

## Tryst with the Masters

An exhibition brings together some rare works by Masters of Indian art

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A painting from Sunder Nagar show.

MF Husain's oil on canvas, titled *Relics of the Empire*, features a self-portrait in full regalia, surrounded by images of Mother Teresa, where the artist appears deeply engrossed in painting lord Ganesha, and a mustached Indian man and a British woman absorbed in a game of polo. It was the same painting that prompted the icon of contemporary Indian art to pen down the words "Am I the relic of the British Empire" in Kumar Gallery's catalogue in 2005. The work is a part of the gallery's group show, "Celebration". The show includes some rarely-seen and a few celebrated artworks by 19 other Masters.

A collateral event of India Art Fair 2016 and coinciding with the 60th year of Kumar Gallery, the group show displays 45 paintings by artists, such as FN Souza, SH Raza, Ram Kumar, Satish Gujral, Krishen Khanna, KS Kulkarni, A Ramachandran, Jamini Roy, KG Subramanyan and Rameshwar Broota. Sunit Kumar, Director of the gallery, says, "This is the sixth edition of 'Celebration', which was started in 2007. The idea was to celebrate modern Indian art in post-independent India around the time of Republic Day and it is launched on January 25."

A seated nude woman with a maid combing her hair qualifies as the earliest work in the show. It is a 1938 oil on canvas, titled *Toilet*, by the country's pioneer sculptor Ramkinkar Baij. The show also includes never-seen-before works by Husain — including a self portrait from 1969 — and *Chakki*, which portrays a sari-clad woman following the circular movements of her hand on the grinder. Staring boldly at the viewer is the protagonist of Jamini Roy's tempera on cotton, *Man with Hukkah*, from the 1940s and is soaked in a sea of folk art. Known for his inventive human forms, Souza is presented in a work, titled *Head*. His bold lines portrays the head in a distinctive way, almost reinventing it using circles, drenched in splashes of colour, similar to an artist's colour palette. The show is on at 56, Sunder Nagar, till February 5, 1 pm to 5 pm (Sundays closed)