

THE FORT & PALACE OF
Ranjit Singh
EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

 **SIKH***lens*
2022 CALENDAR

Ranjit Singh

1780-1839
EMPEROR OF PUNJAB



The Royal Court of Ranjit Singh, a painting in oil (16 ft x 8.34 ft) by August Theodor Schoefft (1809-1838). It depicts the Emperor holding court in the Kutchery (see the site as it appears today, on September page below). Schoefft has taken artistic liberty by reducing the number of arches. The sprawling painting shows the human figures in great detail, enabling us now to identify each courtier with considerable accuracy.



A contemporary of Napoleon Bonaparte, Ranjit Singh burst onto the world scene when he led the Sikh army into the capital city of Lahore in 1799 as conqueror. He was 19 years old.

Under the tutelage of his mother-in-law, the charismatic Sada Kaur, he had succeeded in uniting the twelve Sikh and two other confederacies ('Misls') that held sway over Punjab, and henceforth wielded the consolidated power to easily keep the Afghans and other invaders in the north and the British invaders in the south, at bay. Ranjit Singh was proclaimed Emperor (Maharaja) of Punjab in 1801. However, he refused to wear a crown or sit on a throne, declaring that his rule was 'Sarkar Khalsa', that is, of the people. He insisted on being addressed as 'Sarkar' and no other ostentatious titles: a simple 'Sir'. His court was henceforth known as 'Darbar Khalsa'. Coins of the empire were issued in the name 'Guru Nanak Guru Gobind Singh' and were popularly referred to as Nanakshahi and Gobindshahi currency.

Lahore became the capital of the far-flung empire which ultimately held suzerainty over Afghanistan, Kashmir, Ladakh and the Himalayan kingdoms, and drew tribute from, inter alios, both the Afghans and the British. Though an ancient walled city, it became a thriving centre under the Mughals and served as the capital of the Mughal Empire under Emperor Akbar. Its pride and joy was the fort and palace towering on the southern bank of River Ravi, on the north side of the city. Various wings were added to it under the successive Mughals and thereafter by Ranjit Singh himself.

Popularly known as The Shahi Qila or The Royal Fort, the Lahore Fort was first occupied by a Sikh confederacy in mid-eighteenth century, and remained in Sikh hands until the conquest of Punjab by Ranjit Singh. It then became the capital of the Sikh Empire and remained so until mid-nineteenth century. It served as Ranjit Singh's flagship fortress, court and palace until his death in 1839 and remained in the hands of the Sikh Maharajas that followed until 1849, when Punjab was annexed by the British through the treachery of the royal court's Dogra Hindu employees (who in turn were rewarded for the betrayal with part of the empire, specifically the kingdom of Kashmir).

The hallmark of Ranjit Singh's rule was that even though it was unequivocally a Sikh Empire, people of all faiths and ethnicities were treated as equals, with no preference given to either Sikhs or Sikh institutions. His closest ministers included, in addition to Sikhs, a majority of Muslims, Hindus and Christians. All places of worship were equal beneficiaries of the State's largesse.

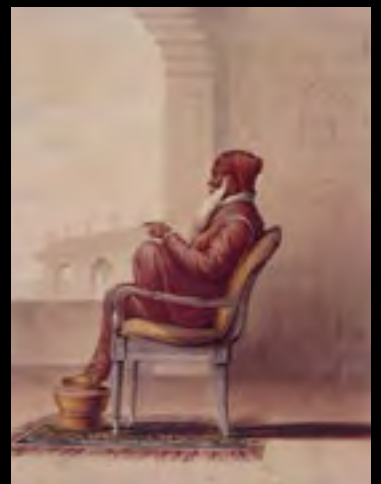
The Lahore Fort and Palace remain among the greatest masterpieces of architecture on the subcontinent. They have suffered from neglect under the British occupation, and after the Pakistani takeover in 1947. UNESCO, however, has taken interest in it in recent years and has begun to finance a number of restoration projects within its grounds, citing its value as world heritage.

The complex is one of the must-see sites for any visitor to the City of Lahore, which in itself is a gem worthy of an extended visit.



ABOUT OUR CALENDAR PHOTOGRAPHER – JAG SINGH REYATT

Jagjit "Jag" Singh Reyatt was born, brought up and trained in professional photography in Kenya. He is the official photographer for Sikhlens and has covered its regular events at Chapman University and at its annual Sikh Arts and Film Festivals. He has travelled around the world photographing Sikh historical sites and seminal events, including in England, Scotland East Africa, Pakistan, India, the United States and Canada. His albums from his photography at, inter alia, The Anglo-Sikh Heritage Tour (2008-9), the 350th birthday celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh (Patna, 2017), The Parliament of World Religions (Utah, 2017), and The Sikh Heritage Tours of Pakistan (2019-20) are much sought-after.



Portrait of Ranjit Singh by skilled watercolorist Lady Emily Eden (1787-1869), sister of Lord Auckland, Governor General of India. Probably the only image of the Emperor for which he personally posed, and therefore - coupled with the artist's diary notes - the best clue we have of how he looked in real life.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB



JANUARY 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 New Year's Day
2	3	4	5	6 Epiphany - Christian	7	8
9 Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Birthday - Sikh	10	11	12	13 Lohri-Maghi - Sikh	14 Makar Sankranti - Hindu	15
16 World Religion Day - Baha'i	17 Tu B'Shvat - Jewish Martin Luther King Jr. Day	18	19	20	21	22
23/30	24/31	25	26	27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day	28	29

The grand **ALAMGIRI GATE** entrance to the Lahore Fort, and the **BARADARI PAVILION** standing in the centre of the **HAZURI BAGH** facing it. The 'twelve arches' structure, built along with the gardens surrounding it as a summer retreat for Ranjit Singh, originally had a second floor.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

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FEBRUARY 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 <i>Chinese New Year - Buddhist</i> First Day of Black History Month	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5 <i>Vasant Panchami - Hindu</i>
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Valentine's Day	15 <i>Nirvana Day - Buddhist</i>	16	17	18	19
20	21 Presidents' Day	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

The **DIWAN-E-AAM** or **THE COURT OF THE PEOPLE**. A short walk from Ranjit Singh's private apartments within the palace grounds of the court, this is where he received members of the public who entered from the nearby **MASTI GATE**. It is also where he lay in state after his death.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF **RANJIT SINGH** • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

SIKHLens


MARCH 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 <i>Maha Shivaratri - Hindu</i> <i>Laylat al Miraj - Muslim</i> First Day of Women's History Month	2 <i>Ash Wednesday - Christian</i>	3	4	5
6	7	8 <i>International Women's Day</i>	9	10	11	12
13 Daylight Saving Time Begins	14	15	16 <i>Purim - Jewish</i>	17 <i>St. Patrick's Day - Christian</i>	18 <i>Holi - Hindu</i> <i>Hola Mohalla - Sikh</i>	19
20 <i>Naw-Rúz (New Year) - Baha'i</i> First Day of Spring	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 <i>Magha Puja Day - Buddhist</i>	31		

The **DIWAN-E-KHAAS** or **THE COURT OF THE NOBLES**. Standing midway between the royal apartments and the Diwan-e-Aam, this is where Ranjit Singh conferred with the chiefs of the confederacies and fiefdoms which formed part of his far-flung empire.



 **SIKHLens**

APRIL 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY


SATURDAY

					1 <i>Hindu New Year - Hindu</i>	2
3 <i>First Day of Ramadan - Muslim</i>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 <i>Palm Sunday - Christian Ram Navami - Hindu</i>	11	12	13	14 <i>Mahavir Jayanti - Jain Vaisakhi - Sikh</i>	15 <i>Good Friday - Christian Pesach Begins - Jewish</i>	16 <i>Passover Begins - Jewish</i>
17 <i>Easter Sunday - Christian</i>	18 <i>Guru Angad Dev Ji's Birthday - Sikh Tax Day</i>	19	20	21	22 <i>Pesach Ends - Jewish Earth Day</i>	23 <i>Passover Ends - Jewish</i>
24	25	26	27	28 <i>Lailat al-Qadr - Muslim</i>	29	30

The balcony which served as a **THRONE** in the **DIWAN-E-AAM** from which the Emperor addressed his subjects and entertained their petitions. Ranjit Singh, however, abhorred ostentations and in smaller gatherings preferred a simple chair to the iconic Golden Throne generally associated with him in folklore.

Use of photograph with permission from Anjum Dara, Curator Sikh Heritage Museums
Lahore Fort, Archaeology Department, Government of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.



 **SIKHLens**

MAY 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY


1 <i>Ramadan Ends - Muslim</i>	2	3 <i>Eid al-Fitr - Muslim</i>	4	5 National Day of Prayer Cinco de Mayo	6	7
8 VE Day (UK) Mother's Day	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 <i>Buddha Day - Buddhist</i>	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 <i>Declaration of the Báb - Baha'i</i>	24	25	26	27	28 <i>Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh - Baha'i</i>
29	30 Memorial Day	31				

An aerial view of the **ROYAL RESIDENCE** of Ranjit Singh. Overlooking the courtyard is the **SHEESH MAHAL** or **THE PALACE OF MIRRORS** which constituted his private apartments. Standing on the left of the courtyard, one had an elevated and panoramic view of the city. Behind the palace itself, looking northwards, the River Ravi used to then flow by the fort's ramparts below.

Use of photograph with permission from Anjum Dara, Curator Sikh Heritage Museums
Lahore Fort, Archaeology Department, Government of Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

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JUNE 2022


SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5 <i>Shavuot - Jewish</i>	6 <i>D Day (US)</i>	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 <i>Flag Day (US)</i>	15	16 <i>Martyrdom Guru Arjan Dev Ji - Sikh</i>	17	18
19 <i>Father's Day</i>	20	21 <i>First Day of Summer</i>	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Ranjit Singh's bedroom inside **THE SHEESH MAHAL** or **THE PALACE OF MIRRORS**. The latticed windows, ornate marble floors and thousands of tiny embedded mirrors on each wall and ceiling in all of the palace's rooms gave it its name. Ranjit Singh lived in this room during his reign, and died in it.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB



JULY 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4 <small>Independence Day</small>	5	6	7	8	9
10 <small>Eid al-Adha - Muslim</small>	11	12	13 <small>Asalha Puja Day - Buddhist</small>	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24/31 <small>Parents' Day (24)</small>	25	26	27	28	29	30 <small>Muharram - Muslim</small>

A multitude of mirrors adorn the ceiling in each of the rooms in Ranjit Singh's residence in **THE SHEESH MAHAL** or **THE PALACE OF MIRRORS**. The tiny convex mirrors are embedded in a mosaic of stucco tracery and gilded floral patterns created with precious stones.



SIKHLens

AUGUST 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 <i>Tisha B'Av - Jewish</i>	8	9	10	11 <i>Raksha Bandhan (Rakhi) - Hindu</i>	12	13 <i>Obon Festival Begins - Buddhist</i>
14	15 <i>Obon Festival Ends - Buddhist</i>	16	17	18	19 <i>Janmashtami - Hindu</i>	20
21 <i>Senior Citizens Day</i>	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31 <i>Ganesh Chaturthi/Vinayaka Chaturthi - Hindu</i>			

THE ELEPHANT STAIRS leading up from the ground level to the elevated compound housing Ranjit Singh's palace. These wide and deep stairs were designed to allow the Emperor's special visitors to access the palace seeking a private audience to ride up all the way to the top without having to dismount their elephants, horses or palanquins.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF *RANJIT SINGH* • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB



SEPTEMBER 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 Labor Day	6	7	8	9	10
11 Grandparents Day Patriot Day	12	13	14	15 First Day of Hispanic Heritage Month	16	17
18	19	20	21 International Day of Peace	22 First Day of Fall	23	24
25 Rosh Hashana Begins - Jewish	26 Navaratri Begins - Hindu	27 Rosh Hashana Ends - Jewish	28	29	30	

KUTCHERY or **ROYAL COURT** (also Atth Dara or Pavilion of Eight Arches) is an addition to the Sheesh Mahal by Ranjit Singh. It was where he received his ministers, generals and closest advisers. The domed structure on the rooftop was Ranjit Singh's personal **GURDWARA** where he retreated each morning to meditate on gurbani. The court scene has been immortalized in a painting by August Schoefft which currently covers an entire wall in the museum located in Rani Jindan's Apartments.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

SIKHLens

OCTOBER 2022

**SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4 <i>Navaratri Ends - Hindu</i>	5 <i>Dussehra - Hindu Yom Kippur - Jewish</i>	6	7	8 <i>The Prophet's Birthday - Muslim</i>
9 <i>Sukkot Begins - Jewish</i>	10 Indigenous Peoples' Day (Columbus Day)	11	12	13	14	15
16 <i>Sukkot Ends - Jewish</i>	17	18	19	20 <i>Gur Gaddi Guru Granth Sahib - Sikh</i>	21	22
23/30	24/31 <i>Diwali - Hindu Bandi Chhor Diwas - Sikh (24) Halloween (31)</i>	25	26	27	28	29

THE PRIVATE APARTMENT OF RANI JINDAN (*Jind Kaur*). A stone-throw from the Sheesh Mahal, it is where Ranjit Singh's youngest queen resided and where her son, Duleep Singh (who later became the last Emperor of Punjab) spent his early childhood.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

SIKHLens		NOVEMBER 2022				SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL NOVEMBER 17-20, 2022	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
		1	2	3	4	5	
6 <i>The Birth of the Báb and The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh - Baha'i Daylight Saving Time Ends</i>	7	8 <i>Guru Nanak Birthday - Sikh Election Day</i>	9	10	11 Veterans Day	12	
13	14	15	16	17 SikhLens: Sikh Arts & Film Festival	18 SikhLens: Sikh Arts & Film Festival	19 SikhLens: Sikh Arts & Film Festival	
20 SikhLens: Sikh Arts & Film Festival	21	22	23	24 <i>Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib - Sikh Thanksgiving Day</i>	25 <i>Day of the Covenant - Baha'i Native American Heritage Day</i>	26	
27 <i>Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá - Baha'i</i>	28	29	30				

THE PICTURED WALL covers about 8000 square yards of the north and north-west frontage of the fort's outside walls, partially delineating the Sheesh Mahal from below. Consisting of hundreds of picture frames, each in colored mosaic on plaster base, the art work depicts floral patterns, geometricals, and figures of humans and animals in a variety of postures and actions, including sports and hunting. That is, an outdoor art gallery that has been around hundreds of years for the benefit of the populace.



THE FORT AND PALACE OF RANJIT SINGH • EMPEROR OF PUNJAB

 **SIKHlens**

DECEMBER 2022

SIKH ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL
NOVEMBER 16-19, 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 <i>Bodhi Day - Buddhist</i>	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 <i>Hanukkah Begins - Jewish</i>	20	21 <i>First Day of Winter</i>	22	23	24
25 <i>Christmas Day - Christian</i>	26 <i>Hanukkah Ends - Jewish</i> <i>Kwanzaa</i>	27	28	29	30	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i>

THE SAMADHI OF RANJIT SINGH. The ashes of the Emperor are buried here. Within the funerary memorial also lie the samadhis of Maharaja Kharak Singh and Maharaja Nanihal Singh (*the second and third emperors of Punjab*). Next door stands the Dehra Sahib Gurdwara commemorating the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, the Fifth Guru Sahib. Both these structures are spectacularly visible from the north-west marble screens of the Sheesh Mahal.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

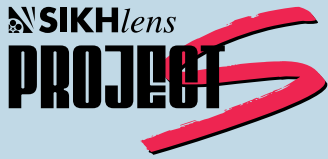
Deadline: September 1, 2022

Every year we receive hundreds of submissions of films, books, and artwork, as well as requests to perform musical acts. Most of these appeals come in the last few weeks before our deadline. We highly recommend that this year you submit your work as soon as possible, to guarantee the most careful consideration by our staff of experts and judges. Early submissions can also take advantage of our feedback if you so request, which will greatly increase the chances that your work will be selected. And if you are a performer, early submission of a sample of your work will also allow us to give feedback that could make a big difference in the selection process.

Submissions to can be mailed to:

Sikhlens Submissions
23800 Via Del Rio
Yorba Linda, CA 92887 USA

Online Film submissions: filmfreeway.com/sikhlens
Art and musical act submission please email: info@sikhlens.com



A pioneering collaboration between an American academic institution and Sikhlens, Project S sponsors Chapman University's students to make short films that engage the mainstream with positive images of Sikhs, who today are an unfortunately misunderstood minority even though they have helped build America for over 130 years.



Destination S gives Sikhlens the chance to make films outside Chapman University's curriculum. Donors can commission films, and film school alums can pitch Sikh stories worldwide.

The characters in Destination S films are role models for young Sikhs, who today are without inspirational Sikh figures in the media.

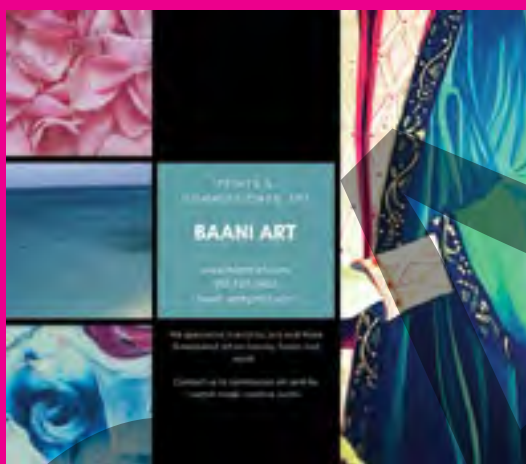
Sikhlens: Sikh Arts & Film Festival is the World Premier Sikh Film Festival with a 4-day festival in Southern California. In addition, we have a condensed version of the film festival which tours the world:

- Northern California
- Seattle, WA
- San Antonio, TX
- New Jersey
- Washington D.C.
- Toronto, Canada
- London, England
- New Delhi, India

If you are interested in hosting our film festival in your city, please contact Bicky Singh at (714) 504-5264 or email bicky@sikhlens.com

Dear Friends,

For the past twenty-two years Sikhlens has been distributing our Sikhlens Art Calendar free around the world. This year we are making an appeal that you support the Sikh organizations that have been contributing their time and money to alleviate food insecurity, and provide medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are four such organizations that have made an exemplary effort to help those in need. — **Bicky Singh, Founder of Sikhlens**



SIKHLens FEATURED ARTISTS FOR 2022

