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Venice Power Brokers: Sundaram Tagore, Curator of Tagore Foundation International's "Frontiers Reimagined"

By Eric Bryant, Angela M.H. Schuster [Calibri 10 pt]

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Sundaram Tagore is the curator for the Tagore Foundation International's, "Frontiers Reimagined."

(Jay Mandal)

In its May edition, Art+Auction looked at the power brokers behind the Venice Biennale — curators, a gallerist, a patron, a banker, and a politician — who remain relatively unsung in their efforts to ensure that the art stands out.

Next in the series: **SUNDARAM TAGORE**, Curator of Tagore Foundation International's "Frontiers Reimagined"

The theme of artists breaking down borders both in their practices and their personal lives unites the diverse works in Tagore's collateral exhibition, but it might also be seen as the impulse driving the New York gallerist's own broader project.

A director at Pace Wildenstein before debuting his Chelsea gallery in 2000, Tagore has gone on to open additional spaces in Hong Kong and Singapore and on Manhattan's Upper East Side; create a foundation; direct a documentary; and, now, produce a museum exhibition coordinated with the Biennale — all promoting the notion of art as both product of and impetus for cross-cultural communication.

“Venice has always represented the ultimate stage on which to mount a show about cultural dialogue,” Tagore says. Still, “in the end, mounting a show at the Biennale is not for the faint of heart; it's hugely complex and hugely expensive.”

Featuring 70 works by 44 artists—about half from his gallery's stable—from 25 countries, the show has been more than two years in the making. Coordinating director Nathalie Vernizzi has lived in Venice for a full year, drawing up two separate 80-page proposals to secure both the venue—the city-run Museo di Palazzo Grimani—and the coveted “official collateral event” status, which confers a variety of coordinated marketing and publication programs.

“Without having her on the ground in Venice, I think it would have been much more difficult, if not impossible,” Tagore says. “Ultimately, however, curators from all over the world are dealing with complex ideas, which they're presenting to a highly sophisticated audience. That's a thrilling prospect.”

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