William Blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,

In the forests of the night;

What immortal hand or eye,

Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.

Burnt the fire of thine eyes?

On what wings dare he aspire?

What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,

Could twist the sinews of thy heart?

And when thy heart began to beat.

What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,

In what furnace was thy brain?

What the anvil? what dread grasp.

Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears

And water'd heaven with their tears:

Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

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In the forests of the night:

What immortal hand or eye,

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In the Forests of the Night

Jesal Thacker

The title of the exhibition featuring Tara Sabharwal’s works spanning a decade, is taken from William Blake’s famous poem, The Tyger. Although the focus of the poem surrounds the elusive and mysterious characteristics of the tiger it also questions its ferocious quality. Does creation need to be wild and untamed or is it expressed only through and as the sublime? What is the purpose of creation and how do these extremes play out within the psyche of an artist?

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In the Forests of the Night, takes off from this very enquiry of observing the process of creative abstraction that emerges from the subliminal, a term psychologists employ to mean below the threshold of consciousness. A plane of being that absorbs all experiences, just as the way night absorbs all light or black absorbs all colour. A perceptive space that dissolves light and shadow into a mythic experience of the subliminal, that Leonard Mlodinow an American theoretical physicist and mathematician, terms as the new unconsciousness.

Tara Sabharwal’s abstraction is a walk into the forests of the night, where the cognitive faculties are refined to suit more than one purpose. In a manner where the auditory, olfactory and tactile faculties chart the map of envisioning the way into the forest, which metaphorically represents the subliminal. Each of the series presented in the exhibition is a mnemonic pattern bridging the worlds of the unconscious to the conscious. Unlike abstraction that derives from minimalizing nature/landscape, or an abstraction that is composed through the notations of sound and music, or an abstraction that reflects the memory of a place; Tara’s abstraction blurs all conscious attempts of reality and presents *the invisible roots*that governs conscious-visible existence.

Every seed has the potential of growing into a tree, and how is one to express that potential within the seed, without seeing the tree? As a practitioner of Buddhist meditative disciplines and a transcriber of her own dreams, Tara navigates through layers of consciousness expressing its extremes, and at times plunging into the subliminal void from which emerge all possibilities. The exhibition thus traces the antithesis, as well as the probabilities of chance, expressed through textural patterns, splurges of colour and an architectonic of shapes. An undefined composition and uncertainty uphold these abstractions, unwilling to be defined through any specific language or aesthetics. She carefully orchestrates a chance aesthetics from the subliminal.

A Subliminal Process

Jesal Thacker

According to psychologists, a subliminal perception reveals the possibility of an unconscious cognitive process stimulatedby any one or all sensory stimuli. This process is often assumed to be automatic in nature, relying on stimuli alone, as the individual is not consciously seeing or hearing. It is an involuntary course of perceiving life/nature and recognizing-revealing its hidden meanings through suggestive forms.

The unconscious remains an uncharted plane for many, a stratum mysterious and fearful as it stores memories, emotions, desires. Like the forest in the night, it has hidden sensations and elements that can’t be seen but only experienced. Having had a traumatic past, Tara can linger inthis space of obscurity and shadow, only to derive from it mnemonic patterns that resonate luminosity. Fluid and frozen, the expressions invite the viewer to cognize their own perceptions, that in turn stimulate the subliminal.

The series of works presented in this show, generate visual imagery that entails using all sensory stimuli. Collaged together as an integral experience of walking through the night forest, the visual stimuli is enhanced by other sensory perceptions that the artist experiences as abstract subliminal sensations. Sound, touch, smell add to the visual perception of the forest. The hooting of the owl, brushing of the leaves, melody of the crickets, hissing of snakes, the burble of water, sniffing of animals, the deafening silence of darknessharmonized with the undertone of the heartbeat. A dynamic combination of apprehension, revelation and rhythm is what Tara experiences in the mindscapes of her own forest.

Rhythm, randomness and reflection is what defines Tara’s abstract imagery that spurts from this dark-unilluminated walk. Transforming obscure imagery into a field of colours, shapes and patterns as a dynamic mirror imaging of a shadowy landscape. Tara’s material engagement with paper and the techniques of printmaking allow her to create layers of colour-form impressions. Adapting the technique of collagraphy that enhances randomness which she carefully charts through subliminal perceptions.

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The current series of works are expressions of her own journey into the night forests, charting her way through a process of healing, reflection, meditation, contemplation. Tara has been deeply involved in philosophy, psychology and spirituality for over a decade. She maintains a Korean Zen practice at Chogyesa in New York City and has participated in several Jungian psychology courses and meditation retreats at the Barre center for Buddhist studies, Massachusetts.

Rhythm transmutes the extremes into an axis of self-expression. It seizes the contrasting elements of stability-fluidity, certainty-uncertainty, darkness-sublime into a rhythmic synchronization of abstraction coded through colours-forms-textures. Not adhering to a deliberate expression of abstraction, the artworks allow the viewer to swing between the realms of the conscious and unconscious, to gently stimulate the subliminal.

As part of the experience, we have also displayed a few dreams transcribed by Tara, her own dreams that don’t necessarily have a direct correlation to the artworks but take you into a fictional autobiography of the artist.