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MINIATURE. 'A PALACE COMPLEX WITH HAREM GARDENS'

INDIA, FAIZABAD OR LUCKNOW; C. 1765

MINIATURE: 45.5 × 31.8 CM

The miniature, whose primary motif is a fantastic palace complex populated by a prince's concubines along with their female servants and guards, in a way depicts the world as one great garden. In the distance we see the prince on the back of an elephant, and on the other side of the river all manner of activities are taking place that form a powerful contrast to the perhaps pleasant but enforced idleness of the women of the harem.

The painting has been attributed to Faiz Allah, one of the many skilled artists who worked in the growing provincial courts at the time when the Mughals' power was waning. He was familiar with the concept of European linear perspective, but he disregarded its laws, either deliberately or unintentionally.

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