

PRINSEPS
MODERN



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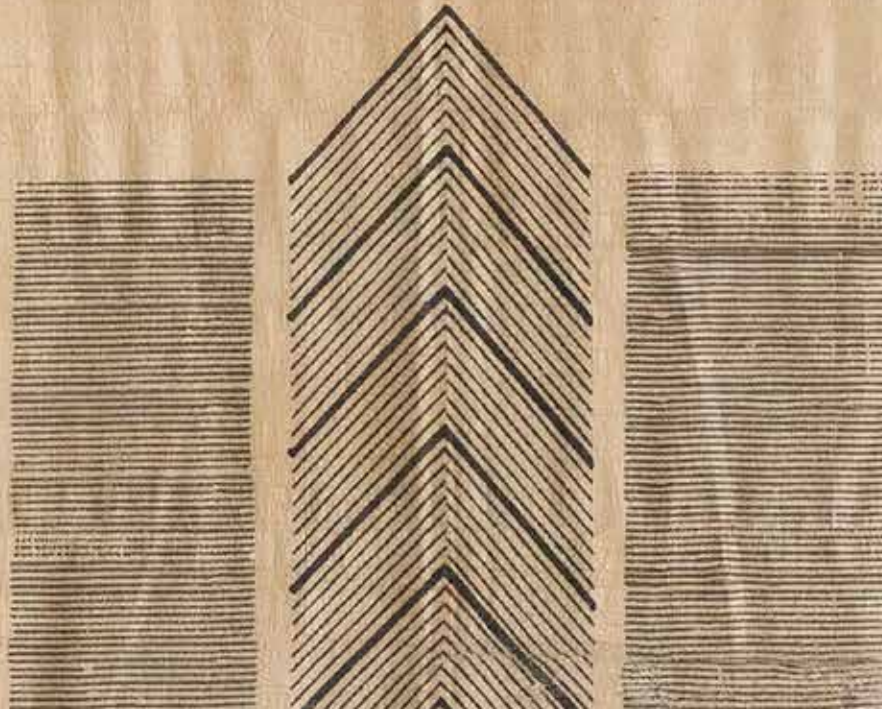
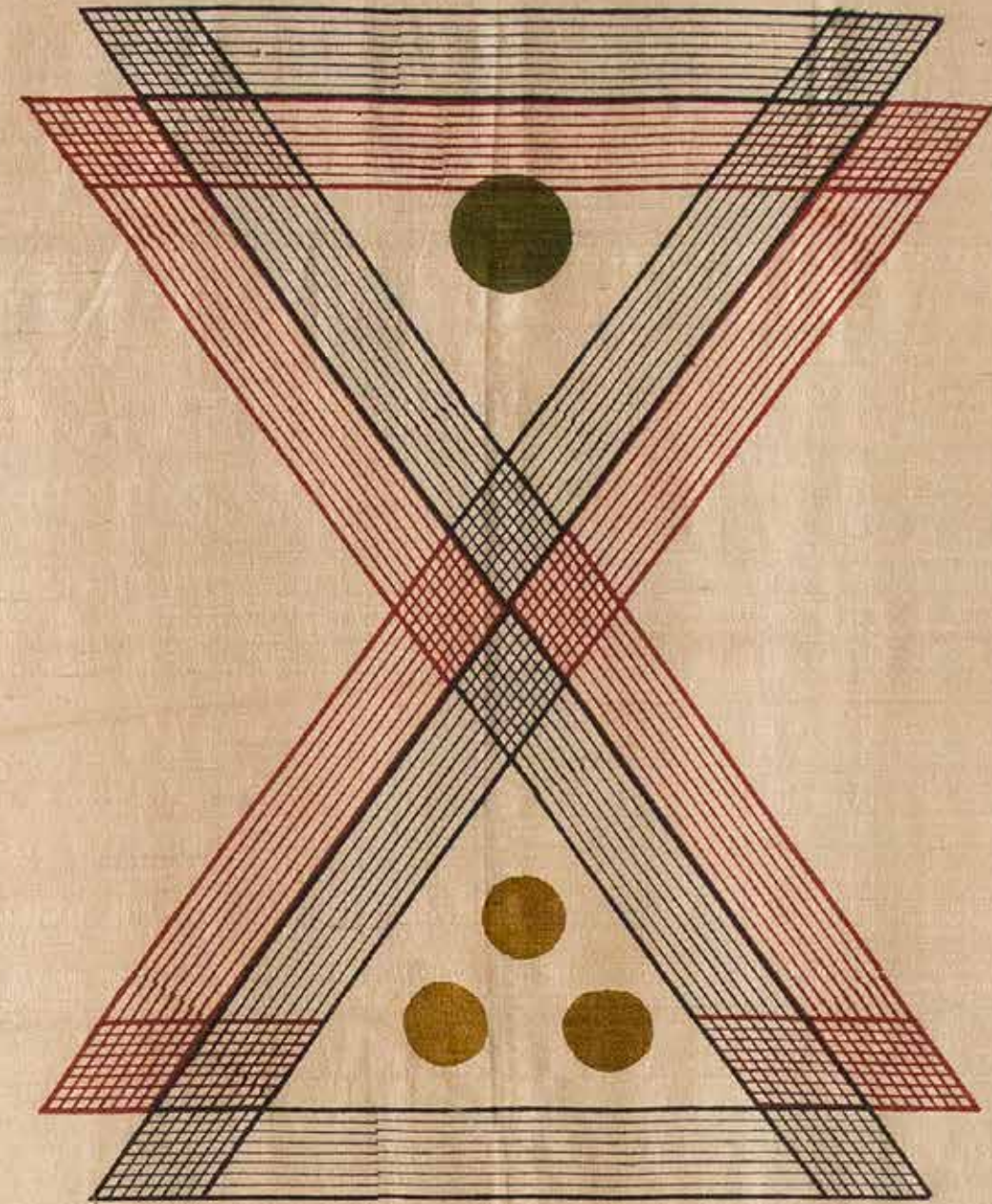
F. N. SOUZA
KRISHEN KHANNA
ATUL BOSE
A. A. RAIBA
SOMNATH HORE

R

JAMINI ROY
SUNAYANI DEVI
K. G. SUBRAMANYAN
MANJIT BAWA
PRABHAKAR BARWE

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SEPTEMBER 2022




P R I N S E P S

MODERN ART

21st September 2022 | 7 PM

www.prinseps.com

Prinseps is delighted to announce its annual Modern Indian Art auction comprising a total of thirty-six exemplary works. Modern Art in India spans an era when artists were breaking away from what was indoctrinated. They were developing their own style, gaining formal training as well as expressing their socio-political struggles. This was an age of coming into their own for Indian artists, searching for an identity, depicting a sense of pride for their motherland and roots and, most importantly, bridging the long gap between the pre-colonial era and post India’s independence.

Prinseps prides itself as a research driven auction house, in constant quest for the hidden gems. We search for the great Indian artists who have been overlooked and have not received their due for their amazing contributions in the saga of Indian art history. In a short period of time, Prinseps has become a platform of trust with a reputation par excellence. As a platform of discovery, each art work in our modern art auction is a rare collectible, a piece to admire and cherish, an investment with unmatched provenance.

Modern art in a country as culturally diverse as India is extremely varied. Our auction provides the discerning collector a glimpse into the numerous visionary artists of the time. A stunning Francis Newton Souza, ‘Head’ takes center stage as the cover of our auction catalogue. The mixed media on paper work with a tinge of green, was created in the 1950’s by the progressive artist. This was a time in his life when he was exploring figurative art and painted several heads. Similarly, the Progressive artist, Krishen Khanna’s early work, a beautiful piece signifying ‘Treaties’ is part of the Prinseps Modern Indian auction.

Another captivating piece is a large, rare Prabhakar Barwe abstract work. A mixed media on cloth work, testimony to the artist’s unique amalgamation of abstractionism and modernism. Manjit Bawa’s, Untitled work, a piece of art, depicting his love for free form and his play with colour, Abdul Aziz Raiba’s painting titled Muslim Couple, a beautiful, captivating work, providing a glimpse into his love for Mughal and Rajput art and his overall artistic oeuvre. GR Santosh’s scintillating piece of art, Prosanto Roy’s, Waterfalls, a beautiful watercolour wash on paper work, captivating the Bengal influence, with the cascading, sublime waterfalls, set in an almost mystical and magical manner.

Estates of greats such as Rathindranath Tagore, Bhanu Athaiya, Gobardhan Ash, Somnath Hore, Lalitha Lajmi, AA Raiba have been consigned to Prinseps over a short period of time. The responsibility of these legacies has enabled us to serenade artists who were an integral part of India’s Modern Art period. We invite you to be part of this historically enriching journey!

Brijeshwari Kumari Gohil

Modern Art Auction

Auction is open for proxy bidding.
Live Auction commences at **7:00 PM** on **21st September (Wednesday) 2022.**

Lots will be closed sequentially.
Bids can be placed in writing, by online, and via telephone.

Lot No	Opening Time (India)	Opening Time (US Eastern)	Opening Time (US Pacific)	Opening Time (UK)	Opening Time (Honkong)	Opening Time (Japan)
1-36	7:00 PM	9:30 AM	6:30 AM	2:30 PM	9:30 PM	10:30 PM

Lot #1

RAMENDRANATH CHAKRAVORTY (1902-1955)

FACE

Wash tempera
Signed lower right
9.5 x 7 in.
Circa 1920

Estimate : 50,000 - 2,00,000 INR

Lot description

Ramendranath Chakravorty was a pioneer of early modernism in Bengal. Born in Tripura the artist was trained at the Government School of Art in Calcutta and at Kala Bhavan (Santiniketan). He met his mentor Nandalal Bose at Santiniketan having previously trained under Abanindranath Tagore and Asit Kumar Haldar. Soon Chakravorty developed an interest in etchings and also continued to create a number of wood-cuts and lino-cuts. An important printmaker of his time Chakravorty was academically trained in the European tradition but attracted to the Japanese style of observation. This particular portrait of a woman is an early tempera during his academic training in Kolkata.



Lot #2

K. G. RAMANUJAM (1941-1973)

UNTITLED (Queen)

Ink and wash on paper
11.5 x 8 in.
Circa 1960

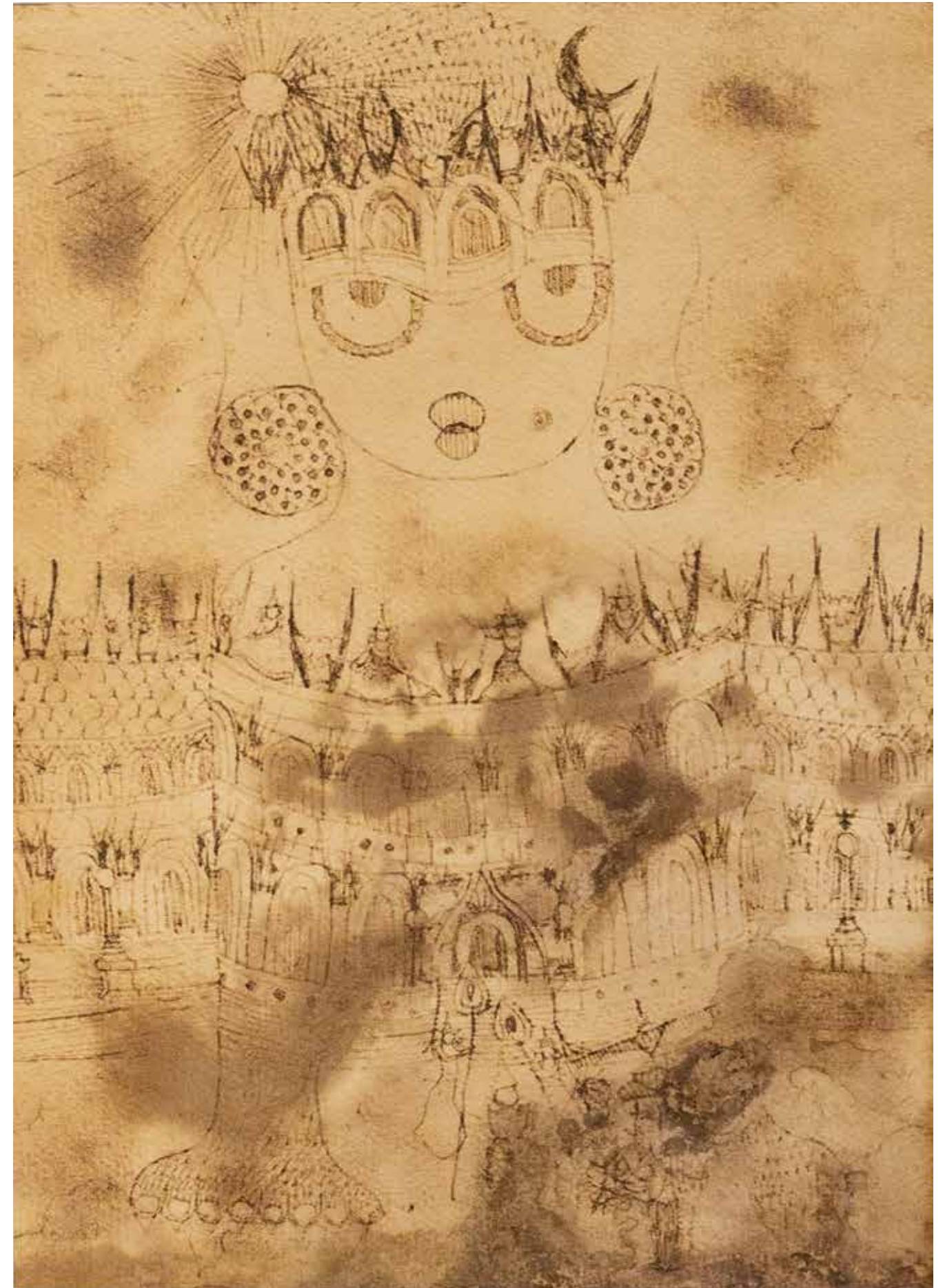
Estimate : 8,00,000 - 10,00,000 INR

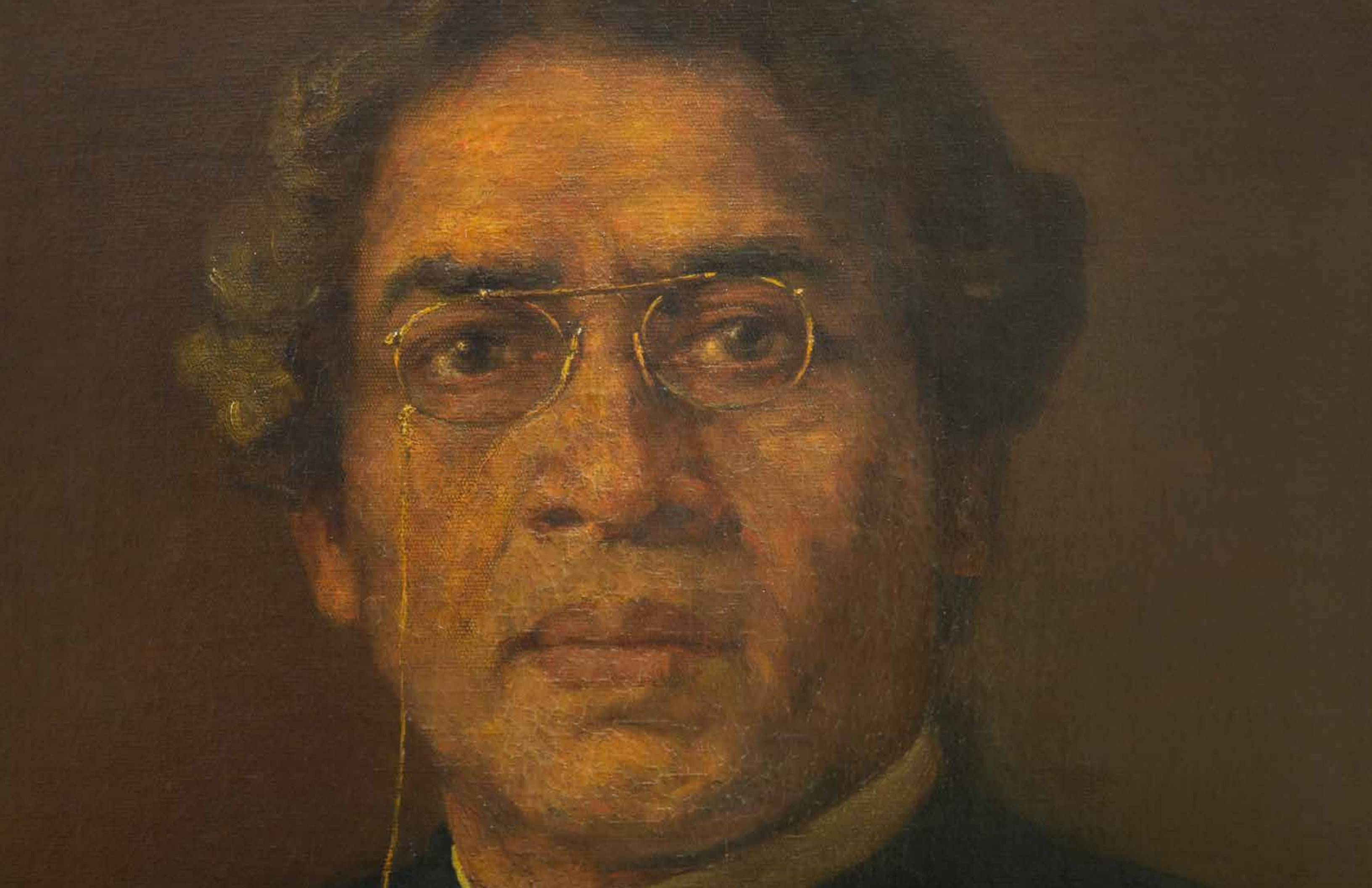
Lot description

Born in Chennai in 1941 K Ramanujam is known for his line drawings in black and white. The artist lived in his own world of fantasy that was often expressed through his art. He often combined the personal the absurd and the eternal; fusing all of those elements in a single artwork.

Provenance

Christie's 2016.





Lot #3 Overseas Lot

ATUL BOSE (1898-1977)

PORTRAIT OF ACHARYA JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE

Oil on canvas
Signed lower right
18.5 x 15.8 in.
Circa 1950

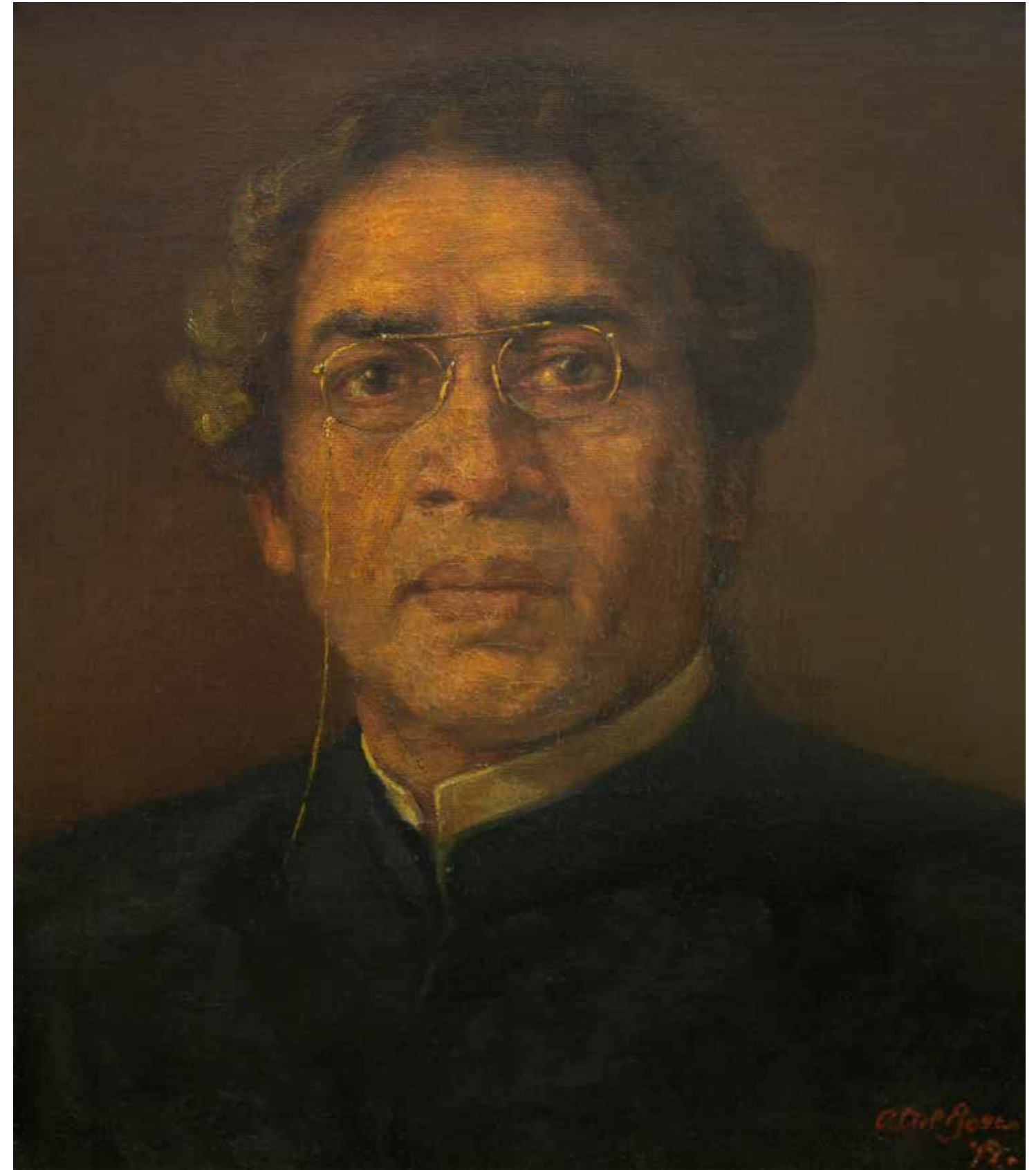
Estimate : 25,00,000 - 30,00,000 INR

Lot description

An oil portrait of Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose; a scientist and writer of science fiction. One can observe the influence of European realistic painting here. Such portraits can only be seen at institutions like the Parliament House.

Provenance

Estate of Atul Bose. Thence by descent.



Lot #4

NIKHIL BISWAS (1930-1966)

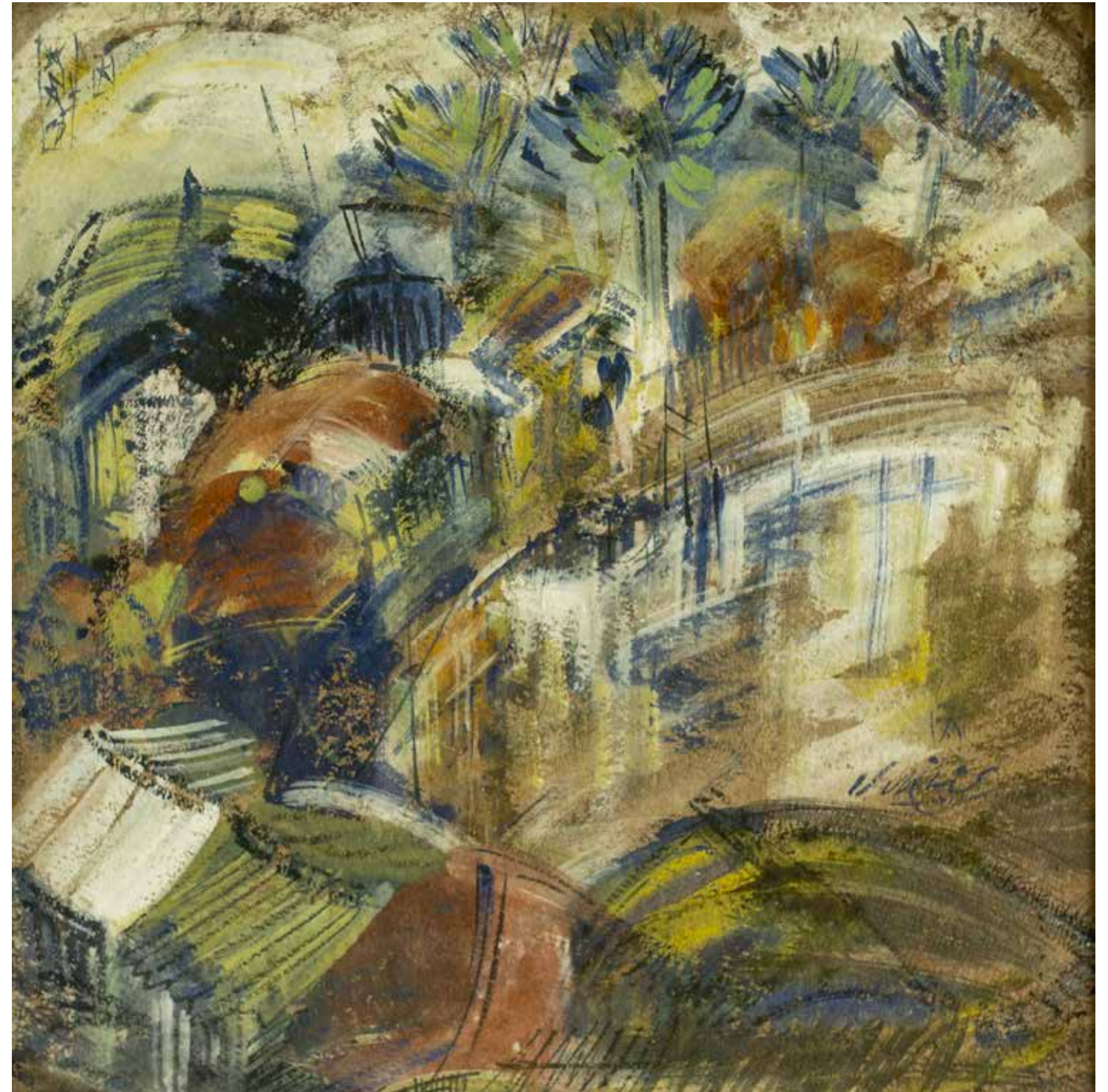
LANDSCAPE

Watercolour
Signed lower right
25 x 25 in.

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

Nikhil Biswas was a Calcutta-born artist and studied at the Government College of Arts and Crafts. The artist was one of the founders the Calcutta Painters Group and the Society of Contemporary Artists. His works elicit a deep understanding of the human predicament. His body of work is intense and rare given his untimely death at a young age.



Lot #5

GOBARDHAN ASH (1907-1996)

UNTITLED (Village Scenes)

Watercolour

Signed lower right ; Signed lower left ; Signed lower right

9 x 8 in. ; 10 x 7 in. ; 10 x 7 in.

1952

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 2,50,000 INR

Lot description

A set of three early and rare watercolours by master artist Gobardhan Ash with vivid depictions of a village household.

Provenance

Originally acquired from the Retrospective Exhibition of the artist held in Birla Academy for Art and Culture.





Lot #6

SUNAYANI DEVI (1875-1962)

UNTITLED (Shiva Parvati)

Watercolour / tempera on paper
9 x 8.5 in.

Estimate : 8,00,000 - 12,00,000 INR

Lot description

Sunayani Devi was an Indian painter born into the Tagore family. She started painting at the age of 3 after being inspired by the Tagore brothers. Her works were inspired by Indian mythology and her life in a Bengali household. She is celebrated as the first woman modern artist to champion rural and folk art.

Exhibited

Painting Freedom: Tagore, Jamini and Hemen – India's Modernist Rebels, Leicester Museum & Art Gallery, United Kingdom, 11/09/21 to 21/11/21.

Das Bauhaus in Kalkutta, Bauhaus Dessau Museum 26/03/13 to 30/06/13.

Rabindranath Tagore's Influence on Modern Indian Art, Nehru Centre, London 07/10/11.

Published

Art of Bengal: Past and Present, CIMA 2000, p.133.

Provenance

Kishore Chatterjee & Maitreya Chatterjee collection (by direct descent from the artist).



Lot #7

K. LAXMA GOUD (b.1940)

HEAD

Edition 3/7, Bronze
12 x 12.5 in.
Inscribed lower centre

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 2,50,000 INR

Lot description

Born in Nizampur Andhra Pradesh Laxma Goud honed his skills at the Government College of Fine Arts and Architecture in Hyderabad and M.S. Univeristy in Baroda. His body of work is rich in rural sensibilities and elements derived from his childhood. He worked in various mediums including gouache prints pastels and sculptures. Goud navigated his works through an urban lens hence resulting in a fusion of village nostalgia the erotic and the surreal. His figurative works oscillated between myth and memory.

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist.



Lot #8

F. N. SOUZA (1924-2002)

THE SECRET

Acrylic and oil on board
Signed upper left
24 x 36 in.
1984

Estimate : 40,00,000 - 60,00,000 INR

Lot description

Francis Newton Souza was born in 1924 in Saligao Goa. He was expelled for participating in the Quit India Movement while studying at the Sir J J School of Art in Mumbai. In 1947 he founded the Progressive Artists' Group along with S H Raza M F Husain and K H Ara among others. Souza's style created thought-provoking and powerful images. This composition depicts F.N. Souza's preoccupation with the relationship dynamics between a man and woman, a recurring theme throughout his oeuvre.

Provenance

Originally acquired from Dhoomimal Art Gallery.



Lot #9

GANESH PYNE (1937-2013)

UNTITLED (Lady)

Pastel on paper
Signed lower left
10 x 7 in.
1987

Estimate : 4,00,000 - 6,00,000 INR

Lot description

An intensely private artist, Ganesh Pyne’s oeuvre comprises intricate ink works haunting temperas and jottings rich in imagery and symbolism. Pyne started his artistic career after enrolling in the Government College of Art and Craft in Kolkata in the 1950s. His art is deeply rooted in dark unsettling images derived from mythology and dreams.

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist.



Lot #10

SHYAMAL DUTTA RAY (1934-2005)

SADHU VERSO FIGURES

Watercolor
Signed lower left
21.5 x 28.5 in.
1966

Estimate : 3,00,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

Shyamal Dutta Ray was born in Bihar in 1934 and studied at the Government School of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata. He was one of the founding members of the Society of Contemporary Artists. Ray is famed for instilling in the watercolour medium a certain depth and intensity. He used saturated hues in his works to reveal life in Kolkata. Most of his art stems from observations and experiences of the complex visual world around him. His body of work can be described as melancholic pensive and surreal. PROVENANCE: Acquired directly from artist.

Provenance

Acquired directly from the artist.



Recto



Verso

Lot #11

SAILOZ MOOKHERJEA (1906-1960)

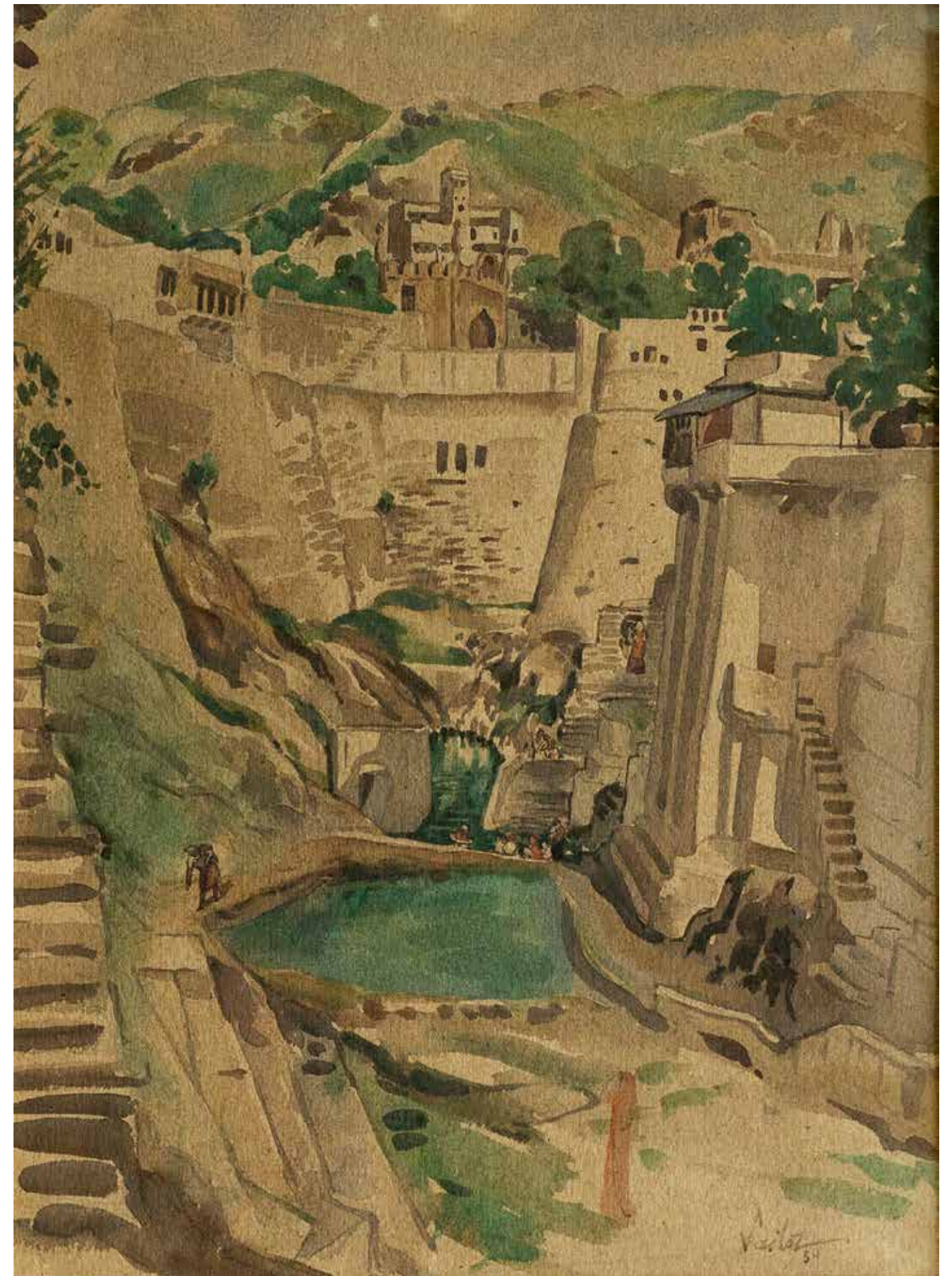
STUDY OF RAJASTHAN

Watercolour
Signed lower right
14 x 11 in.
1954

Estimate : 2,00,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

Sailoz Mookherjea was one of the pioneering figures of modern Indian art in the twentieth century. Mukherjea started his journey in art training from the Government College of Art and Craft in Calcutta in the late 1920s. His main influences were the folk art of India and the Basohli miniatures. He chronicles the landscapes the people flowers and trees of India with a lyricism of line and colour in his work such as this watercolour.



Lot #12

ATUL BOSE (1898-1977)

PORTRAITS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, ISHWAR CHANDRA VIDYASAGAR & MICHAEL MADHUSUDAN DUTTA

Pencil on paper

Signed lower right

15 x 12 in. ; 14.5 x 9 in. ; 9.5 x 7.5 in.

1966 ; Circa 1950 ; Circa 1950

Estimate : 1,50,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

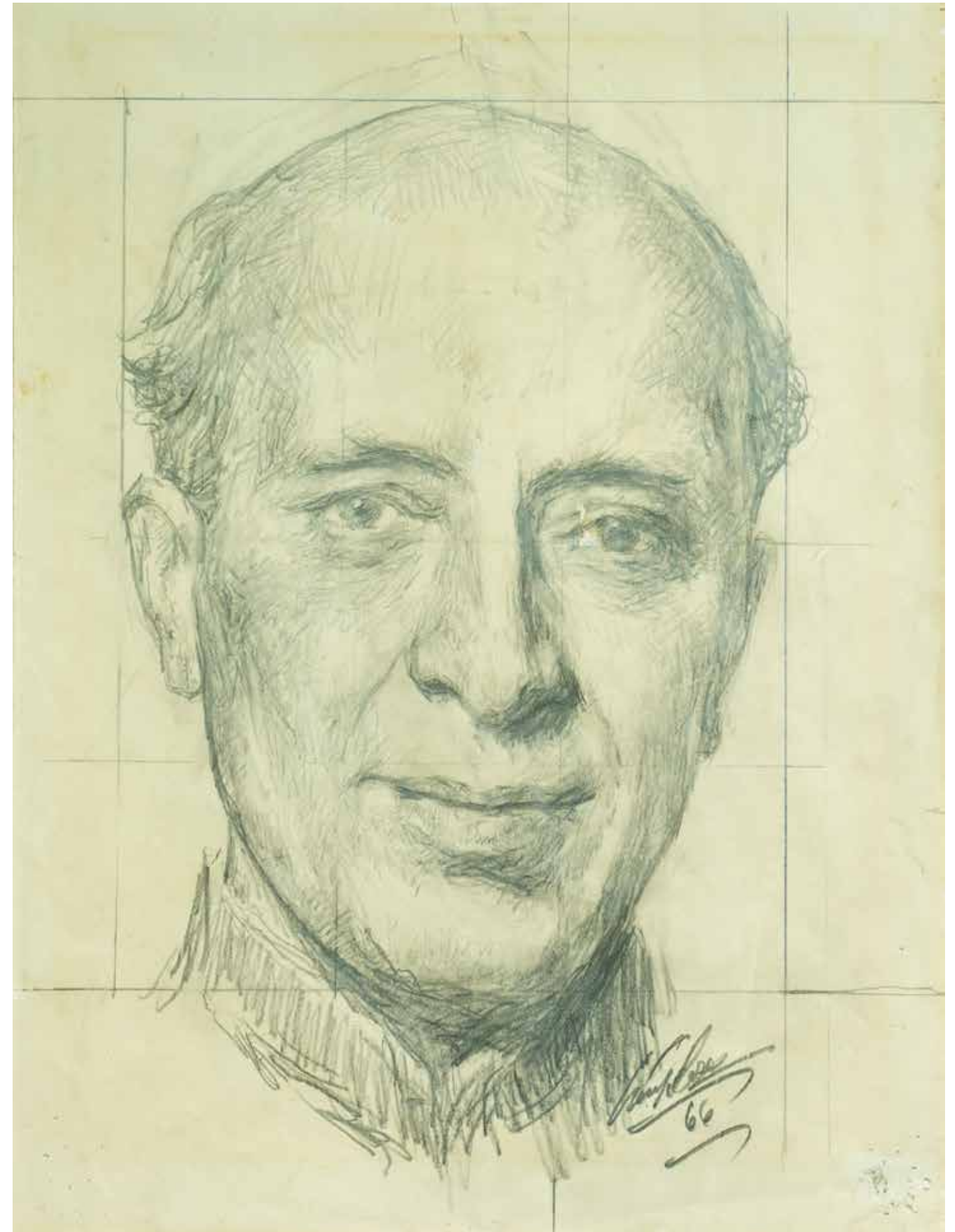
A portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru; India's first Prime Minister and one of the most influential leaders of the Indian Independence Movement. Bose's penchant for capturing anatomical peculiarities earned him a reputation as a much sought after portrait painter in those times.

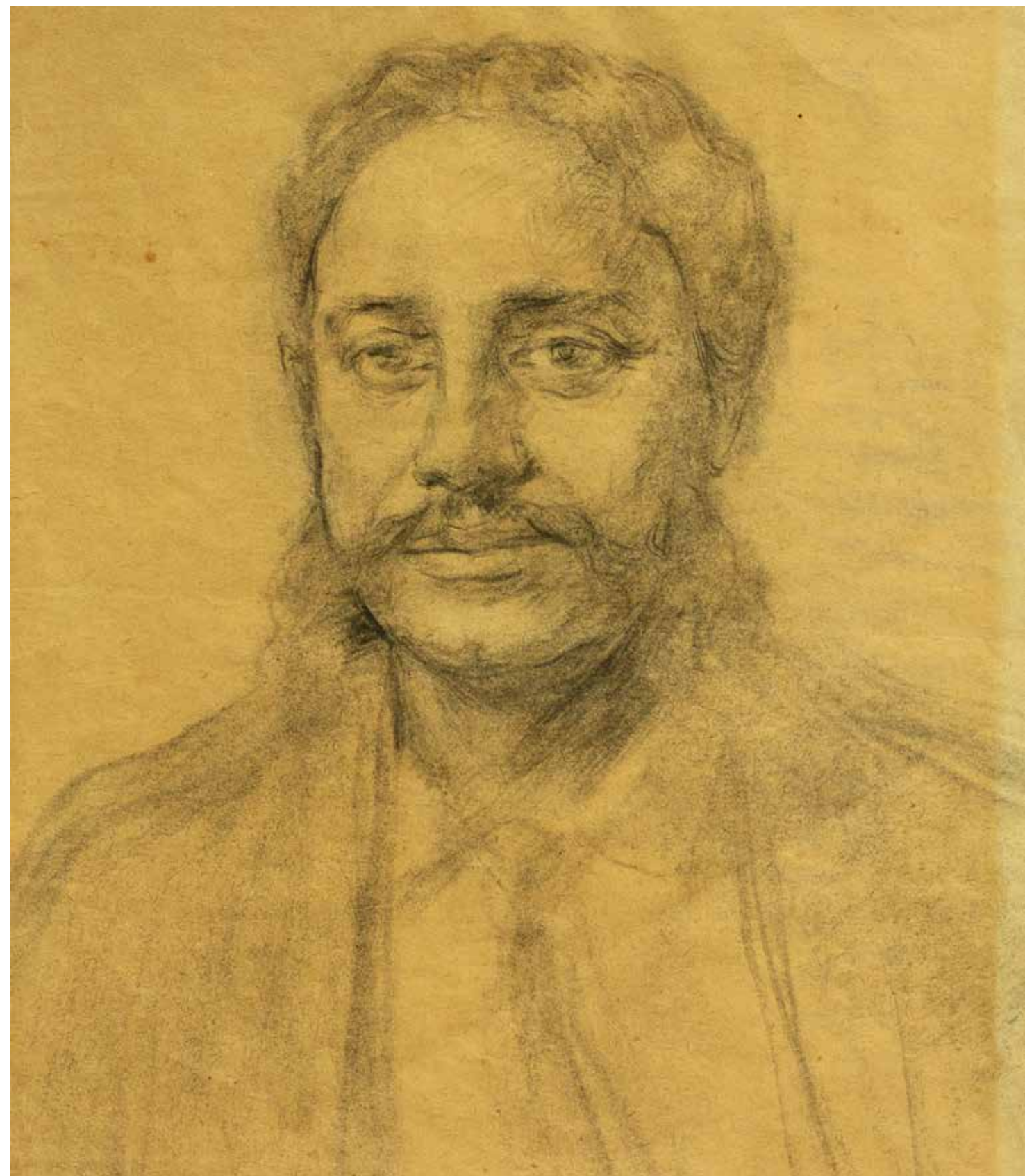
A portrait of Indian social reformer and educator Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. Bose often made portraits of varied freedom fighters and was appointed to paint the who's-who of the times.

A portrait of Michael Madhusudhan Dutta; a Bengali poet and playwright. Oil portraits of Swami Vivekanda and Michael Madhusudan Dutta are on display at the Victoria Memorial Hall Kolkata.

Provenance

Estate of Atul Bose. Thence by descent.







Lot #13

SOMNATH HORE (1921-2006)

WOUNDS - 40

Paper pulp
Signed lower right
20 x 25 in.
1977

Estimate : 30,00,000 - 40,00,000 INR

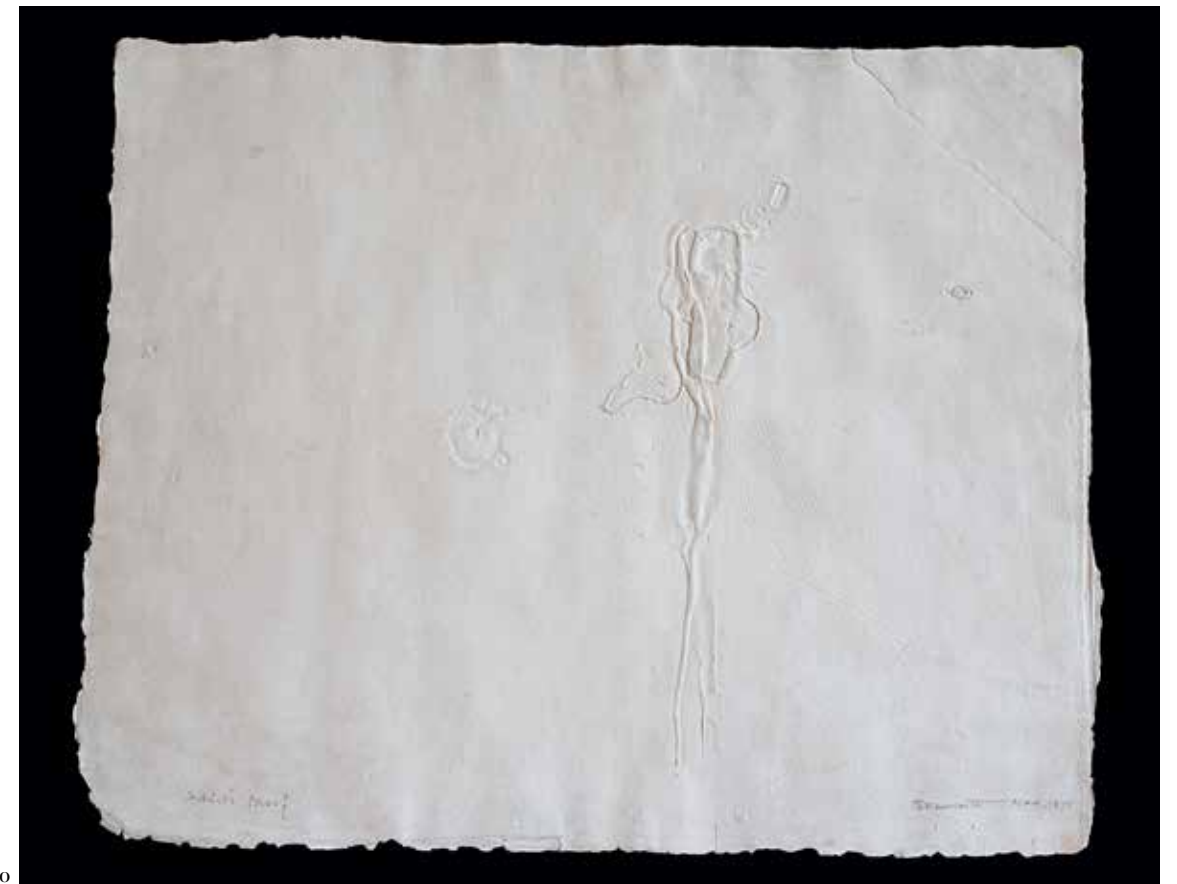
Lot description

Artist proof. The Wounds series depicts human suffering through deep gashes lacerations and cuts inflicted on handmade paper by Hore in the 1970s. This work titled Wounds-40 is amongst the largest of Hore's Wounds series. Another version of this can be seen in the collection of the Tate Gallery London.

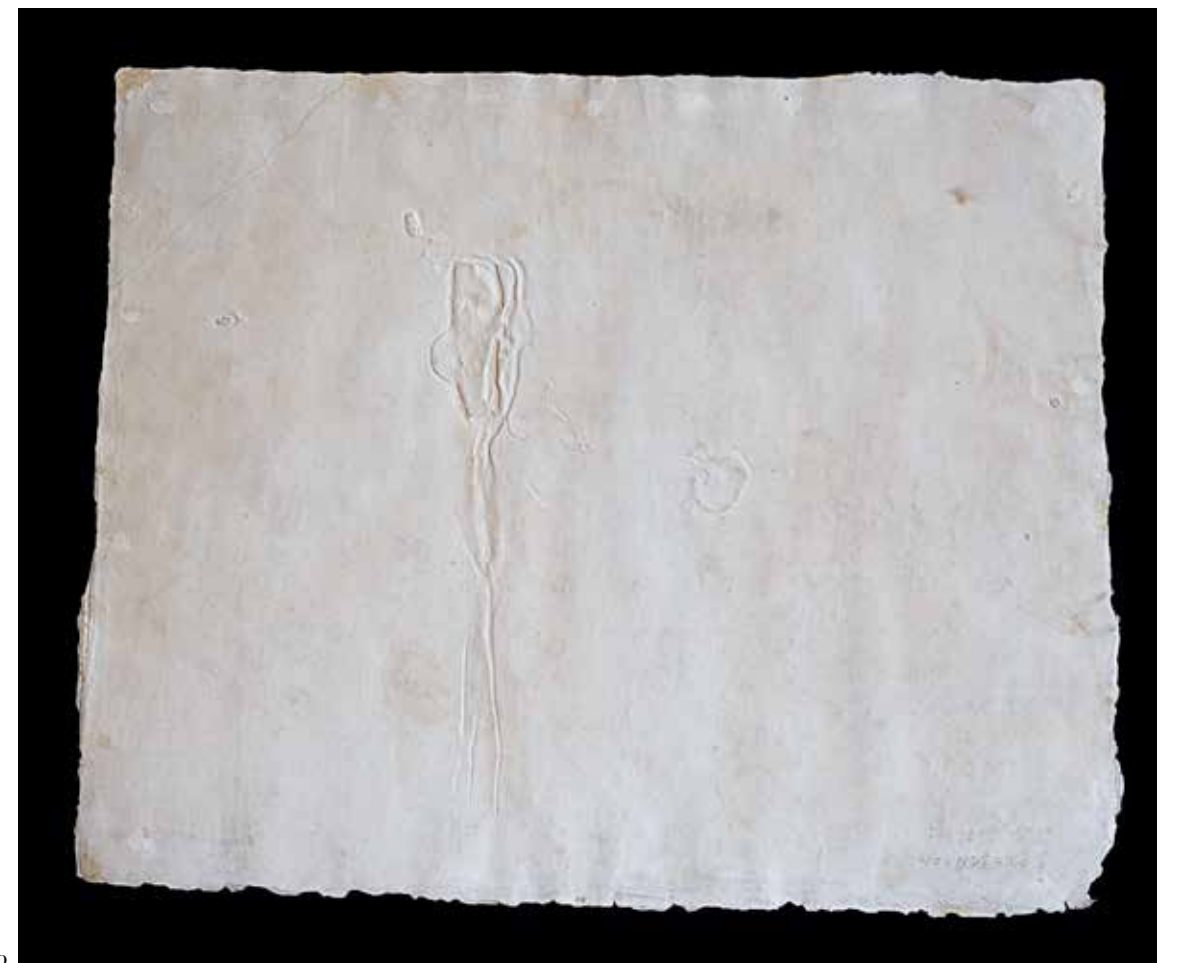
Provenance

Esteemed private collection.

Recto



Verso



Lot #14

PROSANTO ROY (1908-1973)

WATERFALLS

Wash on paper
10 x 6 in.
1952

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

Prosanto Roy was a Bengal School artist who initially studied art under a European teacher. He was closely connected to the Tagores- groomed first by Rabindranath Tagore and then Abanindranath. His visual narrative comprised fairytales and myth, with kaleidoscopic elements instilling a mysterious and mystic quality in his images. This work displays his penchant for the technique of delicate washes and was created while he was teaching at Santiniketan.



Lot #15

RANADA UKIL (1900-1970)

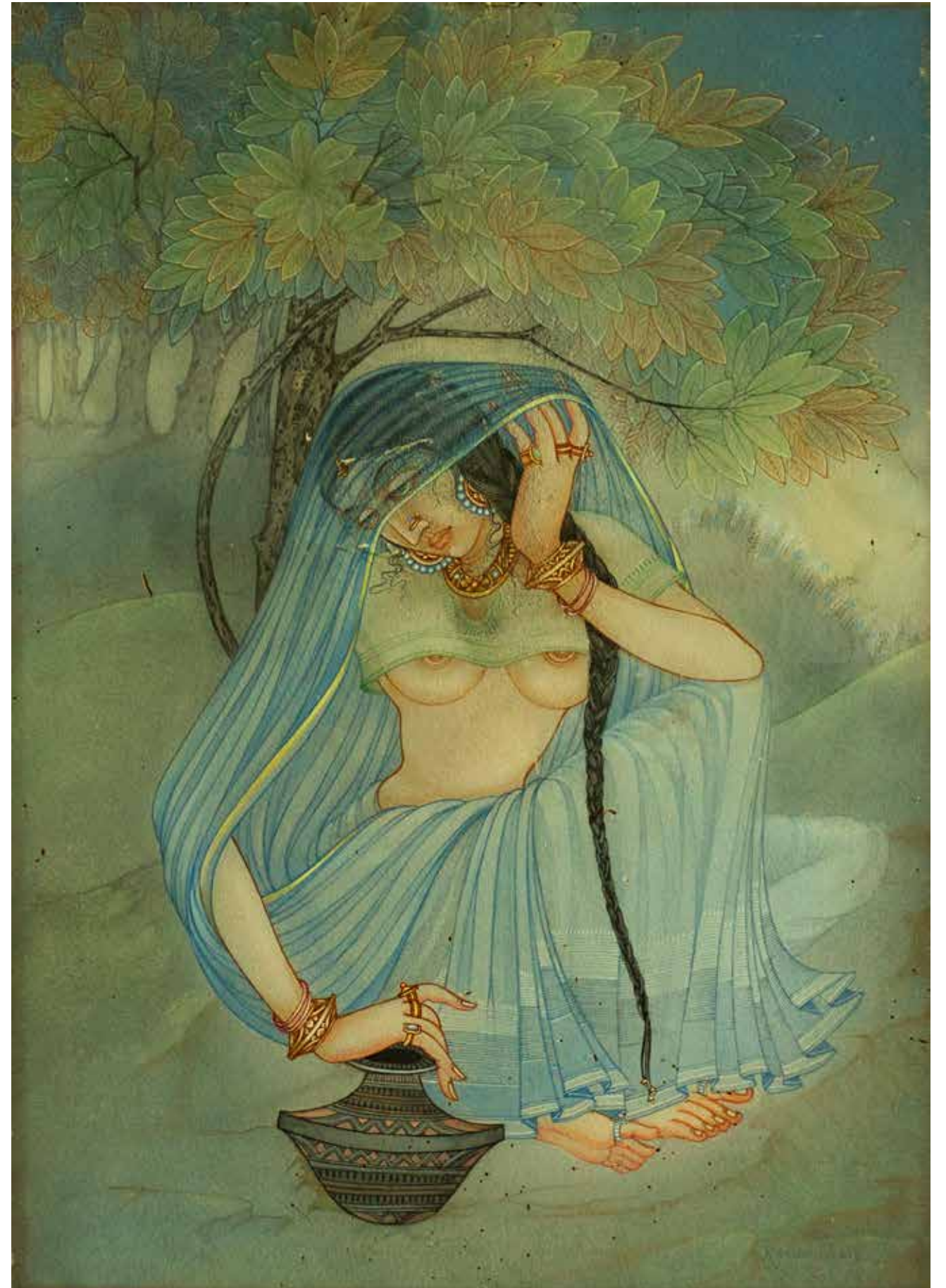
UNTITLED (Woman)

Watercolour
Signed lower right
20 x 14 in.
1942

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

Ranada Charan Ukil was the youngest of the famous Ukil brothers. In 1927 Ranada along with brothers Sarada and Barada Ukil founded the Ukil School of Art in Connaught Place New Delhi. This work with vivid shades of blue and green is rare with influences from the Company School and the Minuature style of art. Ranada Ukil also painted the famed murals in India House London.



The Lyrical Painter

MANJIT BAWA

Once upon a time, a dreamer derived his painterly language from Indian mythological tales, legends, and fables rich in moral and spiritual lessons. Manjit Bawa (b. 1941) introduced fragments of his thoughts, ideas, and poetry into the rational world throughout his artistic oeuvre. Born in Dhuri, Punjab, Bawa's childlike fascination with music, spirituality, and philosophy breathed heavily on his canvas. Manjit Bawa's artworks are mystical musicals that strike a chord and capture a dream.

“Going back to my earliest memories – I recollect listening to stories of Mahabharata, Ramayan, Purana from as far back as I can remember. Religious scriptures, the Holy Granth were so much a part of my formative years.” [1]

As a teenager, Manjit would sketch, scribble and draw without any method. “At that time, my driving need was to bring out all those ideas I had within me, anyhow,” recalls Manjit. After seeing his obsessive interest in art, his brother took him to Abani Sen, regarded as one of the old masters of modern Indian painting. Master babu, as Manjit would fondly call him, influenced Bawa's distinct style and urged him to embrace figurative art when abstraction reigned supreme in India. In one of his interviews, Bawa recalls Sen's constant emphasis on the significance of space at all times. “His strident query still rings in my ears, why can't I see the space behind the model?” This also formed the foundation for Bawa's distinctive use of colour and space.

In 1958, Bawa studied Fine Arts at the School of Art, Delhi Polytechnic, Delhi, and received his diploma in 1963. Here, he quickly realized that abstraction was the newest art trend while figurative art “a poor second, barely tolerated by the self-styled art gurus.” This, however, did not deter Bawa to pursue his convictions and create his painterly language. He moved towards creating his own forms - drawing from his thought process.

“I feel it is essential for a painter to draw from imagination... not photographs or books because somehow this feels borrowed and contrived. Or the work becomes hard and loses its poetry and softness.” [2]

Bawa moved to England in 1964, where he worked as a silkscreen printmaker while studying art at the London School of Painting. The budding artist spent eight years in England before returning to India in 1972. Here, he further explored his fascination with Indian mythology, folktales, and love legends as themes. He steered away from European art conventionalities and delved into Sufi poetry, spirituality, music, and philosophy. His artistic inspiration, firmly ingrained in the fabric of Indian sensibilities and culture. His paintings free-floating verses of poetry in colour - set the stage for his subjects to break into a performance. Bawa drew these subjects from Hindu mythology and Puranic origins that formed the spiritual soul of his work.

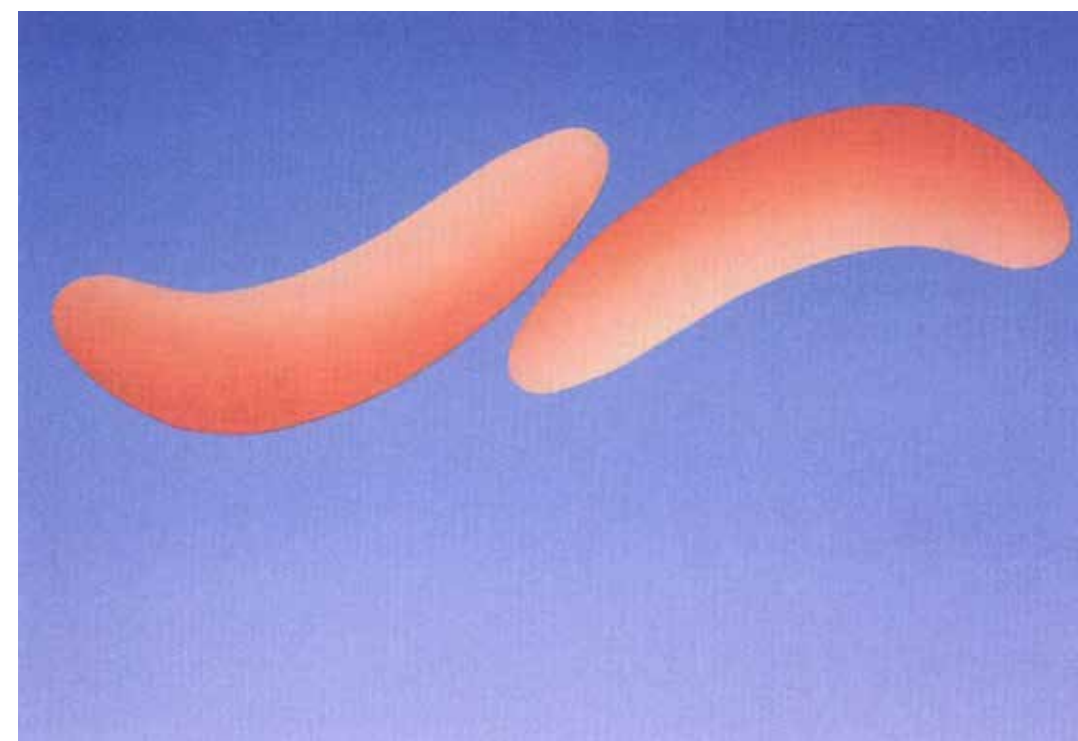
“Personally, my day-to-day life revolves around these allusions. To label is to limit. They remain to me, basically mythical icons – as Durga, Kali, Shiva, Krishna or even Heer – Ranjha, Mirza – Sahiba or Sohni – Mahiwal. In my world of imagination, they are very real. I have known them from childhood tales and fables narrated to me by my father. As I grew up, I met them again in literature, music, poetry, and art. What else can I draw?” [3]

The Indian art world in the 1970s was small - to the extent that only a few chose to be professional artists. Art materials were

insufficient, with close to little or no market, and it was a challenge to find a space to create. Sculptor Sankho Chaudhuri got the Lalit Kala Akademi to start the Garhi Studios - a state-created facility for painting, sculpting, graphics, and ceramics. Garhi was a hub for artists like Krishen Khanna, Paramjit Singh, Ghulam Rasool Santosh, Sankho Chaudhuri, and others who were rented out large studios and workspaces. The Garhi Studios appointed Manjit Bawa as a specialist in the serigraphy studio for his expertise in printmaking. He collaborated with J. Swaminathan to make serigraph prints in 1979 and then in 1986.

Manjit Bawa was amongst the very few to redeem the figure against the background after M.F. Husain, Francis Newton Souza, and Tyeb Mehta. Most urban artists grew in the myopia of the art schools set up by the former colonial rulers. Some painters practiced English academic realism while others dabbled in expressionistic figuration after the opening of the European scene. The Bengal School breathed its last after spreading like a wildfire. The figure still needed to slip into a form. It was only with Tyeb that the figure came into its own again. **“Tyeb too took to flat areas of colour and an austere staccato line: the figure got congealed into a state of puppet-like inscrutability. It is in this background that the emergence of Manjit is to be encountered.”** [4]

“As far as the figures are concerned, they are figments and fragments of my dream world. The split figures that remain suspended in space may seem bizarre to the uninitiated but in



Manjit Bawa Serigraphs; Sotheby's 2013



my mind, they convey my innermost emotions. Our life is about being suspended in spatial areas – it’s about creatures split up. Life is like that to me.” [5]

Bawa’s works remain to be all at once, an assertion and negation of tradition. He was the first artist in India to set his canvas ablaze with striking pinks, violets, and greens on large spaces. Having begun his career as a Silkscreen printer, he was not oblivious to the impact of strong and flat colours in the background. He was constantly inspired to

look for fresh colours on his palette, bringing in pastel hues that were not commonly explored by Indian artists. His obsession with Sufi poetry and elements was visible in the signature rounded forms suspended against an endless sky of colours. His palette brims with rich reds, oranges, yellows, greens, and blues- reminiscent of Indian elements.

Manjit Bawa was an artist of multiple shades. Along with being a painter, Bawa was also a music enthusiast. He learned how to play the tabla to give company to his wife Sharda and daughter Bhavna who would play the sitar. Soon enough, he collaborated with his dear friend Madan Gopal Singh and they became a much sought-after duo that performed Punjabi Sufi music. Bawa would animatedly play the dholki - its pulsating beats filled with passionate interventions of voice. He was also fond of singing and playing the flute. During Lohri, his soulful voice would waft in the air in his native village in Punjab. Both Sufi music and philosophy were essential elements of his artistic creations. And while Bawa’s intense fascination with Sufism started at a young age, he found solace in the same when terrorism surfaced in Punjab.

“I remember the nightmare of the 84 riots and the brutal massacre of Sikhs – in those days, I was working at the Refugee Camps and often returned home weary to my bone in the wee hours of the morning. So deep was my anguish at the heart-wrenching scenes I witnessed that I took to reading and

singing Sufi poetry especially Quadui and works of Bulle Shah and Sheikh Farid.” [6]

Gradually, these Sufi stories seeped into his art - his dream of peace, harmony, and coexistence between all living forms manifesting in his paintings. Bawa always said that he was a painter first, and not an activist. This is why he believed in portraying his innermost beliefs through his art. “I do not feel I have to portray social issues – that is the role of journalists. Films and photographs would capture images far more effectively and authentically.”

Today, Manjit Bawa’s art gives us an intimate experience of the artist’s world. A world of deep, meditative, and playful charm - where kindness exists in abundance. His magical play with colours- afloat in silence seeking peace and harmony. An ethereal domain of soft nudges, endearments, capricious graces, introspective pauses, and rests. His artworks, a vivid documentation of his best qualities as a storyteller.

References:

- [1], [5] and [6] *Frames of eternity*, Manjit Bawa in conversation with Ina Puri
 [2] and [3] *Let's paint the sky red, I cannot live by your memories*, Vadehra Art Gallery
 [4] *Let's paint the sky red, Dogs too keep night watch*, J. Swaminathan, Vadehra Art Gallery



Lot #16

MANJIT BAWA (1941-2008)

UNTITLED (Free Floating Form)

Oil on canvas
Signed lower right
35.5 x 53 in
1977

Estimate : 50,00,000 - 70,00,000 INR

Lot description

Manjit Bawa introduced fragments of his thoughts, ideas, and poetry into the rational world throughout his artistic oeuvre. Born in Dhuri, Punjab, Bawa's childlike fascination with music, spirituality, and philosophy breathed heavily on his canvas. This work depicts Bawa's early experimentation with forms. The artist reinvented the free floating form, which later became figures, and the inanimate shapes reassembled to take on animal and human figuration. (Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art Catalogue, Sotheby's, 2013) The serigraphs and this artwork were both made in 1977.

Provenance

Prinseps 2018.



ABDUL AZIZ RAIBA

The Insatiable Artist

An unabating artist whose creative expression was unfazed by the trials and tribulations he faced, A.A. Raiba (b. 1922) was relentless; almost restless in his artistic pursuits till the very end saying, “*Itni Umar Gayi, Kam khatam nahi Hua*”. [1] His visual narrative was derived from his love for Urdu poetry and Islamic Literature. Born in Mumbai, most of Raiba’s works exude nostalgia and are intimate observations of old Bombay and his travels all over the country. Raiba’s oeuvre is rooted in intensively researched history with influences from his lifelong practice in Calligraphy.

Raiba came from a family of meager means, but his passion for art knew no bounds. Most of his education depended on scholarships and he worked hard for them. Raiba began his schooling at the prestigious *Anjuman - I- Islam School* after having secured a scholarship. His flair for writing in the Urdu language attracted a lot of attention, and his teachers asked him to try his hand at writing. Raiba started composing couplets and would translate the works of one of the greatest Urdu poets Allama Iqbal, to English. This was also the time when he practiced Arabic calligraphy which shed light on his drawing skills. After recognising his talent, his teacher introduced him to artist **Dandavatimath** who had opened an art school called Nutan **Kala Mandir** in Bombay. Here, Raiba learned the basic techniques required for admission into the **Sir J.J. School of Art**.

Raiba’s experimentations with different kinds of material might have something to do with most of his childhood spent in his father’s small tailor shop on Temkar Street in Bombay.

Small strips of fabric would cover the floor amidst which young Raiba would play.

In the early 1940s, when Raiba was around 18 years old, he interacted with **Charles Gerard** (the dean of J.J.School of Art) who offered him a scholarship at the JJ and encouraged him to work with mural paintings and oils. Here, he received training from **Jagannath Murlidhar Ahivasi**, who fostered in him an interest in miniature paintings. Ahivasi was also a leading pioneer of the **Bombay Revivalist School**. Having intricately studied and practiced the Indian style of painting, Raiba stirred away from the then prevailing Western and academic norms in the Indian art scene to pave his own style. His works included depictions of the village folk with colour tones similar to miniature paintings.

“While in the Sir J.J. School of Art, he never missed the opportunity to visit various places and paint his experiences there. These paintings based on real-life experiences were liked by people. To name a few: ‘Forgotten Gothic Cathedral’ painted after his visit to Calicut and Pondicherry, ‘Ruins of Aundha fort’ were his Goa’s memories, remembering Sikkim- Bhutan, and Nepal he painted ‘No man’s land.’” [2]

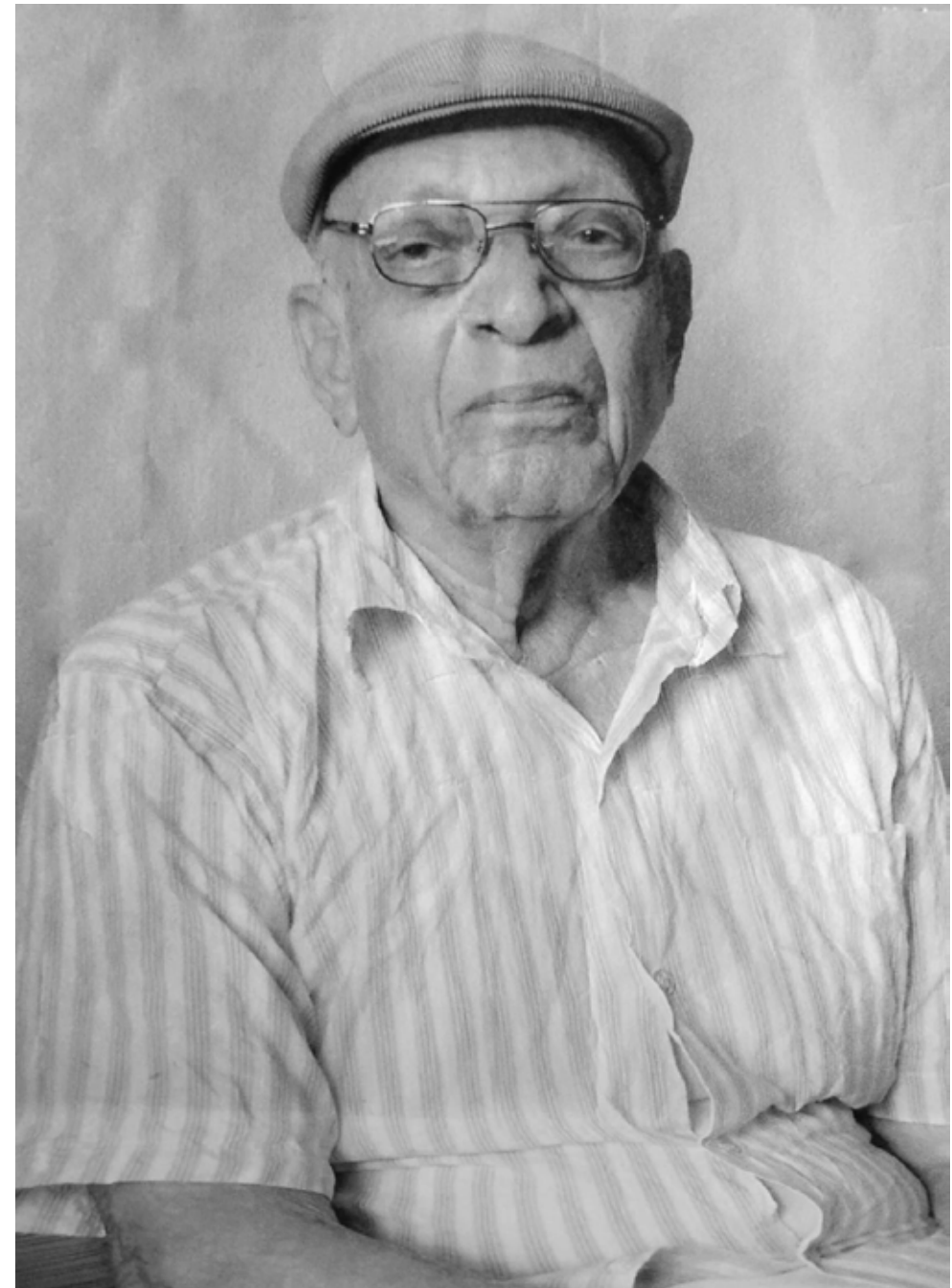


Image Credits : A. A. Raiba Family



Lot #33 | Untitled (Village Women)

Raiba graduated from the JJ School of Art in 1946 with a diploma and was appointed as a Fellow in the painting department for a year in 1947 by Charles Gerard. In 1948, he received a bronze medal from the **Bombay Art Society** for the painting ‘Shrinagar’. The following year he received a silver medal for ‘Glory of India’. He also visited Kochi, where he documented his experiences in a painting called Lullaby for which he received yet another bronze medal. Raiba’s travels across India became his muse and his penchant for recording his adventures became famous worldwide. His canvas often narrated tales of his intensive travels capturing the authenticity of India in his paintings.

Rudi Von Leyden, an art critic observed Raiba’s works over a decade (the 1940s-1950s) characterised by striking and bold forms balanced by somber colours. Leyden then invited Raiba to join the **Progressive Artists’ Group**, but his school of thought was completely different from his contemporaries such as **F.N. Souza** who was also his classmate at the JJ School. However, Raiba soon resigned from the group after a show in 1953, and in 1955 exhibited his paintings in Delhi featuring his Kochi travels. Raiba organised well-researched exhibitions

after studying his subjects thoroughly for his audience. His exhibits were based on his travels and themes such as the **History of Bombay, Kashmir: Miniature to Monumentalism, Metaphysical Paintings, the Baramasa of Keshavdas, Mirza Ghalib, and Islamic Calligraphy**. He would design his own invitations, incorporating translations of Allama Iqbal, stylistic elements of Islamic calligraphy, and Modernist typography.



“A simple man of few words, he always strived to do something different.”^[3]

During that time, most of his contemporaries moved to Paris and encouraged Raiba to do the same. He then consulted **Walter Langhammer**, one of the **founding fathers of the Bombay Progressives**, who suggested he move to Kashmir instead, where

Raiba spent more than three years. (1957-1959) Raiba found accommodation in the Naginbagh area of Srinagar and would venture off to the city’s various Mughal gardens to sketch. He would also traverse the mountains on foot and paint landscapes. The traveling artist intricately documented the city’s monuments, mosques, and people. Raiba captured the essence of his stay in Kashmir perfectly, be it the slanting wooden roofs of mosques in the winter, the folk motifs

in the temple of Jammu, or the renditions of Kashmiri women. Here, he was also exposed to the various disappointments and dilemmas of the people living in that region. He stirred away from miniatures and revealed the plight of the people there through the use of charcoal and white colour. Raiba never really forgot Kashmir even after his return and memorised contexts for the future while he was travelling.

After his return to Bombay, Raiba gave up watercolours and worked with oil on canvas made of jute. Raiba’s works adhered to the Indian style of painting ranging from depictions of Kashmiri women to South Indian fisherwomen, and Goan landscapes to North Indian village landscapes and seascapes. His artistic oeuvre mapped his travels across India in bold strokes, definite solid lines, and vibrant colours. He would sketch villas in Goa and along the Malabar Coast. He continued to sketch for many years after, using perspective in shades like deep reds, umbers, and yellows.

Raiba was an artist of humble means, who did not believe in the commercialisation of his art. Unlike his contemporaries, Raiba’s works were rarely up for auction. He would often say, “*Work with passion, money will follow you.*” Raiba continued to paint out of small spaces, mostly his home and studio in central Mumbai which contained at least two decades of his work that was destroyed in 1972. Raiba went through extreme psychological trauma after having escaped from a collapsing building, witnessing the loss of lives of his neighbours, and watching his two-decade-long body of work perish in front of his eyes. Raiba then moved with his family to his small home in Nalasopara where he continued to paint. Raiba’s creative curiosity

knew no bounds despite his plight. In 1980, he returned to his alma mater (J.J. School of Arts) and enrolled himself in an evening hobby course in Graphic Print Making at the Print-Making Studio. There was a substantial shift in Raiba’s artistic style after 1983, in the material he used. He began experimenting with glass and enamel painting during this period with works such as the Muslim Couple. In 1984, Raiba wrote in an invitation catalogue for one of his exhibitions:

To comprehend the meaning of Art, I have ceaselessly tried to understand what life is – its circuitous course and ultimate goal. I go through a labyrinth of desire and fear, and I must keep on. The only alternative to ceaseless action is Death, which alone can drop a curtain on the medley of deeds and also what remains undone.^[4]

Raiba continued to write clear and witty proses for his self-made catalogues and invitations until he felt that he had lost the ability to orchestrate such shows. However, he relentlessly went on painting at his home until he breathed his last in 2016.

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Lot #17

A. A. RAIBA (1922-2016)

MUSLIM COUPLE

Reverse painting on glass
Signed upper left
8.5 x 6.5 in. each
Circa 1990

Estimate : 10,00,000 - 20,00,000 INR

Lot description

Raiba is well known for his dextrous technique and inventive color schemes. A graduate from the Sir J.J. School of Art in Bombay he was unmistakably influenced by Indian miniature painting techniques. There was a substantial shift in Raiba's artistic style after 1983 in the material he used. He began experimenting with glass and enamel painting during this period.

Exhibition

This work was exhibited at the Nehru Centre Art Gallery Show called Indian Masters' Retrospective, 2017.

Provenance

The Estate of A. A. Raiba.



Lot #18

PRABHAKAR BARWE (1936-1995)

UNTITLED (Abstract)

Mixed media on cloth
62 x 41.5 in.

Estimate : 30,00,000 - 50,00,000 INR

Lot description

Prabhakar Barwe was a self-effacing artist who extensively explored the relationship between space and form. Born in 1936 in Maharashtra to a family of artists, Barwe honed his skills at the Sir J.J. School of Art. After he received his diploma in 1959, Barwe worked with the Weavers' Service Centre for over 20 years, designing textiles. Prabhakar Barwe was known as a symbolic abstractionist, but did not conform to the mainstream notions of modernism and abstractionism.

Provenance

Eminent Collection, Mumbai.



Lot #19

K. G. SUBRAMANYAN (1924-2016)

UNTITLED (Figures)

Terracotta relief sculpture
19 x 19 x 1 in.
Circa 2004

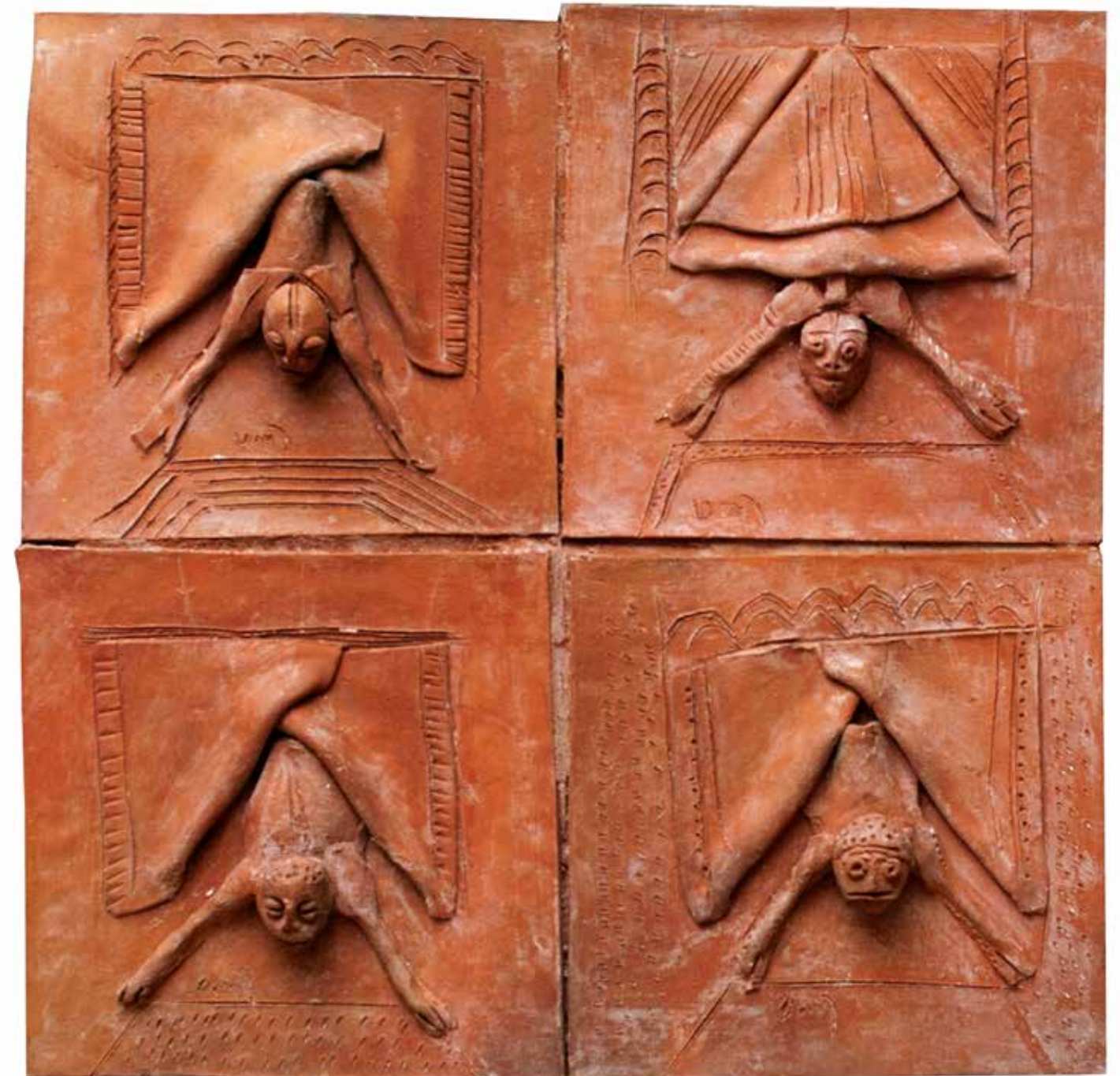
Estimate : 30,00,000 - 40,00,000 INR

Lot description

K.G. Subramanyan's artistic oeuvre reflects modernism in post-independence India as a continuation of cultural pursuits. His engagement with the traditional forms and materials rooted in the country's psyche witnessed exploration of mediums in painting printmaking sculpture and design techniques; terracotta glass and painted murals.

Provenance

Prinseps 2017.





Lot #20

G. R. SANTOSH (1929-1997)

WEDGE IN THE COMPOSITION

Oil on canvas
Signed lower left
32.00 x 20.00 in.
1962

Estimate : 10,00,000 - 15,00,000 INR

Lot description

G.R. Santosh was a poet-painter who began his career painting landscapes in Kashmir before being spotted by S. H. Raza, who encouraged him to study at the Maharaja Sayajirao University at Baroda under N. S. Bendre. He started painting figurative and abstract works before he completely switched to tantra inspired works in 1964. Santosh dedicated the rest of his life to study and practice Tantra. This particular work has a muted colour palette with subdued tones.

Provenance

Originally acquired from Kumar Gallery.



Lot #21

INDRA DUGAR (1918-1989)

BOATMAN

Watercolour
Signed lower right
9 x 16 in.

Estimate : 50,000 - 2,00,000 INR

Lot description

Indra Dugar was schooled in Santiniketan and was introduced to painting by his father who was a well-known artist and one of the first students of Kala Bhavan at Rabindranath Tagore's Vishwa Bharati University in Santiniketan. Dugar's constant interactions with prominent artists like Nandalal Bose Rabindranath Tagore and Benode Behari Mukherjee influenced his oeuvre. His works chronicle his observed views of life and nature during his many travels throughout India. His strengths mostly lay in the landscapes he rendered in watercolour.



Lot #22

AVINASH CHANDRA (1931-1991)

UNTITLED (Abstract)

Watercolour on paper
21.5 x 29.5 in.

Estimate : 4,00,000 - 6,00,000 INR

Lot description

Avinash Chandra was an Indian painter born in Shimla who studied at the Polytechnic School in Delhi. He moved to London in 1956 and was one of the first Indian artists to gain international recognition. In 1965, he became the first Indian British artist exhibited at Tate Britain, in London.

Provenance

Originally acquired from Chemould Art Gallery.





Lot #23

ATUL BOSE (1898-1977)

IN THE SUN

Oil on canvas
Signed lower right
30 x 40 in.
Circa 1930

Estimate : 8,00,000 - 10,00,000 INR

Lot description

A rare oil portrait of Debjani Bose Atul Bose's wife. Bose spent a few years at the Royal Academy in London. Here he was influenced by the English Post-Impressionist Walter Sickert. This is the second post-impressionist portrait inspired by Walter Sickert documented thus far.

Provenance

Estate of Atul Bose. Thence by descent.



THE ETERNAL REBEL

FRANCIS NEWTON SOUZA

Like a carefree child colouring on the walls despite protests, nothing deterred F.N. Souza (b. 1924) from asserting his art. His art, whose first impact is to shock, elicits a childlike element of uninhibited honesty with no filter, unafraid, and almost oblivious to those offended. His unrestrained and thought-provoking body of work makes one wonder about the power of art and its hold over the human psyche. Broad and bold lines jump out of the canvas attacking with speed, deeming him an eternal rebel.

“I have made my art a metabolism. I express myself freely in paint to exist. I paint what I want, what I like, what I feel. When I begin to paint I am wrapped in myself, rapt; unaware of chromium cars and décolleté dillentantes, wrapped like a fetus in the womb only aware that each painting for me is either a milestone or a tombstone... I do not unwrap myself when I paint. I unwrap myself when I write. When I press a tube I coil. Every brush stroke makes me recoil like a snake struck with a stick.

I hate the smell of paint. Painting for me is not beautiful.”^[1]

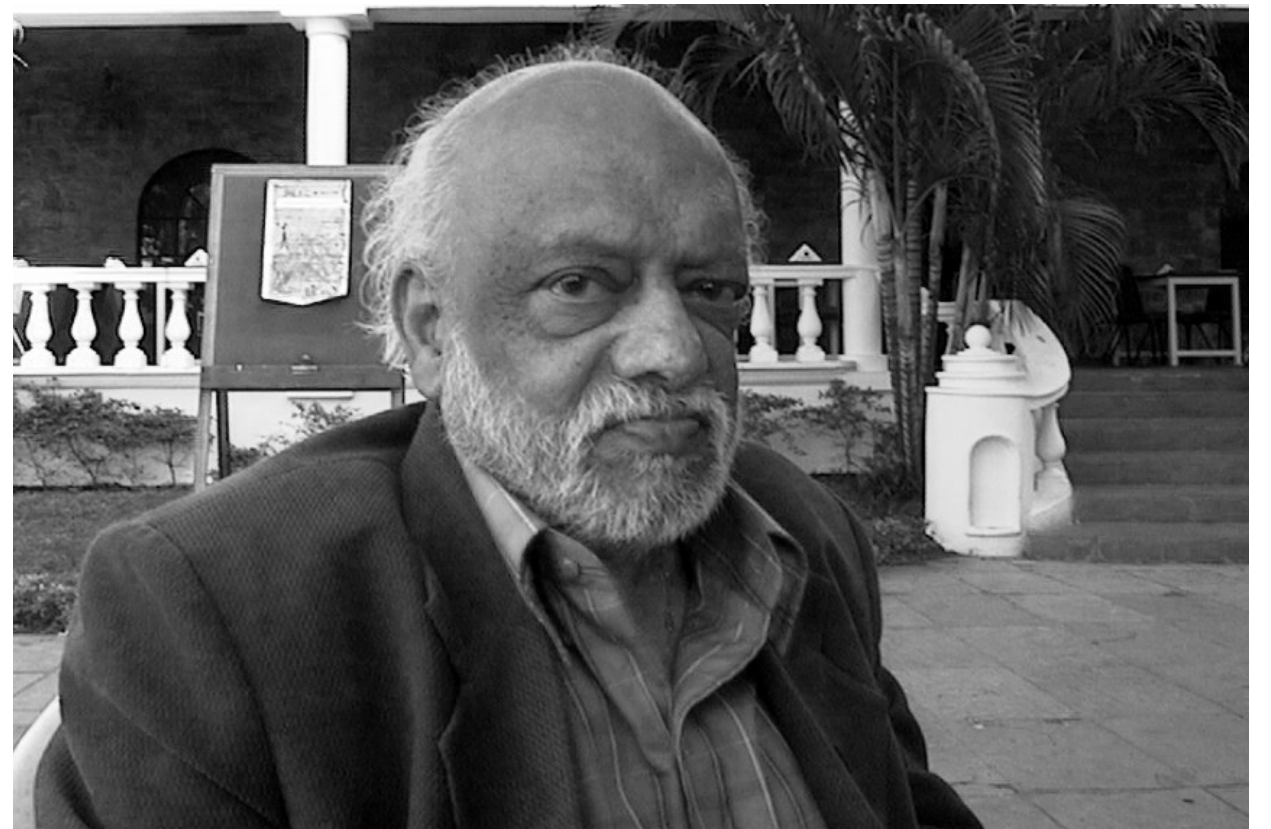


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EARLY LIFE

Born in Goa, Newton Souza lost his father three months after his birth and his sister a year later. The grief and sickness that followed painted in his mind a bleak picture of the world in which he lived. Souza and his mother Lilia moved from Goa to Bombay where he contracted smallpox and was sent back to live with his grandmother. His childhood was immersed in nature and Konkani Catholic practice in Goa. He remained fascinated by the Church's grandeur and tales of tortured saints narrated by his grandmother. This also sparked Souza's obsession with painting heads throughout his artistic oeuvre; portraying religious figures in a grotesque fashion. He continued to paint various heads in the 1950s and 1960s in line with his gamut of figurative art.

After his recovery, Souza went back to Bombay

to his religious mother who had prayed to Goa's patron St Francis Xavier to cure her son in return for him becoming a priest. She then added Francis to her son's name and enrolled him in St. Francis Xavier's College. Souza, however, had other plans for himself.

The rigid curriculum at the college stifled the rebellious Souza. *“The system was only good to turn Indians into toddlers,”* Souza said. However, he did develop an interest in drawing and studying oleographs and prints. He was expelled two years later for drawing offensive images in the lavatory. Souza defended himself by saying that he hated bad drawings and was merely correcting them.

1940'S

The decade of the 1940s was important in shaping Souza's artistic oeuvre. In 1940, 16-year-old Souza joined the **JJ School of Art**. During this time, he was fascinated by the city he was bred in, Mumbai erstwhile Bombay. It was the sight and sounds of the city that fuelled his imagination rather than any textbook.

||

Bombay with its rattling trams, omnibuses, hacks, railways, its forest of telegraph poles and tangle of telephone wires, its flutter of newspapers, its haggling coolies, its numberless dirty restaurants run by Iranis, its blustering officials and stupid policeman, its millions of clerks working clockwise in fixed routines, its schools that turn out boys into clerks in a mechanical, Macaulian educational system, its bania hoarders, its women carrying tiffins to the clerks at their offices during lunch hour, its lepers and beggars, its paan wallas and red beetle nut expectorations on the streets and walls. Its stinking urinals and filthy gullies, its sickening venereal diseased brothels, its corrupted municipality, its Hindu colony, and Muslim colony and Parsi colony, its bug-ridden Goan residential clubs, its reeking, mutilating, and fatal hospitals, its machines, rackets, babbitts, pinions, cogs, pile drivers, dwangs, farads, and din. [2]

||

The city of contrasts with its high-rise buildings and massive slum dwellings became a fixation and artistic inspiration for Souza. Souza painted the poor, labourers, and sex workers, and as a true reflection of his political leanings, the loathed rich while giving his works influential titles like *The Proletariat of Goa* and *The Criminal and the Judge are made of the same stuff*.

Souza continued his rebellion against authority and establishment at the JJ School. The teachers of JJ at that time followed strict academic guidelines with no desire to explore the avant-garde movements in Europe. Souza's curiosity about art in Europe would lead him to **Walter Langhammer's** studio (one of the foremost patrons and critics of the **Bombay Progressive Artists' Group**) every evening on Nepean Sea Road to hear his tales of the European Art scene. During this time, Souza's political passions came to the forefront. In 1942, he joined the Quit India Movement and participated in the mass protests to spark an orderly British withdrawal from India. He was also against the British Principal of JJ and was expelled in 1945 before receiving his diploma, for challenging the system. Almost in a fit of rage, Souza set about painting immediately after his dismissal. On the day of his expulsion, he marched back home and narrated the incident to his mother. The expulsion seemed to have sparked something in him. Souza shares the anecdote:

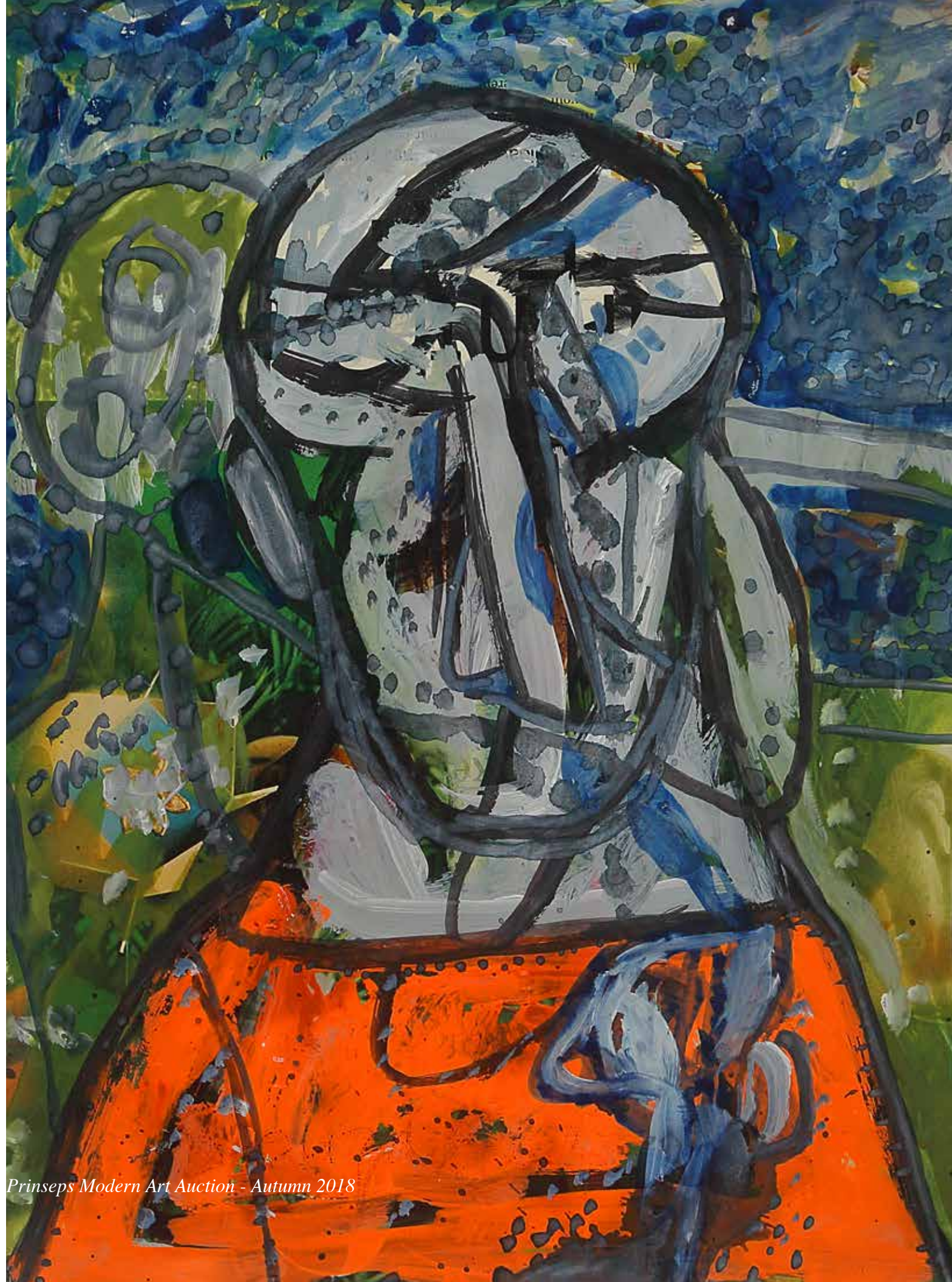
“ I was 21 years old then. I started painting furiously in oils with a palette knife on a large piece of plywood my mother had bought to use as a cutting tabletop for dressmaking.



I painted an azure nude with still life and landscape in the background. I finished the painting in an hour of white heat and titled it The Blue Lady and exhibited it in my first one-man show in December 1945. [3]

“It was an angry, impulsive picture, and in painting it he discovered the way he wanted to paint,” [4] said Edwin Mullins wrote in “F.N. Souza: An Introduction” (1962). Souza then decided to head back to Goa to paint with a more stimulating intensity.

“In those days, I was painting peasants and rural landscapes. I painted the earth and its tillers with bold strokes, heavily outlining masses of brilliant colours. Peasants in different moods, eating and drinking and toiling in the fields, bathing in a river or a lagoon, climbing palm trees, distilling liquor, assembling in a church, praying or in procession with priests and acolytes. Carrying monstrance, relics, and images; ailing and dying, mourning or



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merrymaking in market-places and feasting at weddings.” [5]

In Goa, he painted small-format watercolours of Goan landscapes whilst revealing the plight of the down-trodden in India. He also experimented with oil on canvas and board. Souza’s childhood obsession with the Church translated into his works in the late 1940s. Souza returned with a portfolio of works to Bombay and his paintings were displayed at the new frame shop on Princess Street (a primarily Christian Goan area of Bombay) in 1946. His works were not received well by the locals, they said, “Goan people did not look like that horrible Francis Newton paintings.” Souza’s unappreciative surroundings did not dim his creative vigor. These paintings were on their way to the Silverfish Club, New Book Company for his second one-man show in July 1946. However, just like Souza resisted the establishment; the establishment too resisted him, and the pictures he entered for the **Bombay Art Society Annual Exhibition** in 1946 were all rejected.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE PROGRESSIVE ARTISTS' GROUP

In 1947, the country saw Independence, partition, regional rioting, and death; all of which deeply affected artistic expression. It was in this milieu that F.N. Souza decided to establish the Progressive Artists' Group, a defining movement in Indian Art. Souza conceptualised the formation of a collective. He was in Bombay at the time, which was an important cultural center. The PAG, according to Souza, was a protest against the school of thought of the JJ School of Art and the Bombay Art Society. He said:

“I had begun to notice that JJ School of Art turned out an awful number of bad artists year after year, and the Bombay Art Society showed awful crap in its Annual Exhibitions.... It then occurred to me to form a group to give ourselves an incentive. Ganging up in a collective ego is stronger than a single ego. It is easier for a mob to carry out a lynching; and in this case, we found it necessary to lynch the kind of art inculcated by the JJ School of Art and exhibited in the Bombay Art Society.” [6]

The founding members of the group were **F.N. Souza**, **S. H. Raza**, and **K. H. Ara**. After the invitation of one extra member each, the group included **M.F. Husain**, **H.A. Gade**, and **Sadanand Bakre**. As per Souza, the artistic endeavour of the group was to create new art for a newly free India. Souza was the Secretary, Gade was assigned as the treasurer, Ara handled Public Relations, and Raza was given the task of drawing new clients to their exhibitions. Souza was the one to extend the group's invitation to Husain whom he first met painting billboards for the Indian film industry. After seeing his talent at the Bombay Art Society, he invited Husain to be a member.

The Progressives would often travel to various places to expand their artistic knowledge. Husain and Souza visited the India Independence Exhibition in Delhi and were fascinated by the Khajuraho sculptures on display. Classical Indian Art and the Khajuraho with erotic carvings of temple performers were some of Souza's muses visible in his works.

Souza's paintings from 1947 hint toward his Communist leaning. Most of his works revealed the plight of the oppressed, sending out a strong political statement. Souza soon received an award at the Bombay Art Society Exhibition in 1947. He married **Maria Figuerido** in the same year. Maria would continue to be one of Souza's biggest supporters and promoters of the PAG.



After holding various informal exhibitions in Bombay, the first defining PAG exhibition was held in 1949 at the **Bombay Art Society Salon** in July. It was around this period that F.N. Souza decided to use Souza as his last name because he did not want to be confused with the mathematician Newton. These works were devoid of Souza's political leanings, unlike his earlier works. He eventually left the Communist Party saying:

“I left the Communist Party because they told me to paint in this way and that. I was estranged from many cliques who wanted me to paint what would please them. I don't believe that a true artist paints for coteries or proletariats. I believe with all my soul that he paints solely for

himself.” [7]

The second PAG show was held in Calcutta in 1950. The interaction between the **Calcutta Group** and the PAG artists played an essential role in this joint exhibition. The last group show of the PAG was held in 1953. By this time, new members such as **Krishen Khanna**, **Gaitonde**, and **Akbar Padamsee** began participating in these exhibitions. It also included the only woman member of the PAG- **Bhanu Rajopadhye Athaiya**.

The group formally disbanded in 1956 after three artist members moved abroad. Souza and Bakre departed for London, whereas Raza moved to Paris. Husain began shuttling between Mumbai and Delhi.

THE PUBLIC EYE

In 1948, Souza held his third solo show at the Bombay Art Society and his fourth show later that year in November. Souza wore many hats and wrote manifestos, introductions to his catalogues, and essays. He was an artist who conquered both the pen and paintbrush. He wrote in his fourth exhibition catalogue:

I underwent an abortive art training. The teachers were incompetent. I was expelled from the School of Art. I was banished from a secondary school. Shelley was expelled once, Van Gogh was expelled once. Ostrovsky was expelled once. Palme Dutt was expelled once. I was expelled twice. Recalcitrant boys like me had to be dismissed by principals and directors of educational institutions who instinctively feared we would topple their apple-carts.” [8]

The Times of India reviewed this exhibition stating that no criticism could take away from Souza’s steadily-growing talent which seemed singularly out of place in its unappreciative surroundings. The following year in 1949, he exhibited at the **Art Society of India** at the **Sir Cowasji Jehangir Hall** in Bombay. Two of the four works he submitted were inspired by ancient classical sculpture. Though initially approved for exhibition, these works were

taken down four days later on the grounds of censorship. Souza’s studio was raided, and he was charged with obscenity.

LONDON CALLING

Souza was exhausted from having no artistic liberties and wished to no longer live in an environment where his art was not allowed to thrive. Be it the stringent establishments or the activities of the police, Souza wished to elope with his art to a universe more accepting of his creative spirit. He decided to move to London to exercise his artistic potential and freedom. Even more so after written encouragement from his artist friend **Ebrahim Alkazi** who moved to London two years previously. Before leaving the country, Souza decided to hold one last exhibition of his works to gather funds for his trip. The exhibit was indeed a demonstration of Souza’s artistic evolution. In 1949, 26-year-old Souza embarked on his journey to London. Maria followed suit the following year in spring.

With just £15 in the pocket of his only suit, Souza’s immediate needs were paint and brushes, food, and a week’s rent. He would write back to the PAG sharing his experience with his artist comrades:

“ I have started painting. Plywood is impossible to get, all wood is exported. I have bought two sheets of compressed cardboard for which

I paid 8 Shillings! More than I paid for the large plywood on which I had painted my self-portrait in Bombay.” [9]

Unperturbed by financial distress, Souza immersed himself in the art scene of London in 1949. He walked from one art gallery to the next, one museum to the other, fascinated after seeing in flesh the artworks he would only read about in books. Souza saw the works of **Rembrandt**, **Picasso** and also **Amedeo Modigliani**.

Souza struggled to achieve recognition in London’s creative circles between 1949 - 1954. Souza’s works in the early 1950s expressed his fascination with the duality of sin and sensuality in art. His body of work was controversial since it bound the sacred and the profane together. His canon reflected his rapture with the female form, classical Indian sculpture, and the visual culture of Catholicism. However, his early artistic creations failed to grab the attention of galleries and patrons. He then decided to reconnect with his contemporaries S.H. Raza and Akbar Padamsee while travelling to Europe. This was also when he met Picasso for the first time which

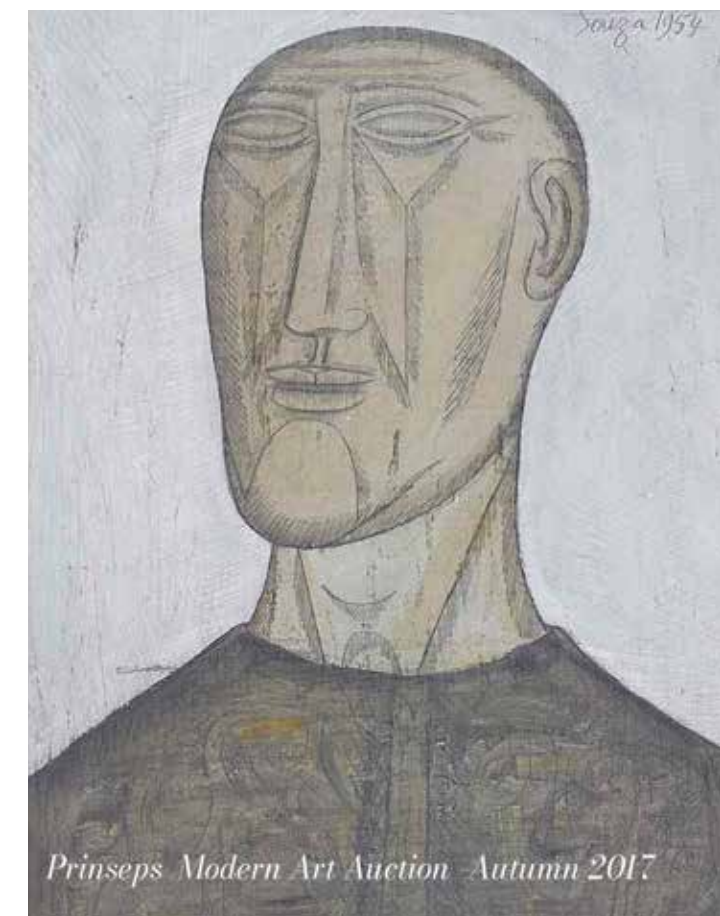
he later described as a defining moment in his career.

SOUZA’S SIGNATURE STYLE

Souza’s signature style was a coalescence of Western and Eastern techniques and motifs.

He derived his artistic language from his fascination with temple sculptures, Catholicism, the works of old European masters, African tribal art, and European modernism. His obsession with the visual culture of Catholicism stemmed from his childhood days in Goa. His body of work hence also comprises an array of paintings portraying religious iconography with compelling depictions of Christ. His oeuvre is also notorious for

visualisations of erotically charged nudes, distorted human figures, landscapes, self-portraits, human sexuality, and conflicts in a man-woman relationship. His works were not



always pleasing to the eyes of the common folk. However, it took Souza six years to establish himself amidst the British. Maria was initially the family's breadwinner, and Souza supported himself through occasional exhibitions and his journalism. In 1955, Souza's writing and not his art brought him into the limelight with his autobiographical essay, *Nirvana of a Maggot*, published in **Stephen Spender's** *Encounter* magazine. An impressed Spender helped Souza with introductions in the art world.

In 1955, Souza gained immense recognition at **Victor Musgrave's Gallery One** after his first solo show in Britain. Souza had seven solo shows here. The following year saw consistent support from an American patron called **Harold Kovner**. Souza also received great acclaim from art critics of the time like **Edwin Mullins** and **David Sylvester**. This was also when Souza developed his black painting series that he described as evidence of his rebellious streak. These works revealed the artist's most favoured subjects apparent only when viewed at certain angles under the light. Souza often used black to traverse his favourite themes such as nudes, portraits, religious scenes, and landscapes. Thick cross-hatching lines characterised his bold works.

“For me, the all-pervading and crucial themes of the predicament of man are those of religion and sex.”
[10]

Souza's body of work revealed his constant dwelling on religion, a theme he revisited throughout his oeuvre stemming from his strict Roman Catholic upbringing and his anti-

clerical stand on the Church. It comprised Goan vistas, sex, intimacy, and grotesque heads. A decade of success and patronage followed. While female forms were centric in Souza's works, he mostly painted European women after 1953.

“How much Souza's pictures derive from western art and how much from the hieratic temple traditions of his country, I cannot say. Analysis breaks down and intuition takes over. It is obvious that he is a superb designer and an excellent draughtsman. But I find it quite impossible to assess his work comparatively. Because he straddles several traditions and serves none.” [11]

- John Berger, “An Indian Painter,” *The New Statesman*, February 26, 1955, 277–78, quoted in Dalmia

SOUZA'S DEPICTION OF HEADS

Souza painted numerous grotesque heads in London. These works did not display any resemblance to the traditions of Indian art. He continued painting heads throughout his life, and later in his career, they would become even more mutilated and monstrous than the ones he painted in the 1950s. What was unsettling about these heads, in particular, were the contorted facial features.



Lot #8 | Untitled (Village Women)

“I have created a new kind of face [...] I have drawn the physiognomy way beyond Picasso, in completely new terms. And I am still a figurative painter [...] He stumped them and the whole of the western world into a shambles. When you examine the face, the morphology, I am the only artist who has taken it a step further.” [12] (F. N. Souza quoted in Y. Dalmia, ‘A Passion for the Human Figure’, *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 94) ”

Justifying his protagonists having unique heads and faces, the eccentric artist once said,

“Renaissance painters painted men and women making them look like angels. I paint for angels, to show them what men and women really look like.”

THE 1960'S AND LATER YEARS

In Spring 1960, Souza received a nomination from the British Council to tour Italy and Europe on an Italian Government scholarship. His works from his brief stay in Rome are vibrant and revel in red with explosive energy. The artist was exploring the cultures of the world and spent several months in Rome developing a body of paintings displayed in another solo show at Gallery One, titled **Twenty-seven Paintings from Rome**.

Souza also visited his home country for the first time in 11 years, after his initial departure in 1949. Here, he revisited his birthplace in Goa and pondered over absolute Roman Catholicism in Rome and Goa.

In the late 1960s, after shows and exhibitions in Europe, India, and the United States, Souza decided to move to New York with **Barbara Zinkant** (his second wife) after his divorce in 1965. Barbara would give birth to their first son in 1971. This turned out to be a period of dramatic technical experimentation for the artist. Here, he began using brighter colours in a brushy, expressionistic manner with a more joyful palette. He would also paint cityscapes and landscapes as intricate illustrations of his US travels. His artistic experimentations included a series of chemical drawings that comprised painting over or drawing figures on torn pages of coloured magazines, catalogues, and printed photographs using chemicals to dissolve the painter's ink. Souza continued travelling extensively and painting in his modest Manhattan studio up until his demise



FN Souza with S.H.Raza and Akbar Padamsee in Paris in 1952. Image Courtesy: Bhanumati Padamsee (Wiki Commons)

in 2002 while visiting Mumbai.

Souza was reckless and unapologetic in his ways; unperturbed by the responses his art elicited. He was an artist fearless in his mode of expression with a blatant disregard for convention. Hence, crafting his own unique artistic language deeming him the art world's nonpareil even today.

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- [12] F. N. Souza quoted in Y. Dalmia, 'A Passion for the Human Figure', *The Making of Modern Indian Art: The Progressives*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 94

Lot #24

F. N. SOUZA (1924-2002)

UNTITLED (Head)

Mixed media on paper
Signed upper right
27 x 22 in.
1956

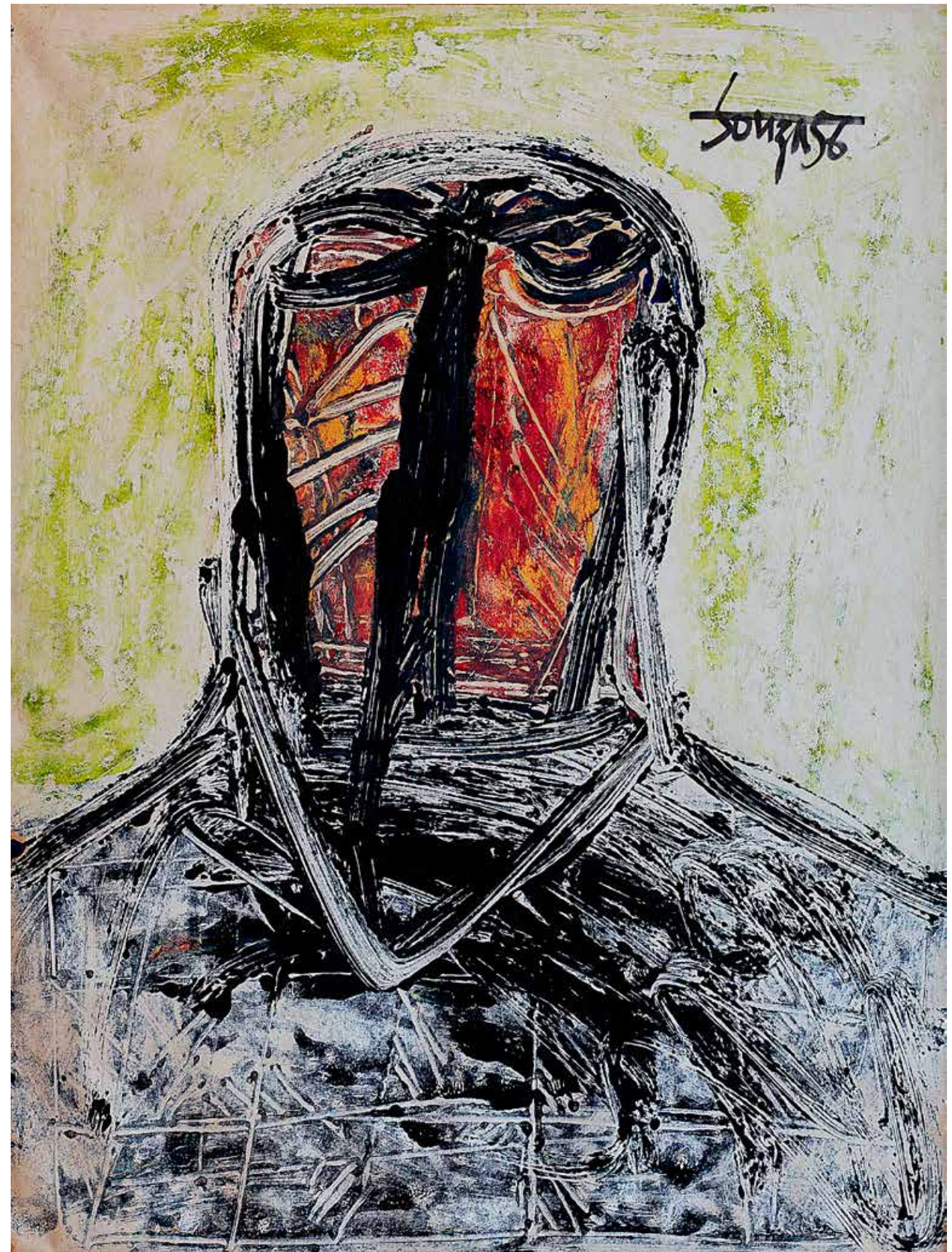
Estimate : 60,00,000 - 80,00,000 INR

Lot description

F.N.Souza's repertoire of subjects covered still life landscapes nudes and icons of Christianity in a distorted form. In his drawings he managed to capture fine details in his forms. He also used a combination of crosshatched strokes that made up the overall structure of his subject. This oil on board from 1956 depicts the head of a man. Souza painted various heads in the 1950s and '60s in line with his gamut of figurative art.

Provenance

Eminent Collection, Mumbai.



Lot #25

LALITHA LAJMI (b.1932)

UNTITLED (Set of four)

Mixed media on paper
21 x 14 in. ; 21 x 14 in. ; 18 x 13 in. ; 11 x 9 in.
Unsigned; Unsigned; Signed lower right; Signed lower right
1980 ; 1980 ; 1961 ; 1990

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 2,00,000 INR

Lot description

Lalitha Lajmi is a veteran printmaker and artist whose works explore the complexities of human relationships themes of performance and death drawn from her personal history with a continuous presence of psychoanalysis. This lot comprises four etchings two of which are nude studies of Sakina a popular model in K.H. Ara’s figure studies. Another is a temple sketch from Lajmi’s time at the JJ. The last one is a rare pointillist work.

Provenance

Artist Collection.







It took me some time to learn the craft but the problem at JJ was that they did not have the suitable material to work on at that time.

- Lalitha Lajmi

Lot #26

SUDHIR KHASTGIR (1907-1974)

UNTITLED (Women in prayer)

Pastel on paper
Signed lower left
29.00 x 21.00 in.
1950

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

Sudhir Khastgir was born in Chittagong Bangladesh in 1907. He did his schooling in Kolkata from Viswa Bharati University Santiniketan. In 1929 he studied under artist Nandalal Bose and later Abanindranath Tagore. He was also an important member of the Bengal School. Some of his signature works depict Indian mythologies women and village life. His expertise lay in watercolour oils and sculptures. This particular work is tender in execution with vibrant colours

Provenance

Originally acquired from Gallerie 88.



Lot #27

SOMNATH HORE (1921-2006)

UNTITLED (Baul dancer, Man with axe and Seated man)

Etchings

Unsigned; Signed lower right ; Signed lower left

6 x 5 ; 6 x 5 ; 5 x 8

1976 - 1984

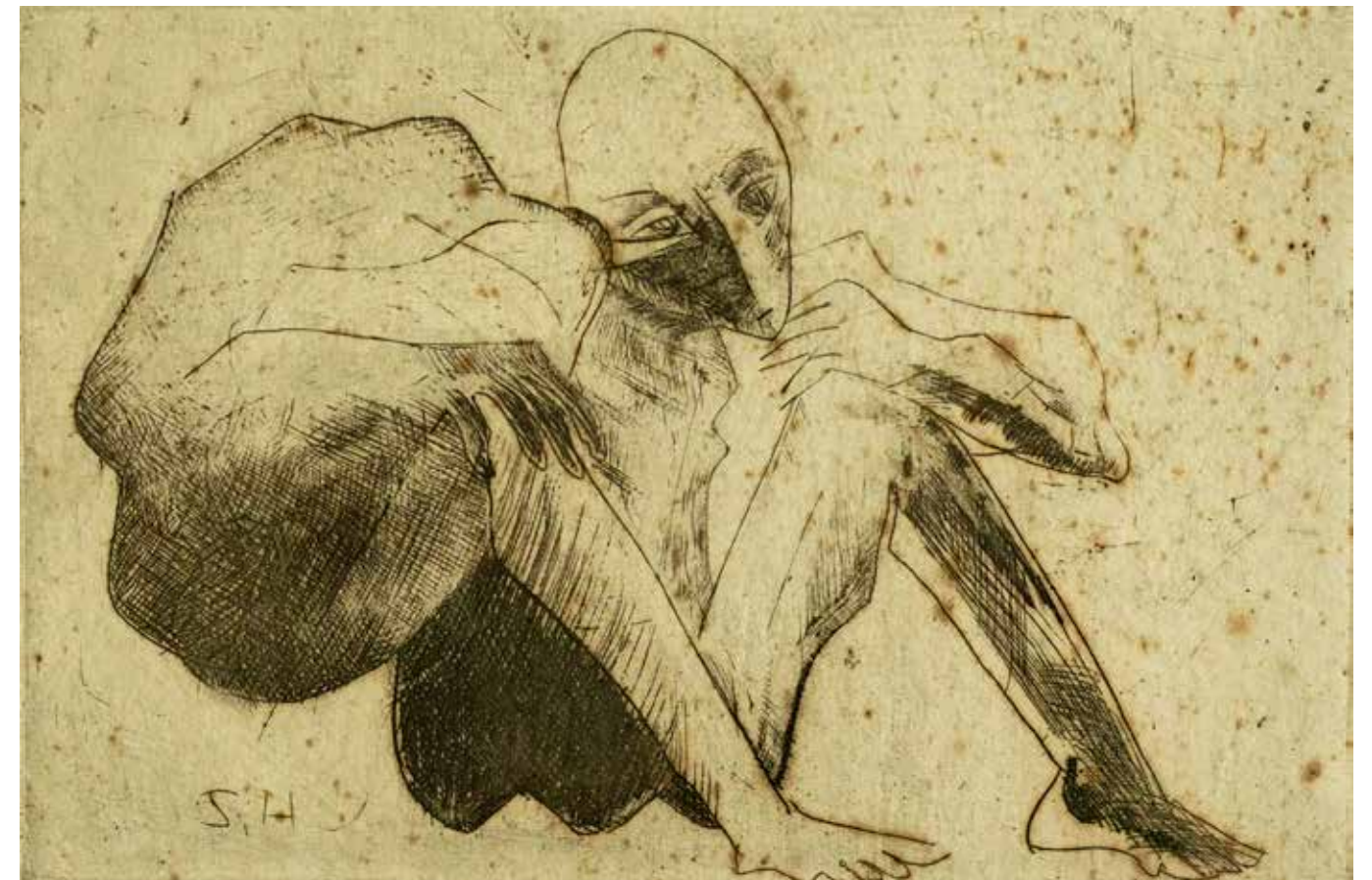
Estimate : 1,50,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

A set of three works by Somnath Hore depicting human suffering, hunger and misery drawn from his memories and observations of the 1943 Bengal Famine, Japanese bombings and World War 2.

Provenance

Originally acquired from Seagull Art Foundation.



Lot #28

SATISH SINHA (1894-1965)

UNTITLED (Two Portraits)

Pencil on board

Signed lower left ; Signed lower right

25 x 18 in. each

1941

Estimate : 50,000 - 1,50,000 INR

Lot description

Born in North Calcutta, Satish Sinha's works like this one display his preoccupation with the female form. His works stood apart from his teacher Abanindranath Tagore's disciples aligning more with Atul Bose and Jamini Roy's realistic trend.





KRISHEN KHANNA

“ They call it drawing. I really have no name for it. It is a compulsion, an itch..It is enjoyable but it can also hurt when nothing emerges but an incomprehensible mess. Was I taught to draw? Silly question, really. How can one manipulate a compulsive itch? Try and leave be and see what happens. Ill-temper, depression and a sickness of the spirit. Emptiness.”

- **Krishen Khanna** in his book, ‘*Memories, Anecdotes, Small talk*’, a motley collection of his memories, his experiences, the life encountered by him, artistic or otherwise.

Krishen Khanna, one of India's most celebrated and prolific artists continues to astound us with his experimentation and creativity at age ninety-seven. His most recent exhibition in Delhi during the India Art Fair was attended by the artist himself along with a list of prestigious collectors, artists and critics amongst others. Krishen Khanna's resilience and dedication to his art has been a beacon of inspiration to all.

Born into a family of professional educationists in Lyallpur (now Pakistan), the artist grew up in Lahore and went to England to study at the Imperial Service College. Upon his return in 1942 to Lahore, Khanna, took up a course in Literature at the Government College in Lahore and an evening class in art, not realizing the indelible mark he was set to place in the Indian art world.

As the saga of the India Pakistan partition was unraveling and creating havoc of tragic proportions between two nations, Khanna, at the time, was working as a printer in Kapur Art Press in Lahore. During this unsettling time, filled with unrest and angst, Khanna, along with his family moved to Shimla. This turmoil of partition left a generation of people plunged in a myriad of emotions. Krishen Khanna, who was one of them, was not ready to face this and joined the Grindlays Bank in Bombay immediately, in dire need of work. In an interview back in 2010, Khanna laughed about how many may assume these fourteen years were a 'vanvaas' or an exile for him. On the contrary he claims he was a reasonably good banker if he may say so himself, but eventually he just wanted to paint. Only a few days into arriving in Bombay, Khanna on a lunch break crossed a sign

board stating Bombay Art Society. Intrigued by this he followed the signage, overhearing two women critiquing art, calling what they had seen disgusting! This was the time when his friend and later fellow member, Francis Newton Souza's exhibition with a self portrait nude was on display. From this point onwards the friendship with the Progressive Group of Artists only deepened, involving animated discussions on artistic technique and style. He says he knew Husain and Ara the best and it was Husain who inducted him into the Progressives. The beauty of this movement being the selfless way in which they all helped each other grow and flourish as artists, understanding the common trials and struggles.

Krishan Khanna's intense urge to paint and allow his creative juices to flow was however, not good enough for him to quit his job at the bank. Largely self taught, he was aware of his shortcomings as a painter at the time and so he practiced relentlessly till he honed his skills instead of indulging in the activities of bankers at the time, such as sailing! But Khanna knew that banking is a total life and this was something he was not signing up for. With encouragement

and a nudge from his wife as well as his fathers support, he quit his job. Then, there was no turning back for Krishen Khanna. He sold his very first painting to Homi Bhaba. Khanna, in an interview fondly remembers how he was in

Madras and suddenly got a telegram that his painting had been sold for two hundred rupees. For him it was a big feather in his cap.

As an artist, Krishen Khanna's journey began with abstraction, moving to the human condition and form as his style and technique developed. In several interviews he talks about his constant concern for things around him, stating that this is what inspired him to shift focus. The effect of suffering the ravages of partition led him to want to move out of abstraction and paint what he had seen and what had scarred him. He says it was something he could not digest and only surfaced after fifty years to emerge onto his canvas. Stating that art is not an imaginary chain reaction, his works post abstraction bear imprints of the traumatic experience of the socio-political chaos that not only affected his

life deeply but also of those around him.



Prinseps Modern Art Auction - April 2019



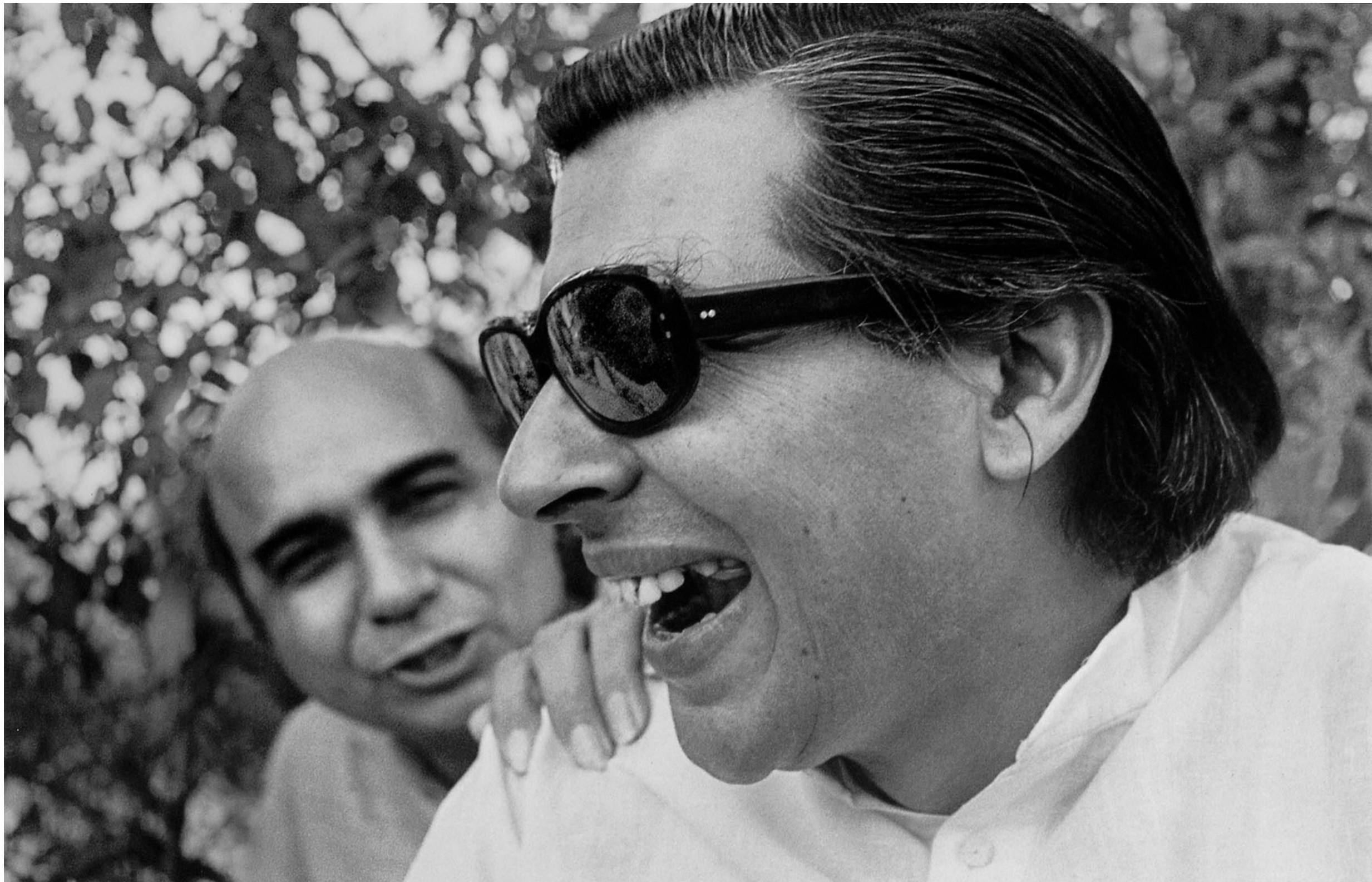


Image credits : Jyoti Bhatt

Khanna speaks of his drawing as an intuitive process, “I start to scratch the surface of a piece of paper. Soon enough, the pencil moves as if on its own accord, putting my hands this way and that rather like a pencil in a planchet creating a nervous scribble meaningful only to the directing ghost. I would repeat the contours of a subject I have tackled before, which is not to say that I would not go back to the same subject in the hope of discovering another dimension.”

Known to create highly figurative and symbolic works, the legendary artist’s tryst with abstraction is rather intriguing though and this is what makes his early works all the more interesting. Each abstract work is vastly different, and deeply meaningful, asking the viewer to consider a variety of interpretations while keeping in mind the artist’s chosen theme and expression. The gestures are unrivaled as they create magic upon the canvas and yet retain their grounded quality. The viewer is transported but also tethered, as though meditating upon the canvas and its many possibilities. His genius with the textual translation of his own palette is quite a feat, as we simply watch the words weave into the folds of colour, igniting sparks within our mind’s eye.

In 1962 he won The Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship, which led him to expand his techniques from paper to canvas, amalgamating the principles he learned with those he witnessed in Abstract expressionist works of the time. He later exhibited at the prestigious Egan Gallery in New York.

A Padma Shree awardee, Krishen Khanna has been an artist who has never sought recognition, rarely being an attendee at exhibitions and events. An avant garde of Indian art, the last link with the progressive artists group that emerged in Bombay in the late 1940’s, Krishan Khanna was a late entry to the group but definitely gained the title of a master of modern Indian art over the years. Dedicating himself to the world of Indian art, Khanna talks about how one must not get too close to something you are good at in an interview. In the same interview, the artist discusses his love for the colour red, a recurring shade in his works, right from the early ones to the most recent ones. His love for red, apparent in this particular work as well, is testimony to his love to manipulate the shade with all the ancillary colours that go with it.

The strokes Khanna implements are experimental, pushing boundaries. The abstraction is a search, a quest of a deeper meaning, offering a glimpse into the wonderfully networked concepts and visual language of Krishen Khanna. While he may not have the definitive direction at the time, his journey from these rare abstracts to his later narrative figures is a contemplative reflection of his life and experiences, showing the artist’s inner direction.

Abstraction was a popular focus because it was a vaguely defined genre that could be adapted well to the growing subcontinent and the myriad artistic practices that were slowly formulating at the time. Khanna often states that painting is an independent activity and abstraction helped him in breaking out of the British indoctrination and training of Indian

artists becoming draftsmen.

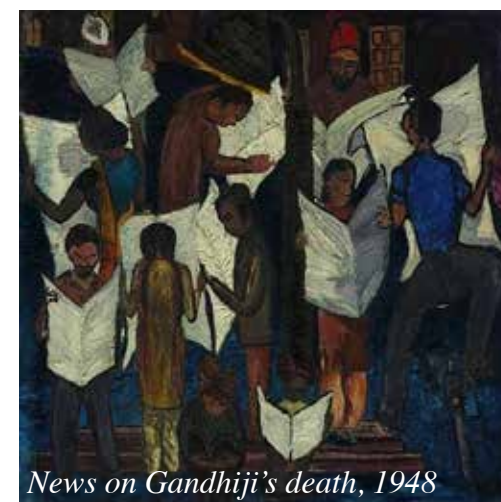
This style and subject of art by Krishen Khanna is seldom seen, perhaps one of the rare works before the truckwalla and bandwalla, his much revered subjects, which he eventually immersed himself into.

Krishen Khanna is definitely one of the most versatile modernists of our times. Art that started as a form of expressionism via abstract pieces gained meaning and depth with each piece. Khanna’s works like the other prolific masters of the time are historic narrations of some of the most turbulent times of ‘India’s political history and his works traverse an Indian idiom of everyday living.’ (TOI).

A voracious reader, think tank and greatly respected, Khanna is an artist who has weathered all seasons. In the 1970’s he returned to figuration and also moved to Delhi. Thus began an observation of Contemporary Indian life. This era in the political capital coincided with the Indo- Pakistan War of 1971, and later The Emergency, and Krishen above all captured this dark and shameful era. He documented all this upheaval and change on the working class, and painted the local dhabas, the workers on lorries, and of course the marginalized. These pieces of art are treasure troves that embody a lifetime of pain and passion.

References:

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- [2] Painter Krishen Khanna talks about his art and anecdotes from his life. Sidharth Bhatia. The Wire. YouTube.
- [3] Krishen Khanna’s Website. ARTIANA.
- [4] Revathi Krishnan. Covid hit London exhibition, artist Krishen Khanna paints at Gurugram home & you can see online. The Print. 2021.
- [5] Krishen Khanna in conversation with Gayatri Sinha and Roobina Karode on his 96th birthday. Kiran Nadar Museum of Art. YouTube. 2021.
- [6] Uma Nair. Krishen Khanna, versatile modernist, turns 96. Times of India. 2021.
- [7] Ritika Kochhar. The last of the Progressives, Krishen Khanna told stories of a newly independent India. The Hindu. 2021.





This particular work of art by Khanna projects a sense of papers being thrown or the tearing up of treaties. Treaties, which later would evolve into paper like forms, floating down and ultimately just becoming a mound of meaningless paper. Could it be that this crushed paper, these treaties are a metaphor for the treaties being signed post India's independence? Or perhaps the futility of treaties when war became a constant reality?

Lot #29

KRISHEN KHANNA (b.1925)

UNTITLED (Treaties)

Oil on canvas
30 x 30 in.
Circa 1970

Estimate : 25,00,000 - 35,00,000 INR

Lot description

Krishen Khanna was born in Lyallpur, undivided India in 1925. As the artist's family shifted to India at the time of partition, Khanna arrived in Bombay in 1948. He got acquainted with the Bombay Progressive Artist's Group, and in the 50's his subjects included urban migrants. As one of the most endeavouring artists of the Progressives Group, Khanna works alternately between narrative and formal concerns. Stylistically his works are aligned with western modernism, but inspired by the occurrences in the world around him.

Provenance

Prinseps 2017.



Lot #30

K. S. KULKARNI (1916-1994)

UNTITLED (Landscape)

Oil on board
22 x 29 in.
1980

Estimate : 3,50,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

KS Kulkarni was an Indian painter and fine colourist who studied at the Sir JJ School of Art Mumbai. He went to Delhi in 1943 to study textile design. In 1945 he joined the art department of the Delhi Polytechnic and became a member of Delhi's All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. Kulkarni painted abstract landscapes with angular bold lines smooth surfaces and shaded areas to emphasise chiaroscuro in his works. He was famed for his distinctive play with colours. The artist derived a unique pictorial language through his exploration of modernist mediums and techniques. Kulkarni used unexpected combinations and experimented with fresh bright colours to depict his work.

Provenance

Prinseps 2019.





Lot #31 Non-Exportable National Art Treasure

JAMINI ROY (1887-1972)

RAAVANA

Tempera on card
Signed lower right
11 x 30 in.

Estimate : 6,00,000 - 10,00,000 INR

Lot description

Jamini Roy was one of the most iconic figures of modern Indian art in the mid 20th century. His artistic originality and magnificence was deeply rooted in Bengali folk art. Roy’s creative oeuvre and new folk style drew heavily on the idioms of a range of local art forms standing out as a singular example of Indian primitivism. This tempera on cloth depicts the mythical multi-headed demon king of Lanka in Hindu mythology.

Provenance

Originally acquired from Turmeric Earth Art Projects.



Lot #32

CHITTAPROSAD BHATTACHARYA (1915-1978)

UNTITLED (Railway station)

Pastel on paper
Signed lower left
21.50 x 28.00 in.
1951

Estimate : 6,00,000 - 8,00,000 INR

Lot description

Chittaprosad Bhattacharya was an artist avid storyteller and poet. His body of works document human suffering the labouring poor and the marginalised. Chittaprosad's artistic oeuvre is a revolution against the tyranny of domination and social injustice at that time.

Provenance

Acquired from the artist's family, Kolkata, 1999.
Gifted to Columbia University Press.
Christie's 2019.



Lot #33

A. A. RAIBA (1922-2016)

UNTITLED (Village women)

Oil on jute
Signed lower right
30.5 x 26 in.
Circa 1970

Estimate : 8,00,000 - 10,00,000 INR

Lot description

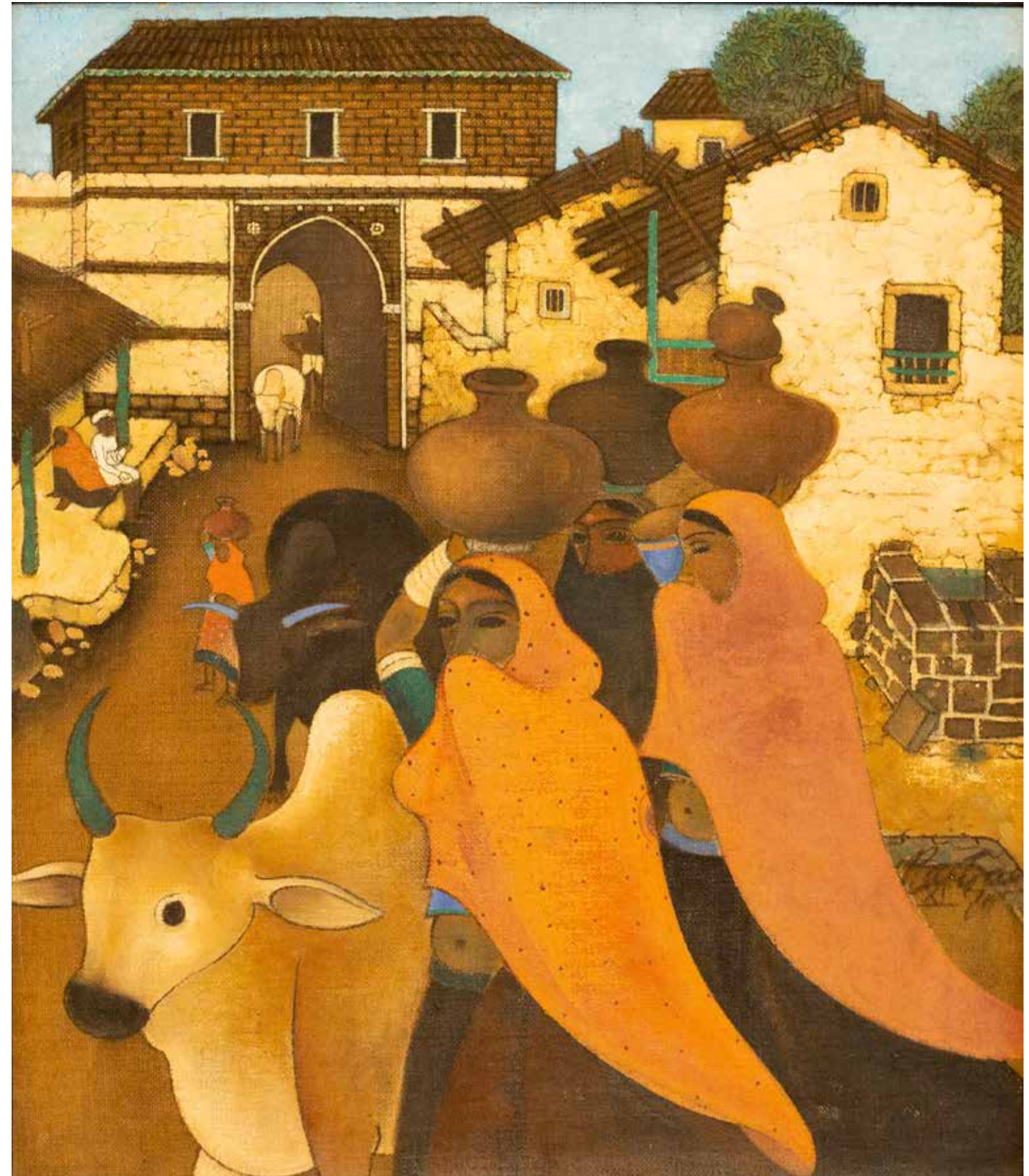
A lively village scene depicting women carrying pots on their heads. Raiba's oeuvre mapped his travels across India in bold strokes, definite solid lines, and vibrant colours. His works comprised depictions of Kashmiri women, South Indian fisherwomen, and Goan landscapes to North Indian village landscapes.

Exhibition

This work was exhibited at the Nehru Centre Art Gallery Show called Indian Masters' Retrospective, 2017.

Provenance

The Estate of A. A. Raiba.



Lot #34

LALU PRASAD SHAW (b.1937)

DURGA

Tempera on paperboard
Signed lower right
19 x15 in.
2003

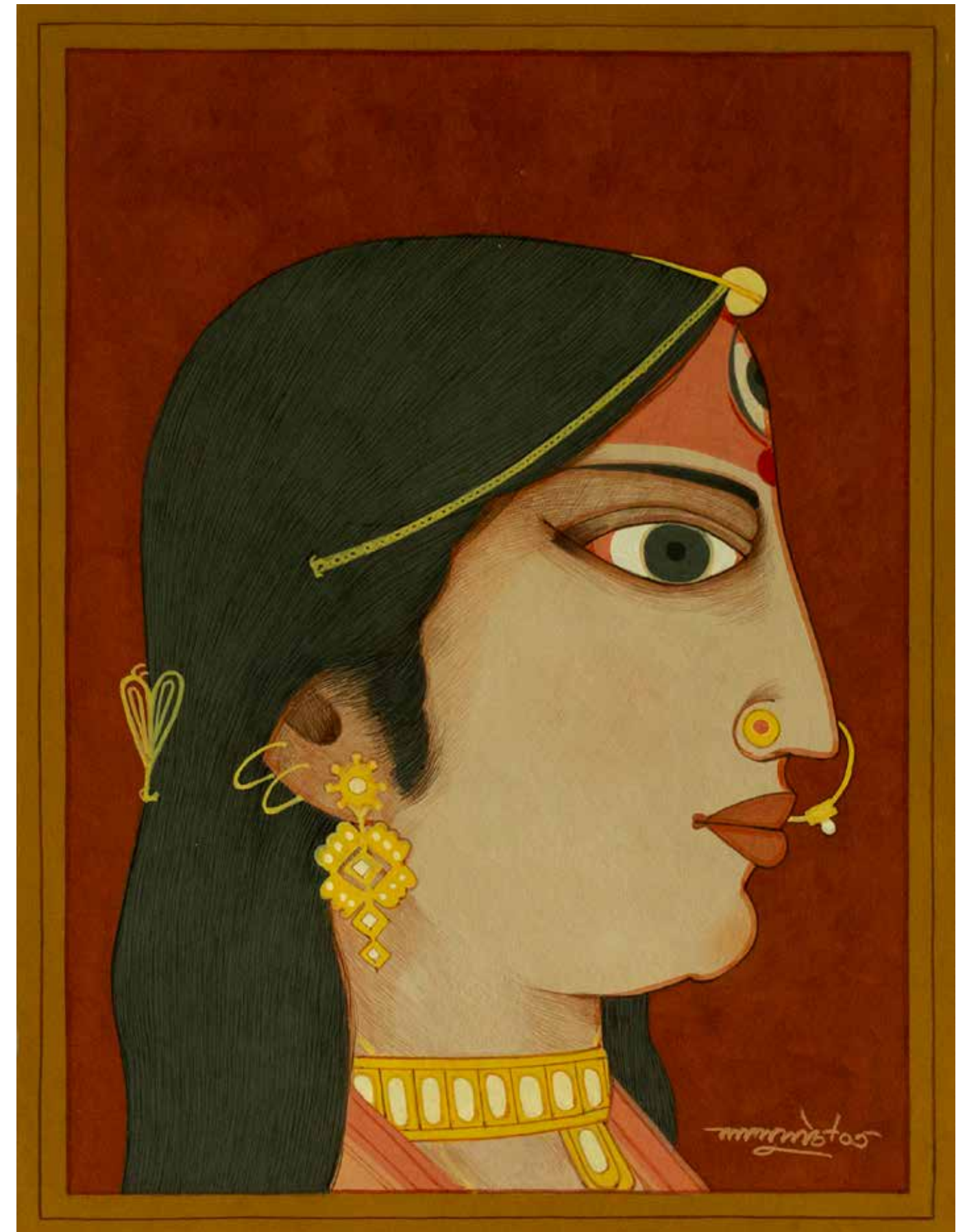
Estimate : 2,00,000 - 5,00,000 INR

Lot description

Lalu Prasad Shaw is an Indian painter and completed his education in fine arts at the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata. He mostly works in gouache or tempera executing observations surrounding the Bengali middle class in academic and traditional Indian formats.

Provenance

Originally acquired from CIMA.



Lot #35

MANINDRA BHUSHAN GUPTA (1898 - 1968)

HAR PARVATI

Tempera on paper
Signed lower right
37 x 26 in.
1937

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

Manindra Bhushan Gupta was amongst the first generation of students at Kala Bhavana and was trained by Nandalal Bose. The artist was nurtured at the same time and in the same ambience as Benode Behari and Ramkinkar. He did a number of paintings on Indian Mythological subjects and Bengal landscapes. He worked in watercolours, temperas, oils, woodcuts, brush and pen drawings. This particular work is reminiscent of the traditional Indian painting style.

Provenance

Originally acquired from the artist's daughter.



Lot #36

CHITTAPROSAD BHATTACHARYA (1915-1978)

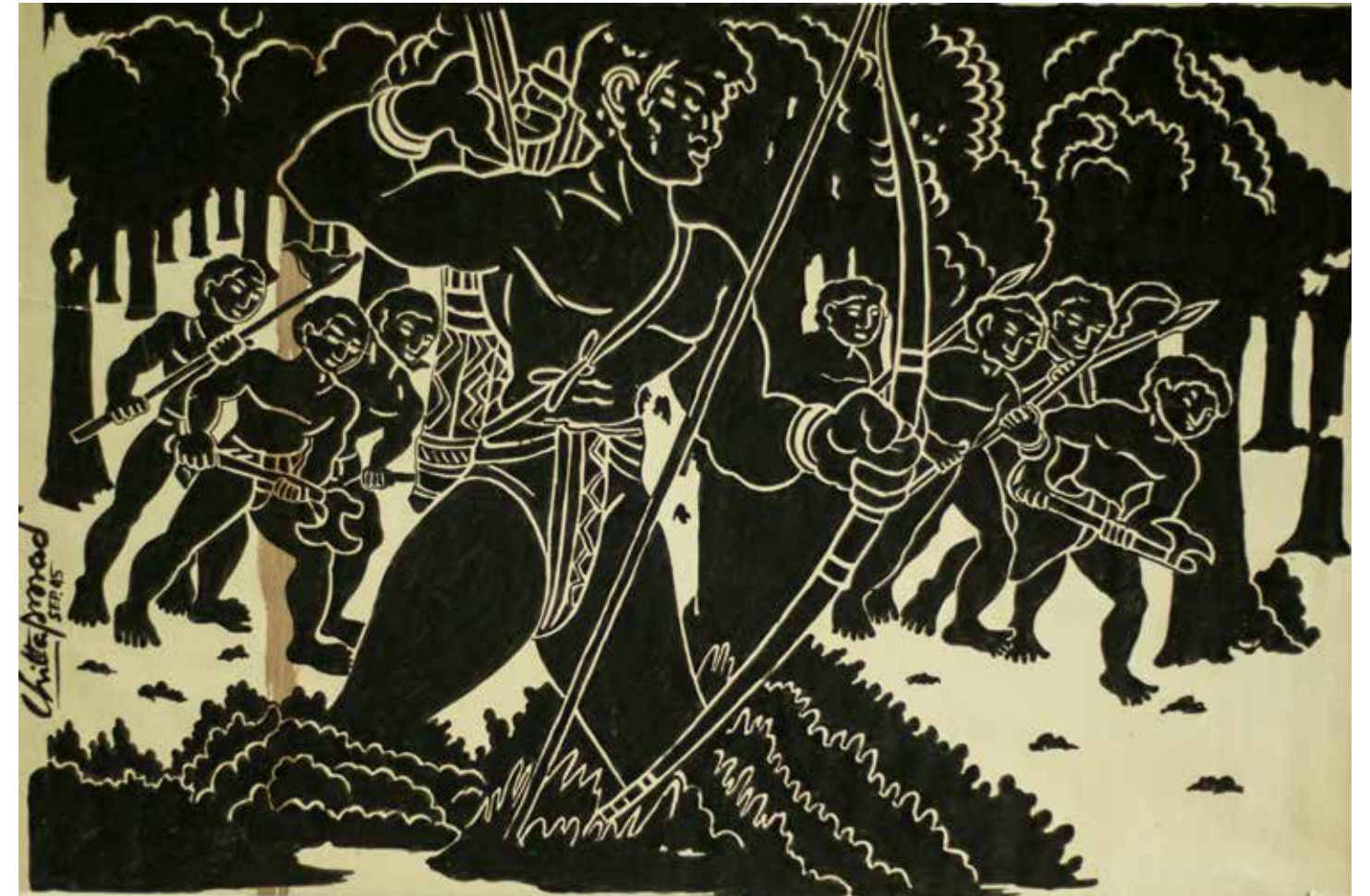
UNTITLED (Hunters)

Ink on paper
Signed lower left
25 x 38 in.
1945

Estimate : 1,00,000 - 3,00,000 INR

Lot description

Chittaprosad was a self-taught artist and illustrator born in Bengal. Well known for his print works, he preferred to use linocuts and woodcuts. The prints were meant to be easily and cheaply created for the masses so they could be widely disseminated amongst the local populace. Chittaprosad witnessed the Bengal Famine in 1943 and he saw the atrocities of a man-made famine firsthand. His works are a protest against colonialism, urban poverty, and economic exploitation. Chittaprosad's artistic oeuvre is a revolution against the tyranny of domination and social injustice at that time. In 1943 - 44, Bhattacharya blatantly depicted the grim realities of the Bengal Famine through profuse sketches in stark black and white, copies of which were seized and destroyed by the British.



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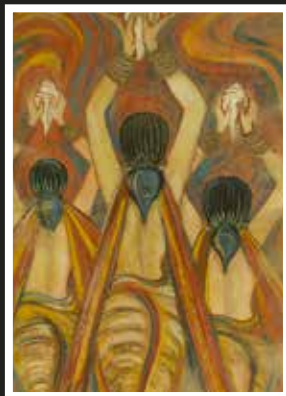
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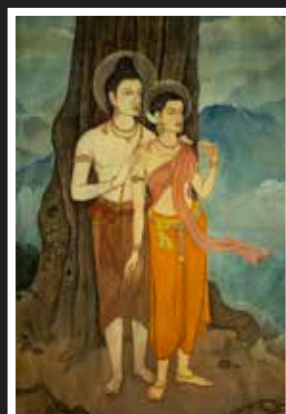
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