



KALA RAKSHA
Preservation of Traditional Arts

KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM ACCESSIONS COLLECTIONS PURCHASED WITH SUPPORT FROM GLOBAL GIVING



KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM PROJECT REPORT 14 APRIL - 8 JULY 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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ACCESSION OF NEW COLLECTIONS

This report follows a Global Giving Matching Day. We are delighted to see that these events really work! The Museum Project received \$250 (and hopefully some matching funds too), which enables us to accession the home quilts we earmarked in the last report. As rural cultures change more rapidly than could be imagined, such art forms which have never been recognized could be lost forever. Kala Raksha wishes to remain at the forefront of documenting and preserving Kutch textile traditions. Thus we find an opportunity to add these exciting quilts to our collections, and to contemplate where this resource will take our contemporary production.

The collection identified after the last accession, in March 2012: home quilts of the Rabaris and suf embroiderers with whom we work, made us research on the Gee's Bend story of similar quilts from southern USA. 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.

Today there is no time, and little patience for such work. So, we decided to keep this wonderful collection as an inspiration. The total value of the collection is RS 45,000 (\$ 918). When the Global Giving disbursement is received, the \$250 will enable us to accession six quilts.



KALA RAKSHA MUSEUM FEATURED IN THE WOMEN'S COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Kala Raksha's collections enjoy exposure with our on-line facility. Drawing on the experience of collaboration between National Institute of Design and Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya students last year, we decided that it is important for the urban design students to know as much as possible of the traditions with which they will collaborate.

At the outset of this year's fifth course, Visiting Faculty member LOkesh Ghai asked the collaborating M.S. University students to browse the Kala Raksha collections on line, and short list objects they would like to examine. The four students then took a field trip to the Kala Raksha Museum to study the collections. They returned to the KRV campus with enthusiasm: studying objects brings appreciation.



INTERN INSPIRATION

This year's Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya graduate design interns Damyantiben Shankar (2008) suf embroiderer, Sajnuben Pachan (2010) Devalben Pachan (2008), and Jivaben Rana (2011), all Dhebaria Rabari embroiderers, and Hariyaben Uttam (2009) patchwork and applique artist. also drew on our museum objects to create new collections. Preparing for a major benefit event to be held in Mumbai in December, the design interns went back to our collections for inspiration for tradition based contemporary wear. As always, they were clear that inspiration is not copying. They made their own interpretations with wild twists.

VISITORS AND RESEARCHERS

Although our high visitation season has passed, the Kala Raksha Museum continues to receive visitors-- dare we say more serious ones? During this period we had the honour to introduce our collections to Faculty Lili Hermann and two students of the Rhode Island School of Design, USA. Renowned Fashion Designer Anju Modi also visited, as did Fellows from the international artisan support organization NEST. Visitors have brought us benefits. Thomas Seligman, who researched ornaments from our collections, advised the Christensen Fund to make their annual donation to Kala Raksha. A National Geographic photographer contributed toward Kala Raksha's travel to the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market in July 2012.

BOOK RESEARCH

Research for Kala Raksha's book on Kutch embroideries, which will highlight the Kala Raksha Museum collections, will resume in August, when two contributors will be in Kutch. We have established a deadline for the manuscript for January 2013.

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:

COMPLETION OF THE HOME QUILT COLLECTION

Kala Raksha was pleased to begin accessioning the home quilts earmarked in March. Six of eighteen quilts have been accessioned. \$ 668 would enable us to procure the remaining objects.