

CALENDAR

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fall arts preview

Where they're coming from

A WORLD OF EXPERIENCES SHAPES THE WORK OF ARTISTS FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES AND NATIONS.

By LOUISE ROUG
Times Staff Writer

BORN in New Delhi, Sunil Gupta spent his teenage years in Montreal before attending university in New York and, later, London. His upcoming show of photographs at UC Riverside is titled "Homelands" — plural. ¶ The title could be extended to several shows this fall that look at the intersection of place and identity — how *where* we are relates to *who* we are. ¶ In some exhibitions, local artists examine their cultural heritage through documentary photography; in others, international artists comment on identity, history and nationality through a mix of traditional and contemporary media. ¶ From a single installation at the Chinese American Museum downtown to a group show of contemporary Asian art in San Diego, the geographic span this season is wide.

"Homelands" which opens Oct. 2 at the UC Riverside/California Museum of Photography, includes more than 15 large-scale photographs — pictures of the different worlds Gupta has traveled among and inhabited in the last five years.

In colorful photographic diptychs such as "Mudia Pamar, Uttar Pradesh/Upper East Side, New York," he juxtaposes Eastern landscapes with Western cityscapes.

But neither place is strictly home. Gupta is a "cultural refugee," says Linda Theung, assistant curator at the museum. "Marginalized by his sexuality, his ethnicity and his health," Theung says, "he doesn't really have a peer identity."

The Indian-born artist is living in London. He is HIV-positive.

Also included in the show is Gupta's "(A World Without) Pity (2003)," a video documentary about HIV/AIDS in India, and "Tales of a City (2004)," photographs that reference — critically — the 19th century images of India made by Western travelers, calling into question who is the "other."

In another photography exhibition opening this fall, the California African American Museum will show work by Peter Magubane.

The South African photojournalist, who for decades has worked for Time magazine and other publications, recorded the practices of apartheid — sometimes at personal cost: He spent more than a year in solitary confinement in a South African prison; his nose was broken by police.

"Deconstructing Apartheid: The Photography of Peter Magubane," which opens Oct. 7, will focus on his work and life through more than 70 images and artifacts.

In a third photography show, Beirut-born Ara Oshagan turns his camera on Armenians in Los Angeles. "Traces of Identity: An Insider's View into the L.A. Armenian Community" opens at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Art Park on Friday.

"I've tried to look at many different parts of the community, not just the traditional areas of school, church or family but also Armenians in prison or in rehab centers," says Oshagan, an immigrant himself.

"I'm trying to see myself in my community and pose questions about identity," says the photographer, who sought to capture the breadth of the Armenian community and ask, "What is 'Armenian-ness?'"

From the specific, he also wanted to draw out "issues that are universal to different immigrant communities: families and history, and the introduction of new identities."

Cindy Suriyani shares Oshagan's preoccupation with issues of immigration, inclusion and exclusion. Born in Java, Indonesia, to Chinese parents, her family immigrated to the United States when she was a child. Since then, she has lived in the U.S., France and Jakarta, Indonesia.

In both this installation and a recent East Coast show, Suriyani used traditional materials to create contemporary artwork.

In the current show, at the Chinese American Museum downtown, her mixed-media installation "Angel Island" — lights, hanging Chinese rice paper scrolls and life-size puppets — addresses the notion of displacement and what