

***Afar Per Se***  
**AMAR FROM AFAR**

AMAR

# Headbones Gallery - The Drawers

*Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper*

## ***Afar Per Se***

Amar from Afar

November 11 - December 31, 2011

RICH FOG



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Amar From Afar Commentary - From Afar  
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Amar from Afar Cover Image: Past, Present, Future

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# Amar from Afar

Commentary by Julie Oakes



From Afar

We look towards the far distant for a sense of something other than the hum-drum existence that often takes over our routine lives. Vacations, videos, reading, music – all become the escape routes to enrichment. Afar Per se fulfills the wanderlust and slakes the thirst for exoticism, transferring a National Geographic mind frame into the refined halls of high culture.

Our identifications to family are through the surname. It is the name that a person has in common with the rest of his family as distinguished from his first or given name. The surname gives out many clues as to parentage, ethnicity and culture. Even religion is implied through the surname. An East Indian family with the last name “Jain” will probably adhere to the Jain faith for instance. The derivation

of the surname often gave clues as to the ancestral craft, occupation or station in life. The surname may provide an indication of the location of family lands.

Some would say that without a surname you are nothing; others, like Amar From Afar - that you are free. Surnames raise expectations before meeting the person named. Amar From Afar acknowledges only one fact before he is introduced personally – that he is from afar. Unless we have native status, all Canadians are from afar which means that it has been but a short time (comparatively speaking) that many Canadians have built their homes on the land where their ancestors are buried. Genesis 3:19, in The King James version of the bible states “in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread, till thou return into the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.”

An immigrant moves away from the land that fed his family not only food but values, culture, religion and politics and in doing so is granted a new opportunity to invent his identity – perhaps free from the boundaries of status or even economic frameworks. Amar From Afar is actually residing and working in a quotidian venue for his studio is in Lumby, BC - yet that fact could translate into a rather exotic imagining for a New Yorker. Amar’s paintings on canvas are as layered as an immigrant’s life, replete with references to the beyond yet impacting a sense of contemporary and generic living as well. Amar’s work is not static. It reaches back wards in time as it projects forward and seldom is there only a surface meaning.

With the surname missing and expectations freed from fetters the ground itself is fractured. The imagery reflects this for Amar presents snippets of life pulled from a variety of sources. India is presented as ancient statues, wildlife as birds, friends as parts or portraits, movie stars, - all like far-away shores to the common man – earthbound and



body bound. This creates a fracking. It re-arranges the traditional ideas of environment and being by sending a tremor that pulls the world as known like a rug from underfoot. For instance, Amar alters the historical sculpture of a traditional dancing dakini, stretching it, blurring it, overlapping with fabrics of life and in doing so achieves a distancing of reality, just as the past, due to it's far-away-ness, is altered in the mind. But this is not a plea for nostalgia or even a reinforcement of exotic otherness for Amar doesn't let the image rest. He pokes at it, jabs at it with the dissonance of virtual life and in doing so pulls his visual story line into the theatrical realms. There is a taste of intrigue, plot, potential climax and even the potential for a narrative resolution. He gives us sufficient clues but doesn't reveal the ending as in Past Present, Future, where the Buddha is barely distracted by a passing satellite.

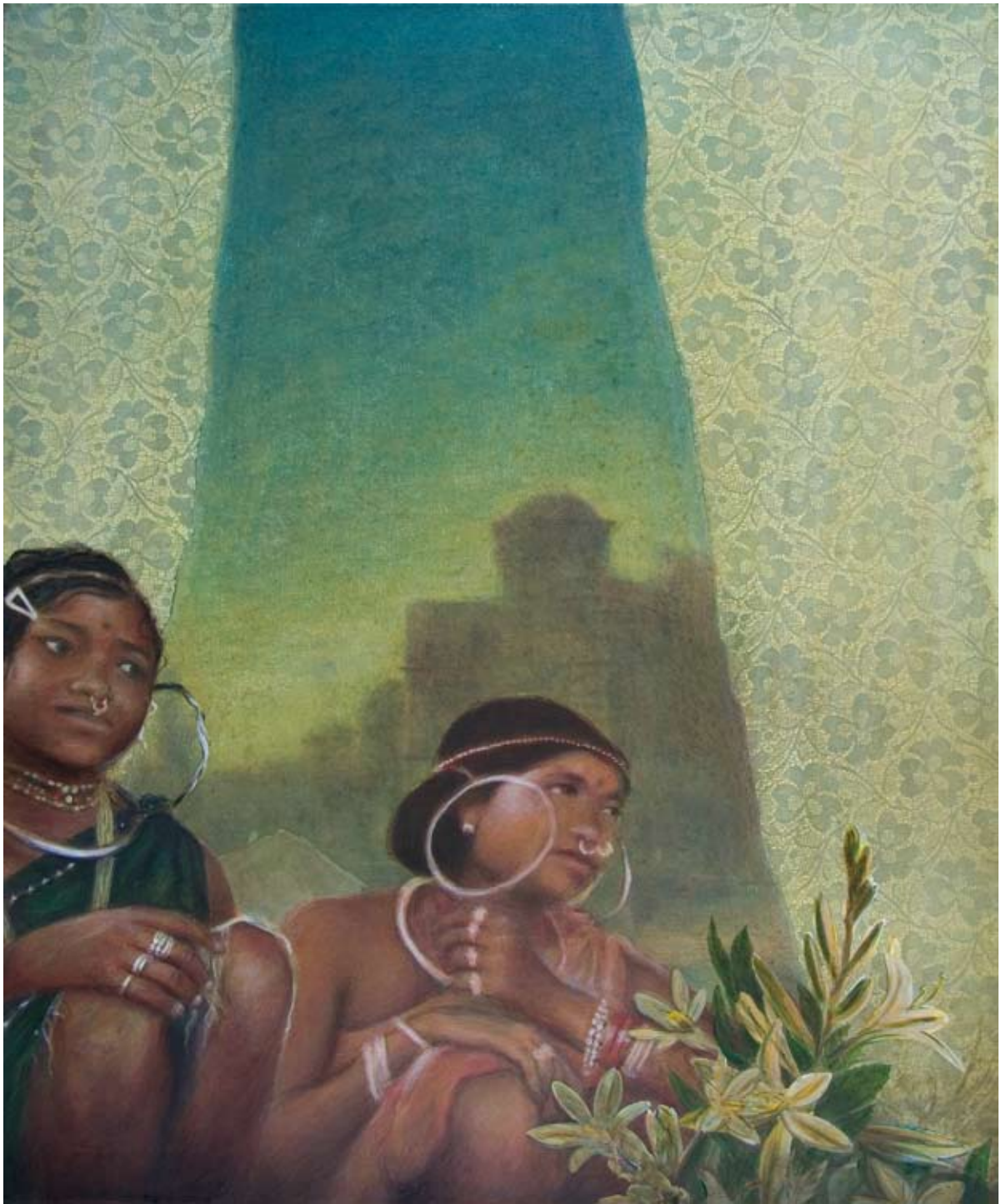
Intezaar means 'necessary wanting'. The ethnicity of a turbaned Indian is caught in a cycle of need as he reaches upwards for an American dollar that wafts down to his lowly position from on high. He is blind to all but the source, the direction of this almighty 'buck'. The grasp of a poor man towards betterment is joined to the futility that comes from

financial need. The sense of shattering future potential creeps into the picture of everyman who experiences poverty regardless of place or surname. Yet there is no preaching in these paintings. When Amar from afar approaches a new work he enters a virgin territory on which to plant his flag. His is not a drive to convince but a request to perceive.

In abandoning traditional demarcations of kinship, Amar joins a bigger family, one that includes his Indian birth right as it embraces the current flow of visual and social information. Amar From Afar's relationship to the ancestral riches inherent in art comes by virtue of his own design as well as his talent. He has a gifted 'hand', perhaps evidence of elevated genes but he brushes what comes with his specific being aside to concentrate on a greater whole.

Julie Oakes, 2011

**Waiting** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 30 inches



**Where Am I** - 1998  
acrylic on canvas, 55 x 24 inches



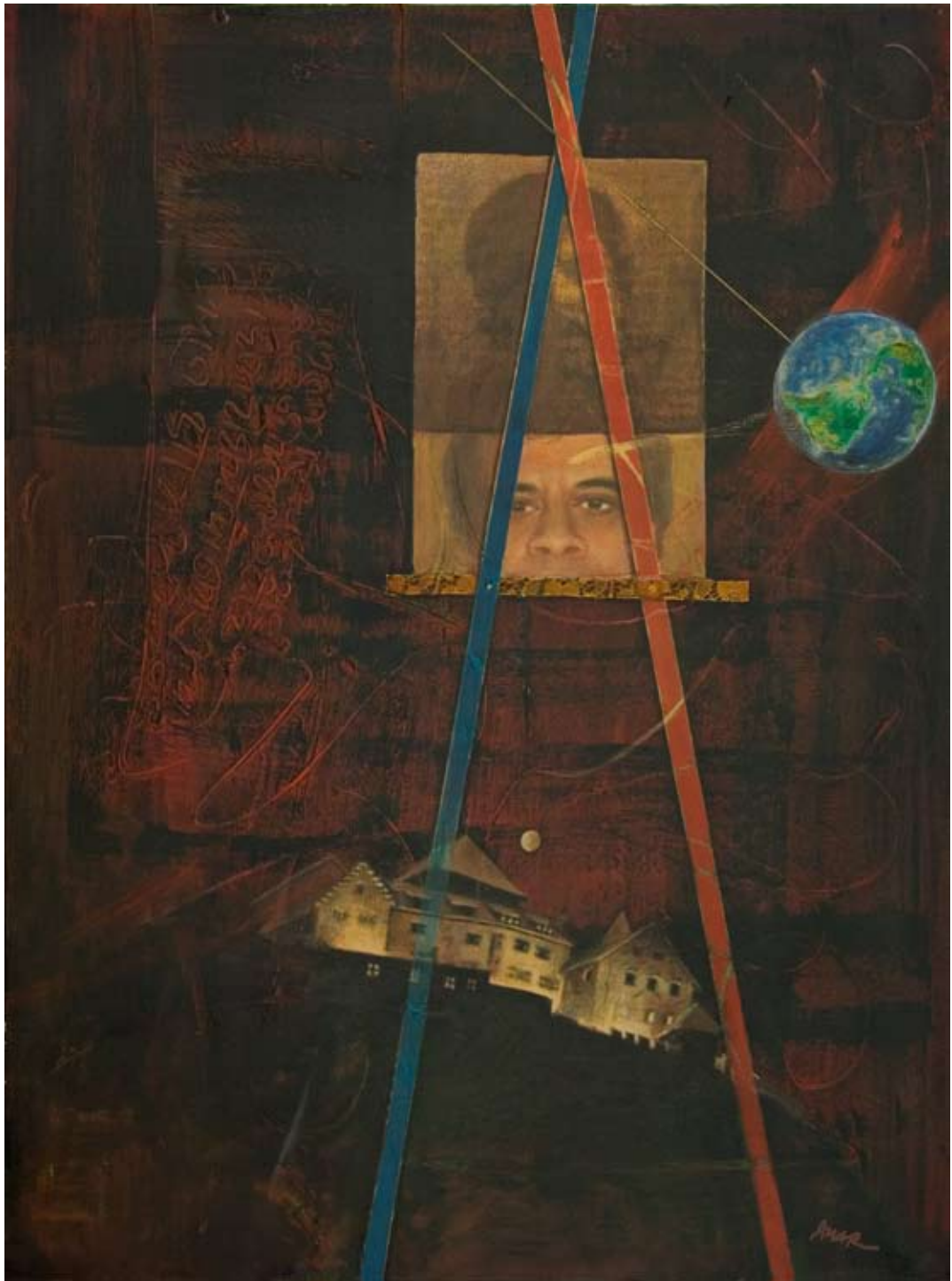
**Journey** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 30 x 42 inches



**Colonial Intrusion** - 1981-2011  
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 inches



**Afar** - 2002-2011  
acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 inches



**Past Present Future** - 1997  
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 30 inches



**Monkey Business** - 1981  
acrylic on canvas, 8 x 10 inches



**Intezaar** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 inches



**Transition** - 1998-2011  
acrylic on canvas, 57 x 30 inches



**It's Yours** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 24 x 48 inches



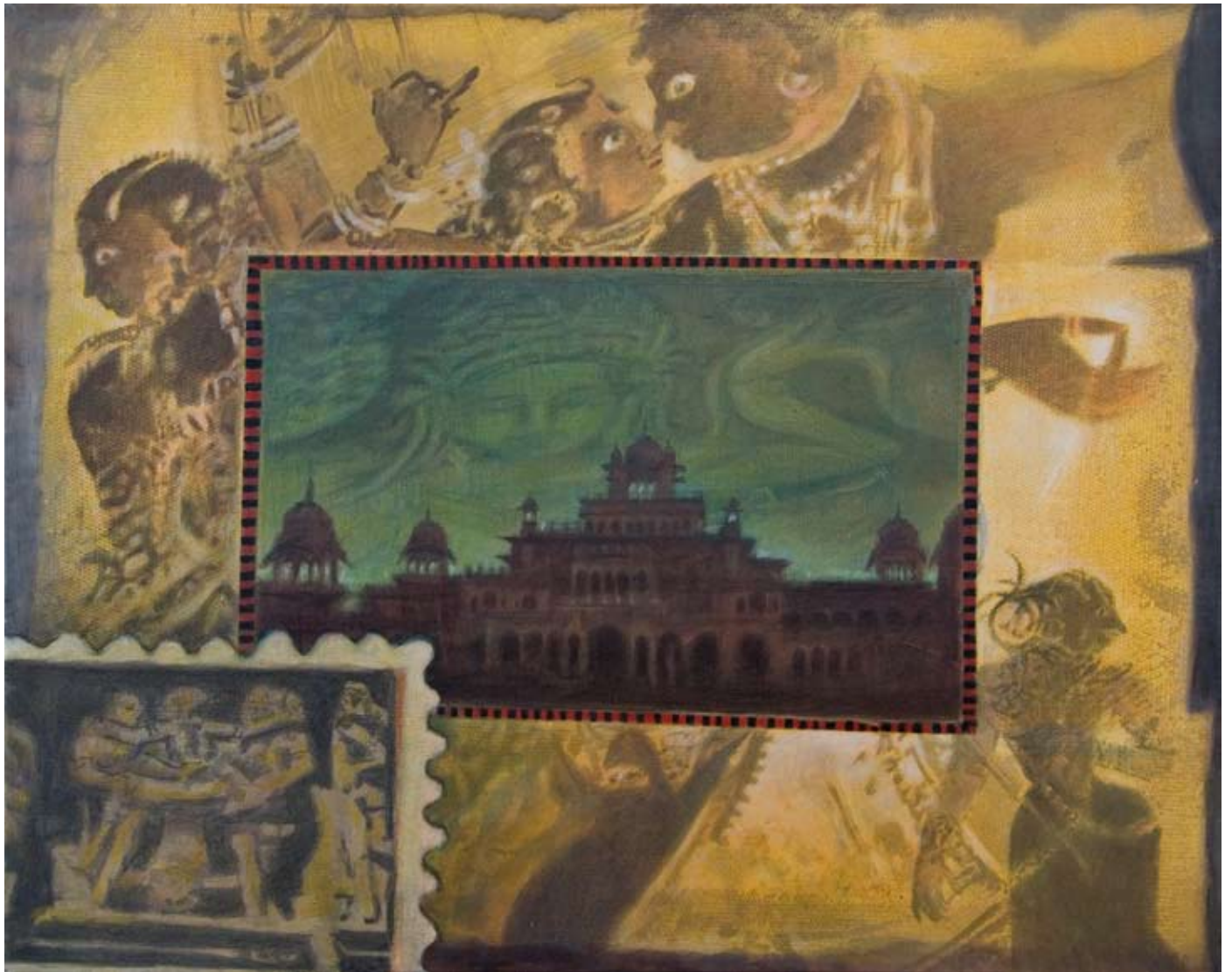
**And You Don't Know** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 inches



**Kim Novak** - 2001-2011  
acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 inches



**Old Spiritual** - 2011  
acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 inches



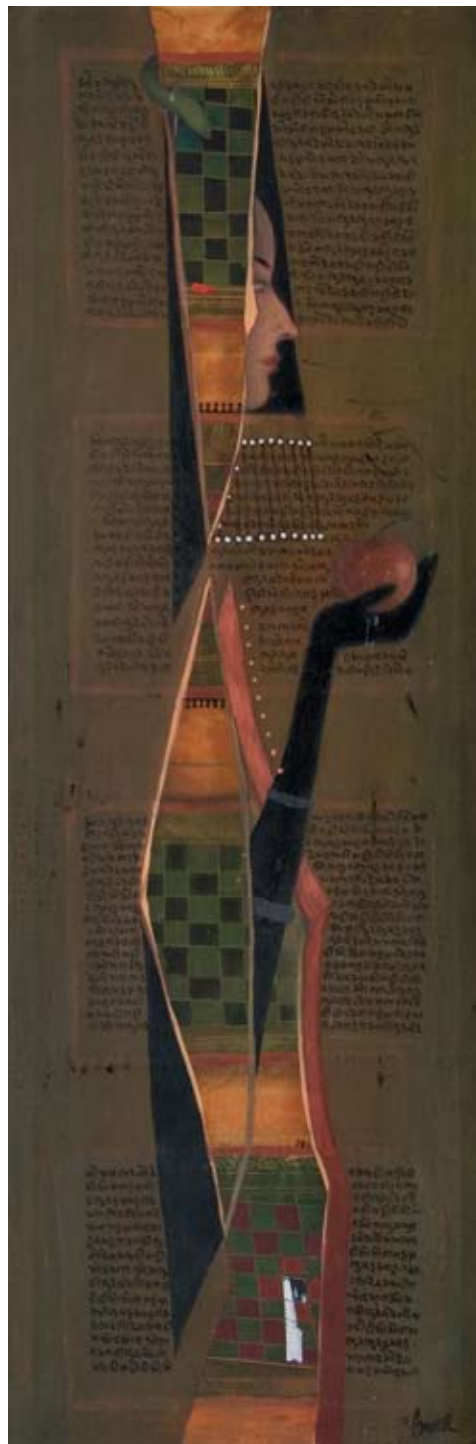
**Krishna** - 2010  
acrylic on canvas, 48 x 24 inches



**Ancient** - 1997  
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 inches



**Eve** - 1988  
acrylic on canvas, 36 x 12 inches



**Apsara** - 1996  
acrylic on canvas, 48 x 13 inches



**Untitled** - 1969  
colored graphite, 3 x 4 inches





## **Amar from Afar**

Amar from Afar was born Amar Lakhpatwala in Bombay, India, in 1952. He attended English boarding schools between India and Britain where at an early age, he started drawing. When he was fourteen, Amar came to Canada where he lived with his school teacher aunt in Edson, Alberta. Following high school, Amar returned to India and worked in the family business until 1979. He returned to Canada to study Art and Design from 1980-83 at Red Deer College, Alberta and then Graphic Arts and Ceramics at Bemidji State University, Minnesota from 1985-87. He was awarded a position at the Red Deer College as a studio artist from 1988-90. His recent exhibitions include the Armstrong Museum and Headbones Gallery in British Columbia, Canada.

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