

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Durga Shankar Bhattacharya (India, 20th century -)

**Radha and Krishna shelter under a tree
Durga Shankar Bhattacharya (India, 20th century)**

West Bengal, India, ca. 1928

Watercolour on paper

Stock no.: A5899

A watercolour of a blue Krishna playing the flute to the gopi Radha, signed by the artist Durga Shankar Bhattacharya in white crayon beneath the right shin of Krishna. Layers of dilute watercolour create a dreamlike atmosphere, characteristic of the work of Bhattacharya and his contemporaries.

Bhattacharya belonged to the Bengal School of Art, a movement which began in Bengal in the early 20th century in protest against methods at the Calcutta School of Art which encouraged students to copy Mughal minatures. Clear influence from the early work of the movement's leader, Abanindranath Tagore, alongside artists such as Nandalal Bose, can be seen in Bhattacharya's painting.

Two works by Bhattacharya, both dated to ca. 1928, are held in the San Diego Museum of Art. One depicts Matsya, the Fish Incarnation of Vishnu (accession no. [1928.39](#)) and the other is another depiction of Krishna and Radha (accession no. [1928.24](#)). These watercolours are unmistakably by the same artist as ours. They were purchased by the museum from an exhibition of Modern East Indian Paintings organised by the American Federation of Arts in 1927.¹ Another watercolour by Bhattacharya, entitled 'Krishna, the Charioteer', is pictured in an article of 1927 in the American Magazine of Art.²

In faint pencil on the reverse of the painting is written Durga...Bhattacharya, as well as 'no. 4' and a

Bengali inscription.

n.b. accession numbers are clickable links.

[1] R. M. 'AT the Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego', *The American Magazine of Art* 19.10 (1928), p. 574.

[2] MacLean, J. Arthur. 'Paintings by Contemporary East Indian Artists', *The American Magazine of Art* 18.12 (December 1927), pp. 651–656: fig. 31, p. 654.