



OLD INDIAN STAMPS

I started this project with a small set of old Indian stamps from 1935. At first, I was drawn to their colours and tiny details, but the more I looked, the more I felt the weight of the history behind them. This zine began as a way to understand them differently, not as collectibles, but as fragments of a larger story I wanted to rearrange in my own way.

SILVER JUBILEE COMMEMORATION

The stamps shown in the image is part of a set of seven stamps issued by India on May 6, 1935, to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of King George V.

The "Silver Jubilee" set of stamps from 1935 was issued to celebrate the 25th anniversary of King George V's reign. The set of seven stamps from India featured various iconic landmarks and themes, including the Gateway of India, Bombay (as seen in the image), the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and the Taj Mahal.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND DEFINITIVE EDITION



The definitive stamp series released by India on August 15, 1949, is known as the "Archaeological Series".

These stamps were the first definitive set issued by independent India, replacing the King George VI definitive set from the British colonial era

THREADS OF EMPIRE



A stitched re-catalogue of India's early postage,
1935–1950s

This zine is an exercise in re-seeing old Indian stamps.

The stamps I'm working with, beginning with the 1935 Silver Jubilee series, were designed to celebrate empire, commemorate power, and circulate controlled images of India across the world. Today they survive mainly as artifacts: tiny pieces of paper that have outlived the system that created them.

Instead of archiving them as collectibles, this zine re-catalogues them.

Not by price, date, or denomination, but by the motifs, symbols, colours, and tensions they carry. Portraits, patterns, landscapes, crowns, fragments of history disguised as decoration.

By rearranging these stamps into new sequences and frames, I'm shifting their purpose from "official record" to "personal reading." Each page tests a different way of looking: taxonomy, collage, repetition, and quiet disruption.

This zine is not a history lesson.

It's a way of asking: What happens when the things that once defined us are rearranged in our own hands?



The Silver Jubilee stamps of 1935 sit at an uneasy intersection: each image depicts an Indian monument, but the framing celebrates the reign of King George V. These sites belong to India, yet here they are mediated through an imperial gaze, printed, circulated, and commemorated as symbols of empire.

I begin my catalogue with these stamps in their complete form, allowing their detail and complexity to be seen without interruption. My intervention emerges later, through thread, as a way of re-organising relationships rather than erasing the images themselves.

Stitching becomes my method of analysis, a tactile line that connects, questions, and reframes how these images speak across time, from colonial representation to independent identity.



A frame without a view: the point where my intervention begins.

A CAPITAL RE-ASSEMBLED.

These stamps mark the inauguration of New Delhi as conceived by the British: a city planned, built, and monumentalised for imperial administration. What appears as architecture is also infrastructure of control.

By stitching these stamps together, I turn this constructed order into a handheld, human form—reworking a capital built for empire into something reshaped through touch.



THE HEADS OF THE



One of the first stamps released after independence, showing the newly appointed national emblem.

HERITAGE HELD, FUTURE IMAGINED.



Post-independence stamps reclaim India's own imagery. Soon after, the archive diversifies into industry, nature, and global connections, mapping a nation in motion.

The first steps of a new nation answering outward.

These early-1950s issues reflect a nation stepping into modernity, industry, railways, sport, surveying, and global institutions. The imagery expands outward, mapping the initial gestures of an emerging republic.





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A catalogue rewritten through thread.
By Vanya

Reordering these stamps changed the way I saw them. Once symbols of authority and circulation, they became fragments I could hold, question, and reframe. This small act of cataloguing opened space for new readings, neither nostalgic nor dismissive, but attentive. The story isn't fixed; it shifts with the hands that arrange it.

PROCESS

collect stamps →
 look closely →
 group by what repeats (colour / symbol / portrait / pattern) →
 mix + rearrange →
 test layouts (grid / collage / sequence) →
 choose one method →
 design pages →
 reflect + refine →
 final zine

Click and view the Zine!

https://issuu.com/vanyavimal/docs/methods_of_cataloguing-_threads_of_empire