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London | +44 (0)20 7293 6000 | Matthew Weigman | [matthew.weigman@sothebys.com](mailto:matthew.weigman@sothebys.com)  
Helen Collier | [helen.collier@sothebys.com](mailto:helen.collier@sothebys.com)

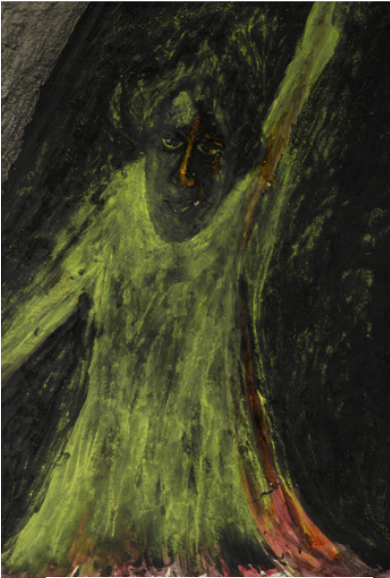
## Sotheby's To Sell Tagore Collection of The Dartington Hall Trust

--The Collection Arguably Ranks as the Most Important Group of  
Works by Rabindranath Tagore Ever To Appear at Auction--



**Rabindranath Tagore**, *Untitled (Portrait of a Woman)*

SOTHEBY'S is delighted to announce the sale of a special and important group of exceptionally rare works by the celebrated Bengali artist and poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), in its annual sale of Indian Art in London on Tuesday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The highly important group of 12 paintings is presented for sale by the Dartington Hall Trust, a charitable organisation based on the Dartington Hall estate, near Totnes in South Devon. Funds raised will be



**Untitled (Figure in Yellow)**

used to support the Trust's ambitious new plans, recently made public, to expand its charitable programmes in the arts, social justice and sustainability.

The rarity and distinguished provenance of the 12 Tagore paintings - in addition to the fact that they have never appeared on the open market before - makes their auction debut a once-in-a-generation opportunity for collectors in the field. Together, the group unquestionably ranks as one of the most important collections of works by the much-loved Indian artist ever to come to the market.

Born in Calcutta in 1861, Tagore was perhaps the most important literary figure of Bengali literature; he was indeed the first non-European to win the esteemed Noble Prize in Literature. An ambassador for India and its culture, his international influence and popularity was considerable and could arguably be compared to that of Ghandi, who himself referred to the artist and poet as 'Mahatma'. Tagore started painting relatively late in his life, but this did not prevent him from becoming one of India's most esteemed Modern artists. Sotheby's has a successful track record of selling works by Tagore and in fact set an auction record for a work by him when his *Death Scene* - from the collection of W.G. and M. Archer - sold for £120,000 in May 2008. However, works by Tagore are relatively rare to the auction market.

The 12 paintings presented for sale have a pre-sale combined estimate in the region of £250,000, and among the more noteworthy highlights of the group are:

- An *Untitled* portrait of a woman, undertaken in watercolour, coloured ink and pastel and estimated at £25,000-30,000. The painting's imagery is typical of Tagore.
- An *Untitled* work in ink depicting a lady with a fan, estimated at £20,000-30,000.
- An *Untitled* depiction of a figure in black with a bare arm and a green background, estimated at £30,000-40,000. This work is known to have entered the collection at Dartington Hall in the 1930s.



- An *Untitled* landscape in yellow, black, blue and green, estimated at £15,000-20,000 and illustrated above.
- An *Untitled* figure in yellow with a black background, estimated at £30,000-40,000.
- An *Untitled* work in coloured inks depicting figures in sepia, estimated at £20,000-30,000.

Talking about the paintings, Holly Brackenbury, Deputy Director in Indian Art at Sotheby's, comments: *"It is very exciting to have the privilege of bringing these 12 museum-quality paintings by one of the key Modern masters of Indian painting to auction this summer. Together they form a stand-out group, and all have impeccable provenance having been in the collection at Dartington Hall for most of their life. Given this exemplary history and also Tagore's status as one of India's heritage artists, the sale of these paintings really does present collectors with an exceptionally rare, once-in-a-generation acquisition opportunity."*



*Untitled (Figure with Green Background)*

Dartington Hall has strong ties to Tagore. The Englishman Leonard Elmhirst and his wife, the American heiress Dorothy Whitney Elmhirst, purchased the estate in the 1920s, and soon began their "Dartington experiment" with their innovative ideas and programmes in education, social reform and rural regeneration. Dartington and the Elmhirsts quickly drew the leading thinkers and artists of the time to the estate.

Leonard Elmhirst was a close friend of Tagore after the pair met in the US while Leonard was attending Cornell University. After graduating from Cornell in 1921, Leonard travelled to India to work as Tagore's private secretary. He not only travelled the world with Tagore, but Leonard Elmhirst also created a department for rural reconstruction on an estate belonging to the Tagore family. His experiences of India and the abiding influence of the Indian artist would shape his vision for the educational, social and rural experiment he and his wife created at Dartington a few years later.

Over the years, the Dartington Hall Trust has amassed an extensive collection of works of art, led primarily by British fine and decorative arts from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is not exactly clear when the 12 Tagore paintings arrived at Dartington, but it is probable that they were a gift from Tagore to his great friend and companion. Tagore visited Dartington on a number of occasions, and in addition to his paintings, Dartington holds a huge archive of photographs, letters and other ephemera relating to the artist, all of which will remain part of Dartington's extensive archives. In one of the archives' letters, a friend of Leonard Elmhirst recalls Tagore painting at Dartington. In it he states: *"One day he [Tagore] asked for bottles of coloured ink, and, when these arrived, there began to emerge a series of paintings and sketches."*

The Dartington Hall Trust recently announced an ambitious investment of £15 million to develop a series of new initiatives on the estate over the coming years. These include the launch of a new arts incubator, expansion of Schumacher College, and



*Untitled (Figures in Sepia)*

building an innovative retirement community called the Abundant Life Project. Funds for this investment will come from the sale of some of the Trust's assets, as well as fundraising.



*Untitled (Lady with a Fan)*

Vaughan Lindsay, Chief Executive Officer of the Dartington Hall Trust, comments: *"We've recently announced an ambitious new programme of investment in our estate to ensure that Dartington remains a centre for innovation and new ideas. Dartington has always been a place of experimentation. Through our new initiatives, we hope the estate will continue to grow and evolve, as it has done over the last 85 or so years. The proceeds from the sale of these 12 Tagore paintings will be an integral part of our new expansion plans for the future. Finding the space to exhibit these beautiful works has been a challenge for us. We hope their sale will allow them to be enjoyed to their full potential by a wider audience and perhaps even by art lovers on the Subcontinent."*

Dartington Hall Trust has a series of events planned in 2011 to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Tagore. The Tagore 150 Festival will take place at Dartington from May 1st to 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. For more information, email: [tagorefestival@resurgence.org](mailto:tagorefestival@resurgence.org).

### NOTES TO EDITORS:

#### About Dartington Hall Trust:

Founded in 1925 by Leonard and Dorothy Elmhirst, Dartington is one of the leading charities in South West England. Occupying a 1200 acre estate in the heart of Devon, it has long been a centre for the arts, social change and innovation. Today, Dartington is a social enterprise focused on innovative programmes in the arts, social justice and sustainability, and draws over one million visitors annually to its beautiful estate.

#### The top five prices for Tagore at auction:

- *Death Scene*, which sold at Sotheby's London for £144,500 (est.: £15,000-20,000) in May 2008
- *Bird*, which sold at Sotheby's London for £70,100 (est.: £10,000-15,000) in May 2008
- *Head of a Woman*, which sold at Sotheby's New York for \$104,500 (est.: \$30,000-40,000) in September 2008
- An *Untitled* depiction of a bird, which sold at Sotheby's New York for \$55,000 (est.: \$15,000-20,000) in September 2007

- *Dumb Efforts and a Desperate Appeal to Emptiness*, which sold at Sotheby's New York for \$43,750 (est.: \$20,000-30,000) in March 2010.

\* Pre-sale estimates do not include buyer's premium

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