

Identity art on display in gallery

By **MELISSA L. GRUNOW**
LIFE Diversions Editor

Stephen L. Barstow Artist in Residence Ambreen Butt's multilayered paintings are on display this month.

Her work focuses on her identity — a female artist born in Pakistan who is living in the Western world — and is on display until April 27 in the University Art Gallery West.

Butt will discuss her work during an artist's lecture at 5 p.m. Thursday in Wightman Hall 142.

Both the exhibit and the lecture are free and open to the public.

"My day-to-day experiences in America resonate in my efforts to give form to many complex issues," Butt said in a press release.

"Those issues involve the risks associated with rejecting conventional roles, the ways to achieve independence while guarding the spirit of time-honored traditions, and the modes of challenging stereotypes this culture associates with women in Islam."

Butt's work is on display in the gallery as part of her residency.

"She works on a very small scale, and they're layered. There are five layers of mylar stitched together with different things painted on it, and grid patterns. Due to the layering process, they have a lot of depth. The mylar is translucent, so the layers show through, but it's not super clear, so some are distorted," said Interim Art Gallery Director Cara O'Brien.

Each layer has its own unique image, and all layers come together to create the final image. Trained in Pakistan in Indian miniature painting, her work is small scale with



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detailed precision.

"Right now it's really nice to have someone from another culture exhibiting," O'Brien said. "She's a master of media; these are some really high quality pieces."

In 1999 Butt was awarded the ICA Artist Prize from the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston — the first such award given by the institute. She studied miniature painting at

the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan, and received her master of fine arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston.

Butt, who has exhibited her work throughout the United States and Pakistan, has earned numerous awards and participated in several residencies, including one at the Edward Albee Foundation.

Her work can be seen in various private and public collections throughout the United States, Pakistan and Europe.

Butt is scheduled to be included in the "Small Worlds: Art of India" exhibit at the Art Complex Museum in Duxbury, Mass. in May and the "50 Years of Painting in Boston" exhibit at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln, Mass. in September.

Next spring she will compete an artists residency program at the Tryon Center for Visual Arts in Charlotte, N.C.

The Barstow Artist in Residence was funded by an estate gift to CMU by the late architect and civic leader Stephen L. Barstow. The bequest also created a fund to maintain Barstow's Midland-area home as a residence for the visiting artist.

The program enriches students' educational experiences through contact with artists with diverse backgrounds who work in a variety of media.

The University Art Gallery is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, from noon to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, and from noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

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