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Jitish Kallat

First Information Report

Bose Pacia Modern

508 West 26th Street, Chelsea

Through Nov. 2

The Indian artist Jitish Kallat made his New York solo debut at this gallery three years ago with a promising show of somber-toned, thickly textured figurative paintings. Although he was only in his mid-20's, Mr. Kallat's work looked so fully resolved that it was a little hard to imagine where he might take it from there.

An answer comes in these paintings, all dated 2002. Mr. Kallat has expanded the physical scale of his work and honed and clarified his once somewhat stifling compositions to create a sense of air. He has also varied and lightened his basic palette of black, brown and maroon with a sparing use of bright colors, often applied to sharply focused symbolic images drawn from newspaper photographs, television, popular graphics and digital sources.

As before, Mr. Kallat addresses political subjects — AIDS, poverty and sectarian violence — that have specific meaning in India but are also of urgent concern elsewhere. He presents these subjects by inference rather than direct statement, often giving them a kind of visionary lift (this is another change).

A painting in which images of an ambulance, a Hindu temple, gesturing hands and a human spine float together in space reminds me of work by the New York artist Martin Wong, which is high praise. On the evidence of this show, Mr. Kallat is surely and steadily developing into the kind of history painter he clearly aspires to be.

HOLLAND COTTER