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## Direct from Market: Manila F.A.M.E.

By Caroline Kennedy -- Gifts and Dec, November 28, 2010

When it comes to international gift and home trade shows, Manila F.A.M.E. International, which was held in the Philippines October 18-21, is a gem of a show, which should not be overlooked by buyers making their sourcing rounds of the Asian-Pacific Rim show circuit. Although the show is relatively small, especially when compared to the Hong Kong shows, it is large in quality and inspiration. It is a well edited presentation of nearly 300 exhibitors, each of whose offerings are different from the others.

This is a show not to shop for a large selection of everyday commodities. Produced by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (C.I.T.E.M.), the Manila F.A.M.E. show is differentiating itself from other Asian shows; C.I.T.E.M. is repositioning the show as Asia's Boutique Show. To that end, it is placing an emphasis on the unique, creative products and great design with the handcrafted artisan touch of its offerings.



Lightworks

"This is a design market," stated exhibitor Rashmi Singh of Lightworks Furniture and Accessories. And indeed, just a glance at the Lightworks display supports Mrs. Singh's statement. Lightworks' offerings are as much art as they are furniture and accessories, and they can be somewhat surprising -- a sculptural chair that appeared to be fabricated out of metal and looked as if it would be cold and uncomfortable to sit on was actually crafted from fiberglass and resin with a metallic finish and was very comfortable.

Not only does Manila F.A.M.E. provide a showcase for Filipino design, it also highlights the Filipinos' artisan craftsmanship and creative use of natural and recycled materials, as well as their creative interpretation of natural looks in alternate materials. There was also a small exhibit area of a relatively new but growing industry, the manufacturing of personal care products.

### Designers and Special Displays

To help Philippine companies broaden their product design outlook, Manila F.A.M.E. partnered with several designers who consulted with exhibitors on prototypes and presented inspirationally merchandised displays for attendees to view before entering the show floor. Japanese designer Wataru Sakuma, known for his creative works made from banana and pineapple fiber handmade paper, provided expertise in the furniture and home accessories area; German designer Britta Frankenhauser worked with holiday decor producers; and British designer Mo Tomaney consulted with fashion producers. Their displays in the lobby were a first stop for many buyers before entering the exhibit hall.



Sakuma's Home Display



Frankenhauser's Holiday Display



Tomaney's Fashion Display

Designer Britta Frankenhauser was very enthusiastic about her experience of working with many of the holiday decor companies to help them produce lines with greater global appeal. To start the process, she noted, "I conceived the themes, colors and decorative elements

to match the [four holiday] trends [that she had determined] -- Traditional, Trendy, Elegant and Fun. Then I went to the companies and looked at their materials, not their products." In the process, there was a lot of give and take, she noted. "One of the things that I had to convince some of them is that less is more, and to not over-embellish. Also to see things in a new way." As an example, she pointed out a tree ornament or angel wings. "These are the wings that one company put on its angel figurines. I showed them how they could also become this!"

Another interesting display was that of the Bohol Weaving Project. Heading up the project, Ingrid Haufe of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP) has been working with the Bohol weavers, who traditionally work in raffia, to develop new patterns and work new materials, such as recycled newspapers and plastic, into their traditional weaving. The project also got them to look at new applications for the weavers' talents and products. In addition to placemats and runners, Bohol-woven end products included handbags, storage boxes, a raffia upholstered chair and a variety of creative lampshades and lighting elements.



**Ferimar's newspaper handbags**

Among the eye-catching results of the Bohol project seen in exhibitor's booths were the striking handbags made from recycled newspaper from [Ferimar](#) and those incorporating recycled plastic by [Bohol Beads and Fibers](#).

#### **The Quadrants**

The show floor in the main hall was divided into four quadrants: Holiday, Fashion, Home Décor and Furniture and Garden, making it easy to navigate and easy to work. The Holiday section, needless to say was festive with glittering, gleaming holiday decorations in materials ranging from paper to capiz, from abaca to metal, and resin to cloth. Among the eye-catching exhibitors were: L and A Designs, Catalina, Team International Concepts, Celebrations Trading and Kardelle Industries.



**Team Internation Concepts, offered some very engaging decoratives, such as trees and deer figures made from abaca strips and metal.**



**Elegant holiday home décor in muted gold and white by Kardelle Industries, had many items that could be used beyond the holidays.**



**Celebrations Trading International had some striking pieces, such as wreaths and angel figurines made with capiz shell that had an icy elegance.**



**Balasi Exports' colorful paper gift boxes and ornaments**



**L and A Designs showed a range of beautiful Nativities, some with a modern edge. L and A was one of the companies that worked with Britta Frankenhauser, resulting in a line of tree ornaments.**



**Catalina, known for its tradition of embroidered textiles debuted a line of holiday pillows and home textiles featuring European-influenced designs.**

The Fashion section presented an attractive and appealing selection of not only handbags and fashion jewelry, but also some trendy apparel and footwear. The fashion jewelry offerings played right into the buyers "want" lists for the Global Bohemian fashion look which is *au courant* especially among the younger fashionista set.

One interesting exhibitor in this area was **Gida's Tnalek International**, a producer of finely woven abaca cloth in traditional patterns, which have a very contemporary appeal.

In addition to Ferimar and Bohol Beads, another standout fashion exhibitor was **S.C. Vizcarra**. This family-owned business is in its third generation with Rita Nazareno, the grand-daughter of the company's founder creatively involved in designing handbags for a new generation of fashionistas. The company earned Katha Award recognition at Manila F.A.M.E. for best product design in the Fashion category.

*Gifts & Decorative Accessories* had the pleasure of visiting the company's workshop and showroom while in Manila. The visit offered the opportunity of a more intimate look at the wonderful handcrafted process that many Philippine exhibitors have to offer. Many of S.C. Vizcarra's artisan employees and their families live on the factory premises and have had a long-time relationship with the firm. They are part of the S.C. Vizcarra family. The company produces several different handbag lines: a very high-end line of handcrafted woven leather bags, a line a private label designs hand-woven in natural materials, and Rita's Zacharias by S.C. Vizcarra line of bags with a modern architectural edge made of hand-woven natural materials. The company also produces a collection of home décor items such as woven trays, storage baskets and the like.



**S.C. Vizcarra**

In the Garden quadrant, we encountered a familiar exhibitor, **Nature's Legacy**. The company had had a showroom at the World Marker Center Las Vegas which it closed due to the economic downturn and is now concentrating on distribution through a U.S.-based warehouse and growing its Hospitality and Contract business. The company is known for its eco-friendly home, garden and fashion accessories. Nature's Legacy is known for its creative use of recycled paper, crushed cast stone and natural scrap materials such as dead bark and forest waste to craft planters, wall art, accent furniture and other things for indoor and outdoor use.

The Home quadrant held a varied collection of exhibitors offering everything from antique reproduction accessories, accent furniture, wall décor and lighting to delicate porcelains, woven baskets, wooden tablewares and decorative tiles. Standout exhibitors included **Masaeco**, Kalikasan Crafts, **Chrysara**, **CSM Enterprises** and Tadeco.





**Tadeco had an eye-catching display of indoor and outdoor accessories**



**Kalikasan Crafts won a Katha Award in the Home Furnishings category. The company reinterprets the basket in metalwork; among its offerings are airy decorative metal baskets, vase-like accents and lighting.**



**CSM Enterprises bone china accents are delicate and luminous. In addition to vases and figurines, there is a striking architectural collection.**



**Chrysara's collection of antique-inspired accents fit with contemporary as well as traditional interiors.**



**Masaeco displayed its handmade paper artistry. The paper is made from banana, pineapple and other natural plant fibers and is cast into tapestries and sculpted into art panel presented in shadowboxes.**

### **Creative Re-use**

All over the show floor, the Filipinos sensitivity to preserving the environment and their natural resources was evident. The creative recycling of newspapers, bottle caps and other plastics, forest floor waste and scrap materials and turning them into beautiful, functional products is impressive. In addition to some of the previously mentioned companies, others of note are Mind Masters, Paper Capers and Craftmill.



**Mind Masters, which won a Katha Award for Best Booth takes recycled materials and**



**Paper Capers recycled paper, plastics and water bottle caps into decorative baskets and other containers, totes, frames and desk accessories.**



**Craftmill creatively recycled old telephone directories into attractive desk accessories as well as totes and handbags.**

### **Furniture and Boutique**

In a second, smaller hall were the furniture and boutique exhibits. What a feast for the design eye. One of the boutique exhibitors was jewelry designer Joyce Makitalo who showcased her statement pieces, striking one-of-a-kind handcrafted necklaces and bracelets.

The furniture area showed Philippine design at its finest -- creative, contemporary and well crafted. There were organic looks made of metal, organic looks made of natural, native materials, contemporary pieces with influences drawn from traditional designs, practical pieces with bow to tradition but with a modern twist and much more.



**Passad's contemporary chair made from small blocks of wood glued and shaped.**



**A. Garcia's stainless steel chairs mimicking rattan styling.**



**Prismic and Brill's safari style for the modern home.**



**Cebu Intertrade Export's vanity is sleekly modern with a nod to traditional 19th century style elements.**



**Metal frame table and chair by JLQ International appear to be made of sinuous vine.**

### **Out and About**

In addition to going off site to visit the S.C. Vizcarra, showroom and factory, *G&DA* visited the LRI Design Center, a showroom building where a number of the furniture exhibitors and other interiors designers have permanent showrooms and the Greenbelt 5 upscale shopping mall. At the Greenbelt 5, several other companies such as Prismic and Brill have retail shops or are prominently a part of a shop's merchandise mix. The retail shop of Celestina, a prominent high-end fashion handbag line which counts Sandra Bullock among its clients, had a large showcase of Tadeco's pillows and decor.

While strolling through the mall, one surprise, we encountered was a kiosk selling Hot Flops!

Manila F.A.M.E. is a show that is reinventing and repositioning itself. There may be more growth and change to come. C.I.T.E.M. had considered adjusting the show's schedule to once a year with the Fashion & Accessories segment taking place in March or April and the Home/Christmas/Gift segment taking place in October, but decided against it.



The next Manila F.A.M.E. is set to take place April 16-19, 2011 at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia Complex, Pasay City, Philippines.

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