

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Lovers on a Terrace

Awadh, Farrukhabad, India c. 1775

Ink, gouache, and gold on paper

26.5cm high, 18.2cm wide

Provenance: Formerly in the collection of Hassan Khan Monif

US private collection

Stock no.: A5224a

Surprising his paramour from behind the male lover places his cheek against hers and cups her breasts with both hands. She throws her arms over her head with apparent abandon. She had been drinking some wine and still holds a small cup in her right hand. She sits on a charpoi leaning against a brocade bolster decorated with an elaborate floral pattern.

The handling of the textiles is quite similar to other paintings from Farrukhabad, especially the striped pajama (pants) on the heroine. The gold brocaded pajama on the male figure is even more elaborate. The lovers each wear a diaphanous garment over their clothes adding rhythm to the composition. The distinctive shape of his turban is commonly seen in paintings from the Late Mughal centres of East India, in Awadh (Oudh) with activity at Lucknow, Faizabad, and Farrukhabad as well as at Murshidabad in Bengal.

The marble terrace setting with the elaborate white marble balustrades placed upon intricately detailed red sandstone displays the height of the Late Mughal architecture of the period. The lush garden beyond the terrace frames the lovers and a bird to each side of the composition underscores their union.

A sticker affixed to the back of the painting attests to the fact that it was formerly in the collection of

Hassan Khan Monif, the proprietor of the Persian Antique Gallery in New York City until his death in 1964. Hassan Khan's father General Reza Khan Monif had a huge collection of Islamic and related material and at his death in 1923 there was a grand sale offered by the Anderson Gallery in New York City. Art from Hassan Khan Monif's gallery graces many museums especially in the United States, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Yale University Art Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art and others the world over.