

PRESS RELEASE

Experiments With Truth, Recent Works by Debanjan Roy

9 July – 1 September 2009

Reception: Wednesday 8 July, 6pm – 8pm

Kolkata-based artist Debanjan Roy will present a series of new sculptures and works on paper and canvas at Aicon Gallery this summer.

Using icons from both world and India's history, Debanjan Roy works to initiate discussion. His works are most notably concerned with the violence of India's past and present, and the current lifestyle of the Indian people: especially in terms of cultural and technological development and material possessions.

The fibreglass sculptures to be displayed at Aicon New York represent different personifications of Gandhi - or what could be considered as alternative realities - as created by Debanjan Roy. *India Shining 5 (Gandhi with ipod)* depicts Gandhi walking and listening to an ipod. The artist has deliberately chosen the colour red, seeing it as symbolic of Gandhi's violent death and the ensuing violence in India following his assassination. In *India Shining 9 (Gandhi at a call centre)* Gandhi sits in a small booth, listening to headphones and looking into a computer screen. The irony of depicting Gandhi with such blatant symbols of India's current wealth and rising middle class is obvious: whilst his personal philosophy called for a rejection of material possessions, it is largely thanks to his influence that the nation can now have such a materialistic drive today. Perhaps most disturbingly, *India Shining 8 (Gandhi supported by two)*, shows Gandhi smiling, his arms around the shoulders of two men in military fatigues with guns slung over their shoulders: again painted bright red, the aggression of Roy's chosen colour together with the clash of ideology, incite deep discomfort for the viewer.

Furthermore, Roy also presents a series of calendars, each an edition of three. Following a style commonly seen in India, with an image of a Hindu god in traditional pose and dress, Roy has substituted the god for well-known figures from politics or history, initiating an ambiguousness to the images that can lead to many different possible readings: Gandhi has replaced *Shiva*, the giver and taker of all life; or reclines as *Vishnu* (the preserver of the universe) in the coils of *Shashnag*, typing into a laptop while the modern leaders of India pray to him.

EDITORS NOTE

Born in 1975, Roy completed his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Visual Arts from Rabindra Bharti University, Santiniketan, in 1998 and 2000, respectively.

In 2000, Roy received the Best Sculpture Award from the West Bengal State Lalit Kala Akademi. His solo shows include those at Gandhara Gallery, Kolkata (2007) and at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata (2002), apart from the group shows, 'Who Knew? Mr. Gandhi' at Aicon Gallery, London (2008); 'Eastern Edge' at Aicon Gallery, New York (2007); 'New Wave in Bengal Art' at Gallery Akar Prakar, Kolkata (2005); and 'Tale of Two Cities' at Birla Academy of Art and Culture, Kolkata and Mumbai, and the Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi (2004).

The artist's work was also shown at Art Dubai earlier this year, where he was also represented by Aicon Gallery.

Forthcoming exhibitions at Aicon New York include works by **Farida Batool**, opening 1 September 2009.

For further press information and visuals, please contact Rachel Phillipps at Pickles PR

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Aicon New York is open 10am – 6.30pm Tuesday - Saturday

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