

Roberta Redaelli, Ambassador of Silk Elegance and Excellence from Como at the Jinju Crafts and Folk Art Biennale

The renowned stylist Roberta Redaelli, President of Mestiere Sarti and Stilisti of Confartigianato Imprese Como, has been selected by the Selection Committee of Jinju to bring the elegance of silk and the excellence of Como to the Traditional Crafts Biennale in Jinju, South Korea. She represents the textile district of Como, a UNESCO Creative City. A standout in the international exhibition at the Jinju Biennale is one of her masterpieces showcasing Como's technology and creativity: a relief-printed silk organza duster, created using the innovative 3D printing technologies of CreO Creation Opportunity and the Experimental and Creative Center "Creazioni Digitali." The ensemble also features a sequin-printed mermaid-skin effect fabric skirt and a top with coordinated silk finishes. These works are inspired by Roberta Redaelli's collaboration with the artist Mechthild Ackermann.

The Jinju Biennale, established in 2019, aims to strengthen exchange among UNESCO Creative Cities. Thanks to the efforts of the Coordination Office dedicated to Como UNESCO Creative City at the Alessandro Volta Foundation, the Jinju Biennale provided a platform to solidify cultural ties between Como and Jinju.

All the artists/artisans selected by the Selection Committee of Jinju participated in the cultural exchange of the 2023 Biennale edition, bringing together cultures from around the world. The focus of this interview will be the connection between craftsmanship and art. "The art of doing" places people at the center, generating a series of actions and attitudes that transform and contribute to changing society, making it more economically sustainable. It is a continuous interweaving of skills and manual work, in which beauty and craftsmanship are two sides of the same coin.



Q. Did you find the experience at the Jinju Biennale stimulating? How were the works of the selected artists/artisans presented?

“My time at the Jinju Biennale was an invigorating immersion into creativity. Uncovering artists from diverse corners of the globe and delving into the rich, distinct Korean culture was profoundly inspiring. The

selected artists/artisans' creations were displayed with meticulous care in a dedicated pavilion, commanding the utmost attention from the audience. The attention to detail was extraordinary and the fusion of tradition and contemporary minimalism created a uniquely captivating experience."

Q. Do you consider it to have been a beneficial experience for your professional growth?

"Absolutely. Engaging in such an international event is a continual catalyst for personal and professional development. Joining a network closely tied to UNESCO Creative Cities and the global realm of artistic craftsmanship significantly boosts the perceived value of my business, fortifying its foundations. Being the sole artist/artisan from Italy at the Jinju Biennale is a testament to the recognition yielded by the passion and dedication I invest in my daily work."

Q. Did the selected artists/artisans engage in networking and initiate a dialogue with new entities?

"Throughout the Biennale, there was a myriad of engaging exchanges among artists/artisans from various countries. We swapped contact details and ideas, paving the way for potential collaboration, particularly with countries experiencing a burgeoning textile sector. I also established meaningful connections with artists boasting unique and exceptional expressive languages."

Q. The purpose of the Jinju Biennale is to convey how artisans should be regarded as artists in every respect. How important do you think it is in the current landscape for artisans to be considered artists? How can we enhance the role of the artisans more effectively?

"The Jinju Biennale's mission is pivotal and I wholeheartedly support it. Artisans are often pigeonholed as mere contributors to manual production. Yet, many artisans are genuine artists, crafting unparalleled

works that demand a perfect fusion of talent and often endangered skills. It is imperative to allocate more space for these artists/artisans through dedicated events and promotional activities, unveiling the intricacies of their world and showcasing their invaluable know-how in a more impactful manner.”

Q. What factors contributed to Como being designated a UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, and how does the city address themes like environmental sustainability and gender equality within the textile sector?

“Como has been designated UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art thanks to its experience in the textile sector, one of the most relevant expressions of “Made in Italy,” which constitutes an immense heritage of experiences and technical and artistic skills handed down through generations and improved thanks to a strong innovative spirit. The city pays special attention to the themes of the 2030 Agenda, particularly the environmental sustainability of the textile sector and gender equality, given the high number of women employed in the sector. Given the current situation, the textile industry must be seen as intangible infrastructure, a patrimony of knowledge that is invaluable for recovery.”

Costanza FERRARINI
(Focal Point of Como)