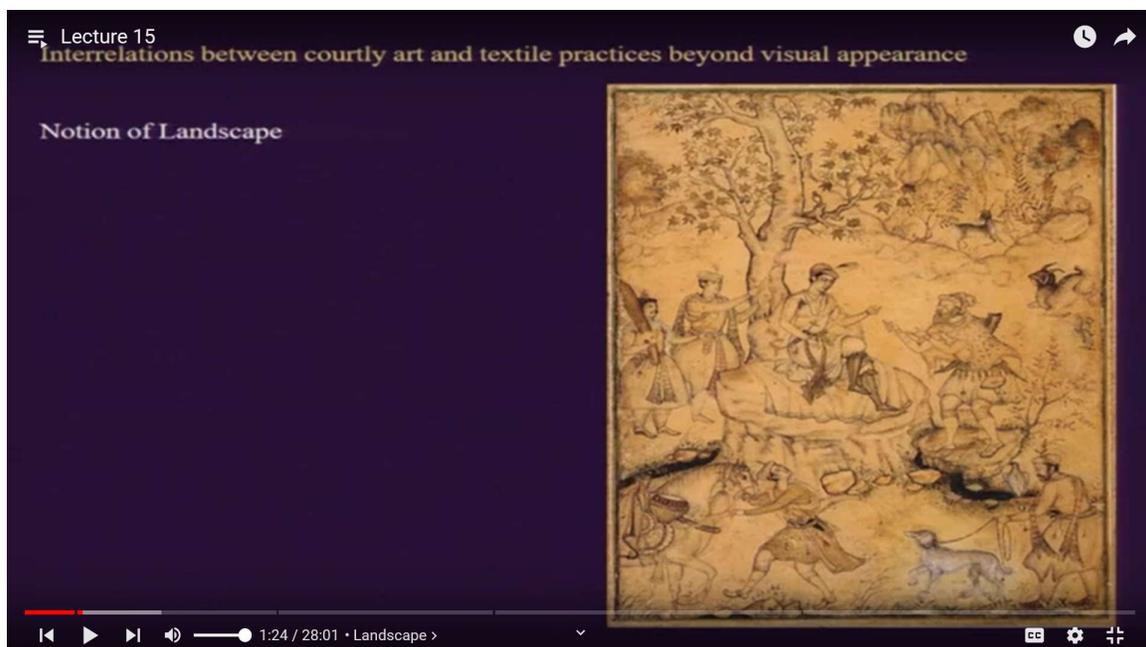


**Threads of Visual Exploration: Textiles and Allied Practices**  
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**Week – 03**  
**Lecture – 15**

Hello everyone, this is Rajarshi Sengupta and we are here in the last segment of our discussion on Textiles and Mughal Miniatures. So, here we will be talking more about the interrelations between courtly art and textile practices beyond visual appearance. I mean of course when we sort of start talking about this idea about the interrelations, we cannot really go away from the visual appearance because all our discussions and all our analysis they sort of start from the visual appearance. However, we also need to think that I mean there are certain things as we have already started sort of uncovering that there are also certain aspects which are not strictly visual but we need to think that I mean the relationship between like I mean this different form of art practices are not really always like I mean the visual connections we can draw but then there are much more deeper connections we can also see that is they are embedded in this very practice of making them and not just seeing them visually. So, this aspects we will see them and then we will start the discussion today with this notion of landscape.



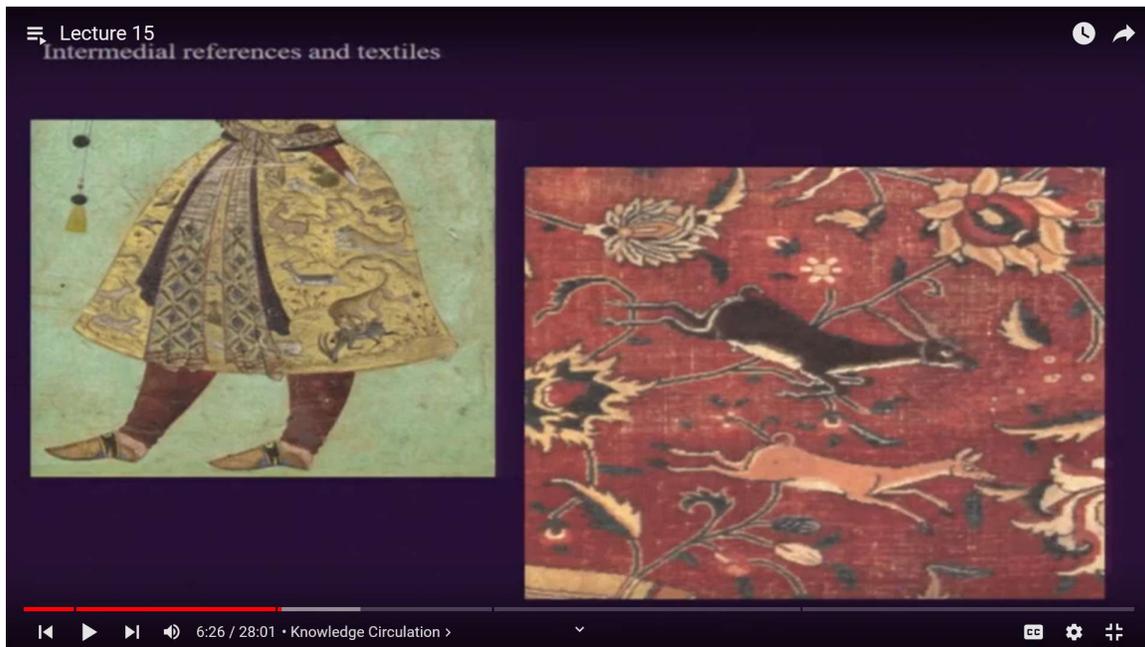
Now landscape is this idea that we see that I mean that is there in many of the paintings that we have already seen and either and presence of an landscape or absence of a landscape that we can see them there and both these cases we can consider that those are conscious decisions made by the patrons as well as the artist or painters whoever were responsible for them.

So, in this case what happens with this notion of the landscape? Now art historian Nuzhat Kazmi has argued that how landscape and portraiture these two things in the Mughal context are very closely intertwined. So, in a many of the portrait paintings we will find in which a lot of cases we see the profile view of the rulers or like the royalties we find them to be there and a lot of times we see them to be there on this landscape. Sometime the landscape in which we see that it is almost like a neutral landscape in which there is a small suggestion of greenery or like a green land and then on the top of that there is open sky. ...in some cases we see that certain elements of like I mean garden, architecture or agricultural labors and so on they are also depicted in the landscape. So, in this case what happens that we see the idea of the landscape is something that is very much there in the representational spaces and then all this notion of the landscape is also something that is very much connected to the human figures those are depicted in this miniature paintings.

Now in Sylvia Houghteling work we also find that there is something that she mentions that is the “landscape of cloth” and by that she means that how there are different kinds of cloth which was flooding the market of Agra or the metropolitan cities of the Mughal Empire. ... then all different kind of cloth that sort of like I mean created this huge diversity and also like a symbolic representation of the different regions that the Mughals ruled under them. So, this is something we find that in both cases that this idea of the landscape whether it is a visual representation of a landscape within a painting or like if you think about this diversity of the artifacts and textiles that were accumulated and they also sort of like I mean remained synonymous with particular regions or workshops. So, then like I mean bringing the land virtually to the Mughal court and that is how like the idea of the landscape became important. So, in both cases like for the textiles as well as for this miniature paintings this notion of the landscape sort of loomed in the background. Now what we see them there

that I mean when we sort of see the figural representations and then like I mean the landscapes and when in this miniature paintings we see them what Nuzhat Kazmi also argues that they sort of represent certain correlation between them. ... then perhaps like the affiliations like I mean if a particular courtly figure is depicted then the land that is depicted with this courtly figure would have some kind of affiliation with that figure. So, it is not something that is randomly selected or just selected to remove all the other details and just to focus on this figure; but the kind of land whether there is a presence of a landscape, whether there is a conscious absence of a landscape they speak something about the people who are depicted there. Now the other thing that we also find that there is that how the landscape is also something that is usually used there to convey certain things which are also very hard to convey in words. So, for example, we see this miniature paintings today the way we see them as painting today they were definitely not made for this kind of viewing experience. We can see we can imagine like I mean they were all associated with written words that I mean some kind of description, some kind of like literary works, and then like these paintings would be there side by side. ... they were also there for this private viewing experience that people would hold them close to them hold them close to themselves and then like see them read them and then put them back to from where they came from. So, this kind of like this experience that we are talking about there are many things perhaps which are not very easy to express in words and those are the cases we see that I mean how this visual symbols or like I mean the use of landscape was very much in favor of sort of expressing certain things which are not really easily expressed.

So, with those things what we also see that I mean in this case is that perhaps this



intermedial references that is there from like I mean how the landscape, this notion of the landscape that is there between like I mean the figural textiles and then like I mean perhaps the land and the figure intertwined in the miniature paintings how those things are there? This also suggests a kind of intermedial cross referencing. ... this kind of referencing that we see them that is much more than just to think in terms of like I mean how one person would be doing something and the another person would be copying that and implementing that in another medium.

But it is kind of like I mean, all of them we need to imagine them to be working under the same with this shared visual vocabulary from which like I mean they would borrow certain motives and then like I mean perhaps we can see that I mean similar kind of not only just like I mean similar kind of images are there but the same life vitality we will be seeing them in across media. ... that is something which goes beyond the visual appearance. But it is much more about like I mean how we think about the life of these motives and how we see them being depicted either on the textiles or in the paintings. So, if we can kind of like I mean consider this and sort of also take this kind of examples to understand certain larger patterns in the Mughal Empire we can see that I mean this knowledge circulation across media was something that was very much prominent. ... knowledge circulation by

that I mean that I mean if you are thinking in terms of like using a shared visual vocabulary between the miniature painters and then the carpet makers, brocade makers and then of course like I mean you know the embroiders. So, we can imagine that I mean all of these peoples a lot of times they were not really present in the same place. As I have already mentioned in the earlier lectures that when we say that Mughal textiles or textiles came from the Mughal Empire we are not really talking about textiles that came from this small region but we are actually thinking in terms of this entire Indian subcontinent from the western frontier to the eastern frontier. So, the embroiders, the mochi embroiders they were perhaps been based in Gujarat in Ahmedabad or somewhere and then the brocade makers were perhaps in Gujarat, some were perhaps in other parts of the northern Indian plain like Agra, Banaras and places like that. ... then definitely like Muslim that came from eastern India from Bengal. So, like I mean we are definitely not thinking that this knowledge circulation across media is something that is happening within a close proximity but then we are thinking in terms of this expansive geographical travel that either this objects were doing or like the artisans who were associated with them they were able to like I mean travel from one place to another. The other possibility that also comes up and which will also come up in our next module is the use of reference drawings or reference material; and how those reference material can interconnect certain kind of practices. I mean perhaps one practice that is happening in one region and then if the original artisans are not able to travel or if the regional artisans they do not have the exposure what is happening in the other parts of the Indian subcontinent perhaps like I mean bringing of those kind of reference drawings or those resource material that help or like I mean that sort of enabled this kind of knowledge exchanges. ... this knowledge exchanges is happening not only in one particular medium like we are not talking about just miniature painting to miniature painting but we are talking about a diverse range of media. So, in one hand if you are thinking in terms of drawing things with a brush on a paper then on the other hand we are thinking in terms of making knots with silk yarn on or like or pashmina yarn on a carpet and then we are also thinking in terms of making brocade textiles in which there is this highly complex jala is then put in this draw loom structure for making the brocaded patterns on the fabric. So, this different kind of techniques we are talking about here and then the knowledge circulation was happening between them. So, that makes it much more

complicated to understand that I mean what kind of knowledge exchange we are talking about here, that it is not something that is simplistic not only just on the level of the surface, but it needs to have this much more deeper understanding of how each and every motif or like I mean the color gradation, variation, tonality, arrangement, compositional organization all these things work in one medium and how to sort of implement that in some other cases. So, this kind of aspects we certainly see that to be there in like I mean in this visual material that we are discussing here.



Now in the last segment of our discussion we will be sort of talking about the one another kind of textiles and that is the tent. ... tents are something we find that to be there very much closely related to the formation of the Mughal dynasty and then like their travels and also like I mean how they have arrived in the Indian subcontinent. So, what we see there in the king of the tents is the central Asian connection ... that comes at the forefront. ... how the Mughal emperors like I mean starting with Padshah Babur ... when he was there in the central Asian plains and a large part of his life even though he was only alive for like 38 to 40 years but like a large part of his life he had spent on the fields and ... in the fields with ... the tent structures were something which survived him and his family. So, we see this huge enclosures were made when he was travelling from one place to another, and there was not really a stable place for him to be rooted for a long period of time. Before he

sort of won over Kabul and then eventually sort of like I mean attacked the Lodhi's in Agra. So, what we see there that I mean this idea of tent being this movable architectural form is something that is there with the Mughals from very early period. Now the tents were something we also see in the Sultanate period and all, but then of course that during the Mughal period with like I mean this idea of the tent being a movable habitable space that sort of became much more expansive. ... with this we also see that I mean this idea of this movable habitable space it was not just there in terms of just a living space, but there are descriptions in which we find that when this entire entourage would travel from one place to another and in those times we will find that the tents were sort of put up and it is almost like an entire movable city would be there with this tent structures. So, for example in Ruby Lal's discussion of Empress Noor Jahan who was the co-sovereign with Emperor Jahangir. So, we see a lot of these times we find that this extensive travels that Jahangir made and in many of the travels when Noor Jahan associated him we find that I mean there are those detailed description about how their entourage would stop in one place and then those tents would be sort of put up and there would be enclosures and enclosures. ... it is almost like replicating an entire palace complex, or palace and bazaars and everything within those tent structures. So, this is something for us to understand that when we are talking about tent we are not just talking about a small tent structure that is to give us security and safety, but we are actually talking about having all possible capacities of leading a life that someone would have in a palace or within a royal enclosure. ... all those kind of facilities would be available within a tent structure. So, this is something we are talking about here when we talk about this particular movable tents. So, in this case what we see that I mean the one tent that we have here and this is perhaps like I mean this one surviving like I mean movable tent ensemble that is there which is known as Lal Dera. This tent came from 17th late 17th to early 18th century and it was during the Mughal conquest of the Marwar and Jodhpur region. So this tent like I mean this entire this tent ensemble that we see on screen is there with the Mehrangarh fort museum. So, this is something we find here that this Lal Dera tent that has been made and it was made entirely of red velvet. As we have like I mean very briefly sort of addressed that I mean velvet making is this Warp pile weave that is again a very complicated way of doing fabric making and that is done on the draw loom. So, that is the technique that is used here for making the entire tent

that we have here. ... then on the top of that we also have that how the intricate embroidered motifs are being made. The embroidery is done with silk and zari threads ... on top of the velvet fabric. So, what we see in this tent structure it is essentially it's a square tent structure here and it is of course like I mean we can see the enclosure and then like on the top of that there is a roof so that that to give protection to like I mean to the people. ... then we also see that I mean what is there in terms of like I mean there is this central space which is there for a royalty for the royalty to sit and also perhaps like I mean have a session with the other courtiers and then we also have this covered colonnade or like I mean this covered corridor like spaces around it so and that is how like the entire structure of this square structure of the tent is made. So, this is something we find there, and then this arch colonnade that we see there at these arches. If we see them closely, it is very much sort of like, I mean, a reminder of the Mughal arches that we see in the Mughal architecture. So, we see this thin columns and then those arches this cusp arch in which like I mean we see this cusp motif is there all across in this arches so this is something we find that to be prominently there in the Mughal palace complexes in this open sort of like I mean these structures and then that is there in this tent structure as well. This thin columns and then also like I mean this cusp arch gateways archways. ... even like I mean the kind of motifs we find that to be there on the archways that I mean the continuation of this pillars or like I mean you know this vertical strips of this fabric that is there and then here in this triangular space we have like I mean the floral motifs and decoration very much in alignment with the kind of decorations we will find in the actual architectural spaces. We can also imagine that I mean how this idea about tent being a movable city itself like I mean it is not just like this much of tent but we are talking about like the entire like I mean all the other tents and the entire enclosure being a movable city. We see that I mean there is a meticulous effort towards sort of making a correlation between the Mughal architecture and the Mughal textile and that is the reason we find that there is this attention towards sort of almost like resonating certain aspects of Mughal architecture within this tent structure. ... of course ... we have poles underneath this fabric structure which would support the roof and that is what will hold the structure together. So this is how ... the tent structures we find them to be there.



This particular Lal Dera was ... displayed in this Houston Art Museum in 2018 in this one particular exhibition and in which like I mean part of Lal Dera and then like this entire installation sort of like I mean took place within the museum space and that also sort of gives us a sense of what kind of space the tent actually created. If we think about it that how there is a roof and then there is this open structure of this arches and then with this thin columns that we have here it is very much like the kind of ... architectural structures that we have in the Mughal metropolitan, the cosmopolitan cities. So, for example this Diwan-e-khas structure that we see here in the left side of the screen and it is entirely made of marble and in this one we also see this kind of this formation in which this squarish or rectangular formation of this structure is there and then we have those cusped arch gateways or the archways and then those seemingly thin columns. I mean of course for an architecture the columns need to be much more thicker because of like I mean stability; but here for the textile the columns can also be thin because they only need to support the poles which are going sort of like I mean through them. So, but overall we can certainly see that there are certain kind of resemblances we can find and this particular kind of open structures that we find that there are arches, there are columns but then there are no specific walls which would sort of like I mean encompass the entire space. But in this cases we find that there were textiles which were hung from the top of them. ... that is the reason in these

architectural structures we have, like, I mean those iron nails or like I mean arrangements for like, I mean hanging textiles with them. So, this kind of arrangement that makes us think that I mean how architecture and textiles in the Mughal context were very much interrelated and then like I mean the openness in the architecture is something that is there to be filled with textile. ... then in this case with this tent structure that we find it here that it almost sort of like I mean replicates this openness of the architecture because it is already there within an enclosure. Like here we can see that there is another enclosure that sort of like I mean goes around this tent that makes us think that I mean yes there are already like I mean those chinks or like I mean other enclosures which are around this tent that would eventually make this place as a closed space. So, this relationship between textile and architecture we find that to be there very much. ... we cannot really say that I mean it is just the textiles like I mean this tent textile is something that is borrowing from the architecture; but if we consider those aspects of openness and closeness we find that ... even ... the marble architecture or this stable architecture is also dependent on the textiles to be made into this enclosed space. Without the textiles this structure of Diwani Khas cannot be an enclosed space as we can imagine.

Now the other thing we also see that I mean in the description of this Lal Dera or this Qanat from the Mehrangarh Museum collection we see them that I mean it has been considered that it was perhaps been used for a private audience hall ... or like I mean this kind of private meetings. ... it is not something that we can imagine that was there for a public meeting for the emperors or the royals. So, that way we can see that I mean this particular architectural structure which this tent that also sort of reminded us of is of Diwan-i-Khas. ... Diwan-i-Khas is also a hall for private audiences and not for public audiences. So, this kind of resemblance, as we see that I mean there's this interrelation between architecture and textiles in the Mughal context, is something that is very much contextual. We cannot really see that I mean one was just sheepishly copying the other but there are many other layers in which we need to understand what kind of correlations were made, and that is the reason we find that this idea of like I mean this multi-level narrative which are sort of like I mean being built into it. Whether we are actually looking at figurative narratives or not,

these levels of narratives which we see ... are actually created through these cross-references across media.



Now ... to conclude this discussion [by] saying that ... when we see the architectural motifs and ... also see ... the textiles together ... then what all ... similarities, differences we can think of. Now here in the left side of the screen we have this monument that is tomb of I'timād-ud-Daulah and that is Nūr Jahān's parents and of course like I mean I'timād-ud-Daulah was Nūr Jahān's father but then Nūr Jahān's mother was also buried there. In this particular tomb that we find it is again it has this square format with like I mean those four minarets corners and in the center we see that there is this one pavilion on the top of the roof. So, in this monument ... we find that I mean this marble made monument it has this tremendous work of Pietra dura or the Parchin Kari in which we see that I mean how there were the different kind of stone fragments which are used and then like I mean they were sort of like inlaid into the marble for making different kind of colorful motifs. ... this is something we see that I mean how the flavor of like I mean perhaps that I mean making carpets, or like I mean the hanging textiles which would we can imagine as like those chicks which would be like I mean covering the open area between two columns in a Mughal court. So, those kind of things perhaps are then reminded of and then they are perhaps been sort of like I mean replicated in the or not replicated perhaps like I mean you know their

essence is sort of like I mean brought into the marble structure of this building. ... this building as we can see that I mean it is much more of a closed surface it's not as those characteristic open spaces of like Diwan-i-Aam or Diwan-i-Khas. In this case, ... it almost seems that ... the textiles - those richly decorated ornamental textiles which would be ... hanging from the roof to the floor, something that is almost like being resonated in the Pietra Dura work; that is there all across the walls of this monument. So, this is something we can imagine that I mean whether something we can see that this idea about like the exchanges those to take place between textile and architectural motifs are something that is not really just once not really single directional but there are always like this cross-references those happened between them and perhaps that I mean combination of the knowledge that came from all these different aspects had encouraged the artisans for doing these tremendous experimentations also achieving the kind of skill that is still considered as wonder today. Thank you.