

# Apparell'd in Celestial Light

An Exhibition of Masterpieces from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries  
European Textiles, including Christian Vestments

## Indar Pasricha Fine Arts

May 9<sup>th</sup> - June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018  
44 Moreton Street, Pimlico, London, SW1V 2PN



An important chasuble, Lyon circa 1740

An historically important collection of textiles originating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries will be exhibited at Indar Pasricha Fine Arts, 44 Moreton Street, London, SW1V 2PN from May 9<sup>th</sup> - June 2<sup>nd</sup> (open Tuesday to Saturday 11.00am – 6.00pm).

The Exhibition highlights a 'golden moment' in European textile production from 1690 to 1720.

The sale of this collection, gathered over the past 20 years from collections in France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany, the United States and Great Britain affords one the opportunity to view or purchase breathtaking textiles including Christian vestments. Prices range upwards from £1,000

Gallery curator Indar Pasricha says:

*"There is a wonder that is captured in the Textiles of Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries.*

*Textile design had brought together, in their earlier manifestations, the influence of China, India and later those of Islamic Spain on the indigenous European aspects of pattern and colour. There were no barriers in borrowing from the various cultures which were thrown together by the trade carried between disparate traditions.*

*At the end of the 17th century, out of nowhere there flourished a new and extraordinary design idea, which because of their asymmetrical and odd aspect were known as 'Bizarre'. This movement held-sway in most of the important centers of weaving in Europe though was short-lived lasting but a few years, petering out by the 1720's*

*Because of the exotic nature of the design it was thought by some experts that these silks, for they were predominately woven in silk, came from India. This was disproved when the pattern books of these Bizarre silks were found in France, Italy and Britain.*

*The complexity of design and weave were never to be seen again. It was a golden moment".*

Indar Pasricha adds:

*"Many of these beautiful garments started life as court and ball gowns owned by aristocratic women and the peacock-like clothes of their men who then donated them to the church. These costly garments were then redesigned to garb priests in awe inspiring garments."*

These woven and embroidered vestments constitute an alternate 'textile' narrative of the Christian Church, in Europe, South America, China and India. The material used in vestments was produced in the countries into which Christianity had been taken. Thus Christianity took on the aspects of the indigenous cultures of these countries. At a time when most of the population wore very basic dull clothes, these garments would have had the effect of causing wonder and amazement among the many people attending church. Among them is a chasuble made for the Bishop of Macau that features Lotus flower motifs made around 1840 - 50. The Skull & Cross bones which appeared in the 16th century were as a result of the exposure to South American Death Culture.

The exhibition has two vestments which are thought to have been made of Indian fabric, one woven the other painted, both dated to the 18th century and made for the priests in Goa, then a Portuguese enclave.

Many of these garments will find homes in museums around the world.

To those with educated fingers these vestments tell a story of their own, in effect messages from the past. One of the UK's leading textile conservators, Janie Lightfoot whose studio does work for the V&A amongst others, says "Because of our work with antique textiles over three decades our fingers can 'read' the weave of these fabrics and

you can tell as you work across a piece if the weaver was having a good or a bad day at the loom hundreds of years ago. It's almost a sort of time Braille. The cloth channels human emotion locked into the silk and wool."

The role of these priestly vestments was to contribute to the dignity of the rites being celebrated. The names of the generations of designers and master craftsmen and artisans who produced these works of the weaver's art remain, in the main, nameless. Many of these textiles were cared for and loved as heirlooms in Churches and monastic orders for centuries. Their equivalents are found in the world's leading museums.



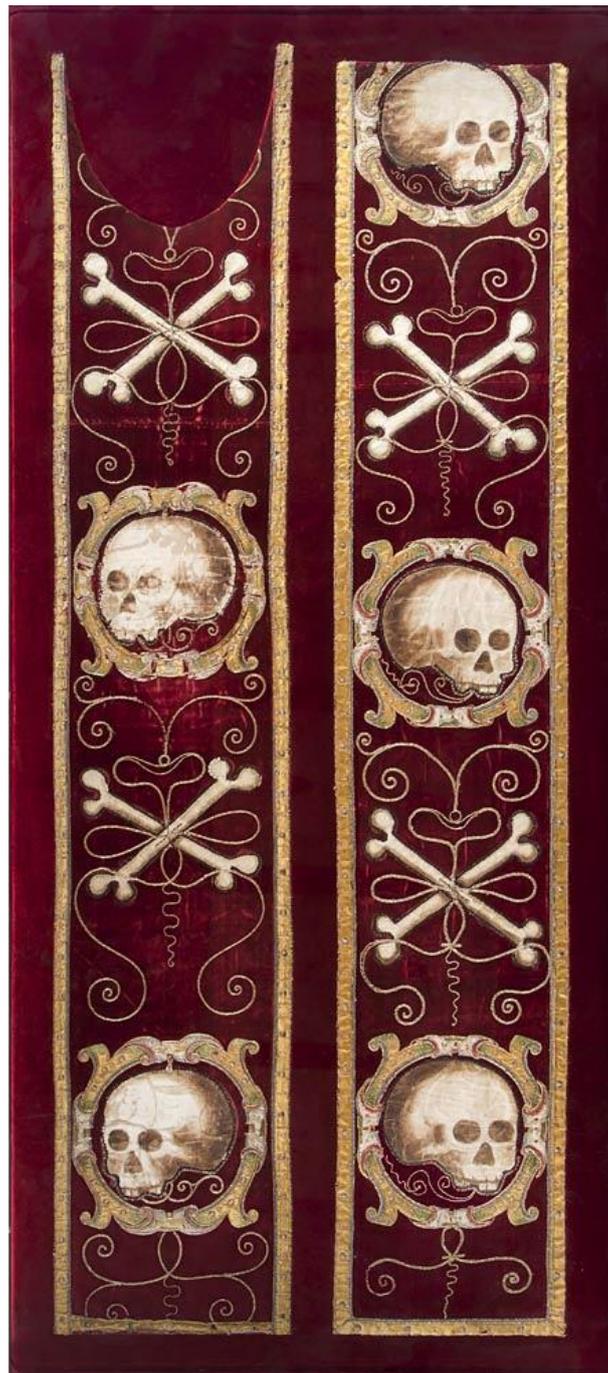
Back of a Chasuble, Lyon. Bizarre silk weave, circa 1720

These textiles, including examples of religious vestments, display the extraordinary designs and virtuoso weaving. A set of Orphrey bands, with Skull & Cross bones which came from a Chasuble or other vestment used in a funeral mass. Placed on crimson velvet, the skulls & cross bones painted on silk taffeta cartouches, with silk & gold polychrome embroidered borders.

One design that includes six skull and crossbones on a silver threaded chasuble, commemorates 'The Day of the Dead', celebrated in Mexico, a chilling reminder of the cost of Spanish colonization in South America.

Cristobal de Valenzuela, a master craftsman who lived in Cordova in the 16<sup>th</sup> & early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries was contracted on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1604 to embroider two frontals for the altar of the church of Obejo. One of them was to be of "black velvet, with borders & caidas embroidered in yellow satin & white satin, with skulls & bones embroidered in gold.

The skull and crossbones were a favourite design upon these objects. The Church of the Escorial possesses four paraments so decorated, which were shown, in 1878, at the Parisian Exhibition of Retrospective Art.



A pair of Orphreys. Spanish, 17th century



Detail of a chalice veil, dated 1654, Italian, depicting Saint Jerome (in Latin *Hieronymus*), who was often shown with the attributes of a lion, and a cardinal's hat.

After twenty-seven years Indar Pasricha Fine Arts has moved from Connaught Street, Marble Arch to, 44 Moreton Street, Pimlico, London SW1V 2PB