



Inv. no. 5/1968

CAT. 45. LACQUER MIRROR WITH ROSE AND NIGHTINGALE

IRAN; 18TH CENTURY

A common motif in poetry through-out the Islamic world, one that was also very popular in visual art from the 17th to the 19th century, is the rose and the nightingale – *gol o bolbol*.

The rose stands for sublime feminine beauty; the nightingale symbolizes the male admirer. Together they are a symbol of love and at times a metaphor of the impossible or unattainable love.

The Great Mughal Akbar wrote the following verse: “It is not dewdrops that fall on the rose / They are only tears from the nightingales.”

The rendition of the bashful nightingale and the luxuriant flora with roses, branches of common St. John’s wort, and other plants both come from a time when naturalistic models from Europe influenced Persian painting.

