

Voices of Bengal: exhibition and displays

Durga: Creating an image of the goddess

12 August –
27 September 2006 ^{GC}

The Great Court will be the venue for the creation of a spectacular image of the goddess Durga, fashioned onsite by craftsmen from West Bengal, out of straw, clay and paint. This is a rare chance to witness the incredible skills of the Bengali craftsmen, before the image transfers to the Camden Centre for worship, ending with its immersion in the Thames.

Admission free

Myths of Bengal

14 September 2006 –
7 January 2007 ⁹¹

An exhibition featuring religious stories, scrolls and artefacts investigating the rich tradition of storytelling in Bengal. A major highlight of this exhibition is the 13-metre Gazi scroll, which recounts the life and deeds of a Bengali saint who is said to have brought Islam to the Delta. In addition to this are six other stories covering some of the major Hindu deities, including Krishna, Rama, Durga and the snake goddess Manasa.

Admission free

The art of peace: Paintings by the poet Tagore

14 September –
12 November 2006 ³

Paintings form the focus of this introduction to the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the first Asian writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. Tagore's paintings are not widely known, yet he was a painter of considerable individuality. The paintings displayed here are from the collections of the British Museum and have never previously been exhibited.

Admission free

Durga image, pratima, from the Calcutta Durga Puja, 2005



PHOTO: JOHN WILLIAMS



GALLERY TALKS

All talks start at 13.15
Admission free, no pre booking

Durga: image and goddess
Thursday 14 September ^{GC}
Brian Durrans

Celebration and narrative in the Bengal Durga Puja
(Sign-interpreted)
Tuesday 19 September ⁹¹
Richard Blurton

Banglar Upo Katha: Myths of Bengal (in Bengali)
Wednesday 27 September ⁹¹
Sona Datta

Tagore and painting: a unique development in Indian art
Tuesday 3 October ³
K Kushari Dyson

Tagore's unique approach to colour
Thursday 12 October ³
K Kushari Dyson

Krishna devotion in Bengal and Assam: paintings, textiles and prints

Tuesday 7 November ⁹¹
Richard Blurton

The Great Continuum: 1000 years of tradition across the Bengal Delta
Thursday 23 November ⁹¹
Sona Datta

Kantha: the embroidery tradition of Bengal
Tuesday 5 December ⁹¹
Richard Blurton

RADIO

On 19 September, BBC Radio 3's *Night Waves* will broadcast a discussion on the fascinating relationship between Tagore and Gandhi. How did their visions for India differ and do they stand up today?

Gazi scroll (detail and border) c. 1800. Funded by NACF (Art-Fund). 1955

THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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Voices of Bengal

12 August 2006 – 7 January 2007

A season of exhibitions and events focusing on the rich cultural heritage of Bengal



Programme of events

EVENING LECTURES

£5, concessions £3

Performing Puja: festivity, authenticity and religiosity in the Durga Puja

Thursday 21 September
18.30 **SL**

Dr Mark Elliott, University of Cambridge, will open a discussion on how Durga Puja is performed today.

The literature of the Bengal renaissance

Thursday 26 October
18.30 **BP**

Dr Gulam Murshid discusses Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Krishna Dutta examines the influence that European literature and thought, from Shakespeare to Freud, had on Bengali literature.

Daggers, Daring & Devotion: the literary imagination of Old Bengal

Thursday 2 November
18.00 **BP**

Tony Stewart discusses how the literature of pre-colonial Bengal illuminates the cosmopolitan nature of traditional society.

Modernism and the East

In partnership with the London Review of Books

Thursday 9 November
18.30 **BP**

A panel of writers discusses Modernism outside Europe, and the influence of 'Easternness' on European Modernism.

Taboo and the West

In partnership with the London Review of Books

Thursday 23 November
18.30 **BP**

Panel discussion on art, psychoanalysis and anthropology.

In Search of Paradise?

Thursday 7 December
18.30 **BP**

Travels in India and the Pacific with writers, readings and images.

FILM SEASON

£3, concessions £2

In Bengali with English subtitles (unless stated)

The Goddess (Devi)

Saturday 16 September
14.00 **BP**

Director: Satyajit Ray

India, 1960, 143 mins

Utsav (Festival)

Friday 22 September
18.30 **SL**

With special guest Sangeeta Datta.

Director: Rituparno Ghosh

India, 2000, 124 mins

Tagore on film

Saturday 30 September
11.00–17.00 **BP**

Andrew Robinson, biographer of both Tagore and Ray, discusses the two great Bengali artists. Followed by screenings of Ray's film work.

£15, concessions £10

36 Chowringhee Lane

Friday 20 October
18.30 **SL**

Director: Aparna Sen

India, 1981, 122 mins

The Cloud-Capped Star (Meghe Dhaka Tara)

Friday 27 October
18.30 **BP**

Director: Ritwik Ghatak

India, 1960, 122 mins

In Search of Famine (Akaler Sandhaney)

Friday 3 November
18.30 **SL**

Director: Mrinal Sen

India, 1980, 125 mins

Letter from an Ordinary Girl

Saturday 4 November
13.00 **BP**

With special guest Sangeeta Datta.

Short film based on Tagore's *Sadharon Meye*. Followed by discussion.

Director: Sangeeta Datta

UK, 2006, 27 mins

Admission free, no pre booking

Singing Pictures – Women Painters of Naya

Friday 10 November
13.30 **SL**

Directors: Lina Fruzzetti and Ákos Öslöu

USA, 2005, 45 mins

Admission free, no pre-booking

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Devdas

Friday 10 November
18.30 **SL**

Director: Bimal Roy

India, 1955, 159 mins

In Hindi with English subtitles

Chokher Bali

Friday 17 November
18.30 **SL**

Director: Rituparno Ghosh

India, 2003, 167 mins

The Apu trilogy

Friday 24 November **SL**

Director: Satyajit Ray

India, 1955, 115 mins

Pather Panchali

14.00

India, 1955, 115 mins

Aparajito

16.15

India, 1956, 113mins

The world of Apu

19.00

India, 1959, 106 mins

Satyajit Ray's most celebrated works, these three films follow the fortunes of Apu, a young boy in rural Bengal through to urban life in Calcutta and the tragic results of his marrying.

Bangladesh film day

Saturday 25 November
14.00–18.00 **BP**

Double bill of *The Clay Bird (Matir Moina)*, 2002 and *Homeland (Ontorjatra)*, 2006, with directors Tareque Masud and Catherine Masud.

£15, concessions £10

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sandhya Sangit – Images of West Bengal

Thursday 14 September

Images of East Bengal

Thursday 19 October

18.30–19.30 **GC**

A dance and music spectacular with Akademi Dance UK.

Admission free, no pre-booking

The discovery of Bengal

Thursday 5 October

18.30–20.00 **BP**

Special evening concert exploring the geographical origins of Bengal.

Admission free, booking required

Bengali poetry – Tagore and after

(Bengali and English)

Sunday 8 October

14.00–15.00 **RR**

A special afternoon recitation of poems with Dr Ketaki Kushari Dyson.

Admission free, booking required

Storytelling with Seema Anand – The curse of Kali

Thursday 24 August

18.30–19.30 **RR**

Tales from the inner courtyard

Thursday 12 October

18.30–19.30 **RR**

Travelling stories

Thursday 9 November

18.30–19.30 **RR**

30 places (per event)

Admission free, booking required

Tales of three generations of Bengalis in the UK

Thursday 12 October

18.00–19.30 **SR**

A special evening exploring cross-generational voices of the Bengali community.

45 places

Admission free, booking required

A Tagore music evening

Friday 3 November **BP**

An evening of music inspired by Tagore by Naresh Sohal.

See website for full details

The Other Me

Thursday 16 November

18.30–20.00 **BP**

This special evening concert created by Dr Ananda Gupta is an adaptation of Rabindranath Tagore's two most popular dance operas: *Shapmochan* and *Shyama*.

Admission free, booking required

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STUDY DAY

Tagore study day

Saturday 14 October

09.30–17.00 **BP**

A day on the life and work of Tagore, including Dr Ketaki Kushari Dyson, William Radice and Naresh Sohal.

Includes a screening of Ray's documentary on Tagore and a music and dance performance.

£18, BM Friends and concessions £12

DEMONSTRATIONS

Throughout August and September skilled craftsmen from Calcutta will provide demonstrations illustrating Bengali cultural arts activities.

Admission free, just drop in

Madhu Chandra Pal making Shola Pith decorations

23, 30 August, 6 September

14.00–15.30 **GC**

Gurupada Chitrakar ancient scroll reading and singing

15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 26 September

14.00–15.30 **91**

Five virtuoso musicians from West Bengal perform on the dhak drum

14, 18, 20, 22 September

14.00–15.00 **F**

FAMILY EVENTS

Tales from Bengal

Sundays 20 August, 3 September **GC**

1, 15 October, 12 November, 10 December 14.00 **91**

Explore the spellbinding world of Bengal with storyteller Seema Anand.

Admission free

The Big Draw

Saturday 14 October

11.00–16.00 **GC**

A day of drawing for all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

Admission free

Enthralling Bengal – half-term activities

23 – 27 October

11.00–16.00 **GC**

Myths of Bengal is brought to life during half term with a range of free family events.

See website for full details

Bengali Blast! Bengali community family day

Saturday 25 November

11.00–16.30 **GC**

Narratives and the rich mix of Bengali culture and arts are the inspiration for this spectacular day, including free activities, performances, workshops and displays.

For further details on all events and the *Voices of Bengal* season visit www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bengal

To book events please contact the Box Office:

Telephone +44 (0)20 7323 8181

Email boxoffice@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

Venue key

1 Room number

GC Great Court

BP BP Lecture Theatre, Clore Education Centre (CEC)

SL Stevenson Lecture Theatre, CEC

SR Sackler Room, CEC

RR Reading Room

F Museum Forecourt