



# What's real and what's not?

The authenticity of a few of the artworks to be auctioned by Bid and Hammer is being questioned. Artists say the clones of masterpieces are next to impossible



It would have been perfect for Bid and Hammer, which is all set to celebrate 100 years of its existence with a grand art auction, had the artworks being auctioned were original! Just days before the mega art auction, the authenticity of few of the works on sale is being questioned. An exact copy of eminent artist Nandalal Bose's *Woman Sitting Under a Tree*, which is in the list of items to be auctioned, is said to be with the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) as well. It is not the only controversial work.

Samindranath Majumdar, grandnephew of Hemendranath Mazumdar, has also raised his doubts. He has told to a leading daily that three of the works of Hemendranath in the auction appear to be clones. "I haven't seen the works physically but from the image they don't seem to be works made by him. I am strongly doubtful. I'm also not sure about an Abanindranath Tagore hand print with signature and many other works," he has said.

Talking about the work *After Bath Series*, he said, "Hemendranath had two versions of several works, one in



watercolour and another oil. The oil of this work sold at the Christie's in 2002." The availability of more than one copies of the same work has surprised one and all. Photographs or prints could be reproduced endlessly but how can a masterpiece, which was painted more than a decade ago, could be cloned?

It is not the first time that such a controversy has erupted before an auction. Artists and auction houses have been blamed time and again to put on sale or reproduce "clones of masters' originals". Sources close to Bid and Hammer told us that the auction house possess all the required paperwork and legal documents. "The auction house has a team of experts and has reputed people on board. They would never go wrong, specially when they are celebrating centenary year. These reports are being circulated by the miscreants who want to damage the family's reputation," said the source.

Despite repeated calls and text messages, director Ankush Dadha didn't respond.