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MINIATURE PASTED ON AN ALBUM LEAF. “A PRINCE RECEIVING AN EMISSARY”. PAINTED BY NIDHA MAL

INDIA, MUGHAL COURT SCHOOL; C. 1750

LEAF: 40 × 28.7 CM

Nidha Mal, who had worked for the Great Mughal Muhammad Shah (1719-1748), was one of the artists who left Delhi when the court gradually began to lose influence after Aurangzeb’s death in 1707. He went east to Lucknow, one of the new capitals that gained greater importance in the 18th century.

We do not know who the prince is, but he is seated in a bay window in his palace and is about to receive a darker-skinned emissary bringing a missive in a silken pouch. A servant stands ready with a turban ornament, which the emissary will undoubtedly receive in return. In the background are sandstone niches holding imported Chinese porcelain.
Published in:
Sotheby’s, London, 21/4-1980, lot 141;
Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.):
Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic
culture, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 313;
Barbara Schmitz: “After the Great Mughals” in Barbara Schmitz (ed.):
After the Great Mughals: painting in Delhi and the regional courts in
the 18th and 19th centuries, Mumbai 2002, fig. 3, p. 4;
Kjeld von Folsach: For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniatures from
the David Collection, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 111;