



KALA RAKSHA
Preservation of Traditional Arts



**KR MUSEUM INSPIRED COLLECTIONS
PREMIER AT CHATRAPATI SIVAJI MUSEUM
GALLERY MUMBAI**

**KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM
PROJECT REPORT 16 SEPTEMBER- 10 DECEMBER
2010**



Sajnoben: *"The embroidery was ours, so were the ornaments. I thought how to make it new?"*

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**Kala Raksha, Parkar Vas, Sumrasar Sheikh, ta. Bhuj, Kutch 370 001, Gujarat,
INDIA**

tel. +91-2808-277237/277238 fax +91-2832-255500/250410

www.kala-raksha.org



THE FRUITS OF KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM DESIGN WORKSHOPS

Since its inception, Kala Raksha has dovetailed the collection and preservation of traditional pieces our income generation work. The Trust established an international quality Resource Center and Museum of textiles and related materials in 1997. Two features of this Museum make it unique. First, the Museum is based in the village itself. Artisans have access to and responsibility for it. Artisans utilize the collections to develop new collections with cultural integrity. Second, artisans were involved in all phases of the development of the Museum. They assisted in collection, were engaged in documentation, and consulted in the permanent exhibition. The Kala Raksha Museum successfully proves the mutual benefits of involving communities in presenting and utilizing their own cultures.

The Museum is intended as a resource base for artisans, designers and researchers. One aim is to perpetuate and revitalize traditions in contemporary ways through the museum's inspiration. During this period, sixteen senior design school students, ten professional curators from Scotland, and thirty women artisans actively utilized our collections to develop contemporary craft-based products. In addition, numerous student and tourist groups visited the museum. Although we do not yet have a way of tracking visitors to our online museum, we have received many compliments on the site.



KRV graduates regularly study the Kala Raksha Museum collections. Current KRV student Sajnoben Pachan was inspired by our ornament collection to create embroidered ornaments as her final collection. She received the award for Most Marketable Collection and has already garnered numerous orders.



In this period, 10 women Design Interns, sponsored with funds raised, developed new Heritage Collections pieces submitted in application for participation in the 2011 Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. The designs were developed using feedback from participation in the event this year, coupled with research in our collections.

In July 2010, Rutika Sheth, senior design student at **Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology** began her diploma project with Kala Raksha to create a collection by combining Museum based garments with the developments of earlier Srishti students and KRV graduates. In November, she completed the project and presented it for her final jury. The prototypes were then produced at Kala Raksha. The collection will be launched, appropriately, at an exhibition at the premier Museum of Mumbai, the Chatrapati Shivaji Sangrahalaya (formerly the Prince of Wales Museum) December 12-28, 2010.



Along with the contemporary collection, Kala Raksha is launching a new concept, Artisan Design, which will celebrate the individual's heart, mind and hand. **Artisan Design** creates value for the integrated spirit of tradition. This is the symbol of integration of concept and execution in craft—as is exemplified in the original objects in our Museum collection-- and of raising status of the contemporary artisan. It is a new fair trade idea—fair trade for the creative spirit.



VISITORS AND RESEARCHERS

Autum and winter are the peak seasons for visitors to Kala Raksha. In November we welcomed a group of students from the National Institute of Fashion Technology. Curator Judy Frater introduced the group to craft traditions as well as our Museum. Several students returned often in their two week stay to study our collection of Rabari ornaments, and use our library. Later in the month, a group of curators from Scotland visited the museum under a new Cultural Connections Programme recently launched by the British Council to develop and foster links and cultural exchange with India.

As part of the Creative Scotland's (formerly Scottish Arts Council) commitment through its Crafts and International departments to strengthening the network, knowledge and skills of curators in Scotland, and to stimulating international exchange and collaboration, CS enabled 10 curators from Scotland to visit India for approximately 10 days. The aim was to research craft practices in India within their cultural contexts, forge links with organizations and practitioners in India for future collaboration, and develop greater understanding of their work in an international context.

The visit also intended to contribute to the development of Scottish Curators and institutions, and to encourage networks in Scotland with their understanding of diversity of cultures, adding value to existing programmes in Scotland seeking to broaden audiences.

ADDITIONS TO COLLECTIONS

A group brought by Stephen Huyler, independent curator, writer and photographer, visited in November. Stephen donated two books for the Museum library, and one member generously donated funds for a new library cabinet. In December, scanned images from Judy Frater's collection of archival black and white images from rural India were added to the image bank of the Museum.



RENOVATION OF EXHIBITION GALLERY

By June 2010 the structural alterations for our Museum Exhibition Gallery facelift were completed. In October the exhibition script was finalized, and visual images were professionally scanned. To create a sense of interaction and orient the viewer to embroidery traditions of Kutch, the exhibition script is structured as a series of questions:

1. What did the embroideries express?
2. Why Did women Embroider?
3. The Wedding Ceremony
4. How did they Use Embroidered Pieces?
5. What are Embroidery Styles?
6. How Else Did Women Decorate Themselves?

Mayank Loonker, a graduate and currently Faculty of the National Institute of Design, has mobilized a team to implement the exhibition design. However, with the constant traffic of visitors, it was decided to postpone construction and to open the exhibition to the public after March.

THANKS TO GLOBAL GIVING!

Kala Raksha Trust is self sustaining in its income generation work- a feat not even attempted by many non-profits. However, the earnings from our income generation can not cover the costs of expansion of The Kala Raksha Museum, which is the core of our sustainable, authentic work. Generous donations from our supporters enable us to add to our collections, and host projects that utilize our rich resource.

Global Giving has enabled us to raise funds for collections. We thank Global Giving donors for your support, and welcome financial contributions as well as ideas for ways to reach out and share our holdings with interested people.



THE NEXT PHASE

Kala Raksha's online Museum includes a virtual gallery for changing exhibitions. Currently, *Recent Acquisitions* are displayed. Plans for our second exhibition and underway. *Innovation: Re- Purpose, Re-Invent* is scheduled to go live in February, coinciding with an exhibition at The Textile Museum in Washington D.C.: *Second Lives: The Age Old Art of Recycling Textiles*. For this exhibition, and for the ongoing collection development, a small collection of objects to be acquired has been identified. The total value of these objects is RS 16,800 or US\$ 363.