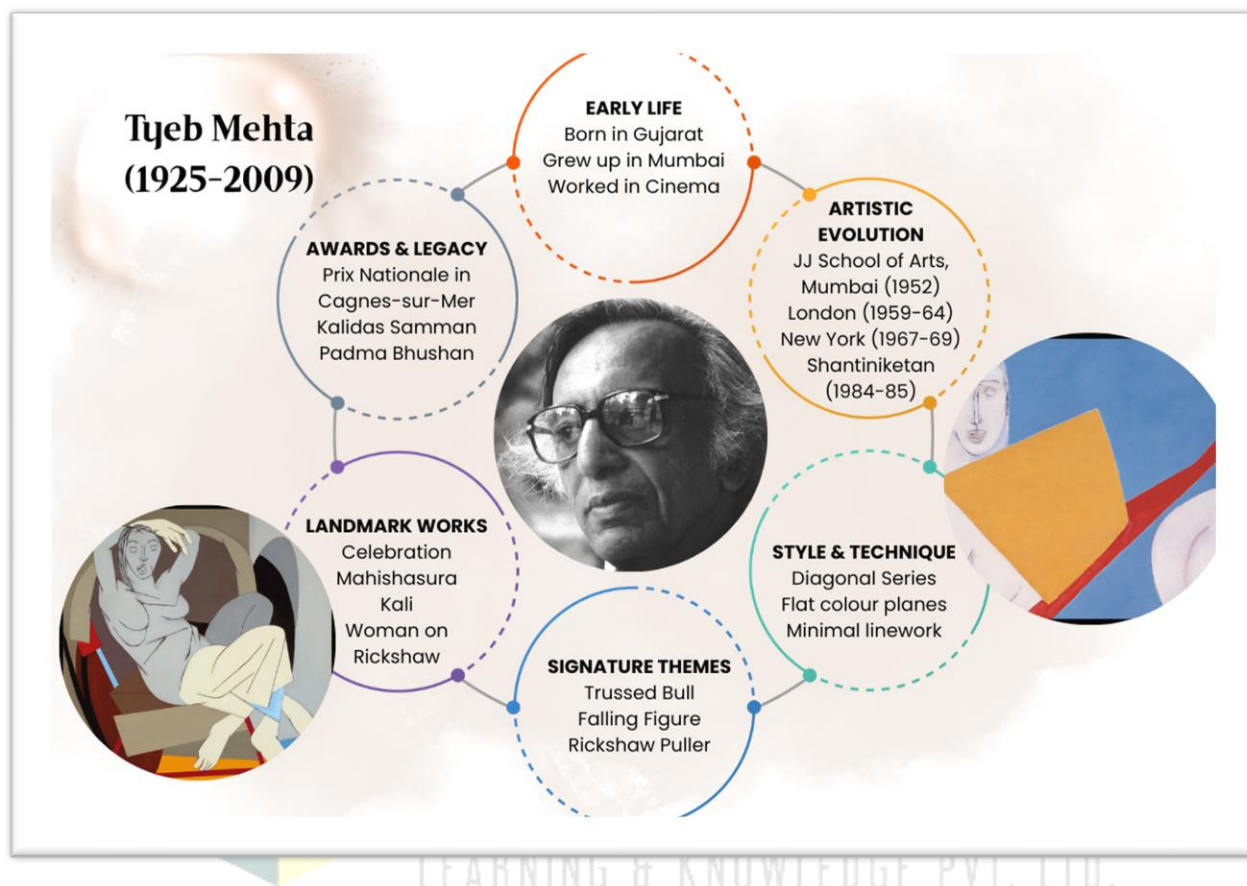


TYEB MEHTA



1. Tyeb Mehta, a symbol of resilience, was born on July 26, 1925, in Kapadvanj, Gujarat. He was raised in the Crawford Market area of Mumbai in a Dawoodi Bohra family. Despite his family's ownership of cinema halls, he chose a different path, working as a film editor at well-known studios in Mumbai early in his career.
2. In 1952, Mehta received his diploma in painting from the Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai. He joined the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group, which included artists like FN Souza, SH Raza, and MF Husain. This group was known for embracing Western Modernism, moving away from nationalist art styles.
3. Regarding the artistic journeys and evolution –
 - From 1959 to 1964, Mehta lived and worked in London, drawing inspiration from the expressionistic energy of Francis Bacon's artwork, which influenced his visual style.

- In New York (1967–69), he received a Rockefeller Fellowship and was influenced by Minimalism, particularly Barnett Newman's work, which guided him toward developing geometric compositions.
- Santiniketan (1984–85): While serving as Artist in Residence, Mehta's style developed further, shaped by the vibrant cultural atmosphere of the area.

4. Hallmark Styles, Symbols, and Themes

- Mehta's art is characterized by the Diagonal series, which emerged in the 1970s. This involved him applying a bold streak of paint across the canvas, which became a central compositional element, dividing the space into dynamic planes.

5. Recurring visual motifs –

- The Trussed Bull represents feelings of powerlessness and pain.
- The falling figure, inspired by his 1947 encounter with a mob lynching, represents the trauma of Partition and human fragility.
- Rickshaw puller: Symbolises human resilience in the face of exploitation.
- Mythological figures like Kali and Mahishasura symbolise concepts of strength and internal struggle.
- He favoured flat, matte colour planes with minimal lines, employing Cubist-inspired fragmentation to express movement and emotional richness.

6. Major Works and Auction Records

- Celebration (triptych) was sold at Christie's in 2002 for around Rs 1.5 crore, a groundbreaking moment in the art world. This marked the first time a living Indian artist's work achieved such an international high price, sparking an art market boom and underlining the profound impact of Mehta's work.
- Later, sales broke records, surpassing previous milestones.
- Mahisasura (~Rs10.9 crore in 2025)
- Woman on rickshaw (roughly Rs 22.99 crore in 2017)
- Kali (around Rs 26.4 crore in 2018)

7. Recognition and Legacy

- Awards received include: Gold Medal at Triennale India (1968), Prix Nationale in Cagnes-sur-Mer (1974), Kalidas Samman (1988), Dayawati Modi Foundation Award (2005), and Padma Bhushan (2007).
- Directed the short film Koodal (1970) at the Bandra slaughterhouse, which received the Filmfare Critics Award.
- His work has been displayed at renowned international locations like the Museum of Modern Art (Oxford) and the Hirshhorn Museum, a testament to the global recognition and influence of his art.
- Died on July 2, 2009, in Mumbai, leaving behind a significant legacy with around 300 works that influence Indian modern art to this day.

Tyeb Mehta

Early Life

Born July 26, 1925 in Kapadvanj, Gujarat; raised in Mumbai's Crawford Market in a Dawoodi Bohra family. Worked as a film editor before pursuing art.

Landmark Works & Auctions

- Celebration (2002): ~₹1.5 crore — first living Indian artist to hit global record.
- Mahisasura (~₹10.9 crore, 2025).
- Woman on Rickshaw (~₹22.99 crore, 2017).
- Kali (~₹26.4 crore, 2018).

Artistic Journey

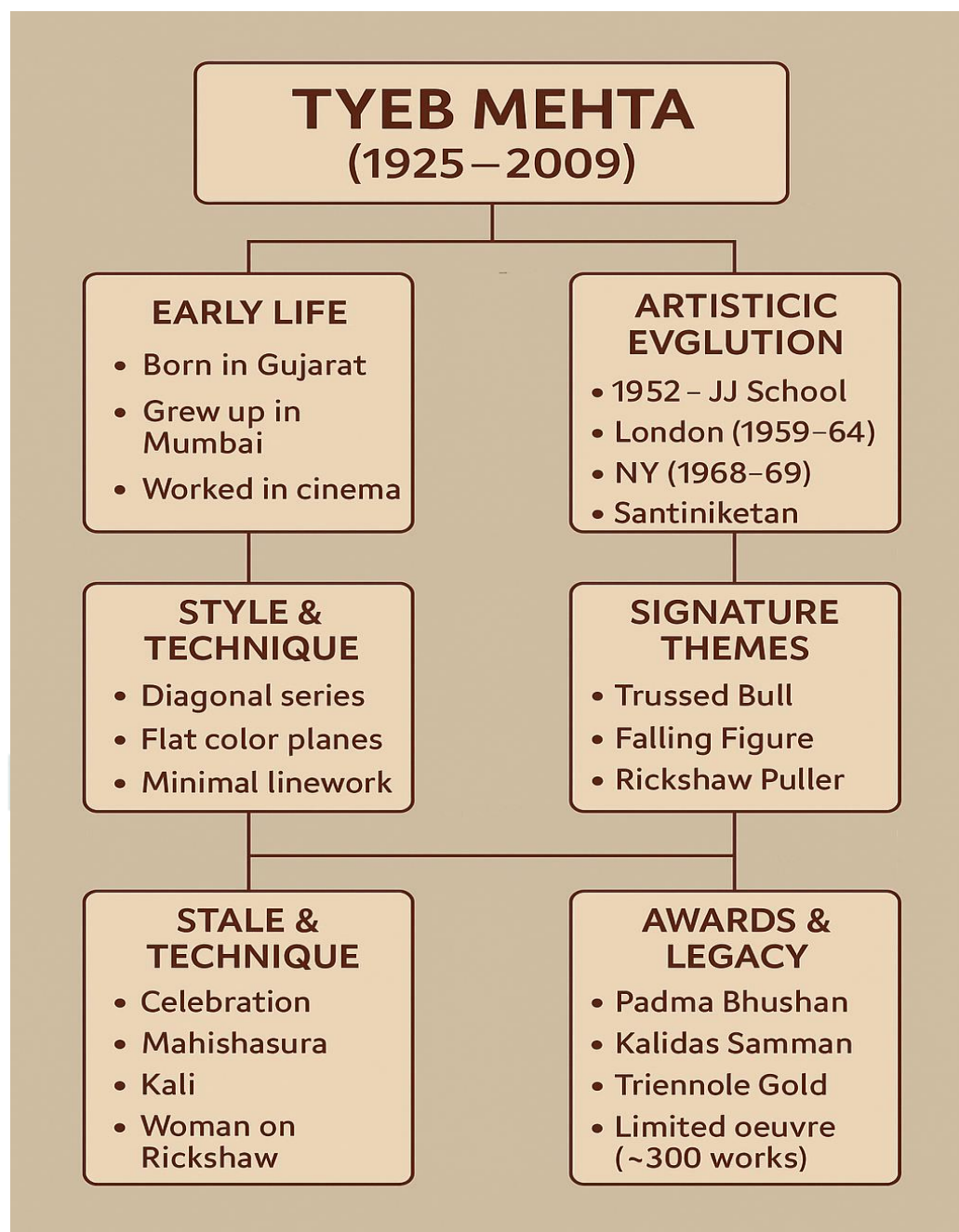
- 1952: Diploma, Sir JJ School of Art; joined Progressive Artists' Group.
- 1959–64: London — inspired by Francis Bacon's expressionism.
- 1967–69: New York — Rockefeller Fellowship; influenced by Barnett Newman's minimalism.
- 1984–85: Artist in Residence, Santiniketan.

Signature Styles & Motifs

- Diagonal Series: Bold streak dividing canvas into planes.
- Symbols: Trussed Bull, Falling Figure, Rickshaw Puller.
- Mythology: Kali, Mahishasura.
- Flat, matte colours; Cubist-inspired fragmentation.

Recognition & Legacy

- Awards: Gold Medal (1968), Prix Nationale (1974), Kalidas Samman (1988), Padma Bhushan (2007).
- Directed short film Koodal (1970) — Filmfare Critics Award.
- Exhibited worldwide; left ~300 works shaping Indian modern art.



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