राष्ट्रदुत

When Diwali meets Halloween

Diwali's sacred rituals, family gatherings, and symbolic lighting will coincide with Halloween's costume parties, trick-ortreating, and eerie decorations.



nis vear. two vibrant festivals from distinct cultural backgrounds, are falling on the same day. Diwali, the Festiva of Lights, Halloween, the spooky celebration, are being celebrated today, presenting a fascinat ing contrast between two significant cultural events. Diwali, deeply rooted in ancient Hindu traditions and rituals, celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil Conversely, Halloween is a celebration embedded in Western culture, embracing



Diwali and Halloween: Contrasting Themes

W hile Diwali holds deep spiritual significance for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, and Buddhists worldwide, representing reflection, renewal, family reunions, and spiritual growth, Halloween focuses on costumes. trick-or-treating. horror-themed decorations. and social gatherings. Diwali radiates optimism, hope, and positivity, whereas Halloween

explores the darker aspects of human experience, embracing the thrill and chill of the unknown. Diwali is joyful and celebratory, whereas Halloween is often spooky and eerie. Despite differences, Diwali and Halloween share common elements. Both use lights. divas and jack-o'*lanterns*, and involve community gatherings and festivities.

Govardhan Puja, on the

fourth day, commemorates

Lord Krishna's victory over

Indra, with traditional dances

and folk music. The final day,

Bhai Dooj, celebrates the sib-

ling bond, where brothers

visit their sisters' homes, and

sisters pray for their brothers'

well-being, applying a protec-

Diwali: The Festival Of Lights

D iwali festivities begin with *Dhanteras*, where people clean and decorate their homes, purchase utensils, silverware, or gold jewellery, and worship Lord Dhanwantari, the god of health. The next day, Chhoti Diwali. involves lighting lamps and candles, offering prayers to goddess *Kali*, and finalising home decorations. The third day, Lakshmi *Puja*, is the main event, where devotees worship goddess

At its core, Diwali symbol izes the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and renewal. As the festival of Lakshmi, the embodiment of prosperity, and light diyas lights illuminates homes and (earthen lamps) to illuminate hearts, it reminds us of the their homes. Families gather, eternal struggle between light and darkness and the ultimate share meals, exchange gifts, victory of good. and burst fireworks.

Halloween: A Global Celebration of Spooks

tive tilak

H alloween is celebrated worldwide, particularly in Western cultures, with a mix of traditional and modern activities. The evening typically begins with children dressing up in elaborate costumes to go trick-or-treating, collecting candy, chocolates, or small toys from neighbours. Many attend or host costume parties, showcasing creative and spooky outfits. Others carve jack-o'-lanterns. visit haunted houses or

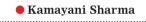
hayrides, or participate in

scarv movie marathons. In recent years, Halloween cele brations have expanded to include themed decorations ghost tours, horror-themed escape rooms, zombie walks, paranormal-themed Traditional Halloween treats include candy, chocolate, pumpkin pie, and spiced cider Adults may enjoy 'Witch's Brew' and 'Ghostly' cocktails. while creative monster themed snacks add to the festive atmosphere.



Indian Ornament in a famous Rossetti painting

A closer look at The Beloved reveals more than lovely faces with slack expressions. As was his wont during this period, Rossetti showered on the characters what art critic, H. C. Marillier, refers to as 'the wealth of his fine imagination,' 'surrounding them with quaint and beautiful accessories.' In the lush frame can be seen richly embroidered robes, flowers, jewels and ornaments, including a piece clasped around the bride's left wrist, which art historian, Susan Stronge, describes as 'a South Indian bracelet with makara-head terminals.



n the mid-19th century, the British artist, Gabriel Rossetti, painted an oil titled. 'The Beloved,' based on the Biblical Song Solomon Commissioned by banker, George Rae for 300 pounds, the painting's debut display was for one day at London's Arundel Club in February 1866. The tightly composed, vibrant work is a highly racialised tableau, featuring the White protagonist bride, raising her veil for the Old Testament king, surrounded by four atten dants, of whom two are not White. with a young Black child in the foreground. Richly bedecked and bejewelled, five, out of the six characters, meet the viewer's eye with what poet, Ezra Pound termed the 'vacant gaze,' typical Brotherhood, of which Rossetti

was a principal artist. A closer look at The Beloved reveals more than lovely faces with slack expressions. As was his wont during this period. Rossetti showered on the characters what art critic, H. C. Marillier, refers to as 'the wealth of his fine imagination,' 'surrounding them with quaint and beautiful accessories.' In the lush frame can be seen richly embroidered robes, flowers, jewels and ornaments, including a piece clasped around the bride's left wrist, which art historian, Susan Stronge, describes as 'a

South Indian bracelet with makara-head terminals.' In her essay 'Indian Jewellery and the West: Stylistic Exchanges 1750-1930.' Stronge, senior curator in the Asian department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. inventoried a bracelet identical to the one that the bride wears and dated to 1850 Madras, 'Gold work in repoussé and chased, tinged with red and set with rubies.' Noting that it was a type of bangle worn and bestowed by royalty, she described it as having 'two makara heads, with a stylised rudraksha bead, sacred to the god Shiva, between.

How did this ostensibly regal artefact make its way from southern India onto the canvas of one of the most well-known British artists from the Victorian era? And what meanings might we read into its presence amidst the bodies and bijoux of *The Beloved*? Personal Collection

In her book Victorian Jewellery Design, historian, Charlotte Gere offers information about Rossetti's jewellery collection. Reporting that an auction of Rossetti's estate was held at his house from July 5 to July 7 in 1882, she notes that 'one or two of the eighteen lots' on the second day's sale of 'Jewellery & c.' were 'identifiable as jewels used in various pictures.' Those in The Beloved were, she states, 'probably in one or other of the

ury points to his habits of borrowing and scouring the curiosity Dshops of Leicester Square and Hammersmith, positing that his 'dependence on appropriate dresses and accessories for the realisation of his themes, undoubtedly, stimulated his activities as a collec-

ellery which are listed in the catalogue.' But was the bride's South Indian bracelet, among them, evidence of Rossetti's personal belongings ornamenting his fantasy women? Gere makes no men-Back in the A Golden Treasury

many lots, containing Indian jew-

listing, Stronge records that a bracelet similar to the 1850 Madras one (albeit mounted on plaited gold wires), from Rossetti's collection and worn by the bride. is held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, bequeathed to it in 1938, more than half a century after his

How that bracelet made its meandering journey is traced by late Shirley Bury, another curator the Victoria and Albert Museum and an expert on modern jewellery. In her essay Rossetti and mask terminals grasping plaited chains in their jaws.' Further, she asserts that this bracelet was the same as that worn two years prior by the model, who sat for Rossetti's Monna Pomona (1864) (although, there the bracelet has green settings, not red ones). According to Bury, the piece then passed to Jane Morris 'by gift or, less likely, by chance, left behind (at their home) by Rossetti' and staved with the family.

his Jewellery, she delves into the

1938 bequest by May Morris. She

was the daughter of William and

Jane Morris, an artist couple

not only as a colleague but as

friend and lover, respectively. In

May's will, she noted that her

mother's jewellery 'was used for

the purpose of paintings by

Rosetti (sic).' Amongst these were

a range of Indian items, a

Trichinopoly gold chain, a heart

brooch and two buckles, one of

which Bury offered up as a candi-

catalogued as

date for the bride's bracelet

Burmese, the piece is described by

Bury as 'a central motif formed by

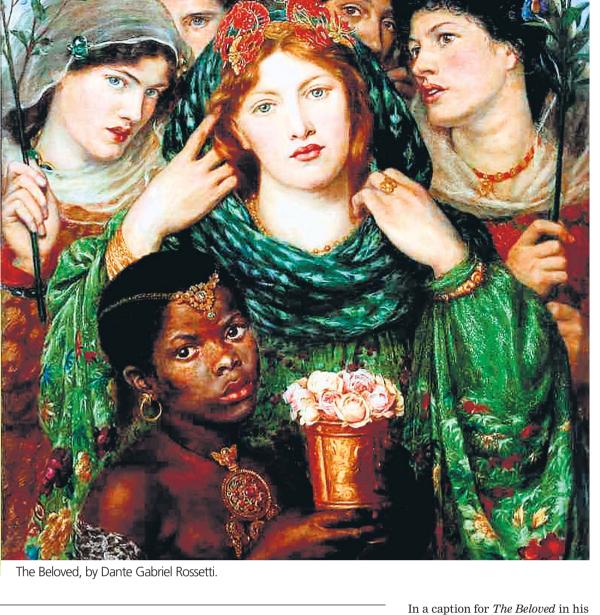
a makara, or water monsters, on

each side of a water pot, and lion

Originally

whom Rossetti was involved with.

Where would Rossetti have accrued the treasures he painted and, perhaps, presented to or forgot with friends? Bury points to his habits of borrowing and scouring the curiosity shops of Square Hammersmith, positing that his 'dependence on appropriate dresses and accessories for the realisation of his themes, undoubtedly,



her essay, 'The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting:

India at World Fairs,' anthropolo-

gist Carol A. Breckenridge

explains, "An astonishing surge of

interest in collecting Indian

objects occurred in the post-

Crystal Palace period (inaugurat-

ing) a new era, in which collect-

ing, like culture itself, became

institutionalized and internation

alized. Numerous discreet but

public settings for this phenome-

non emerged, exhibitions, muse-

ums, royal receptions (durbars),

archives, libraries, and surveys,

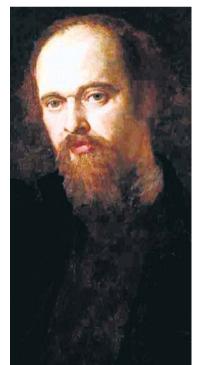
Government officials. Indian

princes and British royalty all col-

ected (as did connoisseurs on the

the royal family amassed collec-

#JEWEL IN ITS CROWN



D y the time of the Brotherhood's second generation avatar as the Aesthetic movement, when *The Beloved* was painted, they embraced a philosophy of art for art's sake. Obviously, the content of the paintings did not deliver on such impossible detachment

Continent) in India, members of Rossetti's career, wherein he

book, Reading the Pre-Raphaelites,

art historian, Tim Barringer,

observes some of the foreign

objects served up for the (norma-

tively white male) British gaze.

"Rossetti's Orientalism is appar-

ent in the Japanese kimono worn

(incorrectly) by the central figure

and her intricate leather head-

dress, which was Peruvian in ori-

gin. The figures in the painting

are similarly exotic, Racial types,

characterised by their 'otherness,'

are presented in the same way as

the flowers, textiles, metalwork

and jewellery, an exotic spectacle

for the delectation of the male

the sensual decorativeness that.

combined with his medieval

palette, came to dominate this

phase of the recently-widowed

began to paint sensuous women

amidst the sort of opulent objects that he collected to fill his own

home. Particularly in the case of

The Beloved, Bury reports, the

artist actively sought to achieve a

sumptuous effect. "I mean the

colour of my picture to be like jew-

els, and the jet would be invalu-

able." The bride's Whiteness con-

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

Barringer links this reading to

stimulated his activities as a collector.' She adds that most of his acquiring would have happened in the early 1860s, precisely around the time he painted *The Beloved*. **Colonial Acquisitions**

Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

It is important to take a look at the broader culture of collecting prevalent at the time. This is the period when 'exhibition fever' was at its zenith, in the era immediate ly following the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace and lasting until the International Exhibition of 1862 in London after which, writes Gere, 'serious artistic interest in them dwindled.' In both these shows, Indian jewellery was extensively displayed, famous highlights being the Koh-i-Noor and Durra-i-Noor diamonds lent to the 1851 exhibition by the East India Company. In tions of objects, composed largely of presents given to them by India's aristocracy. At home, such presents often formed either the principal or a secondary collection for an exhibition display, viewed by an audience wider than

As their contribution to the Crystal Palace exhibition signifies, the East India Company too had long played an important role in the visibility of South Asian artefacts to British publics, from the 'Oriental repository' that it established in London in 1798, to the auctions of jewellery and ornaments that it conducted in the period after the transfer of its administrative powers in 1858. With this context of colonial exhibition and acquisition in the

trasts with the child's Blackness as well as the ethnic difference, marked by Roma model, Keomi Grav. to the left of the bride and mixed race model, Fanny Eaton, at the back between both of them. There thus seems to be a relationship between the chroma, the jewellery and the bodies on display, which reflects the racial and cultural politics of the day. This relationship is intensively analysed by art historian, Matthew Francis backdrop of Rossetti's painting, Rarey, in his essay, 'And the Jet the bracelet begins to make sense. Would Be Invaluable': Blackness.

resentation of a Black person by Rossetti, Rarey interprets the painting through a number of ntersecting frames, the legal ambiguity around slavery, the long-standing European trope of androgynous young Black figures serving white main characters, the eminisation of Black men in abolitionist texts like Uncle Tom's Cabin, the reclamatory quoting of Song of Solomon ("I am black, but comely") by African-American intellectuals and Rossetti's own problematic visual responses to this complex discursive field. Rarey writes, "Rossetti uses "jet" to refer not just to a jewel more accurately, the mineral lig-

Bondage, and The Beloved. Noting

that his portrait of the 'cup-bear ing' child was the only known rep-

nite) but also to a colour and to a human being. Positioning the figure as a colour foil to the bride, Rossetti highlighted the child's face with a focused sheen reminiscent of actual jet, thus transforming them into another form of jewellery in the painting. The other jewels underscore the bride's nobility and cosmopolitanism." In this way, the presence of the child wearing a headpiece and necklace based on North African work) as part of an international commodimarket aligns with the Orientalism connoted by the luxurious artefacts adorning the char-

Orientalism, or the cultural inter-

pretation of so-called Eastern, usually colonised, people by the Western coloniser's gaze, relies on dramatic juxtapositions between the realms and fetishistic renderings of people and things for the pleasure of the viewer. This often ntersects with the expression of eroticism in art of empire, prelominantly by the figuration of non-White subjects as objects for the consumption of White spectatorship, often in the form of hypersexualising the women, emasculate ing the men or drawing on the symbolism of androgyny. In the case of The Beloved, at play is a treatment of a religious text, focusing on sexual love in which the exoticism of the ancient West Asian setting is melded with 19thcentury fantasies of colonial globality, the English rose whiteness of the unveiled female beauty. enhanced by its ostensibly, titillating contiguity with the skin tones of the colonies. It is the formal and conceptual metaphor of the spectrum, not only as a continuum of race and gender but as the literal production of colour by light, the sheen of jet," which makes explicit the violent power relations, governing the colonial economy only hinted at through the glimmer of gold and shine of silk (ironically despite Rossetti's intention, according to Rarey, of avoiding mid-19th century Blackness' political meanings in favour of its By the time of the

Brotherhood's second generation avatar as the Aesthetic movement. when *The Beloved* was painted, they embraced a philosophy of *art* for art's sake. Obviously, the content of the paintings did not deliver on such impossible detachment rom context. It is intriguing to consider the point made by some scholars that the titular Beloved is really the viewer, a surrogate for Solomon. As we meet the eves of the characters and feast on their garments and accessories, we become implicated in the scene. appraisers of precious ware from around the world. The Indian makara bracelet in the jewel-like configuration of The Beloved is, thus, one amongst many glints of Empire, the story of its arrival in Rossetti's possession inextricable from the operations of the trade circuits of the Rai and its material and ideological regime. Girding the bride's wrist, it embodies not just Rossetti's desire to render the erotic and the exotic in brilliant hues, but also the traffic between Britain and the jewel in its Crown.

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#FESTIVITIES

Stunning Ideas to Brighten Up Your

Festivities 7

Rangoli originates from the Sanskrit word *ranga* meaning 'to decorate' or 'to adorn.'

hy is *rangoli* such an

important part of *Hindu*

culture? The origins of

rangoli remain a mys-

tery, but some believe

ed in the ancient Vedic

that it may have originat-

period. Rangoli symbolises fertili-

ty, peace, prosperity, and happi-

ness. They are also seen as a way

to attract good luck and ward off

bad spirits. Rangoli originates from the Sanskrit word ranga

meaning 'to decorate' or 'to adorn.

To make this Diwali more auspi-

cious, we've got a range of rangoli

designs that you can use to deco-



Peacock Feather Rangol

timeless and enchanting art form that beautifully captures the cock, India's national bird. Adored for its grace and vibrant plumage,

different modern Diwali rangoli

designs out there, and it can be

hard to know which one is best for

cock feathers into their designs creating a visually captivating and culturally significant art form. rate your home and celebrate the festival in style. There are a lot of

you. However, we've compiled some of our favourite options. Remember that no two DIY rango lis are ever going to be identical So, make yours unique!

elegance, beauty, and mystique

Rangoli artists have ingeniously

incorporated the intricate pat-

terns and iridescent hues of pea

Floral Diwali Rangoli Designs



iwali is the time to decorate your home or office, and what better way to do that than with a beautiful floral rangoli design? Flower rangoli or floral rangoli are the most beautiful, elegant, and eco-friendly rangoli designs. All you need to do is gather different varieties of flowers and arrange them in your desired design. Be extra creative and use the leaves of the flowers in your rangoli to give it a contrast. You cannot go wrong with the traditional Diwali rangoli design.

Abstract Diwali Rangoli Designs

TT hether you're a beginner or a seasoned rangoli **VV** artist, these abstract rangoli designs are per-

fect to add colour to vour entire space. They are easy, simple, yet elegant very Since an abstract Diwali Rangoli doesn't have any specific pattern vou can easily let your heart out. We would recommend starting with a geometric shape

that you like and using bright colours and rice flour to create intricate patterns. You could even add different types of flowers to create beautiful designs. Be sure to add some glitter to finish it off perfectly!

here are a lot of different modern Diwali rangoli

designs out there, and it can be hard to know



the main attraction of Diwali, is a great option to about this simple and perfect rangoli design you to have the skill of drawing patterns, as it

which one is best

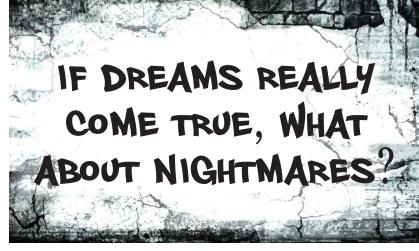
involves only a few hand-turning circles.

Mandala Rangoli



 $m{r}$ and ala, a Sanskrit word meaning 'circle,' repre vI sents wholeness, unity, and harmony in Indian spiritual and cultural traditions. Mandala designs are not just intricate patterns, they are powerful symbols of the universe, representing the cosmic order and the cycle of life. When this ancient art form meets the vibrant world of rangoli, it gives birth to Mandala Rangoli, a mesmerizing fusion of symmetry, spirituality, and creativity.

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

