



CALL FOR PAPERS

Art, Agency, Empire: India in Global Contexts

Graduate Student Symposium | Saturday, February 11, 2012 | Yale Center for British Art | New Haven, Connecticut | britishart.yale.edu

I enquired of monuments and ruins, I questioned the Vedas whose pages count their existence by thousands of years.... And then did India appear to me in all the living power of originality.

—Louis Jacolliot (1869)

The objective of this one-day graduate student symposium is to work against earlier paradigms by asserting the existence of multiple forms of agency — artistic, cultural, political — in India from about 1600 to Independence and beyond. The symposium also aims to examine visual and cultural exchanges between India and the rest of the world, with special (but not exclusive) reference to Britain and the British Empire. We welcome papers discussing the broadest range of visual materials, from architecture and material culture through representations in various media, and proposing interpretations that may engage with questions of agency, artistic identity, power, and politics. We aim to complicate canonical categories such as the “Company School,” “Mughal Miniature,” “British Art” and “British India,” “Swadeshi,” and even “diaspora” by critiquing methodologies currently employed in researching, interrogating, and evaluating materials from this place and time.

This symposium is informed by the recent proliferation of projects on India’s visual and material culture, including two exhibitions opening at the Yale Center for British Art in the fall of 2011: *Johan Zoffany RA: Society Observed*, which includes a substantial section devoted to the works the artist produced during his residence in India, between 1783 and 1789; and *Adapting the Eye: An Archive of the British in India, 1770–1830*, which concentrates on the complex networks of British and Indian artists, patrons, and scholars in the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries. *Art, Agency, Empire: India in Global Contexts* explores how, in a postcolonial period, it has become increasingly pressing to reevaluate India as a site of multifarious cultural (indeed intercultural) production, which has provoked global responses across media.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- colonizing, Independence, and postcolonial contexts
- construction of identities
- spaces of India: maps, landscapes, cityscapes, panoramas
- architecture: exterior and interior
- monuments and monumentality
- popular print, graphic satire, illustrated books
- art as document/document as art
- bodies of evidence: collections, compilations, physical bodies
- methodological innovations
- caretaking sources: conservation, preservation, digitization

We invite proposals for 25-minute papers on this theme from graduate students working in any discipline. Special consideration will be given to papers examining the topic in relation to the British involvement in India. Cross-disciplinary and comparative studies are particularly welcome. Please e-mail abstracts of no more than 300 words by October 31, 2011.

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Travel funds for speakers are available upon application.