

# Gaitonde piece may fetch \$3.7m at NY auction

By **Ashlin Mathew** in New Delhi

It is the Asia week at Christie's and Sotheby's New York again. And it can't go by without having works of Indian artists. Leading the South-Asian art auction March 19 is Vasudeo S. Gaitonde's ethereal Painting No. 3, estimated to bring in more than \$3 million. In December 2013 when Gaitonde's abstract landscape went on sale in India at Christie's, it fetched \$3.7 million (₹23.7 crore).

This work is the only painting by the artist currently in the auction market and was included in one of Gaitonde's earliest New York exhibitions in the 1960s. It was with this painting that Gaitonde began experimenting with a paint roller and palette knife and started to move away from his earlier geometrical series.



"The demand for modernist painters is strong. The Christie's auction in Mumbai last year raised the bar. So, both the auction houses are going in with that confidence. Gaitonde has been ambitiously priced, especially because there are very few of his works on the market. Tyeb Mehta went strong last year. The contemporaries have struggled with sales since 2008, and this auction will point towards how the market views them," says Kishore Singh of the Delhi Art Gallery.

South-Asian art auctions cannot go by without the mention of the master M.F. Husain. At Christie's on March 18,

Husain's *Untitled (Ragini)* (Est. \$450,000), *Untitled (Dancers and Musician)* (Est. \$250,000), *Draupadi (Mahabharata)* (Est. \$220,000) and *Untitled* (\$60,000) are expected to be picked up. Coming from a private collection in Canada is M.F. Husain's oil on canvas *Untitled (Three Horses)* and is expected to garner \$150,000 at Sotheby's.

At Christie's, the *Untitled (landscape)* by S.H. Raza is estimated to fetch \$300,000. In the same auction, Tyeb Mehta's *Untitled (Woman and Bird)* (\$350,000) and *Untitled (Bull)* (\$3,000,000) have garnered interest, so has Akbar Padamsee's *Untitled*, which has an estimated price of \$300,000. Going under the hammer at Sotheby's is also Francis Newton Souza's *Untitled (landscape)*, which is estimated to bring in more than \$200,000.



Paintings of M.F. Husain (left) & Akbar Padamsee.