



KALA RAKSHA
Preservation of Traditional Arts

KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM ACCESSIONS COLLECTIONS PURCHASED WITH SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL GIVING



"The Kala Raksha Museum has shown me my tradition!" Soyabbhai, class of 2011

KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM PROJECT REPORT 21 DECEMBER 2011- 14 APRIL 2012

Since its inception, Kala Raksha has dovetailed the collection and preservation of traditional pieces with income generation. The Trust established an international quality 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. 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. Traditions embody the identity and heritage of a people. Increased appropriation of design intellectual property across cultures has resulted in a generic commercial *ethnic* look, as well as loss of knowledge of textile traditions. Kala Raksha's challenge increasingly is to innovate within traditions, and to tell the story that makes cultural integrity more valuable.

As the museum expands its collection into newer areas, and reaches out to new audiences, it extends its ability to do so.

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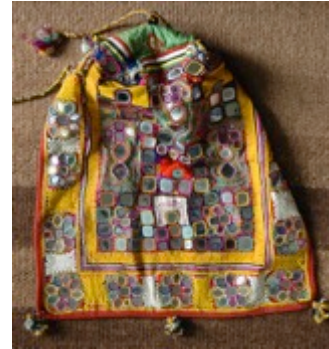




Rajput chaklo



Ahir rumal



Rajput toplo



Brahmin toran



Rajput toran



Kanbi kanchali



Ahir kanchali

ACCESSION OF NEW COLLECTIONS

This report coincides with closure of the Indian financial year. Thus we find an opportunity to reflect and examine the value in what we do. Receiving funds earmarked for the Museum, since the posting of our project on Global Giving, has enabled us to focus on the Museum. Consequently, the Museum has grown in the last year and a half. Growth brings more opportunity and we look forward to using our rich new resources.

Two small collections of objects were identified after the last major accession, in March 2011: a collection of Eastern Kutch embroidery, and a collection of women's blouses. These were valued at RS 10,650 (\$242) and RS 18,700 (\$425) respectively. With the Global Giving December disbursement, which was received in February, we were able to purchase fourteen Eastern Kutch embroideries valued at RS 20,500 (\$ 418). In addition, with funds received from Kandla Port Trust for use of museum images, we were also able to purchase thirteen blouses and two additional objects, valued at RS 20,250 (\$ 413).



MSC-130 Rajput toran



SR-115 Sodha Rajput puthiyo

KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM FEATURED ON THE KANDLA PORT 2012 CALENDAR

Kala Raksha's collections already enjoy exposure with our on-line facility. This year, Kala Raksha was contacted by the Kandla Port, a Government of India undertaking in Kutch, to showcase twelve selected objects on their annual calendar. Anticipating the book on Kutch embroideries on which we are working, we chose objects that illustrate the breadth of Kutch embroidery traditions. The large format calendar was released in January, and fees for the images extended our ability to accession new objects.



Class of 2012 at Kala Raksha Museum



with Master weaver Shyamji Vishramji

VISITORS AND RESEARCHERS

One of the primary users of the Kala Raksha collections is the artisan student population of Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya- as we originally envisioned! This year's seven male weavers, block printers and bandhani artists, and eleven women embroiderers visited the museum during their colour course in January-February. As always, the artisans were eager to see work from their own traditions in the context of a museum, where they were encouraged to examine and question. Among the men we have observed in just six years a steady distancing of younger artisans from their traditions, largely resulting from focus on commercial markets. Kala Raksha aims to re-introduce artisans with a new consciousness to the range and nuances of colour, pattern, and texture in traditional work. During the men's session, Master Artisan advisors joined the program, sparking a lively discussion in which many questions could be immediately answered, and others remain as philosophical navigators.

Winter is our high visitation season. During this period a number of individuals and groups visited the museum, including a group of curators and trustees from the Metropolitan Museum, the Rubin Museum, the Museum of American History, New York, led by Amy Poster and Graeme Hardy; a group of UK Professionals researching

the "Cotton Story" under the guidance of Barney Hare Duke; Nevada Wier, National Geographic photographer. Visitors came from Switzerland, UK, USA, Italy, France and all over India.

Students and faculty from Pearl Academy of Fashion, Delhi, and interns from the Indian Institute of Craft and Design, Mumal Rathod and Shivranjani Shekhawat, and volunteers from UK Bella Leonard, Sophie Gleeson and Lora Avedian utilized the museum for research.

BOOK RESEARCH

Research for Kala Raksha's book on Kutch embroideries, which will highlight the Kala Raksha Museum collections, will resume in May, when two contributors will be in Kutch. We are firming deadlines for January 2013.



Damyantiben and Hariyaben at workshop



Hariyaben's quilt

KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA ARTISAN DESIGN INTERNS

The fourth group of Kala Raksha Artisan Designer interns began their term in March. The interns comprise Damyantiben Shankar (2008) suf embroiderer, Sajnunben Pachan (2010) Devalben Pachan (2008), and Jivaben Rana (2011), all Dhebaria Rabari embroiderers, and Hariyaben Uttam (2009) patchwork and applique artist. The women will do art to wear jackets for the USA market. Damyantiben and Hariyaben created new work for the March Mumbai exhibition, based on museum holdings.

The Mumbai exhibition, **Comforters**, highlighted tradition as one realm from which we derive comfort. Kuvarben's cushion cover based on a museum piece, was used for the invitation and, as predicted, the heritage collections did very well. In spite of having recently shown in Mumbai, Kala Raksha enjoyed brisk sales. Good design based in timeless traditions is our simple, solid formula.



KR collection R-60



Kuvarben's cushion

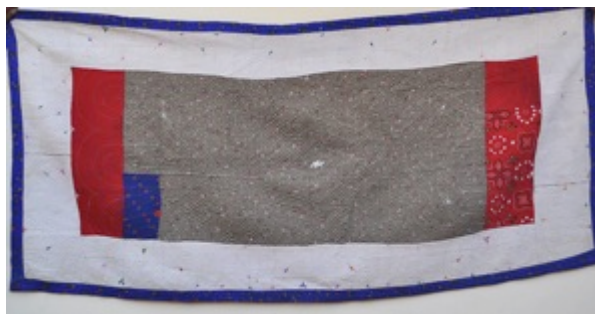


invitation

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 cannot 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 reactivate our museum work. In the past year and a half, we have been able to focus on the Museum. It has paid off, and we are grateful. 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: GEE'S BEND IN INDIA?

Along with our Mumbai show, Kala Raksha held a special event: **Art to Heart**, the first professionally curated sale of contemporary artisans' home quilts. To raise capital for a new Medical relief fund, Kala Raksha drew on traditional and scholarly knowledge of Kutch textile traditions, and requested our artisans to return to their hearts and homes. **Art to Heart** was the ultimate self-help project, in which artisans gave their most intimate household possessions: the quintessential comforters, made from memories of family and home. Fortunately, enough quilts sold to raise the capital required. Perhaps even more fortunate, Kala Raksha still has the majority of the collection. Reflecting on the Gee's Bend story, we began to realize the value of the collection. The quilts are an anomaly in the known textile traditions of Kutch. Made purely for the family, they reflect the artisan's spontaneous sensibility: simple, bold and intuitive in design, but with the finest workmanship invested in the quilting-- the hand, which artisans highly value.

These humble quilts were easily available. But the way that our artisans hesitated to sell them now speaks volumes. Today there is no time, and little patience for such work. Artisans doubt whether they can do these quilts again. So, we will keep this wonderful collection as an inspiration. It still needs to be purchased. RS 45,000 (\$ 918) would fulfill this wish list item!