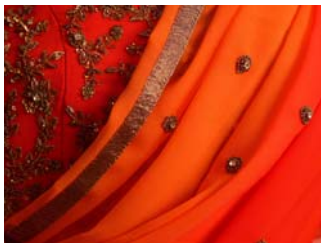


## *The Art of the Sari* March 31 – June 10, 2007



It seems that every week our newspapers carry a story that includes references to the sari. Whether it's in the gossip column about what model Elizabeth Hurley wore at her recent wedding, or a fashion spread on the influence of Bollywood on western style, or a news story describing the scene of a tragic train explosion in Pakistan, the sari's beauty, popularity, and connection with history continues to be remarkable.

The earliest known reference to the sari is in the Vedas, the oldest form of written text, dating back 5000 years. Over millennia, the sari's form has persisted, essentially unchanged, despite colonialism, industrialization, and the pressures of international trade. Its adaptability, practicality, and beauty continue to ensure its future. Although identified as the quintessential Indian garment, a billion women of diverse ancestry living around the world, including Canada, currently choose to wear the sari. As a testament to this, almost all of the saris on exhibition here are borrowed from individuals and retailers from this community.



The sari as an art form embodies the skills of its weavers, dyers, embroiderers, and designers who continue to explore its infinitely variable form, as contemporary fashion. It also includes the artfulness of those women who wear the sari, and manage its pleats and folds and drapes with creativity, grace and dignity. All of this has served to inspire the poets, whose words accompany the saris on exhibit.



Liane Davison  
Curator of Exhibitions & Collections

### *About the poems*

In anticipation of this exhibition, the Surrey Art Gallery issued an invitation to local poets to write poems on the theme of the sari. Texts were requested in two languages – either Punjabi and English, or Hindi and English. In the exhibition, the language in which the poem was written is displayed first, with the translation following.

Eighteen poets are represented.

Amarjeet Chahal  
Chitra Ayyar  
Gurmeet Sodhi  
Harchand Singh Bagri  
Harminder Mangat  
Kishan Partap  
MK (Makajee) Shrestha  
Prabhjot Gill  
Rupinder Khaira

Santokh S. Sangha  
Satinder Kaur Bhui  
Shafaat Ali  
Shrinath P. Dwivedi  
Sumana Roy  
Surjeet Kalsey  
Veenoo Dewan  
Vina Shrestha  
Vinod Kanwal

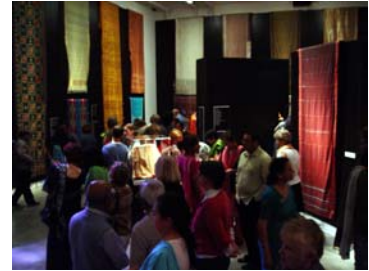


### *Acknowledgements:*

Installation design: Pam Johnson  
Lighting design: Adrian Muir  
Outreach and research: Nadia Deol  
Curator: Liane Davison  
Installation crew: Christopher Dean, Preparator; Scot Keefer, Assistant Preparator, Brian Foreman, Assistant Curator. Installation volunteers: Saker Senaratne, Stella Yatagoda, Fazail Lutfi, and Visaka Wijeratne.  
Typesetting in Hindi and Punjabi: Copytek

**Special thanks to:**

Saker Senaratne for facilitating so many loans and volunteers, Harminder Mangat for organizing the “Saris in Surrey” photo shoot and facilitating loan of the miniature mannequins, Lester Manuel for organizing the “Sari couture” photo shoot and information on saris as fashion, Bryan Mulvihill for acquiring saris for the exhibition while in India, the many people who offered advice on contacting poets and the media for ensure our communities knew about this project, the late Chantal Boulanger for her original work and exhibitions recognizing saris as art, and the assistance of her husband, Peter Maloney. Thanks also to Mehfil Magazine, Manjit Chima; Calgary Sweets and Regal Fabrics.



**Advisory Committee:**

The following individuals attended meetings, and contributed advice on the development of this exhibition. This exhibition would not have been possible without their assistance:

Siddiq Adata  
Urmila Das  
Christine Daskis  
Nadia Deol  
Mandeep Dhaliwal  
Gurdeep Dhaliwal  
Sundeep Dhaliwal  
Kanti Dwivedi  
Maureen Hari  
Hamamala Herath  
Mallika Jayasekera  
Harminder Mangat

Lester Manuel  
Pushpanjali Matharoo on behalf  
of the India Mahalia  
Association  
Anu Palla  
Sarojini Perinbam  
Padma Prasad  
Daughty Preena  
Saker Senaratne  
Shamina Senaratne  
Deepa Sharma  
Gail Sidhu  
Stella Yatagoda



**Sari lenders:**

Anu Dawit-Kanna  
Bir Kaur, of Kaur Couture  
Crossover Bollywood, Vancouver  
Farrah’s Bridal Boutique, Surrey  
Farida Panjwani  
Ferial Sultani  
Gail Sidhu  
Harminder Mangat  
Kanti Dwivedi  
Made in India, Surrey  
Madhu Khanna  
Mallika Jayasekera

Mehar Boutique, Surrey  
Heera Jewellers, Surrey  
Mumtaz Pirbhai  
Nabat Mawji  
Nadia Doel  
Natasha’s Boutique, Surrey  
Pearl Boutique, Burnaby  
Pushpanjali Matharoo  
Saker Senaratne  
Sarojini Perinbam  
Savarna Rao  
Shafaat and Azra Ali



Shamina Senaratne  
Siddiq Adata  
Stella Yatagoda  
Sunny’s Bridal Gallery, Vancouver



**Photos used in this document:**

Trish Connley: images of saris in Surrey  
Surrey Art Gallery: image used for the announcement card  
Robert McGee: images of couture saris in Surrey  
Courtesy Saker Senaratne (her wedding photo)  
Rick Gibson: Exhibition opening  
Sharon Doucette: Fashion show at the exhibit opening  
Sharon Doucette: Wedding saris  
Sharon Doucette: view of wall hung saris