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An Eye Enchanted: Indian Paintings from The Collection of Toby Falk



IN CELEBRATION OF ELEPHANTS
MEWAR, RAJASTHAN, INDIA, CIRCA 1705-15
Estimate £60,000-80,000

LONDON – Christie's is honoured to present **An Eye Enchanted: Indian Paintings from The Collection of Toby Falk**, a live auction at Christie's King Street on 27 October, comprising over 150 paintings. Toby Falk (1942-1997) was a respected academic in the field of Indian painting, whose numerous publications remain important elements of any serious library on the subject and are still regularly consulted. The works being offered in the sale include examples from different schools across the Indian subcontinent, from Mughal to Pahari, Deccani, Company School as well as some of the lesser known Rajasthani centres.

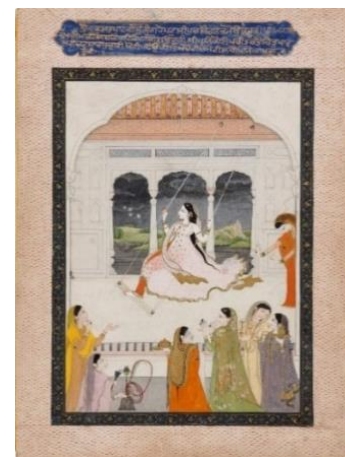
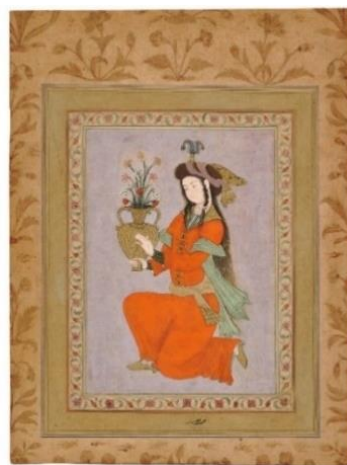
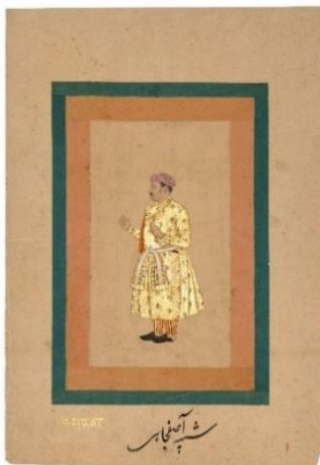
The auction represents over 500 years of Indian painting, from a 15th century illustration of Trisala Reclining (from a Jain Kalpasutra), to a work by the contemporary Indian painter, Jamini Roy. There are also a small number of Persian paintings from the 16th to the 19th century, a particular interest of Toby's, as well as one beautiful 16th century Ottoman album page, a testament to the enduring Ottoman love for flowers, a fascination which dates back to the 16th century.

Highlights include:

A masterpiece of the Mewar school of painting, (*illustrated on page 2 left*) *A Royal Hunting Party*, Mewar, Rajasthan painted circa 1705-15, (estimate £200,000-300,000). Comparable hunting scenes and landscapes can be seen in international institution collections such as the Smithsonian Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, USA. (*Illustrated above*), *In Celebration of Elephants*, Mewar, Rajasthan, circa 1705-15, (estimate £60,000 - 80,000), this work is characteristic of Mewar court painting with each elephant given its own character and expression. (*Illustrated on page 2 right*), *A Lesser Coucal*, signed Shaykh Zayn al-Din, Calcutta, India, dated 1777, (estimate £80,000–120,000). This work comes from the 'Impey Album', a volume of natural history studies commissioned by Sir Elijah and Lady Mary Impey between 1777 and 1783 during their time in Calcutta. It is one of the most well-known and sought after group of natural history Company School paintings.



(Illustrated below left) *Portrait of Abu'l Hasan Asaf Khan*, Mughal India, circa 1615 (estimate £100,000-150,000), is an extremely fine Mughal single-figure portrait, a genre which blossomed in the late 16th and into the 17th century. Abu'l Hasan Asaf Khan was the Vizier to the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and the father of Nur Jahan, wife of Shah Jahan for whom the Taj Mahal was built. (Illustrated below centre), Double-Sided Album Page, Ottoman Turkey, the figure early 17th century, the floral study, early 18th century, a fine album page with the vase held by the kneeling figure, and the study of the poppy on the reverse speaks to the Ottoman love for flowers which dated back as far as the period of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (d.1556). (Illustrated below right), *A Lady on a Swing*, Guler, Punjab Hills, circa 1800-10 (estimate £15,000 – 20,000), typical of the Guler school of painting of the early 19th century and shows a lady, with her attendants, anticipating her lover's return whilst the monsoon storm clouds roll across the sky. The arrival of the monsoon, indicated here by the cracks of gold lightening in the sky was regarded as a romantic and erotically charged event. Guler is one of the more prominent of the Schools which developed in the Punjab Hills collectively referred to as 'Pahari School'.



Toby Falk is recognised as one of the foremost academics in the field of Indian painting and Islamic works of art, and is responsible for some of the most important academic texts on Indian and Islamic art which remain an invaluable source of information for fellow academics and collectors today. He famously catalogued the collection of the India Office Library and produced *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* in 1981. Amongst other publications were *Indian Revealed* (1989) based on the collections of two Scots, James and William Fraser who went to India at the beginning of the 19th century and were extensive patrons of Company School works, and the catalogues of Persian and Mughal miniatures and drawings exhibited by Colnaghi's for the Festival of Islam in 1976. All are still go-to reference books for budding scholars and existing academics in the field.

Sara Plumbly, Head of Department, Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds comments, *'This sale has been a pleasure to work on from the moment we first saw the paintings. Although I never had the pleasure of meeting Toby Falk, his is one of those names whom anyone in this field knows and respects. The warm tributes we have had from a number of curators, academics and collectors which are published within the*

catalogue are a true testament to this. Toby had a discerning eye and with each of the paintings, whether the value is £500 or £200,000, you sense immediately why it was included in his collection. Each work is interesting – be it for an intriguing detail, the history, the pure beauty or perhaps the fact that it comes from a little known school. With many lots sold without reserve, this sale presents an exciting opportunity for established collectors of Indian paintings, as well as for those who are starting on their collecting journey, to acquire examples of Indian painting assembled by one of the giants of the field’.



A selection of highlights from **An Eye Enchanted: Indian Paintings from the Collection of Toby Falk** will be on view as below:

- New York, Christies Rockefeller Centre, 15 - 20 September
- Dubai, Christie's DIFC, 23 - 28 September

An Eye Enchanted: Indian Paintings from the Collection of Toby Falk view and exhibition opens to the public from Saturday 22 - Wednesday 26 October at Christie's, King Street, London.

To view the sale please click [here](#)

Please find lot imagery via a dropbox link [here](#)

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium.

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