

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

佳士得香港有限公司

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**EXCEPTIONAL SOUTHEAST ASIAN AND INDIAN PICTURES
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S HONG KONG SPRING SALE**



Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès (Belgium 1880–1958)
Ladies in the Garden
Signed 'J. Le Mayeur' (lower right)
Oil on canvas
35 x 47 in. (100 x 120 cm)
Estimate: HK\$2,400,000–2,800,000 (US\$307,700–359,000)

Southeast Asian and 20th Century Indian Pictures
25 April 2004

Hong Kong – Christie's Hong Kong Spring sale of Southeast Asian and 20th Century Indian Pictures on 25 April at the JW Marriott Hotel promises to be a visual feast of colours, styles and diversity. Continuing into its third year since its re-location to Hong Kong in 2002, the Southeast Asian Pictures section is presenting 92 works from Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.

Indo-European Pictures

Among the highlights is an exceptional work, Balinese Ladies in the Garden by the Belgian artist Adrien-Jean Le Mayeur de Merprès (estimate: HK\$2,400,000–2,800,000/ US\$307,700–359,000). The artist said of his settlement on Bali, "Except for a few journeys in the Far East, I never left the island. Why should I? Sir, I am an impressionist. There are three things in life that I love. Beauty, sunlight and silence. Now could you tell me where to find these in a perfect state than in

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Bali?" Balinese Ladies in the Garden is one rare find which testifies to both the artist's fascination of the island as well as his immaculate skill as an impressionist artist.

The work depicts the leisurely reposing sitter in the center of a Balinese garden with her company in a luxuriant tropical setting that affords the inter-play of the light and colours is an classic example of Le Mayeur's oeuvres during his Balinese period. As an increasingly rare find in the market, the present lot with an impeccable provenance of direct acquisition from the artist by the original owner will be a much anticipated lot.

Indonesian and Vietnamese Pictures

The Indonesia Modernist artists are best represented by the 'people's' artists, Affandi (Indonesia 1907-1990), Hendra Gunawan (Indonesia 1918-1983) and S. Sudjojono (Indonesia 1914-1986). Contemporaries of an exciting period which witnessed the fall of the Dutch colonial government and the birth of Indonesia as a young republic. These artists fervently expressed the new found freedom and identity of the people of Indonesia.

Affandi's Pohon Beringin (Banyan tree) is a good example of his spontaneous and expressionist style (estimate: HK\$450,000-650,000/ US\$57,700-83,300). The Banyan tree as a symbol of the creative power for the Indonesian is indeed portrayed as 'the spectacular, the wild and the emotive', with the twirling and swirling of the trees treated with such power that the outbursts of the artist's staccato stabs of paint are readily felt by the viewers.

Hendra Gunawan is an artist 'whose infatuation with his own people is lifelong'. Hendra is particularly enamored with the women and he celebrates female beauty unabashedly, the beauty that transcends the mere physical appearance but also highlights their inner strength. Hendra's Women with Fish (estimate: HK\$400,000-600,000/ US\$51,300-76,900) offered in the sale clearly portrays the eternal roles of women as 'nourishing, nursing, mothering beauties'.

S. Sudjojono's Pemandangan dekat Lido (Landscape near Lido) (estimate: HK\$90,000-140,000/ US\$11,500-17,900) is a rebel against the established aesthetics of the Mooie Indie (Beautiful Indies) propounded by the Indo-European artists and some of the first generation indigenous artists. The Mooie Indie school is often attacked by the Modernist artists as an over simplification and romanticisation of the Indonesian landscape and people, ever perceived as exotically beautiful in the foreign eyes. With Landscape near Lido, the landscape is depicted as an intimate and personable land, a homeland that tells a tale of the people and its history.

*The highlight in the Vietnamese section is the early and rare silk work by the first generation Vietnamese artist, Le Pho (1907–2001). This superb work titled *La fleur et l'oiseau* (Flower and Bird) is expected to realize HK\$140,000–180,000/ US\$17,900–23,100.*

Filipino Pictures

A strong selection of Filipino Pictures is featured in the sale, including works by Victorio Edades, Galo Ocampo, Fernando Amorsolo, Nena Saguil, Arturo Luz, Federico A. Alcuaz, Bencab, Vicente Manansala and Anita Magsaysay-Ho.

Magsaysay-Ho's Alternate Face of the Filipino Women in 'Six Senses'



Anita Magsaysay-Ho (b. The Philippines 1914)
Six senses
oil on canvas
48 x 36 in. (122 x 91 cm); 48 x 36 in. (122 x 91 cm)
Estimate: HK\$900,000–1,400,000
(US\$115,400–179,500)

*Amongst the highlights is the diptych titled *Six Senses* by Anita Magsaysay-Ho (born The Philippines 1914) (estimate: HK\$900,000–1,400,000/ US\$115,400–179,500). Anita bravely re-defined the images of women in her works. *Six Senses* is supposedly to be the only work she made in 1995, a re-visit thematically of a work she painted in the 70s – the *Five Senses* which reportedly won the artist an award. With the present work, the five senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are represented and added with the sixth faculty of the elusive and peculiar intuition – a faculty long perceived as a feminine quality. One would think this is a most appropriate allusion to feminine sensitivity for an artist who celebrates the beauty and the strength of women in all her works. Interestingly, the sixth sense of intuition or rather the artistic muses is represented by a little boy in the work. The boy who is the only male figure among the women is seen here playing a flute and sitting on the ground, he almost blends in with his garden environment.*

Manansala's Re-interpretation of Juan Luna

*Juan Luna *The Blood Compact* by Manansala (born The Philippines 1910–1981) is a definite highlight as the modernist artist pays his homage to the 19th century Filipino old master, Juan Luna (estimate: HK\$950,000–1,100,000/ US\$121,800–141,000). This masterpiece depicts the completion of a treaty of friendship between the Spanish explorer and conquistador Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, and Sikatuna, king of one of the Philippine islands (Bohol) in the 16th century. The*

treaty was sealed with a wine toast in which the signatories had shed a few drops of their blood as a token of their sincerity. The composition by Luna shows a lopsided emphasis on the Spanish presence and their constant threat of violence. Sikatuna's faceless figure is meant to remind the viewer that Filipinos would be anonymous and somehow worthless in the eyes of the Spaniards.



Manansala (born The Philippines 1910–1981)
Juan Luna The Blood Compact
Estimate: HK\$950,000–1,100,000
(US\$121,800–141,000)

Painted in the halcyon years of the Philippines economic development in the 1960s, Manansala transforms Luna's darkly brooding scene into a joyous moment. While acknowledging the historical baggage of the Philippine relationship with Spain, Manansala has imbued it with an atmosphere of friendship. The historical scene is presented with colours and in abstraction, Sikatuna's face is now partly visible and his hand is raised even higher than Legazpi's in a gesture of enthusiastic camaraderie. Created in the time period of a successful, rambunctiously independent new republic, Manansala bestows on Sikatuna a victor's generosity and celebrates the triumph of successful negotiations.

Both Manansala and Magsaysay-Ho's works stand out brilliantly on their own artistic merits but also as testimony of an exciting period in Filipino art history when established aesthetics are challenged and thus ushering a period of unprecedented creativity and pluralism.

20th Century Indian Pictures

The third sale of Indian Paintings in Hong Kong features a small but diverse group of works from some of India's leading modern artists. The sale begins with a lovely example of Jamini Roy's monochromatic works of a Mother and Child from the late 1940's. The work is characterized by strong bold lines and simplified forms that represent an emphasis on the compositional elements of the work (estimate: HK\$20,000–28,000/ US\$2,600–3,600).

The Progressives and their contemporaries form an important part of the selection of Indian paintings. Early works by Akbar Padamsee, Francis Newton Souza and Maqbool Fida Husain balance out works by Syed Haider Raza, Ram Kumar. M.F. Husain is represented with two very diverse early works. One is of a Rajasthani Couple (estimate: HK\$70,000–80,000/ US\$9,000–10,300) from 1961 and the other is a perfect example of his horses (estimate: HK\$150,000–200,000/ US\$18,000–24,000); masterful in its balance of strokes, composition and proportion. Akbar Padamsee's early head from 1965 demonstrates the artist's skill with a palette knife that lends a

strong three-dimensional element to the work. Three early works on paper by F.N. Souza focus on the artists' early fascination with the woman that continues into his later works.

*The second generation of modern Indian artists is represented through a strong selection of works by Sakti Burman, Anjolie Ela Menon and Ganesh Pyne. Sakti Burman's *The Greenish Light* is a characteristically colourful work that combines the world of fantasy with scenes from the world around him (estimate: HK\$160,000-180,000/ US\$20,500-23,100). *The Brahmin Boy* by Anjolie Ela Menon is a serene work that makes a powerful statement after the riots in Bombay in the early 1990's (estimate: HK\$60,000-70,000/ US\$7,700-9,000). Ganesh Pyne is represented with two works: a charming mixed media work of a Baul Singer (estimate: HK\$45,000-65,000/ US\$5,800-8,300) and a strong tempera entitled *the Torch Bearer* that addresses ancient stories of heroism from his childhood (estimate: HK\$140,000-160,000/ US\$17,900-20,500).*

*Two important works by Narayan Shridhar Bendre show the artist's diverse painting styles. *Vanjare*, an important work from the *Times of India Collection* is a striking example of his works on the gypsy women of Rajasthan (estimate: HK\$160,000-180,000/ US\$20,500-23,100), while the *Untitled landscape* explores Bendre's interest in the Western technique of Pointillism (estimate: HK\$140,000-160,000/US\$17,900-20,500). The work manages to capture the perfect Indian coastal fishing town with its graceful palm trees and rocking boats on the water.*

Notes to Editor

Pre-sale Exhibitions:

<i>Singapore</i>	<i>2 – 3 April</i>	<i>Grand Hyatt Singapore</i>
<i>Hong Kong</i>	<i>23 – 24 April</i>	<i>JW Marriott Hotel</i>

*Auction: Southeast Asian and 20th Century Indian Pictures, 25 April at 2:00 pm,
JW Marriott Hotel, Hong Kong*

More information about Christie's sale of Southeast Asian and 20th Century Indian Pictures can be found on www.christies.com. All lots from the sale can be viewed online along with full catalogue descriptions on Lotfinder®, which also allows clients to leave absentee bids. www.christies.com provides information on more than 80 sale categories, buying and selling at auction, complete auction results, and Christie's international auction calendar.

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Images available on request

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