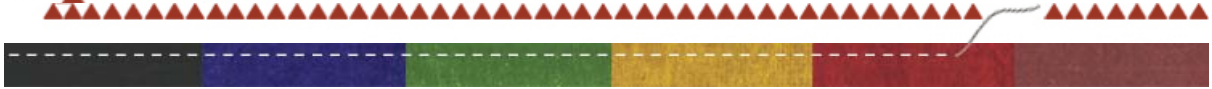




KALA RAKSHA
Preservation of Traditional Arts



KALA RAKSHA TRUST

Preservation of Traditional Arts

KALA RAKSHA VIDHYALAYA GRADUATES In the USA 2010

15 September 2010



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kala Raksha, founded as a Trust in 1993, aims to preserve and present cultures of ethnic communities of Kutch through their traditional arts, to encourage understanding and appreciation. Proactive, Kala Raksha facilitates the transformation of traditional arts into contemporary products by involving women artisans in the design, pricing and marketing of their own products. It encourages artisans' creativity and capacity and, through this process, builds their confidence and self esteem. The Trust maintains a Resource Center and Museum, conceived as a model for development. The experience of developing a locally based Resource Centre and Museum for Kala Raksha has most successfully proved the mutual benefits of involving communities in presenting their own cultures. The museum acts as a springboard. Traditional materials contained therein are used to develop contemporary designs with cultural integrity.

In 2005, the Trust founded Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, a Design School for Traditional Artisans, to offer a long term solution to the sustainability of craft as livelihood. KRV is the first design school with a sustained, long term, coherent program expressly for traditional artisans, a chronically undereducated sector. The mission of Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya (KRV) is to develop a new approach to design education based on existing traditions. The method of the institution is to work within traditions, by understanding and drawing from their strengths. KRV's Advisory Board comprises master artisans of Kutch. KRV's curriculum, schedule and language of instruction are designed to be appropriate to artisans of Kutch. The only prerequisite for admission is knowledge of traditional crafts. The focus of KRV's education is on acquiring knowledge and skills that will enable artisans to use design effectively in their work in order to successfully reach appropriate new markets, while at the same time strengthening traditional identity. KRV's effectiveness is in the relevance of the education provided. By approaching education through a vital subject, the institute enables direct access to higher education and ultimately raises the capacity of the participants and the entire craft sector.

The impact of Kala Raksha's work with traditional artisans has been recognized internationally as well as locally. In 2009, Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya was recognized in two prestigious awards. Judy Frater, Project Director was awarded the Sir Misha Black Medal for Distinguished Service to Design Education for the establishment of Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya. In addition, Ms. Frater was given the "The Pillar of Hindustani Society Society" Award from Trans Asian Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Mumbai.

At present, Kala Raksha works with about 1,000 artisans. This year, with funding from the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market and CGPL-Tata Power, Kala Raksha took two artisans- Meghiben from Sumrasar Sheikh and KRV Graduate Harkhuben from Tunda Vandh- and a senior staff person to the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. The artisans participated in a public seminar on the empowerment of women through craft projects. Following the three day sale, they conducted a month long tour of 6 cities, conducting 6 workshops, 11 lectures, and 11 trunk shows. The artisan representatives had an unprecedented opportunity to experience the international market directly, and could share those experiences with the entire Kala Raksha constituency on return. Everyone clearly understood how artisans could increase their earnings through education and efforts.

THE 2010 KALA RAKSHA USA TOUR**Kala Raksha****The Language of Textile Arts**

A Workshop on Rabari Embroidery
with Kala Raksha Artists of Kutch, India

Conducted by Meghiben Meriya, Harkhuben Bhojraj Rabari,
Nilesh Priyadarshi and Judy Frater of Kala Raksha Trust
2010

Sponsored by The Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. and



14 July	Tactile Arts Center Denver, CO
17 July	Avenir Museum Colorado State University Fort Collins, CO
21 July	Gail Harker Creative Studies Center Oak Harbor, WA
23-24 July	Pacific NW Needle Arts Guild Seattle, WA
29 July	Palo Alto Art Center Palo Alto, CA
31 July	International Quilt Study Center & Museum Dept. of Textiles, Clothing & Design University of Nebraska Lincoln, NE

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**Santa Fe International Folk Art Market
Santa Fe, New Mexico**



The Santa Fe International Folk Art Market is probably the largest market in the world for sale of traditional crafts. This year, 25,000 people from all over the United States and abroad attended the Market. Total sales were \$ 2 million. Kala Raksha's booth had vigorous attendance. About 45% of the stock sent was sold in the two days and one evening of the event. Harkhuben and Meghiben had an excellent opportunity to interact directly with customers, and quickly learned that the buyers preferred work by their own hands. Meghiben sold all but one of her appliqué pieces at this Market! This year the Market also sponsored an exhibition: Empowering Women: Artisan Cooperatives that Transform Communities. In conjunction with that, Harkhuben and Meghiben spoke to a large and interested audience in a seminar, and discussed income generation through crafts with artisans from Africa, Asia, and Latin America in a series of break-out discussions. They learned that the issues with which they grapple are shared by artisans all over the world, and realized that at Kala Raksha they have made considerable progress in development of the quality of their lives.

**TACtile Center
Denver, Colorado**



TACtile Center is an organization modeled after the Textile Center of Minnesota, which brings together diverse textile arts. Under one roof, exhibitions of weaving, embroidery, painting, and other needle crafts are held, and members can learn techniques through classes and workshops. 12 participants attended Kala Raksha's one day workshop in embroidery and appliqué. Most were skilled in needle arts and could learn quickly. Through an introductory lecture we broadened their understanding to include cultural and expressive aspects of traditions, as well as techniques. One of the most enjoyable benefits for everyone was the personal connections made.



**The Avenir Museum
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado**



Colorado State University has a vibrant Department of Design and Merchandising. Recently, the Department opened a cutting edge museum, with state of the art conservation and storage facilities and a beautiful exhibition space. 45 people attended Judy Frater’s lecture on Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya at the Avenir Museum, and a lively question and answer session including graduate Harkhuben followed. The audience appreciated Kala Raksha’s contemporary as well as traditional products.

The next day, 15 participants attended Kala Raksha’s one day embroidery and appliqué workshop. Again, the participants were skilled needle workers, who could learn quickly and enjoyed the artisan interaction.

**Music for the Eyes
Whidbey Island, Washington**



Music for the Eyes is an enterprise created by two former state department employees who love travel and textiles. The shop attracted about 60 attendees for an informal lecture on Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya and a trunk show. Harkhuben and Meghiben could observe some differences in tastes of Midwestern and Northwestern buyers, and enjoyed the convivial atmosphere of the venue. The stays in Fort Collins and Whidbey Island also included some welcome sightseeing in some of the most beautiful regions of the USA.

**Gail Harker Creative Studies Center
Oak Harbor, Washington**



Gail Harker's Creative Studies Center is a school for embroidery, remarkably similar to Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya. Kala Raksha had visited the school in 2004, and we were excited to share our progress since opening and operating Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya. Harkhuben and Meghiben were excited by the inspiring facilities of the school, and the displays of student work. The 23 participants in the Kala Raksha workshop were equally enthusiastic. Harkhuben enjoyed showing her Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya graduate portfolio. We were delighted to meet one woman who participated in a 2004 Kala Raksha workshop, who now teaches at Gail Harker's Center.

**Rotary Club of Seattle
Seattle, Washington**

The Rotary Club of Seattle seemed an unlikely venue for Kala Raksha, even to the first members who curiously trickled into the luncheon meeting. But once we explained our goals and objectives, we met with one of the most supportive and enthusiastic audiences of the tour. Rotary members are by definition proponents of civil service. After the talk and lunch, the 45 attendees welcomed us with many creative ideas and contacts for future development.

**Pacific Northwest Needle Arts Guild
Seattle, Washington**



Kala Raksha had held a two day workshop for the Pacific Northwest Needle Arts Guild in 2004. The members welcomed us back for a second two-day workshop. Several of the 10 participants were repeaters! Again, skilled artists enthusiastically learned advanced techniques, and the conversation over two days spanned many social and philosophical questions on development as well.

**Seattle Textile and Rug Society
Seattle, Washington**

STARS is a well established textile organization of Seattle, and a haven for collectors. Seattle gets few gloriously sunny days, however, and Kala Raksha had some tough competition on a sunny Sunday afternoon. Despite the lovely weather, 25 textile lovers sat inside the Pioneer Hall for a lecture on Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, and posed thoughtful questions to Harkhuben and Meghiben.

**Palo Alto Art Center
Palo Alto, California**



Dear Judy,

A huge 'thank you' from SACHI and the PAAC for a pique rabari program! \

We learned so much from the daylong interaction with artists Meghiben and Harkhuben and you. It was such a unique experience for all participants to spend a day with Bhuj artists. Everyone was blown away by the extraordinary film. You had a diverse group of students enrolled, each very enthusiastic. All appreciated the attention they received.

Again, our grateful appreciation from all at SACHI!

Our very best wishes,
Kalpana Desai, SACHI

The Society for Art and Culture and Heritage of India (SACHI), a well known Bay Area organization for Indian Arts, teamed with the Palo Alto Arts Center to host Kala Raksha Judy Frater had held a program here in 2002 and we were all happy to reunite. The membership is a combination of scholars and Indian Diaspora, especially from Gujarat. About 40 people attended a lecture on the language of Kutchi embroidery, with a screening of Kala Raksha's award winning animated documentary, funded by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, "The Stitches Speak." Harkhuben and Meghiben were in their element as at last they could communicate directly with many of the attendees. The lively discussion led into an equally lively workshop for 20 people. The media filmed the event as it will be one of the last before the Center relocates, and we were glad to reciprocate with advocacy for a great public facility.

**The International Quilt Center and Museum
Lincoln, Nebraska**

There are very few venues in the world devoted to quilts. The International Quilt Center and Museum is one that is well known. It is part of the University of Nebraska and, like the Design Department at Colorado State University, has recently had the excellent fortune to open a beautiful new museum with state of the art facilities. Kala Raksha had an excellent turn out for its final venue of the tour. About 50 enthusiastic textile lovers attended Judy Frater's lecture on Kutchi motifs, followed by the animated film, "The Stitches Speak." Harkhuben, Meghiben and Nileshbhai kept busy through the day with demonstrations and our best trunk show of the post Santa Fe tour! The Museum kept the remaining Kala Raksha quilts for the upcoming Textile Society of America meetings, allowing Kala Raksha to return with just the bare minimum stock.

CONCLUSION



The tour was a resounding success, both educationally and financially. It provided excellent opportunities for visibility for Kala Raksha, traditional textile arts of Kutch, and the sponsors Coastal Gujarat Power Limited and Tata Power. For the artisans, it provided unparalleled learning about the artisans' place in the world marketplace of craft and art, and an experience of another culture that will deepen their ability to design for distant markets.

We expect great new works by Harkhuben and Meghiben, as well as an equally great follow up next year.



Meghiben: *"People really want to buy work from our own hands. Every tapestry I made sold!"*

Harkhuben: *"I learned that people really appreciate our work. America is great- it's clean, and people are friendly and helpful. I hope my grandchildren can come here one day."*

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

Funding from CGPL- Tata Power made the tour financially viable. CGPL-Tata Power's funds covered two international air fares and domestic travel for all four participants.

Kala Raksha structured the tour so that fees for the workshop covered domestic costs such as accommodation, food and related expenses. This enabled full benefit of trunk show sales to come to Kala Raksha artisans. Figures for the sales of Kala Raksha products during the tour follow.

KALA RAKSHA SALES DURING THE TOUR

Date	Venue	Sales in US\$
9-12th July	Santa Fe	19,493
14th July	Denver	1417
18th July	Fort Collins	2537
20th July	Music for the Eyes	1250
21st July	Gail Harker	1924
22nd July	Rotary	910
23rd July	PNNAG	2196
25th July	STARS	1488
29th July	Palo Alto	2422
31st July	Lincoln	3969
Total Sale		37,606



Annexure 1

HARKHUBEN BHOJRAJ RABARI

Tunda Vandh
Ta. Mundra, Kutch (India)
Tel. 91-2838-275553



CURRENT POSITION

Fiber Artist

EDUCATION

Graduate, Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, 2007

EXPERIENCE

Learned embroidery in the traditional way, from her family in Sanosara.

Became known as an expert artisan in beadwork, embroidery and mud relief work

Has embroidered professionally for Gurjari

1994-present Embroiders professionally for Kala Raksha

Creates beadwork for members of Kachhi Rabari community

2008-09-Served as mentor at Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya

2010-Salaried internship for design sampling at Kala Raksha

2010 Attended Santa Fe International Folk Art Market and conducted workshops in the USA

EXHIBITIONS

2010- "Krishna" purchased for permanent collection of Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai

AWARDS

Best Presentation, Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya Class of 2007

Annexure 2

MEGHIBEN RUPA MERIYA

Sumrasar Sheikh
Ta. Bhuj
Kutch (India)
Tel. 91-2808-277237



CURRENT POSITION

Fiber Artist

EXPERIENCE

Learned embroidery in the traditional way, from her family in Ratnal, Kutch

Became known as an expert artisan

Designed patterns for Shrujan

2000 Joined Kala Raksha as patchwork artist

2001 Pioneered development of narrative art form

2010 Attended Santa Fe International Folk Art Market and conducted workshops in the USA

Exhibitions

Has created narrative appliqué and embroidery works since 2002

Among them are:

2002-“Earthquake 2001” for Resurgence exhibition, Manly Australia

2003- “My Life”- revised in 2009 and submitted for President’s award

2007- “The Coming of Better Health” for permanent collection of UNDP

2007- “Monsoon Night” received UNESCO Seal of Excellence award

2010- “Kutch is the Center of the World” a map of Kutch for Ilark Hotel, Bhuj

Publications

“My Life” in “Needle and Narrative: Stories on Cloth,” in International Gallerie, Vol. 9, No. 1, 2006.

Images and voice starred in the award winning animated film “Tanko Bole Chhe”



Thank you, Santa Fe International Folk Art Market, CGPL and Tata Power!

