



# GALLERY WEEKEND KUALA LUMPUR

*Pioneering culture-building networks*

Guest editor - Shalini Ganendra

UNESCO OBSERVATORY  
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY eJOURNAL IN THE ARTS

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# UNESCO OBSERVATORY MULTI DISCIPLINARY eJOURNAL IN THE ARTS

Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur  
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**MULTI DISCIPLINARY eJOURNAL IN THE ARTS**

**Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur**  
**VOLUME 7: ISSUE 1: 2021**

**ABOUT THE  
e-JOURNAL**

The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal promotes multi disciplinary research in the Arts and Education and arose out of a recognised need for knowledge sharing in the field. The publication of diverse arts and cultural experiences within a multi-disciplinary context informs the development of future initiatives in this expanding field. There are many instances where the arts work successfully in collaboration with formerly non-traditional partners such as the sciences and health care, and this peer-reviewed journal aims to publish examples of excellence.

Valuable contributions from international researchers are providing evidence of the impact of the arts on individuals, groups and organisations across all sectors of society. The UNESCO Observatory refereed e-journal is a clearing house of research which can be used to support advocacy processes; to improve practice; influence policy making, and benefit the integration of the arts in formal and non-formal educational systems across communities, regions and countries.

## Editorial

### Shalini Amerasinghe Ganendra – Guest Editor

BA, MA Hons (Cambridge.), LL.M.

Cultural Leader, Scholar and Founder of  
Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur

#### BIOGRAPHY



**Shalini Ganendra's** impact on cultural development has been defined by over two decades of informed cultural engagement. Through programming, research, publication and an overarching commitment to transnational connection, she has furthered recognition of, inter alia, the distinct and longstanding creative practises of Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

Some notable projects include: Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur with its Luminary Programme featuring international and local creatives in dialogue and presentation, pioneering exhibitions of Sri Lankan modern and contemporary art in Kuala

Lumpur, London and New York, and research with publication on cultural practices.

Shalini is Sri Lankan born. She was educated in the US and UK, graduating secondary from Phillips Exeter Academy where she is a Harkness Fellow, after which she read law at University of Cambridge, Trinity Hall. She obtained an LL.M. from Columbia University Law School and is a qualified Barrister and New York Attorney. She has been awarded Visiting Fellowships by Oxford and Cambridge Universities to further cultural research.

## FOREWORD

### **Culture celebrating difference. Culture complimenting commerce. Pioneering culture – The Story of Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur**

Developing appreciation for and bringing greater accessibility to culture as a whole and visual art in particular, has been the foundation on which Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur (GWKL) has developed, over a meteoric five years, reflecting evolution and invention. Culture complimenting commerce. Culture celebrating difference. Culture as the creative. Starting out as a prayer, a dream, GWKL has steadily and organically grown, embracing free participation and access, presenting a dynamic platform of multi-disciplinary content. GWKL has been a mechanism through which Malaysia can reconnect with its own cultural landscape (both traditional and contemporary). The cultural marquee has introduced valuable local culture to global audiences; facilitated global exchange; and bridged cultures and disciplines to deliver engagement and project development. As such, GWKL has critically become about the culture of encounter.

The term ‘gallery weekend’ is somewhat of an anomaly for this marquee because the duration now spans two weeks. This longer period offers the opportunity for guests to participate in all offerings and for cultural stakeholders to derive more value through programme build-up. GWKL remains an immersive and intense cultural experience.

Our goal has been for the long-term development of cultural appreciation (local and global), coupled with the creation of a sustainable and appreciative cultural ecosystem through which audiences develop a greater appreciation for the creative. Such appreciation fostered through talks and viewings inevitably sprouts economic support. As a platform, GWKL complements art fairs and biennials, taking the best features from all such events, and presenting them over a shorter period of time with mainly free programming. Since 2016, GWKL has been supported by a wide array of cultural

stakeholders and endorsed by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Tourism, Arts & Culture. We have partnered with major local museums including the National Art Gallery and Islamic Art Museum Malaysia, in addition to including more than 30 select project spaces, galleries, collection venues and cultural spaces annually.

The GWKL Luminary Programme, consisting of public talks (panel and individual) presented by a diverse range of creative talent, has been the anchor feature of GWKL and has defined the gravitas of the marquee. Over these five years, we have hosted more than 30 Luminaries from over 12 countries, including curators, museum directors, auction experts, artists, journalists and collectors. Twenty-two luminaries, a major foundation participant, one moderator and one observer are represented in this publication.

Their form of contribution, whether through essay, interview or presentation format, provides a vibrant glimpse of the diversity of topics, experience and outlooks presented over the past five years– covering art practise, craft, curation, museology, markets, architecture, design, collecting and more. I thank each of these amazing personalities for their valuable insights; editorial assistant, Yung Lo, for adeptly ordering and coordinating these submissions; and Lindy Joubert, Director of the UNESCO Observatory, for quality endorsement of GWKL.

When GWKL launched in 2016, the Art Newspaper wrote “The next Berlin? Kuala Lumpur launches gallery weekend. Dealers and museums join forces to put the Malaysian capital on the art map.” In fact, GWKL has gone beyond being just another “gallery weekend”. Rather, the connectivity that the marquee offers has enriched many thus far with the promise of growing returns through increased awareness and appreciation. In 2020, the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic propelled us to innovate and deliver what turned out to be one of the most successful Luminary Features virtually, where everyone had a front-row seat. The high attendance was a testament to a growing realisation that culture can be the pivot to recovery. “GWKL continues to pioneer culture-building bridges and networks. It applauds creativity and provides a platform for dynamic discussions that continue long after the event itself closes. Likewise, this UNESCO Observatory ‘Arts in Asia’ publication extends this culture of connectivity for greater reach and duration. GWKL continues to pioneer culture. We hope you enjoy the read.

# Handmade for this Century

## AUTHOR

**Lindy Joubert**, Founding Director - UNESCO Observatory Multi Disciplinary Research in the Arts, Vice President - World Craft Council, Asia Pacific Region, South Pacific

## BIOGRAPHY

**Lindy Joubert** is the Founding Director of the UNESCO Observatory on Multi-Disciplinary Research in the Arts, as well as being the Vice President of the World Craft Council Pacific Asia Region (South Pacific). Joubert is President of the Lorne Sculpture Biennale 2017-2018, one of the largest public sculpture events in Australia.



A Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Melbourne, her combined interests have resulted in facilitating research and coordinating events and conferences for public engagement in the arts and crafts among multiple communities. She has a number of projects underway with NGOs, government and local communities.

As well as having thirty - seven international exhibits of painting, six being in New York City, she is the editor of the UNESCO Observatory ejournal and the Global Village Reading Series. Joubert's edited book *Educating in the Arts - the Asian Experience, Twenty-Four Essays* was published by Springer in 2008. She is currently preparing a suite of six books *Educating in the Crafts- the Global Experience* to appear in the Springer TVET series.

Joubert joined Gallery Weekend Kuala Lumpur (GWKL) as a Luminary in both 2018 and 2019, speaking at the sessions entitled “Handmade for this Century” and “Creating and Collecting the Craft- Borneo and Beyond”, respectively, both held at the Malaysian Heritage Trust (Badan Warisan).

*GWKL 2018's 'Luminary Features' focus, provided an insightful, polished and ultra-exciting foray into the hearts and minds of a special group of creative people for the art-loving public of Kuala Lumpur. I was thrilled to be in the midst of a dynamic group hailing from Kuala Lumpur, New York, Toronto, Singapore and Hong Kong. The dialogue was brilliant - stimulating and informative. GWKL goes from strength to strength, providing innovative programmes while embracing collegial and inspiring inter-disciplinary groups of people coming together as one mind, to promote the arts and KL as a world-class city of creativity.*

- Lindy Joubert



## **Handmade for this Century**

**This paper was designed to accompany a freely spoken slide presentation, and is not as an academic paper.**

### **A. Craft practise and development with the World Craft Council from personal experience**

#### **Background**

The World Crafts Council is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation founded in New York City in 1964 by Mrs Vanderbilt Webb and from its beginning has been affiliated to UNESCO. The World Craft Council (WCC) is the only international NGO working across the world and since its beginning is now structured as a federation established across five regions of the world, Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America.

Each region holds a general assembly annually to address pressing issues, consolidating the early vision to establish a movement to provide futures for the craft artisans, to respect the heritage and traditions of culturally specific craft production and to provide a solid platform to unite craftspeople across the world. The most recent, the 37th General Assembly for WCC Asia Pacific Region (APR) has recently been held in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2018.

Above all, each of the regional WCC NGOs plans to modernise and keep pace with the exponential growth of new technologies, to build greater communication tools and strategies, to engage the next generation through training, access to social media and promote the work of the finest artisans through initiatives such as the ‘Award of Excellence’ and the establishment of ‘Craft Cities’.

#### **Craft Practice and Development**

Global crafts since the earliest times have been instrumental in structuring societies and helping express the cultural and social identity of different social groups. As globalisation begins to erode the traditional communities and bonds which help define

cultures, and tourism vulgarises and perverts traditional craft forms, the WCC plays an increasingly significant role in not only preserving the cultural heritage of the past, but also providing successful economic, community strengthening pathways to the future.

From the perspective of WCCAPR South Pacific, the artistic heritage of the island countries is a rich tapestry of crafts, art and artefacts, song, dance, oral history and performance. The celebration of these different forms not only highlights the diversity but also encourages a new sense of unity between the various inhabitants of Oceania, and in particular to the youth of this region.

This leads to the theme of this paper, from my perspective: how to inform Malaysian craft stakeholders the ways and means of developing sustainable and profitable craft industries. How to develop their craft practice and how are the new generation of crafts artisans and artists to carry over the values of the traditional while creating new work that speaks to today's (and future) audiences.

Figure 1: Handmade beaded necklace at Lindy Joubert's GWKL 2018 talk with Sarah Ichioka, entitled "Handmade for this Century". Photo by Shalini Ganendra Advisory.



In the Pacific, for example, the traditional Samoan practice of tattooing has been regenerated in recent years as global trends have re-incarnated many tribal body art forms – piercing tattooing, hair bleaching or colouring – the very cultural, craft and art expressions that early missionaries suppressed almost to extinction. In Samoan society tattooing is an action of deep cultural significance, endowing the recipient with mana, inviting great respect and reverence. This traditional craft does not disappear but is in an evolutionary state moulded into new forms by the new generations.

Craft Practice and Development cannot survive without the dedication of outstanding individuals or the formation of major crafts organisations, either as NGO's, or government-funded or as self-supporting bodies. The crafts survive and continue to thrive through the sale of products, festivals, gallery and museum exhibitions and other innovative and entrepreneurial initiatives and strategies. This paper will briefly discuss strategies that work to inform craft stakeholders on how to develop sustainable and profitable craft industries. My work at UNESCO for a number of years and as an academic at The University of Melbourne, running the first UNESCO Observatory in the arts and teaching students in the Faculty of Architecture, has informed my opinion that it is only through education from primary, through to secondary to tertiary that the future of the crafts lies. Young people, with their fresh minds, curiosity and adaptability, successfully face each wave of disruption as it occurs, particularly in the digital world. They are the ones to be the craft artisans of the future. The past is the future, the future is now, and change is happening at a phenomenal rate. These are the certainties we have to address while harnessing the skills of our ancestors and master craftsmen and women.

A few practical initiatives will be presented here representing the strength and breadth of the World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region and other affiliated bodies.

## **B. Sustainability of craft - through commercial and curatorial endeavours**

The most effective means of sustaining craft for the future is through education, as previously mentioned. Galleries and curatorial endeavours also play a major part, but it is through education, informal and formal - in schools, institutes, workshops, training programmes, gallery and museum courses and universities that the future for craft artisans is shaped.

Given the opportunities to think innovatively, to experiment, to research and to develop the skills to aspire to excellence, young people will thrive, develop economic futures for themselves and their families, and be part of the burgeoning creative industry paradigm. New research from Nesta, in partnership with the Creative Industries Council, reveals creative industries across the UK are driving local and national economic growth, identifying that local economies have grown their creative industries employment by an average of 11 per cent, twice as fast as other sectors. This is particularly true across all design-related industries globally. [1]

### **The Creative Teaching Laboratory**

A few best practice models are discussed here.

### **Technology as Future Craft**

For many people, “craft” is wooden chairs and pottery, all lovingly constructed by hand. A 3D-printed plastic or wooden object does not have the same level of appreciation, or does it? The exponential growth of digital technologies is increasingly finding its way to the world of crafted objects. Craft is a contested term, especially in an era where machines have taken the place of work previously done by hand. Broadly, it’s a contemporary approach, guided by tradition, sensitive to materials and manual techniques and ready for the future.

**The Digital Fabrication Lab (FabLab) in the Melbourne School of Design, Faculty of Architecture, The University of Melbourne** is an advanced making facility. Students and staff use state-of-the-art equipment such as CNC mills, laser cutters, 3D printers and much more to produce crafted objects such as furniture, models, objects and bringing their designs to life. This is a space where ideas and technology come together to create crafted utilitarian objects you can touch and feel.

In Finland, **Turku University Finland is amongst the growing band of universities offering an education integrating Craft, Design, and Technology.**

Their courses cover themes such as creativity and pedagogical innovation processes in material spaces; multi-material craft as the subject in the comprehensive school; didactical research in craft, design and technology education; craft and design in the context of culture creation, wellbeing and action competence. [2]



At the same time, research and development in Craft, Design, Technology education is a discipline and in the Craft Design Technology subject teacher education and pre- and in-service teacher training are vital for the ongoing train the teacher initiative, so favoured by UNESCO for life-long learning.

### **Exhibitions, Festivals and Awards Benefit Crafts artisans**

**The work of Australian designer Berto Pandolfo, shown in a new exhibition at Kensington Contemporary in Sydney,** demonstrates his side tables that have been constructed using digital fabrication techniques like 3D printing. This offers new possibilities for design practitioners with a craft ethos. By using new technology to enrich rather than substitute traditional techniques, he is part of a movement that the writer Lucy Johnston has termed “the digital handmade” – designers that use emerging digital techniques to create desirable objects. Pandolfo’s show explores the place of 3D printing within such a practice, which results in objects that feel distinctive rather than mass-manufactured, despite their online origins.

**The Crafts at RMIT University, have had a clean sweep at the Victorian Craft Awards.** Melbourne students, staff and alumni artists from RMIT have taken all major honours at this year’s awards. The Victorian Craft Awards is a biennial event that grants over \$20,000 in cash prizes, facilitated by Craft Victoria and supported by the state government. Providing a snapshot of the vitality of contemporary Victorian craft, the Awards celebrate the work of emerging, mid-career and established craftspeople across the state.

**The Santa Fe International Folk-Art Market,** the world’s largest annual folk-art festival celebrated fifteen years in July 2018. One hundred and fifty folk artists from fifty-three countries gathered at the world’s largest, most diverse folk-art festival to celebrate cherished craft traditions and contribute to global unity and economic change. The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe is packed with 130,000 objects, a tribute to craftspeople from around the world, while the annual SWAIA Indian Market, which runs every August, is the showcase for the region’s Native American artists and artisans.

**TRESOR Contemporary Craft Fair** was held in Basel Switzerland, in September, providing a platform for international galleries who present extraordinary works by today’s leading artists as well as up-and-coming names in the industry.

Working in disciplines such as ceramics, glass, textiles, metal, wood and jewellery, the exhibited artists create truly unique pieces that honour tradition while exploring new materials and technologies.

The fair presents:

- Internationally renowned galleries and artist collectives
- Private and museum collections
- International art and design schools
- A platform for up-and-coming talents
- Commissioned works and individual exhibition formats
- Versatile on-site events such as group events and guided tours

**The Oceania exhibition at the Royal Academy** can be viewed at <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/oceania>

This brilliant and exciting exhibition was reported in the Guardian newspaper which states:

“In this exhibition you can feel the ocean roll under your canoe, hear sea birds and see dorsal fins. The Royal Academy helps by painting some of the rooms ocean blue. Long before Cook explored the vastness of the Pacific, its indigenous peoples did. The very existence of the art here is a monument to one of humanity’s greatest and earliest acts of exploration. Human beings reached Papua New Guinea and Australia from Africa more than 50,000 years ago, and this stone age act of audacity was followed by canoe voyages that gradually encompassed myriads of islands. This maritime world is beautifully documented here, not only by gorgeously carved boats and oars but navigational maps made of strips of wood to mark the canoe routes, and shells to denote islands. These are marvels of the human mind.

Living so close to the sea makes for intimacy with its other inhabitants. On a decorative house beam from the Solomon Islands, black and white sea birds, tuna, and sharks are carved with acute realism. You can feel the natural world as if you were in a canoe. Natural observation is everywhere. So are human images including the recurring theme of a mother nursing her child. Yet these great artists felt no need to be confined by realism. Birds become beaked patterns; humans become fantastic deities.”

### **C. Case Studies Based on Successful Craft Modules**

My experience with the WCC APR, and UNESCO, has observed the crafts across many countries. Young people who develop skills in the crafts and arts have a range of other psycho-social benefits such as improving their self-esteem, achieving vocational outcomes, improving the ability to work in teams and developing valuable new skills and confidence.

These outcomes are defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as mental health and wellbeing and are classified as achieving basic human rights; to live in peace and harmony; to have equality for women and girls as well as boys; to have the rightful access to education; to lift lives out of poverty and to achieve a student's full capacity, talents and aptitude.

#### **Refugees**

While discussing how local craft stakeholders can develop a sustainable/profitable craft industry, it is important to mention the plight of refugees that are impacting on many countries of the world.

If all the world's refugees came together as a single nation, they would collectively create one of the largest countries on Earth. According to the UNHCR, there are now almost 70 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, around 1% of the world's population – the highest number in modern history. Statistics show the refugee population in Malaysia from 2006 to 2015. In 2015, almost one hundred thousand refugees were residing in Malaysia compared to thirty thousand in 2006. There was a consistent increase in the refugee population through the years.

The crafts have a role as training, exchange and income generation. Across many communities, there is considerable attention to the crafts as development strategies. Increasingly, arts and crafts are being recognised as a central tool, immediately after conflict. The primary objective of such projects is to reconstruct young minds damaged and scarred by war. Working with crafts and projects in the arts create healthy and positive distractions. This approach deals with both psychological and physiological repercussions that stem from conflict, by enabling relaxation, fostering creativity and self-expression that build self-belief and better socialisation.

Women working within crafts impacts on the power balances within the household. In post-war reconstruction, a significant shift is evident of women joining the crafts sector as stakeholders. Women have selected the area of crafts due to their subjective preferences. This work proposes links between poverty, unemployment and conflict and suggests that culture can play a role in economic development and reconstruction.

The increasing numbers of women craft workers in recovering countries or the new place of living are significant as they reflect the changes that the conflict has wrought to the crafts of their country. Women do their utmost to support themselves and their families, thereby, are central to this work. This is evident with the work being done in Palestine where women have established a thriving creative industry in Gaza with their traditional embroideries.

### **Further Case Studies Based on Successful Craft Modules**

Thailand is one of the most impressive examples of introducing the crafts in education and building the country's creative industries and economic strength.

**“The Young Entrepreneur project” (YEP)** was initiated by Madame Wanpen Sujiputto over fifteen years ago with 200 schools, at that time, and many more today. YEP has developed a valuable programme using traditional and contemporary methods in the crafts and arts in many Thai, low socio-economic primary and secondary schools.

YEP has worked very successfully shaping the design of the school curriculum to involve young people in creative crafts to further their education and job opportunities. YEP provides an important ‘culture for development’ strategy, highlighted at the United Nations General Assembly (June 12, 2013). The then Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon stated that culture, including the arts and crafts, need to be recognised for their vital role in a country's development, particularly in relation to poverty reduction and sustainable growth.

Working closely with all the selected schools across Thailand, Madame Wanpen has tirelessly built a solid platform of craft education, enriching the lives of students, their families and their communities. Her close and collegial network of expert craft teachers travel continuously imparting the knowledge and ethos of the YEP programme, resulting in regular exhibitions, workshops, training programmes and attendance at international trade fairs.



Interestingly, the quality of the student work is in some cases almost as good as many of the older crafts artisans, under the watchful eye of the accompanying Master.

Objectives for the YEP Model include:

- To improve skill development and contributions through the arts and crafts
- To develop creativity in the Thai school curricula and promote artisans in the arts and crafts
- To develop and formulate best practice arts and crafts education reaching the best international standards
- To develop a network and build a collaborative relationship based on inter-cultural understanding and cooperation [3]

I visited Bhutan with Madame Wanpen and her team of thirty-six expert crafts artisans and teachers in schools to exchange knowledge and to impart their skills and build marketing expertise for the crafts artisans of Bhutan. The teachers ran a series of intensive daily workshops at The National Institute for Zorig Chusum in Thimphu (the capital city), established by the Royal Government of Bhutan decades ago to promote traditional art in contemporary Bhutan. We also visited the Choki Traditional Arts School Bhutan.

### **The OTOP PROGRAMME**

On two other occasions, I visited several schools in Thailand with Associate Professor Sineenart Laedpriwan. Thailand provides another best practice model when, as a response to the 1997 Asian economic crisis, the Thai Government launched a series of federally funded programmes to stimulate Thailand's national economy. Significantly, the OTOP project involves extensive research into the relationship between learning and the social and environmental contexts.

One of the most popular programmes, OTOP, was aimed at stimulating Thailand's domestic craft industry, which has now grown to a billion-dollar industry annually. Abbreviated from One Tambon - One Product, or One "District" One Product, OTOP encouraged local craftsmen from each village to develop and market their special craft-oriented products as a means to generate extra income, thereby stimulating the larger economy.

The products that each village decide to create vary in a wide range, from inexpensive but usually attractive tourists' souvenirs to expensive garments. The OTOP seal on the product ensures the authenticity of that product to its particular district. This assurance of being a "locally made" item increases the brand value of the product as authentically Thai, making them quite desirable to both local and foreign consumers. [4]

### **The Support Arts and Crafts International Centre of Thailand (SACICT)**

SACICT is another best practice example from Thailand demonstrating craft promotion. I visited this celebrated Government Centre for Thai craft products on separate occasions with Dr. Surapee Rojanavongse and Professor Sineenart Laedpriwan.

SACICT was established to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's 72nd birthday anniversary on August 12, 2004, to show gratitude to Her sincere effort in promoting Her people's quality of life and to extend assistance towards the promotion and betterment of Thai folk arts and crafts for export.

SACICT has succeeded in its aim for excellence in the management, production and marketing of Thai handicrafts. Its success has been the main key in the development of the network of co-operation in production and marketing efforts to propel Thai arts and crafts products towards local and international recognition. SACICT is adjacent to the Bangsai Arts and Crafts Training Centre. It is an impressive four-storied building for the display of arts and crafts products for export.

Some earlier facts on the crafts in Thailand:

- SACICT targets arts & craft exports at USD800 mil (Monday, 30 April 2012 by NNT).
- In 2012 – SACICT set the target to export art and handicraft products worth 800 million US dollars in that year and boosted the value to USD1 billion in 2015 by utilising raw materials and know-how from members in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).
- In 2012, the SACICT Director-General Pimpapan Charnsilp disclosed that the centre set the 2012 export goal for its art and handicraft products at USD800 million, compared to the global value of USD63.2 billion in this trade. In order to achieve the goal, the centre created an added value to its products and packaging by applying new designs and creativity as well as promoting domestic and overseas marketing plans as a way to strengthen its sale networks.

- In 2015, SACICT art and craft exports reached USD1 billion with the opening of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). That year SACICT became a source of raw materials and knowledge for the development of Thai handicraft products. The estimated global value of trade in arts and crafts in 2015 stood as high as USD72.74 billion and Thailand became one of the world's top ten exporters of arts and crafts. In 2015, China held the highest export value at over USD10 billion/year, followed by Hong Kong and Belgium. Meanwhile, the world's largest importer of this product group the USA (USD6 billion/year), followed by Germany (USD2 billion/year) and the UK (USD1.6 billion/year).

Apart from the championing and promotion of crafts by The World Craft Council Asia Pacific region and the other regional WCC bodies, I will now briefly mention what I have witnessed regarding the most successful organisations devoted to the commercial and curatorial endeavours in the Asia Pacific region. Ones that demonstrate ethical and successful outcomes related to quality/authenticity/ contemporary design/ adaptation and the approach to formal education in schools and informal workshops etc. I have been very fortunate to have witnessed many schools, universities, NGOs and a host of community organisations, groups, individuals dedicated to working in the craft sector. [5]

## **AHPADA**

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA) was established as a result of a Workshop on Handicraft for Export held as part of CONEX'81 which was hosted by the Royal Thai Government in February 1981 in Bangkok. AHPADA was formally inaugurated in Jakarta in March that year as a forum for both the government and private sectors concerned to meet and to complement each other in the promotion and development of arts and crafts activities. AHPADA is affiliated with the ASEAN and the World Craft Council. The Founding Members of AHPADA are Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Indonesia. Singapore and Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam joined AHPADA in September 1999. The 1st AHPADA International Arts and Crafts Expo was organised by the AHPADA Philippines, fully supported by the Philippine Government and the private sector. The Expo provided a platform to raise the level of awareness about the importance of arts and crafts in ASEAN countries and a one-stop marketing venue for the products of AHPADA's craftspeople.

The 2nd AHPADA International Arts & Crafts Expo will be held on October 26 – 28, 2019 at the Philippine Trade Training Centre, Manila, Philippines.

## **THE AHPADA MISSION**

The ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA) has a mission to preserve and improve the status of craftspeople within and outside the Asia Pacific region. AHPADA energizes the sharing of ideas, know-how, experiences, resources and expertise in the region for the preservation and the development of craftspeople, and in promoting quality craftsmanship. At the same time, AHPADA supports the development of crafts through different training initiatives, the establishment of crafts businesses related to cultural tourism, and the vocational training of youth and the physically challenged.

One of AHPADA's projects is the CraftsNet Project, providing networking and information exchange opportunities between Asian organisations who support the region's crafts sector and their European counterparts. The crafts sector, an important economic sector, creates livelihood and employment opportunities and provide regular sources of income for thousands of craftsmen, artists and artisans in the ASEAN region, especially in the rural areas.

Asian intermediary organisations play a crucial, catalytic role in supporting crafts sector professionals and micro, small, and medium enterprises in the region. CraftsNet activities include thematic workshops in Germany, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Bangladesh (AHPADA's Country Partners) on topics such as Marketing and Exports, Crafts, and Information Technology; Crafts and Tourism; Exchange Programmes among craftsmen; and the creation of a state-of-the-art, tailored information technology platform to promote information exchange and networking. [6]

### **One individual case study is the very successful and tireless work of Edric Ong.**

Edric Ong epitomises best practice Craft Practice and Development. He is an outstanding individual who devotes his life to the preservation and promotion of crafts. He is President of Society Atelier Sarawak, the Arts and Crafts Society of Sarawak in East Malaysia. He is also the Immediate Past President of AHPADA ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association. An architect by training, he has designed several landmarks such as the Sarawak Cultural Village and the Kuching International Airport in Sarawak, East Malaysia.



His interest in the heritage of his country has caused him to write several books, for instance: *Sarawak Style*, *Pua-Kumbu-Iban Textiles* and *Woven Dreams-Ikat Textiles of Sarawak*.

A noted speaker at International conferences, he has set up the World Eco-Fibre and Textile (WEFT) Network to further the cause of natural fibres and dyes. He was the Convenor of the WEFT Forum 1999, 2001 and 2003. He has won several awards including the American Aid to Artisans ‘ADVOCATE AWARD’; Australia Culture Award; ‘Penyokong Kraf Negara’ or Malaysian National Craft Award for Best Non-Government Organisation; the Sarawak State ‘Pegawai Bintang Sarawak’ award; and received Seals of Excellence from UNESCO-AHPADA and the Japanese G-Mark for many of his designs in the arts and crafts.

Edric Ong has curated many exhibitions in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Korea, Australia, Japan, India, France, Sweden, the UK and the USA.

The label ‘EO-EDRIC ONG’ is the brand-name of his own company, EON COMPANY, registered in Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia. This company was formed in 1986 to help revive the traditional arts and crafts of Sarawak; and to innovate their designs for contemporary application in fashion, decoration and interiors.

Figure 2: Lindy Joubert with Edric Ong during their GWKL 2019 talk “Creating and Collecting the Craft-Borneo and Beyond”. Photo by Shalini Ganendra Advisory.



Edric Ong has been involved with various groups of ethnic communities such as the Iban (ikat weavings, basketry, mats & pottery); Bidayuh (bamboo & wood carving); Lun Bawang & Kelabit (Reed and palm hats/mats; hand-made plant-fibre paper); Penan (basketry & mats); Chinese (terracotta ceramics); Malay (batik & weaving); Orang-Ulu (beadwork, wood carving, bark painting); Melanau (basketry).

Outside of Kuching, Edric Ong's collection is now selling at Aseana Galleria, KLCC Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur, and The Datai in Langkawi, TANGS Singapore, Triphum Galleries at Gaysorn Plaza and Siam Paragon, Bangkok, and galleries in Korea and Japan. In the United States, they are marketed by David McLanahan of 'Jungle Arts and Flora' in Seattle; and in Britain by Lord Medway, Jason Gathorne Hardy. Recently, his textiles won the Grand Prize at the International Textile Competition in Daegu, Korea.

Today the EO label centres on eco-textiles crafted from silk, cotton and other natural fibres using natural dyes inspired by Malaysian and Sarawakian ethnic designs and motifs. Renowned for his work in reviving the 'ikat' weaving textiles of the Iban people, Edric also applies the motifs of these 'pua kumbu' textiles and the motifs of the Orang-Ulu people in hand-printed and painted textiles using only natural dyes. These are fashioned into a collection of hand-printed and painted scarves, stoles and clothes for men and women. Even the colours of his fabrics come from the earth: natural tones derived from the rainforest. The chic, contemporary garments are comfortable yet stylish to wear. Everything is hand-made: from the batik block-printed designs to the handmade bark cloth and rattan buttons from the jungles of Borneo! [7]

### **The World Craft Council UK – Parent Body for Five regions**

The mission is to elevate awareness and appreciation of crafts as an integral part of societies cultural, social and economic wellbeing.

Their vision is a world where craftsmanship and its inherent skills are valued and appreciated at every level of society.

Their purpose is to strengthen the status of and promote crafts as a vital part of cultural, social and economic life through our global network of members and affiliates. [8]

## **The Award of Excellence**

Launched by the parent body, the World Crafts Council, established the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts. Established to encourage craft-workers to use traditional skills and materials, the “Award of Excellence for Handicrafts” programme was established by UNESCO in 2001 (formerly known as the ‘SEAL of Excellence’ programme) aimed to ensure the continuation of traditional knowledge and skills and the preservation of cultural diversity in the region. WCC APR continues the programme under the patronage of UNESCO.

The Award of Excellence for Handicrafts aims to promote quality crafts that uphold rigorous standards of excellence. It aims to ensure that when consumers buy awarded handicrafts, they are buying high-quality, culturally authentic products that have been manufactured in a socially responsible manner with respect for the environment.

Applications are now open for the 2019 WCC “Award of Excellence for Handicrafts” in Southeast Asia, South Asia and South Pacific. A panel of experts in design and handicraft production and promotion will meet to review submissions across a variety of craft categories which are produced from textiles, natural fibres, ceramics, wood, metal, stone, and other natural materials as well as composite materials.

This winning product will be exhibited by WCC in cooperation with the host Government. Application forms are available on the WCC APR website [wcc.apr.org](http://wcc.apr.org) and the [wccapr.sect.ku@gmail.com](mailto:wccapr.sect.ku@gmail.com)

## **Craft Cities**

A network of creative craft cities worldwide has been recently launched by the World Crafts Council (WCC) in the framework of the creative economy and in response to the growing awareness of the contribution of local authorities, craftspeople and communities to cultural, economic and social development.

Through this innovative and unique network, WCC intends to:

- Highlight, on a global platform, the reputation and assets of a creative city in a specific craft field, for example in woodwork, weaving, pottery, etc

- Strengthen local potential for innovation and the development of creative tourism
- Promote the exchange of know-how, experiences and best practices in diverse craft fields, at the national, regional and international level
- Create new opportunities for co-operation and partnership between the designated creative craft cities. [9]

### **The World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region**

The most successful region for the World Craft Council is the Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR). Overall there are five regions: Africa, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America. The WCC is a Non-Government Organisation NGO with a status Category A at UNESCO. The Asia Pacific Region covers the Asian countries stretching from the furthest West to the furthest East, which includes Australia and the South Pacific Islands. Such a frame incorporates within the following six sub-regions:

- **West Asia:** Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, UAE
- **Central Asia:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
- **South Asia:** Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka
- **Southeast Asia:** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- **Far East Asia:** China, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Mongolia, North and South Korea, Taiwan-China
- **South Pacific:** Australia, New Zealand and the South-Pacific Islands

The WCC-Asia Pacific Region has the same mission and objectives of the World Crafts Council (WCC) International, which are: to bring handicrafts and craftspeople (artisans) into the mainstream of life, elevate their social and economic status and build fellowship among them, upgrade the quality of their products and promote them in the local and international markets.

WCC-Asia Pacific Region is the largest, richest and most diversified in the field of handicrafts. The craftspeople in APR countries, their communities, and their governments have a great degree of awareness of the cultural, aesthetic, sentimental, creative and innovative value of handmade production.

For the purpose of creating awareness locally and internationally, WCC-APR launched three flagship projects: “Crafts in Education”, “Natural Dyes”, and “Online Encyclopaedia of Handicrafts in Asia Pacific Region”. [10]

### **Craft in Education Programme**

Immediate Past President WCC APR Dr.Surapee Rojanavongse brought the craft revival program being operated across Thai primary and secondary schools to WCC APR.

The craft in school program is managed and operated by Madame Wanpen, founder of The Young Entrepreneur Programme, YEP. Madame Wanpen, a former Director in the Ministry of Education Thailand, established formal methodologies which were implemented across the Thai primary and secondary school systems. YEP also has the aim to get talented students to tertiary education at leading arts and crafts institutes and universities.

### **WoCCA - World Crafts Council – Australia**

World Crafts Council – Australia is the national entity representing Australia in the World Crafts Council. Australia is a member of the South Pacific sub-region, which is part of World Crafts Council Asia Pacific. [11]

Indigenous Australians have a rich craft culture that is closely linked to both ceremonial ritual and daily life. In remote regions, there are art centres that promote indigenous craft through workshops, product development and exhibitions.



Baskets are highly prized and collected in major state institutions. Craft in Australia today can be seen as a component of design, a form of visual art. While there are many practitioners at both the professional and hobbyist level, it would be very rare to find anyone who identified as an artisan in the traditional sense of a person who inherits a skill that is offered as a service to others. Instead, individuals are carving out personal careers in their chosen craft medium, presenting their work in galleries for audiences to enjoy, supplying the many outlets for craft and design, and working with communities in realising their cultural potential. There are increasing collaborations involving Indigenous Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

### **Garland e-magazine**

Since the World Craft Council Australia WoCCA was formed, three years ago, it has achieved many excellent initiatives including the e-magazine, Garland. <https://wccaaustralia.org.au/garland-magazine/>

Garland is a platform for thoughtful writing about beautiful objects made today across the Indo-Pacific. Launched in 2015, Garland is produced by the World Crafts Council – Australia, a national entity of the World Crafts Council – Asia Pacific. Garland explores the nexus between East and West through a quarterly online publication and by bringing together writers, artists and carers from across our region.

### **Australian Craft Map**

The Australian Craft Map is another flagship project of WoCCA to collect information and build a network of craft organisations, associations, guilds, workshops, galleries, museums and suppliers across the country. The principle aim of this project is to demonstrate the breadth of the craft sector across media, region, generation and practice.

### **Code of Practice for Partnerships in Craft & Design**

Another initiative for WoCCA is The Code of Practice for Partnerships in Craft & Design. This has been developed to encourage ethical relations between developers and producers.

## **D. Observations and advice**

Working with UNESCO across many developing countries in the arts, crafts and education, I gleaned insights from the UNESCO philosophy alongside the practical success of the best practice models of the Thailand craft in education and Young Entrepreneur Programs YEP programmes.

Education is the only succeeding and sustainable factor for achieving a sustainable craft industry, for building viable communities through the crafts, building the health and wellbeing of communities and individuals and working towards achieving UNESCO'S sustainable development goals.

While working at UNESCO I gained insights based on the outcomes from teams of top experts who gathered from many countries for specific, targeted meetings on the arts, crafts, culture and education.

The outcomes from the UNESCO Pacific Regional Conference on Arts Education, Nadi, Fiji, 25-29 November 2002, relevant and beneficial to the Pacific region, are also relevant to the theme of this paper and included:

### **Teacher Education**

For teachers to be effective in the classroom, the following points should be observed:

- Teacher Education is the responsibility of the government, i.e. The Ministry of Education
- Governments need to be committed to ongoing, in-depth quality programmes for pre-service and classroom teachers
- Teacher education must be committed to quality pre-service and in-service courses
- Teacher education courses should attract artisans from the community. A possible model could be for teacher training providers to form partnerships with tertiary providers to 'grow' crafts experts for a skilled craft teaching profession
- Creative teaching methods need to be employed which engage the students; for example, co-operative learning strategies, co-constructivist methods, inquiry method and so on
- Teachers should be trained to establish, run and evaluate classroom programmes at both the Primary and Secondary level

- Teacher training at the Primary level should include the training of craft specialists. All children at the Primary level should have the opportunity of regular lessons from established and competent teachers coupled with sessions offered by the generalist classroom teacher
- Teaching Training at the Primary level should be such that generalist classroom teachers are able to use craft making as part of their teaching

**Teacher education in the crafts should consider the following aspects:**

- Children who are gifted and talented
- Children with special needs
- Gender issues in education
- Craft/art education in differing cultural contexts

**Recommendations**

In addition to the statements above, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Artists in Schools Programmes, e.g.- craft artisans and artists undertaking ‘residencies’, which should be activated and prevalent at all levels of schooling
- Sound financial resourcing through government means and through partnerships with industry
- Encouragement of exhibitions through regional festivals [again, with financial support from industry]
- Research: a special project to research a one-year trial of craft tuition provided by itinerant [peripatetic] artisans where student achievement in learning and attitude could be evaluated. The shift in such attitudes and involvement of students can be measured and the results used as evidence for the ongoing development of such resourcing
- Other craft education research should be encouraged and undertaken to improve school music education in the region [12]

Interestingly, all the outcomes from major research studies and expert meetings, such as the one above and the YEP programme in Thailand, have very similar final recommendations.. To consolidate this view, I now report on the draft Pacific Strategy where after extensive country-wide consultation, New Zealand has recently completed this draft Pacific Arts Strategy for 2018–2023. This is relevant to the ongoing survival of the crafts and the arts, for individuals, organisations, communities etc. Their final conclusions, briefly stated here as the report is available on the website include:

- Increased levels of funding
- Improved support for young and emerging artists and arts practitioners
- A need to acknowledge and support the diverse range of Pasifika peoples, including Pasifika artists and practitioners with disabilities
- Access to internship and other opportunities for future Pacific arts leaders
- Professional development opportunities for individual Pasifika artists at all career stages
- Greater levels of respect for Pacific arts and increased recognition of the value of Pacific arts
- Greater recognition for the contribution of Pasifika artists and practitioners make to the arts of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- Improved access to business expertise and support
- Capability-building support for Pacific-led arts organisations and personnel
- Support for the transmission and practice of Pacific heritage arts
- The expansion and strengthening of the Pacific arts infrastructure.

The resources they collectively possess have the potential to significantly grow Pacific arts in New Zealand and internationally. However, there can be barriers to greater working together. These can include:

- A lack of resources within some mainstream arts organisations that leads them to focus on delivering their own, more traditional programmes and activities
- Little or limited contact between mainstream and Pasifika artists/arts organisations, leading to a lack of awareness of the opportunities that may exist.

Recent feedback from the Pacific arts community calls for:

- More opportunities for Pasifika artists and practitioners to network, fono and talanoa, including more frequent Pacific Arts Summits
- More Pacific-led venues and spaces presenting Pacific arts programmes
- Recognition of the importance of locally based arts events, such as ‘Polyfests’, in centres outside of Auckland and Wellington
- Less dependency by Pasifika artists on funding from central government
- Greater support for artists creating and presenting work using digital technologies and platforms.

Recent feedback from the Pacific arts community described a desire to see:

- More residency and cultural exchange opportunities between New Zealand- based Pasifika artists and artists based on Oceania
- Greater recognition of the value of success in Oceania
- Greater recognition of the success of Pasifika artists internationally.

To reiterate, the YEP Methodologies in teaching include:

- Peer teaching
- Critical evaluation
- Collaborating across the arts
- Individual and group learning
  
- Engagement with community elders who are experts in the crafts
- Artist in schools programme
- Self and peer evaluation
- Group discussion centred around e.g.- identifying and describing the elements of craft, the purposes and functions of craft.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper is to present a way forward to making the vital link between skills, knowledge, education and employment. The examples presented here are from my own experiences and the connections to the World Craft Council Asia Pacific Region and to UNESCO.



The presentation shows the many ways that creativity, crafts and artisanship are navigated by artisans, educational organisations, NGOs, craft businesses and researchers, navigating across individual and collective levels, between inherited traditions and modern technologies. I wish to thank Datin Shalini Ganendra for inviting me to present in this valuable forum and to offer my respect to her work as a cultural entrepreneur and scholar and her visionary establishment and support for the GWKL 2018's 'Luminary Features' and Vision Culture Lectures.

#### Notes

1. <https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/creative-nation/>
2. <https://www.kasityokasvatus.utu.fi/en/> Craft, Design and Technology Education (CDTE) is a scientific discipline that you can study at the University of Turku, Rauma Campus, Finland. Studying master's degree in CDTE gives you permission to work as a teacher of CDT in Finland. The discipline of CDTE studies intentional productive activity by humans in the context of material space. Study focuses on pedagogic and didactic questions on learning and teaching craft process from early childhood education to the highest levels of education. Study is conducted widely in different material fields on working methods, technologies and educational goals.
3. <https://www.gemconsortium.org/news/a-valuable-source-of-information-on-entrepreneurship-for-stakeholders-in-thailand> The terms entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in Thailand were introduced at roughly the same time as when the GEM research project first took place in the country in 2002. It changed the way in which people viewed small business owners and as a result politicians started targeting entrepreneurship as an important topic to support SME and economic development. GEM was instrumental in providing the necessary facts and figures for the Thai entrepreneurial activities such as their attitudes, activities and aspirations. GEM findings have been used to suggest policies for SMEs, to create training programs on gaps found in the expert survey and to empower women entrepreneurs across the ASEAN region to benefit from the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). August 2, 2018
4. <https://www.thaiembassy.sg/friends-of-thailand/p/what-is-otop> OTOP stands for 'One Tambon (meaning sub-district) One Product'. It is a local entrepreneurship stimulus program which aims to support the unique locally made and marketed products of each Thai tambon all over Thailand. OTOP drew its inspiration from Japan's successful One Village One Product (OVOP) programme, and encourages village communities to improve local product quality and marketing. It selects one superior product from each tambon to receive formal branding as a "starred OTOP product", and provides a local and international stage for the promotion of these products. OTOP products cover a large array of local products, including handicrafts, cotton and silk garments, pottery, fashion accessories, household items, and foods.
5. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/lifestyle/shops-markets/26229/the-support-arts-and-crafts-international-centre-of-thailand-public-organization-sacict-> Assists the promotion and betterment of Thai folk arts and crafts for export. SACICT aims for excellence in the management, production and marketing of Thai handicrafts and also aims to be the main key in the development of the network of co-operation in production and marketing efforts so as to propel Thai arts and crafts products towards local and international recognition.

6. <https://www.ahpada.com/> AHPADA is a regional forum for craft organizations and practitioners in the ASEAN member states to address issues concerning the revitalization, promotion and development of crafts. Educates on Southeast Asian craft traditions and practice and to deliberate on heritage preservation, craft innovation and product development and promotion. It also organizes and participates in craft-related exhibitions and trade fairs.
7. <https://www.edricong.com/>
8. <https://www.wccinternational.org/>
9. <https://wcc-europe.org/craft-cities/>. WCC Craft Cities. A network of creative craft cities worldwide has been launched by the World Crafts Council (WCC) in the framework of the creative economy and in response to the growing awareness of the contribution of local authorities, craftspeople and communities to cultural, economic and social development.
10. WCC-Asia Pacific Region (WCC-APR). <https://wccapr.org>
11. <https://wccaustralia.org.au/>
12. All the information presented here is from a report prepared by Teweiariki Teaero (Fiji); Prof. Futa Helu, Director, Atenisi University (Tonga); Helen Moore (New Zealand); Vishnu Prasad (Fiji); R Barleyde J Katit (Papua New Guinea); Eric Natuoivi (Vanuatu); Tereza Wagner (UNESCO). Fiji, Nov. 2002.