

## Rajan Krishnan – *ANCESTRY*

2011 June 2 – June 25, 2011

New York, 35 Great Jones Street

VIP Preview & Opening Reception: Thursday June 2, 6:00pm – 9:00pm



Rajan Krishnan  
*Plant from the Grove by the River 1*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2011  
84 x 60 in.

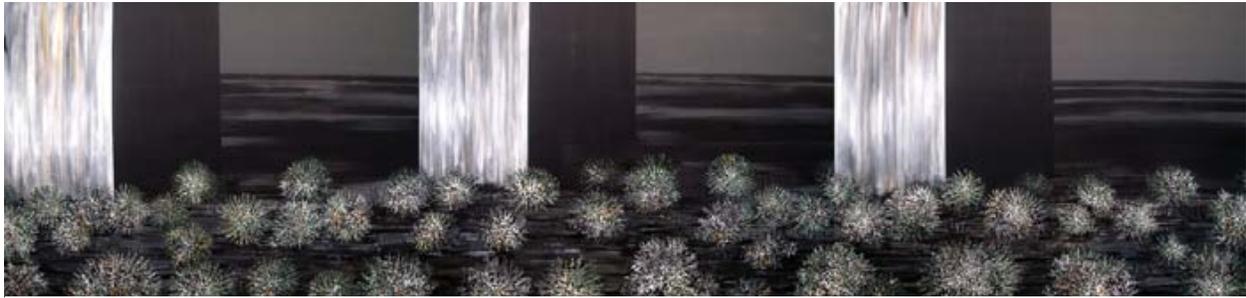
Aicon Gallery, New York's leading venue for Modern and Contemporary South Asian Art, is pleased to present a solo exhibition of Rajan Krishnan's most recent series of works, *Ancestry* – an extension of his past two projects, *Enroute* (2006) and *Memoir* (2007).

These large-scale paintings represent a visualized homage to cultures in transition, as the artist revisits his birthplace, only to discover that the river that once thrived there, sustaining and inspiring the communities around it, now appears devastated and devoid of its past vivacity. The golden sand and placid shimmering currents of the artist's memory are no more – instead, dark debris, crumbling structures and stark shrubbery have replaced the luscious foliage and life-giving waters of the past.

*Ancestry* presents a panorama of sixteen portrait-like paintings of individual elements from the landscape surrounding the river, all rendered against a foreboding grey backdrop,

with neither background nor foreground, focusing our attention directly upon the artist's chosen subjects and settings. Masterful details are contrasted by the darkly flattened milieu, dreamingly devoid of time and its effects, yet ethereally stirred by ongoing sensations of serenity and chaos. Thus, these images visualize the transitional geography, culture and iconography of this riverside terrain, and the impacted visual journey of the artist's return to his birthplace.

The vast panorama of the exhausted riverbed is seen in *There Was a River There...*, a monumental and imposing painting of what Krishnan once viewed as one of the most legendary and beautiful rivers in southern India. In the collective memory of the region – and indeed that of the artist – the Nila River represents more than just a river. For



Rajan Krishnan  
*There Was a River There; Its Banks Filled with Golden Sand!*  
Acrylic on canvas, 2011  
60 x 251.5 in.

generations, its waterways shaped the culture and lives of those in South Malabar, and more specifically the artist's birthplace of Kerala. The river itself served as a lifeline to a vast region, providing literal and cultural sustenance to the countless cities and villages spanning its length – from the Western Ghats, to the Arabian Sea. Yet, the bleak contemporary existence to which this once powerful icon of India's cultural and natural history has been diminished leaves Krishnan's images – like the river itself – stranded somewhere between memory and actuality; between our shared perceptions of the past, and the tangible yet continually shifting realities of our present and future.

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Please contact Aicon Gallery ([Amy@Aicongallery.com](mailto:Amy@Aicongallery.com)) for more information.

\*\* All Images are not hi-resolution, but available upon request.

## RAJAN KRISHNAN



Rajan Krishnan, *Plant from the Grove by the River 4*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

**Rajan Krishnan's** large-scale paintings are signifiers of memory that connect/re-connect with history, especially the history of a landscape and a society in transition. Krishnan uses elements from his immediate natural environment to create fragmentary visions of ever changing landscapes that seem to be an echo of a time once buzzing with activity but now in decline. As art historian Kathleen Wyma points out, "Krishnan's paintings seize on sites of crystallized memory as critical interventions into the present. Re-calling and re-recalling the flow and ebb of time (both real and imagined). His images simultaneously evoke the will to remember and the desire to heed the accretions of localized time."

# RAJAN KRISHNAN



Rajan Krishnan, *Plant from the Grove by the River 1*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

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Rajan Krishnan, *Boat from the House of the Ferry Man*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

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Rajan Krishnan, *Chimney of the Tile Factory by the River*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

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Rajan Krishnan, *Peasant Woman*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 60 in.

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Rajan Krishnan, *There Was a River There; Its Banks Filled with Golden Sand!*, 2011, Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 251.5 in.

## RAJAN KRISHNAN

Born 1967 in Kerala, the artist lives and works in Kochi, Kerala.

### Education

- 1996 Master of Fine Arts in Painting, M. S. University, Baroda  
 1994 Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting, Govt. College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram  
 1989 Bachelor of Arts in Economics, Calicut University, Kerala

### Solo Exhibitions

- 2009 *Four Paintings*, Bombay Art Gallery, Mumbai  
 2008 *RE-VISIT*, OED Basement, Kochi  
*Ore / Substances of Earth-I*, Bodhi Space, Mumbai  
 2007 *Memoir*, Bodhi Art, New York  
 2006 Art Singapore 2006, Bodhi Art, Singapore  
*Enroute*, Bombay Art Gallery, Mumbai  
 2004 *Little Black Drawings*, Kashi Art Gallery, Kochi

### Group Exhibitions

- 2011 *Space-Untitled*, David Hall, Kochi  
 Art Chennai, Gallery OED, Kochi  
 Art Dubai, Aicon Gallery, London  
 India Art Summit, Delhi
- 2010 *The Silk Road*, Saatchi Gallery, Lille (Lille 3000), France  
*Earth*, Gallery OED at Indigo and Labernum Galleries, Chennai  
*Earth*, Gallery OED, Kochi  
*Alt+Refresh*, Pigment Art, Delhi  
*Who has seen Gandhi*, Tangerine Art Space, Bangalore  
*Creating CommonWealth*, Gallery Ragini, Delhi  
*Nature Revisited*, Gallery Sanskriti, Kolkata  
*The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today*, Saatchi Gallery, London
- 2009 *Vicissitudes of the Constructed Images*, Tangerine Art Space, Bangalore  
*Evidentia*, Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore  
*RE-CLAIM / RE-CITE / RE-CYCLE*, Latitude 28, New Delhi & Bose Pacia, Kolkata  
 Group Show, Threshold Art Gallery, New Delhi  
 Group Show, Gallery Kolkata, Kolkata  
 Group Show, Gallery Beyond, Mumbai  
 Group Show, Triva Contemporary, Thiruvananthapuram  
*Facets of A People*, Gallery OED, Kochi  
*Metamorphosis – Change and Continuity in Indian Contemporary Art*, Phyllis Weston  
 Annie Bolling Gallery, Cincinnati, USA  
*The Hot Shots*, The Viewing Room, Mumbai
- 2008 *Works by Various Artists*, Bodhi Art, New York  
*Video Wednesday*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi  
*The Drawing Show*, Gallery Beyond, Mumbai  
*Keep Drawing*, Gallery Espace, New Delhi  
*Triva 2008*, Triva Contemporary, Thiruvananthapuram

- Art Beat*, The Shrine Gallery, New Delhi  
 Hong Kong International Art Fair, Bombay Art Gallery  
 Art Chicago, Bodhi Art  
 Art Cologne, Italy, Bodhi Art
- 2007 *Kashi – 10 Light Years*, Kashi Art Gallery, Kochi  
*Representation*, Triva Contemporary, Thiruvananthapuram  
 Gulf Art Fair, Dubai, Bodhi Art
- 2006 *A Compensation for what has been lost*, Travancore Art Gallery, New Delhi  
*Take Two - The Chennai Chapter' Group Show*, Gallery Sumukha  
*Real*, mattersofart.com, New Delhi  
*Summer Rites*, Gallery Beyond, Mumbai  
 Group show, Open Eyed Dreams, Durbar Hall Art Centre, Kochi  
*Four by Four*, Kashi Art Gallery, Kochi  
 Group show, Shrishti Art Gallery, Hyderabad
- 2005 Group show, Visual Arts Gallery, Hong Kong, presented by Gallery Sumukha  
*New Colours of Sumukha*, Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore  
*Double Enders*, at Jehangir Art Gallery & Museum Gallery, Mumbai, Vadehra Art  
 Gallery, New Delhi, Gallery Sumukha, Bangalore, and Durbar Hall Art Centre, Kochi
- 2003 *Remembering Bhupen*, Kashi Art Café, Fort Kochi  
*Regional Art Exhibition*, Lalit Kala Akademi Regional Centre, Chennai
- 2002 *Monsoon Show*, Daira Centre for Art & Culture, Hyderabad  
*Tree Festival*, Kashi Art Cafe, Fort Kochi  
*An Album of Drawings*, Draavidia, Fort Kochi  
*Cross Currents*, Daira Centre for Art & Culture, Hyderabad
- 2001 *Annual show*, Kerala Lalithakala Akademi, Durbar Hall Art Centre, Kochi
- 2000 *Chingamela*, Kerala Kalapeetom, Kochi
- 1999 *An Album of Drawings and Paintings*, Draavidia Gallery, Kochi
- 1998 *Substances on Black Moon*, Galleria Mareechika, Kochi  
*Miniature Format Show*, Gallery Sans Tache, Mumbai
- 1997 *Gift for India*, SAHMAT, Ravindra Bhavan, New Delhi

### **Related Experience**

- 2010 Curator, *Earth*, Gallery OED, Kochi. Artists: Gulam Mohammed Sheikh, Sudhir Patwardhan, N N Rimzon, Rajan Krishnan and Sujith S N
- 2009 Curator, *Let It Happen*, OED, Kochi. Artists: N N Rimzon, Reghunadhan K, and Rajan Krishnan