



Dear William,

We have been very busy since April, and are only just managing to squeeze out our May newsletter before the end of the month! Below you will read about the new face to a long term dye plant project, new retail partners in Bali, symposia and expos in France and China, and a link to a fascinating paper written about the future of the textile arts in eastern Indonesia by a former Threads of Life staff member. But first some Field Notes.



Field Notes

We have only one new [Field Notes](#) to share in this issue, but it is an interesting one that explores the use of textiles in Balinese ceremony and the ritual context of that textile use, as witnessed at the 18-month ceremony for the son of one of our staff, Ni Komang Darmini, who co-authors the piece.

The Plant Mordant Project

Since 2006, Threads of Life's nonprofit partner, the Bebali Foundation, has been working to secure sustainable supplies for indigenous weavers of a



Girls of Tenganan, Bali, in geringsing double ikat during the village's ceremonial festival from mid-June to mid-July. See the textiles and rituals on one of our Hidden Bali Experiences

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Hidden Bali Experiences

Threads of Life is now offering a new schedule of tours accommodating guests at the Umajati Retreat. Our Hidden Bali Experiences can be arranged at any time to grant you access to authentic culture that honors tradition and avoids commoditization.

[Download Textile Tours Brochure](#)
[Download Nature Tours Brochure](#)

particular dye plant found only in remote forests. Sustainable harvesting practices have been established, and local markets are being supplied, but long-term sustainability of the business model has required the development of a new, international market. The Plant Mordant Project is the result of this work.



The Project offers natural dyers a unique opportunity to avoid mordants produced by industrial processes and make reliable colors 100% from plants. Powdered leaf from Symplocos trees can replace alum in conventional natural dye recipes and produce some exciting new colors. Natural dyers already chose plant dyes over synthetic dyes because they are aligned with their values, and the Plant Mordant Project offers an opportunity to extend the expression of these values by also using a plant-sourced mordant.

At its source, the Plant Mordant Project builds partnerships for sustainability with rainforest communities and indigenous textile artists in Indonesia. Through its sourcing and sales of Indonesia's traditional plant-sourced dye mordant, the Bebali Foundation (www.bebali.org) alleviates rural poverty and empowers women, saves rainforests, and supports the traditional textile arts. The Bebali Foundation brings to this project a decade of experience in the fields of conservation, indigenous culture, and rural livelihoods, while its partnerships with the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew and the Indonesian Forestry Department, and its funding from the Ford Foundation bring world class scientific rigor and accountability.

For more information visit: <http://plantmordant.org/symplocos/>

International Forum for Natural Dyes Provence, France, 11-13 October 2013

The European retailer for the Plant Mordant Project is Couleur Garance of Lauris near Aix-en-Provence in the south of France, and they are holding a three-day natural dye forum in October, including a symposium on the 11th and a marketplace on the 12th and 13th. Threads of Life will be speaking at the forum and selling through the marketplace. Couleur Garance have been very supportive of the Plant Mordant Project and are flying me to participate in the forum, during which the European marketing of Symplocos dye mordant will be launched.

For more information visit: <http://www.couleur-garance.com/index.php/forum-couleurs-vegetales/english-presentation>

New Retail Partners in Bali

As part of our program to extend the marketing reach of Threads of Life - a program that will soon include an e-commerce solution on our website - we have connected with two new retail partners on Bali, both of which share our values and commitment to traditional culture, a sustainable environment, and fair livelihoods.

Desa Seni in Canggu



[Download Nature Tours Brochure](#)

2013 Dates Available for Hidden Bali Experiences

- * June 10 - 13
- * June 26 - 29
- * August 16 - 19
- * September 3 - 11
- * October 25 - 28
- * November 1 - 8
- * December 21 - 31

For information [please inquire](#)



About Threads of Life

Thank you to everyone who reviewed us on TripAdvisor: [now ranked #1 of 22 places to shop in Ubud](#)

Threads of Life is a fair trade business that uses culture and conservation to alleviate poverty in rural Indonesia. The heirloom-quality textiles and baskets we commission are made with local materials and natural dyes. With the proceeds from the [Threads of Life gallery](#), we help weavers to form independent cooperatives and to manage their resources sustainably.



Donate to The Bebali Foundation

Threads of Life's nonprofit partner, the Bebali Foundation, works with the same communities as Threads of Life to support cooperative development and environmental sustainability. The Bebali Foundation trains weavers in the establishment and maintaining of credit unions, and the sustainable cultivation, harvesting and use of dye plants. Its

<http://www.desaseni.com/index.html>

The Desa Seni hotel and yoga retreat center in Canggu, Bali, strives to build an eco-green, sustainable community. The retreat is built with recycled, repurposed, or sustainable products from local sources on a landscape unaltered in its natural land structure and local waterways; 40% of the land is set aside for organic farming for their restaurant, enabling them to produce approximately 80% of the produce they serve. And Desa Seni is now selling Threads of Life textiles and pillows in its beautiful shop. If you are in the area, please visit to check it out.



Desa Seni will also feature an article on Threads of Life in its upcoming edition of Kula Magazine. For the current volume, visit: <http://issuu.com/desaseni/docs/kulavol10>

Kaltimber in Batuan

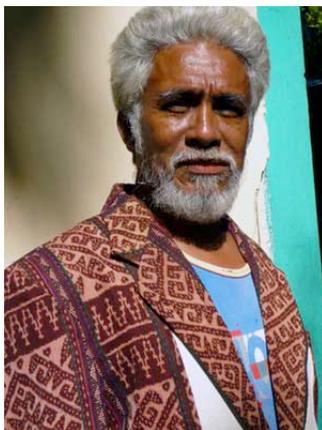
<http://www.kaltimber.com/>

Kaltimber sources and supplies 100% reclaimed unique Kalimantan hardwoods to commercial and residential projects throughout the Asia Pacific region. All timbers are legally and ethically procured from demolished warehouses, jetties, water towers and other structures, and have been carefully selected and dismantled. The Kaltimber warehouse, workshop, and sales office are in the town of Batuan, twenty minutes south of Ubud. In April 2013 they opened their new showroom as a center for excellence in green design, building and homewares, with Threads of Life as one of five initial retail partners. As Kaltimber owner Alex Ryan said at the opening, "This is about showcasing our values and the practice of sustainability in building, and about creating a one-stop retail space where people can find like-minded businesses in construction and interiors. It's about making the hard-to-find and often confusing information about green practices available in a clear and understandable way to people building here in Bali."



Ancient Emblems, Modern Cuts

At the September 2012 symposium of the Textile Society of America, Threads of Life staff member Ian Pollock presented a fascinating paper about the evolving culture of textile production and use in southeastern Indonesia, an area where Threads of Life supports many weavers' cooperatives to maintain their cultural identities in the face of the pressures Ian writes about.



Robbi Koroh, Raja of Amarasi, Timor, in a jacket made of traditional cloth

In his abstract, Ian writes, "Since antiquity, the peoples of the modern state of Indonesia have used textiles to communicate identity. Lines of male and female descent, clan and caste, allegiance to kingdoms both old and new, religion and spiritual accomplishment, and many other identifying characteristics are encoded into the hundreds of

use of dye plants. Its groundbreaking dye plant and dye recipe identification and documentation is the backbone of ongoing work to safeguard endangered indigenous weaving traditions, and the livelihoods they represent, from extinction. To support the Bebali Foundation, please donate at www.bebali.org via Give2Asia, PayPal, or bank transfer.



Umajati Retreat

[Open since July 2012 and rated #12 of 148 luxury hotels in Ubud on TripAdvisor](#)

Surrounded by tranquil rice fields, Umajati is a lush garden property hosting two elegantly converted 100-year-old Javanese teak wooden homes that provide 21st century living in 19th century houses. Each has a kitchen and several private garden spaces around a shared swimming pool. Umajati is just 10 minutes north of Ubud and offers daily, weekly or monthly rentals hosted by Balinese house-keepers and cooks who specialize in healthy and vegetarian food.

www.umajati.com

1-bedroom house, USD 190 per night.
2-bedroom house, USD 245 per night.
Weekly and monthly rates are available on request.

Threads of Life on TEDx



discrete textile traditions that continue to thrive across the archipelago. For the last fifteen years, the Indonesian state has actively engaged with traditional textile culture in ways that co-opt and alter these systems of meaning. The evolving relationship between traditional weavers and the state offers a window onto a nation struggling to reconcile its past with its future. In 1997, the government of the southeastern province of Nusa Tenggara Timur ordered government employees to purchase uniforms made from local traditional cloth. In a concurrent move, the Ministry of Industry formed weaving cooperatives in villages around the region, and encouraged them to mass-produce versions of local textiles using simplified motifs and time-saving chemical dyes. The new policies set in motion a slow, grinding battle over the meaning of textiles, and the identities of the people who weave and wear them." Ian goes on to ask, "Are traditional textiles commodities, or sacred heirlooms? Are the women who weave them skilled artisans, or priestesses? What is the proper relationship between the state and the older social systems expressed in textile culture? What is the meaning of 'traditional' textiles produced in factories in Java, or made into Western-style garments?"

The evolution of any culture is always expressed in the tension between preserving the old and embracing the new, and the counter-trend to the process Ian describes sees weavers forming small cooperatives explicitly to express tradition and identity while making a livelihood. For these women to succeed they will need support from successful commercial partners such as Threads of Life and sensitive support institutions like the Bebali Foundation.

Ian Pollock worked for Threads of Life for six years writing texts for the website and gallery, and overseeing a field research project for the Bebali Foundation. He moved to Canberra, Australia, in February 2013 to begin a Masters and PhD in Anthropology.

Read Ian's full paper at:
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/731/>

SpinExpo New York 16-18 July 2013 and Shanghai 3-5 September

Now, here's a new departure for us: SpinExpo. Organized by independent textile specialists, SpinExpo presents a truly international top level offer in the field of fibers, yarns for knitting, circular knit and weaving (fabrics and upholstery), socks, laces, labels and technical textiles. It takes place twice a year in Shanghai and once a year in New York. It's not where we would normally expect to find ourselves, but we will be sponsored to host a large exhibit at the September event in Shanghai, and sending a small exhibit to the New York event in July.

Attendees include the top people from all the world's major fashion houses and their suppliers; people who understand and appreciate textiles, and represent a large market for our work that we have not had access to before. In light of improving workplace and environmental standards for the textile industry in China, and in contrast to recent tragedies at factories in Bangladesh and Cambodia, the SpinExpo organizers are sponsoring Threads of Life to showcase what environmental sustainability meant to the region's textile arts in the pre-



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sustainability meant to the region's textile arts in the pre-industrial past.

For more information visit: <http://www.spinexpo.com/>

Best wishes,



from William, Jean, Pung and everyone at Threads of Life and the Bebali Foundation

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