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## NEWS

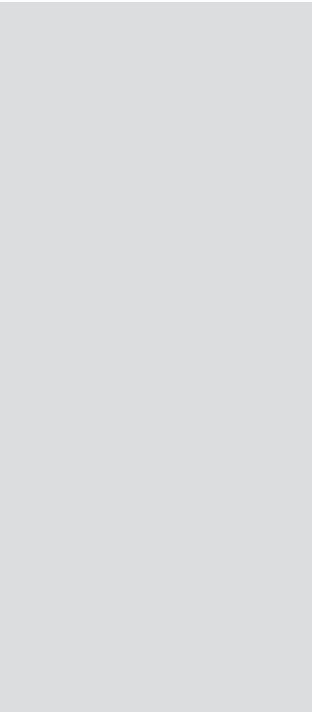
### April 2008

#### **Bari Kumar's In Transit in Grosvenor Vadehra**

**London: Grosvenor Vadehra** is presenting an exhibition of new works by Californian-based Indian artist **Bari Kumar** in his first solo exhibition in the UK . The show starts on May 8 and will be on view till May 24, 2008.

Bari Kumar was born in Andhra Pradesh , Southern India , in 1966 but has been living and working in Los Angeles since 1985. Kumar's work mirrors his personal experience of belonging to more than one culture, or rather, belonging to neither. Kumar's new body work *In Transit*, reflects not only where he finds himself geographically, constantly travelling between India and the US , but is also a personal reflection on his state of being. Steeped in imagery and loaded references from these two divergent cultures, *In Transit* suggests he is still in limbo.

Kumar's work is clearly influenced by contemporary visual culture; his works are poster like in their design with bold areas of colour, often incorporating pieces of text or 'advertising slogans'. Kumar draws heavily on the lively Indian street life he witnessed growing up; where film and advertisement posters sit next to religious temples defaced with a constantly changing stream of political graffiti. The contemporary imagery in his



works is placed alongside religious symbols and icons. By juxtaposing the religious and the popular, Kumar expresses his anxiety about the use of moral and sacred imagery in a media driven modern age.

Kumar, in his use of symbolism and loaded imagery, is keen to explore the idea of miscommunication, something he experienced on his move to the US . He is interested in the effects of context; although visually symbols will remain the same, changing the context in which the symbol is perceived may radically alter the meaning. There is no one way of reading his paintings; the references he incorporates in his works will have different impacts in different cultures.

Also featured in the exhibition are two large-scale fibre constructions. These works are composed of packed rows of material which are in fact women's petticoats. We are immediately reminded of the small Indian linen shops which Kumar recalls visiting as a child, where multicoloured fabrics are stacked high up to the ceiling. These petticoats are the unseen garment which women wear beneath their saris. Kumar is interested in the notion of the unseen, he relates the petticoat to the unseen immigrant workforce in America who are an integral part of the social infrastructure, Kumar comments "it's the immigrant force who help support the system of everyday life, but they're an invisible force that are not recognised, they almost don't exist."