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symposium submissions



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Call for Submissions | Symposium | Showing, Telling, Seeing: Exhibiting South Asia in Britain 1900 to Now. This symposium will take place in London in 2016 and explores exhibitions as sites to provoke critical thinking about artistic exchanges between Britain and South Asia.

Application deadline: 27 Nov 2015 (12pm LDN time)

Date of symposium: 30 June & 1 July 2016

Venue: Paul Mellon Centre, London

Organised by Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Asia Art Archive in collaboration with Tate Modern.

This symposium proposes that exhibitions provide challenging and provocative sites to think about artistic exchanges and the two-way traffic between Britain and South Asia. It interrogates the lenses through which artistic production in South Asia has been framed in Britain, and argues that though these frames have often been fashioned in colonial times, they continue to shape the reception of art from South Asia in the contemporary moment. The symposium explores the legacies of such framings, and takes the exhibition as a site of transaction and transformation—and potentially disturbance and challenge—to the colonialist narrative of South Asian art.

This symposium invites contributions anchored around exhibitions of art that took place between 1900 to the present day, including proposals that describe a broader inquiry centred on art exhibitions of South Asia in Britain. Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

‘Big’ and ‘small’ exhibitions: examine both large-scale, state-sponsored events, as well as much smaller and focused art exhibitions.

Festivals and festivalisation: how have efforts—diplomatic, industrial, promotional—to export culture influenced the reception of broader art and culture?

The afterlives of exhibitions: how have exhibitions impacted art collections or become key markers of curatorial practices and exhibition display?

Mapping collaboration: the role of individual, or groups of, artists and curators in shaping exhibition histories. How can exhibitions enable us to map the cultural networks connecting Britain and South Asia?

Constructing the nation: exhibitions as nation-making projects of cartographic and narrative intent—dealing with 1947 and 1971.

Paying the piper: shifting norms of patronage through philanthropy, public policy, and the market including the role of private galleries and institutions such as the Department of Science and Art, Commonwealth Institute, and the British Council.

Crafting tradition: what roles have ‘tradition’ and ‘craft’ played in framing exhibitions pertaining to South Asia?

The symposium is equally interested in issues of theory and practice, such as comparative trajectories of curatorial and institutional practice; the specificities of site in terms of geography and type; exhibitions as collection-building vehicles; language, translation, and circulation of texts; constructions of nation; South Asia in international discourses; comparative studies from regions

outside South Asia and Britain; audience-building and issues of reception; the role of the market as site and agent; sites of knowledge production; and case studies critically reviewing the influence of key exhibitions, institutions, and agents.

To submit:

Please submit by 27 Nov 2015 to efleming@paul-mellon-centre.ac.uk listing 'Showing, Telling, Seeing' in the subject line with:

1. A 200-word abstract written in English
2. Short curriculum vitae with complete e-mail, phone, and mailing address

Incomplete or late submissions will not be considered. Final papers will be delivered in English. There will be some travel and accommodation funding for speakers.

This is the first event of **London, Asia**, a collaborative project organised by the Paul Mellon Centre and Asia Art Archive. The symposium will be followed by a public panel discussion on Sat 2 July 2016 at Tate Modern to coincide with the 'Bhupen Khakhar' exhibition.

Paul Mellon Centre is an educational charity committed to supporting original research into the history of British art and architecture of all periods. It is the sister institution to the Yale Center for British Art, with which it collaborates closely, and is part of Yale University.

Image: 'The Other Story', Hayward Gallery, London (1989). Courtesy of Rasheed Araeen Archive at Asia Art Archive

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