

Focussed Display

Sustainable lines and artisan crafts from Kangra get their due

Miniature Paintings and Pine Needle (Leaf) Crafts from Himachal Pradesh connect with international markets through the platform of IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2018



Artisans of Kangra miniature painting and National awardees in the art form- Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dhiman and Mr. Dhani Ram from Kangra, Himachal Pradesh; Mr. Sandeep Sachan, Associate Professor, Design Department, NIFT, Kangra and some of his department's students; seen with Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Executive Director, EPCH; Mr. R K Verma, Director, EPCH; and Ms. Amla Srivastava, Head Designer, EPCH

Among crowd pullers at the IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2018 were artisan crafts and paintings from Himachal Pradesh at stalls located in the Activity Area (near hall 9) at the fair grounds. For the first time, two National awardees in painting-Mr. Mukesh Kumar Dhiman and Mr. Dhani Ram from Kangra who have been into making paintings using colours from locally available natural stones and natural resources, for the last 30 years, were invited to display their skills at this edition of IHGF-Delhi Fair. They have been trained in this art form since they were nine years old, by late Shri Chandu Lal who was an 8th generation miniature painter.

Today, they hold the position of Kangra Temple miniature artists and their work is inspired by typical Himachal temples. Their stall at the fair gathered plenty of buyer attention and appreciation. These paintings already have an export market in USA and UK, said the award winning artisans. This gesture of EPCH to offer them a platform like an internationally reputable



National awardees in painting- Mukesh Kumar Dhiman and Dhani Ram from Kangra, Himachal Pradesh

IHGF Delhi Fair will encourage them to develop their paintings as per choice of buyers, they said.

Another attraction from Himachal Pradesh at IHGF were home décor and utility assortments made using discarded leaves of pine trees - a raw material abundantly available



Filipino Designer, Mr. P J Aranador and Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Executive Director, EPCH, interacting with national awardees of Kangra Miniature Painting, at their stall at IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2018

locally (covering forest floors like carpets) and a major cause of forest fires in the region. Locals have been practicing a craft form using this material since 2007 after an artisan group from USA trained them to use this otherwise 'waste material' for making things of daily use. But in course of time, absence of ongoing guidance as well as lack of buyers and commercial demand failed to sustain their interest in continuing it. A decade



The team from the Accessory Design Department from NIFT, Kangra at IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2018, with their project guide, Mr. Sandeep Sachan, Associate Professor, Accessory Design Department, NIFT, Kangra



Rakesh Kumar,
Executive Director,
EPCH

EPCH endeavours that such crafts do not go unnoticed but enjoy pride of place in the global market

At EPCH we are working very closely with artisans and locals in the interior parts of the country and whenever we find any unique product that has been developed with the help of raw material available in these areas, we try to provide them a platform through which such crafts can be brought to the forefront for international buyers. EPCH's endeavour is that such crafts do not go unnoticed or languish due to lack of commercial avenues. Our IHGF-Delhi Fair is one such platform where we get such artisan crafts to be showcased, as this fair gets buyers from across the globe, who visit to source their requirements of home, lifestyle, fashion and textile products during each edition.

later in 2017, some students of Accessory Design from National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, guided by their course professor, Mr. Sandeep Sachan, developed pine craft products through a joint project with local artisans and with support from the Govt. of Himachal Pradesh. With the contribution of their design inputs and training them through workshops, they helped these artisans



develop products that can find usage in urban spaces and modern lives. With pine needles (leaves) as the primary material, threads in different colours are used for tying/binding and lending a colour variation. The process includes collecting dried and discarded pine leaves, boiling and processing them so that they do not shrink or lose shape.

The method of coiling is used to give form to the final product. This material has flexibility of usage and because of its natural shade, can be embellished with beads, small bells, etc.



Embroidery can also be used, especially with green pine. The resultant items such as coasters, flower vases, baskets, lamps, boxes, bags and fashion accessories were put up on display at the NIFT Kangra stall at the fair. According to Mr. Sandeep Sachan, these eco-friendly and sustainable products have generated many enquiries. The baskets, boxes and bags found many takers as they can also be used to package gifts in a unique way. Sharing about this participation Mr. Sachan said, his team was invited by EPCH's Executive Director, Mr. Rakesh Kumar when he saw these products and met the team behind this project, during his visit to NIFT Kangra sometime back. Appreciating the uniqueness of these products, Mr. Kumar desired that these be showcased for the most potential audience—the international buying community. And IHGF Delhi Fair is the only trade appointment of the sector in India that gathers this buying community in large numbers from over 110 countries. "So, that's how we are here! I am very grateful for this opportunity. This participation is a learning experience and we will return with valuable feedback for the artisans back home. Further products using this raw material can be developed with focus on specific buyer markets," added Mr. Sachan. ■