

# EYE TO EYE



**MOST ARTISTS** will tell you their inspiration lies at a crossroads between their immediate environment and their imagination. The successful integration of these two very different worlds is what turns ideas into art and what distinguishes an expert from an amateur. Sangram Majumdar's paintings walk a tightrope between measurement and invention. A few steps in one direction would generate skillful, predictable still lifes, and a few steps in the other direction would yield abstract expressionist works. Instead, Majumdar paints complex visual places that cannot possibly be real yet are deceptively easy to believe.

In *Veils*, the artist depicts a woman sitting in an elegantly patterned chair. He paints woman and chair with loving detail and then, just as carefully, dismantles his vision. Under his hand, a solid world of velvety cushions, shiny black hair, and fleshy skin disintegrates into a flat painted surface and, further back, a simple line drawing. A veil of perception lifts: The believable flesh and fabric is nothing but an illusion of light and color

in buttery strokes of oil paint.

"The constant impossibility of painting a tangible space that is psychologically elusive is what kept me in the painting," says Majumdar, a painting and drawing instructor at Maryland Institute College of Art. "The drawing on the wall was my way out of it."

Negotiating, and sometimes dismantling, the classical rules of depiction, Majumdar paints what he sees, as well as that which cannot be seen.

Sangram Majumdar  
*Veils* (2010)  
oil on linen  
64 × 60 in.

## CARA OBER

CARA OBER IS URBANITE'S ONLINE ARTS/CULTURE EDITOR. TO RECEIVE HER WEEKLY E-ZINE, GO TO [BIT.LY/EZINESIGNUP](http://BIT.LY/EZINESIGNUP).