



PHOTO LEFT, 'Red Rover Chain,' (68 X 42 inches) an Acrylic on linen painting by Tazeen Ahmed was part of an exhibition of works by 36 artists at in the Artists in the Marketplace 26 show at the Bronx Museum of Arts. PHOTO ABOVE, a still from 'Apart from Us' a video by Gautam Kansara featured in AIM 26 at the Bronx Museum of Art in New York. (Photos Courtesy Bronx Museum of the Arts)

■ 'Artists in the Marketplace' (AIM)

2 S. Asians among 36 artists at Bronx Museum exhibit

By Jyotirmoy Datta

AIM 26 (March 23 -July 2) at The Bronx Museum of the Arts (BMA) is more than just a group show of works by 36 emerging artists of the New York metropolitan area; the AIM series has been one of the engines of cultural and social recovery in the Bronx. When the reckoning is made of the contribution of the institutions that contributed to the transformation of Hell's Kitchen into one of New York City's most rapidly rising boroughs, BMA is sure to take its place beside Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the Yankee Stadium.

"Through the Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) program, The Bronx Museum of the Arts has been offering professional development workshops to emerging artists in the New York metropolitan area for more than a quarter century," writes George S. Cochran, Interim Director of BMA, in the catalog for AIM26.

"It is hard to imagine there was much of a market for the work of young artists in 1980 when the AIM program was initiated. Yet, the museum's staff had the foresight to address the needs and concerns of artists at the beginning of their careers — including accounting, grants, legal issues, exhibition opportunities, and career management — and to emphasize the survival skills over short term goals. Many of these topics are still discussed in AIM seminars today, but the program also strives to keep up with current art market issues, such as gallery representation, marketing, public arts programs, and strategic planning."

Over the past 26 years, more than 800 artists

have participated in the AIM program. This year, nearly 600 artists applied for AIM 26, from which 36 talented young artists were selected. Apart from the esthetic richness, the ethnography of AIM 26 is stunning. It's a mirror of New York City's embrace of artists from all over the world. A mere list of some of the birthplaces of these New York artists tells the tale—Aleppo (Syria); Guadalupe (Mexico); Caracas (Venezuela); Madrid (Spain); Trondheim (Norway); Berlin (Germany); Managua (Nicaragua); Belfast (Ireland). Of the two artists of South Asian heritage, Tazeen Ahmed was born in Karachi (Pakistan); and Gautam Kansara in London, England. Kansara told *New India-Times*:

"My family is originally from India. My grandfather, Mooljee Nagla was born in the small village of Rangpur and really came up in life as the only one of nine siblings to receive an education and also to leave India, settling in London. My grandmother was Dhanlaxmi Mahabwari, and was brought up in Bombay in Matunga, the daughter of an influential leader of the congress party.

"Early on in my parent's lives they moved to London separately, met at Cambridge and so on. I was born in London, moved to the states when I was five."

Kansara's two-channel video installation at AIM26 revolves around the fusion of humor and sentiment that plays out between family members while eating together. "I am a visual artist working mainly with video, photography, and installation. My current body of work is an exploration of my family dynamic, focusing on the awkwardness, emotional hesitation, and humor that surfaces within our interactions. I

am also concerned with the reversal and shifting of roles that occurs within a family hierarchy as members age, grow up, and change; the power structure deviating from a typical child/parent relationship with the caretaker role often becoming inverted and confused. Frequently utilizing candid footage of my family, the viewer is also offered an intimate look into their private lives. The work's foundation lies within the divergence of culture between three generations of my family, as well as the fusion of humor and sentiment that permeates the pieces. The work exists primarily as single and multi-channel projections with sound."

Tazeen Ahmed could not be reached by press time, but Kabir Carter, who is the very archetype of the new technology-inclined global artist inheriting many traditions, told *New India-Times*: "As before, I was born and raised in Los Angeles. I am part African American, part European American, and part Native American. Many of my relatives are in the arts. My mother and uncle grew up in Ojai, California, and there is a link to Krishnamurti and the community that he was part of there; as a child, I went to a lecture he gave there, and though the focus of my work is technology, I suspect that this and other events in my life have inculcated a "philosophical" or critical approach to my work."

As for what drew him to AIM 26, Carter said: "I am a big fan of the Bronx Museum, so it is very exciting for me to be in a show there! As an emerging artist, AIM 26 is not only a boon for me in terms of the exhibition opportunity, but also a very useful experience in terms of the professional development seminars that I get to participate in."