



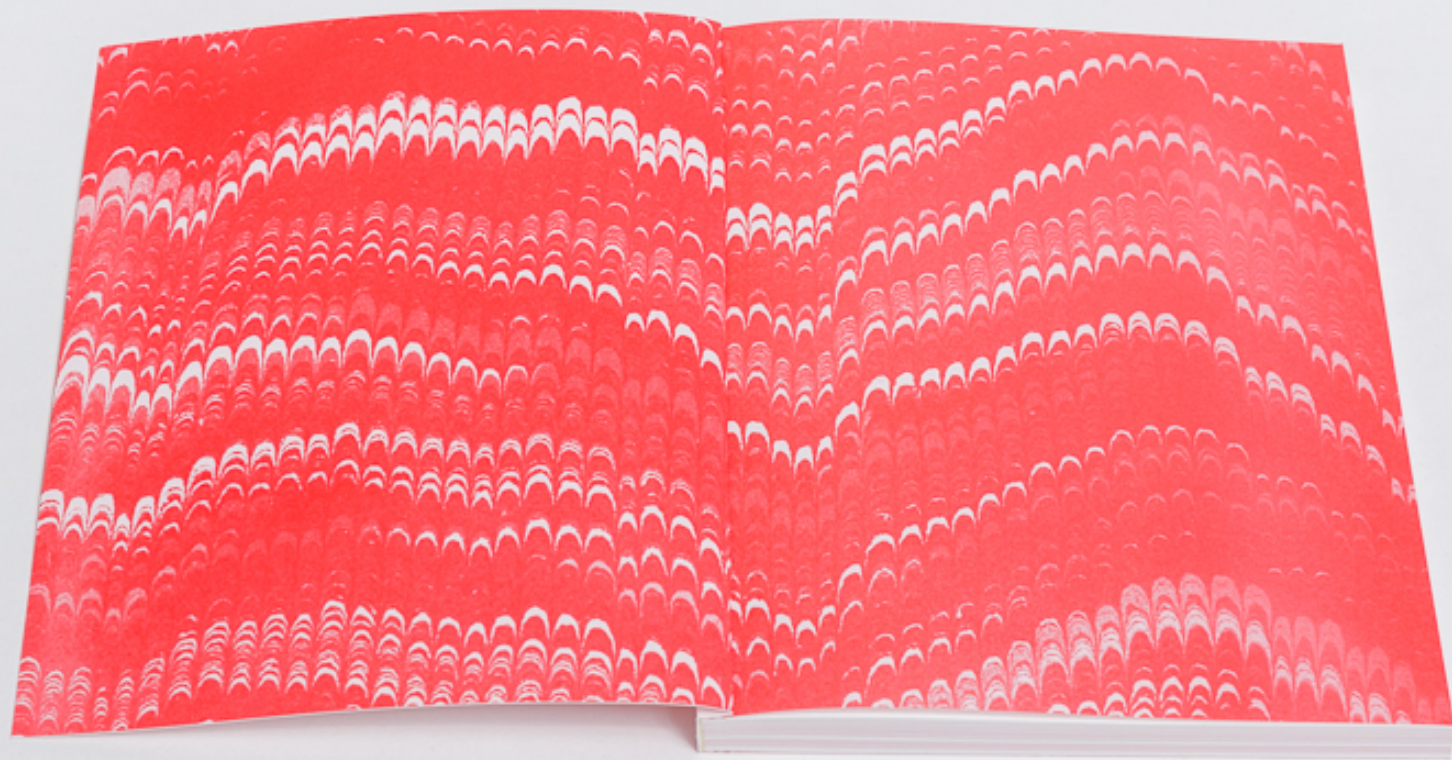
A Selective Guide to the V&A's South Asian Collection

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AN INDIAN LADY

Object: Painting

Place of origin: Murshidabad (made)

Date: ca. 1760-1764 (painted)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

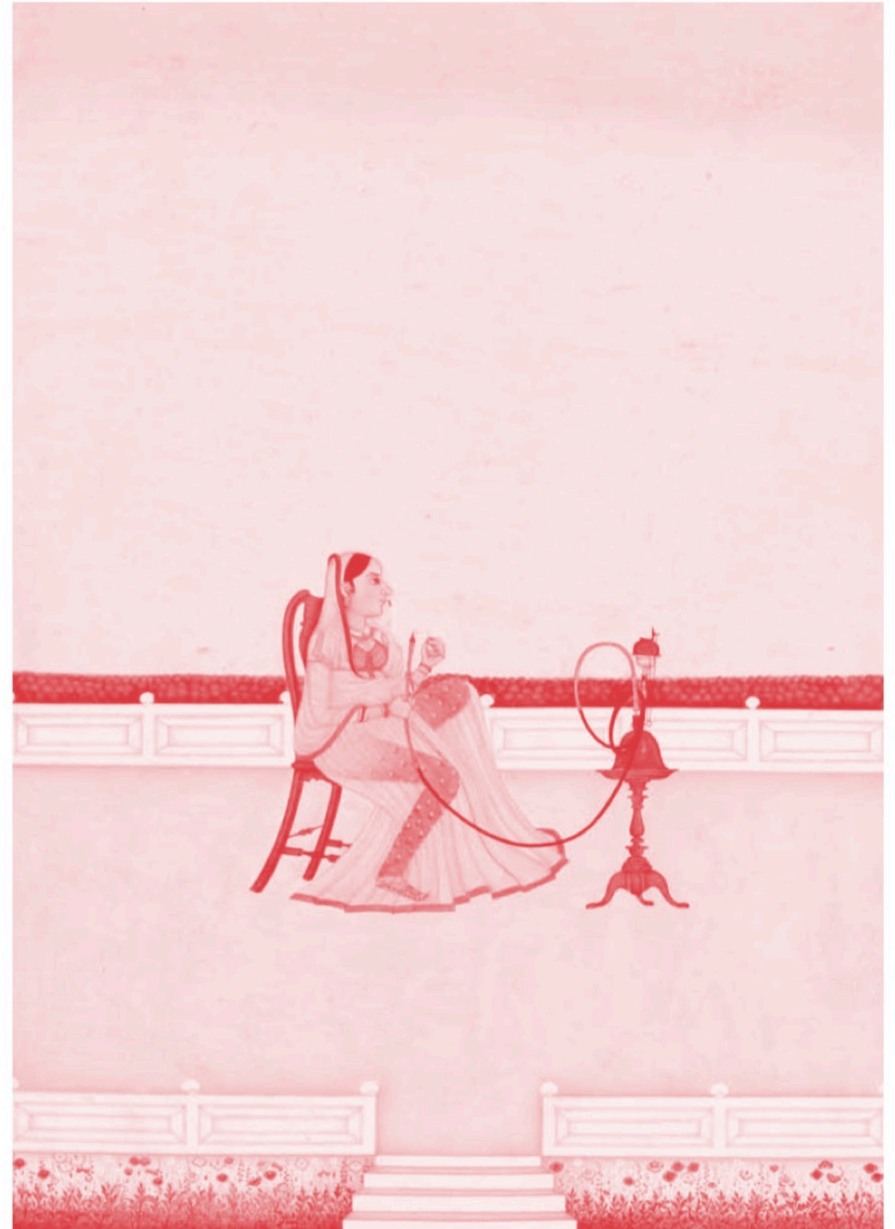
Materials and Techniques: Gouache

Museum number: D.1183-1903

Gallery location: In Storage

Descriptive line: Painting; gouache,  
An Indian lady, Murshidabad,  
ca. 1760-1764

Physical description: An Indian lady  
in a yellow semi-transparent sari and red  
pyjama trousers half squatting on a chair  
on a terrace, smoking a 'huqqa' which  
is on a small stand. In the foreground  
a parapet and a flower-bed with poppies.  
One of seven portraits of Indian men  
and women.



64

# The Ha-Ha

Himali Singh Soin

65

An "Indian" lady  
in a marigold-yellow  
pleated, bordered  
semi-transparent  
chiffon sari  
and flame-red  
block-printed  
pyjama trousers  
and pointy, embroidered  
juttis, half squatting  
on a chair  
of European manner  
on a terrace,  
smoking a hukkah placed  
on a small wooden stand.  
In the foreground:  
a marble parapet,  
(an invisible boundary,  
an architectural ha-ha)  
and a flower bed  
of Baroque poppies.

Her image, set within painted borders  
 Just in case we would never know  
 That she is (no)  
 more than a painting.

The sky is Romanticism  
 encapsulated: Moody,  
 nuclear.  
 Opium totems.  
 Absent light. Marble.

There are no clocks here.  
 (W.F.1764)  
 No names of places.  
 (India?)  
 No nostalgia.  
 (Because: no photography)  
 But uncontainable pleasure.

Maybe she appreciates the visibility:  
 A mistress amiss.  
 An object of the painters' subjectivity  
 The Painter, who has recently learned  
 How to use European notation—  
 Symmetrical composition

The Picturesque—  
 In the service  
 of The Company.

The Company's Man  
 Is concerned  
 Only with the tactility of translucency.  
 The hukkah holder  
 Her red pyjama trousers  
 Her yellow sari  
 Recessed.  
 The Euclidean failure of placing a dome  
 and a cylinder on a square table.

Then.  
 Out of nowhere,  
 Giggles.  
 The disobedience  
 Of her sidelong glance  
 Cast outside  
 The frame  
 In which she has been placed.  
 Laughter.  
 Shattering  
 an entire artistic movement

with a flick and a nod.

Meanwhile:

The sheers

Vertiginous, diaphanous.

The glassy stare,  
the stoic sentimentality.

All forming the intricate  
arrangement of artifice.

Reviewing an image  
and placing it again.

Replacing it,  
with a vista, disrupted.

Another field

Of funny.

The laughter is a play on the  
architectural term, ha-ha, a recessed  
boundary wall that allows for  
un-interrupted views.



Ben Barker  
Lubna Chowdhary  
Jatinder Singh Durhailay  
George Eksts  
Francesca Girelli  
Abeera Kamran  
Priya Khanchandani  
Rose Lejeune  
Yusra Makhdoomi  
Divia Patel  
Sally O'Reilly  
Avni Sethi  
Himali Singh Soin  
Avani Tanya

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Q11

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Avani Tanya

