

Preserving their craft

Artisan Links has taken this craft global by collaborating with leading fashion house – Chloé, among others...



ARTISANS

Artisans are invaluable to culture as they carry the knowledge of traditional arts and crafts that are unique to their communities. Spaces in which arts and cultural activity happen are often the pulse points of communities. At their best, they are places in which artists, tradition-bearers and cultural workers are in charge. These spaces can stimulate civic engagement, and affect economic conditions directly and indirectly. Unfortunately, in the fast-paced globalised world, preserving these artisanal values are becoming challenging as many of the artisans don't have enough opportunities to improve the quality of life.

This is where we need companies that realise the importance of preserving the craft that exists in different communities, especially the

ones that are marginalised. Artisan Links is one such socially responsible, fair trade business featuring products that contribute to a sustainable future. It is the only guaranteed member of the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO) in Pakistan. Each of their products is intricately designed by their team of women-only artisans, consisting of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and local artisans existing in the country. Artisan Links has taken this craft global by collaborating with leading fashion house – Chloé, among others.

Since its inception in Pakistan, the organisation's motto has been to empower women in the marginalised communities by helping them gain economic security and encouraging them to exploit their artistic expertise. By translating traditional embroidery techniques into contemporary designs, they have

developed exquisite hand embroidered apparel, home furnishings, gifts, accessories and more. The company believes in the importance of cultural preservation, hence keeping alive the intricate embroidery techniques – Kandahari, Pukta-Dozi, Tarshumar, Zangeera-Dozi and Graph-Dozi, in their pieces. It remains the only organisation that continues to work with Afghan women both in Pakistan and border regions of Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan. The organisation firmly believes in giving the impacted women work instead of one-off donations in order to provide them with continued financial independence and support.

"We are committed to making sure that we train, help in product development and market products made by these incredible women, playing a humble part in providing

an income source for women who in most cases are the only source of income for their family. It is an honour for our work to be seen across some of the world's most coveted runways and shelves," stated Tahira Afridi, Director of Artisan Links, on the issue.

The organisation is also the official global partner for MADE51, a global brand created by UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, which connects refugee artisans with local social enterprises to design, make and market home décor and accessories across the world. Chloé - a French luxury brand known for ethical craftsmanship and free-spirited femininity, is engaging refugee women to produce components that are incorporated into their products. Starting with their '22 Spring/Summer collection, the Chloé x MADE51 collaboration is incorporating

craftsmanship of Afghan refugee women into Chloé's accessories range, including their iconic Marcie and Woodie handbags.

This collaboration is a massive feat that put the artistic talents of these women to be showcased to the world and is a great stepping stone in welcoming further collaborations from across the world. Artisan Links has provided employment, recognition and financial stability to the uber talented Afghani women, putting them on the map in hopes of a better future for them. Their products have also been exhibited at the various museum shops like the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, Western Australian Museum, Queensland Museum, Victoria Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, Field Museum stores, Palmer Museum of Art, Baltimore Museum of Art, Hammond Museum and British

Museum. Before the pandemic Artisan Links were exhibiting at NEW York International Gift show, Dallas Gift Show, Import Shop Berlin, Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. Through MADE51 these products have been showcased at Ambiente, Frankfurt and Maison de Objet as well. Though it's difficult to quantify the tremendous value - in both techniques and lore - of a community of craft, we do know that once lost it becomes very difficult to recover. A community's ability to generate a livelihood through its artisan traditions generates far more pride and meaning than the all too common rural dispersion into crowded and polluted urban centres for day wages. It makes it all the more important to preserve their craft as cultural diversity makes us richer and more resilient in both our ability to express ourselves and collaborate

A recipe for success

These businesses have gained popularity over the last few years via word of mouth, through social media and, now, through delivery services....



RESTAURANT

While we can resist indulging in shopping or travelling, enjoying a delicious plate of food is one of the many little joys in our life that we cannot resist. This is why a food business always flourishes (given the food is lip-smacking). Even when indoor dining was closed off for many months, we saw a boom in the food delivery business. And surprisingly, it wasn't the many food chains and franchises that were in-demand, but it was the home-based businesses. These businesses were often run by women who found it convenient to prepare and dispatch freshly cooked food from their homes, for pick-up or delivery to customers' homes. These businesses have gained popularity over the last few years via word of mouth, through social media and, now, through delivery services.

And some home-based businesses have been so successful that they have delved into the dining restaurant as well. M's Eatery, a casual dining restaurant in Karachi, is a joint venture by sibling duo Ali Nawaz and Mahwish. While Ali Nawaz manages the business end of

things, Mahwish handles the food side of the things. The restaurant recently opened with an event, which was attended by many celebrities, bloggers and influencers to enjoy their scrumptious wide range of food at the new outlet.

The menu had a range of starters – chilli bites, wings, cheese balls and chicken strips. The entrees were a mix of desi and foreign cuisines. The food is flavourful, even the daal chawal were treat for desi food lovers. Moreover, they served Burmese khowsuey which has quite a different flavour from the regular khowsueys that we find and the quesadillas seemed to be everyone's favourite. While the menu is short, they haven't compromised on the flavours of their offerings.

While speaking to Mahwish at the launch, she shared that she had always been fond of cooking. "I was always into trying different recipes of my mother and sometimes I would try the recipes I found online. My brother encouraged me to start a food business and from delivering orders, here we are at our dining restaurant!" This restaurant serves as an inspiration for young home-based chefs who are dreaming of having their own outlets one day. —The Business Report



Celebrating success

AWARDS

Appreciation and recognition are powerful motivators leading to an increase in performance, productivity, morale, and overall satisfaction. Awards provide an important opportunity to raise the profile of women, celebrate achievement, and showcase success. Awards not only acknowledge success; they recognise many other qualities: ability, struggle, effort and, above all, excellence.

March is generally viewed as Women's Month. Each year in the month of March, a number of important awards are given to exceptional women for their outstanding services in various field by different organisations all over the world as part of their commitment to helping forge women's equality.

One such organisation is Pine Global. The organisation recently launched its first We Lead Awards 2022 on 25th March. The ceremony was held at a local hotel in Karachi. The project was initiated by Pine Community and friends of Pine in celebration of Women's International Month. Primarily, these awards were given to encourage girls and women who were doing exceptionally good in their small startups.

For those who do not know, the term startup refers to a company in the first stages of operations. Startups are founded by one or more entrepreneurs who want to develop a product or service for which they believe there is demand. Over the past few years,



we've witnessed an incredible increase in women entrepreneurs having their own startups. And Pine Global held these awards in a bid to celebrate success of some of the amazing women entrepreneurs. Mr Adnan, the CEO of FHM Publications, appreciated and applauded the recognition of startup small businesses and empowered the women entrepreneurs by acknowledging their contribution to socio-economic development.

Mr Atif Osmani, the Director of Osmani & Company Pvt. Ltd, expressed his feelings by submitting that such events contribute towards a positive and progressive society. Ms Maria Rashdi, the Head of Corporate Communications at Shan Foods Pvt. and Board of Adviser at Pine Global, while receiving the award on the behalf of her mother-in-law Mahtab Akbar Rashdi, said that it was wonderful to be a part of such an event for the first time, where female entrepreneurs' small businesses were recognised. Sir Rasheed Noorani, the Training Consultant and Change Agent, appreciated the startups by encouraging them to never give up on their dreams.

There was another category 'Women supporting Women' in which awards were given to women journalists and prominent personalities in recognition of their extraordinary work in their respective fields. Ms Erum Masood the CEO & Founder of Pine Global said that she felt empowered by empowering the other female entrepreneurs and believed that behind every successful woman is the woman herself. She further appreciated the contribution made

by her team members and Ms Maria Tahir for leading the We Lead Awards project. Ms Masood shared that supporting small businesses, celebrating 'Break the Bias' theme and standing alongside women to support each other fulfilled the objective of this event. "Pine Global International is expanding its horizons as two major incubation centers would be set up in London and Dubai later this year," informed Ms Masood. At the end of the ceremony acknowledgments and appreciations by and for everyone was announced and a promise was made to keep growing and improving every day.



Pakistan expresses heartiest gratitude to UN for initiatives to combat Islamophobia

JHANG: Following the adoption of the resolution in the United Nations calling for the declaration of March 15 as the "International Day to Combat Islamophobia," Muslim Institute organized a human model of thousands of people stating "UN Thank You" at the shrine of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo, Jhang to show gratitude to the UN on this historical feat. Flags of 57 Muslim Countries were prominently arranged around the logo of the United Nations.

Participants of the human model wore white dresses and loudly chanted "Thank You United Nations" and "Islam is Peace". This historical event was organized by Chairman Muslim Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali. Speaking at the occasion, he said that in the modern era Islamophobia erupted as fistula which could dangerously impact internationally.

"We, the people of Pakistan, thank the United Nations to recognize the rising trend of Islamophobia and declaring March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia and hate against Islam," the chairmen added. Chairman Sultan further said that the OIC countries might also adopt a treaty or convention on combating hate against Islam. Later on, he believed, that non-Muslim states could be encouraged to ratify the treaty. It would play an active role in binding the member states to strive for discouraging the trends of hate against Islam. Thanking the UN for accepting the resolution against Islamo-



phobia, he said that the acceptance of the resolution against Islamophobia is a historical act for which we cordially thank United Nations. Pakistan along with OIC and all Islamic countries deserve tribute who participated in the acceptance of this resolution. —APP