To what extent did the aesthetic serve as the register on which competing notions of kingship were played out in Modern Mysore? Did the invention of an aesthetic tradition serve as a supplement to, or compensation for, a severely depleted realm of political power? Through a focus on styles of portraiture and mural painting in 19th and 20th century Mysore, Janaki Nair reveals a struggle for legitimacy waged by the restored Wodeyar “dynasty” following the defeat of Tipu Sultan by the British in 1799. The artistic practices of the Mysore court reveal active choices that were made throughout this period, as the Palace averted, acquiesced to, or fashioned anew the relationship with colonial representational regimes and with an emerging Mysore public, to produce new modes of seeing and being seen.