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SUNDARAM TAGORE HONG KONG PRESENTS AMERICAN ARTIST JOAN VENNUM IN *THE SPACE AROUND US*

Exhibition dates: March 31 – April 25, 2010

Opening cocktail reception: Wednesday, March 31, 7 – 9 pm



River Quartet, 2008, oil on canvas, 29 x 97.5 inches

Hong Kong, March 16, 2010—Joan Vennum is a New York-based artist who creates luminous paintings flooded with color. She is known for her dreamlike canvases covered with thin layers of repeated brushstrokes. Composed of broad fields of color, the paintings invite viewers into a realm governed by imagination and nature. She collapses horizon lines conjuring an infinite and encompassing space. This newest series of oils emerged from Vennum's recent journey through India. Deeply influenced by the dramatic colors of the Subcontinent, Vennum's work has become bolder and more sensuous.

"My discoveries in India have become part of my being, and appear in my work in subtle forms," Vennum says. The artist was inspired by her observations of daily life such as the sun setting on the river Ganges and brightly dressed women working in green fields. She was also intrigued by the effect of viewing one color through another—such as the landscape through a translucent *dupatta* (scarf) blowing in the wind, for example, as she rode past on a motorcycle.

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In her earlier explorations of light and space, Vennum painted subtle gradations of color forming veil-like surfaces. Maintaining this premise, she continues to compose fields of color by layering paint. However, recently she has introduced a more vivid palette reminiscent of Indian miniature paintings. Using fluid gestures, she creates lushly painted works with concentrated vermilions, saffron yellows, and indigos. Her handling of paint has shifted toward a looser application and she has amplified the contrast between dark and light. The resulting canvases are vibrant and ethereal.

Vennum is a native of New York and has roots in the post-abstract expressionist camp of female painters such as Lee Krasner and Joan Mitchell. She has exhibited widely in the United States and Sweden. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York; The Power Collection of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; the Konstmuseet, Uttersberg, Sweden; the Skandia Försäkringsbolag, Stockholm; and the Museo Civico, Taverna, Italy.

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