

# BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## BLANTON MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT *EPIC TALES FROM ANCIENT INDIA: PAINTINGS FROM THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART*



**This Selection of Paintings from the Renowned Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection  
will be on display July 9-October 1, 2017**

AUSTIN, Texas—One of the most comprehensive collections of South Asian paintings outside of India will be on display at the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin from July 9-October 1, 2017. These dynamic images were originally associated with important literary and religious texts and will be organized according to thematic narratives. Museum visitors will be introduced to the epic stories that continue to hold great cultural value in India and beyond.

“The Blanton is honored to partner with The San Diego Museum of Art to bring this remarkable collection to Austin,” said Blanton director Simone Wicha. “The epic stories have much to say about courage,

loyalty, love and friendship, and the paintings themselves impress with the delicacy of their technique, the boldness of their design, and the humanity of the stories they convey. This exhibition is sure to delight audiences of all ages.”

*Epic Tales from Ancient India: Paintings from The San Diego Museum of Art* represents the highest achievement of court paintings from several regions of the Indian subcontinent from the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries and have been selected from the renowned Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection of The San Diego Museum of Art. This exhibition depicts stories that have been integral to South Asian culture for hundreds of years and provides a compelling introduction to classic Indian and Persian texts, including *Bhagavata Purana*, a Sanskrit text about the Hindu god Vishnu and his different incarnations; *Ramayana*, the adventures of Prince Rama of Ayodhya; *Ragamala*, a text that explores various modes in Indian classical music; and works of Persian literature, including *Shahnameh*, an epic poem about the legendary kings of Iran.

The colorful manuscripts depict dutiful heroes, loyal friends, and strong-willed women, and each character serves as an instructive model in this storytelling tradition. Dangerous beasts, cunning adversaries, and assorted demons must be confronted and subdued. Battle scenes teeming with combatants give way to quieter moments, such as lovers meeting for a secret tryst. Many of the stories have religious significance and show the intervention of various divinities in maintaining cosmic order.

Complementing the paintings will be examples of Chola-period processional bronze images, Vishnu and Hanuman, on loan from the Kimbell Art Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art, respectively. These works hint at Hindu ritual practices and highlight the religious significance of the narratives.

Ray Williams, who leads the Blanton’s education efforts and serves as the managing curator for this exhibition, has a deep appreciation for India’s cultural expressions through story and image. “The struggle for cosmic order in the face of dark forces and fulfilling one’s duty with

courage and integrity, are ongoing human concerns. The paintings invite us to plunge into Rama's world, for example, and readily join in the quest to rescue Sita from the ten-headed, mustachioed, demon king and his frightful army," said Williams.

A series of public programs will complement the exhibition, featuring gallery talks, musical demonstrations, classical Indian dance, and storytelling performances.

**Xanthe Gresham, storyteller**

Thursday, July 20, 6:30 p.m. *Shahnameh*

Saturday, July 22, 2:00 p.m. *Ramayana*

*(performances recommended for ages 10 and above)*

**Arnab Chakrabarty, sarod**

**Pandit Sanju Sahai, tabla**

Thursday, September 21, 6:30 p.m. *Concert*

Friday, September 22, noon and 3:00 p.m. *Demonstration*

**Film Screening**

Peter Brook's critically acclaimed *Mahabharata* (171 mins.)

Thursday, September 28, 6:00 p.m.

**Artist-in-Residence: Aruna Kharod**

Aruna Kharod is a graduate student in UT's Ethnomusicology Program and has studied Bharathanatyam classical dance for ten years. She will perform stories and dances related to paintings in the exhibition.

Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays, 1:00-4:00 p.m.

*(suitable for all ages)*

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**About the Blanton Museum of Art**

Founded in 1963, the Blanton Museum of Art holds the largest public collection in Central Texas with nearly 18,000 objects. Recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, Italian Renaissance and Baroque paintings, and encyclopedic collection of prints and drawings, the Blanton offers thought provoking, visually arresting, and personally moving encounters with art.

The museum is located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue and is open Tuesday through Friday from 10-5, Saturday from 11-5, and Sunday from 1-5. Thursdays are free admission days and every third Thursday the museum is open until 9. Admission Prices: Adults \$9, Kids 12 and under FREE, Seniors (65+) \$7, Youth/College Students (13-21) \$5. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders. For additional information call (512) 471-7324 or visit [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org)

### **About The San Diego Museum of Art**

The San Diego Museum of Art is located at 1450 El Prado in Balboa Park, San Diego, Calif., 92101. General Information, (619) 232-7931, Group Sales: (619) 696-1935, Website: <http://www.sdmart.org> Twitter: @SDMA, Instagram: @SanDiegoMuseumofArt Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/TheSanDiegoMuseumofArt>

Providing a rich and diverse cultural experience, The San Diego Museum of Art houses some of the world's finest art. Located in the heart of Balboa Park, the Museum's nationally renowned collections include Spanish and Italian old masters, South Asian paintings including the Edwin Binney 3rd Collection of Indian paintings, East Asian art, and 19th and 20th century American paintings and sculptures. The Museum regularly features major exhibitions of art from around the world, as well as an extensive year-round schedule supporting cultural and educational programs for children and adults. At The San Diego Museum of Art, exhibition text is always in English and Spanish.

#### Image Caption:

Radha Pines for Krishna, folio from a *Gita Govinda* (The Song of the Herdsman), about 1714

Northwest India, Mewar

Opaque watercolor and gold on paper

Edwin Binney 3<sup>rd</sup> Collection, 1990.620