

EXTRAORDINARY ENDEAVOURS

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF COMMUNICATION, COLLABORATION AND DISSEMINATION
AT THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

The Brunei Gallery, SOAS and the Royal Asiatic Society are pleased to present an exhibition celebrating the Society's bicentenary and its involvement in the study of science, literature, religion and the arts of Asia since 1823.

12 October – 15 December 2023
Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London
(GROUND FLOOR AND LOWER GALLERY)

The Brunei Gallery, SOAS and the Royal Asiatic Society are pleased to present an exhibition celebrating the Society's bicentenary and its involvement in the study of science, literature, religion and the arts of Asia since 1823. The exhibition traces the broad development of Asian Studies in Britain as revealed through the Society's collections and the activities of its members. It also highlights the important contributions made by Asian teachers, translators and artists who played significant roles in facilitating British scholars in their encounters with and explorations of Asia over the past 200 years.

The exhibition includes rare books, manuscripts, paintings, photographs and maps from the collections and reveals how Asian works of literature, art and religion made a lasting impression on British culture. This ranges from popular games such as chess illustrated by a 16th century Persian manuscript (*Risāla i-Shaṭranj* RAS 211) and the original game of 'Snakes and Ladders' (RAS 051.001) painted by a Maharashtran artist, ca. 1800 CE to celebrated works of literature including the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and the *Arabian Nights*.



Snakes and Ladders,
Nagpur, Maharashtra,
c. 1800, RAS 051.001



Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn
(fl.1777–1782),
Persian Lilac,
RAS 025.072

The exhibition reflects the extraordinary diversity of the collections donated to the Society by its members and other institutions and will include:

- The remarkable botanical paintings of Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn (fl.1774-1782).
- Detailed drawings of elements of Indian temple architecture commissioned by the Society from Ram Raz (1790-1833) who compiled the first comprehensive history of Indian architecture based on Sanskrit texts.
- The original drawings and paintings used by James Tod (1782-1835) in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (2 vols.1829-1832) by the Mewari artist, Ghasi (fl.1815-1825) and Tod's kinsman Patrick Young Waugh (1788-1829).
- A short film showing the archaeological excavations at Nineveh and Mosul attributed to the archaeologist Reginald Campbell Thompson (1876-1941) in the 1920's.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of lectures on items in the exhibition held at the premises of the Royal Asiatic Society at 14 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD which are open to all. Please check the RAS website for lectures www.royalasiaticsociety.org or email Matty Bradley, mb@royalasiaticsociety.org to be added on the mailing list. The exhibition is supported by SOAS, The Barakat Trust and Rathbones.

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BRUNEI GALLERY, SOAS
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