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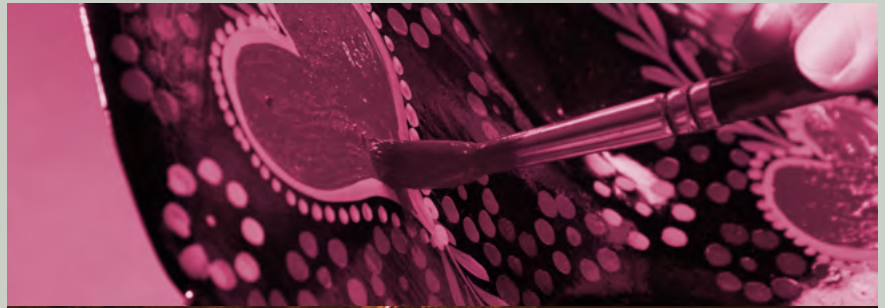
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## NEWS & ACTIVITIES

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## Barcelos, Portugal

# Barcelos Crafts and Folk Arts - Driving Forces of Sustainable Development

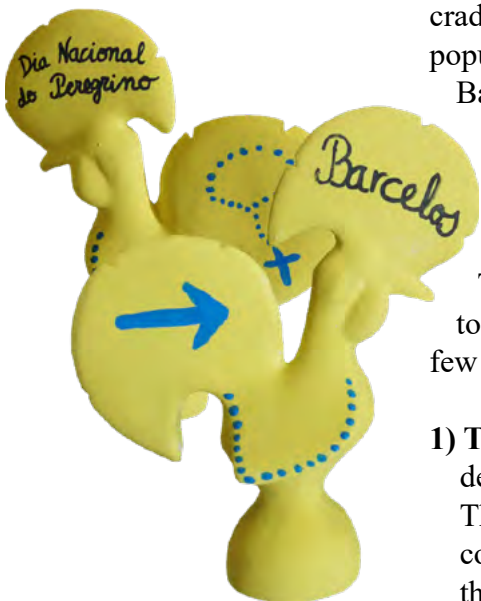
**B**arcelos is situated in Portugal's Northern region. Its long-established reputation is related to the crafts and folk arts, as Barcelos is widely known as a land of carpenters, blacksmiths, embroiders, basket makers, and most importantly, of potters. Barcelos is also famous for being the cradle of the Rooster of Barcelos (Galo de Barcelos), one of the most popular Portuguese symbols. City and county with 120,000 inhabitants,

Barcelos works hard to preserve strong bonds with the creative sector.

Today, the sector stands for roughly eight percent of the county's active population. The city strives to support the vitality of the sector and encourage new generation of artisans.

The city of Barcelos is enrolled in a series of actions and initiatives to boost folk arts, and encourage the local creative sector. Here are a few examples:

- 1) The National Craftsmanship and Ceramics Exhibition :** Initiative designed to promote local and national traditional arts and crafts. This is one of the city's major investments that has been happening consecutively for the past 37 years (except for the year 2020, due to the ongoing pandemic).



**2) Artistic Project :** Designed by the Municipality, it has been happening for over a decade. It aims to increase the art movement of local youth, discover new talents, and reduce school dropout rates by promoting a culture-oriented education.

**3) Strategic Plan for Urban Sustainable Development :** The three great examples of the work developed to achieve the goals of putting creativity on the top of the city's priorities include: the Medieval Tower, the Pottery Museum and the Tourist Craft and Folk Arts Office, creative spaces that house cultural activities, promoting the conservation of craftsmanship knowledge, traditions and culture.

**4) Ongoing developments :** The city is developing works in order to create new public spaces to host public cultural and creative events.

**5) Annual Craftsmanship Exhibitions**

**Program :** It aims to support all local productions and artisans, with a calendar of monthly exhibitions, happening consecutively for the past 15 years, in several different, national and international, public spaces.

**6) Creative Tourism with Crafts and**

**Traditional Arts :** It focuses on the maintenance of a constant and diversified offer of creative tourism, which includes hands-on workshops and tours.

Barcelos is also deeply committed towards internationalization of its creative sector. For example :

- In 2017, was awarded with the Biennial Craftsmanship National Prize in the category of City.

①	← LEFT
②	① Rooster painting workshop
	② Barcelos rooster with the theme of the Way of Saint James

①	③	① Timber
②	④	② Embroidery
		③ Basketry
		④ Iron and derivatives





- In 2017, became a member city of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of Crafts and Folk Art.
- In 2018, began a program of creative interfaces with the sister city of São Domingos in Cape Verde, consisting in the development of educational workshops for potters.
- In June 2019, became an official member of the Creative Tourism Network, as a Creative Friendly Destination.
- In 2019, was awarded the 1st prize of the European Cultural Tourism Network in the category “Contributions by Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to Cultural and Creative Tourism,” with the theme “Barcelos Creative City—Contributions of Crafts and Folk Arts as Paths towards a More Sustainable Tourism.”

Barcelos aims to empower crafts and folk arts as useful and sustainable productions for the future. More specifically, the goal is to:

- Leverage local pottery production concerning utilitarian tableware, promoting its association with the Gastronomy cluster and giving it new uses by encouraging its utilization in the local restaurants and hotels.
- Promote interfaces between modern artists and new concepts with local traditional imagery.
- Promote new approaches between the art of basketry and design, merging them with new architectural environments and modern purposes.

In addition,

- The Tourist Department of the city has been sporting the promotional slogan “Barcelos Lively and Creative City” in all national and international tourist fairs and conferences since 2016.



① Potery

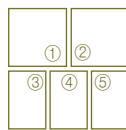
② Handicraft micro Fair

- Certifications have been given out to traditional productions, such as Imagery, Pottery and the “Crivo” Embroidery, as guarantee of quality and authenticity to these productions.
- Due to the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, the city of Barcelos decided to implement the following measures and activities to support this specific sector in 2020:
- Creation of a support pack to protect the sustainability of creative sector: the OSAC (Operational Support to Artisanal Community) and the PISHB (Promotional Incentive System to the Handicraft of Barcelos), which are the two operational reinforcement programs oriented to assist the handicraft community and the creative tourism.
- Micro Handicraft Fairs: every Thursday of

August and September, aiming to cover the effects in this sector.

- Workshops of creative experiences: promoted interactions between general public, different local artisans and traditional crafts.
- Tower by Night: during the Saturdays of August, the Medieval Tower was open to the public at night. The activity represented a boost to the local creative tourism and increased the sales of handicraft.

These strategies aim to promote our creative community, as they are key factors to the process of tourist attraction and, above all, fundamental for a sustainable and inclusive development of the community.



- ① Imagery workshop
- ② Timber workshop
- ③ Basketry workshop
- ④ Iron and derivatives workshop
- ⑤ Embroidery workshop





Sukhothai, Thailand

## Memory and Challenge for Klong Mae Ram Pan, the 700-years-old Historical Canal in Sukhothai

A venue of creative cultural-based activities was held under the theme of Klong Mae Ram Pan which is the 700-years-old historical canal since the Sukhothai Era. This event consisted of various activities based on UCCN mission by integrating cultural heritage into creative sector through crafts and folk arts. Firstly, an exhibition presented cultural landscape elements of Mae Ram Pan Canal which used to be a main logistics route to transport Sangkhalok (a unique style of Sukhothai ceramic ware) to overseas. Certain memorable pieces of this water-based cultural landscape were displayed along with the local residents' nostalgia stories reminding audiences' a sense of the place connected to the canal.



Secondly, two sessions of seminar were organized with a mixed group of audiences (public, private, educational, local sectors including Sukhothai UCCN local partners). The first session was about how to revitalize this historical canal to be vibrant and more productive again. The second session was a discussion on how to employ the UCCN framework as an effective mechanism to develop the waterfront of Mae Ram Pan and



surrounding areas to achieve sustainable future. Current issues related to this canal were also presented, including the discussion on alternative practices for waterfront revitalization. An action plan for the creative district development of Mae Ram Pan was partly proposed as one of the determined UCCN missions of Sukhothai. Thirdly, DIY crafts workshops were organized which allowed all audiences to participate in creating and making their own “give-it-a go” crafts.

The above activities were successfully held at Sukhothai Treasure Resort with a number of 72 participants. This creative venue showed how the UCCN mission could be integrated among different organizations working together in an area-based approach for achieving SDG11 for Sustainable Cities and Communities. The seminars and exhibition were parts of the academic services led by the Faculty of Architecture, Naresuan University, and mainly supported by the Royal Society of Thailand. Additionally, the DIY workshops were organized by Sukhothai crafts and folk art entrepreneurs, who were supported by the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organization) Area 4. With a mutual understanding that is in line with the UCCN mission among all collaborators, all things are possible now for the Sukhothai creative city, to recover from the COVID-19 Crisis, and to achieve sustainable development in the near future.

## Sukhothai Creative Crafts in the Festival of Loy Krathong 2020

Loy Krathong and Candle Festival is the biggest fair held in Sukhothai, and one of top ten well-known festivals in the world. This festival is annually held in Sukhothai Heritage Park between October and November, allowing Thais to pay respects to the Goddess of Water by floating Krathong (made from banana and other leaves decorated with flowers, candle and incense sticks) on watercourses. The festival is organized to preserve cultural heritage and to promote economy of the city. It is led by Sukhothai Provincial Office and other public and private sectors, including participation from communities in and around the city. Sukhothai Creative City Zone was designed by integrating with Loy Krathong and Candle Festival 2020 (23 October to 1 November 2020) to celebrate the first anniversary of Sukhothai UCCN







for crafts and folk art since it was officially announced on October 30, 2019.

A variety of crafts and folk arts from all districts around Sukhothai (potteries, jewellery, textile, wooden and wicker works, bric-a-brac crafts, etc.) are presented in various forms of activities (exhibitions and showcases, DIY workshops, kiosks, and shop stalls, etc.) for either learning or selling purposes. A great number of visitors participated in crafts of boots-making and could get their own take-away gifts. This is the biggest venue for displaying the open crafts markets in Thailand, designed with

respect to the World Heritage Buildings and the archaeological site of Sukhothai. A concept of retro market atmosphere was applied to this festival which can be seen from vernacular building styles of the shops and kiosks made from local materials. Impressively, this festival is successful in encouraging people to wear traditional costumes, to learn from crafts making, to enjoy shopping and importantly, to appreciate the glory of cultural heritage and prosperity of Sukhothai creative city.

Thanks to the collaboration from Sukhothai World Heritage Park, Sukhothai Provincial Office, Sukhothai Provincial Administrative Organization, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration (Public Organization), Tourism Authority of Thailand, and other public and private organizations including local partners and all Sukhothais, it has been a great success integrating our UCCN mission with the remarkable Loy Krathong and Candle Festival.

Witiya Pittungnapoo

(Faculty of Architecture, Naresuan University, Thailand;  
A co-focal point of Sukhothai UCCN, Thailand)







## Chiang Mai: Networking with Creative Cities Home and Abroad

The rationale for the recent efforts in Chiang Mai is to support and strengthen creative cities network in all related fields, and exchange experiences with cities that have already been designated as UNESCO Creative Cities, and with cities that have been preparing for their application towards the membership. Since we started to operate the “Chiang Mai City of Crafts and Folk Art” project, we have had excellent opportunities to visit countries overseas to exchange indigenous knowledge and share our membership experiences. For example, we participated in the 4th International Forum on Creative City and the Jinju World Crafts and Folk Arts Biennale in 2019, both of which were held in Jinju, South Korea in May 2019. Afterwards, the working team from Jinju also visited our city, and we took this opportunity to convey our valuable cultural heritage development and share our best practices. During that time, Jinju was on its way to submit its application, and we were sincerely pleased to hear that Jinju was designated as a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network in Crafts and Folk Art field, on October 30, 2019.



\* The photos of Chiang Mai are posted on the Website : <https://www.creativecitychiangmai.com/en/home-eng/>

With the “UNESCO Creative Cities Network membership” in the field of crafts and folk art, and as a “World Craft City” recognized by the World Craft Council, Chiang Mai has played an important role in sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences with other provinces in the country, such as Lampang and Lamphun that are neighbouring provinces and have shared similar cultures. Our role is also to support the ways cultures are applied and used as a driver for creative city improvement. Building a firm foundation is the main initiative for city development, so we have been diligent to support all scales of community. We are currently cooperating with Nan Province to implement the project, “Driving Measures for Master Plan for Nan Towards UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art,” to support Nan to also become a creative city of crafts and folk art. Due to unique crafts and outstanding traditions, we strongly believe Nan should be promoted and be recognized internationally.

Moreover, Chiang Mai has also empowered those provinces that are interested in fostering themselves towards the membership, such as Phet Buri, Suphan Buri, and Chiang Rai, by disseminating our knowledge and experiences, and by guiding them with effective working processes which should be planned under the cooperation between Provincial Administration Organization, Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism Administration, or municipality of each province.

Apart from working with cities in crafts and folk art field, the intersectoral projects or integrative collaboration with other creative fields should be encouraged so they can contribute to knowledge expansion and creative development. In September 2019, Chiang Mai shared knowledge of traditional arts and crafts in the event “Human City Design Seoul” which was held at Dongdaemun Design Plaza, South Korea, and also had an opportunity to





Pha Sin Teen Jok Jomthong

participate in a field trip to Jeonju Creative City of Gastronomy. Since that time, Chiang Mai has been operating knowledge exchange project with Jeonju relating to local gastronomy. The specialists from each city will be invited to transmit their indigenous knowledge, which will lead to the development of food culture. Chiang Mai has always been strongly committed as a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network, and participated in various meetings within the network. For example, Chiang Mai participated in the annual meeting in Fabiano, Italy, the sub-network meeting of crafts and folk art in Kanazawa, Japan, and Asia-Pacific meeting in Adelaide, Australia, in order to strengthen the working network, expand knowledge, and enhance development approaches. Chiang Mai also took these opportunities to bring some valuable cultural assets presented in each meeting, such as traditional paper crafts and gold leaf crafts.

In addition to the international cooperation, Chiang Mai has forged a synergy between many cities inside the country. We were invited by Phuket Municipality to participate in the “21st Phuket Chinese New Year and Old Phuket

Town Festival,” and display at the exhibition promoting creative city. Furthermore, despite having an increasingly fractious relationship with Sukhothai, we still have been helping them since the beginning of their preparation for the application. After Sukhothai has been officially designated, we have advised its working team relating to effective working process and exchanged our experiences with one another.

The aforementioned operations are the working process that is compatible with sustainable development policy of Thai government. As the main creative city initiative agent, Chiang Mai Provincial Administration Organization and Chiang Mai University have been applying the policies and developing initiative platforms to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under intersectoral cooperation, in order to integrate knowledge and provide benefits directly to local people.





Paducah, USA

## Paducah Presents Stories of the Human Experience in Quilt and Fiber Art

Nothing represents global history and culture quite like quilting. While the world continues to change, the one thing that has remained is how people have captured the human condition in fiber. This is a medium and an art form that has been used for hundreds of years as a form of creative expression in major cities and rural towns, by individuals from all economic backgrounds, to express every possible emotion.



The National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky, USA works to bring these stories of the human experience to life for visitors and, in so doing, we bring the stories of the global quilt and fiber art community to new audiences.

Through diverse exhibits of quilt and fiber art, we strive to offer stories, not of quilts, but of the human condition. We hope to give each visitor ideas to consider that are outside of their current worldview, and ultimately alter their perceptions, their understanding,

and their empathy for those living different lives than their own.

In 2020, the museum has addressed many issues related to basic human rights. These exhibitions represent diverse creators and the unique contributions of culture to achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including Reduced Inequalities, Gender Equality and Life on Land.

“OURstory: Human Rights Stories in Fabric” featured a global representation of artists discussing the history of human rights around the world. Over 45 artists offered commentary on topics including racism, sexism, equal

access to education, LGBTQ rights, Native American rights, apartheid, religious rights, and much more. The museum also honoured the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution which gave women the right to vote. Through the exhibit, “Women’s Right to Vote: Revolution and Evolution,” artists depicted historical events that illustrated the struggle that led to equality and the right to vote. Continuing the topic of human rights, the museum hosted a youth exhibit, “Quilts from the Social Justice Sewing Academy,” an American group committed to advocating for equal rights for all people.

The museum also addressed animal rights this year with the exhibit, “Inspired by Endangered

← LEFT



① The National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky, USA



② Luana Rubin, “Polar Bear.” Inspired by Endangered Species.



① Mary Jane Sneyd, “Colorblind.” OURstory: Human Rights Stories in Fabric.



② Sara Trail, “Rest in Power, Trayvon.” Social Justice Sewing Academy.

③ The National Quilt Museum in Paducah, Kentucky, USA

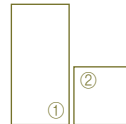






Species,” shining a light on over 170 animals and plants that are currently endangered around the world. By educating audiences on the practices that are driving animal and plant extinction, we aim to influence awareness now, policy in the future, and, ultimately, the impact of this global phenomenon.

The importance of music to each of our lives came alive in fabric this year through two exhibits at the museum. The Studio Art Quilt Associates presented “Musica,” an exhibit which included over 40 works of art that illustrate the music that inspires and motivates them. The exhibit “African Jazz Series” by artist Michael Cummings discussed the history of Jazz music in the United States, a nod to nearby UNESCO Creative City of Music, Kansas City.



- ① Carolyn Skei, “San Antonio on My Mind.”  
SAQA: Musica.
- ② Michael A. Cummings, “Josephine Baker.”  
African Jazz Series.



Quilters are amazing artists who each use the dynamic art form of quilting to share their unique human experiences with the world. Through their stories, we learn more about all of humanity, and ultimately, become more human ourselves.

The National Quilt Museum is proud to present these stories to a wider audience, both through the museum experience in Paducah and new virtual platforms like Quilt Museum Digital. To learn more, visit [www.quiltmuseum.org](http://www.quiltmuseum.org).

\* \* \* \* \*

*As one of the world's UNESCO creative cities of crafts and folk art, Paducah celebrates the art of quilting and the contemporary quilt artist year-round. Cultural partners like the National Quilt Museum continue to support the growth of the quilting tradition into a globally-recognized art form while spotlighting innovative artists, fostering important human conversations and increasing access to cultural assets and experiences. To learn more about Paducah, visit [www.paducah.travel](http://www.paducah.travel).*

**Frank Bennett**  
(National Quilt Museum CEO)

**Laura Oswald**  
(Focal Point of Paducah City)



**Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

## **Talli Tales: Extending Sharjah's Trade Routes of Cultural and Creative Exchange**

**T**alli is an indigenous craft skill in which hand-woven braids are made by female artisans. Traditionally, women who practice the craft work from home consider it an important source of income or livelihood. Used to decorate the collars, cuffs and hems of clothing, Talli was also a means to gift, trade or exchange within communities and beyond.

With support from Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council, Talli is still practiced in the coastal regions of Sharjah, UAE, a place that historically was at the crossroads of important maritime trade routes and home to seafarers born out of their coastal location. Talli forms a unique contribution to Sharjah's cultural heritage, and is considered a national treasure that embodies collective identity and community bonding. The practice of Talli takes place in homes where knowledge and skills are passed in cross-generational exchanges of thread-weaving and technique-trading in which geometric patterns and inspiring adaptations blend with songs and conversations, and where sharing is a

\* Photo by Moez Achour (courtesy of Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council).

way of life. Within Talli lies a rich process of exchange, from mothers' to daughters' hands and from singing voices to listening ears.

Sharjah is the only emirate with coasts on both the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Over its 6000-year history, the town became one of the wealthiest in the region, with the population reliant on trade and seafaring along with farming, hunting, fishing, and pearling<sup>1</sup>. From its ancient roots when local sites formed part of an early Bronze Age regional exchange network (3rd millennium BC) and exports consisted of raw materials such as copper and salt<sup>2</sup>, various produce was later imported from nearby Oman, India and Persia. Sharjah's pearl diving industry developed around a creek which grew to become an important trading port, with trade routes established all over the Gulf,

and to Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and even Kenya and Zanzibar<sup>3</sup>. By the nineteenth century, it was the leading port in the region. Sharjah's strategic location on the trade route to India for Europeans<sup>4</sup> made it a centre of trade and exchange and indeed, its coast was regularly fought over by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. The Qawasim tribe were excellent mariners and built up a sizeable fleet of large vessels with 20,000 sailors, helping to make Sharjah the main political and economic centre until the late nineteenth century.

In an attempt to discover connections between Sharjah, Talli and trade routes of the past, artisans from the Bidwa Centre in Dibba Al Hisn on the coast of Sharjah were asked to share stories they remembered.



1. Rashid, N. A., *Sheikh Sultan Life and Times* (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2010).

2. Charbonnier, J., "The Genesis of Oases in Southeast Arabia: Rethinking Current Theories and Models," in *Oases and Globalisation: Ruptures and Continuities*, ed. E. Lavie and A. Marshall (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2017).

3. Searle, M. *Geology of the Oman Mountains, Eastern Arabia* (Switzerland: Springer Nature, 2019).

4. Rashid, N. A., *op. cit.*



In terms of international exchange: “In the past, women came from other countries like Oman and Iran to exchange their Talli with our Talli.” A second artisan stated that: “Previously, our activities were restricted to local trading. Over

time, we expanded our network of connections outside the UAE and began to barter our handmade crafts.” In addition, “We used to import basic material from Oman and Iran” and “sometimes it would differ from one place to another.”

In terms of material exchange: “Threads were shipped by sea from Pakistan and India to Dubai, where the major companies were based, and then on to Dibba Al Hisn. We used to buy the threads from the ship merchants who would stay here for 1-2 weeks. They knew the houses where Talli was practiced and brought us materials. We never got rid of old Talli pieces because we consider the khose in it as precious as gold (in the past, khose were made of pure gold or silver threads— unlike today’s synthetic threads). We kept our old Talli and even used to collect pieces from others. We would either sell them to merchants for money, or barter them for materials that we needed.”



\* Photo by Moez Achour (courtesy of Irthi Contemporary Crafts Council).

The emirate's culture comes through its people,<sup>5</sup> and these Talli stories of conversation and exchange are extending Sharjah's well-established trade routes into new avenues of creative exploration. Standing at the crossroads of trade in the MENASEA (Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia), Sharjah's strategic location was, and still is, a major advantage to its trade and helps to explain Sharjah's spirit of entrepreneurship and reputation as a beacon of creativity, culture and enlightenment.

In the words of Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Ruler of Sharjah and Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE, "Civilisation is much more than simply buildings and basic infrastructure. It includes the rituals, beliefs and historical heritage that are inextricably linked to a place."<sup>6</sup> Sharjah is committed to keeping local heritage alive, including the safeguarding of Talli. With its hand-made physicality, the craft stands as a counterpoint to our twenty-first century reliance on technology platforms to connect people. Despite our increasingly digital lives, Talli is highly resistant to fading away.

Kathryn Best  
(Focal Point of Sharjah City)

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5. SCTDA, Sharjah: Heart of Culture (Dubai: Explorer Publishing, 2019).

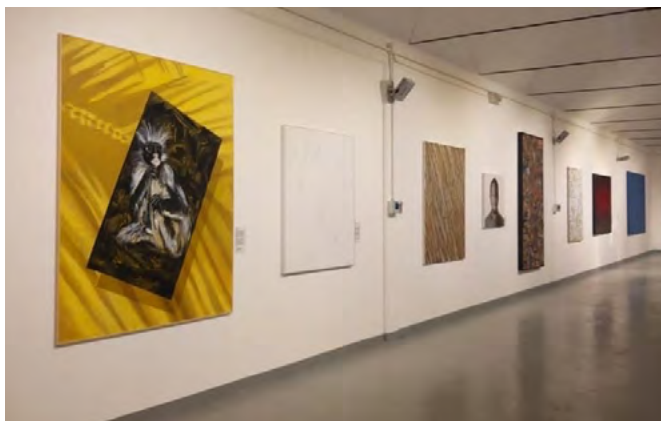
6. Quoted in S. Kay, Sharjah Heritage and Progress (Dubai: Motivate Publishing, 2006).



**Biella, Italy**

## One Year of Biella UNESCO Creative City through the Pandemic

**B**iella joined the UNESCO Creative City Network on account of its crafts and folk art, at the end of 2019. “Art crafts” are an essential part of Biella’s traditional heritage which is inextricably linked to the wool textile production. The territory’s excellence in textile manufacturing is recognized worldwide, which is a result of the work of an entire community that, since 1300, has been able to compete on the international stage through the promotion and the enhancement of their own cultural identity. Nowadays, Biella is home to prestigious brands like Vitale Barberis Canonico, Cerruti, Loro Piana, Piacenza, Reda, and Zegna. Characterized by artisanal skill and manufacturing creativity, the area’s economy has a rare competitive advantage that has always carried on in the full respect of environment, its faithful ally. Indeed, the territory’s given endowment of natural resources, including several torrents and springs, has undoubtedly favoured the cluster’s birth and development. It is not by chance then, that the logo of the “Third Paradise,” drawn by Michelangelo Pistoletto



representing the reconciliation of nature and the hand of man, establishing a new and balanced connection between them, was chosen as the emblem of the city for the application process. Moreover, the six projects presented in the candidacy dossier have been designed with the intention of minimizing the environmental impact of industrial production, covering the UN Agenda 2030 goals of 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Upon that, the application process was the first initiative of the territory that was supported by all 74 mayors of Biella's province, a clear sign that the candidacy represented the will, the cohesion and the commitment of the whole territory. Another theme close to the city, included in the dossier's project called "Weave Relations," is the active Italy-Namibia collaboration. Biella is going to provide Keetmanshoop, the leading center of the wool-producing region of Namibia, with training (workshops in Biella for Namibian operators) and a mentorship for its future candidacy in the field of crafts and folk art. A delegation from Namibia made up of high-level institutional and entrepreneurship representatives visited Biella one year ago and, nowadays, the cities are developing a shared Memorandum of Understanding.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Italy interrupted the ongoing work on the project implementation as well as the establishment of the governance. However, feeling the responsibility of its new status, the city strove for creative solutions for different arising problems.

The first major initiative involved Cittadellarte — Fondazione Pistoletto, Lanificio Cerruti, and CRI (Italian Red Cross), for the production of 100,000 protective masks. The equipment, which bears the brand's signature of both Michelangelo Pistoletto and the designer-entrepreneur Nino Cerruti, has been donated to CRI volunteers and to Biella's hospital, which have been and still are at the forefront of the fight against the virus. One more time the cooperation between the creative and entrepreneurial field of the area contributed to the area's wealth.

As a sign of restart, on September 25, 2020, Fondazione CRB, the first supporter and promoter of Biella UNESCO Creative City, has inaugurated Selvatica, a festival with international artists in which the visual arts dialogue with nature, a recurring theme that meets everyone's interest. The first artistic







event after the lock down represents, as Franco Ferraris (Fondazione CRB President) said, “an important moment for the city that comes back to life,” specifying that all safety standards will be respected and that “the festival is a triumph of creativity.”

The UNESCO acknowledgment has already attracted international creative players. Patrick Saletta and Jean Le Guvarder (already in the artistic direction of important venues in Paris, Shanghai and Beirut), identified Biella and, specifically, part of an industrial building of 20,000 square meters that used to be the textile factory Lanificio Pria, as the perfect location for an international art gallery. The venue’s name is Woolbridge Gallery and aims at covering the entire surface within two years from the inauguration which took place on October 10, 2020. The immense project of the adaptive reuse of old factory buildings for new creative intentions, thus retaining the old industrial buildings and ensures new perceptions of the city itself, has obtained the patronage of Biella UNESCO Creative City.

Considering networks, flexibility, symbolic and cultural attributes as the pillars of growth and innovation in our contemporary economy, the creative and cultural industries, the ones in which the cultural attributes are produced and exploited, have to deal with this emergency period taking into account their important role in the economic recovery. This applies even more to the UCCN, whose foundations are laid on the cooperation between the member cities. Biella, thanks to UNESCO’s recognition, has seen itself as a powerful engine of creativity and innovation. Therefore, these elements will be a step forward for the complete recovery of the local economy in this time of crisis.

Ms Elisa Piga  
(Bocconi University, MS candidate;  
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Biella, intern)