

ART BY NUMBERS

A weekly analysis of the Indian and global art market

In focus: Tyeb Mehta's range of *Diagonal* art on canvas

₹581.5cr

The sum realized after auctioning 185 works by Tyeb Mehta since 1987. Mehta is among the top artists on the Artery India Power Index, which establishes the position of an artist on the basis of sales performance in public domain. The late M.F. Husain, who was ranked 18th on the index, clocked sales of ₹895.5 crore from 1,865 works. Coming back to Mehta, the most expensive of his works was *Kali*, which was sold for ₹26.3 crore in 2018. When his first work—*Figure With Bird*—was auctioned in 1987, it garnered just ₹60,411. Tyeb also embarked upon the powerful *Diagonal* series in the late 1960s. Its recurring motif was a visually striking streak that bisected the composition, resulting in the dismemberment, or, at least, displacement of the central figure within the canvas. There are a total of 33 attributed works from this series on record, with the first painted in 1969 and the last in 1978. The most expensive work from this series was sold in 2016 for ₹10.2 crore—which also made it Tyeb's 19th most expensive work overall. In contrast, the first work from this series was a canvas from 1975 that was sold by Sotheby's in 1995 for ₹2.34 lakh.

—Arvind Vijaymohan, CEO, Artery India, an art intelligence and sales advisory firm



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