

## **SARMILY SARKER**

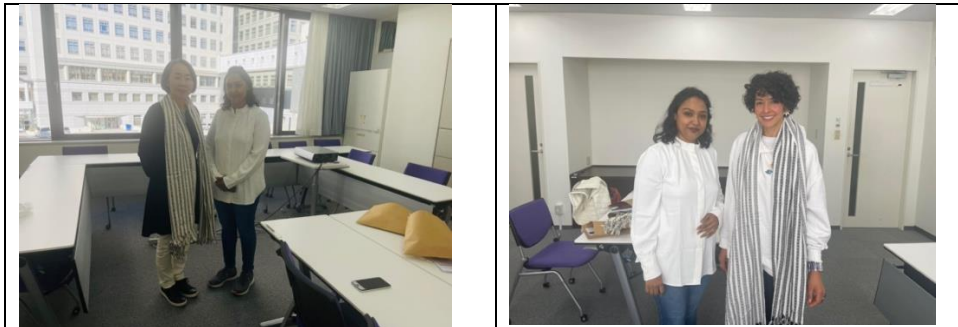
### **Report on IFFTI Cultural Exchange Programme 2023 at Bunka Gakuen University**

#### **Introduction:**

The IFFTI Cultural Exchange Programme in 2023 facilitated a distinctive faculty exchange opportunity between our institution and Bunka Gakuen University in Tokyo, Japan. During this enriching 15-day program, I had the privilege of being hosted by Prof. Dr. Yoko Takagi from Bunka Fashion School. Prof. Dr. Takagi played a pivotal role in both organizing and providing invaluable assistance in showcasing the exceptional facilities at Bunka. This report aims to document the diverse experiences, academic activities, and cultural exchanges that unfolded during my visit from 12th to 27th November 2023. This report encompasses the rationale for selection, a focused exploration of traditional Japanese techniques, interactive sessions, and the exploration of contemporary art. Additionally, the report highlights the transformative impact of the program on the participant and acknowledges the generous accommodations, including a dedicated room in the university dormitory and access to the library, which proved instrumental in the development of various research ideas and topics.

#### **1. Selection of Bunka Gakuen University:**

Bunka Gakuen University is recognized as a center of excellence for fashion design globally, attracting a diverse student body. The institution's commitment to a diverse and multicultural learning environment aligns seamlessly with the goals of the IFFTI Faculty Exchange program.



After Introduction session

#### **2. Purpose of Visit - Traditional Color Palette:**

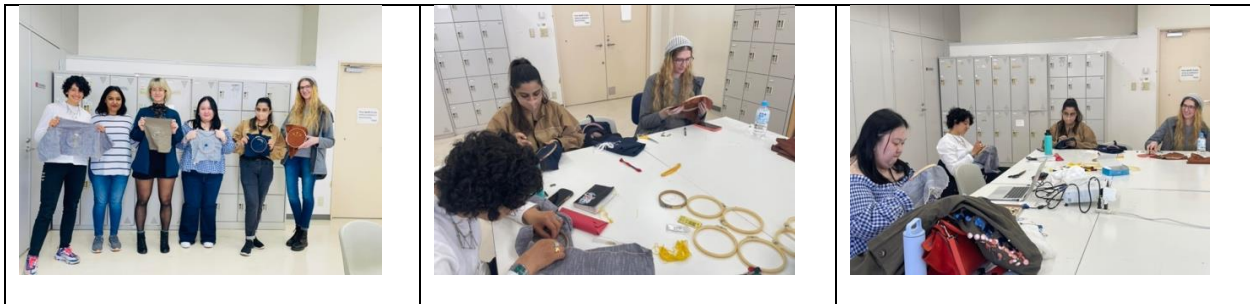
The absence of a traditional color palette in Bangladesh motivated the participant to explore and learn from Bunka Gakuen University. The intention was to develop a culturally resonant color palette that empowers designers in Bangladesh. Bunka Gakuen University Library has helped me tremendously in making this recharge option even easier with many books. With a vast collection of approximately 330,000 books, 3,000 magazine titles (including back issues), and an extensive array of domestic and foreign fashion magazines, the library stands as a valuable repository for fashion enthusiasts. Extensive research in this regard was facilitated by the Bunka Gakuen University Library and valuable insights from Prof. Claudia Arana.



Bunka Gakuen University Library

### 3. Workshops and Interactive Sessions:

On 24th November, an engaging and culturally enriching workshop and interactive session were conducted with the Master Degree program, Global Fashion Concentration (GFC) students of Bunka Gakuen University. This event served as a pivotal component of a broader cultural exchange initiative, aimed at fostering an understanding of the rich textile heritage of Bangladesh. Through this interactive session, we aimed to provide the students with hands-on experience and insight into the traditional craftsmanship that reflects the cultural identity of Bangladesh. The workshop spanned three hours, providing ample time for a comprehensive exploration of the intricate kantha stitch techniques. The workshop included an overview of the historical and cultural significance of kantha embroidery in Bangladesh and a brief introduction to the diverse styles and patterns of kantha stitching. After that students experienced hands-On sessions with materials and tools. I explained step-by-step guidance on basic and advanced kantha stitch techniques.



Workshop on kantha embroidery in Bangladesh

Discussion on the cultural stories and narratives often embedded in kantha designs. Exploration of how these designs are influenced by regional customs and traditions. Afterward, we engaged in a Q&A and interactive dialogue with students. Facilitated discussions on the parallels and differences between Japanese and Bangladeshi textile traditions. Participants gained practical skills in executing various kantha stitch patterns, contributing to their understanding of intricate embroidery techniques.

#### 4. Printing Lab

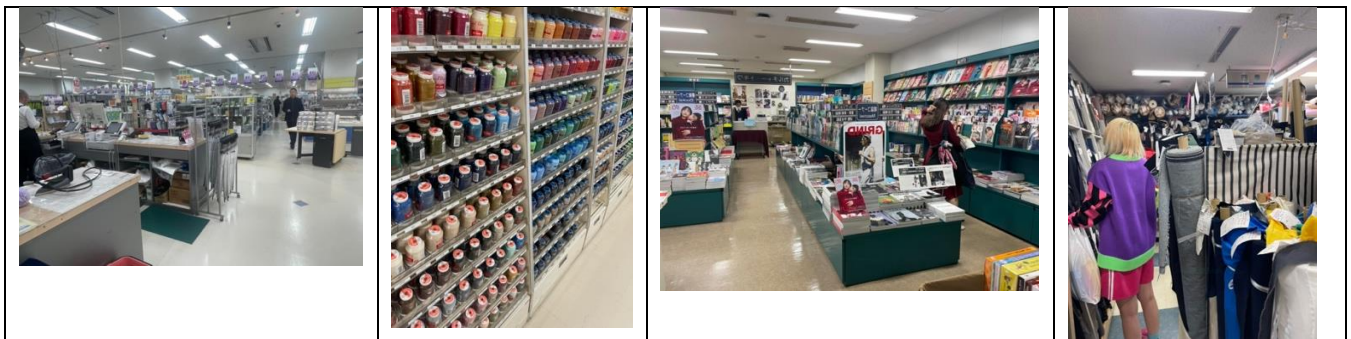
I had the privilege of visiting the Print & Dyeing lab, where they acquire hands-on experience in traditional techniques such as screen printing, tie-dyeing, and Indigo Dyeing. During our visit to the facilities, I explored the screen printing area and observed the dyeing section.



Printing Lab

#### 5. Bunka Fashion Resource Center

The Bunka Fashion Resource Center serves as a comprehensive hub, gathering materials and providing information relevant to the field of fashion. This facility plays a crucial role in supporting education and research within Bunka Gakuen students community of Japanese and international researchers, specialists, and industry professionals.



University shop & Bunka Fashion Resource Center

#### 6. University shop

University shop offers an impressive selection of fabrics, art materials, and fashion-related books and magazines, providing a diverse range of resources for individuals passionate about the world of fashion.

## 7. Learning Japanese Indigo Dye and Shibori Design Techniques:

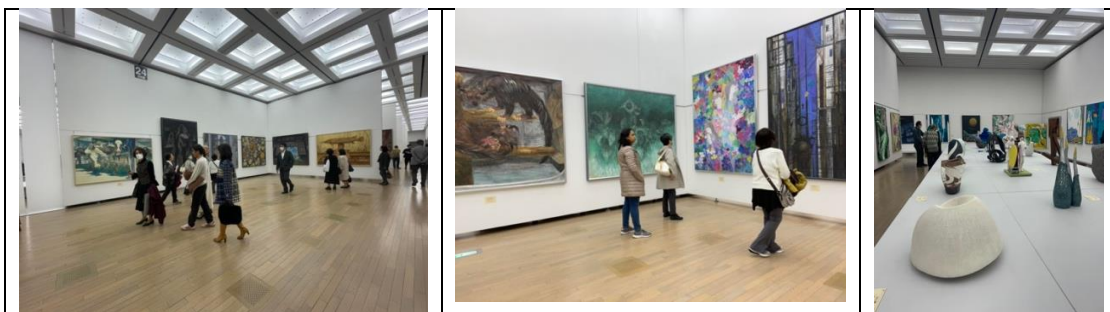
During my stay in the faculty exchange program, I had the invaluable opportunity to immerse myself in the rich tradition of Japanese Indigo dyeing and Shibori design techniques at Studio KosoEn, a renowned establishment with roots dating back to its establishment in January 1919. Joining the indigo workshop marked the beginning of my journey into this ancient craft. The studio provided an authentic and immersive learning environment, allowing me to understand the intricate processes involved in Japanese Indigo dyeing. From cultivating the indigo plants to extracting the dye and mastering the dyeing techniques, every step was a fascinating revelation. Beyond the technical aspects, my time at Studio KosoEn exposed me to the cultural and historical context of Japanese Indigo dyeing. The craftsmen shared stories that transcended generations, offering insights into the significance of this traditional craft in Japanese society. Participating in the indigo workshop at Studio KosoEn was a unique and unforgettable chapter in my academic journey.



Studio KosoEn, Ome, Tokyo.

## 8. Exploration of Contemporary Art at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo:

During my stay at Bunka Professor Takagi and Assistant Professor Claudia Arana suggested that I visit the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo explore Contemporary Art Exhibitions: MOT regularly hosts exhibitions featuring works by contemporary artists, both local and international. These exhibitions often showcase a wide range of artistic styles, mediums, and themes, allowing visitors to experience the diversity of contemporary art. By exploring the museum's exhibitions, I gained insights into the latest developments in the art world. I observed how artists are responding to contemporary issues. This provides an opportunity to broaden my understanding of different art mediums. The design and architecture of the museum itself was an artistic experience.



Contemporary Art at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo.

## 9. Exhibition on Yves Saint Laurent at The National Art Center:

As I approached The National Art Center, the modern architectural marvel immediately caught my eye. The sleek, angular design seemed to foreshadow the contemporary elegance that awaited within. Anticipation filled me as I entered the gallery, about to embark on a visual journey through the history of Yves Saint Laurent's influential career.

The exhibition was meticulously curated, showcasing Yves Saint Laurent's evolution as a designer. The chronological arrangement of the displays allowed me to witness the transformative stages of his career, from his early days at the helm of the House of Dior to the establishment of his own eponymous brand. The exhibition's layout successfully captured the essence of each era, providing a seamless narrative of Saint Laurent's innovative contributions to the world of fashion.

The heart of the exhibition lay in the breathtaking display of Saint Laurent's iconic pieces. From the revolutionary "Le Smoking" tuxedo to the vibrant Mondrian-inspired dresses, each exhibit was a testament to the designer's ability to blend artistry with wearability. The delicate beadwork, intricate embroidery, and meticulous craftsmanship were a testament to the dedication and passion that fueled Saint Laurent's creative process.



Exhibition on Yves Saint Laurent at The National Art Center.

My visit to "Across the Style" at The National Art Center was a transformative experience, offering a profound appreciation for the genius of Yves Saint Laurent. The exhibition seamlessly blended fashion, art, and culture, providing a comprehensive view of the designer's indelible mark on the world of haute couture. As I left the gallery, I carried with me a newfound admiration for the artistry and innovation that define Yves Saint Laurent's enduring legacy.

## 10. Conclusion:

My visit to the IFFTI Cultural Exchange Programme 2023 at Bunka Gakuen University was a transformative experience that encompassed cultural immersion, academic pursuits, and collaborative learning. During my stay, a crucial aspect emerged—the realization of the potential for future collaboration between our institution and Bunka Gakuen University. Upon expressing my interest to Prof. Dr. Yoko Takagi, she displayed keen enthusiasm in exploring collaborative opportunities, particularly in the realms of curriculum development, research and short students visit in industry in Bangladesh. In a meeting held on the 25th of November, Prof. Takagi extended an invitation to me to submit proposals for collaboration in these specific areas.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to Prof. Dr. Yoko Takagi, Assistant Prof. Claudia Arana, and Ms. Saskia, assistant professor, for their warm hospitality and invaluable contributions to the success of the program. The experiences gained and knowledge acquired during this exchange will be instrumental in enhancing the quality of fashion education in Bangladesh and fostering continued collaboration between our institutions. Moreover, my visit reaffirmed my steadfast belief that Japan stands as a global leader in fashion education. The rich tapestry of experiences woven during this cultural exchange further highlighted Japan's unparalleled contributions to the evolving landscape of the fashion industry. It is my sincere hope that this collaboration will serve as a bridge between our two nations, creating a vibrant cross-cultural dialogue that enriches the educational journey for students and professionals alike.

In essence, the IFFTI Cultural Exchange Programme not only deepened my understanding of global fashion education but also set the stage for a transformative collaboration that holds the potential to redefine the future of our academic pursuits. As we embark on this journey together, I am filled with optimism and anticipation for the remarkable developments that will undoubtedly emerge from our shared dedication to advancing the field of fashion education.