

# **14<sup>th</sup> International Conference of National Trusts**

**12-15 October 2011, Victoria B.C.**

**Maureen Liebl**

**Session 7C “Using Tourism to Advantage”**

**15 October 2011**



# Merchandising the Monument

An Experimental Model for Cultural Commerce  
in the Indian Context







# The Mehrangarh Museum Shop

## Mehrangarh Fort

Jodhpur, Rajasthan  
India

# Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur 1459 A.D.







**Mehrangarh Fort belongs to the erstwhile  
Maharaja of Jodhpur, H.H. Gaj Singh  
(known throughout the world as “Bapji”),  
a pioneer of heritage tourism in India and  
recipient of the World Monument Fund’s  
Hadrian Award.**



**. As a young man in 1972, Bapji created the Mehrangarh Museum Trust (MMT), and turned the Fort over to it, so that the Fort and its collections would always be open and accessible to the citizens of the region and the world.**



**The process of turning the Fort into a world-class museum began slowly in the early 1970s.**

**Today, it is an internationally acclaimed site and museum, recipient of numerous awards, and host to nearly a million visitors each year.**



**The idea of establishing a museum shop within the Fort developed in the mid-1990s.**

**Ambitious restoration projects, development of new galleries and facilities, and the restoration of a second fort in the nearby city of Nagaur all required a fresh infusion of revenue.**





**In addition, visitors often remarked that the handicrafts and souvenirs available in local markets did not relate to the Fort experience.**

**A museum shop was an obvious next step.**

**The Museum Shop opened in 1998. The following year, a UNESCO symposium on cultural industries pointed out that "the industries of the imagination, content, knowledge, innovation and creation clearly are the industries of the future."\***

**\* UNESCO, 1999. "General Conclusions of the Symposium of Experts on 'Culture: A Form of Merchandise Like No Other?' Culture, the Market, and Globalization." June 14-15, 1999.**

**Cultural commerce is an obvious means for cultural institutions to meet the need for new forms of patronage/new sources of income.**

**If handled with sensitivity, such activities can also add greatly to the enjoyment and understanding of the visitor.**



**Cultural commerce activities can include  
entrance fees, restaurants and cafes,  
events and performances,  
rental of facilities (for corporate and private  
events, filmmaking/advertising shoots,)  
audio-visual tours, licensing fees,  
and even more creative activities...**



**Museum shops are among the most rewarding segments of the cultural industries sector. Almost all museums in the U.S., Europe, and increasingly in other parts of the world, as well as many national trusts and heritage sites, now have museum shops. The largest earn millions of dollars of revenue for their institutions.**



# **KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUSEUM SHOP:**

**1.**

**The profits benefit the institution, not any individual or commercial group.**

# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUSEUM SHOP:

2.

Products are designed/chosen to enhance the visitor's experience of the museum or site, and all relate in some way to either the institution's collections, or to the culture and/or history of the region.

# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUSEUM SHOP

3.

Products reflect the high standards of the institution/organization/site in terms of quality, and also in terms of ethics: i.e., no use of banned substances, no exploitation of artisans or workers, fair price policies



# KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF A MUSEUM SHOP

4.

All products are designed/purchased in collaboration with, or with the approval of, curatorial or other professional staff.

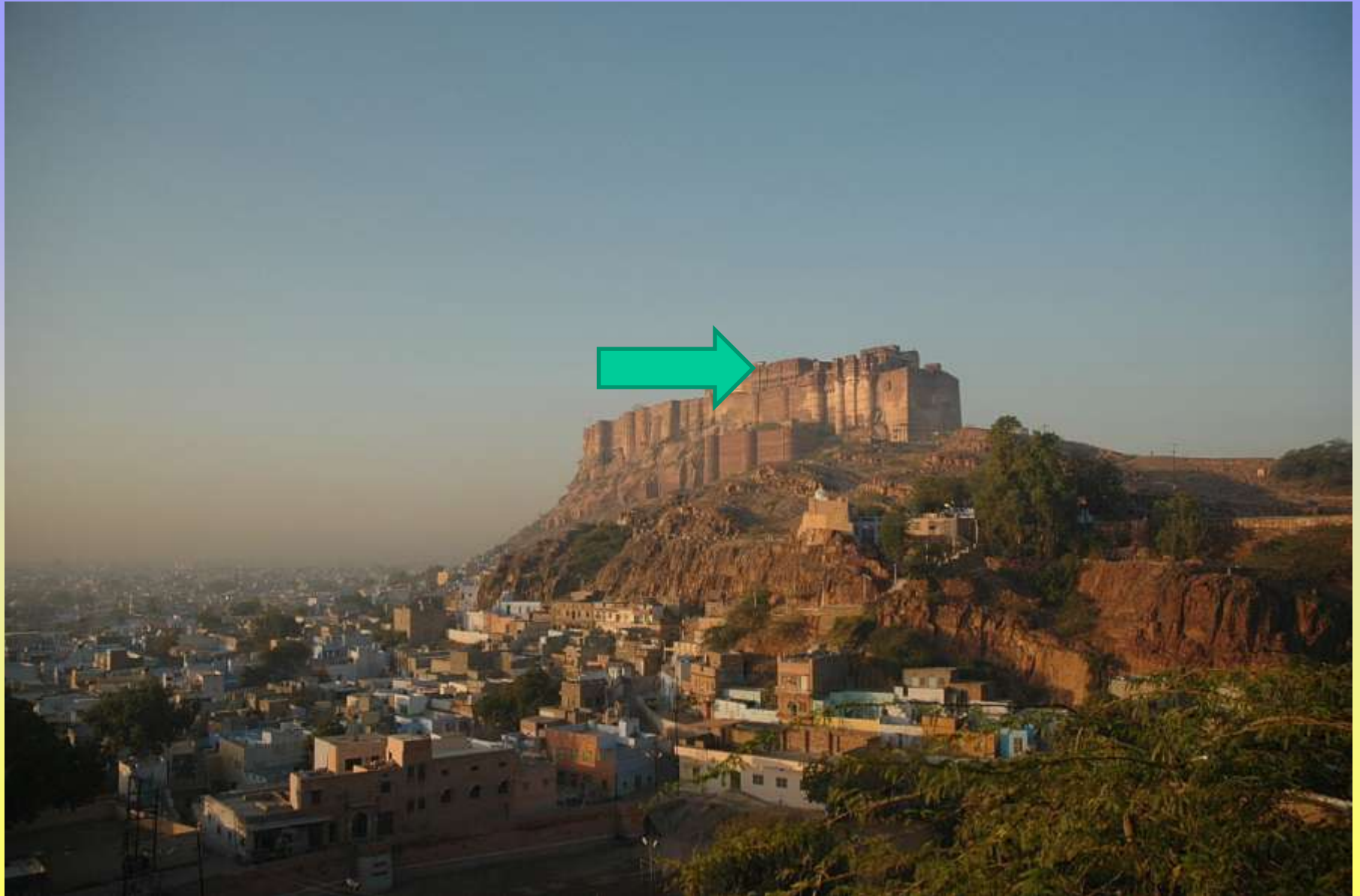
They have final veto power over all commercial decisions.

**The Museum Shop at Mehrangarh Fort  
was established (in 1998) keeping all  
these essential characteristics in mind.**

**Since there were no professional  
museum shops in India when we began,  
we also hoped to serve as both an  
experiment and a model.**

**We were given a space high up in the Fort,  
at the point where visitors finish the  
museum tour.**

**It had been unused and uninhabited  
(except for the resident bats)  
for as long as anyone could remember**









**The Trustees, although supportive, were not willing to gamble much of the Trust's precious funds on this novel experiment.**

**We began on a literal shoestring, raiding the Fort storerooms for cabinets, badgering friends to give us inventory on consignment, and churning out labels and signs on home computers.**



**Even in this (very!) rudimentary form,  
however, the shop was an immediate hit  
with Fort visitors.**





**By 2004, the Museum Shop was beginning to show a very healthy profit.**

**The Trustees became confident enough to approve funds for complete re-design and expansion of the space.**

**Thus began the next challenge, what we came to refer to as “Retail Restoration.”**

**Developing a modern retail space in a 15<sup>th</sup> century historic monument presented immense challenges.**

**After much debate, the final decision was to strip the space down to the original elements, restore the damaged portions, and then “float” minimal fixtures through it.**

**The conservation architect who  
oversees all work in the Fort had  
ultimate authority and veto power, and  
helped devise creative solutions to  
myriad sensitive problems.**

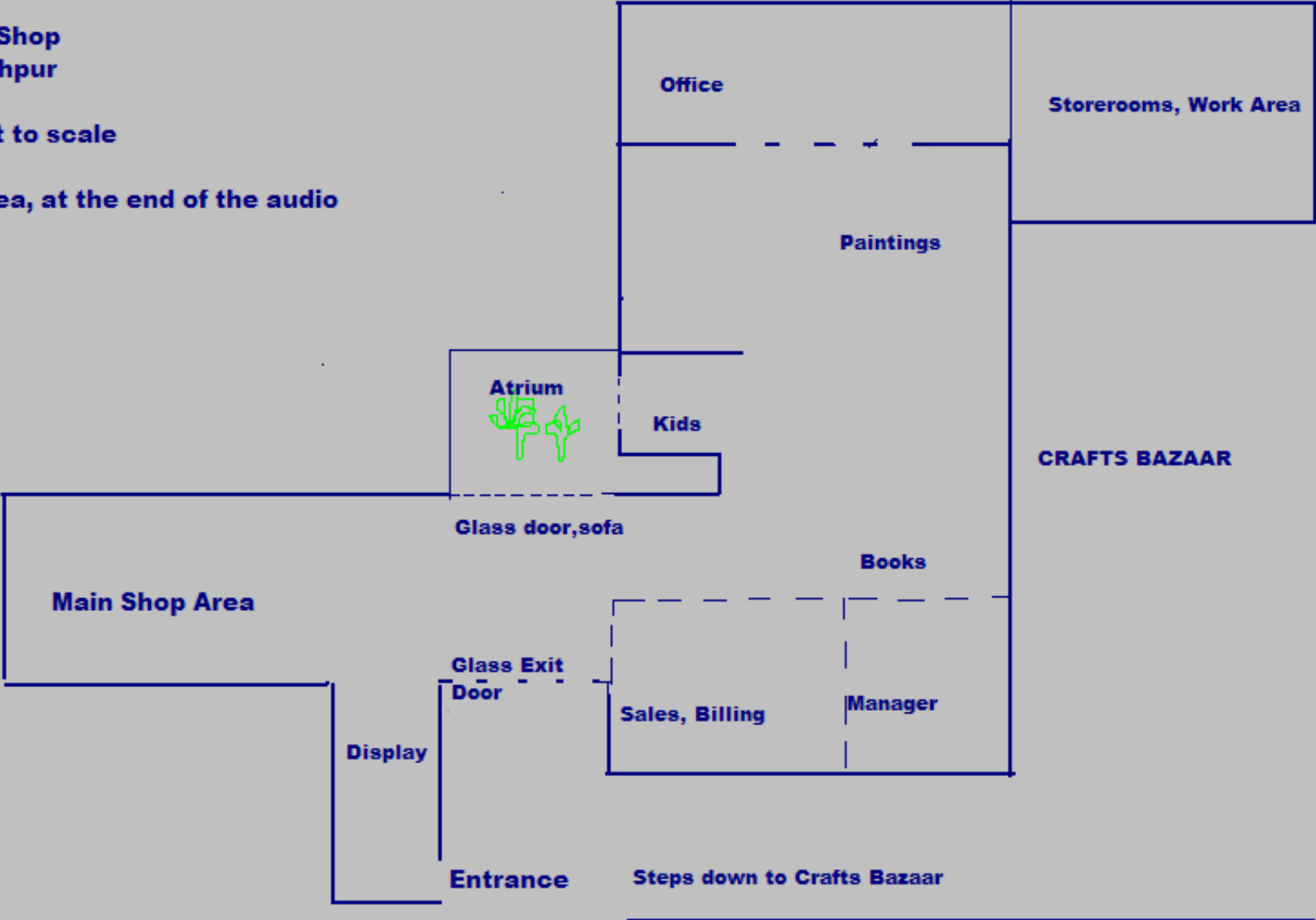


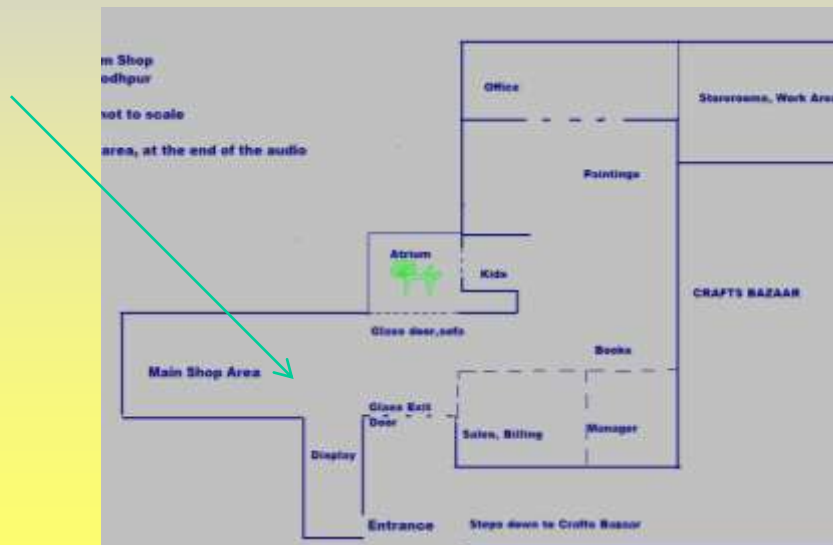


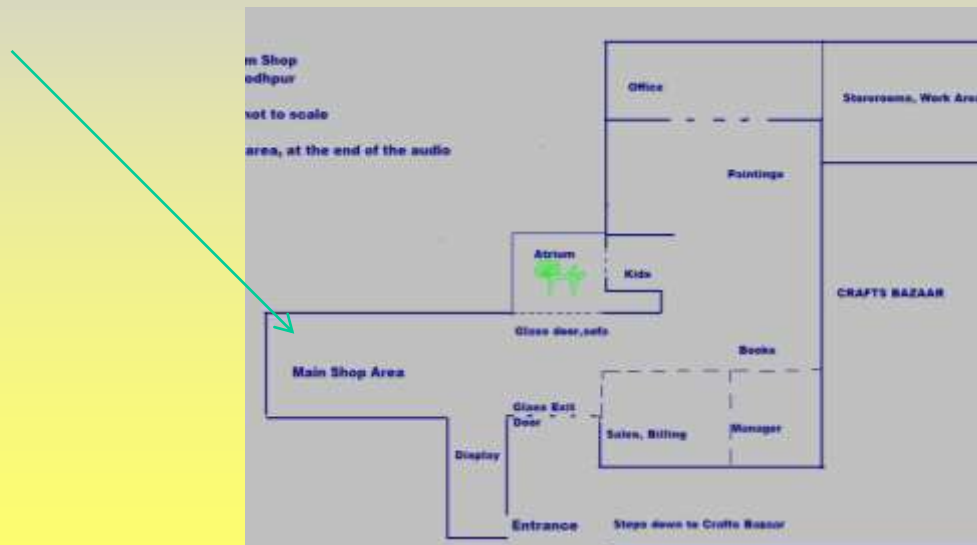
**Mehrangarh Museum Shop  
Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur**

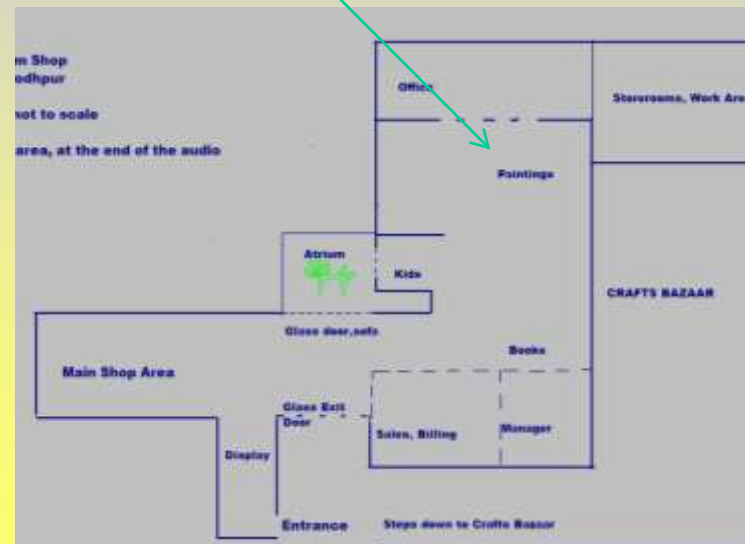
**Approximate plan, not to scale**

**Located in Zenana area, at the end of the audio tour**



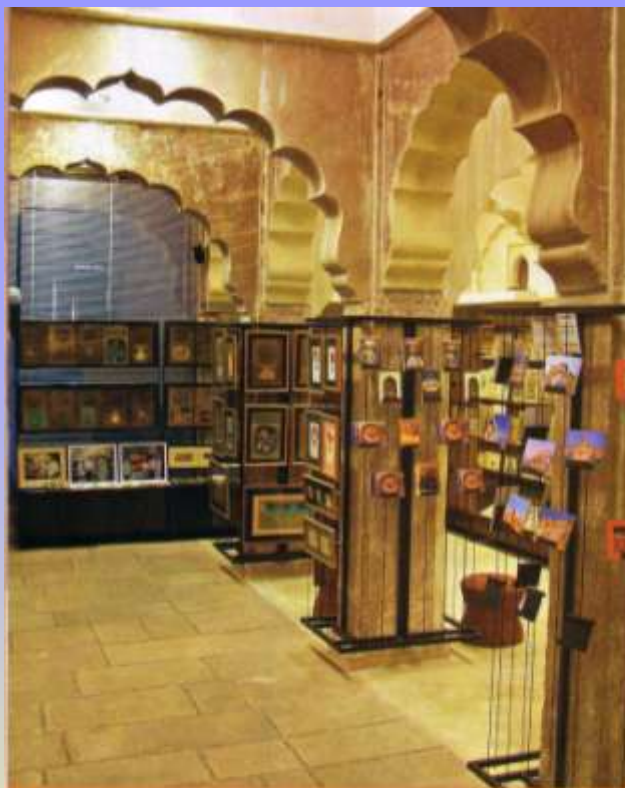








**The 2004 expansion and re-design  
had immediate and dramatic effect  
in increasing sales  
as well as visibility.**



## Shopping in the 15th Century

above left: The modular display system of wrought iron and wood is distanced from the walls.

below right: The revamp uncovered the beautiful texture and carvings of the stone.

right: The museum signage.



As mentioned earlier, Lotus's USP lies in a unique mélange of projects.

This one involved revamping a space that had been functioning as a crafts and memorabilia shop inside the Mehrangarh fort. Incidentally, it was at the Patiala Crafts Mela that the Lotus team met the person who had been hired by the Fort Trust. The place had been functioning in a do-it-yourself fashion with a patchy interior job since the Trust didn't have sufficient funds. The brief talked about the changing product range the shop would host – so flexibility was mandatory. Security was another issue that had to be dealt with – the single route for entry and exit meant a confusing cross-flow of traffic.

Additionally, there were lighting, temperature and power-shortage issues. The earlier system of lighting did nothing to complement the interiors. The hot summers demanded that the design team





**Over the next few years, we were able to show the Trustees consistent growth, averaging 52% annually.**

**In addition, the Fort was receiving growing international recognition, and the Shop was very much a part of this.**



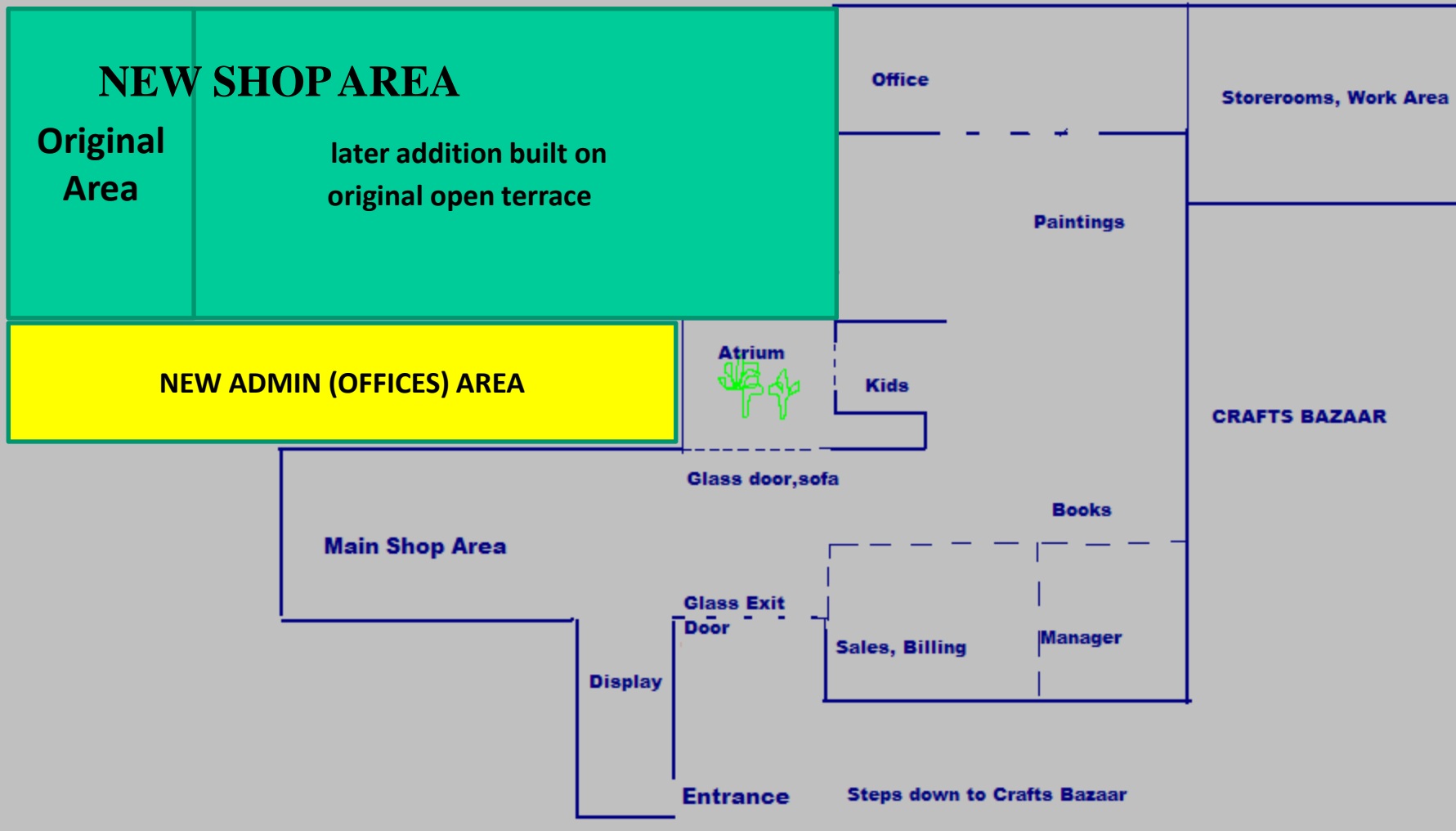


In 2007, in their **BEST OF ASIA** issue, Time named Mehrangarh the “Best Fortress in Asia”, and added that:

“The shop could be an annex to New York City’s Museum of Modern Art.”



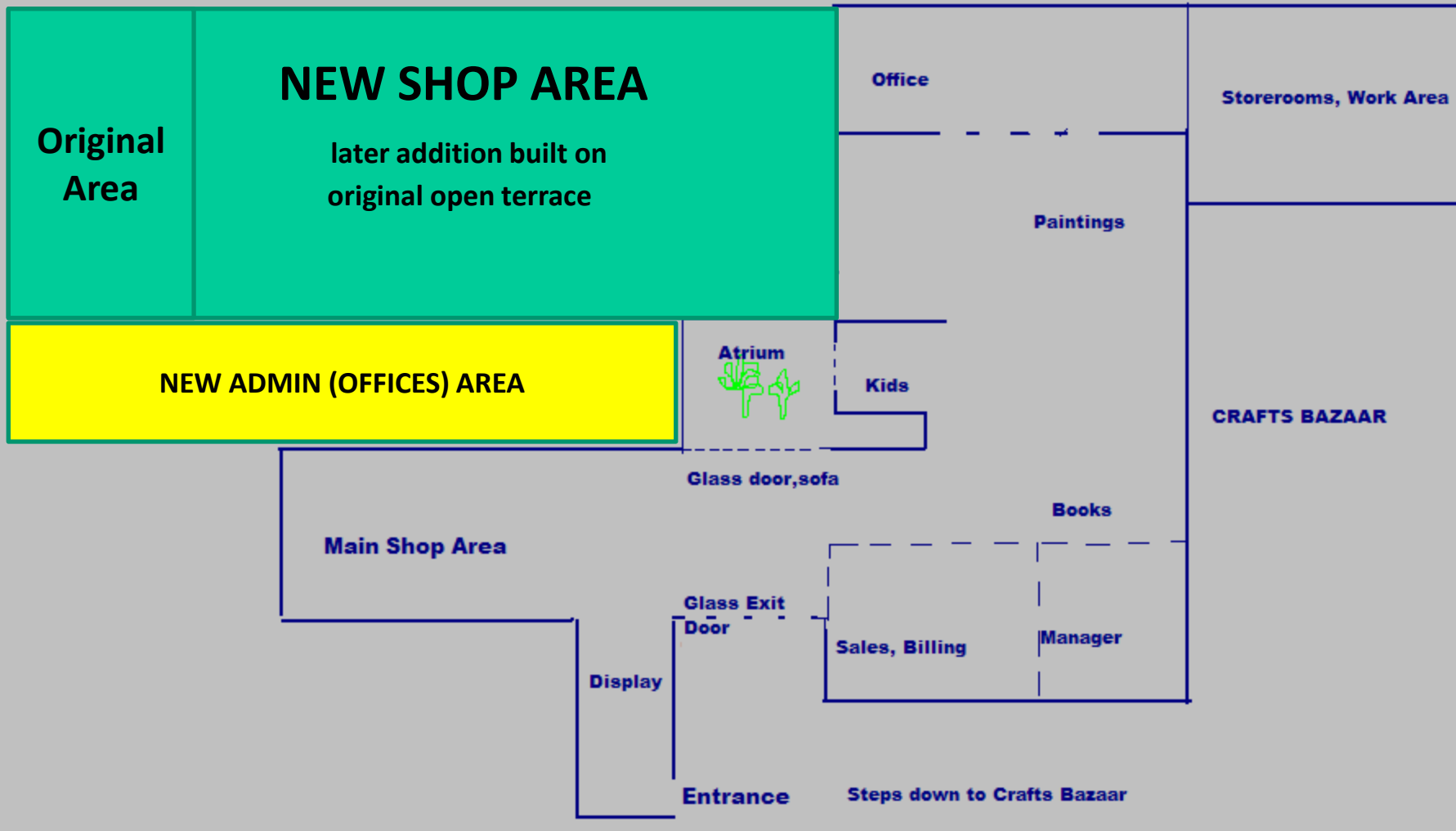
**In 2010, the Trustees,  
now confident of long-term viability,  
approved a further expansion,  
giving us a whole new upper level,  
formerly broken into a warren of  
administrative offices and cubicles.**

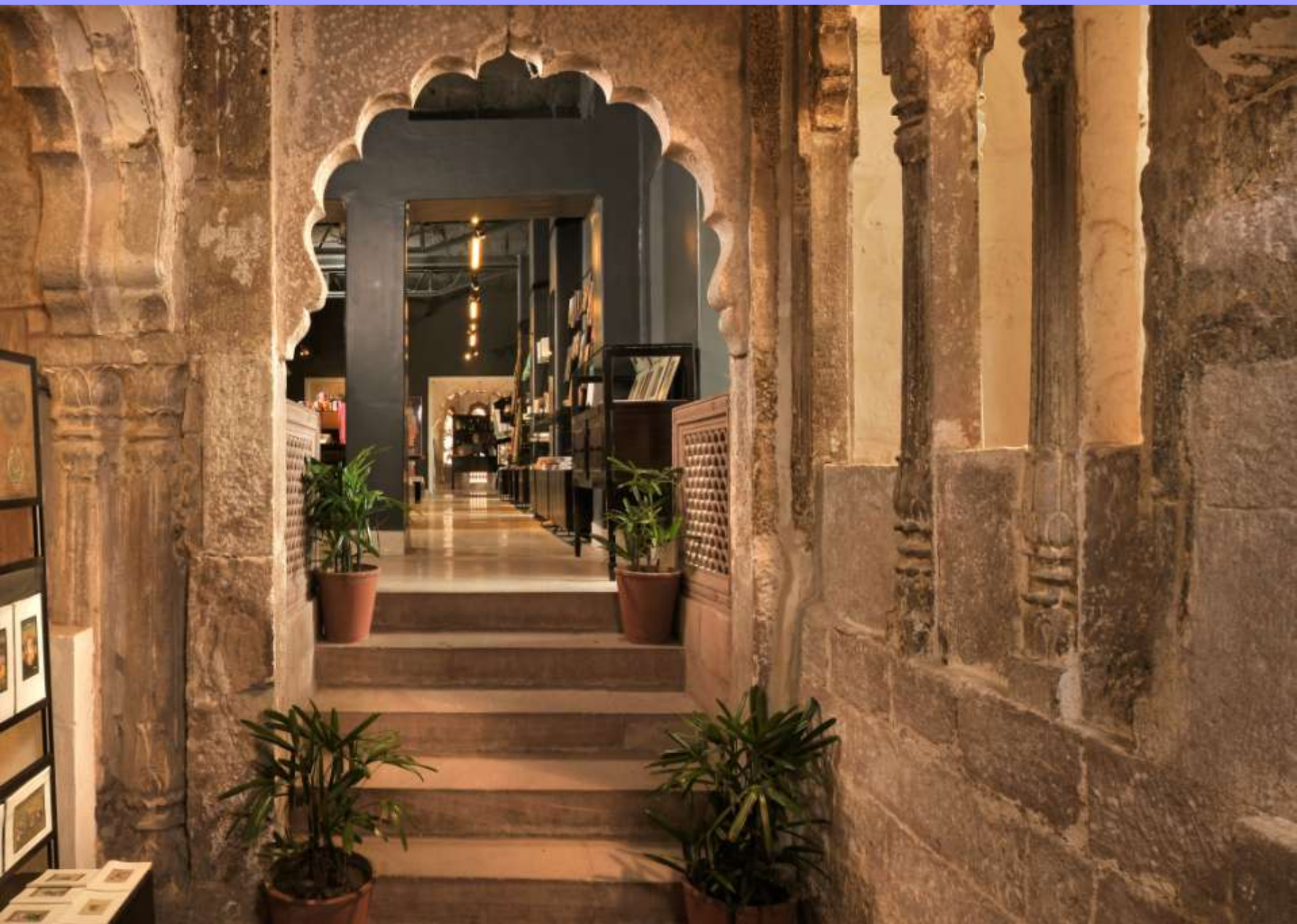












# **PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:**

## **The Major Challenge**

# Basic Resources: The Monument



Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur  
1459 AD



# Basic Resources: The Symbol



# Basic Resources: The Collections



# **Other Resources:**

**Royal Family**

**Jodhpur Polo Team**

**Jodhpur / Rajasthan History**

**Rajasthani Crafts**

**Aspects of Contemporary India  
(Bollywood; Auto-rickshaws; Tea)**

**Indian materials/production  
(Handmade paper; Handcrafted jewelry)**

**FIRST STEP:**

**Develop a strong  
logo / brand image**



# The symbol

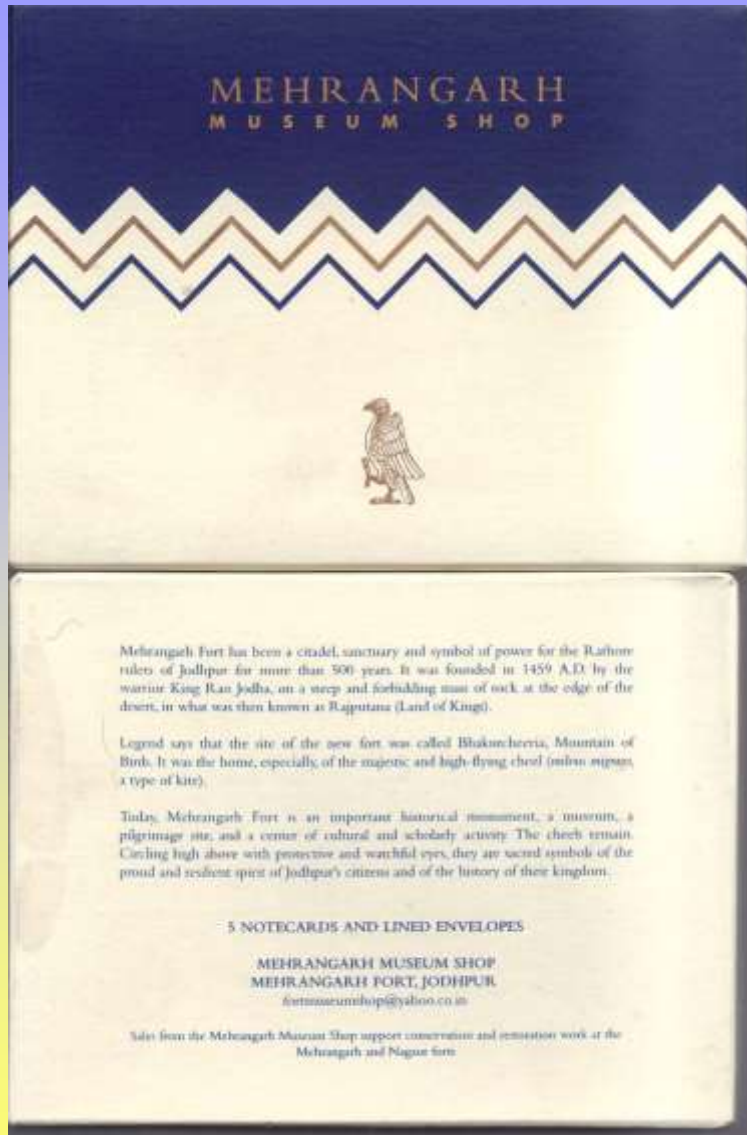




## 1<sup>st</sup> Step:

Develop a logo that will also serve as a visual brand image; for

- Letterheads
- Business Cards
- Bills
- Staff Uniforms



If the logo  
image is  
strong enough,  
and identifies  
with the  
institution, it  
can also be  
used for  
product design







# **Second Step:**

## **Product Development**

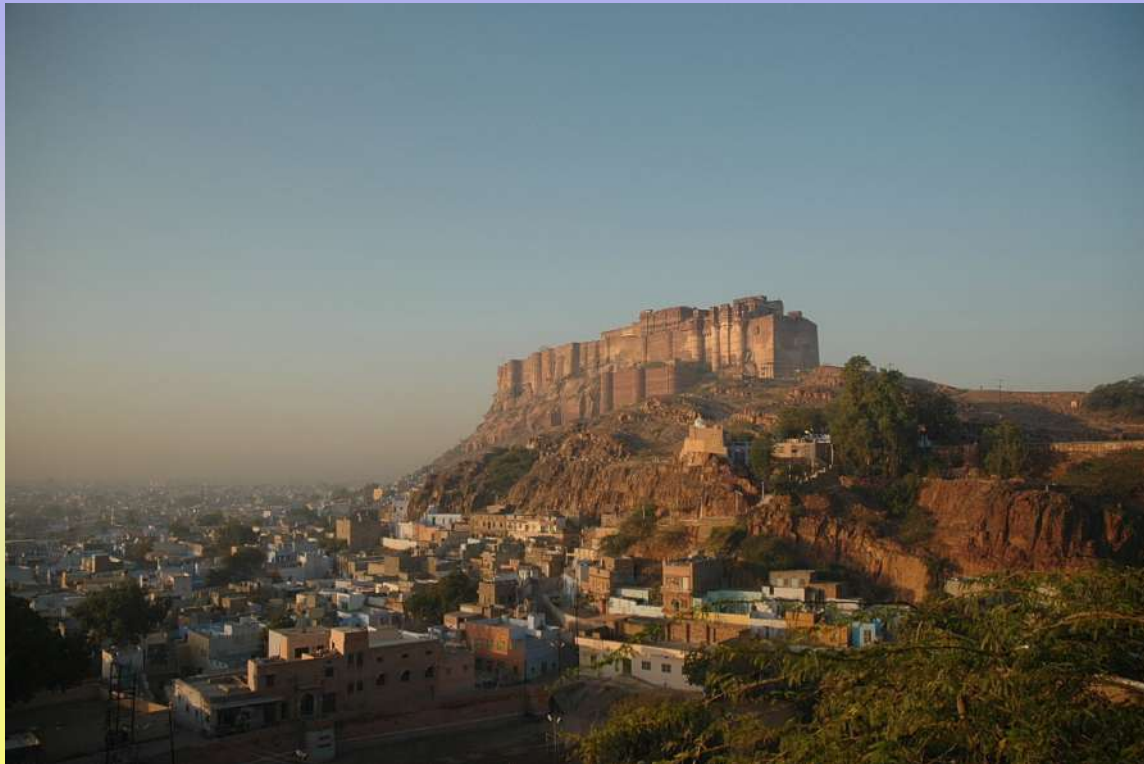
**Most viable products to begin with:**

**Postcards / Books**

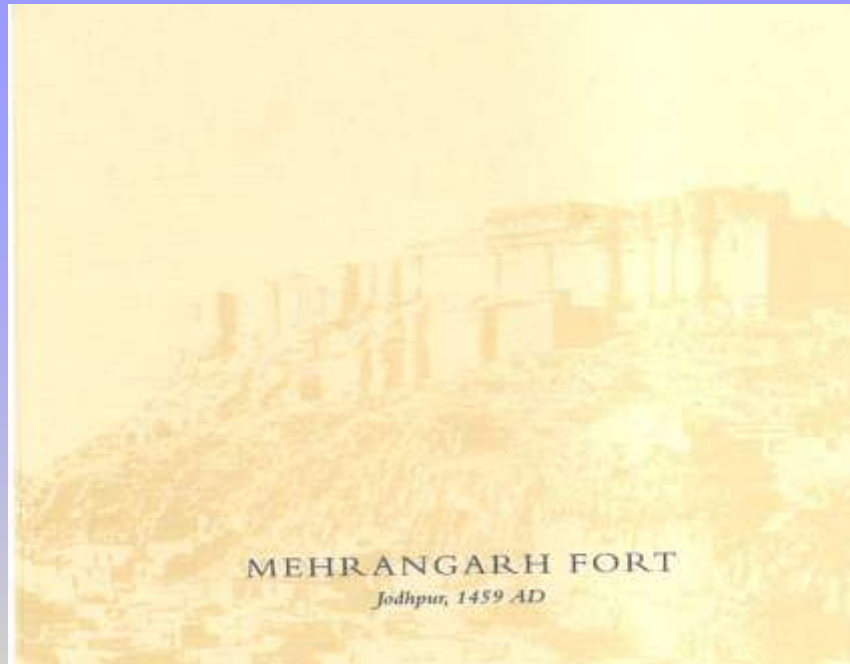
**Tee-shirts / Caps**

**Tote Bags**

# Using the Resources



**Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur**  
**1459 AD**



# Softening the Image

worked for:

**Notecubes, Notepaper, Watches**

**Importance of Tag Line: 1459 A.D.**



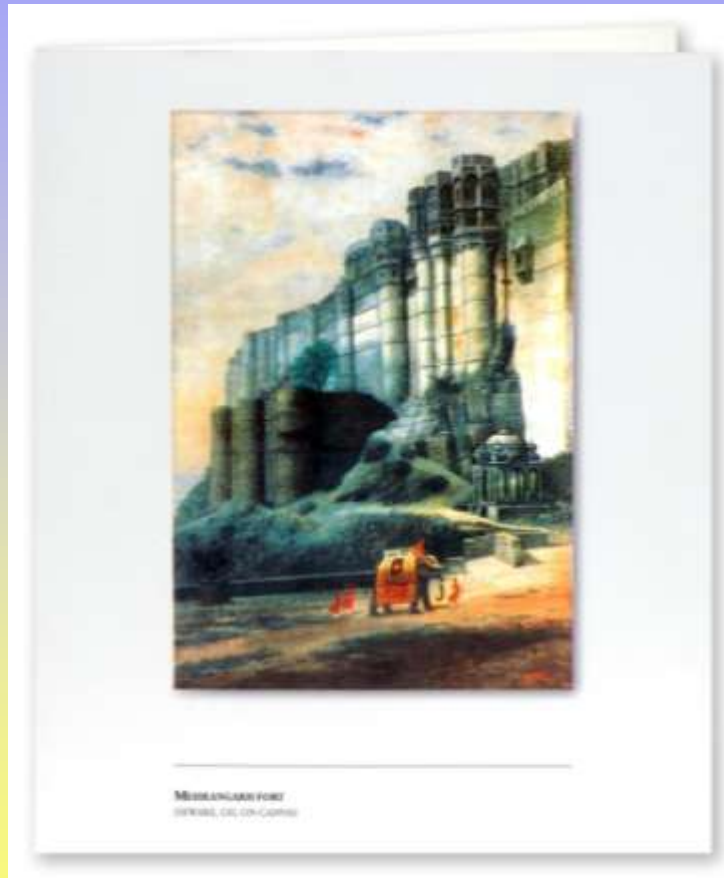
# Romancing the Image

worked for:

Greeting cards

Mousepads

Tee-shirts





# Playing with the Image

The Lion's Head Dagger  
became the focus of  
one of our best-selling  
products:

**JODHPUR ON THE EDGE**

**Tee shirts**



# Linking the Image

**A 19<sup>th</sup> century Maharaja celebrating Diwali, a festival that still involves good-natured card games and gambling.**

**Products:**

**Playing Cards**

**Greeting Cards**

**Tee-shirts**









**Capitalizing on the Image**

# **Maharaja Mansingh Playing Polo with Ladies**

**has been used for almost ten years  
for a wide variety of products**

**and is still going strong**







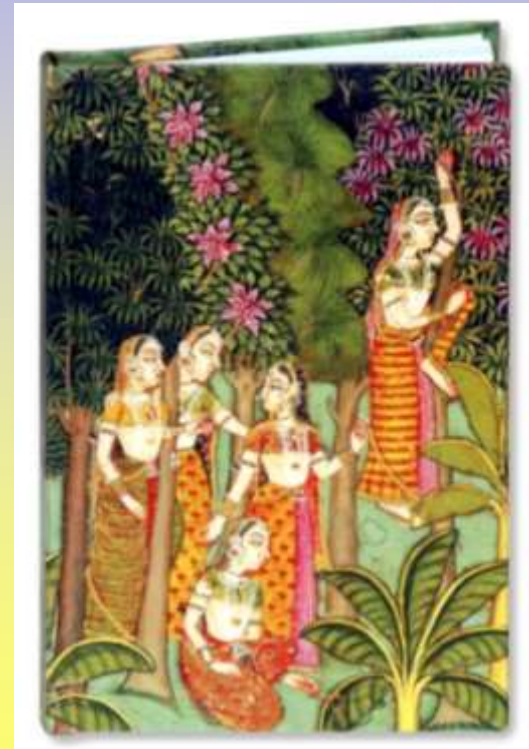
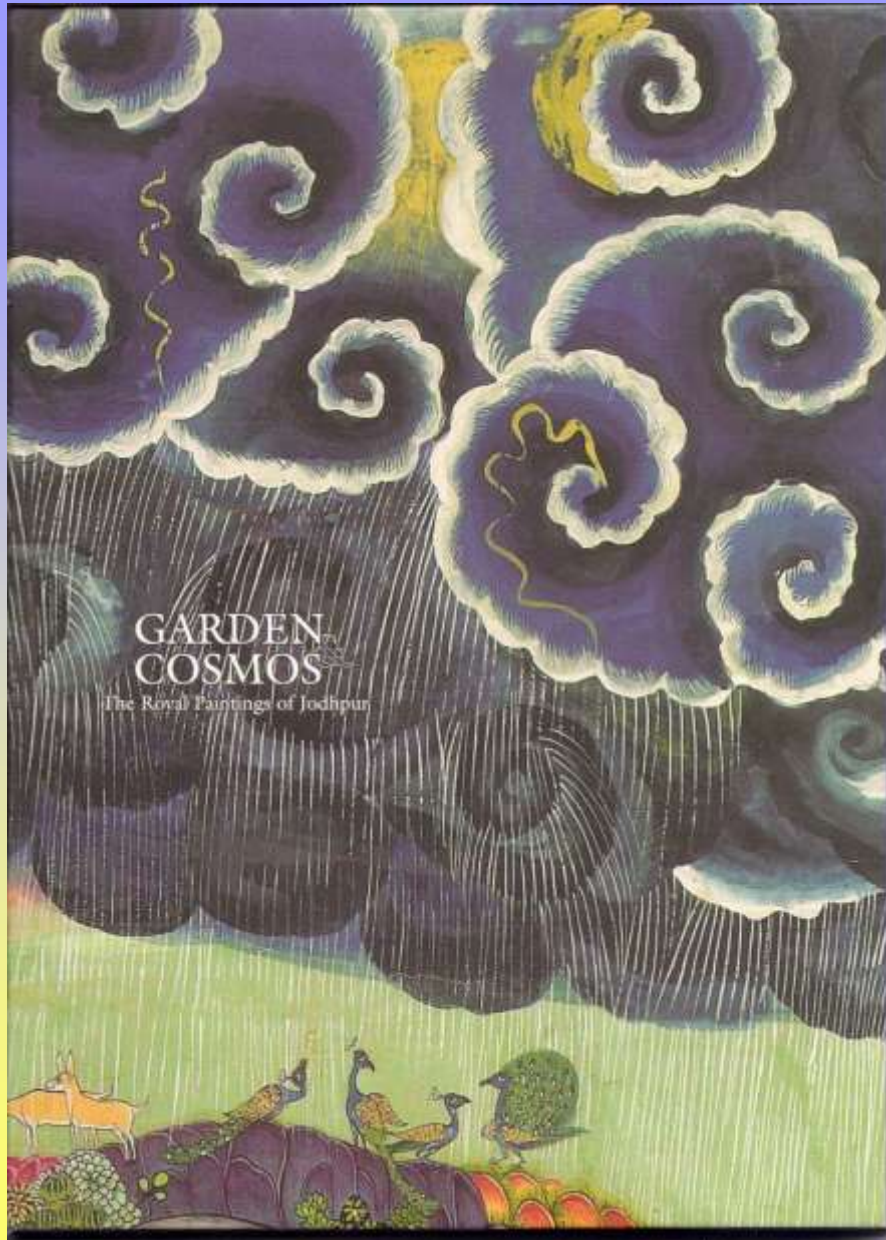
## Resource: Jodhpur Polo Team



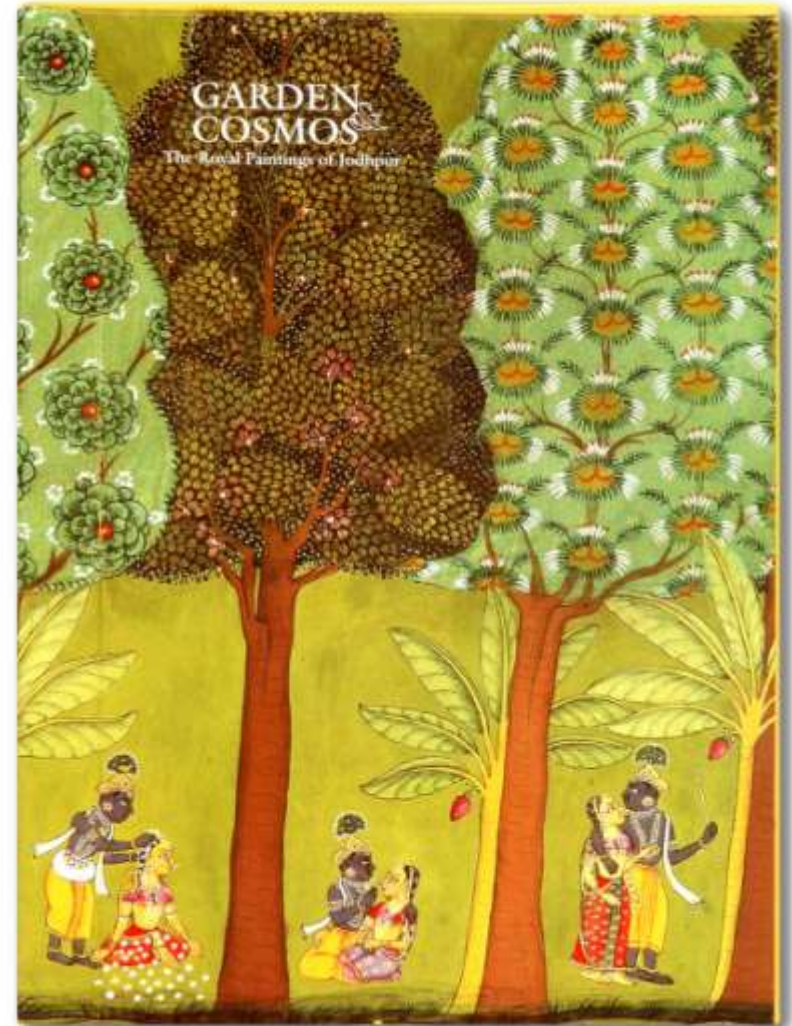
# Resource: Jodhpur Royalty



# Resource: Exhibitions













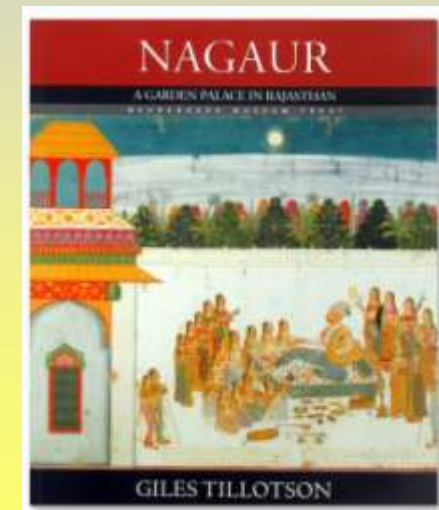
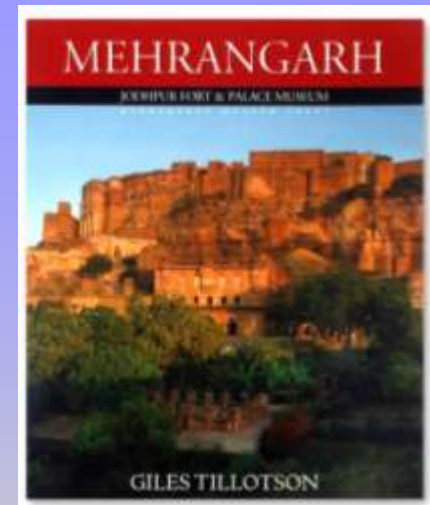
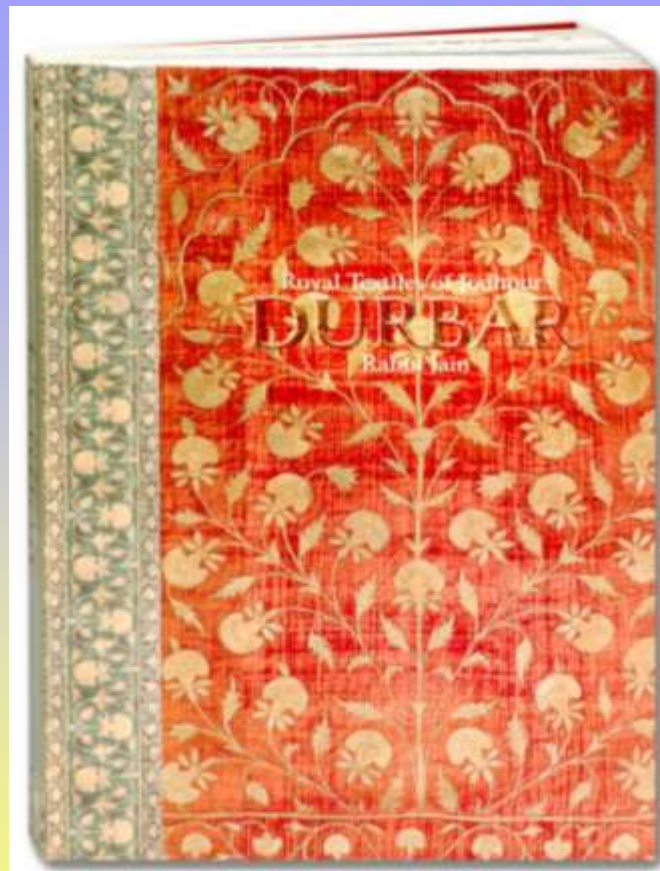
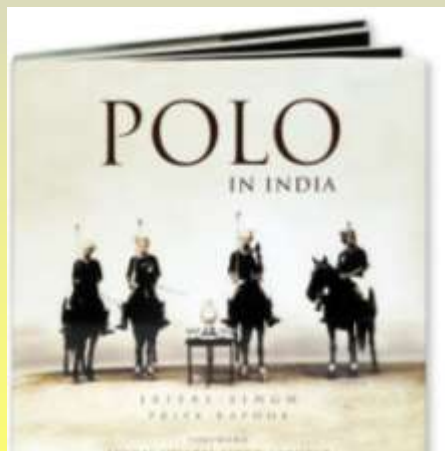








# Books



# **Basic Guidelines for all Products:**

**Authenticity  
(of image, material, experience)**

**Finest Quality, Fairest Prices**

**Made in India**

# **Community Involvement:**

**NGO products**

**Crafts Bazaar**

**Pilgrim Shop**

**Employment Policies**

# Crafts Bazaar





# Crafts Bazaar







# NGOs



# Pilgrim Shop





# OUTCOMES

**Revenue Generation**

**Visitor Satisfaction**

**Employment Generation**

**Demonstration Value**



The background image shows the interior of a museum shop. It features several arched doorways with intricate carvings. Display racks filled with various items, including postcards and small framed pictures, are visible. The floor is made of light-colored tiles. The overall atmosphere is warm and historical.

**Please visit our online shop,  
active at the end of October  
[mehrangarmuseumshop.com](http://mehrangarmuseumshop.com)**



## CALVIN and HOBBS by Bill Watterson



CAN I BUY SOMETHING? THEY'VE GOT DINOSAUR BOOKS, DINOSAUR MODELS, DINOSAUR T-SHIRTS, DINOSAUR POSTERS..



I DON'T THINK YOU NEED ANY MORE DINOSAUR STUFF, CALVIN.



BUT MOM, IT'S ALL *EDUCATIONAL*! YOU WANT ME TO *LEARN*, DON'T YOU??



BOY, SHE FELL FOR *THAT* ONE.

I'LL SAY! I WONDER IF WE COULD GET ANY BATMAN JUNK THIS WAY.



Thanks!