

Press Release: 28 October 2011

# BALTIC

## BANI ABIDI *SECTION YELLOW*

Friday 11 November 2011 – Sunday 12 February 2012

**BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead** presents the first UK solo public exhibition of Pakistani artist **Bani Abidi**. Predominately working with photography and video, **Abidi**'s work highlights the changing parameters of nationhood and citizenship. The artist draws our attention to the relational, often sensitive space, between the citizen, the state and the individual. The body of work **Section Yellow** comprises a film and a series of interrelated photographs.

*The Distance from Here* 2010, a central work in the exhibition, is a video that pans between two distinct environments; the sanitised interior of a generic waiting room and a vast outdoor ground circumscribed by security scanners, guards and surface markings. In both locations a crowd of people quietly assembles and waits their turn, although for what one doesn't entirely know. **Abidi** develops a play on coercion and control, using migration and the movement of people as a subtle metaphor. Ambient sounds form the mood of the work: the deadly stasis and mechanical noise of the waiting area tannoy contrast with the sound of dawn in the world outside.

**Abidi**'s recent photographic work, *Untitled, One of Two* and *Two of Two*, all 2010 compliment the film. With the series *Untitled*, mundane plastic and paper folders, stuffed thick with stamped copies of personal documents form a horizon. Text and image combine to create narratives of endurance, of longing and resignation. These works contrast with the enlarged passport photograph *One of Two*, that makes for a more intimate encounter, showing the haunted expression of an old man.

**Abidi**'s ongoing series of digital drawings look at various types of surveillance architecture in Pakistan. Class disparity and the protectionist nature of gated homes are examined in *Intercommunication Devices 2009*, while *Security Barriers A-L, 2008* shows security barriers found outside foreign embassies and government buildings in Karachi. Isolated from their context of use, both of these series embody hierarchies of power and partial, or selective, communication.

The collective expression of patience and silent resilience is a powerful metaphor throughout **Abidi**'s work. She generates an atmosphere that evokes the personal, domestic and the familiar, set against the larger tectonic forces associated with nationhood and citizenship within Pakistan today.

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For further information and image please contact:

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## NOTES TO EDITORS

### BIOGRAPHY

Bani Abidi was born in 1971, Karachi, Pakistan and divides her practice between New Delhi and Karachi. She graduated from the National College of Arts in Lahore, Pakistan in 1994 and completed her Master's from the Art Institute of Chicago, in 1999.

Her works have been exhibited widely in solo and group shows internationally.

Her recent exhibitions include: *Blockbuster: Cinema for Exhibitions*, Mexico, 2011, the 4<sup>th</sup> Fotofestival in Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Germany, 2011 and *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989*, 2011, ZKM Museum, Karlsruhe, Germany.

Solo shows include: *Karachi*, Green Cardamom, London 2010 and *Grey Noise*, Lahore, Pakistan. Her work was also in *Where Three Dreams Cross*, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; The X Lyon Biennale 2009, Lyon, France; 7th Gwangju Biennale 2008, Kwangju, South Korea, among others.

Her works are in the collections of British Museum, London, Fondazione Patricia Re Rebaudengo, Turin, MoMA, New York, Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, and other private collections. She is currently an artist in residence at the prestigious DAAD Berliner Künstler Program.

**BALTIC** is a major international centre for contemporary art situated on the south bank of the River Tyne in Gateshead, England. BALTIC presents a constantly changing, distinctive and ambitious programme of exhibitions and events, and is a world leader in the presentation, commissioning and communication of contemporary visual art. BALTIC has welcomed over 4 million visitors, since opening to the public in July 2002.

### GALLERY INFORMATION:

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art  
Gateshead Quays  
South Shore Road  
Gateshead  
NE8 3BA  
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Admission: FREE

Opening hours:

Monday - Sunday 10.00 - 18.00

Except Tuesdays 10.30 – 18.00

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