SHANGRI LA: THE ARCHIVE-MUSEUM AND THE SPATIAL TOPOLOGIES OF ISLAMIC ART HISTORY

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ABSTRACT
Over the past two decades, critical histories have questioned the conceit of the archive-museum as a panoptical repository of documents and objects. While this turn in history-writing has engendered productive ethnographies of the archive-as-subject, the spatial topologies that make the archive have received scant attention. My essay proposes that the turn to the archive-as-subject must account for a spatial history of the archive, as well. Reading Shangri La—the philanthropist Doris Duke’s museum of Islamic art in Hawai’i—as an archive-museum produced through interplay between architectural arrangements and the objects housed in that space, I suggest that the history of the archive is also a history of spatiality that delineates visibility as a form of culture. By situating the museum within a history of twentieth-century displays of Islamic art in the West, the essay rethinks the archive as a space of knowledge-production.

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In 1935, the American heiress, art collector, and philanthropist Doris Duke (1912–93) embarked on a world tour that took her to a number of countries in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Among the many countries she visited on this tour was India, where she spent more than two months visiting Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata), Delhi, Agra, Baroda (now Vadodara), and Jaipur. The visit left a deep impression on the twenty-two-year-old Duke. As her then-husband James H. R. Cromwell wrote in a letter to his mother, “While we were in Agra Pete [Doris Duke] had fallen in love with the Taj Mahal and all the beautiful marble tile, with their lovely floral designs with some precious stones.” Indeed, Duke’s visit to the seventeenth-century mausoleum in Agra, built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (1592–1666), led her to commission a new bedroom suite for her mother-in-law’s estate in Palm Beach, Florida, where she and her husband were planning to live upon their return to the United States. The suite was eventually installed in 1938, in a new residence in Honolulu, Hawai‘i.

Designed by the Delhi-based British architect Francis B. Blomfield and fabricated by craftsmen from Agra, the marble panels—inlaid with semiprecious stones—and lattice screens used in the suite were inspired by the Taj Mahal’s delicate architectural design (fig. 1). As Cromwell described in his 1935 letter, “She got her cue from the Taj Mahal, and wanted to have her bed-room done in tiles like those in the Taj Mahal.” Duke’s marble bedroom and bath, with its flowering plants in *pietra dura*, marked the beginning of a long commitment to collecting Indian and Islamic art. The history of this particular commission—from its inception in Agra to its fruition as the Mughal Suite in a new home on the island of O‘ahu—has led scholars to read Duke’s interest in Islamic art and architecture as representative of the crafts revival imperatives of the early twentieth century. This inference is certainly accurate. In a rare autobiographical article written for *Town and Country* magazine in 1947, Duke herself acknowledged the importance of her Mughal Suite. Reiterating the significance of this commission in stimulating her career as a collector and patron of Islamic art, Duke confessed that her new home in Hawai‘i was built around the Taj-inspired marble panels and lattice screens that she had commissioned in 1935 (fig. 2).
A number of other commissions and purchases followed, and, over the next five decades, Duke acquired a substantive collection of paintings, textiles, and jewelry to decorate Shangri La, her new home on O‘ahu and her private retreat from “the constant attention accorded her by reporters and photographers in other places.”6 As the only child of the tobacco magnate James Buchanan Duke (1856–1925), Doris Duke had inherited the considerable family fortune after her father’s death. Subsequently christened “the richest girl in the world,” Duke spent much of her early years fleeing from tabloids and the public eye.7 Indeed, early twentieth-century newspaper reports suggest that Duke’s remarkable estate in Hawai‘i was her private world—literally a Shangri La, a remote, secluded arcadia that allowed her to escape from both the paparazzi and the ostentatious world of the American aristocracy.

That the publication of James Hilton’s best-selling novel *Lost Horizon* (1933) and the release of Frank Capra’s 1937 film based on the novel had a direct influence on Duke is undeniable. At the time of its construction, the Duke residence in Hawai‘i had garnered the nickname “Hale Kapu” (Forbidden House), an epithet bestowed on it by local newspapers. It was only in 1938, a year after Capra’s film was released, that “Shangri La” was adopted as the official name for the Duke residence.8 In Hilton’s novel, the

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7 As the *New York Times* reported: “Miss Doris Duke fled yesterday from her city home at 1 East Seventy-eighth Street after it had been besieged by a host of reporters, photographers and groups of the idly curious seeking a glimpse of ‘the richest girl in the world.’” *New York Times*, “Miss Duke Flees to Jersey Estate; ‘Richest Girl,’ on Birthday, is Besieged at Home Here by Curiosity-Seekers,” November 23, 1933.

8 The name Shangri La first appears in a June 13, 1938, letter from James Cromwell to William Cross Jr.
secret Tibetan lamasery of Shangri-La was not merely a utopian space hidden from the world, but also a museum where all of the wisdom of the human race was carefully collected. However, unlike those in conventional museums, the priceless books, works of art, and musical scores by Mozart and Rameau accumulated by a Belgian Capuchin missionary in Hilton’s Shangri-La were not for public viewing. Rather, as Thomas Richards notes, the hidden lamasery of Shangri-La was imagined by the novelist as an archive-museum, an “unmapped library where a complete knowledge lies in a state of suspended animation against the day when it can again be brought to life to reanimate state control over knowledge amidst a world in ruins.” The two estates—one in a lost valley in Tibet and the other in Hawai‘i—thus shared the same name, both alluding to a utopian cloistered archive, hidden from the public gaze.

The word “archive,” originating from the Greek *arkheion*, a home or domicile, is also, as Derrida reminds us, a “dwelling, this place where they [the archives] dwell permanently.” The archive thus comes into being through the act of domestication, the inhabitation of the privileged space of the home or the *arkheion*, marking the “institutional passage from the private to the public.” It is in this passage—the placing and the spacing of the archive—that the archive reaches not only back to the past but also to the future. The promise of the archive (and the archivist), Derrida suggests, is “an affirmation of the future to come.” Indeed, the residents of the Tibetan lamasery Shangri-La saw themselves as custodians of an encyclopedic archive-museum held in trust for a future when “a new world stirring in the ruins, stirring clumsily but in hopefulness” would seek “its lost and legendary treasures.” Put differently, for the residents of Hilton’s Shangri-La, the imagination of a “future to come” lay in the gift of their archive, representative of the greatest of human achievements in art, music, and literature, to a postapocalyptic world rising from the ruins of impending global war. Duke, on the other hand, at first did not share this ambitious aspiration and instead imagined her Shangri La as a private refuge. It was only in 1965 that she made plans to transform it.

Cited in Hibbard, *Shangri-La*. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had given the retreat now known as Camp David the name Shangri-La in 1942, making the Duke property in Hawai‘i the first estate in the United States to be named Shangri La.


11 Derrida writes, “the meaning of ‘archive,’ its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded. . . . On account of their publicly recognized authority, it is at their home, in that place which is their house (private house, family house, or employee’s house), that official documents are filed.” Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 2.

12 While Derrida acknowledges that the “passage from the private to the public” does not necessarily lead to a displacement of the secret by the nonsecret, my essay focuses on the architecture of the home itself as an archive, a site of “archontic power.”


14 Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, 158.
into a center for the study of art and culture.15 It is in this initial thinking that Duke’s Shangri La appears to have differed from its namesake, the Shangri-La hidden behind the mountains in the valley of the Blue Moon. The eventual passage from private to public, from the home to the archive, was, however, already implicit in Duke’s Shangri La from the moment of its conception, as this essay demonstrates.

This, then, leads to my primary contention. The conceit of the archive-museum as a stable epistemological system, a panoptical repository of documents and objects for the promised “future to come,” has been questioned by critical histories in the past two decades. The move toward reading the “archive-as-subject” (ethnographies of the archive), rather than the “archive-as-source” (the study of objects and documents housed in an archive), has allowed us to think of the archive-museum as more than a space of knowledge accumulation.16 The archive-museum has emerged in scholarship as a site that is central to both the historical and historiographical production of knowledge. While this turn in history-writing has led us to rethink the politics of the archive itself, the architectural and spatial imperatives that produce the archive have received scant attention.

My essay proposes that the turn to the archive-as-subject must adequately account for a spatial history of the archive. As Derrida’s etymological reading of the archive reminds us, the arkheion was the home in which the archive dwelled. It is precisely this topological nature of the archive—the spatial topology through which the archive both is shaped and shapes—to which this essay draws attention. Could one read the structuring of Duke’s Shangri La as an archive-museum with a particular spatial topology? How did this topological imaginary, in turn, determine Duke’s collecting strategies? Reading Shangri La as an archive-museum produced through the interplay between spatial arrangements and the objects/artwork housed in that space, this essay reconsiders the archive as a space of knowledge-production. I suggest that the history of the archive is also a history of specific spatialities that delineates visibility as a form of culture.

The genealogies of the techniques of display deployed in Duke’s museum-archive can be traced to early twentieth-century exhibitions of Islamic art in the West, particularly the 1910 Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst (Masterworks of Muhammadan Art) exhibition in Munich, the Islamic art galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art in London. As scholars have suggested, the mobilization of new strategies of installation and display in Munich, New York, and London provided an optical apparatus for both seeing and narrativizing Islamic art in the early twentieth century.17 The curators of the

17 For the history of the Munich exhibition, see essays in Andrea Lermer and Avinoam Shalem, eds. After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” Reconsidered (Leiden: Brill, 2010). David J. Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic
1910 *Meisterwerke* exhibition in Munich, for instance, used new forms of installation design to strategically unmoor Islamic art from contemporaneous Orientalist readings that presented non-Western objects through narratives of “fairy tale splendor and the attitude of a bazaar” (fig. 3).\(^{18}\) In turn, the Munich exhibition prompted new display aesthetics that became central to reconfiguring the manner in which Islamic art would henceforth be presented to Western audiences. Placing Duke’s Shangri La within this history of the twentieth-century display of Islamic art, this essay presents a method of reading the archive-museum as a simultaneous product and effect of spatial design. My aim is to examine the ways in which the installation design and the architecture of the museum transform the meanings of specific objects and artifacts. Simultaneously, I seek to examine how displayed objects shape the space of the archive-museum. In doing so, I map intersecting processes of collecting, designing, curating, archiving, and exhibiting that effect, and are effected by, the discipline of art history.

![Fig. 3: Room 72, Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst, Munich, 1910. Reproduced from Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik R. Martin, Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst (Munich: F. Bruckmann A.-G., 1912), 1:3.](image)

The 1910 *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst* exhibition of Islamic art at Theresienhöhe Park in Munich emerges as a key moment in this trajectory. Organized by Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945), the honorary curator of the Persian-Islamic department of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin, the exhibition included over 3,600 objects—paintings, textiles, carpets, ceramics, and metalwork—borrowed by Sarre and his co-curator, the Swedish scholar and collector Fredrik R. Martin, from approximately 250 international collections. Although the 1910 exhibition had been preceded by a series of Islamic art shows in London (1876, 1885), Vienna (1891), Paris (1893, 1903), Stockholm (1897), Berlin (1899), and Leipzig (1900), *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst* was the largest and most comprehensive display of Islamic art to date.\(^{19}\) In addition to the

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\(^{19}\) The exhibitions were hosted at the South Kensington Museum, London, in 1876; the Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, in 1885; the Imperial Austrian Trade Museum, Vienna, in 1891; the Palais de l’Industrie, Paris, in 1893; the General Art and Industry Exhibition, Stockholm, in 1897; the
exhibition’s sheer scale, its installation emerges as significant to a new, twentieth-century approach to displaying and studying Islamic art.

Drawing on the Vienna Secession artist Josef Hoffman’s modernist display aesthetics, the Munich exhibition presented artwork, carpets, and weaponry in single or double rows, set against neutral backdrops to accentuate the objects on display (see fig. 3). Individual works were placed on pedestals to further highlight their significance as “masterworks.” The exhibition thus made a radical departure from nineteenth-century expositions that presented Islamic art in settings meant to replicate the chaotic, colorful spaces of the Oriental bazaar. As Sarre’s preface to the exhibition’s commemorative publication emphatically asserted:

A certain austere attitude of the rooms, the absence of coloristic effects and phantastic group arrangements, the effort to let works of art stand alone due to their quality, all this may have come along somewhat unprecedentedly. It resulted from a desire to go against the popular perception of Oriental art, against the fairytale splendor and the attitude of a bazaar.\(^{20}\)

Indeed, this new technique of installation received international critical recognition. Artists such as Henri Matisse and Pierre-Auguste Renoir traveled to Munich to see the exhibition. Wassily Kandinsky reviewed the show in the Russian literary and visual arts journal *Apollon*.\(^{21}\) Roger Fry, the celebrated art critic and founding member of the Bloomsbury Group, declared, “It would be hard to exaggerate the importance of this exhibition for those who are interested in the history not alone of Oriental but of European art.”\(^{22}\)

The reverberation of this new modernist display aesthetic was felt on both sides of the Atlantic. In the United States, it was the display of the Islamic art collections of Charles L. Freer, Edward C. Moore, Henry O. Havemeyer, and Henry Walters that revealed the significance of the 1910 exhibition in pioneering a new approach to the display of Islamic art, one that attempted to provoke the viewer’s affective or aesthetic appreciation of specific objects on display. For example, the jeweler and silversmith Edward C. Moore’s 1891 bequest of approximately 1,500 objects of metal and glasswork had been put on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, in 1892 (fig. 4).\(^ {23}\) Within a year of the Munich exhibition, Moore’s bequest, along with the museum’s growing collection of Islamic art, was moved to a new wing dedicated specifically to art

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23 The Edward C. Moore collection was on display at the Metropolitan Museum by 1892, making it one of the earliest displays of Islamic art in an American museum. The museum began hosting Islamic art exhibitions in 1910, the first of which was curated by Wilhelm Valentiner and focused on carpets from the museum’s collection. For this history, see Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, “Collecting the ‘Orient’ at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 69–89; and Priscilla P. Soucek, “Building a Collection of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum, 1870–2011,” in *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Maryam D. Ekhtiar (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 2–10.
from the Islamic world (fig. 5). Even a cursory comparison of two photographs of the Metropolitan Museum’s Islamic art galleries reveals the transformation in display practices that occurred in the United States in this period. By 1912, the heavy wood vitrines initially used to exhibit the Moore collection had been replaced with modernist metal display cases produced by the museum’s workshop. Simultaneously, the museum’s curator of decorative arts, Wilhelm Valentiner, removed the dark velvet draperies that covered the walls of the gallery in favor of a neutral gray backdrop. Other strategies, such as the display of a select number of objects along with careful use of lighting to define and highlight form, further amplified the contemplative aesthetic generated by this installation strategy. Much like the 1910 Munich exhibition, the display at the Metropolitan engendered a formal aesthetic experience of Islamic art that eliminated contextual practices surrounding objects in situ.


Fig. 5: View of the Islamic galleries, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1912. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Scholars have read the art history of the Vienna school, especially that of Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941), as pivotal to the early twentieth-century formation of a new approach to Islamic art that eschewed ethnographic and contextual readings in favor of critical formalism. But it was exhibitions such as Meisterwerke muhamedanischer Kunst and the display in the Metropolitan Museum’s Islamic art gallery that gave concrete shape to art history’s formalist concerns.\(^24\) Certainly, Strzygowski, along with

\(^24\) For the history of the Vienna School, see Matthew Rampley, The Vienna School of Art History: Scholarship and the Politics of Empire, 1847–1918 (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State
his students at the University of Vienna, had played a key role in the development of formalism as an art historical methodology. Unlike earlier contextual archaeologies, such as that of the Swiss scholar Max van Berchem (1863–1921), Strzygowski’s 1901 Orient oder Rom, for instance, presented formalism as crucial to a comparative analysis of Islamic and Christian European art. However, along with the art history of the Vienna school, it was display practices based on formal comparisons and visual taxonomies that unmoored Islamic art from the historicism and contextualism of both archaeology and earlier Orientalisms.

Separating objects from their spatial contexts (imagined or otherwise), the neo-Kantian imperatives of this new museology lay in an introspective and intuitive study of form that emerged from the juxtaposition of objects from diverse geographical locations and historical moments. The 1912 display at the Metropolitan thus brought together early seventeenth-century Safavid painted ceramics, bequeathed by the Armenian antiquarian Dikran G. Kelekian (1868–1951), with nineteenth-century carpets, tiles, and paintings, foregrounding an abstract formal coherence in terms of motifs and patterns (see fig. 5). This tactical visual juxtaposition—as a method of both archiving and art historical analysis—was, I propose, an effect and product of the spatial layout and arrangement of the museum’s gallery.

The creation of the concept of “Islamic art” through display strategies was most powerfully articulated at the 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art in London. Organized under the patronage of George VI of England and Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran, the exhibition included a wide array of material, ranging from Achaemenid sculpture, Sasanian silver, ceramics, and mosaics to carpets, textiles, and manuscripts, including the 1460 Bodleian Library Rubáiyát from which Edward Fitzgerald made his celebrated translation. Yet again, the director and organizer of the exhibition, the American archaeologist and dealer Arthur Upham Pope (1881–1969), used formal analogies to structure the display. The New York Times, in its review of the exhibition, noted that ceramics were used as “points of color focus” in the Gallery of Honor to balance the adjacent display of carpets.

Emerging from Pope’s firm belief that visual form was intrinsically related to a “spiritual quality” based on cognitive and sensorial perception, the exhibition gave concrete shape to the curator’s philosophical ruminations on color, line, and texture.


25 For instance, Max van Berchem’s Matériaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894–1903) was a multivolume study on Islamic inscriptions that located epigraphy within historical and social contexts. Josef Strzygowski, Orient oder Rom: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Spätantiken und Früchchristlichen Kun (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1901).


Yet, given popular interest in the 1931 exhibition, in part fueled by British newspaper reports interspersed with images of flying carpets and “Persian” dancers, it has become customary to read the International Exhibition of Persian Art as an Orientalist spectacle not very different from colonial expositions and nineteenth-century World’s Fairs.\(^{29}\) In effect, Pope’s innovative installation strategy, his ruminations on color and perception, as well as his commitment to the formalist art history of fin-de siècle Vienna has been eclipsed in scholarship by reappraisals that see him merely as “the P. T. Barnum of Islamic art.”\(^{30}\)

The Second International Congress on Persian Art, held concurrently with the 1931 exhibition, however, makes evident Pope’s intellectual aims. Under the direction of Pope, the Congress invited renowned scholars of Islamic art, including Keppel A. C. Creswell, Ture J. Arne, and, most conspicuously, the Viennese art historian Josef Strzygowski. Strzygowski, who by then had made his Nazi sympathies and anti-Semitism public, gave a lecture on the formal relationship between European and Iranian architecture that purportedly revealed the Persian origins of “Aryan” art. The art critic Roger Fry, who had penned a laudatory review of the 1910 Munich exhibition, was also invited by Pope to write an essay for a publication that accompanied the exhibition.\(^{31}\) Certainly, Pope’s curatorial strategies had wide-ranging consequences for both the study and subsequent displays of Islamic art. Doris Duke, for instance, was in London during the 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art. Given the exhibition’s extensive coverage in the British press, one assumes that Duke visited Burlington House. In the late 1930s, Pope would assist Duke in developing her own collection and facilitate a trip to the Middle East that drastically transformed the young collector’s acquisition strategies.

We see the imprint of the 1931 London exhibition in Shangri La from its very beginning. For instance, a 1937 sketch of the living room by H. Drewry Baker, the Princeton-trained architect responsible for supervising the construction of Shangri La, shows a mural of the Maidan-i Naqsh-i Jahan in Isfahan, Iran, with the seventeenth-century Masjid-i Shah dominating the landscape (fig. 6). Models of the Masjid-i Shah had already appeared in Pope’s exhibitions on a number of occasions. Not only had he included a wooden model of the portal of the Masjid-i Shah, designed by the British architect Arnold Silcock, in the 1931 exhibition in London, but the Safavid mosque also had been used as the central motif for the Persian pavilion at the 1926 Sesquicentennial International Exposition in Philadelphia (fig. 7). In London, the thirty-foot-tall model had received substantial popular acclaim, and images of it repeatedly were reproduced in London newspapers. A special supplement to the exhibition in the London Times even included an image of the model on its cover.\(^{32}\)

\(^{29}\) For instance, the January 14 issue of Punch carried an article on the exhibition with a drawing depicting “Oriental” dancers performing for a group of British men seated on Persian carpets. “The Persian Cult: Inaugural Dinner of the Worshipful Company of Hubble-Bubble-Makers,” Punch, or the London Charivari, January 14, 1931. For similar Orientalist caricatures in British newspapers, see Wood, “A Great Symphony of Pure Form.”


\(^{32}\) “Persian Art Number,” Times (London), January 5, 1931.
Given Duke’s familiarity with contemporaneous display strategies, it is not surprising to find her carefully weaving together the spatial design of Shangri La and the artwork to be displayed in that space. A black-and-white sketch by Baker, one of the early renderings of the design for the living room at Shangri La, shows a series of sculptures, most likely from China and Southeast Asia, on pedestals against the south wall of the room (fig. 8). Although Duke did not finally incorporate this arrangement, Baker’s drawing attests to a careful consideration of objects and their display in relation to architectural space.33 In the drawing, sculptures are interspersed with an Art Deco settee. The resultant effect is an austere space not dissimilar to the galleries of earlier Islamic art exhibitions in terms of spatial layout and display techniques. Much like the display of objects in the 1910 Munich exhibition, a backdrop and a pedestal carefully frame each sculpture. In keeping with the museum-like aesthetic, furniture in the room is

33 Baker’s drawing is dated January 8, 1937. By July, René Martin, a Moroccan designer and art dealer, was commissioned by Duke to redesign the living room. The room as it stands today shows a closer affinity to the designs and drawings provided by Martin.
limited to a single settee, perhaps to further facilitate an unobstructed contemplative gaze. Although this specific arrangement was not implemented, the careful ordering of space in relation to artwork demonstrated in the drawing would become characteristic of Shangri La’s design.

Fig. 8: Interior elevation of living room (looking south), Shangri La, by H. Drewry Baker, October 8, 1937. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)

In yet another drawing of an alcove, we see a late fourteenth-century lacquer sculpture of the bodhisattva Guanyin purchased by Duke in October 1937 from Ching Tsai Loo, the Paris-based dealer of Chinese antiquities (fig. 9). Rendered within three months of the purchase of the sculpture, Baker’s sketch suggests that the display of the seated Guanyin in the alcove was part of the original architectural plan; a brief note from Duke affirms that the alcove was indeed designed with the sculpture in mind.34 Like the sculptures in the living room, the bodhisattva Guanyin was placed on a large pedestal and framed by a green backdrop. The design of the alcove was well in keeping with the living room’s museum-like aesthetic. The space of Shangri La thus must be understood as more than an inert depository of artworks. Rather, Shangri La both actively shaped and was shaped by Duke’s growing art collection.

Fig. 9: Sketch of the Guanyin Room (now the Mihrab Room), Shangri La, by H. Drewry Baker, December 15, 1937. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)

Without a doubt, Duke’s 1935 visit to India had sparked her interest in collecting art. Nevertheless, her acquisitions from this trip reveal the absence of a coherent collecting strategy. Purchases on the trip included gold and silver brocades from Ganeshi Lall, an Agra-based dealer, and copper vessels, brass lamps, ashtrays, rugs, and household objects from the Jaipur-based S. Zoraster and Co.\textsuperscript{35} However, Ganeshi Lall, an antiquities and jewelry store established in 1845, provided important manuscripts and significant works of art to other international collectors and museums. For instance, in 1913, at the behest of Edward D. Ross, the first director of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, the British Museum had purchased from this dealer the celebrated Mughal painting \textit{Princes of the House of Timur} (ca. 1550–55, with additions from ca. 1605 and 1628), often described as one of the largest and most significant of all Mughal paintings.\textsuperscript{36} The Shangri La archive, on the other hand, confirms that Duke’s purchases from Ganeshi Lall in 1935 largely were limited to contemporary textiles.

The contours of a coherent collecting strategy emerged only in the late 1930s and paralleled Duke’s personal involvement in the planning and construction of Shangri La. By the late 1930s and the early 1940s, when Shangri La was being built, Duke had marshaled an assemblage of advisors and dealers. Working closely with figures such as Pope, the Moroccan art dealer and designer René Martin, the Damascus-based antiquities firm Asfar & Sarkis, the Paris- and Tehran-based Iranian art dealer Ayoub Rabenou, Hagop Kevorkian, the New York-based dealer of Persian art, and New York University graduate student Mary Crane, Duke started acquiring significant examples of furniture, architectural tiles, paintings, and textiles from around the world. One of her most noteworthy purchases from Kevorkian in this period was a 1265 luster \textit{mihrab} from Veramin, Iran (48.327, fig. 10). That she competed with the Metropolitan Museum of Art to acquire the \textit{mihrab}—one of six surviving Ilkhanid \textit{mihrabs} and one of only two outside Iran—indicates a new interest in assembling key examples of art from around the world.\textsuperscript{37} Deliberately bringing together architecture and art in Shangri La, Duke installed this particular \textit{mihrab} to keep, in her words, “the house in character.”\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{35} List of goods shipped from Calcutta by Thomas Cook & Son, April 25, 1935, Doris Duke Papers on the Shangri La Residence, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Historical Archives, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University (hereafter DDPSL).


\textsuperscript{37} The second Ilkhanid \textit{mihrab} outside Iran is in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin. In addition to the \textit{mihrab}, Duke also acquired a cenotaph cover, luster tiles, and a seventeenth-century Mughal painting from Kevorkian in 1941.

\textsuperscript{38} Duke, “My Honolulu House,” 75.
It was a 1938 trip to the Middle East facilitated by Arthur Pope that not only fundamentally transformed the aesthetics of Shangri La but also finally consolidated Duke’s focus on Islamic art as the primary emphasis of her burgeoning collection. As the director of the American Institute for Persian Art and Archaeology (established in 1928), Pope wielded considerable influence in Iran, allowing him not only to organize the trip but also to arrange for Mary Crane, a graduate student at New York University who was working on her dissertation on Islamic textiles, to accompany Duke. The Iran excursion included visits to Persepolis, Shiraz, Isfahan, Tehran, Mashhad, and Tabriz among other key historical sites in the region. Duke returned to the United States with a remarkable collection of Safavid tiles; with Crane’s assistance, she also amassed a substantive archive of drawings, photographs, and film footage of monuments in Iran, including the Chihil Sutun in Isfahan (ca. 1647; fig. 11). These photographs, which demonstrate remarkable attention to tile patterns, architectural motifs, and decorative design, played an important role in Duke’s future commissions, of which the guesthouse at Shangri La—based on the 1938 photographs of the Chihil Sutun—is a significant example (fig. 12).39

While Duke’s interest in reusing Islamic motifs in designing Shangri La has received considerable scholarly attention, her archive of photographs and film footage provokes another narrative, one that is entangled with the creation of early twentieth-century Islamic art history and its exhibitionary orders. The 1910 Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst exhibition in Munich, for instance, had led to the publication of a number of catalogs and books focusing on the objects on display. By the 1920s, photographs focusing specifically on the patterns and motifs that adorned the surfaces of structures and objects had become the preferred method of formalist art history. In process, the larger contexts of the structures were disregarded in favor of an archive of details that reduced each object or monument to its geometric essence. By extracting form from context, the art historian/archivist thus fabricated a universal, indeed cerebral, language of abstract design that, using the precision of the camera, provided a relation of general equivalence among disparate objects and monuments.

Foremost among publications employing formalism as a technique of analysis was Pope’s six-volume *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, illustrated with 3,500 photographs. Duke possessed all six volumes and her dealers in the Middle East and the United States corresponded extensively with Pope regarding the design of Shangri La. Indeed, it was Pope who introduced Duke to dealers such as Ayoub Rabenou and Asfar & Sarkis. In terms of the production of an archive of Islamic art, Pope

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and Duke’s documentation projects in Iran were also closely interrelated. In addition to recreating the Masjid-i Shah in Philadelphia and London, Pope was the first American to extensively document monuments such as the Chihil Sutun and the Masjid-i Shah in Isfahan. Duke, too, spent much time at these sites, documenting in detail the tilework and decorative embellishments that adorned the structures. In turn, Duke’s archiving impulses significantly altered the aesthetics of Shangri La. Over the next few years, she both commissioned and acquired historical objects decorated with motifs she had encountered and carefully recorded in Iran. It was this interest in Islamic tilework, palpably visible in her photographs of architectural decoration from Iran, that led her to acquire a large collection of ceramics and tiles in the late 1930s and the early 1940s, including the celebrated 1265 Veramin mihrab mentioned earlier.

Without a doubt, the detail-oriented formalism that had marked early twentieth-century art history and its exhibitionary practices inflected Duke’s incessant attention to archiving, collecting, and displaying the details of Islamic art found on tile panels, textile fragments, and architectural decoration. Duke herself acknowledged the connection between the environment of Shangri La and the artwork displayed there in her 1947 Town and Country article, in which she wrote that she “tried to keep the house in character, using original Near Eastern pieces.”41 One could, then, read both the architecture of Shangri La and Duke’s own emerging collection as intimately associated with her project of documenting Islamic form, patterns, and motifs. The photo library—an archiving practice that had gained particular popularity in the first decades of the twentieth century—thus gave material form to both the architecture and the collection at Shangri La.

Indeed, it was this desire to “keep the house in character” that prompted Duke to construct a Mughal-style garden at Shangri La (fig. 13), designed on the basis of research on the 1642 Mughal Shalimar garden in Lahore conducted by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Pakistan.42 In 1962, the Superintendent of Archaeology, West Pakistan Circle, sent to Duke photographs and plans of the Shalimar garden, which were used to redesign the space of the garden at Shangri La (fig. 14). Yet again, Duke carefully reproduced the geometric patterns of the Shalimar brickwork at Shangri La. In 1969 she traveled to Kashmir herself to further document the Mughal gardens in Srinagar. Although photographs from this particular documentation tour are now lost, archival evidence suggests that her trip was facilitated by the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.43 It is likely that Duke worked with Stella Kramrisch, the Viennese art historian and student of Strzygowski who was then teaching Indian art at the Institute, to plan this trip. The creation of the Mughal garden thus reaffirms the central role of detail-oriented formalist art history and its exhibitionary practices in the making of Shangri La.

42 Drawing of Shalimar brick pattern, 1962, SLHA.
43 Certificate from NYU, Institute of Fine Arts (IFA) enabling Doris Duke to take pictures of Mogul Architecture while in Kashmir on behalf of IFA, DDP. According to a receipt from Preco Studios, Srinagar, Duke processed eighty-nine prints, eighty-nine negatives, and fifty-six transparencies during her visit, DDP.
That the discursive spaces of the archive-museum in Honolulu, Hawai‘i, came into being though a commitment to art history’s cataloguing methods—its vast collections of photographs, films, and reproductions of artworks—as well as its prescriptive apparatuses of framing objects is perhaps best substantiated by stray references in Shangri La’s archive itself. For instance, an early twentieth-century color reproduction of a folio from Baysunghur’s 1430 Shāhnāma in the museum’s archive carries H. Drewry Baker’s careful annotation: “This for dining room fret” (fig. 15).44 The manuscript, housed at the Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, had been first displayed in Europe in Pope’s 1931 exhibition at Burlington House. Duke probably saw the manuscript during her visit to London in the same year. Subsequently, Baker, the architect responsible for supervising the construction of Shangri La, used the latticework decorating the Timurid pavilion in the fifteenth-century painting as a source for architectural decoration at Shangri La. Duke and Baker’s engagement with reproductions from twentieth-century art history texts thus reveals a reciprocal relationship among

44 SLHA. I would like to thank Deborah Pope for helping me identify Baker’s handwriting. For a history of the manuscript, see Laurence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, Persian Miniature Painting, including a Critical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Miniatures Exhibited at Burlington House, January–March, 1931 (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).
exhibitionary practices, the archive of art history, and the spatial design of Shangri La. This reciprocity also allows us to reconsider the role of spatial design and archiving as fundamental to the making of the modern museum.

Fig. 15: Undated reproduction of folio depicting Luhrasp seated on the Kayanian throne, Baysunghur’s Shāhnāma, with annotation by H. Drewry Baker. (Shangri La Historical Archives, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, Honolulu, Hawai‘i.)

Moving beyond analyses that focus solely on objects displayed in a museum, itself a legacy of earlier modernist art histories, an engagement with the spatiality of the archive-museum thus allows us to decipher the processes through which the museum emerged as a key site of knowledge production in the early twentieth century. Indeed, the use of motifs from a 1930s reproduction of a Timurid painting in designing the architecture of a museum only reiterates the relationships among the discipline of art history, architectural design, and museum praxis. While in the recent past the formalist frames of early twentieth-century museological and archival practices have been criticized as perilously disregarding the specific cultural contexts that generate particular expectations and narratives about design and motif, it is, nevertheless, difficult to ignore the role of exhibitions and modern museums as sites that were more than mere spaces of disinterested knowledge accumulation. That the history of the archive is also a history of spatialities that delineates visibility as a form of culture is perhaps easy to perceive when one pays attention to the interplay between the architecture of the museum and the objects housed in that space. A close attention to this interplay, I suggest, might then allow us to rethink the archive-museum as a space of knowledge-production, and as a space that led to the production of the field of Islamic art history in the early twentieth century.