

Art Alive Gallery

presents

**Distinguished Company:
Pictorial Dialogues by Nayanaa Kanodia**

Venue : Art Alive Gallery
S – 221, Panchsheel Park
New Delhi - 110017

Show dates : 16th – 30th December, 2007
(11 a.m. to 7 p.m.)

Art Alive Gallery, New Delhi presents ‘Distinguished Company’ a solo show of the recent works of well-known artist Nayanaa Kanodia.

These works are based on the timeless themes and experiences of the masters of contemporary art. Delving into the psychological experiences and socio-economic conditions that prompted them to paint what they did, she has taken valuable inputs from their paintings and incorporated them into her signature style. She has portrayed the powerful influences that their artwork has left on our society today. By innovatively mirroring images that once mirrored life, she has achieved a connection between the eminent artist, his works and our contemporary world portraying them in her nuanced style.

Nayanaa engages with iconic images from the oeuvres of Picasso, Matisse, K G Subramanyan, Modigliani, F N Souza, Jehangir Sabavala, Frida Kahlo, M F Husain, Jogen Chowdhury, and others: her pictorial dialogues with these masters are calibrated in various registers, being by turns high-spirited, wry, votive and witty. A window opens to reveal a seascape by Sabavala; a woman who might easily belong to the Company Period offers us Ara flowers; a troika of bodybuilders flex their muscles against a Rothko backdrop. A woman shows off her toned body against a Subramanyan painting, with its resonances of the bohemian life of Weimar Berlin; a couple has wrapped themselves in Raza images; a group of proud owners sit around a table with stiff formality, acutely aware of their good taste and market sense, utterly possessed by the paintings they own.

Unusually for a contemporary artist, Nayanaa's paintings originate in an unalloyed pleasure, a viewerly enjoyment of visual surface, narrative depth, and the games that artists play with their audiences. 'Distinguished Company' marks a long-distance apprenticeship, retracing the impulses that have excited her over the years: Van Gogh's brushy, blazing yellows and greens; Dali's unsettling dreamscapes; Raja Ravi Varma's comforting deities, palpably alive and emanating grace in a pastoral landscape; and Bhupen Khakhar's public theatre of secrecies. Khakhar and 'Le Douanier' Rousseau have been among Nayanaa's major sources of inspiration through the years, for their inventive figuration as much as for their bold, fresh and seemingly untutored use of forms and resources conventionally thought to be beneath the notice of the fine arts.

Nayanaa Kanodia approaches the history of art in a spirit of playful homage. Her chosen instruments are an attentive irreverence that is never destructive, a gift for understated comedy, and a conviction that art and life can interweave in the most remarkable ways. Nayanaa does not regard art as a universe separate and remote from the concerns of ordinary life. Nor does she view artists, even the masters of the grand concourse of 19th- and 20th-century art history, as demigods whose feet never touch the earth. On the contrary, she treats them as immediate presences that enter into the textures of normal life: their motifs migrate to household objects, to linen and furniture; their mannerisms light up a living room or bedroom; their hallmark images infiltrate the routines and solid familiarities of the everyday.

"Despite appearances to the contrary, Nayanaa's art is sustained by a certain seriousness of purpose. If humour forms one pole of her project, research forms the other: while the paintings that comprise 'Distinguished Company' embody the visible outcome of her engagement, there is also an invisible body of work in the form of the bibliographical and annotative reading, and the rehearsals that she has put herself through as preparation for the paintings" says critic and curator Ranjit Hoskote.

For further enquiries please contact:

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Nayanaa Kanodia

Nayanaa Kanodia was born in 1950 in Pune, Maharashtra. She has had no formal training in art except for a year's apprenticeship with Anjolie Ela Menon. She had her first solo show in Mumbai in 1986 and has held numerous exhibitions since then in India and abroad. In 1998, she was selected by The Commonwealth Institute for a solo show in their newly renovated complex in London. In 2001 she was invited by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London to exhibit her work and to give a demonstration of her technique. She has also participated in many group shows nationally and internationally including the ones in New York in 1988; National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai in 1997 & 1998; Dubai in 1998; London in 2001, 2002 & 2006; 'Centre Regional D'Art Contemporain', Sete, France in 2001; Washington in 2001; Paris in 2002; Hong Kong in 2005; Singapore in 2006; 'The Ueno Royal Museum', Tokyo in 2007; South Africa in 2007. Nayanaa is the first Indian of non-British origin whose works are in the collection of the 'Paintings in Hospitals', UK previously named as British Museum. Nayanaa's work is held in many public and private collections in India and abroad including the Musée International d'Art Naïf, Paris. She lives and works in Mumbai.