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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

***Color & Light: Embroidery from India and Pakistan***  
December 12, 2008–May 11, 2009

This winter, the Rubin Museum of Art will present stunning examples of embroidery from India and Pakistan, areas long known for their beautiful and diverse textiles. The exhibition *Color & Light: Embroidery from India and Pakistan* is organized by the Textile Museum of Canada (TMC) and is drawn entirely from TMC's important permanent collection of South Asian textiles.

*Color & Light* opens Friday, December 12, 2008, and remains on view through May 11, 2009.



Ranging from the 18th to the 20th century, the works are divided into sections that address the variety of functions that textiles held—and to a large extent still hold—in the secular and spiritual life of the communities in which they were created. The section “Court and Commerce” includes examples of lavishly embroidered textiles produced by master craftsmen, often in state-owned workshops, for rulers and the elite to reflect their wealth and influence. The section “Pasture, Farm, and Village” explores the role of domestic embroidery. Wedding garments, identified by their brightly colored silk threads and mirrors, are among the textiles typically produced in the home. The remaining works are divided among the sections “Embellishing the Home,” “Embroidery and Identity,” and “Ceremonies and Celebrations.”

*Color & Light* represents some of the most exquisite examples of embroidery, whether produced in male-dominated workshops or by women in the home, from a region that has exported its textiles for more than two thousand years. The intricate patterns, the refraction of light off silk threads, the subtle color changes, and the striking juxtapositions of shapes enchanted Marco Polo in the thirteenth century and continue to inspire awe today.

The ethnic and geographic diversity of present-day India and Pakistan is reflected in the variety of decorative motifs, color combinations, materials, patterns, and stitching techniques used to embellish cloth. In this way, textiles serve as indicators of community or religious affiliations. Embroideries created in keeping with Islamic traditions, for example, are frequently identified by precise and complex geometric patterns. Hindu textiles, on the other hand, often feature naturalistic or highly stylized representational motifs. Embellishments used on all types of textiles include beetle-wing casings, seeds, silk tassels, beads, and metal ornaments.

Though textiles continue to play an important role in the societies in which they have been produced, some of the embroidery traditions represented in *Color & Light* are no longer practiced or are in danger of disappearing. Much of this change can be attributed to the increase in urbanization, a desire for mainstream fashions, and the increasing availability of inexpensive, machine-made textiles. Conversely, the past three decades have seen the re-emergence of traditional women's embroidery as an income-generating activity and a vehicle for improving women's education, health, and social equality.

Images are available upon request. Two highlights from the exhibition are shown below:

<p><b><i>Bedding Cover (dharaniyo), detail</i></b>          Possibly Kutch, Gujarat, India; 1980          Possibly Banni Muslim community          Plain-weave cotton appliquéd on plain-weave cotton          51 1/2 x 31 1/2 in.          From the Fitzgerald Collection          Textile Museum of Canada          T00.45.111</p>	
<p><b><i>Boy's Jacket (jhuladi)</i></b>          Saurashtra (Kathiawar), Gujarat, India; ca.1970          Ahir community          Floss silk embroidery on plain-weave cotton          16 1/8 x 51 1/2 in.          Gift of Dr. Howard Gorman          Textile Museum of Canada          T86.0273</p>	

**About RMA**

RMA holds one of the world's most important collections of Himalayan art. Paintings, pictorial textiles, and sculpture are drawn from cultures that touch upon the arc of mountains that extends from Afghanistan in the northwest to Myanmar (Burma) in the southeast and includes Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Bhutan. The larger Himalayan cultural sphere, determined by significant cultural exchange over millennia, includes Iran, India, China, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia. This rich cultural legacy, largely unfamiliar to Western viewers, offers an uncommon opportunity for visual adventure and aesthetic discovery.

Admission to RMA is \$10.00 for adults; \$7.00 for seniors, middle- and high-school students, and artists (with ID); \$2.00 for college students (with ID); \$7.00 for neighbors (zip codes 10011 & 10001 with ID); free for seniors the first Monday of every month; and free for children under 12 and for museum members. Gallery admission is free to all on Fridays between 7 pm and 10 pm

Open Monday 11 am to 5 pm, Wednesday 11 am to 7 pm, Thursday 11 am to 5 pm, Friday 11 am to 10 pm, Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm; closed on Tuesday. To reach the museum by subway, visitors may take the A, C or E to 14th Street; the 1 to 18th Street; 1, 2, 3 to 14th Street; F and V to 14th Street; N, R, Q, W, 4, 5 and 6 to 14th or the L to 6th Avenue. By bus, visitors may take the B20 to the corner of 7th Avenue and 17th Street.