

Syed Haider Raza: Early works through the 60s and 70s.

Frieze New York
Randall's Island Park
May 5th – 8th, 2016

Syed Haider Raza was one of the founders of the Progressive Artist's Group and is one of the most influential and important living Indian artist today. Raza spent much of his career in France, but now lives and works in New Delhi, India. His style evolved over the years- the early period (1950's) saw him create expressionist landscapes which eventually transformed into rigid, geometric abstract paintings. Aicon Gallery is exhibiting Raza's mid-career works- primarily from the 1970's, at Frieze New York, in which this transition took place and the viewer can discover the past as well as the future of his oeuvre in the works.

Raza's work such as *La Terre* is an important work that belongs to a key period in Raza's career when, after many years working within the style of the École de Paris, his artistic path brought him full circle and he began to integrate vital elements of his Indian childhood and cultural heritage into his paintings. *La Terre*, or the earth, is an apt description for Raza's boldly expressive and saturated use of golds, reds and blacks in this 1980 work. The painting relies primarily on color to convey its warmth and lyrical message, relegating representation to simply flickers of shape. Similar to the other Raza works shown at Frieze New York by Aicon Gallery, the concept of nature remains pervasive and integral to their composition. Adopting a codified and symbolic language, Raza uses specific shapes and colors to represent different aspects of the natural world making the works intrinsically representative. Nature and the landscape had become an arena for and a source of power that exceeded figurative representation "Nature had become a pictorial metaphor: the forest, the river, the ravines, parched earth.



S.H Raza, *La Terre*, 1980, Acrylic on canvas, 51.5 x 51.5 in.

The sun magnified a hundred times, exploding with energy and dynamism as the sole luminary. The earthscape [...] these formed the essential components of his [Raza's] work in the '60s and 70s". (G. Sen, 'Genesis' *Understanding Raza: Many Ways of Looking at a Master*, Vadehra Art Gallery, New Delhi, p. 74)



S.H Raza, *Gorbio*, 1976, Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 13 in.

S.H Raza was a successful Paris based artist for fifty years whose works are in the permanent collection of Musee National d'art Moderne, Musee d'art modern de la Ville, Paris, Asia Society, New York, The Phillips Collection, Washington, Fukuoka Art Museum, and the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, amongst others. For the last decade he has been based in New Delhi, where in 2013 he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's highest civilian honor, one of only four artists who have received the award in the last 60 years.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (Newyork@aicongallery.com) for more information.