



Chateri Gumani (Indian)
The Lion Hunt of Maharao Umed Singh of Kota, 1779
opaque watercolor on paper
21 3/4 x 26 3/4 in.
Museum purchase, Michele A. and Georgeann Vaccariello
Fund and Karl E. Weston Memorial Fund
83.6

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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1779

In 18th century India, rulers often staged lion hunts to honor distinguished guests. Hunts were also part of special holidays such as the Spring Festival. During these hunts, kings and their guests were assured of certain success: the animals were driven into confined areas and constrained by ropes or thorny branches. In this watercolor, the lion is restrained by green netting, and the ruler of Kota, Umed Singh, is the relatively unnoticeable figure perched in a tree at the bottom right. Lions were almost extinct in this region in the 18th century. The big cats appear in paintings far more often than they stalked the scrub jungles.



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DISCUSS

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There are many details to spot in this painting. Roll your cursor over the image to magnify. What do you notice? What's going on?

In 18th century India, lion hunts were often staged to honor distinguished guests and display the ruler's bravery, skill, and strength. This watercolor celebrates such a scene. It is carefully composed, presenting wild animals and myriad figures with drama and action set amid a rhythmic spring landscape.

Focusing on some of the elements and principles of design can help viewers to read this complex composition.

For class viewing, project *The Lion Hunt* onto a blank wall. Think about the way the parts of the picture are organized. If you could draw only four or five large lines to divide the composition into its main components, where would you draw those lines (a pointer or laser pointer may be helpful here)?

The principles of design bring our attention to the ways that parts of the picture work together. Consider these principles:

- emphasis What part of the image is your eye drawn to most? What makes this area stand out?
- movement How does your eye tend to move around the image?
- rhythm Do you see lines or shapes that repeat or echo one another, creating a pattern or rhythm? (Hint: look at the trees and the rocks).
- balance What has the artist done to create balance throughout the composition? How are areas of light and dark balanced? Color? Line?



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CREATE

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Create your own *Lion Hunt* painting! Project the image onto a blank wall. Tape a large sheet of paper onto the wall. Assign a small area of the image to each person. Take turns tracing the lines in the image onto the paper. (This may work best if those who are not tracing are working on something else independently, like reading.)

When everyone has had a turn, discuss everyone's observations. What did you notice about the lines? Where did the artist use straight lines, curved lines, bold lines, or sketchy lines? What other details did you notice? While you were looking closely and tracing, did you notice things that you hadn't noticed before?

To add color, move the paper to the side. Use watercolor or colored pencils to add color. Refer back to the projected image. How closely can you match the colors of the original?