

ASIAN ART

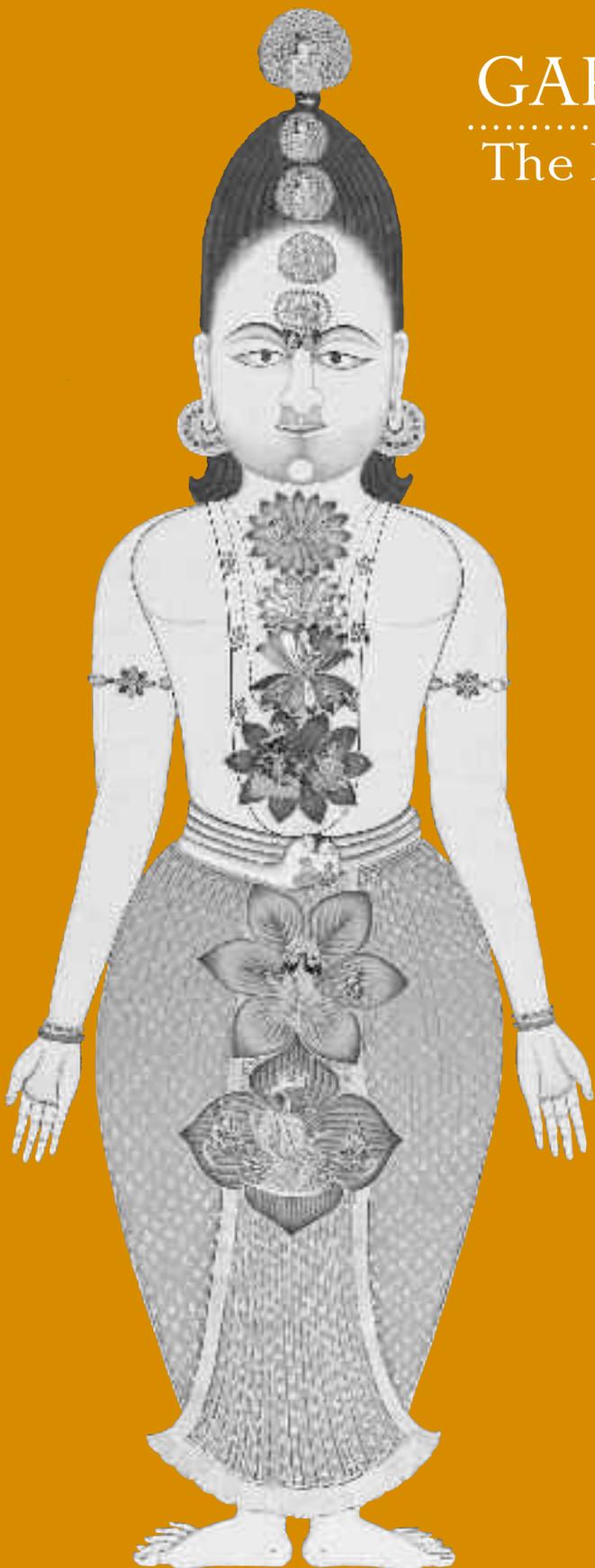
# connections

A RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS

FALL 2008

GARDEN  
..... *and* .....  
COSMOS  
The Royal Paintings  
of Jodhpur

OCTOBER 11, 2008-  
JANUARY 4, 2009



# GARDEN *and* COSMOS

## The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur

OCTOBER 11, 2008–JANUARY 4, 2009

This groundbreaking exhibition of Indian art explores the visual expression of the royal court in Jodhpur from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Newly discovered paintings and a silk-embroidered canopy from Rajasthan in northwestern India form the core of this memorable experience.

Beginning in the seventeenth century, court artists of Jodhpur developed a unique school of painting that synthesized the imperial Mughal style with their own local aesthetic. Lively images of lush gardens set amid the desert regions of Rajasthan distinguish the court art of the eighteenth century. Other works present scenes of palace entertainments or sacred landscapes where the Hindu deities Rama and Krishna engage in adventures.

In the nineteenth century, Maharaja Man Singh (reigned 1803–43), the ruler of Jodhpur, orchestrated the rise to power of the Naths, the religious order that originated hatha yoga in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The court painting in this period represents Nath teachings and legitimized Man Singh's reliance on the Naths as spiritual teachers and political advisors. Man Singh's succession to the throne in 1803 marked a new period when court artists were challenged to translate complex religious ideas into visual form. They created magnificent large paintings, almost four feet in width, that illustrated such complex concepts as the Absolute—the formless, universal essence in Hindu belief (also known as Brahman). Throughout India's long history, artists rarely attempted to draw or paint the idea of Brahman. Works in *Garden and Cosmos* are virtually unprecedented in Indian art for visually presenting something that is believed to be without form. With a minimal style and stunning color, these exceptional paintings embody a richly creative period in the history of Indian art.

# classroom activity

Suitable for Grades 9–12

Art History, Studio Art

## PART I

Look carefully at the images on the poster.  
Describe them in detail.

### A Looking

- What colors do you see in the paintings?
- What shapes do you see?
- What are the different parts of the composition?
- What figures do you see?
- What do you notice about the figures?

### B Interpreting

- What is the relationship between the figures and the other parts of the composition?
- How is color (including gold) used in the composition?
- How is space used?
- Do these paintings look like anything you have seen before? Please describe.
- What do they *not* look like to you?

### C Exploring

- What questions do you have about these paintings?

## PART II

### ***The Emergence of Spirit and Matter***

Attributed to Shivdas  
Folio 2 from the *Shiva Purana*  
India, Jodhpur, ca. 1828  
Opaque watercolor and gold on paper  
Mehrangarh Museum Trust, RJS 2599

In the first half of the nineteenth century, artists in the royal court of Jodhpur, the capital of Marwar in northwestern India, developed an entirely new style of religious paintings. Maharaja Man Singh was deeply devoted to a Hindu tradition of yogis called the Naths. The maharaja (ruler) ordered his artists to create these paintings so he and the members of his court could learn what was special and important about Nath ideas and beliefs.

Before Man Singh's reign, Nath teachings and hatha yoga were not widely known in the Jodhpur court. Hatha yoga was an esoteric tradition, meaning teachers passed it on only to the students they considered to be worthy of receiving instruction and learning its secrets. In an attempt to communicate the profound religious ideas of the Nath yogis, artists were challenged to produce images of concepts that have never actually been seen, such as the creation of the universe. Most likely, these paintings began with a learned Nath yogi explaining ideas and telling stories to the workshop artists. The painters then translated those concepts and tales into visual images.

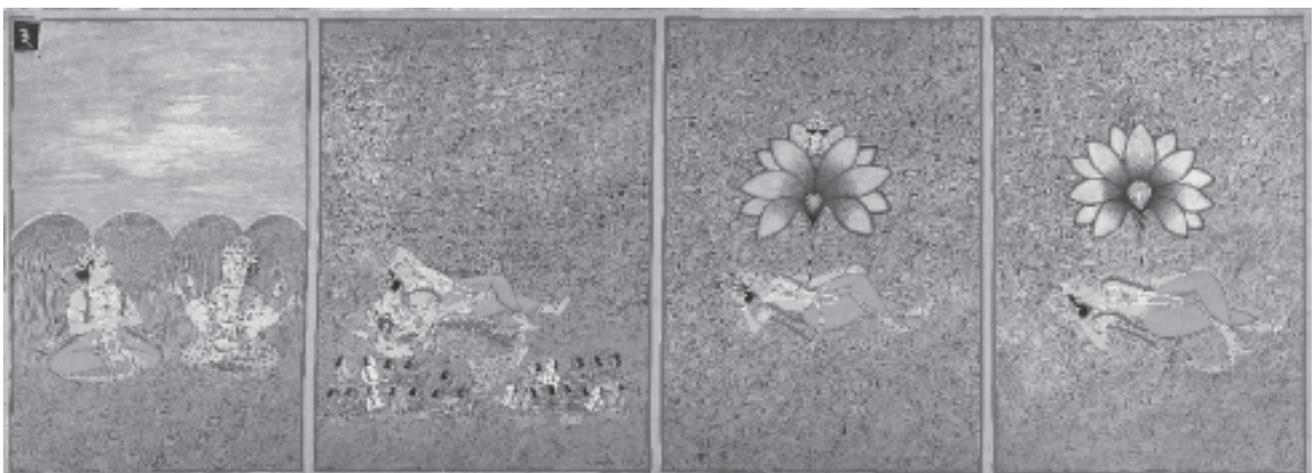
The paintings below depict one of many creation stories in the Hindu traditions. They appear in the *Shiva Purana*, an ancient collection of stories about the deity Shiva and his role in creating





- 1 In this Hindu account of the formation of the cosmos, the Absolute (Brahman) exists prior to the creation of the universe and simultaneous with the created universe. Here, the Absolute—a formless, supreme, immeasurable essence—appears as a field of gold.
- 2 Spirit (or consciousness) is depicted as the male deity on the left, and Matter is represented as the female deity on the right.
- 3 Spirit and Matter practice a highly disciplined form of meditation together.
- 4 Spirit and Matter send out cosmic waters from their heads. The waters cover the Absolute above while they gradually pool into waves below.
- 5 Spirit and Matter lie back upon the cosmic waters and produce the twenty-four elements that are essential to

- experience. These elements are represented as small multi-colored beings. Among the twenty-four elements are the five senses: sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell.
- 6 Spirit and Matter come together to form the sleeping Vishnu, from whose navel a magnificent lotus flower grows. Brahma, the Hindu god of creation, emerges from the lotus, confused about how he came to be there and questioning his origin.
  - 7 In looking for his origin and his creator, Brahma searches the stalk and petals of the lotus for two hundred years. When he does not find the answer to his questions in the outside world, he sits within the center of the lotus and directs his search inward, meditating for twelve years.
- Not pictured: Vishnu reveals to Brahma that Shiva is not only Brahma's creator but also the creator of everything in the universe.



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## PART III

### Giving Visual Form to the Formless

How can you express something visually if it has no physical form? Look closely at the series of paintings on the poster. Examine the images again after you read the information above. What are some of the things with no physical form that the artist has shown? Below, note all the examples in these paintings.

#### Example:

Image #1: The Absolute (Brahman) is depicted as a field of gold.

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Using your knowledge of artworks, advertising, and other examples of visual communication, list at least five things you have seen in which visual form is given to concepts that have no physical form. Such concepts are called abstract and include emotions and ideas, such as love, evil, and time.

#### Example:

What is it?	Light bulb (Usually shown over a person's head)
What does it depict?	Gives visual form to the birth of an idea

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How have other artists represented abstract concepts in visual form? What abstract concept would you choose to represent? Have other artists represented that concept in visual form? If so, how would you do it differently?

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## VOCABULARY

- Abstract** Expressing an idea that has no physical form.
- Brahma** A primary Hindu deity considered to be the creator of the universe. Brahma should not be confused with Brahman, the Hindu concept of the Absolute.
- Brahman** In the Hindu tradition, the all-pervading, formless, and eternal essence of the universe from which all things come and to which they all return. Brahman is often described in the Sanskrit language as *neti, neti* ("not this, not that") because it is beyond the ability of humans to understand it.
- Esoteric** Secret knowledge that is passed down only to those who are deemed worthy or are initiated into a tradition.
- Meditation** The mental discipline of focused concentration, with the goal of achieving spiritual awareness.
- Shiva** A primary Hindu deity, Shiva plays many roles. In some stories he is considered the creator of the universe. Nath yogis identified with Shiva because he meditates and practices yoga.
- Vishnu** A primary Hindu deity, Vishnu is worshiped as the protector and preserver of the universe. Many Hindu religious stories recount Vishnu's appearance on earth to save it from demons, among other things.
- Yoga** In Hindu traditions, yoga is a form of spiritual, mental, and physical conditioning that requires strict concentration and discipline of mind and body, with the goal of liberation from worldly concerns. For the Naths, who originated and practiced hatha yoga, the goal was to unite the individual body with Brahman, which resulted in immortality, super-natural powers, and the ability to be all-knowing.

## TEACHER RESOURCES 2007–2008

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### Free Semiannual Newsletter

#### **Asian Art Connections: Resources for Educators**

To subscribe, please send **MAILING ADDRESS** to [fsgasiaeducation@si.edu](mailto:fsgasiaeducation@si.edu).

### Online Resources: General E-Gallery

Create your own exhibition using objects from the Freer and Sackler online collection.

[www.asia.si.edu](http://www.asia.si.edu)

### Online Educational Resources

[www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm)

### Freer and Sackler Collections

[www.asia.si.edu/collections/default.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/default.htm)

### Online Exhibitions

[www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/online.htm)

### Tour Information

[www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm)

### Online Resources: Publications

#### **Asian Art Connections: A Resource for Educators**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm)  
An online version of the semiannual newsletter.

#### **The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm)

#### **The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtofBuddhism.pdf](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtofBuddhism.pdf)

#### **Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/islam.pdf](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/islam.pdf)

#### **The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/onlineguides.htm)

#### **Devi: The Great Goddess** (Hinduism)

[www.asia.si.edu/education/devi/index.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/devi/index.htm)

#### **Japan: Images of a People**

[smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson\\_plans/japan\\_images\\_people/index.html](http://smithsonianeducation.org/educators/lesson_plans/japan_images_people/index.html)

#### **Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion**

[www.asia.si.edu/education/pujaonline/puja/start.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/pujaonline/puja/start.htm)

### Teacher Resources for Sale Sackler Gallery Shops

All teacher resources listed below are for sale in the Sackler shops. Order these materials online at

[www.freersacklershop.com](http://www.freersacklershop.com), by phone at 202.633.0535, or by fax at 202.633.9838.

In addition to Freer and Sackler publications, the shops also stock children's books on Asia that our education department recommends.

#### **Intersections: Japanese Art and the West A Teacher's Guide**

Appropriate for grades 9–12,  
Explore the ways that Japanese art and Western art have intersected, beginning in the late nineteenth century. \$20

#### **The Arts of Japan: A Teacher's Guide**

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

#### **The Art and Archaeology of Ancient China: A Teacher's Guide**

Appropriate for grades 3–12, \$20

#### **The Art of Buddhism: A Teacher's Guide**

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

#### **The Arts of the Islamic World: A Teacher's Guide**

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$20

#### **Silk Road Resource Packet**

Appropriate for grades 4–12, \$12

### Video

#### **Puja: Expressions of Hindu Devotion**

Appropriate for grades 6–12,  
This award-winning video introduces Hindu worship through moving images and interviews. 1996. 20 min. (close captioned) \$10

### CD-ROM

#### **Chi's Adventure in Ancient China**

Appropriate for grades 3–6,  
Join Chi the chimera as he introduces viewers to ancient Chinese civilization through objects from the Freer and Sackler collections. \$10

### CD

#### **Silk Road Stories**

An audio CD of stories told by Freer and Sackler volunteers who have cultural ties to countries along the ancient Silk Road. Features stories from China, Japan, Turkey, and Bangladesh. \$10

### Slides and Digital Images

Slides and digital images are available from our rights and reproductions department. To preview the sets or to order online, go to [www.asia.si.edu/visitor/rnr.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/visitor/rnr.htm) and click on *Slide Sets Now Available!* Order sets by fax at 202.633.9770.

# exhibitions

**THE FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY** at the Smithsonian Institution together form the national museums of Asian art for the United States. The Freer Gallery also houses a collection of American art from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including the world's most important collection of works by James McNeill Whistler.

## **FREER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS**

Guests of the Hills:  
Travelers and Recluses in  
Chinese Landscape Painting  
**THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, 2009**

Closing Soon!

Japanese Arts in the  
Edo Period, 1615-1868  
**THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7**

Tea for Everyone: Japanese  
Popular Ceramics for Tea Drinking  
**THROUGH SEPTEMBER 7**

### **Ongoing Freer Exhibitions**

Ancient Chinese Pottery and Bronze  
Art for Art's Sake (American)  
Arts of the Indian Subcontinent  
and the Himalayas  
Arts of the Islamic World  
Black & White: Chinese Ceramics  
from the 10th-14th Centuries  
Buddhist Art  
Charles Lang Freer and Egypt  
Freer and Whistler: Points of Contact  
Japanese Screens  
Korean Ceramics  
The Peacock Room  
The Religious Art of Japan  
Small Masterpieces: Whistler Painting  
from the 1880s  
Surface Beauty: American Art and  
Freer's Aesthetic Vision  
Vietnamese Ceramics from  
the Red River Delta

## **SACKLER CURRENT EXHIBITIONS**

Seascapes:  
Tryon and Sugimoto  
**THROUGH JANUARY 25, 2009**

Moving Perspectives: Yang  
Fudong/Cao Fei and Ou Ning  
**SEPTEMBER 6-NOVEMBER 30**

Taking Shape:  
Ceramics in Southeast Asia  
**THROUGH 2010**

### **Ongoing Sackler Exhibitions**

The Arts of China  
Contemporary Japanese Porcelain  
Sculpture of South and Southeast Asia



## **TOURS**

We offer a variety of tours related to the museums' ongoing and temporary exhibitions. For detailed information about tour offerings for school groups, please visit our website at [www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/ToursForStudents.htm).

To request a tour, please submit a tour request form online at [www.asia.si.edu/education/TourRequestForm.htm](http://www.asia.si.edu/education/TourRequestForm.htm).

**Cover:** Detail, *The Emergence of Spirit and Matter*, attributed to Shivdas. Folio 2 from the *Shiva Purana*. India, Jodhpur, ca. 1828. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Mehrangarh Museum Trust, RJS 2599. **Inside Cover:** *Chakras of the Subtle Body*, attributed to Bulaki; folio 2 from the *Nath Charit*; Jodhpur, 1823 (Samvat 1880); opaque watercolor and gold on paper; Mehrangarh Museum Trust.



# ImaginAsia

In our popular family program, children ages eight to fourteen accompanied by an adult use an activity book to explore an exhibition and then create a related art project to take home. These free family pro-

grams take place on the dates and times listed at [www.asia.si.edu](http://www.asia.si.edu) and do not require a reservation. This fall, ImaginAsia offers programs related to Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur..

## VISITOR INFORMATION

**Freer Gallery of Art**  
Jefferson Drive at 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20560-0707

**Arthur M. Sackler Gallery**  
1050 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20560-0707

### Hours

10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily;  
closed December 25  
Admission is FREE to the museum,  
exhibitions, and programs.

### Information

[www.asia.si.edu](http://www.asia.si.edu)  
202.633.1000  
Information desks open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### Food Service

For information on food services  
at the Smithsonian, please visit  
[www.si.edu/dining/default.htm](http://www.si.edu/dining/default.htm)

### Transportation

Ride the Metro's orange or blue line to  
Smithsonian Station. Parking on the Mall  
is extremely limited.

### Library

The museum's non-circulating research  
library specializes in Asian art as well as  
American painting at the turn of the twenti-  
eth century. It is open from 10 a.m. to 5  
p.m. weekdays, except for federal holidays.

### Accessibility

Accessible entrances to the Freer and  
Sackler Galleries are located at Independ-  
ence Avenue. Wheelchairs are available at  
the guard's desk at each museum entrance.  
For more information on accessibility,  
please call 202.633.2921 or email  
[ziebarth@si.edu](mailto:ziebarth@si.edu).

Smithsonian Institution  
Freer Gallery of Art  
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery  
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