

Monica Jahan Bose's SWIMMING: Transforming Public Spaces with Art and Advocacy

The SWIMMING installation transformed the Marie Reed Aquatic Center into a hub of art and dialogue around equity, climate change, and community resilience.

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The highly anticipated opening night of Monica Jahan Bose's [SWIMMING](#) public art installation took place on June 7 at the Marie Reed Elementary School and Aquatic Center, drawing an impressive turnout including remarks from David Markey and Kerry Kennedy of the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Philip Barlow of DC Arts Center, and the principal of Marie Reed

Elementary School. Despite strong winds, the 22 saris were installed that morning, shimmering and flowing in the wind as a beacon of resilience. The event featured poignant poetry performances by workshop participants, including Isaiah Washington, Philip Mecham, Manuel Ramos, Sherri Gales, Lia Totty, Niquida Browne, Joel Grooms, Elizabeth Brandt, Talia, Ann Farley, Hasini Shyamsundar, and Laura Forbes, captivating the audience and highlighting the community's deep engagement with the project.

The SWIMMING installation, which will run until June 20, 2024, has transformed the Marie Reed Aquatic Center into a vibrant hub of art and dialogue around equity, climate change, and community resilience. The installation includes 22 blue saris arranged to mimic a swimming pool and a wave, each piece telling a unique story of endurance and hope in the face of injustices. Visitors use their phones to access six video and sound pieces that feature the project's poetry, songs, and visuals.

The venue for the SWIMMING project, Marie Reed Elementary School and Aquatic Center bears



Swimming, installation view, 2024, photo credit:
Monica Jahan Bose

significant historical importance, standing on the grounds of the former Morgan School. Alongside the Adams School, Morgan School was integral to the desegregation efforts in the 1950s that led to the vibrant, inclusive community Adams Morgan is known as today. Named after Marie Reed, a key advocate for community and educational reform, the center now symbolizes progress and unity. It serves as a vital community resource, helping to address racial disparities in swimming proficiency and water safety. Despite the progress, racial disparities in drowning deaths remain a critical issue both nationally and within Washington, D.C. The "SWIMMING" project celebrates the community's strides toward equality and highlights the ongoing need for inclusive water safety education to combat these disparities effectively.

The project has not only activated the space but has also fostered a profound conversation and connection among community members, participants, and visitors. The opening night's success was a testament to the community's interest and support for innovative approaches to discussing and tackling global issues like racial inequity and climate change through local and artistic expressions.

Upcoming Event Reminder:

Do not miss the participatory performance on June 15 at 5 pm and an artist-led tour and special screening of the SWIMMING short film during the Adams Morgan Movie Night on June 18 at 7:30 pm. These events offer more opportunities for the community to come together and experience the powerful visual art and messages of the SWIMMING project. SWIMMING is open for viewing 24 hours a day through June 20 at 2201 18th Street, NW.



Swimming Opening Event, 2024, Photo credit: Michael Bennett



Swimming, installation view of "pool," 2024, photo credit: Monica Jahan Bose

Media Invitation:

We invite the press to engage with this unique installation, interview Monica Jahan Bose, and cover the ongoing impact of the "SWIMMING" project. Monica's work, deeply intertwined with themes of sustainability, art, and community advocacy, provides fertile ground for insightful stories and discussions. This is an open invitation to witness how art can influence and drive community and environmental awareness.

This project is funded by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, Public Art Building Communities Grant Program.

Community and media partners include Marie Reed Elementary School, DC Arts Center, Adams Morgan Partnership BID, Calvary Women's Services, and Moms Clean Air Force.

All events are free and subject to weather conditions. Updates can be found at storytellingwithsaris.com/events.

For more information, to schedule an interview, or to plan a visit, please contact: Kelly Davidson at info@kellymavenmedia.com

About Monica Jahan Bose: Monica Jahan Bose is a Bangladeshi-American artist and climate activist whose work spans painting, printmaking, film, performance, and installation. Her socially engaged work highlights the intersection of climate, racial, gender, and economic injustice through co-created workshops, art actions, temporary installations, and performances. She has exhibited her work extensively in the US and internationally (23 solo shows, five large-scale public art projects, and more than 25 performances) including solo exhibitions at the Bangladesh National Museum and MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art Rome. Her ongoing collaborative art and advocacy project STORYTELLING WITH SARIS (since 2012) with women farmers from her ancestral island village has traveled to eight countries and 12 US states, engaging thousands of people. Her work has appeared in the Miami Herald, the Washington Post, Art Asia Pacific, the Milwaukee Sentinel, the Honolulu Star Advertiser, the Japan Times, the BBC, Prothom Alo and all major newspapers in Bangladesh. She was an artist delegate to the COP28 climate conference in Dubai, presenting sari installations, workshops, and film screenings. She has a BA in the Practice of Art (Painting) from Wesleyan University, a post-graduate diploma in art from Santiniketan, and a JD from Columbia Law School.

About Sarah Tanguy: Washington, DC-based Sarah Tanguy is an independent curator and arts writer, who believes in hands-on, face-to-face collaboration with artists and the power of art to connect with the general public and our lived experience. Many of her projects have explored the intersection of art with such topics as science, food, tools, and books, inspiring new ways to engage the world around us. Recent exhibitions include *At One with the Elements*, *Reveal: The Art of Reimagining Scientific Discovery*, and *Traces*, in Washington, DC; and *Synergy Unbound*, the last of an ongoing series at the American Center for Physics, College Park, MD. From 2004-2019, Sarah was a curator for Art in Embassies, U.S. Department of State, where she curated

over 100 exhibitions and 12 permanent collections featuring U.S. and host country artists for U.S. diplomatic facilities overseas. The daughter of a U.S. diplomat, Tanguy holds a BA in Fine Arts from Georgetown University, and a MA in Art History from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

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