South

Modern Art

2024

Grosvenor Gallery

South Asian

13 June – 5 July 2024

Modern Art

2024

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Grosvenor Gallery

The lost masterpiece A Moonlight Music Party from the Norman Blount collection of paintings by Abanindranath Tagore and fellow members of the Bengal School.

Art Societies and annual art exhibitions played a significant role in India in the last quarter of the 19th century, offering the public opportunities to see original examples of art, creating consciousness among the populace, encouraging artists through the awarding of prizes, and allowing artists to display their work to an audience. Several of the most important include the Madras Annual Fine Arts Exhibition, the Royal Academy of Anglo-India in Shimla, and The Bombay Arts Society.

The Indian Society of Oriental Art (ISOA), founded in 1907 in Calcutta, was perhaps more influential than any other, and from its inception had a different raison d'etre than the others;

"The Society served as a focus for the aspirations which were stirring in the rising generation of Bengali artists."

Both Abanindranath and Gaganendranath Tagore worked tirelessly to develop the society, the former a sympathetic and articulate teacher who drew students into the fold, the latter a charismatic figure with impressive organizational skills and a cultured demeanour. The Society functioned as a bedrock, sustaining and nurturing the new artistic movement.

The object of the Society was "the cultivation by its members, and the promotion amongst the public, of a knowledge of all branches of ancient and modern Oriental Art, by means of the collection and production by its members of objects of such art and the exhibition of such collection by the Society; the reading of papers, holding discussions; purchase of books and journals relating to art; correspondence with kindred societies and with collectors and connoisseurs."

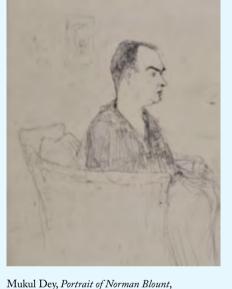
Norman Blount (1875–1930) was a jute broker in Calcutta and the joint secretary of the ISOA. There were several other Europeans fundamental to the establishment of the Society, but Blount was one of the most active members during its early years, and along with the Tagore brothers and handful of others, he formed the purchase committee of the Government Art Gallery. Blount was close friends with Abanindranath and purchased several of his paintings around this time.



The Indian Society of Oriental Art



 ${\bf Mukul\ Dey}, {\it Portrait\ of\ Abanindra nath\ Tagore}$



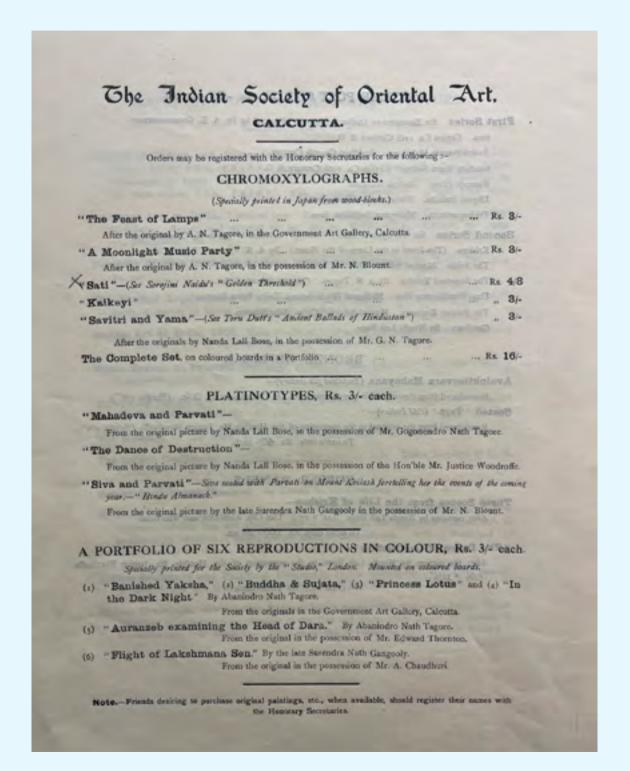
Mukul Dey, *Portrait of Norman Bloun* Collection of NGMA, New Delhi



Norman Polomb

From the outset, the Society held exhibitions, lectures, and discussions on art, including talks by Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose career was in its infancy. Several of the paintings from Blount's collection bear labels on the back suggesting their inclusion in shows, sadly we cannot be certain of which exhibitions they relate to.

One of the Society's first exhibitions comprised the paintings of Abanindranath and Japanese prints brought to India by the Japanese thinker and connoisseur Kakuzō Okakura, who had a huge influence on the Tagores. The exhibition took place at the premises of the Landholders Association, with which Norman Blount was also connected.



Notes

1. Rabindranath Tagore, Art and Tradition, 1926

2. Dr A.K. Coomaraswamy, introduction to the *India Court, Festival of Empire Exhibition*, London, 1911

References

E.B. Havell, Some notes on Indian Pictorial Art, The Studio Magazine, Vol. 27, 1903

Okakura Kakuzō, *The Kokka*, No. 226, March, 1909

Catalogue of Paintings of The New Calcutta School, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1914

Golden Jubilee Number, The Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta, 1961

O.C. Gangoly and James Cousins, *Indian Society of Oriental Art, Its Early Days*, Journal of I.S.O.A., November, 1961

Ratan Parimoo, The Paintings of the Three Tagores, Chronology and Comparative Study, Baroda, 1973

Partha Mitter, Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922, Cambridge, 1994

Our thanks to Partha Mitter and R. Siva Kumar for their assistance and advice on the early days of the Bengal School. The first exhibition of Bengal School painters arranged abroad was titled *Paintings of the New Calcutta School, lent by the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta*, and staged in Paris in 1914 through the joint efforts of French artist Andrée Karpelès. The exhibition travelled to the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and was shown in April and May 1914.

The Society was commercially savvy and saw the possibilities in popularizing the work of the painters and in reforming public taste through the circulation of reproductions. The painting *Moonlight Music Party* was reproduced and formed part of a special edition portfolio published and sold by the Society. The Victoria and Albert Museum have a copy of the portfolio in their collection, along with a price list showing that the complete set, signed by the artists and house in a portfolio was 16 rupees. The chromoxylographs were specially printed in Japan from wood-blocks, the engraving carried out by S. Izumi and the printing by T. Tamura. This technique meant a remarkably faithful reproduction could be made in striking colours. An edition of *Moonlight Music Party* belonging to Coomaraswami was included in the 1914 V&A exhibition alongside a note stating that the original painting belonged to Norman Blount.

In the early 20th century, Abanindranath Tagore's pioneering work as an indigenous Indian modernist sought to counter the influence of Western art as taught in art schools under the British Raj, by modernizing Mughal and Rajput traditions and employing themes from India's mythology, epic and romantic tales, as well as from the life of people around him, reworking them in a highly romanticized style. Abanindranath assimilated Japanese techniques into his work, especially the use of wash, which gave his paintings an ethereal and other-worldly quality, marked, as Coomaraswamy describes in 1911, 'a distinctive Indianness... full of refinement and subtlety in colour, and of a deep love of all things Indian'. ²

The highly influential head of the Calcutta School of Art Ernest Binfield Havell (1861–1934) describes Abanindranath Tagore's work in *The Studio* magazine in 1902:

"Mr. Tagore has happily been proof against the temptation to allow his artistic individuality to be cast in a common European mould. He has found in the work of the Mogul school exactly the material to help forward his artistic development. At the same time he is not a mere imitator of an extinct style of art. The Indian artist who is strong enough to choose the right path has a bountiful reward, for there lies open to him a splendid storehouse of unexploited material such as no other country in the world affords."

The remarkably preserved collection of Norman Blount's is a time capsule from the earliest days of this period of artistic revolution, containing as it does some of the finest work by one of the pivotal artists of the time.

Charles Moore, May 2024

 $\mathbf{6}$

Abanindranath Tagore 1871–1951

A Moonlight Music Party Circa 1903

Signed 'A. Tagore' lower right

Wash and pencil on card 16.8 x 23.4 cm 2 5/8 x 9 1/4 in

Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

Exhibited

Government School of Art Gallery, Calcutta, Winter 1903 Victoria & Albert Museum, London, *Paintings of the New Calcutta School*, April and May 1914, No. 65 (an image of the printed version was lent to the exhibition by Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy)

Literature

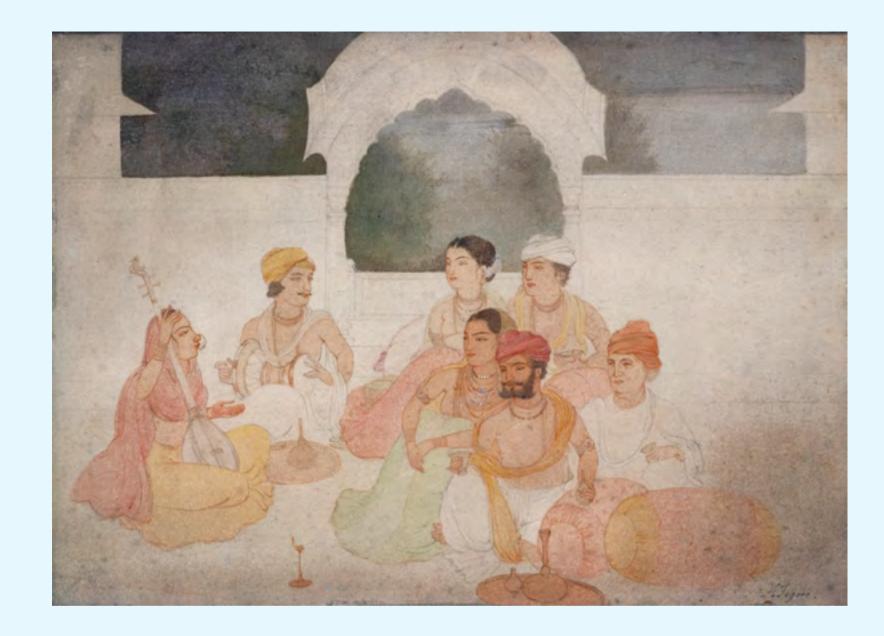
Okakura Kakuzō, The Kokka, No. 226, March 1909, plate VII Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 1850–1922, Cambridge, 1994, plate XXIV, figure 162 (an image of the printed version)

In his article *Abanindranath: Master-Artist and Renovator in Art*, Bengali linguist Suniti Kumar Chatterji describes his first encounter with the work of Abanindranath Tagore. As a young man he and a group of friends were taken to the Government School of Art by Arthur Lefevre, an English missionary in Calcutta. The art gallery contained a number of traditional European paintings, Indian miniatures as well as a selection of paintings by Tagore:

"I came to a small room and made another discovery, the effects of which I have not been able to get over even now. It was a series of miniatures by modern Indian artists, including those famous seven pictures by Abanindranath Tagore, the subjects of which were: A Moonlight Music Party, The Feast of Lamps, Lovers in Summer, Lovers in Spring, The Woman going to her Tryst, The Siddhas of the Upper Air and Buddha and Sujata. The pictures brought to me the message of a totally new world, the world of Romantic Ancient India."

Reference

Golden Jubilee Number, The Indian Society of Oriental Art, Calcutta, 1961





Abanindranath Tagore 1871–1951

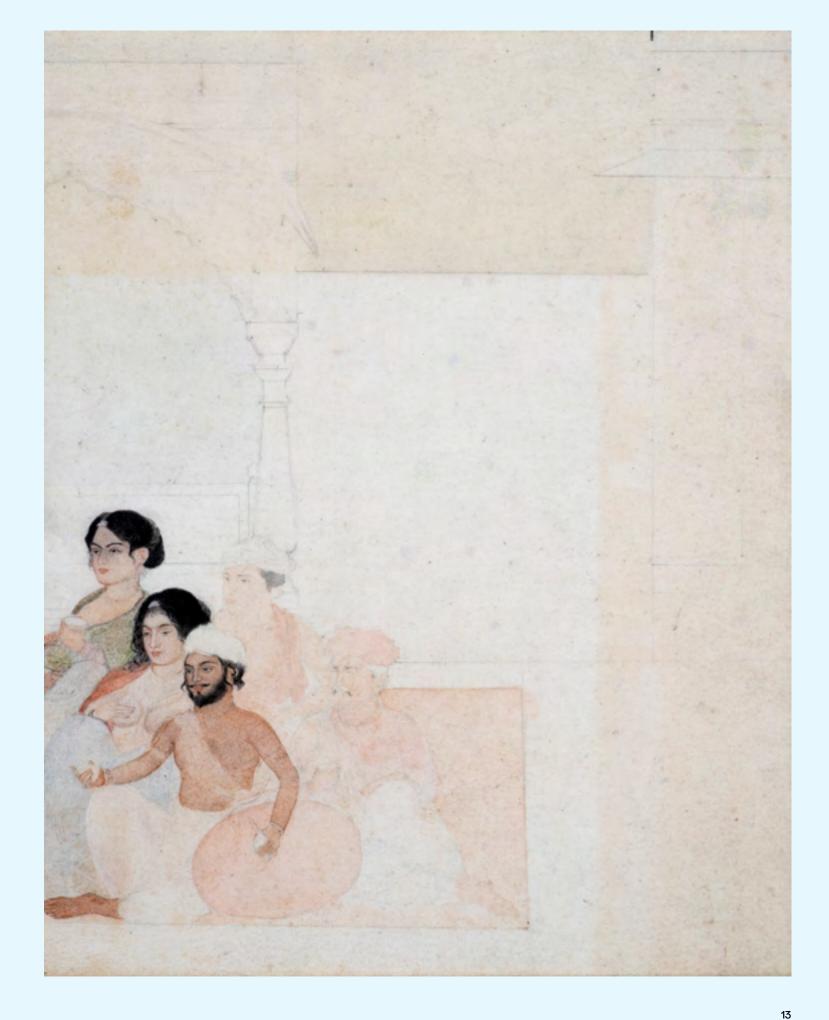
Preparatory Study for A Moonlight Music Party' Circa 1903

Wash and pencil on paper 17.1 x 13.4 cm 6 3/4 x 5 1/4 in

Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

In this preparatory watercolour we see the artistic mind of Abanindranath Tagore working to achieve a harmonious composition. There are several differences between this and the finished painting, primarily seen in the faces of the figures, their dress, and small compositional tweaks such as the closest figure's arm and leg positioning, the foreshortening effect perhaps drawing the eye into the work, as opposed to creating a barrier as in the study. It is arguable that the head of the female figure in the centre of the furthest row is more intricately painted in the study than in the final painting.



Abanindranath Tagore 1871–1951

Girl with duck Circa 1920

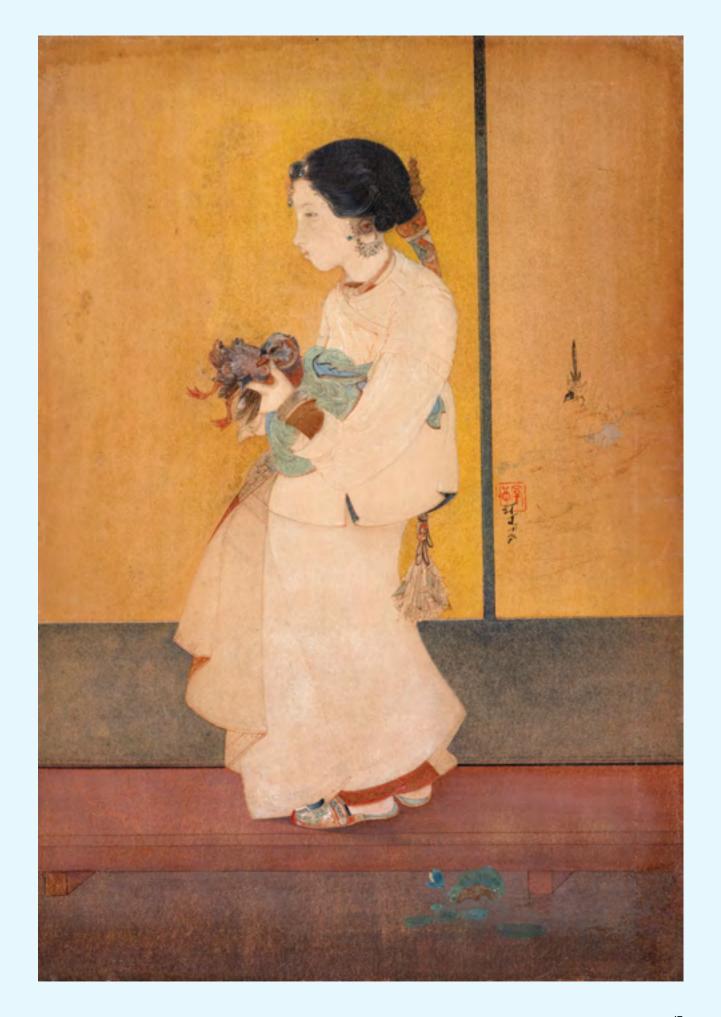
Signed in Bengali and with a red seal mark centre right

Watercolour and gilt on card 32.8 x 23.5 cm 12 7/8 x 9 1/4 in

Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

In this sensitively composed and highly symbolic painting, Tagore shows a young girl crossing a small bridge whilst clutching a Mandarin duck. In Japan, Mandarin ducks signify eternal love and devotion, here the colours of the bird are in harmony with the figure's jewellery and hair ornamentation. On the screen behind her a magpie perches on a rock, a Japanese symbol of good fortune. Below her feet, a lotus emerges from the water with the flower pointing to the figure. In India, the lotus represents beauty, purity and eternity. These visual devices are used here to delicately bestow qualities to the figure, only apparent once the painting is 'read'. Folds in the drapery, highlighted in delicate flashes of white paint, reminiscent of the chiaroscuro technique used by Renaissance painters, lends the figure a feeling of lightness and movement. Tagore's signature is stamped and painted – a technique commonly used in Japanese painting. The combination of Japanese and Indian symbology marries well in this painting, displaying Tagore's technical skill and ability to create an emotionally charged yet sensitive atmosphere in his paintings.





04

Abanindranath Tagore 1871-1951

Mother and Child Circa 1912

Signed 'Tagore' in Bengali and with a seal mark centre right

Chromoxylographic print on paper 28 x 19 cm 11 x 7 1/2 in

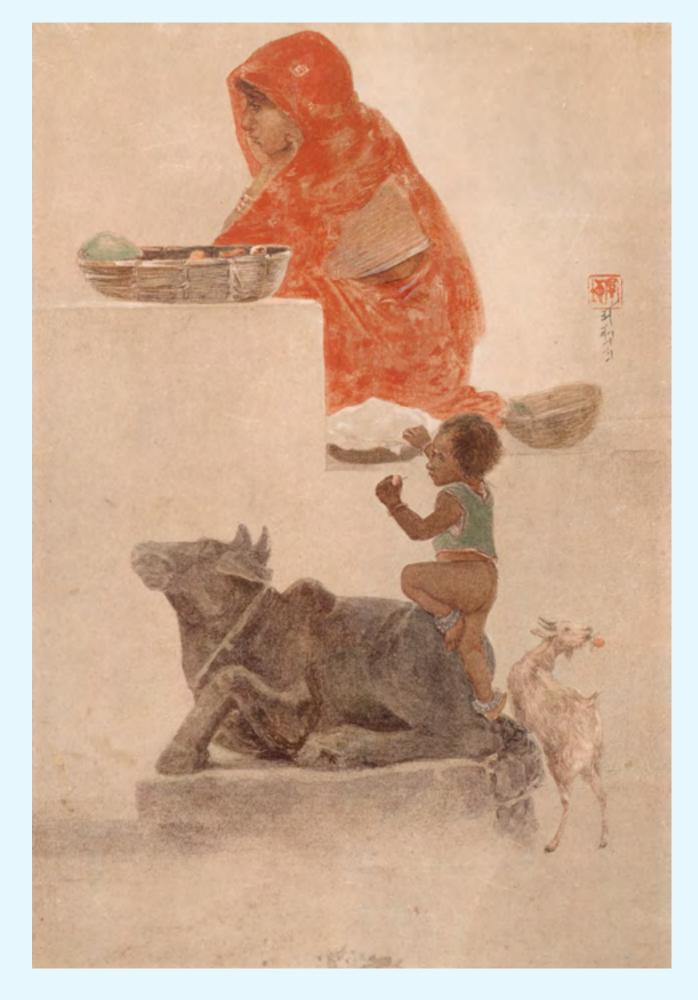
Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

"The Society also published outstanding examples of the works of Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose, originally in the Japanese process of colour woodblocks which are very accurately translated the delicacy and flavour of the modern Indian paintings.

The landmarks in this brilliant series of accurate reproductions by the Japanese process began with the colour facsimile of Bose's Sati which was first published in the Japanese journal Kokka... Other successful reproductions by the Japanese processed covered Abanindranath's Feast of lamps and Surendranath Gangoly's masterpiece *Kartikeya*."

—O.C. Gangoly, Journal of the Isoc, November 1961



Surendra Nath Ganguly 1885–

Shiva and Parvati

Inscribed on the reverse with the artist's name, address and dated 26/12/08', also with a label on the reverse of the original mount reading: '10. Siva and Parvati (Lent by Mr N. Blount.)'

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on card 27.8 x 19 cm 11 x 7 1/2 in

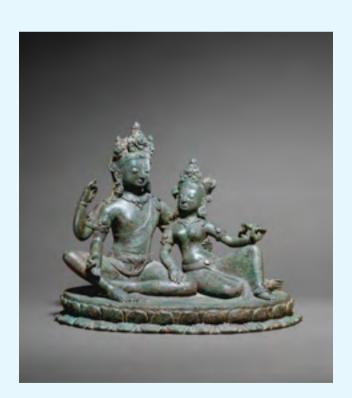
Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

Exhibitions

Unknown exhibition, No. 10, with the description Siva seated with Parvati on Mount Koilash foretelling her the events of the coming year—"Hindu Almanac"

This is the original painting from which a series of platinotype reproductions were made by the ISOA around 1908–1910. The V&A Museum have a copy of the price list for these works, listing copies of *Shiva and Parvati* at 3 rupees each.



Shiva and Parvati, Nepal, 11th Century Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Ordhendra Coomar Gangoly 1881–1974

Krishna and Yashoda in an interior Circa 1910

Signed lower right; inscribed on the reverse 'Norman Blount'

Watercolour, wash, gold paint and pencil on paper 35.5 x 25.3 cm 14 x 10 in

Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

O.C. Gangoly was one of the founding members of the ISOA, editor of *Rupam* and a leading idealogue of the Bengal School. His pioneering texts on Indian art include *Masterpieces of Rajput Painting* (1926) and *Ragas and Raginis* (1935).



Ordhendra Coomar Gangoly 1881–1974

Radha and Krishna on a Terrace

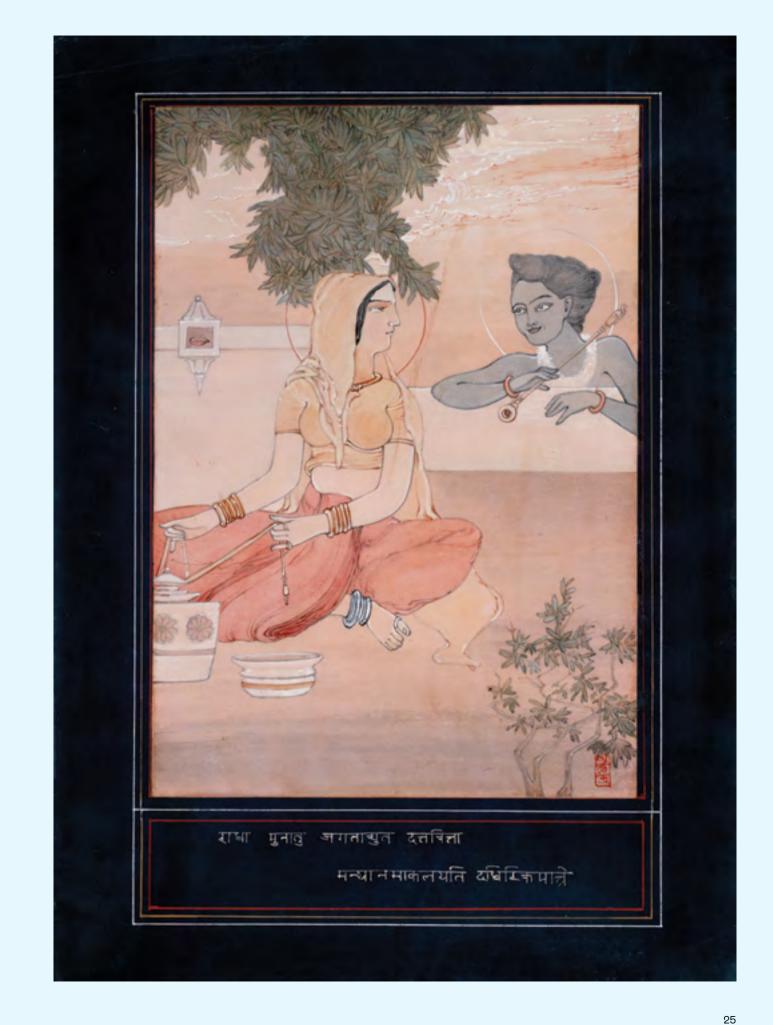
Circa 1910

Signed lower right, inscribed 'May Radha purify the World, o infallible one, with her mind given to her, she gathers her mind in a vessel of curd' inscribed 'Norman Blount' on the reverse

Watercolour, gouache and pencil on paper laid down on card 35.5 x 25.3 cm 14 x 10 in

Provenance

Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent



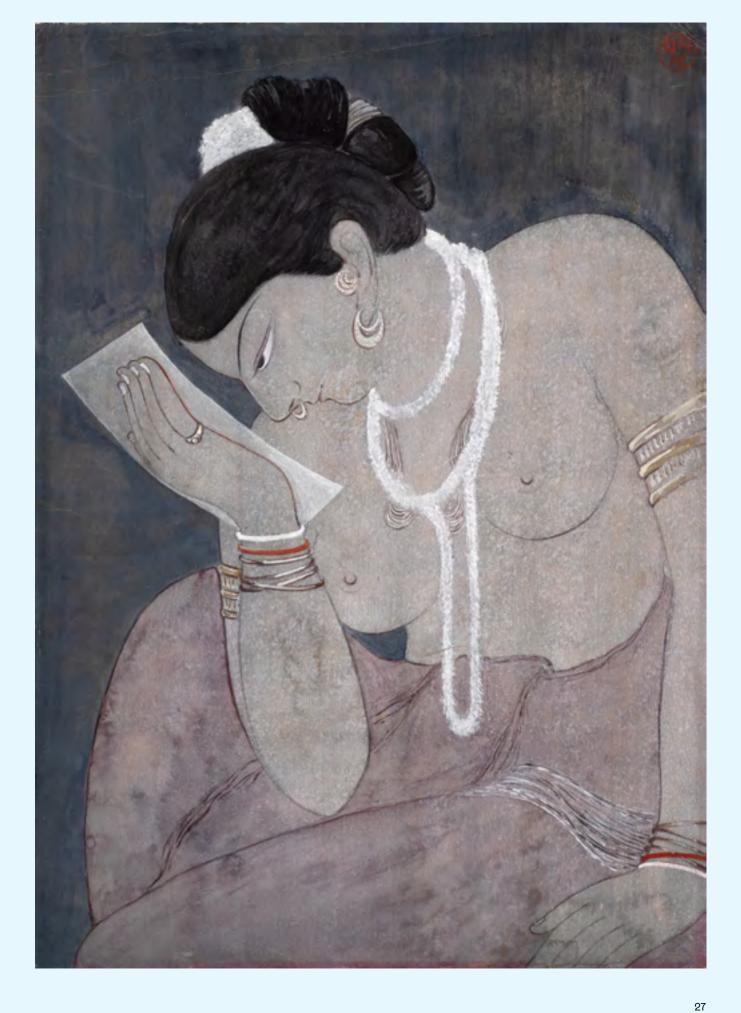
Sri Auindro Kumar Gangopadhyay

Provenance Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

Letter 1911

Signed upper right; signed, titled, inscribed and dated on the reverse '22 Aashar, 1318'

Watercolour and gouache on paper 35.5 x 25.3 cm 14 x 10 in



09

Attributed to Kshitindranath Majumdar 1891–1975

Puja Circa 1910

Watercolour on card 25.5 x 22.5 cm 10 x 8 7/8 in

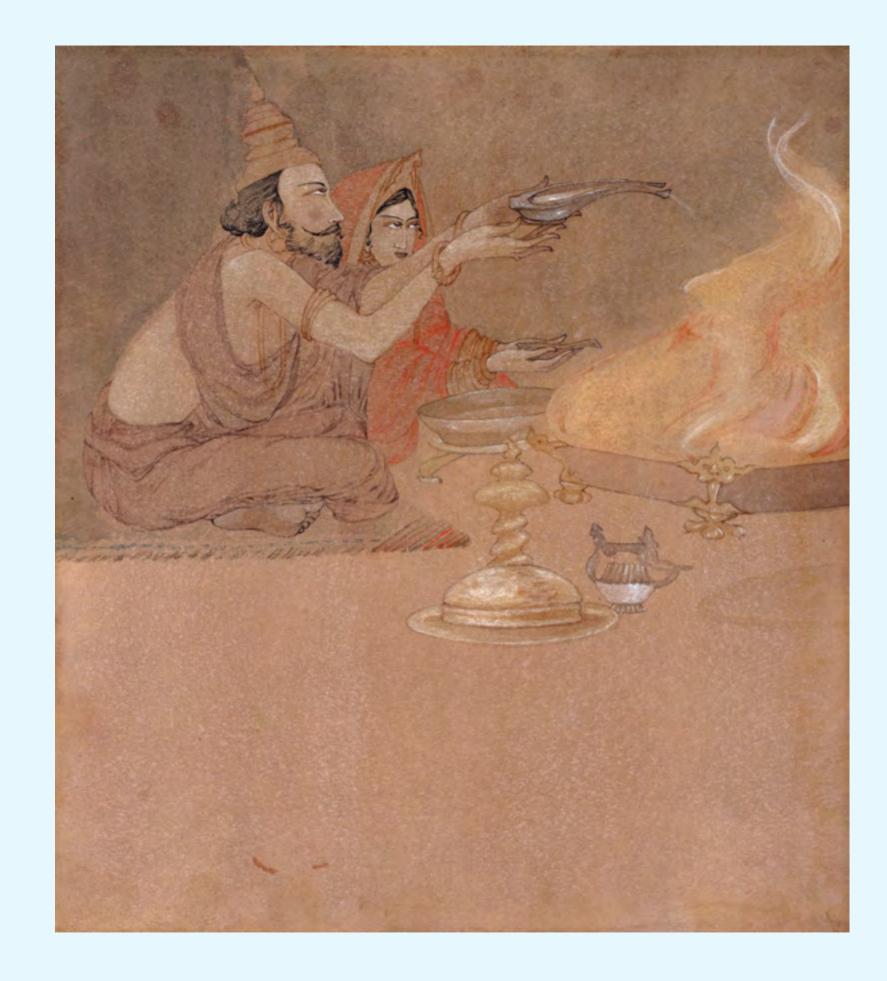
Provenance

Collection of Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy; Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent

Exhibitions

Unknown exhibition, No. 43, likely organised by the ISOA in the early 20th century

On the reverse of this work there is a label stating it was loaned to an exhibition by A.K. Coomaraswamy.



29

 $\mathbf{28}$

Gaganendranath Tagore 1871–1951

Portraits Circa 1910

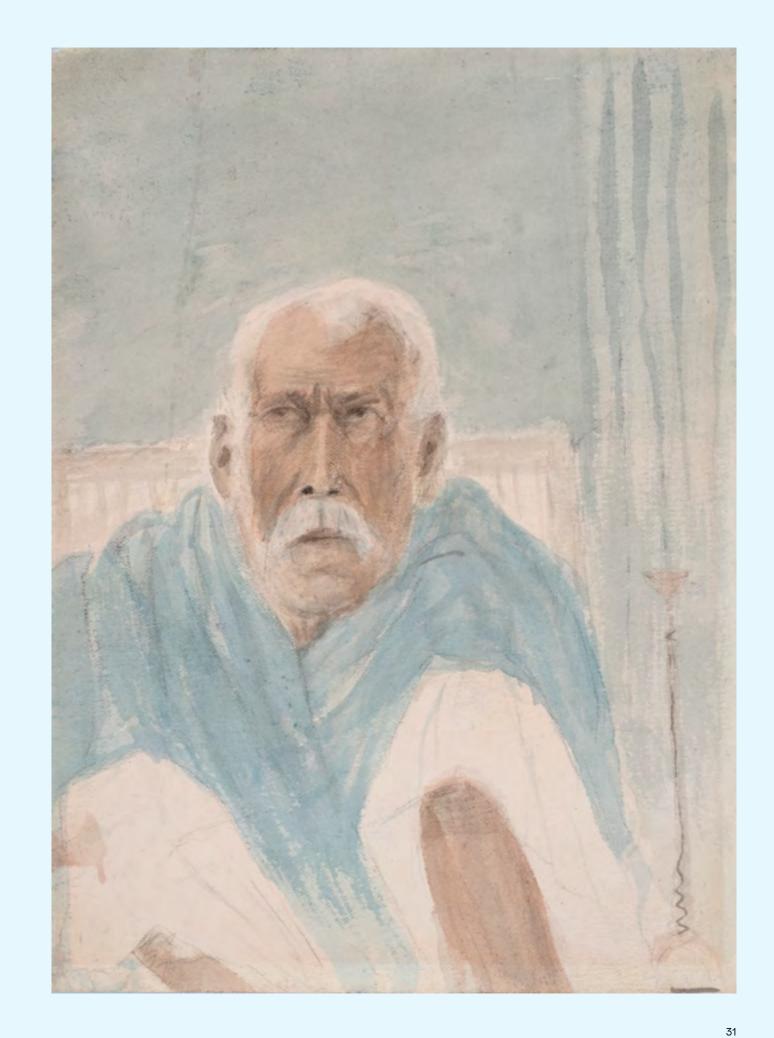
The reverse with pencil studies of heads in profile

Watercolour and pencil on card 17.5 x 13 cm 6 7/8 x 5 1/8 in

Provenance Collection of Norman Blount; Thence by descent



Reverse





Jamini Prakash Gangooly 1876–1953

Yaksha Circa 1908

Signed and dated 'J.P. Gangooly 1908' lower right

Oil on canvas 131 x 91.4 cm 51 5/8 x 36 in

Provenance

Private British Collection; Private British Collection, acquired at a house clearance circa 2000

Jamini Prakash Gangooly was a nephew of Rabindranath Tagore and a student of the British painter C.L. Palmer, who later joined the Government Art School, Calcutta. In 1916, when Abanindranath Tagore left the Calcutta Art School, Jamini Prakash was appointed its Vice-Principal.

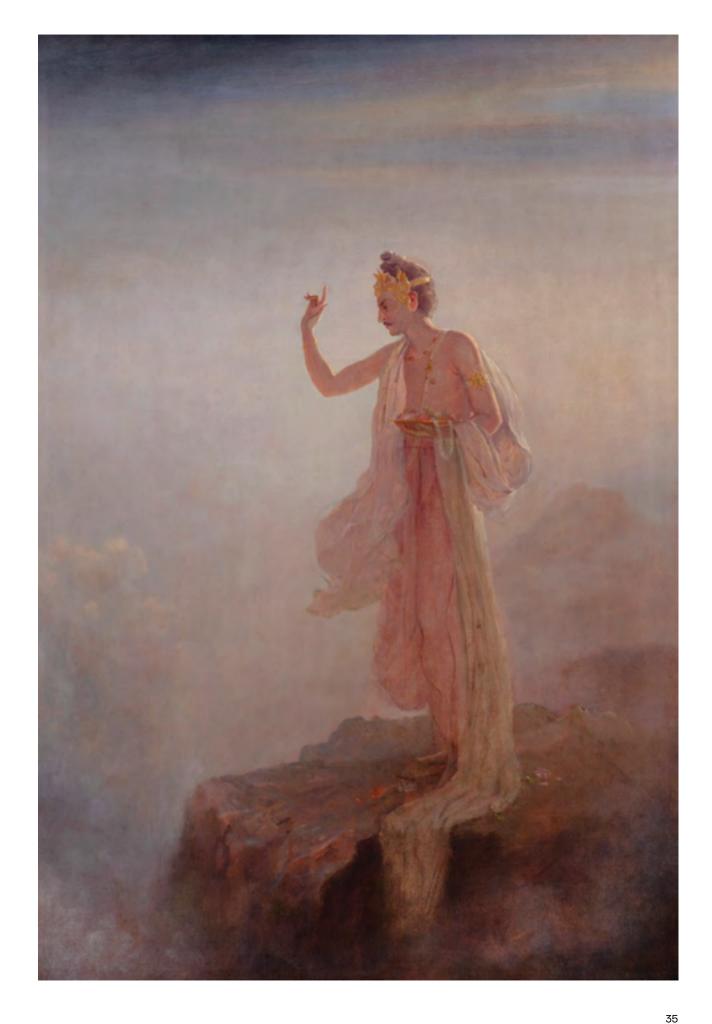
Gangooly primarily painted portraits, landscapes and the mountainous region of Kanchenjunga in the Himalayas. In this large, highly atmospheric oil painting the delicate application of thin layers of paint gives the work subtle luminosity and the compositional elements combine to produce a highly charged emotive atmosphere with the divine figure a powerful and serine force.

In Indian mythology, yakshas are divine beings and guardian spirits of the natural world, with custody over mountainous regions and bodies of water. It is believed that the worship of yakshas, along with other deities such as nagas and fertility goddesses, traces its origins to ancient indigenous cultures in India. Yaksha sculptures stand as some of the earliest depictions of deities, predating even the images of bodhisattvas and Brahmanical gods. Their influence extended to the representation of attendants for gods and monarchs in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain artistic traditions.

The subject of this painting is from the story of *Meghadūta* by Kālidāsa, one of the great Sanskrit poems:

"The story of the *Meghaduta*, or *Cloud Messenger*, describes how a Yaksha, one of the attendants of Kuvera, the god of wealth and keeper of the treasures of the earth, whose paradise is Alaka, in the Himalayas, was banished and separated from his beloved bride for some offence committed against the god. On a lonely peak in Central India, called Ramagiri (Rama's Mountain), when the month of June ushered in the monsoon, he culls the wildflowers as a propitiatory offering, and then addresses a fervent prayer to a majestic cloud to carry a message to his beloved, mourning his absence in Alaka. The poem goes on to picture the beautiful countries over which the cloud messenger would pass, together with the birds and spirits which inhabit the upper regions of the air."

E.B. Havell, Studio Talk, *The Studio Magazine*, London, 1905, Vol. 35, p.78 & 79



Jamini Roy 1887 - 1972

Provenance Private Collection, Paris

Mother and Child Circa 1940s

Signed lower right and on the reverse

Tempera on card mounted on card 37.8 x 16.8 cm 14 7/8 x 6 5/8 in



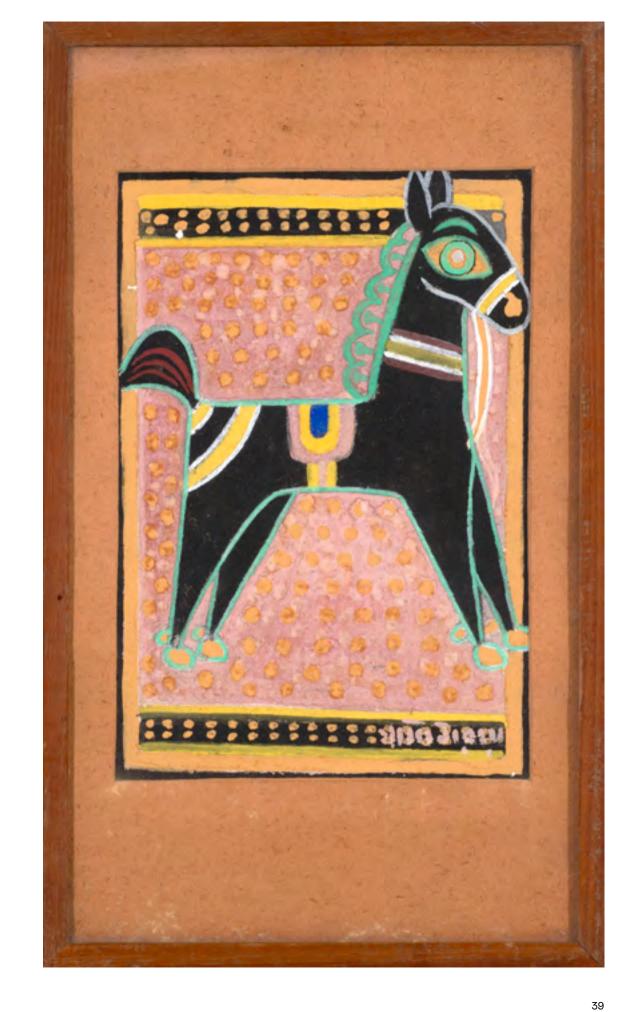
Jamini Roy 1887 - 1972

Provenance
Private British Collection, acquired in Calcutta in the 1940s;
Thence by decent

Toy Horse Circa 1940

Signed lower right

Tempera on card 31 X 21.5 cm 12 1/4 X 8 1/2 in







Jamini Roy 1887 - 1972

Untitled (Woman in Blue) Circa 1960

Signed lower right

Tempera on card 43.6 x 29.7 cm 17 1/8 x 11 3/4 in

Provenance
Private Collection, Düsseldorf, Germany, received as a gift in India in the 1960s;
Thence by descent



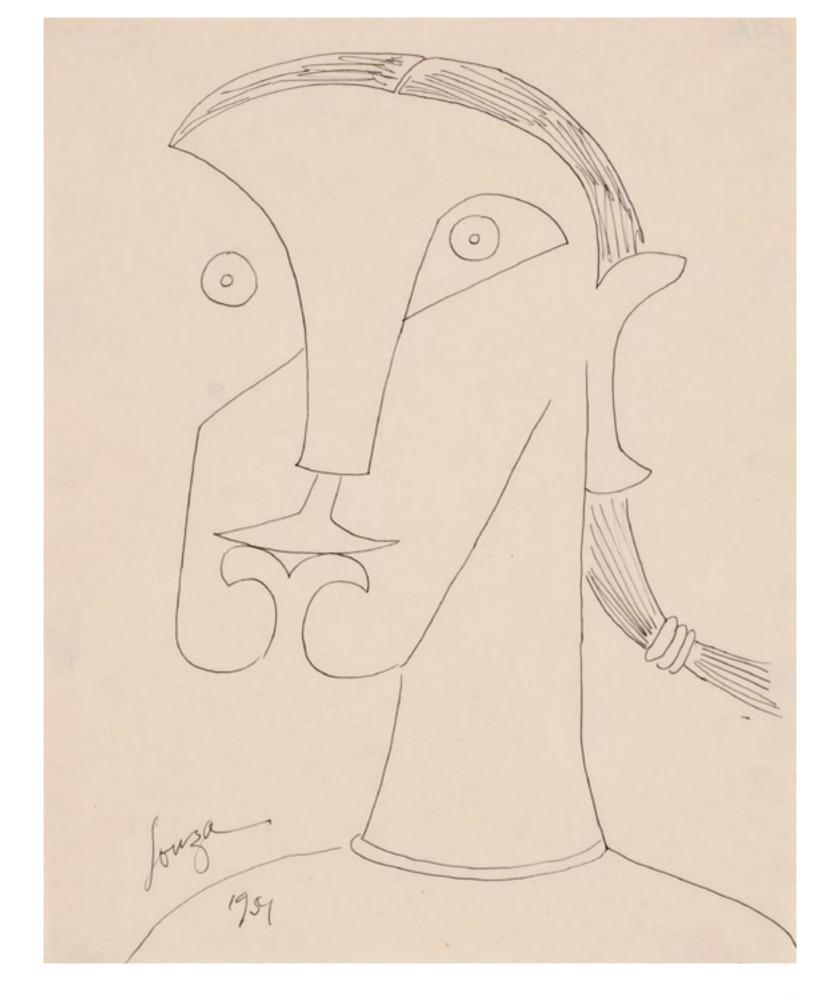
Provenance

Grosvenor Gallery, London; Private British Collection

Untitled (Indian Woman with Ponytail)

Signed and dated 'Souza/ 1951' lower left

Pen and ink on paper 25.4 X 20.3 cm 10 X 8 in



Provenance

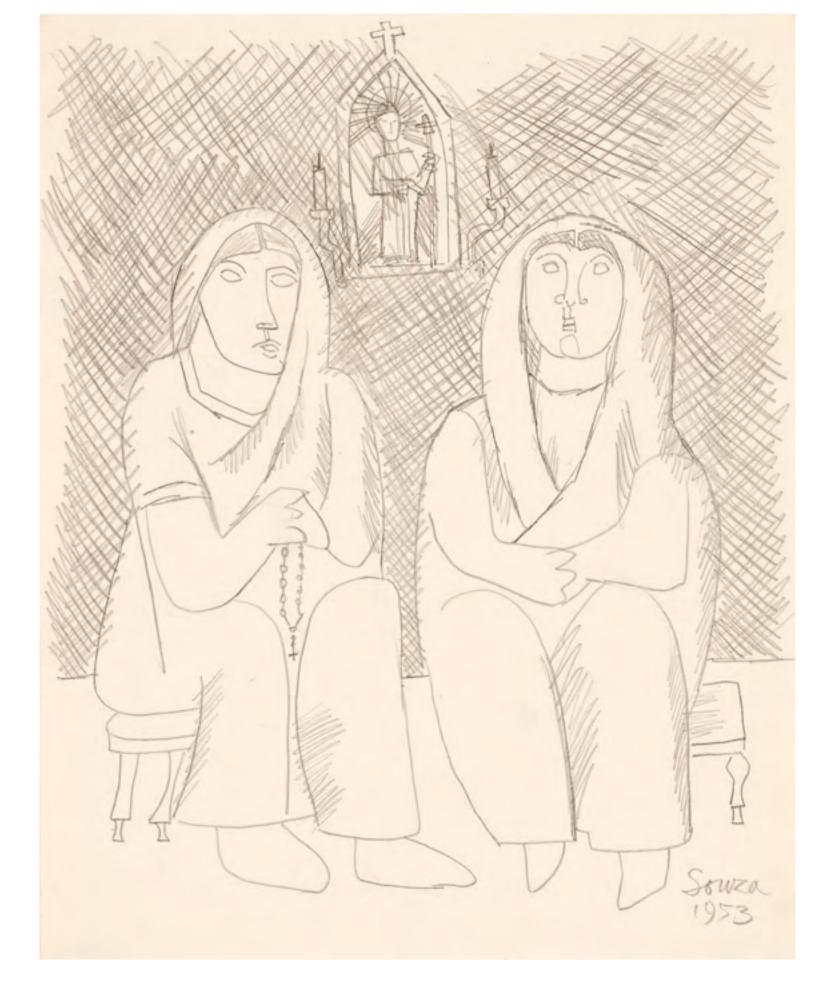
Grosvenor Gallery, London; Private British Collection

Untitled (Two Women with Rosaries in Goan Church)

1953

Signed and dated 'Souza/ 1953' lower right

Pencil on paper 25.6 x 20.5 cm 10 1/8 x 8 1/8 in



1924–2002

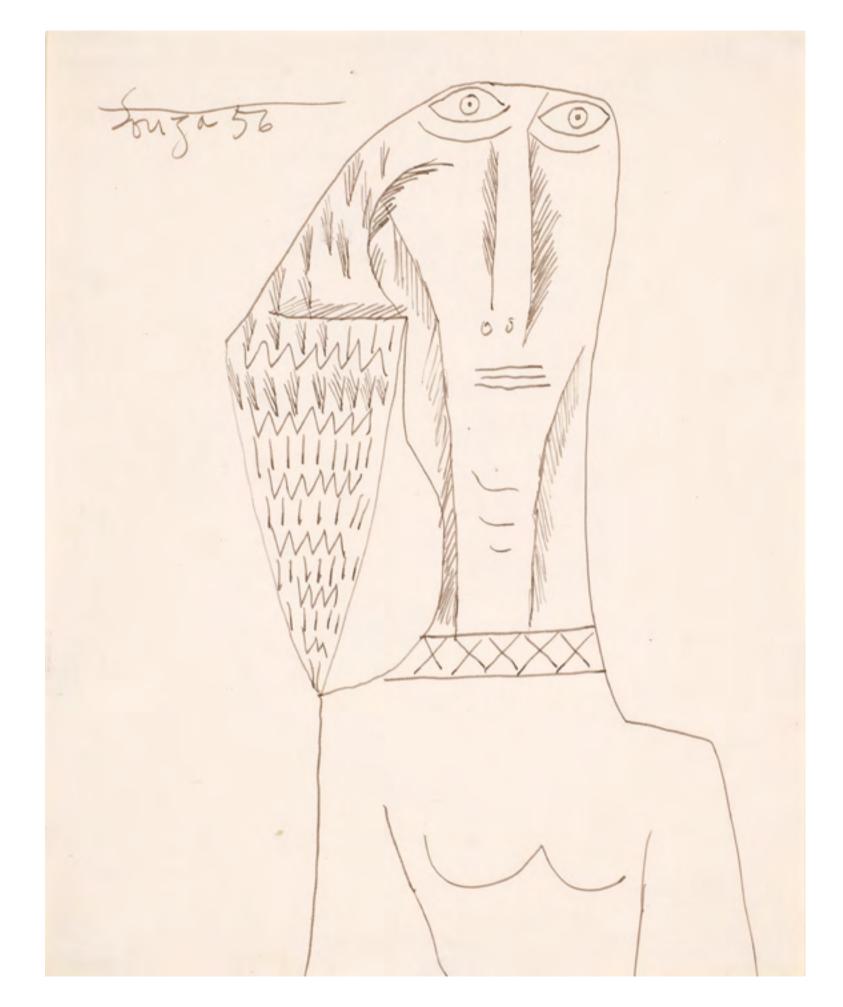
Untitled (Woman with Large Ponytail) 1956

Signed and dated 'Souza 56' upper left

Pen and ink on paper 25.4 X 20.4 cm 10 X 8 in

Provenance

Grosvenor Gallery, London; Private British Collection



Provenance

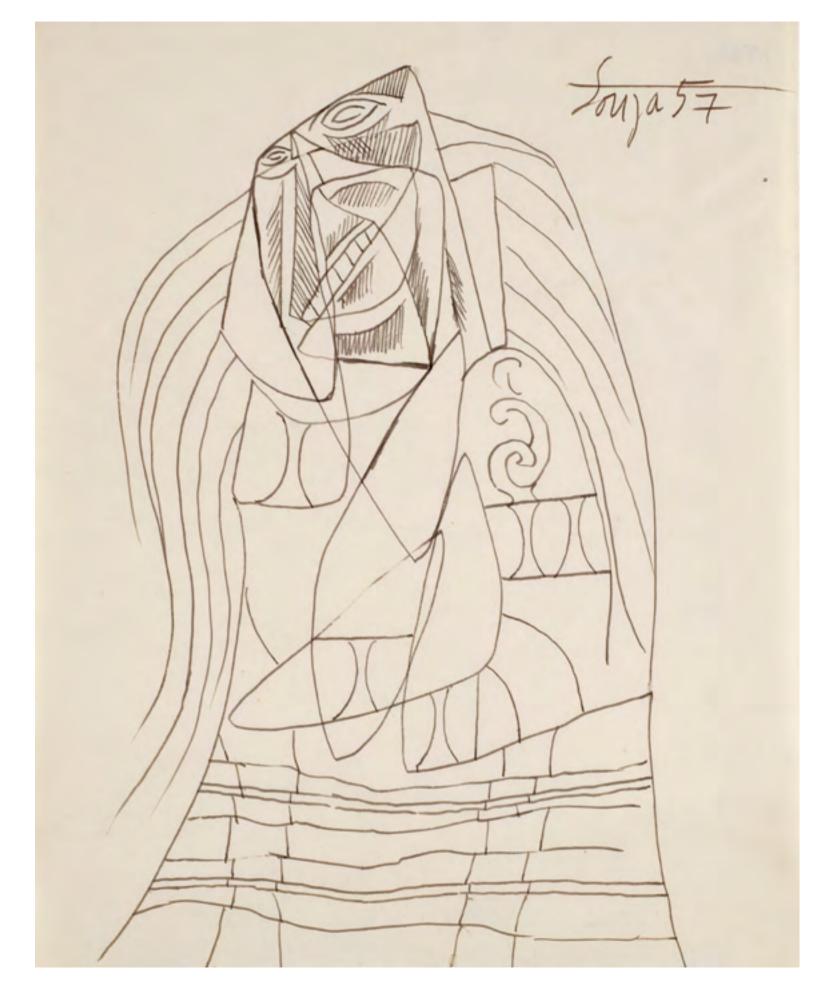
Grosvenor Gallery, London; Private British Collection

Untitled (Seated Woman)

1957

Signed and dated 'Souza 57' upper right

Pen and ink on paper 25.5 x 20.4 cm 10 x 8 in



Untitled (Grey Landscape) 1960

Signed and dated 'Souza 60' lower left; with Grosvenor Gallery and SaffronArt labels on the reverse

Oil and graphite on paper 16.6 x 15.9 cm 6 1/2 x 6 1/4 in

Provenance

Private British Collection; Grosvenor Gallery, London; Private British Collection;

Exhibitions

Saffronart, New York, *F.N Souza*, 16 September – 15 October 2008 Grosvenor Gallery, London, *F.N Souza*, 4–16 December 2008



53

Shankar Balwant Palsikar 1917–1984

Untitled (Village Girl)
1957

Signed and dated lower right, Chemould label pasted on the backboard

Oil on canvas 84.5 x 104 cm 33 1/4 x 41 in

Provenance

Private Indian Collection; Private Collection, Florida, USA

"In professions like those of the lawyer and the doctor, a second-rate professional may get along but an artist has got to be first-rate.

Otherwise, his friends will laugh at him, and society will scorn him."

– Shankar Palsikar

Shankar Palsikar was born in 1917, in Bhandara, a small town in Maharashtra. In his youth, Palsikar worked during the day to earn the money needed to keep up his artistic education at the studio of N.S. Bendre, who became his mentor and tutor.

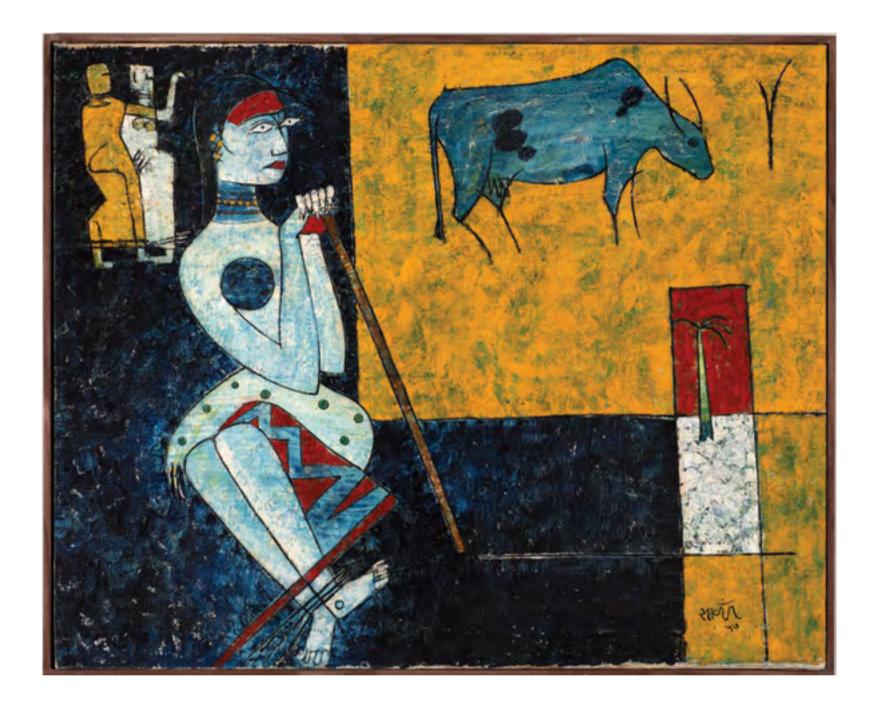
From 1942–47 he studied at the Sir J.J. School of Art in Bombay and on graduating was appointed a teacher there. Several artists and students of Palsikar acknowledge his influence on them, including Tyeb Mehta, Krishen Khanna, Akbar Padamsee and M.F. Husain. Palsikar was made Dean of the J.J. School in 1968, retiring in 1975.

In 1956 he became a member of the *Bombay Group of Artists*, formed after the dissolution of the *Progressive Artists' Group*. Other members included Shiavax Chavda, K.H. Ara, H.A. Gade, K.K. Hebbar and Mohan Samant. His work went through several phases, ending in abstraction, but the 1950s was characterised by the amalgamation of abstraction and Indian subjects, lending paintings from this period an enigmatic quality.

"Form, colour, space and texture are the basic elements for an artist. All these create a sound appealing to the eye and the mind. The sound is not possible without space and space is not possible without form and form is not possible without colour and texture."

-Palsikar, Lalit Kala Contemporary, April-September 1971

A large retrospective was held at Jehangir Art Gallery following his death in 1984, and he is remembered as one of the most important figures in the development of Mumbai's artistic culture in the 20th century.



Abdur Rahman Chughtai 1897–1975

Untitled (Mughal Princess) circa 1960

Signed lower right

Watercolour and wash on paper 70 X 55 cm 27 1/2 X 21 5/8 in

Provenance

Acquired directly from the Artist by the National Bank of Pakistan in the 1960s; Shakir Ullah Durrani, acquired from the above in the 1960s; Thence by descent;

This painting was originally given by the Artist to the National Bank of Pakistan in the 1960s and was subsequently acquired by Shakir Ullah Durrani (1928–2009), who became the 5th Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan in 1971. He started his career in banking, later becoming Managing Director of Pakistan International Airlines in 1969.

Chughtai's paintings often feature enigmatic, romantic subject matter, inspired by Mughal and Persian miniatures and folk tales. He also took inspiration from the Art Nouveau movement and the work of artists such as Albrecht Dürer and Aubrey Beardsley.

Chughtai studied at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore, where he was taught by Samarendranath Gupta, a pupil of Abanindranath Tagore.

His work is often compared to that of the Bengal School artists in their shared use of synthesised Mughal and Persian subjects and Japanese wash techniques, however by the 1920s he had developed a distinct style, keen to "insert himself in a history of Muslim painting that traverses Timurid, Safavid and Mughal eras."

After the formation of Pakistan, he was heralded as a national figure and is revered as one of the most important and influential South Asian artists of the 20th century.

This painting features one of his key subjects, the, lone woman pining for the return of her beloved. This painting is a wonderful example of Chughtai's mastery of the wash technique, using varying hues of turquoise in the figure's dress, as well as the background, contrasting her pale, outstretched hand bearing a ring. Her gaze looks past the viewer, giving the painting an enigmatic and atmospheric feeling.

1. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity: Fifty Years of Painting and Sculpture in Pakistan*, Karachi, 1998, p.58

This work has been requested for the forthcoming exhibition *Art and Architecture of Pakistan* that will take place at The National Museum of Qatar, Doha from October 2024 – January 2025.



Abdur Rahman Chughtai 1897–1975

Provenance

Private British Collection

Punjabi Maiden

circa 1950

Signed 'Rahman Chughtai' and titled along lower margin

Etching and aquatint on paper 30 x 33 cm 11 34 x 13 in





Abdur Rahman Chughtai 1897–1975

Provenance Private US collection

Evensong circa 1950

Signed 'Rahman Chughtai' and titled along lower margin

Dry-point etching and aquatint on paper 36.2 x 18.4 cm 14 ½ x 7 ½ in



B PRABHA 1933-2001

Untitled (In the Fishing Village)
1962

Signed and dated 'B Prabha 1962' lower right

Oil on canvas 55 X 114 cm 21 5/8 X 44 7/8 in

Provenance

Private Collection, Baden-Württemberg, Germany, (acquired in New Delhi in the early 1960s); Thence by descent

Female characters recur throughout Prabha's paintings, with her subjects often set amidst everyday rural contexts.

In this painting from 1962 a woman hangs fish to dry, the angular sticks creating dynamism and depth to a painting in which otherwise time stops for a moment as the woman gazes at a point in the distance. The absence of background is typical in Prabha's work, a device that works to centre your attention on the figure depicted.

This painting comes from a private collection in Germany and was originally acquired in New Delhi whilst the owners were living there.



Syed Sadequain 1930–1987

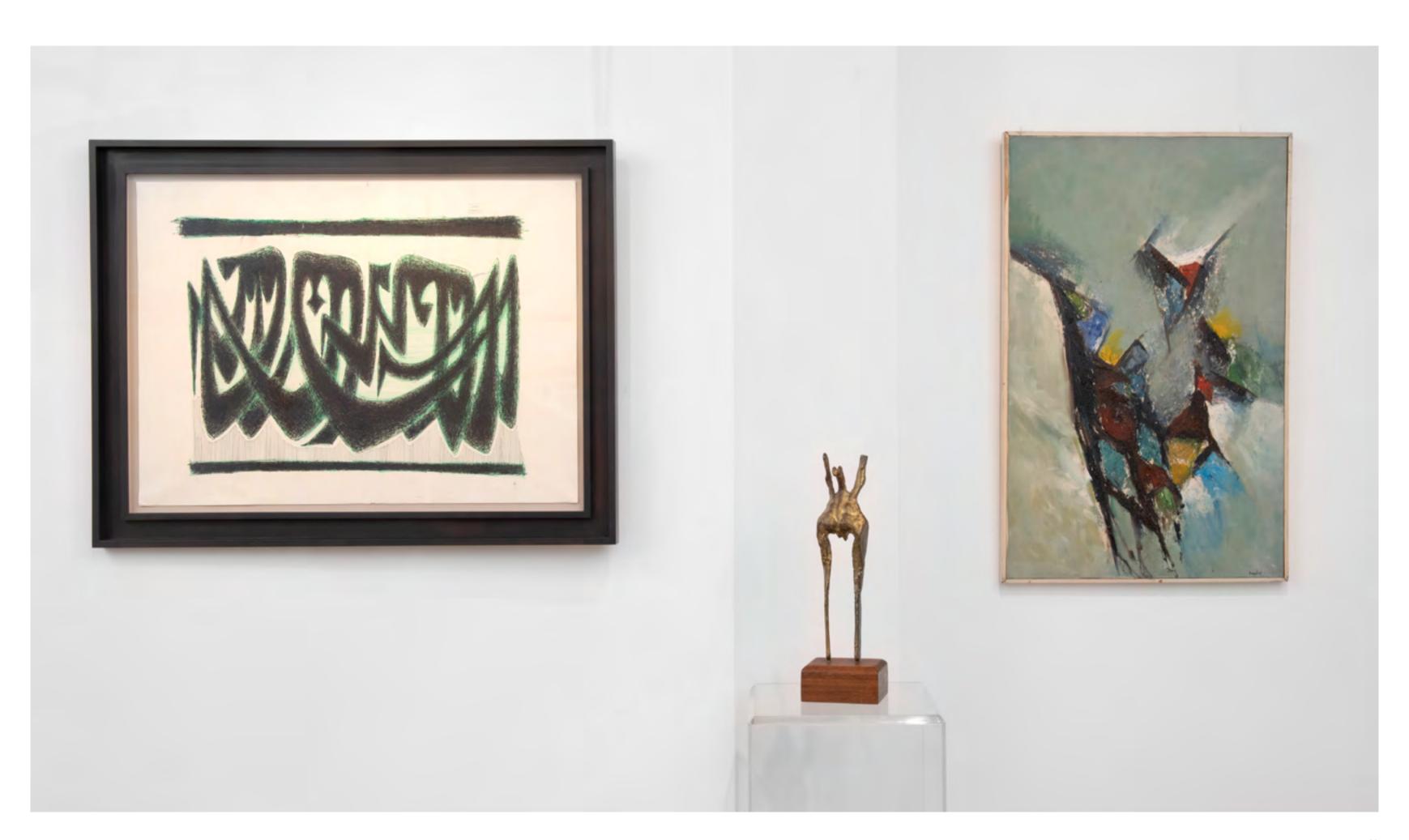
Untitled (Line of Figures) 1962

Stamped 'Atelier Sadequain' upper right

Pen and ink and marker on paper 55 x 75 cm 21 5/8 x 29 ½ in

Provenance Collection of Francois Forges, Paris; Private German Collection; Thence by descent





Lain Singh Bangdel 1919–2002

Untitled circa 1967

Signed 'Bangdel' lower right; inscribed on the stretcher 'Amb Strausz-Hupé'

Oil on canvas 91.5 x 58.5 cm 36 x 23 in



Huit Peintre Indiens a Paris,
Centre Latin, Paris, March 1955
Bangdel – Laxman Pai – Mande – Moti – Padamsee –
Raza – Souza – Sudhir



Les Peintres Indiens a Paris, Club des 4 Vents, Paris, February 1956 Bangdel – Laxman Pai – Mande – Moti – Patel – Reddy – Raza – Sudhir



Lain Singh Bangdel in Paris, early 1950s

Provenance

Collection of Ambassador Robert Strausz-Hupé, USA; Thence by descent

Born in 1903 in Austria, Strausz-Hupé immigrated to the United States in 1923. Serving as an advisor on foreign investment to American financial institutions. In the late 1930s he took up a position at the University of Pennsylvania, and became an Associate Professor in 1946.¹

Strausz-Hupé went on to have a long and successful career as a foreign policy advisor and diplomat, advising Barry Goldwater, the Republican Party's candidate for President of the United States in 1964, and Richard Nixon during his successful 1968 campaign for President. In 1970 he was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Sri Lanka and the Maldive Islands and subsequently served as ambassador to Belgium (1972–74), Sweden (1974–76), NATO (1976–77), and Turkey (1981–89).

Lain Singh Bangdel is known as Nepal's most important modernist painter, as well as a novelist, scholar, and preservationist. Born in Darjeeling, he graduated from the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Calcutta with a degree in Fine Arts in 1945. After graduating, Bangdel found work as a commercial artist at the Kolkata-based firm D.J. Keymer, where he formed a lifelong friendship with acclaimed Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray. During this period, Bangdel produced paintings of everyday life in Bengal, including Calcutta's impoverished suburbs.

Whilst living in Calcutta he wrote novels in Nepali, including *Muluk Bahira* (Outside the Country, 1948), *Maitaghar* (Maternal Home, 1950), and *Langadako Saathi* (The Cripple's Friend, 1951), all of which became important texts in Nepali Universities.

In 1952, Bangdel travelled to Europe and studied art in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts where he developed close relationships with other international artists including Francis Newton Souza, Akbar Padamsee, Sayed Haider Raza and Maqbool Fida Husain, as well as the Indonesian artist Affandi, and other artists of the Asian diaspora. In Paris, Bangdel also met many other renowned artists like Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso, figures that had a significant impact during his formative artistic years. Bangdel began to make a name for himself as an artist and intellectual engaged with the modernist movement, regularly exhibiting and hosting dinners at his Paris apartment.

Eager to study the work of European modernists and old masters alike, Bangdel travelled extensively throughout Europe in the 1950s. At this time experimenting with abstract painting, influenced by cubism and the ethereal imagining of Nepal, such as the painting in our exhibition.

In 1960 he was invited by King Mahendra to become a member of the Royal Nepal Academy and in '61 he moved back to Nepal to help organise the modern aesthetic movement there, holding a pioneering exhibition in Kathmandu in 1962. He would remain in Nepal for the rest of his life.

In an essay titled *My Devotion to Art* written in 1980, Bangdel explains, "We can perceive this entire external world that our naked eyes can see in a tangible as well as abstract manner. This is because humans possess both sight and heart." Bangdel arrived at this view through his production of art in the 60s and 70s, painting both realistic depictions of the arresting Himalayan Mountain range and the abstracted colours and forms stemming from these landscapes.

Notes

1. Paul Lewis, Robert Strausz-Hupe, Envoy and Cold-War Stalwart, New York Times, February 2002 2. History: Robert Strausz-Hupe, USA Department of State

References

Moon Over Kathmandu, Asia Society, USA RossiRossi, Hong Kong



71

Lancelot Ribeiro 1933-2010

The Dining Table 1963

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro 63' upper left

Oil and polyvinyl acetate on canvas 40.5 x 89 cm 16 x 35 in

Provenance Collection of Margaret Webb, (acquired directly from the Artist)



73

Anna Molka Ahmed 1917–1994

Untitled (Beggars in Lahore) 1964

Signed and dated 'Anna Molka 64' lower right

Oil on board 90.5 x 60 cm 35 5/8 x 23 5/8 in

Provenance

Private European Collection, acquired in Pakistan; Thence by descent

Anna Molka Bridger was born in August 1917, in London. She was determined to become an artist from a young age and enrolled at the Royal College of Art in London. There she met her husband, Sheikh Ahmed, moving with him to Lahore.

In the late 1930s, she responded to an advert from the University of the Punjab seeking an artist to open a women's art department at the school. In 1940, she became the first head of the university's Fine Arts Department, and over more than thirty years, she was instrumental in fostering a culture of arts education in Pakistan, expressing immense influence on young artists, mainly women.

She organized the first art exhibitions ever held in the country, and many of her students went on to establish their own university arts programs throughout Pakistan. Meanwhile, Ahmed never stopped painting, her expressionist work often combining European influences with inspiration from her adopted home country.

In 1963, in honour of her pioneering achievements, Ahmed was awarded the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Medal of Excellence) one of the highest awards for a citizen in Pakistan.

This painting shows the harsh realities of life on the streets in Lahore. Four figures in various states fill the composition, casting shadows onto the bare ground and brick wall behind them.





Mohan Samant 1924–2004

Untitled 1964

Signed, dated and inscribed 'To Carol and Alan/ Mohan Samant/ Nov 9th 64' on the reverse

Oil, sand and mixed media on canvas 152.4 X 47.1 cm 60 X 18 1/2 in

Provenance

Private US Collection, New York, gifted to the previous owners by the Artist in 1964; Thence by descent

Having studied under Shankar Palsikar at the Sir J.J. School of Art he joined the second flush of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group and exhibited extensively throughout the late 1950s and '60s. Shortly after exhibiting at the Venice Biennale in 1957, he spent a year in Rome on a government scholarship, before being awarded a Rockefeller fellowship, which took him to New York from 1959–64. During this time, he started exhibiting internationally and with World House Galleries in New York. This painting was given to friends of his in 1964 shortly before his return to India. He would later relocate to New York permanently.

Samant was fascinated by ancient art, especially that of Egypt, and took further inspiration from Mughal miniatures, Jain manuscript paintings, and tribal and folk symbolism. In his paintings, he fused Hindu mythology with these external influences. Samant's relief-like impasto and deeply textured works recall the rough surfaces of rocks and caves.

"I was able to develop the linear relief and hieroglyphic aspects of Egyptian art and the rough texture of the Lascaux caves into a contemporary synthesis, while retaining the colours of Indian miniature paintings."

— Mohan Samant



Maqbool Fida Husain 1915–2011

Untitled (Seated Woman) 1965

Signed lower right

Oil on canvas 151.2 X 92.7 cm 59 1/2 X 36 1/2 in

Provenance
Gita Gallery, New Delhi;
Collection of Donald Erlenkotter, USA,
(acquired from the above in July 1969);
Thence by descent;
Grosvenor Gallery, London;
Private Collection



Francis Newton Souza 1924–2002

Ask me Why? 1966

Signed and dated 'Souza 66' upper left; further titled and inscribed '84 / Ask me why?' on the reverse

Oil on canvas 76 x 51 cm 29 7/8 x 20 1/8 in

Provenance

The Artist;
Grosvenor Gallery, London;
Mrs E. Graham, London, purchased during the exhibition
Black Art and Other Paintings, on 26 May 1966;
Thence by descent;
Sotheby's, Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art,
London, 26 October 2021;
Grosvenor Gallery, London

Exhibitions

Grosvenor Gallery, London, Black Art and Other Paintings, 1966, No. 36

This painting was exhibited in Souza's exhibition *Black Art and Other Paintings*, held at Grosvenor Gallery in summer of 1966. This was a show consisting mainly of his black-on-black works, which at the time received mixed reviews. It was purchased from the show in May 1966 and remained in a private British Collection for over fifty years.

Here the central abstracted figure sits within banded borders, set against a dark background, the title deliberately antagonistic. The vivid colours and thick lines marking the composition are reminiscent of a stained-glass window. In his review of the show, critic and historian Cyril Barrett likened Souza's colourful paintings as 'a kind of passing tribute to Pop art, he draws inspiration from magazine photos. When he has worked them up into a composition they have lost all reference to their source; they are no longer Pop but transformed by Souza's astringent style.'

"He is an individualist who fits into no category, western or oriental, and imposes himself by his considerable talent."

— Cyril Barrett





Sayed haider Raza 1922–2016

Sentier 1966

Signed and dated 'RAZA 66' lower right; further signed, titled, dated and inscribed 'P_659/ 20 F' on the reverse, also bearing a label for the Maison de la culture du Havre

Oil on canvas 73 x 60 cm 28 3/4 x 23 5/8 in

Provenance

Galerie Lara Vincy, Paris; Collection of Madame Vaillant, Paris, (acquired from the Maison de la Culture du Havre); Thence by descent

Exhibitions

Maison de la Culture du Havre, Le Havre, *unknown exhibition*, circa 1972

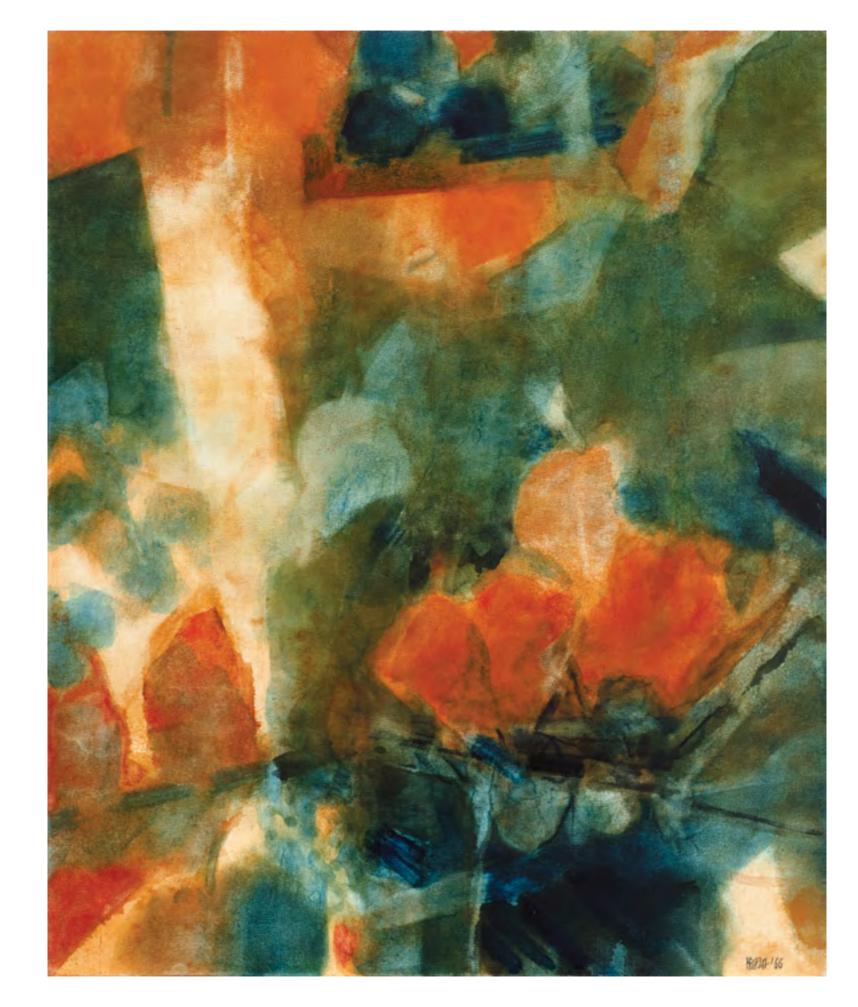
Literature

This work will be included in a revised edition of *S H Raza: Catalogue Raisonné*, 1958–1971 (Volume I) by Anne Macklin on behalf of The Raza Foundation, New Delhi

Sentier (Path) was purchased in the early 1970s by French collector Madame Vaillant from the Maison de la Culture du Havre in 1972. She was the daughter of René Boudet, a French industrialist in the gas industry, who had a large collection of paintings by Raza, several of which were included in the Centre Pompidou exhibition in 2023.

The Maison de la Culture du Havre was an important institution in France. Established in the coastal town of Le Havre in 1961, it played host to important exhibitions throughout the 1960s.

The enigmatic title of the painting was referenced several times throughout Raza's career and can mean a path in a literal as well as metaphorical sense.



Ivan Peries 1921–1988

Albizzias 1966

Signed and dated 'Ivan Peries/ 1966' lower right; further signed, dated and numbered on the reverse

Oil on board 90 x 48 cm 35 3/8 x 18 7/8 in

Provenance

Collection of the Artist; Collection of Veronica Peries, Southend; Private British Collection, (acquired from the above)

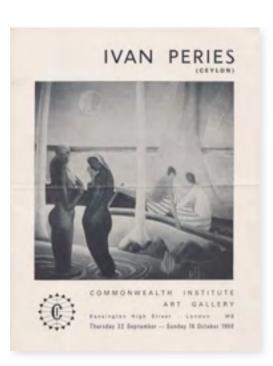
Exhibitions

Commonwealth Institute Art Gallery, London, *Ivan Peries*, 22 September – 16 October 1966, No. 45

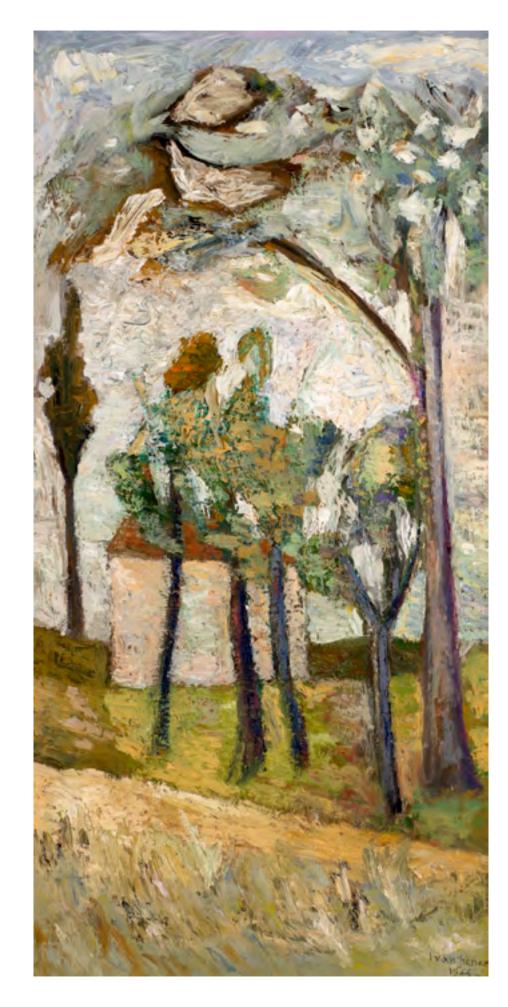
Literature

Senake Bandaranayake and Manel Fonseka, *Ivan Peries Paintings*, 1938–88, Colombo, 1996, No. 54 (unpaginated)

This heavily textured work by Ivan Peries was painted for his 1966 exhibition at the Commonwealth Institute Gallery in London. In the Artist's hand-written inventory of works for the show, this painting was priced at 50 guineas, with only 4 other paintings more expensive (from a list of fifty-two); *Homage to El Greco* (1940), *The Bathers* (1958-59), *Veronica* (1960) and *The Family* (1965). Depicting albizia trees in a landscape with a typical Sri Lankan red-roofed house in the background, this painting belonged to the artist's wife for many years, before entering an important private collection. It has not been seen publicly since 1966.



Commonwealth Institute Art Gallery catalogue





Lancelot Ribeiro 1933–2010

Waiting 1966

Signed and dated 'Ribeiro '66' upper left

Oil and Polyvinyl acetate on canvas 147 X 116 cm 57 7/8 X 45 5/8 in

Provenance

The Estate of the Artist

"[In the 1960s] Successive and deliberate transformations in Ribeiro's depiction of 'Heads' emerged too. In the initial phase – he explained talking through the progression of his work – the dominant medium was PVA rather than oils, a reference to the PVA and synthetic dye colorations he had sought to create. This paved the way for a proliferation of heads he collectively grouped under the *Psychedelic Man Series*:

'From here on i.e., 66 to 68 the paintings appear to have fully absorbed this root or tuber like form which was to be the nucleus on which all the work since 1965 was based'."

Marsha Ribeiro, *Lancelot Ribeiro, An Indian Painter in Hampstead*, Grosvenor Gallery, London, 2023, p. 10



Waiting pictured in the Artist's studio in the 1960s



Jogen Chowdhury b. 1939

Arjuna riding a horse towards the Battlefield 1967

Signed, dated, titled and inscribed 'Jogen.'67/ 12.1.67/ Paris' along lower margin; inscribed on the reverse 'Club du Haut Pavé/ 1967/ Carte de Madame R. Segard/ Encre originale de Jogen Choudury'

Ink and pencil on card 10.7 X 13.3 cm 4 1/4 X 5 1/4 in

Provenance

Galerie du Haut Pavé, Paris; Collection of Madame Roger Segard, Paris

Galerie du Haut Pavé was established in Paris in 1953 by Dominican priest Gilles Vallée as a space to promote the work of contemporary artists aged 40 and under. A non-profit association, the gallery's mission is to promote young artists by organizing their first exhibition in Paris. Several Indian artists exhibited there, including Jogen Chowdhury, Rajendra Dhawan, Akkitham Narayanan and Satish Panchal.

Chowdhury lived in Paris in the late 1960s, graduating from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts in 1967, the same year as his exhibition at Haut Pavé.



Krishna Reddy 1925–2018

Demonstrator 1968

Bronze on wooden base 39.4 X 12.7 X 10.2 cm 15 1/2 X 5 X 4 in

Provenance

Private collection, Louisiana, USA;

Krishna Reddy's *Demonstration* sculptures emerged amidst the fervent atmosphere of Paris in 1968, a year resonating with cultural, social, and political upheavals across the Western world. Amidst the backdrop of widespread civic unrest and government crackdowns in France, Reddy's sculptures captured the essence of solidarity and frustration that permeated the streets of Paris and beyond.

Having grown up in British India, Reddy had witnessed the movements preceding India's Independence. His time in Paris during the 1950s and '60s exposed him to France's reckoning with its colonial past and the Algerian War.

While his best-known works depict abstract motifs inspired by nature, Reddy's early work depicted refugees and Bengal famine victims as emaciated, elongated figures, akin to what we see in this sculpture.

With *Demonstrator*, he encapsulates the tumultuous events of 1968 and the resilience of the populace, a lone figure underscoring the significance of the individual amidst the collective struggle.

Reference

Jennifer Farrell, Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints; and Navina Najat Haidar, Curator, Department of Islamic Art The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2017



Sohan Qadri 1932–2011 Provenance

Private Danish Collection

Untitled (No. 1478) circa 1974

Signed 'Qadri No. 1478' on the reverse

Oil on canvas 65 x 100 cm 25 5/8 x 39 3/8 in



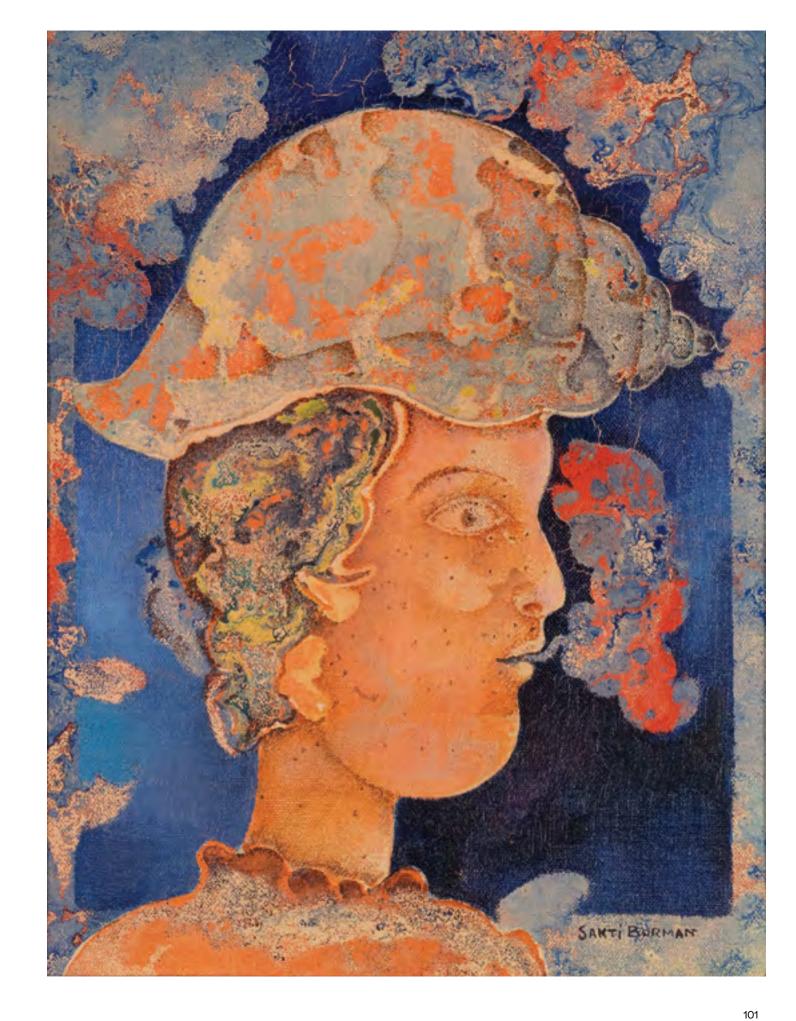
Sakti Burman b. 1935

P.F., 1975 1975

Signed 'SAKTI BURMAN' lower right; with a label from Galleria Nuovo Sagittario, Milan on the reverse

Oil on canvas 24 X 19.5 cm 9 1/2 X 7 5/8 in

ProvenanceGalleria Nuovo Sagittario, Milan;
Private Italian Collection



Sayed Haider Raza 1922–2016

Untitled (Bindu) 1976

Signed and dated 'RAZA '76' lower right; further signed, dated and inscribed 'RAZA / 1976 / 50 X 50 cms' on the reverse

Acrylic on canvas 49.9 x 49.9 cm 19 5/8 x 19 5/8 in

Provenance

Private Collection, Stavanger, *circa* 1976; Thence by descent; Private Collection, Norway; Private Asian Collection

Exhibitions

Galleri Koloritten, Stavanger, *Sayed Haider Raza*, *Maleri/Grafikk*, 3–16 November, 1976, No. 16

Literature

This work will be included in a revised edition of *S H Raza:* Catalogue Raisonné, 1972–1989 (Volume II) by Anne Macklin on behalf of The Raza Foundation, New Delhi

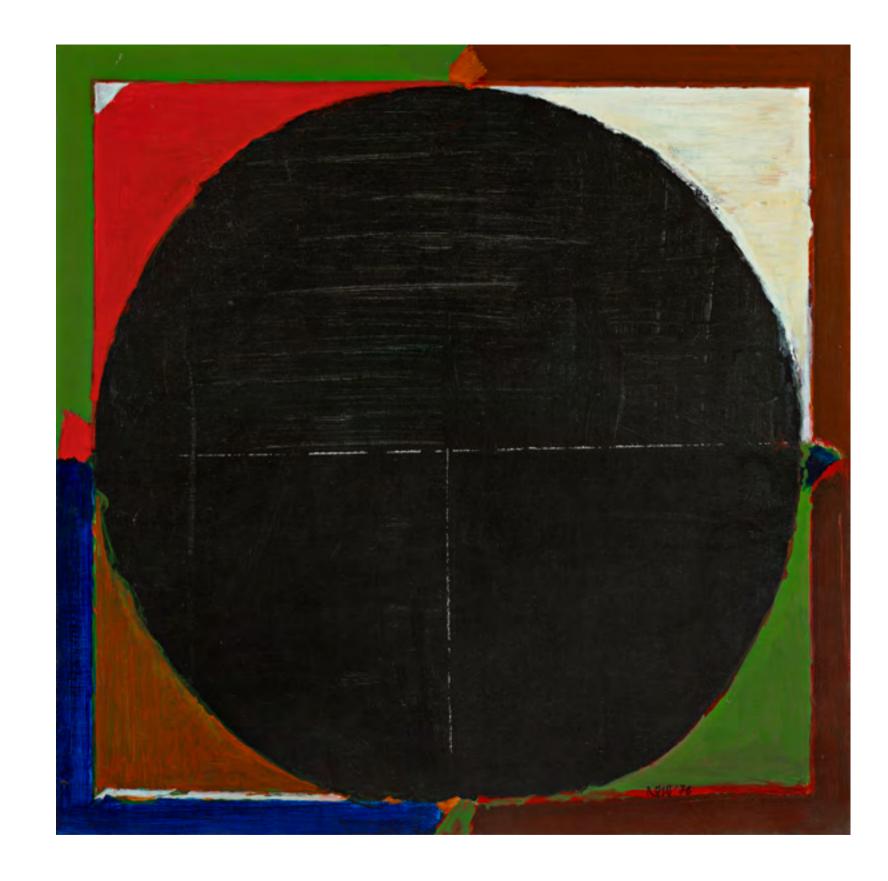
"This is one of Raza's earliest Bindu works. "For Raza, this central image became the bindu to which he was introduced as a focal point of meditation when he was just eight years old, in his native village of Kakaiya in Madhya Pradesh. It was drawn for him on the white wall of the school verandah as a small black point, a dot; a means by which his restless young mind was made to concentrate; but the exercise did much more than that. It was a moment of initiation: towards bringing order into a world of mystery, towards directing multiple energies to one central and single source of energy."

'The intensity of the experience remained within him and surfaced many years later in France. As Jean Bhownagary remarked, "Raza has been painting the bindu in different forms, ever since the Black Sun..."

'A bindu: a circle within a square; a circle with concentric rings set against dense black, expanding; a black dense circle vibrating within a red square; or within several squares, each defined by green and blue and dense-black borders. Within this space, the radiant image becomes a sign: an icon for meditation. We centre our minds upon this single form, upon the epicentre.

'The image itself is not still. It is spinning outwards, perpetually in movement against space - betrayed sometimes by that thin white aureole of white around the black circle as in *The Inaudible Sound*; or by concentric rings of circles resonating with energy. Or by the bold black circle levitating against fine horizontal lines and diagonal lines - from which the circle appears to be emerging as a centrifugal force, as in his painting titled *Emergence*. Or again, by another means, as in *Ankuran:* by repeating an identical form around the central source of energy that is the circle – so that it appears like an icon, magnified a thousand-fold.

'The inherent paradox of this image, which is at once motionless, dense and opaque, and yet in movement - imbues the single form with mysterious powers." - Geeti Sen, *Space and Time* in Raza's *Vision*, *Media Transasia*, 1997





Maqbool Fida Husain 1915–2011

Provenance
Private South Asian Collection

Untitled (Ibn-e-Zainab series)

Signed and dated 'Husain '79' and signed in Urdu lower left, inscribed twice on the reverse 'MF Husain Dubai'

Oil on canvas 77 X 103 cm 30 1/4 X 40 1/2 in



Maqbool Fida Husain 1915–2011

Untitled (Mother Teresa) 1979

Signed 'Husain' lower right; signed and dated 'Husain / '79' on the reverse

Oil on canvas 127 X 90.2 cm 50 X 35 ½ in

Provenance
Dhoomimal Gallery, New Delhi;
Private Collection, UAE, (acquired from the above circa 1980s to mid-1990s)
Grosvenor Gallery, London;
Private British Collection



Standing Figure, Circa 1980

Cement

70.5 X 29 X 24 cm 27 3/4 X 11 3/8 X 9 1/2 in

Provenance

Private British Collection; Private European Collection

Nek Chand, born on December 15, 1924, in Berian Kalan, a village in what is now Pakistan, was a pioneering artist known for his creation of the Rock Garden of Chandigarh. His early life was marked by displacement during the partition of India in 1947. In the wake of the conflict, Chand settled in Chandigarh which was being transformed by French architect Le Corbusier. In the process of development, numerous towns were demolished to make way for the new infrastructure.

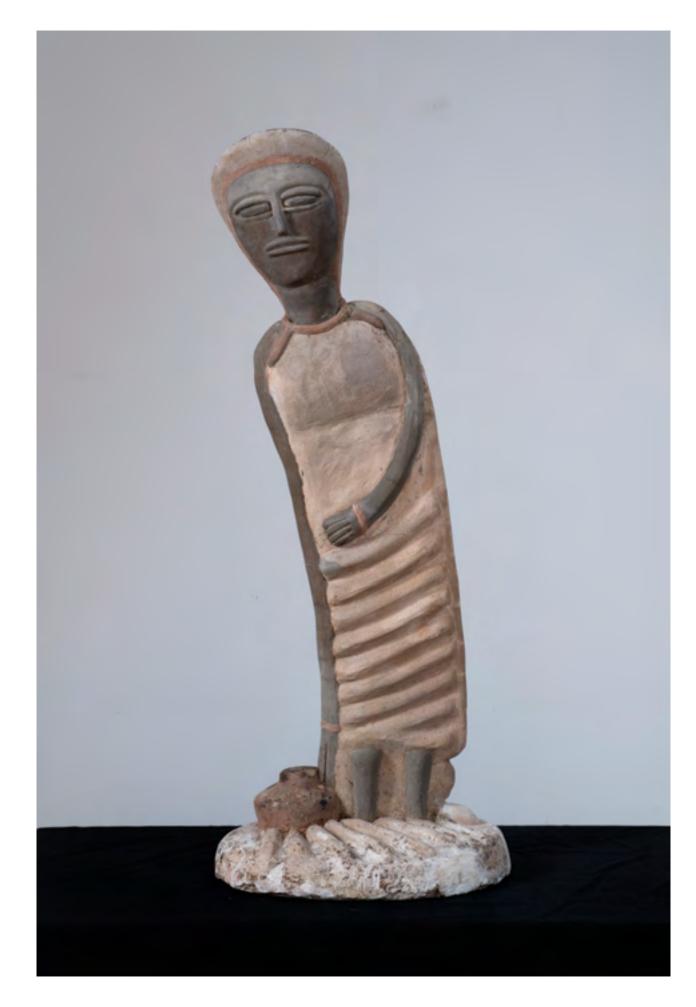
Working as a government roads inspector in Chandigarh, Chand began transforming a small piece of land into an extensive sculpture garden in the 1950s. Utilizing the rubble and detritus from the demolition he created intricate sculptures depicting animals, humans, and fantastical creatures, blending elements of folk art, surrealism, and environmentalism.

Initially unknown to many, the Rock Garden was discovered by authorities in the 1970s, leading to official support for its expansion and maintenance. Over the years the garden grew into a sprawling complex featuring thousands of sculptures, waterfalls and winding pathways.

Chand's artistic philosophy was deeply rooted in his reverence for nature and his belief in the transformative potential of discarded materials.



Nek Chand works in the exhibition *Tropical Modernism* at the V&A Museum, London. Image courtesy Charles Moore



Horse Circa 1980

Stuffing, leather and string on metal armature

84 X 24 X 106 cm 33 1/8 X 9 1/2 X 41 3/4 in

Provenance

Private British Collection; Private European Collection

Exhibitions

Hayward Gallery, London, *The Kingdom of Gods and Goddesses* by Nek Chand, 2013
The Gallery of Everything, London, ZOOOOO!, 2022

The Rag Doll Museum, part of Chandigarh's rock garden complex, contains around 200 dolls made from material collected by Chand from tailor's shops in the 1970s. A variety of human figures, animals and mythical creatures are displayed amidst village scenes, with houses, trees and shops. They are shown engaged in activities such as cooking, celebrating festivals and weddings, smoking hukkahs etcetera, and are intended to instill consciousness amongst the urban populace as to life in rural India.





Untitled (Seated Man with Beads) 1950–1980

Fabric, stuffing, thread on metal armature

44.5 X 40.6 X 30.5 cm 17.5 X 16 X 12 inches

Provenance

Collection of Phyllis Kind, New York, USA; Private British Collection

This piece comes originally from the collection of Phyllis Kind (1933–2018), an American gallery owner and the first to exhibit the work of outsider artists alongside contemporary fine art in the USA. She is quoted as saying;

"I look for a strong, original vocabulary of form, and for evidence that the artists are making art not because they might want to but instead because they have to."

1. Roberta Smith, *Phyllis Kind Art Dealer Who Took in Outsiders*, New York Times, 2018



Untitled (Standing Figure)
1997

Cement, rock and tile

36 x 13 x 19 cm 14 1/8 x 5 1/8 x 7 1/2 in Provenance

Collection of Judith Edwards, UK; Private British Collection

"I made one thing, then a second, and then a third and I liked the results...

I began creating a city of gods and goddesses. You could see life in the rocks and see all the gods and goddesses in the rocks." — Nek Chand





Bhupen Khakhar 1934–2003

Salman Rushdie, Two Stories with Five Woodcuts and Three Linocuts by Bhupen Khakhar 1989

Book size: 32 X 25 cm 12 5/8 X 9 7/8 in

Print size (sheet): 30.5 X 23.4 cm 12 X 9 1/4 in

Provenance

Collection of Hilary Gerrard, London, (gifted by Salman Rushdie in December 1990). Hilary Gerrard (1933–2023) worked in the British music industry and was Ringo Star's manager from the 1970s onwards.

Literature

Dircon, Chris and Raza, Nada (eds.), *Bhupen Khakhar You Can't Please All*, London, 2016, p.179, fig. 52 (another edition)

Copy number IX of 12 specially bound copies, accompanied by an extra suite of 8 signed prints by Bhupen Khakhar, the book inscribed on the endpaper "To Hilary – Best wishes/ Salman Rushdie-/ 8th Dec: 1990")

The book has the original brown goatskin cover by Romilly Saumaurez Smith, housed in the original brown cloth solander box with title label on spine

Privately Printed by Sebastian Carter, 1989

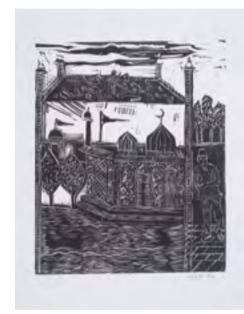






















Bhupen Khakhar 1934–2003 **Provenance**Private British Collection

Curtain: Mojilal Manilal

Etching and aquatint on Fabriano paper

24.6 x 24.5 cm 9 3/4 x 9 5/8 in









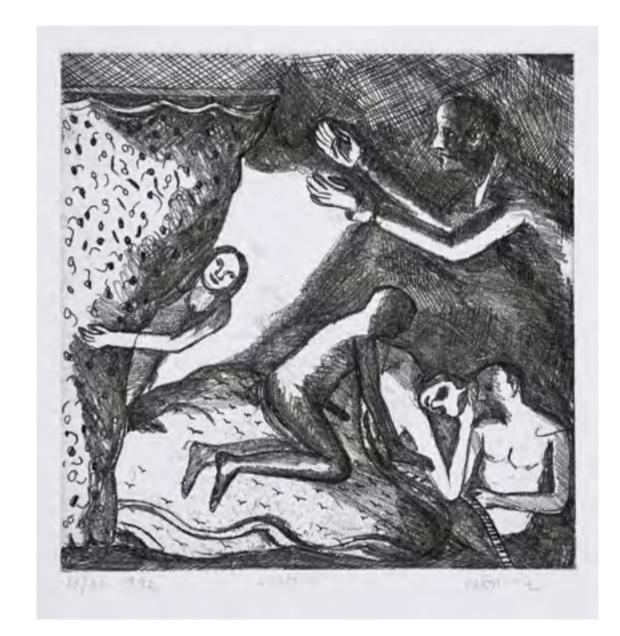












Francis Newton Souza 1924–2002

Untitled (Lovers)
1989

Signed and dated 'Souza 89' upper centre

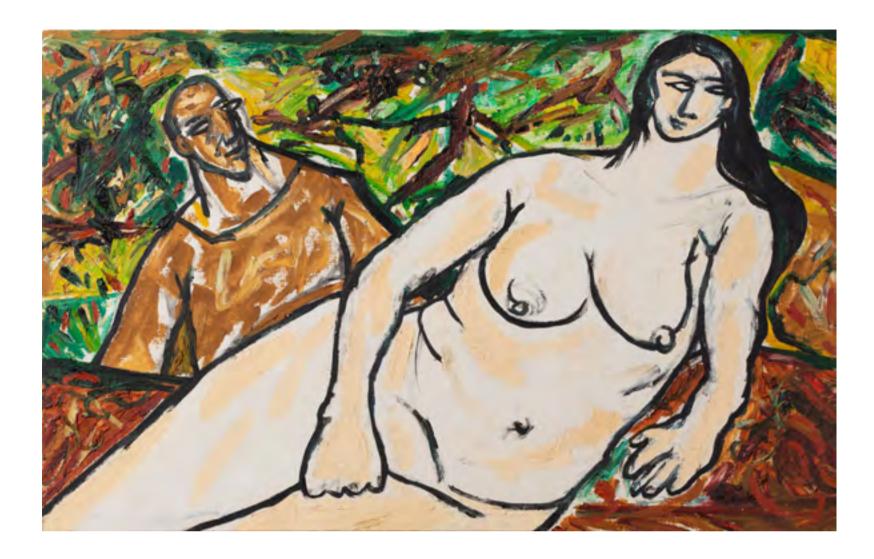
Oil on canvas 71.1 X 106.7 cm 28 X 42 in

Provenance

Private Indian collection, acquired directly from the Artist

This painting comes from a close friend of the Artist's who was living in Mumbai in the 1980s. We exhibited a collection of sketches by Souza in Mumbai in November 2023 from the same collection. In this painting Souza depicts an Odalisque reclining against a richly textured backdrop. A male figure looks on from behind, reminiscent of the tale of Susannah and the Elders, a subject Souza visited earlier in his career. Except the nude, paint is applied thickly and quickly, giving the background an energetic and emotional feeling, contrary to the serene depiction of the reclining nude in the foreground.

For a further discussion of the theme of *Odalisque* in Souza's work see our exhibition catalogue 'South Asian Modern Art 2019', pgs. 58 & 59.



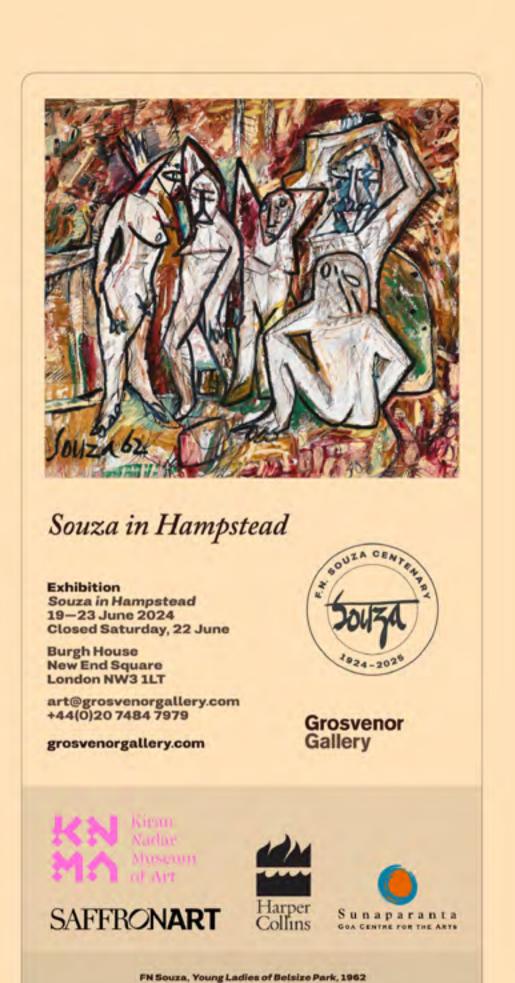
F.N. Souza Centenary 2024–2025

Throughout 2024 and 2025 there is a special schedule of events to celebrate the birth centenary of Francis Newton Souza. The first event, an exhibition titled 'Souza in Goa – Works from a Distinguished Collection', was held at Sunaparanta Goa Centre for the Arts, from 12 April – 10 May 2024.

It will be followed by exhibitions in Delhi and Mumbai, coupled with the launch of an illustrated book, published by HarperCollins India. The book will include essays on Souza by Elena Crippa, Murtaza Vali, Roobina Karode, Jesal Thacker and Dr Zehra Jumabhoy.

We will be holding an exhibition at Burgh House (Hampstead), of important works painted in the 1950s and '60s during Souza's time living in Hampstead and Belsize Park.





Copyright courtesy Estate of FN Souza

Eglise 1960

Indian Modernism in Paris, including Lain Singh Bangdel

Grosvenor Gallery & Rossi Rossi Frieze Masters 9–13 October 2024



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South Asian Modern Art 2024

13 June —5 July 2024

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