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CE-D-5-54  
 Textiles and ornamental  
 arts of India.

# THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Date October 3, 1956

To: Porter (Beth: Please note)

Re: Dore Ashton

From: Helen

Dore Ashton says her schedule is as follows: Monday through Wednesday, every week: New York Times, Lackawanna 4-1000, ext. 8059, can be reached in afternoons. Otherwise, at home, MU 5- 6559.

*Helen*

...the exhibition, directed by ...  
 ...selected ...  
 ...formerl...  
 ...Girard...  
 ...India, England and this country are include...  
 ...jewelry from today's bazaars in India. The...  
 ...auspices of the Museum's International Exhi...  
 ...McCray and has been installed in the Mus...  
 ...staff under the technical supervision of ...  
 ...The exhibition installation, designed...  
 ...ag'nary bazaar or market-place. Twelve go...  
 ...of water over which hang scores of fanciful...  
 ...years, in a profusion of colors and patter...  
 ...brocades, intricately handwoven and tie-dy...  
 ...wools and beautifully patterned embroideri...  
 ...ary artisans of former rulers to the tradi...  
 ...Adjoining this space is a special display...  
 ...designs have enjoyed world prestige for ce...  
 ...In a separate treasure room, under a...  
 ...hundreds of pieces of the finest jewelry...  
 ...diamonds and crystal in settings which va...  
 ...silver filigree, together with rare 16th...  
 ...carved and inlaid jade.  
 ...Another room is devoted primarily to...  
 ...of steel inlaid with silver, vessels of b...  
 ...cradle, toys of painted wood and clay, ori...  
 ...bouquets and wall decorations of pith and



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	IC / IP	I.C.21

APRIL 13, 1955, 10:30 a.m.

TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF INDIA, AS VIEWED BY MODERN ART.

Nearly a thousand examples of brilliant saris, shawls, precious jewelry and rugs, rugs and simple handbags from INDIA will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, from April 13 through June 12 in an exhibition, TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF INDIA, the most comprehensive showing of these traditional and contemporary native crafts ever presented in this country.

The exhibition, directed by Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, was chosen from material selected here and abroad by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., formerly of the Museum staff, and installed by the well-known architect Alexander Girard. Rare historic fabrics and ornaments from Museums and private collections in India, England and this country are included as well as contemporary textiles and jewelry from today's bazaars in India. The exhibition was assembled under the auspices of the Museum's International Exhibitions Program, directed by Porter McCray and has been installed in the Museum's entire first floor by a large Museum staff under the technical supervision of Robert Faeth.

The exhibition installation, designed by Mr. Girard, is in the form of an imaginary bazaar or market-place. Twelve gold columns surround a fifty-foot long pool of water over which hang scores of fanciful saris made during the past two hundred years, in a profusion of colors and patterns. They include rich gold and silver brocades, intricately handwoven and tie-dyed silks, gossamer cottons, feather-soft wools and beautifully patterned embroideries ranging from those made by the hereditary artisans of former rulers to the traditional folk-embroideries still made today. Adjoining this space is a special display of the shawls of Kashmir whose elaborate designs have enjoyed world prestige for centuries.

In a separate treasure room, under a multicolored canopy, are displayed hundreds of pieces of the finest jewelry, many set with rubies, emeralds, pearls, diamonds and crystal in settings which vary from hammered gold to minute gold and silver filigree, together with rare 16th and 17th century enamels and vessels of carved and inlaid jade.

Another room is devoted primarily to folk-crafts: rugs, embroideries, objects of steel inlaid with silver, vessels of brass and copper, a brilliantly laquered cradle, toys of painted wood and clay, ornaments used in religious celebrations, bouquets and wall decorations of pith and paper kites.

more .....

ICE-D-5-54  
Textiles and ornamental  
Arts of India.

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

-9-

...are arranged with legends of contemporary arts and crafts ... available for ...  
...one of the most literary objects is a 19th century miniature in wood of a ...  
...titled "The Englishman". This is equipped with sound effects unfortunately no ...  
...linear narrative, rendering the roar of the tiger and the Englishman's groan.

As many of the fabrics in the exhibition were designed to be worn by women, ...  
...manikins have been placed in the show wearing saris and the adornments which ...  
...are the necessary complements of Indian fabrics. The manikins were dressed by ...  
...Mrs. Margie Grant.

Marcelle Wheeler, who conceived the exhibition during a visit to India more than ...  
...a year ago, is editing an illustrated book on the exhibition which will be published ...  
...by the Museum later this year, with texts by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar of Bombay, a special- ...  
...ist in Indian textile design, and by John Irwin, Assistant Keeper of the Oriental ...  
...Collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, from which several hundred ...  
...objects have been borrowed.

Mr. Wheeler explains the scope of purpose of the exhibition as follows:

"Although I had first visited India twenty years ago, I felt when I returned ...  
...last year that a country which had then been mysteriously somnolent and apathetic ...  
...had, since its independence, come amazingly to life. I encountered everywhere an ...  
...enthusiastic desire to improve living standards and provide better educational facil- ...  
...ities. The capitol of New Delhi has transformed the former Viceroy's Palace into a ...  
...National Museum; there is also a new National Museum of Modern Art, and a Crafts ...  
...Museum is in formation.

"One of the most significant new enterprises is the All India Handicraft Board, ...  
...under the chairmanship of Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, without whose assistance ...  
...this New York exhibition could never have been realized. Its purpose is to guide ...  
...the millions of skilled native craftsmen in the way of traditional design and to ...  
...publicize and market these folk arts in India and other countries.

"The major creativity of India in the past has been shrines and temples with a ...  
...fantastic profusion of architectural sculpture, impossible to move from the original ...  
...site.

"But many a visitor to India, when asked what has given him the greatest pleas- ...  
...ure, after speaking first of the beauty of the temples and their sculpture, will ...  
...then point out the beauty of the multitudes of people in their fairy-tale raiment of ...  
...all the colors of the rainbow. Perhaps nowhere else in the world is there a folk ...  
...art so representative and symbolic of the nation as a whole.

more .....

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore





The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

..No. 27

Page 5

Collections at our disposal, to Dr. Stella Krausz, and to the following people in India who have given their invaluable support to this undertaking:

Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Chairman, All India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.  
 Prof. Humayun Kabir, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.  
 Arthur S. Lall, Permanent Representative from India to the United Nations.  
 Dr. Moti Chandra, Director, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay.  
 Dr. A. Ghosh, Director General of Archaeology, Gov't of India, New Delhi.  
 Pritwish Hoogy, Curator, Crafts Museum, New Delhi.  
 Mrs. Bharat Raa, New Delhi.  
 Mrs. Gira Sarabhai, Ahmedabad.  
 Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, Bombay.  
 C.H. Bhisaya, Secretary, All-India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi.  
 Mrs. B.K. Nehru, New Delhi.  
 Mrs. Prem Beri, All India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi.  
 L.C. Jain, General Secretary, The India Cooperative Union.  
 K. R. Kripalani, Secretary to the Minister of Education, Gov't of India.  
 Mr. Nityanand Kanungo, Deputy Minister for Village Industries, Gov't of India, New Delhi.  
 Thomas B. Kheen, American International Association for Economic and Social Development, New Delhi."

LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad  
 Chicago Natural History Museum  
 Cleveland Museum of Art  
 The Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration  
 Crafts Museum, New Delhi  
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
 The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston  
 Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay  
 Textile Museum, Washington  
 Victoria & Albert Museum  
 Alexander Girard  
 All India Handicrafts Board, New Delhi  
 Mrs. Ruth R. Goddard  
 Mr. Tore Hakansson  
 The Heeramaneck Gallery  
 The Indian Co-operative Union, New Delhi  
 Mrs. Pupul Jayakar  
 Mr. Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.  
 Mr. Thomas Keeln  
 Mrs. Samuel Marx  
 Mr. and Mrs. Irwin Miller  
 Mme. Marguerite Hamara  
 Mrs. B. K. Nehru  
 Mrs. Dorothy Norman  
 Mrs. Sheila Bharat Ram  
 Mrs. John G. Rolph  
 SMT Manorama Sarabhai  
 Mrs. Donald Straus  
 Mr. Glenway Wescott  
 Mrs. L. B. Wescott

Photographs and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York.

NOTE: Information on importing any of the contemporary fabrics or objects in the exhibition can be obtained from the Indian Trade Center, 19 East 49 Street, New York City.

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-9-

Architect Andre Girard's installation was singularly successful, with nearly every article describing in detail the effective design for the exhibition. Some newspapers carried descriptions of the installation gleaned from the press release, while others used eye-witness reports loaded with commending adjectives. Only one critic, writing in a professional art magazine, objected to the lavish installation:

"Beyond, gold columns surround a long pool of water over which ~~xxxxx~~ hang row upon row of beautiful saris ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxx~~... The necessity for a body of water in a display of textiles is dubious; it is a handsome but irrelevant distraction. Indeed, ~~xxxx~~ in the entire installation designed by architect Andre Girard the Museum reaches an epitome of pure showmanship more worthy of a Hollywood set designer than a cultural institution...One has the ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ impression that the Museum does not feel these items capable of attracting interest unless they are frantically promoted by elegant display."

Martica S<sub>u</sub>win in Arts Digest, now Arts

Among enthusiastic ~~xxxxxxxx~~ reactions were:

"Special enchantment of the exhibition is the appealing views offered by an arrangement of fabrics hanging in long lengths over a fifty foot pool surrounded by twelve gold columns. The eye sees through and around the textiles and is drawn through inviting vistas which seem to lead mysteriously somewhere into nowhere....The other convincing touch is a group of wax figures...The effect of all this is to take the visitor East with the setting sun."

Harriet Morrison in the New York Herald Tribune

"The richness of color and pattern guided architect Alexander Girard in designing the exhibition...Not among the majority who feel that the most effective way to render the brilliance of particular objects is to place them in a modest, neutral environment, Girard creates settings in the same mood as the 'things' and builds a new, vaster sensation out of them."

J.A. in Interiors

"Many of the exhibits themselves are of a surpassing beauty and the artistic way in which they have been installed has added greatly to the telling cumulative effect."

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-10-

There were many general statements on the esthetic quality of the exhibition, but few direct comments on either selection of significance of the items included. A thoughtful discussion of the quality of Indian crafts by authority Stella Kramrisch was based on the exhibition:

"This concept of art is clearly mirrored in the current exhibition of Indian textiles at the Museum of Modern Art. It shows admirably how ~~xxx~~ ancient crafts have been translating age-old rites and traditions into the rich and colorful terms of everyday esthetics."

Stella Kramrisch in The New York Times

In a technical craft journal, an article stressed the symbolic significance of textile design from ancient periods to the present ~~Monroe Wheeler~~ and used extensive quotes from ~~Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.~~ pointing out that the exhibition gave an esthetic and historic insight into the ~~xx~~ ornamental arts of India. But beyond these few instances, the exhibition received little serious, analytic consideration of its historical or esthetic qualities. Only Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. suggested the implications:

"An exhibition of Indian textiles such as the one the writer assembled for the Museum of Modern art is more than a large, delightful jumble of rather intriguing, novel colors, patterns, textures, sparkles and shapes--it is a portion of India's life and culture from as near the core as material objects can lie."

Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. in Art News

Frequent references were made in various publications of the stimulating effect the exhibition would have on trade. Indian newspapers, ~~xxxx~~ especially, signalled the occasion. A feature picture story in Life magazine noted that:

"The East has been inching up on the U.S. for several years. ..The whole movement culminated last~~xxx~~ month when New York's Museum of Modern Art, whose past shows have had an historic effect on style, used its whole main floor to exhibit textiles."

Life

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-11-

Indian journalist K. Balaraman, wrote several articles ,based on the exhibition, mentioning the commercial implications:

"Because of the portentialities of distinctive Indian Manufactures, the exhibition of Indian txxtiles which the New York Museum of Modern Art has organized has been extremely timely and ~~for~~ fortunate event for India's trade with the United States."

K. Balaraman in the Hindu, Madras

"The exhibition of Indian textiles and ornamental arts organized by the Museum of Modern Art has helped give considerable impetus to the sari-dress demand."

K. Balaraman in the Nagpur Times, Central India

"The exhibition of Indian textiles and ornamental arts in New York... appears to have given considerable impetus to the demand for sari-dress patterns in particular and to Indian textiles in general."

Capital, Calcutta, India

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

The Museum of Modern Art  
International Program

"Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India" Shown at the Museum  
of Modern Art in New York from April 13 to September 25, 1955

This exhibition of nearly a thousand saris, shawls, precious jewels, rugs and temple hangings was one of two Anniversary Year exhibitions organized under the International Program in cooperation with other departments of the museum. It was shown at the museum from April 13th to September 25th, having been extended four months beyond its original one-month schedule. Subsequently selections from the exhibition circulated to eight institutions in the United States and will be seen later this season in three more.

Conceived as a celebration of the revival under India's new Commonwealth status of some of her oldest native crafts, the show included rare historic fabrics and ornaments from museums and private collections in India, England and the United States. In order to gather material, the International Program sent Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. and architect Alexander Girard on a six-week tour to Great Britain and India. Following Mr. Kaufmann's resignation from the Museum, Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications, assumed direction of the exhibition which was installed by Mr. Girard.

A private preview of the exhibition for contributing members was held April 11th, attended by India's Ambassador to the United States His Excellency Gaganvilkari Lalubhai Mehta, United Nations and consular officials as well as other members of the New York Indian community.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-2-

The exhibition, which drew more than 300,000 visitors, was recorded in a color film made by Charles and Ray Eames, and in a book, "Textiles and Ornaments of India" edited by Monroe Wheeler with text by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar and John Irwin.

Prompted by the exhibition, the Museum's Junior Council arranged a series of three evening programs, "The Living Arts of India" which were so popular they had to be repeated. The evening devoted to music, introduced by Yehudi Menuhin, featured Ali Akbar ~~Khan~~<sup>Khan</sup> playing the ancient stringed instrument the "sarov". A record of this performance was pressed by Angel Records and released with program notes <sup>compiled</sup> by the Junior Council. The second program featured Shanta Rao, a classical Indian dancer, and the third marked the world premiere of a film on Bengal life, "The Story of Apu and Durga" produced by Satyajit Ray. The Indian ~~mus~~ artists were brought to the United States by the Junior Council together with "Ombibus", the television workshop of the Ford foundation, on which they appeared with Yehudi Menuhin.

In addition to these major activities, there were many small concerts, dinners and lectures arranged in honor of the exhibition.

A Summary of Press Reaction to the Exhibition Attached.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

Summary of Press Reaction To the Exhibition "Textiles And Ornamental Arts of India" held at the Museum of Modern Art from April 13 to September 25, 1955.

(The exhibition "Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India", an Anniversary Year exhibition organized under the International Program, shown at the New York Museum of Modern Art from April 13 to September 25, 1955, received what might be called a phenomenal response from the press. More than a dozen aspects of the exhibition were covered by newspapers throughout the United States. An extensive press was given also in the English-language newspapers of India. Picture stories and articles based on the exhibition (frequently lavishly illustrated with color reproductions) appeared in many magazines. The exhibition has already been seen in eight of the ten cities in <sup>its</sup> ~~the~~ circulating itinerary and was ~~enthusiastically acclaimed~~ <sup>covered</sup> by ~~many~~ local newspapers.

#### I- Volume and Nature of Coverage

(The unusually rich possibilities inherent in an exhibition straddling, as it does, several fields, <sup>among them</sup> ~~such as~~ fashion, design, textiles <sup>and</sup> jewelry, were totally exploited by the press. Several factors ~~mentioned above~~ helped bring the flood of response. Such a broad survey of the arts of India had never before been undertaken. Furthermore, the demand of the public resulted in the

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-2-

prolongation of the exhibition for five months, during which time the press became aware of the <sup>increasing</sup> news value of the show. Finally, India is little known in America ~~in~~ in terms of its culture. The myth of its exoticism spurred the curiosity of both ~~the~~ public and press.

[A striking proportion of the coverage ~~was~~ resulted from the special events undertaken at the time of the show. The three evenings of music, dance and the film sponsored by the Junior council and repeated by popular demand received couminous coverage from the daily press in New York. This report, however, is limited to articles dealing with the exhibition.

[Without question, the strongest interest was shown in specialized fields. As early as February, the New York Times made an announcement highlighting the fabrics to be shown in the show. Similar announcements in February appeared in Womens Wear Daily and the New York Herald Tribune. At the time of the exhibition, the April 13th issue of the Times carried a review by Betty Pepis stressing the <sup>show's</sup> influence on fashion and home furnishings. <sup>and the May 8th magazine section of the TIMES had a picture story by Betty Pepis on Crafts.</sup> The April 17th issue of the Times magazine carried a story <sup>Dr.</sup> by <sup>A</sup> Stella Kramrisch on the arts and crafts of India. The New York Herald Tribune, April 13, spotlighted the textiles in terms of fashion. Similar fashion-~~oriented~~ oriented articles appeared in the World Telegram and Sun April 13, the Washington Post and Times Herald May 16, the Corinthian of Corinth, Mississippi, April 21, and Women's Wear Daily.

The Womens Wear Daily <sup>gave</sup> ~~showed~~ sustained attention to the show in running two articles in the April 15 and 22 issues on the jewelry, and two on textiles and their fashion applications in the April 13th and June 7th issues.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

-3-

Aside from the local newspapers, syndicated items were extensively picked up by out-of-town papers.

Specialized magazines devoted to crafts, fashions and interior design gave ~~various~~ large spreads to the exhibition. Feature ~~stories~~ stories were carried in the ~~April issue of~~ ~~the~~ ~~May~~ June issue of Craft Horizons; the summer issue of Handweaver and Craftsman; the summer issue of American Fabrics; the June issue of Interiors; the June issue of Interior Design and the April issue of Industrial Design. In the art magazines, a major feature appeared in the April issue of Art News while a review appeared in the May issue of Arts. The men's magazine Gentry featured the exhibition in a cover and inside story in the summer issue, and Life magazine included a color photo and caption in a general story of Indian fashions.

Amusing secondary stories concerned with specific and out-of-the-way aspects of the exhibition appeared in the Menu and Travel Guide, in the World Telegram and Sun July 22, announcing the influence ~~of~~ of the show on the designers of Macy's displays; in the Los Angeles Times which carried a long interview with an importer who had brought in a number of the fabrics seen in the show, and in the Santa Fé New Mexican which carried items about the rôle of local architect André Girard in organizing the exhibition.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-4-

(Many columns were given over to thoughtful discussions both of the exhibition and its possible significance for India in the major English-language papers of India, and Singapore. In the Indian Daily Mail April 24th edition in Singapore, a full-column descriptive article appeared date-lined New York. The Times of India in Bombay, May 29th, carried a long, analytic review by Dorothy Norman. The Hindu of Madras carried a general review by its correspondent K. Balaraman in its April 14th issue, and later, an article by the same author pointing out the interest created by the exhibition in the world of fashion. ~~Discuss~~ Mr. Balaraman also wrote one of several commentaries based on trade possibilities stimulated by the exhibition in the June 29th issue of Madras. Other articles on the trade aspects appeared in the Capital of Calcutta and the Madras Mail. Nearly all the Indian publications were jubilant in noting the vivid interest in America <sup>in</sup> exportable items.

(Illustrations used in conjunction with stories on the exhibition were ~~presented in abundance~~ abundant. Notable was the unprecedented number of color plates. Art News carried one; Craft Horizons a color cover and some 15 black and white reproductions; Gentry carried an excellent full-page color reproduction of a textile and numerous black-white illustrations; Interiors carried six color reproductions of textiles and a number of black and white photographs of jewelry, and Life <sup>(May 16)</sup> carried a color photograph of saris seen at the opening of the exhibition.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

-5-

The Success of the Exhibition

While the exhibition circulated throughout the United States, local newspapers ran articles and reproductions, but not as extensively as might have been expected given the exceptional New York response. Among those papers carried reproductions ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> the Chattanooga News-Free press in Tennessee; the Oneonta Star, New York; <sup>and</sup> the Houston Chronicle, ~~Texas~~ <sup>Texas</sup>.

Active articles in the detailed press release which accompanied the exhibition. Others and correspondents usually use free fashion and women's departments who enthusiastically declared the importance and excellence of the exhibition.

"Miller and Will decide the eye as not enters the active Indian pattern just installed on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art... However, unlike the artist alone that might be found in India today, the museum version contains only carefully selected examples..."

John Peck, The New York Times

"The splendor of the original that has been captured in detail is fine by the Museum of Modern Art... A handsome setting for what is said to be the most comprehensive of its kind ever presented in this country."

John Peck, The World-Telegram and Sun

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

\* \*  
-6-

II- Summary of Comments on the Exhibition

The exhibition , installed to suggest an oriental bazaar , drew unqualified applause from all but one organ. Writers tended to give way to unbridled enthusiasm, extolling the sensuous beauties of the show and describing its contents. Except for a few writers in the Indian press, there were almost no ~~critical~~ <sup>analytic</sup> commentaries. A number of papers in the United States based descriptive articles on the detailed press release which accompanied the exhibition. Others sent correspondents--usually ~~xxx~~ from fashion and women's departments-- who ~~xxxxxxxx~~ unanimously declared the importance and excellence of the exhibition!

"Glitter and gilt dazzle the eye as one enters the native Indian bazaar just installed on the first floor of the Museum of Modern Art...However, unlike the market place that might be found in India today, the museum version contains only carefully selected examples..."

Betty Pepis, The New York Times

"The splendor of the so-called East has been captured in capsule form by the Museum of Modern Art...A handsome setting for what is said to be the most comprehensive of its kind ever presented in this country."

Lois Maxon, the World-Telegram and Sun

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

-7-

"The people of India seem to see with astounding taste, skill, artistry and clarity. The American beholder is swept with ~~admiration~~ admiration for the fantasy now displayed in the "Arts of India" show in the Museum of Modern Art.

Here to stay until June 12, the living arts of India are ~~revealed~~ vealed in lavish color and magnificent settings as only the museum can do...this magnificent display is one which should be seen.

Alice Hughes, the Times, Hartford, Conn.

"Go west, young ~~man~~ displayman go west--on 53rd Street to see the town's most exciting display of fabrics, jewelry and ~~for~~ fashions. "

Lester Gaba, in Women's Wear Daily

"One of the most exquisite displays of native arts of any country to be held in New York opened today at the Museum of Modern Art....Some of the objects on display are of such beauty that they evoked ~~the~~ gasps of astonishment from the select group of invitees who attended the preview last week....a triumph for the museum's staff of experts."

Indian Daily Mail Singapore

"There is a beautifully satisfying logic about the way in which the Museum of Modern Art set about assembling its current exhibition of Indian textiles and jewelry."

Dorothy Norman in Times of India, Bombay

( The fashion press was naturally delighted with the exhibition which highlighted fabrics and jewelry . Nearly all the reporters noted the potential influence of the exhibition on styles.

"Whats important to American eyes in viewing this handsome exhibit is the shadow of the future its casts on our latest fashions for living. "

Alice Hughes, the Times Hartford, Conn.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-8-

"The arts and crafts of India are already influencing both fashions and home furnishing in this country...But if the audience at ~~the~~ a preview earlier this week is any indication, the influence ~~is~~ will become even more emphatic."

Betty Pepis, the New York Times

"Designers will find inspiration in the collection of traditional jewelry ..that opened this week at the Museum of Modern Art."

Women's Wear Daily

"Cocktail and theatre hats inspired by the recent Indian exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art form a provocative group introduced by Alice May Hats..."

Women's Wear Daily

In the magazine field, a serious prediction was made in an extensive article based on the exhibition :

"The brilliant display of Indian textiles and handicrafts at the Museum of Modern Art...focuses interest on the art treasures of the great subcontinent of India. Western civilization has been familiar with some aspects of Indian philosophy and literature for the past two centuries, but has thus far only an ~~inkling~~ ~~inkling~~ inkling of Indian graphic ~~accomplishments~~ accomplishments.....With the increase in communication and ~~and~~ cultural exchange ..the influence of Indian art may be expected to expand and exert a subtle pressure in the spheres of the fine arts and industrial design. Through the greater accessibility of private and national collections and traveling loan exhibitions such as the Museum of Modern Art's present showing, the splendor of the Orient will come to enrich American design."

Gentry

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-9-

Architect André Girard's installation was singularly successful, with nearly every article describing in detail the effective design for the exhibition. Some newspapers carried descriptions of the installation gleaned from the press release, while others used eye-witness reports loaded with commending adjectives. Only one critic, writing in a professional art magazine, objected to the lavish installation:

"Beyond, gold columns surround a long pool of water over which ~~hang~~ hang row upon row of beautiful saris ~~in a row~~... The necessity for a body of water in a display of textiles is dubious; it is a handsome but irrelevant distraction. Indeed, ~~the~~ in the entire installation designed by architect André Girard the Museum reaches an epitome of pure showmanship more worthy of a Hollywood set designer than a cultural institution...One has the ~~frustrating~~ impression that the Museum does not feel these items capable of attracting interest unless they are frantically promoted by elegant display."

Martica Sgwin in Arts Digest, now Arts

Among enthusiastic ~~reactions~~ reactions were:

"Special enchantment of the exhibition is the appealing views offered by an arrangement of fabrics hanging in long lengths over a fifty foot pool surrounded by twelve gold columns. The eye sees through and around the textiles and is drawn through inviting vistas which seem to lead mysteriously somewhere into nowhere....The other convincing touch is a group of wax figures...The effect of all this is to take the visitor East with the setting sun."

Harriet Morrison in the New York Herald Tribune

"The richness of color and pattern guided architect Alexander Girard in designing the exhibition...Not among the majority who feel that the most effective way to render the brilliance of particular objects is to place them in a modest, neutral environment, Girard creates settings in the same mood as the 'things' and builds a new, vaster sensation out of them."

J.A. in Interiors

"Many of the exhibits themselves are of a surpassing beauty and the artistic way in which they have been installed has added greatly to the telling cumulative effect."

Indian Daily Mail, Singapore

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

-10-

There were many general statements on the esthetic quality of the exhibition, but few direct comments on either selection of significance of the items included. A thoughtful discussion of the quality of Indian crafts by authority <sup>Dr.</sup> Stella Kramrisch was based on the exhibition:

"This concept of art is clearly mirrored in the current exhibition of Indian textiles at the Museum of Modern Art. It shows admirably how ~~xxx~~ ancient crafts have been translating age-old rites and traditions into the rich and colorful terms of everyday esthetics."

Stella Kramrisch in The New York Times

In a technical craft journal, an article stressed the symbolic significance of textile design from ancient periods to the present and used extensive quotes from ~~Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.~~ <sup>Monroe Wheeler</sup>, pointing out that the exhibition gave an esthetic and historic insight into the ~~xx~~ ornamental arts of India. But beyond these few instances, the exhibition received little serious, analytic consideration of its historical or esthetic qualities. Only Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. <sup>cultural</sup> pointedly suggested the implications:

"An exhibition of Indian textiles such as the one the writer assembled for the Museum of Modern art is more than a large, delightful jumble of rather intriguing, novel colors, patterns, textures, sparkles and shapes--it is a portion of India's life and culture from as near the core as material objects can lie."

Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. in Art News

Frequent references were made in various publications of the stimulating effect the exhibition would have on trade. Indian newspapers, ~~xxxx~~ <sup>Also</sup> especially, signalled the occasion. A feature picture story in Life magazine noted that:

"The East has been inching up on the U.S. for several years. ..The whole movement culminated last ~~xxx~~ month when New York's Museum of Modern Art, whose past shows have had an historic effect on style, used its whole main floor to exhibit textiles."

Life

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-2-

The exhibition, which drew more than 300,000 visitors, was recorded in a color film made by Charles and Ray Eames, and in a book, "Textiles and Ornaments of India" edited by Monroe Wheeler with text by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar and John Irwin.

Prompted by the exhibition, the Museum's Junior Council arranged a series of three evening programs, "The Living Arts of India" which were so popular they had to be repeated. The evening devoted to music, introduced by Yehudi Menuhin, featured Ali Akbar Khan playing the ancient stringed instrument the sarod. A record of this performance was pressed by Angel Records and released with program notes by the Junior Council. The second program featured Shanta Rao, a classical Indian dancer, and the third marked the world premiere of a film on Bengal life, "The Story of Apu and Durga" produced by Satyajit Ray. The Indian artists were brought to the United States by the Junior Council together with "Omnibus", the television workshop of the Ford foundation, on which they appeared with Yehudi Menuhin.

In addition to these major activities, there were many small concerts, dinners and lectures arranged in honor of the exhibition.

A Summary of Press Reaction to the Exhibition Attached.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C.21

-11-

Indian journalist K. Balaraman, wrote several articles ,based on the exhibition, mentioning the commercial implications:

"Because of the potentialities of distinctive Indian Manufactures, the exhibition of Indian textiles which the New York Museum of Modern Art has organized has been extremely timely and ~~an~~ fortunate event for India's trade with the United States."

K. Balaraman in the Hindu, Madras

"The exhibition of Indian textiles and ornamental arts organized by the Museum of Modern Art has helped give considerable impetus to the sari-dress demand."

K. Balaraman in the Nagpur Times, Central India

"The exhibition of Indian textiles and ornamental arts in New York,... appears to have given considerable impetus to the demand for sari-dress patterns in particular and to Indian textiles in general."

Capital, Calcutta, India

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

ICE-D-5-54

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART****11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.****TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MODERN TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF INDIA

The brilliant hues and skilled craftsmanship of the Orient characterize the exhibition MODERN TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTAL ARTS OF INDIA, on view at \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_. Produced and circulated by the International Program of The Museum of Modern Art, with the cooperation of the All-India Handicraft Board, this exhibition was selected from a comprehensive showing of traditional and contemporary native crafts of India, held at the Museum in New York in the Summer of 1955.

Intricately hand-loomed saris with elaborate border designs, gossamer cottons, richly colored silks, and gold and multicolored embroideries are among the fabrics included. Though all are of contemporary workmanship, they evidence the extraordinary vitality of the textile tradition in India, which was already famous in ancient times and has maintained its continuity for over 5,000 years. As pointed out by Monroe Wheeler, who directed the exhibition in New York, the influence of these fabrics is evidenced by the number of Indian words in the English language: sash and shawl, pyjama and dungaree, calico, chintz, khaki, gingham, bandana.

The textiles in the exhibition can be generally divided into two main classifications: court fabrics, based on the work of hereditary artisans of former rulers, and village fabrics, embodying the traditional motifs that have been used for centuries in folk-weaving and embroidery.

Differences of habitat and custom have stimulated the originality and ingenuity of the native craftsmen and led to marked regional differences in technique, color and design. Among the techniques represented in the exhibition are block-printing, in which the color is applied with blocks cut in wood and stamped onto the cloth; resist-dyeing, in which parts of the cloth are treated with a wax that prevents the cloth from absorbing the dye; ikat, in which the thread is colored before the cloth is woven and the design appears as the weaving proceeds, and tie-dye, in which wax or starched thread is wound many times around the portion of the cloth not to be dyed.

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	IC/IP	I.C.21

Supplementing the textiles are gold and silver jewelry, festival ornaments or costume accessories like headpieces embroidered with mirrors, sequins or stones, and garlands made from paper of pith. Dolls and household items like place mats and a filigreed tray made with grains of rice round out the display.

11/2/55

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

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11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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October 1, 1954

No 83

### MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ANNOUNCES FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION

#### OF FABRICS; COSTUME AND JEWELRY FROM INDIA

A major exhibition of TEXTILES AND JEWELRY FROM INDIA will be shown at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in April and May, 1955 as part of the 25th Anniversary program, René d'Harnoncourt, Director of the Museum, announced today. Organized under the Museum's International Program of fostering cultural exchange among nations, the exhibition is intended to celebrate the revival under India's new Commonwealth status of some of her oldest native crafts, known and admired in the West since the time of the Roman Empire. It is the outgrowth of numerous discussions extending over a period of years between the Museum of Modern Art, on the one hand, and interested Indian authorities, connoisseurs and collectors, on the other.

TEXTILES AND JEWELRY FROM INDIA will feature historical textiles of several centuries, as well as outstanding modern fabrics chosen for their brilliance of coloring, perfection of craftsmanship and significance from the point of view of modern design. Since so much of Indian weaving and embroidery has been devoted to the elaboration for the costume, many of the fabrics chosen will be displayed draped and combined as in use, accompanied by jewelry and other accessories. Decorative fabrics and animal trappings will also be included.

Edgar Kaufmann, Jr., Director of Good Design for the Museum of Modern Art, arrived today in Bombay on a 6-week trip to Great Britain, Europe and India to assemble material for the exhibition. He will be joined by Alexander Girard, noted American designer and architect, who in addition to assisting Mr. Kaufmann in selecting material will also design and install the exhibition at the Museum. Examples of historical fabrics and jewelry from India will be chosen in consultation with experts at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, one of the world's outstanding museums of fine and applied arts, drawing on that Museum's own unrivaled collection and on private and public collections throughout the world. The modern textiles, to be sought mostly in India itself with the aid of patrons and collectors, government agencies and industrial concerns, will consist of fabrics produced both by hand and industrially.

Following its New York showing the exhibition will be circulated to other important American museums. Concurrently with the exhibition the Museum of Modern Art plans to issue a book on TEXTILES AND JEWELRY FROM INDIA illustrated with plates in color and black-and-white.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC/IP	I.C.21

page 2

EDGAR KAUFMANN; JR., Director of the TEXTILES AND JEWELRY FROM INDIA exhibition, has been associated with the Museum of Modern Art since 1940. He has organized numerous exhibitions shown in major museums in the United States and abroad, and since 1950 has directed the Good Design shows sponsored jointly by the Museum of Modern Art and The Merchandise Mart in Chicago. He has written numerous books and articles for leading periodicals in America and abroad, particularly in the field of modern design and contemporary architecture, and has lectured on modern architectural history at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. He has been a trustee of The American Federation of Arts and a Director of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in England and an honorary member of the Industrial Designer's Institute. Mr. Kaufmann is a member of the Committee on 20th-century painting and sculpture of the Art Institute of Chicago and is himself a well-known collector and patron of the arts. He is a corresponding member of both the Danish and Swedish Societies of Arts and Crafts. He will return from India in time to organize the January 1955 Good Design exhibition to be shown at The Merchandise Mart in Chicago.

Alexander Girard of Santa Fe, New Mexico is an eminent designer and well known as a residential and industrial architect. A citizen of the United States by birth, he grew up in Florence, Italy, where he received his first commissions in 1928. The following year he designed the Italian room at the International Exposition in Barcelona, Spain. He was responsible, in 1944, for factory and office interiors and product design for the Detroit Radio Company in Detroit, and a restaurant for the Ford Motor Company in the same city. In 1949 he directed the exhibition FOR MODERN LIVING held at the Detroit Institute of Arts and more recently designed and installed the 1953 Good Design show at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. A skilled craftsman, he enjoys exercising his versatility in such varied media as cabinetwork, textiles, ceramics and typography. He is a member of the design committee and head of the fabric division of the Herman Miller Furniture Co. Like Mr. Kaufmann, he is a collector, specializing principally in folk arts.

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	IC / IP	I.C.21

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Thursday, August 23, 1956

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TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTS OF INDIA; edited by Monroe Wheeler with text by John Irwin and Pupul Jayakar. 96 pages, 94 plates, 16 in color. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, U.S.A. Now available in bookstores throughout Great Britain, France and Italy. Price: \$4.00.

TEXTILES AND ORNAMENTS OF INDIA, a profusely illustrated book edited by Monroe Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which was published by the Museum in June is now available in bookstores throughout Great Britain, France and Italy.

This publication--a picture book with interpretive essays by John Irwin of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and Pupul Jayakar, Special Deputy of the All-India Handicrafts Board--is based on the highly successful exhibition held at the Museum in the spring and summer of 1955. Besides photographs of the installation, which took the form of an imaginary bazaar designed by the well-known architect Alexander Girard, the book contains many plates, sixteen in brilliant color, of the textiles and ornaments exhibited of which many were from the Victoria and Albert Museum. There are details from block print and tie-dyed coarse cotton saris, delicate printed silk and embroidered tissue saris, and hand-painted temple hangings as well as many other woven and embroidered shawls and coverlets. There are also illustrations of selected pieces of precious jewelry set with rubies, emeralds, pearls, and diamonds in settings which vary from hammered gold to minute gold and silver filigree together with rare 16th and 17th century enamels and vessels of carved and inlaid jade. The book serves to bring before the Western world the endless wealth and variety of Indian craftsmanship.

The exhibition, of which the book is a record, was conceived by Monroe Wheeler during a visit to India two years ago. The material was selected by Edgar Kaufmann, Jr. who was formerly on the Museum staff. Hundreds of rare historic fabrics and ornaments were lent from the vast collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London as well as objects from other collections in India, England and the United States. Contemporary textiles and jewelry from the bazaars of India today were also included. The exhibition was organized under the Museum's International Exhibitions Program.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	IC / IP	I.C. 21

No. 78.

Page 2.

Mr. John Irwin, Assistant Keeper of the Oriental Collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, discusses the great tradition of Indian decorative arts in his essay "Textiles in Historical Perspective." In his own words:

"In India, the decorative arts reflect something fundamental in the traditional way of life: certainly more than the mere wish to be gay and sociable. No one who has been among the colorful crowd in Indian villages and market towns can ignore this impression. Costume and jewelry are not the only clues. It is expressed in the way even the poorest farmer will find a fitting moment to ornament his bullock's horns with silk tassels, and in the ubiquity of the flower-garland as a symbol of dedication. India is perhaps the only country in the modern world to support a large profession of garland-makers."

He gives a lucid account of the main processes of dyeing and printing fabrics in India which include block printing, resist-dyeing, mordant-dyeing, tie-dyeing, and ikat besides describing the traditions of folk embroidery and the manufacture of silk. The endless variety of technique and design, Mr. Irwin points out, has a strong historical and sociological basis. Mr. Irwin contributes the selected bibliography to this book.

A poem by Mrs. Pupul Jayakar, Special Deputy of the All-India Handicrafts Board, who went to New York to act as consultant for the exhibition, is also included in the book. In it she recounts the significance of dress in the life of an Indian maiden. Her essay, "Indian Fabrics in Indian Life," gives an overall picture of the symbolism of color in Indian textile design and draws a slightly more general, but equally colorful, picture of the various means through which a great craft tradition expresses itself.

Besides editing "Textiles and Ornaments of India," Monroe Wheeler has written the introduction for "The Miserère of Georges Rouault," is co-author with John Rewald of "Modern Drawing" and author of "Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators."

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Review copies and black and white photographs are available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N. Y., U.S.A

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