

Contacts

A Fusion of Art and Culture

Anida Yoeu Ali Captivates Audience During Her McGill Lecture Presentation

Hartford, Connecticut, April 22, 2016 – In what can best be described as an emotional, mesmerizing, and what she calls “agitating” lecture, [Anida Yoeu Ali](#), Patricia C. and Charles H. McGill III ’63 Visiting Assistant Professor of International Studies, held an audience of approximately 300 attendees spellbound on April 6 during her presentation titled “Transcending the In-Between: A Lecture, Performance, and Visual Experience of Hybridity, Otherness, and Exiled Bodies.”



Anida Yoeu Ali presents the annual Patricia C. and Charles H. McGill III ’63 Lecture in International Studies as a performance and visual experience in the Trinity College Chapel.

Photo by John Atashian.

During the performance in the Trinity College Chapel, some of the hurtful remarks hurled by passersby flashed across a video screen displaying hundreds of people reacting strongly to Ali wearing her chador. All the while, a pre-recorded voice-over recited her 100-line poem, “Mistaken for Muslims.”

Ali also performed a three-sequence act titled “Push.” In the first sequence, she taped raw eggs to the outside of her body. In sequence two, covered in a white dress concealing the eggs, she slowly walked up and down the chapel’s center aisle, inviting people to push her and try to knock her down – and immediately getting up as a display of resilience.

“Eggs essentially represent women. In my world, women are heroes,” she explained. “They are the duality of fragility and a target for hostility, particularly within the Muslim world.”

In the final sequence, Ali knelt at the head of the chapel, encouraging her audience to pelt her with 99 raw eggs. “I allow people to exercise hostility toward misogyny and race,” she said, adding that the number 99 is an important part of Islamic numerology as an extension of religious aesthetics.

Ali will next travel to Washington, D.C., where her performance of *The Red Chador* will become an integral part of the [Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center’s Culture Lab on Intersectionality](#) held on Memorial Day Weekend, May 28-29.

The McGill International Studies Fund was established in 1996 with a gift from Patricia C. and Charles H. McGill III ’63. The gift helped secure a matching grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The income from the fund is to be used to support the appointment of visiting humanities scholars, primarily international scholars, in the areas of international studies that include African studies, Asian studies, Caribbean and Latin American studies, Middle East studies, global studies, and Russian and Eurasian studies.

Wordlessly gliding down the center aisle of the Trinity College Chapel to the tones of an Islamic *azhan* or call to prayer, Ali temporarily wore a red chador, which she described as “the color of blood,” worn by many Iranian women in public. This same approach to Islamophobia – silently wearing the chador throughout numerous public places worldwide, including the Trinity campus – has enabled Ali to compile scores of examples of insults and angry responses to Muslims from those who witnessed her demonstration. She even dared to walk through a Paris square following the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* massacre that may have been incited by the magazine’s cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad.

“The Muslim body is a target,” said Ali. “And my art and performances are my way of bringing attention to Muslim women. During the

Charles H. McGill III '63 is a nationally recognized expert in mergers and acquisitions, as well as corporate strategic planning and restructuring, with significant experience in consumer products, restaurant and food service, and information services. McGill is the founding partner of Sagamore Partners, an acquisitions adviser. Previously, he was a senior executive of Fortune Brands, Dun & Bradstreet, and the Pillsbury Company. McGill is a former member of the Trinity College Board of Trustees and its Board of Fellows. He received the College's Alumni Medal for Excellence in 1993. The McGills are the parents of a 1994 Trinity graduate.

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Photos by John Atashian. To view the Flickr set of photos, please click [here](#).

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