

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Miniature Portrait of an Indian prince

Signed M J Fleming, 1912

9cm high, 7cm wide

Stock no.: A4574

This portrait miniature was made before 1918 with a surface area smaller than 320 square centimetres and it has been registered with Defra.

This delicately painted miniature portrait on ivory depicts a young Indian prince. He is dressed in a slightly oversized, embroidered outfit with lapels and wears a green turban. The young prince is shown seated, his right arm resting on the side of a European style chair. His royal status is implied by the striking turban ornament, sarpech, made of emeralds, pearls and gold. The double aigrette, kalghi, has pearl terminals; the central stone is set within a surround of smaller emeralds with three suspending pearls touching the forehead of the young royal. The double aigrette is less commonly depicted than the single one. The prince also wears a necklace of pearls and emeralds.

This miniature portrait is typical of late 19th-early 20th century portraits painted of Indian royals by British artists, either in India or in Britain. In the latter case, they were often painted from photographs. The identity of the young prince in this miniature portrait remains unknown; however, the style of depiction has similarities to other portraits, whether painted or photographs, of the period: a sumptuously bejewelled figure in an aristocratic stance, with headgear denoting royal status and portrayed seated or standing in proximity to European style furniture.

Reference:

Jackson, Anne and Jaffer, Amin. Maharaja. The Splendour of India's Royal Courts. Victorian and Albert Publications, London. 2009.

