

CHRISTIE'S

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The Estate of Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi
Property from the Collection of Rashna Imhasly-Gandhy and Behroze Gandhi
Leads Christie's First Auction in India

A TRIBUTE TO THE PIONEERING GALLERISTS WHO
SHAPED INDIA'S MODERN ART SCENE

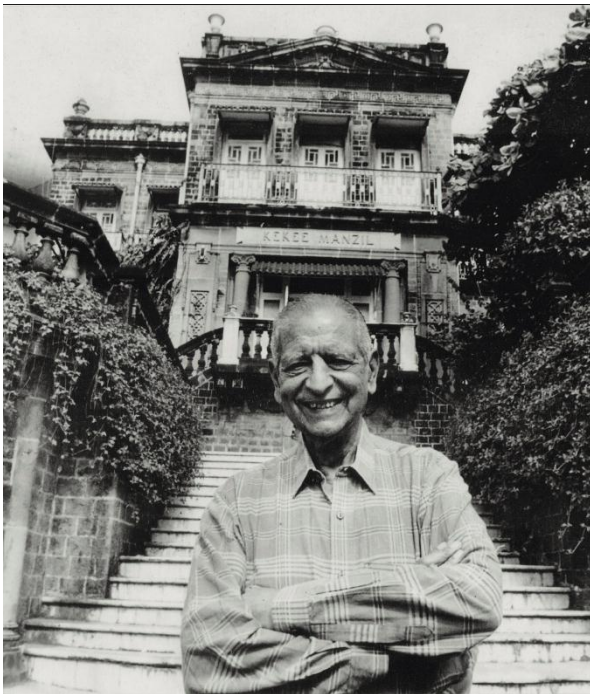


VASUDEO S. GAITONDE (1924-2001), *Untitled (Landscape)*, 1949
Estimate: INR8,00,000-12,00,000 / (US\$13,000-19,400)

Christie's sale in India is sponsored by Credit Suisse

London / Mumbai – Works from the personal collection of the late Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi, Mumbai-based gallerists and among the most significant figures in the development of India's modern art scene, will be the centerpiece of Christie's first auction in India. Artists represented from their collection include V.S. Gaitonde, Ram Kumar, S. H. Raza, Tyeb Mehta, M.F. Husain and Jamini Roy. The sale will be held at The Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai on Thursday, 19 December 2013 with a preview exhibition at The Taj Mahal Hotel in New Delhi from 7-9 December.

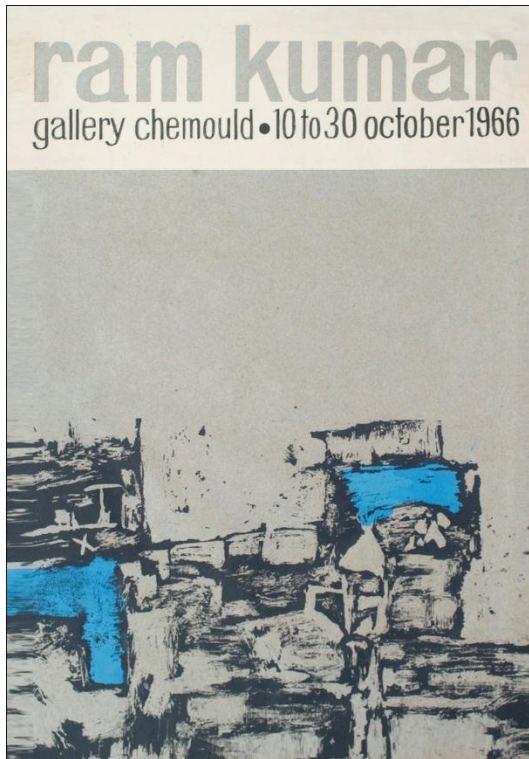
Hugo Weihe, International Director of Asian Art at Christie's said: *"Together Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi, initially through their framing business and later on at Gallery Chemould, prepared the framework for young artists to thrive. The value of their support and patronage to this group is reflected among the works of art in their collection – from the Husain family portrait, the view by Ram Kumar of the hills near their holiday home to the early Gaitonde landscape shown above. Each is a tribute to friendships made and the central role that they played in shaping the modern Indian art scene. I will never forget Kekoo's vivid eye and the deep sense of humanity that he exuded, his passion for art and his openness. It is hard to imagine the careers of the great names of modern art without the encouragement of the Gandhi's and it is a measure of their vision in the early 1960s that their Gallery, under the stewardship of their daughter, continues to show contemporary art today."*



Kekoo Gandhi (1920-2012) ran a highly successful frame company, Chemould, with his Belgian business partner from premises in Princess Street, Mumbai. Alongside the core business he used the space to champion the works of the emerging artists of the modern art movement working in the city. His passion for art became the main focus of his life from the late 1940s and a second shop selling frames and showcasing new art was opened in Calcutta in 1950. In 1963, together with his wife, Khorshed, the Gallery Chemould was opened inside the Jehangir Art Gallery in South Bombay, where it is still holding exhibitions for emerging Indian artists today. This marked a turning point for Kekoo as he was able to leave the running of the manufacturing business to his brother and focus on his passion - bringing people together to talk about art.

From the late 1940s Kekoo organised the Bombay Art Society Salon exhibition, held monthly, often at the Taj Mahal Palace, where the Christie's sale will be held. At the same time, Gandhi became a key advisor to the new government in India on the development of the arts, organized the third All India Art Conference held in Bombay Town Hall in June 1948 and began writing a regular art newsletter. Exhibitions were held at his gallery for the key figures of the Progressive Artists Group, the artists now considered 'National Art Treasures' and The Bombay Group. His legacy is threefold – he established a gallery for modern artists in Bombay, spread the word about their work around India and was among the pioneers who took the best art from India to the world by organising two international travelling exhibitions and gallery shows in Europe.

Many of the works in the sale hung in the spectacular ancestral home of the Gandhi's, where Kekoo was born and died. It was known as Kekee Manzil, a nickname given to him by his grandfather who built the grand villa in 1921 (Mr. Ghandy is shown above outside his home). It was the gathering place for many of the modern artists represented by the Gallery and is in the Bandra area of Mumbai, overlooking the sea.



There are many beautiful works in the collection, all with a story about the unique friendships or mutual admiration which the Gandhi's enjoyed with the artists they helped to champion. The first lot in the sale is a wonderful early landscape by Vasudeo S. Gaitonde (1924-2001), painted shortly after he left the School of Art in Bombay in 1949 and a testament to the Gandhi's early support of modern Indian art. *Untitled (Landscape)* is estimated at INR 8,00,000-12,00,000 (Lot 1 - US\$13,000-19,400- shown on page 1).

Ram Kumar (b. 1924) was introduced to Khorshed and Kekoo Gandhi by M.F. Husain and exhibited with Gallery Chemould in Bombay and Delhi through the 1960s and 70s. It was also with Husain that Kumar first visited Benaras in 1960 to sketch the famed holy city on the banks of the River Ganges. An oil in the sale from the 1960s entitled *Benaras* shows a tightly packed mass of architectural forms, etched out of the impasto background by Kumar's assured line, hugging a river bank. Like the austere sky

above these uninhabited structures, the river before them is grey and unwelcoming (Lot 4 - INR 35,00,000-45,00,000 / US\$57,000-72,900). The flyer shown here is from one of the many exhibitions Husain held at the Gallery Chemould.

Syed Haider Raza (b. 1922) was a great personal friend to the Gandhi family and was a regular visitor from his home in Paris. He once came for six months and set up a studio at Kekee Manzil. On one visit he and his wife visited the Gandhi's family home in Matheran, a hill station about 90 km from Mumbai and this canvas, suitably entitled *Matheran* and dated 1976, was certainly inspired by that visit. Drenched in the characteristic red hues thrown up by the soil there, the landscape was a great inspiration for Raza and this work is included with an estimate of INR 1,00,00,000-1,50,00,000 (Lot 9 - US\$162,000-243,000).

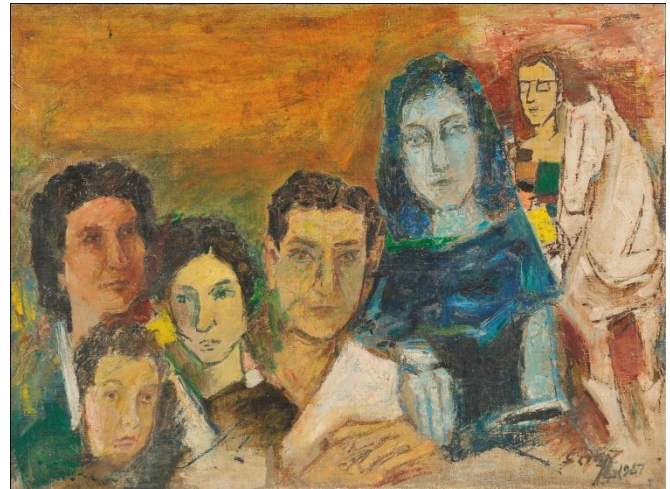




Shown here at the bottom of the staircase at Kekee Manzil is this striking composition of a *Falling Figure* by Tyeb Mehta (1925-2009). This subject, often revisited by Mehta, was born out of a traumatic memory from childhood when he witnessed the violent death of a man in the street during the Partition riots of 1947. Painted in 1991, this painting exhibits Mehta's mastery of composition and economy of line and colour. The acrylic on canvas is estimated at INR3,00,00,000-5,00,00,000 (Lot 10 - US\$486,000-810,000).

By Jamini Roy (1887-1972) is his *Untitled (Head of a Woman)*, a gouache on card portrait showing Roy's ability to strip away the superfluous and make the elegance of his composition and intense concentration on colour, the focus. It is this style of painting for which he is best known, a revolutionary re-interpretation of traditional South Asian iconography through clean, crisp, modernist lines, (Lot 22 – estimate: INR 2,00,000-3,00,000 / US\$8,000-11,300).

An intimate *Untitled (Family Portrait)* of the Gandhi's by M.F. Husain (1913-2011), whilst not the most valuable piece by the artist in the collection, is certainly the most personal. He lovingly portrays the family - Kekoo and Khorshed Gandhi with their four children Rashna, Adil, Behroze and Shireen with Adil sitting on a horse – a playful inclusion of the animal that was so integral and iconic within his oeuvre. The oil, painted in 1967, is valued at INR25,00,000-35,00,000 (Lot 25 – US\$40,500-57,000).



The collection also includes works by Ganesh Pyne, Pilloo Pochkhanawala, Nalini Malani, Nasreen Mohamedi, Anju Dodiya and Arpita Singh.

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PRESS CONTACT:

Alexandra Kindermann | Zurich | + 41 44 268 1019 | akindermann@christies.com
Emma Cunningham | London | + 44 207 389 2496 | ecunningham@christies.com
Prianka Sen, Flint PR | New Delhi | + 91 9899598586 | prianka.sen@flint-pr.com

Notes to editors:

If you are interested in attending the press preview in either New Delhi or Mumbai, please register your interest with one of the team above.

Public Exhibition dates:

7-9 December in New Delhi at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mansingh Road

17-19 December in Mumbai at the Taj Mahal Palace

Sale date:

19 December at the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai

<http://www.christies.com/departments/indian-art/mumbai.aspx>

#ChristiesIndia

About Christie's and Indian Art

Christie's has consistently offered the finest Indian works of art since James Christie, the charismatic founder of the firm, offered 'four fine India pictures painted on glass' in his inaugural sale on 5 December, 1766. Growing interest in Indian Art led to the opening of Christie's first representative office in India in 1994. The following year, Christie's held its first stand-alone Indian Art sale in London. Today Christie's holds regular sales in New York and London and is the market leader in all categories of Indian art. Collectors from India make an increasingly important contribution to the global art market across international categories. This year alone, Christie's has lent its support and international reach to the India Art Fair in January and to the Homelands exhibition, organised by the British Council and exhibited in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru. In July, Christie's announced that they would hold their first India Sale in December 2013.

About Christie's

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, the company has since provided a celebrated showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions 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 \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong and the latest additions Shanghai and Mumbai. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in growth markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.

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