

Craft Resurgence in India Post independence

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Abstract

Indian aesthetics have always been associated with being highly decorative and ornamental. The craftsmanship of Indian textiles has always been appreciated and acclaimed for its refined skills throughout history by various travellers, invaders and rulers. The revival of craft in Post-Independent India has seen designers playing a significant role as interventionists(Kaul,19). This collaboration largely results in a refined product and style however, it has also been responsible for degrading the inbuilt instincts of innovation and improvisation in craft.

This project aims to establish the contribution of torch bearers who played a vital role in craft's revival for post-independence India. It includes Kamladevi Chhatopadhyay, Martand Singh, Jyotindra Jain, Rajeev Sethi and Gangabai whose design intervention led to the development of the existing craft sector. It documents the journey of craft and its purpose while setting its context with respect to the product along-with its relationship with the community. Malkha, DAMA, Khamir, Shrujan and Kalaraksha are organizations that have supported and sustained the craft communities. This legacy is carried forward by contemporary designer labels and brands like Maku, Gangamaki, Avani, Peoli, WeareKal, Injiri, Pero,11:11 cell design, Gaurang Shah, RawMango and Metaphor Racha. (Jay,2015).

The primary data has been collected from field visits, exhibitions, workshops and lecture series. The brand study has been carried out through social media channels and personal interviews with a few designers/organizations. The data is further classified and compiled into divisions that resonate with the nature of contribution from each individual/teams.

The following points establish the evolution of purpose and identity of Craft:

- Personal usage and Barter
- Religious and Socio-cultural practices
- Commissioning by rulers and emperors
- Nationalism
- Exhibition
- Designers and NGO's
- Emporiums, Craft bazaars and Self Help Groups
- Resurgence and Revival
- Contemporary Designers (Luxury and pret)

Respect and belief in the dialogue between two makers of ideas as an expression of artistic tension is a creative space; which the designer labels and brands have been able to capture. This helps to sustain the craft, its people, revive skills and bring back age old processes/ techniques.

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