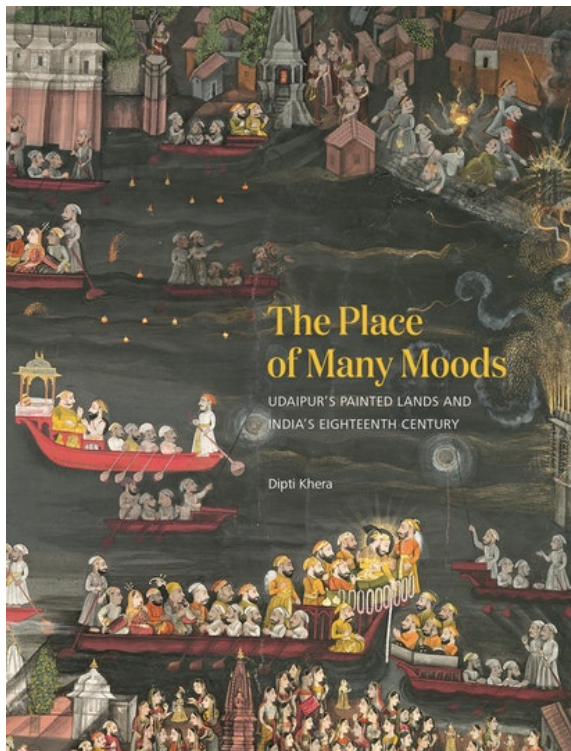


## Review: *The Place of Many Moods: Udaipur's Painted Lands and India's Eighteenth Century*

by Dipti Khera. Princeton University Press, September 2020. 232 p. ill. ISBN 9780691201849 (h/c), \$65.00.

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Khera's *The Place of Many Moods: Udaipur's Painted Lands and India's Eighteenth Century* focuses on describing the energy and mood—the *bhava*—of Udaipur from the weakening of the Mughal imperial authority through the rise of British colonial influence, primarily through her analysis of paintings and drawings in the context of other writings.

Through formal analysis and textual evidence from inscriptions on the backs of paintings, the author begins by conjuring moods of Udaipur as an urban city of lakes from the late seventeenth into the early eighteenth century. In the next chapter, Khera explores the city's ecosystem and the role of rain, water, irrigation, and reservoirs in the emotions, ecology and politics evoked in paintings, poetry, and waterworks of the early 1700s. Chapter three examines the city through

the luxuriousness of lake palaces, highlighting the Jagniwas lake palace. The last two chapters shift focus to objects sent from Udaipur on mercantile and pilgrimage routes. Khera provides an in-depth study of Udaipur court painter Ghasi, who also worked for British agent James Tod as an artist-assistant, contributing to Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajast'han* published by Smith Elder in 1829 and 1832. Chapter five focuses on a painted invitation scroll depicting a prosperous city. Regional merchants and the ruler of Udaipur in 1830 sent the scroll to a monk in Bikaner, nearly 500 kilometers to the north, to counter British reports of faltering leadership

and a failing economy. Finally, an appendix with translations of included poetry as well as notes and a bibliography round out the work.

This volume follows the same overall structure of Khera's dissertation, but in-line figures of the artworks as well as historic and contemporary photographs enhance the storytelling quality. Khera moves between careful formal analysis and presentation of her argument, integrating poetry, historiography, and in some cases, her own experiences visiting these spaces. The challenge of bringing a seventy-two-foot-long scroll to life is addressed by the inclusion of several detailed figures in the book as well as a link to an online viewer on the publisher's website. Unfortunately, there are no corresponding links from the detailed figures in the book to the highlights in the online viewer.

*The Place of Many Moods* enhances collections by its exploration of colonialism and history-making through a South Asian lens and is appropriate for upper-division undergraduates and graduate students. Through its contextualization of architecture, landscape, and politics, this work complements other titles on Indian architecture and painting that cover similar time periods.