

Object Summary



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Diamond-Inset Enamelled Gold Elephant and Spear-Carrying Mahout Figurine

19th - 20th century

India

British India/Princely States

Enameled gold, diamonds

Overall: 1 3/4 x 1 3/16 x 1 7/8 in. (4.4 x 3 x 4.8cm)

In 19th-century India, imaginative scenes featuring animals were popular subjects of lavish miniatures. This figurine of an elephant and its handler, or mahout, is brightly enameled and inlaid with diamonds. With its trunk raised, the elephant is posed in a confident march on an enameled base embellished with floral decoration. The mahout on its back carries a spear and bridle. The role of the mahout, to handle, train, and care for elephants, was a skilled vocation that was passed down through families, from father to son.