



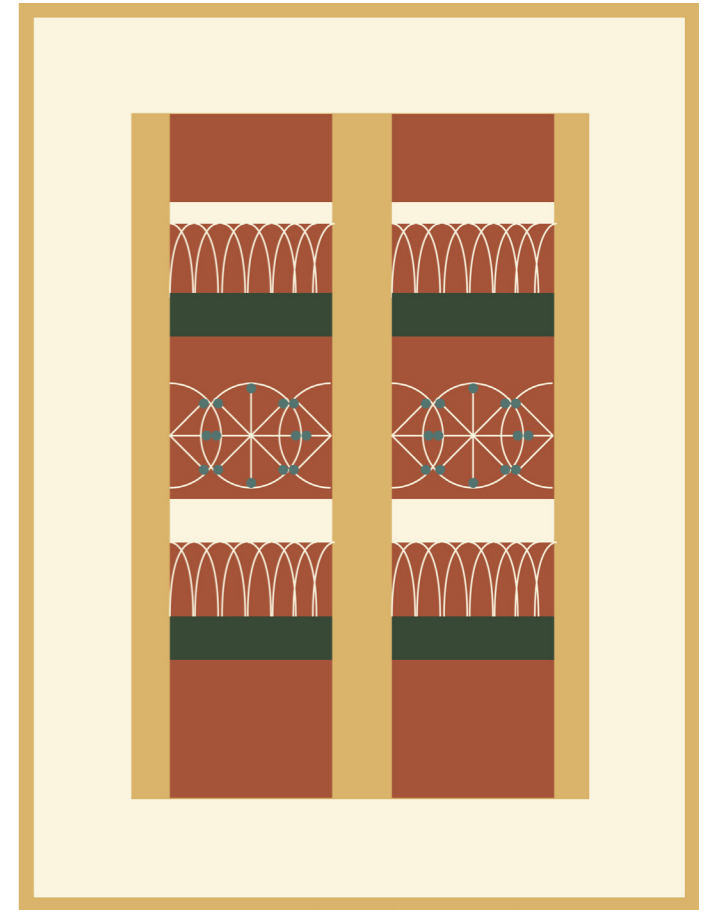
How did Minnette's family history, i.e. her parents, her childhood, influence her way of using craft in Pieris House?



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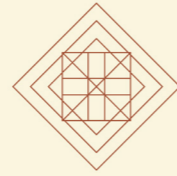
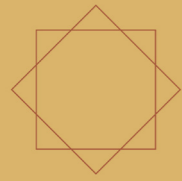


What does Minnette's use of Bo-leaf Grill tell us about the way she attends to the past?

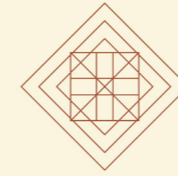


## Lacquered Wood

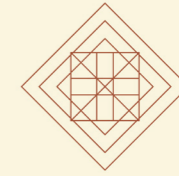
*"My parents had kept our roots intact for my generation, but now I had to interpret this in architecture."*<sup>[1]</sup>  
*"The Kandyan work is by far the most distinctive (...) the four colours used are red, yellow, green and black"*<sup>[2]</sup>



How did western European architects influence Minette's perspectives on architecture?



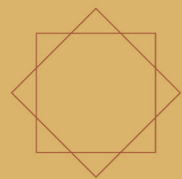
What impact did Minette's work have on the community?



How did the influence of Ananda Coomaraswamy have an impact on Minette's way of dealing with craft as part of the building?

## Pierced Stonewall

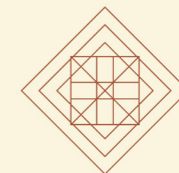
*"(...) de Silva was also keen to use vernacular and local building materials where possible (...). For de Silva this was an aesthetic as much as economic choice"*<sup>[3]</sup>  
*"House walls are pierced with openings influenced by traditional economically designed air vents."*<sup>[4]</sup>



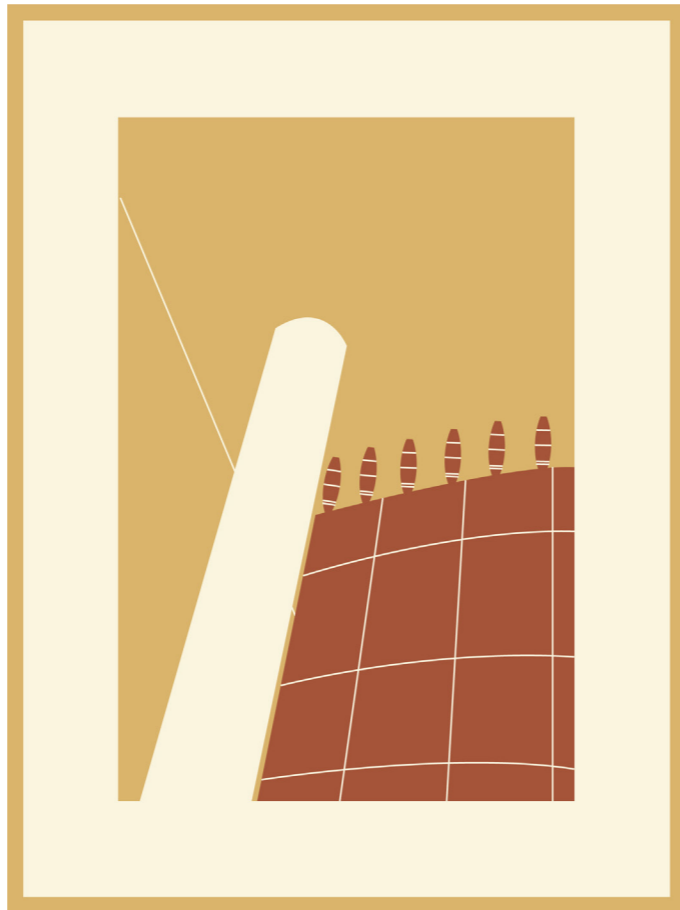
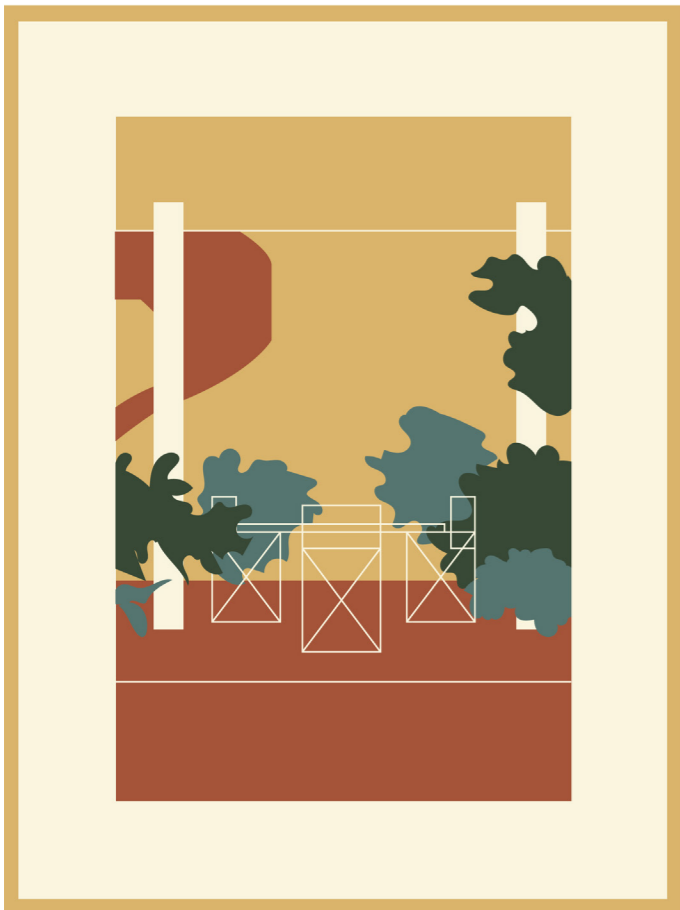
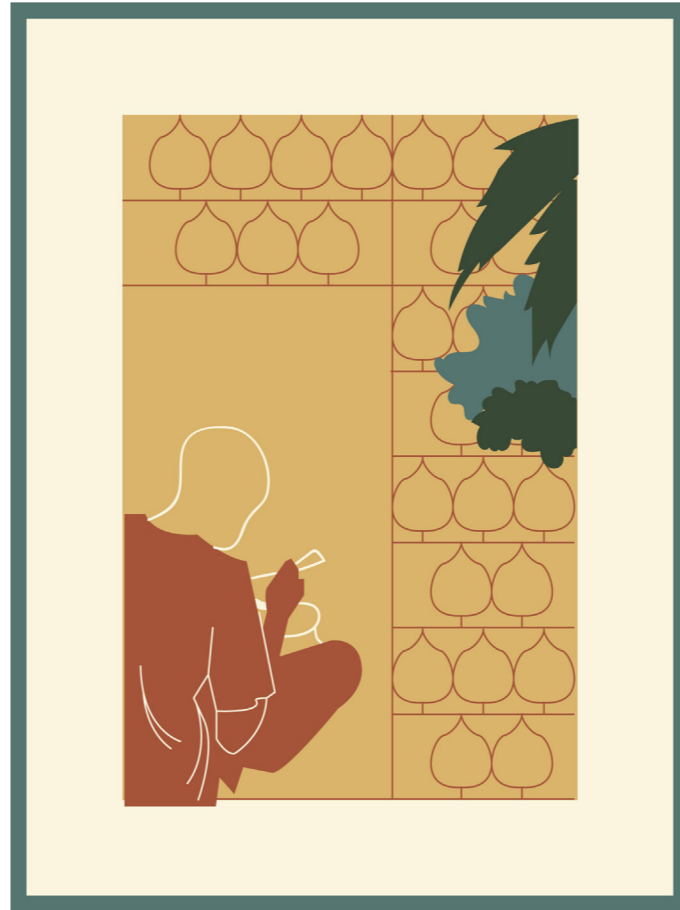
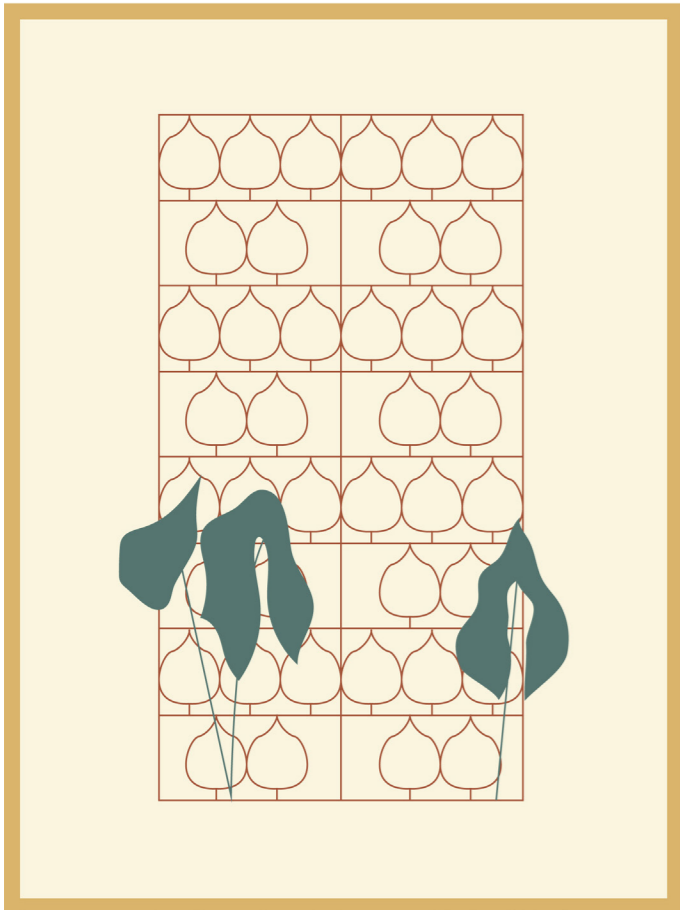
How did Minette preserve the past and tradition through her design?



How did the relationship between Minette and her clients affect her work?



How did Minette overcome some the rigid norms and categories of thinking about architecture set in place through colonialism?



## Ian Pieris

*From the letter: "I would probably like something not ultra-modern but oldist (sensibly), essentially cool, simple (...)" [8]*

*"He let me do whatever I liked with the house - he'd argue, but in the end I'd get my own way." [9]*



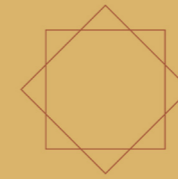
## Craftsmen

*"Today unless they are brought back into architecture in an authentic manner they will cease to serve any useful purpose and will soon disappear or degenerate into a bastard craft." [10]*



## Craftmanship

*Traditional craftsmanship in a modern building has to be brought back as it is part of the architecture. Structures used in different materials from the Kandyan Period were considered modern - forms of the past are still valid today.*

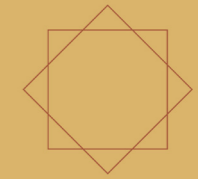


## Bo-Leaf Grill

*"traditional ornaments that preserve the memory of the past without disturbing the modern integrity of the building"*

*"An architecture of opening (...) an effort to build space able to recuperate a relationship with Ceylon's native tropical environment."*

[5]



## Le Corbusier

*"Though the clean lines, simplicity and universalism of Le Corbusier's classicism inspired her work"*

*"Ornament, pure and simple is a thing of significance, it is a synthesis, the result of a process of putting together"*  
- Le Corbusier [10]



## Community

*"living rooms must be designed so that they can be used together, to hold large numbers, or separately, to satisfy ordinary needs."*

*A Ceylonese house should be able to expand easily and in efficient ways to cope with crowds of relatives" [10]*

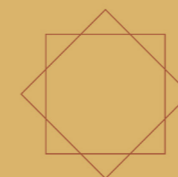


## Pilotis

*"Detail showing pilotis meeting flat slab and decorative tile panel wall with beeralu" [6]*

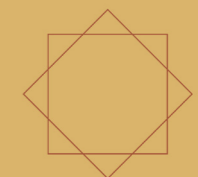
*"Minnette de Silva's vanguardist effort to marry elements of the traditional Sinhala crafts movement with her iterations of the architectural modern"*

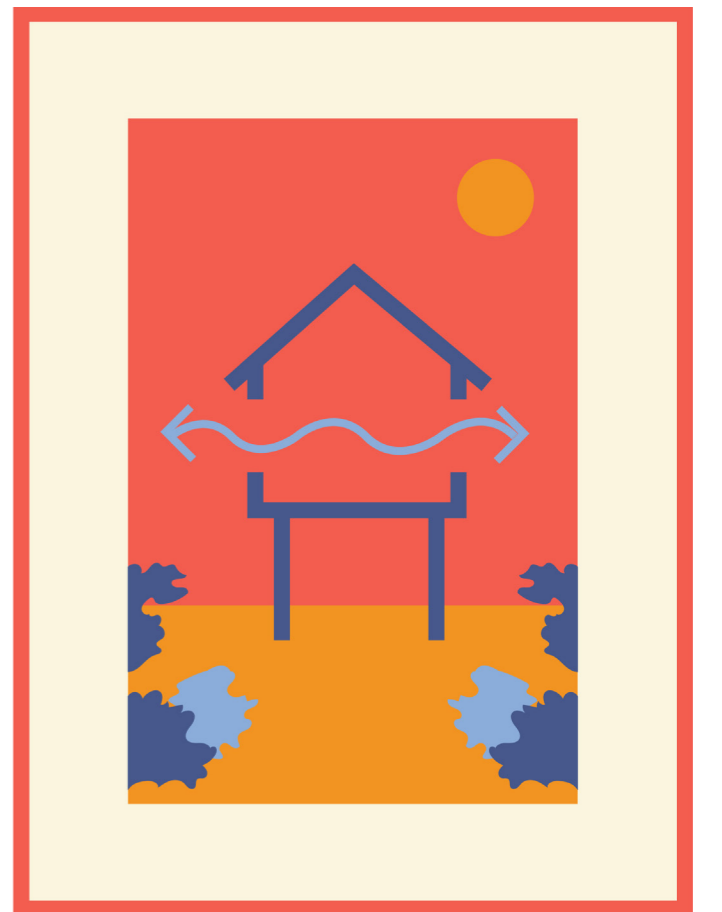
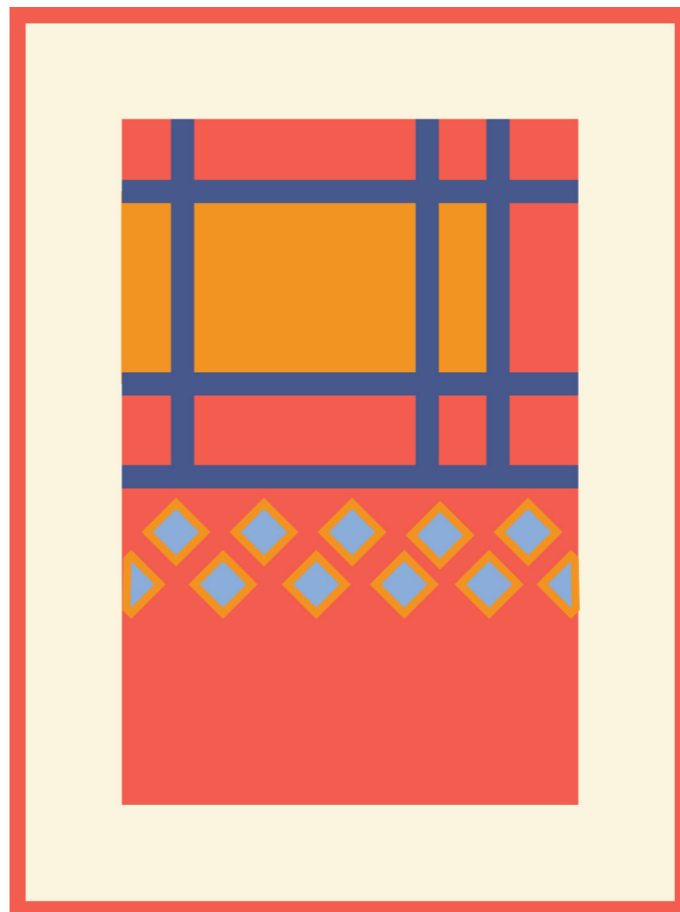
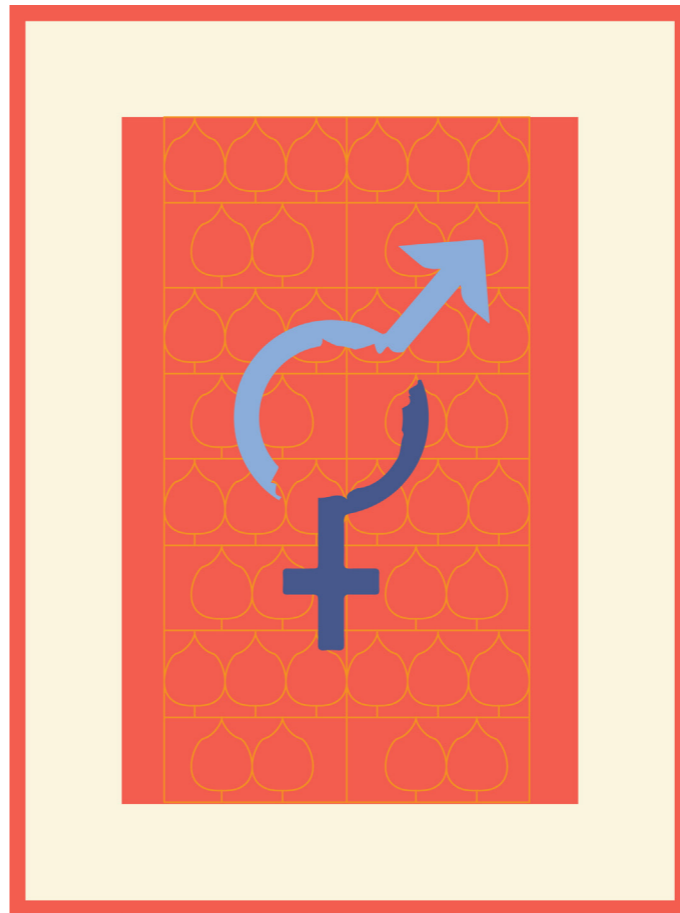
[7]



## Midula

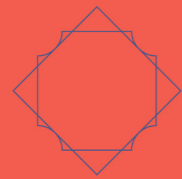
*The manipulation of the visibility within the house by adding Bo leaf grill and lacquered wood balusters into the design to integrate the outdoor with the indoor and create a continuous space but still maintaining a hierarchy of spaces and the midula as the hearth of the house*





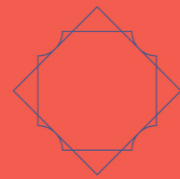
## Memory

*"I would gaze at the beautiful columns and sophisticated structures which the master builders of the 'Golden Age' had left for posterity. All this seeped into my unconscious mind, later manifesting itself in my work..."<sup>[1]</sup>*



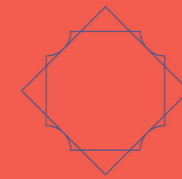
## Gender

*In Sri Lankan society, the building industry and the architectural profession was mostly a male dominated field and de Silva had a difficult time. As a woman, her ideas were often questioned by clients, even her own contractor.*



## Tradition

*The relation between modern and tradition in order to develop a new and original architecture that preserves the valuable parts of the tradition and enriches the existent. Minette tries to bring the idea of Memory into the house*



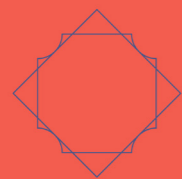
## Minette's Parents

*"When I was a child my parents, who were greatly influenced by Mr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, used to take us to Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and other ancient places. My parents had kept our roots intact for my generation, but now I had to interpret this in architecture"<sup>[1]</sup>*



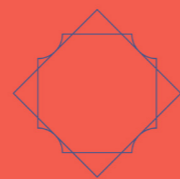
## Post-Colonial

*"A break with colonialism, also an (...) 'architecture for architecture's sake' " "de Silva sought through her architecture to embrace the Sri Lankan environment and to pursue a connection between the Sri Lankan inside and outside."<sup>[12]</sup>*



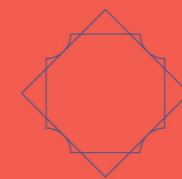
## Traditional-Modern

*Minnette showed that it is possible to achieve in modern ways, without compromising the pure concrete structure, a pleasing and original traditional form that relates to the people and their needs and memory*



## Social Needs

*"We need flexible, open-plan interiors where walls can move out to throw small rooms into large ones, where a bedroom with a movable wall becomes a part of a living room for any special occasion."<sup>[10]</sup>*



## George Keyt

*"Aesthetically, (...) inspired by her own proximity to Ceylon's '43 group of modernists; painters like George Keyt Keyt's words encapsulate a historiographical refrain that pervaded the broader sweep of post-war artistic, architectural and literary modernism in Sri Lanka"<sup>[5]</sup>*



# Craftibly Minnette Playbook

An invitation to explore and question the role of craft in Minnette De Silva's world by crafting narratives

## Description

Let's go back in time to the post independent modernist era in Sri Lanka and work together to craft the story of Minnette De Silva. The game speaks about the life and work of a Sri Lankan Architect, Minette De Silva as a part of the crafts community. The game brings to light events in her life that helps us understand her outlook on Architecture with a special focus on crafts. Not only will it reveal Minette's take on modern Architecture, it will also help us see a different perspective about international modernism from a unique point of view. The game speaks about the life and work of a Sri Lankan Architect, Minette De Silva as a part of the craft community.

We encourage you to find 6 different ways that crafts appear in Pieris House. When we consider the Pieris House as an event in time, we can say it mirrors the many across crafting identity and community in post independent Sri Lanka. We can also see that the use of crafts and arts by Minnette de Silva was inspired by the writings of the great theorist Ananda Coomarswamy and for example his interest in working with traditional wood construction techniques. This traditional way of working with wood requires the usage of, not only local materials, but also local labor. Using craft in such a sensitive manner reveals an aesthetic language that preserves the memory of the past while exploring questions related to the needs of a constantly evolving and transforming society.

As the game unfolds, one will walk down the trail of understanding how Minnette overcomes through craft one of her design struggles, finding the relation between modern and traditional approach in order to develop a new and original architecture that gives us key insights on the craft community of Minnette's era. In Craftibly Minnette, the goal is to unravel how craft alters through the building and see that it can be a way of synthesizing the memory of the Kandyan Era.

In this journey, the players will learn to master the art of storytelling as well as co-working while gaining an understanding of the way Sri Lanka developed after gaining independence. We invite everyone interested in discovering in what way the modernist movement had an impact on Sri Lanka's architecture and Ceylonese community as well as how it was implemented by Minette De Silva without forgetting the past and tradition to play the game.

## Components of the Game

There are 4 different cards:

- Input cards
- Element cards
- Actor cards
- Friction cards

### Input card



The question card that is drawn at the beginning and it starts the game. It represents the main topic of the story. On the front side, it will always be referred to the study case, Pieris House, but once flipped, it reveals a broader theme related to Minette de Silva's life and work as an architect in autonomous Sri Lanka.

### Element card



It represents a physical part of the Pieris house or a object that is considered essential to the story and it will always be part of the Pieris House, but it can refer to a broader context.

### Actor card



It represents the main character that is involved in the story and it had a strong relation to Minette. It can show a person alone or it can be along with Minette if the connection is considered important. The card can refer to a broader context

### Friction card



It represents the main problem that had to be overcome and it is the plot of the story. The card will always relate to a larger theme in Minette's journey as Sri Lankan architect. To find this card, the players have to answer the backside of the input card.

## Bibliography

Tariq Jazeel (2017) Tropical Modernism/Environmental Nationalism: The Politics of Built Space in Postcolonial Sri Lanka, Fabrications, 27:2, [1] page 20, [3] page 2, [4] page17, [5] page 14, [6] page 21, [11] page 11, [12] page 4

Minnette De Silva. (1998). The life & work of an asian woman architect (1st ed.), [2], page 34, [7] page 184, [8] page 180, [9] page 182

Minnette De Silva. (1965). Experiments in modern regional Architecture in Ceylon 1950-1960., [10] page 14

Tariq Jazeel, introduction to Sacred Modernity

M. De Silva, The Life and Work, op. cit., 'Return to Ceylon: Early Years, 1949-1960

Minnette De Silva Pioneer of Modern Architecture in Sri Lanka, Ellen Dissanayake, Orientations, August 1982

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi (2017) Crafting the archive: Minnette De Silva, Architecture, and History, The Journal of Architecture, 22:8, 1299-1336



## Step 4 Refining the Storyline

- After finding all category cards, the players have to discuss whether the chosen cards match the questions and if they form a plausible story.
- The discussion should be around the craft topic and should rise important aspects in Minnette de Silva's life and work.
- If they decide that one or more of them is not suitable, they can change it.

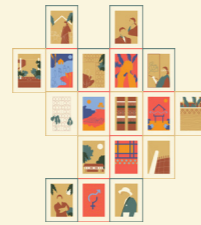
### Results

Players find the correct answers for the each storyline.

- After choosing all the cards and the storylines are formed, the players should check the correct answer on the playbook.
- For each category card chosen right, the group gets 1 point. The goal is to have 18 points at the end.
- At the end of the game, the players will be able to form with the cards chosen a bigger picture that tells how craft appears in Pieris House and how it influenced Minnette de Silva's architecture the way you perceived it.

We encourage everyone to be bold and post their variation of the bigger picture on social media and tag us!

Our variation - **Interconnected Stories**



## Answer Key



How did Minnette combine traditional crafts with a pure, concrete structure such as pilotis?  
//  
How did western European architects influence Minnette's perspectives on architecture?



Pilotis



Le Corbusier



Traditional-Modern



How did the incorporation of the Midula enable Minnette to work with the growing congestion in towns?  
//  
What impact did Minnette's work have on the community?



Midula



Community



Social Needs

How much did Ian Pieris influence Minnette's decisions regarding the house ?  
//

How did the relationship between Minnette de Silva and her clients affect her work?



Craftsmanship



Ian Pieris



Gender

## Answer Key



How did Minnette's family history, i.e, her parents, her childhood, influence her way of using craft in Pieris House?  
//  
In what ways did Ananda Coomaraswamy influence Minnette's way of dealing with craft as a central part of her design process?



Lacquered Wood



Minnette's Parents



Memory



What does Minnette's use of the pierced stonewall tell us about the way she controls the cost of the house?  
//  
How did De Silva overcome some the rigid norms and categories of thinking about architecture set in place through colonialism?



Pierced Stonewall



George Keyt



Post-Colonial

What does Minnette's use of Bo-leaf Grill tell us about the way she attends to the past?  
//

How did Minnette preserve the past and tradition through her design?



Bo-Leaf Grill



Craftsmen



Tradition

## Game Logic

### Key Instruction

Master topic - **All around the craft**

All the Questions in this journey of discovery in this game are based on the core topic of crafts. The aim of this game is to throw light on Minnette de Silva's work with respect to how to beautifully and skillfully amalgamate arts and crafts into her work and the challenges she faced in doing so.

- The card game is advised to be played in a group of 2 to 4 players, but can be played by multiple players in a group.

### Input cards

All the input cards are laterite red in colour.

- Separate all cards by category and place all input cards with the laterite colour faced up
- One player turns around 1 input card from the pile.

### Story cards

Players form the story line based on the given input card. Each colour corresponds to a different category card:

laterite red colour - 6 input cards,  
ochre colour - 6 element cards,  
blue-green colour - 6 actor cards,  
flamingo pink colour - 6 friction cards

- Each category card can be flipped to uncover additional information.
- Players have to discuss and find connections between the input card and category cards.
- the players choose a card and it will be placed on the side on backside with the text visible.

### Step 1 First Category Card

- All the category cards will be spread by category on the table with the graphic part facing up.
- The players have to discuss and reason which card relates more to the first question from the craft perspective.  
Tip: The first question will always be related to Pieris house and it contains a key word.

### Step 2 Second Category Card

- After finding the first category card, the input card should be flipped and a new question pops up that relates to the first one but on a larger scale
- Now, players have to find a second category card that relates to the second question as well and place it next to the first one.  
Tip: The second question will always be related to Friction and it is connected to the first chosen category card as well

### Step 3 Third Category Card

- After finding the second category card, players have to discuss the cards chosen and the ones left and come up with a plausible story in order to find the last category card. They can look again at both questions on the input card.
- The players have to find the third category card and place it next to the first two ones.  
Tip: The third category card has to be found by raising discussions regarding the first two cards chosen on the topic of craft and its influence