

PRESS RELEASE

The Wallace Collection, in Partnership with DAG, to Present First UK Exhibition of Indian Painting Commissioned for the East India Company

Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company Brings Together 100 Masterworks from the 18th and 19th Centuries

The Wallace Collection today announced its partnership with DAG to present *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, the first UK exhibition devoted to works by the Indian master painters that were commissioned by the East India Company in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Curated by renowned writer and historian William Dalrymple, the unprecedented exhibition will bring 100 of these vivid and highly original works of art—among the greatest masterpieces of Indian painting—together for the first time. The exhibition will be on view from 4 December 2019 through 19 April 2020 at The Wallace Collection in London.

Dr Xavier Bray, Director of the Wallace Collection, said: We are very excited to be partnering with DAG to bring these exquisite works together for the first time in the UK, belatedly recognising the genius of Indian artists from this period, who are largely unknown in the West. We hope this exhibition will introduce a wider audience to one of the most interesting but often underappreciated phases of Indian painting, as well as explore the Wallace's rich collection of Mughal arms and armour.

Ashish Anand, Managing Director and CEO of DAG, said: DAG has been an ardent champion of Indian art over the last twenty-five years through our exhibitions, programs, and institutional collaborations. Our partnership with the Wallace Collection highlights DAG's commitment to taking Indian art to wider audiences, in India and abroad, so as to facilitate a deeper understanding of the depth of Indian art traditions, particularly those which have historically not been given their due. We are proud to collaborate with such a venerable institution, The Wallace Collection, to bring *Forgotten Masters* to the UK.

Comprising works from a wide variety of Indian traditions, the exhibition moves the emphasis from the Company commissioners onto the brilliance of the Indian creators. It belatedly honours historically overlooked artists including Shaikh Zain ud-Din, Bhawani Das, Shaikh Mohammad Amir of Karriah, Sita Ram and Ghulam Ali Khan and sheds light on a forgotten moment in Anglo-Indian history. Reflecting both the beauty of the natural world and the social reality of the time, these dazzling and often surprising artworks offer a rare glimpse of the cultural fusion between British and Indian artistic styles during this period.

The exhibition highlights the conversation between traditional Indian, Islamic and Western schools and features works from Mughal, Marathi, Punjabi, Pahari, Tamil and Telugu artists. They were commissioned by a diverse cross-section of East India Company officials, ranging from botanists and surgeons, through to members of the East India Company civil service, diplomats, governors and judges, and their wives, as well as by more itinerant British artists and intellectuals passing through India for pleasure and instruction. What they all had in common was a scholarly interest in, and enthusiasm for, India's rich culture, history and ecological biodiversity.

The exhibition will explore the four main centres of what has traditionally been described as 'Company School' painting: Calcutta and Lucknow, where provincial Mughal painters from Murshidabad, Patna and Faizabad were employed; Madras and Tanjore, where artists from the South Indian traditions received patronage; and Delhi, where Imperial Mughal artists created some of the finest works of this period. Their paintings represent one of the great and forgotten moments of Indian Art during a period of cultural exchange between the artists and their East India Company patrons.

Alongside these fascinating works, visitors will also encounter a Mughal dagger, now part of the Wallace Collection, which has a direct connection to one of the most prominent East India Company patrons of this period. The dagger was formerly owned by Claude Martin, an East India Company official who commissioned Indian artists to create works of art depicting the flora, fauna and daily life in India. Under Martin's patronage, great Lucknavi artists such as Bahadur Singh and Mihr Chand fused their Mughal training with European conventions and materials, to create a new, highly innovative way of depicting the natural world.

ABOUT THE WALLACE COLLECTION

The Wallace Collection is one of the most significant collections of fine and decorative arts in the world and the greatest bequest of art ever left to the British Nation. The collection encompasses old master oil paintings from the 14th to the late 19th century including works by Titian, Velazquez, Rubens and Van Dyck, princely arms and armour, and one of the finest collections of French 18th century art in all media.

www.wallacecollection.org

ABOUT DAG

Established in 1993 in New Delhi, DAG has, over the past 25 years, built a reputation for the quality of its collection that represents the expanse of Indian art practice. This extensive collection charts a historic continuum, from the early works of academic artists trained in Bengal and Bombay, to modernists from Baroda, Delhi and Madras. The collection includes artworks by some of India's most celebrated artists, including Raja Ravi Varma, Amrita Sher-Gil, Jamini Roy, S. H. Raza, M. F. Husain, Tyeb Mehta, F. N. Souza, Avinash Chandra and Chittaprosad. With the aim of taking Indian modernism to a wider audience, DAG now has gallery spaces in the historic Kala Ghoda in Mumbai, and the iconic Fuller Building in Manhattan, New York, in addition to its gallery in New Delhi. It regularly participates in international fairs such as Art Basel Hong Kong, Armory New York, Art Dubai, Masterpiece London and India Art Fair.

The mandate of taking art to the people has led to museum quality exhibition collaborations with stellar art institutions such as the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai, The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi, Punjab Lalit Kala Akademi Chandigarh, and Jawahar Kala Kendra, Jaipur. The most recent of these is India's first public - private collaboration in the arts space that began in January 2019 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating Drishyakala art museum in the precincts of Red Fort, New Delhi – a UNESCO world heritage site – in which the Archaeological Survey of India has partnered with DAG.

www.dagworld.com