

# Thomas Erben Gallery

*Press Release*

Arrested Views

## **Sheela Gowda - Yamini Nayar**

April 7 – May 9, 2009

Opening: Tuesday, April 7, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben is pleased to present a two-person exhibition, which juxtaposes new photoworks by Yamini Nayar with *Private Gallery*, a 1999 sculptural installation by Sheela Gowda, which was part of *How Latitudes Become Forms*, a seminal show at the Walker Art Center in 2003.

Both artists involve extensive research in their process, with Gowda condensing content through the formal outcome and Nayar articulating a territorialized space wherein fragments recombine, engendering multiple, parallel readings.



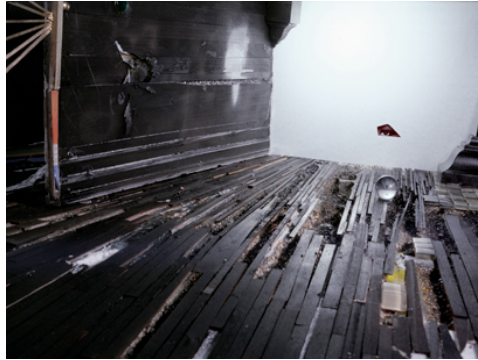
Sheela Gowda. *Private Gallery*, 1999. 2 panels with set of nine watercolor paintings. Lamination sheet, cow dung, watercolor on paper and plywood. 78 x 42 x 1.5 in., each panel.

**Sheela Gowda's** *Private Gallery* presents us with a large, rectangular structure of two Formica "faux marble" sheets, set into a corner to allow on each side a narrow passage. In the interior, the viewer is confronted with painted references to canonized genres: vistas seen from the artist's car, a still life, portraits of domestic workers, migrants from other regions of India to the city and some part of the artist's household. The conscious positioning of the artist within the work's articulation is echoed in the way she constructs the viewing situation to physically engage the visitor. With a similar aim, she evokes conflicting reactions through the proximity of thumb-sized pads of cow dung wallpapered on the inside of the structure. For Gowda, the nod to minimalism, as well as her conceptual use of materials, are key aspects in this work and of her practice.

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Considered one of the most important Indian artists of her generation, Sheela Gowda was born 1957 in Bhadravati and currently works and lives in Bangalore. The gallery first included her work in *Contemporary Art from India* in 2004; Gowda's exhibition history of some 30 years testifies to her increasing international recognition with inclusion in such notable exhibitions as: *Venice Biennale*, 2009 (forthcoming); *Sharjah Biennial*, UAE, 2009 (currently); *Lyon Biennale*, France, 2007; *Documenta 12*, Kassel, Germany, 2007; *Indian Summer*, Paris, 2005; *How Latitudes become Form*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2003; *Traditions/Tensions*, 27 *South Asian Artists*, Asia Society/Queens Museum, New York, 1996; *Africus*, *South African Biennale*, Johannesburg, 1995.



Yamini Nayar. *Cleo*, 2009. C-print, 30 x 40 in., ed. of 5 (+2 AP).

For her photoworks, **Yamini Nayar** wryly builds transitional objects and architectural spaces out of found and raw materials. Therein, through process and image fragments, she combines references from early to mid 20th century historical sources exploring themes of cultural ambiguity. The exhibited photographs articulate a formal language within states of flux. They are carefully structured, yet open ended, engaging levels of recognition as a device to hold the image. Truth and meaning are historically linked to both the history of photography and vision itself. We have learned that photography's "truth" is malleable; however, can we suppress assigning meaning? Without the need to arrest it, Nayar works within exactly this dichotomy.

Yamini Nayar, born 1975, grew up in Detroit, MI; after a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design, she received her MFA in 2005 from the School of Visual Arts in New York where she lives and works. Most notably, Nayar's work will be included in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Saatchi Museum, London in 2009 and *Vogue India's* December '08 issue listed her as one of *India's Ten Hottest Young Artists*. The gallery first showed her photoworks in *First Left, Second Right* in 2007/08. Other exhibitions include: *My Little India*, Marella Gallery, Beijing, 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, NY, 2005. Reviews in *TimeOut*, *The New York Times*, *Asian Art News*, *Art Asia Pacific* and *Flash Art* have all critically appraised her work. An essay by Sharmistha Ray is forthcoming in *Wynwood Magazine*.

*Gallery hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10-6*

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