

The New York Times

Art In Review; 'Expanding Tradition'

By Holland Cotter

May 4th, 2001

Deutsche Bank Gallery

31 West 52nd Street

Manhattan

Through May 21

This corporate-lobby show is based on the theme of contemporary art influenced by Indian miniature painting. Some of the artists -- Francesco Clemente, Shahzia Sikander (moving in new directions) and Amy Sillman -- are naturals. All three look good. Other choices seem more offbeat but turn out to make sense.

Glenn Goldberg's images of squared-off flowers, for example, balance Paul Klee reticence with a distinctive paint-speckled Rajput exuberance. A painting by Marilyn Lerner, who studied traditional miniature techniques in Rajasthan, is an up-to-date example of organic abstraction composed of tendril-like green calligraphic lines and Mughal decorative motifs.

Charles Yuen picks up on the narrative element so vital to Indian work, while three sculptors, Jill Levine, Ravinder Reddy and Susan Leopold (who organized the show), bring various motifs associated with miniatures into the third dimension. And two young, very different artists make a strong impression. Aisha Khalid's hair-fine tableaux of a shrouded woman and outsize roses suggest the political undercurrents of this ultrarefined art, while Chris Martin hints at its manifold spiritual uses in three beautiful paintings that seem to set Alfred Jensen, Hilma af Klint and tantric charts humming away in fields of garden colors. HOLLAND COTTER