

## **How to recreate your home world? Our visual identity**

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The commonality of Finno-Ugric peoples is primarily based on linguistic affinity. At the same time, existence as a nation is not only determined by a spoken language. Non-lingual things that are characteristic to us resonate in our visual environment, objects, clothes, colors as well as the ability to create all of this. The same also applies to everything that can be passed on as an inheritance in a similar way to the language and traditions. Therefore, our surrounding may be "ours" or it may be not. At least at home and on personal grounds, each of us can affect the formation of such environment.

The concept of "national culture", which was common in the twentieth century, is increasingly transforming into the concept of "heritage culture" (In Estonian: Pärnadhkultuur), which, instead of copying in a shallow decorative way, stresses specifically a deep comprehension of inheritance aspects. Nowadays, when commerce has spread everywhere through tourism and globalization, the traditional skills and products have become purchasable goods. Unfortunately, this often leads to one-sidedness and spiritual impoverishment. Just as our native language is impoverishing and disappearing, also our tangible, though spiritually rich, traditional culture may eventually disappear. The value that we give to our culture and share with others, depends on ourselves, on our knowledge, skills and desire to exercise them.

In my report, along with a subsequent practical segment, I want to share with you, the experience of Estonia in terms of how ordinary people have learned to see and create traditional beauty around themselves again. Old handiwork with a supposedly forfeited meaning has now turned into a rediscovery of forgotten ancient landscapes through old family stories and traditional texts. How is this possible? What needs to be done to achieve this? You must study traditional materials, techniques and methods of work and by applying creativity, you get distinctive traditional handicraft items, which reflect their maker's soul instead of the stenciled, copied products. This makes valuable and attractive material for business. This is how workshops appeared all across Estonia during the last decade. These workshops can be compared with "material language nests" which revived our Finno-Ugric world back to life. Once more, the pure spring water flows from a purified well of tradition. Together we will find the key that unlocks the spiritual landscape of our ancestors, who will inspire us to a modern interpretation of universal values.