

Mala ke Manke

108 INDIAN DRAWINGS

From
Private Collection of
SUBHASH KAPOOR

Aaron M. Freedman



Exhibition Schedule:

January 31st – March 28th, 2004

Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami: 5,000 Years of World Art
1301 Stanford Drive, Coral Gables, Florida 33121
Phone: 305.284.3535 • Fax: 305.284.2024

June 10th – August 29th, 2004

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Museum für Indische Kunst
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August 31st, 2005 - December 4th, 2005

The Trammell & Margaret Crow Collection of Asian Art
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February 23rd – May 21st, 2006

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Cover:
Detail of Catalog No. 101
Maharao Shatru Sal II at a Tiger Hunt
Rajasthan, Kotah, ca. 1866–89

Back Cover:
Detail of Catalog No. 33
A Lady Holding a Flower
Rajasthan, Bundi, ca. 1750-1775

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102 A STUDY OF A GREATER ASIAN
ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS

Northern India, nineteenth-century
Ink and translucent watercolor on paper
5½" x 7¾" (14 x 19.36 cm)

Inscription at top reads, "ghanda"(rhinoceros).

The Mughals are credited with beginning the practice of visually documenting flora and fauna in India during the sixteenth century. Not only did they record the favorite animals in their stables and the most beautiful flowers in their gardens, but also all sorts of exotic and unusual creatures. Although this custom migrated to the outlying Rajput and Pahari courts, it was not with the same encyclopedic precision. However, when the British began to assert a greater control over India in the second half of the eighteenth-century, they apparently wanted anything that had to do with India, including paintings documenting the Indian natural world. Indian artists soon began to receive commissions from these eager patrons, and therefore adjusted their style and subject matter to suit these new tastes. Known as Company Painting or the Company Style, the paintings made by these artists are characterized by their attempt to record India objectively and scientifically.

Set against a plain background, this ponderous rhino hails from the same tradition as the celebrated paintings done in Calcutta towards the end of the eighteenth- and beginning of the nineteenth-century.¹ Although not nearly as fine as, for example, those paintings commissioned by Sir Elijah Impey (1732-1818) in the late eighteenth-century, this drawing of a rhino is still an accurate study. The grayish-brown one-horned rhino is distinguished by a particularly massive body and short, skinny legs. In fact, even though the animal's genitals are not shown, it is even possible to determine that this study depicts a male rhino because of the many loose folds of skin around the neck region that have an armor-like appearance.

¹ See, for example, Mildred Archer, *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1992), figs. 71, 72, 78.