



*Messenger*, 2020 (detail). C-print, 50 x 30in, ed. of 5 (+1AP)

## *THREE SPACES for TIME* **Yamini Nayar**

February 13 - March 28, 2020

Opening reception: Thursday, February 13, 6 to 8:30pm

Thomas Erben is very excited to present *THREE SPACES for TIME*, Yamini Nayar's third solo exhibition, and her seventh showing with the gallery, including a two-person show with Sheela Gowda in 2009, as well as solo presentations at NADA, India Art Fair, and Art Cologne, the latter in collaboration with Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai.

The images of *THREE SPACES for TIME* are founded in Nayar's process-oriented fusion of sculpture and photography, in which she now deepens as well as complicates - on several levels - the aspect of time. As before, the artist begins by building stand-alone and wall based sculptures composed of various studio materials, primarily wood, plaster and paperboard, which - through the eye of the camera - are turned into scenes reminiscent of architecture, simultaneously monumental and fragile. However, where the temporal aspect previously would be visible only in material traces of earlier stages of construction, she now merges multiple exposures, taken from different phases of the same model, creating multidimensional visual spaces with an increasingly confounding complexity.

# Thomas Erben Gallery

Another major shift is the abandonment of paint as a means of bringing color to form. Working only from black-and-white negatives and building off the early 20th century method of tri-color separation, Nayar treats color – when featured – as an endlessly malleable element, shaped and generated through light and in an additive manner. The reality of each work is thus bound tighter to the time-specific act of photography than to the sculptural model. This further extension of construction into the editing process also brings a new sense of corporeality into each work, their compound forms becoming more voluminous; a bodily aspect further emphasized by the slender, vertical format of some prints.

In *Messenger*, 2020, for example, by overlaying several negatives and using the above method of color building, the artist projects an almost Escher-esque world of fan-like surfaces in luminous pastels and purples. As in several other works, the space is broken up in a fashion reminiscent of Cubism's multi-perspectival dissolution of the static object. The influence of Modernist architecture present in Nayar's previous artwork is still there, if more subtle, and another connection extending the work back to that period stems from texts on *Time and Space* that the artist found, written by her great grandfather, the philosopher Umesh Chandra Bhattacharya, in 1930s Calcutta, India.

As indicated by the exhibition's title, the concept of time is indeed central. And though the time factor is deeply inherent to the practice of photography, Nayar – positing the film as a container – finds a way to expand and stretch the proverbial "decisive moment," by bringing the temporal aspect of her model building into the darkroom process through her use of light and multiple negatives. The continuous act of physical production is thereby extended into her image-making, rendering the photograph less fixed – liquefied by this action made visible. As seeing becomes doing, time becomes yet another material.

**Yamini Nayar** (b. 1975, Detroit, MI) received her MFA from the **School of Visual Arts**, 2005, and her BFA from the **Rhode Island School of Design**, 1999. Thomas Erben Gallery first showed Nayar's photo works in *First Left, Second Right* in 2007. Over the years, her work has been exhibited widely, both within an institutional as well as gallery context and is currently on view in *All the Marvelous Surfaces: Photography since Karl Blossfeldt* at the deCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA. Major survey shows include: *Ray Photo Triennale*, **Museum für Moderne Kunst**, Frankfurt; *Constructs/Constructions*, **Kiran Nadar Museum of Art**, New Delhi (both 2015); *Sculpture is Everything*, **Queensland Art Gallery**, South Brisbane (2012); *Manual for Treason*, Sharjah Biennial, UAE (2011); *The Empire Strikes Back*, **Saatchi Museum**, London (2010); and *Fatal Love*, **Queens Museum of Art**, 2005. Nayar had gallery shows with Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai (2018 and 2012); Wendi Norris, San Francisco (2019) and BosePacia (2006). Her work was part of numerous group exhibitions at Higher Pictures, New York; Galerie Anne Barrault, Paris; Marella Gallery, Beijing; Grey Noise, Lahore; and Experimenter, Kolkata; to name a few.

Nayar's exhibitions have been widely reviewed in major publications such as **Artforum**, **The New York Times**, **Art India**, **Asian Art Newspaper**, **Vogue India**, **Art in America**, **The New Yorker** as well as **Whitewall Magazine**. Her work will be published in *Global Photography: A Critical History*, Heather Diack, Erina Duganne, and Terri Weissmann (editors), Bloomsbury Press; and was included in *Chandigarh is in India*, Shanay Jhaveri (editor), Shoestring Publisher, Mumbai (2016); *UNFIXED: Postcolonial Perspectives in Photography*, Sara Blokland and Asmara Pelupessy (editors), Unfixed Projects, Amsterdam (2012); and *Manual for Treason*, Murtaza Vali (editor), Sharjah Biennial 2011).

Public collections include the **Art Institute of Chicago**; **Guggenheim**, New York; **Queensland Art Gallery**, South Brisbane; **Kiran Nadar Museum**; **deCordova Museum** and the **Cincinnati Art Museum**.

Nayar lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.