

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Spring 2016
Patronage in Asian Art: Monarchs, Merchants, and Devotees
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Lucknow: Art, Patronage and History

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March 4, 2016

Lucknow emerged to cultural prominence at an important historical junction in South Asian history, as the Mughal Empire fragmented and the English East India Company advanced its political and territorial ambitions. The city—ruled by Shia Muslims of Persian descent, and host to a diverse population of South Asian, Persian, British, and continental European residents and travelers —was a center for various cross-cultural interactions that impacted local artistic production through the mid-19th century. As a result of the events of 1857-58, which were calamitous for the city, and India's independence in 1947, Lucknow's representation differs in South Asian and British art and memory. The lecture will examine patronage of Lucknow's arts against the broad narrative of India's late-Mughal and colonial history and art history.

Key Dates and Patrons:

Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-48)

1739: Sack of Delhi by Iranian King Nadir Shah

Saadat Khan Burhan al-Mulk—first Nawab of Awadh (r. 1722-1739), rules from capital at Faizabad.

Nawab Safdar Jang—(r. 1739-54), rules primarily from Faizabad, also from Lucknow.

Nawab Shuja al-Daula—(r. 1754-75), shifts capital to Faizabad c. 1765, first significant nawabi patron. During his reign, Lucknow's distinctive style emerges.

Mughal Emperor Shah Alam (r. 1759-1806)

Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Gentil—employed by Shuja al-Daula c.1763-75.

Colonel Antoine-Louis Polier—patron at Faizabad and Lucknow, 1773-76 and 1780-88.

Nawab Asaf al-Daula—(r. 1775-97), establishes capital permanently at Lucknow.

Major General Claude Martin, patron at Lucknow, 1775-1800.

Nawab Wazir Ali Khan—(r. 1797-98)

Nawab Saadat Ali Khan—r. 1798-1814)

Nawab Ghazi al-Din Haidar—(r. 1814-27), crowned King of Awadh in 1819, a title then assumed by all subsequent rulers.

King Muhammad Ali Shah—(r. 1827-37)

King Wajid Ali Shah—(r. 1847-56)

1856: Awadh annexed by the English East India Company. Wajid Ali Shah exiled.

1857-58: Great Uprising (also known as the Sepoy Mutiny/Rebellion, or the First Indian War of Independence).

1858: Direct control of India passes to British Crown. Queen Victoria assumes title of Empress of India.

Suggested reading:

Stephen Markel and Tushara Bindu Gude, eds., India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow, (Los Angeles: LACMA; Munich: Delmonico and Prestel, 2010).

Violette Graf, ed., Lucknow: Memories of a City, (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1997).

Barbara Schmitz, ed., After the Great Mughals: Painting in Delhi and the Regional Courts in the 18th and 19th Centuries, (Mumbai: Marg, 2002).

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, ed., Lucknow Then and Now, (Mumbai: Marg, 2003).

Maya Jasanoff, "Collectors of Empire: Objects, Conquests and Imperial Self-Fashioning," Past and Present 184 (2004): 109-135.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Career of Colonel Polier and Late Eighteenth-Century Orientalism," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Series 3, 10.1 (2000): 43-60.

Hussein Keshani, "Architecture and the Twelver Shi'i Tradition: The Great Imambara Complex of Lucknow," Muqarnas 23 (2006): 219-50.

Michael H. Fisher, "The Imperial Coronation of 1819: Awadh, the British and the Mughals," Modern Asian Studies 19.2 (1985): 239-277.

Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British and the City of Lucknow, (New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1985), 1-64, 131-196.

Alison Blunt, "The Flight from Lucknow: British Women Travelling and Writing Home, 1857-8," in James Duncan and Derek Gregory, eds., Writes of Passage: Reading Travel Writing, (London and NY: Routledge, 1999), 92-113.

Narayani Gupta, "Pictorializing the "Mutiny" of 1857," in Maria Antonella Pelizzari, ed., Traces of India: Photography, Architecture, and the Politics of Representation, 1850-1900, (Montreal: CCA; New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 216-239.

For fun:

I. Allan Sealy, The Trotter-Nama: A Chronicle, (NY: Knopf, 1988). (A fantastic novel, loosely structured in the form of a court chronicle, and loosely based on key figures in Lucknow's history).