

Victoria Miro

PRESS RELEASE

NS Harsha Picking through the Rubble

10 October – 14 November 2009



This Autumn Victoria Miro Gallery and Iniva present the first solo shows in London by Indian artist NS Harsha. Working across media including sculpture, installation and community-based collaborations, NS Harsha is known for his paintings that often depict fields of vast, sparsely detailed space populated by highly individuated figures-in-miniature as well as his installations that are often site-specific and political in scope. At Victoria Miro he will present a series of new paintings and an installation created especially for the exhibition, whilst at Iniva he will present his monumental installation *Nations*.

The works are loaded with intelligent political or social commentary, and draw on both popular culture and traditional narratives as they interweave local and international points of reference. Harsha has always been interested in art and its relationship with cultural representation and misrepresentation, and therefore location – whether geographical, political, social or cultural – plays an essential role.

A new group of paintings will be presented in the main gallery, all of which revolve around ideas of meaninglessness and the absurd. Taking on the challenge of representing on canvas the absurd within human nature, Harsha here furthers his exploration of humanity *en masse*, with an underlying sensitivity for the individual as well as the group. In his words, 'I continue to search for a way in which to portray large crowds or gatherings and their collective absurd acts. It is interesting to observe a crowd which has lost its collective rationale – or its attempt to achieve a collective rationale!'

Harsha's first engagement with these ideas resulted in the recent work *Spot an innocent civilian*, in which rows of standing halo-adorned figures appear as though they are part of an identification lineup, presumably for the viewer to appraise and determine the 'innocent' of the title. Harsha often invests his work with an awareness of the medium, in which the figures become an audience for a presupposed viewer, who in turn becomes complicit with or somehow activates the incident depicted. The work grew out of a fascination with the term 'innocent civilian' repeatedly heard in media reports, which, for Harsha, came to signify another exploited byword used to various ends in the global political arena. He set himself the rather absurd task of trying to identify 'the innocence' in passers-by, a futile attempt to try and define sets of characteristics that might successfully define innocence. In the upstairs gallery Harsha will present a site-specific installation comprised of integrated painting and sculptural elements.

***Picking through the Rubble* will be presented at Victoria Miro Gallery from 10 October to 14 November. www.victoria-miro.com. Iniva presents NS Harsha's grand-scale installation *Nations* at Rivington Place until 21 November. www.iniva.org.**

Background and Biography

Born in 1969, NS Harsha lives and works in Mysore, India. He studied painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda 1995. Harsha was the recipient of the prestigious Artes Mundi 3 Prize in 2008 and has taken part in a variety of collaborative projects and exhibitions internationally. Earlier this year he was included in the *Indian Highway* exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, the 9th Sharjah Biennial, *Chalo! India: A New Era of Indian Art* at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo and an exhibition at the Valencia Institute of Modern Art, Spain. He had a solo presentation at Maison Hermes Tokyo in 2008 and was included in the Singapore Biennale 2006; 2nd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennial 2002 and the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Arts, Australia 1999.

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Open Tuesday to Saturday
10am to 6pm, admission free
Tubes, Old Street and Angel