

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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ACCLAIMED AFGHANI ARTIST LIDA ABDUL BRINGS WAR GAMES TO CANADA

(Toronto) – **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art**, in association with the **Images Festival**, presents **Lida Abdul: War Games**, curated by **Scott McLeod**. The exhibition runs from **March 15 to April 21, 2007**.

Featuring three Afghanistan-based 16mm films transferred to DVD, the exhibition hosts one Toronto, one Canadian and one world premiere. **War Games (What I Saw)** (2006) documents the dismantling of a bombed-out residence – the clearing away of a painfully scarred and broken dwelling in an effort to heal and seed a new beginning. **White House** (2005) portrays the artist's deliberate act of purification and commemoration through the application of white paint to a ruin of war. Finally, **Brick Sellers of Kabul** (2006) is a meditation on the resilience of youth, the longevity of the materials that house us, and the impermanence of seemingly fixed structures in a volatile and persecuted land.

A reception for War Games will be held on Saturday, April 14 at 2 PM. Additionally, a discussion between Lida Abdul and Toronto video artist John Greyson will be presented as part of Prefix's Urban Field Speakers Series and the Images Festival's Momentum series, on Friday, April 13 at 7:30 PM. General admission to the talk is \$8 or \$5 for students, seniors, Images Festival members, and *Prefix Photo* subscribers. All events will be held at **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, located at 401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto.** The exhibition continues until **Saturday, April 21.**

Offering a unique and rarely witnessed perspective on a country with whom Canada is now intimately and controversially involved, Lida Abdul's growing body of video, photographic and live-performance work has been garnering much international attention for its socially engaged reappraisals of the unbuilt, destroyed, and monumental. Having recently made history as the first ever representative of Afghanistan at the 2005 Venice Biennale, she not only gives viewers an insight into her painfully war-torn country, but also challenges conventional thinking about architecture by questioning notions of place, community, and the meaning of our surroundings.

Presentation Partner



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"In my work I always attempt to salvage something from what seems to be utterly lost. I think the only hope we have of healing people's inner devastation is through metaphor, through the work of mourning which must take place in two ways: through an accounting of the destruction of Afghanistan, and through a careful rehabilitation of art and culture in order to preclude the aftermath of destruction – revenge and counter-revenge." – Lida Abdul

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Born in Kabul in 1973, Abdul lived in both Germany and India as a refugee. Once again a permanent resident of Kabul, she now divides her time between Afghanistan and different U.S cities. She is currently in Chicago. Fusing traditional and contemporary methods with influences of Buddhism, Islamic, Hindu, pagan, and nomadic aesthetics, her work has been seen most recently at the Kunsthalle Vienna, Museum of Modern Art in Arnhem, Netherlands, and the Centre d'art contemporain de Bretagne in France – it has also been featured in festivals in Mexico, Spain, Germany, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, U.K., and Japan.

"In her evocative body of work, Abdul attempts to comprehend the disaster that has held her homeland in its grip for nearly three decades. In so doing, she resists the temptation to provide easy answers and strives to remain faithful to the complexity of this social, cultural and political situation. Among her assorted mises en scène, amid her vast expanses of nothingness, Afghanistan's desert landscape becomes a blank slate. Within this desolation lies the promise of the future." – Scott McLeod, curator

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