



## Titanwala Museum, Bagru, Jaipur

Sania Galundia\*

Suraj Narayan Titanwala learnt the art from his father Govind Narayan and is a sixth generation artist. Until the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, block printers sold their creations at a weekly market, called a *hathwada*. It took place every Saturday morning in the Roop Chaturbhuj Temple in Choti Chaupad area of the walled city of Jaipur. People from neighbouring towns like Bagru, Kala Dera, Bassi, Jairampura and Jahota were among the regular participants. Suraj Narayan would accompany his father Govind Narayan to the *hathwada* every week. One such visit changed the fortune of the Titanwalas. Their creations were spotted by Hiroko Iwatate from Japan. Charmed by the fine workmanship, she bought all the available *fadads* from the Titanwalas. After a year of correspondence and purchases, she introduced them to Faith and John Singh of Anokhi, who continue to buy from the Titanwalas till date.

The Titanwala Bhawan has attracted international collectors, designers and enthusiasts since the 1980s. They have closely collaborated with designers, retailers and collectors, such as Hiroko Iwatate, Yumi Masumoto Gaya, and Faith Singh of Anokhi. These interactions led to a holistic understanding of cultures.

Suraj Narayan and his son Deepak Kumar continue to spread the knowledge of hand block printing through demonstrations and workshops all over the world. They believe that it is important to create awareness about this traditional practice to keep it alive in modern times. Even English royalty, Prince Charles of Wales, was impressed by Suraj Narayan's skill, when he witnessed a demonstration in Jaipur in 2003. Suraj Narayan was awarded the prestigious National Award in 2011.

Titanwala's collection of blocks, fabrics and related materials through the years, now form the core collection of The Titanwala Museum. It is a repository of knowledge for textile connoisseurs and enthusiasts. Due to limited natural resources and labour issues many have given up this traditional practice of block printing for more lucrative sources of livelihood. The Titanwalas realize the importance of sharing their collection with the world and spreading knowledge on the art form.

The exhibits include traditional tools and materials used in block making, historical wood blocks, raw materials for dyes and mordants, wide range of traditionally printed fabrics. The process of block making, dyeing the cloth, printing, resist printing etc. is also highlighted through swatches showing the step-by-step procedures. Additionally, reflections of social identity and the rural lifestyle are some of the themes that are discussed through photographs and objects. What sets the museum apart is the actual process of preparing the dyes, the act of dyeing, printing, washing and drying, is all on view as the Titanwalas go about their work.

The museum was inaugurated on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019 by Union Textiles Minister Ms. Smriti Irani who was accompanied by Jaipur MP Mr. Ramcharan Bohra. The museum is open from 9 am – 6 pm, from Monday to Sunday, closed on national holidays. It is located in Bagru, a small village located 35 kilometers south west of Jaipur on the Jaipur-Ajmer road, NH8.

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Figure 1: Gallery display showing traditionally printed fadads, blocks, photographs, and representative models of the process of dyeing and printing. Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 2: Union Textiles Minister, Ms Smriti Irani writing in the visitors' book at the inaugural ceremony of the museum. . Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 3: Union Textiles Minister, Ms Smriti Irani and Jaipur MP, Mr Ramcharan Bohra with curator, Ms Sania Galundia and master artist, Mr Suraj Narayan Titanwala. . Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 4: Suraj Narayan Titanwala straining dabu (mud resist paste) through a fine muslin cloth. . Photo Courtesy: Author



Figure 6: Deepak Kumar Titanwala preparing the solution of alizarin and dhawdiya flowers for fixing the dye. . Photo Courtesy: Author