

**EXHIBITION PRESENTS ARTIST RUNA ISLAM'S NEWLY COMMISSIONED FILM  
*EMERGENCE*, ALONGSIDE PREVIOUS WORKS**

***Projects 95: Runa Islam***

May 27–September 19, 2011

The Michael H. Dunn Gallery, second floor

**New York, May 26, 2011**—For ***Projects 95: Runa Islam***, The Museum of Modern Art presents British artist Runa Islam's new 35mm film *Emergence* (2011), commissioned for this exhibition, alongside three of her other films selected specifically in relation to the new work: *The house belongs to those who inhabit it* (2008), *Magical Consciousness* (2010), and *This Much Is Uncertain* (2009–10). For these works, Islam (b. 1970, Dhaka, Bangladesh) constructs austere, minimal installations that take the conventions, histories, materiality, and grammar of film—its language of framing, panning, zooming, editing, and projection—as the bases for structural investigations and narrative experiment. Astutely aware that perception of the world is mediated by cinematic and technological representation, Islam positions her images on the boundaries between visibility and invisibility, legibility and silence, stability and instability, syntactical simplicity and symbolic complexity. *Projects 95* is organized by Christian Rattemeyer, The Harvey S. Shipley Miller Associate Curator of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art. The Elaine Dannheisser Projects series is coordinated by Kathy Halbreich, Associate Director, The Museum of Modern Art.

*Emergence* (2011) explores the relationship between film and still photography. The work shows a photographic print in a developing bath, enlarged from a glass negative taken in the early 1900s in Tehran, during the Persian Constitutional Revolution. As the picture emerges, a city square comes into view; then the photograph, left in the developing bath, slowly darkens and the image vanishes again into the paper's black surface. *Emergence* further complicates the nature of documenting violent and dramatic events, as the work also shows the fractures the negative endured, which occurred during the violent events that surround the subject of the image. In the end, the objects in the work are silent, and all that remains is the act of looking, animated and then denied in the material transformation of the image.

The three earlier works correspond to *Emergence* in their relation to concerns of muteness and a resistance to narration, and they engage directly with the material conditions of film while bordering on abstraction and invisibility. *Magical Consciousness* (2010) transforms the gilded back of a six-panel Japanese folding screen into the silver screen of film. Its folds are compressed into vertical bars in shades of gray, referring to the format of wide-screen cinema and the unfolding history of the 500-year-old screen, valued for its decorated front side. *This Much Is Uncertain* (2009–10) creates an abstract vision of the volcanic island of Stromboli through relentlessly edited footage. As with *Magical Consciousness*, in *This Much Is Uncertain* Islam suggests a material transformation, relating the silver grain of the film stock to the texture of the black volcanic sand

while pushing the film even farther toward the edge of visibility and disappearance. In *The house belongs to those who inhabit it* (2008), the artist explores the boundaries of cinematography by “writing” with the camera, moving it like a graffiti artist’s spray can to spell out the Italian words that, translated into English, comprise the film’s title. The resulting tightly framed views show the poisoned grounds of an abandoned industrial complex in Northern Italy; formerly occupied by squatters, it has been reclaimed by vegetation. The images—shot in one almost completely uninterrupted take—are both formal and symbolic, bearing witness to the competing forces that have occupied the space.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Islam lives and works in London. She attended the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, from 1997 to 1998 and completed an M. Phil at the Royal College of Art, London, in 2004. She has had solo exhibitions at the Musée d’art Contemporain de Montréal (2010), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2010), Kunsthaus Zurich (2008), UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2005), the Camden Arts Centre, London (2005), and the MIT List Visual Arts Centre, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2003). She has participated in many group exhibitions, including the Turner Prize, Tate Britain (2008), *Brave New Worlds*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2007), the 51st International Venice Biennale (2005), and the 8th International Istanbul Biennial (2003).

#### **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

Christian Rattemeyer, The Harvey S. Shipley Miller Associate Curator of Drawings, joined MoMA in 2007. For MoMA he has organized *Lines, Grids, Stains, and Words* (2007) *Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection* (2009), and *I Am Still Alive: Politics and Everyday Life in Contemporary Drawing* (2011), currently on view through September 19, 2011.

#### **ABOUT THE ELAINE DANNHEISSER PROJECTS SERIES**

Created in 1971 as a forum for emerging artists and new art, the Elaine Dannheisser Projects series plays a vital part in MoMA’s contemporary art programs. With exhibitions organized by curators from all of the Museum’s curatorial departments, the series has presented the work of close to 200 artists to date. For further information on the series, including a listing of all Projects artists, please visit [MoMA.org/projects](http://MoMA.org/projects).

#### **SPONSORSHIP**

The Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series is made possible in part by The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art. Additional support for this exhibition is provided by The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art.

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**Press Contact:** Kim Donica, 212/708-9752 or [kim\\_donica@moma.org](mailto:kim_donica@moma.org)

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**Public Information:**

**The Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, [MoMA.org](http://MoMA.org)

**Hours:** Wednesday through Monday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Closed Tuesday

**SUMMER HOURS JULY 1–SEPT. 3:** Sunday through Wednesday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Thursday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m. (except Saturday July 9, the Museum closes at 5:30 p.m.)

**Museum Admission:** \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00–8:00 p.m. (JULY 1–SEPT. 2: TARGET FREE FRIDAY NIGHTS 4:00–8:30 p.m.)

**Film Admission:** \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

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