



Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi Heritage Museum Exhibition Concept

Shri Mataji's House in Ridgefield Park, New Jersey, USA is one of the few places that Sakshat Shri Adi Shakti saw fit to establish a physical abode for Herself in Her ceaseless efforts for the liberation and enlightenment of America. This hallowed abode represents not only a place where She would reside but is an expression of Her desire and divine inspiration in physical form, as She Herself designed every detail of this place which we are so blessed to act as stewards for the generations to come.

An attempt is being made to create a sense of a 'living presence' of Shri Mataji in Her Abode. So that whenever someone visits this sacred ground, they are in fact 'coming home' to their MOTHER. It is not intended to be just a memorial. It is envisioned as Her dwelling wherein She exists, in person – for all eternity. That in essence is the spirit of the vision for this property.

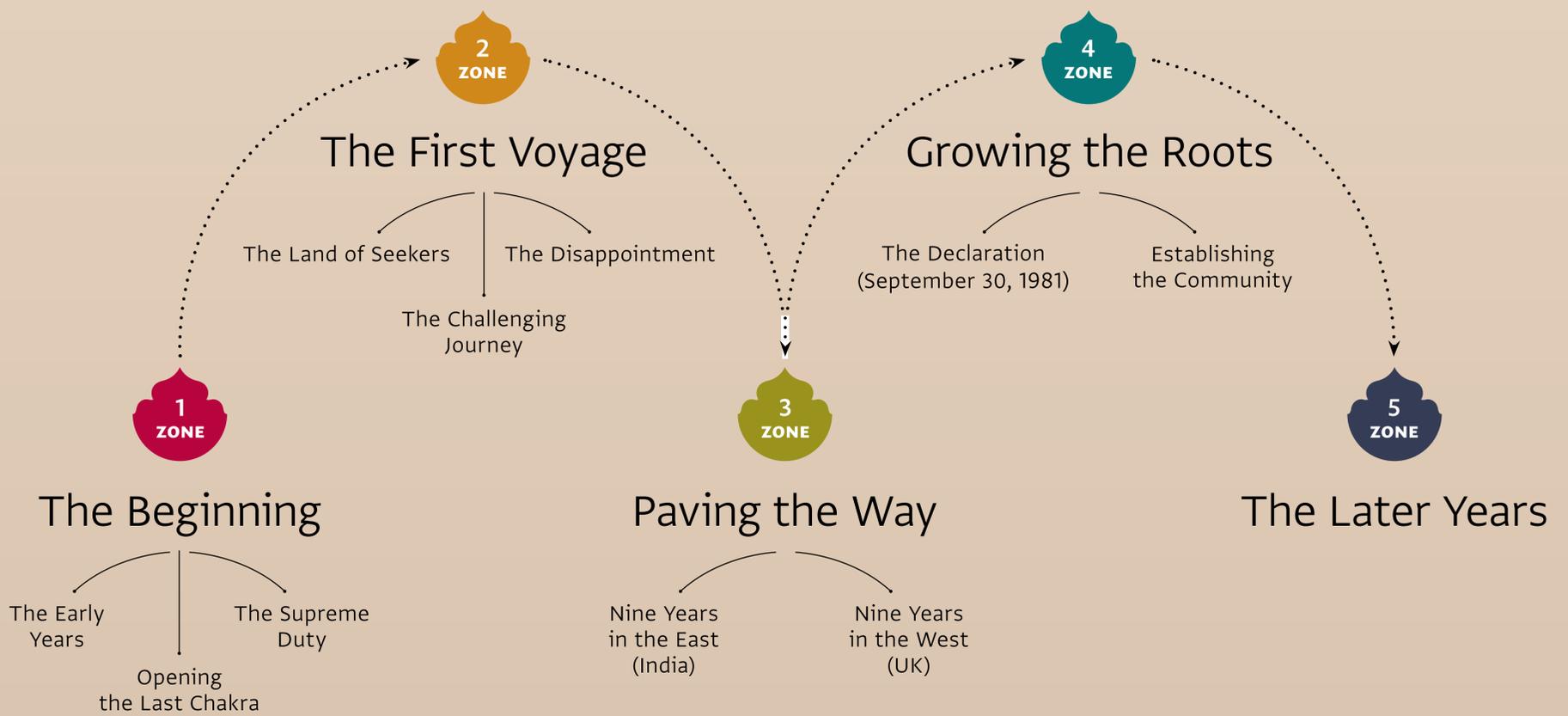
To realize part of this vision we have embarked on a unique project to memorialize Shri Mataji's legacy and Her efforts for the emancipation of America in a format of a Heritage Museum

Exhibit on the second floor of the Abode. This museum exhibit will narrate the unique relationship Shri Mataji had with the Americas and its people for over 3 decades and provide a seeker/visitor with the opportunity to learn about the life and achievements of Shri Mataji and Sahaja Yoga. It is envisioned that the visitors who enter it – literally feel the proximity to Shri Mataji – and explore the different facets of Her Divine personality, Her work, and Her travels in the United States and other countries of the American continent.

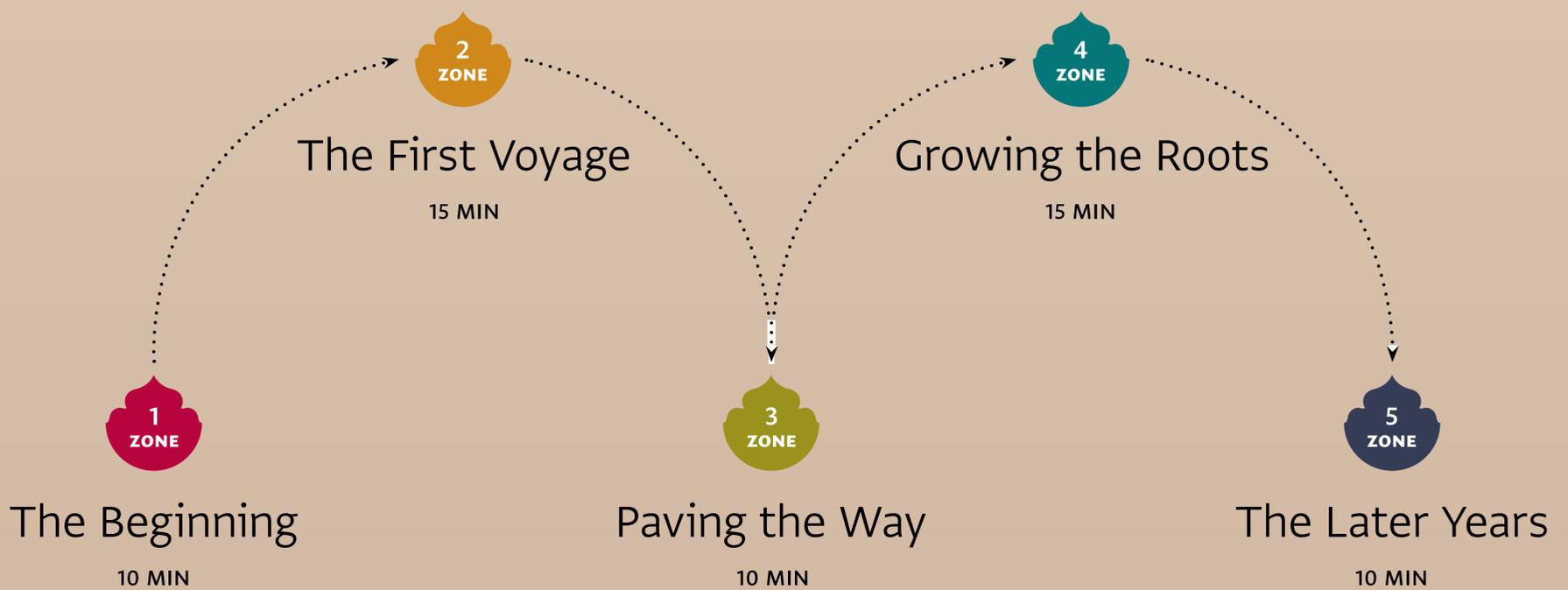
Shri Mataji had a special consideration for the United States and its people. It was one of the first countries She visited in the early 70s when She embarked on Her global mission as She always considered this nation as having its own unique spiritual destiny.

In order to do full justice to this vision, we have involved a professional museum and exhibit design company – Lorem Ipsum Corp. – that will bring in their expertise to materialize a truly world class interactive and powerful experience.

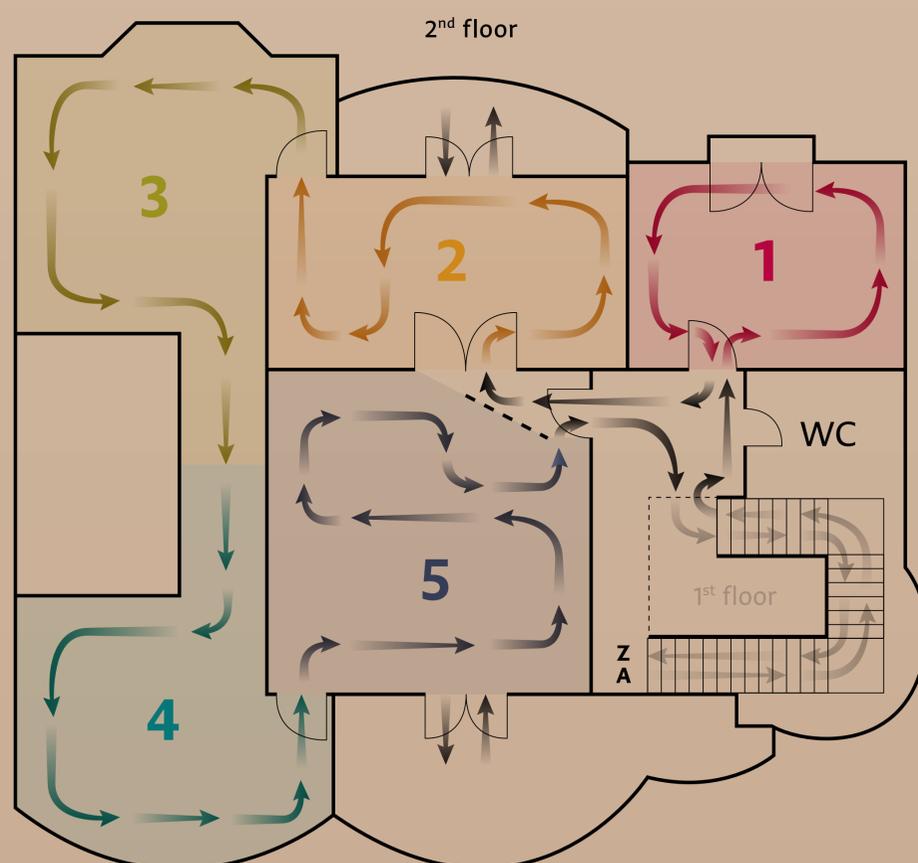
Exhibition Narrative



Visitor Experience Flow



Visitor Flow





The Beginning

Goals

While our main story focuses on Shri Mataji's journey in America, it is important to create the context for the visitors, especially the ones less familiar with Her earlier experiences. This zone facilitates a better understanding and appreciation for what unfolds next.

Description

This zone highlights the milestones of Nirmala Srivastava's life before She first came to the US in 1972, and includes the following three topics:

- *The Early Years*
The visitors learn about formative events in Nirmala's childhood and youth: Her parents, Her early involvement in India's independence movement, Her connection with Gandhi, and Her early embracement of the swadeshi, the notion of self-reliance which continued to be significant throughout Her life.
- *Opening the Last Chakra*
This section focuses specifically on the day of May 5, 1970, and includes Shri Mataji's

recollections of what She experienced and how it determined the rest of Her life.

- *The Supreme Duty*
Here the visitors learn how Shri Mataji soon felt that it was Her supreme duty to bring Sahaja Yoga to the world and deliberately chose America as one of the first international and most important destinations, the domain of the fifth chakra, Vishuddha, the land of communication and collectivism.

Interpretation Tools

Archival materials, artifacts (if possible), interpretive panels, introduction of khadi as a special symbol recurring throughout the exhibition narrative

Timing

7-10 min



Growing the Roots

Goals

This zone is the high point of our dramatic narrative — it brings the visitors to the successful realization of Shri Mataji's vision for America and inspires the feeling of completion and hope.

Description

This zone focuses on Shri Mataji's second trip to the US and the beginnings of the Sahaja Yoga community there and explores two topics:

- *The Declaration*
This section shares with the visitors the details of Her second trip and especially Her historic declaration in New York that She was the Holy Spirit. This event that took place on September 30, 1981, is presented as the foundation for further growth and the success of Sahaja Yoga in the US.
- *Establishing the Community*
In this section the visitors learn about the first Sahaja Yoga centers, ashrams and Shri Mataji's residences in the US, as well

as Her first extensive tours across the country in 1980s. The narrative emphasizes the incredible effort it took Her to turn Her vision into an organized structure.

Interpretation Tools

Artifacts, recollections (video, using either multiple screens or projection mapping), interpretive panels

Timing

15-20 min



The First Voyage

Goals

This zone invites the visitors to join Shri Mataji on Her first trip to America and to experience the range of emotions from great hope to disappointment, while understanding the combination of external challenges with the internal assurance. This zone includes three topics:

Description

- *The Land of Seekers*
The visitors are introduced to political, cultural and spiritual context of the US in the late 1960s and early 1970s, with its immense interest in various 'Oriental' and particularly Indian-born teachings and spiritual movements. The section also highlights the paradox of Shri Mataji choosing — theoretically — exactly the right historic moment for Her journey and yet not seeing the desired response.
- *The Challenging Journey*
Here the visitors follow the intriguing story of Shri Mataji's 1.5-month trip to the US in

1972 onboard a cargo vessel across the Pacific to California via Japan, the very first stage in Her American odyssey.

- *The Disappointment*
The visitors learn about Shri Mataji's first attempts to find the right people in the US and explore the reasons She became disappointed in Americans. One of the key features of this section is the poem She wrote on her way back, promising to return despite all challenges.

Interpretation Tools

VR, recollections (audio), interpretive panels, special representation of the poem

Timing

12-15 min



Paving the Way

Goals

While Shri Mataji knew she was going to return to America, it took nine years to pave Her path back to the US. This zone will help visitors to create a meaningful bridge between Her two journeys.

Description

This zone tells the story of the 9-year (1972-1981) between Shri Mataji's first trip to the US and the beginnings of Sahaja Yoga in the country and consists of two sub-zones:

- *Nine Years in the West*
The visitors learn about Shri Mataji's relocation to the UK, the emerging of Sahaja Yoga community there, small but important, as well as Her most significant trips to other Western countries during this period.
- *Nine Years in the East*
This section is dedicated to the continuation of Shri Mataji's efforts in India during

the same time period. It also invites visitors to understand the differences and the similarities in how Sahaja Yoga was practiced and spread there vs. the Western countries.

Interpretation Tools

Archival materials, graphic panels, artifacts, all presented in a way that highlights the duality of this time period

Timing

7-10 min



The Later Years

Goals

This zone serves as a conclusion to the visitors' journey through Shri Mataji's relationship with America and illustrates the scale of Her impact in this country. The visitors explore Her legacy and leave with a sense that Her work continues in each one of them. This zone does not have an end date and invites visitors to look to the future.

Description

The final zone is dedicated to the growth and development of Sahaja Yoga in America over the last 40 years, from the early 1980s until today.

The exhibition narrative focuses on the wide reach of events, centers, ashrams, schools, etc. in the country, as well as on important highlights of recognition of Shri Mataji's life and service to the humanity, with an emphasis on the US.

Interpretation Tools

Large-scale interactive map, interpretive panels with archival materials, artifacts, a physical interactive inviting visitors to share their stories

Timing

7-10 min

Visual Concept

Approach

While our narrative consists of five distinct thematic zones, we want to create for the visitors a sense of a continuous chronological journey, unfolding throughout the exhibition. Using a unifying element will allow us to guide the visitors from the beginning to the end of our story, provide structure to the space, and visually connect the five zones.

The unifying design element for our exhibition — the sculptural dimensional fabric, weaving throughout each of the rooms, as if unrolled with a swift but precise movement — will provide the canvas for our story and house the graphic elements, vitrines with artifacts, interpretive panels, and multimedia programs.

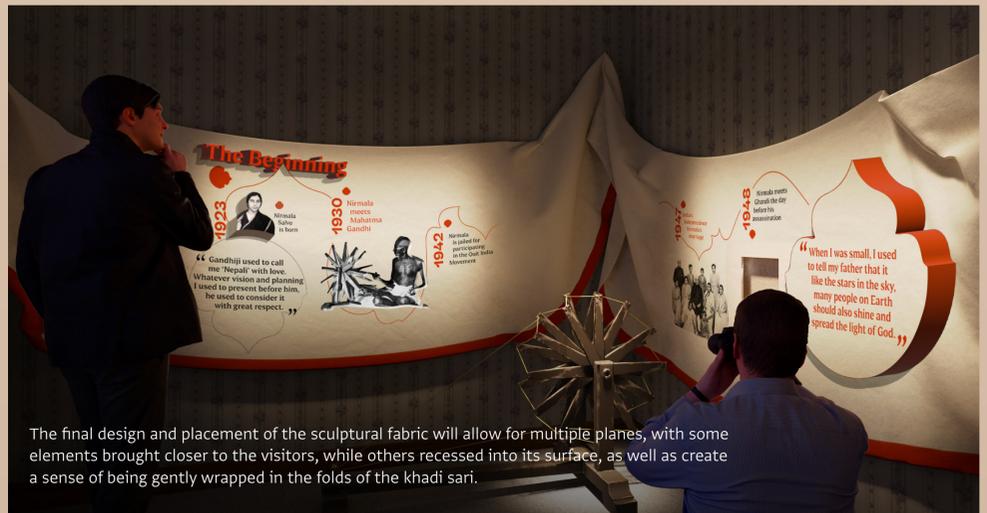


The literal fabric for our narrative is that of a highly symbolic — as well as very personal to Shri Mataji — khadi sari. While it only serves as the visual background for the story, it evokes an emotional reaction in the visitors and creates a subtle connection to the wider context.

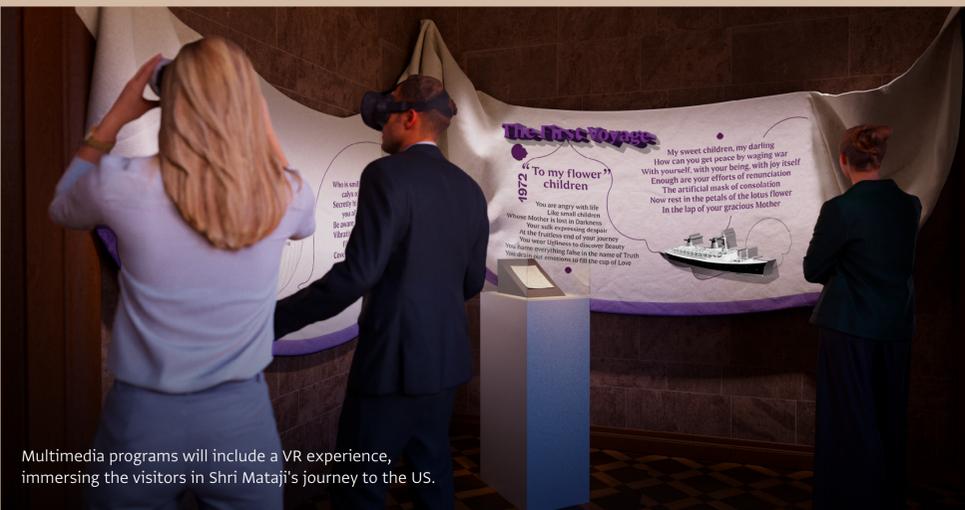


Special to Shri Mataji throughout Her life, khadi sari carries additional significant historic associations with Gandhi and India's struggle for freedom, as well as metaphorically represents the safety of a mother's pallu, an important aspect of the way Shri Mataji was perceived by seekers around the world.

Exhibition Zones



The final design and placement of the sculptural fabric will allow for multiple planes, with some elements brought closer to the visitors, while others recessed into its surface, as well as create a sense of being gently wrapped in the folds of the khadi sari.



Multimedia programs will include a VR experience, immersing the visitors in Shri Mataji's journey to the US.



Original artifacts will be displayed in the vitrines integrated in the sculptural fabric as well as placed throughout the exhibition area.



Personal recollections will help bring the story to life and create a sense of a direct emotional conversation with the visitors.





3 ways to Donate



donations.sahajayoga.us/heritage-project



Checks: Payable to “VND – Shri Mataji House”

Mail address: VND, 268 Overpeck Avenue, Ridgely Park, NJ 07660



Bank Transfer

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