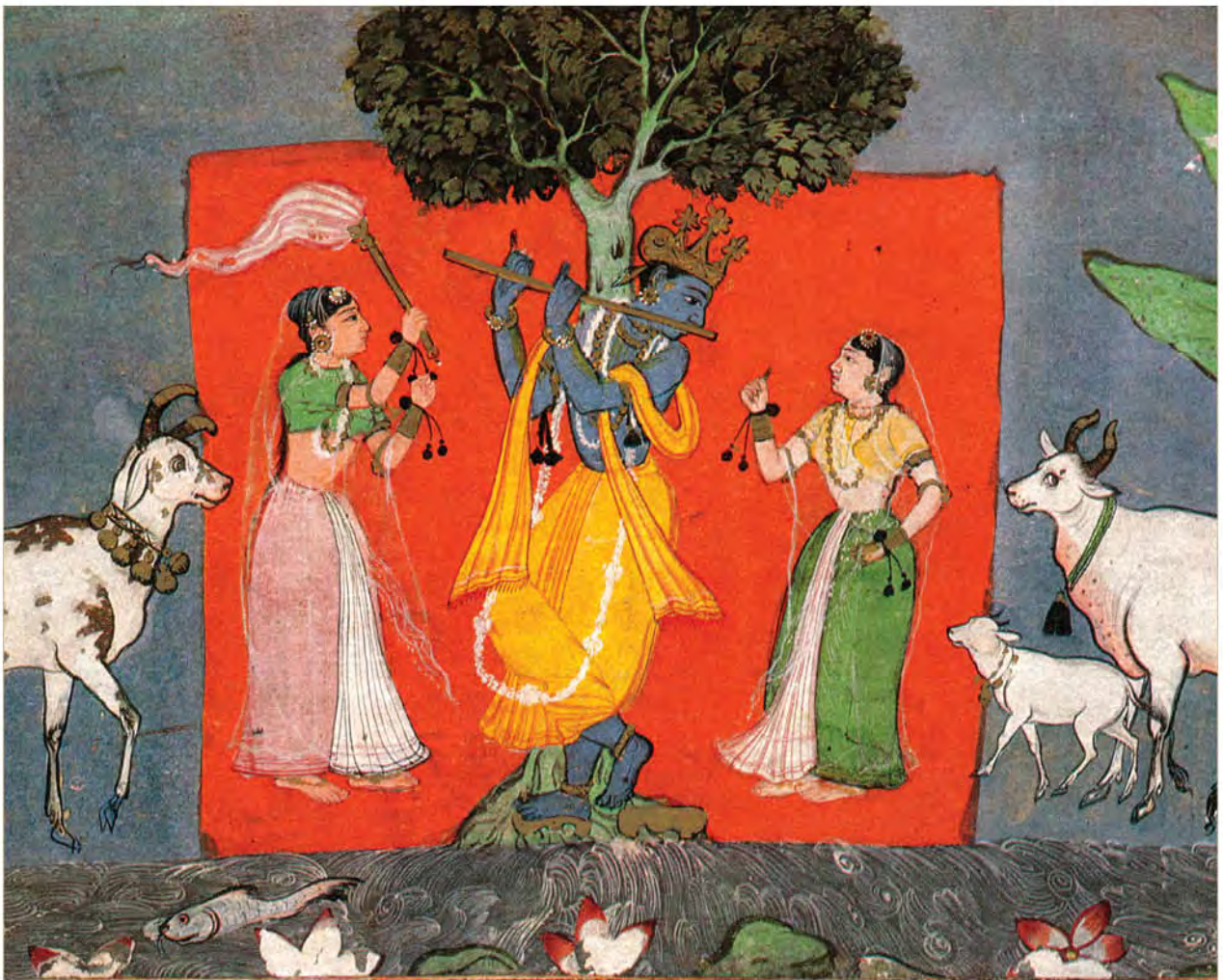


COURT *to* COLLECTOR

— A MINIATURE LEGACY —



A RARE ARCHIVE OF
INDIAN MINIATURE PAINTING FOLIOS
FROM THE VIRJI FAMILY



GALLERY G

Catalogue

CONTENTS

PAGE NO.

In Every Detail, a Legacy: The Virji Miniature Collection	1
Indian Miniature Paintings	
<i>Researched by Karl Jamsheer Kbandalavala</i>	2
01. Amber and Jaipur School of Painting	
<i>Authored by Asok Kumar Das</i>	3
02. Indian Paintings in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art	
<i>Authored by Pratapaditya Pal</i>	5
03. Bikaner and Pahari School of Painting (JP Goenka Collection)	
<i>Authored by Anand Krishna</i>	8
04. The Kishangarh School of Painting	
<i>Authored by Karl Kbandalavala</i>	10
05. The Mewar School of Painting	
<i>Authored by Moti Chandra</i>	12
06. The Ragamala Paintings of Basohli	
<i>Authored by Raj K. Tandan</i>	14
07. The Art of Bundi Painting	
<i>Authored by Shridhar Andhare</i>	16
08. The Bhagavata Paintings from Mankot	
<i>Authored by B. N. Goswamy</i>	18
09. The Deogarh School of Painting	
<i>Authored by Shridhar Andhare & Rawat Nabar Singh</i>	20

Prices start at just ₹35,000/- and go up to ₹45,000/-,
making the collection both exclusive and accessible.
Call 80504-54405 or write in to info@galleryg.com
for more details/enquiries.

FOLLOW US



GALLERY_G_ARTS

COURT *to* COLLECTOR

— A MINIATURE LEGACY —

In Every Detail, a Legacy: The Virji Miniature Collection

In the summer of 1901, Raja Ravi Varma and his brother painted a life-size portrait of a Bombay-based gentleman named Mr. Assari Virji — a man described in the diary (entry dated 23 July 1901, page 130) as quiet, self-made, and deeply respectful of the artistic process. “The more we became acquainted with him, the more we liked him,” writes C. Raja Raja Varma. There was no interference, no vanity — just a sense of trust and stillness in being painted.

More than 120 years later, it would be his descendants — the Virji family — who brought that same quiet discernment to their collecting journey. Between the 1970s and 1990s, they travelled the world attending exhibitions and built a rare and scholarly archive of Indian miniature portfolios. Their eyes were not led by fashion, but by curiosity and care. Their passion wasn’t performative — it was personal, precise, and deeply respectful of provenance.

This exhibition — *Court to Collector: A Miniature Legacy* — carries within it not just folios and paintings, but an ethos. Of those who understand

that collecting is also a form of preservation. That knowledge is best passed on when it’s cherished. That the rhythms of court, faith, and history, recorded so beautifully in miniature, still speak volumes when seen through the eyes of a sincere collector.

It is the **privilege** of the Sandeep and Gitanjali Maini Foundation to support this show — one that echoes everything we believe in: the quiet custodianship of art, the imparting of knowledge across generations, and the full-circle beauty of legacy. That the diary of Raja Raja Varma should speak of a Mr. Virji, and that we now honour the Virji family in this context, feels like more than coincidence. It feels destined.

This collection was brought to light by **Rozy and (late) Karim Virji and Hanifa Banjee**, who generously entrusted it to us. What followed was a quiet coming together of shared values — a belief in preserving legacy, and in offering art the space to speak for itself. It has been a privilege to help bring this exhibition to life.

This is not just an exhibition — it is a tribute.



Indian Miniature Paintings

RESEARCHED BY KARL JAMSHED KHANDALAVALA

Between the 16th and 19th centuries, a remarkable flowering of Indian miniature painting took place, giving rise to diverse regional schools across Rajasthan — including Kota, Bundi, Marwar, Kishangarh, Mewar, and Jaipur. Collectively identified under the broad tradition of ‘Rajasthani’ painting, these schools developed distinctive visual vocabularies, shaped by local courts while also engaging with Mughal artistic influence. The Jaipur school, evolving from Amber, in particular exemplifies this dynamic, combining refinement of line with vibrant colour and narrative power.

The paintings presented in this catalogue bring together folios from celebrated museum collections and private holdings, offering a rare opportunity to appreciate the breadth and depth of this artistic tradition. Each of the nine schools represented here has been rigorously researched and reviewed by leading scholars in the field.

At the heart of this project stands Karl Jamshed Khandalavala (1904–1995) — a pioneering art historian, lawyer, collector, and connoisseur — whose scholarship transformed the understanding

of Indian miniature painting. At a time when these works were often overlooked, his writings and exhibitions established them as masterpieces of global significance. His landmark publication *Pahari Miniature Painting* (1958) remains a cornerstone of art historical study. Beyond his scholarship, his stewardship as trustee and chairman of the Prince of Wales Museum (now CSMVS, Mumbai) left an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of India.

Khandalavala’s passion for collecting was equally profound. In a gesture of extraordinary generosity, he bequeathed his private collection — over 700 miniature paintings, manuscripts, and sculptures — to the CSMVS shortly before his passing. This act cemented his legacy as not only one of the foremost scholars but also one of the greatest benefactors of Indian art.

The present catalogue and exhibition stand as a testament to his vision. With selections made under his guidance, assisted by Sadashiv Gorakshkar and Uma Bhatia, this exhibition reflects his lifelong dedication to preserving, researching, and sharing India’s miniature painting traditions with the world.

01 • Amber and Jaipur School of Painting

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY ASOK KUMAR DAS

The Amber-Jaipur school of painting developed under the enlightened patronage of the Kachwaha rulers, beginning with Raja Man Singh (1590–1614), whose palace murals at Amber set a vibrant precedent. Early compositions — depicting Krishna Lila, Ragamala scenes, flora, fauna, and poetic and erotic themes — blended indigenous styles with refined Mughal influences. The Amber-Jaipur style, with its graceful compositions, luminous palettes, and narrative richness, remains a resplendent chapter in Indian miniature painting—bridging devotion, royal patronage, and the poetry of daily life.



Ragini Maru • 25.1 x 14.2 cm • c. 1705–10



Krishna Playing Holi, from *Sarasa-rasa-grantha*
15.2 x 24.3 cm • c. 1737



Ragini Behag • 20 x 14.4 cm • c. 1750–55



Ragini Todi • Artist: Mangal • 18.5 x 31.5 cm • c. 1785–90



Rasamandala or Krishna's Ring Dance
49 x 65 cm • c. 1790–1800



Revelry, Maharaja Sawai Jagat Singh With a Consort
42 x 39 cm • c. 1803–05

02 • Indian Paintings in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY PRATAPADITYA PAL

The Indian paintings housed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art form one of the most evocative and diverse collections of subcontinental art in the West. Spanning from the 16th to 19th century, these works were never meant to adorn walls but to be held, studied, and savoured — often while turned delicately by hand in albums or manuscripts. Drawn largely from the *Nasli Heeramaneck* collection and enriched over decades, these works reflect both courtly splendour and spiritual intimacy. These masterworks were created not only for kings and connoisseurs but for the heart and spirit. As viewers today, we are invited to pause, to look closely, and to see — through the transfiguring eyes of love — a world where every gesture, every hue, is radiant with meaning.



*The Heroes Are Given Refuge, (scene from the Hamza-Nama) • Artists: Senowbar Banu and Omar
12 x 9.5 inches*



*Humayun's Attack And The Fight of Sultan Bahadur,
(scene from the Akbar-Nama) • 12 x 8 inches*



Pursuit of the Asses, (Folios from the *Harivamsa* Poetic renditions of Krishna's divine exploits)
12.5 x 10 inches



Pradyumna destroys Sambara, (Folios from the *Harivamsa* Poetic renditions of Krishna's divine exploits),
12.5 x 10 inches



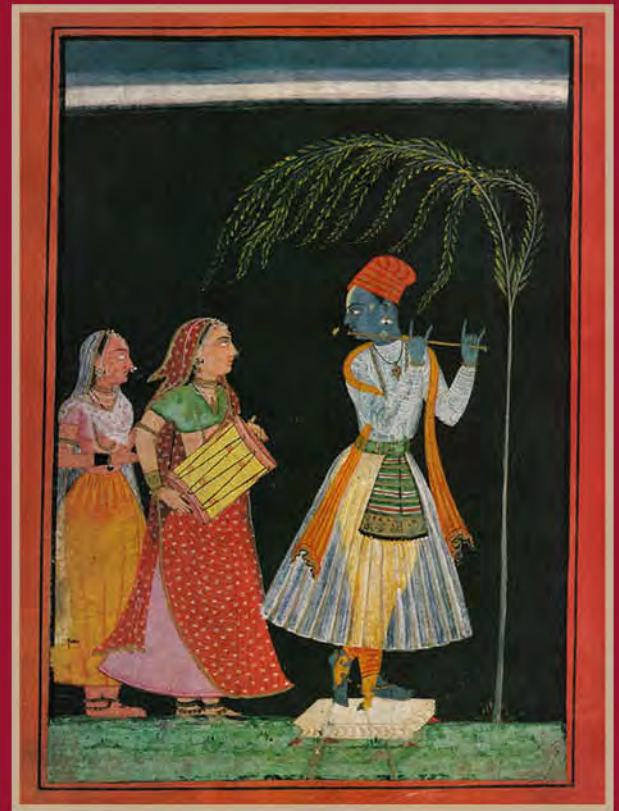
Emperor Shah Jahan Receiving Dara Shikoh
12.5 x 9.5 inches



Krishna and Radha in Vrindavana
10 x 7.25 inches



From the Rasikapriya of Kesavadasa
10.5 x 7.5 inches



Krishna Playing the Flute under Moonlight (*Labula Ragaputra*) • 10.25 x 7.5 inches



Rama Bestows His Possessions On The Faithfuls
9 x 12.5 inches



Narasimha Avatar • 6 x 9.5 inches

03 • Bikaner and Pahari School of Painting (JP Goenka Collection)

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY ANAND KRISHNA

The J.P. Goenka Collection is a remarkable testament to the diversity and sophistication of Indian miniature painting. Assembled by Shri Jagdish Prasad Goenka of Bombay, this collection brings together rare and exquisite works from some of the most celebrated regional schools of North India, dating from the 17th to the early 19th centuries. The paintings on display illustrate a wide range of themes. Many are visual interpretations of sacred Hindu texts such as the Bhagavata Purana and Gita Govinda, capturing episodes from the lives of Krishna and Radha with lyrical grace and emotional depth.



Krishna Playing the Flute (*An illustration from the Bhagavata Purana*) • 5.25 x 7.5 inches • c. 1605-1610



The Worship of Vata Vriksha • 5.75 x 7.5 inches
c. 1800-1805



A Princess in a Garden • 5 x 8 inches • c. 1760



Raga Megh Mallara • 7 x 4.25 inches • c. 1675-1700



A Lady Dressing Her Hair • 7.25 x 5.5 inches • c. 1715



Raga Vasant • 7.5 x 6 inches • c. 1700



Krishna Abhisarika Nayika • 7 x 4.7 inches • c. 1770-1780

04 • The Kishangarh School of Painting

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY KARL KHANDALAVALA

This school stands as one of the most refined expressions of Rajasthani miniature art. In the eighteenth century, the art of miniature painting had become very popular in the Rajput states. Ateliers were maintained not only at the courts of the leading Rajput rulers, but artists were also in the employ of the chieftains of the numerous thikanas (feudal states), who comprised the baronial aristocracy of Rajasthan. Kishangarh paintings exhibit lyrical compositions, delicate lines, and pastel palettes often set against serene landscapes or moonlit Yamuna banks. Each work balances intimacy and grandeur, sensuality and sanctity, making this school distinct among Rajput traditions.



Sanjhi Lila • Artist: Nihal Chand • 10.5 x 13.5 inches • c. 1735



Dipavalika – Night of Lamps • Attributed to Nihal Chand
9 x 14 inches • c. 1742



A Courtly Paradise • Artist: Nihal Chand
 13 x 10 inches • c. 1735



Portrait of Raja Sahasmal • 12.5 x 8.5 inches • c. 1725



The Boat of Love, National Museum, New Delhi,
 Artist: Nihal Chand • 14.5 x 11 inches • c. 1735



Krishna Dancing With Gopis (Illustration to the Gita-Govinda) • 10.75 x 8.5 inches • c. 1820

05 • The Mewar School of Painting

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY MOTI CHANDRA

The Mewar school embodies the fervent devotion, valour, and regional pride of one of India's most storied Rajput kingdoms. From its early roots in the Western Indian style to its sophisticated developments under the reign of rulers like Jagat Singh I, the school evolved into a bold and vivid expression of the Rajput ethos — deeply rooted in Hindu tradition but enriched by subtle Mughal influences. Mewar paintings are characterised by their vibrant palettes, angular figures, symbolic gestures, and expressive storytelling. Themes range from divine love to courtly scenes, battles, and village life.



Madhyadhira – A Heroine (illustration to Nayaka-Nayika Bheda) • 9 x 7 inches • c. 1630–1640



The Dance of Krishna (illustration to Sur-Sagar of Surdas) • 11.25 x 9 inches • c. 1650-51



Sakhi Addressing the Lovelorn Radha (illustration to the Gita-Govinda)
Kumar Sangram Singh Collection, Nawalgarh • 7.5 x 9.5 inches • c. 1655–1660



Krishna Lifting the Mount Govardhana (illustration to the Bhagavata Purana) • *Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi • 14.5 x 6.5 inches • c. 1680–1700*



Meeting of Rama and Parasurama (illustration to the Ramayana)
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Bombay • 9 x 6.5 inches • c. 1649

06 • The Ragamala Paintings of Basohli

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY RAJ K. TANDAN

The Basohli Ragamala paintings represent one of the most vibrant and sensuous expressions in Indian miniature art. Emerging from the secluded hill state of Basohli in the late 17th century, these paintings are a synthesis of three major Indian traditions: music, poetry, and visual art. Each folio is an ode to a musical raga — personified through vivid characters and imagined landscapes, and shaped by traditions stretching back to the Natya Shastra and medieval treatises like Kshemakarna's Ragamala. In the Basohli tradition, Ragas are embodied as male figures, their consorts (Ragini), and sons (Ragaputras), creating a celestial family of 84 musical moods.



Ragini Sorathi of Megha-Mallara Raga
8 x 7.75 inches • c. 1770



Ragaputra Saindhava of Sri Raga
7.5 x 7.5 inches • c. 1780



Ragaputra Goda-Mallara of Sri Raga
7.5 x 7 inches • c. 1780



Ragaputra Mistanga of Malkosa Raga
7.25 x 6.75 inches • c. 1780



Ragini Sindhuri of Hindola Raga
7 x 6.5 inches • c. 1780



Ragaputra Kusum of Dipak Raga
7.5 x 7.25 inches • c. 1780



Ragaputra Hemala of Dipak Raga
8 x 7.25 inches • c. 1785

07 • The Art of Bundi Painting

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY SHRIDHAR ANDHARE

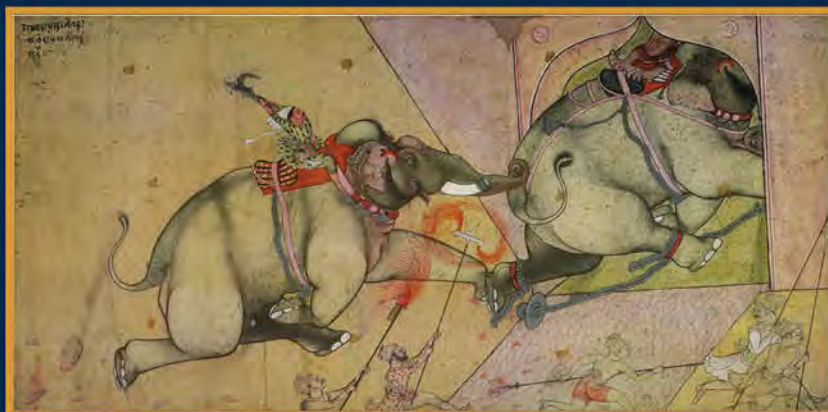
The state of Bundi, nestled in the picturesque Haraoti region of Rajasthan, emerged as one of the most expressive centres of Rajasthani miniature painting. Though often paired with its sister state Kotah, Bundi distinguished itself through lyrical compositions, rich tonalities, and a deep engagement with both courtly and devotional themes. This exhibition explores the range and evolution of Bundi painting, from its 17th-century Mughal-inspired origins to its distinctive, vibrant visual idiom in the 18th century. Bundi painting flourished under the patronage of the Hara Rajput rulers, with stylistic influences stemming from the Mughal atelier during the reign of Emperor Akbar.



A Love Scene • 9.5 x 7 inches • c.1682



Princess in a Garden • Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya • 11 x 9 inches • c. 1670



*Elephant Combat • Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya
10 x 20.5 inches • c. 1725*



Summer Elephant • Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya • 12.5 x 9 inches • c. 1750



Dana Lila (an incident from the Rasikapriya of the poet Kesavadasa) • National Museum, Delhi • 9 x 6.5 inches, c. 1700



The Taking out of a Thorn • Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya • 11 x 7 inches • c. 1750



A Lady after Her Bath Being Watched By Prince • Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya • 9.5 x 6.5 inches • c. 1770

08 • The Bhagavata Paintings from Mankot

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY B. N. GOSWAMY

In the quiet folds of the Punjab hills lies Mankot, an unassuming princely state once no more than fifteen miles long and ten miles wide. Despite its modest political stature and minimal resources — its ruler was granted an annual stipend of merely Rs. 1,500 in the mid-19th century — Mankot unexpectedly emerged as a major centre of artistic brilliance, now recognized alongside Basohli, Kangra, Guler, and Mandi in the rich tradition of Pahari painting. What makes Mankot's contribution particularly extraordinary is the spontaneity with which its artistic style seems to have burst forth.



The Exchange of Babes • Chandigarh Museum • 8 x 12 inches • c. 1810



The Deliverance of Nalakuvar and Manigriva • Chandigarh Museum
8 x 12 inches • c. 1810



The Killing of Kesi • Chandigarh Museum
8 x 11.5 inches • c. 1810



The Killing of the Calf-demon
Vatsasura, Chandigarh Museum • 8 x 11.5 inches • c. 1810



The Curing of Kubja • Chandigarh Museum
8 x 11.5 inches • c. 1815



The Killing of Kamsa • Chandigarh Museum
8 x 12 inches • c. 1815

09 • The Deogarh School of Painting

ADAPTED FROM THE TEXT BY SHRIDAR ANDHARE & RAWAT NAHAR SINGH

Deogarh, a feudal estate in Mewar, Rajasthan, stands as a unique and vibrant node of Indian miniature and mural painting. The history of Mewar, is indissolubly linked in the minds of our countrymen with the valiant Rana Pratap and the battle of *Haldighati*. Its chieftain known as the "Rawat" is one of the sixteen *umraos* (feudal barons) privileged to wait upon the Maharana of Udaipur, the capital of Mewar. Deogarh painting thrived under the patronage of prominent Rawats like Gokuldas II, with a corpus of portraits, court scenes, and hunting expeditions created by renowned artists such as Bagta, Chokha, Baijnath, Kavala, and Kunvla.



The Hour of Cow-Dust • Artist: Chokha • 12.5 x 9.5 inches • c. 1813



Picnic after Hunting • Artist: Bagta • 16.5 x 9.7 inches • c. 1808



**Kunvar Anop Singhji Shooting Pigs • Artist: Bagta
12 x 8.5 inches • c. 1769**



**Gokuldasji Hunting Sambhar at Night • Artist: Chokha
15.5 x 10.6 cm • c. 1811**



GALLERY G

Maini Sadan, 38, Lavelle Road, 7th Cross,
Bangalore - 560 001. India.

+91 80504 54405 • gita@galleryg.com • galleryg.com
[f](#) galleryGarts • [t](#) / [i](#) gallery_g_arts • [in](#) gallery-g-your-art-resource