

Sri Ganesh V Shivaswamy  
The Ganesh Shivaswamy Foundation  
“Annapurna”, No.11 (old. No.172)  
Race Course Road, Madhavanagar  
Bengaluru 56001  
Tel: 080 22266884; 9880627949  
Email: [svganesh@gmail.com](mailto:svganesh@gmail.com)

**Ganesh V. Shivaswamy** is a fifth generation lawyer from Bengaluru. His grandfather was Justice A.R. Somnath Iyer, the former Chief Justice and Acting Governor of Karnataka. As a litigating lawyer, Ganesh has handled many cases, some of which have been reported in law journals.

In addition to his profession, he has taken up the task of structuring the artistic legacy of Raja Ravi Varma. His interest commenced with collecting chromolithographs from the Ravi Varma Press which is now considered one of the most substantial collections of the prints from the Press.

In 2006, he commemorated the centennial death anniversary of the artist by creating the first online catalogue of prints from the Press. In 2019 he established the Ganesh Shivaswamy Foundation, which immediately thereafter partnered with Google Arts and Culture. To coincide with the commemoration of 125 years of the Ravi Varma Press, the Foundation launched chromolithographs from his collection on the Google platform. This was launched by Her Highness Shubhangini Raje, Rajamata Ji of Baroda in September 2019. The exhibition was inaugurated by Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, the former Chief Justice of the Hon’ble Supreme Court of India. The Inaugural message may be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=251342483545976>)

In 2020, the Foundation showcased more exhibits on the Google Arts & Culture platform to celebrate 150 years since the commencement of Ravi Varma’s career. Raja Ravi Varma received his first professional commission in 1870 from a member of the legal fraternity- Kizhakke Palat Krishna Menon. Collaborating in this endeavor were: the Royal Gaekwad Collection, Vadodara; the Kaudiar Palace, Thiruvananthapuram; the Kilimanoor Palace Trust; Sree Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram; the Government Museum, Chennai; the Sri Bhavani Library and Museum, Aundh; DAG (Delhi Art Gallery)- New Delhi, Mumbai, New York among others. This commemorative was launched on April 25, 2020 through an online announcement by Her Highness Shubhangini Raje, Rajmata Ji of Baroda.

(Inaugural messages may be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vK2k3WNZSuI>)

In addition to the images, articles were also contributed for the commemorative:

- Her Highness Ashwathy Thirunal Gowri Lakshmi Bayi of Travancore wrote a three part biography of the artist;
- Her Highness Radhika Raje Gaekwad, Titular Maharani Ji of Baroda wrote an article titled “Reclaiming Shakti” interpreting the painting of Sita Bhumipraves;h;
- Dr Swarnamalya Ganesh wrote an article titled “The Emotive Raja” encapsulating the various emotions;
- Actor Suhasini Hasan, celebrity photographer G Venket Ram and Ganesh Shivaswamy co-authored an article titled “Photograph to Photograph” tracing the journey of the image of the 1893 painting “There Comes Papa” from a photograph to photograph;
- Ganesh Shivaswamy wrote an article in commemoration of 150 years of the artist’s professional career, among others.

(See: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-ganesh-shivaswamy-foundation>)

The Ganesh Shivaswamy Foundation platform on Google Arts & Culture is considered the largest collaborative repository of images relating to Ravi Varma.

### **Recent Talks by Ganesh V. Shivaswamy:**

1. In 2019, he spoke on the Ravi Varma Press- commemorating 125 years since its’ commencement; the first chromolithograph of the “Birth of Shakuntala” having been released in the year 1894. This talk was delivered in six cities across India:
  - Bengaluru- at the National Gallery of Modern Art;
  - Chennai- at the Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyer Art Foundation;
  - Vadodara- at the Maharaja Fatesingh Museum;
  - New Delhi- at the Lodhi;
  - Thiruvananthapuram- at the Sree Chitra Art Gallery;
  - Mumbai- at the JNAF (CSMVS).

(The talk at the NGMA may be viewed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x\\_MZ6At5AU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x_MZ6At5AU))

2. Talk at the Bangalore International Center in September 2019 on “Cult and Culture”- exploring the transformation of an ideology from a cult to a culture using the Ravi Varma example;
3. Talk for Reliance Industries Limited in 2020 on the brand of Raja Ravi Varma;
4. Talk for the Sree Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram in September 2020 on 125 years since the inception of the Museum and Raja Ravi Varma and Museum Culture;
5. Talk for Ghar se Museum in November 2020 on Raja Ravi Varma;
6. Talk for the Museum of Art and Photography (MAP), Bengaluru in January 2021 on “The Evolution of the Popular Aesthetic- from Raja Ravi Varma to Raghuvir Mulgaonkar”
7. Talk for the IGNCA, Vadodara titled “Music and Dance in the Raja Ravi Varma oeuvre” on April 17, 2022.
8. Talk for the Apparao Galleries, Chennai titled “Music and Dance in the Raja Ravi Varma oeuvre” on December 28, 2022.
9. Panel discussion with Gayatri Sinha and Sharan Apparao at the IGNCA, Vadodara on April 10, 2023.
10. Lecture at Maharaja Sayajirao University (MSU), Vadodara – “A Lawyer’s take on Art” on April 11, 2023.
11. Launch of the first volume at Museum of Art & Photography (MAP), Bengaluru on April 12, 2023.
12. Gallery walk at the Sree Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram on April 28, 2023.
13. Launch of the first volume at the C.P. Ramaswami Foundation and Madras Book Club, Chennai on June 30, 2023.
14. Lecture on “Art and its Engagement with Society” for INTACH, Chennai chapter on July 1, 2023.
15. “The Shaping of an Artist” for Khaki Tours on July 15, 2023.
16. “Raja Ravi Varma: An Everlasting Imprint” – Lecture for the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru on July 19, 2023.
17. “Is a picture still worth a 1000 words? – Ravi Varma and the Advertising World” – Talk with Alexander Zachariah for the Chennai International Center on November 5, 2023.
18. “Raja Ravi Varma and Bombay” – Talk with Deepthi Sasidharan for AVID Learning (An Essar Group Initiative) at Pundole’s Mumbai on November 15, 2023.
19. Spoke at the Bangalore Literature Festival in a discussion with Dr. Alka Pande on December 2, 2023.

20. Spoke on the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of the book series at the Museum of Art & Photography on December 8, 2023.
21. “The Unseen Ravi Varma” for the Jatin Das Center for Art and India International Center on December 9, 2023.
22. Spoke at the Jaipur Literature Festival in a discussion with Asad Lalljee on February 3, 2024.
23. “Raja Ravi Varma: Law, Lawyers and Art” for the Bangalore International Center on February 10, 2024.
24. “Raja Ravi Varma: An Everlasting Imprint – A Divine Omnipresence” with Dr. T.K. Rajendran on March 3, 2024 at Levee Hall, Thiruvananthapuram.
25. “Raja Ravi Varma: Law, Lawyers and Art” for the Delhi Art Gallery on April 29, 2024.
26. “Raja Ravi Varma: An Everlasting Imprint – A Divine Omnipresence” with Deepthi Sasidharan on August 23, 2024 at Museum of Art & Photography, Bengaluru.
27. “Exploring the interplay between art, law and policy through Raja Ravi Varma” for the Madras Club on August 30, 2024.
28. “Moving beyond the Religious Image” for the Apparao Galleries, Chennai on August 31, 2024.

### **Ganesh V. Shivaswamy and Museums:**

In 2016, he curated an exhibition at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Bengaluru (Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India) titled “Royal Lithography and Legacy”.

In March 2021, Ganesh was appointed the honorary curator of the new wing of the Sree Chitra Art Gallery, Thiruvananthapuram which is specifically dedicated to the works of Ravi Varma and associated artists. In this regard, two online webinars were delivered on April 29, 2021 and May 18, 2021 where the new museum was discussed. These webinars were jointly presented by Dr Venu Vasudevan, Add'l Chief Secretary, Govt. of Kerala; Mr. Chitrabhanu, Mr Girikumar and Zeba Maria. (See:

<https://www.facebook.com/ganesh.shivaswamy.foundation/videos/1457722821238764/>)

The new wing of the Sree Chitra Art Gallery was inaugurated on September 25, 2023 by the Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan.

Ganesh has now been appointed the Honorary Curator of the Ravi Varma Press Museum at the Hasta Shilpa Heritage Village, Manipal. The process of curating the museum is on-going.

**Ganesh V. Shivaswamy as an author:**

Ganesh continues his research on Raja Ravi Varma and is the author of a six-volume book series, *Raja Ravi Varma: An Everlasting Imprint* which explores the social, religious and aesthetic impact of the images from the Ravi Varma Press on the people of the Indian sub-continent and beyond. It explores the rich legacy in the context of a rapidly transforming India and the impact it makes on the social, religious and aesthetic notions of the people of the Indian sub-continent and beyond. The first volume deals with the life of Raja Ravi Varma and the elements which inspired his paintings. The second volume charts the journey of the Ravi Varma Press and the impact of the prints on various aspects of life. The third volume deals with images intended for worship while the fourth volume looks into the images from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The fifth volume examines images from the Shrimad Bhagavatam and Plays while the sixth and concluding volume documents images of people of power and women. A team from the Critical Collective, New Delhi consisting of Gayatri Sinha, Mrinalini Vasudevan and Namrata Ghosh edited the books. Volo Designs, Chennai founded by Ashwath Naroth and Alessio Comalli designed the volumes. The series is published by White Falcon Publishing Solutions, Chandigarh.

The first volume was launched at the Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Baroda on April 9, 2023. The second volume was launched by Dr. Pheroza Godrej at Mumbai on November 15, 2023. The third volume was released at Thiruvananthapuram on March 1, 2024.

More details are available at: <https://rajaravivarmags.com>

News: <https://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/others/bengaluru-lawyer-pens-the-largest-work-on-ravi-varmas-legacy/articleshow/99853038.cms>