

ARTnews

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Reviews: New York

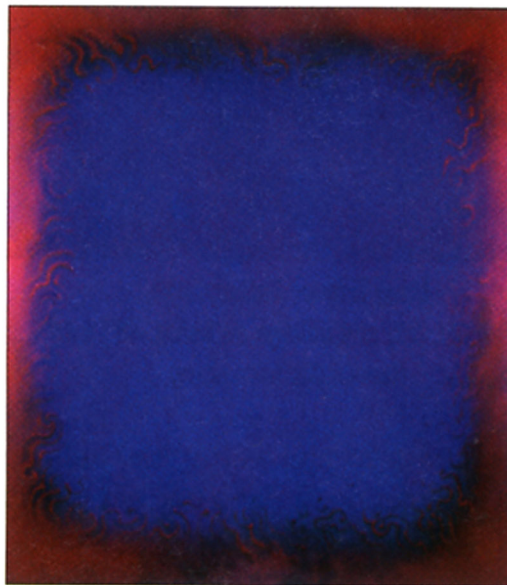
Natvar Bhavsar

Sundaram Tagore

This show of paintings officially inaugurated the gallery's new Chelsea space with an explosion of color. Natvar Bhavsar, who has been living and working in New York since the mid-1960s, mixes Abstract Expressionist tropes with influences from his native India. These references were immediately evident here in his range of exultant hues which recalled the rich pigments that are part of some of India's festivals and its culture in general. He titles his works with such exotic names as *CIHANDARVA* (2006).

The show, titled "Poetics of Color," featured around 40 works spanning almost 30 years, although the majority dated from 2000 onward. Saturating the gallery with ambient color, Bhavsar's luminous paintings, some reaching nine feet in height, some much smaller, seemed to expand before one's eyes, offering what might be a view of galaxies in formation and dissolution—images of endless, incalculable time, reckoned in mythological measures. On a less cosmic scale, they also seemed to breathe, expanding and contracting as the color ebbed and flowed.

Bhavsar's paintings are not limited to their surface colors—which are indefinable, suffused as they are with additional



Natvar Bhavsar, *REESHEE*, 2006,
pigment on canvas, 75" x 68".
Sundaram Tagore.

tones such as violet, saffron, rose, vermillion, cinnamon, midnight blue, and emerald, tinged warm and cool. Their surfaces can resemble smoke when the hues evanesce, or they can be more tangible, with pebbled textures and raised patterns, edged in a flame motif.

The artist works with dry pigments in a very deliberate process, although the results seem more an act of nature and combine the sensuous with meditative. Visions of the earthly and celestial, these paintings, both modernist and traditional, exist in the realm of pure, resplendent color.

—Lilly Wei