

PRESS RELEASE

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Reena Kallat, *Synonym*, Acrylic paint, rubberstamps, plexiglass, 2009, 60 x 45 in.



Sara Rahbar, *Love Arrived and How Red #4*, C- Print Photograph, 2008. 45 x 60 in.

## Reena Kallat + Sara Rahbar

### Never Run Away

Curated by **Shaheen Merali**

*Exhibition Catalogue Available*

**Opening Reception: Thursday, February 11, 2010, 6–8 pm**

*February 11 – March 20, 2010*

“Who knows what you said...?”

Who knows what I heard?

Some thing stirred in my heart.”<sup>1</sup>

.....is an excerpt from the lyrics of a song featured in the seminal film, *Pyasa*, written by the legendary actor and film director Guru Dutt. In these few words, a brief exchange occurs that encapsulates the premise of this exhibition - the desire to know and be touched by what is known and felt by someone else.

The two artists in this exhibition, **Reena Kallat** and **Sara Rahbar**, live on different continents, Asia and North America, or sometimes on the same one, namely Asia (India and Iran), from where their observations about the nature of power as it effects belonging informs their individual practices.

Their work speaks about concerns and caution, in a time when power re-infects those already weakened by how it has been nurtured in a post-global society, of absolutes that have made our world spiral into an existential meltdown with the gradual erosion of rights and mobility; - a set of conditions that is leading to an increment in the condition of subalternity.<sup>2</sup> This subaltern status, that results from the rise of neo-liberalist cosmopolitanism and a hegemonic globalization, has disturbed fragile states and complicates economic relationships along gender, tribal, ethnic and racial lines.

*Continued on reverse...*

The work that **Kallat** has been producing can be seen as part of a growing realization in the picturing of the victims of post-global reality. The recent and sudden drop in status of many people from certain regions of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, who were dependent on patterns of mass migration for their economic survival, has come to provide a vivid portrayal of the victims of the contemporary haste to build and the shadows remaining in the reversal of this trend. Like a rudderless raft by the wayside of international abandon, these courageous souls, who had trawled their way through multitudes of notary agents and officialdom to win over the processes of bureaucracy, are now abandoned in a no-mans land. Here between economies and between national recessions, they exist virtually, on paper and by symbolic agreements that no longer can be afforded.

**Sara Rahbar's** *Those expectations for sunshine* is a series of tightly arranged material, which is highly suggestive in its mixed provenance, making the audience react instantly to its redolent references of today's regrets and future's fears.

The title, *Those expectations for sunshine*, already proposes such a prospect but it is in the correlation and correlatedness of the prints and their signifiers that one starts to unravel the meaning of what is implied. An old Afghan coat reveals its inner lining to be sewn from an American flag and a set of the Islamic Republic of Iran's flag droops in a post-coital fashion from a set of old wooden pulleys. This set of flags and garments are foundational sources, which have, over a period of time, come to represent specific and contrary historical accounts. In viewing them together, a unique set of values springs forth in an assembly of suspiring images.

1. Pyaasa, lyrics from Jaane Kya Tune Kahi, Directed by Guru Dutt, 1957.

2. "A person rendered without agency by his or her social status".

Robert Young J. C., Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction. (New York: Oxford University Press), 2003.

**Reena Kallat** was born in New Delhi and studied at the Sir J.J. School of Art in Mumbai, the city where she lives and works. Reena has exhibited extensively in many major museums and galleries worldwide including the Chicago Cultural Centre; Mori Art Museum, Japan; the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea; Museum of Contemporary Art, Shanghai; Hangar Bicocca, Milan; ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; The Helsinki City Art Museum; The Culturgest Museum, Lisbon, Portugal; the Shanghai Zendai Museum of Contemporary Art and the Henie Onstad Kunstcenter, Oslo, amongst others. She is represented by Nature Morte in New Delhi, Chemould Prescott Road in Mumbai and Primo Marella Gallery, Milan. She is currently exhibiting at the National Museum in Taiwan, the Saatchi Gallery, London, and SESC in, Sao Paolo, Brazil

An international artist, **Sara Rahbar** was born in Tehran, yet was forced to leave with her family during the period of immense upheaval that followed the revolution in Iran and the start of the Iran-Iraq war. She was educated in London and New York. She currently lives and works between Iran and the United States. She has exhibited in important galleries and museums internationally including Brot-Kunsthalle, Vienna, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, Bodhi Art, Mumbai and Hilger Contemporary, Vienna. Rahbar has also exhibited in many important institutions, including the Chelsea Art Museum, New York, Queens Museum of Art in New York, The National Centre of Contemporary Art in Moscow and PS1 MoMa New York. Sara Rahbar's work is included in important public collections including the Center Pompidou, (Paris) and the Saatchi Collection (London) among many others.

**Shaheen Merali** is a writer and curator based in London and Berlin, where, from 2003-8, he was the Head of Exhibitions, Film and New Media at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. In 2006, he was invited to be co-curator of the 6th Gwangju Biennale, Korea. Recent exhibitions in 2009 include *The Dark Science of Five Continents*, (BMB Gallery, Mumbai), *The Promise of Loss* (Kunsthalle Brot, Vienna and Arario Gallery, New York) and *Indian Popular culture (and beyond): The Untold (the rise of) Schisms*, at Alcalá 31 in Madrid. Merali has edited several publications, including *Far Near Distance*, *Contemporary Positions for Iranian Artists* (2004); *Spaces and Shadows*, *Contemporary Art from Southeast Asia* and *About Beauty* (2005): *New York-States of Mind* and *Re-Imagining Asia* (Saqi Books 2007) and the seminal *Everywhere is War (and rumours of war)* for Bodhi, Mumbai, India. (2008) His essays on individual artists include *Ahmed Alsoudani*, *Ramesch Daha*, *Shilpa Gupta*, *Reena Kallat*, *Jitish Kallat*, *Leena Kejriwal*, *Riyas Komu*, *Lisl Ponger*, *Prasad Raghavan*, *Sara Rahbar*, *Sumedh Rajendran*, *NN Rimzon* and *TV Santhosh*.

For further information please contact the gallery at [Andrea@stuxgallery.com](mailto:Andrea@stuxgallery.com)

and visit our website at [www.stuxgallery.com](http://www.stuxgallery.com)

STEFAN STUX Gallery is located on 530 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, New York 10001