NATIONAL MUSEUM

ALAMKĀRA
Jewellery gallery
Teacher’s resource pack and Children’s workbook
This is a teacher’s resource pack cum children’s workbook, which can be used by teachers or families to plan a visit to the Jewellery Gallery at the National Museum (NM). The booklet has four segments including Pre-Visit, During the Visit, Post visit and activities for home.

To promote sustainable creative educational activities through museum collection NM encourages schools, teachers and families to opt for planned museum visits and orient children and accompanying facilitators in classrooms or at home before visiting the museum or any exhibition.

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1. The accompanying images should be used in classrooms or at home to introduce the collection to the class. The images can be used as starting points of discussion which can later be followed by the gallery visit in the museum. The discussion can explore types of jewellery and their usage. Designs, motifs of birds, animals, gems and stones seen in jewellery from different centuries. Questions like why were they created? Who created them? Who used them and how were they discovered can be part of the discussion. The class can be divided in groups depending on the strength of the class.

2. Based on the interactive classroom session a visit to the museum can be planned. The booklet consists of activities which are designed around the jewellery displayed in the gallery. Therefore, teachers/facilitators/families should take printouts of pages 07 to 18 and handover the activity sheets to children.

3. Plan your visit to the museum with a specific date in mind. This tour will take...... hours

4. Visit the Jewellery gallery at the National Museum with your activity sheets that you just got printed.

5. Indulge in the Activities on page number 15 to 18 in your classrooms after your visit to the National Museum.

6. Don't let it end here and you can continue this learning with fun experience at your home by doing the activities on page .......... to ..........
Introduction/Background information

The National Museum collection of jewels celebrates the beauty, design and the technical expertise of Indian craftsmanship. More than two hundred items span the gamut of Indian history and the bulk of the collection dates from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and represents communities and regions from around historic India.

There are 'Mughal' style jewels with kundan set gems in the front and minakari enamelling on the reverse; and, sheet gold necklaces and bangles worked in repoussé from South India. There are hair ornaments for women and turban jewels for men, necklaces that hug the throat and those that cascade down to the waist; there are earrings, armbands, bangles and bracelets. The jewels are set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, white sapphires and pearls.

The term 'jewel' comes from the old French word joule - as something that gives 'joy'. So, by 'jewel' is implied everything that gives joy when worn. It amply sums up what jewellery stands for in the Indian emotional-cultural context. In India, the joy derived from alankara or adornment was not just a component of attire, but was a passion. The significance of adornment in Indian culture is manifest in every period and evident in thousands of sculptures, paintings and photographs through the centuries. Most importantly, jewels are intrinsic to the human body in Indian art.

The chronicle of Indian jewellery commences in the ancient cities of the Indus Valley civilization more than three thousand years before the Common Era. Excavations at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and other sites have brought forth a treasure trove of beads of different shapes and sizes fashioned from gold, agate, jasper, steatite, carnelian and faience. India was a principal supplier of beads to far-flung cities in the ancient world. Evidence of jewellery is also forthcoming in the plastic arts. The famous bronze dancing girl from the city of Mohenjodaro is nude but adorned with jewellery. She stands elegantly her left arm hanging down resting on her thigh stacked with bangles from the wrist all the way up to her shoulder. On her right arm, which is bent at the elbow and placed on her hips, she wears just two bangles – one at the wrist and the other just above the elbow. Around her neck hangs a cord with a pendant of three pod-shaped beads. Another bronze fragment of an elegant foot, also from Mohenjodaro wears a beautiful anklet. Simple terracotta figurines are heavily ornamented with jewels - strips and bits of clays are applied as necklaces, chokers, bangles and girdles. Jewels from the Indus Valley in the museum's collection manifest a sophistication of design and skilled craftsmanship by artisans of this early prehistoric period.

The many invasions of India from Alexander to Babur resulted in a dispersion of jewellery styles from Greece, Persia and Central Asia into India. From the 16th century the Portuguese, the English and the French brought their own influences to bear. Itinerant craftsmen carried their trade and skills across kingdoms and courts. All these interactions exposed local craftsmen to new design influences and techniques - they absorbed, assimilated and reinterpret and what emerged was a unique and distinct Indian style of jewellery.

Gold predominates in the jewels of India as seen in all the pieces in the collection. Gold is the symbol of the sun. From time immemorial, Indians coveted gold for its indestructibility and endowed it with properties that went far beyond its utility in the manufacture of jewels. The ancient goldsmith discovered that gold was easy to work with. It was malleable, ductile and never lost its lustre. The soft metal was ideal to fashion the hollow receptacles into which gems were set. Gold could be drawn into fine wires and twisted into intricate designs, formed into granules and applied to surfaces; gold could be beaten into thin sheets and designs pushed into relief, it could be engraved and incised with beautiful floral patterns. Most importantly, the metal could be melted down and reused to fashion new items.

Nature was an infinite source of inspiration. From the world of flora the jeweller incorporated flowers, buds, leaves, scrolling vines and even fruits into the forms and decorations of the jewels he designed. Craftsmen also drew upon the vast storehouse of myths and legends to decorate jewels. In hair ornaments that take the form of the sinuous body of the snake, Krishna dances in victory on Kaliya the demon snake that he vanquished. Jewels functioned as portable shrines featuring the favourite deities of a devout patron. Jewels such as these were believed to bestow continuous blessings, good health and prosperity on the wearer.

European influence in the 19th century introduced new designs, ornament types, and techniques of production into India. Traditional goldsmiths quickly adapted to the new influences and changing tastes and manufactured jewels that were western in design incorporating lighter mounts, claw setting and faceted gems. The ancient, the traditional and the modern endures side-by-side in India today. Nowhere is this more evident than in jewels.
Surviving pieces from the various periods, dynasties and regions of India are few. This is partly due to the turbulent nature of transition of power from one ruler to his heir, from one dynasty to the next and recurring invasions. Turbulence resulted in treasuries being looted and gold being consigned to the melting crucible. But Indians loved gold and for more than five thousand years India was known as the Golden Bird or ‘sone ki chidia’. It was a land of natural beauty, divine intellect and incalculable wealth. People from around the world flocked to this golden land lured by the abundance of diamonds, pearls, rubies and emeralds that were traded in gem bazaars around the country.

Original Text written by
Dr. Usha Balakrishnan, Jewellery Expert
Further readings


Krishnan, Usha. R.Bala and Meera Sushil Kumar. Dance of the peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India, India Book House limited, Mumbai.
ALAMKĀRA
Jewellery gallery workbook

NATIONAL MUSEUM
MY NAME IS

I STUDY IN ..................................................................................STANDARD

I AM ........................................................................ YEARS OLD.

I HAVE COME TO THE MUSEUM WITH

..................................................................................
Pre-Visit: Time to Think and talk

- You have just seen images of objects from the National Museum's Alamkara- The Beauty of Ornament gallery. You will be seeing them when you visit the National Museum.

- Now can you select an object image and discover more about it?

- You can either work individually or in a group.

- You can also draw your object here.

Talking point

- What must have been the inspiration behind the design?

- Does it have any sign of age or wear?

- What style is it?

- Who might have owned it?

- If it could tell a story what would it be?

- What material is it made of?

This activity is to be done in the classroom
Animals and adornment

Parrots, peacocks, elephants, lions, snakes and even mythical creatures like makara and yali danced their way into jewels from the world of fauna. It is believed that the Greek craftsmen who travelled with Alexander—the mighty Greek Emperor perhaps introduced bangles and bracelets with animal head terminal to Indian!

Look at the pictures - they all show part of few fantastic animals. Try to match the pictures to the description below and put the correct number in the orange circles.

1) An enamelled gem set bangle from Varanasi.

2) It is part of a Bangle (kada), from jaipur and Made of Gold, diamonds, enamel.

3) The lions sit calmly on an Armband (bazuband) made of Gold, diamonds, rubies, enamel.

4) This probably might have been part of a waist belt from Taxila, Sirkap.
In the Museum: During the Visit

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orange
Gold armlet
The object that you are looking at depicts few amazing animals. It was manufactured in Tamil Nadu and probably was created for a royal lady or a bride to be. A lady beautifying her arm with an armlet is considered one of the sixteen acts of Shringara; which means an act leading to a clean and beautiful appearance.

Which all fantastic creatures can you identify? We have identified one for you!
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Q Which all fantastic creatures can you identify?

We have identified one for you! Peacock
The gods and goddess in India are adorned with jewels. An essential component of daily ritual in Indian temples is the placement of jewels on the

Which all sculptures of Indian God and Goddess do you remember seeing in the museum today?
Did you notice their jewellery?

If not you can explore museum's corridors and galleries after you have completed this activity!

Mohini, a celestial nymph
The sculpture shows her beautifully adorned body with different jewellery. Her sculpture indicates the presence of a prosperous ancient Indian society with a rich tradition of jewellery.
Imagine being a priest of a temple from ancient India and pick few beautiful jewels from the gallery to dress your Devi. Draw them on the blank spaces. You could use Mohini for inspiration.
With the arrival of Mughals, there was a complete change in the aesthetics of Indian jewellery. Use of gemstones, large diamonds, precious gems and enamel was combined to craft magnificent jewels. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires and pearls are the five great gemstones which were most used by kings, emperors and nobles.

Legend has it that the lucky owner of the finest ruby was guaranteed of a life lived in peace and harmony with all men. Ruby worn by a warrior made him unbeatable in battles.

The gallery has jewellery decorated with Rubies and other precious stones. Now walk around the gallery and count the jewels set mostly with rubies.
There is jewellery decorated with many other gemstones as well. Do you know which ones they are?

Torquoise
Diamonds
Pearls
Emerald
Rubies

Do you know what is the study of gems called?
The jewels from archaeological finds reveal the aesthetics of ancient skills. The 20th century jewels show that aesthetics continue and ancient techniques of jewellery manufacturing have been passed down in unbroken continuity. Artists since the ancient times have been decorating jewellery with motifs, patterns and writings which are continued till today!

Can you look around the gallery and find objects from Ancient, Medieval and Modern India and think their designs are being continued to be used today?

Draw them in the boxes and don't forget to write down their details as seen in the labels.

**Ancient:** from 3000 BC to 6th Century CE

**Medieval:** 7th Century CE to 14th Century CE

**Modern:** 15th to
Centuries, Creativity and Continuity

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Modern: 15th to

Post Visit: Back at School

Let us sit back and think about all the amazing jewellery that you saw in the National Museum!

Now that you are an experienced gemologist, can you research a little more about gems & stones and find their indigenous places of origin? Precious gems were brought to India from different parts of the world.

Diamond Rubies
Sapphires Pearls
Turquoise Jade

Can you name two sites of the Indus Valley Civilization which are represented in the Jewellery gallery?
Do you remember seeing me in the gallery?

I am a Sarpech initially worn by Indian Royal men on their turbans. People in Persia and Turkey also wore me. If you breakdown the word in two, Sar means Head and Pech means Screw.

Did you know?

Emeralds came to India from Colombian and South American mines, Mughals were very fond of this green gem as it represented paradise to them.
Do you remember seeing me in the gallery? I am a Sarpech initially worn by Indian Royal men on their turbans. People in Persia and Turkey also wore me. If you breakdown the word in two, Sar means Head and Pech means Screw.

This outline image of the sarpech is for you to imagine and recreate it using your favourite gems that you might have seen during your visit.

Did you know? Emeralds came to India from Colombian and South American mines, Mughals were very fond of this green gem as it represented paradise to them. Mughals believed carving emeralds enhanced its magical properties.
Let's see how well you remember what you saw in the gallery. Write “Yes” against the jewellery that you saw and “No” for jewellery that you did not.

A gold heart-shaped pendant from Harappa, Indus Valley Civilization

A wide gold ring from Taxila, Sirkap, 1 century CE

Bejewelled crown with pearls

Two small icons of Rama and Sita in gold inlaid. From Tamil Nadu or Karnataka, 19th Century BC.
Under the patronage of different kings and emperors, the craft of jewellery gained new dimensions in India. Talented goldsmiths were encouraged and given shelter in the kingdoms of various rulers to craft unique and extraordinary jewelleries which became a prestige symbol.

Imagine yourself as the most sought after goldsmith from the Indus Valley Civilization and draw any piece of jewellery that you would use in exchange of grain- do think about features that would make it a unique masterpiece!

Talking point
Would you like to share about what you just created with your friends?
1. **CUT**

2. **PASTE**

3. **CREATE**

Remember seeing this stunning navaratana necklace? Navaratana means nine celestial gems representing seven planets and coming together of all these celestial bodies represented through these gems has the power to dispel negative energies. This har is from Bengal and probably belonged to a very rich zamindar’s wife!
Necklace

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Cut the images by its dotted border and arrange the scramble, create a collage for your room or study.
2
CUT
PASTE
CREATE
Gold earning

This is a 2000 year old gold earning from the mighty king Kushana's period, which you saw at the National Museum. It was found in Taxila presently in Pakistan. The design of the earring depicts a flower in full bloom at the centre. The inner row of petals is plain while the outer petals of triangular form are decorated with embossed particles. The centre of the flower is in the form of a hollow beaded circlet that might have been filled with turquoise paste.

To do at Home

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