



Smithsonian
*Freer Gallery of Art and
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*

Robert J. Del Bonta Collection

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives
Title:	Robert J. Del Bonta Collection
Date:	Circa 1500-1900
Identifier:	FSA.A2014.06
Source:	Underwood & Underwood
Creator:	Del Bontà, Robert John
Extent:	12 Linear feet
Language:	English , French , Dutch; Flemish , German .
Digital Content:	Image(s): Robert J. Del Bonta Collection

Administrative Information

Provenance

Gift of Robert J. Del Bonta, 2014-2019, 2021

Preferred Citation

Robert J. Del Bonta Collection, FSA A2014.06. National Museum of Asian Art Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Biographical / Historical

Dr. Robert J. Del Bontà was born in 1949. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 1978. From 1993 to 2000 he was a research associate and guest curator at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. He also curated major exhibitions for the Berkeley Art Museum; the University of Michigan Museum of Art; the Portland Art Museum; and the New Orleans Museum of Art. He writes and lectures on a wide range of subjects relating to South Asian art including paintings, prints, photographs, popular art, sculptures, and architecture. More recently, he also writes about European prints pertaining to Europe's perception of India and Indo-Portuguese art.

Del Bontà began to collect prints related to South Asia while completing his doctorate in South Asian art history at the University of Michigan in the 1970s. The Robert J. Del Bontà collection contains prints and books depicting

people, cultures, religious customs, gods and goddesses, and architecture of Asia, with a specific emphasis on South Asian art.

Scope and Contents

The collection primarily contains prints, engravings, and books. The majority of the collection highlights the Indian subcontinent from the 16th to the 20th centuries through the lens of Europeans. It contains depiction of the subcontinent's peoples, cultures, monuments, religious sites, and religious practices as seen in Dutch, English, French, German, and Italian publications. Among this collection are also some representations of people from other parts of the world.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into seven series, beginning with the initial gift in support of the 2014 exhibition, *Strange and Wondrous: Prints of India from the Robert J. Del Bontà Collection*. Each series represents a grouping selected by the donor and follows the donor's original curation of the material. E or engraving numbers reflect the donor's numbering system.

Series 1: Original gift supporting the exhibition, *Strange and Wondrous: Prints of India from the Robert J. Del Bontà Collection* in 2014 focusing on ascetics and mendicants. Series 2: Prints and Engravings relating to the rulers including Timurid and Mughal rulers Series 3: 16th-17th century prints Series 4: Engravings and prints from around the world Series 5: English engravings depicting India Series 6: Dutch and French engravings of voyages across the world Series 7: French engravings depicting monuments of India

Bibliography

Calendar Prints: Popular Devotional Art of India, slide set No. 52, American Committee for South Asian Art Color Slide Project, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1984.

"Early European Engravings on Indian Themes," *CSMVS Research Journal 2016*, Saryu Doshi, hon. ed., Bombay: Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formally the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India), pp. 72-83.

"Engraving Eastern Discoveries," *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices*, James Bennett and Russell Kelty, eds., Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2015, pp. 106-13, 323, and 325-26.

"Engraving India in 17th and 18th-century Europe," *Art in Print*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (November-December 2014), pp. 22-27.

"From Herodotus onwards: Descriptions of un-identified Jainas," for *Jaina Law and Society*, published by the Centre of Jaina Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, forthcoming.

"Looking at India, up close and from afar," *Treasures, the Members magazine of the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco*, Vol. II, No. 2, Fall 1998, pp. 6-8.

"M. Abbayi: Krishna und Yashoda" catalogue entry, *Die Sixtinische Madonna: Raffaels Kultbild wird 500*, Andreas Henning, ed., Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden and München: Prestel, 2012, cat. No. 139, p. 293.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Buddhas
Buddhism
Buddhist temples
Cave temples
Ethnography -- South Asia
Fakirs -- India
Hinduism
Mosques
Mughal Empire
Religion
Voyages and travels

Types of Materials:

Engravings
Prints
Stereographs

Names:

Picart, Bernard, 1673-1733
Underwood & Underwood

Places:

Calcutta (India)
India
India -- Goa
Shiva
South Asia
Sri Lanka

Container Listing

Series 1: Strange and Wondrous: Prints of India from the Robert J. Del Bontà Collection Exhibition

Scope and Contents: Includes prints, detached book pages, books, and engravings from 16th through 20th century depicting religious sites, rituals, and people. This series focuses particularly on different ascetic types in India such as portraying yogis and, fakirs, and was the basis of the 2014 exhibition.

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bontà's numbering system.

FSA A2014.06 01: [Voyagien der Engelsen, pages 9 and 10, 1706](#)

1 Item (Print on paper)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: FSA A2014.06 01

Printed book folio.

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

France

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 02: [Voyagien der Engelsen, pages 7 and 8, 1706](#)

1 Item (Print on paper)

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: FSA A2014.06 02

Printed book folio.

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

France

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 03: [Indiaanische pagodem en schrikkelyke boetdoeningen of lichaams kwellingen der fakirs, from Tegenwoordige staat van de koninkryken Pegu, Ava, Arrakan, Acham. Als mede van het eigentlyke India, of het ryk van den Groten Mogol, en van Malabar, Kormandel, en het eiland Ceilon, 1730s](#)

1 Item (Print on paper)

Creator: Salmon, Thomas, 1679-1767

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: FSA A2014.06 03

Printed book folio. Dutch version of the original English publication.

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

Amsterdam (Holland)

England

Netherlands

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 04: [Divers Pagods and the Penitence of the Faquirs from The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Idolatrous Nations, 1733](#)

1 Item (Print on paper)

Creator: Du Bosc, Claude, Engraver, 1684-1745?

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: FSA A2014.06 04

Printed book folio. Dutch version of the original English publication.

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

England

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 13: Shiva as Sadhu from a set of 12 Trading Cards, Histoire de L'Inde, 1939

1 Print

[Image\(s\): Robert J. Del Bontà Collection](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Language: French.

Notes: FSA A2014.06 13

Chromolithographic trade card from a set of 12 made by Liebig Company.

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

Genre/Form: Prints

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Series 2: Prints and Engravings relating to the rulers including Timurid and Mughal rulers

- Scope and Contents: Mostly European prints of the 18th and 19th century. They are portraits of Indian rulers and their families including prince, princes, and kings from not only the Mughal empire, but also other South Asian kingdoms. The main groups came from publications by Francois Valentijn's *Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien, vervattende een naaukeurige en uitvoerige verhandeling van Nederlands mogentheyd in die gewesten, benevens of 1724-26*, Henri Chatelain's *Atlas Historique, Ou Nouvelle Introduction A L'Histoire*, Vol V, 1732, and August Racinet's *Le costume historique. Cinq cents planches; trois cents en couleurs, or et argent, deux cents en camaïeu. Avec des notices explicatives et une étude historique*, Vol. III, 1888.
- Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

FSA A2014.06 2.S: [Stereographs of India](#)

151 Items (stereocards)

Creator: Ricalton, James
Underwood and Underwood
Language: Dutch; Flemish.
Notes: E591

FSA A2014.06 2.S

151 commercial stereographs depicting scenes of South Asia. Sources include Underwood and Underwood Publishers; Ricalton; H.C. White Co.; American Stereoscopic Co. and Keystone View Co. Collectively this is a nearly complete complement of photographs of India taken by James Ricalton.

Place: India
Genre/Form: Stereoscopic photographs
Stereographs

FSA A2014.06 2.144: [Sultan Baber: The Oriental Annual, July 20, 1839, London, United Kingdom \(86 Fleet Street, London, U.K.\); Charles T.H.; October 1, 1836](#)

1 Print (on paper; 7 5/8" x 4 3/4")

Creator: Daniell, William, 1769-1837 (Artist)
Language: Dutch; Flemish.
Notes: E125

Engraved by John Cochran, active 1821-1865. Individual print from a larger printed book folio. This print is identical to a Mughal ivory called Baber Shah in Sotheby's New York, March 26, 2003, lot 109.

Names: Babur
Zahir al-Din Muhammad
Daniell, William, 1769-1837 (Artist)
Cochran, John, Engraver, active 1821-1865
Place: India
London (England)
Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 2.143: The Mogul Dynasty in Hindustan. No. II. Image of Baber. The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, #468, p. 273, July 20, 1839

6 Items (7/8" ; Print on paper)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: E591

FSA A2014.06 2.143

Individual print from a larger printed book folio.

This print is identical to a Mughal ivory called Baber Shah in Sotheby's New York, March 26, 2003, lot 109.

Names: Babur

Zahir al-Din Muhammad

Place: India

England

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 2.006: [Babur: Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur, 1483-1530](#)

13 Items (1/4" x 8" ; Print on paper)

Language: Text in Dutch.

Notes: E879

FSA A2014.06 2.006

Caption reads "Sjah Baboer sevendee groote Mogol."

Individual print from a larger printed book folio.

Print from "Oud en nieuw Oost-Indien, vervattende een naaukeurige en uitvoerige verhandeling van Nederlands mogentheyd in die gewesten, benevens e, Dordrecht, 1724-1726" by Francois Valentijn. No.7, page 193.

Names: Babur

Zahir al-Din Muhammad

Topic: Sadhus

Place: India

Genre/Form: Prints

FSA A2014.06 2.065: Prints from Atlas Historique, Ou Nouvelle Introduction A L'Histoire, by Henri Abraham Chatelain, Zacharie Chatelain, and Zacharie Chatelain, Jr, 1705-1732

11 Items (3/4" ; Print on paper)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Image\(s\)](#)

Language: Dutch; Flemish.

Notes: E1361

FSA A2014.06 2.065

Individual prints from a larger printed book folio. Unknown edition.

Captions read: Sek ou Seich Omar, mort en 1493; Babar ou Baber ou Babour, mort en 1530; Amayum ou Houmayon, mort en 1552; Akebar ou Xa Aguebar, mort en 1605.

This print is identical to a Mughal ivory called Baber Shah in Sotheby's New York, March 26, 2003, lot 109.

Cataloged; Chelsea Fairley; 04/18/2016.

Names: Chatelain, Henri Abraham, 1684-1743 (map maker, engraver)
Chatelain, Zacharie, 1690-1754
Babur
Zahir al-Din Muhammad

Place: India
France

Genre/Form: Prints

Box 5, Folder 1 [Series 2: Small Prints](#)

Box 5, Folder 2 [Series 2: Small Prints](#)

Box 7, Folder 1 [Series 2: Medium Prints](#)

Box 7, Folder 2 [Series 2: Medium Prints](#)

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Series 3: 16th-17th century prints

Scope and Contents: Primarily 16th and 17th century European prints of India. It includes woodcuts from Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi e moderni* and prints from Jan Huygen van Linschoten's *Itinerario*, of 1596, and the complete set of the dashavatara, the ten main incarnations of the god Vishnu in French and Dutch editions, and various prints by Picart of Asia, and woodcuts of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*.

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

Box 7, Folder 3

[Series 3: Medium Prints](#)

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Series 4: Engravings and prints from around the world

Scope and Contents: Prints and engravings from around the world including, from Mallet's *Description de l'Univers*, Münster's, *La Cosmographie Universelle*, and De Bry's *Indiae Orientalis*

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

Box 5, Folder 3 [Series 4: Small Prints](#)

Box 5, Folder 4 [Series 4: Small Prints](#)

Box 5, Folder 5 [Series 4: Small Prints](#)

Box 5, Folder 6 [Series 4: Small Prints](#)

Box 7, Folder 4 [Series 4: Medium Prints](#)

Box 7, Folder 5 [Series 4: Medium Prints](#)

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Series 5: English engravings depicting India

Scope and Contents: The series primarily consists of engravings produced by the English which are focused on India, particularly leading up to the British Raj period. It includes engravings from Holwell's *Interesting Historical Events*, Burnouf's and Jacquet's *L'Inde Française* of 1827-35, Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs* of 1834, Park's, *Wanderings of a pilgrim* of 1850, Rowlandson, *The Grand Master* of 1816, and Moor's, *The Hindu Pantheon* of 1864, aquatints by Thomas and William Daniell, and etchings by F. Balthazard Solvyns among others.

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

Box 5, Folder 7	Series 5: Small Prints
Box 5, Folder 8	Series 5: Small Prints
Box 7, Folder 6	Series 5: Medium Prints
Box 7, Folder 7	Series 5: Medium Prints
Box 7, Folder 8	Series 5: Medium Prints

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Series 6: Dutch and French engravings of voyages across the world

Scope and Contents: This series consists of engravings from Pieter Van der Aa's *Naaukeurige Versameling der Gedenkwaardigste Zee en Land-Reysen na Oost en West-Indien*, between 1706 and 1708, Aa's *Voyagien der Engelsen*, and engravings from various editions of *D'Exiles*, *Histoire générale des voyages*, d'Urville's *Voyage pittoresque autour du monde*, and others depicting the broader Asiatic continent.

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

Box 6, Folder 1	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 2	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 3	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 4	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 5	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 6	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 7	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 8	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 9	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 10	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 11	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 12	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 6, Folder 13	Series 6: Small Prints
Box 8, Folder 1	Series 6: Medium Prints

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Series 7: French engravings depicting monuments of India

Scope and Contents: This series consists of 36 large format steel plate engravings from Louis Mathieu Langlès, *Monuments anciens et modernes de l'Indoustan* from 1821. It also includes 3 books.

Arrangement: Arranged in an order provided by the donor. E or engraving numbers reflect Del Bonta's numbering system.

Box 8, Folder 2 [Series 7: Medium Prints](#)

Box 8, Folder 3 [Series 7: Medium Prints](#)

Box 8, Folder 4 [Series 7: Medium Prints](#)

Box 8, Folder 5 [Series 7: Medium Prints](#)

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