



solo  
painting exhibition

**Explore.  
Dream. Discover.**

**Vinita Karim**

*Throw away the bowlines.  
Sail away from the safe harbor.  
Catch the trade winds in your sails.  
Explore. Dream. Discover.  
- Mark Twain*

**Bengal Art Lounge**  
13 - 25 October 2012



Golden Harbor . Acrylic, oil and gold-leaf on canvas . 144 x 76 x 4.5 cm . 2012 . Bangladesh

Katerina Don  
Bengal Art Lounge

In retrospect, the cycles and phases that an artist goes through seem orderly and systematic. The museum or gallery is able to categorize and label them. But these periods and series are not islands, unconnected and isolated. They are a sequence: the results of an ongoing internal process of reflection and interpretation.

Explore . Dream . Discover is a retrospective of Vinita Karim's works over two decades. The whimsical, romantic water colours that she presented in her first exhibition in Bangladesh in 1995 seem to be a world apart from the abstract golden landscapes that she paints today. But as you look closer, it is clear that the artist has come full circle, returning to where she started but with more force and a new style.

The physical world has always been a source of inspiration and knowledge; the first pure landscapes date back thousands of years. These records of nature tell us much about the world but little about the artist. Over time, the artist's temperament began to reveal itself in the art works, often becoming the dominating characteristic.

Some painters find their calling in hyper realism, in capturing the minute details of reality; others are overwhelmed by their inner life. For them, the desire for self expression wins over, and landscapes turn into inscapes. The painter packs up his materials, and returns to the studio, to begin painting landscapes from memory: landscapes laced with dreams, emotion, and personal experience.

Western landscape painting was reinvented by impressionism, remade as relevant and given new life. Van Gogh painted *The Starry Night* not to document the view of the small village in the plains, but to express the immediate emotional impact the view outside his window had on his sensitive, trembling mind. Ironically, he painted the masterpiece from memory in the day time.

On the other side of the world, in Japan and China, the tradition of landscape painting was never made redundant; it was always esteemed as the most glorious form of painting, the most pure of art forms. The objective of such landscape painting is to achieve balanced composition and harmony. In this sense, the act of painting is a form of meditation, not a form of self expression.

The landscapes of Friedensreich Hundertwasser, a 20<sup>th</sup> century Austrian artist, inspire a similar sense of whimsical joy as those of Vinita Karim. There is a likeness in approach to space, architecture, and the flattening out of surfaces, as if they see the world stretched on a frame. Vinita's landscapes are musical and playful; they speak of joy and curiosity, but most of all, of belonging.

Vinita is a nomad; she has been traveling since she was born and has lived outside India, her homeland, for most of her life. For people like her, home is a concept, an idea, not a place. In her paintings, Vinita creates this mythical place. The dancing houses on the hill, like fairy lights, are inviting and warm and they could be anywhere, everywhere. There are no borders in Vinita's landscapes; in fact, they spill out of the canvas on to the sides. She often discards the frame so there is no barrier between the viewer and the view.

Her third exhibition in Bangladesh, *Explore . Dream . Discover*, is a collection of works from over two decades. She is inspired by the world around her and you can see traces of Switzerland, Egypt, Libya, Philippines, India and Bangladesh in the works. Her transition into abstraction is natural; it is an exploration of the inner space. You can see her evolution and progress, witnessing her growing more and more at ease in the world and in herself. It is an exhibition about traveling and standing still, about immediate impressions and striving for harmony. It is an exhibition about finding home.



A world to be discovered  
Acrylic on fibre-glass . 81 x 50 x 50cm . 2011 . India

## *Retrospective*

A.U.M. Fakhruddin

*Vinita's Quest For An Arcadia*

1<sup>st</sup> Solo Exhibition in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1995

Bountiful to all, Nature is a great teacher offering volumes of knowledge and wisdom. The apple that Nature drops at the feet of Newton, says a writer, is but a coy invitation to follow it to the stars. The artist draws much of her inspiration from Nature in which all is managed with perfection and exact economy.

Fantasy remains her first love.

Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam

*The Colourful World of Shahla Vinita Karim*

2<sup>nd</sup> Solo Exhibition in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1998

Shahla Vinita Karim takes delight in her work. Painting, for her, is therapeutic: as she starts putting colour on canvas, the dissatisfaction and doubts about life – where so much of violence, cruelty, and deprivation persist – vanishes. She steps into a pure world of joy and well being. Looking at her canvas, one does feel the same joy and happiness, because Vinita believes in presenting a total vision. It is her particular ability to make her paintings speak for themselves that distinguishes her, and promises more for her in the future.

Dr Reuben Canete

*Multicultural Negotiations Outside Boundaries*

Artmasala Solo Exhibition

Manila, Philipines, 2007

Vinita Karim's art celebrates the fluidity that our globalized world has inherited. Her works document how an audience differentiated by ethnicity, space, class and culture comes together in the elemental sensory experience of art.

Duygu Ozerson  
*Tripoli in Transit*  
Tripoli, Libya, 2010

Having started out as a figurative painter, she gradually moved into abstraction. The imaginary landscapes are essentially rooted and inspired by her surroundings. The timeless Mediterranean Sea, the vibrant harbor and the miles of vast surrounding desert-cape with many an oil rig represent the restlessness and eagerness with which this country is racing towards a bold future. The pace of construction and presence of cranes all stand testimony to this unique moment in time. It is no wonder that still blue oceans with ships on the horizon float under the midday sun, sometimes with fiery, sometimes with still and placid skies. Ruins with flagstaffs and totem poles open themselves to celebration mode, layering their areas with batik fields of gold. Distant hills stand majestically amidst carnivals of folklore and carnival spirit. For Vinita, Libya with its arid beauty and complexity is another home where she continues to be influenced deeply: She transits willingly in a city itself in transit.

Ranjana Dave  
*East, west, and all that lies in between*  
Abstract Realism Solo Exhibition  
Mumbai, India, 2011

Vinita Karim has traversed the path of the sun. She was born in Burma and spent time living around the subcontinent in Islamabad, New Delhi and Dhaka, studying economics and art in Stockholm and travelling across Europe, before finding herself in Manila, at the far reaches of the eastern hemisphere. Her travels across cultures and communities find their way into her work in ways both tangible and intangible.

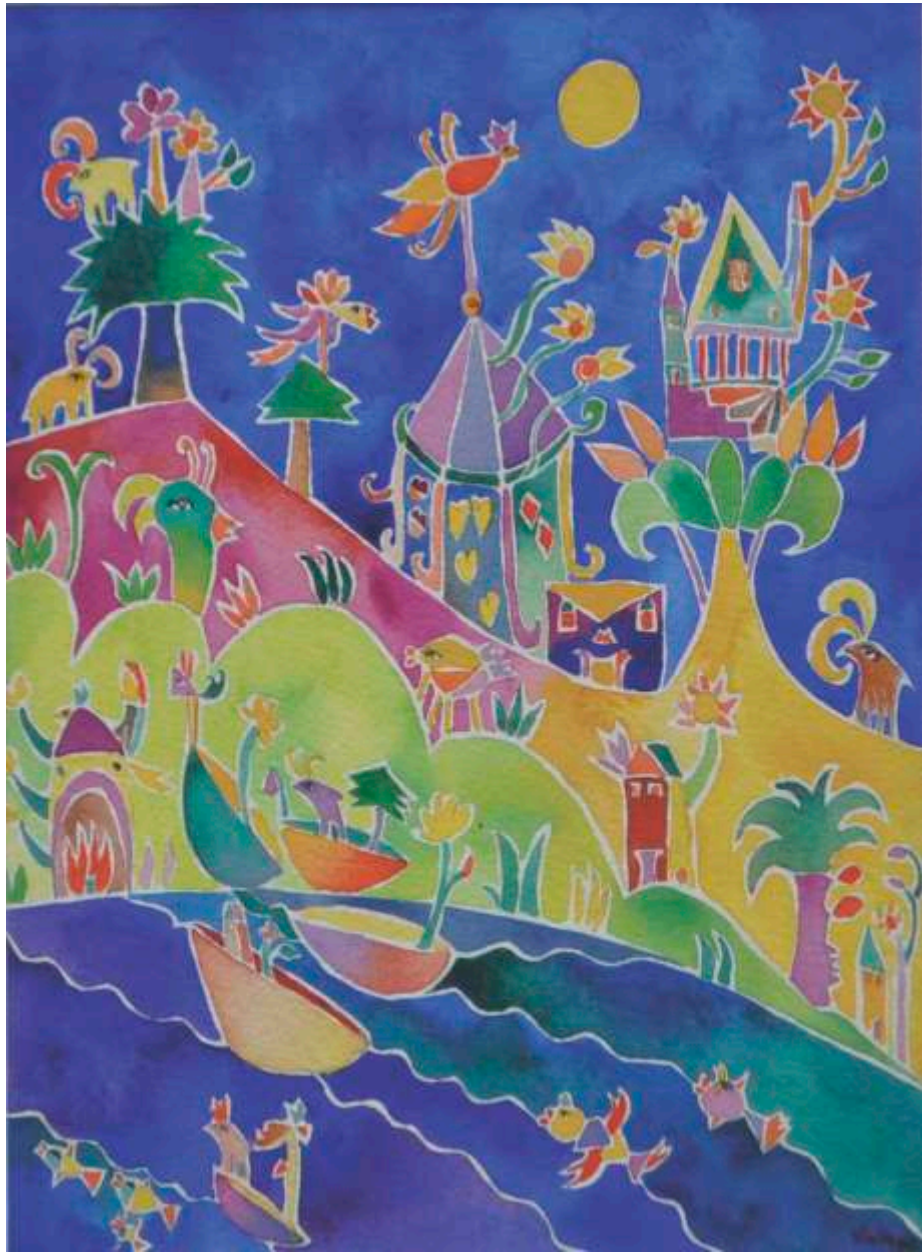
Karim revels in abstraction. Her landscapes are personal figurations of the world that passes before her eyes. Papyrus, gold leaf, recycled newsprint – elements of the worlds she has inhabited populate her canvases. Sometimes, they almost seem like debris, like flotsam that drifts from one imagined urban space to another. In other places, they are fundamental to the existence of her landscapes.

Soma Das  
*Colours, cities and the egg-shaped obsession*  
Stories Of The Golden Horizon Solo Exhibition  
Mumbai, India, 2012

For inspiration, Vinita looks back on her treasure trove of memories: “The inky black of the sky under a crescent moon on a boat in the Sunderbans is a very recent inspiration. The night is so dark that one can see nothing.

The sun setting in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt looks so enormous and powerful. The cool winds on the Alps in Switzerland with snow un-melted on the peaks, the vast deserts of Libya and the lovely turquoise of the Mediterranean Sea are other inspirations.’





Merry-go-round . Watercolor on paper . 30 x 22 cm . 1995 . Switzerland



Gift of Life . Watercolor on paper . 29.5 x 21.5 cm . 1994 . Switzerland



Rhythm of the Night . Oil on canvas . 110 x 110 cm . 1997 . Bangladesh





Nocturnal Verses . Oil on canvas . 106 x 106 cm . 1998 . Bangladesh

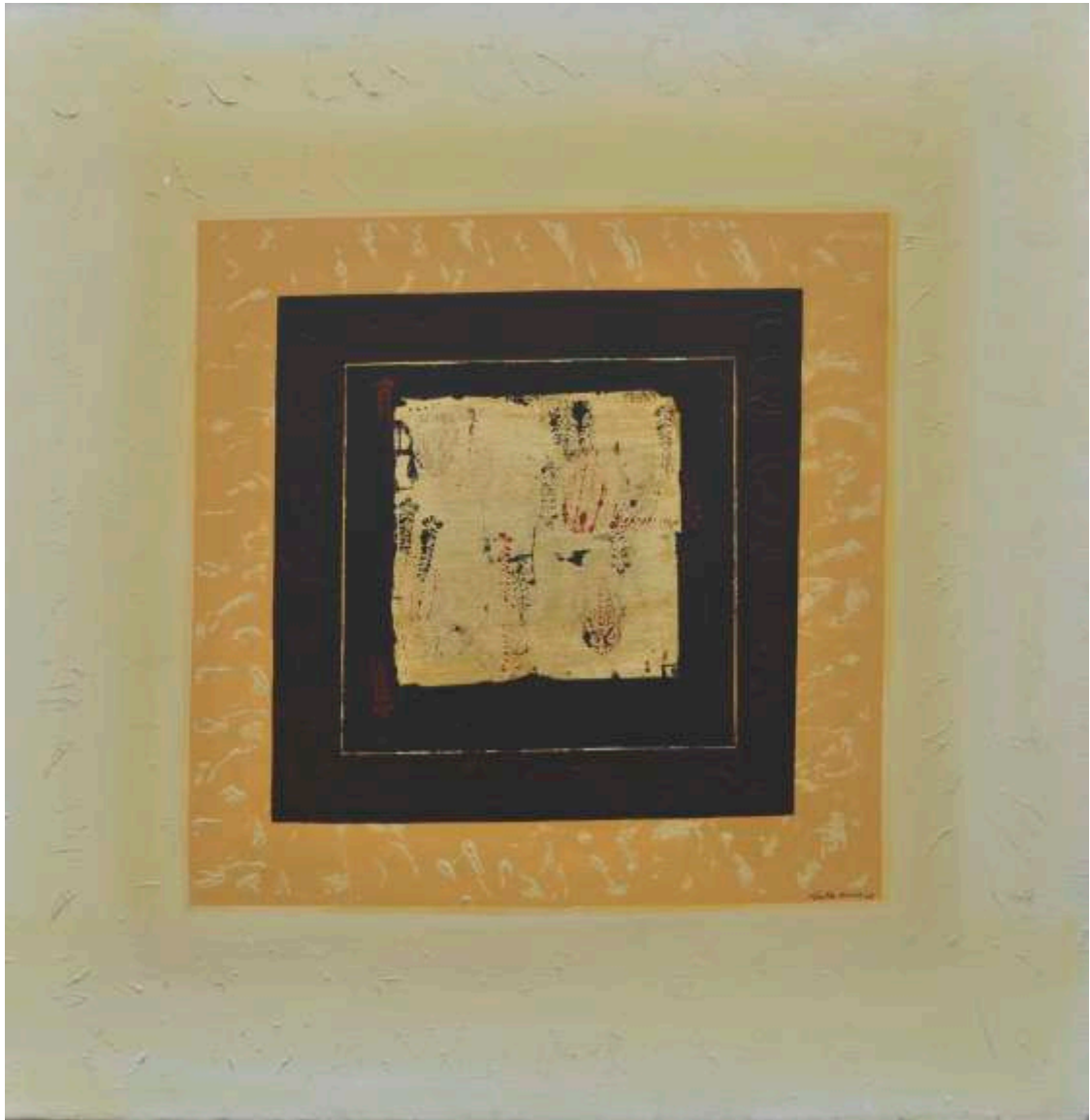


Shifting Horizons . Acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 190 x 280 x 6.5 cm . 2004 . Philippines





Reclaimed Settlements . Acrylic, oil and papyrus on canvas . 152 x 240 cm . 2008 . Philippines



The Sacred Space . Oil, acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 122 x 122 x 5 cm . 2005 . Philippines





Houses and Sea . Acrylic, oil and gold-leaf on canvas . 121 x 91 cm . 2011 . Bangladesh



Cinnamon and Mint . Acrylic and oil on canvas . 68 x 86 cm . 2009 . Libya





Harbor Fiesta . Acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 92 x 122 cm . 2012 . India



Birth of the Pure . Acrylic and oil on canvas . 76 x 118 cm . 2011 . Bangladesh





Seeds of Harmony . Acrylic and oil on canvas . 76 x 118 cm . 2011 . Bangladesh



Rising Horizon . Acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 156 x 63 cm . 2012 . India



Sunset City . Oil, acrylic, gold and copper-leaf on canvas . 156 x 63.5 cm . 2012 . India





Between Sky and Sea . Acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 96 x 152 cm . 2012 . Bangladesh





The Sky Speaks Red . Acrylic and gold-leaf on canvas . 96 x 152 cm . 2012 . India



In Search of Utopia  
Wooden frame and acrylic on canvas . 78 x 117 cm . 2002 . Egypt



Born in Rangoon, Burma but of Indian origin, Vinita Karim has lived and worked throughout Asia, the Middle East and Europe. She began her training as an artist at the Gerlesborg Art Institute in Stockholm, Sweden and received her MFA in 2007 from the University of the Philippines. Vinita's most recent exhibitions have been in Bangladesh, India, USA, Libya and the Philippines. Currently, Vinita splits her time living between Dhaka and New Delhi.



# Vinita Karim

b. 1962, Rangoon, Burma

## Education

- 2000 : Master of Fine Arts, University of Philippines, Philippines  
: Thesis: Artmasala: Multicultural negotiations outside boundaries.
- 1985 : B.Sc. in Economics and Business Administration, University of Stockholm, Sweden
- 1981 : Diploma in Fine Arts at Gerlesborg Art Institute, Stockholm, Sweden

## Solo Exhibitions

- 2012 : *Stories of the golden horizon* Jamaat Gallery, Mumbai, India
- 2011 : *Nomadic Colors* Museum Gallery, Mumbai, India
- 2011 : *Abstract Realism* Gallery Point of View, Mumbai, India
- 2010 : *Tripoli in Transit* Casa Lounge Art Gallery, Tripoli, Libya
- 2009 : *Bands of Reflections* Hiraya Gallery, Manila, Philippines
- 2008 : *Elsewhere* Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Center, New Delhi
- 2007 : *Artmasala* Corredor Gallery, Univ. of Philippines, Diliman, Philippines
- 2005 : *Recent Works* Pinto Gallery, Antipolo, Philippines
- 2003 : *Homecoming* Lalit Kala Academy, New Delhi, India
- 2002 : *Profound Moments* Khan al Magrabi, Cairo, Egypt
- 2001 : *Red* Mashrabia Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 2000 : *Rhythm of the East* Community Services Association, Cairo, Egypt
- 1999 : *Cairo- Inspiration and Color* Sheba Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
- 1998 : *A Colorful World* Drik Gallery, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 1995 : *Arcadia* La Galerie, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 1994 : *Kunstlervitrine* Kaiserhaus, Berne, Switzerland
- 1994 : *Murtenzauber* Galerie Coverma, Murten, Switzerland
- 1992 : *Kunstlervitrine* Kaiserhaus, Berne, Switzerland
- 1991 : *Zauber der Natur* Galerie Kunstlervitrine, Berne, Switzerland
- 1991 : *Neue Werke* Genossensch, ZentralBank, Berne, Switzerland

## Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2012 : *The Toran Project* Concrete Contemporary Auctions, Waddington, Toronto, Canada
- 2012 : *Confluence 2012* Vamart Gallery, Metuchen, New Jersey, USA
- 2012 : *Four Artist's Vision* Inart Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA
- 2012 : *Dhaka Art Summit* Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2012 : *The Voice of Time* Institute of Art and Culture, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2012 : *Alluvial Black Diary* Gallery Cosmos, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2012 : *Diverse Strokes* Radisson Hotel, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2011 : *The Third Dimension* Gallery Point of view, Mumbai, India
- 2011 : *Annual Art show* Saju Gallery, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2010 : *Art in the Garden* Bab el Fanoon, Tripoli, Libya
- 2007 : *Jamming with Rock-icons* Crucible Gallery, Manila, Philippines
- 2007 : *Shifting Landscapes of Forms* The Room Upstairs, Manila, Philippines
- 2007 : *Boxed* Cultural Center of Philippines, Manila, Philippines
- 2006 : *Boxed* Big Sky Mind, Manila, Philippines
- 2005 : *Harmony Show* Reliance Industries, Mumbai, India
- 2005 : *Beyond Boundaries* Corredor Gallery, UP Diliman, Philippines
- 2004 : *Revert to the Nucleus* Indian Art Circle, Delhi, India
- 2001 : *Contrasts* World of Art, Cairo, Egypt
- 2000 : *Nitaq* Wust El Balad, Art Festival, Cairo, Egypt
- 1996 : *Emerging Talents* ABN-AMRO Bank, Chennai, India
- 1995 : *Three man show* Galerie Tanner Berne, Switzerland
- 1994 : *Art Expo 94* UN Womens Guild, Palais des Nation, Geneva, Switzerland

## Selected Art Camps

- 2011 : Artclub, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 2007 : Annual RPG Art camp, Marve, Mumbai, India
- 2005 : Annual RPG Art camp, Marve, Mumbai, India
- 2003 : Annual RPG Art camp, Taj Hotel, Mumbai, India