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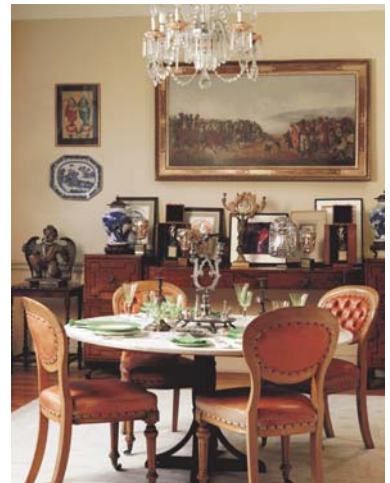
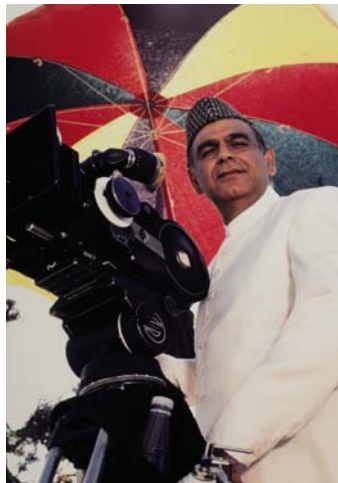
CHRISTIE'S

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**THE COLLECTION OF
LEGENDARY FILM PRODUCER
ISMAIL MERCHANT
TO BE OFFERED AT CHRISTIE'S IN OCTOBER 2009**



The Ismail Merchant Collection

Auction: 7 October 2009 at 10.30am

South Kensington, London – Christie's will offer the collection of legendary Academy Award winning film producer Ismail Merchant (1936-2005) on 7 October 2009 at their South Kensington salerooms. Ismail Merchant had a long and distinguished career working with the film director James Ivory. Their company, Merchant Ivory Productions, won 6 Oscars and 6 BAFTAs, making such major films as *A Room with a View*, *Howard's End*, *The Remains of the Day* and the classic *Shakespeare Wallah*. Julie Christie, Paul Newman, Daniel Day-Lewis, Maggie Smith, Shashi Kapoor, Anthony Hopkins, Glenn Close, Julianne Moore, Uma Thurman, Emma Thompson, Vanessa Redgrave, Charlotte Gainsbourg and Ben Kingsley are just some of the renowned actors who starred for the celebrated team during their 41 year career. Merchant Ivory cast the then unknown actors Felicity Kendal, Greta Scacchi, Hugh Grant and Helena Bonham Carter in their first starring roles.

The auction will offer works of art from Ismail Merchant's residences in London, Paris and upstate New York, as well as a small selection from his New York apartment. Estimates will range from £500 to £100,000, and the objects on offer will reflect his fascination for the

encounter between Eastern and Western cultures as is evident in the Indian and European paintings, furniture, works of art and the collection of textiles and Indian shawls for which Merchant had a particular passion. The leading highlight is an unusually large painting showing a group of Indian Thugs against a landscape by the Hungarian artist August Schoefft (1809-1888) who painted the famous portrait of Maharaja Sher Singh now in the Lahore Fort (estimate: £50,000 to £70,000) (*illustrated below*). The auction will also offer a small group of film memorabilia including some props from various Merchant Ivory films such as the bookcase which fell on Leonard Bast (Samuel West) in *Howard's End* and a replica of Pablo Picasso's 'L'Homme a la Guitare' from *Surviving Picasso*.

Amin Jaffer, International Director of Asian Art at Christie's: *"Ismail Merchant, the legendary producer, was a passionate collector with wide intellectual and artistic tastes. He lived with a striking and stimulating mix of exotic works of art, many of which reflect the subjects of his films. We look forward to presenting his private collection to the public in October. The exhibition and auction will be a testament to this great man and his distinguished taste."*



Ismail Merchant was born in Mumbai in 1936. He was educated at Saint Xavier College before leaving for the United States to study for a Masters degree in business at New York University but ever since childhood he had been drawn to the world of cinema. While still a student in New York, Ismail Merchant established himself as a film producer. At the age of 23 he made a theatrical dance short, *The Creation of Woman*, which secured an Academy Award nomination in 1961. En route to the Cannes Film Festival from Los Angeles, he stopped over in New York where he first met Ivory. A month later, together with the Booker Prize winning novelist and screenwriter Ruth Praver Jhabvala, they founded Merchant Ivory Productions. They made over forty films together until Ismail Merchant's death in London in 2005. Merchant and Ivory are in the Guinness Book of World Records as having had the longest creative partnership in film history and during their long and distinguished career, they won 6 Academy Awards, 31 Oscar nominations and numerous other international awards.

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