



Inv. no. 46/1980

CAT. 61. "A PALACE COMPLEX WITH HAREM GARDENS"

INDIA, FAIZABAD OR LUCKNOW; C. 1765

THE MINIATURE H: 45.5; W: 31.8 CM

This remarkable prospect, which is full of details – from the marble balustrade in the foreground to the horizon in the background – encompasses a cohesive pictorial world: that of the prince. It is his territory we are looking across. He himself is riding off on his elephant, with his entourage far away in the background, and other men are hunting, sailing, etc. out in the landscape, which is also populated by women with jars on their heads.

But it is the women's part of the princely palace that is especially the focus of this painting, since the high angle provides a look into the section of the palace, the harem, that is normally not visible to outsiders.

Although the perspective seems to highlight the women and their world, they are actually beautiful extras, like the peacocks in the scene, without individuality and placed in more or less symmetrical

groups, while they wait for the protagonist of the painting, their lord and master, to come home.