A special preview of artists' works from a residency supported by the Consulate General of the United States in Mumbai

For immediate release

Avid Learning in partnership with The **U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai and Akshara Centre** presents **Arcs of a Circle: 12 Artists + 12 Minutes + 12 Performances** curated and moderated by poet and writer Rochelle Potkar and co-director, Akshara Centre Nandita Shah. The evening will also include an exclusive reading by poet and journalist, **Menka Shivdasani**.

The description of the event is as below:
Arcs-of-a-Circle is an artists' residency program. For its maiden year, 12 artists-in-residence from various art forms converge around and converse on women's empowerment. They will present their thought-provoking work in 12 minutes each and will do so through versatile and compelling art forms like poetry readings, storytelling, screenings, stand-up comedy, spoken word, singing, dance and installation art. Come join us for riveting conversation on significant topics like women's empowerment and engage with some compelling art.

Where: Essar House - Podium 11 K.K. Marg, Mahalaxmi Mumbai 400034
When: Friday 15th December 2017
RSVP Email / Call: www.avidlearning.in/ avidlearning@essarservices.co.in
+919769937710; prior registration required
Press Email / Call: Ayeshah Dadachanji on ayeshah.avid@gmail.com / +91 9820155297

About the Curators:

Feminist scholar and activist with over 25 years of experience**, Dr. Nandita Shah** is active in the women's rights movement for more than two decades, as activist, researcher, gender trainer, and writer. She has co-authored several books, such as: Contingent Workers: Women in Two Industries in Mumbai, and Issues at Stake: Theory and Practice in the Contemporary Women's Movement in India with Nandita Gandhi. In 1995, she co-founded Akshara Centre, a women's rights organization based in Mumbai. Akshara Centre works towards mindset change of youth, on one hand, and systems change on the other. Her expertise in building different public-private partnerships have led to institutionalized initiatives with the police and local municipalities, transport authorities for creating safer cities for women. Akshara Centre works with different stakeholders to further the cause of gender justice, and fight gender-based violence locally, nationally, and internationally. She has been on many expert committees including with the Planning Commission on Gender Rights, for drafting women's policy in Maharashtra. She has represented Akshara on International platforms like UNWomen - Commission of Status of Women, AWID, Feminist Dialogues, Women Deliver, Post Beijing platforms, Habitat III among others. She is on the Civil Society Advisory Group of UNWomen.

Author of The Arithmetic of Breasts and other stories (fiction), Four Degrees of Separation (poetry), and Paper Asylum (prose), Rochelle Potkar is the alumna of Iowa's International Writing Program (2015) and Charles Wallace Writer's fellowship, Stirling (2017). Her prose was performed on stages in Iowa and Portland. She is the winner of the 2016 Open Road Review story contest for The leaves of the deodar. Her poem Cellular: P.O.W. was shortlisted for the 2017 Hungry hill competition, Ireland, and Ground up won

third place at the David Burland poetry prize 2017. She has read her poetry at a few festivals, recently Lviv International Literature Festival, Ukraine. Her short story Chit Mahal (The Enclave) appeared in the anthology: The Best of Asian Short Stories (TBASS) by Kitaab International. She is the editor of the Goan-Irish anthology, Goa: a garland of poems, with Gabriel Rosenstock. She is also editing Joseph Furtado's manuscript of prose and poetry. https://rochellepotkar.com.

About the Residency:
Arcs-of-a-Circle is an artists' residency program, co-founded and co-organized by The US Consulate General, Mumbai; Akshara Centre - a women's rights organization; and poet and fiction writer Rochelle Potkar. For its maiden year, it will be hosting 12 participants from various art forms to converge and converse around women empowerment.

About the Speaker:
Menka Shivdasani has three collections: Nirvana at Ten Rupees, Stet and Safe House. She has edited two anthologies of poetry for www.bigbridge.org, and an anthology of women's writing, If the Roof Leaks, Let it Leak for SPARROW. She is co-translator of Freedom and Fissures (Sahitya Akademi), an anthology of Sindhi Partition poetry. In 1986, Menka co-founded Poetry Circle in Bombay. Her work as a journalist includes eleven books, three of which were launched by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

About Partners:
Akshara Centre – a women's rights organization, works towards changing mindsets of the youth, on one hand, and systems-change on the other. It has striven to build public-private partnerships leading to institutionalized initiatives with the police, local municipalities, and transport authorities in creating safer cities for women. Having worked with different stakeholders to further the cause of gender justice, and fight gender-based violence locally, nationally, and internationally, we saw this residency as an act of breaking the silo between art and activism – since both are crucial in changing regressive and bigoted mindsets. And together the amplification of the message is much higher, much wider.

The U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai is a branch of the U.S. Diplomatic Mission to India under the direction of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. The U.S. Consulate General Mumbai is located in Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai. The Consulate represents the United States in Western India, including the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Goa. One of the busiest consular operations in the world, the Consulate provides an array of services to American citizens residing or traveling in our consular district, such as assistance in emergencies and help with passports and reports of birth. We assist non-Americans with visas to the U.S., both for short visits and for immigration. The Consulate can also assist Indian companies looking to invest or do business in the United States, and provide information on study and exchange programs in the United States. Dosti House, Your American Space, is located at the Consulate in Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai, and provides information about the United States, programs on U.S. culture and society, and offers space to partners for programs on issues of mutual importance to the United States and India. The Consulate also works in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Delhi and Consulates in Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad to ensure a strong relationship between the United States and India.

Avid Learning, a public programming platform and cultural arm of the Essar Group, has conducted over 750 programs and connected with more than 85,000 individuals since its inception in 2009. Driven by the belief that Learning Never Stops, AVID's multiple formats like Workshops, Panel Discussions, Gallery

Walkthroughs, and Festival Platforms create a dynamic and interactive atmosphere that stimulates intellectual and creative growth across the fields of Culture & Heritage, Literature, Art and Innovation. Facebook : www.facebook.com/Avidlearning; Twitter : www.twitter.com/Avidlearning; Instagram: @avidlearning