



# PERCEPTION AND DEFINITION OF ARTISTIC CRAFT WITHIN CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES BASED ON THE QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

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**Abstract.** Culture and creativity are integral to European cultural and creative industries, pivotal in shaping Europe's identity and global prominence. The focus on crafts within the cultural and creative industries ecosystem underscores their cultural significance. However, classifying crafts as artistic or traditional needs more systematic indicators. This article addresses this gap by proposing a methodology to evaluate the artistry of crafts. Twelve indicators were identified based on literature and in-depth interviews with Czech craft organizations to evaluate the artistry of the particular craft. Chosen respondents (legal entities and natural persons) self-evaluated these indicators, assigning weights based on importance. Results revealed varying weights, with mastery of the craft and originality deemed most significant. The proposed methodology offers a scalable approach to determining the artistry of crafts and aiding enterprises and policymakers in supporting cultural and creative industries. This study contributes to theory as well as practice by providing a comprehensive framework for identifying and evaluating artistic craftsmanship within the cultural and creative industries.

**Keywords:** art, artistic craft, creative clusters, creativity, cultural and creative industries.

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## 1. Introduction

Culture and creativity are seen as interconnected systems. The European cultural and creative industries (CCIs) represent a significant set of industries. Europe's CCIs are global leaders and competitive exporters in various fields. Speaking of Europe's CCIs, according to Bertacchini and Borrione (2013, p. 136): "Italy may be considered as an appropriate case study to understand the emerging role of the cultural and creative industries". However, Italy is not the only country in which CCIs are studied, studies of CCIs have shown an exponential growth both in countries where the creative economy originated and developed, and in countries of the Global South (Lazzeretti et al., 2016; Barrowclough & Kozul-Wright, 2008). CCIs are fundamental to developing Europe's culture, identity, and global promotion. Furthermore, the manufacturing and production activities of CCIs are the most regionally concentrated (Power, 2011). According to Comunian and England (2018, p. 331),

"regions are repositories of knowledge and ideas, a specific symbolic capital and specialised skills and practices. Those regions which are more successful in learning and

evolving in their learning are the ones able to create an infrastructure (often linked to social capital and local networks) through which this knowledge is shared, flows and becomes a driver of further learning processes”.

Accordingly, based on Friel (2020), crafts are a fundamental component of a community's culture; the forms and purposes of their products are frequently influenced by the availability of particular raw materials locally, as well as by customs, beliefs, and behaviour that the objects incorporate or attest to. According to the European Commission (2025b), the CCI ecosystem includes architecture, archives, libraries, museums, arts and crafts, audio-visual (including film, television, and multimedia), video and immersive experiences, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts, books and publishing, radio and visual arts. The production of creative goods and services has produced economic value since the mid-1990s, and this value, along with the macro-sector's potential growth relative to other sectors, has brought attention to the creative economy and accelerated the systematisation of knowledge about it (Friel, 2020).

This article discusses craft, specifically artistic craft. In the article, the terms *craft* and *craftsmanship* are used equally as synonyms. It is difficult to define *craft* because the word's meaning has evolved over many centuries. In the past, definitions focused on the relationship between craft and art and the importance of the craft's physical hand-making and technological aspects (Kouhia, 2012; Lucie-Smith, 1981). Differentiating between artistic craftsmanship and craftsmanship is, in fact, even more challenging. Everyone can see the differences between art and craft at first glance. Typically, the distinctions are expressed politically in terms of hierarchy, value, and status, or semantically in terms of meaning and definition. This places craft in opposition to art, as though it is a distinct phenomenon unlike art (Gordini & Rancati, 2015). The criteria for evaluating art include a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach, drawing from psychology, sociology, economics and cultural studies. Various factors influence art appreciation, the dynamics of the art market, the construction of meanings and the definition of expertise within the art industry (Angoso de Guzmán, 2021; Arora & Vermeulen, 2013). In the case of arts and crafts, another aspect enters the topic, namely the production process. The distinctions should be expressed more conceptually. The phrase *artistic craftsmanship* designates two requirements combined in the same work: artistic quality and craftsmanship. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, in the literature, there is no systematic approach and systematic indicators which could be used to identify and set whether a concrete craft is artistic or not. Moreover, the organization and policy of craft industries are different across Europe. For example, in Germany, crafts are controlled within the organization *Handwerk*, in Italy the primary competence of the organization of the craft belongs to the Ministry of Economic Development (Klamer, 2012). Why is it essential to deal with CCIs and what is their state in the Czech Republic? The topic is currently being addressed within the project of the Ministry of Culture (Czech Republic) between 2023 and 2025. In the 21st century, the topic of CCIs is discussed concerning their role in the national economy and economic performance criteria are often identified to justify it. However, its essential role must also be seen regarding memory of place and urban identity. Some sectors become traditional in a region, forming so-called sectoral districts based on a kind of "knowledge

stickiness" in the region. Comunian and England (2018) suggest that regions act as reservoirs of knowledge, symbolic capital and specialised skills, highlighting the importance of learning and adaptability in successful regions. They argue that regions that foster effective learning create infrastructures, often linked to social capital and local networks, that facilitate the sharing and flow of knowledge and drive further learning processes. This concept of the stickiness of skills and knowledge embedded in regional resources underlines the persistence and the need to adapt and develop knowledge within specific regional contexts. Furthermore, as highlighted by Comunian and England (2019), the decline of traditional industries due to de-industrialization and global production outsourcing has led to a loss of skills and a potential erosion of knowledge and production techniques, particularly in sectors like glass-making, ceramics, and textiles. As Adamson (2018) stated, craft usually concerns itself with the crafts specific processes carried out in specific materials. Craft makers emphasise the value of human skill embodied in high-quality things made to last, intended as heirlooms (Bloom Rexrode, 2014; Carr & Gibson, 2016).

Culture has many meanings in the Czech language concerning the range of activities and defining areas that only describe their specific use. The strategy for the development and promotion of the CCI of the Czech Republic (Bakule et al., 2021, p. 12) defines culture as

"an area of development of creativity and active formation and reflection of values of society. It includes arts and cultural heritage, ways of life, value systems and traditions. It is thus also linked to disseminating the values of democracy, creativity, freedom and solidarity across society".

Crafts with the potential to be classified as CCIs are defined by Czech statistical classification of economic activities in the European community (according to Bakule et al., 2021); however, in the case of crafts, it is necessary to find metrics to classify crafts as folk, artistic, and traditional, or those with a significant dose of creativity. This classification is also crucial to the ministries' work agenda in the Czech Republic.

Based on the literature review (Machátová, 2013; Sombart, 1912; Design and Artists Copyright Society [DACS], 2025) and discussions with experts in the field of artistic craft and art education on how to distinguish craft from artistic craft, it can be recommended to define indicators specific to artistic craft. The classification of economic operators should then be carried out based on an evaluation by a defined committee. The article aims to answer the research question: *What indicators explain the observed differences in the degree of artistry of a given craft?* by preparing a methodology for evaluating the degree of artistry of the given craft. The methodology should then serve a defined committee which would evaluate crafts to support artistic craftsmanship, for example, support with subsidy vouchers on the region's level.

## 2. Literature review and theoretical background

In the introduction, several key terms that need to be defined and put into context were mentioned. The literature review first deals with the definition of concepts such as creativity, creative economy and the CCIs, then solves the question of the definition of the concept and the approach to the topic of artistic craft.

## 2.1. Creativity, creative economy, and cultural and creative industries

According to some dictionaries (Dictionary.cambridge.org, 2025), creativity is the “ability to produce or use original and unusual ideas”. Other authors define creativity as “the interaction among aptitude, process, and environment by which an individual or group produces a perceptible product that is both novel and useful as defined within a social context” (Plucker et al., 2004, p. 90). Additionally, rather than concentrating only on originality and effectiveness at a particular moment in time, it is characterised by the potential for both (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2023). It is also seen as a collective, generative, novel way of experiencing reality, culminating in creating a shared product that is evaluated as creative in a relevant context (Hoff & Carlsson, 2015). The creative economy results from the interrelationship between technology as a result of science and research, art, and business. As there are few indirect indicators to measure the generation of new ideas, the measurement of creativity assesses not only the artistic component but also activities with the creative output of intellectual property and activities using creative inputs to increase added value, such as activities in the craft sector, tourism, etc.

The CCIs are strongly linked with the creative economy. According to the European Commission (2025a), the CCIs ecosystem represents approximately 3.95% of European Union added value and employs around 8 million people, including around 1.2 million firms, over 99.9% of which are small and medium enterprises. According to the Metro – Dynamics (2020) report, four areas in which the cultural sector influences the creative industries and the broader economy can be identified: innovation, education, collaboration, and clustering. This report highlights the difficulty of defining the different categories of creative industries and the presence of a barrier in terminology within the sector and the broader economy. This causes a gap in terminology between *traditional/industrial* research processes and those used in the cultural and creative sectors. The authors highlight that the creative industries tend to cluster strongly in cities. Still, if creative clusters and networks are established, they can be a tool for economic development across urban and rural geographies. Creative clusters thus create agglomeration effects that spill over into the whole economy, creating new jobs and improving places to live. The report (study) goes on to recommend further research and evidence of the role of arts and cultural projects as catalysts for commerce and broader economic development, this would also help to reinforce the critical role that the sector plays (Metro – Dynamics, 2020, p. 25). An example is tracking the commercial performance and outcomes of products/services developed in collaboration. The importance of this performance is supported by evidence from case studies, but there is little empirical analysis.

Discussions and critiques of creative industries also highlight the complexities and challenges associated with intellectual property (Rossiter, 2003). Intellectual property is about the creativity that is the result of human thought to meet the needs and well-being of human life. Intellectual property rights (IPR) are essential to protect the creations and innovations of artists and individuals in the creative sector. In addition, legal protection of IPR is considered a main pillar for creative economy businesses, underscoring its role in providing legal certainty and fostering creativity in the industry (Suryansyah, 2019). In continental Europe, the right to intellectual property is based on the so-called dualistic concept – in addition to property

rights, there is also the personal component of the author, originator. IPR include two parts, namely copyright and industrial property rights. Industrial property rights are linked to registration with the competent authority and include patents, industrial designs, designs for the layout of integrated circuits, trade secrets, geographical indications, trademarks and protection of plant varieties can also be included here (Ayu Sadnyini et al., 2021). In addition, copyrights arise at the moment of creation, without the need for registration, and usually have a longer duration of rights. This is a broad topic involving many possibilities and situations that are difficult to generalize. Therefore, the article does not focus more on this area, which is the limit of the presented research.

## 2.2. Toward a concept of artistic craftsmanship

The phrase *artistic craftsmanship* designates two requirements combined in the same work: artistic quality and craftsmanship. Therefore, artistic and handicraft creations are considered an expression of the material culture linked to the environment in which art's artistic phenomena and objects are manifested or produced. In this way, objects of artistic and traditional craftsmanship must be considered as works of art of people who carry a spiritual and cultural message and heritage of traditions and creativity to be passed on to future generations (Fondazione Cologni Mestieri d'Arte, 2025). To evaluate craft activities, Becker (1978) uses the concept of beauty and makes a distinction between ordinary and artist craftspeople. The significance of the aesthetic component and the preoccupation with "beauty" is the primary difference between the two groups. The average craftsman may not care whether the outcome is beautiful or, to use another word, *elegant*, but they do care that a task is completed well and that the intended purpose is fulfilled (Becker, 1978, p. 866). Becker's analysis suggests that the artist-craftsman aspires to a standard beyond usefulness and functionality but is still preoccupied with those aspects.

Sombart's (1912) publication is an essential publication for the definition of artistic craftsmanship. As he wrote, he made his study at the end of 1906 (published in 1908, translated into Czech in 1912). The study focuses on explaining the term *art industry*, stating that its content is aptly expressed by the German translation *Kunstgewerbe* as a combination of fine arts and crafts, more precisely, craft products. That combines artistic aims with things intended to serve a need. This is how beautiful form is blended with purpose. He goes on to state that it is difficult to distinguish between the art industry and art or high art in a principled and precise way according to objective standards. Similarly, he points out that it is difficult to determine which field to exclude from the artistic craft industry. Sombart (1912) discusses the subject of artistic craft from the point of view of...

- ...art, noting that there are features that distinguish the field of arts and crafts (here we can point to the perceived correspondence between the notion of craft and industry) from other fields of human culture. He sees the reasons for distinguishing these concepts in appreciating different cultural purposes. He further states that...
- ...fields of craft activity in which art-industrial creation cannot be found should be excluded. First, he excludes all means of production, *i.e.* aids to further production. In the field of so-called utilitarian goods, it is not classified as arts and crafts intended for daily use. He gives the following criteria: short product life and high consumption. On the

borderline of artistic-industrial production, he places the production of clothing. The art industry goes hand in hand with architecture.

Moreover, Sombart points out that defining specific human activities as arts and crafts is complex and that it is impossible to say where the arts/crafts industry begins and ends. He sees the identification of arts/crafts and skill as another pitfall. He argues that every difficult job, even without the intention of art making, needs skills.

To define the term *artistic craft*, we can use Machátová's (2013, p. 3) definition:

"The basic and main feature of arts and crafts products is a significant proportion of handwork, sometimes it is only the handwork itself in their production. Arts and crafts products are made from classic natural materials using original, often unique production methods and technologies. They are certainly not copies of historical objects. Arts and crafts products correspond in artistic concept and utility value to contemporary lifestyle and aesthetic requirements and, in addition, meet strict ecological criteria. Their creation requires artistic sensitivity, a flair for selecting and working with materials, and, above all, manual dexterity. Each artistic craft product always bears the distinctive handwriting of its creator. The products have a high added value".

Moreover, the International Charter of Artistic Craftsmanship (Fondazione Cologni Mestieri d'Arte, 2025) defines artistic craftsmanship as follows:

- Creations, production and works of high aesthetic value, whether inspired by forms, models, decoration, styles and techniques that are traditional or historical, or the result of individual creative development and of personal and artistic forms of expression;
- Works which are mainly carried out using manual techniques, at a highly professional technical level, using equipment, but excluding wholly mass-produced works; separate mechanised or automatic work stages are allowed, using innovative techniques and high-technology instruments;
- The definition of artistic craftsmanship also covers works of restoration designed to conserve, consolidate or restore art or objects of architectural, archaeological, ethnographic, bibliographic or archival heritage.

This definition emphasises artistic craft products, which include works executed predominantly by hand at a highly professional technical level, using equipment but excluding entirely mass-produced items. Including separate mechanised or automatic operations is permitted, primarily when innovative techniques and high technology instruments are used, which corresponds to the point of view of Machátová (2013). The skills involved in craft practice involve a high degree of tacit knowledge that is embodied and often difficult for the craft expert to articulate. In craft practice, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness; craft judgments are typically made on tacit habits and suppositions (Sennett, 2008). According to Blažiček and Kropáček (2013, p. 217), an artistic craft is defined as:

"[...] a branch of human activity in which objects of artistic value are made by hand, either intentionally by a professional artist or unintentionally. Arts and crafts products are a combination of three components: appropriate materials or materials, processed by appropriate techniques into a purposeful form".

The distinction between ordinary and artistic craftsmanship is further stated, namely that artistic talent and technical skills are required to practice artistic craftsmanship. In contrast to the so-called great arts (free painting and sculpture and architecture), arts and crafts differ

in that their products have a specific purpose, either on their own (e.g. jewellery, everyday objects) or as part of architecture in particular.

According to Gordini and Rancati (2015, p. 170):

"A product can be defined as belonging to the artistic craftsmanship when it does not rely exclusively on technical ability, on site-specific tacit knowledge, on traditions petrified in repetitive activities and routine. Instead, it hinges on innovation, creativity, inspiration, genius, creation of new models, on the effort to contaminate and hybridise tradition with new and contemporary ideas".

A systemic view of artistic craft from a sustainability perspective is offered by Zhan and Walker (2019). Their article considers the artistic craft in terms of three attributes: ecological, locative, systems thinking, and its relationship to authentic notions of being. As they argue, for centuries, craft has reflected the rhythms of everyday life through its rich materiality, deeply embedded cultural identity and intrinsic values of quality work and cultural expression. Their study also defines the relationship between craft and sustainability; they define the relationship in two ways: optimistic (harmony) and negative (tension). Based on the research of some authors (Abson et al., 2017), it can be further concluded that craft can be a catalyst for transformational change. Based on this, the arts and crafts sector must also be viewed in terms of its business model. Inspiration for a systemic view of the arts and crafts sector can be found in Craft Scotland's (2025) projects to support and promote crafts, including the Green Crafts Initiative. However, Mathieu (2025) states:

"If we accept these premises that anything and everything can be art (which I do), it automatically implies that anything and everything craft is also art, insofar as craft is simply another form of art, another category within art, like painting, sculpture, photography, design, architecture, etc."

Additionally, the author continues:

"This division between art and craft exists only at the level of institutional academia. It hardly exists at all at the level of practice. Hierarchies and polarities are interesting and occasionally useful, but are they really relevant here? I thought about it for a long time and tried to resolve the differences as a dialectic between art and craft. I have created long lists of polarities and dualities in the contradiction of opposites" (Mathieu, 2025).

### 2.3. Specifics of cultural and creative industries and artistic craft in the Czech Republic

The following subchapter discusses the specifics of artistic craftsmanship in the Czech Republic, however, these specifics may be similar and applicable to other European states.

Culture and creativity are seen as interconnected systems. Culture has many meanings in the Czech language concerning the range of activities and defining areas that only describe their specific use. The strategy for the development and support of CCIs (Bakule et al., 2021, p. 12) defines culture as

"an area of development of creativity and active formation and reflection of values of society. It includes arts and cultural heritage, ways of life, value systems and traditions. It is thus also linked to disseminating the values of democracy, creativity, freedom and solidarity across society".

According to the Kurzycz (2021), CCIs are divided into the following groups, which are further specified by specific activities, according to the statistical classification of economic activities in the European community – NACE (for the French term *nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne*) code (in the Czech Republic according to CZ-NACE):

- Cultural and artistic core (traditional arts sector including arts and crafts);
- Cultural sector (audio-visual and media sector);
- Cultural industries and administrative activities (creative sector);
- Information and communication activities;
- Recreational activities, printing and reproduction of recorded media.

Broadening the view of the economy's structure to include CCIs is important in terms of the development of technology and, consequently, the development of society. Machátová's study (2013) focuses on the history of the development of artistic craft in the Czech Republic from the point of view of legislation. As she states, when evaluating the development of artistic crafts in the Czech Republic, it is possible to build on the memory of the 20th century. In the Czech Republic, organizations were established by Act No. 56/1957 Coll., on artistic craftsmanship and folk art production, etc. The activity of these organizations was based on the business activities of the *Krásná Jizba* company, founded in 1927, first with a shop in Prague, Czech Republic, and then with ten other branches. In 1992, the law was repealed and the artistic crafts were mostly transferred as natural persons – self-employed with their activities under the trade law. To summarise, Machátová (2013) defines artistic craft based on these characteristics:

- A significant proportion of handwork, sometimes it is only the handwork itself in making artistic craft products;
- The use of classic natural materials;
- Implementation of an activity using original, often unique production methods and technologies;
- Products are not copies of historical objects;
- Artistic craft products correspond in artistic conception and utility value to contemporary lifestyle and aesthetic requirements;
- In addition, artistic craft products meet strict ecological criteria;
- Creation of artistic craft products requires artistic sensitivity, a sense of choice and work with materials,
- Manual dexterity;
- The distinctive handwriting of the creator of each artisanal product;
- The products have a high added value.

In the Czech Republic, the implementation of or interest in mapping craft industries can be documented, for example, in the region of Uherské Hradiště. As pointed out in selected examples, we encounter the question of what is perceived as an artistic craft. It is no exception that many terms defining craft are used within the Czech Republic, such as traditional, folk, creative, industrial, technical, pure, or artistic craft. A survey was carried out on the example of the territory of Uherské Hradiště, which, according to the territorial-administrative division, included at least 100 000 inhabitants (Stejskal et al., 2015). Based on the quantitative



and qualitative analysis, the following characteristics of the region were defined based on the CCIs mapping:

- The uniqueness of the region within the Czech Republic for its still vivid relationship with traditional folk culture and crafts;
- The presence of almost all types of traditional crafts in the region, but some are on the verge of extinction;
- The fact that the existence of the sector is based on the love of craft, self-sufficiency, the ability to improvise;
- The stagnation of the craft sector due to lack of funding and low incomes;
- Risk factors for further development of crafts are the high average age of craftsmen, the lack of opportunities for cooperation and the lack of education of the younger generation;
- Low turnover of the craft sector due to inadequate marketing, low promotion of the sector and poor distribution of products;
- Underfunding of craft entities and the resulting need for financial support for preserving and further developing traditional crafts (Stejskal et al., 2015, p. 4).

To summarise, in the Uherské Hradiště region in the Czech Republic, the mapping of craft industries reveals a diverse landscape with terms like traditional, folk, creative, and industrial crafts commonly used. A conducted survey highlights the region's unique connection to traditional folk culture, the presence of various crafts facing extinction, and the challenges of financial constraints, an aging workforce, and limited marketing in sustaining and developing the craft sector (Stejskal et al., 2015, p. 4).

### 3. Summary of literature review

Table 1 summarises, according to the literature review, possible indicators which can be used to evaluate whether a given craft is artistic or not and to which degree.

**Table 1.** Parameters defining artistic craft according to literature review (source: created by authors)

Parameter	Sources
<p><i>Share of manual work:</i> A significant proportion of handwork, sometimes it is just the handwork itself in making artistic craft products. Werner Sombart, on the other hand, claims that it is not an important parameter.</p>	Machátová (2013); Sombart (1912)
<p><i>Materials:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of classic natural materials;</li> <li>■ Balanced proportion of quality materials. Sombart does not mention their importance.</li> </ul>	Machátová (2013); Sombart (1912)
<p><i>Procedures, techniques:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Implementation of the activity using original, often unique production methods and technologies;</li> <li>■ Intellectual property rights are essential to protect the creations and innovations of artists and individuals in the creative sector;</li> <li>■ Processing of the material with efficient techniques or technology and its purpose (function).</li> </ul>	Machátová (2013); Sombart (1912); Suryansyah (2019)

Continue of Table 1

Parameter	Sources
<p><i>Aesthetic requirements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Artistic craft products correspond to the contemporary lifestyle and aesthetic requirements in terms of artistic concept and utility value;</li> <li>■ An aesthetically impressive finished work (even an ordinary craftsman can sometimes create a work of the highest artistic level);</li> <li>■ Howard S. Becker's analysis suggests that the artist-craftsperson aspires to a standard beyond usefulness and functionality but is still pre-occupied with those aspects.</li> </ul>	Machátová (2013); Becker (1978)
<p><i>True aesthetic quality:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The work should be durable – creation of useful objects of daily use;</li> <li>■ United Kingdom courts test/verify aesthetic quality as follows:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Artistic quality could depend on whether a significant portion of the public would derive "pleasure or satisfaction, from thinking about the work";</li> <li>b) Sometimes it is suggested that the artistic quality of the work be determined by judges;</li> <li>c) Another test of artistic quality is the intention of the author. Its essence is that authors are the best judge of what they intended to create.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	DACS (2025); Masiyakurima (2016)
<p><i>Unique handwriting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The distinctive handwriting of its creator of each art and craft product;</li> <li>■ Application of a specific craft and craftsman.</li> </ul>	Machátová (2013); Sombart (1912)
<p><i>Artistic mastery:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Creation of artistic craft products requires artistic sensibility, a sense of choosing and working with material;</li> <li>■ Mastery depends on technical expertise and masterful processing of the material(s).</li> </ul>	Machátová (2013); Sombart (1912)
Manual skill, interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness.	Machátová (2013); Sennet (2008)
The products have a high added value.	Machátová (2013)
Specificity of customers.	Sombart (1912)
<p><i>Realization of production from purchase to sale to the end customer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sombart emphasizes that all means of production cannot be included among the objects of arts and crafts.</li> </ul>	Sombart (1912)
Artistic craft products meet strict ecological criteria.	Machátová (2013)
An artistic craft product depends on innovation, creativity, inspiration, genius, creating new models, on trying to contaminate and hybridize tradition with new and contemporary ideas. A product can be defined as a product of artistic craftsmanship if it does not rely exclusively on technical skills, on tacit knowledge specific to a given place, on traditions petrified in repetitive activities and routine.	Gordini and Rancati (2015)
<p><i>A conscious intention to create a work of art:</i></p> <p>The fact that an object is created by an artist does not in itself give the object the quality of artistry. In the same way, a mere aesthetic appearance is not enough. For example, items of furniture such as sofas and chairs, although they show craftsmanship and are intended to appeal to the buying public, are not considered artistic if they lack extraordinary qualities.</p>	DACS (2025)
A sufficient degree of craftsmanship and artistry (existing simultaneously).	DACS (2025)

End of Table 1

Parameter	Sources
<i>The artistry of the product:</i> Artistry should be understood as the use of skill, taste and original ideas of the creator in the production of an object that appeals to the artistic sensibilities of the audience and their aesthetic taste.	DACS (2025)
<i>Appreciation of artistic craft:</i> The criteria for evaluating art include a multifaceted and interdisciplinary approach, drawing from psychology, sociology, economics and cultural studies. Various factors influence art appreciation, the dynamics of the art market, the construction of meanings and the definition of expertise within the art industry.	Angoso de Guzmán (2021); Arora and Vermeylen (2013)

## 4. Research methodology

In the first part of the article, the literature review related to artistic craft/craftsmanship helped authors to identify the main criteria used to define the degree of artistry in the given craft. However, to the best of the author's knowledge, in the literature, there is no systematic approach and systematic indicators which could be used to identify and set whether a concrete craft is artistic or not. The research question was set based on the literature review and the research gap within the topic under study.

### 4.1. Data collection and empirical investigation

Our study aims to set coefficients by which a defined committee would evaluate whether and to which degree a particular craft is artistic. As a data collection method for the pilot research, the authors have chosen in-depth interviews carried out online. The study adopts a narrative inquiry perspective inspired by research conducted by Kouhia (2012). The narrative inquiry perspective is how people perceive the world, understand chance encounters, and give meaning to their lives through narratives (Kouhia, 2012; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). According to this study, narrative structures shed light on how people's unique, verbally, and visually expressed meanings help them comprehend their attitudes and appreciation toward crafts. As such, the primary focus of the inquiry process is the retrospective recounting of informants' relationship to crafts, mainly artistic craft (Kouhia, 2012; Howie et al., 2004, p. 448). The authors are aware of the limitations of this method, such as a small sample size, selection of the sample, and the external validity or generalization of the research. Also, an in-depth interview is a time-consuming method. However, despite its limitations, this method has yielded unique knowledge and insight into the perception of artistic craft in a sample of Czech organizations.

The in-depth interviews focused on discovering perceptions and experiences in the craft domain. All interviews were open, semi-structured, and thematic, following the pre-arranged framework of three thematic topics on the organization of work and production process, the products in which the entity specialises, and techniques and methods used in the production. The questions included in the in-depth interview were related to the perception of craft organizations (legal entity or natural person), whether and why their business area and industry

is or is not an artistic craft. These interviews were conducted with the owners or managers of eight anonymised Czech organizations during November, 2023. Table 2 shows the essential characteristics of the respondents. In qualitative research, it is crucial to select informants carefully, assuming they can provide information about the phenomenon under study. All the organizations were selected based on their industry, business focus, and tradition within the region. Businesses of various sizes and legal forms of business (natural persons and legal entities) were approached, namely:

- Enterprises/organizations with a primary activity in the jewellery industry CZ-NACE 321;
- Enterprises/organizations with the main activity in the glass industry CZ-NACE 231.

Moreover, interviewees were contacted based on previous in-person contacts and collaboration and their accessibility to participate in the given time frame. The authors carried out in-depth interviews consisting of four parts; the interview was created separately for organizations and individual entrepreneurs.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of the respondents (source: created by authors)

Respondent (code designation)	Industry (statistical classification of economic activities in the European community – NACE (for the French term <i>nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne</i> , in the Czech Republic according to CZ-NACE)	Size (category of full-time equivalent by number)	Year of establishment
Organization 1	Jewellery (321)	Small (25–49)	1994
Organization 2	Jewellery (321)	Small (10–19)	1991
Organization 3	Glass (231)	Large (250–499)	1991
Organization 4	Glass (231)	Medium (100–199)	1990
Organization 5	Jewellery (321), glass (231)	Small (25–49)	1995
Organization 6	Glass (231)	Small (10–19)	1997
Organization 7	Jewellery (321)	Micro (0)	2006
Organization 8	Glass (231)	Medium (100–199)	2007

Organization 1: a small company in the category of up to 50 employees follows the tradition in the region; for its professional activity, it needs educated employees from the secondary school of crafts and services – the field of jewellery and decorative objects manufacturing and the level of higher education the field of glass and jewellery design. They specialise in producing costume jewellery, glass figurines, decorations, and trophies. They have their own designers and also carry out custom orders. Among the technologies typical for the region (tradition), they mention glass grinding, gluing of components, and soldering of metal parts. They present their products through an online catalogue, have their sample room, organise open days, and participate in regional industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley, Czech Republic. Their market potential is worldwide.

Organization 2: a small family business with up to 20 employees listed design, graphic design, glass blowing and glass stone pressing as essential fields for implementing their activities.

The second generation has run the company since 2018. They specialise in the production of hand-pressed stones, components for dress decoration and jewellery making. They present their products through an online catalogue, have their sample room, hold open days, and participate in regional industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley. Their market potential is worldwide.

Organization 3: a large company with up to 500 employees, which needs employees with education in the following fields: glassmaker, glass grinder, mould maker, girdlers, locksmith, painter, welder; from secondary schools, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and design; at the university level, electrical and mechanical engineering, chemical engineering. The company has followed the regional tradition of craftsmanship in producing lighting fixtures since 1724. They specialise in lighting installations (design lighting fixtures, chandeliers, light objects, etc.). They use traditional artisanal drawings/patterns but have their own designers and offer realisation based on the customer's design. Their critical technological processes include hand-blowing and glass grinding, girdlery, artistic sketching, decorative electroplating, cast iron skills, milling, turning, welding, etc. They present their products through an online catalogue, have their own sample room, hold open days, participate in industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley, and have a worldwide sales network.

Organization 4: a medium-sized family-owned company with up to 200 employees needs employees with a vocational school and secondary school background in glassmaking. The company has been operating in the region since 1990 when the current chief executive officer initially established the company as a natural person. Since 2004, it has been operating as a legal entity. They specialise in chandelier glass components, glass sculptures, special gift bottles for alcohol filling, and laboratory and technical glassware. The realisation of products is based on the customer's design; they design the gift bottles themselves, according to their experience with the material and market demand. They are essential for the production technology of glass lathes and production over glass furnaces. They offer their products through an online catalogue, have their own sample room and participate in trade fairs. Their market potential is worldwide.

Organization 5: a small family business with up to 50 employees. The company implements a pearling craft passed down within families; the blowers are trained within the company. Knowledge of working with glass (technical glass blower) is an advantage for the blowers. The company is a continuation of a company that was founded in 1902. The company partly uses the so-called factor system, *i.e.* work at home up to about 60% of production. The main product range is beaded Christmas decorations. Product realisation is based on the company's historical archive, collecting antiques, and they have their own designer, including creating at the customer's request. Technological processes crucial to the company include blowing glass tubes, internal silvering of tubes, wetting glass tubes in acetone paint, cutting blown tubes into individual beads, painting beads and hand assembling of Christmas ornaments. They offer their products through an online catalogue, have their sample shop, hold exhibitions, hold open days, participate in industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley, run workshops, cooperate with schools, have a company shop alongside their electronic shop, and participate in craft fairs and markets. Their market potential is worldwide.

Organization 6: small business self-employed persons, up to 20 employees, organization needs workers apprenticed in glassmaking for their work. The company specialises in the creation of art glass, for which they use traditional artisan drawings/patterns, have their own designers and also produce work based on customer designs. Their leading technologies

include hand glassmaking, blown glass and metallurgically shaped glass. The company has its own sample room, organises exhibitions and open days, participates in industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley, promotes its products further through Czech centres, realisation of art projects and cooperation with artists of various disciplines. Their market potential is global.

Organization 7: a self-employed person without employees for his work graduated from a vocational high school of glassmaking, then at the Technical University of Liberec (TUL, Czech Republic), Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw (Poland), Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Arts (Poland), Toronto School of Art (Canada) and gained experience in a glass company. She uses traditional artisanal drawings/patterns and mood boards to realise her products. Her products include glass objects, jewellery and clothing appliqués. She uses all techniques of working with ready-made beads – peyote, herringbone, brick, raw stitches, loom weaving, and embroidery in all ways. It also involves working by the torch, fusing, and combining cut and compacted glass. She organises exhibitions, but her products are presented by companies that commission their production from her. The market potential is throughout the Czech Republic, as well as Canada and the United States.

Organization 8: a medium-sized family-owned company of up to 200 employees, it needs employees from the high school of glassmaking for its operations in all disciplines. It partly uses the so-called factor system for its production, *i.e.* work at home for about 20% of its activities. Its products are lighting installations, art glass, and facade art glass. They have their own designers for the production and realise it based on the customer's design. Important technologies for their production include blowing metallurgical glass, grinding and engraving glass, and fusing – heat treatment of flat glass. They offer their products through an online catalogue, have their sample room, hold exhibitions and open days, participate in trade fairs and are involved in industry initiatives such as the Crystal Valley. Their market potential is global.

Furthermore, to fulfil the aim of our study, we then asked respondents to evaluate the given indicators identified to determine the artistry nature of the particular craftsmanship. Based on the literature review, the authors identified twelve indicators which could be used to identify the degree of artistry in the given craft. The indicators are as follows:

- Use of traditional techniques and technologies;
- Elements of originality (distinctive handwriting);
- Specific materials;
- Artistic value (conscious artistic creation);
- Individual orders;
- Craft organization of production (realised order in terms of the entire production process);
- The final product does not enter further production;
- Aesthetic quality in terms of lifestyle at a given time;
- Mastery of the craft;
- The created product/work has a durable form; it is not a product of short-term consumption;
- Artistic-artisanal value;
- Handmade work.

If the respondent answered that they view their business as an artistic craft, we then asked:

- What makes the craft artistic?

- How do you see the applicability of your artistic craft today? What makes your products attractive to the modern consumer?

Two primary steps comprised data analysis. A qualitative content analysis that combines theory-driven and data-driven methodologies was utilised to make sense of the transcribed data. Following that, we conducted an analysis of the coefficients provided by the respondents, focusing on the indicators that determine the level of artistry in a specific craft. The following chapter discusses the collected data and the results of the study.

## 5. Results

Respondents were asked first to specify their company and then to identify the importance of the indicator and the extent to which the presented indicators can define artistic craftsmanship. Respondents rated the importance on a 5-point scale, where 0 means the indicator is not important and 5 means the indicator is very important. The scoring method was used to determine the weights. The respondent rated the importance of a criterion by assigning a score on the given scale, which is hereafter referred to as the  $pi$  score. The weight of the  $i$ -th criterion  $v_i$  was determined according to relation (1), where  $pi$  is the point value assigned by one respondent to the  $i$ -th criterion and the number of criteria is  $k$ :

$$v_i = \frac{p_i}{\sum_{i=1}^k p_i}. \quad (1)$$

If a group of  $n$  respondents judges the importance of a criterion, it is necessary to replace the expression  $pi$  in relation (1) by  $\sum_{j=1}^n p_{ij}$ , which is the sum of the score values assigned by all respondents to the  $i$ -th criterion selected.

The weights of the importance of the particular indicator are listed in Table 3. The weights are based on expert estimation in a pilot survey of companies cooperating with the team through online in-depth interviews. In the next step, an expert view on these companies was requested from an expert in the field of jewellery and glass, who evaluated the fulfilment of individual indicators for the given companies based on her knowledge and publicly available information. The expert's point rating is shown together with the weight of the indicators in Table 3.

Nevertheless, it must be considered that given the ratings from our respondents, each indicator has a different weight in the evaluation process. According to the data obtained, the highest importance (speaking of the weight) was allocated to the following indicators:

- Mastery of the craft;
- Elements of originality;
- Artistic-artisanal value and handmade work;
- Use of traditional techniques and technologies;
- Artistic-artisanal value, aesthetic quality and artistic value.

Furthermore, respondents were asked *What makes your craft artistic?* to collect more information regarding the artistry element within the crafts. As answers, the respondents used many factors they perceive as artistic in their craft. The summary of the responses is displayed in Tables 3–4.

**Table 3.** Rating of the importance of the particular indicator given the artistry element of crafts (source: created by authors)

	Traditional techniques and technologies (using traditional tools)	Elements of originality (distinctive handwriting)	Specific materials	Artistic value (conscious artistic creation)	Individual orders	Craft organization of production (realized order in terms of the entire production process)	The final product does not enter further production	Aesthetic quality in terms of lifestyle at a given time	Mastery of the craft	The created product/work has a durable form (it is not a product of short-term consumption)	Artistic-artisanal value	Handmade work	SUM
Organization 1	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	5	4	1	3.41
Organization 2	4	3	5	1	2	4	0	3	3	5	3	3	3.09
Organization 3	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	3.5	4.63
Organization 4	5	4	5	1	0	5	4	4	4	5	3	3	3.58
Organization 5	5	5	5	2	1	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	4.25
Organization 6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Organization 7	5	3	4	3	2	5	5	3	3	5	3	5	3.77
Organization 8	4	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	3.5	4.63
WEIGHT	0.0877193	0.0952381	0.0802005	0.085213	0.0776942	0.0726817	0.0501253	0.085213	0.1002506	0.085213	0.0902256	0.0902256	
CHECK	1												

Based on the results summarised in Table 4, it can be stated that a particular craft could be considered a 100% artistic one if all indicators were evaluated with 5 points (maximum). Using the defined points, artistic craft could be scaled following the proposed criteria:

- 0 point, meaning the given craft does not have any artistic elements in the business and cannot be considered artistic;
- 1 point, meaning up to 20% of the craft activities could be considered artistic;
- 2 points, meaning up to 40% of the craft activities could be considered artistic;
- 3 points, meaning up to 60% of the craft activities could be considered artistic;
- 4 points, meaning up to 80% of the craft activities could be considered artistic;
- 5 points, meaning up to 100% of the craft activities could be considered artistic.



**Table 4.** Respondents' perception and expert's assessment of art (source: created by authors)

Respondent	What makes your craft artistic? Answers of the respondents	Please give us the rate of artistic activities in %. Answers of the respondents	Evaluation of fulfilment of indicators, according to Table 3 in %.
Organization 1	"I believe that when we have standardized products and set quality levels, it is not art".	0	68
Organization 2	"The colour, shape and composition of the individual stones. Each piece is original".	80	62
Organization 3	"A unique product based on our own designs and proposals with lasting value".	90	93
Organization 4	"Our technology produces unique glass objects that differ significantly from the original production both in shape and size".	50	72
Organization 5	"Well-mastered craftsmanship is combined with the individuality of the manufacturer".	50	85
Organization 6	"The term art glass is used by viewers, customers, professionals and artists".	100	100
Organization 7	"Creative processing of traditional glass components by combining techniques that push the craft by applying modern technology".	40	75
Organization 8	"The result of our work is the sum of unique design and craftsmanship".	80	93

Public entities and policies could use these criteria to determine the amount of financial support, e.g. subsidies within the region. Different amounts of financial support would then be assigned according to the percentage amount of the artistry of the craft. Furthermore, Table 4 summarises respondents' perception of the degree of artistry in their craft. Data in the third column of the table were set based on the respondents' estimation; organizations did not rate themselves based on the weights of the given indicators but were only asked to estimate the percentage of artistry in general. Interestingly, the evaluation of the degree of the artistry of the participating organizations is a bit different according to the expert's evaluation based on the fulfilment of the specified twelve indicators, displayed in the fourth column. The most significant difference could be seen in organization 1, which did not perceive its craft as artistic because they have standardised products and set quality. However, based on the available information about the company and their tradition within the region, the expert's company evaluation is seen as artistic craftsmanship at about 68%. Organization 6 is considered artistic craft 100% based on the company's perception and the expert's evaluation.

It is important to say that not every indicator can be evaluated based only on the available online information about the company; for example, the degree of individual orders and the level of handmade work in the production process cannot be evaluated without personal knowledge regarding the company's business. However, this discovery is an important

finding in our research, and based on that, a further step for evaluating the degree of artistic craftsmanship in the given craft would be, for example, an interview with the company for verification of particular questions. This would be the next step in our complex research.

## 6. Discussion and conclusions

The paper contributes to the field by presenting a systematic approach to evaluate the artistry of crafts, filling the gap in the existing literature related to CCIs. This article aimed to identify indicators through which the artistry of a particular craft could be evaluated. Furthermore, existing literature about definitions of artistic craftsmanship were collected and analysed. By collecting and analysing definitions of artistic craftsmanship, the study establishes a unique framework and methodology for assessing the artistic value of crafts through uniform indicators. The study extends the relevant literature on crafts and their connection to CCIs by demonstrating the unique framework and methodology to identify and quantify the artistry of a given craft based on uniform indicators. This methodology not only allows enterprises and public sector entities to evaluate craftsmanship within their own contexts but also facilitates international comparisons across countries. However, it is essential to state that craft organization differs within each state, yet our proposed methodology could be used internationally in different settings. Overall, the paper's main contribution lies in categorizing indicators and determining their significance in evaluating artistic crafts, thereby enhancing understanding and providing practical guidance for supporting and developing CCIs worldwide.

Hence, our research adds value to the existing theory by presenting a framework of indicators for identifying and assessing artistic crafts. In practical terms, our study enhances the comprehension of current research on artistic craftsmanship. This study contributes to practice by offering a specific and generally applicable methodology for organizations and policy-makers of different countries facilitating the support and development of CCIs.

Our study has several limitations; firstly, the data were collected from a sample of Czech companies most of which were small enterprises. Second limitation is the geographical one as data were collected in the Czech Republic. Another limitation of the research concerns intellectual property rights, as discussions surrounding the creative industries have emphasised the importance of intellectual property rights in protecting artistic creation and fostering innovation (Rossiter, 2003; Suryansyah, 2019). However, our study did not investigate the part related to intellectual property rights of artistic crafts production.

In future research, authors want to discover and set specific documents/ways/methods through which each organization would prove and demonstrate the disponibility of each identified indicator, which is used in the methodology to evaluate the artistry of the craft. And to organise follow-up interviews with participating organizations to discuss the expert's evaluation of their business based on the given indicators and available information. To conclude, our paper provides valuable insight into the concept of artistic craft, considering the proposed methodology and the overview of the indicators. Overall, it contributes to the topical literature and confirms the importance of CCI in the European context.

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