

THE WOVEN ART OF BALUCHAR

AN EXHIBITION OF MUSEUM QUALITY BALUCHARI SAREE FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIDDHARTHA TAGORE

A show dedicated to JASLEEN DHAMIJA for her contribution to the history of textiles and costumes

18 August - 18 September, 2021

Art Konsult #1, Basement, Hauz Khas Village, New Delhi-110016



Presents



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THE WOVEN ART OF BALUCHAR

Dating back Nearly two hundred years, Nawab of Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan, brought Baluchar art from Dhaka (Bangladesh) to a small village named Baluchar on the banks of the river Bhagirathi in Murshidabad (West Bengal). Baluchari derives its name from 'balu' (meaning sand) and 'char' (or riverbank). Baluchari weaving had themes that revolved around the lives of the nawabs and featured women smoking hookahs, nawabs driving horse carriages. The romantic notions of Indian culture adopted by Europeans and the effect of the Indian elite mirroring foreign practices as a part of their lifestyle came to be documented in various art forms. These stark changes became important themes in growing formalized artistic practices of the company school, kalighat painting. common themes transcended the realm of art, craft, and architecture and it was from within this artistic pool that themes and motifs of the Baluchar textiles were drawn from.

The Baluchar art was patronized in Baluchar until the continually changing courses of the Bhagirathi river meant that villagers had to keep uprooting themselves and move along with the river. Eventually, a flooding of the Bhagirathi forced the trade to shift from Murshidabad to Bishnupur (in the Bankura district of West Bengal) in the nineteenth century. The trade then flourished for a while under the Malla dynasty there, until the British felt threatened by their inability to replicate this artisanship in the mills of England and forced financial sanctions that squeezed the poor weavers out of their craft and brought it to the verge of shutting down.

Baluchar textiles were made from the finest locally cultivated mulberry silk of which the saris were the most versatile. The threads were dyed in natural colours and woven on traditional draw looms locally known as jalas, a mechanism developed and borrowed from Persia following the arrival of Islamic immigrants to the subcontinent. The rich creamy base of the threads absorbed color easily with the deep maroons, reds, chocolate, oranges, and purples being the favorite hues.

Baluchar saris were essentially divided into three sections based on motifs. These were the end piece or pallu; the zamin or field of the sari, the borders framing the sari, and one border between the zamin and the pallu. By analyzing the motifs on different sections of the sari, the distinct division of designs can be segmented into figurative, floral, and faunal as well as geometric or decorative. A single sari often contained a combination of these elements.

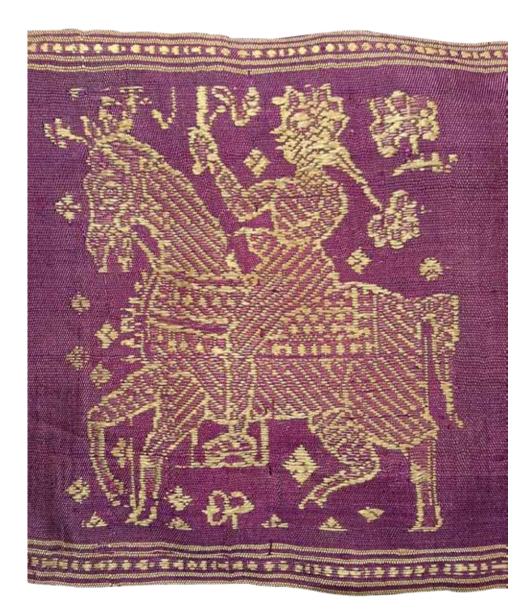
The pictorial representations found on the pallu or end piece of the sari, supplemented by a variety of motifs, gave it a unique identity. Often termed 'figured fabrics', the pictorial representations were a commentary on the changing socio-cultural developments in society while maintaining their value as a unique art form.

Moreover, competition with European mill products as well as the active hostility of the English to the Indian textile industry pushed this art further to its decline. The reason for the decline of Baluchars in Murshidabad in the early 20th century is often attributed to the passing of Dubraj Das, and the revival of baluchari weaving in the mid 20th century was brought about by the artist Subho Tagore, the first Director of the Regional Design Centre in Calcutta of the All India Handicrafts Board, who helped develop the technique of jacquard weaving that greatly simplified the process and reduced the time it took to weave a saree. This new era of baluchari weaving featured motifs from epics and religious texts (Vaishnava Imagery) and is continued to this day by the weavers of Bishnupur. The intricately carved terracotta temples of Bishnupur provide ample inspiration for the weavers who reproduce whole epics on the pallu of the sari. The ground colors range from sober beige to resplendent blues and reds with contrast borders, all on fine mulberry silk. While the present-day Baluchari may not be as grand as its ancestor, it still has a unique appeal, making the wearer stand out in a crowd.

This exhibition is dedicated to JASLEEN DHAMIJA for her contribution to the history of textiles and costumes, she has written many books on Textiles especially on Baluchari and she is the only authoritative of Balucharee saree. In this exhibition, we are showcasing the Museum quality and rare collection of Baluchar saree from the Murshidabad and some are from the Varanasi and Gujrat which are collected by the Siddhartha Tagore, Director of Art Konsult Gallery, and Curated by Puneet Kaushik & Rema Kumar, Co-curated by Gaurav Kumar

- Gaurav Kumar

New Delhi, 2021







Baluchar-Nambali (Detail), Hare Rama Hare Krishna

Baluchar-Nambali Hare Rama Hare Krishna 19th century, Murshidabad, West Bengal 470 x 136 cm.



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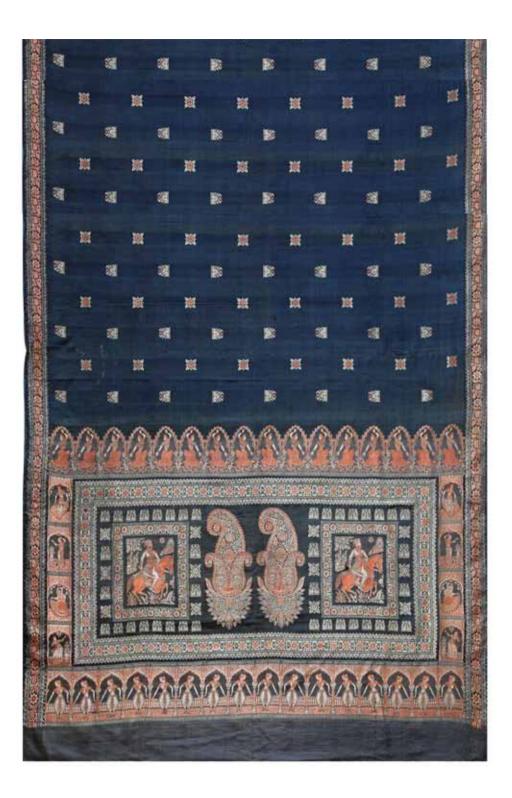
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 409 x 110 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 428 x 107 cm.



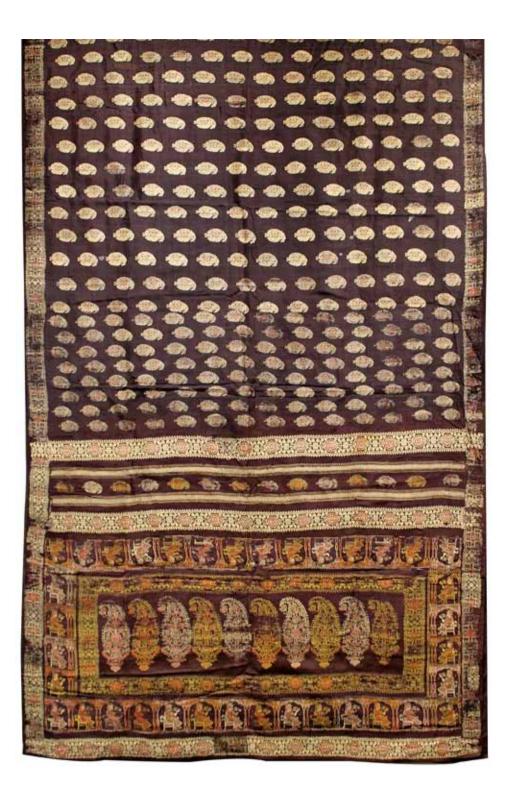
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 426 x 106 cm.



Baluchar Saree

Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu in the center area followed by a warrior on the horse depicting on left and right side and Dancing figures in the border line.

Murshidabad, West Bengal 550 x 122 cm.



Baluchar Saree within architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers. Murshidabad, West Bengal 239 x 104 cm.

Depicting an intricately woven floral kalkamotif. On the pallu the prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women placed



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 366 х 112 ст.



Baluchar Saree 300 х 110 ст.

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Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu and showing a man with the flag on the horse. Murshidabad, West Bengal

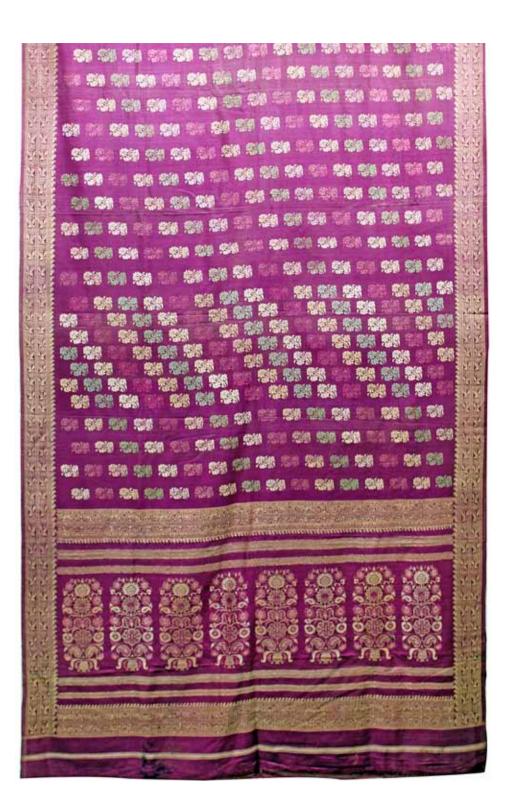


Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of thepallu, Signed by Shri Goshno Karikor. Murshidabad, West Bengal 401х112 ст.

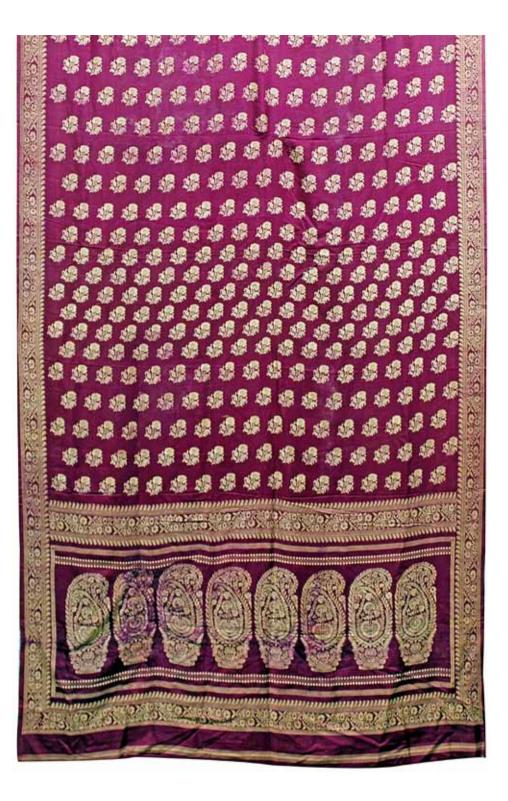


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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 322 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 442 x 112 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 445 x 110 cm.

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Baluchar Saree

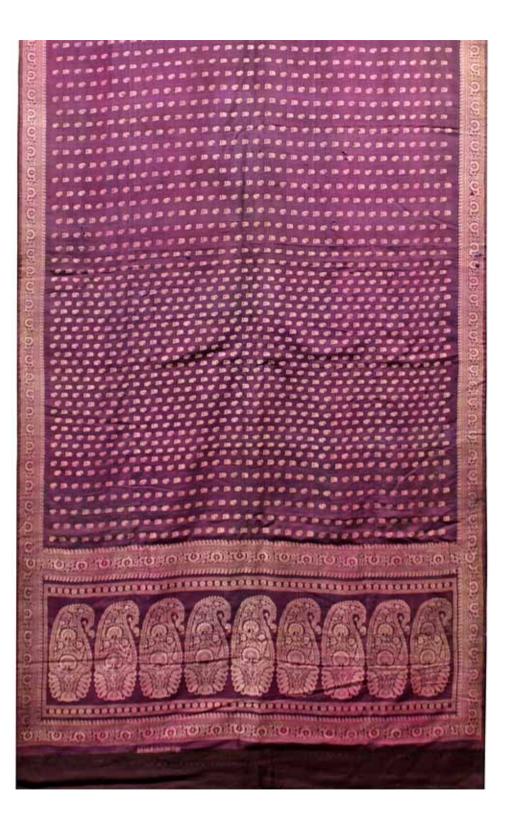
The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated European Men & women placed within architectural frames Murshidabad, West Bengal 352 x 114 cm.



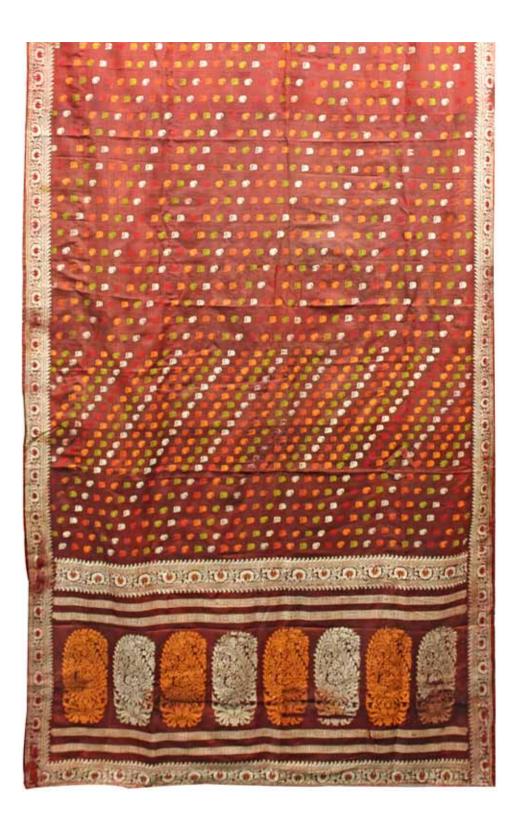
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 426 x 120 cm.



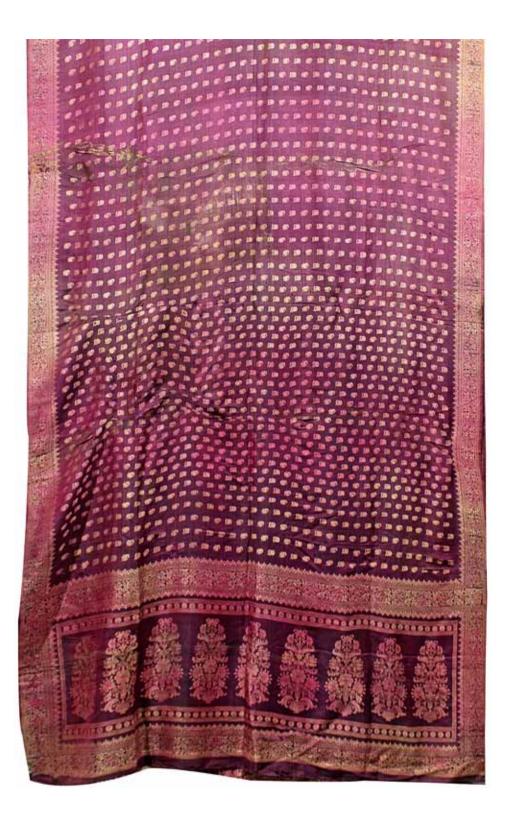
Baluchar Saree On the end of pallu showing scenes from the epic Ramayana depicting the Sita haran by Ravana Bishnupur, West Bengal 452 x 120 cm



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal Signed: Sri Dubaraj Das Mirpur, 456 x 114 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 580 x 112 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu, Signed by Shri Dubaraj Das from Mirpur Murshidabad, West Bengal, 440 x 115 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 494 x 117 cm.

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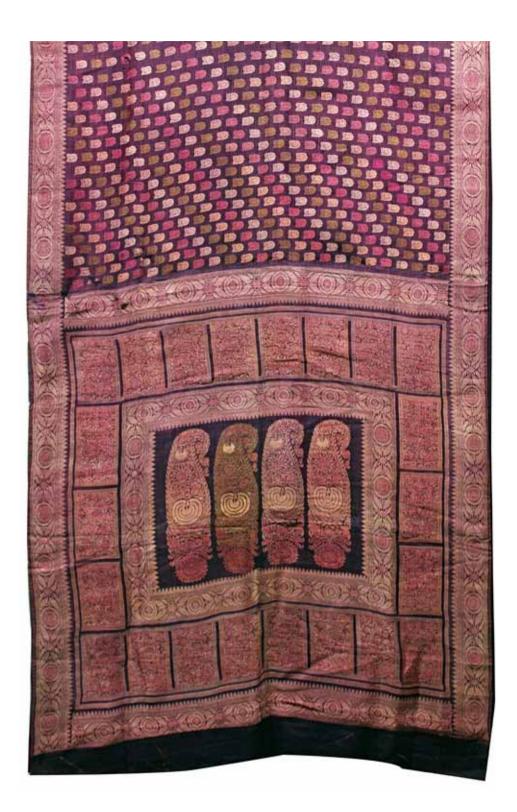


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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 439 x 108 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 389 x 106 cm.



Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre. Murshidabad, West Bengal 437 x 110 cm.



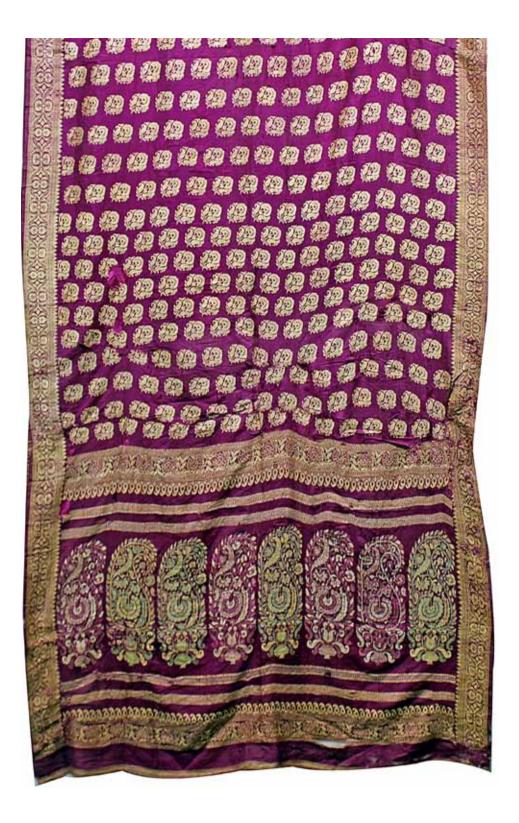
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 449 x 116 cm.



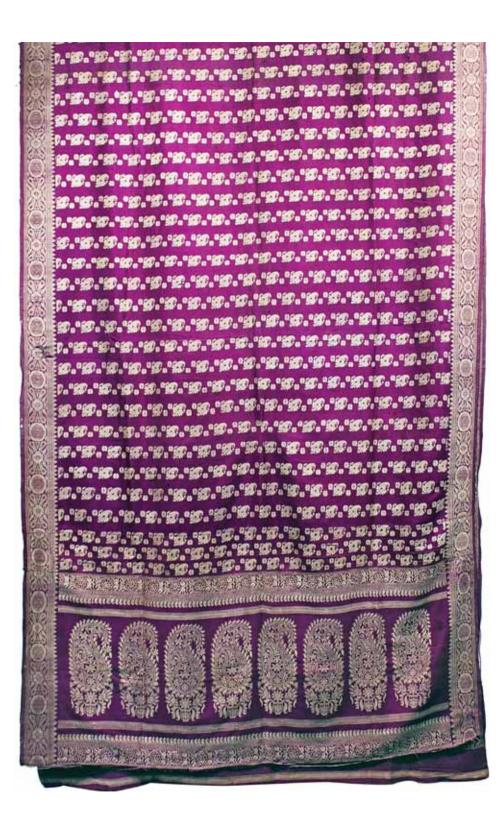
Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing Kalka in the centre and a European man with a hat riding on a horse. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 429x109 cm.

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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 402 x 114 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 394 x 102 cm.



Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu.



Baluchar Saree Murshidabad, West Bengal 373 x 111 cm.

Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 464 x 117 cm.

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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 429 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree

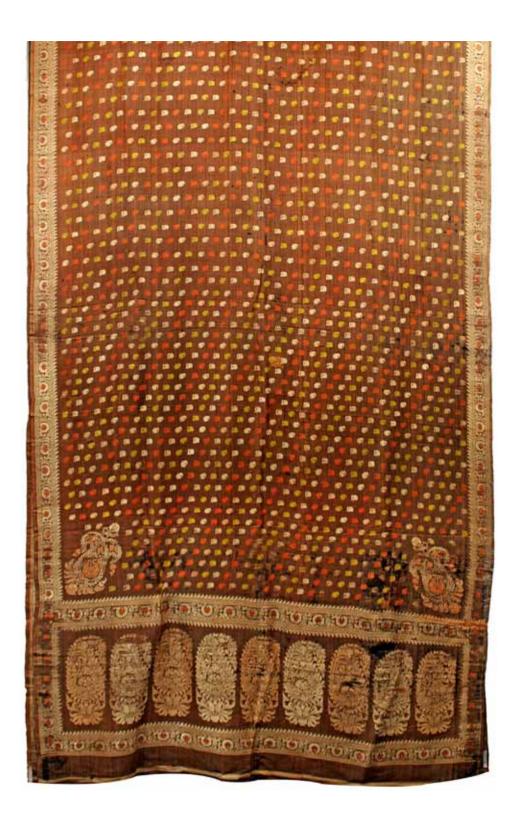
The prominent motifs show kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural carriage frames. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 386 x 109 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 423 x 111 cm



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 440 x 102 cm.



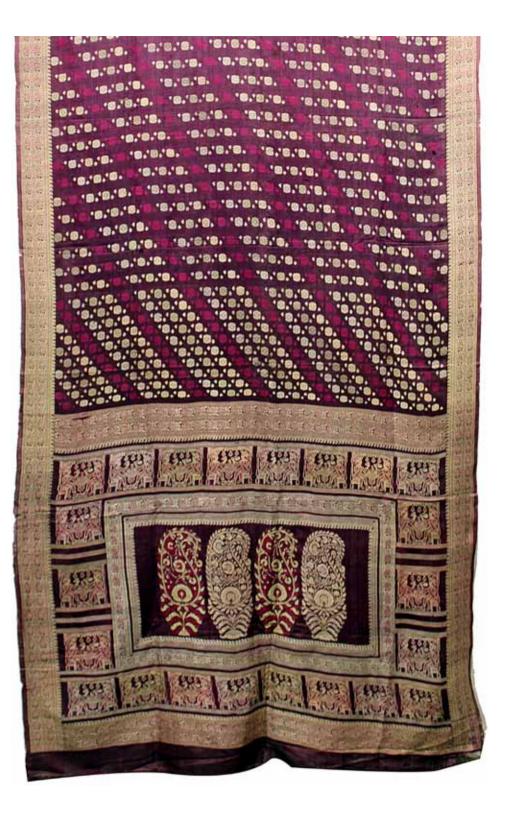
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 449 x 117 cm.



Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women placed within architectural frames Murshidabad, West Bengal, 156 x 111 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 430 x 111 cm.

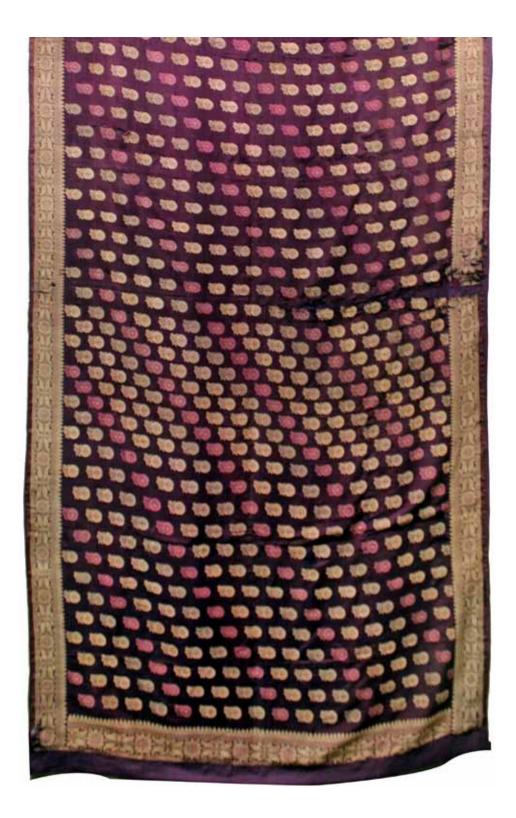


The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 388 x 108 cm.

Baluchar Saree

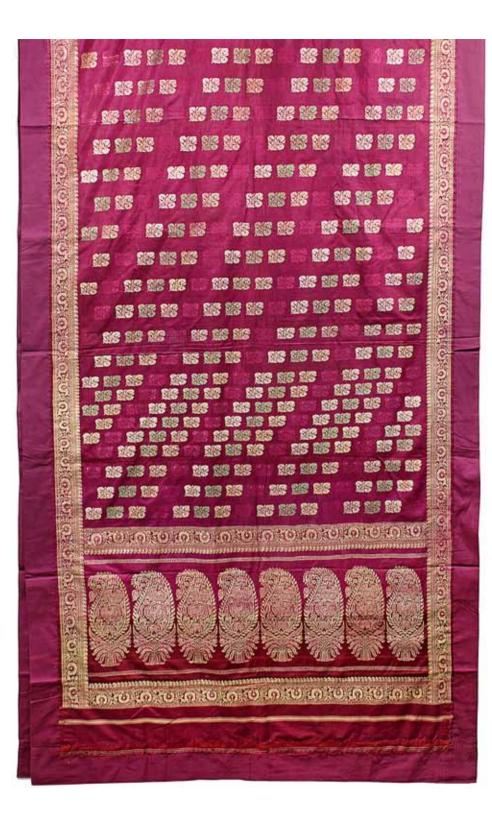


Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 506 x 108 cm.



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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 426 x 107 cm.



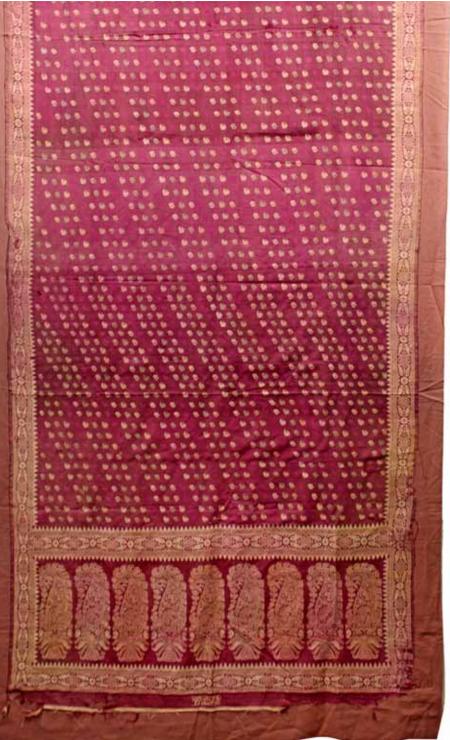
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 442 x 110 cm.



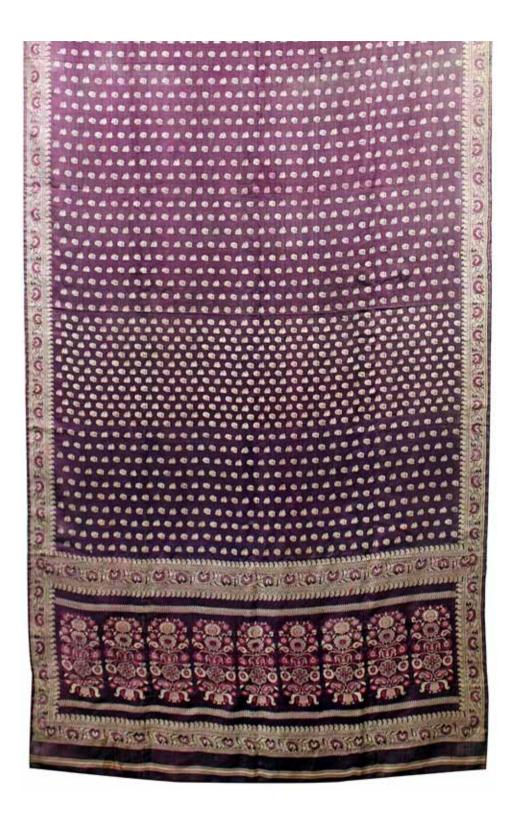
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 448 x 108 cm.

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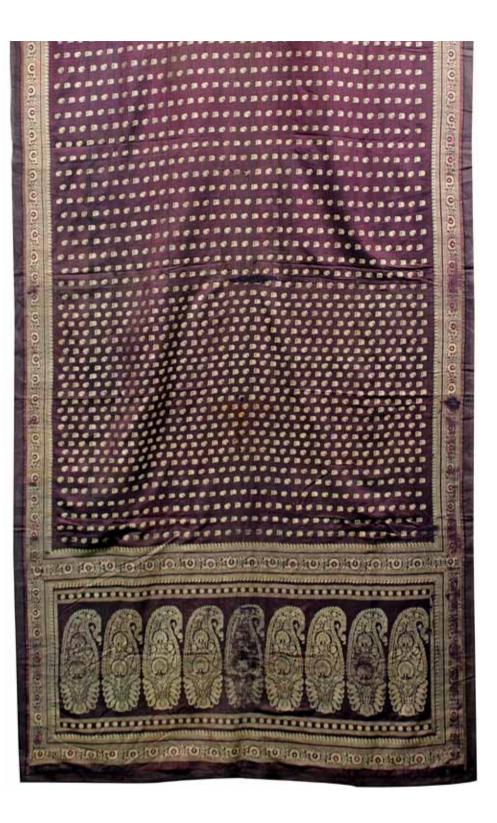
Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing Kalka in the centre and a man riding on a horse. Murshidabad, West Bengal 391 x 119 cm.



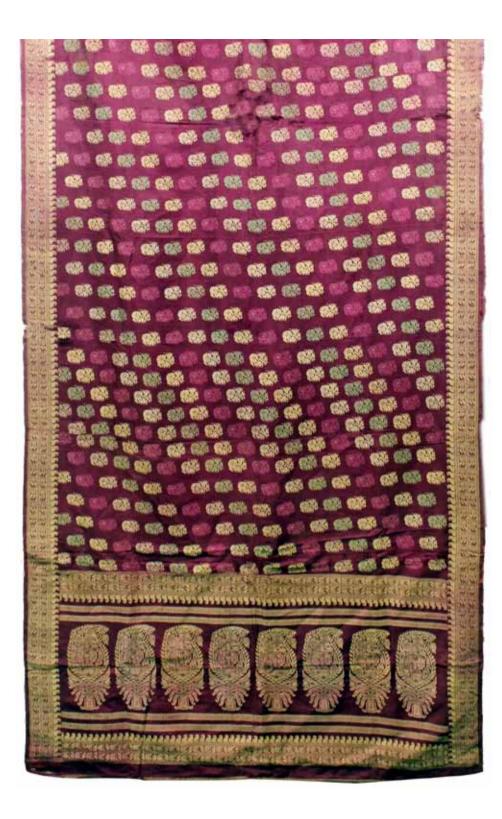
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral Kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Signed by Shri Jageshwarkor Para from Natenugram. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 454x114 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 438 x 111 cm.



Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 452 x 115 cm.



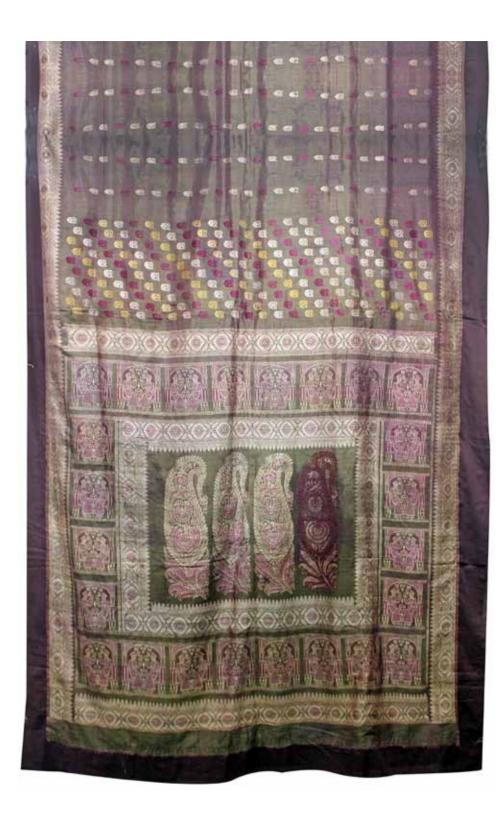
Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 403 x 110 cm.

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Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated woman on horse holding a sword. Murshidabad, West Bengal 440 x 116 cm.

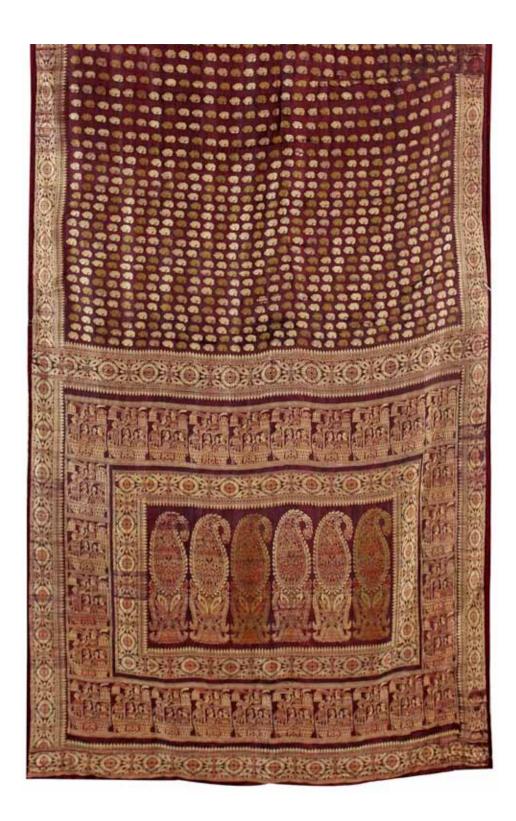


Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural frames enjoying the essence of flowers. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 432 x 111 cm. · 6.90 d* .6 • C¹¹ .0 8 2 2 .3" •**B*** 18 a# 18 81520 .3" 61**6**9* 9° ... 6 d' 6 6 d' 12" .S. • **B** .6 a@* (a) (a) . 61



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Baluchar Saree Depicting an intricately woven floral kalka motif at the end of the pallu. Murshidabad, West Bengal 344 x 109 cm.



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Baluchar Saree

The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated Men & women placed within architectural frames enjoying the ride on carriage. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 460 x 107 cm.



Baluchar Saree The prominent motifs showing kalka in the centre and seated women are placed within the architectural frame. Murshidabad, West Bengal, 344 x 109 cm.





#1, Basement, Hauz Khas Village, New Delhi-110016

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