

CHRISTIE'S

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CHRISTIE'S PRESENTS THE FALL SALE OF SOUTH ASIAN MODERN + CONTEMPORARY ART



Tyeb Mehta
Untitled (Falling Figure)
acrylic on canvas, 1992
Estimate: \$600,000-800,000

New York – On September 12, Christie's will present the Fall sale of *South Asian Modern + Contemporary Art* in New York. Christie's specialists have secured over 120 exceptional works of exceptional quality as well as rare works with extraordinary history, and with estimates ranging from \$1,500 to \$600,000. The sale will feature works by modern masters including Tyeb Mehta, Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, Maqbool Fida Husain, and Syed Haider Raza, as well as an impressive selection of contemporary works from celebrated artists, such as, Subodh Gupta, Alwar Balsubramaniam, T. V. Santhosh, Nalini Malani, Rina Banerjee and Zarina. The sale will also feature several works by modern and contemporary Pakistani artists including, Ismail Guljee, Anwar Shemza, Shezad Dawood, Khadim Ali, and Tazeen Qayyum.

Highlighting the modern works from the sale is the historically significant *Untitled (Falling Figure)* by Tyeb Mehta, representing an exceptional moment of synergy between the artist's artistic and social concerns (*pictured page 1*; estimate: \$600,000-800,000). The use of this particular scene in Tyeb's work derives from a traumatic experience in his youth, when he witnessed the violent death of a man during the Partition Riots of 1947. *Untitled (Falling Figure)* served as the central backdrop for the *Artists Against Communalism* twelve hour cultural sit-in in Bombay on 14 March 1992 and was created as a didactic icon used for a uniquely socio-political purpose. Tyeb Mehta, and this painting in particular, can be credited with helping to raise consciousness against communal violence. It became the banner under which artists communed in creative unity.



An extremely rare untitled work by Vasudeo S. Gaitonde, a true master of the relationship between linear form, light, and color, will also be featured in the sale (*pictured right*; estimate: \$450,000-600,000). Formerly from the Collection of Dr. Bernard Peters, a cosmic ray physicist who was deeply influential in the early years of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Bombay, this painting is a quintessential example of Gaitonde's minimalist and conceptual approach as well as connecting two great scientists to a monumental time in India's history. In the early years of post-Independence India artists and scientists shared a common belief that for India to advance and join the ranks of the greatest nations new discoveries and new ways of understanding the universe were necessary.



Syed Haider Raza's *Red Sun and Black Clouds* was painted in 1960, after the artist had left his native India for France, where he was greatly influenced by the Post-Impressionists (*pictured left*; estimate: \$280,000-350,000). In the work, Raza creates a heightened tension between the brightness of the sun and the opacity of the black clouds that surround it. The expansive forms of *Red Sun and Black Clouds* offered Raza the opportunity to convey his prodigious command of gesture and color that he had honed over several decades.

From a private U.S. collection, Maqbool Fida Husain's untitled work, depicting three separate musical scenes is also among the modern highlights of the sale (*pictured right*; estimate: \$300,000-500,000). Husain uses the canvas to convey his innate Indian vernacular, having always been inspired by Indian classical music and dance. While the space is seemingly divided into three distinct scenes – a sitar player, a group of female dancers, and a trio of singers and drummers – Husain's rich and varied palette creates a cohesive and integrated whole.

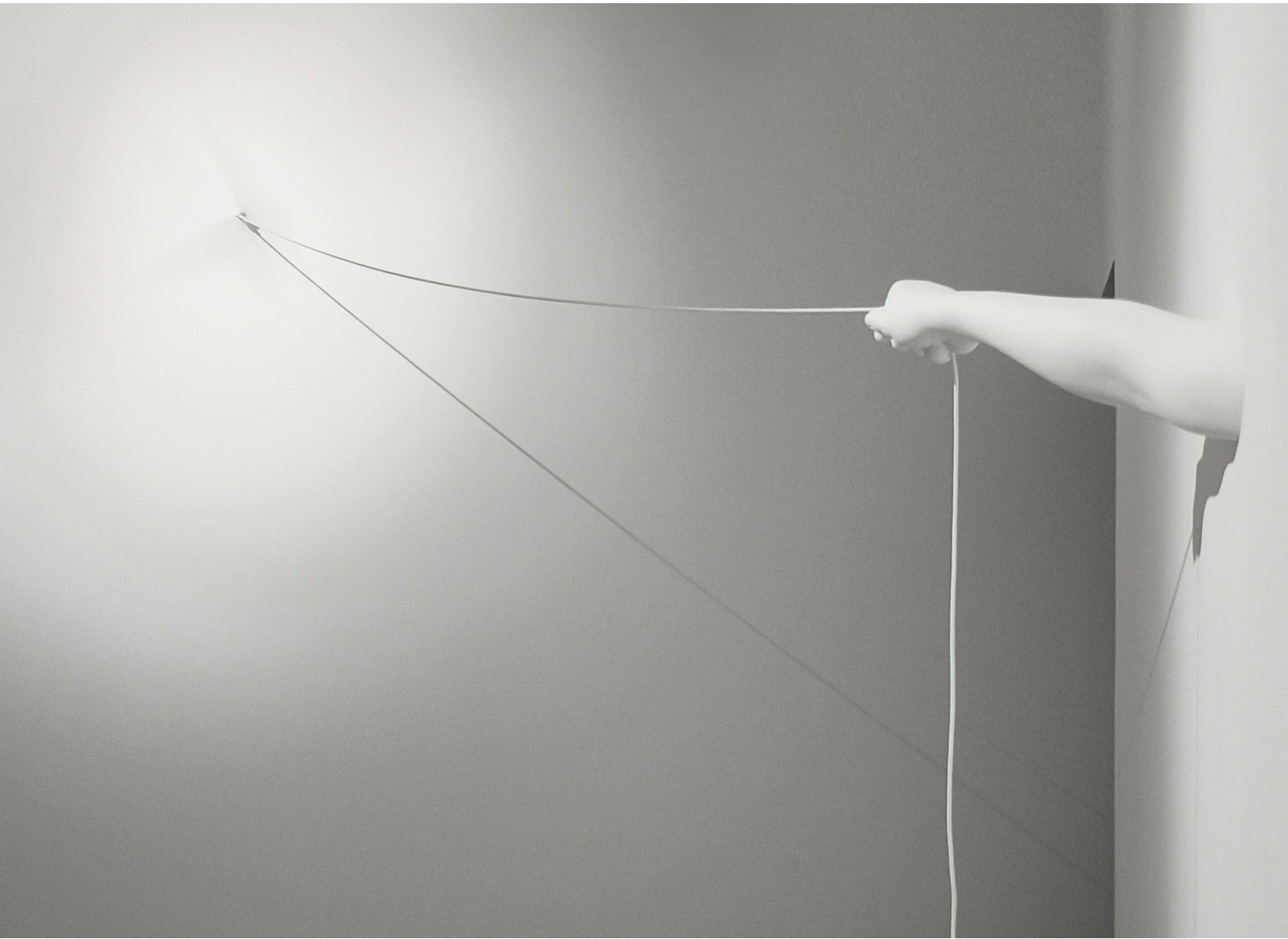


A wide range of contemporary works are also present in the sale. An untitled work by Subodh Gupta depicts stainless steel pots, serving as a commentary on contemporary India (*pictured right*, estimate: \$200,000-300,000). Stainless steel utensils are symbols of the traditional Indian family life that transcends class, religion, and ethnicity, being one of the first truly aspirational objects of modern India.

Representing the new generation of Pakistani artists, Shezad Dawood appropriates various forms of Western and Eastern popular culture from films to music in his multi-disciplinary works. Dawood often addresses notions of cultural, ethnic and religious identity. In *Beata Benazir* (estimate: \$3,000 – 5,000), Dawood depicts Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's first democratically elected female prime minister as a film heroine, suggesting that Pakistani politics, much like cinema, is a fabricated reality. Rina Banerjee's *Wondering Angel Insects* (estimate: \$10,000-15,000) is a creation of magical and mystical works laced with pseudo-spiritual imagery. This year, she will be participating in the exhibition *India: Art Now* at the Arken Museum, Copenhagen (August 2012 – January 2013) and she will be the only other Indian artist, alongside Dayanita Singh to show at the Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art, Queensland (December 2012 – April 2013).

Three diverse works by Zarina will be offered, which includes *Journey to the Edge of Land* (estimate: \$6,000-8,000), *Steps* (estimate: \$10,000-15,000), and *House with Four Walls* (estimate: \$10,000-15,000). Zarina is an inspiration among her contemporaries, straddling the art scene across four decades, and she was one of a group of artists who represented India at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011. A retrospective exhibition of her work is scheduled to open in September 2012 at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles and will then travel to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work is in the permanent collections in key museums across the globe.

Alwar Balasubramaniam was trained as a painter and printmaker, but has more recently embraced sculpture. He is currently the only Indian artist invited to participate in the 18th Sydney Biennale. Balasubramaniam's untitled sculptural work offered in this sale is a distinctive piece that plays with the interaction between space and form (*pictured below*; estimate: \$60,000-80,000). An outstretched arm made from a cast of the artist's own hand extends from the wall, pulling a rope that is adhered to an adjacent wall. From the force of the pulling, the wall pulls away like the pinching of skin or fabric, immediately drawing in the viewer.



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The complete eCatalogue will be available on christies.com.

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