

PHILLIPS de PURY & COMPANY PRESENTS ITS PREMIERE EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY SOUTH ASIAN ART, THE AUDIENCE AND THE EAVESDROPPER: NEW ART FROM INDIA AND PAKISTAN

UNIQUE ARTWORKS TO TRAVEL TO NEW YORK FOLLOWING ACCLAIMED EXHIBITION AT PHILLIPS de PURY'S LONDON GALLERIES

EXHIBITION DATES: 28 January – 14 February NEW YORK

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

New York – December 18 – Phillips de Pury & Company announces the unprecedented exhibition *The Audience and the Eavesdropper: New Art from India & Pakistan*, opening in London on 26 November 2008 and in New York on 28 January 2009. In partnership with **Gallery Nature Morte**, one of India's premiere contemporary art spaces since 1997, Phillips de Pury & Company is honored to feature 10 of the most influential and sought-after artists working in India and Pakistan:

Anita Dube
Thukral & Tagra
Justin Ponmany
Samarendra Raj Singh
Raqs Media Collective
Hema Upadhyay
Rashid Rana
Sheba Chhachhi
Probir Gupta
Hamra Abbas

The Audience and the Eavesdropper will present a selection of works by each artist to convey the strength and breadth of each individual *oeuvre*. Together, these works depict a nuanced, complex portrait of the themes and trends emerging under the banner of "Contemporary Indian Art". This ambitious exhibition asks, what is "Indian" in "Indian Art" and what cultural exchanges are implied in the asking? These artists work in a variety of media including painting, sculpture, video, installation and design and draw from multiple cultural and artistic histories. The vast majority of the artwork has been created specifically for this show and Phillips de Pury & Company is proud to be the first to exhibit these works.

Institutional and museum attention for Indian contemporary art has initially fallen onto the shoulders of many commercial venues to promote and exhibit this new frontier in contemporary art. This exhibition enables the introduction and exhibition of a new, exciting and highly influential group of artists from South Asia, many of whom have never shown outside the region. An exhibition catalogue will accompany this highly anticipated show.

The Audience and the Eavesdropper asks us to identify the burgeoning audience for these contemporary artworks from India and Pakistan: who is the designated audience and who is the fortuitous eavesdropper? Furthermore, the exhibition title points to the artists' role as cultural producers from the Indian subcontinent, but producing from an international position. Inevitably, these works grapple with the strands of postcolonial dialogue marking India's history. As these artists initiate new dialogues in the global art community, the critical reception has been enthusiastic and promising.

Says **Veronica Collins**, Contemporary Specialist at Phillips de Pury & Company, "These works inevitably confront ideas of globalization in the contemporary art world and look at how cultures are borrowing from each other. The title begs the question: Is it the artists who are 'eavesdropping' on Western developments or is it the West that is 'eavesdropping' on the new trends in Asia?"

A major exhibition highlight from the Indian art stars **Thukral & Tagra** addresses these issues through *Now in your neighborhood*, 2008, a pointed reference to mass cultural consumption. The collaborators **Jiten Thukral and Sumir Tagra** draw from pop culture, history and street -life in a giant Dinosaur created entirely from pink squeeze bottles stamped with custom stickers depicting "everyday people" in silhouette. The familiar bottles, at home in supermarkets and pharmacies around the world (holding toilet bowl cleaner, shampoo, dishwashing detergent, etc.) are transformed by the artists from innocuous consumer products to a more menacing form: the seductive yet empty promises of consumerism.

Thukral and Tagra describe the work as "A new gigantic shopping experience which offers all new products in your city! From institutions to monster malls, schools to cinemaplexes, picnic parks to vinyl playgrounds in the malls, they come in all forms to rule our world. They are glamourized, restless and coming soon." The artists then sign off tongue in cheek: "Your friendly neighborhood Dinosaur."

Pakistan's international art star **Rashid Rana** will exhibit *Desperately Seeking Paradise*, a massive stainless steel cube whose reflective, gridded surface is also comprised of photographs of contemporary Lahore. The cubed form of *Desperately Seeking Paradise* references the revered position of the **Kaaba** within Islamic culture, while the photographic urban mosaic draws from the classical Mughal Miniature Painting tradition. In dialogue with multiple cultural traditions, *Desperately Seeking Paradise* defines no clear position, trend or Paradise; instead, it asks the audience what we are searching for.

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Exhibition dates New York:

28 January – 14 February 2009

Opening Reception New York:

27 January 6 – 8 pm

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