



SYLVIA MARTINS: *OFFERINGS*
June 5 – July 10, 2010
Artist's Reception: June 5, 2010, 6 – 8PM

ARC Fine Art LLC is pleased to announce the opening of its first solo show of the work of Sylvia Martins. *Offerings* on view from June 5th through July 10th is comprised of six oil paintings and five pigment prints, all recent works by the artist and all based on the theme of ritualistic Hindu offerings. Sylvia Martins, raised in Brazil, divides her time between Rio de Janeiro and New York City and has exhibited her richly colored canvases for nearly three decades throughout the U.S., the U.K., and Brazil.

In September of 2009, Martins had plans to travel to the island of Bali in Indonesia to visit a dear friend; however, just days before her departure, her friend suddenly passed away. Since his remains were to be cremated in Bali, Martins felt even more compelled to make the journey as her friend was expecting her to be there. Witnessing his cremation and the accompanying water purification ceremony, Martins was deeply moved by these Hindu practices and was inspired to attend and document other such rituals, both funerals and weddings. Visiting sacred places with a camera in hand, Martins sought to capture the spirit and essence of these significant moments. Perhaps most impressive to the artist were the daily offerings made in praise and thanks to the Gods. Canang Sari are small, meticulously crafted baskets woven out of coconut leaves and filled with a variety of flowers, food, and money and are ubiquitous on the island of Bali. Canang refers to the basket and Sari means "essence"—essentially of what is being offered. The simplest of Balinese offerings, Canang Sari reveal the belief of the Balinese people in the invisible worlds and reflect their loving devotion to the divine.

For years, Martins has been an avid traveler to both India and Indonesia where she has garnered not only artistic inspiration but also spiritual enrichment. Having grown up in the small town of Bagé in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sol, in Brazil, the artist possessed an early interest in spirituality as she observed her grandmother practice rituals of Candomblé, an animistic religion of African origin that is fundamentally similar to traditional Native American religions. Over the past several years, Martin's paintings have revealed this interest in the spiritual. Her recent series of work, *Malas*, celebrates the fresh flower garlands worn and offered ceremoniously in India. Fresh flowers are considered by Hindus to be ritually and sacrificially pure and thus are a favored offering to the Divine. The present body of work produced by Martins commemorates the artist's impassioned response to the rituals practiced by the people of Bali at weddings, funerals, and throughout daily life. The six paintings on view are marked by richly layered surfaces, exquisite color, and distinctive compositions, which range from all over patterns to garland-like forms draped across the canvas. The digital prints share a similar palette to the paintings and offer a range of compositions from up-close details to more traditional still life arrangements.

ARC Fine Art is located at 3113 Bronson Road in Fairfield, Connecticut and is open by appointment. Further inquiries, please contact Adrienne Ruger Conzelman at 203 895 9595.