





Allison Stielau on TANYA GOEL

Tanya Goel sees with a rare clarity what most passersby overlook, those materials and surfaces that typically signify the temporary, the unfinished, the discarded. A series of paintings, for example, represents the mottled blue weave of a plastic tarpaulin as if through a microscope, magnifying the visual qualities of an object ordinarily used merely to cover or mask. Goel attributes this awareness and attention-to tarps and particleboard, to the accreted surface of posted advertisementsto her upbringing in New Delhi, where slow-moving construction seems to be a constant and unending fact of life. In India, though, building bears the mark of the makeshift and the handmade, from bamboo scaffolding to hand-lettered signs. Goel's project consists in part in bringing that aesthetic to the slick, commodified surface of the American everyday. Through processes of excision and excess, grinding down or piling up, she obliterates the surface to make it visible again. Among the most satisfying of her works in this vein are those that appropriate and subvert the hieroglyphs of retail business and industry. A stack of cardboard

Among the most satisfying of her works in this vein are those that appropriate and subvert the hieroglyphs of retail business and industry. A stack of cardboard boxes looks very much like those sent by the massive retailer Amazon.com, with the ubiquitous curve and dot of its logo printed on their sides. On closer inspection, though, the logo has been modified, the barcodes used for global tracking purposes erased, the black lines slightly smudged in spots from having been screenprinted by Goel

having been screenprinted by Goel rather than mechanically produced. Though subtle, these slippages are exhilarating in the way they wrest control of the surface from the brand and intervene in the commodity's circulatory system. Goel applied the reverse strategy to

similar effect on a sheet of particleboard purchased from a local building supply store. First copying the black stencils indicating its brand and grade from the surface, the artist then hand cut and repeat stenciled the same marks back onto the board in a pattern reminiscent of woodblock-printed Gujarat textiles. Here, the excessive replication of the industrial mark saps its ability to signify until it becomes an ornamental pattern that mimics the chaotic substrate it covers. The artist's gesture overwhelms the brand, reanimating the surface for the viewer's eye.

In these as well as more recent projects, Goel has herself identified a fascination with the grid, the underlying order on which she builds her meticulous entropies. From her studies of the tarp's woof and weft and the stenciled particleboard like printed fabric, she has returned to canvas as a structuring grid at the level of both texture and border. Against the traditional scaffold, though, her techniques are those of the builder, the graffitist, and the amateur craftsman who delights in tinkering. For the MFA show, she glued, varnished, dripped, and sanded her canvases, laid masking tape and pulled it up again, penciled notes in the paint surface like a carpenter; she tie-dyed and laminated the paper scraps on her studio floor, hoping in all these treatments of the surface to "keep the crinkle in," the flaw that enables perception.

Throughout this work her palette remained inspired by all of those things Goel notices on the street that others miss. Her blues are those of painter's tape and shiny tarps, her orange that of the temporary plastic fences that mark off work sites,

an orange that has become, in the American landscape at least, the sign for construction. Her grays, on the other hand, are the ash-color of newsprint crumpled, torn, sanded down and rained upon until pulpy and illegible. Defaced, the newsprint, like Goel's resurfaced canvases, becomes the foundation of a modern palimpsest.



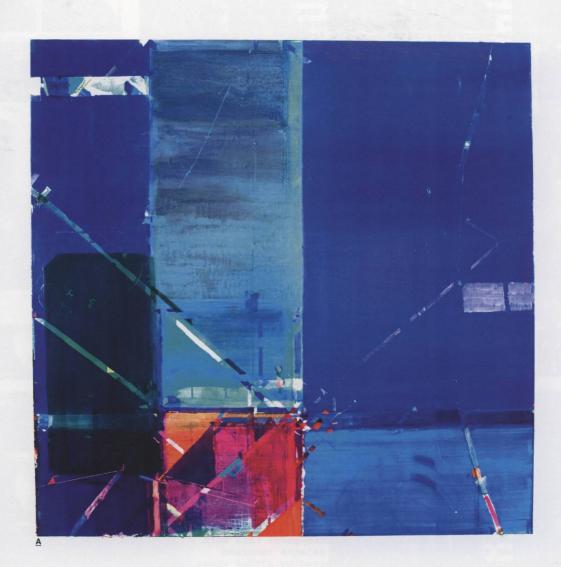








- Untitled
 Oil on canvas
 72"x72"
 2010
- B Untitled
 Oil on canvas
 20"x 15"
 2010



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MFA 2010 Painting+Printmaking



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Tanya Goel

Tanya Goel



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- Orange
 Oil on canvas
 20"x15"
 2010
- D Red On
 Oil on canvas
 15"x 20"
 2010
- E Installation view 2010



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074

- Untitled Oil, newspaper on canvas 72"x72" 2010
- Studio view 2010
- A4 paper/tarp Oil on canvas 20"x 15" 2010



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Tanya Goel

075