



**KALA RAKSHA**  
Preservation of Traditional Arts



## **KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA**

**KRV MELA!**  
**KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA**  
**CELEBRATES ITS SIXTH WONDERFUL YEAR!**



### **PROJECT REPORT 25 AUGUST- 20 DECEMBER 2011**

The Convocation is always a time to look back and see what we all have achieved in the year. This was most certainly the Year of Co-Creation.

Lakshmi- *"We took this course to be better prepared to serve the market. We learned to think in another way. Now we can do our own work, as per the market."*

Jivaben- *"The difference is day and night."*

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## **KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA'S 6<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION**

About half way through the year, someone commented, "It's all very well for artisans to learn design, but who is going to do my work?"

Our mission is to change that attitude toward artisans, and the best way to do that is through experience. This year, we collaborated with NID apparel students. It required discussion, sharing knowledge, and resources. Whose design was the result? It was a process, a co-creation! Both designers had to learn from each other. For this to happen, each person must acknowledge and respect each other's strengths. And Kala Raksha's premise is that an artisan's greatest strength is knowledge, not simply skills. Anyone can learn skills. It takes generations to learn a tradition. We are here to value and strengthen traditions. So what we achieved this year was creating an opportunity for experience, to pave the way for increased appreciation for artisan designers-- in addition to stronger products! When this is realized, designers can work collaboratively for the best product and the question of who is going to do whose work vanishes.



November 25-27<sup>th</sup> marked this year's Convocation Mela. The program began with two days of jurying by experts in craft and design, including Priya Kishore- founder of Bombay Electric, Radhi Parekh- founder of Artisans Gallery, Subrata Bhowmick- internationally renowned designer, Anuradha Kumra- head buyer Fabindia, Krishna Patel-faculty National Institute of Design, and Alison Welsh-faculty Manchester Metropolitan University (UK)



The jurying culminated in a fashion show inaugurated by the dazzling actress and social activist Shabana Azmi. Drawing a record crowd, the show was an important statement about the value of art and artisan.





The following day, graduates received certificates and awards were conferred. Miraben Poonam, who had joined the course with trepidation, received the award for best collection for women, while Hansraj Devji, a weaver from Bhujodi village received the award for best collection for men. Ms. Geetha Narayanan, Founder and Director of Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology gave the keynote address, stressing the importance of working locally and with respect for the natural environment.



A public fair drew people from UK, Australia, New Zealand, Italy, Korea, and the USA. The artisans had a chance to test new collections on a range of buyers, made direct sales and took orders. Local, national and international visitors examined the collections and learned the importance of good design.



Over 6,000 visitors enjoyed local craft demonstrations, folk music, and of course Kutchi food. This was a wonderful celebration of the culture of Kutch, and creators and Co-Creators, the Artisan Designers.





## INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In October 2011 KRV Project Director Judy Frater was given the Ojaswini Alankaran Award for work in Women's Empowerment. Simultaneously, the article *Empowering the Artists*, by Annie Waterman appeared in Hand Eye Magazine.  
<http://www.handeyemagazine.com/content/empowering-artists>

Launching its plan to become more financially self sustaining, KRV recently held a workshop for seven students from Oregon State University in December. The workshop built on last year's pilot programs, and will earn the students college credits in the USA! The students took a four day tour of Kutch, and then decided the theme "Transition" for their collections. They spent four days working with women embroidery and patchwork artisans, and four days working with men weavers, block printers, batik and bandhani artists. The American graphic design students co-created collections of innovative scarves with the KRV graduates. They all learned new processes.



Christin- *"I enjoyed the creative energy of working in a group."*

Danielle- *"This was the best experience of my life so far!"*

Tod- *"We learned so much more than in a classroom at home."*

Bhagvatiben- *"Working together was a whole new experience."*

Champaben- *"They learned a lot, we learned a lot- new products, new aesthetics. If they learn, we learn."*

Zuber- *"At home I procrastinate. Here, I learned to put ideas into production!"*

Irfan- *"I learned enough for a whole new collection."*



## ALUMNI AND OUTREACH

The KRV design community is growing. The enthusiasm with which they practice their traditions is the best insurance that they will flourish. Exciting co-creation was clearly evident in this year's alumni fashion show collections.

Last year we launched the KRV website. This year, The Victoria and Albert Museum in UK contacted KRV through the website and are choosing several graduates to participate in a international exhibition on Indian design.

KRV women graduates have created a series of narrative works depicting their memoirs of traditional life, and the rapid changes they have experienced. The exhibition, **Fabricated Memory** will be shown along with the work of seventy Italian art students from the Art Institute of Trento from 10 February 2012 for three months. The third group of Kala Raksha Artisan Designer interns made their final collection of stunning Art to Wear jackets for the Mumbai market. The collection was launched in Mumbai in December 2011.

### Artisan Design Online

Find Kala Raksha Artisan Designed work online at [www.equalcraft.com](http://www.equalcraft.com)

Articles on Artisan Design have been published in three important online craft journals: **Hand/Eye** [www.handeyemagazine.com](http://www.handeyemagazine.com) 3 February 2010; **Craft Unbound** [www.craftunbound.net](http://www.craftunbound.net) 27 January 2011, and the **Craft Revival Trust Newsletter** [www.craftrevival.org](http://www.craftrevival.org) vol 110, issue 2 Winter-Spring 2011.

Kala Raksha is now on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/kalaraksha). And join a discussion on issues of craft and design on our blog <http://www.kala-raksha-blog.org/>

## THANKS TO GLOBAL GIVING!

KRV succeeded in raising the funds to cover the academic year of 2010! The Indian financial year spans between April 2010 and March 2011, and our sixth year of classes is finished. To date we have received RS 2979,267 (\$ 59,585), with two pledged grants yet to be cleared. This brings us close to balancing the budget for the current financial year.

KRV relies entirely on donations. 3% of 2011's funding so far is individual donations—equivalent to two scholarships. Global Giving has made a substantial contribution.

As one donor wrote, **“The Global giving website is easy to navigate. It makes giving so much easier.”**

**Your generous contribution can help!** You can make a difference in the lives of our very creative constituency!!

## THE NEXT PHASE

**Sustainability** is still our challenge. Our program for entrepreneurial activities to enable the institute to become more self supporting has begun.

Financial sustainability is always a huge challenge for an educational institution. We welcome any entrepreneurial ideas –and ideas for increasing visibility–from our supporters.

And again we thank you, our supporters. With your support, KRV will expand its web of collaborators in Artisan Design!