

SPOTLIGHT

Ningbo Showcases Its Cultural Heritage Around the World

By Zhao Yu

In the summer of 2026, Ningbo expanded its international cultural outreach through a series of events across Asia and Europe. From Dragon Boat Festival celebrations in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to the Global Zhejiang Business Community New Quality Productive Forces Development Conference in Seoul, South Korea, and the Mostra Internazionale dell'Artigianato in Florence, Italy, the city's Hi Craft Cultural Hubs and intangible cultural heritage showcases introduced international audiences to Ningbo's traditional crafts and cultural identity.

Sri Lanka: Cultural Hub Brings Ningbo Traditions to Dragon Boat Festival

Ningbo's Hi Craft Cultural Hub, a compact cultural exhibition, made its debut in Sri Lanka on June 13 during the 2026 China-Sri Lanka Friendship Cup Dragon Boat Regatta at Port City Colombo, showcasing the city's traditions through interactive exhibits and hands-on cultural activities.

The regatta, jointly organized by Chinese and Sri Lankan partners, attracted more than 1,000 local residents, overseas Chinese expats, and international visitors. As part of the event, the Hi Craft Cultural Hub offered visitors a glimpse into Ningbo's cultural heritage and Dragon Boat Festival traditions.

The exhibition featured a range of heritage-inspired merchandise, including paper-cutting art, drum-shaped lanterns, shadow-puppet crafts and Ningbo-themed fridge magnets. Visitors stopped to photograph the displays while exhibition staff explained the cultural significance of each item and the city's intangible cul-



Ningbo's Hi Craft Cultural Hub makes its debut in Sri Lanka. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

tural heritage.

Interactive workshops proved especially popular. Visitors tried their hand at bamboo weaving to make wind chimes and stuffing embroidered sachets with fragrant herbs such as mugwort and cloves. For many Sri Lankans, it was their first experience with Chinese folk traditions.

Chinese Ambassador to Sri Lanka Qi Zhenhong also visited the exhibition, saying the Hi Craft Cultural Hub offers an accessible and engaging way to share Chinese culture overseas. He said the compact exhibition format makes it easier for visitors to engage directly with Chinese culture and encourages more personal exchanges between people from the two countries.

Seoul: Business Conference Showcases Ningbo's Culture and Innovation

In May, the Global Zhejiang Business Community New Quality Productivity Development Conference was held in Seoul, South Korea.

Zeng Changbiao, vice president of the Global Zhejiang Merchants Association, said that although the Hi Craft Cultural Hub is compact, it brings together elements of Ningbo's history, cultural heritage and intangible cultural traditions in an accessible way for international audiences. Supported by the global Zhejiang business network, the initiative can reach communities around the world.

Also featured at the event was the "Ningbo in Light" installation, which presented a visual overview of the city's cultural heritage, landmark scenery and emerging industries, including robotics. The display combined elements of Ningbo's commercial heritage with contemporary industrial development, offering visitors a snapshot of the city's past, present and future.

Zeng also said Zhejiang-based businesses could make use of the conference to engage with leading South Korean companies in artificial intelligence, smart technologies and digital services. By com-

bing digital tools with cultural branding, companies could strengthen the global reach of Ningbo's products and cultural content.

Florence: Traditional Crafts Take Center Stage

In April, works by Zhenhai District's Red Peony Painting and Calligraphy Center and products from the "Hi Craft" heritage crafts label were showcased at the 2026 Mostra Internazionale dell'Artigianato in Florence, Italy.

As Italy's first internationally recognized handicrafts fair, the exhibition attracted professional buyers and visitors from around the world. At the Ningbo booth, Jiang Hongsheng, director of the Red Peony Painting and Calligraphy International Exchange Center, demonstrated traditional Chinese painting by creating peonies, orchids and bamboo with brush and ink. The live demonstrations drew steady crowds, with many stopping to watch and trying their hand at Chinese brush painting.

"It is a great honor to be invited to the exhibition," Jiang said. "There is strong interest in traditional Chinese painting and calligraphy among international visitors. Since the fair opened, our booth has welcomed more than 1,000 visitors each day."

Alongside the live demonstrations, Jiang also presented more than a dozen products under Zhenhai's "Hi Craft" heritage crafts label, including Xupu rural art, bamboo-woven wind chime kits, traditional round fans and handcrafted clasp purses. Many visitors and exhibitors demonstrated strong curiosity about the origins and production techniques behind the products.

The exhibition forms part of Ningbo's initiative to encourage local companies to promote the city's culture at overseas trade shows, combining business outreach with cultural exchange. Last year, the initiative was recognized by the China International Communications Group as one of the country's Top 10 Outstanding International Communication Cases. 开放

Ningbo Takes Trade Show to Poland During China-CEEC Expo Off-Year

By Lu Xinyan

On June 25, business negotiations continued across the exhibition floor on the final day of the 16th China-Poland Trade Fair and China (Ningbo) International Consumer Goods Fair (Poland) at PTAK Warsaw Expo. Visitors entering the venue were greeted by the slogan "Ningbo's Intelligent Manufacturing Connects Global Trade", underlining Ningbo's identity as a manufacturing powerhouse of China.

Held every two years, the China-Central and Eastern European Countries Expo is not scheduled this year. Instead, Ningbo, one of the expo's host cities, brought its own trade fair directly to Poland, one of its most important markets in Central and Eastern Europe.

Poland is the region's largest economy and Ningbo's biggest trading partner among CEE countries. Bilateral trade reached 24.7 billion yuan (\$3.4 billion) last year. Shipments of home appliances, household goods and hardware products regularly depart from Ningbo Zhoushan Port for the Polish port of Gdańsk.

More than 200 companies from 20 Chinese cities participated in this year's exhibition. Ningbo accounted for 32 exhibitors, occupying more than 300 square meters of exhibition space, the largest presence among participating Chinese cities.

At the booth of Cixi Jianhui Electrical Appliance Technology Co., Ltd., export general manager Luo Tao had just wrapped up discussions with a Polish buyer. The company specializes in air circulator fans, a product category that is still relatively new in the European market.

To prepare for its first push into Poland, the company spent months researching local distribution channels, redesigning product appearances, reaching out to buyers online and refining product prototypes.

The preparation paid off. On the exhibition's opening day alone, the booth welcomed more than 40 prospective customers, about half of whom were considered serious buyers. Before the event concluded, Luo had already scheduled future meetings with five potential clients.

"Air circulator fans are still in the growth stage in the Central and Eastern European market, and they're especially popular with younger consumers," Luo said. "We see strong potential here."

According to the organizers, the exhibition attracted more than 20,000 preregistered professional buyers, up 16% from last year. In addition to Poland, buyers came from neighboring countries including Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

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Two Ningbo Companies Make Hurun Global Unicorn Index 2026

By Jin Lu

Two Ningbo-based companies have been included in the 2026 Hurun Global Unicorn Index, reflecting the city's continued growth in high-tech industries and innovation.

Released by the Hurun Research Institute on June 25, the annual ranking tracks privately held companies founded after 2000 with valuations of more than \$1 billion. This year's list includes a record 1,603 unicorns worldwide. The US leads

with 806 companies, followed by China with 381.

The two Ningbo companies on this year's list are Rong Semiconductor Corporation, ranked 541st with a valuation of 16 billion yuan (\$2.35 billion), and Keyuan Petrochemicals, ranked 1,209th with a valuation of 7.5 billion yuan. Rong Semiconductor has appeared on the index for several consecutive years, while Keyuan Petrochemicals has now been included for the second straight year.

According to the report, artificial intelligence has become the world's

largest unicorn sector by value, accounting for more than one-third of the combined valuation of all companies on the list. In China, unicorns are concentrated in sectors including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, life sciences and green energy.

Ningbo's pipeline of high-growth technology companies has continued to expand in recent years. Following the public listings of local companies in sectors such as AI chips, semiconductors, medical devices and electric vehicles, more innovative firms are expected to emerge as future unicorns.



The site of Keyuan Petrochemicals. [Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

