

MAQBOOL FIDA HUSAIN

Born 1915, Maharashtra, India

Commonly known as M.F., Husain was an eminent Indian painter. Widely regarded as the "Picasso of India," he is arguably the most recognizable figure of modern and contemporary Indian art, influencing a whole generation of artists in the country. A self-taught artist, Husain moved to Mumbai at an early age and began his artistic career by painting the billboards for cinemas. He recalled, "We were paid barely four or six annas per square foot. That is, for a 6x10 feet canvas, we earned a few rupees. And apart from the New Theatre distributor, the others did not pay us at all. As soon as I earned a little bit, I used to take off for Surat, Baroda and Ahmedabad to paint landscapes."

Husain became associated with Indian modernism in the 1940s. A dashing, highly eccentric figure dressed in impeccably tailored suits, he went barefoot and brandished an extra-long paintbrush as a slim cane. He never maintained a studio, but he spread his canvases out on the floors of whatever hotel room he happened to be staying in, always paying for damages when he checked out. He created four museums to showcase his work, and had a collection of classic sports cars. Enormously prolific, a gifted self-promoter and hard bargainer, he claimed to have produced some 60,000 paintings. When questioned about such prolificacy by Michael Peschardt of the BBC in one of the last interviews he gave on May 27th 2011, he replied, "All this talk about inspiration and moment is nonsense. Excuse us". He amassed a fortune, but maintained a bank balance of zero. He applied the formal lessons of European modernists like Cézanne and Matisse to scenes from national epics like the Mahabharata and Ramavana, to the Hindu pantheon.

His first exhibition took place in 1947 with his painting *Sunhera Sansaar*, shown at the annual exhibition of the Bombay Art Society, and Husain decided to stay in India during the Partition in 1947. Between 1948 and 1950, Husain's work caught the public eye in a series of exhibitions across India. Through the fifties and sixties, he traveled outside India, with his first foray into China in 1951. The following year, he had his first solo exhibition in Zurich, and so began a series of exhibitions across Europe and the United States. In 1966, the Government of India awarded him the Padmashree.

Over the following decades, Husain's fame spread and was glorified by what was deemed to be a rather controversial approach to his art. His *Shwetambari* exhibition at the Jehangir Art Gallery consisted of two halls shrouded in white cloth, whorls of which also shared the floor with torn newspapers. Later, he gave a public performance at the Tata Center in Calcutta. For several days, a crowd watched as he painted pictures of six goddesses. On the last day of the exhibition, he destroyed his paintings by over-painting them in white. Several of his paintings in the 1990s were named after the film actress Madhuri Dixit, perhaps displaying a childhood obsession originating from his time spent painting billboards. As reported in *The Times* of India, "The Padma Vibhushan awardee continues to paint events that are topmost on contemporary minds, be it the solar eclipse, the cricket mania or the victory at Kargil."

Themes in Husain's work often returned to his cultural roots, but he embraced diverse influences – from the cinematography of Buñuel, to themes that have blended folk, tribal and mythological figures – to create vibrantly contemporary, living art forms in his work.

Icons of Indian culture through the ages seek to capture the quintessence of his subjects, like Mother Teresa and Gandhi, to religious icons as Krishna and Saraswati.

His narrative paintings, executed in a modified Cubist style, can be caustic and funny as well as serious and somber. His themes—usually treated in series—also include hallmarks of Indian culture and history, such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the British Empire, and motifs of Indian urban and rural life. One of the most celebrated and internationally recognized Indian artists of the 20th century, he also received recognition as a printmaker, photographer, and filmmaker.

Besides painting, he also made feature films, including *Through the Eyes of a Painter* (1966), which won the 'Golden Bear Award' at the Berlin Film Festival (1967), and was also awarded the 'Gaja Gamini' in 2000. The Government of India honored him with the 'Padma Bhushan' and the 'Padma Vibhushan' awards, both prestigious civilian awards. In 2007, Husain received Honorary Doctorates from Benaras Hindu University, Jamia Millia Islamia University, and Mysore University.

Died 2011, London, UK.

Education

2007 Honorary Doctorates from Benaras Hindu University, Jamia Millia Islamia University, and Mysore University

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2015	Husain at Hundred, Aicon Gallery, New York
2014	M. F. Husain: Master of Modern Indian Painting, Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A),
	London
2010	M.F. Husain 2010 – The World is my Canvas, organized by Museum of Islamic Art
	(MIA), Qatar Foundation and as part of 2010 Arab Capital of Culture
2010	M.F. Husain: Early Masterpieces 1950s-70s, 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	Epic India: Paintings by M.F. Husain, Herwitz Collection of Contemporary Indian
	Art, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
2006	Early Masterpieces 1950-70's, Asia House Gallery, London
2005	Exhibition of Prints, Collector's Paradise Gallery, Mumbai
2004	Husain (An Exhibition of Graphic Prints in Honor of M S Subbalakshmi), Lakshana
	Museum of Fine Arts, Chennai
2004	National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai
2004	<i>'Husain: Graphic 2004</i> , Pictures and Frames, Mumbai
2003	'88 Husains in Oils 2003, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2003	Husain Hieroglyph, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
2003	M F Husain in Oils, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
2003	Thief of Baghdad, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
2003	Gallerie 88, Kolkata
2002	Paintings and Serigraphs by Husain, Sarjan Art Gallery, Baroda
2002	M .F Husain, Limited Edition Graphics and Reproduction, Sakshi Gallery in
	association with Archer Art Gallery, Ahmedabad
2002	Madhuri as Saratchandra's Chandramukhi: The Eternal Enchantress of
	Devdas, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2000	Paintings, Murals and Drawings, Husain Ki Sarai Collection, New Delhi
1998	Maqbool Fida Husain: The Beacon of Energy, The Window, Mumbai
1998	Husain Now, Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1996	From Sinhasan to Peacock Throne to the Chair of the 21st Century: M. F
	Husain and Jehangir Nagree Exhibition of Furniture, organized by The Living Room at
1001	Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai
1996	Exhibition of Water Colors and Object Based Works', Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1996	Screening of Film 'Gaja Gamini', along with an exhibition of lithographs and
	selected works, New Delhi

1995	Maqbool Fida Husain, Art Today, New Delhi
1995	14 Serigraphs on Madhuri Dixit, Surya Gallery, Hyderabad
1995	A Visual Script of 'Untitled Film on Madhuri, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1994	Tapestry Show, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1994	Oils on Canvas, 31st Anniversary Exhibition, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1993	Let History Cut Across Me Without Me, organized by Vadehra Art Gallery,
	New Delhi at National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi
1993	Civilization, Violence and Pather Panchali, at National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA),
	New Delhi
1992	Six Days of Live Painting, Tata Centre, Kolkata
1991	Knight Watch, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1991	Shwetambari, Installation at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1991	Front Page, Centre for Contemporary art (CCA), New Delhi
1990	Theatre of the Absurd, Installations, New Delhi
1989	Calcutta 300, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
1988	Husain, Hunter Museum of Art, Tennessee, USA
1986	Images of the Raj, Sista's Art Gallery, Bangalore
1983	Story of a Brush, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1982	Culture of the Streets, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1981	Culture of the Streets, Art Heritage, New Delhi
1981	Les Otages – Mere Theresa, Galerie Jourdan, Montreal, Canada
1980	Mother and Child: A Tribute to Mother Teresa, Calcutta Art Gallery, Kolkata
1979	Husain in Malaysia, The Hilton, Kuala Lumpur
1978	Ragmala Paintings, Centaur Hotel, Mumbai
1978	Sufi Paintings, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1978	Portrait of an Umbrella, Art Heritage, New Delhi
1978	Retrospective, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1975	Maqbool Fida Husain, Sarla Art Centre, Chennai
1974	Commonwealth Art Centre, London, UK
1974	Moscow Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow
1974	Paintings by Husain, Worcester Art Museum, USA
1973	Retrospective, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
1973	Espace Cardin, Paris
1972	Paintings 1971, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1971	Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi
1969	21 Years of Painting, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1968	<i>Images of Kerala</i> , Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1968	Six Days of Making: Movements and Moods in Paintings, Shridharani Gallery, New
	Delhi
1967	New York, Poland and Czechoslovakia
1966	Mumbai
1966	Oberoi Hotel, New Delhi
1965	Drawings: The Arab Image, Gallery Chemould, Mumbai, Kolkata and New
	Delhi; Gallery Waisty, Baghdad and Kabul
1964	Dhoomimal Art Gallery, New Delhi
1962	Ashoka Gallery, Kolkata
1962	Mumbai and New Delhi
1961	Ashoka Gallery, Kolkata
1961	Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1960 - 1961	Gallery Palse, Rome
1960	Kunst Kabinet, curated by Hanna Bekker vom Rath, Frankfurt, Germany
1956	Gallery Palette, Zurich
1956	Gallery Mannes, Prague
1950	Bombay Art Society, Mumbai

Selected Group Exhibitions

2017	Culture of the Streets, Aicon Gallery, New York
2016	Masterpieces of Indian Modern Art, Dag Modern, New York
2016	Mysteries of the Organism, AkaraArt, Mumbai
2016	India Art Fair 2016, Aicon Gallery
2015	The Naked and the Nude: The Body in Indian Modern Art, Dag Modern, New York
2015	Palo Alto 2015 The Story of Indian Modern Art, Aicon Gallery, New York
2015	"Subcontinental Masters", Dubai Pop Up, Aicon Gallery
2015	Abby Grey and Indian Modernism: Selections from the NYU Art Collection, Grey Art
	Gallery, New York
2014	Shifting the Paradigm, Aicon Gallery, New York
2011	Continuum, Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
2011	Roots in the Air, Branches Below: Modern & Contemporary Art from India,
2011	San Jose Museum of Art, CA
2011	Time Unfolded, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi
2011	Celebrations 2011, Kumar Gallery, New Delhi
2010 - 2011	Figure/Landscape: Part Two, Aicon Gallery, London
2010	Figure/Landscape: Part One, Aicon Gallery, New York
2010	Who Has Seen Gandhi?, presented by Tangerine Art Space at Raj Bhavan; Kynkyny
	Art Gallery and Tangerine Art Space, Bangalore
2010	The Modernists, RL Fine Arts, New York
2010	The Progressives & Associates, Grosvenor Gallery, London
2010	From Miniature to Modern: Traditions in Transition, Rob Dean Art, London in
	association with Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
2010	Symbols and Metaphors, Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2010	Masters of Maharashtra, collection from Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi at Piramal
	Gallery, National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), Mumbai
2010	Evolve: 10th Anniversary Show, Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai
2010	Art Dubai 2010, presented by Aicon Gallery, New York
2010	Manifestations IV, Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
2010	Roots, 25 th Anniversary Exhibition of Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai at The Park, Chennai
2010	Celebration 2010, Kumar Art Gallery, New Delhi
2009 – 2010	Master Class, The Arts Trust, Mumbai
2009	Bharat Ratna: Jewels of Modern Indian Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
2009	In Search of the Vernacular, Aicon Gallery, New York
2009	Indian Harvest, presented by Crimson, The Art Resouce, Bangalore at S.G. Private
2000	Banking, Singapore
2009	Long Gone & Living Now, Gallerie Mirchandani + Steinreucke, Mumbai
2009	Kalpana: Figurative Art in India, presented by The Indian Council for Cultural
2000	Relations (ICCR) at Aicon Gallery, London
2009	Progressive to Altermodern: 62 Years of Indian Modern Art, Grosvenor Gallery, London
2009	
2009	Spirit of India, co-exhibition with S.H. Raza, Kings Road Galleries, London Armory Show New York, presented by Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2009	Ltd. Edition, Gallery Threshold, New Delhi
2009 - 2009	Signs Taken for Wonders: Recent Art from India and Pakistan, Aicon Gallery, London
2008 - 2009	Modern India, presented by Institut Valencià d'Art Modern (IVAM) and Casa
2000	Asia, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture at Valencia, Spain
2008	Indian Highway, presented in Collaboration with Astrup Fearnley Museum of
2000	Modern Art, Oslo at Serpentine Gallery, London; Herning Museum of Contemporary
	Art, Denmark
2008	Paz Mandala, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
2008	Winter Moderns, Aicon Gallery, New York and London
2008	Frame Figure Field: 20th Century Modern and Contemporary Indian Art, Delhi Art
2000	Gallery, New Delhi
2008	Modern and Contemporary Indian Art, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
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2008	Multiple Modernities: India, 1905-2005, Philadelphia Museum of Art
2008	Freedom 2008 – Sixty Years of Indian Independence, Centre for International
	Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2008	Tales, Reflection and Constructs, Galerie 88, Kolkata
2008	Exhibition of Seri-Prints, Studio Vasant, New Delhi
2008	Moderns, Royal Cultural Centre at Amman, Jordan; organized by Lalit Kala Akademi,
	New Delhi, with Embassy of India, Amman, Jordan
2008	Harvest 2008, organized by Arushi Arts at The Stainless Gallery, New Delhi
2007 - 2008	From Everyday To The Imagined: Modern Indian Art, Museum of Art, Seoul
	National University, Seoul
2007	Epic India: Paintings by M.F. Husain, Peabody Essex Museum,
	Massachusetts, USA
2007	From the Vault, Aicon Gallery, London and New York
2007	Gateway Bombay, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA
2006	Pictorial Glimpses, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai
2006	Summer Show, Centre for International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
2006	M.F. Husain: Early Masterpieces 1950s-70s, Asia House, London
2006	The Moderns Revisited, Grosvenor Vadehra, London
2006	Shadow Lines, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2006	Making of Divinity, Sakshi Gallery, Mumbai
2005	Manifestations III, curated by Delhi Art Gallery at Nehru Center, Mumbai,
2003	and Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi.
2005	Drishti/Vision: Indian Contemporary Artists, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur
2005	Evoking Rasa in Luminous Visions: Indian Art, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester
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2005	Ashta Nayak: Eight Pioneers of Indian Art, Aicon Gallery, New York
2005	The Sacred Feminine, Shridharani Gallery, New Delhi
2005	Still Life: The Inscrutable Genre, Art Motif, New Delhi
2004	20 / 20 – A Vision: Looking Back / Looking Forward, Apparao Galleries, Chennai
2004	Ruminations, Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai; The Forum, New Delhi; Windsor Manor
2004	Hotel, Bangalore; Museum Gallery, Mumbai
2004	Jiva / Life, Bodhi Art, Singapore
2004	Portrait of a Decade, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
2004	Manifestations II, curated by Delhi Art Gallery at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai and
2224	Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi
2004	Concept and Form, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi
2003	Anniversary Master Strokes, Art Musings, Mumbai
2003	Manifestations I, organized by Delhi Art Gallery at World Trade Center, Mumbai and
	Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi.
2002	Art Musings 2002, Art Musings, Mumbai
2002	Colors of India, organized by Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata at Mumbai
2001	Anniversary Return to Eden, Art Musings, Mumbai
2001	Modern Indian Art, Metropolitan Pavilion, New York
2001	Jubilant Gold: 50 Years of Artists, Artists' Centre, Mumbai
2000	Distillations, Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata
2000	Timeless Vision: Contemporary Art from the Herwitz Collection, Haggerty Museum of
	Art, Milwaukee, WI
2000	New Works, The Fine Art Resource, Berlin
1998	Ruminations, Apollo Apparao Galleries, Mumbai
1998	The Window, Mumbai
1997	Indian Painters Having Lives in France, Alliance Francaise, Pondicherry
1997	The Indian Beast, Apparao Galleries, Chennai
1997	Inaugural Exhibition, Art Indus, New Delhi
1997	Tribute to Mother Teressa, Art Indus, New Delhi
1997	The Keehn Collection: Important Paintings of Post Independence India, Bose Pacia,
	New York
1997	Colors of Independence, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi

1996	Contemporary Indian Paintings: The Chester and Davida Herwitz
	Collection, Pt. II, Sotheby's Auction, New York
1996	Modern and Contemporary Indian Paintings: One Hundred Years, Sotheby's Auction,
	London
1995	River of Art, Art Today, New Delhi
1995	Contemporary Indian Paintings: The Chester and Davida Herwitz Collection, Pt. I,
1,,,0	Sotheby's Auction, New York
1995	Art India Now: Important Contemporary Artists, Bose Pacia, New York
1995	Mithuna, 91C Jermyn Street, London
1994	Art Today, New Delhi
1994	Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
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	Reflection and Images, Mumbai Wounds Control of International Modern Art (CIMA), Volketo
1993	Wounds, Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), Kolkata
1991	National Exposition of Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Modern Art
1001	(NGMA), New Delhi
1991	Husain, Husain and Husain, Egypt
1991	Remembering Kali Pundole on its 28th Anniversary, Mumbai
1991	State of Art, Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai
1991	Nine Indian Contemporaries, Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA), New Delhi
1988	Festival of India, Takoka Municipal Museum of Art & Meugro Museum of
	Art, Tokyo
1987	Indian Drawing Today, Mumbai
1987	Festival of India, Russia
1987	Coups de Couer, Halle de I'lle, Geneva
1986	Indian Art Tomorrow, The Phillips Collections, Washington D.C
1986	Contemporary Indian Art, Grey Art Gallery, New York
1985 – 1986	Festival of India, Exhibition of Contemporary Indian Art, New York University, NY
1985	Indian Art Today: 4 Artists, Washington D.C, USA
1985	Contemporary Art in India, Worcester, USA
1985	Bharat Bhavan Biennale, Bhopal
1985	100 Jahre Indische Malerei, Altes Museum, Berlin
1985	Six Indian Painters, Tate Gallery, London
1982	Indische Kunst Heute, Kunsthalle Darmstadt
1982	Contemporary Indian Art, Festival of India, Royal Academy of Arts, London
1982	India: Myth and Reality, Aspects of Modern Indian Art, Oxford, UK
1982	Modern Indian Paintings, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC.
1982	Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1973	Gallery Chanakya, New Delhi
1972	A Painter Makes a Film, Pundole Art Gallery, Mumbai
1971	São Paulo Biennale, special invitee with Pablo Picasso, Brazil
1970	Art Today II, Ashoka Gallery, Kolkata and Shridharni Gallery, New Delhi
1969	Art Today I, New Delhi
1967	25 Years of Paintings seen in Bombay, Mumbai
1966	Commonwealth Art Exhibition, London
1966	Art Now in India, London and Brussels
1964	Indian Paintings Now, London
1962	Asoka Art Gallery, Kolkata
1961	Gallery Chemould, Mumbai
1960	Tokyo Biennale, Japan
1959	São Paulo Biennale, Brazil
1959	Tokyo Biennale, Japan
1958	Eight Painters, International Culture Centre, New Delhi
1955	National Exhibition, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1955	Venice Biennale, Italy
1953	Venice Biennale, Italy Venice Biennale, Italy
1951	Salon de Mai, France
1701	outon do Manj Mundo

1950	Calcutta Group and Progressive Art Group, Kolkata
1950	Bombay Art Society's Salon, Mumbai
1948 - 1956	Group Exhibitions with Progressive Art Group

Cinematography

2011	Pehla Sitara (Writer)
2008	Halla Bol (Thanks, as M.F. Husain)
2004	Meenaxi: Tale of 3 Cities (Director/Writer)
2003	Tehzeeb (Thanks, as M.F. Husain)
2000	Gaja Gamini (Director/Art Department/Writer/Actor)
2000	Fiza (Thanks – as M.F. Husain)
1997	Mohabbat (Actor, as himself)
1991	Henna (Art Department/Paintings); tribute to Raj Kapoor
1967	Through the Eyes of a Painter (Director/Writer)

Awards and Honors

2007	Raja Ravi Varma Award, Government of Kerala
2007	Honorary Doctorates, Benaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi
2007	Honorary Doctorates, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi
2007	Honorary Doctorates, Mysore University, Mysore
2004	Lalit Kala Ratna, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1997	Aditya Vikram Birla 'Kalashikkar' Award for Lifetime Achievement
1991	Padma Vibhushan, Government of India
1973	Padma Bhushan, Government of India
1968	National Award for 'Best Experimental Film' Through the Eyes of a Painter, India
1967	Awarded 'Golden Bear' for film <i>Through the Eyes of a Painter</i> , International
	Berlin Film Festival, Germany; purchased by Museum of Modern Art, NY
1966	Padma Shree, Government of India
1959	International Biennale Award, Tokyo
1955	Padma Shree, Government of India
1955	First Prize at National Exhibition of Art, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi
1947	Bombay Art Society, Mumbai