

# BOSE PACIA

**January 2004 New York** - Bose Pacia Gallery presents *Export Quality*, a solo exhibition of new work by **Bari Kumar** from February 5th through March 20th, 2004. The gallery is located at 508 West 26th Street on the 11th Floor, in the Chelsea district of New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 12 to 6 pm and by appointment. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, February 5th from 6 to 8pm. The public is invited.

*Export Quality* presents several large-scale works as well as a number of small paintings, each of which seems to capture a fleeting glimpse into some darkly fantastic vignette. One is left to deconstruct a beguiling mix of words and icons in order to reconstruct a narrative or conceptual framework. Kumar deliberately complicates notions of time and space to present these myriad symbols in an unfamiliar context – thus graceful Indian scripts appear alongside English and Spanish texts, Renaissance imagery is paired with contemporary icons and religious symbols from East and West blend seamlessly. Such juxtapositions prompt the viewer to readdress theories of cultural and social politics with a critical eye.

As a body of work, it is provocative and challenging. Kumar is not content to deliver easy platitudes to questions of identity amid globalization. With text that speaks of despair ('Sooner or Later', 'Devoid' and 'Useless') and recurring images of severed limbs and headless bodies, he delivers a wry commentary on the exploitation of culture and language as a means of subjugation. The monumental five-panel *Live and Let Live* is a grand culmination of this searing vision.

Each painting is rendered in rich tones with a slight painterly touch recalling the Old Masters. His compositions and particularly, his figures, are inspired by the Italian Renaissance. Yet his use of text as imagery, his preference for an abstract narrative and his technique of layering visual upon visual are wholly contemporary. His blending of these various aesthetics lends well to work whose content borrows from such disparate sources as art history, religion, literature and film.

As Peter Nagy has written in the catalogue accompanying *Export Quality*, "The paintings of Bari Kumar exploit pictures for word-play and language for visual puzzles, their subject is the definitions with which we dismantle our senses and construct our sense of ourselves."

Born in Vakadu in Andhra Pradesh, India in 1966, Bari Kumar studied at the Rishi Valley School in India founded by the philosopher J. Krishnamurthi and thereafter, obtained a BFA in Graphic Design from the Otis/ Parsons School of Design in Los Angeles. He has participated in group exhibitions throughout the United States and India and has held numerous solo exhibitions in California. Bari Kumar currently lives and works in Los Angeles. This is his first solo exhibition with Bose Pacia.