

Supports a young generation of craft workers from Kashmir to become independent and sustainable



Block printer, Gulam Mohd. silently preparing a new design for a saree, in his discreet little workshop at Budgam Village, Kashmir

Commitment to Kashmir (CtoK) with the support of Titan Company Ltd. aims to aid the creation and development of 25 small businesses, owned and operated by artisans engaged in the production of traditional Kashmiri crafts, through a holistic hands-on approach comprising of design and product training, skill enhancement, mentoring in business practices, logistics and creation of marketing avenues.

CELEBRATING SUPPORT OF ANCILLARY CRAFTS TO THE KASHMIRI CRAFT INDUSTRY



Pattern on a tracing paper getting ready to be transferred onto the fabric.



Riyaz Ahmad welding on a pot of copper

Every craft process is incomplete without support from an ancillary craft worker. Working as tailors, fyers, wood turners, printers, welders and moulders, these unseen artisans hold myriad roles.

Associated with the CtoK lead entrepreneurs are several such support and service providers. Through this newsletter issue we at CtoK aim to recognise, spread awareness and celebrate the support of the ancillary craft Industry.



DEDICATED TO SOZNI – SAJJAD PARRAY

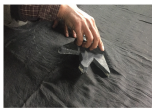
Sajjad Parray, grew up watching people around him practicing Sozni embroidery, including his entire family and the neighbourhood. The more he paid attention to the delicate craft the more he learned and became a master at it.

Sajjad, a Masters in History and a Sozni trainer in a nearby college has dedicated his life to learning and teaching the craft of Sozni. While he always made shawls, stoles and saris in traditional designs: almonds, flowers, fruits at the same time, he wanted to push the boundaries. It was his ambitious nature which lead him to join CtoK.

CtoK assigned designer, Gunjan Jain acted as a mentor to Parray in his quest to create out of the box products. After analysing his traditional design library, Gunjan helped Sajad to introduce contemporary style narratives in design such as geometric conversational textures to give his Sozni a unique twist.



“ Working with her has broadened our horizons. Earlier we were only making traditional pashmina shawls. I realise that was extremely restrictive because they would only be useful in winter. Now, we’re working on fabrics like cotton, silk and linen. Whole new product ranges are being explored: pherans, kurtas, saris...”-says Sajjad cheerfully.



A PRINTER'S AND AN EMBROIDERER'S STORY OF LOYALTY AND TRUST

Known as Khaka walas in the local dialect, the printers print various patterns onto the fabric. The patterns represent both tradition and natural motifs and are transferred to the fabric with the help of either a block made of wood or a tracing paper.

The printed fabric is later passed to an embroidery artisan who embroiders on the patterns, filling the motifs with colourful threads.



Tariq's association with his local printer Gulam Mohd. dates back to his childhood. As a young boy he often accompanied his father, a master Sozni artisan to the printer's workshop and watched him printing the fabric with exquisite designs made by the Naqash community in Kashmir.



Today, even after 50 long years, Tariq and his brothers follow the same tradition their father taught them. “Over so many years nothing about our association with Gulam Mohd. has changed, he stills hums a tune every time he prints, there's always a dye boiling behind him and us, we just sit and watch him do his business. Our faces may have grown older, but the bonds and the respect towards each other has strengthened.”

Tariq never wants to start printing the fabric at his own workshop. He is a firm supporter of the dwindling ancillary craft sector. “I never want to print myself, that will be unfair to Gulam Mohd. For me business means to help the other grow. It's a give and take process and can never be one sided.”



GUNJAN JAIN, FOUNDER
VRIKSH STUDIO AND DESIGN
MENTOR CTOK

EXPERT SPEAK

“ Sajad is well educated and enterprising with a family background in the craft. The idea with him and his team has been to introduce new style narratives in design – geometry, conversational, textures etc. to give the craft of Sozni a contemporary twist. Sajad is excited for the new collection and aims to dream big ”



UPCOMING EVENTS

THIRD DESIGN DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP, KASHMIR

COMMITMENT TO KASHMIR, (CtoK) is a Delhi based Charitable Trust, launched in 2011. It is inspired by the late LC Jain, activist, economist and Gandhian and supported by esteemed organisations such as Dastkar, Craft Development Institute, Srinagar, Crafts Council of India, Craft Revival Trust, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi, Ambedkar University of Delhi and the Dara Shikoh Centre for Arts, Srinagar.

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