

*written on the occasion of a solo exhibition  
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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.

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