



Katjamaarit

Collaborative Branding Beyond Borders

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Partner: Katjamaarit

Collaborators: Katja Pääkönen, Diptee Thapa, Fabiola Hernández Cervantes

Katjamaarit is a crafter from Hetta, Ennontekiö. She utilises locally sourced, naturally dyed wool. Two multicultural designers from the Villalno team worked together to co-develop a new brand identity, graphics, printed and digital materials as well as a complete video and photography package for her brand. They also worked on the layout for Katja's online store, which is now fully operational and offers Katja's knitwear and knitting patterns. A book catalogue featuring the photographic work is combined with a personal interview, composing a narrative about what it is like to be a wool crafter in the North. The inspiration for this collaboration emerged after the designers travelled to meet Katja and to learn about her way of working, her inspiring working environment, and her wool culture.



▲ **FIGURE 1.** A selection of Katjamaarit knitted garments. Photographs: Diptee Thapa, 2024.



▲ **FIGURE 2.** Diptee Thapa photographed Katjamaarit's designs at a winter market in Hetta. Photograph: Chia-Chen Chang, 2024.

Katjamaarit is a handmade brand by artisan Katja Pääkönen, a craft entrepreneur and VillaInno partner living in Hetta in the municipality of Enontekiö. Katja's products are handmade from wool she dyes naturally in her home atelier. Her emerging brand was at a good stage for enhancement, so our multi-disciplinary team worked together to co-develop a new brand identity, graphics, printed and digital materials, as well as a comprehensive video and photography package (Figure 1).

The collaboration began with a visit from the VillaInno team in December 2023, during which they met the person behind Katjamaarit's brand. The talks continued throughout the spring, and soon Diptee Thapa, a Nepalese visual artist and graphic designer currently living in Kalajoki, Finland, joined the design team to work on ideas for professional photography for the brand. Thapa's interest in textile art led her to collaborate with Katjamaarit. At the beginning of the collaboration, she travelled twice to Hetta to meet Katja, and it was during the spring of 2024 that she gained her first insights into what it was like to work with freedom with a craft-artisan.

Over a two-year period, Thapa got a chance to learn about Katja's world. She understood the value of working close to the artisan, something she had

"Katja is not only a very skilled crafter and knitter, but she is also designing her own clothes, weaving and designing patterns". -Diptee Thapa

never experienced before. Thapa had the opportunity to see the environment and nature that inspired Katja, her way of working, the surroundings of her studio, and the places where she sourced her plants and mushrooms for natural dyes. The northern weather and latitude made this collaboration an interesting journey.

During these trips, Thapa visited the local market in which Katja participates every winter; there, she became aware of various factors impacting craft: the temperature, the long winter season, the wait time to harvest local plants, the cycles of nature and animals, and local symbols. With all this information, Thapa developed a brand package for Katja's multiskilled business (Figure 2).



FIGURE 3.
Yarn skeins
of Katjamaarit's
naturally dyed wool.
Photograph: Fabiola
Hernández Cervantes,
2025.

In the final seminar, Thapa presented her working process and how she considered Katja's previous logo and colours to enhance and redesign a new identity. Thapa shared with the attendants how her role was to tell Katja's story, what it is like to work with craft entrepreneurs, and why people should support them. In her short film, Thapa shared a glimpse of Katja's way of life and work, building a narrative of what it is like to make a living in the North as a crafter.

A second designer, Cervantes, worked on the layout for Katjamaarit's book, using Thapa's photography package and brand identity. Cervantes travelled to Hetta in the winter of 2023, where she gained her first insights into Katja's way of working, her interests, style, and types of products she needed to enhance her brand. Cervantes started designing a set of graphic materials for Katja, including promotional printed materials such as postcards, a gift card, flyers to give with her products at markets, and a belt for wrapping her naturally dyed yarn, to name a few (Figure 3).

Cervantes went through Thapa's photography package and thought that Katja would benefit from a more complete set of materials, and decided to

put together a book to show all the pictures and the crafting process. She visited Katja for an interview. This published book (Hernández Cervantes et al., 2025) presents the entire outlook of Katja's work: from her atelier in Hetta to her ready-made products, from her naturally dyed yarns to pattern design (Figure 4). The book also documents an interview with Katja, in which she discusses her future goals as a crafter, her interest in wool, her inspiration to knit, and her slow, rooted-in-nature crafting cycles (Figure 5).

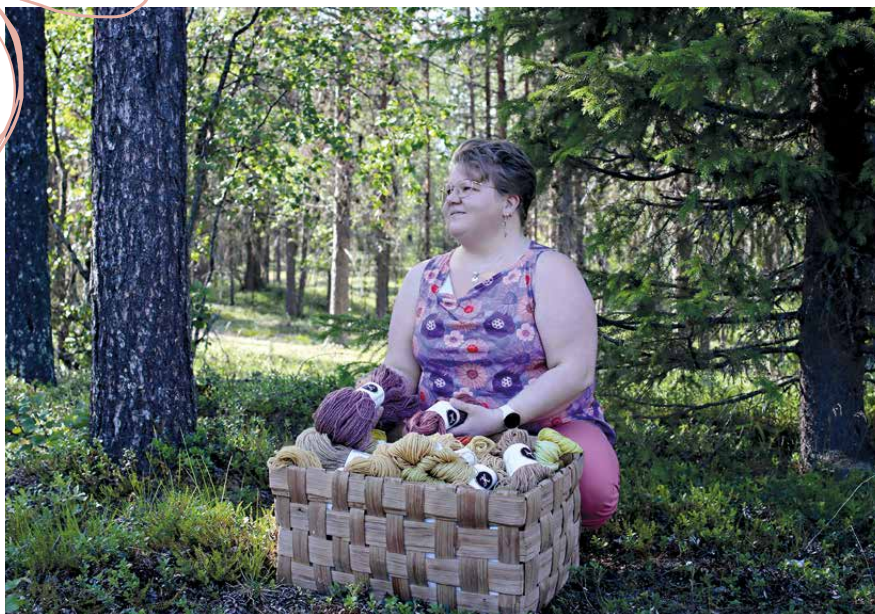
Thapa's graphic design involved considering Katja's previous logo and colours to enhance and redesign a new identity (Figure 6). Cervantes worked with Thapa's new brand identity, logos and photography to produce a set of materials that include the following:

1. A printed and digital booklet, published at the University of Lapland's library, that serves as a product catalogue to show the readers insights about her life as a crafter, her processes, her products, her inspiration; with the booklet containing professional photography by the two designers as well as the process behind the re-design of Katjamaarit's brand.
2. A set of A6-sized postcards ready to print.
3. A set of A5-sized promotional flyers that briefly summarise Katjamaarit's style, brand inspiration and insights about her knitted garments.
4. Belt design to wrap the naturally dyed skeins.
5. A gift card.
6. Social media highlights.
6. Re-design of brand identity, logo, and fonts.
8. Business cards.
9. An operational website showcasing Katjamaarit's products for sale.
10. A complete package of photography available for the crafter to use in her social media channels.
11. Audiovisual Production: a short film about Katja's life as a crafter in the North, narrating her working processes briefly, the process behind a pattern design, her future projects, her crafting challenges, and her relationship with natural dyes.

During the collaboration, the team produced work-in-progress pictures, book texts, and feed-



FIGURE 4.
Katja is knitting
in her studio in
Hetta. Photograph:
Diptee Thapa,
2024.



► **FIGURE 5.** Katja Pääkönen, in an interview with Cervantes, talking about naturally dyed wool. Photograph: Fabiola Hernández Cervantes, 2025.

back while planning the entire package of materials. In the future, Katja can use the entire package of graphic materials, video, photography, booklets, and co-designed materials from the last two years; she received some printed materials, the audio-visual production, and professional photography, all with the aim of supporting her business (Figure 7). Thapa and Cervantes produced a series of products and a brand identity package that includes logos, business cards, flyers, the complete design of a website and a book that serves as a catalogue. With this, the VillaInno project has made an impact on a small entrepreneur from northern Lapland, as the materials designed for Katja will substantially enhance the possibilities for her brand, hopefully serving as an example of good branding for future wool entrepreneurs that feature material sustainability, nature-inspired products, and crafts rooted in the Arctic.

References

Hernández Cervantes, F., Thapa, D., & Pääkönen, K. (Eds.) (2025). *Katjamaarit: neulontaa pohjoisessa* [Katjamaarit: Knitting in the North]. Lapin yliopisto. <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-337-503-1>

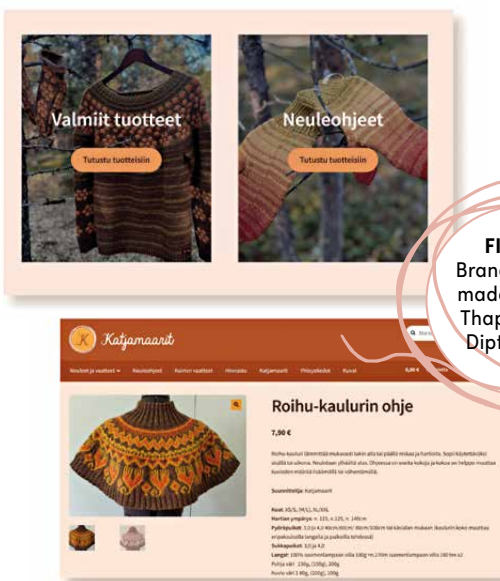


FIGURE 6.
Branding design
made by Diptee
Thapa. Images:
Diptee Thapa,
2025.

▼ **FIGURE 7.** Katja Pääkönen with her knitted garments. Photograph: Diptee Thapa, 2024.

