

The Wallace Collection - New Exhibition Announcement:

Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company

Guest Curated by William Dalrymple

4 December 2019 - 19 April 2020

Tickets on sale from 16 September 2019

In partnership with DAG

New Delhi-Mumbai-New York

In December 2019, the Wallace Collection presents *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*. Curated by renowned writer and historian William Dalrymple, this is the first UK exhibition of works by Indian master painters commissioned by East India Company officials in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is an unprecedented opportunity to see these vivid and highly original paintings together for the first time, recognising them as among the greatest masterpieces of Indian painting.

Comprising works from a wide variety of Indian traditions, the exhibition moves the emphasis from the Company commissioners onto the brilliance of the Indian creators. It belatedly honours historically overlooked artists including Shaikh Zain ud-Din, Bhawani Das, Shaikh Mohammad Amir of Karriah, Sita Ram and Ghulam Ali Khan and sheds light on a forgotten moment in Anglo-Indian history. Reflecting both the beauty of the natural world and the social reality of the time, these dazzling and often surprising artworks offer a rare glimpse of the cultural fusion between British and Indian artistic styles during this period.

The exhibition highlights the conversation between traditional Indian, Islamic and Western schools and features works from Mughal, Marathi, Punjabi, Pahari, Tamil and Telugu artists. They were commissioned by a diverse cross-section of East India Company officials, ranging from botanists and surgeons, through to members of the East India Company civil service, diplomats, governors and judges, and their wives, as well as by more itinerant British artists and intellectuals passing through India for pleasure and instruction. What they all had in common was a scholarly interest in, and enthusiasm for, India's rich culture, history and ecological biodiversity.

The exhibition will explore the four main centres of what has traditionally been described as 'Company School' painting: Calcutta and Lucknow, where provincial Mughal painters from Murshidabad, Patna and Faizabad were employed; Madras and Tanjore, where artists from the South Indian traditions received patronage; and Delhi, where Imperial Mughal artists created some of the finest works of this period. Their paintings represent one of the great and forgotten moments of Indian Art during a period of cultural exchange between the artists and their East India Company patrons.

Alongside these fascinating works, visitors will also encounter a Mughal dagger, now part of the Wallace Collection, which has a direct connection to one of the most prominent East India Company patrons of this period. The dagger was formerly owned by Claude Martin, an East India Company official who commissioned Indian artists to create works of art depicting the flora, fauna

and daily life in India. Under Martin's patronage, great Lucknavi artists such as Bahadur Singh and Mihr Chand fused their Mughal training with European conventions and materials, to create a new, highly innovative way of depicting the natural world.

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, said:

We are very excited to bring these exquisite works together for the first time in the UK, belatedly recognising the genius of Indian artists from this period, who are largely unknown in the West. We hope this exhibition will introduce a wider audience to one of the most interesting but often underappreciated phases of Indian painting, as well as explore the Wallace's rich collection of Mughal arms and armour.

William Dalrymple, Exhibition Curator, said:

Forgotten Masters showcases the work of a series of extraordinary Indian artists, each with their own style and tastes and agency, whose brilliance has been frequently overlooked until now. These masterpieces combine Indian and European influences to create rich, hybrid works which reflect the cultural fluidity of this period in India's history.

Ashish Anand, Managing Director and CEO of DAG, said:

India's largest and best known repository of Indian art, DAG is committed to take Indian Art to new audiences and present or support significant, historical world class exhibitions. DAG is therefore proud to be partnering with the Wallace Collection to support this landmark exhibition in London.

Edwards Gibbs, Sotheby's Chairman, Middle East and India, said:

One striking feature of Indian art of all periods, from antiquity up to the present day, is its capacity to embrace ideas and styles from beyond its own borders and to interpret and refashion those influences in a dynamic and original way. The Indian artists who worked for British patrons during the period of colonial rule, are no exception. It is with great pleasure that we support the launch of this landmark exhibition in introducing these beautiful and arresting works to a new audience.

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Notes to Editor

For further press information please contact Eleanor Nimmo on press@wallacecollection.org / 0207 563 9516

Tickets

Exhibition tickets will be on sale from the Wallace Collection website from 16 September 2019. www.wallacecollection.org

Membership

Members of the Wallace Collection enjoy free unlimited entry to all Wallace Collection exhibitions, as well as exclusive previews, private views and special events, plus discounts in the Wallace Collection Shop and Restaurant. For further information please visit: www.wallacecollection.org/support-us/become-a-member/

Opening hours

Open daily 10am-5pm.

Catalogue

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated book, published in association with Philip Wilson Publishers. Edited by writer and historian William Dalrymple, it contains essays by leading scholars of Indian art, celebrating the work of a series of extraordinary Indian artists who worked for British patrons between the 1770s and the bloody end of the Mughal rule in 1857. Illustrating 109 works, the book will expand on the themes of the exhibition and showcase the last phase of Indian artistic genius before the onset of the twin assaults- photography and the influence of western colonial art schools - ended an unbroken tradition of painting going back two thousand years.

Social Media

Join the conversation here:

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Facebook: [@wallacecollection](https://www.facebook.com/wallacecollection)

Twitter: [@WallaceMuseum](https://twitter.com/WallaceMuseum)

#ForgottenMasters

Events

A series of events including lectures, seminars, art classes and performances have been organised in relation to this exhibition. Find out more: wallacecollection.org/whats-on

About DAG

DAG was established as a private art gallery in 1993 in New Delhi, and over the past 25 years, has built a reputation for the quality of its collection that represents the expanse of Indian art practice. This extensive collection charts a historic continuum, from the early works of academic artists trained in Bengal and Bombay, to modernists from Baroda, Delhi, Madras and beyond, and includes artworks by some of India's most celebrated artists. With the aim of taking Indian modernism to a wider audience, DAG now has gallery spaces in the historic Kala Ghoda in Mumbai, and the iconic Fuller Building in Manhattan, New York, in addition to its gallery in Delhi.

The mandate of taking art to the people has led to museum quality exhibition collaborations with stellar art institutions. The most recent and monumental collaboration has been with the Archaeological Survey of India—with the Drishyakala museum at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Red Fort being inaugurated by India's Prime Minister on 23 January 2019.

www.dagworld.com

About William Dalrymple

William Dalrymple is the bestselling author of *In Xanadu*, *City of Djinns*, *From the Holy Mountain*, *The Age of Kali*, *White Mughals*, *The Last Mughal* and, most recently, *Nine Lives*. He has won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award, the Sunday Times Young British Writer of the Year Award, the Ryszard

Kapuscinski Award for Literary Reportage, the Hemingway Prize, the French Prix d'Astrolabe, the Wolfson Prize for History, the Scottish Book of the Year Award, the Duff Cooper Memorial Prize, the Asia House Award for Asian Literature, the Vodafone Crossword Award and has three times been longlisted for the Samuel Johnson Prize. In 2012 he was appointed Whitney J. Oates Visiting Fellow in Humanities at Princeton University. In 2013, with Yuthika Sharma, he co-curated a show on late Mughal art, *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857*, at the Asia Society in New York. He lives with his wife and three children on a farm outside Delhi.

About the Wallace Collection

The Wallace Collection is one of the most significant collections of fine and decorative arts in the world and the greatest bequest of art ever left to the British Nation. The collection encompasses old master oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th-century including works by Titian, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck, princely arms and armour, and one of the finest collections of French 18th-century art in all media.

www.wallacecollection.org

Image Sheet

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Bhawani Das, *A Great Indian Fruit Bat, or Flying Fox (pteropus giganteus)*, Calcutta, c1778-1782
Courtesy Private Collection



Shaikh Zain ud-Din,
Indian Roller on Sandalwood Branch, Impey Album, Calcutta, 1780
Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark, © Minneapolis Institute of Art home



Vishnupersaud, *Arum tortuosum* (now *Arisaema tortuosum*, family Araceae) ca. 1821. © The Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew



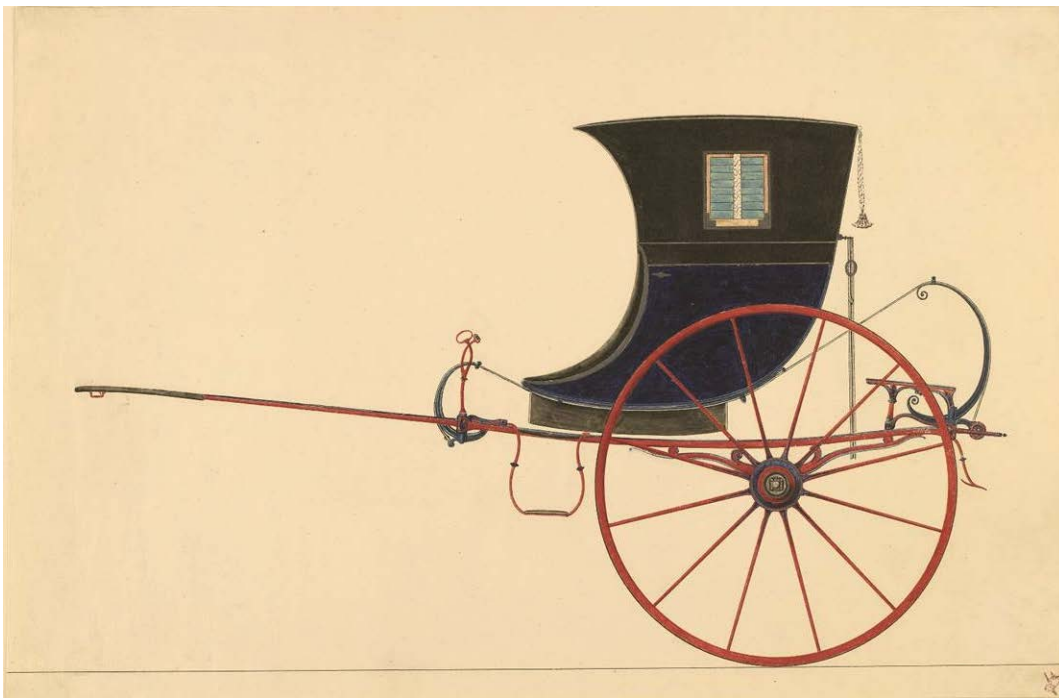
Asian Openbill Stork in a Landscape, Lucknow, c. 1780
Courtesy Private Collection (Photo: Margaret Nimkin)



Shaikh Zain ud-Din, *Brahminy Starling with Two Anteraea Moths, Caterpillar and Cocoon in Indian Jujube Tree*, Impey Album, Calcutta, 1780. Gift of Elizabeth and Willard Clark, © Minneapolis Institute of Art home



Family of Ghulam Ali Khan, *Six Recruits*, Fraser Album, c.1815
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery [Smithsonian Institution]



Sheikh Mohammah Amir, *English Gig*, c.1840
Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery [Smithsonian Institution]