

new multimedia lab, Yamaguchi Center for Arts and Media (YCAM), has opened in Yamaguchi, a city with a population of 140,000, on the western end of Japan's main island. YCAM is one of a number of small art spaces and organizations recently created in regional cities, intended to promote contemporary art which enjoys less than enthusiastic support from the larger public museums in urban areas. YCAM's goal is to produce interdisciplinary projects, linking media such as the visual arts, performance, music, and film with science, industry, and education. Its location—housed together with a municipal library in a new building designed by Arata Isozaki—makes the center a

NEW DELHI

Pushpamala N.

The Queen's Gallery, The British Council, New Delhi, in collaboration with Nature Morte, New Delhi and Gallery Chemould, Mumbai

Pushpamala N.'s three recent series of performance photographs are preoccupied with fantasy and the visual forms that can serve as its trigger, or catalyst. She particularly focuses on the emotive possibilities of twinning nostalgia—evoked by place or costume—with narrative.

In *Dard-e-Dil: The Anguished Heart* (2003), Pushpamala places herself in an imagined romance set in a Delhi ruin and draws upon the melancholic nostalgia that has become the prevalent mode of imagining India's Islamic past. Accompanied by a contemporary Urdu poem that fairly drips with the pain of love, the set of photographs sketches a love story cut tragically short. Unfortunately, the narrative is somewhat too complicated to be totally realized in these otherwise lush and evocative large-scale tinted prints. The format is better suited to *Sunhere Sapne: Golden Dreams* (1998), a series of smaller photographs. Each slightly larger than the picture postcards they represent, these photographs of the artist as a bored housewife and her 1960s film-star alter ego are funny and poignant variations on a basic theme. This loose structure allows for such narrative fragments as the mysterious emergence of the golden-clad film star from the trunk of a car, or the honey-moon pose of the dreamy housewife reclining under a tree.

Pushpamala's engagement with narrative shifts in her series of large-format, sepia-toned photographs, *Bombay Photo Studio* (2001). These



Pushpamala N. • *Portrait of Mohammedan Woman* • 2001
 • sepia-toned prints • 24" x 18" unframed

meticulously executed, ironic performances of essentially feminine emotional states include specific icons, such as Phoolan Devi, India's "Bandit Queen," and Nargis, the great actress of the golden age of Bombay cinema. The artist's set of three veiled brides, Muslim, Hindu, and Christian, is her most direct representation of social identity as a semiotic shell to be donned at will. Pushpamala does not create these narratives rather she enters them for a time, just as we all do as we perform the roles of bride or lover.

Although she clearly draws upon the groundbreaking self-portraiture/performance works of Cindy Sherman, Pushpamala's aesthetic choices are formed more by a preoccupation with narrative and the concept of Indian visual culture which has emerged from the narrative painting movement centered in Baroda in the 1970s and 1980s. Like those painters, who drew from a wide variety of Indian popular and folkloric visual tropes, Pushpamala makes use of media that both skillfully allude to popular cultural forms and engage directly with popular artistic practices.

The hand-tinted photograph has had a lively role in Indian visual culture since the mid-19th century, as has the studio photograph, particularly those by Thakker, Pushpamala's collaborator. Studio photographs not only framed the popular image of the film star, but also made that process of image-making accessible to the public. Both media were explicitly used as vehicles for popular fantasy; a sitter's black and white portrait could either be made glamorous through lighting or its surrounds could be infinitely transformed by painting. In these three series of photographs, Pushpamala brilliantly harnesses this everyday form of masquerade and lays bare the weight of performing one's identity. • **KARIN ZITZEWITZ**

PHILADELPHIA

Yoon Kwang-Cho

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Although Yoon Kwang-Cho is one of Korea's most significant ceramic artists, this is his first museum exhibition in the United States. It is a modest, though beautifully installed, exhibition that suggests a monumental feeling of intimacy—a paradoxical relationship between eye and hand.

Yoon lives in a mountain retreat far from the urban metropolis of Seoul. His style is often related to the Zen experience, which consists of isolation,



Yoon Kwang-Cho • *Heart Sutra* • 2001 • Stoneware with white slip and incised design • 31 7/8" x 16" x 13" • Collection of the artist