

AAS-in-Asia 2020

Asia at the Crossroads:
Solidarity through Scholarship

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Re-thinking Creative Economy Through Fashion in
Asia

Re-thinking Creative Economy Through Fashion in Asia

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Title: 1182 | Re-thinking Creative Economy Through
Fashion in Asia

Area: Border Crossing and Inter-Area

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Presentation Type: Panel Presentation

In Partnership
with Osaka
University,

Panelists:

Wessie Ling, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom (organizer, chair, discussant)

Xin Gu, Monash University, Australia (presenter)

Peter Oakley, Royal College of Art, United Kingdom (presenter)

Wuthigrai Siriphon, Thammasat University, Thailand (presenter)

Kathleen Scott, Academy of Design Colombo, Sri Lanka (presenter)

Shwana Khalil, Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Pakistan (presenter)

Abstract:

The rise of Asia in recent years not only as economic powerhouse but as global cultural soft power has shifted geopolitical trajectories for the region and its 'imagined' threat to the West. Despite the fact that Asia's growing interest in creative industries such as fashion consumption is seen to hold out opportunities for countries like France and Italy to sell high-end creative goods, there's growing anxiety over Asia's rising creative literacy. In recent years, Korean, HK and Chinese fashion designers are increasingly achieving global status, supported by much more efficient cultural production and distribution services in their local creative ecosystems.

Borrowing the creative economy policy framework from Europe, many Asian countries have pursued a Western-style of modernization but with very different

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routes. In the case of fashion, the creative economy framework tends to focus on high-end cultural consumption and wealth creation than on artistic sensibility and progressive social reforms. This panel, through the lens of fashion, explores challenges for Asia, operating often via authoritarian style of governance, to translate and adopt the discourse of creative industries – which tends to reward grassroots, individual innovation. It focuses on the symbolic value of fashion in mediating and communicating an evolving cultural politics in Asia.

Panel Abstracts:

Fashion: A Pathway Into Creative Working Lives in China

The term CCIs in China was not a simple migration exercise for Chinese policy makers. Although for over two centuries, Chinese modernization has always involved some relationship to the West. It has been a relationship fraught with hard choices stemming from how the them and us were framed. It seems that it has always involved a form of China catching up with the West, asking questions as to what can be mobilized from one's own tradition, what and how much to borrow from the West. What's unique about CCIs as a key mechanism for the latest wave of modernization project is that it is no longer about developing a new economic sector and hoping for rapid industrialization. It is about cultivating human

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creativity, drawing on the discourse of cultural modernization and demands a whole new range of social-urbanistic structures that were absent. Using fashion as a case study, this paper uncovers some of these challenges amongst independent designers in China. It asks questions associated with the development of the creative subjectivity in China and explores how the development of creative class cannot be imagined in the same way as it did in the West.

The Value(s) of Thai Craft Textiles in the 21st Century

The cultural distinctiveness of the Kingdom of Thailand has, in part, been built on the manufacture and consumption of specific woven textiles. Today, the craft weaving of silk and cotton fabrics is promoted by the Thai Royal Family through patronage, encouraged by government bodies and charitable foundations. The resulting products are worn by senior government officials and fashion-conscious urban professionals as well as rural villagers. However, despite the apparent current strength of the sector, the craft weaving industry faces a range of problems that threaten to destabilise or corrode its viability and relevance. These include issues around the cultural transmission of weaving skills and what are acceptable avenues for innovation. In some sense, Thai craft weaving is a classic case of the 'iron cage of creativity', as practicing weavers appear to be trapped by a limited repertoire of colour schemes and decorative motifs.

repertoire of colour schemes and decorative motifs that are increasingly at odds with the expectations of some of their important groups of consumers, but weavers have little opportunity to challenge the status quo. Through a series of case studies, based on fieldwork conducted over the past five years, the authors will explain the nature of these pressures and how they come to influence or define what true craft woven Thai textiles can or should be. The paper will conclude with some suggestions of how Thai craft weavers can move beyond the current impasse whilst retaining their integrity and importance within Thai society and culture.

Heritage Craft at the Heart of Forward Thinking Fashion: How Can Sri Lanka Build a Creative Industries of the Future?

Sri Lanka has a rich history of heritage craft and textile design cottage industries, influenced and derived from much of its colonialism throughout history. These crafts are an integral part of the Sri Lankan design industry, but are largely overlooked. Sri Lanka's fashion industry is small but burgeoning and in recent years Mercedes Benz Sri Lanka launched as a platform for Sri Lankan designers and the Academy of Design, where the researcher works as a design practitioner and lecturer, on multiple projects introducing the new generation of Sri Lankan designers to the craft of their country. Additionally, Sri Lanka also has a large garment manufacturing industry examined in this study, with some of the

most sustainable and progressive factories in the world using hi-tech processes. In many ways Sri Lanka surpasses the West in terms of resources, facilities and opportunities and this study will examine how Sri Lanka can develop and foster 'A New Sri Lankan Style' in the fashion industry that is unique to its culture and has global appeal, without being held back by a western-based creative framework. This study proposes key areas of focus for building the creative industries in Sri Lanka in the future with a focus on fashion, driving Sri Lanka to become a creative leader in South East Asia.

Creative Cultures and Creative Economies through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC): A Pakistanis Perspective

Pakistan is heir to one of the greatest textile traditions and craft techniques. Considered a part of Indian art and culture for a long time albeit the absence of official documentation, it holds its own uniqueness and validity. It is a product of numerous migrations through centuries, bringing along the great amalgamation of cultures and different design sensibilities new to this region, from Europe, Central Asia, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and China. This aesthetic excellence in design and textiles emerged from shared experiences of different regions has been passed on to generations. Recent years saw the creative vibes of Pakistan fashion and textile industry further revolutionised by the economic endeavour of China. How and to what extent has the migration

China. How and to what extent has the migration history of Pakistan influenced its fashion and textile economy? What is the impact of the new China Pakistan Economic corridor (CPEC) has on its region's creative economy? What role does Pakistan creative economy in fashion and textile play in the new silk route of the 21st Century? This paper addresses these questions through the discussion on creative culture through migration, Pakistan fashion and textile as creative industry and the intriguing relation between Chinese and Pakistan creative economy

This panel is on Wednesday - Session 05 - Room 2

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The AAS-in-Asia conferences are intended to be smaller size conferences than the typical AAS Annual Conferences. This conference gives our members and others interested in Asian Studies, who are unable to attend the Annual Conferences held in North America, the opportunity to participate in panel sessions and network with colleagues in a more intimate setting. Although smaller in size, these conferences include the same exciting features as the Annual Conference including sessions, keynote speakers, book exhibits and receptions. Each year, AAS-in-Asia conferences are a joint production between the Association for Asian Studies and a local host university and committee.

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The Association for Asian Studies (AAS) is a scholarly, non-political, non-profit professional association, open to all persons interested in Asia. With over 6,500 members worldwide, representing all the regions and countries of Asia and all academic disciplines across the humanities and social sciences, the AAS is the largest organization of its kind.
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Founded in 2009, The International Academic Forum (IAFOR) is a politically independent non-partisan and non-profit interdisciplinary think tank, conference organiser and publisher dedicated to encouraging interdisciplinary discussion, facilitating intercultural awareness and promoting international exchange, principally through educational interaction and academic research. Based in Japan, its main administrative office is in Nagoya, and its research centre is in the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP), a graduate school of Osaka University.
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