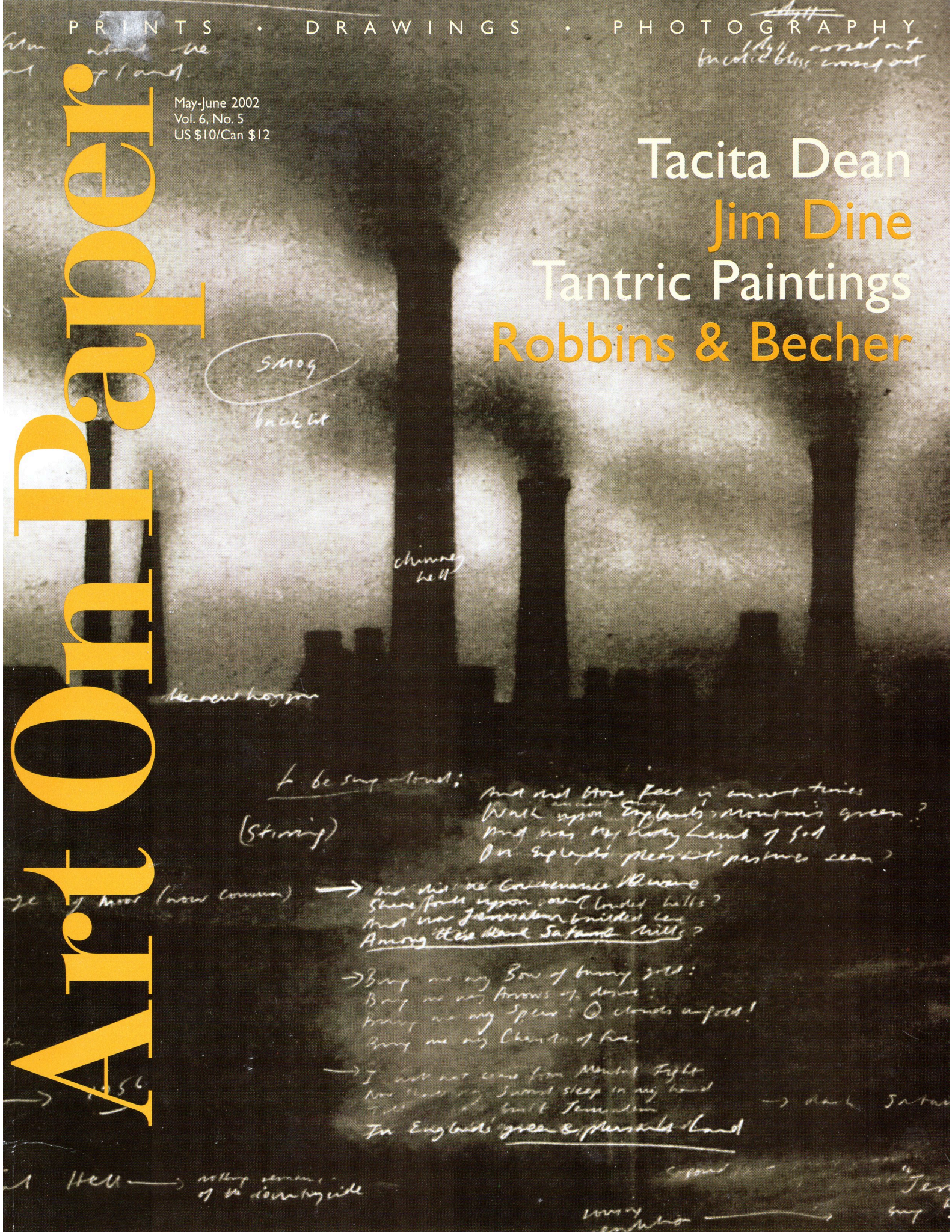


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Art On Paper

Tacita Dean
Jim Dine
Tantric Paintings
Robbins & Becher



smog

backlit

chimney
belt

the new horizon

to be sung aloud:

(stirring)

And what those feet in ancient times
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Land of God
Or England's pleasant pastures seen?

age of Moor (now common)

→ And did the Conquerors
Share points upon clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Saxon hills?

→ Bring me my Bow of burning gold:
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire.

→ I will not come from Meville fight
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till I have built Jerusalem
In England's green & pleasant land

→ dark Saxon

1 Hell → nothing remains
of the countryside

→ dark Saxon
→ dark Saxon
→ dark Saxon

Conversations with Tradition: Nilima Sheikh and Shahzia Sikander.

The Asia Society, New York.

As this winter exhibition at the Asia Society proves, shared artistic sources do not assure a common artistic outlook. Recognizing that Nilima Sheikh and Shahzia Sikander both draw inspiration from traditional South Asian miniature painting, curator Vishakha Desai stresses their stylistic affinities. Yet these artists are distinct from each other in age and background. Their "conversation" on shared sources is less an exchange than two monologues, each echoing the other but often worlds apart.

Sheikh, based in Baroda, India, for almost 40 years, reinvents Indian miniature painting while grappling with tumultuous, often cataclysmic, narratives. Borrowing from Mughal and Rajput painting, her tempera paintings on hand-made paper also echo the vibrant tones, strong outlines, and expressive subjects of early 20th-century nationalist painters of the Bengal school. *After Amnesia* (2001) recalls the violent relocations forced by Pakistan's 1947 partition from India; luminous, sweeping washes frame delicately drawn, haunting vignettes. Graceful birds fall from the sky while a man beats a cowering woman and a lonely line of figures trudges through an empty landscape. The fractured, claustrophobic spaces of *When Champa Grew Up* (1984) suggest the formal characteristics of the



Shahzia Sikander, *Riding the Ridden*, vegetable color, dry pigment, watercolor tea on hand-prepared wasli paper (8x5-1/2 in.), 2000. Courtesy the Asia Society, New York.

Riding the Ridden (2000) weaves cowboy boots and New York streetscapes into an erotic pairing of courtly lovers.

Sikander once contemplated traveling to India to see Sheikh, yet the two never met before this exhibition; due to difficulties obtaining an Indian visa, the Pakistani Sikander abandoned this plan and pursued advanced study in America, acutely shaping the direction of her art. Ultimately, this exhibition may prove the writer Margaret Millar right: conversation is simply a monologue delivered before witnesses. Although both artists share artistic roots and ties, their training and interests diverge profoundly.

—Elizabeth E. Guffey

Expressionists, while the content describes a case of bride-burning at the hands of a young woman's in-laws.

Born in Pakistan, Sikander shares Sheikh's interest in hand-made wasli paper and perpetuates other miniature conventions even more closely. Emblematic of hybridity and post-colonialism, Sikander's work has become increasingly well-known in the West; however, here it is presented in a rarely examined South Asian context. Whereas Sheikh's art reflects modern Indian culture and identity, Sikander addresses a shifting mix of religious, political, and artistic boundaries. Trained in Lahore and now working in the United States, Sikander employs the format and formal devices of miniatures within an omnivorous aesthetic, fusing Asian and Western sources. Charged with sexual ambiguity, the aptly named *Elusive Realities* (2000) borrows from M.C. Escher;

Tazio Secchiaroli: From Via Veneto to Cinecittà.

Gallery Chiostrò del Bramante, Rome.

Walking around Rome these days, it takes a bit of doing to remember that the city spent a long time digging itself out of postwar detritus. Even into the early '60s, the comfortless poor greatly outnumbered the well-heeled gentry. But there were a lucky few who crowded the fashionable avenues and select cafés, image-makers and movie people, a new brand of self-made aristocrat with a startling openness. Photographer Tazio Secchiaroli (1925–98) chased and ambushed these big-screen swells, his fresh, unexpected boldness earning him the new sobriquet of *paparazzo*.

Despite an emphasis on the *bellissimi*, the more than 200 photographs in the fall/winter show *From Via Veneto to Cinecittà* document not only the razzle-dazzle of Veneto but the general upheaval of postwar Roman life. In *Ischia, 1957*, for example, a mother picks nits from her child's head in a shantytown near Rome. Secchiaroli also documented the alleged *Miracle at the Maratta Alta Dairy, Terni, June/July, 1958*. The photographer shows the frenzied faithful without resorting to easy irony, and his treatment

of their headlong run to the site is candid and even sympathetic.

A confusion of myths compose Rome: Ceasars, the Catholic church, Mussolini, and movie stars all have their day. Secchiaroli manages to convey this mix, his timing as keen as Weegee's but less hard-bitten: even in a prying shot such as a towel-wrapped Ava Gardner and David Niven in a bathing suit, caught at Cinecittà in 1958, he preserves a slight sense of respect and fellow-feeling. If the stars seem a bit monstrous, they are also nervous and absurd, not so much enviable as vulnerable.

Secchiaroli's biggest assignments were 20 years as Sophia Loren's personal pho-