

Classical Art Research Centre

#AncientArtConnections



Classical Art and Ancient India

A hybrid workshop, Tuesday 21st to Wednesday 22nd March 2023

This international workshop builds on the achievements of CARC's past Gandhara Connections events, broadening the Centre's horizons to the relations of Graeco-Roman art with other parts of the ancient world. Our focus this time is those parts of the subcontinent south of the Indus and the workshop's potential chronological range is wide: the classical Greek period to late antiquity.

Throughout this era, India was more or less connected by land and sea with the world of the Mediterranean and Near East, sometimes by land or through conquest, sometimes through the nexus of the Indian Ocean. In the Hellenistic and Roman Imperial periods the movement of artistic ideas intensified. It appears to be vividly attested in the earliest cave paintings at Ajanta in Maharashtra, in the Buddhist sculpture of south India and the monuments of Andhra Pradesh. In the first two centuries AD, when trade with India underpinned Roman luxury consumption and financed much of the cost of running the Empire, Roman coins and other artefacts reached India in abundance. However, the artistic connection is a subtle and elusive. In contrast to the conspicuously 'classicizing' aspects of Gandharan sculpture, the art of the central and southern subcontinent affords only puzzling glimpses of the influence of Graeco-Roman traditions. Conversely, the impact of Indian products and ideas on the classical world has to be teased out of challenging and fragmentary evidence.

The character of the links between Graeco-Roman art and ancient India is therefore a frontier for new research, fueled by a rapidly growing body of evidence from different areas and periods. This workshop seeks to stimulate debate and the sharing of ideas. Presented in person in Oxford and online via Zoom, this hybrid event will bring together an international panel of invited expert speakers and a truly global audience to examine ancient art in a new light.

On 21st March we will be joined online by the renowned historian William Dalrymple, who will deliver the keynote lecture.

The workshop is generously supported by

