PRESS RELEASE/ PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

# Please publicize exhibition period February 28, 2013– April 7, 2013

**Art @ the Y announces the opening of Salam Arastu’s ‘Garden of Verses’**

**What:** The University YMCA announces the opening reception for the new art exhibition, ‘Garden of Verses’ by Salma Arastu. All art viewing is free to the public and all are encouraged to attend.

**When:** Thursday February 28th, viewing begins at 6:30pm.

**Where:** Murphy Gallery at the University YMCA

**Bio:** Salma Arastu was born in Rajasthan, India and graduated from MS University in Baroda, India with a Masters degree in Fine Arts. Salma has moved past many adversities in her life, one being a birth defect where Ms. Arastu was given the life-defining challenge of a left hand without fingers. Salma was able to move past this obstacle and has done almost 40 solo shows, won several awards including East Bay Community’s fund for artists in 2012, three works in public places and two books published with her poems and paintings.

She has been invited to Germany twice, first on artist residency in 2000 and In 2011, Westphalia Wilhelm University in Münster, Germany invited to publish her paper “Art Informed by Spirituality” in the publication on the International Symposium: ‘God Loves Beauty: Post Modern Views on Religion and Art.’

**Details:** Salma Arastu’s ‘Garden of Verses’ focuses on spiritual connection and expression of the Universal. Her art includes Arabic calligraphy that symbolizes love, diversity, unity and compassion from the Quran to the people of the world. “Garden of Verses” will be on view throughout the Friday Forum **Faith in Action** lecture series as well as the **Illinois Conference on Interfaith Collaboration.** Learn more about these interfaith collaborations at [www.universityymca.org/art/upcoming](http://www.universityymca.org/art/upcoming). The exhibit will run weekdays from 9am to 9pm from February 28th through April 7th in Murphy Gallery at the University YMCA.

**Background:** Some of the most profound insight, critique, and creative thinking around issues which comprise the mission of the Y happen in and around the arts. Art @ the Y seeks to engage issues of social justice, international understanding, environmental activism, faith and cultural understanding through quality arts programming.

**Sponsors:** Intercultural Friendship Foundation (RSO), the center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Diversity and Social Justice Education, World Harvest International and Gourmet Foods, and the Niagara Foundation.

Attached is the ‘Art @ the Y’ Postcard: ‘Garden of Verses’

**Contact:** *Ann Rasmus, Program Director*

**[*217-337-1514, ann@universityymca.org*]**