

Gallery Space Explores Alternative Feminism Through The Diversity of Five Women Artists in 'Moving Beyond the Frame'

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New Delhi, Delhi, December 17, 2008 /[India PRwire](#)/ -- Cutting across boundaries and cultures by exhibiting the works of five renowned women artists from India, USA, and UK, **Gallery Space** presents **Moving Beyond the Frame: A Space for Alternative Readings...**, a five-woman show exhibiting alternative concerns with femininity and feminism. The exhibition is on view from **December 19, 2008 to January 13, 2009** at **Gallery Space, (Level 0-1), 16, Community Centre, New Friends Colony.**

The participating artists include **Maxine Henryson, Catherine Mosley and Jaishri Abichandani from USA, Sutapa Biswas from UK and Paula Sengupta from India.** The five artists have explored a variety of mediums including collages and printmaking, sculpture and installations, photography and drawings.

Says Renu Modi, Director, Gallery Space: "Through their work, each artist deals with issues related to the fact that one's identity is in a constant flux, be it their sexual or gender-related identity, be it how one deals with the self in society having migrated to a different country or in just attempting to decode another culture."

Kolkata-based artist Paula Sengupta, who largely works in the genre of the autobiographical narrative, addresses issues of feminist concern through her work. Explains Paula Sengupta: "The present body of work addresses the lump in my throat, the numbness in my veins, and the loss in my heart for a land long lost." Her usage of everyday objects like cloth, lacework, crochet and furniture transforms the exhibited area into an intimate domestic space.

Paula Sengupta recreates a delicate yet surreal space from the past where the viewer discovers reminiscences of women who led seemingly idyllic lives, yet had complex emotional uncertainties and secret desires to break free from social conditioning and the claustrophobia of the male gaze. For instance, in her diary-shaped installations titled **Bay of Bengal & Hugli and Karnaphuli**, she narrates her family stories to showcase miseries faced by her family during the Bengal partition and Hindu-Muslim rioting in 1947. She says: "In 1947, my family witnessed Hindu-Muslim rioting and a village that was predominantly Hindu, turned suddenly Muslim. My family fled its home in Bangladesh and I lost my roots forever. When destinies were drawn and history was rewritten, how is it that my mother's tears were never mentioned? And yet, more than sixty years later, they continue to flow."

The female protagonist in Paula's work assumes a bigger dimension in **USA's Catherine Mosley's** six collages paintings that employ human images and animal forms to convey the stressed notions of the victim and the predator. Her interpretation of 'wild', ranges from the natural to the supernatural in subject matter, from the figurative to the abstract in style and from the dreamlike to the gritty in theme. Her works **Tree Storm** and **Goodbye** give the impression of surroundings being swept away in a dreamlike structure. Her collages move, shapes tangle and colours whirl in strong currents of abstraction. In yet another work titled **Falling Girl**, the nude, inverted, and falling female form is symbolic of vague memories of a time gone by. The collage is a woodcut that appears to be embedded in a well-worn piece of cloth.

Says Catherine Mosley: "I first print my collage material using stencil, mono-printing, transfer processes and woodcut and then aim towards the close merging of the paint and paper materials to bring out a display of opacity and translucency."

While Paula Sengupta's and Catherine Mosley's works highlight their extensive background in printmaking, **USA's Maxine Henryson** captures simple and archetypal images in her camera's viewfinder. A freelance photographer who keeps roving between the cultural landscapes of New York City, Vermont, Europe and South Asia, she creates an impeccable balance of figuration and abstraction in her photographs that furnish a narrative that naturally unfolds itself. Her subject matter revolves around using simple and archetypal characters like trees, rivers, clotheslines, women, children, temples, seasons, courtyards, flowers, gardens, curtains, vessels, fences,

bedspreads and many more everyday objects.

In one of her series titled **Red leaves and Gold Curtains**, she explores her perception of the feminine in the world, examining the differences and similarities among cultures. She also traces evidence of divinity, rituals, place, memory and history in the West and East. She says: "These images are my response to the present while mirroring the past. The abstraction of the photographs reflects distance and proximity. The photographs represent intimate moments and bestow a new form of painting that uses photography as a medium."

Feminism in a bolder form is what marks artist, social worker and founder of the South Asian Women's Creative Collective, **USA-based Jaishri Abichandani's** works who breaks the shackles of predictability by presenting bold display of fetishized objects like leather whips, dildos, plastic breasts, wire with swarovski crystals. Her works, often called as *lingam* sculptures are highly ambiguous objects and hover between irony and sincerity, as they are both subversive while being celebratory. Combining certain sex toys (banned in India) with fabricated leather whips and high-Swarovski crystals, the sculptures interrogate patriarchal power centers and the use of religious fundamentalism to mask capitalist and patriarchal strategies. She upsets the notion of male dominance by placing the phallic objects within a larger triangle or Yoni – making the female shape as important and dominant as the male. Other sculptures using many of the same materials interrogate other complex power dynamics, such as a piece titled **Roe Vs Wade**, named after the US law allowing women to have abortions or the installation made of whips titled **Allahu Akbar** using the Kufic script from the Iraqi flag of 2008.

Finally, **UK's Sutapa Biswas** explores the themes of time, history, gender, race and human condition through her works. Her strongly poetic and visually resonant works derive influences from a wide range of sources including film, art history, literature, and psychoanalytic theory. Her drawings are evocative of her enquiry into the psyche of the feminine subject, and the daily rituals of domestic life. She works in the medium of drawing, painting, film and video that have an uncanny ability to halt the viewer in their tracks.

Says Sutapa Biswas: "Though much time has passed since my journey from the country of my birth to a country that is now my home, the complex relationship that has existed between these two places for centuries now, has given way to a certain poetry that belongs to both of them, which inevitably has consequently entered my psyche. I would also point out that if we as human beings are to be read only as the sum total of the places we inhabit with rigid linearity then the richness of thought and the poetics of space, time, and experience cannot be fully appreciated. In short, we would either presume too much or too little."

Indeed, a must-visit show with alternating and alternative sensibilities as seen through the eyes of women far apart in space yet connected through their art!

For more information, please contact:

Poonam Goel

CEO

(L) 011-41552948

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