

Large Text Labels

Eastern Encounters

Four Centuries of Paintings and Manuscripts from the Indian Subcontinent



Please do not remove from the gallery

Welcome to The Queen's Gallery, Palace of Holyroodhouse

The label text follows the order in which works
are displayed in the gallery.

Eastern Encounters

**Four centuries of paintings and manuscripts
from the Indian Subcontinent**

The Indian Subcontinent is an area encompassing modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka. It is home to some of the richest manuscript and painting traditions in the world.

The works of art that you will see in this exhibition reflect its diverse cultures and compelling histories. They are typically small in scale and written or painted by hand. Unlike in Europe, the manuscript craft endured well into the nineteenth century in India. Later Indian printed books and photographs also included elements of earlier manuscript and painting traditions.

Many of the finest examples in the Royal Collection were diplomatic gifts presented by Indian rulers to British sovereigns. These manuscripts and paintings are part of a shared history between Britain and the Indian Subcontinent which is explored throughout the exhibition



“This is indeed India! the land of dreams and romance
... the country of a hundred nations and a hundred
tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods,
cradle of the human race, birthplace of human
speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend,
great-grandmother of tradition ... the one land that
all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a
glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of
all the rest of the globe combined.”

Mark Twain, *Following the Equator* (1897)

Early Encounters

The art of the Great Mughals

The paintings and manuscripts in this section date to an era when the Mughal Empire was richer and stronger than any European power and encompassed much of the Indian subcontinent. The Mughals were a Muslim, Persian speaking dynasty. Their magnificent courts at Delhi, Agra and Lahore were international centres of art where Indian, Iranian, Central Asian, Chinese and European cultures converged. British royal ambassadors were overawed by the splendours they encountered.

The finest Mughal manuscripts were illuminated (decorated with gold), illustrated with paintings and protected by leather bindings. Their creation was a collaborative effort involving calligraphers, artists and

craftsmen. Wealthy Mughal patrons commissioned artists to paint poetry, portraits, court ceremonies, hunts and battles.

Using precious pigments, such as lapis lazuli, malachite and gold, Mughal artists produced some of the world's most beautiful and delicate miniature masterpieces.

Sultan Husayn Mirza rests after a hunt

Sultan Ali Mashhadi (calligrapher)

Dhanraj (artist)

1492, with Mughal additions c.1605–15

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

The figure in green at the lower left of this painting is Sir Thomas Roe, the first English ambassador to the Mughal court. His mission immediately encountered difficulties due to the low quality of the gifts he had brought for an emperor used to only the finest and rarest offerings.

This manuscript was made at the court of Sultan Husayn Mirza (r. 1469–1506), in Herat (modern Afghanistan). According to valuation notes on its opening page, it was one of the most treasured books in the Mughal imperial library. The Nawab of Awadh

sent it with five other volumes as gifts to George III
in 1797.

RCIN 1005032.f

Shamsa (sunburst)

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1657

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

‘The Shamsa ... is a divine light, which God directly transfers to kings, without the assistance of men; and kings are fond of external splendour, because they consider it an image of the Divine glory.’

Abul-Fazl Allami, ‘Ain-i Akbari’ (1598)

This is the opening page of a royal manuscript written at the Mughal court in the seventeenth century. It is a visual metaphor for the unity, infinity and harmony of the Divine.

RCIN 1005025.b

Persian poetry

Most Mughal manuscripts were written in Persian, which is read from right to left. Persian was the social, cultural and intellectual language of the Mughal court. A rich and expressive language, it is celebrated for its long tradition of moralising, romantic and Sufi (mystical) poetry.

The ‘Divan’ (Collected Poems) of Hafiz

Unnamed Mughal calligrapher

c.1600

Manuscript on paper

Hafiz was a Persian poet much admired by the Mughals. His ‘divan’ (collected poems) consists largely of ‘ghazals’ (short lyric poems). These were intended to be sung out loud and were popular in Mughal court entertainments.

RCIN 1005018

The ‘Gulistan’ (Rose Garden) of Sadi

Muhammad Husayn (calligrapher)

1584

Manuscript on paper

The ‘Gulistan’ (Rose Garden) is a Persian classic by the poet Sadi. A text of timeless wisdom, passages from the ‘Gulistan’ were widely quoted in everyday speech at the Mughal court. This manuscript was written in Agra in 1584 by the Mughal master calligrapher Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri.

RCIN 1005022



The ‘Tuhfat al-Ahrar’ (Gift of The Free) of Jami

Mir Ali (calligrapher)

c.1500 – 50

Manuscript on paper

This early sixteenth-century volume of Persian poetry is the type of manuscript that was prized and collected by the Mughals. The illuminated page on the right is the book’s opening page.

RCIN 1005019

Imtiaz Dharker

Imtiaz Dharker is a British poet who grew up in Glasgow. During the early stages of preparation for this exhibition, Imtiaz spent time in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle exploring the paintings and manuscripts that are now on display here. The works of art and the stories behind their creation inspired her to write new poems, which you can discover throughout the exhibition. You can also listen to Imtiaz reading some of these on the multimedia guide.

The Rose Garden

Imtiaz Dharker

When you come back from the rose garden
your eyes have changed colour
and the scent of attar follows you home
like a lover.

You return to the city of pointing fingers,
to howling sirens and beeping phones,
the clicking, the screens all on, and you
still have petals falling from your mouth.

What did you do there? Did you meet
Sadi or only his words?

Did you lose your way in that script,
its arabesques and curves?

In that place, did the poets utter in roses?

You cross from corner to corner
like a fugitive in this time. Your eyes
are watercolour, and in them, the city
and all its workings have been stamped
with gilt. Calligraphy blazes

over the walls of the meat market.

But the streets are brambled, thorned,
and on the illuminated borders

there are drops of blood.

The Day of Judgement is discussed in a bathhouse

Sultan Ali Mashhadi (calligrapher) Govardhan (artist)

1492, with Mughal additions c.1605–15

Opaque watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

Old manuscripts were sometimes ‘updated’ in the Mughal workshops. This painting is from a fifteenth-century book of poetry written in Turki (the language of the Mughals’ ancestors). The artist Govardhan scraped off the original figures and painted a new scene over them. The text describes a theologian in a bathhouse explaining the Day of Judgement to a king. He says, ‘on that day too, rich and poor will be alike in their nakedness.’

RCIN 1005032.i

The Day of Judgement

Nanha and Manohar (artists)

c.1605–15

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

The Torah, the Bible and the Quran all describe a Day of Judgement when believers will ascend to heaven and disbelievers descend to hell. This painting is a reinterpretation by two Mughal artists of a Flemish print of c.1580 depicting the scene. The original print was probably brought to the Mughal court by Jesuit missionaries.

RCIN 1005032.d



'The Last Judgement'

Adriaen Collaert

c.1580

The British Museum

Poetry in a Garden (left)

Poetry in a Landscape (right)

Lal (artist)

Abdullah al-Husayni, Sultan Muhammad Nur and
Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri (calligraphers)

c.1600

Ink and watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on
paper

These pages are from an album of poetry and
paintings assembled at the Mughal court c.1600. The
paintings are in a style known as 'nim-qalam' (half-
pen), minimally coloured with light washes. The same
artist painted these two contrasting depictions of
poetry recitals. One is in an Iranian style, the other in
the style of a sixteenth-century European engraving.

RCINs I005043 and I005047

Verses of Persian Poetry

Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri and Mir Ali Heravi
(calligraphers)

c.1600

Ink and watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on
paper

The Persian name for an album is 'muraqqa'. Derived from the Arabic word for 'patchwork', this name reflects the collage-like quality of an album in which each page is made up of several sheets of paper, cut up and arranged within decorative borders.

The largest text on this page is a verse in praise of the Prophet Muhammad written by the celebrated sixteenth-century master calligrapher Mir Ali. It is surrounded by verses of Persian poetry by the Mughal master Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri.

RCIN 1005039

The Nad-i Ali Prayer (left)

A Gathering of Yogis (right)

Daswanth (artist)

Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri (calligrapher)

c.1600

Ink and watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

The text written in large-scale calligraphy is a prayer to Ali (the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and the first Imam of the Shia). It is recited at times of stress or anxiety. The Persian poem above and below the painting on the right describes the anxieties of an old man contemplating youthful beauty, a theme which is also explored in the image.

RCINs I005052 and I005062

Abd al-Mumin Khan (left)

Abdullah Khan Uzbek (right)

Unnamed Mughal artists

c.1620

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Abdullah Khan II (r. 1583 – 98) was the last ruler of the Shaybanid dynasty of Uzbekistan and Abd al-Mumin Khan his only son. The portrait of Abd al-Mumin Khan is painted in an Iranian style and was based on an earlier portrait now in the Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.

RCINs I005038.af and I005038.ae

Raja Bhagwant Das (left)

Raja Rai Rai Singh (right)

Unnamed Mughal artists

c.1620

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

These portraits depict two Hindu Rajput rajas who served as high-ranking generals in the Mughal army. Both arranged political marriages of their daughters to the Mughal emperor Jahangir. Portraits such as these would have been used as models to be copied for larger paintings depicting Mughal court ceremonies.

RCINs I005038.ap and I005038.ao

Naqib Khan (left)

Hakim Abul-Fath (right)

Unnamed Mughal artists

c.1620

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Naqib Khan was a celebrated Mughal historian and the Mughal emperor's official 'reader'. Hakim Abul-Fath was a doctor at the Mughal court and is credited with the invention of 'huqqa' (the water pipe). These portraits were based on sketches drawn from life.

RCINs I005038.al and I005038.ak

British monarchs and Mughal emperors

Elizabeth I and Akbar

Elizabeth I (r. 1558 – 1603) was the last Tudor monarch and a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556 – 1605). In 1600 she granted a group of 125 merchants a monopoly on all English trade to Asia. Through this royal sanction, the East India Company was born.

James VI & I and Jahangir

James VI & I (r. 1603 – 25) was a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605 – 27). In 1613, he agreed to appoint Sir Thomas Roe as the first ambassador to the Mughal court on behalf of the East India Company.

Charles I and Shah Jahan

In 1637, Mughal ships were plundered by pirates said to have been flying the English flag. The East India

Company President and his council in India were imprisoned as a result. Charles I (r. 1625 – 49) sent a letter of apology to Emperor Shah-Jahan (r. 1628 – 58) in order to free them.

Charles II, Catherine of Braganza and Bombay

Charles II (r. 1660 – 85) married Catherine of Braganza in May 1662. Part of her large dowry was the Portuguese territory of Bom Bahia (Bombay) on the western coast of India, modern Mumbai. The king agreed to transfer control of Bombay to the East India Company and it soon became their main base in South Asia.

William III and Alamgir

In 1698, the East India Company clashed violently with the Mughals over failed trade negotiations.

William III (r. 1650 – 1702) then appointed Sir William Norris as ambassador to the Mughal court.

His task was to 'establish a friendly and good understanding' with Emperor Alamgir (r. 1658 – 1707).

The ‘Padshahnama’ (Book of Emperors) of Abd al-Hamid Lahori

The fifth Mughal emperor Shah-Jahan (r. 1628 – 58) commissioned the Padshahnama (Book of Emperors) to celebrate his reign and his dynasty. Several copies were written during Shah-Jahan’s lifetime but the Royal Collection’s manuscript is unique, being the only illustrated imperial Padshahnama volume to survive from the period.

The Padshahnama’s forty-four illustrations are among the finest Mughal paintings ever created. They are now separated from the book, which is on display in the central case.



Jahangir presents Shah-Jahan with a turban ornament

Payag

c.1640

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

This painting is a flashback to when Shah-Jahan's father, Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605 – 27), granted his son the title 'Shah-Jahan' (King of the World).

Jahangir presents to him a turban ornament symbolising a transmission of power. Their heads are surrounded by 'shamsas' to signify the 'divine light' emitted by kings.

The artist, Payag, painted himself holding his paintings folder at the bottom left of the scene.

RCIN 1005025.an

Shah-Jahan hunting lions at Burhanpur

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1630 – 40

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

The hunting of lions and tigers was a privilege of the Mughal emperor and princes alone. The tall net forms a physical and a metaphorical barrier between the imperial family and their attendants in the foreground.

RCIN 1005025.au

Shah-Jahan receives his three eldest sons during his accession ceremonies

Bichitr (right), **Ramdas** (left)

c.1630 – 40

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

As part of Emperor Shah-Jahan's accession ceremonies in 1628 he held a durbar ceremony during which he received homage from his sons and nobles. The emperor sits on a balcony at the centre of the public audience hall with his court assembled below him according to their rank.

The artist of the painting on the left included his self-portrait at the edge of the painting, furthest away from the emperor, as an expression of his humility. He is the figure wearing white holding a paintings folder.

RCINs I005025.k and I005025.l

The decapitation of Khan-Jahan Lodi

Abid

c.1640

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Khan-Jahan Lodi was a general who did not support Shah-Jahan's accession to the throne. He and his sons fled the Mughal court, but they were soon hunted down and killed. This gory painting captures the moment when imperial soldiers cut off Khan-Jahan Lodi's head to send to Shah-Jahan as a trophy.

RCIN 1005025.q



The Siege of Qandahar

Payag

c.1640

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Shah-Jahan was determined to expand the Mughal Empire. His general Azam Khan took the fortress of Qandahar (north-west of Hyderabad) in May 1631 after a four-month siege. This painting depicts the moment when the mines exploded, throwing charred bodies into the air. The artist, Payag, painted three other illustrations in the 'Padshahnama', including 'Jahangir presents Shah-Jahan with a turban ornament', also on display in this exhibition.

RCIN 1005025.s

Mughal dagger

Early seventeenth century with later scabbard

Water crucible steel, rock crystal, gold, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, wood and textile

The paintings of the 'Padshahnama' manuscript show the wealth and opulence of the Mughal court. Deluxe materials and skilled craftsmanship turned everyday, utilitarian objects into works of art. The hilt of this Mughal dagger is made of rock crystal inlaid with gold, rubies, emeralds and diamonds.

RCIN 11275

**Illuminated Frontispiece of the
'Padshahnama' depicting Timur (right)
passing the imperial crown to Shah-Jahan
(left)**

Unnamed Mughal artists

c.1657

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

The term 'Mughal' is a corruption of 'Mongol' and a misnomer for the dynasty that considered itself 'Timurid' (i.e. descendants of the fourteenth-century ruler Timur). When the two pages of this frontispiece are read together, the images imply that Timur, the great ruler of Central Asia, is passing the imperial Timurid crown to Emperor Shah-Jahan.

RCINs I005025.e and I005025.d

Mughal spinel

Early seventeenth century

Spinel, seed pearls, gold thread

Spinel is gemmologically similar to rubies but has a greater lustre, durability and hardness. The Mughal emperors considered them superior to all other precious stones. This spinel is inscribed in Persian with the names of its previous owners: the emperors Jahangir (r. 1605 – 27), Shah-Jahan (r. 1628 – 58) and Alamgir (r. 1658 – 1707), who may have worn it as a turban ornament.

In the late eighteenth century the jewel came into the possession of the Rajas of Nabha. Raja Sir Hira Singh of Nabha (1843 – 1911) presented it as a coronation gift to King Edward VII in 1901.

RCIN 11526

Mir Muhammad Said (left)

Prince Sulaiman-Shukoh (right)

Ramdas

c.1650

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Mir Muhammad Said was a high-ranking courtier whom Shah-Jahan gave the title Muazzam (Magnificent) Khan. Prince Sulaiman-Shukoh was Shah-Jahan's grandson, the son of Dara-Shukoh. After Aurangzeb became emperor he had both Dara-Shukoh and Sulaiman-Shukoh murdered.

RCINs I005069.f and I005069.e

Shah-Jahan honours Dara-Shukoh at his wedding

Bulaqi

c.1633

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

The wedding of Prince Dara-Shukoh took place in the Agra Fort on 12 February 1633. It was the first grand ceremony at the Mughal court after the death of Shah-Jahan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal (for whom he built the Taj Mahal as a tomb). These paintings depict the 'sehra-bandi', a Hindu wedding tradition adopted by the Mughals, in which a veil ('sehra') is fastened around the groom's forehead to protect him from the evil eye.

RCINs I005025.z and I005025.aa

Prince Aurangzeb faces a maddened elephant named Sudakar

Attributed to Govardhan

c.1635

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

In June 1633, the Mughal imperial family were watching an elephant fight when one of the elephants, named Sudakar, ran away. Guards attempted to control the elephant by chasing him with fireworks but without success. Sudakar charged towards Prince Aurangzeb, who lanced him with a spear. Shah-Jahan subsequently awarded Aurangzeb the title 'bahadur' (champion) for his bravery.

RCIN 1005025.ad

Chameleon

Mansur

c.1600

Opaque watercolour with gold paint

Mansur was the leading natural history painter at the Mughal court in the seventeenth century. His tiny dots of green paint mimic the surface of the chameleon's skin. On very close inspection, a gold crescent is visible in the reptile's eye, creating a glint as it gazes at the hovering insect.

RCIN 912081

[In centre case]

The 'Padshahnama' (Book of Emperors) of Abd al-Hamid Lahori

Muhammad Amin Mashhadi (calligrapher)

1656 – 7

Manuscript on paper

The Persian text of the 'Padshahnama' is a combination of prose and verse written in an ornate style. Its long introduction narrates the Mughal imperial genealogy from the fourteenth-century ruler Timur to Emperor Shah-Jahan. The names of Shah-Jahan's ancestors are written in gold ink.

RCIN 1005025

A 'nayika' waiting for her lover

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1730–50

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

This painting depicts a 'nayika' (heroine) waiting for her lover. Mughal court poets and musicians wrote love songs in which the emperor was cast as the ideal lover or 'nayak' for whom the 'nayika' yearns.

RCIN 1005069.aq

Ladies of the Mughal ‘zanana’

Unnamed Mughal artists

c.1650 (left), c.1730 – 50 (right)

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Many of the openings in this album show a seventeenth-century painting on one side and an eighteenth-century Mughal artist’s ‘response’ on the facing page. The painting on the left is thought to be a portrait of Farzana Begum, the sister of Shah-Jahan’s wife, Mumtaz-Mahal. It was rumoured that Shah-Jahan took Farzana Begum as his mistress after Mumtaz-Mahal’s death. Both paintings represent the ideal feminine characteristic of ‘nazakat’ (delicacy of demeanour).

RCINs I005068.w and I005068.v

A Mughal album of paintings and calligraphy

c.1730 – 50

Manuscript on paper with painted lacquer covers

Painted on the insides of this album's covers is a landscape scene incorporating figures from popular literature of the time. On the left, the woman holding a gun is Chand Bibi, the fabled warrior queen. On the right are the characters of a well-known Indian love story, Baz Bahadur and Rani Rupmati, hunting on horseback.

RCIN 1005068

Woman in a Mughal Album

Imtiaz Dharker

Absent from the terrace and high window,
she is the one who startles the birds at dawn
and sends them squawking out of the trees
into an opalescent sky. She is gone,

out all hours, galloping with the wild things
that call through the forest,
crossing streams and rivers, her scent
lost. When she needs to eat

she sets about catching and roasting fish,
woodsmoke rising through the trees.

If it is time to rest, she lights up a hookah,
soothed to poetry by its low babbling.

She is at the centre of this story. It lifts
her like wings and she feels it as muscle
rather than feathers. Her beauty is not relevant

to this, but the story-tellers always mention it.

What matters is that she is someone you recognise,
fierce on the page, too stubborn to let you turn
away.

She is no myth, but a hunter, stalking words
with no mercy, arrows ready to fly.

[The next room – Gallery C]

Divine Encounters

Hindu paintings from northern India

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dynasties of Hindu rajas ruled a large area of northern India called Rajasthan. They commissioned their artists and scribes to create paintings and manuscripts for 'bhakti' (personal devotion). On display here are intimate images of earthly encounters with Hindu gods intended to connect the soul with the Divine. The same figures may appear multiple times in a painting because the paintings do not depict any fixed time or human realm.

Paintings on paper traditionally echoed the heavily contoured and colourful imagery of wall paintings. Rajput artists developed distinct styles and techniques which evolved into regional styles, some bold and

bright, others more delicate and muted. These paintings illustrate epic Hindu texts in an easily-accessible way.

Gifts for a Prince

Queen Victoria's son Albert Edward, later King Edward VII, toured India as Prince of Wales in 1875 – 6. The Prince's first port of call was Bombay (Mumbai) where lanterns had been set up for the Hindu festival of Diwali. These were left in place to mark the Prince's birthday the day after he arrived. Mangaldas Nathubhai, head of the Bombay welcoming committee, presented the prince with a gift of three albums of paintings portraying Hindu deities, including many of those on display here.

Vishnu and Lakshmi

Unnamed Rajput artist (Jaipur)

Late eighteenth century

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

As part of Hindu worship, devotees pray to 'murtis' (votive images or statues) as physical embodiments of the Divine. Here Vishnu (the preserver god) and his consort Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune) are depicted as if idols on a pedestal but also as real, physical beings.

RCIN 1005113.ab

Krishna and the gopis play hide-and-seek

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1730 – 50

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Krishna is the eighth avatar of Vishnu. The 'lila' (love-play) between Krishna and his devotees are metaphors for the mutual love and longing of man for God and God for man. Poetry and paintings on this theme were popular in the courts of northern India.

RCIN 1005069.av

Krishna and the gopis celebrate Holi

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1765

Opaque watercolour including gold metallic paint on paper

In this unusual painting a princess conjures a vision of Krishna and his devotees as she gazes out over a stormy sky. They revel in a forest grove hurling tinted water and coloured powder in celebration of the spring festival of Holi.

RCIN 1005113.r

Radha spies on Krishna dancing with the gopis

Imtiaz Dharker

This love. Like the sun staring straight in my eyes on
a hill road, watching me going over the edge.

This love, breathing hard in my ear, saying, 'Look at
him, look at him looking at her,'

forcing me to see his hand touching hers, the way the
air quivers around them.

Everything in nature is on his side, the half-moon in a
blue sky, every leaf

in a whole orchard of trees turns to admire him.

They are pointing to where he is dancing,

saying, 'Look at him, how the world shamelessly
throws its lustre at him, its radiance refracted
through him.'

I know how it feels, being blinded by light, nothing but
touch and sound,

the sound of his breathing, and everything for miles
around holding its breath.

This love, the lip of the earth falling away and I,
following.

Radha spies on Krishna dancing with other women

Unnamed Rajput artist (Jaipur)

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

“When spring came, tender-limbed Radha wandered like a flowering creeper in the forest wilderness, seeking Krishna in his many haunts.

The god of love increased her ordeal, tormenting her with fevered thoughts, and her friend sang to heighten the mood.”

RCIN1005114.t

Radha longs for Krishna

Unnamed Rajput artist (Jaipur)

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

“Soft sandal mountain winds caress quivering vines of clove. Forest huts hum with droning bees and crying cuckoos.

When spring’s mood is rich, Hari [Krishna] roams here to dance with young women. A cruel time for deserted lovers, my friend”

RCIN 1005114.v

Verses from the ‘Gita Govinda’ (Song of the Cowherd)

The Sanskrit devotional poem ‘Gita Govinda’ (The Song of the Cowherd) by Jayadeva is a cycle of twenty-four songs. These paintings are from a long series in which each painting illustrates a single verse.

The main characters are the god Krishna, the eighth earthly incarnation of Vishnu, and his lover, the mortal cowherdess Radha. Their recurrent separations and blissful reunions are metaphors for the separation of the soul and the Divine and their ultimate ecstasy in union.

Matsya (the Fish)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.d

Kurma (the Tortoise)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.e

Varaha (the Boar)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.f

Narasimha (the Man-Lion)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.g

Vamana (the Dwarf)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.h

Parashurama (the Warrior)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.i

Rama (the Hero King)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.j

Krishna (the Statesman)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.k

Buddha (the Enlightened)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

RCIN 1005115.l

Kalki (the Incarnation yet to come)

Unnamed Rajput artist

c.1800

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

Kalki is the final avatar of Vishnu. He is prophesied to appear on a winged white horse at the end of Kali Yuga, the present epoch, to usher in a new Golden Age.

RCIN 1005115.m

Series depicting the dashavatara

Devotion to Vishnu and his ten earthly incarnations or 'avatars' (the 'dashavatara') is particularly prevalent in north India. According to Hindu belief, Vishnu descended to earth in these ten animal and human forms in order to restore 'dharma' (cosmic order).

Hiranyakashipu learns that Varaha (the boar incarnation of Vishnu) has killed his brother

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Hiranyakashipu (the king of the demons) learns of his brother's death at the hands of Varaha (the boar incarnation of Vishnu) and vows to kill Vishnu in revenge.

RCIN 925230

Hiranyakashipu consoles his mother and sister-in-law

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775–90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

RCIN 925237

Hiranyakashipu performs penance so that Brahma might grant him powers of invincibility

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

After his brother's death, Hiranyakashipu performs yogic penance by standing on an anthill holding his arms above his head. Impressed by his ascetic act,

Brahma (the creator god) agrees to grant him powers of invincibility: that he cannot be killed by any human, animal or weapon, neither inside nor outside, neither during the day nor at night, on earth or in the sky.

RCIN 925229

Hiranyakashipu leads his demon army into battle against the gods and conquers all the world's territories

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

RCIN 925231



**Hiranyakashipu sends his son Prahlada
away to be taught by the sage
Shukracharya**

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on
paper

Hiranyakashipu sends his son Prahlada away after he
professes devotion to his enemy Vishnu.

RCIN 925232

**Shukracharya advises Hiranyakashipu not
to kill Prahlada**

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775–90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

RCIN 925233

Hiranyakashipu orders Prahlada to be killed

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Hiranyakashipu is furious after Prahlada again expresses his devotion to Vishnu and orders the demons to kill him.

RCIN 925234

The demons try to crush Prahlada with an elephant

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Prahlada remains faithful to Vishnu throughout his ordeal and the demons' assaults have no effect.

RCIN 925235

Hiranyakashipu asks Prahlada whether Vishnu is in the pillar in front of him

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Prahlada asserts that Vishnu is the omnipresent, supreme controller of the Universe. Hiranyakashipu asks 'then why do I not see Him in this pillar in front of me?'. When his son replies that Vishnu is indeed inside the pillar, the king instructs his demons to destroy it.

RCIN 925238

Narasimha (the half-man, half-lion avatar of Vishnu) bursts out of pillar and attacks Hiranyakashipu

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

RCIN 925239

Narasimha kills Hiranyakashipu

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Narasimha kills Hiranyakashipu as the sun is setting (neither day nor night) on the palace threshold (neither indoors nor outdoors) on his lap (neither earth or sky).

RCIN 925240

Vishnu enthroned as the world rejoices

Nainsukh family workshop

c.1775 – 90

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

Lakshmi presents a garland to Vishnu, no longer in his Narasimha form, as the gods rejoice.

RCIN 925241

‘Proshitabhartruka Nayika’

Unnamed Pahari artist

c.1840

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

‘Proshitabhartruka Nayika’ represents the lady in despair because her lover is away. She rearranges the folds of her sari in frustration as her ‘sakhi’ attempts to console her. Her inner turmoil is echoed outside as the dark clouds open up and strutting peacocks welcome the downpour of the monsoon rains.

RCIN 1005128

Raga 'Todi'

Unnamed Pahari artist

c.1810

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

'Todi' is an early-morning, summertime raga (melody). The mood of this raga is represented as a beautiful heroine separated from her lover who thinks of him as she wanders the forest. She plays a stringed instrument and her enchanting music causes the animals to wake.

RCIN 1005127

Raga 'Khambavati'

Unnamed Pahari artist

c.1760

Opaque watercolour with gold paint on paper

'Ragamala' paintings are pictorial representations of 'ragas' (musical modes associated with particular seasons and different times of day). 'Khambavati' is a slow-to-medium tempo, early-evening raga associated with autumn and cool, post-monsoon weather. The painter portrays 'khambavati' as a beautiful young woman performing a solitary fire ritual to Brahma (the creator god).

RCIN 925221



Political Encounters

Art and the East India Company

The East India Company was a British trading corporation that gained influence and acquired territory in South Asia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. East India Company officers presented Indian paintings and manuscripts to George III (r. 1760 – 1820) and George IV (r. 1820 – 30) as symbols of victory and control. Indian rulers also sent gifts to the British monarchs as appeals for favour and protection.

The increased presence of Europeans in the Indian Subcontinent had significant impact on the art of the region. As evident in the paintings on display, South Asian artists working for both European and local patrons adopted European techniques and materials in their work.

Muhammad Ali Khan, Nawab of Arcot and the Carnatic

John Dixon (c.1725–1804) after Francis Swain Ward (c.1734–1794)

1771–2

Mezzotint on paper

The South Asian ruling dynasty with whom George III and George IV had the closest relationship was the Wallajah dynasty of the Carnatic. The Carnatic was a Mughal province at the southernmost end of the subcontinent (encompassing modern-day Tamil Nadu). Its capital at Arcot lay just 65 miles west of Fort St George, the East India Company's base in Madras.

Although a Muslim dynasty, the Nawabs of the Carnatic were patrons of both the Srirangam temple complex (seen in the background of this print) and the nearby Muslim shrine of the Sufi saint Nathar

Wali. The two often co-ordinated the timings of their festivals and shared elephants and other regalia.

RCIN 618757

The body of Tipu Sultan is recognised by his family

Luigi Schiavonetti (1765 –1810) after Robert Ker Porter (1777–1842)

1801

Stipple engraving on paper

Tipu Sultan (r. 1782 – 99), the ruler of Mysore in Southern India, was killed in the East India Company's assault on Seringapatam (Srirangapatnam) on 4 May 1799. George IV collected many relics of Tipu Sultan and purchased this print and its pair two weeks before they were officially published.

RCIN 750587

Asaf ud-Daula, Nawab of Awadh

Johan Zoffany (1733–1810)

c.1784

Chalk

Asaf ud-Daula (r. 1775 – 97) was one of the wealthiest Indian rulers of the late eighteenth century. An avid collector of paintings and manuscripts, he bought many important books that had been sold or looted from the imperial Mughal libraries. These included the 'Padshahnama', 'Gulistan' of Sadi and 'Khamsa' of Navai manuscripts on display in this exhibition. His successor sent these and other volumes as gifts to George III in 1797.

RCIN 913286

Quran scroll

South Indian (Vellore)

Late eighteenth century

Manuscript in black and red inks with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

All 114 chapters of the Quran fit onto the narrow surface of this scroll. As it is unrolled, the tiny text forms the larger words of the talismanic 'throne verse'. This verse asserts the meaning of 'tawhid', 'the oneness of God', and is considered by many the most important in the Quran.

The scroll is thought to have been a gift to George IV from the Nawab of the Carnatic.

RCIN 1005002

The Holy Quran

South Indian (Deccan) Harun ibn Bayazid al-Bayhaqi
(calligrapher)

1613

Manuscript on paper

The Holy Quran is considered by Muslims to be the Word of God as spoken in the Arabic language to the Prophet Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel. This Quran manuscript was owned and annotated by Tipu Sultan, whose library contained at least 44 Qurans.

After Tipu's death, most of his manuscripts (more than 2,000 volumes) were transported to the East India Company's library in London. In 1807, the East India Company's librarian, Charles Wilkins, presented this Quran as a gift to George III.

RCIN 1005001



The Taj Mahal

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1815

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

The East India Company took the cities of Agra and Delhi in 1803. Company engineers responsible for the upkeep and restoration of the cities' dilapidated buildings commissioned local artists to make architectural studies of the Mughal structures to use as working drawings. These were idealised views of what the buildings would have looked like when first constructed rather than how they appeared at the time they were painted. Such paintings soon became popular collectors' items.

RCIN 932750

The tomb of Afzal Khan in Agra

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1810

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

RCIN 932752

Akbar Shah II with his sons and grandson

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1820 – 30

Oil on canvas

The Mughal emperor Akbar Shah II (r. 1806–37) sent this European-style oil painting with a letter to George IV in 1830. George IV had died by the time it reached England and Viscount Combermere (Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in India) presented it to the new king, William IV, instead.

RCIN 406533

The 'Buland Darwaza' (Great Gate) of Fatehpur Sikri

Unnamed Mughal artist

c.1810

Ink and opaque watercolour

RCIN 932755

Elevation of one of the ‘gopurams’ of the temple at Srirangam

Unnamed South Indian artist (Tiruchirappalli)

c.1800

Inks and watercolour over graphite pencil on paper

The Sri Ranganathaswamy temple complex in Tamil Nadu is one of the most important Hindu pilgrimage sites in India. This pen-and-ink drawing is part of a series made by local artists in the service of Colin Mackenzie, the first Surveyor-General of the East India Company. It depicts one of the colossal painted brick ‘gopurams’ (entrance towers) of the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple.

RCIN 930166

Victorian Encounters

Gifts for the Queen Empress

British-Indian relations transformed dramatically during Queen Victoria's reign (r. 1837 – 1901). After Indian soldiers rebelled against the East India Company in 1857, the Company collapsed and all its territories in South Asia transferred to the British Crown.

This period also saw a boom in printing and the commercial book trade in India. Queen Victoria received books written about her and dedicated to her in several Indian languages. Some traditional elements of Indian manuscripts survived in printed books. Indian artists also took up photography and incorporated prints and photographs into their artistic practice.

“Unfortunately a dreadful day of violent showers & fearful wind ... My thoughts much taken up with the great event at Delhi, & in India generally, where I am being proclaimed Empress of India ...”

Queen Victoria’s Journal (Windsor Castle, 1 January 1877)

“Just before luncheon, I received in the Drawing room the Kumar Harman Singh & his wife ... She said she heard I spoke Hindustani, & addressed a few words to me, I saying some to her, with which she was delighted. She remarked that if only English Ladies in India would follow my example it would do so much good.”

Queen Victoria’s Journal (Balmoral Castle, 4 September 1891)

Letter from Azim Jah, Regent of the Nawab of the Carnatic, to Queen Victoria

South India (Madras/Chennai)

1837

Ink on gold-flecked paper with margins painted in gold

Silk bag embroidered with gold thread and beetle-wing cases with a wax seal

Correspondence from Indian rulers to British monarchs arrived in this format: an illuminated handwritten letter continued on a second gold-flecked page with an accompanying English translation, all wrapped and folded into a sealed silk pouch.

In his letter to the young Queen Victoria, Azim Jah offers his condolences on learning of the death of William IV and writes of his hope that 'Almighty God the Giver and Defender of the Kingdom of the Earth will make your accession happy and prosperous...'

RCIN 1005070

Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Imam Bakhsh Lahori

c.1842

Opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

This equestrian portrait was the first South Asian painting presented to Queen Victoria. It depicts Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1801 – 39), the founder of the Sikh Empire of the Punjab. He revived the splendour of the Mughal court at Lahore and projected himself as heir to the great Mughal emperors of the past. The artist Imam Bakhsh Lahori portrayed him as a warrior riding his favourite horse.

Ranjit Singh's son and successor, Maharaja Sher Singh, sent the painting in its unusual jewel-encrusted gold frame to Queen Victoria in 1843.

RCIN 452414



Maharaja Duleep Singh with Prince Arthur

Queen Victoria

1854

Watercolour on paper

Duleep Singh (r. 1843–1849) was the youngest son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (left) and the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire. He was exiled following the East India Company's annexation of the Punjab and moved to England in 1854. Soon after his arrival, Queen Victoria invited Duleep Singh to stay with the royal family at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. In her journal entry for 22 August 1854 she describes him as 'the truly amiable young Maharaja, who is so kind to the Children, playing so nicely with them'.

RCIN 980023.br

Boy

Imtiaz Dharker

There is a crowd standing behind you
but you are unaware, engrossed in the task
of tying a turban for a child from another country,
tucking in the curls to make it right, saying,
“This is what we wear, where I come from.
This is who we are.

Who we are.” We stand outside the line
of vision, millions of us, like the labourers
in paradise gardens who scurried underground
so they never crossed the path of the king.
If we have faces, they are not drawn here.
There is no paper large enough to find

or hold us. The pages of this sketchbook,
turned, rustle like the forest they come from
and speak another language,
knowing the surge of sap and leaves
breaking through to somewhere high
and blue.

At sixteen, you are kneeling
beside a royal child, being painted by a queen
with a silver and sable brush. Cobalt
washes over seas and continents, rinses
a country away behind your back,
separating you from who you are,
and what you could have been.

The 'Ishqnama' (Book of Love)

1849 – 50

Manuscript on paper, paintings in opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint

The 'Ishqnama' is a poetic autobiography of the last King of Awadh (Oude), Wajid Ali Shah (r. 1847–56), whom the East India Company deposed in 1856. The king was a connoisseur of music, and the painting at this opening shows him listening to a performance with his wives. He was among the first rulers in India to have his own photographic studio. The depictions of his wives in this volume were based on their photographs.

This manuscript is one of the few books to survive the storming of the Lucknow palaces in 1857. Sikh soldiers gave it to Sir John Lawrence (later

Governor-General and Viceroy of India), who presented it to Queen Victoria in 1859.

RCIN 1005035

The 'Siraj al-Tavarikh' (Lamp of History)

Pandit Ray Narayan

1875

Manuscript on paper

This manuscript, written in the author's own hand, is a history of the rulers of Awadh up to the British annexation in 1856. The author states that he compiled it from records in the Awadh royal archives in Lucknow and the archives of the East India Company.

RCIN 1005028

Taviz necklace and miniature Quran

c.1700

Enamelled gold locket with diamonds and rubies

Manuscript on paper with leather binding

This necklace is said to have been taken during the uprising in Delhi in 1857 from Zinat Mahal, wife of the last Mughal emperor. The side of the locket slides open so that the miniature Quran manuscript can be stored inside it.

RCINs 11512 and 929395

The 'Amirnama' (Book of the Amir)

Amir Ali Khan

Calcutta: Mazhar ul-Ajaib Press

1870

Lithograph and opaque watercolour with gold and silver paint on paper

The author of this text, Amir Ali Khan, was the legal and financial advisor to Wajid Ali Shah after the king's deposition. His book gives a favourable analysis of the British rise to power in India. Although printed, it mimics the traditional layout and decoration of a manuscript.

The author presented the book to Queen Victoria in 1871.

RCIN 1051398

‘Victoria Samrajyan’ (Victoria’s Kingdom)

Sourindro Mohun Tagore

Calcutta: I.C. Bose & Co.

1876

RCIN 1196822

‘Moharani Victoria’ (A Happy Reign)

Ambika Charan Gupta

Calcutta: Uchita-Vakta Press

1885

RCIN 1051387

Loyal Address

Kuvi Raj Murar

1877

Ink and opaque watercolour with metallic paints and gold leaf on paper

On 1 January 1877 the rulers of India gathered in Delhi to witness the formal announcement of Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of Empress of India. Among them was Jaswant Singh II, Maharaja of Jodhpur (r. 1873 –1895). He commissioned his Poet Laureate to compose these verses in praise of the Queen-Empress and Edward, Prince of Wales, which he sent to her to mark the occasion.

RCIN 1005088

The Queen's travels in Scotland, translated into Hindi

Benares (Varanasi): Medical Hall Press

1875

Printed book with hand-painted albumen prints in opaque watercolour with gold paint and gold leaf on paper

Ishwari Prasad Narayan Singh, Maharaja of Benares (r. 1835 – 89), made this Hindi translation of Queen Victoria's published diaries of the royal family's trips to Balmoral. The book opens with a painted composite photograph depicting the maharaja offering the book to Queen Victoria.

The Queen recorded the book's arrival in England in her journal: 'My book, translated into Hindustani, beautifully illuminated, containing a painting of me...receiving the present from the Maharajah of

Benares, bound in inlaid marble, is very curious & really beautiful.'

RCIN 1053105

The Maharaja of Benares, presents an album to Queen Victoria

Madho Prasad (?)

c.1889

Hand-coloured albumen print on paper

Painted photographs were particularly popular in nineteenth-century India, where monochrome imagery was uncommon. For this composite image, an artist working for Prahbu Narayan Singh, Maharaja of Benares (r. 1889 –1931), used the same photograph of Queen Victoria as in the frontispiece of the book presented to her by his predecessor a

decade earlier (right). The maharaja also stands in the same pose presenting an album of photographs.

RCIN 2907350

‘Indian Chiefs’

Bourne & Shepherd

c.1887

Album containing albumen prints

The Bourne & Shepherd photography studio was favoured by members of Indian Royalty and the British Raj. To British audiences, their black-and-white portraits were familiar in style but also corresponded to Western ideas of the ‘exotic’, especially if the Indian sitter was photographed wearing traditional clothing and jewellery.

RCIN 2107577

Hafiz Abdul Karim and Sheikh Muhammad Bakhsh

Unnamed photographer

1887 – 8

Albumen print hand-coloured with watercolour on
paper

Abdul Karim (left) and Muhammad Bakhsh (right) were two of the many Indian servants in Queen Victoria's Household. Their Indian-style uniform was embroidered with Queen Victoria's cypher 'VRI' (Victoria Regina Imperatrix), the 'imperatrix' of which was added after she became Queen-Empress of India in 1877.

RCIN 2914332

Queen Victoria's Hindustani diaries

Volume 6: November 1893 – March 1894

Manuscript on paper

Queen Victoria began her study of Hindustani (Hindi/Urdu) in 1887, the year of her Golden Jubilee. This is one of several 'Hindustani diaries' that she wrote during lessons with her servant, Abdul Karim. Initially employed to wait at table, Abdul Karim's role gradually expanded, and he became known as the Queen's 'munshi' (Indian secretary).

RCIN I129222



The munshi and his nephew at Balmoral,

c.1897

RCIN 2160269

[The first Gallery (Gallery B); the last section]

Encountering the Raj

Tradition and Modernity

During the period of British Crown rule in India (known as the British Raj, 1858–1947) members of the royal family made grand public tours of the subcontinent. By adopting South Asian courtly rituals of durbars and big game hunts they projected themselves as heirs to the Mughal emperors of the past. Carefully staged images of these imperial occasions circulated worldwide.

The early twentieth century saw the rise of the 'swaraj' (self-rule) movement in India. Many Modern painters responded to colonial politics by reviving earlier South Asian artistic traditions. Queen Mary acquired several works of art by Modern Indian painters including the final painting in this exhibition.

**King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales,
beside an elephant in Nepal (left)**

**King Edward VII, when Prince of Wales, in
Nepal (right)**

Bourne & Shepherd

1876

Albumen print on paper

‘Shikar’ (hunting) was a courtly tradition associated with Indian kingship that symbolised supremacy and control. The Prince of Wales spent several days big game hunting during his visit to India in 1875 – 6.

RCINs 2107183 and 2107182

Lord and Lady Curzon at the Delhi Durbar

Bourne & Shepherd

1903

Platinum print on paper

For King Edward VII's Coronation Durbar in 1903, the Viceroy Lord Curzon and his wife led the procession on a silver elephant howdah. It was the same howdah in which King Edward VII had ridden during his visit to India in 1875 – 6. For this print, the figures of Lord and Lady Curzon were merged with a separate photograph of the state elephant, Lutchman Pershad, and his retainers.

RCIN 2916586

Map of the railway system of India

1905

Lithograph and ink on paper

In 1905, the Prince and Princess of Wales, the future King George V (r. 1910 –36) and Queen Mary, embarked on their first tour of the Indian Subcontinent. This map was annotated to show the tour routes, destinations and halting places. The two weeks that the Prince of Wales was due to spend hunting in Nepal were cancelled due to a cholera outbreak at the hunting camp.

RCIN I129903.m

Photographs of Places of Interest in India: Delhi and Agra

Raja Deen Dayal

1891

24 autotype reproductions on paper

Raja Deen Dayal was the most celebrated Indian photographer of the nineteenth century. In 1897, his photography studio became the first in India to receive the Royal Warrant from Queen Victoria. This album was owned by King Edward VII, whom Deen Dayal had photographed during his 1875 – 6 tour of India when Prince of Wales.

RCIN 1022072

The Royal Tour of India, 1905 – 6

1906

Leather-bound album containing silver gelatin photographs

Queen Mary, when Princess of Wales, compiled and annotated this album of photographs of the 1905 – 6 royal tour of India. It includes signatures of people she and her husband met.

On 29 November 1905, they received visits from local rulers at Government House in Lahore, and after dinner watched a fireworks display in the Mughal Shalimar Gardens.

RCIN 2918701

Panoramic View of the Delhi Durbar, 12 December 1911

Aubrey Kellaway

1911

Gelatin silver prints

Following their initial visit in 1905 – 6 as Prince and Princess of Wales, King George V and Queen Mary returned to India as Emperor and Empress for a coronation tour in 1911–12. The climax of the visit was the Coronation Durbar in Delhi. These three photographs form a panorama of key moments during the ceremony held in Delhi on 12 December 1911. Read from left to right, King George V and Queen Mary first receive homage from the Indian rulers. They then appear under the Throne Pavilion for the official proclamation of their coronation as Emperor and Empress of India. In the third they are seen leaving the Durbar in an open carriage.

RCIN 2935183



Queen Mary's Album, volume 15

(17 November 1909 – 16 December 1911)

1912

Leather-bound album containing silver gelatin photographs

The day after the 1911 Delhi Durbar, the royal couple went to the Mughal Red Fort, as Queen Mary recorded in her diary: 'At 3 – we drove to the Fort where a garden party was held, after which we put on our robes & crowns & showed ourselves to thousands of people stood on a balcony where the Mughal emperors formerly showed themselves.'

RCIN 2303457

Queen Mary's Visiting Book, 1911-12

1912

Leather-bound album containing silver gelatin photographs

Thirteen young Indian princes were chosen to act as pages for the King-Emperor, Queen- Empress, Viceroy and Vicereine during the 1911 coronation ceremonies in Delhi. They each wore a brooch of George V's initials in diamonds (gifts from the King-Emperor) fastened to their turbans.

RCIN 2919083

The visit to India of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary

The Hon. John Fortescue

London: Macmillan and Co.

1912

This is Queen Mary's copy of the official narrative of her visit to India as Queen- Empress. She commissioned the special binding which incorporates plaques of 'meenakari' enamel given to her during the 1911 – 12 tour.

RCIN 1137166

The visit to India of Their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary

The Hon. John Fortescue

London: Macmillan and Co.

1912

This detailed narrative of the 1911 royal tour of India was written by The Hon. John Fortescue, a British military historian and the Royal Librarian at Windsor Castle. Like the 'Padshahnama', and other Mughal history texts, it describes all the daily public activities of the King-Emperor. This is King George V's copy.

RCIN 1054612

The Maharaja of Kolhapur's Album

Devare & Co. : Bombay

c.1911

Leather-bound album containing silver gelatin photographs

Thousands of memorial statues of members of the British royal family were erected across India in the early twentieth century. Sir Shahu Chhatrapati, Maharaja of Kolhapur, presented this album to King George V. It contains photographs of tribute busts of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII, Queen Alexandra, King George V, Queen Mary, and the Duke and Duchess of Connaught which he erected in the grounds of his palace.

RCIN 2702170

The Queen of Asoka

Abanindranath Tagore

1911

Watercolour with gold and silver paints over graphite pencil on paper

The artist Abanindranath Tagore (1871 – 1951) pioneered the Bengal School, the first nationalist art movement in India. His works draw upon Indian history and earlier painting traditions in direct resistance to the Western academic styles taught in India at the time. A note in his hand on the back of the painting explains the subject matter: “King Asoka was extremely fond of The Bodhi Tree. His queen Tissarakshita became jealous of the sacred tree and in a fit of anger destroys it.”

Queen Mary admired this painting in an exhibition of the Indian Society of Oriental Art in Calcutta in 1911, shortly after the Delhi Durbar. Lady Hardinge, the Vicereine, presented it to her as a gift before her

departure. Queen Mary later lent the work to Indian Society of Oriental Art's exhibition in Paris in 1914, the first exhibition of Indian Modern Art in Europe.

RCIN 452415

Story

Imtiaz Dharker

Who is telling this story? The one
who gives the gift, or the one who takes?

Ask the rose garden
to abandon its symmetry
and lift off the shining page
as if it were a bird

arriving from another country,
its plumage resplendent.

Tell the wind to send rumours
of a language you begin to understand,
written in a script that looks
like your heart beating.

Reorient the built form to catch
sunlight at a different angle,
turn the moon upside down
to be cupped in another palm.

Let your hands slide off parchment
to touch human skin,
a face you will look into
and love for its difference.



