

Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release



Srestha Rit Premnath, *Surrender*, 2009. Digital C-print, 45 x 90 in.

Moment as Monument

Hemali Bhuta - Ajit Chauhan - Siamak Filizadeh - Chitra Ganesh - Barbad Golshiri
Matthias Müller - Yamini Nayar - Vijai Patchineelam - Srestha Rit Premnath
Mahbub Shah - Kiran Subbaiah - Jaret Vadera - Haeri Yoo

August 18-25, 2009

Opening Reception: August 17, 6-9 pm

Travancore Palace - New Delhi
Kasturba Gandhi Marg, Connaught Place, near Bharti Vidya School

Thomas Erben Gallery and Aparajita Jain of Seven Art are excited to present *Moment as Monument*, a curated exhibition of work in a variety of media by thirteen artists from Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Iran, Pakistan and the United States, many of whom are part of the South Asian diasporas.

Moment as Monument explores the dynamic relationships between the temporal and the authoritative, in the overlap where politics, social systems and cognitive structures intersect. Through varied strategies, processes and materials, the artists in the exhibition all seek to question, challenge, expose or destabilize the often unacknowledged ideological, social, psychological, aesthetic and philosophical constructs that surround us daily.

The concept of "moment" implies sequentiality, a before and after. The criterion of isolating one moment from another is marked by intensity – of a political nature, for example, in **Rit Premnath's** (b. 1979, Bangalore) *Surrender*, a photograph of Somali pirates buzzed by a U.S. Navy helicopter. Cropped and reframed as a triptych, the singularity of the scene assumes the quality of a cinematic event. In his interactive video-installation, **Kiran Subbaiah** (b. 1971, Sidapur, India) heightens our awareness of the moment by duplication and temporal

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displacement whereas **Barbad Golshiri's** (b. 1982, Tehran) *Jxalq* [(dʒælgʰ) v.t. & i. act of creating a masturbpiece], in part, is a meditation on the mutability inherent in the cyclical, or "looped" in video parlance.

Mahbub Shah's (b. 1978, Sindh, Pakistan) seemingly unorganized arrangements of dots cropped from colorful magazine ads solidify a scintillating universe in which shifting patterns and structures emerge. Similarly visually fragmented, **Haeri Yoo** (b. 1970, Korea) systematically suspends in her paintings stories of disrupted feminist and cultural narratives. This new body of work evidences her shift towards the dissolution of a linear narrative, testing the inherent possibilities in the foundational language of painting itself.

By its function, the monument solidifies the moment and, through amplification, projects itself as an overriding principle pushing other moments into oblivion. Interested in the detritus of buried narratives, marginal figures and parallel histories, **Chitra Ganesh** (b. 1977, Brooklyn) ink-jets, in a new body of work, disparate visual materials and languages onto unstretched canvas which she further elaborates upon with paint additions and collaged elements.

Siamak Filizadeh (b. 1970, Tehran) uses the visual language of advertising with its authorial intentions, not only as a tool to mock Iranian's high end consumerist aspirations but also ironically points to the impossibility of the production of these products in contemporary Iran.

Yamini Nayar's (b. 1975, Rochester, NY) photographs of meticulously constructed and intervened, small-scale architectonic works situate themselves at a very specific place of time defined by an intersection of personal, historical and psychological story lines that converge for an instance and diverge again. Keeping the images in flux, her formal skills transform the transient and ephemeral into iconic images. Similarly, the paintings and photographs of **Vijai Patchineelam** (b. 1983, Rio de Janeiro) are trapped in a perpetual state of transit. Idea and result are conflated into a present continuous, which is both the impetus behind and the product of the work.

Jaret Vadera (b. 1976, Toronto) is exhibiting work from the *Here be Dragons* series where he layers photographic prints - taken from experimental paintings - and re-presents them on light boxes. The resulting, back-lit images float back and forth between something abstract and decipherable, clinically cold and subtly seductive, digitally high-tech and biomorphic.

Vacancy, a collaged travelogue by **Matthias Müller** (b. 1961, Bielefeld, Germany) explores the city Brasilia, "the ultimate utopia of the 20th century" (Umberto Eco), abandoned by its inhabitants - kept alive today only by its staff. The film exudes a strangely obsessive feeling of time and space, documenting this vast and failed modernist utopian monument.

In her installation, **Hemali Bhuta** (b. 1978, Mumbai) uses cacti as her primary, unwieldy and literally prickly material to create a visceral experience for the viewer that elicits synesthetic associations. She processes her materials formally and uses accumulation to create large-scale environments.

All of these works finally demonstrate that such categories as moment and monument are inextricably linked, constantly shifting and forever being reconfigured. Their malleability is finally determined through each artists strategies and processes, and, ultimately within the viewer. (Thomas Erben, Curator)