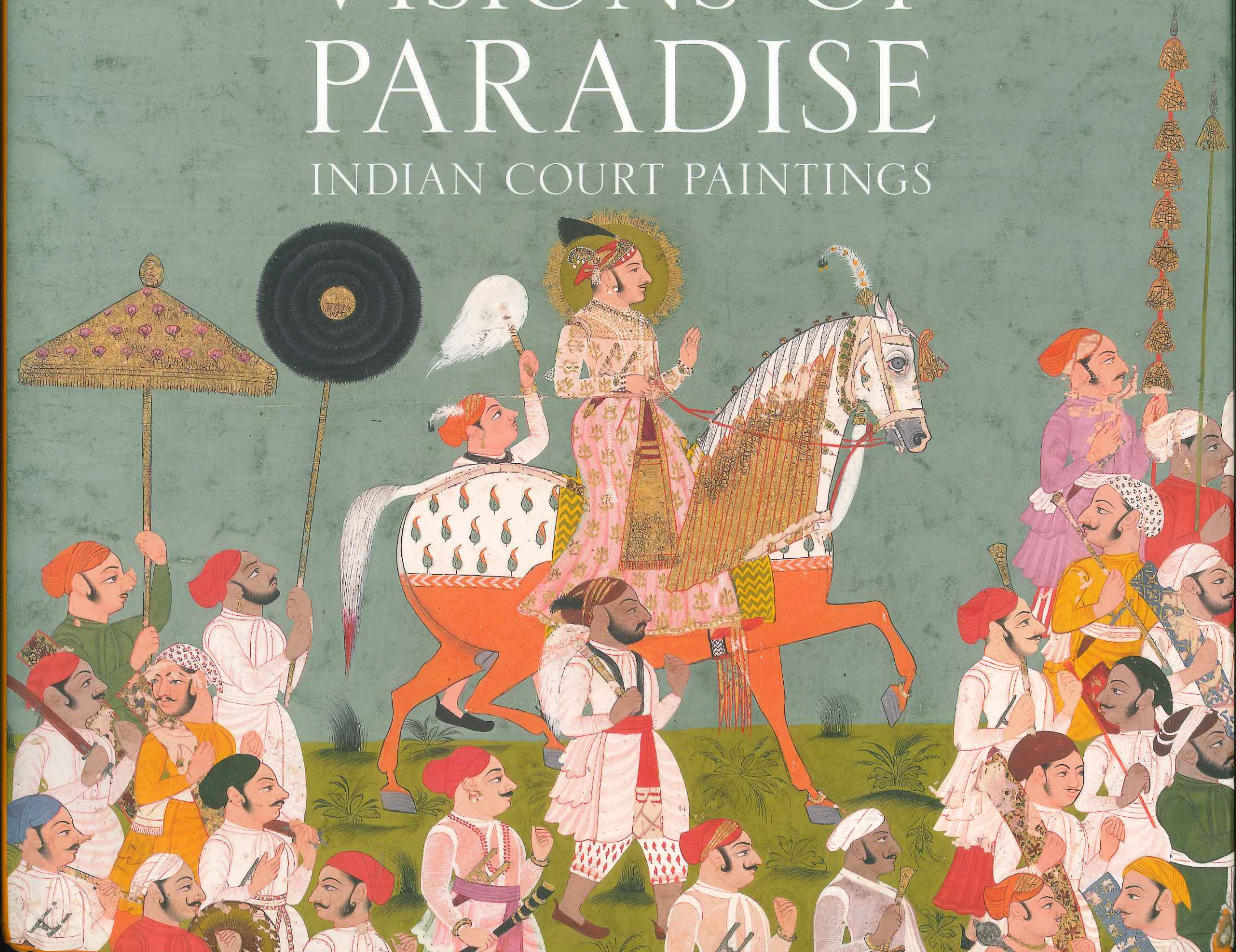


# VISIONS OF PARADISE

INDIAN COURT PAINTINGS





VISIONS OF  
PARADISE  
INDIAN COURT PAINTINGS

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# THE JOYS OF BONDING

*Dipti Khera*

## COLOURED IN THE MOODS OF SPRING

In the eighteenth-century Udaipur painting *Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas garden*, c. 1708–1710 (opposite; p. 164), a band of lush variegated foliage bounds red flowers in full bloom, and a square of tall, tapering cypresses border the portraits of the king and his sixteen nobles. The men of the court are shown playing *Phag* or *Holi* (the spring festival of colours), and throwing the red powder of *gulal* from their seated positions on a white ground. The resultant concentric squares in hues of green, red and white concentrate the viewer's gaze on the centre of the page, underscoring the designed formality of the seated collective, and the painting itself. The eyes, however, soon deviate to admire the heaps of coloured powder and trays of fruit, the flowing fountains, the buff-pink coloured wall, the double-tiered tent and, underneath it, the portrait of the bearded king, Amar Singh II (r. 1698–1710), presiding over his assembly. The assorted painterly effects of the trees and flowers, and the distinctive features of individual portraits, deepen the immersion into the picture's multi-textured

surface. The painterly contrast of the red frottage of the *gulal* with the thick red blobs of the flowers animates the dryness of the powder and its spread on the ground and in the air. The graphic and painterly effects intertwine to render the moods of a spring garden party, composing the king and his nobles into a collective in an iconic image that lingers in our imagination. The eighteenth-century painters of Udaipur excelled in such depictions of the *bhava* (moods) of courtly assemblies.

Udaipur, with its lime-washed white palaces overlooking the lakes, was established around 1559 as the capital of the court of Mewar.<sup>1</sup> As a site, it evokes the imaginary of an oasis within the dry and desert landscape of north-western India. For at least the past three centuries, Udaipur has captured the gaze of visitors from across the world. The city's early modern artists, though, were the first to give form to their admiration for the valley's lakes, palaces and gardens. In grand-scale works, larger in size than earlier, smaller manuscripts and portraits, which could be held in a single hand, these eighteenth-century paintings depicting moods of courtly places invite our gaze to wander. On the backs of



these paintings, scribes of the Udaipur court, in addition to identifying the portraits, often noted the names of artists and the moods of depicted places, events and seasons.

The depictions of pleasurable parties can seem deceptively simple, and scholarship, grounded in nineteenth-century historical accounts like British colonial agent James Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829–32), has viewed mimetic images of eighteenth-century decadence as themselves decadent. This essay instead underscores the powerful role of practices of pleasure and moods of joy, and explores representations of courtly sociability among sophisticated urbane men.<sup>2</sup> Painted descriptions of Udaipur's kings performing the prescribed courtly ethic of pleasure reveal powerful artistic ruminations on the materials, the places, and the atmospheres that shaped joyful immersion.<sup>3</sup> The desires of kings – to bind men into bonds of joy – surface in the pigments on paper. In turn, at work are the efficacious desires of images of pleasure.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE PLEASURES OF INTIMACY

In pre-modern Indian paintings, chronicles and poems, gardens were favoured aesthetic spaces where kings and connoisseurs assembled to bond over poetry, philosophy, and the arts.<sup>5</sup> Friends and associates would perform an act of 'sitting together', sharing perfumes and food in scented spaces.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the scribe's inscription on the back of *Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas garden* notes that the gathering was held in the pavilion of the garden of Sarbat Vilas.<sup>7</sup>

The particulars of a joyful sensorium in mid eighteenth-century Udaipur were rooted in an analytic of pleasure performed in India's earlier courtly worlds. *Kama*, which literally means pleasure or desire, was not an isolated practice of sex, but the making of an aesthetically encoded world of the eponymous Hindu God of Love and of the



urbane man, a *rasika*, the ideal courtly connoisseur of this 'Kama world' on Earth. A 'properly lived, worldly' life by kings included 'proper enjoyments' of material things like wines, perfumes, garlands and jewellery.<sup>8</sup> Consumption likewise refined and defined men in courtly sultanate and imperial Mughal circles, as Persian conduct manuals such as the *Ni'matnāma* and *Mirzānāma* advised.<sup>9</sup> The education of a *mirza*, the cultivated connoisseur, enlists the education of the *rasika* of Sanskritic worlds, but also speaks specifically to the emergence of new nobility by the late seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> To fashion themselves as powerful and ethical statesmen, these elite men strived to cultivate all five senses, and refine their bodily gestures and emotions.

Like the collective partaking in visual and olfactory delights, listening to music centrally shaped convivial settings. In the early eighteenth-century portrait, *Maharana Amar Singh II listening to music at night*, c. 1700, the painter depicts the king and his close associates being entertained by *kalavants* – master singers, musicians and instrumentalists who are seen singing, playing a variety of drums and string instruments, and clapping.<sup>11</sup> These portraits of *kalavants*, whose names and faces Andrew Topsfield has tracked across the corpus of Udaipur artworks, show that musicians who created sonic pleasures were extremely valued for their art.<sup>12</sup> They suggest intense collaborations between scribes and artists of the visual and material arts during this time period, but also a special intimacy between musicians and patrons within restricted social spaces.

The moods and intimacies of such assemblies equally presented the potential for transgression of boundaries. The Mughal-era *mehfil* (courtly assemblies) of elite male patrons and musicians, as Katherine Schofield has shown, were highly constructed liminal spaces in practice and in representation.<sup>13</sup> Musical recitals enabled elite men to be affected by sounds and melodies, to become immersed

in *bhava* (moods and emotions), and to be ultimately transformed into adept *rasikas* (connoisseurs) who could discern *rasa* (aesthetic tastes). The pressure to maintain boundaries in reality likely motivated artists and poets to make their descriptive portraits all the more prescriptive by way of designing the setting. In *Maharana Amar Singh II listening to music at night*, swirling strokes of white pigment on the fountain bed evoke the ambient sound of rippling water that animates the musical night. The painted moon reinforces the symmetrical setting, and the progression of the sky from a pale green-blue hue to a layered white, and finally to a deeper blue tone with evenly dotted white stars, creates the effect of a white marble terrace bathed in soothing moonlight. As the painted atmosphere of the king's *mehfil* was rendered ideal, so was Maharana Amar Singh II praised as the ideal *rasika*.

Portrayals of Udaipur's eighteenth-century kings as connoisseurs iterated the social space of musical assemblies, but also moods and the possibilities of reaching beyond boundaries. The painter Deva's depiction and the scribe's description of Jagat Singh II's (r. 1734–1751) gathering in the palace of Kacheri Mahal (*Maharana Jagat Singh II and his sardars watching a nautch*, 1748 [p. 128]) references the real space: a two-storeyed palace with three bays, a painted elephant frieze and a shallow tank designed from a singular block of marble without joints.<sup>14</sup> The placement of the king in the central bay and others on either side of the central axis provides a semblance of symmetry. The painting, however, also gestures towards the potential of impending intimacies. A series of thick, alternating, orange-coloured wavy lines denote the coloured water that fills the tank; its painterly effect is starkly distinct from the flatly applied pigment seen in the architecture, and the fine brushwork seen in the attendees' portraits and the gold-coloured costume of the dancer. This perceptual difference registered on the



**JAI RAM (attributed to)**  
*Maharana Sangram Singh II receiving*  
*Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur*  
*feasting in camp c. 1732*  
 (AS100-1980)

painting's surface makes the tank's position in the centre all the more prominent. The tank separates the king from the performers, and the boldness of colour and brushstrokes invites an imagining of wild play in the royal assembly, a transformation in the moods of the musical night, and a possible transgression of depicted boundaries.

**THE PLEASURES OF DIPLOMACY**

The creation of beautiful and appealing moods for political diplomacy were also imperative in many eighteenth-century Udaipur paintings. The shifting political landscape after Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's (r. 1658–1707) death engendered a new pressure on regional courts to forge new friendships and keep older allies loyal.<sup>15</sup> New networks, like the 1708 alliance between the Udaipur, Amber (later Jaipur) and Jodhpur kings, were directly related to renewed claims over regional territories.<sup>16</sup> The three kings came together again in 1734 at Hurda (near Ajmer in central Rajasthan) to form a political alliance against the Maratha states, who were looking to expand their authority as the Mughals steadily weakened.<sup>17</sup> A painting thought to have been made by the Udaipur artist Jai Ram between 1728 and 1734 (*Maharana Sangram Singh II receiving Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur feasting in camp*, c. 1732) commemorates one such tented durbar (ruler's court) of diplomacy, when Udaipur ruler Sangram Singh II (r. 1710–1734) and Jaipur ruler Jai Singh (r. 1699–1743) came together.

The lavish tents of Mughal India mediated the mobility, sovereignty and riches of emperors and kings.<sup>18</sup> Eighteenth-century kings, key participants in itinerant Mughal durbars, proclaimed their sovereignty through similarly coded symbolic and material use of tented apparatus.<sup>19</sup> The tented world depicted in Jai Ram's painting displays an ambience worthy of the pleasures of both kings, each an astute connoisseur in his own right. An elaborate red

tent arrangement comprising a large central chamber is surrounded by a cluster of smaller tents, emphasising the space inhabited by the kings and their close confidants. While the red colour of the tent on the outside was 'strictly guarded as a royal privilege', the interior material often varied.<sup>20</sup> Jai Ram depicts the interior lining to evoke the *kalamkari* (cotton, painted mordant and resist-dyed) *kanats* (tent panels) associated with the Amber-Jaipur court since at least the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> The lobed niches with flowering stems reference designs based on poppy flowers, red hibiscus, red roses and other species. The limited intact examples of Amber-Jaipur tentage attest that elaborate tents, reserved for the innermost royal chamber, could include vertical panels with individual designs.<sup>22</sup> Such lavish *kalamkari* creations evoked the sights and scents of flowers and gardens transferred onto the cotton cloth by skilful dyeing. The painter Jai Ram's descriptive rendering of the art of *kalamkari* illustrates how the painted cloth would have enveloped the interior.

This array of exquisitely painted descriptive details offers a visual catalogue of persons and preparations devoted to the camp party. We gain a palpable sense of a broader landscape and an implied itinerancy. The scalloped edges of a slate-grey stream on the horizon echo the sway of tent eaves captured in curved outlines. Some members of the entourage rest and converse, while others cook delicacies in a large pot and skewer kebabs on the grill, suggestive of aroma and anticipation filling the air. In introducing a select few painterly details, the artist denies that the image can be read as a document. Tiny clumps of petals are placed in trays near the two kings and on platters made of leaves in front of the other prominent courtly members. The brushwork, in tiny strokes of watery gouache in pastel shades, is discernible only due to a vignette of two attendants outside, who are shown fluffing a similar-looking pile of petals,





INDIAN

*Maharana Sangram Singh II attending the feeding of crocodiles at Jagmandir c. 1720 (AS88-1980)*

likely for a fresh supply to the durbar party.

The image of the freshly scented tent with panels of flowers in full bloom suggests the Jaipur court's desire to assemble a world into its ambit.<sup>23</sup> The described *kalamkari* tent functions in the image as the key historical trace that shaped the mood of the dialogue. Tents marked conspicuous consumption, and their visual impact and memory often mattered more than their function.<sup>24</sup> The scribe labels Jai Ram's painting as a *pano* (picture) of the two kings seated in the '*kherada re dera*' ('the tent at Kheroda'). An additional scribal note on the back of the painting reinforces the description of the tent, which likely suggests the meeting took place in Kheroda, on the outskirts of Udaipur.<sup>25</sup> The painting suggests the Jaipur contingent carried an elaborately painted, dyed and stitched *kalamkari* tent to pitch a beautifully scented, tented world that could overpower any collective. Jai Ram's depiction invites an imagining of the world inside the durbar associated with Jaipur's textiles, rendered by the eye, palette and style of an Udaipur-based artist.

The gathering of assemblies on frontiers and in gardens depicted in such paintings suggests a life of intentional itinerancy and immersive interludes. In the image of one such garden party (*Maharana Jagat Singh II celebrating the Festival of Flowers in the Gulab Bari Garden, 1750* [p. 167]), the artist Raghunath combines the joys of spring and the mobility of kings. Both the painter and scribe make note of the king's arrival with a small group comprising his brothers and sons in the *Gulab Bari* (garden of roses).<sup>26</sup> A red tent delineates the bottom register of the painting and the depicted garden. The group of musicians and dancers, dressed as the Hindu gods Shiva and Parvati, echo the sound and evoke the scent that made assemblies pleasurable.

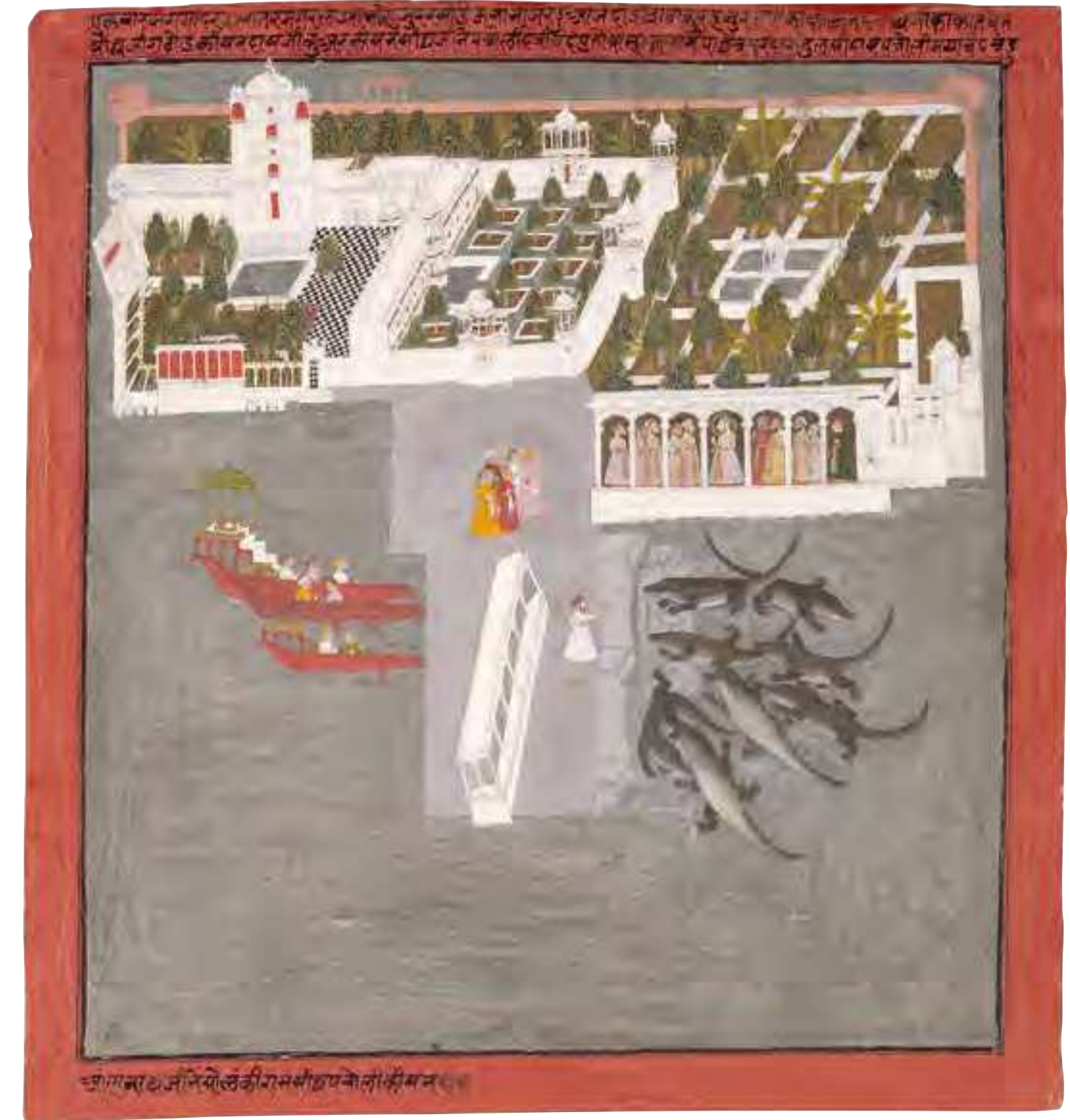
The painted garden of roses engulfs Jagat Singh II's assembly in the same way the red tinge of powdered colours

engulfed Amar Singh II's courtly community in *Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas gardens*. Almost all figures, including the king and his courtly party, even the attendants and dancers, are shown wearing thick pink garlands of roses that seem to colour the complete artwork: the rose shrubs in horizontal rows, the rose-pink cushion against which the king rests and the rose-pink robe of the standing attendant. Yet, as we closely inspect each row of bushes, the circular swirls of two shades of pink are revealed in each flower and the impression of a rose pattern overpowers.

Paintings featuring joyful assemblies of courtly communities thus become less historical documents of real parties and pleasures, as previous scholarship has understood them, than aesthetic and material means of merging the real and ideal moods of places, and thereby the real and desired bonds among courtly communities.

THE 'WORLDS OF PLEASURE' IN LAKE-PALACES  
Lakes distinguished Udaipur's pleasures. Later painters in Sangram Singh II's workshop built upon the images of painterly gardens, but also sought to shift the gaze to the city's lakefront and lake-pavilions. They portrayed Sangram Singh II within the environs of the lake palace of Jagmandir, built on Udaipur's Lake Pichola. Multiple paintings reinforced the compositional choice of depicting the Jagmandir Island in its entirety, thereby creating a profound association between the ruler's portrait and the lake-palace's imaginary.<sup>27</sup>

In *Maharana Sangram Singh II attending the feeding of crocodiles at Jagmandir*, a painting dated to c. 1720, the compositional emphasis associates Sangram Singh II directly with the building and gardens of the Kunwarpada Mahal (Palace for the Princes) in the Jagmandir palace, which he expanded during his reign.<sup>28</sup> The painter plays



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*A Maharana of Mewar attending the feeding of crocodiles* c. 1720–1740 (AS91-1984)



with scale: the king and his courtiers are portrayed in an enlarged pavilion, and in front of it we see a group of crocodiles painted in a gigantic, highly manipulated size. In the silvery lake at the bottom register, we see the hungry reptiles leap towards the chunks of meat offered by the lone attendant on the edge of the platform. A fragmentary drawing, *A Maharana of Mewar attending the feeding of crocodiles*, c. 1720–1740, though not completely identifiable, reveals a finely rendered vignette of a bare-chested Udaipur king in an intimate gathering and the tails of ravenous reptiles in front of a lake pavillion. Such play with scale and the vivid depiction of the reptiles forge the pictorial pathways by which painters and courtly communities

recalled places. Both the sites and the paintings of lake-palaces are not simply marked by the portraits of patrons, but rather the moods of the memories associated with places and paintings emerge to the forefront.

The lake-palace of Jagmandir becomes the basis for architectural expansion in and around Udaipur's lakes.<sup>29</sup> Just like the flowers and colours of spring were reinforced as sensory elements and atmospheres that enabled bonding in garden assemblies, during the mid eighteenth century, Udaipur's poets, painters and architects deepened the role of water as a material and aesthetic medium in shaping pleasure and politics.

The Udaipur court poet Nandram composed a 405-verse poem, *Jagvilasa*, to commemorate the three-day inauguration ceremony and celebration of the Jagniwas lake-palace that commenced on 20 January 1746.<sup>30</sup> Nandram's poetry reveals Sangram Singh II's successor Jagat Singh II's desire to build the most impressive lake-palace in mid eighteenth century Udaipur, to foster affective bonds with his friends and assert authority over the material exchange of gifts, foods and drinks. Its introductory cantos highlight how the Udaipur king compares the location for his new lake-palace to that of the Jagmandir lake-palace on Lake Pichola, where Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658) was thought to have stayed.<sup>31</sup> Nandram's recalling of Jagmandir's history may suggest seventeenth-century Mewar-Mughal competition<sup>32</sup> – or more likely a popular tale that Jagat Singh II decided to build the Jagniwas lake-palace because his father, Sangram Singh II, denied him permission to visit the Jagmandir.<sup>33</sup>

Paintings thus persuasively inaugurated the representation of localised spaces of pleasure at Udaipur, and the city's poets followed suit.<sup>34</sup> *Jagvilasa* may be translated as 'Jagat Singh's delights', or the 'pleasures offered by Jagniwas', or the '*jaga of vilasa*', the 'world of pleasure'

that the poet presents as an idealisation of real gatherings in the Jagniwas lake-palace.<sup>35</sup> Just like Amar Singh II's artists deployed the joys of spring to bind the king's courtly community, the poetic representations of Jagat Singh II within Jagniwas reveal the connoisseur-king and his court enacting historically contingent aesthetic ideals of pleasure to form the Udaipur political community.

### THE POWER OF JOY

The focus on pleasure, assemblies and moods enables us to see the dynamic communities of courtly men, allies and adversaries formed around the experience of all kinds of joys – corporeal, sensorial, material, spatial, visual and sonic. The poet Nandram captures the role of pleasure in one resonant poetic phrase. He notes that at the Jagniwas lake-palace, the king Jagat Singh II 'rules with joy (*sukha so rajata rana*)', or, more precisely, by generating emotions and experiences of joy for his community. The poet tells us this is where 'the king and his companions together find an ocean of joy (*sabhi sanga sukha men taha sukha ko sagara paya*)'.<sup>36</sup>

The painting depicting Amar Singh II playing the spring festival of colours with his sixteen nobles (*Maharana Amar Singh II's Holi durbar in the Sarvaritu Vilas gardens*) is noted as an effective document. Its extraordinarily copious inscription includes the names of all the courtiers and *kalavants* and the positions of the two unnamed *carans* (poets) who sang royal histories and praises.<sup>37</sup> The position of the names matches the seating arrangement seen on the front, reinstating Amar Singh II's recent rearrangement of the hierarchical positions of his court nobles. The painter composes the courtly community as aesthetically unitary, and the clarity and tactility of the pigments and colours demand slow and close viewing. Viewers in effect become beholders, like the represented

*rasikas* (connoisseurs).

The efficacy of Amar Singh II's *Holi* painting lay in its potential to transform the contemporary mood of Udaipur's politics – to colour the courtly community in one hue and hold it together within inescapable layers of lush boundaries. Such artistic choices and painterly deliberations on the moods of assemblies created effective, rather than reflective, imaginings of a unified polity, revealing in turn the potential for enchanted bonding with and within the paintings.



## NOTES

### VISIONS OF PARADISE (pp. xx–xx)

1. Rajputana means ‘Land of the Rajputs’ and was a region in north-west India that included many of the Rajput kingdoms. Today it mainly makes up the present-day Indian state of Rajasthan. See Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria: A collection acquired through the Felton Bequests’ Committee*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1980, p. 7.
2. M. S. Randhawa & John Kenneth Galbrait, *Indian painting: The scene, themes and location*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969, p. 66.
3. *ibid.* p. 67.
4. Trees and plants revered by Hindus as sacred include the *tulsi* (holy basil), *pipal* (sacred fig), *bilva* (Indian bael), *vata* (banyan), *amra* (mango), *nim* (lotus), coconut, and *kusa* (sacred grass). See Captain A. H. Bingley, *Handbook on Rajputs*, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi, Madras, 2006, p. 145.
5. Randhawa & Galbrait, p. 67
6. The Jaipur court was known as Amber from the fourteenth century to 1727. In that year, a new capital was built and named Jayapura, then the kingdom was renamed Jaipur.
7. Babur ruled several kingdoms as he moved from Central Asia to India: Ferghana (1494–1497), Samarkand (1497–1498), Ferghana (1498–1500), Samarkand (1500–1501), Kabul (1504–1526), Samarkand (1511–1512) and finally, Mughal India (1526–1530). For more about Babur’s conquests, see xxxxx. <<Jim: Do you have any suggestions here?
8. Dara Shukoh, *The confluence of the two seas*, or *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, is a book on comparative religion authored by Dara Shukoh (1615–59). It was one of the earliest works to explore both the diversity of religions and a unity of Islam, Hinduism and other religions. The book was authored as a short treatise in Persian in 1654–55.
9. The *Bhagavata Purana* is a chronical of the avatars or incarnations of Vishnu. Books ten and eleven outline his eighth incarnation as Krishna.

10. Topsfield, p. 9.
11. Terence McInerney, *Divine Pleasures: Painting from India’s Rajput courts*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2016, p. 18.
12. Topsfield p. 9.
13. Randhawa & Galbrait, p. 67.
14. James Tod, *Annals and antiquities of Rajasthan*, vol. 1, The society of the resuscitation of Indian literature, Calcutta, 1902, p. 434.
15. *ibid.* p. 138.
16. Randhawa & Galbrait, p. 75.
17. *Gopika* are the female form of *gopi* cowherders and were famous for their unconditional devotion to Krishna, as described in the *Bhagavata Purana*.
18. Captain C.J. Brookes, Captain C. J., *History of Mewar*, Lewis Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1859, p. 38.

### THE JOYS OF BONDING (pp. xx–xx)

1. G. H. R. Tillotson, *The Rajput Palaces: The Development of an Architectural Style, 1450–1750*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999, p. 88.
2. On seventeenth-century assemblies and the role of painting, see Molly Emma Aitken, ‘The Laud Rāgamālā album, Bikaner, and the sociability of subimperial painting’, *Archives of Asian Art*, vol. 63, no. 1, 2013, pp. 27–58.
3. For a discussion on Holi depictions as artistic ‘rumination on the act of painting’, see Debra Diamond, ‘Holi in the Zenana: genre, style and sociability’, in *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting*, Molly Emma Aitken (ed.), Marg Publications, 2017, pp. 100–115. I thank Debra Diamond for discussions on this topic.
4. Hannah Baader & Ittai Weinryb, ‘Images at work’, *Representations*, vol. 133, no. 1, February 2016, pp. 1–19.
5. Daud Ali & Emma J. Flatt, ‘Introduction’, in Daud Ali & Emma J. Flatt (eds), *Garden and Landscape Practices in Precolonial India: Histories from the Deccan*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2012, pp. 1–17.

6. Emma J. Flatt, ‘Sitting Together: A Practice of Friendship in Indo-Persian Courtly Societies’, unpublished conference paper, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, May 2011.
7. Andrew Topsfield, ‘Court painting at Udaipur: art under the patronage of the maharanas of Mewar’, *Artibus Asiae. Supplementum*, vol. 44, Artibus Asiae Publishers, Zurich, 2002, pp. 128–37. Amar Singh II’s innovative artist, called the ‘Stipple Master’, is believed to be the artist of this painting. See Catherine Glynn, ‘The “Stipple Master”’, in *Masters of Indian Painting*, vol. 2, B. N. Goswamy, Milo Cleveland Beach & Eberhard Fischer (eds), vol. 2, Artibus Asiae Publishers, Zurich, 2011, pp. 515–30.
8. Daud Ali, ‘Rethinking the history of the Kāma world in early India’, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2011, pp. 1–13.
9. Katherine Butler Brown, ‘If music be the food of love: masculinity and eroticism in the Mughal “mehfil”’, in Francesca Orsini (ed), *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 61–86.
10. Rosalind O’Hanlon, ‘Manliness and imperial service in Mughal North India’, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1999, pp. 47–93.
11. For inscription, see Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, pp. 100. For re-evaluation of the portrait’s identification as the 12th-century Delhi king Prithvi Raj Chauhan, and not Amar Singh II, see Cynthia Talbot, *The Last Hindu Emperor: Prithvi Raj Chauhan and the Indian Past, 1200–2000*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016, pp. 178–82.
12. Andrew Topsfield, ‘The Kalvants on their durrīe: portraits of Udaipur court musicians 1680–1730’, in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, Rosemary Crill, Andrew Topsfield & Susan Stronge (eds), Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 2004, pp. 249–63.
13. Katherine Butler Schofield, ‘Learning to taste the emotions: The Mughal rasika’, in *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India*, Francesca Orsini & Katherine Butler Schofield (eds), Open Book Publishers, Cambridge, 2015, pp. 407–21.

14. For inscription, see Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, p. 100.
15. Rosalind O’Hanlon, ‘Cultural pluralism, empire and the state in early modern South Asia – a review essay’, *Indian Economic Social History Review*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2007, p. 368.
16. See Molly Emma Aitken, ‘Portraits, gift giving and the Rajput alliance of 1708’, in *The Ananda-Vana of Indian Art: Dr. Anand Krishna Felicitation Volume*, Naval Krishna & Manu Krishna (eds), Indica Books & Abhidha Prakashan, Varanasi, 2004, pp. 355–66. Also, Sonika Soni, ‘Glories of the Suratkhana: two centuries of painting at the Jaipur Court’, in G. H. R. Tillotson and Mrinalini Venkateswaran (eds), *Painting & Photography at the Jaipur Court*, Niyogi Books, New Delhi, 2016, especially pp. 18–20.
17. Rima Hooja, *A History of Rajasthan*, Rupa & Co, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 660–61.
18. Peter Alford Andrews, ‘The Generous Heart or the Mass of Clouds: the court tents of Shahjahan’, *Muqarnas Online*, vol. 4, no. 1, January 1986, pp. 149–65.
19. The contemporaneous ‘Lal Dera’ tent of the Rajput kings of Jodhpur was used for one of the diplomatic meetings noted above. See Peter Alfred Andrews, ‘The Lal Dera in the tradition of Indian tentage’, in Karni Jasol (ed), *Peacock in the Desert: The Royal Arts of Jodhpur, India*, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2017, pp. 121–136. Also, Zirwat Chowdhury, ‘An Imperial Mughal tent and mobile sovereignty in eighteenth-century Jodhpur’, *Art History*, vol. 38, no. 4, September 2015, pp. 668–81.
20. Andrews, ‘The Generous Heart or The Mass of Clouds’, p. 150.
21. Rahul Jain & Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, *Textiles & Garments at the Jaipur Court*, Niyogi Books, New Delhi, 2016. I thank Sylvia Houghteling for discussions on textiles in Mughal India.
22. *ibid.*, pp. 75–8 & pp. 134–136.



23. The Jaipur association seen in the depicted durbar becomes even more significant when compared with Jai Ram's painting of the two kings meeting in the Jagmandir lake-palace. See Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, pp. 160–161, fig. 139.
24. Andrews, 'The Generous Heart or The Mass of Clouds', p. 163.
25. I am grateful to Dalpat Rajpurohit and Prem Rajpurohit for their generous discussion on this inscription.
26. For inscription, see Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, pp. 161–62.
27. Andrew Topsfield, 'Jagmandir and the other royal palaces in Udaipur painting', in Dipti Khera & Raju Mansukhani (eds), *The City within a City – Volume I: Jagmandir on Lake Pichola*, Penguin Enterprise, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 117–41.
28. For the inscription on the red border on the painting see Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, p. 70.
29. For a brief history of the building of lake-palaces in Udaipur and beyond, see Dipti Khera, 'Lakes within lake-palaces: a material history of pleasure in 18th-century India', in *Liquescent: Spatializing Water in Global South Asia, 1500–2000*, Sugata Ray & Venugopal Maddipati (eds), Routledge, New Delhi, forthcoming 2018.
30. I thank Dr. Prem Rajpurohit for transcribing the manuscript copy of the *Jagvilasa*, Rajasthan Oriental Research Institute, Udaipur, accession no. 2216. All translations are mine.
31. See *Jagvilasa*, verse 7, in Dipti Khera, 'Jagvilasa: picturing worlds of pleasure and power in 18th-century Udaipur painting' in Molly Emma Aitken (ed.), *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting*, Marg Publications, Mumbai, 2017, p. 74.
32. Mewar's 17th-century historical literature retold the court's illustrious past in the context of growing Mughals power and rival kings in the imperial service. See, Cynthia Talbot, 'Becoming Turk the Rajput way: conversion and identity in an Indian warrior narrative', *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2009, pp. 211–43.
33. Kaviraj Shymaldas, Virvinod: Mevār kā Itihās, vol. 3, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1986, p. 1233.
34. Though we may be missing key texts by Udaipur poets that make architecture an object of affection.
35. Khera, 'Jagvilasa: picturing worlds of pleasure and power in 18th-century Udaipur painting', pp. 74–87.
36. See *Jagvilasa*, verse 204 and 207.
37. For inscription, see Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, p. 128.

BEYOND THE IMAGINARY (pp. xx–xx)

1. Art historians have often commented on the power of male portraits to reveal personality. For a summary of the arguments on the transcendental nature of Mughal portraiture see Krista Hall Gulbransen, 'Reassessing the origins of the portrait genre in Bundi: A case study in Northern Indian artistic exchange', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 77, no. 2, p. 143.
2. Notice how Jaswant Singh's right hand is raised as if in rhythm to the melody (*raga*) being performed.
3. For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Molly Emma Aitken, 'Pardah and portrayal: Rajput women as subjects, patrons, and collectors', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 62, no. 2, 2000, pp. 267–271. For the relation between pleasure, power and painting see Dipti Khera, 'Jagvilasa: Picturing worlds of pleasure and power in 18th-century Udaipur painting', in Molly E. Aitken (ed.), *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting*, Marg Publications, Mumbai, 2016, pp. 74–87.
4. Inscribed on the back in Persian script is 'bahadur jaswant sang' ('The Brave Jaswant Singh'); in *Nagari* script: 'jasut si[n]gh ji raja bikaner ka ri chabi majal ki' (Painting of Jaswant Singhji Raja of Bikaner [at a musical] assembly). The *Nagari* inscription inaccurately identifies Jaswant Singh's kingdom as Bikaner. See Andrew Topsfield, *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 1980.
5. Sylvia Houghteling's nuanced study of textiles at the Mughal court reveals how muslin, wool and tie-dyed fabrics were valued for sensory qualities and were used by rulers to make political statements. See 'The Emperor's humbler clothes: Textures of courtly dress in seventeenth-century South Asia', *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 47, 2017, pp. 91–116.
6. The incense burner is probably filled with benzoin resin (*sambrani*) which is often used in Hindu rituals. Its fumes are known to calm the nerves and induce tranquillity. Traditionally, women also used *sambrani* steam as a perfume on wet hair.
7. The Bilawal Ragini is part of a very popular genre of Indian painting called *ragamala* or 'garland of ragas'. *Ragas* and *raginis* are melodic frameworks for improvisation (or musical modes) in Indian classical music. They were personified and illustrated by artists to depict the mood that is evoked when a *raga* or *ragini* was performed.

8. While no names of women artists at Rajput courts are known as yet, it is likely that women practiced the art of painting. This is seen in the personification of the *Dhanashri Ragini*, where the heroine paints a picture of her beloved. See Vidya Dehejia, *Representing the Body: Gender Issues in Indian Art*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1997, pp. 12–14. Women artists are known to have been active under the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58). For example, Sahifa Banu made a portrait of Shah Tahmasp in the 1620s at the Mughal court. Also, a drawing from the same time period depicts a lady sketching on a block. See Annemarie Schimmel, *The Empire of the Great Mughals: History, Art and Culture*, Reaktion Books, London, 2004, p. 158.
9. Molly Emma Aitken, 'Pardah and Portrayal: Rajput Women as Subjects, Patrons, and Collectors', *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 62, no. 2, 2000, pp. 247–280.
10. *ibid.*, pp. 251; 263–267.
11. *ibid.*
12. For example, see John Seyller's reading of a painting where two women share a cup of wine. Seyller interprets this as a 'poignant moment of real tenderness'. *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2010, pp. 54–56.
13. For a portrait of the Mughal empress Nur Jahan, see *Nur Jahan Holding a Portrait of Jahangir*, Cleveland Museum of Art, 2013.325, <http://www.clevelandart.org/art/2013.325>, accessed 3 July 2018. For a portrait of the Mughal empress Mumtaz Mahal, see *Mirror case with portrait of Mumtaz Mahal*, Freer|Sackler <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/object/F2005.4/>, accessed 3 July 2018.
14. In the polygamous Rajput household, lives of women were marked by complex hierarchical and ceremonial networks within the *zenana*. At the apex was the queen-mother, or Rajmata, followed by the mother of the heir-apparent to the throne and other co-wives of the ruler. The highest ranked concubines were called *paswans* and *pardayats*, and also resided in the palace. See Varsha Joshi, *Polygamy and Purdah: Women and Society among Rajputs*, Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 1995.
15. One of the most important Krishna shrines in Jodhpur, the Kunjbihari temple was commissioned by Gulabrai in 1778. Her political power can be gauged by her authority to collect tax and reallocate administrative posts in the kingdom. See Priyanka Khanna, 'The female companion in a world of men: Friendship and concubinage in late eighteenth-century Marwar', *Studies in History*, vol. 33, no. 1, February 2017, pp. 98–116.

16. For a painting of the same subject in the British Museum see <https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\_online/collection\_object\_details.aspx?objectId=233616&partId=1>, accessed 16 July 2018.
17. In *Nagari* script: 'pano tulchi mata aage dev kanya ubhi mala pher che' ('Page of a celestial maiden standing in front of Tulsi Goddess').
18. Vidya Dehejia, 'Issues of spectatorship and representation', in Dehejia, p. 5.
19. With evidence from albums assembled for the rulers of the Amber-Jaipur kingdom, I argue elsewhere that connoisseurs looked at paintings comparatively. See Shailka Mishra, 'Suratkhana at Amber-Jaipur in the 18th Century: Paintings, Patronage, Practices', unpublished PhD thesis, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2016.
20. Debra Diamond, 'Occult Science and Bijapur's Yoginis', in Mahesh Sharma & Padma Kaimal (eds), *Indian Painting: Themes, Histories, Interpretations – Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy*, Mapin Publishing, Ahmedabad, 2013, p. 150.