

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Hannah Schmidt +44 (0) 207 389 2664 [hschmidt@christies.com](mailto:hschmidt@christies.com)

## A CELEBRATION OF SOUTH ASIAN MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART AT CHRISTIE'S IN JUNE 2008 LED BY:

- EXHIBITION OF 32 WORKS FROM THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF TINA AND ANIL AMBANI GO ON PUBLIC VIEW FOR THE FIRST TIME: 7-10 June 2008
- 12 WORKS OFFERED FROM HARMONY ART FOUNDATION (Founder and Patron Mrs Tina Ambani) IN ASSOCIATION WITH BARCLAYS WEALTH – PROCEEDS TO GO TO THE FOUNDATION'S FUTURE ACTIVITIES - CHRISTIE'S SALE: 11 June 2008 at 2.00pm
- MUSEUM QUALITY MASTERPIECES BY FRANCIS NEWTON SOUZA AND TYEB MEHTA LEAD CHRISTIE'S LONDON *SOUTH ASIAN MODERN + CONTEMPORARY ART* SALE – WHICH IS EXPECTED TO REALISE IN EXCESS OF £3.7 MILLION: 11 June 2008 at 2.00pm

**South Kensington** - Christie's London is proud to announce a particularly fresh and multi-faceted celebration of *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art* in June 2008. To coincide with the June auction,



Christie's is greatly honoured to curate and host an exhibition of works from **The Private Collection of Tina and Anil Ambani**. On public view for the first time, from Saturday 7 June to Tuesday 10 June, this collection of 32 works showcases a range of artists, from masters of the Progressive Artists Group era such as Maqbool Fida Husain, Tyeb Mehta and Syed Haider Raza, through to leading names in contemporary art including Atul Dodiya, Jitish Kallat, T.V. Santhosh and Riyas Komu. This exhibition provides a fascinating reflection of the discerning eye and strong, visionary tastes of its renowned owners (*Mrs Tina Ambani illustrated left*).

Coinciding with this exhibition, 12 works will be offered from **The Harmony Art Foundation in association with Barclays Wealth** as part of Christie's London sale of *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art* on Wednesday 11 June. The 12 works, led by Maqbool Fida Hussain's *Untitled* (estimate: £12,000-18,000) *illustrated right*, Francis Newton Souza's *Untitled*, 1956 (estimate: £15,000-20,000), H.G. Arunkumar's playful sculptures *Toys: Aeroplane- Car-Sprung Ball* (estimate: £15,000-20,000) and Navjot Altaf's powerful sculpture *December 15<sup>th</sup>*, 2000 (estimate: £18,000-20,000), are being auctioned. The proceeds will go to the future activities of the Foundation. These works are hoped to fetch in excess of £100,000. Elsewhere in **Christie's *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art* sale** on Wednesday 11 June 2008, a further 100 works from the leading 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>



century artists from South Asia, including artists from India and Pakistan will be offered. Highlights include Francis Newton Souza's *Birth*, 1955 (estimate: £600,000-800,000) *illustrated page five*, and Tyeb Mehta's *Untitled (Figure on Rickshaw)*, 1984 (estimate: £300,000-500,000), *illustrated right*, which are museum quality masterpieces and timeless examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century classic Modern styles, as well as key contemporary works such as Subodh Gupta's *Untitled*, 2007 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) *illustrated page five*. The sale as a whole is expected to realise in excess of £3.7 million.



These three dynamic aspects combine to provide 5 days at Christie's to explore, examine, engage and to be inspired by the art, artists, and philanthropists Tina and Anil Ambani, of one unique cultural region that continues to grow in artistic strength and international recognition.

## THE PRIVATE COLLECTION OF TINA AND ANIL AMBANI



Christie's is greatly honoured to curate and host an exhibition of 32 works from **The Private Collection Tina and Anil Ambani**, which are on public view for the first time, from Saturday 7 June to Tuesday 10 June at the spectacular new contemporary interiors of Christie's South Kensington. The definitive aesthetic vision and deep-rooted philanthropy of **Anil Ambani**, who is arguably corporate India's most recognized and internationally acclaimed businessman and his wife **Tina Ambani**, a successful actor in Bollywood speakeasy for the Hindi film industry prior to her marriage, have combined to form this superlative art collection that represents their support and commitment to art practice in India today.

**Tina and Anil Ambani:** *"This collection has evolved naturally from a desire to seek beauty and creativity in myriad forms and promote emerging talent in India. It gives us both enormous personal pleasure and pride to share this collection with art cognoscenti and connoisseurs. We hope this evokes a greater interest in Indian art - its diversity and virtuosity."*

**Hugo Weihe, Christie's International Director Asian Art and International Specialist Head Indian and Southeast Asian Art:** *"We are delighted and honored to have curated this exhibition of selected works from The Tina and Anil Ambani Collection. This is a first for Christie's. It provides a unique opportunity to view key works by many of the leading artists in India today, collected with true passion and a most discerning eye."*



The collection is a joyous celebration of the beauty and importance of the artworks themselves and what can be gained from them in both artistic style and also aesthetic pleasure. Works by masters of the **Progressive Artist Group** include **M.F. Husain's** *Untitled*, 1970 and rare work *Prophet*, 1954, **Tyeb Mehta's** extraordinary graphic image *Bull on Rickshaw*, 1999, which exemplifies Mehta's post-cubist style - employing minimal lines and opaque masses of colour to create single dominating forms, *illustrated left*. The trussed bull on its way to slaughter is one of the few recurring motifs in the artist's oeuvre. In this case the bull taken for slaughter precariously balanced on its mount serves as a metaphor for man's violent encounter with his own environment which Mehta has witnessed during Partition riots on the streets and communal violence. Key works by **S.H. Raza** are also featured, including his enigmatic *Surya*, 1974, *Domain*

and the hypnotic work *Bindu*, 1998. This work examines the 'beej' or cosmos that reverberates as 'naad' sound, signifying wholeness and continuity. In the mid-1970s, Raza shifted from an energetic expressionist abstraction to symbols derived from Indian geometric abstraction. In his painterly style however, Raza transcends the Indian *yantra* to gain a more universal expression.



From the leading names in contemporary art paintings include **Atul Dodiya's** hauntingly beautiful *Man Walking*, 1996, illustrated left and *Bapu Planting*, 1999, as well as **Jitish Kallat's** thought provoking diptych *Aren't We All Getting Spotted*, 2002, **T.V. Santhosh's** *The Milking Machine*, 2003 and **Riyas Komu's** *Systematic Citizen 9 to 9*, illustrated right. This is a rare opportunity to gain insight into the very personal artistic passion, finely discerning eye and highly developed tastes of its owners who are one of India's most powerful and important couples. Please see separate image sheet for full list of all works and artists to be exhibited.



## WORKS FROM THE HARMONY ART FOUNDATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH BARCLAYS WEALTH



In 1995, well before the surge of global interest in modern and contemporary Indian art, Tina Ambani created Harmony Art Foundation to provide a non-profit platform for emerging artists in the subcontinent and build bridges of understanding with other cultures and artistic perspectives. Many of today's prominent artists started their careers at Harmony, including Jitish Kallat, Anju Dodiya and Atul Dodiya. In support of this endeavour, on 11 June Harmony Foundation will be offering 12 works for sale at Christie's. The proceeds will be used to further the organisation's activities.

### HARMONY ART Foundation

**Mrs Tina Ambani, Founder and Patron of Harmony Art Foundation:** *"I am truly passionate about the Harmony Art Foundation; it aims to empower artists and sculptors in India by creating infrastructure for them to blossom, furthering exchange and dialogue through international collaboration; giving awards and holding residencies that promote Indian and international artists and sculptors; and offering private support for non-mainstream art forms like sculpture, environmental and video installation. Over time, the foundation wishes to create a keener sense of knowledge and sensitivity about the rich spectrum of contemporary art practices in the country. Going forward, the foundation aims to hold more events and workshops and work with museums and private collectors, in India and across the world. The collaboration between Christie's, Barclays Wealth and Harmony Art Foundation to sell these 12 works and raise funds will enable the foundation to achieve its mandate."*

**Dr Amin Jaffer, Christie's International Director of Asian Art:** *"I am delighted that Christie's, the world's leading art business, Harmony Art Foundation and Barclays Wealth have united in this significant collaboration which highlights the importance of philanthropy within the arts. The inspirational vision and commitment of founder and patron, Mrs Tina Ambani, have already made a positive impact in supporting artistic practice in the present day. Art crosses boundaries and unites people with a stimulating, shared appreciation of creativity and originality. Christie's is proud to facilitate the sale of works from the Harmony Art Foundation as part of the London sale of South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art on 11 June 2008 and we feel confident that with bidders around the world these works will raise significant funds to help the Foundation's future philanthropic projects."*



**Gerard Aquilina, Head of International Banking, Barclays Wealth:** “It is clear that India’s unprecedented rise on the global economic stage is being mirrored in the world of art. Our latest Insights report, titled “Evolving Fortunes”, shows that there will be 411,000 households with wealth in excess of US\$1 million in the country by 2017 from almost none in 2008. Barclays Wealth is proud to be supporting Christies

and Mrs Tina Ambani in raising awareness of Indian contemporary art in this innovative way, and crucially, the important work of the Harmony Art Foundation.

*We work closely with our clients to help them understand how art can enrich their lives and hence this exhibition provides an ideal opportunity to showcase not only some of the best up and coming talent, but raise cultural and social awareness of Indian art too amongst an influential audience.”*

The 12 works have estimates ranging from £3,000 through to £20,000, making this an accessible group of works, with fascinating provenance, which will excite both new and established collectors. They are led by



Maqbool Fida Hussain’s *Untitled* (estimate: £12,000-18,000), Francis Newton Souza’s *Untitled*, 1956 (estimate: £15,000-20,000), H.G. Arunkumar’s playful sculptures *Toys: Aeroplane- Car-Sprung Ball*, which are brass and nickel coated, 2006 (estimate: £15,000-20,000) *illustrated left*, and Navjot Altaf’s powerful sculpture *December 15<sup>th</sup>*, 2000 (estimate: £18,000-20,000).

Other works range from Anupam Sud’s set of three sensuous etchings *Draupadi’s Vow; Couch Potato; Infiltrators*, 2006 (estimate £8,000-12,000) and Akbar Padamsee’s *Head*, 2006 (estimate: £8,000-10,000), to Dhruva Mistry’s *Moving Mountains - 2* bronze 1988-1990, edition 3/5 (estimate: £8,000-10,000) and *Spatial Diagram*, stainless steel and paint 2005-2006, variation 7 (estimate £6,000-8,000) *illustrated below right*.

Rameshwar Broota’s photograph *Untitled - 14*, 2007; edition 9/9 (estimate £6,000-8,000), Ambreen Butt’s *Daughter of the East*, from the ‘*Dirty and Pretty*’ series, 2008 (estimate £3,500-4,500), Farhad Hussain’s *Untitled*, 2008 (estimate £3,000-4,000) and Dhruvi Acharya’s set of three watercolours *Metamorph II (I); Metamorph II (II); Metamorph II (III)*, 2008 (estimate £3,000-4,000), are also sure to attract great interest. *Please see separate image sheet to view all works to be offered from the Harmony Art Foundation in association with Barclays Wealth.*



Tina Ambani has combined her own artistic energies with sponsorship from the Reliance ADA Group, channelling resources towards the Harmony Art Foundation, which organises annual non-profit selling exhibitions and the Harmony Art Show, India’s largest annual private contemporary art show. Over the past 13 years, the show has attracted over half-a-million people and provided a platform to a wide range of artists from all over India who are at different points in their careers; it has nurtured emerging talent, and made the acquisition of art a simpler, linear process by creating an accessible environment where the artist and collector - amateur or seasoned - can find each other. In recent years, the Harmony Art show has sought to emphasise the link between art and wider society by fostering a sense of responsibility and commitment towards the underprivileged. The Foundation is associated with social welfare organisations that exhibit the creative talents of underprivileged children at its shows.

## CHRISTIE'S SOUTH ASIAN MODERN + CONTEMPORARY ART SALE:



Christie's *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art sale* on Wednesday 11 June 2008, features a total of 112 works - including those offered from the Harmony Art Foundation in association with Barclays Wealth - from the leading 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century artists from South Asia and artists from India and Pakistan. Highlights include Francis Newton Souza's *Birth*, 1955 (estimate: 600,000-800,000) *illustrated below* and Tyeb Mehta's *Untitled (Figure on Rickshaw)*, 1984 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) *illustrated page two*, which are museum quality masterpieces and timeless examples of 20<sup>th</sup> century classic Modern styles, as well as key contemporary works such as Subodh Gupta's *Untitled*, 2007 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) *illustrated left*. The sale as a whole is expected to realise in excess of £3.7 million.

### **Yamini Mehta, Christie's Senior Specialist, South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art, London:**

*"The market for Indian art is very strong. It has incredible depth because it started as a market that was supported by Indians worldwide and now is picking up steam internationally. We are very excited about the selection in the sale as it includes many exceptional works and masterpieces with universal appeal."*

**Modern works:** *Birth*, 1955 (estimate: £600,000-800,000) *illustrated right*, is a masterpiece by the founder of the **Progressive Artists Group**, **Francis Newton Souza**. This painting exemplifies the artistic essence of Souza and is his most important work to come to auction. The property of a Private American Collection, this painting was submitted for *The Guggenheim Painting Award* in 1958 and also part of the London Commonwealth Institute of Art's *Indian Painting Now* touring exhibition in 1965; in 2005 Souza became the only Indian artist to have a room dedicated to his works at Tate Britain. The excellent provenance, beauty and content of this work are sure to create great excitement amongst both institutions and private collectors.



**Tyeb Mehta's** *Untitled (Figure on Rickshaw)*, 1984 (estimate: £300,000-500,000) *illustrated page two*, is another leading highlight within the sale. Mehta's iconic Rickshaw series underscores the anonymity and isolation of the common laborers; his paintings reflect his own disillusionment with the world around him. The powerful content of Mehta's works is heightened by his unique formal treatment of the canvas. As with Souza's *Birth* this painting played an important part in the development of Indian art and is museum quality; always in fierce demand, this work by Mehta is likely to attract competitive bidding.



A further key work is **Rameshwar Broota's** *Havaladar -III*, 1980 (estimate: £90,000-120,000) *illustrated left*. This painting reflects Broota's visual transition from his earlier ironic 'Gorilla Man' to his 'Primordial Man', who symbolizes the universal substance of the human being. This was executed during the period when Broota discovered his signature technique of layering flat monochromatic pigment and then scratching and scraping at the surface with the sharp edge of a broken blade. Other strong modern works include **Maqbool Fida Husain's**

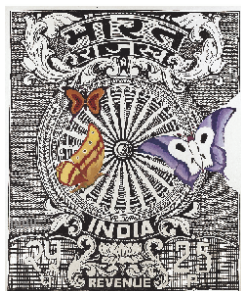


*Untitled*, circa 1970 (estimate £120,000-160,000) *illustrated right*, and **Gandhi - Man of Peace**, 1969 (estimate: £100,000-150,000), as well as **Syed Haider Raza's** *Rajput House*, 1965-1966 (estimate: £80,000-120,000) and **Sadequain's** *Untitled*, 1985 (estimate: £20,000-25,000).

## Contemporary works:

**Subodh Gupta's** *Untitled*, 2007, edition 2/3 is the star lot amongst the contemporary art offered and is estimated to realize between £300,000 and £500,000, *illustrated top of previous page*. Epitomizing his artistic vocabulary, which is firmly rooted in the vernacular of everyday India, this work is made of stainless steel and stainless steel kitchen utensils: milk pails, washing buckets, tiffin boxes, chappati tongs and daal strainers; durable items which are familiar to all echelons of Indian society and often part of the bridal trousseau. Gupta sees these gleaming mass-market commodities as symbolizing India's struggle for an equilibrium between urban/rural; wealth/poverty; socialism/capitalism; low caste/high caste and religion/secularism.

Addressing another aspect of contemporary society, **Ravinder Reddy's** sculpture *Head* (estimate: £60,000-80,000) explores the traditional and the contemporary in both theme and material. Made from fiberglass and enamel paint rather than traditional materials such as clay, plaster and gold leaf, Reddy references Jeff Koons, whilst thematically addressing the issue of maintaining reverence and adherence to tradition whilst being under pressure from society to achieve femininity and beauty through makeup, clothing and hair styling.



*Attached Wings*, 2004 by **Ashim Purkayastha**, (estimate £40,000-60,000), is a stunning mixed media work which has been exhibited in Mumbai at the Sakshi Gallery's dedicated show in 2004 and also in London at the Aicon Gallery's *New Wave – Contemporary Art from India* show in 2007. Born in Digboi, Assam, to Bengali refugees, Purkayastha later moved to New Delhi, where he was able to view and dissect the contemporary culture of the Indian Republic's bustling capital with the discerning eye of an outsider. Inspired by the current socio-political situation, he sorts through imagery of Indian daily life, identifying

overlooked items such as stamps and re-contextualizes them to reveal political and social messages. Elsewhere in the sale other contemporary works include **T.V. Santhosh's** *Untitled*, 2005 (estimate: £30,000-50,000), **Justin Ponmany's** *Staple agony - II (Plastic Memory)*, 2006 (estimate: £30,000-50,000) and **Anita Dube's** *Offering*, 2000 (estimate: £5,000-£7,000).

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Images available on request

Visit Christie's on the web at [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)

### Notes to editors:

#### **Exhibition of The Private Collection Tina and Anil Ambani:**

Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3LD: Saturday 7 June – Tuesday 10 June 2008

#### **Auction of South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art including works from the Harmony Art Foundation in association with Barclays Wealth**

Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, SW7 3LD: Wednesday 11 June 2008 at 2.00pm

**Viewing:** Christie's South Kensington: Saturday 7 April & Sunday 8 June: 10.00am-4pm  
Monday 9 April & Tuesday 10 June: 9.00am-5.00pm

#### **About Harmony Art Foundation:**

Harmony Art Foundation was established to provide a non-profit platform for emerging artists in the subcontinent and build bridges of understanding with other cultures and artistic perspectives. The Foundation organises the Harmony Art Show, India's largest annual private contemporary art show. For the past 13 years, Harmony has showcased the work of nearly 1,500 artists—at different points in their careers—and attracted over half-a-million visitors. More significantly, it has nurtured emerging talent, created awareness about Indian art, and made the acquisition of art a more simplified, linear process by creating an enabling environment where the artist and collector can find each other. In recent years, the show has sought to emphasise the link between art and wider society by fostering a sense of responsibility and commitment towards the underprivileged. The Foundation aims to empower artists and sculptors by creating infrastructure for them to grow and blossom. It also promotes

international collaboration to further exchange and dialogue. To this end, the Foundation holds residencies that promote Indian and international artists and sculptors, and offer private support for non-mainstream art forms like sculpture, and environmental and video installation. Over time, the foundation wishes to create a keener sense of knowledge and sensitivity about the rich spectrum of contemporary art practices in the country.

For further information about Harmony Art Foundation, please contact: Preeti Ambani: [preetiambani@harmonyindiart.com](mailto:preetiambani@harmonyindiart.com) or Usha Bhatia: [ushabhatia@harmonyindiart.com](mailto:ushabhatia@harmonyindiart.com)

#### **About Barclays Wealth:**

Barclays Wealth, the UK's leading wealth manager by client assets, has £132.5bn client assets globally, at 31 December 2007. It serves affluent, high net worth and intermediary clients worldwide, providing international and private banking, fiduciary services, investment management and brokerage. Thomas L. Kalaris is the Chief Executive of Barclays Wealth and he joined the business at the start of 2006. It was voted Global Investor's Wealth Manager of the Year for 2007.

Barclays is a major global financial services provider engaged in retail and commercial banking, credit cards, investment banking, wealth management and investment management services with an extensive international presence in Europe, the USA, Africa and Asia.

With over 300 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 50 countries and employs over 134,000 people. Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for over 27 million customers and clients worldwide.

For further information about Barclays Wealth, please visit our website [www.barclayswealth.com](http://www.barclayswealth.com)

#### **About Christie's**

Christie's is the world's leading art business with global auction sales in 2007 that totaled £3.1 billion/\$6.3 billion. This marks the highest total in company and in art auction history. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's conducted the greatest auctions of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, and today remains a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 600 sales annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$80 million. Christie's has 85 offices in 43 countries and 14 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Dubai and Hong Kong. Most recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.