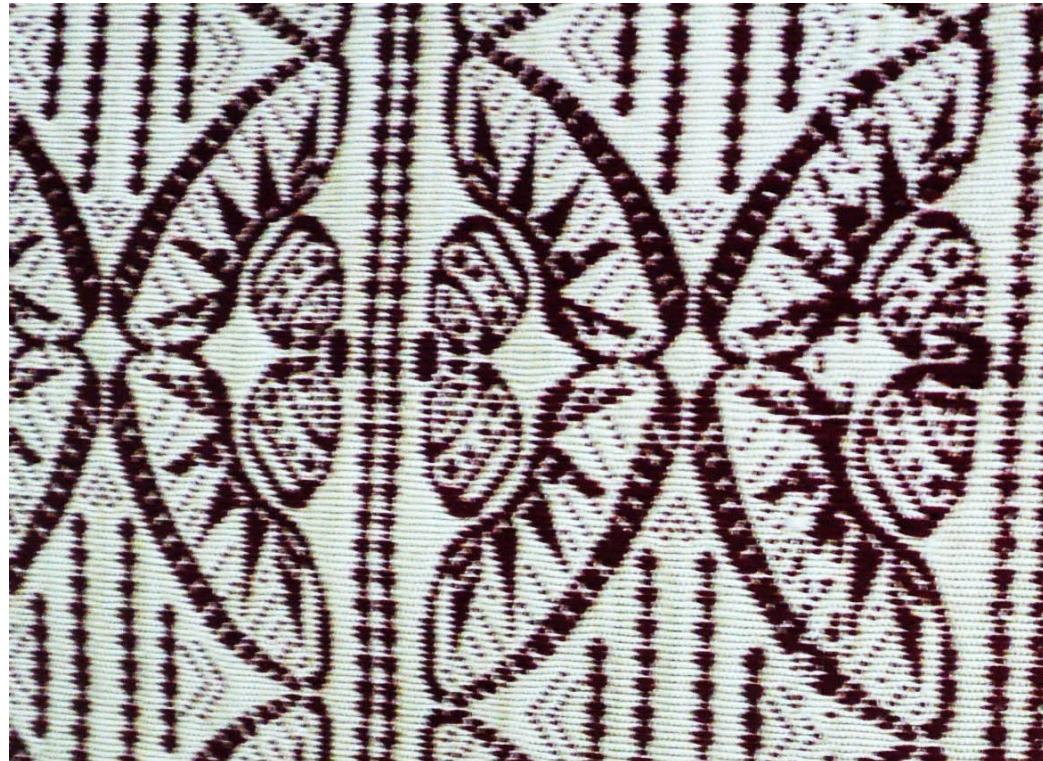
Parbat<sup>o</sup>

This motif is a repeated border design generally consisting of leaves, fern, flower and hills



## Pokhila

The pattern of butterfly known as pokhila in the local language is often woven in different shapes depending on the expertise of the weaver



## Japi

Japi is a traditional Headgear, once used by females of noble and rich families, but now serves as a headgear for farmers to protect them from rain and sun. The motif of japi is often found woven on traditional Assamese garments.



Lota

Lota design is inspired from the organic shapes of fern, flowers and leaves



## Buta

Buta is the ornamental element that acts as a filler and is repeated multiple times as a sole element throughout the fabric.

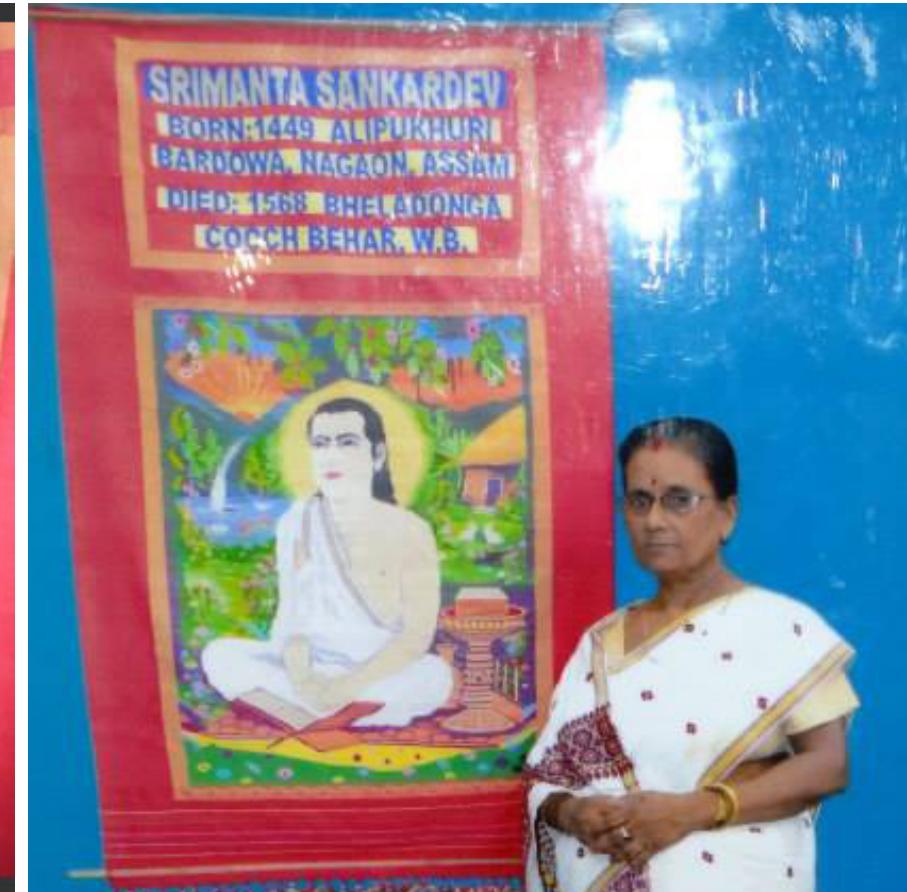


*Textile as an  
art form*



## Kaziranga design

It forms a plethora of elements that exists in the environment of the Kaziranga National Park which stands as a landmark for Assam. The major elements includes Rhino, Deer, Bird, Monkey, Flora and Fauna etc



## Lakhi Prabha Bordoloi

Shrimanta Shankardev Artwork  
which can be compared as a piece of art

Lakhi Prabha Bordoloi being a weaver by profession have tried to experiment and have combined her creativity and skills by creating two major projects



## Lakhi Prabha Bordoloi

She along with other weavers participated in the Guinness World Record by weaving a gamusa of 1.5km. The motifs on the gamusa depicted every ounce of Assamese Culture from festivals, food, flora and fauna to famous people

# Textile Animation

## 1) Panda Extinction

The movie explains the concept of extinction of Pandas through frames which are woven into textiles.



## 2) Tako Bole Chhe

The movie is an animated documentary which celebrates the art and passion of the Kutch artisans



### 3) The Animated Bayeux Tapestry

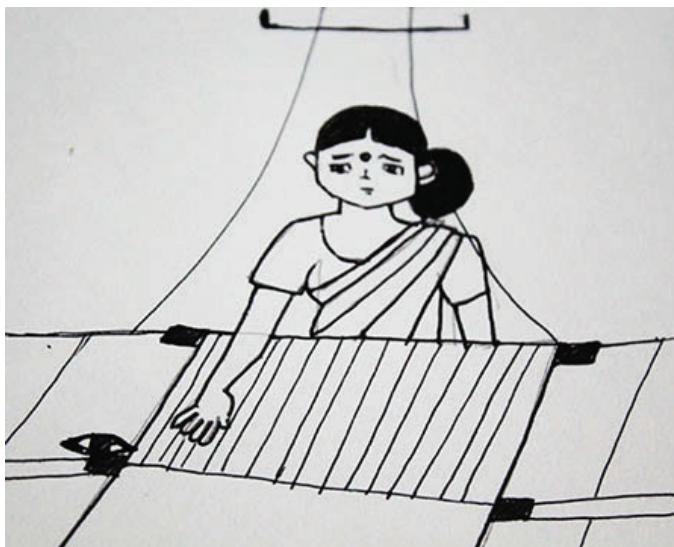
The movie offers a pictorial interpretation of the Norman Conquest of England (1066) and the events leading up to this pivotal moment in medieval history.



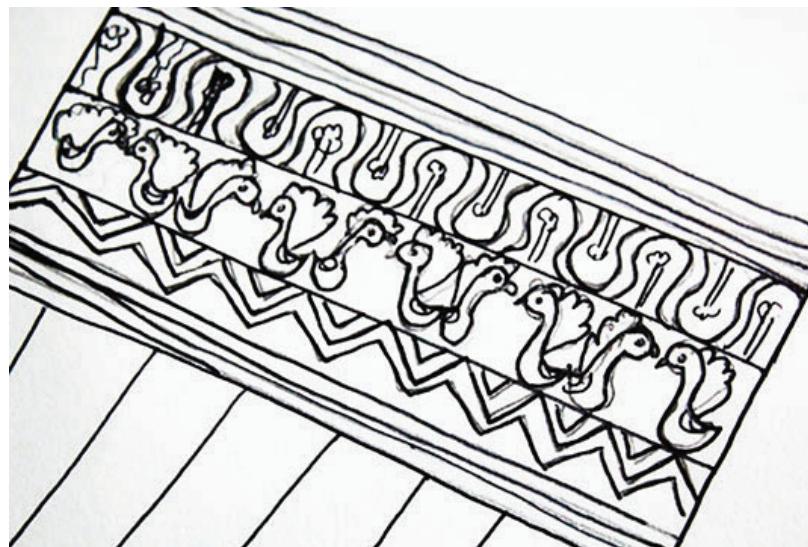
## Scope of the project

I want to explore the project in terms of an animation similar to the above examples. This will add another dimension to the existing perspective of textiles of Assam and will also provide an authentic identity to the motifs as a visual medium.

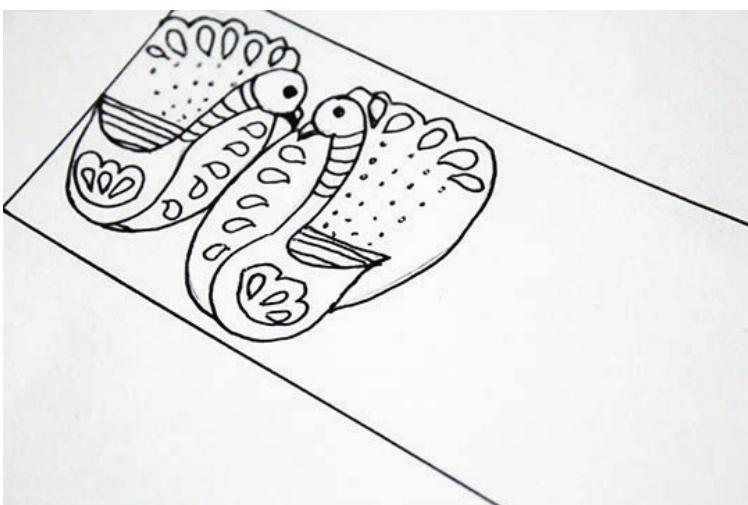
# Story for the animation



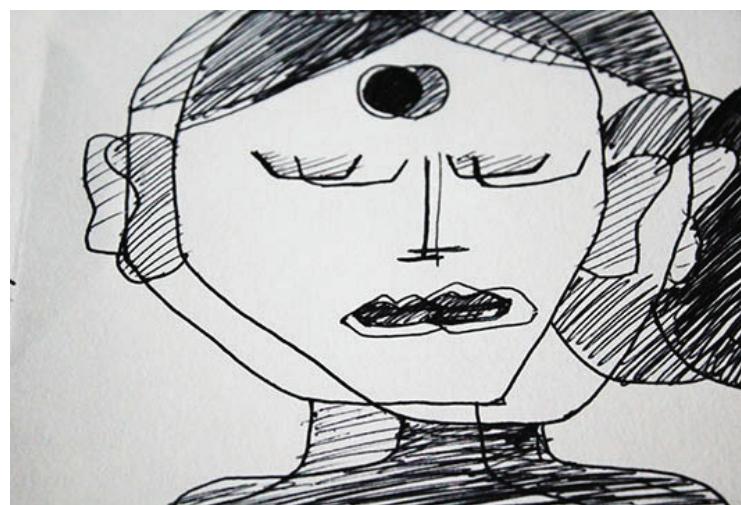
A weaver is lost in the warp and weft of the loom and is being busy putting each weft in her creation. The sound of the loom is humming a rhythmic melancholy.



She sees the peacock motif adorning the fabric in repetition



She can see the multiple colours of thread entwining carefully to form the beautiful mesh of the peacock.



The frame zooms to her face and gets blur. It indicates a transformation of what she is imagining.

*The frame converts into a beautiful piece of artwork with motifs.*

*The clouds, field, house, trees everything looks like a woven cloth.*



There amidst the scenery lives a magician and his beautiful daughter.



The magician's daughter fell in love with a young man

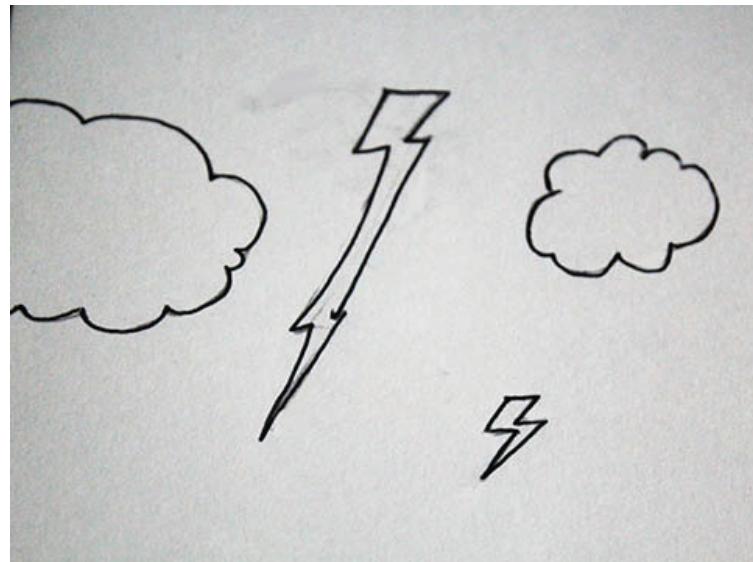




After seeing his daughter sad, the magician finally agreed to his daughter's wishes.



And then he got them married.

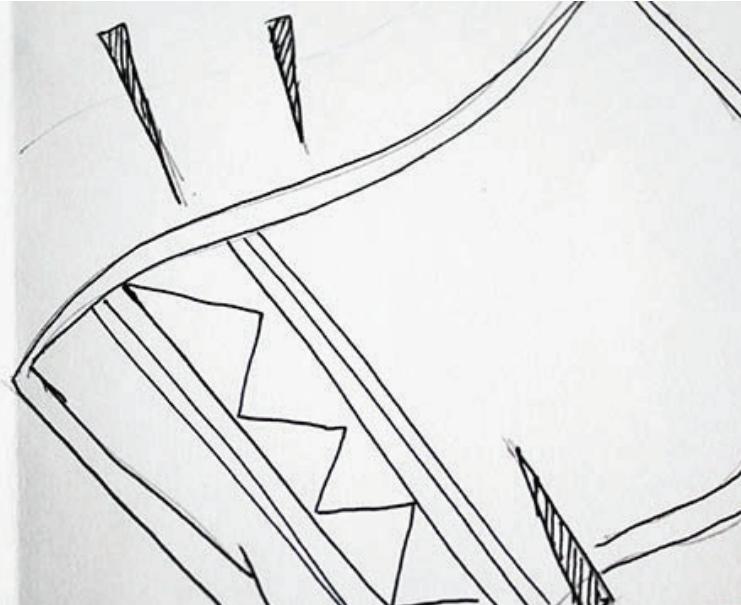


One day when she was walking by the paddy fields, she saw that the sky was getting dark. It was about to rain.



She started running towards the house and started complaining about the unexpected rain.

She was scared about only one thing.

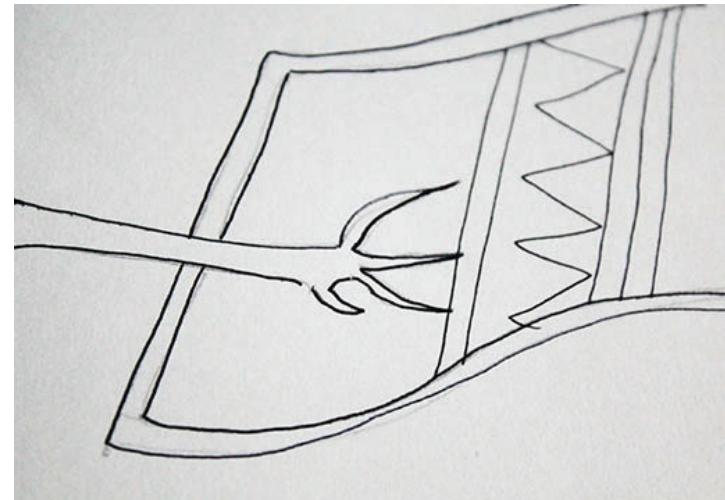
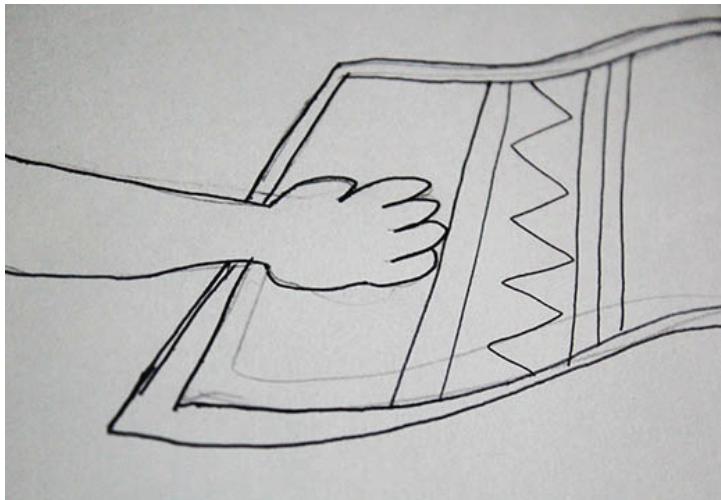


The secret: Her father (the Magician) had a magic rug. The rug was not supposed to be touched by anyone except the magician, otherwise it would turn the person into anything.

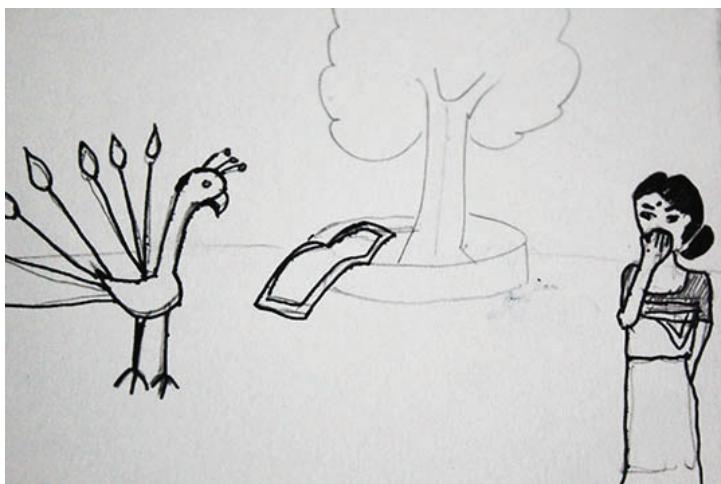
Her father had kept the rug in the courtyard to dry that morning. She started worrying about her husband that he might try to save it from the rain.



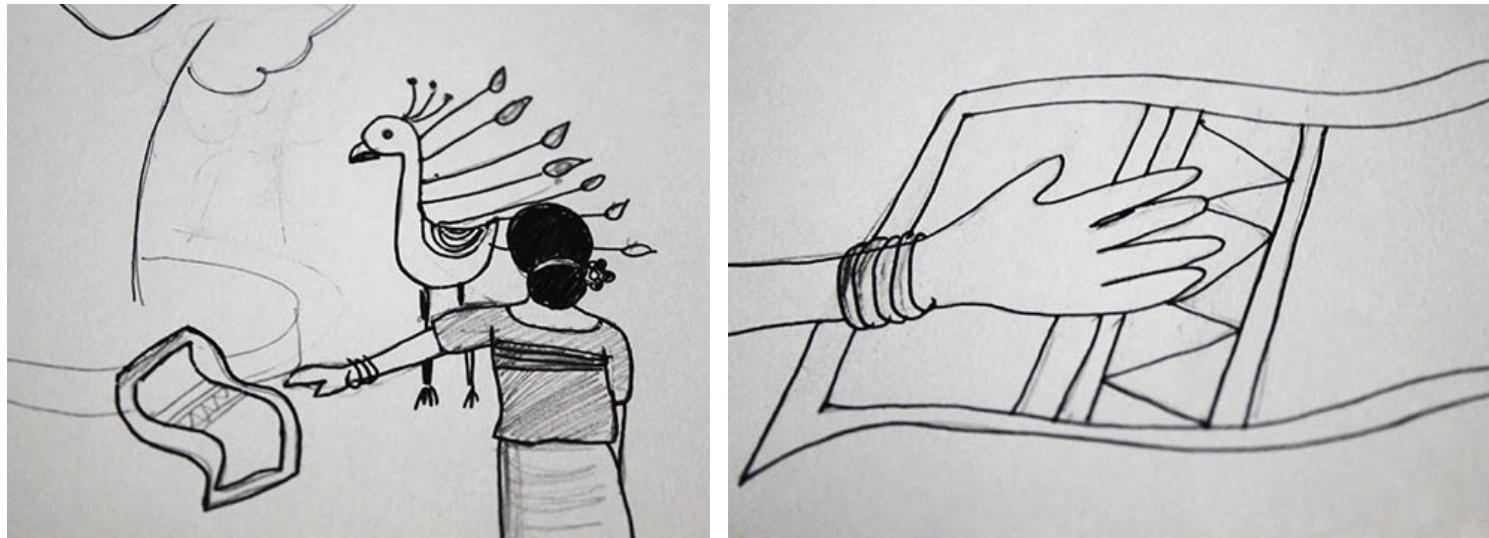
Meanwhile, the husband saw the unexpected rain and rushed towards the rug to save it from getting wet.



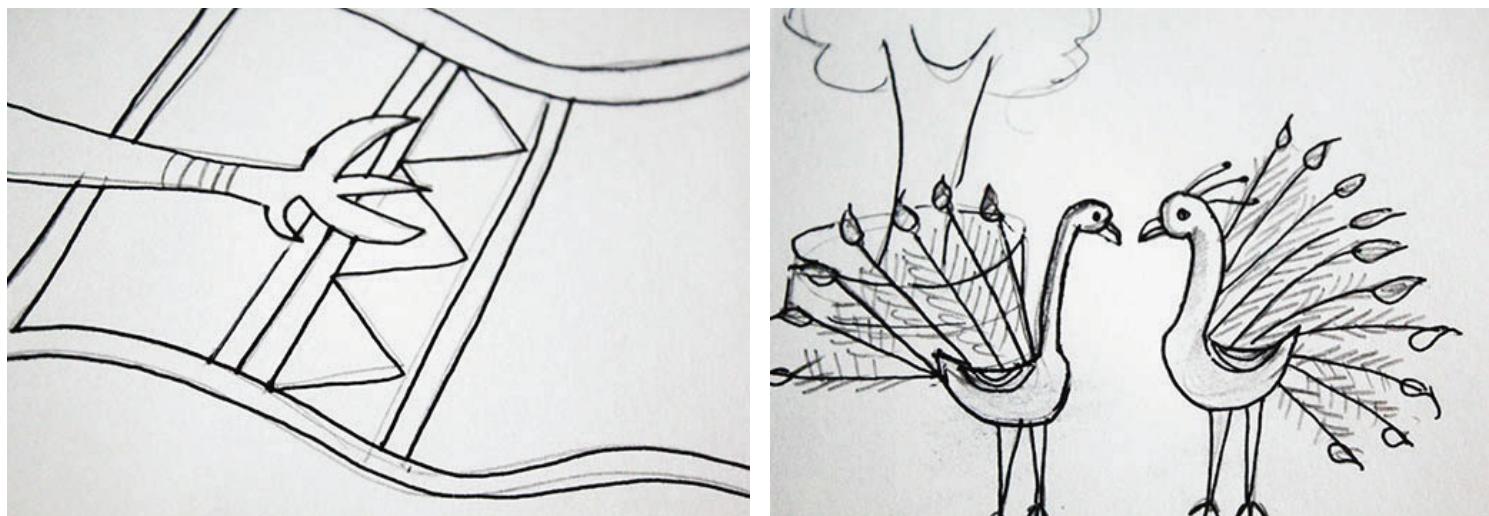
When he touched the rug, he changed into a peacock in a fraction of second.



When she reached the courtyard, she faced what she was afraid of. Her beloved husband has already become a peacock.

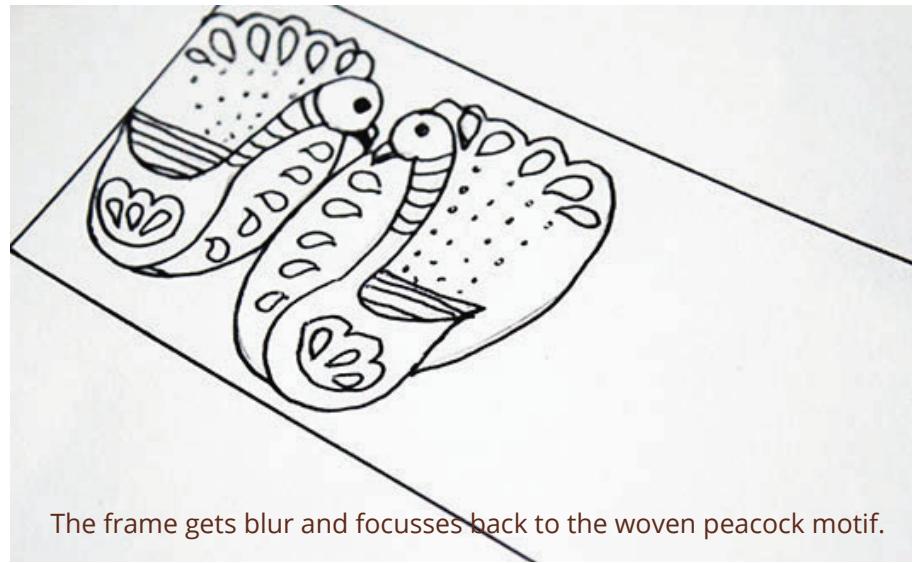


She became so sad that she wanted to die. She was so shocked that she decided to choose the same fate as her husband.



Similar to her husband she also got converted into a peahen. Since most of the power of the rug was used for her husband she became a less ornate peahen.

After some time, when both of them stood facing each other, the rug trapped them as a motif.



The frame gets blur and focusses back to the woven peacock motif.



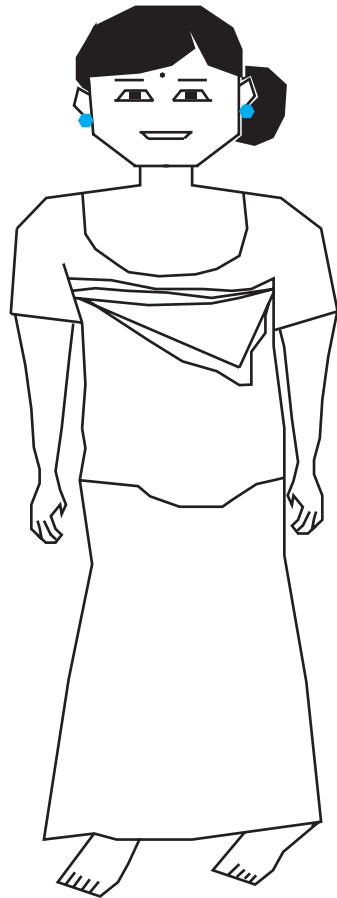
And then to the weaver who was imagining the story behind the creation of peacock motif.

# The process

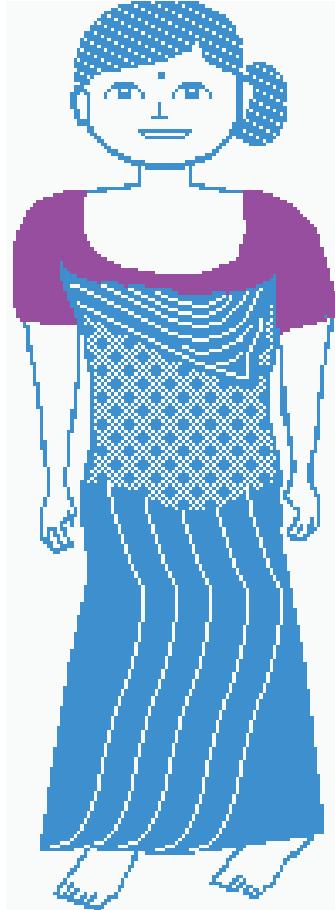


Human figures through Handloom Weaving.





Basic weaving



Texcelle rendering



After weaving

# Characters



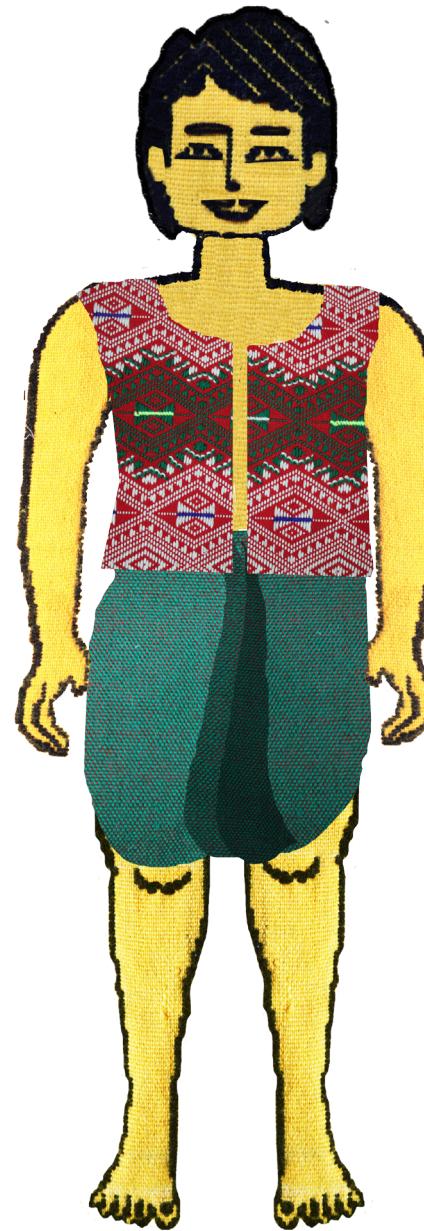
The weaver



The girl



The magician



The young man



A large industrial loom is shown from a low angle, with a weaver in a red uniform visible at the bottom. The loom has many vertical and horizontal threads in shades of brown, tan, and white. The background is a dark, industrial setting with overhead lighting and structural elements.

*Thank you*