

The East-West Center
Arts Program presents

Curators: **Pheroza J. Godrej, Firoza Punthakey Mistree, Michael Schuster**
Exhibition design: **Lynne Najita**

PARSI

SILK & MUSLIN FROM IRAN, INDIA, AND CHINA

Presented in cooperation with:
Pheroza J. Godrej, Firoza Punthakey Mistree,
Shangri La - Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art



NOWROJEE JAMSETJEE WADIA, COLLECTION: SIR J.J. PARSI BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION, BOMBAY,
COURTESY: THE BOMBAY PARSI PUNCHAYET, PHOTOGRAPH: HOMYAR MISTRY, HOMZ PRINTS

Parsis, followers of Zoroastrianism, one of the world's oldest religions, are a unique community found mostly in South Asia (they are the smallest recognized ethnic group in India). From the 8th through 10th centuries, the Parsis emigrated from Central

Asia/Greater Persia when Islam was overtaking the region and marginalizing the once-dominant Zoroastrian religion. The Parsis have been extremely important to India's modernization and are well-known in industry, commerce, education, government,

and the arts. In the 19th century, many Parsis moved to the bustling port of Bombay during the British colonial expansion. During this expansion, they were instrumental in the British-dominated China trade. Living in Canton, China, Parsi merchants imported opium and cotton from India and exported tea and silk to the empire. They often acted as intermediaries for the English and by the late 19th century were educated in English medium schools, embracing features of English dress and culture. As Parsis entered professions within the British colonial administration, they became even further anglicized. After Indian independence in 1947, the special status of the Parsi community was greatly diminished. Because of the high education of Parsi men and women, low birthrate, and the prohibition of intermarriage, the community has been shrinking. The Zoroastrian religion is presently followed by two major groups: the Zoroastrians of Iran and the Parsis of India. There are less than 70,000 Zoroastrians in India, around 25,000 in Iran, and only around 125,000 Zoroastrians worldwide. This exhibition focuses on Parsi textiles, highlighting aspects of the long and varied development of the Parsi community. Parsi clothing demonstrates elements borrowed from Iran, India, Victorian-era England, and China. The exhibit emphasizes the continuity of Parsi culture, giving insight into the Zoroastrian religion and its Persian roots, the history of the community, and its rich and complex culture.

Arts Program, Office of External Affairs
1601 East-West Road, Honolulu, HI 96848-1601

Address Service Requested

EWC Arts Mailing List Notice:
To receive notices by email,
please visit our website
<http://arts.EastWestCenter.org>

East-West Center Gallery

John A. Burns Hall, 1601 East-West Road
(corner Dole St. & East-West Rd.)

Gallery hours: Weekdays: 8:00 a.m. –5:00 p.m.
Sundays: Noon–4:00 p.m.; Gallery admission is free
**Closed Saturdays, & October 12, November 11, 26–27,
December 24–25, 31, January 1 & 18.**

Parking on the UH-Mānoa campus is normally free and ample on Sundays.

For further information: 944-7177
arts@EastWestCenter.org
<http://arts.EastWestCenter.org>
Free school & group tours available

 Printed with soy based inks on recycled paper

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Special Events

In the EWC Gallery with free admission.

Sunday, October 11, 2:00–3:30 p.m.
Exhibition **Gala Opening** including reception and gallery walkthrough with guest curators, Pheroza J. Godrej and Firoza Punthakey Mistree.

Sunday, October 25, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
Illustrated talk: **“Global Textile Industry in Pakistan: A Personal Conversation”** by Nisha Pinjani, MFA candidate, UHM Dept. of Art and Art History.

Sunday, November 1, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
Illustrated talk: **“From Ritual to Sport: Persian Culture and the Ancient Sport Tradition”** by Maseeh Ganjali, MFA candidate, UHM Dept. of Theatre and Dance.

Sunday, November 15, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
Illustrated talk: **“Ancient Religions of Persia: Mithraism, Zoroastrianism, and Manicheism”** by F. Don Parsa, Professor of Surgery, UHM John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Sunday, December 6, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
Illustrated talk: **“Chinese Influence on the Fashion Runway”** by Shu-Hwa Lin, Associate Professor and Costume Curator, UHM Dept. of Fashion Design and Merchandising.

Sunday, January 17, 2:00–3:00 p.m.
Illustrated talk: **“Zoroastrianism after Islam and Its Influences on Persian Culture”** by Ladan Hamedani, Roshan Institute Instructor in Persian Language and Culture, UHM College of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature.



JHABLA (BLOUSE)

This exhibition is made possible by generous support from Richard H. Cox; Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute; The Hawaii Pacific Rim Society; and Aston Hotels & Resorts.

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