

**SACHI, Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India and  
American Friends of SOAS, School of Oriental and African Studies (London),  
in collaboration with Palo Alto Art Center**

***are pleased to present:***



*Sāqī*. Isfahan. 1630, gouache on paper, 19.6 x 18.5 cm.,  
*Muraqqa'-i Golshan*, 1633, Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.

## ***Depicting the Beloved: Exploring Text and Image in Sixteenth-Century Persian Painting***

by Visiting Scholar  
**Naciem Nikkhah**

**Sunday  
September 18, 2016  
2:00–4:00 pm**

Palo Alto Art Center  
1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto, CA

Rsvp: [info@sachi.org](mailto:info@sachi.org) or  
[bkansara@yahoo.com](mailto:bkansara@yahoo.com)

For inquiries, call 650-918-6335

***The Event is Free and Open to the Public***

### ***Depicting the Beloved: Exploring Text and Image in Sixteenth-Century Persian Painting***

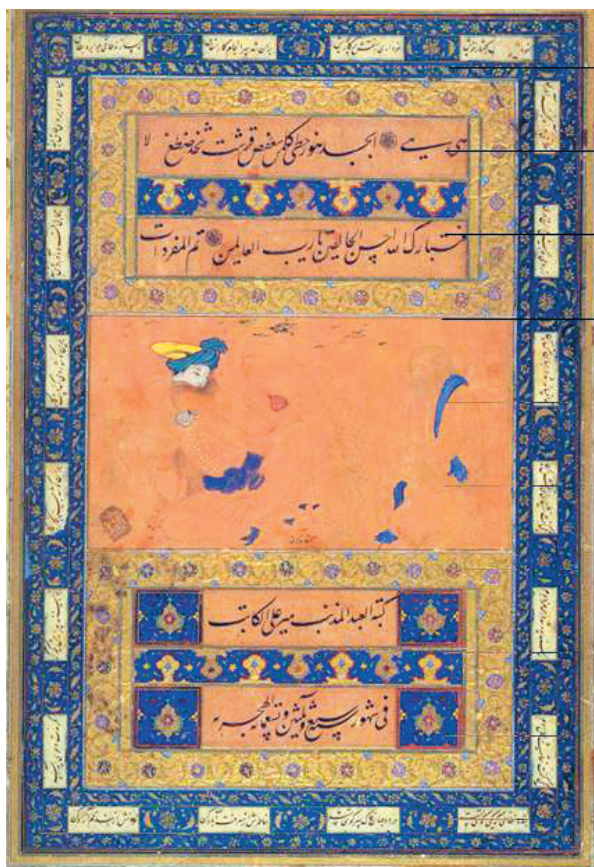
*Using seven single-page folios produced in Iran and India,* this paper focuses on Safavid and Mughal paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and argues for a direct relationship between text and image (in which the image demonstrates the outer allure and the text highlights the inner refinement). The selected folios are used as case studies for pages in which paintings of single figures have been bordered by calligraphy. A close reading of the literary content of these folios demonstrates that lines of poetry have been carefully selected for the paintings framed. A careful reading of the calligraphy testifies to the specific taste of the patron and collector of these pages; and further points to a distinct aesthetic choice made to satisfy a desire for beauty and perfection unique to the region in which the paintings were produced.

*Furthermore, the meaning of each line of poetry*

chosen for the folios will allow for a contextualization of the paintings discussed in this paper. Viewing these paintings elicited the patron's desire to observe and be observed in return. The poetic text accentuates the importance of 'gaze', immersing and drawing the patron viewer to portraits in these paintings, seen as "objects of desire".



Portrait of a Russian Ambassador. Qazvin, 1587–88, gouache on paper, 19.3 x 9.2 cm., Topkapı Sarayı Museum, Istanbul

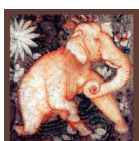


A Youth and an Old Man. Isfahan. c. 1605, opaque water color and gold on paper, 32.6 x 21.48 cm., Freer and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution



**Naciem Nikkhah** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on the relationship between text and image in sixteenth and seventeenth century Persian painting. She is particularly interested in understanding the selection process of verses of poetry that borders a painting on a single-folio, and the agency of text in comparison to painting.

She holds a B.A. in Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute, and an M.A. in History of Art and Archaeology from SOAS, University of London. After completing her degree at SOAS in 2012, Naciem returned home to California, where she taught the Persian language at the San José State University. Her interest in the role of art as a means for cross-cultural communication has led her to curate projects and exhibitions between galleries and universities of Iran and the United States.



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