Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 10th October 1988, lot 27.

This is among the few works signed by or inscribed to Muhammad Faqirullah Khan, who began his career in the studio of Mughal Shah's artist but moved to Oudh, perhaps around the time of the emperor's death in 1719. Two signed early works show the clean, quite simple drawing style the artist followed while in Muhammad Shah's studio (Falk and Archer 1981, no.189; Blassey 1976a, no.76).

This ornately detailed, more stylized scene characteristic of the painter's time in Lucknow and may be a Baghnama subject. Hindi Baghnamas were popular in the city, and Faqirullah had already produced a smaller, less decorative series (Blassey, 1975a, no.84; Sotheby's, 11th July 1975, lot 15). The artist, described by Mughal Shah period minstree, possibly by Faqirullah himself as a younger age (Blassey 1975a, no.78). The artist has, however, made his composition more overtly sensual, and it is thus more likely to illustrate a Hindu subject. Desakari Ragini, as drawn by Lucknow artist, showed an embracing couple by a bed chamber (Falk and Archer 1981, no.185; Blassey 1976a, no.158). Further Provincial Mughal compositions by Faqirullah indicate that his career continued until about 1770 (Victoria and Albert Museum 188-1957; Bibliothéque Nationale 1986, no.128).

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 21st November 1985, lot 168.

Though this noble is costumed in Mughal fashion, the soft style, warm colouration and Dutch inspiration on the reverse of the work indicate that the picture was produced in the Deccan.

£1,000-1,500

Drawing with use of colours and gold on paper (simpulam), inscribed with artist's name in centre, fictitious inscription of identification at lower left, English inscription on reverse naming the artist, framed, drawing 186 by 120mm.
A woman making an offering before a shrine as ascetics sit around a fire at night, attributable to Mir Kalan Khan, provincial Mughal, Lucknow, c.1760-70
gouache with gold on paper, narrow blue border, framed, 331 by 240mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 13th October 1989, lot 27.

Mir Kalan Khan was an eccentric painter who utilised exotic themes in highly creative ways. Deccani and seventeenth-century imperial Mughal miniatures as well as European prints were reaching wealthy Lucknow by about 1730. Mir Kalan Khan employed all of these types in arranging, melodramatic compositions of his own invention. The present example combines the compositions of at least two or probably three miniatures from Hyderabad. In some cases, Mir Kalan Khan probably made straight copies of Deccani miniatures that are now lost, showing his fascination with works from this area (Falk and Archer 1981, no.239; Mag. Vol.XVI, no.2, p.57, fig.4). Here he has plaintively blended a Hyderabad miniature depicting morning worship with a night scene showing ascetics round a fire. The puja scene runs down the entire left side of the picture and probably included the attractive landscape with a pair of deer. The horizontal composition of yogas before an assem is being joined to this, and the conjunction partially masked by thick foliage. Dark areas running directly above and below the scene of yogas suggest the proportions of the original composition. The fantastical building in the upper right is derived from Deccani architecture and may come from still another Deccani miniature (see Mag. 1986, p.69).

Having left the imperial studio in Delhi, Mir Kalan Khan needed to sell commercially and sometimes plotted various versions of a design. This example seems to mark the first stage in Mir Kalan Khan’s adaptation of his theme, which was then reconstructed with the doll-like faces often favoured by the artist and his followers. In a second compositional version, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (AC.1997.38.1), all traces of Deccani origin have been removed and the subjects have been further unified.

Mir Kalan Khan, who could paint in many idioms, loved landscape detail. In the present example, the sheer crispness of the landscape drawing and the complexity of certain passages, such as the sloe-covered tree above the head of the woman doing puja, are characteristic. Similar attention to landscape and animals forming decorative environments around figural groups is shown in a signed miniature of losers with a fantastic (Colnaghi, 1981, no.10) and two attributed miniatures in the Nasser D Khalif collection, London (see forthcoming essay, The Many Faces of Mir Kalan Khan by L.J. Leach). For miniatures signed by Mir Kalan Khan, see Falk and Archer 1981, nos.229, 239; Rogers 1995, no.59; Sotheby’s, New York, 22nd March 1988, lot 71; Dunn Album, St. Petersburg, folio 13A, dated 1759; Colnaghi 1981, no.10. For miniatures attributable to this versatile eccentric, see Rogers 1993, nos.16, 74; Gahlin, 1991, pl.49; Birney 1976a, nos.79, 80; Leach 1982, no.189; Leach 1995, no.6319; Sotheby’s, 10th July 1986, lot 36; Colnaghi, 1976, nos.134, 136; Stiph and Son, 1987, no.14; Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 16th Dec 1988, lot 77; Falk and Archer 1981, no.241, 242.

£10,000-15,000

An inscribed picture of Raja Dhira Singh of Raghogarh (c.1685-1725) at worship has facilitated the identification of other depictions of the same raja (see Leach, 1982, nos.209; Sotheby’s, 11th December 1975, lot 102; Sotheby’s, 10th December 1974 lot 100; Wolf et al., 1985, no.251). The present example seems to show Dhira Singh as a very young man standing with an offering of lotuses before Rama, Sita, Lakshman, and the monkey general Hanuman. The picture may be by the same artist as other Dhira Singh scenes, indicating that this miniaturist was probably one of the main artists at the small Raghogarh court (Leach, 1982, no.289; Sotheby’s, 10th December 1974 lot 109). Despite a lack of resources, Dhira Singh had excellent taste and supported a distinguished, individualistic painting idiom. Members of the Raghogarh house were devotees of Rama, and other Raghogarh paintings show both the strength of the worship and the assumption also expressed here of Rama’s immortality on earth (see Pal, 1978, pl.42).

£1,000-1,500
Portrait of Prince Shah Alam, Deccan, possibly Golconda, c.1600-1700

gouache with gold on paper, mounted with borders of stout blue paper, reverse with inscriptions in Dutch, framed, miniature 423 by 270mm.

This lot and the following one are from an album depicting past and present rulers as well as princes of the Mughal court and the Deccan. Nineteen of these extraordinarily large works were recorded as being together in the 1750s, the original album was probably more extensive, but these few examples seem to be all that remains. From the inscriptions in Dutch on the reverse of these works it can be deduced that they were made for the European market. From the second half of the seventeenth century many Deccani portrait albums were compiled for the Dutch, but this one is distinguished by its size and its Maghabheest style (see Schrijver 1996, pp.167-255).

Prince Shah Alam, oldest son of Aurangzeb, succeeded his father in 1707 at the age of sixty-four. Here he is shown as young and vigorous, but the whole portrait group was probably not painted until around 1690 at least (for discussion of this dating, see above; for another portrait of Shah Alam at approximately the same age, see Mclnerney, 1985, no.15).

In 1695, Shah Alam was awarded the title Bahadur Shah which he would use as emperor, but the Dutch merchant who commissioned this work may not have realised this change. The ages of the subjects and the information given in inscriptions conflicts slightly, though this data conflates the period of production to between c.1690 and 1700. Aurangzeb’s own portrait (Waddington and Tooth, 1977, nos.5) is inscribed as being done at the age of eighty.

£2,500-3,500

Portrait of the Mughal Emperor Humayun, Deccan, possibly Golconda, c.1600-1700

gouache with gold on paper, mounted with borders of stout blue paper, reverse with inscriptions in Dutch, framed, miniature 429 by 277mm.

From the same series. Other examples from this album indicate that the portraits were prepared around 1690-1700 (see Waddington and Tooth, 1977, nos.4-7). A depiction of Aurangzeb, born in 1618, is inscribed as being done while he was eighty years old. A further portrait shows the emperor’s youngest son Kam Baksh, born in 1667, well into his twenties. That the previous lot is inscribed with the subject’s title Shah Alam, which was retained until 1695, and does not mention that this prince succeeded Aurangzeb as emperor, implies the group was compiled before Aurangzeb’s death in 1707. While most albums for Dutch connoisseurs were prepared at Golconda, the Mughalised style of this album suggests that the production may have occurred in a centre further north which had been under Mughal control longer.

£2,500-3,500

Mahanaja Durjan Singh Dhabhuri firing his gun from an elephant at two tigers hidden in reeds, attributable to Muhammad, Kotah, c.1800

gouache with gold on paper, red border with inner black rule, inscription of identification in white devanagari in upper border, slight creasing at right, framed, miniature 271 by 390mm, with border 311 by 427mm.


This spirited hunting scene appears to be by the same artist as an equally animated work on which the painter’s name is inscribed as Muhammad (9) but remains partly illegible (Herwemanek 1984, no.86). In both scenes the modelling of the elephants is relaxed and spryly but firmly based upon the long tradition of elephant painting at which miniaturists in Kota excelled. Even specific details, such as the strokes appearing on the legs of the elephants are the same in the two works (here the elephant also bears a typical auspicious sign, like a swastika, but in reverse). The animated attendants in each work can be related by their similar proportions and types of turban. In both miniatures the artist uses the same olive green for the costumes of the hunters and the same strong mango yellow for the background.

In this example, the rajah, whose name is given in the inscription as Durjan Singh Dhabhuri, sits where a mahout ordinarily would, with his legs firmly wrapped behind the elephant’s ears. An attendant behind refrains from shooting in deference to the rajah but carries a second gun for support. Both men have pouches and powder horns at their waists. Meanwhile a courageous retainer on foot, armed only with sword and shield, strides boldly forward and seems about to confront the tiger leaping from the reeds, who is still very much alive. Durjan Sal was an early eighteenth century rajah of Kotah.

£1,500-2,000

Portrait of Ajmat Dev of Mankot, Mankot, c.1730-40

gouache with gold on paper, slight dampstaining around edges and retouching on figure at left, framed, miniature 177 by 227mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 7th December 1977, lot 183.

Like several other portraits of Ajmat Dev, this example seems to precede the date during which he actually served as rajah of Mankot from c.1750-1765. This unusual importance of a prince led W.G. Archer to surmise that Ajmat Dev may have taken over state administration from his father about 1738 (Archer 1973, Vol.1, p.309).

The present example is one of four portraits of Ajmat Dev probably painted by the same artist during the years from 1728-40 (Gray 1947, p.106; Archer 1973, Mankot nos.33, 34). One other representation is close to this portrait in composition, also showing Ajmat Dev with a rosy to his right hand, a curved sword beside him, and the same type of headdress before him. The attendant, whose figure is restored in the present example, is likewise shown with a curved sword, dagger, and flywhisk in the comparative depiction (Archer 1973, Mankot no.34).

£3,000-4,000
Young noble seated smoking a hooka, Mankot, c. 1720

drawing with use of colours on paper, borders ruled in black, framed, drawing 170 by 248mm.

This noble with his long curk, probably still a teenager, may be a young scion of the Mankot family. His turban type is that of Ajmat Dev, heir apparent of Mankot during this period (see Archer 1975, Mankot no.33). The device drawing of the profile and treatment of the eye with its firm dot standing for a pupil are characteristic of Mankot portraits at this time. The conventionalisation of the jamna skirt almost as if it were a shone capital is also typical of Mankot portraits circa 1720. It is possible that this artist is the same one who painted the depiction in Archer 1975, Mankot no.32.

$1,900-1,500

Portrai of an elephant, Mewar, c. 1730

gouache with gold on paper, red border with inner blue rule, framed, miniature 287 by 499mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 21st November, 1985, lot 115.

Although not inscribed, this elephant portrait conforms to the type done for Maharana Sangram Singh (r.1719-94), who had his stable of 132 elephants depicted. Examples of these elephant portraits are simply composed with only two returns marching in front of the beast who is saddled quite plainly (see Cimino 1985, no.42 British Museum 1956-14-190). The figures in the present example have the large heads and squat bodies characteristic of Sangram Singh’s era.

$1,900-1,500

Maharana Sarup Singh hunting boar, style of Tara, Udaipur, dated 1856

gouache with gold on paper, borders ruled in blue, white and yellow, inscriptions of identification at top in nagari, framed, miniature 427 by 322mm., with border 495 by 391mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 18th October 1988, lot 97.

Tara was Maharana Sarup Singh’s major artist. (For other works either signed by or attributable to Tara, see Taplin 1980, pl.205-200, 275; Taplin 1990, nos.29, 30; Sotheby’s, 26th April 1994, lots 51, 53, 55, 56). But this picture is more likely to be the work of one of Tara’s followers, possibly his son, or perhaps Shridhar or Ambika.

The inscription at the top of the miniature identifies Maharana Sarup Singh riding the elephant Morhak. Riding on the female elephant Lakshmi are Kakal Dal Singh and Sukhraj Himmat Singh. The miniature is dated V.S.1849 (A.D.1856).

$1,200-1,800
Illustration to the Bhagavata Purana: Krishna’s parents at a ceremony prior to his birth, Central India, mid-eighteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, red borders with gold rule, some areas of pigment flaking around edges, framed, miniature 332 by 457mm.

This large Bhagavata Purana illustration shows astrologers taking omens and women dancing in celebrations prior to Krishna’s birth. A further page from the same set includes similarly extensive views of palace architecture (see Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1975, no.7).

£1,200-1,800

Yogis and yoginis around a fire in the wilderness at night listening to a vina player, Kishangarh, c.1760-70

gouache with gold on paper, small patch of retouching at lower left corner, framed, 219 by 160mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 7th December 1977, lot 106.
This work apparently adapts a popular type of Lucknow composition to Kishangarh. Series of acrobats at right are frequent in Lucknow painting (see Sotheby’s, New York, 21st March 1990, lot 198; Sotheby’s, London, 12th October 1981, lot 9). The flickering fire created with gold pigment, the illusionistic trees derived from European engravings, and the group listening to a musician in the present example all have Lucknow precedents.
However, in this case, the red border and a certain exaggeration seen especially in the rendering of the foreground dog indicate that this scene was painted by a Kishangarh miniaturist. Despite the Hindu theme, the subject is unusual in a Kishangarh context. An object of this romantic genre was to allow the artist to place figures evocatively in the shadow with firelight illuminating only the main character of the implied narrative. Here the painter has handled the shadow skillfully, creating greater depth and mystery with the half-hidden figure in the background behind the main yogi.

£1,400-1,800

Portrait of Mian Mukand Dev of Jaunpur seated on a terrace holding a falcon, Basohli or Jammu, c.1760

gouache with gold on paper, blue border with inscription of identification at top, pink flocked outer border, framed, miniature 184 by 125mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 21st November 1985, lot 122.
Others from the same series sold in these rooms, 15th October 1984, lot 105.

This portrait is one of a set depicting past and present Hill personalities painted by a member of the Nainsukh family in Basohli or Jammu (Archer 1973, Jammu no.62) but was originally in a Basohli collection. Wherever produced, it is in the style characteristic of the renowned Nainsukh painting family.
Mian Mukand Dev (c.1720-1770) was the subject of a number of portraits done at different phases of his life (see Archer 1973, vol.1, p.214), including a well-known scene showing him on a picnic painted by Nainsukh himself and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Archer 1973, Jammu, no.48). The present example employs the same likeness and was probably constructed by reversing the Victoria and Albert depiction and altering the lower half.

£1,000-1,500
A pair of Chukor Partridges by a blossoming tree filled with birds, Guler or Kangra, c.1770-80
gouache on paper, blue border, laid down on stout white paper, in mount, miniature 170 by 166mm.
The chukor partridge was one of the earliest Mughal natural history subjects (see Beach, 1987, nos.17-18).
Paintings featuring pairs of such partridges were repeated by Mughal miniaturists at various times during the
seventeenth century (see Pal 1993, 56-72). A painting of this subject probably reached the Hills and was combined by
Guler or Kangra miniaturists with a picturesque, twisted tree of a type more commonly seen only in
the background of Pahari figural scenes. (For similar twisted trees or blossoming trees filled with birds in the
background of Kangra paintings, see Gublin 1991, pl.84 or Singh, 1990, no.241).

£1,200-1,800

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