

Object Summary



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Gold and Gem-Set Carved Ivory Figurine of a Nobleman with Flowers in Hennaed Hands

19th century

India

Ivory, pigments, gold

Overall: 7 1/16 x 2 3/16 x 1 13/16 in. (17.9 x 5.6 x 4.6cm)

This figurine of a noblewoman smiles serenely while holding a flower in her right hand. She wears bejeweled ornaments on her forehead and ears, strings of pearls around her neck, bazubands (armbands) on her upper arms and bangles around her wrists. Her hands are ornamented with mehndi, a decoration created from a paste of the dried leaves of a henna plant. She is wrapped in a shawl, pigmented with gold and adorned with floral motifs. Textiles production has a long history in the Indian subcontinent, where indigenous artisans mastered the arts of printing and dying. Under the Mughals kharkhanas, or court workshops, were established to produce textiles, clothing, and embroidery. Fabrics from Mughal India were exported as far as Southeast Asia and Europe, while the finest fabrics were worn by members of the Mughal court.