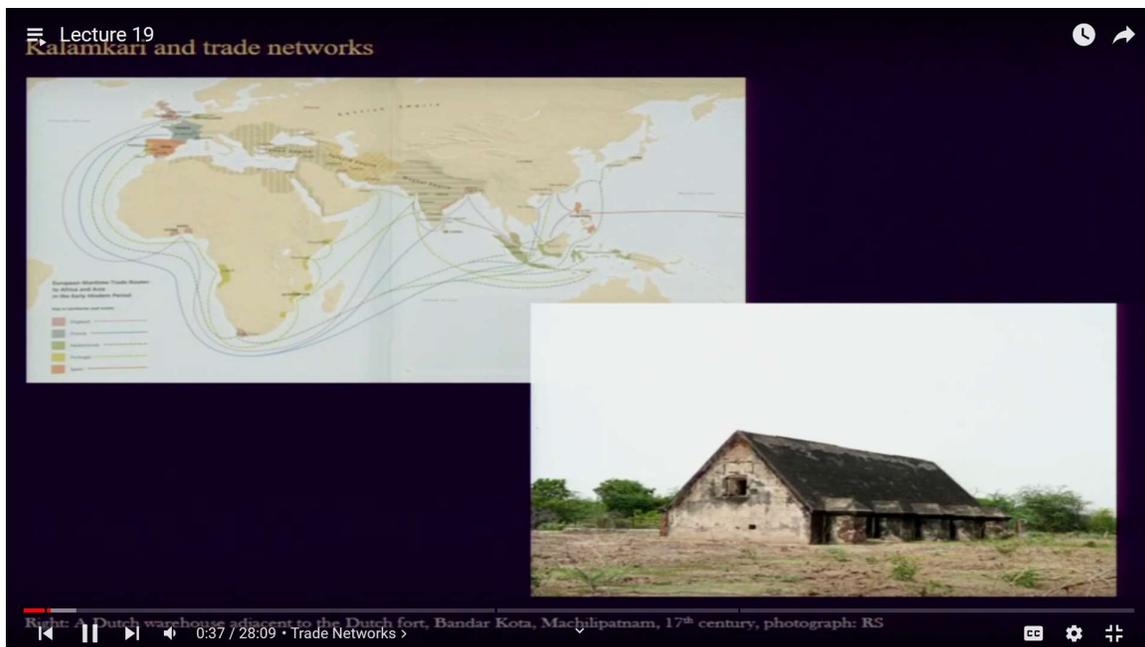


**Threads of Visual Exploration: Textiles and Allied Practices**  
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**Week - 04**  
**Lecture – 19**

Hello everyone, this is Rajarshi Sengupta and we are here in the fourth installment of the week on Kalamkari and allied practices. So, after we have discussed the relationship between Kalamkari, architecture and other Deccani craft forms, now let us look into Kalamkari and trade networks.



Now, we have looked into this map earlier, and when we ... tried to understand this idea of India's relation (or, like I mean this Indian subcontinent's relationship) to the other parts of the world and then how those trade networks were there. and mostly, we are talking about the oceanic networks, which were there during the early modern period from the 17th century onwards and then, of course, towards the 19th century and so on. So, in this time what we see that I mean the importance of some of the ports on the Coromandel coast, so for example, Machlipatnam, Nagapatnam and so on, they have become very important and Machlipatnam especially. So, in this cases what we have that Kalamkari textiles which were produced in the Coromandel region, we find them to have audience or like patrons both inland as well as in other parts of the world. ... for that reason what we find that I

mean there are distinctive kind of textiles which were made in the same workshop or in the same region which would probably be like I mean the ones which were made for inland trade would have a very different kind of flavor from the ones which are made for outlandish ones (so like for the foreign trade perhaps) ... if I can specify it in that way. So, the kind of textiles which would be sent to Siam or Thailand and then like I mean part of Malaya or like I mean you know the port of Malacca and places like that. So, in those places, we find that particular kinds of textiles were preferred, and that kind of textiles were commissioned by the traders from there, and that kind of textiles would be distinctive from the ones which are made for inland trade. The similar thing can be said also about the ones which were intended for use in Middle East or part of like Eastern African coast or like I mean then those were taken to the mainland and so those ones will also be very different. Now with the arrival of the Europeans from the 17th century, we also find that they also had their own (kind of) aesthetic sensibility, at the same time, their own demand for ... the domestic market there, and that's the reason we find the different kind of experiment had all taken place in this Coromandel region.

So, the artisans ... who'd be able to do dyeing and drawing and printing all those things efficiently, they would probably deal with imagery from different parts of the world, perhaps the different kind of cultural aspects which they were not exposed to earlier. So, it's a complex situation for artisans who perhaps speak languages like Telugu, Tamil and so on, but then they are dealing with materials that perhaps are not really from those regions or from that cultural context. But still they were able to convey the cultural meanings efficiently, successfully in those textiles. So, with those things, we also find (as I have already mentioned) that this kind of trade network sort of made room for the exchange of knowledge. So, for example, we find that the local knowledge would come in contact with the inter-regional knowledge ... and that is how like the traders knowledge and perhaps the kind of like objects and items that traders would bring to this workshop and how those objects would perhaps like enrich the visual and (you know) the vocabulary of the artisans as well as like the intellectual capability of the artisans to think through them and then like sort of implement them in their craft practices. So, those things we also find that how

particular sites on the coast have been very influential but also at the same time like I mean with this kind of exchanges the nature of this port sites have also changed extensively.



So, for example in the right corner we have ... an image of a warehouse, it's a Dutch warehouse that we find from this area called Bandar Kota or like this port site, a fort site of Machilipatnam and that is slightly sort of away from the city or the town of Machilipatnam today and so this is the area in which we find this 17th century Dutch fort was established and the primary work (or like I mean the primary responsibility) of the people who were there in the Dutch fort was about textile trade. And for that reason we definitely see that I mean why this kind of this robust warehouses would be required for storing textiles and perhaps spices and other goods. So this entire area was walled and then like a highly protected and then there was also a jail around this area. So, one can imagine ... this kind of textiles they needed to be kept safe and for their high economic and cultural value. So, those kind of things we find that I mean how this trade networks and also like I mean how this cultural exchanges they paved the way for different kind of interactions which might not happen otherwise.

Now with those things in mind let us look into one of those textiles and try to see that what all were happening if we think that I mean those trade networks they have enriched the visual vocabulary of these textiles.

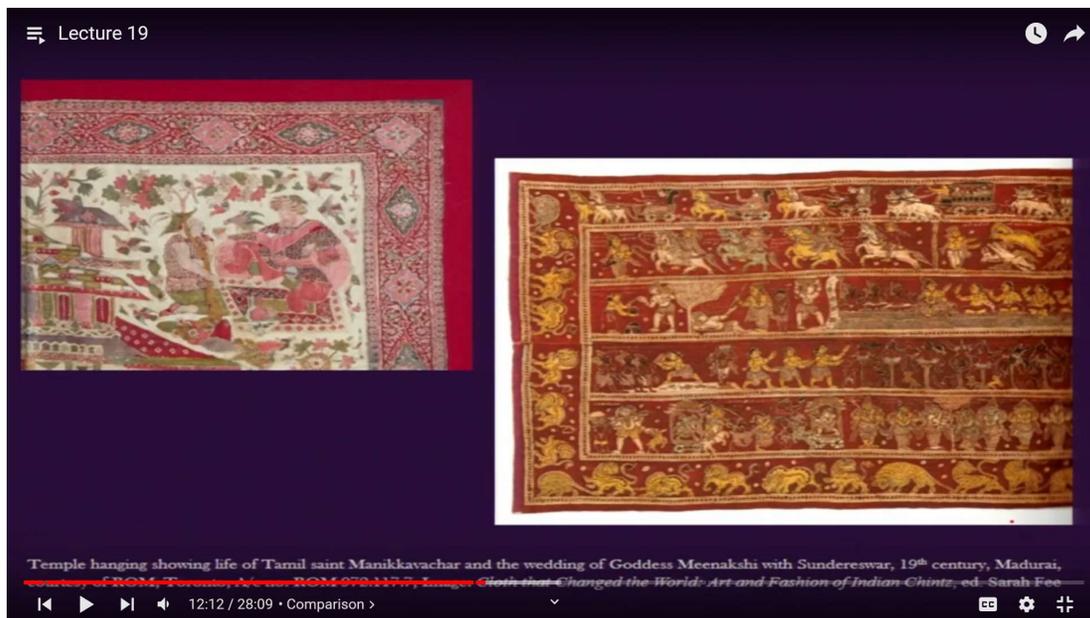


So, this is a rumal and it is a Kalamkari rumal or a coverlet whatever we call it and in this one what we see that perhaps there is this elaborate border here we have and within the border there are many groups (compositional groups) who are gathered around this central architectural motif. ... this central architectural motif seems to be a combination of tent like for example in this cases we see these extensions and so on and then also it seems like I mean the stories and part of ... the pillars and everything else make us think about perhaps there is a stable architecture here as well. So, it can be a combination of both and in this case what ... we see (I mean around in this architecture of course) ... motifs ... like ... this jars and vessels and then also like I mean some of the references to ... ceramic tiles and all. Which shows that I mean perhaps they were drawing this kind of motifs and the architectural this organization from the Deccani palaces. And then what we see there that this colorful textiles which is coming together with this the palace complex or the stable architecture. So, it kind of makes us think about this overlapping between stable and temporary or transient architecture at the center. Then what we see here there is this princely figure also dressed in perhaps in a this expensive brocade or perhaps in a Kalamkari textile (who knows!!) and then in this case what we see this elaborately dressed royal who sits here rested against a bolster (this huge red bolster) and then he is being served wine by this attendant figure (this female attendant that we have). And then there are people who are playing drums and one is perhaps there is an attendant figure again, a

male attendant so that they are guarding this place. Then we also see that different kind of like I mean people around them. So, in this group it seems like there is a soldier, and then someone is being attentive to the soldier, and they are almost in this conversation where this person is still tying the sash in his waist and coming to hear this soldier for whatever reason, perhaps this soldier also carrying some important news and that's the reason we see that he is holding something in his hand which looks like perhaps a letter or something that needs to be given to this man and that's the reason this man is hurrying and then like I mean still tying his sash and rushing out to this person.

So, if this is one of the scenes that we find here on the other corner we have there is this man again who's dressed in this Persian turban and then like I mean also like the facial feature and everything seems that I mean this pale complexion and then like I mean the kind of Jhama and everything else that we have here it seems like a Persian figure, perhaps also a Deccani royal who knows. But then this man is met by this person who's perhaps from eastern Asia who's wearing this conical hat and then also has those slanting eyes and then the beard and everything else which are characteristically eastern Asian, and then we see this man is wearing something like a small this waistcoat and at the waist we see that I mean he is tying a piece of fabric, but then in the bottom part of the body he is also wearing this sarong or lungi which is just this one plain untailed piece of fabric that is wrapped around the body something that we see in part of South Asia also in eastern Asia and southeast Asia. So, this distinctively eastern Asian man we find this man to be here in conversation with this Persian figure. So, in the same this rumal we have like different kind of motifs in which we see that I mean different kind of activities are taking place; perhaps this also gives us a sense of this different kind of overlapping that we are initially talking about. What the trade networks or this cultural exchanges enabled the artisans to experiment with? ... they were perhaps exposed to different kind of people or like images in which they could see that different kind of dressing style and then the facial features and everything being different from one another, and they have successfully implemented them in these figural groups. At the same time, the overlapping also comes between permanent architecture and transient architecture. So, those things are also implemented in this central architectural motif that we have here prominently presented in this rumal.

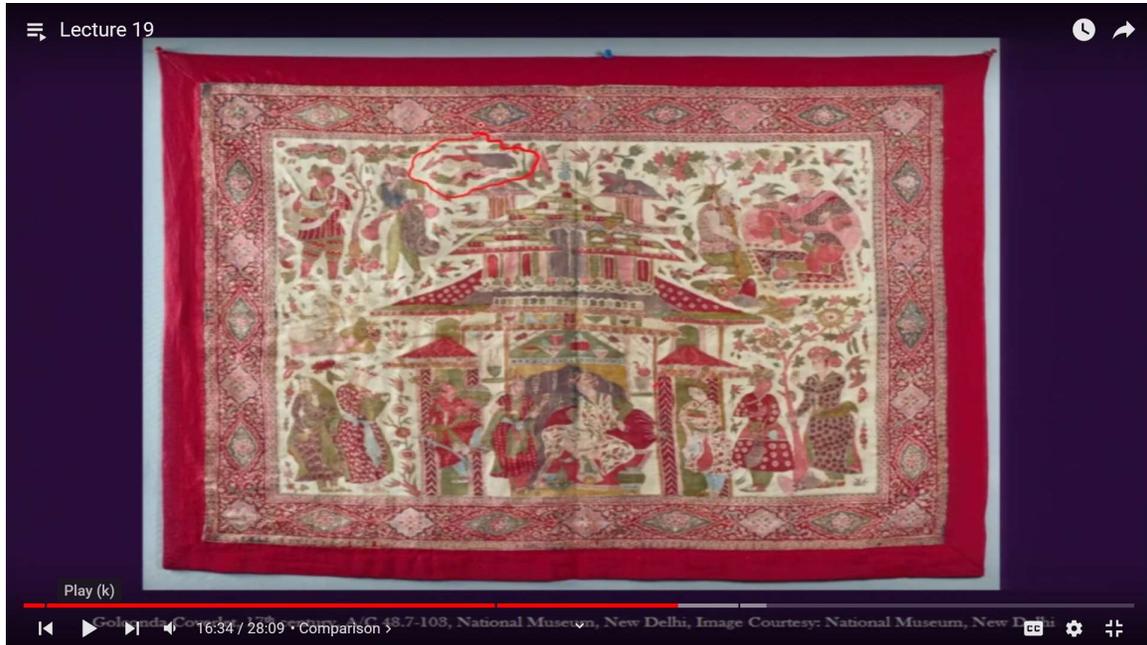
So, this kind of aspects that make us think that I mean the trade networks or like this cultural this exchanges are not something that had just happened on the surfacial level; but the artisans must have absorbed this essence of this kind of exchange or the coexistence of different kind of people in the same region and then what happens with that. So, those kind of things make us think that the extent of this kind of cultural exchange and something which we usually talk about in the context of the traders or the people from the elite class but this kind of experiment that also tells us that the artisans were very actively ... participated in this kind of cultural exchanges and that is how this kind of complex imagery came into being.



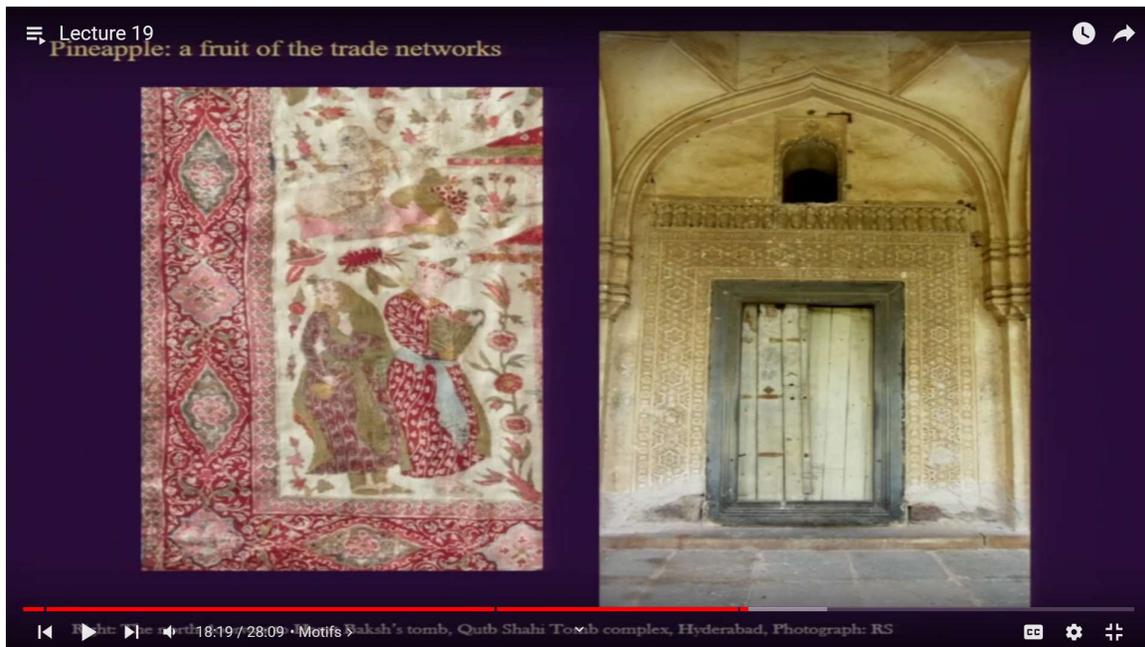
Now if we also compare it to like I mean the other Kalamkari textiles then we can also imagine that what kind of differences that might have presented there. So, in the right side of the screen we have this elaborate Kalamkari hanging that came from 19th century perhaps from Madurai and which is in the southern Coromandel region in Tamil Nadu. In this one what we see that I mean there is this Shaiva Saint Manikkavachar and then also then we see that scenes from goddess Meenakshi getting married to Sundareshwara. These scenes ... are in the Shaivite theme we find them to be there in this textile. And this textile also follows this typical arrangement of the temple hangings except the fact that I mean even in the borders we see that I mean some kind of narration is still continuing. So, for example, in the upper border we have the narration continuing which in many of the other

Kalamkari textiles the temple hangings we find that usually like the flowers or ornamental motifs are there in the border and not strictly figurative narrations. So, in this one what we again see that there are those horizontal registers in which like the entire hanging is divided and then we have the figures and those figures are then associated with text. And sometime the text would be written in Tamil, but then also surprisingly we find a lot of Telugu text in the Tamil region. I mean the Tamil speaking region and that's because a lot of those artisans were Telugu and Telugu speaking and that is the reason we find that I mean how a lot of those textiles even though those were made in the southern Coromandel but where a lot of times ... we'll find them to be made by ... Telugu speaking artisans. So, whatever it is we see that I mean here there are like I mean text which are associated with like I mean this imagery that sort of tells us about that I mean what image or like I mean what figure we are looking at what part of the story of Meenakshi and Sundareshwarar we are looking at and so on. And of course there are those iconographic details which help us to sort of read through this narrative or see the entire narrative how it unfolds. Now if we compare it to a rumal that we have already seen here (so in the earlier slide) in this one we can see the kind of like how the color scheme at the same time like the way the figures have been drawn and then the kind of information about the different part of the world perhaps all those things are brought in is something that is very different from how this temple hangings were made. So, for example in both cases we find that the initial drawings are done by this Kalam. So for that reason all the lines or like I mean all the contour lines of the bodies they need to be drawn with this kalam with this black ink or kasam whatever we call it. So, if this is what is used there but then we can also see how the way of drawing it is very distinctive. So, for example in this temple hanging for a valid reason we find that the figural motifs they sort of follow the iconography of those different characters and they also stay close to or faithful to the other figurative representation of these gods and goddesses (those we see in the manuscript as well as in the architecture). So, if that is something we find but then like I mean the same artisan perhaps or like I mean artisan from the same region would use the same kalam, the same ink to draw something like this Eastern Asian man or Persianate figure and in which, the character of the drawing completely changes (the essence of it or like the flavor of it), would be very different from how the kalam is used for making a temple hanging. And it's not just about drawing but we

can also think about the kind of other aspects of these images in which like what kind of backgrounds are used and then like all the other elements which are then incorporated as part of like I mean this kind of motifs.



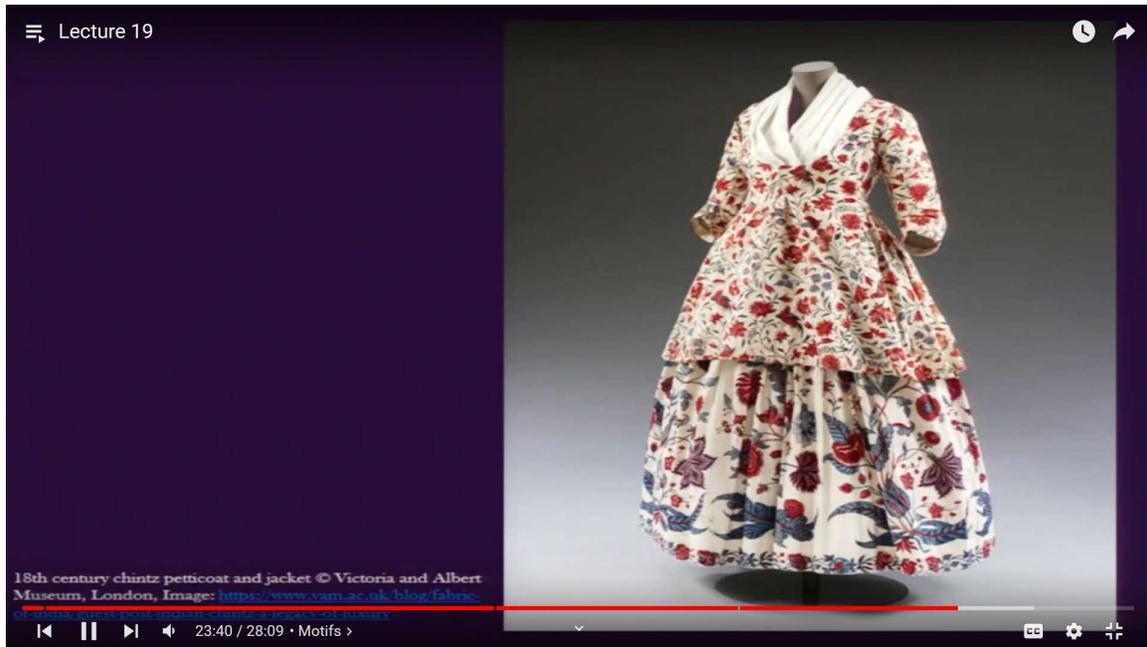
So, for example, in this motif if we go back this particular area in which we find that there are two antelopes or deers which is seated there and then there is stylized depiction of rock formations. So, this is something we find in those Shikargah carpets and then those other textiles which we have already seen in the Persian context. So, there are many different kind of references we find them to be there much more fluidly sort of incorporated in this rumals or in the trade textiles than the ones which were perhaps intended for the temple hangings and the inland trade. For those reasons what we see that the artisans had this extensive sort of .... vocabulary at the same time their skill was expansive so that they could incorporate different kind of motifs if required they can get engaged in making temple hangings but at the same time they could also get engaged in making things which were not really part of their culture the regional culture or local culture. So, these are the kind of experiences since there is no written record of the artisans about how they have absorbed the flavor of the cultural exchanges and so on this textiles they remain here for us to understand that what kind of cultural exchange they were part of and how they might have incorporated this different kind of information and sort of blended them together in the imagery that we see here.



The other aspect of like I mean the trade exchanges we see them there is the use of different kind of particular motifs and one of the motif we will find them to be there and that is the pineapple motif. So, in this rumal (this Golconda coverlet that we have already seen so) in one part like ... in this section of the coverlet right here we have this one motif, there is this ascetic we find that is there seated on this rock formation and this ascetic we can see him here with like I mean this very characteristic animal skin perhaps a tiger skin being like I mean worn in his body. ... then we also see this almost like this yoga patta that is sort of like I mean tying his two knees together it is also a sign that is used in the yogic poses we find that to be extensively used in the Deccani and South Indian cultures. and one of the very famous example of that would be the yoga Narasimha from Hampi which was previously Lakshmi Narasimha and then in the 19th century renovation this yoga patta was added and then it was made as a it was sort of like I mean transformed into yoga Narasimha. So a similar kind of yoga patta we find that to be there in this ascetics around the knees of this ascetic. So it kind of like confirms that this person is an ascetic and we see that with the beard and everything else that it confirms that I mean perhaps is in this ascetic is someone who is perhaps in his old age. ... then this person we find that he is holding in his one hand this brightly colored pineapple. So what does that mean? We do not really know that if there is any relationship between an ascetic and perhaps it is a Hindu ascetic because

of the yoga patta and so on. So, there is no direct correlation we find between a pineapple and a Hindu ascetic. But then what we see during this time that in the 17th century the Portuguese traders they have brought pineapple from South America and Central America and then like I mean they have arrived in the coast of Coromandel and from there we find this pineapple motif was extensively then used in many of the textiles even in those prayer mats, Janamaz we find in the apex of the arch there is usually a flower or like a bud motif even there we find the pineapple motif to be incorporated. So, this new fruit that came with the Portuguese traders, was well accepted in the Deccani society. And we have records the Mughal Waqai's and so on in which we find this fruits were then presented to the rulers (the Golconda rulers and the Qutub-Shahi kings) they were very much fascinated enthralled by this kind of gifts and this new fruit. And so we find that this kind of fruit then became part of this larger Deccani visual lexicon and it was not something just utilized in this Kalamkari textiles but in many other visual forms. So for example, we find that I mean how in this particular architectural panel (Qutub-Shahi tomb complex tomb of Hayat Baksh Begum and is the northern gateway) on the top of this gateway we find this one horizontal column which is full of pineapples. And pineapple then like in one hand we see one motif that is there with the Hindu ascetic and the ascetic is gazing at this pineapple, on the other hand we see this entrance to the tomb of Hayat Baksh Begum that has this panel of pineapple on the top of it. So we see that pineapple was in the 17th century by this time we find that it was already been accepted as something that was related to good health and good fortune. And so those kind of association which is still there in part of Southeast Asia (in Malaysia and part of that region). So those kind of aspects we find them to be there also absorbed in the Deccani culture. So this idea of the fruit that is related to good fortune health and so on something that perhaps been already been developing in part of Southeast Asia and when the fruit arrived in the Coromandel coast we find that I mean this fruit was not just something that was accepted as this new wondrous fruit; but it was also something that came with its cultural meaning which was associated with good health and perhaps good fortune. And that is how it became much more relevant to be incorporated in the Deccani craft forms and architectural forms. So this is the other extent of like this cultural exchanges which were happening which is not just sort of like focused on the textile but it also shows that I mean what kind of like I mean cultural exchange was happening in the

17th, 18th century; the textiles were part of it. But also the other kinds of visual representations and the materials like the architecture, different craft forms, and so on were all part of this kind of cultural exchange in Deccan and southern India.



Now the other part of, like I mean the trade around Kalamkari textiles and similar kinds of objects we find is that. when the European traders they arrived there they have also demanded that what kind of like flora and fauna that would be drawn on those textiles. And for those reasons we find that after a particular point in time the European traders they would prefer that motifs of like I mean birds, less of animals, but then more of like those flora and vegetal and creeper motifs. And so those things we find them to be there. So in one hand like I mean the perhaps like some kind of tailoring requirement were given to the artisans and the artisans perhaps kept those requirements in mind when they were making those pieces of untailored fabric. And then after making them we find them to be tailored perhaps mostly in western Europe and made into dresses like this. So, with this oceanic trade networks we find that initially a lot of the European traders were interested in sort of in the barter-system for which they can get the Indian textiles and then sort of exchange them for Southeast Asian spices. But then we find that how those textiles also gained a huge popularity and market in Western Europe. For those reasons we find that the European traders become increasingly interested in obtaining these dye painted (modern painted

textiles) the Kalamkari textiles from the Coromandel coast and then sort of bringing them to Western Europe (to the market in Western Europe). And this kind of activities that went to certain extent that in the early 18th century there was a ban on importing chintz textile, this Kalamkari textiles (which are also called chintz in Western Europe in the context of Britain). So, we find that how this textiles were banned. But then the banning actually did not help it increased the popularity of this textiles even more, and more of the smuggling that started happening of this textiles and those textiles were sold for a high price. So, in one hand we find there is a stage in which that the textiles how the textiles have appeared in the market in Western Europe and only the wealthy people could wear them; and then we see that sometimes that I mean for since the cotton textiles were not really as expensive as the brocade or like I mean the European the woven cloth and everything else with motifs. So, we find that I mean it was not just there with the elites but then it kind of like also were disseminated in the larger public. And that was kind of like, I mean, we see that how does this 'globalization of style' (something that is coined by Beverly Lemire and then also like I mean Maxine Berg and so on) that started happening with these textiles. So, it's not just that I mean how the traders they brought information to the artisanal workshops in the Coromandel coast; but this kind of textiles, when they arrived in the other parts of the globe, they also transformed the local markets and then like I mean the regional economy, at the same time style, and fashion and everything else with that. So, of course, like I mean, when we see these textiles we cannot really just think that this is all about celebrating these cultural exchanges, but we also know that, I mean how there have been all those hierarchy and also like I mean how the money making and everything they do not really in acknowledge the contribution of the artisans.

So, all these different parts, we see them be there as part of, like, I mean, the cultural exchanges and trade networks. So, from transforming the workshops on the coast to like transforming the market and fashion in other parts of the globe. Thank you.