



**KALA RAKSHA**  
Preservation of Traditional Arts



**KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM  
ACCESSIONS THREE COLLECTIONS  
WITH GLOBAL GIVING DONATIONS**



**KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM  
PROJECT REPORT 21 OCTOBER 2012- 24 JANUARY 2013**

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 Kala Raksha artisans develop contemporary designs based on the museum collections, they tell their own story, enhancing the value of their traditions.

**Shafikbhai, bandhani artist and KRV student, "In the Museum I saw bandhani I had not seen before!"**

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## ACCESSION OF NEW COLLECTIONS

Since the last report, another excellent Global Giving disbursement was received. The generous donation enabled us to accession the remaining nine home quilts earmarked in March, and fifteen objects from eastern Kutch- 8 blouses and 7 embroidered objects. The collection of these increasingly rare objects is crucial to enabling artisans to study and perpetuate their own traditions with the enthusiasm that keeps them living.



## SERVING THE ARTISAN COMMUNITY

In January 2013, the eighth year of Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya began. As the years have passed, we have seen the student composition change. Artisans under the age of 35 have a markedly weaker knowledge of their traditions. This year, we noted a new, hopeful trend: all but one of the men students are sons of artisans who left their crafts to work in industry. This generation returned, albeit with some hesitation. These young men visited the Kala Raksha Museum to see examples of traditional work they had never seen, and met with masters of their crafts. They also had the opportunity to interact with students from the Institute for Apparel Management in Delhi during the class. By the end of the colour class we were happy to hear enthusiasm for traditions growing.

Sajanbhai, tanglio weaver, *"In the interview I wasn't sure. But now I have the desire to learn, to use our weaving. When I saw the Delhi students come so far to learn, I thought we should also learn and preserve our traditions."*

Poonambhai, weaver, *"I have made dbablas for years, but I never knew there were THREE colours- black, white and gray. And we get different shades by proportion of warp and weft."*

Sureshbhai, tanglio weaver, *"I will take a year but I will make a super piece."*



## INSTITUTION BUILDING

In our quest to build our institution, Kala Raksha hosted twelve students from the Institute for Apparel Management in Delhi in a craft documentation/ skill building project. The students approached Kutch textile traditions with little experience. We

encouraged them to use the museum collections and library so that they would begin with respect for the aesthetic and conceptual as well as technical aspects of traditions. This background made a clear change in their approach.

Graduates of KRV found an excellent opportunity to meet international design professionals in the "Make it New Again" international conference in Ahmedabad, co-sponsored by Sangam, Australia, and National Institute of Design. LOKesh Ghai presented a paper on Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya.



## **VISITORS AND RESEARCHERS**

In December, Kala Raksha hosted avant garde Australian designer Rebecca Paterson for an extended workshop in Rabari embroidery. Rebecca also utilized the Kala Raksha Museum to familiarize herself with Rabari work, and then immersed herself in Rabari culture. The project, documented by renowned photographer Rozie Sharp, culminated in a set of design prototypes that we are confident evoke Rabari tradition, but which will sell in the high fashion market of Australia.

During this period two groups representing the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, a group of students from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, faculty from Kansas State University, and many tourists visited Kala Raksha Center and Museum.



## **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

### **A BIG BOOST FOR INTERN INSPIRATION**

We are happy to announce that the museum inspired products designed by Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya graduate artisan designers garnered Kala Raksha a place in the 2013 Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. Look for our team in Santa Fe this July.

Our Artisan Design line took an exciting turn in January, when we paired men and women graduates to work in collaboration on our next fashion show collection. The women interns decided the theme "Sangam," joining elements to make something new.

The men met with them and studied their initial work, and will now reply with accessories that coordinate and complete the ensembles. We will encourage them to utilize museum collections to insure that traditions remain recognizable.

This January, Kala Raksha received a generous grant to institute a new design internship program in memory of Ms. Shakunt Nanda. This will enable ten women to utilize the museum to develop new products over the next year.



## **IMPROVING OUR WEB PRESENCE**

Throughout the months of December and January, our traveling webmaster Catriona Russell stayed in Kutch to revamp our three websites. They are now better functioning as well as accurate and elegant. You can now reach the museum website with a click from our Kala Raksha site. We will upload images of our new accessions once they are photographed.

## **BOOK RESEARCH**

Research for Kala Raksha's book on Kutch embroideries, which will highlight the Kala Raksha Museum collections, resumed in August. One more chapter is drafted. With the rapid modernization of Kutch villages, we realize that this is probably the last chance to glean information from the heritage held in our Museum collections. Aging artisans now struggle to place the work we show them. Our creative team has captured critical information that will make an invaluable contribution to the field.

## **THANKS TO GLOBAL GIVING!**

Global Giving has been a steady and significant source of support for the Kala Raksha Museum. Your contributions insure that our collections continue to grow and support our sustainable, authentic work and we can host projects that utilize our resource. 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 Museum.

Global Giving has enabled us to reactivate our museum work. 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: CONTINUED EXPANSION1**

Kala Raksha has its sights on new collections and also hopes to be able to expand the museum facilities to accommodate them this year. As research progresses, we will be able to make the best selection of new accessions.