

Press Release

CHRISTIE'S

For Immediate Release

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**A CELEBRATION OF SOUTH ASIAN MODERN +
CONTEMPORARY ART AT CHRISTIE'S IN SEPTEMBER**



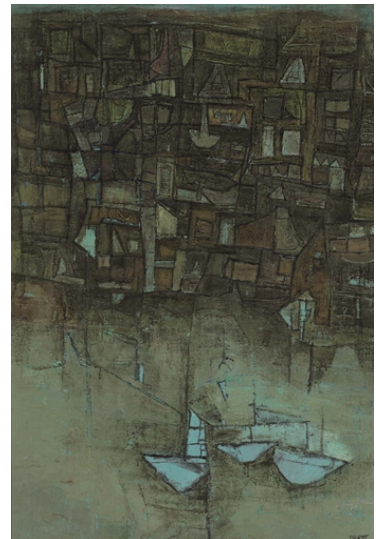
Tyeb Mehta (1925-2009)
Two Figures, 1994
Estimate: \$600,000-800,000

**South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art
September 16, 2009**

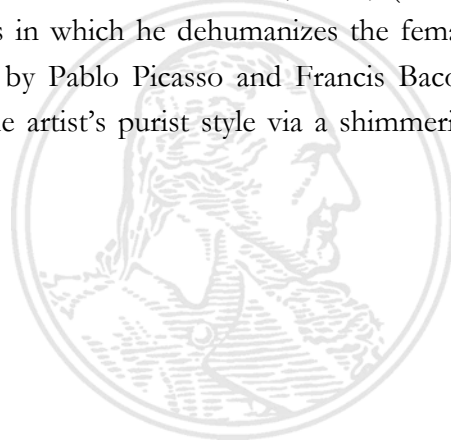
New York – On September 16, Christie's *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art* sale will feature over 100 works from the leading 20th and 21st century artists from South Asia, including artists from India and Pakistan. The sale will focus on prime examples of many different movements and styles and highlights will include works from modern masters Tyeb Mehta, Francis Newton Souza, Syed Haider Raza and Ram Kumar as well as works from leading contemporary artists Rashid Rana, Jitish Kallat, Thukral & Tagra among others.

Christie's pays tribute to Tyeb Mehta (1925-2009), who recently passed away, and with whom Christie's shared a great friendship as well as many successes. The September sale celebrates his genius by presenting works from different periods of his oeuvre. The cover lot of the sale is *Two Figures*, a signature work from 1994 estimated at \$600,000 to \$800,000 (*illustrated on page 1*). The painting bears a strong relation to the themes from Mehta's *Celebration*, which sold at Christie's New York in September 2002. The theme draws inspiration from the Charak festival, the Spring Festival of the Santhals, celebrated in Eastern India. Another notable highlight is Mehta's *Mahishasura* (estimate: \$600,000-800,000), which refers to the traditional Hindu tale of the Warrior Goddess Durga slaying the Buffalo Demon, Mahisha. Another version from this series realized \$1,584,000 in September 2005 at Christie's New York and established a world auction record for a Contemporary Indian painting. It was the first work in the category to break the million dollar mark.

Ram Kumar apprenticed with Fernand Léger in Paris during the 1950s and was inspired by Modigliani, which is evidenced in one of his last figurative works *Untitled*, 1960 (estimate: \$70,000-90,000). Ram Kumar was then to abandon figuration after a pivotal journey to Benares, a city by the banks of the Ganges, which is reflected in *Untitled (Benares)*, 1963 (*illustrated right*- estimate: \$60,000-80,000). The work is painted with an architectural formalism that in reality would be chaotically teeming with bathers and pilgrims. Benares as the Eternal City has since pre-occupied the artist for over four decades and he described his first visit to the city as having "...left an everlasting impression on my artistic sensibility."



The auction further includes an excellent selection of Modernist works led by Syed Haider Raza, Francis Newton Souza, and Vasudeo S. Gaitonde. Raza's *Le Maquis*, 1965, (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) meaning scrub or bush, is an important work from Raza's abstract expressionist period. Painted in shades of yellow and green, the work represents his childhood memories of his home in the deep, warm forest of Kakaiya, India. Souza's *Nude with Mirror*, 1963, (estimate: \$300,000-500,000) is a unique work from the early 1960s in which he dehumanizes the female nude with a violent expression similar to the faces painted by Pablo Picasso and Francis Bacon. Gaitonde's *Untitled* (estimate: \$150,000-200,000) displays the artist's purist style via a shimmering, uncluttered composition.





Rashid Rana is one of the best known multi-media Pakistani contemporary artists and his *Red Carpet- 2* (illustrated left- estimate: \$120,000-180,000) is paradoxically an object of gruesome beauty. The work imitates the pixelated architecture of an actual carpet, which is created from hundreds of composite images of goats being slaughtered, arranged to form a stunning impression of the traditional carpets of the region. Amongst a fine group of Modern and Contemporary Pakistani works featured are *Sunrise* (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), a 1968 canvas by Sadequain (1930-1987), who was one of Pakistan's best known and most prolific painters and *Untitled* (estimate: \$60,000-80,000) by Jamil Naqsh (b.1939), which depicts his long-time companion and fellow painter Najmi Sura holding a bird.

Jitish Kallat has emerged as one of India's leading artistic voices and *Dawn Chorus- 7*, 2007 (illustrated right- estimate: \$80,000-100,000) is his most celebrated series. In this work, Kallat found inspiration from young boys peddling goods to commuters in the crowded Bombay streets. He replaced the boys' hair with towering, tightly packed cityscapes celebrating their resilience and entrepreneurship. Elsewhere in the sale other contemporary works include Anju Dodiya's *Opus*, 2007 (estimate: \$80,000-100,000), Bhupen Khakhar's *Shabrukh with Southern Stars (Two sided cut-out figure)*, 2000 (estimate: \$40,000-60,000), and Thukral & Tagra's *Phone Now +91 114174 0215*, 2006 (estimate: \$25,000-35,000).



Auction: South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art
Viewing: Christie's Rockefeller Galleries

September 16 at 10 am
September 11-15

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2008 that totalled £2.8 billion/\$5.1 billion. For the first half of 2009, art sales totalled £1.2 billion/\$1.8 billion. 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 450 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 53 offices in 30 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in

emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the Middle East, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium

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Images available on request

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