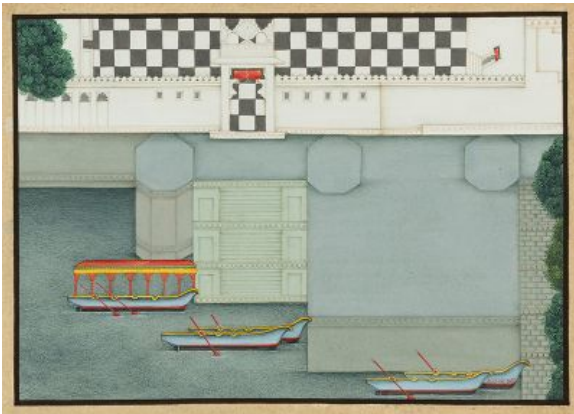


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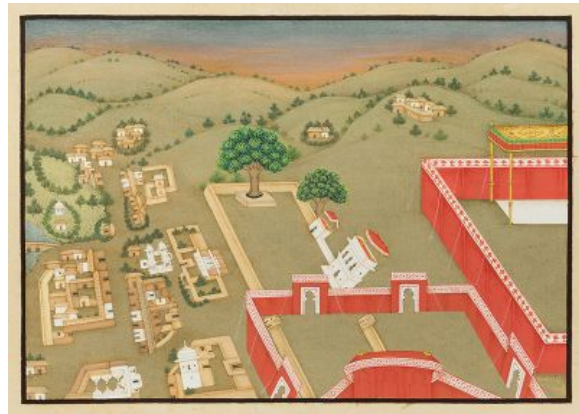
April 2015

## RAJA RAM SHARMA

new miniatures



*Palace of Solitude (south), 2014*



*Urbanization III, 2014*

The Drawing Room is pleased to present two exhibitions on view May 1 through June 1, **RAJA RAM SHARMA new miniatures** and **ROBERT HARMS new paintings**.

Raja Ram Sharma is a master miniature and temple painter living in Udaipur, India. He left home at the age of 13 to be trained in the Nathdwara School of miniature painting that was founded in 17<sup>th</sup> century Rajasthan. In contemporary culture this means that his daily work is devoted to painting pichwai, the cloth paintings hung as offerings behind the image of the deity in Hindu temples. In his own time, away from his pichwai workshop, Sharma creates miniature paintings reinventing traditional subjects and structures to explore his thoughts about the current state of the world.

Sharma's quiet miniatures recall the exquisite illustrated manuscripts painted in the imperial ateliers where Hindu and Islamic traditions were fused with the influence of Persian court painting. However, on closer examination, rather than depicting courtly life and conquests, Sharma fractures the narrative, eliminates all figures, and focuses on dramatically cropped views of the Rajasthani landscape and Mughal palaces and gardens.

In *Captive*, a bold composition of rider-less horses prancing in formation in the hills, Sharma seems to ridicule the concept of control. In *Urbanization IV*, a vision of canopied 18<sup>th</sup> century rowboats adrift under a dark sky, one senses the abandonment of a civilization. The ceremonial tent encampments in *Urbanization II* address the fragility and impermanence of the human condition. Painted from a bird's eye view each of these tiny compositions reflects a monumental randomness in the beauty we behold.

(over)

In two series of abstracted aerial views of Moghul architecture, *Illusions of Power* and *Palace of Solitude*, Sharma peeks over palace walls into lush courtyard gardens offset by checker-board stone work or across to an elaborate turreted fortress. The stark emptiness of the spaces is powerful as is the marvelous precision among the leaves of each tree. However traditional his painting practice, it serves to articulate dramatic shifts in the picture plane where isometric and axonometric views collide.

Measuring 6 x 8 inches, Sharma's works are painted on rag paper with one-hair brushes he makes from rabbit and squirrel hairs. His medium is a traditional 'body color' or gouache, which he achieves by pulverizing stone pigments in a mortar and mixing them with gum arabic and water. Observing his centuries old process, one sees the inherited knowledge of color and brushwork passed along a lineage of painters from 1600 to the present.

Raja Ram Sharma's miniatures are in many private and public collections including Fidelity Investments, Wellington Management, 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.

[www.drawingroom-gallery.com](http://www.drawingroom-gallery.com)

**Gallery hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 10-5; Sunday 11-5**

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