



National Museum
New Delhi



Public Lecture



Speaker : Dr Usha. R. Balakrishnan

The crown jewels of India: the Nizam collection

Date : 15 February 2019

Time : 05:00 PM

Venue : NMI, Conference Hall

Dr Usha. R. Balakrishnan is the pre-eminent art-historian of Indian jewellery and Principal Curator of the World Diamond Museum. She has a Ph.D. in Ancient Indian Culture and a post-doctorate degree in Museum Studies from New York University, USA. She has worked for the Brooklyn Museum, New York and has catalogued and studied Indian jewellery in the MuséeBarbier-Mueller, Geneva, the Art Institute of Chicago, USA, and the National Museum, New Delhi, and in public and private collections around the world.

Usha has authored numerous books and catalogues on the jewellery heritage of India including *Dance of the Peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India*, *Jewels of the Nizams, India: Jewels that Enchanted the World*, *Enduring Splendor: Jewelry of India's Thar Desert*, and most recently *Treasures of the Deccan: Jewels of the Nizam*.

She curated *Alamkara: The Beauty of Ornament*, the permanent jewellery gallery in the National Museum, New Delhi and has curated exhibitions of Indian jewellery at the Kremlin Museum, Moscow, and Fowler Museum at UCLA, USA. In 2017.

Spanning a legacy of five thousand years, the jewellery of India is a compelling expression of the country's aesthetic and cultural history. Intricately carved jewels on sculpted images in ancient temples, references in literature, texts on gemology, and myths, legends and chronicles provide vital clues on the history and legacy of Indian jewellery.

Based on her vast study of the jewellery traditions of India, documentation of the Nizam jewels for the government of India, and her recent book *Treasures of the Deccan: Jewels of the Nizams*, Dr. Balakrishnan will provide a glimpse into India's extraordinary jewellery legacy. She will reveal the splendid court of the Nizams of Hyderabad, and the breathtaking world of imperial might and material splendour of the most powerful rulers of the Deccan. Featuring rare portraits from the archives of the Chowmahalla palace, and spectacular Asaf Jah jewels from the National Museum, and collections around the world, the lecture will focus on the art historical importance of the gems, the ornaments and their craftsmanship, and also present the collection from the perspective of a jewellery historian addressing the various issues related to the study and documentation of this historically important collection.

