

Elizabeth Simson was born on 7th April, 1931 and grew up in England and France. She had many connections with India and her grandfather, Charles, had been a partner in Simson Bros. & Co. Coconada (Kakinada Andhra Pradesh) rice merchants and jute mill owners.

Elizabeth studied art and lectured in fine art at Bath Academy of Art in Wiltshire in England in the fifties and sixties. She was fascinated by India and first drove there, overland, in 1963 with a group of friends and again in 1971. On her third trip in the late seventies, when wanting to study the rich heritage of turbans, she was referred to the Indian musicologist and Director of the Rupayan Sansthan Folk Museum, Kumul Kothari. The museum was in Borunda near Jodphur. She got to know many people in the village and returned there every year for the next 35 years. She remains particularly grateful for the hospitality of Rupayan Sansthan and Inder Dan and his family.

Elizabeth's primary interest was photography in the days of black and white films that you developed yourself. She had only taken photos with a box Brownie before coming to India but bought a Rolleicord. Colour came in during the early seventies. She was particularly drawn to textiles and their creative uses as in turbans. She recorded people and scenes which were considered too ordinary to be worth recording by others but which have since disappeared and exist only in the memories of older people.

This exhibition is dedicated to the people of Rajasthan, particularly to those in Borunda and Kota who welcomed Elizabeth and shared their lives with her.