

Please join us
for an illustrated talk by Prof. Daniel Herwitz

M. F. Husain
Between Modernism and Celebrity

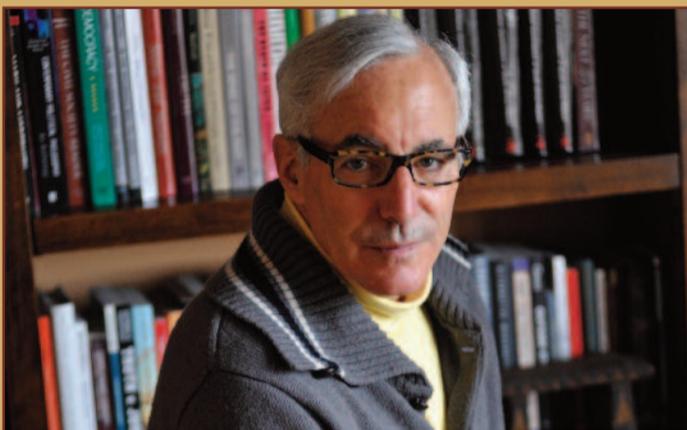
Saturday, November 16, 2013
2:00 p.m.

Samsung Hall, Asian Art Museum
200 Larkin Street, San Francisco

Free after museum admission.
Wine and refreshments following the program.

Contact information: info@sachi.org; tel. 650-918-6335

SACHI Annual Meeting, 1:15 p.m., and SACHI Commemoration Film Screening (13 min.), 1:45 p.m. will precede the Annual Event.



About the Speaker

Daniel Herwitz is a distinguished scholar and the author of books in aesthetics, politics and modern and contemporary art, most recently *Heritage, Culture and Politics in the Postcolony* (2012) and *The Star as Icon* (2008). From 1996-2002 he was Chair in Philosophy at the University of Natal, South Africa where he participated in the process of democratic transition, and which led to his book of essays, *Race and Reconciliation* (2003). His first book, on the modern painter of India, M.F. Husain (Husain, Tata Press) produced in consort with the painter, won a National Book Award in India (1988). From 2002-2012 he Directed the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he is now professor.



SACHI

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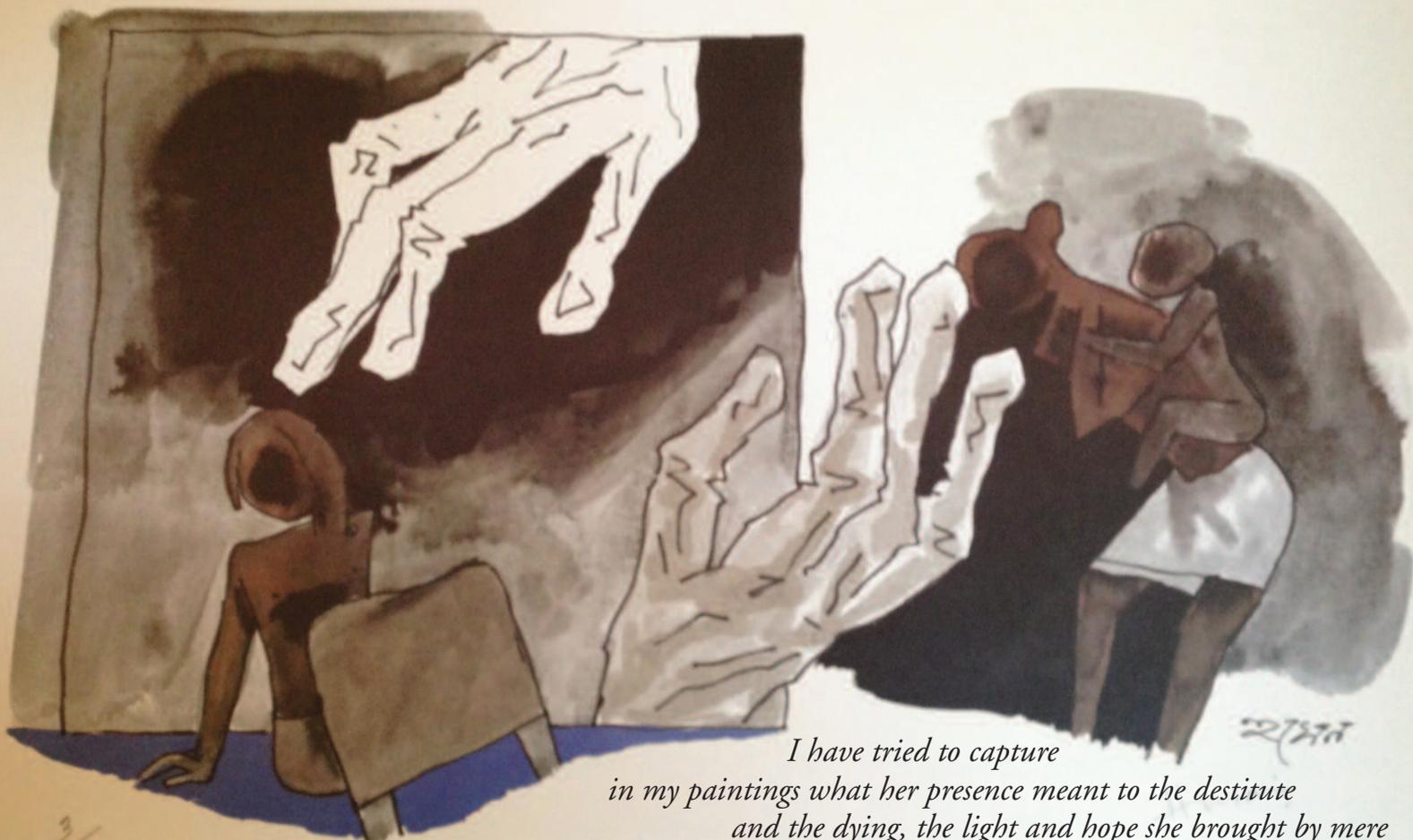
Asian
Art
Museum

Acknowledgements:

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Cover image:

M.F. Husain (1915–2011)
Mother and Child: A Tribute to Mother Teresa The Great Humanist of our Time
(one of a Portfolio of 10 Prints), 1982
Lithograph, on paper, Collection of Daniel Herwitz



*I have tried to capture
in my paintings what her presence meant to the destitute
and the dying, the light and hope she brought by mere
inquiry by putting her hand over a child abandoned in the street...*

~ MF Husain

SACHI 2013 Annual Event

A Special Anniversary Event on the life and legacy of artist M.F. Husain

PRESENTED BY

SACHI Society for Art & Cultural Heritage of India

AND

The Asian Art Museum, San Francisco



"Yet, without a family, a sketch book in hand and rupees fifteen in my pocket I landed in Bombay of British India, year 1936."

~ MF Husain

Maqbool Fida Husain (1915-2011), known to the art world as MF, was India's most significant artist of the 20th and early 21st century. Born in Pandharpur, Maharashtra's temple town in West India, and brought up in Indore, Husain arrived in Bombay (Mumbai) at age 20, determined to become an artist. He began his career painting billboards for the popular Bombay cinema.

Husain's life changed radically with Indian independence in 1947, which saw the rise of the Progressive Artists Group, self-declared 'moderns' of Indian art. As founding member of the PAG, Husain was intent on creating a new art for India that was devoid of the colonial and national imprint of pre-independence art. A self-taught artist, educated at the Indore School of Arts and briefly, the J.J. School of Arts, Mumbai, Husain was immensely talented with an enormous curiosity about the world.

His incredible and prolific career spanned nearly 75 years during which he created thousands of paintings that are in museums and collections throughout the world. In 1971 he was invited, along with Pablo Picasso, to the Sao Paulo Biennial and in subsequent years was the focus of retrospectives in Calcutta, Mumbai, and Delhi. His work has been exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts and the Tate Gallery in London, the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., the Grey Art Gallery, NYU, New York, and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts among others.

In choosing his subjects, Husain's richest source of inspiration was the vast cultural landscape of his native India. He depicted icons of Indian

culture through the ages, seeking to capture the quintessence of his subjects in themes as diverse as *Mahatma Gandhi*, *Mother Teresa*, or the characters of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics, the *British Raj*, and motifs of Indian urban and rural life, including ancient war horses.

He painted thousands of galloping horses for many years, inspired by his visit to China in 1951. Husain's 'Lightning' horses have cantered far and wide, all over the world. His most enigmatic paintings are of Mother Teresa, the saintly nun of Calcutta. This remarkable series of works is a testimony to the profound impact Mother Teresa had on the artist's life and work.

Husain returned time and again to his roots, to create vibrant, contemporary living art forms. Bold, eccentric, and multi-talented, he was a superb draughtsman, painter and film maker. Cinema held a lifelong fascination for Husain. His 1967 film, *Through the Eyes of a Painter* won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, and his notable *Gaja Gamini*, 2000 starred Madhuri Dixit, the famous Bollywood actress.

MF was a towering figure in the Indian art world; in post-Partition era, he became a celebrated symbol of the modernist role model. Yet, that very celebrity made him vulnerable; he was a Muslim who provoked the conscience of a nation by playing with the gods, all of them, whether Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian. Above all, he was a great artist and a man of courage and conviction.

Husain left India in 2006 and since, remained mostly in exile. Leaving behind a legacy of countless works of art, India's most famous artist, MF Husain, passed away in 2011 at age 95. Today, his presence remains alive in a limitless outpouring of works.

"As I begin to paint, hold the sky in your hands; as the stretch of my canvas is unknown to me".

~ MF Husain



Image credit:
M.F. Husain, *Lightning Horses*, ca. 1979, Oil on canvas, 43 x 100 inches
Collection of Sri and Harsha Reddy.
Exhibition display: *Midnight to the Boom: Painting in India After Independence*
Peabody Essex Museum, February 2 - April 21, 2013