

# Victoria Miro Gallery

## Press Release

**Raqib Shaw**

### **Garden of Earthly Delights**

*19 February to 20 March 2004*

Since the early 1990's the Victoria Miro Gallery has promoted the work of young emerging artists from this country and abroad. The Gallery is delighted to present work by the London based Kashmiri painter, Raqib Shaw. His first exhibition will comprise a suite of large-scale paintings along with a group of works on paper relating to the paintings' subject matter.

Raqib Shaw, 29, graduated with an MA in Fine Art from Central St Martin's in 2002. Born in Calcutta and brought up in the cultural wealth of Kashmir, Shaw's ancestry has shaped his richly layered paintings. Raqib Shaw's family are carpet makers and shawl traders and he grew up immersed in antique carpets and the incredible Jamevar shawls of the area. As can be expected from such an upbringing, Shaw's work draws on a rich seam of information from the eastern cultures of India and Kashmir as well as China and Japan. When he was sixteen he travelled to London and experienced Western art for the first time outside of books.

The group of paintings in *Garden of Earthly Delights*, are inspired by the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. They are sophisticated, flowing, erotically charged works that depict a fantastical, hedonistic, underwater world populated by mythical creatures, part aquatic/part animal/part human often engaged in sexual acts. Shaw mixes media such as car enamels and industrial paint with decorative materials including, glitter and semi precious stones to create elaborately layered and densely patterned surfaces that combine a Western and Eastern perspective.

*" I have always been obsessed with the idea of making industrial paints and decorative materials into something beyond decorative. I want the paintings to question people's notions of aesthetics. In looking at my work I want people to believe in the possibility of transcendence, that base metal might be turned into gold, or as Proust eloquently wrote to reveal "the pearl that may give the lie to our carapace of paste and pewter". Raqib Shaw 2003.*

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