FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 19, 2018

Artist Ambreen Butt makes her mark at the National Museum of Women in the Arts | Dec. 7, 2018–Apr. 14, 2019

WASHINGTON—The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) presents Ambreen Butt—Mark My Words, on view Dec. 7, 2018–Apr. 14, 2019. This is the first solo exhibition in Washington, D.C., for Pakistani-American artist Ambreen Butt (b. 1969). Featuring 13 mixed-media works on paper, Mark My Words reveals the connection between the artist’s global consciousness and the physical mark-making techniques that she uses to create her works.

“Trained in traditional Indian and Persian miniature painting, an art form used in historical illustrated manuscripts, Ambreen Butt reimagines the genre to feature contemporary female protagonists and political subject matter,” says NMWA Assistant Curator Orin Zahra. “While the intricate details of her works on paper invite close looking and discovery, her content tackles larger global issues of oppression, violence and the role of art as social commentary.”

The artist’s use of varied mark-making processes enriches her work and speaks to broader ideas of women making their mark on society. This exhibition showcases a diversity of techniques, including drawing, stitching, staining, etching and gluing. Reflecting on her painstaking and labor-intensive process, Butt says, “It is through that physical experience that I process the complexities of my thoughts. I call it the labor of love, the bearer of the clarity of my mind.”

Butt’s imagery—both figurative and semi-abstract—evokes organic and free-flowing movement, while her subject matter grapples with persistent tensions: religious ideologies and political...
oppression, beauty and violence, and past and present. Though Butt has incorporated text in her images throughout her career, as in *The Great Hunt I* (2008), her recent works employ text repetition to convey her message. The “Say My Name” series is dedicated to forgotten youth casualties of American drone strikes in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Each work displays myriad shredded pieces of paper glued to the surface in dizzying patterns; the scraps repeat the name of a single victim. Several new works from this series will be displayed for the first time in this exhibition.

Born in Lahore, Pakistan, Butt was trained in Indian and Persian miniature painting before relocating in 1993 to Boston, where she received her MFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her practice fuses techniques of miniature painting with the conceptualism prevalent in contemporary Western art. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions, both nationally and internationally. Among the institutions that have exhibited her work are the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Brooklyn Museum; the USC Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena; the Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; the National Art Gallery, Islamabad, Pakistan; and the Sunshine Museum, Beijing, China.

Butt has received the Brother Thomas Fellowship from the Boston Foundation; the Maud Morgan Prize from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and grants from the Joan Mitchell Foundation and Canada Council for the Arts. In 1999, she was the first recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize awarded by the Institute of Contemporary Art, in addition to being an artist-in-residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. She currently lives and works in Dallas, Texas.

*Ambreen Butt—Mark My Words*, presented in the Teresa Lozano Long Gallery of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, is organized by the museum and made possible through the generous support of the Belinda de Gaudemar Curatorial Fund. Additional funding is provided by the members of NMWA.

**National Museum of Women in the Arts**
The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is the only major museum in the world solely
dedicated to championing women through the arts. With its collections, exhibitions, programs and online content, the museum inspires dynamic exchanges about art and ideas. NMWA advocates for better representation of women artists and serves as a vital center for thought leadership, community engagement and social change. NMWA addresses the gender imbalance in the presentation of art by bringing to light important women artists of the past while promoting great women artists working today. The collections highlight painting, sculpture, photography and video by artists including Louise Bourgeois, Mary Cassatt, Judy Chicago, Frida Kahlo, Shirin Neshat, Faith Ringgold, Pipilotti Rist, Amy Sherald and Élisabeth Louise Vigée-LeBrun.

NMWA is located at 1250 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. It is open Mon.–Sat., 10 a.m.–5 p.m. and Sun., noon–5 p.m. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for visitors 65 and over and students, and free for NMWA members and youths 18 and under. Admission is free the first Sunday of each month. For information, call 202-783-5000, visit nmwa.org, Broad Strokes Blog, Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

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Image credit lines:
Ambreen Butt, Untitled (Woman/Dragon) (from the series “Daughters of the East”) (detail), 2008; Etching, aquatint, spitbite aquatint, drypoint and hand coloring on paper, 25 x 19 in.; Courtesy of the artist; © Ambreen Butt; Photo by Stephen Petegorsky

Ambreen Butt, The Great Hunt I (from the series “Dirty Pretty”) (detail), 2008; Water-based pigments, white gouache, text, thread and gold leaf on Mylar and tea-stained paper, 45 x 30 in.; NMWA, Gift of Massachusetts State Committee of the National Museum of Women in the Arts; © Ambreen Butt; Photo by Lee Stalsworth

Ambreen Butt, Shoaib (8) (from the series “Say My Name”), 2018; Text, collage, and watercolors with white gouache on tea-stained paper, 29 x 21 in.; Courtesy of the artist; © Ambreen Butt, Photo by Kevin Todora