



News & Activities

Sukhothai Artisans' Experiences and Impressions Gained from Participating in Jinju International Craft Market during Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale 2025 in Republic of Korea Witiya Pittungnapoo

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Introduction

This article aims to share experiences of Sukhothai artisans who participated in the international crafts market during Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale which was held in Jinju, South Korea between October 1st to November 16th 2025 under the theme: Between, Nature to Human. This first international craft market was initiated in 2025 as associated event under the UNESCO Creative Cities Crafts Market held from the 1st to 4th October in the Jinju Railway Cultural Park. There were about 25 domestic and international craft artists to join this event. Two artisans from Sukhothai were selected to exhibit their crafts, the first is Raveewan Khanadnid a textile artisan of Suntree and the second artist is Anurak Bunkhong who is a pottery artisan from MothanaCeramic.



Figure 1a and 1b Opening Ceremony of Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale on 1st Oct. 2025 Group photo in front of the Vehicle Maintenance Depot (Left) and Crafts booths at Jinju Railway Cultural Park at Jinju Station (Right) Photos by Jiinju Organising Committee.

Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale provided rich experiences for residents and visitors to express and exchange cultural differences through various activities, namely, main and special exhibitions, side programs (CRAFTea, International Symposium, UNESCO Creative Cities Crafts Market, and associated events). A reflection of the two artisans from Sukhothai who participated in Jinju International Crafts Market and Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale will be presented next.



Experiences and Learning Opportunities by Raveewan Khanadnid

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Jinju is clearly recognized as a UNESCO Creative City of Craft and Folk Art, demonstrating strong collaboration across all sectors. The city organizes major events every two years, with consistent attention and support from government agencies. A special gathering is also held between government representatives and participating artists, providing an informal space for conversation, exchange, and the strengthening of future relationships. As a gesture of hospitality, gifts are presented to participants—Hamo dolls, the city's symbolic mascot, and Jinju silk scarves, a premium local product. These thoughtful gifts effectively promote Jinju's unique identity as a distinguished city of craft to all visitors.

Jinju International Craft Market was held at the front of the Vehicle Maintenance Depot, Jinju Railway Cultural Park. The event beautifully honoured local artists and showcased their work with great value and appreciation. Although the exhibition featured contemporary artwork, it also included a hands-on workshop on tea brewing, allowing everyone to learn about the community's ancient cultural traditions. The activity incorporated the artists' own crafted materials and tools—such as teapots, ceramic cups, and wooden tables—creating a harmonious presentation. The exhibition remained open for about one and a half months, giving more visitors the opportunity to enjoy the artwork. The integration of the public park, relaxation, and art appreciation blended seamlessly with the rhythm of daily life, leaving a lasting impression on those who visited Jinju City.



Figure 2a and 2b: The Mayor of Jinju City, Mr. Kyoo-il Jo visited Suntree crafts booth at the Railway Cultural Park (Photos taken by Raveewan Khanadnid and Thai team)



The exhibition was held at Jinju Railway Cultural Park in Jinju Railway, a public park where people can visit and relax every day. This made it easy for visitors to access the craft exhibition without having to travel far. Local residents showed great interest in visiting the exhibition and appreciating the artist's work. Many families also brought their children during weekend to experience and engage with the artists' creations. Art and craft workshops were organized in collaboration with artists, fostering learning, exchange, and the transmission of artistic knowledge from artists to the community.



Figure 3: Prof. Byung Hoon Jeong, Focal Point of Jinju and Coordinator of UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art Subnetwork (Right) and his wife (Middle) visited Suntree crafts booth (Photo taken by Raveewan Khanadnid).



Figure 4 (a-d): DIY crafts-making workshop provided by Sukhothai artisan of Suntree (Photos by Raveewan Khanadnid and the Thai team).



This year, artists from several countries participated. From Thailand, there were three art showcases—textile art (Suntree Thai Fabric) and ceramics (Mothana Sukhothai and Chiang Mai Pottery)—along with an artist from China. The event encouraged cross-cultural learning, exchange, and the building of artistic networks. Through these collaborative activities, artists had opportunities to share and learn from one another in many meaningful ways. It is believed that if such exhibitions are held again in future, including hands-on workshops will further enable everyone to access art and experience the creative process firsthand.



Figure 5: A group photo, namely, Komol Kongcharoen (Ceramist: Chiang Mai), Raveewan Khanadnid (Textile artisan: Sukhothai) Prof. Cho-Yeon Bak (Steering Committee Member of Jinju UCCN) and Anurak Bunkhong (Ceramist: Sukhothai) (from left to right). Photo by Jinju Organising Team.

Impression and Learning Experiences by Anurak Bunkhong

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My first and most impressive aspect was the warm hospitality from the host city, Jinju. The organizing team took excellent care of all participants, constantly checking in to see if anything was needed or missing. The people of Jinju were kind, generous, and had wonderful interpersonal warmth. Although there were some communication challenges, these were easily overcome by using Google as a translation tool.



Figure 6a and 6b: The Mayor of Jinju City, Mr. Kyoo-il Jo and his team (Left) and Prof. Byung Hoon Jeong (Focal Point of Jinju UCCN) visited MothanaCeramic booth at the Railway Cultural Park (Photos taken by Raveewan Khanadnid and the Thai team)



The festival was organized in a highly systematic and orderly manner, without confusion. Even though traffic volume increased during the event period, the city managed transport efficiently through strong cooperation between public and private sectors. Moreover, the event encouraged public participation, allowing people to take part in the activities.



Another valuable learning experience was observing the methods of art exhibition and museum management, which were particularly interesting. The atmosphere and venue decoration were beautifully arranged, especially the use of ornamental flowers and plants that added vibrant colours and a refreshing ambiance. This creative environment left visitors feeling delighted and deeply impressed by the festival.



Figure 7a and 7b: MothanaCeramic's booth at Jinju International Crafts Market (Left) and Museum (Right). Photos taken by MothanaCeramic and the Thai team.

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Witiya Pittungnapoo for sharing this great opportunity and coordinating with the city of Jinju, which made this meaningful exchange and collaboration between Thai artists, artists from other cities, and the host team possible.

Acknowledgement

On behalf of the Co-focal point of Sukhothai UCCN and ASIA and the Pacific Regional Coordinator of UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art, I would like to express my appreciation to the Mayor of Jinju City, Mr. Kyoo-il Jo. and Prof. Byung Hoon Jeong, a focal point of Jinju UCCN and the coordinator of UCCN for Crafts and Folk Art Subnetwork for all the support and facilitation provided for Sukhothai artisans. Within the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, Jinju and Sukhothai will further strengthen our cooperation for achieving meaningful cultural exchange in more sustainable future.