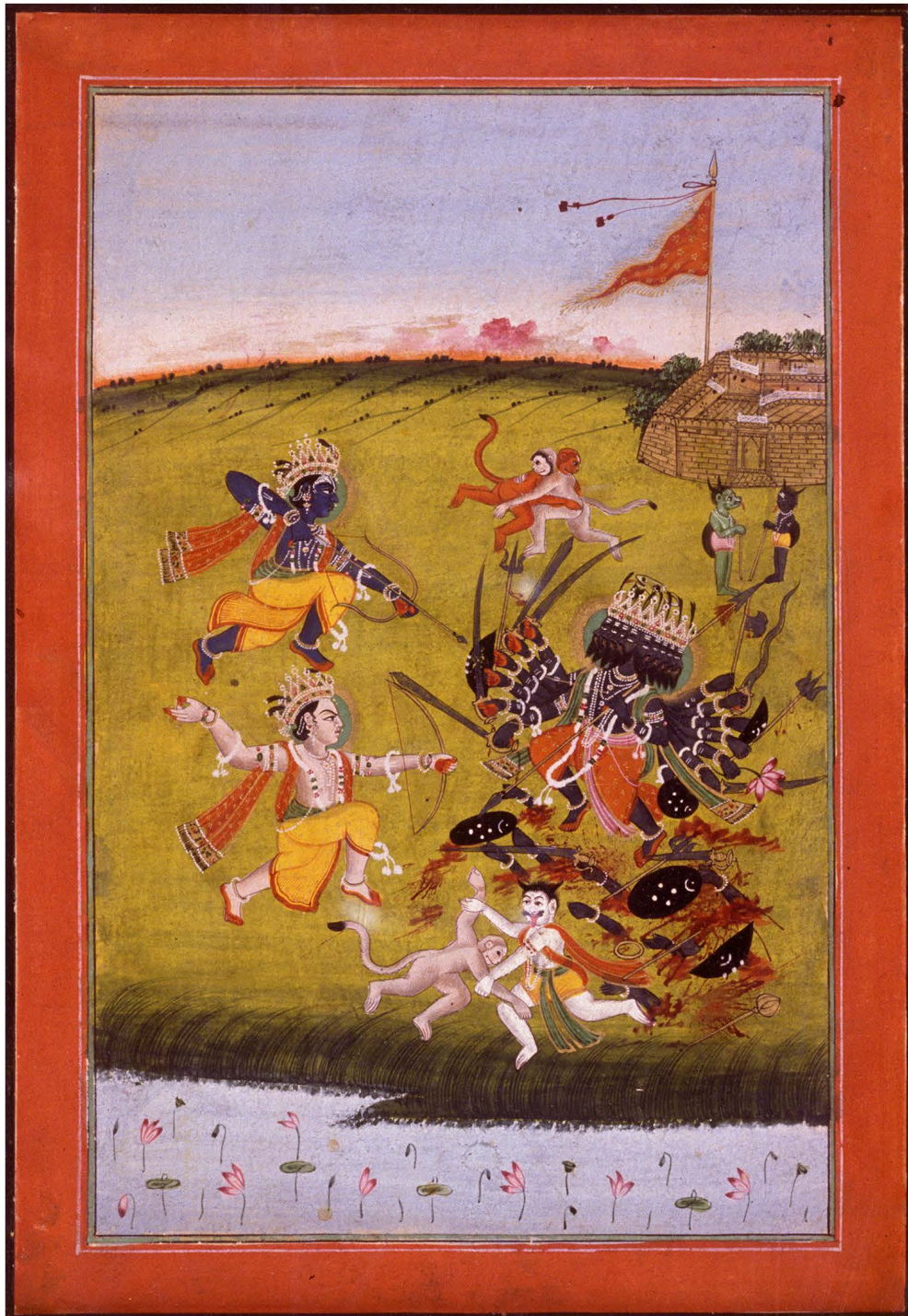




THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery



# Education Kit

**Expressions of India | Virtual Exhibition 2020**

# Education Kit

This Education Kit was prepared to accompany the exhibition *Expressions of India* from the Ronald and Catherine H. Berndt Collection, an online exhibition on the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery website (July 2020- June 2021).

The kit provides educational resources for teachers and students from K-12. Aligned with WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority outcomes, it includes context for research across curricula including Visual Arts, Design, Humanities and Social Studies along with art making and interpretation tasks.

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**EXHIBITION TITLE: Expressions of India**  
**Berndt Museum of Anthropology**

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## Why the exhibition - the Collection:

Established in 1976, the Berndt Museum is renown for its Collections of Australian Aboriginal, Melanesian and Southeast Asian art and cultural material. It was founded on the collections of anthropologists Professor Ronald and Dr Catherine Berndt, who themselves founded the Anthropology Department at UWA in 1956. The Berndts collected numerous objects that were integral to their research, they did this primarily amongst Australian Aboriginal peoples; but they collected also for their interest in the cultures from other lands, including Japan and India amongst others.

The artworks in this exhibition, *Expressions of India*, reveal the Berndt’s interest in collecting artworks that could support their research into philosophies and ideologies of diverse religions and sects, and the cultures and social circumstance within the Indian subcontinent. The three key stylistic modes evident in this exhibition reveal much about the religions and social circumstance of their makers and their patrons.

## The Artworks

The range of artworks in the exhibition are paintings that include figures, landscapes and architecture; with themes ranging across social life and stories, illustrations to poems, epics, and folk-tales as well as religious narratives.

The characteristic styles on display are designated; ‘Court’ paintings, ‘Kalighat’ (which also provided the Berndts with particular personal pleasure as some of the works in this exhibition were exhibited in their own domestic context), and ‘Pattachitra’, (‘patta’ meaning cloth; ‘chitra’ meaning picture/ painting in Sanskrit).

# The Themes

## Social and historical context and religious deities.

### Rajputs and Mughals

Initially a diverse cluster of castes and kin bodies associated with warriorhood, the Rajputs in India emerged over a period, commencing in the 6th century, as a social class comprising people from a variety of ethnic and geographical backgrounds. Eventually, by the 16th century, hereditary, landed aristocrat and ruling class values dominated this group, and several Rajput-ruled kingdoms had a significant role in many regions in central and northern India until the twentieth century. The former Rajput states including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are in north, west, central and east India.

Key influences to their control and status occurred following the invasion and consolidation of the Mughal Empire during the 16 - 17th centuries. Over time, both groups were reduced in influence and the Mughal Empire was eventually dissolved by the British Raj in the mid nineteenth century.

Commencing in 1526 when a warrior chieftain Babur swept down the plains of Upper India, and consolidated in the 1600s with the rule of his grandson Akbar, the Mughal Empire

led to the generation of great wealth and it expanded over a large portion of the landmass in India. The imperial structure lasted until 1720 following the death of the last major emperor Aurengzeb.

Whilst the Muslim Mughals initially took over lands and ruled by force, they strategically continued to rule by co-existing with other groups including the Rajput Hindus. Both Rajput and Mughal elite intermarried, and they also aligned diplomatically with outside forces, including by intermarrying family members with princesses from other states and countries.

With increased prosperity, freedom of religion and socio-political and cultural differences were accommodated by Mughal rulers. For a period, Hindu - Muslim culture was championed, and even in especially conservative religious times when Islamic orthodoxy was strongly supported, the ruler of that time, Aurengzeb (1658-1707) built Hindu temples.

### Krishna

A Hindu deity, Krishna is worshipped as the eighth avatar of the god Vishnu and also as the supreme God in his own right. Across the various theologies and philosophies, concerning Krishna, the common theme presents Krishna as the essence, and symbol of divine love, with human life and love as a reflection of the divine.

Such ideas are communicated through love-filled legends, including of Krishna with his lover Radha, or as an enchanter and playful lover of the gopis, (milkmaids). Other stories depict Krishna's playful pranks as a baby, conveying the theme of playing for fun and enjoyment rather than for sport or gain.

A Hindu text that includes Krishna, is the 700 verse *Bhagavad Gita*, which is part of the epic, the *Mahabharata*. This text has functioned as a spiritual guide. It allegorically raises, through Krishna and another character Arjuna, the ethical and moral dilemmas of human life, then presents a range of answers, raising ideological questions on human freedoms, choices, and responsibilities towards self and towards others.

### Kali

The universal range of the feminine, including nurturing and benevolent aspects, as well as destructive and ferocious aspects, is expressed in Hindu mythology through the multiple names and forms of Parvati. She is a mountain goddess who is the wife of Shiva, the Supreme Being, a deity of both destruction and regeneration.

Durga, an invincible protective mother of the universe is the strong and capable aspect of Parvati that identifies and destroys evil to protect. An avatar of Durga, the Hindu goddess Kali, is the angry ferocious aspect of Durga/ Parvati. In Hindu mythology, she is an active agent of the universe, the power of Shiva.

Kali has been worshipped by devotional movements and tantric sects variously as the Divine Mother and the Mother of the Universe, a

divine protector and a destroyer of evil forces.

There are many varied depictions of the different forms of Kali. The most common form shows her with four arms and hands, showing aspects of both creation and destruction. The two right hands are often held out in blessing, one in a particular gesture or symbolic pose (known as a 'mudra'), saying 'fear not', the other gesture conferring boons (favours or benefits). Her left hands hold a severed head, which signifies human ego, and a blood-covered sword, signifying divine knowledge, which is used to slay the human ego.

Kali is often portrayed standing or dancing on her husband, the Hindu god Shiva, who lies calm and prostrate beneath her. Kali is worshipped by Hindus throughout India.



# Close Readings

## KRISHNA

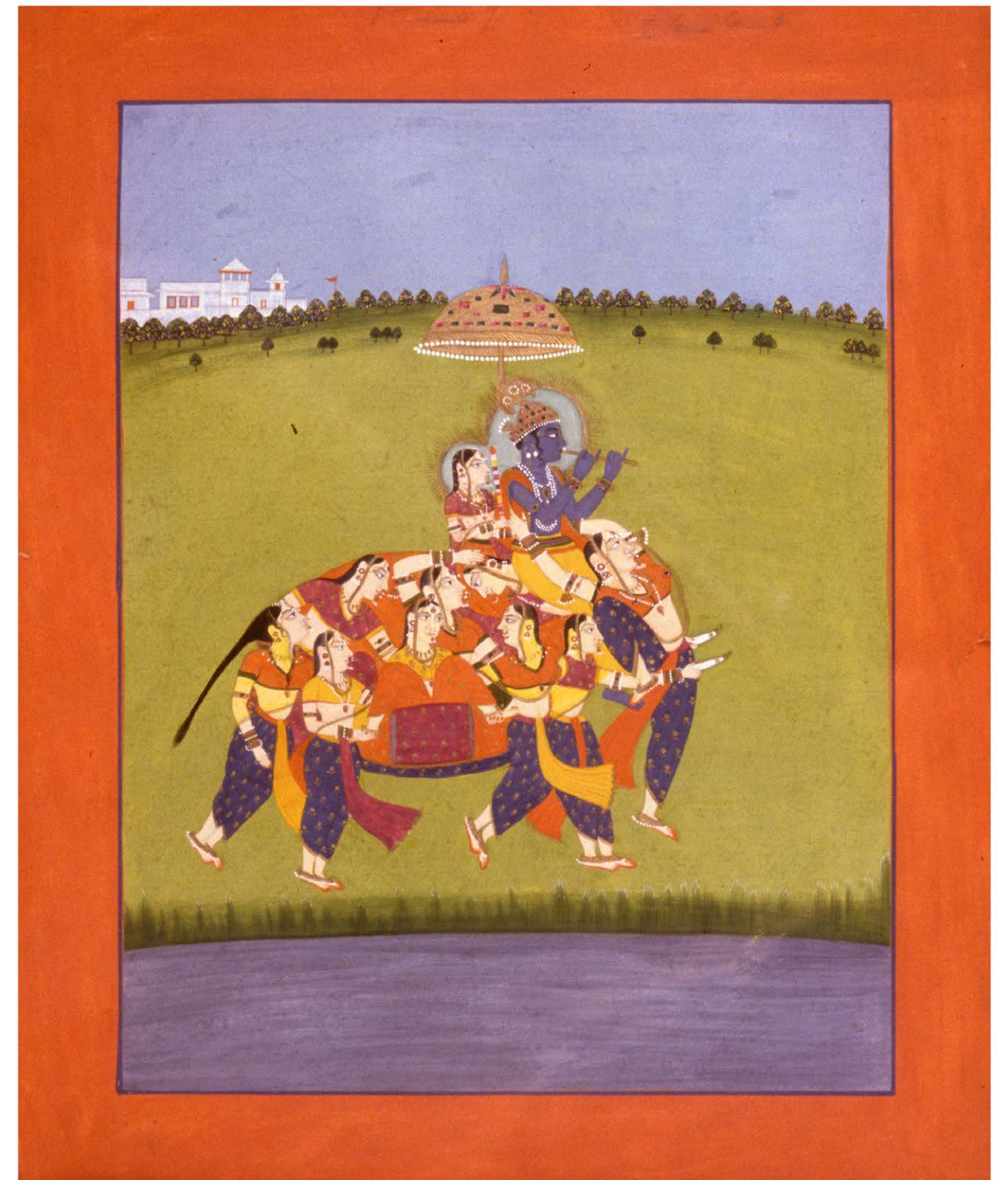
### IMAGE 1:

This Rajput origin image is designated to be of a 'Court' style. This is indicated both by its refined materials and technique and elegant setting. The artwork is painted with delicacy; incorporating fine details in the figures, their faces and costumes. The image depicts Krishna the Hindu deity with his lover Radha. They are riding on Nari Kunjara an elephant that is made up of gopis – or milkmaids. They ride beside a lake which is set in a cultivated landscape with a fine fort like building on the distant horizon.

The use of watercolour, applied with a fine brush on paper, together with the image of Krishna and his entourage riding on an elephant, an animal that is only able to be

owned by the wealthy or higher orders of society, creates a mood of majesty, suitable for the patrons of such a 'Court' painting.

Krishna is identified by his attributes of blue skin, he plays the flute and wears a bejewelled feathered topknot. Considered a model lover, as he is with his lover Radha - he is nevertheless shown to be of good humour and a prankster, as the besotted devotees – the gopis - are like an acrobatic troupe accompanying him.



*Krishna and Radha on Nari Kunjara - Composite Elephant Made of Gopis (Milkmaids), 19th century. Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 31.6 x 25.6 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology [1994/0907]*



## IMAGE 2:

By contrast to the first image, this picture – also of Krishna, as signified by his blue skin, feathered topknot and accompanying devotees, the gopis – is painted in a less refined style with a simple palette of striking colours, using a small selection of readily sourced pigments. Even though the gopis are also depicted in acrobatic postures, indicating a similar prankster theme related to Krishna, they wear less refined costumes and their bodies comprise the form of a horse, an animal of lower value and more numerous than an elephant, which is the animal ridden by Krishna in the first ‘Court’ style image.

The figures are set against a field of foliage like patterns within a decorative border rather than within a realistically styled landscape as with the first image. This is designated a ‘Pattachitra’ painting; it originates from Odisha, a region that has a tradition of folk art. This style of painting has less technical complexities than the Court paintings, and being of more robust materials was probably produced more quickly and in bulk numbers, and was of lower monetary value than the ‘Court’ image, thus was more accessible to the public in a ‘Market’ context.



*A Krishna Riding a Composite Horse Made of Gopis (Milkmaids), early 20th century. Odisha, India. Opaque watercolour and unknown surface coating on cloth, 24.7 x 37.5 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1994/0829]*



### IMAGE 3:

Designated 'Kalighat', this painting is a watercolour on paper, with brightly coloured figures against a simple background.

Traditionally, the colours included chrome yellow, lac red, black from soot and Prussian and Indigo blue. The image depicts the Hindu god Krishna in his prankster mode. He sits in a tree, having stolen the clothes of the unmarried gopis – his devotees. The attributes of his feathered headdress and blue-black skin tone, together with his behaviour, signify it is Krishna. The plain watercolour is lifted by an ornamental silver decoration on his arms and torso that signifies jewellery. This technique, which is achieved using parallel lines of colloidal tin that creates a silver sheen, is also used to indicate the gopis' hair adornment and jewellery.

### Summary

The Images 1, 2 and 3 all depict Krishna the Hindu god in ways that reveal his character as a likeable prankster and lover. Despite that they are in different styles and include more or less additional information in the form of background scenery or other objects, nevertheless all of the images provide a focus for the viewer to reflect upon Krishna, a prankster yet a divine hero, the god of compassion, tenderness and love. In this way they all provide a focus for devotional practice.

Originating in the environs of Kalighat Kali Temple in Calcutta (now Kolkata), in West Bengal, this simple form of folk art was made in large quantities to be sold cheaply to pilgrims visiting Hindu temples. These designs were produced as paintings using natural colours in the period 1830- 1930 and from the 1840s they were also taken up to be produced in the form of cheaper lithographic prints.

*Krishna Steals the Garments of the Unmarried Gopis*, 1880-1890. West Bengal, India. Watercolour and tin on paper, 43.3 x 28.1 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1963/0044]





## KALI

### IMAGE 4:

As with Image 3, this is known as a 'Kalighat' style painting, it is comprised of watercolour and tin on paper and is characterised by a simple palette of strong colours; yellow, red and black. It features the Hindu goddess Kali who has blue-black toned skin and her husband Shiva who has pale skin.

This pose shows the conclusion of an episode in which Kali was rampaging out of control after destroying many demons. Shiva, her husband, fearing that she would not stop until she destroyed the world, could only think of one way to pacify her. He lay down on the battlefield so that she would have to step on him. Seeing him under her foot, Kali realized that she had gone too far, and calmed down. Her extended tongue is widely seen as expressing

embarrassment over the realization that her foot is on her husband's chest. A protruding tongue is now used commonly among Bengalis as a gesture to signal speechless embarrassment. It may also signify modesty.

*The Goddess Kali*, 1880-1890. West Bengal, India. Watercolour and tin on paper, 46 x 27.9 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1963/0016]





## Folk Tale Scene

### IMAGE 5:

This 'Court' style artwork of Rajput origin has been painted using a fine brush and valued pigments in rich colours. It is an opaque watercolour on paper that depicts a scene from a Hindu legend set in a Mughal style palace. There are coloured mythological demon style figures together with men from the higher social orders. This is indicated by their detailed costumes, decorated turbans and jewellery. The transparent robes worn over their trousers are made of muslin, a fine textile that became synonymous with the wealth generated by the Mughal Empire. Along with other textiles, muslin was traded in large quantities to Europe, Central Asia, Indonesia and Japan in the early 18th century. The patterned blinds and the carpets flung over the window ledges are other

characteristically exquisite textiles that are a mark of the wealth of the elite depicted in the image.

The rendering of angles in the architecture and use of diagonals and patterns in the tiles and paving indicate attention to perspective. But unlike Western art, where perspective was determined according to mathematical systems since the Renaissance, it is not fully successful. It does however introduce a sense of order and design in this space. Rather than a 'real' narrative image as Image 1 depicts, this has a shallow picture space contained by the rear wall and appears as if it is a theatre set for the episode in the story. It is contained within a floral motif frame.



*Unknown Rupkatha (Folk-tale) Scene, 19th century. Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 29 x 21.2 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology [1994/0873]*



## The Materials and the Techniques

The techniques of the Rajput ‘Court’ style paintings were derived from the skills and knowledge handed down and learned from the Mughal court painters who themselves originally learned from painters from the Persian court. The types of pigments used in such ‘Court’ style artworks required skillful preparation and were the result of many hours of work.

Vermilion and red lead were the most common reds. Of the many greens used, the most common was verdigris, copper chloride produced by the reaction of copper metal with salt water. Azurite (blue) and malachite (green) are particularly present in many of the Berndt Museum Collection ‘Court’ paintings.

Metallic pigments were also used, including gold in painted powder form, and a tin metal that was silver in colour.

The other painting styles, ‘Kalighat’ and ‘Pattachitra’, are of folk art origin. These were also prepared in traditional ways using pigments that required particular knowledge and skills. For example, the white used in traditional ‘Pattachitra’ painting was produced by powdering seashells and a process of refining them into a pigment.

For these more widely accessible paintings; often-times the designs or scenes were handed down from master copies and reused again and again over time to produce new artworks.

## Conclusion

This selection of artworks is from Rajput – Hindu sources; and whilst the influence of Mughal - Muslim court painters can be seen in the refined detailed ‘Court’ paintings, and the style of architecture in Image 5, the paintings are all a means for conveying information about Hindu religious themes, mythologies and folk tales. The deities Krishna and Kali have been depicted in numerous styles, but consistent across all of their images are their identifiable attributes of colour and form, recognisable no matter the level of refinement of the work.

The ubiquitous appearance of these deities across all artwork styles, so as to be available to a wide spectrum of people from the court to the marketplace and to the temple, supported the widespread communication of religious stories

and morality epics of Hindu origin through visual art. Other art forms including song, dance and performance were also means of communicating these themes.

The painters of each style were themselves highly skilled and these small artworks are the result of carefully prepared materials and extensive practice in developing their techniques.

The production of such artworks indicates a very ordered social structure existed in this time that could support their careful time consuming production.

## Resources

Learn more about Rajput and Mughal Indian painting in a lecture ‘Wonder of The Age: Master Painters of India (1100-1900)’, Sunday at The Metropolitan Museum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3blZB9XNAE>

Folk Art Styles:

Kalighat: Coming from the state of Rasagullas and Misthi - is an Indian Folk Art. It originated in the 19th Century in West Bengal in the environs of Kalighat Kali Temple at that time near, now in Kolkata (previously Calcutta).

Pattachitra: This folk art of India is sourced from the region of Odisha. See <https://indianartideas.in/blog/indian-art/a-brief-introduction-about-indian-paintings>

Anne Murphy, ‘The Mughal Court Paintings, Indian Artists and Techniques’, *Asia Society*, 2020 <https://asiasociety.org/mughal-court-paintings>

The paint materials in Indian Painting <https://www.victorialeader.com/blog/2017/10/20/patience-and-the-paint-makers>

Colour Symbolism in Hinduism <https://wou.edu/wp/exhibits/files/2015/07/hinduism.pdf>



## Year 5

### Family Portraits

The following program has been designed to align with the Western Australian Curriculum for Visual Arts for Year 5. In this project students are encouraged to reflect on the work included in the *Expressions of India* exhibition and explore how these artworks can influence their own practice. Through engaging with the artworks, students will have the opportunity to explore the role of art in different times and cultures and see how characteristics and styles can be translated into contemporary artwork. The program can be adapted to suit the needs of the classroom with the research leading to either a painting or collage project.

Students are encouraged to consider the ideas, feelings and opinions communicated in their own artwork based around the theme of family portraits. Consideration needs to be given to how final artworks will be presented to enhance their visual appeal, such as framing works on paper and/or stretching fabrics.

*Women through a Window*, 19th century. Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 30.2 x 24.2 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology [1994/0869]





# Year 5 Making and Responding

Exploration of artwork from various artists and different approaches used to communicate ideas, beliefs and opinions. (ACAVAM114)

Appreciation of the role of art from different times and cultures, and consideration of how the artist's perspective is reflected in the artwork. (ACAVAR117)

Exploration of the influences of other artists, and selection of visual art elements, materials, media and/or technologies, to enhance their own artwork. (ACAVAM115)

## IDEAS

Investigate portraiture evident in traditional Indian Art of the 19th Century. Consider the following questions when looking at these portraits.

1. Who was the subject?
2. What are they wearing?
3. What is included in the portrait that gives us a clue about their personality?
4. What colours has the artist used?

Observe the features in work such as:

- Facial features (sideways profiles, eyes and hair)
- Simplification of forms
- Borders that frame the work
- Use of pattern in borders, fabric, buildings, foliage and sky/land.
- How colour has been used

## SKILLS

Development and application of artistic techniques and processes. (ACAVAM115)

- Choose a subject (a relative or yourself)
- Consider what elements you will include in your portrait; such as objects that relate to the sitter, clothing, colours, patterns and background/foreground
- You might consider instruments, sporting equipment or a background setting that will help to communicate something about the sitter
- Draw up at least two compositional drafts for your final piece
- Consider the shape of the frame and the use of a border

## PRODUCTION

Presentation and display of artwork to enhance visual appeal/aesthetics. (ACAVAM116)

### PORTRAIT ON FABRIC

- Stretch fabric onto an embroidery hoop, consider the use of black or patterned fabric to give a tonal base to the artwork
- Draft the design on the fabric (use a white pencil if needed) and paint with acrylic paint
- The embroidery hoop can be used as a hanging device.

### COLLAGE PORTRAIT

- Using acrylic or gouache paint complete portraits with some consideration to tonal work
- Complete outlines of portraits with strong lines
- Complete the clothing using collaged sections of patterned papers
- Consider the use of paper a doily as a border.



Portrait on Fabric



Collage Portrait



# Year 8

## Tile Design



Plaster Mould for Tile Production

The application of art and design is vast and integral throughout Indian society and is evident in so many aspects of culture from textiles to architecture. The incorporation of pattern is prevalent in many cultural artefacts, with rich and varied influences from both religion and regions represented in Indian art. Evidence of Hindu, to Islamic and Middle Eastern, to Portuguese influences are apparent in this splendid diverse culture. Through exploring various designs found in architectural monuments students will have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of culture,

time and place and can observe techniques used by other artists and artisans in the creation of a design. This program has been designed around the syllabus for the Western Australian Curriculum for Year 8 Visual Arts.

## Making

### INQUIRY

Ideas and design development for art-making:

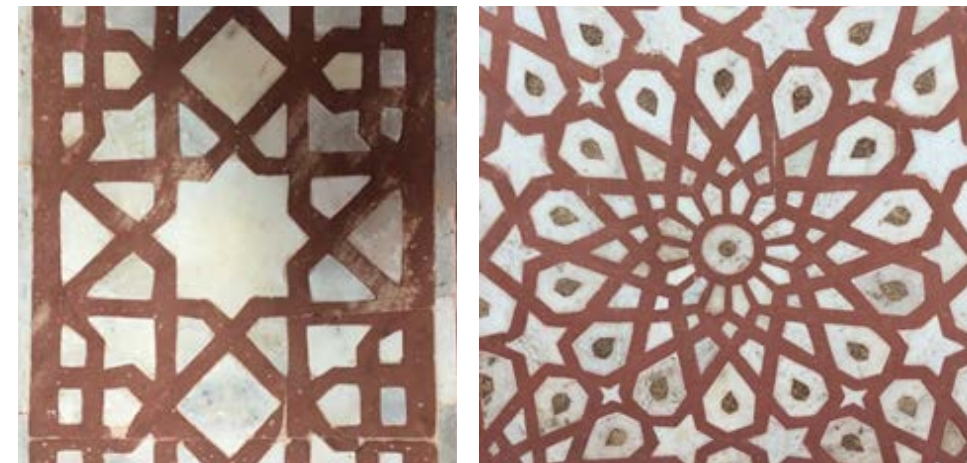
Research designs found in temples and architecture in India.

Consider buildings such as the:

- Taj Mahal in Agra
- Shaikh Salim Chisti, Fatehpur Sikri
- Golden Temple, Amaritsa

Observe symmetry and the use of shapes found in these buildings. Consider the principles of repetition, symmetry, balance and contrast.

Experiment with combining geometric shapes as well as natural forms such as plants or insects.



Details from Shaikh Salim Chisti, Fatehpur Sikri, India.

Details from Taj Mahal, Agra, India.

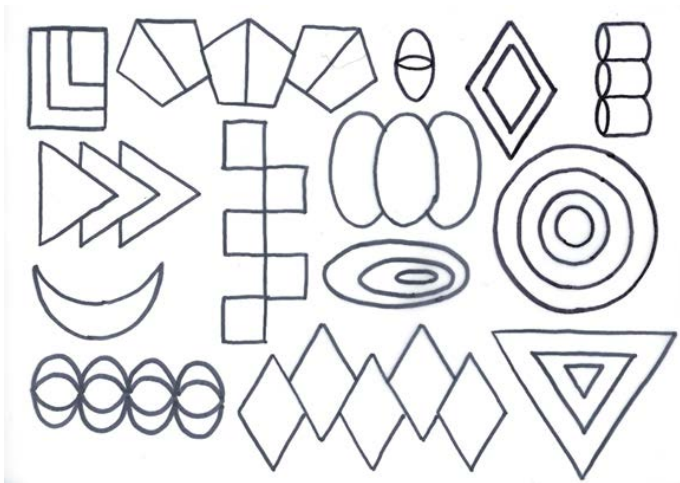




ART PRACTICE

Processes to develop and produce artwork. (ACAVAM121)  
Techniques and processes to support representation of ideas in art-making. (ACAVAM119; ACAVAM121)

- Create small thumbnails for designs
- Consider the symmetry of the design and its ability to be incorporated into a repeated pattern or in a square or rectangular tile configuration
- Explore tessellations.



Geometric Shapes



Designs from India

TWO COLOUR REDUCTION LINO PRINT

Note the colour plan on the final design.

- Use two colours and consider using coloured paper if a third colour is desired
- Carve out all areas that are to remain white and print the lightest colour
- Carve out all areas that are to remain the lightest colour and print the darkest colour.



Two Colour Reduction Lino Print



## RELIEF LINO PLATE FOR CERAMIC TILE DESIGN

- For this project the design needs to be transformed into a black and white design
- Consider that the design is positive and the remaining areas are negative
- Transfer design on to a lino plate and carve out all of the negative areas
- Roll out clay to create a tile preferably no thinner than 10 mm
- Press the tile on to the clay and apply even, firm pressure then remove carefully
- Scratch diagonal lines into the back of the tile to assist in the drying process and avoid warping of the clay. Dry slowly
- Fire and decorate.

### Lino Print Design Clay Tile



Relief Lino Plate



Lino Impression in Clay Tile



# Year 12 Visual Arts General

## Art Interpretation

WA Schools Curriculum and Standards Authority, Year 12 General Course Syllabus unit content is used as the basis for the following Art Interpretation task.

### VISUAL ANALYSIS

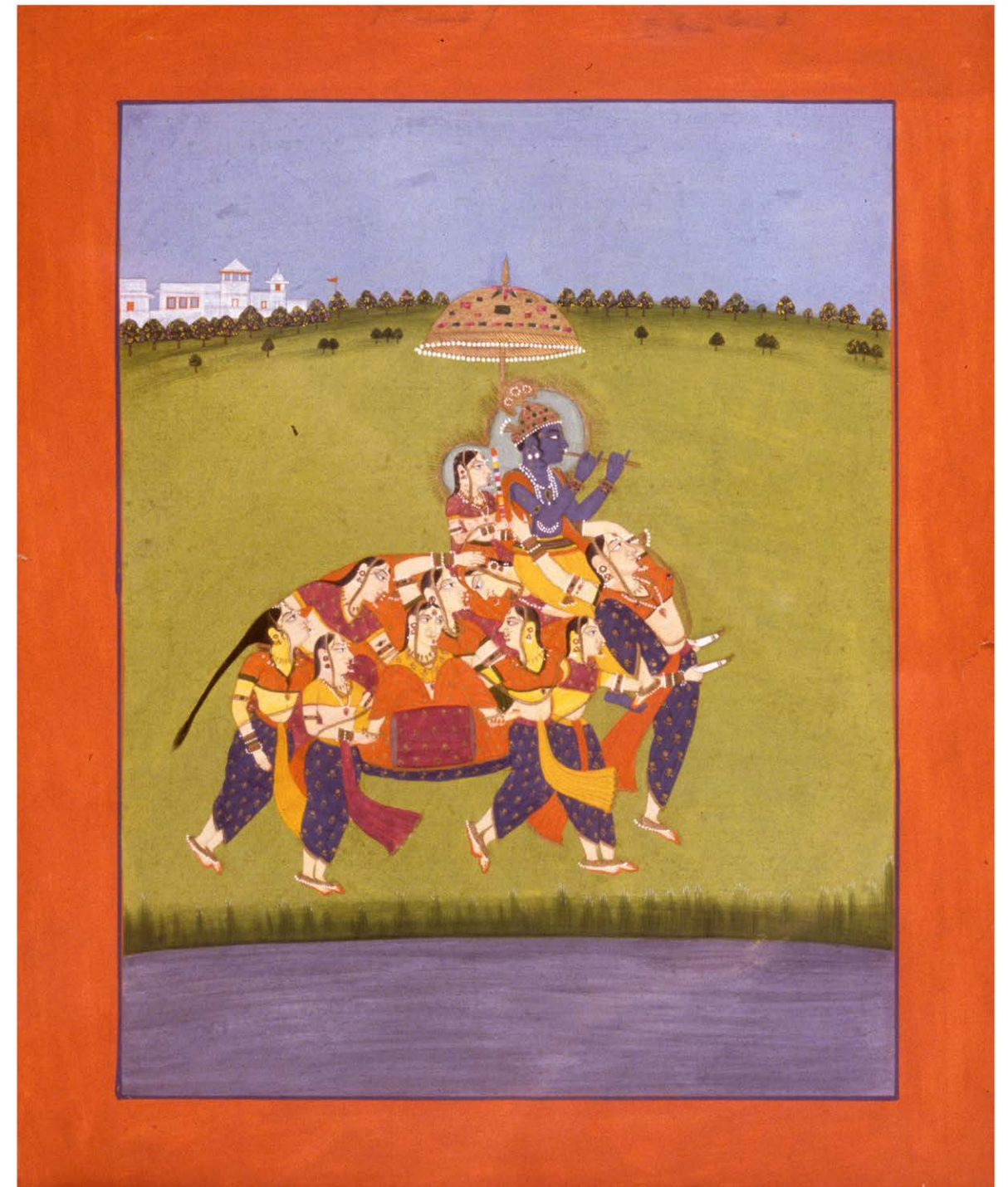
- Comment on subject matter, meaning and formal organisation – composition of artwork
- Discuss artwork referring to visual language and using art terminology

### PERSONAL RESPONSE

- Structure responses giving reasons for opinions and interpretations about artwork

### MEANING AND PURPOSE

- Identify the purpose and discuss the techniques, visual language and approach used to communicate meaning in artwork



*Krishna and Radha on Nari Kunjara - Composite Elephant Made of Gopis (Milkmaids)*, 19th century. Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 31.6 x 25.6 cm. Bequest of RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology [1994/0907]



Using Art Terminology describe in detail the artist’s use of contrast, colour, pattern and space.

CONTRAST:

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COLOUR:

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PATTERN:

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SPACE:

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Using evidence, describe what you see and provide two different interpretations of the possible meaning and/or purpose of the artwork.

1. POSSIBLE MEANING:

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2. POSSIBLE MEANING:

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## References

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/the-arts/visual-arts2#year-5-syllabus>

<https://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/home/teaching/curriculum-browser/the-arts/visual-arts2#year-8-syllabus>

<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/>

[https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/9883/Visual-Arts-Y12-Syllabus-General-GD-EST.pdf](https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/9883/Visual-Arts-Y12-Syllabus-General-GD-EST.pdf)





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Cover image: *Rama & Lakshmana, in the fight against Ravana, just outside Lanka* (detail), Indian 16th – 18th century. Opaque watercolour on paper, 28.4 x 20.2 cm. Gifted by RM & CH Berndt, Berndt Museum of Anthropology Collection [1994/0868]



**CULTURAL PRECINCT**

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