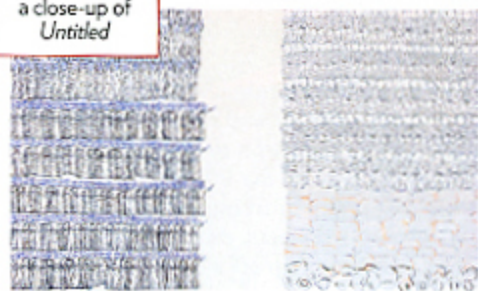




**ARTIST'S
EXPRESSION**

Clockwise from left: Schandra Singh: her works *The Rose Garden* and a close-up of *Untitled*



Trade Center in New York. "I had the idea to paint *Untitled* a couple of weeks later, on a miserable day down at Ground Zero," she admits. "But I did not have the courage to do it for some time. I didn't know how to express myself. How can one speak, visually, of the death of 3,000 people, of their (and my) world becoming a war zone, of my own loss of innocence? My conclusion was to paint the 3,000 people who died, along with the questions that rose from this tragedy." The result is an 84 x 54-inch canvas (rescued from her shattered apartment) in which a group of Muslims pray on one side, while on the other are the 2,915 victims she could trace from those who perished. Singh records each one of them. "If I hadn't done this, I don't think I would ever have painted again," she says. "It was my way of giving back, trying to heal and making sense of something senseless."

Reality Check

In *Neha*, named after a little girl she met on a flight to the Bahamas, Singh portrays a chubby girl waddling out of blue water, her face fearful. Schandra's desire is to depict people living lives of luxury, but with a fear of the unknown lurking within. Her work mirrors themes of "escapism, anxiety and the existential crisis of being marooned in 'paradise,'" she says. "The act of violence comes out of pain. People fight back by killing, whether it's war or terrorism. But, as Gandhi said, 'An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.'"

• Singh shows at Bose Pacia, New York, April 9-May 22. www.bosepacia.com

ART

paradise lost

APARNA PEDNEKAR meets New York-based artist Schandra Singh on the eve of her solo show

Sipping cocktails with Schandra Singh, it's difficult to find any hint of 'desi' in this self-described 'Eurasian blonde' who spends her free time walking in the country, reading Camus and Sartre. The 32-year-old artist may be a poster child for uptown chic, but, as the *Village Voice's* Greg Tate says in a foreword to her catalogue for a previous show, *The Sun is Not Ridiculous*, Singh is "fitting global status quo into paintings without being obviously political or aesthetically vulgar." Last year, Singh showed in China alongside Subodh Gupta and Jitish Kallat. Her solo will now be on display at Bose Pacia in Brooklyn, New York.

A New World

Born in Pakistan, Schandra's father endured seven years as a Partition refugee. He arrived in the US in 1959, lived

in a YMCA, worked in a factory and ultimately became a financial advisor. Schandra's mother was born in Germany, but moved to Austria during the war, relocating to Chicago when she was 14. "I grew up in a rich, visual environment filled with artefacts from around the world," says Schandra, "large Buddhas, Western art, batiks from Sri Lanka, and of course, Indian miniatures." This melting pot of cultures shows in her technique: the Rhode Island School of Design alumnus' oils-on-linen marry Indian miniature style with European Expressionism.

The Afterlife

In 2001, Singh's apartment/studio was destroyed in the attack on the World

"If I hadn't done this after 9/11, I don't think I would ever have painted again" —SCHANDRA SINGH