

BOSE PACIA

May 2002 New York - Bose Pacia Modern presents a group exhibition entitled "*Photo-Transcendent*", June 6th, 2002 through July 20th, 2002. The gallery is located at 508 West 26th Street on the 11th Floor, in the Chelsea district of New York City. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 12-6pm and by appointment. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, June 6th from 6 to 8pm. The public is invited.

"Photo-transcendent" presents photographic works coming out of and inspired by the culture of India. Just as the form, identity and meaning of photography itself is becoming increasingly diffused and complicated, the culture of India continues to morph kaleidoscopically and spread in every direction. Curated by Peter Nagy, *"Photo-Transcendent"* does not present works of a spiritual or enlightened aesthetic but rather one which is attracted to photography precisely for its ability to transcend established boundaries between artistic mediums and subjects. Five artists from India, one from the United States and a group of pictures by anonymous photographers will be presented.

The Casa Documentation Center is a photographic archive compiled by the Delhi-based multimedia artist Ashim Ghosh. By traveling throughout India during the 1990s and visiting photo-studios in small towns and villages, Ghosh has been able to compile an extraordinary collection of vernacular photography. Some three thousand images, mostly dating from the post-Independence period, have been meticulously cataloged and are currently being digitized. Ghosh has selected a group of images which highlight the essential artificiality of Indian photo-studio photography while presenting the multiple uses of portraiture and the inherent semiotic confusion at the heart of so-called "naïve" photographic practices.

Samit Das was born and raised in Calcutta and studied art at Shantiniketan in Bengal. He now lives and works in New Delhi where he pursues his interests in architecture, photography and graphic design, fusing all three disciplines into collaged relief works. Books are another of the artist's passions and on display will be eight unique books Das created while studying at the Camberwell College of Arts in London during the past year. These range from the abstract to the descriptive or indexical while presenting layered, nuanced interpretations of interiors, buildings and cities.

Anita Dube's recent photographic works use her own body as a starting point for further manipulation. The enameled ceramic eyes used for Hindu idols (which the artist has used extensively in installation works) cover her hands in a process which recalls the Indian tattooing art of mehendi. By photographing these hands in various poses and combining the images into sets, Dube creates strange creatures which seem both animal and vegetable, confuse bodily functions with body parts and mimic a sign language of hand gestures, or mudras, associated with the Buddha and classical Indian dance.

Lewis Koch is a documentary photographer based in Madison, Wisconsin. After completing undergraduate studies in social history and philosophy, he has worked for nearly three decades, making personal projects and exhibitions, publications and temporary public installations. He presents here "*Paired Meditations*": photographs from a journey to northern India paired with excerpts of text from disparate sources. Poetry and prose collaborate with image to engage the viewer in a complex dialogue, one which prompts an unconventional notion of art interpretation and yields unexpected revelations. Through this body of work, Koch seeks to transcend popular stereotypes and capture instead the fleeting, elemental beauty of the mundane.

Rajeev Lochan's hand-painted photographs up-date an old Indian tradition for contemporary times. His camera is attracted to found arrangements of objects which seem to embody metaphysical attributes, reminiscent of the classic paintings of de Chirico but also the jumbles of

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objects found in the late paintings of Philip Guston. Lochan's works which incorporate a human figure speak of the anonymous multitudes of working class Indians and, by extension, subaltern histories and politics.

Ram Rahman is a photographer, graphic designer and founding member of the Delhi-based activist organization SAHMAT (the Safdar Hashmi Memorial Trust). Made up of artists, politicians, historians, journalists and intellectuals from all over India, SAHMAT organizes exhibitions and symposiums, stages demonstrations and publishes books so as to defend secular traditions and combat the rising tides of communalism and right-wing fundamentalisms. Seven posters which Rahman has designed for SAHMAT will be exhibited. These are erudite forms of collage which, while influenced by Soviet-era agit-prop, combine photographs with texts and graphic devices so as to reinvigorate the presentation of historical information.

Gulammohammed Sheikh is one of India's best known painters and a guiding force behind what has come to be known as the "Baroda School" of painting. Perhaps the most self-conscious painter of his generation, Sheikh's program has always revolved around both the traditionally hybridized nature of Indian culture and its encounters with Western art forms, hence forging a properly post-modern Indian art. In the past few years, Sheikh has been attracted to the computer to create photo-collages which continue these dialogues. In richly colored works which combine details from Rajput or Pahari miniatures with Umbrian or Siennese frescoes and black and white works which use film stills both domestic and imported, Sheikh's digital montages reflect upon identity, culture and artistic influence.

Peter Nagy is an American artist who has been based in New Delhi since 1992. In 1997 he resurrected his East Village gallery Nature Morte in New Delhi to work with both contemporary Indian artists and foreign artists who come to India. He frequently writes about art for publications in India, Europe and the United States and has exhibited his own works widely in galleries and museums. This is the third summer group show he has curated for Bose Pacia Modern.