



INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART
VIRGINIA B. FAIRBANKS ART & NATURE PARK
OLDFIELDS – LILLY HOUSE & GARDENS

4000 Michigan Road
Indianapolis, IN 46208-3326
T 317-923-1331 F 317-931-1978
imamuseum.org

FIRST SOLO U.S. MUSEUM EXHIBITION OF AFGHAN ARTIST LIDA ABDUL TO OPEN AT THE IMA IN APRIL 2008

Exhibition to feature three video works in IMA's Holeman Video Gallery

INDIANAPOLIS, February 6, 2008—The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced today that it will premiere the first solo museum exhibition in the United States for Afghan artist Lida Abdul beginning April 11, 2008. The exhibition, titled *Lida Abdul*, includes three video works by Abdul on view in the IMA's Carmen & Mark Holeman Video Gallery. The installation will include *White House* (2005), *What We Saw Upon Awakening* (2006), and will premiere Abdul's newest work, *In Transit* (2008).

"Lida Abdul's video works bring to light the poignant stoicism of how the people of Afghanistan are dealing with a long history of violence," said Maxwell L. Anderson, the Melvin & Bren Simon Director and CEO of the IMA. "As an encyclopedic museum with a robust contemporary program, the IMA is uniquely able to show how artists across time have examined the current events of their lives through their work."

In Abdul's video works, different types of ruins serve as metaphors for the state of Afghanistan, taking the form of bombed houses, abandoned vehicles, sick animals and the citizens of Kabul. Abdul recruits her videos' participants from those she meets on the streets of Kabul and surrounding areas, and she often engages the participation of local children. In turn, the videos explore the complex interrelation between a city's inhabitants and its architecture, and also between architecture and memory.

"Why can't a ruin itself be transformed into a meditation on something other—a non-referential work of art—a visual or sculptural poem that one hopes will open up new spaces for rethinking about society, about ethics and identity itself?" Abdul has said in reference to her work.

White House was first shown in 2005 at the 51st Venice Biennale, where Abdul was the first official representative for Afghanistan in the Biennale's 100 year history. *White House* (2005) documents Abdul's three-day process of painting the ruins of a bombed house white using only a paintbrush, paint, and her own considerable exertion. In the video *What We Saw Upon Awakening* (2006), a group of men pull long ropes attached to what is left of a recently destroyed building in Kabul. Making its United States premiere at the IMA, Abdul's newest video work *In Transit* (2008) features nearly 70 school children filling a military airplane's voids with cotton, attaching ropes, and attempting to fly the airplane like a kite.

"Abdul's video works offer counter-representations to the images of Kabul and Afghanistan that permeate news media throughout the United States and Europe," explained Sarah Urist Green, curator of the exhibition. "Ruin and devastation are pictured, but Abdul adds to the scene an utterly human aspect, reflecting upon the physical displacement and psychological trauma experienced by those who live there."

In celebration of the exhibition opening, Lida Abdul will give an artist talk on Thursday, April 10 from 6 to 7 p.m. in DeBoest Lecture Hall at the IMA. The talk is free and open to the public. The exhibition is on view at the IMA through September 28, 2008.

About Lida Abdul

Lida Abdul is a multimedia artist whose work attempts to make sense of the destruction and political unrest that has ravaged her country for the past several decades. Born in Kabul, Afghanistan in 1973, Abdul was forced to flee her country in the late 1980s. She lived as a refugee in India and Germany before moving to the United States. It was not until 2001 that Abdul returned to Afghanistan, where she has since staged video-based works that explore the interconnection between architecture and identity. Abdul lives in Afghanistan and the United States.

Abdul has exhibited widely including solo presentations at the 2005 Central Asian Biennial; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Banff Centre for the Arts, Banff; and Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Netherlands. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at such venues as the Sao Paulo Biennale, Brazil; the Kwangju Biennale, South Korea; and the Singapore Biennale; Tate Modern; Brooklyn Museum; Centre d'Art Contemporain de Bretigny, France; Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design, Milwaukee; ifa Galleries, Berlin and Stuttgart; among many others. Lida Abdul is represented by Giorgio Persano Gallery, Turin.

Carmen & Mark Holeman Video Gallery

Since the expansion of the IMA's contemporary galleries in 2005, the Carmen & Mark Holeman Video Gallery has been dedicated to showing video works by contemporary artists. Previous exhibitions have featured works by Jawshing Arthur Liou, Rothstauffenberg, and Omer Fast.

IMA Contemporary Program

The IMA's robust contemporary art program is evolving as a model for encyclopedic museums as they engage the art of our time. With a renewed focus on its contemporary collection, the IMA has been actively seeking out the works of new and emerging artists through both gift and acquisition, and in addition to organizing major traveling exhibitions, has established two innovative exhibition series to showcase the work of leading contemporary artists. The Museum recently announced a groundbreaking installation program in its principal entry pavilion, a rotating series of site-specific artworks which features different artists responding to the same distinctive space, and which allows visitors to interact with art from the moment they enter the Museum.

In the past five years alone, IMA has received more than \$17 million in endowment funds supporting its contemporary programming, an amount which is unparalleled for an encyclopedic museum in the United States.

IMA Information

Encompassing 152 acres of gardens and grounds, IMA connects visitors to its unique and expansive view of art with its Indianapolis Museum of Art, the future Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park and Oldfields—Lilly House & Gardens. The Indianapolis Museum of Art is the fifth largest encyclopedic art museum in the United States and features significant collections of African, American, Asian, European, contemporary and decorative art, including paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings and photographs, textiles and costumes.

The IMA completed a \$74 million expansion project in May 2005 that featured three new wings, 50 percent more gallery space, expanded educational spaces, two new restaurants by Wolfgang Puck Catering and an enhanced museum store. The construction added 164,000 square feet to the Museum and includes renovation of 90,000 square feet of existing space. In order to present major exhibitions of its own and to accommodate major traveling exhibitions, the expanded Museum was outfitted with new 10,000-plus square foot Clowes Special Exhibition Gallery on the Museum's first level.

Located at 4000 Michigan Road, the IMA and Lilly House are open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The IMA is closed Mondays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days. For more information, call 317-923-1331 or visit www.imamuseum.org.

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Media Contacts:

Katie Zarich
Indianapolis Museum of Art
317-923-1331 x 295
kzarich@imamuseum.org

Ilana B. Simon / Maggie Berget
Resnicow Schroeder Associates
212-671-5176 / 212-671-5157
isimon@resnicowschroeder.com / mberget@resnicowschroeder.com