

India Abroad
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 **Asia**
Society

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**Experience an authentic Indian Folk Arts Market where artisans will
create and display traditional arts, crafts, and collectibles**

(New York, NY – July 7, 2010) The sights and sounds of an Indian market are unmistakable – merchants selling their wares, customers bargaining prices, and artists creating new products simultaneously. For the first-time in the heart of Manhattan, **India Abroad**, the **Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC)**, and **Asia Society** invite you to experience an authentic **Indian Folk Arts Market from July 15-17 during the hours of 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Asia Society, located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th St.)**. Master artisans will be on hand to display, demonstrate, and sell their work, all while exposing the general public to an arts and crafts industry that dates back centuries.

“The role of the IAAC is to bring the arts and culture of India to a wider American audience,” says Executive Director **Aroon Shivdasani**. *“We are proud to focus our attention on Indian heritage and tribal folk art such as specific weaves, block printing, tie and dye, embroidery, patchwork appliqué, and vegetable dye paintings such as Pichwai & Kalamkari, which rarely ever get the right exposure outside India.”*

“We have partnered with IAAC and India Abroad because we share a commitment to preserving cultural diversity and fostering economic and cultural sustainability for folk artists,” says **Rachel Cooper**, Director of Cultural Programs and Performing Arts at Asia Society.

“As the premiere Indo-American newspaper for the Diaspora, India Abroad has a corporate social responsibility to promote awareness of the arts within the community,” says Anjali Maniam, Associate Vice President of Brand Marketing and Business Development.

***In addition to the Indian Folk Arts Market (July 15-17 from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. at Asia Society), the media is invited to a special, **VIP reception on Thursday, July 15 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Indian Consulate (3 E. 64th St.) by Consul General of India, Ambassador Prabhu Dayal**. At the reception, artisans will demonstrate their various crafts, and sponsoring organizations will discuss the importance of creating awareness around economic sustainability for India’s artisans. One-on-one interviews will be made available at this reception.

About the Artisans:

Abdul Jabbar Khatri – Bandhini (Tie and Dye)

Born within the community of Khatri, who were once renowned for their traditional craft of Bandhini (Tie/Dye), Abdul Jabbar Khatri, a man of vision, graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1988. And while his peers were leaving their traditional family craft and choosing to work in mainstream clerical and service jobs and careers, he decided to take up the craft of making Bandhini. In 1988, the National

Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, conducted a dyeing workshop for the craftsmen of the Bandhani in the Bhuj region. He participated in it and realized that his choice was right and that, indeed, the entire craft could be given a new lease of life with the introduction of contemporary design ideas, color sensibility, and naturalized dyeing techniques. He has given Bandhani a fresh breath of air. His enterprise generates income for more than 300 women in the interiors and neighboring villages of Kutch. He has won the "Unesco Award of Excellence Award 2006" and was recognized for his active participation and contribution to the craft.

Abdul Razak Khatri – Ajarakh Block Printing

Abdul Razak Khatri was born in 1958 in Dhamadka, Gujarat, to a family of traditional hand block printers of Ajarakh. His father, Shri Mohmed Sidik Khatri, a renowned National Award Winner, trained his son in the field of block printing. Khatri got his primary education up to 7th standard and became an expert hand block designer and printer at the early age of 16. For the last 35 years, he has been engaged in the art of producing fine block printed fabric with many variations of color, while experimenting with various natural dyes. Today, his main focus is on the technical development in the field and reviving old designs and creating new blocks.

Firdose Ahmad Jan – Pashmina Shawl Weaving

Firdose Ahmad Jan was born in Srinagar, Kashmir, to a family of shawl weavers who have been practicing this craft for centuries. His father, Bashir Ahmad Jan, a Shilp Guru (Living Legend), gave him training in weaving and embroidery. The Guru Shishya parampara (passing on knowledge from teacher to student) is very much a part of their cultural heritage. Their family has revived a number of designs in weaving and in embroidery. Some examples of these are being shown at the Indian Folk Art Market.

Kankuben Lalabhai Parmar – Appliqué

Kakuben Lalabhai Parmar of Madhutra, Santalpur, Patan, is a patchwork artisan and has been with the SEWA Project for the 20 years. She says, "We had no value for our work and never thought of getting income by selling them. It was only a piece of bread or flour that we got against several days work that I did. Even the community that I belong to is termed as scheduled caste and were treated as untouchables thus though having this traditional skill of patch work entering market with our work could never be dreamt of but with the help of SEWA and our company STFC it has become possible. I had never thought of my piece of patch work that I used to cover the torn mattresses in my house could be used as a curtain and beautify someone's drawing."

Shamji Vishram – Shawl Weaving

Shamji is a graduate in Arts from Bhuj University. He is a weaver, designer, and entrepreneur. He has worked with a range of new materials (like Tussar, Eri, Muga, Mulberry, Cotton), finer counts and has also experimented with the introduction of new products in the last ten years of his work. He is aware of the significance of natural dyes in the global scenario. Lately, he has been grappling with the idea of how value additions in the Bhujodi products could bring about better wages to improve the economic stability of the weavers.

About Indo-American Arts Council: The Indo-American Arts Council is a registered 501(c)3 not-for-profit, secular service and resource arts organization charged with the mission of promoting and building the awareness, creation, production, exhibition, publication and performance of Indian and cross-cultural art forms in North America. www.iaac.us

About Asia Society: Asia Society is the leading global and pan-Asian organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders, and institutions of the United States and Asia. We seek to increase knowledge and enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression, and generate new ideas across the fields of arts and culture, policy and business, and education. Asia Society is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. www.AsiaSociety.org

About India Abroad: India Abroad keeps you in touch with news and opinions involving Indians abroad - and those back in India. Over the years, the publication has grown into the leading voice for Indian Americans and is today the publication of choice within this influential community. With three strong sections - News, Magazine and Community - we cover all the hard and soft news the Diaspora needs, and the entertaining and informative feature stories it wants. www.rediff.com

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