

The Visual Arts Studio provides a space where artists of South Asian origin can come together and share their art practices with other artists, cultural producers, and the public. The artists of the studio bring with them their unique experiences, varied practices and approaches to the creation of visual art. The sharing of information and insight is crucial to the personal development of the artist and the development of our arts community. The Visual Arts Studio hopes to encourage public participation by inviting them to become part of an installation, to pick up a magnifying glass, to watch an artist at work, to follow the transformation from clay to pottery, and to speak with the artists about their work.

## The Studio

### Visual Arts Studio

The Darling Building  
96 Spadina Avenue.

### Opening

Wednesday, May 4 10:30 pm  
Midnight lighting of divas  
by Sheherezade Alam

### Hours

Thursday to Sunday  
May 5 to May 8  
11am to 6pm

### Desh Pardesh

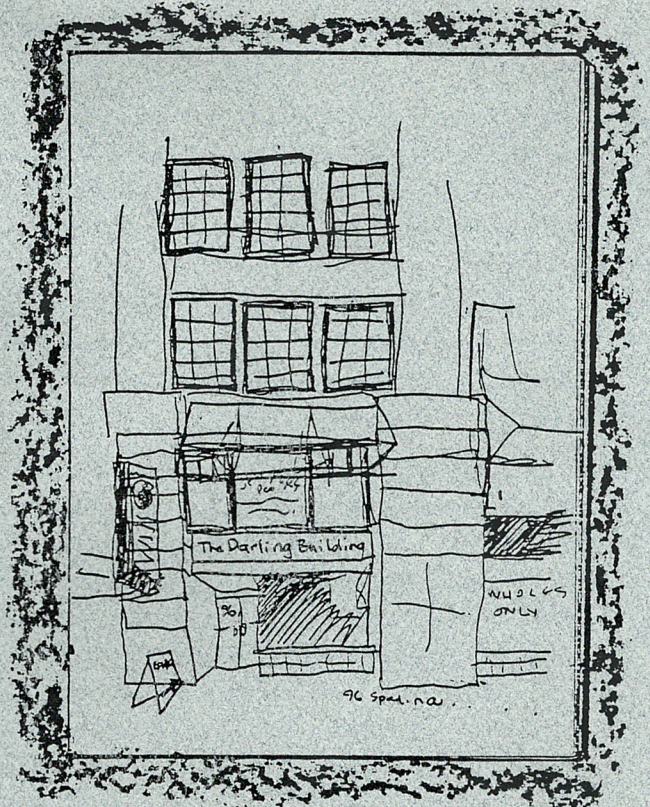
141 Bathurst Street  
(416) 601-9932

We regret this venue is not wheelchair accessible.  
Please call Desh Pardesh for assistance.

Desh Pardesh is a non-profit, community based organization of South Asian artists, cultural producers, and activists committed to facilitating new expressions and encouraging the development of diasporic South Asian arts, culture, and politics. Desh Pardesh focuses on the perspectives, issues, artistic and cultural expressions of women, working class people, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and other progressive independent artists, thinkers, and activists of the various South Asian communities living in the West.

Desh Pardesh Selection Committee Enam Huque, Rachel Kalpana James, Salimah Kassim-Lakha, Tamara Makan, Steve Pereira.

## Desh Pardesh



Desh Pardesh presents the:

## Visual Arts Studio



## Studio Artists

**Ayisha Abraham** (US) Born in England, raised and educated in India, Ayisha came to New York city in 1989. She did the Whitney Program and is completing an MFA from Rutgers University. Her recent work involves fragmenting/re-photographing photographs from the 1880's to the 1930's. "These images belonged to my family and (though family photographs) depict the process of the community's conversion to Christianity and subsequent westernization. They have meaning as isolated pictures-poignant, powerful, nostalgic. However,... these images can be looked at through a range of constructed points of view.....punctuated and fragmented images, history and theory, memory and narrative provide a look at visual anthropology and photography at the threshold of modernity".

**Sheherezade Alam** (Toronto) was born and schooled in Lahore, Pakistan. From 1974 to the present Sheherezade has been active as an art educator and potter. She has exhibited internationally, from Karachi, Kuwait, Islamabad to Washington, D.C. and Ottawa. Her prolific work ranges from affectionate and good humoured replications of classical shapes in the sub-continent tradition to more experimental forms. Sheherezade returns to the functionality of standard domestic shapes in North Indian culture...the water urn, the bread basket, the clay lamp...to reinterpret their dimensions from the perspective of an artist seeking to keep such shapes alive. Sheherezade will be demonstrating at her potters wheel at the studio and will initiate the lighting of clay divas to celebrate the opening of Desh Pardesh.

**Neena Arora** (Toronto) Born in Chicago of Indian and Irish American descent, raised in Saskatchewan, she is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. Recently she has been working with wax dipped cheesecloth that has been left in lengths and also wrapped and formed. In the studio she will continue preparing and adding cloth in the construction of an altar installation, *Am I Hindu? I am Hindu?*, "a place for me to connect with the universe, and my deepest racial memories. There are issues in my work that relate directly to being an artist of mixed heritage."

**Allan deSouza** (US) was born in Kenya and emigrated to England when he was seven. In Canada, he was in the touring shows *Fabled Territories* in Vancouver, *Ecstatic Antibodies* in Montreal, and *Siting Resistance* in London. In England, he was co-editor of *Bazaar*, a South Asian arts magazine; and a founder of Panchayat, a Pan Asian artists' slide library. He now lives in New York. "My work uses the body as an arena for the enactment of social and cultural forces. Within this construct are explored issues of gender, desire, history, "normality", infection and dis/ease. I use fictional narrative in the form of autobiography to interrogate memory, "authenticity", and nation. Allan's works are laser prints.

**Geevan** (Toronto) Born in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, he studied at the Jaffna Hindu College and University of Moratuwa where he received a National Diploma in Technology-Civil Engineering. Living through the violent struggle for self determination of the Tamil people and witnessing the suffering of his people he began to express his political resistance in visual arts. Toronto exhibitions include BESL Gallery, Theatre Passe Muraille, and Campaign for Democracy. Geevan's work is primarily pen and ink and collage. He is published internationally.

**Ameen Gill** (Vancouver) graduated from the Emily Carr College of Art and Design in 1989. From 1984 to the present she has exhibited in solo and group shows from China to Spain to Vancouver. She works mainly in printmaking, specifically lithography, etching, and monoprints. "My recent work explores the images that create a neighborhood. I see myself as an outsider with no real relationship to these places. I have started incorporating elements into my work that relate to my Indian heritage by seeking out neighborhoods that have a South Asian presence. I will be drawing in the studio what I gather from the streets of Toronto."

**Rachel Kalpana James** (Toronto) Born in England, she emigrated to Canada in 1968. She is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. *As We Are* is a photo/collage on sexuality, HIV/AIDS prevention and family. A magnifying glass is provided for viewers to take a closer look at sexuality within the South Asian community and to challenge the barriers that silence. *As We Are* was exhibited in *Dismantling Invisibility: Asian and Pacific Islander Artists Respond to the AIDS Crisis* at A-Space in Toronto, 1993. Three photo/collage portraits are also on display at York Quay Gallery as part of Asian Heritage Month.

**Debi Ray-Chaudhuri** (US) is a lesbian artist living in New York. Her mixed media installation explores the homogenization of "indianess" in the West as being the middle class Hindu perspective. "I would like to deconstruct this stereotype as well as stereotypes promoted by South Asians in the West". Debi has exhibited in the United States and at last year's Desh Pardesh *In-Sight: The First Canadian South Asian Woman's Art Exhibit*. Most recently she is an Artist In Residence at the Asian American Arts Centre.

**Shamina Senaratne** (Vancouver) is a young writer emerging from a well-rounded artistic background. About her installation/sculpture, *Emerging Daily*: "When I place my shoes in cubby holes I think of going to a mosque or a Buddhist temple.... although I enter in with my mother or my father, I find myself inside a different place than the one they enter. Into this place they bring their identity: this place represents what they are about. For me it represents going to find out what we as a family are about, but never quite connecting because my identity seems to be have been formed outside...." Shamina is of Sri Lankan and Indo-Kenyan heritage.