

sangram majumdar

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sangram majumdar: new work

jan 12- feb 19, 2012

Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects presents a solo exhibition of new work by Sangram Majumdar. Majumdar, born in 1976 in Calcutta, is an image-based painter who received his BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and his MFA from Indiana University, and is currently on the faculty at Maryland Institute College of Art.

This is the gallery's second one-person exhibition of his work, which we have also featured in a solo presentation at PULSE New York 2011 and in several group exhibitions. Majumdar received a Marie Walsh Sharpe residency grant in 2010, and a Purchase Award following his inclusion in the American Academy of Arts and Letters 2010 Invitational Exhibition.

This new body of work ranges thematically from a portrait (*Portrait Projected*), to a painting that plays with geometric abstraction (*Fall Into*). Yet underlying all of the paintings is a complex compositional process of image overlays - paintings atop paintings. Majumdar's work of ten years ago explored figure groups and crowds as subjects. In his recent work, the figures are often erased, with just traces or remnants of their presence remaining. Detailed, precisely drawn forms become pieces of a dense, but ultimately unified surface. Open spaces and voids are explored as much as accumulations of objects.

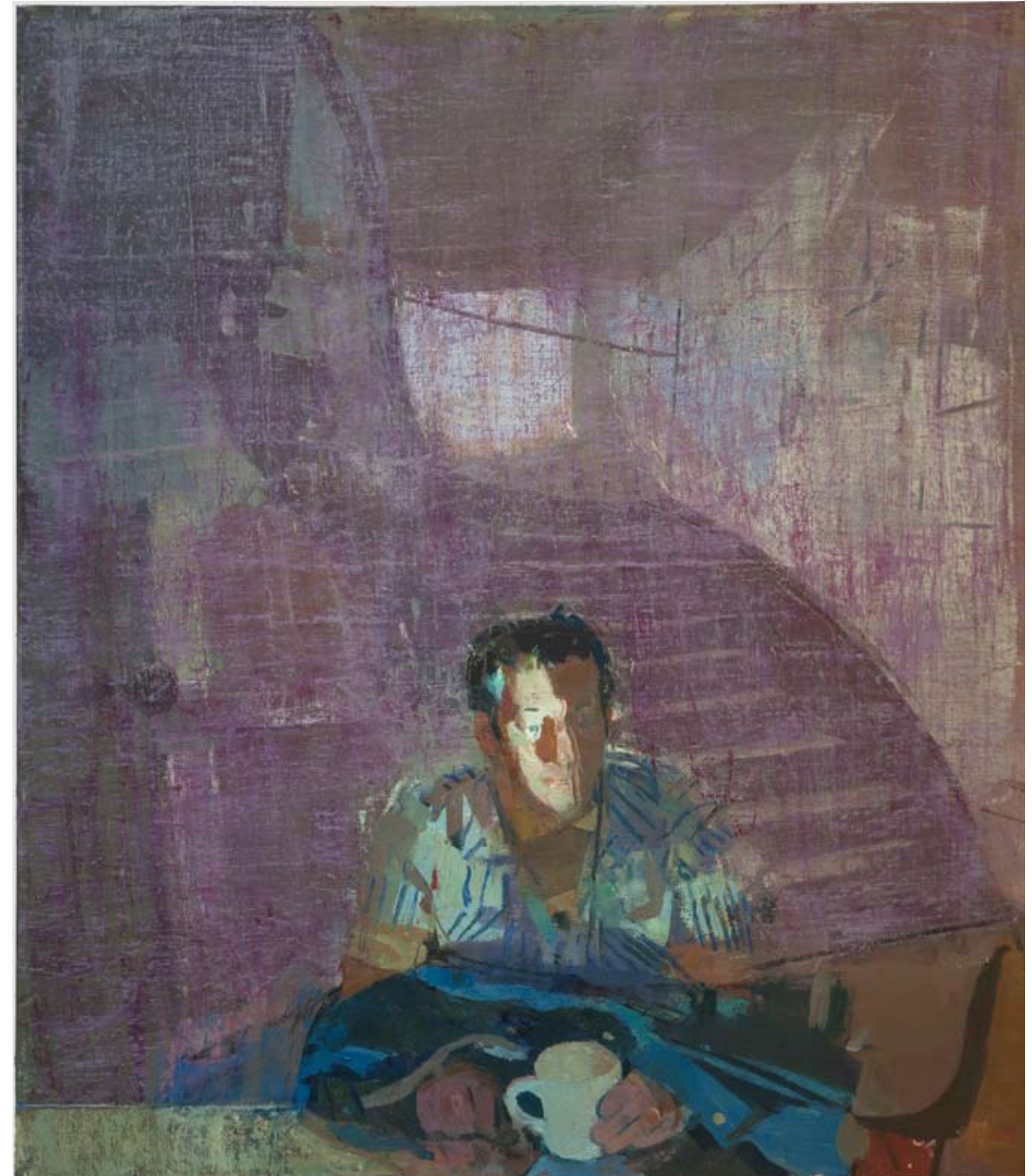
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The layering of fragmentary information relates to Majumdar's reflections on Bengali culture - the multi-day, multi-sensory religious festivals (pujas) that were part of his childhood in Calcutta. These paintings contain references to the myth of Durga - a Hindu Goddess who slayed the buffalo demon with her lion. The image layering is also an exploration of our relationship to social media, where partial knowledge becomes embedded in us - but only as fragments. The paintings in the exhibition are inter-related: we find small segments of imagery repeated and re-mixed in different ways, for example, in *Smoke and Mirror* and *Fall Into*. They become half-truths, a questioning of image and narrative, and Majumdar invites the viewer to discover what is actually there.

Majumdar writes:

My paintings are conversations between the notion of the familiar and the questions it raises through the medium of painting. The work is never about arriving at a resolution, but maintaining the question, not out of any existential romanticism, but the sheer joy of the hunt. The paintings begin long before I pick up a brush, with a desire to fabricate out of the familiar a situation that is in itself a hybrid. Working against the factual nameability, the paintings are extensions of this metamorphosis.

Visual truth is complicated by the long-standing staunch conviction that what you see is real. As a painter working with these conventions of naturalism, I have chosen not to resolve the question of what is "it" or what is it? but rather to deepen the query that confound the expected outcome. I am saying (to paraphrase Groucho Marx) you shouldn't believe me or your lying eyes. It should remain an ongoing investigation. An open case.



portrait projected, 50 x 42 in, oil on linen, 2011



fall into, 42 x 46 in, oil on linen, 2011



smoke and mirror, 84 x 66 in, oil on linen, 2012



fragment study no.1, 16 x 12 in, oil on panel



fragment study no.2, 12 x 16 in, oil on linen



altered structure with turquoise bits, 42 x 50 in, oil on linen, 2011



as if, 66 x 72 in, o/l, 2012



facemask, 20 x 24 in, oil on linen, 2011



cropped portrait of A., 11 x 9 in, oil on linen, 2011



office space, 20 x 24 in, oil on linen, 2011



wood shop, 18 x 24 in, oil on linen, 2011



two heads, 20 11/16 x 29 in, charcoal and pastel on paper, 2011



night comes in, 17 13/16 x 22 15/16 in, charcoal and pastel on paper, 2011



studio after hours, 31 1/2 x 22 1/2 in, oil on linen

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