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TRI-STATE Newslines

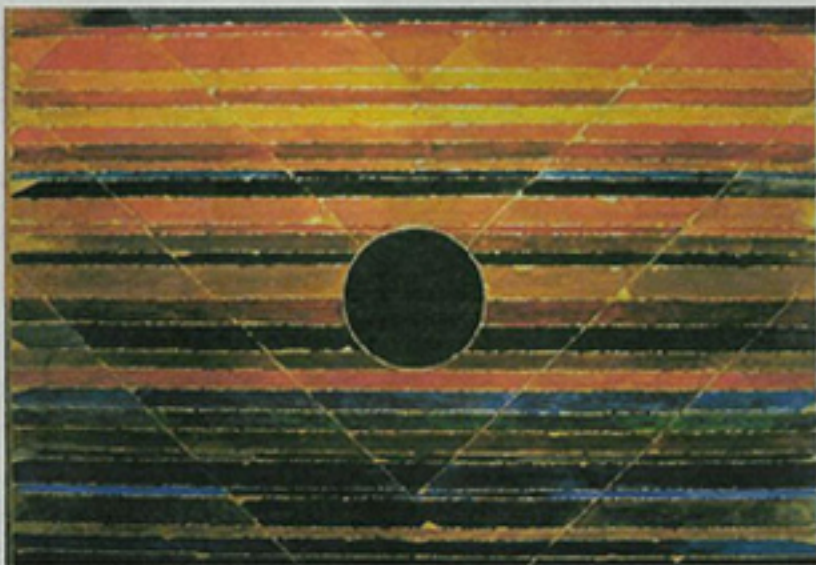
JUHI JHUNJHUNWALA

New York

IT TOOK a million dollar-plus auction at Christie's and Sotheby's last year to announce the arrival of Indian painters on the international art map. What began then with five progressive Indian artists setting the trend, when their paintings were auctioned for over one million dollars, has now become a deluge. Gone are the days when Indian names were looked upon as novelties in US galleries. Today they are a common sight all over the country.

This week, the Peter Louis Arts Gallery in New York shows works by renowned painter, S.H. Raza. Prominent among the progressive painters, Raza's *Tapovan* fetched \$1.3 m at the Christie's auction last March. This time, gallery owner Peter Louis has displayed some of his

Painter's progress: Raza in town



most popular works between 1990 and 2005. In his typical geometric style, these paintings are beautiful examples of why Raza is known in the art fraternity as the 'the Master of Color'.

An extended viewing of the *Bindu* can actually draw the viewer into the work. Raza's works are extensively geometric in style, influenced by major symbols and totems central to the Indian tradition—upward and downward triangles, and the yin and yang. This is very characteristic of Indian tradition and very prevalent in his paintings. His shift to using acrylic paint has allowed him a different

mastery and control of the application of color. To this day, Raza is exploring these symbols and continues to offer a complex vision based on ancient signifiers.

Though his early work was influenced by artists like Cezanne and Van Gogh, echoing their structure and composition, Raza soon forged his own unique identity. Along with M.F. Hussain and Akbar Padamsee, he founded the Progressive Group in 1947, which aimed at bringing in a touch of modernism to Indian art—the thoughts and ideas were Western but the presentation was Indian. However, the current style of painting was taken up by him in 1970s.

In the 1950s, Raza moved to France. He still resides in Paris. The show runs till April 20th.

For more information log on to:

www.peterlouisarts.com

Raza-Bhoomi: Bhoomi, signed 1990