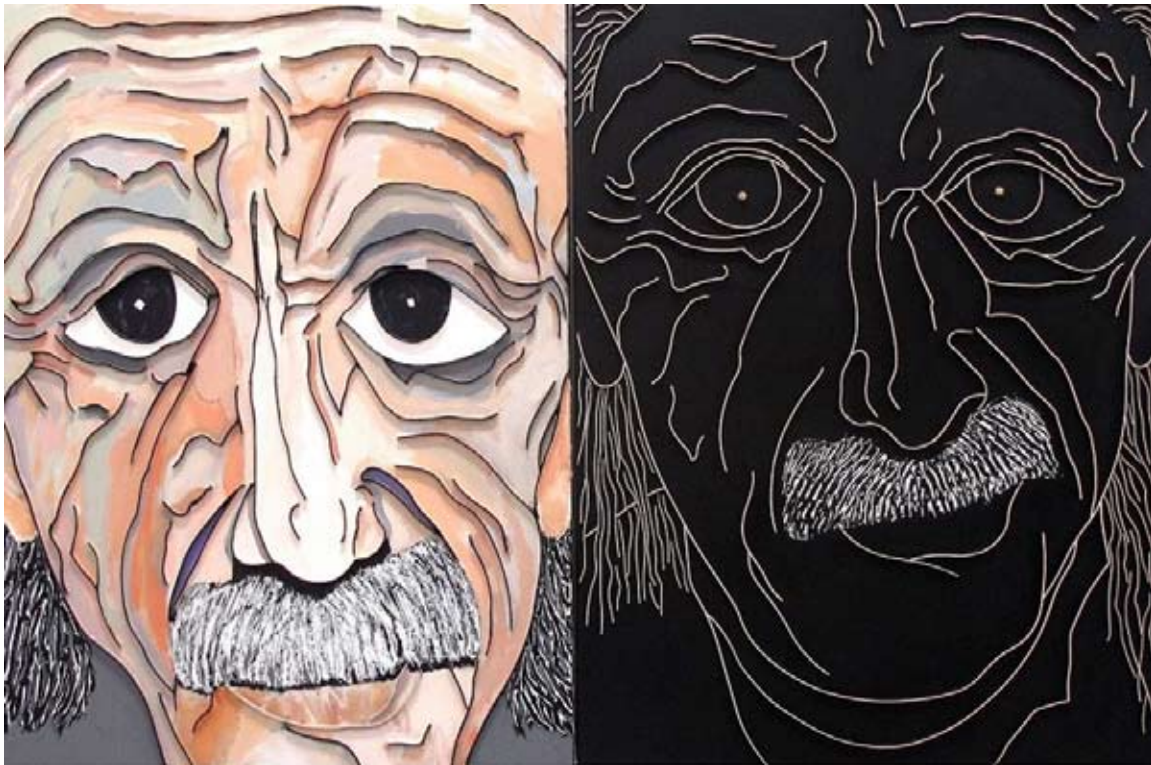


## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SUNDARAM TAGORE CHELSEA/NEW YORK PRESENTS NEW PORTRAITS BY AMERICAN PAINTER LEE WAISLER**

Exhibition dates: October 17–November 16, 2013

Opening cocktail reception: Thursday, October 17, 6–8 pm



*Double Einstein*, 2013, acrylic and wood on canvas, 40 x 60 inches

**New York, September 23, 2013**—Sundaram Tagore Gallery is pleased to present new works by Lee Waisler.

Lee Waisler is a Los Angeles-based artist who paints arresting portraits of iconic figures using a rich variety of materials.

For this exhibition, Waisler presents a global group of individuals from diverse disciplines, eras and origins. Among his subjects are renowned artists, literary giants and Hollywood luminaries such as Frida Kahlo, Gertrude Stein and Charlie Chaplin, alongside influential figures of social change, including Israeli leader Moshe Dayan and teenage Pakistani education advocate Malala Yousafzai. Each of these portraits is a reminder of how a single individual can change the way society thinks.

*(continued)*

This new series marks a stylistic departure, as Waisler tests the boundaries of recognition and explores new perspectives by elongating his subjects' features to shadow-like proportions. Stretched to near distortion, his portrait of Vincent Van Gogh is still immediately recognizable thanks to the familiar red beard and deep-set eyes. This skillfully plays to Waisler's idea of "re-membering," his practice of deconstructing, remembering and then reconstructing his subjects' likenesses.

Some of the works are rendered in a restrained palette of black and white. Distilled, linear, almost gestural in nature, these portraits possess a haunting quality that transcends the subjects' iconic status, revealing the person behind the persona. "When the work is successful, the viewer can project themselves onto the subject," says Waisler. "Hopefully that connection—that moment when the viewer identifies with the subject—will inspire them."

Waisler creates these textured works, which he calls "dimensional portraits," by layering his canvases with thick pigments; he incorporates organic materials for their innate associative values: sand for time, wood for life, and glass for light. With strips of wood and blocks of color, he creates finely nuanced faces and figures.

Having practiced abstraction for decades, Waisler returned to figuration full force about eleven years ago by launching a series of moving portraits of historical and contemporary figures. A deep empathy for the human spirit lies at the core of Lee Waisler's portraiture "With these paintings, I have a purpose in mind, which is to inspire people to act more humanely towards one and other."

Waisler's earliest works, which date to the 1960s, were socially and politically charged. He tackled historical events such as the Holocaust, the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Gradually, he became fascinated with Eastern philosophy, and his paintings became increasingly abstract. A journey to India in the mid-nineties, at the invitation of then Indian Prime Minister I. K. Gujral, was a turning point. Waisler became acutely aware of the struggle for survival in a deprived country, rediscovering the power of humanity. After this experience, he moved away from pure abstraction and began exploring figuration.

Waisler's work is in many important museum collections, including those of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; The Tel Aviv Museum of Art; the Brooklyn Museum of Art; The Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; The Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; the National Gallery of Art, New Delhi; and The Indian Museum, Calcutta.

For more information, please email: [press@sundaramtagore.com](mailto:press@sundaramtagore.com) or call 212.677.4520

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### **Sundaram Tagore Galleries**

- new york** 547 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001 • tel 212 677 4520 fax 212 677 4521 • [galleries@sundaramtagore.com](mailto:galleries@sundaramtagore.com)
- new york** 1100 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10028 • tel 212 288 2889
- hong kong** 57-59 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong Kong • tel +852 2581 9678 fax +852 2581 9673 • [hongkong@sundaramtagore.com](mailto:hongkong@sundaramtagore.com)
- singapore** 01-05 Gillman Barracks, 5 Lock Road, Singapore 108933 • tel +65 6694 3378 • [singapore@sundaramtagore.com](mailto:singapore@sundaramtagore.com)