

NIGAAAH

Vol. 1 HUNDRED

Arts, Culture, & Heritage





Shah Jahan Darbar 2, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 12.5 x 20 inches

A Trip Across Time

Syed A. Irfan is an artist who is true to his craft. This self-taught practitioner embarked on his gouache painting journey on his own initiative, and has honed and developed his skills over the years with pure dedication. His interests reveal themselves in the form of imagery that traverses timelines and places.

Irfan's pieces for his solo show at Art Scene Gallery take us back to the 16th/17th centuries, to the time of the grandiose Mughal Empire that ruled over South Asia (from the outer fringes of the Indus basin in the west, northern Afghanistan in the northwest, and Kashmir in the north, to the highlands of present-day Assam and Bangladesh in the east, and the uplands of the Deccan plateau in South India). With his recreations and re-compositions of traditional Mughal miniature pieces, Irfan's works are a glimpse into the distant past when Mughal rulers (of Turkic-Mongol origin) ruled most of northern India.

Irfan occasionally uses artistic license to break free from traditional compositions found in Mughal miniature paintings. These paintings were originally created by/commissioned by the Mughal Emperors to Master



Princess in Garden, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 10 x 14 inches

artists in their imperial ateliers in order to record significant events under their rule, or to simply immortalise and glorify them. Mughal Miniature Paintings were confined to miniatures either as book illustrations or as single works to be kept in albums (muraqqa). This style emerged and was adapted and developed from Persian and Ottoman miniature paintings, both of which were inspired by Chinese painting. This was an interesting trajectory of artistic exchange between Empires of that time that emerged over decades/centuries.

Irfan's pieces are sometimes simple, other times complicated in detail. For avid aficionados, practitioners or students of miniature paintings, the imagery is instantly recognizable with twists in colour and imagery. There are renditions of impressive, detailed borders in his works as well as a myriad of bright and earthy colours (as well as tea stain) that have been incorporated.

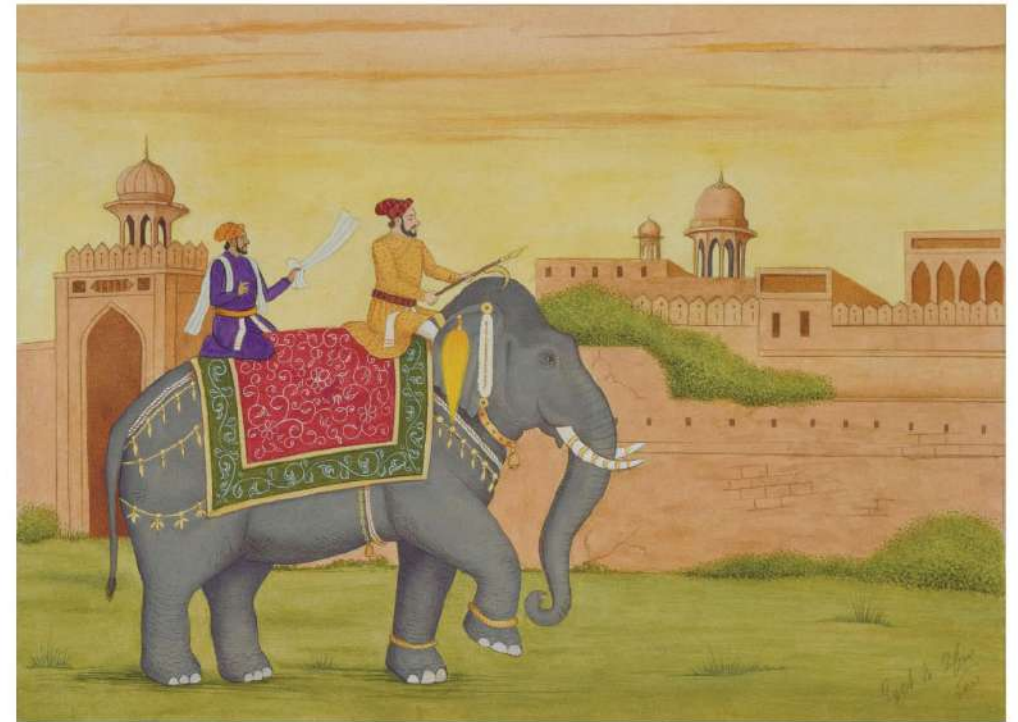
Proud horses, raging elephants, grandiose falcons and other exotic birds pepper the compositions as the protagonists go about significant moments of their lives. Beautiful, detailed patterns and motifs emerge on the flowing attire of the Emperors, the Queens/Princesses



Jahangir Darbar, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 16 x 22 Inches



Preparing for Someone Special, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 10 x 14 inches



Prince on Elephant, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 10 x 14 Inches



Aurangzeb Alamgir with Followers, Gouache & Gold on Wasli, 10 x 12 Inches

and their disciples, as well as on the ornate carpets, thrones, hand-held fans, marquees, animals, embellishments, cutlery and accessories. Delicate jewels can also be seen adorning both people and animals. Singular, pensive subjects are seen, as well as small to large groups of people in various kinds of communication and action.

In Syed A. Irfan's work, the attention to detail is exquisite. His interest in this period of the Indian Subcontinent's history is also very apparent. He has a repertoire of work over the last many years that has been evolving, and presents the viewer with new surprises every time.