An illustration to the Bhagavata Purana where assembled men and girls attend a ceremony performed by Krishna and a group of sages. North India, c.1520-30

gouache on paper with lines of script at top and between the registers of the illustration, losses at edges, some adhesive tape at edges, framed, 170 by 230mm.

From a Bhagavata Purana series which is among the few examples of pre-Mughal Indian painting made for Hindu patronage. The series has been attributed to various places including the Delhi-Agra region and the Mewar area of Rajasthan.

The series is discussed by K.Khandalavala and J.Mittal, ‘The Bhagavata Purana from Palam and Bada, a consideration in style’, Lalit Kala, no.16, New Delhi, 1974, and many pages are published in F.G.Huskins, Young Krishna, West Franklin, 1980. See also sale in these rooms 29th April, 1992 (Bachofen Collection), lot 28, where further references are given.

£1,000-1,500

The durbar of Raja Parichhit of Datia with his ministers and courtiers kneeling in rows before him, musicians present and a depiction of Ganesha on the canopy above. Datia (Bundelkhand), early nineteenth century

gouache with gold on stout paper, the figures identified in black inks on the painted surface, gold inner border and red outer margins with three of the identifications in white, a manuscript page bearing the Datia State stamp mounted on the reverse, 235 by 327mm., page 344 by 217mm.

This unusual documentary court scene must date from soon after the accession of Raja Parichhit to the throne of Datia in 1801. The fiefdom of Datia was granted to Bhagwan Rao in 1628, since when it maintained an identity separate from the parent state of Ochha. Painting at Datia in the second half of the eighteenth century is known from series of poetic illustrations and a few durbar scenes of Rao Indrajit and Rao Satajit (S.C.Welch and M.C.Beech, Gods, Thieves, and Poets, New York, 1965, no.38; sales in our New York rooms 22nd March, 1989, lot 141, and 27th March, 1991, lot 90). Raja Parichhit succeeded to the throne of Datia in 1801, the only son of Rao Satajit (1762-1801) who was killed fighting the army of Balaat Rao Sindhia commanded by General Perron. For further information and an account of painting at Datia see N.C.Mehta, Studies in Indian Painting, Bombay, 1926, 39-45.

£2,500-3,500

A European muse standing in a landscape holding a long-necked ekta and a flower, trees and buildings on the horizon. Mughal, late 16th century

gouache with gold on paper, on an album page with gold-decorated borders, framed, 132 by 94mm., page 305 by 200mm.

A drawing by Basawan of a similarly European-inspired figure with an ekta is in the Musée Guimet, Paris, illustrated in A Okada, Imperial Mughal Painters, Paris, 1992, fig.90.

£1,000-1,500
Susanna at her bath is surprised by the Elders: a European miniature on a page from an album of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, the broad border decorated in gold and colours with animals and birds in rocky landscapes. Mughal, India, c.1600

Among the very greatest of Mughal albums are those made for the Mughal emperor Jahangir, of which two volumes survive today, one in the Imperial Library, Gulistan Palace, Tehran (known as the ‘Ghulistan Album’), the other in the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin. These albums are remarkable for the quality and variety of their contents, with pairs of facing pages alternating with pairs of pages of fine calligraphy. What particularly singles out the pages of these albums is the refinement of the decoration of their borders, which from an early date gave rise to the ‘Ghulistan’ label. It appears that Jahangir, while yet a prince, adopted this style of border in response to border decorations being produced for his father Akbar’s manuscripts late in his reign towards the end of the sixteenth century. The pictorial material contained in the albums includes Mughal works alongside Persian, Deccani, and even European pictures, of which this is a significant example.

The Tehran album, containing works dated between 1599 and 1600, is thought of as the first of the two volumes. The Berlin album would have been the second volume, its dated works falling between 1609 and 1618. Stray pages from these albums are few, and all seem to originate from the Tehran volume. The only other page to have come to auction in the West is the page now in the San Diego Museum (Binnem Collection) with its miniature now attributed to Basawan (from the Keshikwan Collection, sold in these rooms 1st December, 1999, lot 121).

A closely-related European miniature, depicting the Madonna and Child and evidently by the same European artist, is set within very similar borders on another page of the same Jahangir album. Possibly originally placed as a facing page to this one, it is now in the collection of the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University (1958.255; Beach, 1976, no.9). Eric H. Cohn, ‘Le grand Mazaraki Gubban’, Akhbar, 1, 1936, 11-35.

A page from an album of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir

The biblical story of Susanna and the Elders is from the book of Susanna, the fifth book of the Apocalypse. Susanna is the righteous and beautiful wife of a God-fearing man of Babylon, whose house becomes a meeting place for the elders and wise men of the city. Susanna likes to walk in the garden every day and two of the elders, who have noticed her beauty and become infatuated with her, take advantage of her daily stroll to lie in wait for her in the garden. They proceed to accuse her as the bathers in a garden pool and when she resists their advances the two elders accuse her publicly of adultery, a false accusation to hide their own guilt. As she is about to be put to death God sends a message to the prophet Daniel who intervenes and proves her innocence.

The albums of Jahangir have been published and discussed in many reference works on Mughal painting. The following is a selection of some of the more informative and accessible:


£35,000-£45,000
74. **Abhiri Ragini; a lady making an offering to snakes which creep out of two stacked water-pots.** Bilaipur, c.1740-50

gouache with gold, red border with black and white rules, identified in top border in white script, 212 by 153mm., page 261 by 202mm.


£1,000-1,500

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75. **Radha on the terrace of an exotic garden, her maidservant holding a mirror in which she appears with Krishna who views the scene from above.** Kota, c.1840

gouache with gold, red border with black and gold rules, framed, 265 by 198mm.

From the period of Maharaja Ram Singh II of Kota (1827-1865). For the style compare M.C.Beach, *Rajput Painting at Bundi and Kota, London*, 1974, fig.101.

£1,500-2,000

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76. **An illustration to the story of Nala and Damayanti; Damayanti confronts a tiger before visiting an ascetic by a pool in a wooded wilderness.** Kangra, c.1820

red and blue borders with white rules, framed, 248 by 356mm.

From a Nala and Damayanti series whose illustrations are distinctly sparse in style. Formerly sold in these rooms 4th April, 1978, lot 296, another of the series 17th July, 1978, lot 141.

£1,000-1,500

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77. **Todi Ragini; a lady standing beneath a tree playing the vina to assembled deer.** Central India, mid-eighteenth century

gouache with gold, yellow pastel at top, red border with midnight-blue inner margin, framed, 255 by 175mm., page 306 by 231mm.

£1,000-1,500
black ink and colours and gold on paper, many of the signs identified in red sugars, the two hemispheres depicted side by side on a deep blue background decorated in gold with flowers and birds, orange-red border with gold rules and a trailing floral pattern in colours, a few tears at edges repaired, border pattern flanked mostly at top, border trimmed and made up at sides, framed, 58.5 by 118cm., page 65.5 by 125cm.


An understanding of the stars has for long been of great interest at Indian courts for astrological reasons, yet painted celestial maps on this scale are surprisingly rare. This map can be assigned to Jaipur on grounds of the painting style, an attribution which accords with the royal patronage there of astronomy and astrology, Maharaja Jai Singh II of Jaipur (1720-1744) built the largest of his famous observatories, now popularly known as Jantar Mantar, at Jaipur between 1718 and 1734 (later carefully restored by Maharaja Madho Singh II). Apart from the painting style, this celestial map can be dated to the last quarter of the eighteenth century on the basis of the constellations present and absent: 'It reproduces classical Ptolemaic constellations, particularly those of the Zodiac and some introduced in the 16th and 18th centuries. The presence of the Reindeer and Taurus of Pontianiowski in the northern hemisphere, the latter being introduced in 1777, marks a terminus ante quem of the miniature. On the contrary, the important constellations of Lacaille of 1755, appearing also in Bode’s famous atlas of 1801, are altogether missing: that shows either a date of the miniature preceding such atlas, or a deliberate decision by the artist not to reproduce them because of the novelty of the subjects being represented.' (Gimino, op.cit., where it is also pointed out that the traditional giraffe constellation, Camelopardalis, has been transformed into a donkey, and a new constellation in the form of a Rajasthani sword added in the southern hemisphere). Apart from these contemporary interpretations, most of the figural constellations and signs derive from Islamic and Indian manuscript illustrations of the sixteenth century and earlier, ultimately traceable to classical manuscript sources.

£14,000-18,000

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**Suramand Putra of Hindol: two warriors fighting with drawn swords and shields on grassland against a yellow background. Basohli, c.1690**

orange-red border with black and white rules, taken inscription of identification at top left, 171 by 171cm., page 211 by 210mm.

From the same Basohli Ragamala series.


£4,000-6,000

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**Vardhan Putra of Hindol: a prince on horseback taking leave of his lady who stands before him shading her face with a veil. Basohli, c.1690**

orange-red border with black and white rules, tabri
81. Raja Iwari Sen of Mandi (1788-1826) received by Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra (1775-1823) who is enthroned beneath canopies. Kangra, c.1805

Gouache with gold, blue border with gold floral meandering, top left corner affected by damp, framed, 237 by 164mm. £2,000-3,000

Raja Iwari Sen was held captive at Kangra from c.1799 when Mandi was plundered by Sansar Chand's forces (W.G. Archer, Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills, London, 1975, p. 348). Formerly sold at Christie's, 21st November, 1986, lot 22, where it is suggested that this picture may mark Raja Iwari Sen's departure from Kangra in 1805.

82. Krishna raising Mount Govardhan on his finger to shelter the cowherds from the wrath of the storm-god Indra. Kangra, c.1830

Gouache with gold, floral inner border obscured by mount, framed, 188 by 273mm., page 237 by 332mm. £1,000-1,500

83. Siva and Parvati with their family on Mount Kailasa, Parvati cradling Ganesha in her arms and Siva with Kartikeya on his lap, Nandi behind them. Guler, c.1829

Gouache with gold, and with florally decorated spirals in blue, midnight-blue outer border, outer border trimmed, 196 by 177mm., page 223 by 160mm. £2,000-3,000
An Illustration to the Gita Govinda (Song of the Herdsman): Radha in discussion with her confidante while Krishna waits nearby beneath a tree, the scene set in blossoming hilly landscape with the river flowing across the background. Attributed to either Krishna or Gauranga, Kantha, circa 1780.

gouache with gold, midnight blue inner border, outer pink border trimmed, Sanskrit text on reverse in black nagaari, framed 178 by 206mm.

Published:
M.S.Randhawa, Kangra Paintings of the Gita Govinda, New Delhi, 1963, p.47, figs.11 and 15
Tooth Paintings Ltd., Indian Paintings, 1986, no.1 (cover illustration)

This great series is described by Archer as `the new Kangra style in full and confident maturity. The subject, the Gita Govinda poem of Jayadeva, was an ecstatic celebration of the romance of Radha and Krishna culminating in lyrical descriptions of their love-making.' Illustrations of songs celebrating the romance of the divine lovers Radha and Krishna were customarily produced at Pahari weddings, and the series is thought to have been produced in anticipation of Raja Sansar Chand’s marriage in 1761 to the daughter of Kishan Singh of Suket. This example, with depictions of Radha and Krishna thinking of one another from opposite sides of the picture, and with its evocative portrayal of the landscape character of the Kangra region, fully represents those qualities upon which the reputation of the series is based. The Sanskrit text illustrated by this scene, translates:

`Oh! comrade, bring him whose beauty unlaces all my garments’

Archer considered the paintings to be by Sansar Chand’s favourite artist Kushala (a son of the artist Manaku), working with Gaurangi (second son of the artist Nainsukh), while Goswamy and Fischer attribute the series to a `master of the first generation after Nainsukh.’ With the very limited number of signed or contemporarily attributed works of Pahari painting at this period, it may never be possible to be sure which artist painted which picture, but the importance of the series as one of the peak achievements of eighteenth century Pahari art remains assured.

For further information and other leaves from the series see:

£12,000-18,000

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