

## How KalamCreations Revives Kalamkari Craft with Storytelling

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Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh — KalamCreations, founded over two decades ago by Mamata Reddy, works to keep temple-style Kalamkari alive.

When she visited Srikalahasti in the late 1980s, she found artisans struggling, art nearly forgotten. Many had abandoned Kalamkari for farm labour or beedi-rolling due to lack of patronage and income.

### Mamata Reddy's Hands-On Approach

Instead of merely commissioning work, Reddy lived among artisans, learning every part of the traditional process from raw material to dyeing.

She mastered the Srikalahasti Kalam style: hand painting using a bamboo pen (kalam), natural dyes and freehand drawing.

Her persistence gradually restored artisans' confidence as well as revived traditional techniques.

### Innovation Within Tradition

While preserving techniques, KalamCreations also adapts design sensibilities so Kalamkari remains relevant in contemporary fashion.

They incorporate motifs and themes suited for modern home décor, clothing, and accessories in demand globally. Natural dyes and organic processes, although time-consuming, are upheld to maintain both ecological responsibility and authenticity.

### Impact on Artisan Livelihoods

About 100 artisan families now work with KalamCreations; many moved from poverty to more stable incomes and dignity. They lived in thatched huts earlier, now have better homes, amenities, and renewed community esteem. Young educated children are returning to the craft, inspired by its revived value and tradition.

### Storytelling Through Textile Narratives

Kalamkari is inherently narrative; Sanskrit epics and temple mythology traditionally appear in Srikalahasti scrolls and temple hangings.

KalamCreations retains these visual stories yet also weaves newer themes to suit today's tastes and cultural dialogues.

The craft demands many laborious steps—treating fabric, sketching, dyeing, multiple washes—sometimes 20-45 days per piece.

Global markets' pressures for quick turnaround challenge this traditional timeline; artisans often struggle to balance cost

and time.

To mitigate this, KalamCreations invests in design innovation, streamlining where possible without compromising authenticity.

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