

'And Then' Exhibition and related performance by Bangladeshi-American artist Monica Jahan Bose



Bangladeshi-American artist Monica Jahan Bose's exhibition 'And Then' began Tuesday at the Bangladesh National Gallery, in collaboration with filmmaker Nandita Ahmed and the women of Katakhalī Village, Patuakhali District.

One Billion Rising Bangladesh is presenting the exhibition and related performance by Monica at the Bangladesh National Gallery as part of the One Billion Rising Revolution 2015, culminating in a series of performances and street actions on 14 February 2015 in front of the National Museum.

The exhibition features a 216-foot sari.

Photo: storytellingwithsaris/Monica Jahan Bose

The exhibition features a 216-foot sari and two films that are part of Storytelling with Saris, an art and advocacy project that uses woodblock prints on saris, writing, performance, and video to address women's empowerment in the face of climate change in the remote community of Katakhalī Village, Barobaishdia Island, Patuakhali District. Bangladeshi-American artist and activist Monica Jahan Bose is collaborating with 12 women from Katakhalī who have recently acquired literacy and are valiantly fighting climate change. The 12 women are Hawa, Hasina, Khuku Rani, Nasima, Noor Sehera, Parveen, Roxana, Salma, Shahida, Shima, Zakia, and Zulekha. Monica's mother Noorjahan Bose, author of the award-winning memoirs "Agunmukhar Meye," was born and raised in Katakhalī. New York-based Bangladeshi filmmaker Nandita Ahmed is working with Monica to document the project with film and photography. The longterm project highlights the Katakhalī women's personal stories to inspire the world to take action on gender discrimination and climate change. The exhibition is called 'And Then' as a reference to the continuing narratives of the women's lives and the performances inspired by their saris.

The women of Katakhalī have written and printed words and images on saris, which have been worn by them for eight months and then used for performances and installations around the world. The 216-foot sari displayed here references the story of Draupadi and was featured in several performances in the United States — in Washington DC at (e)merge art fair, in Brooklyn, New York at the DUMBO Arts Festival and the Brooklyn Museum, in Newark, New Jersey at the Gateway Arts Centre, and in Miami Beach, Florida at Select Art Fair during Art Basel-Miami Beach, the world's largest art event.

On 14 February, 2015, Monica will use this sari for a performance in front of the Bangladesh National Museum as part of the One Billion Rising Revolution 2015 to bring attention to gender-based violence.

About the upcoming performance, Monica says, 'I am thrilled to be doing my first performance in Bangladesh and to be working with One Billion Rising Bangladesh. Violence against women is a global phenomenon and my work on this issue is meant to transcend borders. My performance is about women supporting each other and standing up for our rights over our bodies and our minds.'

The One Billion Rising campaign began as a call to action based on the staggering statistics that one in three women on the planet will be beaten or raped during her lifetime. With the world population at 7 billion, this adds up to more than one billion women and girls. One Billion Rising Revolution is an escalation of the first two stages of our campaign - One Billion Rising and One Billion Rising for Justice.

'We've danced. We've demanded justice. Now we are demanding changes. And only a radical shift in consciousness - braver, bolder and more creative and determined actions can bring about change.'

Monica Jahan Bose is a Bangladeshi-American artist, lawyer, and activist. Her work includes painting, printmaking, video, installation, and performance, as well as advocacy on women's issues and the environment. She studied art at Wesleyan University and Santiniketan, India, and has a law degree from Columbia University. In 2014, her paintings were selected to represent the US in 1 in 3, the World Bank's global exhibition on gender-based violence, which featured 30 international artists. She lives and works in Washington DC, spending part of the year in Bangladesh.

For more information visit storytellingwithsaris.com onebillionrising.org