

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**Exhibition Runa Islam  
at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
May 21 to September 6, 2010**

Montréal, May 19, 2010. A rising star on the contemporary art scene, British artist Runa Islam gained an international reputation with her participation in the 2005 *Venice Biennale* and her nomination for the 2008 Turner Prize. This new exhibition is a coproduction of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia. It comprises five film installations by the artist, including the world premiere of *Magical Consciousness*, 2010, a shared commission by the two museums. The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *Runa Islam* from May 21 to September 6, 2010.

**The exhibition**

Through her works, Islam pursues an investigation of the history of experimental film, doing away with narrative structures and representations in favour of visual explorations. The Montréal presentation focuses on the artist's fascination with cinema as a device. It consists of five 16-mm film installations produced over the last six years, including a 2010 work commissioned by the two presenting museums. Titled *Magical Consciousness*, this silent film simultaneously conceals and reveals a screen—actually, a Japanese screen covered in gold leaf. Filmed in black and white, the gold turns to silver (the “silver screen” also being a metaphor for cinema in general) and the screen becomes something of a reflector of an imagined consciousness that is counter to any depicted narrative.

In *Assault*, 2008, a man is filmed in close-up, facing the camera, lit by high-intensity projectors and in different saturated colours. *Untitled*, 2008–2009, offers a succession of close-ups against a blurred photograph. With *The House Belongs to Those Who Inhabit It*, 2008, Islam experiments with “writing with the camera” as she looks at graffiti used by squatters who appropriate a site by signing this slogan. Finally, in *Be The First To See What You See As You See It*, 2004, she follows a woman walking through an exhibition gallery who runs her eye (and then her hand, until she knocks everything to the floor) over a china tea service. In this work, the artist uses slow motion to examine the relationship between art, the gallery and the spectator.

**The artist**

Born in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Runa Islam earned a master's in philosophy from the Royal College of Art in London (2002–2004) after completing a residency program at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (1997–1998). She lives and works

in London, where she is represented by the White Cube gallery. Since 1994, Islam has taken part in numerous group shows around the world, including *Manifesta 7* in 2008 and *Modernologies* at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA) in 2009. Her work has been featured in a number of important solo exhibitions, notably at MUMOK in Vienna (2008), the Camden Arts Centre in London (2005) and Hammer Projects in Los Angeles (2006). This is her first solo museum exhibition in either Canada or Australia. She was previously the subject of a one-woman show at the Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art in Toronto in 2005 and participated in a group show at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, British Columbia, in 2009. In Australia, her work was included in the *Asia Pacific Triennial* presented at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, in 2009–2010.

### **Organization and catalogue**

The exhibition *Runa Islam* is a coproduction of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia (MCA). It was organized by Mark Lanctôt, curator at the MACM, and Rachel Kent, curator at the MCA. The two museums jointly commissioned a new work from the artist, titled *Magical Consciousness*, which will be receiving its world premiere.

The exhibition is being presented first in Montréal, at the Musée d'art contemporain, from May 21 to September 6, 2010. It will then travel to Australia, where it will open at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney on August 19 and run until November 11, 2010. A bilingual, 144-page joint publication accompanies the exhibition. It contains essays by the curators Mark Lanctôt and Rachel Kent, a list of works, a biobibliography, documentation of the commissioned work and installation photographs taken in Montréal. The catalogue will be available for purchase as of June 21 at the museum's Boutique or from your local bookseller.

### **Point[s] of View Series**

As part of the Point[s] of View series, a guided tour of *Runa Islam* will be led by exhibition and Musée curator Mark Lanctôt on Wednesday, May 26 at 6 p.m. (in English) and 7 p.m. (in French) in the exhibition galleries. Free of charge.

### **Guided tours**

Guided tours of the exhibition will be offered by the education team on Wednesday evenings at 5, 6 and 7:30 p.m. in French and 6:30 p.m. in English, and on Saturdays and Sundays at 1 and 3 p.m. in French or English. Free of charge.