

BOSE PACIA

March 2004 New York - Bose Pacia Gallery presents *Indian Lady*, a solo exhibition of new work by **Pushpamala N.** from April 7th through May 15th, 2004. 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 to 6 pm and by appointment. There will be an opening reception with the artist in attendance on Wednesday, April 7th from 6 to 8pm. The public is invited.

Through a series of photo-performance works, Pushpamala N. simultaneously promotes and negates the archetype of the Indian Lady. In assuming such roles as daughter, sister, nurse and temptress, she exploits stereotypes to play with universal notions of womanhood. Yet by staging each photograph herself and directing its composition and color, she essentially subverts the gaze that is so often male and denies the possibility of objectification. The women of her portraits and fictional narratives range from modest to impassioned to nurturing to fierce, but each asserts her own brand of fortitude to rise above caricature and subjugation.

Pushpamala borrows from the practices of popular cinema and hand-painted photography to engage a vast audience while exploring themes ranging from religion to familial duty to love. In relying on artifice and masquerade, she revels in the surreal to pose and investigate more sobering questions of reality. Thus images borne of shallow Bollywood kitsch are rendered ironic and poignant.

Series such as *Dard-e-Dil* and *Sunhere Sapne* comprise a set of hand-tinted photographs that recount a fictional vignette. The washes of surface color lend *Dard-e-Dil* a gorgeous old-world quality that with the tender narrative, evokes nostalgia and melancholy. In *Sunhere Sapne*, the colors are bolder and heighten the surreal aura surrounding the starry-eyed housewife and her wistful daydreams. In the *Bombay Photo Studio* series, Pushpamala collaborates with acclaimed Bollywood portraitist J. H. Thakker to form sepia-toned images inspired by fifties-style film glamour. Finally, *The Phantom Lady* consists of 25 black-and-white photographs depicting the surreal tale of a masked woman appealing to an ex-don in search of her long lost twin sister. The stark palette combined with dramatic lighting and outrageous costumes suit the series' over-the-top tone.

Born in Bangalore, India in 1956, Pushpamala N. studied at the MS University in Baroda, Gujarat and obtained a BFA & MFA in sculpture. She has had several solo exhibitions, both in India and the United States. She has also participated in numerous group exhibitions, including *New Indian Art* (Manchester Art Gallery, 2002), *Century City* (Tate Modern, 2001) and the Johannesburg Biennale (South Africa, 1995). Pushpamala N. currently lives and works in Bangalore. This is her solo debut in New York and her first solo exhibition with Bose Pacia.