

MARCH *to* FREEDOM

Reflections on India's Independence on its Seventy-Fifth Anniversary

The Indian Museum, Kolkata, in partnership with DAG present *March to Freedom*, on the occasion of the seventy-fifth year of Independence. The exhibition is curated by Dr Mrinalini Venkateswaran, a historian and curator who is currently based at Royal Holloway, University of London.

March to Freedom opens to the public on 23 July 2022 at the historic Indian Museum, Kolkata, and will remain on view until 18 September 2022, as part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations by the Government of India. Consisting of 160 works of art and historical artefacts, the exhibition re-interprets the well-known story of the Indian freedom struggle and anti-colonial movement through art. It draws on DAG's extensive collection of modern and early modern Indian art, and ranges from eighteenth and nineteenth century European paintings and prints, to unknown works by Indian artists that merit greater recognition, as well as several iconic pieces by celebrated modern artists. Particularly noteworthy are the seldom seen before photographs, historical maps, travel and cinema posters from pop culture and collectible figures that add to the diversity of material being showcased in this grand-scale collaboration.

Alongside Dr Venkateswaran, specialists have contributed to the accompanying book and the making of the exhibition. Instead of following a chronological order of historical events, the narrative of the exhibition has been divided into eight distinct thematic sections. Each section is accompanied by activities that engage viewers of all ages with the themes and questions of the exhibition.

They are as follows:

Battles for Freedom will investigate the significance of the myriad wars scattered through India's past.

The Traffic of Trade situates India and South Asia's colonial histories within a global history of trade, and refocuses attention on the individuals within the broad-brushed narratives that we construct.

See India considers the role that travel and seeing India, both literally and through circulating images, plays in our conception of a nation.

Reclaiming the Past is about the power endowed in the simple act of being able to tell one's own story.

Exhibit India is about being able to showcase one's culture.

From Colonial to National focuses on the different places and spaces in which the anti-colonial struggle took place.

Shaping the Nation emphasises individuals who led the effort to imagine a nation over the decades.

Independence explores the moment of the nation's Independence and its aftermath: the joys, sorrows, and multitude of experiences of freedom.

March to Freedom continues DAG's engagement with the people of Kolkata, and follows in the footsteps of ***Ghare Baire***, a museum-scale exhibition dedicated to Bengal's art that opened in the Currency Building in early 2020 (in association with the Archaeological Survey of India, and the National Gallery of Modern Art).

Mr Ashish Anand, CEO & Managing Director, DAG, notes, "Since 2019, DAG has promoted educational, non-profit exhibitions that bring art to the wider Indian public. To achieve this goal, we have partnered with important national institutions like the National Gallery of Modern Art Mumbai (***The Romantic Realist: M. V. Dhurandhar***, 2018), and the Archaeological Survey of India (***Drishyakala***, at the Delhi Red Fort, 2019; and ***Ghare Baire*** at Kolkata's Currency Building, 2020). We have exhibition partnerships with other leading Indian museums such as the Dr Bhau Daji Lad Museum, in addition to ongoing exhibitions at our gallery spaces that have been extremely well-received. Some of our path-breaking shows have included material that has never before been seen in India. The enthusiastic response has spurred us on to do more, and better. ***March to Freedom*** presents us with a special moment: celebrating seventy-five years of Indian Independence at the oldest museum in the country."

NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

"This exhibition draws upon works of art from the DAG collection to tell the story of how independent India came to be. If you are expecting the 'usual' history exhibition, we hope you will be surprised by what you find, or find missing. For those expecting a 'typical' art exhibition, we hope to startle you by the eclectic mix of works on display.

Many of us may remember the familiar timeline of events, and the famous people who led the march to freedom, from our school lessons. Others may recall it from personal experience, or family stories. Here, we will explore the story through artworks grouped around eight themes. You have the freedom to approach the exhibition as you like.

As we celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of our birth as a nation, this exhibition offers a space to pause and reflect on our journey towards nationhood. How we accommodate and negotiate with our past changes over time, depending on our present realities. So, what we choose to do today will shape our future."

-Dr. Mrinalini Venkateswaran

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR, INDIAN MUSEUM

"We feel privileged to collaborate with DAG in presenting the exhibition 'March to Freedom – exploring the many facets of the journey towards independence through art' on the

momentous occasion of the celebration of 75 years of India's Independence, 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'."

- A.D. Choudhury, Director, Indian Museum

EXHIBITED ARTISTS

- A. A. Raiba (1922-2016)
- Asit Kumar Haldar (1890-1964)
- Alfred Crowdy Lovett (1862-1919)
- Atul Bose (1898-1977)
- Baburao Sadwelkar (1928-2000)
- Bijan Chowdhury (1931-2012)
- Biren De (1926-2011)
- C. Stanfield (1793-1867)
- Charles D'Oyly (1781-1845)
- Charles Shepherd (1892-Date Unknown)
- Charles Walters D'Oyly (1822-1900)
- Chintamani Kar (1915-2005)
- Chittaprosad (1915-1978)
- Dattatraya Apte (b. 1953)
- David Gould Green (1854-1918)
- Devayani Krishna (1910-2000)
- D. Newsome (1900-1980)
- Edward Orme (1775-1848)
- Gobardhan Ash (1907-1996)
- Gopal Ghose (1913-1980)
- G. Tait (1891-1954)
- Haren Das (1921-1993)
- Hemanta Misra (1917-2009)
- Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004)
- Henry Martens (1790-1868)
- Henry Salt (1780-1827)
- Henry Singleton (1766-1839)
- Jacob Epstein (1880-1959)
- James Hunter (1755-1792)
- James Fraser (178-1856)
- John Gantz (1772-1853)
- John Jabez Edwin Mayall (1813-1901)
- K. K. Hebbar (1911-1996)
- Kanwal Krishna (1910-1993)
- K. C. S. Paniker (1911-1977)
- K. G. Subramanyan (1924-2016)
- K. Sreenivasulu (1923-1995)
- K. S. Kulkarni (1916-1994)
- Laxman Pai (1926-2021)
- M. Eyre Proudman (1906-1989)
- M. K. Parandekar (1877-1961)
- M. S. Morgan (1837-1890)
- Nemai Ghosh (1934-2020)
- N. R. Sardesai (1885-1954)
- P. A. Dhond (1908-2001)
- Prokash Karmakar (1933-2014)
- P. T. Reddy (1915-1996)
- Radha Charan Bagchi (1910-1977)
- Robert Dodd (1748-1816)
- R. Vijay (b. 1970)
- Satish Gujral (1925-2020)
- Satish Sinha (1893-1965)
- S. Dhanapal (1919-2000)
- Stella Brown (fl. 1930s)
- Sudhir Khastgir (1907-1974)
- Sushil Chandra Sen (1909-1972)
- Sunil Das (1939-2015)
- Sunil Madhav Sen (1910-1979)
- Thomas Anbury (1759-1849)
- Thomas Daniell (1749-1840)
- Thomas Jones Barker (1815-1882)
- V. B. Pathare (1911-2005)
- V. A. Mali (1911-2011)
- V. Veervers (1903-1970)
- William Daniell (1769-1837)
- William Hodges (1744-1797)

CURATORIAL CONSULTANTS AND CONTRIBUTING SCHOLARS

Dr. Sumathi Ramaswamy (James B. Duke Distinguished Professor of History, Duke University), Dr. Aparna Vaidik (Associate Professor of History, Ashoka University). Dr. Sujit Sivasundaram (Professor of World History, University of Cambridge), Dr. Aashique Ahmed Iqbal (Assistant Professor of History, Krea University), Dr. Maroona Murmu (Professor of History, Jadavpur University), Dr. Lakshmi Subramanian [Professor of History (Retd.), Centre for Studies in Social Sciences; Visiting Professor, BITS Pilani-Goa], Dr. Pushkar Sohoni (Associate Professor of Humanities and Social Sciences, IISER).

PROGRAMMES AND EVENTS

The Indian Museum and DAG have organised a series of events and programmes as a part of the exhibition 'March to Freedom'. Each weekend we take a closer look at different sections of this historic exhibition, exploring the various arenas within which the anticolonial struggle took place through workshops, talks and walks that are free and open to all. We invite

audiences to join us for a line-up of special programmes during the opening of the exhibition and over the weekend celebrations of India's 75th year of Independence.

OPENING WEEKEND		
Friday, 22 July 4.00 pm to 5.30 pm	Inauguration of the exhibition, <i>March to Freedom</i> <i>By invitation only</i>	The inaugural event features a curatorial walkthrough of the exhibition by Giles Tillotson in the presence of His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal.
Saturday, 23 July 7.00 pm to 8.30 pm	Opening Weekend Performance: Navtej Johar's <i>Tanashah</i> <i>Free and open to all</i>	A groundbreaking solo performance by Navtej Johar based on the jail diaries of Bhagat Singh, the drama explores a lesser-known side of the anguished, young revolutionary during the last days of his life.
INDIA AT 75 CELEBRATIONS		
Saturday, 13 August 11.00 am to 1.00 pm	গল্প বলি, গল্প শোনো / Hear me out! Storytelling Sessions <i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i>	A storytelling festival for young people from ages 10 to 16 by changemakers, activists and artists, exploring the idea of freedom from various walks of life.
Saturday, 13 August 4.00 pm to 5:30 pm	March to Freedom: Panel discussion with Mrinalini Venkateswaran (Curator), Aparna Vaidik, Lakshmi Subramanian and Pushkar Sohoni <i>Free and open to all</i>	A panel discussion with Mrinalini Venkateswaran— the curator of the exhibition— and contributing writers and advisors, Aparna Vaidik, Lakshmi Subramanian, Pushkar Sohoni, and Giles Tillotson, on the making of the exhibition, and the questions and concerns that they are faced with today as historians of art and culture.
Sunday, 14 August 11.00 am to 1.00 pm	Curator's Take: Guided walk of the exhibition <i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i>	A guided walk of the exhibition with the curator and contributing writers on the lesser-known narratives of the Independence movement.
Sunday 14 August 5:30 pm	Improvising the Khyal: Afterhours Music Concert by Ranjani Ramachandran; introduced by Lakshmi Subramanian <i>Free and open to all</i>	A khyal performance by Ranjani Ramachandran, drawing from the repertoire of the Gwalior and Jaipur gharanas, that will focus on her interpretive style and the legacy of women performers in post-independence India. Introduced by Lakshmi Subramanian, a historian of music and trade.

WEEKEND PROGRAMMES

<p>Saturday, 30 July 11.00 am to 12.00 pm</p>	<p>The Battle of the Textbooks: A presentation by Dr. Maroona Murmu on the absent protagonists in our history books</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>What happens when important events and personalities are left out of our histories? From school textbooks to mainstream narratives of the national struggle, this session will explore how such gaps come about and what consequences they have for us in the present.</p>
<p>Saturday, 6 August 11.00 am to 1.00 pm</p>	<p>Mapping the Colony: A cartography workshop on the different methods of colonial and post-colonial mapmaking, led by Dr. Priyank Patel</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>The science of map-making has an important place in the way we imagine the shape of our land and its waterbodies. How does one make such maps? Why do they change over time? Explore these questions and work on some real maps during this session.</p>
<p>Saturday, 20 August 11.00 am to 1.00 pm</p>	<p>Font, Form, Function: A typography workshop exploring poster design techniques in colonial India led by Diptanshu Roy</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>The exhibition features several innovative fonts and types that were used for poster designs and artworks over the last century and more. This workshop presents an opportunity to see these at close range and design some of your own fonts.</p>
<p>Saturday, 27 August 11.00 am to 1.00 pm</p>	<p>Preserving the Past: Workshop-cum-demonstration, led by Kamalika Mukherjee on restoration and preservation techniques for paper-based heritage items</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>Even though letters, photographs and diaries are among the simplest household items, they bear the burden of our family memories. Learn some easy ways to preserve these precious documents for the future generation.</p>
<p>Saturday, 3 September 11.00 am to 1.00 pm</p>	<p>Crossing the Midnight Hour: Guided walk led by Sujaan Mukherjee, from Dalhousie to Indian Museum on the changing city before and after Independence</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>The neighbourhood around the Indian Museum is one of the oldest in Kolkata. In this walk, we will see the changing faces of the city centre and the narratives and legends surrounding such iconic monuments like the Shahid Minar, and popular marketplaces like New Market.</p>

<p>Saturday, 10 September 11.00 am to 1.00 pm</p>	<p>Iconic Impressions: Printmaking workshop on lesser-known icons of the Independence movement, led by Rahee Punyashloka</p> <p><i>Free and open to all with prior registration at www.dagworld.com</i></p>	<p>As an exciting, emerging artist, Rahee Punyashloka (@artedkar) has developed a visually striking and critically grounded practice of making linocuts that are re-shaping the way we look at our most popular icons of history. In this workshop we will be learning from his method and making our own impressions.</p>
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ABOUT DAG

Established in 1993, DAG is an art company that includes art galleries, exhibitions, museum collaborations, publishing, archives, and knowledge-based interactions. With India's largest inventory of art and archival material and a vigorous acquisitions policy, it offers curators and writers opportunities for planning and executing important, historic exhibitions. These have taken place at its galleries in New Delhi, Mumbai and New York, as well as through collaborations with leading institutions in India and abroad.

India's first public-private collaboration in the arts space began in January 2019 with *Drishyakala* art museum in the precincts of Red Fort, New Delhi—a UNESCO world heritage monument—in which the Archaeological Survey of India partnered with DAG. In January 2020, the Prime Minister inaugurated *Ghare Baire: The World, the Home and Beyond, 18th to 20th Century Art in Bengal*, a museum-exhibition at the Currency Building, Kolkata, curated by DAG in collaboration with NGMA. More large-scale projects are planned for the future.