

NEWS RELEASE

ARPITA SINGH *Memory Jars*

August 2003 New York - Bose Pacia Gallery presents *Memory Jars*, a solo exhibition of new work by Arpita Singh from September 4 through November 1, 2003. The gallery is located at 508 West 26th Street on the 11th Floor, in the Chelsea district of New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 12 to 6 pm and by appointment. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, September 4th from 6 to 8pm. The public is invited.

The title *Memory Jars* is apt in its poetic coupling of incongruous terms for the work of Arpita Singh often seems defined by incongruity – common objects and mark-making traditions are assembled in unexpected combinations yielding delight and unease simultaneously. Singh exploits the novelty of her compositions to celebrate the intimacies of family life while exposing the distress and trauma that often dwell beneath the benign facade of the domestic interior.

At first glance, each work seems to be an exercise in pure exuberance. In her oil paintings as well as her smaller watercolors, one finds teapots and eggplants and airplanes and blossoms holding court like ceremonial talismans as letters and numbers dance within the margins. These disparate elements are rendered in a brilliant candy-colored palette and bring to mind memories of picture books from primary school. Yet the human figures that inhabit these fantastic spaces are worlds apart from childhood. With somber countenances, sagging folds of flesh and furrowed brows, they are mature adults who wrestle with the looming threats of aging, illness, and abandonment. As we stand witness to their private burdens - a cowering nude body showered with knives, a woman peering out from beneath a veil to reveal her organs twisted like knotted roots, a middle-aged man wearing a crumpled shirt in an external revelation of internal anxiety – the myth of the domestic sphere as a safe haven begins to unravel.

In negotiating a balance between the joys and perils that complicate daily life, Singh always manages to retain her sense of humor. When confronted with the prospect of growing elderly, one woman dons a hot pink brassiere and little else while another flashes the viewer a bit of leg as she sits opposite her husband at the breakfast table – each refusing to relinquish hold of a waning sexuality. Aesthetics also serve to mitigate the solemnity of her works by adding levity and sheer beauty to each composition. The rich surface textures, intense saturation of color, flattened perspective and decorative motifs combine to imbue each painting with warmth and engaging optimism. Through *Memory Jars*, Arpita Singh invites us to share in her luminous vision of the world and embrace hope and fear as strange, but enduring bedfellows.

Born in Bengal in 1937, Arpita Singh studied at the School of Art, Delhi Polytechnic. She held her first solo exhibition in 1972 in New Delhi and since then has exhibited extensively throughout India as well as in London (1982, Royal Academy of Arts), Paris (1986, Centre Georges Pompidou), Geneva (1987, Halles de L'Île), Havana (1987, Biennial) and here in New York (1996, Asia Society). Her work is held in numerous public and private collections around the world including The Victoria and Albert Museum, London and The National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. Arpita Singh currently lives and works in New Delhi. This is her second exhibition with Bose Pacia.