

UNDER SIGHT



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MARGINALIZED SUPPORTING ROLE

Colonialism is the occupation of another country with long-term settlers in order to control it and gain economic and strategic benefits. Colonialism never truly ended – its legacies and effects are still felt today in everyday life.

The establishment of the British East India Company led many British artists to focus on India. The hidden meanings of this calls for deep thought. *Under Sight* shows the colonial gaze in British artworks, both portraits and landscapes.

Comparison between British and Indian artists' artworks, and open questions posed to audiences aim to link up the past and the present through visible history. We want to start a participatory dialogue to discuss these invisible inequalities and think about the gaze under the shadow of colonialism in the grey corners of the contemporary era.

• 「SILENT MAJORITY」

From 1750 onwards, images of Indian people began to appear in works by British artists. These were often depictions of subordinate or lower status' people such as servants, nautch girls (Indian female dancers) or performers. This differing status is seen more clearly when portrayed next to the British people in the artworks, since they are usually placed farther away or smaller. British people are depicted as powerful and in control.

This section also looks at the British view of India through their use of traditional English style portraiture. These portraits convey the British sense of superiority at this time that colonialism created. By comparing portrayals of Indian people and British people created during this same period by British artists, the lower status of Indian people, in the eyes of British colonists, becomes very clear.

Finally, we see some artworks created by Indian artists depicting similar topics to British artists. By looking at these works we want to provoke people to think about how Indian artists created artworks that catered to British interests.



Arthur William Devis
Emily and George Mason, 1794 – 95
Oil on canvas, Public Domain

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

At first glance, this could be an image of two children at home in England. However, this painting actually depicts the children of an East India Company agent, playing in their Indian home.

Like many British people in India, the family have chosen to decorate their home in the traditional English style of the period, at odds with their actual surroundings.

The Indian servants waiting outside are not immediately obvious in this image.

The family have purposely chosen to separate themselves both visually and physically from them. Works like these, and the collections they belong to tell us a lot about British families like the Mason's but very little about the Indian people who served them.



The Indian Woman, Undated
Graphite on paper, Public Domain

Yale Center for British Art,
Yale Art Gallery Collection,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J.
Richardson Dilworth, B.A.
1938

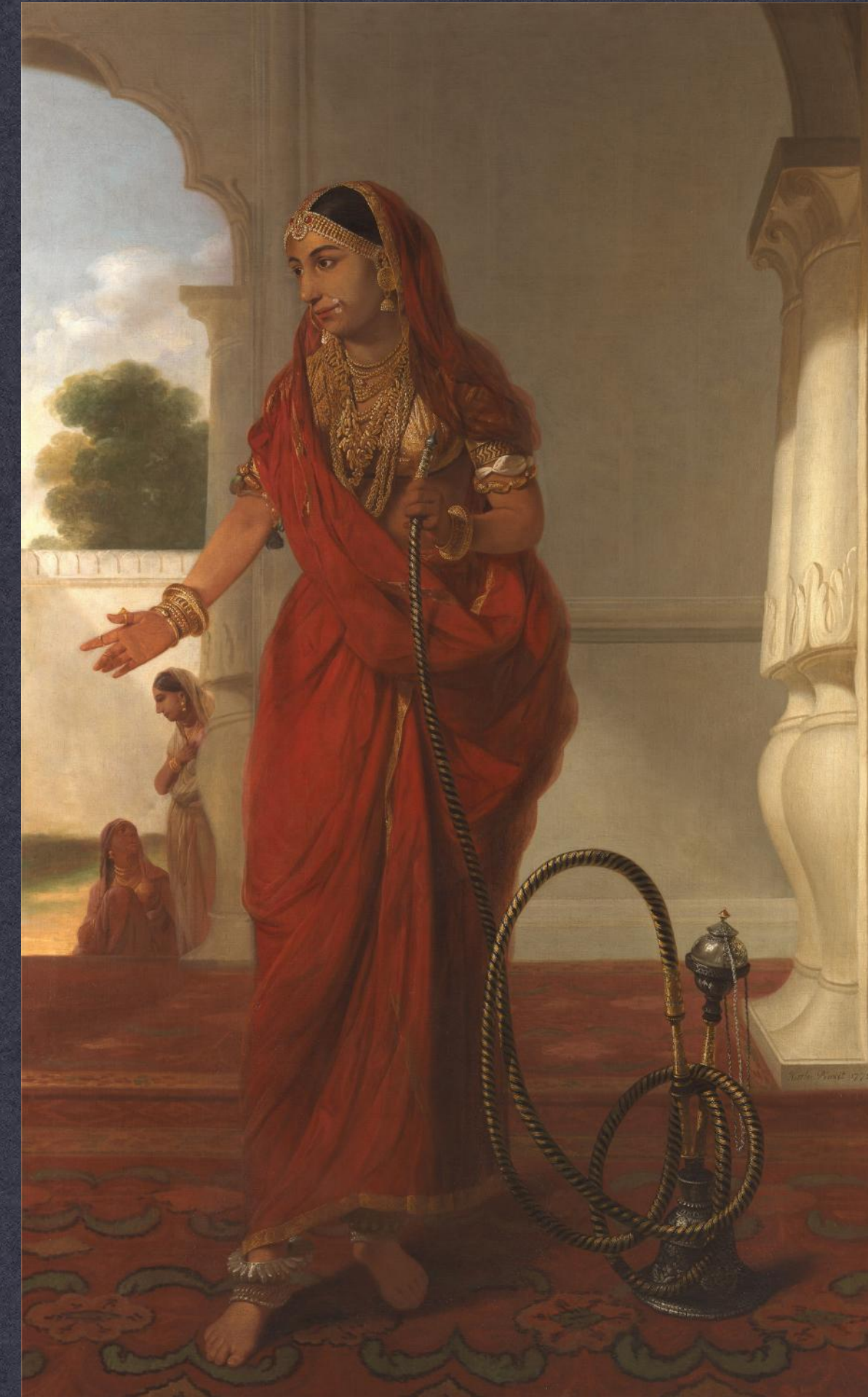
What differences
do you see
in the way
Indian and British people
are presented?



George Chinnery
Study for the Portrait of a
Military Officer, Undated
Watercolour and graphite on
paper, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art,
Paul Mellon Collection



Arthur William Devis
Portrait of a Gentleman and an Indian
Servant, ca.1785
Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
 Mellon Collection



Tilly Kettle
A Woman of the Court at Faizabad,
1772
Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
 Mellon Collection



Tilly Kettle
Shuja-ud-Daula, Nawab of Oudh, 1772
Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Some Indian officials and rulers became interested in British use of portraiture as a symbol of power.

Shuja-ud-Daula commissioned Kettle (who usually painted British officials) to paint this portrait to project a powerful image of himself to the British. This helped when he negotiated to hire troops for his military campaigns.

The portrait uses the colonial gaze to make Shuja-ud-Daula appear powerful. He meets your gaze, is dressed in fine clothes, and his subjects are shown smaller to the right. However, he has gained power using visual methods and ideas from British colonial rule.

Does this complicate how you look at him?



Watercolours by Gangaram Cintaman Tambat

Does his work
fit your understanding
of the colonial gaze?

How is his work different from
British artists in the
exhibition?



Gangaram Chintaman Tambat
A Man holding a Scroll I, Undated
Watercolour and graphite on
paper, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art,
Paul Mellon Collection

Gangaram Chintaman Tambat
Man with a Stringed Instrument,
Undated
Watercolour, gouache, and graphite
on paper, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
Mellon Collection

Indian artist, **Gangaram Chintaman Tambat** worked with artists presented in this exhibition, like Thomas Daniell, as a guide and artistic assistant.

He was an Indian artist making works largely for, and because of, British interest.

Like many Indian artists who worked alongside British artists touring India, little is known about him. This means Indian artists like him are often left out of narratives discussing these works.

• 「ETERNAL SHADOW」

Indian landscape works created by British artists in the 18th century can be seen as a subtle expression of colonial gaze.

During this period, British artists in India gazed at local natural sceneries and harmonious rural life, then pictured a romantic, exotic and peaceful colonial image. These works presents India in the eyes of British colonizers and documents a carefully constructed understanding of this country. Meanwhile, there were very few British artists who directly revealed the tragedies that happened under British colonialism with realistic narratives that uncovered the cruel truth beneath the harmony.

Behind the numerous Indian landscape paintings was a whitewash for the legitimacy of colonial goals, a commemoration of the spoils of wars, as well as a consolidation of British beliefs and values.

The landscape works in this section highlight exactly how the unfolding of fictive narratives and hidden conspiracies are used by the colonial gaze



Arthur William Devis
Grinding Corn, 1792 – 1795
Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
Mellon Collection



William Hodges
The Marmalong Bridge, ca. 1783
Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
Mellon Collection

'Grinding Corn' by Arthur William Devis and *The Marmalong Bridge* by **William Hodges** are examples of popular Indian landscapes by British artists from the eighteenth century. They romanticise rural life, showing people carrying water from the river and preparing food.

If we look closer at Hodges' 'The Marmalong Bridge' however, an alternative reading of this idyllic portrayal emerges. The man stood beside the woman carrying water is a Sepoy, an Indian soldier serving under British orders.

His presence shows how conflict ran through colonial rule. Life for Indian citizens was not as idyllic as these British landscapes seem to suggest.

These are three artworks by British artists.

Do you think they are the true reflection of India?



John Gantz

The Basket Maker, 1828

Black ink and watercolour on paper,
Public Domain

Yale Center for British Art, Paul
 Mellon Collection



Thomas Daniel I

Indian Temple, Said to Be the
Mosque of Abo-ul-Nabi, Muttra,
1827

Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
 Mellon Collection



George Chinnery

Indian Landscape with Temple, ca.
1815

Oil on canvas, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Paul
 Mellon Collection



William Simpson
Elephant Battery, 1864

Watercolor and gouache over graphite on paper, Public Domain

Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Elephants were a popular subject for British artists. They played a significant role in Indian court culture and were a symbol of royal power that fascinated British viewers.

During colonial rule, the elephant was embraced by British officials as a military asset and as a signifier of their own power. By the nineteenth century, the British government had a monopoly on the trade of elephants and had taken many of the traditions that the Indian courts had established as their own.

They saw themselves as the controllers of India's natural world, able to command and use its resources as they wished. Images of elephants as exotic and powerful creatures, now under British control, only strengthened this narrative.



William Simpson
Famine in India, 1866

Brown wash and ink on paper, Public Domain
Yale Center for British Art, Gift of Paul F. Walter

This work is unusual in not portraying a highly romanticised view of India. Instead, it directly confronts the negative consequences of British rule.

The famine depicted by Simpson affected India's east coast, especially the isolated region of Orissa. It tragically led to the deaths of at least a million people.

British rulers did very little to intervene in cases of famine like this one. During this year, colonial rulers continued to export over 200 million pounds of rice to Britain. This was a key turning point for many Indian people angry about the effects of British rule in India.

- 「NOWHERE TO HIDE」

“Colonialism” might seem to be a word from a long time ago, but it still exists today in our lives through the form of privilege and prejudice.

Colonialism has never gone out of date, but generated new variants that permeate everyday life.

08/12/2022, Clay Pit Lane, Leeds

09/25/2022, Lower Marsh, Waterloo, London

12/01/2019, Piazza Santa Croce, Italy

05/06/2022, New Town, Birmingham

10/03/2022, Central Train Station, Glasgow

10/12/2022,, Oxford Street, London

12/09/2020, 동대문패션타운관광특구, 서울특별시

07/30/2022, Denmark Street, Soho, London

02/18/2021, Leganes, Madrid, Spain

Some natives spit on me and say "Get F*** off of our country!"

01/26/2022,

I don't want to be treated equally because of my race.

08/05/2021, Richmond St, Brooklyn, New York - Mohan Jin, Asian, Australia

梅田, 大阪

People need to make sure 'what is right and what is wrong'.

東京のレストランを歩いていると、ウェイターが私にサービスを提供してくれませんでした。 - 王一森, Asian, Tokyo

- Navi, Asian, Punjab

When I'm the only one in the crowd with yellow skin.

When they celebrated their festival that I never heard before.

- Jieyu Xu, Asian, England

- Destiny, Asian, England

11/09/2020, Dantzig Street, Manchester

Just staring at me. Sad.

- Anna, Asian, NYC

- Priscilla, Asian, Boston

my interview on the grounds that my name sounded black.

- Kipruto, Afro-Americans, Washington D.C

11/29/2020, Virginia Avenue, Washington D.C, USA

In the museum.

-Madison, Asian, Leeds

When I was watching War II movie. - Captain, Asian, Shanghai

11/26/2017, 포개항, 부산광역시 They rejected

03/13/2022, 台東区東上野四丁目, 東京

Why do I have to be treated that way?

- Daisy, Asian, Seoul, Korea

Asian face, I was forced to tip. - Hao, Asian, England

Once I was

In qualsiasi momento. - Bei Pan, Asian, Italy

threatened by natives because I'm a white person.

04/22/2017, Aberdeen Ln, Ohio

- Rose, British, South Africa

Fui ridiculizado por mi acento en el momento de la presentación.

Fear and Anger.

- Evangeline, Asian, Glasgow

10/23/2019, Public Garden, Boston, USA

怒っているが何もできない。 - 林荣, Asian, Tokyo

- Jose, Spanish, Ohio

다른 아시아 국가에서 온 사람으로 식별되어 거리에서 학대를 당함. - SeongHyun, Asian, California

09/06/2015, Hartman Street, Port Elizabeth, South Africa

12/15/2018, Swanston Street, Hoddle Grid, Melbourne

Staff members in stores treat me with bad attitudes. - Melody, Asian, London

Sometimes I receive unfriendly gesture from strangers with other skin colors.

- Stella, Asian, England

06/27/2021,

8th Street, New York

09/17/2019, 神奈川県, 川崎市

04/16/2019, Lord Street, Liverpool

03/12/2019, Greenwich Street, New York

I will get that. - Steve, Asian, Scotland

They say some

discriminatory words

to me and my friends.

- Janette, Asian, Leeds

03/16/2022,, University Road, Southampton

11/14/2022, Manchester

12/10/2021, Rue Laffitte, 9^e arrondissement de Paris - Sydney, New South Wales

Under Sight,

Ruxiao Yang & Pingrui Li & Kexin Rong & Elsie Taylor

2022,
digital

This work comes from the real feedback of the discrimination or gaze under colonialism felt by people all over the world. The curators collected the experience of audiences from different regions and races through questionnaires and created the final work together with them.