

OF NETWORKS AND NARRATIVES: COLLECTING INDIAN ART IN AMERICA,
1907-1972

A Dissertation

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Brinda Kumar

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1907-1972

Brinda Kumar, Ph. D.

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Beginning in the early 20th century, art museums in America were among the first to collect and display Indian objects *as fine art*. Although the appreciation of the aesthetic value of Indian art in colonial India took place in the wake of burgeoning nationalism, parallel developments in framing Indian art, albeit with differing impetuses were taking place in America. The aim of this dissertation is therefore to unpack the ways in which Indian objects were placed within the American art museum, and how such framings contributed in specific ways to the contouring of the field of Indian art beyond the nation. A history of the transnational, cosmopolitan networks along which individuals, objects and ideas traveled, that underpinned this process is therefore recovered, while the shifts in the contours of the field during different historical periods within the 20th century are also traced. The dissertation focuses on key individuals and their collections of Indian art in America in the period between 1907 to 1972, in order to track and analyze how Indian objects were variously accorded value in aesthetic, monetary, cultural and art historical terms.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brinda Kumar was born in New Delhi, India in 1981. She studied at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya (1992-1999), after which she did her BFA in Painting and Printmaking at the College of Art, New Delhi (1999-2003). At College of Art she developed an interest in art history, which she pursued during her MA at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (2003-2005). She has worked as an independent researcher, curator and as a Director of Publications at a contemporary Indian art gallery. After being accepted to the PhD program in the Department of the History of Art at Cornell University, she moved to the United States in 2007, and is now based in New York.

To my parents Renu and Arun Kumar

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Although writing a dissertation can be a solitary and often lonely task, the genesis of a project, the development of ideas and the production of a body of work require the support of many individuals and organizations. My dissertation demonstrates my interest in historiography, and thus I take this opportunity to turn that methodological lens onto my own trajectory, as I acknowledge those who have enabled me to reach this stage.

My parents Renu and Arun Kumar, to whom I have dedicated this dissertation, deserve primary credit for introducing and nurturing an interest in art in me. Their unwavering support of my pursuit of studying first painting and then art history has been crucial to my development as a scholar. Moreover, it was my parents' collection of Indian textiles, painting and sculpture, coupled with the desire to understand that which is closest to one, that spurred an initial interest in collecting and connoisseurly practices, which in turn developed into the kernel of an idea for a research project.

I am extremely grateful to my advisor Prof. Iftikhar Dadi, for having seen potential in me, and for having given me the opportunity to attend Cornell University as his student. He has been a generous and supportive mentor, who helped me navigate the pressures and demands of graduate school. He encouraged me to extend the scope of my scholarly pursuits, often beyond my disciplinary boundaries, while at the same time he reminded me to stay focused and set realistic goals. I have learnt from Prof. Dadi's critical thinking, I have been inspired by his passion and dedication

to research, and I have learnt that questions asked are not necessarily an indication of lack, but rather opportunities for discovery.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKC – Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy

CLF – Charles Lang Freer

EB3 – Edwin Binney 3rd

JDR3 – John D Rockefeller 3rd

MFA – Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

PMA – Philadelphia Museum of Art

SDMA – San Diego Museum of Art

SK – Stella Kramrisch

WGA – W. G. Archer

WNB – W. Norman Brown

Introduction

“What we now consider the arts of India – analyzed in its Art History, displayed in its museums, prized in its markets – comprise a category that was constituted in the twentieth century.”¹

The conventions of the constituting factors that created the category of “Indian art,” namely its Art History, museums and markets, have in recent years come under interrogation and critique in the wake of a self-reflexive movement towards a “new” art history.² The “new” art history proposed a turn to critically question “all the normative assumptions on the production, circulation and consumption of art as well as the production of meaning.”³ This entailed not only an engagement with the lessons of literary theory and cultural studies, but also an embrace of the methodologies of art criticism that had hitherto been focused on modern trends in Indian art. It is in this self-reflexive spirit that this dissertation analyzes the formation of collections of Indian art

¹ Kavita Singh, “Museums and the Making of the Indian Art Historical Canon” in Shivaji Panikkar, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Deeptha Achar, eds., *Towards a New Art History: Studies in Indian Art: Essays Presented in Honour of Prof. Ratan Parimoo* (D.K. Printworld, 2003), 332.

² This critique of conventional art history is levied at a set of practices that pervaded in museums in India which largely relied on the framework established in the early twentieth century, which itself arose out of nationalist impulses. Accordingly an equivalent art history for Indian art arose that in many ways transferred Western approaches to an Indian context, emphasizing stylistic analyzes, attribution of works to schools, historical periods and artists, dating of works and the establishment of their authenticity with a focus on rarity and the rediscovery of forgotten artists and periods “The shared logic and complementary practices of Archaeology-Indology-Museology put in place during the phase of high nationalism determined the contours of the practice of Indian Art History...the conventions of the discipline have been significantly determined by the concerns of the art market on the one hand and the practical demands of the allied Archaeology and Museology on the other. Moreover, Indian Art History has, along with Archaeology and Museology, been materially implicated in the project of inventing a “golden” Indian past.” *Ibid.*, 50.

³ “The crux of the debate lay in the clash of an Art History predominantly concerned with an art-object oriented approach entailing issues of authorship, connoisseurship, attribution and chronology with a framework oriented approach that undergird the production of art.” Panikkar, Mukherji, and Achar, *Towards a New Art History*; *ibid.*, 51.

since the early 20th century, and the role of individuals who had enabled the development of a discourse around them. Although museum collections of Indian art (located mostly in India, and partly in Britain) and art historical scholarship have been this new art history's primary areas of interest, this dissertation focuses on the implication of the formation of museum collections and the production of discourse in America, which has received slight attention. It also takes seriously the constitutive role of the circulation of objects through international markets, in the making of the category of "Indian art".

In its chosen focus this dissertation aims to open up a space for the exploration of how the collection of Indian objects *as art* in America, and the development of Indian art as a distinct and legitimate field of study, were linked processes. This is a subject which has not been sufficiently addressed in Indian art historiographical writings, particularly as the genealogy of an Indian art historical canon ties it to the project of nation-making, first in opposition to colonialism and then in national institutions in the post-independence era. In undertaking the examination of the implications of the framing of Indian art through collections, in America and by select individuals, the idea of cosmopolitanism becomes a useful lens through which to approach the subject. It is a cosmopolitanism, that Amanda Anderson describes as "reflective distance from one's cultural affiliations, broad understanding of other cultures and customs, and a belief in universal humanity."⁴ It is therefore a cosmopolitanism that works *with* nationalism,⁵ and hence this project is not an untethering of the nation from Indian art history, but rather questions this history's singular orientation to it. In this regard it is helpful to take a leaf out of the approaches in

⁴ Pheng Cheah, Bruce Robbins, and Social Text Collective, *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 265..

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

more recent writings on Modernism in South Asian art that have explored global connections in art practice in the 20th century, as a “translation in transnational modernism.”⁶ I propose that the study of the transnational movement of Indian objects and the production of meanings around collections of Indian art, is thus a way of complicating the history of canon formation of Indian art. However, although this approach from studies on modernism is germane to the current project, the subject of this dissertation does not address the collection of modernist art from South Asia or its associated discourse. Indeed, the secular underpinning of much of modern Indian art put it at odds with the spiritualized ideals that pre-modern Indian art ostensibly articulated, and made the seamless continuation of the pre-modern narrative into the modern harder to reconcile. The category of Indian art, as articulated through art historical writings and museum collections in the 20th century, was typically limited to art of the pre-modern era.⁷

The accretion of value around objects occurred when they were brought into public circulation. The presence of objects in a “market” and their subsequent selective collection and deliberate reframing were factors that enabled their transformation from “curiosities”/ “antiquities”/ “ethnographic objects”/ “industrial arts”/ “idols” or “relics” to “fine arts”. This transformation, and the imbueing of aesthetic value accorded objects with the elevated status, now art, worthy of collection by the art museum, and their study, and ordering within a larger classificatory art system. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the acceptance of the western terms for the location of “fine art” in the pre-modern

⁶ Iftikhar Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 22.

⁷ Even where modern art was presented alongside the premodern, such as in the case of the 1947 Royal Academy exhibition in London, the former stood as a narrative aside to the latter.

“sculpture” and “painting” for Indian art and the transformation of such objects in particular would dominate collecting practices.⁸ While the nationalist imperative to take on equivalent terms to develop an autonomous and equally valid art history, particularly in the context of colonialism certainly played an important role in the manner in which objects were narrated, the contexts in which such framings were articulated also took place beyond the nationalist and colonialist paradigms. Moreover such framings outside the national/colonial context, were taking place in tandem and in the case of Indian art in America were often adapted to prevailing understandings of “Asian Art” (or Far Eastern Art) and “Islamic Art” (or Near Eastern Art), both of which were categories that had evolving valencies in the 20th century and need to be teased out to better assess their effects in shaping an art historical canon.

In spite of the widely acknowledged roles of figures like Ananda Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrisch, who were based at American museums for several productive decades of their respective lives, the implication of the incorporation of their collections within American art museums needs to be complicated. It is thus important to situate Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch, within the larger context of the American museological turn to Indian art, to not only fully understand the significance of their individual contributions in shaping the field from their respective positions, and also to track the relationships which fostered such interests in Indian art. The coalescence of informed individuals and interests in the arts was a crucial factor in the development of art

⁸ “[T]he two “fine art” genres constituted here for India – sculpture and painting – are artificial categories. Both are literally composed of shards wrenched out of other, embedding, cultural phenomena that are crucial to their understanding or appreciation. Instead of viewing the objects *in situ*, Indian Art History presents the architectural fragment as sculpture, and the detached manuscript folio as painting, in an approximation of a western model of these arts. For the nationalist art historians who fought for the entry of Indian artefacts into the enclave of fine arts, the strategy seems to have been the positing of an Indian tradition equivalent to the western.” Panikkar, Mukherji, and Achar, *Towards a New Art History*, 352.

collections and art historical canons. Most significantly, such developments often meant that individuals played overlapping roles, and their relationships and networks belied the discrete distinction between historians, collectors, curators and dealers. An acknowledgement of the leakiness of these categories, and the hyphenated identities of key players is thus an important part of the narrative of art history. The figures addressed in this dissertation, including Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch therefore need to be seen as connected to a larger network of individuals in America and beyond, who played key roles in contouring a connoisseurly praxis for the collection of Indian art, which entailed the crystallization of ideas around antiquity, authenticity, metaphysical aesthetics and the stylistic delineation and categorization of paintings and sculpture.

Finally, this project also opens up the space to explore the history of the mobility of objects and people along transnational networks in the 20th century. Histories of the art market in recent years have begun to examine this aspect in the process of collection-formation and the assignation of value to art, however, the place of Indian objects within this history has received slight attention. Moreover it is a history fraught with the task of having to negotiate the legal and often illegal regimes that have enabled the movement of objects across borders.

Chapter 1, “The Shift to Art” begins in the 19th century and situates the place of India in the American imaginary, and describes the gradual transformation of the valuation of Indian objects. Since the 18th century, India had been a source of luxury

goods that entered America through the east coast trading channels. From the mid-19th century however, the phenomena of World's Fairs became a popular site where people in Western countries could encounter the objects (and some case people) from the non-West first-hand. India in these contexts was invariably presented as an "exotic land" while its "industrial arts" were showcased as exemplars of design and craftsmanship. The chapter tracks the influence of American Orientalism in shaping the interest in India at sites like the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876 and the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Moreover American Orientalism and Indology was also instrumental in introducing Sanskrit texts among American intelligentsia, and forwarded the idea of the universalism of Indian religions, which resonated with ideas among the New England aesthetes regarding Asian spirituality. The channeling of Asian spirituality through the objects led to the transformation of ancient Asian objects as bearers of universal aesthetic ideals and Asian art began being collected by a select number of individuals. Among these was Charles Lang Freer, whose interests in Indian and Japanese art were first sparked during a trip in 1894. By the early 20th century, Freer went on to become the leading collector of Chinese and Japanese art in America, and although he only collected Indian art for a brief period in 1907, he saw it as a vital link between his collections of "Near Eastern" and "Far Eastern" art. While he was advised in his collecting by scholars like Ernest Fenollosa, and dealers like Dikran Kelekian, Freer's tastes and aesthetic proclivities were such that they allowed him to collect in an eclectic fashion, and eventually led to his decision to found an art museum in Washington D.C. as part of the Smithsonian Institution, where Asian objects, now recognized for their aesthetic value, would have a prominent position. Freer's decision to highlight "fine art" was in keeping

with a prevailing shift away from anthropological framings that hitherto dominated the presentation of non-western objects in places such as the ethnographic museum. During the Progressive Era in America, fine art museums began actively including non-western art in their collections. For Indian art this coincided with the purchase of objects by the Metropolitan Museum of Art under the directorship of Robert de Forest through the efforts of Lockwood de Forest, and the increased presence of Indian objects at art auctions and in dealers' inventories.

Chapter 2, "A Place for India" examines the manner in which Indian art was framed in the context of prevailing interests in "Asian Art" and "Islamic Art". Focusing on the case of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston the chapter traces the introduction of the idea of Pan-Asianism in art through the efforts of Okakura Kakuzo, who had been the advisor and curator to the MFA from 1904 until his death. It addresses how the MFA first began collecting Indian art – drawing upon Okakura's ideas about the cultural and artistic unities within Asia as described in his book *Ideals of the East* (1903) on the one hand, and the growing interests in the field of "Islamic Art" on the other. Okakura and the MFA's trustee and benefactor Denman Ross, laid the groundwork upon which Ananda Coomaraswamy and his collection could be brought to the MFA. Coomaraswamy, like Okakura before him presented an opportunity for a "celebrity cosmopolitan" equally at home in the east as in the west, yet capable of making the former intelligible to the latter. It was the presence of Coomaraswamy at the MFA that signaled a new era in the history of Indian art in the American art museum. Coomaraswamy had built his collection in India and it had been the basis of his seminal work *Rajput Painting* (1916). He had collected works at a time when there were a mere handful of interested parties and the

information about pieces was scant. Nevertheless, as a market for such objects grew, it was channeled through existing networks of dealers who dealt in antiquities and curios. These included the likes of Imre Schwaiger, and the relationship between dealers, collectors, scholars and curators was crucial for the circulation and accrual of value around works. Coomaraswamy's thesis on Rajput painting, formulated in India and England arose out of a prevailing nationalist imperative, and was aimed at countering colonial biases against the presence of fine art in India. It thus recovered an aesthetic form described as purely Indian and presented it as a continuation of Buddhist art of Ajanta. Yet in America, where Coomaraswamy settled in 1916, it was such a framing that was in consonance with Okakura's proposals for the Buddhist basis of the unity of Asian cultural expression, and made the inclusion of the Coomaraswamy collection at the MFA opportune. Coomaraswamy was appointed as Keeper at the MFA and from that position would wield enormous influence on the direction of Indian art in America and beyond. During his years at the MFA he wrote extensively on Indian art and produced a comprehensive catalog of its Indian collections which set the template for such practices in art museums. Beyond his compelling arguments and elegant prose which would see him as the preeminent scholar of his day, Coomaraswamy played an important role in the formation of collections of Indian art at American museums by selling works from his own collection and advising museums curators and directors. The 1920s were also a period when there was an increased availability of objects at sales in New York often organized by European dealers. By the late 1920s, Nasli Heeramaneck, who would go on to become the primary dealer of Indian art in America, would relocate from Paris to New

York as well. With the combined efforts of interested individuals, the place for Indian art in American museum was thus secured.

Chapter 3, “The ‘Indianness’ of Art” spans the decades from the 1930s to the 1950s. It tracks the growing preeminence of Indian sculpture in the framing of Indian art within the museum, and extends Tapati Guha-Thakurta’s arguments regarding the place of Indian sculpture in the schema for Indian art established at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1947 and furthered at the National Museum in Delhi. The chapter examines the links between Coomaraswamy and a small but growing number of scholars and collectors in India in the 1930s, including Stella Kramrisch. It explores how sculpture became a priority among American museums from the 1920s as *the* quintessential form of Indian art, and this interest in sculpture only grew over time. The Philadelphia Museum of Art installed a South Indian temple hall in its new buildings, while Coomaraswamy’s *Dance of Siva* (1918) was an immensely influential publication and did in no small measure contribute to the popularity of the bronze Chola Natarajas among American collectors and museums. In this, as well as in his later writings, Coomaraswamy argued for the universal relevance of Indian art, and emphasized its spiritual underpinnings. It was such prevailing interests that paved the way for Stella Kramrisch and her collection to be brought over to America from England after World War II. Kramrisch’s ideas about Indian art were in sympathy with and extended Coomaraswamy’s proposals, and she was seen in many ways as his intellectual successor in America. Like him, she too possessed a fine collection, although its strength lay in sculpture. The collection was eventually bought by the PMA, and Kramrisch was

appointed as Curator for the first dedicated department of Indian art at an American museum.

Chapter 4 “Of Culture and Connoisseurship” focuses on the sculpture collection of John D Rockefeller 3rd and the painting collection of Edwin Binney 3rd. Collecting Indian art from the 1950s onwards, both collectors were advised by museum-based scholars and curators. Sherman Lee of the Cleveland Museum of Art advised Rockefeller, while W.G. Archer advised Binney. They also both had close relationships with Nasli Heeramaneck and bought several pieces for their Indian collections from him. Although it began as a private initiative, Rockefeller saw his art collection as being valuable in promoting cultural understanding of Asian culture to Americans. His collection thus became aligned to his activities initiated through the Asia Society, which he founded in 1958, particularly through the activities of the Asia House Gallery. The Asia House Gallery became the site for some of the most important exhibitions of Asian Art in the 1960s, including seminal exhibitions of Indian art, where pieces from the JDR3 collection were often included. For Rockefeller the place of India was integral to the cultural understanding of Asia, and thus harkened back to early twentieth century imaginings of Asia, while being attendant to the post-war needs for a renewed understanding of Asia in America. For Binney, his collection of Indian painting became a matter of connoisseurly obsession. His interest in Indian painting was an initial extension of his interests in Persian paintings, but quickly became a central focus in his collecting practice. He would go on to form an encyclopedic collection of Indian painting, which included examples of every known stylistic variety, even as new “schools” of paintings were being delineated by contemporary scholars. The period in which Binney was able to form his collection

was one where paintings, and particularly non-Mughal paintings, were entering the market in unprecedented ways. Binney brought a scholarly rigor to his collecting practice, studied works and built his collection strategically. Yet his practice was also a watershed in the history of Indian art with regards to the collection of Indian art in America. Not only was the availability of pre-modern objects from India curbed by the passing of the 1972 Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, but the discourse in Indian art history shifted away from mapping a field and extolling its aesthetic uniqueness, which had hitherto been at the heart of building collections of Indian art that would find their ways into museums.

Looking back therefore, the formation of collections of Indian art in American museums, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century is a key factor in tracing the genealogies of an Indian art historical canon, as articulated in the museum space. Singh has noted that “The reconfiguration of artefacts as art would occur only in the middle of the century; for only when the Nation had been created would nationalistic theories find a field in which to play.”⁹ Implicit is an assumption that the “authoritative centers and institutions that administered the field of Indian artefacts” were located in Britain or British India, as well as that theories of Indian nationalism that informed the discourse around Indian objects enabling their transformation into art, could only occur in and for the Nation post-independence. Although the number of objects in museums in America was small in comparison to those in Britain or British India, nevertheless, the

⁹ Ibid., 340.

place and framing of Indian objects in American *fine art* museums before 1947 complicates the contention that Indian art history primarily developed in India and the UK. Colonial economic museums, industrial art museums and site-museums,¹⁰ existed in pre-independence India, while the so-called fine-arts museums in princely states of Baroda and Hyderabad, contained European paintings, and other objects deemed aesthetically worthy according to western tastes. Of course there were private collectors (like the Tagores, B.N. Treasuryvala, Ajit Ghosh to name a few) who were collecting the kind of objects that would end up in the National Museum post-independence, however they were invariably neither making museums nor were there collections ending up in existing museums (a notable exception was Rai Krishnadasa who founded Bharata Kala Bhavan in Benaras in 1920 and guided its acquisitions). In Britain, although the India Society had been founded as early as 1910 to create a more sympathetic and nuanced understanding of Indian art than the colonial narrative presented at sites like the South Kensington Museum and the British Museum, the Society's efforts to create a museum of Indian art in London in the late 1920s, came to naught. In the 1930s, the Society's efforts to mount a grand exhibition of Indian art at the Royal Academy in the manner of the ones that had taken place for Chinese Art (1929) and Persian Art (1931), was also thwarted by the advent of World War II. Thus private collections of Indian art that were collected for or acquired by *fine art* museums such as Charles Lang Freer for the Freer Gallery and at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston were unique for their time. Moreover the aesthetic and historical recovery of Indian objects as art were resonant with the anti-colonial nationalist

¹⁰ Referring to the development of site museums in India during the viceregal tenure of Lord Curzon, Kavita Singh has noted that these museums were most akin to present-day archaeological museums "however, archaeological finds were referred to not as "art" but as "antiquities" and were valued for their documentary evidence about Indian history and the social conditions in India in the past...[a]s antiquities were not yet invested with the aura of "art", notions of "authenticity" were irrelevant..." Ibid., 338.

impulse but were adapted to needs beyond the nation. This was evidenced in the presentation of Indian objects that highlighted their aesthetic connections to other art such as attempted by Freer, or the presentation of a comprehensive narrative for Indian art such as organized by Coomaraswamy at the MFA.

In the period after 1947, the fate of Indian art in America was affected by the geopolitical conditions created in the aftermath of World War II that also saw America as the dominant economic power. American interests in Asia were influenced by Cold War politics, which extended to the cultural sphere, and concomitantly saw the rise of area studies programs at American universities. Post-war American hegemony and economic buoyancy enabled a resurgence in museumization and art collection. Several factors including the impoverishment of Europe in the aftermath of the war and the inheritance tax levied in England necessitated the dismantling of several important European collections whose contents were eagerly acquired by American collectors setting record prices. At this time, several collectors turned to arts of Asia out of pragmatism for the prohibitive prices of the most-coveted European works kept them out of reach for many. Among some collectors who had begun by collecting East Asian art in the pre-war era, in the aftermath of Japanese aggression and in the wake of trade blockades after the 1949 Revolution in China, there was also a strategic turn to the arts of South Asia. Indeed, changes in Indian domestic policy had brought about dramatic shifts in the political terrain. Former princely states that had stood in nominal autonomy from the colonial (directly controlled by the British) spheres, were incorporated into the new national territory, and had to cede power to the center with the formation of the Republic in 1950. The treasuries and libraries of these states became vulnerable to and viable for liquidation.

In a combination of processes where objects were covertly let go of or pilfered, paintings and other objects from the holdings of the hill states began to enter the market.¹¹ From the late 1940s, through the 1950s and the 1960s, this movement of objects towards the market via intermediary dealers, and thence to collections both private and public gained in momentum. Unsurprisingly therefore this was a period when the availability of greater material for study enabled the extension, revision and refinement of many of Coomaraswamy's initial observations about Rajput painting by the likes of W.G. Archer, Moti Chandra, N.C. Mehta and Karl Khandalavala.

Although the National Museum in New Delhi made extensive purchases and was an active player in this market in India, the sheer volume, and indeed the higher prices garnered abroad saw works leaving India in ever greater numbers. This was a time when the export of antiquities was still permissible according to Indian law. Till the 1970s, the only legal instruments in place concerning the movement of antiquities in India were the Treasure Trove Act of 1878 and the Antiques (Export Control) Act of 1947 (amended in 1965). Under the provisions of the former, all found "treasure of consequence which has been hidden in the soil one hundred years before the date of finding" was required to be declared to, and could then be acquired by, the government. The second act stated that no antiquity, if it were more than a hundred years old could be exported without a license issued by the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India. As early as 12 April 1947 the Antiquities (Export Control) Bill was proposed to limit the export of antiquities which was feared would take place once Europeans in India left the country and took their collections with them. So urgent was the felt need among Indian nationalist

¹¹ The processes through which this occurred and the individuals who were instrumental in this remains to be studied and was beyond the scope of this dissertation.

leaders in parliament that the Bill was passed and became an Act in the very same session.¹² This Act was intended to limit, but not outlaw the export of antiquities, however the export (with or without legal sanction) of such works continued unabated in the years following independence in 1947, and indeed grew with a corresponding demand overseas, primarily based in the US. The extreme efflux of works from India culminated in the passing of the draconian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972,¹³ which also required that “individuals within India in private possession of such property were also required to register those objects with the government within fifteen days (Section 14).” The forcible linking of the private and national property has altered the manner of private collecting to such a degree that much of it within the country now takes place beneath the radar of the law, while many earlier dealers have ironically returned to the lucrative business of replicas of “antiquity” or objects that can fall through the cracks of the law. In India objects of art, thus anointed by national culture, simultaneously became more and less accessible both physically and conceptually. While on the one hand the museum as a public space allowed art to be putatively more accessible to a wider ‘public’ the failings of this pedagogic project in postcolonial India underscored the limits of this access. Moreover, for individuals too, the domestic market for art was increasingly confined not just by the nation state’s greater prerogative to be its primary custodian but also by the limits to individual ownership of art brought about by exacting regulation and legislation noted above.

¹² The Antiquities (Export Control) Act stated that no antiquity, if it were more than a hundred years old could be exported without a license issued by the Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India. This was intended to limit, but not outlaw the export of antiquities.

¹³ The 1972 Act, made it illegal to remove from the country any movable cultural property over 75 years old in the case of manuscripts and over 100 years for all other objects.

Although the National Museum stridently went about collecting art in the decades after independence, even acquiring increasingly rare Mughal miniatures from private collectors,¹⁴ with only a limited budget for the acquisition of art however, with the volume of work becoming available (particularly plentiful for example were a number of Rajput miniatures), a few individual collectors continued to find ways in which to collect from dealers. Yet with the precedent set by Coomaraswamy and other collectors abroad, while the market for Indian art in the west grew beyond the few dealers and galleries, the market in India did not really develop in any substantial manner either for ancient art or modern and contemporary art – a situation that did not dramatically change till the end of the twentieth century. As a consequence, the kinds of individual and collective engagements between dealers, collectors and scholars that had animated the formation of the field of Indian art in the early decades of the twentieth century diminished in India. However its legacy of connoisseurship and emphasis on stylistic interpretations would go on to characterize much of the scholarship that ensued after independence, including the fuller elaboration of the Rajput schools of painting.

In the post-independence era, while some earlier collections were bought by the state, many others would be dispersed, occasionally appearing at auction and often entering the newly forming collections abroad, and it was possible for collectors like Binney and Stuart Cary Welch to form impressive collections of Indian paintings from outside India. Some *did* bequeath their collections to public institutions while others

¹⁴ Among the early acquisitions were the B.N. Treasuryvala collection of sculpture, bronzes, textiles and paintings, Ajit Ghosh's collection of paintings, and Imre Schwaiger's collection of the Mughal room, bronzes and paintings. *Bulletin - National Museum, New Delhi*, 2002, 10.

would go on to open private museums from their collections of art.¹⁵ A discussion of these post-independence turns is however beyond the scope of this dissertation.

My contention has been that while the framework of the nation as articulated at sites like the National Museum formed in post-Independence India in defining the art historical canon has received some attention in the past few years, a related yet much less explored aspect in this contouring has been the role the interpersonal systems of exchange (of objects and ideas), and the particular processes of collecting of art that took place *outside* the nation, and specifically in America, which have also been constitutive in forming canonical framings of Indian art. While such exchange was often informal and its very ephemeral nature has left little trace in the archival record, nevertheless, the moral imperative to distance culture from the taint of the transactional (that often mark such exchange), has also been responsible in the postcolonial context for the partial erasure of the formative contribution of these roles.¹⁶ The travel of objects, people and ideas and the movement of art from the personal to the shared, from the private to a more public sphere are all processes that contribute towards the formation of art history, and its institutionalization, but as I have stressed the processes are often simultaneous and mutually constitutive. This dissertation therefore addresses the roles of collectors, dealers,

¹⁵ Examples include the Sarabhai Foundation and Calico museum begun by Sarladevi and Ambalal Sarabhai in 1956 and the Saraladevi and Basantkumar Birla collections at the Birla Academy of Art & Culture. B. N. Goswamy, *Indian Paintings in the Sarabhai Foundation*. Niyogi Books, 2010; and Karl J. Khandalavala et al. *A collector's dream: Indian art in the collections of Basant Kumar and Saraladevi Birla and the Birla Academy of Art and Culture*. Marg Publications, 1987. Print.

¹⁶ Ivan Gaskell notes, “[T]he contamination of commodification extends to ideas, however abstract or apparently subversive... Politics, aesthetics, and commerce are simply inextricable under capitalism for *anyone*. To admit as much is not to propose that everyone’s motivations must be identical, nor that choices regarding conduct are not available, some of which may be ethically or politically preferable to others. It is, rather to recognize that any inquirer must take the determining conditions fully into account, and, in the case of art, those determining conditions include the unavoidably pervasive existence of the market.” Elizabeth Mansfield, *Art History and Its Institutions : Foundations of a Discipline* (London ;;New York: Routledge, 2002), 158.

curators and scholars whose contributions particularly in America framed studies of Indian art, in a manner distinct from the nationalist contours of the narrative frameworks in India. The differences in the nature of American public and private collecting, art institutions and philanthropy further complicate the position of Indian art. However the prominent institutional presence in terms of collections of and scholarship on India art in America, beginning with figures like collectors like Freer, Coomaraswamy and Heeramaneck in the early part of the twentieth century, but growing exponentially post-1947, makes the study of collecting practices and their framings of art in America most salient. Thus in conclusion, by shifting the focus away from a national art history, and by analyzing the implication of the movement of people and objects outside the nation in the creation and framing of Indian objects as art, this dissertation questions key assumptions of the genealogy of the Indian art historical canon and broadens ones understanding of the formative role developments in the United States played in its twentieth century consolidation.

Chapter 1: The Shift to Art

The emergence of Indian Art History in the early 20th century, was tied to the larger project of Indian nationalism in the face of colonial oppression. However, this emergence was also related to changes in the understanding of India and Indian art, that were occurring at sites beyond the nation and indeed beyond Europe as well. It was in America, in the context of the prevailing 19th century interests in India that the space for the appreciation and collection of Indian objects *as art* began, and would have an impact on the circulation, institutionalization and narration of Indian art history through the 20th century. Although the British encounter with Indian culture was the dominant narrative from the late 18th century onwards, be it through trade or Orientalist scholarship, several other European countries and America also engaged in Indology in the 19th century. While some of the earliest and largest collections of objects from India are to be found in Britain, their collection and narration occurred in the context of bolstering colonialism. In America however, India entered the imaginary, first in the context of American Orientalism and then in the evolving American understanding of its relationship to Asia and the Near East. This in turn set the stage for the aesthetic and historic reassessment of the Indian objects in American collections, which would go on to affect the framing and role of Indian art within the museum.

In recent years there has been a lot of scholarly interests in the formation of collections of objects in the 19th century, including the fate of works on display in the Great Exhibitions of London from the 1851 onwards, as well as colonial organization of archaeology and industrial arts in India. At the same time, scholars like Partha Mitter have traced the history of European responses to Indian art in his seminal volume *Much*

Maligned Monsters, while noting in his subsequent work *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India: 1850-1922*, that while Indian “industrial design” and crafts practices were found to be valuable, the West denied “fine arts” to India. In the face of such an establishment stance, it fell upon a few select individuals, buoyed by the rising tides of nationalism in India, to critically reexamine the place of Indian arts, recovering their aesthetic value and culturally resituating them, in a bid affirm their legitimacy. Unsurprisingly therefore, finding equivalences in western stylistic models as well as establishing a teleology for Indian art became important on the one hand, but at the same time, beginning with the pioneering scholarship of E.B.Havell and particularly Ananda Coomaraswamy, the field of Indian art history employed the strategy to elevate Indian art to the level of “fine art” by firmly establishing it on a spiritual and temporally transcendent aesthetic basis. As a result, early writings on Indian art have been heavily inscribed by the interpretations of the connoisseur-aesthete-philosopher. Yet it was this reframing of Indian objects as art, that altered the terms of valuing them, and thus transformed the prevailing modes of collecting and understanding such objects. It is in this regard that the early 20th century marks a shift in existing attitudes towards valuing Indian objects not just for their decorative or ornamental value, or at the level of curiosities or souvenirs, but allowed for their systematic historical study as well as their autonomous aesthetic appreciation. It was this parallel movement that created the space for Indian objects to enter the market, the private collection and subsequently the art museum. However, the reclamation of art history for India was so intimately linked to the Indian national project, which continued with renewed vigor in the postcolonial era too, that the study of Indian art history has not sufficiently recognized the role played by individuals and museums beyond the nation,

particularly in America with whom India did not have a colonial relationship. What is often overlooked however is the fact that significant changes were taking place in America at the same time that were effected by and had an effect on this shift to art and this shaping of art history. Moreover the geopolitical and socioeconomic dominance of America, played a key role in structuring narratives of India and Indian art well into the 20th century.

“Orienting” India: American interests in India in the 19th century

Since the late 19th century the global flows of goods, including cultural objects have tended towards the rising economic power of America. As Susan Bean in *Yankee India* discusses, from the mid-18th century onwards, Indian commodities, particularly textiles had been entering the American market, through the New England trading channels, trading with merchant communities based in the Indian port cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. Although experiencing a period of decline in the early decades of the 19th century, trade revived once more after 1850, with Boston and Calcutta being the main seats in American and India respectively, although now the principal imports from India were linseed oil and jute, even though luxury textiles such as shawls from Kashmir continued to be coveted. Aside from traded objects, mariners would bring back curiosities, gifts and souvenirs. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, “curiosities” were a particular class of object comprising the unfamiliar, unusual and exotic.

Curiosities were thus distinct from commodities, or useful things that could be easily assimilated into the world market.¹⁷ As Bean notes, “Because curiosities were actually

¹⁷ Susan S Bean and Peabody Essex Museum, *Yankee India: American Commercial and Cultural Encounters with India in the Age of Sail, 1784-1860* (Salem, MA; Chidambaram, Ahmedabad, India;

from far-off places, unlike recollections or journal descriptions that were merely *about* those places, they embodied real connection to their places of origin... People who had never been to India had to connect exotic things they saw to what they already knew, believed, or imagined about the world's creatures, civilizations, or arts."¹⁸

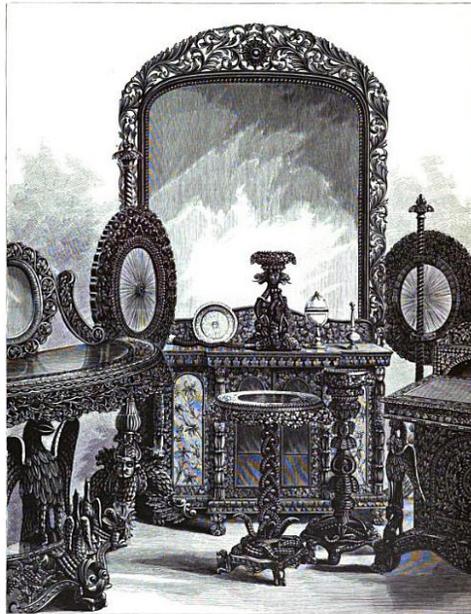
From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the imagining of faraway exotic lands through curiosities *and* commodities in the most organized fashion, was through events like the worlds fairs. Once again, India was explained through both these means to Americans, at venues such as the Philadelphia Centennial exhibition in 1876, and more spectacularly at The Worlds Columbian Exposition in 1893. From the catalogue for the Philadelphia exhibition, *Gems of The Centennial Exhibition Consisting of Illustrated Descriptions of Objects of an Artistic Character* one is able to glean the prevailing ideas about the associations of nature and race with cultural production.

“Antipodal to each other, alike in situation and character, are the peoples of Norway and Hindostan. They represent the most strongly-contrasted types of human race, though direct representatives of the same far-away Aryan stock; the one characterized in history by a stern, hard, heroic life, delighting in the storms of Nature and war; the other soft, sensuous, and subtle, equally marked by physical effeminacy and intellectual acuteness.”¹⁹

Wappinger Falls, NY: Peabody Essex Museum ; Mapin Pub. ; Distributed in North America by Antique Collectors' Club, 2001), 13.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ George T Ferris, *Gems of the Centennial Exhibition: Consisting of Illustrated Descriptions of Objects of an Artistic Character, in the Exhibits of the United States, Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, Russia, Japan, China, Egypt, Turkey, India, Etc., Etc., at the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876*. (New York: Appleton, 1877), 59.



Hindu Carved Furniture.

Figure 73: Furniture by Watson & Co., Bombay at Philadelphia, 1876

The “Aryan racial myth” that had been argued amongst and popularized by 19th century writers such as H.H. Cole and James Fergusson in assessing quality in art,²⁰ seems to have been picked up, complete with its colonial prejudices and emasculations and applied to describe objects from India, largely represented at the Exposition, in shawls, carpets, earthenware, and arms. A set of furniture from Bombay, was singled out for special mention for in it “the Hindoo feeling and methods were characteristically set forth...” Describing the furniture set, the author continues “The several objects in the group are all carved from solid wood, and are rich and substantial in appearance, and as an example of the Art-industry of India are interesting. The style of ornamentation has

²⁰ Partha Mitter in *Much Maligned Monsters* addresses the role of the Aryan racial myth in writings on Indian art in the 19th century, noting that it remained important even for writers like E.B. Havell. Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 275.

the conventional grotesqueness of India, and shows the tendency of the Hindoo mind to indulge in extravagant and fanciful conceptions, natural to a country where all the forms of animal and vegetable life run riot under an intense tropical heat. The richness and elaboration of the merely conventional ornament are particularly striking. The observer will be impressed with the fact, so dominant in Hindoo Art, that the main idea is rather to dazzle the imagination with a variety of crowded and striking forms, interwoven in the most curious contrasts, than to present any clear and well-ordered conception of the mind. The rich prodigality of Nature seems to be too large for the merely human life framed in it.”²¹ Discernable in the description is the legacy of German antiquarianism, and Indology, widely acknowledged in Europe and North America in the 19th century, which had attributed climactic conditions to the excess of ornament and “grotesque” forms of Indian art.²² At Philadelphia similar arguments were used to bolster not historical material, but objects of “Art-Industry” aimed at American consumers.

By 1893, in Chicago, the emphasis on commodity trade was even greater. Although the British Government in India did not officially sponsor the event, Indian businessmen and heads of the princely states supported the Indian presence at the fair, which appeared as a booth in the Art Work, Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building, as well as in the dedicated India Pavilion. The Pavilion, which was written about extensively at the fair was erected by the India Tea Association of Calcutta at a cost of \$15000, with 104 tea companies present. Tea was the primary commodity being showcased, through elaborate display and service, complete with tin boxes to serve

²¹ Ferris, *Gems of the Centennial Exhibition*, 56–61.

²² Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 201–215.

samples provided by Students of the Calcutta School of Art²³. Although Arindam Dutta has pointed out that “Indian tearooms were a prominent feature of world exhibitions from Melbourne to London” clearly their ubiquity and the new modes of consumption that tea service entailed, extended beyond the empire as well, explaining their presence at Chicago.²⁴ Other commodities on display to complete the “Orientalist” context for consumption were silverware, silks, cottons, muslins, ivory carvings, inlaid boxes, screens, furniture and rugs. Also on view was a unique exhibit described in the official directory as “India in a nut shell” which consisted of models and dioramas illustrating Indian architecture, sculpture and people.²⁵ This tradition of display which had been in vogue since the early 19th century in London, worked as a substitute for travel for fairgoers.²⁶ It was also a way to maintain the ethnological lens through which along India could be viewed. As Saloni Mathur has noted, even Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906), who submitted a series of ten portraits to the Fair titled “The Lives of Native Peoples” as a counter to colonial narratives, nevertheless found himself contending with this ethnographic bind on an international platform.²⁷ As was typical, numerous commemorative albums and catalogues, official and unofficial accompanied the Fair, and served for the dissemination of information and impressions of the fair long after it was

²³ Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (University of California Press, 2001), 118.

²⁴ Arindam. Dutta, *The Bureaucracy of Beauty : Design in the Age of Its Global Reproducibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 40–41.

²⁵ “all art-sculptures and represent buildings from almost all parts of the Empire, as well as many ancient monuments, street, bazaar and house scenes, durbars, burial processions and grounds, temples, wedding and betrothal ceremonies, religious worship and customs... There are also models of artisans with their tools and appliances; of the means of transport by land, river and sea, and of the different tribes and castes of India. This class of exhibits is composed of several thousands of most artistic figures dressed in the costumes worn by the people. Then come shoes, as worn by the natives of the country...”Official Directory, 129

²⁶ Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display*, 146.

²⁷ Saloni. Mathur, *India by Design : Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 105–106.

over. Drawing upon conventions that had been established since the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, the texts accompanying the lavish photographs reveled in their descriptions of the Indian section. Shepp's World's Fair album describes the India Building thus:

“Entering, we find ourselves in what appears to be a Bazaar. To the left, a number of gorgeous rugs, some hanging from the wall and others piled in heaps upon the floor, reveal the industrial skill of the natives of Hindostan. To the right, a series of small rooms are devoted to the sale of fragrant tea, the pungent odor of which pervades that part of the building. Passing these rooms, we enter an oblong hall surrounded by galleries, and covered with a plate-glass skylight through which the sun shines down with an almost Indian radiance. A tall pagoda at the center forms a resting-place for numerous gods who seem to loll lazily about it like fakirs around the sacred fountain. In this wonderful hall we are frequently reminded of the religion of the Hindoos. On a hard sandal-wood stand we see a beautiful marble miniature of the great Temple Jodhpure, while gods and goddesses in many forms and attitudes stare at us from cabinets, shelves and stands... Under the galleries a series of arches mark rows of bazaars in which the most wonderful fabrics are displayed and sold; their beauty is hardly visible in the dim light. So great is the amount of hard sandal-wood, such as tables, panels and even gates, that the heavy odor drifts searchingly through the great hall and adds to the general oriental flavor...”²⁸

²⁸ James W Shepp and Daniel B Shepp, *Shepp's World's Fair Photographed: Being a Collection of Original Copyrighted Photographs Authorized and Permitted by the Management of the World's Columbian Exposition ... All Described in Crisp and Beautiful Language* (Chicago; Philadelphia: Globe Bible Pub. Co., 1893), 470.

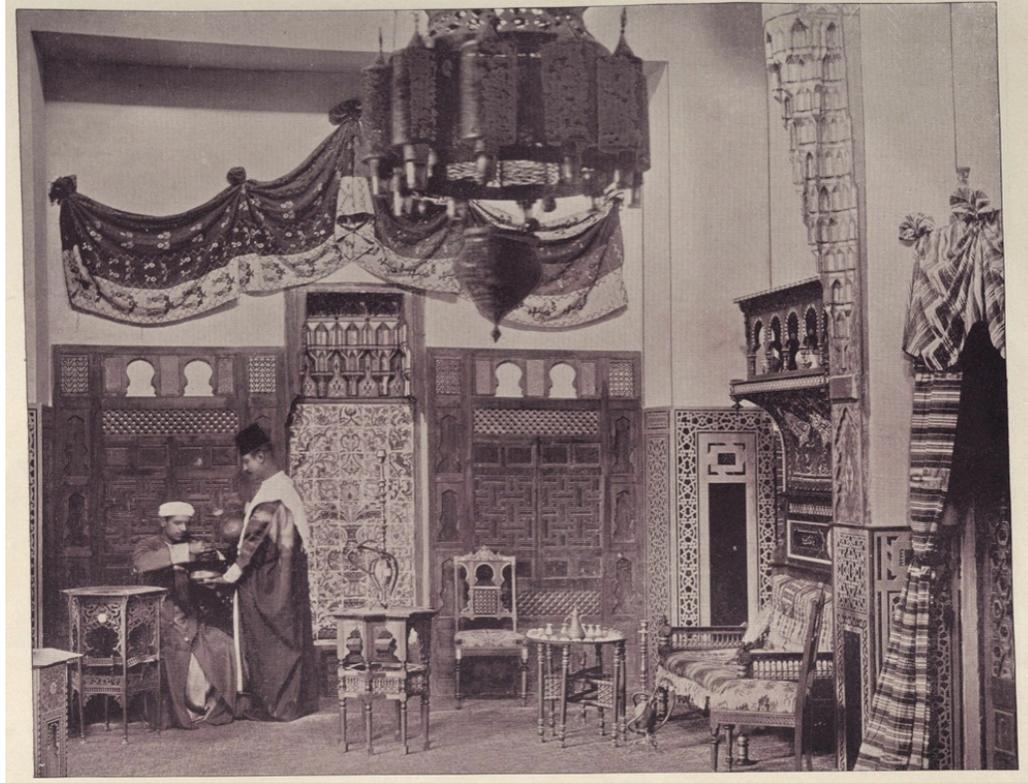


Figure 74: Tea Service in the Indian Pavilion at Chicago

The long description is striking in its presentation of India as exotic, mysterious and decadent, yet still the fount of consumable luxuries, and clearly bears the marks of Orientalist literature. Indeed, it could almost be describing a scene from the repertoire of the American Orientalist painter Edwin Lord Weeks who travelled to India several times from the 1880s onwards, to search for new material to paint. Weeks frequently wrote articles on India for *Harper's Weekly* which included his illustrations, and also published an illustrated book of travels titled *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*. In America, travel literature on India was plentiful, particularly after Thomas Cook had begun operations in India in 1881, and as was the case in Egypt, no longer just mariners, traders and missionaries, but American travelers and tourists, could now also journey with ease. A frequent refrain of the travelers to India was that their Orientalist fantasies

were often not fully realized in the harsh realities of the country they encountered²⁹. Indeed, venues like the World's Fair served to reenforce the exoticization of India in providing visitors to the fair the ability at a safe distance to choose which fantasies they would consume at the same time as maintaining a superiority over the "Other" cultures represented at the Fair.³⁰ In other words, American Orientalism served to reinscribe American Exceptionalism, which undergirded the larger aims of the fair.

While the Fair provided a populist space for the production of American Orientalism, from the mid-19th century, India began to figure in the cultural imaginaries of Americans in other ways as well. In contrast to Edward Said's location of the Middle Eastern focus of American Orientalism, Mishka Sinha has argued that American Orientalism was "first most substantially associated with India" by an early focus on Sanskrit literature and drew more upon German Orientalism than British Orientalism.³¹ At the Fair the association of Indian life with "Hindoo religion" and a multitude of gods

²⁹ While many may have waxed eloquent on the tea services, the verdict on two "East India Jugglers" was less charitable, for their presence was described as "Much has been written about the astounding feats of juggling performed by the fakirs of India, who it has been repeatedly declared, suffer themselves to be buried alive for months, who thrust knives through their bodies, who climb heavenward by means of a rope thrown towards the sky and suspended by invisible means. People have read these accounts so frequently that a great many believe them, and for this reason Indian jugglers were brought to the Fair ostensibly to perform their legerdemain, but primarily to delude the sophisticated. 'They gave their exhibitions in a hut on the north side of the Plaisance, and were liberally patronized; but no reward was great enough to induce them to exhibit the amazing powers with which Munchausen travelers credited them. 'Those at the Fair were no doubt as skillful as their brother artists, but their performances were limited to such tricks as every American boy has seen a hundred times, and which many a boy can duplicate. Tales of travelers, like those of amateur fishermen, are not easily verified, and it is well to doubt the ability of India jugglers to perform those magical feats which many have heard of but which in fact no one has ever seen.'" J. W Buel, *The Magic City: A Massive Portfolio of Original Photographic Views of the Great World's Fair and Its Treasures of Art, Including a Vivid Representation of the Famous Midway Plaisance, with Graphic Descriptions*. (St-Louis: Historical Pub, 1894). Vol.1, No.2.

Karp, Ivan, and Steven Lavine. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991. Pp.344-365

³¹ See Mishka Sinha, "Orienting America : Sanskrit and modern scholarship in the United States, 1836-1894" in Elmarsafy, Ziad, Anna Bernard, and David Attwell. *Debating Orientalism*. , 2013. Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard, and David Attwell, *Debating Orientalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 74.

and goddesses and “fakirs” still pervaded, and was aimed to entertain the average fairgoer, a parallel more sophisticated understanding of Indian religion was also underway in America. Through the legacy of Indology, the formation of the American Oriental Society in 1842 and the introduction of Indian literature in American, and India in American literature, the Unitarian movement and Transcendentalism in New England had also engaged with Sanskrit texts, including the Bhagavat Gita, the Puranas, and the Upanishads. Writers like Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson and others in their circle had been creative in their involvement with Indian thought and philosophy. It was this interest that allowed for a figure like Swami Vivekananda to be welcomed and celebrated in Chicago at the World’s Parliament of Religions that took place alongside the Fair. Vivekananda’s philosophies stemmed from reformist Hindu movements in India that sought to distance themselves from the overreliance on caste-based ritualism and instead reached back to the philosophies the underlay early scriptures, bringing to the fore ideas of Advaita Vedanta or non-dualism, of seeing the self in the whole, thus emphasizing the universalism of Hinduism in a manner that would resonate with the universal nature of religious truth that had been the premise of the Parliament. He was so well received that soon after his visit, the Vedanta Society of New York was established in 1895, and soon followed by centers in London and Boston.



Figure 75: Swami Vivekananda (center) together with other South Asian delegates to the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago.

If Vivekananda represented a form of reformist Hinduism that philosophically appealed to some American intellectuals at an abstract level, a more practicable understanding of Asian spirituality, was particularly routed through Buddhism. The Japanese and Boston elite saw the collecting, connoisseurship and contemplation of art as a means to refine a spiritualized identity. As Kathleen Pyne notes, “The taste for Buddhism in part reflected the fashion in cultural capital in Boston, where since the 1880s a disposition toward mysticism was regarded as a “sign of advanced evolution”...Buddhism was popularized as a watery brew that freely mixed principles of Buddhism with transcendentalism and spiritualism.”³² While in New England, the tastes were primarily centered around Japanese and to a lesser degrees Chinese art, that India was the ancient home of three great religions – Hinduism, Jainism but particularly Buddhism, made it narratable as a spiritual fount. This in turn made the connection of

³² Kathleen Pyne, “Portrait of a Collector as an Agnostic: Charles Lang Freer and Connoisseurship,” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 1 (March 1996): 80.

three cultural spheres, Japan, China and India, into a larger cultural sphere of “Asia” an attractive proposition for American intellectuals, collectors and museum curators.



Figure 76: Okakura with Isabella Stewart Gardner and friends, Gloucester, MA, 1910

By the turn of the century, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston had the Japanese scholar Okakuro Kakuzo as its Curator of Asian Art. Okakura’s had famously opened his seminal work *Ideals of the East* with the bold and defining statement “Asia is One”. The Asia imagined by Okakura was less a political entity than a metaphysical and spiritual realm, transcending cultures of distinct histories and nations, and imaginary unity of shared ideals.³³ For Okakura, it was through art, and specifically Japanese art, that the real ideals of Asia (Chinese learning and Indian religion, Buddhism) find expression. By stressing the art-historically actualized “ideal” rather than the “idea”, and by neatly adopting the Vedantic idea of Advaita or non-duality, Okakura challenged not only

³³ Rustom Bharucha, *Another Asia : Rabindranath Tagore and Okakura Tenshin* (New Delhi ;New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11.

Hegelian Eurocentricism but also made a claim for the oneness of Asia.³⁴ This emphasis on the ideals of Asian art would find resonance with the scholarship of Ananda Coomaraswamy, who would further Okakura's vision for the MFA collection, which will be explored in Chapter 2. The growing awareness of certain narratives of the universalism in Asian religions prevalent in America at the end of the 19th century is particularly important, as the unequivocal equation of Indian art and religion, would make the elevation of Indian objects to art, contingent upon, their connectedness to deep antiquity, and universal aesthetic and spiritual ideals.

This transformation of Asian objects into bearers of universal aesthetic ideals, also parallels a turning point in the debates that took place in the 19th and early 20th century in Europe and then America over the categorization of cultural objects from Asia in museums – whether as anthropology or as art. The estrangement of the discipline of anthropology from the study of objects from Asia, enabled their aesthetic appropriation by individuals and institutions, and so museums took over the primary role of exhibiting Asian objects as “fine art” to the American public, so “with the exception of archaeological remains, the study of Chinese and Japanese material culture [was] now conducted largely by art historians.”³⁵ Even though an early generation of Japanese and Chinese scholars was already in place by the early 20th century – besides Okakura, there

³⁴ Karatani Kojin “Japan as Art Museum: Okakura Tenshin and Fenollosa,” Michael Marra, *A History of Modern Japanese Aesthetics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001). 46

³⁵ “That fine art won the day over anthropology in the debate over where to place Asian objects reflects only partly a resolution to the categorical debate on-going since the 1830s. It reflects as well anthropology's movement away from the study of objects altogether...By the first quarter of the twentieth century, however, anthropology was leaving its museum nest and roosting more and more in university departments... By 1920 roughly half of the professional anthropologists in the United States made their institutional home in college and university departments, and that was the direction in which the traffic would continue to flow. In short, anthropologists ceased to be much interested in objects of any kind.” Steven Conn, “Where Is the East?: Asian Objects in American Museums, from Nathan Dunn to Charles Freer,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 35, no. 2/3 (Summer - Autumn 2000): 172.

was Edward Sylvester Morse, Ernest Fenollosa, and William Bigelow, in 1913, speaking of John C. Ferguson's collection of paintings for the burgeoning collections of Chinese Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Charles Lang Freer, by then the pioneering and premier collector of Chinese art in America, nevertheless bemoaned that "the Occident contains no expert sufficiently informed to speak authoritatively on these matters."³⁶ If this was still the case for China, the comprehension of Indian art was far bleaker, and the situation would remain unchanged until Ananda Coomaraswamy's arrival in America in 1916.

Pioneer Steps and Aesthetic Leaps: Charles Lang Freer and Indian art



Figure 77: Colonel Frank J Hecker (1846-1927) and Charles Lang Freer

³⁶ Warren I. Cohen, *East Asian Art and American Culture: A Study in International Relations* (Columbia University Press, 1992), 69.

Yet it is this very context that Charles Lang Freer as the founder of a national museum with significant interests in Asian art, by including art from Indian opened the door for new appreciation and understanding of Indian art in America. Born in upstate New York, Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919) made his fortunes in the railroad industry in the last quarter of the 19th century. Eventually settling in Detroit, it was there that he and his business associate, mentor and friend Colonel Frank J Hecker built their homes adjacent to one another and it was also there that Freer began his interest in art. His early collections were not atypical of the time, and he collected modestly and safely in prints and later became close friends with and patronized many American artists of the day. Most famous was Freer's encounter with James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and his extensive collection of the artist's works. Indeed it was this interest in Whistler that led Freer towards an interest in Asian art, and thence to an interest in the countries of Asia. As an American, Freer's interest in India was unusual, but not unique for his time. As mentioned above, Indology and Unitarianism had played a role in bringing India to the attention of those in Freer's circle as had it influenced the popularity of Vivekananda in America, and for decades American missionaries had been active in India as well, and had brought back material, as well as impressions. Although Freer does not particularly display any significant interest in missionary activity or the Parliament of World Religions, he was nonetheless aware of the relationships of both to India – a voucher among Freer's Papers from January 1894 to a certain Hattie Standart reveals a small donation in aid of Foreign missions towards the Indian missionary's salary, while later in India he would recount being questioned on the Parliament of World Religions, and

would on his return begin an annual subscription to the Vedanta Society's journal *Brahmavadin* from its inaugural year in 1895.

It is this background that one must keep in mind when considering Freer and his burgeoning interest in Asia as he set out on his first trip East in 1894. It was a voyage of many months, and not without precedent as the routes were well established. After the quelling of the Revolt of 1857, the Indian subcontinent had for the most part come under direct rule of the crown and management by the British bureaucratic and organizational systems. In this climate, Thomas Cook had begun operations in India since 1881, and as was the case in Egypt, European and American travelers and tourists could now journey with ease. The Boston-based couple Isabella and Jack Gardner too had travelled to India about a decade before Freer did, and a comparison of their travel routes, reveals striking similarities – further indicating that these were well charted routes. Indeed, photographic studios that had mushroomed in India in the latter part of the 19th century were well fitted to serve the souvenir needs of travelers, by offering a range of stock photographs of the famous sites in India, and generic scenes in India. Charles Freer too was no exception in collecting a few photographs as souvenirs of his travels from what was then the most prolific and extensive establishment of commercial photographs: Bourne and Shepherd.



Figure 78: Bourne and Shepherd photograph of the Lake Palace at Udaipur which Freer visited during his travels

In 1894, when planning his trip to the East, Freer's main country of interest was India, with the possible inclusion of Japan.³⁷ This was the only time Freer would end up spending time in Asia primarily as a tourist, forming impressions and beginning his understanding of the culture with little initiation, for by the next time he visited the east over a decade later Freer's interest in Asian culture and his reputation as a collector would precede him and his access to and interests in places and people would be far more pointed. Freer's accounts too would become more refined and detailed in time, and so at that early stage, his correspondence was restricted to a few individuals, and his diary entries were minimal. They do however, allow one to follow him on his travels, and with the exceptionally expressive observations he shared with his partner and close associate Colonel Hecker, one can better understand his encounter with India. The manner in which he described and wrote about India inevitably drew upon Orientalist conventions,

³⁷ Writing to his friend Fredrick Stuart Church on 15th of August, Freer writes, "On the 19th of September I expect to leave Detroit for New York, and on the 22nd, expect to sail for Italy... This trip will probably be quite a lengthy one and will include France, India and possibly Japan. It will take the better part of the year, so if you expect to see much of me during the next twelve months, you want to "get a gait on you"."

yet he found himself deeply moved by the richness and diversity of all that he saw, and he looked to the Orient with frank interest and was capable of sympathy too for the conditions of colonial rule. While in India, he traveled to Rajputana, spending a memorable time in Udaipur where he became friendly with the son of the Prime Minister Fateh Lal Mehta.³⁸ Freer also stopped at Alwar, and though less impressed with it than Udaipur, nonetheless noted that “Its copy of the Gulistan and splendidly illustrated Persian manuscripts, also its wonderful stable (unusual combination) are worth a long journey to see.”³⁹ The copy of the Gulistan in the Alwar Palace Library, had become quite famous for the craftsmanship of its binding after its exhibition at Simla in 1897 as well as its prominent mention in the publication of *Ulwar and Its Art Treasures* by Thomas Hendley in 1888.⁴⁰ One can seize upon this casual remark, and speculate whether, at this early stage in Freer’s interest in Asia, this was the first time that he came across such a work. Did the memory of having seen this Gulistan have an effect on Freer over a decade later when he was considering buying Colonel Hanna’s collection of Indian paintings that also contained an illustrated copy of the Gulistan? At any rate, Freer’s interest in and enthusiasm for India and things Indian had certainly been piqued, and as he admitted to Hecker a few weeks later:

“Oriental art and architecture is “crawling through my innards” so to speak, and whether it will prove a tonic or a tape worm, is still an enigma. I can certainly hope for no certain result

³⁸ Mehta would later correspond with Freer on the latter’s return to America, and would also send him some photographs of the famous sites and buildings of Udaipur.

³⁹ Letter from Charles Lang Freer to Hecker, February 18th, 1895.

⁴⁰ According to the catalogue of the 1903 exhibition of Delhi, the Maharaja of Alwar loaned the manuscript to the exhibition, noting that “This is valued at Rs.1,75,000 and was written by Agha Mirza of Delhi, a single page taking one fortnight and the whole book 12 years.” Delhi. Indian Art Exhibition and George Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903. : Being the Official Catalogue of the Delhi Exhibition, 1902-1903*. (Calcutta: Superintendent of government printing India, 1903), 487. The interest that American institutions were taking in events and publications in India at this time is evidenced by the fact that in 1889 the Smithsonian Library reports receiving a copy of it.

until after digestion and that means many months. So were there no other reason, I should hate greatly with my present impressions, to entirely over look what I have recently seen, and I could not if [I] would, forget Italy. The architecture of the two countries is alike and still entirely different i.e. thoroughly artistic but upon different lines of application. A modification of my personal choice of the types of either country I know would delight me, but how others would like it, architecture being as Whistler puts it “still a matter of taste” is entirely another and in the present instance the important thing...”⁴¹

The above statement while made in response to an inquiry from Hecker on designs a plot of land, nevertheless indicates that Freer was quick to consider ways of combining and drawing analogies between aesthetic sensibilities he had been exposed to, and very eager to modify his taste in response to new experiences. But Freer was also cautious and as his conviction in his taste of things non-Western was still in a nascent stage, whilst in India, when he did exercise his taste and buy objects in the bazaars or from traders in Bombay, Ahmedabad or later in Lahore, his choice of objects was typically conventional and safe – whether it was silver objects, or jewellery or Kashmir shawls from the reputed establishment of J.P. Watson and company or the purchase of carved wooden pieces from Ahmedabad which had also been feted in America for their craftsmanship. Most of these objects were intended or would end up as presents for Freer’s friends and family, and would not end up in his collection that is now part of the Smithsonian Institution.⁴² Indeed, a vital part of the tourist experience in India, then as

⁴¹ CLF to Hecker, Letter dated February 23rd, 1895.

⁴² An exception is a collection of agate charms. Freer mentions buying a single agate charm from a trader in a camel train when he visited the Khyber Pass, however on his return to America, he was intrigued enough by his purchase to enquire from his friend and professor of art history Richard A. Rice for aid in their translation. He was also keen to purchase more like it, and after research into Freer’s correspondence after his visit, it transpires that a set of amulets listed as being bought by Freer in Egypt in 1907, were in fact purchased from the Lahore-based dealer Syed Bahadur Shah in 1897. Syed Bahadur Shah would go on to be a prominent dealer who diversified into Pahari paintings, and would coincidentally supply Coomaraswamy with a set of Nala-Damayanti drawings – we know because of the presence of the dealer’s

now, was the buying of souvenirs and curiosities, and Freer was no exception, bemoaning the slipping of his will to Hecker in spite of his resolve to not purchase anything on his trip. Dealers in the bazaars in the large Indian cities maintained establishments particularly catering to western clients.

Through the rest of February till the end of March 1895, Freer traveled through north India, before gradually turning westward. He visited Delhi, Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, Amritsar, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lucknow, Benaras, and Calcutta. Freer did not make extensive notes or describe in great detail all that he saw or his reactions, but it is likely that he took in the Mughal palaces, mosques, tombs including the Taj Mahal, the ghats in Benaras, the birthplace of Buddha. By the end of his trip, Freer was deeply affected by his experiences in India,⁴³ and the impressions formed would last not only for the remainder of his trip,⁴⁴ but for many years to come. Yet even though Freer suspected that his experiences in India would “prevent indiscriminate affection for Japan”, Japan, and particularly the forms and practice of Buddhism in Japan as he saw it, *did* move Freer, and whether it was the longer period of time he spend in the country, or the more leisurely pace at which he traveled, he found more time to contemplate the meanings and

stamp on the reverse of some paintings. Most of the folios from this series would end up at the MFA in Boston, but a few (?) would come into the Freer’s collection from Coomaraswamy in the late 1920s.

⁴³ “I am very well, and over my head in love with India. The discomforts, of which I have not told you, are many, but they are like the one ravelled fringe of a Rajah’s cashmere shawl—a sort of hall mark of experience. Too soon the hot weather will drive me towards Japan just as the ice and snow not keeps me out of Cashmere. But surely, I should not grumble, and Cashmere—well, that means a whole summer next time.” (February 18th, 1895)

“My sprained leg is practically well but I still tread carefully—Fever entirely gone—and I hope soon to regain all that these little ills of Hindustan took from me—mere nothings compared to what she gave me” CLF to Hecker April 18th, 1895

⁴⁴ (“The immensity of India makes things of Japan doubly miniature but detracts not from their beauty.” (CLF to Hecker, Nagasaki, April 28th, 1895) “I am getting enjoyment; yes, plenty of it, but it is so new and so curious I don’t know whether or not it will digest. After long indulgence I can write you more surely of its real character. India is entirely unlike Japan; and Indian life and adventures will I think, leave more lasting and precious impressions in my mind. At any rate they will prevent indiscriminate affection for Japan.” CLF to Hecker, Kioto, May 7th, 1895).

effects of his travels. Writing to Hecker, he observed that “In the Orient one’s mind frequently and easily turns many corners of the endless road to the great unknown. To the stranger in India that Faith which drove Buddhism from its very birth place to China, Korea and finally Japan seems the representation of Archaic Truth.”⁴⁵

Freer was not alone in his observations and understanding of Asian spirituality, particularly as routed through Buddhism. On his return to America later in 1895, taking a cue from his understanding of the aesthetic practices of the Japanese and Boston collectors, Freer’s interests in Buddhism and Buddhist art of east Asia was affirmed. Having had first-hand experience of the contexts in which it was produced and used, Freer was in a position to buy Asian art in a more concerted fashion on his return to America.

Although one may well expect Freer to also begin collecting Indian art at this time, there were several factors that precluded this possibility. Firstly, with the aforementioned interest among the elite in Boston and increasingly in New York as well, a network of dealers was already in place that could supply Freer’s and others’ demand for objects from East Asia, particularly Japan. There was no such equivalent network in place for objects coming from India in America, at that time. While there had been a substantial presence of Indian objects and Indian businesses at the Chicago World’s Fair, Lockwood de Forest had been the only supplier with a New York address. It is key to note however that a greater variety of objects were available for sale in Europe, and so when Freer began patronizing dealers in Paris and London, the range of his collection could also expand, and he was able to collect a greater variety of works. Although he did buy a

⁴⁵ CLF to Hecker, June 26th, 1895.

couple of works here and there from Syed Bahadur Shah and Watson & Co., as Freer's early interest in Asian art began with things Buddhist, there was little in India in terms of collectible objects for Freer to collect. What was known of what remained of Buddhist art in India was primarily sculpture, but for Freer's purposes remained largely uncollectible for most of the pieces of Buddhist art from India were either to be found in situ, would find their way into archaeological contexts under British efforts, either in India or in London, or would be collected by British officers. The memory of Buddhist art from India would however stay with Freer and during his expedition to the Longmen Caves in China during his last visit to Asia in 1910 he noted: "someone has placed in this great sanctuary a superb rock carved Buddha, life-sized, which looks as if it might have been brought here reverently from India including its square rock pedestal which supports a lotus - it measures nearly nine feet in height and it is modeled with noble simplicity. It suggests concentrated enlightenment and repose, as if heaven were his and with sympathy for those outside." (Monday, October 31st)



Figure 79: Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908)

In his early years of collecting Asian art, Freer often turned to his friend Ernest Fenollosa for advice. Once again as Kathleen Pyne notes, "Fenollosa's evolutionary philosophy of aesthetics cast Whistler's art in the religious terms of late nineteenth

century agnosticism, an understanding which accorded well with Freer's own use of art. Fenollosa's scholarship thus provided a forceful direction in Freer's quest after 1900 to create an art collection that from ancient to modern times chronicled the presence of spirit in the material form of the eternal perfected object...in 1907 Freer himself was eventually led by Fenollosa's theories to attempt to trace these aesthetic principles back to their supposed source in Egyptian art and pottery. In the years before he died, Freer devoted nearly all his economic and physical resources to demonstrating the existence of such universal aesthetics and constructing a correlative sequential development in his collection with representative pieces from the Near East and the Far East."⁴⁶ 1907 was also the year that Freer would buy his collection of Indian painting, which he clearly saw as contributing to this program of universal aesthetics as readable in his art collection, which he had by then already pledged to the nation as part of the Smithsonian Institution.



Figure 80: Freer Gallery of Art. Opened to the public in 1923

Freer's interests in Asian art also coincided with the disciplinary shift away from anthropological frameworks, which in turn necessitated the development of a framework

⁴⁶ Pyne, "Portrait of a Collector as an Agnostic," 93.

of narrativising art through history within the institutions. Speaking of Chinese art in Imperial collections, Craig Clunas notes, “Objects transferred from the domain of ‘ethnography’ to that of ‘art’ typically find diachronic links privileged at the expense of connections with others that have failed to make the transition.”⁴⁷ For Asian art objects in the museum however this presented a vexed situation, for while the shift from the anthropological to the art historical necessitated their retrieval from what Nicholas Thomas has termed a place “out of time”⁴⁸ i.e. existing in an unchanging time, to having a mappable and progressive history, the aesthetic and spiritual values which they were presumed to be imbued, required their location in a transcendent extratemporal state. While older museums in America and Europe were struggling with resolving these issues, Freer had the advantage of being relatively unfettered by such preceding narratives, for when he proposed the formal institutionalization of his collection, it was on the presumed basis of these being aesthetically worthy and acknowledged as “fine art” for this was the basis on which he had collected it. However that is not to say that he was unconcerned with history or in finding connections – on the contrary, it would be fair to say that tracing connections was in many ways key to Freer’s intentions however arguably these were conceived more laterally, in a networked fashion rather than in a linear progressive manner. It was this that allowed him to move between cultures with the ease with which he did, and find meaningful albeit often deeply personal or even whimsical connections. They were nonetheless connections, which he believed could provide a viable model for a

⁴⁷ Tim Barringer, *Colonialism and the Object : Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998), 44.

⁴⁸ Thomas notes the persistence of evolutionary rhetoric and atemporality in anthropological writing stemming from the legacy of outmoded paradigms where the status of time was marginalized, and “the notion that history has any constitutive effect in the social situation under consideration” was negated. Nicholas Thomas, *Out of Time : History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse* (Cambridge [England] ;;New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 5.

museum such as he proposed and subsequently spent the latter years of his life collecting for.

Even though he never went back to India, nor collected any Buddhist art from there, Freer's interest in India endured, and the early development of it through collection was more likely to be a matter of the limitations of circumstances, and access, rather than inclination. When the time and opportunity presented itself, Freer was not timid in pursuing this interest and materially articulating it through the collecting of works. In the interim, his library reveals that he kept abreast on scholarship on India and Indian culture, buying books regularly from booksellers like Thomas Spink & Son and Bernard Quatrach. After an introduction by Laurence Binyon, Freer also became a member of the India Society in London (of which Ananda Coomaraswamy was one of the founders), through whom he obtained a copy of Lady Christiana Herringham's reproductions of the Ajanta Frescoes (1915).

Although Freer became best known for his collection of Whistlers, and also as a collector of Japanese and Chinese art, as noted before, he did also begin to develop an interest in Near Eastern art. The American encounter with objects from the Near East occurred in a manner not dissimilar to how Indian objects became known – as an extension of Orientalist interests, through events like the great world's expositions, and since the late 19th century objects were also to be found in the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876, the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 and the St. Louis Fair in 1904. What made the fate of Indian objects different to those from the Near East in terms of rendering them collectible, was the matter of networks in place to source such material – their availability, entry in the market, and conveyance to collectors through dealers

such as Dikran Kelekian (1868-1951). In the early decades of the 20th century, Armenian dealers such as Kelekian, and later Hagop Kevorkian and Kirkor Minassian were responsible for cultivating interest among American collectors in works from the near East. At this stage there was little knowledge about the history or the culture of the region beyond Orientalist fantasies, and as Marilyn Jenkins-Madina has noted, “What expertise in the field did exist was concentrated, for the most part, in the hands of two groups of individuals: dealers and collectors, with the former very often teaching and guiding the latter.”⁴⁹

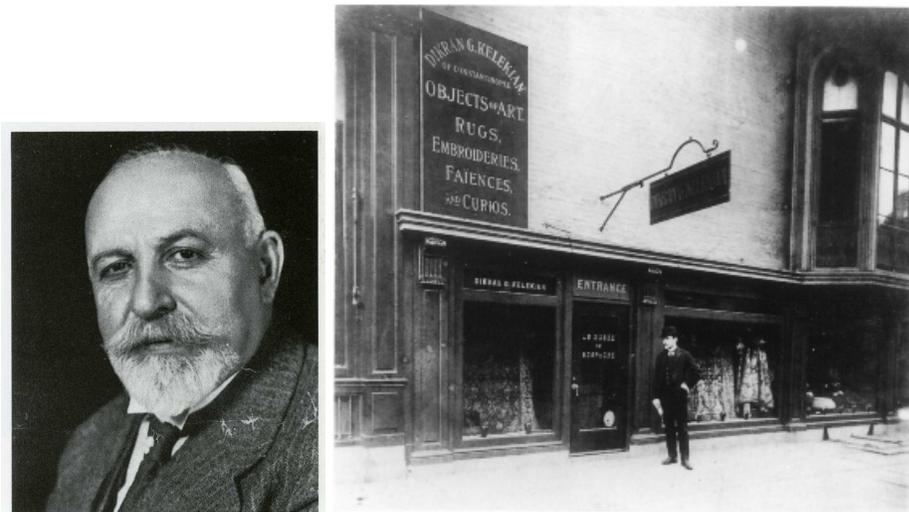


Figure 81: Dikran Kelekian (1868-1951); Kelekian's establishment in New York City

Freer would often rely on his dealers like Kelekian on information about objects he was about to purchase. He would also turn to his fellow-collectors for advice on such matters. As David Roxburgh has pointed out, for [Parisian] collectors, who thought of themselves as amateur/connoisseurs, “the amateur’s collection was private and exclusive; in order to see it one had to be admitted to a circle of like-minded, qualified, and

⁴⁹ “Collecting the ‘Orient’ at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 72.

financially well-equipped individuals, who were nearly always male.”⁵⁰ For Islamic art, Freer sought advice not only from Kelekian but also his Parisian friends and fellow collectors such as Gaston Migeon, who had written the introduction to the *Exposition des arts musulmans au Musée des arts décoratifs* (1903) – an exhibition that Freer had taken in on a visit to Paris, writing to Hecker that “...to our delight, on arrival here, we found on exhibition in the Louvre, a special collection of Spanish-Moresque, Persian, Arabic and Babylonian art—the great forerunners—loaned from the private collections of Paris—i.e. Baron de Rothschild, Gillot, Vever, Koechlin, et.al. The whole including the first thoroughly good exhibition of these arts ever publicly made. It has offered us a great opportunity to continue our study and compare the various periods, mediums and wares.”⁵¹

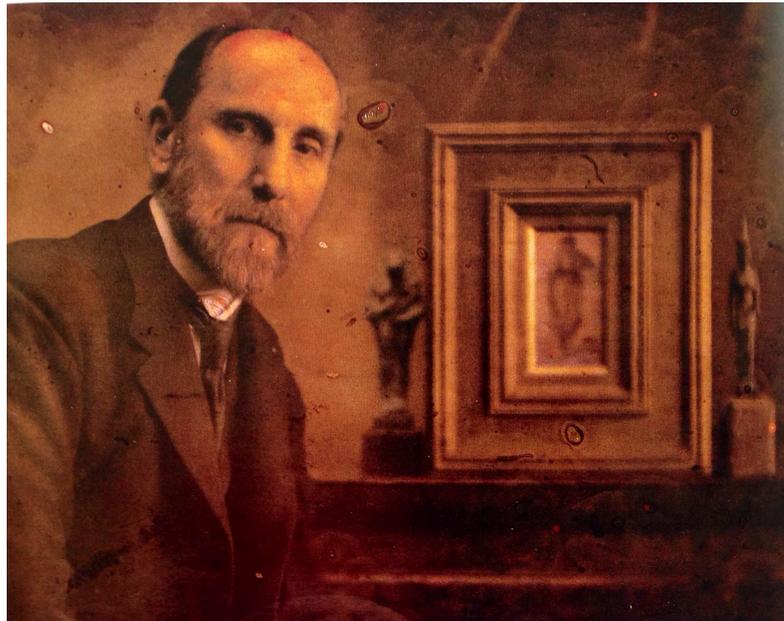


Figure 82: Alvin Langdon Coburn's portrait of Charles Lang Freer, 1909. Whistler's *Resting* (1870-75) is placed between two Egyptian bronze figures of Anubis and Neith dating to Dynasty 26 (664-525 BCE)

⁵⁰ “Au Bonheur Des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, Ca. 1880-1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 14.

⁵¹ CLF to Hecker, Paris, June 22nd, 1903.

The ability to compare and make aesthetic connections across mediums and periods became the determining principle by which Freer was able to collect across different cultures. By the early years of the 20th century, he had extended his collecting interests beyond the American painters and printers he had been drawn to at first. While he did continue to develop this aspect of his collection, it soon became clear that the most unique parts of his collection were the Asian objects – chiefly from China and Japan. Thus it was this aspect of his collection that was highlighted in correspondence relating to Freer’s proposed bequest to the nation through the Smithsonian Institution in 1904. Writing to Samuel Pierpont Langley, then Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution Freer noted, “No attempt has been made to secure specimens from unsympathetic sources, my collecting having been confined to American and Asiatic schools. My great desire has been to unite modern work with masterpieces of certain periods of high civilization harmonious in spiritual and physical suggestion, having the power to broaden aesthetic culture and the grace to elevate the human mind.”⁵²

The harmony “in physical suggestion” that Freer alludes to in the letter above is what allowed him to collect in an eclectic fashion and not be limited to one medium or one area, and can be seen in Freer’s selection in one of the few rare photographs of himself with his collection. In the photograph taken a few years later by Alvin Langdon Coburn, Freer positions himself beside a 19th century Whistler drawing inspired by ancient Greek Tanagara figures flanked by two 6th century BCE bronze figures of Egyptian deities Ann Clyburn Gunter et al., *A Collector’s Journey: Charles Lang Freer and Egypt*

⁵² CLF to S.P. Langley, Dec 27, 1904.

(Washington, DC; London: Freer Gallery of Art : Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution ; Scala, 2002), 15.. Thus, when Freer saw the exhibition in Paris in 1903, even though he was more interested in Near Eastern pottery at the time – the famous Rakka ware of which Kelekian supplied him with in plenty, it is likely that he also took in the paintings that were also on display and have been reproduced in the catalogue. Among the paintings in the Paris exhibition were a handful of Mughal miniatures, which were identified simply as Indian art. Their inclusion although small nevertheless indicates the presence of such objects in a few private collections, often as tangential or incidental pieces to a larger corpus of Persian painting, in vogue amongst fin-de-siècle Parisian collectors. Mughal painting, then often termed Indo-Persian, had for its naturalism and decorative quality been available and collected for many years in Europe. Since the latter part of the 19th century, after the complete domination of the British rule over Princely States in India, and the abolition of Mughal rule in Delhi, the great Mughal painting collections of weakened or overthrown rulers were looted, burned or sold. Much of what was not destroyed made its way to Britain, through former British officers, and even as tributes from rulers, and explains the great number of Mughal paintings still present in British collections. Other works made their way to European collections overland, often via Persian or the Ottoman empire (an earlier plundering of the Mughal library predating the British colonial presence was in the 18th century under the Persian ruler Nader Shah). Mughal paintings, often part of manuscripts, were initially collected by Europeans as souvenirs, or out of bibliophilic interest in the late 18th and early 19th century. Interest in Mughal art would experience a revival in the early 20th

century in India through the efforts of E.B. Havell and Vincent Arthur Smith who championed the naturalism and aesthetic qualities of such paintings as well.

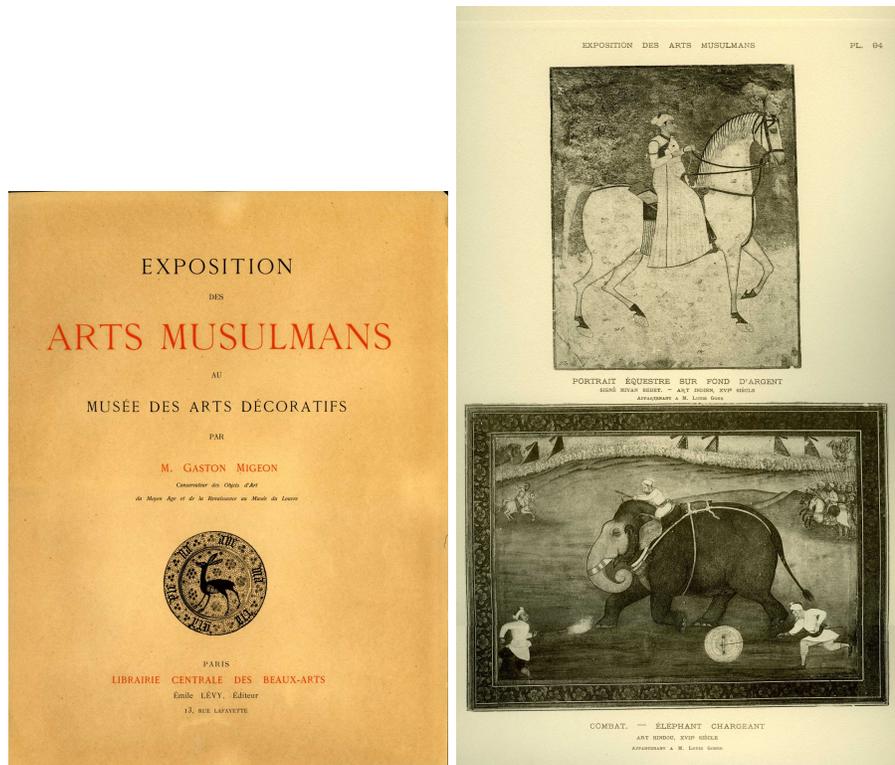


Figure 83: Catalogue of the exhibition *Exposition des Arts Musulmans*, Paris (1903) (left); Images of Indian paintings included in the exhibition and catalogue.

At the time when Freer encountered them in Paris however, the prevailing approach was to relegate Mughal art to the margins – Indian in content, but derivative from Persian art in sensibility and thus Indo-Persian. While this interstitial position rendered Mughal painting of tangential interest to most collectors who concentrated on Persian painting, it is conceivable that it was its very hyphenated identity that made it attractive to Freer who was looking for ways to make connections between his diverse collections. It is therefore not surprising that when a few years later Freer heard about the availability of a set of Indo-Persian paintings, his interest was piqued. Writing from Detroit in a letter to the financier Charles W. Morse Freer observed: “I have been anxious

for nearly a year to see a collection of Persian-Indo paintings, which are for sale privately.⁵³ If they are as fine as they are said to be, I shall probably purchase them as I fancy they represent an important link in the chain which connects potteries of Syria, Persia, Babylon, with the later art of China and Japan.”⁵⁴



Figure 84: Catalogue of Indo-Persian Pictures and Manuscripts...by Native Artists, collected by Colonel H.B. Hanna (1896) (left); Illustration from Ramayana manuscript in the Hanna collection (right)

⁵³ Freer had been apprised of the collection’s availability from a most unusual source – Frances Elizabeth Hoggan. Frances Hoggan, M.D. of London, was the first woman to receive a doctorate in medicine from a European university, and was a registered practitioner in Wales and Ireland. In 1906 she was touring America and giving lectures, during which time, whilst in Chicago, she read about Freer in an article from the Century magazine. [The century illustrated monthly magazine, Volume 73, Nov 1906-April 1907], and wrote to him about her acquaintance with the Hanna collection of Indo-Persian paintings that were available privately on the market in England. Freer responded and Hoggan subsequently provided him with a catalogue of the works, and a few photographs as well. Freer promised her that he would go to England if the photographs proved that the collection was important, and it seems he found them so, for after returning from his trip to Egypt in the summer, Freer set forth with much anticipation to meet Colonel Hanna in Petersfield, and see his collection which was on view in Newcastle.

⁵⁴ CLF to Charles Morse, August 30th, 1907.

The collection in question was that of Henry Bathurst Hanna (1839-1914).⁵⁵ Not much is known of Colonel Hanna, except that he was an officer in the British army, who served in India during the Mutiny of 1857. How he amassed his collection is unknown, except that he made most of his purchases outside the larger Indian cities in the course of military duties.⁵⁶ He was eager to sell the collection as a whole, and in order to provide for some relatives, had reduced his asking price from £10000 to £7500.⁵⁷ Freer spent a whole day in Newcastle examining the collection, which consisted of 129 paintings, and 13 manuscripts, and made brief notes with regards to the quality and his estimation of the value of each work. According to the catalogue of the collection, most of the works from the collection were Imperial Mughal albeit from differing periods, but the most important work, was an illustrated version of the Hindu epic the Ramayana, thought to have been painted by the atelier of the emperor Akbar. This was clearly the core work of the collection, and a third of the eventual price Freer paid for the collection was for this one manuscript. We now know that the Ramayana manuscript was not in fact made for Akbar,

⁵⁵ Freer had been apprised of the collection's availability from a most unusual source – Frances Elizabeth Hoggan. Don't be surprised if the name doesn't sound familiar in these circles, although it may be known amongst historians of medicine. Frances Hoggan, M.D. of London, was the first woman to receive a doctorate in medicine from a European university, and was a registered practitioner in Wales and Ireland. In 1906 she was touring America and giving lectures, during which time, whilst in Chicago, she read about Freer in an article from the Century magazine. [The century illustrated monthly magazine, Volume 73, Nov 1906-April 1907], and wrote to him about her acquaintance with the Hanna collection of Indo-Persian paintings that were available privately on the market in England. Freer responded and Hoggan subsequently provided him with a catalogue of the works, and a few photographs as well. Freer promised her that he would go to England if the photographs proved that the collection was important, and it seems he found them so, for after returning from his trip to Egypt in the summer, Freer set forth with much anticipation to meet Colonel Hanna in Petersfield, and see his collection which was on view in Newcastle.

⁵⁶ "I began collecting in the Indian Mutiny, and I need scarcely say that I am selling these old friends with great reluctance...Had I been a rich man, I would have given them to India, their birth place." (HBH to Freer, April 10th, 1907)

⁵⁷ ("In fixing the value of my Collection, I took into consideration the length of time and difficulty I found in collecting the M.S.S. and Pictures, the high prices I paid for some of them, and the fact that such specimens are no longer obtainable in India, the supply being now practically exhausted...I could get good prices for some of the Pictures & M.S.S. if I were willing to sell them separately, but I have always been loth to break up a Collection so unique both from a historical & artistic point of view." HBH to Freer, October 3rd, 1907)

but rather for the nobleman Abdal Rahim, and indeed that many of the works were misattributions and oftentimes of a later period than had been thought. Hanna's collection itself is eclectic, and had no clearly defining theme, with paintings ranging from portraits of Indian rulers (primarily Mughal, but also others) to architectural views of important Islamic buildings and genre scenes. The manuscripts included an album, and three copies of the Shahnama and a Gulistan – types of works typical and no doubt known to Freer. He noted which he preferred as “good”, “fine” or “superb”, and paid anywhere between \$150 - \$250 for them. Besides the Ramayana, there was only one painting for which he paid more than the others—a surprisingly bland portrait identified simply as the Emperor Aurangzeb. This however was in keeping with Freer's preference for what were thought to be imperial portraits, or paintings with overt Imperial Mughal associations, as a safe bet. Yet this being his first, and only foray into Indian art, Freer was admittedly not sure of his own opinions and sought advice from his confreres in Paris, before eventually agreeing to purchase the collection for £3100 or \$15000+. Hanna was disappointed, but nevertheless agreed to the sale.

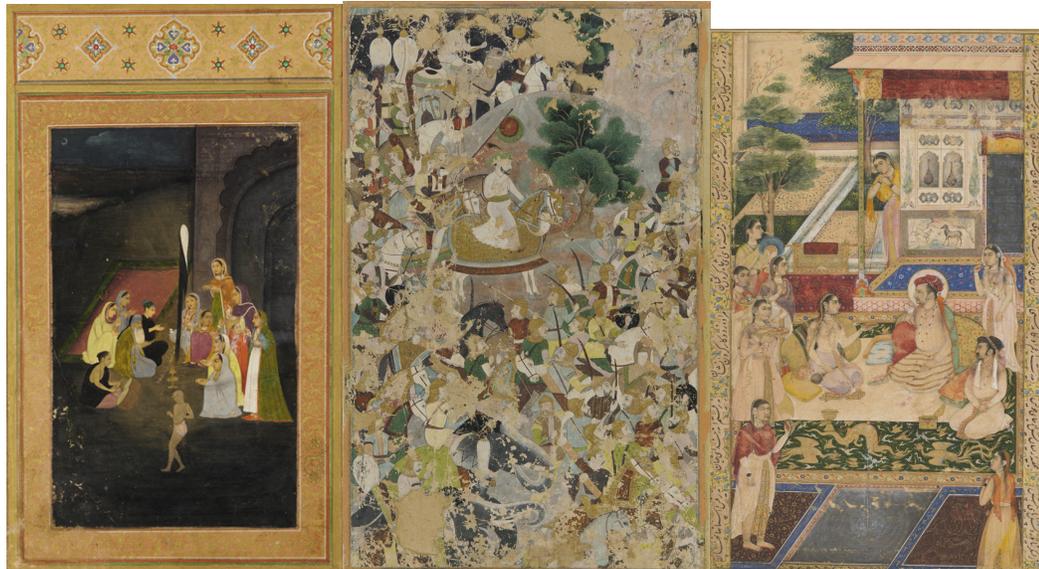


Figure 85: Paintings designated “Good” (left); “Fine” (center); “Superb” (right)

No doubt enthused by his latest acquisition, and possibly excited for a new phase of collecting, Freer bought a few other Persian pieces on the same trip from Lusac and Quatrach in London, and one thought to have been part of the Hanna collection but actually bought from Siegfried Bing’s establishment in Paris.⁵⁸ Although Freer had bought a few Persian pieces from Kelekian in the past on this occasion he chose to refrain, but found it necessary to mollify his dealer nonetheless, in a letter which may also explain his temerity, and why after this brief period of buying Persian and Indo-Persian manuscripts and paintings, he did not pursue it much further. He tellingly noted:

“This collection [Hanna’s], along with a few other specimens which I already owned, some of which came from your store, will receive during the coming winter much of my time. I shall study them carefully and hope to familiarize myself with this charming art, and by degrees in the

⁵⁸ In his essay on The Hanna Collection, Milo Cleveland Beach noted that the work A young man seated (F1907.161) was bought from Colonel Hanna, however in the Freer Archives a receipt from Seigfried Bing and a handwritten note by Freer on his European trip describes the work, and notes having bought it from Bing.

future when opportunity offers, I hope to add to the collection, but I feel it would be very unwise on my part to rush into the market and buy promiscuously without knowing more about the subject and it was for this reason and for none other that I declined to buy the specimens shown me in your shop in Paris...I appreciate the fact that your knowledge of Persian art is so far advanced that you can make purchases independent of other connoisseurs, but unfortunately for me I am only a beginner and I cannot as yet act entirely independent. I need all the coaching and training that I can get and I seek it in all possible directions. To you particularly, I am very greatly indebted for the little that I know...⁵⁹

Yet in spite of Kelekian's constant cajoling, and enthusiasm for Persian art, and his bemoaning the state of the market for Persian miniatures in America,⁶⁰ Freer continued to demur, and further added:

"It seems more important to secure fine specimens of Chinese Art than it does to secure specimens of Persian Arts. Many other collectors and museums are quite likely to buy Persian things before they are likely to invest heavily in Chinese objects, and I feel it wiser for me to watch for things Chinese before too many buyers enter the market and send the prices beyond my reach...The Goloubew collection of Persian miniatures was offered to me privately some time ago but I declined to consider the purchase of the collection for the reasons above mentioned...⁶¹

Realizing where Freer's preferences lay, ever the pragmatist, Kelekian did not hesitate to offer Freer Chinese works. The above-mentioned Goloubew collection of Persian and Indian paintings was formed by Victor Goloubew who himself parted with

⁵⁹ CLF to Kelekian, October 28th, 1907.

⁶⁰ "I was glad to hear that Boston Museum of Fine Art bought the Goloubew collection of Persian miniatures...I have never been able to sell in 21 years time more than one dozen of Persian miniatures outside of Mr. Henry Wolters who always bought them. The others I had to bring and sell them here for European collectors, and most of them I can assure you will return to America...I have today the finest collection of Persian Miniatures in the word yet nobody even asks about it. Nevermind I always hope my time will come. I am not yet discouraged." Kelekian to CLF, Paris, May 22nd, 1914.

⁶¹ CLF to Kelekian, June 5th, 1914.

the collection “in order to devote himself to the collection of Chinese art, in which field he has since become interested.”⁶² Of the collection of 179 pieces, 44 were from India. The addition of this collection extended the Museum of Fine Art, Boston’s collection of such art, which already contained some gifts from the Museum trustee Denman Ross. Indeed it was Ross who would go on to purchase the Ananda Coomaraswamy collection, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Yet before offering it to Denman Ross and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Ananda Coomaraswamy had first approached Freer who was the acknowledged and foremost American collector of Asian Art at the time. In 1912, Coomaraswamy had written “but to those who care for pure expression rather than mere representation, or are in some other way prepared to understand and sympathise with Indian thought, these paintings are the key to the door of an enchanted land which, once entered, can never be forgotten.”⁶³ Coomaraswamy’s emphasis on “pure expression rather than mere representation” undoubtedly resonated with Freer’s aesthetic approach to collecting, and unsurprisingly therefore the interests and ideas of the two men were aligned. Freer had in his library books written by Coomaraswamy, including the latter’s famous *Rajput Painting* (1916) and Coomaraswamy was also acquainted with Freer and wrote to the latter in 1915 requesting permission to publish a piece from Freer’s collection in his book *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* (1916).⁶⁴ The men expressed a mutual interest in one another, and from Freer’s diary entries from 1916, we note that they finally met in New York. Coomaraswamy, although usually based in England, was at the time, touring

⁶² F. V. P., “The Goloubew Collection of Persian and Indian Paintings,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 13, no. 74 (February 1, 1915): 1.

⁶³ Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Rājput Paintings,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 20, no. 108 (March 1, 1912): 15.

⁶⁴ This was an image of the Chinese silk painting of Kwanyin (Fish-basket Guanyin; F1904.2)

America with his wife the singer Ratan Devi.⁶⁵ The two men met at the Plaza Hotel on the March 10, 1916, and subsequently on at least three other occasions, in the company of the sculptor Paulanship and his wife. Freer also took in a performance by Mrs. Coomaraswamy. While we do not know what transpired between the men during their meetings, later that summer, while up in the Berkshires at Great Barrington, Freer notes in his diaries that he spent the greater part of some days examining “Mogul paintings and books.” Coomaraswamy for his part while in America occasionally gave lectures, but also kept a lookout for opportunities to sell his collection. After having made his acquaintance in 1916, Coomaraswamy decided to approach Freer regarding the sale of his collection. The two had no doubt discussed Freer’s plans for his collection and therefore Coomaraswamy thought it appropriate to broach the subject. On July 12, 1916, Coomaraswamy wrote the following to Freer:

“It is about my Indian collections that I am now writing to you. I have not described them to you in any detail, but you will be familiar with the reproduction of the more important pictures and bronzes. It has always been my earnest wish that this collection, which is in many ways unique, should be preserved intact and either during my lifetime or subsequently be permanently housed in a suitable museum. I had at one time wished that this should have been in India but I am now inclined to think that many human advantages are better gained by the dissemination than by the local concentration of works of art. Your great Chinese collections for example will have at this stage of the world’s history, more effect in their home at Washington, than if they had remained in the East. Their dynamic effect is greater here where they present the strongest contrasts. From this point of view, in the same way, it would not distress me to see my own collection properly housed in an American Museum. I do not feel very strongly the itch of ownership, apart from the

⁶⁵ Ratan Devi was the stage name of Alice Richardson – Coomaraswamy’s second wife. She held many recitals in America at the time, performing ragas and folk songs from Punjab and Kashmir. Coomaraswamy would typically give an introduction to her performance.

inevitable personal attachment that one has for one or two particular works. At this moment, owing to financial circumstances mainly connected with the war, which you will readily appreciate, I find myself in a position where I should be glad to realize earlier than might otherwise have been the case the value which I have invested during many years in making my collection. My suggestion is that possibly you would think well of the idea to purchase my collection, almost in its entirety, and to incorporate it with your own Far Eastern collections at Washington. It would not, indeed, be difficult to transform this into a Museum of Asiatic Art, rather than of purely Far Eastern art: but in any case, and apart from this, it seems to me that it would be very possible to add to it an Indian room or rooms where the bronzes and later schools of painting, Rajput and Mughal, together with the choicer types of decorative art, might be for the first time in America, or indeed the world, adequately represented... The price that I should ask would be \$55000 (fifty-five thousand) for the collection delivered in America. I have no doubt that in years to come it will be valued more highly than this; on the other hand Indian art has not at present the commercial vogue which attaches to some others, and I think this might be regarded as a good opportunity for the nation, through your far-sighted activity to take the pioneer step in this direction. I need not however adduce any argument, as all the circumstances are so well known to you, and there is no one more capably than yourself to judge them.”

In pitching his collection for sale, Coomaraswamy highlighted the uniqueness of the opportunity and the potential for distinction in America and the world, and thus cannily appealed not only to Freer’s singular vision for his collection, but also his acumen as a businessman. He correctly identified that Indian art in America could be positioned as a natural continuation of interests in Asia, and has Freer himself had identified, an aesthetic bridge between the art of different cultures. Unfortunately for Coomaraswamy, Freer at this stage was in declining health, and quite frail, and not keen

to make further acquisitions, particular of whole collections, and in his reply dated July 25, 1916, he noted

“I appreciate your willingness to add your collection of Rajput Painting to the collection which I am making for the American Government but I regret that my strength is not at present sufficient to permit me to investigate the matter as fully as it deserves. Since my purchase of the Hanna collection of so-called Indo-Persian miniatures, I have had but little opportunity to examine the same, or to familiarize myself with Indian Art, and some time ago when it was determined that I should spend this summer at Great Barrington, I had the Hanna collection brought here, and I have had some little opportunity to compare my pictures with those illustrated in your book, but last week the work was stopped by my physician, and when in greater strength I hope to renew the study and comparison...I wish that I could hold out to you the hope that some day in the near future I could expect to purchase your collection, but at present I do not see my way clear to its accomplishment.”

Although Freer felt obliged to decline Coomaraswamy's offer, in the years after the Freer Gallery was established in 1919, Coomaraswamy would go on to be a supplier and advisor in the new gallery's purchases of Indian art in the 1920s and 1930s, ushering in a new phase in the study, appreciation and collection of such art in America. It was thus in Freer's legacy of a museum that Indian art proved to be that enduring presence he suspected it would be from his very first encounter.

Progressive Shifts

Within a couple of years of Coomaraswamy's correspondence with Freer, the transformation in the attitude among American collectors and museums was already underway. In 1917, Coomaraswamy's collection was bought by the MFA, and so on May

25, 1918, the painter and decorator, and brother of the then-secretary of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lockwood de Forest wrote the following in a letter to his friend, Stewart Culin, who was the Director of Ethnology at The Brooklyn Museum:

“I am very much interested in what you say about Indian art and that you find it more and more fascinating as I have done. So few have been able to see anything really great in it that I have sometimes wondered whether I was right about it after all. I was quite sure I was right when Denman Ross, whom I consider one of the extremely cultivated men I know as to real art became interested in it very much as I was. I am even more sure now that you say what you do. I find that even some of the rather prejudiced trustees of the Metropolitan are beginning to see that European art of the so called Renaissance is not the only one. They purchased my two Indian pictures and have bought a very fine Indian stone figure at a very high price notwithstanding my advice not to buy it. None of the men who voted to buy it would have seen any art in it ten years ago...”⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Culin, Gen Correspondence 1.2.010



Figure 86: Lockwood de Forest's showroom, 9 E 17th St, New York, c.1885.

Lockwood de Forest, an artist, and a one-time collaborator of Tiffany had been a tireless promoter of Indian craftsmanship, particularly woodwork, and had spent decades cultivating Gilded Age patrons to include Indian furniture and decorative elements in their homes.⁶⁷ His own home which also served as his showroom had been hailed as “The Most Indian Home in America” by the magazine *House Beautiful* in 1900, and was replete with architectural elements and furnishings mainly from India. Over his many trips to India he had purchased and commissioned pieces to decorate his home, making it comparable to a museum in the eyes of many. In 1922 Lockwood de Forest was retiring to California and decided to sell his home and all its contents. He approached Culin who had by that stage traveled to India with de Forest in 1914 and had become close friends with him, to appraise its contents, particularly wrote the following:

⁶⁷ For a monographic study of Lockwood de Forest, see Mayer, Roberta A, and Forest L. De. *Lockwood De Forest: Furnishing the Gilded Age with a Passion for India*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008.

“You ask me what would be a fair value for your things...I have had occasion recently to speak and write concerning the value of things which have been vitalized by a creative spirit, in contrast with the dead objects that fill museums and lead to your calling their contents rubbish. Your things have been thus vitalized. They would be invaluable to any of the Museums you mention...”⁶⁸

One of the museums Lockwood had been keen on interesting in his collection was the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ever since his brother Robert de Forest became closely associated with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and then became its director, Lockwood saw an opportunity and pushed for Indian objects to be purchased. For the most part he was successful in selling jewelry from India, and had tried to interest museum and design schools in objects of Indian arts and crafts for instructional and educational purposes. Assessing the importance of his collection he wrote:

“One of the things which makes my Indian collection valuable is that I was able to prove that art was alive and that man of the industries were turning out just as good work as had ever been done in the past as J.L. Kipling said my wood carving was the best he had ever seen at the Lahore Exhibition of 1881. Purdon Clarke was not sure but he was convinced when I sent things to the Colonial exhibition in London in 1886. He said he had never seen such carving ever done. One of the things I have always had in mind was to make collections with a view of selections from them being made to be put in the small industrial museums and the school museums which we should have...”⁶⁹

In letter after letter de Forest wrote to Culin arguing for the importance of a collection such as his in the educational objectives of American museums. By the 1920s however, de Forest found himself on the losing side of a pedagogical battle in American

⁶⁸ Culin to Lockwood de Forest, January 30, 1922. Culin, General Correspondence 1.4

⁶⁹ Lockwood to Forest to Culin, February 7, 1922. Culin, Gen Correspondence, 1.4. [029]

museums. The fine arts focused connoisseurship imperative based on the Louvre, and being actively adopted by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which had been the first to close its art school as far back as 1894 was eclipsing the rival model based on the approach of the South Kensington Museum,⁷⁰ and followed by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and by the 1920s, the close association between museums and design schools was breaking down in America.⁷¹ Culin gently tried to explain the shifting realities to his friend:

“As to museums let me tell you the outcome of my own experience. Our American institutions are managed, not by a single responsible head...but uniformly by Boards of Trustees, merchants, bankers and lawyers, who conduct them as they would all the other enterprises with which they are associated...They have no ideas of the possibilities of objects for a Museum outside the limited field which, uniformly, they have in their minds. This they understand to be the accumulation and preservation of rare and valuable objects as aids to the establishment and maintenance of canons of taste and in some ways which they do not pretend to understand to what they call “education”. Their idea of a Museum is static...Our existing American museums seem to be a kind of cross between a bank and a church with a kindergarten thrown in as a sop to the public that supports them.”⁷²

⁷⁰ The South Kensington museum model was the de facto model followed by the museums contrasted in India, including those at Madras and Calcutta, but by the early twentieth century were beginning to be critiqued by some, including Culin, who remarked upon the display at the Madras Museum as follows: “It was quite clear that the South Kensington scheme of arrangement had been followed out and the objects classified under materials. I recognized here another influence of South Kensington in the heavy black cases in which the metal objects were contained. As I have contended, they are ugly and unsuited.” (p.203, Culin Diaries)

⁷¹ For further discussion of this divergence, see Steven Conn *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926*

⁷² Culin concluded his letter with “My own ideal is a museum that is dynamic rather than static; a place where the mere keeping of things is secondary to their use, and there this use is not merely objective and practical. My ideal museum should enrich the human consciousness and stimulate imagination. It should be a place of romance. It should serve as a kind of bridge to fairyland.” Culin to Lockwood de Forest, March 20, 1922. Culin Gen Correspondence, 1.4. [031]

This scathing assessment on Culin's part would have echoed with de Forest's experiences in his dealings with the Metropolitan Museum. When de Forest had gone to India in 1914, it had been a buying trip financially underwritten by his brother Robert and his own finances, on the understanding that the Metropolitan would buy the entire collection. The collection carefully formed by Lockwood de Forest on the basis of his knowledge of the role of the design instruction in the museum was however eventually not purchased by the museum in toto. He bemoaned the manner in which the affair unfolded and even fourteen years later in 1928 when he wrote to Culin about the episode, he was still smarting from the perceived injustices, the lack of appreciation for the premium he placed on the educational value of the collection he put together rather than the more profitable sale of it as a dealer.⁷³ That de Forest saw himself and Culin in the same camp was not a little ironic given that in 1914, when they embarked for India together, before they even reached, and whilst they were still in Colombo, Culin records in his diary that : "I found him [de Forest] too unutterably selfish and penurious."⁷⁴ The

⁷³ "The Museum declined to take the collection but only wanted a very small part and proposed it should only pay 25% over cost on what they took...I was not even allowed to select the pieces best suited for the small collection... My entire collection was broken up and what they have is in no sense a collection. I had all the remaining pieces left on my hands to sell ... In his [Robert's] last letter as I think I told you he said if I had taken up the antiquities profession on my return from India in 1882 with my knowledge I would have been rolling in wealth now. This is true and so could you have, but you have never use you knowledge for personal gain nor have I. Use and educational value have always come first not money making. We would have been more appreciated perhaps if we had exploited the public and the museums and the rich collectors to the top of their bend (?) just as the successful dealers have. Had every one bowing down to us and if we had been in England knighted like Sir Joseph Duveen! We would have been able to give works of art to the museums as he has. All the dealers have made fortunes out of the rich collectors and the Museums and will continue to do so until there is cooperation instead of the competition there is now." (de Forest to Culin, March 5, 1928, Culin General Correspondence, 1.4.156)

⁷⁴ In the same diary entry Culin elaborated: "I had had a talk with de Forest in the morning at breakfast and told him it would be impossible for me to go on with him, even to Madras, as he had planned. I told him that the time had arrived for a very complete and direct separation on my part; that I found him too unutterably selfish and penurious; that he let me carry all the burdens, doing nothing and giving nothing he could avoid. I could stand all this, but for the fact that in addition, he had grabbed everything I showed him without reference to me. He was greatly distressed and could not eat any breakfast, at the same time he volunteered that what I said was true." (Culin Diaries, p.177)

two men did however salvage their relationship and reconnected in North India, and kept up a friendship, which henceforth tended to be conciliatory on Culin's part.

Nevertheless, their correspondence is revealing, for it signals the perceptible change that was undergoing in the understanding of Indian objects in America. Although the distance between the museum and the industrial art and design school was increasing, Jeffery Trask has argued that the closer examination of Progressive Era changes in the American museum "reveals a much more complicated relationship between connoisseurship and educational utility. Museums invited manufacturers to study museum collections, they distributed photographs and illustrations to trade magazines, and they organized programs and talks to bring designers into museums. The kind of decorative art collected and displayed by museums, however, depended significantly upon traditional notions of connoisseurship. Trustees and curators wrestled over distinctions between fine and applied art, they reconsidered traditional criteria for evaluating the cultural and educational value of objects, and they turned once again to the relationship between authenticity and reproduction— genuine and fake."⁷⁵ Culin would see these changes taking place at his own institution, for in 1920, the "Oriental collections," once formed "in order to inspire and meet the needs of American artists and industries" were separated from the ethnography collection and housed in their own galleries at the Brooklyn Museum. Through the 1920s, Culin oversaw changes in the focus of the collection, from collecting decorative and crafts objects, and objects representing life and customs, to acquiring objects of high aesthetic and cultural value. This would culminate in the 1930s, after Culin's death when the collections would move

⁷⁵ Jeffrey Trask, *Things American Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 90, <http://ezproxy.viu.ca/login?url=http://muse.jhu.edu/books/9780812205657/>.

from being designated under the Department of Ethnology, first to the Department of Eastern and Near Eastern Art, and then to the Department of Oriental Art. These were changes not limited to the Brooklyn Museum either, and as will be explored in Chapter 2, occurred at the same time as the place for India was being established within American museum, and was greatly aided by the presence of a scholar like Ananda Coomaraswamy, and the emergence of a market for Indian art led by Nasli Heeramaneck. The emphasis was shifting from an appreciation of craftsmanship, utilitarian functions and exotic nature of the works, that was the purview of decorators such as de Forest, ethnographers such as Culin, design school educators and travelers, to the antiquity and rarity and intrinsic aesthetic value of such works i.e. the coupling of intellectual and sensual engagement with the works, of greater interest to connoisseur-collectors, and art museums.

Chapter 2: A Place for India

In the first two decades of the 20th century, the appreciation of Indian objects as art in America was linked to shifts in aesthetic approaches and the extension of connoisseurship practices with regards to objects from the East. The formation of the Freer Gallery, and the development of strong collections of Asian Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston soon followed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art signaled such shifts at the institutional level. However, the legitimization of Indian art within the American art museum was ultimately enabled by the coalescence of two key factors – the presence of an increasing number of men who had had first hand experience of and expertise in Indian art, as well as the availability of Indian art in the American market, through dealers. By far the most influential was Ananda Coomaraswamy who first came to the United States in 1916, and would remain until his death in 1947. In those three decades, he not only played a key role in instituting a place for India within the art museum, but established enduring frameworks for the narrativization of Indian art.

In 1918 Coomaraswamy wrote the following introduction to the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Sculpture, Painting and Drawings of Ancient India*, being held at the Kevorkian Galleries, in New York: “The art of India has been the last of the great Asiatic arts to attract the attention of western students and to obtain a recognized place in the collections of the great museums. And yet, for the student of Far Eastern art- and particularly of Chinese Buddhist art, it possesses, apart from its intrinsic importance, all the significance of an art of origins....It is now perhaps for the first time that an exhibition of purely Indian art has been attempted in New York; and it is fortunate that this should include not merely a series of Mughal paintings, but also more than one

unusually important example of religious sculpture, and a number of those paintings, called Rajput, in which the older tradition of Ajanta survives with surprising vitality.”⁷⁶

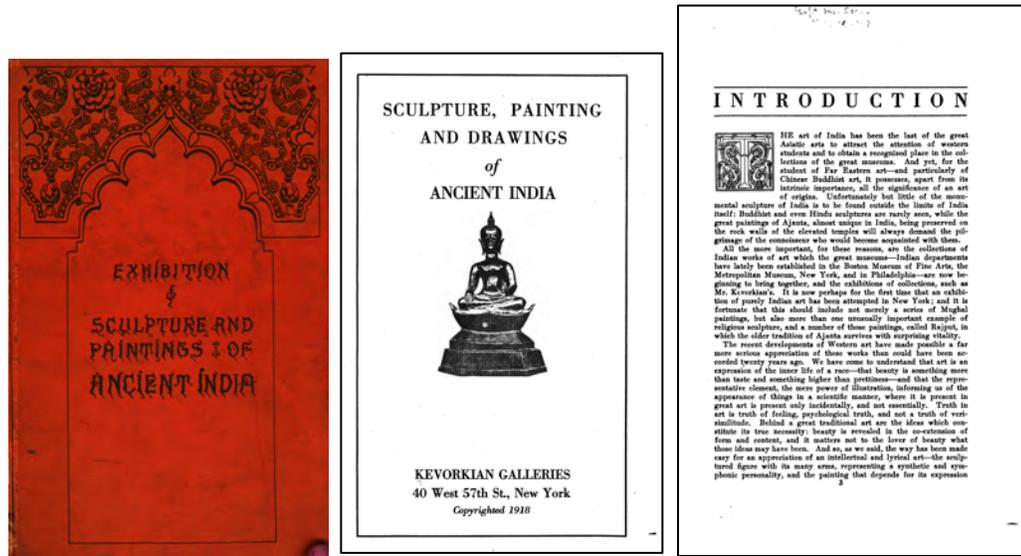


Figure 87: Kevorkian Exhibition Catalog (1918) with Introduction by Ananda Coomaraswamy

Coomaraswamy’s assessment in the catalogue introduction succinctly sums up the prevailing place of Indian art in American consciousness – connected in seminal ways to the arts of the Far East, and less-importantly (in Coomaraswamy’s estimation) to the Islamic arts of the Near East, through its Mughal painting tradition. It was particularly the

⁷⁶ The recent developments of Western art have made possible a far more serious appreciation of these works than could have been accorded twenty years ago. We have come to understand that art is an expression of the inner life of a race—that beauty is something more than taste and something higher than prettiness—and that the representative element, the mere power of illustration, informing us of the appearance of things in a scientific manner, where it is present in great art is present only incidentally, and not essentially. Truth in art is truth of feeling, psychological truth, and not a truth of verisimilitude. Behind a great traditional art are the ideas which constitute its true necessity: beauty is revealed in the co-extension of form and content, and it matters not to the lover of beauty what those ideas may have been. And so, as we said, the way has been made easy for an appreciation of an intellectual and lyrical art—the sculptured figure with its many arms, representing a synthetic and symphonic personality, and the painting that depends for its expression on linear rhythms and essential symbols, to the exclusion of preoccupation with the cast shadow and the modelling of masses. It is true that to fully understand the art of India, or any other art, we must place ourselves at the point of view of the artist, and this demands of the modern industrialist, whose sense of the immediacy of the spirit is all too faint, a considerable effort: but it is also true that those that approach the unfamiliar art, even without an intellectual knowledge of its themes, if they will permit themselves to feel its moods, to yield to it as one yields to the moods of nature and of human and spiritual emotion, will find themselves at home.” Kevorkian Galleries, *Sculpture, Painting and Drawings of Ancient India*. (New York: Kevorkian galleries, 1918).

former that he emphasized, for this allowed him to build upon Okakura Kakuzo's framing of "Asian art," as the Japanese scholar had done so while at the MFA, and at the same time established a lineage for Rajput painting, which was a new category of art that he had identified and introduced, and which comprised a large part of his collection. It was this collection that he had recently sold a large part of to the MFA, and he would go on to sell pieces from it to other important museums in America.

Collecting Asia at the MFA, Boston: Okakura and the Goloubew collection

By the time the Japanese art scholar Okakura Kakuzo arrived in Boston to work at the Museum of Fine Arts in 1904, he was already world-renowned. He had famously authored *Ideals of the East* (1903), published shortly after a year spent studying the origins of Asian art in India, where he came into contact with Bengali intellectuals including members of the Tagore family. For Okakura however, it was neither in Japan, nor in Bengal that his ideas about Asia could really be worked out beyond the page. Although he had spent several years establishing himself in Japan as a scholar of repute and had even established a fine arts school, by the time Okakura travelled to India, he had somewhat alienated himself from his peers. In the West however, and in Boston in particular he found not only receptive audiences for his ideas, but also a perfect avenue for their articulation. His former teacher and Japanese scholar Ernest Fenollosa's position at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston had been empty since the latter had had to ignominiously leave the institution under a cloud of social scandal. At a time when few were knowledgeable about the East, and fewer still with any scholarly experience of the arts, Okakura brought talents that were much needed at the institution.

The Museum of Fine Arts had been enriched by the donation of private works of art by the Boston area collectors, that had been collecting art in Europe, but also directly in Japan since the mid-19th century. Boston's key role in the China trade had provided members of trading families uniquely advantaged access to objects from the east. Interest was followed by scholarship and the likes of Edward Sylvester Morse (1830-1925), William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926) and Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908) and later John Ellerton Lodge (1878-1942) and Langdon Warner (1881 – 1955), concentrated interest in Boston. Yet none could compare to Okakura, perfectly at ease in the Boston parlors conversing in fluent English, dressed in traditional samurai costume. Christine Guth has examined the role of self-fashioning by Okakura “If dressing in “native costume” endeared Okakura to many of the Bostonians he met, it was undoubtedly because it confirmed their expectations of Japan. By wearing a beautiful silk kimono that transformed his person into a work of art, Okakura made visible the widely held Western view that Japan was “a pure invention” and the Japanese people “simply a mode of style, an exquisite fancy of art.”⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Christine Guth, “Charles Longfellow and Okakura Kakuzo: Cultural Cross-Dressing in the Colonial Context,” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8, no. 3 (2000): 623.



Figure 88: Okakura in Taoist robes in front of the MFA, Boston facade. c.1904

Okakura presented an irresistible opportunity of the “native informant” to blend education, entertainment, enlightenment and access to the authentic. Spending half his year in Japan and half in America, he embodied the cosmopolitan celebrity.⁷⁸ Equally at ease in the East as in the West, he safely rendered intelligible, the former to the latter through art and culture. In *Ideals of the East* Okakura had famously affirmed that Japan was a “museum of Asiatic civilization” and that the history of Japanese art was the history of Asiatic ideals.⁷⁹ As the advisor and later curator of Japanese and Chinese art at Boston, with museum funds at his disposal, he was in a position to substantively and materially realize his claims for the unity within Asia. Although the existing Japanese collections of art were extensive and he continued to make important acquisitions for the

⁷⁸ Speaking of figures like Salman Rushdie and V.S. Naipaul, Tim Brennan in his essay “Cosmopolitanism and Celebrities” has used the idea of the cosmopolitan celebrity to describe Third World metropolitan intellectuals, arguing that such writers have been selected by Western reviewers as interpreters and public spokespersons for the Third World. As referenced in Amanda Anderson, “Cosmopolitanism, Universalism and the Divided Legacies of Modernity” Cheah, Pheng, and Bruce Robbins. *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998. pp.265-289 (270)

⁷⁹ Kakuzō Okakura, *The Ideals of the East : With Special Reference to the Art of Japan*, 2d ed. (New York: Dutton, 1905), 8.

museum, one of the most significant contributions of his time at Boston is his development of collections of Chinese Art. This was in many ways in direct response to a perceived inferiority with regard to Charles Lang Freer's growing collection of Chinese art, and Gardiner M. Lane, the President of the MFA wrote to Okakura in no uncertain terms to this effect, laying the responsibility of addressing the issue squarely at his feet, even suggesting the capitalization on the political turmoil in China to access collectible material.⁸⁰

The competition for the finest art collections between art museums in the major cities on the East Coast, extended to non-western art as well. In response to the urgency of the perceived pressure from the Museum, Okakura duly traveled to China with his nephew Hayasaki Kokichi who also became the museum's agent. In his historical introduction to the recently reopened Asian galleries at the MFA in 1982, the museum's director Jan Fontein was quick to add however that "the discerning eyes of Okakura and Hayasaki should not be given exclusive credit. The unconventional but enlightened policy of the Museum regarding methods of acquisition, the harmonious collaboration between Japanese and Bostonians, between gifted scholars and discerning collectors, enterprising dealers and generous benefactors – all these are factors that should be taken

⁸⁰ "Several friends of the Museum who take the greatest possible interest in our Chinese and Japanese Department have recently visited Detroit to see Mr. Freer's collection. On coming back to Boston, they seem to feel that Mr. Freer's Chinese collection is far ahead of ours...Everybody wishing our Museum well would regret it very much if any other Museum in this country should obtain a general collection of Chinese and Japanese objects of art superior to the collection in our Museum...Our aim, as I understand it, is to make our collection the very best all-round representative collection of Chinese and Japanese art as a whole. I understand that so far as Japanese art is concerned, we can maintain our premiership. So far as Chinese art it concerned, I am afraid that our collection is inferior to Mr. Freer's. At the meeting of the Committee to visit the Chinese and Japanese Department, at which funds were recently raised the unanimous opinion of all present seemed to be that every effort should be made to strengthen the Chinese Collection, particularly at this time of disorder in China." (Gardiner M. Lane to Okakura Kakuzo, March 1, 1912, MFA Archives).

into account”.⁸¹ Fontein’s anodyne account, belies the opportunism that Gardiner sought in his reference to the “disorder” in China and Okakura fulfilled, as is evident from the latter’s letter to Arthur Fairbanks of the MFA, which underscores the enterprise of it all. In it Okakura recounted with some glee not unmingled with remorse the details of his purchases. The letter is quoted at length to give one a glimpse into the often ruthless tactics and strategies, at play while collecting in China at this time:

“Let me thank you first for promptly cabling me \$19,000 which I received this morning... It is a great reinforcement... You may be glad to learn that this journey to China proved to be the most successful and went beyond my expectations... I arrived just in time to reap a rich harvest... In paintings we were so very fortunate as to secure specimens of the first grade which, with the things already in our collection will place our Chinese paintings at once on the highest level... Among them I may mention... the famous Album of Sung & Yuan masters containing nine superb pieces from the collection of Ching Chien ... Ching would not have parted with his things if it were not for the distressed condition of the Manchu nobility... In spite of the elation I felt at our success, I could not help being saddened for taking away these rich heirlooms... ancient bronzes we have about thirty-five pieces... Two more are from the Imperial Collection. These acquisitions will give the Museum the foremost position in Europe and America. Except for the Tuan Fuan collections and that of Baron Sumitono of Osaka, I think we need fear no rivalry. Tuan Fuan (who was assassinated in the Southeast last November) is not yet buried – his head being in

⁸¹ Jan Fontein “Notes on the history of the collections” Mass.) Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*. (Boston, Mass., 1982), 10.

the Honan and his body in the Saudien. The dispersion of his bronzes is expected to take place after the burial, probably in August, when we must make a great effort to get some of his important pieces... The state of things here has enabled us to purchase these works at comparatively low prices. Some of them would never have been in the market before and dealers at present charge very much less than previously...I shall however advise silence about our good luck for some time to come. I do not want China to become, in art, the field of international competition! ...Mr. Calhoun, the American minister on whom I called the other day was good enough to agree to give me facilities about passing our things through the Chinese custom-house without the regulation heart-rending inspection. I am waiting his advice in the matter. Meanwhile the objects are safely kept at the Japanese Legation...I have induced Hayazaki to stay another year in China and purchase for us..."⁸²

By the time Okakura began collecting for the MFA, with a collection of over 80,000 works, the Japanese collection of art was second-to-none outside Japan, and the Japanese government had become vigilant and wary about the export of its national treasures. This also made the turn to Chinese art more expedient at the time, for the opening decade of the 20th century was a period of the collapse of the Qing Dynasty and a period of great political turmoil on the mainland. Okakura and Hayasaki were thus able to buy treasures with a much greater facility, and were enabled by the laxity in regulations. There were also an increasing number of discoveries at Chinese sites at this time, which had similarly prompted Freer to concentrate on collecting Chinese art at that time.

⁸² Okakura Kakuzo to Jonathan Fairbanks, May 16th 1912, MFA Archives.

Writing to the MFA Trustee, Dr. Denman Ross in China, Freer said, “Quite a large number of our mutual acquaintances have brought me work concerning the beautiful objects brought to Boston by Mr. Okakura on his return to America last fall. I am very happy to know that he succeeded in securing numerous good things. The interest in early Chinese art is spreading rapidly throughout America, and the recent accessions at Boston will exert splendid influence throughout our country.”⁸³ Although head-and-shoulders above all other American museums in terms of Japanese art, besides the collection of Charles Lang Freer noted above, in the field of Chinese art the MFA was also fiercely competitive with the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Indeed the MFA was one of the key avenues for the Boston Brahmins to publicly affirm their social class as well as cosmopolitanism. It was a cosmopolitanism manifest as a “complex tension between elitism and egalitarianism,”⁸⁴ played out at sites such as the MFA, that advanced the ideal for the broad understanding of other cultures and customs and a belief in universal humanity, but one that depended on a mobility that is the luxury of social, economic or cultural privilege. Thus the asset of a celebrity cosmopolitan like Okakura, and later Coomaraswamy, only served to cement Boston’s cultural cachet.

With the increasing collections of Chinese art, by Okakura’s “Asia is One” model, the project of collecting Asia in the American museum, was fast being realized. Rustom Bharucha has however tellingly noted that “it would be more appropriate to designate his Asia as “three-in-one”, constituted by the three “mighty civilizations” of China, India and

⁸³ CLF to Denman W. Ross, Detroit, January 26th, 1913

⁸⁴ Cheah, Robbins, and Social Text Collective, *Cosmopolitics*, 268.

Japan.”⁸⁵ There was however one large civilizational gap in the narrative. One must recall that Okakura’s “Ideals of the East” was written whilst in India, and the art and culture of the subcontinent as well as the specific intellectual milieu of the Bengali intelligentsia had a tremendous impact on his imagining of Asia. It is very likely that in time, having begun collecting Chinese art, Okakura would have turned to Indian art for the museum as well. Writing to Gardiner M. Lane in 1912, Okakura observed: “I think that my trip to India will not prove useless...as I intend to study the ground to some purpose and determine whether it is possible to establish our Indian section in the near future or not.” (Okakura to Gardiner M. Lane, April 15, 1912, MFA Archives).



Figure 89: Examples of Mughal paintings purchased through Gaganendranath Tagore in 1914

Further correspondence reveals that by 1913, Gaganendranath Tagore had been sourcing Indian paintings for the MFA in Boston, and had been sending paintings to John

⁸⁵ He goes on to add that “The relationship of these civilizations is less multilateral than triangular, with the bases of Chinese communitarianism and Indian spirituality feeding the apex of “art” to be found in Japan.” Bharucha, “The Illusions and Antagonisms of Civilizational Exchange” *Re-Imagining Asia*, 91

Lodge and Okakura for consideration, as the director had been interested in Indian paintings.⁸⁶ Following up with Lodge, Okakura asked. “Please tell me what became of the Indian pictures sent by Babu G. Tagore to the Museum?...I am told that Dr. Ross liked them very much...Tagore has sent me another parcel of 17 old paintings of the Kangra school... Though Tagore tells me that they are representative of the Kangra school. I do not care personally for them except for two or three... They are cheap as the prices go nowadays and perhaps it may be wise to buy one or two (or more if you find people interested in them) to encourage further sending for inspection. I wrote to Tagore that we expect better things if they cost twice as much...If we are going to have a collection of Indian things it may be wise to buy some of these as a beginning.”⁸⁷ The collection that Okakura refers to was bought in total, and included Mughal paintings, primarily as a gesture to cement the relationship with Tagore, while the future preference on quality was emphasized, particularly as one of the MFA’s trustees, Dr. Denman Ross, had already begun to acquire Indian paintings, which it was no doubt expected would eventually find their way into the museum’s collection.⁸⁸

Particularly through his association with the Tagores, and also through Dr. Denman Ross’s interests in the matter, Okakura was aware of extant scholarship on the subject of Indian art and as is evident from the correspondence quoted above, had begun to lay the foundation for the MFA’s forays into Indian art. In a presentation before the

⁸⁶ “Enclosed is a letter from Babu Gaganenedranath Tagore whom you know is collecting Indian paintings for the Museum...Mr. Lane is interested in the Indian paintings—in fact he advanced the first \$1000 for buying them.” (Okakura to J.E. Lodge, April 21st, 1913).

⁸⁷ Okakura to J.E. Lodge, May 25th, 1913, MFA Archives.

⁸⁸ “The Indian pictures were accepted as purchases by the Committee...the Committee thought it wise to buy the whole lot, partly, I think, to encourage Mr. Tagore’s efforts. This is undoubtedly a very sensible thing to do, though in the future we ought, I believe, to buy such things rather sparingly and with a view to getting only the best, particularly as I understand that Dr. Ross has acquired a large number of similar paintings.” (J.E. Lodge to Okakura, June 13, 1913, MFA Archives)

museum Committee he outlined in no uncertain terms in the manner in which he envisaged the Department of Asiatic Art future directions, in which India had an integral place and role to play.

“There is a deep significance in the fact that the art of the Extreme Orient should be so well represented in America – the most western of western nations. It makes our Museum a potent factor in the scheme of universal culture, and entitles it to the attention not only of Americans, but also of humanity at large...In order to estimate the strength and the weakness of our Collection we must pass in review the different expression of Eastern Art which have time after time unfolded themselves to reveal the consciousness at each successive period. It will be no easy task to give an adequate idea of the interrelation of the different phases of Asiatic Art. In the following diagram I have attempted an outline of the art development of the three principle nations of the East, India, China and Japan...” (Notes on a presentation before the MFA Committee, May 9th, 1908, MFA Archives)

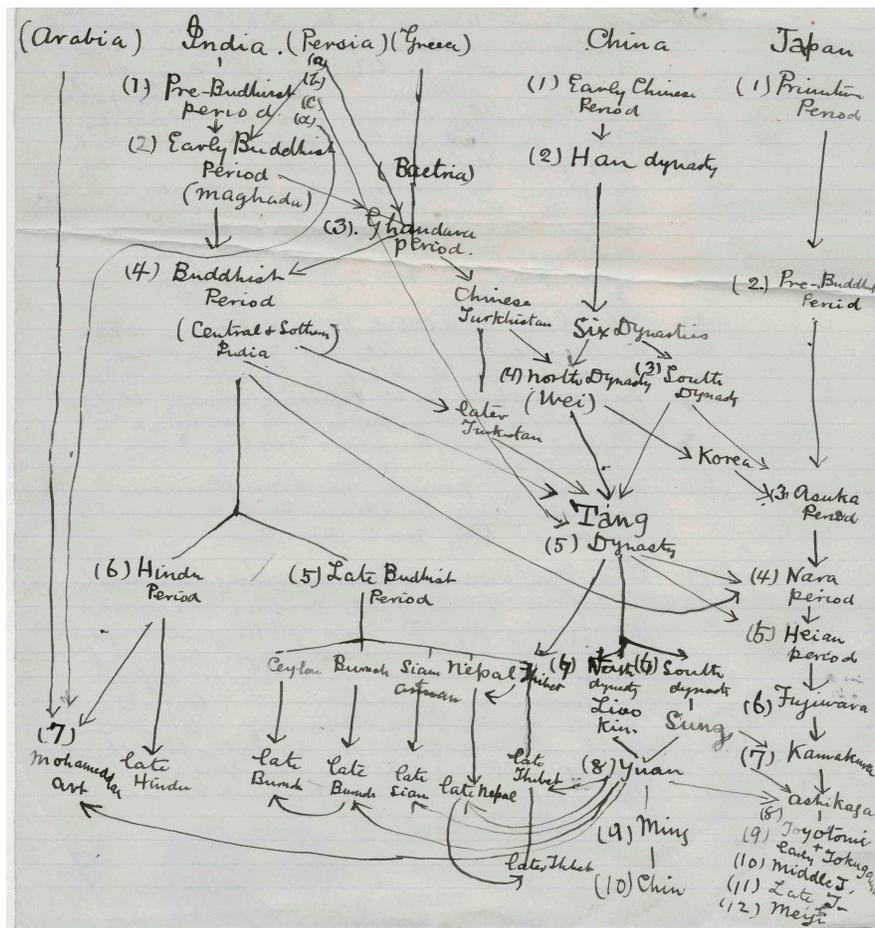


Figure 90: Detail from handwritten letter to the Committee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston from Okakura Kakuzo, Adviser to the Department, Department of Chinese and Japanese Art, page 8. May 9th, 1908 . Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Such a diagram makes evident that at this stage Okakura’s interests in Indian art were schematic and roughly hewn. Whereas he delineated a progression of stylistic forms based on dynastic eras for China and Japan, his interests in India only extended as far as art from “Buddhist” and “Hindu” periods presented parallels to and departures from the dynastic arts of China and Japan. In keeping with the prevailing understandings of the cultures of Southeast Asia as being derivative from those of India and China (in contrast to independent Japanese progression), the arts from Southeast Asia did not even merit mention within the schema. “Arabia” “Persia” and “Greece” were relegated to a

secondary position – impossible to historically gloss over, but visually and conceptually kept at a distance from India and China, through the use of parenthetical notations in the diagram – a distinction between civilizational heartlands and mere geographical bases. For Okakura, Persia and Greece were important primarily in establishing lineages for the more significant nodes for “Gandhara,” “Wei” and “Tang” dynasties illustrated by crisscrossed arrows that pointed to these connections, while it was sufficient to indicate an unbroken link between the art of ancient Arabia to “Mohammedan Art,” its presence mainly necessitated by its connections to later “Yuan” China.

Even though Okakura’s ideas for *Ideals of the East* had crystallized in India, in it he had famously affirmed that Japan was a “museum of Asiatic civilization” the ancient expressions of which were in the civilizations of China and India and that the history of Japanese art was the history of Asiatic ideals.⁸⁹ In the diagram, he translated this emphasis by clearly marking the artistic links from China and India to Japan, while the need to detail the connections diminished as the cultural and geographical distance from Japan grew greater, and in visual terms thinned from right to left. Moreover, Okakura numbered artistic progression, designating parallel developments with corresponding numbers, in a “generational” organization. Tellingly, while the arts of India tapered off somewhere between Hindu and Mohammedan Art in the 7th generation, and those of China continued till a 10th generation, it was only the arts of Japan that had succeeded in progressing until a 12th generation, that of the Meiji or the modern era.

According to the diagram, the Islamic tradition coming from “Arabia” was a parallel development, fundamentally outside the conception of the Buddhist genealogy

⁸⁹ Okakura, *The Ideals of the East*, 8.

for Asian Art as described by Okakura. Okakura's diagram had placed "Mohammedan Art" in a marginal position – a parallel, but distantly related category to the arts of Japan. Yet it was to the arts of India and particularly its Mughal painting tradition that "Mohammedan Art" was most closely aligned. At about the same time as Japanese and Chinese (and latterly Indian) art were being conceptually connected as "Asian art" a similar development was taking place in the field of "Islamic Art." The ideas of "Islamic art" were being crystallized around a series of exhibitions taking place in Europe at the turn of the century and leading up to World War I.⁹⁰ In America the interest in objects from the "Near East", had been also been piqued by 19th century expositions at Philadelphia and Chicago, while a little later American collectors such as Henry Walters and Charles Lang Freer looked to Europe for connoisseurly inspiration and access to objects, even as dealers were beginning to operate in America.⁹¹ The term "Islamic Art," which gradually came to eclipse other early monikers like "*arts musulman*" (popular in France) or "Mohammedan Art" (preferred at the MFA in its early years), was generally understood as being from lands where Islam spread from West Asia during initial conquests in the seventh and eighth centuries, while not necessarily only being art made exclusively by Muslim artists or for Muslim patrons. Sheila Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom have noted that Islamic Art from "regions where Islam flourished in later centuries, such

⁹⁰ David Roxburgh has examined this relationship in his essay "Au Bonheur Des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, Ca. 1880-1910." *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000)

⁹¹ Dikran Kelekian played a key role in Freer's interests in Islamic art, and would be a source of objects for the MFA as well. For an assessment of his role in influencing the collections of Henry Walters, see Marianna Shreve Simpson, "A Gallant Era": Henry Walters, Islamic Art, and the Kelekian Connection" *Ars Orientalis* , Vol. 30, Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perceptions of Islamic Art (2000) , pp. 91-112; and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina "Collecting the "Orient" at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America" *Ars Orientalis* , Vol. 30, Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perceptions of Islamic Art (2000) , pp. 69-89

as tropical Africa, eastern Europe, southern Russia, western China, northern India, and southeast Asia, are marginalized by this definition and thereby treated as peripheral to the main story...”⁹² These early biases of “Islamic Art” were reflected in the formation of collections as well.

In America, for the ascendant fields of “Asian Art” and “Islamic Art,” Indian art stood at the margins of both. Mughal paintings in particular were subject to classificatory inconsistencies, and at this time were variously termed “Islamic,” “Indo-Persian” and even “Asian” in a manner reflective not only of the instabilities in the scope of the categories themselves, but also of the inconsistencies in museum and market systems, and evolving art historical frameworks.

Thus Okakura’s 1908 diagram is quite revealing in terms of the manner in which Indian art was being primed for placement within the museum primarily given the prevailing understandings of the arts of Asia, and somewhat tangentially given the growing interest in Islamic Art. Although its Chinese art collections would continue to grow, the MFA went on to purchase a few Indian paintings through Gaganendranath Tagore in 1914, the Victor Goloubew collection of Persian and Indian paintings in 1914 and the Ananda Coomaraswamy collection in 1917. American interests had been gradually expanding westward from Japan, to China, and finally to India, echoing what Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) would note a few years later, as being “the last of

⁹² Sheila S Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom. “The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field.” *The Art Bulletin*. 85.1 (2003), p.152

the great Asiatic arts to attract the attention of western students and to obtain a recognized place.”⁹³

Yet while Okakura’s 1908 diagram was intended to present the scope for the development of the MFA’s Asian Art collections in particular, it also presented an art historical mapping of the arts of Asia, indicating their relationship to one another, as well as their relative position to Islamic Art, although the latter was only barely sketched out. However, like Alfred Barr’s famous flowchart of modernism that would follow about two decades later, and which has justifiably been the subject of much analysis in consolidating a tendentious art historical canonicity,⁹⁴ Okakura’s diagram was also flawed by omissions, and relationships that were more complicated to reconcile than arrows sufficed, as subsequent art historical writings would show.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, this plotting of art along a chart of historical progression was not only a visual articulation of Okakura’s ideas, but can also be seen as an early attempt at the organization of the burgeoning and often bewildering histories of non-western art into a canonical structure.

At around the same time as his presentation before the MFA Committee, Okakura was acquainted with Coomaraswamy, albeit via letter. Correspondence between the two reveals that Okakura was familiar with Coomaraswamy’s writings, and was even keen to meet him. In a letter among Coomaraswamy’s papers Okakura wrote, “I have read your

⁹³ Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Introduction”, *Sculpture, Painting and Drawings of Ancient India*. New York: Kevorkian galleries, 1918.

⁹⁴ Marcia Brennan has given a summarized account of the interpretations and critiques of Barr’s diagram, as a preface to her own analysis of the diagram’s capacity for “the dialogical theorization of gendered subjectivity embedded within the aesthetic structures of canonical modernism.” Marcia Brennan, “The Multiple Masculinities of Canonical Modernism: James Johnson Sweeney and Alfred H. Barr Jr. in the 1930s” in Brzyski, Anna (Ed.). *Partisan Canons*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. p.180

⁹⁵ While comparing the two diagrams, it is however important to remember the marked differences in their circulation; while Alfred Barr’s diagram was prominently visible on the cover of the exhibition catalogue *Cubism and Abstract Art* (Museum of Modern Art, 1936), Okakura’s 1908 diagram was in a set of notes among his papers and part of the MFA’s departmental archive.

books and am very desirous of meeting you... I am going tomorrow to Paris and may stay there ten days. I shall come back to London perhaps on way to America & home. If you can arrange to see me in London or somewhere within call about a ten or twelve days hence can you not send me a line to me...Bande Mataram. Okakura Kakuzo".⁹⁶ The salutation at the end of the letter was no doubt a nod to their shared familiarity with the spirit of nationalism they had both experienced in the company of the Tagores. In pencil Coomaraswamy simply noted at a later date "I regret much that I was never able to meet O.K. – AKC". At that date little did either man know that it would be Coomaraswamy and his vast collection of Indian art, which through the aid of Denman Ross that would mark the next phase in the museum's expansion in its Asiatic Arts interest.

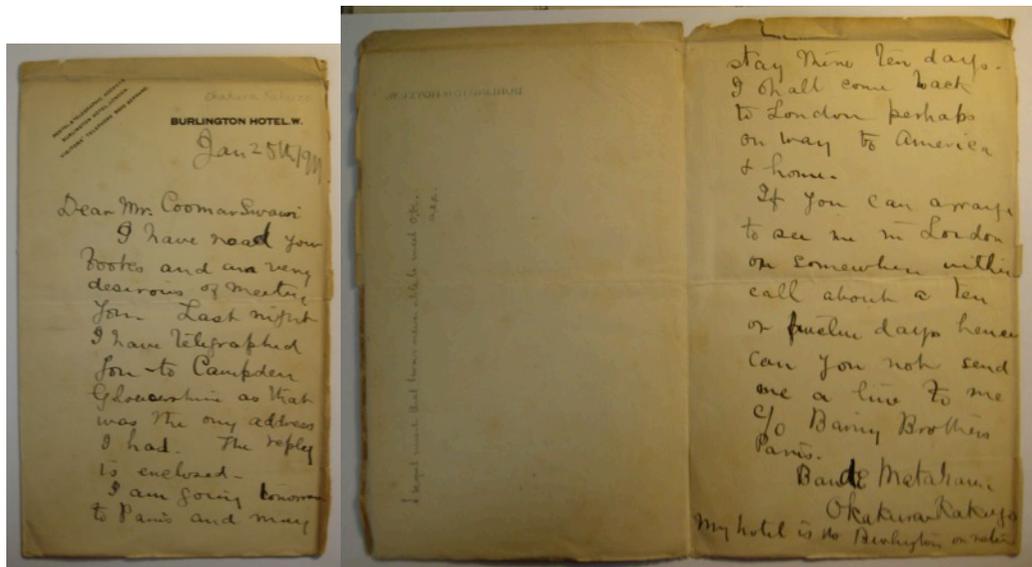


Figure 91: Letter from Okakura Kakuzo to Ananda Coomaraswamy, January 25, 1911

Before the Coomaraswamy acquisition, however, the MFA made another acquisition that was significant for the development of the institution's interests in the arts of India – the Victor Goloubew collection, purchased in 1914, not long after

⁹⁶ Okakura Kakuzo to AKC, January 25, 1911; Coomaraswamy Papers, Princeton University Library.

Okakura's untimely death in 1913. The collection consisted of 179 pieces, mostly Persian but 44 were from India. Seen in the light of Okakura's diagram and the link that Indian (Mughal) art presented between "Asian Art" and "Islamic Art" the Goloubew collection was a natural extension of growing interests at the MFA. As argued in Chapter 1, this interstitial position had made a collection of Indian paintings particularly interesting to Charles Lang Freer who was seeking also a link between his Near Eastern and Far Eastern collections. At the MFA, the ambitions of the institution, particularly as The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, was making forays into the both fields, necessitated the development of rival collections. In this environment therefore, the acquisition of the Goloubew collection, soon followed by Coomaraswamy's collection, seen as a westward expansion from its position of strength in Asia, was in keeping with the MFA's vision for its collections.

The MFA made clear its interest in being foremost in the field of Asian art when it purchased the Victor Goloubew collection in 1914. In a memorandum in the papers related to the Goloubew collection, this intention was made explicit:

"This purchase is the more important for Boston because the art museum already possesses the largest and most important collection of Chinese and Japanese painting and sculpture in Europe or America. The interest in the art of Asia already shown here will be increased by the addition of these examples of painting in southwestern Asia. In this field also the Museum bids fair to secure a preeminence like that which it enjoys in the art of China and Japan. During the past winter it has been able to show a large and representative collection of Persian and Indian miniatures, most of which had been bought by Dr. Denman W. Ross during his recent trip around the world. The Golubew [sic] collection combined with the Ross collection and examples from other sources will place the Museum in Boston in the first rank so far as this

interesting type of painting is concerned...” (undated memo, 1914; Goloubew Papers, MFA Archives).⁹⁷

In the absence of a specialist in Islamic Art at the MFA, (as they had had for Japanese and Chinese art in Okakura and later in J.E. Lodge and Kojiro Tomita), the museum needed to establish its credentials in such an arena by acquiring a collection whose reputation was already in place. In brokering the sale of the collection, the German Islamicist Rudolf A. Meyer Riefstahl gave a fourteen-page long handwritten account of the collection, situating its significance within a longer history of collecting in the orient, and recounting its exhibition history and the revelation of its aesthetic importance in representing the best specimens in the history of oriental miniatures. Riefstahl noted how at the 1907 exhibition of Oriental Art at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris (the same exhibition that Freer had seen),

“There was a little collection of Persian miniatures, which resumed – for the last time – the old point of view [as curiosities], and showed in the same time the departure of a new method of appreciation. Besides of a numerous series of the “East India Company miniatures” (as I venture to call them) were some pieces of pure Persian Art, end of the 16th-17th century very well executed, school of Riza Abbasi, things which had not been seen before and which were imported by Armenian carpet dealers, when political insecurity brought them on the market of Tehran. When things arrived in greater number and in different quality, some men of task began to notice these differences of style and quality, and a new evaluation of all values began. Some amateurs

⁹⁷ Denman Ross himself had made the suggestion to Gardiner M. Lane in May 1914: “I am much pleased to learn that our offer of seventy five thousand dollars for the Goloubew Collection of Persian and Indian paintings has been accepted...If any of our friends will present the Goloubew Collection to the Museum I will give you my Collection to put with it, - the Collection which is now on exhibition, as a loan, in the Fore-Court Gallery...I am eager to see our Museum as rich in the Art of Middle Asia as it is in the Art of the Far East; so that it may become the great center of interest for all students of Asiatic Art...I want it said that in illustration of the Art of Asia, the wonderful Art of the other half of the world, we stand alone, preeminent among the Museums of the World.” (Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

understood the remarkable qualities of the early Mohammedan art and on the other hand they appreciated mostly the refined art of Behzad and his school... The Munich exhibition [of] 1910 of Mohammedan Art showed the enormous progress which had been made, and the Goloubew collection, exhibited there in an especial room, gave there the best possibility to appreciate the progress of knowledge and taste which had been realized since 1907. M. Goloubew was the first amateur, who had understood that the masterpieces of Persian art are those of the primitive period and those of the time of Behzad.”⁹⁸

Riefstahl added that besides having purchased miniatures after studying in the libraries of Turkey, India and Egypt, Goloubew had made “discoveries” in the bazaars, but had also purchased items on the Paris market in the aftermath of the unrest in Persia.⁹⁹ Riefstahl’s account not only attested to the acknowledged pedigree of the collection, but established the process through which the amateur became the connoisseur in a manner that would be key to the scholarly direction in the study of Islamic art. Therefore, although they did not have among their ranks an individual to curate the collection, ostensibly the merits of the collection and its comprehensiveness, as outlined by Riefstahl, coupled with the opportunity for a coup in a hitherto under-collected field in America, allowed the MFA to purchase the Goloubew collection as a whole in 1914. The addition of this collection extended the Museum of Fine Art’s collection of such art, which already contained some gifts from the Museum trustee Dr. Denman Ross.

⁹⁸ “The Goloubew Collection of Oriental Miniatures” by R. Meyer-Riefstahl, undated, 1914; Goloubew Collection papers, MFA Archives.

⁹⁹ “Since the last Revolution of Persia a great number of Persian collections – among them the library of the Shah himself – have been dispersed an[d] rather all these beautiful works of art came to the Paris market.”

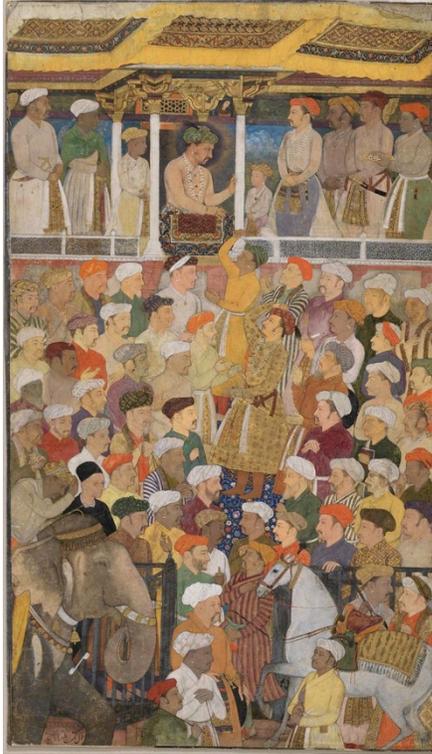


Figure 92: Darbar of Jehangir, Victor Goloubew Collection, purchased 1914

The acquisition of the Goloubew collection by the MFA, was largely the result of the trustee Denman Ross's efforts.¹⁰⁰ Ross, who was a professor of art at Harvard, had been a prominent supporter of the growing Oriental Department under Okakura. He had himself travelled to the East to collect works for his personal collection, which were destined for the MFA. Besides Charles Lang Freer, he was the other American collector who made forays into collecting Indian art, and in the rarefied connoisseurly circles that they both shared, the two men were acquainted with one another. Writing to Ross in 1913, Freer noted, "India too will furnish both yourself and Mr. Maclean splendid entertainment and rare opportunities for the study of sculpture, especially at Ajanta and

¹⁰⁰ The collection had also been offered to Charles Lang Freer, and Mrs. Isabella Stuart Gardner, however the MFA decided to purchase the collection. (R.M Riefstahl to Denman Ross, 18 March 1914; ; Goloubew Papers, MFA Archives)

Ellora. Twenty years have passed since my first view of Ellora and certain impressions of the place made, pointed the way to many delights of recent years...”¹⁰¹ The following year, Stewart Culin who was traveling to India with Lockwood de Forest, noted in his diary that Denman Ross had established a reputation as a serious collector in Calcutta: “Dr. Denman Ross, on his recent visit had bought not less than £7000 worth of Indian pictures. He had put up prices enormously, but he had obtained some very good pictures along with others of little value.”¹⁰² With the purchase of the Goloubew collection, and his own gift of the Ross Collection to the MFA the same year, established his reputation in American circles as well, and so by 1917, although he had first been offered to Freer, it was Denman Ross who would buy the Ananda Coomaraswamy collection of Indian art. Indeed, it was the acquisition of the Coomaraswamy collection, and the presence of the man himself that marked a turning point in the American understanding of Indian art.

The Coomaraswamy Collection: Context and Formation

When Ananda Coomaraswamy first traveled to America in 1916, not only was he in possession of a fine collection, but as a scholar he stood on the cutting edge of the study of Indian art. A few years earlier, before the outbreak of World War I, Coomaraswamy had returned to England after having spent several years in India where he had begun to write seriously on Indian art, and to collect and organize exhibitions. Born to a Sinhalese father and English mother, Ananda Coomaraswamy had spent most of his childhood in England, brought up in the countryside by his mother and aunts after the early death of his father. At university he read science and geology and eventually

¹⁰¹ CLF to Denman W. Ross, Detroit, January 26th, 1913. Charles Lang Freer Papers.

¹⁰² Culin Diaries, p.217.

received a doctorate from London University on Ceylonese mineralogy. In 1902 he travelled to Ceylon and settled there with his first wife Ethel where he formed and was director of the Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon. It was during his field work in this capacity that Coomaraswamy first became acquainted with the traditional arts and crafts. He was alarmed at the rapid disappearance of these traditions in the wake of modernisation with its influx of factory made wares that replaced the hand-made objects. This experience was a major turning point in his life and brought out not only his reformatory zeal but also his art-historical interests. Buoyed by readings of the British Arts and Crafts Movement and William Morris, Coomaraswamy embarked on a study and revival of Ceylonese arts and crafts, in his first major work *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, which marks the beginning of his serious engagement with the field of visual arts.

Between 1903 and 1910, Coomaraswamy was primarily concerned with problems of craft and its relation to society first in Ceylon and then in India,¹⁰³ and wrote extensively on the matter, building upon the work of earlier proponents of Indian art forms, George Birdwood (albeit limited to decorative arts) and E.B.Havell,¹⁰⁴ “yet reformulated them, by providing a comprehensive textual and empirical framework. Being a deeper thinker and scholar...as well as being of mixed Ceylonese-Tamil and British parentage and at ease with the highest social circles in England, Coomaraswamy

¹⁰³ For further information of this period see Iftikhar Dadi, “Visual Modernities in a Comparative Perspective: the West, and South Asian and Asian-American art” Ch.3: Coomaraswamy and After: Craft in the Twentieth Century, (PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2003), 63-107

¹⁰⁴ For more information on E.B. Havell’s contribution see Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a new ‘Indian’ art: Artists, aesthetics, and nationalism in Bengal, 1850-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

was able to reexamine and re-theorize Indian art and craft decisively, in effect, to set new paradigms, and to create entirely new fields of discovery and research.”¹⁰⁵

However being under a colonial regime, it was clear to Coomaraswamy that a better understanding needed to be inculcated not only among the population of Ceylon (He established the Ceylon Social Reform Society in 1906)¹⁰⁶ but also among those responsible for governance and the direction of education. Consequently, when he returned to England in 1907, he forged alliances with like-minded people, including the artist and collector William Rothenstein and crucially E.B. Havell, who had by then returned to England. Along with Roger Fry, W.R. Lethaby and others, they founded the “India Society” in London in 1909 for the further appreciation of Indian art.

Coomaraswamy wrote profusely at this time, and enthused about the possibilities that lay ahead he approached his subject with zeal. One of the major shortcomings that Coomaraswamy recognised about extant scholarship was a serious lack of understanding between text and context in the study of works of art in India. Even the most sincere, like Havell, fell short in their understanding of their chosen field, which was for the most part

¹⁰⁵ Dadi, 73.

¹⁰⁶ “The idea of reform derived from Victorian precedents, but pressed into service for a more desperate cause—the disintegration of an ancient civilization under Western domination—the actual business of reform entailed a thorough-going critique of the imperialist civilization: its historical direction, its social values, its very quality of consciousness...Coomaraswamy’s cultural consciousness on behalf of his people (the people of Ceylon and of India whom he recognised as his own) had two recognisable dimensions. There was the nationalist impulse...a rejection of the West in a very crucial sense...the nationalist impulse [which also fitted into Romantic dissent in which the industrialized West stood already indicted...]” Geeta Kapur, “On the Vocation of the Artist” *Paroksa: Coomaraswamy Centenary Seminar Papers*, Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, K.G. Subramanyan, and Kapila Vatsyayan, eds. (New Delhi : Lalit Kala Akademi, 1984), 149.

Mughal miniatures.¹⁰⁷ He firmly believed that for a purer non-industrial culture (or as Coomaraswamy called it, a “post-Industrial age”¹⁰⁸) and the development of true cultural consciousness, it was necessary, as Gulam Mohammed Sheikh has noted, “to identify aesthetic constituents of Indian art born out of internal conditions”.¹⁰⁹ While Coomaraswamy was indebted to Western philosophy, he was deeply critical of the role of colonialism on the culture of the colonies. The education system had let the people down, and they were being blindly ushered towards an industrial future, which he saw as deadening both culturally and spiritually. Moreover the British continued to deny Indian art legitimate place,¹¹⁰ and while the decorative arts from India were much appreciated by Coomaraswamy’s time, Indian painting and sculpture were felt to be sorely lacking in the Western formal ideals of fine art.¹¹¹ Although Havell had championed for a revision of

¹⁰⁷ Terence McNerney “On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings: Twentieth-Century Issues and Personalities” *Intimate Worlds: Indian paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak collection*, Darielle Mason, ed., (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 2.

¹⁰⁸ “The future of art in India depends upon Europe and America as much as upon India, and the future of art in Europe and America depends upon India, for East and West are together co-responsible for the post-Industrial age. The possibility of a renewed Indian inspiration will be create first when India begins to realize that Europe and America are faced with spiritual problems which she must also face, and to understand that the future of humanity is in the making here and now” Ananda Coomaraswamy. *Rajput Painting: Being an Account of the Hindu paintings of Rajasthan and the Panjab Himalayas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth century described in their relation to contemporary thought with texts and translations*, Vol.1 (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1916), 83.

¹⁰⁹ Sheikh, Gulam Mohammed Coomaraswamy Centenary Seminar et al., eds., *Parokṣa: Coomaraswamy Centenary Seminar Papers* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1984), 87.

¹¹⁰ Percy Brown in his introduction to a section of the Exhibition at Delhi of 1903 categorically states: “It is generally accepted that the higher flights of art, such as picture painting and sculpture, usually spoken of as the Fine Arts, are little known and still less practiced by the natives of India. In a sense this is true as an examination of their art work has revealed very little that may legitimately come under this head...” *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903.*, 449. he then proceeded to concede a few examples of “high order” which were nevertheless categorized into two divisions – articles in the round and work done on flat surfaces. For Brown, the “life-like” character and workmanship of some objects alone deserved mention, but for the most part, sculpture was disparaged for being repetitive, stiff, formulaic, and composition was restricted by religion.

¹¹¹ Shyamacharan Srimani in *The Rise of the Fine Arts and the Artistic Skills of the Aryans* (1874) effectively used Sanskrit sources, something that Coomaraswamy would do, to make a case for India as the home of the fine arts, and not just decorative art, however he still conceded that Hindu art was deficient in

this attitude on the part of British educationists and policy makers, he had done so by trying to create appreciation of Indian art's formal properties – in Mughal miniatures which in some instances *did* adhere to naturalism. However, Coomaraswamy was convinced that the answer lay in revealing the spiritual underpinnings of art, and in order to do so, he embarked for India in 1909. It was this retrieval of an ancient spiritual base for Indian art that would resonate with Okakura's conceptions of "Asian art" at the MFA in Boston too. Indeed, Coomaraswamy was closely following in Okakura's footsteps, literally and intellectually, for like the Japanese scholar before him, it was during his 1909 visit to India that Coomaraswamy's ideology became firmly established, partly after coming into contact with the *swadeshi* movement and the vibrant intellectual and cultural scene in Calcutta, but also by travelling through north India, visiting sites and cities. It is likely that he began his collection of Indian painting during this trip, although he probably made the bulk of his purchases on subsequent visits between 1910 and 1913.

Although Coomaraswamy was not the first person to collect Indian art, what is significant however about his collection is its art historical functionality. It is in this respect that it differed from other older or even contemporaneous collections. Collections of Indian art (or containing objects from India) are known since the 18th century within India and abroad; among the former most common are collections as part of imperial treasuries, while among the latter as part of European *Wunderkammer*.¹¹² However in neither of these instances were the objects collected or displayed with an eye on art

anatomy and composition. Coomaraswamy's position was different. Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922: Occidental Orientation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 223.

¹¹² For further information on this subject see Robert Skelton "Indian Art and Artefacts in Early European Collecting" *The Origin of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in 16th and 17th century Europe*. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) 274-280

historical significance. It is with the beginning of museums and universal fairs in modernising Europe that a variety of objects were accrued at an unprecedented scale in one place. In the case of Indian art, the Great Exposition of 1851 in London at the Crystal Palace was closely followed by the opening of the South Kensington Museum in 1852 where much of the collections from the exhibition, including the Indian objects were eventually housed.¹¹³ Other museums including the Ashmolean and the British Museum also had notable collections of Indian objects however these were not as extensive or as well organised as the South Kensington Museum. Moreover these were invariably present as a result of individual bequests collected more in a spirit of antiquarianism, than arising out of any scholarly interest.¹¹⁴ Partha Mitter in *Much Maligned Monsters* demonstrates how early collecting of Indian art was marked by a presumption of its degenerate and decadent nature, and to European eyes it stood in great contrast to Greek Classicism, which was the ideal in 19th century Europe. Pioneers in the study of Indian archaeology and history such as Henry Cole and James Fergusson were steadfast in their condemnation of Indian forms,¹¹⁵ even as they explored and unearthed archaeological remains and pieced together a chronology for them. The other person whose

¹¹³ "...the South Kensington Museum, though benefiting from some outstandingly generous private bequests, contained collections that either had been purchased with government funds from the Great Exhibition and subsequent international exhibitions, or assembled for the use of the Government Schools of Design...the Museum formed an integral part of a wider system of national art education." Malcolm Baker, "Museums, Collections and Their Histories" *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson, eds. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 17.

¹¹⁴ "There must be a great quantity of Indian paintings in this country scattered and hidden away in the houses of those whose families have had dealing of one kind or another during the last five or six generations with our Indian Empire, not to speak of what is to be found in the India Office, the British Museum, the Bodleian and other public collections." Laurence Binyon, "Persian and Indian Paintings", *The Living Age*, March 18, 1911

¹¹⁵ Buddhist Gandharan art was the only relatively noted art form, primarily because of its affinity to Classical Greek sculpture, albeit in what they considered to be a debased form of the latter. Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977) 271, 274.

classificatory contributions were important was George Birdwood, whose *Industrial Arts of India* (1880) provided a template of sorts for Coomaraswamy's own *Medieval Sinhalese Art*¹¹⁶ (although unlike Birdwood, Coomaraswamy took a deeper interest in the craft processes and not simply descriptions of the products).¹¹⁷ By the end of the 19th century, Indian crafts or the "Industrial Arts" as they were better known were valued as *applied* arts, and their collection and classification encouraged not only among institutions in England, and America (the 1876 and 1893 exhibitions at Philadelphia and Chicago discussed in Chapter 1) but also in India, with the 1883 Calcutta Industrial Exhibition, and the 1903 Delhi Durbar exhibition organised by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon.¹¹⁸ Museums holding collections of Indian art, classified as industrial and decorative arts, were also built in conjunction with art schools such as at Jaipur, Madras, Calcutta and Lahore. They were all structured on the South Kensington model, which had become the template for most new museums of similar instructional purpose, being established across the world, including the United States.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the cities of Boston,

¹¹⁶ Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 30.

¹¹⁷ Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 36.

¹¹⁸ The catalogue of the 1903 exhibition explicitly stated: "There are two distinguishing features of the present Exhibition which deserve particular attention. Of these the *first* is that the exhibits have been collected as the result of personal choice and selection—special efforts having been directed to the exclusion of all trace of the modern foreign influences which have tended to debase the ancient indigenous arts of India. And in the *second* place an important divergence has been made from the methods of classification usually followed at exhibitions, in that the exhibits are arranged according to their kind and not their place of origin. It is thus made possible for visitors to compare almost at a glance, productions of one kind from all parts of India both near and remote, and to make purchases in the Sale Gallery without being harassed by the importunities of competing traders." Delhi. Indian Art Exhibition and Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903.*, 1–2.

¹¹⁹ "The international fame of the South Kensington Museum and its schools, and the belief in the success of the English enterprise, were in no small measure responsible for this revolution in the United States. Throughout the late 1860s and 1870s, the South Kensington example was invoked to motivate America's business and education leaders to establish art museums in a number of cities, each with an avowed purpose of public service through education." Michael Conforti "The Idealist Enterprise and the Applied Arts" *A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, Malcolm Baker and Brenda Richardson, eds. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 37.

New York and Philadelphia all rivalled one another in their efforts to build museums and collections that would support design and industrial art education on the South Kensington model in the late 19th century. Both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the MFA were founded in 1870, although the former opened in 1872 and the latter in 1877, whereas Philadelphia opened its museum the year after the Centennial exhibition in 1877. By the early twentieth century however, as Steven Conn has argued these art museums would distance themselves from the pedagogic imperatives that had led to spaces such as the South Kensington Museum and others like it, and gradually came to define “fine art” by privileging their “aura”. “The art museum provided the context for the objects inside to retain their authority, where authenticity could be adjudicated, and where the historical testimony of objects could be heard.”¹²⁰ As argued in Chapter 1, it was as this transformation of the American museum space, and of objects from antiquities or ethnographic or industrial art examples to objects of aesthetic contemplation and art historical and aesthetic importance was taking place, that Indian objects began to be (re)constituted as art, and the field of Indian art history could develop a ‘canon’.

In India however, although E.B. Havell’s refurbishment of the Calcutta Art Gallery collection, included examples of “fine art” Mughal miniatures, *bidri* ware etc.,¹²¹ was thus in keeping with Havell’s own interests to elevate the status of Indian art, it was nonetheless a collection built as an adjunct to the Calcutta Art School. Through the collection Havell believed students could learn to appreciate what he felt was the Indian aesthetic standard, which in his estimation was the Mughal school, and thus the collection

¹²⁰ Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 194.

¹²¹ Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*, 300-301.

dominated by Mughal works functioned more as a teaching aid, than art historically. Indeed, private collectors in Europe and England had already cultivated a taste for Mughal miniatures as is evident by the presence of dealers in London such as Imre Schwaiger by the early 20th century.¹²²



Figure 93: Sketch of Coomaraswamy with the Tagores by Nandalal Bose. Pieces from the Tagore collection are visible in the background.

Among Indians who could afford to collect, like the wealthy Nizam of Hyderabad, most were more interested in collecting European artefacts and objects, rather than Indian art. There were however a few exceptions, such as nationalist Indians who attempted to reinstall an understanding and appreciation for Indian culture and traditions, which manifested in the *swadeshi* movement. The Tagore family of Jorasanko, on the outskirts of Calcutta, were intellectual leaders of this movement. When Coomaraswamy came to India for the first time in 1909, he stayed with them and found common ground in terms

¹²² It seems Imre Schwaiger routinely gifted pieces of Indian art to museums – he gave a sculpture of a peacock to the British Museum amid much fanfare in 1912, Indian textiles to the V&A in London in 1924, and also later the Metropolitan, New York in 1928.

of interests and concerns, particularly as far as art was concerned. It was this contact that proved to be immensely generative for Coomaraswamy, and was a catalyst of sorts to materialise all the theoretical knowledge he had been formulating on the basis of his textual studies. He studied and learnt from the collections of Abanindranath, and Gaganendranath Tagore, and was inspired build his own collection. With this ambition, and with “the prophet’s mantle resting securely on his shoulders,”¹²³ he proceeded to North India on several trips between 1910 and 1912, where he was able to build a collection, that would be the basis for his ideas as an art historian. According to his biographer Roger Lipsey, Coomaraswamy made purchases from the great-grandson of a well-known early nineteenth-century painter, and in some instances bought from the collection of Indian princes such as the Maharaja of Benares, besides buying paintings from dealers and private sources, mainly families that had no use for their inherited works of art.¹²⁴

Yet as a collector, Coomaraswamy’s approach is not always clear; Terence McNerney has argued that while his collection certainly contained some very fine examples, these formed a relatively small percentage of his collection.¹²⁵

Coomaraswamy’s writings and other sources reveal only oblique clues with regard to his

¹²³ Terence McNerney in Darielle Mason and B. N. Goswamy, eds., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 1.

¹²⁴ Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, Roger Lipsey, and Bollingen Foundation Collection (Library of Congress), *Coomaraswamy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 95.

¹²⁵ “Rai Krishnadasa’s collection has an item-by-item distinction that Coomaraswamy’s collection lacks. Coomaraswamy was not really interested in works of art themselves, but in the ideas they represented. His buying trips of 1910-12 yielded an enormous archive of images. But his exposure to the rough-and-tumble of the market was limited to a two- or three-year period in his life. Of the nine hundred items in the Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection now in Boston, perhaps 10-20 percent would be rated exceptional when judged by the slowly acquired yet unforgiving standards of today. Rai Krishnadaa allowed his instinct for quality to develop over a much longer stretch of time.” McNerney, Darielle Mason and B. N. Goswamy, eds., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection* (Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), 3.

collecting practices, and it is likely that during years he spent conscientiously doing so, his collection was built partly by buying in the bazaars but primarily through dealers in North India (he definitely mentions Jaipur, Delhi and Amritsar).¹²⁶ While it is not known for certain whether he had a chance to see private royal collections in the hills, he would have no doubt visited the museums in the princely states,¹²⁷ which in keeping with the archaeological and industrial arts model, did not typically display much (if any) Indian painting.¹²⁸ Thus his sources for information on provenance etc. were invariably second-hand, and in B.N. Goswamy's opinion relied too heavily on the "authentic information" provided to him by the dealers.¹²⁹

It is nonetheless arguable that his collection of Rajput miniatures would not have been possible had interest in and availability of Mughal miniatures not already been prevalent. As noted above, by the early 20th century, either out of antiquarian and

¹²⁶ The "Amritsar dealer" mentioned by Coomaraswamy was Radha Krishna Bharany and was a source for many early collections of Pahari paintings, for Coomaraswamy's and other collections, which in turn led to this branch of Rajput miniatures being studied in greater depth before those from Rajasthan. Chandra, 98.

¹²⁷ Of the areas where Rajput painting was to be found, Coomaraswamy mentions the museums in the princely states of Jaipur, Srinagar and Chamba that contained Indian art. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927, repr. New York: Dover Publications, 1985)

¹²⁸ The one exception would have been the Central Museum, Lahore. While admittedly not in a princely state, nor a traditional centre for the production of Rajput painting, the museum nonetheless had in its collection several Rajput paintings. This is probably due to the efforts of the Bengal School artist and pupil of Abanindranath Tagore, Samarendranath Gupta, who became the Vice-Principal of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore, and later Curator of the Central Museum, Lahore. S.N. Gupta was deeply interested in Sikh and Pahari miniatures and was probably responsible for their inclusion at the Lahore Museum. Indeed, Coomaraswamy's *Rajput Painting* includes images of works in the Lahore Museum collection as well as S.N. Gupta's private collection.

¹²⁹ "the dealers, it is possible to argue, after all know most about their own collections. The strenuous search after paintings led them into the remotest corners of the hills and they know the collections, the source of each painting they acquired, the artists, and the traditions of their families. But it is at the same time important to bear in mind that precisely this information they do their utmost to keep back for a variety of reasons. The information which they supplied was either interested or calculatedly distorted, for the point with them was never to betray the true source of their supplies for fear alike of rival dealers and direct purchase by buyers. And, in some cases, the fear of the law... One knows only of one case where Dr. Coomaraswamy showed some suspicion of the Amritsar dealer's information [*Rajput Painting*, 19]...In other cases he took, I am afraid, the word of his informants too seriously, neglecting to examine his evidence with that sharpness which is characteristic of so much of his work." Goswamy, 78-79.

bibliophilic interests or for the purposes of the study of design, many major Mughal miniature collections had already found their way to Britain; it was E.B. Havell and the Bengal School however who enabled such a renewed interest in Mughal miniatures in India, and began collecting them¹³⁰ with the purpose of fashioning a ‘national art’. Collecting antiquities, curios and ‘exotic’ luxury goods from the Orient, had become part of the British colonial experience in India. In her seminal work on the subject, Mildred Archer observes how ‘Company Paintings’¹³¹ as a genre arose in many ways to fulfill this demand for souvenirs and visual ways of recording examples/evidence of life in the East, while absorbing some of the skills of hereditary painters¹³² that were no longer being patronized by Indian rulers whose tastes were being altered to emulate ‘western’ sumptuary habits. Lord Curzon when Viceroy of India, decried this lack of interest in Indian crafts on the part of the Indian nobility, and vociferously called “for a reversion to the old-fashioned but exquisite styles and patterns of their own country.”¹³³ It was with

¹³⁰ “The great [Mughal] painting collections their former ruling families had either inherited or assembled were looted, burned or sold...A fair amount of the material that was not destroyed made its way to Britain, explaining the present wealth of Mughal and Mughal-style painting (sixteenth-nineteenth century) in British collections. It arrived in two waves. In the pre-Birdwood period, it followed in the lee of bibliophilic collectors such as Richard Johnson, a cultivated *amateur* of Indian literature, history and language...[and] forms the cornerstone of the India Office Library’s impressive holdings in this field. A substantial portion of the Indian material in other British public and private collections has a similar eighteenth-century, bibliophilic provenance... With the hardening of British cultural attitudes in the 1830s and 1840s, the movement of Mughal paintings from India to Britain diminished. Sir Caspar Purdon Clarke, Keeper of the Indian collection at the South Kensington Museum in London, acquired important items on a buying trip to India in 1881-82. But the second great wave really begins with Havell, and the dramatic change in appreciation that he set into motion in 1896-1906.” Terence McNerney “On Collecting Indian Miniature Paintings: Twentieth-Century Issues and Personalities” Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 2.

¹³¹ This was an expansion upon the kinds of paintings their mentor and collector P.C. Manuk had written about in *The Patna School of Painting (19th Century)*. Patna: Bihar Research Society, 1943. Print.

¹³² Archer, Mildred, and William George Archer. *Indian painting for the British, 1770-1880*. Oxford University Press, 1955. Print.

¹³³ George Nathaniel Curzon Curzon and Thomas Raleigh, *Lord Curzon in India: Being a Selection from His Speeches as Viceroy & Governor-General of India 1898-1905* (Macmillan and co., limited, 1906), 207–8.

this in mind that an exhibition of Indian arts (in the vein of 19th century Industrial Art exhibitions) was organized in 1903 to coincide with the Delhi Durbar.

George Watt, a botanist in the Revenue and Agricultural Department of the Raj who had had some experience in organizing exhibitions, such as the Calcutta Industrial exhibition in 1883-84, was made the curator for the 1903 exhibition, and along with his assistant Percy Brown, spent several months scouring the bazaars across India, collecting material, ‘rescuing’ the handicrafts, and classifying them according to the standards set up by George Birdwood in the *Industrial Arts of India*.¹³⁴ Yet as Kajri Jain has pointed out these bazaars in colonial India were not static places of ‘traditional India’ simply for the exchange and availability of goods, but became “node[s] of convergence of space and time” where community identities were forged.¹³⁵ Altering social groups that occupied the space in addition to the kinds of objects that were made available animated the vitality of the bazaar making the networks forged in the bazaar as key to the commercial and economic development of late colonial urban Indian society. In the bazaar Watt particularly sought out older objects that were included to serve as examples of the greatness of past design. Such objects often found their way into the market through the dispersal of private collections of older nobility and imperial collections, whether because

¹³⁴ George Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*. (London: South Kensington Museum of Art: Chapman and Hall, 1884) set the template for the appreciation and classification of the so-called “industrial arts” of India, after producing the handbook for the South Kensington Museum of Art, where the Indian objects from the Crystal Palace exhibitions were housed. While Indian “industrial arts” were lauded by the British and admired for its design, Indian fine arts was thought to be non-hesitant, and what painting and sculpture the British found in India, they thought monstrous and lacking in proper classical form. It was not until the early 20th century, as a result of the efforts of E.B. Havell, Ananda Coomaraswamy and the Bengal Renaissance that opinions on the matter of Indian art began to change.

¹³⁵ “[The bazaar] on the one hand is a cyclically repeated event—like the daily tumult of activity in Old Delhi, steadily building until noon and...dying down only late at night. On the other hand it is a web of relationships extending beyond and between individual sites...the bazaar during the colonial period is not longer a uniform and essential static “indigenous” arena in a dual economy. Instead it emerges as a social formation and credit complex both distinct from and forming a crucial interface with the colonial administration...” Kajri Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar : The Economies of Indian Calendar Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 78–79.

of impoverishment, changing status or sumptuary patterns. Unsurprisingly specialized dealers in antiquities occupied this niche position within the bazaar, to absorb and acquire such objects from former owners, while supplying them to non-Indians and a new class of Indians, as souvenirs, curiosities, ornamentation, and gradually as art. Mobility was key to the dealers' practice as they often travelled with works for sale, sourcing pieces from various locations and then bringing them for sale to the modernizing cities in India such as Lahore, Simla, Delhi, Jaipur, Patna, Bombay and Madras. The better-connected dealers would even have regular networks for works to be sent abroad with Paris and later London becoming the main international entrepôts for such trade. It was in this context that miniature paintings (initially Mughal and later Rajput as well) became available with facility, and eminently collectible. This was because of a number of factors; it was greatly because of the elevation of their status as 'fine art' (through the writings of Havell, Coomaraswamy et. al.), but also because unlike sculpture, painting was not subject to the Treasure Trove Act of 1878 according to which all found "treasure of consequence which has been hidden in the soil one hundred years before the date of finding" was required to be declared to, and could then be acquired by, the government. Indeed with Curzon's emphasis on site museums, sculpture from India at this stage was still not as easily separable from its archaeological framings. While small sculptural pieces, particularly in bronze, did nonetheless find their ways into the hands of antique dealers and on to buyers, the extreme portability of miniature paintings,¹³⁶ plus the

¹³⁶ Percy Brown in his book on Mughal miniature painting noted that the "average size of one of these, including the mount, approximates to the size of a modern foolscap" *Indian Painting under the Mughals, A. D. 1550 to A* (Clarendon Press, 1924), 22. or 8.5 x 13.5 inches. The exceptions were the Hamzanama paintings, while later Rajput paintings would be far more varied in size, often far beyond the typical size associated with Mughal miniature paintings that also suggest a llvariety of contexts of their viewing and use.

advantage of the maximizing profits through a system of wholesale-retail distribution made paintings a preferred object. Illustrated manuscripts would be bought in bulk from princely libraries, sifted through and painted folios would be separated out for individual resale—a practice that would continue well into the twentieth century and explains the dispersal of paintings from manuscripts across the world in public and private collections that latterly require careful piecing together by tracing narrative connections for art historical study.¹³⁷ Thus, in the early 20th century it is not surprising to find collectors in the cities where the dealers regularly did business.

Imre Schwaiger and the Role of Early Dealers

A figure who appears repeatedly in accounts of early 20th century collecting of Indian art is the Hungarian dealer Imre Schwaiger (1864-1940). Schwaiger had establishments in Delhi, Simla, and London. He allegedly came to India to sell racehorses for an English firm, but seems to have diversified in the 1890s and found a niche in art.¹³⁸ In this regard he seems to have followed in the footsteps of an earlier contemporary A.M. Jacob (d.1921) who was reputedly eccentric and remarkably mysterious. (Jacob whose

¹³⁷ The travelling exhibition “The Adventures of Hamza” first held at the Freer and Sackler Galleries, Washington D.C. in 2002, and the accompanying book by John Seyller brought together for the first time, 61 paintings from about 200 surviving leaves in public and private collections of the 16th century illustrated Mughal manuscript of the Hamzanama that is thought to have originally had 1400 painted folios. Such a fate was not only limited to Mughal manuscripts, for the same happened to Persian manuscripts—Stuart Cary Welch notes the fate of the famed and exquisite *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) made for Shah Tahmasp also in the 16th century, that had made its way intact into the collection of Baron Maurice de Rothschild in England and thence to Arthur A. Houghton, Jr.’s collection in America in 1957, before being broken-up and dispersed through a partial bequest to the Metropolitan Museum of Art of ninety folios in 1970 followed by a series of sales (that set record prices) in 1976. Toby Falk and Musée Rath, *Treasures of Islam* (Sotheby’s/Philip Wilson Publishers, 1985), 30–31.. Similarly in the case of Rajput painting too, a late 18th century Pahari miniature series of the Ramayana that was attributed to painters from the Pandit Seu-Nainsukh family, is believed to have been dispersed through a series of sales by the famous Amritsar-based dealer Radha Krishna Bharany. Ramesh Chandra Sharma et al., *Indian Art Treasures: Suresh Neotia Collection* (Mosaic Books, 2006), 180, 190..

¹³⁸ Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 5.

origins were unknown was primarily known as a dealer in precious stones,¹³⁹ and also had a store in Simla. He did however deal in all kinds of antiquities, and is considered to be the inspiration of the character of Lurgan Sahib in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* (1901), where vivid descriptions of the interiors of a dealer's shop are said to be based on Jacob's establishment.) Although the identity or images of his shop have never been ascertained with any finality, in his 1904 account of Simla, Sir Edward John Buck includes a picture of Schwaiger's show-room, that provide a sense of the overcrowded yet sumptuous interiors where India is made available through a mixture of carpets, furniture, textiles, metalware, pottery and assorted objects including sculpture (note the Nandi figure on the floor and the small bronze piece on the Kashmiri table at the right) and presumably paintings and jewelery which lie beyond plain sight. The showroom's interiors as published in Buck's book bear extreme resemblance to the traditions of display of Indian works ever since the Great Exhibition in 1851.

¹³⁹ The seventh largest diamond in the world, the Victoria or Imperial Diamond is also known as the 'Jacob Diamond', following its sale by Jacob in the 1890s to the Nizam of Hyderabad. The Nizam however reneged on full payment and Jacob took him to court in a lawsuit that eventually ruined him, and he is believed to have died in penury in Bombay.



Figure 94: Interior of Imre Schwaiger's Simla showroom from Sir Edward John Buck's *Simla, Past and Present* (1904)

Although Schwaiger did not participate in the 1903 exhibition, he was a principal donor to the loan exhibition of Antiquities, that accompanied the Coronation Durbar of 1911.¹⁴⁰ Schwaiger, along with the Lahore Museum, the Delhi Museum of Archaeology and other individuals including the Maharaja of Udaipur,¹⁴¹ lent several objects to the exhibition. The pictures forming the largest number of objects in the exhibition were primarily Mughal or later copies, and were intended to illustrate the Mughal succession. It was no doubt apt that the later exhibits in the pictures section of the exhibition included works illustrating the emergence of British presence in the courtly and political life of India. Schwaiger himself had a showroom or an 'art-museum', in Delhi and had

¹⁴⁰ Schwaiger was a member of the committee responsible for the exhibition along with J.Ph. Vogel, the Officiating Director-General of Archaeology in India and Rev. C.F. Andrews. The exhibition was housed in the Mumtaz Mahal of the Red Fort. The King and Queen visited the exhibition on December 12, 1911, and the exhibition continued till the end of March 1912, attracting 2196 people. The categories under which objects were catalogued were: Arms and Armour, Standards and Insignia, Miscellaneous Exhibits, Farmans, Letters, Etc., Specimens of Calligraphy and Pictures. The last two categories contained by far the most number of objects. The catalogue noted that "The study of Indian pictorial art is stil in its infancy, and the dating of pictures is rendered extremely difficult by the frequency and accuracy with which old pictures are reproduced." Delhi Museum of Archaeology., *Loan Exhibition of Antiquities : Coronation Durbar, 1911 : An Illustrated Selection of the Principal Exhibits*. ([Delhi]: Archaeological Survey of India, 1911), 72.

¹⁴¹ At least a couple of paintings from this collection have ended up in the Aga Khan Museum and the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

developed enough of a reputation to have merited a visit from the visiting King Emperor George and his wife. During this visit, they signed in pencil one of the folios Schwaiger showed them for consideration, a story which has now become attached as lore and additional novelty to the individual folio from the 17th century manuscript of the Gulistan of Sa'di, which illustrates Sa'di preaching, even as it passed hands from one collector to the next.

At this time Schwaiger was clearly the leading dealer of Mughal paintings, dividing his time between 1910-30 between Delhi and London, supplying collectors within India and abroad. The Bombay based collector Ardeshir C. Ardeshir is known to have bought works from Schwaiger including the above-mentioned Gulistan folio,¹⁴² while in his book of 1908, E.B. Havell acknowledges Schwaiger for his supply of some “choicest treasures” for the Calcutta Art Gallery.¹⁴³

Collectors from abroad included Lockwood de Forest, and Stewart Culin who recorded in some detail his encounters with Schwaiger in Delhi and London in his travel journals from 1914. For two weeks in Delhi in February 1914, practically every day was spent in Schwaiger's establishment, who entertained Culin – showing him the sights of Delhi and introducing him to important British officials, including Sir Edwin Lutyens the architect of New Delhi that was being built at the time. Schwaiger's network and savviness in sourcing works not only from India allowed Culin to purchase textiles from Afghanistan and China besides Indian pieces.¹⁴⁴ Culin had been impressed with

¹⁴² Asok Kumar Das, *Dawn of Mughal Painting* (Vakils, Feffer & Simons, 1982), 36.

¹⁴³ Ernest Binfield Havell and Pramod Chandra, *The Art Heritage of India, Comprising* (D. B. Taraporevala Sons, 1964), 3.

¹⁴⁴ “February 26th. I spent nearly the entire day Yesterday at Mr. Schwaiger's... My first purchase was two globular pillows, and four children's coats of Cutch embroidery. This was followed by a cushion cover, *old* and dirty, but susceptible of renovation. I then bought three Afghan coats, with several things, including a

Schwaiger to such an extent that he wrote to Percy Brown, the head of the Government School of Art in Calcutta in March 1914. In his reply, Brown concurred: “I can quite understand your feelings with regard to Mr. Schwaiger’s shop. It is always more interesting to me than any museum can ever hope to be and as you say, the man himself is such a pleasure to meet and talk with.”¹⁴⁵

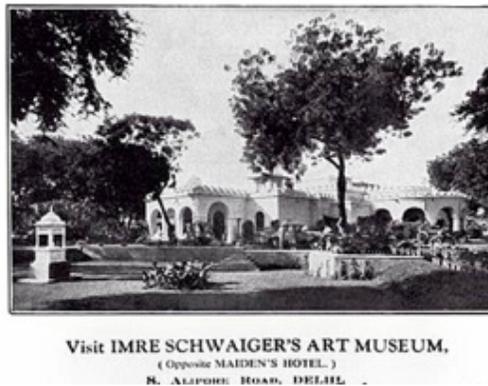


Figure 95: Imre Schwaiger's “Art Museum” in Delhi

Culin and Schwaiger established a good business rapport and later that year their paths crossed again when Culin visited Schwaiger’s London shop. In India Schwaiger clearly stood out as the main dealer, but abroad he competed with a more well established market,¹⁴⁶ and so, ever the pragmatist, as such dealers were, he was able to be the conduit, the middleman for bigger dealers who were going on to supply the wealthier buyers, including those on the other side of the Atlantic. On May 17th Culin noted: “After luncheon...I rejoined de Forest and we went together to call on Schwaiger in Brook

green. velvet cushion cover, one of a pair. NOW, leaving the Indian, Schwaiger brought out some Chinese things. I bought first a pair of tapestry banners for ten rupees, and then three old theatrical costumes for fifty rupees apiece. These latter are very beautiful, and admirably adapted for Our museum purposes. They are much worn, but far finer than any I have ever seen except the two that de Forest lent to the Museum. I purchased too a Boxer's coat which I had not been able to procure in: Peking . This was followed by a pair of tapestry banners, very dear at three hundred rupees.” Culin Diaries 332

¹⁴⁵ Percy Brown to Stewart Culin, 26 March 1914. Culin Gen Correspondence, Culin 1.2

¹⁴⁶ Georges Demotte, Charles Vignier, Léonce Rosenberg, Georges Tabbagh and Reza Khan Monif were some of the early 20th century dealers of Mughal and Persian art.

Street, No. 39. We found him in his salesrooms with his things still in their boxes and bales. I infer that he expected [Dikran] Kelekian or some similar customer and desired to give him the impression that he saw the collections for the first time. Indeed, it may have been de Forest he desired thus impress. The carpets and textiles were the first things he displayed to us. I recognized instantly that they came from the same source as the objects I had bought at Jeypore...¹⁴⁷

Thus while Schwaiger was a source for travelers to India or London, he was an indirect source for many of the works that would find their ways into the hands of dealers like Dikran Kelekian and Hagop Kevorkian who would in turn would supply American collectors and museums. Interestingly, not long after Culin's descriptions of his encounters with Schwaiger in Delhi and London, World War I broke out, and Schwaiger, a Hungarian, was interned and his house and stock was liquidated. Nevertheless, after the war, Schwaiger recovered his fortunes enough to reestablish himself, and his businesses in London and Delhi. He continued to cultivate American collectors, and museums, selling and gifting works to institutions like the Metropolitan Museum of Art among others between 1928 and 1931. As he had done with Culin over 20 years before, when Doris Duke visited India in 1935 on her honeymoon, it was Imre Schwaiger who would show her around the major sights of the city, besides selling her some jewelry. Besides the Metropolitan, Schwaiger offered works to museum benefactors¹⁴⁸ and routinely gifted

¹⁴⁷ Culin diaries 465

¹⁴⁸ An example of Schwaiger's tactics were his offering of presents with embellished provenance to Museum benefactors, such as in 1924 when he wrote to the wife of Frank L. Babbott one the Brooklyn Museum's major benefactors and a proponent of the Asian arts section: "May I present you these two fragments of Turban (Pugree) which were worn by the great Emperor Shah Jahan. I believe you would give these to the Brooklyn Museum in which you take such great interest." 6 March 1924, Culin Gen. Correspondence 1.4. [014]

His buyers were not always taken in by his stories and often took them with a pinch of salt. "Thank you very much indeed for your full letter of the 11th concerning the mystery of the curtains which we bought in

pieces to the British Museum and the V&A in London, and also provided the seed collection of Indian sculpture for the Ferenc Hopp Museum in Budapest.

Giving gifts and thus receiving validation when those works became part of museum collections was routine for dealers seeking to establish themselves as legitimate and trustworthy sources. Value accorded to works was established through institutional acknowledgement which in the case of Indian art was through the mutually reinforcing forces of collecting and scholarship.¹⁴⁹ In America no better was this seen than in the career of Nasli Heeramaneck, who shared a close relationship with Ananda Coomaraswamy, and several museums. As Ivan Gaskell pithily observes in his discussion of: “the interests of every participant in the art world, whether abstruse theorist or rank salesman, are intimately intertwined...scholars can learn from the trade, just as the trade can learn from the scholars”.¹⁵⁰ Unsurprisingly therefore, Mughal paintings quickly began fetching high prices on the market abroad, and availability of such works in the much smaller Indian market dwindled, and so with the exception of a few wealthy Indians such as Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who possessed interest, access and funds to collect such works, Indian collectors found it expeditious to turn their energies towards other forms of art. Indeed this was the time when Coomaraswamy was paying one-hundredth

India. Schwaiger had given a long cock and bull story about Jehangir and said that these curtains had been used by him in his travels as curtains for his private apartment. He was quite hazy regarding details, but her were interested in them regardless of their history and obtained them. He has two more which he hopes will go to the new Government House in Delhi.” Frank L. Babbott to Stewart Culin, 22 November 1924. Culin Gen. Correspondence, 1.4. [016]

¹⁴⁹ Early dedicated European collectors of Mughal miniatures included Henri Vever, Victor Goloubew, Georges Marteau, Jean Pozzi, and Baron Maurice de Rothschild. By 1914 however, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acquired the Goloubew collection, while in 1916 the Marteau collection was bequeathed to the Louvre. Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 5–11.. While Vincent Arthur Smith mentioned Mughal painting in his *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* in 1908, Percy Brown in 1926 wrote exclusively on it in *Indian Painting under the Mughals*. Yet, Pramod Chandra identifies Ivan Stchoukine’s *La peinture indienne à l’époque des Grands Moghols* (1929) as a seminal work that took the matter of style seriously. *On the Study of Indian Art* (Published for the Asia Society, by Harvard University Press, 1983), 90.

¹⁵⁰ Ivan Gaskell, “Tradesmen as Scholars: Interdependencies in the study and exchange of art,” Mansfield, *Art History and Its Institutions*, 146–147.

the price of Mughal paintings for Rajput paintings¹⁵¹ and many others began collecting such paintings too.

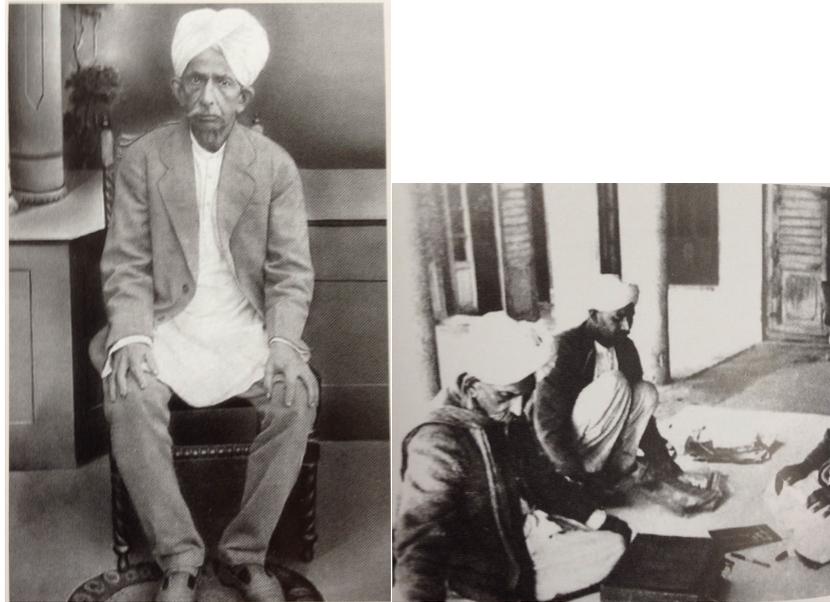


Figure 96: Radha Krishna Bharany (left); With his servant Teja laying out paintings for inspection (right).

While Coomaraswamy and other collectors did at times travel to cities and buy works in the bazaars, or seasonal fairs, dealers of art would often be peripatetic, and would travel with works, bringing them right to collectors' doorstep, ensuring an intimacy and informality of business. Radha Krishna Bharany was one such dealer, who while having a shop in Amritsar, also travelled with Pahari paintings, which became his specialty.¹⁵² He is known to have directly supplied works to collectors such as Ananda Coomaraswamy and Eric Dickinson (professor at the Government College, Lahore who had an important collection of Kangra paintings and is credited with bringing importance to Kishangarh painting), in Amritsar. W.G. Archer (1907-1979), remembered how he and

¹⁵¹ Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 5.,

¹⁵² For an account of the Bharany collections, see Chhote Bharany, G. H. R Tillotson, and Marg Foundation (India), *A Passionate Eye: Textiles, Paintings and Sculptures from the Bharany Collections*, 2014.

other dealers, used to visit Patna bringing trunks full of works.¹⁵³ While collectors' tastes were often eclectic, and they typically bought from a range of dealers, in a relatively small market, the dealers' turf could be efficiently managed, therefore for instance, Schwaiger partnered with Manick Chand Backliwal (1894-1954), who founded Indian Crafts Palace, New Delhi. Ram Gopal Vijayvargiya (1905-2003), based in Jaipur became a major supplier of Rajput paintings from Rajasthan, while Mahadev Natesan, based in Bombay came to specialize in South Indian bronzes and Kerala wood carvings. Dealers would be in touch with one another, and source works, through barter or consignment. Moreover, as they became established even if they were primarily known for specializing in particular forms of works, coming out of the antiquities and curio trade, dealers would maintain stocks of a range of objects from textiles to ivory carvings to jewelry.

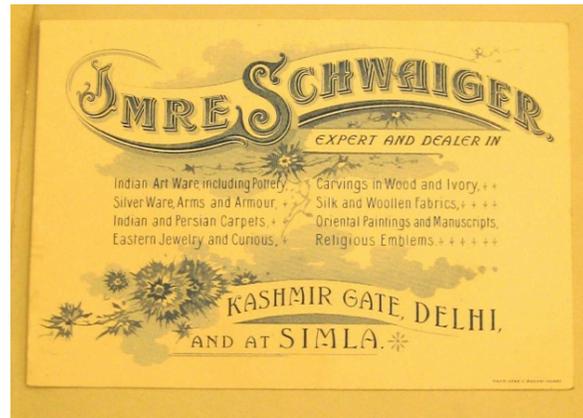


Figure 97: Imre Schwaiger's business card found in Stewart Culin's travel diaries.

At this early stage, the market was small enough that when interested buyers appeared on the scene, dealers would respond with alacrity and bring more works

¹⁵³ “Radha Krishna Bharany regularly came to Patna to see [P.C.] Manuk and it was from him that my wife and I made out first purchases. Although we ourselves had only purchased some thirty Pahari pictures, by the time we left India in 1948, we had seen and handled vast numbers. Bharany would arrive at our bungalow, open a tin trunk and spread miniature after miniature out on the floor...we went through the hundreds of pictures which he showed us...” *Visions of Courty India: The Archer Collection of Pahari Miniatures* (Foundation, 1976), xi..

forward for sale. Stewart Culin recounted how soon after a visit to Schwaiger's shop in Delhi where he bought a 'great painted cotton curtain' (what would later be identified as a 17th century *kalamkari* trade textile), he and Lockwood de Forest found themselves enticed by more textiles as word of their presence spread fast among dealers, and Jaipur dealers offered them carpets that were probably sourced/looted from the former royal palace at Amber.¹⁵⁴ The incident is nonetheless instructive in noting the contexts and manner in which dealers operated, that allowed them to be key middlemen in the transfer of objects to collectors, variously shrouding the ignominious circumstances of initial sale from the source (often times for financial reasons among the increasingly impoverished nobility)¹⁵⁵ or even occasionally fronting the murky channels of procurement. This allowed the urbane, cosmopolitan collectors to buy works with ease and erasing the traces of the earlier 'lives' of the works. However, if collectors required more information about individual pieces, they ended up having to rely heavily on the dealers' information, which could often be erroneous, as not only did much information get lost on the way,¹⁵⁶ and dealers would be reluctant to share their sources, but they were known to embellish stories of provenance to increase the value of works.¹⁵⁷ B.N. Goswamy has noted that this

¹⁵⁴ Rachel Morris, "ENTER THE ROYAL ENCAMPMENT: RE-EXAMINING THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM'S KALAMKARI HANGING," *Arts of Asia*. 34, no. 6 (2004): 95–105.

¹⁵⁵ A practice that has continued well into the twentieth century – in the 1960s the Jaipur Royal Family sold many Mughal carpets at auction to finance some of the City Palace Museum. *Ibid.*, 105..

¹⁵⁶ Between the dealers and the 'rajwade' (princely families) themselves there were 'runners' who would act as 'go-betweens' but would not be particularly concerned with the contents of their cargo. Radha Krishna Bharany's 'runners' operated mainly from Tibbar, in Gurdaspur district, near the town of Pathankot in the foothills of the Punjab, acquiring the name 'Tibbaris'. Koorra Mal, Kashi Ram and Gyan Chand were some who would bring bales full of paintings from the pothikhanas of the 'hill rajas' whose ancestors had commissioned the paintings which would be terms as 'Pahari paintings'. *Interview with Mr. C.L. Bharany, son of Radha Krishna Bharany*, 9 July 2009, New Delhi.

¹⁵⁷ Concerning the painting "Mian Mukund Dev with Companions in the Countryside" by Nainsukh (now in the V&A, London) are two inscriptions on top in two hands in neat Takri, while at the back: "Raja Sahib going and hearing the singing of Rug Basant", followed by "(pounds sterling) 10/-,-," and the rubber stamp

often led to inaccuracies in early art historical accounts, remarking that even Coomaraswamy relied too heavily on the Amritsar dealer's accounts, and doubted them only on one occasion.¹⁵⁸ It becomes important however to piece together the nuances of these little-recorded transactional relationships between dealer and collector, for works acquire different meanings at several stages of their 'lives' as Richard Davis has pointed out, that crucially effect their 'value' through accorded meanings.

While the 'collector', 'curator' or 'scholar' can be given agency in narrativizing, as Pieter ter Keurs observes in his account on the theory and practice of colonial collecting, the illusion of choice notwithstanding (the fact of selecting a few from hundreds of paintings for example), collectors were nonetheless receiving works that had themselves already been chosen, and presented in particular ways.¹⁵⁹ The works therefore accrued meanings as they moved, and changed 'use-value' not only metaphorically from one context of viewing and appreciation to the next (from original patron/s to modern collectors/museums) but also sometimes quite literally, as the trace of this movement can

"(sd) D.J. Tata" . Goswamy notes that "This painting was in the group that was sold at Sotheby's in December 1931. The description in English at the back, with its reference to the "Raja Sahib" and "Rug Vasant", was possibly added by an Indian dealer hopeful of selling the work to some "Sahib". It is unlikely to be by Imre Schwaiger, the antique dealer, who was active in Lahore and Delhi at this time. It needs to be mentioned that, when sold at the auction, the painting fetched far less than the ten pounds sterling given as its "price" at the back." B. N. Goswamy, *Nainsukh of Guler: A Great Indian Painter from a Small Hill-State* (Artibus Asiae, 1997), 98..

¹⁵⁸ "the dealers, it is possible to argue, after all know most about their own collections. The strenuous search after paintings led them into the remotest corners of the hills and they know the collections, the source of each painting they acquired, the artists, and the traditions of their families. But it is at the same time important to bear in mind that precisely this information they do their utmost to keep back for a variety of reasons. The information which they supplied was either interested or calculatedly distorted, for the point with them was never to betray the true source of their supplies for fear alike of rival dealers and direct purchase by buyers. And, in some cases, the fear of the law... One knows only of one case where Dr. Coomaraswamy showed some suspicion of the Amritsar dealer's information [*Rajput Painting*, 19]...In other cases he took, I am afraid, the word of his informants too seriously, neglecting to examine his evidence with that sharpness which is characteristic of so much of his work." Goswamy, B.N. "Ananda Coomaraswamy as a Historian of Rajput Painting" S Raja Singam, *Ananda Coomaraswamy : Remembering and Remembering Again and Again* ([Petaling Jaya]: Raja Singam, 1974), 78–79..

¹⁵⁹ Pieter Keurs, *Colonial Collections Revisited* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2007), 8.

be seen on some works in the form of dealers' rubber seals, and collectors' marks, besides other miscellaneous notational markings on or alongside works. Not only was this process additive (in the sense of addition of descriptions), but also depleted or deleted contextual meaning (when paintings would be separated out from manuscripts or albums, or sculptures hacked from temple walls). Yet in the eventual canonization of art, through art historical writing and museums collections, to which all such objects being collected would tend, the processual nature of meaning, and particularly the turns that occurred in the modern era, are in turn obfuscated.

While it is true that oftentimes, exchanges between dealer and collector were oral, and never recorded, in their 'elevation' to the 'spiritual' realms of art, and their public (in museums and exhibitions) or private (within connoisseurs' circles) presentations, objects required the erasure of their 'commodity value' or at least for it to be hidden, confined to a distanced 'market' or consigned to the archival underbellies of institutions, where the 'material' could be managed, and at most acknowledged anecdotally in collectors' accounts or museums' histories. In the framing of art history, Ivan Gaskell has questioned the validity of this distancing from the "the trade" (dealers and auction houses): "A distrust of the way in which certain types of art history can be informed or even driven by the trade's commercial imperatives has consistently informed other kinds of art-historical and museological practice... The hostility to issues immediately pertinent to the art market is in part a revulsion against a perceived hypocrisy in which the common interest and mutual exploitation of those in the trade and scholarly institutions, both universities and museums, who address matters such as quality and attribution, were never openly acknowledged by the scholars concerned, or seen as factors that might affect decision

making and choices in particular ways. Yet must interests common to scholars and the trade be discredited?”¹⁶⁰

It is the primarily transactional nature of the dealer-collector relationship that not only evidences the presence of a ‘market’ and but also how such objects, through these movements were deeply implicated in the networks of capitalism and cosmopolitan modernity.¹⁶¹ It is these forces in turn that also contributed towards their recognition, appreciation and canonization in particular ways. In short, these modern histories of ancient art (that have the potential to remind us of their status as ‘objects’ or ‘commodities’ among other things) also greatly contribute towards their accorded status as ‘art’. While the institutional role of museums in the transformation of objects and antiquities into art, is crucial in this process, the narratives of meanings that arise from the networks of relationships between dealers, collectors, scholar and curators, are epistemologically constitutive and temporally parallel processes, that are formative in such transformations as well.

Collecting and Writing an “Indian” Art: *Rajput Painting (1916)*

It was therefore also among collectors and critics that systems of connoisseurship arose that also provided the basis for the structuring of a history of Indian art and aesthetics. It was a process that took place among the elite, educated and wealthy men in India and abroad. In Calcutta, by the late 19th century, there was a turn towards a

¹⁶⁰ Mansfield, *Art History and Its Institutions*, 147–148.

¹⁶¹ “Any substantial discussion of things that are traded in a capitalist market will both affect and be affected by that market. Art historians may try to confine or direct their discussions to intangibles in order to avoid contamination, but which the reality of objects in the world subtends ideas about them such avoidance is impossible. Many of the strongest, most persistent and complex ideas about such objects are articulated within the terms of that market.” Ibid., 158.

discovery of India's past traditions among the nationalists, and consequently, as noted above some members of the prosperous Tagore family, Abanindranath (1871-1951) and Gaganendranath (1867-1938) in particular began collecting miniature paintings from 1897 onwards. This 'return' marks a shift in taste that was occurring not only among the Tagore family itself, but also among other elites, who had been conscientiously developing and emulating a taste for European objects, ever since British presence in India in the 18th century, by filling their palaces and homes with European furniture, and antiquities in the original or in copies, as well as with chinoiserie. Thus in the cities of colonial India, new elites, captains of industry whether the Parsis in the west in Bombay (B.N. Treasuryvala, Cowasji Jehangir, Ratan and Dorabji Tata) or later the Marwaris in the east in Calcutta and Patna (Radha Krishna Jalan, Gopi Krishna Kanoria), as well as wealthy professionals (P.C. Manuk a high court judge in Patna, and Nanalal Chamanlal Mehta, an Indian Civil Services officer) began collecting Indian antiquities as art. But while such collections were meant for private pleasure on the one hand, there was also purposefulness with which works were purchased. For instance the discovery of Mughal painting was exciting for Abanindranath Tagore and his painting students in Calcutta, even though later it "failed to provide all the ingredients for a national style"¹⁶² for it lacked the *bhava* or feeling that Tagore felt was key to Indian aesthetics. Nonetheless a system of connoisseurship based on formal values (similar to the one developed around Mughal painting among Parisian elite) arose around Rajput Painting too, drawing upon the *rasa* theory of the *Natyashastra*¹⁶³ especially after Coomaraswamy had forwarded his

¹⁶² Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850-1922 : Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge [England] ; New York NY USA: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 288.

¹⁶³ "In a period when knowledge and standards were still vague, other factors [than price] came into play. According to Rai Krishnadasa's explanation of traditional *rasa*, or aesthetic theory, if a painting did not

theses on these non-Mughal schools in 1916. Moreover, such paintings, as well as ‘Hindu’ sculpture (often subsuming Buddhist and Jain), were ostensibly more in keeping with traditional Indian aesthetics, based on interpretations of the Puranic genre of *Silpa sastras*,¹⁶⁴ and provided an unbroken continuity with the ancient painting traditions of Ajanta. Indeed *recovering Ajanta* from being relegated to the merely “decorative” and identifying it as the source for Rajput Painting *in contrast to the Mughal* became Coomaraswamy’s intervention in critiquing the established notions of Indian paintings as described by the likes of Percy Brown.¹⁶⁵

access or unleash a durable emotion in his heart, the collector should leave it alone. As a standard of selection, this advice was rudimentary and unchallenging. But it established the foundation for an increasingly sophisticated understanding in the post independence (1947) years.” Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 4. Indeed, Coomaraswamy discussed the rasa theory at length in *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1934), and its endurance as key to Indian aesthetics continued well into the twentieth century, and became the basis for two exhibitions curated by B.N. Goswamy: “Rasa: Les neuf visages de l’art Indien,” Grand Palais, Paris, 1986; and “Essence of Indian Art,” Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 1986. Goswamy discusses these exhibitions in his essay “Another Past, Another Context: Exhibiting Indian Art Abroad” Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures : The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 68–78.

¹⁶⁴ Both Ananda Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrisch based their theses on Indian aesthetics and paintings on texts of the Citrasutra of the Visnudharmottara Purana, roughly dated between 500 A.D. and 900 A.D. that had been ‘discovered’ in colonial India through its first translation in 1912. However it was only with Kramrisch’s work, (“A Treatise on Indian Painting,” *Journal of the Department of Letters*, 2, pp 1-56, Calcutta, 1924; revised edition in *The Calcutta Review*, 1928) and Coomaraswamy’s essay (“Visnudharmottara Chapter XLI,” *Journal of American Oriental Society*, 52, pp 13-21, 1932) that the text began to shape the attitudes towards Indian aesthetics. As Parul Dave-Mukherji argues, these readings of the text are located within the struggles to make a case for fine art in India, by finding ways to talk about naturalism from *within* tradition rather than from the outside. The efforts of Ananda Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrisch to find equivalences, hinged on the proposal of the term ‘*sadr̥y̥sa*’ – the conceded absence of the naturalism (as understood in Western terms) in Indian art, was recompensed by the preferable and possibly morally more elevated existence of *sadr̥y̥sa* or similitude (implied by simile rather than simulacrum). Parul Dave Mukherji and Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, *The Citrasūtra of the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 2001), xxxiv–xxxvii.

¹⁶⁵ “[Painting] may be said to be broadly divided into three distinct styles. The Buddhist, exemplified by the frescoes on the walls of the caves of Ajunta, the Muhammadan style as shown by the book illustrations and portrait pictures of the Moghul artists and still carried on to this day, and the modern style of oil and water colour painting as practiced in the Schools of Art. The first mentioned is more decorative than pictorial so that it can hardly be classed among the Fine Arts, and is therefore omitted from a description of what is intended to be an account of painting in the pictorial sense only. The earliest true pictures therefore, of which we have any records are the productions of the old Moghul painters who from all accounts carried on this work with unusual difficulty owing to the well-known Muhammadan objection to the delineation of natural forms... Authorities appear to be of one opinion with regard to this style of painting, namely, that it was originally introduced from Persia... To the casual observer the want of atmosphere, the total disregard

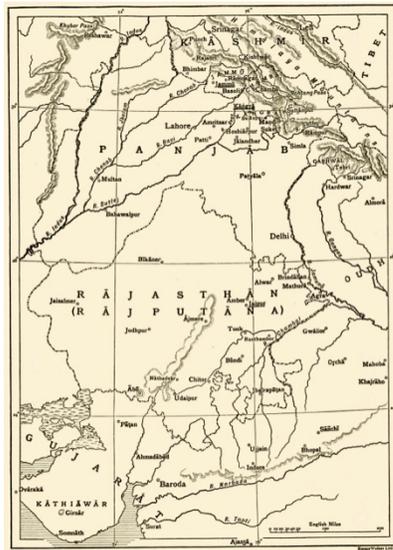


Figure 98: Map of Rajasthan and the Punjab Hills, from Coomaraswamy's *Rajput Painting* (1916)

At this juncture, it is worth noting certain aspects that made Coomaraswamy's collection unique. For the first time non-Mughal and non-Company Indian paintings were actively and significantly collected. Moreover, it is arguable that it Coomaraswamy was engaged in issues surrounding Indian art, nationalism and *swadeshi*, even *prior* to having visited India,¹⁶⁶ and his encounter with Tagores and their circle enhanced this interest; he became active in the Indian Society of Oriental Art that had been formed in Calcutta in 1907. However in the absence of readily available materials of the nature that interested him in the collections he saw in England or India, it fell upon him to gather raw material

for all rules of perspective, and the general stiffness of the composition condemn them absolutely, but a closer study brings to light the artist's capabilities for portraiture which, combined with a sense of harmony of colour and a grasp of decorative effect, renders these pictures peculiarly interesting... From the picture painting described above grew the art of miniature painting which is carried to a considerable degree of excellence in Delhi. These miniature paintings are usually executed on ivory..." Delhi. Indian Art Exhibition and Watt, *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903.*, 454–455.

¹⁶⁶ Not only had he reviewed others' work on Indian art Birdwood's Indian Art exhibition at Delhi in 1903 (1906) and Sister Nivedita's *The Web of Indian Life* (1907), but had also brought out two pamphlets of his own: *The Aims of Indian Art* (1908), *The Influence of Greek on Indian Art* (1908). Aside from this, he contributed to periodicals and lectured extensively on the subject of Indian art as well: *The Present State of Indian Art* (1907), *The Aim of Indian Art* (1908), *Art of the East and of the West* (1908), *The Indian Craftsman* (1908). (For a complete list of Coom's publications, see James S. Crouch, *A Bibliography of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts: Manohar, 2002))

to study and work further. In 1908 already, he wrote that “materials are not yet available for the detailed history of Indian art or of any off-shoot or branch of Indian art” and four years later he noted that “the study of Indian culture in all aesthetic aspects, save literary, remains an almost unworked field.” In 1910 he had given a lecture titled “On the Study of Indian Art” in 1910, in which he indicated “the seriousness with which he set out to write the history of Indian art.”¹⁶⁷ The decade following the time he spent in India collecting and studying, was the most productive and Coomaraswamy’s most influential art historical writings date to this period. In a field with few players, by 1910-1911 he was well-known enough that the Indian Society for Oriental Art asked Coomaraswamy to organise and exhibition of art at the United Provinces Exhibition in Allahabad,¹⁶⁸ including old works from his own and other private collections, as well as new works drawing from the Bengal School. It was on seeing this collection at the Allahabad exhibition that a young Rai Krishnadas was inspired to collect Indian art.¹⁶⁹

Although Coomaraswamy spent a few years primarily in India, and would have liked to have stayed on, a number of reasons led him back to England in 1913 – he was disillusioned by the Bengal School of painting¹⁷⁰ and the more political, rather than

¹⁶⁷ McInerney in Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*. 1.

¹⁶⁸ “In the course of a letter she [Ethel Coomaraswamy] wrote in 1910 to their London friend Mr.C.K. Ashbee, she says: “We are travelling from town to town over the north of India inspecting, choosing and rejecting things for the (Allahabad) exhibition...Agra and Delhi are unspoilt. You get down into the bazaars and you are in India that must be little different from what it has been for centuries...You feel you are among people who know what real civilization means.... He has a big scheme of a National Museum on foot which he hopes will come to something. Anywhere whether it does or not he is going to settle in Benaras for a time, have a house there and be more there than in England.”.Coomaraswamy, Lipsey, and Bollingen Foundation Collection (Library of Congress), *Coomaraswamy*., 4.

¹⁶⁹ McInerney, 3. The Rai Krishnadas collection was destined for the Bhartiya Lalit Kala Parishad (later Bharat Kala Bhavan) in Benaras.

¹⁷⁰ “Although he had originally championed the efforts of the Bengal School, and the shared ideals of *swadeshi*, in articles and lectures, in time he became disillusioned with their efforts. “In this high tide of cultural nationalism, he sounded an unexpectedly hesitant note: ‘a great responsibility now rests upon members of the Calcutta group, and upon the public for whom they work. What has been accomplished

cultural turn that *swadeshi* was taking in India. Moreover, he was also concerned about the matter of the publication of his illustrated magnum opus.¹⁷¹ The result was a lavish two-volume set titled *Rajput Painting: Being an Account of the Hindu Paintings of Rajasthan and the Panjab Himalayas from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century Described in their relation to contemporary thought with texts and illustrations*. The pioneering work of this art historical importance of this publication cannot be emphasized enough and Coomaraswamy clearly recognized the radical break he was making with what he called the “unscientific attitude” of the scholars that preceded him.¹⁷² His geologist’s training firmly in place, Coomaraswamy was an empiricist, and had scientifically gone about his task collecting material for his thesis on Rajput Painting. These “samples” formed an unrivalled personal collection, and which formed the crucial basis of his scholarship. Of his early publications for India Society, published in London the 41 items that he published in *Indian Drawings* (1910), 13 belonged to the author, and of the 37 items that he published in and *Indian Drawings: Second series, Chiefly Rajput* (1912), all but one belonged to the author. Finally, of the 105 items that Coomaraswamy

constitutes, considering the very adverse conditions obtaining in India a few years ago, and to almost the same extent at the present day, much; but it is not what the world has to expect from India’. The savant’s sudden loss of faith in the Bengal School had followed a dismissive article by Roger Fry.” Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 312.

¹⁷¹ Coomaraswamy’s exacting standards necessitated that the book could “only have been produced by an experienced publisher with enough capital to finance a meticulous and luxurious set of volumes, and such was unavailable in India.” Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 83.

¹⁷² “The Rajput paintings have been entirely overlooked by Anglo-Indian writers may perhaps be explained by the remark of B.H. Baden-Powell: ‘In a country like this we must not expect to find anything that appeals to mind or deep feeling’ (*Panjab Manufacturers*, 1872, II, iii), This is the normal standpoint of the Anglo-Indian writer: Fergusson, for example, lays it down that ‘it cannot, of course, be for one moment contended that India ever reached the intellectual supremacy of Greece or the moral greatness of Rome’. Whether or not these are true judgements may be left to time to decide; here I only call attention to the, to day the least of it, unscientific attitude implied in the words ‘we must not expect’, and ‘it cannot, of course, for one moment be contended’. On this principle, the only object of research would be to confirm our *a priori* judgements!” Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting* (London ;New York [etc.]: H. Milford Oxford University Press, 1916), 6.

published in *Rajput Paintings* (1916), 81 belonged to the author.¹⁷³

What becomes evident from above is, that unlike other art historians, and collectors, Coomaraswamy was responsible for single-handedly *creating* a field of art historical study, through a collection, periodization and classification, which he then proceeded to *interpret* in the light of textual readings. Following well-established Wölfflinian art historical methodology, Rajput painting was a field he identified and defined in opposition; not by any cohesive intrinsic or formal elements per se, but rather in contrast to the already well-defined field of Mughal art: “The term Rajput... conveniently summarizes the fact of broad distinction from Mughal... Rajput painting is the counterpart of the vernacular literature of Hinduism.”¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, a (Western) narrative and a relationship between the styles was not something that Coomaraswamy conceded,¹⁷⁵ as in his opinion Mughal painting developed hermetically, as a *time-bound* aside to the *timeless* ideal of Rajput painting – “Mughal art, however magnificent in its brief achievement, was but an episode in the long history of Indian painting.”¹⁷⁶ Thus his thesis on Rajput painting not only marked a break from preceding scholarship, but also expands the field by presenting it in distinct contrast to Mughal miniatures that had

¹⁷³ McInerney in Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 6..

¹⁷⁴ Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting*, 1..

¹⁷⁵ This was an aspect of Coomaraswamy’s scholarship that required revision by later scholars like Pramod Chandra and B.N. Goswamy. One of the criticisms of Coomaraswamy’s research is that he never concerned himself with the matter of individual artists, in continuity with his transcendent belief that “the anonymity of the artist belongs to a type of culture dominated by the longing to be liberated from oneself” Ananda Coomaraswamy, “The Christian and Oriental, or True, Philosophy of Art” *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 41. B.N. Goswamy redressed this particular aspect in his research, however, even in the case of Mughal miniatures, studies reveal that many of the painters in the early imperial atelier were from India and there was a carrying over of indigenous style particularly evident in early Mughal painting. The hybrid nature of early Mughal paintings is evident in Chandra’s work *The Cleveland Tuti-nama manuscript and the origins of Mughal painting* (1976) The direction of influence was also reversed as is evidenced by the marked Mughal features of “Rajput” painting from Bikaner and other courts, a fact borne out by the migration of several artists from the Mughal to regional courts, with the weakening central power from the 17th century onwards.

¹⁷⁶ Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting*, 6..

hitherto been the only acknowledged forms of paintings from India.

However, one can also recognize a nationalist agenda to create an Indian art history, which was not about the (Western) concerns of evolution of form, and the matter of influence, but rather proposed an Indian aesthetics arising from vernacular conditions and the creation of an “unbroken continuity of tradition in Indian art of which he took Rajput painting to be an exalted expression. It is in fact towards establishing this that a great lot of his arguments tend all the time.”¹⁷⁷ The presentation of Rajput art as a continuation of the Buddhist art of Ajanta, even though it was not Buddhist in content, would later be in harmony with the schema of Asian art as delineated in Okakura’s diagram before the MFA.

The Coomaraswamy collection at the MFA and beyond

Were it not for World War I, key aspects of Indian art history as it developed were likely to have been significantly altered, for it was the war that made Ananda Coomaraswamy first come to America. According to his biography, by 1916 the progress of World War I had necessitated conscription in England, and although Coomaraswamy apparently declared himself a conscientious objector, he managed to avoid entanglements with the authorities with the aid of influential friends.¹⁷⁸ The situation in England having rendered it impossible for him to stay, in 1916 Coomaraswamy and his second wife voyaged to America. At this stage Coomaraswamy was particularly keen to sell his collection and secure not only an income from it, but also a livelihood. While seeking

¹⁷⁷ B.N. Goswamy, “Ananda Coomaraswamy as a Historian of Rajput Painting” Raja Singam, *Ananda Coomaraswamy*, 82..

¹⁷⁸ Coomaraswamy, Lipsey, and Bollingen Foundation Collection (Library of Congress), *Coomaraswamy*, 123.

potential buyers, he accompanied his wife, an English singer who went by the stage name of Ratan Devi, on a series of performances in a tour of America. At her recitals, it would be Coomaraswamy who would speak first, providing “an intellectual introduction before it could be heard by Western audiences,”¹⁷⁹ and often garnered much interest in his own right.¹⁸⁰ Although at the time the understanding of and interest in Indian art in America was thin, nevertheless, among some circles, Coomaraswamy or at least his books were known. Rajput Painting had even been mentioned among notable art books in American periodicals like *The Independent*.¹⁸¹ Accordingly Coomaraswamy marketed his collection, emphasizing its singularity and his own unique position and skills as scholar, later adding his experience in museums and his connections in India.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 93.

¹⁸⁰ “Before the recital began Dr. Coomaraswamy briefly explained to the audience the nature of the music they were about to hear. He is well known in India as well as in Europe as a critic and a member of learned societies, and has a gift of interpreting art in clear, fine English...Dr. Coomaraswamy likened it [the sound of the tamboura] to the universal reality out of which the individual emerges and into which he recedes. It has no separate intellectual interest...Dr. Coomaraswamy and his wife ought to find in America an eager public. If attendance at their recitals should become a fad, it would be as wholesome and useful a fad as any that ever found favor among Americans.” “Music of Hindustan” *Outlook*, April 26, 1916.

¹⁸¹ “A great work on a little known topic is in two beautifully made folios on *Rajput Art* by Ananda Coomaraswamy, the text in one, the plates in the other. To most people this is an unknown world, a rich, marvelous, mystical world, where every line and tint and figure is of mysterious import. Here one gets the Hindoo view of life, and his whole philosophy, for art to him was not fancy, but the symbolic representation of the mysteries of life and death and the hereafter as he translates them.” “A FEW ART BOOKS,” *The Independent ... Devoted to the Consideration of Politics, Social and Economic Tendencies, His...* Dec 4, 1916; p. 411

¹⁸² “I have a good deal of museum experience of one kind and another [sic]. You will be familiar with my Catalogue of Bronzes in the Colombo Museum. I was also in charge of the art section of the big Allahabad exhibition of 1911. I think I may fairly mention here that had it not been for war conditions I should have expected by this time to be occupied with the organisation of the new Indian museum which is contemplated for Delhi. I have had a certain amount of confidential correspondence with the authorities on this, but everything is indefinitely postponed. I am an honorary correspondent of the Indian Archaeological Survey...” (AKC to Denman Ross, September 8, 1916; Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

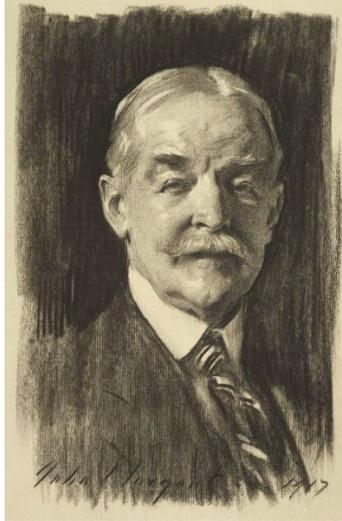


Figure 99: Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1935). Portrait by John Singer Sargent, 1915

Three days after receiving Charles Lang Freer’s letter declining his offer to buy his collection of art, Coomaraswamy wrote the following letter to Denman Ross:

“The first enquiry is whether you have ever considered the development of an Indian section in the Museum and would contemplate allowing me to work for it very much as Okakura worked for you in connection with the Far Eastern art. The second refers to my own Indian collections under certain conditions, of which the chief would be the understanding that the most important works would be adequately exhibited. ...” In a handwritten postscript Coomaraswamy added “I need hardly mention that there is no museum at present where even a small collection of Rajput works is exhibited.”¹⁸³

As he had done with Freer, Coomaraswamy emphasized the unique advantages that the purchase of his collection, would entail for a museum like the MFA, and offered his own expertise and services in addition to the collection. Unlike Freer, Ross’s response to Coomaraswamy was more encouraging and included a promise to take up the matter of

¹⁸³ (Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

the purchase of the collection with the Museum Committee, although he was clearly more interested in the potential that Coomaraswamy himself presented. In his reply Ross confessed that the MFA was interested in the collection, however, only slightly, because the interest in Indian Art was underdeveloped. In his letter he therefore suggested that Coomaraswamy's and the MFA's purposes might be better served by the collection being exhibited initially as a loan with the possibility for purchase afterwards, once enough enthusiasm and support for Indian art had been cultivated. This would be enabled by lectures given by Coomaraswamy, with a view to future fund-raising for the Museum's collections.¹⁸⁴ After some negotiation, the MFA commissioned Coomaraswamy to travel to England to retrieve the collection in October 1916. After a short visit, Coomaraswamy returned with the collection to New York by December 17, 1916.¹⁸⁵ He never returned to England.

Two years after the purchase of the Goloubew collection, in proposing the exhibition and sale of his collection to the museum, Coomaraswamy also appealed to the Museum of Fine Arts' now well-known ambitions in the field of Asian art, echoing Okakura's outline and vociferously arguing for the centrality of India in the narrative. He

¹⁸⁴ "We are, all of us, very much interested; but in a vague sort of way; because we do not know definitely what you can do for us and we know very little, of course, about your collections...what would you do for us as Curator of Indian Art? As we have at this time, no considerable collection of examples, your work would, perhaps, take at first, the form of lectures, to be given at the Museum and possibly at Harvard, this with the idea of getting people interested. The people of Boston know very little about Indian Art. They have heard of the Taj Mahal perhaps. Then you might go to India to make purchases for us, the interest aroused by these lectures being fruitful of money to spend. There would be books to be bought and photographs. Our interest would certainly be stimulated by a loan exhibition, which might, later, be purchased...I have been reading your books on Indian Drawings and Rajput Paintings with the greatest interest. They are a revelation of delightful things. I see that many of the drawings and paintings described are in your collection, so I hope that I may see them some day." (Denman Ross to AKC, August 25, 1916; Directors' correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

¹⁸⁵ Letters in the MFA Archives addressed to Arthur M Fairbanks from AKC from London describe how he was given an advance of \$3050 to return to England and pack and transport his collection back to the US. Quatrach and Luzac's helped in the transportation of his boxes to America.

built upon Okakura's acknowledgement of India's position in the "organic unity" of Asian Art, he quoted the Chinese Painting scholar Rafael Petrucci's support of his thesis,¹⁸⁶ and added that "the delayed interest in the art of India need have nothing to do with any question of relative importance". He further emphasized that there was growing recognition of the arts of India, including the paintings of Ajanta by members of the India Society in London, and as a final pitch he noted that "At the same time no European, and still less any American museum possessed important or adequate exhibits of Indian art; and considerable *éclat* will rightly accrue to any institution which makes the first move in this direction, while at the same time the best opportunities will naturally be open to the first comer."¹⁸⁷

In spite of Coomaraswamy's compelling arguments, and although the prospect of purchasing the collection as a whole had initially garnered great interest among the Museum Committee, by March of 1917, the mood had changed, and the museum was reluctant to take on such a large financial undertaking. It fell upon Denman Ross, who no doubt also felt some responsibility in bringing the matter to such a stage, to make the offer that would secure the position of the Coomaraswamy collection at the museum, and so he offered to buy part of it, and suggested that Coomaraswamy might sell the remainder.¹⁸⁸ It would be this latter proviso that would later enable Coomaraswamy to

¹⁸⁶ "In the first place the art of Asia represents and organic unity: the position of India in this culture is sufficiently indicated, for example, by Okakura, in the *Ideals of the East*. "In this magnificent whole", M. Petrucci writes (in his notice of my 'Rajput Painting', *Burlington Magazine*, 1916) "India takes an eminent place, yet India is the last figure to appear within the frame of European culture. For this there are deep-seated reasons." The fact that Western interest even in Far East art began with the later and relatively trivial manifestations will suffice to suggest"

¹⁸⁷ (AKC to Denman Ross, September 8, 1916; Directors' correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

¹⁸⁸ "As you know, I am very much interested in the Collection and shall be sadly disappointed if it leaves the Museum. I wonder whether it would be possible for me to buy it and present it to the Museum. I should like to do that, more than anything I can think of; but it will be difficult for me to do it, as I am not a

sell works from his collection to other museums in subsequent years. Coomaraswamy's options were no doubt limited, and so Denman Ross bought his collection of paintings and drawings and its acquisition was listed in the museum bulletin as having taken place in April 1917.¹⁸⁹ In the same issue, of the museum bulletin Coomaraswamy wrote a small piece on the Kalpa Sutra and Kalakacarya illustrated Jain manuscripts that were "lately acquired from the writer's collection through the generosity of Denman W. Ross".¹⁹⁰ Henceforth the collection would be known as the Ross-Coomaraswamy Collection. Finally in a note from the same issue of the museum bulletin, it was established that Coomaraswamy was appointed Keeper of Indian Art at the Museum for three years.¹⁹¹ He became the Keeper at a time when there was no designated Department, but simply a "Section" on Indian art. Moreover, he was given the title of "Keeper" rather than "Curator" as had initially been discussed in the correspondence leading up to the purchase of the collection.¹⁹²

On Coomaraswamy's commencement as Keeper at the MFA, he went about building a library for the Museum of Fine Arts,¹⁹³ giving talks at the museum's Thursday

millionaire and shall have to go into my investments. Of course it is a bad time for selling stocks and bonds and it must not be done in a hurry...It has occurred to me that you might be willing to keep a part of your Collection, if you could sell the other part advantageously. Would it be possible for me to purchase a selection to the amount of, say, thirty or forty thousand dollars?" (Denman Ross to AKC, March 2, 1917; Directors' correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

¹⁸⁹ "Acquisitions by the Museum from April 1 to May 3, 1917," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 15, no. 89 (June 1, 1917): 37, doi:10.2307/4423744.

¹⁹⁰ A. K. Coomaraswamy, "Illustrated Jaina Manuscripts," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 15, no. 90 (August 1, 1917): 40, doi:10.2307/4423747..

¹⁹¹ "Notes," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 15, no. 90 (August 1, 1917): 45, doi:10.2307/4423751.

¹⁹² Coomaraswamy would never assume the position of "Curator" and anecdotally this was a sore point for him.

¹⁹³ Numerous additions have recently been made to the collection of books on India in the Museum Library. They include Jouveau-Dubreuil's "Archeologie du sud de l'Inde," 2 vols.; Getty's "Gods of Northern Buddhism"; Laufer's "Das Citralakshana" Gangoly's "South Indian Bronzes"; Parker's "Ancient Ceylon";

Conference series on “Indian Buddhist Art”, “Indian Paintings after 1450: Jain and Rajput” and “Indian Painting after 1450: Mughal and Modern.” At the same time, the museum decided that the west corridor on the main floor of the building which had hitherto been assigned to European Textiles, were to be devoted to Indian art, and it was Coomaraswamy’s install objects from the Museum’s collections there.¹⁹⁴ In the context of the museum, this physical location for the Indian galleries complemented Coomaraswamy’s conceptual approach which emphasized the value of Indian philosophy as the lens through which not only Indian but all of Asian art could be introduced. From its very first installation in the museum the Indian art collections located in the west corridor, on the Main Floor just off the main rotunda, which one literally and metaphorically needed to traverse before entering the larger and more extensive Asiatic galleries, which were still by far dominated by Chinese and Japanese art. That Coomaraswamy emphasized the ancient roots of Indian art, placing it in a timeless ideal, appeared repeatedly in his writings, on all aspects of Indian culture. In a short essay on Indian dance for instance he notes, “An ancient art may be a source of inspiration, it may guide us in matters of principle—since beauty is independent of time and place—but it ought not to be regarded as a model for our imitation: and so it is rather the theory than the practice of Oriental art that has real significance for us at the present moment... it is the spirit, rather than the form, that should be our guide to the achievement of ends of our

Sarkar's “Sukrauti”; the following books by Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy: “Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism,” “Burning and Melting,” “Vidyapati,” “Taking of Toll,” “Visyakarma,” and the “Mirror of Gesture.” The publication of the India Society entitled “The Ajanta Frescoes,” 2 vols., has also been purchased. The illustrations are in color and monochrome of frescoes in some of the caves of Ajanta after copies taken in the years 1909-1911 by Lady Herringham and her assistants. R. L. D., “Recent Accessions to the Library,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 15, no. 91 (October 1, 1917): 65, doi:10.2307/4169641.

¹⁹⁴ “Notes,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 15, no. 92 (December 1, 1917): 75, doi:10.2307/4169646.

own.”¹⁹⁵ This conceptualization, which reiterated the ancient roots and premodern iterations of Indian art also alluded to his own disillusionment with the modern interpretations such as the Bengal School of which he had once been a great proponent. Such an emphasis on the firmly ancient basis,¹⁹⁶ was particularly resonant in an American cultural context where museums and other institutions coming out of World War I were still deeply suspicious of modern art that had been associated with the cultural disintegration of Europe.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless it is notable that it was Coomaraswamy who would engineer the inclusion of Alfred Stieglitz’s photographs in the Museum of Fine Arts’ collections – a first of its kind.¹⁹⁸ The prints offered as a gift from Stieglitz

¹⁹⁵ “Oriental Dances in America,” *The Dial*, Jan 1922, Vol. LXXII, p.17

¹⁹⁶ This emphasis was also picked up by the press in pieces such as “An Elder Art” which noted “The history of Indian art is, in the last analysis, the history of Indian thought; and the Boston collection is not the assembled work of various masters of different periods, but rather it is a record in stone, bronze, terra cotta, and other materials of the development and changes of a whole people and the entire culture of a race.” “An Elder Art: A Few Examples from One of the Finest Collections in the World” *The Independent (1922-1928)*; Feb 11, 1928; p. 131

¹⁹⁷ Trask, *Things American Art Museums and Civic Culture in the Progressive Era*, 146–148.

¹⁹⁸ Writing to Arthur Fairbanks in August of 1923, Coomaraswamy suggested “My proposal is that I should now be entrusted with the formation of a small representative collection of photographs as works of art, by leading photographers, so far as I can obtain them by invitation and without cost, having in view in the first instance the formation of a series of, let us say, a hundred and fifty prints. The invitation would carry an assurance that (1) the photographs would be kept in the Print Department (2) would be exhibited for not less than two weeks not less than once in every five years and (3) that reproductions would not be published or sold in so far as they might be reproduced in a catalogue or other publications of the Museum. I propose to include a few of my own photographs in the series and have handed two to you. Mr Stieglitz[’s] photographs may be expected in the autumn.” (AKC to Arthur Fairbanks, August 20, 1923; AKC Papers, MFA Archives). Although they were a gift to the museum, Stieglitz was very particular about the manner in which the photographs he was presenting would be sized: “You may not realize that I am about to present to the Museum a gift whose value is at least \$5000...So you see I feel I have earned the privilege of requesting that I be permitted to send my prints in my sizes & when they are shown in Boston they be shown as I send them, that is without additional mats—unless the prints are in the museums right they are worse than wrong. This work of mine is really something new. I know that after 40 years of incessant(?) work – thought & great sacrifice. It is the beginning of photography as expression & not merely photographs or pictures in the “pictorial” sense...” (Alfred Stieglitz to AKC, December 31, 1923; Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art).

For a recent study on the relationship between Coomaraswamy and Stieglitz in the context of their shared aesthetic and political interests, see Nachiket Chanchani’s. “The Camera Work of Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy and Alfred Stieglitz.” *History of Photography*. 37.2 (2013): 204-220.

were accepted by the museum, and this was a watershed moment in the history of collecting photographs as art in the major American museums, a fact that Stieglitz himself remarked upon in 1929 in another letter to Coomaraswamy: “The Metropolitan Museum has opened its sacred halls to Photography—22 of my photographs have performed the miracle! I suppose Boston helped pave the way.”¹⁹⁹ Throughout his tenure at the museum, Coomaraswamy also gave gifts to the MFA.²⁰⁰ It was an eclectic range, for although some were South Asian pieces, Coomaraswamy’s gifts also included his

¹⁹⁹ (Alfred Stieglitz to AKC, December 30, 1929; Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

²⁰⁰ These would be gifts of textiles (1918), a Mughal drawing and his own drawing (1919), and engraving of *The Money Changers* by Eric Gill and a woodcut of *The Taking of Toll* which was made for their collaboration for the 1915 book *The Taking of Toll: Being the Dāna Lilā of Rājendra* (1920), fragments of pottery from Cairo (1921); a Chinese porcelain bowl and a Sinhalese woodcarving, two nineteenth century leaves from Madras, a landscape by P. Guigou (1922); an 18th century Sinhalese colored drawing, two fragments of Indian silk, and a bronze reproduction of Sundaramurti swami the original of which was in the Colombo museum (1923); design for a ring by C.P. Ashbee, two photographs of Stella Bloch and ‘Legong’ by AKC, mezzotint by J.J. Tissot, two pages of early printing, Afghani saddle cloth (1924); four textiles, cast from prehistoric Harappa and Mohenjodaro seals as well as a Gupta seal cast, waxed Javanese cloth, eight pieces of Indian ikat, sixteen Rajput paintings (1925); an 18th century Rajput painting, three Rajput drawings, a leaf from a 19th century Javanese Ramayana and two leaves from a 15th century Armenian manuscript, two casts from a coin of Kanishka, two Indian coins, (1926); three etchings by Mary J Coulter, two more coins, two etchings by Mukul Dey (1927); fragment of a sixteenth century Jain manuscript, Persian velvet, Persian brocade, fragment of 17th century Indian embroidery (1928); a seventeenth century Indian copper yantra, portrait of Ratan Devi by Dorothy M Larcher, two leaves of a Persian Koran, twenty six coins, (1929); three drawings by Maurice Sterne, a twentieth century Ceylonese lacquered box (1930); photograph of Tagore by Z. Llamas, miscellaneous coins, an American medal, an English medal, a fragment of Javanese batik, Indian brocade, Indian cotton, Indian embroidery, Malay silk, a photograph of Alfred Stieglitz by Z. Llamas (1931); studies by Stella Bloch and Ananda Coomaraswamy, and another drawing of Ratan Devi by Larcher (1932); Kusana votive terracotta, a figure study by A. Walkowitz (1933); an engraving by E. Gordon Craig, woodcut by John D. Ballen (1934); Paricharika by Asit Kumar Haldar and Seated Girl by Gogonendranath Tagore, four proofs from the New Testament by Eric Gill (1935); a Romanian blouse (1936); a Crouching bear drawing by Maurice Sterne, lithograph of a girl from Bali by Maurice Sterne, a woodcut by Walt Kuhn, a fragment of Indian painted cloth, (1937); wood engraving by Eric Gill. woodcut by E Gordon Craig (1938); woodcut by Eric Gill, Indian jewellery earring, woodcut by Eric Gill (1939); Japanese velvet, *Emblems* by Eric Gill, *The Lost Child and Other Stories* by Mulk Raj Anand (1940); Chinese shadow puppets, drawing and watercolour by Maurice Sterne (1942); silhouette drawing by James Ashbrook, Portrait of Alfred Stieglitz by Z. Llamas (1945), photographs by Zlata Llamas (1947).

own drawings²⁰¹, and works from friends and collaborators like Eric Gill, pieces of textiles, and photographs.²⁰²



Figure 100: John Ellerton Lodge (1878-1942) and a Ragamala folio (17th cent.) sold to the Freer by AKC

Coomaraswamy had a close relationship with museum curators and directors, and was particularly influential at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Freer Gallery, the latter which was headed by his colleague from the Museum of Fine Arts, John Ellerton Lodge. Lodge had been selected by Charles Lang Freer to head the gallery, and became its first Director. He had become an established and well-respected scholar of Chinese art

²⁰¹ In 1920, Coomaraswamy had an exhibition of his drawings at the Weyhe Gallery on Lexington Avenue, New York city, and was reported in the *American Art News*, Vol. 18, No. 20 (Mar. 6, 1920), pp. 1-10. He'd also had an exhibition of his photographs at Grace Horne Gallery in Boston in 1923. *The Art News* (1923-), Vol. 22, No. 10 (Dec. 15, 1923), pp. 1-12

²⁰² Since 1914, Coomaraswamy had also been giving gifts and selling works to the British Museum, and would continue to do so even when he was working at the MFA in Boston. These included some of his own drawings, but also Rajput paintings from his collection. In response to a Ragamala painting (1927,0223,0.1) given by Coomaraswamy to the British Museum in 1927. "This is a very handsome present: the painting will be a very valuable addition to our collection. I think of having an exhibition of Indian painting this summer, so it will be in time to adorn it." Laurence Binyon to AKC, 27 February 1927, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Papers; 1903-1970 (mostly 1930-1947), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

whilst at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and had maintained ties with Okakura and Coomaraswamy. As a consequence of his association with Lodge, the Freer Gallery made its first purchases of Indian art (after Freer's purchase of the Hanna collection) from Ananda Coomaraswamy. In 1923, this first purchase included a 15th century Jain manuscript of the Kalpa Sutra and Kalakacaryakatha, three Persian illustrated manuscript folios, and seven Rajput works, including a Malwa Ragamala and drawings from the famous Guler Nala-Damayanti series.²⁰³ While Boston received the bulk of the images from both these latter series in 1917, and Alvan C Eastman would produce a monograph on the Nala-Damayanti drawings in 1959, it was clear that Coomaraswamy had held onto several that would end up in museum collections including the Metropolitan Museum and the Cleveland Museum. Coomaraswamy would go on to sell paintings to the Freer until 1940, although the bulk of the purchases from him were made in the 1920s. Indeed, by 1924, the trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, were frowning upon Coomaraswamy's role in supplying other museums with potentially finer works, and saw this as a conflict of interest. Therefore, in a reply to a letter from Ross, Coomaraswamy wrote: "You will remember that I had full permission to dispose of the remainder of my collection, and in doing so I have only had to do with you and with one or two museums...I am quite willing, if this would be gratifying to yourself & other trustees to undertake to abandon all 'dealing', one year from Jan. 1 1924. I mention this limit because a museum is interested in a few things I still have and the matter cannot be

²⁰³ In 1923, he also sold a selection of books, primarily authored by him, to the Freer Gallery.

immediately gone into. This will in effect be a relinquishment of the privilege originally granted me.”²⁰⁴

Indian Art in America

Not long after his appointment at the MFA, Coomaraswamy wrote the introduction from the catalogue *Sculpture, Painting and Drawings of Ancient India* quoted at the start of this chapter. Hagop Kevorkian was a leading dealer of Islamic art and held the exhibition at his eponymous galleries in 1918. He had begun to source Indian works from Europe for a growing American market. Hailing it as a first of its kind, in his introduction to the exhibition, Coomaraswamy added that,

“The recent developments of Western art have made possible a far more serious appreciation of these works than could have been accorded twenty years ago...Behind a great traditional art are the ideas which constitute its true necessity...And so, as we said, the way has been made easy for an appreciation of an intellectual and lyrical art—the sculptured figure with its many arms, representing a synthetic and symphonic personality, and the painting that depends for its expression on linear rhythms and essential symbols, to the exclusion of preoccupation with the cast shadow and the modelling of masses. It is true that to fully understand the art of India, or any other art...demands of the modern industrialist, whose sense of the immediacy of the spirit is all too faint, a considerable effort: but it is also true that those that approach the unfamiliar art, even without an intellectual knowledge of its themes, if they will permit themselves to feel its moods, to yield to it as one yields to the moods of nature and of human and spiritual emotion, will find themselves at home.”

²⁰⁴ AKC to Denman Ross, August 2, 1924; Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art.

While few besides Coomaraswamy could argue so eloquently for the legitimate place for Indian art in American museums and cultural consciousness, his observations were also timely, for Indian objects began to also take their place in the market, in an unprecedented way. At about the same time as the exhibition, the Metropolitan Museum purchased an Indian sculpture from Kevorkian, which de Forest mentions in his letter to Culin from May 1918 quoted in Chapter 1. When Kevorkian, sourced the piece from an English collection that had it since about 1835, and offered it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art,²⁰⁵ Joseph Breck who was the Assistant Director at the time, accordingly turned to the one person in America who could be consulted on such matters – Ananda Coomaraswamy. Writing to Coomaraswamy, he observed, “As fine Indian sculpture comes so rarely on the market, I should say this was quite an opportunity. As I understand the exportation laws from Indian (sic) are very strict, it is hardly likely that much sculpture of this kind will be available...”²⁰⁶ Coomaraswamy sent an enthusiastic telegram in response endorsing the idea to purchase, later adding that “It is a very fine examples of its kind, but this kind is of course somewhat rococo or flamboyant, though it retains much that is very interesting. The two side figures, presumably Laksmi and Prthvi are quite charming, moreover. In any case it will always be difficult to acquire any large examples of Indian sculpture such as this, owing to the restriction in exportation to which you refer.”²⁰⁷ Brecker had also approached the Director’s brother Lockwood de Forest for advice. His telegraphic response was a little different, noting: “Fine Piece Price

²⁰⁵ “With regard to the India sculpture figure of \$15000, which I quoted is an extremely moderate valuation for a piece of this importance... You will appreciate in comparing with the prices of Asiatic art objects that the museum acquired during recent years, and that I would have charged considerably more for any other prospective purchases outside of the museum.” Metropolitan Museum Archives.

²⁰⁶ Metropolitan Museum Archives.

²⁰⁷ Ananda Coomaraswamy to Joseph Breck, February 18, 1918. [Object Record: 1918.41, Sculpture – Purchased; Far East – Indian, Kevorkian, 1918, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.]

Preposterous Do Not Buy If You Do You Destroy all possibility of getting anything reasonably There are hundreds of such stone carving in India if Museum wants some let me try other channels rather than dealers”²⁰⁸ While the Metropolitan bought the piece on the basis of Coomaraswamy’s endorsement, which was a major acquisition, like de Forest had predicted, it signaled the potential interests such work could now generate in the American market.²⁰⁹ Coomaraswamy’s also maintained mutually advantageous relationships with dealers, first with Kevorkian,²¹⁰ and later with Nasli Heeramanek as well.

²⁰⁸ Telegram from Lockwood de Forest to Joseph Breack, February 13, 1918. [Object Record: 1918.41, Sculpture – Purchased; Far East – Indian, Kevorkian, 1918, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.] By the time Lockwood de Forest sold his collection of Indian objects in 1922, his anxieties about the prices such pieces would fetch on the market seemed to be well founded. He ruefully wrote to Stewart Culin: “I almost wish now I have never collected at all as I have done but gone into a regular business to make as much out of it as I could as so many have done. Evidently the best place to get things cheap is here in New York. Mr. Jaehne bought the other day at one of the book sellers one of the most beautiful Indian manuscripts I have ever seen. There were 36 fine pictures, and some[?] 40 most wonderful pages with flowers painted on them. He has cut it all up, and taken the pictures out to frame separately which seems a terrible shame to me.” Lockwood de Forest to Stewart Culin, October 23rd 1922. Culin Gen. Correspondence 1.4. [037]

²⁰⁹ A few years later when R. Meyer-Riefstahl offered Coomaraswamy an 11inch tall Gupta period Boddhisattave head from the Anderson Galleries for \$5000, a handwritten note on the letter stated, “Dr. Ross says does not think warranted. Would rather look forward to sending Dr AKC again to India to buy(?) things for us at 1/3rd of the price.” (R.M. Riefstahl to AKC, May 16, 1922; MFA Archives)

²¹⁰ “I am at liberty to inform you that we recently purchased three out of a collection of 14 pieces of Indian sculpture offered for sale by Mr. J.P. Rawlings....It might well be worth your while to obtain the remainder for £200...In case you decide to take advantage of this opportunity it would be well to write or cable to Mr. Rawlins at once. We should assume that you would give us the first refusal of these pieces in case you obtain them. I hope you will also let us have the first refusal of the piece of Indian sculpture already in your possession...” AKC to H. Kevorkian, May 3, 1919; MFA Archives.

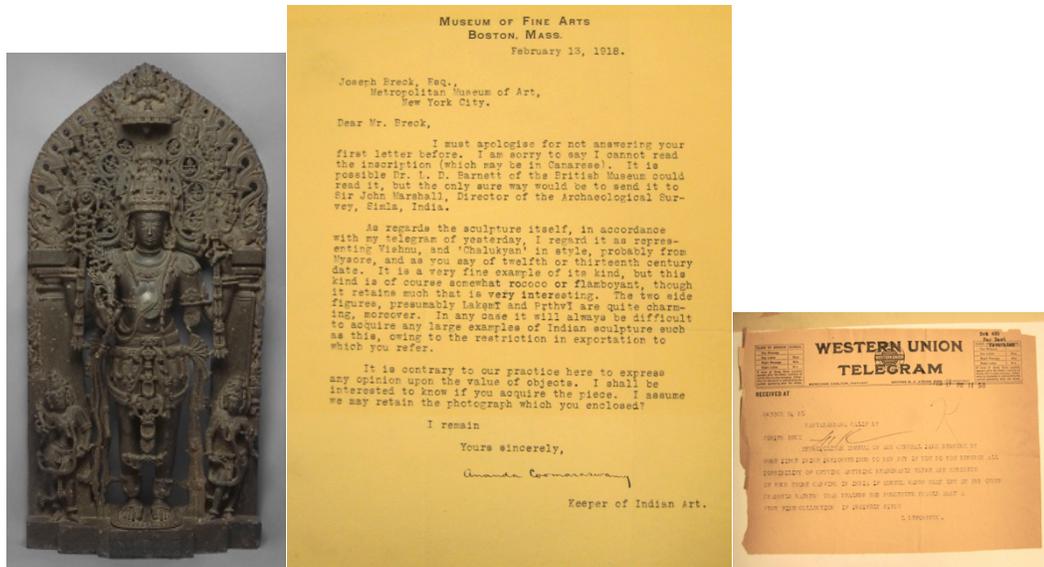


Figure 101: Vishnu Purchased by the Metropolitan Museum; Letter from AKC; Telegram from Lockwood de Forest

In 1918, the same year that Kevorkian had his exhibition, the Anderson Galleries in New York had a sale from the Rosenberg collection, which also including Mughal and Rajput paintings. Rudolph Meyer Riefstahl, who had emigrated to America after the war and held a professorship at the Institute of Fine Arts, regularly wrote introductions to the Anderson Gallery sales, which increasingly included Indian art. Writing in an early catalogue from 1921, Riefstahl observed: “For years India has served Western romantic ideas: for a long time the depth of Indian philosophy has had a creative influence on many Western minds. Of late where rail and aeroplane shorten the distances of the globe and where the economic life of all countries becomes more and more interlocked, the immense political and economic importance of a country of three hundred million inhabitants has impressed every thinking mind. Indian art, too, is arousing greater interest.”²¹¹ Riefstahl’s own growing interests in Indian art is evident from the extensive correspondence he maintained with Ananda Coomaraswamy through the 1930s. At the

²¹¹ Art from India and Persia – Anderson Galleries, 1921

Anderson Galleries alone there were sales containing Indian art every year through the 1920s, including collections of important European dealers such as Reza Khan Monif (1923, 1924), Kirkor Minassian (1925), Kouchakji Freres (1927), and of course Hagop Kevorkian (1922, 1925, 1926, 1927).

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|---|---|---|
| <p>SALE NUMBER 1354 ON PUBLIC EXHIBITION FROM APRIL 22</p> <p>AN ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE OF SELECTIONS FROM</p> <p>THE ALEXANDRE-ROSENBERG COLLECTION</p> <p>EARLY EGYPTIAN ART PRIMITIVE CHINESE BRONZES CUBIST PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES PERSIAN MINIATURE PAINTINGS</p> <p>TO BE SOLD ON FRIDAY EVENING, MAY THIRD, 1918, AT 8:15 O'CLOCK</p> <p>THE ANDERSON GALLERIES PARK AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET NEW YORK</p> |  <p>[530] INDIAN POTTERY VASE 17TH CENTURY</p> | <p>SALE NUMBER 1984 ON FREE PUBLIC EXHIBITION, FROM SATURDAY, MAY SEVENTH</p> <p>ART FROM INDIA AND PERSIA</p> <p>INCLUDING SIXTEENTH CENTURY PERSIAN RUGS BEING ADDITIONS TO THE CATALOGUE OF A WELL-KNOWN EUROPEAN CONNOISSEUR RECENTLY DELIVERED FROM THE CUSTOMS</p> <p>TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AFTERNOONS, MAY TWELFTH, THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH, AT TWO-THIRTY O'CLOCK</p> <p>THE ANDERSON GALLERIES [MITCHELL KENNERLEY, PRESIDENT] PARK AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK 1921</p> |
|  <p>MINIATURE, "HISTORY OF TIMUR" INDIA, LATE 16TH CENTURY [165]</p> | <p>SALE NUMBER 1812 ON FREE PUBLIC EXHIBITION FROM SUNDAY, FEBRUARY TWENTY-FOURTH</p> <p>THE COLLECTION OF THE LATE REIZA KHAN MONIF OF PARIS AND NEW YORK</p> <p>[PART TWO]</p> <p>WITH ADDITIONS FROM OTHER SOURCES</p> <p>PERSIAN AND INDIAN MINIATURE PAINTINGS OF THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES SYRIAN IRIDESCENT GLASS, NECKLACES AND OTHER JEWELRY</p> <p>A CHOICE SERIES OF PERSIAN POTTERIES INCLUDING A LARGE 13TH CENTURY RHAGES LUSTRE PLATTER</p> <p>IMPORTANT 16TH CENTURY ISPAHAN RUG RARE 17TH CENTURY EASTERN CAUCASIAN RUG DECORATIVE TEXTILES, ETC.</p> <p>TO BE SOLD BY ORDER OF HARLAN KHAN MONIF, EXECUTOR A. JOCKEY H. MAGRATH, ATTORNEY FRIDAY, SATURDAY AFTERNOONS FEBRUARY TWENTY-NINTH, MARCH FIRST AT TWO-THIRTY O'CLOCK</p> <p>THE ANDERSON GALLERIES [MITCHELL KENNERLEY, PRESIDENT] PARK AVENUE AND FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK 1924</p> | <p>LIQUIDATION SALE SALE NUMBER 2131 PUBLIC EXHIBITION FROM SUNDAY, JANUARY TWENTY-THIRD</p> <p>RAKKA, PERSIAN, RHODIAN, DAMASCUS, HISPANO-MORESQUE, FAIENCES; EGYPTIAN, PTOLEMAIC, ALEXANDRIAN, ROMAN, ARABIC, AND SYRIAN GLASS; PERSIAN AND INDIAN MINIATURES AND MANUSCRIPTS, GREEK AND ROMAN STATUARY, GOLD AND SILVER OBJECTS, PERSIAN RUGS AND OTHER OBJECTS OF RARITY</p> <p>THE COLLECTION OF KOUCHAKJI FRERES PARIS & NEW YORK</p> <p>TO BE SOLD BY THEIR ORDER AT UNRESERVED PUBLIC SALE TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS JANUARY TWENTY-FIFTH, TWENTY-SIXTH AT TWO O'CLOCK</p> <p>THE ANDERSON GALLERIES [MITCHELL KENNERLEY, PRESIDENT] 489 PARK AVENUE AT FIFTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK 1927</p> |

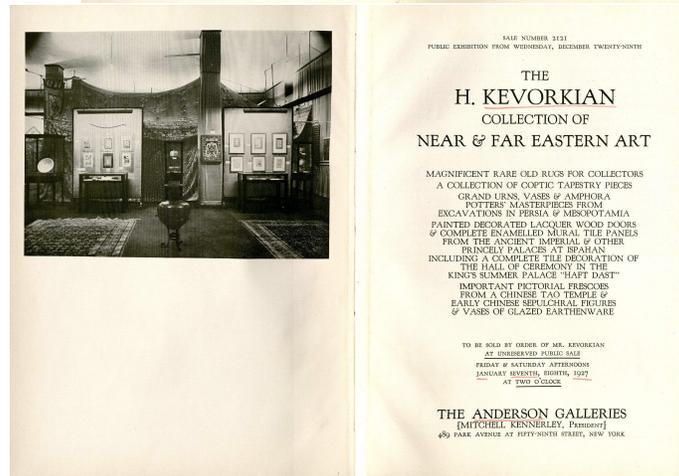
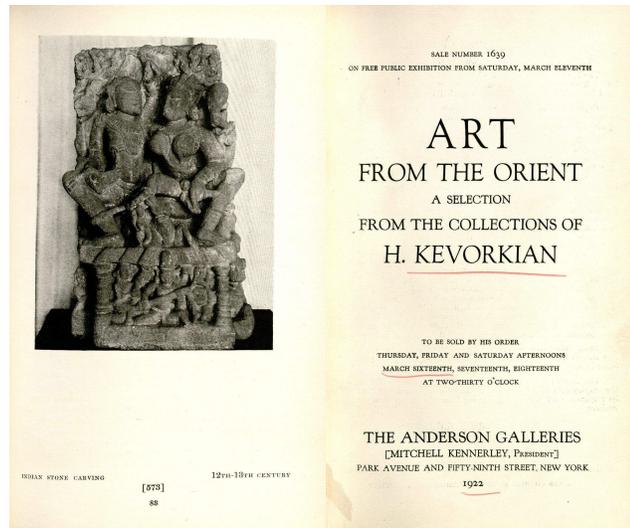


Figure 102: Exhibition and sale catalogues featuring Indian art held in New York through the 1920s

In 1928, Kevorkian held a sale of his collections at the American Art Association's galleries, and so in 1929, soon after his arrival in America, Nasli Heeramanek, the dealer who would dominate the next four decades of the supply of Indian art to the US, also chose to have his debut sale at the American Art Galleries. Once more hailed as the first of its kind, Heeramanek's exhibition at the American Art Galleries marked not only the development of the market for such work in America but also the maturation of interests in Indian objects as art among American collectors.

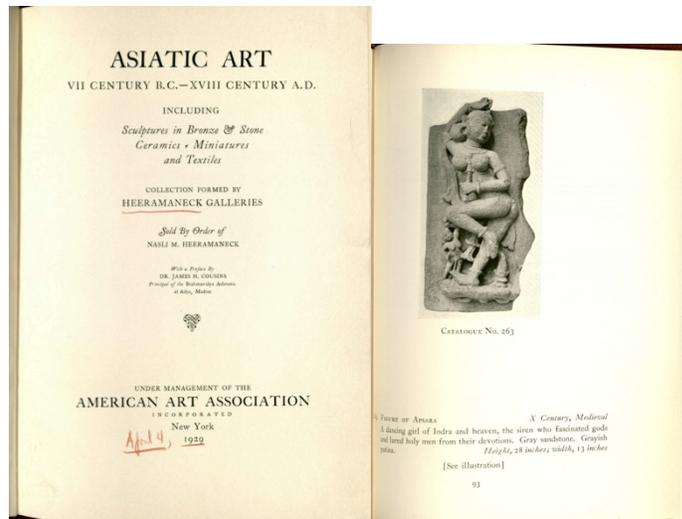


Figure 103: Nasli Heeramanek (left); Catalogue of the first Heeramanek sale held in 1929 in New York

Dealing in Indian art and curios was a family business, and Nasli Heeramanek first established a dealership in Delhi, very possibly even taking over Schwaiger's old business during World War – I,²¹² and later moved to Paris, where he had a business of Persian and Indian Antiquities in the mid 1920s. From there he had already begun to supply American collectors and museums, and correctly gauged that there was a growing interest there. As early as 1926, he contacted curators in America such as Stewart Culin, offering them pieces first as trial consignment and then more regularly for purchase depending on their needs. Culin had at first been interested in Indian textiles and so Heeramanek duly sent him some pieces, adding that “I have also communicated with my father who is in India to write direct to you, and to send you some of pieces [sic] of painted and printed cottons of which he has got a very fine collection...I should also be glad to know in what other Oriental objets d’art you are interested in as I have a large collection of Persian and Indian sculptures, brocades, embroideries, miniatures,

²¹² There is a tantalizingly brief mention of Heeramanek taking over Schwaiger's old shop in Delhi in *The Tribune*, Aug 2, 1917 in an article titled “Daring Burglary in Delhi”, which opens with “A daring burglary was committed on Saturday night at the shop of Mr. Heera Manack, the curio dealer at Kashmiri Gate....It formerly belonged to Mr. Imre Schwaiger and latterly to Messrs. Ganeshi Lal & Co.”

woodcarvings, velvets and carpets of great antiquity, and if any of these are of special interest to you I shall be very glad to send photographs.”²¹³ Following this initial contact, Culin and Heeramanek developed a regular business relationship with the latter providing the former with pieces of Indian textiles, handprinted and painted. Quickly realizing that greater potential lay on the other side of the Atlantic, within a year, Heeramanek relocated to New York. “He turned the [Paris] gallery over to his brother and came to New York with \$75 in cash in his pocket and a fortune in treasures in a trunk”²¹⁴

From all the correspondence available, it is evident Coomaraswamy played a mentoring role to Nasli Heeramanek, encouraged his business, often consigning works to the latter to sell. At the 1929 American Art Association sale, he “got Coomaraswamy to give a lecture on Indian art at the auction because nobody knew about Indian art then.”²¹⁵ From 1928 Nasli Heeramanek began giving gifts to the MFA Boston, beginning with a small terra cotta capital from the 2nd century BC in 1928, steadily through the early 1930s until 1938. Besides keeping works from Coomaraswamy on consignment at his gallery, Heeramanek would also occasionally gift works to Coomaraswamy himself.²¹⁶ It is significant but not at all surprising that when the College Art Association approached him in March of 1935 to organize a circulating exhibition of

²¹³ Heeramanek to Culin, September 30, 1926; Asian 4.1.002

²¹⁴ Russell Lynes and N. M. Bodecker, “After Hours - Bonanza for Boston,” *Harper's Magazine*, February 1, 1967, 23,

<http://search.proquest.com.proxy.library.cornell.edu/pao/docview/1301535196/citation?accountid=10267>.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

²¹⁶ “Do you remember the Mathura red sandstone sculpture I have here with the figure of Laksmi (I believe you have a photograph of this piece), would you do me a favour by kindly accepting it for your private collection.” (Nasli Heeramanek to AKC, June 9th, 1930; MFA Archives).

Indian art, he evidently handed over greater responsibility to Nasli Heeramaneck.²¹⁷ For while Coomaraswamy wrote the introduction to the catalogue and no doubt his connections and influence were used to secure some loans, the exhibition was largely assembled by Nasli Heeramaneck, drawing predominantly from works in his own collection and was first held at the Heeramaneck Galleries in New York, later traveling to the M. H. de Young Museum in San Francisco.²¹⁸

The Introduction, which was later reprinted in the same year in the CAA publication *Parnassus* as an article entitled “An Approach to Indian Art” was written by Coomaraswamy. The essay was divided into two sections – one titled “Principles” and the other “History”, exemplifies the maturation of understandings of Indian art in America in the 1930s.

“It has often been emphasized that “Asia is one”. This should be understood both geographically and historically. To enunciate the principles of Indian art is to enunciate the essentials of artistic expression in Asia, as these have been preserved in an unbroken continuity from the stone age until very recent times. It is less often realized that with only two exceptions, viz. that of the classical decadence and that of the modern (post-

²¹⁷ “When you were in my office recently I forgot to speak to you in regard to an exhibition of Indian Art which we are interested in circulating next season. Do you think that such an exhibition is practical and that it can be assembled from the various dealers and a few private collectors....Would you be willing to indicate to us what material should be used and to allow us to write letters in your name in order that only good material might be secured, and would you prepare a brief foreword for the catalogue.” (Audrey McMahon, Director Travelling Exhibitions, CAA to AKC, March 5, 1935; AKC Papers, MFA Archives) “Is this use of your name in order in connection with the exhibition of East Indian Art which we are planning? “An exhibition of approximately 100 rare and fine examples of Hindoo, Buddhistic and Jain Art including bronze, stone sculpture, wood carvings, and paintings, from the 1st and 2nd Centuries BC to the XVIIIth Century AD. This exhibition, organized to fill two museum galleries, is collected from various sources and assembled by Mr. Nasli M. Heeramaneck with the assistance of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy.” (Audrey McMahon, Director Travelling Exhibitions, CAA to AKC, April 15, 1935; AKC Papers, MFA Archives)

²¹⁸ Other lenders to the exhibition included museums: the Buffalo Art Academy and Albright Art Gallery, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Pennsylvania Museum of Art, the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and the Worcester Art Museum, besides a few individuals like W. Norman Brown, Philip Hofer and Coomaraswamy himself.

mediaeval) period, one and the same view of the nature and significant of “art” has prevailed throughout the world. It is only because we ourselves are of and inured to one of the irregular phases of civilization referred to above, that what in a larger view may be described as normal to humanity, and is exemplified equally in mediaeval Christian and in Hindu art, appears to us either enigmatic or arbitrary.”²¹⁹

Once again Coomaraswamy was evoking the place of India within the larger sphere of Asia as imagined by Okakura three decades earlier. By this stage, he had not only managed to secure a place for Indian art at the MFA, within its larger program for Asian art, but had been tireless in his writing on the subject – having produced the exhaustive catalogues of its collections.²²⁰

Later that year, in the wake of the exhibition, W. Norman Brown, professor of Sanskrit at the University of Pennsylvania and curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, published an article in *Parnassus* on the exhibition titled “Indian Art in America.” In it, Brown wrote: “With but one distinguished exception there is no city in America where it is possible to get a complete conspectus of Indian art. The one exception is Boston, where the Museum of Fine Arts, with the guidance of Dr. Coomaraswamy, has assembled a collection of Indian art that is one of the world’s foremost...As a rule our museums represent India by a few scattered pieces, frequently less in number than those from other countries, like China, which had much intellectual and even artistic fertilization from India. Where Indian pieces are present, they are often Indo-Hellenistic Gandharan

²¹⁹ College Art Association of America, Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, and Nasli M Heeramaneck, *Loan Exhibition of Early Indian Sculpture, Paintings and Bronzes*; (New York: Edwards Printing Co., 1935), 3.

²²⁰ While Coomaraswamy was working on cataloguing the MFA’s holdings, and the Museum issued a special “Portfolio of Indian Art” with a hundred objects from the museum’s collections (104 in monochrome and 4 in color). It was priced at \$35. “Portfolio of Indian Art,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 21, no. 126 (August 1, 1923): 54, doi:10.2307/4169869.

sculpture or Indo-Muhammandan miniature paintings, and these are not the most characteristic Indian sculpture and painting, and in the opinion of many modern students not the best... The College Art Association, with the generous cooperation of museums and private collectors, has arranged an exhibition with the aim of illustrating Indian art in its “pure” state, that is, Indian art of periods and styles in which the component elements of the art are either Indian in origin, or if originally from outside, have been so well assimilated that any foreign feeling has been lost and in most cases is to be detected only by exact and laborious scholarship.”²²¹

In this understanding of “pure” Indian art that Coomaraswamy and Heeramanek espoused, their selection of objects for the exhibition included neither Gandharan sculpture nor Mughal paintings, only somewhat dismissively referring to them in passing.²²² In an exhibition from the previous year, also held at the Heeramanek Galleries, and whose catalog introduction was written by Alvan C Eastman, although Mughal paintings were included, they were not discussed at length and certainly not as much as the Rajput paintings. In the affirmation of the centrality of religion to Indian art, the so-called “secular” nature of Mughal painting within a genealogy of Indian art was always hard for writers to reconcile, particularly in contexts where a comprehensive sweep of Indian art was being presented. Although from the period before Coomaraswamy’s arrival at the MFA, the museum already possessed a fine collection of

²²¹ W. Norman Brown, “Indian Art in America,” *Parnassus* 7, no. 6 (November 1935): 16–17, doi:10.2307/771152.

²²² “Hellenistic influence had resulted in the development of another Buddha type, equally Indian in iconography, but Western in feeling, that is to say illusionistic in intention, which the purely Indian art had never been,” and “The Mughal school of painting is closely related to the Rajput, but secular and historical in its interests, and stylistically eclectic, uniting Persian, Indian and European elements. Examples of Indian Muhammedan art are not included in the exhibition.” College Art Association of America, Coomaraswamy, and Heeramanek, *Loan Exhibition of Early Indian Sculpture, Paintings and Bronzes*; 5–6.

Mughal paintings, through the Goloubew purchase, Coomaraswamy's own collection did not significantly add to such paintings.²²³

If the “secular” was deemed inauthentic, so too was the “hybrid” and Gandharan works were deemed to be such. Under Coomaraswamy, the MFA did not typically purchase Gandharan works, noting once that “Our own policy in connection with Gandharan art has been to have only a few good examples, feeling that its hybrid character is uninteresting.”²²⁴ Coomaraswamy had participated in the reigning debates on the origin of the Buddha image, where the primacy for the development for the anthropomorphic form of the Buddha image between the Mathura and Gandhara schools were at stake, with the Mathura being considered more a result of Indian aesthetic ideals and being the precursor for later Gupta art.²²⁵

Conclusion

By the 1930s, largely thanks to the strategic efforts of Coomaraswamy, Indian art had secured a place in American art museums. Building upon the preexisting interests in

²²³ In 1922, Coomaraswamy also became the Keeper of Muhammadan Art, and so became in charge of the earlier Denman Ross purchases as well as the Goloubew collection, on which he published a catalogue. Coomaraswamy had known Goloubew personally, and from at least 1913 the two had corresponded, and Coomaraswamy had keep Goloubew abreast on his latest publications – a postcard in the Princeton University Library Archives from Goloubew

²²⁴ AKC to Charles R. Rogers, Assistant Director, Baltimore Museum of Art, June 19, 1939 (MFA Archives) Rogers had been advised by J.E. Lodge to approach Coomaraswamy for an opinion on a set of Gandharan objects his museum was interested in purchasing, to which Coomaraswamy in his reply noted “The set of Gandhara photos represents a good series of types and might be desirable as a whole if you are chiefly interested in the historical point of view. It seems to me that only nos. L1, L2 are really of good quality. If you want types you might consider all, depending on the price whih out not to be excessive. Kevorkian has some fine pieces, perhaps you know them.”

²²⁵ Refer to the debates on the Origin of the Buddha Image vs. Foucher's “The Greek Origin of the Buddha Image” – see summary in Ashley Thompson's “In the Absence of the Buddha: “Aniconism” and the Contentions of Buddhist Art History” in Rebecca M Brown and Deborah S Hutton, *A Companion to Asian Art and Architecture* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/book/10.1002/9781444396355>.

Asian art, he had successfully argued for the legitimacy of Indian objects, and through the 1920s increasing interest and demand had led to the steady supply of such art from India, either directly or via Europe. He had fostered interest in Indian art among museum curators, at the same time as the role of art in the study of Indian culture was being increasingly appreciated by American scholars such as W. Norman Brown, with whom Coomaraswamy maintained a collegial relationship. Among the individuals in India, Europe or America, who were keenly interested in Indian art, whether as scholars, connoisseurs, collectors, or dealers, Coomaraswamy's reputation was well established. As more players entered the field, and as his interests in the latter years of his life turned away from art and towards philosophy, Chapter 3 will examine the manner in which some of the seminal contributions made by Coomaraswamy would have a lasting legacy, and how the next generation of scholars and collectors, steered American interests in Indian art in selective ways.

Chapter 3: The 'Indianness' of Art

By the 1930s, American art museums and museum curators had increasingly come to accept Indian paintings and sculpture as fine art and were making occasional purchases for their collections. Ananda Coomaraswamy had played no little role in this process, providing information on the necessary historical and aesthetic contextual information on objects. As seen in Chapter 2, he had strategically presented the place of Indian art as a natural continuation of existing interests in Asian Art, particularly at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Indian art had also begun to enter the art market, and there was sufficient interest to warrant the arrival of Nasli Heeramaneck, a dealer with a focus on Indian art, in New York. But by far it was Coomaraswamy had set the stage for the appreciation and organization of Indian art within the American museum and beyond. The following chapter will examine the effects of his contributions, including his writings particularly *The Dance of Shiva* (1918), and relationships that would contour the field of Indian art in particular ways. Although the 1930s and 1940s were generally not a period of expanding museum collections in America on account of the Great Depression and then World War II, nevertheless, it was a formative period for scholars and collectors in India, many who reached out to Coomaraswamy, including Stella Kramrisch. After the war, it would be Kramrisch who would come to America and bring her collection of sculpture with her, at a time when Indian sculpture was being designated as the ultimate expression of Indian art. Indian sculpture would also be a particular interest of John D Rockefeller 3rd who formed a collection of Indian art as part of his larger Asian art collections.

The Dance of Siva: Establishing an Icon

As part of his duties at the MFA, Coomaraswamy regularly contributed articles to the *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, typically on the museum's collections and more generally on the field of Indian art. Where in England he had contributed articles to *The Burlington Magazine*, in America, the venue became the *MFA Bulletin* and latterly, *Parnassus*, the publication of the College Art Association. In 1925 he published a *Bibliography of Indian Art*, and the museum bulletin noted that "For the study of Indian Art this Bibliography of books selected by an authority on the subject is invaluable. The attention of scholars in Europe and America has only been turned seriously towards India in comparatively recent years, and the wealth of artistic and historical material now opened up has created great interest in the distinctive character and traditions of Indian Art."²²⁶ Given the readership of these publications, these articles on Indian art would tend to be of an introductory nature, but nonetheless served to lay out some of the specific contours to Coomaraswamy's own scholarship, including his biases towards Rajput painting and away from Mughal painting.²²⁷

²²⁶ "Notes," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 23, no. 139 (October 1, 1925): 64, doi:10.2307/4169966.

²²⁷ In 1918 in "Mughal Painting (Akbar and Jahangir)" he writes, "But Mughal art is really finished by the middle of eighteenth century, and all that remains of it now is the Delhi trade in ivory miniatures, the productions of which, for the student of art, are entirely negligible, though they satisfy the somewhat romantic taste of the tourist" A. K. C., "Mughal Painting (Akbar and Jahangir)," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 16, no. 93 (February 1, 1918): 8, doi:10.2307/4169650.. In a subsequent issue of the bulletin he would write an article on "Rajput Painting" noting that "Mughal painting as pointed out in a previous number of the Bulletin, represents merely a brilliant episode in the history of Indian art, and, in its realistic and secular preoccupations is remote from Hindu feeling, the painting known as Rajput, that is to say, the essentially Hindu art of Rajputana and the Panjab Himalayas had deep roots in the permanent ground of epic tradition devotional faiths and the common life." A. K. C., "Rajput Painting," *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 16, no. 96 (August 1, 1918): 49, doi:10.2307/4169664..

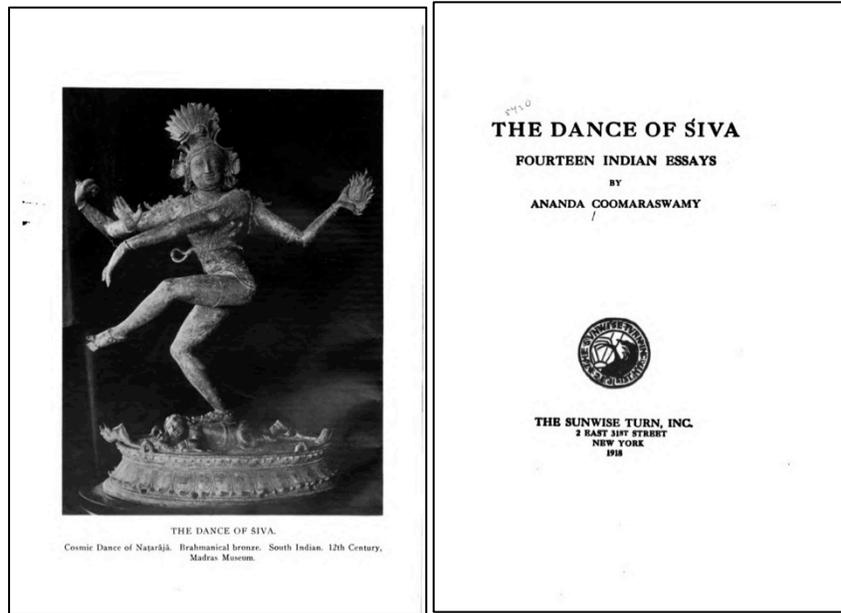


Figure 104: Frontispiece and Title page of *The Dance of Siva* (1918) by Ananda Coomaraswamy

In 1918, he published what would be his most popular book, *The Dance of Siva* through Sunwise Turn. Although the book included a number of essays on Indian culture, it was the essay on the dance forms of Shiva and particularly the elevation of the Shiva Nataraja that ended up having the most enduring impact.²²⁸ In it, he wrote: “This dance of Siva in Chidambaram or Tillai forms the motif of the South Indian copper images of Ari Nataraja, the Lord of the Dance. These images vary amongst themselves in minor details, but all express one fundamental conception.”²²⁹ Although the better part of the essay was spent working through textual sources, it was towards the end that Coomaraswamy finally spoke of the artistic implications of this literary form with frank admiration,

“So far I have refrained from all aesthetic criticism and have endeavoured only to translate the central thought of the conception of Siva’s dance from plastic to verbal

²²⁸ The essay the Dance of Siva was first published in *Siddhanta Dipika*, Madras, XII 1911, however the essay received much wider readership when it was included in the 1918 volume.

²²⁹ Ananda Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Shiva : Fourteen Indian Essays*, Rev. ed. (New York: Noonday Press, 1957), 58.

expression, without reference to the beauty or imperfection of individual works. But it may not be out of place to call attention to the grandeur of this conception itself has a synthesis of science, religion and art. How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who first conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality, a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, not merely satisfactory to a single clique or race, nor acceptable to the thinkers of one century only, but universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover, and the artist of all ages and all countries. How supremely great in power and grace this dancing image must appear to all those who have striven in plastic forms to give expression to their intuition of Life!”²³⁰

Along with subsequent articles that Coomaraswamy wrote on the subject of Siva sculptures, through his elegant prose, he elevated the position of the Siva Nataraja form from one tied to specific practices to an ultimate universal object of aesthetic contemplation. As a consequence his opinion on the subject became primary among American collectors, buyers and museums. Time and again his opinion on specific objects would be sought,²³¹ and his replies tended to be terse and to the point restating

²³⁰ Ibid., 66.

²³¹ On his return from a purchasing trip to India in 1921, Coomaraswamy and J.E. Lodge would give informal talks on Asiatic Art at a museum series called Wednesday conferences. It is likely that they began to know one another more closely at this stage, which would be important for the collaboration between the two men, particularly with regards to Lodge seeking advice from Coomaraswamy on matters of Indian art purchase for the Freer Gallery of which he became the first Director, including an instance of the prospective purchase of a Shiva Nataraja. “Thank you very much for your comment on the dancing Siva. I thought so highly of it myself that I was afraid of being misled by the enthusiasm of my inexperience, and so made bold to bother you about it. I think of it as dating from 1500, a suggestion with which you seem to agree. Graceful, delicate, and proficient as the execution is, I should say that the artist has avoided mushiness and mere virtuosity pretty successful. I rather wish it were not so large; but I think I shall have it sent to the Gallery for examination, in any case, and shall let you know when it comes, just on the change that you may care to see it too.” J.E. Lodge to AKC, April 18th, 1935. (MFA Archives)
When Walter H. Siple, Director of the Cincinnati Art Museum wrote to him asking for more information about a Dancing Siva figure his museum had been given as a gift, Coomaraswamy responded collegially in full, “You doubtless know the description of the type in our Catalogue of the Indian Collections, Part 2, Sculpture. The only peculiarity that I see in your example is that there is no sign of its having been provided with the usual halo.

that in his capacity at the museum he was not in a position to make valuations,²³² although he would at times recommend that prospective sellers looked at the prices fetched at contemporary exhibitions such as those held at the Heeramaneck or other New York galleries.²³³ Nevertheless, as a consequence of Coomaraswamy's persuasive and powerful writings on the subject of the Shiva Nataraja, it became sought out in great numbers by collectors and museums as a key piece in any Indian art collection. In 1928, C.T. Loo, the Paris-based dealer in Chinese art, held an exhibition and sale at the John Levy Galleries in New York, and although it was ostensibly an exhibition of Khmer, Javanese and Chinese works of art, nevertheless the chief feature of the exhibition was a Dancing Shiva.²³⁴ The Shiva Nataraja was once again a prominent feature of his 1935

Dating of these bronzes is a matter of great difficulty. As Hadaway often pointed out to me, bronzes true to type and almost of the finest quality are still made for use in Southern India. Our own examples are not very early, the probably exception of one seated figure and a recently acquired group. The Freer Gallery Parvati is, I think, quite early. The principle distinction lies in a certain fullness, and so to speak, more blooming and fruity quality in the early examples, and greater sharpness and linear quality in the later. Something can also be deduced from patination. Your example does not seem to have been buried. I see no reason to be sure that it is earlier than the nineteenth century. You must bear in mind that I am saying this only on the basis of the photographs." AKC to Walter H. Siple, October 9, 1940 (MFA Archives)

²³² Some even solicited his stamp of approval for individual pieces, to which Coomaraswamy hotly replied in some indignation "Our duty and responsibility begins and ends with giving to any enquirer our opinion as to the nature, age, provenance, etc of an object submitted... In writing articles I am under no obligation to mention any particular piece. I certainly cannot undertake to "recommend" to anyone the purchase of any particular piece they may be considering..." (AKC to C.M. Brown, May 19, 1941; MFA Archives)

²³³ For example, in an exchange with Edith V. Cockcroft after persistent emails, he finally responded in the following terms: "Regarding you [sic] Persian paintings of the 19th century. Please see article by D.B. "Persia of Fatha 'Ali Shah, A.D.18223" in the Art News for Jan 15-31 1943. Valentine's [a New York gallery] is 55 East 57th St. You could go there and see what prices they are asking. Some pictures of the same school were recently sold at The Parke-Benet Galleries (Jan.28), (30 East 57th). You might also consult Mr. Heeramaneck at 724 Fifth Avenue, 12th Floor who could perhaps keep them on sale for you..." (AKC to E.V. Cockcroft, February 12, 1943; MFA Archives)

²³⁴ "It is about the same period and quality as your [sic], but, like the one in Boston, lacks the nimbus of flame. I did not ask the price, but I am sure it is high enough. There is a very pressing demand for these images at the moment and it has been augmented by the article in the International Studio, which Mr. Loo showed me. The Musée Guimet is now discarding the one of which they have been so proud and have procured or are procuring another. No specimen exists in Germany nor in any European Museum. I have photographs now of the one in the India Museum and it is later and inferior to yours. The one in the Pennsylvania Museum does not count. Loo sold the University Museum the two Chinese stone horses that are such a distinguished feature of its exhibit. He sold it also the two great winged lions. As I have said I think we should now acquire large monumental objects for our Oriental department, concentrating upon a

exhibition *Exposition de Sculpture et Bronze Ancien de l'Inde* in Paris. Indeed, this tendency would persist throughout the century, with museums seeking to purchase Shiva Natarajas, particularly the Chola bronze kind that Coomaraswamy had specifically described the symbolism of in such laudatory terms.



Figure 105: *Exposition de Sculptures et Bronzes Anciens de l'Inde* (1935) at C.T. Loo's galleries in Paris highlighting the Shiva Nataraja

Stewart Culin had encountered the image of the Dancing Siva during his expedition to India in 1914 first at the Colombo Museum and then again in the Madras Museum.²³⁵ It was the Dancing Siva from the Madras Museum in fact that would be the frontispiece to Coomaraswamy's volume. Coomaraswamy had himself nudged a Madras-based collector, towards Culin, and it was through this contact that the Brooklyn Museum secured an

small number and securing only things of high importance and preferably those which are not perishable.” (Culin to Babbott, Jan 23, 1928, Culin Gen. Correspondence, 1.4.151)

²³⁵ “After this he accompanied me to the upper gallery of the museum building opposite the Library, in the upper hall of which I found a long series of South Indian bronzes. The beauty of these objects made a strong appeal to me. Among them are two figures of the dancing Siva, similar to those in the Museum at Colombo.” (p.202, Culin Diaries)

image of a Siva Nataraja as well.²³⁶ The image's arrival in the US was greatly anticipated and even featured in a newspaper article,²³⁷ and in the summer of 1927, Stewart Culin wrote to the Brooklyn Museum trustee Frank L. Babbott: "I was greatly excited when the two Hindus in Paris [Heeramaneks] from whom I have been buying old painted Indian cottons told me that Mr. [C.T.] Loo, the Chinese dealer in works of art, who comes to New York has sold the Boston Museum of Fine Arts an image of the dancing Civa for \$5000. I saw it when I went to Boston where it is one the best things they have in the Museum although it has no nimbus and is in every respect inferior to the one you present to the Brooklyn Museum. The Heeramaneks told me this sale has stimulated greatly the interest in fine Indian bronzes and that orders for another have been received in India with no limitation of price. They knew nothing of your purchase and I said nothing."²³⁸

That the market was heating up for Indian objects followed the predictions that de Forest

²³⁶ The initial interest in the purchase of two ladles yielded an unexpected offer of some more substantial works by William S Hadaway, an American-born Madras based painter who worked at the Madras School of Art till his retirement in 1927. It was on account of his retirement that he was offering certain works from the collection he had made for sale: "I believe I wrote to you before that I had general articles for sale. The articles which may interest you particularly are as follows: 1. A "nataraja" image of the early 17th (or late 16th) century, 2. ft. 6 ½ " high. It is a good specimen and photographs are sent separately. The price is \$1500 (one thousand five hundred dollars); 2.- A set of eight Persian miniatures from a "Shahnama" ms....Mr. Victor Golonben [sic], whose collection of Persian paintings was sold to the Boston Museum a few years ago, examined my lot when here in Madras in October and described them as "very beautiful" work of about 1450 A.D. The price of eight pictures is \$1200...3. A ceremonial cap made of green beetle wings and gold tinsel which belonged to the Rajah of Tanjore. I purchased this last year when the sale of all the articles in the Tanjore Palace Museum took place. The price of this is \$50. These are the only very important things I have to sell..." (W.S. Hadaway to Culin, 28 December 1926). Culin jumped on the opportunity for such a purchase and managed to procure the Nataraja through the trustee Frank Babbott who gave it as a gift to the museum in 1927. (Acc. No 27.959)

²³⁷ "Brooklyn Museum to Receive Valued Statue from India", Feb 27, 1927 (Culin 4.1, Objects 4.1 [002] Asian)

²³⁸ (Culin Gen. Correspondence 1.4.141) In a letter to another patron of the museum Fredrick B. Pratt, he repeated the same, noting: "In Paris I learned from Heeramanek, the Indian dealer from whom I have been buying old Indian painted cottons, that the Boston Museum paid Loo \$5000 for the dancing Civa. It lacks the nimbus of flames and is inferior to ours. Heeramanek's father is a dealer in Bombay whom I met there in 1914. He writes [to] his sons many orders have come for Indian bronzes and expecially [sic] for a replica of the dancing Civa without limit of price. I find the one in the Musée Guimet, which is their chief Indian treasure, has been blackened and the patination destroyed. I was relieved to learn ours was shipped." (Culin Gen. Correspondence. 1.4.141)

had made almost 10 years prior, with regards to the Visnu offered by Kevorkian to the Metropolitan mentioned in Chapter 2. Moreover Indian objects were of interest to dealers such as C.T. Loo as well who had been selling Indian sculpture (primarily Graeco-Buddhist) in order to establish the links between classical Greek sculpture and ancient Chinese sculpture.²³⁹

With the Ross and Coomaraswamy collections, the MFA's collections of Indian paintings were among the strongest in America, and therefore the museum sought to strengthen its collections in sculpture. In the middle of 1920 therefore, Coomaraswamy was given leave by the museum to visit Japan, Java and India in the interest of the Museum, to study and also to significantly build the Indian art holdings of the museum since prices were still reasonable. The opportunism in the wake of post-war conditions that had been the impetus for Okakura's buying trip to China several years prior, was once again the reason argued by Coomaraswamy in a letter to Arthur Fairbanks, the Director of the MFA. "With reference to the proposed Indian tour on behalf of the Museum, the principal arguments for going this year include the advantage to be gained by going immediately after a period when tourists and collectors have not been visiting the country for some time, and the possibility of antiquities coming on the market owing to the economic distress now unfortunately widely prevalent there. No doubt, sooner or later, other American museums will endeavor to build up their collections, and it may assumed that prices are rising every year."²⁴⁰ Accordingly, referencing the pioneering role in representing the art of India in America, the MFA set aside \$15000 for purchases,

²³⁹ Yiyou Wang, "The Louvre from China: A Critical Study of C. T. Loo and the Framing of Chinese Art in the United States, 1915-1950" 2007, 129-132.

²⁴⁰ AKC to Arthur Fairbanks, June 21, 1919; MFA Archives.

as it was deemed “very desirable...that the Indian collections in the Museum should be extended as far as possible while this can still be done at a reasonable cost. Examples of stone or wooden sculpture, architectural woodwork, early south Indian metal work, especially the Saiva bronzes, Orissan painted book covers, South Indian painting, and early metal figures generally are still much to be desired.”²⁴¹ The emphasis on sculpture would be borne out by Coomaraswamy’s subsequent purchases, for it was a fruitful trip, and Coomaraswamy gleefully recounted his successes in letters to Arthur Fairbanks.²⁴² On his return, a Special Exhibition of recent additions to the Collections of Indian Art, took place in the Japanese Rotunda of the MFA in 1922. This list of acquisitions, accessioned in 1921, also included gifts from the Government Museum, Madras of wood carvings and reliefs from the Amravati stupa which were the oldest pieces in the museum’s collections.²⁴³ These gifts were enabled by F.H. Gravely who was the Superintendent of the Government Museum, Madras at the time. Coomaraswamy wrote focus articles on acquisitions from this trip (“Saiva Sculpture”, “Jaina Sculpture”, “Buddhist Sculpture” (1922), and also wrote an article on the recent acquisitions, including one detailing the purchase of a fragment of an Ajanta fresco from a Sotheby’s sale of 1921, which the Museum bought during Coomaraswamy’s trip.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ Boston Museum of Fine Arts, “Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.,” *Annual Report of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston.*, 1876.

²⁴² “I have the most excellent news to send you. In the first place I have secured a magnificent series of South Indian bronzes from a private collection, for Rs.12000, and this will explain my cable asking for \$2000 additional funds...Further, I have secured from the Government Museum, Madras, a magnificent collection of Amaravati reliefs, some decorative, and some with figures...All these I have obtained as a free gift...” AKC to Arthur Fairbanks, April 3, 1921; Directors’ correspondence, 1901-1954, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston records, 1870-1973, Archives of American Art)

²⁴³ “Exhibition of Recent Acquisitions of Indian Art,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 20, no. 117 (February 1, 1922): 8, doi:10.2307/4169802.

²⁴⁴ Ananda Coomaraswamy, “Recent Acquisitions of the Department of Indian Art,” *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 20, no. 122 (December 1, 1922): 71, doi:10.2307/4169840.

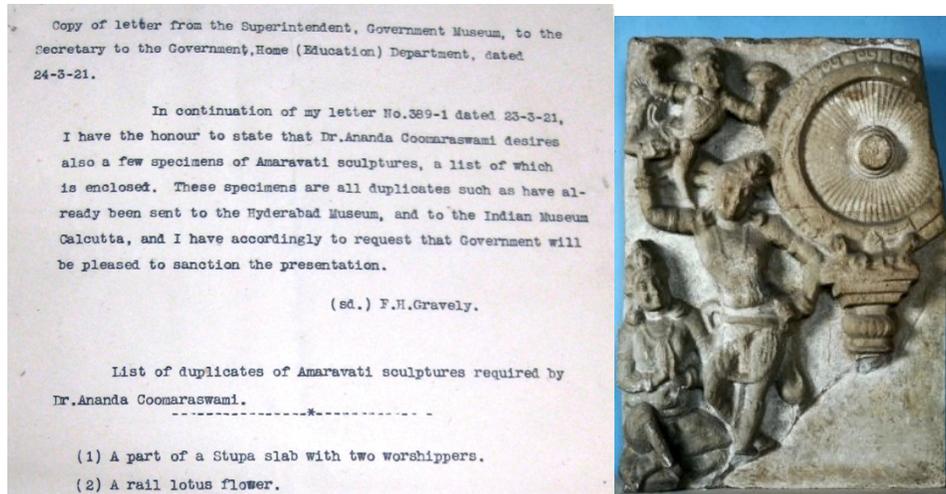


Figure 106: Letter from F.H. Gravely to Ananda Coomaraswamy regarding the gift of the Amaravati stupa pieces (left); railing piece from the stupa, now at the MFA (right)

Cataloguing the MFA’s growing collections of Indian art was another monumental task that Coomaraswamy had begun work on from the time of his appointment. In 1923, the first volume of the four volume catalogue of the MFA Collections, on sculpture was also published by Coomaraswamy.²⁴⁵ This was followed by volumes on Jain paintings, Rajput paintings, and finally the last volume on Mughal painting in 1930. The process of cataloguing the collections and researching the objects, gave him an encyclopedic knowledge of the arts of India, and allowed him to organize them along a historical timeline, but as his biographer Roger Lipsey noted, “he rarely used it tendentiously to argue a point, as he did so often in his younger days.”²⁴⁶ Lipsey went on to quote how scholars such as Norman Brown lamented the loss of these

²⁴⁵ Interestingly in a letter addressed to the Secretary of the Trustees of the MFA from E.B. Havell, now in the AKC Papers, MFA Archives, after acknowledging receipt of the volume Havell notes: “With regard to the two bibliographies printed in the Catalogue may I be permitted to point out that the most important of my own contributions to the literature of Indian art, viz. “Indian Sculpture & Painting” (Murray 1908) – which was the pioneer work on the subject and two volumes on Indian Architecture (by the same publisher) have been omitted from these two bibliographies which otherwise are fairly comprehensive.” (E.B. Havell to Secretary of the Trustees of the MFA, September 3, 1923; MFA Archives)

²⁴⁶ Coomaraswamy, Lipsey, and Bollingen Foundation Collection (Library of Congress), *Coomaraswamy*, 135.

interpretive leaps on Coomaraswamy's part, and his conformity to a positivist scholarship as exemplified in his later volume, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* of 1927. Indeed, it is likely that with the increased availability and visibility of Indian objects and the beginning of more scholarly investigations by a younger generation, some of the interpretive interventions that had characterized and been so compelling about Coomaraswamy's pioneering works could no longer be tenable. Coomaraswamy had always skillfully drawn upon literature to forward his ideas, and where initially he had used it to bolster arguments and substantiate his aesthetic interpretations,²⁴⁷ by the 1930s however Coomaraswamy was moving more towards philosophy, away from the specifics of Ceylonese, India or Indonesian art to the philosophical connections across geographies of the human condition. He would repeatedly return to his ideas on the connections between Mediaeval Christian and Indian art, and while it would most fully be articulated in the essay "The Christian and Oriental, or True, Philosophy of Art" in the 1943 volume *Why exhibit works of art?* (the book would later be reprinted as *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*), he had brought them up in *Transformation of Nature in Art* in 1934, in the chapter "Meister Eckhart's view of art", and even mentioned them in the opening paragraph of the slim catalogue that accompanied Heeramaneck's exhibition mentioned in Chapter 2.²⁴⁸ Yet even as his interest in art was waning, he kept abreast of the work of

²⁴⁷ "The art historian's métier, as he practiced it, extended beyond presenting visual art in a comprehensive way. Literature enjoyed equal credit with him; it was not a foreign matter to be used like a "trot" to understand otherwise incomprehensible iconography, but rather a highly honored, related artifact to be used and enjoyed concurrently with visual art." Ibid., 99.

²⁴⁸ In the same catalogue, he added: "The bridges to be crossed are not so long as might at first appear. The general end of art is man, and human nature itself, which "is in a manner all things", provides the essential basis for an understanding of all its varied manifestations. As to the objective beauty, there is a basis of agreement on fundamental, diversity belonging only to accident; once we have realized that our own idiosyncrasy is not an absolute standard but merely a specific modality, the very fact of variation reminds us of a norm in which all variation is implicit (just as many effects inhere in a single cause) and in which all are one. Tastes may differ, but that about which tastes differ remains unaltered in human nature. Similarly

the next generation of scholars, and in the light of John Marshall's rediscovery of Mohenjodaro in the 1930s, he conceded that his *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* published in 1927 was out of date.²⁴⁹ Moreover, in the list of extended references to the catalogue, besides his *Rajput Painting* and *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, Coomaraswamy also included W. Norman Brown's book *The Story of Kalaka* (1933) and Stella Kramrisch's *Indian Sculpture* (1935) both which focused on aspects of the pure Indian tradition of painting and sculpture respectively and were authored by scholars who would be key in the next phase of developing interest in Indian art in America. Yet, they were just two among the several scholars, curators and collectors from American, Europe and India that Coomaraswamy knew either personally or by letter, as is evidenced by his correspondence,²⁵⁰ and we have noted the close ties he maintained with museum directors such as J.E. Lodge and dealers such as Hagop Kevorkian and later Nasli Heeramaneck in Chapter 2.

as regards the communicated ideologies; all of these are variants or dialects of a common intellectual inheritance, and even the symbols employed in communication are identical or interchangeable, as may be illustrated by a conspicuous example, that of the rose and lotus, employed alike in Christian and Indian art and with the same significance, that is with reference to the **ground** of all being. And thus at last, those very differentiations which at first precluded sympathy become the means of mutual understanding, and being attracted by the specific beauties of one another's arts, the barriers of race and language are broken down." College Art Association of America, Coomaraswamy, and Heeramaneck, *Loan Exhibition of Early Indian Sculpture, Paintings and Bronzes*; 4.

²⁴⁹ "My "History..." is now of course out of date in some respects. Cf. Marshall's Mohenjodaro (ch. On religion etc.). My remarks, p.42, merely quote proof that the terminus a quo cannot be later than 2nd-3rd century B.C., while those on p.4 (taken together with recent finds, like the representation of Siva, in yoga pose, from Mohenjodaro) justify saying that anthropomorphic cult images of terracotta date back in India to 3000 B.C...." (AKC to Mr. Bailey, October 23, 1936; MFA Archives)

²⁵⁰ His reputation was such that he would not only get letters from scholars, collectors and dealers, but government officials would often approach him for advice on how to manage their works. An example of one such instance is when a member of the council for Kishangarh State, Kesari Singh, wrote to Coomaraswamy for advice in the matter of a "good stock of old paintings" that were "very useful and valuable and there is no idea at present of dealing with them in any way." Coomaraswamy in response noted that "The best thing would be for the State itself to publish an illustrated catalogue of the paintings... what is needed is good photographs. If a catalogue could not be published, at least some scholar might be asked to examine the collection and to publish examples in some such publication as the Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. I suggest you get in touch with either Dr. Stella Kramrisch... or Dr. Hermann Goetz." (AKC to Kesari Singh, April 1, 1940; MFA Archives)

Networks of Indian Art in the 1930s

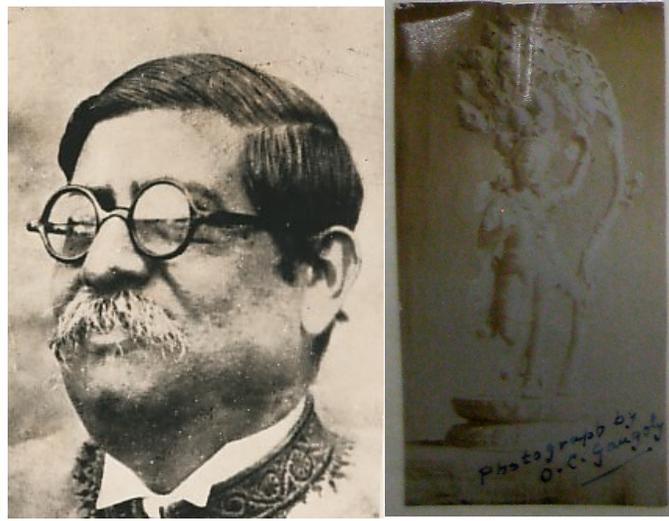


Figure 107: O.C. Gangoly (1881-1974) (left); photograph of piece offered by Gangoly to Coomaraswamy in 1919 (right)

Among Indians who were similarly interested in Indian art, Coomaraswamy was not only a renowned and respected figure, but being based in America, he was actively sought after. O.C. Gangoly (1881-1974) corresponded with Coomaraswamy extensively. He was a founder member of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, considered himself to be a scholar and a dealer, and had periodically offered works to Coomaraswamy for purchase by the MFA. He had established a reputation through the publication of *South Indian Bronzes* (1915) and subsequently brought out and edited the influential art journal *Rupam* in the 1920s in Calcutta. Through *Rupam* and the publication of monographs in the 1910s and 1920s he had been influential in the small world of Indian art. His scholarly and personal reputation however began to decline, and by the 1930s, letters between Coomaraswamy, Brown and others reveal a growing mistrust of him, and clearly he burnt several bridges,²⁵¹ Nevertheless, Gangoly wrote to Coomaraswamy practically

²⁵¹ As early as 1924, the Dutch art historian Herman Floris Eduard Visser opened his letter to Coomaraswamy with “Thank you very much for your short reply in the ‘O.C. Gangoly case’. Thus your

asking him for a job in America.²⁵² Even though initially there were some who bemoaned the cessation of *Rupam*, Gangoly himself was not thought of as fondly. In a telling letter to Coomaraswamy, the Bombay based collector B.N. Treasuryvala wrote “ “Rupam” is gone and my world is so much the gloomier for it! I hope some day it may re-appear. My friend Dr. Kramrisch’s new Journal can not replace Rupam!... Last year I secured 62 or 63 examples of Kangra Raginis red line drawings with slight touches and washes of white (priming). You have only one example in the Boston Museum. I regret I have no opportunity to publish my things in a proper manner. O.C.G may murder some fine examples by false chronology or something of the kind! So I don’t take chances”²⁵³

Although Treasuryvala was known more as a collector than a scholar, and had even given

name can be added to the numerous persons that have been shamefully treated by Mr. Gangoly, viz. M.Hackin, M.Pelliot, Dr. Bosch, Milles [Andrée] Karpéles etc.” (H.F.E.Visser to AKC, 2 March 1924; MFA Archives).

While negotiating for the purchase of some manuscript folios from Gangoly for the MFA, W. Norman Brown wrote to Coomaraswamy, “My name is being left out of the transaction entirely, for Gangoly and I are not on very good terms. [He has treated me very badly about an article I sent him at his urgent request for *Rupam*]. But I thought that if I could get the 10 or 12 folios he is said to be holding, I would do so within reason, providing the price is within reason. Would the MFA like them?” (W. Norman Brown to AKC, November 12, 1934; MFA Archives)

Several decades later, when writing a review article on the studies on Rajput Painting, M.S. Randhawa noted that Gangoly’s “*Masterpieces of Rajput Painting* (1926) contains a number of miniatures from the Punjab Hills, but as he had never visited that area and did not make an on-the-spot study, his ascriptions were in many cases fanciful and incorrect... Moreover, all his so-called masterpieces were not so, and his selection of paintings and their advertisement indicated a dealer’s mentality...” *Cultural Contours of India: Dr. Satya Prakash Felicitation Volume*, 1st ed (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1981), 297.

²⁵² “I have been seriously considering the possibility of devoting the rest of my life in an active service in the cause of Indian art. I would prefer to join some Museum in the States as Assistant Curator of the Department of Oriental Art. Could you help me to join any such institution. Is it not possible to take me in as your Assistant in your own Museum. Various other museums are gradually developing their Eastern Section. My work is fairly well known to most of the American Museums, and I can claim to have fairly first-hand knowledge of all the monuments of India and Indonesia having studied them by repeated visits to the ancient sites. I have also a good knowledge of Sanskrit, Prakrit and Hindi Literature and have access to the original sources of informations (sic) bearing on the history of Indian Art.” (O.C. Gangoly to AKC, 30th January 1939; MFA Archives)

²⁵³ The same letter from Treasuryvala who was an avid collector of Pahari paintings, included a lengthy description of a Kangra painting in his possession of Krishna dressed in Radha’s clothes, which he compared to a work in Coomaraswamy’s MFA catalogue entitled “Radha’s Toilet”. He explained his hypothesis, and in the manner of connoisseurs exchanging opinions he added “Please examine your original with great care and do let me know your considered opinion. Even in the collotype reproduction my eyes are sharp enough to catch the “feeling” of male & female profiles!” (B.N. Treasuryvala to AKC, 27 July 1934; MFA Archives)

some works as gifts to the MFA Boston in 1929, he would go on to mentor his nephew Karl Khandalavala, while the Treasuryvala art collection would eventually be acquired by the National Museum of the newly independent India, after being declined by the MFA in 1946.²⁵⁴

Ajit Ghosh was also among other early contributors to the study of Indian painting who regularly corresponded with Coomaraswamy and also wrote for *Rupam*. Ghosh was an avid collector and sometime dealer, who bought and wrote on Indian art at from the 1910s and 1920s. It was a large and extensive collection, comprising of Indian paintings, both Mughal and Pahari paintings and also sculpture. It is likely that Coomaraswamy played a role in introducing Ajit Ghosh to John Ellerton Lodge,²⁵⁵ and from 1930 to 1932, the Freer Gallery purchased Buddhist palm leaf Rajput and Mughal paintings, from Ajit Ghosh, including four folios from the famous *Tarikh-i-Alfi* manuscript. Although he had been initially reluctant to sell the individual leaves separately, he eventually did so,²⁵⁶ to other museums as well and wrote to Coomaraswamy in 1933 “I am sure you will be pleased to learn that the British Museum has selected for acquisition two miniatures of my *Tarikh-i-Alfi*. In the hope that your

²⁵⁴ The Treasuryvala collection was offered to Coomaraswamy and the MFA, Boston for \$80,000 (a valuation made by his nephew Karl Khandalavala) and consisted of over 2000 paintings, and about 200 sculptures in 1946. Coomaraswamy, however demurred and wrote “I know something of the Treasurywalla collection from photographs, and there are some very important things in it. However, I must inform you at once that this Museum never acquires whole collections, but only individual pieces....I may say, however, that I think Mr. N.M. Heeramaneck of 322 East 57th St New York would be the best man to work with; he has a fine gallery and is very trustworthy.” (AKC to Capt. P. Berko, May 25, 1946; MFA Archives)

²⁵⁵ A memo in the files for objects collected from Ajit Ghosh include one listing objects received from him on approval at the Freer Gallery where it stated that “4 Indian Mughal paintings, as follows (received by mail from Dr. A.K. Coomaraswamy, June 13, 1931). (Registrar’s Files, Freer Archives)

²⁵⁶ “You will remember that about a year ago when I saw you with the miniature of my Akbari manuscript, “Tarikh-i-Alfi”, and suggested that the leaves might be acquired for the Freer Art Gallery, you said that you could buy only a specimen leaf. At that time I did not entertain the idea of selling the leaves separately. I have, however, now changed my mind.” Ajit Ghosh to J.E. Lodge, 19th February 1931; Registrar’s Files, Freer Archives.

Museum will also acquire at least one of these splendid miniatures as soon as finances permit I am leaving with Mr. Wells one of the finest pages which is attributed by Percy Brown to Basawan.”²⁵⁷ In 1932, he sent four sculptures (three Chola bronzes and one chlorite sculpture) to the Freer Gallery on approval, however the Freer did not receive the financial support from the Federal Government it was accustomed to, and so Lodge was forced to decline the purchase. Ajit Ghosh, who claimed to “have never thought of approaching private collectors and would certainly prefer that such superb specimens of Indian art should remain in a museum of such choice art as the Freer,”²⁵⁸ requested that they be stored at the Freer. Over the next few years however, with the depression in the US, the matter of purchasing the pieces was dropped. It was a good 20 years later when in 1951 Ajit Ghosh wrote again to the Director of the Freer Gallery, A.G. Wenley (Lodge died in 1942) and asked if the pieces were still there, for he was considering giving two of them to the National Museum in Delhi. The sculptures were indeed still at the Freer, and by 1952, it was deemed that the sculptures would be handed over to a representative of the Indian Embassy in Washington D.C. Two years passed, and when nothing further happened,²⁵⁹ in 1954 the assistant director John Pope informed Ajit Ghosh of the same further adding that Laurence Sickman, of the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art (now the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art), had expressed interest in the pieces for purchase. The pieces were eventually bought by Sickman for the Nelson Gallery (Acc.

²⁵⁷ Ajit Ghosh to AKC, October 7, 1933; MFA Archives.

²⁵⁸ Ajit Ghosh to J.E. Lodge, 18th September 1932; Registrar’s Files, Freer Archives.

²⁵⁹ “As the Government of India were unable to accept my offer and made a counter offer, which I declined, nothing came of my proposal, which was dropped and the Ministry of Education in New Delhi and the Government of India or its Embassy have no further say in the matter of the brozes and sculpture. Moreover these pieces were sent to the Freer Gallery as far back as 1932 when there were no restrictions whatsoever on their export and I have been advised that their ultimate disposal rests entirely with me without reference to anyone else and I take full responsibility in the matter.” Ajit Ghosh to A.G. Wenley, May 7, 1956; Registrar’s Files, Freer Archives.

No. 56-108, 56-109, 56-110) at a time when there was a post-war preference for the purchase of sculpture.



Figure 108: Three bronze figures sent by Ajit Ghosh to the Freer Gallery in 1932 and finally bought by the Nelson-Atkins Museum in 1956

Rai Krishnadasa, the Benaras based collector, scholar and founder of the Bharat Kala Bhavan was another scholar collector who looked to Coomaraswamy for inspiration and guidance. Krishnadasa had been spurred by Coomaraswamy's exhibition of paintings held in Allahabad in 1910-11, to found his own museum in Varanasi in 1920. Still looking to Coomaraswamy's example, in 1936, he wrote to him: "Recently I have heard a great deal about your Vedic Researches and hope to go through them some day...I am glad to let you know that the catalogue of the Bharat Kala Bhawan is being prepared by my young and energetic friend Dr. Moti Chandra who has secured his PhD in Indian Art from the University of London and whose interest in our art is deep and genuine...I should be obliged if you could kindly suggest me the proper method of numbering the objects. What method do you employ for the conservation and preservation of the Indian Paintings. What we do here is to mount them in Cut-mounts and place them in folders. Any suggestion in this connection will oblige me. Please also send me a set of the forms in use in your museum there as we shall have our forms on the same lines...It will

interest you to know that recently we have acquired an illustrated manuscript of the ‘Durga Path’, dated ‘Samvat 1738’. The paintings are of primitive type and are quite powerful. The manuscripts hales from Gujrat.”²⁶⁰

O.C. Gangoly, Ajit Ghosh, Rai Krishnadasa, Alice Boner,²⁶¹ Gurusaday Dutt,²⁶² and Charles Fabri²⁶³, who all played pioneering and important roles in the appreciation, study, collection and display of Indian art in India, all corresponded with Coomaraswamy, turning to him for advice, looking for his guidance and seeking his counsel or approval.

Although Coomaraswamy was unable to return to England, and did not even visit India

²⁶⁰ Rai Krishnadasa to AKC, January 27, 1936; MFA Archives.

²⁶¹ Fellow Benaras-based collector and artist Alice Boner, who was also a friend of Stella Kramrisch, also turned to Coomaraswamy as the final authority on matters relating to textual bases for symbolic interpretation of architectural forms of temples which was a subject of interest to her. Boner had previously met Coomaraswamy in Boston in 1933, when she had visited America with the Uday Shankar Dance company. “I consulted Dr. Stella Kramrisch on the subject. She assured me, that she had never come across any text making reference to compositional schemes of this kind, nor could I obtain any information from other sources. Mr. René Guénon, to whom I had also submitted my problem, advised me to consult you, which I had already thought of doing, in case everything else should fail... I shall feel deeply obliged for any guidance you can give me in my search, as I am perpetually grateful to you for all the work you have done to reveal the true and essential meaning of Indian Art.” (Alice Boner to AKC, September 30, 1946; MFA Archives)

²⁶² Gurusaday Dutt, who played a pioneering role in the revitalization of interest in Bengal folk arts, wrote to Coomaraswamy in a similar vein, and acknowledged the latter’s influence on his work: “I have derived considerable inspiration from your books in Indian Art and on Indian handicrafts and these have encouraged me to take an interest in matters concerning art in general and particularly in the art of Bengal... I attach special importance to the multiple scroll paintings of Bengal of which I have, I believe, made a larger and more representative collection than anyone else has hitherto done and which I believe, represent an art tradition which formed the common art language of continental India before the Buddhist period and which has come down in an unbroken and an unadulterated strain from the ancient times in the villages of Bengal through the medium of the rural Patuas. Thus although it is the indigenous art of ancient India – the main stream from which even the Buddhist art sprang as a branch. How I wish I could now I [sic] have the opportunity of placing my collection before you for your inspiring and invaluable criticism and counsel. Although in the article in the Modern Review of which I send you a reprint, I have stressed the Bengali character of this art, I have done this merely with the object of rousing the patriotism of Bengal artists for their indigenous art. In my article on the subject, however, which will appear in the next issue of the Rupam, I have stressed the All-India character of this art in its origin and I am glad to tell you that both Mr. O.C. Gangoly and Dr. Kramrisch agree with me in this view. May I hope therefore that my humble effort may receive some encouragement from your powerful pen so that this art tradition may receive the attention that I venture to think it rightly deserves. It is a pity that there is no museum in Bengal where the collection made by me can be adequately housed but as soon [as] such a museum is available I should be glad to make my collection over to it for the benefit of the nation.” (G.S. Dutt to AKC, May 25, 1932; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Papers; 1903-1970 (mostly 1930-1947), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).

²⁶³ Among a generation of Hungarians, active in the Indian art scene, Fabri stood along the likes of Aurel Stein (who he accompanied on an expedition in 1931), Imre Schwaiger, Elizabeth and Saas Brunner.

after his travels there in the 1920s, his reputation among the cognoscenti only grew with time, in large part due to the circulation of his publications.



Figure 109: Herman Goetz (left) and Heinrich Zimmer (right)

Thus, by the late 1930s, as a consequence of the effects of the war on German scholars, some turned to Coomaraswamy as the leading figure in the field. Germany had been one of the strongest centers of Islamic and Sanskrit studies since the 19th century, however in the wake of the unrest in the years leading up to the war, several scholars had been effected. These included Hermann Goetz (1898-1976)²⁶⁴, and Heinrich Zimmer

²⁶⁴ Goetz had been in Germany, but left first for Holland, and later to India. In a letter to Coomaraswamy from Leiden from 1933, his despair was palpable, and his next move unclear: "...things in Germany went from bad to worse, which concerned me the more as I had always taken part in German political life. Although I am neither Jew nor socialist, I am at present practically in the same situation as many emigrants. Acquaintances of mine have been murdered, friends are in the concentration camps, relatives are thrown out of their positions. It is hard to lose one's native country, the more as I have never felt the ties with real German culture so much as now when many of its best exponents are outlawed and its official forms in rapid decay. It is hard to be between the fronts and in a period of growing national and racial hatred to feel not only as a German, but also as a European and even to some degree cosmopolite...As things are now in Germany, there is at present no more reason for me to stagger. Holland too offers no great chances (there is at present a great number of colonial medical and other academics unemployed). Though I have no reason to act rashly, yet I would prefer already to look out for other possibilities. Mexico might still attract me, supposed that I could find a proper activity. Yet I would not insist now on any special country, and I should like as much to go to Northern or Southern America as to Turkey, India, Shanghai, the Phillipinas or any other country, always under the supposition that there would be a chance for an activity corresponding to

(1890–1943). The former who was already in India was interned by the British on the outbreak of the war,²⁶⁵ and the latter emigrated to the United States. Coomaraswamy supported and encouraged Goetz's work, and Goetz used to correspond regularly with Coomaraswamy in long descriptive letters outlining his research interests and travels and discoveries, however by 1939 his tone changed, and a letter from Goetz to Coomaraswamy, gives one a glimpse of the dire circumstances for scholarship in Nazi-occupied Europe at the time: "It had been so kind of you to recommend me to the editor of the *Wiadomosci Literackie* in Warsaw for their special India number. I felt it a real pleasure to write a contribution, but unfortunately the war has destroyed everything; the offices of the periodical have been looted at the fall of Warsaw, our articles are confiscated by the Nazi Gestapo and Mr. Janta is fighting as an air pilot in France."²⁶⁶

While Coomaraswamy was signatory to an appeal to the British Government to free

my aims and apt for further development. If you would be inclined to help me somewhat in this respect, I would be very much delighted." (Hermann Goetz to AKC, 25 August 1933; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Papers; 1903-1970 (mostly 1930-1947), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library)

²⁶⁵ "Since last year the expectation of the war towards which all the events were driving with fatal inevitability, was hanging over us like a threatening cloud, and when the disaster finally burst off in September, I was indeed arrested and interned for two months. Now that the government had got all the proofs that we are old anti-Nazis who had broken with German since almost a decade, I am again free and continue my researches, though my plans have been rather upset by the war consequences." Herman Goetz to AKC, 6th December 1939; MFA Archives.

²⁶⁶ Herman Goetz to AKC, 6th December 1939; MFA Archives. On the crisis that affected German and Austrian Orientalistik after the First World War, see Marchand, S. L. (2009). *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, 2010 Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 474–98. Goetz would go on to India and worked at the museum of the princely state of Baroda, and was known for his articles in *Marg*, however 10 years after he wrote to Coomaraswamy, he once again found himself in a precarious position, and wrote to W. Norman Brown (Coomaraswamy died in 1947), "In the next days Baroda State will disappear. We have passed through all the phases of a progressive disintegration...and Baroda will relapse into the position of a district town in Bombay Province...But as everywhere retrenchment is at present necessary...the museum budget will be cut down to a minimum and its cultural activities paralysed. Thus I have to think of another job. But though I have a good reputation in this country, the early retirement age (55) under administrative regulations and the nationalist trend against the permanent employment of foreigners make the future appear not very hopeful...Under these circumstances we plan to emigrate to the USA

Goetz and testified to his credentials as a scholar, in 1938 Stella Kramrisch wrote to Coomaraswamy requesting him try and secure a university position for Zimmer in the USA since he could no longer be in Germany and the prospects of a university position in India for him were slim.²⁶⁷ Zimmer wrote to Coomaraswamy seeking his endorsement for a job at Mills College in California, lecturing on Indian civilization and potentially supported by the American government's scheme, the 'Emergency Committee for displaced professors' that supported refugee scholars. "I feel however, I need some support from an outstanding scholar in my field whose voice means authority in this country, and who might be willing to write a letter on my behalf. That is why I ask you, kindly to do me the favor of writing a statement recommending my ability for the position."²⁶⁸ Zimmer would eventually secure a visiting professorship at Columbia University, and during his brief time in America (he died in 1943), he received support from the Bollingen Foundation, which was an organization sympathetic to Indian philosophy via the ideas of Carl Jung, and would later play a key role in enabling Stella Kramrisch to work in the United States.

²⁶⁷ Stella Kramrisch to AKC, 29 May 1938, Princeton University Library Papers.

²⁶⁸ Heinrich Zimmer to AKC, 7 July 1941; MFA Archives.

THE DANCING SIVA IN THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM

By ALVAN C. EASTMAN



HEAD OF NATARAJA. Detail
In the collection of the Brooklyn Museum

OF all the great art treasures of India, one subject alone wins popular approval at first sight, regretful as it is, without the observer having to be tutored or trained to recognize its merits as a work of art. We refer of course to the Siva Nataraja-

their aesthetic quality, are based on certain rules as to bends and dispositions of trunk and legs laid down in the sculptor's handbook." The sculptor "regarded his own work" as is well stated in the *Dance of Siva* essays, "from the standpoint of a pious craftsman, not from the standpoint of connoisseurship or of an aesthetician. If there is beauty in his work," the essays continue, "this did not arise from aesthetic intention but from a state of mind which found unconscious expression." The Indian artist, it should be remembered, always was first a yogi, that is, he practiced mental concentration visualizing all the details and measurements of a deity before actual work was begun. It was a method of "self identification with the object of the work." To image God, he became God, as it were. Yoga, as an operative principle in Indian art, obtained from the 2nd century B. C. clear down to the 18th century. It was not merely a "mental exercise, or a religious discipline, but a most practical proposition for any undertaking."

Budding scholars in the US too approached Coomaraswamy for advice and opportunities to become involved in the field. Alvan C. Eastman, who had written articles on the Siva Nataraja at the Brooklyn Museum and had helped in cataloguing the Heeramanek collection in 1934, wrote to Coomaraswamy inquiring if there was an opportunity to join the museum's expedition to Persia to "serve wherever needing...my chief usefulness I imagine would be in documenting, listing objects in the field etc. though I gladly would undertake any kind of work asked that I can do- even physical labor if required."²⁶⁹ In the same letter he also mentioned having attended Dr. Meyer Riefstahl's lectures on Mohammedan art and Hagop Kevorkian's project of cataloguing a collection of Gandharan sculptures.

²⁶⁹ Alvan C. Eastman to AKC, April 9, 1936; MFA Archives.



Figure 110: Original Installation of the Temple Hall at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (left); detail of Siva Nataraja (right)

With W. Norman Brown, Coomaraswamy maintained a collegial relationship, and one of mutual respect. Over the years they frequently exchanged postcards, often querying Sanskrit terminology. In 1919, Coomaraswamy had helped the Philadelphia Museum of Art in its installation of the temple hall that had been a gift from Adeline Pepper Gibson,²⁷⁰ and had even contacted the Director General of Archaeology in India, Sir John Marshall for help on the matter of potentially securing more architectural elements from the same complex.²⁷¹ In a series of letters to the then director of the PMA, Langdon Warner, Coomaraswamy recorded having visited the site from where the pillared hall’s columns came, and sent photographs of the same along with suggestions

²⁷⁰ In response to an inquiry from the dealer Dikran Kelekian in 1940 about a sculpture from India in his possession, Coomaraswamy wrote “Your piece might reasonably be attributed to a date similar to that of the part of a temple with sculptures recently set up in the Philadelphia Museum. I recommend you to acquire the little book by Professor Brown on this set up, published by the Philadelphia Museum, in which the dates are discussed. It is rather difficult to date such a piece as yours in a single example, as the style is fairly constant, and work of this quality or near it has been done up to the modern times. In any case I do not think your piece can be older than the 16th century. It merits a place in a museum as you say.” AKC to Dikran Kelekian, April 11, 1940 (MFA Archives)

²⁷¹ “You may have heard that the Pennsylvania Museum has recently acquired by gift the greater part of the Mandapam of a Vishnava temple from Madura—originally brought over by the donor in 1912 with the then Collector’s knowledge and permission. Would it be possible (1) to trace the name and actual date of the temple (2) secure the remainder of the frieze (scenes from Ramayana etc.) of which the Pennsylvania Museum has already what I suppose is the greater part.” (AKC to John Marshall, Oct 6, 1919; MFA Archives)

on how the hall was to be installed in its original building. When the original installation was complete, at the far end of the hall, a Shiva Nataraja was placed somewhat incongruously, but no doubt intended as a culmination of the experience as the iconic piece of Indian temple sculpture. The bid to acquire the rest of the temple was a long and protracted one led by Norman Brown and continued through until the early 1940s, but was ultimately futile.²⁷² Coomaraswamy's relationship with the directors of the museum, and with Norman Brown, when he became the curator at the PMA continued for the rest of his life. Norman Brown and the PMA would continue to be involved with Indian art in a significant way, and Brown would later facilitate the exhibition of Stella Kramrisch's collection and her own arrival to the museum in the 1950s.

Stella Kramrisch and her collection at the Philadelphia Museum of Art

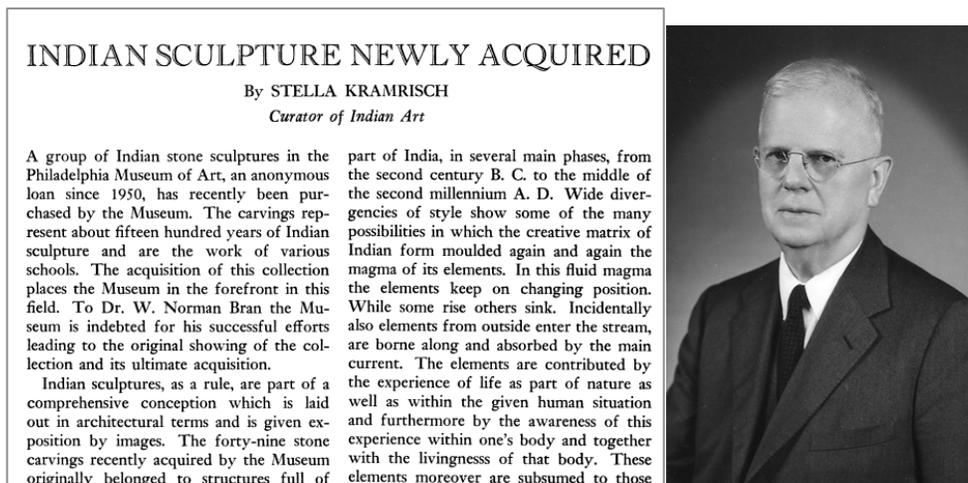


Figure 111: Stella Kramrisch's article on her collection in the PMA Bulletin (left); W. Norman Brown (right)

²⁷² Darielle Mason, "Mysteries of the Mandapa: Revisiting the South Indian Temple Hall at the Philadelphia Museum of Art," In Progress.

In the opening paragraph of her essay on the newly acquired collection of Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) published in the *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* in the winter of 1957, Stella Kramrisch acknowledged the role Dr. Norman Brown, the Sanskritist and Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, had played in bringing about the event. Kramrisch noted that it was to him that “the Museum is indebted for his successful efforts leading to the original showing of the collection and its ultimate acquisition.”²⁷³ The “anonymous collection,” about whose purchase Kramrisch gave credit to Norman Brown in the article cited above, was in fact Kramrisch’s own, and had initially been on loan to the PMA as part of an exhibition that had opened in the Spring of 1950, well before its eventual purchase in 1956. Although the impression that comes across in her article is that of Kramrisch discussing a set of objects in a disinterested manner, they were all part of her own collection that she had assembled over the preceding two and a half decades.²⁷⁴ When Kramrisch was residing in India where she had been ever since 1922, in addition to teaching at the University of Calcutta, she would spend many weeks every year traveling to historic sites. It was in the

²⁷³ Stella Kramrisch, “Indian Sculpture Newly Acquired,” *Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin* 52, no. 252 (1957): 31, doi:10.2307/3795036.

²⁷⁴ Kramrisch preferred to keep the matter of the formation and sale of her collection to the PMA discreet. In a letter to W. Norman Brown from April 1950, when her collection of sculptures was first on loan to the PMA, in response to a request to sell photographs of her collection, she wrote: “I received a letter from Jean Gordon Lee, Curator of Chinese Art, Philadelphia Museum, asking my permission to photograph the sculptures and sell them to the public. They should remain copyright of the Philadelphia Museums is my request and the Museum’s as well as my own permission would have to be given should they be required for reproduction. I must insist that this loan collection remain anonymous...” (SK to WNB, 5 April 1950, W.N. Brown Papers, University of Pennsylvania Archives). Much later, in the 1994 Biographical Essay on Kramrisch written by Barbara Stoller Miller, no mention is made of how she put together a collection during her time in India. Moreover, the matter of the collection of Indian sculpture at the Philadelphia Museum is mentioned in passing in an endnote as follows: “Before 1952 the museum had about seventy small Indian stone pieces, as well as the Madura Mandapa; in 1952 this was supplemented by the acquisition of a private collection of about fifty significant sculptures. [This was Kramrisch’s collection and was formally accessioned into the museum collection in 1956 although it had been on loan exhibition until then]...” Stella Kramrisch, *Exploring India’s Sacred Art: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch* (Motilal Banarsidass Publishes, 1994), 33. The PMA began to acknowledge the pieces from the 1956 sale as being from Kramrisch’s collection relatively recently.

course of these travels that she gradually amassed this significant personal collection. In December 1956, possibly necessitated by the sale of her collection to the Philadelphia Museum that year, she described the acquisition of her collection in a private letter to the tax attorney Fred L. Rosenbloom as follows:

For the major ones [sculptures] I worked, and for the rest I paid. Those for which I worked, I asked for in lieu of my honorarium when in charge of surveying a definite region, organising a local museum and cataloging the sculptures. For this purpose, I was granted leave from the University. The honorarium for the work varied according to the length of time spent on it. When I loved a particular sculpture to the extent that I want it to be with me forever, I suggested that in lieu of payment this sculpture should be my own.²⁷⁵

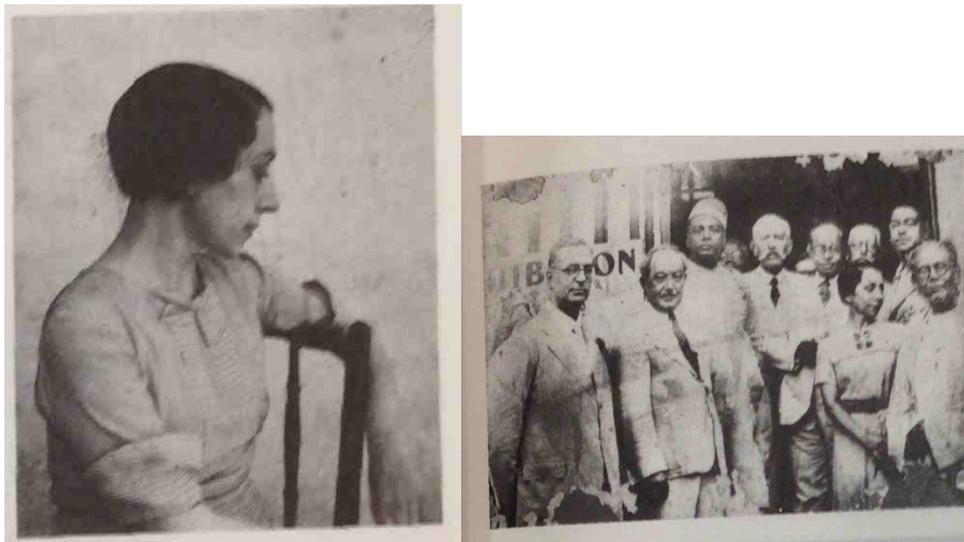


Figure 112: Stella Kramrisch in Calcutta c. 1922? (left) and with members of the Indian Society of Oriental Art (right)

Kramrisch presumably spent the years she taught at the University of Calcutta from the 1920s and through the 1930s on these field trips, but is careful to not provide

²⁷⁵ (Stella Kramrisch to Fred L. Rosenbloom, December 3, 1956) Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

any transactional details of prices paid and from whom the pieces were ostensibly bought.²⁷⁶ Kramrisch would not have been unaware that pieces from archaeological sites, such as sculpture, might technically have been deposited with the local archaeological museums and their authorities. That she breezily suggests that some sculptures were simply given to her “in lieu of payment” in deference to her aesthetic appreciation of them, glosses over the possibly questionable procurement process. On acquiring her sculptures, she quickly had them removed from India – she sent pieces over to England as early as the 1930s. It is unclear how she managed to do so. However, by 1929 she had married Laszlo Nemenyi, a Hungarian economist who worked for the Viceroy and who probably had powerful connections within the British administration.

In her article for the *PMA Bulletin* she alludes to the preexisting spoliation, suggests that the gathering, collecting and organizing of the “fragments” were a part of the process of recovery:,

Time and decay, neglect and wars brought damage and destruction to many of these monuments. Though broken and scattered, their impact survives in some of their fragments. ... The power vested in the monument was present in its parts. The entire surface was charged with meaning. ... a particular image shines forth infused with illuminating intensity and imparts, even though it is severed from its original context, the essential impact.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ In the same letter to Rosenbloom quoted before she simply stated that she never kept receipts for more than one year. Nevertheless for the pieces that she detailed as being given to her in lieu of an honorarium, she estimated that the 12 sculptures that she acquired in this manner would be worth about \$50,820.

²⁷⁷ Kramrisch, “Indian Sculpture Newly Acquired,” 13.

She herself acknowledged that she played a role in organizing the material by working for local museums, and indeed her scholarship from this period was based on the careful salvage and study of material that had been long neglected by scholars. From her articles in journals such as *Rupam* and later in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, she systematically worked to analyze and shed light on types of sculpture, delineating in greater detail the rough categorization of archaeological material that had begun in the colonial era. While she was a scholar first and a collector second, among her fellow authors in the journals in which she published were those such as B.N. Treasurywalla, and Ajit Ghose who were also avid collectors and who turned their scholarly interests towards building their own collections. Kramrisch was perhaps most akin to Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947) who set out to write about Indian art, and built a collection along the way. When Coomaraswamy had been collecting in India, he had been a man of means (his financial circumstances had altered by the time he was living in America), and like the Tagores was able to build a collection initially for his own pleasure, and later for the purposes of institution building. Kramrisch, who was also close to the Tagores, and no doubt familiar with their personal art collection too, had less disposable income to build a vast collection. In terms of the number of objects, hers was a relatively small collection, but it nevertheless included important pieces collected by a discerning eye for quality and that were directly illustrative of her research interests. This is clearly evidenced in her writings from the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, in her long and profusely illustrated article on “Pala and Sena Sculpture” from 1929 in *Rupam*, although none of the included images are from her own collection, nevertheless some of

objects from her collection now in the Philadelphia Museum of art bear striking parallels to those referred to in the text.²⁷⁸

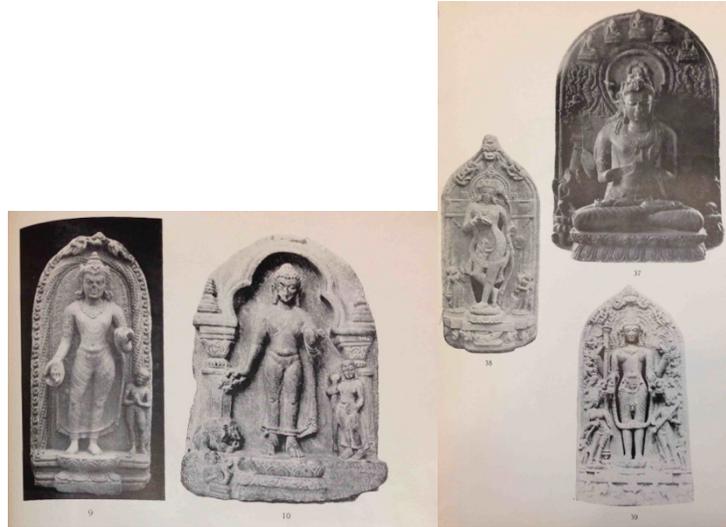


Figure 113: Illustrations for article “Pala and Sena Sculptures” by Stella Kramrisch



Figure 114: Pieces from the Kramrisch collection now in the PMA

²⁷⁸ Her article included images of 55 works, mainly from the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the Dacca Museum and the Rajshahi Museums. Works that were in her collection that relate to the ones she refers to in her text include a Votive tablet with Vishnu and the Dashavatars (1994-148-30), Lalita (1956-75-15) and an image of Buddha Subduing the Raging Elephant Nalagiri (1956-75-49). Stella Kramrisch. “Pala and Sena Sculpture,” *Rupam* XL (Oct. 1929): 107-26

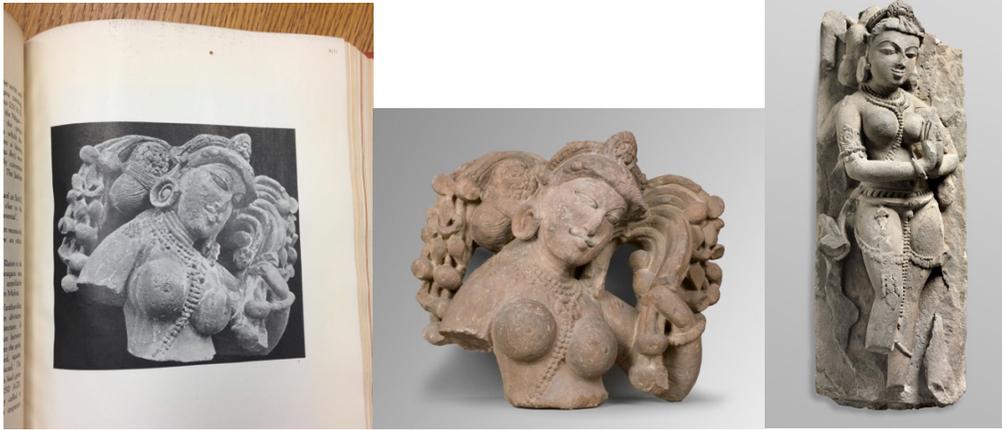


Figure 115: Illustration in Umapasrad Mookherji's essay on "Sculptures from Candravati" (left); sculptures from the Kramrisch collection (center and right)

In the inaugural issue of the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* of which Stella Kramrisch was the Editor, Umapasrad Mookherji's essay on "Sculptures from Candravati" included the illustration of a "Fragment of a Salabhanjika from the Harsiddhi Temple (Plate XIII)."²⁷⁹ Although the piece itself was not credited as being from the Kramrisch collection (even though it was), the author acknowledged his indebtedness to Stella Kramrisch in providing him with the photographs for his essay. That the photographs include views of the temple *mandapam* as well as sculptures from the temples at Candravati themselves, and the local museum at Jhalrapatan and finally one of Kramrisch's own, suggest that in the preceding years, Kramrisch had travelled to Candravati for research and had presumably picked up a piece or two at that time.²⁸⁰ She would go on to publish the same Salabhanjika in *The Hindu Temple* although once again the source was not mentioned.²⁸¹ In the second volume of the *JISOA*, in Kramrisch's essay on "Kalinga Temples" she included images from her own collection (then listed as

²⁷⁹ U.P. Mookherji "Sculptures from Candravati," *Journal of the Indian Society of Indian Art*, Vol.1 No.1, June 1933. 59-62. This piece is now PMA Acc. No. 1956-75-10.

²⁸⁰ These include PMA Acc. No.s 1956-75-10 and 1956-75-11.

²⁸¹ (p.399, Vol. 2),

“Private Collection, London”). These were the image of Kartikeya from Puri (Plate XIX), fragment of a *maithuna* couple from Bhubaneswar (Plate XX) and an image of Kicaka or Squatting Gana (Plate XXIII).²⁸²



Figure 116: Illustration of sculptures from Kramrisch's collection in her essay “Kalinga Temples”

The examples above demonstrate that Kramrisch formed collections as she went about her research, and pieces from her collection directly addressed her scholarly interests. Nevertheless her decision to not acknowledge the illustrations used in her own article as being from the “Author’s collection”, as for instance Ananda Coomaraswamy had done in his seminal writings on Rajput paintings, raises the question of her deliberate preference to remain anonymous, a practice she would largely continue.²⁸³ Perhaps she felt that anonymity accorded an objective distance between author and object, which would strengthen her scholarly analysis. Such an interpretation with regard to her

²⁸² Stella Kramrisch, “Kalinga Temples” *Journal of the Indian Society of Indian Art*, Vol.2 No.1, June 1934, 43-60. These correspond to PMA Acc. Nos. 1956-75-14, 1956-75-17 and 1956-75-40.

²⁸³ With some exceptions. In Coomaraswamy’s early publications of the 41 items that he published in *Indian Drawings* (1910), 13 belonged to the author, and of the 37 items that he published in *Indian Drawings: Second series, Chiefly Rajput* (1912), all but one belonged to the author. Finally, of the 105 items that Coomaraswamy published in *Rajput Paintings* (1916), 81 belonged to the author. While Kramrisch did not rely on her own collection to quite the same degree to illustrate her arguments, she also did not acknowledge the pieces as such. Pieces from her collection were however acknowledged in the catalogues for the exhibitions for the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London in 1931 and later for the Royal Academy exhibition in 1947.

motivations must remain speculative however, for Kramrisch left no record of her intentions in this regard. The preference for remaining unnamed may also have been a matter of personality, for by all accounts she was an intensely private person and discreet about her collection throughout her life.

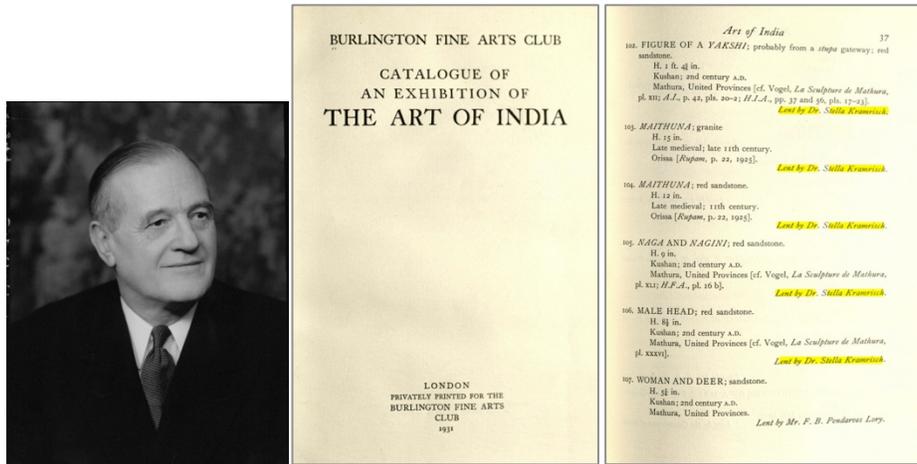


Figure 117: Kenneth de Burgh Codrington (left); Catalogue for the Exhibition of the Art of India at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1931 highlighting Kramrisch's loans (center and right)

Nevertheless, Kramrisch was also generous in sharing the actual pieces and their images in publications and exhibitions. The earliest record of works from her collection on display are from the Burlington Fine Arts Club's London's exhibition of Indian art in June 1931. In that exhibition, organized by K. de B. Codrington, fourteen pieces from Kramrisch's collection were exhibited, and were explicitly acknowledged as such in the exhibition catalogue. This exhibition was mounted only a few months after the much more spectacular and celebrated Exhibition of Persian Art that had been organized by the American scholar Arthur Upham Pope at Burlington House earlier the same year.²⁸⁴ One

²⁸⁴ The 1931 Exhibition of Persian Art was a seminal exhibition in establishing a canonical framework of understanding Islamic Art. The exhibition and its impact have been discussed extensively elsewhere, and an account of its impact can be found in Barry Wood's article "A Great Symphony of Pure Form": The

contemporary author noted that it “achieved a certain popular attention since it followed closely on the heels of the exhibition of the Art of Persia,” and while conceding that it was not as spectacular as the previous exhibition, nevertheless noted that “this small exhibition was able to raise the level in this country of the prestige of Indian Art.”²⁸⁵ The catalogue reveals that the exhibition covered both paintings and sculpture, and brought together pieces from government and private collections, but among the latter only Kramrisch had contributed a substantial collection of Indian sculpture.

At this stage, private collectors with interests in Indian art such as Ajit Ghosh, P.C. Manuk, A. Chester Beatty etc., would concentrate on Indian paintings. Private collectors of stone sculptures were few, as these works were still regarded as the domain of the (archaeological) museum, and less a site for connoisseurly endeavors. Collecting sculpture also posed challenges of access, and did not typically enter the established antiquarian market in the networks for the circulation of pictures, jewelry, carpets and textiles and small objects, which would often come under the category of luxury items and were invariably objects loosened from royal treasuries, from the ancestral collections of wealthy families, or religious institutions. If a stray “idol” would occasionally find its way into an antique shop in one of the larger Indian cities, little was known about the history or meaning of that particular object, and labels ascribed would often be erroneous. Stone sculpture was typically made for temples, was associated more with the archaeological and museum context since the 19th century. It was in these contexts that stone sculptures from archaeological sites were studied and organized by scholars, but were rarely collected in the manner of paintings or even bronze sculpture. Even

1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and Its Influence.”; *Ars Orientalis*, Vol 30, Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perceptions of Islamic Art, (2000) pp.113-130.

²⁸⁵ Trenchard Cox, “A Letter from London,” *Parnassus* 3, no. 6 (October 1, 1931): 12, doi:10.2307/770450.

Coomaraswamy, whose collection had some years previously entered the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston primarily collected paintings, and when he *did* acquire stone sculpture, he had done so on behalf of the museum, and that too on a dedicated buying trip in 1924 where his focus had been on sculpture.

That is not to say that stone sculptures did not enter the market at all. However, they were typically intended for or expected to be sold to a museum whose collecting mandates extended to Indian sculpture. Padma Kaimal has discussed the Frenchman Jouveau Dubreuil's procurement of a set of seventeen sculptures from a site in Kanchi in South India for the Paris based dealer C.T. Loo in the 1920s. Kaimal observes that Dubreuil's procurement and export of the pieces was enabled by the complicity or at least tacit awareness of British officials, including F. H. Gravely, Superintendent of the Government Museum of Madras.²⁸⁶ Loo's primary interest was in placing the sculptures sourced through Dubreuil in prominent museum collections, not only to add to their prestige, but presumably also because individual collectors were less interested in purchasing such pieces for private use or placement at this time. Indeed Loo's early sales and bequests of sculptures from this set (with the exception of a couple of sculptures to Baron Edward von der Heydt in the 1930s) were all made to museums in Paris and Boston. This would change after the war, for although he continued to sell to museums, individual collectors in America such as Avery Brundage and Christian Humann finally began to take an interest in Indian sculpture.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ For a detailed account of the dispersal of the Kanchi yoginis from South India see the Chapter "How they left: Dispersing the Kanchi goddesses and their Companions" (pp.139-142) in Kaimal, Padma A. *Scattered Goddesses: Travels with the Yoginis*. Ann Arbor, Mich: Association for Asian Studies, 2012

²⁸⁷ Padma Audrey Kaimal, *Scattered Goddesses: Travels with the Yoginis* (Association for Asian Studies, Incorporated, 2012), 142.

During the 1920s and 30s therefore, Stella Kramrisch's collecting of sculpture was exceptional, and clearly born from a combination of her interests in the subject of medieval temple sculpture and her field work, which entailed travel to sites where she had unique access to collectable material. In contrast to many of her peers, and indeed as she had herself done before for her doctoral work, once Kramrisch was in India, she did not rely solely on photographs taken by others for analytical purposes, but instead took every opportunity to travel to sites that she wished to study. It was on these field trips that she gradually built her distinctive collection. Writing many years later, when her collection was already at the PMA, Kramrisch would recount this process, emphasizing the arduousness of it, in a manner not untouched by the romantic:

Works of art of the quality of those now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art are very rare, one scarcely can find one in a thousand sculptures. I had unique opportunities as a scholar and explorer. I travelled by the general means of transport, but also a great deal by bullock carts, on elephants and camels to the remotest places for the purposes of knowing all the monuments and discovering some which had been unknown so far...If, on these expeditions, I badly wanted one or the other sculpture, I paid for it the price which the local priests or the village head men demanded. This required careful negotiations, repeated visits by myself or by my Indian, Brahmin assistants whom I had to engage for this purpose. On many occasions I failed to obtain the object and the money paid for travelling and in salaries and my time were lost. On the whole, I spent about as much in getting the sculptures for which I paid as I did by exchanging my honorarium for the others. I bought only four pieces in towns, one from a

collection and the others from dealers. The artistic quality which alone interests me is scarcely ever to be found on the market in antique shops.²⁸⁸

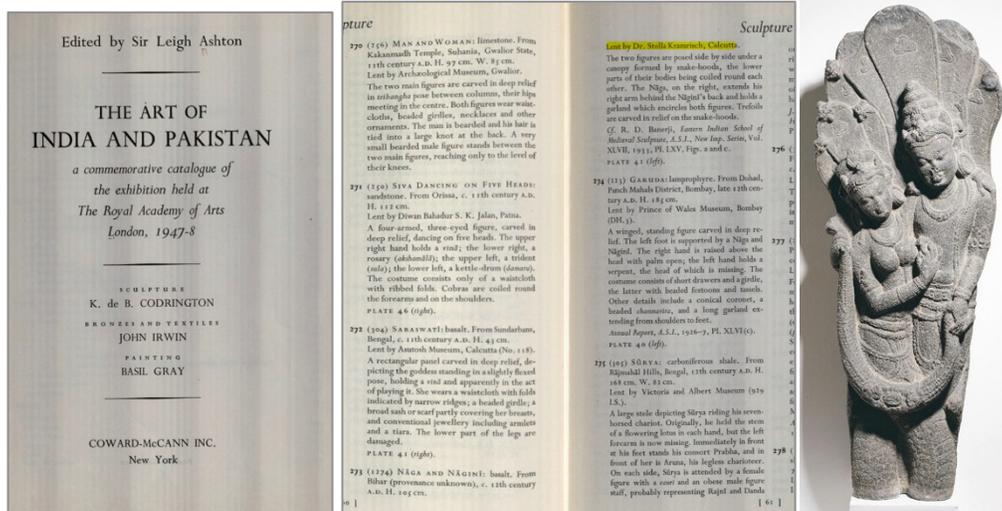


Figure 118: Catalogue of The Art of India and Pakistan Exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1947 (left); Highlight of Kramrisch's loan of Naga and Nagini (center); Naga and Nagini from Kramrisch's collection now in the PMA (right)

Indeed most collections containing pieces like hers were to be found in museums.

This was evident in the famous exhibition of Indian Art held at the Royal Academy, which took place in 1947-48. While there were many private lenders to the painting section, most lenders to the 373 pieces in the sculpture sections of the exhibition were museums mainly in India but also abroad. [See Table 1] Although there were some exceptional loans from private sources in this section too, the manner in which such pieces had been collected can be gauged from the fact that the “Gandhara and Minor Antiquities section,” which was the largest section by far, had loans from former British officers who had worked in the region, while the only section where Indian private collectors such as Gautam Sarabhai and Sir Cowasji Jehangir had contributed

²⁸⁸ Stella Kramrisch to Fred L. Rosenbloom, December 3, 1956. Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

significantly was to the South Indian bronze sections. From Kramrisch’s collection of over 50 pieces, although only three pieces belonging to her were picked for the exhibition,²⁸⁹ in the section under which her objects were classified, i.e. “Medieval 7th-17th century”, of the 67 pieces on display, only three others were from different private sources.

Table 1: Number of Sculptures Exhibited at the 1947 Royal Academy Exhibition

| Category → Lenders ↓ | The Indus Valley | Maurya & Sunga | Kushan & Andhra | Gandhara Sculpture | Gupta | Medieval | Bronzes (South) | Bronzes (North & West) | Miscellaneous |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------|----------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Museums (India) | 25 | 22 | 23 | 48 | 35 | 57 | 12 | 7 | 9 |
| Museums (UK & others) | | 1 | 33 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 3 | | 8 |
| Private Collections (non-UK) | | | | 1 | | 5 * | 12 ** | | 2 |
| Private Collections - UK | | | | 33 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 14 |

* 3 stone sculptures belonged to SK. ** 11 bronzes belonged to Gautam Sarabhai and Cowasji Jehangir

Source: 1 *The Art of India and Pakistan: A Commemorative Catalogue of the Exhibition Held at the Royal Academy of Arts*, London, 1947-8.

The 1947 Royal Academy exhibition had garnered interest among American curators and museums, and there were rumors that it might even travel to America.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ K. de b. Codrington who was the organizer of the exhibition, was critical of Kramrisch’s work and methodology, which may have played some role in his exclusion of some important pieces from her collection in the 1947 exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art in London.

²⁹⁰ “the other day I was in New York and heard through C.T.Loo that the Indian show which is at Burlington House in London now is coming to this country. Do you know anything about it? Did you by any chance see a preview of it when you were in London? I gather it opened on November 29th. From articles in various English publications I have seen, it looks to be a fine thing, and I was just wondering whether it were true that it was coming here, and if so where.” (Jean Gordon Lee to W Norman Brown, December 29th, 1947) Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

Although this did not happen, no doubt curators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who organized an exhibition of photographs of Indian sculpture in 1949 were interested in presenting an equivalent exhibition. “Medieval Indian Sculpture”, which comprised of photographs by Raymond Burnier took place under the patronage of the Government of India, at the Metropolitan Museum in October and November 1949. The press release for the exhibition quoted the curator Alan Priest’s observations of the exhibition as follows: “while most of the larger American museums have examples of Indian sculpture...never in this country has there been anything like this photographic display to convey to the public the experience of visiting an Indian temple.”²⁹¹ The exhibition consisted of a series of large photographs, mostly of single figures and details from temples at Bhuvaneshwar, Khajuraho and Mahoba. The New York exhibition was on the radar of the curators of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, would later travel there in March 1951.²⁹² Coincidentally, Burnier’s photographs had been used in the aforementioned 1941 exhibition organized by Kramrisch in London, and he had also been the source of the photographs that had illustrated Kramrisch’s *The Hindu Temple* when it was published in 1946.²⁹³ The two had also collaborated on Burnier’s volume *Surasundari* (1944), published by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, which was focused on the celestial women from Khajuraho’s temples. Thus the Burnier exhibition of photographs of sculpture can be read as arising out of an impulse not only to be at par with the 1947 exhibition, but also reflective of the burgeoning interest in Indian sculpture in America and was a timely foreshadowing of Kramrisch’s own collection that was soon to be exhibited at the PMA.

²⁹¹ “Press Release, October 6, 1949” [Exhibitions—1949: Mediaeval Indian Sculpture. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives.]

²⁹² “Front Matter,” *The Philadelphia Museum Bulletin* 45, no. 224 (January 1, 1950): 74.

²⁹³ Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*. ([Calcutta: Univ. of Calcutta, 1946).]

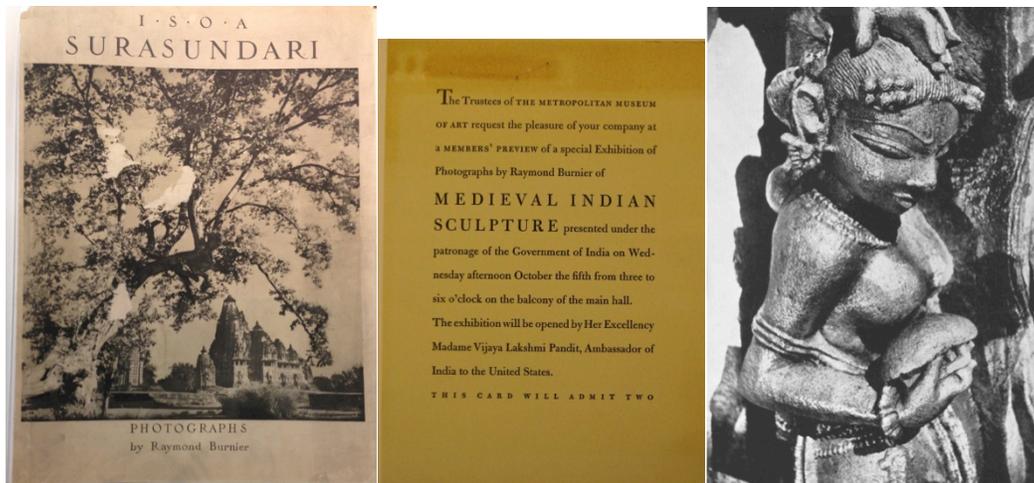


Figure 119: *Surasundari* (1946) with photographs by Raymond Burnier (left); invitation to Medieval Indian Sculpture by Raymond Burnier at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1949); Photograph by Burnier in Medieval Indian Sculpture at the Met (right)

The PMA curators had also closely followed the progress of the 1947 Royal Academy exhibition, and so, on learning that some of her sculptures were exhibited at London, and were part of a larger collection that was also held in Museums in England, W. Norman Brown's personal relationship with Stella Kramrisch allowed him to approach her with the offer of having them loaned to the Philadelphia Museum in 1948.²⁹⁴ Until then, Kramrisch's collection had been on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum and Oxford. The correspondence between Kramrisch and Brown from 1948-49 reveals that Kramrisch was increasingly uncertain about her prospects in the newly independent India, and was clearly conflicted about it, confessing that "Since we met I have been thinking many times about the possibility of my going to U.S.A. Material conditions and prospects for me here in India are not good. At times I am very

²⁹⁴ The two had first gotten to know one another in the 1930s, and when she was in India, teaching at Calcutta. The two had maintained a correspondence, with Brown submitting articles to the JISOA, which Kramrisch edited, including for a special volume on Ananda Coomaraswamy. Kramrisch herself may have only met Coomaraswamy once in Calcutta, although they corresponded in the 1930s. By the time Kramrisch came to America, Coomaraswamy had already died.

depressed—but I cannot tear myself away from India...”²⁹⁵ Barbara Stoller Miller in her biographical essay, and others who also knew Kramrisch personally, suggest that she was reticent to talk about her Calcutta days. In the early years, she had faced some difficulty as a woman (and initially as a single white woman) in the male-dominated field of Indian academics and intellectuals that comprised her milieu in Calcutta. After independence, in the wake of nationalist sentiment, when foreigners were disallowed from holding full professorship positions at Indian universities, she felt marginalized at the University of Calcutta.

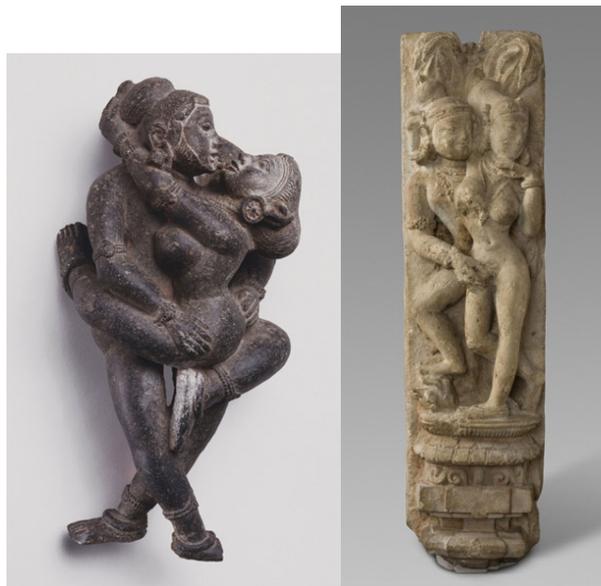


Figure 120: Examples of *maithuna* couples in amorous poses from the Kramrisch collection

²⁹⁵ “I shall be happy to have the sculptures in the Philadelphia Museum; it is reasonable that they should be there for at least five years—they have been ever so much longer than that in England. However, conditions now are uncertain and I am afraid to commit myself for five years. Should I have to remove the sculptures from the Museum within this period I would refund the \$1000—(one thousand dollars) spent for transport, insurance, etc. to the Philadelphia Museum. I hope this suggestion will be acceptable... Since we met I have been thinking many times about the possibility of my going to U.S.A. Material conditions and prospects for me here in India are not good. At times I am very depressed—but I cannot tear myself away from India... I am anxiously awaiting your article for the Coomaraswamy volume.” (Stella Kramrisch to W Norman Brown, 4 August 1948) Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

Moreover, Kramrisch was also unsure of the status of her collection in England. She was reluctant to sell it piecemeal, and in the post-war economic climate in Europe, it was unlikely that any museum would purchase the collection as a whole. She was therefore quite amenable for the loan to the PMA to take place. The V&A on the other hand was initially reluctant to comply, particularly since they feared that Kramrisch would try to sell the collection in America, and wanted to be able to retain it in England. In his letters to Fiske Kimball about the collection, Leigh Ashton of the V&A revealed these fears, and was somewhat discouraging of the exhibition and loan of the collection, noting that: "I assume you have received photographs of the collection as, despite the very high quality, a large proportion of the groups represent couples engaged in the sexual act. While the quality is of the very highest order the public has complained a good deal about its exhibition and I am merely underlining this in order that you may be perfectly clear as to what you are getting...I have also written to Dr. Kramrisch saying that I assume she is not going to sell the collection, otherwise I should oppose an Export License as the quality is of exceptional standard."²⁹⁶ American museums had repeatedly contended with the "problem" of the explicit depiction of copulation or couples in sexually frank poses. The voluptuousness of women and bare breasts in medieval Indian sculpture as were the majority of Burnier's photographs were at the same time tantalizing and troubling for the conservative US museum establishment.

After repeated reassurances from both Kimball and Kramrisch,²⁹⁷ the Export License was procured, and by the Summer of 1949, plans for a Spring Exhibition of the

²⁹⁶ Leigh Ashton to Fiske Kimball, 8th November 1948. Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives

²⁹⁷ "Over a month ago I sent you a letter in which I copied the contents of a letter to me by Sir Leigh Ashton. Should it not have reached you I repeat its contents... "...I hope this does not mean that Philadelphia is going to buy your collection. If this is so, it seriously affects the question as to whether we

collection were penciled into the PMA calendar. The sculptures came to Philadelphia for exhibition for a loan period of 5 years. Jean Gordon Lee, the Curator of Chinese Art and W. Norman Brown, oversaw the installation of the exhibition, which was opened in the Spring of 1950 by Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, the Indian Ambassador to USA.²⁹⁸ Nevertheless Ashton's fears had not been unfounded for barely a month after the opening of the exhibition, to warm reviews by both the public and museum,²⁹⁹ Norman Brown broached the subject of acquisition of the collection with Stella Kramrisch.³⁰⁰ Brown's timing was fortuitous for Kramrisch, as her life was in flux for the day before Brown wrote to her, her husband, Laszlo Nemenyi had been found shot dead on a beach in Karachi. Although they had not been close or cohabited for many years, with Nemenyi's death Kramrisch felt her position in India to be even more vulnerable. In his negotiations with her, Brown needed to manage his personal friendship and his professional interests, and ended up

can give you an Export License as we should wish in view of the long relationship between this country and India, that this museum should have the change of purchasing this collection..." I reassured Sir Leigh Ashton that the collection was going to Philadelphia on loan as it had been in the V&A Museum..." (SK to Fiske Kimball, 9th January 1949) Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

²⁹⁸ (PMA Bulletin, Annual Report, Summer 1950) "In early spring the Galleries adjoining the Indian Temple were installed with an anonymous loan collection of Indian sculpture and our own treasures in that field. The opening was made auspicious by the presence of Madame Pandit, Ambassador of India to the United States. The exhibition continues and will continue to attract attention of all those who are moved by the art of the cutter in stone." (PMA Bulletin, Annual Report, Summer 1950)

²⁹⁹ "At last the exhibition is up and has been received with a great deal of interest and admiration. I think that the general public's eyes have been opened to the beauty of Indian Sculpture more by your pieces than anything they have seen for a long time..." (Jean Gordon Lee to Stella Kramrisch, 26th March 1950)

³⁰⁰ "Your pieces are being highly appreciated at the Museum, the President of the Museum Board and the Director have a feeling that it would be advantageous to the Museum to try to acquire them as a whole. As you can well imagine, that would suit me since I would like to see them kept here in Philadelphia. Of course, the immediate question is at what price you would sell them... Since I am on the Museum staff, but at the same time your personal friend, I hesitate to give you any very strongly worded advice. It would, of course, be a simple transaction from your point of view to sell the collection as a whole, and be a convenience to do so." (W. Norman Brown to Stella Kramrisch in Calcutta, 28th April 1950)
[The above letter contained a handwritten note referring to the initial price of \$50000 offered, as a reminder, but the note says, "She says these figures were before her husband's suicide now collection is her only resource, wants minimum of 60. I phoned."] Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

being the go-between for the museum and Kramrisch from 1949 when the subject of the loan of the collection first came up until its final acquisition in 1956.

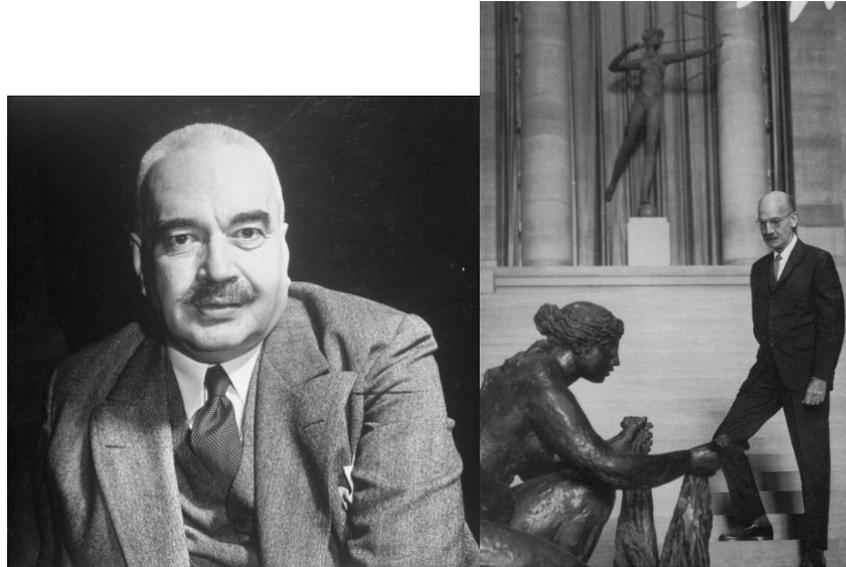


Figure 121: Fiske Kimball, PMA Director (left); R. Sturgis Ingersoll, PMA President (right)

On learning of Kramrisch's willingness to sell, Fiske Kimball seized upon the opportunity to plug for the purchase of the collection, and impressed upon the President of the Museum, R. Sturgis Ingersoll the need to do so, emphasizing that Philadelphia had a major American center in the study of the arts and languages and literature of India, and the museum would thus be a fitting home for the collection.³⁰¹ As an architectural historian Kimball had a deep regard for Kramrisch's work on *The Hindu Temple*, and understood the relationship between the individual sculptures and the whole temple form, which Kramrisch highlighted in her work. He no doubt saw the addition of a collection like Kramrisch's, as an ideal complement to the setting of the PMA with its preexisting

³⁰¹ "The loan collection of Indian sculpture continues with us. It is available to the Museum for purchase at what is considered by all who have given thought to the matter a modest price. The owner desires the collection to be kept intact and believes that its final home should be in Philadelphia, the city in America regarded as pre-eminent in the study of the arts and languages and literature of India. It is my hope that during the ensuing months, members of the Museum will examine that extraordinary collection and that eventually a donor or donors will be found to present it to the Museum." R. Sturgis Ingersoll, "Review of the Year Presented at the Annual Meeting on June 11, 1951," *The Philadelphia Museum Bulletin* 46, no. 230 (July 1, 1951): 60, doi:10.2307/3795000.

collections of sculpture (including a gift from Nasli Heeramaneck of 29 sculptures in 1931), and most significantly its magnificent temple hall mentioned earlier in this chapter, and would boost the status of the collection as a whole. In Kimball's letters to Ingersoll, he highlighted the uniqueness and scope of the Kramrisch collection, as well as its prestige. Having been formed by the preeminent scholar on Indian sculpture, the quality of the pieces he argued were second to none, and particularly the Metropolitan and the MFA.³⁰²

Kimball also argued that the reputation of the collection was further enhanced by the fact some pieces had been part of the London show and had even been illustrated there. "We now have the illustrated volume on the Burlington House exhibition of 1947-48, of the Art of India, edited by Ashton, and I have looked it over with Miss Lee. Of 300 numbers in sculpture listed (including many great ones from the Indian government), three were lent by Dr. Stella Kramrisch, and those illustrated (say 150) included one of hers. This is very creditable to the collection. These three pieces are here, and it surely adds to their value and interest that they were in the London show... The Boston Museum, which is the richest over here in the field, lent two pieces of sculpture, one illustrated (among seven works of art lent by them) and the Metropolitan lent no sculpture (two paintings, one illustrated)..."³⁰³ The PMA's ambitions and its sense of competition to bolster its intent to acquisition is palpable in the quote above.

³⁰² "What Leigh Ashton wrote about the Kramrisch collection was: "The quality is of the very highest order."...I called Norman Brown to ask what book would be best on the mediaeval sculpture, and he said Dr. Kramrisch's own on that topic—although naturally it deals mostly with the major monuments in place in India...He said Coomaraswamy's general book on Indian sculpture stresses more the earlier stuff. Boston is stronger in that. He volunteered that, for quality, the group here outdoes New York—I am sure for quantity also." (Fiske Kimball to R. Sturgis Ingersoll, May 3, 1951) Series I, Subseries M, Box 83. Folder 24. Fiske Kimball Records, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

³⁰³ (Fiske Kimball to R. Sturgis Ingersoll, September 13, 1951) Series I, Subseries M, Box 83. Folder 24. Fiske Kimball Records, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

At the same time as Kimball and Ingersoll's correspondence on the matter of the purchase of the collection, W. Norman Brown also undertook extensive efforts to source funds to establish Kramrisch as a Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania (which began offering its first full program on South Asian Studies in the academic year 1949-50), and as Curator of Indian Art at the PMA. Brown succeeded in securing funding through the Bollingen Foundation for Kramrisch to teach at the University of Pennsylvania, which was becoming the leading center for the study of India in the United States in no small measure due to Brown's own efforts. Brown had held the curatorial position at the PMA, but in an unpaid capacity, and was willing to step down in favor of Kramrisch. Once again Fiske Kimball was energetic in his efforts to find money for this endeavor, and approached Nelson and John D. Rockefeller 3rd who were active in the post-war period in promoting awareness of Asian culture among Americans as part of larger diplomatic and developmental initiatives in the 1950s. In a letter to JDR3rd, Kimball humorously noted, "Stella Kramrisch is quite a wonderful bird to put salt on the tail of. She will also make good relations between U.S. and India."³⁰⁴ Consequently, the PMA made an application for a grant to the Rockefeller Foundation in order to fund Kramrisch at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and for her to continue her teaching activities at the University of Pennsylvania for initially a period of five years. Advocating on her behalf for funds from the Rockefellers, Kimball observed "The main position of Dr. Kramrisch for the next five years would be Professor (not Visiting Professor) at the University of Pennsylvania, but she would also take over anything that may need to be

³⁰⁴ "Dear John, I don't know whether you , as Chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, bother with these things, but I enclose you my letter to your President—so that you may, at least, not oppose....Stella Kramrisch is quite a wonderful bird to put salt on the tail of. She will also make good relations between U.S. and India." (Fiske Kimball to John D Rockefeller 3rd, 10th March 1954) Series I, Subseries N, Box 96. Folder 12. Fiske Kimball Records, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

done here in relation to Indian art...Dr. Kramrisch, besides being a very attractive woman “of uncertain age”, is a demon scholar. There is not the smallest doubt that if she lives five years, as she should, she will go on with her teaching, her publications, and her curatorship, as well as making friends and influencing people in favour of India...³⁰⁵

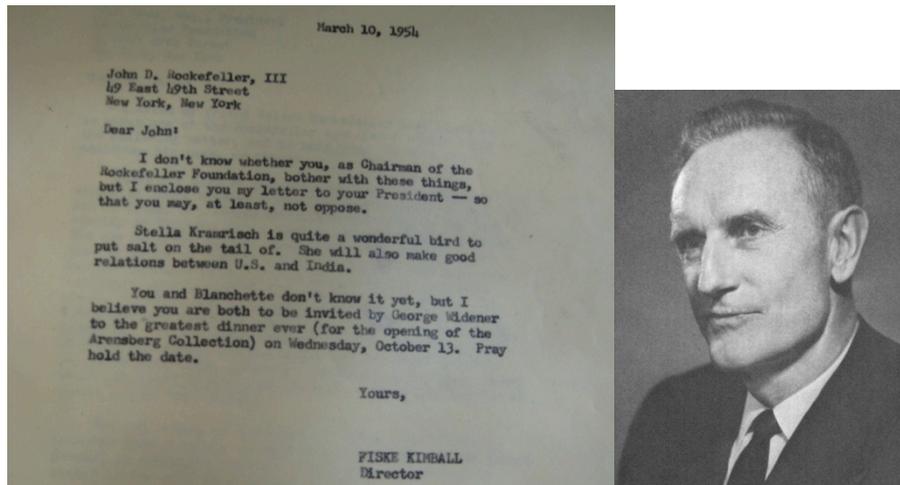


Figure 122: Letter from Fiske Kimball to JDR3 (left); John D. Rockefeller 3rd (right)

Once again Kimball argued for Kramrisch’s international reputation; he highlighted her connection to Coomaraswamy, noted that he had been a promoter of her during his lifetime, and presented her as an intellectual successor to him. The comparison would not end there for Kimball also observed that “The limitation is that the private

³⁰⁵ “We are making our application wholly on behalf of Dr. Norman Brown, who is head of the Department of South Asia Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. He has built up a wonderful department of studies of the language and culture of India, Pakistan and other Southeast Asia regions. He has had Dr. Stella Kramrisch on his staff for several years—the supporting grant for her (I believe from the Old Dominion or Avalon Foundation) expires this June. Over there, she is Visiting Professor in the Art of South Asia, but she does way beyond art and has indeed made endless friends for India in Philadelphia and in the University. Norman Brown has acted without salary as Curator of Indian Art here for many years, and he is prepared to step down from that title in her favour. The University Museum, of the University of Pennsylvania, itself has fine collections of Indian art, but here we have more, especially with the inclusion of 250 [sic] pieces of Indian sculpture, all of it formerly on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and to Oxford University. (At the beginning of the war, we paid to have all this brought over here, and it has been here, and it has been here ever since, very magnificently installed and much admired along with our own Indian things)...I cannot predict for you the future of the Indian collection in this Museum, except that like every other department we shall push it to the limit of our means and try to keep and improve our relative position in this country. (Fiske Kimball to Charles B. Fahs, 7th April 1954) Series I, Subseries N, Box 96. Folder 12. Fiske Kimball Records, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

collections of Indian art in America are few...³⁰⁶ alluding to the fact that Coomaraswamy had not only sold his own collection to the Boston Museum and negotiated a position as its keeper, but had also been instrumental in building the collections of the Metropolitan and the Freer Gallery in the 1920s and 1930s. In the American context, he presented a clear precedent for the purchase of Kramrisch's collection and her appointment at the PMA. The difference was that unlike at the time of the Coomaraswamy purchase, when he had been fortunate to find a buyer and promoter in Denman Ross, in the 1950s, Kramrisch's collection was garnering interest among the growing proponents of Indian art in American museums. The Rockefeller Foundation which had already conferred a grant of \$500 to Kramrisch in 1952, for a report on the contemporary arts of India, confirmed the grant to the PMA supporting Kramrisch's curatorship in June 1954.³⁰⁷ For the PMA, the appointment of Kramrisch as Curator would be the sweetener for her agreement to sell the collection. Within a year, the PMA (through R Sturgis Ingersoll) and Stella Kramrisch had come to an understanding that the Museum would raise \$120,000 to buy the collection by June 1956. Then followed a period of fund raising to buy the collection, ultimately managed on cobbling together monies from a variety of individual and collective funds.³⁰⁸ These included not only Ingersoll himself, but also funds from the Rockefellers.

³⁰⁶ (Fiske Kimball to Chadbourne Gilpatrick, The Rockefeller Foundation, 10th May 1954) Series I, Subseries N, Box 96. Folder 12. Fiske Kimball Records, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

³⁰⁷ In the Humanities grant for Intercultural Understanding under which the funds were disbursed, it was noted that "In the present Humanities program, emphasis is placed on the significance of art in gaining a fuller understanding of major cultures. The recent grant to Cornell University for Miss Holt's study of Indonesian art is paralleled to the new interpretations Dr. Kramrisch will give to the role of the arts in Indian culture." (Folder 3474, Box 402, Series 200R, RG1.2, RFA) Rockefeller Archive Center.

³⁰⁸ Miss Anna Warren Ingersoll, Nelson Rockefeller, R. Sturgis Ingersoll, Mrs. Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee, Dr. I. S. Ravdin, Mrs. Stella Elkins Tyler, Louis E. Stern, Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Levy, Mrs. Flagler Harris, and with funds from the bequest of Sophia Cadwalader, funds from the proceeds of the sale

The purchase of the Kramrisch collection in 1956 marked a culmination of not only several years of particular interest in Indian art at the PMA, but also signaled the growing interest in Indian sculpture among American collectors. At the time of the PMA negotiations with Kramrisch, Norman Brown had tried to interest George P Bickford, the Cleveland based industrialist and art collector, in the Kramrisch collection.³⁰⁹ Bickford himself was a patron of the Cleveland Museum of Art, and had been responsible for supporting the Asian Art curator, Sherman Lee's efforts in building the museum collections of Asian as well as Indian art there. Lee and Bickford had taken an interest in the Kramrisch collection, and apparently made an offer to Kramrisch that she seriously considered claiming economic security of a sale, until the PMA was able to match the offer and retain the collection. Nevertheless, Bickford's interest in Indian art would persist and he would build an impressive personal collection that would find its way into the Cleveland Museum of Art.³¹⁰ Drawing largely from his own experiences, Sherman Lee's observations in his introduction to the catalog of the George P Bickford Collection are telling when he noted that, "The war [WWII] in the Pacific and South Asian theatres changed all this and exposed hundreds of thousands to the "mystery" and excitement of Indian art and society. The earlier writings of Coomarswamy were now read in the light

of deaccessioned works of art, the George W.B. Taylor Fund, the John T. Morris Fund, the John H. McFadden, Jr., Fund, the Popular Subscription Fund, and the Lisa Norris Elkins Fund

³⁰⁹ "When the pieces were brought to this country, they were meant only for exhibition at the Museum on a five-year loan. The question of purchase did not arise. Dr. Kramrisch's feeling is that she would like these pieces housed in a museum where they would be available for the public to see. This corresponds to the Museum's own desires. Since seeing you I have received word that the University has received the funds to continue Dr. Kramrisch on its staff at least a year. While she is here she makes regular use of those pieces in her teaching." (W. Norman Brown to George P Bickford, 3rd May 1951) Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.

³¹⁰ Until the December 2013 announcement of the acquisition of the Benkaim collection of Indian paintings, the Cleveland Museum of Art was primarily known for its strengths in Indian sculpture, in no small measure due to George P Bickford's collection.

of fresh and direct experience.”³¹¹ For others like John D Rockefeller 3rd it was through an extensive trip through South and Southeast Asia, that they found themselves very drawn to Asia and its cultures and would be instrumental in having JDR 3rd going on to found both The Asia Society and its Asia House Gallery, not to mention building a fine personal collection also dominated by Indian sculpture.³¹² Speaking of the Rockefeller collection, Sherman Lee wrote: “[It] is rich in Indian sculpture and in Chinese and Japanese porcelain, categories we now recognize as two areas of prime innovation and creation in Eastern Asia.”³¹³ The Rockefeller collection will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

As Tapati Guha-Thakurta has argued, by the middle of the century, there was an increased emphasis in presenting sculpture as the pinnacle of creative expression in the art of India. Guha-Thakurta has emphasized the role of exhibitions in the late 40s in highlighting sculpture, and particularly ancient and medieval stone sculpture in Indian art history, as “a new art history” that was developed since the twenties and thirties, in which sculpture was foregrounded as “the prime genre of India’s “great art” heritage.”³¹⁴

Stella Kramrisch played no small role in this process, for in her writings from the 1920s onwards, and particularly in her seminal volume *Indian Sculpture* (1933), she argues for a system of internal aesthetic coherence in the appreciation of Indian sculpture.

³¹¹ Sherman Lee, “Preface” Stanislaw J Czuma and Cleveland Museum of Art, *Indian Art from the George P. Bickford Collection: Catalog* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975). p. v

³¹² “Our collecting has always been closely related to our feeling for these Asian friends. It also expresses our hope of gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of these older civilizations.” Sherman E Lee, Asia House Gallery, and Asia Society, *Asian Art; Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd*. ([New York] Asia Society: distributed by New York Graphic Society, 1970), 8.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³¹⁴ “In it was invested all the highest values of “divine idealism” and religious symbolism that singled out this heritage. In this process, sculpture in Indian art was reimagined as an entirely new aesthetic entity, abstracted from its larger architectural and religious viewing, to be accorded its own distinct attributes of style and symbolism.” Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories : Institutions of Art in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, [Pbk ed.] (Ranikhet India: Permanent Black, 2007), 189.

Even though she was not politically engaged, writing in India, and based in Calcutta, the influence of the nationalist imperative that underlay much of the writings from this period, is traceable in Kramrisch's Foreword to *Indian Sculpture* which opens with:

Anyone with an understanding of art in general and a knowledge, however slight, of Indian things, will, on being shown a work of Indian sculpture, unfailingly label it Indian. Differences in age and origin, however clearly marked to the discerning eye, when pointed out to the outsider, will be apprehended only with more or less difficulty. There is something so strange, and at the same time unique, in any Indian work of art that its 'Indianness' is felt first of all, and what it is, is seen only on second thought.³¹⁵

This emphasis on the "essential" qualities of a "national" art took forward Ananda Coomaraswamy's project in the study of Indian art, where the spiritual and the transcendental became the defining marks of India's fine arts heritage.³¹⁶ Indeed there

³¹⁵ Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, (Calcutta; London; New York: Y.M.C.A. Pub. House; Oxford University Press, 1933). ix.

³¹⁶ Although Coomaraswamy was recognized as a scholar, he was not formally involved with a teaching institution for any length of time. He nevertheless regularly gave lectures at universities, colleges and museums beginning with lectures at the Fogg Art Museum through the Division of Fine Arts at Harvard, Smith College, the University of Chicago, and later at Tufts College on Buddhism (1926), the Institute of Fine Arts in New York, the Worcester Art Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1930s. He also participated in a series of radio lectures by personnel from the Museum of Fine Arts in the mid-1930s, aimed at popularizing the understanding of the Museum's collections among the public. Once again he turned to the rhetoric of universalism that was a running theme in his introductions to the art and culture of India: "Even in India, an understanding of the art of India has to be won, and for this, just as in Europe where the modern man is as far from understanding the art of the Middle Ages as he is from that of the East, a veritable intellectual rectification is required. What is needed in either case is to place oneself at the position of the artist by whom the unfamiliar work was actually made, and in the position of the patron for whom the work was made: to think their thoughts and see with their eyes. For so long as a work of art appears to us in any way exotic, bizarre, quaint, or arbitrary, we cannot pretend to have understood it. It is not to enlarge our collection of bric-a-brac that we ought to study ancient or foreign arts, but to enlarge our own consciousness of being. As regards India, it has been said that "East Is East, and West is West and never the twain shall meet". This is a counsel of despair, that can only have been born of the most profound disillusion, and deepest conviction of impotence. I say on the contrary that human nature is an unchanging and everlasting principle; and that whoever possesses such a nature—and not merely the outward form and

was a broad congruency in their interpretations of Indian art, as evident in the positive review of *Indian Sculpture* (1933), which Coomaraswamy wrote in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. While he differed with Kramrisch's use of the terms "form" and "motifs," he nevertheless endorsed the book by saying that "Dr. Kramrisch's clearly written, well illustrated and well documented volume is nevertheless within its chosen limits probably the best existing introduction to the subject."³¹⁷ This was no doubt in part due to Kramrisch's interpretations such as "'classically Indian' refers more to the quality than to the chronology of art in India," which resonated with Coomaraswamy's own ahistorical analysis, particularly in his conclusion in the review when he returns to this interpretation in his turn interpreting folk arts: "All this survives at the present day only amongst the 'illiterate,' only the folk arts are now 'classically Indian,' while the bourgeois and even the aristocratic milieus have broken with the past."³¹⁸ No doubt Kramrisch shared such ideas, for one of her groundbreaking contributions later in her life was the showcasing of such "folk arts" in the organization of the exhibition *Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribe and Village* (1968).

However, not all reviews of Kramrisch's *Indian Sculpture* were as complimentary. K.de B. Codrington in his review for *The Burlington Magazine* took issue with Kramrisch's approach on several counts, from her reliance on archaeology to trace the development of form, her choice of examples, to her grounding her interpretations in

habits of the human animal—is endowed with the power of understanding all that belongs to that nature, without respect to time or place." (Transcript of "Understanding the Art of India" by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, Talk Number 3, Boston Museum of Fine Art Series, January 13, 1935; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy Papers; 1903-1970 (mostly 1930-1947), Manuscripts Division, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library).

³¹⁷ A. K. Coomaraswamy and Stella Kramrisch, "Indian Sculpture," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 54, no. 2 (June 1934): 219, doi:10.2307/594648.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 221.

Indian philosophy as the basis for an aesthetics that was distinct from that of the west. He could not accept such a premise, as was evident in the exasperated tone of his review where he took issue with Kramrisch's emphasis on abstract ideas and philosophy.³¹⁹ Codrington further suggested that methodologically, Kramrisch's metaphysical framework could not contribute to art history: "It may be pointed out, both with regard to such a philosophy and western modernism, that there is a tendency on the part of such critics to substitute a rather indefinite appreciation of the artist's state of mind, for a definite appreciation of the works of art in question. It is, after all, the business of art-criticism to discuss works of art."³²⁰ This vein of critique would continue in reviews of some of Kramrisch's later publications, when W.G. Archer and Benjamin Rowland would take issue with her abstruse prose, and her eschewal of art historical methods such as stylistic analysis.

If some art historians lamented Kramrisch's overemphasis on the metaphysical and symbolic aspects of Indian art, it was precisely these elements that she felt were important to foreground in the study of Indian art, and she often found sympathetic audiences for her views. When the Warburg Institute approached the India Society in London to organize an exhibition on photographs of Indian art and culture in a bid to highlight India's importance and acknowledge India's contribution to the war effort,³²¹

³¹⁹ "Indian naturalism is defined as a consciousness of the function of the organism. It is not the line nor substance of the flowers, nor the colour, not the quality of the petals that provide material for the artist, but rather his intuitive sense of the rising sap and the unfolding embryo. Indian "realism" is, therefore, cosmic." K. de B. Codrington, "Review of: Indian Sculpture by St. Kramrisch," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 64, no. 375 (June 1, 1934): 292, doi:10.2307/865900.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ 12 July 1940, India Society to Ministry of Information, for funding [which was declined] "we of the India Society, have been approached by the Warburg Institute with a proposal for arrangements to be made for an Exhibition of specially prepared photographs illustrating the great contributions to art and culture of the people of India...."

Kramrisch, who at the time was lecturing at the Courtauld Institute, was invited to organize the exhibition in 1940, which was held at the Imperial Institute. The note written by Kramrisch in a memorandum for the exhibition claims that the exhibition intended, “to show how the Indian builder and craftsman have given shape to the religious ideas of the Indian people...the monuments convey, by their form and contents, the essential conceptions of the Indian mind.”³²²

Later in the 1940s, she built upon her earlier work in *Indian Sculpture*, where she interpreted sculptures beyond their archaeological significance, to their being integral to the larger architectural symbolic complex of the Hindu Temple. Her analysis of the latter she would famously delineate in her seminal two-volume magnum opus *The Hindu Temple* (1946). By analyzing the structure as a symbolic form, often basing her interpretations on religious texts and architectural canons, her interpretation of Indian sculpture and architecture was a break from colonial archaeological readings of Indian temples that sufficed to categorize temples along stylistic lines, without any understanding of theoretical or conceptual basis for their form.³²³ Her approach was more

It is felt that a time when India's unreserved cooperation in the War is a matter of vital importance no opportunity should be lost in this country of making known to a wider public than that which is already interested the variety and extent of Indian contributions in this way to human progress, and her worthiness to fill a great place in the future of our Empire...It is proposed that the organization of the Exhibition should be in the hands of Dr. Kramrisch, a lecturer in Indian Art both in the Post-Graduate Department and at the Courtauld Institute of the University of London.” India Office Papers, British Library, MSS EUR/F147/78

³²² As quoted in Barbara Stoller Miller's Biographical Essay on Kramrisch. Kramrisch, *Exploring India's Sacred Art*, 18.

³²³ Barbara Stoller Miller in her account of its impact notes: “*The Hindu Temple* established a radical alternative to the narrowly archaeological view expressed in Percy Brown's *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, which Stella reviewed critically soon after its publication in 1944. Her synthetic view of the temple as a symbolic image of the cosmos stresses the integrity of architectural forms, sculptures, myths, rituals, and metaphysical conceptions, as they are visualized in the eye and mind of the worshipper. Seeing the temple as the body of the god who dwells within the sanctum, she analyzes the way in which its walls are structured by abstract designs and sculptures in human and animal form to visualize the power of the divine presence.” *Ibid.*, 20–22.

akin to what Coomaraswamy had done in his interpretations on the basis of textual sources for Rajput Painting, although arguably her method was more rigorous. This approach to Indian art had been lauded in the reception of *The Hindu Temple*, and would continue in the form of support received from the Bollingen Foundation that had been founded mid-century for the dissemination of Carl Jung's ideas in the scholarly field. Kramrisch's interests in the religious symbolism underlying Indian art and thought was in sympathy with the Bollingen Foundation's mandate, and they provided funding for her to lecture at the University of Pennsylvania when she arrived in America in 1950.

Yet sympathy for Kramrisch's scholarly interventions was not the only aspect that drew her to America after the war. While Guha-Thakurta has rightly argued for the reliance on and adoption of art historical frameworks that valorized Indian sculpture above all other art forms by the organizers of the exhibition in Delhi in 1948, and the subsequent formation of the National Museum for the new postcolonial nation state, a similar understanding of the place of sculpture in the understanding of Indian art was witnessed in post-war America as well. In the United States however, while the nationalist imperative was not a major contributing factor, among public institutions such as universities and museums, there was nevertheless a more concerted turn to studying and collecting Indian art, which took on board the nationalist-cultural frameworks that were then being established already in India and the UK. As Fredrick Asher has pointed out, it was in mid-century America that "Indian art, as part of the disciplinary practice of art history, entered the academy."³²⁴ Moreover, in cities like Philadelphia, at the

³²⁴ In his essay on "The Shape of Indian Art History" he lays greater emphasis on the roles of Ludwig Bachhofer, Alfred Salmony and Benjamin Rowland in creating a place for Indian art within their respective academic institutions. Vishakha Desai, ed., *Asian Art History in the Twenty-First Century* (Williamstown

University of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of W. Norman Brown, art history was also being envisaged as a key component for cultural understanding of South Asia in the post-war project of Area Studies.³²⁵ The Director at the Philadelphia Museum of Art at the time was Fiske Kimball, an architect and architectural historian who had overseen the building of the new museum including the installation of its architectural pieces in the 1920s. Although a Professor of Sanskrit, Brown at the time also acted as curator for the Asian art sections at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where he had done extensive research on the famous Indian temple room in the Museum's collections, and had published a book on the subject in 1940.³²⁶

By the mid-20th century, Indian art collections in America were to be found principally in museums in Boston, New York, Washington DC and Philadelphia. Since the late 19th century, museums in these cities had vied with each other for prestigious collections. This process had primarily centered around their Western art holdings, but the competitiveness had often carried over into their non-Western collections as well. It was particularly true of East Asian art, which had been avidly collected and promoted by wealthy patrons of these museums. Although both Philadelphia and New York had large

Mass. ;New Haven: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute ;;Distributed by Yale University Press, 2007), 5–6.

³²⁵ W. Norman Brown in his capacity of Chairman of South Asia Regional Studies provided an account of the program at the University of Pennsylvania, and listing the resources then available to students, noted that there were 15 museums in America containing “fair to excellent collections of South Asian art or ethnographic material,” adding in the following sentence that “clearly these resources are not enough to meet America’s national need for knowledge of South Asia.” Further on in the same paper he added that “Art history too is of interest to us. We want to know the people’s aesthetic stimuli and responses. What are the theories of art, whether in architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, drama, music? In every South Asian country the arts are changing today. The surviving tradition of sculpture and handicraft is important. New developments demand our attention as well. Hence the University of Pennsylvania program has a separate appointment for South Asian art.” W. Norman Brown Papers, University of Pennsylvania Archives.

³²⁶ W. Norman Brown and Philadelphia Museum of Art, *A Pillared Hall from a Temple at Madura, India, in the Philadelphia Museum of Art*, (Philadelphia; London: University of Pennsylvania Press; H. Milford; Oxford University Press, 1940).

architectural installations from India in their galleries, it was Boston's Museum of Fine Arts that stood in the forefront of Indian art in America, primarily aided by the collection and presence of Ananda Coomaraswamy who was there for three decades, from 1917 till his death in 1947. After Coomaraswamy's death there was no museum appointee who specialized in Indian art, and it was often the East Asian or Islamic art specialists whose curatorial duties extended to the Indian collections. Nevertheless in the decades preceding World War II there had been concerted efforts to expand the American public's understanding of India through institutions such as the Watumull Foundation (which funded Indian students to study in America), the Institute of Pacific Relations,³²⁷ the and the American Oriental Society. Brown in his article in *Parnassus* titled "Indian Art in America" on the exhibition organized by Heeramanek and Coomaraswamy wrote: "at this time when an American expedition is just commencing the archaeological excavation of a prehistoric site in the Indus valley, we might consider further evidences of America's interest in the culture of India..."³²⁸ He was referring to the excavation led by American School of Indic and Iranian Studies and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts held between 1935-36, and as a consequence of this American interest in Indian archaeology there was a greater awareness of the plastic art traditions, and their continuation in subsequent centuries.

That sculpture was acknowledged as the quintessential representation of Indian tradition, for American collectors and American museums in the 1950s presents a parallel to the foregrounding of sculpture in narratives of Indian art in India, as Guha-Thakurta

³²⁷ Among W. Norman Brown's paper at the University of Pennsylvania archives is a 1944 paper titled "Program to Promote the Study of India in the United States" W. Norman Brown Papers, University of Pennsylvania Archives.

³²⁸ Brown, "Indian Art in America," 16.

has argued. Coomaraswamy had played a pivotal role in introducing the sophisticated uniqueness of Indian art to the museum establishment in America, while Brown and other Indologists had done the same for Indian culture to American intelligentsia more broadly, thus providing a receptive audience for Kramrisch's scholarship and her collection at Philadelphia. Although the intellectual lineages that informed their thinking were different, and arguably differences lay in the trajectories of their scholarship as well,³²⁹ ever since Coomaraswamy, and indeed in the narratives of Indian art that Kramrisch also proposed, the mid-century understanding of Indian art was premised on its distinction from all Western aesthetic frameworks.³³⁰ Kramrisch's writings from the 1930s and 1940s, all contributed to the centerstaging of Indian sculpture as the primary expression of the spiritual essence at the heart of Indian art. Kramrisch continued this project in her writings in America principally *The Art of India* (1954) and *Indian Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (1960), the latter which catalogued the holdings at the PMA. For Kramrisch, in contrast to her peers like Benjamin Rowland in America,³³¹ the explanation of the style along a historical trajectory was of secondary importance to a far more important need to understand the ideas and philosophies that led to the emergence

³²⁹ Ratan Parimoo has discussed this contrast in his essay "Stella Kramrisch: Indian Art History and German Art-Historical Studies (Including the Vienna School) in Ratan Parimoo, *Essays in New Art History: Studies in Indian Sculpture : Regional Genres and Interpretations* (New Delhi: Books & Books, 2000).

³³⁰ "Indian art could come into its own only through posing of a sharp East-West dichotomy in aesthetics: through a construed opposition between Western "realism" and Indian "idealism,"...Henceforth, the spiritual and the transcendental became the defining marks of India's fine arts heritage, the code that could reduce and compress its complex history around a common essence." Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects*, 186.

³³¹ Rowland in his review of Kramrisch's *The Art of India* wrote "In the present book the fault seems to lie in such a uniformity of metaphysical interpretation that the reader is unable to gain any real sense of development or change other than that conditioned by the requirements of iconography....However admirable Dr. Kramrisch's condensation of the subtleties of the Indian philosophy of art may be, one wonders just how far even this brilliant performance can really lead Western readers to a formal and aesthetic appreciation, without at least some systematized analysis from a stylistic point of view and within a frame of reference that has some familiarity for them..." Benjamin Rowland Jr., "Review," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 75, no. 2 (April 1, 1955): 138, doi:10.2307/595024.

of forms. While her contributions were respected, her methods were also critiqued at the time. Nevertheless her presence and contributions in America necessitated an engagement with her work, and thus in her scholarship she signaled a shift away from the prevailing primacy of stylistic difference in the writing of art history.

It is clear that she always saw herself as a scholar first, and even though she formed an important collection of Indian art, she was reluctant to acknowledge herself as a collector. Nevertheless Kramrisch was well aware of the value of her collection and was astute in her placement of it, and it was the very fact that it was *her* collection that made its exhibition and eventual acquisition by the PMA especially desirable. Although readable in terms akin to Coomaraswamy's sale of his collection to the MFA and his subsequent role there, unlike Coomaraswamy who had negotiated for his name to be forever associated with that collection, Kramrisch's remained anonymous. She continued to anonymously gift pieces to the PMA during her lifetime and on her death bequeathed what was left to the museum as well.

Thus in the aftermath of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1947-48, in India, while the prominent presence of sculpture in the formation of the National Museum in Delhi represented the nationalist imperatives for such a move in the museum space as Guha-Thakurta has argued, in America, the increased interest in sculpture represented a move to culturally bracket Indian art in a manner that was deemed internally coherent in its own system of aesthetics and art appreciation rooted in spirituality.³³² Furthermore the collection served to bolster the PMA's particular ambitions as a world-class museum at par with the Metropolitan and the MFA in the decade following its Diamond Jubilee in

³³² Tapati Guha-Thakurta, "'Our Gods, Their Museums': The Contrary Careers of India's Art Objects.," *Art History*. 302007 (2007): 642–643.

1950, and in strengthening its holdings into the first dedicated department of Indian art in an American museum, with arguably the leading Indian art scholar of the day at its helm.

In her analysis of the exhibition *Sculpture of India* held in 1985 at the National Gallery in Washington, Tapati Guha-Thakurta notes in a nod to Kramrisch that “If, in such exhibitions scholars still needed to advertise the ‘Indian-ness’ of Indian art, they also wished to assert its rightful place within a universal ‘family of art’. In choosing to focus on sculpture, Pramod Chandra’s [the curator] main intention had been to pick out a ‘master-genre’ of Indian art that could rival the traditions of European classical sculpture and ‘convey a sense of the contribution of Indian sculpture to the common artistic heritage of mankind.’”³³³ Indeed, shortly after the purchase of the Kramrisch collection by the PMA, the museum with perhaps the grandest ambitions with regards to the presentation of the cultural heritage of mankind in America, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York opened its first permanent gallery of Indian sculpture in 1960. A few years later, in 1965 the Government of India organized a traveling exhibition of Indian sculpture at American museums in New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Cleveland. Consisting of 117 sculptures from 22 museums in India, the exhibition was hailed as “the most important exhibition of the art of India ever held in the United States...one of the most magnificent chapters in the whole history both of the world’s art and the word’s religion”³³⁴ Including a few pieces from the Indus Valley Civilization, the sculptures traced the now-familiar development of sculpture from Buddhist to Hindu forms.

³³³ Ibid., 39.

³³⁴ Press Release, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, February 9, 1965, p.1 [The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives]

Tellingly among the sculptures singled out for mention were a “Dancing Siva”, and two female figures from Khajuraho.³³⁵ The choice bears evidence to the fact that the lessons of Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch after him were well learnt in America, and continued to be reinscribed.

³³⁵ “The Hindu religious revival is superbly illustrated by a Dancing Siva with Eight Arms, poised in cosmic dance. Among splendid Medieval sculptures are two famous nymphs from Khajuraho.” Press Release, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, February 9, 1965, p.2 [The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives]

Chapter 4: Of Culture and Connoisseurship

The post-war period was a time when museum collections were seeking to highlight the place of sculpture as the foundational and greatest accomplishment in the history of Indian art, uniquely imbued with character that was quintessentially 'Indian.' It was this archetypal character of sculpture that drew John D. Rockefeller 3rd to collect it at a time when he was building a collection of Asian art as an extension of his developmental interests in Asia. A now-postcolonial India stood poised to play a new and key role in Asia, and consequently elicited new interests in post-war America. One such expression was the renewed need to understand Asian culture, and for Rockefeller and the organizations he instituted, including the Asia Society and the JDR3 Fund, a better understanding of art was integral to this process. The JDR3 collection of Indian sculpture, built with the advisement of Sherman Lee, and eventually bequeathed to the Asia Society, thus needs to be seen in this context of post-war cultural interests in Asia.

While the Rockefeller collection, in its purported selection of artworks of the highest quality (a testament to Lee's connoisseurship) served as an access to culture, connoisseurship practices also dominated the art historical mapping of Indian art in the post-war decades, particularly with regards to the reassessment of Indian paintings. Practices that had been established in the assessment of Persian and Mughal paintings, were now brought to bear on Rajput painting as well. Although Coomaraswamy had summarily deemed Mughal paintings to be 'secular' and thus not in keeping with the essentially 'religious' nature of Indian art, by the middle of the century his judgements were being reevaluated by a new generation of scholars. On the one hand, Islamic art historians were acknowledging the achievements of Mughal painting and not merely

relegating it to a derivative status, while on the other, with a greater number of Rajput paintings entering the market and suddenly available for study, scholars were departing from Coomaraswamy's theories and recognizing the continuities between Islamic painting traditions and those of the Rajput courts. It was in this context that the formation of Edwin Binney's encyclopaedic collection of Indian paintings needs to be situated and the implications of the collection in the field of Indian art history at the time that Binney was collecting can be unpacked. The study of the formation of his collection also allows one to examine the closely intertwined relationships between collectors, dealers, advisors and scholars, across continents. While JDR3 was closely advised by Sherman Lee for all his Asian art purchases, Binney was initially counseled by W.G. Archer. Both collectors bought several works from Nasli Heeramaneck and maintained personal relationships with him as well. Whilst Binney's encyclopedic ambitions stemmed from individual predilections and prevailing trends, his taxonomic approach to collecting represents the high watermark of a form of connoisseurship and scholarship where formal analysis as the basis of stylistic difference was the order of the day, and arguably pushed to the limits such approaches to the collecting of and scholarship on Indian painting. Binney's collection thus provides an entry point into unpacking a critical historical period in the study of Indian painting.

Indian Sculpture in Asian Culture: Situating the John D Rockefeller 3rd collection

At the time that the PMA bought the Kramrisch collection of Indian sculpture discussed in Chapter 3, other American museums, and collectors, particularly those with larger ambitions in Asian Art turned to collecting Indian sculpture, as key in the

representation of the arts of India. Museum directors of like Laurence Sickman of the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, Sherman Lee of the Cleveland Museum of Art (with the support of museum patron George Bickford), and later Richard Fuller of the Seattle Art Museum all extended their interests from East Asian Art to Indian art, in a manner not dissimilar to the way the MFA had expanded its interests in Asian art to include India earlier in the century. There were also private collectors who concentrated on Indian sculpture like Christian Humann (who formed the Pan-Asian collection, Indian sculpture from which would be exhibited in the 1981 show *The Sensuous Immortals*), and Samuel Eilenberg (who collected mainly Indian bronzes, which were eventually gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art), and Avery Brundage (whose Asian art collection would form the core of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco). Brundage would later go on to buy a sculpture from Kramrisch.³³⁶



Figure 123: John D Rockefeller 3rd and his wife Blanchette Rockefeller admiring a Siva Nataraja with George Bickford (left) and with pieces from their collection at the Asia House gallery (right).

³³⁶ The sculpture is a fragment of a Kushan period Buddha image now in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco. [Object ID: B65S10]

In the case of John D Rockefeller 3rd (JDR3), his interest in Indian sculpture was not that of a curator or scholar of art, but as a philanthropist who saw his Asian art collection within his interests in the cultural sphere of Asia. JDR3 had first visited Asia in 1929, but only began collecting Asian art after a trip to Japan in 1951 when he was appointed as a cultural consultant to John Foster Dulles during the Japanese Peace Treaty Mission when he was to consider ways to improve U.S.- Japan relations fostered his deep interest in Japan and in all of Asia. As a consequence he was responsible for revitalizing the Japan Society and organized the Asia Society in 1956. He would also often travel to Asian countries, and by 1974 acknowledged having visited “all of the countries from Java around to Afghanistan, with the exception of Sikkim and Bhutan. Most of them I have visited several times.”³³⁷ His definition of Asia included countries from Japan in the east to Afghanistan in the West. Writing of his decision to purchase art, JDR3 noted: “Increasingly, we came to have an appreciation and respect for the peoples and their cultures. As a result, we found that we had an urge to buy objects of art not only because of their beauty and appeal but also because they served as constant and tangible reminders of the countries and people visited. It was in this fashion that our collection started. And it was because of this approach that we found ourselves collecting important pieces from all parts of Asia rather than concentrating on any one area or culture or type. We wanted to have a reasonably represented the four principal cultures – Japanese, Chinese, Khmer and the Indian sub-continent – because all four had appeal to us.”³³⁸

³³⁷ JDR3 to George Ball, Chairman, Asia Society, January 31, 1974 (RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 48 – Folder 413)

³³⁸ JDR3 to George Ball, Chairman, Asia Society, January 31, 1974 (RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 48 – Folder 413)

Although JDR3's comment suggests that the Rockefeller's began collecting art as souvenirs from the countries they visited, in fact they rarely did so, preferring to buy works in America or Europe through well-established dealers. Coming from a family with an established tradition of collecting art, including East Asian art, JDR3 and his wife Blanchette focussed on two areas of particular interest to them – American painting, and Asian art. In both spheres they enlisted the aid of art advisors to guide them in their purchases, and in the case of the latter, it was the well-known Asian art historian and curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Sherman Lee, who steered the Rockefellers in their purchases. Even while the matter was a private one, given the high public profile of the Rockefellers, the preference to buy works from reputed sources and through the proper channels was also a matter of caution.³³⁹

Among the trips to Asia were included several visits to India. While most of these trips involved meeting officials and politicians who played a key role in areas of interest to him, such as population, agriculture and development, he nevertheless encountered Indians involved in the cultural field and would cross paths again with some of them America. One such instance was with the illustrious couple the scientist Vikram Sarabhai and his wife, the dancer Mrinalini Sarabhai. JDR3 and Sarabhai wrote letters to one another and the latter visited the Rockefellers at Pocantico hills. Mrinalini Sarabhai would go on to perform at the Asia Society in events intended to showcase and introduce American audiences to Indian culture. JDR3 recorded these encounters and events in his diaries, which while not revealing of his personality or preferences, were an exhaustive record of his many activities. Nevertheless, in them one catches glimpses of where his

³³⁹ When the Norton Simon investigation was underway, there was a possibility of a couple of pieces from the Rockefeller collection being investigated for the provenance.

interests turned to art, and although he did not record having made any purchases in India, he did mention visits to Asian art dealers in London and Paris,³⁴⁰ and more regularly notes that his Saturdays were often spent “arting” with Blanchette. Together they would visit their favorite galleries or dealers, and often found themselves engaged for several hours at either Nasli Heeramaneck’s or later Doris Weiner’s establishments.

Typically the pieces would be sent to the Rockefeller’s apartment where they would live with them for a while, before making a decision on whether to buy the piece in question.³⁴¹ JDR3’s decision to purchase a piece would often be in consultation not only with Lee, but also with his wife. Blanchette Rockefeller enrolled at Columbia University at the age of forty-five and took courses in the history of Japan as well as in art history. Tellingly she notes “And I always felt sorry for Mr. Rockefeller because he was doing the collecting while I was the one who was having the fun of learning about it. He, of course, didn’t have the time to do all that...”³⁴² Addressing the matter of their taste she noted that JDR3 and her own tastes were similar, adding that “Although I do feel that if he could have taken some of these courses he would have had a slightly different slant

³⁴⁰ “I was interested that you were off on another trip to India. Please do not hesitate to bring to our attention any piece which you may run into which you feel is truly outstanding, even if we already have something of the same general type and character. Always we are glad to improve the quality of our collection.”
(JDR3 to Adrian Maynard, August 14, 1969; Folder 438, Box 51, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

³⁴¹ JDR3 to Nasli Heeramaneck, 5 June 1963
“Let me first say how much we appreciate your interest in our collection of Oriental art. Already we have bought from you some significant pieces and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the years ahead. What means particularly much to us is your willingness to speak frankly as to the quality of the pieces – whether or not you feel they measure up to our aspirations of eventually having a collection which would be small but would hopefully only include the best of what is available.

As you know, I feel that essential criteria for selection are not only quality but one’s own reaction to the piece – whether one has a sense of pleasure and satisfaction from it – as I occasionally express it, whether it “lifts” one. At the same time I realize from experience that sometimes the piece which appeals less in the beginning does grow on one with the passage of time.” RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 47 – Folder 405

³⁴² BHR Oral History, p 3. Folder 116, Box 16, Series 3, RG53, RFA

on some of things – getting a little more of the historical importance of a certain piece rather than having to rely only on his own aesthetic reaction...”³⁴³

In the early years, since the collection was intended as purely for private pleasure, the works of art that would be preferred would be of a smaller scale that would be in keeping with the proportions of a New York apartment or office, and pieces would periodically get circulated. Later when the decision was made to give the collection to the Asia Society, the lack of historical comprehensiveness was acknowledged as a shortcoming of the collection as a whole, although this was attributed to the connoisseur’s preference.³⁴⁴ Of particular interest to the Rockefellers were South Indian Chola bronzes, and they would go to lengths to try and secure a fine piece. Indeed during the 1960s many such pieces entered the market, allowing him and other collectors such as Norton Simon to build significant collections, and so by the early 1970s he confessed to Doris Weiner, “As I have mentioned to you before, one of the problems which I have faced increasingly with my small collection is the disproportionate number of Indian

³⁴³ BHR Oral History, p 4. Folder 116, Box 16, Series 3, RG53, RFA

³⁴⁴ “... With the burgeoning of Museums throughout the country, and with a growing appreciation of the art and culture of Asia, the Gallery has been a very creative and constructive force in widening the areas of Museums collections and educational programs.

This kind of creative stimulus in setting standards of excellence remains as a challenge to the privileged collector and philanthropist. Since in a democratic society the standards of taste and quality have a tendency to decline as the measure of affluence makes more art available to the larger public, the role of the collector as spur and innovator becomes more and more essential.

This role, it seems to me, you have admirably succeeded in your contributions in funds and in leadership at the Asia House Gallery. Earl Morse to JDR3, June 18, 1969 (RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 48 – Folder 413)

“The criteria for the selection of each piece were, on the one hand quality and, on the other, that my wife and I responded to it – “that it stirred and lifted us”. Also, obviously, our purchases were affected by the availability of items of quality and appeal. As a result of this approach, there are notable gaps in the collection which have not concerned us.” JDR3 to George Ball, Chairman, Asia Society, January 31, 1974 (RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 48 – Folder 413)

bronzes. This, of course, has come about primarily because so many good bronzes have become available. However, it is a matter of concern to me as I have wanted to have a reasonably balanced collection representing Asia broadly.”³⁴⁵

Unlike Charles Lang Freer more than half a century before him, JDR3’s interests in Asia were not merely borne out of aesthetic concerns, but were rather situated in a larger post-war American geopolitical interests in Asia. Thus, even though his art collecting was a private initiative, and his collection initially occupied a private space (either in his home or office), JDR3 quickly saw the scope of art as well as his own collection in bolstering American cultural understanding of Asia. Indeed the impact of JDR3’s interest in Asian culture resulted in the 1950s, in the support that The Rockefeller Foundation extended to the PMA for Stella Kramrisch, has already been noted in Chapter 3, as was the grant that Kramrisch was awarded directly in 1952, on the existing “library and artistic scene in India as far as it effects the younger generation.”³⁴⁶ Later, funding of

³⁴⁵ JDR3 to Doris Weiner [declining the purchase of a Sarnath Gupta Buddha] March 19, 1971 (RFA – RG 5 – Series 2 – Box 48 – Folder 412)

³⁴⁶ In the confidential report, Kramrisch wrote the following: “There is not standard of criticism, no sense of quality amongst the “educated”, i.e., Westernised Indians nor had it time to develop amongst those who turned away from Westernisation. Gandhian “simplicity” protects the worst offenders, “Khadi” home spun and woven fabrics, are disfigured by virulent, clashing colours in effete patterns. The average home of the “educated” and/or well-to-do man about town would give the measure of the incomparably poor standard of “taste.” It is far below the level of the low standard of “living” of the masses. For all practical purposes visual art is dead and being murdered in modern India.

The remedies would be: (1) teaching in schools by competent (and adequately paid) teachers of the elements of dignified living in conformity with Indian conditions; (2) the awakening of a need for art, if not by established religion, at least by patrons of art. The latter are in the making. They belong mainly to the newly rich, the Marwaris, the money lenders, bankers and business magnates. For one reason or the other primarily not connected with art they are amassing vast collections of Indian art, chiefly ancient. And the miracle has happened more than once. By the impact of things amassed by them they became drawn towards the power held in some of these old paintings and not by others; they became aware of quality; they turned into true connoisseurs [sic] of art, became discriminating collectors. In quest of quality and meaning they begin to turn into true patrons and historians of art, they begin to look—in vain—for contemporary art worthy of their attention.

The names of Radha Krishna Jalan of Patna, Bihar, and of Gopi Krishna Kanoria of Calcutta may be mentioned. There are other such possible patrons—in search for the thing to be given patronage—in

scholars of Indian art took place more extensively through the Asian Cultural Program of the JDR 3rd Fund JDR3 Fund. From the late 1960s, through the 1970s, young scholars who would go on to become preeminent in the field of Indian art history had been funded through this organization to support their research into the field of Indian art. These included the likes of Pratapaditya Pal,³⁴⁷ B.N. Goswamy, Saryu Doshi, Michael Meister, Stuart Cary Welch and Catherine Glynn to name a few. Finally, in terms of the JDR3 art collection, as its reputation grew, objects were given on loan, but crucially, from 1959 onwards a series of important exhibitions showcasing Indian art took place at The Asia House Gallery of the Asia Society.

Beginning with the plan for travelling exhibitions of Asian Art, the Asia Society was involved in mounting some of the most important and innovative special exhibitions of Asian art in the 1960s, including some in the Asia House gallery when the society

Bombay, Ahmedabad and elsewhere. If the present order of society continues and wealth stays with them they may become the successors of India's princely patrons of the arts.

In comparison to the masses of painted canvass [sic] and paper on view in exhibitions which are part of the make believe cultural activities of the Indian towns, sculptures occupy a fraction of space and attention. This is the more disheartening if one looks back [at] the five thousand years of Indian art which had found in sculpture their truest medium. The lack of sculpture, the lack of quality in the few sculptures—mostly portraits—today is symptomatic of the death of a great tradition and of the void in which the contemporary sculptor finds himself.”

³⁴⁷ “It is our hope that this visit provided Dr. Pal with a good view of American scholarship and art collection in Asian art, an opportunity to make contacts with other scholars, and a favorable first impression of American culture, at least that seen in about a dozen of our major cities.” [on P.Pal's having been given funds through the JDR 3rd Fund to travel to the US in 1964. The Dept of State had put his name forward]

Elizabeth Bayne, Assistant to the Director, JDR 3rd Fund to Robert J. Boylan, Chief, South Asian Programs, Dept. of State, October 22, 1964 (ACC – Series: Museology/India – Box 102 – Folder: DF-6430)

“I feel that I have profited greatly in broadening the scope of my dissertation. While writing it I came to realize how clouded the history of art in India has been by metaphysical fog. I do not think that my eyes would have penetrated this fog had I not had access to the works of Panofsky and Gombrich. I find that a synthesis of their methods do help considerably to explain the psychology of both Indian and Nepali art and in my approach to the problems I have almost nothing in common with Dr. Kramrisch. I am afraid neither Dr. Kramrisch nor some of my professors at home, who subscribe strongly to her approach, are going to be pleased with what I say.” (written during the completion of his thesis. P. Pal's first visit to America was on a JDR 3rd Fund grant) P. Pal to Porter McCray – April 1965 (ACC – Series: Museology/India – Box 102 – Folder: DF-6430)

moved there.³⁴⁸ The first exhibition, “Masterpieces of Asian Art from American Collections” was curated by Laurence Sickman in 1959, and included pieces from the Eilenberg, Heeramanek and JDR3 collection. Subsequent exhibitions included important shows of Indian art included *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks* (1965) and *Master Bronzes of India* (1966). The former, curated by Stuart Cary Welch was notable for having included pieces from the collection of John Kenneth Galbraith, the eminent economist and former ambassador to India, as well as pieces from Jacqueline Kennedy’s collection, while the latter included many pieces from the personal collection of JDR3 and Blanchette Rockefeller. In 1970 the Rockefellers loaned a much larger selection of pieces for an exhibition focusing on their collection of Asian Art. The exhibition was not only a commemoration of 10 years of the Asia House gallery exhibitions, but was also a convenient option for the gallery director Gordon Washburn, given that the scheduled exhibition on Indonesian Art was jeopardized by the prevailing diplomatic problems between America and Indonesia.³⁴⁹ Finally, in 1974, JDR3 decided to give his private collection of Asian art to the Asia Society, thus giving the institution a permanent collection, and laying the foundations for the Asia Society Museum. This decision, taken just a few years before JDR3’s death marks a culmination of several years of considering the future role that he envisaged for his collection. The move was made after careful consideration of all available options and at various moments in 1973, JDR3 had spent

³⁴⁸ A seven-page memorandum for “A Plan for Travelling Exhibitions of Asian Art”, The Asia Society Inc. November 1, 1968; Folder 2724, Box 290, Series 12, RG200R, RFA.

³⁴⁹ Gordon B. Washburn to JDR3, August 28, 1969
“Reviewing our exhibition schedules for the next two seasons, I am struck by the fact that we are still scheduling “National Treasures of Indonesia” for our winter exhibition in 1971 (January – March). Yet the setbacks in our negotiations with the Indonesians that occurred this spring and summer suggest that we will do well to postpone the hope of that show to a slightly more distant date.”

time meeting individually with advisors as well as members of the board of the Asia Society. As early as 1966 he had asked Sherman Lee for advice on this matter,³⁵⁰ and considering the political and diplomatic relations America in Asia, particularly in a post-Vietnam era was an important dimension in his decision as well.³⁵¹ Eventually he decided that his collection would best serve in illuminating and complementing the work and activities of the Asia Society in informing American audiences of Asian culture through its historical forms which comprised his collection. In his letter to the Chairman of the Asia Society, George Ball, JDR3 stated his intent as follows:

“Because of my recognition of the importance of United States-Asian understanding and cooperation, because of my belief in what the exchange of our cultures can mean in the enrichment of our individual lives, and because of my belief in the Asia Society as a means to carry forward these objectives I

³⁵⁰ JDR3 raised the question of the future of his collection with Sherman Lee in September 1966. In response Sherman Lee submitted a memorandum outlining possibilities for the ultimate placement of JDR3's Oriental collection. In it he listed four options—giving the collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the creation of a private museum of Oriental art, the creation of a gallery or museum in connection with the Asia Society, and finally giving the collection to another museum in a metropolitan area. (Sherman Lee to JDR, November 8, 1966; Folder 41, Box 8, Series 3, RG5, RFA)

³⁵¹ JDR3 wrote the following in a letter to his friend Lila Acheson Wallace: “Since 1951 Blanchette and I have collected Oriental art covering the four principal cultures of Asia. After much thought and study over a period of time, we have decided to give the collection to the Asia Society believing it will enhance the programs of the Society and, at the same time, the Society's efforts will add to the meaningfulness of the collection....
Last Fall the Trustees of the Asia Society met for two days at my home in the country to discuss the suitability and desirability of my offer to give my collection. What impressed me the most in the discussion (in which 24 of the 28 Trustees participated) was the feeling that there was a new era ahead in terms of United States – Asian relations. This, obviously, was to a great extent based on our withdrawal from Vietnam militarily and its far-reaching implications for Asia as a whole. Also, of course, it picked up the spirit of the Nixon doctrine in which he emphasized that Asians must handle their own problems with the United States on the sidelines to help only as might be appropriate. In this connection, it was felt that the collection might add a new dimension to the Society's efforts partly as a focal point of special interest and partly inspirational, if I may use the word, because of the beauty of the Asian art.” JDR3 to Lila Acheson Wallace, February 1, 1974. (JDR3 Papers – RG5 – Series 3 – Box 77 – Folder 530)

increasingly became persuaded that the Society offered a promising and meaningful repository for the collection. Also, I have become persuaded that the collection would strengthen and make more effective the work of the Society in the years ahead just at a time when, in my opinion, we have the opportunity of developing a new and more creative relationship with Asia.”³⁵²

While the place for Indian art within this larger cultural framework of Asia harked back to earlier imaginings of the unity of Asian culture in America,³⁵³ the specific contours of the Rockefeller collection’s emphasis was more in keeping with not only new geopolitical relationships with Asia on the one hand, but also the post-war valorization of Indian sculpture, as an area “prime innovation and creation.”³⁵⁴

Connoisseurly Obsessions: Edwin Binney 3rd and his collection of Indian paintings



Figure 124: Edwin Binney 3rd (1925-1986)

³⁵² JDR3 to George Ball, January 31, 1974; Folder 413, Box 48, Series 2, RG5, RFA.

³⁵³ The Japanese scholar and later influential curator of Asian art at the Museum of Fine Arts Okakuro Kakuzo, wrote extensively on the theme of Asia at the turn of the century. His seminal work *Ideals of the East* (1905) famously began with the statement “Asia is One.”

³⁵⁴ Lee, Asia House Gallery, and Asia Society, *Asian Art; Selections from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd.*, 9.

In contrast to Rockefeller, for whom collecting was something that he indulged in on the weekends and ultimately tangential to his larger interests in Asia, for Binney, collecting was a far more compulsive and personal activity, and one that spurred scholarly curiosity and engagement. As the grandson of the founder of the Binney & Smith (makers of Crayola), Edwin Binney 3rd came from an affluent background. The son of Edwin Binney Jr. (1899-1928) a record-holding member of the Yale swimming team and a petroleum geologist and Elizabeth Peters he began collecting at the age of five starting with trolley transfers of the Portland Metropolitan Transit System. As a child, when his father died, he began to collect bars of soap from his travels with his mother through Europe.³⁵⁵ He graduated from Harvard College in 1946, and went on to do a PhD from Harvard in 1961 specializing in 19th century French Literature, and writing his dissertation on the ballets of Théophile Gautier. He married the dancer Alicia Langford, with whom he established the Boston Ballet Company. His wife had two children from a previous marriage, and Binney adopted her children and developed a close relationship with them. Indeed, along with his daughter Gail, he developed a close collecting relationship, fostering and encouraging her interest in collecting quilts.³⁵⁶ Stemming from his interest in literature, he began to acquire a unique and impressive collection of 10,000 prints on ballets and theatre material, which he later donated to his alma mater.

He was thus not new to collecting, but as a young man in his 30s, and like many first-time collectors of Indian painting, his introduction was through Persian miniatures,

³⁵⁵ They were, as Caron Smith notes, “another collection related to travel... ordered, arrayed and preserved” B. N Goswamy et al., *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting* (San Diego; [Seattle]: San Diego Museum of Art ; Distributed by University of Washington Press, 2005), 8.

³⁵⁶ San Diego Museum of Art, Smithsonian Institution, and Traveling Exhibition Service, *Homage to Amanda: Two Hundred Years of American Quilts from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd & Gail Binney-Winslow*. (San Francisco: R K Press, 1984).

which were more widely established among the collecting elite. By Binney's own retroactive admission his forays into Indian art were tentative and undistinguished and his first Indian painting was bought in 1958 from a gallery on Newbury Street in Boston. Nevertheless, the portrait of Mirza Husain Raza Khan, vizier of Asif-ud-Daulah, with an attendant carrying a hookah, elicited much excitement from him: "This was my first "Indian" purchase, and what a major event that was! We looked for days at the four or five portraits at Childs, and then made this choice for two reasons: the gold wash in the watercolor sky was so lovely and, there was an attendant, so we were really getting "two" portraits. The matte of this painting had been "beautified" by the adding of an ornamental border—GHASTLY. I took the border off (making several "thin" spots on the borders. (I have since learned [not] to cover up disagreeable things, but to leave them on!)."³⁵⁷

³⁵⁷ (Accession Number: 1990.415, Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

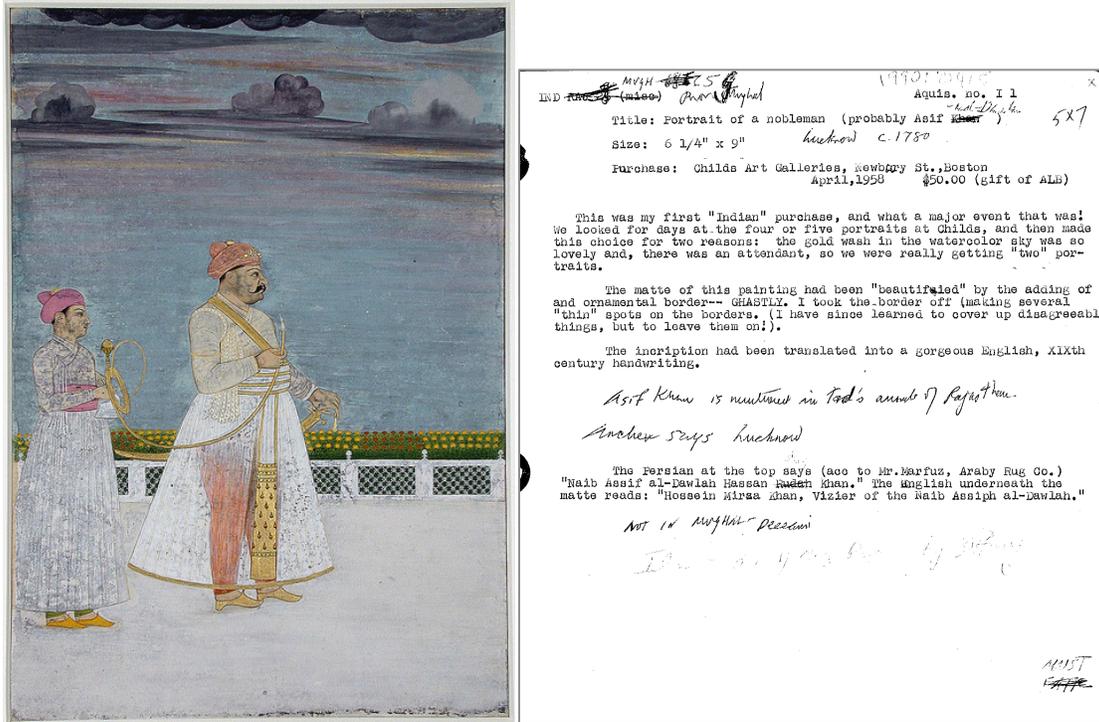


Figure 125: Edwin Binney 3rd first Indian painting (left); Accession notes for the purchase (right)

His observations on this painting, recorded at some point after his purchase, are from a series of accession notes on his purchases, no doubt begun when the pursuit and collection of Indian paintings had become a commitment. The descriptions in his notes are rich and are revealing in terms of what one learns of Binney's temperament as a collector but also as a scholar – he noted in delicious detail the gossipy backstage machinations and negotiations in pursuit of coveted pieces that read like a juicy memoir, but also the careful and methodical organization of scholarly references and comparisons to other works. It is in these notes that the formation of Binney's dual roles as a scholar-collector first becomes apparent. The passion with which he pursued and assessed each and every piece was evident, even as he made calculated assessments on purchases depending on the state of his collection and his finances.

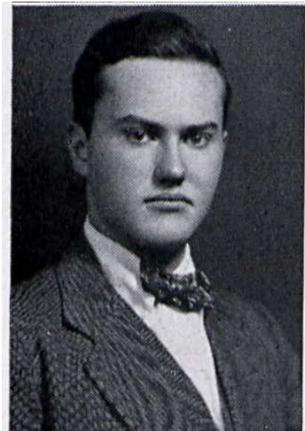


Figure 126: Stuart Cary Welch (1928 – 2008)

Binney began collecting Indian painting with an interest in Sultanate and Mughal painting, and his early purchases reflect these tastes. His tastes were as yet informed by those with more experience in the field, such as Stuart Cary Welch (1928-2008), with whom his relationship was variously collegial and competitive over the years. Regarding a Sultanate period leaf from a Khamsa of Nizami, purchased early in 1959, his initial mild interest was heightened when he noted that Cary Welch was interested in it too.³⁵⁸

Welch taught at Harvard University where he trained a whole generation of art

³⁵⁸ “In the day before I visited Mr. [H.K.] Monif, a series of five miniatures from this manuscript had been brought in, all very dirty, creased and generally messy. I bought this one, the prettiest of the bunch, interesting to me because of its lovely “Chinese Clouds” in gold and the series of “spongy” rocks on the horizon, alternating in pinks and blues. I was under no illusions that I had bought a wonderful painting, but I liked it. . . . Shortly thereafter, Carey [sic] Welch went to see Mr. Monif and bought all the rest of the series. He called me and wanted mine also. (I immediately became suspicious and determined to hold onto this “find” of mine which interested him). At the de Cordova and Dana Museum in Lincoln, in the summer of 1960 when Carey’s collection was exhibited in a large part, one of the miniatures he had bought was shown, labelled “c.1520 Persian or Indian---‘Provincial Persian School’”. I feel that the miniatures should be dated in the XVth century (as Mr. Monif did), although I could not possibly argue with Carey Welch. Needless to say, I am all the less likely to want to part with the miniature although it has always been listed as “OMIT” in any list of my collection.” EB3’s leaf bought from Monif in 1959 for \$50, while other leaves from the collection appeared at auction at Sotheby’s in Dec 12, 1972 and sold for 380-700GBP. (Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

historians,³⁵⁹ and eventually gave more than 300 works to the Harvard Art Museums from his private collection. Moreover, Welch was a curator who wrote extensively on Indian painting and mentored many private collectors (and sometimes trading works with them too).³⁶⁰ He thus nurtured channels whereby larger publics could see this work, which had hitherto largely circulated among private individuals or had been confined to small exhibitions in museums. From the first important display of Mughal Art in America, titled “The Art of Mughal India” at the Asia House Gallery of the Asia Society in 1964, during his long career, Welch curated several important exhibitions, that drew from works in many of the rich private collections (but particularly the Binney collection) he had played a hand in forming, including “A Flower from Every Meadow – Indian Paintings from American Collections” also at the Asia Society in 1973, where about thirty per cent of the exhibition was from Binney’s collection. His magnum opus was “India!” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in 1985 in conjunction with the Festival of India, and was intended to introduce Indian culture that had hitherto been confined to a “relatively, small if widening circle” to Americans on unprecedented scale.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ At a time when Harvard University did not offer a program in Indian art history, Welch was self-taught. He in turn tutored several of the major subsequent scholars, including Milo C. Beach, Glenn D. Lowry, Michael Brand, Mark Zebrowski and John Seyller, who continue to impact the field till today.

³⁶⁰ Speaking of the genesis of his collecting habits, Topsfield writes: “Hodgkin immediately came under the spell of Welch’s generous enthusiasms....As his friend Bruce Chatwin wrote: “The upshot of the meeting [with Welch] was the Howard’s hunting instincts were thoroughly aroused. He bought, sold and traded; he perfected the tactics of the bazaar; and for over ten years he channeled about half his creative energies into his collection.” Andrew Topsfield, “Rajput and Mughal painting in Howard Hodgkin’s collection”, Andrew Topsfield and Milo Cleveland Beach, *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991).

³⁶¹ “The Sculpture of India, 3000 B.C.-1300 A.D”, took place at the National Gallery, Washington D.C. and the accompanying catalogue was written by Pramod Chandra. Chandra, Pramod. *The Sculpture of India, 3000 B.C.-1300 A.D.* Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1985. The Catalogue titled *India: Art and Culture 1300-1900* that accompanied the exhibition “India!” held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from September 14, 1985, to January 6, 1986, is a nearly 500 page tome, profusely illustrated and with extensive essays that has since become one of the most important compendiums on the subject

Thus when Binney began collecting Indian paintings in the 1960s, he was entering a well-scripted field that already had many players with scholars and collectors spread across three continents. In America there were a handful of players, and besides Cary Welch, Ralph Benkaim, John McDonald, Paul Walter, George Bickford etc.³⁶² Among these collectors, Cary Welch and Benkaim were two that Binney competed and consulted with during the thirty-odd years that he was a collector of Indian art. Moreover, unlike Norton Simon who began collecting in the 1970s, Binney concentrated on Indian painting, and was scarcely interested in bronze or stone objects. It is worth remembering that this was still a time when connoisseurship played a greater role in art historical inquiry, and was the basis of much of the attributions and differentiations that collectors and scholars alike made. Binney very quickly situated himself in this milieu and became part of a generation of collectors interested in painting. In the postwar era, an economically beleaguered Europe was no match for America's wealth and the buyers at auctions in London, were increasingly American.³⁶³ By 1961 Richard Ettinghausen, then at the Freer Gallery, had published *Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections* (which included some of Binney's works), and in 1965 Stuart Cary Welch

and was reprinted in 1993. The third exhibition that took place in San Francisco was "Kushan Sculpture: Images from Early India" and its catalogue was written by Stanislaw J. Czuma and Rekha Morris. Pramod Chandra, "American Understanding of Indian Art" Louis A Jacob and Symposium on American Understanding of India, *American Understanding of India: A Symposium ; Papers Read at a Conference Held at the Library of Congress, 23 - 25 October, 1986 Convened in Conjunction with the Festival of India 1985 - 1986* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2001), 136.

³⁶² "I am always interested in that "the competition" is doing. Paul Walter had a most interesting Sultante picture that he bought from Doris Wiener (1979 exhib, no 9) which Cary used for A Flower from Every Meadow, at Asia House, April 1973. I liked the picture, and was easily convinced to get this when I spotted it at Doris's on the way to the Cape in spring, 1973---and realized that it was from the same set." (Acc. No. 1990.578; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

³⁶³ the dealer Terrence McInerney notes "Binney represents the Americanization of a new, postwar generation of Indian painting collectors. From the late 1950s, as the market caught fire in the West, the action shifted from Europe to the United States. London remained an important entrepôt for Indian art, but the buyers, even in London, were increasingly American." McInerney in Mason and Goswamy, *Intimate Worlds*, 8..

organized the exhibition *Gods, Thrones and Peacocks* at the Asia House Galleries in New York.³⁶⁴ In her article on Edwin Binney’s collection of Ottoman art, Keelan Overton has referred to Binney’s engagement in the art world, his interaction with his peers, and his assigning of value as part of a form of “social collecting”.

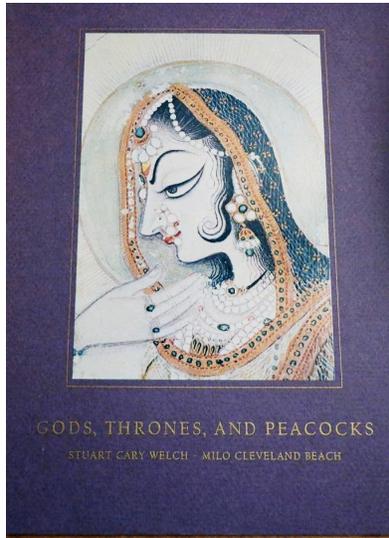


Figure 127: Welch, Stuart C, and Milo C. Beach. *Gods, Thrones, and Peacocks*. New York:, 1965.

Binney also cultivated his interests by referring to all available publications of work in the field, and his library, built over his years of collecting and eventually bequeathed to the San Diego Museum of Art included titles of most available canonical and minor texts relating to the study of Indian painting, as well as catalogues of all any relevant exhibitions containing Indian paintings. In his purchase notes for an early Sultanate period work (Khamasa of Amir Khusrau) bought from Nasli Heeramaneck, who had brought them from India in 1962, Binney noted: “...The importance of the miniature lies

³⁶⁴ Richard Ettinghausen, *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1961); Asia Society et al., *Gods, Thrones, and Peacocks; Northern Indian Painting from Two Traditions: Fifteenth to Nineteenth Centuries* ([New York: Distributed by H.N. Abrams, 1965).

in the fact that it belongs to a manuscript several of whose other miniatures have been reproduced. In [Richard] Ettinghausen’s *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections* (Lalit Kala Akademi, 1961) are shown two miniatures from this same manuscript, illus. same size as originals, and the same as this one.”³⁶⁵



Figure 128: Folio from a Mid 15th-century Khamsa of Amir Khusrau

Through the early 1960s, he continued to develop his Mughal collection, eager to buy those with creditable provenance and examples that typified “Mughal” style. From the very beginning he had a self-reflexive take on his acquisitions, even as he increased his understanding of the field – in his notes he would often elaborate upon the individual purchase, including the circumstances that led to and surrounded the acquisition, ranging from negotiations with a dealer, to opinions sought and received from scholars

³⁶⁵ The notation follows: “These miniatures are from a now dispersed manuscript, of which over 25 paintings are known.” Regarding another Sultanate painting bought at the same auction (Sotheby’s Dec 12, 1972) he notes: “This was a MUST....first, because it had been published and exhibited. Second:- because of the Mughal-Deccani show, then in progress.” (Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

concerning the piece in question, and finally his conclusions or judgments on the work in question. A painting bought in 1961, was initially thought to be part of the Baburnama, carried a terse, almost timid, assessment by Binney: "This is certainly my finest Mughal painting. The Babur Nama, along with the earlier Hamza Nama and the later Akbar Nama ... where the major works of the reign of Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.)". Lengthy emendations ensue, and eventually "Babur" was scratched and replaced by "Akbar" ascribing it to an Akbarnama folio and the names of other artists would be added.

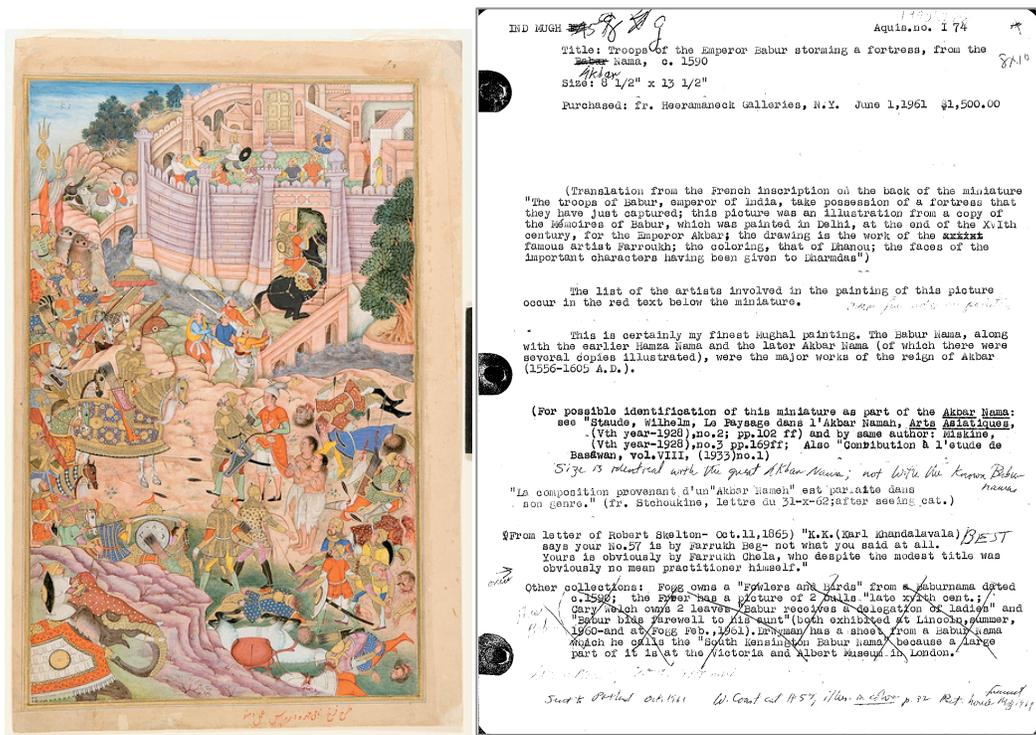


Figure 129: Akbarnama folio originally thought to be a Baburnama folio (left); Accession notes (right)

Binney's tone in this early purchase would be in contrast to the confident and more assertive judgments on paintings he acquired in later years, even as he would continued his practice of lengthy notes with subsequent additions as new materials and new insights came to light. Moreover as Mughal paintings were most often circulated as

single leafs (whole manuscripts, especially those with illustrations, were invariably taken apart and their pages sold individually to maximize on sale price; similarly other compilations of paintings in “albums” for the rulers, nobles or later the British were separated out for individual sale), catalogue entries detail other known works from the same source or shared work by the same artist’s hand. Besides the mandatory descriptive note that invariably introduced the narrative or contextual elements of each work, it is in these details of provenance and companion pieces, as well as in the detailed listing of sites of prior exhibition/publication of the particular work in question that Binney’s character as a collector comes through. Indeed Binney cultivated his interests by referring to all available publications of work in the field, and his library, built over his years of collecting included titles of most available canonical and minor texts relating to the study of Indian painting. Although he did not read any languages from the Indian subcontinent, where paintings carried inscriptions, he would seek out specialists to translate the inscriptions. He eventually referred to himself as a “scholar-collector” and while giving the George Birdwood Memorial Lecture on Deccani Painting in 1979, demonstrated his knowledge of the field in an extensive literature review preamble.³⁶⁶

His typed notes would include records of when a piece was loaned (or given) to museums or for exhibitions, and early ascriptions and attributions would be struck-through and corrected by hand as new scholarship came to light. The notes thus have a palimpsestic quality that reveal insights into Binney’s interests and priorities as a collector, and seen alongside the works in question, give one an understanding of the changing nature of the field of Indian painting. Other former collectors of works now in

³⁶⁶ Edwin Binney 3rd, “Indian Painting in the Deccan” *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 127 (The Society, 1978). 784.

his possession included A.C. Ardeshir, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Stuart Cary Welch, Hagop Kevorkian, to list just a few of the recurrent names, and the provenance of these works were clearly noted, both in Binney’s accession notes and catalogue entries. One can read this possibly as a form of talismanic identification with previous owners, through the object, and this was something that Binney self-consciously noted, as in his entry alongside a late South Indian portrait of a young girl: “Ex.coll: P.C. Manuk and Miss G.M. Coles. I bought this solely because of the previous ownership. It doesn’t seem wrong to have a miniature that once belonged to these pioneers of Indian miniature collecting, and she’s perfectly pleasant.”³⁶⁷



Figure 130: Paintings formerly in the P.C. Manuk and G.M. Coles collection (left); and in the Coomaraswamy collection (right)

³⁶⁷ (Acc. No. 1990.574; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

Thus it is as a *hybrid* subject,³⁶⁸ the scholar *and* collector, that Binney could *make himself* not just the owner, but the inheritor of each work. This was an acquired legitimacy, not simply through the purchase and collection of works but through the concerted study of them as well. In a letter to Edwin Binney 3rd from 1965, Dona Luisa Coomaraswamy wrote, “I know of no one who would be more understanding and appreciative of the quality of this drawing than you, and because I am confident that my late husband, Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy would have very much wanted someone like you to have it and share with him its beauty, I should like you to accept it and keep it. This is a token of gratitude to you for awareness of the significance and beauty of Indian things.” The drawing she was referring to were from the Nala-Damayanti series of drawings, most of which were in the Boston Museum, with a few others in other institutions like the Freer, and the Cleveland Museum and still others were retained by Mrs. Coomaraswamy, some of which Binney later bought through her son.³⁶⁹ In his notes on the folio in question “Nala and Damayanti make love” Binney noted that the entire series, with exception of his folio (because it depicted an explicit sexual scene) had been reproduced in Alvan Clark Eastman’s book from 1959, but added that “This scene is apparently not “pornographic”, as Nala is wearing a cap. The action therefore is a “religious rite” rather than a more simple sexual dalliance.”³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ Meike Bal, “Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting” John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (Reaktion Books, 1994), 108–109.

³⁶⁹ For a Hindola Raga (1990.607) bought from Dona Luisa Coomaraswamy’s estate through her son, Binney wrote: “This is from a MAJOR set. Until the discovery and publication of the many mid-XVIIth century Mewar series, this ragamala was one of the best known of the early Rajasthani sets. Coomaraswamy had (probably?) the whole set, and sold individual leaves to various owners.” (Acc. No. 1990.607; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 4; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archive)

³⁷⁰ (Acc. No. 1990:1923; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 6; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)



Figure 131: Hamzanama folio

Quite early in his collecting, Binney's desire to be comprehensive and acquire examples from all the various periods and styles of Mughal painting was evident. In one such instance he focused on acquiring a page from the Hamzanama – by then a well-known and much sought after Mughal manuscript dating to the early reign of the emperor Akbar. In 1963, he finally bought a folio from Nasli Heeramanek for \$3500, and described the process as such: “The possibility of having a Hamza Nama page has always been very remote, particularly after my visit to Rattan in Paris. That dealer owns three, of which two are very, very poor, although one of the two divs is “fun” because so ugly. Rattan, whom I saw in August 1962, is really unwilling to sell, and least of all for anything beside a very large price. (n.b. There have been well-founded rumors about the presence in India of a wonderful Hamza Nama page, in excellent condition, which was being considered by the National Museum in New Delhi, price about \$9000)...Nasli came back from India in June (?) 1963, having found this sheet under a film of varnish. It is not in good condition, having been folded in fourths at some time in the past. The faces

have also been overpainted. The possibility of owning a miniature from this crucially important text, and my relief at discovering that the picture portrayed is a very decent one, made it absolutely impossible not to buy this.”³⁷¹

The description above indicates that quality of an individual piece was always kept in mind as purchases were considered, but as Binney’s temperament as a collector gradually developed, his aesthetic predilections for the poetic, whimsical, erotic and occasionally outlandish and gory also became evident, and he delighted in the unusual aspects of his purchases, making note of features in specific works. He peppered his notes on paintings and purchases with personal whimsical comments, noting how they were “fun” or g. on his purchase of a late Mughal painting of Bahadur Shah II from Eyre and Hobhouse in 1984, he wrote: “I’ve always liked the persona of Bahadur Shah II, and was very glad to find another miniature showing him. He certainly was NOT the cause of “all our troubles” in the Mutiny. A very nice little picture.”³⁷²

³⁷¹ (Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

³⁷² (Acc. No. 1990.401; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

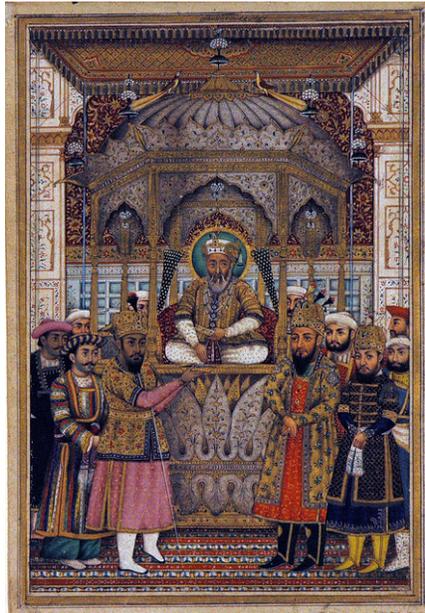


Figure 132: Bahadur Shah II on his throne

It is clear from his accounts and the extensive notes he placed on individual paintings that he was strategic about his purchases, and in his early years of collecting Indian paintings, as he was developing an understanding of the field into which he was entering, he sought examples that would make his collections at par with established collections, noting in 1961 on the purchase of folios from a Rasikapriya manuscript, “These illustrations are one of the “staples” of collections in America. Mr. Heeramaneck must have disseminated much of the part of the manuscript that is not in New Delhi.”³⁷³ Rarity also attracted him in the early stages of his collecting career, noting on the purchase of a 12th century Nepali Palm-Leaf manuscript. “Palm leaf manuscripts are rare. Complete ones—absolutely impossible to find. Ones with matching covers—the next

³⁷³ “The illustrations were on each side of the sheers and Mr. Heeramaneck had many of them split lengthwise and sold separately. I had already reserved one side of one which was my favourite and was waiting for him to “do the necessary work”, when he offered me both sides for less than half again as much as a single side” (Acc. No. 1990.946; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 5; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

rarer level of impossibility. This had to be bought even though I did not want the whole thing.”³⁷⁴ At other times still, Binney was not immune to the lures of publicity and candidly confessed in his notes on the purchase of a Kangra Siva and Parvati, “The price of this miniature has nothing to do with its excellence. It is concerned solely with the fact that it was illustrated in Life (an article on art collectors and where to buy all kinds of items in N.Y.).”³⁷⁵

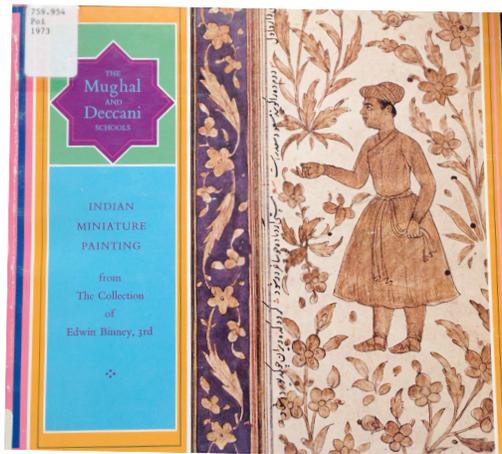


Figure 133: Edwin Binney 3rd, *Indian Miniature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd: The Mughal and Deccani Schools with some related Sultanate material. An Exhibition at the Portland Art Museum (1973-1974)*

Binney was conscious of upholding this greater role and responsibility that American collectors had in showcasing Indian works of art. He had organized exhibitions from his collections as early as 1962 when he published the catalogue *Persian and Indian Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd* which was held at the Portland Art Museum. He continued to loan pieces from his collection to exhibitions in the 1960s, including those at the Asia House Gallery. Speaking in 1973 of the collections of Indian art abroad, in a catalogue accompanying an exhibition of Mughal and Deccani paintings, he tellingly noted that while “it remained for the British to give these works the

³⁷⁴ (Acc. No. 1990.271; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

³⁷⁵ (Acc. No. 1990.1311; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 7; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

recognition they deserve” to a western audience, through collections such as those at the V&A, “It is hoped that the present exhibition [his] and catalogue will help to show both Indians and British that America also treasures these works, the art of one as made known by the other.”³⁷⁶



Figure 134: W.G Archer (1907-1979)

Binney’s comparison with the collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum was not arbitrary, for W.G Archer (1907-1979), the keeper of the Indian section of the V&A, was a friend and advisor who guided him through his collecting practice, especially in the early years. Archer had been an advisor to other American collectors, having played a similar advisory/proxy role for Stuart Cary Welch in the 1950s, and Binney and Archer possibly even met through Cary Welch. By 1962 Archer was bidding at London auctions on Binney’s behalf. Leading up to a sale, there would be protracted and colourful correspondence between the two men with detailed descriptions of the merits and demerits of particular works, objectively as well as in the context of Binney’s collection itself. A “battle plan” was often laid out, with the risks of other bidders assessed, and the

³⁷⁶ Edwin Binney and Portland Art Museum (Or.), *Indian Miniature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd: An Exhibition at the Portland Art Museum, December 2, 1973-January 20, 1974 : Catalogue and Text* (Portland, Or.: The Museum, 1974). xii

limits placed, and oftentimes one comes across a gleeful notation by Binney alongside the description of a particular lot in one of Archer's mails, simply stating "MINE" or "GOT"! When the stakes were exceptionally high however, more than enough for Archer to take responsibility on himself for, he would urge Binney to come in person as he did in December of 1967.³⁷⁷



Figure 135: Sherman Lee (1918-2008)

In this regard the comparison with the relationship between Sherman Lee and John D Rockefeller 3rd, is worth noting. Although Lee was based in Cleveland as curator of Asian Art at the Cleveland Art Museum, he would make regular visits to New York, and spend time with JDR3 and Blanchette, discussing individual objects that had been offered to the Rockefellers on approval by the handful of dealers specializing in Asian art. At times the objects themselves would be in the Rockefeller residence, and its various merits and demerits would be discussed at length.³⁷⁸ At other times, the conversation was

³⁷⁷ "I have just got your letter of 18 November and must say you really are most splendidly seated on the horns of a dilemma!...I really to think the best thing would be for you to come, see thins for yourself, work out a very careful plan of campaign, stay with Tim [Mildred] and me...I think it very important that you should come because I quite honestly do not see how we can possibly predict who is going to be there, what they will go for, what priorities they will have." (WGA to EB3, 22 November 1967; Auction Correspondence, EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

³⁷⁸ "Sherman Lee came to 1 Beekman in the afternoon. We had a long session beginning at 3:00 and running until 10:00, going over all our pieces of Asian art classifying them A, B, or C, A meaning

on the basis of photographs and descriptions from the dealers. Such discussions between Lee and the Rockefellers would often continue via correspondence, and the letters exchanged are revealing in terms of the kinds of preference both of Lee and the Rockefellers and the emphasis placed on certain elements rather than others.³⁷⁹ Even when Rockefeller travelled, he sought Lee's advice on the dealers he should visit in places like London and Paris, which were the other centres from which he occasionally bought pieces of art. He was deeply grateful for Lee's inputs and acknowledged the same in a letter to him from 1966: "Our work together in regard to Asian art has been a source of pleasure and satisfaction to Blanchette and me. We greatly appreciate your interest in our collection and your wise and helpful advice concerning purchases. As you know, we rely very much on your judgement."³⁸⁰

JDR3 also received advice on Asian art from other leading curators of the day including Laurence Sickman of the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, and more closely Aschwin Lippe of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. Among the dealers, in London JDR3 developed a close relationship with some in particular, including Adrian Maynard of Spink's the leading London bookseller, as is evidenced by series of

outstanding, B meaning good, and C meaning of a quality we really should dispose of." (JDR3 Diary entry, May 15, 1964; Folder 77, Box 11, Series 3, RG5, RFA)

³⁷⁹ An example of the discussion surrounding the purchase of a Chola bronze went as follows: "Enclosed are photos, some better than the ones I sent you, of the bronze here in Brussels. I have stopped off between Paris & Amsterdam to see it and I can only say the following:

1. It is genuine
2. It is unique in many of its representational details, notably the knot at the back of the head; the fact that it is cast in one piece plus the base
3. Sculpturally it is extremely fine, vigorous, much movement and finely proportioned.
4. It is very early, c.900 A.D. with still some Pallava features.
5. Height 76cm
6. Price, after much argument, discussion etc. \$50,000 (reported to have been purchased in Tanjore)..." (Sherman Lee to JDR3, April 14, 1965; folder 403, Box 47, series 2, RG5, RFA)

³⁸⁰ JDR3 to Sherman Lee, December 12, 1966; Folder 407, Box 47, Series 2, RG5, RFA.

correspondence with him over the years.³⁸¹ Similarly Alice Boney, the famous Tokyo-based dealer would offer JDR3 works, most often by sending photographs. But in New York itself, JDR3 bought many of his pieces from the leading dealer in Indian art Nasli Heeramaneck and later from Doris Weiner.³⁸² It was JDR3's relationship with Heeramaneck that was revealing for the dealer realized his client's preference for sculptured works and offered him some extremely fine pieces.³⁸³ Besides the exchange of several letters between Rockefeller and Heeramaneck, found in the JDR3 Papers, entries from JDR3's diaries through the 1960s, record several visits to Heeramaneck's gallery/home in the Upper East Side. Binney too was a regular buyer from Nasli Heeramaneck in New York, Ray Lewis in San Francisco, and later Doris Weiner in New

³⁸¹ "I was interested that you were off on another trip to India. Please do not hesitate to bring to our attention any piece which you may run into which you feel is truly outstanding, even if we already have something of the same general type and character. Always we are glad to improve the quality of our collection."

(JDR3 to Adrian Maynard, August 14, 1969; Folder 438, Box 51, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

³⁸² By the late 1960s, as Heeramaneck's career was winding down, Doris Weiner was fast becoming one of the leading dealers of South Asian art in New York. In a letter to JDR3 from 1969, referring to his recent purchase of a Chola bronze she opened with:

"My husband and I would like to express to you how pleased we are that the Surasundari maiden has joined a most distinguished collection. She is a rare beauty."

(Doris Wiener to JDR3, January 2, 1969; Folder 412, Box 48, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

By the early 1970s JDR3 was realizing that his collection was becoming unwieldy, he wrote the following to Doris Wiener:

"As I have mentioned to you before, one of the problems which I have faced increasingly with my small collection is the disproportionate number of Indian bronzes. This, of course, has come about primarily because so many really good bronzes have become available. However, it is a matter of concern to me as I have wanted to have a reasonably balanced collection representing Asia broadly."

(JDR3 to Doris Wiener, March 19, 1971; Folder 412, Box 48, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

³⁸³ The correspondence between the two men included exchanges such as the following:

"Let me say first how much we appreciate your interest in our collection of Oriental art. Already we have bought from you some significant pieces and we look forward to continuing to work with you in the years ahead. What means particularly much to us is your willingness to speak frankly as to the quality of the pieces – whether or not you feel they measure up to our aspirations of eventually having a collection which would be small but would hopefully only include the best which is available."

(JDR3 to Nasli Heeramaneck, June 5, 1963; folder 405, Box 47, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

"My wife & I were very happy that you & Mrs. Rockefeller came to see our latest & finest acquisition. It was a fresh pleasure & satisfaction to show you these objects, as both you and Mrs. Rockefeller seemed so appreciative of their quality. It is my aim & desire to be able to show you objects of the very finest quality."

(Nasli Heeramaneck to JDR3, September 2, 1969; Folder 405, Box 47, Series 2, RG5, RFA)

York and also bought works from dealers such as Maggs Brothers when he traveled to London.

That collectors, curators and dealers shared cozy relationships was not unsurprising for the era, and conflicts of interest were ostensibly avoided by arrangements between the parties concerned. Nevertheless, it was a delicate balance and one that needed to be carefully managed. In the instance when JDR3 was considering putting some works from his collection up for auction along side Nasli and Heeramanek's collection after the successful first sale of pieces from their collection, Lee urged caution: "As to having a joint sale with Heeramenck, I have mixed feelings... Heeramanek has a good reputation, particularly in the field of Indian and Near Eastern art. On the other hand, you would be allowing your name to be used in connection with a dealer's liquidation and this is a little bit different from having your name included with those of other collectors who are disposing of surplus material. This may seem like a small point, but I think it has numerous over-tones. For example, other dealers here and abroad might not react favorably to the conjunction of the two names. Or, since a distinction would be made in the catalogue between your things and those of Heeramenck, the buyer would distinguish between works which you were casting off and works which Heeramenck would be liquidating. There is a slight difference between the private collector who is discarding and the dealer who is consolidating his holdings and raising money."³⁸⁴

³⁸⁴ Sherman Lee to JDR3, October 28, 1964 (Folder 429, Box 50, Series 2, RG 5, RFA)

It was not uncommon for collectors to begin to refine their collections as their vision for its scope became clearer. Nevertheless JDR3 did not study individual sculptures in the manner or to the extent that Binney did with paintings, and relied on scholars like Lee to assess the art historical value of the pieces in his collection and give him direction. Binney by contrast had received early guidance from Archer, but quickly developed a keen sense of the field and became an active participant in a milieu of avid collectors who traded between themselves, swapping works, each aiming to refine his collection.³⁸⁵ It is clear from his accounts and the extensive notes he placed on individual paintings that he was strategic about his purchases, and candidly remarks that through a process of refining he sold or traded older works of “less than prime aesthetic importance” for the purchase of those that were better suited to the larger aims of his collection.³⁸⁶ It is worth noting as well that in practical terms, Indian paintings because of their size were easier to transport (legally and illegally) and also more conducive to the informal exchanges and swapping of hands.³⁸⁷ Moreover, unlike sculpture, which more often than

³⁸⁵ “Painting in a studio is naturally a lonely occupation. Collecting, on the other hand, brings with it an almost automatic series of international social contacts, with dealers, scholars and occasionally with fellow collectors. The conversations that ensue (particularly with other collectors) can be illuminating, inspiring and sometimes quite extraordinarily childish – even descending to the level of ‘My picture is bigger and better than your picture...’” –Howard Hodgkin in Topsfield and Beach, *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, 11. Edwin Binney 3rd and Howard Hodgkin were acquainted with each others’ collections, and occasionally traded paintings.

³⁸⁶ Edwin Binney, 3rd, “The Binney Collections in San Diego”, *Apollo*, London, vol. CXV, no. 244, June 1982, 33. “Yes, we are quite willing to sell for you any miniatures that you feel should be weeded out/” (H. Clifford Maggs of Maggs Bros. London, to EB3, 26th October 1962; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

³⁸⁷ In the pre-1972 era the export of Indian paintings still ostensibly required getting an export license, however anecdotally this step was often circumvented. The private nature of the sales meant that paintings could pass from one owner to the next informally, with little if any “official” sanction. Painted folios from Indian manuscripts could typically be slipped between the covers of books and innocuously transported across borders without detection. The thriving tourist business of new paintings that recreated the older stylistic genres of miniature paintings also made the detection of originals and copies a difficult matter for

not came from a temple or archaeological site, paintings in the post-war era were often already in private hands and entered the market with greater ease.

Besides the expected channels of sourcing works from dealers or other collectors, occasionally works of art, and paintings in particular served as a means for extra cash for Indians visiting the US, who were at that time subject to currency restrictions, and Binney bought at least a couple of paintings in this manner.³⁸⁸ In Binney's notes he often wrote that the work in question came from one of Heeramanek's recent travels to India. While Binney was interested in the paintings that Heeramanek brought back, the 1960s were also a period when dealers were able to source sculpture with relative ease, and led to JDR3's remark about a great number of bronzes entering the market, noted in Chapter 3. This would contribute to the run-ins with the law that the other prominent American collector of Indian sculpture Norton Simon would face when the Indian government declared a Nataraja in his collection as having been stolen from a temple in South India.³⁸⁹ It was the same year when India's indignation at the loss of her cultural property led to the passing of the draconian Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act.³⁹⁰ Bonnie

border authorities. Ram Gopal Vijayavargiys was a famous Jaipur-based dealer and painter, who not only supplied older paintings, but also produced modern reproductions.

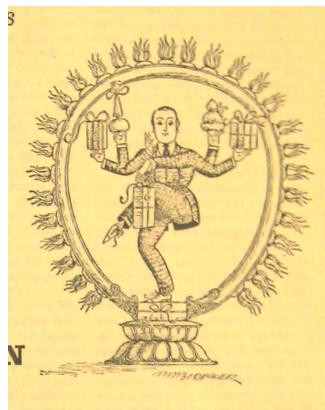
³⁸⁸ "This (like I 357-8) was no doubt brought from India by some Indian who could not bring out "pocket money", but could bring out miniatures to sell! A very curious miniature." (Acc. No. 1990.835; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives). This was also an instance where Binney in his notes wrote "Unidentified subject from unidentified manuscript!" adding a description as follows: "a river separates the miniature into two halves:- above: children and gopis greet a blue figure with halo and male sex organs. Below: Rajput nobles adore a seated Krishna (with female breasts!)" In his handwritten additions to the notes, in 1971 he added a correct identification courtesy of Robert Skelton, namely "Srinathji (top) and Sukh Dev preaching"

³⁸⁹ During the Norton Simon case, JDR3 as a collector of Indian sculpture was also briefly under scrutiny. The case of Norton Simon was examined at length by Bonnie Burnham in *The Art Crisis* (1975), and more recently by Richard Davis. Bonnie Burnham, *The Art Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975). Richard H Davis, *Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997). in *The Lives of Indian Images* (1997)

³⁹⁰ The passing of the Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act serves as the bookend for this project and will be discussed further in the Conclusion.

Burnham in her 1975 book *The Art Crisis* has examined the Simon case at length, and also noted that Indian government regarded Nasli Heeramaneck with particular wariness:

“Heeramaneck’s movements in India were watched with some bitterness by Indian officials,....The Indian government is said to have deliberated long and hard on what Heeramaneck was exporting, and on how he was getting his objects out. A rich and important man, with connections everywhere, it was assumed that he could get out of any scrape. But, the exhibition of his collection in several American museums during 1966-67 seems to have aroused particular resentment in India that so many fine objects would remain in America. It seemed evident that Heeramaneck would have to make some kind of gesture to the cultural development of India...Heeramaneck, however, had in mind a gesture which would prove to be precisely what was needed. He offered a group of pre-Columbian antiquities as a gift to the National Museum in New Delhi. The museum gratefully accepted; the Indian government was satisfied...and Heeramaneck died vindicated.”³⁹¹



Heeramaneck, Dealer-Collector, Gives Pre-Columbian Art to India

By GRACE GLUECK

During 47 years of trading in Asiatic and pre-Columbian art, Nasli Heeramaneck has hidden the things he liked best from the prying eyes of customers. Passing up important sales prospects, he has kept superb examples of Buddha heads, Persian miniatures, Indian temple carvings, Mayan pottery and sculpture.

Today, he is recognized as one of the world's leading dealer-connoisseurs of Asian art.

Taking a visitor on a tour of his house, Mr. Heeramaneck stopped before a magnificent temple carving of Genésá, the four-armed elephant-headed god of wealth and good fortune.

"I wouldn't sell this for a million dollars," he said. "It's brought me great luck. A dealer in New Delhi swapped it in 1932 for a fine Moghul dagger I had. We exchanged on condition that neither of us sell during our lifetime. He's passed

Figure 136: Illustration of Heeramaneck as Nataraja accompanying the article “Bonanza for Boston” in the February 1967 issue of *Harper’s Magazine* (left); *New York Times* article on the gift of the Pre-Columbian art Collection to India, Dec. 1966 (right)

³⁹¹ Burnham, *The Art Crisis*, 175–176.

Burnham did not fail to note that it was more than slightly ironic that the objects in the pre-Columbian collection had also more than likely been exported without the consent of the respective governments in question! Moreover, the National Museum of Delhi, under the directorship of the American Grace Morley, would have been unable to accept the gift had the JDR3 not financially underwritten the insurance for the transportation of the collection from America to India as well. Yet the 1966 exhibition of works from the Heeramanek collection at Boston that Burnham refers to was a revelation for scholars and collectors alike. Hailed as a “Bonanza for Boston” was the first time that a major exhibition had been devoted to objects from the personal collection of a dealer,³⁹² and “although Heeramanek had sold Indian art in the United States for over thirty years preceding 1966, the collection shown in Boston came as a surprise to many. It was evident that he had squirreled away a number of important objects, indicating that his collecting instinct had often overwhelmed his ambitions as a dealer.”³⁹³ The collection which was initially considered for purchase by the MFA, was eventually sold to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and a smaller collection to the Virginia Museum of Art. In the LACMA purchase from the Heeramanek collection,³⁹⁴ Binney was a key figure in this acquisition.³⁹⁵ His contributions were duly acknowledged

³⁹² Russell Lynes, “After Hours, Bonanza for Boston”, *Harper's Magazine*, February, 1967. 22.

³⁹³ Pratapaditya Pal, *American Collectors of Asian Art* (Marg Publications, 1986), 84.

³⁹⁴ In 1966 Nasli and Alice Heeramanek donated a collection of over 200 Pre-Columbian works to the National Museum, New Delhi, but it was their collection of more than 2,700 works from India, Nepal, Tibet and other cultures, acquired in gifts and purchases in 1969-85.

³⁹⁵ Binney's father's family was from Connecticut, but his mother was from Oregon, and he spent significant time on the west coast. He exhibited his works at Portland, and maintained a home in San Diego, and devoted a lot of his energies to developing art in this region. At various times, Binney had been on the Board of Trustees of the LACMA, the Portland Museum of Art and the San Diego Museum of Art, and had played an important and strategic role in this capacity, for their acquisition policies.

by the newly appointed curator of Asian Art, Pratapaditya Pal and the director Kenneth Donahue, in the catalogue for the exhibition that accompanied that purchase.³⁹⁶

Indeed, from his very early days of collecting Indian art, Binney was also interested in patronizing museums, and regularly gave works to museums, or enabled the acquisition of others by museums. Regarding the purchase of folios from a Kalakacharya katha manuscript in 1959, which consisted of 5 paintings and one leaf without illustration, he began his notes with, “the buying of this miniature reads like an adventure story...”. It was decided to give two miniatures to a museum, and he added that “Providence (Rhode Island School of Design) was happy to accept. Thus I made my first gift to a Museum. (And, with income tax deduction and whatnot, received my first Jain painting for something under \$50.00)”³⁹⁷



Figure 137: RISD Museum sheets, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Maurice H. Shulman and Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Binney III Acc. Nos.: 60.020.1 and 60.020.2

As mentioned before, Binney’s collection of European prints and drawings was given to Harvard, and “other [Persian] miniatures were given to various museums to form four self-sufficient collections which trace the evolution of Persian painting. During the

³⁹⁶ Pal, Pratapaditya. *Islamic Art: The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of Joan Palevsky*. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1973) 6-8.

³⁹⁷ (Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

late 1960s and early 70s, Eugene, Oregon, Portland, San Diego and Honolulu each received one such group... What remained of the Islamic collection in my hands was a growing groups of unique Turkish treasures and the best...rarest and most valuable...of the Persian works.”³⁹⁸ Although he did go on to sell some of these Persian work at Colnaghi’s in London in 1976, to further fund his collection of Indian miniature paintings, 101 Turkish works were eventually donated to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1985.³⁹⁹

Thus the mid-1960s although he had a substantial Persian painting collection, Binney began to concentrate on his Indian painting instead, and his purchases and trades tended to be in this direction.⁴⁰⁰ This was also the time when he began focusing on his Turkish collection, for as Keelan Overton has argued, it was a calculated choice that catered to his legacy and his means, for Persian paintings by this stage were garnering exorbitant prices. market (the sale of the Kevorkian, Sevajian collections and also the Houghton Shahnama pages were being dispersed from the 1960s onwards).⁴⁰¹ He would leave paintings on consignment with dealers, put them up for auction or swap with other collectors. For instance, he saw it as a “sensible trade” when he exchanged a Persian

³⁹⁸ Edwin Binney, 3rd, “The Binney Collections in San Diego,” *Apollo*, vol. CXV, no. 244, June, 1982, 33.

³⁹⁹ Binney had exhibited his Turkish works at the Portland, the Metropolitan and LACMA on two previous occasions since the 1970s: *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts, From the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd.* (1975), *Turkish Treasures from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd* (1979).

⁴⁰⁰ Writing to Archer in December 5, 1965

“... You won’t have to worry about my “interest” (should we call it “bourgeois”, “capitalistic” or what?) in Persia when you come later on. It also, thank GOD, gives me some more storage space for the PROJECTED new Indian purchases, I bought 7 non-Indian mins in 1965; and 86 Indians. You can see the relative importance of the two parts of the collection, which were of about equal scope at the time of the Portland show in 1962.”

⁴⁰¹ In his collection a miniature initially attributed to being a Turkish miniature was soon after its purchase in 1970, reascribed to be Deccani, and contained notes such as “Probably Deccani “Too good to be Turkish” Walter Denny Aug 1971...Definitely Deccani as of October 1972. Cary Welch even dates it! c.1650! Compare Ralph Benkaim’s from Kevorkian II” (Acc. No. 1990.446; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

Zafar Nama painting with Cary Welch for a Mughal Babur Nama folio.⁴⁰² Although he was one of several heirs to his grandfather's fortune, it was only when Crayola Crayons was bought over by Hallmark in 1984 that Binney actually gained the cash liquidity needed for the extensive purchase of art.⁴⁰³ In July of 1969 he confessed to Archer that "It occurs to me that after the last auction, when I spent more than \$31,000, which, with the stock market being at its lowest in years, I couldn't really afford, I've got to do some cutting down! This doesn't mean that I'm going to stop. Just that I've got to concentrate on the things I need most."⁴⁰⁴

Although Binney had studied and taught European literature and dance, and continued to write on the subject in the context of his collections related to those fields,⁴⁰⁵ like Stuart Cary Welch, he also spent a great deal of time diligently studying Indian art, as he built his collection. Binney is credited, through his collection and scholarship on the subject, of recuperating later Mughal painting (18th-19th century) from an ignominious position of stylistic inferiority (in comparison to the early Mughal 16th-17th century works). He presented material on "Later Mughal Painting" in 1970 at a symposium at the LACMA, whose papers were compiled by Pratapaditya Pal in a volume titled *Aspects of*

⁴⁰² "I have never been satisfied with my other Babur Nama page (not from this manuscript!). Hence I have been on the look-out for one, without any great hopes of getting one...It seemed almost mutual that Cary Welch and I mentioned trading my first Zafar Nama page for one of his three Babur Nama pages. This is the least typical of his...but is extremely poetic in feeling. (Inasmuch as I had been thinking semi-seriously of getting rid of my Persian miniatures to concentrate on Indian ones, it seemed a sensible trade.) Were this in better condition (it is slightly stained in the foliage of the top half)...and it would no doubt bring about \$1500 at auction (??), while my Zafar Nama, purchased for \$990.00 in 1960 might not quite bring that amount." (Accession Number: 1990.283)

⁴⁰³ Goswamy et al., *Domains of Wonder*, 9.

⁴⁰⁴ (EB3 to WGA, 12 July 1969; Archer Papers, British Library MSS EUR/F236/244)

⁴⁰⁵ His works on these subjects include *Les ballets de Théophile Gautier* (1965), *Royal festivals and romantic ballerinas, 1600-1850. From the collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd.* (1971), *Delacroix and the French Romantic Print: An Exhibition from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd* (1974), *One Man's Vision: The Graphic Works of Odilon Redon. An Exhibition from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd* (1978), *Longing for the Ideal: Images of Marie Taglioni in the Romantic Ballet : a Centenary Exhibition* (1984).

*Indian Art.*⁴⁰⁶ His own first purchase of Indian art had been such a work, and it is likely that his motivations for doing so were twofold: firstly, this absence of writing on the subject presented a nagging ‘gap’ in the scholarship, that needed to be filled in order to account for his collection’s elements, and secondly, ever the “canny connoisseur” (Smith 10) he no doubt had an eye on the market for such material which had not circulated in the auction sales as much as had other Indian miniatures, and so in the retrieval of this area through his scholarly and aesthetic validation from the “rubbish” it was thought to be, he rendered it a “durable” value (Thompson 272-275). In this particular interest, although late Mughal painting, was still considered to be a decline from the heyday of early Mughal, nevertheless Binney saw it as a continuation of the tradition, and for a while avidly collected as many examples of it as he could: “I have been on a “nineteenth century Mughal kick” for several years, after renumbering the collection and discovering that although I had excellent late Mughal things, they were almost entirely eighteenth century. It is obvious that good XIXth cent. stuff is almost a confusion in terms, but I had been fortunate in getting the state portrait of Akbar II but had found little else.”⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Edwin Binney 3rd, “Later Mughal Painting”, Pal, Pratapaditya. *Aspects of Indian Art. Papers Presented in a Symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October, 1970.* Leiden: Brill, 1972. 118-129

⁴⁰⁷ Embarking on this kick at the auction of Dec., 1970, I had bought a portrait of Babur, later to discover it was really Bikaner and 2 other late things, that turned out to be from a Lucknow album. This picture seemed, therefore, to be worth more to me than it really was...” he concluded the same note emphatically with “I’M NOW FORMALLY OFF MY XIXth CENTUY MUGHAL KICK!” (Acc. No. 1990.406; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

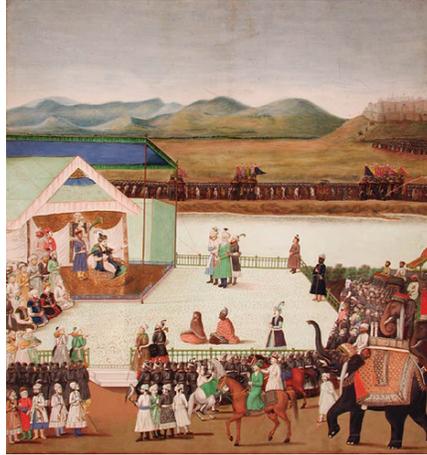


Figure 138: The Turkish Sultan Bayazid brought captive before Timur, Mughal, c.1850

For Mughal paintings however, the market was by the 1950s and 1960s, largely limited to the west, and therefore it was only when Binney’s interests began to turn to non-Mughal (primarily Rajput) painting did he plan on taking a trip to India. As he had done with Persian paintings, having been advised by Archer, as early as 1965 he decided to keep a stock of Mughal paintings for “trade” with Indian collectors.⁴⁰⁸ In 1967, in the notes of a painting he eventually sold, he writes, “For the past year or so, I have been trying to assemble a group of Mughal miniatures to take to India to exchange for Rajput and Pahari things. The Indians do not have available good Mughal miniatures, which I can buy, and I cannot get the great early sets that may be available there. So, if and when I can get to India, I plan to take 15-20 miniatures to trade. This will be one of them. I rather expect I could trade it for a \$1000 value.” A year later, in 1968 that Binney and his wife went to India. works from his collection had already appeared in a special volume by the Indian Lalit Kala Akademi, *Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India in American Collections* (1966), and had been part of a travelling exhibitions (with

⁴⁰⁸ EB to WGA, July 12, 1965

“... You gave me the most wonderful piece of “food for thought”—about the common sense in hoarding of good, but not great, Mughal miniatures with the view of trading in India.

published catalogues) held through the Portland Museum of Art (1962), the Smithsonian Institution (1966) and a dedicated exhibition of over 100 works from his collection (and accompanying scholarly catalogue written with W.G. Archer) titled *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd* had been produced at the Portland Museum of Art (1968). But there were still ‘gaps’ in his collection that Binney aimed to fill during his first trip to India.⁴⁰⁹

The trip to India over the winter of 1968, was very enriching for the Binney collection, particularly in terms of meeting other collectors and dealers in Hyderabad, Jaipur and Delhi.⁴¹⁰ He recounted these encounters to WGA describing a buying visit to Jagdish Mittal as a “coup”,⁴¹¹ trading or buying pieces, while at the same time keeping abreast of sales back in the west.⁴¹² Although they did not have an enjoyable time and Binney even contracted hepatitis, from a collecting point of view the trip was undoubtedly a success. In a letter to Archer from December 1968, leaving Delhi for Istanbul, Binney’s elation is palpable “I bought 138 miniatures and 19 drawings (all the latter from Mittal). Read it again – its true 138 miniatures! ...I am so excited I could die!

⁴⁰⁹ *Edwin Binney, 3rd*, “The Binney Collections in San Diego”, *Apollo*, London, vol. CXV, no. 244, June 1982, 34.

⁴¹⁰ “I think that Gopi [Krishna Kanoria] may well be prepared to part with soe of his things. He will also be looking out for some of the “gaps”. Your idea of basing yourself in Delhi is very sound. About 80 per cent of the picture trade is there.” (WGA to EB3, 4 July 1968, EB3 Papers, Auction Correspondence, SDMA Archives).

⁴¹¹ In further notes added to the acquisition record of the piece mentioned above, Binney later added “Traded to Jagdish Mittal, Nov 9, 1968, \$1250. \$625 profit.” Another one was Aquisition No. I505 – Mughal Razmnama. EB3 notes: “On the way back from the London auctions of June 18-19, 1968 with Jean Soustiel, I went into his father’s shop with him and met Garabed who had apparently just “retired” and had most this [his] miniatures at Soustiel’s for resale. Jean and I spoke of the French lack of interest in Indian pictures, and their inability to price them well. When I saw this----at \$700, I figured it might be another possibility for taking to India for resale during our trip of Fall 1968..” further notes “Traded to Jagdish Mittal, Nov 9, 1968 for \$1250. \$550 profit.”

⁴¹² “Here is a hurried note to give you a report on the Phillips sale. As I told you earlier, most of it is crap; but there are some truly marvelous items, which I am afraid you will have to take seriously (It really would come at this time, when with all the riches of India spread before you you could well have done without it!)” WGA to EB3, 28 October 1968, EB3 Papers, Auction Correspondence, SDMA Archives)

I DO NOT EVER NEED another Bikaner, Kishangarh, Bundi ever again. (I shall always look) From almost no Basholis – I cannot complain not to have a Rasamanjari YET.

Leads are out...Most crucial were the personal contacts with [Jagdish] Mittal and [Jagdish] Goenka.”

While in India, he was in pursuit of specific types of pieces, including Jain palm-leaf manuscripts, primarily because he knew of no such paintings in other US collections, and bought several such paintings from the dealer C.L. Naulakha.⁴¹³



Figure 139: Vimalaprava converses with Raji and Lakshmi, folio from Jain palm leaf mss, c.1300

His glee and excitement on scoring a coveted work, and acquiring a real find, did not take away from his prudence with regards to what he considered to be a fair price, and he was

⁴¹³ “For a long time I have wanted to have a Jain palm leaf, having already very good Pala things. Nasli brought me back a fragment of a Jain palm leaf in 1964, and I felt particularly glad to get it, as I knew of NONE in US collections...Having pretty well forgotten about the possibility of finding any in India, I had more or less “checked them off my list” in preparing for our trip in Nov.1968. Imagine my surprise when I found a choice of THREE at [C.L.] Naulakha’s. (I saw NO OTHERS anywhere else). This one was better than the other two.” (Acc. No. 1990.179; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

Buying other things from Naulakha, he notes: “Naulakha was unpacking a group of Jain things that had just returned from being exhibited for some Jain community???. In addition to this major things (like the leaves from the Devasanapala Kalpa sutra) and palm leaves, there were three later things, of which this was the second. A must...They are Svetambara Jains!” (Acc. No. 1990.214; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

not above bargaining, right alongside his fellow Indian collectors and dealers, competing with them for much sought-after pieces.⁴¹⁴

Binney owed much of his early appreciation of Indian painting to W.G. Archer who wrote his magnum opus *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills* (1973) during the years that he knew Binney. Archer introduced Binney to the schools of Rajput paintings as he delineated them in his work. He would on occasion sell Binney some of the paintings from his personal collection too. Archer wrote the catalogue to Binney's first collection catalogue on Rajput miniatures, and it is not surprising therefore that Binney's collection, particularly with regards to Rajput paintings, closely followed the kinds of rubrics and categorizations that Archer proposed. The period when Binney was collecting was also a time when the field of Rajput painting was, after its initial "discovery" by Ananda Coomaraswamy in the early 20th century, was being detailed by scholars such as Karl Khandalavala, M.S. Randhawa, N.C. Mehta, Moti Chandra, and of course Archer himself. Part of the impetus was provided by the fact that in newly-independent India, and particularly after the formation of the Republic in 1950, with the merger of Indian Princely States into the Indian union, many of these former Princely states, which had been the original patrons of "Rajput" painting, began variously loosening or losing control over their treasuries and libraries that contained manuscripts with illustrations.

⁴¹⁴ Once, over a palm leaf from Orissa, he notes: "When [Motichand] Khajanchi arrived in Delhi to see me, he had just been "visited" by Mittal and Natesan and had very little left. This I wanted, but he wanted \$800. As I already had a very similar leaf from the Backliwals for which I had felt overcharged at \$600. I refused. Naulakha and Mehra who were there said that they would talk to him. He had left, they followed him, and, coming back to as "what I would pay"...I said, "Oh, half of what he suggested." So we settled on \$450. It's a better leaf than the other one." (Acc. No. 1990.226; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)



Figure 140: Folio from the Isarda Bhagvata Purana

Inevitably this was of interest to collectors such as Binney, who noted in 1968 on the purchase of a folio from the ‘Isarda Bhagvat Purana’, “The thikandar of Isarda (real brother of the Maharaja of Jaipur who was adopted by the Jaipur royal family) had just sold his ancestral collections: about 900 pictures for 1¼ lakhs of rupees (about \$12,500.00). With all the crap, of which there were tremendous numbers, there were two MAJOR sets:- this one, and 28 leaves from a Bundi ragamala of c.1650.”⁴¹⁵ The Isarda Bhagvat was dispersed among several dealers, and during his trip to India in 1968, Binney considered the purchase of several folios from this set from various collectors and dealers including Gopi Kanoria, Natesan, Naulakha and VijayaVargiya⁴¹⁶, his major acquisition.

⁴¹⁵ (Acc. No. 1990.586; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

⁴¹⁶ Ram Gopal Vijayavargiya was a Jaipur-based painter and dealer, and while known for sourcing works from many of the Rajput collections. He was also infamous among collectors for often producing paintings in early Rajput styles. Although none of the paintings bought by Binney from Vijayavargiya himself were such works, one that was attributed to Kotah and had formerly been in the collection of Maurice and Edyth Shulman (of Origins gallery) and before that in the collection of Khalil Gibran. This was Acc.No. 1990.732, “Umed Singh hunting deer and boar” which Binney described at the time as “an even more typical coarse Kotah hunt drawing than the two I had had previously.” Since his notes were not amended to reflect the correct attribution, it is likely that Binney continued to believe it was a Kotah drawing and the correction occurred some time after the accession of his collection into the SDMA.

As these manuscripts came to light, entered the market, and were often dispersed, it also spurred the stylistic groupings of various “schools” of paintings, and scholars took to describing in detail the stylistic hallmarks of a particular school as distinct from another. This process on the one hand entailed the elaboration upon Coomaraswamy’s initial proposals, as well as their correction, but at the same time there was often vying propositions among the small field of scholars working on this material.⁴¹⁷ Archer and Khandalavala for example had a protracted debate about the origins of Kangra painting, as Archer took issue with Khandalavala’s term “pre-Kangra” in a dispute which continued from the early 1950s till the 1970s. Binney did not get into such terminological debates, particularly with regards to Pahari painting, and deferred to Archer in such matters, and collected them more for a sense of completion or as a strategic purchase than out of a real passion for them. A late Kangra painting was purchased in 1965 primarily in anticipation of rising prices in the wake of an Asia House exhibition containing Kangra paintings from the Jacqueline Kennedy and Kenneth Galbraith collections. “...I sometime wish that I can be “turned on” by the Pahari things that so many others like...I looked at the Galbraith and Jacqueline Kennedy pictures with absolute boredom!”⁴¹⁸

For Binney, by the 1970s it was clear that a comprehensive survey of Indian painting, a single collection through which it would be possible to track the evolution of style, and with representative examples from every identifiable school of painting, was to

⁴¹⁷ WGA to EB, 27 November 1965

“...I was relieved to hear that your two Kangras had been, so to speak, especially exported; as it looks as if they purposely got Lambagraon to part with some of his best ones in order to boost the Fair. [Worlds Fair by Handloom and Export Co of India] But I shall hear all about it when I arrive. I am in the thick of Kangra at the most, cursing Coomaraswamy for muddling everything up, cursing Khandalavala for doing ditto, cursing, cursing...”

⁴¹⁸ EB3 to WGA, December 5 1966, Archer Papers, British Library MSS EUR/F236/243

be his main legacy. Indeed this was his intention from the very beginning, for he noted on the early acquisition of a Nepali painting (Acc. No. 1990.170), “I bought this painting to show the end of the Jain miniatures and how they were transformed in Nepal.”⁴¹⁹



Figure 141: Worship of a divinity, Nepal, c.1800

Binney was thus always on the lookout to refine and strengthen his collection. Till the late 1980s London remained main centre for auction house activities for South Asian art – with Sotheby’s selling “more miniatures than any dealer in the world.”⁴²⁰ (Binney 1973: xii). It was invariably at the auction of works from the estate of a private collectors that Binney, like most others at the time, from the 1960s onwards, built his collection piece by piece. Binney had a mania for stylistic groupings and an obsession with completeness and updated his accession lists on a yearly basis. Terrence McInerney who knew Binney and sold him works during his collecting years recalls having seen a chart that Binney made that “was divided into small squares to represent the various schools of Indian painting, which were listed along one margin, and their divisions in time, which

⁴¹⁹ (Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder, Vol 2; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

⁴²⁰ Binney and Portland Art Museum (Or.), *Indian Miniature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd*.

were listed along another. If the box labelled “Bundi, c.1700-25,” was marked with an X, then Binney had an example. If the box was empty (and very few were), then a hole needed to be filled.” Binney would refer to the nagging presence of these “gaps” in his collection.⁴²¹ But it wasn’t just enough to have an example, but he desired a *quality* example. In a letter of a similar vein to W.G. Archer from 1969 he writes, :“I’ve even had a chance to reassess the collection and think about future purchases. You know that I have assigned numbers to the collection by schools and regions... Within each category, I give designations of Best, Good, Fair, Poor, Omit (as well as the category “must” for those that cannot be disposed of...” Binney proceeded to list out 680 pictures in 39 schools according to their quality.⁴²² At the end of the long list, in a somewhat chagrined

⁴²¹ In a lengthy description from 1971, he notes the lengths to which he went to try and acquire a couple of pages from the Akbarnama manuscript most famously in the collection of Chester Beatty, stating his ambition in the following terms: “[T]he Beatty Akbar Nama was the ONLY major Akbari historical [manuscript] from which I didn’t have a leaf! So these were musts.” (Acc. No. 1990.607; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

⁴²² Palm leaves 16 (14b; 2m)
 Jain 15 (6b;2g;3m;2f;1p;1o)
 Gujarati-Rajasth transition 15 (2b;11g;2m)
 Sultanate 7 (1b;4g;2m)
 Earliest Mughal 10 (4b;6g)
 Akbari 23 (15b;6g;1m;1f)
 Sub-Imperial 12 (4b;6g;2m)
 Jahangiri 11 (3b;5g;1m;1f;1o)
 ShahJ/Aurang 11 (6b;5g)
 XVIIIth cent 14 (4b; 6g; 2m; 2f)
 XIXth cent 3 (1b;1g;1m)
 Prov Mughal 23 (10b;10g;1m;1f;1p)
 Deccani 52 (21b;20g;5m;6f)
 Mewar 42 (19b; 16g; 2m; 1f;3o)
 Bundi 32 (15b; 14g; 1m; 2o)
 Kotah 13 (5b; 7g; 1f)
 Kishangarh 20 (9b; 11g)
 Bikaner 18 (9b;6g;3m)
 Marwar, etc. 17 (7b;8g;im;1f)
 Jaipur, etc. 16 (7b;7g;2f)
 Sirohi, etc. 10 (5b;4g;1m)
 Nathadwara 4 (2b;1f;1p)
 Misc.Rajasth 9 (2b;1g;3m;3f)
 Malwa 26 (9b;14g;1m;2f)
 Cent. India 20 (6b;12g;2f)

tone he added, : “Making this kind of listing is probably one of the silliest waste of time that I make, but I’ve always loved it.....particularly in thinking “my greatest strength is....” Or “I NEED...???)”⁴²³

In the Binney archives is another chart, which lists the different schools of Pahari paintings that he was interested in, and the number of works from each in different known collections, which further demonstrate Binney’s competitive tendencies on the one hand, as well as his conceptualization of the scope and relative location of his collection on the other. In the same letter to Archer he concluded with a judgment of his strengths, an identification of schools with “very good” or “good” coverage and his weaknesses. Binney did not hold back in emphasizing that this was a sore point!⁴²⁴

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Basohli+Mankot | 20 (8b;11g;1m) |
| Nurpur | 11 (7b; 4g) |
| Kulu | 18 (16b;2g) |
| Mandi | 14 (6b;4g;4m) |
| Bilaspur-Arki | 19 (7b;11g;1m) |
| Chamba-Jammu | 19 (7b;11g;1f) |
| Guler-Siba | 15 (5b;9g;1m) |
| Kangra | 29 (14b;7g;6m;1f;1o) |
| Garhwal+Nalagarh | 11 (6b;5g) |
| Sikh | 7 (3b;2g;2f) |
| Misc.Pahari | 5 (4g;1m) |
| Indo-British | 28 (7b;11g;4m;5f;1o) |
| S.India-Bengali-Orissan | 17 (6b;6g;3m;2f) |
| Kalighat | 23 (21b;2f) |
| Nepali-Tibeti-Burmese-Siamese | 32 (4b;11g;8m;9f) |

⁴²³ (EB3 to WGA, 12 July 1969; Archer Papers, British Library MSS EUR/F236/244)

⁴²⁴ “9 greatest strengths (and I really don’t feel that I EVER NEED TO ADD OTHER PICTURES HERE: Palm; Mewar; Kishangarh; Bikaner; Kulu; Garhwal; Malwa; Kalighat)...15 very good coverages...of which I would not need to add to: Jain; Gujarati-Mewari transition; Sub-Imperial Mughal; XVIIIth and Provincial Mughal; Nurpur; Mandi; Bilaspur; Chamba; Sikh; Indo-British)... The others are almost very good or good coverages except for 3...WEAKNESSES: 3 JAHANGIRI; BASOHLI-MANKOT (later part is excellent, but REAL Basohli?); GULER”

Although Binney was loath to draw parallels to Western art when he wrote about pieces in his collection, his classificatory system and curation of his exhibition nonetheless strictly adhered to chronological and stylistic categories, based on regional schools that followed progression of patronage. Indeed his need to archive, his *mal d'archive*,⁴²⁵ led to a collection of representative material corresponding to all schools of art as outlined by scholars who had written on the subject (work that Binney was familiar with) in India and abroad – of the 1450 works, more than a quarter were from Rajasthan, 20% Pahari, 13% Mughal, 10% Deccani, 7% from Central India and the rest are from Eastern, Southern and Western India, the Himalayas, Iran and the Company School.⁴²⁶ As a collector, he could thus indulge in the privileged position of the creator of an ordered microcosm.⁴²⁷

The identification of stylistic varieties, regional variations, questions of authenticity and the establishment of links between schools, became *de rigueur* in scholarship at the time that Binney was collecting. It was thus not at all surprising for him to obsessively seek out an example of a “newly discovered school” or an ever-more distinguishing example of a period or artist from a known school, as is evident in the notes he made, often adding his own interpretation and insights. An early purchase of a folio from a Bhagvata Purana manuscript from Heeramaneck in 1961, necessitated the assiduous notation of all the collections in which examples were to be found, in America and in India, adding that his was superior to Cary Welch’s and that it was “a major item

⁴²⁵ Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 90–91.

⁴²⁶ Goswamy et al., *Domains of Wonder*, 9.

⁴²⁷ Eva Schultz, “Notes on the history of collecting and of museums,” Susan M. Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections* (Routledge, 1994), 186.

from a major manuscript, one of the earliest known from the general region of Rajasthan.”⁴²⁸ Similarly, on the purchase notes of a Todi ragini from a Bundi ragamala that was formerly in the collection of the Raja of Raghogarh⁴²⁹ in 1975, he adds “With the publication of Milo Beach’s thesis on Bundi and Kotah painting, and with it, the establishment of a “new school” from the state of Raghogarh, I wanted to have AN EXAMPLE.”⁴³⁰ Similarly on the 1979 purchase of an equestrian figure of a thakur of Jhalai, he excitedly noted, “A new school is always a must! And Jhalai has just been “found”. Apparently some ancestral collection “came out” and there was enough inscribed material (as here) to constitute a new source of a small school of portraiture.”⁴³¹



Figure 143: Bundi Todi Ragini (left); Painting by Chokha (right)

⁴²⁸ (Acc. No. 1990.607; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

⁴²⁹ From 1967 till the abolition of princely states in 1971, Digivijaya Singh (now an MP for the Congress Party of India) was the head of Raghogarh thikana.

⁴³⁰ (Acc. No. 1990.682, Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 4; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

⁴³¹ (Acc. No. 1990.884, Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 5; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

Works by known artists too were of significant interest, and he was thus doubly pleased on being informed by Stuart Cary Welch that his recently acquired painting of a Virgin and Child from a Jahangiri album in 1969 was by Manohar “one of the greatest masters of Jahangir’s atelier”.⁴³² This enthusiasm was not limited to Mughal artists whose names had historically been better known, for when he bought the equestrian portrait of Maharana Bhim Singh, by Chokha, in 1973, he wrote: “The artist Chokka, whose work is now known from THIS MINIATURE, and to whom are several other attributions (notably my swooning Shiva, which is actually Madhavnala, seemed vitally important. So I paid a large price for a major picture.”⁴³³ It is telling that although Binney remarked on the large price he paid in both instances for the folios by known artists, the price differential was remarkable, for in 1969, he paid \$20,400 for the Manohar, and in 1973 he paid \$7000 for the Chokha! Binney himself noted the differences in value, not just in the changes over different eras but also different styles and schools. Remarking in a somewhat self-congratulatory tone upon his purchase of a ‘high-Mughal’ Govardhan painting at a Sotheby’s sale in London in 1965 he noted, “This was an imperial portrait that I HAD TO HAVE, even if I paid this much for it. I had expected £1000, but Maggs went up to £1100 and I had to go up again. It is curious that on the back of the page, along with a panel of calligraphy, is a dealer’s notation £20! This price broke an auction record in London:- “Over £1000 for an Oriental miniature.” The event was recorded in the London newspapers.”⁴³⁴ Ten years later, on buying “Ram Singh hunts black buck”

⁴³² “So, I have not only a major picture AT A MAJOR PRICE, but now one that is attributed to one of the greatest masters of Jahangir’s atelier. This is a very good way to fill partially one of my former weak parts of my collection.” (Acc. No. 1990.607; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

⁴³³ (Acc. No. 1990.660; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 4; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

⁴³⁴ (Acc. No. 1990.347; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 3; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives).

(then titled A Kotah prince with two beaters, shooting deer with a matchlock), for \$15,000 (£6000) he found himself remarking with astonishment that “This is an unheard of price for a Rajasthani picture. It is based, of course, on Cary’s paying £6500 for the drawing of many elephants, also from Kotah.”⁴³⁵ By 1978, following the purchase of a folio from the Chunar Ragamala set, at the end of his notes he concluded with “The purchase of this miniature brings the ABSOLUTE VITAL NEEDS of the collection down to ONE:-- early Guler.”

Thus by 1982, in a special edition of *Apollo* magazine dedicated to the SDMA, Binney could state “A collection grew that now numbers more than 800 Indian paintings. There may possibly be larger collections, particularly in India, but except at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, there is not one that covers every center and every period of production, in such varied range.”⁴³⁶ What is interesting to note is that while in 1982 Binney declares to have about 800 images in his collection, the collection bequeathed to the SDMA after his death in 1986 had over 1450 works. It is thus indicative that in the last four years of his life, he came close to almost doubling the collection he had spent over twenty years putting together. It is all the more remarkable then that he had managed to build a comprehensive collection that spanned paintings from the 10th to the 20th century. In 24 years Binney had managed to fill all the “gaps” and put together a formidable and what he considered to be a comprehensive collection (to which he would continue to add to, until his death in 1986) with representative examples from every identifiable school.

⁴³⁵ (Acc. No. 1990.717, ; Binney SDMA Accession Record Folder – Vol 4; EB3 Papers, SDMA Archives)

⁴³⁶ *Edwin Binney*, 3rd, “The Binney Collections in San Diego”, *Apollo*, London, vol. CXV, no. 244, June 1982, 34.

At the outset of this chapter one noted that Binney's collection pushed to the limits such approaches to collecting and conceptualizing the field of Indian painting. A year after Binney's remarks, in 1983, Pramod Chandra in his lecture "On the Study of Indian Art", underscored the need for new approaches. After acknowledging the "careful connoisseurship" and "painful tasks" of identifying schools, he advocated a critical reexamination of extant scholarship on Indian painting, noting that "The validity of basic assumptions and classifications that so strongly orient our thoughts needs to be scrutinized and, if necessary, changed; or if not changed, at least given new meaning. The study of style and form needs to be intensified without losing sight of the subject of art; the understanding of the historical, social, cultural, and economic context has to be deepened; and the relationship of art to other forms of artistic expression, notably literature, has to be more intimately understood."⁴³⁷ Chandra's remarks nodded to a shift in scholarship that was already underway, and were also a clarion call to future scholars.⁴³⁸ Stylistic analysis, and expanding the implications of style in the study of Indian painting continues to be something that scholars grapple with, for example recently Molly Aitken has eloquently articulated her engagement with it in an essay called "Interpreting Style" that gives an indication of the ground that has been covered in the past three decades.⁴³⁹ Binney's assumptions of style and form at the heart of his

⁴³⁷ Chandra, *On the Study of Indian Art*, 111–112.

⁴³⁸ Scholarship was no longer restricted to the strict adherence to style and school, and increasingly examined materiality, text and social context in relation to miniature paintings, often bringing radical new perspectives and innovative understandings to familiar material. For example, John Seyller's reading of marginal scribal notes and colophon inscriptions on Mughal paintings led to a new understanding of the historical valuation and circulation of the very same materials. Bonnie C. Wade's work *Imaging sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India* (1998) is one such example that uses images of music making in miniature paintings to track political and cultural shifts that occurred during the 16th-19th centuries.

⁴³⁹ "Ultimately style is befuddling because it is two different things; a useful concept or "heuristic" and a complex physical reality. As a concept it is intended to simplify and bring order, but the reality it is meant

analytic, that allowed him to embark upon, and within its own conception, achieve a comprehensive collection, may thus seem outdated, and limiting for not probing the implications of style more broadly. Indeed the capacity to and purpose of collecting in the manner that Binney did is debatable. Binney was collecting in the heyday of the circulation of paintings in the art market that afforded him the opportunity to collect as extensively as he did, a feat which is well-nigh impossible today, particularly in the aftermath of the 1972 Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, and also because many such works are now to be found in art museums, and thus out of market circulation. Moreover, Binney's impulse to have at least a single example from every known school or manuscript collection would fall out of fashion as the museum and the academy moved away from the structure of the art historical survey. Nevertheless, as the legacy of the survey continues, so too with distance, Binney and the formation and use of his collection, remain of art historiographical relevance because his interest in Indian paintings temporally coincided with a field of art being mapped, made visible, and given value, through scholarship, exhibitions and market circulation. And these were connected processes, founded on a network of relationships, all of which Binney was intimately engaged in.

to order can be as subtle and manifold as the qualities that comprise personality, so often understood to be the root of artistic style. Thus it is in the nature of the concept never fully to encompass the reality it seeks to comprehend. With this in mind, I begin with a healthy regard for the limits of the concept of style, on the one hand, and the limitless of its reality, on the other." Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2010), 58–59.

Conclusion

In the period between 1907 and 1972 we have seen that the understanding of Indian art underwent a metamorphosis in America. In Chapter 1, we have seen how private collections such as those assembled by Charles Lang Freer that had first valorized Indian objects as fine art would be the stepping stone for their entry into fine art museums. As more museums developed similar interests, they sought collections, such as Coomaraswamy's as Indian art dovetailed with prevailing interests in Asian and Islamic Art. In Chapter 2 we also saw the study of Indian art followed the early development of a market for such objects, which became readily available and were avidly collected. As Indian art's place in the American museum was secured, in Chapter 3 we explored the manner in which it was narrated and theorized in particular ways by Coomaraswamy and later Kramrisch. Their identification of the quintessentially spiritual nature of Indian art, would be the touchstone for subsequent interpretations and would dominate art historical analyses for several decades. Finally in Chapter 4, John D Rockefeller 3rd and Edwin Binney 3rd were seen adopting connoisseurly approaches to Indian art in the formation of their collections in post-war America. However, where Rockefeller was not interested in comprehensiveness, and sought to situate India within larger interests in Asia, and selectively collected Indian sculpture, for Binney an obsession with exhaustiveness would determine the scope of his collection of paintings. By focusing on individuals who formed collections in the private sphere, but which ended up in public museums, the chapters track the encounters that fostered such interests in Indian art and the relationships that sustained it. This consideration and analysis of the circulation of objects in tandem with the production of an art history complete with canonical biases, and the

mutual effects of one on the other can thus contribute to a richer understanding of the genealogy of Indian art history in the twentieth century. The narrative ceases in 1972, primarily because the passing of the Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act would have significant consequences for the legal circulation of objects. Collecting Indian art thereafter became a fraught subject, and thus the relationship between collecting and the production of canonical frameworks became more tenuous, even as the discipline of art history and the questions asked of art began to change in the 1970s and 80s. Nevertheless there remain aspects that cannot be addressed in the current project, including the relationship to modernism. Some of the implications of the 1972 Act and the elision of modernism will be addressed in brief below, however several other questions that this project has brought to the fore, remain unanswered and open up possibilities for future exploration.

The tenacity and limits of canonical narratives of Indian art, the broad contours of which had been formed by the mid-20th century continues to haunt the institutional space of the museum even as the discipline of Indian art history has begun radical rethinking of its terms in the last 20 years. This has much to do with the nature of museum collections, whose holdings of Indian objects were firmly rooted in pre-modern frameworks that as we have seen dominated conceptions of “Indian Art” since the beginning of the twentieth century. In India from the mid-century, the post-independence era was marked by the mobilization of pre-modern art to the narrative ends of national culture at sites such as the National Museum in Delhi. As noted, nationalism embedded in the writings of scholars

including Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch had led to the creation of a self-contained aesthetic framework for the appreciation of Indian art. This autonomous episteme was nevertheless evidentiary of civilizational and cultural greatness no less than that of the west, and thus in turn legitimated India's own access to modernity. Paradoxically however it was a narrative to which Indian modernism was not central, and thus even in the new nation state, the National Museum became the institutional repository for the pre-modern past (upon which the modern present was predicated, and whose custodianship became the responsibility of the new nation state) while the National Gallery of Modern Art developed in institutional separation. The uncomfortable relationship to modernism can partly be seen as a consequence of the establishment of precedents for the narrations of cultural teleology through pre-modern forms, and their inability to adequately narrate modernism in India. Yet modernism was also largely excluded from the narrations of Indian art outside of India, and modern art from India was rarely part of museum collections in America,⁴⁴⁰ and was not seen as part of the "canon" of Indian art. Although scholars in the post-war era including Mildred Archer and Edwin Binney 3rd, had been instrumental in extending the timeline for Indian art to the 19th century by their studies on Company painting and Later Mughal Painting respectively, nevertheless, art from the 20th century was largely excluded from survey books or exhibitions of "Indian art".⁴⁴¹ It

⁴⁴⁰ Exceptions would include works gifted by individual museum patrons

⁴⁴¹ While the 1947 exhibition at the Royal Academy had 68 pieces under a section titled "Modern Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture" which included works by artists who would be recognized as modernists in time (Zainul Abedin, K.H. Ara, Nandalal Bose, N.S. Bendre, Dhanraj Bhagat, M.A. Chughtai, K.K. Hebbar, S.H. Raza, Jamini Roy, D.P. Roy Chowdhury, Amrita Shergil, Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, and Rabindranath Tagore), unlike pre-modern works, which carried explanatory notes in the catalogue entires, the modern works were limited to caption details alone, and not addressed in Basil Grey's Introduction to the section under which they were listed in the catalogue either. Almost 40 years later, Stuart Cary Welch's tome *India: Art and Culture, 1300-1900*, which accompanied the exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1985, and along with the corresponding exhibition of pre-

would however not be until the waning years of the 20th century that modern (and contemporary) art from India would begin to enter the international art market or be collected in any substantial ways by museums, and it was not until the 2001 acquisition of the Chester and Davida Herwitz collection of Indian modern art by the Peabody Essex Museum that a museum made modern art the focus of its Indian collections.

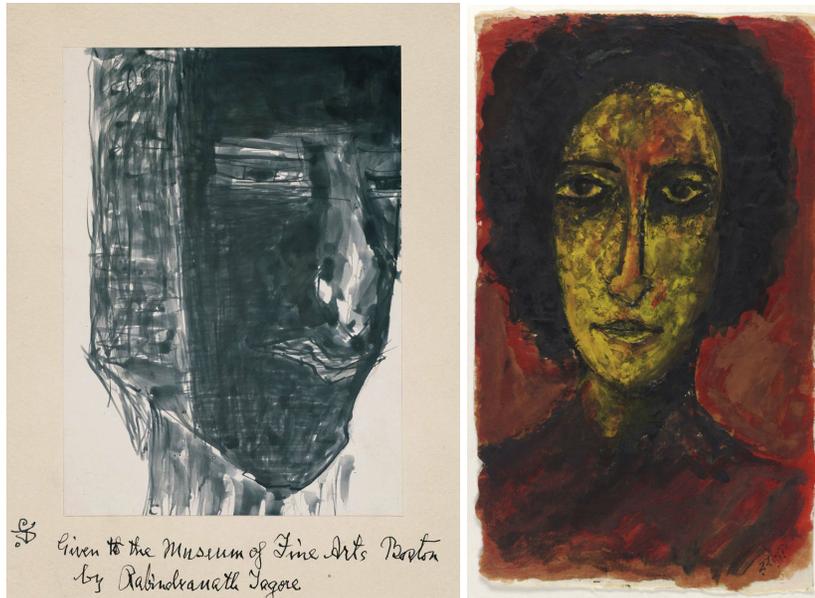


Figure 144 Works by Rabindranath Tagore given to the MFA by Tagore in 1930 (left), and to the PMA by Stella Kramrisch (1966)

Thus in the decades following independence, the concentration on pre-modern art continued, and by in the 1960s, there was an increasing realization that much of this cultural heritage was being drained from India, and finding its way to museums and collections in the West. This phenomenon elicited outrage and indignation by the nationalist establishment in independent India, who turned to the law to stem the outflow. This itself was part of a longer process of Constitution making whereby national identity,

modern Indian sculpture at the National Gallery in Washington D.C. were part of the much-feted Festival of India in 1985, clearly chose to cease before the 20th century.

rights and self-imaginings all became “saturated by the culture of law”.⁴⁴² At the same time issues related to the movement of “cultural property” were being widely discussed in the international arena as well and in 1970 UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. The Convention was however limited to recommendations and left countries to regulate the movement of such property on an individual and inevitably uneven basis. In the absence of universal ratification by UN member states (notably absent were many of the north countries where the markets for antiquities thrived) and an international tribunal to adjudicate such matters, the recommendations of the convention were largely ineffectual,⁴⁴³ and it was left up to member countries to legislate legal instruments by which “cultural property” could be protected, and no international universally ratified legislation for the repatriation of cultural property was formed. While UNESCO’s objective was ‘The return of cultural property in its true context, namely that of maintaining, reconstitution, developing and serving the cultural identity of all peoples’, as Jeanette Greenfield has pointed out, this position was unhelpful, for “making ‘cultural property’ universal contradicts the notion of ‘return.’”⁴⁴⁴ Thus for former colonies like India whose heritage was threatened by unregulated export of cultural property, since there was no international provision for their return, there was no option but to turn to national legislation to regulate export.

⁴⁴² Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, eds., *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 26.

⁴⁴³ Jeanette Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 368–9.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 265.

It is in this light that the passing of the Indian Antiquities and Art Treasures Act of 1972 needs to be considered. The Indian Parliament legislated to ban the export of all antiquities more than 100 years old (75 years in the case of manuscripts and other documents). Part of a broader movement towards the creation and consolidation of a national identity, the export ban was supposed to keep Indian cultural heritage within national borders. The Act marked a decisive break with the established relationships to cultural commodities; in one move, it not only rendered illegal an entire system of exchange, but also criminalized possession of unregistered objects. Unsurprisingly there were many critics to the law, who found it to be “draconian”⁴⁴⁵ and *unenforceable*, and indeed the limits of the law soon became evident as the thriving trade in antiques simply went underground, beneath the radar of legality, exploiting every loophole in the law, circumventing its ambit and aggressively ensuring an unbroken chain of supply for an insatiable demand. Ironically, the law and its implications for the trade served to raise the stakes and as the prices of antiquities at auction houses in London reached new highs in the 1970s. As Comaroff and Comaroff have noted that “criminal profits require that there are rules to be broken”, and so “law and lawlessness...are conditions of each other’s possibility.”⁴⁴⁶ In India, 3,000 thefts of antiquities were reported between 1977 and 1979, and only ten cases were solved. UNESCO has estimated that more than 50,000 art objects were smuggled out of India over the decade 1979-89 alone and the volume of trade in

⁴⁴⁵ “It is draconian in the sense that it virtually makes the possession of an antiquity by a god-fearing Indian a criminal offence. The onus of registering everything with the government and that too in triplicate, with three copies of photographs and within a very short time-frame lies entirely with the individual. In a country with limited literacy the effectiveness of such a piece of legislation can easily be imagined!” India International Centre, *India International Centre Quarterly* (India International Centre., 2007), 137..

⁴⁴⁶ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, 5.

Indian artefacts has continued unabated.⁴⁴⁷ With the Indian government's restrictions on export, works were often channeled through countries like Switzerland,⁴⁴⁸ who had no export restrictions,⁴⁴⁹ where their true antecedents were obscured and so on to dealers in London or New York (who could in turn claim to have bought them from Switzerland). Some works were even channeled through auction houses such as Sotheby's, and it was when this direct nexus between the auction house and smugglers in Italy and India was exposed in Peter Watson's book *Sotheby's: Inside Story* (1997), that their antiquities office was closed in London and shifted to New York. Indeed during the 1980s London was the entrepôt for most trade in Indian art. Richard Davis in his book *Lives of Indian Images* describes in detail the fate of one such work – another Shiva Nataraja (the enduring appeal of this figure for collectors is clear) – that was dug up from a derelict temple in Pathur, Tamil Nadu, in 1976 and after a series of exchanges, where its exact location was sometimes unknown, eventually ended up in the hands of Julian Sherrier, a private dealer in London. It was then sold to Robert Borden, a Canadian collector, who bought the piece for his collection, which he was going to bequeath to a public museum in Canada. Prior to its shipment to Canada, the Tamil Nadu government, who had been tracking the theft in India, made a claim for the seizure and return of the piece.

The saga spanned the years between 1984 and 1988, and while this is not the space to elaborate upon the details of the case that ensued, which has been done so elsewhere,⁴⁵⁰ it is pertinent to note a few implications of the case. After much legal

⁴⁴⁷ Greenfield, *The Return of Cultural Treasures*, 247.

⁴⁴⁸ “For Switzerland, . . . the trade in art treasures is a major course of income, estimated at \$2 billion per year, and the Swiss government has placed no restrictions on the market.” Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 234.

⁴⁴⁹ Roy S Kaufman, *Art Law Handbook* (Gaithersburg: Aspen Law & Business, 2000), 425–436.

⁴⁵⁰ Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 222–259.

wrangling and interpretation of laws across different the two countries in question (the god Shiva himself was named as one of the plaintiff, which caused much consternation and confusion in the British courts where the case was being tried) it was eventually decided that while Shiva could as per Indian interpretation be understood to have juridical presence, the plaintiff would be represented by the State of Tamil Nadu, although the central government in India would pay all the legal expenses for the case. The case became the site for the negotiation of the relationship between central and state politics as well.⁴⁵¹ As Davis has noted, “The trade in illegal antiquities directly challenges national claims on cultural property since it threatens to appropriate all detachable, movable, salable objects for market exchange, leading them by an invisible hand towards the richer nations of the West,”⁴⁵² and so its motivations were inevitably determined by the evident flouting of the very law it had put in place and whose ineffectuality had been brought to the fore through the trial. All the more, the importance to win the case in a much-publicized legal battle would send “a cautionary message both to India’s internal network of smugglers and also to those abroad who dealt in or purchased Indian art” The presiding judge, Justice Kennedy relied upon the principle of “comity of nations”, whereby “each nation respects the laws and usages of every other, so far as may be without prejudice to its own rights and interests,” to pronounce his judgment in favor of the plaintiffs and the sculpture was to be returned to the temple and the state of Tamil Nadu.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ (the Rajiv Gandhi led Congress government at the centre was eager to be a champion a national cause with strategic regional implications and it was particularly fortuitous to curry favour with the Tamil Nadu state ADMK government led by M.G. Ramachandran and Jayalalitha in the run-up to general elections being held in 1989).

⁴⁵² Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 233.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 250–1.

The example of Vaman Ghiya is instructive in the saga of illegal antiquities trade, however this case unfolded on Indian soil and within the jurisdiction of Indian courts. The story that broke the case to the public dramatically declared the international reach of his nefarious activities: “His frequent flier miles were rivalled only by the number of antiques he had stole—20,000.”⁴⁵⁴ After a six month undercover operation (Operation Blackhole), the Jaipur based dealer was arrested in his home in 2003 and charged with habitually receiving stolen property from protected monuments and illegally exporting items out of the country by labeling them as handicrafts (the “legitimate” front for his real business in antiquities) and smuggle them through a series sales and resale via ten export companies in Mumbai, Delhi and Zurich, before they would enter the galleries of dealers in New York or London, or even the auction houses. By the mid-1980s Ghiya was a well established figure as an antiquities supplier for foreign clients and was even mentioned in Watson’s exposé; at the time however, charges were dropped due to insufficient evidence, and it became clear that Ghiya was a meticulous operator, who took extreme precautions to cover his tracks. In his story in *The New Yorker* from May 2007, on the case, Patrick Radden Keefe notes “Part of the durability of Ghiya’s network, authorities say, was that any given link on the chain knew only the links on either side”.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, Watson’s book did not harm his reputation, and evidence emerged to suggest that works sourced through Ghiya continued to make their way into Sotheby and Christie’s auctions well into the 2000s. The *India Today* article from June 2003 that first broke the story revealed “When the Jaipur Police searched his home...they found 34 catalogues each of Sotheby’s and Christie’s on Indian and South-east Asian art listing

⁴⁵⁴ Rohit Parihar. “Past Master” *India Today*, (Living media: New Delhi, 30 June 2003), 70

⁴⁵⁵ Patrick Radden Keefe, “The Idol Thief” *The New Yorker*, May 7, 2007.

thousands of Indian antiques. When Ghiya was asked to flag the pieces he had smuggled for these auction houses, he marked nearly 700.”⁴⁵⁶

While investigating the case in India, about 900 antiques were discovered in Ghiya’s godowns, and it became clear that he had a large number of men working for him that would variously steal, transport, and smuggle the works. The manner in which works were stolen was often exceedingly violent and destructive.⁴⁵⁷ At times where his business risked exposure by the discovery of the appearance of stolen works abroad, he would have the works replaced at the sites they were stolen from by fakes. New copies were also produced to obtain legitimate export licenses, which were then used to export the “original” work out of the country. The myriad ways in which the “copy” circulates, recalls what Comaroff and Comaroff have termed as “modernity of counterfeit,”⁴⁵⁸ where there is a sophisticated and highly organized system in place in the postcolony, that capitalizes on the value created by the commodification of “third-world” cultural property.⁴⁵⁹ The handicrafts industry (itself a colonial legacy reformulated and revalorized in the postcolonial state) is just one such legal system, but the smugglers (for whom handicrafts are often the front), “create parallel modes of production and profiteering...thereby establishing simulacra of social order.”⁴⁶⁰ In Ghiya’s case, it was

⁴⁵⁶ The article goes on to reveal that Dr. R. Russek, a collector based in Switzerland claimed that half the works from his 500-strong collection were sourced through Ghiya. Parihar, 70-72

⁴⁵⁷ “He recalled a squat stone Vahara—a depiction of Vishnu in his incarnation as a boar—that stood in the village of Attru, in southeast Rajasthan. The boar weighed more than a thousand pounds and its legs and torso were covered in a magnificent phalanx of tiny, intricately carved figurines. Ghiya’s thieves stole the statue in the late nineteen-eighties, lacing a chain through the boar’s open mouth and yanking it from its stone pedestal, shearing off its lower jaw and breaking its legs in the process.” (Radden Keefe)”

⁴⁵⁸ Comaroff and Comaroff, *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*, 13.

⁴⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

the combination of the legal handicrafts business and the illegal antiquities trade that sustained the lucrative “zone of ambiguity between the presence and the absence of the law.”⁴⁶¹ With the arrest of the mastermind, his became the biggest antiquities smuggling network to be systematically dismantled and prosecuted, ever since the AATA in 1972. In November 2008, through the proceedings of a “fast-track” court in Jaipur, Ghiya was sentenced to life imprisonment under Section 413 of the Indian Penal Code for habitually dealing with stolen property.

More recently, the New York based art dealer Subhash Kapoor was arrested in Germany in 2011 and extradited to India where he is on trial for selling works stolen from sites in India. He smuggled into the US, where he would sell them alongside legitimate pieces. Several stolen pieces found their way into museums around the world, as gifts or acquisitions. It is telling that Kapoor opened a gallery in New York City, Art of the Past, in 1974, just two years *after* the passing of the Antiquities Act.

Thus, it is evident that despite the ban, smuggling of cultural goods continued to take place. Indeed, the question of the extent to which an export ban like that affecting Indian antiquities is undermined by smuggling has been addressed and borne out by standard trade data⁴⁶² by the comparison of exports from India and the imports in the United Kingdom and the United States which are the major destinations of the Indian antiquities trade. According to the data measured in the years between 1988 and 2012, in the light of the 1972 act prohibiting the export of antiquities, India recorded no

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² As of 1988, the Harmonized System specifically identifies “antiques of an age exceeding one hundred years” (product 970600). For more see Ben Shepherd and Brinda Kumar “Export Bans are Ineffective and Bad for Governance: Evidence from the Indian Antiquities Market”, *ARTNeT Policy Briefs*, Brief No. 37, October 2013

substantial exports and for most years, exports were less than \$50,000, which is within the realm of misclassification and other measurement error, and would suggest that the ban was effective. The picture changed completely when import (mirror) data for major art markets were used instead of Indian export data. By comparing the reported imports in the same category in the import data for the United Kingdom and the United States with India's reported exports it was found that the UK recorded small amounts of trade—less than \$1 million per annum—prior to 2006. For the rest of the sample, however, recorded imports are nearly always in excess of \$1 million. In the US, the situation is even more striking: for no year in the sample did recorded imports fall below \$3 million (with rounding). To bring the point home, total imports of Indian antiquities into the United States in 2012 were valued at just over \$17 million. By comparison, India reported exports for the same year of only \$0.003 million—a difference of nearly 600,000%!

In terms of following the transnational flow of pre-modern art and the building of museum collections, particularly those outside India, the 1972 Act therefore serves as a bookend, for as is evidenced by the events in the decades following the passing of the Act, there was pressure on museums to be more circumspect in their purchases and particular about provenance of pieces. Works that could be proven to have left India before 1972 were especially sought after, but as noted above, those with dubious provenance would still enter the market. Yet it is because of the very shadowy nature of such exchanges that tracing the movement of such works in the post-1972 era is a challenging task made even more difficult.⁴⁶³ That is not to say that collectors did not continue to purchase works

⁴⁶³ Unsurprisingly people still involved in the market are now even more loath to talking about transactional matters, while others have simply opted out of the trade. C.L. Bharany who had been a source

after 1972, and even Binney continued to actively purchase paintings well into the 1980s—not only was Indian painting relatively easy to slip out of the country, but by that stage there were plenty of objects already abroad, and circulating in the secondary market. The often-cyclical nature of art on the secondary market saw earlier generations of collections coming up for sale periodically. Just as the first generation of Islamic Art dealers and collectors including Reza Khan Monif and Kirkor Minassian had brought work to auction in the 1920s in America, so too did the next generation including Hagop Kevorkian and Nasli Heeramanek hold auctions of their works in the 1960s. For collectors who were contemporary to Binney, those whose collections did not end up in museums (most recent of which is the bequest of the Catherine and Ralph Benkaim collection to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2013), once again collections would be dispersed at auction, such as Stuart Cary Welch’s collection after his death in a two-part sale at Sotheby’s in 2011.⁴⁶⁴ But in spite of such continued availability of works, in the years after 1972, the potential liability of pre-modern art was one reason that made the gradual turn to the collection of modern and contemporary art from India more attractive. Yet it would not be until the 1990s that scholarly discourse would address non-Western modernisms, including the critical interventions of Indian modernists. However the absence of modernist art in this dissertation should not be read as a reinscription of its long marginal position in the Indian art historical narrative, but rather, it is hoped that in providing an account of the very modernist gestures of developing art history and building museum collections paradoxically focused on pre-modern art, some of the

of works for collectors like Binney and others in the US, says that he completely stopped dealing in paintings after the passing of the 1972 Act. Instead, he and his sons shifted their focus to Indian jewelry.

⁴⁶⁴ Welch had gifted works to the Harvard Art Museums over the many decades of his association with the institution, and after his death in 2008 his widow Edith Welch would give more works for the “Stuart Cary Welch” collection in the years since 2009.

factors that contributed to its exclusion are better understood. While the fuller unpacking of the implications of the proximity between the consideration of the pre-modern and the modern at various instances through the 20th century was beyond the scope of this dissertation,⁴⁶⁵ the concomitance is worth noting for future exploration.

Indeed part of this dissertation's attempt has been to shift the perspective from which Indian art history is viewed and thus better appreciate the roles of individuals and collections in places other than India and the UK. As such this project has emphasized the particular place of America in this larger narrative, however there remain aspects that have been highlighted, but whose further study remains. The role of temporary exhibitions and the changing installation of works from permanent collections would no doubt provide valuable additional insights into the manner of framing collections. Furthermore, while the roles of lesser known individuals has been recovered (de Forest, Schwaiger, Heeramaneck), and those of better known ones has been understood in a more contextualized manner (Freer, Coomaraswamy, Kramrisch), there are still more questions to be asked – some which the archives can still yield answers for, and others which would require a different kind of investigation. Indeed, this project has needed to circumvent the limitations of the archive. While I have been fortunate to access the papers of several of the individuals discussed in this dissertation, as is evident in the preceding chapters, collectors were uneven in their record-keeping with Freer and Binney often keeping extensive notes about individual purchases, while Coomaraswamy and Kramrisch's

⁴⁶⁵ The instances of such concomitance are many—Gaganendranath Tagore as collector and supplier of pre-modern paintings for the MFA at the same time as his role as an artist experimenting with the idioms of modernism; Ananda Coomaraswamy's involvement with artists of the Bengal School and later Alfred Stieglitz in America; Karl Khandalavala's championing of Amrita Sher-Gil in the 1930s and his writings on Pahari paintings; W.G. Archer's writings on Modern Indian Art in 1959 and his treatise on Paintings from the Hill States the following decade.

collecting practices are veiled in ambiguity and needed to be discerned indirectly. There also remains the further unpacking of the role of individuals in the context of Indian art, mentioned in passing including W. Norman Brown and Stuart Cary Welch. Brown in particular was influential in the organization of the South Asia programs in post-war America, and was instrumental in the founding of the American Institute of Indian Studies, nevertheless, his engagement with Indian art over the decades in America needs to be further elaborated in the context of burgeoning area studies programs at American universities. Welch played an influential role as a collector, Islamic art scholar at Harvard, and curator of important exhibitions of Indian art.

Such a project also opens up the space for a comparative study with the formation of collections of Indian art in continental Europe—collections such as those in Berlin, Zurich, Budapest (where Schwaiger's collection ended up) and Paris (the Musée Guimet's collection and its relationship with C.T. Loo for example) the latter which, which would in turn have different implications for the assessment of the place of Indian art in Asia. The place of London too could be further explored, particularly in its capacity as an important center for the secondary market for Indian art. An early ambition of this project to systematically track the appreciation of value in monetary terms of objects as they traveled, and were sold, and moved from private hands to public institutions, needed to be abandoned on account of the lack of sufficient and consistent data. Instead, the prices of objects have been mentioned at various points in the chapters to give an impressionistic sense of the prevailing valuations at different moments in the twentieth century. Finally, while this project has highlighted the impact of collecting practices in the production of art historical canons and in institutional building in America, the

significance of private initiatives in India is one that remains to be studied. In 2004 Tapati Gaa Thakurta noted that “The history of private art collecting in twentieth-century India remains untold and would make for a fascinating new area of research,”⁴⁶⁶ and a decade later that challenge remains open. Indeed the role of figures mentioned in passing in this dissertation including B.N. Treasurywala, Ajit Ghose, Rai Krishnadasa, P.C. Manuk, Jagdish Goenka, Gautam Sarabhai, Gopi Krishna Kanoria etc. is worth exploring,⁴⁶⁷ and it is hoped that some of the approaches undertaken in this dissertation may be instructive in situating their roles and collections within in a larger transnational interest in the collection of Indian art.

This dissertation began with the objective of questioning some of the assumptions about the genealogy of the Indian art historical canon, particularly with regards to the role of collecting practices. With its focus on collections in America and in covering a period of seven decades, the project has been unorthodox and ambitious, however it has not pretended to be comprehensive, and as outlined above, there remain many avenues for further exploration. Nevertheless, it is hoped that in unpacking the manner in which individuals formed collections, contextualizing those collections in the historical moments of their formation, and situating the individuals within a network of interactions, fruitful inroads have been made in an evolving and critical understanding of Indian art history and historiography in the 20th century.

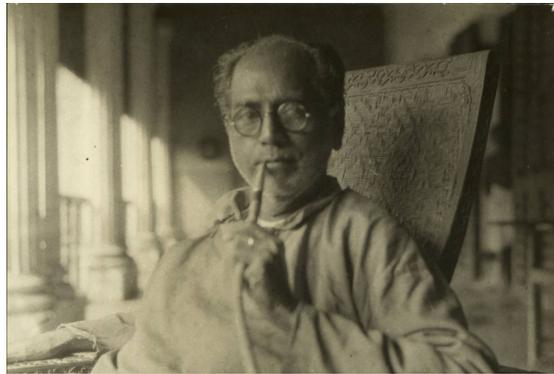
⁴⁶⁶ Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 349.

⁴⁶⁷ The role of the communities from which many such collectors hailed, namely the Parsis and Marwaris will also be a fascinating lens through which to approach an analysis of their collecting practices.

APPENDIX

Cast of Characters

A.G. Wenley (1898-1962): Chinese Art scholar who was mentored by J.E. Lodge who introduced him to the field of Chinese art, Wenley worked for the Freer Gallery of Art from 1924 until his death. From 1942 to 1962 he was the Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, after J.E. Lodge's death.



Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951): Member of the Tagore family from Jorasanko near Calcutta, and brother of Gaganendranath Tagore, and nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. He was trained as a painter, and along with E.B. Havell was responsible for the revitalization of the teaching curriculum of the Calcutta School of Art, by the incorporation of nationalist values. As an artist he was responsible for the development of a style of painting, which became known as the Bengal School, and was influenced by the study of historical forms of Indian paintings including the paintings of Ajanta and Mughal works. He was a founder of the Indian Society of Oriental Art through which he published an influential treatise *Sadanga, or, The Six Limbs of Painting* (1921).

Adrian Maynard (1901-1991): Deputy Chairman of Spink & Sons, London leading antiquarian and booksellers. A specialist in their Chinese department he developed a close relationship with John D. Rockefeller 3rd and Blanchette Rockefeller and advised them on all aspects of Asian art. The Rockefellers would typically stop by Spinks to meet Maynard on their visits to London.



Alvin Langdon Coburn. Charles Lang Freer Comparing Whistler's Venus Rising from the Sea to a Glazed Syrian Pot. 1909

Alvin Langdon Coburn (1882-1966): American photographer who rose to fame in the early 20th century. He was known for his development of pictorialism in photography and was part of Alfred Stieglitz's circle. Coburn opened his first studio in New York City in 1902 to exhibit his prints, and became part of a crowd that wanted to establish photography as art. He moved to London in 1904 to take portraits of celebrities. At the request of Charles Lang Freer, Coburn briefly returned to the U.S. so he could photograph Freer's large collection of Asian art and Whistler prints.

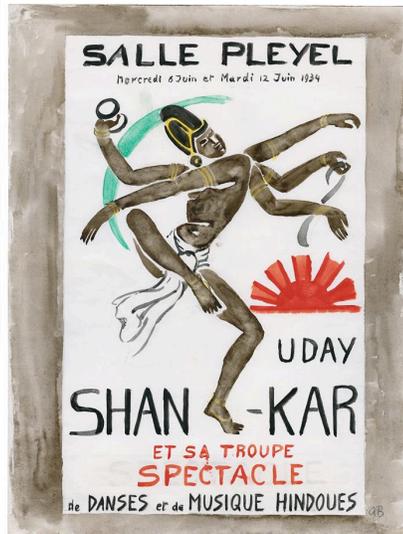
Ananda Coomaraswamy (1877-1947): Born to a Ceylonese Tamil father and English mother, Coomaraswamy grew up in England where he trained as a Geologist. He went to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to head the Mineralogical Society, and wrote his first influential book *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (1908). He would go on to become a champion of Indian art and philosophy, and wrote seminal books on the subject including *Rajput Painting* (1916), *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* (1916), *The Mirror of Gesture* (1917), *The Dance of Siva* (1918), *Yaksas* (1928-31), *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (1927) and *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1934). He moved to America in 1916 where he lived until his death. Shortly before he died he planned to move back to India.



Alfred Stieglitz, *The Hand of Man*, gelatin silver print, 1902. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946): American photographer, editor and publisher. Stieglitz began taking photographs as a student in Germany in 1883. He was responsible for elevating photography's status to the level of painting and sculpture through the numerous pioneering exhibitions that he organized, and by his participation in Photo-Secessionist and Pictorialist movements in photography. He published *Camera Notes* and *Camera Work*, the influential journals that he founded and edited. He became friends with Ananda Coomaraswamy in the 1920s who also shared Stieglitz's interests in photography. Coomaraswamy was responsible for the inclusion of Stieglitz's works in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston – a first for an American museum.

Ajit Ghose: Calcutta based collector of Mughal and Rajput paintings, art critic and occasional dealer. His collection was exhibited at the Government School of Art, Calcutta in 1925. He wrote articles in *Rupam* and sold works to museums abroad including the Freer Gallery and the British Museum. He was also an early collector of Kalighat Paintings. His collection of paintings would end up in the National Museum in Delhi.



Alice Boner in her home in Benares, 1928

Alice Boner (1889-1981): Swiss painter, art historian and Indologist. She was introduced to India through dance and became a patron of Uday Shankar, traveling with his troupe between 1926 and 1930. In 1935 she decided to settle in Varanasi, and from there began drawing and conducting studies on Indian sculpture. It was in Varanasi that she became friends with Stella Kramrisch as well. Her house has now become the home for the Alice Boner Institute. Her collection and papers are now in the Museum Reitberg in Zurich.

Alice Boney (1901-1988): American dealer, known for her specialization in Japanese art. Once called “The doyenne of Oriental art,” in a 65 years career, she was one of the few women in the male-dominated world of Oriental art. She began dealing in East Asian art in the 1920s in New York, (including an exhibition of contemporary Japanese paintings in 1926). She sold art to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Freer Gallery in Washington, and during the 1940's and 1950's, she helped to organize exhibitions at the China Institute and got to know John D Rockefeller in this period too. In 1958 Miss Boney went to Japan for six months and stayed for 16 years, returning annually to the United States to sell art. She eventually returned to America in 1974 and continued to sell art from her apartment in New York.

Ardeshir C. Ardeshir: A Bombay-based Parsi collector of Mughal paintings in the 1920s and 1930s. An automobile and horse racing enthusiast, today he is remembered mostly for the race named after him at the Bombay Turf Club, he has also given his name to a splendid album that was once the property of the Maratha Peshwa, Nana Phadnavis. It was sold and dispersed in 1973, along with other individual paintings and manuscripts from his collection, including the exquisite *Khamsa* of Nizami produced for Akbar c. 1585 and now in the Keir Collection. It was at the same sale that Edwin Binney 3rd bought paintings. Karl Khandalavala wrote notes on the Ardeshir collection in “The Ardeshir Collection of Mughal miniatures” alongside an essay by Ardeshir himself titled, “Mughal Miniature Painting: The School of Jahangir”, *Roopa Lekha*, Vol. II, No. 3 (1940).

Arthur Fairbanks (1864-1944): Boston Museum of Fine Arts Director and curator of classical art. In 1908 he was appointed Director of the Museum. Under his directorship the Museum moved to new facilities in Fenway Park. It was also his directorship that Okakura’s expansion of the Chinese and Japanese Art took place. It was also during his tenure that the Victor Goloubew and Ananda Coomaraswamy collections were acquired by the museum. He retired from the museum in 1925.

Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969): Archaeologist and historian of Persian art, and an often-controversial figure. In the 1920s Pope and his wife and fellow Persian art specialist Phyllis Ackerman became advisors to major collectors and museums on the acquisition of Islamic art and artifacts. In 1925, he went to Iran to complete research and serve as an art advisor to the Iranian government. He organized an exhibition and the First International Congress on Persian Art in Philadelphia in 1926. In 1928 he founded the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology (later the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology and ultimately the Asia Institute) in New York. He traveled the world giving lectures and curating exhibitions of Persian art. In 1930, he edited the Survey of Persian Art and was a key organizer of the highly successful International Exhibition of Persian Art that opened at London’s Royal Academy of Arts in January 1931. The exhibition would be an inspiration for the India Society to mount a similar

exhibition of Indian art, although this ambition was never realized. The exhibits consisted of more than 2,500 items from 90 institutions and individuals in 27 countries. In 1954 The International Association of Iranian Art elected him president in 1960. He and his wife settled in Iran.

Aschwin Lippe (1914-1988): A German born prince who was trained in East Asian Art, and Chinese painting in particular. In 1945 he left Germany, and in 1949 settled in New York as a research assistant at the Department of Far Eastern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he later became a curator before his eventual retirement in 1973. In his later years Lippe worked more on South and Southeast Asian Buddhist sculptures, publishing in 1970 a catalog of the Indian sculptures in the Freer Gallery. He also advised John D Rockefeller 3rd in his collections of South and Southeast Asian sculpture.

Avery Brundage (1887–1975): A controversial figure, he is known for being the President of the International Olympic Committee, but also became known as a major collector of Asian Art and benefactor of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. He first started collecting Asian Art in the 1930s, and continued till the end of his life. He engaged the French scholar René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argencé to advise him on his Chinese art collections. In 1959, Brundage agreed to donate the first part of his vast collection of Asian art to San Francisco on the condition that the city build a new museum to house it. His collection included jade, Chinese lacquer work, Japanese swords and prehistoric Chinese bronzes, and also Indian sculpture. Brundage donated more than 7,700 Asian art objects to the City of San Francisco, now housed in the Asian Art Museum.

B.N. Goswamy (b.1933): Indian Art historian who specialized in Pahari painting and Sikh painting. His doctoral work focused on the social background of Kangra valley paintings. In his pioneering research he recovered Pahari painters from their assumed anonymity, establishing the basis for family as the basis of style in the instances of Pandit Seu's family and Nainsukh of Guler. He taught for many years at Panjab University, where he is Professor Emeritus. He also organized international exhibitions of Indian

painting including *Essence of Indian Art* at the Asian Art Museum in 1986 which was notable for looking at Indian art through the concept of *rasa*.

B.N. Treasuryvala: Bombay based Parsi collector of Rajput and Mughal painting. He knew Ananda Coomaraswamy and corresponded with him regularly and even gave folios from Isarda Ramayana to the MFA in 1929. He was uncle and mentor to Karl Khandalavala who would be an important art historian and collector as well. Sculptures, Bronzes, Textiles and Paintings from his collection would end up being bought by the National Museum, New Delhi.

Benjamin Rowland Jr. (1904-1972): Historian of South Asian art and Harvard Professor. During the 1930s he became interested in Asian arts and began to study Chinese and Japanese languages. He also established a friendship with Ananda Coomaraswamy at this time. In 1936-37 he traveled to India, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) researching a book on Buddhist wall painting and eventually published a book on the subject in 1938. It was while exploring the temple remains in Afghanistan and the Gandhara district of West Pakistan that he became fascinated with the influence of Greco-Roman art on Buddhist sculpture. This became the topic on which he built his reputation as a scholar. In 1950 he was appointed full professor in 1950, succeeding Langdon Warner in responsibility for the Asian collections of the Fogg Museum. In 1953 he published the Pelican History of Art volume on Indian art.

Bernard Quatritch (1819-1899): A German-born British bookseller and collector, he founded a business in London in 1847 for the sale of rare books and manuscripts that continues till today. The eponymous establishment became an important source for Islamic manuscripts and was frequented by collectors.

Blanchette Rockefeller (1909-1992): Wife and collecting partner of John D Rockefeller 3rd. Blanchette was also interested in the arts. She was a great collector and generous donor of modern art, and was particularly enthusiastic about the New York School in the 1940s. She served as a trustee of the MoMa beginning in 1953, and as president and chair

of the board on and off for many years. She also served on the New York State Council of the Arts, the National Council of Humanities, and as the Chairman of the Asian Arts Council. She shared many of her husband's philanthropic interests and deep interest in Asia and Asian art. She accompanied on many of his trips to Asia. She was a member of the Asia Society, which JDR 3rd founded. Blanchette and JDR 3rd consulted Sherman Lee and would make decisions about the purchase of art together. They gradually assembled world-class collections of Asian and American art which were donated to the Asia Society and to San Francisco's DeYoung Museum. She also bequeathed an extensive selection of modern and Asian art to her alma mater Vassar's art gallery.

C.L. Naulakha: Delhi based collector and dealer of Indian paintings who was active in the 1960s.

C.T. Loo (1880-1957): Preeminent dealer of Chinese art and artifacts. Starting his business in Paris, Loo was responsible for introducing early Chinese art—bronzes, jades, paintings—to Western Europe and North America. Because of his connections in Asia, he was able to obtain major pieces for such collectors as J. P. Morgan, Samuel Peters, Alfred Pillsbury, and Henry Clay Frick from eras never before represented in the West. He also dealt in Indian sculpture and held exhibitions in his galleries in the 1930s and 1940s, besides supplying the Musée Guimet with Indian works as well.

Caspar Purdon Clarke (1846-1911): British architect who was the second director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1905-10) after having served at the South Kensington Museum, London. In 1880 Clarke arranged the Indian collections at South Kensington, which led to taking on the position of special commissioner in India and then becoming keeper of the India Museum at South Kensington in 1883. He was responsible for the purchase of Hamzanama folios by the South Kensington Museum.

Catherine Glynn Benkaim (b.1946): A scholar, lecturer, and independent curator in the field of South Asian art. She worked at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the 1970s and was a recipient of a research grant on Indian art from the Catherine Glynn

married the collector Ralph Benkaim (1914–2001) who was a patron of LACMA and a contemporary of Stuart Cary Welch and Edwin Binney 3rd. The Benkaim Collection of Deccan and Mughal Paintings, of 95 works from India's major Islamic courts was bought by the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2013

Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919): American collector and museum builder. Freer made his fortune in the railroad car manufacturing industry latter half of the 19th century. His interest in the Aesthetic Movement helped to shape his tastes in art, and in the late 1880s, Freer began to actively collect paintings and works on paper by James McNeill Whistler. It was through Whistler's interests in the arts and cultures of Asia, that Freer's first looked East, and by 1906, had amassed a considerable amount of paintings and ceramics from Japan and China, and artifacts from the ancient Near East. He bought the Hanna Collection of Indian paintings in 1907. He built the Freer Gallery and to house his personal collection, which he bequeathed to the nation through the Smithsonian Institution in 1906.

Charles Fabri (1899-1968): Hungarian born Indologist, art historian, critic and archaeologist who published on a wide range of subjects. Until the early 1930s he served as a conservator of the Kern Institute Library. In the 1930s he worked for the Archaeological Survey of India, and later worked as a curator of the Lahore Museum. He was based in Punjab till 1947, and became acquainted with Amrita Sher-Gil and became a supporter of her work. After Indian independence he settled in Delhi where he lectured at the National Museum and the Delhi Polytechnic.

Charles J. Morse (1852–1911): Charles Morse was a Chicago engineer. A friend of C.L. Freer, he also collected Chinese and Japanese paintings, porcelain, and other works together with a library relating to Asian art.

Christian Humann (1929-1981): New York based American investment banker. The collection of Indian and Southeast Asian stone and bronze sculptures was assembled from the 1950's through the 1970's. About 160 works from the Humann holdings were shown

anonymously in the late 1970s as the Pan Asian collection in the exhibition “Sensuous Immortals,” organized by Pratapaditya Pal at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and traveled to museums in Seattle, Denver and Kansas City. After Humann's death the New York based dealer Robert Ellsworth bought the collection of about 1,600 paintings and objects for about \$12 million, and subsequently sold pieces to several museums, before putting a small selection of 137 works up for auction in 1990.

Cowasji Jehangir (1879-1962): Prominent member of the Bombay Parsi community and art collector. He served as President of Bombay Art Society, and later founded the Jehangir Art Gallery in 1952. The Cowasji Jehangir Collection of art included miniature paintings and sculptures (Karl Khandalaval and Moti Chandra brought out a catalogue of the collection in 1965), and would eventually become part of the collections of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

Denman Waldo Ross (1853-1935): American collector, teacher and patron of the arts. He served as a member of Department of Fine Arts at his alma mater Harvard, from 1909 to 1935. Ross also played an important role as a trustee of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and was particularly instrumental in shaping the museum’s collections of Asian art. It was Ross who purchased the Ananda Coomaraswamy collection of Indian painting for the MFA in 1917. Throughout his association with the museum he donated works from his collection including European art objects, Chinese and Japanese paintings and textiles, and Indian paintings and sculpture.

Dikran G. Kelekian (1868-1951): Armenian dealer and collector who maintained establishments in Paris in New York. The latter was opened shortly after his participation in the World’s Columbian Exposition. He was an important advisor and source for turn of the century American collectors who were interested in Islamic art, including Charles Lang Freer, Henry Walters and Henry Havemayer, and thus was instrumental in shaping the Islamic art collections of three important museums (the Freer Gallery, the Walters Art Gallery and the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Dona Luisa Coomaraswamy (1905-1970): Argentinian born photographer who worked under the name of Xlata/Zata Llamas in Boston, she married Ananda Coomaraswamy in 1930 and was his fourth wife. They had one son together called Rama. After Coomaraswamy's death in 1947, she was responsible for his estate and continued his work, including editing versions of Coomaraswamy's work prepared for the Bollingen Foundation.

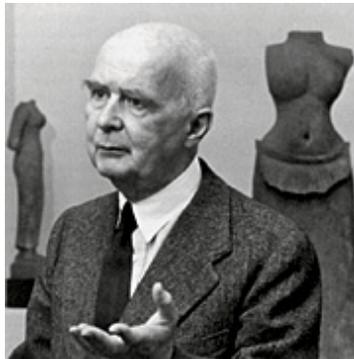
Doris Duke (1912-1993): Doris Duke was an Islamic art collector and inherited a fortune from her father the tobacco tycoon James Buchanan Duke. She is known for being a major collector of Islamic art, assembling a collection of more than 2,500 pieces and exhibiting it throughout her Honolulu home Shangri La. In 1935, Doris Duke and her first husband James Cromwell traveled around the world on their honeymoon, and visited India as part of their journey. It was in India that she first began to collect Islamic art, and met Imre Schwaiger who supplied her with objects including jewelry. She was inspired by the Mughal architecture and commissioned a bedroom and bath suite based on Mughal designs. She devoted over five decades building a collection of Islamic art that she housed in Shangri La which has now become a Center for Islamic Arts and Culture.

Doris Wiener (1923-2011): New York based dealer of Indian and Southeast Asian art. She had her first show in 1961 and traveled to India in the 1960s, soon thereafter organizing important sale exhibitions of sculpture and painting. Among her many clients were John D. Rockefeller 3rd, Jacqueline Kennedy and Edwin Binney 3rd. Till her death she supplied works to important collections of Asian art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Norton Simon Museum of Art, Asia Society and The Brooklyn Museum, among others. After her death over 400 works from her collection were sold at Christie's in 2012.

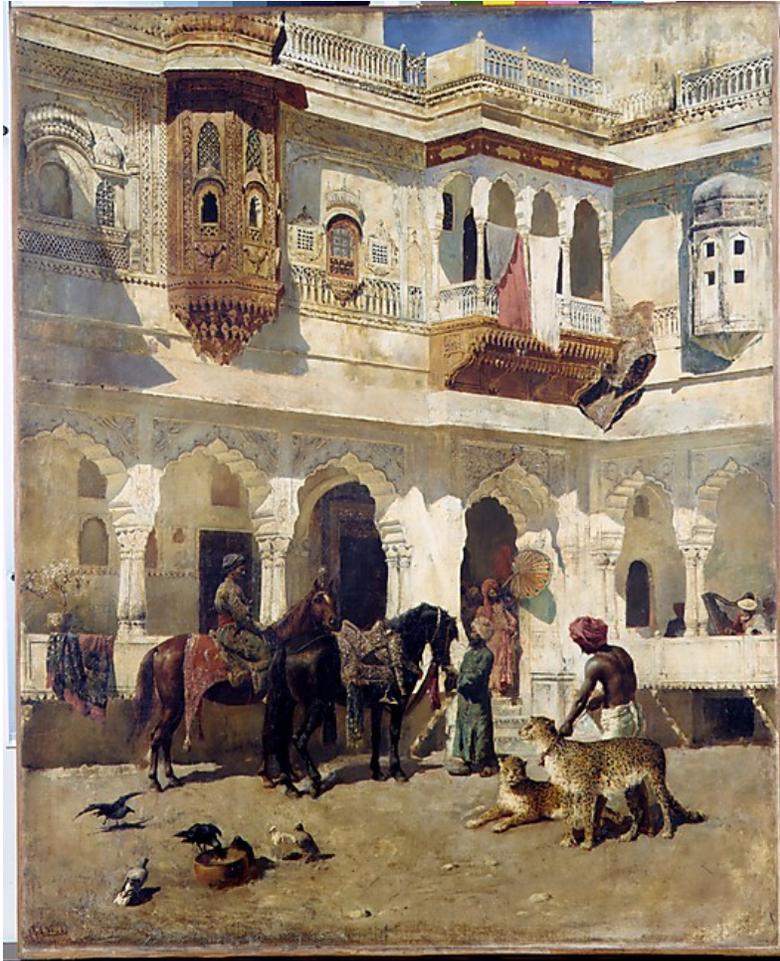
E.B. Havell (1861-1931): English arts administrator who played an influential role in the development of Indian art at the turn of the century. He was the principal of the Government School of Art, Calcutta from 1896 to 1905, where he proposed a system of

art education that drew upon Indian painting traditions. This would lead to the formation of the Bengal School of art by Havell and Abanindranath Tagore. He became an early champion for the worthiness of Indian art through his writings such as *Essays on Indian art, industry and education* (1907) and *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (1908). He helped found the Indian Society of Oriental Art and was also a founding member of the India Society.

Edward Sylvester Morse (1838-1925): American zoologist and orientalist, who specialized in Japan. Morse became Keeper of Pottery at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1890. He was also a director of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in Salem from 1880 to 1914. His collection of Japanese ceramics was given to the MFA, and became the “Morse Collection”, whose catalog was written by Ernest Francisco Fenollosa, and a collection of artifacts from the Morse collection are now part of the Peabody Essex Museum. He became chairman of the Boston Museum in 1914, and chairman of the Peabody Museum in 1915.



Edward von der Heydt (1882-1964): A German-Swiss baron, who was a banker and Collector of the arts of South and East Asia. From 1920 he acquired his first African sculptures as well as Chinese paintings. C.T. Loo would supply him works in Paris. During his life he bequeathed works to museums in Europe and America, before giving the major part of his collection to the City of Zurich, which formed the kernel of the collections of the Museum Rietberg.



Edwin Lord Weeks, *The Rajah Starting a Hunt*, c.1892. Collection: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Edwin Lord Weeks (1849-1903) American Orientalist painter who trained under Léon Bonnat in Paris. Like many American painters of his day, Weeks made Paris his home. He did however travel to North Africa, Central Asia and India and wrote articles and made accompanying illustrations for Harper's. He spent two years in India before returning home to Paris. In 1895 he wrote and illustrated a book of travels, *From the Black Sea through Persia and India*. His paintings of Indian life gave him celebrity both in France and America and they became his specialty. In 1905 in New York, the artist's widow sold his studio effects as well as his paintings, drawings and studies at auction. When academic painting declined in the mid-20th century, museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (*The Last Voyage: Souvenir of the Ganges, Benaras*), and the Brooklyn Museum of Art (*The Hour of Prayer at Muti-Mushid (Pearl Mosque), Agra*, c.1888-89), who had paintings by Week deaccessioned them.

Eric C. Dickinson (1892-1951): Professor of English and Principal at the Government College, Lahore and collector of Rajput paintings. He is credited with the “discovery” of Kishangarh school of painting which he happened to see during an education delegation in 1943. He wrote about the subject in an essay in *Marg* in 1950. He also collected Kangra paintings. He was active in the artistic and literary scene in Lahore and hosted E.M. Forster’s on the author’s visit to Lahore in 1945.

Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908): Curator of Oriental art at the Museum of Fine Art, Boston. He traveled to Japan in 1878 (at the invitation of Edward Sylvester Morse) to teach at the Imperial University at Tokyo. He helped revive the Nihonga (Japanese) style of painting together with Japanese artists Kanō Hōgai (1828-1888) and Hashimoto Gahō (1835-1908). After eight years at the University, he helped found the Tokyo Fine Arts Academy and the Imperial Museum acting as its director in 1888. Among Fenollosa's accomplishments were the first inventory of Japan's national treasures, and in so doing he discovered ancient Chinese scrolls brought to Japan by traveling Zen monks centuries earlier. In 1886 he sold the art collection he had amassed to Boston physician Charles Goddard Weld (1857-1911) on the condition that it go the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. In 1890 he returned to Boston to be curator of the department of Oriental art at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts where he organized the first exhibition of Chinese painting at the MFA in 1894 and developed the Department. His public divorce and the scandal that ensued led to his dismissal from the Museum in 1896, and he was replaced by his student and fellow buying companion, Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1913). His last years were spent creating a collection for Charles Lang Freer.

F.H. Gravely (1885-1965): English botanist, zoologist and archaeologist, Gravely worked as Assistant Superintendent at the Indian Museum, Calcutta before becoming the Superintendent of the Government Museum of Madras in 1920. Along with the Curator C. Sivaramamurti (who would later head the National Museum), Gravely organized the museum’s collections in 1938. He also collaborated with T. N. Ramachandran (Curator of Archaeology 1925-1935) on the scientific basis for identifying the period of metal

images. He was responsible for the donation of sculptures to Ananda Coomaraswamy for the MFA, Boston.



FATEH LAL MEHTA, OF OUDHPORE, IN COURT DRESS

Fateh Lal Mehta (1868-????): The son of the Prime Minister or Diwan of Mewar Panna Lal Mehta, Fateh Lal Mehta joined service in Udaipur State where he served as a Revenue Officer. In 1888 he authored the *Handbook of Meywar and guide to its principal objects of interest*. Mehta probably met Edwin Lord Weeks on his visit to the state, as an illustration of him in court dress is included in *From the Black Sea through Persia and India* (1896). Mehta also met Charles Lang Freer on his visit to India, and the two men corresponded in 1895.

Frank J. Hecker (1846-1927): Detroit based railroad car manufacturer, and Charles Lang Freer's business partner. In 1879, the two men organized the Peninsular Car Works, which in 1884 was turned into the Peninsular Car Company. Hecker was president of both companies, and business made both Hecker and Freer rich. Freer would devote less time to business affairs as he traveled and collected, but much of what we know of Freer's travels is because of the letters he wrote to Hecker. They build adjacent mansions in Detroit, and the two men remained close until Freer's death.

Gaganendranath Tagore (1867-1938): Member of the Tagore family from Jorasanko near Calcutta, and brother of Abanindranath Tagore, and nephew of Rabindranath Tagore. He was trained as a painter and in 1907, along with his brother Abanindranath, he founded the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Like members of the Bengal School he studied and assimilated Japanese brush techniques, however later moved towards caricatures. In the 1920s he also experimented with Cubist forms, and Stella Kramrisch wrote on his work in *Rupam*. He was a collector of Indian paintings and occasionally supplied the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Gardiner M. Lane (1859-1914): A prominent Boston businessman who worked for President of the Boston Museum from 1907 until his death in 1914.

Gaston Migeon (1861-1930): French curator at the Louvre who was responsible for the building of Chinese art, Japanese and Islamic Art collections. He was the organizer of 1903 *Exposition des arts musulmans au Musée des arts décoratifs*. He was close to many Parisian Islamic art collectors, and advised Charles Lang Freer on his Near Eastern collections.

Gautam Sarabhai (1917-1995): Ahmedabad based industrialist from the prominent Sarabhai family who was a collector of Indian bronzes, textiles and paintings. He and his sister Gira opened the Calico Museum of Textiles. The Museum was inspired by Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, who in conversations with Gautam Sarabhai during the 1940s, suggested the founding of a textile institute in the city of Ahmedabad.

George Birdwood (1832-1917): British colonial officer who worked in the Bombay Presidency. Trained as a surgeon, Birdwood's interests lay not only within the medical field. He was heavily involved in the cultural affairs of Bombay and became the Registrar of the newly-founded University of Bombay. As a cultural administrator he occupied the posts of curator of the government art museum, Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society and Sheriff of Bombay. He returned to England in 1868 where he continued vigorous involvement in Indian cultural affairs, especially in the form of international exhibitions

and the museological display of Indian art and artefacts. He was appointed keeper of the Indian Museum at South Kensington. His reputation as an authority on Indian art and manufacture was firmly established with the publication of *The Industrial Arts of India* in 1880, which championed the production of Indian arts and crafts in heavily paternalistic tones. His reputation as a champion of Indian art was somewhat challenged at a now infamous event which took place whilst chairing the Indian Section meeting of the annual meeting of the Royal Society of Arts 1910 when he claimed that India possessed no 'fine art' which he had come across in all his years in India, and that a 'boiled suet pudding would serve equally as well as a symbol of passionless purity and serenity of soul.' This prompted a wave of counter claims and protest, most notably a letter sent to *The Times* in February 1910 penned by William Rothenstein and counter-signed by twelve other prominent cultural figures, and led to the foundation of the India Society.

George Watt (1851-1930): Professor of Botany, Calcutta University. He held several posts in the British colonial government and was also involved in the India Section of the Calcutta International Exhibition (1884); the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, London (1885–86) Calcutta Industrial Museum (1894-03) and eventually the Director of the Indian Art Exhibition, Delhi, 1903 for which he produced an extensive catalogue for all the exhibitors and objects.

George P. Bickford (1901-1991): Cleveland attorney, who became known on Indian and Far Eastern art circle for his extensive personal collection, which eventually became part of the Cleveland Museum of Art – an institution he was long associated with. Bickford conceived his own interest in Indian art as a result of Army service in the Judge Advocate General's Dept. during World War II, where he served in the India-Burma Theater. Upon his return, the collection he had begun was displayed in the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1946 and later in 1975. He made bi-annual postwar trips to India and in 1964 was appointed honorary consul for India for the Cleveland area. For 35 years, he also served as trustee for the Cleveland Museum of Art, and shared a close relationship with the Far Eastern Art Curator, and later Director Sherman Lee.

Hagop Kevorkian (1872-1962): Armenian archaeologist, dealer, and collector. He settled in New York in the late nineteenth century, and like Dikran Kelekian became a key tastemaker for Islamic art and an intermediary between Middle Eastern governments, and clients, and museums in America. He considered himself to be an archaeologist and directed several excavations, including at sites in Sultanabad and Rayy in Iran. He organized exhibitions of Islamic works in London (1911) and in New York (1914). He also organized the first exhibition of Indian art in his New York galleries in 1918 for which Ananda Coomaraswamy wrote the introduction to the catalog. Major sales of Islamic pieces from his collection, were held in the 1920s at the Anderson Gallery, New York. In 1929 he acquired at auction the Mughal album of calligraphy and painting that became known as the Kevorkian Album.

He regularly donated works to the Metropolitan Museum and the Brooklyn Museum's Kevorkian Gallery displays the Assyrian reliefs he donated to the institution. In 1951, he created The Kevorkian Foundation, through which the Kevorkian Chair of Iranian Studies at Columbia University, several professorships, and The Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at New York University were created in 1966 to foster the interdisciplinary study of the modern and contemporary Middle East and to enhance public understanding of the region.

Henry Bathhurst Hanna (1839-1914) An officer in the British Army in India retiring at the rank of Colonel. During his military career in India he assembled a collection of Indian paintings over 30 years. These included 17th and 18th century Mughal works of imperial quality as well as later copies, Deccani and provincial illustrations and miniatures executed under English patronage and influence. In 1890 Hanna began looking for a repository/buyer for his collection and in May 1890 exhibited his collection at Dowdeswell and Dowedswells in London. When he did not find a buyer, he sent them on long-term loan to Laing Art Gallery at Newcatle-on-Tyne which had opened in 1904. A few years later Charles Lang Freer heard of the collection and corresponded with Hanna for its purchase, eventually buying the collection for £3100 (approx. \$15,000) in October 1907. *Catalogue of Indo-Persian Pictures and Manuscripts, Principally of the*

Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries by Mughal Artists, Collected by Colonel H.B. Hanna (London: Dowdeswell and Dowdeswells, 1890)

Henry Hardy Cole (1843-1916) He was the son of Henry Cole, who was responsible for the organization of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. A Royal Engineer, Major Henry Hardy Cole became the Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India and Curator of Ancient Monuments. Published in 1874 a *Catalogue of the Objects of Indian Art Exhibited in the South Kensington Museum*. The catalogue was the first to outline what would become the enduring framework of organization as divided into three main chronological and stylistic phases, the “Buddhist,” “Brahmanical Hindu,” and “Muhammadan” phases, with the art and civilization in ancient India being the monopoly of the Aryan races.

Henry Walters (1848-1931): Art collector, American rail magnate (Atlantic Coast Line) and founder of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. When his William Walters (1820-1894) died, he bequeathed his collection of European and American paintings, and Asian art and ceramics to Henry Walters, who greatly expanded the scope of acquisitions, becoming notable for some spectacular purchases including the contents of the Palazzo Accoramboni in Rome which included some 1700 pieces. He was particularly known for his collection of Islamic Art, much of which he bought through Dikran Kelekian. In September 1900, Henry bought the three adjoining houses in Baltimore, and had the site designed and adapted as a palazzo-style building, which opened to the public in 1909 as the Walters Art Gallery. Besides the Walters Art Gallery, he was also associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art and became its second vice president until his death.

Heinrich Zimmer (1890-1943): South Asian historian of philosophy and art. While holding the position of the Chair of Indian Philology at Heidelberg University from the late 1920s, he wrote some of his most influential work, including *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* (1926). In 1938 he was dismissed by the Nazi's, emigrating to London where, between 1939-40 he taught at Balliol College, Oxford. In 1942 he moved to New

York to accept a Visiting Lecturer position in Philosophy at Columbia where he died the following year. He was known to Ananda Coomaraswamy, and Zimmer's vast knowledge of Hindu mythology and philosophy would be influential on Joseph Campbell who edited Zimmer's writings after his death. The psychiatrist Carl Jung also developed a long-standing relationship with Zimmer.

Hermann Goetz (1898-1976): German born art historian and museologist who specialized in Indian art. In Germany, Goetz was the director of the College of Arts and Crafts in Karlsruhe, and had published several articles on Indian art and historiography. Goetz came to India in 1936 with a travel grant from the Kern Institute, and stayed on in India even after his fellowship expired. He taught Indian art at various universities, writing, lecturing and undertaking journalistic activities. In 1940 the Maharaja of Baroda appointed Goetz as the Director of the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery. Goetz's firsthand knowledge of Indian art in conjunction with his scholarly inclinations revitalized the collection and direction for the Baroda Museum, including bringing about an emphasis on modern art. On his retirement in Baroda in 1953, he was appointed Director of the new National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, which was inaugurated in March 1954. Returnig to Germany in the late 1950s, Goetz was named Honorary Professor at the new South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University in 1961, where he taught until his death in 1976.



Imre Schwaiger (1868-1940): Hungarian born dealer in Indian antiquities, curios, jewelry and art. He began with a shop in Simla, but became better known for his

establishments in Delhi and London from where he supplied an international clientele with Indian objects. Works from his collection were on display in the Delhi exhibition of 1911, and Stewart Culin recalls meeting Schwaiger in 1914. Although his shop and its contents were confiscated during World War I on account of Schwaiger's nationality, he was allowed to return to India in the early 1920s, and reestablished himself. He toured Agra with Doris Duke during his visit in the 1930s and sold her some jewelry. Throughout his life, he sold and donated works to various museums in Europe and America, including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The Ferenc Hopp Museum in Budapest's Indian section was established through Schwaiger's donations. Imre Schwaiger Collection of the Mughal room is now part of the National Museum, Delhi.

Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840-1924): Boston-based American art collector and patron, she was married to John "Jack" Lowell Gardner II, a businessman who was descended from the Peabody family. After the death of their only son, the couple traveled the world extensively and began to collect art. Her collection is now housed in the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

James Proctor Watson (1843-1923): British businessman and proprietor of Watson & Co. of Bombay and London. The son of a silk mercer, draper and hosier who emigrated to Bombay in 1853, Watson's family business flourished and the company bought and developed a plot on the Esplanade in Bombay for additional office and showroom facilities. This later became the grand Watsons Hotel in Bombay. Watson & Co. partnered with Lockwood de Forest to sell works from the Ahmedabad Wood Carving Company. With the fortune amassed in India, J.P. Watson founded the Watson Institute in his ancestral hometown in Castle Carrock, Cumbria.

James Fergusson (1808-1886) Scottish architectural historian who played a key role in the rediscovery of ancient India, through the publication of drawings, lithographs and photographs of sites. His first book was *Picturesque Illustrations of Ancient Architecture in India* (1848), which was a product of his travels through India and his notes and

impressions. In this volume he delineated his notion of “the inverted evolution” of Indian architecture where the Buddhist architectural achievements of Ancient India were seen as a high point and a product of the racial purity of the ancient Aryans. This “Aryan Myth” would later be echoed in the writings of Henry Hardy Cole and other 19th century Orientalists. On his return to England in the 1840s saw him establish himself as an architectural historian, who situated Indian architecture within world architecture in publications like *The Illustrated Handbook of Architecture, being a Concise and Popular Account of the different Styles of Architecture prevailing in all Ages and Countries*, a work which first appeared in 1855 in two volumes. He would more fully elaborate on Indian architecture in the dedicated volume *The History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (1876) which was part of his ‘world architecture’ series.

James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903): American born, Britain based painter during the Gilded Age, Whistler participated in the artistic ferment of Paris and London in the late nineteenth century, crafted a distinctive style from diverse sources, and arrived at a version of Post-Impressionism in the mid-1860s. Whistler found inspiration in the composition and subject matter of Japanese prints and the delicate designs on Chinese porcelains.. Initially, Whistler merely included Asian costumes and accessories as props in his works but, by the mid-1860s, he adopted Japanese principles of composition and spatial organization. Charles Freer met Whistler in 1890 when, on his first trip to London, he paid a call at the artist's Chelsea studio and initiated a long and fruitful friendship. With Whistler's encouragement and cooperation, Freer built the most important collection of his works in the world, including the Peacock Room, which is now a part of the Freer Gallery of Art.

John D. Rockefeller 3rd (1906-1978): Third generation of the famous Rockefeller family, he is best remembered for his philanthropic activities and institutional building. In the early 1950s, Rockefeller revitalized the Japan Society, and in 1956 he organized the Asia Society. Rockefeller traveled extensively in Asia in aid of development activities, including issues of population and agriculture. He was a key figure in the founding of Lincoln Center in New York, and served as its first president and later became its

chairman. As chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation, he also provided funding for the India International Center, New Delhi. During the 1960s, Rockefeller and his wife, Blanchette, became serious collectors of Asian and American art. Sherman Lee, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art and an expert on Asian art, served as a consultant to the Rockefellers, as did Edgar P. Richardson, an expert in American art. On his death, his major collections of Asian and American art were donated to the Asia Society in New York City and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, respectively.

John Ellerton Lodge (1878-1942): A member of politically and socially prominent Boston family, Lodge was appointed curator of the Department of Asiatic Art of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in 1910, where he worked with Okakura Kakuzo, and was later a colleague of Ananda Coomaraswamy. During these years he also got to know Charles Lang Freer, who was looking for someone to head the gallery he was founding, and tipped Lodge for the position. He became chairman of the committee on oriental art of the Smithsonian Art Commission in 1920, and director of the new Freer Gallery. Until 1931 he continued to split his time between his curatorial role at the MFA and his new role as Director. During this time, he often turned to Coomaraswamy for advice in matters of Indian art, and was instrumental in the publication of *Yaksas* (1928-31) by Coomaraswamy through the Smithsonian Institution. He held the position of Director of the Freer Gallery of Art, until his death.

John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006): A prominent Canadian-American economist, public official, diplomat and public intellectual. Galbraith taught at Harvard University, and was also active in Democratic politics, and served as American ambassador to India during the Kennedy administration. It was during this time that he became a collector of Indian paintings, and introduced Jacqueline Kennedy to such work, particularly Kangra paintings. Works from his collection was part of exhibitions at the Asia Society in the 1960s, and he donated several pieces to the Harvard Art Museum as well.

Joseph Breck (1885-1933): Assistant Director of the Metropolitan Museum and curator of Decorative Arts during the installation of the Cloisters Museum. He was also

responsible for the installation of the new Indian galleries including the installation of the wooded Jain temple bought for the museum by Lockwood de Forest.

G. Jouveau Dubreuil (1888-1945): French archaeologist and architectural historian, he was based in South India, and most famously wrote the two volume *Archeologie du Sud De L'Inde* (1914). He was also known for sourcing works for the Musée Guimet, and for the Paris based dealer C.T. Loo.

K. de B. Codrington (1899-1986): British scholar of Indian art and a major authority on the subject of Indian sculpture in England. He organized an exhibition of Indian art in 1931 at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, which included pieces from Stella Kramrisch's collection. In 1935 after being appointed Keeper of the Indian collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, he undertook a major reorganization of the collection, away from the decorative arts approach. He was responsible for the section of Indian sculpture at the famous 1947 exhibition of Art from India and Pakistan held at the Royal Academy. In 1948 he moved to the School of Oriental and African Studies, where he held the position of the first Professor of Indian archaeology.



Karl Khandalavala (1904-1995): Bombay based Parsi lawyer and art collector and scholar. He was introduced to Indian paintings by his uncle B.N. Treasuryvala. In the 1930s he became a close friend and champion of the works of Amrita Sher-Gil, and introduced her to Indian bronzes and paintings. In the post-independence era, he was an active member of the Art Purchase Committees that oversaw the purchase of works for

new institutions like the National Museum, New Delhi. He was also active in the activities of the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi and of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. He became known as an expert on Pahari painting, however his opinions were often at odds with other scholars in the field including W.G. Archer. Khandalavala's personal art collection was eventually bequeathed to the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay.

Langdon Warner (1881-1955): Scholar of Asian Art and museum administrator, he was involved in the collections of many American museums. In 1906 he was appointed assistant curator at the Boston Museum of Fine Art and traveled to Japan for the first time the same year. In 1913 he traveled to Europe and Asia to ascertain the possibility of creating an institute for Charles Freer. During 1915 he made another art-buying trip, this time for the Cleveland Museum of Art. He was appointed director of the Pennsylvania Museum of Art in September 1917. In 1923 he left the Pennsylvania Museum to join the Fogg Museum. During World War II, Warner led a group of scholars prevailing upon military leaders not bomb the former Japanese capitals of Nara and Kyoto. He is credited with saving the priceless artwork in those cities.

Leigh Ashton (1897-1983): Scholar of Chinese art; Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum (1945-1955). He was instrumental in the important 1935 Chinese exhibition at the Burlington House. A controversial figure, Ashton's reputation was more that of a promoter of museums than as a scholar.

Lockwood de Forest (1850-1930): American painter who was a key figure of the American Aesthetic Movement who, as the designer, introduced the East Indian craft revival to America during the Gilded Age. His brother Robert de Forest (1848–1931) was the President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. As a painter he was mentored by the Hudson Valley River School artist Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900). In his mid-twenties, de Forest became interested in decoration and architecture after browsing Church's extensive library at his Persian-style home, Olana, in New York. Thereafter in 1879, de Forest became a partner of the design firm Associated Artists, with Louis

Comfort Tiffany. He traveled to India on his honeymoon and on his trip he collected furniture, jewelry and textiles. In Ahmadabad de Forest met Muggunbhai Hutheesing, a philanthropist with an interest in the arts, and together the two men opened the Ahmadabad Woodcarving Company. While in India de Forest also became good friends with John Lockwood Kipling and with him organized a display of works by the Ahmadabad Woodcarving Company at the Lahore Museum in 1881. Lockwood de Forest would also display work at the Chicago World's Fair. He would make purchasing trips to India for the Metropolitan Museum, and on one such trip in 1914 Stewart Culin of the Brooklyn Museum of Art accompanied him. He eventually retired to Santa Barbara.

Nandalal Bose (1882-1966): Indian painter of the Bengal School of Painting, he studied under Abanindranath Tagore. He became the principal of Kala Bhavan, Santiniketan in 1922. He was influenced by the Tagore family and the murals of Ajanta. He became a prominent figure in the nationalist movement and is considered to be one of India's early modernist artists, and trained many students at Kala Bhavan.

Nasli Heeramanek (1903-1971): Prominent dealer of South Asian art, Heeramanek came from a Bombay based family of dealers. He first established his business in Paris, before moving to America in 1927, where he established himself in New York, thereafter becoming the primary source for American collectors and museums with interests in Indian art. His wife Alice Arvine would become his partner in his business. He developed a close relationship with Ananda Coomaraswamy and would supply collectors like Edwin Binney 3rd and John D Rockefeller 3rd. His collection was famously exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1967, but was eventually divided between the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

N.C. Mehta (Nanalal Chamanlal) (d.1958): Indian government official and art collector. A member of the Indian Civil Service he was responsible for the early focus on Western Indian paintings and Jain paintings. He published his researches through several books and articles and discovered several new documents of Indian Paintings, like the Vasanta Villasa scroll and the Chaurapanchasika series of paintings. The N C Mehta Collection of

Miniature Paintings is now located In the complex of the L D Institute Of Indology, Ahmedabad.

Norton Simon (1907-1993): Collector, businessman, and philanthropist, and founder of the Norton Simon Museum. Beginning in 1954 Norton Simon's first acquisitions were Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works by Degas, Renoir, Gauguin, and Cézanne. Simon went on to assemble a private art collection that would come to be recognized as one of the finest in the world. In the 1960s he expanded his focus as a collector and began purchasing Old Masters and modern art. Simon's honeymoon in India in 1971 with his second wife, the actress Jennifer Jones, sparked his interest in Indian and Southeast Asian art and he quickly became a major buyer of such objects. In 1973 he was famously embroiled in a legal battle with the Government of India over a stolen Nataraja that he bought from the New York dealer Ben Heller.

O.C. Gangoly (1881-1974): Trained as an attorney, he was an Indian art and architectural historian and long time editor of *Rupam* the journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. An ideologue of the Bengal School wrote widely, if controversially on the subjects of Indian painting and sculpture, and is best remembered for bringing out *Rupam* between January 1920 and October 1930.

Okakura Kakuzo (1862-1913): Japanese scholar, writer and curator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Mentored by Ernest Fenollosa during the latter's tenure at Tokyo University, Okakura was one of the principal founders of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Okakura researched Japan's traditional art and traveled to Europe, the United States, China and India. He emphasized the importance to the modern world of Asian culture, attempting to bring its influence to realms of art and literature. In India he was particularly close to the Tagore family, and soon after his travels to India he published one of his most influential works *The Ideals of the East with special reference to the Art of Japan* (1903). He was invited by William Sturgis Bigelow to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1904 and became the curator of Chinese and Japanese art, and was responsible for strengthening the museum's collections in these areas.

Percy Brown (1872-1955): British scholar, art and architectural historian and educator. He well known as an author on Indian architecture and art. Along with George Watt, he helped organize the Exhibition of Indian Art in 1903 in New Delhi. He became principal of the Mayo School of Arts (today the National College of Arts) in Lahore and curator of the Lahore Museum. In 1909, he became the principal of the Government School of Art in Calcutta. He retired in 1927 and became secretary and curator of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Pratapaditya Pal (b.1935): Scholar and curator of Indian and Himalayan art, Pal was born in Bangladesh and earned a doctorate in fine arts and history from University of Calcutta. In 1962 he received a Commonwealth Scholarship of Cambridge, where he got his second PhD. It was during the course of his studies in England on Nepalese art that he first visited the United States with the help of funding through the JDR 3d Fund. After finishing his doctoral work he returned to India, however on not finding a suitable position there, he moved to the United States in 1967 and took curatorial position at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and became the first specialist in Indian art at that institution since Ananda Coomraswamy's death. He joined Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1970 not long after the purchase of the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck collection at that museum, and remained at the museum until retirement. He was the editor of *Marg* a journal on the visual arts and culture, for several years. He had a close relationship with many prominent collectors of Indian art including Edwin Binney 3rd, Robert Ellsworth and Christian Humann, and was affectionately known as "Eddie" among his friends.

R. Sturgis Ingersoll (1915-1968): Lawyer, collector and President of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. He was instrumental in gathering the requisite funds for the purchase of Stella Kramrisch's collection for the PMA.

Radha Krishna Bharany (d.1942): Bharany ran a shop in Amritsar, where he traded in Mughal jewellery, Mughal miniatures, Kashmiri shawls, Persian carpets, metal, wood

and ivory wares and a multitude of beautiful things. Apart from Ananda Coomaraswamy, the Parsi collector brothers Sir Dorabji and Sir Ratan Tata, and the Tagore brothers Abanindranath and Gagendranath Tagore, and later P.C. Manuk and W.G. Warcher also bought Pahari paintings from Bharany.

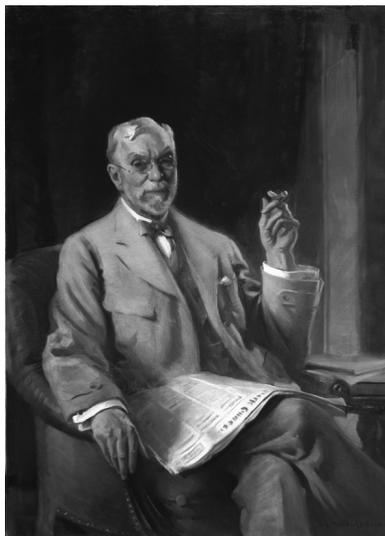
Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906) Indian artist from the princely state of Travancore who painted Indian subjects in western academic style. He became well known for his large scale paintings of religious epics and his romantic depictions of women. He exhibited his works widely and received much acclaim at exhibitions in India and abroad for his reimagining and depictions of Indian subjects and his mastery of the conventions of European portraiture. He became a celebrated painter, and at the height of his fame, he founded the Ravi Varma Fine Art Lithographic Press, which produced chromolithographs of his most famous paintings, which aided their circulation and added to their popularity. In this regard and in the kind of imagery he produced, he is often considered as having paved the way for the genre of “calendar art” in India.



Ratan Devi (Alice Richardson) (c.1889-????): She met Ananda Coomaraswamy around 1910, most probably at a recital of folk songs given by pupils of the collector of folk songs and cultural revivalist, Cecil Sharp. Coomaraswamy left his first wife Ethel to live with Richardson in India in 1911. They lived on a houseboat in Srinagar, Kashmir, whilst she studied Indian music with Abdul Rahim of Kapurthala, and Coomaraswamy researched Rajput painting of northern India. Once back in London, Alice Richardson

gave birth to their first child Narada and after Ethel divorced Coomaraswamy became his second wife 1913. They had a second child Rohini (1914-2003, later went by the name Rohini Coomara). Devi as Richardson now styled herself was noted for her recitals of Indian music which were often introduced by an explanatory lecture given by her husband. She performed widely in the UK and often wore Indian dress. When the Coomaraswamys first went to the US, it was for her concert tour. Alice had two children (a boy, Narada, and a girl, Rohini) by Coomaraswamy before their divorce and his subsequent marriage to the American dancer and artist, Stella Bloch.

Raymond Burnier (1912-1968): Swiss photographer who came to India in the 1930s and is known for his photographs of medieval Indian temples. He worked for a while for the Archaeological survey and his photographs were used by Stella Kramrisch to illustrate her magnum opus *The Hindu Temple*. They also contributed on the volume *Surasundari*, which included many of his photographs of the figures at the temples at Khajuraho. His photographs were exhibited at an exhibition of “Medieval Indian Sculpture” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1949.



Robert de Forest (1848-1931): Older brother of Lockwood de Forest and President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1913 until his death. He was involved with the museum ever since its inception in 1870, and was also the son-in-law of the museum's

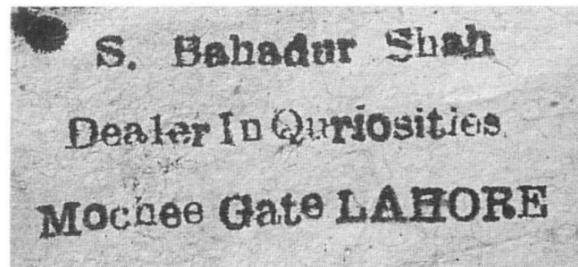
first president. He was extremely influential in fostering an appreciation for American interiors and decorative arts, and was a supporter of his brother Lockwood's activities, and jointly donated the interiors of the Jain assembly hall that were first installed in the museum galleries in 1918.

Rudolph A. Meyer Riefstahl (1880-1936): German-born expert on Islamic art, who came to international prominence as the Secretary of the Exhibition of Islamic Art in Munich in 1910. He taught at the Sorbonne in Paris from 1911 till 1915, which was when he became acquainted with the Victor Goloubew collection. He moved to the United States during the war, and held several positions, before joining the faculty of New York University's new Institute of Fine Arts in 1925. He married Elizabeth Titzel, a prominent Egyptologist in her own right, and between 1924 and 1936 the family visited and lived in many Middle Eastern countries and also lived for a time in Rome. During the 1920s he wrote catalogue essays for exhibitions and sales of Indian art in New York, and also knew Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Sherman Lee (1918-2008): Art historian and expert on Asian art, he is best remembered for being a formative Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art, from 1958 until 1983. He began his career as a curator of Oriental art, and was responsible for building the museum's Asian art holdings. In 1964 he wrote the first edition of his *History of Far Eastern Art*, a survey of Asian art. He was a long time advisor to John D Rockefeller 3rd on his Asian art collection.

Stewart Culin (1858-1929): American ethnographer who is known most for his work done in the fields games, art and dress, particularly of Asian American and Native American cultures. He played an influential role in building the collections of the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Paleontology, where he was the Director and the Brooklyn Museum, where he was the Curator of Ethnology. It was during his tenure at the Brooklyn Museum that he traveled to India on a collecting expedition, accompanied by Lockwood de Forest.

Stuart Cary Welch (1928-2008): American scholar and collector of Islamic and Indian art. Welch came from a wealthy family and began collecting Indian drawings at a young age. He taught at Harvard and was responsible for training important scholars on Indian art including Milo C. Beach and Mark Zebrowski. He was also a major collector of Indian, particularly Mughal paintings, and was known for his curatorial work, including several seminal exhibitions at the Asia Society in the 1960s on Indian painting. He was also special consultant in charge of the department of Islamic art for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he presented “India! Art and Culture: 1300-1900,” as part of the Festival of India which opened in 1985.



Syed Bahadur Shah: Lahore based dealer in curiosities or “quoriosities” [sic], he sold works to Charles Lang Freer and Ananda Coomaraswamy. He was the source of the Nala-Damayanti series now at the MFA, Boston (17.2394) and the Freer Gallery, and was known to put seals on the backs of Pahari paintings that passed through his hands.

Victor Goloubew (1878-1945): Russian-born, Paris-based collector of Asian art who formed an important collection of Persian and Mughal paintings which was sold to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1914. Subsequently he worked for the French École française d’Extrême-Orient in Pnom Penh, and made important contributions to the archaeology and photography of Cambodian sites.

W.G. Archer (1907-1979): British art historian, civil servant and curator. His interest in Indian art began during his career as a civil servant in Bihar and Assam in the 1930s and 1940s, which is when he and his wife Mildred also began collecting painting. After Indian independence, on his return to England, he became the Keeper of the Indian

Section of Victoria and Albert Museum. It was during this period that he published extensively on Indian paintings, and is particularly known for his magnum opus *Indian paintings from the Punjab Hills; a survey and history of Pahari miniature painting* (1973). He served as an advisor to both Stuart Cary Welch and particularly Edwin Binney 3rd.

W. Norman Brown (1892-1975): American Indologist, Sanskritist who established the first academic department of South Asian Studies in the U.S at the University of Pennsylvania, organized the American Oriental Society in 1926, and a founding member of the American Institute of Indian Studies in 1961. He was curator of Indian art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and was responsible for bringing Stella Kramrisch to America to teach at the University of Pennsylvania and also to take over the curatorial duties at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

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