

TRANSCENDENTAL REALISM

THE ART OF ADI DA SAMRAJ



la Biennale di Venezia

52. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte
Eventi collaterali

PALAZZO BOLLANI

Castello 3647- 30122 Venice

10 June - 21 November 2007

Hours: 10.00 am - 6.00 pm

ADI DA SAMRAJ: THE REAL AS TRANSCENDENTAL

by **PETER FRANK**

Adi Da's artistic sensibility can be identified as Modernist (or perhaps neo-Modernist); his experiments with form—with the dramatic distortion and structured reorganization of perceived reality—re-examine the methods and strategies that were common parlance in the avant-garde of a half a century to a century ago. Like the Modernists he emulates, however, Adi Da has made sure to find and develop his own voice. The tradition he maintains is a tradition of the new.

Between 2000 and 2006, Adi Da worked in extended "suites" of imagery, realized through the digitally enabled elaboration of particular photographic images. The *Spectra* series is the most recent to include photographic imagery. Realized at the beginning of last year, the *Spectra* series contains not only myriad variations on various themes and compositions, but is divided into a number of sub-series that build around certain core themes and images. Leitmotifs often recur across several different sub-groupings, and figures and objects have been manipulated and collaged to establish a highly deliberate staginess, a self-evident display of possibly allegorical, possibly ritualistic performance constructed "in camera."

While working on the *Spectra* series, Adi Da began to investigate the process of generating form entirely without a camera, employing only the computer's own imaging programs. Soon, working "in camera" replaced working with the camera—and Adi Da's work hewed ever closer to its precedents in Modernist painting. Indeed, he came quickly to settle on a highly focused formal vocabulary, paring his shapes down to circles (or fractions thereof), squares, and triangles—the formal trinity out of which the basic language of Modernist abstraction evolved. It is out of this three-form vocabulary in the past year that Adi Da has formulated his vast and ever-growing *Geome* series.

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The *Geome* sequences began with what may be the single most ambitious artwork Adi Da has conceived and realized digitally to date, *Alberti's Window I* (from *Geome One*). In its muralic span, *Alberti's Window I* traces the passage of two different measures of time simultaneously, the cycle of a day and the cycle of a week. And as such, for all its elaborate geometry, it actually represents the observation of the real world. Several more *Geome* series have followed on the heels of *Alberti's Window*, each tracing a formal and/or a metaphoric theme. The various sequences of *Geome Two* and *Geome Three* each explore even more simplified formal vocabularies, out of which manifold structures, elementary and impossibly dense by turn, are derived, while *Geome Four* applies the Cézannesque trinity to the realization of a more rhythmically complex visual field. In the *Oculus* images, Adi Da reintroduces the figure, relying on the prevailing geometry to frame and clarify the archetypal nature of the figures depicted, that is, the four stages of woman (lover, bride, mother, and widow) in relationship to family and society.

Excerpted from "Adi Da Samraj: The Real As Transcendental", published in the exhibition catalogue *Transcendental Realism: The Art of Adi Da Samraj*.

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BIO PETER FRANK is Senior Curator at the Riverside Art Museum, art critic for *Angeleno* magazine and the *LA Weekly*, and past editor of *Visions* art quarterly. Frank contributes articles to numerous publications and has written many monographs and catalogues to one-person and group exhibitions. Frank has also organized

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many theme and survey shows for institutions such as the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art in St. Louis, Otis Institute of Art and Design in Los Angeles, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York. Frank is the co-curator for the exhibition *Transcendental Realism: The Art of Adi Da Samraj*.