

# WORLD SCULPTURE NEWS

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## THE UNITED STATES

### Birth Of Blindness

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**A**icon Gallery New York will present *Birth of Blindness*, a solo exhibition by Indian artist G.R. Iranna, November 6 through December 6, 2008. *Birth of Blindness* will be the first solo exhibition to be held in the gallery's newly relocated ground-floor space at 35 Great Jones Street, New York. On view will be two large fiberglass-based sculptural installations and a collection of paintings that explore themes of sensory and spiritual deprivation, and of physical and psychic restraint; all key elements of Iranna's oeuvre.

The exhibition's titular



G.R. Iranna, *The Birth of Blindness*, 2007, fiberglass and cloth, 27 x 26 x 42 in. (10 figures). Image: Courtesy of Aicon Gallery, New York.

installation in the first gallery, which exemplifies Iranna's interest in forms of deprivation and the body as a site for negotiating socio-cultural and political realities, finds a series of ten prostrate classical figures arranged in a semicircle through the gallery. Each sculpture has been blindfolded and placed atop a wooden cart.

In *Make Sure U Are Breathing*, installed in the second gallery, a man stands naked with a burlap bag covering his arms and head. Without senses or the ability to manipulate his environment, he is left to roam aimlessly. Emphasis is placed on the figure's vulnerability as he is unwillingly subjected to the threat

and control of exterior forces.

Iranna's paintings, rendered in acrylic on his signature tarpaulin, present lush narratives within the barest of productions, typically using a handful of figures on a monochromatic background to tell a complex philosophic parable. A bull ominously passes a hooded matador in *Afternoon Sacrifice I* and *II* while in *There is No Border* soldiers are stripped of their uniforms and crouched behind concertina wire with their heads covered in shrouds.

The imagery throughout the exhibition conjures up now iconic images such as the abused prisoners of Abu Ghraib or of politicized coverage of

Muslims in prayer. However, the anonymity of the figures brings light to Iranna's concern with the universal human condition: the artist asserts that his featureless figures are "about acting blindly, about choosing a path without understanding the situation and its implications."

G.R. Iranna was born in 1970 in Northern Karnataka, in southwest India. He studied at Gulbarga University in Karnataka and went on to receive his MFA in painting from the College of Art, New Delhi, in 1994. During his youth, Iranna studied in a *gurukul* (a system of education where the student resides with the teacher) and lived in an ashram (a traditional Hindu hermitage) for almost seven years. He was recently named the inaugural recipient of the Asia-Pacific Breweries Foundation Signature Art Prize. He has had solo exhibitions in Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and the United States. His works are in the collections of the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi; the Bharat Bhawan, Bhopal; and the Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, among others.

For more information on Aicon Gallery New York, please visit [www.aicongallery.com](http://www.aicongallery.com) or call (1-212) 725 6092.



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