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SUNDARAM TAGORE BEVERLY HILLS PRESENTS
ADI DA SAMRAJ’S WORK, CURATED BY ACHILLE BONITO OLIVA

Exhibition dates: September 8 – October 8, 2011
Opening cocktail reception: Thursday, September 8, 2011, 6 – 9 pm

Beverly Hills, August 8, 2011—Adi Da Samraj is known for his monumental works meant to draw viewers into an ecstatic experience and connect them to a higher spiritual truth. Since his participation in the 2007 Venice Biennale, the late American-born artist has commanded a large international following. This exhibition, called Orpheus and Linead, curated by the renowned Italian critic and art historian Achille Bonito Oliva (director of the 45th Venice Biennale), comprises 7 works on aluminum. Each image is a geometric abstraction composed of the three primary colors and black and white. The exhibition premiered in September 2010 at Sundaram Tagore Gallery in New York.

Adi Da (1939-2008) graduated from Columbia University in New York in 1961 with a BA in philosophy and from Stanford University in 1966 with an MA in literature. His thesis was on modernism, Gertrude Stein, and painters of the same period. He began making art in the early 1960s, in the form of photography and calligraphic brush painting. In the last decade of his career, he worked to move beyond the single-point perspective that dominates the canon of Western art. By transcending single-point perspective, which he equated with egocentricism, he sought to invite viewers into a space devoid of ego. Curator Achille Bonito Oliva explains: “The abstraction of Adi Da Samraj is anti-rhetorical and aspires to restore humanity to a state of contemplation and reflection….His abstract images look upon the world from beyond any point of view.”

(continued)
Over the course of his artistic career, Adi Da embraced technology, which he valued for the precision, aesthetic freedom, and non-painterliness it allowed. For this body of work, Adi Da began by photographing a chair, a bicycle, and a bird in flight. He then made digital compositions of geometric shapes inspired by his photographs. Once completed, the first drawing served as the basis for the next work as he sought to progressively abstract his images. Thus each subsequent image was a further distillation of the previous one.

Adi Da’s digital drawings were informed by a complex vocabulary of forms, colors, and spiritual concepts. He used two major visual elements in each work, which he called lineads and geomes. Lineads are hand-drawn gestural marks and curvilinear lines; geomes are solid geometric shapes. There is a momentum that takes place as the lineads uncoil upon the harmoniously positioned blocks of colors or the geomes. Together these forms unite to create a sense of dynamism and movement within the drawings.

In the final stage of Adi Da’s unique process, the drawings were sent to a top fabrication studio to be transformed, in a painstaking and elaborate process, into large-scale works composed of lacquer pigment on aluminum.

*Orpheus and Linead* is accompanied by a catalogue, which includes an essay by Achille Bonito Oliva.

**ABOUT THE ARTIST**

In addition to being an artist, Adi Da was a spiritual leader and prolific author on spiritual subjects. His work has been shown widely in Europe and the United States. Adi Da was the first contemporary artist to be given a solo exhibition by the city of Florence. In 2007, he was featured as an official solo collateral artist at the Venice Biennale. Recently his work was exhibited at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri.

**ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Achille Bonito Oliva is an internationally acclaimed Italian art critic and historian. He has curated numerous exhibitions around the world. A prolific author, Bonito Oliva’s books include *The Italian Trans-avantgarde, American Graffiti, The Ideology of the Traitor: Art, Manner and Mannerism,* and *Art Tribes.* He has been recognized with the Flash Art International Critics’ Prize (1982), Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres of the French Republic (1992), and the Fregene Prize for essays and art criticism (2000). Bonito Oliva lives in Rome where he teaches contemporary art at La Sapienza University.

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