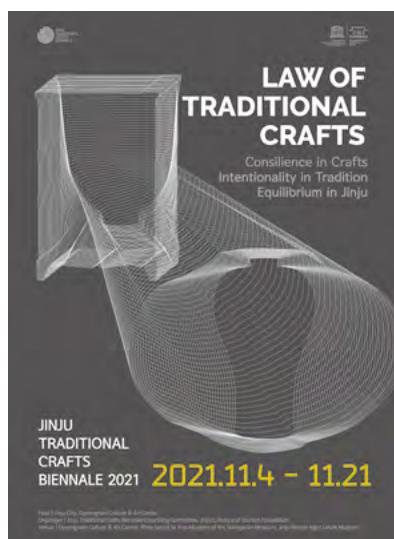


## Jinju, KOREA

## Jinju's First Traditional Crafts Biennale



The 2021 Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale took place in Jinju at four different exhibition halls for 18 days, during November 4–21, 2021. This event, held for the very first time, was hosted by Jinju City after being designated as the UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Arts in November 2019. The biennale aimed to promote the development of cultural industry in the craft field and foster active exchanges with the other UNESCO Creative City Sub-Network.

The overall theme of this year's Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale was the "Law of Traditional Crafts." The main task was to answer whether there are laws, principles, or rules that penetrate traditional and modern crafts, Oriental and Western crafts, as well as the crafts in Korea.



According to the theme, the biennale was divided into four different sections. At Gyeongnam Culture and Arts Center, an exchange exhibition of 13 overseas artists and 12 Korean artists was held under the theme of “Consilience of Crafts.” The overseas artists, including Christine Waxweiler (Limoges, France), Lexie Millikan (Paducah, USA), Sandro Tiberi (Fabriano, Italy), Toshio Ohi (Kanazawa, Japan), Sonchat Chanthawarang (Sukhothai, Thailand), Andile Dyalvane (Cape Town, Republic of South Africa), Kalin Daskalov (Gabrovo, Bulgaria), Maria Poll (Tallinn, Estonia), and Setonji Pascal (Porto Novo, Benin) participated as the Creative City artists, and Chiang Mai,





Thailand sent a video presenting the evolution of their traditional clothes. More artists, such as Markus Faisst and Anton Mohr from Bregenzwald, Austria, also participated as well. Along with these foreign artists, 12 Korean artists exhibited their artworks.

At Rhee Seund Ja Jinju Museum of Art, 7 Korean senior craft artists' artworks were exhibited under the theme of "Intentionality of Tradition." This section tried to predict the future direction of traditional crafts. The audience were able to enjoy the highest quality of Korean crafts. At Namgaram Museum, the Jinju traditional wooden crafts and metal crafts



exhibition took place under the theme of “Equilibrium of Jinju.” This section aimed to explore how the law and intentionality are balanced in Jinju's traditional crafts. Eight Korean traditional craft artists participated in the exhibition. The audience were able to experience the balanced aesthetic of Jinju's traditional crafts through the wooden furniture pieces, which are the most representative traditional crafts of Jinju.

Meanwhile, at the Jinju Bronze Period Culture Museum, the exhibition of “Taejeong Collection,” displaying the metal crafts furniture from the Joseon dynasty, the exhibition of award-winning works from the “Jinju Traditional Start-Up Idea Competition,” and the “Jinju Traditional Crafts Media” exhibition took place.

Moreover, Kalin Daskalov (Gabrovo, Bulgaria), Maria Poll (Tallinn, Estonia), and Setonji Pascal (Porto Novo, Benin) arrived in Korea in early October to participate in the Jinju Artists-in-Residence Program for one month. The artists worked together with the Jinju artists during the program to produce collaborated craftworks, and these works were displayed at the exhibition hall of Gyeongnam Culture and Art Center.

On November 5, the “Round Table” was held in Rhee Seund Ja Jinju Museum of Art. Lexie Millikan (Paducah, USA), Sonchat Changthawarang (Sukhotahi, Thailand), Fernando Zaccaria, the coordinator of the Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale who recruited the craftworks from Italy, Professor Byung Hoon Jeong, the chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Biennale, and others participated in the Round Table and had a discussion



under the theme of “Law and Intentionality of Traditional Craft.”

On November 11, the 2021 UNESCO Creative Cities Network Forum was held among domestic and overseas creative cities, under the theme of “Creative Industry in the Digital Environment.”

There was a total of 43 artists who participated in this biennale, consisting of 13 foreign artists and 30 domestic artists, including intangible cultural asset and master-class level artists. Also, a total of 200 works were exhibited.

The audience appreciated the highest quality of the craftworks and praised the skillful and kind explanations of the docents consisted of the citizens of Jinju. Especially, the “Meditation Room,” staged with artist Kim Yikyong’s ceramic works and artist Lee Ufan’s “Encounter” received astonishing attention from the audience and was considered the highlight of the biennale.

The organizing committee estimated the number of the total visitors to be approximately 15,000 and believes the biennale was a great success considering the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The in-person event of the biennale ended on November 21, but the online format of the biennale will continue for the next 6 months. The organizing committee has prepared a Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale website ([www.jinjubiennale.com](http://www.jinjubiennale.com)) where all exhibited works from the biennale are available to view in the metaverse.

We plan to take this event as an opportunity to develop the Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale into a world-class traditional crafts event, where the highest level of domestic and overseas traditional crafts can be exhibited and enjoyed. We hope that the event can establish a platform for the industrialization of Jinju crafts and the expansion of international exchange.

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