

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the British East India Company rose to significant power in Eastern and Northern India, but the shift from British Orientalist to Anglicist policies had not yet taken place. At that time, numerous Indo-Persianate albums (*muraqqa's*) were assembled for or collected by the Mughal governors (*nawabs*) of Awadh (Uttar Pradesh), Shuja' al-Daula (r. 1754–1775) and his successor, Asaf al-Daula (r. 1775–1797), as well as other local elites in Bengal and Bihar. Europeans also very much participated in the creation and consumption of albums, as patrons and collectors.

However, often the Europeans' commissioning of albums cannot be neatly distinguished from their collecting of already existing albums or repurposed paintings and calligraphies originally made for Indian patrons. Still in the imperial tradition of the seventeenth century, most of the Indo-Persianate albums compiled in the new regional centres contain an equal number of paintings and calligraphies dating to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, with elaborate decorative borders. Apart from a nostalgic desire to evoke the glories of the Mughal past, they nevertheless include many innovative subjects, such as new forms of harem entertainment and topographic views; these new subjects are based on various visual cultures (Mughal, Iranian, European, Rajput, Deccan) and a combination thereof. By contrast, the calligraphic specimens primarily consist of poetic or religious texts written in formalised Arabic and Persian scripts by eminent Mughal and also a few Iranian masters.

In 1882, the Prussian State acquired a group of twenty albums from the twelfth Duke of Hamilton; so far, these artworks have received little study. Eight of them belonged to the Scottish surgeon and interpreter Archibald Swinton (1731–1804) and ten to

the Franco-Swiss engineer-architect Antoine Louis Henri Polier [1741–1795] – both were Company officers deeply acquainted with Indo-Persian aristocratic culture.

Many more albums are linked to well-known European figures, such as the Governor-General of Bengal Warren Hastings [1732–1818], the Chief Justice Sir Elijah Impey [1732–1809] and his wife Lady Mary Impey [1749–1818], as well as the French Company officer (and special agent to Shuja' al-Daula in Faizabad) Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Gentil [1726–1799].

Numerous interrelated questions arise from the study of this material, concerning audiences, artists, patrons, collectors and their wish to produce and preserve knowledge; these questions are to be discussed in this workshop.

CONTACT:

f.weis@smb.spk-berlin.de
a.vlachopoulou@smb.spk-berlin.de

Seating is limited. Advance registration is essential.

Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) – project no. 416816602 – organized by Friederike Weis

Front: Detail of a harem entertainment, Polier Album, I 4594, fol. 19 © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst / Johannes Kramer

DFG Deutsche
Forschungsgemeinschaft



GESELLSCHAFT FÜR INDO-ASIATISCHE KUNST BERLIN E.V.



Staatliche Museen zu Berlin
Preußischer Kulturbesitz

**Eighteenth-century
Persianate Albums Made in India:
Audiences – Artists – Patrons and Collectors**

BERLIN, 15–17 SEPTEMBER 2021

An international workshop [online and on-site
presentations] at the Museum für Asiatische Kunst
and the Museum für Islamische Kunst

WEDNESDAY, 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

Museum für Asiatische Kunst [staff entrance],
Takustrasse 40

2.30 pm Welcome Coffee/Tea

3.00 pm Raffael Gadebusch [Berlin]
Welcome

3.15 pm Friederike Weis [Berlin]
Welcome and Introduction

... SESSION I: POLIER'S ALBUMS AND MANUSCRIPTS: CONTENTS AND CONTEXTS

Chair: Friederike Weis

3.50 pm Susan Stronge [London]
Collecting the Mughal Past

4.30 pm Coffee & Tea Break

5.00 pm Malini Roy [London]
Blurred Lines: Looking at the Paintings by
the Artist Mihr Chand and Determining the
Boundaries between Innovation, Imitation
or Intentional ›Duplication‹

5.40 pm Firuza Abdullaeva-Melville [Cambridge]
Three Highlights of Polier's Collection
from Cambridge: Treasures or Leftovers

THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2021

Museum für Asiatische Kunst [staff entrance],
Takustrasse 40

... SESSION II: PATRONS, COLLECTORS AND COMPILATION STRATEGIES

Chair: Susan Stronge

9.30 am Emily Hannam [Windsor]
Fit for a King? Two Late Mughal Albums
in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle

10.10 am Axel Langer [Zurich]
Obvious or Hidden Narratives in the
Large Clive Album

10.50 am Coffee & Tea Break

11.20 am J.P. Losty [Sussex]
Archibald Swinton's Indian Paintings
and Albums – an Analysis

12.00 pm Lunch Time

... SESSION III: RECURRENT THEMES AND TROPES IN INDO-PERSIANATE ALBUMS

Chair: Laura Parodi

1.20 pm Katherine Butler Schofield [London]
Performing Women in the Polier and
Plowden Albums: Pursuing Khanum Jan

2.00 pm Molly Aitken [New York]
Intoxicating Friendships: Figuring
Classical Indian Aesthetic Regimes in
Mughal Album Painting

2.40 pm Coffee & Tea Break

3.10 pm Yuthika Sharma [Edinburgh]
Topography as Mughal Utopia?
Polier's ›Garden Series‹ and Artistic Exchange
in 18th-century Periphery-Centre Imagination

3.50 pm Anastassiiia Botchkareva [New York]
Tropes and Outliers: Tracing Patterns of
Iconography in the Polier Albums

4.30 pm Coffee & Tea Break

**4.30–
6.00 pm** Presentation of selected pages from the
Polier and Swinton Albums kept in the Museum
of Asian Art [only for speakers; study room]

FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2021

Archäologisches Zentrum [Administrative Offices of the
Museum für Islamische Kunst], Brugsch-Pascha-Saal,
Geschwister-Scholl-Strasse 2–6

9.45 am Stefan Weber / Deniz Erduman-Çalış [Berlin]
Welcome

... SESSION IV: CALLIGRAPHY IN THE BERLIN ALBUMS: HISTORICISM AND CONTEMPORARY MUGHAL MASTERS«

Chair: Axel Langer

10.00 am Claus-Peter Haase [Berlin]
The Calligraphies of the 16th–17th Centuries
in the Berlin Albums – Reflections on their
Origins and Purpose in a *Muraqqa'*

10.40 am Will Kwiatkowski [Berlin]
Expanding the Canon – Mir Muhammad
Husayn 'Ata Khan and the Polier Albums

11.15 am Coffee & Tea Break

... SESSION V: INDIAN *MURAQQA'*S COLLECTED BY EUROPEANS: NETWORKS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Chair: Deniz Erduman-Çalış

11.50 am Laura Parodi [Genova]
Allegory and Verisimilitude in Later
Indian Albums

12.30 pm Isabelle Imbert [Manchester]
Like a Garden Bedecked: Floral Margins
in 18th-century Awadhi Albums Produced
for European Patrons

1.10 pm Lunch Time

2.20 pm Yael Rice [Amherst, MA]
The London Market for South Asian
*Muraqqa'*s and the Hastings Albums

3.00 pm Final discussion

3.30 pm Coffee & Tea Break

**3.30–
5.00 pm** Presentation of selected pages from the
Polier and Swinton Albums kept in the
Museum of Islamic Art
[only for speakers; study room]