

Saffronart Holds Two White Glove Auctions; Sets World Record for Orientalist Edwin Lord Weeks

- Saffronart concluded two white-glove auctions in New Delhi on 14 September 2024—the Evening Sale and the Francis Newton Souza Day Sale—achieving a total sales value of INR 111.43 crores (USD 13.42 million)
- *Hindu Temple, Bombay, circa 1884* by Edwin Lord Weeks sold for INR 24 crores (USD 2.89 million) at the Evening Sale, setting a world record for the highest price achieved by the artist at auction globally
- Artist records set for Jangarh Singh Shyam, Nirode Mazumdar, and Walter Langhammer for highest price achieved by these artists at auction globally
- The leading lot of the Francis Newton Souza Day Sale, *Untitled (Pieta), 1987*, sold for INR 9 crores (USD 1.08 million), nearly double its higher estimate

New Delhi, 16 September 2024: Saffronart’s flagship Evening Sale and Francis Newton Souza Day Sale concluded on 14 September 2024 in New Delhi, achieving a cumulative sales value of INR 111.43 crores (USD 13.42 million). The auctions were both white glove sales and witnessed enthusiastic and competitive bidding in the room as well as on the phone, the website and via the Saffronart mobile app globally, with several lots surpassing their pre-sales estimates.

EVENING SALE

Saffronart’s Evening Sale saw record prices being hammered down and the creation of multiple artist records. The auction achieved a total sales value of INR 86.80 crores (USD 10.45 million) with 100% lots sold and 74% surpassing their higher estimates.

The leading lot of the sale, *Hindu Temple, Bombay, circa 1884*, ([lot 31](#)) by prominent 19th century Orientalist Edwin Lord Weeks performed exceedingly well. The work surpassed its higher estimate selling at INR 24 crores (USD 2.89 million) and set a world record for the highest price achieved by the artist at auction globally. This painting exemplifies Weeks’ exceptional academic skills in realistic draughtsmanship, naturalistic colour, and a nuanced use of light and shadow, with which he captures Bombay’s tropical atmosphere with remarkable fidelity. The temple architecture adds a picturesque quality and reflects the artist’s deep interest in the subject and his appreciation for the cultures he encountered.

Earthenware, 1959, ([lot 19](#)) by Jehangir Sabavala sold for INR 7.50 crores (USD 903,614), more than

double its higher estimate. In this work, the artist adapts the Cubist traditions in which he was trained with his own personal artistic vision to create a still life inspired by a *kumbharwada* or potters' colony in Bombay. Also featured were works by **S H Raza** from significant phases in his artistic career. *The Earth, 1986 (lot 23)*, which demonstrates the integration of Raza's expressionist techniques with geometric abstraction, sold for **INR 5.04 crores (USD 607,229)**, more than double its lower estimate.

Two rare sketchbooks by **Ganesh Pyne**, which offer a glimpse into the artist's formative influences, invited spirited bidding. *Untitled (Sketchbook), 1959, (lot 15)* sold for **INR 2.40 crores (USD 289,157)**, surpassing its higher estimate. *Untitled (Indian Temples), 1961, (lot 16)* sold for **INR 1.02 crores (USD 122,892)**, more than five times its higher estimate. *Untitled, 1966 (lot 45)*, an early gouache and ink work by the artist sold for **INR 1.32 crores (USD 159,036)**, nearly double its higher estimate.

Other highlights from the sale that surpassed their higher estimates include *Untitled, 1983, (lot 62)* from **Jagdish Swaminathan's** *Bird, Mountain, Tree* series, which sold for **INR 2.22 crores (USD 267,470)**; **F N Souza's** *Still Life With Veronica's Veil and the Accoutrements of Christ's Passion, 1984, (lot 49)* and *Untitled, 2001 (lot 50)*, both of which sold for **INR 1.56 crores (USD 187,952)** each, almost double their higher estimates; a set of four early drawings by **Amrita Sher-Gil (lot 34)**, which sold for **INR 1.32 crores (USD 159,036)**, exceeding its higher estimate; and *Untitled, 2006* by **Sohan Qadri (lot 40)**, which sold for more than double its higher estimate at **INR 38.40 lakhs (USD 46,265)**. Works by **M F Husain** showcasing his interest in the female form, Indian classical sculpture, and mythology were also well-received—*Three Women, circa 1980s, (lot 53)*, sold for **INR 1.68 crores (USD 202,410)**; *Untitled (Dancing Ganesh), 2004 (lot 22)* sold for **INR 96 lakhs (USD 115,663)**, more than double its higher estimate; and *Untitled, circa 1950s (lot 10)* sold for **INR 54 lakhs (USD 65,060)**, nearly double its higher estimate.

Artist records for the highest price achieved at an auction globally were set for **Jangarh Singh Shyam**, **Nirode Mazumdar** and **Walter Langhammer**. *Untitled, 2001, (lot 76)* by **Jangarh Singh Shyam** sold for **INR 1.44 crores (USD 173,494)** more than double its lower estimate; *Devi and Oindri, circa late 1970s - early 1980s*, by **Nirode Mazumdar (lot 72)** sold for **INR 26.40 lakhs (USD 31,807)**, surpassing its higher estimate; and **Walter Langhammer, Untitled, (lot 28)** sold for **INR 33.60 lakhs (USD 40,482)** more than three times its higher estimate. Rounding off the sale were two works by **K H Ara** belonging to a prominent Parsi family collection—*Untitled (lot 7)* sold for **INR 84 lakhs (USD 101,205)**, more than four times its higher estimate; and *Untitled (lot 8)* sold for **INR 84 lakhs (USD 101,205)**, more than double its higher estimate.

An analysis of the [Evening Sale](#) can be viewed at saffronart.com.

FRANCIS NEWTON SOUZA DAY SALE

The Evening Sale was preceded by the **Francis Newton Souza Day Sale**, with a catalogue of 48 lots from a distinguished private collection. These works spanned several decades of the modernist's

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career and encompassed some of his best-known themes, such as his iconic heads, Christ and the Church, and female nudes. The auction achieved a **total sales value of INR 24.63 crores (USD 2.96 million)**, with **100% lots sold** and **85% surpassing their higher estimates**.

The leading lot of the sale, ***Untitled (Pieta), 1987, (lot 16)***, invited spirited bidding and sold for **INR 9 crores (USD 1.08 million)**, nearly double its higher estimate. The work interprets the Pietà, a depiction of the Virgin Mary cradling Christ's body after his crucifixion, and explores the tender theme of mother and child. The piece held profound significance for Souza having been painted in the year of his mother Lilia Maria Antunes' death.

Untitled (Veiled Nude), 1964, (lot 11), sold for **INR 3.60 crores (USD 433,735)**, three times its higher estimate. The work was painted during a decade of illustrious output for the artist and highlights his many influences, including Catholic imagery and Henri Matisse's *odalisques*. The sale also featured ***Untitled (Head with Horns), 1966, (lot 15)***, a powerful painting from among his series of heads, which sold for three times its higher estimate at **INR 2.40 crores (USD 289,157)**. ***Untitled (The Family), 1984, (lot 42)***, sold for **INR 1.92 crores (USD 231,325)**, more than double its higher estimate. The large acrylic work on canvas depicts a biracial couple and their mixed-race son, drawn in Souza's trademark bold, fluid lines.

Other notable lots from the sale included ***Figures in a Landscape, 1974, (lot 27)***, which sold for **INR 1.56 crores (USD 187,952)** more than three times its higher estimate; and ***Head of a Man in Blue, 1983, (lot 31)***, which sold for **INR 90 lakhs (USD 108,434)** nearly double its higher estimate. The latter is an unusual head by Souza that emanates from his engagement with the Redmond Theory. ***Untitled (Head of a Man), 1949, (lot 4)***, sold for **INR 48 lakhs (USD 57,831)** more than double its lower estimate; and ***Untitled (Numbers), 1958, (lot 7)***, sold for **INR 28.80 lakhs (USD 34,699)**, more than nine times its higher estimate. Lot 7 is a rare work that displays the artist's signature cross-hatched lines and was included in Edwin Mullins' 1962 monograph on Souza, published when he was at the height of his career.

An analysis of the [Francis Newton Souza Day Sale](#) can be viewed at saffronart.com.

Dinesh Vazirani, Saffronart CEO and Co-founder said, *"We are thrilled by the enthusiastic response from bidders with both auctions being white glove sales. Our Evening Sale produced strong results and we are pleased to have set multiple artist records, most notably a world record for eminent American Orientalist Edwin Lord Weeks with the sale of a stunning 19th-century painting of a temple outside of Bombay. Our catalogue resonated with a broad spectrum of collectors with several rare works by modern Indian artists surpassing their pre-sales estimates, including Jehangir Sabavala's 1959 painting Earthenware, from his series inspired by a potters' community in Bombay; and exquisite sketchbooks from Ganesh Pyne's student days. Of course, no discussion of modern Indian art is complete without mentioning F N Souza. The intense bidding we observed, both in-person and from online and mobile bidders during our Francis Newton Souza Day Sale, highlights the enduring interest in his work,*

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especially as we celebrate his centenary this year. His legacy remains strong as one of India's most innovative artists, whose works are both deeply personal and universally resonant."

ABOUT SAFFRONART

Founded in 2000 by Minal and Dinesh Vazirani, Saffronart is a leading international auction house, and India's most reputed, with over three hundred auctions to its credit. Its flagship gallery is in Mumbai, with offices in New Delhi, London, and New York. At the forefront of selling Indian art, Saffronart has held online and live auctions, exhibitions, and Dialogues in Art, working with collectors, gallerists, and artists to develop a strong market for art and aesthetics. Its focus is to bring transparency to the auction process and provide easy access and information to collectors around the world. Saffronart's services go beyond auctions to include private sales, appraisals, and valuations for clients. Saffronart has set several global benchmarks for online auctions and was the subject of a case study at Harvard Business School in 2005.

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