



Sudarshan Shetty, *Taj Mahal*, 2008

In Transition: New Art from India

Shilpa Gupta, Reena Kallat, TV Santhosh, Sudarshan Shetty, Thukral & Tagra, Hema Upadhyay

Richmond Art Gallery

May 1 – June 13, 2010

Opening Reception: Saturday May 1, 2010

In collaboration with the Vancouver Biennale the Richmond Art Gallery will present *In Transition: New Art from India*. India is experiencing a period of remarkable growth and transformation and its artists (like contemporary artists everywhere) are responding to these changes. With an eye on its past and a view to the future, these artists are examining the social, political, economic and religious implications of becoming a major world economy.

The exhibition will feature installation-based work by six of India's most recognized contemporary artists: Shilpa Gupta, Reena Kallat, TV Santhosh, Sudarshan Shetty, artist collective Thukral & Tagra, and Hema Upadhyay. An exhibition brochure with an essay written by Keith Wallace will be available at the opening reception.

The reception will take place on Saturday, May 1 from 1:00 to 3:00pm. City of Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie will be in attendance to officially open the exhibition at approximately 1:30pm. Tea and Indian sweets will be served and a short performance by local Bhangra dancers will take place.

In collaboration with

**VANCOUVER
BIENNALE**

Richmond Art Gallery would like to thank Barrie Mowatt, Sarah Creedon and all the staff at the Vancouver Biennale, The Guild Art Gallery in Mumbai, Christina Pannos, Director at the Walsh Gallery in Chicago, Vancouver Curator, Keith Wallace, Joey Kwan at Aberdeen Centre and City of Richmond Public Art Planner, Eric Fiss.

RELATED EVENTS

Aberdeen Centre

Hema Upadhyay will create several sculptures on-site at Aberdeen Centre which will be unveiled the week of May 24 to June 2.

Lulu Series

A lecture in Richmond with Biennale sponsored artist, Hema Upadhyay from Mumbai, *India Dream a Wish, Wish a Dream* on May 20 at 7pm in Council Chambers.

Contemporary Art in India: At Home and in the World

Walk through the exhibition with Keith Wallace as he discusses contemporary art in India today. Thursday June 3, 2010 at 7:30pm. Admission is free.

New Asia Film Festival

Co-presented by Cinevolution Media Arts Society and Richmond Cultural Centre, the festival showcases cutting-edge films centered on contemporary, progressive, and controversial themes related to Asian culture. May 27 to 30 in the Richmond.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Gallery Hours

Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm
Weekends, 10am to 5pm
Closed for statutory holidays

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DESCRIPTION

Shilpa Gupta (b. 1976, Mumbai)

National Highway, No. 1 (En Route Srinagar to Gulmurgh), 2008

Shilpa Gupta uses common modes of representation and technology, the familiarity of which helps make the work accessible to the viewer. As in *National Highway 1*, her work often addresses the ideas of borders and territorial politics. In this work she presents the viewer with a shifting landscape, the road between Srinagar and Gulmurgh, in the beautiful and troubled Kashmir region. In the video the beauty of the landscape is glimpsed through views of the chinar trees, herds grazing, towns and fields, and shots of people by the side of the road. Here Gupta makes us aware of the psychological pressure often felt by visitors to an emergency state such as Kashmir, which has been debilitated by the forces of militarization and surveillance since the late 1980s. In this video installation the viewer encounters what appears to be a record of a road-trip tracking along a pristine, pastoral landscape in a blur of speed and distance. However, the video/experience is occasionally halted whenever a soldier is spotted in the landscape. Each time a soldier appears on the screen, the image stops, stutters and repeats, then returns to normality for a time, only to experience the next soldier and the next jolt. This sighting of soldiers at regular intervals could be read as a testimony to "seeing and time, a visual exploration of duration and rupture that allows us to see deep into a situation."

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Shilpa Gupta was born in Mumbai, India in 1976. Gupta creates artwork using interactive websites, video, gallery environments and public performances to probe and examine subversively such themes as consumer culture, desire, notions of security, militarism and human rights abuse. The artist lives and works in Mumbai.

DESCRIPTION

Reena Saini Kallat (b 1973, Delhi)

Lunar Notes, 2008

Reena Kallat's work often explores the places where the public and the private intersect. *Lunar Notes* and the accompanying photographic installation, *Anonymously Yours*, grew out of the artist's fascination with what she calls "love-graffiti"—testaments of affection in the form of names or initials scratched on the walls in public places. Her work often incorporates names, which act as the stand-ins for personal identity. *Lunar Notes* consists of hundreds of bonded-marble beads, each carved with names of lovers, "strung vertically like raindrops" into a curtain. From a distance the beads can be seen to form an image of the Taj Mahal, the now public monument built as the ultimate (private) symbol of love. Like the Taj Mahal, *Lunar Notes* balances between the public and the private, the monumental and the intricate. Yet, where the mausoleum has traversed from being a private declaration to a national symbol, the curtain has conjoined the two realms, in a sense democratizing it, by literally inscribing the image with individual names.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Reena Kallat was born in New Delhi and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Sir JJ School of Art in Mumbai. She currently lives and works in Mumbai.

DESCRIPTION

TV Santhosh (b. 1968, Kerala)

Living with a Wound, 2009

The themes of violence and injustice run through TV Santhosh's art practice. Drawing on reports and images from the media, Santhosh combines text and repetitive sculptural forms to comment on both the persistent nature of violence and how, through recurrence, it becomes the norm. Conceived after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, *Living with a Wound* revisits these themes, when they become even more relevant and urgent. The work as shown at the Richmond Art Gallery consists of three sculptural forms that recall ossuaries, repositories of skeletal remains. LED panels mounted on top of the pieces scroll a text recounting the story of an unknowing participant in medical testing:

"...Without any reason, they made a cut in my arm above the palm 10 centimetres long and 2 centimetres wide. Today I understand that the surgery that was done on me without anaesthesia was done purposely with tools that weren't sterilized to cause infection...A part of the experiment was also to observe my ability to work with the wound and how far I could bear its pain. Slowly, as hopelessness started encroaching the pain, one day, Oh God! I heard someone screaming that war is over! And saw the soldiers there to rescue us from this hell...."

On a primary level, the work speaks about reopening old wounds—the text seems to be drawn from the testimony of a survivor—but in the larger context, speaks of the relation of a society to the violence of global terrorism.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

TV Santosh was born in Keraka and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Kala Bhavan Santinikatan West Bengal in 1994 and his Masters of Fine Arts from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda in 1997. He currently lives and works in Mumbai.

DESCRIPTION

Sudarshan Shetty (b. 1961, Mangalore, Karnataka)
Taj Mahal, 2008

Sudarshan Shetty's work reflects on the nature of contemporary Indian society and the objects that define it. Working with mechanically-reproduced multiples of common objects, the artist attempts to reveal the many meanings that lie beyond face value. In *Taj Mahal*, Shetty has created hundreds of miniature reproductions of the historic monument, bolted together to form a monumental block. Re-scaled and repeated, the image is transposed from its original context and meaning to become decorative, nearly meaningless. Near the installation a video of the Taj Mahal, overlaid with an image of flames, reinforces this idea of destruction. With this video we are meant to understand the process of disintegration in meaning, in the same way the monument has migrated from private gesture through national symbol, to a ubiquitous image robbed of potency, akin to the tourist souvenir. In this sense, the piece reflects the notion of absence – as, in the first instance, the Taj Mahal stands in monument to a dead wife, in the second, it stands as a symbol of a (constructed) notion of national identity. The artist's strategy of radically altering the scale of the objects and his choice of steel as material is also intentional, serving to reorient the viewer's perception and act as a commentary on the everyday, the contemporary nature of society, its economy and its road to modernisation.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sudarshan Shetty was born in Mangalore, Karnataka, India and received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting at Sir J. J. School of Art, Mumbai in 1980. Shetty completed a residency in 2007 at the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, USA.

DESCRIPTION

Jiten Thukral (b. 1976, Jalandhar, Punjab) & Sumir Tagra (b. 1979, New Delhi)
Keep Out of Reach of Children (Tank), 2009

The artist collective Thukral & Tagra present their work under the trade name of Bosedk Design. The Anglicization of an abusive term in Punjabi, Bosedk can be read as an adolescent stance taken in defiance of all that is serious and adult, ensuring that the artists never take themselves too seriously. Working under Bosedk Design permits Thukral & Tagra to delve unrestrictedly into all media and forms, including corporate commissions, since the notion of "selling-out" is part of their artistic enquiry. The creation of a faux-industrial line of products, branded as "Everyday Bosedk", allows the artists to challenge the values of fine art fabrication and the art market by using industrial processes to create everyday, disposable objects within the context of "high art". *Keep Out of Reach of Children* plays into this strategy, presenting ordinary plastic bottles on commercially produced shelving units. Through the use of commissioned labels and their strategic placement on the shelving unit however, the artists reveal the social critique underlying their work. In the current exhibition, standing at a distance from the work allows the viewer to note the deliberate arrangement of objects that create the form of an armoured tank. The title repeats a common warning found on everyday household products, exhorting care, responsibility and proper supervision of those in power to safeguard those who must be protected.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Jiten Thukral was born in Jalandhar, Punjab and received his Bachelor of Arts from Chandigarh Art College and his Master of Fine Arts from New Delhi College of Art.

Sumir Tagra was born in New Delhi and received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the New Delhi College of Art, New Delhi and his Post Graduate Diploma from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad Shankar of Arts, New Delhi. Thukral and Tagra currently work as a collective based in New Delhi.

DESCRIPTIONS

Hema Upadhyay (b. 1972, Baroda, Gujarat)
***Loco-Foco-Motto*, 2010**

Hema Upadhyay's work often reveals a concern with issues of migration and displacement, gender, and class. *Loco-Foco-Motto* is part of a series she has been working on since 2007. Constructed of thousands of un-ignited matchsticks assembled into elaborate chandeliers, these pieces embody a trend in her work which explores violence co-existing with beauty. A nascent violence is implied in these works, a commentary on the hostilities, intolerance and cruelty that touches so many lives throughout the contemporary world. At once delicate, nostalgic and yet dangerous, the disparity of creating a chandelier out of matchsticks takes the object out of the realm of logic and situates it firmly in the metaphoric. The materials are familiar and innocuous, but in the wrong circumstance, disastrous. The potential exists for matchsticks to perform either of two functions with its flames, a constructive one and a destructive one, and *Loco-Foco-Motto* points to the 'moment' when the individual decides which course to pursue. As the artist says, "the structure speaks of the 'Light of Hope' in this fragile environment.... a [potential] time bomb organized out of day-to-day experiences and real-life heroes and heroines."

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Hema Upadhyay was born in Baroda and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts and Masters of Fine Arts from the Fine Arts Faculty of the Maharaja Sayagirao University Baroda in 1995 and 1997 respectively. She currently lives and work in Mumbai.

LIST OF WORKS

In Transition: New Art from India

- 1) Shilpa Gupta, *National Highway No.1*, 2008
single-channel video projection,
6 min, 10 sec.
- 2) Reena Kallat, *Lunar Notes*, 2008
bonded marble, photographic prints
curtain: 108" × 150"
photos: 22 ¼" × 15 ½" each
- 3) TV Santhosh, *Living with a Wound*, 2008
fibreglass, metal, LED panels
60" × 84" × 30"
- 4) Sudarshan Shetty, *Taj Mahal*, 2008
steel, video
84" × 69" × 171"
- 5) Thukral & Tagra, *Keep Out of the Reach of Children (Tank)*, 2009
plastic, resin, water, decals, glass and corian shelving units
96" × 82" × 12"
- 6) Hema Upadhyay, *Loco-Foco-Motto*, 2010 (to be created on-site)
matchsticks, adhesive plywood