

Journey Through Indian History at an Exclusive Auction of Antiquarian Books, Prints, Maps, and Photographs

- Saffronart's upcoming auction *Passages to India: A Journey Through Rare Books, Prints, Maps, Photographs, and Letters* takes place online on 24 – 25 July
- The sale features 93 lots among which are rare antiquarian books, maps, letters, and prints documenting important scenes from colonial India
- The expansive catalogue covers a variety of subjects, including Indian history, art, culture, landscapes, architecture, and travelogues

Mumbai, 11 July 2024: Saffronart's upcoming auction *Passages to India: A Journey Through Rare Books, Prints, Maps, Photographs, and Letters* brings together 93 carefully curated lots that explore India's rich history and culture, significantly during colonial rule and the freedom struggle. The catalogue is remarkable in that it encompasses a wide range of subjects, including history, religion, social life and customs, natural history, textiles, landscapes, architecture, the Imperial Durbars, military history, and travelogues. The auction will take place **online on 24 – 25 July 2024** with opportunities to view each lot in person at **Saffronart's Mumbai gallery from 19 – 25 July**.

The sale includes several prints that offer insight into 18th- and 19th-century India and contribute greatly to the valuable documentation of the country's history. ***Les Hindous: Ou Description de Leurs Moeurs, Coutumes et Ceremonies* by François Balthazar Solvyns (lot 93; Estimate: Rs 34 - 40 lakhs)** is a four-volume compilation of coloured etched plates offering detailed visuals of Indian society and culture in the 1790s. ***Oriental Scenery One Hundred and Fifty Views of the Architecture, Antiquities and Landscape Scenery of Hindoostan* (lot 92; Estimate: Rs 14 – 20 lakhs)** is one of the best-known works by Thomas Daniell and William Daniell, both among the most outstanding European landscape artists to document the Indian subcontinent in the 18th and 19th centuries. The work comprises six series of engravings with 144 later hand-coloured aquatint plates depicting Mughal and Dravidian monuments, cityscapes, and sublime landscapes of India. ***An Exquisite Collection of Calcutta Prints* by James Baille Fraser (lot 90; Estimate: Rs 16 – 20 lakhs)** features a set of prints of early 19th-century Calcutta, including views of Chandpal Ghat, the Government House, and the Writers' Building. ***A Set of 6 Prints on the Sikh War* (lot 84; Estimate: Rs 7.5 – 8.5 lakhs)** includes 6 hand-coloured aquatints by J Harris based on watercolours by Henry Martens documenting the fierce battles of the First Anglo-Sikh War fought between 1845 and 1848. ***Chir Singh [Sher Singh] Maharaja des Siks, Roi de Panjab Avec sa Suite/ Lahore Avril 1842* by Louis Henri de Rudder after Alexis Soltykoff (lot 83; Estimate Rs 5 - 6 lakhs)**

is a striking and expansive lithograph print from 1842 that portrays the Maharaja of the Punjab, Sher Singh, and his retinue on a hunting expedition.

Other highlights include *The Chalees Satoon in the Fort of Allahabad on the River Jumna* (1795) by Thomas Daniell ([lot 70](#); Estimate: Rs 4 – 5 lakhs); *A View of the Government House and Council Chamber, Madras* (1807) by Henry Merke ([lot 72](#); Estimate: Rs 4 - 6 lakhs); and *Calcutta from the Water Gate of Fort William* (circa 1845) by Dickinson & Co. after William Prinsep ([lot 75](#); Estimate Rs 4 - 5 lakhs).

The sale also features rare first-edition books, including a first-edition translation of the Bhagavad Gita, *The Bhagvat-Geeta, or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon; in Eighteen Lectures; with Notes* by Charles Wilkins ([lot 1](#); Estimate: Rs 5 – 6 lakhs); the first edition of the *Constitution of India* from 1950 ([lot 91](#); Estimate: Rs 18 – 20 lakhs); and *Sketch of the Sikhs; A Singular Nation, Who Inhabit the Provinces of the Penjab, Situated Between the Rivers Jumna and Indus* ([lot 22](#); Estimate: Rs 2 – 3 lakhs), an extremely rare account of Sikhism, authored by Sir John Malcolm, and the first book on Sikhs ever published in English.

Other important letters and books from the expansive catalogue include *A Typewritten Letter From M K Gandhi to Dr. Behram Navroji Khambhatta* ([lot 87](#); Estimate: Rs 5.5 – 6.5 lakhs), dated April 1928 and signed by Mahatma Gandhi; *Jung Indien: Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1919 bis 1922* (*Young India: Essays From the Years 1919 to 1922*) signed by Mahatma Gandhi ([lot 64](#); Estimate: Rs 3.5 – 4.5 lakhs); *Chitrakshar* by Abanindranath Tagore ([lot 89](#); Estimate: Rs 4 – 5 lakhs), a little-known album on the Bengali alphabet depicting each letter as an integral part of an illustration of a bird, animal etc; *Indian Jewellery (1909)*, an important survey of Indian jewellery signed by its author Thomas Holbein Hendley and illustrated by W Griggs & Sons, Ltd. ([lot 48](#); Estimate: 2.5 – 3.5 lakhs); *Nicholai Konstantinovich Roerich, His Life and Creations During The Past Forty Years 1889-1929* ([lot 50](#); Estimate: Rs 2 – 3 lakhs), a limited-edition suite of black-and-white reproductions of Nicholas Roerich's paintings; and *The Discovery of India*, signed by Jawaharlal Nehru ([lot 66](#); Estimate Rs 1.5 – 2 lakhs).

Minal Vazirani, Saffronart President and Co-Founder said, “Saffronart’s upcoming auction *Passages to India: A Journey Through Rare Books, Prints, Maps, Photographs, and Letters* is an incredible opportunity for experts and enthusiasts of Indian antiquarian culture to acquire rare collectibles that offer a rich insight into the region’s diverse traditions and history. Each lot is a notable documentation of the minute details of Indian history, which might otherwise have been lost to the passage of time. The market for these collectibles has grown tremendously in the last decade and beyond their aesthetic and intellectual significance, these objects also hold value.

The auction will take place on the Saffronart website and will be preceded by viewings in Mumbai. All lots can be viewed on saffronart.com.

AUCTION DATES

Passages to India: A Journey Through Rare Books, Prints,
Maps, Photographs, and Letters Auction | 24 - 25 July 2024
on saffronart.com

VIEWINGS

MUMBAI

19 – 25 July 2024
11 am – 6 pm, Monday to Saturday
Sunday (by appointment only)

VENUE

Industry Manor, Ground Floor
Appasaheb Marathe Marg
Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400025

To make an appointment, please contact +91 22 6855 4100 or email us at auction@saffronart.com

ABOUT SAFFRONART

Founded in 2000 by Minal and Dinesh Vazirani, Saffronart is a leading international auction house, and India's most reputed, with over three hundred auctions to its credit. Its flagship gallery is in Mumbai, with offices in New Delhi, London, and New York. At the forefront of selling Indian art, Saffronart has held online and live auctions, exhibitions, and Dialogues in Art, working with collectors, gallerists, and artists to develop a strong market for art and aesthetics. Its focus is to bring transparency to the auction process and provide easy access and information to collectors around the world. Saffronart's services go beyond auctions to include private sales, appraisals, and valuations for clients. Saffronart has set several global benchmarks for online auctions and was the subject of a case study at Harvard Business School in 2005.

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