

For Immediate Release

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CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK ESTABLISHES NEW WORLD AUCTION RECORD FOR A CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PAINTING: TYEB MEHTA'S *MAHISASURA* SELLS FOR \$1,584,000

New York – Today's sale of *Indian and Southeast Asian Art Including Modern and Contemporary Indian Art* set a new world auction record for modern and contemporary Indian art when Tyeb Mehta's *Mahisasura* was bought by an Indian private collector living in North America for \$1,584,000, against a pre-sale estimate of \$600,000-800,000. This is the first time a contemporary Indian painting sells at auction for more than \$1,000,000 and the result quintuples the previous world auction record which was set at Christie's New York in 2002 when *Celebration*, a painting by the same artist, achieved \$317,500, becoming the first contemporary Indian painting to have ever surpassed the \$100,000 price limit.

Mahisasura refers to the traditional Hindu tale of the Warrior Goddess Durga slaying the Buffalo Demon, Mahisha. However, Mehta's interpretation recasts Mahisha in this striking red/black/white painting, as a sympathetic figure in a seductive embrace with Durga, symbolizing the spiritual transformation after union with the divine.

Tyeb Mehta (b. 1925), was part of the vanguard Progressive Artists Group that drew stylistic inspiration from European masters – especially Francis Bacon in Mehta's case - while re-interpreting distinctly Indian themes post-Independence in 1948. He is not a prolific artist due to his highly exacting and meticulous standards. The artist, who was present during the sale, launched his monograph - featuring *Mahisasura* on its cover - at Christie's last Sunday.

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