

ARTS & BOOKS

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POETRY IN WORDS, IMAGES AND ODDITIES
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REFRAMED



"RON": The result: "beautiful drama."



"SELF PORTRAIT": Manjari Sharma turns the camera on herself for her project.



"ALEX": Sharma says, "The bathroom, formerly a beauty parlor, now became a confessional and I the hair dresser."



"AARTI": The light in Sharma's shower was the inspiration.



"LOLA": What began awkwardly ended in "intense ease."

Watery revelations

By BARBARA DAVIDSON

When asked what led to her career in photography, Manjari Sharma said we all have a way of processing the world around us.

"Some do it through chemistry and others through cooking," she said.

"In my case, I've always loved listening to stories, but even more so I love finding out about people's motivations. Photography became a license to stare."

She stayed in the field not only because photography allowed her to stare but also because she "started to realize that if you look hard enough, it starts to look back."

The origin of Sharma's "Shower" series of photos are simple enough: The photographer — born and raised in Mumbai, India, but later a resident of New York City — had a shower stall where a window threw beautiful

light across marble walls.

"I asked my first subject if they had showered that day, and then the water came on, resulting in some unexpectedly beautiful drama," she said.

After photographing four or so people in that light, she said, "I realized that the shower was giving way to as much more than a mere photograph. The conversations in that intimate space assumed a different quality. They were more raw, more real, and we walked in as awkward acquaintances but walked out as friends. The conversations got addictive."

And the "Shower" series ended up last-

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"Reframed" spotlights photojournalists and fine art photographers. Online are more images and the full interviews.

ing four years.

When it began, Sharma was not perfectly comfortable with nudity.

"I ended up photographing women and gay men for a while, until the series really began to gather its own steam," she said.

"The part that came naturally to me was the conversation, and so what ensued after we walked into the shower was effortless. It was amazing to me how something that began as awkwardly would end in such intimate ease and with such lyrical unfolding."

The photographer (www.manjarisharma.com) has a show, "Transcendent Dances of India: The Everyday Occurrence of the Divine," running through Sept. 14 at the Ade Society museum in Houston. Her work has been exhibited around the world, and she is represented by ClumpArt in New York and Richard Levy Gallery in Albuquerque.

barbara.davidson@latimes.com

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Gitmo inmate writes a memoir

By HECTOR TORRES

Mohamedou Ould Slahi has been described by one former Guantanamo prosecutor as the "Pompeo Clump" of the Guantanamo detainees. A slight man, he seems to have known, or met, or crossed paths with key Al Qaeda figures. But it isn't clear that he's ever done anything wrong.

Slahi turned himself in to the authorities in his native Mauritania in 2003, was later handed over to the U.S., and he has been in custody ever since. Though never charged with a crime, he's still being held in Guantanamo — where he has the special privilege of being allowed to grow tomatoes in a garden.

Now he'll be an author too. *Life in the U.S. and Guantanamo* in the British will publish his memoir next year, according to the Booklocker.

"During his time in custody he has been subjected to multiple forms of torture including isolation, beatings, sexual humiliation, death threats, and a mock kidnapping and rendition," Conroy said. "Three years into his captivity, having learned English from prison guards, Slahi began a diary to recount both his life before he was seized by the United States and his experiences as a detainee."

The Booklocker says Slahi's attorneys worked for seven years to have his manuscript declassified. Slahi handwritten it on 400 pages in English. Slahi published an excerpt last year.

Having been shunned around the globe after his detention in Africa and tortured in Jordan, Slahi was refused to be at a U.S. base when he arrived in Guantanamo in 2002, he writes. "I considered the arrival to Cuba a blessing, and so I told my brothers, 'Since you guys are not involved in crimes you need to fear nothing. I personally am going to cooperate, since nobody is going to torture me. I don't want any of you to suffer what I suffered in Jordan.'" But Slahi was soon proved wrong. "With every day going by, the optimistic lost ground, and the interrogation methods worsened considerably as time went by," Slahi writes. "As you shall see, those responsible to GITMO broke all the principles upon which the U.S. is built."

Conroy said Slahi's book is "not merely a vivid record of a miscarriage of justice, but a deeply personal, darkly humorous, and surprisingly graceful."

Torres tweets on Twitter (@torres) or Facebook



An inmate held by U.S. at Guantanamo Bay.