

For Immediate Release: April 2007



The Noble Sage

NEW DRAWING EXHIBITION POINTS TO FRESH INDIAN TALENT

**‘Drawn from India - Pen and Ink Drawings by
S. Ravi Shankar and M. Natesh’**

2nd May – 3rd June 2007

The Noble Sage, the first gallery in the UK to specialise in Indian contemporary art, will open its new show dedicated to the strikingly original work of two rising artists from South India.

A line on paper resonates with all of us as we have all put pen to paper in our lives though not all of us have put brush to canvas. We can relate on that basic fundamental. It is for this reason that the work of artists, M. Natesh and S.R. Shankar, inspires great awe and admiration. We are in the presence of works of art where we understand the medium (pen and paper), where we use the medium, where it is all within our reach. Yet here it is pushed to a level of imaginative creativity and artistic skill we could never have imagined.

Shankar, born and brought up in Chennai (formerly Madras) though now living and working in Kerala, is not an artist unknown to these shores. In 1996 he spent time in Edinburgh studying printmaking and soon fell in love with the country. He travelled widely in England, learning about the rituals of Western culture compared to those of India. Much inspired, Shankar in 2005 set about creating a series of bold, large, monochrome pen drawings on paper. The result was an astonishing group of highly skilful, and not to mention, cryptic figurative works that continue today in the fourteen new drawings commissioned for this special exhibition.

In Shankar’s drawings, the world is reflected in people’s surfaces (skin, clothing). Faces emerge next to the lining of a pocket. Numbers and lettering tell from skin within a patch of muscle. If ever there is a meaning to be gathered, it is that we are all the product of our world. As a viewer, we are constantly dared to de-crypt Shankar’s drawings. Characters and their surroundings become vessels for never-ending scrutiny and diagnosis.

His opposite in the exhibition is Tamil Nadu artist, M. Natesh. His love of art can be rooted back to the age of three when he would scribble on the floor of his house with a piece of chalk. Half artist, half talented set designer, Natesh has always had a theatricality about his artistic message. Every morning Natesh sits down to produce a series of strange fluid line drawings. His contemporaries describe him as a 'classicist' because of these drawings. He puts this categorisation down to the 'design element' conspicuous in his finished pieces. In his words, he looks for 'fluidity through symmetry and repetition of line and form'.

The final drawings are a bizarre connection of toes, tendrils, tentacles, thumbs, knuckles, elbows, wings and open palms. These are morphed together picto-genetically: hands become beaks, wings become feet, a knee joint becomes an elbow. To Natesh, it is a reference to the world around us and its strange future metamorphosis into something ugly due to climate change. A favourite topic of Natesh is man's consumption of the planet. In his drawings, mankind is often pictured a gluttonous, ogre-like being. The artist punishes man through his drawing giving him an expanded anus, a gorged mouth, or flaccid limbs.

Director of The Noble Sage, Jana Manuelpillai, says: 'Natesh's drawings are certainly strange for the viewer: grotesque and elegant in equal measure, comical and tragic in the same artistic line. Shankar's are thoroughly different. They leave you in awe as much for the workmanship and detail as the complex embedded meanings. I pit these two superb draughtsmen together to purposefully challenge and excite the viewer.'

Private View

Wednesday 2nd May 2007, 7.30-11.30pm. Opening by special guest to be confirmed.

Special Press Viewing at 7pm. Inauguration speeches to be made at 8.30pm.

Exhibition Listings

Drawn from India: Pen and Ink Drawings by S. Ravi Shankar and M. Natesh (exhibition catalogue available)

2nd May – 3rd June 2007

All artworks for sale; free entrance

Exhibition price range: £500 to £1500

The Noble Sage Art Gallery, 2A Fortis Green, London N2 9EL (near East Finchley Tube)

Mondays & Tuesdays By appointment only

Wednesdays 9 - 6.30pm

Thursday – Friday 11 – 7.30pm

Saturdays & Sundays 11 - 5pm

T: 0208 883 7303

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Jana Manuelpillai, Director, The Noble Sage Art Gallery

Jana Manuelpillai is the man behind The Noble Sage. A British-born Sri Lankan with Indian lineage, he leads a new breed of home-grown talent forging fresh and exciting links with the subcontinent.

Jana (28yrs) has a wealth of experience behind him and some impressive qualifications to boot. His interest in art at a young age led him to a degree in Art History and English Literature from Birmingham University where he was well-known amongst his peers and professors for his robust presentation style. This was swiftly followed by a First Class Masters degree in Museum Studies at Leicester University, thus cementing his career in art museums and galleries. His career throughout has been vast, varied and international, spanning from Dulwich Picture Gallery and South London Gallery in his beloved capital, to The Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in the USA, the largest contemporary art space in the world.

Most recently, Jana worked as Head of Education at the well-known Mall Galleries just off Trafalgar Square. Here he added to his formidable knowledge of contemporary art while utilising his own unique business sense and entrepreneurial spirit in relation to the management, fundraising, sponsorship and marketing of the Mall Galleries' brand new education wing. In December 2004, Jana left the Mall Galleries to burn a trail for himself in the contemporary art world.

The Noble Sage is the product of this high endeavour – an intelligent symphony of Jana's own unique cultural background, his strong belief in the positive emergence of a new world culture, and his unerring love and knowledge of the arts.

Public and Media Enquires

Please contact, Director, Jana Manuelpillai via email jana@thenoblesage.com or by phone - 0208 883 7303. For further information about The Noble Sage Art Gallery, please visit www.thenoblesage.com.

Further information about the artists, images and interviews are available for press use.