



SANGRAM









steven harvey fine art projects presents

SANGRAM MAJUMDAR

DRAWINGS

November 19-December 19, 2009

Coleman Bancroft llc

35 east 67th Street | New York City, NY 10065

PAINTINGS

December 1- December 31, 2009

Gallery Schlesinger

24 east 73rd Street | New York City, NY 10021





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Sangram Majumdar: Drawings

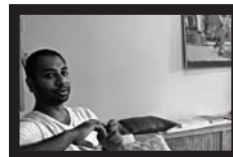
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Cover: ***Removal***, 2009, oil on linen, 28 x 32 inches (detail)

Inside cover: ***Hidden***, 2009, oil on linen, 38 x 42 inches (detail)

1/2 title page: ***History Box***, 2009, oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches

Opoosite title page: ***Left Behind***, 2009, oil on linen, 36 x 32 inches

Opposite: ***Midday Sun***, 2008, oil on paper on panel, 19 x 21 7/16 inches

Back cover: ***Interior***, 2009, charcoal and graphite on paper, 72 x 48 inches (detail)





Simultaneity: The Work of Sangram Majumdar by Jennifer Sachs Samet

In 1975, in an exhibition catalogue essay entitled “Painterly Representation,” Louis Finkelstein wrote that the service of painting was to transfix the past, present, and future – to achieve simultaneity of the movement of life. In a painting, he continued, we transfix a flow of consciousness that is involved with all of the challenges of representing appearance, and all of the potential to create meaning through pictorial language. The potential is immense, he rightly noted, “for painterly vision everything is always up for grabs: the style, the space, the structure, the attitude, above all affect, the way we are touched by the world.” Finkelstein, of course, was not the first to discuss the idea of simultaneity in relation to visual art; Henri Bergson popularized the idea of a constant flux of time and space that animates our consciousness, and his philosophy catalyzed the early 20th century avant-garde – artists like Léger and Duchamp.



Sangram Majumdar’s painting reminds us of the potential and the achievement of transfixing simultaneity within a single visual image. He seems to slice open his worlds, cutting into them almost mercilessly to present an image rich with evocation. In earlier work he presented scenes of travelers that more literally represented passing time, movement, and geographic transitions. But in his recent work he has found ways to achieve this in a less literal manner: his interiors show an accumulation of stuff: broken chairs, vases, shattered ceramics, electrical cords, and sometimes a figure. The shattered fragments not only take our mind to another time and place—how did it break, why, what was it like before—but it also is a direct metaphor to Majumdar’s distinct painterly style. The angles and lines and delineations of form animate his paintings and take them out of pleasant domesticity into another world. His touch can be raw; he builds up a dry surface with neutrals and pale color. But his hand is never heavy; his surface is not a rough palette-knife impasto but rather juxtapositions that seem almost effortlessly unified. Similarly, within his compositions, there is always something voluptuous to balance out the edges: the circular rims of a vase, bowl or jar. The touches of roundness in figures become all the more rewarding—little gifts to us—like in his drawing *Lucia*, 2008, where the curves of the nude and the leaves behind become a counterpoint to the slashing demarcations of the interior. His floral still lifes play with this impossibility outright—they are almost a tease in their mixture of austerity and decorative beauty—rich blooms parsed and carved against monochrome, dry grounds.

Finkelstein rightly noted that the artist’s individual choices were foremost – it was the marriage of subject and form where meaning was produced. Majumdar creates an equivalence between the shards of objects represented, and his pictorial means. His work is composed of painterly “shards” – areas of color delicately spliced against one another. He reaps meaning out of fragments: an interior where a staircase juts out from under a black ceiling, a painting hangs on a gray wall, and a ceramic hovers at bottom edge. Or a landscape, like *Midday Sun*, where pink illuminated rooftops cut right through trees and grass seen from above. The contrasts tell a story; it is a subconscious narrative evoked by our awareness of the elements’ passage through time and space, and the painting’s overall plasticity. The simultaneity, the flux, the flow of consciousness speaks to us and reaches us gently.





Megan With Umbrella Plant, 2009, charcoal and graphite on paper, 60 x 40 inches







Lucia II, 2009, charcoal and graphite on paper, 42 x 48 inches







Lucia III, 2009, charcoal and graphite on paper, 48 X 60 Inches







Stacks Study, 2009, oil on panel, 12 x 12 Inches







Eclipsed, 2009, oil on linen, 78 x 90 inches







The Maze, 2009, oil on linen, 38 x 42 inches (private collection)







Islands, 2009, oil on linen, 42 x 48 inches





Material Thoughts, 2009, oil on linen, 78 x 90 inches (in progress)







Interview with Sangram Majumdar
by Steven Harvey, edited by Jennifer Samet

SM: I've been thinking about trying to find visual imagery that parallels my working process. My process involves adding, removing, often reworking a painting, but also trying to retain a transparency of decisions in the working process. Areas of color are often broadly applied with the palette knife, and charcoal or single brush lines act as incisions into space. The lines become separations and boundaries and are often a "yes" to one thought, versus a "no" to another, which delve into the history of the narrative. I would do a drawing, and I might like it, but often it generally wouldn't work, so I would do another drawing on top. That history began to become part of the actual physical image. It's not about just what is on the surface; it's also about how it came into being.

It becomes about history, which is why I was drawn to the scraps of woodworking that were in my studio from building setups and whatnot. I began to think there is something in there, there is something that I can discover; it is a state complex enough to be a motif. It parallels my aesthetic decisions. Wood is organic at the beginning, it comes from trees, from the earth, and then it is processed - it becomes these systematically rectangular planks that then are taken to make houses or whatever. And then, later, they are taken down and they become scraps again. So there is a kind of circular quality to it. I'm taking this, and building. I'm building with them, but I'm not building houses - I'm building these structures. The wood and the cords are simple geometric forms - rectangles, lines, curves angles. So formally they are dense enough and visually they can also be loaded. But there is also something about the mundane. They are so simple and regular, and I am always drawn to the poetry within those things.

I'm also interested in the contrast between the exotic and the mundane. That is where narrative comes in or imagery becomes interesting. Like when certain passages create a hybrid of patterns - imagery that takes you to another place and another time. In some of my paintings there are snippets of imagery that are like forms from another world. When I go to the Met, I am always drawn to sculptural objects where pieces are missing. Or perhaps I'm looking at a billboard, but things have rotten away or there's some information on top - that's what I'm drawn to. I have a certain need or love for density - a density of mark, density of information, a dense palate and flavor. In terms of narrative, I am always interested in layers. In terms of books and film, I've always loved to experience that feeling that by the time I finish, I want to watch it again or read it again. A classic example would be Joyce or García-Marquez, where you go back to re-read a passage and find a different meaning or different combinations. When I see how that is done, it gives me the ability to try the same. Every time I look, I find a new orientation or a new possibility, a new pattern that forms. Your eyes find these connections and they become indented in different ways.





SH: You're talking about working from life in both the drawings and paintings. Your work has been characterized as perceptual rather than realist. How much is invented, and how much is observed, and how does that interaction work for you?

SM: With those sorts of terminology, people attach themselves to certain phrasing and it becomes a way of thinking. For me, looking is a starting point. But once I start drawing or painting, it is its own thing. The world outside becomes a bouncing-off point. The drawings are more perceptually limited.

SH: Is it because they are figure drawings?

SM: It is because they are about manifesting a sense of place. They are about the here and now, and I'm really interested in that. The paintings start with that, but then I begin to pull back more and more. Especially when I begin to sense elements that are not there, and I start changing things, and it becomes a more synthetic experience.

SH: The picture you are working on today, you started in another city and studio with a certain set-up, and now you've changed it completely. The figure is turned around and it's a different person than who you started with.

SM: Yes, that becomes an extension of the narrative. With a lot of these paintings, I don't start with any sketches. That is an intentional decision. Three or four years ago, I used to do a lot of planning. That was fine, but there was a disconnect between the way I was painting and the imagery. They completely did not relate. I think for me it is important that I start from an impulse and with a sensation. For me the sensation is an actual world, be it something that exists or something that I somewhat manipulated. That begins to give me ideas for the narrative. The people I'm painting have a specific personality and they really drive the narrative in many ways. This can be a little disorienting, and that's why those pauses are helpful when the person is not there. Then I can come in and it helps me play that game between what I want, and what the painting says. I'm trying to become better at listening to the painting. Not doing sketches is really helpful because it helps me think about what's important, and lose some control. It's a play between losing control and gaining control, where you ratchet things down, and where you just close your eyes and jump.

recorded at the artist's studio, October 23, 2009





SANGRAM MAJUMDAR

BORN Calcutta, India, 1976

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Paintings, Gallery Schlesinger, New York, NY
 Drawings, Coleman Bancroft LLC, New York, NY
 Laguna College of Art and Design, Laguna Beach, CA
- 2008 Past & Present, University of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD
 New Works, Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL
 Kresge Art Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
 Paintings & Drawings, Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg, PA
- 2006 Observations - Paintings and Drawings, Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2005 New works, Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 2004 Transitions, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
 Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL
 New Works, Wright State University Art Galleries, Dayton, OH
- 2003 Ann Nathan Gallery, IL

SELECTED GROUP and TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2009 Brick Walk & Harvey @ ArtHamptons, Bridgehampton, NY
 35/25 : Twenty -Five Painters Under Thirty-Five, The Painting Center, NY, NY
 Summer Invitational, Alpha Gallery, Boston, MA
- 2008 Sangram Majumdar and Eric Holzman, International School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, Montecastello di Vibio, Italy
 Old School, Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects @ Gallery Schlesinger, NY, NY
 Vessels, Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, NY, NY
 Persona, Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, NY, NY
 Bethesda Painting Awards Exhibition, Fraser Gallery, Bethesda, MD
 Form & Fiction, The Painting Center, NY, NY
- 2007 United States Embassy, Freetown, Sierra Leone
 COLOR, 2219 St. Paul St. (curated by Nancy Froelich), Baltimore, MD8
 NUDE, Maryland Art Place Benefit Auction, Baltimore, MD
 RISD Baltimore/DC Biennial 2007, The Warehouse Gallery, DC
- 2006 Marking Perception: Figurative Works on Paper, Andrews Gallery, The College of William & Mary, VA
- 2005 Drawing Invitational, Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art in Nagoya, Japan
 Mind/Self, Villa Julie College, Baltimore, MD
 Alfred and Trafford Klotts Residency Program Exhibition, Rochefort en terre, France
- 2004 "Paint, Poetry, Pros", Eubie Blake Jazz Institute, Baltimore, MD
 "Narrative Visions: Works by Grace Hartigan, Beverly McIver, Sangram Majumdar, Raoul Middleman, David Rich, and Tony Shore,"C.Grimaldis Gallery, Baltimore, MD
 Conversations – influences and collaboration in contemporary art (traveling exhibition) – Delaware Center for Contemporary Art, DL; Rochester Institute of Technology, NY
- 2003 Annual Faculty Exhibition, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
 SOFA NY, Ann Nathan Gallery, Chicago, IL
 Lyon College, Batesville, AR
- 2002 Brittingham Invitational II, (exhibition catalogue) University of Wisconsin System, Madison, WI
 Wisconsin Triennial, juried exhibition, (exhibition catalogue), Madison Art Center, Madison, WI
 Drawing from Perception, juror: Graham Nickson, Wright State University Art Galleries, Dayton, OH
- 2001 MFA Thesis Exhibition, IU Art Museum, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN





AWARDS

- 2009 Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Space Program Recipient 2009-10
MICA Trustees Excellence in Teaching Award
- 2008 Marcella Brenner Faculty Development Grant - Maryland Institute College of Art, MD
- 2006 Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Grant in Painting
- 2005 Alfred and Trafford Klotts Residency Program, Rochefort en Terre, France
- 2002 Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs - Travel Grant for Visiting Artists, University of WI-Eau Claire, WI
- 2001 Tony Munavec Overseas Fellowship to Italy, Indiana University, IN
- 1999 First Year Graduate Assistantship, Indiana University, IN
- 1995 -99 Rhode Island School of Design Tuition Scholarship, Providence, RI

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2009 McQuaid, Cate, "Exhibit charms with its twists on being "Handsome", Boston Globe, June 24, 2009
John Yau, Exhibition Essay, 35/25 : Twenty -Five Painters Under Thirty-Five, The Painting Center, NY, NY
- 2008 Burke, Judy, "Paean to Painting: Fine CAW exhibit shows the art form is alive and well", New Haven Register, May 22, 2008
Noel, Scott, Exhibition essay, Form & Fiction, The Painting Center, NY, NY, 2008
Drury Ralph, Stryker Joanne, Drawing: Structure and Vision, Prentice Hall, 2008
Rockman, Deborah, Drawing Essentials: A Guide to Drawing from Observation, Oxford University Press, 2008
Artworks This Week, Show #. 749, Maryland Public Television, June 4, 2008
- 2007 Exhibition Catalogue for United States Embassy, Freetown, Sierra Leone
Stone, Harold B. Exploring Life Drawing, Thompson Delmar Publishing, 2007
- 2005 Exposition franco-américaine au château, Oues-France, June 28, 2005
Best of Baltimore 2005, Baltimore, City Paper
- 2004 Juxtapositions, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, October 2004
Giuliano, Mike, "Baltimore Weekly Highlights", CityPaper, Baltimore, MD, Oct 20, 2004
Giuliano, Mike, The Towson Times, Baltimore, MD, June 27, 2004
McNatt, Glenn, "Nearly every picture tells a story," The Sun, Baltimore, MD, June 23, 2004
Simmons, Carol, "Calcutta-born artist intrigued by the state of transition," Dayton Daily News, Dayton, OH, Jan 25, 2004
Arnett, Melinda, "Sangram Majumdar and Louis Finkelstein Art Gallery Exhibition," The Guardian, Dayton, OH, Feb 4, 2004
- 2002 Wisconsin Triennial exhibition catalogue, Madison Art Center, Madison, WI

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Summer 2008 The International School of Painting, Drawing and Sculpture, Montecastello di Vibio, Italy
- 2003-Present Professor of Painting, Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD
- 2003 - 2001 Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, Eau Claire, WI

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Kresge Art Museum, East Lansing, MI
Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago, IL
Wright State University, Dayton, OH
LDH Energy, Wilton, CT

EDUCATION

- 2001 MFA, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, Bloomington, IN
- 1999 BFA, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN, Providence, RI
- 1997 RISD European Honors Program, PALAZETTO CENCI, Rome, Italy





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MAJUMDAR

