

BOSE PACIA

June 2006 New York - Bose Pacia presents *It's Good to be Queen*, an evolving site-specific installation cum artist-in-residence project by Mithu Sen, from June 2 through June 30, 2006. The installation is at 514 West 25th Street and will serve as the inaugural exhibition of Bose Pacia's new Artist Space. An opening reception and discussion with the artist will take place on Friday, June 2, 2006 from 6 to 9pm. Please contact the gallery to arrange for a private viewing of the installation between June 6th and June 30th.

For Sen, the process of adjusting to new time, space and solitude is at once disorienting and illuminating, enabling an investigation into her known and unknown selves. This personal exploration results in an overall artistic venture, incorporating traditional paintings and installations as well as treasured mementos, daily ephemera and the intangible contributions of visiting guests.

Her manipulation of found materials combined with her morbidly playful paintings generates unusual and provocative associations around the subjects of gender, domesticity, sexuality, kitsch – recurrent themes in her earlier work. Yet in the context of a space which is simultaneously studio and domicile, life and work become tightly intertwined and her art takes on extremely personal overtones. For example, sepia photos encased in an album or delicately monogrammed teabags represent fond memories of moments spent with her many visitors.

The photographs in particular represent an exploration of intimacy, as characterized by the tension between proximity and distance among us. One must choose, make an immediate decision when confronted with another person. How close? To hug or not? To touch or not? As Sen describes: When this camera takes pictures at my hand's length, facing two of us, and you are confronted with such minimal distance between us, there is a moment of revelation. This person: what does she mean to me, and what do I mean to her? It is the same moment when one enters: room, house, gallery space, etc. Should I stop? Smile? A smile might render me too vulnerable to the host, to her hospitality. In different contexts we enter and greet differently, we are received differently. This negotiation of distance and proximity is the key to our everyday lives. We might want to touch and kiss more, much more than the other wants it, or it is 'accepted'. Or we might choose to be cold and distant, as if it is an easy choice! Welcome, negotiate, become aware, and lose yourself if you are still able...

The rituals of greeting and hosting guests are at once a pleasure and an obligation, prompting Sen to explore the everyday aspects of hospitality. They are the most intimate and fundamental revelation of hospitality, often forgotten by 'hospitality theory'. The artist deals with the unspoken but known almost auto-matically: the acts of host / guest relation. Being invited to inhabit a space, Sen is exploring aesthetically the radical quality of this invitation: negotiating cultural boundaries and personal character, performing as an 'artist' and simultaneously as a 'guest/host'.

As a guest herself, she is grateful for creative freedom, but remains wary of overstepping bounds and possibly imposing upon her hosts. As a hostess, she enjoys, even craves company, but struggles as to how much one ought to accommodate friends, never mind strangers. Yet by inviting visitors into the very private domains of bedroom and bathroom, and by permitting them to handle her possessions and scrutinize her way of life and art, she far exceeds the normal boundaries of hospitality. *It's Good to be Queen* invites us to celebrate the best of both self-indulgence and generosity.

Born in 1971 in Burdan, West Bengal, poet and painter Mithu Sen studied fine art in Santiniketan and Glasgow. She is a young but already influential figure in the contemporary art scene in India. Ms. Sen's practice involves construction, installation and painting. She has had numerous international exhibitions, most recently in India, China, South Korea, Kenya and the United States. Ms. Sen has

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been the recipient of several international awards including the UNESCO Ashberg Scholarship for Brazil and the Charles Wallace India Trust Award in the UK. The artist currently lives and works in New Delhi.