Study day

Mughal India: Art and Culture

Date        Monday 27 March 2017
Times       10.45–16.00
Location    British Library Knowledge Centre

Ruling South and parts of Central Asia from 1526–1858, the Mughal dynasty became one of the most powerful and opulent empires the world has ever known. Remembered through a rich artistic and cultural heritage including exquisite paintings, manuscripts and architecture, the British Library invites you to discover Mughal India at this study day, exclusive to U3A members.

Programme

10.45   Arrival; tea and coffee

11.15   The Formation of Mughal Painting Style  
         Dr Barbara Brend, independent scholar

11.45   Arts of the Mughal Court  
         Susan Stronge, Senior Curator, Victoria & Albert Museum

12.15   The Development of Akbar’s Manuscript Studio with Special Reference to the Akbarnama  
         Jerry Losty, Curator Emeritus, the British Library

12.45   Q&A Plenary with Barbara Brend and Jerry Losty

13.00   Lunch (not provided)

14.15   The Mughal Imperial Library  
         Ursula Sims-Williams, Lead Curator of Persian Collections, the British Library

14.45   Interrogating Patronage: the Bustan of Sa‘di for Emperor Shahjahan  
         Dr Sâqib Bâburî, Curator, Persian Manuscripts Digitisation Project, the British Library

15.15   Later Mughal Painting: from Aurangzeb to Shah Alam II  
         Dr Malini Roy, Curator of Visual Arts Collections, the British Library

15.45   Q&A Plenary with afternoon contributors

16.00   Close

Redisplay of Mughal collection items
Timed to coincide with our study day, we have redisplayed related collection items in the Sir John Ritblat Treasures Gallery. Participants are invited to visit this free Gallery before and after the study day.
Contributors

Dr Sāqib Bābūrī is a specialist in the history, literature, and book cultures of the Persian-speaking Middle East and South Asia. He is contributing to the Library’s Persian Manuscripts Digitisation Project, aiming to update and make the collection – one of the most significant in the world in terms of its size and importance – available online.

Dr Barbara Brend is an independent scholar who has carried out major research on form and meaning in Persian and Mughal manuscript illustration. Her books include Islamic Art (1991), Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau’s Khamsah (2003) and Muhammad Juki’s Shahnamah of Firdausi (2010). Barbara curated the 2010 Fitzwilliam Museum exhibition, Epic of the Persian Kings.

Jerry Losty curated the collections of Indian manuscripts and paintings in the Library, 1971-2005. He has published widely on various aspects of Indian painting from the 12th to 19th centuries – major books for the Library include The Art of the Book in India (1982), Calcutta City of Palaces (1990), The Ramayana (2008) and Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire (2012, with Dr Malini Roy).

Dr Malini Roy is an art historian with particular interest in late 17th- and 18th-century Indian painting. Her interests include Mughal and provincial painting, art for the East India Company, and British artists in India. Malini was the lead curator of the Library’s 2012 exhibition Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire and co-authored, with Jerry Losty, the accompanying publication of the same title.

Ursula Sims-Williams interests are in the material cultures of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia, Zoroastrianism, and Mughal India. She leads on the Library’s project to provide digital access to our collection of over 12,000 Persian manuscripts. Ursula co-curated the Library’s Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire exhibition, and curated The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination (Brunei Gallery SOAS, 2013) and an expanded Everlasting Flame exhibition in New Delhi (National Museum, India, 2016).


Date for your diary
Our next U3A study day will take place on Monday 23 October 2017 – we hope you’ll join us again.

McKalan, An elephant and rider trampling a tiger © British Library Board
Abü’l Hasan, Squirrels in a plane tree (detail) © British Library Board