

<p>Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Case 22 (2022-2023) <i>Risaldar Jagat Singh and Risaldar Man Singh</i> by Philip de László</p>	
<p>Statement from Expert Adviser</p>	<p>Statement of the Expert Adviser to the Secretary of State that the painting meets Waverley criteria one and three.</p> <p>See below</p>
<p>Statement from the Applicant</p>	<p>Statement from the applicant referencing the three Waverley criteria against which the Committee will consider whether an item referred to it is of national importance.</p> <p>a) <i>Is it so closely connected with our history and national life that its departure would be a misfortune?</i></p> <p>b) <i>Is it of outstanding aesthetic importance?</i></p> <p>c) <i>Is it of outstanding significance for the study of some particular branch of art, learning or history?</i></p> <p>The applicant did not consider that the painting's departure from the UK would be a misfortune.</p>
<p>Note of case hearing</p>	<p>See below</p>
<p>Press release</p>	<p>A press release was issued by the Secretary of State on 14 April 2023:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/news/philip-de-laszlo-painting-of-two-indian-soldiers-at-risk-of-leaving-uk</p>
<p>Recommended price</p>	<p>£650,000 (plus VAT of £130,000, which can be reclaimed by an eligible institution)</p>
<p>1st Deferral period</p>	<p>13 July 2023</p>
<p>2nd Deferral period</p>	
<p>Note of outcome</p>	

Statement from Expert Adviser

This sensitively painted portrait of Risaldar Jagat Singh and Risaldar Man Singh by Philip de László (1869 -19237), one of the leading portrait painters of the day, represents a singular opportunity for a UK collection to acquire a portrait of two Indian cavalry officers who were engaged in trench warfare during the First World War. Just two months after they sat for this portrait in London in 1916, the soldiers were sent to France. They fought in the Battle of the Somme, after which it is not known what happened to them: they are presumed to have been killed in action.

De László's painting is a unique 'First World War portrait' in that it represents non-high-ranking officers of colour. At the time of the sitting, both men were Ressaidar (junior troop commanders) in the British Indian Army's Expeditionary Force A. [They later became Risaldar, an equivalent of captain]. Apart from the NPG's 1919 oil sketch of Ganga Singh, Maharaja of Bikaner by William Orpen (NPG 4188), which shows the first Indian prince to fight as a general for the British Empire in the war, there are, as far as I have been able to ascertain, no other portraits in UK collections that bear compelling visual witness to the active involvement of Indian participants in the war. The Scottish National Portrait Gallery also has a portrait of the Maharaja of Bikaner, by Sir James Guthrie (PG 1130); but this is part of his series, 'Statesmen of the Great War', depicting members of the senior-officer class. This double-portrait is therefore extremely rare, if not unique, in depicting 'ordinary' Indian people living under imperial rule who were sent to fight on Britain's behalf.

During the war, India contributed nearly 2 million personnel, including meeting all associated expenditures. This meant that one in six soldiers fighting on the British side was from India. In addition, India made two war gifts to the UK in 1917 amounting to £150 million (the modern-day equivalent of around £10.3 billion). This, together with the 14 million deaths of India's population from the Spanish flu pandemic brought to the subcontinent by returning soldiers, has left a painful legacy in India, which it is important to find ways to acknowledge. The inclusion of this portrait in the context of a display about First World War British military history or British Imperial history would enable this legacy to be acknowledged. The painting was shown in the exhibition 'Empire, Faith and War: The Sikhs and World War One' at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, London in 2014 and in an exhibition at the Tate Gallery.

In any comprehensive display and interpretation of the First World War and the people who took part, this portrait would make a significant contribution. While interpretation can address the war as a global phenomenon that involved millions of colonial subjects, there are very few works that could, like this portrait, attest visually to this still under-represented and little-understood history. Just as in the UK, the story of the Indian contribution to the war effort in 1914-18 has been insufficiently acknowledged, so too in India, this is a subject that has received little serious attention. When soldiers who had fought in the war returned to India, they were not given a heroes' welcome but, rather, were criticised for having sustained the imperial cause. There are no war memorials in India to commemorate them, apart from one built by the British in New Delhi. This portrait honours two named individuals: it would also be of true value in representing the heroism and self-sacrifice of the thousands of their compatriots who, like them, lost their lives in the Great War.

My own experience of curating the 2014 exhibition 'Remembering the Great War' at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery has convinced me that a most effective way to convey to a modern audience the enormity of the sacrifice of the First World War is by telling the stories of individuals alongside their portraits.

It is vital for diverse audiences that, in its presentations, institutions concerned with the history of Britain, acknowledge the shared experiences of the World Wars among imperial subjects. Being able to show these two Sikh cavalry officers should help to do that and would transform the narrative traced in displays. This portrait, if acquired by a British collection would also help to fulfil the ongoing ambition shared by all UK collections to increase their holdings of representations of People of Colour. This is generally more challenging to do for historic figures, of whom images are rarer than for contemporaries, which is another reason why this portrait carries such importance.

Provenance

The portrait of Singh and Singh is one of a few portraits de Laszló made of visiting Indian soldiers. Of those, this is generally accepted to be the most technically accomplished. Its provenance is strong. It was painted in just a couple of hours at de László's studio at 3 Palace Gate on 1 May 1916, when both men signed the sitter's book in Punjabi. They were visiting London at the time when a number of officers were presented to George V, and were about to depart for the front. De László seems to have painted the work for himself, and it was in his collection when he died in 1937. As an artist known for his sumptuous portraits of royal and aristocratic sitters, the present work is an unusual example of another kind of portrait. It also represents his own claim: 'I am an artist of the world and paint history, not only individuals.'

Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, note of case hearing	
Meeting date	Wednesday 8 March 2023
Object	<i>Risaldar Jagat Singh and Risaldar Man Singh</i> by Philip de László
Expert Adviser's objection	The Chief Curator, European Portraiture, National Galleries of Scotland, had objected to the export of the painting under the first and third Waverley criteria on the grounds that its departure from the UK would be a misfortune because it was so closely connected with our history and national life and it was of outstanding significance for the study of the Indian contribution to the war effort in 1914-18.
Committee Members & Independent Assessors	Seven of the regular eight Committee members were present and able to inspect the painting. They were joined in person by two independent assessors, acting as temporary members of the Committee. One Committee member joined remotely, having viewed the object in advance of the hearing on 23 February.
Value on the licence	The value shown on the export licence application was £650,000, which represented an estimated price at which the owner was prepared to sell the painting supported by a justification by reference to comparable items.
	<p>The applicant was informed that there was currently an interim process in place for Committee hearings. The Committee was still holding hybrid meetings but any Committee members, including the independent assessors, were required to inspect the object/s under consideration prior to discussing the case and voting. Any permanent Committee members or independent assessors who were not able to view the object were not able to vote.</p> <p>The applicant confirmed that the owner understood the circumstances under which an export licence might be refused.</p>
VAT	The applicant confirmed that the value did not include VAT and that VAT of £130,000 would be payable in the event of a UK sale.

<p>Expert Adviser's comments</p>	<p>The expert adviser stated that they did not have anything further to add to their submission.</p> <p>When questioned about whether the fact that junior officers were depicted added to the significance of this painting, the expert replied that this was extremely rare. The expert further stated that the role of Indian soldiers in the First World War has been overlooked in the past.</p>
<p>Applicant's comments</p>	<p>The applicant stated that they did not consider that the painting's departure from the UK would be a misfortune.</p> <p>When asked if the applicant would like to expand on this, they stated that they felt that if the granting of an export licence be deferred, there was a risk of the work being acquired by a private buyer or even a dealer. Further to this, they opined that, should a licence be granted, with the profile and interpretative capabilities of the potential unnamed institutional buyer abroad, and its wealth of physical and virtual resources, the painting and its story would reliably reach a vast global network and its impactful narrative would be accessible to the broadest possible audience.</p>
<p>Committee's discussion</p>	<p>The expert adviser and applicant retired, and the Committee discussed the case. They agreed that this was a fascinating painting and a visual representation of an overlooked and under-researched period of our national history. Further to this, the uniqueness of the subject, especially the depiction of junior Sikh soldiers, and the fact it was kept by the artist throughout his lifetime, added to its significance.</p> <p>The Committee noted that there has been renewed interest since the centenary in learning more about the Indian contribution to the British war effort during the First World War, and that this painting was a gateway into that subject. The 'empire' played a very important role within British national history, and the Committee noted that this was especially apparent during conflict. Despite this, very little was known about the lives of foreign soldiers, including those depicted in this painting. Furthermore, the artist himself was a British citizen but had been born in Budapest and he was interned during the First World War in London after the painting of this work, during</p>

	<p>which period he was not permitted to paint: the Committee agreed this added a further dimension to the outstanding research potential of this painting as it may give us an insight into societal behaviours towards foreigners at the time the painting was produced.</p> <p>The Committee then discussed the value and the detailed justification for it which the applicant had provided and explained to them. Expert advisers may be asked their opinion on whether the value claimed represents a fair market price (although judgements on the value should not influence their view on national importance) and in this case the expert adviser said that the valuation was fair: it was not the artist's usual painting of a pretty woman and would be highly desirable if it were to come to the market.</p> <p>The applicant noted that <i>Mrs Adrian van Montagu, née Anne Mabel Olivia Trouton</i> was the highest price paid for a work by this important artist at auction (£275,000) which would currently sell for a higher value. They added that there have been numerous sales both private and public which far exceed the historic auction record for works of art which describe diverse cultures such as <i>Portrait of Muhammad Dervish Khan, Full-Length, Holding His Sword in a Landscape</i> by Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun (£5,527,615), <i>A Portrait of two girls</i>, c. 1820, American School (£768,292) and other examples.</p> <p>After hearing the applicant's detailed justification of the value and considering the comparable items they had referred to, the Committee was satisfied that the valuation provided was adequately substantiated.</p>
<p>Waverley Criteria</p>	<p>The Committee voted on whether the painting met the Waverley criteria. Of the nine members, four members voted that it met the first Waverley criterion. One member voted that it met the second Waverley criterion. Eight members voted that it met the third Waverley criterion. The painting was therefore found to meet the third Waverley criterion for its outstanding significance to furthering study of the Indian contribution to the war effort and the individuals involved.</p>

Matching Offer	The Committee recommended the sum of £650,000 (plus VAT of £130,000 which can be reclaimed by an eligible institution) as a fair matching price.
Deferral periods	The Committee agreed to recommend to the Secretary of State that the decision on the export licence should be deferred for an initial period of three months. At the end of the first deferral period, if the Arts Council received notification of a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the painting, the owner will have a consideration period of 15 Business Days to consider such offer(s). The Committee recommended that there should be a further deferral period of three months that would commence following the signing of an Option Agreement.
Communication of findings	<p>The expert adviser and the applicant returned. The Chairman notified them of the Committee's decision on its recommendations to the Secretary of State. The applicant agreed to provide a copy of the letter of agreement, in the event a sale was agreed.</p> <p>The expert adviser agreed to act as champion if a decision on the licence was deferred by the Secretary of State.</p>
Subsequent developments	Following the meeting, the applicant provided a letter of intent from the purchaser to the Secretariat, the Committee and the Minister.