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Red Sandstone Jālī
North India, 17th/18th century

Provenance: Purchased from Sotheby's New York, March 1988

125cm high, 69cm wide

Stock No.: A5355

This red sandstone *jālī* screen of arched form features latticework in a design that combines different geometric patterns. The design consists of hexagons with central six-pointed stars, which are the intersections of horizontal and diagonal parallel lines. The border is plain and frames the entire central design panel.

Jālī screens were commonly found in Mughal Indian architecture, serving as windows or dividers between rooms. They offered the practical function of keeping the interior of a building cool, as the holes in the screen allowed for air to pass through and circulate. Additionally, the light passing through the carved geometric decoration resulted in beautiful shadows exhibited across the walls and floors, which would move and shift throughout the day. The use of red sandstone was particularly favoured from as early as the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar (1550-1605).

The geometric design used for this screen finds its parallel in panels from *Dīwān-e Khass*, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra as well as panels from the Red Fort, Delhi.