



Sangram Majumdar - Biography

Sangram Majumdar was born in Kolkata, India and immigrated to the US in 1990. He has an MFA from Indiana University and a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. Sangram has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally and has also lectured on his work at numerous colleges. Recent solo exhibitions include Pulse, NY; Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects at Gallery Schlesinger, NY and Coleman Bancroft LLC, NY; the Jerusalem Studio School, Israel, and the Kresge Art Museum, MI. Recent selected group exhibition venues include The Painting Center, NY; Alpha Gallery, MA; the 2010 Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts, American Academy of Arts and Letters, NY; US Embassy, Sierra Leone; the International School of Drawing, Painting and Sculpture, Montecastello di Vibio, Italy and the Aichi Prefectural Museum of Art, Nagoya, Japan.

His awards include the 2009-10 Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Space Program Grant, a MICA Trustees Award for Excellence in Teaching, two Maryland State Art Council Individual Grants in Painting, and two Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grants. His work has been published in drawing textbooks: Drawing Essentials: A Guide to Drawing from Observation (Oxford University Press, 2008), Drawing: Structure and Vision, (Prentice Hall, 2008) and Exploring Life Drawing (Thompson Delmar Publishing, 2007).

Since 2003 he has been teaching painting and drawing at the Maryland Institute College of Art and is represented by Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects, NY. Sangram Majumdar lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

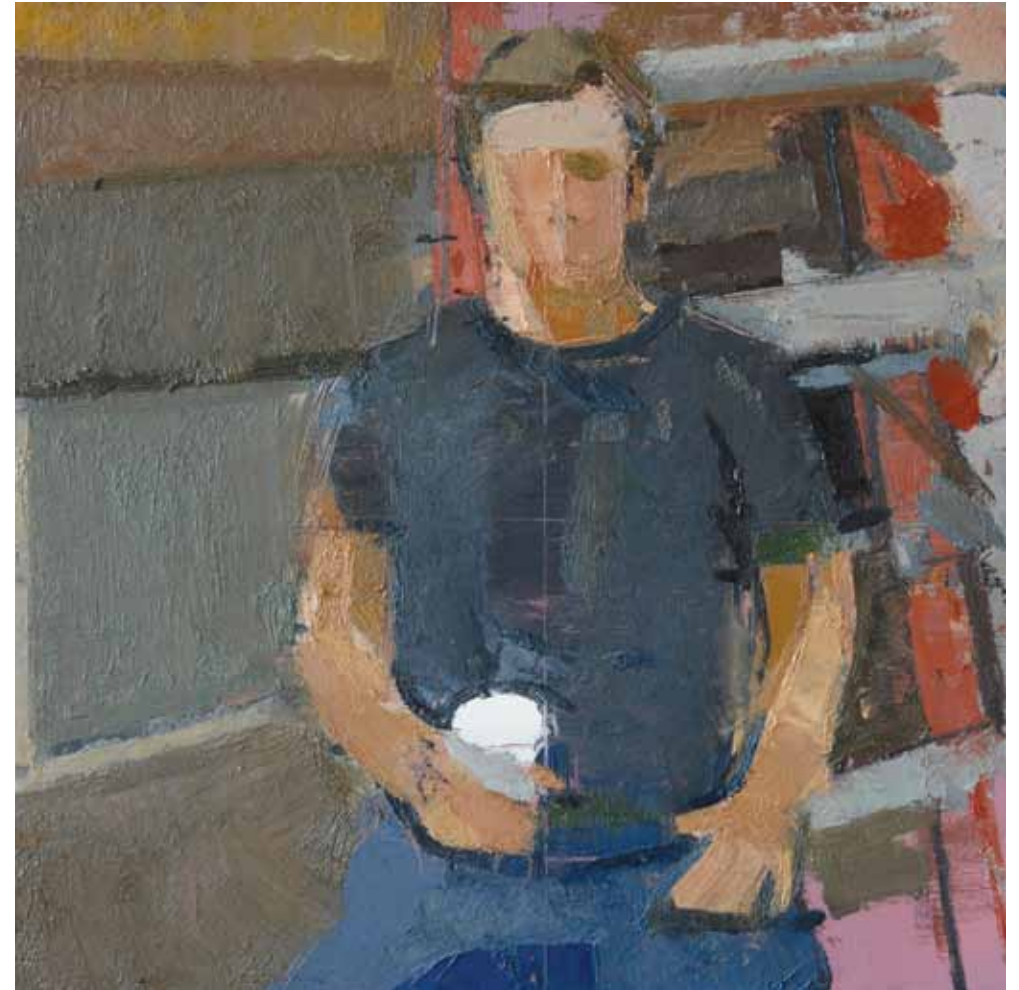
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Head/Face
21x18 In, 2010
Charcoal, pastel and graphite on paper



Night Tree
28x32 In, 2011
Oil on linen



Man With A Cup
12x12 In, 2008
Oil on panel



Bagged
 12x12 In, 2009
 Oil on panel



Between Seasons
 28.75x37 In, 2008
 Oil on linen



Midday Sun
19x21 7/16 In., 2008
Oil on paper on panel



Israel Painting No.4
16x20 In., 2010
Oil on panel



Night-Light
32x26 In, 2010
Oil on linen



Night Study
12x12 In, 2008
Oil on panel



Seated Figure
21x18 In, 2010
Charcoal and pastel on paper



Left Behind
36x32 In, 2009
Oil on linen



Megan With Umbrella Plant
60x40 In, 2009
Charcoal and graphite on paper

The whole word's filled with things I know. But then, in working more with things, they don't have nouns, they don't have names, but they're things. Things get squashed, are pushing each other, and all that. I like that feeling.

Philip Guston

The phenomena of Facebook and Twitter, is in line with the exponential nature of how we are able to find information in any form, any time. For me, choosing to be a painter is an intentional decision to work on the other side of this streaming data- the slower and the tangibility of direct human experience. But apart from being anachronistic or foolhardy, I am curious as to how our understanding of our own immediate lives, when slowed to the measure of a heartbeat, compares to our daily intake of virtual experiences. What is real?

I find myself drawn toward three distinct motivations each time I paint. One is clearly perceptual, that of direct and physical contact that pits me as a viewer against the actuality of the experience. Another is a set of visual cues that range anywhere from half forgotten conversations and movie sequences to the “antiquated” world of books, and song lyrics that I wake up with in the morning that just don't want to go away. Beginning a painting through the filter of one often means introducing the other at some point. Paint – the third, and perhaps the biggest wildcard – this amazingly organic compound in its various reincarnations, mixed with oil on various substrates, continues to invite its own reality into the mix. It is viscous, sinewy, wet, dry, fixed and alterable at the same time. Here now, and gone in a flash. A new image that is fleeting like any passing thought comes into being.

The group of paintings and drawings in this exhibition are done in the studio and on location. The working process is cyclical and follows a stream of consciousness, guided by various cues - from objects, to location, to plastic concerns of form and space. Paint goes on, paint comes off. Information is added and removed. And in some cases works go through multiple false starts as I orbit a motif from different vantage points or from day into night. This search for a motif itself becomes complicated as I notice multiple focal points that are always vying for attention. Trying to put these decisions down on canvas or paper becomes a way to link the sometimes cacophonous and disparate conditions. The search to find the painting in front of me, something surprising and new comes often at the cost of removing the very elements that started the works in the first place.

While physically the works are about physicality and a ‘reality’ that is experiential and tangible, psychologically they are in many ways the complete opposite. From the hinted forms in “Left Behind, 2010”, to “Night/Light, 2010” that ‘sandwiches’ the night sky and the dimly lit interior on the thin glass pane, both works try to convey ideas of absence and missing information. In “Night Tree, 2010” the actual tree is replaced by its shadow which becomes an ominously animated ‘figure’ against the warm glow of the night wall (ground).

More and more, I find myself using the facture of paint as a technical parallel to explore the fractured nature of how we experience our lives, and imagery as a whole. We seem to ‘know’ things before we touch them, be-‘friend’ people and have extensive conversations before we ever meet them in person. My work is about this gap between what we think we know and what is right in front of us.

Sangram Majumdar / July 2011

Alert, madly facile and willfully unsentimental. Sangram Majumdar's work conveys a gigantic ambition and a lofty serious mindedness. His color, clear and clean as a glass of water..his drawing perfectly calibrated to get the job done. There are many strings to his bow and the range of his investigations and queries is wide. His is a caliber of painter that has become quite rare.

The still life objects and set ups seem to be chosen for their availability and ordinariness. From the Lone Purple unnamable vegetable to the yellow gift fruit wrapped in cellophane. In Sangram's hands, the cellophane and unnamable color become opportunities to dazzle and thrill. Painterly riffs of virtuosic derring do that resolve in perfectly solid form and nailed landings. It's as if his choice of what is painted is the counter punch to how it's painted. Leaving us wondering what just happened. He always pulls them back from the edge of bombast and keeps his feet firmly in the here and now.

Sangram has spoken of his smaller studies as experimental seedbeds. Tinkering and probing, coaxing hybrids that will inform and deepen the emotional and intellectual range of his work. These studies have much in common with traditional Japanese Surimono Prints. Small exquisite images made to illuminate celebrated poems. But rather than poems, Sangram has chosen to examine and clarify discrete emotional moments: the heart stopping vulnerability of a dainty vine, the ominous shadow play of a night tree or the claustrophobic wrappings of packaged fruit. These are only the tip of the investigations that have so richly increased Sangram's curiosity and painterly vocabulary.

There is a stubborn and humorless aspect to Sangram's insistence on the here and now. It is at odds with his painterly acumen. The more time spent with the work, the less this incongruity matters. What, at first, was called stubborn changes its name to tenacity. The humor, while certainly not overt, is operating at just the right pitch to keep the work out of the dangerously gapping ditch reserved for those who can't keep their eyes on the road. This is a painter capable of stunning and crowd pleasing pyrotechnics who keeps his head and holds out for more. Sangram Majumdar is indeed a rare one.

Kyle Staver is a painter who lives and works in Brooklyn, NY