

## SUNDARAM TAGORE CHELSEA PRESENTS NEW WORK INSPIRED BY BHUTAN BY PAINTER RICARDO MAZAL

**Exhibition title:** *Ricardo Mazal: Bhutan Abstractions*

**Exhibition dates:** November 20 to December 20, 2014

**Opening cocktail reception:** Thursday, November 20, 6 to 8 pm

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*Bhutan Abstraction G1*, 2014, oil on linen, 70 x 100 inches/178 x 254 cm

**New York, November 10, 2014**—Ricardo Mazal, one of Mexico's most prominent contemporary artists, presents a new series of abstract paintings that evolved from a recent journey to Bhutan. The work draws on previous explorations into themes of life, death, transformation and regeneration.

Over the past ten years, Mazal has created a large body of multidisciplinary work, including paintings, photographs and video, inspired by investigations into the sacred burial rituals of the Mayan tomb of the Red Queen in Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico; the Peace Forest cemetery in Odenwald, Germany; and Mount Kailash, Tibet's holiest summit.

After mounting his hugely successful solo show *Kailash: Black Mountain* (Sundaram Tagore Hong Kong and Sundaram Tagore Singapore, 2014), the culmination of this near decade-long burial trilogy, the artist traveled with his family to Bhutan where he was struck by the country's beauty and spirituality. He realized then that his explorations weren't over, just moving in a new direction.

Although Mazal's previous burial works encompass a range of subject matter and influence—from the cinnabar powder blanketing the entombed queen to the colorful wooden pigment boxes of Tibet's open-air markets—this new series focuses on a singular subject: the colorful, billowing prayer flags of Bhutan. Hung from bridges, mounted on rooftops and strung from one hilltop to the next, the flags populate the landscape with brilliant colors, each symbolizing a different natural element. They're often inscribed with mantras or prayers for good fortune and it's believed that the wind delivers these blessings to the world.

As with each of his investigations, Mazal began this series with photography, which he believes is the bridge linking reality and abstraction. He then manipulates the photos on the computer to compose a digital sketch. Once the composition is elaborated, he moves onto stretched linen, delicately layering oil paint using foam-rubber blades.

More abstract and distilled than his previous work, many of the paintings, such as *4 Studies*, comprise bold swaths of color formed into grid-like compositions. Although carefully compartmentalized, Mazal's distinctive gestural style charges the canvas with movement and energy. Other paintings, including *Bhutan Abstraction G1* and *Bhutan PF 1*, reference elements from his earlier series, such as the snow-capped peak of Mount Kailash and the sacred prayer flags of Tibet. Mazal often deconstructs and reconfigures details from previous paintings in a regenerative and cyclical process that closely parallels the themes he explores.

Ricardo Mazal was born in Mexico City in 1950. He has exhibited extensively in galleries and museums throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe, including the Museo Estación Indianilla, Mexico City; Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey, Mexico; Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City; the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona; the Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Americas Society, New York. In 2006, a retrospective of his work was held at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City and in 2009/10, in the Museo de Arte de Queretaro and the Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguerez in Zacatecas, Mexico.

Mazal's work is included in the collections of the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, Arizona; Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City; Museo de Arte Abstracto Manuel Felguerez, Zacatecas, Mexico; Maeght Foundation, Paris; Centro de las Artes, Monterrey, Mexico; Cirque du Soleil, Montreal; the Peninsula Hotel, Shanghai; and Deutsche Bank, New York and Germany.

Mazal divides his time between New York City and Santa Fe.

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