Set of 3 Paintings of Servants with Card Background - HEIC School

£325



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REF: 81174

Height: 20 cm (7.9")

Width: 37.5 cm (14.8")

Description

A set of 3 Company School gouache on mica paintings of Servants in ceremonial dress. The mica sheet is placed on a card which is painted with a face and the background of a striped carpet and a balustrade etc.

This would have been part of a set to be used as game where you put different costumes and foregrounds onto of the face. The final image shows the background card, which is a copy for the purpose of framing.

Painted by a Benares Indian East India Company School artist to be sold to Europeans living and travelling in India. Circa 1870.

Mount size given. Each image size is 5 1/4 x 3 3/4 inches.

Size given is for the mount. Now framed.

The market for paintings on mica was popularised by the British in India. Previously it had been used by Indian artists to trace family paintings for preservation or for decorating marriage lanterns. However, the Europeans were fascinated by it and soon became the principal buyers. In the age before photography such pictures would give an insight to families at home of life in India and serve as a memory for those returning west. The Honourable East India Company encouraged such artists and seeked to profit from their work which was broadly labelled Company School Painting. Mica was mined in Kordarmah to the north of Hazaribagh and was sent to artists in Benares, Patna and Murshidabad in the east. Trichinopoly artists would have used mica from Cuddapah in the south. The paintings from the south predominantly used orange-brown, yellow and arsenic green in their colour scheme whereas those from the east favoured red, pink and blue. By its nature, mica is fragile and it is common to see pictures with damaged edges. However, the clear, crystal like properties of the silicate give the paintings a wonderful quality.

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