

Report on the Exhibition of Indian Art Manufactures, Delhi,
1902-03.

I have the honour to submit a brief general report of the Art Exhibition held at Delhi in connection with the Coronation Assemblage, from the 30th of December 1902 to the 14th of February 1903.

2. *Preliminary arrangements.*—The organization and control of the Exhibition was placed in the hands of a Director, and Sir George Watt was appointed to that position on 1st March 1902. As Assistant Director I joined the staff on April 6th, 1902.

The first steps taken were (a) to obtain a suitable design for the building, and (b) to acquaint all intending exhibitors with the scope and character of the Exhibition. The former was the work of a number of hands, and was finally approved on 6th August 1902. The duty of informing the craftsmen of India of the opportunities the Exhibition placed before them was commenced in March 1902, and seven months were occupied by the Director and myself in travelling over the country and personally instructing the artizans as to the kind of manufactures that were considered the most desirable exhibits.

3. *Method of informing intending exhibitors.*—The procedure adopted during this tour was to inform the local officer of the district it was proposed to investigate, of the date of our visit, and to request him kindly to arrange a small display of the best local manufactures at some central institution. The artizans and others interested were then asked to be in attendance, and a brief lecture was given explanatory of the aims and objects of the Exhibition, and giving a general idea of those industries of the locality which it was considered most desirable to represent. Questions were then answered and every facility and encouragement given to any deserving craftsmen who wished to send a display of their goods. The results of the tour as seen in the different departments of the Exhibition, showed that the above plan was successful, as it brought the object in view to the very doors of those directly concerned.

4. *Details of tour.*—Commencing with Burma in May it was thought advisable that I should accompany the Director in this particular instance so that a concerted plan of investigation for the remaining provinces might be matured. A rapid survey therefore of this country was made, all the principal art centres visited, and arrangements entered into with most of the leading artizans for a representative display of their works. On our return to India the Director and myself toured independently in order that more ground might be covered in a lesser time. June therefore was spent by Sir George Watt in travelling through Madras and the Deccan, while all the industrial towns of Bengal, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and the Central Provinces were visited by me. Bombay, Kathiawar and Kach occupied both of us during the greater part of July, and Rajputana and Central India were completed towards the end of August. In September, Baluchistan, Kashmir and the Frontier Province were visited by the Director, while the greater part of the Punjab was finished by the middle of October when, nearly the whole of India having been surveyed, our presence at Delhi was found necessary in order to arrange for the reception of the exhibits which from that time commenced to arrive. A brief account of the lessons learnt while personally interviewing the artizans and others all over India may be considered of interest. The first idea was that this tour would be one of selection, but it soon became evident that the greater part of the work would be that of rejection as a vast number of intending exhibitors had a very imperfect comprehension of the standard by which their manufactures would be judged. Goods, too, showing European influences of an inferior or unsuitable nature were repeatedly being brought forward and the difficulty of explaining the undesirability of these articles was often met with. Generally speaking, however, the small local displays got together at each industrial centre by the exertions of the local officials showed an enthusiasm and desire to learn which

was most encouraging, and it may be accepted that the spirit of emulation inspired by these conferences led to some of the best collections being sent. The advice and assistance, aided by sketches, that the Director and myself were enabled from time to time to give to those interested were no doubt of considerable benefit to many classes of exhibitors.

Briefly, the principal facts brought to light during the tour, directly bearing on the improvement of the art industries were: (1) the advisability of an art expert regularly visiting industrial centres to guide the manufacturers in their designs and workmanship, and (2) the need in a number of the best known art industries for a good illustrated pattern book. In the former case the manufacturer could get the assistance required from the schools of art where they exist, but he rarely chooses to do so. The school of art, represented by the art expert, must therefore go to him. With regard to the pattern book, when visiting any workshop if we requested to see those in use, this invariably led to the production of a most unsuitable European illustrated catalogue. These appear to be used not because the designs were admired or because there was a demand for the reproduction of such designs, but for the reason that they were comparatively easily obtained and supplied a want. A museum would furnish the workman with suitable ideas if he went there, but the Indian craftsman by nature requires either the actual article or a faithful copy before him in his workshop from which to work directly. Pattern books containing a series of working drawings illustrating good designs would, it is felt, considerably improve some of the more important art industries.

5. *The building.*—During the tour Delhi was visited more than once in order to note the progress made in the erection and decoration of the Exhibition building. The site selected was the Kudsia Bagh outside the Kashmir gate of the city, and the design adopted was mainly Saracenic in character. The facade was ornamented with tile work and fresco painting, the former the production of the potters of Lahore, Multan, Halla and Jeypore, and the latter the work of one of the Masters, aided by the pupils, of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore.

The general construction of the building was carried out by the Punjab Public Works Department, and it was completed and handed over in November 1902. In plan it consisted of an Entrance Hall and three large galleries surrounded by a verandah. These were, the Main or Sale Gallery, 220 feet by 80 feet, the Loan Collection Court, and the Jewellery Court, each 80 feet by 60 feet, and the Artificer's Gallery or verandah. The whole building occupied a rectangle of 250 feet by 210 feet.

6. *Lighting.*—A point which received special consideration was the lighting. This was obtained in the daytime by a series of skylights facing the north. By these means windows were dispensed with, and the wall space was thus left free for the display of the larger exhibits, such as carpets, etc. This arrangement proved satisfactory.

7. *Artificial lighting.*—At night the whole building was well illuminated with Acetylene gas. The light given by this installation was a bright and steady one, its only drawback being the soot which from various causes occasionally accumulated.

8. *Fire precautions.*—The rates quoted by the various insurance offices being considered abnormally high, the building was not insured. Special precautions were therefore taken to protect the building and its contents from fire. Tanks holding several thousand gallons of water were constructed in the rear of the premises and connected with them were three portable fire engines capable of throwing a stream of water above the height of the building. In addition to these were four patent fire extinguishers for use in the case of a small local outbreak. All these appliances were under the control of a party of British soldiers who were located in tents near at hand, and could be easily turned out night or day in case of emergency. It was felt, however, that the safety of the building mainly lay in the hands of the permanent staff, who were requested to pay more than ordinary attention to the strict instructions issued with regard to the use of lights or fires.

9. *Arrival of the exhibits.*—Exhibits commenced to arrive early in October but, owing to the limited time that could be allowed to most of the intending exhibitors, the greater number of the boxes did not reach Delhi until much later, thus rendering the work of the staff during the month of December particularly arduous.

10. *Railway concessions.*—Reduced rates for the carrying of exhibits were conceded by all the principal railways and the assistance rendered by those concerned in the transit of goods is worthy of note.

11. *Forwarding of exhibits.*—Specially prepared tickets, labels, invoice forms, etc., were supplied to all intending exhibitors during the previously mentioned tour, to assist them in the despatch of their goods. To facilitate the reception of exhibits the country was divided into eight circles, each circle, ticket label, invoice, etc., being marked with a distinctive colour (such as Punjab, brown label; Bengal, blue label, etc.), so that on the arrival of the packages or invoices at Delhi, the different circles could be readily distinguished. This arrangement worked well throughout the whole period of the Exhibition and lightened the work in many directions. All invoices were in triplicate, and instructions as to the use of these were distinctly printed on the back for the guidance of intending exhibitors. The information asked for on these was briefly (*a*) a description of the article, (*b*) the maker's name, (*c*) the price, and (*d*) a number corresponding to a number on a ticket which was required to be attached to all articles. One copy of the invoice was to be forwarded to Delhi by post, the second was to be packed with the goods, and the third to be retained by the sender. On arrival at Delhi the articles were checked with the invoice which was then bound up with others of the same circle into folios, and these formed the basis on which the sale department worked, and in fact by means of these most of the business part of the Exhibition was conducted. The exhibits were then removed to that division of the building which the description on the invoice indicated, and in course of time were arranged as artistically as possible in conjunction with similar manufactures from other parts. A statement is appended with regard to the sale collection indicating the number of exhibitors in each circle and the amount of goods sent.

12. *Government purchases*—To enable artizans in indigent circumstances to put such works in hand as would effectively represent their craft, sums of money were advanced by the Exhibition from time to time to the local officers for this purpose. Goods prepared with this assistance became the property of the Government. Most of these were purchased by the public during the period of the Exhibition, but a number from one cause or another remained unsold. These at the close of the Exhibition and under the orders of Government were forwarded to the different Provincial Museums for inclusion in their collections.

13. *Classification of exhibits.*—As before mentioned, the Exhibition comprised four great sections:—

- (*a*) the Main or Sale Gallery;
- (*b*) the Loan Collection Gallery;
- (*c*) the Jewellery Court;
- (*d*) the Artificers' Gallery or Workshops;

and within each of these galleries the same main classification was observed, namely:—

- I.—Metal wares.
- II.—Stone wares.
- III.—Glass and earthen wares.
- IV.—Woodwork.
- V.—Ivory, horn, shell and leather wares.
- VI.—Lac (Lakh) and Lacquer wares.

VII.—Textiles :—

- (a) Treatment after leaving the loom, such as dyeing, printing, etc.
 (b) Woven patterns.

VIII.—Embroidery, braiding, lace, etc.

IX.—Carpets, Rugs, etc.

X.—Fine Arts.

These classes were next referred to certain divisions so as still further to facilitate the grouping together of manufactures of a particular kind. An important feature of this arrangement was that the goods were grouped according to their kind and not their places of origin. It was thus made possible for visitors to compare, almost at a glance, productions of one kind from all parts of India, both near and remote, and to make purchases in the Sale Gallery without being harassed by the importunities of competing traders.

Dispersed throughout the building were certain small rooms, balconies, etc. These were set apart for the purpose of exemplifying the adaptability of the various better known styles of Indian art, to modern household furnishing and architectural decoration. These and the other features of each gallery will be found fully described in the official catalogue.

14. *Loan Collection Gallery.*—The Loan Exhibits were displayed in a special room distinct from the other galleries and cut off from them by an iron gate. The floor was paved with Agra sandstone. It was considered necessary to take these precautions owing to the great value of the art treasures exhibited therein. It is needless to add that to the generosity of the Princes and Nobles of all parts of India this exceedingly rich and diversified collection was mainly due. An important addition to the gallery was the collective exhibit sent out from London by the Commissioners of the South Kensington Museum. This was of special interest as illustrating some of the finer designs long since lost to India through large collections of the many art wares having been bought up and carried off to foreign museums.

15. *Jewellery Court.*—The Jewellery Court was a gallery corresponding to and built on similar lines to the Loan Collection Gallery. It was specially arranged to allow a selection of the more influential jewellers of India to bring personally to Delhi a set of their most desirable Indian wares, which formed one of the most rare and expensive collections of jewels ever brought together in one building. The spaces for stalls were let to the 8 selected firms at the rate of Rs. 5 per square foot.

16. *The Artizans' Gallery.*—The Artizans' Gallery consisted of a long series of shops situated in the verandah and occupying the entire perimeter of the building. These were given to selected artizans who desired to work in them, and many of the art trades of India were represented. These craftsmen were permitted to sell, free of all Exhibition commission, the articles actually made by them in the building. Although some of these men made a fair amount of profit during their stay in Delhi, the majority of them from a variety of causes did not make much more than their expenses.

17. *Fittings.*—A number of shelves, tables, cases, etc., were required in the building for the proper display of many of the exhibits. With the exception of the fittings in the Loan Collection Court, these were all of a temporary character. Between each pair of the pillars of the Main Gallery, stalls were constructed by means of tables and shelves, each of which corresponded to one of the divisions of exhibits before mentioned under 'Classification.' These fittings were of ordinary unplanned wood and covered with printed cotton, and proved quite suitable for their purpose. But the value of and the responsibility connected with the exhibits sent on loan necessitated a different arrangement in the Loan Gallery. Twenty-two plate-glass teak-wood dust-proof cases were specially constructed for the display of articles sent under this head, and the cost of these formed the principal item in the expenditure on "fittings." They added, however, considerably to the appearance of the Court, protected the articles admirably, and at the close of the Exhibition were sold and realized a very fair percentage of their original cost.

18. *Decorations*—Articles for decorative purposes only were required to a very small extent, as the exhibits themselves were arranged so as to produce an artistic effect, the walls being tapestried with carpets and rugs, and the archways draped with embroidered curtains from Kashmir. The unsightly timbers and girders of the roof, moreover, were covered with printed cottons representing this art in all its forms from Kalahastri to Lahore, while the severe outlines of the supporting columns were relieved by flags and banners generously supplied by nearly every State in the country. The boarded floor was covered with a fibre matting of a green pattern which proved a most suitable article, and admirably completed the general effect.

19. *Value of the exhibits.*—Owing to the almost priceless value of some of the Loan Exhibits it is difficult to form even an approximate estimate of the value of the complete collection. The Main or Sale Gallery may, however, be computed to have contained goods equivalent to ten and-a-half lakhs of rupees. The Jewellery Court exhibits, as assessed by a competent authority, were valued at 140 lakhs, and the Loan Collection may be put down at a similar figure. The building may therefore be said to have held goods to the total value of nearly *three crores* of rupees.

20. *Police precautions.*—To efficiently guard the building, the nature of the construction of which had been carefully studied with regard to this important particular, a force of 120 policemen under a European Inspector was attached to the Exhibition. These patrolled inside and outside the buildings in the daytime, and the precincts and roof at night. The efficiency of these precautions may be judged by the fact, that, except for a little petty pilfering, no case requiring the attention of the police occurred.

21. *Medical assistance.*—As a small army of workmen was employed for several months about the building and had quarters in the Exhibition Camp, arrangements were made with the Civil Surgeon to depute a Hospital Assistant to be in attendance at certain hours every day in case of illness or accident. It was thought also that his services might be required in connection with the occupants of the Artizans' Gallery many of whom coming from warmer climates such as Madras and Burma might feel the rigors of the Delhi winter. Fortunately the duties of this officer throughout were of a very light character, no sickness or accident of any importance having to be recorded.

22. *Awards of medals and certificates.*—Awards of medals and certificates were made to those exhibitors who displayed goods of sufficient merit. For this work a Judging Committee was appointed under the orders of the Government of India. This consisted of the following:—

President :

COLONEL SIR SWINTON JACOB, K. C. I. E., I. S. C.

Members :

COLONEL STUART BEATSON, C. B., I. S. C.

C. L. BURNS, Esq.

CHEVALIER O. GHILARDI.

COLONEL T. H. HENDLEY, I. M. S., C. I. E.

R. D. MACKENZIE, Esq.

THE HONOURABLE MUNSHI MADHO LAL.

BHAI RAM SINGH.

E. THURSTON, Esq.

Secretary.

R. E. V. ARBUTHNOT, Esq., I. C. S.

The total number of awards made by the Committee amounted to 327 and consisted of 19 gold medals, 83 silver medals, 115 bronze medals, and 110 certificates of commendation. Fourteen of the gold and five of the silver medals were generously presented by the following gentlemen:—

Gold Medals.

- His Highness Raja-i-Rajgan of Kapurthala.
- Raja Baldeo Singh, Raja of Poonch.
- The Honourable Munshi Madho Lal, of Benares.
- His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar.
- General Raja Sir Amar Singh, K.C.S.I., of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Raja Bahadur Ranjit Sinha, of Nashipur.

Silver Medals.

- His Highness Raja i-Rajgan of Kapurthala.
- Raja Bahadur Ranjit Sinha, of Nashipur.
- The Indian Industrial Association.

23. *Awards of money prizes.*—In addition to the above a sum of Rs. 4,900 was subscribed for distribution as money prizes among craftsmen who submitted exhibits of superior workmanship.

The following are the names of the contributors to this fund:—

- The Honourable Sir E. Law, K.C.M.G., C.S.I.
- His Highness the Raja of Tippera.
- His Highness the Raja of Nabha.
- Babu Manmatha Nath Roy Chaudhury, of Santosh, Calcutta.
- Babu Dooly Chand, of Calcutta.
- Raja Bahadur Ranjit Sinha, of Nashipur.
- Babu Dhanpat Singh, Nowlakha, Azimganj.
- Lalubhai Samaldas, Esq., of Bhavnagar.
- The Indian Industrial Association.

A full and detailed list of the awards made by the Judging Committee, with their recommendations as to the disbursement of the money awards, was published by the Government of India in their Resolution No. 16—5-7, dated April 24th, 1903.

24. *Catalogue.*—A brief "Abstract Catalogue and Guide" was prepared and placed in the hands of the public on the opening day. It contained short references to most of the more important exhibits, and was sold at 4 annas.

A considerably enlarged edition of this was prepared during the time the Exhibition remained open. It contains descriptions of most of the art industries of India and complete references to all the different divisions of exhibits. It is profusely illustrated and should form a record of the Exhibition and of Indian arts and industries generally.

25. *Illustrated folio of special exhibits.*—A proposal by the Judging Committee that reproductions of some of the more important exhibits, particularly those on loan, should be made and issued in folio form for use in Art Schools, is being put into effect.

26. *Opening ceremony.*—The Exhibition was formally opened by His Excellency the Viceroy on the forenoon of December 30th, 1902. A specially constructed platform was thrown out from the steps of the Main Entrance of the building. This was reserved for the principal guests of His Excellency, and for the Ruling Princes and high officials of Government. On the open space in front of the platform, accommodation was arranged for the general public, and complimentary

tickets were issued for the seats. The proceedings commenced with a speech by His Excellency the Viceroy, the doors were then thrown open and those seated on the platform only were admitted. At noon the general public were allowed entrance.

27. *Rates of admission.*—From December 31st to January 2nd the rate of admission was one rupee, but owing to so many people crowding into the building it was decided to raise this to Rs. 2. No appreciable reduction of those desiring admission taking place, this rate was on January 6th and 8th further raised to Rs. 5, but was reduced again on the 7th, 9th and 10th to Rs. 2. On the 11th, the crowds having by this time become normal, the original price of admission of Re. 1 was resumed, and this rate was charged until January 24th. From that date until the closing day, February 14th, so as to give all classes of the community an opportunity of inspecting the collections, 4 annas only was charged, and a large number of the working classes of Delhi and elsewhere took prompt advantage of this concession and visited the Exhibition in large numbers.

28. *Purdah Days.*—While the Exhibition remained open, several Sundays were reserved for ladies only, and large parties of *purdahnashin* and other ladies took the opportunity to see the collections.

29. *Season tickets.*—Season tickets which entitled the holders to admission at any time during the period of the Exhibition were on sale at Rs. 5 each. As a first instalment 500 of these were stocked; it was anticipated that this number would be equal to the demand of the first few weeks at least. It is significant that these were all disposed of in 2 hours.

30. *Hours of admission.*—From December 31st until January 22nd the doors were opened from 9 A.M. until midnight. From January 23rd to January 31st from 9 A.M. until 10 P.M.; after this date artificial lightning was discontinued and the doors were closed at sunset.

31. *Sales.*—The Main Gallery was the Sale Gallery, and every article displayed therein was priced and sent by the exhibitors for the purpose of sale. Every effort was made by the Director and myself while on tour and by correspondence to get exhibitors to quote the very lowest paying price on their goods, as the intention was to conduct sales by means of a selected staff, and no bargaining could be entertained. This principle of a fixed price was naturally not quite comprehended by some of the smaller traders and led in some cases to difficulties, but it may be accepted that in the main the prices quoted were of a very reasonable character. An Exhibition commission of 10 per cent. over and above the exhibitor's price was charged on all sale goods, and in cases where freight and packing was defrayed by Government, a further commission of 15 per cent. was added to these charges. The latter figure was arrived at after calculations had been made on a number of goods received from all parts of the country, and, although in the case of a light fabric from the Punjab it was somewhat in excess and on a heavy article as (for instance) a piece of furniture from Madras, a small loss to the Exhibition was probably incurred, the 15 per cent. average may be considered fair.

For the first few days after the opening ceremony the Exhibition was conducted on the lines of a museum, and no sales took place. On January 3rd, however, purchases were allowed, and from then until the closing day practically the whole of the staff was engaged in meeting the wants of customers. The principal transactions were the work of a number of European Sales clerks—professional shop assistants—who were specially employed for this purpose. To check the sales properly the following system was adopted. Each clerk was provided with a sale voucher book, the vouchers being numbered in triplicate. On a sale being effected the salesman wrote the number, description and price of the article and the purchaser's name in triplicate in his book. Two of these leaves were then detached and presented with the money to the cashier who stamped both "paid." One copy was retained by the purchaser as a receipt, and the other handed over to the Accounts clerk, and by means of these each evening the daily takings were checked. The third copy