



An illustration to a Ragamala, Bhairava Raga,
Mankot, India, circa 1720-30
£5,000 - £8,000

Indian Miniatures, Islamic Tiles, an Attic Amphora and a Tantric Rug Centuries of collecting under the hammer

London, UK– Olympia Auctions is pleased to announce its forthcoming auction of [Indian, Islamic, Himalayan and South-East Asian Art and Greek and Roman, Antiquities](#) taking place on Wednesday June 4th, 2025.



The sale offers a vibrant and diverse selection of 302 lots, spanning centuries of artistic brilliance in different cultures, faiths and forms. Many of the lots come to sale after decades in private families and some can be traced back to the collections of 18th and 19th century connoisseurs.

Tiles, textiles and thang-ka

Two very different examples illustrate a superb range of tiles and ceramics. A set of three Iznik tiles, c.1600, with a classic Ottoman design of scrolling saz leaves and prunus blossoms, is estimated to fetch £8,000-12,000 (lot 112). (**See tiles, left**). Formerly in a Greek private collection since the 1960s, an old label on the back of the frame states 'from the display case in the dining room'.

An exceptionally rich and colourful range of textiles includes an interesting collection, mostly from Indonesia and the Philippines, acquired by London-based Australian pianist Geoffrey Saba who toured South-East Asia with his wife during the 1960s and 70s.



Lot 243
A Ninghsia Tantric rug,
Northwest China, 19th century
£3,000 - £4,000



Lot 245
A Piskent suzani, Uzbekistan,
pre 1850
£6,000 - £8,000

An important group of rugs and textiles from Anatolia, Central Asia and China includes a striking Konya Kilim (Lot 242 £3,000-5,000), a Turkmen Saryk carpet (lot 236 £5,000-10,000) and a Ninghsia Tantric rug (lot 243 £3,000-4,000). Depicting a flayed man, the rug would have been used in Esoteric rites to celebrate the power of detachment from the corporal body that advanced Buddhist practitioners strive to attain. A Piskent suzani with a particularly dynamic and joyful design in which yellow outlines and motifs animate a rich red field is estimated at £6,000-8,000 (lot 245). Also from Uzbekistan is a fine 19th century Ikat panel from Bukhara (lot 248 £3,000-5,000).



Rare wood items include an 11th century model of the Buddhist temple at Bodh Gaya in Northern India, made for a pilgrim to take home lot 140, £4,000-6,000. **(See image, left).** While some stone versions exist in museums, wood models are scarce, probably because of the perishable material. At the other end of the date scale is a brass model of a Western Indian temple to Siva (lot 207 £2,500-3,500), with every detail faithfully reproduced including Nandi bull, the vehicle of Siva, in a canopied hall in front. Among a considerable number of other interesting metal objects and images, is a fine 16th century bronze figure of the popular elephant god, Ganesha, from Kerala, in the South-West of India, (lot 188 £4,000-6,000).

A collection of Tibetan thang-ka paintings – Buddhist scrolls – comes to sale from the family of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1901- 1995), a Viennese anthropologist whose fieldwork took him all over India and Nepal for four decades from 1936. In 1950 he was appointed Professor of Anthropology at SOAS where he established the Department of Anthropology and his archive,

donated to SOAS, is considered the world's most comprehensive study of tribal cultures in South Asia and the Himalayas. Collected on his travels in Nepal in the 1940s, the thang-ka paintings, range in estimate from £300-3,000.

Also included is a fine black ground thang-ka depicting Mahakala, Tibet, 18th/19th century (lot 156), from a London consignor. Estimated at £10,000 -15,000.

Paintings and Manuscripts

The auction includes three illustrations from a Safavid 16th century manuscript of the Shahnameh (lots 7-9), as well as a 17th century illustration from Mughal India (lot 16).



Lot 16
The trial by fire of Siyavush, Sub-Imperial
Mughal, India, circa 1630
£3,000 - £5,000

This illustrated page, lot 16, **(pictured, above)** from a manuscript copy of The Shahnama (The Book of Kings, an epic composed 977-1010 CE by the poet Firdausi) comes to sale having been owned and treasured by a succession of the greatest bibliophiles in 19th century England. Depicting The Trial by Fire of Siyavush, and dating from sub-Imperial Mughal India, c.1630, it is unique among only five known pages from the same manuscript in that it has text on the verso. It also bears early annotations probably in the hand of Mrs Richardson Currer, frequently referred to as England's first female bibliophile but before her it was owned by Mrs. Bliss of Kensington who may have more right to this claim. (Estimate: £3,000-5,000)

From the collection of the late artist Howard Hodgkin comes an illustration to Bhairav Raga, an ancient raga (melody) in Indian classical music known for its rich, devotional character. This example shows the god, Bhairava, depicted on the bull with an attendant with a fly whisk. Painted in the distinct style associated with Mankot, capital of a former kingdom in the Punjab hills, c.1720-30, it is estimated to fetch £5,000-8,000 **(lot 17 – see top of page)**.

Colonel **Antoine-Louis-Henri Polier** (1741–1795) was a Swiss engineer and polymath who spent thirty years in India. He was empathetic to both cultures and whilst promoting the interests of the East India Company at the court of Lucknow, began the production of a series of albums, muraqqa, a page from one of which is included here (lot 22 £3,000-5,000). **See image, right.** One side features an early 17th century Mughal portrait of a courtier (possibly evoking Emperor Jahangir or a nobleman like Mirza Muzaffar or Khan 'Alam) holding a falcon and its prey. References in Polier's albums to falcons representing courtiers include a legend in which a royal falcon meets its death at the hands of the King despite its attempts to protect him. This was probably copied by 'Ata Khan, Polier's calligrapher, and it could be that they shared a sense of being court attendants whose sage advice was not always valued by their rulers.



More than just a beautiful image, this page is a palimpsest, telling the story of an 18th-century cosmopolitan navigating empire, art, and his place in the world. After Polier's death the album including the present page was acquired by the famously eccentric English collector William Beckford, and by the present owner in the 1980s.



Greek and Roman Antiquities

An Attic Black Figure amphora from mainland Greece, circa 540-520 BC, is estimated to sell for £20,000-30,000. Lot 79, **see image, left.** Its terracotta surface is painted with a gigantomachy, a mythological combat in which the Olympian gods battled the Giants who sought to overthrow them. There are figures of Athena and other helmeted gods, a fallen warrior beneath rearing horses and friezes of lotus flowers and pointed leaves. First bought at Sotheby's in 1967, it is attributed to the "Swing Painter", an unnamed artist whose rarely seen works include three other amphorae in the British Museum.

Indian, Islamic, Himalayan and South-East Asian Art and Greek and Roman Antiquities Auction

Viewing Days

Sunday 1st June 12-4pm

Monday 2nd June 10am – 8pm

Tuesday 3rd June 10am – 5pm

Auction

Wednesday 4th June, 11am

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