

SAVED

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Syed Haider Raza was born in 1922, in Babaria, Madhya Pradesh, India. He studied painting at the Nagpur School of Art and the Sir J.J. School of Art, Bombay; Founder member of Progressive Artists Group, he presented several exhibitions of his paintings in India, before leaving for France on a French government scholarship in 1950. He studied painting at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris from 1950 to 1953.

Raza was awarded the Prix de la Critique, in Paris, in 1956. He has presented numerous individual exhibitions of his paintings and has participated in group shows and salons, including the International Biennales at Venice, Sao Paulo and Menton and in the Triennale at New Delhi. In 1959 he married the French artist Janine Mongillat. The University of California invited him as a Visiting Lecturer at the Art Department of Berkeley, in 1962. He revisited India in 1959, 1968, 1976, 1978, 1984 and 1985, and since then, every year, to establish tangible relationship with Indian concepts, contemporary art and life.

Widely acknowledged as one of the masters of modern Indian art, Raza has received several honours and awards including Padma Shri 1981, Fellowship of Lalit Kala Akademi, Kalidas Samman and recently he has been honoured by the French Govt. by the award of Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters.

Trained in the painterly values and vision that Paris offered and continues to offer, and belonging at one period of time to what is known as the Paris School, Raza has moved decisively towards a more rooted vision, which has imbibed *le sens plastique* and reinvented it with many Indian ideas and concepts. It has blossomed into something uniquely Raza, an inclusive vision whose alchemy now supercedes the merely French or specifically Indian.

Raza, in his ultimate phase, has taken to a poetics of simplicity, intensity and passion. He is forever celebrating being in colour. There is an unmistakable humility rooted in confidence and competence. Painterly aesthetics and spiritual concerns meet in consonance. After being a part of the modernist project, Raza moves on to a self-discovered project of continuity and eternity, almost adjourning history as far as he is concerned.

Raza has been a master colourist, a visionary innovator, a generous promoter of younger artists of India. His artistic vision and his creative expression have been a unique contribution to the richness, plurality and dynamism of Indian art of our time.