



KALA RAKSHA
Preservation of Traditional Arts



KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA INAUGURATES ARTISAN DESIGN!

KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA PROJECT REPORT 16 SEPTEMBER- 10 DECEMBER 2010



Monghiben: *"I had a dream, and I had to fulfill it!"*

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CONVOCATION MELA AT KRV!

After completing the final course of the year, **Merchandising, Presentation**, our traditional artisan students prepared to launch their careers as Artisan Designers. In their year of intensive design education, they have learned to create in new and exciting ways. Since beginning the institution, the infinite creativity of the individual has clearly emerged. In five years, we have not yet seen any repetition. When encouraged, each individual effortlessly finds his or her unique expressions. And they confidently articulated these to their juries. This year, Jury members included Subrata Bhowmick, world renowned designer, Shilpa Sharma, previously in charge of products at Fabindia, Amit Sinha, head of the Apparel Department, National Institute of Design, and Priya Kishore, designer entrepreneur and owner of the high fashion boutique Bombay Electric.



Khalid: "I have given up jobwork now. I want to create my own art."



The new graduates walked the fashion show ramp with their collections, under the stars on our rural campus. It was a dream come true for many of them.

Monghiben: "My dream was to be in the fashion show."

Govindbhai: "For years we have made prize winning pieces for others. This year, my father and I will submit an entry in our own name."



Graduates received certificates and awards for Best Collection, Best Presentation, Most Marketable Collection, and Most Promising Artisan. Alumni Hariyaben Uttam (KRV 2009) and Shakil Khatri (2009) addressed the audience of several thousand with confidence and sincerity.

Sajnuben- "If we do something new we can advance."



The Convocation ceremony was followed by a public Mela, in which artisans showed their work to local visitors and craft lovers from Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi, the USA, France, Germany, Austria, Australia, Portugal, Italy, UK., and China. Over 5,000 people attended the two day event, and the graduates sold their new products. This year's winner of Best Collection nearly earned the cost of his annual tuition! The winner of Most Marketable Collection recorded orders for domestic and international clients.

Bhagvatiben- "I couldn't see the sea at night. I had to imagine—I used my mind." And her husband said, "I am so proud of her, because she did not go to school, but she can think."



The Mela included craft workshops and local music, with a grand finale of a concert of traditional music and the now customary “Sanedo,” which drew graduates, staff, friends and family onto the dance ground.

Hanifbhai- “When I came here, I wasn’t an artisan. Now, I am on my way.”

OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF ARTISAN DESIGN



At the Convocation, we took the benefit of the presence of our Chief Guest, Ms. Kasturi Gupta Menon, Honorary President of the Crafts Council of India, to officially launch our trademarked logo, Artisan Design.

Innovation has always been an integral part of tradition. In traditional arts or crafts the artisan both conceived the product and created it. When the old relationships between maker and user broke down, design emerged as a separate entity. At its best, design- like art- is understood as the work of an individual, whose creative efforts are the most highly valued aspect of the product. But when concept is separated from execution, the execution becomes “labour.”

In order to reverse the trend of artisans becoming laborers, Kala Raksha started Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya. Here, we value the unique concepts of each artisan designer, consciousness and confidence increase, and the art aspect of craft re-emerges. Artisan Design emphasizes the aspect of the artisan's thought

Art and craftsmanship are really two sides of a coin. When it is our own design, we make the effort because we love the satisfaction of creativity. The enthusiasm with which all of our graduates presented their work assures us that Artisan Design matters.

The **Artisan Design** logo will create visibility and value for the individual's creative effort. **Artisan Design** certifies that a product is an artisan's own creative innovation. It celebrates the individual's heart, mind and hand. **Artisan Design** also creates value for the integrated spirit of tradition. This is the symbol of re-integration of concept and execution in craft, and of raising status of the artisan. It is a new fair trade idea—fair trade for the creative spirit.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Continuing in its linkages with premier Indian institutes of Design, Kala Raksha is currently hosting two National Institute of Fashion Technology students for their diploma projects. Richika Pallavi is working on sourcing raw materials. This is a timely project, since one important feedback of the KRV jury this year was the need to have a good materials bank to encourage students to experiment with new materials. Smita Srivastava is creating a recycle collection, in line with our focus on sustainability.

Two of the KRV graduates who worked with the Srishti interns in the summer, Abdulla Khatri, and Zuber Khatri have submitted new collections for an exhibition in Mumbai December 12-18. The fabrics developed by Dayalal Kudecha and Ramji Maheshwari in the same workshop have been used for Kala Raksha's current collection. All four of these graduates have now firmly established their independent businesses.

Shyamji Visbramji, KRV Advisor: "No one who has graduated from KRV has not gotten orders for his work."

OUTREACH

An Exhibition of Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya at the National Institute of Design

As NID celebrates completion of 50 years of design education, KRV has been given the honour to exhibit our five years of work for the NID Convocation, December 14-15th. KRV graduates will be present to discuss their work on display.

E-Portfolios of KRV Alumni

KRV will initiate a separate website which will host e-portfolios of the Artisan Designers who have graduated from Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya. Through the e-portfolios, Kala Raksha will facilitate contact to world markets for each of these artists. The contemporary market has a critical role to play in recognizing and honoring the spirit of the creator. With information technology, emerging artisan designers can be discovered by people who can value their work. The portfolios will be maintained on www.kala-raksha-vidhyalaya.org to be launched in January 2011.

Collaboration for Online Marketing

Another initiative is live in time for the holiday season. Through collaboration with **Equal Craft**, a socially conscious marketplace that provides world citizens with excellent world art, and artisans with true global market value and recognition, KRV graduates are able to sell their designs at www.equalcraft.com

The collaboration was developed through the Ashoka network. Combining age old tradition and the latest technology, Kala Raksha and Equal Craft are breaking social barriers. E-commerce makes it possible for rural artisans to directly connect with long distance markets. The fact that one can ask what is the difference between a quilter in Vermont selling her quilts on Etsy.com and Lachhuben Rabari selling her embroidered bags on Equalcraft.com says it all. There *is* no difference. The venture is leveling the playing field. The difference is that now Lachhuben *can* sell her embroidered bags directly to anyone in the world—and she can get direct feedback from her customers!

In the way that Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya offers design education to artisans with no formal education, Equalcraft.com makes social networking possible for artisan designers who may not read and write.

THANKS TO GLOBAL GIVING!

KRV has made great strides in narrowing the gap between the budget and the coffers, and Global Giving has made a substantial contribution. In the second Matching Campaign, Kala Raksha received \$2,850- more than three times the previous campaign. This almost equals two scholarships for our artisan students. We utilized these funds to balance the budget for the year. One person, YOU, can make a difference in the lives of our very creative constituency!!

THE NEXT PHASE

Sustainability! That is our challenge. Our students are working toward their own sustainability. At the dress rehearsal for the jury, KRV alumni gave sophisticated feedback that proved Artisan Design is sustainable.

Anwarbbhai Khatri, president of the men's class of 2010: "KRV was the chance of my life. I know I will keep going with what I learned."

Kala Raksha has submitted ideas for becoming self sustaining to one of our major funders for feedback. This is a huge challenge for an educational institution. We welcome any entrepreneurial ideas –and ideas for gaining increasing visibility—from our supporters.