



CHRISTIE'S

PRESS RELEASE | MUMBAI

CHRISTIE'S FOURTH INDIA SALE WILL BE LED BY

The Collection of Abhishek and Radhika Poddar

"I don't know why I collect. But I enjoy doing it. Often, I look at a piece and feel that if I don't have it, there would be something missing in my life"



Mumbai – Christie's fourth consecutive India Sale in Mumbai will take place on 18 December at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and will be led by one of the most important collections of modern Indian art put together over the past thirty years. Abhishek and Radhika Poddar have built one of India's most comprehensive collections of modern and contemporary art, antiquities, folk and tribal art, textiles, craft, design and photography. Their collecting has always been based on an innate respect for the arts and a drive to learn about and document the country's diverse cultural landscape and reflects their longstanding personal relationships with a multitude of artists, gallerists and scholars, as well as their own deep knowledge and unrelenting effort to train their eyes and hone their tastes.

A total of 41 lots will be offered from this collection, including important works by Tyeb Mehta, Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Ganesh Pyne, Meera Mukherjee, Bhupen Khakhar and several other modern Indian artists. The reason for parting with these works is that Abhishek and Radhika Poddar are currently expanding their collection in new and exciting directions.



Tyeb Mehta, Untitled (Diagonal), 1975

This work, painted in 1975, epitomizes one of Tyeb Mehta's longest lasting and most important series. Shortly after the artist abandoned his expressionistic painting style, he began work on a series in which each painting's composition was built around a thick oblique line running right to left, oftentimes rendered over his figures. In these works, the 'diagonal' allows a single figure to adopt different forms on each side, giving Mehta the flexibility to explore different means of representation in a single painting (estimate: INR 10,00,00,000-15,00,00,000)

According to the artist, "My encounter with minimalist art was a revelation. Let's say there must have been a point of saturation in my work before I went to New York, which my confrontation with the contemporary art scene brought to the surface. I was open to new ideas. About the same time, I became interested in using pure colour. Normally brush marks suggest areas of directions. I wanted to avoid all this to bring elements down to such a minimal level that the image alone would be sufficient to speak for itself."

(Artist statement, N. Ty-Tomkins Seth, *Tyeb Mehta: Ideas, Images, Exchanges*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 342)

Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Untitled, 1973



An uncompromising artist of great integrity, Vasudeo S. Gaitonde distanced himself from anything he deemed superfluous to the contemplative rigour he believed his art required. Following a 1964 trip to New York on a Rockefeller Fund Fellowship, where Gaitonde experienced the works of several Abstract Expressionist and Conceptual artists first hand, his style began to evolve. Over the next decade, his paintings explored the relationships between form, light and colour in a diligent, yet sophisticated manner.

This painting showcases Gaitonde as painter and philosopher at the zenith of this exploration. Completed shortly after he moved from Bombay to Delhi, this work represents a mature, confident and resolved vocabulary (estimate: INR 10,00,00,000-15,00,00,000). Scrupulously manipulating finely graded pigments, the artist coordinated their convergences and reactions on the canvas with precision, leaving nothing to chance. The multi-layered result of this process illuminates Gaitonde's deep interest in the methodology of painting itself.

Abhishek Poddar: One of India's Youngest Collectors

Born and raised in a business family in Calcutta, Abhishek Poddar became familiarised with the basic notion of collecting and living with art at a young age. In 1980, Abhishek left home for The Doon School, the legendary boarding school for boys in the Himalayan foothills of Dehradun. At Doon, he frequented the art school, and established the school's first art magazine. *Akshat* underlined Poddar's early grasp of the various genres and geographies of the art world. After the magazine was launched, Abhishek made it a point to meet and thank all of the artists who contributed to the magazine, setting in motion several personal relationships and further introductions that influenced the course of his collecting.

Building Relationships and a Collection

One of the most important of the relationships Abhishek forged was with the painter Manjit Bawa, who played a pivotal role in his and Radhika's journey in the art world. In 1987, Poddar arrived on the doorstep of Bawa's studio in Delhi, and a friendship was in the making. Bawa introduced him to the works of artists including Tyeb Mehta, Jagdish Swaminathan, Arpita Singh, Paramjit Singh, Krishen Khanna, Himmat Shah, Mrinalini Mukherjee, Ravinder Reddy, Atul Dodiya, Amitava Das and Dhruva Mistry among others. Dissuading Abhishek from buying only his own work and looking instead at the work of other artists, Bawa helped hone his instincts and focus his collecting.

Other artists whom Poddar met and befriended and played an influential role in the evolution of his collection were Ram Kumar, Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Maqbool Fida Husain, Tyeb Mehta, Meera Mukherjee, Arpita and Paramjit Singh, Bhupen Khakhar, K.G. Subramanyan and Jogen Chowdhury. Poddar's long friendship with Husain, for example, began by coincidence when, at the age of fourteen, he spotted him on the road outside his Calcutta home. Recognising his bearded countenance and bare feet from photographs the teenager invited Husain home for tea. Since then, the artist regularly stayed with the Poddars in Calcutta, and remained in touch with Abhishek till a few days before his death in 2011.

In 1988-89, Poddar spent a few months in Bombay, working at a bank. All his weekday evenings after work, were spent either with Kekoo Gandhi at Gallery Chemould next door to his office, or at the homes of Jehangir Sabavala and Akbar Padamsee. On the weekends, Poddar would venture to Bandra to spend time with the artists N.S. Bendre, K.K. Hebbar and Prabhakar Barwe. With Gandhi, who would introduce him as 'India's youngest collector', he met artists Sudhir Patwardhan and Gieve Patel, and other patrons like Jehangir Nicholson and Kavas Bharucha.

Beyond the Collection

Joking that he was soon going to run out of wall space, Poddar convinced his artist friends to experiment with other media and genres through his commissions, including designs for textiles, carpets and dhurries, jewellery, screens, etched mirrors, silver and crockery. Several artists also created pieces especially for Radhika, first as wedding gifts and then as tokens of their friendship with her. Apart from drawings and paintings, Meera Mukherjee hand-embroidered *kantha* dupatta for her with an intricate village scene, and Jogen Chowdhury, Jagdish Swaminathan, Arpita Singh and Shuvaprasanna Bhattacharya designed saris for her. Radhika also turned one of the tapestries Abhishek commissioned Raza to design into wearable art, adding black silk to turn it into a striking sari border. The Poddars continue to commission their artist friends to create unique pieces for the family.

###

NOTES TO EDITORS

A full highlight press release will be available early November.

Christie's Indian Art Sale

18 December

At the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai

Preview exhibitions

New Delhi–2 to 4 December at The Taj Mahal Hotel, Number One Mansingh Road

Mumbai–15 to 17 December at The Taj Mahal Palace Hotel

CONTACT: Alexandra Kindermann | +41 79 1014196 | akindermann@christies.com
Rooparna Coomar | 022 6638 7261 | rooparna.coomar@indivamarketing.com
Nyssa Desai | 022 6638 7261 | nyssa.desai@indivamarketing.com

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction, private and digital sales in the first half of 2016 that totalled £2.1 billion / \$3 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Christie's offers around 350 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.

2016 marks Christie's 250th anniversary. 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. Click [HERE](#) to view a short film about Christie's and the 250th anniversary.

Christie's has a global presence in 46 countries, with 12 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Mumbai. 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.*

###

Images available on request

FOLLOW CHRISTIE'S ON:

