

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Material Witness

Bari Kumar & Mondongo

9 September – 23 October 2010

Artist Reception: 9 September, 6 – 8 pm

September 2010 | New York – Bose Pacia is pleased to present ***Material Witness*** with new works by **Bari Kumar** and **Mondongo** 9 September – 23 October, 2010. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Friday from 11 to 6 pm and Saturday 12 to 6. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, September 9th from 6 to 8 pm. The artists will be in attendance and the public is invited.

Material Witness presents the works of Los Angeles-based Bari Kumar and the Buenos Aires-based collective, Mondongo. The initial meeting of the artists was a truly happenstance event and the impulse to create a visual conversation between their works has been strong from the first discovery of their separate projects. This exhibition is comprised of large scale “paintings” constructed with various non-traditional substances. Both Bari Kumar and Mondongo alike have independently explored theories of voice and representation of materials and subjects in their works. By using materials that are intrinsically linked to the message of the work the objects become complicit with their message. The works themselves become both the perpetrator and the perpetrated creating a vacuum of intense representation.

A material witness is a person who contains real or alleged information, or “material”, of importance to criminal trial. As such they become bound to the event irrespective of interest or intent. The works in this exhibition explore this concept as it relates to their subject and medium choices. Bari Kumar, historically a painter, began experimenting with fabric constructions in 2007. These constructions can be seen to mimic the pixilation aesthetic found in many of his canvas paintings. His work in this exhibition is predominantly comprised of fabric constructions. In each of these the artist has depicted segments of nude bodies. By depicting nudes with the material conventionally used (sari lining fabric) to cover bodies he is able emphasize the shifting contexts of the body and its covering and the miscommunications that arise when such distinctions no longer follow an expected trajectory. By using the fabric which is intended for the inner lining of a sari he is also bringing to the fore a material which is frequently seen but rarely adored or discussed. He gives a voice and position to an unspoken variable from visual culture.

By using a commonly acquired and viewed material to depict a related but far more contentious form, the artist emphasizes questions of voice, marginality, and inherent meaning. Mondongo’s work has followed a similar path. The group has created realistic representations of portraits, landscapes, and objects using commonplace and specifically coded materials for many years. In this exhibition the artists have utilized Plasticine (a substance similar to play-dough or Silly Putty), thread, tar, mirror, make-up, etc. In each case the medium and the images depicted by the medium form an intersection of material and metaphor. The purposeful material variegation relates to each specific subject matter. In *Dream of Reason II* the group depicts what appears to be the scene following a rape. For this work they have used tar, make-up, and broken mirror on wood. The substances can be seen as both the potential aftermath of a violent encounter as well as the encounter itself. The references to make-up and mirrors can leave the viewer to consider questions of beauty and artifice. To then directly link this to a rape scene we are led to question where the true information lies.

Both Bari Kumar and Mondongo’s insightful pairing of medium and subject matter creates a visual meditation on the agency of common materials and the moments of purposeful or prescribed meaning in life.

Born in Vakadu in Andhra Pradesh, India in 1966, Bari Kumar studied at the Rishi Valley School in India founded by the philosopher J. Krishnamurthi and thereafter, obtained a BFA in Graphic Design from the Otis/ Parsons School of Design in Los Angeles. He has participated in group and solo exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally. Bari Kumar currently lives and works in Los Angeles and Hyderabad, India.

The Argentinean artist collective, Mondongo, is comprised of Juliana Laffitte (1974), Manuel Mendanha (1976), and Augustina Picasso (1977). After working independently for many years the three began collaborative work in 2000 and have widely exhibited internationally. They have been included in solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Madrid, and London. The collective has also collaborated with Rei Kawakubo of Comme des Garçon. Mondongo live and work in Buenos Aires.

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