

For Immediate Release**TRASH****Photographs by Vivan Sundaram****Opening on 29th August and continuing till 27th September 2008
(Extended till 10th October, 2008)**

Vivan Sundaram's exhibition, *Trash*, develops a theme that has engaged him since 1997. Based on the economy and aesthetics of second-hand goods and urban waste, *Trash* recalls Sundaram's installation, *Great Indian Bazaar*, from 1997, and carries over parts of his large exhibition, *living.it.out.in.delhi*, from 2005. He had involved waste-pickers in Delhi in the production of his last exhibition, working through Chintan, an NGO that enables this unorganized workforce to gain rights.

Constructing a huge and fantastical cityscape with garbage in his own studio, Sundaram mediated the spectacle via the camera from several vantage points. The theme continues to be explored in successive works included in this exhibition: the social implications of waste at the core of which is the frenzy of global consumption; a deconstruction of the commodity form that recalls modernity's fascination with found objects; and the changing aesthetic of bricolage, a key modernist procedure in the making of art objects.

The voluntary act of accumulating filth is a kind of indulgence, an excess. The colour and texture of industrial iron, toothbrushes, plastic toys, tin cans and a sea of soiled milk sachets, all of these make for optical pleasure such as what the viewer might derive from a painterly palette. Among the photographs, there is a grand *Master Plan* (2005–08), a surveillance view of a garbage-city, and *Prospect* (2005–08), where the same city conglomerate recedes into steep perspective. A set of photographs, titled *Barricade* (2007–08), disorient the viewer by their scale: jammed edifices both frail and monumental, never-ending stretches of landfill, homes flattened by bulldozers and rising again. These photographs propose the material consequence of urban demolitions, amounting at times to collateral damage that erases citizens' lives.

In the single-channel video, *Turning* (2008), Sundaram develops what we may call a countering poetics. The rubbished fragments of a daytime city rise and fall, collapse and swirl. Towers blow over and topple in the wind and smoke, structures big and small sway and whistle and turn askew. A musical montage and fragments of text from the great Jelaluddin Rumi speak of ascension, recalling an earlier video titled *The Brief Ascension of Marian Hussain* (2005) that demonstrated how the flight is always only brief.

Trash began its journey in April 2008 at Chemould Prescott Road and Project 88 in Mumbai followed by an inclusion at the Biennale of Sydney. Through September, *Trash* will be presented at Photoink, New Delhi and Sepia International Inc., New York. Images from the series will later be shown at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo in November in a show titled 'Theatre of Life: Contemporary Art from India Today'.

Accompanying the exhibition is *Trash: Vivian Sundaram*, a 124 page catalogue (published by Photoink, Chemould Prescott Road, Project 88, Sepia International, Walsh Gallery, 2008) with an essay by Chaitanya Sambrani.

ABOUT VIVAN SUNDARAM

Vivan Sundaram was born in Shimla in 1943. He studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara, and at Slade School of Fine Art, London in the 1960s. He returned to India in 1970 and continued his painting. Since 1990 he has turned to making artworks as sculpture, installation, photography and video. These works have been widely exhibited nationally and internationally as, for example, at the Johannesburg, Havana, Kwangju, Shanghai, Taipei and Seville Biennales, and the Asia-Pacific Triennale. In 2008 his work was shown in 'Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art', curated by Okwui Enwezor at the International Centre of Photography, New York. Sundaram has organized international artists' workshops, curated exhibitions and done public art projects. He is a member of SAHMAT, a cultural activist forum based in Delhi.

Vivan Sundaram lives in New Delhi.