

SOMAIYA KALA VIDYA DESIGN CLASS OF 2017: READY TO TEST THE MARKET



PROJECT REPORT 13 June- 16 SEPTEMBER 2017

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 includes national and international educators. SKV offers workshops to the world and courses in craft traditions taught by artisan designers. Artisan-to-Artisan outreach programs 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 2017

Education for artisans is SKV's reason for being. The class of 2017 began their design education journey on 19 January 2017. Eleven weavers, Ajrakh printers and bandhani artisans have joined to expand their creative capacity. This year, we again enjoy a wonderful harmony of diversity. In each craft, we have a highly experienced artisan, a fresh entrant to the craft, and a mid-career artisan.

During this period, we completed the last of our six-class Design for Artisans course, held the final jury, and conducted a workshop in production management.



Course 6, Merchandising, Presentation, was taught by Nita Thakore, fiber artist and seasoned educator, from 24 July- August 2017. Nitaben, assisted by SKV Faculty Laxmiben Puwar, guided the students to make logos and brand identities, create portfolios of their work, and display products effectively. The thrust of the course is to learn to derive maximum value from one's work.



The course ended with a dress rehearsal jury for alumni and current students' family members. Alumni gave valuable feedback in preparation for the final jury. Family members had the opportunity to know just what their sons, brothers, fathers or husbands had learned in the year. In many ways, this is the real jury for the year.



FINAL JURY

On 5-6 August, the students presented their year of design education to a jury comprising Karishma Shahani-Khan, renowned fashion designer, Wasim Khan, award winning interior designer, Anjali Karolia, Senior Professor The Maharaja Sayaji Rao University of Baroda, and Meher Castelino, renowned fashion critic. They rose to the occasion, impressing the panel. Even after twelve years of design education for

artisans, many people working in craft, fashion and design are not aware of artisans' capacities. The jury thus serves as mutual, two-way education.



SKV SEMINAR: COPING WITH COPYING

On 5 August evening, SKV held its third seminar for artisan designers, on the topic: Coping with Copying. Over years of design education for artisans, we have seen the emergence of the issue of copying, a perennial issue in the world of design.

But for traditional artisans there is a special situation. Traditional art was made within a community for a particular community. The designs were community property. Copying was not an issue.

At SKV we teach traditional artisans to innovate within tradition- and we hope they will be known by their individual styles. This should mean there is no need to copy. But it happens. So the jury panel and artisan designers, moderated by Lokesh Ghai, discussed the issues of copying, and ways of dealing with them. Resoundingly, value for ethics prevailed among this group.



OUTREACH -BHUJODI TO BAGALKOT/ FARADI TO LUCKNOW

Somaiya Kala Vidya Artisan-to-Artisan outreach programs share the benefits of artisan education and begin to practically scale the Design Craft movement. Artisan Designer graduates work with artisans in less exposed areas- as a sort of kick-start to demonstrate

that innovation in traditions, and design education are beneficial. The programs culminate in an exhibition sale.

This September SKV Outreach held the exhibition **Bhujodi to Bagalkot+** in Chennai. Bhujodi and Bagalkot weavers, Suf and Chikan embroiderers, our current Outreach projects, displayed their current collections at Folly Gallery at Amethyst, Chennai from 7-9 September. Presentations and a demonstration of the Ilkal kondi technique piqued interest. Sales were excellent. The Bagalkot weavers sold 57 saris- 60% of their stock. Our Bhujodi mentors Purushottambhai and Niteshbhai also sold beyond expectation. Laxmi, Tulsi, Tara, Manisha and Khushboo's embroidery also sold well.



From 10-11 September the team moved on to Dakshinachitra, a living museum of south Indian culture in Muttukadu. The Bagalkot weavers revived the Ilkal loom after a 17 year hiatus, and finally were able to see a traditional cotton-silk Ilkal sari- out of production for more than their lifetimes. The Bhujodi weavers demonstrated weaving to visitors on a sampling loom, and the whole team enjoyed trying their hands as well.



KUTCH TO KASHI

Just as the Bagalkot weavers are graduating from our Outreach project and launching their own business, we received an invitation to start an Artisan-to-Artisan project with Varanasi weavers, in collaboration with All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA). Founder Director Judy Frater and artisan designer Jentilal Bokhani traveled to Varanasi from 22-25 August to launch the project. The weavers were skeptical, identifying two main challenges: the sheer number of weavers in Varanasi and the restrictions of the jacquard loom. But a dozen signed up for the project. We are excited to imagine the innovations they will do.



INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CO-DESIGN

SKV is happy to be at the forefront in developing co-design, a concept gaining interest in mainstream design institutes, and is seeking to build collaborative alliances. The SKV- University of Wisconsin Madison collaboration launched its second phase on 14 September 2017. Eleven artisan designers met at SKV to review the profiles of their American partners and learn about this year's project. The theme for the collections is "Home." Meeting face to face, even by Skype is an important foundation of collaboration. Professor Jennifer Angus, University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Founder Director Judy Frater, SKV, facilitated the video call. The artisan designers gave their preferences for partners, and took home the 2018 colour trend forecasts. Partners will be finalized and WhatsApp groups made. The partners will begin by exchanging images of their homes. Each person will then make an inspiration board of his/ her partner's environment.



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 November we will launch Open Studio Tours in Bhujodi and Ajrakhpur. SKV's maps locating artisan designer participants are under way. We already have participants signed up for the November, December, January and February tours.

Participants in workshops, courses and tours learn the richness of living traditions. And proceeds support SKV programs, insuring financial as well as cultural sustainability.

Workshops and courses can be arranged on demand. Tours are 3-4 November, 1-2 December 2017, and 5-6 January and 9-10 February 2018
For more information contact judy.kalavidya@somaiya.org.



STAFF AND ALUMNI NEWS

SKV Faculty and master weaver Dahyalal Kudecha, bandhani maestro Abdulaziz Khatri, and ajrakh wizards Juned and Sufiyan Ismail Khatri attended the International Folk Art Market| Santa Fe, 14-16 July. Aziz, Juned and Sufiyan were in the new Innovation section of the market, and enjoyed special coverage. Dayabhai received good orders as well as sales. Aziz had his best sales yet, and as a bonus, designer Donna Karan loved his work.

SKV IN PRINT AND ONLINE

SKV work has been featured in several online and in print articles:

11 July 2017-Judy Frater, "The Craft of Fashion," in **Selvedge** blog

17 August 2017- "Bandhani Artisan Imagines the Eclipse: Aziz Khatri," in **Clothroads**

8 September 2017 "Collaborative Craftsmanship," **The Hindu**, and "Finding a Common Thread," **Indulge**

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](#)



DESIGN CRAFT

The Somaiya Agencies's innovative business to complement SKV's educational programs, **Design Craft**, offers a juried selection of artisan designed and created textiles, bringing the best in contemporary craft to one platform. It provides artisan designers with a great opportunity to present their brands, under their own labels, and it will fund SKV's education for traditional artisans with the profits from sales. Currently, 56 artisan designers are represented.

You can meet the 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 profiles of each of the artisan designers. A work of art in itself, the map with artisan designer logos is also available in hard copy.

Design Craft's flagship shop is located in Somaiya Bhavan, 45-47, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Post Box No.384, Fort, **Mumbai**. Phone : +91-22 61702273.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

12-14 October 2017- SKV Design students' Exhibition- Aamra Gallery, Ahmedabad

25 November 2017- SKV Convocation Kala Umang!



SKV GOVERNING COUNCIL AND ADVISORS

SKV's Governing Council includes Shri Samir Somaiya, Amritaben Somaiya, 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: Ali Mohammed Isha -bandhani artist, Bhuj, Umar Farouk Khatri- bandhani artist, Bhadli, Dr. Ismail Mohammed Khatri - block printer, Ajrakhpur, Gulam Hussain Umar -bandhani artist, Bhuj, and Shyamji Vishramji Siju- weaver, Bhujodi.

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, we met a challenge by raising US\$ 6,563 from 43 donors, in March. This greatly encouraged Somaiya Kala Vidya and also increased our visibility immensely. Funds will be used to support this year's class of 11 sincere and talented artisan students.

LOOKING AHEAD

The class of 2017 is now busily producing collections for an exhibition/ sale in Ahmedabad in October. Our goal is to demonstrate to clients and artisan designers themselves that design education makes a difference, and to develop the value of artisan design.

SKV surely has a life of its own and we are enjoying new horizons for artisans, and the knowledge that we are contributing to creating a sustainable future for craft traditions.

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”

— Mahatma Gandhi