

Somaiya Kala Vidya Class of 2019 Begins Final Collections



"I never thought I could get such stories. I learned I can get an idea from anything."

~ Bharat V. Jepar, SKV Class of 2019

PROJECT REPORT 17 March- 11 June 2019

Somaiya Kala Vidya is an institution for traditional artisans of Kutch, India. Combining over fifty years' experience of Somaiya Vidyavihar with ten years of design education for artisans, it offers sustained, coherent programs in design and business to provide effective, relevant and practical education. SKV honors and incorporates existing traditions. Its advisors are Master Artisans. Its faculty are professional educators. SKV offers workshops to the world and courses in craft traditions taught by artisan designers. Artisan-to-Artisan Outreach programs and Co-Design Collaborations demonstrate the importance of education for artisans, and generate awareness and motivation to build a movement of Design Craft.



EDUCATION FOR ARTISANS

DESIGN FOR ARTISANS COURSE 2019

Education for artisans is SKV's reason for being. The class of 2019 began their design education journey on 3 January 2019. In this quarter, they had a workshop on Fibers and Structures, completed course 4, and began course 5, of a six-course year.



Fibers and Structures

Each year during the Market Orientation Course, SKV invites a faculty person from the Maharaja Sayaji Rao University, Baroda to teach a day-long workshop in fibers and structures. SKV enjoys an MOU with MSU Baroda that facilitates collaboration in this as well as Course 5. The workshop helps students better identify the materials with which they can work, and grasp raw material factors that affect the value of their work. This year, Arpita Desai, MSU PhD Scholar, taught students the different types of fibers and how to identify them using a microscope and a simple burning test. She had them practically identify yarn structures, try different weave structures, and examine fabric swatches. One day was brief. It was difficult to get students to stop for dinner.

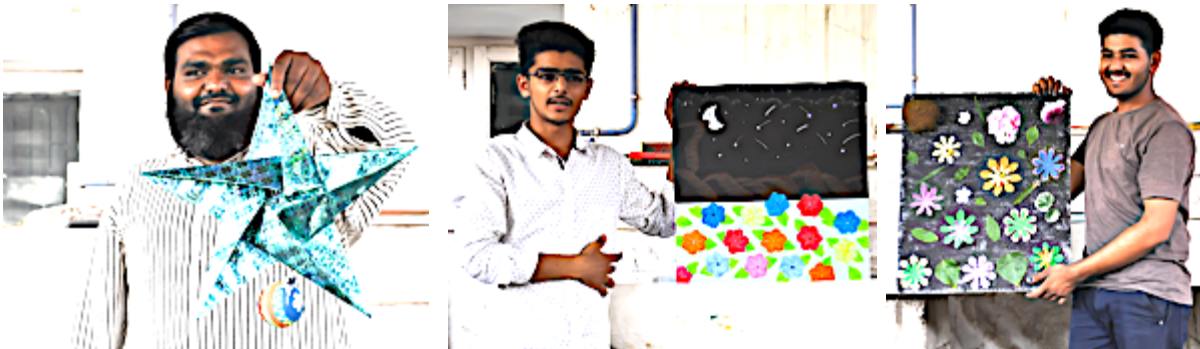


Course 4- Concept, Communication, Projects

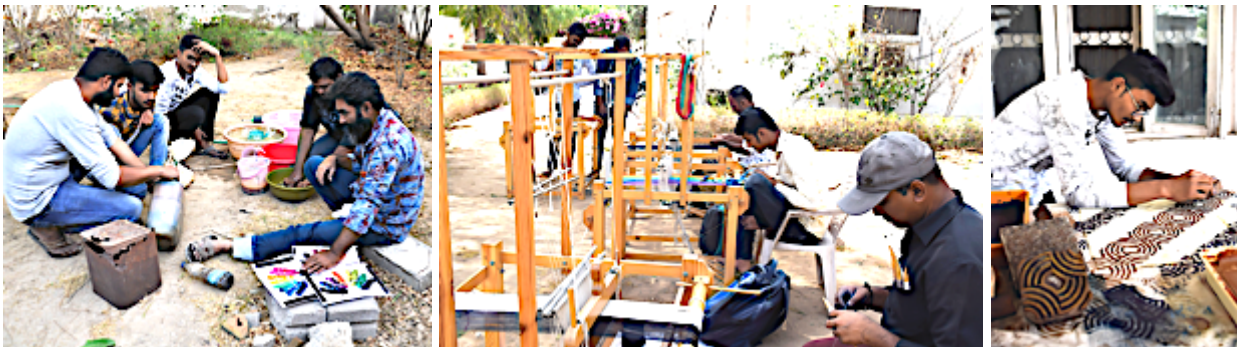
Course 4, taught by veteran Visiting Faculty LOKesh Ghai, was held from 8-21 April 2019. The students learned about trend forecasts, and each chose a current trend. To understand it better, they watched Andy Goldsworthy's *Rivers and Tides*, and then each made an installation evoking his theme.



Based on the directions they had begun, the class took a field trip. They visited the Maharao of Kutch's Chadva reserve, the dramatic ravine Khari Nadi, and the lush Ganesh Baug orchards for inspiration, sketched and photographed.



Delving earnestly into their concepts, the students then renamed their themes and created theme boards from which they will draw inspiration for their final collections.



They sampled to create the colours of their theme in weaving, printing and bandhani- in natural as well as synthetic dyes, and played with motif, pattern and layout to evoke their concepts.



"I learned to make a motif. This is most important. I will keep this going." ~Jabbar

"I made a block design for the first time; I got the geometry of it." ~Moinuddin

"I used colours we don't usually use and learned how to work on a story." ~Rizwan

"My head is full of ten years of job work. I have to work to add new ideas. Seeing in reality gave me ideas. Everything has beauty to be observed; everything inspires." ~Imran

"At home I weave what I'm told to do. I had to think through the whole course. That's how I will get new ideas, and I will be able to explain them!" ~Nanji



Course 5- Finishing, Collection Development

Course 5, currently in session, is also taught by LOkesh Ghai, due to an unexpected problem. The silver lining is that LOkeshbhai knows the students' work and can adeptly facilitate maximum growth. In this course, which began on 10 June, students collaborate with interns from MS University Baroda. In addition to developing products for their final collections, they learn co-design.



OUTREACH -BHUJODI TO BAGALKOT/ KUTCH TO KUMAON

Somaiya Kala Vidya Artisan-to-Artisan outreach programs share the benefits of artisan education. Artisan Designer graduates work with artisans in less exposed areas- as a kick-start to demonstrate that innovation in traditions, and design education are beneficial. During this period, SKV conducted a

concept development workshop for the Jeevadaara weaver team in Bagalkot with whom we have been working since 2014. Geeta Patil and Shwetha Shettar, both designers who have worked before with Jeevadaara, conducted the workshop. Arunbhai from SKV facilitated, and Niteshbhai and Sureshbhai, SKV weaver designers, mentored. This time we built the capacity of the team and shortened the sampling time in one go, as Niteshbhai and Sureshbhai taught the Jeevadaara team yarn dyeing. And this time, after five years the weavers shared financial concerns in the project. This is an important reminder of just how difficult genuine development is, and how long it takes to build the trust essential to it. We are looking forward to an excellent exhibition in Hyderabad in September, and renewed growth of Jeevadaara.



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CO-DESIGN

Co-Design

SKV is happy to be at the forefront in developing co-design, a concept gaining interest in mainstream design institutes. The SKV -Srishti Institute of Art, Design and Technology co-design project finished on 10 May. The project experiences underscored the importance of good communication in co-design. The key issue in working with artisans is to create an environment of genuine equality. Despite SKV's education of artisan designers, there remains an inherent power differential between rural artisan designers and urban designers. Additionally, artisans neither demand or complain except in comfort zone situations. Many excellent products were developed by the fifteen teams. But communication is where we will concentrate future efforts in co-design.

Interesting, in our association with University of Wisconsin Madison, we have found that long distance electronic communication can sometimes overcome the power gap. On 26 March 2019, SKV began its fifth session of co-design with the UWM with a Skype introduction call. The spring project involving 7 teams, completed their collections of four co-designed stoles each (carpets in the case of Prakashbhai). Of these, the artisan designers will each produce the two favorites.

On 11 June, Prof. Hemen Sanghvi brought a group of architecture students from Anant University Ahmedabad to start off a tour to sensitize them to craft traditions. Founder Director Judy Frater presented an introduction to Kutch textile traditions, and the students met with the SKV class of 2019.

Alumni Workshops

SKV has identified a growing issue for artisans: identifying and evaluating quality in raw materials and finding reliable material sources. Fibers are the basis of textile artisans' raw materials. Tapping the experience of Program Coordinator Arun Singh, SKV organized a one-day alumni workshop on 8 June. Arunbhai reviewed what students learn in their Fibers and Structures unit. He presented in greater depth a wide variety of fibers. Then he showed the community samples and demonstrated how to distinguish and identify them. Finally he shared how artisans can buy closer to the material source.

In SKV's effort to continuously offer opportunities to develop new work, Prof. Chettiar visited again in March to work with the team of seven SKV artisan designers on engineered garments. He taught them to translate flat silhouette drawings to patterns on fabric, and to map their layouts accordingly.



SKV WORKSHOPS, COURSES, --AND NOW OPEN STUDIO TOURS TO THE WORLD

Since its inception, SKV has been raising awareness and value for artisans' traditional knowledge and skills by conducting workshops and courses taught by artisan designer faculty. In this quarter we held two workshops: a one-day workshop in Ajrakh printing with natural dye on 2 May, and a five-day workshop in suf and Rabari embroidery from 15-19 May.

"Our day with Irfanbhai was definitely one of the highlights of our entire trip!" ~Elisabeth Rohr
"It gave me a wonderful opportunity to forget about time" ~Alia Jeraj

In November 2017 SKV launched Open Studio Tours in Bhujodi and Ajrakhpur. The 2018-19 season began on 27 October and ended on 3 March. During this quarter we met with artisan designers from both villages to review the year and plan for the 2019-20 season. The discussion centered on benefit. Artisan Designers felt that some of the community were only interested in sales connected to the tours. So we took a broader view of benefit. Namoribhai shared that through Open Studio Tours he and his family have gotten new ideas. "We have become real designers!" he said. Khalidbhai said he had understood what people want to know, and it made him think of making a colour chart with recipes. Vasimbhai shared that he hesitated at first, but the tours gave him experience and confidence. Irfanbhai said that he sees a longer term future in the tours. "We have to have a desire to learn, and keep learning," Khalidbhai agreed.

Workshops are scheduled on demand. Open Studio Tour dates for next season are posted on the SKV website and Facebook page; special tours can also be organized. Proceeds from both workshops and Open Studio tours support SKV programs, insuring financial as well as cultural sustainability. For more information contact kalavidya@somaiya.org.

SKV IN PRINT, OUTLOUD AND ONLINE

Browse the SKV [website](#).

Learn more about our work on our [facebook](#) page.

For a discussion on issues of art and artisan, follow Judy Frater's [blog](#)

Find SKV on [Instagram](#)!

And on 6 July 2018, SKV began a [YouTube channel](#).

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnbxdYle8v36eDHqmdEiFsg/featured?view_as=subscriber

We now have nine videos on our channel, all providing important insights on craft in Kutch today.

DESIGN CRAFT Association

Design Craft Association was formed to foster a community of artisan designers and offer them a presence and a platform. It provides artisan designers with a great opportunity to present their brands, under their own labels.

You can meet Design Craft artisans on the SKV website. We welcome you to log onto **www.somaiya-kalavidya.org**. Under Design Craft you will find a map, and a link **Design Craft Members** that will take you to profiles of each artisan designer. This quarter we password-protected the profiles. You will have to register to view them, but it is an easy procedure.

2019 DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12-14 September- SKV Exhibition, Artisan-to-Artisan Design 2019, Hyderabad

17-20 October- SKV Exhibition -Design 2019, Ahmedabad

14 December- Kala Umang! 2019



SKV GOVERNING COUNCIL AND ADVISORS

SKV's Governing Council includes Shri Samir Somaiya, Amritaben Somaiya, Lt. Gen Jagbir Singh, Mitenbhai Sachade, Judy Frater, Anjana Somany, Lokesh Ghai, and Irfan Anwar Khatri.

The institute is also advised by a team of visionary Master Artisans, who guide us in honouring and nurturing textile traditions: Dr. Ismail Mohammed Khatri – Ajrakh artist, Ajrakhpur; Shyamji Vishramji Siju- weaver, Bhujodi; Ali Mohammed Isha -bandhani artist, Bhuj; Umar Farouk Khatri- bandhani artist, Bhadli; and Gulam Hussain Umar -bandhani artist, Bhuj.



THANKS TO GLOBAL GIVING!

On **13 March 2017** SKV posted a project on **Global Giving**. Global Giving makes donation easy. To kick off our project, in March 2017 we met a challenge by raising US\$ 6,563 from 43 donors. Today, 96 donors have raised \$14,831—enough to fund an entire class of our sincere and talented artisan students. This greatly encourages Somaiya Kala Vidya and increases our visibility immensely.

During the period March-June 2019, our project raised \$200- enough for 4 scholarships for co-design projects or 2+ tool kits.

And we were delighted to host Piyush Narang, a part of Global Giving's Field volunteer team in India, on 31 May and 1 June. Piyush showed us some valuable tips for getting the most out of Global Giving's

opportunities, and we introduced him to our weaver designer graduates to share more about the impact of SKV education.

Thank you Global Giving!

LOOKING AHEAD

We are now halfway through the fifth of six courses for the class of 2019.

As awareness and concern make sustainability and co-design household words, each year more opportunities come to our growing cadre of artisan designers. Their capacity is increasing, and increasingly they are recognized. We clearly see the impact of design education. Yet our visibility is limited, and artisans are still widely perceived as skilled technicians.

This year SKV will conduct a professional assessment of the impact of design education on artisans to share our experiences widely. Look for a micro project on Global Giving to support this important work.

And we look to insuring that there will be a market to value small production quality craft designed and made by artisans. Together we can insure a sustainable future for craft traditions.

"Be the change that you wish to see in the world." ~ Mahatma Gandhi

A Note on Names

A key goal of Somaiya Kala Vidya's education for artisans programs is to bring visibility to unrecognized artisans. Our students and graduates, faculty and workshop participants are proud and happy to be recognized and have consented to have their names shared.