

Press Release

**MILLJUNCTION**  
**Paintings & Photoworks**  
**by BAIJU PARTHAN**

Aicon Gallery, New York: 23 March – 24 April 2010  
Invitation Only VIP Opening Reception: Tuesday 23 March, 6pm – 8pm  
General Reception, 8pm onwards

Baiju Parthan's collected body of work stands as a multimedia *bricolage* of his diverse scholastic and professional background. Trained in botany, illustration, painting, computer science, engineering and comparative mythology, Parthan's artistic scope inhabits multiple worlds. Revolving around the omnipresent theme of the intersection between collective imagination, the material world and the non-material digital sphere, his work seeks existential reconciliation with the intangibility of the information age. Citing Sartre's book *L'age de Raison*, Jungian psychoanalysis, Joan Miró and the Surrealist Manifesto, and traditional Indian mysticism as sources of inspiration, Parthan creates his own rich, contemporary mythic language in a search for meaning. This language, Ranjit Hoskote explains, "... holds secret signals for us, directives pointing to virtual universes that begin at the threshold of the everyday reality we know, threads into hidden archives of continuity."

In the MILLJUNCTION series, Parthan's palette of black, white and sepia tones recalls the iconic vintage Bollywood posters of his youth, and the photorealistic tradition of the 1960s and 70s. Superimposed with ASCII code, however, these images become icons of a different sort. Under Parthan's influence, the ASCII character-encoding scheme – that is, the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, originally developed as telegraphic code – transforms into an existential commentary that asks the question, "What is the significance of mythic vocabulary, when modern icons are nothing but virtual symbols of themselves?"

In a statement from the artist:

*"I certainly see virtualization and gradual relocation of our everyday activities from the realm of the real into virtual data space as the most important signifier or marker that identifies the present historic moment. The attempt in ASCII code paintings is to capture this particular marker and also re-assert the physicality of the photographic image ..."*

*"With the photograph gradually turning into a virtual entity, the physicality of painting has become more attractive to me as an artist. I feel the physicality of the painted image is becoming an important or the only counterpoint to the fact that the photograph of today (our primary source of images) is a virtual object captured on a digital camera and uploaded onto an online album or to a hard disc where it lives as bits and bytes, till invoked onto a computer screen."*

Born in Kerala in 1956, Baiju Parthan studied Painting from 1978-83 at Goa College of Art and has a Master's degree in Philosophy from The University of Mumbai. He has participated in group and solo exhibitions worldwide, including Galerie Christian Hosp, Austria 2008; Anant Gallery, New Delhi 2006 and 2007; Aicon Gallery, New York 2005 and 2008; and the Ninth Asian Biennale, Dhaka 1999. The artist currently lives and works in Mumbai, India. This will be Baiju Parthan's first solo exhibition in New York.

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