

\$1,584,000 in September 2005 at Christie's, establish the world auction record for a Contemporary Indian painting, and the first work in the category to break the million dollar mark.



Another highlight in the sale is a rare figurative work by Ram Kumar, *Vagabond*, made in 1956, which portrays three isolated and forlorn figures, the mood emphasized by the dark and somber pallet (estimate: \$400,000-600,000). Kumar's paintings of the 1950s are a direct reaction to the events he witnessed around him upon his return to India from Paris. After studying in Paris with Fernand Leger in 1950, his style as a figurative painter was instilled with a melancholic realism. His figurative paintings from these years capture the strong feelings of disillusionment and alienation harbored by those around him.

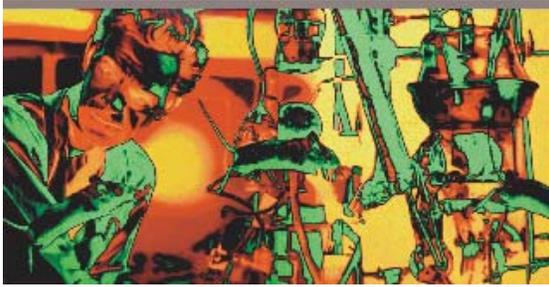
From the founder of the Progressive Artists Group, Francis Newton Souza's nude, *Untitled*, 1961, is one of spectacular size and is a highlight among the dozen paintings by the artist offered in the sale (estimate: \$350,000-500,000). Made in the artistic peak of Souza's career, this work demonstrates why the artist is known as the "master of lines." Souza's paintings reflect his inventive interpretation of the human form, and like Gauguin, possesses both a strong sexual aura and a sense of the primitive, the other and the unfamiliar. Souza is regarded as one of the greats of Indian art and was amongst first who attained international acclaim after being awarded the Guggenheim International Award.

The auction presents a fantastic group of works by Syed Haider Raza, encompassing significant phases of his career — from the 1960s abstract expressionist work, to the 1980s - 90s when he incorporates highly colorful ideas and elements of Tantrism, born from Indian scriptural texts. *Bindu Pancha Tatva*, painted in 1999, has a geometrical resemblance to the abstract expressionist painting of Frank Stella and Jasper Johns, and the circle is the formal concern around which Raza structures his canvases (estimate: \$300,000-500,000).



Bhupen Khakhar is an artist who bridges the gap between the Modern and Contemporary, and his unique and perceptive works have made him one of India's most revered artists. The recent major retrospective of his work at the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Spain and his group shows, including a 2001 exhibition at the Tate Modern, have placed him beside masters like David Hockney, Sir Howard Hodgkin and R. B. Kitaj. His international acclaim has seen his paintings and watercolors exhibited across the world, with solo shows at museums and galleries in Berlin, Amsterdam, London, Frankfurt, Vancouver, Delhi, and Mumbai, to name only a few. In the work

offered, *Untitled*, made in 2002, Khakhar employs complex spatial arrangement, bold use of color, and both the men and elephants are treated with equal reverence by the artist (estimate:\$ 120,000-150,000).



Featuring among the contemporary highlights in the auction is TV Santhosh's *Traces of an Ancient Error*, 2007 (estimate: \$150,000-200,000). Santhosh is internationally known as one of the rising stars of the contemporary Indian art scene with several exhibitions to his credit. His works capitalize on the attributes of post-modernism, and often address the subjects of war, catastrophe and modern society. Similar to Man Ray in his exploration of inverted negatives, Santhosh turns positive photographic images into their negative counterparts. During this process certain elements of the original image become unrecognizable and thus reveal an event's hidden implications.

The works of Bharti Kher are gaining increasing critical acclaim as one of India's key contemporary artists. Trained originally as a painter in the United Kingdom before moving to India, her range of work has extended to also include collage, sculpture, and digital photography. As depicted in *Untitled*, 2005, Kher uses the bindi, a symbolic and stylistic adornment in India, as her main aesthetic tool and transforms it to explore the issues between tradition and modernism (estimate: \$30,000-50,000).

Evolving from the realist tradition, Rameshwar Broota's works have gradually moved towards the abstract, as shown in *Traces of a Man-I*, (estimate: \$180,000-200,000). He has developed a unique way of painting by utilizing a sharp thin blade to bring in light and forms, giving his work a luminous and translucent look.

Other Contemporary highlights include Atul Dodiya's *Untitled*, a work commissioned for the exhibition *Visions of Landscape*, curated by Ranjit Hoskote, in which Dodiya focuses on the horizon and divides the landscape into earth and cosmos (estimate: \$120,000-150,000). Dodiya added a short text in Sanskrit from the Hindu scripture of the Upanishads, translating, "it moves, and it doesn't move, it is close and it is far away at the same time." The house at the bottom of the painting signifies the importance of belonging and returning to one's own roots.

Contemporary Pakistani art has witnessed a surging market and several artists from Pakistan are represented in the sale, including three paintings by Anwar Jalal Shemza; *Anarkali*, 1979, and *Royal Family*, 1977, and an untitled work from 1959 (each estimate: \$6,000-8,000). A contemporary of Francis Newton Souza and Avinash Chandra, Shemza exhibited with them in London's Gallery One.

Shemza drew his inspiration from opposite sides of the spectrum; Mughal traditions and Paul Klee. Zahoor ul Akhlaq is undoubtedly one of the most significant artists working out of Pakistan during the latter 20th century and influential to following generations. An untiled work by Akhlaq from 1987 uses geometry of the grid to attempt a universal message through the abstraction of a pictorial image (estimate: \$20,000-25,000). Nusra Latif Qureshi's *A Particular Suitable Place – 1*, 2007, juxtaposes traditional Muhgal, Pahari and Rajasthani imagery with symbols of power and hierarchy (estimate: \$5,000-7,000).

Auction:

South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art

20 March at 10:00am

Christie's New York, 20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10020

Public Viewing:

Delhi

The Oberoi Hotel, Zakir Husain Marg, New Delhi 110 003

21 February, 2008

Mumbai

Christie's Mumbai,

B-11 Dhanraj Mahal, Chhatrapati Shivaji Marg, Apollo Bunder, Mumbai 400 039

26 – 29 February, 2008

New York

Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

20 Rockefeller Plaza, New York NY 10020

14 – 19 March, 2008

Note: \$ denotes US Dollars.

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<http://cshk.myftp.org/Upload/SALE%201975-S%20Asian%20Modern%20and%20Contemporary%20Art/>

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*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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