

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2011
The Arts of South Asia & the Islamic World: Beliefs Made Visible
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Epic Visions:
The *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata* and the Visual Culture of Early Hinduism and Beyond

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Study Guide

Ancient Period: Poetic Vision in the Vedas:

Poet as Seer (*ṛṣi/draṣṭṛ*)
Ṛgveda (ca. 1500 BCE) 1.32; 1.92 Indra and Uṣas

Epic Visions

Seer as Poet (*ṛṣi/kavi*)

Vālmīki and the *Rāmāyaṇa* (ca. 600 BCE) “A fruit in the palm of your hand”

Vyāsa and the *Mahābhārata* (ca. 400 BCE) “I will give you a divine eye.”

Medieval Period: Playwright as Painter

Bhavabhūti (ca. 750 CE) *Uttararāmacarita*

Sculptor as Story Teller

Kailāsanatha (Śiva) Temple, Ellora, Maharashtra ca. 770 CE
Epic Friezes

The Eve of Modernity: Painter as Story Teller to All Communities

Jagat Singh’s Vālmīki *Rāmāyaṇa* (ca. 1650) Mewar

Naqīb Khan’s *Razmnama* Persian *Mahābhārata* (ca. 1760) Mughal

Keśarāja’s *Ramayaśorasāyana* (ca. 1790) Rajasthani Jain

Modernity; Epic as Icon, Object, Advertisement, Entertainment

Painters, Posters, Labels, Collectables and Comics

Raja Ravi Varma's Rāvaṇa and Jaṭāyus, Menakā and Viśvāmitra ca. 1890
(Indian/Academic)

Kerr, Tarruch & co. Calcutta ca. 1890 Aśvatthāman, Chromolithograph Label for Fabric Bale

Chore Bagan Studio ca. 1890 Śantanu and Gaṅgā, Chromolithograph Label for Fabric Bale

Libox Meat Extract Collectable Cards *Rāmāyaṇa* (1931)

Poster Art, Indra Sharma (Brijbasi & Sons, Bombay ca. 1990) Disrobing of Draupadī

Anant Pai, Amar Chitra Katha. *Mahābhārata* (ca 1970)

Grant Morrison Eighteen Days (*Mahābhārata*) (2010)

Painter as Provocateur

M.F Husain Hanuman, Sītā Watercolor (ca. 1990)

Background Readings:

Huntington, Susan, *The Art of Ancient India*, New York, Tokyo, Weatherhill, 1985.

Kaul, Manohar. *Trends in Indian painting, ancient, medieval, modern*. Foreword [by] S. Radhakrishnan, New Delhi, Dhoomimal Ramchand 1961.

Neumeyer, Erwin and Schel, Christine, *Popular Indian Art: Raja Ravi Varma and the Painted Gods of India*, New Delhi: New York, Oxford University Press, 2003.

Chandra, Nandini, *The Classic Popular: Amar Chitra Katha, 1967-2007*, New Delhi, Yoda Press, 2008.

Alkazi, E., *M.F. Husain: The Modern Artist and Tradition*, New Delhi, Art Heritage, 1978.