Painting - Vishnu as Vishvarupa (cosmic or universal man)

Object: Painting

Place of origin: Jaipur (made)

Date: ca. 1800-1820 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Watercolour on paper

Credit Line: Given by Mrs Gerald Clark

Museum number: IS.33-2006

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This striking painting shows the blue-skinned Hindu god Vishnu in his form as the Universal Man or Vishvarupa, which means 'all forms'. The small figures painted on his body refer to his role as encompassing all of creation. He has four arms, each holding one of Vishnu's attributes; a conch shell, a lotus flower, a mace and the circular weapon called Sudarshana chakra (meaning 'beautiful discus').

The painting was probably done in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in about 1800-1805.

Descriptive line

Vishnu as Cosmic man, watercolour on paper, early 19th century, Jaipur.

Physical description

Painting of a figure of Vishnu as the Cosmic Man. He is shown blue-skinned with an orange scarf against a black background. His body is covered with images of people and buildings to convey the idea of all of humanity.

Dimensions

Height: 38.5 cm, Width: 28 cm

Museum number

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Object history note

Given by Mrs. Gerard Clark.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O154643/vishnu-as-vishvarupa-cosmic-or-painting-unknown/