

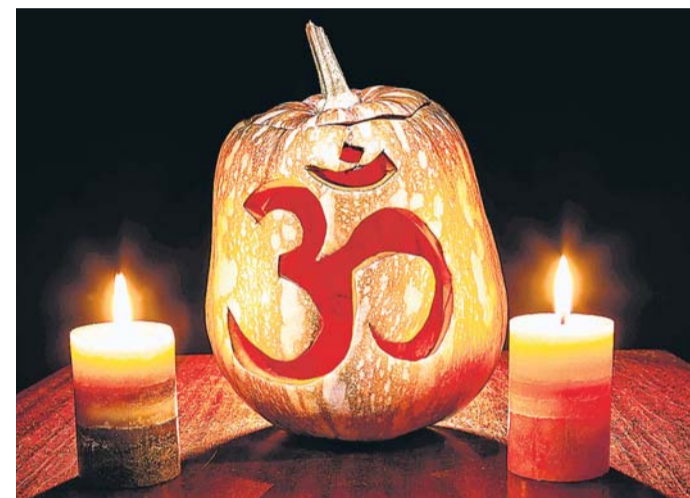
World Cities Day

World Cities Day is a day that focuses on the future of urbanization and its impact on our lives. It's a time to reflect on the role that cities play, in creating a sustainable world where everyone can live in harmony and prosperity. The United Nations established World Cities Day to highlight the importance of cities as hubs of culture and innovation. This special day promotes the idea of making cities better places to live. The aim is to ensure that cities become inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable as we move forward.

#CELEBRATIONS

When Diwali meets Halloween

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



This year, two vibrant festivals from distinct cultural backgrounds, are falling on the same day. Diwali, the Festival of Lights, and Halloween, the spooky celebration, are being celebrated today presenting a fascinating 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 the thrill and playfulness of the spooky and unknown.

Diwali and Halloween: Contrasting Themes

While 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

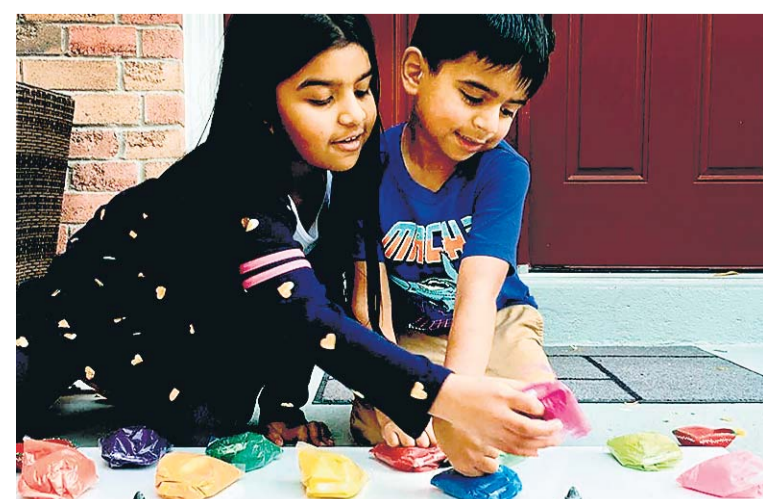
Diwali: The Festival Of Lights

Diwali festivities begin with *Dhanteras*, where people clean and decorate their homes, purchase utensils, silverware, or gold jewellery, and worship Lord *Dhanvantari*, the god of health. The next day, *Choti Diwali*, involves lighting lamps and candles, offering prayers to goddess *Kali*, and finalising home decorations.

The third day, *Lakshmi Pujan*, is the main event, where devotees worship goddess Lakshmi, the embodiment of prosperity, and light *diyas* (earthen lamps) to illuminate their homes. Families gather, share meals, exchange gifts, and burst fireworks.

Halloween: A Global Celebration of Spooks

Halloween 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



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.'

• Kamayani Sharma

In the mid-19th century, the British artist, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, painted an oil titled, 'The Beloved,' based on the Biblical Song of 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 attendants, 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 of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, of which Rossetti was a principal artist.

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In her essay *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

Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Bury points to his habits of borrowing and scouring the curiosity shops 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 collector.'

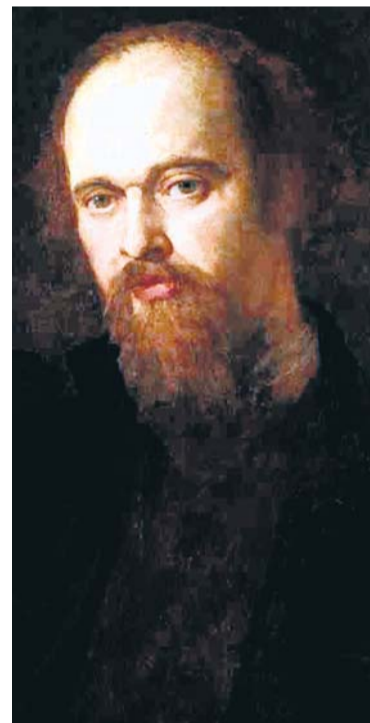
many lots, containing Indian jewellery which are listed in the catalogue.' But was the bride's South Indian bracelet, among them, evidence of Rossetti's personal belongings ornamenting his fantasy women? Gere makes no mention.

Back in the *A Golden Treasury* 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 death.

How that bracelet made its meandering journey is traced by late Shirley Bury, another curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum and an expert on modern jewellery. In her essay *Rossetti and*

#JEWEL IN ITS CROWN

In her essay, *The Aesthetics and Politics of Colonial Collecting: India at World Fairs*, anthropologist Carol A. Breckenridge explains, 'An astonishing surge of interest in collecting Indian objects occurred in the post-Crystal Palace period (inaugurating a new era, in which collecting, like culture itself, became institutionalized and internationalized. Numerous discreet but public settings for this phenomenon emerged, exhibitions, museums, royal receptions (*durbars*), archives, libraries, and surveys. Government officials, Indian princess and British royalty all collected (as did connoisseurs on the Continent) in India, members of the royal family amassed collec-



Portrait of Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

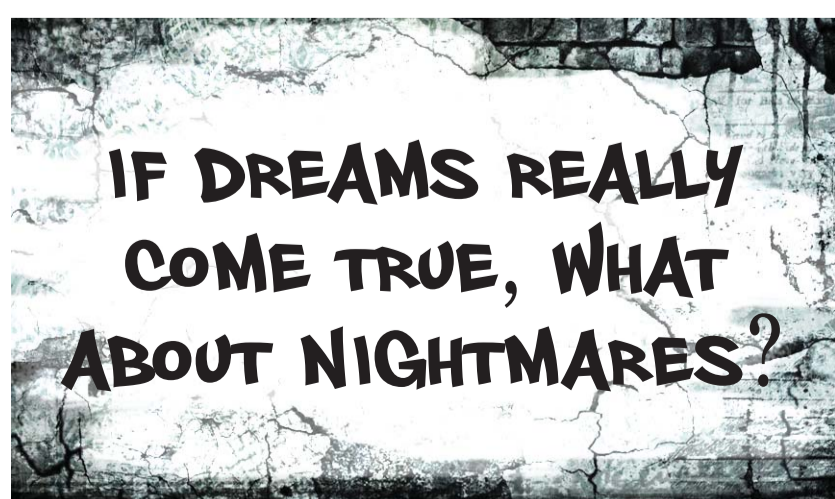
stimulated his activities as a collector.' She adds that most of his acquiring would have happened in the early 1860s, precisely around the time he painted *The Beloved*.

Colonial Acquisitions

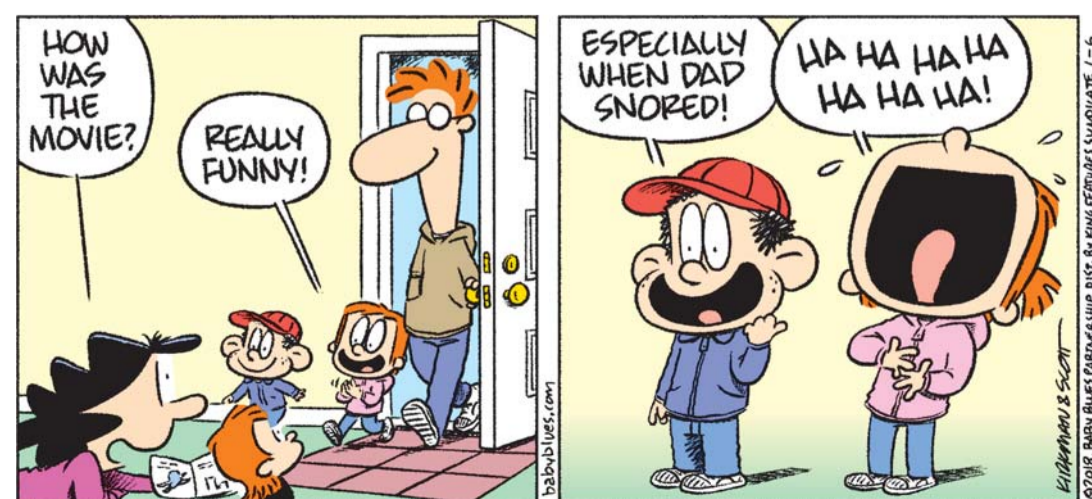
It is important to take a look at the broader culture of collecting prevalent at the time. This is the period when 'exhibition fever' was at its zenith, in the era immediately following the Great Exhibition of 1851 at the Crystal Palace and lasting until the International Exhibition of 1862 in London, 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

amongst 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 jewels, and the jet would be invaluable.' The bride's Whiteness contrasts with the child's Blackness as well as the ethnic difference, marked by Roma model, Koon Gray, 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 Rarey, in his essay, *And the Jet Would Be Invaluable: Blackness,*

THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

#FESTIVITIES

Stunning Ideas to Brighten Up Your Festivities

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



Why is rangoli such an important part of Hindu culture? The origins of rangoli remain a mystery, but some believe that it may have originated from the ancient Vedic period. Rangoli symbolises fertility, peace, prosperity, and happiness. 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 auspicious, we've got a range of rangoli designs that you can use to deco-

Peacock Feather Rangoli

Peacock Feather Rangoli is a timeless and enchanting art form that beautifully captures the essence of the magnificent peacock, India's national bird. Adorned for its grace and vibrant plumage, the peacock serves as a symbol of

elegance, beauty, and mystique. Rangoli artists have ingeniously incorporated the intricate patterns and iridescent hues of peacock feathers into their designs, creating a visually captivating and culturally significant art form.

your home and celebrate the festive in style. There are a lot of different modern Diwali rangoli designs out there, and it can be hard to know which one is best for you. However, we've compiled some of our favourite options. Remember that no two DIY rangolis are ever going to be identical. So, make yours unique!

Floral Diwali Rangoli Designs



Diwali 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



Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned rangoli artist, these abstract rangoli designs are perfect to add colour to your entire space. They are easy, simple, yet very elegant. Since an abstract Diwali Rangoli doesn't have any specific pattern, you 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!

Diya Rangoli Design



There are a lot of different modern Diwali rangoli designs out there, and it can be hard to know which one is best for you. However, we've compiled some of our favourite options. Remember that no two DIY rangolis are ever going to be identical. So, make yours unique!

Mandala Rangoli



Mandala, a Sanskrit word meaning 'circle,' represents 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.