

## Mapmakers

### The Evolution of Contemporary Indian Art

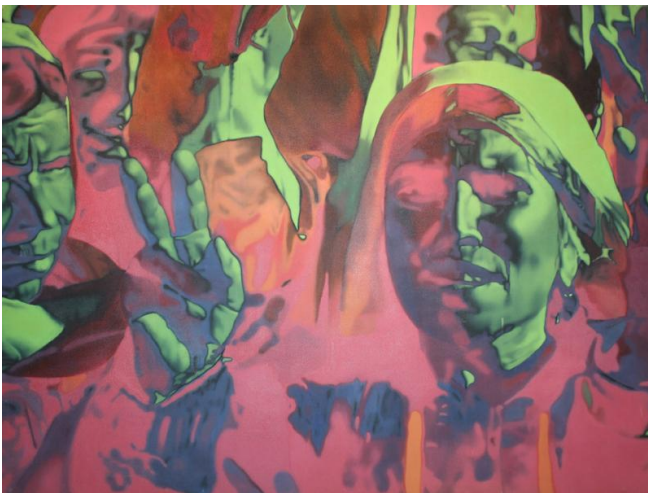
Featuring Jitish Kallat, Bose Krishnamachari, Baiju Parthan, Justin Ponmany, Ravinder Reddy, T. V. Santhosh, Chintan Upadhyay and more.

May 18 – June 23, 2012

Press Preview & Opening Reception: Friday, May 18, 6:00pm – 9:00pm

Featuring a multi-media performance by New York-based artist **Nitin Mukul**

35 Great Jones St., New York NY



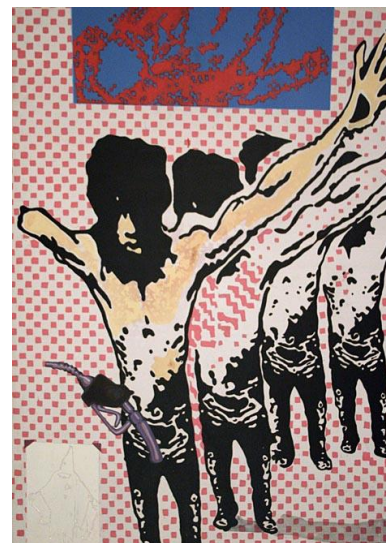
T. V. Santhosh, *Spinal Cord*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 54 x 72 in.

**Aicon Gallery New York** is pleased to present the group exhibition *Mapmakers: The Evolution of Contemporary Indian Art*, featuring iconic works by **Jitish Kallat, Bose Krishnamachari, Baiju Parthan, Justin Ponmany, Ravinder Reddy, T. V. Santhosh, Chintan Upadhyay** and more. As a group, these artists represent the vanguard of Contemporary Indian Art that burst onto the international scene in the mid-2000s, turning the heads of museums, critics and collectors. This exhibition showcases the important large-scale canvases through which these artists, among others, redefined Indian Contemporary and set the compass points for a new generation to follow.

Drawing inspiration from a variety of sources – ranging from cinema, news, media, art history and popular culture – **T.V. Santhosh** explores present-day crises through his art. Adapting images from digital and printed media, the artist creates eerily realistic canvases, charged by opinions on the general socio-political climate of India. Santhosh's distinctive style makes his paintings recognizable without being predictable, via three key elements: Photorealism, chromatic scale, and gradual variation. An undertone of profound disillusionment is rendered in his paintings, his realistic figures cast in iridescently blurred light, framed in hallucinatory shadows. The enigmatic aesthetic denotes a social commentary of protest, while the artist remains disengaged from the social events depicted. He veils, floods and distorts the subjects with this strange yet familiar light – opting for a cold, machine-made glow rather than the warmth of sunlight. This stark filter conveys a macabre intensity, where reality and fantasy mix in his fluid surface bathed in an ominous luminosity.

Quickly recognized as an artist at the forefront of Contemporary Indian art, **Bose Krishnamachari** focuses on form with conceptual and contextual concerns in mind. Impressive planes of flat color are contrasted with recognizable and realistic persona, which infuse the work with an identifiable sensibility. His simultaneous qualities of being a prodigious producer of work, while being knowledgeable of contemporary art movements and histories, denote two distinguishing aspects carried through his work. Krishnamachari remains conscious of historical significance, both personally and socio-politically, apt to retain and highlight this aptitude via his artistic praxis. Using traditional techniques in image-making mixed with an underlying vernacular message, Krishnamachari strives to elicit an idiom that is refreshingly contemporary and brisk.

Characteristic combinations of extreme sensibilities, a yearning for solitude, distaste for the mediocre and a passion for novelty define the artistic practice of **Jitish Kallat**. Kallat is of a generation with no trepidations on the impossibility of today's originality, with an equal lack of hesitation in accepting the derivation of cultural influences. The question asked by Kallat's work is how we should negotiate this reticulated terrain while deriving insight from his frenetic visual landscapes to evoke a unique and personalized response.



Jitish Kallat, *Covering Letter 5*, 2004, Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 48 in.

Elaborating upon the recesses of a personal process, **Baiju Parthan's** fascination with transcending mediums is explored in his richly textured works. His work combines both celebration and lament, archaic and modern, utilizing a mirrored reality suggesting a world or mind undergoing the motions of change – disintegration, permutation, evolution – as the result of a restless gaze, unable to settle on one space or thing for long. In his own philosophy, “The art I produce currently addresses the dematerialization or erosion of tactility of the real, and its effect on our being and existence.” Parthan works on the fringes of the mainstream and the unreal, wary of the constraints of established visual lexicons, he weaves a common thread of the cosmic narrative, addressing the present, past and future in one moment.

**Justin Ponmany** draws his influences from the transient city landscape, under constant construction, in what he terms the “Plastic Memory” of culture. Very much entwined as an artist to his worldly surroundings, he values interpersonal relationships as greatly as intrapersonal responses to one's environment, looking at the subject and his world in the same frame. His perceptive adjustment to changing situations and relationships is conveyed on his canvas, capturing an intangible event through a tactile medium. Ponmany's art stands apart not merely for what he paints, but also for its forms and his method of painting. By experimenting with various mediums and materials – like plastic paint, silver holograms, foils and rich pigments – his mixed-media works seem to resemble photo negatives, filled with black and silver undertones. This adventurous mix gives his work a shiny almost hallucinogenic quality. “I am a very tactile person,” explains Ponmany. “The physicality of the medium is important. It is almost as if I am quoting a material, bringing out its character and texture.”

**Ravinder Reddy**, known for his brightly colored larger-than-life heads, uses sculpture as a primarily heraldic medium. Assuming the characteristic stance of an announcer, the often monumentally scaled heads invariably stare frontally through wide eyes – never daring to glance sideways, or over the shoulder – eager to address all in attendance. The message is further amplified by characteristically bold colors, gold inlay and intricate hairstyles. Reddy returns to the statuary of earlier pre-modern cultures and civilizations – such as ancient Egypt and Greece, where conventions of stark simplicity and rigid formality prevailed in artistic forms – emphasizing again his penchant for depicting the iconic theme of the herald.

**Chintan Upadhyay** holds a unique position in the context of Contemporary Indian Art. Asserting that artworks are commodities in themselves, Upadhyay believes his works to be mass-produced, consumerist objects with aesthetical and ideological values infused to their economic value. In a world driven by the rules of consumerism, he, as the artist, refuses to attribute subliminal values to artworks. This eventually imparts a uniqueness based in originality. According to Upadhyay, an artist exists among a chain of already ‘produced’ and ‘consumed’ images, thus rendering himself submissive to the dominance of images. Artistic products are simply gestures to nullify the predetermined and mediated meanings of symbolic objects produced within the context of Art. Upadhyay chooses to formulate his ideas, nullifying the meanings of the objects and images to infuse them with new associations, knowing that they would be subsumed by the existing system, ultimately becoming part of the production of meanings.

Please contact Aicon Gallery ([Andrew@Aicongallery.com](mailto:Andrew@Aicongallery.com)) for more information.

# T. V. SANTHOSH



T. V. Santhosh, *Spinal Cord*, 2005, Oil on canvas, 54 x 72 in.



# T. V. SANTHOSH



T. V. Santhosh, Peace Protest, 2004, Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 60 in.

# BAIJU PARTHAN



Baiju Parthan, *Dragonfly*, Acrylic on paper, 43.5 x 43.5 in.

# BAIJU PARTHAN



Baiju Parthan, *Progression (Last Supper - After Da Vinci)*, 2008, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 35.5 x 96 in.



# JITISH KALLAT



Jitish Kallat, *Covering Letter 5*, 2006, Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 48 in.

# JITISH KALLAT



Jitish Kallat, *Rickshawpolis (The Dented Chariot)*, 2006, Acrylic, oil enamel and paint on canvas, 71 x 49 in.



# BOSE KRISHNAMACHARI



Bose Krishnamachari, *Stretched Bodies 29*, 2007, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 72 in.

# BOSE KRISHNAMACHARI



Bose Krishnamachari, *Untitled (Figurative)*, 2005, Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

# CHINTAN UPADHYAY



Chintan Upadhyay, *Smart Alec*, 2007, Acrylic and oil on canvas, 71 x 71 in.



## CHINTAN UPADHYAY



Chintan Upadhyay, *Commemorative Stamps (Andy's Monroe)*, Mixed media on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

## RAVINDER REDDY



Ravinder Reddy, *Head 4*, 2004, Polyester, resin and fiberglass, painted and gilded, 18 x 20 x 12 in.



# NITIN MUKUL



Nitin Mukul, *Chandelier*, 2010, Acrylic, oil and tea stain on canvas, 74 x 98 in.



# JUSTIN PONMANY



Justin Ponmany, *Elixer*, Acrylic and hologram on canvas, 75 x 96 in.

# JUSTIN PONMANY



Justin Ponmany, *Genuine Conquest*, Acrylic and hologram on canvas, 75 x 96 in.