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PRESS RELEASE

Sakti Burman, *Enraptured Gaze*

14 May – 30 June 2009

Opening Wednesday 13 May, 6.30– 9.00

Aicon New York is proud to present new work by Indian modern master, Sakti Burman. For his first solo exhibition in New York, Burman has produced a distinctive and representative body of work created since 2006.

The dream-like art of Sakti Burman is a celebration of the wondrous and beautiful aspects of existence as well as a whimsical dive into the fantastical. His works are not tainted by the darker aspects of life but are pure and unaffected, depicting scenes of unadulterated peace and joy.

Burman spent his youth in India where he was surrounded by the decorative traditions and culture of his native homeland. He soaked up the exquisite patterns of miniature paintings and Persian carpets and revelled in the elaborate festivals, musicians and exotic animals. The 1950s was also a time when the Indian people were resisting British rule and there was a strong nationalist feeling uniting the country, which was manifested in the art world by a desire to develop styles with an Indian identity. By the time Burman entered the Government College, there was a thriving Bengali School of artists, and Sakti benefited from the new enthusiasm for the visual arts in his homeland.

Burman's practice was equally influenced from his move to Paris. The nihilistic mood in France following the World Wars was captured in styles of Dada and Surrealism. Burman, however, avoided such cynicism and despair, focusing his attentions on the idyllic domestic scenes encountered in the colourful works of previous French masters, such as Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard.

Architecture and relics encountered East and West greatly influenced Burman's work. From the elaborate borders and calligraphy of Mughal manuscripts to the Italian frescoes, they helped to mould Burnam's individual style, in particular his trademark speckled paint technique producing decorative and elaborate hues.

By the mid-1960s Burman had formed his style, which has remained basically the same over the years, becoming richer with his age and experience, as his recent work attests.

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A fine example is *Music runs from Sky to Sky* (2007). In this joyous image, musicians and dancers from East and West, and from ancient to modern times, frolic together with sacred animals. In most of Sakti's paintings the peacock is carrying a rider, but in this work the bird unfurls his splendid speckled and colourful tail. The intricate border around Sakti's lovely dappled colours recalls Mughal miniature painting.

In *Artist and Model* (2008), Sakti created an allegory of his French-Indian life as a painter. Sakti painted himself sitting at his easel on the right wearing spectacles and Western attire, and in a mirror-image on the left he wears a traditional Indian garment and sits on a peacock. In this painting-within-a-painting Sakti has composed an exact duplicate of the nude model standing before him. In a nod to the French realist Gustave Courbet's *L'atelier du peintre, allégorie réelle* (The Artist's studio, a real allegory, 1855), Sakti has surrounded himself with his muses and admirers, including family members, an Indian mythological figure on a horse, a reclining classical woman and assorted cherubs. The inspirational roles all his muses is marked by colorful flowers in their hair. The art world today is richer because, as this allegory of painting demonstrates, Sakti Burman has embraced two cultures and created from them his own unique international vision—his enraptured gaze.

Sakti Burman was born in Kolkata in 1935. He studied at the Government College of Arts and Crafts in Kolkata in 1956 and went on to study at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts Paris. He has had solo and group shows worldwide and been the recipient of prestigious awards such as the Medaille d'argent au Salon de Montmorency. Sakti Burman lives and works in Paris.

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

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Aicon New York is open Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6:30 pm

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