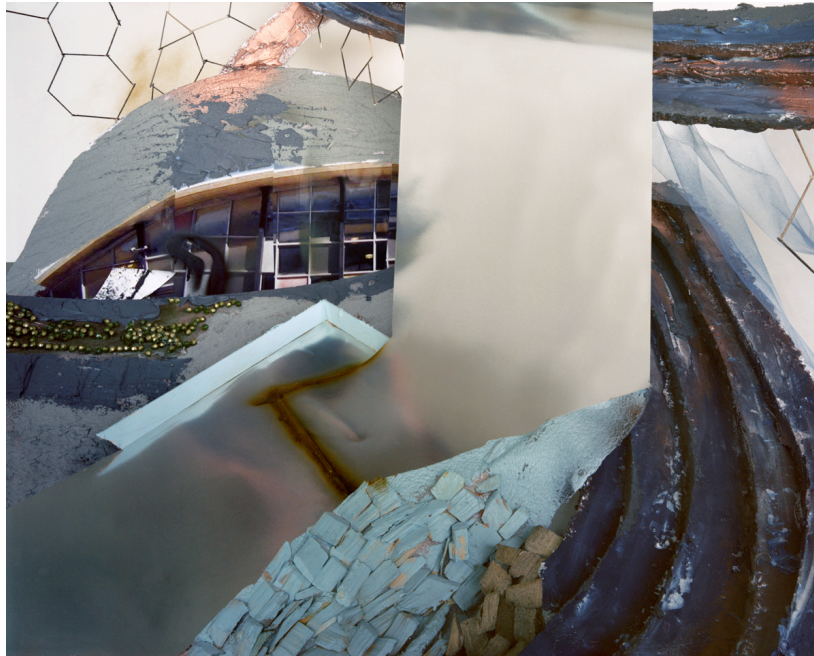


Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release



Cascading Attica, 2011. C-print, 48 x 60 inches, edition of 5 (+2 AP).

Yamini Nayar

Head Space

October 27 – December 3, 2011

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 27, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben is pleased to present *Head Space*, **Yamini Nayar**'s first solo exhibition with the gallery, following the critically acclaimed two-person show *Arrested Views* (with Sheela Gowda) in 2009.

In this new body of work, Nayar enables us – through an increase in scale - to more directly inhabit her photographs, documents of temporarily fashioned tabletop sculptures and environments. A slow-down of the photographic moment is effected through the entirely hand-made nature of her assemblages, which are additionally inscribed with time through a process of continuous reworking. The textures of raw, often discarded materials (plaster, Styrofoam, plastics, fabric, etc.) complemented with the flattening and distancing qualities of photography result in works that are structured, yet highly visceral. In her constructions, Nayar often uses historical imagery as a point of departure and employs familiar spatial logic to engage levels of recognition, while simultaneously suspending narrative and defying rules of perspective. These tensions, combined with her painterly sense of color and use of light, create an elusive, open-ended quality.

over...

Thomas Erben Gallery
526 West 26th Street, 4th floor
New York, NY 10001
212-645-8701
info@thomaserben.com
www.thomaserben.com

Over the past five years, Nayar's work has been shifting from literal into abstract space, which still serves as a repository for memory and imagination. Her core concerns remain psychological, historical, and centered around the fluidity of wider social perspectives. Previous images depicted distinctly room-like settings, however unstable these may have seemed, whereas her current work, informed by a deepened research into modernist architecture, continues towards the edge of im/possibility. *Cascading Attica*, for example, presents us with an architectural image fragment, extending into a swirl of unidentifiable matter which wraps around a field seeming simultaneously solid, vaporous, reflective and transparent. Perspective is dislodged – not quite defying gravity, but not on firm ground either – and the exquisitely toxic coloration adds an element of ominence. "Attica" - referring to the Classical Greek region projecting into the Aegean Sea, the 1971 prison riot in upstate New York, and a waterfall in Wyoming – exemplifies Nayar's interest in the shifting nature of meaning. On a formal level, she often intersperses three-dimensionality with decidedly shallow space making both conditions, though factually unfeasible and irresolvable, appear entirely believable. It is as if, rather than working toward compromise, she folds spectrums in half, bringing polarities to a place of coexistence.

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**, 1999. Thomas Erben Gallery first showed her photo works in *First Left, Second Right* in 2007/08. Other exhibitions include: *Always the Young Strangers*, **Higher Pictures**, NY; *The Influentials*, **School of Visual Arts**, NY, both 2011; *The Empire Strikes Back*, **Saatchi 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 Sreshtha 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**. She is currently an artist-in-residence at the **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council** and a Visiting Artist Scholar at New York University, Steinhardt School of Art, 2011-12. Upcoming publications include an *Artist to Watch* profile in **Art Economist Magazine**, December 2011, and a feature in the book *UNFIXED: Photography and Postcolonial Perspectives in Contemporary Art*, **Unfixed Productions**, January 2012. Nayar lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Gallery hours: Tue - Sat, 10-6.

For further information and visuals, please visit www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701.

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