National Crafts Council

Posted on

Preserving Traditional Crafts



Capturing the attention of onlookers, skilled artisans create intricate lacquer patterns.

The National Crafts Council (NCC) is responsible for the nurturing and preservation of Sri Lankan traditional craftsmen and their art thus, ensuring that the country’s heritage transcends to the next generation. A visit to a craft village allows guests to witness the aesthetic creations of the skilled craftsmen and experience their lifestyle.

Words Udeshi Amarasinghe. | **Photographs** National Crafts Council and Mahesh Bandara.


NCC
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தேசிய அருங்கலைகள் பேரவை
National Crafts Council



Sudath Abeysekara, Chairman, National Crafts Council.



Visitors can experience the live action of pottery making at the craft village.

Traditional crafts such as mask making, lacquer, wood-carving, beeralu and pottery have been prevalent in the country for centuries. And, this art has been passed down for generations to the present day. As Sudath Abeysekara, Chairman, National Crafts Council explains, “We need to protect these unique creations and the skills of the craftsmen. We need to draw inspiration from our heritage and see ways of creating for the future.” The NCC sales outlets are present at Dutch Hospital Precinct – Colombo Fort, Molagoda, Wariyapola, Galle Fort as well as production and marketing villages in Sigiriya and Kawantissapura, Hambantota. The focus of the NCC is also to create a linkage between traditional crafts and tourism, not merely by providing products but also through experiences. Thus the craft villages of which the traditional artisans live and create their products are opened for foreign travelers to visit and experience their lifestyle. The visitors can further participate in making their own products so that they can take it back home.

“In the future, we will encourage home stay in these villages as well”, explained the Chairman. Extensive plans have also been made to enhance the experiential aspects at the NCC premises in Battaramulla together with Ape Gama. So that visitors can experience the creation of the product, and participate and eventually purchase. The NCC logo was revamped to give a modern feel and a greater meaning. The design depicts a finger print from which a creation emerges. A striking yellow and white combination with a black background is used in the new

logo. The Chairman explained that the finger print denotes the power of the fingers of the artistes from which beautiful crafts are created tirelessly. Yellow is used to reflect power and motivation, and as it is a warm color, it adds an energetic feel. Another new initiative termed ‘Shilpa Samajayata Gasak Situwamu’ (lets plant a tree for the craftspeople), a concept by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa was inaugurated with the planting of an Ebony tree by the President. This is an endeavor to continuously replenish the required raw materials to ensure the sustainability of Sri Lankan crafts. Various types of trees were planted through this program that was initiated around the country.

Watake plants were planted around the coastal belt of Sri Lanka highlighting the importance of coast conservation. In this manner, the Chairman said, NCC with the guidance of Wimal Weerawansa, Minister of Small and Medium Business and Enterprise Development and Minister of Industries and Supply Management, has taken steps to further establish its role as the protector of national crafts, so that future generations can experience and ensure that Sri Lanka traditional art and crafts remain.

The National Crafts Council organizes a marketing program at Diyatha Udayana, Battaramulla every Thursday from March 26th onwards to promote local crafts, under the theme of ‘Ape Weda – Apita Abimanayak’.

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Opening hours of sales outlets: 9am–6pm Daily



The planting of a Watake plant by Sudath Abeysekara, Chairman, National Crafts Council.



Weavers deftly work on creating unique designs.