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The Enigmatic Image: Curious Subjects in Indian Art

by [Stephen Markel](#)

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Even when one knows their [Rajasthani paintings'] basic developmental chronology, the fundamentals of the patronage, the methods of their making, and the stories they tell, their peculiar representational conventions remain anything but obvious.

(Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*)[1]

The Mughal image is more than a mirror image of visual objects and more than a mere fragment of the text . . . that only has basic information to offer: no metaphor, allegory or conceptual, rhetorical and figurative speech.

(Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India 1550-1750*)[2]

For many viewers the rudimentary subject of most Indian paintings is understandable even without a specialist's knowledge of the identity and history of the figures portrayed. For example, images of a princely couple listening to music on a palace terrace or representations of a royal hunting scene can be understood and appreciated without needing to know the historical or literary identity of the protagonists. Beyond this basic intelligibility, however, many works feature complex subject matter, symbolic nuances, and/or compositional substructures that require an in-depth explanation to understand their layers of meaning and *raison d'être*. Together, these pictorial intricacies form a corpus of subtextual approaches by artists intended to convey deeper levels of interpretation than are apparent at a superficial glance.

Recent academic studies of South Asian art[3] have begun to analyze the intellectual creativity underlying these indirect or abstract modes of communication. This article,[4] written to accompany a permanent collection exhibition of the same title at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) from November 7, 2015 to October 16, 2016, further explores some of these sophisticated types and specific examples of visual indirectness, or enigmas, that can be encountered in Indian painting and analogous decorative art objects. Some of these enigmatic categories have been long studied by scholars of Indian art, such as the allegorical images made for the great Mughals and other Indo-Islamic courts, or the metaphorical images created to express Hindu devotional beliefs. Other kinds of enigmas have received scant scholarly attention, particularly similes, caricatures, parodies, and pastiches, as well as works whose particular subtleties, complexities, and obscurities challenge straightforward explanation. Even works with dedicatory or identifying inscriptions can be confusing and even deliberately obfuscating, as such inscriptions can actually be incorrect, misleading, and in the case of pseudo-inscriptions, unintelligible.

Allegories

Inspired by the iconography and mythology of Western divinity and sovereignty featured in the European prints brought to India by emissaries and traders, the Mughals and other Islamic dynasties of India soon appropriated the visual attributes of the divine and the regal for their own glorification and commissioned paintings allegorically equating themselves with the famous just monarchs of the Judeo-Christian tradition and certain luminaries of Islamic and Greco-Roman literary traditions. Chief among these emulated personages were Solomon and David, kings of ancient Israel; Orpheus and the philosopher Plato, both legendary musicians and poets of ancient Greece; and Majnun, the famous Arabic poet and unconsummated paramour of his beloved Layla[5] (see Figs. 3-5 below). The unifying thread in the stories of these influential personalities was that each was graced with the ability to tame and control animals by means of his musical ability and/or spiritual authority. Images of these eminent figures often portrayed them in the midst of various wild animals which, although normally hostile, were pacified by the protagonist's presence and communed in peace in the manner famously prophesied by Isaiah, "The wolf lies with the lamb..." (Isaiah 11:6). Similarly, the Mughal emperors portrayed themselves in allegorical images as just rulers of a harmonious realm standing atop a globe inset with a lion and lamb

lying peacefully together.[6]



Fig. 1

Perhaps the most important Mughal allegorical images are a series of portraits of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605-1627).[7] During his later years, characterized by political turbulence, regional famine,[8] and his protracted poor health, Jahangir was inspired by a self-exalting dream[9] to commission these allegorical portraits in order to extol his righteousness and imperial supremacy. The dream portrait in the exhibition, *Emperor Jahangir Triumphant Over Poverty* (Fig. 1), has been attributed to c. 1620-1625 by the artist Abu'l Hasan (active 1600-c. 1630).[10] The painting's inscription explains the Emperor's symbolic act of shooting arrows at an emaciated old man emblematic of poverty:

An auspicious portrait of his exalted majesty, who by the arrow of generosity eradicated the trace of Daliddar--the very personification of poverty--from the world and laid the foundation of a new world with his justice and munificence.[11]

The chain stretching from heaven to earth represents God's justice manifested in Jahangir, and would have been a recognizable allusion to the golden "chain of justice" hanging from a tower in the imperial palace at the Agra Fort that had been installed for citizens wanting to appeal to the Emperor. Jahangir describes the rationale for the chain of justice in his memoirs:

After my accession, the first command issued by me was to have a chain of justice hung so that if those charged with administering the courts were slack or negligent in rendering justice to the downtrodden, those who had suffered injustice could have recourse to the chain and pull it so the sound would cause awareness.[12]

Jahangir stands upon a globe symbolically inset with a larger and therefore dominant lion, signifying the Mughal Empire, that lies peacefully alongside a smaller lamb, representing Iran and the Safavid Dynasty under Shah Abbas I (r. 1588-1629). The globe functions pictorially as a nimbus for a sage, who has been interpreted as Manu, the Hindu lawgiver, who reclines on the cosmic fish that Islamic and Indian cosmologies imagine as supporting the world.[13]

The Mughal interest in figure studies adapted from Western prints is well documented.[14] The example illustrated here is an *Allegorical Figure of Fortitude* (?), which is attributed to Basawan (active c. 1565 -1600) and dates from c. 1590 (Fig. 2). It was inspired by European prints personifying various virtues. Previous scholars have suggested that it was modelled on an engraving of Eve by the German artist Jacob Binck (1500-1569),[15] but other iconographic models seem even more apropos, such as *The Personification of Fortitude* by Marco da Ravenna (1475-1527)[16] or *Fortitude* by Hans Sebald Beham (1500-1550).[17] Regardless of its ultimate source, this diminutive drawing and a few additional related images by Basawan and/or his son Manohar represent a creative combination of diverse iconographic elements rather than a straight copying of foreign works. Landscapes and accompanying figures are often reworked, and handheld attributes are mixed-and-matched between the hybrid compositions. Here, in order to suggest the subject's classical antiquity, *Fortitude* holds an undulating scroll bearing a pseudo-Greek inscription.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

As mentioned above, the Mughals and other Indo-Islamic courts emulated in art and cultural belief certain illustrious predecessors with whom they felt a symbolic affinity. Three of these symbolic representations are illustrated here. The first is *Plato as a Musician* dating from c. 1600[18] (Fig. 3). Plato is dressed in European-derived garb (note especially the silk or velvet toque-style hat with a fur brim).[19] He plays bagpipes and an Indianized harp that is probably derived from earlier Mughal and Islamic images of Plato (Arabic name: Aflatun) playing esoteric melodies to tame wild animals on a special organ he constructed and took into the wilderness. Whereas other compositions of this theme include the pacified animals, particularly stereotypical predators and prey such as tigers and gazelles, in this particular painting and its descendent versions Plato has been isolated and set in a European-style landscape devoid of animals apart from the birds flying overhead. Here, the pictorial emphasis is on the exotic

figure of Plato and his curious instrument; nevertheless, his symbolic mastery of the animals would have been understood by the Mughal viewers.[20]

The second symbolic representation portrays *Solomon Enthroned as the King of the Three Worlds* (Fig. 4). It is attributed to Lucknow,[21] c. 1775- 1800, and is reportedly based on a Bijapuri work of 1620.[22] According to Islamic belief, Solomon (Arabic name: Sulayman), the third king of ancient Israel, was an archetype of the ideal of just kingship. Graced with the ability to communicate with and calm wild beasts, Solomon was regarded as the sovereign of the three worlds, the earthly realm (symbolized by the pacified animals beneath him), the nether world (symbolized by the subjugated demons), and the heavens (symbolized by the winged angels bearing offerings). The Mughals and other Islamic dynasties frequently commissioned portraits of Solomon as an allegorical metaphor and leitmotif to affirm the righteousness of their own reigns. He was believed to epitomize the just ruler of a harmonious kingdom.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

The third symbolic representation is of *Layla Caressing Majnun* (Fig. 5). It is from an unpublished bound album of miscellaneous paintings and calligraphy that was likely assembled in the 19th century, but the paintings have been attributed earlier to Hyderabad, c. 1780.[23] The folio in question follows the pictorial tradition of the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw of Delhi, rather than the *Khamsa* of Nizami, in that the camel conveyance of Layla is prominently depicted per Khusraw's version of the tale (the camel is not mentioned in Nizami's rendition).[24] Other than the presence of the camel and the somewhat atypical portrayal of Layla caressing Majnun rather than merely sitting near one another, the iconography of the setting is fairly standard (along with some expressive local nuances). Several pairs of male and female animals peacefully coinhabit the lush landscape despite their normal antagonism, such as the tigers adjacent to the antelope. The paired animals serve symbolically "to amplify the climax of the lovers' yearning"[25] in accordance with the greater emphasis this aspect of the tale is given by artists illustrating Khusraw's version. More important in the present discussion, however, is Majnun's spiritual sovereignty over the pacified animals and, hence, his appropriateness as an archetypical ruler to be emulated by the Mughal monarchs. As recounted by Nizami and retold in abridged prose,

When he [Majnun] returned to the cave, the animals of the desert came to his side. First, the lion, then the very stag that he had saved, and then the antelope, and the wolf, and the fox; the wild ass joined their company, and the hare, and the timid gazelle. Majnun ruled over them all; a king was he, and his cave was his court. All around were rocks and thorns and burning sand. No place on earth was more desolate than this, yet Majnun called it paradise, for here he lived in peace with all his friends. Among the animals there was perfect harmony; the lion lay with the lamb; the wolf chased not the hare; the gazelle went undisturbed before the fox.[26]

For a sense of just how closely this characterization of Majnun's harmonious kingdom accords with the Mughals' descriptions of their own tranquil realms, compare the account of the Emperor Humayun (r. 1530-1540, 1555-1556) by his court historian Khvandamir:

Under the protection and shelter of his justice, deer sleep carelessly in the lap of panthers, and fish fearlessly take rest near crocodiles; pigeons become friends of falcons and sparrows chirp fearlessly in front of eagles.[27]

Metaphors

The use of visual metaphors in Indian art was especially prevalent in images associated with Vaishnava Bhaktism, a form of worship focusing on the Hindu avatars Krishna and Rama that was popular in northern India during the 14th–17th centuries. Numerous poems and prose expressed the core belief of the Bhakti movement that a devotee's loving adoration for one's personal deity was a metaphor for the ultimate union with a transcendent god. This interchangeability of the soul with godhead is aptly conveyed by the inscribed poem on a well-known painting in the exhibition from a *Sur Sagar* (The Ocean of Sur Das) series:

Darling, just a little, let me play your flute.
 The notes that you've been singing out, Love—
 let me produce them all.
 The jewelry you've been wearing, I'll put on—
 and dress you up in mine.
 You'll sit aloof, a woman angry with her lover;
 I'll come and plead with you, touch your feet.
 You'll retreat to a hut in the forest;
 I'll tug at the edge of your clothes to lure you out.
 I'll pull back the veil from the love of my life
 and hold you close, take you in my arms.
 You'll be Radha; I'll be Madhav [Krishna], Madhav—
 everything upside down.
 I'll make a braid in the hair on your head
 and on that head I'll place a crown.
 Lord of Sur Das [the poet], you'll become Radhika
 and Radha—let me call her Nanda's son [Krishna].^[28]

The *Sur Sagar* painting, *The Reversal of Roles, Episodes from the Krishna Lila (The Play of Krishna)*, is attributed to Udaipur, c. 1725-1735 (Fig. 6). Its three registers of multiple images of Radha and Krishna wearing each other's clothes and grooming each other in role-reversal scenarios brilliantly express the intrinsic identification of the worshiper and the worshiped as theorized in Vaishnava Bhaktism. The painting's inscribed poem is drawn from the enormous corpus of devotional poetry ascribed to the preeminent Hindi poet Sur Das (1478-1573) and his followers. It was presumably not written by Sur Das himself, as it first appears in the extended Sur Das corpus in a manuscript dated 1686 (V.S. 1733) written at Chatsu by a scribe from Gokul. ^[29] The painting is part of "a dispersed group of large illustrations to the *Sur Sagar*, of differing sizes and dating from circa 1725-35."^[30]



Fig. 6

The three best-known paintings from this series are LACMA's (M.71.1.11; illustrated here); a folio in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (AS78-1980)[31] and a folio in the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (23.586).[32] Intriguingly, in each painting the blind poet Sur Das is shown seated and singing his verses to the accompaniment of golden hand cymbals.



Fig. 7

An atypical iconic, rather than narrative, representation of Krishna and Radha exchanging their accoutrements is *Radha and Krishna Dressed in Each Other's Clothes* (Fig. 7). Attributed to Kangra, c. 1800-1825, it portrays the divine lovers in a lush forest setting that has been interpreted as suggesting the spring season in Braj and the culmination of their illicit affair.[33] The scene's intended association with Braj can be corroborated by a previously unnoticed, or at least unremarked, feature of the painting. At the top of the painting is a silver crescent moon in a star-filled sky. Thus, the white background behind Krishna and Radha must be that of a moonlit night rather than a bright spring day. Accordingly, this charming night scene may also evoke Krishna's last night of dalliance in Braj before leaving his adolescence to journey to Mathura and begin his adulthood.

Another painting in the exhibition, *Gopis Clinging to Krishna*, attributed to Mandi, c. 1700-1725, also serves as a metaphor for the ultimate indivisibility of the devotee with the divine in the belief system of Vaishnava Bhaktism (Fig. 8). Its mountain-like form evocatively portrays nine adoring cowherdresses (*gopis*) clinging to Krishna, several of whom hold their hands in the gesture of devotion. As previously interpreted,[34] the image seemingly visualizes verses analogous to those in the *Bhagavata Purana* (Ancient Stories of the Lord) that describe the passionate interplay of Krishna and his lovers in their climatic Dance of Delight (*Rasa Lila*) on his final idyllic night in Braj:



Fig. 8

Another Gopi caught hold by her arm, the shoulder of Krishna... Another Gopi smelt how Krishna's arm placed on her shoulder, was fragrant like a Lily... Another Gopi who rested on Krishna's cheek her own... Another Gopi...pressed to her bosom his blissful lotus-hand. (*Bhagavata Purana* 10.33.11-14)[35]

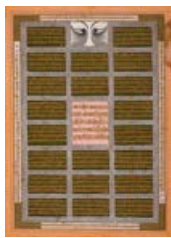


Fig. 9

The concluding painting in the metaphor section of the exhibition is *Maharaja Savant Singh's Tears Irrigate the Garden of His Poetry*, which is attributed to Kishangarh, c. 1750-1775 (Fig. 9). This unusual, if not unique, work has for its subject a veritable garden of elegant *devanagari* calligraphy of Hindi poetry composed by the ruler of Kishangarh, Savant Singh (r. 1748-1757). He wrote poems and commissioned numerous paintings celebrating the love of Krishna and Radha, as a metaphor for his own deep love for a poetess and singer named Bani Thani. Eventually, he abdicated his throne and moved with his lover to the home land of Krishna where they spent the rest of their blissful days composing devotional poetry.[36] The poem forming the subject of this extraordinary image is entitled *Ishq Caman*, The Garden of Love. It was written in c. 1720-1740 by Savant Singh under his penname, Nagaridas. [37]

Outlanders and Caricatures

Since the earliest periods of South Asian art, genre and narrative sculptures have depicted exotic foreigners and otherworldly anthropomorphized creatures with an embellished physical form and heightened artistic style, often as caricatures with exaggerated features and convoluted postures,[38] and frequently wearing misunderstood foreign or hybrid garb.[39] In Indian paintings of the later 16th through 19th centuries,[40] there was a renewed interest in portraying bizarre-looking outlanders, as well as comical Indians.[41] Based primarily on the distinctive figural forms found in European prints and engravings circulating in India during the time, and from personal observation of the many European merchants, travelers, and political and religious emissaries that were increasingly commonplace throughout India during the period, painters took evident delight in depicting such literally "outlandish" characters, often as stereotypes and stock motifs.[42] These seemingly humorous or satirical observations of the "Other" could be termed Occidentalism, an Asian corollary of Orientalism, the artistic vogue in 19th-century Western painting for romantic images expressing the exoticism and allure of Middle Eastern culture. Among the most popular of these Occidentalist subjects were the foppish "Farangis" or Franks, a name used generically and often disparagingly to refer to the French, Portuguese, Dutch, and English alike.

Despite the prevalence of portraits of Europeans in Mughal and Rajput painting, their representations are not as straightforward as one might first imagine. Presumably inspired by a European print or prints yet to be identified, a Mughal portrayal of *Europeans Embracing* from c. 1590 epitomizes the hybrid creative process underlying such images (Fig. 10). Foreign figural types, characteristically depicted in dramatic postures and wearing a mix-matched assortment of European Renaissance garb, are typically plucked from a variety of visual sources and often set in a Westernized landscape featuring diminishing perspective and European-style architecture. In this example, the bearded gentleman wears a 16th-century English "city flat cap" made of wool, the mustachioed man wears what is presumably a type of béret common to several northern European countries, and the man facing forward wears a feathered toque similar to that shown in Fig. 3.[43] The exotic appearance of the outlanders is further emphasized here by the unusual full-frontal visage of the central figure. Indian artists of this period were not experienced at representing the human face from this perspective and such portrayals often seem to border on caricature to modern viewers.



Fig. 10



Fig. 11

An unusually early Rajput representation attributed to Bundi (?), c. 1600, is likely intended to depict a Portuguese courtier (Fig. 11). The elegant figure wears a 15th-century style padded roundlet hat topped by a peacock feather, [44] a cape with a crenellated collar, baggy pants, and knee-length leather boots. All of these garments, so alien and unsuitable to the Indian climate, must have served as an immediately recognizable visual trope for artists wishing to portray exotic foreigners. Curiously, the Portuguese gentleman holds a white lotus bud, an atypical attribute in a European context. Its presence here may have been intended to symbolize the subject's cultural sophistication as an allusion to refined Indian rulers and courtesans similarly shown holding a single flower.

Although not as common as men, European women are also represented in Indian painting of the period. Attributed to Kota, c. 1725,[45] the example illustrated here depicts an elegant European woman with curly hair wearing a stylized Western woman's riding hat with a low rounded crown, a small upturned brim, and a feather cockade (Fig. 12).[46] Several similar images survive that are generally identified in scholarly and commercial literature as Portuguese women wearing a variant of this distinctive hat,[47] but given that such hats were worn across Europe,[48] this geographic certainty is unwarranted. Images of women drinking wine are a frequent genre in earlier Mughal and Persian literary and pictorial traditions, but later Indian images such as this may also refer to the popular perception of European licentiousness.

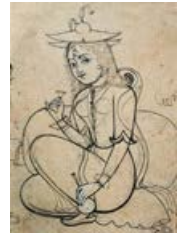


Fig. 12



Fig. 13

In addition to printed sources for European figural types, Indian artists presumably also drew upon their own personal observations of the numerous European administrative and military personnel active throughout India by the mid-18th century onward. Attributed to Mewar (?), 1800 -1825, a representation of a *European Man Drinking Wine* is likely inspired by an in-person encounter with an English or French military officer or footman in a livery uniform (Fig. 13). He wears a bicorne or cocked hat embellished with a feather cockade. It is worn in the side-to-side fashion, best known by its association with Napoléon Bonaparte. His green jacket features a single epaulet on the left shoulder, and is worn with a white stock collar and a striped waistcoat with a large central button or fastener.[49] Although the clothing components are based on actual European garb, their somewhat misshapen representations and the figure's awkward proportions and flattened perspective suggest that the

artist's conceptual model was misunderstood rather than being adapted from an anatomically correct representation in a European print. In addition, the figure has been placed in the artificial context of an Indianized setting by being shown seated against a bolster behind a carpet-covered railing, similar to the *jharoka* portraits of Indian royalty presenting themselves in a balcony window. On the back of the painting is an inscription in *devanagari* script erroneously identifying the subject as Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore (r. 1782-1799).

The Indian fascination with exotic foreigners is evident in this representation of a *European Fortune Teller Feeding Pet Birds*, which is attributed to Udaipur, 1700- 1725 (Fig. 14). Bestowed with a topknot, mustache, and goatee, the figure wears a loose shawl over a shirt with a lace collar and folded cuffs, both features inconsistent with Indian fashion. The fortune tellers' birds would pick a playing card to tell the customer's future or fortune, thus making his occupation seem equally bizarre to his audience. Almost identical representation in the British Museum (1956,0714,0.28) omits the mustache and goatee, and hence has been misinterpreted as female despite the vaguely rendered nipples and chest hair.[50] The probably later inscription in the upper border of the LACMA painting misidentifies the figure as an "oliya" (Arabic name: auliya) or Muslim saint.



Fig. 14

Parodies of Europeans

The Indian interest in portraying exotic foreigners during the Mughal period in the late 16th and early 17th centuries was reinvigorated in the painting traditions of the Rajasthan courts of Mewar and Bundi in the early 18th century. The impetus for these representations is believed to have been the visit in 1711 to the Mewar court of Maharana Sangram Singh II (r. 1710-1734) by the embassy of the Dutch East India Company led by Johan Josua Ketelaar (1659-1718), the director of the Dutch trading post in the port of Surat in Gujarat.[51] Several contemporaneous Mewar paintings depict the Dutch delegation, the members of which are shown as distinct individuals wearing the common uniform of wide-brimmed black hats, periwigs, and knee-length redcoats. Images of the Dutchmen from these historical paintings were soon conflated into the genre of Indian court paintings portraying exotic Europeans ("farangis") as isolated subjects, which due to their exaggerated features and loss of historical context may have come to be viewed as parodies.

A peculiar subset of the farangi genre features a pair of grinning buffoons, as depicted in two paintings in the exhibition attributed to Mewar, c. 1760-1800 and c. 1760-1775 respectively (Figs. 15-16). The visual source of these enigmatic expressive figures was apparently the representation of fools in 16th- and 17th-century European paintings and prints that illustrated the Dutch proverb, "the world feeds many fools." [52] The figures' gesticulation of touching their nose with their forefinger has been said to suggest the use of snuff, but the gesture may have also found resonance in the Indian cultural context from its resemblance to the well-known hand position expressing astonishment where the index finger and sometimes the middle finger are held touching the chin or lips. This distinctive gesture has been featured in Indian painting and sculpture, and perhaps dance, for centuries.[53] The appeal of

these eccentric figures was such that they were often repeated as stock motifs with minor variations, including being shown individually rather than as a pair, and with sundry changes of gender, clothing, hand positions, and objects held.[54]



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18

The odd couple was even combined with other bizarre outlanders, such as a shrieking curly-haired European man being bitten on the chin by a snake, who is shown in at least three paintings attributed to Mewar, circa 1760-1775 (Figs. 17-18).[55]

Subtleties, Complexities, and Obscurities

The concluding section of this article presents a diverse selection of paintings and two decorative art objects that exemplify the wide range of enigmatic aspects that can be encountered in Indian art. Sometimes subtle nuances of the painting can confirm the identification of the subject, such as in the case of *Rama Bestows His Possessions on the Brahmins, His Friends, and Servants* (see Fig. 22). Dedicatory inscriptions often convey the underlying rationale for an enigmatic work, such as for *Homage to Bihzad* (see Fig. 25), but works with multiple, esoteric, effaced, intrusive, and/or incorrect inscriptions make the interpretation far more complex, especially when variant translations are rendered. Even more perplexing are works with pseudo-inscriptions, which cannot be translated, such as those on an ivory manuscript cover (see Figs. 33-34). Images with obscure or atypical subject matter are also confounding, insofar as it is difficult to determine relevant comparisons or related works from the same series. To muddy the waters even further, these various categories of obliqueness can also be combined in a single work, such as when earlier images are reworked in a pastiche, which renders a new composition that can be both complex and obscure.



Fig. 19

An example of a manifold pastiche is an *Illustration of a Philosophical Poem*, attributed to Hyderabad, c. 1800-1825 (Fig. 19).[56] The composition is derived from the creative combination of two late 16th-century Mughal works, which are themselves based on earlier European prints of an allegorical female figure that were likely inspired by representations of St. Margaret with the dragon, such as *St. Margaret* by Israhel van Meckenem (1440-1503),[57] and an as yet unidentified depiction of the Christian "Holy Family." The central figure of the female musician is directly modeled on a c. 1590 drawing signed by the artist Basawan, *Woman on the Head of a Monster* (Fig. 20).

[58] There are several distinctive iconographic features common to both figures, particularly the identical stance and hand positions. The manner of wearing the drapery over the proper left shoulder and tying it horizontally under the breasts is also similar, as are the color striations in the hair. The most telling

feature that the Basawan drawing was the direct model for the LACMA painting is the latter's superfluous orange cuff shown just above the proper left elbow, which corresponds to the analogous cuff correctly portrayed in the former. The chief areas of discordance between the two works are the omission of the surmounted monster's head and the bow in the proper right hand in the LACMA painting, the change in the color and designs of the two sets of clothing, and the transformation of the Persian stringed instrument, *ektar*, in the Basawan drawing into the Indian *tambura* in the LACMA painting. The variations in clothing and musical instrument may have been more a matter of reinterpreting unfamiliar objects rather than deliberately replacing them with different ones.



Fig. 20



Fig. 21

The second compositional prototype used as an element of the pastiche in the LACMA painting is *The Holy Family, A Copy of a European Painting*, which is attributed to the artist Keshav Das and dates from c. 1585-1590 (Fig. 21).[59] There are several areas of concordance and discordance between the Keshav Das and LACMA paintings. In the Keshav Das painting, the figures flanking the central musician are St. Joseph reading a codex with a pseudo-Arabic inscription, and the Virgin Mary holding a spray of daffodils and the Christ Child, whose arms are spread apart in a symbolic prefiguration of Christ's crucifixion. In the LACMA painting, the corresponding flanking figures are a black-robed Christian priest holding a wine carafe and cup, and a white-clad European woman holding a wine cup and a child, whose arms are also spread apart. Although the identity of the flanking figures has thus been changed in the LACMA painting, their seated postures, general hand positions, and obvious

interaction have been retained. The architectural setting has also been somewhat modified in the LACMA painting. Both scenes are set in a garden terrace with stonework archways with a central pilaster and billowing draperies serving as the backdrop. In the Keshav Das painting, the architecture is European and a landscape vista with diminishing perspective is prominently visible through the right archway. In the LACMA painting, the receding landscape under the right archway has been replaced with a single tree against a blue sky, and the architecture and drapery under the left archway has been simplified. Just as some of the compositional details of the figures were retained in the LACMA painting, so too was an architectural detail retained in a residual

form. In the right archway, there are two triangular protrusions that morph out of the protruding edges of the capitals surmounting the pilasters. These minor architectural details are significant for helping to confirm the Keshav Das painting serving as the model for the LACMA painting.[60] Finally, the Renaissance-style chair and low platform in the Keshav Das painting have been replaced in the LACMA painting with ornate quasi-European chairs, which may have been intended to represent the lacquered black-and-gold furniture from Patna and Bareilly that was fashionable in elite colonial households across India in the late 18th century.[61]

In addition to its visual strata, the interpretation of the LACMA painting is further layered by its inspired pairing with the Persian poetry inscribed in the border in fine *Nasta'liq* script (see translation below). Regardless of whether the identity of the original subjects of the two late 16th-century sources was known when the LACMA painting pastiche was created in the early 19th century, its three main figures seem to have been utilized to accord with the musical and bacchanalian imagery of the poem. This interpretation is suggested by the concordance of the musician wearing a skirt with gold threads and the Europeans drinking wine.

When that cypress-statured [beloved] rose to her feet to dance,
A thousand tumults rose from their seat to show respect to her.

O musician! The atmosphere has become cloudy.
Bring forth a new [musical] note.
Impart to this water a fresh color with [burning] flame.

When, O luxury-loving one, my sweetheart raises a tumult with her graceful gait,
Her gold-threaded skirt becomes the skirt of [heavenly] Resurrection.

O luxury-loving one! I have no head for song, banquet, or goblet.
I am [already] intoxicated [with the wine of love],
I am going to see the sick [languishing] Narcissus.[62]

An example of how subtle enigmatic details can inform the interpretation of a painting can be found in a masterful illustration from the "Shangri" *Ramayana*, which is attributed to the First Bahu Master (active c. 1680-1695).[63] *Rama Bestows His Possessions on the Brahmins, His Friends, and Servants* depicts the well-known episode of Prince Rama's benevolence before being banished to his forest exile (Fig. 22). Overlooked in previous studies, the details in question here are the small apparent paint drips with downward directionality strewn across the lower half of the painting.[64] Significantly, all of the drips appear beneath the level of Rama's hands offering the presents and all appear against plain backgrounds. Rather than being accidental paint drips or mere rain from the heavens, their proper interpretation can be gleaned from the simile used in the text to describe Rama's generosity:



Fig. 22

Summon the two eminent Brahmins Agastya and Kaushika and in homage shower precious objects on them, Saumitri [Rama's brother, Lakshmana], as crops are showered with rain. (*Ramayana* 2.29.12)[65]

Thus, the paint drips are actually meant to be rain drops that brilliantly symbolize Rama's largesse in visual terms as an abundance of treasures "raining" on the recipients. Not only is the recognition of this visual simile crucial for definitively identifying the verse illustrated by this painting, but the close analysis employed here may be a useful model for helping to identify other paintings in the "Shangri" *Ramayana* that cannot be conclusively matched to a corresponding text verse because of the scene's visual ambiguity and the lack of inscribed verse numbers.[66]



Fig. 23

An extreme example of the complexities potentially inherent in interpreting even an inscribed Indian painting is *The Attack of Bees, Folio from a Madhumalati-varta (The Story of Madhu and Malati) series*, which is attributed to the artist Bhagvan Das and presumably made in Kulu in 1799 (Fig. 23). [67] The painting is enigmatic not only because of its bizarre visual subject of horseback riders being attacked by a swarm of insects, but also because of the convoluted nature of its underlying textual basis per the inscribed verses on its reverse. The crux of the story involves the trials and tribulations of the forbidden young lovers, Madhu, a minister's son, and Malati, a princess. As such, the story is a fairly standard example of the secular romance genre of Hindi poetry. What makes the interpretation complicated is twofold: First, the more general reason, is that there are numerous distinct literary

works of varying lengths and differing storylines, but all with the same or closely similar titles; moreover, there are also several known illustrated manuscripts of the text/s.[68] These parallel tales range from the original 8th-century Sanskrit drama by Bhavabhuti[69] to the 16th-century Sufi version by Manjhan,[70] neither of which includes the episode illustrated here. Rather, the LACMA painting portrays an incident from the *Madhumalati-varta* (The Story of Madhu and Malati) written by the Rajasthani

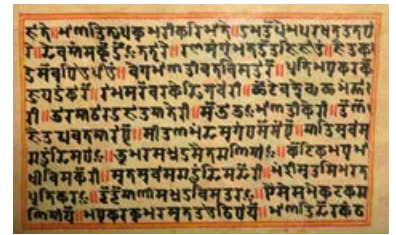


Fig. 24

poet Chaturbhujdas in c. 1500.[71] Second, the text on the back of the LACMA painting, written in a mixture of *takri* and *sharada* scripts (Fig. 24), does not describes the actual scene depicted on the obverse, indicating that the text on the LACMA painting was to be read while its corollary painting in the series was being viewed.[72]

Accordingly, the inscribed text on the reverse of the LACMA painting narrates the storyline leading up to the scene depicted on the obverse, which is then described in the subsequent verses of the published text:

Even though the royal Rajput Malati made a decision [to love Madhu], says sadly that we have lost the examination of love. [Nevertheless] similar in kheer [rice pudding] as water merges nicely in kheer [we have bondage together]. Where would I escape from this battle, Jait, you tell me some brilliant/wise ideas/. Malati, you expand your powers and call bees [or Madhu] in this battle. Ram Sarovar has ponds, clusters of small and big trees with unending species - all these have become Malati's friends. Jait[mal] says- pray and control as well to cool, fragranced wind, the fragrance which is spread in all cordial points and thus due to it the battalion of bees would come. Hearing this the fragrance spread in all cardinal points. As the son of the Minister [Madhu] recalls, bunches [of bees] spread likewise. At this moment, [the troop] approached [the city of] Kataka. Hearing this, [in rage] Madhu jumped upon, and Malati ran after him and held his neck [feet]. (*Madhumalati-varta* 511-516) [73]

The narrative action illustrated in the LACMA painting is then described in Chaturbhujdas' following verses (not included in the LACMA inscription):

. . . like locusts (*tiddi*) destroy the harvest field, each of the thousands of bees glued [to the soldiers attacking Madhu] and their stings were as painful as being burned by hot coals. You like a swan brighten Kataka . . . (*Madhumalati-varta* 517-520) [74]

Intriguingly, the painter Bhagvan Das seems to have been inspired by the poet's simile of the bees appearing like a swarm of locust and, accordingly, represented the bees with a more elongated physical form reminiscent of locust.



Fig. 25

The next work in the exhibition, *Homage to Bihzad*, attributed to Hyderabad, c. 1750 -1800, is an instructive example of the importance of translating even brief inscriptions on a painting (Fig. 25). The previously unpublished[75] minuscule inscription in the right-hand border provides the necessary clue for properly interpreting this exquisite tinted drawing featuring amorous scenes inside a polygonal pavilion and studies of figural types engaged in mundane pursuits in the surrounding landscape. The inscription, *khayālāt-i Bihzād*, translates to “images (or imaginary scenes) [inspired] by Bihzad.”[76] Ustad Kamaluddin Bihzad (c. 1460-1535) is the most celebrated of Persianate painters, in part due to his own accomplished compositions, and also because of his influential role as the head of the royal ateliers in Herat, Afghanistan and Tabriz, Iran under the

Timurid dynasty (1370-1507) and the Safavid dynasty (1501-1732).[77] Bihzad and his followers are credited with developing, among certain other stylistic characteristics, an interest in the depiction of everyday activities. Inspired by the oeuvre of Bihzad and his followers, the Deccani artist of this work has replicated various genre figures engaged in commonplace undertakings that were stock motifs in late Timurid and early Safavid painting. Source models for several of the figure types have been found to date, with the remainder awaiting future research.[78] Specifically, the woman spinning thread,[79] the mule carrying firewood[80] (Fig. 26), the dervish, [81] the horse,[82] the digger,[83] and the woman holding a handkerchief.[84] Amorous couples, both heterosexual[85] and possibly homosexual,[86] can also be found in Timurid and Safavid painting, as well as polygonal pavilions.[87]



Fig. 26



Fig. 27

Even with extensive inscribed annotations, the historical circumstances of a work of art can remain muddled. According to the long contemporaneous *devanagari* inscription in black ink, an alluring *Portrait of a Woman* (Fig. 27) by the Bikaner artist Nure was painted in 1743 when he was sixteen years old and visiting the home of a textile printer where he saw an earlier portrait that he then copied.

[Done by] Nure [Nuruddin] at the age of 16.

Leaf 1, Dated 4th [day] of the bright half of the Phalguna [February-March] month, V.S. 1800 [A.D. 1743]

Leaf 1, executed by Nure, son of Usta Umardin. A copy [of an earlier such portrait] is in

Gulam Rasul Chhipa [textile printer]'s house which he [Nure] saw and after seeing that he executed it.[88]

The black inscription in Arabic confirms Nure as the artist. The Urdu couplet in red, which was perhaps added later by a collector

to convey the spirit of the portrait, reads:

My heart somewhere [with the woman in the portrait] is being captured and thus I begin to get fever of love.[89]

Contrary to the specific information furnished in the inscriptions, there is no known son of Umardin named Nure according to the published genealogies of the Bikaner painters[90] and the date of 1743 does not fall within Nure's generally accepted dates of 1690-1715 according to some scholars.[91] Thus, the full backstory of this evocative portrait remains an enigma.

An example of obscure and grisly imagery, this double-sided folio of *A Demon with Two Chained Men (recto), Man Bitten on the Arm by a Tiger (verso)* is likely from a Jain karma series depicting the punishments in hell of evil doers (Figs. 28-30). It is attributed to Marwar, late 19th century.[92] The Jain pictorial tradition of such hell scenes of torment and torture includes murals,[93] manuscript folios,[94] and the better-known large-scale representations on cloth of the cosmic man (*loka-purusha*) whose compartmentalized body symbolizes Jain cosmographic views of the structure and nature of the universe.[95]



Fig. 28



Fig. 29



Fig. 30

The didactic inscriptions on this work, albeit somewhat cryptic and inexact per the painted imagery, have been translated as follows:

Figs. 28-29: *Recto (Demon with enchained souls)*

Do auspicious Dharma, occasionally would be hit.
Later does bad deeds, thus get hit.[96]
Observe Dharma.
To get result of it
Do Karma, offer *Daan* [offerings] to God and reduce sins.

Fig. 30: *Verso (Tiger biting arm)*

Follows wrong path, head would be striked.
Observe religion and Karma.[97]

Another example of obscure subject matter requiring explanation is a delicate drawing of a woman seemingly emerging from the mouth of a *makara*, a mythical aquatic creature (Fig. 31). Attributed to Jaipur, c. 1800, this partially colored drawing embellished with exquisite floral motifs is actually an accomplished design for a powder primer flask, a container for the priming powder used in early muskets. Designs of martial and other decorative art objects were drawn by leading Mughal and Rajput painters, and provide important documentation of the interconnectivity of the decorative and pictorial arts.[98] Some designs functioned as artists' models, while others were intended as illustrations for sales catalogues.[99] Powder primer flasks were created in a wide variety of media and forms. This design would likely have been for a painted wood powder primer flask, with the woman holding the orb (possibly referring to a musket ball) functioning as the stopper. Although less ornate, a 19th-century Gujarati (?) powder primer flask made in the form of a *makara* similar to the drawing can be seen in Fig. 32.

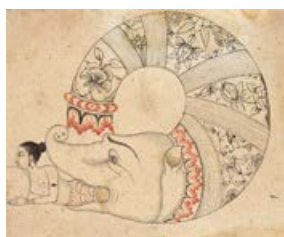


Fig. 31



Fig. 32



Fig. 33



Fig. 34

The final category of enigmatic imagery included the exhibition and article are works of art embellished with pseudo-inscriptions, such as a *Pair of Manuscript Covers with Varaha and pseudo-inscription (top), Yoga-Narasimha (bottom)*, which are attributed to Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh, mid-18th century (Figs. 33-35, 37). Pseudo-inscriptions are well known in the arts of Islam, being

found particularly on amulets, textiles, ceramics, painting, and architecture.[100] Pseudo-Arabic and pseudo-Greek inscriptions are also occasionally found in the arts of the West, with examples ranging in time and place from ancient Greece to the Byzantine Empire and from the Renaissance to the present day.[101] Although illegible or esoteric in meaning, pseudo-inscriptions were created for a number of overt reasons: to affirm symbolically the legitimacy or sanctity of a place or object, to evoke specific social or religious contexts or practices, to ascribe a certain cultural identity, to symbolize or abbreviate sacred and/or magical formulae, and for fraudulent purposes.



Fig. 35



Fig. 36



Fig. 37



Fig. 38

Countless hours have been spent by a number of scholars[102] in trying to decipher the script and meaning of the nonsensical letter-forms laboriously and extensively carved in low relief around the border in the form of a flowering vine that runs around the ivory manuscript cover “A” (approximately sixty-six characters; total linear length: 26.25 in. (66.675 cm); height: .5 in. (1.27 cm)). As only one character is an actual Arabic letter, however, the letter-forms are most likely intended to constitute a pseudo-Arabic inscription.[103] Perhaps even more perplexing than the potential meaning of the inscription itself, is the rationale for its occurrence within the overall decorative program of the object. Given that the central medallions of the covers are graced with south Indian iconographic forms of the Hindu deities Varaha[104] and Yoga-Narasimha[105] (see comparisons in Figs. 35-38), the presence of a pseudo-Arabic inscription in the context of a Hindu literary object is enigmatic.[106]



Fig. 39



Fig. 40

Another example of a pseudo-Arabic inscription on a South Asian decorative art object can be found inlaid in a gold grid pattern on the steel blade of a Mughal *Dagger*, which is presently set into a bejeweled jade hilt attributed to c. 1675-1700 (Figs. 39-40).[107] The design of the inscription appears truncated at the juncture of the tang, indicating that the blade may be a replacement.

Conclusion

In seeking to comprehend enigmatic images in South Asian art, both art historians and viewers among the laity must be prepared to delve into the analysis of a work of art on many levels. Not only must the elements of the composition be correctly identified and interpreted with culturally inherent meanings in order to achieve a basic iconographic understanding, but the explication must also be taken to a deeper iconological level in order to realize the intrinsic historical context and artist's semantic intent. This interpretive methodology, chiefly developed by Aby Warburg (1866-1929),[108] Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968),[109] and Sir Ernst Gombrich (1909-2001),[110] forms the basis for the analytical approaches in the aforementioned recent academic studies.[111] In Panofsky's words,

. . . the correct identification of the *motifs* is the prerequisite of a correct *iconographical analysis in the narrower sense*, the correct analysis of *images, stories* and *allegories* is the prerequisite of a correct *iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense*.^[112]

Ultimately, deciphering enigmatic images successfully often depends on a combined approach involving the close examination of the work's features, an understanding of its historical milieu, a full reading of the inscriptions and determination of their viability, and, if available, a scientific analysis of the materials and methods used by the artist.

Art (LACMA).

He has organized numerous exhibitions at LACMA, including *India's Universe: Masterworks of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (travelling exhibition to Mexico, Chile, and China, 2012-2015); *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow* (2010-11); *In the Service of the Buddha: Tibetan Furniture from the Hayward Family Collection* (2010-11); *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* (2003-04); *Images from a Changing World: Kalighat Paintings of Calcutta* (1999); *The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India* (1994-95); *Pleasure Gardens of the Mind: Indian Paintings from the Jane Greenough Green Collection* (1993); and *Romance of the Taj Mahal* (1989-90). A specialist in South Asian decorative art, sculpture, and painting, his many publications also include *Chachaji: Professor Walter M. Spink Felicitation Volume* (2000); *Origins of the Indian Planetary Deities* (1995); *The World of Jade* (1992); and more than forty research articles and catalogue essays. His articles on painting include "Ramayana and Related Imagery in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art" (2010), "A New Masterwork by Mir Kalan Khan" (2004), "Correlating Paintings of Indian Decorative Art Objects with Extant Examples: Correspondences and Issues" (2003), "A Jaipur Ragamala in the [University of Michigan] Museum of Art" (1992-93), and "Drowning in Love's Passion: Illustrations of the Romance of Sohni and Mahinwal" (1988).

From 2011-2014, Dr. Markel was the President of the American Council for Southern Asian Art, which is the leading professional organization for art historians of South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Himalayan art.

Endnotes

1. Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 7.
2. Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India 1550-1750*, 2nd ed. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 259.
3. See Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition* and Minissale, *Images of Thought*, as well as Deborah Hutton, *Art of the Court of Bijapur* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), especially "Developing Visual Metaphors," pp. 70-119; and Debra Diamond et al., *Garden & Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur* (Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2008), cited by Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition*, p. 8.
4. This article is intended to introduce each thematic section of the exhibition, provide detailed references for further research, and discuss the works of art in the exhibition and supplemental comparative works exemplifying each topic. I am deeply indebted to the established scholarship cited herein, and to the numerous scholars who generously shared their expertise and thoughts on these enigmatic objects and, in several cases, also provided fresh or first-ever translations of the inscriptions on the artworks. Extensive new research has been conducted on the works in the exhibition, which has yielded several important discoveries and revised attributions and interpretations.
5. Ebba Koch, "The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun, and Orpheus, Or The Album as a Think Tank for Allegory," *Muqarnas* 27 (2010): 277-311. See also Ebba Koch, "The Influence of the Jesuit Mission on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors," in *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, ed. Christian W. Troll (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1982), pp. 14-29; Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus: The Pietre Dure Decoration and the Programme of the Throne in the Hall of Public Audiences at the Red Fort of Delhi* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1988); and Ebba Koch, "The Hierarchical Principles of Shah-Jahani Painting," in *King of the World: The Padshahnama, An Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle*, by Milo Cleveland Beach and Ebba Koch (London and Washington: Azimuth Editions and Smithsonian Institution, 1997), p. 137.
6. For further information on the Mughal's Imperial imagery, see Glenn D. Lowry, "The Emperor Jahangir and the Iconography of the Divine in Mughal Painting," *The Rutgers Art Review* 4 (January 1983): 36-45; Robert Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1988), pp. 177-191; and Koch, "Hierarchical Principles," pp. 136-137.
7. For recent discussions of these well-known allegorical portraits, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, revised and expanded edition (Washington, DC and Ahmedabad: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, and Mapin Publishing, 2012), pp. 122-127, nos. 22A-22C; and Elaine Wright et al., *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008), pp. 344-346,

8. Jasper C. van Putten, "Jahangir Heroically Killing Poverty: Pictorial Sources and Pictorial Tradition in Mughal Allegory and Portraiture," in *The Meeting Place of British Middle East Studies: Emerging Scholars, Emergent Research & Approaches*, ed. Amanda Phillips and Refqa Abu-Remaileh (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 115, n. 377; and A. R. Disney, "Portuguese Goa and the Great Indian Famine of 1630-31," in *Mediaeval Deccan History: Commemoration Volume in Honour of Purshottam Mahadeo Joshi*, eds. A. R. Kulkarni, M. A. Nayeem, and T. R. de Souza (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1996), pp. 135-55, cited by van Putten, "Jahangir Heroically Killing Poverty," p. 115, n. 377.
9. For an inscription recording Jahangir's dream, see Beach, *The Imperial Image* (2012), p. 124, no. 22A.
10. For previous discussions of this painting, see Rosemary Crill and Kapil Jariwala, *The Indian Portrait 1580-1860* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2010), pp. 78-79, no. 15; Vishakha N. Desai, *Life at Court: Art for India's Rulers, 16th-19th Centuries* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), pp. 26-27, no. 24; B. N. Goswamy, *The Spirit of Indian Painting: Close Encounters with 101 Great Works 1100-1900* (Gurgaon: Penguin Books India, 2014), pp. 326-329; Alice N. Heeramaneck, *Masterpieces of Indian Painting from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramaneck* (New York: By the Author, 1984), pp. 163 and 225, pl. 204; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Painting*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles and New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1993), pp. 262-265, no. 72; Robert Skelton et al., *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), pp. 40-41, no. 48; Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," p. 185, fig. 5; van Putten, "Jahangir Heroically Killing Poverty," pp. 101-120, figs. 1-2; and S. P. Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Biblical Themes in Mughal Painting* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2011), p. 76, pl. 102. For a contrary attribution for this painting, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India 1600-1660* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), p. 92.
11. Translation by Z. A. Desai; see Pal, *Indian Painting*, p. 262. For alternative translations, see Skelton et al., *The Indian Heritage*, p. 40, no. 48; and Wheeler M. Thackston, trans. and ed., *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India* (New York and Washington: Oxford University Press and Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1999), Appendix C, p. 476. For the translation of a previously unpublished subsidiary inscription, see Goswamy, *The Spirit of Indian Painting*, p. 327. For a contrary opinion on the date of the inscription, see Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers*, p. 76.
12. Thackston, *Jahangirnama*, p. 24.
13. Skelton et al., *The Indian Heritage*, p. 40. For a possible alternative identification of the sage as Khizr, see Crill and Jariwala, *The Indian Portrait*, p. 78. For a perceptive comparison of the figure of Manu with the emaciated personification of poverty, see van Putten, "Jahangir Heroically Killing Poverty," pp. 115-116.
14. For a brief historical overview, see Beach, *The Grand Mogul*, pp. 155-157. For in-depth studies of European prints as the source of Mughal paintings, see Khalid Anis Ahmed, ed., *Intercultural Encounter in Mughal Miniatures (Mughal– Christian Miniatures)* (Lahore: National College of Arts, 1995); Gauvin Alexander Bailey, "The Indian Conquest of Catholic Art: The Mughals, the Jesuits, and Imperial Mural Painting," *Art Journal* 57:1 (Spring 1998): 24-30; Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580-1630*, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Occasional Papers, vol. 2. (Washington, DC, 1998); Milo Cleveland Beach, "The Gulshan Album and its European Sources," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, 63:332 (1965): 63-91; Milo Cleveland Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," *Oriental Art* 22:1 (1976): 180-188; Milo Cleveland Beach, "The Mughal Painter Kesu Das," *Archives of Asian Art* 30 (1976-77): 34-52; Milo Cleveland Beach, "The Mughal Painter Abu'l Hasan and Some English Sources for his Style," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 38 (1980): 6-33; J. P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library* (London: British Library, 2012), pp. 119-122, figs. 71-73; Gregory Minissale, "The Synthesis of European and Mughal Art in the Emperor Akbar's *Khamsa* of Nizami," *Asianart.com*, 2000; Yael Rice, "The Brush and the Burin: Mogul Encounters with European Engravings," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence; The Proceedings of the 32nd International Congress of the History of Art*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Carlton, Australia: Miegunyah Press, 2009), pp. 305-10; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700," *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): 39-83; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), "Courtly Representations," pp. 154-210; Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers*; Franz-Josef Volmer, "Christian Themes in Mughal Painting," in *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories, Interpretations: Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy*, eds. Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing in association with osianama.com, 2013), pp. 65-78.
15. Beach, *The Grand Mogul*, pp. 155, 157, no. 53; and Pal, *Indian Painting*, pp. 216-217, no. 54.
16. For example, see Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, M20412, <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/260312>.

17. For example, see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Forteza_Virtus_or_Fortitude.jpg
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19. For examples of European toques, see R. Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 90-91.
20. For a variant representation of Plato (Aflatun) with the pacified animals depicted as if sleeping, see Barbara Brend, *The Emperor Akbar's Khamsa of Nizami* (London: British Library, 1995), p. 57, fig. 39.
21. For additional paintings of literary themes made in Lucknow, see Stephen Markel with Tushara Bindu Gude, *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow* (Los Angeles: LACMA and DelMonico Books, 2010), pp. 26, 28, 173, figs. 22-24.
22. Mark Zebrowski, personal communication.
23. Simon Digby, personal communication.
24. Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition*, p. 163; and Koch, "The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun, and Orpheus," p. 291. For a detailed study of Amir Khusraw's *Khamsa*, see Barbara Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau's Khamsah* (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).
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26. Peter J. Chelkowski, *Mirror of the Invisible World: Tales from the Khamseh of Nizami* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1975), p. 62.
27. *Qanun-i-Humayuni, Also known as Humayun Nama, of Khwandamir: A Work on the Rules and Ordinances Established by the Emperor Humayun and on Some Buildings Erected by his Order* (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1940), p. 7, quoted in Koch, "The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun, and Orpheus," p. 283.
28. Translation by John Stratton Hawley, personal communication. For an alternative prose translation, see Walter M. Spink, *Krishnamandala: A Devotional Theme in Indian Art* (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Michigan, 1971), p. 88, fig. 103.
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32. Pratapaditya Pal, *Divine Images, Human Visions: The Max Tanenbaum Collection of South Asian and Himalayan Art in the National Gallery of Canada* (Ottawa and Calgary: National Gallery of Canada and Bayeux Arts, 1997), pp. 100-101, no. 86.
33. Vidya Dehejia et al, *Devi: The Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art* (Washington, Ahmedabad, and Munich: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, in association with Mapin Publishing and Prestel Verlag, 1999), p. 332, no. 80.
34. B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (Zurich: Museum Rietberg and Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1992), pp. 204-205, no. 83. See also Milo Cleveland Beach, "Rajput and Related Paintings," in *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1966), p. 136, no. 181. For a related Mandi painting of Shiva similarly adored by clinging women devotees, see B. N. Goswamy in association with Usha Bhatia, *Painted Visions: The Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1999), p. 238, no. 181; and W. G. Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills: A Survey and History of Pahari Miniature Painting*, 2 vols. (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1973), pp. 1:356, 2:266, pl. 16.

35. Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare, trans., *The Bhagavata Purana*, Part IV (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978; reprint ed. 1994), p. 1460.

36. For more on Savant Singh and Bani Thani, see Eric Dickinson and Karl Khandalavala, *Kishangarh Painting* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1959), pp. 6-12; and an important new publication by Heidi Rika Maria Pauwels, *Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century India: Poetry and Paintings from Kishangarh*, Studies in Asian Art and Culture, no. 4 (Berlin: E. B. Verlag, 2015), in press.

37. Heidi Pauwels, personal communication.

Translation of Nagaridas' [Savant Singh's] *Ishq Caman* "The Garden of Love" by Heidi Pauwels, *Cultural Exchange in Eighteenth-Century India*, pp. 245-256.

(Poem around the margin)

1. Listen to His praises, in whatever tongue they are sung,
[The praise] of the might, of the unsurpassed beauty of the one named Krishna.
2. In the glittering fair of the world, many religions are on display,
But for the exquisite lover, the only faith is that of love.
3. There is no one like the lover, such a beautiful face!
Nagar [says]: Mohana [Krishna] is the dark beloved, for those with sublime taste.
4. The joy of mundane religion does not please [my] heart at all.
[I] marvel at [God's] love: it brings devastation in its wake.

(First square)

1. Love provides a glimpse of God, like sunlight of the sun:
Where there is love, there is God: mighty, unsurpassed beauty.
2. If you have never wielded love with proper care,
You are a fool! How could you come to love the Lord?

(Second square)

3. If you shy away from love, everything will slip from your hands.
If you are reviled for giving [your heart], you will be [among the] chosen [few].
4. Man of the world or ascetic, whatever type you may be,
It is all vain talk, except for love's ecstasy.

(Third square)

5. Plain [lovers] are mere infantry, no matter [their] riches uncounted,
But if you hold on to love's pure ecstasy, on an elephant you may mount.
- [6. Every religion and philosophy, it all tastes the same.
Truly, without the imprint of love, it is all in vain.]
7. If you are entangled in love, if by [her] eyes you have been killed,
You have arrived in the world, and have your belly filled.

(Fourth square)

8. Nothing gets done in worldly [life] except for money's sake!
But one who wields love, in truth, he puts his life at stake.
9. Cut off your head, and place [her] foot on top.
That is what you have to do to enter the garden of love.

(Fifth square)

10. If you walk the world on foot, you will not conquer the earth,
But walk with [her] feet on your head, and you shall enter the garden of love.
11. Numerous are the names of the lovers [who tried], but no one reached the finish.

Only one succeeded: Majnūn arrived in the garden of love.

(Sixth square)

12. The garden of love belongs to the beloved, no one can trespass
Who goes there will not survive, or who survived would go mad.

13. Truly, in the garden of love, tread carefully when you enter:
[You will] drown in the middle of the road! Find refuge from the rough path.

14. She has beaten you again and again, pierced you with the arrow of [her] eyes,
The court of tyranny convenes, wherever the beloved presides.

15. Once struck by the arrow of [her] eyes, the lover's heart suffers chronic pain.
The creator made the beloved unyielding: from sympathy she will refrain.

(Eighth square)

16. Truly, the lover has offered [his] head, and placed it at [her] feet.
Shorn of justice is the beloved: irritated, [she] brushes it out of the way.

17. The eyes of the beloved make short work of the innocent.
When does she relent? Only when throwing a ball—her lover's head!

(Ninth square)

18. With bloodshot eyes, the beloved has prepared the daggers:
They come out stained with blood, as they go right through the lover's chest.

19. He does not retreat from the battlefield, though out of breath, he pushes ahead.
As his head flies, hit by [her] eyes, he manages "bravo" with his last breath.

(Tenth square)

20. When God created the world, truly, he wanted us to laugh:
The lover he made for suffering, the beloved for inflicting pain.

21. [Her] eyes wounded him. He fainted on passion's battlefield.
[She] tied [him] up with her hair's curly laces, and finished by shattering his heart.

(Eleventh square)

22. Learned man, forget reason: worship [needs] a heart that is pure.
When stabbed by [her] eyes, all pride turns demure.

23. Feet cannot linger there, [so] severe is the pain [inflicted by her] eyes.
You know it [only] when struck by a volley of [her] poisoned arrows.

(Twelfth square)

24. The arrows of [her] eyes have struck. [Such] pain alas, ever worsening!
[Yet] the surgeon [who examined] the heart could not find the slightest wound.

25. O healer, go home! Your hand's (healing) touch is impotent.
The fever of love's ecstasy goes right to the head: it will come down only when the head drops.

(Thirteenth square)

26. I swear to you by God, listen, all [you] people of the world:
The knot tied by her eyes loosens its grip only with life (itself).

27. Whether emperor, prince, or wretched pauper,
None can escape once [her] big eyes have cast their snare.

28. Arrow aimed, dagger drawn, lurking is the sword,
[Yet] he, alas, drunken with love, does not sober up and does not hide.

(Fourteenth square)

29. O my beloved, what can I do? My love will be disclosed.
How to hide the fire of love, when my heart explodes?

30. A spark of passion's flames falls inside my heart,
Smoldering among love's explosives, it flares up in fireworks.

(Fifteenth square)

31. The fire of love rages in [his] heart, thus consumes all peace.
Before its fever can reach [his] eyes, [he is] choked by thick smoke.

32. Fallen, he chooses to remain prostrate, unable to recover.
His eyes forever thirst for the goblet of beauty of his lover.

(Sixteenth square)

33. Felled, he remains prostrate, his eyes do not open, do not even blink.
Majnun's eyelids are heavy with her beauty's wine.

34. Their story spread in the world: an abundant harvest of love.
Where [is there now] a lover like Majnun? Or a beloved like Layla?

(Seventeenth square)

35. All say: "Majnun is true, the others seem fake."
If your heart holds some truth, only then try to replicate.

36. [Her] persiflage outshines the truth, [she] keeps [the lover] in her thrall.
God's servant's (Haridas's) intoxication, imbues with exhilaration even door and wall.

(Eighteenth square)

37. Love validates even a disguise, it gratifies the heart.
The servant of God in front of all, revealed [love's] magic form.

38. Can the tale of beauty be captured by a poet's conceit?
If your heart or eyes grew tongues, then you could begin to speak.

(Nineteenth square)

[39. How can the story of love be told? No one will believe a word.
Only who has suffered it firsthand, in truth can claim to know.]

40. The world does not believe one word—idle talk is of no avail.
[First] make sure [you] deserve love, and then [you] might obtain a taste.

41. If the tongue of [your] eyes relishes wondrous beauty's delights,
If you tend the garden of love, it will flourish and thrive.

(Twentieth square)

42. A fountain springs from the eyes, a waterfall of pain.
As long as the heart's soil is pure, the verdant garden of love will remain.

43. Inhabit the garden of love, sing of the garden of love.
Nagar says: enter the beloved's dwelling in the garden of love.

(Twenty-first square)

44. Where the heart is always wounded, and the mud is mixed with blood,
Where the lover is waylaid and plundered, there, Nagar [says], is the garden of love.

45. Nagar wields the dagger of [his] pen, sharp as the edge of love.
If not by [her] blow, still he will be cut up, if only by sheer joy.

(Poem in the middle of the painting)

Raga Soratha [sung in]

The game of love is hard to play!

[Pondering the human, searching the divine,]

Whoever has found love and stays in love,

Under the banner (of love), he can be impaled, but his body cannot be broken.

38. J. E. van Lohuizen de Leeuw, "Caricatures in Indian and South-East Asian Art," *Adyar Library Bulletin* 25:1-4 (1961): 616-621; and J. E. van Lohuizen de Leeuw, "Humor in Indian and Southeast Asian Art," in *Indological Studies in Honor of W. Norman Brown*, ed. Ernest Bender (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1962), pp. 217-227.
39. Frederick M. Asher, "The Depiction of Foreigners in Indian Art," *The Willamette Journal of the Liberal Arts* 10 (1994): 55-66.
40. The earliest portrayals of Portuguese visitors in India that some scholars have attributed to Indian artists are those found in the *Biblioteca Casanatense* in Rome, which dates from circa 1540. See Maria Manuela Mota, "Código Casanatense: An Indo-Portuguese Portrait of Life in 16th-Century India," in *India & Portugal: Cultural Interactions*, eds. José Pereira and Pratapaditya Pal (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2001), pp. 34-45. The nationality of the artist who created these stylistically anomalous representations remains unsettled, however. Therefore, the present exhibition and article focus on works from the later 16th century onward.
41. See Navina Najat Haidar, "Satire and Humour in Kishangarh Painting," in *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, ed. Andrew Topsfield (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2000), pp. 78-91; and Stuart Cary Welch, "A Matter of Empathy: Comical Indian Pictures," *Asian Art & Culture* 7:3 (Fall, 1994): 77-103.
42. For excellent overviews of this topic, see Milo C. Beach, "Visions of the West in Mughal Art," in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, eds. Jorge Flores and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon and London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in association with Scala Publishers, 2004), pp. 170-189; and Rosemary Crill, "Visual Responses: Depicting Europeans in South Asia," in *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, eds. Anna Jackson and Amin Jaffer (London: V&A Publications, 2004), pp. 188-199.
43. See Wilcox, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress*, pp. 85-91. I would like to thank Kaye Spilker for helping me understand the geographic origins of the European clothing depicted in this painting. For a more general discussion of the disparate clothing articles featured in this painting, see Pal, *Indian Painting*, pp. 214-215, no. 53.
44. See Wilcox, *The Mode in Hats and Headdress*, p. 53.
45. Pratapaditya Pal and Catherine Glynn, *The Sensuous Line: Indian Drawings from the Paul F. Walter Collection* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1976), pp. 30-31, no. 22.
46. For a realistic European depiction of this style of woman's hat, see Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013), p. 259, Fig. 242. I am indebted to Dale Gluckman for identifying this type of hat.
47. O. C. Gangoly, *Critical Catalogue of Miniature Paintings in the Baroda Museum* (Baroda: Government Press, 1961), p. 24, no. 14, pl. VIII, no. A; Sotheby, *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures*. Auction catalogue (London: Sotheby & Co., December 7, 1971), pp. 18-19, lot 98; and Sotheby, *Fine Indian and Persian Miniatures and a Manuscript*. Auction catalogue (London: Sotheby & Co., December 12, 1972), pp. 44-45, lot 113 (the style of hat is therein misidentified as chinoiserie), cited by Pal and Glynn, *The Sensuous Line*, p. 31. Although not identified as a Portuguese woman, see also a related portrait of a fashionable European woman in Pramod Chandra, *Indian Miniature Painting: The Collection of Earnest C. and Jane Werner Watson* (Madison: Elvehjem Art Center, University of Wisconsin, 1971), pp. 183, 185, no. 185.
48. Dale Gluckman, personal communication.
49. I am grateful to Kaye Spilker for identifying the European uniform components.
50. Ahsan Jan Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture (A.D. 1498-1707)* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 104, n. 168, pl. 17.
51. Andrew Topsfield, "Ketelaar's Embassy and the Farangi Theme in the Art of Udaipur," *Oriental Art*, n.s. 30:4 (Winter 1984/1985): 350-367; and Joachim Bautze, "Maharana Sangram Singh of Udaipur Entertaining Members of the Dutch East India Company Led by Johan Josua Ketelaar," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 36:2 (1988): 117-132. See also Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer and Gijs Kruijtzter, "Camping with the Mughal Emperor: A Golkonda Artist Portrays a Dutch Ambassador in 1689," *Arts of Asia* 35:3 (May-June 2005): 48-60.
52. A circa 1600 painting attributed to the Flemish artist Pieter Balten, *Rebus: The World Feeds Many Fools*, has been published as the visual source for the Indian depictions of the odd couple in *The Doris Wiener Collection*. Auction catalogue (New York:

Christie's, March 20, 2012), pp. 198-199, lot 221; and *Simon Ray: Indian & Islamic works of Art* (London: Simon Ray, 2012), pp. 90-91, no. 42. However, as at least three distinct paintings depicting the same pair of "fools" are known, it is unclear which painting or descendant print was the actual source. See S. J. Gudlaugsson, "Het nederlandsche voorbeeld voor een indisch miniatuur uit den Mogoltijd" ("A Dutch model of an Indian miniature of the Mogul period"), *Kunsthistorische mededeelingen van het Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie* 1 (1946): 2-3. I would like to thank Pieter Meyers for translating this article into English. For additional discussions of Indian representations of the figures, see Darielle Mason et al, *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001), pp. 154-155, no. 63; Crill, "Visual Responses: Depicting Europeans in South Asia," p. 196, fig. 15.10; and Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition*, pp. 78-79, fig. 2.13.

53. For a painted example from Mewar, circa 1600-1625, see Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition*, p. 3, fig. INT.1. For a sculpted example from Mathura, circa 50-20 BCE, see Sonya Rhie Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura, CA. 150 BCE-100 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 2007, fig. 188; and Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, 3rd ed. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1974), p. 260, pl. IV, fig. 3. When the hand position is represented in sculpture, it is termed the *vismaya-vitarka-mudra*. See Fredrick W. Bunce, *Mudras in Buddhist and Hindu Practice: An Iconographic Consideration* (New Delhi: DK Printworld, 2001), pp. 277-278, fig. 693.

54. For example, see *The Doris Wiener Collection*, pp. 200-201, lots 222-224; Rosemary Crill, *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style* (Mumbai: India Book House Ltd, 1999), p. 146, fig. 121; and the Christie's painting in the following note.

55. At least one other version of Fig. 17 is known; see *Simon Ray: Indian & Islamic works of Art*, pp. 90-91, no. 42. Another double oval portrait in the same distinctive series as Fig. 18 is published in Christie's, *Indian and Southeast Asian Art*. Auction catalogue (New York: Christie's, September 17, 1999), p. 184, lot 267. The top portrait portrays one of the fools recast as an elderly woman (identified as such for the first time here). The bottom portrait depicts a mother and child. For another instance of European genre portraits being reworked into variant compositions, see Daniel Ehnborn, with contributions by Krista Gulbransen, *Realms of Earth and Sky: Indian Paintings from the 15th to the 19th Century* (Charlottesville: The Fralin Museum of Art, University of Virginia, 2014), pp. 68-69, no. 23; Jiwan Sodhi, *A Study of Bundi School of Painting (from the Collection of National Museum, New Delhi)* (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1999), p. 137, pl. 98; and Daniel Ehnborn, with essays by Robert Skelton and Pramod Chandra, *Indian Miniatures: The Ehrenfeld Collection* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1985), pp. 134-135, no. 61, cited by Ehnborn, *Realms of Earth and Sky*, p. 69, ns. 3-4.

56. For a close stylistic comparison, see Joachim Bautze, *Indian Miniature Paintings, c. 1590 - c. 1850* (Amsterdam: Galerie Saundarya Lahari, 1987), pp. 33-34, no. 12.

57. For example, see British Museum, London, 1858,0417.953, <http://www.britishmuseum.org>

58. For previous discussions of this drawing by Basawan, see Amina Okada, "Cinq dessins de Basâwan au musée Guimet," *Ars Asiaticus* 41 (1986): 82-83, fig. 1; and John Seyller, "Basawan," in *Masters of Indian Painting: 1100-1650*, eds. Milo C. Beach, Eberhard Fischer, and B. N. Goswamy (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011), pp. 128-129, fig. 9. For a slightly earlier version of this figure by Basawan, see Amina Okada, "Les peintres moghols et la thème de Tobie at l'Ange," *Ars Asiaticus* 43 (1988): 9, fig. 7. For a rendition of this figure attributed to the Mughal artist Mukund, see John Seyller and Jagdish Mittal, *Mughal Paintings, Drawings, and Islamic calligraphy in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art* (Hyderabad: Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, 2013), pp. 10-11, no. 1.

59. A signature in the margin states the painting is "the work of Mani, the painter," but this has been regarded as a later spurious inscription and the painting has been reattributed to Keshav Das. See Gian Carlo Calza, ed., *Akbar: The Great Emperor of India* (Milan: Skira Editore, 2012), pp. 201, 268, no. V.7. For an earlier acceptance of the attribution to Mani, see Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, p. 23, fig. 13.

60. A number of Mughal paintings feature a similar setting of a terrace with an archway and a landscape in the distance; for example, see Calza, ed., *Akbar*, pp. 204, 269, no. V.10. The retention of the minor details noted above corroborates the Keshav Das painting as the source model for the LACMA painting.

61. See Amin Jaffer, *Furniture from British India and Ceylon: A Catalogue of the Collections in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum* (London: V & A Publications and Salem: Peabody Essex Museum, 2001), pp. 55, 267-271, figs. 15, 117, nos. 95-97.

62. Translation by Z. A. Desai, personal communication.

63. Steven Kossak, "The First Bahu Master," in *Masters of Indian Painting: 1650-1900*, eds. Milo C. Beach, Eberhard Fischer, and B. N. Goswamy (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011), p. 497, fig. 6. See also P. Banerjee, *Rama in Indian Literature, Art & Thought*, 2 vols. (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1986), p. 1:59, 2: pl. 58; Goswamy and Fischer, *Pahari Masters*, pp. 86-87, no.

30; Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Paintings in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (New Delhi: Lalit Kala Akademi, 1982), pp. 22-23, pl. VIII; and Pratapaditya Pal, "Ramayana Pictures from the Hills in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art," in *Ramayana Pahari Paintings*, ed. Roy C. Craven, Jr. (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1990), pp. 90-91, 93, fig. 2.

64. The importance of this subtle detail was first noted in Stephen Markel, "Ramayana and Related Imagery in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art," in *Ramayana in Focus: Visual and Performing Arts of Asia*, ed. Gauri Parimoo Krishnan (Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum, 2010), pp. 107-108, fig. 8.

65. Sheldon Pollock, trans., *The Ramayana of Valmiki: An Epic of Ancient India*. Vol 2. Ayodhyakanda (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 2:144.

66. For a discussion of this concordance dilemma, see Kossak, "The First Bahu Master," p. 492.

67. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Classical Tradition in Rajput Painting, from the Paul F. Walter Collection* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library and the Gallery Association of New York State, 1978), pp. 190-191, no. 70. For the colophon used to date this and related series, see Jagdish Mittal, "An Illustrated Manuscript of Madhu-Malati and Other Paintings from Kulu," *Lalit Kala* 3-4 (April 1956-March 1957): 92, fig. 7; and Archer, *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, p. 1:339, no. 37.

68. Ronald Stuart McGregor, *Hindi Literature from its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), p. 61; Pandit Keshava Prasad Misra, "An Illustrated Manuscript of Madhu-Malati," *Rupam* 33-34 (January-April 1928): 9-10; Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Part V: Rajput Painting* (Boston and Cambridge: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Harvard University Press, 1926), pp. 102-104, pl. XXXV, no. XCII; and Amy G. Poster et al. *Realms of Heroism: Indian Paintings at the Brooklyn Museum* (Brooklyn and New York: Brooklyn Museum in association with Hudson Hills Press, 1994), pp. 282-283, nos. 234-235. See also an unpublished folio in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (28.231) that is seemingly the same subject as the LACMA painting and, thus, must have been adjacent to it in the original sequence of the manuscript: <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/hindi-poem-madhu-malati-149258>.

69. H. H. Wilson, trans., *Malati and Madhava; or The Stolen Marriage, A Drama* (Calcutta: the Society for the Resuscitation of Indian Literature, 1901).

70. Mir Sayyid Manjhan Shattari Rajgiri, *Madhumalati: An Indian Sufi Romance*, trans. Aditya Behl and Simon Weightman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

71. McGregor, *Hindi Literature*, pp. 61-62. I am grateful to Richard Cohen for this reference and to the identification of the script and literary source of the text written on the reverse of the painting: Chaturbhujdas, *Madhumalati varta*, ed. Mata Prasad Gupta (Varanasi: Nagari-Pracarini Sabha, 1964), p. 74, verses 511-516. I would like to thank Daniel Ehnborn for putting me in touch with Prof. Cohen. I would also like to thank Joachim Bautze for corresponding about this painting.

72. I am indebted to Naval Krishna for sharing this insight about the organization of the manuscript originally containing the LACMA painting.

73. Translation by Naval Krishna, personal communication.

74. Translation by Naval Krishna, personal communication.

75. Pal and Glynn, *The Sensuous Line*, pp. 18-19, no. 9. This inscription is not mentioned in the LACMA catalogue and is not included in the drawing's cropped illustration (omitting the borders). The uncited Sotheby's auction catalogue in which this drawing was previously published correctly interprets the artist's intent to laud his Persian forebearers, even though the inscription is not specified: "The unifying element in this miniature of various subjects is the style of the sixteenth-century Persian master Muhammadi which the artist is aimed to reproduce. Compare for instance the girl spinning with a drawing of a pastoral scene in the Louvre: B. W. Robinson, *Persian Drawings*, New York, 1965, pl. 40." See Sotheby, *Catalogue of Persian, Turkish and Arabic Manuscripts, Indian and Persian Miniatures* (London: Sotheby & Co., November 25-26, 1968), p. 116, lot 374. As the Sotheby's catalogue identifies Muhammadi as the stylistic source rather than Bihzad, the inscription may have been unnoticed.

76. Translation by Wheeler Thackston, personal communication. I would like to thank Prof. Thackston for his translation and discussion of this important inscription.

77. See Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996); David J. Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 119-146; Thomas W. Lentz, "Changing Worlds: Bihzad and the New Painting," in *Persian Masters: Five Centuries of Painting*, ed. Sheila R. Canby (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1990), pp. 39-54.

78. I am indebted to Keelan Overton for her assistance in locating several of the following source models.

79. For example, see British Library, London, Or. 6810, f.144v, https://imagesonline.bl.uk/?service=search&action=do_quick_search&language=en&q=Or.+6810%2C+f.144v

80. For example, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 63.210.44r, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/63.210.44r>

81. For example, see Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Istanbul, H2162, f.3r., in Bahari, *Bihzad*, p. 56, fig. 18.

82. For example, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 14.570, <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/sultan-husain-mirza-on-horseback-13863>

83. For example, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 63.210.35, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/451730>

84. For example, see Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, F1937.27, http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.cfm?q=fsg_F1937.27

85. For example, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 13.228.7, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/446602?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=13.228.7&pos=6>

86. For example, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1988.430, <http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/453311?rpp=30&pg=1&ft=Worldly+and+otherworldly+drunkenness&pos=1>

87. For example, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 63.210.4, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/63.210.4>

88. Translation by Naval Krishna, personal communication. I am grateful to Dr. Krishna for his assistance in interpreting the painting's inscriptions.

89. Translation by Naval Krishna, personal communication.

90. See Naval Krishna, "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and Their Genealogy," in Topsfield, ed., *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, pp. 57-64; and Shanane Davis, *The Bikaner School Usta Artisans and their Heritage* (Jodhpur: RMG Exports, 2008).

91. Davis, *The Bikaner School Usta Artisans*, p. 264; and Molly Emma Aitken, personal communication.

92. I would like to thank B. N. Goswamy, Naval Krishna, Rob Linrothe, and Edward Wilkinson for their opinions on this intriguing work.

93. See John E. Cort, "The Cosmic Man and the Human Condition, in *Victorious Ones: Jain Images of Perfection*, ed. Phyllis Granoff (New York and Ahmedabad: Rubin Museum of Art and Mapin Publishing, 2009), pp. 37, 39, figs. 2.2-2.3. There are also murals in the Parshvanath temple in Varanasi depicting torments in hell based on the Jain *Tattvartha Sutram*. See Umaswami Acharya, *Tattvartha Sutram: The Sacred Books of the Jains* (Delhi: Barrister Champat Rai Jain Trust, 1956), p. 190ff. I am indebted to Naval Krishna for this reference to the temple and text.

94. See Subhashini Aryan, *Unknown Masterpieces of Indian Folk & Tribal Art* (Gurgaon: K.C. Aryan's Home of Folk Art, 2005), pp. 118-122, nos. 205-221; and Robert J. Del Bontà, "Painting" [entries], in *Victorious Ones*, ed. Granoff, p. 263.

95. For example, see Granoff, ed., *Victorious Ones*, pp. 261-263, no. P 21; and Pratapaditya Pal et al, *The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India* (Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Thames and Hudson, 1994), pp. 220-221, 230-233, nos. 97, 103A, 103B.

96. This line of text is currently obscured by the green horizon line in the painting when viewed under normal lighting, but is visible under infrared (IR) lighting (see Fig. 29).

97. Translation by Naval Krishna, personal communication.

98. See Jagdish Mittal, "Indian Painters as Designers of Decorative Art Objects in the Mughal Period," in *Facets of Indian Art: A Symposium held at the Victoria and Albert Museum on 26, 27, 28 April and 1 May 1982*, eds. Robert Skelton, Andrew Topsfield, Susan Stronge and Rosemary Crill (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1986), pp. 243-52.

99. See Skelton et al., *The Indian Heritage*, pp. 68-69, nos. 171-190; and Vidya Dehejia, "A Cache Uncovered : Workshop Drawings of Oomarsee Mawjee and Sons of Kutch," in *Delight in Design: Indian Silver for the Raj*, by Vidya Dehejia et al. (Ahmedabad and New Delhi: Mapin Publishing in association with TIMELESS BOOKS, 2008), pp. 38-47.
100. See Don Aanavi, "Islamic Pseudo Inscriptions," (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1969).
101. See David Jacoby, "Silk Economics and Cross-Cultural Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 197-240; Adrienne Mayor, John Colarusso, and David Saunders, "Making Sense of Nonsense Inscriptions Associated with Amazons and Scythians on Athenian Vases," version 2.0, *Princeton/Stanford Working Papers in Classics* (July, 2012): 1-51; Axelle Rougeulle, "The Sharma horizon: sgraffiato wares and other glazed ceramics of the Indian Ocean trade (c. AD 980–1140)," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*, vol. 35, Papers from the thirty-eighth meeting of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held in London, 22-24 July 2004 (2005), pp. 223-246; Alicia Walker, "Meaningful Mingling: Classicizing Imagery and Islamicizing Script in a Byzantine Bowl," *The Art Bulletin* 90:1 (March, 2008): 32-53; and Linda Komaroff, Color, Precious Metal, and Fire: Islamic Ceramics and Glass," in *The Arts of Fire: Islamic Influences on Glass and Ceramics of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Catherine Hess (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004), pp. 46-47.
102. I am grateful to Robert Del Bontà, Benille Emmanuel, Rochelle Kessler, Padmanabh Jaini, Nalini Rao, and Wheeler Thackston for studying this pseudo-inscription.
103. Wheeler Thackston, personal communication.
104. Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian Sculpture*, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and University of California Press, 1988), p. 295, no. 160. Both the copper and ivory representations of Varaha follow his traditional iconography of rescuing a goddess personifying the earth rather than his modern iconic form of bearing aloft a symbolic terrestrial globe. See Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Of Gods and Globes: The Territorialization of Hindu Deities in Popular Visual Culture," in *India's Popular Culture: Iconic Spaces and Fluid Images*, ed. Jyotindra Jain (Mumbai: Marg Publications, 2007), pp. 18-31.
105. The LACMA Yoga-Narasimha sculpture is unpublished. For an earlier representation of the same iconographic type, see Debra Diamond, et al, *Yoga, The Art of Transformation* (Washington: Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 2013), pp. 146-147, no. 8A.
106. For a closely related pair of ivory manuscript covers, see Amy G. Poster, *Indian and Southeast Asian Ivories: Selections from Local Collections* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1982), no. 10. The central medallions on these covers depict "Krishna and the gopis" and "Kalyan Krishna." It is unknown if these covers also have a pseudo-Arabic inscription.
107. Stephen Markel, "Inception and Maturation in Mughal Jades," in *The World of Jade*, ed. Stephen Markel (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1992), p. 62-63, fig. 16; and Stephen Markel, "Carved Jades of the Mughal Period," *Arts of Asia* 17:6 (November 1987): 129, fig. 94.
108. See E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970; Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 2nd ed., 1986).
109. See especially Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939; reprint 2nd ed., New York: Harper & Row, 1972).
110. See especially E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance II* (London: Phaidon, 1967; reprint 2nd ed., London: Phaidon, 1978).
111. See n. 3. Minissale directly discusses his work in relation to that of the Western iconologists, see. pp. xii, xxviii. Aitken does not specifically ground her work in iconological theory, but her overall thrust of engaging in a deeper interpretation to determine why artists made certain formal choices seems to have clear analytical parallels.
112. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, p. 8.

