

## Celestial landscapes and falling figures lead Saffronart's *Evening Sale*

**February 2018:** Saffronart's *Evening Sale* live auction, which features sixty five exceptional works of art across the spectrum of Indian modernism, will be held at The Four Seasons, Mumbai, on 13 March 2018. Highlights from the sale were first unveiled at Saffronart's new gallery space at The Oberoi, New Delhi, on 9 February, and will be on view at the Saffronart gallery in Mumbai from 1 – 12 March.

**Hugo Weihe, CEO of Saffronart**, commented, "Saffronart's *Evening Sale* in March is a highlight of the spring season in Mumbai. We are thrilled to have sourced exceptional works of art with excellent provenances, notably masterpieces by Jehangir Sabavala, Tyeb Mehta and Nicholas Roerich, which are being offered at auction for the first time. Collectors can look forward to some wonderful discoveries, including a monumental sculpture by Meera Mukherjee, which was exhibited at the Birla Academy in 1995 and ranks as one of her most outstanding achievements."



L-R: Jehangir Sabavala, *The Star that Beckons*, 1968; Tyeb Mehta, *Falling Bird*, 2002-2004; and Meera Mukherjee, *Balance*. Images courtesy of Saffronart

Top lots include **Jehangir Sabavala's** *The Star that Beckons*, 1968, offered at INR 2.5 – 3.5 crores (USD 396,830 – 555,560). This masterpiece encapsulates the subtlety and sensitivity of the artist at his best. *Falling Bird* by **Tyeb Mehta** is a strikingly composed painting of a morphed creature that is part human, part bird, and is well estimated at INR 5 – 7 crores (USD 793,655 – 1.1 million). Among the sculptures on offer, **Meera Mukherjee's** *Balance*, which is one of the largest non-public sculptures to enter the auction market, is estimated at INR 3.75 – 4.5 crores (USD 595,240 – 714,290). The sculpture section also includes works by **Himmat Shah**, **Sadanand Bakre**, and **Jacob Epstein's** bust of Rabindranath Tagore. Further highlights include works by **Jagdish Swaminathan**, **Bhupen Khakhar**, **Madhav Satwalekar**, and two paintings by **A A Almelkar** and **S H Raza** which were shown at the Venice Biennales in the 1950s.

Saffronart's auctions have presented exceptional works by leading names, some of which have set world record prices. In September 2014, Jehangir Sabavala's *The Flight into Egypt – I* set what was then a world record for the artist at INR 3 crores (USD 500,000). Sabavala's earlier world record was also set at a Saffronart auction in 2010, where his painting, *The Casuarina Line - I*, sold for INR 1.68 crores (USD 374,900). In February 2016, Saffronart auctioned a stainless steel sculpture by British sculptor Anish Kapoor for INR 4.8 crores (USD 705,882), the first of its scale to be auctioned in India. Subsequent Saffronart live auctions have seen significant works set world records or surpass their initial estimates.

Alongside well known names the *Evening Sale* offers a broader perspective on Indian modernism, with artists who gained recognition early in their careers, but may have been under appreciated in the interim.

The auction will be held at The Four Seasons, Mumbai, and is preceded by viewings at The Oberoi, New Delhi and at Saffronart, Mumbai.

**AUCTION**

Tuesday, 13 March 2018  
Registration: 6.30 pm  
Auction: 7.30 pm

**VENUE**

The Gallery Rooms  
The Four Seasons  
1/136, Dr. E Moses Road, Worli  
Mumbai 400018

**MUMBAI VIEWINGS**

1 – 12 March 2018  
11 am – 7 pm, Monday to Saturday  
Sunday by appointment

**VENUE**

Saffronart  
Industry Manor, Ground Floor  
Appasaheb Marathe Marg,  
Prabhadevi, Mumbai 400025

**About Saffronart**

Founded in 2000 by Minal and Dinesh Vazirani, Saffronart is a leading international auction house with deep Indian roots, and is India's most reputed, with over a hundred auctions to its credit. It is headquartered in Mumbai, with offices in New Delhi, London and New York. At the forefront of selling Indian art, Saffronart holds online and live auctions, exhibitions, and prime property sales throughout the year. Saffronart's focus is to bring transparency to the auction process, and to provide easy access to bidders around the world.

Saffronart's services go beyond auctions to include private sales, art storage, appraisals and valuations for our clients, and supporting the efforts of the Indian art world by holding fundraiser auctions. Saffronart has set several global benchmarks for online auctions, and was the subject of a case study at Harvard Business School in 2005.

**Website:** [www.saffronart.com](http://www.saffronart.com) | **Facebook:** @saffronart | **Instagram:** @saffronartartindia



**Meera Mukherjee, *Balance*. Bronze**  
**Estimate: INR 3.75 – 4.5 crores (USD 595,240 – 714,290)**  
**Saffronart, *Evening Sale*, 13 March 2018. Image courtesy of Saffronart**

Among the largest of Mukherjee’s non-public sculptures to enter the auction market, this monumental four-sided bronze was part of an exhibition at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture in what was then Calcutta, where it was acquired by an eminent collector in 1995. Composed of cast bronze panels in *bas relief*, the sculpture presents a multi-layered juxtaposition between female and male, *prakriti* and *purusha*, nature and justice or rationality that is encapsulated in its title: *Balance*. Mukherjee offers a multitude of nuanced interpretations to the notion of “balance” as an intellectual ideal. It is underscored by the same humanism that is to be found in all of Mukherjee’s sculptures, whether smaller, fine filigree rural scenes, or large public sculptures.



**Tyeb Mehta, *Falling Bird*, 2002-2004. Acrylic on canvas.**

**Estimate: INR 5 – 7 crores (USD 793,655 – 1.1 million)**

**Saffronart, *Evening Sale*, 13 March 2018. Image courtesy of Saffronart**

From his earliest gold-medal winning *Falling Figure* of 1965, to the auction record setting *Falling Figure with Bird* of 1988, Tyeb Mehta gradually combined man with bird to create a composite creature. In this painting, he presents the horror of bodies in free fall, calmly juxtaposed against blue skies. The diagonal line is used to create fractured planes which heighten the reigned-in violence of the captured moment



**Jehangir Sabavala, *The Star that Beckons*, 1968. Oil on canvas.**

**Estimate: INR 2.5 – 3.5 crores (USD 396,830 – 555,560)**

**Saffronart, *Evening Sale*, 13 March 2018. Image courtesy of Saffronart**

This is the first of three canvases with the same title, which Jehangir Sabavala painted over the course of three decades. *The Star that Beckons* is arguably the finest of the series, emerging from a time when the young artist was in search of his own voice. With its stark landscape and receding horizon, muted colours and haunting absences, the painting draws from a range of artistic, religious and literary references. It comes from the collection of Dermot and Patricia de Trafford of Lancashire, UK. The de Traffords met Sabavala in 1967 in Bombay, and subsequently purchased this painting directly from him. The painting has been in their country house near Beaulieu in Hampshire ever since.

Also included with this lot is a signed copy of the 1966 monograph, *Sabavala*, which was gifted to the de Traffords by the artist as a mark of their friendship.



**Nicholas Roerich, *Himalaya*, 1945. Tempera on board.  
Estimate: INR 80 lakhs – 1 crore (USD 126,985 – 158,735)  
Saffronart, *Evening Sale*, 13 March 2018. Image courtesy of Saffronart**

Russian artist Nicholas Roerich has been called the “Wizard of Eastern Landscapes.” His paintings of the Himalayas are among his most iconic works, capturing the glory of snow-capped mountain peaks through a masterful interplay of light and shadow. This painting is from the collection of The Kejriwal Family, which owns tea plantations and textile mills, and is renowned for their extensive art collection. It was gifted to H K Kejriwal by Roerich’s son, Svetoslav, and has been with the family ever since.

In September 2017, another painting by Roerich, titled *Himalayas*, was auctioned by Saffronart and sold for four times its lower estimate at INR 4.8 crores (USD 761,905).





**Bhupen Khakhar, *Untitled (Ratnagiri)*, 2002. Acrylic on paper.**

**Estimate: INR 1.5 – 2 crores (USD 238,100 – 317,465)**

**Saffronart, *Evening Sale*, 13 March 2018. Image courtesy of Saffronart**

Bhupen Khakhar is rapidly rising to earn a place among the most coveted Indian modernists. This painting is quite likely a view of coastal Ratnagiri. Khakhar encloses it within a red border populated with scenes of coastal life. Khakhar's art is predominantly figurative and narrative, and this painting ties the genre he is best known for with the tradition of landscape painting.