Jnanapravaha

JNANAPRAVAHA MUMBAI

QUARTERLY

JANUARY - MARCH 2020

CONTENTS

Director's Note

This quarter exemplifies our continuous efforts to address current research, especially in the fields of Indian Aesthetics, Buddhist Aesthetics and Critical Theory. Alongside these programmes was our *Yoga* & *Tantra* certificate course, which wrapped up with two extraordinary performance scholars taking the audience through the poetic realms of Kabir and the Varkaris, demonstrating their underpinnings to *yogic* and *tantric* worldviews. This Quarterly carries not only a detailed report by the Course Director but also an attendee testimonial, both of which speak volumes on the quality and cogency of each of the twenty-five sessions.

A pioneering series of Critical Theory seminars ensued wherein a range of theoretical approaches to the experience of art was examined. It discussed how various histories of art and aesthetic theories have activated and made meaningful visual art, giving participants valuable tools to understand the applicability of abstract theories.

Gandhara was a focus once again: last year, we had looked at the region and monastic establishments in particular; this time we centred around the confluence of several cultures that constitute the objects found in the greater Gandharan area.

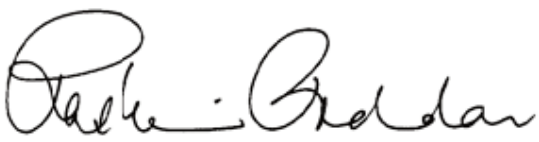
South Asian religious architecture ranges from quintessential *stupas* to temples, material remains of which span over 2,000 years. The sheer typologies are encyclopaedic, requiring valiant scholarly efforts to compress their vast time, space and meaning in weeklong seminars. Two such breath-taking series addressed temples and texts, and early Buddhist *stupas* of the subcontinent to a full house.

As we prepare to wish this year adieu, we welcome the new with a path-breaking course on the Safavids, where three internationally-renowned scholars will address the audience on the intricacies of their histories, art and architecture. In early February 2020, we start a freshly minted three-month-long certificate course titled Aesthetics, Criticism and Theory, which will provide students with a rigorous introduction to art history, criticism, aesthetics, critical theory, and contemporary art practice. In-depth seminars at the institute will be complemented by film screenings, studio, gallery and museum visits, ensuring a thorough engagement with a breadth of artistic praxes and institutions of the art world.

March 2020 witnesses the launch of an additional academic track, this time on South Asian Painting, which makes its way through a constellation of exquisite works, generally termed 'miniature', produced in northern India from the 16th century onwards. The course will introduce essential terms and key concepts, and provide an overview of the methods employed by analysing iconic examples of manuscripts, series, and stand-alone works on paper. Do visit our website www.jp-india.org for details.

Season's greetings and all our wishes for a happy new year. Looking forward to your continuing support and perhaps a visit to our institute.

With my warmest wishes,



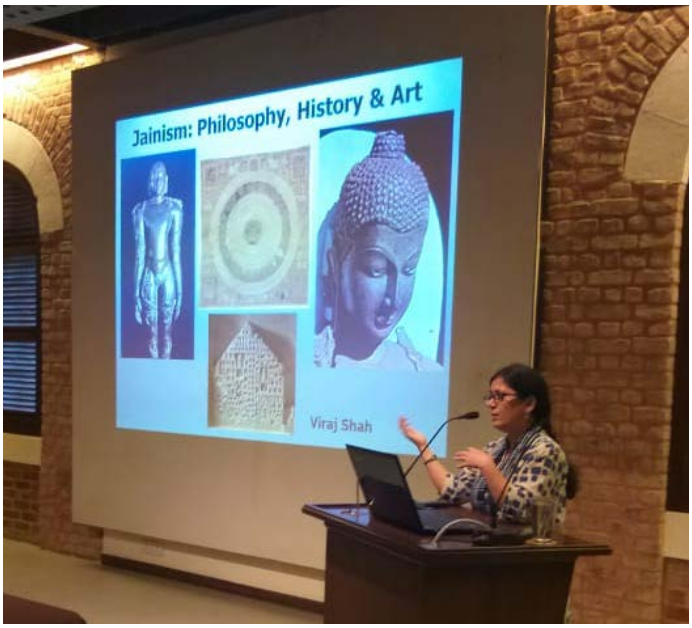
Rashmi Poddar PhD.
Director

AESTHETICS

A Folio from the Manuscript of Kalpasutra and Kalakacarya Katha: Jaina Tirthankara Enshrined (upper panel), Celestial Dancers (lower panel). c.1475

JPM's Aesthetics offerings include:
(1) an academic year-long Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate course in Indian Aesthetics, as well as ongoing public seminars and lectures in the field; (2) a quarterly Postgraduate Certificate course in Yoga and Tantra, as well as ongoing public seminars and lectures in the field; (3) a quarterly Postgraduate Certificate course in Southeast Asian Art and Architecture, as well as ongoing public seminars and lectures in the field; (4) a fortnight of public seminars and lectures in Islamic Aesthetics; (5) an ongoing series of public seminars in Buddhist Aesthetics; (6) an ongoing series of public seminars in South Asian Painting; and (7) occasional academic conferences and workshops in these fields.

Indian Aesthetics

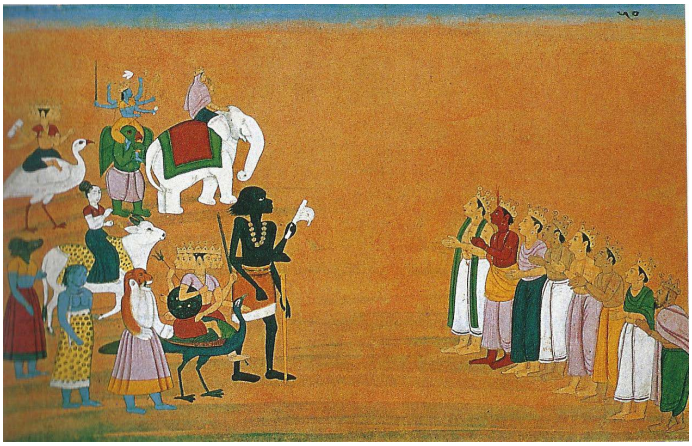


Dr. Viraj Shah speaks during 'Jainism: Philosophy and Art'

In the last quarter of 2019, lectures within the Indian Aesthetics course covered a variety of topics, including an exploration of Jain philosophy, iconography, architecture and art by Dr. Viraj Shah and Kamalika Bose. Dr. Shah presented her original research on the Jain caves of the Western Deccan, and explored the myths, legends and iconography of the Jain *tirthankaras*, exemplars of *vira rasa* or heroism in their mastery over the senses. The sole emphasis on enlightenment and liberation in Jainism gradually gave way to an inclusion of *tantric* elements, and the worship of folk deities and popular heroes who could provide material boons to the laity. *Shanta rasa*, related closely to tranquility and detachment, is also apparent in the images of *jinas*.

Kamalika Bose drew on her research at Jain sites of worship in Bengal and Ahmedabad, showing the effect of social, political and economic conditions

on medieval and early-modern architectural styles, manner of worship, and locations of Jain temples from the 18th century CE onwards. Such temples were products of the limitations and exigencies of the time in which they were built. The scholar also presented hybrid typologies of worship in Bengal, such as the home shrine or *thakur dalan*, and other sites of Hindu worship. The unique brick and terracotta temples of the area are unrelated to both the Northern (*Nagara*) and Southern (*Dravida*) styles of temples, instead mimicking the thatched hut styles of homes in Bengal. Variations of several types show the acculturation of architecture, a living entity which is a product of both time and place. Kamalika Bose's lectures on architecture connected back to the previous lecture on the evolution and morphology of the Hindu temple, which was delivered by Dr. Pushkar Sohoni.



The gods praise Devi and her shaktis upon the conclusion of the final battle in the Devi Mahatmya

Dr. Rashmi Poddar's lectures on *Devi* and *Shakti* introduced students to the complex feminine cosmic principle which is both motherly and fierce, combining *vatsalya rasa* and *raudra rasa*. First elucidated in the *Devi Mahatmya* of the 5th – 6th centuries CE, it is likely to have had roots in aural tradition and multiple early forms. *Mahadevi* or the Great Goddess as well as *Shakti* in the *Devi Mahatmya* were not consorts of male gods, making this a non-patriarchal, egalitarian approach to the feminine. The goddess was both protective and dangerous, associated with blood sacrifice, and worshipped by warriors and common people. *Shakti* is the kinetic principle that animates various gods including *Shiva*. Dr. Poddar's next session elucidated *tantra*, the experiential method which is anti-ascetic and anti-speculative. *Tantra* evolved from traditional religion, but became radically different, using the body, offering tools to expand the practitioner's consciousness, and affirming the senses under the guidance of a *guru*. *Tantra* continues to be perceived as occult, esoteric and forbidden.

Dr. Kirit Mankodi's exposition of *Shiva* and *Vishnu* showed how obscure forms evolved into these inclusive Hindu deities worshipped by *bhaktas*. *Vishnu*, the sustainer, was originally one of the *Adityas* or *Vedic* solar gods, and relatively unimportant. Less complex than *Shiva*, *Vishnu's* associations with kingship, victory and *avatara* mythology expanded his representations and legends substantially, resulting in theriomorphic, anthropomorphic and therio-anthropomorphic forms, abundant in post-*Vedic* texts and temples across the subcontinent. *Vedic* and tribal influences combine in *Shiva's* aniconic *linga* form and his iconic forms. Dr. Mankodi's elucidation of *Surya* connected him to *Vishnu* and to *Shiva* in temples such as the one at Modhera where both forms were probably present. A leading iconographer, Dr. Mankodi displayed lesser known and early images, and explored the *ashtadikpalas* (directional gods) generally represented in the outer ambit of temples. Dr. Alka Hingorani presented a perceptive analysis illustrated with rich images, elaborating on the sculptural and architectural programme at Elephanta.

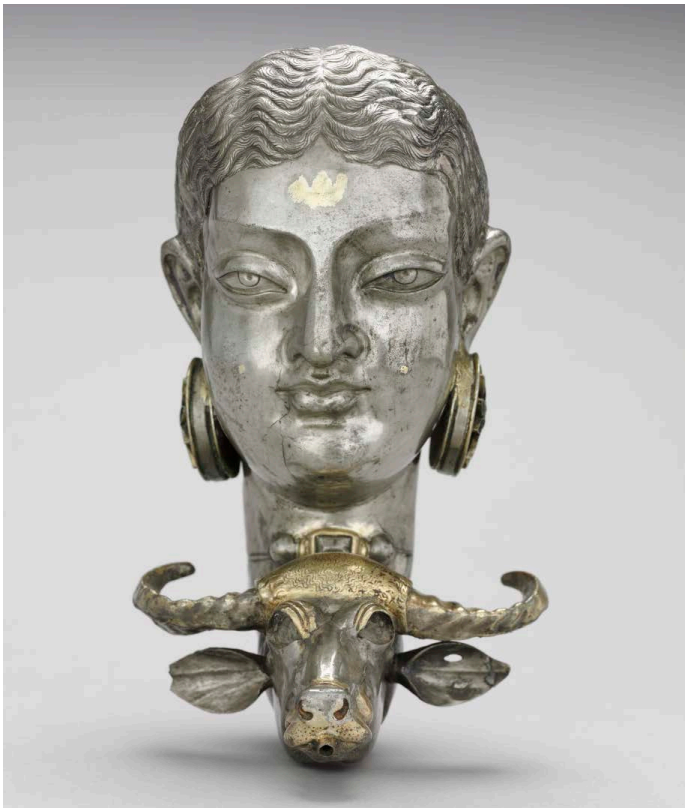
Dr. Alka Hingorani speaks during 'Elephanta'

The sophisticated, delicate and innovative art, ornamentation and architecture of the subcontinent's Islamic courts were presented by Smita Dalvi. Introducing the philosophy and art forms of the Central-Asian Islamic world, she explained their connections to the art of the Sultanate and Mughal courts in the subcontinent. The resultant refined and syncretic philosophy, art and architecture enriched the Indic tradition. The engagement with various facets such as art, architecture, text, sculpture and icons, along with an insight into their connections with philosophy and art history illuminated the students' understanding. - ***J.K.***

PAST PROGRAMMES

Gandhara by Design

November 22nd & 23rd, 2019, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Naman P. Ahuja (Curator of Indian art, Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University and Co-Editor of Marg Publications)



Durga on Mahishasura in the form of a silver rhyton for ritual use; probably Turkoshahi, 7th century CE, © Cleveland Museum of Art

Nomads from Central Asia, South Asian Buddhists and Hindus, Hellenistic communities from Greece, as well as Egyptians, Syrians and Lebanese intermingled in Gandhara due to migration, forming its rich and unique culture. Their varied cultural inputs are visible in the material remains used by Prof. Naman P. Ahuja to uncover Gandhara's often misunderstood history. A staged photograph taken by Alexander Caddy in the 1890s at Loriyan Tangai shows a large group of rediscovered Gandharan statues before they were widely dispersed to museums in Taxila, Calcutta, London and Lahore. Today, no sculptures are found *in situ*, having been displaced by their 'migration' to different nations. The scholar brought in questions of multiple identities in relation to migration, pointing out that cosmopolitanism was the norm in Gandhara for centuries. Trade and the promise of prosperity in this presently conflict-ridden region attracted migrants from all over the world, creating 'a confluence of cultures', according to the scholar.

The archaeologically rich region of Gandhara was a crucible of history and the home of the Zoroastrian and Vedic cultures, neither of which included image worship. Consequently, they did not generate much in the form of material remains. Most visible in the thousands of stone, stucco and silver images, and architectural objects is the Hellenistic impact which followed Alexander's invasion, and Mahayana Buddhist culture which spread from North India in the Kushan period, *en route* to China, Korea and Japan. For instance, the Bimaran reliquary or casket exhibits one of the oldest known images of the Buddha, giving rise to the old debate that Gandhara was the place of origin of such images. What has often been seen as Hellenistic 'naturalism' in Gandharan images was termed as dramatic 'hyper-realism' by the scholar. This can be seen in the sculpture of a starving Buddha which displays a greater number of ribs than biologically possible.

The 5th century saw the construction of Hindu temples in the region of Bannu, and by the 7th century, also in Central Afghanistan. The speaker argued that it is possible to isolate the different cultural sources that resulted in particular forms, and that this composite iconography was deliberately created as migrating people intermingled with the settled population of the region. For instance, an image of Hariti from Yusufzai depicts her various children as representatives of different affiliations, enabling migrants from several regions to see in her the mother goddess of their own culture and religion. Wrestlers' weights with images of Krishna and Herakles, both emblematic of strength but from different cultures, have been found. Objects created due to movements of communities and their knowledge systems lent themselves to interpretations that evolved with changing contexts.

The larger archaeological picture shows objects and motifs that were highly valued, created in styles and with techniques that came from disparate parts of the world, which enabled theirs dating. Numismatics is especially significant. Indo-Greek and Kushan coins have been uncovered all along the Himalayan foothills for three hundred years, each with images of the Greek gods Herakles, Zeus, Poseidon or Dionysus on one face, and an image of the king on the other. The Greek diaspora seems to have continued to follow tradition and use such imagery, in a possible attempt to retain their precious culture, even after it fell out of use in Greece. Some coins show Zoroastrian or Vedic rites or deities on one side and the Kushan emperor, identified by an inscription, on the other. The Zoroastrian Veshu and the Brahmanical Shiva

Dr. Naman Ahuja speaks during 'Gandhara by Design'

are similar in iconography; such commonality poses a barrier to the extrapolation of the history of the two religions. A mixing of the vocabulary of design makes it difficult to ascertain the place of origin of several objects. Sacred imagery has been found on objects of all types which were used for various purposes, both sacred and secular.

Certain objects belonging to the Oxus civilisation (mature phase: 2300-1700 BCE) reveal that its greater spread included Gandhara. It is complicated to interpret the relationship of this civilisation with local culture and the partly contemporary Indus Valley Civilisation from archaeological remains, linguistic evidence and DNA analyses because it evolved over long and continuous processes. It seems that Gandhara was once the centre, with outlier regions such as Central India and Teheran at its periphery. During the Sassanian and Gupta periods, the peripheral regions became the new centres and Gandhara, which had been built on nomadism, came to occupy the periphery. The language of conquerors became the one through which local identities were consciously articulated through processes that are better understood due to the discipline of postcolonial studies. ***- J.K.***

Temples and Texts

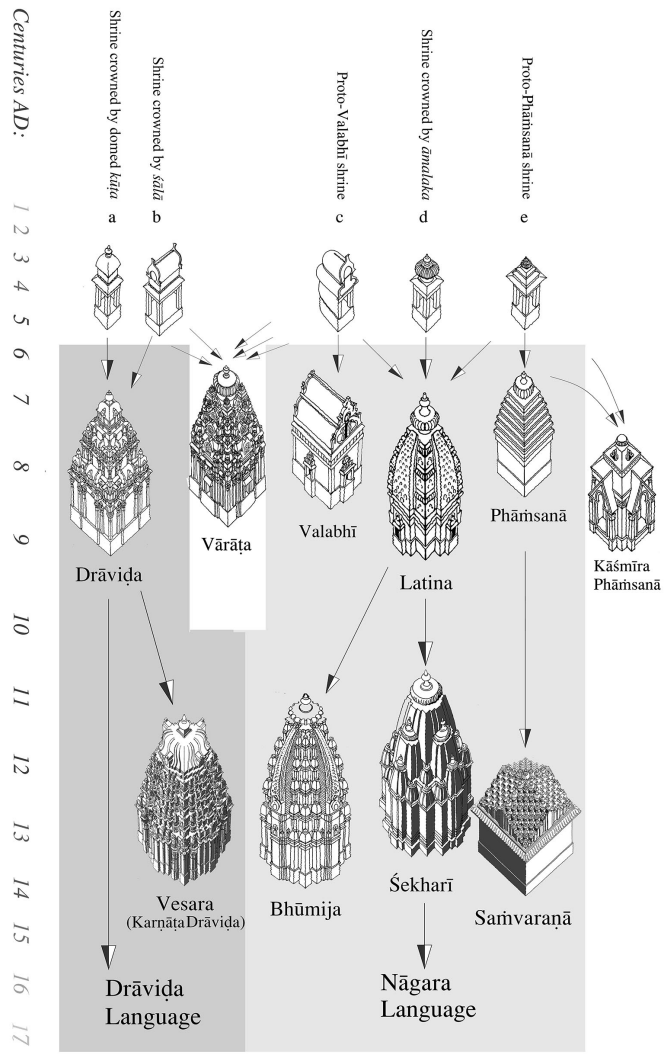
November 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th & 29th, 2019, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Adam Hardy (Emeritus Professor of Asian Architecture at Cardiff University)

Adam Hardy's theory states that the temple is composed of aediculae which have been combined, enlarged, staggered and given projections to invoke a dynamic image of an expanding-dissolving cosmos. The theory also states that the aediculae simply convey to mortals a heavenly palace on earth, or a likeness of a mountain where gods reside. After reading his theory, one cannot view a temple in the same way again. Some aspects of his work, such as the evolutionary view of how temple design progressed, have their critics, but it is difficult not to be convinced and marvel at the observations and insights of a passionate scholar who has deeply studied and completely internalised the architectural scheme of over 450 temples, which span a millennium and are spread across the entire subcontinent.

The five-day series of lectures, delivered in two parts each day, was replete with nuanced points on temple designs, similarities and differences between modes, and observations of how vestiges of the theory are still in practice. It was difficult enough to comprehend it all, let alone attempt to summarise it for our readers.

Dr. Hardy (henceforth referred to as 'AH') has prepared a wonderful chart, produced here with his permission, which beautifully illustrates the idea of types, and the formal logic of the *Nagara* and *Dravida* traditions, which he suggests are like a language. By using different shrine types, such as aediculae, we

get different modes and styles that were created by temple builders.



Day 1, Part 1: Indian Temples and their Typological Origins
Part 2: *Latina* Temples: Measure, Proportion and the Myth of the *Vastumandala*

Indian temples can be classified into several types, which AH was quick to clarify is not an Orientalist imposition, but goes to the heart of how temples have been conceived from their earliest wooden counterparts. The manner in which they have been built – the ribbed wooden roofs of *chaitya grihas*, the mouldings, and sculptural adornment – is reminiscent of what would have been made in wood.

Moreover, the aediculae have their prototypes in reliefs and fragments from the 2nd century BCE to the centuries CE, in Buddhist Gandhara, Ajanta and Mathura, which would suggest that there was an Indic idea of an anthropomorphic god and his abode. It is these ideas that are expressed in the architectural language of *Nagara* and *Dravida*, using aediculae as a 'kit of parts'. When these are combined with mouldings, *talas* and sculpture, we get the *Latina*, *Valabhi* and other temple forms – which he calls 'modes'.

The first lecture illustrated the different aedicule types. These are depicted on the top of the chart. The Y-axis depicts time and the X-axis shows the geographical distribution of temple modes from the South to the North. In this chart, we see that the *Dravida* temple form remains reasonably constant from the 6th century CE onwards, whereas the *Nagara* form not only had many different modes, such as the *Latina*, *Valabhi*, *Shekhari and Phamsana*, but was also the inspiration for the *Bhumija*, which was invented around the 11th century CE.

That is not to say that the *Dravida* temples were unchanged for centuries. They added more *talas*, had different capstones, and developed a more complicated sculptural scheme, but the basic form remained more or less the same, compared to the *Nagara* temple modes in the North, Deccan and East.

The proto-*Valabhi* ('c' in the chart), an apsidal two-level *chaitya* hall with its horseshoe arch, is etymologically related to the ribbed wooden roofs found in Karle. Images of it appear in many places, including Cave 17 at Ajanta, where it is shown below a pitched roof, exhibiting an early idea of a heavenly palace. A single-roofed *Valabhi* form is also seen, as in the Lomas Rishi cave in Bihar.

The *kuta* ('a' in the chart) is another common thatched-roof pavilion with a domed cornice shrine. Sculptures and reliefs from Gandhara have many such examples, with the *Buddha* seated in such a shrine, while the courtyard in Takht-i-Bahi has alternating *kuta* and *Valabhi* shrines surrounding the *stupa*.

The shrine crowned by an *amalaka* ('d' in the chart) is another 'type', of which the Sangameshwar at Mahakuta is an example. This type also appears in a relief in Cave 20 at Ajanta. Both, the Dashavatara Gupta temple in Deogarh and a fragment from Mathura have reliefs of a *Valabhi* type with *amalaka*s adorning the corners. It was fascinating to learn that the *Valabhi* temples are mostly rectangular and therefore built for goddesses.

AH demonstrated that if you construct a *shikhar* by combining a two-storeyed *amalaka* shrine with a *Valabhi* aedicule along the cardinal axis and *amalaka*s at the corner, and then give it a curvature so as to make the band of *gavaksha* forms continuous, you get the classic *Latina* type of *Nagara* temple.

The proto-*Phamsana*, meaning 'wedge-shaped' is very similar to the *amalaka* shrine, except that it has 'piled-up eaves'. It is shown in a relief in Cave 10 at Ellora

and also Cave 3 at Aurangabad.

The *shala* aedicule ('b' in the chart) is a barrel-vaulted roof with a *chaitya* arch at both ends. Reliefs in Cave 1 and 19 at Ajanta and Cave 3 at Badami show early examples of it.

AH showed a picture of the *Ghantasala* relief from the Musee Guimet in Paris, in which there is a multi-storeyed palace with an octagonal dome. Projecting from each facet of the dome is a *shala*, which he termed the '*panjara'* type (not in the chart).

The lecture ended with a picture of a recently discovered proto-*Dravida* temple in Warangal, the Devunigutta. The temple has a *kuta* dome but no *tala*s nor recesses, and illustrates an interesting contrast between a prototype and the later *Dravida* grandeur.

From its heartland in Magadh and Madhya Desa, the *Latina* mode spread to the Deccan and Bengal, Orissa and even Burma. We saw images of the amazingly complex combinations of the *Valabhi* arch to create *gavaksha* patterns, and how projections increase to *pancharatha* and *saptaratha* (for example, at Madikheda in MP).

The rituals and texts frequently mention the *vastu purush mandala (vpm)* as being central to temple architecture. Stella Kramrisch had proposed that the *vpm* was important to the selection of a site, but not necessarily to the temple plan. Her PhD student William Meister concluded that 8x8 grids work well for plans. However, AH demonstrated with the help of digital scans that a 10x10 grid works better.

Dr. Adam Hardy speaks during 'Temples and Texts'

Day 2, Part 1: The Medieval Blossoming of the *Nagara* Tradition
Part 2: Evolving Temples in Evolving Texts

In experiments with the *Latina* mode, architects started embedding mini *Latina shikharas* to the main one. Along the axis, we get a cascade of *kuta stambhas*, a composite aedicule which has a pillar crowned by a *Latina* shrine. By the 11th century CE, the mode was no longer recognisable as *Latina* and was called *Shekhari*.

Examples of *Shekhari* abound: the Jagat temple in Rajasthan, Kekind in Kutch and its crowning achievement, the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho. AH emphasised that *Shekhari* was the outcome of a formal logic in which aediculae are combined to artistically show emanation and dissolution, an idea that is fundamental to Indic philosophical conceptions of the universe.

A video prepared for an exhibition in Shanghai provided an indescribably graphic view of how *gavakshas* split and stagger, of how projections and angles enlarge the temple while not only making it look like a mountain in which the gods live, but also to express how one becomes many and many dissolve into one.

The *Samarangana Sutradhara (SSD)* is not just an architectural treatise but was meant to be a compendium of all knowledge, ascribed to Raja Bhoja, the polymath ruler of Malwa in the 10th century CE. The text is a mixture of 'philosophy, myth and ritual' from different regions. It has instructions on how cities, palaces, houses and stables should be built, and also has chapters on temple architecture, of which the chapter on *Bhumija* temples is the most important.

The other significant texts were the *Aparajitaprachha* (*APP*), which focussed on temples in the West and was written in the 12th century CE; the *Prasada Mandana* from Rajasthan, which was written in the 15th century CE, and the *Shilpa Ratnakara*, 1939, written by PK Acharya under the patronage of the Gaekwad rulers of Baroda.

These texts are extremely difficult to comprehend because of various reasons: they do not use terms uniformly, the practice tends to be ahead of the texts, they seem to be written by temple priests who are not completely familiar with architecture, and they also seem more concerned with temple form and ritual rather than serving as an instructional manual for builders.

Nevertheless, the *SSD* can be very specific at times, prescribing the size of the *karna* and *vedibandha*, and stating, for example, that five *andakas* (*amalaka*-topped *kutas*) should emerge from the *karna kuta*. In Chapter 56, a *Kesari* form of temple is described starting with five *andakas* to which four more are sequentially added at a time. Each temple has a different name, and are

completed after 25 series of four *andakas* have been added. The resulting 101-*andaka* temple is called '*Meru*'. This is another example of how formal logic is inherent in temple design, and only technological capabilities limit how far it can be stretched.

The session ended with AH working through two examples of the instructions given in texts: The *Kesari* from the *SSD* and the *Indranil* from the *APP*. Making sense of it required not only an understanding of some terms but also the presumption of what a practitioner might know. For example, an excerpt from one of the texts states that the initial piece of land is divided into 10 *bhagas*, "the *garbha*…should be in its middle part, in two *bhagas*…the *jhangas* should be four *bhagas* high…", and just when you conclude that '*bhaga*' refers to one part, you are told to fit the "…*padmasirsa* and *griva* in one *amsa*-and-a-half"! This is an excellent demonstration of the difficulty presented by texts, a puzzle only AH could have pieced together.

Day 3, Part 1: *Dravida* Temples: The Language of Aediculae and the Palette of Mouldings
Part 2: South-Indian Texts: *Manasara*, *Mayamata* and Others

The main aediculae in *Dravida* temples are the *kuta* and *shala* ('a' and 'b' in the chart). The idea of temples being a kit of aedicular parts is a lot clearer in such temples. In the Upper Shivalaya at Badami, the structure has a *k-s-k* (*kuta-shala-kuta*) combination that carries forth to the upper floor as well. Moreover, the aediculae are not mere surface decoration but are embedded into the structure as they pyramid up in *talas* (tiers). *Dravida* temples usually end with four *talas*, but during the Chola period, they reach an incredible 14 *talas*.

It is interesting to note that the *Dravida* tradition remains much truer to type until the 17th century CE. The temples become larger and more decorative, but the basic form and type remains the same albeit with more projections, more *talas* and different shapes of capstones.

The main *Dravida* texts, the *Manasara* and *Mayamata*, use the terms '*Nagara*', '*Dravida*' and '*Vesara*' to refer to the capstone as square, circular or polygonal respectively, and not in the contemporary sense. Also, unlike their northern counterparts, Southern texts also contain lots of detail on mouldings, along with a large number of illustrations.

The 11th century CE sees the emergence of the *Vesara* mode. '*Vesara*' means 'hybrid' or 'mule', and has controversially been used as a pejorative term in academic literature, to describe temples that are a mixture of the *Dravida* and *Nagara* forms. Interestingly, AH believes that it is actually a different mode and that it was a conscious choice.

According to AH, the *Vesara* form is like the *Nagara* but "the language is entirely *Dravida*". This mode appears most frequently in Karnataka where the square *Dravida* plan is transformed by turning two squares into a stellate floor plan, with projections carried along the *talas* to the dome. It expresses an emanatory form with a centrifugal force, with an emphasis on the *panjara*. An important feature is the change made to the *bhadra* with interpenetrating *shala*s and diagonal *nasis*. The "*makara* gets emphasised, and the *vyalas* virtually disappear…the centre bulges out…". The Malikarjuna temple at Sudi and the Hoysala temples are part of this tradition. At Pattadakal, the mouldings are simple and give way to multiple ornate banded plinths at Hoysaleswara, in Halebidu.

The session ended with a fascinating account of a Hoysala temple that AH has been commissioned to build in Kolar district. Belur was the inspiration for the client. They wanted a star-shaped *viman*, with *dashavataras* and the 24 names of *Vishnu* on the exterior. The client's requirement eventually included

Dr. Adam Hardy speaks during 'Temples and Texts'

an open *rangamandapa* and even a *gopuram*! The *sthapati* had the last word on where east lies, even though it had been measured precisely by marking where the sun rises at dawn on Spring equinox. To top it all, one *bhaga* was the measurement of the *sthapati's* fathers' hand! If this wasn't chaotic enough, the architect was given very little notice to finalise the plan because the Maharaja of Mysore had agreed to grace the *bhumi* puja. AH, ever the professional, delivered on time, and produced a breathtakingly beautiful plan for the Shree Kalyana Venkateshwara temple.

Day 4, Part 1: *Varata* Temples: The Lost Tradition
Part 2: Kashmiri Temples and the *Vishnudhamottara-purana*

The *Varata* mode, which etymologically stems from *Vavata* or the Vidharba region, is placed between the *Dravida* and *Latina* traditions, and originated around the 6th century CE. This mode incorporates all the shrine aedicule types (including what would be known later as *Dravida* elements), stacked pyramidically and crowned by an *amalaka*. They seem to belong to a period when the *Nagara* and *Dravida* traditions were not clearly formed.

This mode spread across Central India from the Vakataka heartland of Ramtek and Ajanta to Dakshina Kosala (Chhattisgarh). The stone temples of Jitani, Malhar, and others in the region are not so well known, but are impressive in size and have some beautiful sculptures.

The mound at Mansar in Madhya Pradesh does not look like a palace suitable for living, and AH's hypothesis is that it may mirror *puranic* ideas of the divine being reached by passing through a heavenly courtyard in which a hierarchy of gods are seated. Alternatively, it could be a palace where feudatories gathered, as suggested by Ronald Inden.

There is so little left of the temples in Kashmir that we have to rely on a small two-storeyed temple at Pandrethan, ascribed to Lalitaditya in the 8th century CE, near Srinagar; and remnants of Martand and Avantipur. The aedicule consists of classical elements like a pediment and a trefoil arch, and its inspiration in relief can be seen in a *Buddha* shrine from Gandhara, which even has a Corinthian pillar.

The shrine has a cruciform plan, or *sarvotabhadra*, pitched roofs with *Phamsana*-like tiers, and an emanating aedicular form, which probably gets its philosophical underpinnings from the *Shaiva Sidhhanta* and *Vaishnava Pancharatra* sects. AH calls this mode the *Kashmiri Phamsana*, and it is the inspiration for temples in Himachal (Bajoura) and Riba in Spiti. It was interesting to see images of their prototypes in carved wooden gables at Sumtek in Ladakh and Udaipur in Lahaul.

Day 5, Part 1: Bhojpur, the *Bhumija* and the *Samaranganasutradhara*
Part 2: *Bhumija* Temples and the Principle of *Parivartana*

AH has done remarkable work at Bhojpur and nearby Ashapuri. He gave a detailed account of the research and inferences from the architectural drawings found on the rocks at Bhojpur, which he has published in *Theory and Practice of Temple Architecture in Medieval India: Bhoja's Samaranganasutradhara and the Bhojpur Line Drawings*.

The line drawings, on rock, near the Bhojpur temple, are the most significant architectural drawings to have survived from antiquity. Near the existing temple, which AH believes was never completed, is the plan of a *Bhumija shikhar*. According to his calculations, had the temple been built, it would have been about 90 metres high, making it the highest Hindu temple in the world.

Ashapuri is also the cradle of the *Bhumija* mode, where it was invented around the 11th century CE. Chapter 65 of the *SSD* describes the *Bhumija* in detail, with mathematical calculations. Although it is primarily *Nagara*, it has radiating *kuta stambhas*, arranged in tiers, or *bhumi*s, with *karna kutas* and mouldings. However, unlike the *Shekhari*, which evolved from the *Latina* form, the *Bhumija* mode was more or less invented. Most *Bhumija* temples are *Shiva* temples, and it is possible that its shape was inspired by a *linga*. Udayeshwar in Madhya Pradesh is a good example of an orthogonal plan, while Belur is an example of a stellate *Bhumija* temple.

The talk ended with an explanation of *parivartana*, which is described in the *SSD* as a method of using radial measurements to create orthogonal and stellate plans. It seems like sacred geometry in which a large circle is drawn, a fraction of which is used as a radius to draw smaller circles on the circumference to get a discrete number of circles on it.

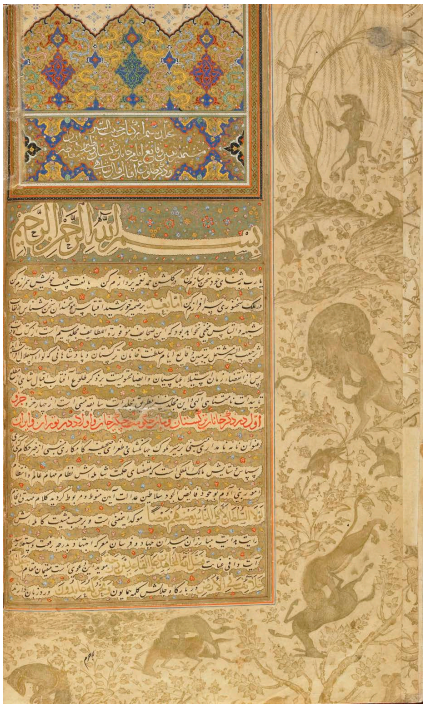
It was a visual treat to see images of different modes of temples across different periods and geographies of the subcontinent, to be guided through the nuances of whether they belong to the *Nagara* or *Dravida* traditions, and trace how they evolved and what features identify them as belonging to one mode or the other. ***- Ar.S.***

Islamic Aesthetics

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

Narrating the Safavid Past: Religion and Society in Three Iranian Cities

January 6th, 7th & 8th, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Sholeh A. Quinn (Associate Professor of History at the University of California, Merced)



Habib al-siyar (Beloved of virtues) by Muhammad Khwandamir (died ca. 1533-37) ca.1590-1600

This seminar presents a historical overview of three phases of Safavid history in the cities of Tabriz, Qazvin, and Isfahan, associated with Shah Isma'il, Shah Tahmasb, and Shah 'Abbas, respectively. The presentations will focus on religious and social developments in the 16th-17th centuries, and include the role of *ghulams*, Armenians, Georgians, and other religious and social communities. Emphasis will be placed on historical chronicles, one of the most important categories of primary sources for the Safavid period.

Day 1 : Tabriz and Shah Isma'il: The Sufi Who Became King

Day 2 : Qazvin and Shah Tahmasb: The Safavid State Takes Shape

Day 3 : Isfahan and Shah 'Abbas: Narrating Half the World

Architecture of Persuasion: Safavid cities in the 16th and 17th centuries

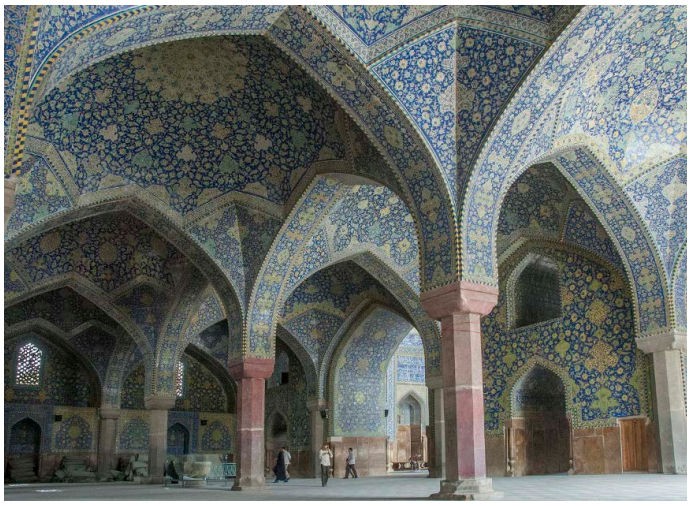
January 9th, 10th & 11th, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Sussan Babaie (Reader in Islamic and Persian arts at The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

These lectures explore the making of a newly configured Shi'i empire through architectural campaigns in capital cities of Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan, and the pilgrimage cities of Ardabil and Mashhad. Urban development projects, initiated by royal decree or by individual investments of the new elites—viziers, physicians, Perso-Indian and Armenian merchants; the role of Shi'ism in developing imperial legitimacy for Friday prayer and thus for congregational mosques; Shi'i shrine complexes; royal palaces, gardens, and mansions of the elite; these topics offer views into the social and aesthetic dimensions of Safavid architecture.

Day 1 : Tabriz and Ardabil: Inherited Traditions and Invented Empire

Day 2 : Qazvin: A New Beginning Under Shah Tahmasb

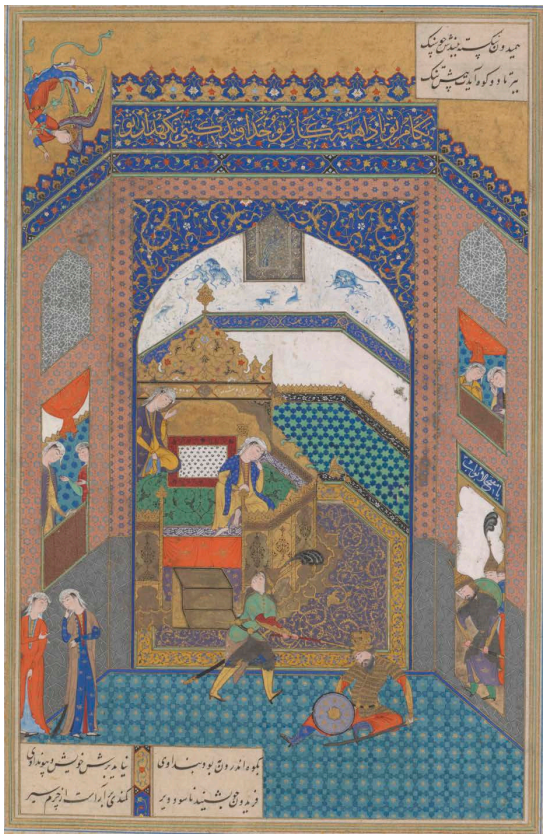
Day 3 : Isfahan: The Jewel in the Safavid Crown



Isfahan, Masjid-i Shah (currently known as the Imam Mosque), view into the prayer hall, 1611-1638. (Photo credit Daniel C. Waugh)

Between Word and Image: Safavid Visual Culture in the 16th and 17th century

January 13th, 14th & 15th, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Massumeh Farhad (Associate Curator of Islamic Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery)



Feridun Strikes Zahhak with the Ox-Headed Mace. Folio from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) Iran, Tabriz, ca. 1525. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Freer Gallery of Art F1996.2

The lectures will examine Safavid visual culture, in particular the arts of book in Tabriz, Qazvin, Isfahan, and Mashhad during the 16th and 17th centuries. They will focus on some of the outstanding illustrated literary texts, illuminated Qur'ans, and albums (murqqa') as well as related objects. The aim is to offer an overview of Safavid artistic production and its patronage, and place it in a broader historical and cultural context. Attention will also be given to the rise of a new class of patrons outside the court and their role in the formation of a new Safavid aesthetic and its dissemination.

Day 1 : Tabriz and Ardabil: Production of Safavid Royal Manuscripts

Day 2 : Qazvin and Shiraz: Arrival of the Millennium

Day 3 : Isfahan and Mashhad: Towards a New Aesthetics

Shaykh Abbasi and His Circle: Artistic Exchange Between Iran and India in the 17th century

January 16th, 2020, 6:30 - 7:30 pm | Massumeh Farhad (Associate Curator of Islamic Art, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery)

Numerous painters, calligraphers, and architects migrated from Iran and India over the centuries and especially in the 16th century. Whether searching for new patrons or escaping personal and professional challenges, these individuals were responsible for introducing new artistic ideals, which were selectively adopted and transformed in Mughal India. In the 17th century, however, artistic exchange between Iran and India began to flow in both directions—a topic that has received relatively little scholarly attention. While Mughal painters, and particularly those in the Deccan, drew upon Safavid pictorial traditions, Persian artists became equally fascinated with Indian style and subject matter, which they appropriated to create a new and highly idiosyncratic visual language. This lecture will examine the relationship of Safavid, Mughal, and Deccani art in the 17th century in a broader historical, cultural and economic context.

This lecture is part of the annual Deccan Heritage Foundation Lecture Series.

"Woman in European Costume," Shaykh Abbasi, Iran, Safavid period, 1660s, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W 668, f. 18b.

Yoga and Tantra

Dr. Rashmi Poddar and Gazala Singh (Course Director - Y&T) with the students of Yoga and Tantra, batch of 2019

We ran the third edition of the introductory course of *Yoga* and *Tantra (Y&T)* over ten weeks at Jnanapravaha Mumbai from August 1 to October 4, 2019: it involved twenty-five lectures, eight internationally-recognised scholars, four senior practitioners who were also consummate tradition-keepers from the world of praxis, and thirty-one curious participants who signed up to undertake this wondrous journey. It was rewarding in many ways, a true privilege to direct the journey of this course. Please allow me to offer you a glimpse because that is all that I can humbly attempt here.

Week One

We began by acquainting ourselves with the course structure and tentative timeline that would hold the content going forward. The first lecture was delivered by Prof. V.N. Jha, former Director of the Centre of Advanced Study in Sanskrit at Pune University, and a returning scholar to the course. He provided a solid grounding of *Samkhya* and *Yoga* in broader Indic intellectual traditions (and even inspired participants to learn Sanskrit in order to read texts) in their original. We accessed these traditions through the Yoga Sutras of *Patanjali* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. We couldn't have asked for a better start to the course!

Week Two | Public Seminar: Models of the Human in *Tantric* Hinduism

Dr. Bjarne Wernicke-Olesen, who is the Director of the *Shakta* Programme at the Oxford Centre of Hindu Studies with a focus on the goddess traditions in South Asia, and Research Lecturer at University of Oxford, presented a three-day seminar that was open to the public. An ambitious presentation, on day one, he referred to three schemas: the first explained the movement from what is referred to as India's Axial Age or Ascetic Reformism to the *Shaiva* Age, or in other words, from classical *yoga* to *tantric yoga*; the second situated *Shaktism/Shakta* and examined its problematic definition and scope within a network of other Hindu traditions; and the third focussed on a schema that spans the Hindu *Shaiva* world, beginning with *Shaiva Atimarga* (outer path) or *tantric Shaivism* and concluding with *Shaiva Mantra Marga* (the path of *mantras*) or *Shakta Kula Marga* (the path of the clan). These include the phases of *kula* and *kaula*, which form *tantric Shaktism*. All these movements were clarified to facilitate a discussion of ideas with great rigour, moving towards the inquiry of what the sine

qua non of *Shaktism* is.

On day two, the scholar read excerpts from the sixth, seventh and eight chapters of the 9th-century *tantric* text, *Netra Tantra*, to explain the models of the human as found in graded practices of cultivating the body through visualising meditations, including: gross meditation (*sthula dhyanam*), subtle meditation (*sukshma dhyanam*), and ultimate meditation (*para dhyanam*). The seventh chapter of the *Netra Tantra* was of particular interest since it contains early versions of the *chakra* system, the system of *kuṇḍalini*, bodily channels (*nadis*), and the notion of the divinisation of the body.

Day three helped link the *Y&T* course held in 2016 to *Y&T* 2019, through the scholarship of Dr. James Mallinson, Director of the *Hatha Yoga* Project (2015-2020) and lecturer at the School of Asian and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, whom we had invited in 2016 to lead a four-day seminar titled *'Yoga and Yogis: The History of Hatha Yoga in India'*. Dr. Olesen drew on Dr. Mallinson's scholarship (also a participating scholar of the *Shakta* Project) to explain the *tantric* model of the human, focussing on the *Shakta* model of *kundalini yoga* that was overlaid onto the techniques of *hatha yoga* as evidenced in the 15th-century work *Hathapradipika*, the classical text of *hatha yoga* studied not only in Sanskrit circles but also in popular contemporary *yoga* teacher-training programmes.

We ended the seminar on an awe-struck note, viewing footage from the scholar's recent fieldwork at Tarapith, Kamakhya and other esoteric *Shakta tantra* sites, a rare privilege indeed with the scholar himself!

Weeks Three and Four

Dr. Supriya Rai, a much-beloved teacher-practitioner, currently Acting Director at the K. J. Somaiya Centre for Buddhist Studies in Mumbai, guided us through a four-part journey into the land of Buddhist thought and meditation, across the geographies of India, China and Japan. She started off with the Pali canon to lead us into an inquiry of not 'what' constitutes the human being, but rather 'how' the human being is constituted in quintessential Buddhist thought. This radically path-breaking worldview set the Buddha apart from the thinking of the religious milieu of his time. From this, we moved on to gain an understanding of the basis of meditation in Buddhist practice, assimilating the parallels of psychology and cosmology along with the methods of Buddhist meditation: *samata* and *vipassana*.

In week four of the course, we entered the *Mahayana* phase of Buddhism through the contribution of one of the most influential philosophers of Buddhist and Indian thought – Nagarjuna – to understand his theory of the middle way or *madhyamaka*, centred on the notion of emptiness or *shunyata*. And finally, we learnt about the other important school of *Mahayana* Buddhism: *Yogachara* and the doctrine of eight consciousnesses. The scholar concluded the series by introducing us to the Chinese canon, reading vivid excerpts from the three Pure Land *Sutras* and discussing the ten ox-herding pictures of Zen Buddhism.

Dr. Supriya Rai speaks during 'The Importance of Cultivating Jhanas – Meditation and Cosmolog'

Week Five

From discussing the Sutra Vehicle of week four, we entered the complex and visually abundant world of the *Tantra* Vehicle, with a special focus on the Indo-Tibetan world.

This week had three lectures: the first was a presentation by Swati Chemburkar, Course Director of JPM's Southeast Asian Art and Architecture course. She brought to light, through conceptions of the body, the *mandala* and deity *yoga*, which involve complex attitudes towards the role of the body in *tantric* practice, with special reference to the religious and medical dynamics circulating in Tibet. The relationship between moral perfection and physicality in medicine and the healing arts, aimed towards a body fit for enlightenment, were explored through rich imagery including paintings depicting the origins of disease and pathology, primary and secondary sources of disease, and human embryology.

The next two lectures provided a glimpse into the world of the Jain tradition. For the first lecture in the series, we had Shilpa Chheda, Coordinator of the Jainology diploma course at the Department of Philosophy, University of Mumbai, acquaint us with this ascetic tradition and its point of view. She explained the constitution of the human, including the soul-body relationship, the precious human birth and the human condition itself, the workings of *karma* that keep the

individual soul in bondage, the means to liberation, and finally, the role of *yoga* toward human liberation. It was interesting to discover that *yoga* had a negative connotation in the early part of the tradition, and later, through possible interactions with other religious traditions of the time, and developments within, the tradition itself gained a more positive conception that was highlighted in the following lecture, focussing on a specific Jain *yoga* text, the *Yogabindu*.

The second lecture was a free public lecture titled '*Karma, Fivefold Yoga, and Puja in the Yogabindu*', delivered by Christopher Key Chapple, currently residing in the country under the auspices of the International School for Jain Studies (ISJS) as a Fulbright Nehru Fellow, and Director of a two-year Master of Arts degree programme in Yoga Studies at Loyola Marymount University, California. The lecture threw light on the historical figure/s of *Haribhadra*, who composed both the *Yogabindu* as well as the *Yogadrishtisamucchaya* in Sanskrit. The scholar dates the *Yogabindu* to the 6th century CE and the *Yoga Drishti Samucchaya* to the 8th century CE. In the second half of the lecture, Prof. Chapple had groups of us read excerpts from the *Yogabindu*, from which points were taken up as class discussion. We had a full-house and it was especially wonderful to be sharing in Prof. Chapple's scholarship along with people from the Jain community who attended during one of their most auspicious festivals of the year, the *Paryushan Parva*.

Week Six | Public Seminar: The Bengal-*Vaishnava* Body and its *Yogic* Affects

Dr. Sukanya Sarbadhikary, Assistant Professor of Sociology at Presidency University, Kolkata, working at the intersection of the anthropology of religion, religious studies and philosophy, shared with us original material from her own primary research in the field, as well as her current unpublished work. In her two-part seminar, she introduced two themes of a cultivated spirituality: first, *The Yogic Affects of the Mind/Body as Place*, entailing *yogic* practices that imagine and transform the mind-heart or *manas* as veiled *Vrindavana* or *gupta Vrindavana* into an unveiled *Vrindavana*, and second, that of the *Sahajiyas*, a quasi-*Vaishnava tantric* community that place *Vrindavana*, veiled within their physical body, the unveiling of which takes place through direct sexual relationships mediated through a *yogic* body. On day two, Dr. Sarbadhikary's paper focussed on her ongoing research on *The Yogic Affects of the Body-as-Instrument*, discussing sonic metaphysics and the practice of *yoga* through her narrativised experiences and accounts, arguing for how the three instruments of "the conch, flute, and *mridangam* become devotional bodies, and the entire vibrational interiority and skin of the devotee sounds, and *becomes*, the instrument."

Week Seven | Praxis

This week introduced the praxis element in the course. We had two prominent tradition-keepers of the living traditions of *yoga* and *tantra* give lecture performances/demonstrations. Mandakini Trivedi, a senior dancer of the Indian classical dance form of *Mohini Attam*, presented the body as a *yantra* through an interactive session including theory and demonstrations.

Mr. Vipul Rikhi speaks during 'Poetry of the Body: Yogic Vocabulary in the Nirgun Bhakti Poetry of Kabir & Other Poets'

In the second presentation, we journeyed into the mystical land of oral traditions of *bhakti/baul/sufi* poetry, into the place of no place. How does one even imagine such a quest? Where does one even begin the journey? We were led to inquire, and sing alongside Vipul Rikhi – poet, translator, singer and archiver of the oral traditions – the words of Kabir, the mystic poet of 15th-century medieval India, *'ya ghat bheetar'*.

Week Eight | Public Seminar: An Introduction to the Tradition of *Pancharatra*

We were delighted to have amidst us Dr. Marion Rastelli, foremost scholar of the *tantric Vaishnava* tradition of *Pancharatra*, to deliver a four-day public seminar. A Sanskritist, she teaches at the Institute for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies of the University of Vienna. This seminar, an immersion into the different aspects of the tradition, included the early history and key features on day one, along with the emanationist and hierarchical conceptions of cosmology. The *mantric* systems, especially as they appear in the *Jayakhya samhita*, were elucidated on day two. On day three, Dr. Rastelli unpacked the *tantric* ritual of the *sadhaka* to further explain the tradition at the level of the individual practitioner. The praxis of the *tantric* ritual was introduced as experienced in the life of an initiate, entailing *diksha*, the five *samskaras*, the three types of rituals, ritual purification (*bhuta shuddhi*), the five periods of time (*pancha kala*) and so

on, where we learnt how the body is purified before it is divinised, and how *yoga* has been understood and practiced in this tradition. On day four, we looked at temple *tantra* to understand the *Pancharatra* conception of the temple as God's body, temple as the entire universe and temple as representation of the heavenly world of *Vaikuntha*, with illustrated slides of some exemplary temples of this tradition such as the Gupta temple at Deogarh, the Lakshmana temple at Khajuraho, the Ranganathaswami temple at Shrirangam and the Varadaraja Perumal temple at Kanchipuram.

Week Nine

In this week, I presented the textual history of Hatha and Modern Yoga, mainly drawing on the scholarship of Dr. James Mallinson, Dr. Jason Birch, Dr. Mark Singleton and Dr. Elizabeth de Michelis, along with the catalogue of the 2013 exhibition titled *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, organised by the Sackler Gallery at the Smithsonian Institution, which was curated by Dr. Debra Diamond. In the first lecture, we focussed on the forms, continuities, innovations and transformations in the practice of *hatha yoga* to hint at its connections and discontinuities with modern *yoga* of the present day. We also looked at the figure of the *yogin* in the Indic and transnational imagination (16th to 20th centuries).

The second presentation closely tracked the historical development of modern *yoga* through the biography of Swami Vivekananda, "the first teacher of *yoga* in the West", and the publication of his highly influential book, *Raja Yoga*, published in 1876, which set in place the blueprint and framework for systematic *yoga* teaching in the English language to appear in the 20th century in India and the West. Following this was a slide presentation of key *yoga* masters of the 20th century and their prominent disciples who influenced the movement toward *yoga* becoming a global phenomenon.

Week Ten | Praxis

In the final week of the course, we had Shruthi Vishwanath, singer and composer, sing and story-tell the *Varkari* tradition, a popular tradition from Maharashtra that owes its beginnings to the 13th-century mystic poet, Dnyaneshwar, who was initiated in the *natha sampradaya* through his brother Nivruttinath who became his guru. The performer has also been musically interpreting and giving voice to women-poets such as Muktabai, Janabai, and Bahinabai, whose *abhangs* (poem-songs) are no longer sung in traditional circles today. This presentation not only celebrated the female voice, but also the ten-week *Y&T* journey that we had made together as a group.

Shruti Vishwanath speaks during 'The Nath Connection in the Warikari Sampradaya of Maharashtra'

The final lecture featured a modern school of *yoga*, The *Yoga* Institute, Santacruz, Mumbai, a historic institution founded in 1918 by Shri Yogendra. In this lecture, I traced the founder's journey of becoming the householder *yogi*, simplifying *hatha yoga* for the common person, medicalising its benefits and integrating it in the larger global discourse of physical culture and nature cure, initiating the making of a modern *yoga* renaissance, as it were. We then turned to his son, Dr. Jayadeva who further popularised *yoga* among the common masses, reaching out to educational institutions and shaping the *Yoga* Institute to function as a 'life school' running monthly *yogic* health camps, aiming to help create what he called the 'culture of consciousness', to end with a video and discussion on the *Yoga* Institute completing 100 years in 2019.

We closed the programme with a sharing circle, reflecting on two questions: first, whether during the course of this ten-week journey, a new pathway – inward or outward – had emerged for us, and second, what the one definite takeaway from the course was for each of us.

It was most gratifying to hear how one participant, a musician, found renewed vigour as her creative imagination rekindled towards her music during the ten weeks, while another participant was inspired to buy an *ektara* the day after listening to Shruthi Vishwanath's presentation, committing to learn to play it, while yet another participant was inspired to learn Sanskrit so as to read primary texts after Prof. Jha's lecture-series.

A deep motivation for me running the course was to present *Yoga* and *Tantra* at once as a meditation on life and as an encounter between the philosophical and the experiential. And to situate it in the socio-religious

order of the historical world even when it speaks of the transcendental, esoteric and mystical dimensions of an array of *yogic* and *tantric* traditions. So, it was truly satisfying to hear one of the participants share that for him, one of the most significant takeaways was to drop the mythology of all of *yoga* and *tantra* being 5,000 years old and be introduced to a timeline, even if tentative, to better appreciate developments that take place in historical time. For others in the group, the course became particularly meaningful when theory met praxis, brought alive by the opportunity of interactions with practitioners who are also tradition-keepers, telling their life's stories, and to be able to live in daily guidance of the teachings they have received in transmission of a living tradition.

With deep gratitude and in greater wonder of life's deeper mysteries, I submit this report here. To follow is a participant's sharing, which was read aloud in the circle at the end, and captured moments and personal highlights from the course that resonated with many in the group. A precious gift! **- *G.S.***

Testimonial

I'm taking the liberty of expressing gratitude on behalf of our entire class, taking a cue from our oral tradition, if it sounds like blatant praise, then you can safely assume it is but heartfelt nonetheless.

The course and the days that followed have been like sitting in an ophthalmologist's chair.

The said doctors would place different lenses and check if we can see anymore clearer!

Dr Supriya, Swati, Dr Sukanya, Shruti, Dr Rastelli, Dr Chapple, Dr Bjarne, Professor Jha, Mandakini ji, Vipul, Shilpa and Gazala all letting us glimpse through their lens and into their world views.
And how greedily we lapped up all of it.

Everything about this place is a delight. When you do things with passion, it shows, thank you Rashmiji for creating this garbhagraha and the consecration of energy in the form of Jnanapravaha.

To say the least, even the chai here is so awesome almost a Rasa.
This is like a version of Florence syndrome caused due to excessive consumption of art. We can safely call it the 'jnanpraha syndrome'

Firstly you can't see the world the same way again. Washing away all these years of limited exposure to our own culture, laced by colonial hangover and Victorian archiving was a task in itself.

Seeing all the beauty of tantra and yoga hidden in our architecture, art, religion and mere way to life was such a delight nitpicking.

Now it's going to be difficult to hear anyone get away by saying something, as we will demand the supporting text and treaties.

Secondly I will never be able to go to a spa with a Buddha quietly looking on, dude he is not as simple as he seemed, now knowing how he is responsible for changing the landscape of the world with an ideology that brought Into existence the first of the temples, art of living , political repercussion and affected everything that followed in its wake and aftermath.

And let's not even get started on his good old friend- Mahavira.

Also I guess we have all been in a constant state of foreplay and lovemaking with the course and it's subjects at hand and never reaching orgasm. We just want more, don't we?

I guess that qualifies for a sort of Bindu dharna!

I hope we continue to seek and be curious.

Bindu reminds me how yoga has influenced some of the masters of Indian art from raza to Hussain, which I'm only able to notice now.

With all the reading material and ideas seeded in our minds, we are on a path of seeing art much more critically and life more questioningly.

Also realising how important is breathe! And now it seems obvious why even when other parts of the body stop working, we only die when we stop breathing!
Thank you Gazala for curating a subject so open and vast, putting together such fabulous lectures.

Thank you to everybody for being such fun cohort.

I would like to leave you with Kabir Das Doha

It says how the musk deer searches for the musk aroma all through its life, all time in the day and night, missing out all the beauty, joy, delights and life around it, not knowing that the magical aroma it's seeking actually emanates from its own navel!

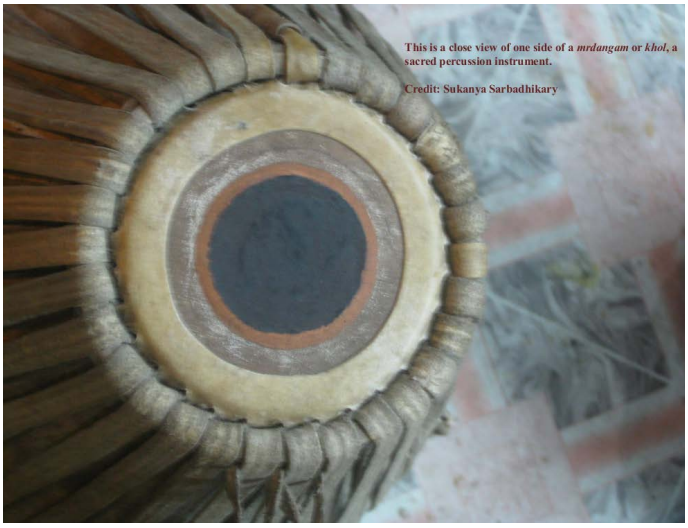
Kasturi kundali basai, mrig dhundai van mahi
Aaise ghat ghat Ram hain, duniya dekhe nahi

Thank you,
Mohit Dochania

PAST PROGRAMMES

The Bengal-Vaishnava Body and its Yogic Affects

September 5th & 6th, 2019, 5:30 - 8:00 pm | Sukanya Sarbadhikary (Assistant Professor of Sociology at Presidency University)



Dr. Sukanya Sarbadhikary shared her research on Bengal *Gaudiya Vaishnavism* as well as *Sahajiya* practices (which are quasi *Vaishnava-tantric*), exploring their envisioning of the mind-body as a sacred place. Foregrounding sensorial materiality, embodiment, imagination, place-making, and sonic physiognomy in the intensely intimate and sensuous devotion that render the Bengal *Vaishnava* body, she described the cultivated spirituality and yogic practices that imagine and transform the 'mind-heart' (*manas*) from a veiled or *gupta* 'Vrindavana' into an unveiled 'Vrindavana'.

The internationally familiar worship practiced by adherents of ISKCON is arguably the most polished version of the many different types of ecstatic Bengal *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*. In the last three centuries, the *Gaudiya Vaishnava* devotee has been subjected to an ironic diet of discipline and passion which merge together in yogic bodies leading to affective union or *raga*. After Chaitanya, the earliest practitioner of this type of devotion, two main currents emerged in *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*, resulting in a varied philosophical doctrine called *achintya-bheda-abheda*, conveying the irresolvable conundrum of whether god is the same or different from the devotee, a subtle interweaving of monism and dualism, emotive in nature. In this affective relationality, the relation with god is interiorised. It is both conceptualised and viscerally sensed inside, combining *bhakti* and *tantric* oneness.

The *Goswamis*, beginning in the 16th century CE, are considered 'orthodox' *Gaudiya Vaishnavas*. Householders, ascetics, and *tantrics* became adherents of this still-popular practice, which envisages a devotional mind-body continuum in which complex inner methods of understanding feeling, making real divinity, and relations with that divinity bring about intense interior psycho-social transformations. The *Gaudiya Vaishnavas* use multiple terms to describe body and mind in a complex philosophy where the body is interiorised, defying Cartesian dualism. The mind-body continuum is influenced by yogic-tantric local analytical theories.

This religious experience often exceeds theology. Central to it are experiences of divine sexuality. In the feminised imagination of the *Gaudiya Vaishnava*, he is a young girl between 9 and 11 years of age (*manjari* or bud) whose sensitivity and imagination brings *'Vrindavana'* into being in a phenomenology which combines cognition and affect. The devotee cannot differentiate between his dream life and waking life. The practice is described in Bengali and Sanskrit terms and is not *kalpana* (imagined) but real to the devotee, a handmaiden (who is assigned extremely specific tasks) to Radha-Krishna in their enactment of sexual trysts in Vrindavana, who must never desire divine sexuality for her(him)self. Prior meditation enables this step towards *manjari sadhana* which goes beyond *yoga*, and demands purging of the sensory body and an ego-less self, maintaining the tension between *yoga* (becoming God) and *bhakti* (remaining a devotee). The training for *manjari sadhana* involves 64 types of disciplined devotion (*vaidhi bhakti*) of which nine daily practices, including chanting, yogic breathing, remembrance (of the deities' *leela* or play) and visualisation are cardinal.

The *Sahajiyas*, on the other hand, consider themselves the best *Vaishnavas* and authentic practitioners of *raganuga bhakti* (passionate devotion) centring on bodily sacrality. They are detested by *Goswamis* who consider their own religion mindful and their practices sensuous but clean as they are conducted only in imagination. The *Sahajiyas* place celestial *'Vrindavana'* veiled within their physical bodies, the unveiling of which takes place through direct sexual relationships mediated by yogic bodies. However, their practices also fall along a mind-body continuum. Theorisations of their bodies are known as *deha tattva* (knowledge of the body) also associated with *Baul* practitioners. These are competitive devotional strains in which the bodily practices of the *Sahajiyas* follow the *vartamana* (present) *marga* in contrast to the *anumana marga* of the *Goswamis*. The *Goswamis* comprise mainly male practitioners who cultivate embodied minds while the *Sahajiyas*, who are both male and female, cultivate 'enminded' bodies. Mental dimensions in *Sahajiya* practice include intellectual and emotive control of the mind through *yoga* and cognitive or meditative nuances of abstract breathing.

Dr. Sukanya Sarbadhikary speaks during 'The Bengal-Vaishnava Body and its Yogic Affects'

Like *Goswamis*, *Sahajiyas* use critical terms of yogic embodiment but also the generic term '*desha*' (an intimate place of inhabitation) which refers to different levels of the spiritually cultivated body. Often, illiterate practitioners follow oral tradition and rely on embodied memory. The four '*deshas*' (stages of spiritual perfection) refer to the gross material body undergoing regular physical discipline due to which the mentality towards physical activity changes and corporeal perfection is attained. This is the vessel of *Sahajiya* spirituality, and the practitioner becomes a renouncer even while engaging in sexual activity. The crucial idea of *raksha* (control or withholding) changes the meaning of all physical acts. *Sahajiyas* eschew ejaculatory sex (representing lust or ego) through yogic discipline. The body-mind complex constitutes an intricate efficacious whole and the practitioner 'knows' what it is to be a *Vaishnava*. In addition to the *diksha mantra* or initiation, *Sahajiyas* receive a *shiksha mantra* or knowledge after which the *guru* teaches them the detailed philosophy of yogic sexual arousal controlled by the mind. This *shiksha* is heavily criticised by other *Vaishnavas* because it gives a physical dimension to what the *Gaudiya Vaishnavas* practice only in imagination.

Sahajiya practice includes specified movements of breath and body fluids in the corporeal interior, clearly *tantric* in nature, and involves five types of deified bodily emissions – semen (embodying the male principle, *Krishna*), menstrual blood and female sexual fluid (embodying the female principle, *Radha*), faeces, and urine – which the devotee learns to retain in the body. Their coming together is seen as the union of *Radha-Krishna* and the preservation of *Vrindavana's* pleasures and the deities' love within the body. Secrecy and transgression are practiced. Ingestion of excreta helps practitioners to overcome *lajja* (shyness), *ghrina* (aversion) and *bhaya* (fear), maintains cosmic rhythm and brings about egolessness. Bodily substances, and the practitioner's breath and cranium are venerated as equivalents of the five natural elements, and bodies may be conceptualised as full universes in themselves. Internal absorption (of bodily fluids) is seen as reflecting feminine and empathetic subjectivities, which both partners cultivate to imagine themselves as *Krishna's* egoless lovers.

The *Sahajiya* vocabulary interprets *Vaishnava* terms differently; for instance, the woman practitioner is known as *manjari* and her sexual encounter with the *guru* (*Krishna*) is her *manjari sadhana*. The *guru* also gives the practitioner metaphorical poetry (which preserves secrecy) in the form of tabular charts (often memorised along with songs in oral transmission) which are classifications of different stages of practice. *Sahajiyas* visualise six circular energy centres or *chakras* in the body in the form of lotuses. 72,000 nerves remain coiled in three-and-a-half twirls at the base of the spinal cord, like a dormant serpent, referred to as *kula kundalini*. When stimulated by the cognitive rising breath, these nerves relax and align themselves into a vertical formation that rises to the highest *chakra* (*sahasrara*), making the head feel spacious and empty in contrast to the 'bounded space' of the vessel-body, straddling embodied and abstract concepts, where *Radha-Krishna* dwell both inside (monist) and outside (dualist) the practitioner.

Bengal *Vaishnavism* combines monism and dualism as seen in important Bengal *Vaishnava* texts, in the theology of *achintya-bheda-abheda* and in the phenomenology of the mind-body continuum in *turiya* (transformative ecstatic experience). Dr. Sarbadhikary presented her recent research on the *yogic* affects of the body as instrument, relating it to the practitioner's use of the flute, the *mridangam* (or *khol*), along with cymbals, and the conch (with its three-and-a-half spiral interior) as cosmic, sacred devotional instruments which become mirror reflections of the cultivated *yogic* body. The hollowness of these instruments mimic the vessel-ness of the spiritualised body and mind. The scholar discussed sonic metaphysics (*nada yoga*) in traditions of devotional instrumentality in Bengal, where in response to breathing (*pranayama*) and to the playing of the instrument, the spiritualised vibrational interiority and skin of the astute *yogi* resound with various musical sounds and become, in turn, instruments of devotion. ***- J.K.***

Buddhist Aesthetics

PAST PROGRAMMES

Great Buddhist *Stupas* from the Indian Subcontinent

December 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th & 13th, 2019, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Pia Brancaccio (Professor in the Department of Art and Art History at Drexel University, Philadelphia)

Relief Depicting Worship at the Saidu Sharif Stupa, from Butkara III, Swat
Credit: Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan

The detailed write-up about this seminar series will be featured in our next Quarterly (Apr - Jun 2020).

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

The In-Betweeners: Trade and Patronage in 1st Century CE - The Case of Kuda-Mandad

January 23rd, 2020, 6:30 pm | Shailendra Bhandare (Assistant Keeper, South Asian and Far-Eastern Numismatics and Paper Money Collections, Ashmolean Museum)

The rock-cut Buddhist cave complex at Kuda (dist. Raigad, Maharashtra) epitomises what art historians have regraded as 'minor'. While the caves lack great artistic feats and a grand plan, they no doubt are significant in many ways such as their coastal location and the epigraphic evidence they present. The lecture will bring forth important new evidence to contextualise this significance further. It will also problematise some long held notions about the chronology and the architecture of the Buddhist cave temples of the Deccan and provide new insights into questions which have been a part of the discourse on archaeology of trade and patronage on the Western Coast of India.

South Asian Painting

Portrait of a Bird, Bikaner, dated VS 1842 / CE 1785, 20 x 16.5 cm. The work of Sahibadin, son of Abu. Opaque watercolour on paper

"Even when works are of a very small size, they convey a sense of monumentality."—Daniel Ehnbom, video interview, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.

The South Asian Painting course makes its way through a constellation of exquisite works on paper produced in northern India from the 16th century onwards. Ranging in size from a few inches to a few feet, the paintings are often mistakenly referred to as 'miniatures'. Intimate yet monumental, quiet yet pulsating with life, worldly yet spiritual, these paintings have delighted viewers for centuries by allowing them a glimpse into a magical world. With their prices sky-rocketing, such works are the darlings of the art market, boosting the reputation of both, renowned and anonymous artists.

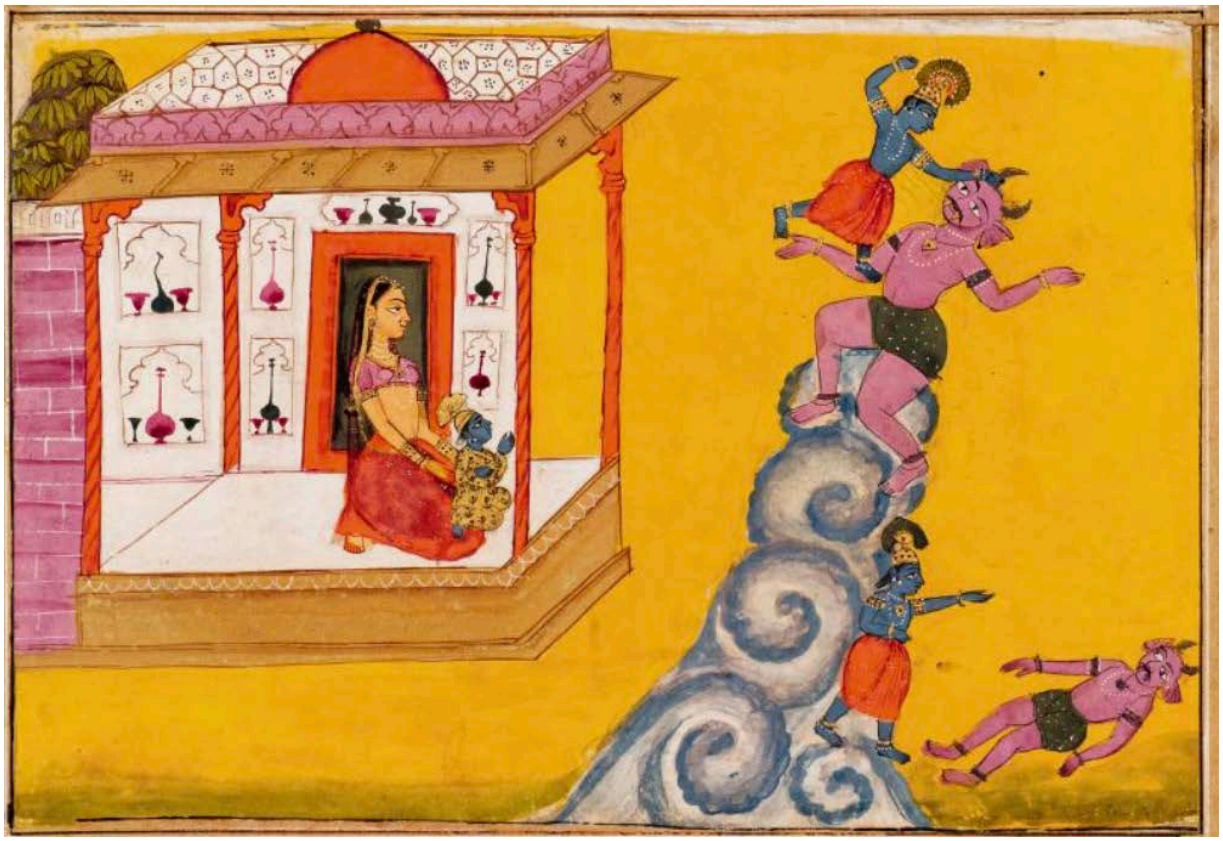
The course will introduce the key terms and concepts that are essential to an understanding of South Asian painting. It will provide an overview of the methods employed in the examination of such works, and discuss scholarship that has defined the field. The value attached to these paintings in previous centuries—they helped their patrons realise spiritual goals, visualise and sustain royal identity, and so on—and by the unpredictable demands of modern-day collectors, will be compared.

This will be accomplished while analysing iconic examples of manuscripts, series, and stand-alone works on paper. The aim of the course is to help students learn how to look at South Asian painting, and to familiarise them with the approaches that may be employed in their study.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

Rajput Painting: Concepts and Realities

March 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th & 16th, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Daniel Ehnbom (Associate Professor of Art, University of Virginia)



Leaf number 13 from a dispersed series of the Bhagavata Purana. Krishna slaying the wind demon. Opaque color and gold on paper. Sub-Imperial Mughal style at Bikaner (?), Rajasthan, India, c. 1600 CE. Private Collection, USA.

The serious study of Rajput painting began in the early 20th century with the path-breaking work of A K Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) but except for his scholarship it languished until the period after Independence. Then discovery followed discovery and scholars scrambled to establish order in this new visual world. Theories were proposed, promoted, and sometimes abandoned. Questions of the relationship of Rajput painting with Mughal painting were central to its understanding—was it part of a continuum with the Mughal style or was it oppositional? The course surveys the history of the study of Rajput painting and its implications for our understanding today of its many styles.

Day 1: March 11, 2020
Session I: Coomaraswamy's 'Main Stream' of Indian Painting and a Ground-Level View of the 16th Century
Session II: 'True Miniatures', 'Old Fangled Notions', and The Search for Order in the Post-Independence Study of Indian Painting

Day 2: March 12, 2020
Session I: A History of Costume or a History of Painting?
How to look at the Pre-Rajput and Rajput Schools of the 16th and 17th Centuries
Session II: An Embarrassment of Riches: The Post-Independence Discoveries of Rajput Paintings and the Growth of Knowledge

Day 3: March 13, 2020
Session I: Simplicity of Narrative(s) in the 16th Century: 'Rajput' (And Other) Painting and Embodiments of Stories
Session II: Complexity of Narrative(s) in the 16th Century: 'Rajput' (And Other) Painting and Illustrations of Texts

Day 4: March 14, 2020
Session I: The 'Main Stream' Continues: Overt and Covert Manifestations of Compositional Forms
Session II: The Paradox of the 18th Century: Things Fall Apart and Things Come Together – Political Multiplicity and Aesthetic Convergence

Day 5: March 16, 2020
Session I: A Final Flowering and a New Aesthetic Order: Patrons Old and New, Transformed Technologies and Another Way of Seeing
Session II: The Market, the Collector, and the Museum: How the Marketplace Inflects 'Knowledge'

CRITICISM & THEORY

JPM's Criticism and Theory offerings include (1) a Certificate course in Aesthetics, Criticism, and Theory as well as ongoing public seminars and lectures in the field; (2) an ongoing series of public seminars and lectures in Indian Intellectual Traditions; and (3) occasional academic conferences and workshop in these fields.

Apnavi Makanji | Untitled - Significant Other | 2018 | Courtesy Vadehra Art Gallery

PAST PROGRAMMES

Seeing-Making-Meaning: An Introduction to Art Historical Methods

November 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th, 2019, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Chaitanya Sambrani (Art Historian, Curator and Teacher)

Dr. Chaitanya Sambrani speaks during 'Seeing-Making-Meaning: An Introduction to Art Historical Methods'

"Seeing comes before words…It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it."[1] These are the opening statements of the art theorist John Berger's seminal treatise *Ways of Seeing*. Seeing is not a passive act of absorption but an active investment in making the world anew, of claiming a stake in it through codes and conventions that merit meaning. A significant imprint on our world is the labour which makes consciousness tactile through imagery that may or may not be 'aesthetic', may or may not be 'utilitarian', but is necessarily intellectual. The

discipline that studies and values this labour, encodes it in terms such as 'aestheticism', 'utilitarianism', and 'intellectualism', and determines rigorously why certain modes of production, more than others, command a deeper examination of their sources and impacts on the ways we witness and live in our surrounding world is art history.

It is precisely these complexities and nuances inscribed in making images and meaning that Dr. Chaitanya Sambrani explored and unravelled in a five-day lecture series titled 'Seeing-Making-Meaning'.

The discipline of art history has morphed from an analysis of style or artistic skill as a temporal register of individual and collective history and development to include a range of theoretical perspectives, not all of which are specific to its field of study. As the art historian Anne D'Alleva writes, "the range of theories most commonly employed today in the social sciences and humanities is often called *critical theory*… In art history, we could say that theory helps us to develop precise and penetrating lines of questioning to guide our research. Certain modes of inquiry…are recognised as valuable across a variety of disciplines: among these are semiotics, Marxism, [feminism], and psychoanalysis."[2]

This paper cannot do justice to the sheer breadth of imagery and its attendant vocabulary covered in the lecture series. It deals briefly with the concept of representation and then selects two images and analyses them in order to *demonstrate* the approaches mentioned above, rather than defining or commenting on them.

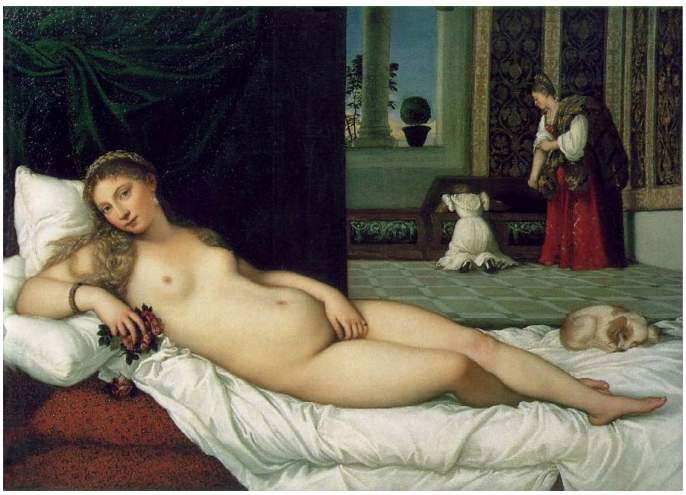
As such, art history problematises the nature of representation. In his book *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, the cultural theorist Raymond Williams writes, "a representation [is] a symbol or image, or the process of presenting to the eye or the mind."[3] This process of presentation is understood through terms such as illusion, abstraction, imitation and originality. The characteristics of representation highlighted here are relativity and convention.

An illusion is a manmade object that strives to look natural, that is, like a part of nature that surrounds us. However, the 'naturalism' of an image is a manifestation of the technical and technological means available to a certain culture at a certain time. Thus, a sculpture of a horse with its laboured emphasis on anatomical and tonal accuracy made during the Tang dynasty in the 7th– 8th centuries CE is, for its period, as illusionistic as a photograph of a horse in the current century. It would be simplistic, from our vantage point in history, to judge the sculpture as inferior.

The vast contrast between representation as exactitude and abstraction is clarified by Marcel Duchamp's experiment *Three Standard Stoppages*, 1913–1914. The process involved taking a straight horizontal thread one metre in length and dropping it on a horizontal surface from a height of exactly one metre. This was performed three times and each time the thread fell and twisted 'as it pleased', thus creating an image of the unit of length. The exact shape of the threads was imitated carefully in three wooden structures. The resulting images were a far cry from the poker-straight 'standard' that governs the ecology of mathematics and economics. Both image and standard are representations in their own right.

The concept of convention is addressed by the Kashmiri scholar, Sri Sankuka (c. 9th–10th CE). His doctrine *chitra turaga nyaya* (the law of the pictorial horse) demonstrates the stages in understanding artistic representation. When confronted with verisimilitude or resemblance (*sadrishya*), the viewer is torn between naïve acceptance of the image and a series of critical questions elicited by the picture. When the viewer realises that he is not looking at a 'natural' object, he thinks of it as falsehood (*mithya*), he doubts its credibility and questions arise as to *why* he has been 'tricked' (*sanka*). Resolution finally follows when he understands representation as a relationship to nature mediated by codes and conventions (*samyaka*). As Berger writes, "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled."[1]

Berger's observation could not be more apt when understanding the nature of theoretical forces at play in the analysis of an image under the rubric of art history. These methods move far from the field of the 'work of art in and of itself', though they do begin with a formal analysis of the work at hand.



Titian, Venus of Urbino, 1538, oil on canvas, 119 x 165 cm, Uffizi, Florence

In Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, 1538 CE, we witness the beginnings of a tradition of the reclining nude in post-Renaissance European oil painting, a tradition that

continued well into the late 19th century. We see a nude woman relaxing on rumpled sheets, her gaze turned towards the viewer, her hair falling across her shoulders and her left hand resting on her genital organs. A sleeping dog curls into itself at the edge of her bed. Much of the background is dominated by a deep green screen of curtains. At the far right of the painting two handmaidens are removing a fresh pair of clothes for the supine figure while behind them is a partially visible window looking onto a landscape. This is a pre-iconographic study of the work in question.

This typology of images was ubiquitously titled 'Venus', so an iconographic reading of the work associates, generically, all reclining nudes with the Roman goddess of beauty. Historically, these Venuses were mistresses of the powerful, wealthy elite who commissioned the paintings, and the women were so labelled to create an illusion of the nude as a mythological genre that did not offend gentility. This contextual reading is iconological – it reveals the suggested meaning of the artwork. It reveals why a certain iconography was chosen within a certain historical, cultural context.
These paintings were always executed in horizontal format and depicted the background as an ordered landscape or implied (as in Titian's case) that it was so. The nude herself *signifies* a landscape – the verdant hair, the torso and thighs as smooth, undulating hillocks, the peninsular legs. Both woman and landscape become possessions of the patron. The dog that signifies loyalty and often appears in portraits of couples such as Jan Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434 CE, is asleep, demonstrating that the patron's fidelity to his partner is in question.

Jan van Eyck, The Arnolfini Portrait, 1434
Oil on wood, 82 x 60 cm, National Gallery, London

There is at play the absent-presence of another signifier. Berger points out that the European tradition does not depict hair on the female body: "hair is associated with sexual power, with passion. The woman's sexual passion needs to be minimised so that the spectator may feel that he has the monopoly of such passion."[4] In art history, the study of formal elements as signifiers to be decoded in order to elicit significations that define the relation between image and artist, image and viewer, image and society, is semiotics. It includes an analysis of *what* images mean and *how* they express those meanings.

Berger's observation on female sexuality at work in the genre of the nude brings us to a feminist critique of the selected image. Importantly, Berger analyses what it means to be nude and not simply naked. He writes, "To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognised for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display."[5] He continues, "In the average European oil painting of the nude the principal protagonist is never painted. He is the spectator in front of the picture…Everything is addressed to him. Everything must appear to be the result of his being there. It is for him that the figures have assumed their nudity."[5]

In an earlier part of his text, Berger investigates the concept of masculine and feminine presence. "A woman's presence…defines what can and cannot be done to her…presence for a woman is so intrinsic to her person that men tend to think of it as an almost physical emanation, a kind of heat or smell or aura… Every one of her actions – whatever its direct purpose or motivation – is also read as an indication of how she would like to be treated."[6] The 'Venus' in Titian's painting appears to caress gently her genitals with her left hand, signalling that this is how she would like to be touched by a male viewer (her 'master'). Her gaze addresses him and beckons similar reciprocation.

Titian's Venus wears a benign expression but if we approach a woman's gaze from a psychoanalytic perspective it becomes a threat to the male viewer, and it is precisely this dread that transforms a woman into an object/image. According to Freud, before the human infant becomes a gendered being, that is, before it overcomes the Oedipal complex or, as Lacan says, before it endures the trauma of submitting to linguistic and social systems of meaning (the Symbolic or the Law of the Father), its sexual drives are orientated, in equal measure, to the pleasure of seeing (scopophilia), and the pleasure of being looked at (exhibitionism). The Symbolic organises masculinity and femininity into polarised positions. The art

theorist Griselda Pollock writes, "In the Symbolic, Woman is designated as image, that is, the almost exclusive repository of formative exhibitionism, while masculinity appropriates the activity associated with scopophilia."[7]

"The trope, woman-as-image" Pollock writes, "becomes the bearer of the fear of a 'lack in being' (Freud called this castration anxiety) which is projected out from the masculine psyche because it threatens the narcissistic integrity of the masculine subject as whole and masterful."[7] To objectify a woman, to project inferiority onto her is to dominate masculine fear of being the Other. Scopophilia is the obsessive repetition of looking at the woman to confirm that she is, in fact, Other. However, there is almost always an overhanging dread that the veneer of the Symbolic will wear out because masculine scopophilia, given the particular structure of the psyche, is torn between unmediated pre-Oedipal pleasure and the anxiety of a gendered position.

Pollock elaborates, "There is a permanent oscillation between related but irreducible regimes– the Symbolic…and what preceded it…The latter remains active as the permanent, unconscious companion of the Symbolic because these processes are the pre-conditions of any Symbolic…the adult psyche is formed by an almost archaeological layering, where all the subject has passed through is completely sited in…the unconscious. Thus the mobile pleasures of looking and being looked at which define one moment of human subjectivity are perpetually present to destabilise the symbolic fixing of such pleasures to an arrangement called man (look) and woman (object)."[8] Berger writes, "Men of state, of business, discussed under paintings like [those of Titian's Venus]. When one of them felt he had been outwitted, he looked up for consolation. What he saw reminded him that he was a man"[9] – a man with castration anxiety who could, under certain circumstances, surrender to the pleasure of exhibiting himself as image. Then, even as an image, a woman is not safe enough for a man.

As Berger's statement suggests, art in capitalistic societies "entered the culture of the ruling class, whilst physically it was set apart and isolated in their palaces and houses…the authority of art was inseparable from the particular authority of the preserve."[10] When art entered the preserve of the museum, the experience of it within that space became a ritual. As the cultural theorist Carol Duncan writes, "it is the visitors who enact the ritual. The museum's sequenced spaces and arrangement of objects, its lighting and architectural details provide both the stage set and the script."[11]

In a 1969 study compiled by the cultural theorists Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, 66% of manual workers assessed, 45% of skilled and white-collar workers, and 30.5% of professional and upper managerial workers, all likened the experience of a museum to that of a church. In modern society, the artist becomes an evergreen genius and therefore art is considered 'greater' than commerce. As Berger writes, "[art's] market price is said be a reflection of its spiritual value. Yet the spiritual value of an object…can only be explained in terms of magic or religion. And since in modern society neither of these is a living force, the art object…is enveloped in an atmosphere of entirely bogus religiosity."[12]

Without an iconological understanding of the Venus genre, the paintings are understood only as portrayals of mythology, thus distorting the perception of a very large section of society. Within the museum, the paintings all too often become icons of formalist art history, masterful, fluent renditions of landscape and anatomy; they become a sensory delight. Titian's Venus is a masterpiece. Nothing more, nothing less.

Celebrating, in the tradition of Walter Benjamin, the proliferation of the mechanical reproduction of images, Berger nonetheless recognises that this reproduction has thus far only made manifest the illusion that the masses can understand art, without educational mediation, the way the cultured class did, simply because they have access to it as never before. The discourse of certain museums is, as shown above, problematic, steeped partially in the tradition of Winckelmann's art historical methodology – an interpretation of art as skill that reflects the maturity or decline of a nation-state.[13] The masses, he notes, "understandably, remain uninterested and sceptical."[14] In reality, we are alienated from a personal and historical experience of the past in relation to ourselves; we cannot become the active agents of a history we do not understand. Seeing has arrived but knowing matters.

The lecture series by Dr. Sambrani was a crucial step in constructing a bridge between eye and intellect.

The feminist and psychoanalytic critiques demonstrated above delineate the nature of the relationship between a normative Self (always male) and an aberrant Other (always female) and the traditions of representation it encodes. This section presents another portrayal of the nude in which the identities of normative colonial forces and the colonised Other claim a stake.

The painting in question here is *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814 by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres. The term 'odalisque' can be applied to a virgin female slave

figure or a member of a harem. Ingres depicts the latter. A crucial fact about this work is that Ingres never visited an Eastern harem but juxtaposed a study of the nude gleaned from Giorgione's *Dresden Venus* and Titian's *Venus of Urbino* with an imagined setting to create an Orient for visitors to a Paris salon where it was first displayed in 1819. The work was commissioned by Napoleon's sister, Queen Caroline Murat of Naples. The image is what Dr. Sambrani calls a 'vision-machine' (35 in. by 64 in.).

J.A.D. Ingres, Grande Odalisque, 1814

In his contentious treatise *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, the cultural theorist Edward Said writes, "The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilisations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience."[15]

Western discourse on the Orient is termed 'Orientalism'. Said classifies this discourse in three loose categories. Orientalism refers to academic area studies; to the body of work by poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists who perceive a definite divide between 'East' and 'West'; "the third meaning…", Said says, "is something more historically and materially defined than either of the other two. Taking the late 18th century as a very roughly defined starting point, Orientalism can be discussed and analysed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it…"[16]

Having described these modalities, Said makes several qualifications: "To believe that the Orient…was created…simply as a necessity of the imagination, is to be disingenuous. The relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony…As much as the West itself, the Orient is an idea that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West. The two [manmade] geographical entities thus support and, to an extent, reflect each other."[17]

The nude depicted by Ingres, however, is to a large extent, a flight of imagination institutionalised nonetheless within the network of imagery authorised by "corporate dealings" with the East. It is a signifier of Oriental sensuality. Once again, the nude is a landscape, or more accurately now, a map. Her contours are dramatically elongated, her thighs and buttocks are emphatically fleshy – she signifies a vision of the vastness of European territory. Her intricately printed turban, her jewellery, her fan made of peacock feathers, and the hookah near her feet all signify Oriental splendour. However, the nude is now subject to another layer of meaning within the European tradition. Undoubtedly, the Odalisque is erotic, but for the enterprising, colonising, imperial West, she is a disquieting reminder of Oriental lassitude and should be approached with caution. Her image is pleasing; its added signification is not.

Said's conception of Orientalism oscillates between an anxiety to understand the Orient as a 'reality' and as an imagined materiality. This is expressed by the statement, "The Orient was *almost* a European invention"[18] [emphasis added]. However, for all its 'material' correspondence with the Orient, it cannot be emphasised enough that "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate, and even underground self."[16] The gaze of the Odalisque addresses the idea of Europe. ***- S.H.***

Notes:

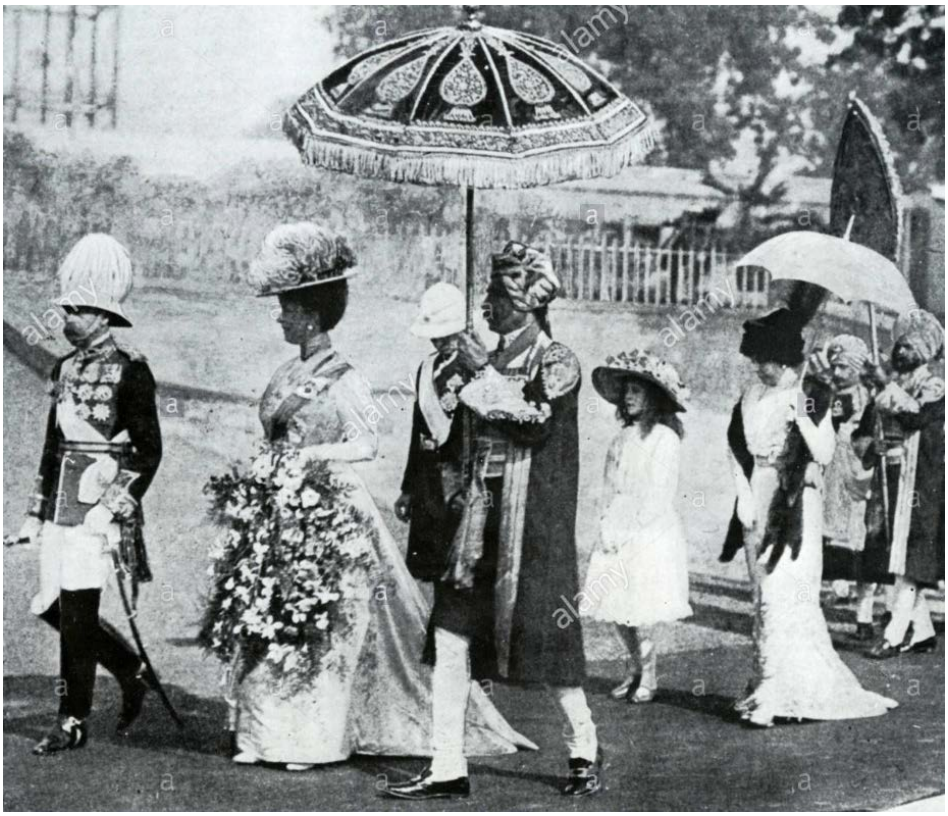
[1] Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 7.
[2] D'Alleva, Anne. *Methods and Theories of Art History*. (London: Lawrence King Publishing, 2012), p. 6.
[3] Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 208.
[4] Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 55.
[5] Ibid, p. 54.
[6] Ibid, p. 46– 47.
[7] Pollock, Griselda, "The Gaze and The Look: Women with Binoculars– A Question of Difference" in Kendall, Richard and Pollock, Griselda (ed.) *Dealing with Degas: Representations of Women and the Politics of Vision*. (London: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 114.
[8] Ibid, p. 115.
[9] Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 57.
[10] Ibid, p. 32.

[11] D'Alleva, Anne. *Methods and Theories of Art History*. (London: Lawrence King Publishing, 2012), p. 55.
[12] Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 21.
[13] While Winckelmann advocated the primacy of the style of an image as an index of its value, his writings reveal a subtler approach towards art history, an approach now effaced by the context of the museum. The art historian Donald Preziosi writes, "The problem of the position of the historian-observer is cast in [Winckelmann's] writing in such a way as to foreground the ambiguities and ambivalences both of gender-relations and, more generally, of distinctions between 'subjects' and 'objects' *per se*. Such ambiguities are those upon the repression of which modern society depends for its boundaries, laws, and social organisation." Preziosi, Donald in Preziosi, Donald (ed.) *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 19.
[14] Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p. 33.
[15] Said, Edward W. Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient. (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1995), p. 1- 2.
[16] Ibid, p. 3.
[17] Ibid, p.5.
[18] Ibid, p. 1.

FORTHCOMING PROGRAMMES

Theory & Practice of Imperialism: Locating The British Raj

February 20th, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm | Zareer Masani (Freelance historian, journalist and broadcaster)



An evening of two related lectures locating the British Raj in the context of previous imperial models, dating back to ancient Greece and Rome, the Holy Roman Empire and the Mughals. The early ideology of empire, as it emerged, partly Mughal-inspired, partly classical, partly post-Enlightenment in the 18th century administrations of Robert Clive and Warren Hastings, through the Utilitarian ideals of Mountstuart Elphinstone and Governors-General Lords Bentinck and Dalhousie, through to the imperial ornamentalism of Viceroys Curzon, Chelmsford and Willingdon, will be explored.

Aesthetics, Criticism & Theory

Homestead, Fletcher Williams III, 2018
Materials: Tin Roof, Picket Fence, Interior Wood Paneling, and Rebar
Dimensions: 44 x 44 x 84 in.

JPM's intensive postgraduate certificate course in **Aesthetics, Criticism and Theory (ACT)** provides students with a rigorous introduction to art history, criticism, aesthetics, critical theory, and contemporary art practice. In-depth seminars at the institute are complemented by film screenings, studio, gallery and museum visits, ensuring a thorough engagement with a breadth of artistic praxes and institutions of the art world. For the duration of the course, students can expect to have three to four sessions per week, both at JPM and across the city.

ACT begins with classes on aesthetics in Western philosophy with careful attention to Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Foucault. We then move to an analysis of how the discipline of art history and the practice of art criticism emerged and transformed over time. Students survey the field of art history and criticism in South Asia in relation to developments in the West. These survey lectures will be followed by a week-long seminar on 'Shock and Awe: The Sublime in the 18th and 19th centuries'. The second month of the course also includes a critical writing workshop, allowing the students to practice and engage with a variety of forms for writing about art.

The second section of the course is devoted to the foundations of critical theory with close readings of Marx, Lefebvre and the Frankfurt School, followed by seminars on 'the many lives of images' and 'spaces of colonial and postcolonial modernity'. These seminars prepare students for the final section, which puts theory into direct engagement with practice. Inviting practitioners that consciously move between disciplines, institutions, pedagogy, curating and diverse forms of making and exhibiting, students are exposed to a range of contemporary creative processes.

Seminars on modernism, modernity and postmodernism open the final month of the course. These classes provide tools with which to address and understand contemporary art. Engaging with thinkers such as Geeta Kapur, Arjun Appadurai, Laura Mulvey, TJ Clark, Arthur Danto, Paul Gilroy, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, WJT Mitchell, and Jacques Ranciere, among many others, students enter the charged debates that follow from key moments in art history marked by texts such as *When Was Modernism* and *The Black Atlantic*. Classes on documentary practice, histories of photography and video art, and the unpacking of recent transmedia exhibitions like *When is Space* (Jawahar Kala Kendra, 2018) and *The Boat is Leaking. The Captain Lied.* (Fondazione Prada, 2017) accompany these seminars.

Throughout the course, students engage with the oeuvres of select painters, sculptors, architects, as well as video, performance, sound, digital and multimedia artists. ACT brings the very best faculty of scholars and practitioners from our city, India, and abroad; those experienced in pedagogy that tacks between lecture, discussion, close reading, seeing, and writing. ACT students are introduced to ideas and histories that allow them to develop and evolve their own academic research, writing, and professional interests in the visual arts world imaginatively.

Learning how to read, think and write critically are an essential part of the course. The history of aesthetics and the history of art, media and technology go hand in hand. Scholars have carefully selected texts, films, exhibitions and artists for each session and much of this material is available to the students on our online learning management portal, **JPM Think.** Students are expected to come to class well-prepared.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

JPM's Community Engagement offerings include occasional public lectures and performances in Creative Processes, Curatorial Processes, and Iconic Images as well as book launches, concerts, film screenings, and panel discussions on topics of interest to Mumbai's and India's general public.

PAST PROGRAMMES

Lions on the Throne: The Supreme Court of India and Judicial Independence

Lecture by **Arghya Sengupta** and conversation with Justice **B. N. Srikrishna |** September 24th, 2019, 6:30 pm

Justice B.N. Srikrishna and Prof. Arghya Sengupta in conversation during 'Lions on the Throne: The Supreme Court of India and Judicial Independence'

How Do We Judge the Judges?

The question of the limitless power of the Indian judiciary looms large in public consciousness at present. Not a day goes by, it seems, when the decisions and deliberations of the Supreme Court are not front-page news. Judges of the highest courts are being made recognisable to the news-watching and newspaper-reading masses (some for less illustrious reasons than others). Their ever-growing presence in the mediascape, following the most recent spate of pronouncements on notable national issues, combined with the unexpected transfers of judges (not to mention the abysmally handled case of an accusation of sexual harassment) have especially raised questions of the level of accountability and transparency necessary for the public to continue to have institutional trust in the higher Indian judiciary.

A recent example of this growing cognisance of judicial power is the illustration that the Indian Express chose for its cover page on the day after the Ayodhya verdict – the faces of the judges, sketched in black and white. The subliminal messaging – remember those who changed the course of history in India. The aesthetic was that of the history textbook, i.e., the manner in which we remember Nehru and Gandhi. Any number of other images could have been chosen: those taken by photojournalists present at the demolition of the Babri Masjid, of those killed in the violence that ensued, or even of the land itself whose ownership has now been adjudicated. But the faces of the now-famous five were chosen instead, to etch them clearly into our mind's eye with a heroic brush.

This degree of visibility is worthy of discussion. However, few lawyers would argue that the broad decision-making powers that currently fall into the ambit of the Indian courts should be curtailed. Arghya Sengupta's lecture, based on his recent book, *Independence and Accountability of the Higher Indian Judiciary*, provided a riveting evening of counter arguments to the traditionally accepted logic for the relatively opaque functioning of the higher courts, especially the process of judicial appointments which, he reminded us, has been called the country's 'best-kept secret'. Shedding light on some unconventional solutions for balancing demands for more insight into judicial processes, while upholding the respect and authority deserving of this constitutional office, Sengupta forced us to re-think whether our judges today are truly "lions under the throne".

According to Sengupta, the haunting experience of Emergency, especially the events of 25th April 1974 – the day on which the Chief Justice of India was handpicked by the executive rather than through expected and established criteria of seniority – have been key to shaping common wisdom about what constitutes judicial independence in India. In a phrase, independence equals insulation from the government. Sengupta unpacked why this idea may not be as sound as we might imagine. Beginning with Montesquieu's misnomer about the need for "separation of powers", Sengupta reminded us that this theory was meant to create a balance of power between the executive, judiciary and legislature rather than to mandate any kind of complete separation in function. Quoting also from the federalist papers, he asserted that James Madison had explicitly spoken of a blending of the various organs of power. Therefore, separation becomes a question of degree, aimed towards ensuring a system of checks and balances, rather than a reason for refusing any role for the executive in the process of judicial appointments.

Sengupta also made some suggestions for reform. One was that the executive needed to have "skin in the game" if we wanted to see all major judicial positions filled rather than over half languishing empty, and cases and undertrials waiting for years. The other was that there needed to be more of a

focus on the process of appointments, rather than the persons doing the appointing. On this second issue, Sengupta presented the following possibilities: first, the creation of some published criteria with regard to who could be appointed – for example, on the basis of religion, gender or representation of different states – as there is only an informal understanding of this at present; second, clarity on how the facts of a judge's or lawyer's performance is assessed; and third, perhaps most controversially, a formalised process of application or interview. Sengupta's contention is that if we want our judges to be credible while at the same time ensuring diversity, there is now a need to move from covert, unspoken rules, to overt, explicit processes.

The honourable Justice Srikrishna, who was Sengupta's respondent after the lecture, was quick to point out – to rousing laughter – that even if the Indian higher judiciary were threatening to become "lions on the throne", it was better than them being mice under the Queen's chair. Justice Srikrishna's responses, candid and anecdotal, provided extraordinary insight into the real battles behind more theoretical desires for reform. While sympathising and agreeing with some of Sengupta's formal arguments, and subtly acknowledging that the Supreme Court's credibility is low at present, he also emphasised that there was nothing to be gained by lowering the bar, or opening the floodgates, to an extent that judges would be under the same scrutiny as civil servants. Many, perhaps, forget the sacrifice that lawyers make when accepting a judgeship, not only of time (and of working persistently at double-time for the rest of their career) but also with regard to salary. The most serious pressure is of living up to their oath, which mandates that they must be able to render justice to all manner of persons without fear or favour. Justice Srikrishna, famous for his impartiality, illustrated that the question of accountability can only be raised once there is clarity on who and what the judges must first and foremost be accountable to. If accountability to their own conscience, in every judgment they make, is what matters most, then any new system which threatens that delicate balance must be weighed against that higher moral order. ***- A.S.***

Dancing Women: Choreographing Corporeal Histories of Popular Hindi Cinema

December 20th, 2019, 6:30 pm | Usha Iyer (Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies program, Department of Art & Art History, Stanford University)

Azurie in Bal Hatiya (Ram Daryani, 1935)

The detailed write-up about this lecture will be featured in our next Quarterly (Apr - Jun 2020).

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Announcements

POSTGRADUATE COURSE IN ISLAMIC AESTHETICS

THE MAKING OF SAFAVID IRAN: HISTORY, ART, AND ARCHITECTURE

January 6th to 16th, 2020 | 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Masjid-i Shaykh Lutfallah, Isfahan @ Morteza Aminoroayayo

1 - **Narrating the Safavid Past: Religion and Society in Three Iranian Cities**
Sholeh A. Quinn (University of California, Merced)
Day 1 : Tabriz and Shah Isma'il: The Sufi Who Became King
Day 2 : Qazvin and Shah Tahmasb: The Safavid State Takes Shape
Day 3 : Isfahan and Shah 'Abbas: Narrating Half the World
6th - 8th January 2020 | Registration: INR 3,000

2 - **Architecture of Persuasion: Safavid Cities in the 16th and 17th centuries**
Sussan Babaie (The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)
Day 1 : Tabriz and Ardabil: Inherited Traditions and Invented Empire
Day 2 : Qazvin: A New Beginning Under Shah Tahmasb
Day 3 : Isfahan: The Jewel in the Safavid Crown
9th - 11th January 2020 | Registration: INR 3,000

3 - **Between Word and Image: Safavid Visual Culture in the 16th and 17th century**
Massumeh Farhad (Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)
Day 1 : Tabriz and Ardabil: Production of Safavid Royal Manuscripts
Day 2 : Qazvin and Shiraz: Arrival of the Millennium
Day 3 : Isfahan and Mashhad: Towards a New Aesthetics
13th - 15th January 2020 | Registration: INR 3,000

4 - **Shaykh Abbasi and His Circle: Artistic Exchange between Iran and India in the 17th century**
Massumeh Farhad (Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution)
Annual Deccan Heritage Foundation Lecture
16th January 2020 | Registration: www.jp-india.org

Registration fee for the entire programme: INR 8,000. Certificate of attendance will be given.

POSTGRADUATE COURSE IN AESTHETICS, CRITICISM AND THEORY (ACT)

February 4th – April 29th, 2020
Typically Wednesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Homestead, Fletcher Williams III, 2018
Materials: Tin Roof, Picket Fence, Interior Wood Paneling, and Rebar
Dimensions: 44 x 44 x 84 in.

Jnanapravaha Mumbai's intensive postgraduate certificate course in Aesthetics, Criticism and Theory (ACT) provides students with a rigorous introduction to art history, criticism, aesthetics, critical theory, and contemporary art practice over three months. Seminars are complemented by film screenings, studio, gallery and museum visits, ensuring an understanding of a breadth of artistic praxes and institutions of the art world.

Beginning with the history of aesthetics in Western philosophy through Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Foucault, ACT moves to an analysis of how the discipline of art history and the practice of art criticism emerged and transformed over time. Students survey developments in South Asia in relation to the West.

Classes devoted to the foundations of critical theory with close readings of Marx, Lefebvre and the Frankfurt School, provide the transition to seminars on modernism, modernity and postmodernism. Engaging with thinkers such as Geeta Kapur, Arjun Appadurai, TJ Clark, Arthur Danto, Paul Gilroy, WJT Mitchell, and Jacques Ranciere, among many others, students enter the charged debates that follow from key moments in art history marked by texts such as *When Was Modernism* and *The Black Atlantic*.

The oeuvres of select painters, sculptors, architects, as well as video, performance, sound, digital and multimedia artists are studied throughout the course. Bridging the gaps between reading, writing and seeing, ACT is unique in providing theoretical depth while remaining critically engaged with diverse practitioners.

For admission, you are required to submit:
A copy of your last degree certificate and a passport-size photograph.

Fee: INR 18,000

JPM STUDENT REVIEW

Peris as winged friends in the *Flower Garden of Love*

Ujwala Rao (JPM Alumnus)

Fig. 1: 'Fairies Descend to the Chamber of Prince Manohar', The Metropolitan Museum of Art. [1]

The *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* (*Flower Garden of Love*) manuscript folio of *Fairies Descend to the Chamber of Prince Manohar* (Fig. 1) in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, straddles many worlds. [2] It encompasses the essence of the Deccan in its paintings and its language, the earthiness of Awadh in its tale, the prestige of Iran in its script and most famously, the cloaked mysticism of Sufism in its *isharah* (allusion or symbolism). This multi-stranded network of influences makes the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* a worthy representative of the syncretic art tradition of the Deccan. This essay reads the manuscript as a *Sufi* romance and explores the resulting metaphors in its narrative composition, focussing on fairies and their function in Islamic art.

Description and provenance

The Met *GII* folio is attributed to Deccan India, where it was a popular manuscript theme as evidenced by the existence of multiple illustrated and unillustrated manuscripts across museums and public libraries. The Met *GII* folio was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2011[3] and is from a dispersed copy of a *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* manuscript which has been broadly dated to circa 1710.[4] Folios of this dispersed 1710 *GII* are also in the collections of the Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Khalili collection in London, and the Binney Collection at the San Diego Museum of Art, amongst others, and are last traced to a 1979 Christie's auction of Islamic and

1 Image Source: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/457728
2 Hereinafter referred to as 'The Met *GII* folio'.
3 https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/457728
4 Hereinafter referred to as 'The dispersed 1710 *GII*'.

Indian manuscripts.[5] Their provenance prior to this period is as yet unknown, but given the lavishness of the manuscript (see Fig. 2 for the double-sided folio of the dispersed 1710 *GII*), it is quite likely that the manuscript was commissioned by a Mughal governor or a local *jagirdar* (state official administering lands) in the Deccan during the transitional period between the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda by the Mughals in 1686-87, and the reign of the Asaf Jahis in Hyderabad from 1724 onwards.

Literary context and narrative story

The *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* is a *masnavi* (poem with rhyming couplets) written in 1657-58 in *Dakkani* by Nusrati, the poet laureate of Sultan Ali Adil Shah II of Bijapur. The story is adapted from an earlier *Hindavi* tale, *Madhumalati*, written in *Avadhi* by Shaikh Manjhan Shattari in 1545. By its association with *Madhumalati*, the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* merges into a rich tradition of *premakhyans* or *Sufi* romances written in the vernacular medium since the 14th century in North India, starting with Mulla Da'ud's *Chandayan*. As a typical allegorical love story from its genre, the *masnavi* depicts the pre-ordained kindling of love, separation and eventual union of Prince Manohar and Princess Madhumalati.

Fig. 2: 'Double Page from the Gulshan-i 'Ishq of Nusrati', The Khalili Collection.[6]

The story begins with a *Sufi* saint, Roshan-Dil, refusing alms from the Prince's father, Raja Bikram, since he was childless (depicted in Fig. 2). Consequently, Raja Bikram embarks on an ascetic path and undergoes several

5 Navina Najat Haidar. 'Sufi Romances of the Deccan: The Illustrated Traditions of the Gulshan-I 'Ishq (Flower Garden of Love)', *Hadeeth ad-Dar* (*Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah*, Volume 40, 2017), 27.

6 (1) This double page is from the same dispersed 1710 *GII* manuscript that the Met *GII* folio belongs to. (2) All image sources hereinafter are provided in the Appendix 'Image References'.

tribulations to seek the boon of an offspring, a *Sufi tamsil* (allegory) indexing the search of the soul for the divine essence. The quest metaphorically ends where it began – with Roshan-Dil giving a magic fruit to Raja Bikram to help him secure a son. This magically-begotten son, Prince Manohar, lives a lavish, protected life within the palace. However, fate intervenes as a group of flying fairies sees him sleeping on the palace terrace, next to his *dai* (nurse), Sahaja. The accompanying verses aptly capture the mood that is so beautifully illustrated in the Met *GII* folio.

> *Utar saqf par te angan men pariyan /*
> *kharyan a yakas yak te yak chand bhariyan //*
> *Dekhan sahzade kon la'e dhar hawas /*
> *yakas yak te angin cali jalad dhas //*
>
> The fairies came down from the roof intro the courtyard, /
> they stood there and teased each other. //
> When they saw the prince (!), they were overcome by desire /
> and quickly, one before the other, they rushed inside. //[7]

Enraptured by the beauty of the prince, the fairies decide to find a worthy lover for him, and their search leads them to Princess Madhumalati of Maharaspur. In a poetic topos often employed in Persian and Arabic romances,[8] the fairies hoist up the prince's bed and fly him all the way to Princess Madhumalati's bedroom, confident in their knowledge that the two, well-matched in their attributes, would certainly fall in love. The lovers wake up, instantly fall in love and exchange rings as tokens of their fantastical tryst. The fairies transport the prince back to his palace before daybreak, but the prince is unable to bear the trauma of separation from the princess. Re-enacting his father's ascetic quest, the prince sets off on an arduous journey in search of his beloved, battling wild animals, demons, forests and a turbulent sea.

The story now progresses towards the union of the two lovers, using standard tropes of the nurse as a guide in the journey of self-discovery, a mother who is concerned about social conventions, a *sakhi* who leads him to his beloved, a valiant prince who selflessly helps the lovers re-unite, etc. Unlike many other *Sufi* romances, *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* (and Manjhan's *Madhumalati*) envisages a happy ending for the lovers without resorting to the metaphor of *fana an al-fana*, a complete annihilation of the soul. Instead, the *Sufi* path of mystical ascent and descent seems to be distinctly Shattari (after Manjhan's affiliation to the *Sufi* Shattari order).[9] A sudden revelation of the divine essence (the beloved) leads the *murid* (disciple) on a journey during the course of which the *nafs al-ammara*, 'the soul inciting to evil' grows into the *nafs al-lawwama*, 'the self-accusing soul', and ends in speechless contemplation of the beloved as the *nafs al-mutma'inna*, 'the soul at peace'[10] Thus, the story of *ishq-e majazi* (metaphorical love or mundane love, that of humans for one another) becomes metamorphosed into *ishq-e haqiqi* (true love, that of humans for the divine)".[11]

Style and composition

Having elaborated on the historical and mystical context of the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq*, the connections between its narrative story and its illustrative composition become evident. The Deccan as the place of origin for the manuscript is unchallenged, even though the manuscript colophon is both undated and unsigned. Until the pioneering scholarship of Peter Gaeffke in 1987, the folios of the dispersed 1710 *GII* were unidentified.[12] A key marker in identifying the folios of the dispersed 1710 *GII* has been the complete version of the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, whose colophon dates it to 1742-43.[13] The Philadelphia copy has been conclusively traced to the Deccan through its presence in Tipu Sultan's library.[14] More importantly,

7 Peter Gaeffke. 'Identification of Four Miniatures from the Dekkhan', Journal of the American Oriental Society, 107, no. 2 (1987), 309-10.

8 For similarities between *Madhumalati* and *Mirigavati* and three stories in *Thousand and One Nights*, see Richard Van Leeuwen, in 'Kingship and Love', *Narratives of Kingship in Eurasian Empires, 1300-1800*, 163-97. (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2017),168.

9 For a detailed discussion on Shattari cosmology in Manjhan's *Madhumalati*, see Aditya Behl. *Love's Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 379-1545,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 296-97.

10 Annemarie Schimmel, in *A Two-coloured Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina, 1992), 66.

11 Carla Petievich. 'The Feminine and Cultural Syncretism in Early Dakani Poetry', The Annual of Urdu Studies, Volume 8 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1993), 113.

12 Peter Gaeffke, 'Identification of Four Miniatures', 309-11.

13 Navina Najat Haider. *Sultans of Deccan India,1500-1700. Opulence and Fantasy*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 297-98.

14 Charles Stewart. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Oriental Library of the Late Tippoo Sultan of Mysore* (Cambridge: 1809), 179.

the Philadelphia manuscript seems to be a near-copy of the dispersed 1710 *GII* (compare Fig. 3 with Fig. 1) and demonstrates how techniques changed in the three-decade gap between the production of the two manuscripts, with the later folio not as vibrant and intricate in its use of colours, textile patterns and lines.

Fig. 3: 'Fairies Descending to the Bedchamber of Prince Manohar', Philadelphia Museum of Art.

In addition to the textual evidence that can be traced to the Deccan, the manuscript's stylistic linkages with the Deccan are very strong. The fairies, a dominant element in the composition, lend a lyrical sense of movement and grace to the illustration. The downward sweep of their descent brings to mind the descent of angels depicted in another Deccani drawing (See Fig. 5).[15] One can discern some Mughal influence in the faces of the fairies, but their costumes are distinctly Deccani in style. The long *patka* (waist sash) with floral patterns, the tight *salwars* (trousers) with small *butis* (floral prints) and the transparent *peshwaz* (tunic) with gentle folds demarcated through shading are all recurrent features in Deccani paintings (Compare Fig. 4 with Fig. 6, 7 and 9). Multi-stranded pearl necklaces, arm cuffs with pearl borders and *bajubandhs* (armlets) with tassels are also seen in several Deccani paintings, in the late 17th century and well into the 18th century (See Fig. 9). Some of these elements also made their way to the Rajput (especially Bikaner) and Pahari ateliers, along with the artists who migrated there after the fall of the Deccani kingdoms.[16]

The folio also displays architectural elements which are popular in Deccani paintings – the sloping *chhajja*, the curtain drapery and the upper-storey wall covered with *martabans* (vases) in *taqs* (niches). The fine detailing of the palace structure suggests a Bijapuri influence. The depiction of flower sprays in vases in the lower-storey resembles the wall design of the Athar Mahal, Bijapur (1646)[17] and is considered to indicate a possible Turkman influence, as seen in some illuminated manuscript panels (see Fig. 10).[18]

Fig. 4: Detail, 'Fairies Descend to the Chamber of Prince Manohar', The Metropolitan Museum of Art.[19]

15 J P Losty. 'Further Deccani and Mughal Drawings of Christian Subjects'. British Library Blog: Nov 16, 2015.
16 John Seyller. 'Deccani Elements in Early Pahari Paintings', *Sultans of Deccan*, 64-81.
17 Haidar, 'Sufi Romances of the Deccan', 28.
18 http://library.clevelandart.org/sites/default/files/5%20Kitab%20i%20Nauras.pdf
19 Image Source: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/457728

Fig. 5: 'The Virgin Worshipping the Christ Child with Angels', 1640-60, Deccan, British Library.
(Note the angels hurtling down)

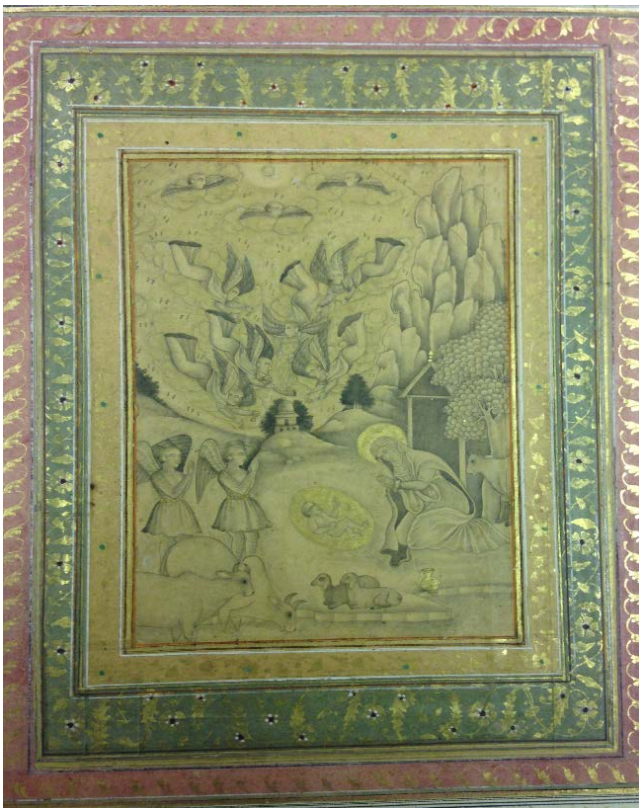

Fig. 6: 'Lady Sitting on Terrace with Attendants', 1650, Golconda, British Museum.
(Note the crown and the folds of the peshwaz)

Fig. 7: Detail, 'Zeb-un-nisa', 1670, Golconda, Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art.
(Note the floral butis on the shalwar and the earrings)

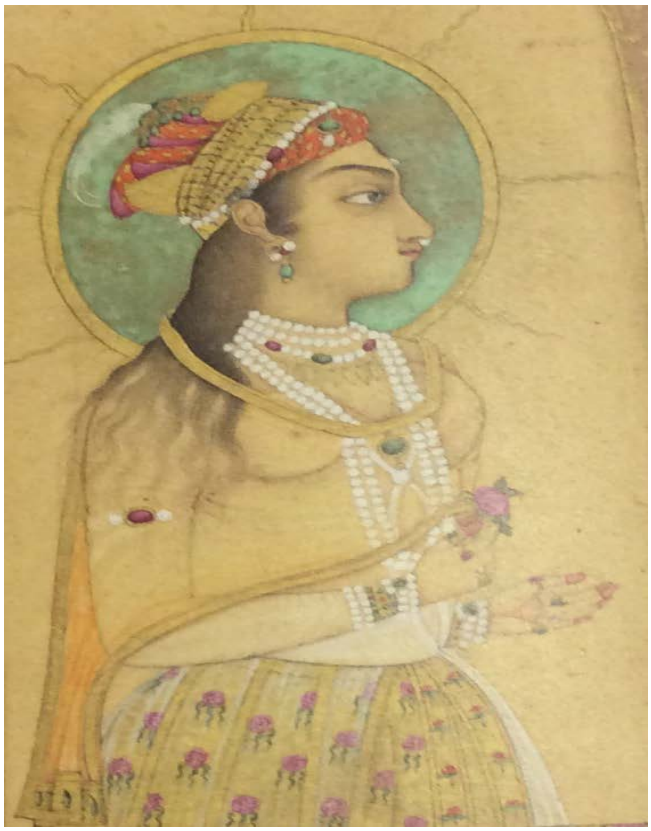

Fig. 8: Lady Playing a Tambura, 1720-50, Bijapur, NSW Art Gallery.
(Note the attendant's costume, including the drapery of the odhni)

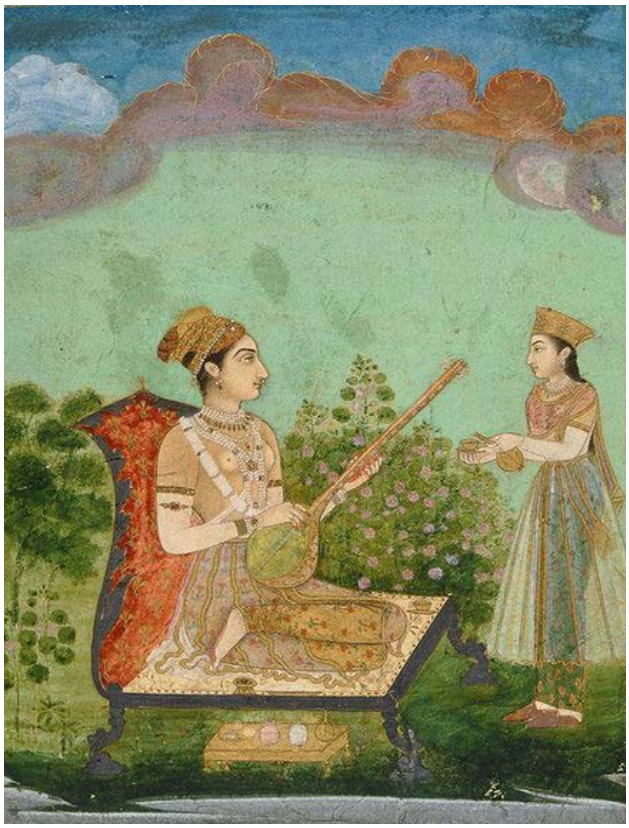

Fig. 9: Dancing Girl, Late 17th Century, Golconda, Collection of Dr. Daniel Vasella, Switzerland.
(Note the tasselled bajubandhs and arm cuffs)

Fig. 10: Detail, The 'Yazd' Anthology (Or.8193), 1436, British Museum.
(Note the floral vase motif)

The cool colour palette (including mauve, blue, green and brown) sparkles brilliantly against the rich application of gold and silver (though now oxidised). Rather than a mere artistic choice, this liberal use of gold and silver is linked to the verses which describe the palace setting as a garden in which "Handfuls of pure diamonds and pearls were applied. They were set in mortar and polished."[20] The shiny white surface which attracts the *peris* to the palace may also be a metaphor for light.[21]

Peris as allegories in the narrative

In the context of the relationship between the illustrations and the accompanying text, it may be appropriate to say that images in this manuscript were meant "to be 'read' rather than appreciated as fine art".[22] I would like to additionally suggest that the *peris* are the key agents through whom the story unfolds. The *peris* bring forth two important inflexion points in the story and most *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* manuscripts have at least five folios dedicated to these scenes. Firstly, they guide Raja Bikram to Roshan-Dil's ashram in exchange for their clothes in a scene reminiscent of Krishna's *Vastraharan Lila* (See Fig. 11 and 12). Secondly, they orchestrate the fateful meeting of the hero and the heroine and initiate the hero's self-transformation. Angels or *apsaras* play such transformative roles in several other *prem kathas* (love stories).[23]

20 Peter Gaeffke, in 'The Garden of Light and the Forest of Darkness in Dakkinī Sūfī Literature and Painting'. Artibus Asiae 48, no. 3/4 (1987): 229.

21 Haidar, 'Sufi Romances of the Deccan', 31.

22 Lisa Golombuk in 'Towards a Classification of Islamic Painting', *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 23.

23 Francesca Orsini, in 'The Social History of a Genre: Kathas across Languages in Early Modern North India' (E-paper SOAS), 19 & 24. See also *Phulban*, a Deccani Sufi Romance by Nishati.

Fig. 11: 'Raja Bikram Collecting the Clothes of the Bathing Fairies', dispersed 1710 GII, Minneapolis Institute of Art.

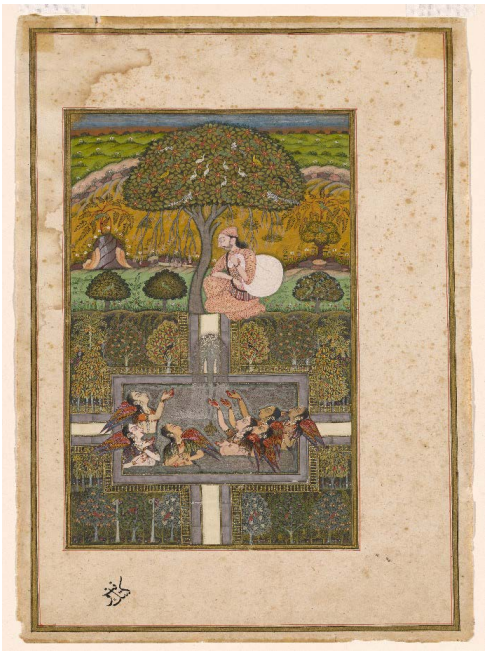

Fig. 12: 'Flying Fairies Carry King Bikram toward Kanakgir', Philadelphia Museum of Art.

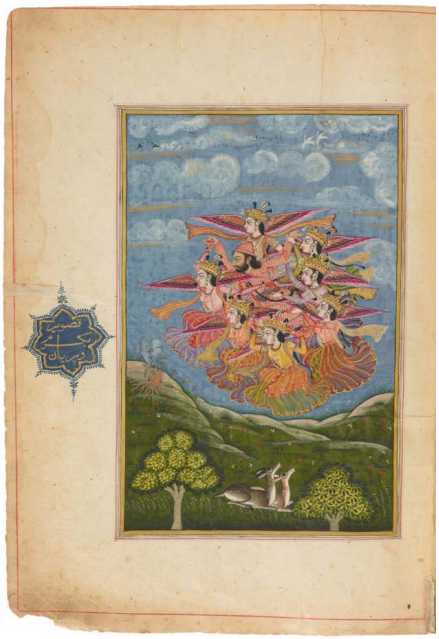

Fig. 13: 'Fairies in the Bedchamber of Princess Madhumalati', 17th Century, Salar Jung Museum.

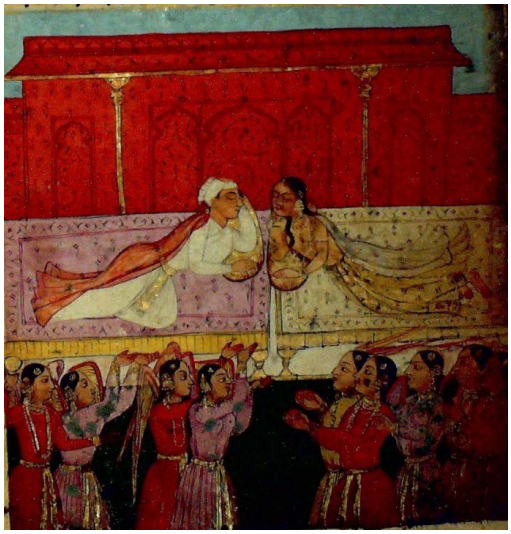

Fig. 14: 'Fairies Carry Manohar', 1750, San Diego Museum.

This strategic intervention of mythical beings could find its source in the important functions that angels play in Islam. Schimmel refers to the Archangel Gabriel who, having brought the revelation to Muhammad, is equated to a mediator between Man and God in Islam. "…Gabriel becomes a symbol of intellect, which can lead the seeker to the threshold of the sanctuary, but is not allowed inside".[24] Islamic cosmology explicitly states that *Nasut* (human world) and *Lahut* (absolute divinity) are only connected via *Malakut* (angelic world) and *Jabarut* (heaven).[25] I would also like to argue that the consistent use of nine fairies in the bedchamber scene across multiple manuscripts (See Fig. 13 and 14) is a veiled allusion to the nine guardian angels that Hadith 304 envisages for every human being.[26] The Shattaris' belief in number and letter mysticism and its linkages with guardian angels also lends credibility to this theory.[27] The *peris* in the story are thus symbolically a bridge between man and god and create a space of fantasy in which the text, illustrations and philosophy can be interwoven.

24 Schimmel, '*A Two-coloured Brocade*', 80.

25 MZA Shakeb, in '*Islamic Paradise and Cosmology*', Jannat: Paradise in Islamic Art (June 2012, Vol. 63. No. 4). Mumbai: The Marg Foundation (2012), 38.

26 S R Burge, in *Angels in Islam: A Commentary with Selected Translations of Jalal-Al-Din al Sujuti's Al-Habaik fi akhbar al mala'ik (The Arrangement of the Traditions about Angels)*. PhD dissertation. (The University of Edinburgh, 2009), 304.

27 Aditya Behl, in '*Love's Subtle Magic*', 322-323.

Appendix: Image References

Image No.	Image Description	Image Reference
Fig 1	*'Fairies Descend to the Chamber of Prince Manohar', The Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met GII folio).*	https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/457728
Fig 2	*'Double Page from the Gulshan-i 'Ishq of Nusrati', The Khalili Collection.*	https://www.khalilicollections.org/collections/islamic-art/khalili-collection-islamic-art-double-page-from-the-gulshan-i-ishq-of-nusrati-mss640
Fig 3	*'Fairies Descending to the Bedchamber of Prince Manohar', GII, Philadelphia Museum of Art.*	http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/338408.html?mulR=829502940|445
Fig 4	*Detail, 'Fairies Descend to the Chamber of Prince Manohar', The Metropolitan Museum of Art.*	https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/457728
Fig 5	*'The Virgin Worshipping the Christ Child with Angels'. 1640-60, Deccan, British Library, J.6,2.fc.*	http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/asian-and-african/2015/11/further-deccani-and-mughal-drawings-of-christian-subjects.html
Fig 6	*'Lady Sitting on Terrace with Attendants'. 1650, Golconda, British Museum.*	http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.assetId=267953001&objectId=266820&partId=1
Fig 7	*Detail, 'Zeb-un-nisa', 1670, Golconda, Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art.*	Seyller, John and Jagdish Mittal, '*Deccani Paintings*'
Fig 8	*'Lady Playing a Tambura', 1720-50, Bijapur, NSW Art Gallery.*	https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/EP6.1962/
Fig 9	*'Dancing Girl', Late 17th Century, Golconda, Collection of Dr. Daniel Vasella, Switzerland.*	http://asianartnewspaper.com/sultans-of-deccan-india-1500-1700-opulence-and-fantasy/#prettyphoto%5Bgroup%5D/7
Fig 10	*Detail, The 'Yazd' Anthology (Or.8193), 1436, British Museum.*	http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_8193_fs001r
Fig 11	*'Raja Bikram Collecting the Clothes of the Bathing Fairies', dispersed 1710 GII, Minneapolis Institute of Art.*	https://collections.artsmia.org/art/4829/raja-bikram-collecting-the-clothes-of-the-bathing-fairies-mulla-nusrati
Fig 12	*'Flying Fairies Carry King Bikram Toward Kanakgir', GII, Philadelphia Museum of Art.*	http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/338377.html?mulR=720412305|444
Fig 13	*'Fairies in the Bedchamber of Princess Madhumalati', 17th Century, Salar Jung Museum.*	MS 125, Gulshan-I 'Ishq, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad
Fig 14	*"Fairies Carry Manohar", 1750, San Diego Museum.*	http://collection.sdmart.org/Obj5640?sid=2207&x=10136

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