

Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release

First Left, Second Right

Abhishek Hazra - Yamini Nayar - Kiran Subbaiah

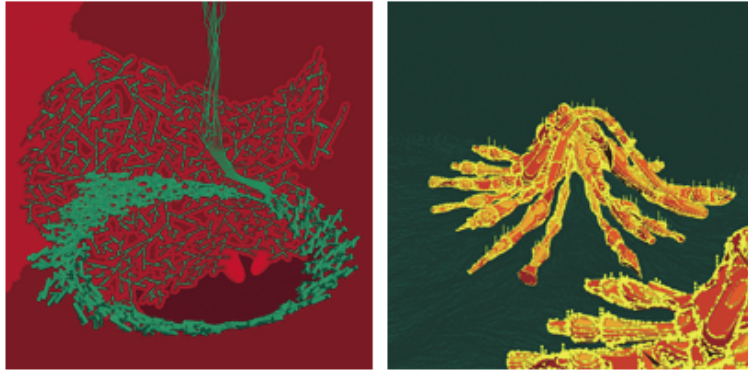
December 18 – February 2, 2008

Opening reception: Tuesday, December 18, from 6 - 8:30

Information: www.thomaserben.com

Thomas Erben is pleased to present a three-person exhibition, which includes, for the first time in the United States, Bangalore-based artists Abhishek Hazra and Kiran Subbaiah as well as the work of Yamini Nayar, a member of New York's South Asian Women's Creative Collective.

Confronted with the lack of street signage in Indian urban environments, instructions such as, *First Left, Second Right*, become an ubiquitous lingo. These directionals not only allow for a concrete method of navigation, but can also be viewed as symptomatic of a specific understanding of self - fully embedded, relational and not dependent on exteriority to maintain a sense of control. Similarly, the three artists in our exhibition manipulate various tropes; such as scientific representations, domestic objects and even first-person narration, to punctuate infinitesimal mazes, thereby providing viewers with posts for guidance.



"Partition01_Distribution" (2007), Part 1 of **Abhishek Hazra's** video series, *Bose Einstein Chapters*, explores the collaboration between Albert Einstein and the Indian physicist S.N. Bose. This piece has emerged from Hazra's ongoing research into the social history of science in colonial India and from his underlying interest in hybridizing scientific concepts with the visual arts. Strongly colored backgrounds provide the space for organic accumulations of simplified, geometric structures to come together, reorganize and disperse at will. Sequences of complex elegance, here, merge with the scientific to present an undulating field of over-activity.

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Yamini Nayar's hand-made, entirely constructed miniature sets of private interiors are composed with sly neglect for perspective and proportion. The resulting photographs of said sculptures cause a tension between these two unified mediums and highlight the expressive abilities and limitations of each respectively. While devoid of actual figures, Nayar's works speak to a highly personalized appreciation of physical surroundings, wherein an object's hope for meaning is lengthened and hyphenated by its placement. The unified structure of her worlds intensifies our reading of the everyday, giving the work a resonance that permeates it as a whole.



In *Suicide Note* (2006, 21 min.), a multi-themed, meta-narrative video, **Kiran Subbaiah** functions as author, director, main and supporting character, camera man and editor. No classical subject is safe from Subbaiah's humorous, satirical, irreverent treatment. Life, death, love, bureaucracy, philosophy, fame and even art itself is unflinchingly confronted in this technically advanced look at the impossibility of securing meaning for any span of time - yet another concept that Subbaiah calls out. Using himself as a pawn throughout the work, each increasingly arrogant supposition of truth tops its predecessor in its recognizably vacuous nature. Viewers are left pondering if repetition alone should convince them of Subbaiah's ironic self-idolatry or if they too possess the bravery to grapple with such topics independently.

Abhishek Hazra (b. 1977); Srishti School of Art and Design, Bangalore; 2007 *Horn Please*, Kunstmuseum Bern; 2006 Gallery SKE, Bangalore; 2007 Artist in Residence at PROGR - Zentrum für Kulturproduktion, Bern (funded by Pro Helvetia).

Yamini Nayar (b. 1975, Rochester, NY); 2005 MFA School of Visual Arts; 1999 BFA Rhode Island School of Design; 2007 ExitArt, NY; 2006 BosePacia Modern, NY; 2005 Queens Museum of Art, NY.

Kiran Subbaiah (b. 1971, Sidapur, India); 1999 MFA Royal College of Art, London; 1994 MFA M.S. University, Baroda; 1992 BFA Santiniketan; 2006 *Subcontingent*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; 2005 *Are We Like This Only?* Vadhra Gallery, New Delhi; 2004 *LA Freewaves*, 9th Biennial Festival of Film, Video and New media, LA; 2002 Media Arts Asia Pacific Festival, Beijing; 2002-3 Rijksakademie, Amsterdam.

