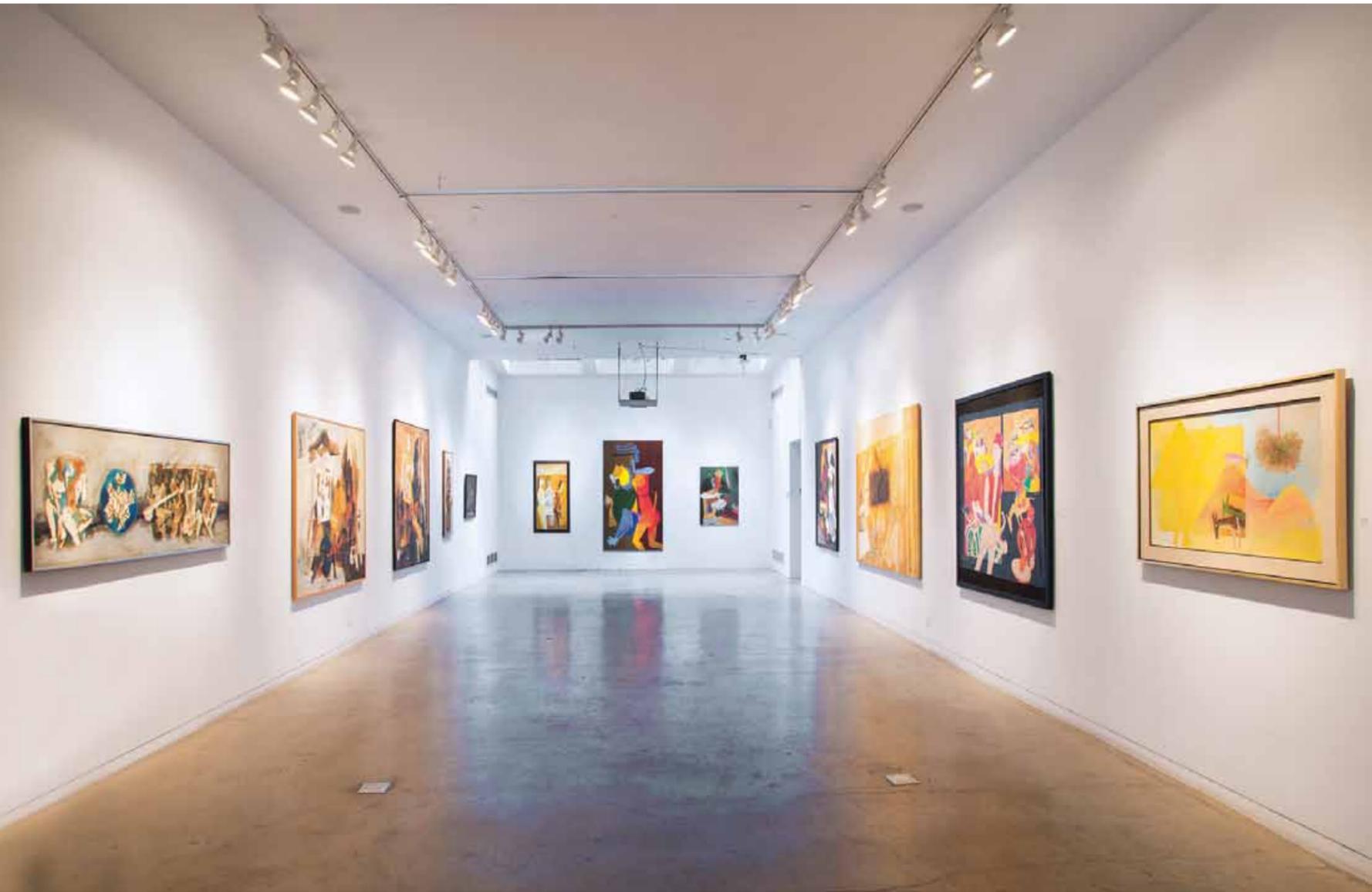


HUSAIN AT  
HUNDRED



HUSAIN AT HUNDRED  
**M.F. HUSAIN**

AICON GALLERY, NEW YORK  
SEPTEMBER 17 - OCTOBER 24, 2015



## Foreword

"...in '48 I came out with five paintings, which was the turning point in my life. I deliberately picked up two or three periods of Indian history. One was the classical period of the Guptas, the very sensuous form of the female body. Next was the Basohli<sup>1</sup> period, the strong colors of the Basohli miniatures. The last was the folk element. With these three combined, and using colors very boldly as I did with cinema hoardings, I went to town. That was the breaking point...to come out of the influence of the British academic painting and the Bengal Revivalist School."

—M. F. HUSAIN  
*P. Nandy, The Illustrated Weekly of India, December 4 - 10, 1983*

Aicon Gallery, New York proudly presents *Husain at Hundred*, an extensive retrospective of India's most iconic Modern painter, M. F. Husain, in honor of what would be the artist's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this year, featuring landmark masterworks on canvas from every decade of Husain's career. The exhibition traces the growth and advancement of the artist's unique figurative style, as well as his pioneering and ever-evolved merging of Western Modernist techniques with themes from India's epic historical and mythological texts, along with its ongoing struggle for an independent modern identity and stability in a post-colonial world.

Long considered a pioneer of Modern Indian art, Husain initially made a living as a billboard painter and children's furniture designer, painting at first in his spare time until joining the Bombay Progressive Artist's Group (PAG) in 1947. His background in billboard painting gave rise to two pivotal aspects of Husain's future practice: first, an understanding of how to communicate visually with the 'everyman' of India; and second, a strong appreciation for the high drama of Bollywood. The PAG grew to be the most influential group

of Modern artists in India, seeking new forms of expression to capture and convey India's complex past, along with its emerging post-colonial future. The fusion of Indian subject matter with Post-Impressionist colors, Cubist forms and Expressionist gestures forged a synthesis between early European modernist techniques and the ever-shifting cultural and historical identities of India.

Since his beginnings in the 1940s, Husain sought to radically redefine and redirect the course of Indian painting, paving the way for Modern Indian art's now recognized presence on the international stage. In the 1950s and 1960s, Husain began moving away from heavily gestural and thick impasto techniques, simplifying and stripping his subjects of overt detail through confident but visceral line-work. A master of radiant and saturated colors paired with earthen tonalities, Husain's use of color became a distinguishing element of his style, but one he would leave and revisit continually throughout his career. Gradually drawn to the expression of inner feelings and emotions through color and brushstroke, he moved away from representations of reality, into abstraction and expressionism, to become the prolific artist known as the "Picasso of India" (*Forbes Magazine*). His odyssey to find the most immediately communicative elements of painting drew him to the residual remains of Cubism, earning him an invitation in 1971 to exhibit alongside Pablo Picasso for the Sao Paulo Biennial. He was later awarded the Padma Bhusan in 1973. Thus, a rising star by the early 1970s, Husain reached a level international prestige unparalleled by any other Indian artist of his time. Husain himself became a legend in his lifetime—an imposingly tall, bearded, and perpetually barefoot man with a shock of white hair, often brandishing an oversized paintbrush—who

elevated himself from the ordinary man to a distinctive icon.

Entering into the 1980s and 1990s, Husain painted his country with the eye of a man who knew his subject uncomfortably well; he knew India's insecurities, blemishes and inner turmoil. Beyond the controversy that eventually led him into exile, he was above all an artist radically and permanently redefining Indian art, while remaining unafraid to confront the growing social and political issues of his country's transformations. Regardless of these conflicts, Husain won the Padma Vibhusan in 1991. Between 1990 and 2006, his paintings increasingly stirred resentment from Hindu nationalist groups, who campaigned against Husain's religious paintings of the 1970s. By 2007, charged with hundreds of suits citing indecent portrayals of Hindu deities, Husain's past obscenities warranted his arrest. Husain lived in self-imposed exile from 2006 until his death in 2011.

Husain, both the artist and the iconoclast, was known for his boldness: he never shied away from expressions of critiques of modern India, which helped lay the foundations for the pervading themes of Modern and Contemporary Indian art to this day. The artist consistently explored the blending of folk, religious, political and mythological subject matter to create unprecedentedly unique, vibrant and sometimes controversial works. His endless quest for his cultural roots and willingness to absorb diverse influences from both the Eastern and Western art historical canons made M. F. Husain arguably the most prolific and recognizable figure of Modern Indian art, and an artist long overdue for a serious reevaluation on an international scale.

—Aicon Gallery, New York, 2015

### NOTES

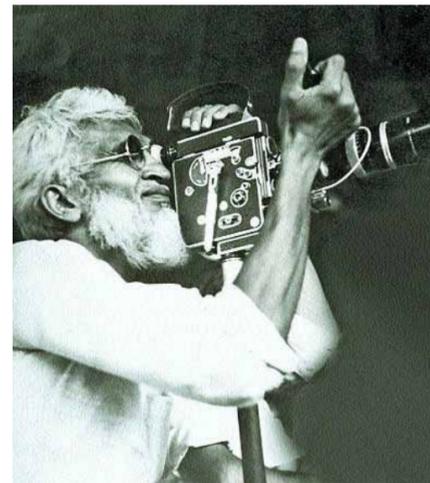
<sup>1</sup> Basohli: School of Pahari miniature painting that flourished in the Indian hill states during the late 17th and 18th centuries, known for its bold vitality of color and line.

# Through the Eyes of Husain

by Daniel Herwitz



Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.



M. F. Husain on the set of *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967

## PART I

Eugene Ionesco, the Rumanian playwright, said the point of life is to become immortal and then to die. Husain seems to have done a good job of it, for here we are celebrating him, thanks to the Aicon Gallery, at one hundred. He even made the home page of Google/Doodle on the day of his birthday. Apart from Sainthood (which wouldn't have interested him), that is as close to deification as a person can get in the contemporary world.

I want to write about Husain's 1967 film, *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, a wonderful short film conceived and directed by him. The film is seventeen and a half minutes long and won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in the category of experimental films. Husain made a number of films throughout his life, some far less successful than others, but this one is extraordinary, and I think, extraordinarily revealing of his project as a modern artist. Indeed it took film to allow him to reveal whom he was as a painter in a way that does not come across so clearly in his actual painting.

M. F. filmed it in the various locales throughout his beloved Rajasthan, above all the city of Jaisalmir and the rough desert surrounding. The film begins with Husain speaking in his apartment or studio in front of one of his paintings and then cuts to scenes of the people, places and landscape of Rajasthan, which follow each other in beautiful sequences, strung together through the feel, or eye of the artist. In some of those sequences his paintings seem to be part of the fabric of the city, there like the ancient stones, garlanding the city and making it festive. It is an impressionistic, but also highly staged film. His eye is a painter's eye, which is why everything is highly framed, the angles fresh and impressionistic, those of a painter living in cubist space and bringing that to the camera. But his transition from painter to filmmaker is aided by the fact that his paintings are already cinematic. When he ran away from Indore to escape being apprenticed to a tailor and study art, he lived for a

while by painting cinema hoardings in Bombay, those garish, oversized advertisements for Bollywood films you see raised above the streets like strident floodlights. These film adverts are meant to convey the gist of the film in a single, iconic sweep. They are highly cinematic—full of movement.

Husain's use of Picasso is the same: he takes the geometrical and still use of form one finds in a cubist painting and sets it in motion by dynamizing the spaces, splitting the figure down the middle, casting everything into a state of perpetual animation, generating dynamic tension between the picture planes, drawing his galloping horses in frenetic lines, accelerating his female figures into existential space. And so his painter's eye is already a cinematic eye. He is born to use the camera and did so all his life.

In many ways the underlying form of the film is held together by the music, composed by Elchuri Vijaya Raghava Rao, the great flautist of Andhra Pradesh. Husain said, "He rightly understood my feelings and composed the music, otherwise I would have been doomed."<sup>1</sup> It is only because Indian music is so improvisatory that Rao and his musicians could follow the flow of his film, rather like a pianist or organist playing for the silent films and constantly shifting the music as the action changes. The female lead appears in all her orientalist glory and the pianist plays Lakmé, the evil Sheik strides onto the screen and the pianist switches to pounding diminished seventh chords, and then, the innocent girl in white appears in a garden and the pianist plays a simple folk tune in the key of C. That is how the music for this film goes, and it therefore both provides continuity and declares improvisation.

The film is basically a silent film with the characters being the landscape, the streets, the buildings, and the stream of people. There is no plot. This is part of the reason Husain relies on ordinary icons of Indian life like the lantern and umbrella to appear and disappear throughout,

providing continuity and a sense of the episodic without inviting plot. If he had allowed the people in the film to appear more than once, suddenly everyone would have asked, who is this person, what is he or she doing there, and the demand for a story would have been paramount. Since he wants to avoid the usual narrative formula of plot, character, conflict and action that is, for example so central to Bollywood films (and telescoped into the cinema hoardings he'd made as a young person), he relies instead on objects.

Husain's is a modernist gaze. The film is mostly shot at midrange, the camera zooms in and out of life. There is no establishing shot (to show you the entire city of Jaisalmir or the desert), simply an immersion into place and constant change of place at close range, as if the filmmaker were there—but with enough distance to be watching. *Through the Eyes of a Painter* is a film of animated energy but also highly stylized distance, like a modernist traveler who is part of life, but also apart from it. This was Husain's stance. His concept was simultaneous immersion in life and detachment: watching life as if it were a site while also swimming in life as if it were a sacred river and he the pilgrim wading in the Ganges. He thought of his relationship to life in very traditional terms: in accord with the Hindu formula of action and non-attachment to the fruits of action. He thought of his relationship to life this way even though he managed to acquire a fleet of Bentleys, about eight houses and enough business class air tickets to live between airports. Wherever he stayed, he would wake at dawn and take an early morning walk throughout the streets, watching, studying, occasionally sketching, stopping for tea at the local *teawallah*, or if in New York or Paris, for a coffee and croissant, then returning to his place of residence to draw and paint.

This to-ing and fro-ing is the underlying dynamic of the film.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Through\\_the\\_Eyes\\_of\\_a\\_Painter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Through_the_Eyes_of_a_Painter)

## PART II

Now the opening shots of *Through the Eyes of a Painter* are, I think, very much worth dwelling upon, because they illustrate a drama central to what his film is about, a drama that was unresolved in his painting, requiring resolution in film. Put another way I think the film seeks to do what his painting wanted to do and never quite could. Allow me to elaborate.

As I said the film opens with the painter introducing the film in front of one of his paintings—either in his home or in a studio. It cuts to the rough and dry desert of Rajasthan and then to Jaisalmer where Husain has painted figures on boards that are planted in the ground, giving one the feeling that his painted figures are part of the population of the city. We almost expect them to walk right off the boards down the street.

Twice in the film we see a bullock covered in Husain's painting, as if decorated for a religious ceremony. Later in the film we see a series of cuts between shots of temples and buildings—the artistic legacy of traditional Indian arts—and close ups of the shadow of a painter's hand, painting on canvas. That hand is juxtaposed to the hands of ordinary workers, suggesting the work of painting is also commonplace. Towards the end of the film, Husain's paintings lay crumpled on the desert. The point of these images is to place the work of the painter within ordinary life and tradition.

In this film Husain's paintings live a double life. His work is portrayed as a thing apart from ordinary life but also part of the on-site life of villages, temple architecture and sculpture, of colors splashed on the sides of roads illustrating gods of the byways, of figurines of Ganesh on the mantles of homes, of saffron robes and garlanded elephants, his work decorates the city like ritual painting for a festival, and is a found object in the sands.

This desire to break out of the encomium of the art world and place his art in the texture of ordinary life was also a central and revolutionary motive of the European avant-gardes, with their

Dadaist demonstrations in cities, their museums without walls, their constructivist desires to turn art into a set of instruments for the creation of the utopian, revolutionary future. The avant-gardes wished to construct a new and utopian world by recasting the face of their cities with new forms of architecture, city planning, typeface, poster art, clothing, and furniture.

This avant-garde aspiration was almost always unsuccessful: the radical experimentalism of the avant-gardes consigned them to a marginal position a good bit of the time. And when the avant-gardes did enter the fabric of the world it was usually through the builder of corporate malls or faceless apartment blocks, the fashion designer who turned Mondrian into women's dresses or designer rugs, the advertising agent who adopted Russian film montage for his Chevy commercials.

Husain also wanted to return his art to the streets while simultaneously allowing it a life in the more rarified and detached art world of the museum, gallery, collector, and critic. His desire was also utopian—but with a significant difference from the European avant-gardes.

He wanted his art to play both a traditional and a modern role, to be of the present and of the past, for elite collectors and critics but also for ordinary villagers.

This desire to bespeak the new from the perspective of its modernity while rooting modernity in the past and its ongoing traditions is a central project of modern art at the moment of postcolonial nation building and decolonization. When the Progressive Artists formed into a group in 1947 with the shared project of creating a modern art capable of giving voice and vision to the Indian nation at the moment of its tumultuous birth, they sought to learn from European modernism but also to return to the past, to artistic traditions repressed or what Frantz Fanon called "devalued" under colonial rule, traditions castigated by the colonizer as incapable of playing a role in modernity. The



Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.



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Progressive Artists Group, Syed H. Raza, Francis Newton Souza, K. H. Ara, Sadanand Bakre, and H. A. Gade, later Chavda, K. K. Hebbar, Ram Kumar and a number of others, reached out to European modernism to globalize the vision of India and give it modern representation. But equally important was return to the past, and not only the past, but to the ongoing forms of life they found in villages, streets, to the rhythm of ordinary people.

The Progressive Artists' project was concordant with what was happening globally in a postcolonial world occupied with nationalism and decolonization. Diego Rivera lived a decade in Paris as a cubist/surrealist painter before returning to his native land in 1921, when the Mexican nation was some ten years old. He became a public muralist in the name of that nation, fusing what he'd learned and practiced in Paris with pre-Columbian forms in an art plastered across the public spaces of Mexico. For the postcolonial artist at a moment of nationalism, the recovery of traditions and art forms from the past is an act of rehabilitation, an assertion of difference from the culture of the colonizer, a way of re-scripting the past to give the new and emergent nation a myth of longevity and unity, as if the nation arose from an endless river of time. The postcolonial nation state at the moment of its formation seeks *authentication* in its past, suitably mythologized as the heritage of the nation, as if the past were now understood to set the future of the nation in a long arc of tradition. In accord with the heritage formula found in the European nations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the newly minted postcolonial nation turns its past into an *origin* capable of activating its future. If only we can re-discover our origins - the thought is - we can know where we are going. The past becomes understood a source of citizenship, a way of creating the fact, or an illusion of shared belonging to the new and fragile nation through a common origin and cultural currency.

Needless to say there were fierce, indeed violent political contestations around whose version of the past should serve as the origin and script for the Indian nation, and therefore what the character of that nation should be and who should be central to its citizenry. In India such contestation remains unresolved today, and finally forced Husain into exile in Doha and London at the end of his life.

That is happily not part of the story told in this experimental film. The story told is rather, I think, about Husain's simultaneous desire to have his work exist in the modern art world and in traditional village life. He wished to incarnate his painting as part of the present and also traditional life. Husain often used to say that it was important to him that when he brought his huge, monumental paintings of gods and goddesses, his epic paintings of the Ramayana and Mahabharata to the villages and "exhibited" them in fields and by houses, the villagers got the message. "Here is Ganesh", they exclaimed, "And here is Saraswati, here the story of Arjuna and the chariot, here Hanuman and the mountain". For Husain this ratification of meaning by the villagers is part of what *authenticated* his art. Gave it the stamp of Indianness.

Husain's adventures with these villagers were theatrical and episodic. His art never really played a central role in their lives in spite of his deep desire that it do exactly that. It is a general fact about modern art that it exists in an art world so complex, its meaning is so entangled with that world, that it cannot really break out to live both there, and also on the streets with ordinary villagers and city dwellers. There is a significant role for *public art* in modern life but not as a found object in the desert, or a bullock garlanded with modernist drawing, or a painting that is part of the texture of ancient walls used and reused every day by local peoples. This wish for a double life in which villager and cognoscenti both share the meaning and use

of the object is a fantasy. And so Husain invents a film in which this double life for his *paintings* can take place. The film is a modernist theatre that stages this double life for his paintings. In *Through the Eyes of a Painter* his paintings exist in the studio and on the walls of the town. They exist in direct comparison to ancient temples, as part of ordinary human realities. The film's rhetoric is: my paintings live in both places.

And I think this is why the film seems at once so impressionistic and so artificially framed. It is totally unusual, a kind of magnificent shock.

The film is also a study in the world of a painter—how he or she learns from looking at life. At a certain point in the film the camera lingers on the texture of walls, later the undulations of desert sand. This lingering over the texture of things could have been taken directly from the great Italian painter Leonardo, who instructed painters to study walls, pour over their irregularities, focus on their patina of time, limn the things you can "see in" walls. Husain is literally reinventing Leonardo's dictum. In this film he compares the painter's eye for the world, with the painter's eye for painting.

The transaction between the painter's eye for the world and for painting is one of the great transactions of beauty. The philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote that nature is beautiful when seen under the aspect of art, and art is beautiful when seen under the aspect of nature. Husain's film celebrates that relationship.

This is what it means to see through the eyes of a painter. In the film one sees a slice of India and of its art on site. There is ragged, stylized beauty in that slice of India you see in the film, but also a sanitizing process that leaves the suffering out. Ironically, the suffering so central to India can be found instead in his great paintings. And later, in his own life.

HUSAIN AT HUNDRED  
WORKS



*Untitled (Mother Theresa with Krishna and Bull)*, 1996, Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 60 in.



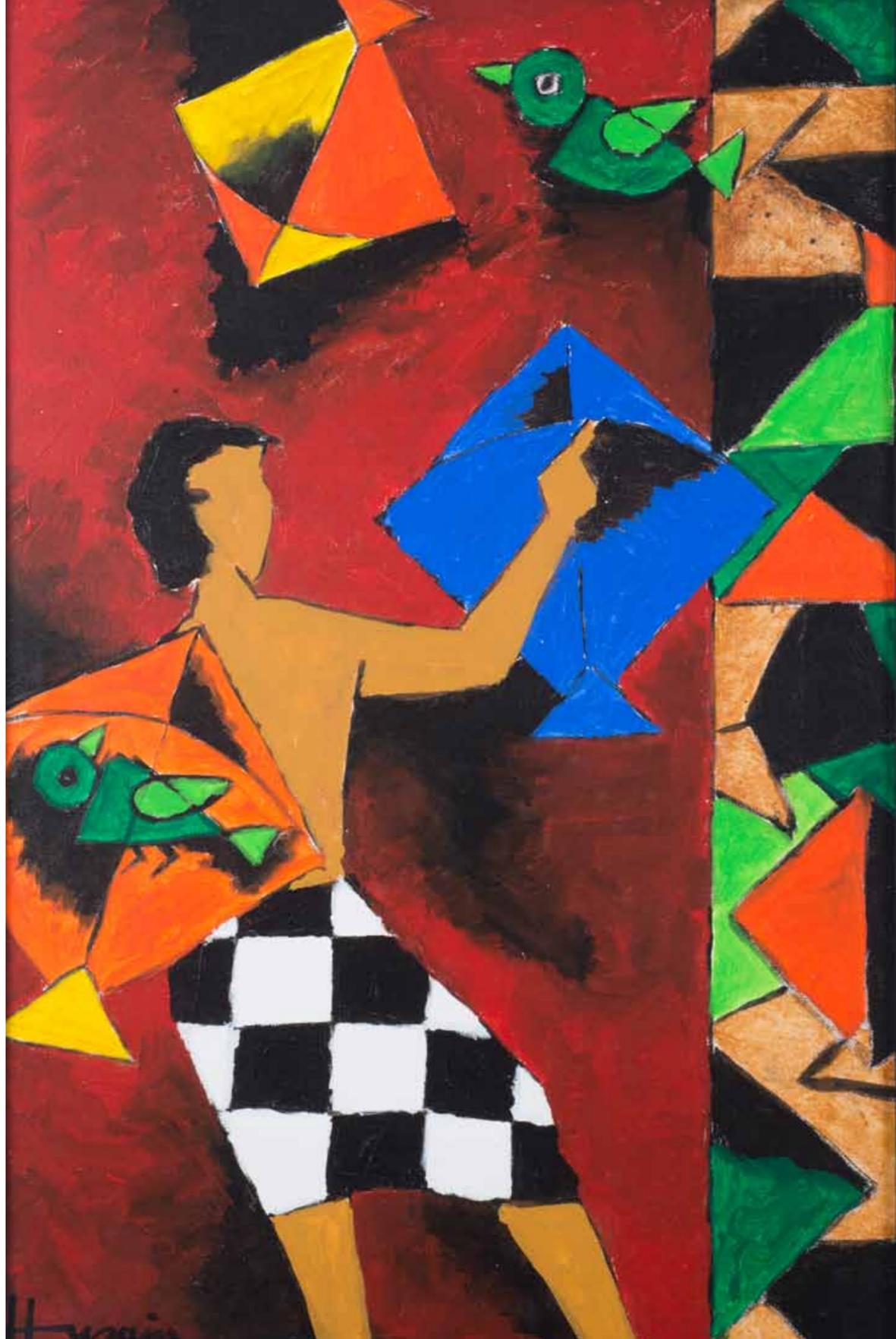


*Women from Yemen*, 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 58.5 x 46.5 in.



Opposite Page: *Durga*, 1976, Acrylic on canvas, 88 x 55.5 in.  
Page 17: *Kite Festival*, 2004, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.  
Page 18: *Bharat*, 1999, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.





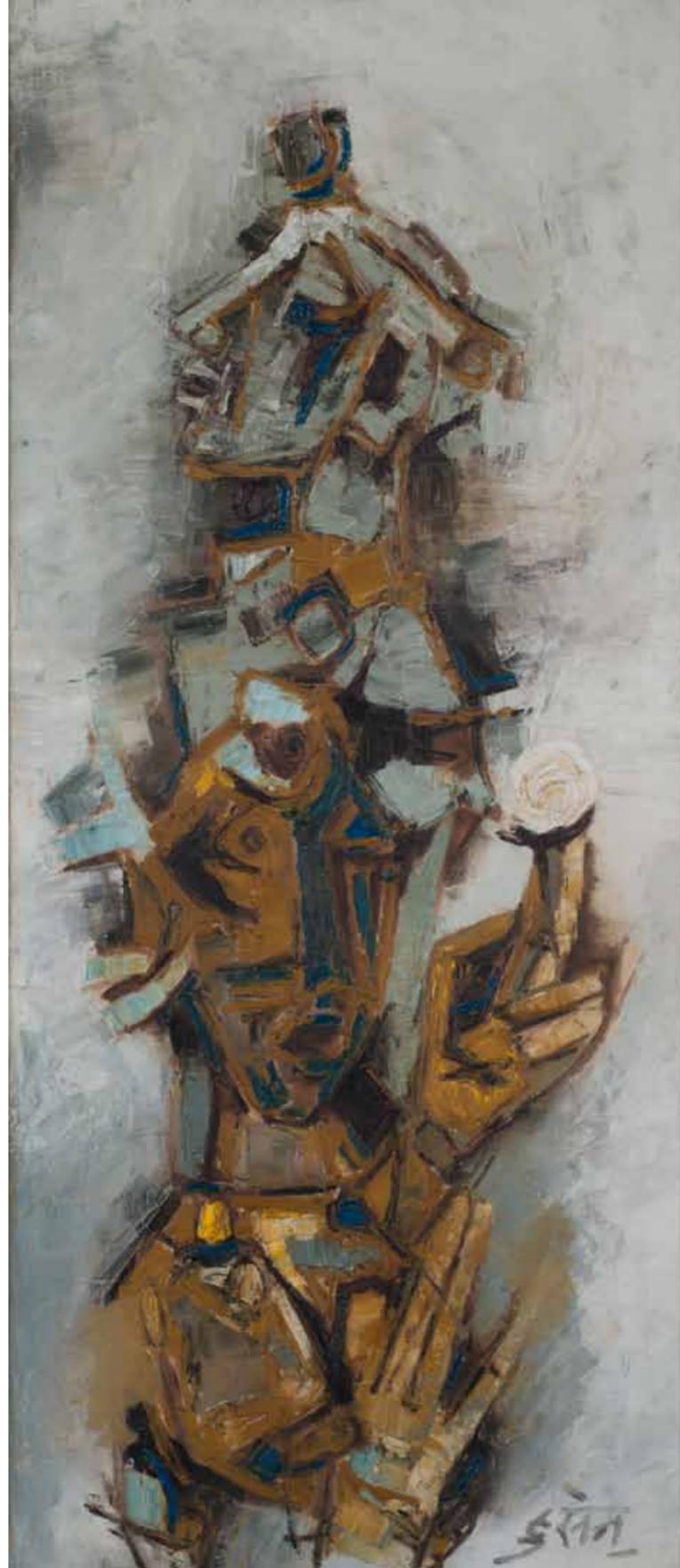




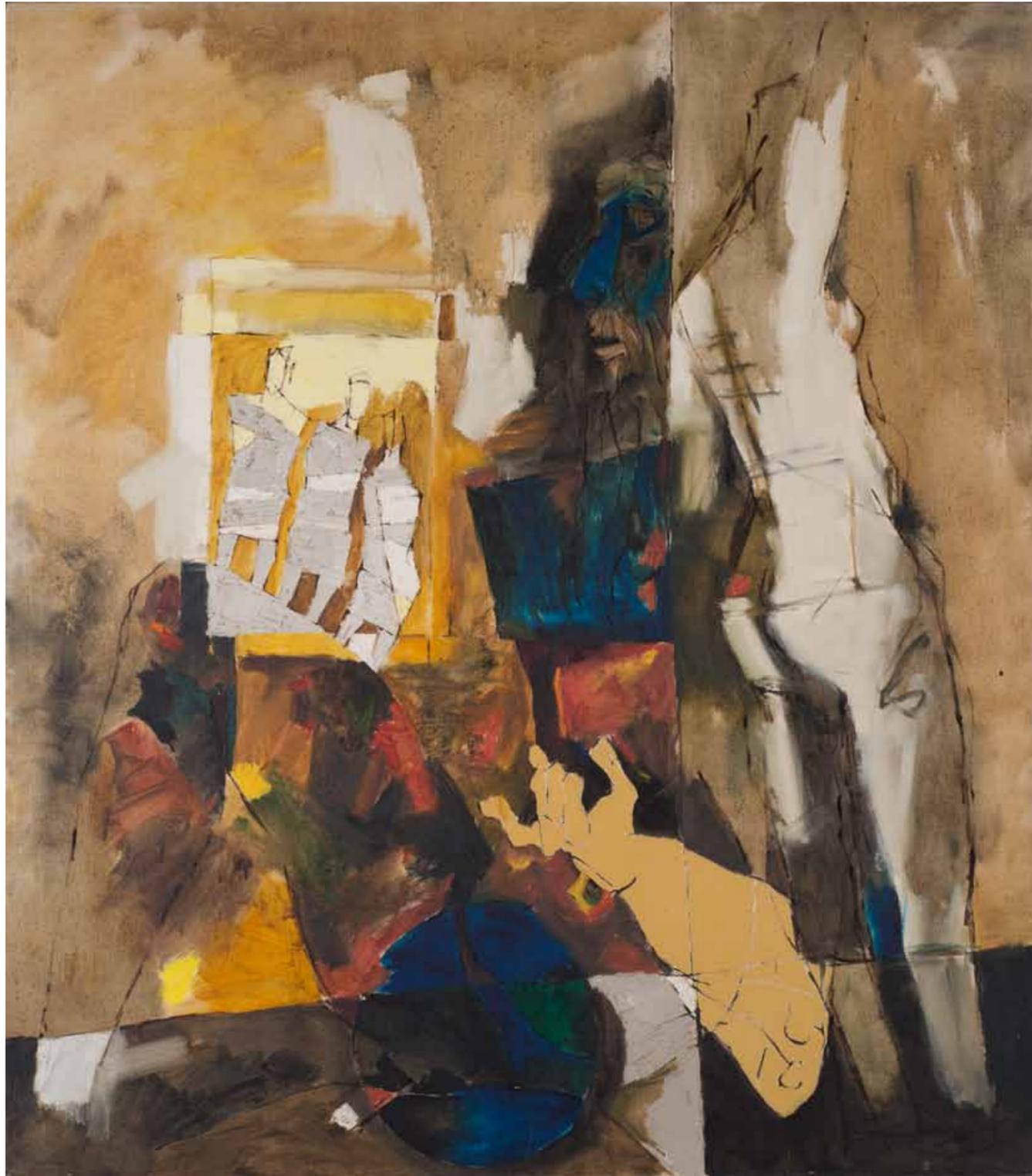
*Untitled (Three Heads - Green)*, 1957, Oil on canvas, 20 x 33 in.







Opposite Page: *Masks*, 1964, Oil on canvas, 48 x 20 in.  
 This Page: *Musicians*, 1965, Oil on canvas, 27 x 72 in.

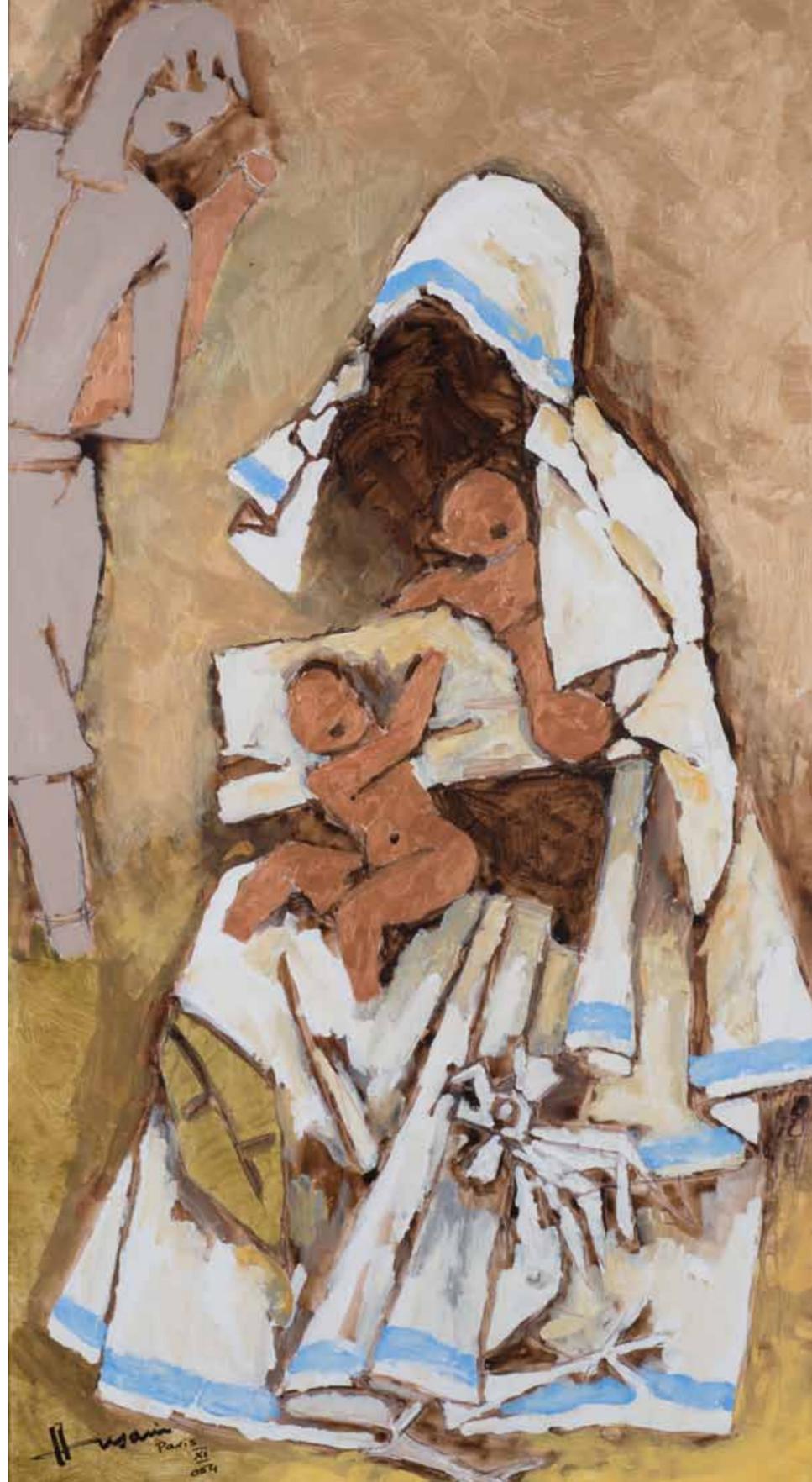




*Three Donkeys*, 1971. Oil on canvas, 26.5 x 44 in.



Opposite Page: *Women in Yellow*, 1970, Oil on canvas, 53 x 29 in.  
This Page: *Untitled (Tribal / Drought)*, 1973, Acrylic on canvas, 67.5 x 89.5 in.



## WORKS

Cover: *Untitled (The Three Muses, Maya Series)*, 1965, oil on canvas, 68 x 60 in.

Page 1: *Husain at Hundred* (Installation View), 2015, Aicon Gallery, New York

Page 3 (Top): Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.

Page 3 (Bottom): M. F. Husain on the set of *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967

Page 5 (Top): Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.

Page 5 (Second from Top): Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.

Page 5 (Second from Bottom): Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.

Page 5 (Bottom): Still from *Through the Eyes of a Painter*, 1967, 17:50 min.

Page 8: *Untitled (Mother Theresa with Krishna and Bull)*, 1996, Acrylic on canvas, 51 x 60 in.

Pgs. 9–10: *Visages*, 1972, Oil on canvas, 19 x 56 in.

Page 12: *Women from Yemen*, 2006, Acrylic on canvas, 58.5 x 46.5 in.

Page 13: *Autobiography Pechwel*, Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in.

Page 14: *Thief of Baghdad*, 2003, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Page 16: *Durga*, 1976, Acrylic on canvas, 88 x 55.5 in.

Page 17: *Kite Festival*, 2004, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Page 18: *Bharat*, 1999, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Page 20: *Untitled (Tribal Woman)*, 1968, Oil on canvas, 47.5 x 36 in.

Pgs. 21–22: *Untitled (Three Heads – Green)*, 1957, Oil on canvas, 20 x 33 in.

Page 23: *Untitled (Pieta with Mother Theresa)*, 1994, Acrylic on canvas, 71.5 x 92 in.

Page 24: *Red Horse*, 2000, Acrylic on canvas, 18 x 24 in.

Page 25: *Untitled (Heads – Blue)*, 1970, Oil on canvas, 19 x 34 in.

Page 26: *Untitled (Musicians)*, 1959, Oil on canvas, 24 x 27 in.

Page 27: *Masks*, 1964, Oil on canvas, 48 x 20 in.

Page 28: *Musicians*, 1965, Oil on canvas, 27 x 72 in.

Page 29: *Untitled (The Three Muses, Maya Series)*, 1965, Oil on canvas, 68 x 60 in.

Page 30: *Three Unidentified Men on Hilltop*, 1960s, Oil on canvas, 60 x 67 in.

Pgs. 31–32: *Three Donkeys*, 1971, Oil on canvas, 26.5 x 44 in.

Page 33: *Women in Yellow*, 1970, Oil on canvas, 53 x 29 in.

Page 34: *Untitled (Tribal / Drought)*, 1973, Acrylic on canvas, 67.5 x 89.5 in.

Page 35: *Untitled (Mother Theresa)*, 2004, Acrylic on canvas, 67.5 x 36 in.

# ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

## MAQBOOL FIDA HUSAIN (1915 – 2011)

### SELECT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015	<i>Husain at Hundred</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2015	<i>M.F. Husain: Paintings and Drawings from a Private Collection</i> , Grosvenor Gallery, London
2013	<i>Maqbool</i> , Sovereign fze, Dubai
2012	<i>Between 2 Lines</i> , organized by Doha Bank and Blue Mosaic, Doha Gallery Basilio, Bangladesh
2011 – 2012	Presented by Institute of Contemporary Indian Art (ICIA), At The Arts Trust, Mumbai
2011	<i>A Tribute to MF Husain</i> , Royal Academy of Arts, London
	<i>Celebrating Husain</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
2010	<i>M.F. Husain 2010 – The World is my Canvas</i> , organized by Museum of Islamic Art (MIA), Qatar Foundation
	<i>M.F. Husain: Early Masterpieces 1950s–70s</i> , sponsored by the Year of India, the Cogut Center for the Humanities, and the David Winton Bell Gallery at David Winton Bell Gallery, Providence
2006 – 2007	<i>Epic India: Paintings by M.F. Husain</i> , Herwitz Collection of Contemporary Indian Art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
2006	<i>Early Masterpieces 1950–70’s</i> , Asia House Gallery, London
2004	<i>And Not Just 88: Husain in Oils</i> , National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai
	<i>’Husain: Graphic 2004</i> , Pictures and Frames, Mumbai
2003	<i>’88 Husains in Oils 2003</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Thief of Baghdad</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>’88 Husains in Oils 2003</i> , Gallerie 88, Kolkata
2002	<i>Madhuri as Saratchandra’s Chandramukhi: The Eternal Enchantress of Devdas</i> , Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2000	<i>Paintings, Murals and Drawings, Husain Ki Sarai Collection</i> , New Delhi
1998	<i>Husain Now</i> , Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1996	<i>From Sinhasan to Peacock Throne to the Chair of the 21st Century: M. F Husain and Jehangir Nagree Exhibition of Furniture</i> , Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai
1995	<i>A Visual Script of ’Untitled Film on Madhuri</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1994	<i>Tapestry Show</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Oils on Canvas</i> , 31st Anniversary Exhibition, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1993	<i>Let History Cut Across Me Without Me</i> , organized by Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi at National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
1992	<i>Six Days of Live Painting</i> , Tata Centre, Kolkata
1991	<i>Knight Watch</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Shwetambari</i> , Installation at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>Front Page</i> , Centre for Contemporary art (CCA), New Delhi
1989	<i>Calcutta 300</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1988	<i>Husain</i> , Hunter Museum of Art, Tennessee, USA
1983	<i>Story of a Brush</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1981	<i>Les Otages – Mere Theresa</i> , Galerie Jourdan, Montreal, Canada
1980	<i>Mother and Child: A Tribute to Mother Teresa</i> , Calcutta Art Gallery, Kolkata
1979	<i>Husain in Malaysia</i> , The Hilton, Kuala Lumpur
1978	<i>Sufi Paintings</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>Retrospective</i> , Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1974	Commonwealth Art Centre, London, UK
	Moscow Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow
	<i>Paintings by Husain</i> , Worcester Art Museum, USA
1973	<i>Retrospective</i> , Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
	Espace Cardin, Paris
1972	<i>Paintings 1971</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1969	<i>21 Years of Painting</i> , Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai

1967	New York, Poland and Czechoslovakia
1965	<i>Drawings: The Arab Image</i> , Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, Kolkata and New Delhi; Gallery Waisty, Baghdad and Kabul
1964	Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1961	Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1960 – 1961	Gallery Palse, Rome
	Kunst Kabinet, curated by Hanna Bekker vom Rath, Frankfurt, Germany
	Tokyo
1956	Gallery Palette, Zurich
	Gallery Mannes, Prague
1950	Bombay Art Society, Mumbai

### SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015	<i>Approaching Figuration: Pt. 1</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2015	<i>Abby Grey and Indian Modernism: Selections from the NYU Art Collection</i> , Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York
2014	<i>Shifting the Paradigm</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Remaking the Modern II</i> , Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>Immutable Gaze Pt. I</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Post-Picasso: Contemporary Reactions</i> , Museum Picasso of Barcelona, Barcelona
2013	<i>Pioneers of Modernism</i> , Sovereign FZE, Dubai
	<i>Remaking the Modern</i> , Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>Ram Kumar and the Bombay Progressives: The Form and the Figure Pt. II</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Past Parallels: The Art of Modern &amp; Pre-Modern India</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Ideas of the Sublime</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>The Discerning Eye: Modern Masters</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>The Naked and the Nude: The Body in Indian Modern Art</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
2012	<i>Iconic Processions</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Through the Ages: South Asian Sculpture and Painting from Antiquity to Modernism (Part 2)</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Gallery Collection</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Indian Highway VI</i> , organized in collaboration with the Serpentine Gallery, London, and the Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway at The Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) Beijing
	<i>Crossings: Time Unfolded, Part 2</i> , Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi
2011 – 2012	<i>The Body Unbound</i> , Rubin Museum of Art, New York
	<i>Indian Highway</i> , Museum of XXI Century Arts, Rome
2011	<i>Continuum</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Roots in the Air, Branches Below: Modern &amp; Contemporary Art from India</i> , San Jose Museum of Art, CA
	<i>Time Unfolded</i> , Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi
	<i>Modern Masters</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>The Path of the Lotus: Indian Art</i> , Grosvenor Gallery, London
	<i>Manifestations VI</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>States of Departure: Progressives to Present Day</i> , Aicon Gallery, London
2010 – 2011	<i>Figure/Landscape: Part One</i> , Aicon Gallery, London, New York
	<i>The Modernists</i> , RL Fine Arts, New York
	<i>The Progressives &amp; Associates</i> , Grosvenor Gallery, London
	<i>From Miniature to Modern: Traditions in Transition</i> , Rob Dean Art, London in association with Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>Symbols and Metaphors</i> , Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
	<i>Masters of Maharashtra</i> , collection from Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi at Piramal Gallery, National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai
2010	<i>Evolve: 10th Anniversary Show</i> , Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>Manifestations IV</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi

2009 – 2010	<i>Master Class</i> , The Arts Trust, Mumbai
2009	<i>Bharat Ratna: Jewels of Modern Indian Art</i> , Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
	<i>In Search of the Vernacular</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
	<i>Long Gone &amp; Living Now</i> , Galerie Mirchandani + Steinreucke, Mumbai
	<i>Kalpna: Figurative Art in India</i> , presented by The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Aicon Gallery, London
	<i>Progressive to Altermodern: 62 Years of Indian Modern Art</i> , Grosvenor Gallery, London
2008 – 2009	<i>Modern India</i> , presented by Institut Valencià d’Art Modern (IVAM) and Casa Asia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture at Valencia, Spain
	<i>Indian Highway</i> , presented in Collaboration with Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo at Serpentine Gallery, London; Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark
2008	<i>Winter Moderns</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York and London
	<i>Frame Figure Field: 20th Century Modern and Contemporary Indian Art</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Modern and Contemporary Indian Art</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Multiple Modernities: India, 1905–2005</i> , Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia
	<i>Freedom 2008 – Sixty Years of Indian Independence</i> , Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
	<i>Tales, Reflection and Constructs</i> , Galerie 88, Kolkata
	<i>Moderns</i> , Royal Cultural Centre at Amman, Jordan; organized by Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, with Embassy of India, Amman, Jordan
2007 – 2008	<i>From Everyday To The Imagined: Modern Indian Art</i> , Museum of Art, Seoul National University, Seoul
2007	<i>Epic India: Paintings by M.F. Husain</i> , Peabody Essex Museum, Massachusetts, USA
	<i>From the Vault</i> , Aicon Gallery, London and New York
	<i>Gateway Bombay</i> , Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
2006	<i>Pictorial Glimpses</i> , National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai
	<i>Summer Show</i> , Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
	<i>M.F. Husain: Early Masterpieces 1950s–70s</i> , Asia House, London
	<i>The Moderns Revisited</i> , Grosvenor Vadehra, London
	<i>Shadow Lines</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
	<i>Making of Divinity</i> , Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai
2005	<i>Manifestations III</i> , curated by Delhi Art Gallery at Nehru Center, Mumbai, and Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.
	<i>Drishti/Vision: Indian Contemporary Artists</i> , Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
	<i>Evoking Rasa in Luminous Visions: Indian Art</i> , Worcester Art Museum, Worcester
	<i>Ashta Nayak: Eight Pioneers of Indian Art</i> , Aicon Gallery, New York
2004	<i>20 / 20 – A Vision: Looking Back / Looking Forward</i> , Apparao Galleries, Chennai
	<i>Jiva / Life</i> , Bodhi Art, Singapore
	<i>Manifestations II</i> , Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai and Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi.
	<i>Concept and Form</i> , Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2003	<i>Manifestations I</i> , Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi.
2002	<i>Colors of India</i> , organized by Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata at Mumbai
2001	<i>Anniversary Return to Eden</i> , Art Musings, Mumbai
	<i>Modern Indian Art</i> , Metropolitan Pavilion, New York
2000	<i>Distillations</i> , Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
	<i>Timeless Vision: Contemporary Art from the Herwitz Collection</i> , Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee, WI
	<i>New Works</i> , The Fine Art Resource, Berlin

1998	<i>Ruminations</i> , Apollo Apparao Galleries, Mumbai
	<i>The Window</i> , Mumbai
1997	<i>The Indian Beast</i> , Apparao Galleries, Chennai
	<i>The Keehn Collection: Important Paintings of Post Independence India</i> , Bose Pacia, New York
	<i>Colors of Independence</i> , National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
1995	<i>Art India Now: Important Contemporary Artists</i> , Bose Pacia, New York
1994	Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1993	<i>Reflection and Images</i> , Mumbai
	<i>Wounds</i> , Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1991	<i>National Exposition of Contemporary Art</i> , National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
	<i>Husain, Husain and Husain</i> , Egypt
	<i>Nine Indian Contemporaries</i> , Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), New Delhi
1988	<i>Festival of India</i> , Takoka Municipal Museum of Art & Meugro Museum of Art, Tokyo
1987	<i>Festival of India</i> , Russia
	<i>Coups de Couer</i> , Halle de l’Ile, Geneva
1986	<i>Indian Art Tomorrow</i> , The Phillips Collections, Washington D.C
	<i>Contemporary Indian Art</i> , Grey Art Gallery, New York
1985 – 1986	<i>Festival of India</i> , Exhibition of Contemporary Indian Art, New York University, NY
	<i>Indian Art Today: 4 Artists</i> , Washington D.C, USA
1985	<i>100 Jahre Indische Malerei</i> , Altes Museum, Berlin
	<i>Six Indian Painters</i> , Tate Gallery, London
1982	<i>Indische Kunst Heute</i> , Kunsthalle Darmstadt
	<i>Contemporary Indian Art</i> , Festival of India, Royal Academy of Arts, London
	<i>India: Myth and Reality</i> , Aspects of Modern Indian Art, Oxford, UK
	<i>Modern Indian Paintings</i> , Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC.
	Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
	<i>A Painter Makes a Film</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1972	São Paulo Biennale, special invitee with Pablo Picasso, Brazil
1971	
1967	<i>25 Years of Paintings seen in Bombay</i> , Mumbai
1966	Commonwealth Art Exhibition, London
	<i>Art Now in India</i> , London and Brussels
	<i>Indian Paintings Now</i> , London
1964	Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1961	Tokyo Biennale, Japan
1960	São Paulo Biennale, Brazil
1959	Tokyo Biennale, Japan
1958	<i>Eight Painters</i> , International Culture Centre, New Delhi
1955	<i>National Exhibition</i> , Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
	Venice Biennale, Italy
1953	Venice Biennale, Italy
1948 – 1956	Group Exhibitions with Progressive Art Group

### AWARDS AND HONORS

2007	Raja Ravi Varma Award, Government of Kerala
2004	Lalit Kala Ratna, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1991	Padma Vibhushan, Government of India
1973	Padma Bhushan, Government of India
1966	Padma Shree, Government of India
1959	International Biennale Award, Tokyo
1955	Padma Shree, Government of India
	First Prize at National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1947	Bombay Art Society, Mumbai

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**M. F. Husain** *Husain at Hundred*

Exhibition dates: September 17 – October 24, 2015

Thank you: Daniel Herwitz, Sumathi Ramaswamy, Harish Patel, Manish & Ritu Mittal, Mahinder Tak, Tinky Weisblat, David & Leigh Weisblatt, Projjal Dutta, Prajit Dutta and the team at Aicon Gallery.

Introduction by Daniel Herwitz

Screening of *Through the Eyes of a Painter* courtesy of the Husain Estate

Graphic Design: Christine Navin

Artwork Photography: Bill Orcutt

Printer: Puritan Capital

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Published by Aicon Gallery, New York, 2015.

# ABOUT AICON

Aicon Gallery's curatorial vision begins in South Asia but reaches outwards internationally from there. The New York gallery provides a vital platform for Modern and Contemporary South Asian artists to exhibit in the United States. Alongside in-depth, focused solo shows, the gallery presents a program of curated group exhibitions that are international in their scope and ambition. Following recent debates in institutional curating, the program deliberately links together art produced very recently and art made through the latter half of the 20th century. Through this we hope to produce unexpected congruencies, shed light on other modernities, make complex the designation 'contemporary' and signal a shift away from simple survey exhibitions. In short, we aim to bring new and challenging art from South Asia to the widest possible international audience.

This exhibition is the first of a series of exhibitions re-examining figuration in Modern and Contemporary South Asian art to be held at Aicon Gallery, New York over the next two years. With major museums having responded strongly over the past two years to Modernist abstraction from the subcontinent, with exhibitions of Zarina Hashmi and V. S. Gaitonde at the Guggenheim, New York, and a forthcoming exhibition of Nasreen Mohamedi at the Metropolitan Museum of New York, we see it as a vital next step to turn to the rich heritage of figuration throughout the history of South Asian art and specifically its influence and manifestations amongst first and second generation modernists. Forthcoming exhibitions in this series will include Rekha Rodwittiya, Anjolie Ela Menon, and Surendran Nair among others.



Aicon Gallery · 35 Great Jones Street · New York, NY 10012 · 212.725.6092 · [newyork@aicongallery.com](mailto:newyork@aicongallery.com)