'lhe art ot

Investing in Indian art can be a minefield, yet a single, elusive stroke can earn you millions. GN Focus looks at who's hot in art at the moment

By Megha Abraham > Feature Writer

xperts value the Indian art market at more than Rs20 billion (Dh1.4 billion). A sizeable chunk is commanded by The Big Four — M.F. Husain, F.N. Souza, Tyeb Mehta and S.H. Raza — considered the masters of modern Indian art. But a new wave of artists from the subcontinent has drawn the attention of art conoisseurs worldwide, helping the genre to thrive like never before. The past decade in fact has seen Indian art growing exponentially, allowing it to emerge as a more serious investment option than before. And while it might just garner 0.04 per cent of the international market, the good news for buyers is that the price tag for many a canvas executed by this new breed of artists may not seem as formidable as the sheer talent on display. So even as we doff our caps to the masters, whose works are now only affordable to the private-jet set, GN Focus highlights a selection of artists who are getting the cognoscenti all excited.

India



BATTLE OF GANGA AND JAMUNA: MAHABHARATA 12

Magbool Fida Husain (1915-2011)

Widely considered the Picasso of India, Husain was associated with Indian modernism in the 1940s. One of the most celebrated and internationally recognised Indian artists of the 20th century, he also received recognition as a printmaker, photographer and film-maker. Never maintaining a studio, Husain spread his canvases out on the floor of whatever hotel room he happened to be staying in, paying for damages on checking out. A Qatari national at the time of his death, the value of the eccentric and brilliant painter's works is said to have tripled since his demise.

Most Expensive Work: Battle of Ganga and Jamuna: Mahabharata 12 \$1.6 million (Dh5.8 million)

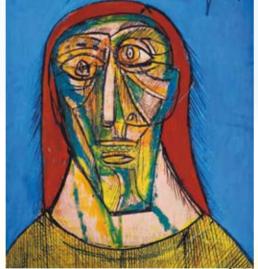


SAURASHTRA

Syed Haider Raza (1922-)

Raza's decision to move back to India from Paris in 2010 was a monumental one. On his return he mounted an exhi-

Most Expensive Work: Saurashtra \$3.49 million



HEAD

Francis Newton Souza (1924-2002)

Souza was the first post-independence artist to achieve recognition in the West. Barbara, one of his three wives bition of his latest works, *Punaraagman* (Return), in Delhi, famously said he painted "sex, violence, and the mind." A providing a window for those who want to possess one of * triumph of an artist, Souza's entire body of work sold well the top signatures. These new paintings are important as • - from the placid village scenes and landscapes to the older Raza paintings are not easily available in the market. • rage, love, passion and frustration he felt right to his final In 2010 a bid by Kiran Nadar, India's biggest art collector, years. A final lot of 152 of his works was auctioned in 2010 broke all records when she acquired Raza's seminal 1983 • by his eldest daughter who, to pacify a debt-ridden squabwork, Saurashtra, paying the highest-ever price for a piece bling family, was able to sell at twice the highest estimates or more, realising a final total of \$7.9 million.

Most Expensive Work: Birth \$2.5 million

investment

INDIAN ARTISTS MAKING WAVES



STALLIONS

Mazarine Memon

An award-winning artist and aspiring author, Memon is skilled in a fusion of media, and has a love for acrylics. With several international solo and group ies in colour' where one needs to seek clues before the subject completely reveals itself.

Price range: Between Dh7,000 and Dh40,000 www.mazarinememon.com



Satish Gupta

A versatile artist who has a deep engagement with mystifive elements located at the Jindal Centre, New Delhi.

Price range: Between Dh15,000 and Dh200,000 www.satishgupta.in



Bharati Kher

One of India's best-known contemporary artists, Kher's oeuvre includes painting, sculpting and installation. She is one of the world's highest-priced female artists, and wife showings, her artworks have found homes all over * to an equally accomplished creative force (Subodh Gupta). the world. Employing a realistic-abstract style in her . Her style though, is different from her husband's, incorpaintings, her works have been described as 'myster- porating hybridism and the ubiquitous 'bindi', which has become a signature of sorts. Blending magical realism, Indian traditions and personal identity, Kher's works negotiate between old India and the present.

Price Range: Dh200,000 upwards



Murali Nagapuzha

In Kerala it is believed no Indian contemporary artist can cism and Zen spirit, Gupta has 33 solo shows to his credit, 🔭 match self-taught painter Nagapuzha in his ability to sumheld across India and other parts of the world. Encom- on up the natural beauty of their state. Likened to French passing portraiture, landscapes and abstract imagery, (also self-taught) artist Henri Rousseau, he first attracted has worked across all media, holding 22 solo exhibitions, his work is known for its meditative quality and is held attention two decades ago with his seasonal painting Bash. which include installation work and video art. With no in public and private collections. Besides paintings, his eer with his Characters, a whimsical tribute to renowned formal education in art, this artist has evolved a unique famous works include the four-metre copper sculpture Malayalam writer and novelist, Vaikom Mohammad Bash- style. A pioneer of the digital medium in India as an art Surya at the Indira Gandhi International Airport at New eer. His works are commanding exceptional international form, Mehrotra blends elements to push the conceptual Delhi and his five-piece metal sculpture inspired by the interest, making him a prime candidate for first-time col- threshold of his visual language. His works are included lectors looking for an artist of immense talent and value.

Price range: Dh4,000 onward www.nagapuzha.blog.com



UNTITLED

Subodh Gunta

This is the man who saw his auction prices increase 52 times in three years. Known as the 'Damien Hirst of Delhi'. Gupta is best known for his conceptual art incorporating

everyday objects integral to the Indian diaspora, elevating them into artworks that transform its meaning and function. Gupta is seen as the enfant terrible of the Indian art scene and is a show-stopper on the international art circuit.

Price Range: Dh290,000 upwards



Jaideep Mehrotra

With a significant presence of over four decades, Mehrotra is considered one of India's finest inventive artists. Beginning his career at the young age of 13, Mehrotra in prestigious art collections around the world.

Price range: Between Dh15,000 and Dh200,000

www.jaideepmehrotra.com