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THE NEWARK MUSEUM

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First Major North American Exhibition of Contemporary Indian Photography and Video Art Opens at The Newark Museum

India: Public Places, Private Spaces – Contemporary Photography and Video Art
September 19, 2007 – January 6, 2008

Newark, NJ - A major exhibition of India's contemporary photography and video art, the first of its kind in North America, opens at The Newark Museum on September 19, 2007. ***India: Public Places, Private Spaces – Contemporary Photography and Video Art*** includes more than 100 works that vividly reflect the interior and exterior realities of contemporary India, as captured by 28 photographers and video artists. Among the featured artists are internationally-renowned photographers Raghu Rai and the late Raghubir Singh, as well as emerging talents Tejal Shah and Shilpa Gupta. The exhibition, which was designed to heighten awareness and appreciation for the artists and art being created in India today, focuses on works produced since 1984; they will be on view through January 6, 2008.

Each artist has used his or her medium to provide rich insight into the dynamics shaping the contemporary Indian psyche. This revealing exhibition explores the artistic vitality that arises from extreme economic and political shifts, the pervasive influence of the media, and the cultural traditions competing with globalization. Some of the artists have bent the strong tradition of photojournalism to explore more subjective modes of photography that still include socially and politically engaged street photography. Some treat photography and video as overtly interpretive media that extend into social analysis. Others construct elaborate fictions with self-portraiture and performance to create deeply personal, often enigmatic narrative histories. In addition to Rai, Singh, Shah and Gupta, the artists represented are: Ravi Agarwal, Navjot Altaf, Pablo Bartholomew, Atul Bhalla, Shahid Datawala, Anita Dube, Gauri Gill, Sunil Gupta, Subodh Gupta, Vijay and Samar Singh Jodha, Ranbir Kaleka, Jitish Kallat, Sonia Khurana, Shantanu Lodh, Anna Palakunnathu Matthew, Pushpamala N., Ram Rahman, Gigi Scaria, Vivan Sundaram, Surekha, Manish Swarup, Vivek Vilasini and Rajesh Vora.

“The Newark Museum is so pleased to recognize the achievements of photographers and video artists working in India during these last twenty years,” commented Mary Sue Sweeney Price, the Director of The Newark Museum. “It is highly appropriate for the Museum to debut this groundbreaking exhibition, given the equally unprecedented growth and influence of the Indian diaspora in this country, New Jersey being home to one of its largest Indian-American communities.”

The exhibition is the culmination of several years of research and coordination by co-curators Gayatri Sinha, an independent curator and art critic in India, and Paul Sternberger, Associate Professor of Art History at Rutgers – The State University, Newark, New Jersey. The curators also contributed to the exhibition catalog, as did award-winning author Suketu Mehta and Barbara London, Associate Curator, Department of Film and Media, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Zette Emmons, The Newark Museum’s Manager of Traveling Exhibitions, serves as the project director.

This exhibition was made possible through the generous support of The Provident Bank and The Provident Bank Foundation. “This remarkable and highly creative exhibition opens new windows on the diverse culture of India,” said Paul M. Pantozzi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of The Provident Bank and Chairman of The Provident Bank Foundation. “No bank in New Jersey, and few in the United States, has a heritage as long and rich as The Provident Bank's. Founded in 1839, Provident at first served immigrants who settled in New Jersey in search of a better life and we continue to serve the myriad peoples that make New Jersey one of the most culturally diverse states in the nation. The Provident Bank is pleased to have played a role in making this exhibition possible.”

Additional support was provided by E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, Poonam Khubani, Marguerite and Kent Srikanth Charugundla, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, The Hite Foundation, Asian Cultural Council, Dr. Umesh Gaur and Dr. Sunanda Gaur, Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Continental Airlines.

Community outreach for this highly-anticipated exhibition is being counseled by the Museum’s Indian Advisory Board. Indian Advisory Board members include Ambassador Neelam Deo, Consul General of India; New Jersey State Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula; Telebrands International President, Poonam Khubani, who is also a trustee of the Museum; Executive Director of the Indo-American Arts Council, Aroon Shivdasani; Daryl Rand, President of Harrison Advertising; journalist Udayan Gupta; and Meme Omogbai, Chief Operating Officer of The Newark Museum.

The 15-week run of *India: Public Places, Private Spaces* will be enhanced by a series of public programs including an evening with writers, filmmakers and artists; gallery tours and talks with special emphasis on the Museum’s large and distinguished collection of Indian art covering two millennia, with particular strengths in stone images and textiles; and a workshop introducing adults to artistic photographic and video techniques.

Indian arts and culture will be the central theme of The Newark Museum's Thanksgiving Family Festival on Friday, November 23. The Festival, a museum-wide celebration, will feature live musical entertainment, dance performances, craft workshops, guided gallery tours, guest lecturers and cooking demonstrations.

Over the years, the Museum has presented a number of exhibitions on Indian culture, starting with the pioneering exhibitions *East Indian Costumes and Articles* in 1928 and *Art of India and Persia* in 1938. Major examples of Indian sacred art were added to the holdings in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. These include a life-size stone image of the Buddha from the third-fourth centuries and a stone image of the elephant-headed deity Ganesha. In 1989, three permanent galleries devoted to the art of South Asia were completed as part of the Michael Graves "Master Plan Campaign" renovation. Gifts in the last two decades have expanded the collection to include prehistoric ceramic and bronze artifacts and the everyday traditional arts of urban, rural and tribal peoples throughout South Asia. The Indian collection now numbers some 2,000 objects.

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Images are available upon request.

ABOUT THE NEWARK MUSEUM

The Newark Museum is located at 49 Washington Street in the Downtown/Arts District of Newark, New Jersey, just a few steps from the new NJTransit Light Rail Washington Park Station. Direct connection with the Light Rail at the Broad Street Station and through Penn Station makes the Museum a convenient ride from all points in the region. The Museum is open all year round: Wednesdays through Fridays, from Noon - 5:00 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., October 1 - June 30; and Saturdays and Sundays, from Noon - 5:00 p.m., July 1 - September 30. Suggested Museum admission: Adults, \$7.00; Children, Seniors and Students with valid I.D., \$3.00. Members are admitted free. The Museum Café is open for lunches Wednesday through Sunday. Convenient parking is available for a fee. For general information, call 973-596-6550 or visit our web site, <http://www.NewarkMuseum.org>. The Newark Museum, a not-for-profit museum of art, science and education, receives operating support from the City of Newark; the State of New Jersey; the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; the New Jersey Cultural Trust; and corporate, foundation and individual donors. Funds for acquisitions and activities other than operations are provided by members and other contributors.