Painting - Krishna and Balarama

Object: Painting

Place of origin: Kolkata (made)

Date: ca. 1855 - ca. 1860 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Painted in opaque watercolour and tin alloy on paper

Museum number: IM.2:62-1917

Gallery location: In Storage

Descriptive line

Painting, Krishna and Balarama, watercolour and tin alloy on paper, Kalighat, Kolkata, ca. 1855-1860

Physical description

Painting, in watercolour and tin alloy on paper, image of the blue skinned god Krishna on the right with his elder brother Balarama on the left. Balarama is normally shown with a white complexion carrying a horn or a ploughshare. Both deities have peacock crowns and silver necklaces (executed in tin alloy) which hang over their pleated dhotis. Reared with Krishna in the family of the cowherd Nanda, Balarama shared his boyhood in Brindaban. He assisted Krishna in the killing of many demons.

Dimensions

Height: 17 in, Width: 11 in

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Object history note

Historical significance: Calcutta was recognised as the Capital of British India from 1833-1912. By the 1830s, artists had arrived from rural villages in Bengal and began to produce paintings that reflected local history, mythology, customs and conflicts of a colonised society. As a popular art form, these artists are recognised for their use of brilliant colour, simplified images and swift brushstrokes that became the hallmark of Kalighat painting in the 19th and early 20th century.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O72151/krishna-and-balarama-painting-unknown/