

**Jamini Roy**  
**Hemen Mazumdar**  
*Two Rebels*

*Aicon Gallery Exhibition: March 14 – April 6, 2019*  
*Press Preview & V.I.P Reception: Thursday, March 14, 2019*  
*Discussion with curator Caterina Corni: 7 pm*  
*35 Great Jones St, New York NY 10012*



Jamini Roy, *Untitled (House)*, tempera on paper, 13.38 x 18.11 in

We are delighted to present *Two Rebels*, a survey of the careers of two visionary artists of modern India, **Jamini Roy** and **Hemen Mazumdar**.

Featuring works from the prestigious Nirmalya Kumar collection, the exhibition consists of oils and watercolors that exemplify the artistic styles of Roy and Mazumdar - two artists who while stylistically distinct, saw their work as falling outside the diktats of the then pervasive Bengal School. The Bengal School propagated the technical-stylistic values of traditional Indian art, resisting any influence from so-called Western academic art. Not all artists, however,

embraced this concept of static and conservative art, preferring not to join or identify with any current, thus remaining unbound by the canons of "traditional faith".

**Jamini Roy** successfully observed, analyzed and interpreted many of the European artistic themes from the 19th and 20th centuries. He adapted the post-impressionism of Cézanne and Van Gogh, the powerful chromatic approach of the Fauves, the flat color fields of the Nabis, and the essential nature of the lines of Matisse. Making the symmetrical compositions of the post-avant-garde into a vernacular and drawing inspiration from the elementary forms of popular art, Jamini Roy created a personal language by solving his intimate problems as a painter. The artist understood and was passionate about the great heritage of Indian folk art, its extreme elegance and harmony. He took the process of synthesis that is the foundation of traditional iconography and made it his own. The Bengali master always studied, investigated and

collected, without ever forgetting what he believed was the duty of the modern artist: to understand and rework the roots of their culture.

**Hemen Mazumdar** was also drawn to Western art and its great masters: Ingres, Canova, Rubens, and Velázquez to name a few. He was inspired by them without ever lapsing into mere imitation. Divine and earthly dimension are perfectly balanced in Mazumdar's works, which spring from a poetic that is so personal that it creates a new and unique aesthetic. He was a cultured painter, endowed with a great talent for creating a clear, simple beauty which raises to the greatest heights the sensuality of the female figure, and in particular, of Bengali woman.

Mazumdar portrays his women with an almost sculptural grandeur, the composition of the space develops vertically, and within this the artist creates figures filled with expressive power. The essential aspects of his language focus on the beauty of the female body, a taste for details and an attention to smooth and abstract lines, which shape and isolate the forms. The salient feature in *Ear-Ring* is the small, typically feminine, gesture which gives the woman seen from behind a poised sensuality that looks to eternity. The hands, brought together to fasten the earring, give the composition an almost sacred dimension. Even though we cannot see the face of the woman reflected in the mirror, we can sense its extreme grace through the chiaroscuro of her skin and the sari that rests elegantly on one shoulder and caresses her form.



Hemen Mazumdar, *Ear-Ring*, watercolor and gouache on paper, 14.57 x 9.84 in.

In this serene and silent moment of intimacy lies all the charm of the painting, which offers the viewer a female image of pure and naked beauty, free from any conceptual superstructure. The two great Bengali masters understood the importance of a cultural and artistic rediscovery of the true face of India, plunging their hands in the fertile earth of images drawn from tradition and modernity.

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