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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Main Exhibition Space: In her first solo show at RARE, Yale graduate Schandra Singh exhibits large-scale, prismatic paintings that depict subjects engaging in leisure activities yet simmering under the surface with anxiety. Stoic faces are betrayed by beaten, jewel-like skin surfaces that reveal hidden burdens of guilt, fear, and uncertainty.

October 11 – November 10, 2007

Opening Night Reception: Thursday, October 11, 6–8 PM @ RARE, 521 West 26th Street, NYC

For additional information, please contact Jeff Lutonsky or Pete Surace at 212.268.1520 or raregallery@earthlink.net.

For images, log onto www.rare-gallery.com.

In her exhibition entitled *Around and Around 1000 Times*, **Schandra Singh** presents large-scale paintings that address the issue of escapism as a means of coping with suffering. Her characters attempt to manage their inner crises and conflicts by fleeing from their fears, guilt, or responsibilities through various forms of leisure activity. Singh intentionally selects the silliest means possible to ironically underscore the weightiness of the struggles she explores, as many of her adult subjects try to occupy themselves with recreational activities often associated with children.

Floating on inner tubes down a "lazy river" or playing around with "noodles" in a pool, Singh's adults seldom accomplish their goals and remain sunk under the weight of their own existential crises. This factor illustrates how the elements of her paintings are metaphors for the opposite of what they typically mean. Consequently, in those works where adults are trying to regain a sense of child-like oblivion, it is the children who are projecting a serious demeanor. In *Annie* (2007) and *Strange Exotic Creatures 1 & 2* (2006), children who traditionally represent innocence are the most disturbingly painted, which in turn signifies a loss of innocence – a loss not only felt by the individual but also by a culture forever shifted by recent traumatic events.

In *Cafe in the Clouds* (2007), television monitors are broadcasting something one doesn't want to see or hear especially at an airport: media reports of conflict and tragedy around the world. Playing off the expression "having one's head in the clouds" (i.e., being blissfully ignorant), *Café* speaks to the general anxiety of our culture and its need to distract itself. In the age of the 24-hour news cycle, one would think it impossible to be naïve of today's terrorism and suffering. To quote cultural critic Greg Tate: "Leisure travel implies wealth and privilege, but after 9/11 that very notion also conjures up the security risks and cultural differences that have complicated the vacationer's sense of comfort in their exotic and well-guarded homes away from home. . . . [Singh's] floating vacationers seem to be drowning and dissipating in both luxury and lassitude. . . . Behind the sparkling blues and fiery earth tones Singh favors when depicting her frothily frolicsome travelers, one paradoxically senses muted terror and a hidden desire to succumb to the allure of desperate pleasures."

In the end, the artist's message seems not one of bitterness or blame, but of trying to come to terms with the irony of human emotion. According to Singh, "The characters portrayed are in a world of escapism where their own inner meaning, their own emotions are truly troubled. As if while sitting on an inner tube, or waiting to catch a plane to paradise, we are carrying an invisible weight or burden – one of guilt, fear, or uncertainty. Yet we choose to float."

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 11-6, and Monday by appointment.

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