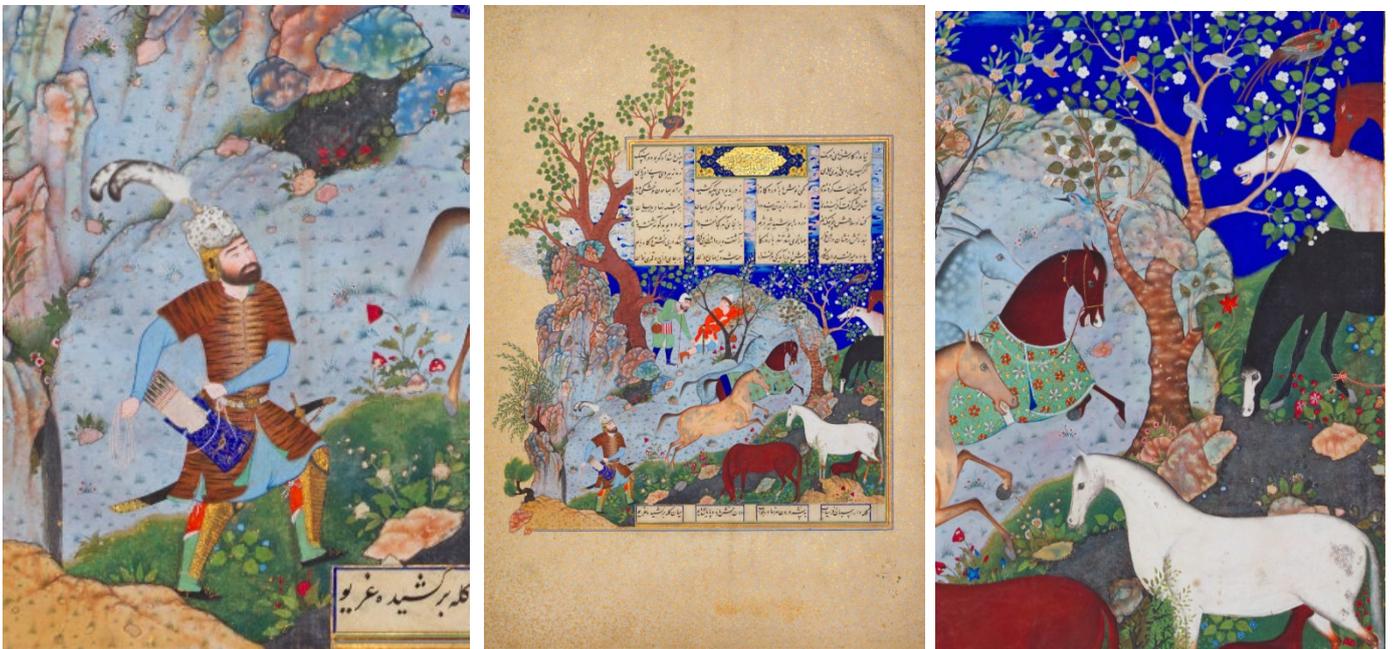


**A ROYAL MASTERPIECE TO STAR AT SOTHEBY'S THIS OCTOBER**

**RARE 16<sup>th</sup>-CENTURY FOLIO FROM PERSIA'S "THE BOOK OF KINGS"  
– ONE OF THE FINEST ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS IN EXISTENCE –  
TO BE OFFERED WITH AN ESTIMATE OF £4 – 6 MILLION**

**Alongside Indian Miniatures, Islamic Manuscripts, 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Jewels & Rare  
Works of Art as Part of "Arts of The Islamic World & India"  
At Sotheby's London, 26 October 2022**



*"The Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasp is a perfect encapsulation of artistic skill, patronage and beauty – universally acknowledged as one of the supreme illustrated manuscripts of any period or culture and ranking among the greatest works of art in the world. The record for any Islamic work on paper is held by a folio from the same manuscript, sold at Sotheby's in 2011, and so the rare appearance of another at auction represents a great opportunity for collectors in this field and beyond."*

**Benedict Carter, Head of Department, Sotheby's Islamic & Indian Art**

The Shahnameh – or 'Book of Kings' – made for Shah Tahmasp of Persia (r.1524-76) is one of the finest illustrated manuscripts in existence. The monumental tome covers the greatest epic of Persian literature, containing 50,000 rhyming couplets and tells the history of all Persia's rulers from the country's ancient mythical beginnings. The most lavishly illustrated copy of the 10<sup>th</sup>-century poem in existence, it was illustrated over the course of two decades from 1520 to 1540 by the greatest artists in the royal atelier. It is thought that no other Persian work of art, save architecture, has involved such enormous expense or taken so much artists' time. The result was an unparalleled achievement and stands as one of the greatest works of art in the world.

**This October, a magnificent folio from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh will make a rare appearance at auction, as part of Sotheby's bi-annual Arts of the Islamic World & India auction, offered with an estimate of £4,000,000 – 6,000,000.** The scene depicts the great hero Rustam recovering his horse Rakhsh – named the Persian word for lightning – two of the main figures over the course of the tale.

The manuscript boasts a glittering provenance from the moment it was commissioned, to the present day. It was commissioned by one emperor, Shah Ismail (the first of the Safavids), completed by another, his son and successor Shah Tahmasp, gifted to a third, Sultan Selim II of the Ottoman Empire, and was later owned by one of the great bibliophilic families of the modern era, the Barons de Rothschild, whose collections included such masterpieces as the Belles Heures of the Duc de Berry and the Hours of Catherine of Cleves. Today, folios from the Shahnameh are treasured in museum collections internationally, including New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art; The Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C; The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto; The David Collection, Copenhagen; The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, London; The Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran.

#### RARE WORKS OF ART & JEWELLERY



**A Fatimid carved rock crystal bottle, Egypt, late 10th-early 11th century (est. £40,000-60,000)**

Rock crystal, from which this flask was carved, is the purest form of quartz, and is renowned for both its hardness and clarity and associated with air and water in philosophy and poetry. Produced during the heyday of Fatimid power, it is thought that these pieces were used by ladies of the harem for cosmetic purposes.

**A Pair of Crescent-shaped Pearl and Diamond Earrings, India, Hyderabad, late 18th century (est. £50,000-70,000)**

These magnificent diamond earrings belong to a group of jewellery that was from the collection of the Nizam of Hyderabad, a dynasty of wealthy rulers known for their spectacular collection of jewels. The family had inherited gemstones from the earlier rulers of Deccan, who oversaw the famous Golconda mines – the world's only supplier of diamonds for centuries. They were last exhibited at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York's exhibition on the Sultans of Deccan India in 2015.



**A Mughal gem-set glass-hilted dagger and scabbard, India, 18th century (est. £80,000-120,000)**

This exquisite dagger, with its distinctive floral gem-set decoration, is most likely to have been produced in the Deccan or for a Deccani patron. The dark, emerald-coloured green glass inlaid with rubies and diamonds relates closely to the enamelled objects produced in Hyderabad during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

## The Collection of Maharni Jindan Kaur (1817-63), wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839)

This beautifully carved emerald and diamond-set gold bazuband (est. £120,000-150,000) and gem-set and enamelled belt buckle (est. £40,000-60,000) both from North India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were both reputedly in the collection of Maharani Jindan Kaur (1817-63), wife of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839).



When the Maharajah and his eldest sons died, Jindan Kaur's son Duleep took to the throne aged only five years old, with her as regent. After the first Anglo-Sikh war, the British retained Duleep as ruler but imprisoned Jindan Kaur, until she managed to escape disguised as a servant. Jindan Kaur sought refuge in Nepal and was eventually reunited with her son in 1861, who negotiated the return of her jewels, comprising of over six hundred pieces.

The bazuband was acquired by John Brogden, the renowned London jeweller in the Victorian era, who showcased a range of jewellery at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

## WORKS ON PAPER & MANUSCRIPTS

### A double-sided illustration to the Tarikh-i-Alfi (The History of A Thousand Years), India, Imperial Mughal, circa 1590 (est. £250,000-350,000)

The "History of a Thousand Years" was written for the Mughal Emperor Akbar between 1582-88, and recounts the ruling Caliphs through the Islamic period. This work is a rare folio, thought to be the last remaining in private hands, with only approximately eighteen or so others known to survive. Many are in museum collections, including The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Freer | Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C., The British Museum, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The San Diego Museum of Art and The National Museum New Delhi.



### An exceptional illuminated Qur'an, copied by Yusuf ibn 'Abdullah student of 'Ala al-Din Muhammad Tabrizi, Persia, Safavid, dated 983 AH/1575-76 AD (est. £400,000-600,000)

Incorporating two tones of gold in the opening illumination in contrast with a dazzling ultramarine lapis lazuli, this Qur'an, in superb condition, exemplifies the height of Safavid illumination. The ambitious decorative scheme and the overriding quality points to an illustrious patron.

### A monumental Qur'an leaf in Kufic script, Near East or North Africa, circa 750 AD (est. £250,000-350,000)

This monumental folio originates from one of the largest Kufic Qur'ans of the early Islamic period, the scale suggesting a patron of great wealth and importance. The simplistic ornamentation that gives focus to the text is typical of the earliest period of Kufic Qur'ans in the 8th century.



## The Collection of Betsy Salinger

The sale offers 15 Indian paintings from the collection of Betsy Salinger. The selection, not seen on the market in decades, crosses centuries, spanning outstanding Mughal folios to the distinctive styles of the lyrical Pahari schools, the dynamic Rajasthani schools to the masterful Mughal and Deccani schools and court ateliers.

Among the highlights is ***The Pilgrimage of Maharana Sangram Singh of Mewar, circa 1720-30 (est. £80,000-120,000)***. Commemorating a historic royal pilgrimage to the temple and shrines of Srinathji in Nathdwara, it is impressive both for its large-scale and the complexity of the composition. Also from the collection is ***An Encampment of Ascetics, circa 1680 (est. £60,000-80,000)***, a Deccani painting depicting a group of forty figures in the wilderness, all in various states of intoxication.

### EXHIBITION DATES

**New York** 15 – 20 September

**Dubai** 3 – 7 October

**London** 21 – 25 October

#### About Sotheby's

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*\* Estimates do not include buyer's premium or overhead premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and overhead premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.*

**Images are available upon request**

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