



A creative journey in Southwest China
Curated by DEYI Design Studio

August 22-31 / 2026

Meaningful Threads



MEANINGFUL THREADS is a journey to the heart of ancestral wisdom — an invitation to step into another rhythm of life, where knowledge is transmitted through gestures, soothing landscapes, and shared human encounters. Rooted in the mountains of Guizhou in Southwest China, the program offers an immersive experience within a culture deeply connected to its artisanal traditions, its relationship with the land, and the communities that sustain these living practices.



Designed for creatives and curious minds, **MEANINGFUL THREADS** is a journey that opens new paths for both creation and personal growth. Through encounters with master artisans of the Dong and Miao indigenous communities, participants discover techniques and knowledge that have been preserved and refined over generations. Through their hands, these artisans transmit far more than craft: they share a living legacy.

Far from being relics of the past, these ancestral practices offer powerful insights for the present. They reveal alternative ways of thinking, creating, and inhabiting the world – approaches that can inspire and enrich contemporary artistic practices and ways of being.

In a world increasingly defined by speed, productivity, and constant stimulation, slowing down becomes a quiet act of resistance. Observing nature, witnessing the rhythm of artisanal processes, and engaging with cultures rooted in deep ecological and spiritual relationships with their environment allows new patterns of connection to emerge.

New perspectives, new creative tools, and new ways of approaching life are at the heart of this journey – a journey into a territory rich in both practical knowledge and spiritual wisdom. Through this experience, participants are invited not only to learn, but to reconnect: with creativity, with community, and with a deeper sense of self.



Weaving the threads of community

MEANINGFUL THREADS was born from the unfolding journey of the Franco-Chinese design studio **DEYI**, patiently shaped over the years through fated encounters, dedicated research, and a deep commitment to indigenous artisan communities in Qiandongnan, Guizhou Province, Southwest China – homeland of the Dong and Miao peoples, a region of extraordinary cultural richness shaped by millennia of ancestral knowledge, yet economically fragile in the face of modernization and the rise of fast fashion.

Thread by thread, these relationships have grown into a living network linking villages in Guizhou and giving birth to this immersive program, which now hosts a global community of creators and seekers who continue to weave its living fabric. Within the philosophy of **DEYI**, such encounters are not seen as mere coincidence, but as part of the invisible threads that quietly guide human connections across time and space.

In Chinese culture, the ancient character 缘 (yuán) – often translated as destiny or predestined relationship – carries within it the image of silk threads. It evokes the invisible connections that bring people together across time and space, the subtle strands through which encounters unfold and human relationships are woven. In many ways, **MEANINGFUL THREADS** itself emerged through these unseen threads of fate. Through the work of **DEYI**, connections have gradually formed between artisans, creators, and seekers from all parts of the world.

Around a simple thread of cotton, a global community continues to take shape – each meaningful encounter adding a new strand to the weave, inviting us to rethink our relationship to craft, to culture, and to the ways we inhabit the world. What began as a single thread has gradually become a living tapestry of relationships woven across cultures, places, and generations.

缘



80. TRAVELERS

More than eighty participants from around the world have joined the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion over the years, forming a global community of curious minds and open hearts seeking meaningful cultural encounters. Designers and artists from diverse creative disciplines, artisans, curators, collectors, design and art students, as well as curious souls and adventurers have taken part in the journey. Through this experience, they become active participants in the DEYI ecosystem, contributing to a living network of creators, researchers, and cultural explorers. Their testimonies resonate in unison: they speak about the transformative power of the experience, which brought them a deep new perspective on their lives, their creative paths, and their relationship with culture, nature, and community.

7. EDITIONS

Seven editions of the immersion have taken place throughout the seasons, each one deepening the dialogue between participants and the living textile traditions of the Dong people. Organized in the mountains of Guizhou, each journey unfolds within the rhythm of village life, the cycles of nature, and the creative energy of the group. Every edition has been unique, woven through unexpected encounters, spontaneous moments of sharing, the bonds formed within the group, and the rituals experienced together – from textile workshops to tea ceremonies, music gatherings, and moments of contemplation. Each time, the journey takes on a new form, shaped by the people who participate and the living culture that welcomes them.

14. COUNTRIES

Participants from fourteen different countries have taken part in the journey, creating a rich intercultural dialogue around craft, culture, and shared learning. France, Spain, Andorra, Italy, Belgium, Ukraine, Russia, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, and China – with more countries to come. Beyond cultural differences, the immersion revealed how the universal language of indigenous knowledge can bring people together. Participants discovered that ancestral craftsmanship, music, tea culture, and shared daily life create a space where understanding happens naturally, beyond words. Many described the experience as a rare opportunity to connect deeply with others while exploring a culture very different from their own.

The journey
at a glance

30. ARTISANS

More than thirty artisans from the Dong and Miao communities have joined the immersion from different regions of Qiandongnan, one of the most culturally rich areas of Guizhou Province. These craftswomen and craftsmen share their knowledge with remarkable generosity, welcoming participants into their workshops and often into their homes. Through weaving, natural dyeing, embroidery, and textile preparation, they transmit techniques that have been preserved and refined over generations. Beyond the techniques themselves, they share a worldview – a way of living closely connected to nature, community, and ancestral memory. For many participants, these encounters with artisans become some of the most powerful moments of the journey.

3. EXHIBITIONS

The **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program has also inspired several artistic and cultural projects beyond the villages of Guizhou. Three significant exhibitions in Beijing, Paris, and Madrid have presented the project internationally, sharing the beauty and significance of Dong textile heritage with wider audiences. These exhibitions highlight the dialogue between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary creation, showing how ancestral techniques can inspire new forms of artistic expression. Through fiber art, art performance, and storytelling, they bring the voices of the artisans and the spirit of the villages to international cultural spaces.

20. MUSICIANS

More than twenty musicians from the Dong community have been part of the experience, bringing healing sounds and traditional instruments into the cultural dialogue of the immersion. In Dong villages, singing is an essential part of daily life and cultural identity. The traditional Dong polyphonic singing, known as the Grand Song of the Dong, is recognized as part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Through these songs, legends, history, and the collective memory of the community are transmitted from generation to generation. By sharing their voices with participants, the musicians open a window into the poetic and spiritual world of the Dong people, where music becomes a living language that connects people beyond words.

The journey
at a glance

THE SOULS BEHIND THE JOURNEY

This experience was dreamed, curated, and designed by the three co-founders of **DEYI** Design Studio – three kindred spirits brought together by a shared longing: to reconnect contemporary life with the wisdom of ancestral cultures and to inspire more conscious ways of creating and inhabiting the world.

Coming from different cultures and creative disciplines, the founders bring together complementary perspectives that shape the spirit of the journey. **Pauline Ferrières**, a French art director and cultural curator; **Adriana Cagigas**, a Spanish textile designer and researcher; and **Zhang Xing**, a Chinese interior designer deeply rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, form the creative and philosophical foundation of the project.

德

The name **DEYI** 德逸 reflects the values guiding and infusing their work. In Chinese philosophy, dé (德) refers to virtue, ethics, and the cultivation of inner integrity, while yì (逸) evokes harmony, freedom, and a life aligned with the natural flow of the world. Together, these characters express a vision of creation rooted in ethical awareness, respect for nature, and the quiet pursuit of balance. Through their respective practices – spanning curation, textile research, spatial design, philosophical and cultural exploration – the founders have woven a space where craftsmanship, indigenous knowledge, Chinese wisdom, and contemporary creative practices can meet. More than a journey, **MEANINGFUL THREADS** becomes a living platform for encounter, learning, and transformation.

逸



A cross-disciplinary
international team

The **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program would not exist without **Yang Yi**, the beating heart of the project. Born in the Dong village of Sanbao, she grew up immersed in the textile culture of her people. The women of her lineage were all involved in the making and trade of Dong textiles at a time when this craft flourished and sustained many families across the villages of the region. Like many young people from rural areas, Yang Yi left her village to work in the city of Shenzhen. Yet she eventually chose to return to her homeland, guided by a deep calling to preserve and share the textile heritage of her community. Today, Yang Yi serves as both host and cultural bridge for the journey. Through her warmth and presence, participants are welcomed into a world that remains largely inaccessible to outsiders. With generosity and trust, she opens the doors to village life, allowing guests to witness sacred rituals and ancestral traditions that are usually shared only within close community circles.



The richness of the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** experience lies above all in these encounters with the Dong and Miao artisans. Participants have the rare opportunity to live and create alongside a community of Dong women weavers who form the heart of the **DEYI** textile cooperative, supporting a dozen families in the region. Through their weaving and natural dyeing practices, these women are able to sustain their households while remaining in their villages – communities that have been deeply affected by the rural exodus. Many of these craftswomen never had the opportunity to receive formal education, yet they embody an extraordinary body of knowledge transmitted through generations. Their mastery of textile craftsmanship reflects the intelligence of the hand and the wisdom of lived experience. Beyond the techniques themselves, the artisans share a way of life rooted in resilience, community, and a deep relationship with the natural world.

YOUR HOME ALONG THE JOURNEY

Hidden in a quiet valley, surrounded by lush vegetation and the vibrant wildlife of the region, the place where guests stay appears like a small sanctuary among the mountains. The air carries the songs of birds and the subtle scent of indigo. This traditional wooden house of the Dong people is a beautiful refuge for creation and introspection, a dreamlike space where time seems to slow down and where the rhythms of village life gently unfold. The house is the home of Yang Yi and hosts the weaving and natural dyeing workshop, the beating heart of the **DEYI** textile cooperative. It is here that the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** journey begins and returns, a gathering place where the threads of the experience slowly come together and begin to weave their story.



A quiet refuge
in the pine forest





A quiet refuge in the pine forest

According to the principles of Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of geomancy, the workshop is believed to hold a very harmonious energy. Behind the house rises a protective hill, traditionally seen as a guardian of the home, while in front lies a small pond inhabited by a water buffalo. The presence of water in front of a house is considered a beautiful sign of prosperity and abundance. The house and workshop are also watched over by the ancestors and the spirits of nature. Inside the home, family and nature altars quietly honor these invisible forces, maintaining a sense of balance between the human world, the invisible realm, and the natural environment. Many guests describe feeling the gentle vibration of the place as soon as they arrive. The atmosphere of the house invites calm and presence, creating a space where participants often feel deeply soothed, grounded, and inspired in their creative process.

LOCATION & ACCESS

The house is nestled deep in the mountains, about twenty minutes by car from the ancestral Dong village of Sanbao by the river, and fifteen minutes from Rongjiang's modern train station, which is easily accessible from Guiyang Longdongbao railway station and airport, or around three and a half hours from Guilin airport. Though the setting feels remote and untouched, access remains relatively easy. From the workshop, participants set out on excursions into more secluded villages, where many of the cooperative's artisans live and work in close connection with their land.

Over the years, the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program has gently contributed to the renovation and evolution of the house, improving comfort while preserving its original spirit and authenticity. The guesthouse welcomes up to **sixteen guests**, offering an intimate setting for a deeply meaningful and transformative experience.



EARTH-ROOTED MEALS

Meals are shared outdoors under a beautiful wooden porch overlooking the surrounding hills, creating deeply cherished moments of connection. Food is deeply rooted in the land and local traditions, prepared with care by a Dong chef using seasonal ingredients from the region. As Dong cuisine is traditionally quite spicy, the dishes have been adapted for non-local guests, offering a gentle reinterpretation of traditional recipes while preserving their essence. Great attention is given to each participant, with meals also adjusted to accommodate special dietary needs when necessary. Guests also enjoy the abundance of local fruits, including mangoes, passion fruits, and bananas of exceptional quality, bringing freshness and vitality to each day. More than nourishment, these shared meals become a way to connect with the territory and its people. Prepared with generosity, the food supports both physical balance and a deeper sense of grounding throughout the journey.

YOUR HOME ALONG THE JOURNEY

The house unfolds over four levels, following the natural slope of the mountain. On the ground floor lies the weaving workshop, where wooden looms and craft tools are arranged, and where artisans work on a daily basis. Adjacent to it is the dyeing workshop, dedicated to the preparation of natural dyes and indigo dyeing process. It is also where the creative classes of the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program take place.

An adjoining space hosts the kitchen, where meals are prepared with care. Here, the family's treasured fermentation vats are preserved, used for rice wine and fermented plums, carrying flavors and ancient knowledge passed down through generations.

The second and third floors welcome the guest rooms and shared facilities. Each level opens onto a balcony, offering quiet views over the surrounding hills and inviting moments of contemplation.

The top floor, a refined expression of Dong carpentry craftsmanship, is the most sacred space of the house. It hosts the altar of Sama, the deity of the Dong people, and becomes a place for workshops, tea ceremonies, and moments of meditation. Over time, this space becomes a refuge participants return to, a place for journaling, contemplation, and gentle inner reflection.



A quiet refuge
in the pine forest

Every corner of the house is thoughtfully designed, curated by the studio's interior designer, Zhang Xing. An aesthetic inspired by Chan (Zen) philosophy unfolds throughout the space, creating an atmosphere of simplicity, balance, and quiet presence. Each room is adorned with handcrafted textiles, naturally dyed by the artisans. The subtle presence of indigo brings a sense of calm and quiet healing. The space is composed of local and natural materials, enriched with reused and repurposed elements. The design respects the original structure while integrating principles of circularity and eco-consciousness. Most of the furniture is second-hand or repurposed, creating a warm and inspiring atmosphere. Traditional objects and bamboo-crafted pieces from Yang Yi's lineage, along with antique furniture collected from nearby villages, give the house a unique soul shaped by memory and time.



The **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersions take place between August and September, a particularly vibrant time to experience local craftsmanship and natural dyeing. During this season, the abundant sunlight plays an essential role in activating the dyes, making it an ideal period for textile creation. The days can be warm, and the house has been gently adapted to ensure comfort. Air conditioning is available in the common areas, while the guest rooms are equipped with fans. Participants share four renovated bathrooms with hot water, and Wi-Fi is accessible throughout the house.





Fluent in both English and Mandarin, Pauline creates a bridge between worlds, allowing for subtle and meaningful exchanges. Beyond his practice as a designer, Zhang Xing is also a teacher of tea and Chinese philosophy. Together, they offer a space where ancestral wisdom becomes a living experience — not as abstract knowledge, but as something to be felt, embodied, and integrated.

The days are gently punctuated by tea ceremonies guided by Zhang Xing, a disciple of the Taiwanese tea master Liu, who approaches tea as a form of medicine through the lens of traditional Chinese medicine and Chan (Zen) philosophy. Participants are given rare access to teachings that are usually shared within intimate circles.

The top floor of the house is one of the most cherished spaces of the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** journey. Tucked beneath the wooden roof, it becomes a place of quiet gathering, often at dawn or in the evening, when the light softens and the atmosphere invites inward reflection. More than a space for creative workshops, it is a place of transmission that goes beyond textile knowledge and craftsmanship. Pauline and Zhang Xing, hosts and facilitators of the experience, also guide participants through an introduction to the philosophical foundations that have shaped Chinese civilization for over 4000 years. Drawing from Confucianism, Daoism, and Chan (Zen) Buddhism, these moments of sharing open a deeper understanding of the cultural and spiritual context in which these crafts exist.



The **MEANINGFUL THREADS** journey is an invitation to reconnect with the Qi, the vital energy that animates all living beings – an invisible force that gives life and movement to the world, and flows through the crafts of the Dong people, shaped from nature and created in deep reverence for it.

Through an introduction to Chinese cosmology, participants explore the principles of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. These are not approached as abstract theories, but as living principles, experienced through artistic and craft practices, tea rituals, and immersion in nature.

In this way, participants encounter a millennia-old philosophy that offers pathways toward inner balance and harmony. These ancestral teachings nourish not only personal awareness, but also the creative process, inviting participants to rethink how they create, perceive, and relate to the world.

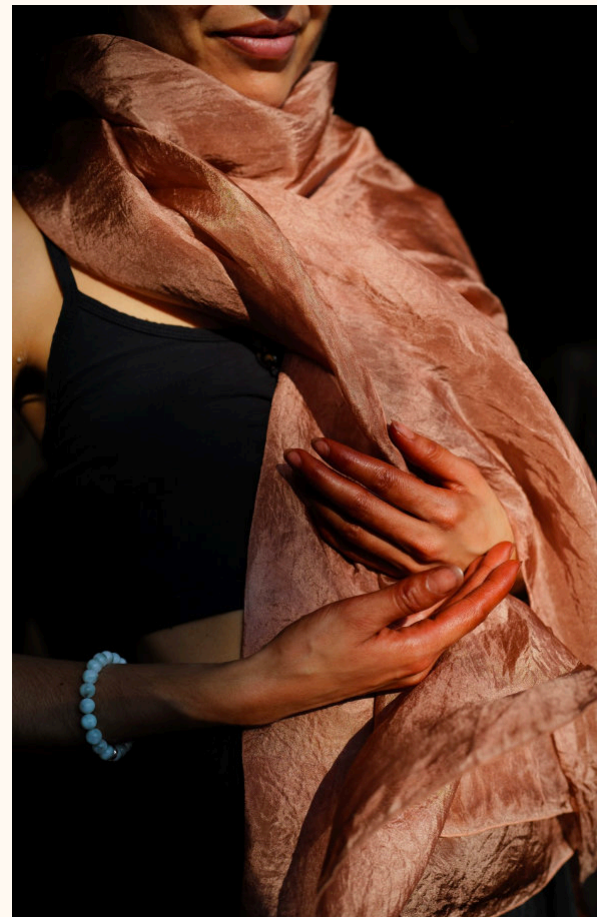
At its core, Chinese philosophy carries a universal message: it reminds us that nature is the ultimate guide. Meditative and embodied practices such as Qigong gently punctuate the journey, offering moments to slow down, listen, and reconnect. These practices open a path toward reconnection – to the rhythms of nature, to the essence of life, and to a deeper inner presence often lost in the pace of modern urban life.



THE NATURAL DYE & WEAVING WORKSHOP

Within the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion, participants are invited to learn and experience a range of exquisite ancestral textile crafts, guided by artisans from the Miao and Dong communities at the **DEYI** workshop. Beyond technical knowledge and ancestral processes, this transmission opens a deeper understanding of the spiritual dimension of these practices within local communities. In Guizhou, craftsmanship is not only a means of making, but a way of relating to the living world – a gesture of dialogue with the forces of nature and a form of reverence towards the ancestors.

Dedicated time is also offered for personal creative research, allowing participants to explore, experiment, and develop their own work in resonance with the experience. During these moments, participants have access to the dyeing workshop and are invited to freely engage with the tools of the atelier, including the looms and weaving instruments.



A sacred sanctuary
for crafts & creation

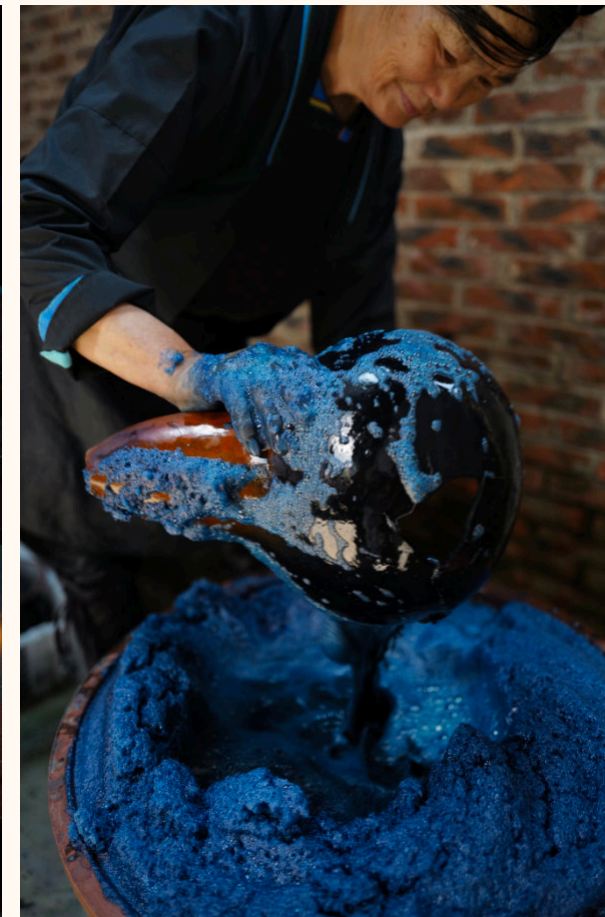


THE NATURAL DYE & WEAVING WORKSHOP

The indigo dyeing workshop is one of the most mystical spaces within the atelier. In Dong culture, the indigo vat is regarded as a living being, a member of the family to whom women speak, sing, and offer sacred offerings. Participants in the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion are given the rare opportunity to witness and take part in these ancient, yet fragile rituals.

In the remote mountains of Guizhou, textile craftsmanship is traditionally carried out exclusively by women, who, throughout the experience, become the guides and teachers, sharing their knowledge with warmth, generosity, and a deep sense of care. Beyond indigo, a treasured plant used both for dyeing and for its medicinal properties, Dong craftswomen also work with Chinese yam and mugwort to create a wide range of natural colors. More than color alone, these medicinal plants are chosen for their intrinsic qualities, as they are believed to protect and nourish the body.

For certain textiles, Dong artisans also use a particular mud collected from rice paddies, as well as powdered local stones, adding depth and texture to the fabric. Depending on the season and climatic conditions, participants will encounter different stages of these processes, as textile production in the Guizhou mountains follows the rhythms of nature, guided by subtle energetic timings and ancestral blessings.



A sacred sanctuary
for crafts & creation



THE NATURAL DYE & WEAVING WORKSHOP

In the **DEYI** workshop, participants have the privilege of intimately experiencing the full process of handmade textiles, from cotton spinning to winding, the preparation of the loom with warp threads, the weaving of the weft, and finally the dyeing. An ancestral dance unfolds, where women work in harmony, their gestures guided by the rhythm of wooden tools and their songs. Of great complexity, handweaving becomes a form of moving meditation.

For local communities, the preparation of the loom itself is a joyful ritual, a precise choreography in which each gesture is rooted in living memory. Nothing is written, no manuals exist in the villages. Only the transmission of movements, passed down from generation to generation of women.

Participants in the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion are introduced to the rich variety of traditional weaving patterns, each carrying symbolic meanings and subtle energies. Since its founding in 2019, the **DEYI** studio has been engaged in a long-term process of documenting and preserving these ancestral motifs, some of which had been forgotten, while also supporting the transmission of these techniques to younger generations.

These gestures remind us that, in Dong culture, weaving goes far beyond the making of cloth. It is a form of social connection, a space where women gather, share, and create together. It is a way of sustaining bonds and nurturing a sense of family.



A sacred sanctuary
for crafts & creation



“Dong Women weavers can be defined as "The Dong's Alchemists". The ancestral and complex knowledge they hold as well as the intricate dance they perform while working with the laws of Nature, makes their craft a unique form of spiritual practice and philosophy. Their skill and artistry empower them to expand and gain political autonomy and influence. Even if the weight of patriarchy is more present today, historically, the Dong minority used to be a matriarchy. Such imprint still remains vibrant within their social norms, notably, at the heart of Sanbao village, a group of women hold the keys to the main temple. They are called "the guardians of peace" who inherited such title from their respective mothers and simply put, it is strictly prohibited for men to come inside the temple... In the face of the rapid modernisation currently transfiguring China, along with the ever growing consumerist drive, the fragility of their threads is being tested. Nevertheless, their resilience and togetherness remain intact.”

Noémie Kadaner · Belgium
Documentary Film Director · Photographer
Meaningful Threads Resident

IN EVERY THREAD A STORY

The Miao and Dong communities of Guizhou do not rely on a written language. Their culture is primarily oral, expressed through dialects that vary from one mountain to another. Their ancestral stories, legends, and origin myths are carried through traditional songs, as well as through the intricate patterns found in embroidery, weaving, and wax-resist dyeing. In this way, textiles hold a hidden language. Preserving this textile heritage is therefore essential, as it also means preserving the memory of a people – their history, their myths, their identity, and the very language through which they understand and relate to the world. Throughout the journey, participants are invited to decipher this subtle language, a living narrative that reveals cosmology, memory, and the deep relationship between humans and the natural world.



When textiles
speak



Over the years of research and field exploration led by the founders of DEYI, the studio has gradually built a collection of antique embroidery pieces and traditional garments from the Miao, Dong, Yao, Gejia, Buyi, and other indigenous communities of Guizhou. These antique textiles, which carry myths of origin and bear witness to the extraordinary craftsmanship of Guizhou women, are considered true family relics, passed down from generation to generation. During the immersion, participants have the rare opportunity to study and handle these pieces, imbued with presence and memory, some of which could be displayed in the world's most prestigious museums. Among them are exceptional works adorned with symbolic motifs such as the Butterfly Mother, believed to be the ancestral figure of the Miao and Dong peoples, the sacred bird, and other legendary forms that bring life to the fabric.



LIVING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

MEANINGFUL THREADS offers an experience rooted in daily life, where participants are welcomed into the homes and rhythms of rural Dong communities, living alongside women at the heart of this culture. This immersion invites a direct encounter with a world in transformation. In the mountains of Guizhou, ancestral ways of life are increasingly challenged by the forces of modernity. While many women aspire to greater comfort and improved living conditions, this evolution also brings the gradual disappearance of sacred rituals, gestures, and knowledge, often preserved today only by the elders. To be part of this journey is to witness these tensions from within. It is to experience the coexistence of continuity and change, of preservation and adaptation, and to approach these realities with sensitivity and respect.



A world
in transition



Historically, Dong and Miao societies were structured around matriarchal systems, an imprint that remains deeply present today. Women continue to hold a central place within the community, embodying a strong sense of solidarity, sorority, and mutual support. Whether in textile practices or daily life, their gestures are collective and rooted in connection. At the heart of Dong spirituality lies Sama, the female ancestral deity, considered the mother of the people. In many villages, her temple is entrusted to elder women, who hold its keys and continue to perform rituals to protect the community. During the immersion, participants have the rare privilege of visiting the Sama temple, guided by these guardians.

Dong culture also reflects a dual heritage, shaped by Confucian reverence for ancestors, visible in household altars, and by an animist worldview in which mountains, rivers, bridges, and wells are perceived as sacred divinities.



SAMA TEMPLE

Through this immersion, participants are invited to experience these ways of being from within, at a moment when they are both fragile and profoundly meaningful. In a world where many of these values are fading, these communities offer another perspective, one rooted in connection, balance, and a deep relationship with the living world.

Cultural differences are naturally part of this journey. To support each participant, a detailed guide is shared in advance, offering practical information for travel as well as gentle guidance on local customs and ways of being. This preparation allows the experience to unfold with greater ease, awareness, and respect for the communities encountered.



THE JOURNEY ITINERARY

The next edition of the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** experience will take place from **August 22 to 31, 2026** guided by Pauline Ferrières, Yang Yi, and Zhang Xing. This ten-day journey has been carefully designed to offer a deep immersion into Chinese culture, far from the usual paths. It weaves together encounters with indigenous textile craftsmanship, meditative and embodied practices, and moments of contemplation, forming a beautiful initiatory journey where every detail has been thoughtfully considered to create an experience rooted in authenticity and in close connection with nature.

The journey begins in the breathtaking landscapes of Yangshuo, offering participants a gentle transition into the experience and time to settle into a new rhythm. A pick-up is organized from **Guilin Liangjiang International Airport**. After a first night immersed in the beauty of Yangshuo's mountains and rivers, the group travels together to the Qiandongnan region of Guizhou, reaching the **DEYI** sanctuary nestled in the heart of the pine forests, where life unfolds in harmony with nature within the Dong community.

The program of the journey is detailed in the following pages and may be subject to minor adjustments.



In the spirit of an
initiator journey

SAT 22. 08

**ATTUNING TO THE VIBRANT
MOUNTAINS OF YANGSHUO**

The group gathers at Guilin Liangjiang International Airport, marking the beginning of the journey. From there, a transfer leads into the lush landscapes of Yangshuo. Nestled among karst mountains and winding rivers, this first stop offers a gentle transition into the experience. Participants are invited to rest, breathe, and slowly attune to the rhythm of the place, discovering the poetic beauty of Yangshuo's scenery and traditional architecture.



SUN 23. 08

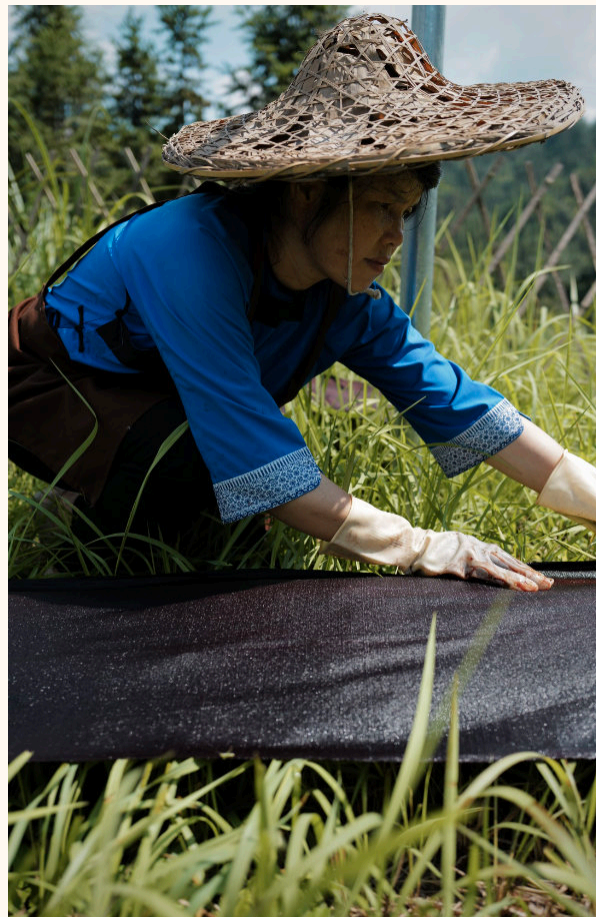
**ENTERING THE SPIRITED LANDS
OF THE DONG PEOPLE**

The day opens with an exploration of Yangshuo's river and mountain landscapes, whose timeless beauty has inspired generations of Chinese painters. Around midday, the group journeys towards the mountains of Guizhou. Upon arrival, participants are welcomed by the Dong community with a traditional singing ceremony at the **DEYI** workshop, a wooden house nestled in nature. The space is introduced as both a home and a place of creation, followed by a presentation of the **DEYI** team and the spirit of the immersion. The day gently unfolds with a first shared meal in Dong lands, followed by a tea ceremony, a moment to gather, connect, and set intentions for the journey ahead.

MON 24. 08

IMMERSING IN DONG ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE

The day opens with a tea ritual, followed by an introductory session on Chinese philosophy and wisdom traditions that will gently infuse the journey, inviting participants to approach craft and creation through a new lens. In the afternoon, participants are introduced to cotton hand-spinning and traditional loom weaving, guided by the artisans at the workshop. Through these gestures, they begin to experience the rhythm and intelligence of ancestral techniques. The day concludes with a traditional Dong festive dinner, where local delicacies are shared and Master Yang, a renowned singer of the Dong community, introduces participants to traditional songs.



TUE 25. 08

EXPERIENCING THE HEALING POWER OF INDIGO

The day begins with a gentle Qigong practice, attuning the body to the rhythms of nature. In the morning, participants have the rare opportunity to take part in an ancestral Dong ritual to awaken a new indigo vat. This sacred moment offers insight into the spiritual dimension of natural dyeing for the people of Guizhou. In the afternoon, artisans guide participants through an indigo tie-dye workshop, sharing the stories and healing properties of this ancestral plant. The day gently closes with a tea ceremony exploring tea as a form of medicine, following the principles of traditional Chinese medicine.

WED 26. 08

JOURNEYING INTO THE LIVING CULTURE OF A DONG VILLAGE

The day begins with an early departure towards a beautiful remote village in the mountains, where several artisans from the DEYI textile cooperative live and work. Welcomed by the villagers, participants step into daily life at a particularly vibrant moment of the year, as the rice harvest approaches. They take part in traditional music ceremonies, share tea in the rice fields, and discover the process behind the iconic shiny textiles of the Dong people. Far from conventional paths, this day offers a rare glimpse into a way of life deeply attuned to Mother-Earth. Participants encounter traditional hairstyles, garments, and silver adornments, while experiencing the richness of a living culture. The group returns to the DEYI workshop at night, carrying the memory of a day filled with endless discoveries.



THU 27. 08

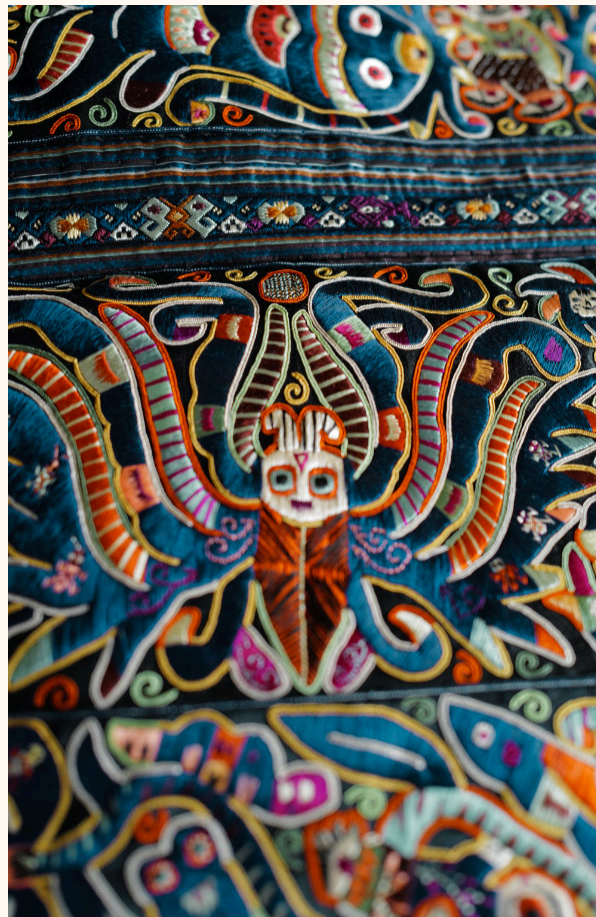
DIVING INTO CHINESE COSMOLOGY AND NATURE-BASED MEDICINE

The day opens with a Five Animals Qigong practice, followed by a session dedicated to the ancient system of Bazi astrology. This exploration of Chinese cosmology offers participants insights for both personal cultivation and their creative path. In the afternoon, Dong artisans guide the group through a Chinese yam dye workshop on silk, revealing the process behind its warm, earthy tones. The day concludes with a sensorial experience centered on medicinal teas and handcrafted incense, offering a rare transmission from the teachings of tea master Liu.

FRI 28. 08

DISCOVERING THE HIDDEN LANGUAGE OF GUIZHOU TEXTILES

The day begins with a visit to the traditional Dong village of Sanbao, by the river, a place where ancient ways of life meet the transformations of the present. Participants offer reverence at the temple of Sama and share meaningful encounters with village elders and artisans from the **DEYI** cooperative at work. In the afternoon, participants are introduced to the hidden stories and symbolic language of traditional patterns from Guizhou through the remarkable antique embroidery collection of Miao artisan Pan Xiaomei. As night falls, the day culminates in a celebration of the Full Moon, with a tea ceremony held under its luminous presence.



SAT 29. 08

LIVING ANCESTRAL WELLNESS RITUALS

The morning unfolds with a Qigong practice, followed by an introductory session on traditional Chinese medicine, placed in dialogue with the Dong way of life. Participants are then invited to experience a unique moxibustion ritual with essential oils and incense, offering a moment to restore balance and harmony. In the afternoon, two Miao sisters guide a batik workshop, introducing the wax-resist indigo dyeing technique while deepening the exploration of traditional patterns discovered the day before. In the evening, Dong women share their wellness rituals with the group, including a mugwort foot bath and a traditional haircare practice using rice fermented water.

SUN 30. 08

GATHERING THE ESSENCE OF THE JOURNEY

The morning unfolds with a final Qigong practice, offering a moment of grounding before entering more deeply into tea as a form of medicine. Through tea moxibustion and transmissions inspired by the teachings of tea master Liu, participants explore the subtle relationship between body, energy, and nature. In the afternoon, time is held for personal creative research within the studio. Supported by the artisans, participants are free to explore, refine, and give form to what has emerged throughout the journey. The day gently closes with a nourishing dinner and a final tea ceremony, a moment to gather the essence of the experience and share it together.



MON 31. 08

BRINGING THE TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY BACK HOME

The final morning begins with a closing tea ritual, followed by a circle of sharing, where participants reflect on what has been lived and what they carry forward. As the time of departure approaches, the group prepares to leave the mountains, carrying with them the threads of the journey. Farewells unfold in the early afternoon, before the transfer to Guilin International Airport. Until we meet again.

AJOURNE Y ROOTED IN SOLIDARITY

MEANINGFUL THREADS is conceived as a solidarity-based journey, rooted in a deep commitment to supporting local craftsmanship and the communities who carry it. Through this program, the **DEYI** textile cooperative is able to provide sustainable income to several families of artisans and musicians living in rural villages of Guizhou, where traditional ways of life have been deeply impacted by rural exodus and the decline of handmade practices. In regions where many villages have been partially deserted, and where craftsmanship alone can no longer sustain livelihoods, this initiative contributes to creating new possibilities. Beyond economic support, the program also helps sustain intergenerational transmission, enabling artisans to continue their craft and support the education of their children, while remaining in their home villages. Participating in this journey means becoming part of this living ecosystem, where each presence contributes to the continuity of these ancient cultural practices.

MEANINGFUL THREADS is an immersion into rural life and natural environments, far from the comfort and standards of large urban settings. Participants will visit remote villages where living conditions can be very simple, and at times confronting. This journey invites openness, sensitivity, and the capacity to encounter different realities with respect and humility. The experience takes place in close connection with nature, including outdoor activities, walking in mountainous terrain, and the possible presence of insects and other natural elements. Participants are expected to be in good general health and able to move comfortably in such environments. Due to the nature of the locations and activities, the program is not suitable for individuals with limited mobility or certain health conditions. We encourage each participant to carefully consider their readiness to engage with this experience, with an open heart and a grounded presence.



Preserving culture
through connection



JOIN THE UPCOMING JOURNEY

Registrations are now open to welcome a new group of creative souls and seekers from diverse horizons, ready to weave the next chapter of the journey. The eighth edition of **MEANINGFUL THREADS**, taking place from **August 22 to 31, 2026**, unfolds under the energy of the Yang Fire Horse, a year associated with creativity, transformation, and new momentum.

Guests are invited to join the immersion either in a shared room or a single room. For shared accommodation, it is preferable to come with someone already known, allowing for a more harmonious experience.

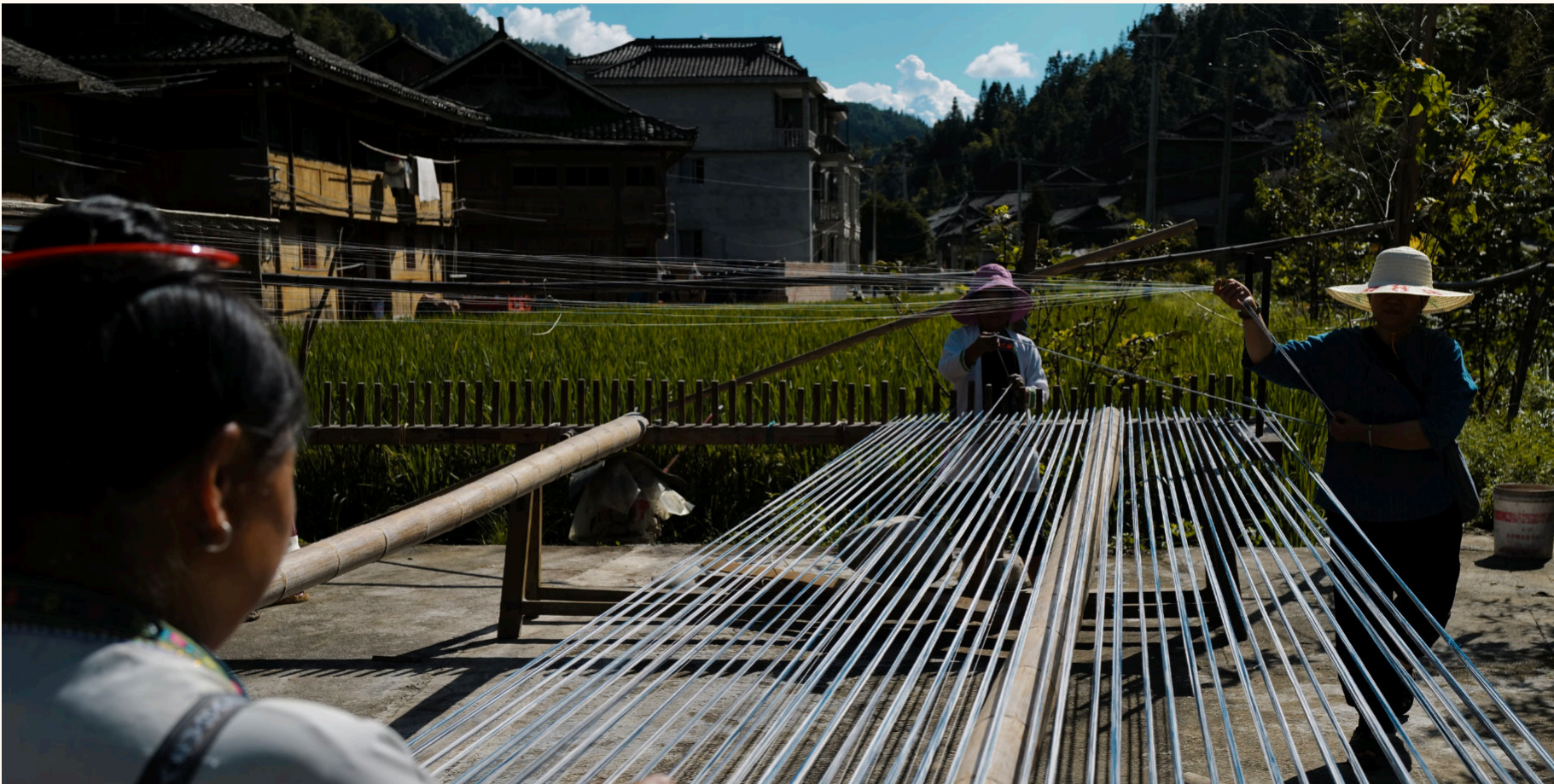
The participation fee is as follows:

2000 EUR
SHARED-ROOM OPTION

2500 EUR
SINGLE-ROOM OPTION

The journey is designed as an all-inclusive experience, covering accommodation, meals, domestic transportation within China, workshop materials, and all scheduled workshops, teachings, and guided activities. International flights, visa fees, mandatory travel and medical insurance, and personal expenses are not included.

Many nationalities now benefit from a 30-day visa-free entry to China. For those who require a visa, **DEYI** provides guidance and support throughout the application process. Assistance in selecting the most suitable flights is offered to all participants. To confirm participation, **a deposit of 25%** is required, along with acceptance of the immersion's terms and conditions. For registration or further information, please contact contact@deyi-living.com.



An all-inclusive immersion



HEARTFELT TESTIMONIES

“In July, I embarked on an adventure with other designers to explore and study the culture of the indigenous people of Guizhou, China. I am still processing everything I experienced. Sometimes, while studying something external, we also engage in deep introspection. I realize how everything is interconnected: the people I met, the places I visited, the experiences we shared – each has changed me in ways I am only beginning to understand. This journey was filled with discoveries, emotions, and learning that left an indelible mark on me. There are not enough words to capture the magnitude of what I experienced and how transformative this trip was. Sometimes, the deepest truths are beyond the reach of language – and this trip is one of those experiences that you carry in your soul forever.”

Ana · Panama · Fashion Designer

“I wanted to write to you to express how grateful I am for every single one of you who made this journey possible. I went there not knowing what to expect, and I came home feeling like a different person, loving this beautiful country even more. You showed us China in the most mindful, eye-opening way, and I couldn’t be happier that this was how I experienced the country for the first time. Thank you for allowing us to discover China in all its richness – its values, people, culture, food, and philosophy – from the forests and villages of Guizhou to the breathtaking mountains of Guilin. You have reminded us – those of us who live in the city – of what we so often forget: how to live slowly, how to appreciate the little details in life, and how to reconnect with Nature.”

Beatriz · Spain · 3D Designer



A once-in-a-lifetime
experience

“Everywhere we went, we were received with extraordinary warmth. The artisans at the workshop, the women who welcomed us with tenderness and laughter, and the villages of Zengying and Yaxian, where life itself seemed woven like poetry into everyday gestures. And Grandma Wu Nainai – what a radiant soul. Her smile still echoes somewhere in my heart.

The food deserves a chapter of its own. Every meal was a revelation. The colors, textures, and flavors left me feeling both nourished and humbled.

I did not expect the retreat to transform me so profoundly, but it did. I left China with the quiet certainty that a part of my soul now belongs to its rivers, its people, its stillness and its sounds. Every step of the journey filled me with awe. And that sense of wonder continues to live within me.”

Sadie · USA · Creative manager



“This immersion was much more than a journey; it was a transformative encounter. Not only did I find important answers for a personal project that has accompanied me for years, but also for questions about life and the many ways it unfolds. I chose to come to this journey without specific expectations, but rather with the intention of opening myself completely to the unknown and allowing myself to be surprised. It surpassed any preconceived ideas I might have had.

This experience represented a significant step in my personal growth, inspiring me to become more aware of myself. Through the tea ceremony, I learned to appreciate the beauty of contemplation and to reconnect with a calmer, more restful, and peaceful version of myself. Also, every person I met, including my fellow participants in the immersion, inspired me to become a better person.

During this journey, I was able to see and understand first-hand the weaving of a true community, built on respect and love for oneself and for others. I now leave with my eyes and heart open, ready to observe and discover the world through new and enriching perspectives.

One sentence stayed deeply in my heart: “Take what already comes with you – your roots – and transform it to create from who you are, from what you have, from your essence.” Thank you deeply for the care and attention you gave to every detail of this experience. It was a gift for my soul.”

Jazmin · Colombia · Craftswoman

“From the moment the immersion began, I couldn’t believe I was in China. I found myself in a loop, constantly questioning if it was real or if I was daydreaming. My mind kept asking the same question: “Have I ever been so present?” Guizhou left a mark on me. Guizhou nourished me. Guizhou is a blooming teacher and a caring mother. Guizhou stitched my heart back together.”

Vero · Venezuela · Fashion Designer

“Sometimes it’s hard to believe glowing testimonials, and a little skepticism is natural. I can honestly say this immersion lives up to every word. It’s life-changing, not just for the destinations, but for the depth, intention, and heart behind every moment. You visit hidden villages in China that very few outsiders see, witnessing people living in traditional homes and preserving spiritual and cultural practices largely untouched by modern pressures. Observing these traditions, including arts and crafts under threat from fast-fashion and mass production, offers a fresh perspective on the quality, heritage, and soul of China.

Pauline and the instructors are incredibly supportive throughout; from pre-trip anxieties and visa questions to anything needed during the immersion. Every activity, even spontaneous ones, feels intentional, with a perfect balance of structured experiences and free time for reflection.

I am deeply grateful to have been able to join this journey. Beyond the learning and experiences, I formed friendships I believe will last a lifetime, gained a renewed perspective on life and culture, and felt a profound sense of connection. Knowing that the immersion also supports the communities we visited made it even more meaningful.

This is more than a trip; it’s a soulful investment in yourself, in understanding the world, and in witnessing the sacredness that still exists in corners of China. I feel as passionately as Pauline does about preserving this special part of the world and sharing it with others, and I’m so grateful to have experienced it firsthand.”

Joanna · USA · Psychology Graduate



“After the final shared tea ceremony, the emotion felt overwhelming for me to be able to put this life experience into words. These tears that filled my eyes were truly a symbol of all the gratitude I feel for having had the chance to live such a precious moment, surrounded by such a kind and connected group, which also contributed deeply to the quality of this immersion. I had the intuition that this experience would transform my vision of the world, but it went far beyond anything I could have anticipated. This pause in the middle of such a chaotic world was exactly what I needed, and it deeply resonated with my core values. I wish DEYI the recognition it deserves for all the work that has been accomplished and for the path that still lies ahead.”

Diane Collongues · France
Textile Designer · Merigot Sanzay Studio

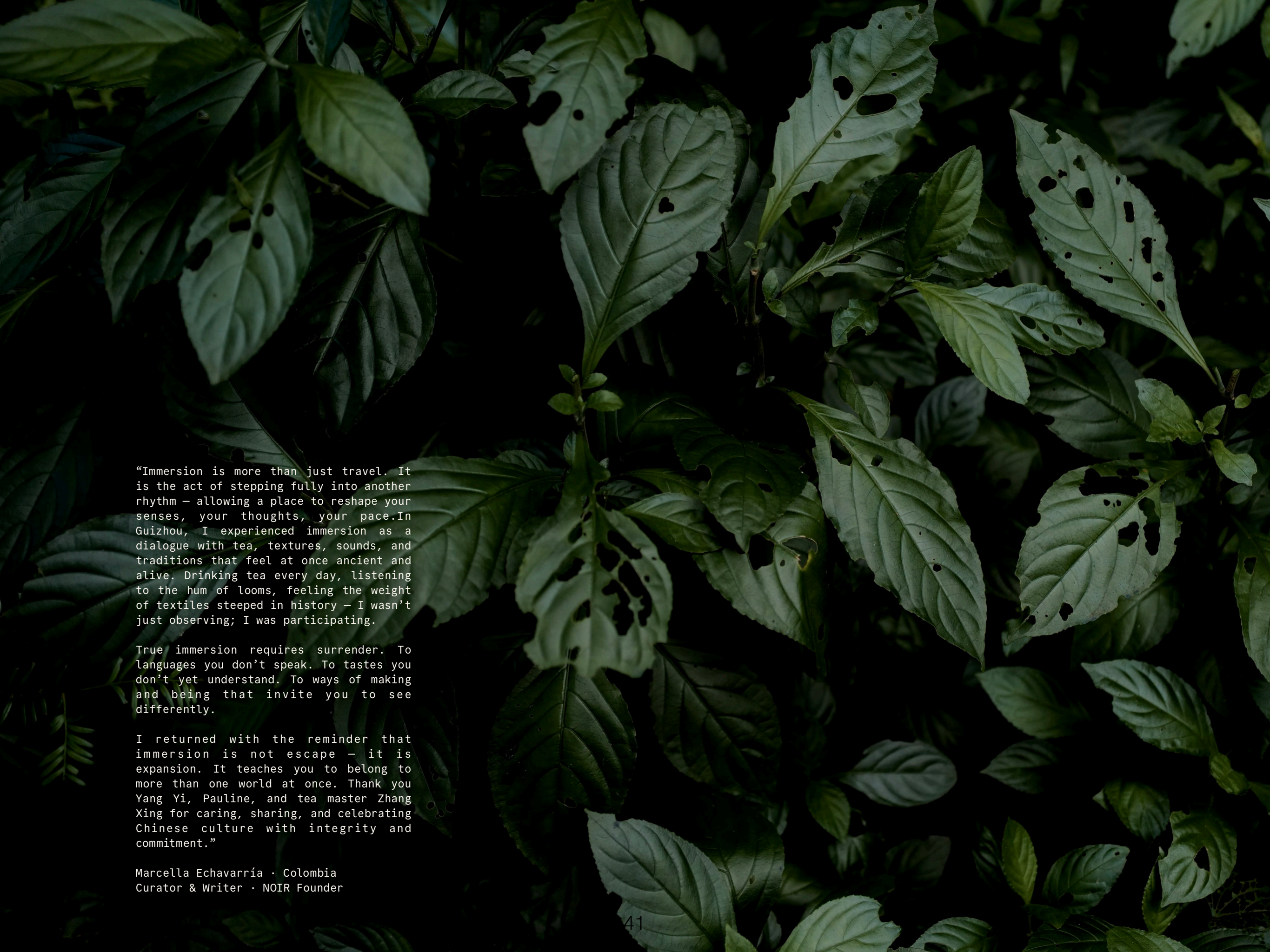
“As I slowly begin to assimilate everything we experienced, I’m writing to thank all of you for your teachings and kindness. I still can’t believe I was there with you in Guizhou – not even in my wildest dreams would I have imagined living something like that. You are a true inspiration for so many of us. I’m writing to you while listening to the rain... I know I will never be able to hear it again without thinking of Sama, the Dong goddess of rain, and everything we shared together in China. I miss drinking tea and meditating with the sound of the rain in the background. I know that, at some point in my life, I will return to Guizhou. I dream of creating something in the future that transmits as much beauty and depth as you do with DEYI.”

Julia · Spain · Fashion Designer

“I keep thinking about how grateful and happy I am to have been able to live this experience. I truly believe it has changed me and nurtured me deeply. During this journey, I felt like my truest self, and I wish to carry this feeling with me when I return home. I will always remember everything that brought me so much happiness.”

Cristina · Spain · Product Designer





“Immersion is more than just travel. It is the act of stepping fully into another rhythm – allowing a place to reshape your senses, your thoughts, your pace. In Guizhou, I experienced immersion as a dialogue with tea, textures, sounds, and traditions that feel at once ancient and alive. Drinking tea every day, listening to the hum of looms, feeling the weight of textiles steeped in history – I wasn’t just observing; I was participating.

True immersion requires surrender. To languages you don’t speak. To tastes you don’t yet understand. To ways of making and being that invite you to see differently.

I returned with the reminder that immersion is not escape – it is expansion. It teaches you to belong to more than one world at once. Thank you Yang Yi, Pauline, and tea master Zhang Xing for caring, sharing, and celebrating Chinese culture with integrity and commitment.”

Marcella Echavarría · Colombia
Curator & Writer · NOIR Founder

WHEN THE JOURNEY CONTINUES WEAVING

Following the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program, more than twenty cross-disciplinary artistic and educational projects have emerged, creating a dialogue between Dong textile craftsmanship, its cultural and spiritual dimensions, and contemporary art and creation. Prestigious exhibitions and performances in Europe, various documentary films and photographic works, publications and conferences have all grown from these encounters. The journey continues to weave beyond the Guizhou workshop.

The richness of these projects lies in the diversity of their participants, across disciplines, cultures, and geographies, each bringing their own perspective into this evolving fabric. One of the highlights was the **DEYI** studio's participation in the **Révélations Biennial** at the Grand Palais in Paris in May 2025, where textile works created from Dong fabrics were presented in collaboration with Chinese artists.



Threads of Guizhou,
Woven for the World



ENHEBRAR is one of the major artistic and educational projects that emerged from the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program in Spain, reflecting the richness and generative potential of the experience. The word *enhebrar* means to thread or to weave together, a gesture that embodies the act of connecting cultures, practices, and ways of seeing the world.

The initiative, led by Adriana Cagigas, co-founder of **DEYI**, was born following the participation of a group of thirty designers from UDIT (the University of Design, Innovation and Technology) in Madrid, who joined the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion in the summer of 2024. Coming from Spain, Portugal and several Latin American countries, they formed a diverse and multidisciplinary group, bringing together practices from fashion design, graphic design, product design, interior design, and video game design.



UDIT
UNIVERSIDAD DE DISEÑO,
INNOVACIÓN Y TECNOLOGÍA

**MATADERO
MADRID**

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04.2025 MADRID MATADERO ART CENTER

During the residency in **DEYI** workshop, participants engaged not only in traditional textile practices such as weaving, embroidery, and natural dyeing, but also in teachings exploring Chinese philosophy. These approaches offered a holistic understanding of Chinese culture and became a profound source of inspiration for their creative work. Following this journey, an exhibition presenting the designers' works, inspired by their cultural and ethnographic research within the Dong communities, was held at the **MATADERO Cultural Center** in Madrid in Spring 2025, in partnership with the Madrid Designers Association. The artists presented original pieces born from this dialogue between ancestral craftsmanship and contemporary creation, revealing how traditional knowledge continues to inspire new artistic languages. The exhibition was widely received, generating strong interest in this approach where tradition and innovation meet.

Another major artistic project that emerged from the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program is the co-creation of a large-scale installation developed with design students from UDI. During the residency in Guizhou, a selected group of designers was invited to collaborate with the **DEYI** studio on this collective work. The textile installation was later presented at the first edition of the **Révélations China Biennial** in Beijing in September 2024, marking a significant milestone for these emerging designers. Created using ancestral pleated textiles from the Miao people, the piece was conceived as a tribute to Sama, the Dong deity of rain, often symbolized by the umbrella in local temple altars. Through this work, ancestral symbolism and contemporary expression came together in a shared gesture of creation.



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09.2024 BEIJING REVELATIONS CHINA

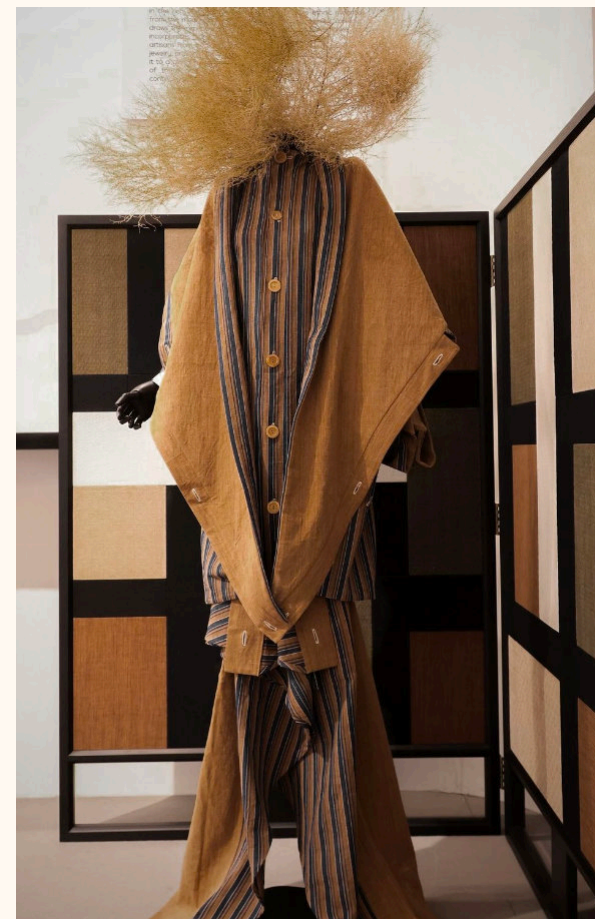
Beyond craft practices, the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion also introduces participants to key principles of Chinese culture and to a worldview rooted in harmony between humans and the living world. These perspectives offer valuable insights into contemporary questions around sustainability, circular design, and regenerative practices. The ways of life of the Dong communities embody these principles in a tangible way. Beyond language and theory, participants are invited to experience them directly through daily life, gestures, and shared moments. In this way, these experiences open new perspectives for more conscious and responsible approaches to creation.

WHEN THE JOURNEY CONTINUES WEAVING

Cross-cultural collaborations between artists and artisans continue to unfold across continents, reflecting the spirit of **MEANINGFUL THREADS**. One such example is the encounter between French artist Juliette Baigné and Spanish designer Gonzalo Alvarez, both participants in the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** residency. Gonzalo Alvarez created a transformative textile piece using Dong handwoven fabrics, an oversized garment that can unfold into a tent, exploring and questioning our ways of inhabiting space and dressing the body. The piece was first presented at the **Révélations China Biennial** in Beijing, and later exhibited in Madrid at the **MATADERO Cultural Center**. Its journey then continued to Paris, where French multidisciplinary artist Juliette Baigné brought it to life through a contemporary dance performance in a gallery setting.

Wearing the piece, Juliette brought it to life through movement, drawing inspiration from ancestral textile gestures of the Dong people, such as spinning, weaving, and dyeing. The performance was accompanied by traditional Dong songs, allowing their presence to resonate through the space. Through such intercultural and intergenerational projects, the voices of Dong women continue to be carried forward. Their stories, gestures, and the spirit embodied in each thread endure. Their values of solidarity, resilience, and deep respect for nature continue to echo.

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From Guizhou to Madrid,
Paris & Beijing

MEANINGFUL THREADS JOINED YITONG ART RESIDENCY NETWORK

The **MEANINGFUL THREADS** immersion is now part of the **YI TONG 艺同** network, an artistic residency initiative led by the Institut Français in collaboration with the Embassy of France in China. The program aims to promote contemporary French creation in China while fostering long-term cultural exchange and artistic collaboration between France and China. **YI TONG 艺同**, which can be translated as “practicing art together,” reflects a philosophy that resonates deeply with the spirit of the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** journey. It encourages artists to engage with various Chinese creatives, explore new techniques, and encounter alternative ways of understanding the world through meaningful, embodied experiences. In 2025, French fiber artist and designer Diane Collongues joined the immersion at the **DEYI** workshop with the support of the Institut Français. Deeply touched by her experience within the Dong weaving community, her journey reflects the potential of such encounters, where contemporary creation enters into dialogue with ancestral craftsmanship.



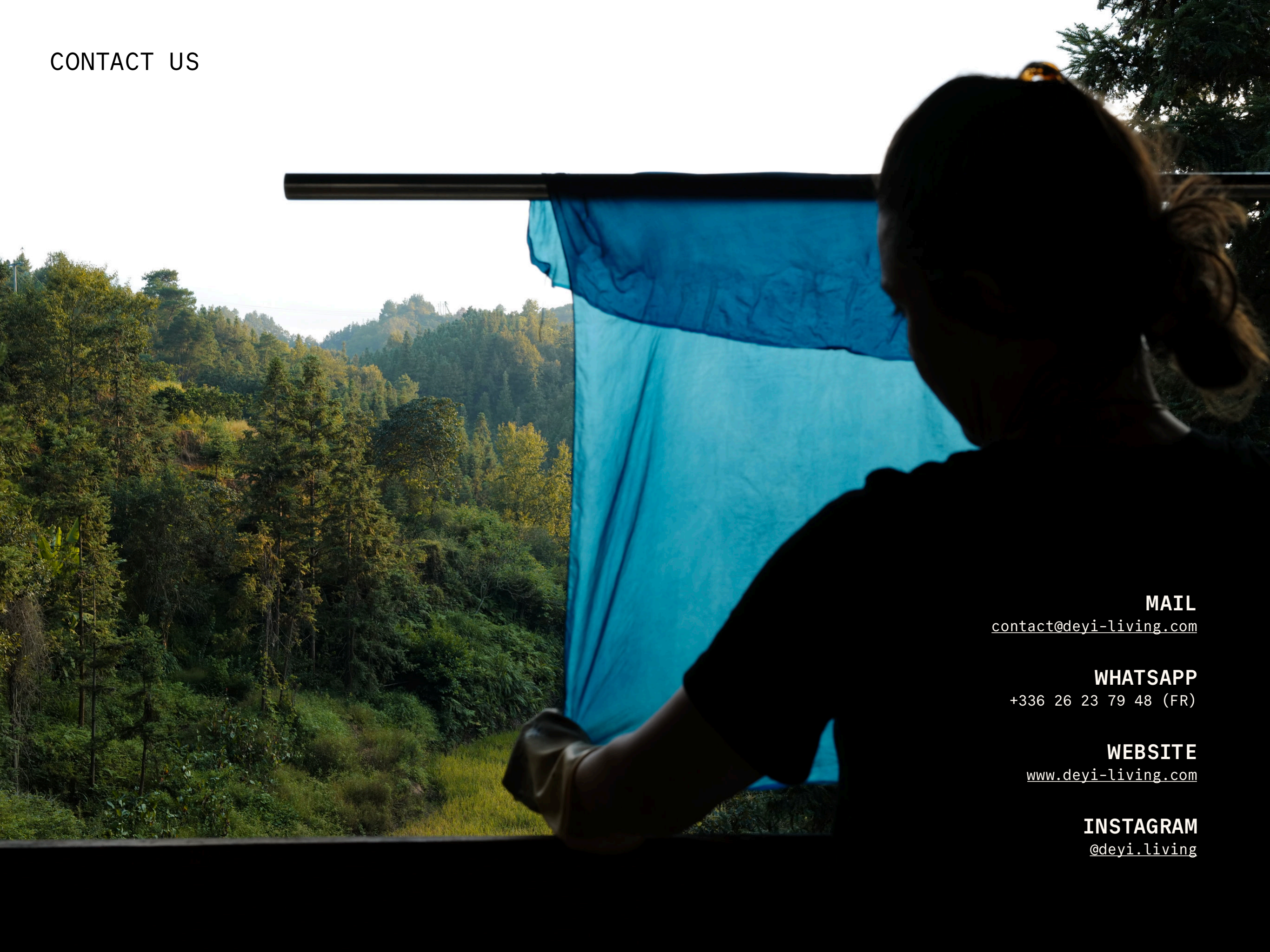
This collaboration continues this year, with the Institut Français supporting the participation of French artists and artisans whose practices resonate with the textile heritage of the Dong communities and the broader cultural context of the Guizhou region, inviting them to join the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** program.

DEYI warmly welcomes these international partnerships with cultural institutions, design schools, and creative partners. Together, they contribute to building meaningful bridges between East and West, opening new spaces for dialogue and creation beyond borders. Through these encounters, the **MEANINGFUL THREADS** tapestry continues to unfold.



A meaningful Franco-Chinese initiative

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