

# NUMBERLESS FORMS

Modern & Contemporary Indian Masters



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ART AGENDA

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Published in conjunction with the exhibition

## **NUMBERLESS FORMS**

Modern & Contemporary Indian Masters

organised by Art Agenda & Art Magnum at Art Agenda, 39 Keppel Road, #02-01  
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Curator and Author: Wang Zineng

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## FEATURED ARTISTS

B PRABHA	N S BENDRE
BIMAL DAS GUPTA	PIRAJI SAGARA
F N SOUZA	S H RAZA
GANESH HALOI	SHAMPA SIRCAR DAS
J SWAMINATHAN	SANJAY BHATTACHARYA
JERAM PATEL	SHANTI DAVE
K G SUBRAMANYAN	SUDHIR PATWARDHAN
LALU PRASAD SHAW	SUNIL DAS
M F HUSAIN	T VAIKUNTAM
MANU PAREKH	

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Please contact +65 8133 1623 / [info@artagendasea.org](mailto:info@artagendasea.org).

# NUMBERLESS FORMS

## Modern & Contemporary Indian Masters

This exhibition features two dozen artworks by 18 established Indian artists, including artists central in Indian art history such as N S Bendre, M F Husain, S H Raza and F N Souza.

Its title, Numberless Forms, lifts from a phrase in Rabindranath Tagore's poem Unending Love:

I seem to have loved you in numberless forms, numberless times...  
In life after life, in age after age, forever.

The forms, styles and matters raised in such a survey exhibition are rather diverse and innumerable, and reflective of contemporaneous concerns and engagements with history; thus encapsulated by the word numberless.

For me, crafting the exhibition alongside fellow gallerist Saurabh Singhvi is a palpable experience of coursing through history, what with its episodic fragments and ultimate subjectivity cloaked in definitive objective facts. What kind of history do we, as exhibition-makers, engage with? History relived through others, of course.

Modernist artists in the exhibition like F N Souza and Shanti Dave have spent lifetimes struggling with the contradictions of modernity. They engaged in nationalist struggles, whilst acknowledging deeper within themselves the colonial legacies that have brought about modernity and their own bourgeoisie and privileged positions to allow them to comment on modernity through their works.

Mythic narratives are central to the constitution of 20th century Indian art. In the phallic horses and heroic warriors of M F Husain, idioms from the epics and folklore bring about a powerful and mythic conception of the Indian soul. The same is true for Sunil Das and T Vaikuntam in whose works we see the local approached and apprehended through the purity of line and the non-naturalistic and poetic expressiveness of colour.

I have a suspicion - a natural, healthy one no less - that I will look back at this exhibition a few months or years on through markedly different lens. Ultimately, such a survey exhibition stands as one in a succession of surveys, particularly where Indian art exhibited abroad is concerned. For gallerists, exhibition-makers and curators, it is always useful to be aware that our creative efforts are built upon those of others who have come before us, and serve as reference for those after us.

Above all, survey exhibitions as such are celebratory; and in our case, recognising that indelible passion arising from cultural awareness, appreciation and pride underpins the collecting and exhibiting of Indian art (and for that matter, art from other specific geographies as well), cementing its relevance at home and on the world stage.

Wang Zineng



**B. Prabha** was born in the village of Bela, near Nagpur in Maharashtra in 1933. Growing up in a close-knit middle-class family, she studied at the Nagpur School of Art and went on to pursue a Diploma in Painting and Mural Painting from the Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai. Although she worked mostly with oils on canvas, this modern painter did explore several media, styles and subjects before finally settling with oils as her preferred medium. Following her phase of experimentation, Prabha developed an elegant, formal style that remains her trademark. Her paintings cover a wide range of subjects, from landscapes to social issues like droughts, hunger and homelessness. A significant component of Prabha's body of work is the artist's self-conscious attempt to immortalize the plight of women in her country.

Prabha's signature style fully evolved after her marriage to fellow artist B. Vithal in 1956, when she moved from modern abstract forms to a more decorative figuration. She held her first joint exhibition with her husband the same year. It is interesting to note that B. Prabha was a practicing female artist in an age where women were unapologetically oppressed, and it is no surprise therefore that Prabha used her own position as an artist to make strong comments on the same. While her work today might seem like a simple documentation of the figures of rural women, it must be taken into account that a few decades ago these might have been odes to the spirit and the plight of these women.



**B PRABHA (1933 - 2001)**

Untitled, 1981  
Signed in Devnagari, bottom right  
Oil on canvas  
91.5 x 46 cm (36 x 18 in)

Provenance:  
Property of a Delhi-based collector  
Authenticated by Nayana Sarmalkar



**B PRABHA (1933 - 2001)**

Untitled  
Signed in Devnagari, lower back  
Bronze  
44 x 28 x 22.5 cm (17 1/2 x 11 x 9 in)

Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist  
Property of a Mumbai-based collector



"I believe that if an artist has mastered one medium, he can work in the others as well. I paint only when I am in the mood. The colours are always there in my heart, an unseen power in the background drives me to put them down on canvas."

The Bengal School of Art influenced Dasgupta. He painted landscapes that gave full rein to his penchant for nature and its fanciful shapes and colours, with the ocean being an endless source of fascination. Several of his paintings are surrealistic and abstract in his depiction of the teeming life underwater.

A native of Bengal, Dasgupta spent his childhood years in Behrampur. He remembers, "My parents did not want me to be an artist. It was considered a waste of time. Boys were discouraged. But I was not interested in school, and after my matriculation I begged my father for money and began painting. Since colours and canvasses were so expensive, I did other part-time jobs."

Despite these obstacles, Dasgupta completed his art education from the Government College of Arts and Crafts, Calcutta, and embarked on a career as a landscape artist. Primarily interested in watercolours, Dasgupta nevertheless painted in other mediums as well. He had to give up oils, when he developed an allergy to turpentine and linseed oil. Thereafter, he took up acrylic. But his preferred medium always remained watercolour.

Moving slowly, but surely, from realistic images to the completely abstract, Dasgupta used textural changes and sharp-defined colour schemes, making his landscapes come alive with shifting shapes and barely visible forms.



**BIMAL DAS GUPTA (1910 - 2000)**

Untitled, 1989

oil on canvas

122 x 61 cm (48 x 24 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist  
Property of a Delhi-based collector

**Francis Newton Souza** was born in 1924 in Saligao, Goa. After losing his father at a very young age and being afflicted by a serious bout of small pox, he vowed to go about life his own way. Souza 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. An articulate genius, Souza augmented his disturbing and powerful canvases with his sharp and provocative prose.

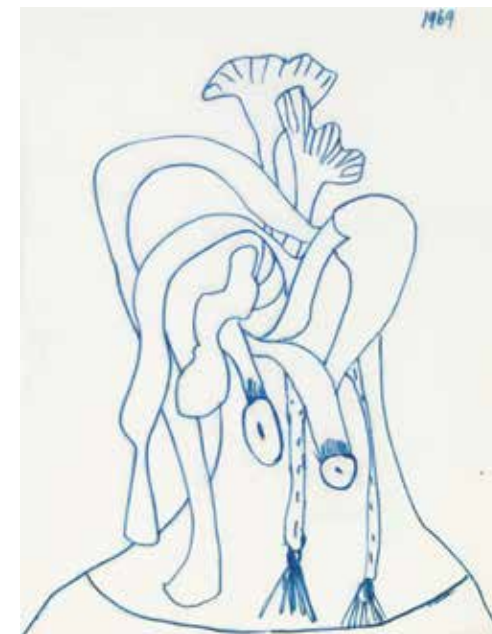
Francis Newton Souza's unrestrained and graphic style created thought-provoking and powerful images. His repertoire of subjects covered still life, landscape, nudes and icons of Christianity, rendered boldly in a frenzied distortion of form. Souza's paintings expressed defiance and impatience with convention and with the banality of everyday life. Souza's works have reflected the influence of various schools of art: the folk art of his native Goa, the full-blooded paintings of the Renaissance, the religious fervour of the Catholic Church, the landscapes of 18th and 19th century Europe, and the path-breaking paintings of the moderns. A recurrent theme in his works was the conflict in a man-woman relationship, with an emphasis on sexual tension and friction. In his drawings, he used line with economy, while still managing to capture fine detail in his forms. He also used a profusion of crosshatched strokes that made up the overall structure of his subject.



**F N SOUZA (1924 - 2002)**

Untitled, 1966  
Dated, top left  
Ink, pen and pencil on paper  
25.5 x 20 cm (10 x 8 in)

Provenance:  
The Shelley Souza Collection,  
Christie's London, 18 March 2014, part  
of Lot 105



**F N SOUZA (1924 - 2002)**

Untitled, 1969  
Dated, top right  
Pen on paper pasted on tracing  
paper  
28 x 22 cm (11 x 8 3/4 in)

Provenance:  
Formerly in the Shelly Souza  
Collection  
Saffronart, 24-25 April 2018, Lot 16  
Acquired from the above sale by  
the present owner



**F N SOUZA (1924 - 2002)**

Untitled, 1946  
signed and dated, top right  
ink and pencil on paper  
34 x 21.5 cm (13 1/2 x 8 1/2 in)

Provenance:  
The Shelley Souza Collection,  
Christie's London, 18 March 2014,  
part of Lot 30

**Ganesh Haloi's** art has evolved through a series of transactions from pure landscape to the innerscapes.

Even though it is abstract, Haloi's works and his motifs have precise associations with the artist's psyche, his experiences and the upheavals that have shaped him and his point of view. "Everything begins in pain," says Haloi. He maintains high standards craftsmanship and his construction of tress, houses and the ambience of Kolkata that seems murky with a suppressed strength. Some of his unforgettable work includes nature-scapes painted on rice paper.

Born in 1936 in East Bengal, now, Bangladesh he migrated to Kolkata during the partition. He graduated from Government College of Art & craft kolkata in 1956 and joined Archaeological Survey of India as a Senior Artist. He was deputed to work at Ajanta from 1957 to 1963. Then he joined Art College Kolkata as a lecturer in 1964.

His initial work includes study of miniatures at Banasthali (Rajasthan) and copying Ajanta frescoes for six years. While his earlier work is dominated with landscapes, his later paintings reflect his introvert and philosophic temperament. Haloi's work shows his preoccupation with the theme of devastation or calamity and resilience.

Born in a district that is now a part of Bangladesh, his earlier memories of the region are of Brahamaputra and delta region mixed with communal holocaust, of partition.

**GANESH HALOI (B.1936)**

Untitled, 2021

Signed and dated in Bengali, top right

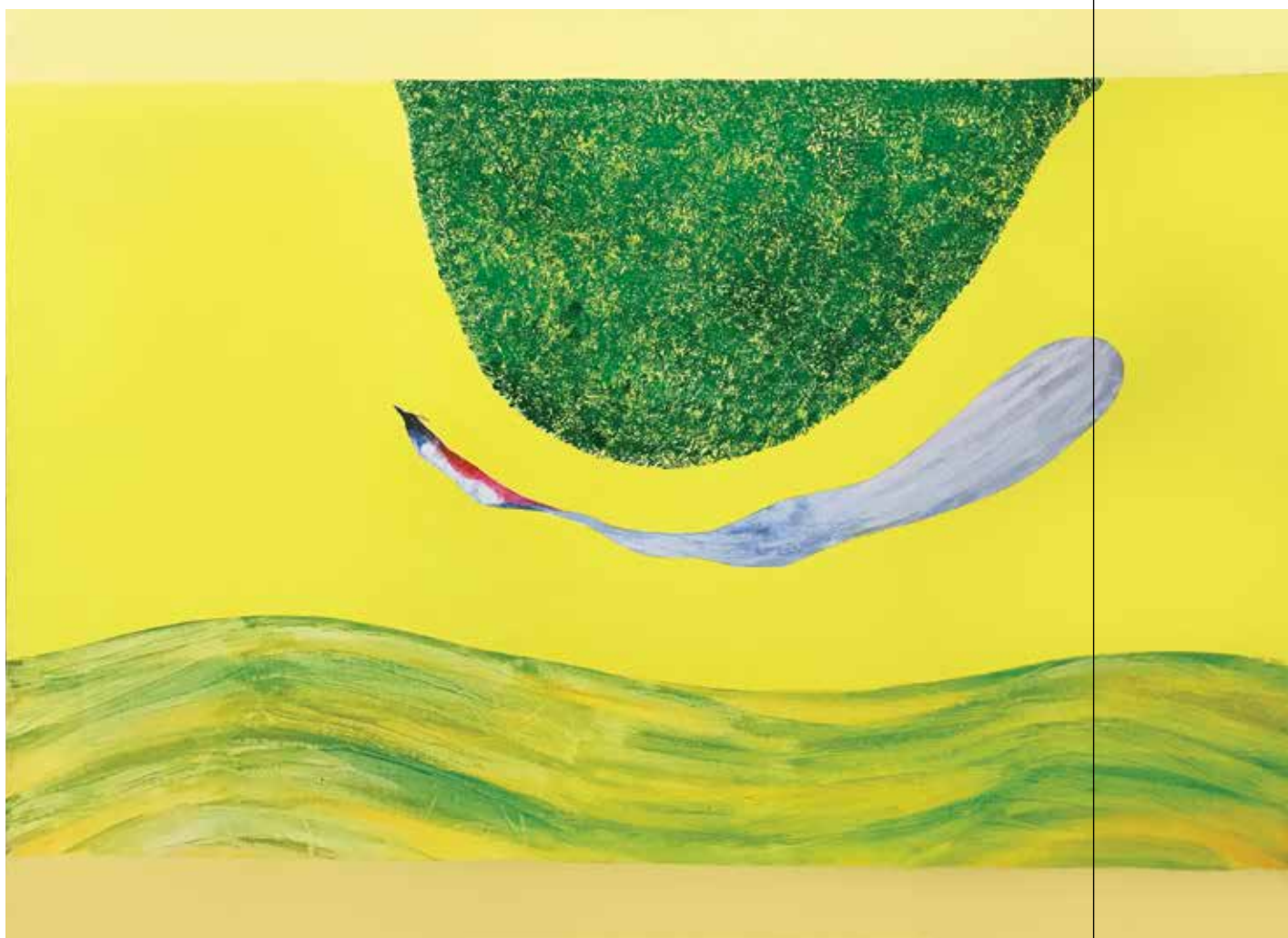
Gouache on Nepali paper

35.5 x 16 cm (14 x 6 1/4 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist





**Jagdish Swaminathan** was born in Simla in 1928. His education in art consisted of short spells at the Delhi Polytechnic and later, in Poland. It was only in the late 50's that he started devoting his time completely to art. He was a member of the Communist Party of India in the mid-50's and worked as a journalist and art critic for the Left magazines. Swaminathan founded the "Group 1890" in August 1962. This group put up their only show in 1963. As a solo artist, he put up about 31 shows and participated in a number of national as well as international exhibitions.

The main feature of his paintings was simplicity that was rather captivating. The vivid imagery and bright colours were a celebration of the rise of the inner being over the common place. Later on, the well ordered colour geometry and brush painting, gave way to the use of symbols. The latter was a distinct influence of the tribal arts and he began to use his fingers to apply the pigment in order to achieve the desired effect.

"The Significance of the Traditional Numen in Contemporary Art", a project that he worked on, won him the Nehru Fellowship. He served as a member of the International Jury at the Sao Paulo Biennale and was also a trustee at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. In 1981, he set up the art museum "Roopanker" at the Bharat Bhavan in Bhopal. He served as the director of the institute till 1990.

Jagdish Swaminathan passed away in 1994.

**JAGDISH SWAMINATHAN (1928 - 1994)**

Untitled, 1980

Signed and dated in English, on the reverse

Oil on canvas

84 x 112 cm (33 x 44 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist

Collection of a British diplomat

Exhibited:

Timeless Treasures, Singapore Art Week, New Delhi: Art

Magnum, 22 - 30 January 2021

Authenticated by the Swaminathan Foundation

**Jeram Patel** was born in 1930 at Sojitra in the Kaira district of Gujarat. He studied drawing and painting at Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai between 1950 and 55, and typography and publicity design at Central School of Arts and Craft, London for two years till 1959.

Jeram Patel was one of the artists who turned around the Indian art scene and formulated a new visual identity and method of abstraction in the late 1950's and 60's. Alongside NS Bendre and Sankho Chowdhuri who set up the Baroda School of Art, Patel, with artists like Jagdish Swaminathan, initiated one of the greatest changes in Indian art as a founder member of the short-lived artists' collective Group 1890.

Patel has held one-man shows in London, New Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai and has represented India at the Tokyo Biennale of 1963, the Sao Paulo Biennale of 1963, the Third World Biennale at Baghdad in 1980 and the Festival of India, London, in 1982. His works are featured in many prestigious collections including those at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, the Museum of Chennai Art, Baghdad, Chandigarh University, the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, the Society of India, the Museum of Fine Arts in Bhopal and the Dhoomimal Gallery in New Delhi.

Patel has been associated with various organizations including the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, the Gujarat State Lalit Kala Akademi, the Royal Society of Arts, London, the School of Architecture, Ahmedabad and the Weavers' Service Centre, All-India Handloom Board, New Delhi. He was till recent working as a professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda University. Jeram Patel has been a recipient of the National Award from the Lalit Kala Akademi in 1957, 1963, 1973 and 1984 and National Award for Design in 1976. He has also won a silver medal from the Bombay Art Society in 1960. In 1994 he was awarded Emeritus Fellowship from The Govt. of India.



**JERAM PATEL (1930 - 1994)**

Untitled

Signed, on the reverse

Blowtorch and enamel paint on wood

61 x 61 cm (24 x 24 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist



Born in Kerala on 15 February 1924, **K G Subramanyan** was one of the leading artists who was part of India's post-Independence search for identity through art. He completed his Bachelor's Degree in Economics from the Presidency College in Chennai. In 1948, he graduated from Kala Bhavan in Santiniketan, where he studied under the tutelage of Benode Behari Mukherjee, Nandalal Bose and Ramkinkar Baij. In 1955, he received a British Council Research Fellowship to the Slade School of Art at the University of London.

A writer, scholar, teacher and art historian, K G Subramanyan was prolific in his art, spanning the spectrum of mediums from painting to pottery, weaving, and glass painting. He believed in the value of Indian traditions and incorporated folklore, myth and local techniques and stories into his work. He was an inspiration to generations of students as a member of the Baroda M S Fine Arts Faculty. His focus there in later years was on terracotta and pottery.

In a career spanning nearly seven decades, K G Subramanyan's work has been exhibited in over fifty solo shows, including an extensive 2015-2016 exhibition by the Seagull Foundation for the Arts in collaboration with the Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, and the Harrington Street Arts Centre, Kolkata.

**K G SUBRAMANYAN (1924 - 2016)**

Untitled

Signed in Tamil, bottom left

Gouache on paper

25.5 x 25.5 cm (10 x 10 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist's daughter

**Lalu Prasad Shaw** was born in Bengal in 1937, and completed his education in fine arts at the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata.

Known widely for his highly stylized portraits of Bengali women and couples, Lulu Prasad Shaw's works lay the most emphasis on his subject's physical characteristics. Capturing the expressions of his subjects perfectly with the greatest economy of line and colour each of Shaw's paintings has an intimate feel to it.

Influenced by the pre-independence Company School of art, the traditional Kalighat Pat and the Ajanta cave paintings, Shaw's works, mainly executed in gouache or tempera, like his own person, are simple and graceful, having a very still, well-composed and smooth exterior. This senior artist draws his inspiration primarily from nature and the milieu surrounding the great Bengali middle class, often depicting pleasant and quiet scenes from his own life on his canvases and papers. His style is unique and modern in its adaptation of academic and traditional Indian formats.

Though he would describe himself as a painter, Shaw took a liking to printmaking when he was 32 years old and mastered the genre of graphic arts shortly since he had worked with intaglios and lithographs earlier, making a name for himself as a printmaker comparable to the great reputation that he already had as a painter.

Shaw has exhibited extensively in India and abroad since 1956, and his works have been a part of prestigious international shows such as the second British Biennale in London, 1970, two Norwegian Print Biennales in 1974 and 1978, the seventh Paris Biennale in 1971 and the second Asian Art Biennale hosted by Bangladesh in 1984.

Lalu Prasad Shaw lives and works in Kolkata, where his son Partha has also established himself as a young artist.



**LALU PRASAD SHAW (B.1937)**  
Man With A Wine Glass, 2020  
Signed and dated in Bengali, bottom left  
Tempera on Nepali paper mounted on board  
56 x 38 cm (22 x 15 in)  
Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist



**M F HUSAIN (1915 - 2011)**

Untitled, 1970s  
Signed in Devnagiri, top right  
Oil on canvas  
63.5 x 61 cm (34 x 24 in)

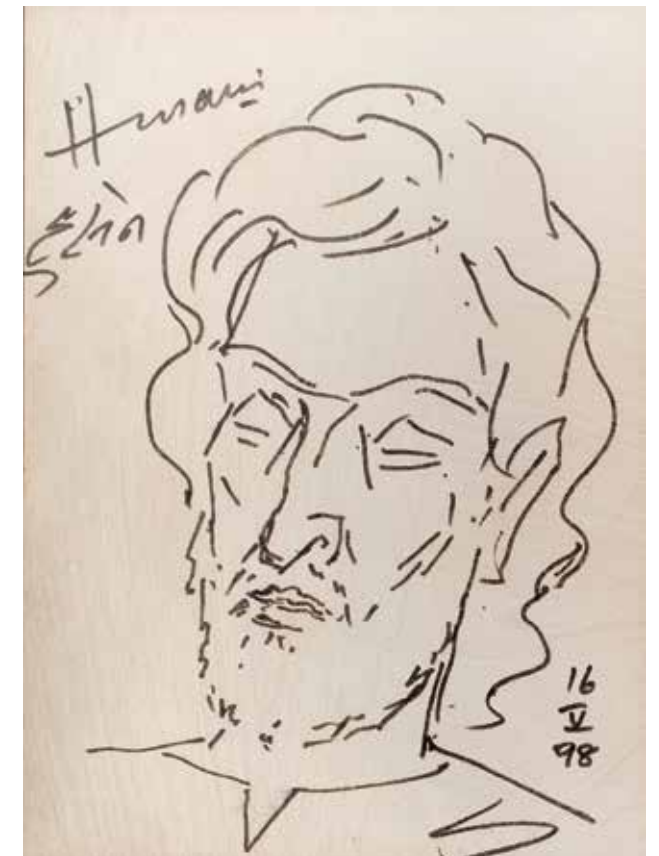
Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist  
Property of a Delhi-based collector

**Maqbool Fida Husain** is one of the greatest modern painters of India. Known to finish a work in one sitting, Husain's lines were drawn directly with a paintbrush, making no room for error once applied. Renowned for revolutionizing Indian Art, he was a founding member of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group which formed in 1947. They combined influences of Indian history with the European avant-garde. Influenced by movements such as Post-Impressionism, Cubism and Expressionism, this synthesis is apparent in Husain's paintings.

By the 1960s, Husain had become an established artist and had increased his output to critical acclaim. As Yashodhara Dalmia writes, 'By the 1960s, Husain's lifestyle had become affluent and he mingled in upper-class circles.' (Y. Dalmia, 'A Metaphor for Modernity: Maqbool Fida Husain', *The Making of Modern Indian Art*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 110).

Husain's first-hand encounters with the paintings of Paul Klee, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso during his travels to Europe in 1953 had a decisive impact on his art. His Indian sensibility merged with newly experienced aspects of European Modernism, forming a distinctive pictorial language. Despite the pervasive influence of European modernism on Husain, he nonetheless remained committed to his South Asian roots.

Husain passed away in 2011; "I'm an Indian-origin painter. I will remain so to my last breath." (M .F. Husain quoted in 'Indian artist M F Husain dies in London', *Dawn*, 9 June 2011,



**M F HUSAIN (1915 - 2011)**

Self Portrait, 1998  
Signed in English and Devnagiri, top  
Left, and dated, bottom right  
Ink on paper  
38 x 30.5 cm (15 x 12 in)

Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist  
Property of a Mumbai-based collector

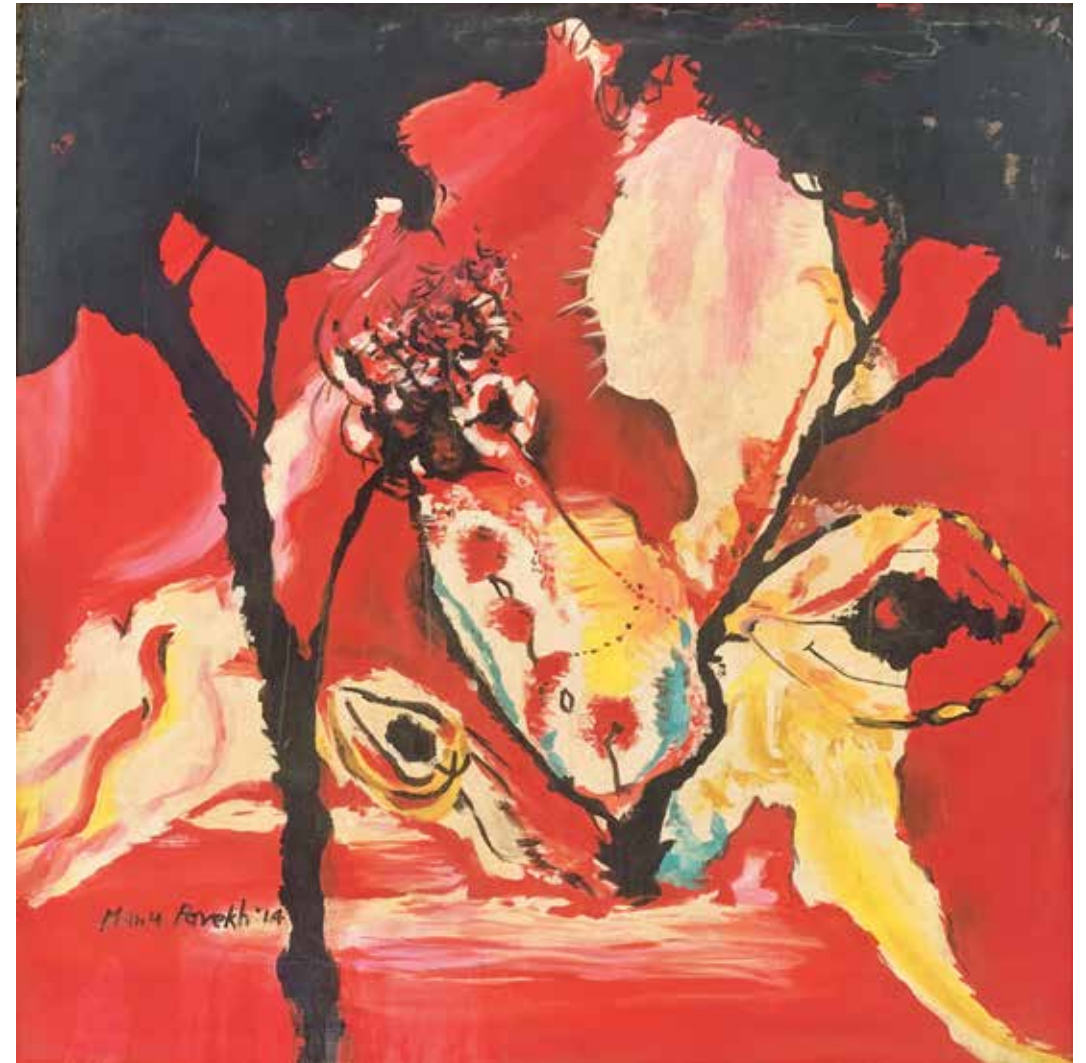
Born in 1939 in Gujarat, **Manu Parekh** completed a Diploma in Drawing and Painting from the Sir J.J. School of Art, Mumbai, in 1962. Parekh's early work explored the relationships between man and nature, as according to him, this was an energetic link that had to be celebrated. The artist also points out that, since then, contradictions have formed the basis of his artistic practice, no matter the subject or genre of his works.

Polemics have always intrigued Manu Parekh - the energy of the organic form and the inherent sexuality within these forms are intangible elements in his works. His paintings provoke viewers to take notice of the world around them through the emotion, pain and anguish expressed in the subjects of his paintings. His colors and forms exude a volatile energy that can barely be contained within the confines of his canvas, and become an extension of the artist's personality.

Parekh held his first solo exhibition of graphics and paintings in Ahmedabad in 1968, and has not looked back since. His most recent solo shows have included 'Banaras - Eternity Watches Time' presented by Saffronart and Berkeley Square Gallery, London, at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2007; 'Banaras' at Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2004; 'Portraits of Flower and Landscapes of River' at Jehangir Art Gallery and Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2003; 'Ritual Oblations' at Rabindra Bhavan, New Delhi, Sakshi Gallery, Bangalore, and Sakshi Gallery and Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 1999; and 'Small Drawings' at Sophia Duchesne Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 1991. Parekh has also had solo shows at BosePacia Modern in New York and at ARKS Gallery in London.

Parekh was awarded the President of India's Silver Plaque and the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Award, New Delhi, in 1972; the National Award from the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, in 1982; and the Padma Shree from the Government of India in 1992.

The artist lives and works in New Delhi.



**MANU PAREKH (B.1939)**

Untitled, 2014

Signed and dated in English, bottom left

Acrylic on canvas

76 x 76 cm (30 x 30 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist

Born in 1931 in Ahmedabad, **Piraji Sagara** hailed from the Sagara community in Rajasthan. The artist trained at the Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, and in 1963, was invited by architect B V Doshi to teach at the School of Architecture in Ahmedabad. Sagara was known for his “wood collages,” which were influenced by Gujarati folk traditions. Between 1950 and 1990, he produced an extensive body of work, imbuing nails, paint, embroidery, glass beads and copper trinkets into burnt wood. His work has been exhibited in Europe and Japan, and he has showcased his art alongside M F Husain, S H Raza and Jeram Patel. In 1971, Sagara participated in the Sao Paulo Biennale in Brazil. Sagara passed away in 2014.



**PIRAJI SAGARA (1931 - 2014)**

Mithuna, 1989-1993

Signed and dated in English, bottom left

Mixed media on canvas and wood mounted on board  
91.5 x 91.5 cm (36 x 36 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist's family



At the heart of **S H Raza's** art is the celebration of nature, whether it emerged through his early expressionist watercolour landscapes from the 1940s, or the Cubist compositions during his time in Paris, or his later abstract works characterised by the fusion of geometric forms with principles of spirituality. Often, his themes were drawn from his childhood memories spent in the forests of his native village in Madhya Pradesh. Raza's stylistic evolution over nearly eight decades reveal the life of an artist and individual who constantly challenged the boundaries of modern art, as well as his own.

Born in 1922, Raza spent his childhood growing up in the village of Babaria in Mandala district in Madhya Pradesh surrounded by dark forests and lush landscapes. This early experience with nature became a lifetime preoccupation for Raza, and he would revisit these memories on canvas in later years. His love of art brought him to Bombay where he enrolled privately as a student at the J J School of Arts, earning his diploma in 1947. At the same time, he made his living by working at a blockmaker's design studio in downtown Bombay, which overlooked one of the busiest streets in the city and inspired him to paint his early watercolours. His paintings attracted the attention of fellow artists F N Souza and M F Husain—with whom he co-founded the Progressive Artists' Group—and critics such as Rudy von Leyden, Walter Langhammer and Emmanuel Schleisinger—three Europeans whose presence, patronage and influence was crucial in the burgeoning art world of then Bombay.

Raza worked mainly with a few primary colours, assembled and reassembled to simulate the passion and colours of his homeland. At the same time, he had realised the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of nature and began incorporating these principles in his works. In the late 1970s, the artist's focus turned to pure geometrical forms; his images were improvisations on an essential theme: that of the mapping out of a metaphorical space in the mind.

S H Raza passed away on 23 July 2016.

### **S H RAZA (1922 - 2016)**

The Earth, 1986

Signed and dated in English, bottom centre,  
signed, titled and dated, on the reverse

Acrylic on canvas

99 x 99 cm (39 x 39 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist

Thence by descent to the present owner

Property of a London-based collector



**SHANTI DAVE (B.1930)**

Untitled (Figures), 1955

Signed and dated in Devnagiri, top right

Oil on paper

49.5 x 32 cm (19 1/2 x 12 1/2 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist in the early 1990s

Thence by descent to the previous owner

Property of a private corporate collection, New Delhi

Sotheby's London, 15 November 2019, Lot 27

Born in 1931, **Shanti Dave** lived in the village of Badpura in north Gujarat with his mother and brother. Dave started his career in the field of fine arts as a signboard and banner painter in Ahmedabad. In 1950, Dave joined the Faculty of Fine Arts of the MS University in Baroda, where he obtained both his undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in painting.

Shanti Dave has held several one-man exhibitions in India and abroad since his first in 1957, and has participated in group exhibitions including prestigious shows like the South East Asia Art Exhibition in the Philippines, 1957, the International Graphic Exhibition in Switzerland, 1960, the Commonwealth Exhibition in London, 1962 and other international events in Japan, France, East Europe and the Middle East. Dave has shown his paintings in almost every Indian city and his work is part of many private and corporate collections of art all over the world.

This artist has been the proud recipient of a Padma Shree and the National Art Academy Award on three occasions in 1956, 1957 and 1958. Dave is a member of the Executive Board of the Lalit Kala Academy, and a member of the Sahitya Kala Parishad, both in New Delhi

**SHANTI DAVE (B.1930)**

Untitled (Mother and Child), 1955

Signed and dated in Devnagiri, bottom right

oil on paper

34.5 x 72 cm (13 1/2 x 28 1/4 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist in the early 1990s

Thence by descent to the previous owner

Property of a private corporate collection, New Delhi

Sotheby's London, 15 November 2019, Lot 27



**SANJAY BHATTACHARYA (B.1958)**

Untitled, 2020

Signed and dated in English, bottom right,

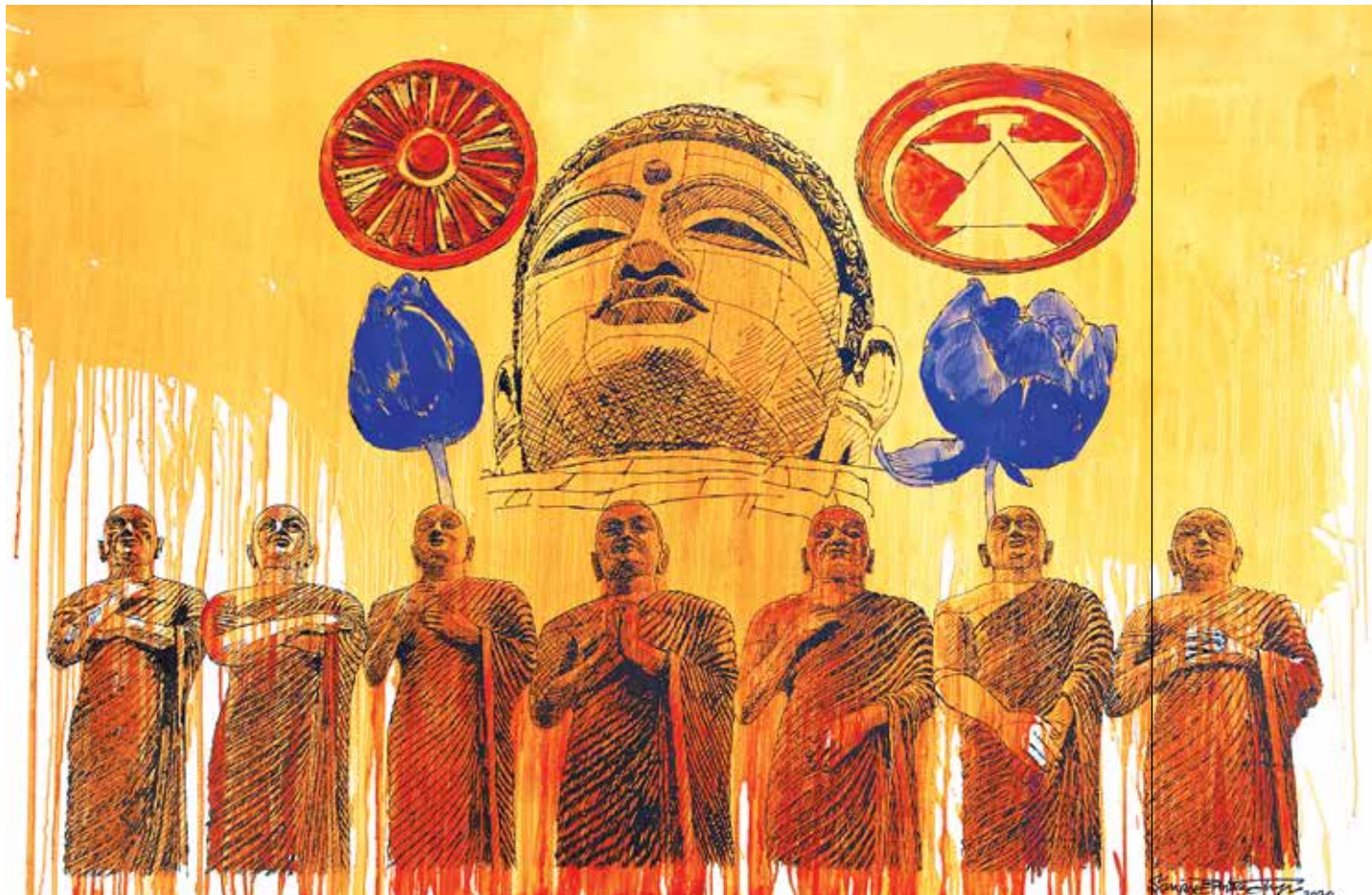
Signed and dated again, on the reverse

Oil on canvas

106.5 x 152.5 cm (42 x 60 in)

Provenance:

From the artist



**Sanjay Bhattacharya**, school was the most boring thing on earth. He was clearly not interested in books or studies. After Sanjay finished school, he decided he wanted to have nothing more to do with books. He went to the Government College of Arts & Crafts, Kolkotta and graduated in 1982 in fine arts.

The youngest son of four children of a retired account officer, Sanjay says he was never aware that he had a hidden artistic talent and an enormous capacity for hard work. "I got appalling grades in the first year," he laughs.

After graduating, he joined an ad agency, Clarion, as an illustrator and shifted to Delhi. "On the first day, they asked me to do one an ad on tyres. However much I tried, the nature of work did not agree with my artistic self," says Sanjay. He left the agency nine months later and joined Hindustan Thomson Associates. "They gave me the freedom to freelance," he recalls. Sanjay rented a place in Delhi and managed to complete 16 or 17 watercolours and some oils. He exhibited them in Dhoomimal Gallery. As luck would have it, all the five water colour were sold out within a week. The year was 1988.

Sanjay's figurative images are quite close to those found in the works of the Dutch realist painters or the French 18th century painters.

Along with homes and families, Sanjay's work consists of realistic portraiture. Like the exhibition he did on late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's portraits. There are no larger than life images here. The interiors against which he has painted Gandhi are untelling and cryptic behind their dark brown layers.

Sanjay says that sometimes he misses being that little boy, who would walk along the footpath at Park Street, in Calcutta, towards the Outram Ghat or Howrah bridge, with a drawing board in hand. "Now I sit in tall buildings, and have lost touch with reality," he sighs.

Sanjay Bhattacharya spends his time living between Delhi and Kolkotta

Born in Indore in 1910, **N S Bendre** was a contemporary of Nandalal Bose, Ram Kinkar Baij and Benode Behari Mukherjee. His artistic career began at the State School of Art in Indore in 1929. This was followed by the Government Diploma in Art from Bombay in 1933. In 1947-1948, Bendre travelled to the United States, gaining an exposure to 20 th century Western art.

A member of the committee of artists who set up the Lalit Kala Akademi, and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at M S University of Baroda from 1959, Bendre was a towering figure in the world of modern Indian art. Known as "Dada" (elder brother) to generations of students, he had a profound influence on art in India. Bendre introduced new ideas in art education, including an intellectual informality in disseminating information. As an artist, Bendre was equally adept at portraits, landscapes and still- lifes, inspiring awe among his students with his demonstrations of painting techniques.

Bendre achieved early recognition when he won the Silver Medal of Art, awarded by the Bombay Art Society, in 1934, followed by the Gold Medal in 1941.

He continued to paint till he passed away on 18 February 1992.

#### **N S BENDRE (1910 - 1992)**

Untitled, 1941  
Signed in English, bottom right  
Watercolour on paper

35.5 x 49 cm (14 x 19 1/4 in)

Provenance:  
Property of a Delhi based collector  
Acquired from the artist's family



#### **SUNIL DAS (1939 - 2015)**

Untitled, 2007  
signed and dated, bottom left  
mixed media on paper  
73.5 x 53.5 cm (29 x 21 in)

Provenance:  
Acquired directly from the artist's  
family

Literature:  
Sunil Das: Works Drawings And  
Bronze Sculpture, 2010, New  
Delhi: Dhoomimal Art Centre, pg.  
30, illustrated in colour



One of India's important post-modernist painters, **Sunil Das** rose to prominence with his drawing of horses. "I must have done 7000 horses between 1950 to 60," he says. "In 1962, I went to Spain, where I was fascinated by the bull fights."

About 60 years of age, he can look back at his nine to ten phases of paintings, all of them marked by supreme skill and a sense of integrity. An indefatigable painter, Das jumped from one style to another easily.

Talking about his art style, he says, "To express my authentic feelings about reality, I have to interpret it, I have conceptualise it. The previous reality gets transformed in the laboratory of minds. Then, I bring it out on the canvas."

Das's paintings not only express the physical attributes of his subjects but also their associative ones. Every once in a while he paints human beings, but his depiction of the human anatomy is skewed, to a point that it almost borders on macabre surrealism. For example, his series on women with mysterious, tantalising eyes - all oil on canvas, the portraits convey, in various forms including the erotic, the pressures women are subject to.



**SHAMPA SIRCAR DAS (B.1970)**

Mriga Series

Signed and dated, bottom right, and signed, titled and dated again, on the reverse

Acrylic on canvas

106.5 x 137 cm (42 x 54 in)

Provenance:

From the artist

**Shampa** may like to emphasize her fascination with the basic elements of nature that unify the earth. The actual Tattva in her visual representation is her keen sense of colour. With colours she builds her canvases. Her colours fill the void and reach out through the eyes to the nerves and inspire a quite meditative mood. The vibrant yellow and reds, the blues and whites, element and pour are juxtaposed to construct a range of hues that sedate and exhilarate almost simultaneously. Shampa counts her visual encounters in the region of Ladakh and more especially Leh as points that triggered a volley of sensations and insights. These she has captured with remarkable skill and sensitivity in the present body of artworks.

With the medium of acrylic applied on canvases the magic of meditative heads, closed eyes, pink sensuous lotuses, tapering hands and chinese clouds, Shampa evokes a mysterious and the mystic element. Other motifs also play in her visual narratives: the shapely fish, sometimes even a playful dolphin, the written script as well the signs apparently of Buddhist origin. What is delightful to see is that the silent heads that float in a space that is dense with colour are representative of both the genders. This perhaps reinforces Shampa's own statement regarding her art, "My works revolve around the relationship of nature and forms". It would be interesting to see how Shampa moves from the present visual repertory which she has structured so excellently to social realities, to the political and the economical backwardness of a region so rich in natural resources, clean air, infinite solar energy, multitude of minerals, precious stones, a stark landscape, a quiet and varied population. When we leave the gallery each one of us would have taken with us an experience

Sudhir Patwardhan was born in 1949 in Poona. He is a self-taught artist and a practicing radiologist. He began painting seriously in the 70's when he moved to Bombay. Patwardhan's work centers around a poetically monumental panorama of an urban and natural environment. The human figure remains the center of his painterly universe.

Patwardhan uses scale to maintain an emotional distance from his subject. Recording landscapes in transition has been a lasting interest for him. He often paints the suburbs, shanty towns and satellite townships where his subjects work and live.

In 2004, a monograph on his work, 'The Complicit Observer' was written by Ranjit Hoskote. In 2007, Hoskote also wrote 'The Crafting of Reality- Sudhir Patwardhan: Drawings', which was translated into Marathi and a monograph in Marathi was published in 2012. Anjali Monteiro and K. P. Jaysankar have made a film on Sudhir. In 2012, the Mumbai theater group Awishkar staged a play 'Chitragoshti' based on Patwardhan's paintings.

Patwardhan curated an exhibition of Indian Contemporary Art 'Expanding Horizons' which travelled around Maharashtra. He also curated a show at Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai and Sudarshan Art Gallery, Pune. He lives and works in Thane, Mumbai.

**SUDHIR PATWARDHAN (B.1949)**

Studio Window, 2005

signed, dated, titled and inscribed, on the reverse

Acrylic on paper

66 x 101 cm (26 x 39 3/4 in)

Provenance:

Acquired from a private collection,

New Delhi in the 2000s

Sotheby's Mumbai, 15 Nov 2019, Lot 10

Acquired from the above sale by the present owner



**T VAIKUNTAM (B. 1942)**

Untitled, 2014

Signed and dated in Telugu, bottom centre

Acrylic on canvas

30.5 x 40.5 cm (12 x 16 in)

Provenance:

Acquired directly from the artist in 2014



**T Vaikuntam** hails from Andhra Pradesh, in South India, and finds his inspiration in the rural areas of the state. Men and women of his village are often the central characters of his work. Telangana women, in particular, are frequent subjects for his works. The obsession can be traced back to his childhood, when he used to be fascinated by the male artists who used to impersonate female characters in the travelling theatre groups that performed in his village. He admits finding the women of his village very sensuous and that he only attempts to capture their vibrancy.

In an interview with Saffronart, the artist explains his early apprehensions when it came to art. "...In private I began sketching images which were very Indian, but which I thought were quite shocking. They were very obviously inspired by the spiritual and sensuous tradition that's part of Indian mythology and art. I hid them from public eye, because I thought they were very sexual."

Vaikuntam's art has a sense of strength to it, a power that emanates from the paint or charcoal that he applies to the surface, from his controlled lines, and from the fine strokes that he executes. He generally uses only primary colours, as he believes that composite colours do not exist in nature and are therefore, unnatural. As he explains, "I like using rich primary colours, which give a sense of character and depth to my paintings. Like reds and saffron and even orange, because these are essentially Indian colours. I don't like using colours that are mix of two, because they are not natural, they don't exist in surroundings around us, in our everyday life".

Among his several honours are the National Award for Painting, which Vaikuntam received in 1993, and the Biennale Award from Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, which he received in 1988-89.

The artist lives and works in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.

# ART AGENDA

Established in 2016 in Singapore by Wang Zineng as an art advisory with a curatorial arm, **Art Agenda** specialises in post-war and modern Southeast Asian art from the 20th century, including photography, and works selectively with contemporary artists to reflect upon aspects of global and Southeast Asian art history.

Working primarily in the secondary market with artists' estates and private collections, Art Agenda has cultivated a curatorial programme through exhibitions in its own gallery spaces in Jakarta and Singapore, at art fairs and with partner galleries in Asia. Its art advisory provides a full suite of services, including appraisal and valuation that serve the needs of both private art collectors and corporate clients.

Art Agenda opened a classic white cube gallery in Jakarta in mid-2020 with a programme centred on blue-chip and undervalued modern and post-war Indonesian art. Art Agenda is newly located in a 1,800 sqft salon at the newly established Tanjong Pagar Distripark arts precinct in Singapore. Its architecture is uniquely influenced by the industrial character of the warehouse building it is in, and its programme centred around cross-disciplinary and cross-geographic showcases of art, design and fashion.



**Art Magnum** was founded with a vision to provide South Asian Art a platform to showcase its true ability and magnificence and to support upcoming and established artist and craftsmen. Since its inception in 1986, it has been nurturing emerging artist to further the cause of South Asian Art. It's founder Late Shri Prakash Chand Singhvi was a visionary figure whose passion and enthusiasm was the driving force behind the gallery.

Art Magnum's current director, Saurabh Singhvi, is taking his legacy forward. The gallery has prided itself to present different medium of artistic expression ranging from the traditional to the modern to the contemporary to the experimental. A contemporary space with a modern tone located in the heart of South Delhi, the gallery attempts to give voice to the emerging talent of the day balanced with a roster of shows that presents the Masters of India Art through the pre and post independence era.

Always innovative and always striving towards new paradigms, Art Magnum has, in its journey, reached many milestones and many goals. The firm has held shows in countries such as Dubai and Singapore for which it has won critical and popular acclaim both within India and internationally. The collection of the gallery includes works of M F Husain, S H Raza, F N Souza, Somnath Hore, Suhas Roy, K G Subramanyan, Paresh Maity, T Vaikuntam amongst others. Going forward, Art Magnum shall act as a catalyst for talented young artist striving for creative excellence.







ART MAGNUM

ART AGENDA

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