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**THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM PRESENTS FREE LECTURE BY CURATOR ROBERT GRANT IRVING**  
**“THE LAST GREAT COUNTY SEAT: VICEROY’S HOUSE, IMPERIAL DELHI”**

(BOSTON – Feb. 8, 2010) The Boston Athenæum presents “**The Last Great Country Seat: Viceroy’s House, Imperial Delhi**” a lecture by Robert Grant Irving, author of *Indian Summer*, on Tuesday, March 9 at 6 p.m. The lecture is free and open to the public, but reservations, accepted beginning Feb. 24 at (617) 720-7600, are required. The Boston Athenæum is located at 10 ½ Beacon St. on Beacon Hill near the State House. For more information, visit [www.bostonatheneum.org](http://www.bostonatheneum.org) or call (617) 227-0270.

The buildings of Imperial Delhi —now New Delhi—were designed to provide a properly magnificent setting for the pomp of Britain’s Indian Empire at its most imposing. Viceroy’s House, a sprawling 340-room palace, was conceived in 1912 as the centerpiece of the new capital by renowned architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, celebrated for his outstanding country house designs. Lutyens’ Viceregal edifice combined public grandeur and private domesticity, functioning admirably as both ceremonial stage set and comfortable residence. Brooding over city and plain, the titanic dome of the great house expressed the very essence of art for empire’s sake, a tangible reminder of British authority at the heart of the Indian subcontinent. When it was formally inaugurated in 1931, Viceroy’s House was seen as a noble epitaph to imperial rule, but came to a swift end in 1947 when Lord Mountbatten transferred power to Indian hands.

**Robert Grant Irving** is a Fellow at Berkeley College at Yale, and has taught at Wesleyan, Trinity College, and the University of Virginia. He has lectured on six continents and has held research grants in India, Africa, Britain, and the United States, including a Fulbright Scholarship and fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Dr. Irving’s book *Indian Summer*, on the creation of New Delhi, won the British Council Prize in the Humanities as well as the highest honor of the Society of Architectural Historians, the Alice Davis Hitchcock Book Award.

**In the Boston Athenæum's Gallery**

PAINTER + POET: George Nama and Charles Simic

Feb. 10—April 10, 2010

This new exhibition, the result of a collaboration that began several years ago between the two artists, features a selection of Nama's recent etchings, sculptures, gouaches, and artist's books that have been inspired by and give visual illumination to Simic's poetry. It is curated by David Dearing, Susan Morse Hilles Curator of Paintings and Sculpture.

**About the Boston Athenæum**

The Boston Athenæum, founded in 1807, is one of the oldest and most distinguished independent libraries in the United States. The building's first floor galleries are always free and open to the public. The Library's Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery features new exhibitions two to three times a year, and works of art from the Athenæum's formidable permanent collection are on display on a rotating basis in the public areas. New members are always welcome. In addition to library borrowing privileges, members enjoy access to beautiful research rooms with wireless internet access, and many events, including concerts, lectures, book groups, children's story hours and a delightful bi-weekly Athenæum afternoon tea. The Library offers fellowships and research opportunities for scholars who wish to make use of the Athenæum's special collections. For information about membership, including discounted membership for young people, visit [www.bostonathenaeum.org](http://www.bostonathenaeum.org).