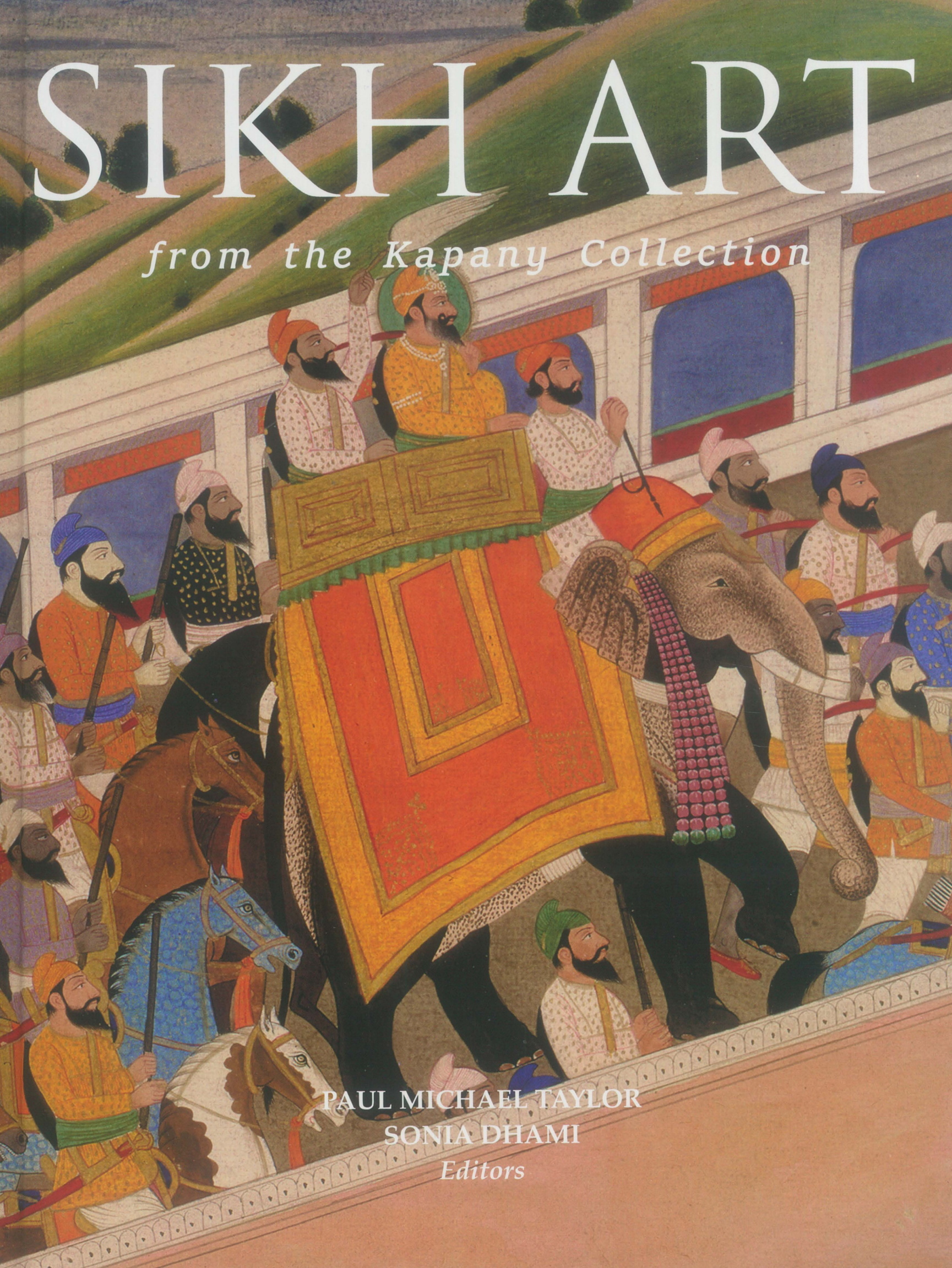


SIKH ART

from the Kapany Collection



PAUL MICHAEL TAYLOR
SONIA DHAMI
Editors

SIKH ART

from the Kapany Collection

PAUL MICHAEL TAYLOR

SONIA DHAMI

Editors

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In association with the
Asian Cultural History Program
Smithsonian Institution

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Dimensions of artwork from the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco are given as height × width.

Front cover photo: Detail of Fig. 8.24, *Maharajah Narinder Singh of Patiala on an elephant proceeding up the ramparts of a palace*, Kapany Collection

Back cover photos, left to right, top to bottom
(for full captions see these photos in text):

Fig. 11.32 rev., *Moolmantra, a Sikh Prayer*;
Fig. 10.2, *Helmet with chain mail neckguard*;
Fig. 8.27, *Seal Ring of Maharajah Ranjit Singh*;
Fig. 13.1, *Phulkari with vegetal, floral, and jewelry motifs*;
all from the Kapany Collection

Page 5: *Portrait of Maharani Mohinder Kaur of Patiala*,
India, Punjab state, former kingdom of Patiala,
Ca. 1940–1950, Oil on canvas, 66 × 49.5 cm,
Asian Art Museum of San Francisco,
Gift of the Kapany Collection, 1998.107

Pages 8–9: *Punjab Zamindars*, Punjab, Ca. 1817,
Watercolors on paper, 38 × 28 cm, Kapany Collection

Page 10 (Dedication): *Satinder Kaur Kapany*, by
Devender Singh, 2016, Oil on canvas, 40 × 60 cm,
Kapany Collection

Page 14: *Narinder S. Kapany*, by Taylor Lewis,
Oil on canvas, 60 × 90 cm, Gift of Bank of America



On the occasion of its 50th anniversary, this book is produced and distributed by
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The editors respectfully dedicate this book
to the memory of

Satinder Kaur Kapany

1928–2016

INTRODUCTION: ART BY, FOR, OR ABOUT THE SIKHS

Paul Michael Taylor & Sonia Dhami

This volume honors the remarkable art historical resource assembled by Narinder S. and Satinder K. Kapany on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Sikh Foundation, which Dr. Kapany founded. This compilation honors these achievements in the way we felt would be most appropriate—by bringing together leading scholars of Sikhism and of Sikh art to assess and interpret the Kapany Collection, using it to introduce Sikh art as well as the Sikh ethos to a broad public.

The editors of this book have worked professionally with the Kapanys for many years (Dhami at the Sikh Foundation's main office in Palo Alto, California; Taylor at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.), and the idea of putting together a book about their collection dates at least back to our discussions of this idea in September 2007, finally coming together in recent years as a way of celebrating the Foundation's Golden Jubilee in 2017. Its activities are international, as many contributing authors to this book point out. But we have also heard Narinder Kapany, who is known (both in Silicon Valley, where he lives, and beyond) as "the father of fiber optics," emphasize how, as an immigrant to America, he wanted to be very American but also wanted to contribute something important from his own background to his fellow Americans, through his collecting and Foundation work. Gurinder Mann's chapter within this volume summarizes the centrality of Dr. Kapany's support in developing the academic field of Sikh studies, especially in the United States. And succeeding chapters by internationally recognized art historians and experts in the field of Sikh studies testify to the significance of the Kapany Collection as an unparalleled assemblage of great Sikh art.

The field of Sikh art itself is one that Dr. Kapany effectively defined (at least for purposes of his own collecting) in the Introduction to the 1999 publication of conference proceedings on *Sikh Art and Literature*, which had been hosted at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum. The definition was broader than most, not just on Sikh religious themes and not merely based on Sikh artists, but rather "art that is by, for, and about the Sikhs." Several of the authors in this compilation have remarked on the breadth of the collection that has resulted. Like any working definition, if one thinks too much about this definition it gets problem-

atic at its edges, yet quibbling over such concerns never once seems to have held up the Kapany's' vast collecting—not only of paintings, prints, and sculptures but also of textiles, books, prints, coins, stamps, and historical memorabilia of all kinds. The result could never correctly be called an "eclectic" collection; quite the opposite, this is an intensively focused collection of exceptional breadth. The creativity that developed fiber optics seems to have been poured also into the creation of a new field of study and a collection of art worthy of that field's new definition, the field of "Sikh art." It is hard to remember that before the 1980s, Sikh cultural phenomena were often treated as a kind of subset of Hindu culture; and even the Library of Congress classification of books on Sikh art sometimes listed their subject headings as "Art, Hindu – India – Punjab."

So in assembling a book of essays now about Sikh art from the Kapany Collection, we editors thought it most appropriate to group the invited essays into three parts. We are extremely grateful to the renowned scholars who freely volunteered their time to produce the chapters here. The three chapters in Part I ("The Collectors and Their Vision") seem inseparable from an understanding of the Kapany Collection. They describe the passion and vision of Narinder and Satinder Kapany, explore Narinder Kapany's own early attempts to relate his fiber optic studies to artistic works, and place the couple's collection within the context of their legacy that influenced the development of Sikh studies as an academic discipline. Kiran Kaur Kapany, the couple's daughter, recounts the personal histories of her mother and father, including how they met and their early years in the United States, remembering how Sikh art collecting became their inspiration for establishing the Sikh Foundation in 1967. Professor Gurinder Singh Mann then reflects on both the professional and personal accomplishments of Dr. Kapany, demonstrated through both his groundbreaking work in fiber optics and his incomparable art collection. He explores the relationship between Dr. Kapany's Sikh identity and his philanthropic work, then reviews the creation of the Sikh Foundation, describing the establishment of endowed Sikh Studies professorships, artistic sponsorship, and museum exhibitions that he launched or supported, suggesting that his legacy is built on "the Sikh belief that liberation is not personal but collective."

The editors also asked Gurnam S. S. Brard to write about a little-known period of Narinder Kapany's life during which he experimented with creating his own works of art. His so-called "Dyynoptic sculptures" were fused from repurposed fiber optical building material. Brard's own memories of that period illuminate a time when he and other friends of the Kapany's initially developed an informal appreciation of these experimental works, which later began to draw positive critical notice through several invited formal museum exhibitions and published reviews. He concludes with summary descriptions of selected Dyynoptic sculptures that were created, before Kapany stopped making them. For the editors and surely for most readers, Brard's chapter provides a window into a "lost" chapter of Kapany's own creativity. After this book was essentially completed, during a discussion of his definition of Sikh art, the editors asked Narinder Kapany if he considered his own Dyynoptic sculptures to be "Sikh art." He seemed surprised by the question, but answered that, though he had not thought about it before, "No, I don't think so." Then, after a pause, he added, "Are they art? I would say they were more 'Sikh playthings,' not 'Sikh art.'"

Recounting again the where he was surprised by primarily that the why I gave it up," he sentiment that we do n

We believe that t Part II ("The Kapany truly examined and u purpose it was intende and ethos of the Sikhs. Sikh Gurus, in a chap contemporary painting vision and the Sikh Pashaura Singh sumr within the context of S with the establishtmen transfer of authority to this key subject by e the Kapany Collectio Mughal-inspired portr potary portraits such then surveys "Guru N the unbound set of fo Collection to San Frar visual vocabulary and collectively recount th in which these paint "aesthetic principle o beautiful selection of qually known as the history and its spiritua Jean-Marie Lafor Punjab Kingdom and vast range of Kapany political history of the around the turn of th East India Company, depicting events from the time illustrate Lafc ing miniature ivory p advocating for renew recognition of its sigt chapter on "The Mahi Duleep Singh, who w Britain in 1849 and rel the Kapany Collectio maharajah's conversio return to the Sikh fait

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His art from the Kapany group the invited essays and scholars who freely three chapters in Part I on an understanding of vision of Narinder and attempts to relate his art's collection within the art of Sikh studies as an daughter, recounts the how they met and their art collecting became on in 1967. Professor fessional and personal both his groundbreak- tion. He explores the is philanthropic work, iving the establishment sorship, and museum at his legacy is built on ve."

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Recounting again the story of how he was invited to exhibit them in museums where he was surprised that hundreds of people came to see them, he remembers primarily that they were quite complicated to assemble and display. "That's why I gave it up," he added; "they just took up too much time." That is a sentiment that we do not recall his ever expressing about his work with Sikh art.

We believe that the illustrious scholars who have contributed chapters to Part II ("The Kapany Collection: A Survey of Sikh History and Ethos") have truly examined and used the artworks within the Kapany Collection for the purpose it was intended to serve—to introduce and examine the culture, history, and ethos of the Sikhs. First, Pashaura Singh begins with his examination of the Sikh Gurus, in a chapter illustrated by Devender Singh's magnificent series of contemporary paintings of the ten Gurus. Laying out the story of Guru Nanak's vision and the Sikh *Panth*, or community, that coalesced around his teachings, Pashaura Singh summarizes how the Guruship and Sikhism would transform within the context of South Asian politics in the centuries to follow, culminating with the establishment of the *Khalsa* by Guru Gobind Singh, as well as by the transfer of authority to the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Nirvikar Singh's chapter returns to this key subject by examining many of the other portraits of the Sikh Gurus in the Kapany Collection, noting the historic and stylistic changes from the Mughal-inspired portraits of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to contemporary portraits such as those by Arpana Caur. Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh then surveys "Guru Nanak at the Asian Art Museum," a richly detailed study of the unbound set of forty-one *Janamsakhi* illustrations donated from the Kapany Collection to San Francisco's Asian Art Museum. She interprets for us all the visual vocabulary and language of these late-Mughal style illustrations that collectively recount the story of Guru Nanak's life; and she illuminates the ways in which these paintings exhibit the Sikh aesthetic principle of *vismad*, or "aesthetic principle of wonder." Mohinder Singh's chapter then employs a beautiful selection of Kapany Collection images of the *Harimandir Sahib*, colloquially known as the "Golden Temple," to discuss that architectural gem's history and its spiritual significance to Sikhs worldwide.

Jean-Marie Lafont's illuminating chapter on "Arts and Culture in the Punjab Kingdom and the Sikh States, Trans-Sutlej and Cis-Sutlej" examines a vast range of Kapany Collection artworks relevant to his topic. He recounts the political history of the formation of the Punjab kingdom and the Sikh States, around the turn of the nineteenth century, and their relationship to Delhi, the East India Company, and other contemporaneous political entities. Artworks depicting events from the life of Ranjit Singh and other important Sikh figures of the time illustrate Lafont's critical evaluations of this period's art forms, including miniature ivory portraiture and illuminated manuscripts. He concludes by advocating for renewed interest in the "Lahori School of Art" and greater recognition of its significance within the history of Indian art. Peter Bance's chapter on "The Maharajah and His Faith" traces the biography of Maharajah Duleep Singh, who was removed from the Punjab following its annexation to Britain in 1849 and relocated to Europe. Illustrating his story with artworks from the Kapany Collection, Bance paints a sympathetic portrait, examining the maharajah's conversion to Christianity and also the motives behind his eventual return to the Sikh faith. This is followed by Navtej Sarna's chapter on "The Sikh



Narinder S. Kapany

Marital Tradition,” colorfully illustrated with images from the Kapany Collection of weaponry, armor, and artworks depicting Sikh soldiers. Sarma argues that a pacific faith developed a militant nature in response to years of political and religious persecution. He describes how the military accomplishments of Guru Har Gobind and the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur inspired Guru Gobind Singh to establish the *Khalsa* and change Sikhism forever.

Having set the stage for Sikh art historical studies by Part II’s survey of Sikhism’s history and ethos, Part III (“Further Studies in the Kapany Collection”) invites the reader to examine in more detail specific aspects or media of Sikh artworks within this collection. First, Jyoti Rai’s chapter (“The *Nanakshahi*—The Divine Sikh Coinage”) surveys the numismatic history of the Sikh kingdoms, such as the silver rupees and copper paisas from the Lahore,

Amritsar, and Kashmiri Sikh rule, in addition to Sikh religious pilgrimages. Kapany Stamp Collecting, a collection of Sikh-themed postage stamps, issue stamps, printed others depict great Sikh figures. Kapany Collection (“”) begins by pointing out the definitions of “Sikh art” and “Sikh art history.” Kapany Collection examines several sign of the *phulkari*, *rumal* (handkerchiefs) and *Sukhpreet Singh*, Arpe through lenses of “the importance of considering Sikh faith. Paul Michael Taylor, this collection by examining exhibited within museums among community members. Kapany Collection differs from what museums describe how tradition from museum methods value of *sewa*, or service, because the work is to preserve and collect Sikh museum exhibitions, as Kapany Collection. Indeed, readers can see the legacy of the Sikh art in their own lifelike Sikh art—Guru—which this volume Foundation’s 50th anniversary



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Amritsar, and Kashmir mints, alongside coins from various historical periods of Sikh rule, in addition to "temple tokens" of commemorative medallions marking religious pilgrimages. Henry J. Walker follows with his chapter on "The Kapany Stamp Collection," which chronologically presents the collection's Sikh-themed postage stamps from around the world. Several of these are modern-issue stamps printed to commemorate significant Sikh anniversaries, while others depict great Sikh athletes and writers, recognizing Sikh contributions to many fields. Cristin McKnight Sethi then provides a chapter on textiles in the Kapany Collection ("Faith and Identity in Silk, Cotton, and Wool"), which begins by pointing out the difficulty of placing this material within traditional definitions of "Sikh art," and promoting the more inclusive attitude that the Kapany Collection encompasses. This allows inclusion, within art historical studies, of the numerous examples of meaningful contributions to our understanding of Sikh cultural life that result from analyses like those Sethi presents, of the *phulkari*, *rumal*, and other textiles. Mary-Ann Milford-Lutzker then examines several significant Sikh artists of the twentieth century, including Sukhpreet Singh, Arpana Caur, and Devender Singh. She views their artworks through lenses of "devotion, work, portraits, and play" and emphasizes the importance of considering their art to be expressions of a deeply personal Sikh faith. Paul Michael Taylor provides a different kind of "further study" within this collection by examining ways in which Sikh art is "transformed" by being exhibited within museums. He notes that initial folk concepts of Sikh "heritage" among community members get transformed as the members see that they differ from what museums often select for successful exhibits. In addition, he describes how traditional Sikh modes of treating and displaying objects vary from museum methods, which emphasize long-term preservation. The core Sikh value of *sewa*, or service to community, is particularly relevant in this transformation, because the worldwide Sikh community increasingly views efforts to preserve and collect their own heritage, and to make it available through museum exhibitions, as a new form of this traditional ideal of *sewa*.

Indeed, readers of this volume might well conclude that Narinder and Satinder Kapany's great work of assembling the Kapany Collection, alongside the legacy of the Sikh Foundation they founded, does itself constitute some of their own lifelong *sewa*—or perhaps even their *Gursewa*, service to the Guru—which this volume magnificently celebrates on this occasion of the Sikh Foundation's 50th anniversary.



Left: Fig. 1.1, Narinder Singh
Kapany and Satinder Kaur k



1

NARINDER AND SATINDER KAPANY: THE PASSION BEHIND THE KAPANY SIKH ART COLLECTION

Kiran Kaur Kapany

On February 6, 2014, our whole family gathered at a Japanese restaurant in Menlo Park to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the wedding of my parents, Narinder and Satinder Kapany: Michael, the love of my life; our two beautiful daughters, Misha and Ariana; and my lifelong partner in crime, my brother Raj, and his beautiful children, Tara and Nikki. After dinner, we asked each of our parents to tell us how they had stayed married so long. My mother and father looked at us—all eyes and ears were on them. My father responded first, saying, “It takes a very long-term commitment with a few short-term problems.” My mother waited her turn. Her eyes sparkled and, as she winked at us, she said, “Well, I pray to God, and Narinder is still here by my side!”

Ten days later we rushed my mother in an ambulance to Stanford Hospital. She was diagnosed with life-threatening asthma and aspiration pneumonia. Two days after that, a stroke left her paralyzed and bedridden. The next day, the pulmonary team entered her room, followed by the cardiac team and, within minutes, the neurology team, to discuss Mom’s treatment. As this rather large team of doctors all conferred quite noisily with each other, my mother spotted my father walking down the hallway to come visit her. When he entered the room, all of her attention focused on him. As her eyes filled with love at the sight of my father, she chastised the doctors for the noise they were making, telling them, “Gentlemen, please, please—the love of my life is here!”

Since her release from the hospital in February 2014, my mother continued to be paralyzed and bedridden, but she also remained a warrior. Her eyes continued to only sparkle with warmth, humor, love, and happiness to us all, but mostly to my father.

In the months since then I have been privy to many wonderful and poignant moments that, for me, define the eternal love between

*Left: Fig. 1.1, Narinder Singh
Kapany and Satinder Kaur Kapany*

my mother and father. Though she could not move, when my beautiful mother caught a glimpse of my father, her eyes would light up with joy, smiles, and love. My father would reassure her that they were in this together and together they would fight until the end.

One day my father read us a letter that *his* father had written to my mother in 1965 in which he praised and credited her for *all* of my father's accomplishments. "Without you," my paternal grandfather wrote, "Narinder would not have been successful." My father, who is usually willing and eager to accept any and all praise, declared that his father was "absolutely right. Your mother deserves all the credit."

Another day, my mother seemed quite anxious and was moaning loudly. Afraid that she was in some unimaginable pain, I summoned my father, who rushed to the room and said, "My Dear, I am here. Do you remember this morning I fed you every bite of your breakfast? I go to work for a few hours a day and come back to you. We are together every day. We have been married 61 years now. Please relax and don't worry. May I sit on your bed?" My mother, who had not spoken a word for months, stunned us all by saying, "Oh, yes. Please do." And in that miraculous moment she stopped shaking completely, content to gaze at my dad adoringly.

Moments like these have convinced me that it is because of my father's love that my mother remained so happy, loving, and content despite the many health issues that had plagued her over her last few years. Her strength came from *his* strength, as earlier in their relationship his did from hers.

Don't get me wrong here: my parents' marriage has not been free of trials and tribulations. Any marriage, as we all know, is work. In that sense their marriage is like many others, filled with not only joy and bliss but also some tears. However, what sticks with me is the way they have always held each other's hand, no matter how severe the challenges they have faced.

It is as a result of their profound love,



Fig. 1.2, Narinder Singh Kapany performing as Lord Krishna during college days



Fig. 1.3, Satinder Kaur and Narinder Singh Kapany, on their wedding day, February 6, 1954, London

depth of spirit, and challenges together—the Kapany Collection of world. This collection to Sikhism and the art who peruses the collection

My mother and father and English literature. College of Science and took him by surprise. in art, side by side, pe dancing, and they mai side, my father found a revolutionary new id him to challenge the belief that light could He wrote a Ph.D. thesis he demonstrated that *could* bend, and a discovery "fiber optics of that breakthrough, an impact on the work continued to reverberate led him to be known "Father of Fiber Optics

After completing my father dragged me mother to Rochester, on a massive cruise ship continued his research University of Rochester my brother, Raj Kapany moved to the University

Not long after, a before-seen intellectual into a frenzy. My father to start his first comparison. In 1960, my mother to Woodside, California.

When Raj and I were and passed appetizers our home, mingling at Valley, like Don Lucas Perkins, of Kleiner Perkins excitement and buzz at own unique vantage point Within this environment themselves raising two



any performing as Lord



arinder Singh Kapany, on
6, 1954, London

depth of spirit, and character—as well as their patience to endure any challenges together—that my mother and father have been able to create the Kapany Collection of Sikh Art, one of the largest such collections in the world. This collection is an exemplary representation of their commitment to Sikhism and the art that flows from its history and culture. I hope anyone who peruses the collection will appreciate and enjoy it with this in mind.

My mother and father met in London in 1950. She was studying dance and English literature. He was pursuing a Ph.D. in physics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology. Her wit and stunning beauty completely took him by surprise. They began their relationship as well as their interest in art, side by side, performing emotional, passionate, marvelous shadow dancing, and they married soon thereafter. With the love of his life by his side, my father found the security and stability that enabled him to develop a revolutionary new idea: in 1951, his curiosity about the nature of light led him to challenge the conventional belief that light could not bend. He wrote a Ph.D. thesis in which he demonstrated that, in fact, it *could* bend, and named his discovery “fiber optics.” By virtue of that breakthrough, he has made an impact on the world that has continued to reverberate and has led him to be known as the “Father of Fiber Optics.”

After completing his Ph.D., my father dragged my seasick mother to Rochester, New York, on a massive cruise ship. There, he continued his research at the University of Rochester, where my brother, Raj Kapany, was born. A year later, the new family of three moved to the University of Chicago, where I came into the world.

Not long after, my father’s research created some fantastic, never-before-seen intellectual property that drove the venture capitalists of the day into a frenzy. My father was quickly enticed by colleagues in Silicon Valley to start his first company, the very successful Optics Technology Inc., in Palo Alto. In 1960, my mother and father, with my brother and me in tow, moved to Woodside, California. They have lived on the same street ever since.

When Raj and I were growing up, we served drinks (and drank some!) and passed appetizers at the huge, fabulous parties my parents hosted at our home, mingling amid those who had deep roots in the birth of Silicon Valley, like Don Lucas of the former Draper Gaither & Anderson, and Tom Perkins, of Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers. We experienced the infectious excitement and buzz around the earliest start-up companies, albeit from our own unique vantage point.

Within this environment, my staunch Sikh parents suddenly found themselves raising two very American children. However, my brother and I



Fig. 1.4, Kiran Kaur
Kapany, Satinder Kaur
Kapany and Rajinder
Singh Kapany
(left to right)

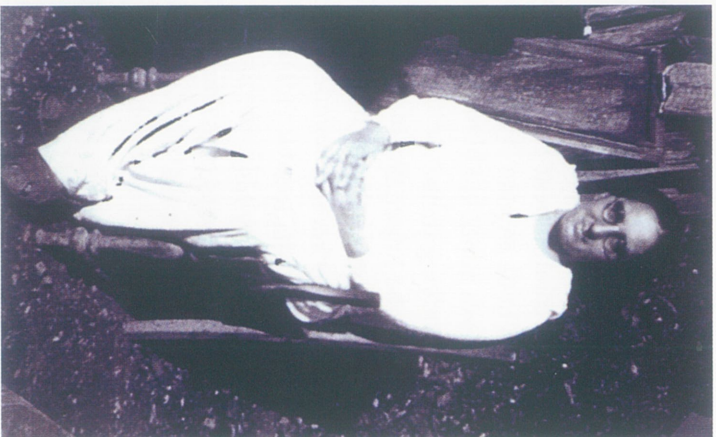


Fig. 1.5a, Kundan Kaur Kapany, mother of Narinder Singh Kapany

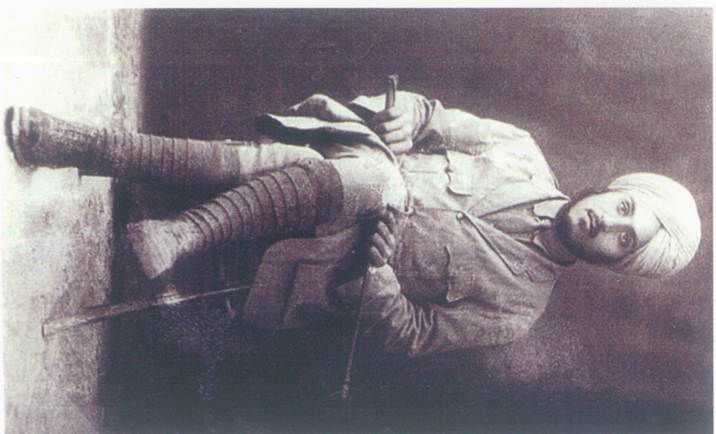


Fig. 1.5b, Sunder Singh Kapany, father of Narinder Singh Kapany

weren't raised traditionally Indian or typically American; we were very much a part of the budding Silicon Valley culture, yet our Sikh heritage always remained a guiding principle in the household and in all major family decisions.

While my father was busy conquering the world of fiber optics, my mother was breaking out of her traditional Indian role as queen, wife, and mother. She found tremendous success as a real estate mogul, buying properties in need of repair, remodeling them, and then renting or selling them. With huge profits in hand, and the *chariti kalaa* (positive nature or ever-uprising spirit) that has always characterized her, my mother sold our first home and purchased a large property up the hill while my father was on a business trip. My father returned to discover he no longer owned his home, but rather owned a huge lot on which to build their dream house. Fortunately, the home that my parents built, courtesy of my mother's entrepreneurial spirit, is large enough to house some of their Sikh art!

It is no surprise that my father has

journeyed into the protection of our rich Sikh history and Sikh art: some scholars have traced our family lineage to Guru Amar Das, the third of the ten Gurus of Sikhism. This lineage was a source of great pride in the family. Ages ago, my father's ancestors from Patna Sahib began to pass down their prize possession: two spectacular *janamsakhi* manuscripts (the birth stories of Guru Nanak, written after his death), each holding forty paintings. When the *janamsakhis* were inherited by my father's paternal grandfather, a Sessions Judge during the time of Maharajah Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, his wife would take the *janamsakhis* and read the stories to the neighborhood with wide eyes and an engaging spirit. Their son, my grandfather, later inherited the *janamsakhis* from them, and the stories continued. He would love to explain the stories to my father. One of his favorite stories follows: "When Guru Nanak went to Mecca on the request of Bhai Mardana, his first follower, of Muslim descent, it was said that when he was sleeping, he pointed his feet toward Mecca. Someone asked him why he was pointing his feet toward God. Guru

Nanak responded that I me where to turn my feet father treasured these inherited them from his themselves with Sikh devotion to their own England, and other countries, working with two Christies, to buy both dealers.

They were even art exquisite and emotion, showing the changing is in our Sikh holy scriptures became well renowned optic products he had munications systems noticed that in all of them not see much Sikh spurred them to make to change that.

My mother and convinced that the two know who the Sikhs people themselves show they are as they emigrate from their original root did I discover how significant this was, given the 1950s and 1960s. The Indians at that time in mention Sikhs.

In this setting, in along with my two uncles the most kind, sage, see Sikh Foundation, a mission was to educate Sikhism. They all inspired outstanding and independent years, the Foundation chairs at prestigious greeting cards, and fine

The Sikh Foundation the Khalistan movement creation of an independent that gained a Bhindranwale, was ki movement became



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Nanak responded that wherever you turn, there is the presence of God. Tell me where to turn my feet where there is no God." Through his lifetime, my father treasured these stories written in the *janamsakhis*, and one day he inherited them from his father. From that point on, my parents surrounded themselves with Sikh art depicting their rich history, which deepened their devotion to their own culture. They traveled back and forth to India, England, and other countries—indeed, all over the globe—to collect Sikh art, working with world-renowned art dealers such as Sotheby's and Christies, to buy both old and new Sikh treasures from various artists and dealers.

They were even artists themselves. My mother painted an oil series: an exquisite and emotional rendition of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's *Barah Maha*, showing the changing moods of Mother Nature. This beautiful love poetry is in our Sikh holy scripture, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Meanwhile, my father became well renowned for his Dynoptic sculpture, created out of the fiber optic products he had invented for communications systems. However, they noticed that in all of their travels, they did not see much Sikh art. This realization spurred them to make a commitment to try to change that.

My mother and father became convinced that the world at large should know who the Sikhs are, and the Sikh people themselves should not forget who they are as they emigrate to other lands far from their original roots. Only as I grew up did I discover how significant a challenge this was, given the social climate of the 1950s and 1960s. There were very few Indians at that time in the Bay Area, not to mention Sikhs.

In this setting, in 1967, my parents, along with my two uncles Janmeja Singh and Gurnam Singh Brard—two of the most kind, sage, selfless, loving, and lovable men in my life—began the Sikh Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpolitical charitable organization. Its mission was to educate others and highlight important issues and people in Sikhism. They all inspired the world with their spirit of *chardi kala*. With the outstanding and indispensable help of the beautiful Sonia Dhami over the years, the Foundation has held numerous Sikh art exhibits; established four chairs at prestigious universities; published numerous books, calendars, greeting cards, and fine art prints; and preserved one monument.

The Sikh Foundation was launched during a tumultuous era for Sikhs: the Khalistan movement, which began in 1980s and was aimed at the creation of an independent state of Sikh Punjab, was a fast-growing movement that gained an increasingly militant edge once its leader, Bhindranwale, was killed by Indira Gandhi's government in 1984. The movement became even more divisive when the Khalistan faction

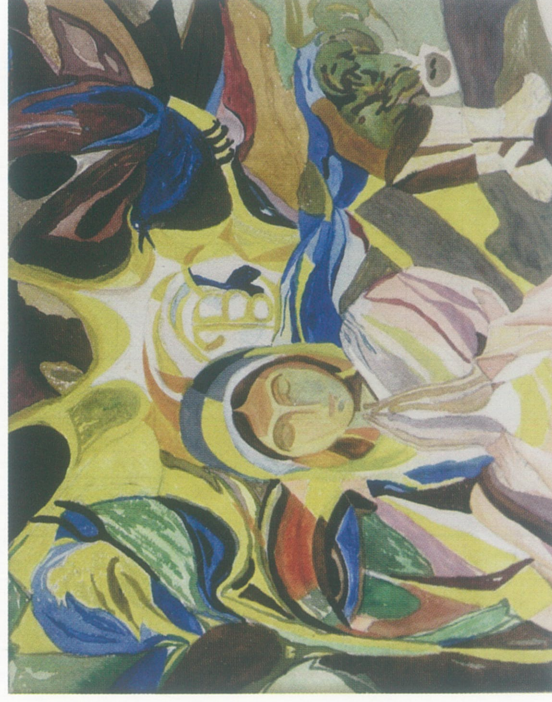


Fig. 1.6, *Bara Maha*,
Satinder Kaur Kapany,
1980, watercolors on
paper, 45.7 × 35.5 cm,
Kapany Collection





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