

BOSE PACIA

August 11, 1998, New York - Bose Pacia Modern gallery presents an exhibition of paintings by the artist **Francis Newton Souza**. The show will run from September 19 through November 7, 1998. The gallery is located at 580 Broadway, 2nd floor, in Soho. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 12-6 p.m. and by appointment. A reception will be held on Saturday, September 19 from 6-8 p.m.

F. N. Souza was born in India in 1924 and is of Goanese Christian origin, although his life is perhaps best understood under the rubric of the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva - creator, preserver and destroyer.

His creative genius is unquestionable and assures his position as a seminal figure in the evolution of modernism in this century and international contemporary art. Preservation and survival have informed the life of Francis Newton Souza since the very beginning. Given his father's middle name of Newton, he survived his father's death only 3 months after his birth. After his miraculous survival through a bout of small pox at age 5, his mother gave him the name, Francis, after St. Francis Xavier, the patron saint of Goa. He survived expulsion from St. Xavier High School; he survived expulsion from the prestigious Sir JJ School of Art by its English director after Souza's participation in the Quit India Movement in 1945. He has survived recurring domestic turmoil and isolation, as well as the constant demon of alcoholism.

Perhaps the artist's oeuvre is best understood in the context of Souza as destroyer. His life and work has been informed by the systematic destruction of the staid and banal - destruction of the ordinary, vapid conceptions of beauty, color and form, and the subsequent reconstruction of these tenets in his own heretic, angst-driven, yet paradoxically fluid and easy rendition. Souza's dialectic of creative destruction is seen most clearly in the body of work he calls "Alterations". Souza has been experimenting with the altered image since 1953 using rubbing and ink line to transform newspaper images and chemical solvents to alter magazine pages, dissolving the existing color and form. As Julian Hartnoll writes, "When Warhol was employing photographic imagery to influence our way of seeing' in the 1960's, Souza had already explored its possibilities". In his chemical alterations, Souza recreates the image, restricting himself to using only the color that he has extracted. For this artist who is an avid reader of Einstein, Hawking and Darwin and a great admirer of the scientific method, this represents an apt artistic corollary to the scientific principles underlying the conservation of matter and energy.

This exhibition begins with master paintings that have been in the artist's private collection for nearly a half-century and includes his recent chemical alterations, representing the artist's most current innovation in the medium. Unlike a retrospective that tends to lead the viewer to a conclusion and implies a certain finality, this exhibition is more a recapitulation of an adventurous life that has befallen a brilliant and unsuspecting man.