

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Embassy of Bangladesh Presents “Who Have You Left Behind?”

by MONICA JAHAN BOSE

A Solo Exhibition of Mixed-Media Paintings and Fabric Installation



“Sari Blouse and Calla Lilies,” 2010, acrylic and photo-collage on canvas

তুই ফেলে এসেছিস কারে, মন মন রে আমার?

Exhibition Dates: May 12-23, 2011

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 12, 2011, 6:30 pm

Embassy of Bangladesh, 3510 International Drive NW, Washington, DC 20008, Metro: Van Ness/UDC

Washington, D.C.--- The Embassy of Bangladesh is pleased to announce Bangladeshi-American artist Monica Jahan Bose’s first solo exhibition in the United States, featuring bold mixed-media paintings and a feminist fabric installation using cut and burnt saris.

Bose’s work reflects the immigrant experience of longing and displacement. The title of the exhibition, “Who Have You Left Behind?,” comes from the first line of a Bengali love song by Tagore, about longing for a person and memories of a place left behind. Bose’s work goes far beyond nostalgia, with a gendered perspective on cultural pluralism. Fusing together text, fabric, photographs and symbols from East and West, Bose charts out a unique visual language befitting her diverse professional background and heritage. She has studied art and law and has been an artist, lawyer, and activist. She was born in

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England to Bangladeshi parents – one Hindu, one Muslim – and brought up mostly in the United States. She recently returned to DC after almost five years in Paris, where she started working full-time as an artist.

Her paintings are fragmented narratives, often autobiographical, telling stories with underlying nuances about the rights of women, religious fundamentalism, and global warming. For this exhibition, Bose also creates a temporary installation of red and pink saris wound into sheer pod-like shapes hanging from power cords. Bose makes cut-out designs in the fabric which she says are an allusion to the latticed walls in the women's chambers (the Hawa Mahals) of Moghul palaces. These perforated walls allowed royal women to observe the world outside while remaining unseen. The installation includes partially burned saris piled on the floor. Through the installation, Bose raises questions about the role of women in maintaining heritage in a globalizing world where women still lack power.

About her work, Bose says: "My art is a journal of my thoughts and reactions to our world. I explore identity, love, and gender. I use women's clothing – the sari, sari blouse, boots – to comment on women's place in the world. Women are so often defined by what we wear. I am interested in the coverings that are considered appropriate for women, and the duality women face between being 'attractive' yet 'virtuous.' I am fascinated by the dichotomies between tradition and globalization, and love and violence. I try to create work that is beautiful yet thought-provoking, with the goal of stimulating dialogue towards a more tolerant and equal world."

Bose studied art at Wesleyan University, the University of California at Berkeley, and at Santiniketan, India. She studied law at Columbia University. She has exhibited her work in Bangladesh, France, India, Japan, and the US. Last year, she was one of 12 artists invited to participate in the prestigious Prix Marin Exhibition, an annual exhibition showcasing emerging painters in Paris.

The Embassy is open from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm Monday-Friday (or by appointment).

For more information and images: www.bdembassyusa.org or <http://monicajahanbose.com>

For inquiries contact:

Mr. Jashim Uddin , Minister, Bangladesh Embassy -- gaohar@yahoo.com

Monica Jahan Bose -- monica@monicajahanbose.com or 202-509-6282.

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