

## The New York Times

### THE NEW YORK TIMES

March 19, 2004

Bari Kumar  
Bose Pacia Modern  
508 West 26th Street, Chelsea  
Through March 27

With their no-frills realist style and theatrical air, Bari Kumar's paintings have the graphic pull of film posters, though the films advertised seem composed entirely of symbols. In one painting, a nearly nude male figure floats on a green field; he is clearly based on Renaissance pictures of the crucified Jesus but has black skin and the four arms of a Hindu god and is missing his head, which has been severed at the neck.

In other pictures hermaphroditic bodies emerge, half-visible, through pixel patterns, accompanied by tantric symbols and words in Roman and Indian scripts. And the show's panoramic centerpiece, "Live and Let Live," is a compendium of a dozen such images. Withering flowers from a Dutch still life surround a human eye pierced by a nail. A pair of hands held open as if waiting to receive something is labeled "Brown Is the New Black." A small woman's figure done in traditional Indian style stares up at a muscular male torso towering over her, its origins European, its skin Krishna blue.

Mr. Kumar, born in India in 1966, has lived in Los Angeles since his teens, and his work is clearly about the clash of several cultures — including that of Latino Southern California — in his own history. At the same time, like many young artists, he destabilizes what was once called identity politics by making his own position all but unlocatable. The web of apparently free-floating cultural fragments that results can be hard to read and in Mr. Kumar's work sometimes feels inorganically pieced together. But he's dealing with difficult material and doing so in intriguing ways that would seem to allow plenty of room for growth.

HOLLAND COTTER

## **VILLAGE VOICE**

March 4, 2004

### **Bari Kumar**

A painter born in India and living in L.A. manages to have something in common with Manuel Ocampo, Julio Galán, and David Salle, while conveying his own identity and interest in a show called "Export Quality."

KIM LEVIN

## **THE NEW YORK SUN | CALENDER**

February 6-8, 2004

INTERNATIONAL IMPORT "Export Quality" an exhibit of new works by Indian painter **Bari Kumar**, juxtaposes Indian script with English and Spanish words in large-scale works and small vignettes.