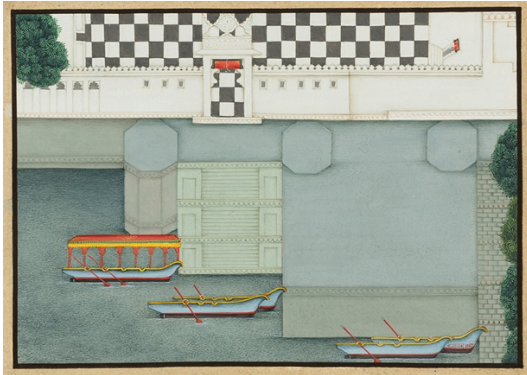
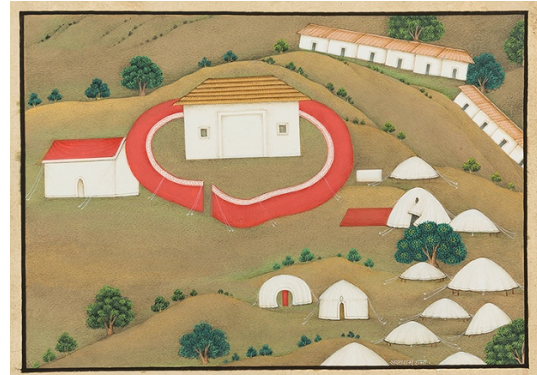


RAJA RAM SHARMA | Contemporary Indian Miniatures

February 9 – March 12, 2022



*Palace of Solitude (south), 2014*  
mineral pigments on paper, 4 ¾ x 6 ¾ inches



*Urbanization II, 2014*  
mineral pigments on paper, 4 ¾ x 6 5/8 inches

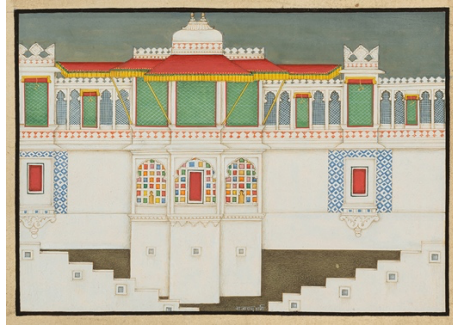
On view February 10 to March 12, 2022, Victoria Munroe Fine Art is pleased to present RAJA RAM SHARMA: Contemporary Indian Miniatures.

Raja Ram Sharma is a master miniature and temple painter living in Udaipur, India. At the age of 13 he left home to be trained in the Nathdwara School of painting, founded in 17th century Rajasthan. In contemporary culture this means that his daily work is devoted to a traditional devotional art narrating The Life of Lord Krishna in paint on textiles called Pichwai, which hang in Hindu temples. However, in his home studio, away from his Pichwai workshop, Sharma has always practiced miniature painting, reinventing the evocative Mewar miniature tradition which he studied at the City Palace Museum of Udaipur since he was a young boy.

Measuring 6 x 8 or 8 x 14 inches, Sharma's miniature paintings on cotton rag paper are made with one-hair brushes he makes from rabbit and squirrel hairs. His medium is a traditional hand ground gouache, made from pulverizing pigments from stone in a mortar and dispersing them in a mixture of gum arabic and water. His centuries old technique reveals the inherited knowledge of color and brushwork passed along a lineage of painters from 1600 to the present.

In these captivating miniature scenes Sharma pays tribute to the exquisite, illustrated manuscripts painted in the imperial ateliers where Hindu and Islamic traditions were fused with the influence of Persian court painting. Rather than depicting courtly life and conquests, he eliminates the human presence to explore the haunting spirit of deserted kingdoms and the nature of water in Nature. The serenity and reverence with which he paints the lakes and trickling waterfalls portend an ominous future. Elegant lake canoes are docked at empty palaces. Horses and elephants gallop and perform without a rider or an audience. The artist may be envisioning the peaceful end of civilization when drought has parched the land and the animals roam. The last tiger captures Sharma's imagination.

(over)



*Illusions of Power*, 2014  
 mineral pigments on paper, 4 ½ x 6 ½ inches



*Palace of Solitude (west)*, 2014  
 mineral pigments on paper, 6 5/8 x 4 ¾ inches

In dramatically cropped birds' eye views of Moghul architecture, *Illusions of Power* and *Palace of Solitude (west)*, Sharma peeks over palace walls into lush courtyard gardens watered from the surrounding lake. However traditional his painting practice, his abstract eye articulates dramatic shifts in the picture plane where isometric and axonometric views collide.



*Captive*, 2014  
 mineral pigments on paper, 4 ¾ x 6 ¾ inches



*Urbanization IV*, 2014  
 mineral pigments on paper, 4 7/8 x 10 3/8 inches

In *Captive*, a bold composition of rider-less horses prancing in formation while staked to the mountainside, Sharma seems to ridicule the concept of control. *Urbanization IV* presents a vision of canopied rowboats adrift under a darkening sky. Each jewel of a composition reflects a monumental randomness in the beauty we behold.

Raja Ram Sharma's miniatures are in many private and public collections including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Davis Museum Wellesley College, Indology Department, Middlebury College, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, Srinathji Temple, Nathdwara and the Harmony Foundation, Mumbai. His paintings were exhibited in "Gems of Rajput Painting" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2011.

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