

How can we use gender and intersectionality lenses to empower individuals and communities to build upon their heritage sustainably?

## Subrang Arts



We are a south asian arts organisation based in South London. 'Subrang' means spectrum of colour and it represents the rich cultural heritage of the Indian sub continent. We engage communities, particularly women in all kinds of participatory programmes like music, dance, arts, crafts, heritage and aim to nurture their artistic talent and develop them holistically. The positive influence on these women by the virtue of their immersion into our activities has empowered them to build upon their heritage sustainably

# Empowerment through craftsmanship - Embroidery

- We recently undertook two heritage projects ‘Gujarati Yatra – Journey of a People’ and ‘Roots and Changes - Gujarati influences’ - both explored the migration story of the gujarati diaspora. Their travels across three continents India, Africa, England have influenced them immensely.
- We conducted several workshops in South London and at the Neasden temple in Brent where local women took inspiration from the rich tradition of Gujarati embroidery.



## Impact on the women

- We gave them the creative freedom to interpret new designs, letting the women's personalities through their stitched work and a chance to express themselves and showcase their work. They taught each other and learnt a lot through collective work.
- A visual feast, this exhibition charted the generational art with skills taught from mother to daughter. Historically, women have embroidered clothes for festive occasions and to decorate deities and in addition to create a source of income. In Gujarat, women not only embroider their garments, but also use them as items for decorating their houses such as wall hangings, toran, pillow cases or cushion cover.





# Their inspiration

- For the embroidery, the women took inspiration from romantic, architectural, human motifs as well as Persian and Mughal art. Bright colours, mirrors, flowers, birds, peacocks, elephants and dancers – all form part of the rich tradition of Gujarati embroidery.





# Types of Embroidery stitches taught

- Each of the 400 crafts women developed a very distinct style, using different techniques to interpret the artefacts and to show an individual style. They created a diverse and creative range such as
- running stitch (thebha),
- back stitch (bakhiyo),
- stem stitch (amlo),
- fly stitch (bhat no tankoudan),
- chain stitch (sankari),
- single feather stitch (peechhatanko),
- buttonhole stitch (gaajtanko),
- herringbone stitch (sadotanko),
- cross stitch (chokditanko),
- satin stitch (reshmitanko),
- interlaced cross stitch (bavadio) and mirror work (abhla).





# Impact of the workshops

- We found it very rewarding when we saw their skills improving day by day. It deepened their love for artisan work and they started believing in their real strengths.





## Few more examples



## Charkha (Spinning workshops)

The purpose of the Charkha workshops was to make them understand Gandhi's call to take up spinning and reject the exploitative economic and political regimes of textile manufacture









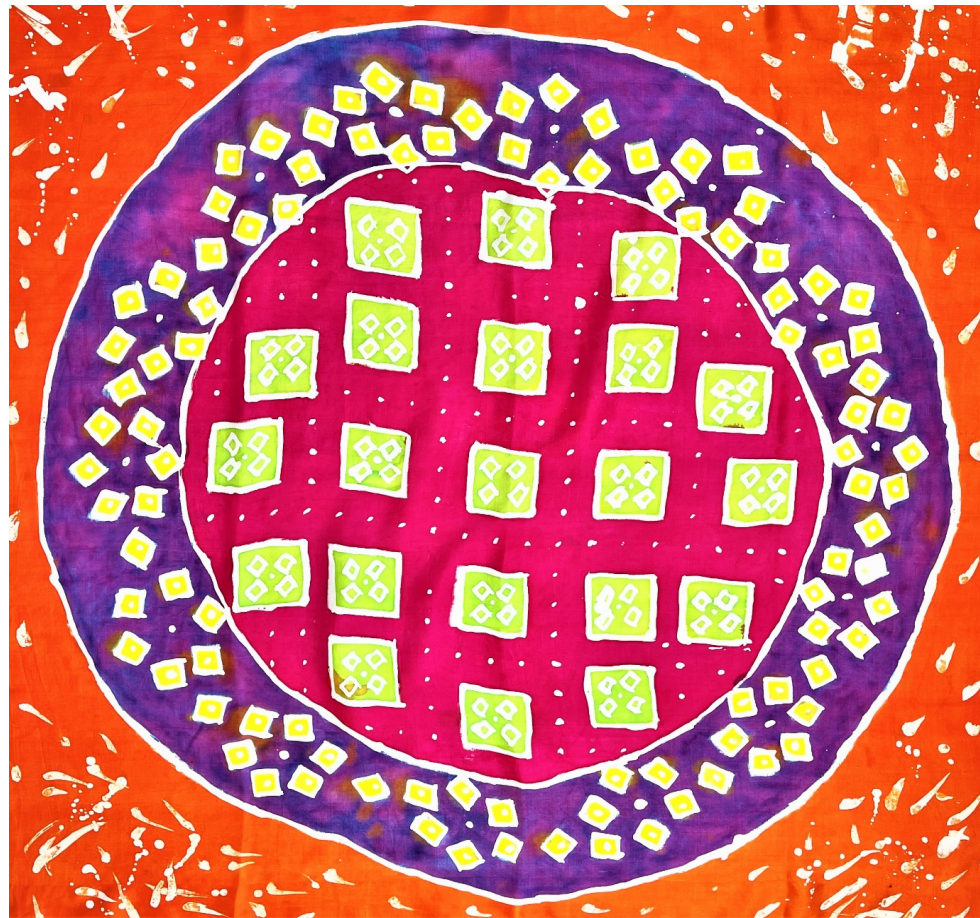
# Batik Silk Painting with Kinetika

- Kinetika specialises in Batik Silk painting
- Through artist-led workshops with women, we taught 30 women the techniques of Batik silk painting
- We created content through drawing and oral storytelling activities inspired by these women's journeys. Some were influenced by Indian heritage, some were born and brought up in Africa and influenced by African art, some were influenced by their journey to England. We not only empowered these women, but we also raised cultural awareness





# Indian influences





# African influence





# English influences





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