



# Art You Wear

Five Unique Garments  
in the MAP Collection

**DISCOVER MAP**





We all have that one unique piece or quirky outfit in our wardrobes, don't we? Bought on a whim, or for a special occasion, or perhaps a family heirloom that is in trend even today – these pieces hold special place in our wardrobes and in our hearts.

In this pack, we look at five special pieces from the MAP collection and see what extraordinary stories they can tell us.

**Do you see any  
aeroplanes in this  
sari? How many?**







**#1**

**Socially  
Conscious  
Skirts!**



What connections could there be between textiles and the Indian freedom struggle? Are you thinking of *khadi*? What about something that's NOT *khadi*?

**LOOK CLOSELY** at this skirt for the answer. Do you see anything unusual?

\*Khadi is a hand-spun and woven natural fibre cloth derived from cotton. It was promoted by M.K. Gandhi as a mark of self-sufficiency during the Indian freedom struggle,



**How many shades of blue can you spot in this piece?**



This skirt is made using a technique called **Brocade**\*.

If you look hard enough, you will see the Indian flag among other shapes! Cannot find it still? Head to the next page to see a detail of the flag.

\*In Brocade, fabrics are woven with gold and silver threads. Could you spot the silver in this skirt?



## THINK.

It may be common to have flags printed on clothes today but at the time when this skirt was made (in the 1930s), India was still to gain independence and didn't have officially have a flag yet. Why do you think one then went to great lengths to have flags woven into a skirt? What could they have been trying to say?





**IMAGINE.**

What kind of a person do you think the wearer of this skirt was? Where do you think they would have worn such a skirt?



In fact, there was a trend of including nationalistic imagery on clothing during the Indian freedom movement.

People wrote slogans on cloth, or added recognisable elements and items related to the freedom struggle.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

Here is another skirt from our museum, with another unique nationalist motif or design. Do you see it?



**How many different species of flowers can you identify in this skirt?**





## EXTEND.

This skirt features the map of India. But something about this map looks different. Do you know why?\*

\*This is a map of undivided India, as it was during colonial times when the British occupied the country. It therefore, also includes areas that are today in modern day Pakistan. You can start learning a little more about the partition of India and Pakistan [here](#) and [here](#) if you like.



**On what kinds of occasions, do you think one might wear a skirt like this and why?**

**REFLECT.**

Is there a social cause or issue that you care about? What outfits will you wear to highlight this cause?







**#2**

**The  
Travelling  
Jacket!**





We now move to a different kind of outfit with an interesting name. This piece is called the **jhuladi** or **zuldi**. It is a smock jacket especially made for young boys in Gujarat.

## CONNECT.

Can you imagine how parts of this outfit would move when worn? Have you seen clothes of similar design in shops today?





The *Jhuladi* is characterised by colourful embroidery and mirror inserts, that also have distinct names inspired by the local environment and culture of Gujarat.

Go to the next page to learn some of them and head to our **Activity Sheet** extra for a fun game designing your own motifs!

**How do you think the floral designs on this were made?**





***Daant (Teeth)***  
The wavy scrolls  
that look like rows  
of teeth



***Daano/Daana***  
A motif that looks  
like grains.



***Keechu***  
A tiny pocket with  
embroidery similar  
to the rest of the  
jacket



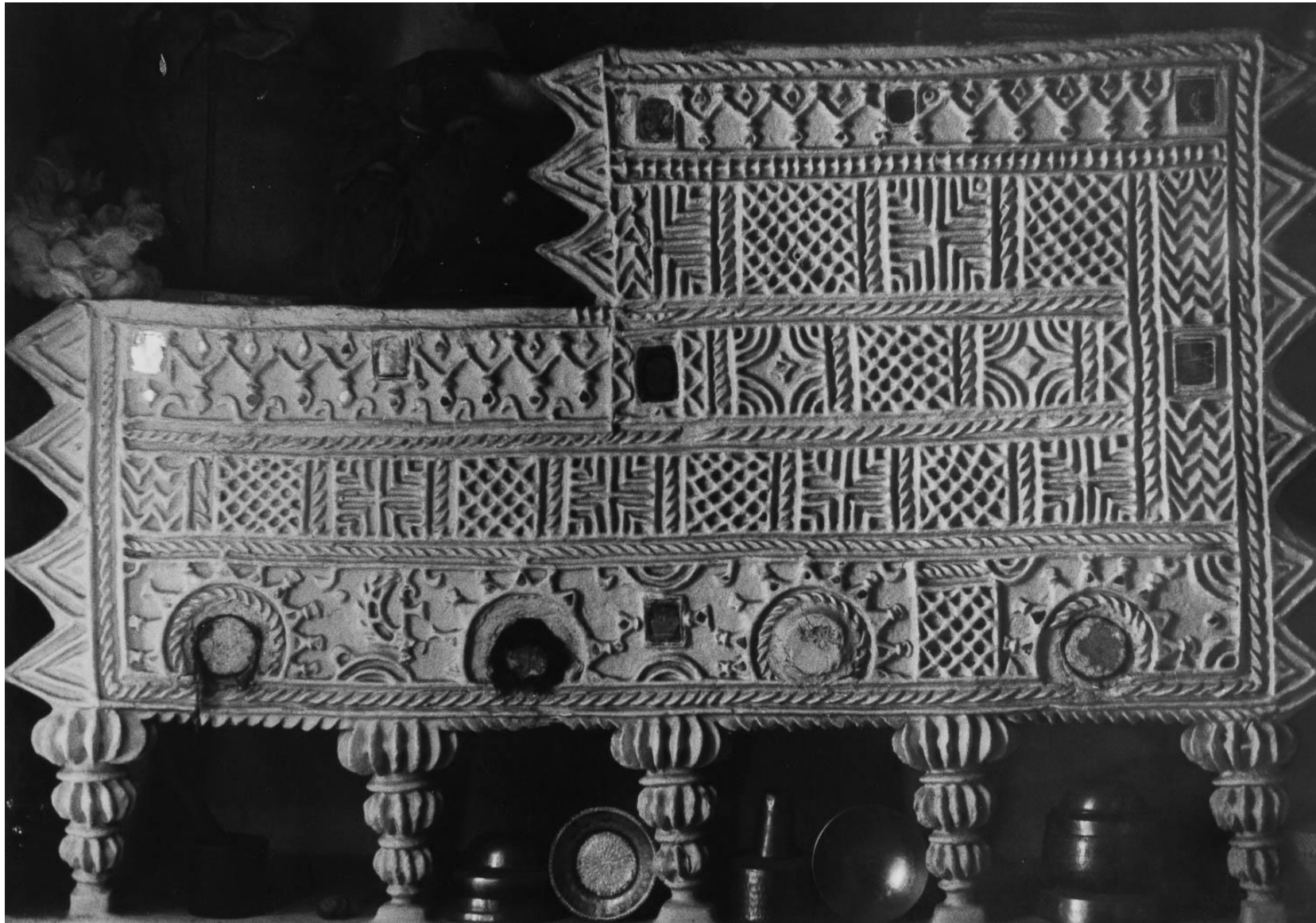




## **IMAGINE**

If you had a chance to name components of this jacket in your native language, what would you call them? Why did you choose these names?





**What do you think this object might be used for? Focus on the bottom, to see whether the other objects in the photograph can help you guess!**

The *jhuladi* was used mainly by the nomadic **Rabari** community, who are known for their distinct artistic practice in textile and architecture.\*

\*Learn more about the Rabaris [here](#).

## **COMPARE & CONTRAST.**

Here is a photograph from the interior of a Rabari house.

Do you see any similarities in the designs here and in the *jhuladi* you just saw? Do you see any differences?





**#3**

**Truly  
Fancy Pants!**



Like the *jhuladi*, this next textile piece is also made for a young person, but is most likely from northern India.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

How many different kinds of fabric can you spot in this set? What do you think the highlighted motif represents?

### **CONNECT.**

Have you seen pieces like this being worn today? To what kinds of occasions?

**How would this fabric feel if you could touch it? Will the texture be same everywhere?**







This is a kid's jama and trouser set made with gold and silver embroidery. This embroidery process is called **zardozi**, you can learn more about the technique [here](#).

### **THINK.**

Now that you know how it was made, can you imagine what the owner of this piece might have been like? What kind of people do you think made it?

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

In this zoomed-in detail, you can see the form on the chest clearly. Can you guess what the design is?





This detail is an embroidery of a pocket watch, complete with a dial and a connecting chain!

**THINK.**

- Why do you think this design was stitched on a kid's outfit?
- Who must have made the decision? The child, the parent, the person embroidering? Why do you think so?

**LOOK CLOSELY.**

What looks different when compared to a real watch?





**#4**

**Trend  
Setting  
Saris!**



From North India, we now move to the east and look at a unique sari-making tradition. Here's a portion of one.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

- How many kinds of repeating motifs can you spot in it?
- Do you see a certain motif that looks like a mango? How many times do you see it?
- How do you think these motifs were made on the sari? Were they embroidered, woven or perhaps painted?

**What are the three words you would use to describe this sari?**







This is a Baluchari sari from West Bengal. Traditionally, the saris carried floral and geometric designs, as well as religious themes.

However, in the 18th century, a change occurred and new motifs and designs began to emerge in the saris.

Go to the next page to see a very-very zoomed in detail to know what we are talking about!

### **LEARN MORE.**

Baluchari saris are named after a village of the same name in West Bengal where they were made. They are known for intricate pictorial depictions. Learn more about them [here](#).





This is a detail from the border that goes around the mango shapes of the sari.

### **LOOK CLOSELY.**

- What do you think the highlighted figure is holding?
- Where are these figures seated?
- Why do you think they are wearing hats?
- Are there any figures repeated? How many similar figures do you see?





This motif shows a vehicle (do you see the wheels?) with people inside. The same motif repeats all around the mango-shaped design on the sari.

### **CONNECT.**

How many floors do you see in each vehicle? Does it remind you of another means of transport found today?

Take a guess at why the maker of this sari decided to include such unique motifs in their work.

**How would this textile feel, if you could touch it?**

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In the 18th century, European traders were establishing trading colonies all over Bengal, resulting in the rapid flood of modern technology and lifestyle into the region.

The inclusion of such motifs in the Baluchari saris (and other textiles from the region at the time) therefore, came with makers and owners of the textiles also recording and responding to the socio-cultural changes in their environment.

**REFLECT.**

Do you think our lived realities affect the clothes we make and wear in any way, today?

Can you think of some examples?



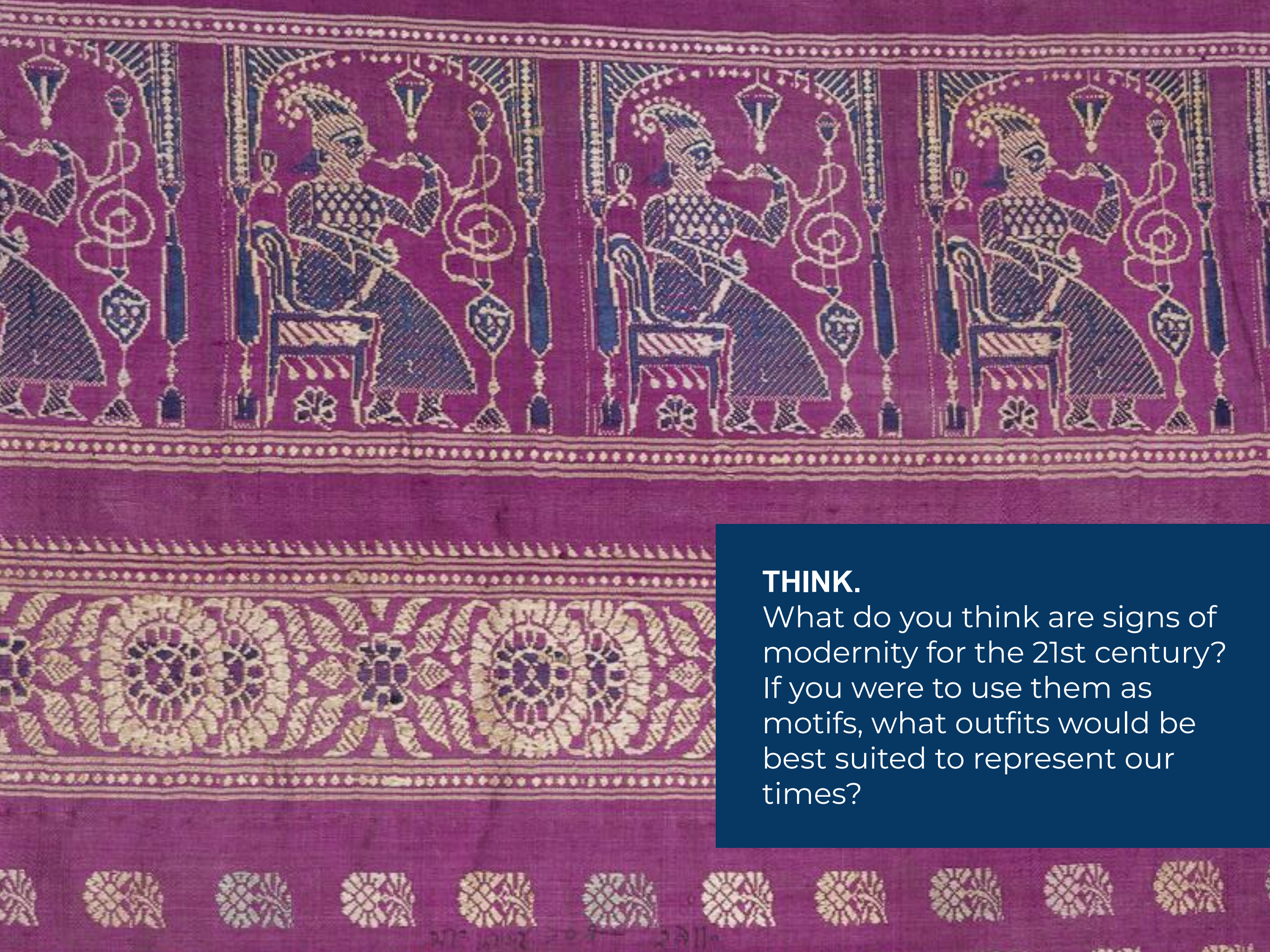


## If this was the design of a book cover, what do you think the story, plot or idea of the book might be?

These motifs may not seem very 'modern' to us today (such as the hookah smoker in this detail from another sari). At the time, however, certain actions and lifestyles were considered signs of status and modernity.

Using these signs as motifs in one's outfit was considered very trendy and that is exactly what the owners of the Baluchari saris did!





## **THINK.**

What do you think are signs of modernity for the 21st century? If you were to use them as motifs, what outfits would be best suited to represent our times?





**#5**

**A Shawl That  
Carries The  
World**



The last in our cool textiles list comes from a tradition that is flourishing even today!

**LOOK CLOSELY.**

How many animals, birds and reptiles can you spot?

How many means of transport?

What do you think this scene depicts?



**THINK.**

Why are some figures and things upside down?

**If this were a GIF, what parts of it would move and how?**





This piece is called a **phulkari** (literally translating to flower work), and is a tradition of embroidered shawls from the region of Punjab.



*Phulkaris* are a part of the bridal trousseau in a Punjabi wedding, and were traditionally made by the women of the household.

At the time of the wedding, these pieces were gifted to the bride who would treasure and wear it on special occasions.

The one you see here with humans, animals and objects is called a ***Sainchi Phulkari***.

There is no real right orientation for a piece like this, and can be viewed from any side (which is why some figures will always appear upside down!) In this phulkari though, it looks like one everything else is arranged around one design or scene. Can you spot it?





A *sainchi phulkari* usually depicts regular day scenes in the village, but this one also has a train puffing black smoke, complete with passengers and maybe even guards at the station! Remember the bit on signs of modernity making its way into textiles?

### LOOK CLOSELY.

Do you spot a figure under a tree? What do you think this figure is doing? Do the others around give you a clue?

What do you see close to the engine of the train? What do you think these figures are doing?



Go to the next page to see what other scenes we spotted.

Try and find some more yourself (You may have to turn your neck quite a bit, or the screen of your device!).



A vibrant folk art tapestry on a dark background, featuring numerous stylized figures and animals in various poses and orientations. The figures are dressed in colorful, striped clothing. Animals include camels, a crocodile, and various birds. The entire scene is framed by a decorative border of small, colorful dots.

**A bullock cart**

**A man with a  
pet monkey**

**A cool trailing toy!**

**A palanquin**





Based on the designs, *phulkaris* are categorised into different types. The names of these types as well as the designs are usually inspired from nature and its elements.

Head to our **Stories With Art** extra to know about more *phulkari* types, and do a fun creative writing exercise using the *sainchi phulkari*.

And to wrap up, how about looking around your own house to find super-duper cool outfits? Read up about their history and share all the fun stuff you find with friends and family!





Baluchari Sari, 20th century  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Silk  
H. 93 cm, W. 76 cm  
TXT.00559



Sainchi Phulkari, Early 20th century  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Cotton, Floss silk  
L. 214 cm, W. 120 cm  
TXT.00640



Brocade sari, Silk Brocade  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Silk brocade  
L. 232 cm, W. 129 cm  
TXT.00924



A brocade skirt, c. 1930  
Unknown Maker(s)  
silk, gilt metal  
L. 104.5 cm; W. 102 cm; Circ. 430 cm  
TXT.00009



A brocade skirt, c. 1920  
Unknown Maker(s)  
silk, gilt metal  
L. 104.5 cm; W. 102 cm; Circ. 365 cm  
TXT.00033



A smock jacket, 20th century  
Unknown Maker(s)  
Embroidery on cotton  
H. 36 cm, W. 28 cm  
TXT.01667



Zardozi Set, 20th century  
Unknown maker(s)  
Silk, Gilt and Cotton  
TXT.00926





**MAP**

Museum of Art  
& Photography

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