

Object Summary



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Diamond-Inset Enamelled Gold Elephant, Mahout, and Howdah-Enclosed Rider Figurine

19th - 20th century

India

British India/Princely States

Enameled gold, diamonds

Overall: 2 3/4 x 1 1/8 x 2 3/16 in. (7 x 2.9 x 5.5cm)

This colorfully enameled elephant figurine bears a mahout, or elephant handler, and a ruler enthroned on a seat called a howdah. In India, elephants were employed as magnificent mounts for royal processions.

On such occasions, the animals were adorned with their own regalia. This miniature elephant is draped with a large textile called a jhool, decorated with floral motifs and lined with inlaid diamonds. A smaller textile called a sehri rests atop its forehead.