

THE DRAWING ROOM 16R Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY 11937 T 631.324.5016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2010

Opening October 22 and on view through January 10, 2011, The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to assemble three bodies of work and an artist's book that represent varied and sometimes overlapping expressions of reverence for the natural world, and landscape and horticulture in particular. In one room, a collection of 18th and 19th Century European Garden plans commissioned for ambitious private estates is paired with contemporary miniature landscape paintings by Raja Ram Sharma, a resident of Udaipur, Rajasthan. Concurrently, the gallery will present *The Island of Rota*, a limited-edition artist's book published by The Library Council of The Museum of Modern Art with text by Oliver Sacks, cliché-verres by Abelardo Morell, and design by Ted Muehling. This tactile volume that considers the unique natural history of a particular island in Micronesia will share the gallery's intimate front room with a collection of pressed plant specimens by 19th-century amateur and professional botanists. Seen altogether, these works of art, design and natural history celebrate wonders of nature in the hands of refined practitioners.

THE ISLAND OF ROTA



The Island of Rota, 2010, limited edition artist's book
Published by The Library Council of The Museum of Modern Art

19th CENTURY HERBARIA



Herbaria: Polysophonica Fastigiata, late 19th century

The most recent in a series of artist's books produced by the Library Council of The Museum of Modern Art, *The Island of Rota* unites the work of the photographer Abelardo Morell, the designer Ted Muehling, and the neurologist and writer Oliver Sacks in a limited-edition publication. Inspired by Sacks's observations on color blindness, his descriptions of plant life, and his fascination with nineteenth-century botanical books, Morell and Muehling have created a lush volume in black-and-white and sepia. The books' many layers of fossil-like images of ancient ferns and cycads evoke Sacks' sense of geological time. Morell has made thirteen original photographs for each book in the edition, using plant specimens supplied by The New York Botanical Garden. Muehling's contributions include laser cut images, unique castings of cycads and sea fans in handmade paper and an elegant hand-made box.

The 19th century *herbaria* that hang nearby are meticulously arranged horticultural specimens that were carefully picked from the field and the sea and labeled with place names and dates in Victorian script. One series of six mosses typifies the traditional botanist's layout, with each fragile species pasted to the neutral background, while other examples are personal, decorative arrangements that incorporate pressed wild flowers from the coast of Normandy, or ferns from Capri. In a third group, individual algae are centered, one delicate silhouette to a page, revealing the macrocosm within the microscopic specimen.

Fall/Winter hours: Friday, Saturday & Monday 11–5, Sunday 11-4.

closed December 25, 26, 31 and January 1

For further information & images, please contact Kristin Miller at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com.

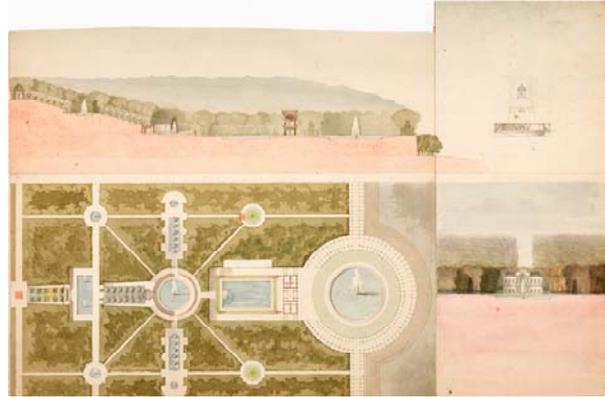
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18TH & 19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN GARDEN PLANS

October 22, 2010-January 10, 2011



Flemish School, 18th Century
Project for a Landscape Garden near Schellebelle, 18 x 20 1/2"



Leon Dufourny (French, 1754-1818)
Plan for an Italianate Garden and Villa, 11 1/4 x 17 1/4"

Ranging from a detailed plan for an English garden laid out with follies that reference widespread cultures to a fully rendered watercolor of a grand villa landscape, this selection of French, British and Flemish pages captures dreams realized in man-made environments. Large, formal designs by Léonard François Seheult (1771-1840) combine 17th century French axial plans with the serpentine landscape garden introduced in the 18th century by Capability Brown. For one aspiring client, Seheult proposed on a single sheet a veritable history of landscape design -- from Pompeian courtyard gardens, to a French parterre, to a 19th century woodland park.

In an 18th century Flemish drawing for an estate near Antwerp, inscriptions detail the location of tenant lots and dotted red lines radiate from the main house indicating the four primary vistas across the land. A French drawing from the same era enumerates all of the 'classic' elements of the landscape garden: an obelisk, a rustic pavilion, a wooden bridge, a grotto, a statue and a rich variety of trees. The plan of the house reveals the careful consideration given to the views from each room.

The precise and evocative ink and watercolor techniques evident in these designs elucidate the formal training and practice that European landscape architecture historically required. Leon Dufourny (1754-1818) pieced together four different views in his delicate *Plan of an Italianate Garden and Villa*. An aerial vantage point shows the symmetry of the paths, beds and fountains; two elevations define a hillside parterre and tree line view of the main house, and a graphite drawing of one of the fountains illustrates the grandiose water features. This collaged work that combines technical architectural drawing with rich landscape painting suggests a wonderful sense of place.

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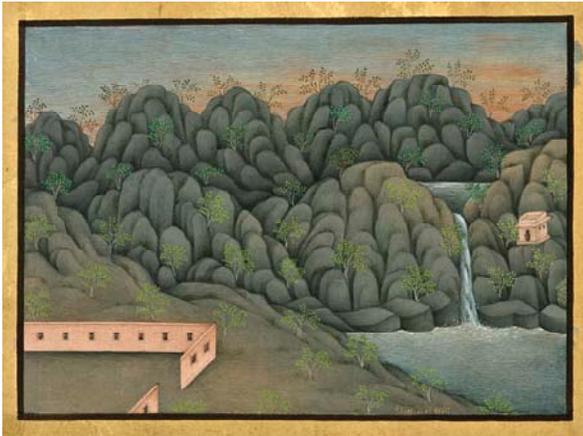
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See press release on reverse for **Raja Ram Sharma: Contemporary Miniature Paintings from Rajasthan**

RAJA RAM SHARMA

Contemporary miniature paintings from Rajasthan

October 22, 2010-January 10, 2011



Reservoir, 2009, mineral pigments with gum arabic, 6 x 8"



Hillside Palace, 2010, mineral pigments with gum arabic, 6 x 8 "

Raja Ram Sharma was trained in the traditional miniature painting styles refined by the Mughal Court and studied with Sri Jamanadas Chitrakar at the Nathdwara School. Sharma is a master temple painter whose life's work within the contemporary culture in Rajasthan is devoted to painting *pichwai*, cloth paintings depicting Krishna that hang in Hindu temples. In his workshop, Sharma creates compositions of Hindu gods and mythology, directing his apprentices who fill in the color of his powerful black brush drawings. The miniature landscapes on view here are painted away from his workshop, on his own time, when he is able to express his personal concerns about contemporary life in Rajasthan.

Sharma's paintings on recycled rag paper measure 6 x 8 inches and are painted with one-hair brushes. He formulates his traditional water based 'body color' or gouache medium by pulverizing stone pigments in a mortar and mixing them with gum arabic and water and his compelling palette is informed by a long lineage of court painters. Sharma's quiet paintings of the landscape, the architecture and the gardens of Rajasthan recall the exquisite illustrated manuscripts painted by the imperial Mughal ateliers where Hindu and Islamic traditions merged.

Living in an arid and heavily populated area, Sharma is sensitive to man's impact on the surrounding landscape and his paintings give delicate form to his hopes for nature's healing powers. *Reservoir* depicts a view of neglected buildings in a landscape where water that continues to flow from the hills replenishes the soil and allows trees to grow again. In *Building on a Lake*, the stark white turreted structure has three tiny windows that suggest man's narrow inward reflection and his detachment from the outside world. The trees are sparse around the structure but grow with abandon over the surrounding hills towards the riverbed.

In other paintings, Sharma reinvents local 16th century palace architecture in mazes of white turrets with glimpses of cultivated courtyard plantings. For paintings that evolve within a country where overpopulation is the experience, the absence of the human figure is striking. Sharma seeks the quiet of landscape and the melancholic emptiness of abandoned architecture

These intense Indian miniature paintings are a voice of silence and beauty inspired by the words of Indian mystic poet Kabir, "People are conscious in times of Misery, but not in times of Joy. If we are conscious of our deeds in times of Joy then there will be no Misery." Sharma's paintings tell us to pay attention to our land, our wild life and our places of architectural history.

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