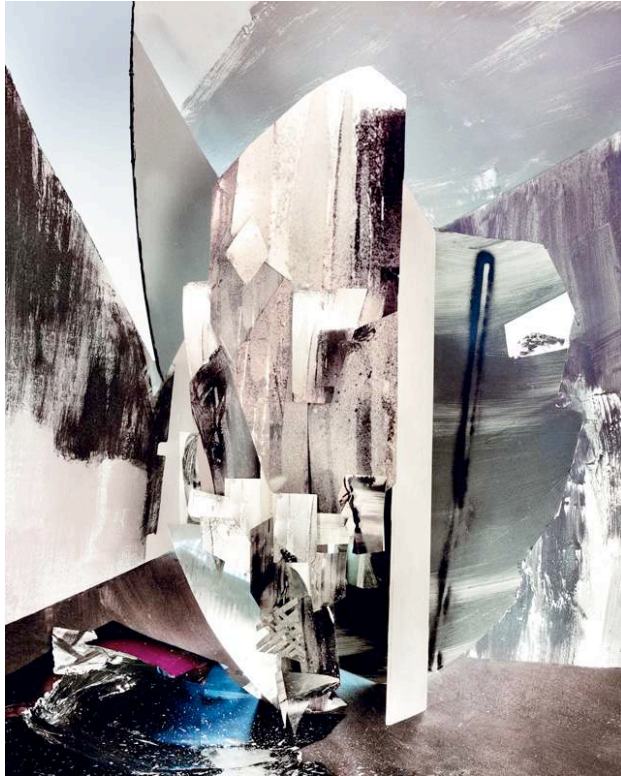


# Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release



*Akhet*, 2013. C-print, edition of 5 (+2 AP), 50 x 40 in.

## Yamini Nayar

*an axe for a wing-bone*

November 7 – December 21, 2013

*Opening reception: Thursday, November 7, 6-8:30 pm*

It is our great pleasure to announce *an axe for a wing-bone*, **Yamini Nayar's** second solo exhibition with Thomas Erben Gallery. This new body of work continues Nayar's process-oriented practice, further highlighting her method of construction and destruction, where the finally selected photographic recording might not be an end result but chosen from a state "in between." This is particularly evident in a series of four black-and-white small-scale studies, different iterations of a makeshift room where common elements take on roles that change from image to image. The timeline is unclear, giving a sense of parallel realities, and the improbable constructions disrupt any sense of spatial logic as they veer towards abstraction.

Process and temporality have always been essential to Nayar's work: tabletop and wall-built models are fashioned from raw industrial materials and studio debris, and continuously reworked while being documented by the camera. The works in *an axe for a wing-bone* seem even more impermanent than

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earlier examples, unhinging meaning/logic in a classic surrealist clash of visual impulses, where multiple perspectives are contained within the same image. Constructions that previously appeared fractured but stable have been infused with a heightened precariousness, the delicate energy of a place whose very structure is founded on the constant shift of time and movement. There is a presence of body in these spaces, hands building and tearing apart, the physical and personal merging with the space itself as each small event leaves its mark.

One point of departure for Nayar is her research into modernist architecture – along with the 1920-30s design of constructivists and the Bauhaus movement – and its monumentality echoes through the work: ambitious structures supported by fragile, skeletal underpinnings. There is a sense of mimicry here, a desire to understand and rework the tectonics of modernism, as if someone from a distant future were trying to make sense of a fragmented architectural past, improvising with any objects at hand. In works like *Akhet*, this tension between the monumental and the unstable is mirrored in other, similar dichotomies, as solid surfaces are contrasted with the transparency of glass, and familiar materials like wood and plaster intersect insubstantial fields of vague and gauzy matter. Nayar's new interiors are no less expansive than before, but she seems to increasingly strive towards the vertical, which adds a new dimension of overreaching impermanence. Similarly, a flattening of space has taken place, a shortening of perspective influenced by other ways of rendering depth, such as non-Western pictorial traditions where images are constructed according to a different logic.

Nayar's 2011 exhibition *Head Space* represented a critical breakthrough, with reviews in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *Whitewall Magazine*, *The New Yorker* and *Art Papers*, which commented on the artist's combination of the physical and the improbable, her deconstruction of modernist space, and the visceral life of her images. In her continuing effort to open the world we construct around us to alternative strains of history and meaning, Nayar presents us with a collection of monuments just as fragile and ephemeral as they are ambitious.

Yamini Nayar (b. 1975, Detroit, MI) received her MFA from the **School of Visual Arts**, New York, in 2005 and her BFA from the **Rhode Island School of Design**, in 1999. Thomas Erben Gallery first showed her photo works in *First Left, Second Right* in 2007. Other exhibitions include: *Migrating Identities*, **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts**, San Francisco, 2013; *Harpoon*, (solo) **Jhaveri Contemporary**, Mumbai; *second nature: abstract photography then and now*, **deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum**, Lincoln, MA; *Sculpture is Everything*, **Queensland Art Gallery**, Australia, all 2012; *Always the Young Strangers*, **Higher Pictures**, NY; *The Influentials*, **School of Visual Arts**, NY, both 2011; *The Empire Strikes Back*, **Satchi Museum**, London; *Tough Pictures*, **Cincinnati Art Museum**, OH, both 2010; *We would like to thank (again) the curators, who wish to remain anonymous*, **Galerie Anne Barrault**, Paris; **Marella Gallery**, Beijing, both 2009; *Sultana's Dream*, **Exit Art**, New York, 2007; *Yamini Nayar and Sreshta Rit Premnath*, **BosePacia**, New York, 2006; *Fatal Love*, **Queens Museum of Art**, 2005.

In 2010, Nayar gave the **Lightborne Lecture** at the Cincinnati Art Museum and held residencies at the **Art Academy of Cincinnati** and the **Center for Photography**, Woodstock. In May of 2011, she was one of seven contributors to *Manual for Treason*, editor Murtaza Vali, **Sharjah Biennial**. In 2011 she was an artist-in-residence at the **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council** and a Visiting Artist Scholar at New York University, **Steinhardt School of Art**, and in 2012 she gave an artist talk at *ANALYTICAL SPACES: Art, Architecture and Psychoanalysis*, **Freud Museum**, London, and was featured in the book *UNFIXED: Photography and Postcolonial Perspectives in Contemporary Art*, **Unfixed Productions**. Nayar lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

*Gallery hours: Tue - Sat, 10-6.*

*For further information and visuals, please visit [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com) or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701.*

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