

ASIAN ART COLLECTION

Jamini Roy

Santal Boy with Drum

ca. 1935

Opaque watercolor on canvas, mounted on Masonite

30¼ × 14¼ in. (76.8 × 36.2 cm)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Needham

1987.1.48

The Harn Museum holds one of the largest and most diverse public collections outside India of masterpieces by the well-known Bengali artist Jamini Roy. The Roy holding consists of more than forty objects, including paintings, preliminary sketches, drawings, ceramics, and sculpture. The breadth and depth of the Harn collection offers a cross-section of Roy's developmental stages in his quest for the essential in the visual arts. Roy sought what was crucial and vital in the artistic heritage of India while grappling with modernity, national independence, and his own uneasiness at his increased notoriety in the modern art world, both in India and abroad.

As *Santal Boy with Drum* demonstrates, Roy was determined to develop a style of painting that embraced his own experiences with village crafts and arts as well as his understanding of how India changed during his lifetime from a colony to an independent nation. Bengali village life was where he located not only thematic materials but also color tones and compositional mannerisms that reconciled his formal art training with his embrace of folk art traditions. Santals were noted by Roy and others for their traditions of song and dance. Roy returned again and again to the Santal theme to create works that expressed the rhythms and colors of the group through his choice of hues and pigments.

