

M.F. Husain

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (Homage to Satyajit Ray)(1990)



aicon CONTEMPORARY

M.F. Husain, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Bane*



Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (Homage to Satyajit Ray), 1990

Aicon Contemporary is proud to offer *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* (Homage to Satyajit Ray), an extremely rare, institutional quality painting by Maqbool Fida Husain.

Husain (1915-2011), India's pre-eminent post-independence painter, and Satyajit Ray, the most critically acclaimed Indian filmmaker of the same period, were mutual admirers. Husain, who got a start painting cinema billboards, was a lifelong cinephile and accomplished filmmaker, frequently drawing inspiration from Ray's films. That inspiration regularly spilled over onto his canvas, and he painted several paintings based on Ray's imagery, beginning with *Pather Panchali*, the first movie in Ray's iconic *Apu Trilogy*, in the early 1950s. Of such Satyajit Ray inspired M.F.Husain paintings, *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* stands out for its sheer size, its sheer colorfulness, and its sheer joy!

What also makes *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* remarkable is how Husain adopts Ray's visual language. Ray, in addition to being a master filmmaker, was a gifted illustrator and designer, who went to art school in Shantiniketan (though he never finished). This painting channels Ray's distinctive style at a moment when Ray was gravely ill, yet still directing what would become his final film. Confined to bed and under constant medical supervision, Ray completed *Agantuk* (The Stranger), which was released in 1991.

Husain knew that Satyajit Ray was ill, and wanted to acknowledge the master filmmaker with a grand gesture, resulting in this magnificent painting, where Goopy, the singer, Bagha, the sitar player, and their nemeses, the mindless king and the wicked minister, seem to be twirling around on a silver screen.

In 1990, *The Village Gallery* in New Delhi, led by Dolly Narang, mounted *The Other Ray*, a landmark exhibition highlighting Ray's work in set design, costume, and illustration. Husain and Narang had a chance encounter at AIFACS (All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society) where Narang told Husain about her exhibition. Husain requested a private preview to see Ray's work immediately; he would not wait until the exhibition opened. Narang brought Husain home, and showed him Ray's artwork, with several sketches by Ray of the two characters, Goopy and Bagha, before the exhibition opened. This exhibition proved a last hurrah for Ray. His traveling was almost at an end. In 1992, too ill to travel, Ray accepted an honorary Oscar via videotape from his hospital bed. He passed away shortly thereafter.



Illustration by Satyajit Ray for the children's magazine, *Sandesh*

Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne is a tribute from one friend to another, quite clearly not long for the world. It is full of appreciation, admiration, and even love, for a fellow traveler.



M. F. Husain
Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne (Homage to Satyajit Ray), 1990
Acrylic on canvas
96h x 168w in
243.84h x 426.72w cm



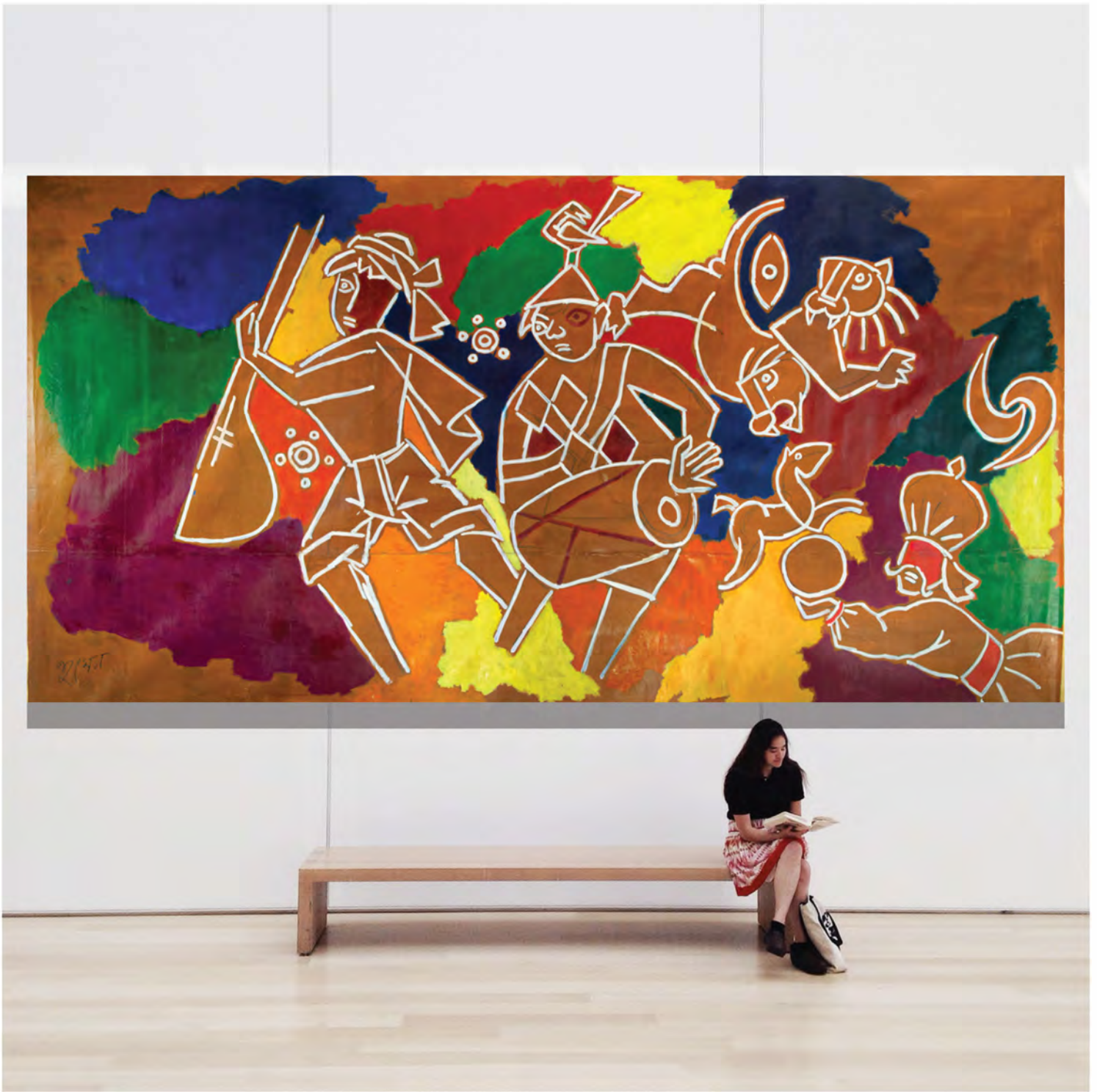
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