MAPPING COLOR IN HISTORY

Activity Report, Fall 2025

By Dr. Celia Chari, MCH-Dogra Art Foundation Conservation Scientist

Thanks to the support from the Dogra Art Foundation's fellowship, Dr. Celia S. Chari has been able to contribute her scientific expertise to several of MCH's projects, expanding the project's knowledge on South Asian artists' materials and techniques. Although the government shutdown obstructed her work with the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Asian Art (NMAA), Dr. Chari was able to establish plans with NMAA to collaborate remotely in Fall 2025, with the potential to join on-site later in 2026. Her work with NMAA is allowing Dr. Chari to grow the MCH database, adding analytical results previously undertaken at NMAA by scientists Jennifer Giaccai and Blythe McCarthy on South Asian objects from their collection.

Other work carried out by Dr. Chari in Fall 2025 as part of her MCH-Dogra Art Foundation fellowship include:

- Writing and submitting her article titled *Inside a Sixteenth-century Indian Artists' Workshop: Technical and Scientific Insights into the Dispersed Bhagavata Purana*, for which the Dogra Art Foundation has been acknowledged for their support

- Writing and submitting her article titled *Decoupling Diffuse and Specular Reflection Contributions to External Reflectance FTIR Signals of Indian Pigments on Paper*, for which the Dogra Art Foundation has been acknowledged for their support

- Delivering a webinar for the American Ceramics Society (link to webinar page and video)

- Establishing partnership with scientists at the Walters Art Museum, with plans to carry out analyses on their Indian and Nepalese paintings in January 2026

- Formalizing plans to return to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in February 2026 for a two week-stay to continue spectroscopic analyses on Indian manuscripts

- Submitting an abstract to the 2026 Mineralogical Society of America meeting, for which she will talk about the MCH database of *mineral pigments* and its potential for aiding with geological surveying in South Asia and beyond. The conference will take place in February 2026

- Writing her article titled *Investigating the Light-stability and Laser-induced Degradat ion of Arsenic Sulfide Pigments*, a paper which investigates the

photochemical reactions of the Indian pigment *mensil*, which is derived from the toxic mineral bonazziite, for which the Dogra Art Foundation has been acknowledged for their support