

SUBLIME VIRTUE



A performance/installation by Monica Jahan Bose

Dumbo Arts Festival, 2013, 100 Water Street, Brooklyn, NY

September 28th @ noon and 4 pm, September 29th @ noon

SUBLIME VIRTUE is inspired by the Indian mythological story of Draupadi, the eternal virgin who was married to five brothers, as well as the true story of the artist's grandmother's marriage at age seven. Queen Draupadi's husbands lose a wager to Dushasana, who tries to shame the family by disrobing Draupadi, but the sari miraculously grows longer and longer and the queen remains clothed. Bose's grandmother, Johora, sat through her wedding ceremony at age seven. As soon as the ceremony ended, she stripped off her sari and all her ornaments and climbed up a tree naked, staying there for hours.

Speaking to women's rights to education and over their own bodies, the performance involves a bed outdoors in the street and wrapping and unwrapping the body with a 216-foot sari covered with writing by women from Bose's grandmother's village in Katakali, Bangladesh, part of a collaboration called *Storytelling with Saris*. The "endless" sari comprises 12 saris stitched together, each one painted, written on, embroidered, and worn for eight months by 12 women from Katakali who were denied education and married young but have learned to read as adults. Cards with the women's photos and bios will be distributed. This performance is a link to their bodies, creating a chain of sisterhood in support of female autonomy in mind and body.

Bose is engaged in a multi-year art and advocacy project called *Storytelling with Saris* with women from Katakali, who have learned to read as part of an eco-empowerment program that Bose has been supporting for many years. The project includes printmaking, photography, a film, a book, exhibitions, discussions, and performances.

From her bed, Bose will be texting, sewing, and reading books written by women. **Viewers may text her at 202-509-6282 to ask questions about the performance.**

Other performers: Reya Sehgal (performance assistant), Nandita Ahmed, Farhana Akhter, Anjali Bhargava, Anjali Goyal, Negin Moss, Josheen Oberoi, Sa'dia Rehman, and Laju Shah.

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