

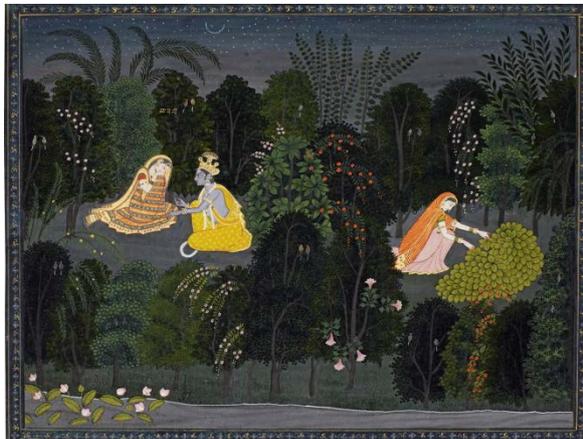
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Rare & Historical Miniatures of Outstanding Provenance

The Khosrovani-Diba Collection

Featuring 'The Kennedy Stork'

13 - 19 October, Sotheby's London



Formed over four decades, the Khosrovani-Diba collection comprises predominantly Indian miniatures by Mughal masters as well as fine paintings and works of art of the Rajasthani, Pahari and Company Schools. Each work in the prestigious collection was chosen with an eye for quality, rarity and historical importance. The auction will take place in London on 19 October 2016, comprising thirty-five beautifully-preserved pieces with a combined pre-sale estimate of £1,002,000 -1,486,000. To view the full catalogue online please click [here](#), with a selection of stunning highlights detailed below.



A study of a Stork, from the Lady Impey Series, signed by Shaykh Zayn al-Din, Company School, Calcutta, dated 1781 (est. £60,000-80,000)

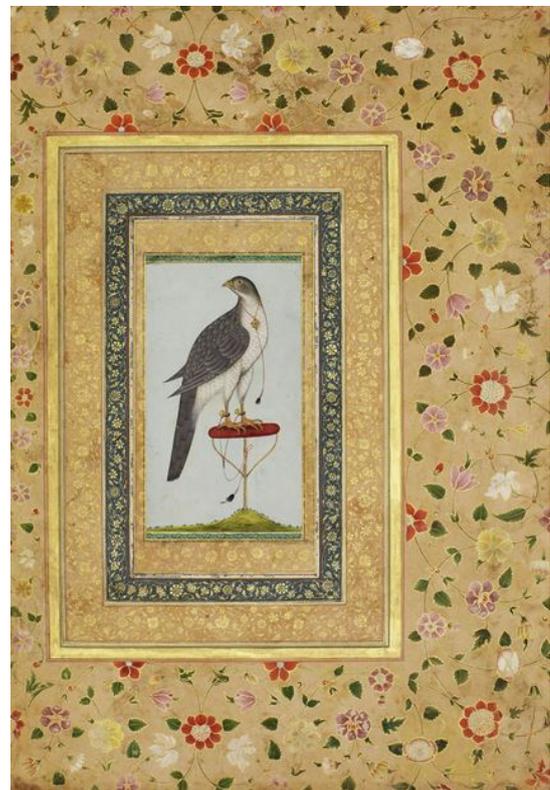
Sir Elijah Impey, his wife, Lady Impey, and their family moved to Calcutta in 1774 following his appointment as Chief Justice in Bengal under the East India Company. As their exotic menagerie of pets grew, so did Lady Impey's interest in the natural history of the region. She employed three known artists, all

trained in the Mughal tradition, to record their animals and birds on a true-to-life scale. The project, which lasted over six years, resulted in over 300 illustrations – which are amongst the finest group of natural history illustrations commissioned by the British in India. Examples from the Impey series are held in collections across the world, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

This large and arresting study of a Stork eating a snail from the Lady Impey Series was part of the estate of Jacqueline Kennedy, whose 'taste for the exotic' drew her to the miniatures of Mogul gardens, when it was sold by Sotheby's in 1996.

A Northern Goshawk, attributed to Mihr Chand, Lucknow or Faizabad, circa 1770, with borders from a royal album made for Shah Jahan, Mughal, circa 1640-58 (est. £40,000-60,000)

This portrait of a bird of prey is an exquisite example of the distinctive landscape style of Mihr Chand – one of the leading artists of the 18th-century, who worked at the court of Nawab Shuja' al-Dawla. The exquisite borders originate from an album prepared for Shah Jahan known as the Late Shah Jahan Album, admired for its ravishingly fine borders decorated with flowers, birds, floral scrolls or trellises, animals and human figures. Dated to approximately 1770, this painting typifies the tradition of empirical naturalism developed by the Mughal masters in this period. Formerly in the Collection of Edmond and Maurice de Rothschild, the work was last exhibited at Colnaghi's in London in 1976.



A royal horse attended by three grooms, Mughal, circa 1575-90 (est. £200,000-300,000)

This work depicts the scene of an elegant royal horse attended by grooms, one of whom is shoeing him with golden nails – painted in a style that can be associated with the artists of the Hamzanama, the monumental series of paintings made for Emperor Akbar between approximately 1560 and 1580.



Radha consoled by Krishna in a forest at night, an illustration from the "Lambagraon" Gita Govinda series, attributed to Purkhu or his circle, Kangra, circa 1820 (est. £50,000-80,000)

This lyrical scene is from the so-called "Lambagraon" *Gita Govinda* series, an elegantly coloured and richly conceived group of works depicting Krishna's amorous adventures in the forests with Radha and the Gopis. This romantic night scene and the lush landscape are typical of a series that fully celebrates in visual form the many moods of the lovers whilst celebrating nature.



Arjuna's cosmic vision of Krishna, Rajasthan, Kota, circa 1850 (est. £20,000-30,000)

This dynamic and iconic image of Krishna's cosmic form is almost hypnotic in its visual power, providing one of the most arresting and inventive images in later Rajasthani painting. The intense cosmic presence of Krishna's divine form is apparent, as he is shown with multiple heads and limbs and in remarkable detail.





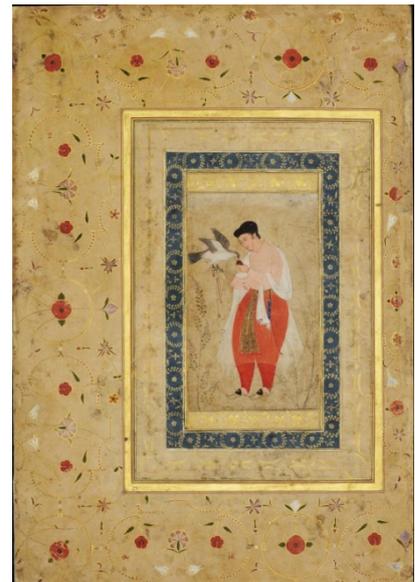
A group of five seated men, an illustration from the Fraser Album, Company School, Delhi or Haryana, circa 1816-20 (est. £40,000-60,000)

William Fraser was the second son of Edward Fraser of Reelig, Inverness-shire, and like many Scots of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, travelled abroad to seek his fortune. The area around Delhi was still very unsettled following the Maratha Wars,

and his work and travels provided a stimulating if somewhat dangerous life. William then commissioned a local artist to record the people and scenes that he came across in his work in and around Delhi, and sent a batch of forty such watercolours to his brother James in Calcutta in 1819. This watercolour comes from the celebrated series painted by his personal artist in India from 1815 onwards, and each of the figures are identified on a cover sheet. Examples from this important series are now in a number of collections including the British Library, the British Museum and Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

A courtier feeding a hawk, Mughal, circa 1600-10, with borders from a royal album made for Shah Jahan, Mughal, circa 1640-58 (est. £40,000-60,000)

Falconry was a favourite pastime among rulers and courtiers in India and the subject of a courtier or prince holding a bird of prey was a perennially popular one in Mughal painting. This detailed and naturalistic painting is of an elegantly attired man feeding a small dead bird to his hunting hawk, mounted in borders from the Late Shah Jahan Album.



Hanuman and the Vanaras learn of Sita's location from the vulture Sampati, an illustration to the Ramayana, Nurpur or Mankot, circa 1710-20 (est. £20,000-30,000)

The Ramayana legend is an ancient Indian epic poem, one of the largest in world literature. The story narrates



the life of legendary prince Rama, who is banished from his kingdom and travels across forests in India with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana. The distinctive series from which this illustration comes is notable for conveying the lyrical as well as confrontational aspects of the legend, all with a relatively cool palette of greens that depict the lushness of the landscapes. All of the illustrations so far known from this series illustrate episodes from the section dealing with Rama's early experiences with his monkey allies. This inventive Ramayana series is also important as it has been linked to one of the most illustrious artist families active in the Pahari region.

**A Christian figure in a landscape, Mughal, circa 1595
(est. £15,000 - 20,000)**

This painting of a Christian figure is based on a European print - many of which arrived in India from the 1570s onwards through the activities of Jesuit missionaries, as well as European traders, diplomats and travellers. An interesting aspect of the present example is that it appears to depict a figure from the northern European Protestant Reformation, rather than a Catholic saint or a Biblical figure - with the subject wearing a distinctive hat and thick fur coat. Echoing the compositions of many of the European printed images of Protestant reformers, the figure is shown holding a book, but here the Bible or reformist text is depicted with an Islamic binding in the manner of a Qur'an manuscript.



Auction Calendar

18 October: [Modern & Contemporary South Asian Art](#)

19 October: [Arts of the Islamic World](#)
[The Khosrovani-Diba Collection](#)

20 October: [20th Century Art: Middle East](#)

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