

A fetching ₹11 crore for Tyeb Mehta work at Sotheby's India auction

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NEW DELHI: Modernist Tyeb Mehta was the toast of Sotheby's inaugural Indian and Islamic Week, with his work *Blue Painting* selling for ₹11 crore.

The Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art sale Tuesday, which kicked off the art week, raked in ₹4,697,975 (₹46.4 crore approximately), the highest total of the season for any sale in the category.

A key transitional work by Mehta, *Blue Painting* (1982) was bought by an anonymous bidder for ₹1,118,500 (₹11.04 crore), far higher than pre-auction estimate of ₹800,000.



■ **Mehta's Blue Painting**

The classic image of the female body, depicted with an economy of lines, radiates calm with its blues of the sea, sky, and night. Inspired by international artists as varied as Barnett Newman, Kazimir Malevich

and Henri Matisse, the work is a departure from Mehta's themes of suffering and angst.

A work by another member of India's ground-breaking Bombay Progressive Artists Group also smashed pre-sale estimates. Akbar Padamsee's iconic *Prophet I* (1952) sold for ₹530,500 (₹5.2 crore approx).

Church At Meulan by Sayed Haider Raza fetched the third best price of ₹206,500 (₹2 crore approx).

A series of public exhibitions and three dedicated auctions presenting the works of renowned artists and craftsmen from the subcontinent and Islamic world will feature during the art week.

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Delhi-based Mrinalini Mukherjee's large-scale suspended figure made out of hemp *Sri* (Deity) was bought by an Indian collector for ₹98,500 (₹97 lakh), a new record for the artist.

A day after modern works were auctioned, Art of Imperial India and Arts of the Islamic World went under the hammer on Wednesday.

Yamini Mehta, senior director, international head of Indian and South Asian art said, "The sale demonstrates not only the enduring appeal of works by India's pioneering Modernists – with such fantastic results for works by Mehta, Padamsee and Raza – but also the enthusiasm among collectors for works by artists who are new to the auction scene, with a new world record set for Mrinalini Mukherjee."