

An abstract painting featuring a complex arrangement of geometric shapes. The composition is dominated by various shades of blue, ranging from deep navy to bright cerulean, and black. A large, vibrant yellow shape is visible on the right side. The brushstrokes are visible, giving the artwork a textured, expressive quality. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered depth.

# sangram majumdar





above, left:  
*open borders*, 2017  
Oil on linen

above, right:  
*two rooms*, 2012  
Oil on linen

left:  
*smoke and mirror*, 2012  
Oil on linen  
From the Louis-Dreyfus Family Collection,  
courtesy of The William Louis-Dreyfus  
Foundation Inc.

# sangram majumdar

APRIL 22 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2017

The paintings of Sangram Majumdar invite the viewer into a densely layered realm of vectors across time, geography, and meaning. The 14 works featured in this exhibition, dating from 2012 to 2017, are not composed and charted by the artist as completed works from their outset. Instead, they track his passage as the canvases become increasingly imbued with references that may be unpacked and parsed as evidence of his process and wide-ranging references.

Majumdar (b. 1976, Calcutta, India; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY) immigrated to the United States as a teenager, and pursued his formal arts training in Rhode Island and Indiana. His paintings may variously relate to Indian miniature, Italian pre-Renaissance, and Abstract Expressionist paintings, reflecting the connectivity across global cultural centers and eras through his unique perspective. The large scale of many of his works emphasizes the physicality of painting, and the enveloping perceptual environment of standing before an extensive canvas, both for the artist and the viewer.

Many of the works shown here are from two of his major series, *Stagings* and *Reconstructions*. Those in the *Stagings* series emphasize the theatrical potential of certain compositions, while *Reconstructions* accentuates the yield of techniques such as collage, digital manipulation, and layering. Geometric grids, built environments, the uncontrolled character of the natural world, as well as cultural and aesthetic practices from India, appear in many of Majumdar's paintings. These motifs suggest an opacity that allows viewers diverse interpretations, with the artist leaving myriad trails for each to decipher as they linger and engage with the works.

The following page contains Sangram Majumdar's reflections on the works featured in this exhibition.





"As an immigrant I see myself as a cultural hybrid, finding equal inspiration in the prosaic and the theatrical. [My paintings] are as much a way for me to stay grounded in the everyday as they are to dream and wander. When I first traveled to Rome I was struck by how much I was reminded of Calcutta. It is also probably why I have always felt comfortable in the streets of New York. Thus my studio practice revolves around discovering parallels in a wide array of visual spaces, including medieval Italian paintings, Indian miniatures, early video game floor plans, and my own natural environment. And in the paintings, I embrace this fractured and sometimes opposing logic that is the outcome of crossbreeding these traditional genres of still life, landscape, and the figure.

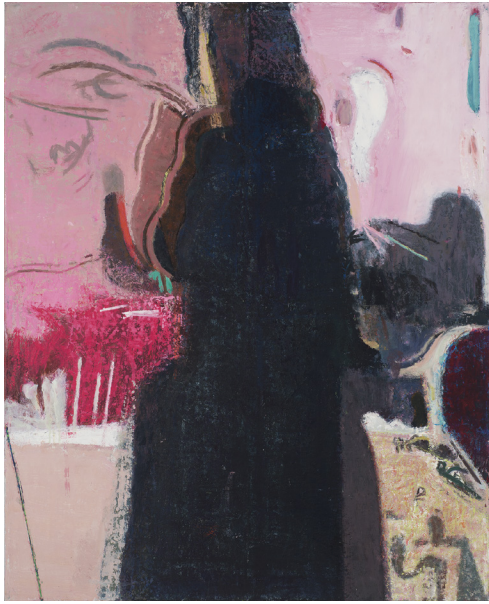
A recurring motif of a stage or threshold space runs through many of my paintings, animated with biomorphic forms, dramatic lighting, and a highly theatrical presence. While initially appearing abstract, they often leave various hints to the observable world in the form of half recognizable forms, directional lighting, and cast shadows. Working from found and made objects, digitally altered paper cutouts, and sketchbook doodles, I am excited when the opposing logic in each reference filters into the paintings. Identifiable objects sit alongside recognizable shapes asking the viewer to travel between naming and seeing.

I often think about Kierkegaard's notion of the eternal return, or the Hindu idea of reincarnation. My aesthetic and conceptual inclinations favor multiplicity and repetition, often returning to a theme after a period of time. Perhaps this circular way of working is an attempt to see my work in a new way, like looking obliquely in the mirror. The paintings themselves are hard fought, often going through multiple revisions. In them, I invite the viewer to consider a simultaneous existence of the nameable and the legible, the functional and the decorative, the structural and the 'plastic'."

opposite, top:  
*underwater electric greenhouse*, 2014  
Oil on linen

opposite, below:  
*hands in a landscape*, 2015  
Oil on canvas





above, left:  
*apparition*, 2016  
Oil on canvas

above, right:  
*drawn out*, 2015  
Oil on canvas

left:  
*desert interior*, 2014  
Oil on linen

above:  
*in dreams*, 2012  
Oil on linen

right:  
*floorplay*, 2016  
Oil on canvas





This exhibition at Asia Society is made possible through major support from Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen, Nancy C. Allen, Leslie and Brad Bucher, and the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance. Generous funding also provided by The Clayton Fund, Kathy and Glen Gondo, Ann Wales, and through contributions from the Friends of Exhibitions, a premier group of individuals and organizations committed to bringing exceptional visual art to Asia Society Texas Center.



@AsiaSocietyTX #SangramMajumdar  
#s\_man\_paints

cover:

*coming through* (detail), 2015

Oil on linen

All works by Sangram Majumdar

Courtesy of the artist

©2017 Sangram Majumdar

Asia  
Society



Texas  
Center

1370 Southmore Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77004

713.496.9901  
AsiaSociety.org/Texas