

Painting of India's First Oscar Winner to be Auctioned by Saffronart in February

Mumbai, 8 December 2016: Saffronart's upcoming **Evening Sale** will be held on 16 February 2017 at Saffronart Mumbai. The sale features significant works of modern and contemporary Indian art. Paintings by V S Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, Ram Kumar, M F Husain, and Akbar Padamsee are on offer.

Among the highlights is Tyeb Mehta's *Falling Figure*, painted in 1967. The falling figure took shape as a result of Mehta witnessing the death of a man falling through a window during the Partition riots in 1947. Mehta's pared down minimalism, light colour and vigorous brushwork create an unlikely juxtaposition with the trauma that is the subject of his work. The present lot is estimated at INR 5 – 7 crores (USD 819,675 – 1.14 million).

Also on offer is V S Gaitonde's painting of Bhanu Athaiya. A student at the J J School of Art taught by Gaitonde during his time there, Athaiya was the only woman to be part of the Progressive Artists' Group in Bombay. She is an Academy Award winning costume designer in the field of Hindi cinema. Her most notable achievement was winning an Oscar for costume design in Richard Attenborough's 1982 film *Gandhi*—she was the first Indian to do so. Gaitonde immortalises her in this painting which was later acquired by fellow modernist Krishen Khanna. It is estimated at INR 2 – 3 crores (USD 327,870 – 491,805).

A portrait of artist Ram Kumar by M F Husain, estimated between INR 50 – 70 lakhs (USD 81,970 – 114,755), highlights the camaraderie between the two. Husain made the painting to honour Kumar, when the latter was unable to attend a joint exhibition of the two artists in Prague in 1967. It shows a stoic Kumar painted in his early figurative style.

Ram Kumar's 1961 landscape, *Benaras*, is an important early work of a subject that became the artist's major preoccupation for the next few decades, marking a transition from his earlier figurative works. The painting is estimated at INR 65 – 85 lakhs (USD 106,560 – 139,345).

CEO Hugo Weihe said, "We are proud to present an extraordinary and carefully curated collection of modern and contemporary masterpieces. It features leading names including V S Gaitonde, Tyeb Mehta, Ram Kumar, M F Husain and F N Souza. Mehta's *Falling Figure* is one of the earliest versions of his seminal series. Gaitonde's painting of Bhanu is a rare and significant work."

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A platform for fine art and collectibles with over fourteen years of experience in auctions, Saffronart is committed to serving the growing community of Indian collectors, while also creating a cultural bridge to India for both the global Indian diaspora and the international community at large. Saffronart has set several global benchmarks for online auctions and is the subject of a case study at Harvard Business School.

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