

PearlLam FineArt

Window in the Wall:

India and China – Imaginary Conversations

Curated by **Gayatri Sinha and Gao Minglu**

Featuring works by Indian artists Abir Karmakar, Gigi Scaria, Lavanya Mani, Manjunath Kamath, Mithu Sen, Ranbir Kaleka, Sharmila Samant, T. Venkanna

And by Chinese artists Cui Xiuwen, Ge Zhen, Hu Zhiying, Li Zhanyang, Ma Yuan, Su Xinping, Tan Xun

Exhibition Dates **9th September – 9th November, 2011**

Opening Celebration Party on Thursday, **8th September, 2011, 5-8 pm**

Pearl Lam Fine Art, No. 181 Middle Jiangxi Road, Shanghai, China 200002

Works will also be shown at our additional Project Space, No. 500 S.Ruijin Road, by appointment only

Shanghai—Pearl Lam Fine Art is delighted to present *Window in the Wall: India and China - Imaginary Conversations*, an exhibition curated by Gayatri Sinha, an art critic and curator based in New Delhi, India, and Professor Gao Minglu, a curator, critic and professor at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. This exhibition is a unique combination of photography, video, sculpture and painting from fifteen contemporary Indian and Chinese artists.

China and India are the world's two most populous nations with the fastest growing economies. Both countries are on the cusp of a changing global order, which puts them at the centre of world scrutiny. As a consequence of their rise in prominence, Indian and Chinese art are playing a more significant role in the international art market with some Indian and Chinese artists attracting a global following.

Relations between China and India date back to ancient times. Both cultures reflect a humanist and artistic exchange. Today through diplomatic and economic ties spurred by their respective growth, they have successfully entered into mutually beneficial dialogue.

This exhibition proposes a new way communication where contemporary artistic vision and cultural heritage become the basis of an imaginary dialogue - a Window in the Wall - to investigate cultural and philosophical concerns and redefine Asian consciousness in terms of individual and collective identity.

The past in China and India is always viewed as a spiritual realm, while the present relates to the transient materialistic world - an industrial and commercial playground.

The metaphor of the wall in this exhibition refers not only to the relation between the past and the present, but is extended to a demarcation of two cultural extremities: spirituality and materialism, introversion and extroversion. The coexistence of these opposing extremities has deeply influenced and shaped the two cultures.

The exhibition reflects these two extremities in a coexistence of reality and fiction, imaginary past and futuristic visions. In all the featured works, personal experience and collective memory, urban fantasies and cultural icons are intertwined in a strong contemporary theme that engages not only the two countries but expands to the individual and the imaginary.

Highlights of *Window in the Wall* include:

Familiar Music from the Old Theatre (2011) by Indian artist Manjunath Kamath reveals an imaginary narrative, where the essential enigmatic nature of the images and its meaning are in flux, open to viewer interpretation. Elements of pop, mythology and media are combined to create surreal and naturalistic worlds. Drawn from the ephemeral, the narrative functions as a way to perceive the world, pointing to the possibilities of the unspoken, unrevealed events.

A surreal combination of reality and the imaginary is also present in the work *Equator* (2011) by Indian video artist and sculptor Gigi Scaria. This photoscape investigates the relationship between society and architecture, urban structures and social displacement. *Equator* explores the impact of the recent boom in Asian cities, such as Shanghai and New Delhi, by establishing a liminal delineation that challenges the human psyche and its relationship with modern progress.

Transit series (2011) by Mithu Sen provokes both humor and serious consideration. Combining watercolors and collages, these intimate works invite response to subjective experiences of femininity and identity through memories of transition. The imagery links the kitschy femininity of flowers arrangements with anatomic details and linear configurations that transform into ornamental structure.

Chinese artist Tan Xun's sculptural installation *Limingzhuang Program Column series* (2008) is based on historical inspiration and reflects on cultural identity. Scenes inspired by Song Dynasty poems have been carved onto Qin dynasty wooden beams. Without an attempt to disguise the material or its function, a daily object is transformed into a sculptural work to serve as a testament of the artist's cultural identity.

Relating to the universal theme of existential exploration, photographer and video artist Cui Xiuwen transcends gender, culture and time in her *Existential Emptiness series* (2009).

Selected Indian and Chinese works from *Window in the Wall* will be on view at Pearl Lam *Fine Art*'s booth (E2-11) at the 5th edition of SH-Contemporary 2011, Asia Pacific Contemporary Art Fair, from September 8-10, at the Shanghai Exhibition Center.

About Gayatri Sinha

Gayatri Sinha is an art critic and curator based in New Delhi. She is the author of several books focused primarily on the structures of gender and iconography, media, economics and social history in India. As a curator she has worked extensively in India and abroad, most notably at the India Art Summit, the Newark Museum, the National Museum in New Delhi, and the National Gallery of Modern Art among others.

About Gao Minglu

Gao Minglu is a curator, critic and professor at the University of Pittsburgh. His many publications explore the changing relationship between global art movements and Chinese tradition. He is particularly interested in Chinese art from the 1970s to the present and his exhibitions on the subject are among the most important ever assembled in the U.S. and China.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Pearl Lam Galleries was originally founded as Contrasts Gallery in Hong Kong in 1992 by Pearl Lam. Both the Fine Art and Design Gallery are at the vanguard of the global art and cultural scene.

Pearl Lam **Fine Art** focuses on nurturing and promoting a stable of cross-cultural and cross-discipline Chinese artists along with a select handful of international artists, all of whose work is a recreation and extension of traditions. These artists react to and against Western influences and the established Western cannon to create a new aesthetic or visual language. As part of this mission, Pearl Lam Fine Art collaborates with renowned curators who present influential and groundbreaking shows that question perceptions of Chinese contemporary art and explore the crossing of cultures, East and West.

Pearl Lam **Design** shows works by established and emerging international designers at its design gallery in Shanghai and design fairs around the world. Designers are invited to push the boundaries of traditional Chinese art and craft techniques to create new works that often reflect their experiences in China or some notable aspect of Chinese culture.

Pearl Lam Galleries will soon have its website online at www.pearllam.com.

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