

BOSE PACIA

September 2006 New York – Bose Pacia presents recent works by Sheela Gowda from September 14th through October 28th. There will be an opening reception with the artist on Thursday, September 14th from 6 to 8 pm. Bose Pacia is located at 508 West 26th Street on the 11th Floor, in the Chelsea district of New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 12 to 6 pm and by appointment.

In her debut solo exhibition in New York, Sheela Gowda presents three installation pieces and two paintings. Gowda's focus on process-based art is evident in her choice of humble materials, her elaborate installations and her manipulation of found space. Often disarmingly simple in appearance, her works are endowed with great poignancy and subtlety.

Her monumental *Darkroom* is a pseudo-house crafted out of both unaltered and flattened tar drums which simultaneously conveys the grandeur of Greco-Roman colonnades and the barren simplicity of road workers' temporary shelters. Upon crawling into the structure and standing, one finds an interior of stillness and darkness lit gently by a punctured ceiling evoking the night sky. *Some Place* is a sculptural installation which transmits sound through metal plumbing pipes. At various points, the pipes remain open and the viewer is invited to listen to the musings of a radio commentator speaking in Kannada, Gowda's native language. *Still*, an ephemeral work comprised of the ashes of burnt incense and intimate watercolors of images of nature and family photographs, comments on memory, personal histories and the slow passage of time. Gowda comments, "Like the ash, these watercolors were more or less monochrome. I scanned them, printed them out, and then put them under glass. So they are prints of watercolors of photographs of moments, many generations away from the initial moment of viewing. In this sense, the watercolors, like the ash, contain a trace of time."

Each installation demonstrates Gowda's principle of using materials in their original form and contending with the peculiar resistances of each. As she herself reveals, "I think resistance is very important. It gives you the challenge, the convictions and the idea as well." Her use of humble materials specific to local cottage industries and infrastructure reflect her urgent desire "to address the political debates and the angst" felt by herself and many others given current socio-political tensions in India. Yet Gowda shies clear of fundamentalism and sentimentality, stating, "I do not like to use my work as a vehicle for making strident statements and need subtler means."

2/7 and *Agneepath* demonstrate her training as a classical painter and toy with the idea of grand historic painting. The former, is an adaptation of a newspaper photograph depicting a scene of urban unrest as a lathi-armed policeman confronts a group of frenzied protestors. The latter, derived from a Hindi film, reveals a climactic moment; a wounded son returns to die on his mother's lap after having avenged the humiliating death of his father. The frame is atypical and poignant as the conventional sympathetic embrace of the mother figure is instead replaced by her averted gaze and reserved body language. As in her installation works, purity of form remains paramount. In *2/7*, the newspaper photograph is projected onto the surface and *Agneepath* also begins with an enlarged digital print of the film still. Gowda is careful to build upon the existing silhouettes in order to preserve their inherent blurriness and minimize the presence of her brush. Although of disparate subject matter, the two paintings draw from one another as the artist observes; "They are very different, but the symbolism in these images leads to a consideration of reality and so back to the world outside."

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Sheela Gowda was born in Bhadravati, India in 1957. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Bangalore University and later a Masters degree from the Royal College of Art, London. Gowda has had numerous solo exhibitions throughout India and has also participated in various group exhibitions. Her recent exhibitions include *Play/Lila: Contemporary Miniatures and New Art from South Asia* (Melbourne, 2006), *Indian Summer: Contemporary Art from India* at the Ecole des Beaux Arts (Paris, 2005), *How Latitudes become Form* at the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis, 2003) and *Traditions and Tensions, 27 South Asian Artists* at both Asia Society and Queens Museum (New York, 1996). The artist currently lives and works in Bangalore, India.