



Textile Museum of Canada

30 YEARS Celebrating Cloth, Culture and Art

MEDIA RELEASE

COLOUR & LIGHT: Embroidery from India and Pakistan

Exhibition at the Textile Museum of Canada

January 24 to July 8, 2007

Guest curated by Dale Gluckman

Opening reception: January 24, 6:30 to 8:00 pm – remarks at 6:45

Exhibition Sponsor:



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TORONTO - January 2007. An explosion of colour and pattern awaits visitors to the **Textile Museum of Canada's** new exhibition, *Colour & Light: Embroidery from India and Pakistan*. *Colour & Light* presents a dazzling display of richly embellished South Asian textiles from the 18th – 20th century. The refraction of **light** on silk threads, the subtle **colour** changes and the striking juxtaposition of positive and negative shapes transform the cloth in *Colour & Light* into something extraordinary.

Drawn primarily from the TMC's permanent collection of South Asian textiles, one of **the most significant collections in Canada**, *Colour & Light* will be the **first major exhibition of these stunning works**. South Asia is known for the beauty and diversity of its decoratively stitched cloth. Whether produced in male-dominated urban workshops or in the home by rural women and girls, embroidery served – and to a large extent still serves – multiple functions in secular and spiritual life.

Colour & Light speaks of the communicative power of needle and thread. The styles, motifs, colour combinations and stitching techniques are essential indicators of group affiliation and personal identity. Some of the most exquisitely embroidered textiles in this exhibition were meant to reflect the **wealth and influence of rulers and the elite**. Others were lavishly covered with brilliantly coloured silk threads and shiny mirrors to **identify brides and grooms**. The objects in this exhibition come from the modern countries of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh – a vast geographic area that shares a common history and culture yet is ethnically and environmentally diverse.

The exhibition will showcase textiles from a variety of communities throughout the region including the sophisticated and complex geometric patterns of Islamic traditions and the lively and imaginative representational motifs of Hindu artistic expression. Many pieces featured in *Colour & Light* are embellished with glass mirrors, beetle-wing casings, glass beads, seeds, silk tassels and an assortment of metal ornaments.

With the passage of time and the increasing availability of imported and machine-made goods, some of the outstanding examples of embroidery traditions represented in this exhibition are no longer practiced or are in imminent danger of disappearing. Others have been revived by interest from

Textile Museum of Canada
55 Centre Avenue (Dundas & University)
Toronto ON M5G 2H5
T (416) 599-5321 F (416) 599-2911
www.textilemuseum.ca
Transit: St. Patrick Station



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Museum Hours

Open 7 days a week 11 am – 5 pm
Wednesdays 11 am – 8 pm

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Western markets. In the past three decades, women's embroidery has become an income generating activity and a vehicle from improving women's education, health and social equality.

Colour & Light: Embroidery of India and Pakistan combines the innate and striking beauty of historic textiles with contemporary voices of the community. An in-gallery video installation, featuring **Hari Krishnan, Kiran Ahluwalia, Rashmi Varma and others**, brings personal commentaries to textiles traditionally made for clothing, household decoration and cultural expression, reflecting the multicultural environment of today's Canada.

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For additional information, interviews or images:

Contact Beth Sharpe at 416-599-5321 x2239 or email bethsharpe@textilemuseum.ca

The curator is available for interviews January 15 to 24.

About the Curator

Dale Carolyn Gluckman has over 20 years experience as a curator and department head in the Costume and Textile Department of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) where she specialized in Asian textiles and organized many exhibitions as well as co-authoring two major catalogues and winning several awards for excellence. She has degrees in art and costume history from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Dale has taught, published and lectured widely. She is currently an independent curator and museum consultant based in Los Angeles.

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PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Three-Part Lecture Series: The Arts of India

Wednesday January 17, February 28, March 21, 6:30 pm

Investigate the traditions, symbolism and influence of Indian art.

January 17, *Whose Sari Now? The Influence of India on Western Fashion*

Dale Gluckman, Independent Curator & Textile Consultant.

February 28, *At Home and the World: Textiles and Indian Art*

Dr. Stephen Inglis, Director General of Research and Collections at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.

March 21, *Darshan – Seeing the Divine: Hindu and Jain Art*

Sudharshan Duraiyappah, Scholar and Instructor at the University of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum.

Individual lectures: Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

All three lectures: Members \$21, Non-members \$26, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Tickets may be purchased at the TMC's front desk. Please arrive early, seating is limited.

Wintercity Family Day

Sunday January 28, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Come and let your eyes be dazzled by the beauty of embroidery. Have your hand painted with henna in the traditional body art of *mehndi*, and make your own piece of embroidery inspired by *Colour & Light*.

Free with admission.

Textile Seminar

Wednesday February 21, 6:30 pm

Enjoy a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at Indian and Pakistani artifacts from the TMC's collection with curators Roxane Shaughnessy and Natalia Nekrassova.

Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Advance registration is required, class size is limited. To register, call 416-599-5321 x 2221.

Dance and Music Performance: inDANCE, choreographed by Hari Krishnan

Wednesday March 14, 6:30 pm, Saturday March 17, 2:00 pm

Experience a modern dance work by Toronto based company, inDANCE, inspired by Indian mythology and created specially for the *Colour & Light* exhibition. The Saturday afternoon performance is family oriented.

Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Please arrive early, seating is limited.

Music Performance: Rez Abbasi Group featuring Kiran Ahluwalia

Wednesday April 4, 6:30 pm

Hear New York based jazz guitarist and composer Rez Abbasi perform his acclaimed blend of jazz and Indian music from his latest CD release *Bazaar*. This performance features Juno-award winning vocalist Kiran Ahluwalia.

Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.

Please arrive early, seating is limited.



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Culinary Talk: Mangoes and Curry Leaves with Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid
Wednesday May 9, 6:30 pm

Join the authors of *Mangoes and Curry Leaves: Culinary Travels through the Great Subcontinent* for an illustrated talk about their travels, their textiles, and a sampling of delicious South Asian finger foods. Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid are the authors of four other award-winning cookbooks.
Members \$12, Non-members \$15, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.
Please arrive early, seating is limited.

Film Screening and Poetry Reading: Seeing Red, Hearing Red with Mitra Sen and Rishma Dunlop

Wednesday June 6, 6:30 pm

Explore the meanings and metaphors of the colour red in South Asian art and culture through a screening of the family film *just a little red dOt* by award-winning filmmaker and educator Mitra Sen, and a reading of poetry from *Red Silk: An Anthology of South Asian Canadian Women Poets* and other works by Dr. Rishma Dunlop, poet, writer and professor at York University.
Members \$8, Non-members \$10, Full-time students Pay-What-You-Can.
Please arrive early, seating is limited.

Adult Group Tours: In My Grandmother's Closet and Colour & Light Embroidery 101
Two-Hour Interactive Tour

Take a specialized group tour led by a TMC curator.

Tour 1: In My Grandmother's Closet

Discover the rich cultural histories of the textiles in the exhibition and bring a small "memory cloth" of your own, to share your stories.

Tour 2: Colour & Light Embroidery 101

Explore the world of embroidery through the textiles in the exhibition, and then experiment with a small sample of your own design.

The TMC requires groups to register for these tours at least two weeks in advance of the visit.

Each Tour: \$200, minimum 10, maximum 20 participants. To book, call 416-599-5321 x 2221

