



## **A Nayika on a Terrace with Attendants**

From a Rasikapriya series

Punjab Hills, Himachal Pradesh, Kangra, circa 1830-40

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

Folio 23cm high, 16cm wide

Provenance: Private European Collection

Stock no.: A4520

The lovely contrast of the pale blues, pinks, yellows, and greens creates a tableau frozen in time. Smoking a hookah, the nayika or heroine sits against a brocade bolster on a gold charpoy studded with jewels. An attendant stands behind the nayika extending her arm while holding a white scarf used as a fly-whisk. Two musicians entertain the nayika, one with a dholak or mridangam, a two-sided drum, and the other with a tambura, a stringed instrument that creates a drone for the singer who raises one arm. Numerous paintings offer representations of nayikas, sometimes paired with nayakas or heroes, but very often separate from their lovers. On the whole they illustrate the many sets of love poetry associated with Indian Rajput courts. Recently a virtually identical painting was associated with a verse from the Rasikapriya which concerns a nayika who is the centre of everyone's attention, replying when spoken to, but always with her gaze on Krishna who is not present in the painting, essentially keeping one's mind on the godhead.