

**“Official” Chronicle of Mayo School of Art. Formative years under J. L. Kipling (1874–94)**, researched and introduced by Nadeem Omar Tarar, ed. Samina Choonara, Lahore: National College of Arts, 2003, pp. 175. ISBN 969-8623-00-0, PK Rs 1295.00

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This book is published under the archival research project, which was launched at the National College of Arts, Lahore (Pakistan), to document the art and craft traditions of the region. Drawing on the archival records of the National College of Arts Archives, the book is compiled to offer a highly valuable material pertaining to the early years of the Mayo School of Arts (now National College of Arts, Lahore), hereby greatly contributing to the unrecorded history of colonial art education in British India. As is stated in the introductory research, the *Chronicle* is ‘an attempt to bring together the material on the history of the Mayo School of art, [...] which is compiled, edited, and reprinted from official reports, correspondences, proceedings and the visual records of the British Indian government in Punjab’ (p. 28). With the aim to document the period of the School run by John Lockwood Kipling (1837–1911), the book consists of two major parts. In the first part, a Historical Chronicle of the first twenty years of the school, from 1874–75 to 1893–94, based on the Reports of Director of Public Instructions of Punjab is highlighted. This material on Mayo School, published by the Department of Public Instructions, Punjab in an annual series of Reports on Popular Education in Punjab and its dependencies (RPED) was based in part on annual progress reports of the Principal of Mayo School of Arts, J. L. Kipling, which were included in the RPED as Appendices. The second part is a Visual Chronicle, which was reprinted from the Report on the Punjab, Court of the Calcutta International Exhibition, in 1883–84, authored by J. L. Kipling, as the Secretary and the office-in-charge of the Court. As the section of specimens from Punjab, called ‘Punjab Court’ at the Calcutta Exhibition, was intended not only to represent the state of the industrial arts in the province, but also to show the articles, many of them exhibited for sale, J. L. Kipling describes succinctly the articles of various kinds, which are richly illustrated in the *Chronicle* by the photographs and drawings from the pages of the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry* (first issue in 1884). The Appendices to the historical and illustrated chronicle of the Mayo School of Arts include reports on the rationale for visual education and its relationship to exhibitions and museums of industrial art and are reprinted from the proceedings of the Home Department and the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*.

The commencement of proper art education in British India can be dated back to 1839 when the Calcutta Mechanics' Institution and School of Art was founded by Frederic Corbyn and replaced in 1854 by the Society of Promotion of Industrial Art. Later in 1850, the institutionalisation of art education succeeded by launching an art school in Madras on the initiative of resident surgeon, Dr. Alexander Hunter. After a year the Parsi industrialist Jamsethji Jijibhayi offered funds to open an art school in Bombay, which is now famous as Sir J.J. School of Art. The Mayo School of Art, established in 1875 in memory of late Viceroy, Lord Mayo, was the youngest among colonial art schools in India and the first of this kind in Punjab after its annexation in 1849.

While most of scholarly literature on colonial art education in British India inclines, along with the historical data presentation, to argue methods of epistemic hegemony, not all scholars relate this problem with the implementation of the new methods of composition and transmission of knowledge, which was carried out with the reflection of the relevance of the hereditary art education system. In the "Historical Introduction" Nadeem Omar Tarar reviews with profound penetration the shift of methodological basis of artistic training in imperial workshop (*karkhanas*) coming up to those of the colonial art institutions. It is rightly argued that issues related to the figuring out of the curriculum for the schools of art by the leading British art educators with regard to developing a rational and written mode of knowledge, are vital not only in discerning the tendencies of art practice in India at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but also in understanding the principles of viewing Indian art and its theory. For the introduction of methodological scale of science and rationality into the system of art instructions, the memorandums on the formation of Mayo School of Art by Sir Richard Temple, John Lockwood Kipling, Henry Hoover Lock and Dr. De Fabeck, included as an Appendix 2 to the *Chronicle*, are very eloquent and worth studying.

A separate chapter in the history of colonial art education might be devoted to the role of art schools in disseminating the knowledge of skills and cultivating popular taste through the provincial and international trade exhibitions held from 1860 onward every year, as well as the museums. It was within the framework of the scheme to promote trade in industrial art articles that once established, the Mayo School of Art started to play a key role in organizing, staging, and furnishing exhibits for exhibitions and representing British Punjab. The International Industrial Exhibition 1883–84 in Calcutta had to demonstrate *inter alia* the success of using the modern technique in traditional manufacture. J. L. Kipling was secretary of the provincial Committee responsible for collecting specimens for the 'Punjab Court' at the Calcutta International Exhibition. The "Visual Chronicle" and the Resolution on Museums and Exhibitions of 1883, added as Appendix 5, clearly state the main purposes of the exhibitions, such as to promote trade in the commercial products of India, to improve ordinary and art manufactures and to promote trade in these manufactures. Museums, therefore, were also called upon 'to fulfil a new function – that of trade museums [...] where the best examples of Indian craftsmanship can be seen' (p. 168).

