

PRESS RELEASE

BANI ABIDI

The Man Who Clapped for 97 Hours

Experimenter

2/1 Hindusthan Road, Gariahat, Kolkata 700029

Jan 15 – Feb 27

Funland – Karachi Series II

Government College of Art & Craft

28, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, (Beside Indian Museum) Kolkata 700016

Jan 18 – Jan 28

Experimenter presents Bani Abidi's second solo at the gallery, ***The Man Who Clapped for 97 Hours***, opening on Friday, Jan 15, 2016 and will continue until Feb 27, 2016. Simultaneously, her 6 part video installation ***Funland – Karachi Series II (2014)***, commissioned and originally screened at the 8th Berlin Biennale, will be shown for the first time in India at the Government College of Art & Craft, Kolkata between Jan 18 – 28 2016.

Amongst the works displayed in the gallery will be Abidi's recent video ***An Unforeseen Situation***. The fictional video refers to a series of orchestrated mass events and spectacular individual feats hosted by the Punjab Ministry of Sports in 2014 during which multiple world records were reportedly broken by Pakistan. Picking up from disparate rumors, newspaper clippings and video footage surrounding the events, the artist spins her own narrative. The video is presented alongside a suite of drawings that explore multiple characters similar to the protagonist in the video. Titled ***And The Man Who...after Illya Kabakov's 'The man who flew into space from his apartment'***, the drawings are an homage to average men who mastered profoundly poignant skills in order to make their mark in the chronicles of history. They are semi fictional people based on real characters picked from the popular Guinness Book of World Records. Of particular interest to the artist is the metaphoric and performative quality of their chosen gestures when seen against the backdrop of contemporary society. A new 3-channel video installation, ***'The most amount of people standing still, screaming and laughing'***, draws from the Guinness Book category of 'mass participation events', hugely popular amongst record breaking aspirants. 3 looped performances of a mass of people simultaneously engaged in identical activities, mimic processes involved in the manufacturing of images, as well as explore the potential of everyday gestures as a form of protest.

The documentary works in Bani Abidi's video installation ***Funland- Karachi Series II***, meander between being memorials to a cosmopolitan city that fights for its survival to melancholic imaginings of a hypothetical, deserted future. A library in Karachi puts itself under a harsh regiment of censorship. Threatened by suspicious visitors asking questions about the vast reserve of books on comparative religion and history, the board decides to hide seventy percent of its collection; a cinema hall from the 50's in the city center is burnt down by an outraged mob protesting a video posted on the internet; an amusement park built in the 1970's fears closure as construction on the country's tallest skyscraper begins next to it. These moments in scantily inhabited public spaces play alongside a video of a man on a sea-shore, sitting on a set of meticulously laid out chairs, watching the sea. This work is a continuation of Abidi's ongoing exploration of the demographic, economic and cultural changes in her home city, Karachi. The first works from this series were photographs she orchestrated in 2009, titled *Karachi Series I*.

Born in Karachi, Pakistan, Bani Abidi now works between Berlin and Karachi. Solo shows have taken place at Dallas Contemporary, Kunstverein Arnsberg, The Baltic, Gateshead, Experimenter, Kolkata, Green Cardamom, London, amongst others. Select group shows include, 8th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art, 2014; *In Plain Sight*, Smack Mellon, NY 2014; *Lines of Control*, Nasher Museum, Duke University, 2013; *No Country*, Guggenheim Museum, NY 2013; dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel 2012; Kochi-Muziris Biennial 2012; *Blockbuster: Cinema for Exhibitions*, Mexico 2011; *Where Three Dreams Cross*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London 2010; Xth Lyon Biennale, Lyon, France 2009; 7th Gwangju Biennale 2008, Kwangju, South Korea; *Thermocline of Art - New Asian Waves*, ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany 2007; Singapore Biennale, Singapore 2006; *Sub-Contingent – The South Asian Sub Continent in Contemporary Art*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy 2006; Contemporary Commonwealth, National Gallery of Victoria, Australia 2006; 3rd Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, Fukuoka, Japan 2005; amongst several others. Her work is in collections of the Museum of Modern Art – NY, Guggenheim Museum – NY, The British Museum, TATE Modern, The Spencer Museum of Art, The Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, The Burger Collection, Devi Arts Foundation, Marguelies Collection amongst several other private and public collections. She was artist in Residence at DAAD Artists Residency, Berlin in 2011/2012.

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