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Colonial, International, Global: Connecting and Disconnecting Art Histories

Kavita Singh

Abstract

The Distinguished Visiting Professorship program at the School of Art and Aesthetics of Jawaharlal Nehru University, one of India's leading postgraduate universities, has supported a series of courses and lectures that have expanded and diversified the curriculum. During the three-year program, topics such as gender and identity in Roman art, contemporary art theory, and the history of art in Jerusalem have given students the opportunity to work directly with leading scholars in the field, gain skills in close reading of text and image, and debate leading issues in the field.

KEYWORDS: India, Indian art history, Buddhism, Hinduism, globalization, Coomaraswamy, teaching art history

Introduction

The figure was small, but its phallus swooped right across the wall, impossibly enormous, with a swollen glans. Then came a phallus that was a creature all on its own—sprouting legs and wings from its engorged body. The class full of well-brought up Indian girls watched in hushed silence as Natalie Kampen clicked through the slides of Priapus frescoes and phallic wind-chimes from Pompeii. Her lecture was part of the course on “Gender and Sexuality in Roman Art” that she taught as the Getty Visiting Professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University. When the slide show ended and the discussion began, the questions came in a cascade. Were these incredibly inflated phalli meant to be grand or comic? Were female figures not used as emblems of fertility? A Priapus was painted at the entrance of the House of the Vettii. Everybody could see it. Were these things not hidden from children? What was considered an appropriate age to know about sex? What did we know about the sexuality of children in Roman times? Our questions to Tally brought back her questions to us. What about the scenes of copulation on Hindu temple walls? What was the social context of their reception? Were the figures of fertile goddesses and *asparas* or nymphs—with their immense breasts and pinched waists—to be seen as straightforward depictions, as ideals, or as caricatures? And how did phalli figure in Indian religious imagery?

A scene like this vividly encapsulates what happened *to* us, and what happened *through* us, in the exchanges enabled by the Getty’s Connecting Art Histories (CAH) project. Our CAH grant was for a Distinguished Visiting Professor program, which brought a range of distinguished art historians to India. John Clark of Sydney University taught a course on “Biennales in the Contemporary Art World”; Natalie Kampen of Columbia University taught a course on “Gender and Sexuality in Roman Art”; Thierry de Duve from the University of Lille had a course titled “A Theory of Art For Today”; Avinoam Shalem, then at the University of Munich, led us to “Jerusalem: 1000 Years of the Making of a Sacred Geography”; Dario Gamboni of the University of Geneva taught us about “Destruction and Preservation of Art”; Gerhard Wolf, from the Kunsthistorisches Institut (KHI) in Florence, took us on a tour across the world in “Local/Transregional/Global interactions in Aesthetics and Politics from 1350–1600”; while both Griselda Pollock (University of Leeds) and Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University) came to Delhi not to teach entire courses but to run workshops and deliver a lecture series on “Art in the Times of Trauma” and “Art in Muslim South Asia” respectively over the short space of two weeks. Each of

these professors brought a range of readings, ideas and art histories that we do not usually encounter in India, and in each case their teaching allowed us not just to look at another place and time, but to look again at our place, and our time, through another's eyes.

Our CAH grant was designed specifically to bring non-Indianists to India, so that the students and faculty of our newly-instituted school could engage with ideas and objects, theories and methods of a range of art histories not normally accessible in India. As I wrote in the grant proposal, "we would like to avoid bringing scholars who have a readymade audience here"; to bring scholars who work on Indian topics would only give us a chance to hear work that we already read. Further, we even avoided inviting scholars whose theoretical positions would be familiar to us: those who work on postcolonialism, for instance, since their ideas would already have "traveled" to India in some way. By choosing to invite art historians who represented streams of art history other than those we already consult, we hoped to address one of the major weaknesses of Indian art history: its near-exclusive focus on the art history of India, and its near-blindness to the art history, and even to the art, of other locations.

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In recent years, along with many other disciplines, art history has had its mid-life crisis. Postcolonialism and postmodernism have prompted a moment of intense self-reflexivity. Much as anthropology examined its historical and political roots and tried to think outside the frameworks of colonialism, art history also came to terms with its own associations with class and colony. Confronting and rejecting art history's long and intimate connection with elites, scholars and curators have sought to engage with "visual culture" rather than "masterpiece culture," bringing a broad range of objects and practices into its zone of scrutiny (this maneuver rejects formalism in favor of a more social-historical approach). They have also sought to change the terms on which they engage with the arts of "others," dignifying them and removing them from an anthropological zone into a zone of art (this maneuver rejects anthropology in favor of a formalistic approach).

If the need to look again at non-Western art (a clumsy category!) grew in response to postcolonialism, it has gained a different sort of urgency in the era of globalization. The opening of borders that were formerly closed, and the growing networks of communication and data exchange, made it possible to engage with the art of "elsewhere." The interlinked economies, the changing map of global wealth and the shift of geopolitical power to new centers have made it imperative to do so. The need to move away from an exclusive focus on Western art or Euramerican perspectives is now articulated everywhere. The art of

other cultures, and the aesthetic theories developed in other places, are seen as offering keys to another past and a new future.

We can now see the effects of Western art history's effort to become "global" in the expanding syllabi of art history departments in major universities, and in an increasing number of publications, and conferences that address this theme. For now, the question seems primarily to be a methodological one, which asks how (or if or whether) a global art history can be done. After all, the Universal Survey-type art history always did acknowledge the existence of other cultures and civilizations; the question now is on what terms they should be acknowledged.

The irony is that as Western art historical institutions express anxiety about their Eurocentricism, and try to open out to other art histories, the art histories that they attempt to engage with mostly remain centered upon themselves. Art history in China will be Sinocentric, and art history in India is most decidedly Indocentric. And it is likely to remain so. While it is to some extent natural for it to be so, it is still instructive to look at these "other" art histories to understand the logics underlying their form of operation. To understand the insularity of art history in India, one needs to understand not just the historical circumstances under which the discipline developed, but also the political, ideological, economic, institutional and juridical factors that shape or curtail the discipline.

History

How did art history arrive in India? The terminus is hard to establish, and depends upon what we are willing to accept as art historical writing. In the canon of Sanskrit classical literature, texts that deal with art were written as early as the second century CE. However, most of these would count as writings on aesthetics rather than art history. In subsequent centuries these were joined by similar texts in Pali and Prakrit in the early centuries CE that certainly give us evidence about art, and about thinking about art. With the arrival of Islam and Persianate and Timurid court culture in India from the thirteenth century onward, numerous chronicles, memoirs and didactic texts provide evidence of a refined and connoisseurly culture at court. In addition to texts, there is art's own internal evidence of discourses about art. Many historical works of art reveal the artists' acute knowledge about artworks and master artists of the past, as later works of art seem to respond to earlier ones, though emulation, parody, mimicry or even through the ambition to compete with and do better than their precursors. But all of this is not admissible as "art history," narrowly defined.

In effect, art history is defined as any kind of writing on art as long as that is identical with the discipline that was developed in Renaissance Italy or Enlightenment Germany.¹ As a result of this circular reasoning,

art history everywhere is necessarily a field that arises from a transplantation of European disciplinary practices. Thus construed, art history is said to have come to India in colonial times, as colonial administrators and enthusiasts tried to piece together a history of India by reading the objects from its past. Producing a visual record through sketches, engravings, photographs and plaster casts, making studies and deciphering inscriptions, and attempting to write histories of individual monuments or placing them within the trajectory of a local or worldwide evolution of architectural form, these works might be called the first art histories practiced in or upon India. Not least among the legacies of these colonial pioneers was the fledgling institutional structure that they brought into being by establishing the scholarly circle of the Asiatic Society which encouraged scholarship and the custodial authority of the Archaeological Survey of India which undertook excavations and took monuments into its care.

But the project of the colonial scholars and archaeologists was more properly antiquarian rather than art historical. As these pioneers mined artifacts and monuments for historical information, the aesthetic qualities of the objects or sites under study were of little relevance—indeed, they were not even discernible to the scholars' unaccustomed eyes. Most antiquarians disdained these objects even as they amassed vast collections of them. For the British archaeologists, the value of these objects lay in the evidence they might provide about history: they were antiquities, then, not art. The pervasiveness of this attitude can be seen as late as 1935, just twelve years before India's Independence, when the Museums Society of London sent two members to India to conduct a survey of the Museums in India. Of the 105 museums that they visited, only three were listed as having "art." These were museums that either had European oil paintings or had copies of European oil paintings. Yet when the survey was conducted, many museums in India not counted as "art" museums were filled with finely carved stone sculptures dating from the third century BC onwards.² Clearly, it was a narrow circle of objects that could be acknowledged as art at this time. As the British Keeper of an important Indian museum famously said, "Painting and sculpture were unknown as the fine arts in India."³

It was left, then, for the lineaments of an art history of and for India to be drawn as part of an early-twentieth-century nationalist reaction against the disparaging assessments of colonialism. Nationalist scholars began to assert that Indian objects were "high art" in the face of colonial denigrations of Indian artifacts. Interestingly, a significant number of these nationalist art historians were not Indian although they worked alongside Indian artists and members of the intelligentsia. Perhaps the understanding that they brought of metropolitan art worlds was key to their contribution. A major figure in this endeavor was Ernest Binfield Havell, English art educator and principal of the Government Art College in Calcutta (Kolkata). In association with nationalist artist

ideologues of the city, Havell attempted to reform art education to follow Indian rather than Western models, famously leading a procession of students who threw the College's replicas of western art into the campus pond. Even more influential was Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy, the Ceylonese-English polymath who wrote fluently and with great erudition in half-a-dozen languages. Coomaraswamy's passionate, learned and polemical writings combined philosophy and religious studies with art history to great effect.

From the information available at the time, these pioneers were able to piece together a continuous history for Indian art at least from the second century BC until the twelfth century AD.⁴ This continuous history then became evidence of a continuous indigenous civilization, countering one of the tropes of colonial history-writing which had asserted that India showed cultural progress only when it was energized by an external influence such as the Hellenes or the Persians. If there was any phase of Indian art of which British scholars had been able to approve, it was the "Greco-Buddhist" sculptures made in the first and second centuries CE in the areas comprising present-day Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan. Working for Scythian and Bactrian Buddhist kings, Hellenistic sculptors had made elaborate narrative friezes and icons on Buddhist themes that were based on the figures of Greek deities and myths. For British archaeologists, the familiar aesthetic, the Western derivation and the connection with Buddhism, that was seen as a relatively "rational" religion led by a Christ-like Messianic figure, evoked some admiration. Inevitably, this would be precisely the period that was scorned by the nationalist art historians who saw these as derivative and weak sculptures and shifted their "classic" period three centuries down, to an indigenous empire ruling over central India, and under which Buddhism waned as Hinduism came to the fore.⁵

Politics, Ideology, Aesthetics

In the early decades after independence, the focus of Indian art history was on expanding the canon of Indian art. As more and more sites were excavated or discovered and conserved and photographed, the ranks of Indian "art" began to swell with objects and monuments discovered at an ever-growing number of sites. The map of India filled up with art that seemed to be sprouting up everywhere from the soil in an unstoppable effervescent production of high culture.

But in order to make it possible to appreciate and admire Indian artifacts, it was necessary also to expand the aesthetic criteria by which objects were judged. Rather than trying to prove that Indian art was equivalent to, or as good as, the art of the West, nationalist historians developed a discourse of difference. Here the aims of Indian art were shown to be different from the aims of western art; what was formerly

criticized as shortcoming was turned into intention. Thus the deviations from naturalism seen so often in Indian art—as in the multi-armed, multi-headed images of gods—were described as the higher, purer visions of an “inner eye” that was fixed upon “spiritual vision and not the visible objects perceived by the external sense.”⁶ By this token, the accuracy of musculature in Greek statues, or of perspective views in Renaissance painting, was evidence of a mentality that was enslaved by dross materialism.

Assertions of the traditional Indian artists’ transcendentalist intention were only the intuitions of the nationalist scholars, however, and at this time a great deal of effort was also expended on locating traditional texts that might reveal an indigenous intellectual tradition that reflected on the art while it was being made. In fact, art historical studies became overwhelmingly the study of texts—whether these were religious texts that would clarify the iconography, or art manuals that would describe ritual or process, or philosophical texts devoted to aesthetics. The major task for scholars with this orientation was to place works of art within an indigenous knowledge system, which would force an acknowledgement of the intellectual framework within which art was produced.

Although the objects studied by the nationalist scholars were oriental, the chief methods of study were occidental. Their writings followed the formalistic-evolutionary method developed by German art history, and their project sought to normalize Indian objects as “art,” to assert that they belonged to the canon of great art from any location in the world. Recently, critics have pointed to the way art history places an Enlightenment frame around artifacts produced all over the world, regardless of their original function or intent; “artification” displaces other possible meanings for objects.⁷ While this is true, it is a function that is embraced by local scholars who wish for this inclusion, for their own strategic ends.

Institutions

After India achieved Independence from British rule in 1947, art and culture were to play an important role in the formation and consolidation of national identity. The layer of culture that was most useful for this postcolonial self-fashioning was the very distant past. The allure of primordialism, which would show Indian citizens that their land had been a great and mighty power in ancient times, led to an overemphasis on ancient monuments and artifacts from the early centuries of the Common Era, at the expense of the achievements of the medieval Islamic and modern periods.

To understand this relegation of Islamic art in the art history of India, one needs to recollect the fraught relationship that existed between India’s two largest communities—Hindus and Muslims—through the

first half of the twentieth century. Tensions came to a head as Independence drew near. Fearing the consequences of domination by a much larger Hindu majority, leaders of the Muslim community demanded a separate homeland, leading to the Partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan. While this was a major historical event with enormous and tragic implications, it also affected the kind of heritage that independent India chose to inherit. Through systematic erasures and amnesias, a civilizational history was produced for India, one that ratified, and tried to make sense of, the fractured land. The thousand years of Islam in India were now seen as an interruption in national destiny.

Taking charge of Indian heritage after Independence, the state expanded its control over museums, enlarged the Archaeological Survey of India, brought more monuments under its care and incorporated teachings about cultural heritage in school education. While some university departments of archaeology and museology were established, the degree program established in several universities to educate students on cultural matters was the M.A. in Ancient Indian History and Culture. Focusing on Sanskrit aesthetics, ancient history, religious texts and the material culture of ancient India, this program equipped graduates to understand the iconography, mythology and religious and historical context of artifacts from the ancient period. This is the program that trained the cadre that went on to work in many cultural institutions, reinforcing the emphasis on ancient pre-Islamic India in the sphere of public culture.

Working in the cultural sector was not particularly rewarding at the time. The jobs were ill-paid, and institutions were poorly funded. Employees had almost no authority or room for initiative. With little pay or opportunity, cultural sector institutions could not attract high-quality employees. If in the 1960s and 1970s a number of interesting publications emerged from museums in India, these were written usually not by museum employees but by museum board members, men with social and intellectual capital much greater than that of the museum officials.

Noteworthy art history programs were available in association with art schools in only two universities in India, each with its own historical and ideological burden. Vishwabharati, the university established in rural Bengal by the great poet and artist Rabindranath Tagore, was closely allied with the early nationalist art historians and artists. Until today, its art historical research and teaching focus on its own legacy. The Faculty of Fine Arts at the MS University of Baroda, on the other hand, sought to be in touch with the international avant-garde. Led by Courtauld-educated professors, its art history faculty attempted to keep up with current art historical methods as applied to local topics and themes. For both of these institutions, the analysis of an Indian modernism and an Indian modernity has been a persistent theme. Academic art

history in these two important institutions has been tied to modernism and contemporary art.

Law and Economy

In 1971 the government abolished the Privy Purses, the handsome pensions that had been promised to the rulers—the rajas and maharajas—who had merged their states with India. The former royal families found themselves in financial difficulties and needed to encash their assets. The *arts mobiliers*—small objects, jewelry, miniature paintings and illustrated manuscripts that had been lying in royal libraries and treasuries—began to trickle and then to flood into the market. As these items became available, a small but lively sphere of collectors, dealers and museum directors developed, primarily in the cities of Banaras (Varanasi), Bombay (Mumbai) and Chandigarh. These individuals played a role in the development of museum collections (and personal collections of their own) and wrote about them, sometimes in journals that they had started.⁸ Not everything found buyers in India, however, and many objects were sold abroad.

As art treasures flowed out of the country, another law was introduced: the Antiquities and Art Treasures act of 1972 expressly prohibited the export of artifacts and antiquities (defined as artifacts that were more than 100 years old). Through this law the state asserted its overarching custodianship of all artifacts, over the rights of individual owners. To exert even greater control over these objects, the act made it mandatory that they be officially registered with the government, so that any sale or change of hands within the country could be tracked.

Since the legal market for Indian antiquities was now limited to India, the range of potential buyers was severely constrained. If, as the law required, owners of antiquities were to register their objects with the government, they would forego the possibility of selling these abroad in the future. To preserve the potential of foreign sale, many collections avoided registering their antiquities and went “underground.” So too did the entire market for premodern Indian art.

In this now-clandestine market for Indian art, sculptures were broken up and manuscripts dismembered without documentation. Objects changed hands several times before they surfaced in the market with an invented provenance. This has left later scholars the difficult (and wholly avoidable) task of trying to reassemble a monument from its rubble, a whole manuscript or painting cycle from its fragments. Much information in this area remains private, known to a circle of initiates including collectors and dealers; scholars and curators who may serve as advisors to collectors often bifurcate their knowledge, with some information available for public consumption, and a larger body of private data that are shared with a chosen few.

It is clear that the laws which were intended to safeguard national heritage destroyed the market for Indian art, put a stop to the growing circle of Indian collectors, and denied India the corollary benefits of a vigorous market for premodern Indian art. For wherever there is a healthy market for art, it encourages the circle of collectors who might found private museums or gift their collections to public ones. But the market also needs information about the things that it trades, for which it supports academic and popular art history. Even as private interests withdrew from the sphere of art, public spending shrank at the same time, leading to stagnation in the field.

Liberalization

In the 1990s the Indian economy was liberalized. A number of protectionist policies were reversed, markets opened and currency was allowed to flow more freely. The opening of the Indian economy and the forces of globalization brought new energy to the Indian art scene, but this time growth and energy focused on the only areas not over-regulated by the government: art that was less than 100 years old, which is to say modern and contemporary art. In the 1990s there was an explosion in the production and circulation of contemporary Indian art. Artists gained visibility and opportunities, the number of art galleries mushroomed, and the participation of Indian in biennales and international exhibitions grew.

There was also a growth in the writing on contemporary art. Most of this writing, however, was sponsored by galleries for publication in their catalogs and one critic has described it as “extravagant, adjective-laden utterances produced in close proximity to the artists.”⁹ Entangled with the market, this kind of art-writing might be seen as an extended form of marketing. It may have some uses, but cannot take the space of critical and independent work, and it may have severe limitations of its own. In a recent instance, a senior scholar was asked to write about certain objects for an auction catalog. When the scholar informed the auction house that she felt the works were fakes, the auction house threatened to sue her for libel. One wonders about the role open to art-writing when sale catalogs are the major avenue of publication.

In conjunction with the growth of the market, the key figure to emerge in the gallery scene in recent years is that of the curator. Part researcher, part impresario, part agent, the curator is a multitasker who compensates for the weakness of institutions in India. But as curatorial work too, like writing on contemporary art, is mostly done in the service of the market, the curator's functioning must also rhyme with the market's needs. A common arrangement for curators' fees in India is to allocate 2 percent of sale proceeds; naturally the curator is motivated to include saleable works.

Globalization

The institution in which I work—the School of Arts and Aesthetics—was established in 2001 as one of the departments of Jawaharlal Nehru University. The Jawaharlal Nehru University prides itself on being one of the premier universities in India, and is known particularly in the field of the social sciences. Although the university was always meant to have a School of the Arts since its inception in 1970, such a school was established only after three decades had elapsed. By this time, the university decided to enhance its strong social sciences profile by establishing a school for theoretical and critical studies rather than one for art practice. The school has since grown in the areas of art history (here called visual studies), theater and performance studies, and cinema studies.

The School of the Arts soon established itself as an important place for the study of the arts in India. Its art history department was acknowledged to be of a high standard, and in touch with current developments in the field. The approaches followed here include “the new art history”—in courses that study institutional critique, for instance, or that look again at ancient Indian art’s treatment of caste, class and gender.

The reputation of some of the faculty members, and exposure at fora such as the Comité International d’Histoire de l’Art (CIHA), gave our faculty members visibility at the time that art history, internationally, was trying to come to grips with the consequences of globalization. This conjuncture had some interesting consequences for us.

Regardless of what some commentators might say, globalization does not flatten the world. Instead it erodes some old peaks and adds some new ones to the landscape. When the growing economies in Asia made “India–China” a mantra for an anticipated new economic order, cultural interest also followed the track of probable economic growth. For major institutions, for projects, for individuals who wished to study the meaning and possibilities of making art history global, dealing with India and China became important. As Anglophones, Indians were immediately able to serve the need of this broadening interest and my colleagues and I found ourselves in demand, not just in conferences devoted to South Asia or to the periods and fields of our specialization, but in “mainstream” art history conferences that discussed and prognosticated on the future of the discipline itself. I recall being part of a conference in which French, German, Austrian and American scholars had made their presentations. As I stepped up to the podium, my session chair announced: “We have been looking at national histories, and then at international ones, but now we are looking at global histories.” Our presence in certain meetings and conferences became a guarantee that it was indeed a “global” event.

Global art history is not the art history of the globe—there cannot be such a thing—but it has become an art history of objects that bear some marks of the forces of globalization, whether in this era or in an earlier one. Hybrid objects, processes of circulation and exchange, or the impact of transnational institutions have become the canon of “global art history.” **This is an art history of globalizing processes.** As my colleagues and I fly from conference to conference that address globalization and art history, we ask what is our role within this field? Frequently traveling, arriving at the venue to speak Sanskrit and Ranciere, have we ourselves not also become traveling, hybrid objects whose function it is to perform a kind of “globality?” **And as we do so, it is worth reflecting on the difference between the roles we perform now against the roles we performed when we used to be postcolonials.** But that is a discussion for another day.

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Globalization has brought us tremendous gains. Our sense of being connected to the conversation in art history was completely altered through digital technology, when we began to subscribe to Jstor and Artstor, and as museum websites began to upload huge amounts of data. Yet, even as we interact with our peers across the world, and discuss global art history, our own academic work within our parent institution faces local constraints. Most serious among these is the fact that we do not offer our students an art history program.

Although our school offers courses in three disciplines, we have such a small number of faculty members in each that we are unable to offer a master’s program in any one of them. We are constrained to offer a cross-disciplinary master’s program in Arts and Aesthetics in which students take courses in art history, performance studies and cinema studies. As a result, we are not able to say that our students are graduate art historians.¹⁰

Lacking a broad base of teachers, and knowing students would take only a fraction of courses in our disciplinary area, we at the School of Arts and Aesthetics chose to focus our attention on courses relating to the arts of India. Whatever their quality and depth, the lack of breadth is certainly a constraint. It was for this reason that the CAH project was framed to open our department out to the larger art historical world. In course after course, we were taken to places we would never have ventured on our own. But more than the content, even, it was instructive to see the pedagogical methods employed by the visiting faculty: John Clark, whose incredible databases were built painstakingly over decades and shared generously with us all; Natalie Kampen, who was fiercely protective of her woman students, insisting that they speak up for themselves; Thierry de Duve, whose elegant, eloquent lectures were accompanied by dazzling PowerPoint presentations and were like animated films; Avinoam Shalem, who spoke of objects, poems and songs

in a free-spirited art history that looked beyond works of art; Dario Gamboni, who played with paradoxes, showing us that destruction creates something too; Gerhard Wolf, who took us on a voyage across the globe but ended each lecture in mid-argument leaving us hungry for the next lecture; Iftikhar Dadi, who showed us why we have to understand Africa to understand India; and Griselda Pollock, who listened carefully to a dull question from the audience and made it the occasion for a brilliant answer that delighted us and made the questioner feel he was also someone of consequence.

Notes

1. "I think it can be argued that there is no non-Western tradition of art history, if by that is meant a tradition with its own interpretive strategies and forms of argument. Art historians in different countries vary in what they study, and there is a wide latitude in the kinds of interpretive methods that are employed. (Most scholarship, I think, still takes iconography as its principal or default model.) But there is no such thing as an independent narrative or scholarly approach to the writing of the history of art that can be understood as a history of art. There are ways of writing about art's history that developed in India from the seventh century, and in and China from the Han Dynasty; but those texts are not recognizable as art history, and a simple proof of their distance from current practice is that no art historian who chose to emulate those texts could get a permanent position in a university." James Elkins, "Art History As a Global Discipline," e-source, (http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/guest_author/220) (accessed January 18, 2015).
2. Their report was published as S.F. Markham and H. Hargreaves, *The Museums of India* (London: Museum Society, 1936).
3. George C.M. Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1880), p. 125. To many of the antiquarians who puzzled over Indian antiquities, the shapes taken by Indian sculpture or monuments were bizarre, illogical and malformed. For suggestive accounts of early phases in this process, see Bernard Cohn, "The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities, and Art in Nineteenth Century India," in *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 76–105; and Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). The latter traces the history of responses to Indian art, from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century.
4. E.B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting* (London: John Murray, 1908; reprint Delhi: Cosmo Books, 1980) and Idem., *Ideals of Indian Art* (London: Murray, 1911) were the earliest "revisionist"

histories of Indian art. However, the greatest scholar among the pioneers of Indian art history was undoubtedly Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. His *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (London: Goldston, 1927) was the most important art historical survey text to be produced by any of the nationalist art historians. Coomaraswamy's many writings have been compiled in: Roger Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 3 vols, Bollingen Series (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press), 1977–8.

5. For the “colonialist” point of view, see: Henry Hardy Cole, *Catalogue of the Objects of Indian Art Exhibited in the South Kensington Museum* (London: HMSO, 1874); or Vincent A Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911). The nationalist view point is best represented by Coomaraswamy's works, cited above.
6. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, 23.
7. See particularly Donald Preziosi, “Art History: Making the Visible Legible,” in D. Preziosi (ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 7–12.
8. These individuals included Rai Krishnadasa in Banaras (Varanasi), Moti Chandra in Mumbai, M.S. Randhawa in Chandigarh and Karl Khandalwala in Mumbai. Krishnadasa, Randhawa and Khandalawala were collectors who produced a stream of articles and books about the objects that they had discovered. Of this august group, M.S. Randhawa was a powerful civil servant and Karl Khandalawala was a prominent lawyer; Krishnadasa was a litterateur with family wealth and connections who built the finest museum collection in India. Only Moti Chandra was a professional museum employee.
9. Abhay Sardesai in the panel discussion on “Reading, Writing, Researching,” in *Figuring the Curator* workshop, organized by the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, in conjunction with the Visiting Professorship of Thierry de Duve as part of the Getty CAH Project, September 18–19, 2010. Cited in Vidya Shivadas, *Mapping the Field of Indian Art-criticism: Post-Independence*, Asia Art Archive Research project, Digital Publication, p. 5, (http://www.aaa.org.hk/cms/Content/upload/download/research/Mapping_the_field_of_Indian_Art_Criticism_01_Final_Report.pdf) (accessed January 18, 2014).
10. This is a situation we hope to remedy from the 2017 academic year onwards.