

## Activities of Creative City Jinju at International Level

1. This article aims to review the projects that the UNESCO Creative City of Jinju has implemented at the international level in 2022. The UNESCO Creative City is a city that pursues sustainable development by solving the city's challenges based on cultural assets and creativity. By the time Jinju City was designated as a UNESCO Creative City in 2019, it had three major challenges. The first of these was to restore its identity as a historical and cultural city. Since Jinju City was a neglected region in modern industrialization, it instead maintained its identity as a cultural and historical city. However, entering into the twenty-first century, the national aerospace industrial complex was built near Jinju, and the innovation city planning was developed. As a result, many public corporations moved to Jinju. Since then, belated industrialization has been progressing in Jinju. Due to these changes, the identity of Jinju City as a historical and cultural city was being challenged. Citizens of Jinju hoped the industry and culture could be balanced and harmonized in the city.

The second challenge was to solve the hollowing of the original city center. It is a phenomenon in which the downtown area around Jinjuseong fortress is being hollowed out as an innovation city is created on the outskirts of the city and its fringe areas are developed. The central commercial district, including the Central Market in Jinju, was dying. As the main street became dark in the evening, people hardly traveled, and it became difficult to find any nightlife. Jinju tourism was becoming simply a daytime tour of the Jinjuseong fortress. Citizens wanted a city where tourists and travelers stayed because there were many things to see inside Jinju, regardless of day or night.

Third, Jinju City was aware of the cultural and economic gap between the urban area and the rural area. The area of Jinju City is about 720 km<sup>2</sup>, of

which the land ratio between the urban and the rural area is about 2:8. The population ratio of these areas, however, is about 8:2. In particular, many cultural facilities are concentrated in the city center, making it difficult for people in rural areas to access. Citizens thought that in order for Jinju City to become a more inclusive city, people in the urban areas and the rural areas should at least not feel a cultural gap between them.

2. Jinju City has changed its major policies from 2017 to address these challenges. Culture has become to be regarded as one of the four pillars of city administration along with society, economy, and environment. Accordingly, three objectives were set. The first was to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. The second was to learn how to promote sustainable development of the city through culture by carrying out the UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments) Pilot City Program. Finally, it tried to become a legal cultural city, designated by the central government. Due to the efforts of the past five years, Jinju was designated as a UNESCO Creative City in 2019, completed the three-year UCLG Pilot Program from 2019 to 2022, and got the preliminary status of a legal cultural city in 2022.

3. The most important thing in these three projects was to internationalize the culture of Jinju. As part of the UCLG Pilot City Program, the Self-Assessment of the cultural status and cultural policies of Jinju City in 2019 showed that Jinju had well preserved and passed down its unique cultural assets, but lacked efforts to creatively industrialize and internationalize them. After being selected as a UNESCO Creative City, four programs were offered to internationalize the cultural assets of Jinju. The first was the Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale and Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale; the second, the Jinju Artist-in-Residence; and the third, the publication of the *International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts*. In addition, the fourth program focused on making efforts to participate in international network activities, to share knowledge, experiences, and practices with other cities.

4. The Jinju Artist-in-Residence program aims to internationalize the cultural assets of Jinju by inviting foreign artists to stay in Jinju for a month and



collaborate with artists of Jinju. Furthermore, through this program, the goal is to help artists of Jinju understand the international trends in art and promote the traditional arts of Jinju to the world. In particular, this year's event was held as a development cooperation project by inviting artists from creative cities in developing countries with the support of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. The development cooperation project is a program that was established to support the international activities of artists of developing countries. While the actual period when foreign artists came to Jinju to work was for only a month around October, this project was carried out from March to December 2022.

First, in June 2021, the proposal of Jinju City for the development cooperation project was accepted by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO. Then, from July, the announcement and promotion for the residence program of Jinju City began in cities overseas. Three artists were selected among the applicants: 1) Rio Ephruan from Ambon, Indonesia; 2) Piengrawi Sirisuk from Chiang Mai, Thailand; and 3) Satchel Thomas from Trinidad and Tobago Fort of Spain. In August, a public call for local organizations to collaborate with these artists was announced, and three groups were selected: A) Blue Willow Reservation Center (CEO: Seon-Hee Nam); B) Center for Traditional Arts Noljei (CEO: Jin Yu); and C) Sin Gwan-yong Style Gayageum Sanjo Preservation Association (CEO: Dong-Yeol

Kang). 1-A, 2-B, 3-C worked together, planned collaborative performances, and held joint rehearsals and workshops over a month-long collaboration period. The results of their joint work were showcased on 20 October at the outdoor performance venue of the Jinjuseong fortress. Team 1-A presented a collaborative work combining the music of Ambon, Indonesia and the dance of Jinju. Team 2-B combined Jinju's *Talchum* (mask dance) and Thailand's *Lanna Dance* to produce and perform *Guna Dance* (dance to ward off evil spirits) to eradicate plague. Team 3-C co-created music that matches well with both Korean traditional beats and Trinidad and Tobago's steelpans.

In short, all three teams can be said to have sufficiently achieved the goal of enhancing their respective creativity, pursuing cultural diversity, and new aesthetic experiences by collaborating with each other.

5. The Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale is an event held every other year along with the Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale. In 2021, the Traditional Crafts Biennale was held, and in 2022, the Folk Arts Biennale was held for about seven days from 15 to 22 October. This year's event, held under the theme of "Diversity: The Foundation of Creativity," featured folk arts troupes from nine creative cities, including those participating in the residence program. At the first Biennale held in June 2019, before Jinju City joined the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, only Baguio City from the Philippines was a Creative



City out of six participating cities. But this year, all participating cities were UNESCO Creative Cities. Except for Ambon, a Creative City of Music, all were creative cities of crafts and folk art. Since last May, a total of 12 cities had applied for participation through the announcement and the promotion of the Jinju delegation that participated in the XIV UNESCO Creative Cities Network Annual Conference held in Santos, Brazil. For the difficulties of funding, only seven cities were selected for invitation. Fifty-four artists from seven overseas performance teams, including Nigeria's Bida, Thailand's Sukhothai, USA's Paducah, Burkina Faso's Ouagadougou, Philippines' Baguio, Indonesia's Ambon, and Egypt's Aswan, collaborated with 48 artists from seven performance groups from Jinju City. Two artists from Chiang Mai, Thailand and artists from Trinidad and Tobago also participated. The event consisted of opening and closing performances, main performances, art delivery performances, exchange meetings and workshops, and residency performances. The opening performance and the main performance were held at the Gyeongnam Culture and Arts Center located in downtown Jinju, and the closing performance was held at the outdoor performance venue of Jinjuseong fortress. On the other hand, art delivery performances were held in culturally marginalized areas outside Jinju City, such as Gwanbong Elementary School and old houses in Jisu-myeon, and other residential areas for the vulnerable. The art delivery performance was to realize UNESCO's value of social inclusion.

Overall, this event is evaluated to have served the purpose of expanding cultural exchanges between the creative cities of crafts and folk art, making the folk arts of developing countries enter the international arena, and promoting the folk arts of Jinju internationally. In particular, it was an event that faithfully realized UNESCO's value of cultural diversity through the participation of three cities in Africa, a region of UNESCO's current interest. In particular, during the closing performance, all the performers sang and danced together to the rhythm of Korean traditional instruments, which greatly impressed the audience. Creative City representatives who watched the closing performance evaluated it as an amazing event that realized the true meaning and purpose of international cultural exchange and the mission of UCCN.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the artists and delegations from each city who participated in the Biennale, presented good performances, and cooperated in various ways.

6. Jinju City actively carried out various network activities in 2022. In July 2022, four delegates participated in the XIV UNESCO Creative Cities Network Annual Conference held in Santos, Brazil. Deputy Mayor Jong-woo Shin was the head of the delegate, and Byung Hoon Jeong, chairman of the Creative City Steering Committee, Dong-Min Kang, director of the Cultural Industry Team at the Culture and Tourism Bureau, and Yunhak Seong, leader of the Creative City Team at the Jinju Culture & Tourism Foundation attended. Deputy Mayor Jong-woo Shin attended the Mayor's forum and introduced Jinju's creative city activities, focusing on the publication of the *International Journal of Crafts and Folk Arts*, and Chairman Byung Hoon Jeong participated in the crafts and folk art sub-network annual meeting and

introduced the international events of Jinju City. The Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale and Jinju Artist-in-Residence were promoted. He proposed to hold an annual meeting of the crafts and folk art cluster in Jinju in October 2022, when the World Folk Arts Biennale was held, and received positive responses from many cities. As a result, at this meeting, it was decided to hold this year's annual sub-network meeting in Jinju as a hybrid meeting, both online and offline.

7. The 2022 UNESCO Creative Cities of Crafts and Folk Art Sub-network Annual Meeting was held for two nights and three days from 19 to 21 October at Jinju Knowledge Industry Center in Jinju City. This meeting was co-hosted by the sub-network (Coordinator, Mary Hammond, Paducah's Focal Point) and Jinju City, and organized by the annual meeting preparation team of the UNESCO Creative City Steering Committee of Jinju City. The purpose of this meeting was mainly fourfold: First, introducing and welcoming new member cities in 2021; second, discussing the possibility and method of "Convergence and Collaboration between Creative Fields," the theme of the annual meeting; third, reporting the progress of various committee activities within the sub-network; and fourth, activating friendship and exchange among the sub-network cities. With the conference being held three years after the start of the pandemic, 51 focal points or representatives (25 offline, 26 online) from 30 of the 59 member cities of the Creative Cities of Crafts



and Folk Art Sub-network (11 offline, 19 online) participated. In addition, one Focal Point from Ambon, the city of music, participated as a presenter. The list of participating cities is as follows: Offline—Aswan, Baguio, Bida, Carrara, Gimhae, Icheon, Jinju, Ouagadougou, Paducah, Santa Fe, Sukhothai, Ambon (music); and online—Al Ahsa, Bursa, Chiang Mai, Como, Duran, Fabrino, Gabrove, Kanazawa, Küthaya, Manises, Nakuru, Nassau, Perth, Porto-Novo, San Christobal, Sasayama, Suzhou, Trinidad, and Weifang (a total of 31 cities).

On the first day of the meeting, held from 4:00 p.m. on 19 October, an opening ceremony was moderated by Professor Cho-yeon Bak (Professor, Chinju National University of Education; UNESCO Creative City Steering Committee Member). Byung Hoon Jeong, Focal Point of Jinju (Emeritus Professor, Gyeongsang National University), gave an opening address, followed by a welcome speech and guidance about the meeting by Mary Hammond, Coordinator of the Sub-network. Kyoo-il Jo, Mayor of Jinju City, gave a welcome speech on behalf of Jinju City, and Kyung Ku Han, Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, and Denise Bax, Secretary of the UCCN Secretariat, gave video congratulatory remarks.

In Session 1, Professor Masayuki Sasaki (Professor Emeritus, Osaka City University) gave a keynote presentation titled “Sustainable Development of Creative City after Pandemic” online. Then there was an introduction of the cities that joined the network in 2021. Gimhae City and Bida City gave





presentations first, and the introduction of other cities was postponed to the next day due to the schedule. From 7:00 p.m. in the evening, a banquet took place hosted by the mayor of Jinju.

Session 2, which started at 4:00 p.m. on the second day on 20 October, was preceded by the introduction of new cities that could not be introduced the previous day. Como, Manises, Perth and Weifang introduced their cities and main activities. The meeting was lively with presentations and discussions under the theme of “Convergence and Collaboration between Creative Fields.” Presentations at the conference, moderated by Professor Witiya Pittungnapoo (Co-focal Point, Naresuan University, Sukhothai), are as follows.

- Presentation 1: “Convergence and Collaboration,” Peter Ives (Santa Fe, the former Crafts and Folk Art Sub-network Coordinator)
- Presentation 2: “Leveraging the Creative Knowledge of a Community,” Giuseppe Biagini (Carrara, Founder of Creative Knowledge Foundation)
- Presentation 3: “New Ways for New UCCN Governance—National Coordination and the New UCCN Rules: Two Experiences of Fabriano Creative City,” Vittorio Salmoni (Fabriano, Focal Point; National Coordinator of Creative Cities in Italy)
- Presentation 4: “Cross-Network Creativity Collaboration,” Ronny Loppies (Ambon, Focal Point; Professor, Patimura University)

An evening dinner was hosted by the Deputy Mayor Jong-woo Shin, and afterwards, the Namgang Yudeung (Lantern) Festival, a representative festival of Jinju City, was enjoyed while riding a ferry.

On the third day, Session 3 was held, which was a project meeting attended only by Focal Points from each city. This meeting was held at 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., so that many Focal Points from different time zones around the world could participate. All project meetings on this day were chaired by Mary Hammond. In her coordinator’s report, first, Coordinator Mary reported the results of selecting new cities, and she reported that ten cities out of 19 candidate cities were selected in 2021. She subsequently reported the membership monitoring report screening, and she said,



currently 20 cities' reports submitted in 2021 are under review. She then delivered in detail the conclusions of the UCCN Santos Annual Conference, sharing the contents and requesting that they be reflected in the projects of each city. Lastly, the Coordinator announced the results of the selection of regional coordinators decided at the last Santos meeting to vitalize the network's activities in the future. The names of the representatives of the five regions are as follows:

- 1) Africa: 6 cities—Gitau Thabanja, Nakuru (Kenya)
- 2) Arab States: 7 cities—Al-Ahsa (Saudi Arabia)
- 3) Asia & the Pacific: 21 cities—Byung Hoon Jeong, Jinju (Republic of Korea)
- 4) Europe & North America: 15 cities—Anabela Dias, Barcelos (Portugal)
- 5) Latin America & Caribbean: 10 cities—Marianne Gaudêncio, João Pessoa (Brazil).

Subsequently, there were project reports from each committee belonging to our sub-network. First, Giuseppe Biagini of the Website Committee announced plans to create and operate the website. Our sub-network will go through a preparation period and open and operate a website in 2023. Peter Ives of Governance Committee announced the “Rules Governing the Craft and Folk Art Subgroup of the UCCN” and decided whether to adopt them at the Limoges meeting in March 2023. Afterwards, there was a report on the progress of the sub-network project. Giuseppe Biagini, founder of

the Creative Knowledge Foundation, gave an interim report of the “Breads of the Creative Cities” project, and announced the new plan of “Connecting Threads—Connecting Cultures.” Jinju City was invited to participate in both of these projects. At the end of the session, it was decided to share support for the Declaration of North American Creative Cities Forum, and it was announced that the 2023 Sub-network Annual Meeting will be held in Limoges (France) from 23 to 25 March.\* In addition, the plan to select a sub-network deputy coordinator city, which is currently vacant, was announced. After dinner, we all visited the Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale.

After the annual meeting, the preparatory committee members, including Coordinator Mary Hammond, expressed their gratitude to the UNESCO Creative City Steering Committee of Jinju City, which prepared the meeting without a hitch despite the short preparation schedule. They also thanked the Mayor of Jinju City and his staff for supporting the annual meeting administratively and financially, and treated the representatives warmly. It was concluded that this annual meeting was successful, sufficiently achieving the purpose of the meeting mentioned above.

8. Jinju City’s international activities provided an opportunity for Jinju to share knowledge, experience, and culture with other cities, and upgrade the capabilities of Jinju City’s creative city stakeholders who organize projects, events, and meetings related to the Creative City. We believe that such activities served as a good opportunity to strengthen the cultural capacities of Jinju citizens, experience cultural diversity, and improve social inclusion.

Byung Hoon Jeong  
(Focal Point of Jinju City)

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\* The Coordinator of Crafts and Folk Art Sub-network was notified on 22 November 2022 that the City of Limoges (France) will be unable to host the 2023 Sub-Network Annual Meeting.



## From Paducah to Jinju

The city of Paducah, Kentucky, lies in a rural region of the middle southern United States of America. Although the population is only about 25,000 people, there are many rich cultural traditions in craft and folk arts in the area. “Quilt City USA” as Paducah is lovingly known, is home to the National Quilt Museum, which offers inspiration and education for quilters. The confluence of the Ohio, Cumberland, Mississippi, and Tennessee Rivers create a hub for transportation, recreation, and exchange, that adds to the unique feel of the city.

Paducah has collaborated with Jinju, South Korea, in UNESCO Creative Cities events for the past two years, and I have personally had the honor of representing Paducah in Jinju. As an artist and arts administrator, I maintain my own studio practice which is predominantly focused on textiles and mixed media work, along with serving as the Executive Director of Yeiser





Art Center, which is a regional art center located in the heart of historic downtown Paducah. In an effort to share traditional art and craft practices with others, I make arts education a priority in my career, through outreach in schools and community events.

In the fall of 2021, I was invited to exhibit my textile work at the “Jinju Traditional Crafts Biennale.” This artwork was an exploration of improvisational quilt piecing using discarded denim and khaki work pants. It was an immense honor to be in the company of such accomplished artists, craftspeople, curators, and educators, especially while participating in the roundtable discussion with Fernando Zaccharia, Sonchat Changthawarang, and Professor Byung Hoon Jeong, the coordinator of the event. I connected with artisans from Korea, Benin, Italy, Thailand, Bulgaria, and Estonia. While I knew this trip to South Korea had the potential to be life-changing, I never would have guessed how much I would fall in love with the city of Jinju. I saw many similarities between the cities of Jinju and Paducah, like the history of traditional textiles, beautiful river views, extraordinary restaurants, and warm and welcoming residents.

When given the opportunity to travel to Jinju for a second time, for the Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale (JWFB) in fall of 2022, I excitedly initiated Paducah’s involvement. Along with serving as Executive Director of Yeiser Art Center, I also serve as the director of our region’s largest music and art festival, the Lower Town Arts & Music Festival (LTAMF). This festival is

held each spring in the historic Lower Town neighborhood of Paducah and welcomes approximately 20,000 visitors during the event. Our regional music is best represented by The Wheelhouse Rousters, a local group “sharing the sounds of the American inland waterways,” which made them the perfect musicians to represent us in Jinju. To round out their sound, LTAMF Music Director and cellist, Seth Murphy, joined us for the trip to South Korea. As our group traveled to and through Korea, I got to experience the wonder of the region for the second time in two years. Once in Jinju, there were many rehearsals in preparation for the Jinju World Folk Arts Biennale, but we still made time for sightseeing, exploring our new neighborhood, and experiencing local culture.

Highlights from our trip included the cross-cultural collaborations that happened through planned workshops, and also organically during practices and performances. New friendships were formed amongst people from Korea, Burkina Faso, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Nigeria, USA, and Egypt. Over shared meals and breathtaking performances we learned about each other’s cultures. We listened to music that brought tears to our eyes and together we explored the city of Jinju along with the surrounding area. Through the arts, we came to a deeper understanding that transcended the complication of not sharing a common language.





The exchange between UNESCO Creative Cities can be measured directly with things like number of collaborative events held together or total participants and communities affected. However, one could also use a more abstract measurement to decipher the effect the cities have had on one another. I have consciously and subconsciously carried the cultures of my new friends home with me. The art, music, and performances from events held in Jinju have now traveled home to many new countries, where they will be shared via social media, print publications, and in person. Recipes, languages, and research will now be linked to those special events that took place in Korea. Jinju has been successful in their goal of creating a platform for international exchange and has also fostered understanding and collaboration between countries. Jinju now lives in my heart and I strive to continue to learn about their arts and culture along with the other UNESCO Creative Cities that I have encountered as a result of Jinju's efforts.

**Lexie MILLIKAN**  
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