



Transitional/Transcultural: New Paradigms for a New Century; 8 artists explore multiculturalism's complexity

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Summary: *Transitional/Transcultural: New Paradigms for a New Century*, January 15 – February 27; Reception, Winter Gallery Night, Friday, Jan. 15, 5 – 9 p.m.; Artist Talk and Reception, Thursday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m. Frederick Layton Gallery, 273 E. Erie St. Tues. – Sat. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Free. 414.847.3200. miad.edu. **Hi-res images available at site listed on page 2.**

PRESS RELEASE

MILWAUKEE... The acclaimed Culture in Transition series marks its fifth year with *Transitional/Transcultural: New Paradigms for a New Century* – an exhibition by eight artists whose work explores the changing character of world culture and the complexity of their multicultural identities. The exhibition is on view January 15 (Gallery Night) – February 27, 2010, at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, with an Artist Talk and Reception on Thursday, February 11, 7 p.m.

“During a period of rapid cultural change these visual artists from across the globe and diverse aspects of the multi-faceted United States reveal that all culture is essentially personal as well as transpersonal,” said Director of Galleries Mark Lawson, who curated the exhibition with curatorial advice from participating artist Siona Benjamin, who will attend the Artist Talk.

“A product not only of their past but of their current culture, the artists actively negotiate these boundaries in their work. In doing so, they redefine viewers’ perspectives both of western, American culture as seen by others less immersed in it, and of the interconnectedness of the larger culture of humanity that develops through such interactions,” said Lawson.

The artists are:

Siona Benjamin (Montclair, N.J.); www.artsiona.com – A painter originally from Bombay, Benjamin’s work reflects her background of being brought up Jewish in a predominantly Hindu and Muslim India. In her paintings, she combines the imagery of her past with the role she plays in America today – making a mosaic inspired by both Indian miniature paintings and Jewish and Christian illuminated manuscripts.

Grisha Bruskin (New York City); www.meyerovich.com/bruskin – In his early years as an emerging artist in communist Russia, Bruskin had no idea that his ironic mythological take on social realism would become so relevant as a monument to a culture that seemed to unravel overnight. Equally proficient in sculpture and painting, this New York City artist’s work also focuses on his Jewish roots, creating symbols and a heritage that was not actually available. In 1988, the New York Times reported that at a Sotheby’s conducted first international art auction in Soviet history, a painting by Bruskin sold for \$416,000, “a record high for work of contemporary Soviet art.”

Carol Hamoy (New York City); www.sunywcc.edu/gallery – Hamoy’s work is informed by her background as a descendant of Jewish immigrants who settled in New York in the early 20th century. “Welcome to America,” an installation of crafted garments imprinted with gold text, references the story of women who emigrated from diverse locales around the globe and ended up working in New York’s garment industry. It was first installed at the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.

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Tom Jones (Madison, WI); www.tomjoneshochunk.com – Of native Ho Chunk descent, Jones has long been interested in the manner in which the dominant Caucasian society reinterprets Native American culture. His photographic series “Encountering Cultures” focuses specifically on the sub-culture of re-enactors who stage encampments where they dress like Native American peoples of the French fur trade era.

Annu Palakannathu Matthew (Kingston, RI); www.annumatthew.com – Matthew’s photographic series “The Virtual Immigrant” examines the contradictions of the new class of Indian workers who operate American call centers on the other side of the globe from the clients they serve. Skillfully rendered through lenticular prints, these individuals appear caught between two conflicting ethnic identities.

Faith Ringgold (San Francisco); www.faihringgold.com – Renowned African-American multi-media artist Ringgold has applied her focus on American race relations to an Internet-based quiz that causes participants to re-examine their own biases and identities. This interactive site is recreated as a gallery piece in which viewers are invited to engage, particularly from the perspective of what they would feel, think and do if their racial identity was suddenly changed.

Roger Shimomura (Lawrence, KS); www.rshim.com – As a young child reared during World War II in the United States, Shimomura’s first memories are of his time growing up in an internment camp for Japanese Americans. The poignant images in the series of prints on display are a stark reminder of one of the United States’ worst examples of prejudice and discrimination against a minority within our country.

Jason S. Yi (Milwaukee); www.jasonyi.com – Through diverse multi-media works, Yi examines where culture and history are reviewed, merged and modified through human experiences and responses. His relationship to the larger Asian as well as American cultures is articulated through experiences and environments, both actual and manufactured, in a series of vignettes and documentations of social activities.

MIAD’s Culture in Transition series was inaugurated by Lawson in 2006 to explore the rapidly changing nature of our global culture. It is supported in part by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation’s Mary L. Nohl Fund and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

Additional information to follow on artists joining Benjamin for the Artist Talk and Reception on Thursday, February 11, 7 p.m.

High-resolution images available at <http://sites.miad.edu/media/TransitionalTranscultural/>
User and password: media

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