2016-07-01

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Integrators of Design: Parsi Patronage of Bombay’s Architectural Ornament

Nicole Ashley Vance

A thesis submitted to the faculty of Brigham Young University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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July 2016

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ABSTRACT

Integrators of Design: Parsi Patronage of Bombay’s Architectural Ornament

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The seaport of Bombay is often referred to as India’s “Gothic City.” Reminders of British colonial rule are seen throughout South Bombay in its Victorian architecture and sculpture. In the heart of Bombay lies the Victoria Terminus, a towering, hybrid railway station blending gothic and vernacular architectures. Built at the height of the British Empire, the terminus is evidence of the rapid modernization of Bombay through the philanthropy of the Parsis. This religious and ethnic minority became quick allies to the British Raj; their generous donations funded the construction of the “Gothic City.” The British viewed the Parsis as their peers, not the colonized. However, Parsi-funded architectural ornament reveals that they saw themselves on equal footing with Bombay’s indigenous populations. Through their arts patronage they created an artistic heritage unique to Bombay, as seen in the architectural crown of Bombay, the Victoria Terminus (figure 2).

The Parsi philanthropist, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy was the most influential in Bombay’s modern art world. He was chosen with other Indian elites to serve on the selection committee for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. He selected India’s finest works to demonstrate India’s rich tradition of the decorative arts. In turn, these works were viewed within the Indian Pavilion by the Victorian public and design reformer Owen Jones. Jones used many of the objects at the India Pavilion in his design book, *The Grammar of Ornament*. This book went on to inspire the eclectic architectural ornament of Victorian Britain and eventually Bombay. Jeejeebhoy sold the majority of the works from the exhibition to the Victorian and Albert Museum and the Department of Sciences and Art in South Kensington. The objects were studied by design students in South Kensington who were later hired by Jeejeebhoy to be instructors at the Bombay School of Art. This school taught academic European art alongside traditional Indian design for the purpose of creating public art works. Thus, the Parsis were important cultural mediators who funded British and Indian craftsmen to create symbols of “progress,” such as the Victoria Terminus, for a modern India.

Keywords: Colonial India, Parsis, Indo-Sacrenic Architecture, Bombay School of Art, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, Architectural Ornament, Owen Jones, Victoria Terminus
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thesis is the result of the contributions and encouragement of many. I would like to thank the professors and mentors who have inspired my love of art history. I would like to especially thank my advisor, Dr. Martha Peacock, who has been a marvelous mentor through all stages of my thesis. I would like to thank my parents, especially my father for accompanying me to museums and archives in Mumbai, and my mother for proofreading the many drafts of my thesis.

I am grateful to the Department of Comparative Arts and Letters for sponsoring my travel to present various versions of my thesis at symposia. My research trips in India were made possible through the generous funding ORCA grant, the George & Geraldine Swanson Watkins Scholarship, and Graduate Mentoring Award. In more general terms, I would like to thank the many scholars of British India for providing invaluable resources for my study of Bombay’s neo-gothic architecture.
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Introduction

“Native workmen have been as apt to learn as their confrères in Europe, and that architecture has now for the first time since the decadence of Mussulman art, a glorious future before her in India. Art can only be permanent when the knowledge of it has become indigenous, and this period in architecture is arriving.”

—The Bombay Times, January 1876

During the late nineteenth century, public art and architecture flourished in Bombay due to the charitable donations of Indian elites. Furthermore, these natives reaped the benefits of a modernized infrastructure introduced by the British. Due to these philanthropists’ economic power on the Indian subcontinent, they formed close ties with their colonial rulers. They saw themselves as middlemen, acting on behalf of their indigenous communities. A majority of these intermediaries were Parsi, an ethnically and religiously distinct group from their indigenous Indian counterparts. Originally from Persia, the Parsis were followers of the Zoroastrian faith, who had found religious refuge in India and had prospered greatly. The Parsis were viewed by colonial rule as “almost British,” yet they saw themselves as native Indians. Visual manifestations of the Parsis’ “nativeness” can be seen in the art and architecture they patronized throughout south Bombay. The Parsis funded many public architectural works, museums, and art schools. Their philanthropy joined Indian and British artisans, architects, curators, designers, and art educators together to create a hybrid style for a modern India.

Bombay, like Britain during this period, favored architectural eclecticism. However, the monumental architecture of nineteenth-century Bombay has an Indian flair, echoing the

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2. The British have a long history on the Indian subcontinent. The East India Company governed regions of India from 1612 to 1858, and then power shifted to the British Raj, or rule of the British Crown, which governed the Indian subcontinent (i.e. present-day Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh) until the Partition of India in 1947. For a deeper study of colonial rule in South Asia, see Douglas M. Peers, and Nandini Gooptu, India and the British Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Victorian aesthetic ideal that architecture should reflect the culture in which it was developed.\(^4\)

The majority of Bombay’s Victorian structures were patronized by the Parsis and built by the Public Works Department run by native Bombayites. Today, these monuments stand as reminders of a British colonial past. This seemingly exotic colonial legacy has prompted many British art and architectural historians to study these buildings through a strict colonial lens without regard to the massive role that the indigenous populations played.\(^5\) Their scholarship acknowledged many nineteenth-century colonial structures within India and paved the way for their recognition as historical structures worth preservation—as seen in the Victoria Terminus being designated a UNESCO world heritage site in 2004. However, there has been little research accomplished on the decorative sculpture of Bombay’s Victorian architecture. My thesis provides the first analysis of the importance of Parsis’ patronage in Bombay’s architectural ornament. These structures were largely built and commissioned by Indian natives—specifically

\(^4\) John Ruskin’s sixth lamp of architecture “memory” states that architecture should respect the culture of that which it is developed in. For a the complete set of the critic’s aesthetic ideals see John Ruskin *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (London: The Waverly Book Company Ltd., 1849), 42.

Indian craftsmen and patrons had artistic agency during colonial rule as is revealed in the figural ornament that covers the architectural oeuvre of Bombay’s Public Works Department. This department, consisting of both British and Indian architects, outsourced the majority of architectural ornament to Indian students of decorative sculpture at the Parsi-funded Bombay School of Art.

Partha Mitter is the lone art historian who has studied the Bombay School of Art in great depth. However, he only briefly acknowledges the Department of Architectural Sculpture and primarily discusses the Department of Painting. Rather than focus on high art that was produced within the walls of the school, my thesis attempts to fill the void in scholarship pertaining to the Department of Architectural Sculpture. I argue that the Department of Architectural Sculpture must be studied because their Parsi patrons dictated much of their subject matter. In addition, their work had a wider viewership because their ornament adorns many public and government buildings throughout South Bombay. Most importantly, however, I would like to argue that

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6 During his lifetime, Parsi Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy contributed approximately Rs. 30 lakh to the arts and architecture in Bombay and abroad. For a list of his expenditures see Appendix II in Modi, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 142.


these architectural motifs and ornaments shed light on the complex and overlapping ideologies of
the Parsi, British, and Indian populations that prevailed in nineteenth-century Bombay.

Another historian, Preeti Chopra, was the first scholar to address the joint role native
populations had in the creation of colonial architecture. Nevertheless, due to her training as an
architectural theorist, she briefly mentions the artistic qualities of the architectural ornament of
colonial Bombay. She concedes that such monumental architecture certainly conveys meaning to
the viewer, and clearly the nineteenth-century contemporary viewer would have easily read the
pictorial elements decorating these structures. The ornamental sculpture is evidence of the
complex colonial relationships between British, Parsi, and Indian populations in nineteenth-
century Bombay. Parsi patrons funded European artisans to educate Indian craftsmen to sculpt
symbols of “progress” for Colonial India. The ornament and sculpture on Bombay’s Victorian
revival architecture must be studied as a reflection of the ideological attitudes of nineteenth-
century Bombay populations—specifically the Parsis.

Decorative sculpture was crucial to the building of a modern Bombay because of its
unrestricted viewership. Bombay’s Public Works Department built not only administrative
buildings but much of the city’s infrastructure. Indians from all walks of life interacted with
these structures on a daily basis; they could see the influence of Parsi elites on Bombay’s
modernity through the figural representations of the wealthy minority. In addition, the

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9 For a brief summary of the Department of Decorative Sculpture at the Bombay School of Art see Preeti
Chopra, A Joint Enterprise: Indian Elites and the Making of British Bombay (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota
Press, 2011), T. J. Barringer and Tom Flynn, Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the
Museum (London: Routledge, 1998), and Partha Mitter, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India: Occidental

10 The “Indian populations” to which I am referring to are not entirely homogeneous, late-nineteenth-
century Bombay was diverse. It is often divided in scholarship along ethnic and religious lines, which were often
very similar. These groups included; Hindus of all castes from throughout the Indian subcontinent, Muslims and
Sufis originating from the Moghul Empire, Sikhs from the Punjab, Baghdadi Jews, Jains, Buddhists from India and
the Far East, and Indian Christians. For a in depth look at the demographics of this period, see Meera Kosambi,
longstanding tradition of architectural ornament on the Indian subcontinent would have emphasized its importance in the architectural imagery of nineteenth-century Bombay.\textsuperscript{11} Using the architectural ornament of structures built between the years 1860-1890, with an emphasis on the epitome of Bombay-Gothic architecture, the Victoria Terminus, I will discuss the position of the Parsis as promoters of a new culture within the colonial city.

Before beginning however, I will discuss the theoretical framework that informs my research and methodology, followed by a brief history of the Parsis with a particular focus on their patronage of the arts. Next, I shall discuss the Parsis’ ability to construct a modernized India. Then, I will examine the role of Parsi patronage for the objects selected to represent India at the Great Exhibition of 1851. I will then trace the influence of these artifacts displayed in the India Pavilion and how they radically affected the decorative arts in London and Bombay in terms of collection, design handbooks, and arts education. Finally, I will describe the activities of the Department of Decorative Sculpture at the Parsi funded Bombay School of Art.

From the outset, an explanation of my use of the term “native” to refer to non-European populations of Bombay must be explained. Today this word is used pejoratively, referring to non-whites. However, in the nineteenth century the term “native” was quite fluid. As literary and cultural theorist Raymond Williams states, the term “native” was “used for the inhabitants of a place in which some superior person had settled. Yet all the time, alongside this use, “native” remained a very positive word when applied to one’s own place or person.”\textsuperscript{12} Thus, this term was in a state of constant flux during India’s colonial period and it cannot be assumed that it was

\textsuperscript{11} In a predominately Hindu region, it can be assumed that the majority of viewers would have been familiar with the Sanskrit term \textit{alamkāra} (अलंकार) which references architectural ornament but carries much more than a mere aesthetic connotation, the turn references the “validity of whatever is adorned, or enhances its effect, empowering it,” in a spiritual sense. Thus Indian viewers would approach decorative sculpture with this prior knowledge. For more information see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, “Ornament,” \textit{The Art Bulletin} 21, no. 4 (December 1939): 377-78.

\textsuperscript{12} Raymond Williams, \textit{Keywords: Vocabulary of Culture and Society} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983) 215.
intentionally negative. Bombay’s local inhabitants often used this term to describe themselves—even before they collectively identified as Indian.\(^\text{13}\) I choose to use the term “native” to reflect the attitudes of local populations within colonial Bombay and retain the tone of the primary documents studied within my thesis.

**Theory and Methodology**

Given that the Parsis patronized architectural projects, museums, and art schools which brought together British and Indian architects, artists, and designers, my study intersects with postcolonial theory, specifically in the areas of hybridity, third-space, and imagined communities. Following in the tradition of postcolonial theory and more general examinations of art and architecture of the British Empire, my thesis attempts to investigate the relationships between the students, teachers, and patrons of the Bombay School of Art.\(^\text{14}\) In addition, I will refer to the prevailing beliefs pertaining to art and architecture in India and Britain in the nineteenth century.\(^\text{15}\) Previous studies of Indian art schools and architecture during colonial rule are grounded in Marxism, Orientalism, and the early stages of postcolonial thought.\(^\text{16}\)

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\(^{13}\) Chopra, *Joint Enterprise*, ix.


\(^{15}\) Namely John Ruskin, primary documents, journal and newspaper articles.

\(^{16}\) Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*. 
Chopra, an architectural historian, was the first to look in the direction of the postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha, when alluding to “mimic men,” while discussing the architectural style and patronage of a Parsi colony in Bombay.\(^{17}\) It is puzzling that previous scholars of British Bombay did not look to Bhabha as a basis for their theoretical framework. The postcolonial theory of Homi Bhabha is critical to my research. Not only is he a world-renowned literary theorist originally from Bombay, but he was born into an elite Parsi family within the walls of the colonial fort. Bhabha’s Parsi upbringing gives great insight into his theories of hybridity, third-space, mimicry, and ambivalence.\(^{18}\) Hybridity, according to Bhabha is the process by which cultures come together through translation and iteration and how their meanings are addressed through difference or an “other.” By contrast, third-space describes the liminal space between two cultures. Thus, the Parsis, not fully belonging to either culture, acted in the third-space and patronized a new hybrid culture. The hybrid culture they supported was built through mimicry—imitating art styles and educational practices.

In addition to Bhabha, I will utilize Benedict Anderson’s theories of “imagined communities” and nationalism.\(^{19}\) Anderson’s theory of imagined communities has found resonance with many political scientists, however I find his ideas relevant in regards to creating a sense of national identity especially within the context of a different nation. According to Anderson, the formation of ideas of nation and community are first imagined within a citizen’s mind before they are formed in reality. Hence, Parsis imagined their own unique space within British and Indian cultures and ultimately carved out their own community in Bombay.

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Pertaining to questions of ethnic identity, I employ the theories of sociologist Stuart Hall regarding the construction of identity through readily conceived cultural differences. According to Hall, identity—whether it is religious, ethnic, or national—is constructed through difference. Identity during colonial rule in India is a complex issue; an identity based on religion, ethnicity, and nationality was amplified by the caste system. A sociological approach to identity will be crucial to understanding the influential minorities of Bombay.

The writings of these theorists have encouraged me to take a closer look at the architectural patronage of British Bombay, Indian art schools, and London’s Great Exhibition of 1851. By situating my thesis in the theoretical frameworks of hybridity, nationalism, and identity, I hope to refine my arguments about the Parsis’ role in arts patronage during the latter half of the nineteenth century. This theoretical framework has provided an avenue to understanding Parsi patronage of British colonial monuments, the Bombay School of Art, and traditional Indian art and design.

**History of the Parsis**

The history, arts, and architecture of modern Bombay are intrinsically connected to the Parsis. Humbly beginning as textile traders and spice vendors in the early-modern era, they transformed into mercantile millionaires at the head of international companies by the mid-nineteenth century. The Parsis lived lives comparable to American industrialist philanthropists of the nineteenth century. Like Rockefeller, Mellon, and Carnegie, the Parsis made charitable donations to museums, funded public building projects, and patronized the arts. They controlled Bombay’s visual culture by integrating European academic art with traditional Indian design.

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The Parsis are not native to India—they fled from Iran during the seventh through the tenth centuries due to religious persecution during Abbasid Caliphate rule. As strong believers in Zoroastrianism, an ancient monotheistic Persian religion, they were unable to freely practice their faith in a strictly Islamic state. Wishing to preserve their faith and heritage, the Parsis relocated across the Arabian Sea to the western coastal regions of India on the Malabar Coast. For nearly seven hundred years, they remained in India carefully preserving their religious identity and Persian culture. Accordingly, they did not intermarry with Gujarati and Maharashtrian locals, which resulted in a tightly knit community. They were known by the moniker “Parsi,” which means Persian in Farsi. When the Mughals occupied India in the sixteenth century, they found commonalities with the Parsis in their shared Persian language and culture, and as a result, they often favored Parsis over Gujaratis and Marathas when it came to trade. Thus, the Parsis became mercantile elites and prospered greatly.

Before, and even during British rule, the Parsis governed themselves through a panchayat system. This form of local government is distinctly Indian. Members of the Parsi panchayat always came from prominent families who were revered in their local communities. These leaders formulated and enforced religious amendments and secular laws. Scholars of Parsi culture and identity often point to the panchayat’s existence as the social ideology that came to represent and safeguard Parsi identity during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. In essence, the Parsis utilized a system of Indian self-governance.

When the British East India Company first arrived on the Indian subcontinent in search of tea, cotton, and textiles in the seventeenth century, they quickly established ties with the Parsis

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22 “Parsi” is often alternatively spelled “Parsee,” however most historians today use the first spelling.
25 The panchayat is a village council system prevalent in South Asian countries. For a historical overview of the panchayat in India see: Kuldeep Mathur, *Panchayati Raj* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).
26 Palsetia, *The Parsis of India*, 63
who accounted for the majority of merchants on the western coast. The Parsis joined and made
donations to many British and Indian boards and associations. One organization in particular, the
Bombay Association, was the first political organization, other than the panchayat, that the Parsis
joined. The association served as a place where Indians could vent public complaints to the
British. Although the Parsis held few of the seats in the association, they donated Rs. 20,814 out
of the Rs. 28,561 to start the association.27 Clearly, the problems of their neighbors mattered to
them, and more importantly, they saw themselves as integrators, bringing British and Indian
cultures together.

At a political meeting of the Bombay Association at the Elphinstone Institution, native
economic and political leaders of Bombay met to discuss the complaints of the people of
Bombay before the Bombay Presidency.28 The following quote from August of 1851
summarizes their grievances:

“Under the British Government we do not suffer any great zoolum [tyranny or
oppression]. We are comparatively happier under the kind Government than we are
likely to be under any other. Whatever evil we have to complain of originates from one
cause, the ignorance of European officers coming fresh from home. With regard to many
of the habits, customs, and usages prevailing in this country, these officers may pass laws
or regulations injurious to the nation and yet fancy they have done their duty
conscientiously. The authorities think them to be right, while natives think otherwise.
But if an Association like this be in existence, we can suggest improvements. These
suggestions coming from such an Assembly must be listened to and perhaps adopted.”29

27 Rs. is the abbreviation for rupees, the official currency in late nineteenth-century Bombay. Modi,
Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 40.
28 Members of the first meeting of the Bombay Association included: Dadabhai Naoroji, Bombanji H.
Wadia, Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney, Virjivandas Madhavas, Manockjee Petit, Maneckji Limji Banaji,
Khurstedi N. Cama, Framji N. Patel, Navroji Furdoonji, Dr. Bhau Daji Lad, and Jagannath Shankerseth, Sir
Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy. For the full list see John Edward Taylor, Life and Public Charities of Sir Jamsetjee
Jeejeebhoy (London: Lincoln’s Inn Fields, 1855) 48.
29 Zoolum comes from the Arabic ظلزم meaning oppression or injustice. See Munir Ba‘labakki, Al-Mawrid:
A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary (Beirut: Dar El-Ilm Lil-Malayen, 1979). For the grievance letter quote see
Modi, Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 40.
This letter demonstrates that the leaders of the Bombay Association found little fault with the British government aside from cultural ignorance. Here again, we see the Parsis and other mercantile elites acting as middlemen for their Indian neighbors.

Zarathustra, Zoroastrianism’s founder taught a code of ethics based on personal responsibility. In summary, Zoroastrianism taught one to live an industrious, honest, and charitable life.\(^\text{30}\) While this is a strong motive for nineteenth-century Parsi patronage, I would argue that economic and political gains in colonial Bombay held greater sway. During British rule, philanthropy among the Parsis became a uniting symbol of not only political and economic power, but also “religious goodness.”\(^\text{31}\) For many Parsis in the nineteenth century, the word “good” was a sign that the person was charitable. Much of the central corpus of British Bombay was built with charitable donations from the Parsi elite. The Parsis not only formed relationships with the British, but they funded the construction of government offices, libraries, schools, hospitals, dharamshalas, and public drinking fountains.\(^\text{32}\) The Parsis did much “good” for Bombay and as a result many of these institutions carry their names today. It may almost appear as though it was the Parsis rather than the British who built the distinctly European port city of Bombay.

Parsi philanthropists did not limit their donations to their own communities however. The Parsis also had a strong presence within the Empire and abroad. Wealthy Parsi merchants donated to the building of public works and monuments in London, the Suez Canal in Egypt, and urban planning during the Haussmannization of Paris.\(^\text{33}\) It is interesting to note that although the Parsis consisted of only six percent of the population of Bombay, they accounted for over

\(^{30}\) Hinnells, Zoroastrianism and the Parsis, 69.


\(^{32}\) Dharamshalas are religious rest houses or sanctuaries for the poor. Ibid. 105.

twenty-five percent of London’s Indian student population.\textsuperscript{34} This over-representation suggests strong links between the Parsis and their colonial rulers in India and Britain. Thus the Parsis did not see themselves as a colonized group. In 1823 the Charter of the Bombay Presidency established that the Parsis of Bombay were granted privileges under English civil law.\textsuperscript{35} Viewing themselves as “other” to the Hindu population and being “foreign” like the British, the Parsis formed close ties with the Raj.\textsuperscript{36} They viewed the Raj as an alliance and vice versa. Hence, they served as intermediaries between the British and the indigenous populations in Bombay. The Parsis’ presence in Bombay and abroad was tremendous.

The single most influential Parsi was Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy. As a merchant and banker, Jeejeebhoy amassed his large fortune through the opium trade between England and China. Like many other Parsis, Jeejeebhoy became a valuable joining India and Britain. Jeejeebhoy was considered “almost English.”\textsuperscript{37} As the first native of India knighted and awarded baronetcy by the British crown, he held great authority in Bombay and was recognized abroad. Over his lifetime, Jeejeebhoy donated nearly twenty-five lakhs to charities and the building of Bombay.\textsuperscript{38} Even today he is known for his philanthropy, and many schools, hospitals, and libraries are named after him. Of greatest importance to this study is the fact that he was a great patron of the arts. Jeejeebhoy, like many other Parsi and British elites, commissioned portraits by European and Indian artists; he was fond of the art and design of India as well as European


\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Palaestia}, \textit{Parsi Identity}, 134.

\textsuperscript{36} The British Raj was the rule of Great Britain on the Indian subcontinent. The Hindi राज means rule or reign, therefore, the British Raj simply refers to British rule.

\textsuperscript{37} Modi, \textit{Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy}, 69.

\textsuperscript{38} In total, Sir Jeejeebhoy donated Rs. 24,59,736 to charity. The division of funds was as follows: public works Rs 4,36,340, Catholic charities, Rs. 8,48,381, and communal charities, Rs. 11,75,015. Jeejeebhoy’s donations to the arts rivaled those of his Parsi contemporaries; Sir Cowasji Jehangir “Readymoney,” Sorabji Pochkhanawala, Dadibhai Noshirwanji (Dadyseth), Pherozeshah Mehta, Dorabji Tata, and the Wadia family. See Ibid. 175.
academic art. He served on the juror committee for London’s Great Exhibition of 1851. In addition, he donated to museums in both London and Bombay and founded the Bombay School of Art.

Jeejeebhoy however, was one of many prominent Parsis and colonial elites in western India. Fellow Parsis, such as Sir Cowasji Jehangir Readymoney and Jamsetjee Tata, also contributed to the building of Bombay and London. Their charitable donations are dubbed a “joint enterprise,” by Indian art historians, because of the partnerships between the Parsi philanthropists and colonial governments who shared funds and duties in the construction of public spaces in Bombay. The peak of native philanthropy and government partnership occurred in the 1860s, when Bombay became the top cotton-trading market in the world, which greatly increased the port-city’s international value. The Parsis were true leaders of the city’s cosmopolitan population. Through Parsi philanthropy, a landscape was created in South Bombay that produced a newly “imagined community” for its inhabitants.

To be socially progressive, tolerant, and open to change was the aim of the nineteenth-century Parsi. As supporters of the most modern community in India, the Parsis became integrators of British and Indian culture. They ushered in the modernization of Bombay and provided the wealth and taste to do so. The visual manifestations of this modern Indian culture

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39 Portraits that he had commissioned by British artists included, George Chinney (1840), Baron Marochetti (1856), Richard James Lane (1840), and D.J. Pound Asian artists included G. K. Mahtre (1855) and Lam Qua (1860).
41 Ibid, xiv.
43 Not all of the colonial elite who built Bombay were Parsi. Other important figures such as David Sassoon and Jagannath Sunkersett came from Jewish and Hindu backgrounds respectively. However, their contributions—although great—are meager compared to the Parsis. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 34.
can be seen gracing the spires and buttresses of the gothic-style edifices throughout south Bombay.

**Modernization of Bombay**

Bombay began its modern bourgeoning in the mid-nineteenth century. Standing apart from other colonial cities of the subcontinent such as Madras, Calcutta, Delhi, and Lahore, Bombay was built and financed for the greater part by natives. Unlike other colonial cities, Bombay was home to some of the British Empire’s wealthiest capitalists—the majority of which were Parsi. They were a unique and essential group that orchestrated the modernization of Bombay through significant charitable donations. Indeed, the Parsis transformed Bombay into a modern metropolis.

Bombay became India’s most valuable port-city in 1867 after the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt. Shortening shipping routes by almost 4,000 miles, the canal saved two months of time for each one-way voyage.45 The maritime British Empire suddenly became geographically smaller with the introduction of the canal. For many, the Suez Canal was a marvelous manifestation of modernity and world power. Shortly after its completion, trade exploded on the Indian subcontinent. Due to India’s poor infrastructure and the high demand for cotton, tea, and spices, Bombay could not fill the British Empire’s appetite for exotic goods fast enough. Political cartoonist, John Tenniel, criticized the British Empire’s hunger for Indian exports in his political cartoons featured in *Punch* Magazine (Fig. 1). In *Mending the Lesson*, John Bull embodies the attitudes of the British in the nineteenth century as he forcibly removes a large laden basket from the Bengali woman in order to appease the British Miss Prudence. In addition, the allegory of progress reasons with John Bull and the Bengali woman. The caption

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reads, “Progress: ‘Take care my dear, don’t interfere with the laws of supply and demand.’ John Bull: ‘I don’t, Miss Prudence. She demands and I supply.’”

46 Tenniel in this print, as well as many other artists, criticized the British exploitation of the Indian people in many of their political illustrations throughout the Empire.

To fulfill the foreign demand for Indian goods, the British hastily made plans for railway lines. In 1853, the British East India Trading Company introduced railway lines. The Earl of Dalhousie was a major supporter of the railway in India, seeing its introduction as,

“[A] system of railways [that] will certainly and rapidly beget in India the same spirit of enterprise, the same increase of produce, the same discovery of latent forces, and the same multiplication of national wealth as have marked the extension and improvement of communications in the kingdoms of the western world.”

However, the British East India Trading Company was not successful in this venture because of insufficient materials and means. It was not until the later half of the nineteenth century that India’s railroad blossomed. Between 1880 and 1900, the miles of railway line tripled to nearly 24,000 miles.48 This railway mania led to greater British political control of India, new perceptions of time and space, and most importantly for Britain and the Parsis—an organized economy. All railway lines led to Bombay. The railway rapidly led India to modernize faster than any other region under the rule of the British Empire. Hence, railways were seen as a metaphor for civilization in colonial India.49 The British saw the railway as a means of opening India up to civilization, and the Parsis and native Indian populations reaped its economic


47 Mehrotra, A City Icon, 35.


49 Marian Aguiar, Tracking Modernity India’s Railway and the Culture of Mobility (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011) 42-49.
benefits. Thus, many in India, as well as abroad, viewed the railway as a valuable addition to the subcontinent.

The combination of the Indian Railway and the opening of the Suez Canal contributed to Bombay becoming the most important port city in Southeast Asia. Bombay’s population increased rapidly and many new opportunities arose in the trading industry. To accommodate this new and large population, Bombayites—a majority of them Parsi—promptly commissioned public and administrative buildings. All structures established by the Public Works Department were built in an Indo-European style, blending western architecture with native Hindu and Mughal elements. Thus, Bombay colonial architecture exemplified art critic John Ruskin’s theory that architecture should reflect those who develop it. Even from a continent away, British aesthetic ideals made their way into Indian architectural design.

The Victoria Terminus

The pinnacle of progress, the Victoria Terminus lies at the heart of Bombay. The structure embodies the colonial history of the metropolis and consequently gives great insight into the prevailing ideologies of British, Parsi, and Indian Bombayites of the period. In its day, the Victoria Terminus was one of the finest examples of Victorian architecture not only in India, but Britain as well. The massive, towering railway station blends European and vernacular architectures (Fig. 2). In keeping with the traditions of gothic revival architecture, the building is heavily ornamented with reliefs of flora, fauna, allegories, and portraiture. However, these Victorian elements also display Indian influence because native animals and vegetation, as well as...

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50 Mehrotra, A City Icon, 32.
51 Thus, the eclectic style of the Victoria Terminus, brings together British, Hindu, and Muslim elements. Ruskin, Seven Lamps, 42.
52 The Victoria Terminus is known today as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (after the great Maharashtrian hero), the name was changed in 1994, one year before Bombay was changed to Mumbai, this was part of a renaming campaign that started shortly after the partition which changed names of cities and buildings in local languages. Mehrotra, A City Icon, 35.
as prominent Bombayites, are depicted. Much research has been done on the construction of the Victoria Terminus in recent years as it was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2004. However, little research has been done on the structure’s architectural sculpture. My research fills this gap in the scholarship.

Since I will refer back to the structure throughout my thesis and because the structure followed a similar “joint enterprise” to other buildings by the Bombay’s Public Works Department, I will provide a brief history of the construction of the Victoria Terminus. By 1872, the Great Indian Peninsula Railway headquarters had outgrown their offices. The British Raj and Indian elites sought to combine the headquarters with a new massive railway terminus. In 1877, the Raj began plans for the new railway station. Many sites within the port city were nominated. After much deliberation, the chosen site was that of Bori Bunder, an ordinary dock which, prior to 1737, was the original location of the Hindu Mumbadevi temple. Land had to be reclaimed from the sea to build on the site. This painstaking process took nearly a year to complete.

During this time, Frederick William Stevens, a British architect of the Raj was inspired by the site for the terminus and envisioned its important placement within the “Gothic City.” Desiring a modern and innovative design for the terminus, Stevens traveled back to Britain in 1877 to study railway stations—specifically St. Pancras Station in London (Fig. 3). As one of the finest manifestations of Victorian architecture, St. Pancras Station directly influenced Stevens’s architectural details, as witnessed in his sketchbook (Fig. 4). This can be seen in his

53 Mehotra, A City Icon, 35.
54 “The original temple of Mumbadevi, built by the island’s first inhabitants, the Koli fisher-folk, was also located in the neighborhood of the gallows until the British authorities demolished it in 1737 when the fortifications were enlarged. The temple was later rebuilt in the Kalbadevi area.” in Ibid. A City Icon, 64.
use of pointed and rounded polychrome arches, rich architectural ornamentation, and double lancet windows. Stevens’s designs allowed for native ornamentation and domes. He returned to Bombay later that year with a complete set of architectural plans. He submitted them to the selection committee and they were chosen in early 1878.

Stevens had only taken on smaller assignments before this time, however the Raj favored Stevens’s ideas for their blending of European and Indian architectural traditions. Stevens’s designs demonstrated how High Victorian eclecticism could fuse with non-European styles, thus resulting in an architectural heritage unique to Bombay. His designs were selected by the native-run Public Works Department of Bombay.

A diverse group—consisting of Parsis, Muslims, and Hindus, Anglo-Indians, and British officials—aided with the construction of the Victoria Terminus. While Stevens supervised the project in its entirety, he was greatly assisted by two native engineers, Siteram Khanderao and Maherao Janardhan, as supervisors from the Public Works Department. Stevens’s designs were brought to fruition by the Great Indian Peninsular Railway’s ten directors. Sir Jeejeebhoy was one of these directors and donated nearly five lakhs of rupees to the construction of the Victoria Terminus. Although Stevens designed some architectural ornament, students of the Bombay School of Art, under the direction of professors John Lockwood Kipling, M. Gomez, John Griffiths, were commissioned to sculpt architectural details and reliefs for the railway terminus. As per Stevens’s direction, the ornament was to reflect local flowers, plants, animals, and citizens of Bombay. The embellishments of the Victoria Terminus were highly praised in

56 Mehrotra A City Icon, 78.
57 According to Jan Morris, Bombay has the highest percentage of Victorian structures per-capita in the entire world, Stones of Empire (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 12.
58 “Great Indian Peninsular Railway Terminal Building Bombay” The Builder, October 23, 1886, 608.
59 Five lakhs is today approximately $11,200. In total the structure cost a quarter of a million sterling. Modi, Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, 175.
60 “Great Indian Peninsular Railway Terminal Building Bombay” The Builder, October 23, 1886, 608.
their day in Bombay and in Europe. Stevens considered “the quality of the work to be quite equal to anything of the kind in Europe.”\textsuperscript{61} In the midst of erecting the railway headquarters, colored drawings of the building were exhibited in London’s Royal Academy in 1881. Many European architects who visited the exhibition marveled at the architectural feat of placing a large masonry dome upon a Victorian structure.

After nearly a decade of construction, the terminus was opened just in time to celebrate Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee in 1887. To honor her as supreme monarch of India, a twice-life-size sculpture of the Queen was placed on the third story of the western façade.\textsuperscript{62} At the height of Victoria’s imperial power, the railway terminus was named after her and carried her name for over a century. Nevertheless, although the structure was considered by the British to be a jewel in the Empire’s architectural crown, Bombayites regarded the Victoria Terminus as a symbol of modernity and shared partnership with colonial rule.

\textbf{Parsis as Natives}

Bombay was different from most colonial cities on the Indian subcontinent in that most, if not all, of India’s wealthy industrialists resided within the metropolis. Colonial cities such as Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, and Lahore did not have the luxury of charitable donations from native capitalists. The majority of these philanthropists were Parsi, a minority centrally located in Bombay. The city is unique among other Indian cities because of the greater role native populations played in the patronage and construction of public buildings, particularly Jeejeebhoy who wanted the Parsis to be viewed as part of the native population rather than to be associated with the British. Evidence of their identity construction is seen in the architectural reliefs on the

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid, 608.
\textsuperscript{62} The sculpture was removed after India’s independence from Britain and is now lost.
Victorian structures of Bombay. In Parsi patronized structures, Parsis are depicted alongside other Indian groups such as Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Jains.

As stated previously, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy served on the board of directors for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and donated five lakhs to the building of the Victoria Terminus. As a major donor to the Grand Peninsular Railway and founder of the Bombay School of Art, Jeejeebhoy had great authority over the pictorial elements of the terminus. As a result, he and the other nine directors are featured in large bas-reliefs on the western façade (Fig. 5). Eight of the directors are of European descent and two are not. In addition to Jeejeebhoy, Indian-born Jagannath Sunkersett, an elite Hindu Bombayite is featured (Figs. 6-7). Sunkersett was a major donor to the Victoria Terminus, and like Jeejeebhoy, he supported the arts of India. The portraits of Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett are not displayed centrally like the Europeans; they are placed at the far reaches of either side of the façade near the circular towers, which display a relief of the different peoples of Bombay (Fig. 8). Although some may argue that this deemphasizes their importance, I argue that the location of the portraits shows their desire to be the “middle men,” acting as intermediaries between the British and other Indian populations in Bombay. The Parsis saw themselves as part of cosmopolitan Bombay, and they wished to improve their city through the patronage of government buildings.

The relief panels on the ground floor of the two circular towers connect the wings to the main structure. The figures on the relief panel are not naturalistic like the medallions. Each panel consists of sixteen distinct profile portraits. Each man wears a different turban and has varying facial hairstyle, alluding to their social group. Bernard S. Cohn, an anthropologist of British India, argues that the classification and organization of different ethnicities functions as a display

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63 For a complete list of the officials featured on the western side of the Victoria Terminus see Malhotra, A City Icon, 35.
64 Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 98.
of colonial power. However, I would argue that these relief panels give a voice to the many communities who inhabited the city. The Indian public who frequently utilized the Grand Peninsular Railway would view these relief panels as a positive representation of their own communities, not the elite society of the British Raj. The contemporary viewer would be able to categorize the religion, caste, if Hindu, and inhabited district of each man simply by their headdress and facial hair. For example, the man second to the left is shown with a mundaso turban, a headdress worn by males of the Daivadnya Brahmin caste. Daivadnyas were the wealthiest Brahmins in Maharashtra, who lived in the southern-most coastal region of Bombay. This same analysis can be given to each of the figures; Muslims, Jains, Christians, and Parsis are also depicted. It is interesting to note that Parsis are grouped with the other Bombay types. Although the British did not view them as indigenous to India, the Parsis identified themselves as being native to Bombay. This again emphasizes how the Parsis saw themselves as integrators of a new culture into their Indian home.

This architectural narrative of the different cultural factions native to Bombay is not unique to the Victoria Terminus. Within the walls of the Bombay fort lies the Bombay General Hospital, completed in 1875, which also prominently features the sculptural work of students.

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65 In the late nineteenth century, the British Raj commissioned photographers to take portraits throughout India in attempts of developing an ethnographic classification system of the different castes of India. For the best studies on this topic read, Bernard S. Cohn, “The Past in the Present: India as Museum of Mankind.” Paper presented at the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies Colloquium, Museums and Collecting, Colonial and post-Colonial, April 3 and 4, 1992, and Christopher Pinney, Photography and Anthropology (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

66 See Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Can the Subaltern Speak? (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988). However, the exclusion of women in these panels would be highly problematic for the contemporary female viewer.


from the Bombay School of Art (Fig. 9). On three sides of the crossing tower, four massive human heads gaze over Bombay representing the Koli, Muslim, Christian, and Parsi classifications of nineteenth-century, cosmopolitan Bombay. Typical of Victorian sculpture, the colossal heads are idealized leaving little room for portrait-like qualities. However, the heads can be identified again by their facial hair and headdress. Common to ethnic studies in India, the figure-heads reflect the diverse religious groups present in Bombay. The Koli includes the original fishing peoples that were the original inhabitants of Bombay, which were predominately Hindu. The Muslim head represents the Bohra and Khoja clans who came to Bombay from Mughal Gujarat. The Christian head represents the Christians who had been living on the Malabar Coast for several centuries. The last head represents the Parsi population within Bombay. Here again, the Parsis are regarded by the contemporary viewer, and by themselves, as a native group in Bombay.

The Rajabai Clock Tower, finished in 1862, is another example of the inclusion of Parsis as Bombay natives in architectural sculpture (Fig. 10). As one of the most expensive neo-gothic projects commissioned by the Bombay Public Works Administration, the University of Bombay has a large amount of relief sculpture inside and out. The exterior sculpture is most revealing concerning attitudes toward Parsis in a purely governmental building. The clock tower is lined with columns and the capitals display Indian animals such as tigers, peacocks, and chital. Most significant, however, are the sculptures within the porticos where native peoples of Bombay are displayed (Fig. 11). Like the relief panels on the Victoria Terminus, the varying nuances of

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70 Chopra, *A Joint Enterprise*, 59 and Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*, 60. See also the report of the direction of public instruction in the Bombay presidency for the year 1873-74, 52.
dress signify distinct cultural groups. At the left is a Parsi in traditional garb. He wears a stiff *dabhoi* turban, a headpiece reserved for wealthy Parsis. He also wears the *jama*, a robe-like costume that was first introduced by the Mughals. Here, Parsis are seen alongside the major religious groups of Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Christians.73

The High Court of Bombay was a building used by British government officials—even more frequently than the Victoria Terminus and the Bombay General Hospital. It was a structure that enforced the laws and regulations of the British Empire. In this judicial sphere, the Parsis were seen by colonial rule as “almost British,” however they are still included with the Bombay types.74 The Parsis had a foot in both cultures and were able to best integrate British habits into multicultural Bombay. By straddling British, Indian, and Parsi cultures, they created a new space and culture that could freely interact with all societies.75 The Parsi community functioned in a self-identified “third space” which resulted in the group being the middlemen chosen to represent India at home in Bombay and abroad.

**The India Pavilion**

Not only were the Parsis and other Indian elites patrons of architecture, they were also great connoisseurs and collectors of art. As mercantile elites in Bombay they led a similar lifestyle to the Victorian aristocracy. They commissioned portraits, invested in Indian and European art, and collected overseas trinkets for their own *kunstkammers*.76 Consequently, it is no surprise that Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy and Jagannath Sunkersett were selected to serve on the

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73 Jains, Buddhists, and Sikhs are left out of this group of religious figures. However, the demographics of this group were much smaller than that of the Parsis in nineteenth-century Bombay. Meera Kosambi, *Bombay in Transition*, 27-34.

74 Parsis enjoyed many more economic, political, and religious rights than their indigenous Indian counterparts. See Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India*, 174.

75 Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 97.

76 Palaestia, *Parsi Identity*, 34.
Indian arts and craft selection committee for the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London. The men had a taste for European academic art and relished the craft and workmanship of traditional Indian design. Thus, Sir Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett were ideal candidates for selecting Indian fine and decorative arts to be displayed at the Crystal Palace.

The exhibition came at a time when the British in India were shifting from trade to military domination. Thus, the exhibition was extremely beneficial to the British Empire, as it showed its dominion on every continent to the Victorian public. The British wanted to show to the European public that the relations between Britain and India were indeed beneficial. As a result, the Indian section featured an exhaustive display of the arts, textiles, animals, and customs of the subcontinent (Fig. 12).

Sir Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett selected a wide array of artistic mediums for display as representations of the diverse religions and cultures within India. They chose the best textiles, sculpture, painting, furniture, and jewellery India had to offer. Artefacts chosen reflected the whole of the Indian subcontinent. Embroidered textiles, metal ware, and jewellery were requested by the Great Exhibition’s commissioners. Victorians did not take a strong liking to

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78 In 1851, India was seen as a source of textiles, rather than a location to exploit for raw cotton. It was not until the 1910s and 1920s when the Lancashire textile industry blossomed, and high tariffs on textiles from India detracted from Indian textile manufacturers, which sparked Gandhi’s Swadeshi Movement. See SRB Leadbeater, *The Politics of Textiles: The Indian Cotton-Mill Industry and the Legacy of Swadeshi*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993) 24.

79 The Secretary to the East India Company, Peter Auber, requested the selection committee to handpick, “[c]ottons and silks such as muslins and shawls of Dacca and Delhi and other districts, Brocades of Benares and Loongies of Scinde, etc., woolens such as blankets of the north western provinces and of the Himalayas with the coarse fabrics made of the wool of the Shawl goat, the shawls of cashmere, dyed articles of cotton and silk, mats of Sylphet and other provinces, paper both of the plains and the mountains, pottery from different parts, tanned leather and prepared skins of different animals, Indian lacquered ware, toys, etc., work in metal using copper, brass, and other metals, embroidered work in gold and silver and other metals, and jewellery from various parts of India.” Auber’s request sheds light on European preferences in Indian art. RC Corr. 1850/52, Bundle of papers relating to East India Company.
the fine arts and sculpture of India, however the region’s decorative arts were praised. With the era’s romantic zeitgeist and the malaise of an industrialized society, Victorians saw India as an exotic province, with an un tarnished primitive past which greatly contributed to the Indian Pavilion’s popularity.

India was allotted more space for its display than any other colony, possession, or dependency of the British Empire, as is evidenced by the plans for the Crystal Palace (Fig. 13). Furthermore, India’s placement off the north transept emphasizes India’s prominence in the exhibition. The Kohinoor diamond was displayed in a central location off the transept of the Crystal Palace, attracting many viewers to the India Pavilion. Jerome Blanqui, a French economist, claimed that the Indian Pavilion was a “représentation encyclopédique” of the actual country. Balanqui had never travelled to India and yet he described himself as “persécuté par la Collection indienne…contraint de retourner pour contempler ses participations à plusieurs reprises.” For many viewers at the Crystal Palace, the India Pavilion was their first experience with Indian art and culture. Like many other British exhibitions, the India Pavilion conformed to exotic stereotypes. Traditional arts and craft were exhibited alongside exotic displays of luxurious howdah seats atop taxidermy elephants, jewel-encrusted ivory thrones, and silk mandapah pavilions. The display in the India Pavilion stressed the rich materiality of the

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84 The displays of the Asia, Africa, Oceana, and the Americas were all subject to stereotypical portrayals of the region. India was no exception. For a closer look at the objects presented at the 1851 exhibition see, Kriegel, *Narrating the Subcontinent, 50-73* and Hobhouse, *The Crystal Palace, 45-46.
85 Hobhouse, *The Crystal Palace, 43.*
subcontinent and further emphasized that imperial rule in India was profitable. Victorian viewers were lured to experience the “wonders of the Orient;” many merely marveled at the costly goods, but some studied the unique patterns and designs of the collection.86

Design reformer Owen Jones’s artistry was greatly influenced by the collection at the Indian Pavilion. Jones believed that the decorative arts of the “other,” specifically those of India, would help England improve their own superior artistry.87 The Mughal and Hindu patterns and motifs were exactly what Jones was seeking to infuse a new life into the arts and design of industrial Britain. Patterns on the Indian and “Hindoo” plates of his The Grammar of Ornament (1856) were directly influenced by decorative arts from the Indian Pavilion (Figs. 14-15).88 Jones spent many hours copying motifs at the Crystal Palace for his encyclopedic design book. Furthermore, as he was one of the better-known architects of his day, many of the patterns and designs found in his Grammar of Ornament were used in architectural decoration throughout London.

Thus, by serving on the selection committee for the Great Exhibition of 1851, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy and Jagannath Sunkersett were instrumental in monitoring the Indian designs to which the public would have access. Their selection of works informed viewers at the Great Exhibition of 1851 about the art and culture of the Indian subcontinent. Eventually these objects would be housed in museums throughout London educating the public about the jewel of the British Empire. Most importantly however, the objects selected by the Bombay elites would go on to radically shape the decorative arts of London and ultimately the entire western world.

86 Ibid. 48.
88 List of patterns include Tanjore Lotus, Mooltan May Blossom, Rangoon Poppy, Champa Chrysanthemums, Allahabad Marigold, and Ponnah Thistle, found in Jones, The Grammar, 35-42.
The South Kensington Connection

Even after the Great Exhibition of 1851 was finished, the impact of Indian art and design upon the British art world continued. Indian works found their way into museum collections and art schools. In addition, Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett served as board members of the newly founded Victoria and Albert Museum. These Indian elites expanded their spheres of patronage throughout the Empire, especially in London.

After the Exhibition drew to a close, the commissioners of the Crystal Palace wished to purchase land near to Hyde Park to build a university as well as museums dedicated to the arts and sciences. In the years shortly thereafter, South Kensington became a community that prized both creative artistry and innovative engineering. The museums and university buildings in which future generations would be taught about art and science were built in a neo-gothic style with rich architectural ornament. The decorative elements of these structures have striking similarities to Bombay’s European architecture. This can be attributed not only to the revival of gothic architecture, but the design inspirations found within the India Pavilion at the Crystal Palace.

The desire for fresh new architectural ornament in England is displayed through the sculpted embellishments on the British Museum of Natural History (Fig. 16). Exotic designs, flora, and fauna are juxtaposed with Victorian gothic-revival elements. This museum is evidence of Owen Jones’s belief that the decorative arts of the “other,” specifically those of India would help Victorian England improve their superiority of artistry. Chief curator, Sir Richard Owen worked with architect Alfred Waterhouse to design ornaments inspired by the natural world.

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89 One of the most influential commissioners was Henry Cole who was instrumental in the formation of the Victoria and Albert Museum, and other education and cultural institutions in South Kensington.
found throughout the British Empire. Waterhouse looked to *The Grammar of Ornament* for floral motifs from the colonies of the British Empire. In a detail found on the left of the south entrance to the Natural History Museum, monkeys flank a vertical relief that imitates Owen Jones’s lotus pattern found on Indian Plate no. 7 in *The Grammar of Ornament* (Fig. 17). Jones’s seminal work was used not only by decorative and graphic artists, but also by sculptors of architectural ornament. Jones’s influence is seen throughout South Kensington on Victorian structures. The *Albert Memorial* in the Kensington Gardens exemplifies Jones’s Indian Plates in *The Grammar of Ornament* (Fig. 18). The intrados of the quatrefoil gothic canopy feature identical lotus motifs as seen on the Natural History Museum. *The Grammar of Ornament* was used as an important pattern and design book in Europe, America, and the Indian subcontinent.

Sculpture and architecture schools sprang up in the wake of the Great Exhibition, which promoted the design theory of Owen Jones. The schools of the Department of Arts and Sciences produced numerous artisans and designers who were trained for the practical arts. Although these artisans were not considered fine artists, their works had a larger viewership in London and abroad. One such artisan, John Lockwood Kipling, a graduate of the DSA program, worked on the decorative sculpture for the South Kensington Museum and came into contact not only with the institution’s first director, Henry Cole, but also with prominent Indian elites.

At the close of the Great Exhibition, the Department of Arts and Sciences purchased works from many of the exhibits to use in teaching design. It is estimated that more than one third of the objects acquired by the DSA were of Indian origin. Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett

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interceded with the DSA and Kensington Museum to carry out these dealings. In so doing, they interacted with the museum’s board of directors and art schools. Upon their return to India, both Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett donated to the Prince of Wales Museum and the Victoria and Albert Bombay Museum. An engraving from the November 1862 edition of *The Illustrated London News* reveals the museum patronage of Indian elites—specifically the Parsis (Fig. 19). In this illustration, more than half of the patrons seen laying the main cornerstone of the Victoria and Albert Museum are Indian natives. The line of patrons draws the viewer’s eye to the cornerstone for Bombay’s Victoria and Albert Museum. They are shown in a prominent and dignified manner, which reflects the pride of the Indian elite regarding Indian art. The Victoria and Albert Museum in Bombay was created to exhibit, “to the world the country’s rich cultural traditions.” As a result, museums in Bombay and South Kensington formed a strong artistic dialog, which resulted in a great interchange of art and culture. Most importantly however, it provided the natives of Bombay with an opportunity to view and study the arts of the Indian subcontinent.

The influence of Indian art and craft exhibited at the Great Exhibition was enormous. It invigorated the pattern books of textile, graphic, and architectural designers. Most importantly for my research, Jones’s *The Grammar of Ornament* inspired many architects and sculptors of the Natural History Museum, *Albert Memorial*, and other neo-gothic structures in South Kensington. Jeejeebhoy and Sunkersett recognized the popularity of Indian decorative arts in Britain and they paved the way for traditional Indian craftsmen to interact with the board of South Kensington’s India Museum and the newly formed South Kensington Museum. Indian elites also helped build and fill museums in Bombay. Artists and designers associated with the

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93 These museums are now commonly referred to as the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum and the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum respectively. For more information see Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*, 48.
94 Mathur, *India By Design*, 145.
South Kensington Museum and the DSA came into contact with Indian elites regularly and developed relationships that would carry them eastward in their later careers.

**Bombay School of Art**

“His object is to afford to his countrymen those advantages of culture, in respect of the principles of art, which their admitted taste, and their known fineness of organization and touch, assure us could be employed with vast advantage. At the Great Exhibition of 1851, the natives of India surprised all Europe and America with the richness of their imagination, the justness of the appreciation and association of colours, and the unapproachable delicacy of many of their works. They seem only to want the guidance of artistic education, to be able to place themselves amongst the foremost in the walks of tasteful industry. The object of Sir Jamsetjee is to open to his half-employed fellow-country-men a career in which they seem so likely to excel.”

Via his exchanges in London, Jeejebhoy realized that India’s decorative arts were praised and their fine arts looked down upon. As a result of observing the British desire for traditional Indian craft, he wished to refine the arts of India. Nevertheless, he was also influenced by the fine art of Europe. To aid Indian craftsmen in the international sphere, Jeejebhoy funded an art school to “improve”—implying that India’s fine arts needed “improving”—and to help solidify opportunities among the Indian craftsmen of Bombay. His answer was a school where Indian craftsmen would be taught to both continue in the tradition of Indian decorative art and at the same time be trained in a European academic style. In this manner, Indian craftsmen would enhance their decorative designs and patterns. This idea was highly radical at the time. Previous art schools in India with British affiliations taught only European art styles. In this way, the Parsi-funded school sought to integrate Indian and European arts, so that Indian craftsmen and fine artists would gain favor in the international sphere.

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95 Memorandum of the Life and Public Charities of Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, 17-18.
Shortly after his return from the Great Exhibition, Jeejeebhoy offered one lakh to the Bombay Presidency to found an art school. Art classes instantaneously began at Elphinstone College in Bombay in 1852, and in 1856 students and instructors moved into a newly erected school.\(^98\) The Bombay School of Art was one of the first of its kind in India. Like other art schools in India, it adhered to British aesthetic ideals, yet it also prized the ornamental arts of India. It championed academic and decorative art. However, the school interceded in Indian art, guiding so-called “instinctive” tastes.\(^99\)

The Bombay School of Art was also exempt from British educational dispatches. All other government run schools were regulated by official declarations from the British Raj’s education department. These dispatches would often define and create regulations that to which colonial schools had to adhere. For example, art schools in India were significantly influenced by the British East India Trading Company’s Educational Dispatch of 1854. The aims of this educational reform were to, “confer upon the natives of India…[the] vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge.”\(^100\) In summary, the British-Indian art schools supported the Victorian belief that “good taste” could be trained by enlightened measures.\(^101\) The Dispatch of 1854 particularly influenced academics, and specifically art education.

Sir Richard Temple, governor of the Bombay Presidency had much to say on the arts and craftsmanship of India. In a memorandum on the formation of the School of Art to the Governor-General of India, he wrote, “the art of the natives of this country was instinctive rather than systematic; that it was the result of sympathy with the surrounding forms and colours of the

\(^{98}\) Because of Sir Jeejeebhoy’s generous donation the school was named after him.


\(^{100}\) East India Company. *Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, to the Governor General of India in Council on the subject of the education of the people of India (no. 49, dated the 19th July 1854)*. Simla: G.M. Press, 1854.

They did not view the arts of India as similar to their own. The British saw this artistic style as instinctive, further emphasizing the colonized Indians as primitive and also uncorrupted by western civilization. Thus, the colonial elites assumed that by “enlightening” the people of India, their arts would develop in an academic sense.

The Bombay School of Art was not the first art institution in India; it was established shortly after the Government School of Art in Calcutta and the Madras School of Art. The south Indian city of Madras was home to the first art school of the British Raj. The school’s founder Dr. Hunter Alexander believed that by enlightening the students of his art school, he would improve indigenous taste through “the humanizing culture of fine arts.” Four years later, the second art institution of the Raj, located in the northwestern province of Bengal, was founded and named the Government School of Art in Calcutta. Its purpose was to,

“…develop inventiveness and originality, to supply skilled draughtsman, designers, [and] engravers, to meet increasing demand, to provide employment to promote taste and refinement in the application of Art, among the upper classes [and] to supply the community with works of art at a moderate price.”

In short, the School of Art in Bombay was similar to the government schools in Madras and Calcutta that supported the Educational Dispatch of 1854.

The art schools in Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay had similar curriculums. Sketching, painting, and sculpting classical figures were highly valued forms of art instruction. Oftentimes

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103 The Madras School of Art was founded in 1850 by Dr. Alexander Hunter, who managed the school at his own expense. For more see Mitter, Art and Nationalism, 83.
105 The Government School of Art in Calcutta was completed and ready for classes in 1854. See Mitter, Art and Nationalism, 59.
106 Swapan Majumdar, Rules of the Society for the Promotion of Industrial Art, Calcutta, May 1856.
Indian students at art institutions had conflicting artistic aims. Unlike the subcontinent’s highly praised decorative arts, its indigenous painting and sculpture were looked down upon. Sir Joseph Crowe, a journalist of the British Raj discussed the conundrum in art schools in India when he stated, “…a school of design would in time arise, native in the best sense, owing its accuracy, truth and natural beauty to European inspiration, but molding its material into purely Indian types.”\(^{107}\) In a sense, Indian students were expected to emulate Indian design but treat their own sculpture and painting as inferior to European traditions. This was to encourage a taste for European academic art among Indian students. Thus, in applying Bhabha’s concepts of colonization, Indian students were taught to “mimic” European style, as seen in the allegorical figures upon the Victoria Terminus, in order to gain recognition from the British, as well as from their communities.\(^ {108}\) By imitating the styles and attitudes of the colonizer, Indian craftsmen gained access to artistic power. However, in the process of mimicking, the artisans suppressed their own cultural identities and viewed their own culture as inferior. Through the ideals of academic art, colonial rule asserted its power in full force.

Art historian, Partha Mitter, addresses teaching approaches in art schools of the Raj when he explains through an anthropological approach that the European method stressed the perceptual, whereas traditional Indian art emphasized the conceptual.\(^{109}\) In addition to this, two ideological differences contributed to a lack of artistic understanding. For example, Indian students came from a tradition where there was little room for artistic freedom when adhering to religious decorative sculpture. Sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses adhered to a strict

\(^{107}\) Sir Thomas Crowe, Bombay Times, 1862.
\(^{108}\) Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 122.
\(^{109}\) Best described as “the distinction between a conceptual mode of art, followed by Indian artists since antiquity, and the western perceptual one, which constantly corrects the initial formula by means of observation.” See Mitter, *Art and Nationalism*, 30. This is found very similar to Worringer’s theories of abstraction and empathy, the Raj focused more on empathy whereas the Indian craftsman had a preference for the abstraction prior to the British. See Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1967) 72.
mathematical canon of proportions, specifically in temple architecture. This stands in contrast to the European tradition, which emphasized artistic creativity and classical observations of nature. Moreover, the role of the Indian artist had been a communal one rather than one celebrating individual genius. The second philosophical difference related to the purpose for creating art. Nineteenth-century Hindu sculptors believed that when they created a work of art, they were not mere individuals expressing their own wishes, but part of the universe giving expression to ideals of eternal beauty and ultimately God. Their craft was a spiritual calling. These ideological variances often led to misunderstandings, however, they also gave way to great cultural interchange.

**Curriculum**

The educational reforms in India during the nineteenth century had an important bearing on the visual arts of India. It led Indian art schools to guide native tastes with the introduction of western artistic ideals. In addition, Indian craftsman were taught Victorian artistic sensibilities, disowning their rich heritage in painting and sculpture, as seen in the preference for European academic arts. This was reinforced by nineteenth-century Indian art schools, which were almost always funded and instituted by British officials, or in the case of the Bombay School of Art—the Parsis. Wanting to infuse the arts of India with European art traditions, Indian elites invited fine artists and designers from South Kensington to teach Indian students in Bombay.

Accordingly, British artists were hired to teach at these art institutions. In the summer of 1865, John Lockwood Kipling arrived from South Kensington to teach decorative sculpture at the newly opened Bombay School of Art. Kipling began his career in the arts as a designer at

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the Staffordshire pottery factory and later became a sculptor and decorator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. He spent much of his early life in South Kensington and was influenced by the prominent Department of Science and Arts (DSA), which promoted the practical arts. Kipling was instrumental in bringing mid-Victorian design sensibilities to India, and he taught Indian craftsman how to refine their traditional Indian designs.

Kipling was unquestionably influenced not only by his Indian surroundings but also by the craze of the “other” in Victorian eclecticism. He studied Indian motifs made popular in Britain by Jones. This can be seen in his designs and casts for architectural ornament which are unquestionably influenced by Owen Jones’s “exotic” Indian plates (Fig. 19). These casts imitate Jones’s Indian plates from the Grammar of Ornament, in terms of the lotus flower motif from Indian plate No. 4. Kipling’s training in South Kensington would have unquestionably exposed him to Victorian design reformers such as Jones. He instructed his students in the tradition of Jones, which is indicated by the fact that the Bombay School of Art owned several copies of The Grammar of Ornament. Pattern was not the only example of his desire to turn to the exotic in decorative reliefs. Kipling also looked to exotic animals as inspiration for decorative elements on Bombay’s Victorian structures. Furthermore, all the animals depicted in sculptural form on the Victoria Terminus are native to India except the lion near the front of the gate. A variety of animals, reminiscent of his son’s famous tale, The Jungle Book, are nestled in the foliage including: peacocks, monkeys, snakes, and elephants (figs. 21-23). Although scholars have argued that this display of animals exhibits British control of India, I would argue that it instead reflects a desire to return to the primordial jungle—akin to a “native” India—free from the pollution of the industrialized age.\(^\text{113}\)

\(^{112}\) Jiibhai. Story of Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay, 49.
\(^{113}\) Cohn, “The Past in the Present,” 12.
When Kipling first encountered his Indian pupils at the Bombay School of Art, he was not impressed by the students’ abilities to sculpt the human figure. He recorded in his diary in regards to their sculpting; “the Hindu aims at nothing and hits or misses by chance so that no one thing is quite right.” Kipling hoped that through his instruction they would become better sculptors. In opposition to the other instructors, M. Gomez and John Griffiths, Kipling was “better informed on all matters Indian.” As a result of showing genuine interest in Indian religion and culture, he gained popularity among his Indian pupils.

Soon after his arrival in 1865, Kipling was commissioned to sculpt tympana and fountains at Crawford Market less than a mile north from Victoria Terminus. Kipling’s tympana reliefs picture monumental Indian figures at the market (Fig. 24). Aside from the turbans and dupattas pulled above the figures’ heads, the figures appear Greco-Roman. This neo-classical style of figural sculpture was predominant in Britain and throughout the Empire. It was this style that students were taught to imitate at the Bombay School of Art. Kipling’s fountains, on the other hand, show a fusion of neo-classical reliefs with gothic gargoyle-esque animals and decorative Indian motifs (Fig. 25). The conglomeration of ornamental styles was popular in decorative sculpture throughout Bombay and London. It was this combination of contradictory styles that Kipling taught to his students.

In the March edition of The Graphic in 1872, a print shows Kipling’s Crawford Market Relief within the Bombay School of Art with native students studying and creating art (Fig. 26). A native rests on a Corinthian capital, and sections of architectural reliefs are seen hanging up in the background. This etching visualizes the educational landscape of the Bombay

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115 Ankers, The Pater, 102.
116 Finished in 1869, before the Public Works Commission decided to have students at the Bombay School of Art create work for their projects.
117 “Indian Sketches—Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy’s School of Art, Bombay” in The Graphic, June 1872.
School of Art, a setting very similar to that of the Department of Art and Science’s classrooms in London. This rare illustration captures the complex curriculum of the Bombay School of Art with the juxtaposition of traditional Indian design and classical architectural traditions. This multifaceted learning environment is also seen in the clothing worn by the students—native as well as western wear.

The result of British academic art training in India is seen in the allegorical figures atop the domes and gables of the Victoria Terminus. These figures are indistinguishable from the academic sculpture of Britain. There are five allegorical figures: Progress rests atop the central dome representing the railway in India and ultimately modernity (Fig. 27); Allegories of Commerce and Agriculture sit atop the side gables, and figures representing Science and Engineering rest in the tympanums (Figs. 28-29). These figures are symbolic of India and Britain’s relationship. Through commerce, agriculture, science, and engineering introduced by the British, India progressed in the international sphere.

The allegorical statues can be compared to the art education system in Bombay: with the introduction of new teaching methods Indian art and design would flourish and lead to artistic progress. From Jeejeebhoy’s standpoint, he saw the introduction of European academic art as a means for natives to compete artistically in the international arena. And they did.

**Progress in India**

At the entrance to the Victoria Terminus, a freestanding sculpture of a Bengal tiger represents India (Fig. 30). The Bengal tiger came to symbolize the subcontinent to the nineteenth-century British public, as it was an exotic animal found only in Southeast Asia. Also flanking the entrance to the Victoria Terminus is a lion (Fig. 31). The lion was a personification of the British Empire throughout the nineteenth century. The lion, like the tiger, is a powerful
animal. Political cartoons often depicted the lion of England and tiger of India as equals (Fig. 32). In Ready!, the allegorical figure of Progress holds the leashes of the tiger and lion. The title, "Ready!" suggests that Progress will unleash the two animals and they will go forward. Therefore, the placement of the two monumental felines outside the Victoria Terminus is evidence to British, Parsi, and Indian viewers that the two countries are working together for progress.

**Conclusion**

The artistic interchange that occurred between Bombay and London during the nineteenth century was tremendous. By way of the Parsis, Indians and British artists, designers, and architects infused the styles of their “other” into the ornament that graced their public buildings. This mutual exchange of creativity is paralleled by the modernization of Bombay from which the British and natives benefitted in different ways. The British Empire was able to gain easy access to the subcontinent’s rich natural resources, and Indians and Parsis reaped the economic benefits of a modernized country. However, these mutual advantages did not extend much beyond the making of art and architecture. With the dawn of the twentieth century, it became increasingly apparent that India was being controlled for the benefit of Britain rather than of India. After nearly fifty years of struggle and revolt, India was finally granted independence from Britain, and Queen Victoria’s sculpture was taken down from the western façade of the Victoria Terminus.118

Nevertheless, the terminus is evidence of ideals of progress and modern civilization held by Indians and the British alike. The Parsis represented themselves as natives of India through

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118 This was part of movement dissociating India with the British colonial rule through the arts see David Cannadine, "Where Statues go to Die." BBC World News, January 21, 2008, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7196530.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7196530.stm).
the public art they patronized. Thus, they revealed their own attitudes towards colonization, and viewed themselves as being part of modern India not middlemen between the British and Indian populations. As intermediaries, the Parsis promoted Indian art at home and abroad. They selected the art with which the Victorian public came in contact and they hoped to promote the rich traditions of the subcontinent in order for native craftsmen to be able to compete in the international arena. Nevertheless, they wanted their countrymen to be taught in the European academic style. Their solution was a school of the arts that praised both academic and decorative sculpture influenced by native Indian forms.

The Bombay School of Art paved the way for modern artists to visually express the desires of a revolutionary and independent India. The Parsis however, did not enjoy the same fate as the monuments they patronized. In an independent India, they no longer received bureaucratic appointments as they had during British rule. Indeed, today they have almost disappeared from Bombay’s bustling streets, leaving only echoes of their influence through British colonial architecture.
Figure 1 John Tenniel Mending the Lesson, 20 December 1873. Punch Magazine. Text reads: “Political Economy: ‘Take care my dear. Don’t interfere with the laws of supply and demand.’ John Bull: ‘I don’t miss prudence. She demands and I supply.’”
Figure 2 *Victoria Terminus*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 3 George Gilbert Scott and William Henry Barlow *Saint Pancras Station*, 1868. London, United Kingdom.
Figure 4 Frederick William Stevens *Victoria Terminus Detail Drawings from Sketchbook*, 1878-1880. Maharashtra State Archives, Mumbai.

Figure 5 Students at the Bombay School of Art *Director Portraits*, 1880-1886. West Façade, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 6 Students at the Bombay School of Art Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, 1880-1886. West Façade, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 7 Students at the Bombay School of Art Jagannath Sunkersett, 1880-1886. West Façade, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 8 Students at the Bombay School of Art *Bombay Types Relief*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 9 Col. J.A. Fuller *Native General Hospital*, 1875. Gokuldas Tejpal Hospital, Mumbai.
Figure 10 Col J.A. Fuller *Rajabai Clock Tower*, 1869-78. University of Mumbai, Mumbai.
Figure 11 Students of the Bombay School of Art *Rajabai Clock Tower Castes of India*, 1869-78. University of Mumbai, Mumbai.

Figure 12 Joseph Nash *The Indian Court*, 1854. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Figure 13 Joseph Paxton *Plans for the Crystal Palace*, 1850-51. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Figure 14 Owen Jones *Indian Ornament Plates* 49-55, 1856. From *The Grammar of Ornament* pages 77-79.
Figure 15 Owen Jones *Hindoo Ornament Plates* 56-58, 1856. From *The Grammar of Ornament* pages 81-83.

Figure 16 Alfred Waterhouse and Sir Richard Owen *The Natural History Museum*, 1873. London.
Figure 17 Alfred Waterhouse and Sir Richard Owen, *Architectural Ornament*, 1873. The Natural History Museum, London.

Figure 18 Sir George Albert Scott, Detail, *The Albert Memorial*, 1872-75. Kensington Gardens, London.
Figure 19 *His Excellency Sir H. B. E. Frere Laying the Chief Corner-Stone of the Victoria and Albert Museum, Bombay, 1863. The Illustrated London News.*

Figure 20 John Lockwood Kipling *Bombay School of Art Ornamental Relief Casts*, c. 1870s. Sir Jeejeebhoy School of Art, Mumbai.
Figure 21 Students at the Bombay School of Art Sir *Monkey Spandrel*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 22 Students at the Bombay School of Art Sir *Peacock Tympanum*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 23 Students at the Bombay School of Art Sir Sparrow and Owl Capitals, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 24 John Lockwood Kipling Crawford Market Tympana, 1865. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Mumbai.
Figure 25 John Lockwood Kipling *Crawford Market Fountains*, 1865. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Mumbai.
Figure 26 *Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy’s School of Art at Bombay*, March 2, 1872. *The Graphic.*
Figure 27 Students of the Bombay School of Art, *Progress*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 28 Students of the Bombay School of Art, *Commerce and Agriculture*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 29 Students of the Bombay School of Art, Science and Engineering, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 30 Students of the Bombay School of Art, Bengal Tiger, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.
Figure 31 Students of the Bombay School of Art, *Lion*, 1880-1886. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai.

Figure 32 John Tenniel *Ready!* April 4, 1885. *Punch Magazine*. 

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