

FRANCESCA GALLOWAY

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BUSHWICK

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Court, Epic, Spirit: Indian Art 15th – 19th Century
September 15 – December 18, 2021

Luhring Augustine, in association with Francesca Galloway, is pleased to present *Court, Epic, Spirit: Indian Art 15th – 19th Century*, a show of historical artworks from India opening on September 15 at Luhring Augustine Bushwick. The showcase marks the first time Luhring Augustine has partnered with the London-based gallery Francesca Galloway, internationally renowned in the field of Indian art. Anchoring the exhibition will be a late 18th – early 19th century Mughal-style pleasure pavilion façade, which previously figured in Luhring Augustine's *The Pleasure Pavilion: A series of installations* that featured contemporary artists in dialogue with the structure. *Court, Epic, Spirit* will place the pavilion back in conversation with contemporaneous work such as textiles, paintings, and courtly objects. Grounding the works in their historical context, the selection will offer insights into artistic and cultural movements in India during this time.

The title of the exhibition refers to three key lenses through which to view the multi-faceted and extraordinarily inventive arts of India: court, epic, spirit. With these organizing principles as a guide, the exceptional and iconic works of art in the installation can be more fully considered and understood.

A fine and rare 17th century panel from a lavish royal tent will be among the exhibition's featured objects. The panel is part of an important group thought to have been originally commissioned for the Muslim rulers of the Deccan, a region of central India. For both Rajput and Mughal rulers, tents were immensely important, especially to the latter given the nomadic lifestyle required to govern their vast empire.

Indian painting is above all a storytelling medium, created to illustrate epic texts. These narratives, and the paintings that accompanied, them were an integral aspect of the region's cultural traditions throughout this period. A work of particular importance in the exhibition is a recently discovered 16th century painting from the early Imperial Mughal manuscript of the great epic, the *Hamzanama* ('Story of Hamza'), one of the supreme achievements of Indian art. Commissioned by a young Emperor Akbar, it is the only known folio depicting this episode and represents a significant addition to the scholarship, not least because it was painted by Dasvant, a master artist in the Imperial atelier.

Also significant to the artistic output of the region were artworks focusing on the idea of worship – some depicting and enabling acts of revery, and some imbued with spiritual power. Hindu *ragamala* paintings depict verses that in turn evoke a mode of music. Through a very unusual group of 17th century *ragamala* paintings, most likely from the northern Deccan, the connection between sound, image, and spirit can be explored. The wild sense of colour and proportion coupled with stark architecture and sumptuous textiles, lend these paintings an assured and individual aesthetic. Another highlight of the show will be a masterpiece of painting on cloth illustrating *Dana Lila*, or Krishna playfully demanding a toll from the *gopis*. This type of Deccani *pichhvai*, a painted cotton temple cloth, is rare, with only a handful of examples in museum collections around the world.

Court, Epic, Spirit: Indian Art 15th – 19th Century will be on view through December 18, 2021 and will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue.

For information on the exhibition, please contact Leah Horowitz at 212-206-9100 or leah@luhringaugustine.com
For press requests, please contact Caroline Burghardt at caroline@luhringaugustine.com



Figure 1
Panel from a Kalamkari tent
Golconda region of the Coromandel Coast, c.1640-1650
Mordant-painted and -dyed and resist-dyed plain-weave cotton
Textile 92 x 75 inches; Stretcher 96.5 x 80.5 inches



Figure 2
A page from the *Dastan-I Amir Hamza* commissioned by Akbar: Amir Hamza clings to the Rukh's legs to carry him home across the sea
Imperial Mughal, attributed to Dasvant, c.1565
Opaque pigments on cotton with paper support for the text
Painting 25 x 20.9 inches; Folio 27.8 x 20.8 inches

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Figure 3
Two illustrations from a ragamala series
Northern Deccan, c. 1630-50
Opaque pigments with gold on paper
Folio 20 x 16.3 inches; Painting 17.7 x 14.5 inches

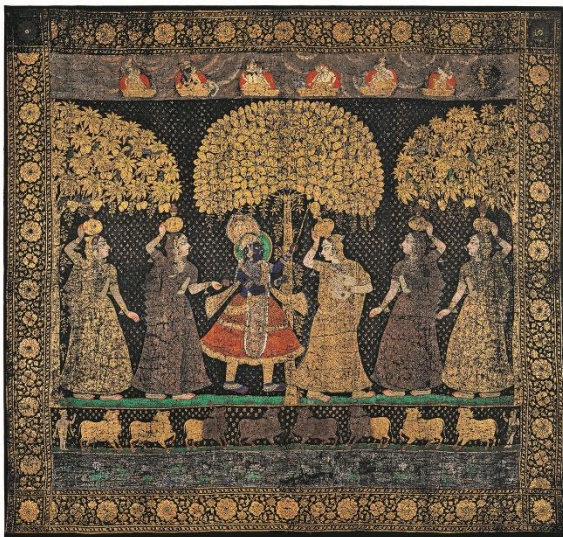


Figure 4
Pichhvai of Dana Lila (the demanding of toll)
Deccan, possibly Hyderabad, mid-19th century
Cotton; with stencilled and painted design, gold and silver
applied with an adhesive, with additional painted pigments
100.9 x 94.3 inches (mount 101 x 96 inches)