JOHN LOCKWOOD KIPLING

This very successful exhibition first opened at the V&A in London and now finds itself in New York at the Bard Center. John Lockwood Kipling was the father of the rather more famous Rudyard Kipling. Lockwood senior, however, was an extremely influential figure in his own right and this exhibition, dedicated to the arts and crafts of the Punjab and London, examine his life and work. He was an artist, teacher, curator, as well as a social campaigner for the preservation and promotion of Indian crafts and design and his own work can still be seen on buildings in London, Mumbai, and Lahore.

The exhibition focuses on Lockwood Kipling’s design, his advocacy for and the promotion of the arts and crafts of India through his work at art schools in Bombay and Lahore, as well as his role as curator of the Lahore Museum, his journalism over 25 years in India, and his influence on his son, some of whose books he illustrated. Nearly 300 objects, encompassing metalwork and furniture, drawings and paintings, as well as ceramics and relief sculpture are on view from lenders across Britain, as well as the US and Pakistan.

In the 1860s, Lockwood Kipling joined the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A) to work on producing terracotta architectural decoration for the museum this also gave him the chance to become acquainted with various groups involved in the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain. He and his family left London for India in 1865, where he first spent 10 years in Bombay teaching sculpture at the Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art. He then moved to Lahore as the principal of the new Mayo School of Art and curator of the Lahore Museum, where he stayed for the next 18 years. A film, specially commissioned for the exhibition, features many of the buildings he and his students worked on during the Gothic Revival period in India. He also championed architectural conservation and salvaged architectural features such as carved doors, window frames and screens for both the Lahore Museum and museums in London.

One section of the exhibition looks at his working collaborations with his son, Rudyard. In 1893, John Lockwood Kipling returned from his position in Lahore and returned to England. Other sections of the exhibition cover Lockwood Kipling’s royal commissions and his former student the architect and designer Bhai Ram Singh.

* From 15 September to 7 January 2018, Bard Graduate Center Gallery, New York, kgc.bard.edu.
* A full programme of events has been organized to run alongside the exhibition. Catalogue available.

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