



An Institute of Education for Traditional Artisans Somaia Kala Vidya E-News *March 2017



Somaia Kala Vidya is an institution for traditional artisans of Kutch, India. Combining over fifty years' experience of Somaia 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 AND BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT FOR ARTISANS COURSES 2016

Education for artisans is SKV's reason for being. This winter we completed our two core courses, with students exhibiting their final collections. The Design students held a show at Anmol Gallery in Ahmedabad from 17-20 November, and the BMA students held their show- also designed and produced by themselves-at Art Positive Gallery in Delhi. Despite fears about the new currency regime, and eternal queues at ATMs, both shows enjoyed a steady stream of designers and craft connoisseurs. SKV Advisor Gulambhai Khatri came to our aid with a credit card machine for both sales, which enabled our success. The collections were highly appreciated, and our now signature programs of artisan presentations emphasized to visitors the creative thought as well as skill that goes into artisan design.



Following the exhibitions, the Design students attended a Sales Analysis workshop conducted by Programme Coordinator Anuj Chaudhary, and the BMA students attended their final course, **Analyzing and Maximizing Business Performance**, taught by Mohit Charnalia.

KALA UMANG! 2017

On 5 January 2017 SKV held the BMA final jury, with Hitesh Bhatt, senior faculty, Institute for Rural management; Darshan Shah, Founder and Director of the Weavers' Studio, Kolkata; and Albert Rigo, Quality Control Manager, Fabindia. The jury was an opportunity for quality exchanges of stories, experiences and philosophies between industry professionals and our post graduate students.



On 7 January 2017, SKV held its annual Convocation, Kala Umang! In Bhujodi, with welcome organizational support from the weaver community of the village, and generous sponsorship from Good Earth and Somaia Vidyavihar. This year the Chief Guest was Ms. Anita Lal, Founder and Creative Director of Good Earth. V. Ranganathan, honorable Secretary of K.J. Somaia Trusts also attended the event.



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Nileshbhai Priyadarshi anchored both the convocation and the Fashion show. Faculty Laxmiben Puvar began the ceremony with Tagore's poem, "Mind Without Fear." Founder Director Judy Frater, Shri Ranganathan, SKV Advisor Shyamji Vishramji Siju, Faculty Dayalal Kudecha, Design Graduate Pravin Siju, and BMA graduate Zakiya Khatri all spoke on the relevance of education for artisans.

After presenting the SKV certificates to Design and BMA graduates, we gave awards for Best Collection to Suresh Parbat Vankar, Best Presentation to Fahd Gulam Khatri, Most Marketable Collection to Mustak Junas Khatri, Most Promising Artisan to Dahyabhai Motibhai Parmar and Ramesh Devsi Jepar, Best student to Juned Husen Khatri and Suresh Parbat Vankar, and Best exhibition sales to Basir Fakirmamad Khatri and Aslam Abdulkarim Khatri.

Anita Lal brought a creative innovation by holding an interactive session with graduates rather than lecturing. Guests thus had an opportunity to experience the confidence and mindfulness of our artisan designers as well as to hear Anitaji's wisdom. Adil Khatri gave a vote of thanks for the ceremony.

Kala Umang! concluded with a fabulous fashion show choreographed by renowned fashion designer James Ferreira. James generously contributed his own fashions to create ensembles with our graduates' work. This was a real taste of craft in high fashion!



SKV Design Class of 2017

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. It is a joy to see how they quickly find equilibrium based on intense desire to learn. The first two courses, **Colour**, taught by Avanish Kumar, and **Basic Design**, taught by Hitesh Rawat, began with understanding how the basics of design have been used in the artisans' traditions, and exist in the natural environment: the two constant, best sources of inspiration.



The students have learned to explore their world by taking theory into practice using painting, drawing, collage and their own craft media. They have learned to organize their experiences and are already gaining confidence in presentation.



OUTREACH

Somaia 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 can be beneficial. The programs culminate in an exhibition sale. Thus, all participants earn through sale of the products developed. We are thrilled that the Bagalkot Ilkal innovations have become known within three years. Confident, the Bagalkot team ordered 100 kg of cotton yarn to continue production of last year's collection. Fabindia is considering an order. This year, a new team of Bhujodi mentors will work in the project, and we plan to expand the Bagalkot team by almost double. The weavers will begin co-designing the 2017 collection in early April. This team and the embroidery team will hold an exhibition in the south in September.

Meanwhile, SKV is exploring options for the next Outreach project.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT & CO-DESIGN



The December BMA exhibition coincided with the completion of a decade of design education for artisans in Kutch. To reflect on the impact of education for artisans, Somaia Kala Vidya, in collaboration with Craft Revival Trust and India International Center, held a seminar, **Craft**

Nouveau, on 30 November at IIC Delhi. Twenty-one well-known experts in craft and design spoke from the perspectives of education, artisans and the contemporary market. Highlights were the contrast of the vibrancy of crafts in Kutch today to the situation of crafts elsewhere in the country, and the strong sentiment that the program should spread to other regions. The BMA students stole the show, of course. And the ultimate compliment came from the videographer, who said he films at scores of events and it's always routine. But, he said, he has never been as moved as when he heard the artisans from Kutch tell their stories and share their hopes.

On 2 February 2017, prime time, SKV made history with a sequence in the 2017

Lakme Fashion Week!

SKV Faculty Dayalal Kudecha and Laxmiben Puvar, Abdulaziz Alimamad Khatri, Aakib Ibrahim Khatri, Monghiben Rana Rabari, Tulsiben Purshottam Puvar and Taraben Vijay Puvar



presented a new collection of woven, printed, bandhani and embroidered saris.

This was the first time ever that artisans presented at Lakme Fashion Week as designers in their own right. The show, part of the IMG Reliance LFW Sustainable Fashion & Indian Textiles Day, was very enthusiastically received. "I learned so much about fashion- and business!" Aakib declared. He now wants to make garments.

Next up, SKV will be featured in a special hall in the Delhi Crafts Council's 50th anniversary show 16-18 March 2017.



In 2017, SKV plans to devote time to alumni programs and development of co-design. From 7-11 March Jagada Rajappa, renowned expert, conducted a workshop in natural dyeing for alumni. The group created 27 luscious shades in 5 days, and learned to work methodically to be able to reproduce the results-- just in time for Holi.

In mainstream design institutes there is a growing interest in co-design, a method that SKV actively promotes as way to further our goal of increasing the value of craft traditions. The SKV- University of Wisconsin Madison collaboration resulted in excellent fresh samples that were shown in the Kala Umang! fashion show. The stoles and rugs have received orders in India and abroad, and will be featured in the April UWM fashion show. UWM faculty Jennifer Angus has received a grant to expand the program this year. We also plan to conduct a co-design project with a design institute in India.

On 14 February, the SKV co-designers met with a group of University of New South Wales art and design students led by faculty Liz Williamson to share their experiences. Several of the UNSW students were inspired to do their research projects on co-design.



SKV WORKSHOPS- AND COURSES, TO THE WORLD

From 1-22 November, SKV conducted its third Craft Traditions Course. Claire Gohorel from the USA learned Ajrakh printing, while Emma Sumner from UK learned Rabari embroidery. Again, the artisan jury was impressed with the authenticity that these earnest students achieved. "I learned to be free with my work," Emma shared. "I learned that it doesn't need to be perfect to be beautiful." Claire noted that Ajrakh is more complex than she had imagined. "I understand now how you can be creative within a tradition," she said.

This winter, SKV conducted a day-long workshop in weaving, printing, bandhani and batik for children from the Ascend International school, Mumbai, and a 5-day workshop in Ajrakh for visitors from the USA and Australia. "This was the highlight of my trip!" one participant wrote. "I'm impressed with how much I learned in such a short time. I'm definitely a candidate for a return visit-- perhaps with a group for a course!"

Workshops and courses can be arranged on demand.

For more information contact judy.kalavidya@somaia.org.



STAFF AND ALUMNI NEWS

On 21 January 2017, Founder Director Judy Frater gave a keynote address at **Thanima 2**, A Quest for Authenticity, a conference held at NIT Calicut. And on 23 February 2017, she was a Changemaker in the **What's Next?** Confluence of Global Design Educators organized by Pearl Academy Delhi.

SKV BMA graduate Adil M. Khatri won first prize in the 2015 Gujarat State award for craftsmanship. Dayalal Kudecha and Purshottam Siju were both awarded the 2016 World Craft Council Seal of Excellence

In December 2016 Programme Coordinator Anuj Chaudhary resigned. He is succeeded by Ritesh Chauhan. Ritesh comes from Fabindia Ahmedabad. He began his job by conducting this year's Orientation for Design students. We wish him an active tenure.

SKV ONLINE

Lakme Fashion Week brought considerable press coverage for SKV. In January-February 2017 we were featured in articles in **India Today**, **Indian Express**, **Economic Times**, **Business Standard**, **Fibre to Fashion**, and other online publications

2 January 2017 SKV was featured in **LiveMint**- "[The Kutch Renaissance](#)." by Shefalee Vasudev

17 February 2017 SKV was featured in **The Better India**- "[A Range of Initiatives are Keeping Handmade Products Competitive](#)."

18 February 2017 an interview with Founder Director Judy Frater was aired on SBS Gujarati Australia <https://m.facebook.com/story.php...>

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 Somaia 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.somaia-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 Somaia Bhavan, 45-47, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Post Box No.384, Fort, **Mumbai**. Phone : +91-22 61702273.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

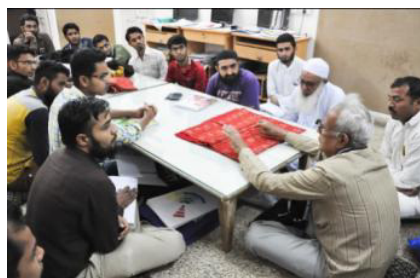
16-18 March 2017- find SKV at KAIRI- Delhi Crafts Council's 50th Anniversary show- Agha Khan Hall, Bhagwan Das Road, Delhi

14-16 July 2017- Meet Dayabhai, Abdulaziz and Juned at International Folk Art | Market Santa Fe

14-16 September 2017- SKV Outreach Exhibition Chennai

12-14 October 2017- SKV Design students' Exhibition Ahmedabad

25 November 2017- SKV Convocation Kala Umang!



SKV GOVERNING COUNCIL AND ADVISORS

SKV's Governing Council includes Shri Samir Somaia, Amritaben Somaia, 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, Gulam Hussain Umar -bandhani artist, Bhuj, Dr. Ismail Mohammed Khatri - block printer, Ajrakhpur, Shamji Vishramji Siju- weaver, Bhujodi, and Umar Farouk Khatri- bandhani artist, Bhadli. Every year our Advisors hold a Masters' program to study traditions in the context of design.

LOOKING AHEAD- SUPPORT SKV



SKV on Global Giving!

Somaia Kala Vidya is very excited to announce that as of **13 March 2017** we have a project posted on **Global Giving**, a premier online donation site. Global Giving makes donation easy. You can make a donation using your credit card, debit card, PayPal, Apple Pay, US check, etc. Most important, Global Giving makes sure that your donations aren't lost into "the ether" of international banking.

To kick off our project, there is a challenge of raising US\$ 5,000 from 40 donors, between March 13 at [9:00:01am](#) EDT and March 31 at [11:59:59pm](#) EDT. If you send SKV a donation during this time, we can receive a bonus from Global Giving. **And 22 March 2017 is a special bonus day. Donations received between 9:00:01 EDT and 23:59:59 EST on March 22nd will be matched according to the availability of matching funds.**

Donate to [Somaia Kala Vidya through Global Giving!](#)

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/design-education-for-artisans-of-kutch-india/>

Your generous contribution can help! You can make a difference in the lives of our very creative and courageous artisan students!! **Sponsor an Artisan Student and enjoy his/her success for just \$1,000. Every contribution in affordable increments will count!**

Contact kalavidya@somaia.edu for details.

With your support, our institution will continue to break new ground for craft and artisans. Together we will create value for design craft, and a sustainable future for craft traditions.

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

—Mahatma Gandhi