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SUNDARAM TAGORE SINGAPORE PRESENTS JOAN VENNUM: THE SPACE AROUND US

Exhibition dates: May 3 – June 9, 2013

Opening cocktail reception: Friday, May 3, 6 - 8 pm



Left: *Possibility*, 2011, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

Right: *There From Here*, 2011, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 inches

Singapore, April 1, 2013 — For her first solo show in Singapore, New York-based artist Joan Vennum presents color-saturated paintings inspired by India.

Joan Vennum is known for her luminous, ethereal works on canvas that explore spatial environments. Her paintings are at once abstract and figurative, consisting of layers of brushstrokes and gradations of color fields. Vennum has roots in post-abstract expressionism and portrays the illusion of limitless space, as it appears both in her imagination and in the natural world.

The artist began the series of oils on view at Sundaram Tagore Singapore in 2008 after traveling through India where she was deeply influenced by the dramatic colors she encountered everywhere. “My discoveries in India have become part of my being, and appear in my work in subtle forms,” Vennum says. The artist

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was struck by observations of daily life, such as the sun setting on the Ganges and brightly dressed women working in green fields. She was also intrigued by the effect of viewing one color through another—such as the landscape through a translucent *dupatta* (scarf) blowing in the wind as she rode past on a motorcycle.

In her earlier explorations of light and space, Vennum painted subtle gradations of color forming veil-like surfaces. Maintaining this premise, she continues to compose fields of color by layering paint. However, in these works, Vennum has introduced a brighter palette reminiscent of Indian miniature paintings. Using fluid gestures, she creates lushly painted works with concentrated vermilion, saffron yellows, and indigos. Her handling of paint has shifted toward a looser application and she has amplified the contrast between dark and light. The resulting canvases are vibrant and ethereal.

A native of New York, Vennum studied art at the University of Illinois, Champaign, and at Washington University in St. Louis. Her main inspirations have been the works of Mondrian, de Kooning and, particularly, the Dutch Old Masters' use of space and minute detail. More importantly, two events affected Vennum's artistic point of view during her early development. As a child she was mesmerized by the New York Planetarium's simulation of the universe and the vastness and mystery of space. Then, as an adult, a trip to Sicily revealed the impact of weather on the landscape, the coming together of the elements on the horizon and the spectacle of the sea. The dynamism of the elements and the vastness of space are made present in Vennum's images through a combination of simple forms and intense surface detail. As Vennum says, "My goal is to express a large concept visually using what appear to be the simplest forms."

Joan Vennum's work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, New York; The Power Collection of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; the Konstmuseet, Uttersberg, Sweden; the Skandia Försäkringsbolag, Stockholm; and the Museo Civico, Taverna, Italy.

GALLERY PROFILE

Established in New York City in 2000, Sundaram Tagore Gallery is devoted to examining the exchange of ideas between Western and non-Western cultures. We focus on developing exhibitions and hosting not-for-profit events that encourage spiritual, social and aesthetic dialogues. In a world where communication is instant and cultures are colliding and melding as never before, our goal is to provide venues for art that transcend boundaries of all sorts. With alliances across the globe, our interest in cross-cultural exchange extends beyond the visual arts into many other disciplines, including poetry, literature, performance art, film and music.

For more information, email press@sundaramtagore.com, call +65 6694 3378 or visit www.sundaramtagore.com.

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