

TARA SABHARWAL

Aside from art, my continual dialogue with Tara is literature. This is not to imply that we consider it more important or relevant than visual art, but I've come to realize that we use it as a parallel mechanism in discussing visual art in general, and more specifically, her art work. Literature has the ability to take one someplace else, to place the reader amongst strangers in the broadest most general sense much the way Tara's recent work takes one someplace else. However, here the analogy ends because of the difference of means of communication.

Tara's world is communicated via images, color, and pictorial space without reliance on language. Through a radically flattened synthetic cubist space and rich chroma, she presents a world which encompasses concepts of place, home, , and the world in general. With its rejection of spatial hierarchy, Sabharwal's forms and closely valued color exist on a ground that is an equal participant in the compositions as in *Body Paths* and *Body Paths 2*. In each, the integration of form or figure and ground is both the result of the spatial use of color which places all forms on the same plane and the frontality of form. Even when there is a clearer distinction of form and ground as in *Building, bottle* or *Bottles in rows*, or the very majestic *Eye*, the handling of ground is such that it takes equal interest with form. To that extent, the work seems to address issues of abstraction far more than the story telling of representational painting.

However, it is because of Tara's use of referential form that her world is communicated to the viewer: forms that encompass other forms, forms that hover on the picture plane, forms that seem to destabilize one's sense of placement and space. This is a world in which issues of enclosure and entrapment are alluded to but contradicted and, to that extent, liberated. Consider *Building, vase*. A figure is trapped within a cage like conical form that is juxtaposed against a similar form that is inverted and open at the top from which lines freely flow all in cool blue green.....a considerably expansive color. Or, there is *Building, bottle* in which a large vessel contains three smaller ones. Again, Tara contradicts the apparent enclosure through the transparency of the forms, the fact that they are open at the top and a discrete little ladder on the right. The same mechanisms are the case in *Bottles in rows* in which bottles are within bottles but are again transparent and open at the top. The point is further emphasized by the use of two rows placed essentially on top of each other all within the context of a bright expansive chroma which is integrated with the forms. The same concept is carried yet further in *The inside box* in which a large vessel contains two others all transparent and completely integrated with the ground.

Tara's concept of *home* is possibly the most intriguing aspect of her body of work and her world. This is not a search for home but rather an affirmation of it, a celebration and appreciation of home. *Life Journeys* and *Moving Roots* might be considered to be the definitive statement concerning home. In one, *Life Journeys*, the figure is both spatially and physically stabilized by the structures at either side of the paths, and in *Moving Roots*, the sheer tenacity and portability of the tendrils (roots) that extend from the

structure as it moves in space are at once a metaphor for the mutability of home as a concept and the physical stasis of it as a place.

It is a curious fact that many must leave their birthplace, first home, in order to understand it and possibly appreciate it. Tara knows and has lived in three major cities of the world and has homes in all of them. This *Loop* has informed her aesthetic, but *Ancient Paths* lead to and are informed by Delhi.

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Michael Chisolm is an art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art and teaches art history at the City University of New York. In addition to teaching, he has curated exhibitions in the New York area of contemporary and Haitian art. He has written extensively on the subject primarily in the form of analytical essays for exhibition catalogues.

Chisolm also consults for museums and private art collectors in forming and appraising collections and writes and lectures on the subject.

Chisolm's work as a board member of the Triangle Artist's Association, an international residency and workshop which brings together artists from around the world, has developed a specific interest in contemporary art in the non western context. This has resulted in trips to India primarily to visit artist's studios.