

KATKRITI

Getting to the Roots

CRAFTS MUSEUM

The crafts museum set over a 30 years ago was started in the year 1950's to 60's by the renowned freedom fighter late Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay.

By the late 1980s, it had a substantial collection and in time, the museum gradually evolved and acquired space.

It was designed between 1970 and 1990 by the architect Charles Correa.

It is set by the Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India.

The museum is located facing the Purana Quila Complex.

The crafts museum is a repository and a celebration of handmade art. Handiwork continues to be a major activity across India and the abundant and diverse crafts traditions have produced myriad objects of exceptional beauty.



Above: A traditional piece of wall art in the Craft's Museum

Editor's Pick

Aditya Khandelwal



The visit to the Crafts Museum was an enriching experience filled with knowledge and beauty. While in today's world we are experiencing the effects of globalisation, it is sad to see that most of our youngsters today are drifting away from our own country's rich cultural heritage and adopting more of the western culture. Only a few practitioners of these amazing artworks remain and it is the duty and responsibility of the upcoming generation to help in the progress of the folk art of India and display it to the whole world. It is a worrying trend that there are only two families of artisans that exist today which practice the Patola Art Form.

"Adopting new trends is not a bad thing to and change is necessary but one should remain true to his/her roots."

Different States, Different Strokes

Shekhawati Paintings

RAJASTHAN



The region of Shekhawati in Rajasthan is remarkable for its wealth of mural paintings which adorn the walls of many buildings, including havelis. Until the mid 19th century the paints were mineral or vegetable pigments. Ochres dominated but in finer interior work red and white lead, cinnabar, indigo, lapis lazuli, copper carbonate, vivid Indian yellow. The lead pigments were prone to oxidation, blackening. Germany's industrial revolution created chemically synthesised pigments which were soon cheaply available.



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Bhil Paintings

MADHYA PRADESH



The rich cultural tradition of the Bhils of Madhya Pradesh is manifest in their rituals, their songs and dances, their community deities, tattoos, myths and lore. Their homes reveal an innate sense of aesthetics. Walls are plastered every year and decorated with clay relief work, mittichitra, and paintings. Their materials are simple, homemade – pigments extracted from the leaves and flowers of various plants, daubed on with brushes made of rag or a cotton swabs fastened to twigs of neem.



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Warli Paintings

MAHARASHTRA



THE WARLI TRIBE WITH THEIR extremely rudimentary wall paintings use a very basic graphic vocabulary: a circle, a triangle and a square.. The circle and triangle come from their observation of nature, the circle representing the sun and the moon, the triangle derived from mountains and pointed trees.. The central motif in these ritual paintings is surrounded by scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals. Human and animal bodies are represented by two triangles joined at the tip; the upper triangle depicts the trunk and the lower triangle the pelvis.



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Ajrakh

WHAT IS AJRAKH?

Ajrakh has been derived from the arabic word “ajrak” meaning colour blue.

Ajrakh (is a name given to a unique form of blockprinted shawls and tiles found in Sindh, Pakistan; Kutch, Gujarat; and Barmer, Rajasthan in India. These shawls display special designs and patterns made using block printing by stamps.

Common colours used while making these patterns may include but are not limited to blue, red, black, yellow and

The Ajrakh process takes place in 20 stages involving a multi-layered design done typically with the use of blue and red vegetable dyes. The practitioners of this craft are the Khatri, both Hindus and Muslims. Today Ajrakh is considered a symbol of identity for the high class textiles requiring precision. While the long winded process in making the traditional Ajrakh is considerably more expensive than the screen printing substitutes, its quality and depth of design mark out a distinct, sophisticated product.



Khel-mel Workshop



A four module workshop was conducted in collaboration with the Crafts Museum. Each 2.5 hour session is a dynamic combination of learning and hands on creative activity. Gond artist Gariba Singh Tekam and Naira Jansen lead the children. They ask “Who are the Gonds?

Where does their art come from? What and who do they paint? And why? How does their world view differ from my own?” They learn the techniques of Gond painting – creating their own “signature” patterns and making their own works which for display at the Museum. And during all the fun they get to know children from backgrounds very different to their own.

And they said...

On the visit to the Crafts museum, the reporter interacted with a few artisans who were taking part in the Ajrakh festival. The reporter discovered that most of the artisans came from families that have been practicing the art they display, and sell today for generations, and many came from villages where everyone was engaged in a similar form of artfolk.

Our next talk was with a group of great musicians from West Bengal who treated us with the Baul song a famous folk song of this State. The song was dedicated to the devas (gods) and had a soothing tune to it. The use of special instruments like Atthra and Dotarr in the musical hymn added a refreshing culture to the Bengali folk.



ATHITI TALK

"THIS PLACE LOOKS QUITE DESERTED" was the comment our reporter received from a Russian tourist highlighting the paucity of the visitors who visit the museum. The tourist also exclaimed that there was no comparison between the European arts and the Indian ones, revealing the interest foreigners display in their own culture which today, shockingly, many youngsters of India lack.



Left:
SERGEY
IVANOV

An artisan from Odisha displayed the Patachitra art which was primarily done by dyeing in beautiful natural colours of green, white red black and more. He also revealed that the price of each of his work was determined by the number of days for which the effort was put into to complete the masterpiece.



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