Object Summary

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Enamelled "Pialeh Zang" Chandelier Earrings with Bird and Floral Motifs

19th century

Iran

Qajar

Enameled gold, seed pearls, rubies, emeralds

Overall: 4 5/8 x 7/8 in. (11.7 x 2.2cm)

These cascading chandelier earrings were created in Persia in the 1800s. They are formed of two graduated semi-spheres, each decorated with enamelled birds and flowers, from which threaded seed pearls, rubies, and diamonds fall. Enamel (called mīnā in Persian) is a paste created from heat-fused glass and colored with metal oxides.This brightly colored, shimmering substance was used to decorate an array of luxurious objects, from daggers with richly adorned hilts to brightly colored snuff boxes and bases or waterpipes (qalyan). The gul-u-bul-bul (rose and nightingale) motif is a common pairing in Persian art and poetry, serving as a metaphor for both earthly and divine love. The rose (gul) and the nightingale (bul-bul), represent the beloved and the lover, a theme that has been immortalized in Persian poetry, literature and art for over a thousand years. Gul-u-bul-bul designs appear throughout Qajar art, from ceramics to manuscript illustration.