

Nataraj Sharma
Travel Log | New York

Aicon Art Exhibition: June 5 – July 10, 2021
Press Preview & V.I.P Reception: Saturday, June 5, 2021
35 Great Jones St, New York NY 10012



Nataraj Sharma, Adani Thermal Power Plant, 2020, oil on canvas, 72 x 108 in.

Aicon Art New York is delighted to present *Travel Log*, the recent solo exhibition by a stalwart of Indian Contemporary Art **Nataraj Sharma**, his second solo exhibition in North America and his first in New York in over a decade.

The exhibition is comprised of monumental canvases that document Sharma's travels around India and its vicinity, and which explore the relationships between urbanization, landscapes and the human presence at the interstices of modernity. Sharma is constantly exploring, expanding, and evolving these images so they add new connotations and dimensions to that which was already familiar.

His fascination with the industrial is vividly on display in these works. Sharma's images are incisive commentaries on perception and experience. Largely-barren, broody, yet visually dramatic, these landscapes allude to the unpredictable confluence of nature, civilization and industrialization. Sharma captures this milieu by distilling complex images to their essential elements. These elements along with an intelligent critique of human intrusion in the natural world are a connecting thread within his oeuvre. As writer **Nicole Rudick** has observed on some of Sharma's previous work:

Many of the artists landscapes are churning, chaotic abstractions in which exterior sites appear as aberrant and unlikely environments for life, denuded by the ravages of progress, empty and sullen.

Evoking the frenzy of construction found in many urban Indian cities, the artist's scale – both in his canvases and installations – tends to be quite monumental. However, Sharma cautions us through his use of miniaturization within the works, gently mocking the idea of western modernity as a standard of cultural achievement. Combining two strands in Indian visual history, Sharma seeks to create a dialogue around the notion of historical progress and urban realities. The narrative tradition of figuration, with its focus on emerging middle-class aspirations, and the geometric abstraction of Indian modernist painters is suffused within his vocabulary.



Nataraj Sharma, *Urmi School*, 2020, oil on canvas, 72 x 108 in.

Born in 1958 in Mysore, Nataraj Sharma grew up in Egypt, England, and Zambia. He studied Applied Art at the Faculty of Fine Arts at Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, graduating in 1982.

Strongly influenced by socio-political happenings across the world and his own migrations, Sharma's art reflects a multiplicity of influences, not just in its content but also in its form. The artist moves swiftly and convincingly between figure studies, portraits and landscapes in oil and acrylic on canvas, as well as large-scale installations. His recent work explores urban landscapes and industrial geometry, playing and teasing the forms that they take, stretching their boundaries, and depicting civilization through empty factories and battered machines.

Sharma solo exhibitions include 'Airshow' at Bodhi Art, Singapore in 2008-09; 'Work In Progress' at Bodhi Space, Mumbai, in 2008; 'Stretch' at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute and Bodhi Art, Singapore, Mumbai and New York, in 2007; 'Flight' at Art and Public, Geneva, and Bodhi Art, Mumbai, in 2007; and 'Nataraj Sharma: Vapi Horse and Other Stories' at Nature Morte, New Delhi in 2005. His work has been a part of several group shows including 'Living of the Grid' at Anant Art Centre, New Delhi, in 2009; 'Zip Files' at Tao Art Gallery, Mumbai, in 2009; 'Frame Figure Field: 20th Century Modern and Contemporary Indian Art' at Delhi Art Gallery, New Delhi, in 2008; 'Edge of Desire' which travelled to several cities across the world from 2005 unto 2007; and 'Kitsch Kitsch Hota Hai' presented by Gallery Espace at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, in 2001. Sharma was awarded the Sotheby's Award for Best Emerging Artist in 1993, and participated in an artist residency program at the Singapore Tyler Print Institute (STPI), Singapore, in 2006.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (erica@aicongallery.com) for more information.