

CHRISTIE'S

THE ART PEOPLE

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FROM CLASSICAL TO CONTEMPORARY INDIAN ART

AS LEADERS OF THE SOUTH ASIAN MODERN + CONTEMPORARY ART MARKET IN INDIA

CHRISTIE'S WILL BE EXPANDING THEIR INDIAN ART SALE BY INCLUDING CLASSICAL ART FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS DECEMBER IN MUMBAI

Mumbai – Christie's announce that its third consecutive India Sale, to be held in Mumbai on 15 December, will include a section dedicated to Classical Indian Art. This extended sale offering commemorated the 20th anniversary of Christie's presence in India. This strategic auction extension was enhanced by the recent stellar results achieved for Indian antiquities included in the March auction of the Robert Hatfield Ellsworth Collection in New York, realising a total of \$134 million, to date the most valuable private collection of Asian Art to be offered. By including classical art to Christie's third India Sale the company will lend its international standards to this burgeoning domestic market.

William Robinson, International Head of World Art declared: *"When we made the bold move in 2013 to hold our first sale in India we had hopes of including Indian Classical Art in our auctions in the near future. With the necessary licenses now in place, we are excited to bring our longstanding expertise in this category, which has for so long been one of the cornerstones of our business, to our sales in India. As these objects are not able to be exported, but can still be exchanged in India, they will be safeguarded, and through the cataloguing process they will be properly identified and, for the time they are on exhibition, available for all to see and enjoy."*

One of the most important works of art offered in the sale is a buff sandstone figure of the dancing Ganesha, the lovable and mischievous elephant-headed deity. The theme of the dancing Ganesha captivated the sculptors of Central India, resulting in the production of some of the liveliest examples between the 8th and 11th centuries. This Ganesha is carved with voluptuous form as well as a sense of joyful elegance and agility. This signature piece of the sale is amongst the finest of its type (estimate: INR 60,00,000-70,00,000/illustrated right). The sculpture section also contains a magnificent life-size early Chola granite dvarapala figure formerly in the collection of the noted dancer Yamini Krishnamuthi (b. 1940 / estimate: INR 1,20,00,000-1,20,00,000 /illustrated above).

At the heart of the miniature paintings selection is a group that comes directly from the ancestral collections of the Maharajas of Bikaner. Very well preserved by the dry desert air, these are a reminder of how cosmopolitan Bikaner was in its heyday. Not only does the group include typical elegant depictions of Krishna and



palace life, but also two paintings that clearly illustrate the direct influence of Golconda (present day Hyderabad) in the Deccan. The group also contains two fanciful depictions of Europeans that relate closely to those painted on the ceilings of the Phool Mahal in the Fort of Bikaner (estimates range from INR 2,00,000-12,00,000).

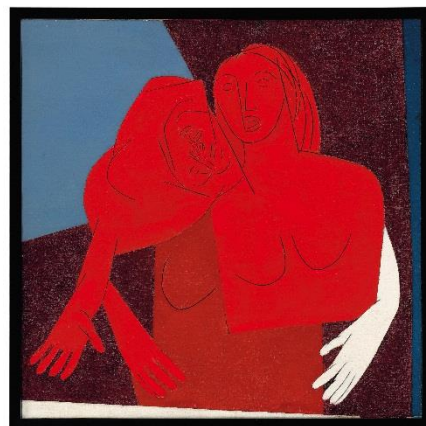


Throughout 2015, Christie's South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art team has been able to offer some rare and unique works of art, resulting in new world auction records for Maqbool Fida Hussain and Gaganendranath Tagore set in London in June, as well as the second highest price at auction for Amrita Sher-Gill. More recently, Christie's also established a new world auction record for any modern Indian work of art sold at auction when Francis Newton Souza's *Birth* sold for US\$4,085,000 in New York this September.

Featuring exceptional works of modern and contemporary South Asian Art, The India Sale will comprise approximately 80 lots from important private and corporate collections. The auction includes modern masterpieces by Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, Ram Kumar, Nasreen Mohamedi, Manjit Bawa, Nandalal Bose, Abanindranth Tagore and Gaganendranath Tagore. Gaitonde's radiant painting from 1995, *Untitled* maintains a delicate balance of light, texture, colour, and space, which makes the artist's paintings lyrical and luminous. With their virtually imperceptible gradations of pigment and enigmatic forms, which seem to spontaneously emerge from and disappear under the almost liquid surface, Gaitonde's canvases elicit new discoveries with each viewing. A recent retrospective at the Guggenheim in New York, which opened at the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice this month, brought Gaitonde's work to an international audience, and followed on from Christie's debut Mumbai auction in December 2013, in which a 1979 painting by the artist sold for INR 23,70,25,000 (\$3.7 million) setting a new world auction record for the artist.

Tyeb Mehta's *Untitled (Two Figures)* painted in 1981, represents an important turning point in the artist's work, illustrating a growing complexity in composition and the facility of line. In this modernist masterpiece, the heavily textured impressionistic brushstrokes from his early days are completely transformed into a new painting mode. Illustrating the transition between Mehta's diagonal works and his later variations on the theme of the Mother Goddess, in this painting large expanses of flat earthy and vibrant colours are paired with a conscious two-dimensionality focused more on line than contour.

Further announcements about the sale will be made in due course.



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About Christie's and Indian Art:

- 2015 marks the 20th consecutive year of Christie's selling South Asian Modern and Contemporary art
- Christie's has a presence in the country since 20 years
- Christie's are the only international auctioneers to hold sales regularly in India
- The Indian Art specialist team is based in Mumbai, New York and London
- In the September 2015 South Asian Modern + Contemporary sale in New York, 44% of lots were either sold or directly underbid by collectors on the internet. The average price per item sold online was \$49,000
- Christie's hold the world auction records for works by F.N. Souza, Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, S. H. Raza, M. F. Hussain and many other artists
- The 2014 auction in Mumbai was 97% sold

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in the first half of 2015 that totalled £2.9 billion / \$4.5 billion. In 2014, Christie's had global auction and private sales that totalled £5.1 billion/\$8.4 billion, making it the highest annual total in Christie's 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 has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers around 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 & Contemporary, Impressionist & Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery.

Christie's has a global presence with 54 offices in 32 countries and 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, 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.

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