

Week 1 The Mughal Empire

A glorious dynasty that ruled the Indian subcontinent for more than three hundred years left a lasting impression. Among the most striking examples of Mughal heritage are the many beautiful buildings: Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Humayan's Tomb to name a few. The merging of Persian and Indian styles created a refined aesthetics in architecture, literature, fashion and cuisine.

Week 2 Akbar the Great and Shahjahan

Two of the most illustrious Mughal Emperors were Akbar the great and his grandson Shahjahan.

Akbar ascended the throne at the age 13 and became the Shahanshah ("King of Kings"). He conquered Northern India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Akbar's legacy of religious toleration, fair central control and liberal tax policies gave commoners a chance to prosper.

Shahjahan the designer of the Taj Mahal was, a complex man. He proved equal to the challenges from the Sikh kingdoms, Rajputs and from the Portuguese.

Week 3 Masculinity and gender performance

Noble men wore elaborate garments were well jeweled, had elaborate headwear, carried daggers and swords that correlated with hunting, equestrian and falconry traditions. Garments and adornments the symbols of nobility were worn for war, ceremony, and at court. Different accessories and accoutrements were worn for different activities.

Gallery visit: Special Exhibit

Week 4 Art and Exchange in the Islamic world

The interconnection of cultures facilitated by trade, displayed in aesthetics, courtly etiquette and material culture had spread through out the Islamic empires. The 14th century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta spent nearly thirty years traveling 75000 miles across Africa, the Middle East, India and Southeast Asia. The seven voyages of Chinese admiral Zheng He to South East Asia, South Asia, Arabian Peninsula and the East coast of Africa in the 15th century are unmatched in world history.

Week 5 The Rajputs

The Rajputs occupied the North and North West part of India and Pakistan. They were fierce warriors in conflict with the Mughals. Accepting Mughal overlordship, Rajput princes were admitted to the Mughal court, the emperor's privy council, given governorships and commands of armies. Some Rajput nobles further strengthened their ties with the Mughals by arranging marriages between their daughters and Mughal emperors and princes.

Week 6 Technique and technology

The subcontinent was a major source for precious materials required for the adornments. We will explore the various techniques such as kundan, koftgari, stone incrustation, enamel decoration and relief carving utilized in producing Indian and Pakistani jewelry and weapons by artists, metal smiths and jewelry makers.

Gallery visit: AKM Permanent Gallery