

jasmeen patheja









g	<b>staring</b> তাকিয়ে থাকা	<b>staring at breasts</b> বুকের দিকে চেয়ে থাকা	<b>talking to breasts</b> বুকের দিকে তাকিয়ে কথা বলা	<b>adjusting rear view mirror</b> আয়নার মধ্যে দিয়ে দেখা	<b>passing comments</b> অশ্লীল মন্তব্য করা	<b>calling r</b> অশ্লীল নাম
g sound করা	<b>unsolicited conversation</b> গায়ে পড়ে কথা বলা	<b>winking</b> চোখ মারা	<b>blowing kisses</b> চুমু ছোঁড়া		<b>tickling</b> সুরসুরি দেওয়া	<b>touching 'ac</b> 'তুল করে' গায়ে
ng শাঁচা দেওয়া	<b>spitting on</b> গায়ে থুতু ফেলা	<b>stalking</b> পিছু নেওয়া		<b>es/ car/ bike/honking</b> মগাত হর্ণ বাজানো	<b>cycles/ car/ bike/dashing purposely</b> গাড়ি দিয়ে ইচ্ছে করে ধাক্কা দেওয়া	<b>gestures,</b> অশ্লীল ই

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### **Education:**

Graduation: Received an under graduate diploma in fine arts from Srishti School of Art Design and Technology, Bangalore, India. (1999-2003)

### **Selected Talks/ Exhibitions/ Workshops:**

Feb 2010: Blank Noise talk at Tedxbitsgoa

August 2009: 2 week Blank Noise workshop at Srishti School of Art Design and Technology based on fear and the city. The workshop proposes to create a series of interventions in city spaces.

July 2009: Talk at Srishti School of Art Design and Technology.

Talk focussed on art process and the artist as activist / facilitator/ communicator; context Blank Noise.

March 2009: presentation and panel discussion on Blank Noise and the use of social media. Symbiosis Institute, Pune. Cyber media conclave.

April 2008: Exhibition/ workshop /talk -Blank Noise at the Asian Triennial, Manchester. Invited by Cornerhouse, UK.

Exhibition included a series of audio conversations of women living in Manchester. Blank Noise hosted a women's only event at the Cornerhouse – the Kitty Party, inviting the people to come and discuss street sexual harassment from personal lived experience. Talk / Blank Noise presentation.

October 2007: Dealing with Fear conference, Akademie Schloss Solitude. Stuttgart. September 2006- workshop at Lady Shriram College. Delhi. Workshop explored body and memory in context to fear and the city.

December 2005 talk at MS University Baroda women's studies department.

### **Talks + workshops attended:**

March-April 2004: Participant and Research Assistant in *Synchronisations*. Synchronisation was an international think tank curated by Paris based Clementine Deliss that brought together artists, professionals, and art and design students from the United Kingdom, Mumbai, Dakar, Greece, Spain, Netherlands, Austria, and Bangalore. Synchronisations probed into what the future art and design academy would be like.

December 2002. Student participant in Dyd, 'Development by Design' an international conference that showcased innovative ideas and projects in design change and technology.

<http://www.srishtibl.org/workshops.htm#dyd02>

May 2002 student participant at Sunoh was organised as a result of the Communication for Social Change Lab, led by Geetha Narayanan, Srishti. It brought together people concerned with 'social change'; professionals from ICT, artist, designers and non-profit organisations. The issue in focus was HIV Aids in India. The conference also highlighted the role of the artist as a facilitator in the process of change.

<http://www.srishtibl.org/sunoh/index.htm>

### **Fellowships/ Commissioned work/ residency programme:**

2009 - Ted India fellowship.

2008- June to December

2007- May- November- Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart Germany.

2008/ 2007/ 2005- Ashoka Innovators for the Public for social entrepreneur – Blank Noise.

2006 – Khoj, New Delhi towards Blank Noise. Public art residency programme.

2005 – Sarai CSDS Fellowship towards Blank Noise.

2004 Feb - appointed Research Associate with Srishti School of Art Design and Technology, to take the Blank Noise project on street harassment forward.

2002 Aug-October. Regent College, Leicester, UK.

The project was a participatory photography project exploring notions of masculinity within a group of seven men.

**Upcoming residency:** Akademie Schloss Solitude, July, August 2010 towards project Indri, collaboration with Indri, grandmother.

### **Exhibition/Productions:**

#### **Upcoming exhibitions:**

2011- date yet to be confirmed. photography exhibition sharing Project Indri at Tasveer, India

Jan 2011- Dolls group show curated by Marta Jacimowitz in collaboration with Sumukha (Bangalore) and Rob Dean Art (London)

Nov 2010- Exhibition featuring Blank Noise. Museum of Contemporary Art Denver

Feb 2010- Group exhibition featuring Blank Noise at gallery BMB, Mumbai. Group exhibition title " Her Work Must Go On"

featured Blank Noise publication: Moments of A Long Pause. Blank Noise posters.

#### **Past exhibition:**

November 2008- Jan 2009- Exhibition at the **Akademie Schloss Solitude**. Group. Works include; ' video installation *Moments of a Long Pause*', *Blank Noise posters*; *food chart*, *testimonials*'

**September 2008- Jan 2009- Bronx Museum of Arts**, show titled Street Art-Street Life curated by Lydia Yee New York.

Video. 2 channel video based on street interviews between men and women. *Moments of a Long Pause*. The video builds an argument on the definition and understanding of street sexual harassment.

**2009 March. April. June. July.- Tasveer** photo exhibition, *Running Amok* at Delhi, Bangalore, Bombay and Calcutta. Running Amok comprises a series of images from everyday seemingly ordinary encounters.

**2008. March. Cornerhouse**, Manchester. UK.

Blank Noise (video Mad Women, sound interviews with women living in Manchester, event- the Kitty Party) curated by Kathy Rae Huffman as a part of the Asian Triennial Manchester events.

**2007 April Max Mueller Bhavan/ Goethe Institute**. Bangalore. India. Blank Noise production: **Mind The Gap**.

The show comprised audio installation based on interviews with men on street sexual harassment, Hot News Taaza Samachar (video performance address passive news consumerism), Mad Women ( photo projection loop), I NEVER ASK FOR IT ( clothes installation; garments worn at the time of experiencing street sexual harassment. Each garment addresses the notion of blame for experiencing harassment and says ' I never ask for it')

**April 2006– Kitab Mahal**. Mumbai. Blank Noise in collaboration with actor director Rehaan Engineer and bloggers testimonials of street sexual harassment.

**Sept 2005:** Blank Noise was exhibited at **Ars Electronica**, Linz, Austria. The exhibit was an installation that comprised clothes sent in by victims of street sexual harassment in response to the 'DID YOU ASK FOR IT' project, a news video performance on incessant rape reportage and passive news consumerism and a video projection of people's views on street sexual harassment on streets of Bangalore. In this video everyone is blaming each other for the occurrence of 'eve teasing'.

**Sept 2004( group) Max Mueller Bhavan.** Hot News Taaza Samachar was installed at the Max Mueller Bhavan Café as a part of the Video arts festival.

**June 2004:** 2 Feet Apart- (solo) 2 Feet Apart was a photography installation at the **Alliance Francaise de Bangalore** which recreated the experience of urban walking. The photographs at the exhibit were taken over a period of 4 years across different cities (London, Paris, Calcutta, Edinburgh, Barcelona and Rome)

**March 2005:** (Group) An all women artist show at Gallery Geechoo, Bangalore. The gallery was inaugurated on women's day. 'Unclothing Uniforms' was a sound and photography installation that brought forth the experiences of women bus conductors of Bangalore in relation to their uniform and identity.

**Oct 2004:** Blank Noise was presented at the art and design Biennale in St Etienne, France.

**Sept 2004:** (group) exhibition organised by Nigah Media , New Delhi at the Aparna Caur Gallery. The video piece Hot News Taaza Samachar was installed at the exhibit.

**December 2003: Blank Noise.** (group) Blank Noise refers to the silence that can create noise. The project was a response to street sexual harassment experienced by urban Indian women. An undergraduate diploma project; it was conducted over a period of 4 months with a group of nine girls. The project process included a series of workshops that explored memory, identity and the body. Blank Noise juxtaposed what was perceived as severe; everyday information and news on women being raped, with something that was perceived as 'trivial; a male stranger commenting on a girl's body. The final form was an installation using various media. (Video, photograph, sound, performance, projection). [http://www.srishtibl.org/Grad2003/frames\\_index.htm](http://www.srishtibl.org/Grad2003/frames_index.htm)

**Silent Spaces:** Sunoh, the conference led to the making of Silent Spaces, a film exploring the different meanings 'sexuality' can take. Silent Spaces was made with a group of 8 students as a part of the SCOM lab. The film's purpose was to open a discussion ground for homosexuality, masturbation, body image and identity, and child sexual abuse. The film was also aimed at being given to Non profit organisations with similar concerns, to enable them conduct workshops. The film was screened at the queer film festival in Bangalore in 2003.

#### **Selected projects:**

##### **Blank Noise:**

Blank Noise is a volunteer led community arts collective that builds public discourse towards the issue of street sexual harassment; 'eve teasing'.

The idea was initiated in 2003, as a final year diploma thesis project at the Srishti school of Art Design and Technology.

Everyday experiences led to need to form a collective that would address ideas related to fear and the city. As an art student I was also deeply interested in exploring ways in which artists could work with society/ with communities /with public.

Over 60 all girl students were asked to make a mind map with the term 'public space' and it resulted in a series of associations such as 'fear, strangers, discomfort, anonymity, groping, stalking, whistling, crowd, hands, staring, vulnerable, hide'. This gave the basis to propose a project. In its first phase began with a series of workshops that explored the public and private identities of nine young urban Indian women. This collective participatory experience evolved into Blank Noise.

Blank Noise is now a growing community of volunteers both male and female, from across the globe with chapters in over 7 cities in India. These groups conduct meetings, events and public interventions, street

actions, presentations at colleges etc. We work actively on the internet- on communities such as blogger, facebook, orkut, googlegroups.

In its current phase Blank Noise takes the form of a public conversation. We build testimonials of street sexual harassment and disperse them back in the public. We try and engage the 3 groups ; the spectator, the survivor and the potential perpetrator while stressing that the 3 roles are interchangeable i.e. the perpetrator is a victim in one kind of view etc. The Internet is a medium that allows us to tread on this territory.

We seek to establish street sexual harassment as an issue that concerns male attitudes as much as it is a woman's issue.

Blank Noise also seeks to define boundaries between wooing ,flirting, harassment, violation.

There are Blank Noise blogs that invite spectators, survivors and men to share their understanding of street sexual harassment.

<http://blog.blanknoise.org>  
<http://bnguy.blanknoise.org>  
[http://twitter.com/blank\\_noise](http://twitter.com/blank_noise)  
<http://actionheroes.blanknoise.org>  
<http://spectators.blanknoise.org>  
<http://flickr.com/photos/blanknoisethisplace>

**Blank Noise is an umbrella project with several events and campaigns listed below:**

**Blank Noise blogathon: (2006)**

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2006/03/spill.html>

Internet based event asking bloggers to share their experiences of street sexual harassment. As a result hundreds of bloggers participated leading to a mass online catharsis. The viral transfer of testimonials went from one blog to another and the anonymity of the medium created a space for people to speak fearlessly. This event established street sexual harassment / violence or 'teasing' as that which is experienced almost everyday and is seen as 'normal' but as that which alters one's relationship with the body and the city. This event established 'eve teasing' as an urgent issue. While the event took place on the internet, the testimonials spread because the mainstream press supported it.

**I never ask for it: (2006. Ongoing)**

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2008/03/i-never-ask-for-it-i-repeat-until-we.html>

Blank Noise collects testimonials and disperses them back in the public. 'I never ask for it' addresses the notion of shame, blame and guilt. This is a nationwide campaign asking women to send in one garment they wore at the time they experienced street sexual harassment. Each garment is a witness and a testimonial to the experience. The garments will be installed on the streets of various cities in the form of a travelling exhibition. Blank Noise has been receiving an entire range of garments from saris, salwar kameez, school uniform, swim suit etc. This campaign is to challenge the assumption that 'women ask for it'; ask for harassment./ violation because of the clothes they wear. We are seeking to state that all kinds of women, all kinds of socio eco backgrounds, all age groups, at all times of day and in any kind of garment have experienced violated and that there is no such thing as 'asking for it'.

**Things to do at home on a hot summer afternoon/ I never ask for it:** (year 2009 medium. Internet) collects proverbs statements and sayings in different languages that imply women 'ask for it'.

Eg: jithe gur uthe makhi/ 'where there is sugar there will be a fly/ if you are a girl guys will be after you.'

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2009/05/things-to-do-at-home.html>

**Museum of street weapons of defense** (year 2008. Medium. Internet. Blogspot. Facebook):

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2008/11/towards-museum-of-street-weapons.html>

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2703755288#/event.php?eid=46016327805&ref=mf>



This project examines fear and defense mechanisms or tools women adopt to deal with the city. The museum of street weapons is a compilation of weapons and confessions ; everyday objects that have become weapons of defense such as safety pin, Baygon spray, talcum powder, a heavy bag.

**Excuse me? Compilation of misdirected terms. Build it like you heard it:** (year 2007 medium. Internet/ blogspot)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2007/08/blog-post.html>

is a compilation of food names, objects, statements, songs, that women have been called or referred as while out on the streets.

**Step by Step Guide to Unapologetic Walking:**

(year 2008. Medium poster + t shirt)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2008/10/step-by-step-guide-to-unapologetic.html>

is a compilation of things to remember while walking; to ensure the walk is unapologetic.

**Blank Noise T shirts:**(year 2006)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2006/09/t-shirts-for-autos.html>

Tshirts for women who travel by public transport. The text is written in mirror reflection hence readable only when the vehicle driver does the obvious- that is adjusts the rear view mirror to her chest: it reads " so what are you looking at".

**Unwanted Men:** (2005. medium. photography + internet)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2005/07/he-placed-his-hand-on-my-breast-and.html>

Are a series of encounters with men who harassed /violated / offended the photographer. The photographs were shared on the internet along with an account of the incident; thereby leading to a public discussion, argument, debate on the nature and definition of street sexual harassment.

The photographs have not been removed but have been manipulated recently (2009) because the project takes a stand on not being against the one 'perpetrator' of sexual violence but instead encouraging public debate and public responsibility towards the issue.

**Blank Noise Street Actions and interventions:**

**I made a little wish in a big park: (2009)**

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2009/06/learning-to-belong-here.html>

Is a series of self confrontational actions that different women did at Cubbon Park in Bangalore. One Action Hero wanted to be able to take a nap, while another wanted to whistle and hum a song and another wanted to be able to read a book.

As one Action Hero reports: " I was there to challenge no one else but me".

**One Night Stand:**

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2007/01/blog-post.html>

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2006/12/action-heroes-in-bangalore.html>

Location: on the streets of Bangalore, Delhi, Calcutta, Chennai, Patna, Lucknow, Hyderabad

Is announced on the blog. Anyone is welcome. This action/ intervention asks women to join in to be idle. It becomes challenging and self confrontational for participants to come in and stand idle on the street and it also becomes challenging for the public to witness a street filled with idle women; not waiting, not on the phone, not shopping, not even 'chit chatting'; just standing there, leaning and looking back at passers-by. Some 'One Night Stands ask Action Heroes to come

-Dressed in garments they have always wanted to wear but not worn because they felt they might be 'asking for it'. Members of the public are invited to participate by joining the girl by the railing; this happens through a very private circulation of letters that bear testimonials addressed to strangers.

**WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?**

(Year/ 2005/2006)

cities: Delhi. Bombay. Calcutta. Chennai. Bangalore

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2006/04/mumbai-carter-road-y-r-u-looking-at-me.html>

The event is announced on the blog. Any one can join in and become an Action Hero. Each Action Hero is wearing an alphabet and standing at a traffic signal- being read as "Y R U LOOKING AT ME?". This event reverses the gaze and seeks to generate public discussion on ways of looking, or even the most basic act of looking as an assertion of power. This action is accompanied by pamphlet distribution and the dissemination of the law, section 354, Indian Penal Code.

#### **Stencilling testimonials/ Night Action Plan:**

(year 2006/2009)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2006/09/night-action-plan.html#inks>

This intervention takes place at night, in small 'gangs'.

The site of sexual crime is often fictionalized. The 'gang' or Blank Noise Action Heroes This intervention takes place at night, in small 'gangs'. The site of sexual crime is often fictionalized in public memory and this action creates a sense of it happened here and 'now'. The 'gang' or Blank Noise Action Heroes spray testimonials on the pavements and streets. It is written in a report like manner with the name, age, time of day and nature of sexual 'crime'.

**Opinion poll:** (year 2005/ 2006/ 2007/ 2008. medium. poster/opinion poll, thumb print)

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2007/11/blank-noise-opinion-poll.html>

Seeks consensus on the meaning of 'eve teasing'. This is done via a format of the opinion poll. The opinion poll is a safe format via which the public put their thumb print on what they consider street sexual harassment. The list is prepared at Blank Noise meetings and by various bloggers- and ranges from looking, staring, stalking, groping, touching, rubbing, pinching, singing to etc. A local stall owner hosts the opinion poll over a period of time thereby becoming a local Blank Noise agent.

#### **Other ongoing projects:**

**Indri:** is an ongoing collaboration with my grandmother Indri. Indri always wanted to be an actor, a performer and this collaboration makes us an 'actor-director' team. The project so far has been a series of photo performances (since 2004) and will also comprise a series of video performance for youtube.

Indri is a very keen and willing to learn individual. She challenges and breaks the idea of a stereotypical grandmother for me with her ability to use the internet, send e greetings, text messages, drive the car and to simply not retire. It is with this spirit that our project is made possible.

She will be co artist at residence at Akademie Schloss Solitude in 2010.

#### **Don't make me lose my temper:**

(Weeping women. Angry men)

Is an ongoing project arising from the need to understand male anger and the construct of masculinity in the urban Indian context visa a exploring the 'image' of the female 'victim'. This project comprises a series of recurring angry men and weeping women images. These images are tv monitor shots from daily tele viewing.

Past project:

#### **Birth Control:**

Location- Regent College, Leicester. UK.

Birth Control is participatory photo-performance project exploring notions of masculinity within a group of seven 'heterosexual' men. The men/boys were aged 18 to 50 years, 4 were of Asian origin, and three were English. They were asked to wear women's clothing and be photographed. The project documented the 7 individual and personal experiences of 'dressing like a woman'.

#### **Press:**

<http://blog.blanknoise.org/2000/09/press.html>