



Ngebat - tying patterns on the warp



Mampul - Tie and dye resist technique



Nenun - Weaving

**An Exhibition in Collaboration with**  
Rainforest Fringe Festival, Kuching  
Georgetown Festival, Penang

**Textile Tales of Pua Kumbu Exhibition Original concept by**  
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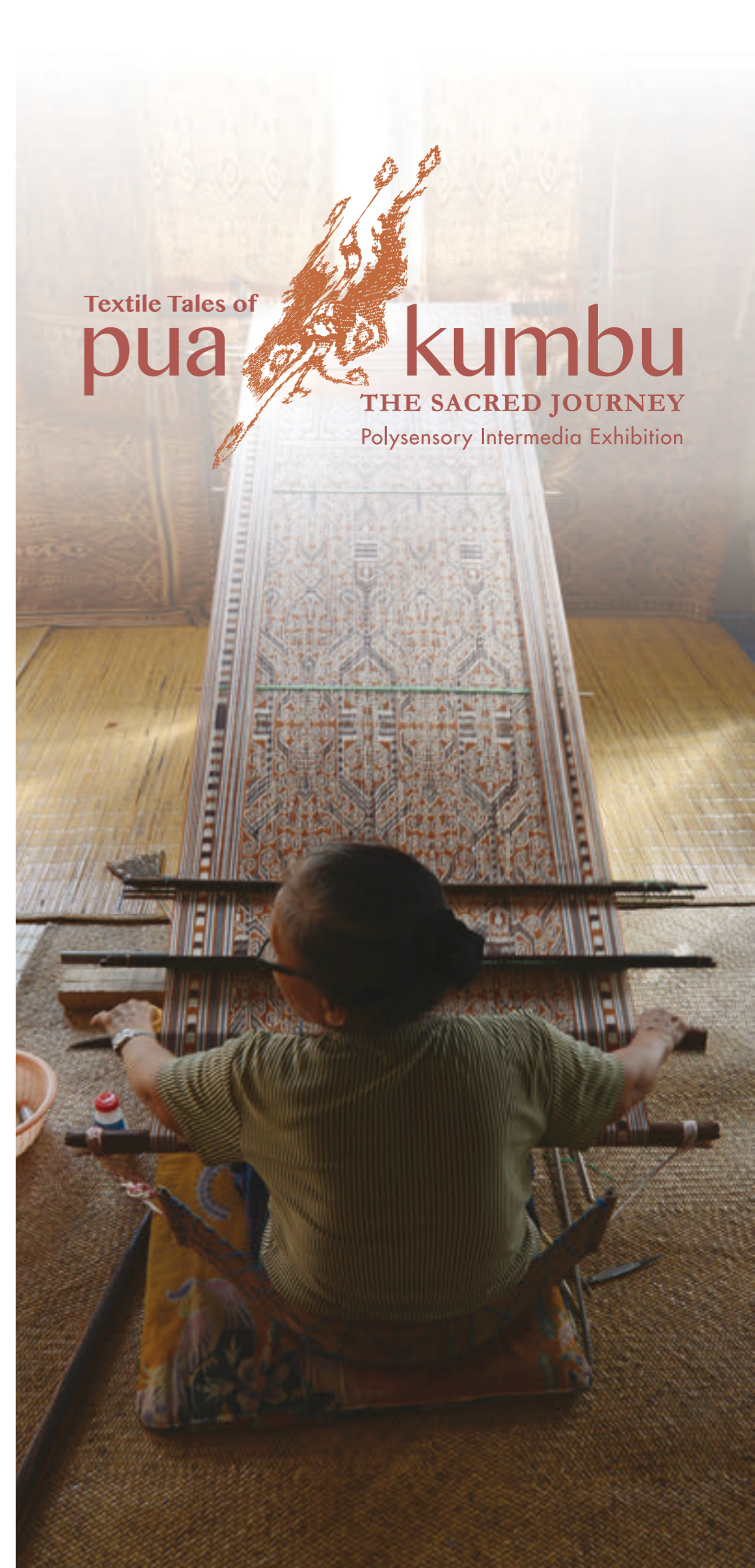
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Textile Tales of  
**pua kumbu**  
THE SACRED JOURNEY  
Polysensory Intermedia Exhibition



# PUA KUMBU

Pua means blanket and kumbu means to cover thus it is a ceremonial blanket. Tying or the more well known term ikat, used throughout the Indonesian archipelago, is also recognised in Iban as kebat. The Iban weavers practice the tie and dye resist technique, using natural ingredients. It is not clear how the Iban learned to weave because they have no written history except for oral traditions passed down from generation to generation. In the 19th century many scholars started to record and publish the history of Iban migration, auguries and livelihood focusing on Iban head-hunting which also highlighted the pua kumbu.

The pua kumbu, has a prominent role in Iban rituals and is used for many purposes; to protect, to create a barrier or to decorate a space. During major gawai (ceremonies), pua kumbu are displayed in the communal ruai (gallery).

The size of a standard pua kumbu is approximately 8ft x 4ft. It is also the size applied in any pua kumbu weaving competition in Sarawak.

Nowadays, Iban woven textiles serve not just as ceremonial blankets but are also worn as shawls and tailored as beautiful wearable clothes. However, only selected motifs and designs can be worn. Other more potent designs remain only as sacred ceremonial blankets.



# EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS

Textile Tales of Pua Kumbu: "The Sacred Journey" showcases the sacredness of the textile and the way the textile has transformed in terms of its functionality being a sacred ritual cloth to a modern artistic shawls.

The exhibition specially showcases the intangible cultural heritage of creating the pua kumbu of Sarawak through various forms of digital capture and innovative media communication methods.

The exhibition goal is to take the research on the textile beyond the academic sphere by presenting research findings into the public sphere. The exhibition encourages a flawless interactions of the public with the polysensory and interactive methods presented in capturing the different stages of yarn preparations to the natural dyes and weaving activities, as well as the animations of the folklores of selected stories behind the designs and the pua kumbu's motifs.

The exhibition aims to create and present to the public, a living, digital, and cultural imaginary of intangible knowledge. In this exhibition, public of different ages will experience the whole ecosystem of the productions of the pua kumbu.

The Pua Tales are conceptualized, illustrated, and animated to present the stories behind a selected range of the textiles. A simple approach of monochromatic pen-on-paper technique was used in creating the storyboards as to not stray from the existing patterns of the textile. These images on the storyboards were then digitally scanned, reconstructed and colored using Adobe Illustrator, and animated using Adobe Flash to create the final result.

The Pua Explorer is designed to digitally bring forth the woven pua motifs that are geometrically stylized within the design patterns of the Pua Kumbu. The morphing transition is embedded in the smart devices and displayed through image-recognition programming. Then by selecting, the motif is highlighted and then morphs into the object it is referencing.

