



CALIFORNIA GIFT SHOW REPORT



"Selections of authentic Fijian crafted artifacts were on display at the California Gift Show, from 23rd – 26th January, 2015 at the Los Angeles Convention Center in downtown Los Angeles. The tradeshow was jointly attended by the Los Angeles based Fiji Trade Commission and a contingent from the Fiji Arts Council. This was another great occasion to create global awareness of the Fijian-crafted brand".

REPORT ON THE CALIFORNIA GIFT SHOW, LOS ANGELES

23RD – 26TH JANUARY, 2015

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Participating in the California Gift Show in Los Angeles was another event attended by the Fiji Arts Council upon the invitation of the Fiji Trade Commission, Los Angeles, California within the ambit of the Ministry of Industry and Trade. The three days event was held at the Los Angeles Convention Centre, Los Angeles, California, USA from 23rd – 26th January, 2015.

An international event that has been held yearly was a great opportunity for the Fiji Arts Council to be invited to attend such shows as these. As Fiji is considering exhibiting in the world styles markets, in the wake of promoting our Fijian Crafted products, this was one of the events that had opened up larger opportunities to meet key buyers, viewers at large and access to US markets for Fiji's products.

This was a great occasion to create global awareness of the Fijian-crafted brand.

The tradeshow was jointly attended by the Los Angeles based Fiji Trade Commission Mr. Jitendra Singh and representatives of the Fiji Arts Council, comprising the Director Fiji Arts Council, Mr. Laisiasa Veikoso, President Fiji Craft Society and Craft Development Officer, Ms. Tuvuki and a selected Contemporary Craft Practitioner, Mrs. Akanisi Smith who was also tasked to do live craft demonstrations in the Fiji Booth.

The Fiji Trade Commission supported the Council's participation to market Fijian Handicraft at the three days Trade Show. The FTC provided a 200 square foot booth at the event, domestic transportation, accommodation and daily meal allowances for three representatives. FTC also paid freight costs to and fro of handicraft items taken across for the exhibition.

In my point of view FAC's participation in the Trade show determined two main elements which will be analyzed in this report.

Firstly it provided opportunities to establish relationships for new international markets for our Fijian Crafted Products and secondly it was an eye opener for further improvements in how our promotional materials could be developed and modified to best showcase and present Fijian Crafted products to attract viewers and buyers during Trade Shows as such.

Communicating the right information to the right people in the right way is a way forward that Fijian Crafted products will be best promoted in foreign markets and furthermore familiarizes ourselves as exhibitors in all aspects relating to Trade Shows to improve future participation.



The Fiji booth was based in the World Styles section and was amongst hundreds of US and international exhibitors showcasing a variety of unique and creative gift items.

2.0 PRE- PREPARATION FOR PARTICIPATION:

Travelling visas applications for two members of the group were submitted and approved within a week before we departed.

The Fiji Arts Council had to organize orders of Fijian Crafted samples to few Craft Practitioners as many were not able to be contacted due to the Festive Seasons. The following producers were able to meet the request at a very short period allocated to them for the collections of the various samples

AKANISI SMITH:

1 Large Doll

3 small Photo Frames @ \$10.00 each

3 Medium Photo Frames @ \$15.00 each

3 Large Photo Frames @ \$20.00 each

PARAS RAM:

3 Mother of Pearl Neck ware @ \$60.00 each

VILIMAINA LEA:

1 compartment Box plain edge

1 compartment Box woven edge

1 Jewellery Box with cover

FRAMERA ARTWORKS:

2x1 Frames with Artifacts

3x1 Frames with Artifacts

KAPUI'S KREATIONS:

1 Men's shirt

1 Boys Shirt

1 Girls Jamba

1 Set Neck ware and earring

ASENACA CASTILLO:

1 Cat Holder

1 Coconut Spice Holder

1 Pen Holder with Turtle Message

SAMUELA CABE:

2 Plain Dyed Sulus @ \$20.00 each

1 Colored Printed Sulu

In addition to the above preparations, a Craft Catalogue was designed by one of our local Artist, Mr. Viliame Tuilaulala to comprise a wide range of Fijian Crafted images that were available in FAC as Craft Collections consisting both contemporary and traditional crafts such as wedding costumes, wedding bouquet, flowers, photo frames, woven Fijian dolls, tissue boxes, meeting satchels, passport holders, coasters, Rotuman fans, cannibal coco dolls, coconut spice holder, bone note

holder, calendar doll, pen holders, Fijian artifact prints, Burekalou, Fiji Island Maps, Tanoa, war clubs, fruit platter, head rest, miniature lali, oil dish, turtle shaped dish with lid, miniature potteries, miniature water vessels, masi and mats.

The Catalog was compiled in only three days and fifty copies were then printed out for distribution in the office and also taken for promotional purposes to the Trade Show.

The catalog is intended to be further modified and upgraded to provide all relevant information necessary for a buyer and well serve needs in future. A price list was also put together to supplement the catalogue, in addition, Business Cards were also printed out as a form of contact information.

Other craft were handpicked from FAC's available collections, basically to showcase the varieties of the best products and of the highest quality that we thought would attract potential buyers during the Trade Show.



3.0 FIJI'S BOOTH

The Fiji booth was based in the World Styles section and was amongst hundreds of US and international exhibitors showcasing a variety of unique and creative gift items. Fijian Crafted products included: contemporary and traditional wedding costumes, wedding bouquet, flowers, photo frames, woven Fijian dolls, tissue boxes, meeting satchels, passport holders, coasters, Rotuman fans, cannibal coco dolls, coconut spice holder, bone note holder, calendar doll, pen holders, Fijian artifact prints, Burekalou, Fiji Island Maps, Tanoa, war clubs, fruit platter, head rest, miniature lali, oil dish, turtle shaped dish with lid, miniature potteries, miniature water vessels, masi pieces , mats and few pieces of hand printed textiles

The four day program began at 9.00am in the morning and retired at 6pm in the afternoon, meeting and greeting viewers, enthusiasts, and potential buyers at the same time answering raised questions to explain what the products are and to take orders at the same time.

Attendees raised their interest in the uniqueness of some products such as masi dolls, Art work frames, and coconut shell products, masi products, carved artifacts, textiles, woven fans, woven boxes and masi and voivoi flowers.

These were some new products, they mentioned, so it was the perfect opportunity to put those new products directly into their hands – *literally*. Attendees were able to touch, feel, and see the various products exhibited and discuss with them the service's FAC provides regarding the Fijian Crafted productions and developments.

Viewers also had the opportunity to watch craft demonstrations especially for masi flowers by Mrs. Akanisi Smith, unfortunately working in pandanus leaves was difficult since the texture was very brittle, due to weather conditions



Fiji's Booth Set up from a side view

Our participation was also covered by media coverage which was sent by the Trade Commissioner to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Fiji, for media exposure on Friday 23rd, January. That was a significant opportunity for public awareness and a good public relation in our participation in the Trade Show. This also demonstrated the success and innovations of competitiveness of FAC in such event

4.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION:

The Trade show was a great advantage

- To access to a large number of potential buyers at one time and in one place,
- Offered an opportunity to meet with audience of like-minded viewers
- An efficient way to learn about markets inclinations and product competition
- Identify new market opportunities
- Connecting us as exhibitors to establish a great working relationship with viewers .A way to educate buyers, this also strengthens our business approach, better positioning ourselves to our clients, and promoting FAC more to International markets
- It was an efficient and personal way to network, market, and sell directly to target audience.
- It encouraged us to modify and improve ways of providing small information on background stories of each exhibited item. Although promotional materials such as business cards, price list and Catalog were developed. Effective promotional works to upgrade and modify the existing ones in place to draw buyers to Fijian Crafted products is crucial, thereby stimulating demands that will surely results to sales.

4.01 Meeting with USC Pacific Asia Museum

(The University of Southern California Pacific Asia Museum (USC Pacific Asia Museum).

The team including Mr. Jitendra Singh Trade Commissioner LA met with the Director –

Ms. Susana Smith Bantista and Assistant Curator Ms. Yeonsoo Chee in the Pacific Asia Museum on Tuesday 27th January, 2015. The meeting was held at the university after viewing some of their displayed artifacts in the museum. We observed that their Artifacts collection were mainly from Asian Countries and only three pieces were Artifacts representing, Tonga, Hawaii and Papua New Guinea



Fiji Trade Commissioner, LA Mr. Jitendra Singh, and the Team with the USC Pacific Asia Museum Staff

During the meeting, DFAC gave a short brief on the overview of Fiji Arts Council and the roles it plays in the development and promotions of Fijian Crafted, at the same time offering and providing a leeway to establish a working relationship between the two organization . An opportunity considered for both Organizations in networking, and collaboration in future programs.

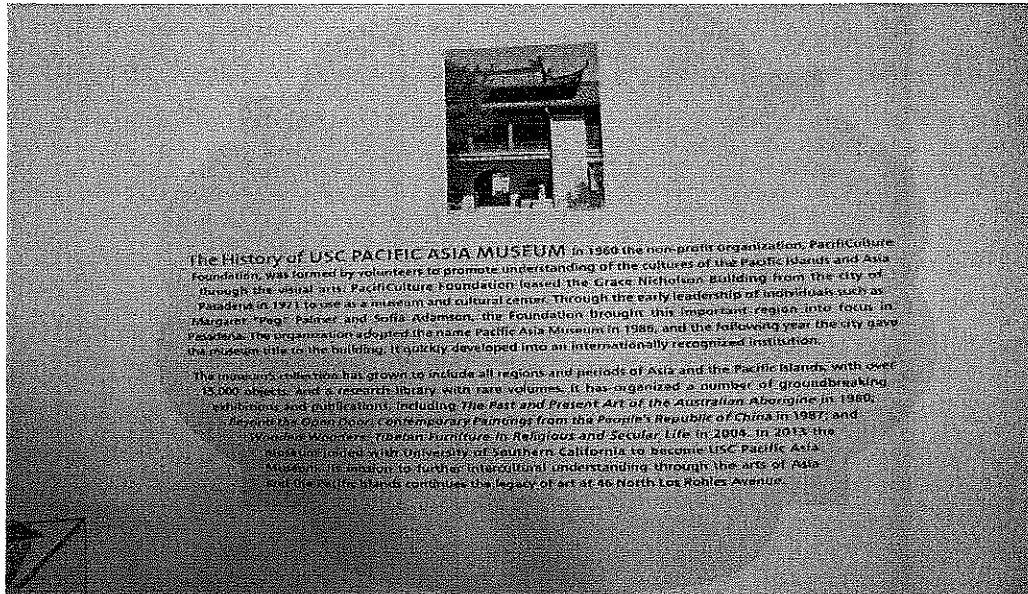
We were highlighted on the following issues:

- USC Pacific Asia Museum has two types of collections:

Educational Collections used for educational materials for visiting schools. Students are able to be educated in knowledge relating to Pacific Cultures on cross cultural information.

- These are limited as USC Pacific Asia Museum does not have enough appropriate information to use for their teaching programs.
- The Museum has limited information relating to other Pacific Cultures
- The need to work with FAC in regards to Fiji's Cultural information and Fiji's Cultural skill demonstrations is substantial in the following traditional knowledge's
 - Traditional cooking practices
 - Masi making

- Wood Carving
- Pottery Making



A Brief History of USC PACIFIC Asia Museum placed in the main entrance of the Building

It was highlighted that FAC is keen to offer the support in their educational programs

- USC Pacific Asia Museum has a Cultural Committee which meets annually in December. The Committee also endorses on such submissions and also decides on requests submitted to the museum regarding collections from other countries likewise for Educational and Public Programs to community outreach

5.0 HANDICRAFT SALES:

The following products were sold in the last two days of the show. Other viewers that indicated and attracted their attention to some pieces exhibited, left their business cards in the booth in exchange of picking up copies of catalogs and our business cards. It was noted that the smaller items were easier to be sold with very realistic prizes. Fijian Crafted Products are handmade unique and very different, really it cannot compete with mass production handicrafts which we had noticed most booths were showcasing similar products,

And for further observation, it was noted that Fijian Handicraft Products would have made a greater difference in sales if the prizes were more realistic, better presentation in sizes, background information attached to products would have meant a great deal to the interested buyers

The Fiji Trade Commission, LA, also purchased some pieces to add on to his office collections which consisted a miniature lali, photo frames, coconut shell crafts and masi pieces

We were also requested to elevate the setting up of the *Office Fijian Made Corner* by using the craft pieces purchased

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AND MODIFICATION

- Work on information of each product, referring to related information
- Information to be laminated and attached to the product itself
- Background stories on products that depicts our cultures and traditions
- Price list to be further modified, prices has to be realistic , reflecting the quality and design of the product, at the same time to be competitive
- Price Tags on each products is a must for all exhibited items
- The Smaller the items, the better- single colored masi flowers, flower bunches, masi bookmarks, masi dolls, were some of the items most picked up and admired by viewers
- No more mats to be exhibited. Mats could be appropriate in other City Trade Shows where Fijian National resides
- Carvings has to be miniatures and not huge pieces , easy to carry
- Daku fans, all sizes likewise with other various minority fans to be part of collection
- Harry Kapui's Creation – small dresses and shirts, various sizes for children to be available
- Exhibited Items to be placed on Racks and Fixtures to attract viewers from a far.

7.0 CONCLUSION:

The Fiji Arts Council expresses its greatest vakavinavinaka to the Ministry of Industry and Trade and we have been overwhelmed with the support rendered by Fiji Trade Commissioner LA during our participation

The Permanent Secretary for Trade, Investment and Tourism, Mr. Shaheen Ali announced today that "A selection of authentic Fijian crafted artifacts is on display at the California Gift Show, which opened today at the Los Angeles Convention Center in downtown Los Angeles. The show will run over the weekend and finish on Monday January 28, 2015. This is a great occasion for our Ministry to create global awareness of the Fijian-crafted brand".

The tradeshow is jointly being attended by the Los Angeles based Fiji Trade Commission and a contingent from the Fiji Arts Council. Representatives of the Fiji Arts Council comprise the

Director (Fiji Arts Council), Mr. Laisiasa Rokobuludrau, Mrs. Niqa Tuvuki and Mrs. Akanisi Smith.

The Fiji booth is based in the World Styles section and is amongst hundreds of US and international exhibitors showcasing a variety of unique and creative gift items. Fijian products include: contemporary and traditional wedding costumes, wedding bouquet, flowers, photo frames, woven Fijian dolls, tissue boxes, meeting satchels, passport holders, coasters, Rotuman fans, cannibal coco dolls, coconut spice holder, bone note holder, calendar doll, pen holders, Fijian artifact prints, Burekalou, Fiji Island Maps, Tanoa, war clubs, fruit platter, head rest, miniature lali, oil dish, turtle shaped dish with lid, miniature potteries, miniature water vessels, masi and mats

Fiji's Trade Commissioner to the US, Mr. Jitendra Singh was delighted at Fiji Arts Council's participation at the tradeshow. He thanked the Council and said that, "The Fiji booth is very well arranged and we have experts on hand

. In addition, we have live demonstrations arranged in the booth, which will attract attention from show attendees. We look forward to securing new orders for Fijian artifacts at the show".

N. Tuvuki
Craft Development Officer

