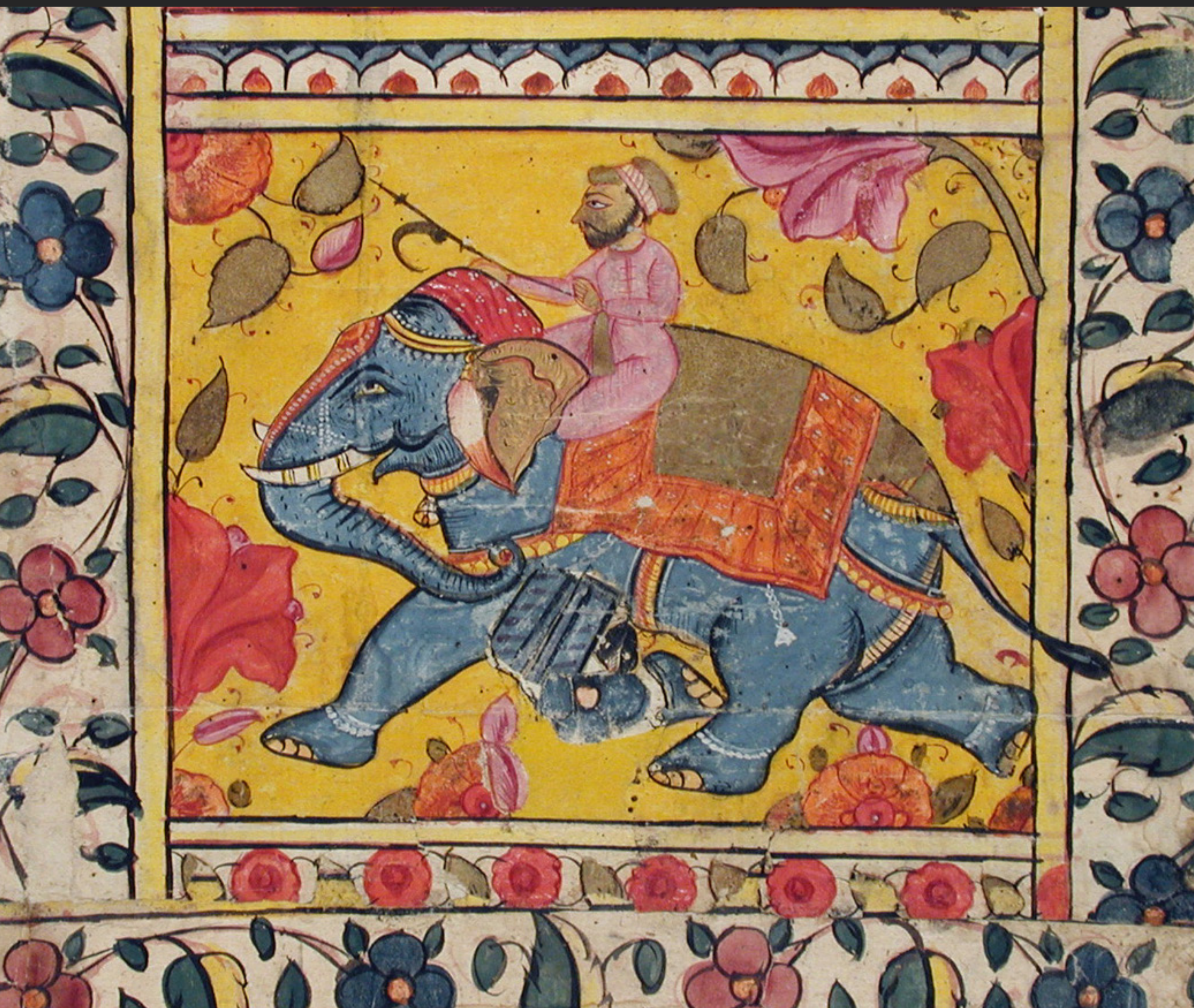
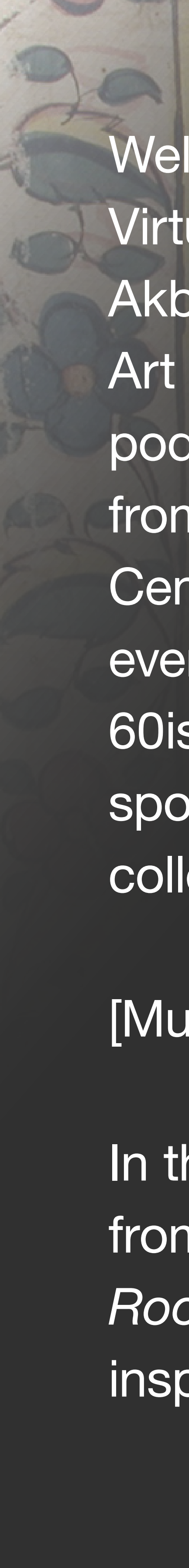


MASTERPIECE
MINUTE





Welcome back to Masterpiece Minute on Virtual SDMA. This is your host, Ladan Akbarnia, Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art at The San Diego Museum of Art. In this podcast, I explore SDMA's collections of art from places such as India, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Drop in every Friday at 10 a.m. to pick up a new 60ish-second mini-talk led by SDMA curators spotlighting works of art from the Museum's collection.

[Music]

In this episode, we look at another example from the SDMA exhibition *The Elephant in the Room* but with a little twist to explore art as inspiration. This time, I am joined by my son

and distinguished guest, Luca, a kindergartner at Torrey Pines Elementary School. Luca will read his own story, “Blue Elephant,” which was inspired by this painting of an elephant and his keeper in SDMA’s Binney Collection.

There once was a blue elephant who lived in a beautiful place with a lot of flowers and trees. And when danger came, there was somebody on his back with a weapon to defend him, and the elephant also had his trunk to protect him. One day, the elephant went outside to play, but there was a drought. So he set off to find out what was happening to the forest. He found out that the rain clouds were gathering up somewhere else and the wind never blew them to their part of the country, which was India.

So the elephant used his trunk to make the wind blow the clouds all the way to their part

of the country. And this time, the rains came even stronger, so that all the plants grew in just one day. Suddenly, the elephant and his keeper found themselves in a field full of wildflowers that grew as tall as trees. They were colored orange, red, and pink, with leaves like feathers.

This is where the story of the blue elephant ends, but the tale was so beautiful that it was written into a book, and a portrait was made of the elephant and his keeper. It was so special that the maker of the book painted a gorgeous border of colorful flowers to frame the picture and remember the story.

Some trivia: The “weapon” carried by this elephant’s keeper, or mahout, is actually an *ankus*, or goad, an instrument with a sharp point and hook used to guide the animal’s

movements or behavior. Elephant goads were often used for hunting expeditions, and it is possible this painting illustrates part of a hunting scene.

Thank you for listening. This has been Ladan and Luca on Masterpiece Minute at Virtual SDMA!