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Science Minded Art Collectors – An Inspirational Journey

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While growing up in India and many other parts of the world, we often feel the thrust on us to study mainstream subjects like science,

engineering, technology, mathematics or medicine. In our school years, we also study other subjects like literature, language, history, geography, art, physical education, economics or many other subjects. But often we are taught these subjects as separate entities and miss the connections between them. We study about history and arts but often there are not many classes about history of arts. We study economics and psychology but not that often behavioural economics. It is important to discuss the need to create bridges between these knowledge islands.

In Science and I, we have been continuously bringing stories of individuals and their relationship with STEM to you. In our recent search, this time we stumbled upon the very interesting stories of [Dr. Anirban Sadhu](#) and [Dr. Rejina \(Ramachandran\) Sadhu \(Read more\)](#). They started as neuroscientists and transitioned into successful careers in drug development. Anirban is a Vice President in the pharmaceutical industry, while Rejina is intricately involved in the science underlying clinical development of drugs. In addition to the demands their careers impose on their lives, Anirban & Rejina both nurture other interesting passions and pastimes in their lives, one of which is collecting Art. They have recently been featured in the lifestyle magazine PROVOKE, and have published an impressive [book on their art collection](#). Please read below to find more about their amazing journey crisscrossing science and art, and their scientific approach towards art collection.

Please let us know about your journey in science and arts till now.

We are a scientist couple who have also maintained an interest in art as a counterbalance in our life. We both have a PhD in neuroscience from Switzerland, and a chequered career in Drug Development in the pharmaceutical industry and have been collecting art in various form for many years now.

Could you please explain to us art collection in layman terms?

Paintings forms the major part of our art collections – both works on canvas as well as works on paper. [Indian miniature paintings](#) from 17th to 19th century representing different miniature schools form a substantial part of the works. In addition to paintings, there are also objects of ivory, busts of stone and brass figures.

When did you start collecting? And how did you gain interest in collecting artistic objects/items?

We started our art collection from around 2001. It started as an extension of a longstanding academic interest in Indian art, and as an

offshoot of our interest in the history and culture of the Indian subcontinent. The collection has grown steadily since then, and today contains upwards of a 100 objects that represent 8000 years of Indian history.

How do you maintain your collection? How much effort it takes to maintain collection of art in vast numbers after managing full time work and family?

Ours is a living, growing and thriving collection. Unlike many other collectors who like to stash their collection in bank vaults, we like to live with our collection and enjoy it. Objects of our collection adorn our walls and our lives. It takes time, monetary investment and effort to maintain a collection like this. Most of the objects in the collection are appropriately catalogued, researched and in some cases they have also been published. All of these objects have a clear provenance and description associated with them.

We like our art, and enjoy the effort that it takes for maintaining it.

What is the trigger you look for while selecting a piece of art for your collection? Do you maintain a theme or being eclectic is your theme?

Unlike many other collection, ours is primarily an academic one. We do not follow investment trends and advice. Nor do we follow art market trends. Many of the pieces in the collection are more important from an art historical point of view than they are from a commercial point of view. We collect pieces and artists that we understand, that we like and that we consider important from an art historical point of view.

What do you look for to identify an original piece of art in all the fake pieces available around?

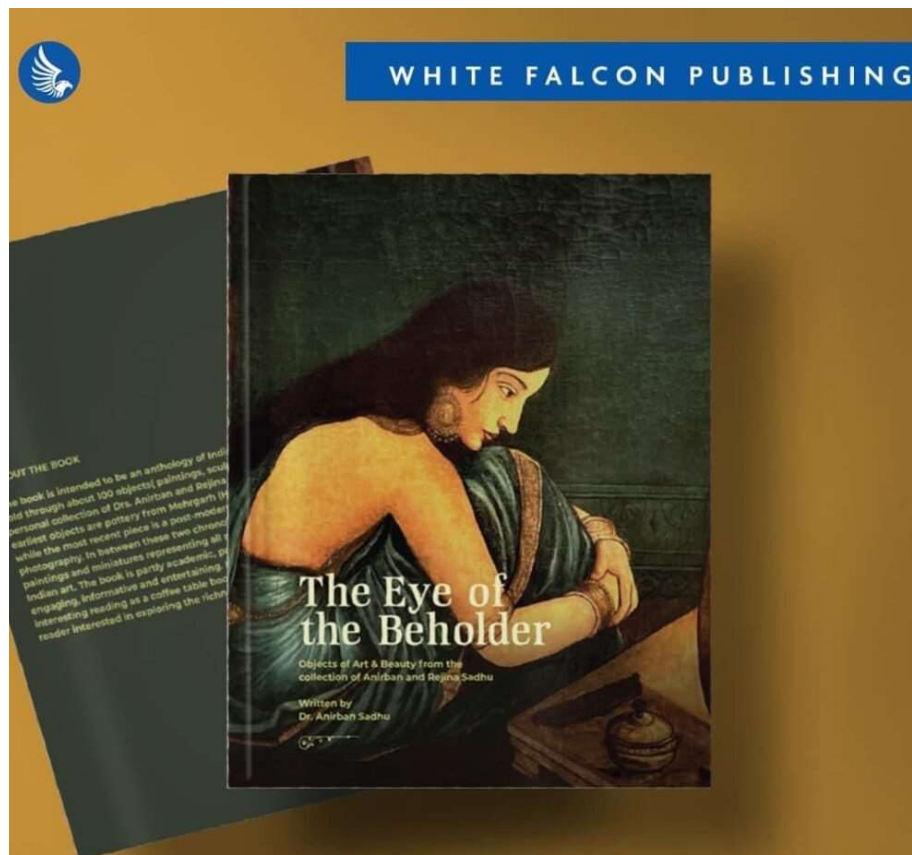
It takes a long time for the eye to develop. We have been in the field for about quarter of a century, and have allowed our eye to develop. There are fakes in the market – some bad ones, and others that are less bad. It is necessary to listen to the voice of your inner eye while looking at an art. In addition, while acquiring a piece of art, it is important to rely on trusted sources, insist on solid provenance, and have a network of informed collectors whose advice you can depend on.

How do you manage the logistics of art storage, revival and maintenance that is often needed for an old piece of art?

As mentioned before we like to live around the art pieces we collect. In addition, maintenance of art requires continuous care – cleaning, protection against temperature fluctuations, humid conditions etc. Fortunately, the climatic conditions in Switzerland are generally supportive. Once acquired, most artworks go through a months long process of professional cleaning and restoration. We are fortunate to have one of Europe's most senior and experienced art restorers to have worked on paintings of our collection.

How are you thinking of passing on information about these beautiful objects to more people?

Unlike many other collectors, we are not secretive about our collection. We love to talk about it. We love to show it to interested people. The publishing of the book ([The Eye Of The Beholder – Objects of Art and Beauty from the collection of Anirban and Rejina Sadhu](#)) is a step in this direction. Right now, we are also involved in preliminary discussions with museums and institutions for loans from our collection.



The Eye Of The Beholder – Objects of Art and Beauty from the collection of Anirban and Rejina Sadhu

We are sure that the entire collection is special for you. Are there any items in your collection which are very precious to you in term of stories or memories? Would you like to tell us about any such story?

All the pieces in the collection have been collected painstakingly and have a lot of emotions attached to them. It is difficult to single out one or two pieces from the rest. All the stories associated with the objects have been included in the [book](#).

Perhaps one of the pieces that I really relate to is a set of earthen pottery from the Indus Valley Civilization, sourced from Mehrgarh. These are among the earliest pottery from the dawn of human civilization about 8000 years ago. To hold one of these pieces in your hand is to feel close to the life of people who lived and used these objects thousands of years ago, and to feel connected to their lives and emotions.

Do you think it is easier today to buy/ access art pieces than 10 years back?

The Indian art market is still in its infancy. There is still plenty of possibility for new collectors to get in to the field. A lot of Indian miniatures and sculptures are not available any more in India. However, for the collector with the right amount of passion and perseverance, a lot of possibilities exist internationally.

Have you build a community around your passion of art collection? Have you got any training in history of arts or maintenance a piece of art?

Doing is the best way to learn. That's what we have done. However, there is a lot of theoretical knowledge that we access from books, journals, periodicals and the internet. In addition, we never miss an opportunity to attend a talk, seminar, vernissage (a private showing or preview of an art exhibition) or exhibitions. These are great sources of learning and developing the eye.

What are the 2 most important piece of advice you would like to give to people who are starting in their journey of collecting art.

One, do not be in a hurry to buy. Two, Do not miss an opportunity to learn.

Buy the book: The Eye Of The Beholder – Objects of Art and Beauty from the collection of Anirban and Rejina Sadhu in the online

platforms below:

[Amazon](#); [Flipkart](#); [WFP store](#)



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