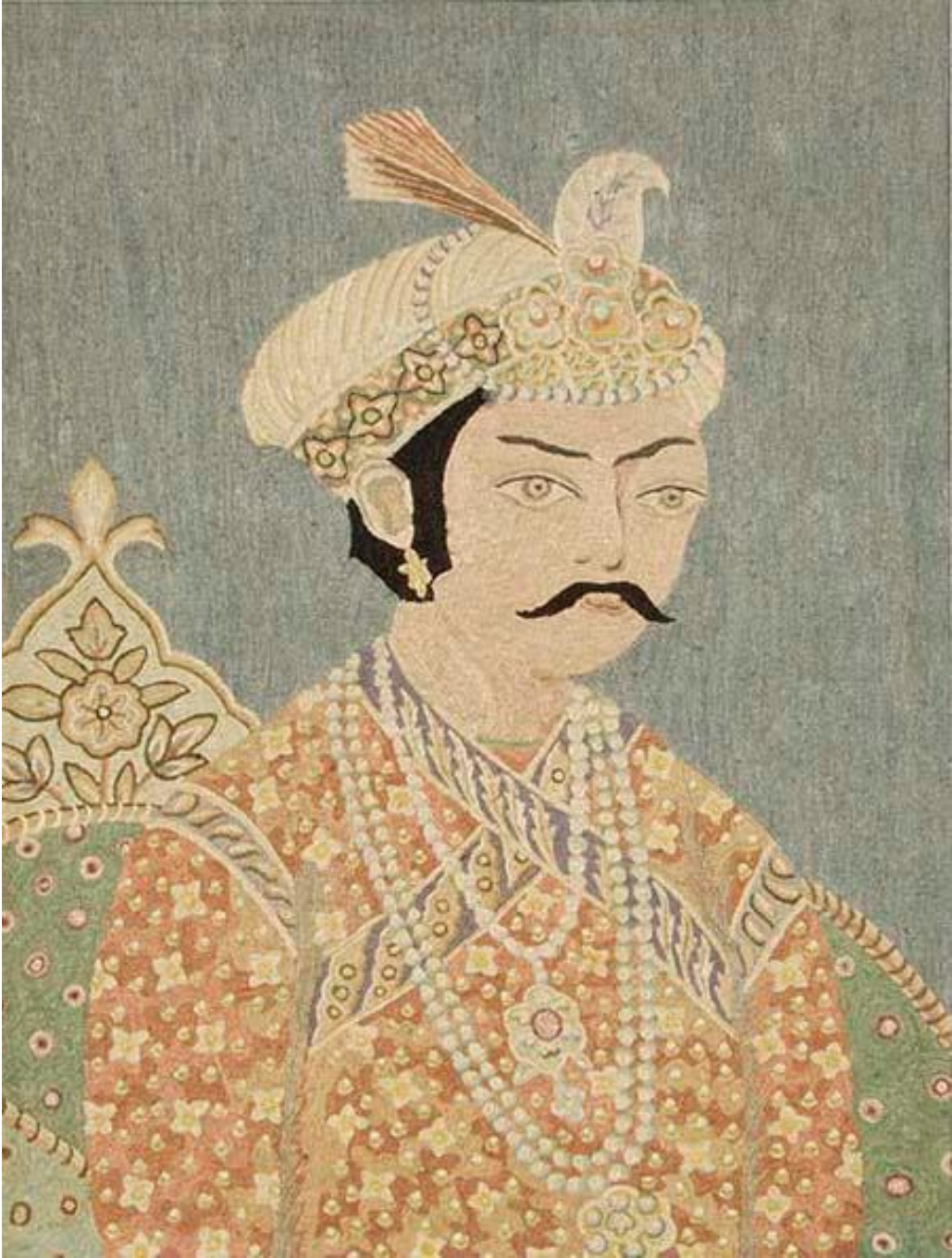


# Object Summary



# Object Summary

## Embroidered Silk Portrait of the Mughal Emperor Akbar

c. 1850

India (Delhi)

Cotton, silk threads

Overall: 22 1/2 x 18 1/2 in. (50. x 40.cm)

Thought to be a portrait of the Mughal Emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605 CE), perhaps due to the distinctive narrow moustache, this image was created not by delicate brushstrokes, but by tiny stitches: silk thread covers the entire surface, from his sarpech (turban ornament) to his heavily embroidered caftan. His heavy ropes of pearls, gem-set pendants, and floral seat certainly indicate a high-ranking gentleman of the court, if not the emperor himself. If it is meant to be Akbar, then the depiction is apt: a noted patron of arts, he was known for the high quality of his artisinal court workshops, where craftspeople and artists from all faiths worked together. The Mughal Empire was at its height under Akbar, with riches obtained through military campaigns and matrimonial alliances. As this portrait was made in the 18th century, as the Mughal Empire was waning, this is perhaps a moment of wistful artistic reflection on the era of peace and pluralism under Akbar, two centuries before.