
Twelve Gates Arts & The Philadelphia
Asian American Film Festival Present:

**CONTEMPORARY
VIDEO
ART
EXHIBITION 2022**

Sun 8.28
2-4 pm
106 N 2nd St
Philadelphia 19106

A series of approximately 15 thin, light green wavy lines that originate from the right edge of the page and curve downwards and to the left, creating a sense of movement and depth.

THE EXPERIMENTAL VIDEO ART EXHIBITION IS A PLATFORM FOR SOUTH ASIAN, SOUTH WEST ASIAN, AND NORTH AFRICAN (SSWANA) VIDEO ARTISTS.

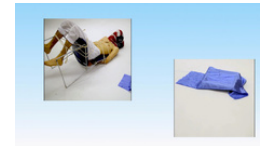
12G and PAAFF are pleased to welcome you to the 4th Contemporary Video Art Exhibition. The exhibition features short films that reorient dominant narratives; films that are positioned between what could be and what will be.

Collectively, PAAFF and 12G work within the Asian, West Asian, and North African diaspora to produce visual arts programming that is a mirror—a reminder that traditions and experience, whether new, marginal, or erased, not only exist, they also possess imposing beauty that demands our attention.

This year's exhibition centers on three themes: Censorship and Empire; Queer Poetics as Audio/Visual Lexicon; and Migration/Displacement as a Consequence of Colonialism.

The Jury has carefully selected 11 works from hundreds of noteworthy submissions. The exhibiting artists span the SSWANA regions and diasporas, including Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, India, Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Canada, and the US.

ENTRIES



OCCUPYING A CHAIR

E Rady, 2019. United States, 6 min

What does it mean to be part of an empire? The United States is the largest monetary and military supporter of Israel's crimes, so where does that leave those of us whose tax dollars are used for murder and theft? "Occupying a Chair" places the director in a scene resembling an interrogation. There is audio of homes being demolished, weeping, an argument—but the source of these sounds, for a duration of the video, remains hidden—like many truths. And like many truths, it is both an internal and external struggle to reveal them. But with solidarity, no evil can hide.



IMAGINING PALESTINE

Iman Jabrah, 2021 United States, 3 min

"Imagining Palestine" reinforces a conceptual country while questioning how one could manifest a country. Is imagining considered a beginning or a denial of reality? In this abstract short film, Jabrah uses collection of Palestinian keffiyehs and various scarves to create an abstract landscape. Visuals are accompanied by audio containing a Quranic verse about nature. The soundtrack playfully interacts with a man-made country.



AL ALTAL (THE RUINS)

Raed Rafei, 2021. Lebanon, 16 min

In a French travel book to the Middle East, a drawing of an ancient bathhouse sparks a visual poem inspired by the Arab poetic tradition of "standing by the ruins." The ambivalence of the five-hundred-year-old image gestures towards enduring imperial power dynamics. Pleasure and pain, seduction and domination, homoeroticism and violence, archives and ruins, histories of sex and of empire, all commingle in this essay film.

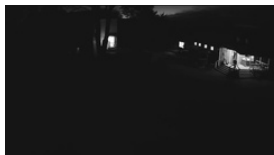


THE MAGIC ROUNDABOUT

Aman Sandhu, 2021. Canada, 12 min

“The Magic Roundabout” uses a notorious traffic intersection in Swindon as a stage for

the of male indiscretions in a local Punjabi family. Shot entirely inside a car driven continuously around the roundabout, the film creates a state of suspension and disorientation while critiquing heteronormative colonial framings of South Asian migrants.

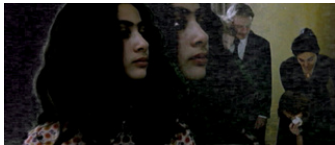


30/900

Shireen Maleki, 2022. United States, 9 min

“30/900” is a poetic exploration of a once familiar and now estranged everyday landscape

behind. The videos read the fragmented experience of an immigrant going through temporary residencies in a forever-liminal otherness between departure and a promised arrival. The textual and visual poetry of this space play with concepts such as separation, language attrition, memory, and—overall—a reflection on the past and present.



CLENCH MY FISTS

Sarah Trad, 2020. United States, 6 min

“Clench My Fists” is a found-footage collage video that explores the process of

growing up in an Arab family deeply affected by death and grief. Using footage from Lebanese films and audio from archival Lebanese funeral laments, the video looks at how men and women express grief and anger under the patriarchy, and the impacts of childhood trauma. “Clench My Fists” is part of a larger body of work that explores how the death of the artist’s grandfather affected her paternal family. It also addresses decolonizing imperialist western understandings of the Middle East and reveals the beauty of the artist’s heritage.

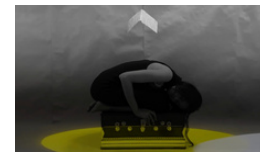


THE RIPTIDE

Nazanin Noroozi, 2021. United States, 5 min

“The Riptide” is a visual short story based on Super 8 movies that Noroozi’s father took in

post-revolution Iran. In this short film, handmade cinema is used as a medium to transform personal and public archives into a narrative told by others addressing trauma and displacement. “The Riptide” consists of over 900 individually painted frames as means of re-imagining history, collective memory, and broken narratives. The found footage and images of forces of nature are manipulated multiple times to explore notions of failure, resistance, and longing. The director’s interest in the archeology of technology results in borrowing elements and graphics of early computer games from the 1980s.

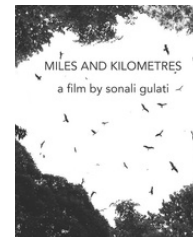


IN A SINGLE THOUGHT

Darkshika Singh, 2020. India, 3 min

How does one exist in isolation, until isolation and one can’t be separated? In the aftermath of

staring at a still scene, the scene comes to life, and one dies. When I spend a year in a room, do I become the room? Does an animal caged at birth, recognize the cage as an extension of self or negation of it? The attempt is to examine the minute, and yet not miss the whole landscape. In the stasis of time, every moment passes by in the dual thesis of examination and observation, and all thought is coming together and breaking with time.



MILES AND KILOMETRES

Sonali Gulati, 2021. United States, 2 min

A lingering haiku poem of migration, separation, dislocation, and exile.

ARTISTS



RAŚMI/RAY

Sarker Protick, 2020. Bangladesh, 9 min

“Constantly delving between the hyperreal-digital and the organic-natural world, “Raśmi” (“ray of light“ in Bangla) becomes a commentary on the duality of contradictory and often overlapping lives.

The images are created out of the everyday, ordinary consequences and the luminous queries about the cosmic. “Raśmi” is an arrangement of images and soundscapes that explores the ideas of personal truth and fiction, a non-geographical non-place that is universal in its stimulation. The immersive soundscape works almost as a narration of the sequence. Between this intricately carved pattern of imagery and sound, one could find oneself seeking hope, to breathe and let go.



COOKBOOK OF GESTURES

Sarah K Khan, 2018. United States, 5 min

The Cookbook of Gestures Series is an homage to the embodied knowledge of women cooks

and farmers. Each “recipe“ holds fifty film clips. Each clip reveals timeless gestures and captures the virtuosity of unsung cooks. There are five recipes in this series. The first four are different breads made in Fez. The last three are the stages required to make a sweet called Gazelle Horns. You see the hands of Najia, a woman of Fez. The aroma wafts out into the street, filling the air with the scent of culture and a history of unsung labor.

E RADY

Ayesha Ali Ahmed is a writer and freelance editor living in Chicago. As a film editor, curator, and journalist, Ahmed uses visual storytelling to enhance understanding of the origins of social stigmas that relate to health, literacy, and cultural mores, particularly for women in the South Asian context.

IMAN JABRAH

Iman Jabrah is a Palestinian-American multidisciplinary artist. Jabrah holds a BFA from Northern Kentucky University and is currently an MFA candidate at China Academy of Art. Iman has performed and exhibited works internationally. As a curator-in-residence at Wave Pool Gallery she showcased a collection of artworks by female and queer Palestinian artists from the West Bank and the diaspora. Jabrah aims to build collaborative cultures and increase exposure to displaced Palestinian artists through shared exhibitions, residencies, and collective projects.

RAED RAFEI

Raed Rafei is a Lebanese filmmaker, researcher, and multimedia journalist. For over ten years, he worked as a Middle East reporter for publications like the Daily Star and the Los Angeles Times, and as a researcher, producer, and director for channels like Al-Jazeera, CNN, and ARTE. Since 2011, Rafei has been making independent hybrid films that screened at international film festivals and received several awards. His films include: 74:The Reconstitution of a Struggle (2012), “Here I am ... Here you are” (2016), and “Salam” (2017). Rafei is currently based in San Francisco. He is a Ph.D. candidate in Film and Digital Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

AMAN SANDHU

Aman Sandhu is an artist working between Glasgow and Montréal. Sandhu studied at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf and holds an MFA from The Glasgow School of Art. Sandhu was awarded the 2020 Emerging Visual Artist Residency at Cove Park, Helensburgh. He was included in Glasgow International 2020/21 and has been engaged in a long-term pedagogical research project with SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre), Toronto since 2020. Sandhu has an upcoming exhibition at Centre Clark, Montreal. Recent solo exhibitions include So Glad (Market Gallery, Glasgow, 2020) and NO MORE ARTISTS (CCA/Intermedia Gallery, Glasgow, 2019). His work has been exhibited at multiple galleries in Canada and globally.

SHIRIN MALEKI

Shirin Maleki is a multimedia visual artist born in Tehran, Iran who is interested in experimental storytelling. She graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2018 where she was able to combine her passion for interdisciplinary fine art by using photography, poetry, and animation. Her work often has an implicit connection with nostalgia and the Anthropocene, invoking a vast range of color and light and sparking ideas about childhood, nature, connection and change. She is interested in the potential of animation as a part of interactive installations to provoke action.

SARAH TRAD

Sarah Trad is a video artist who explores the relationship between subjective and objective emotionality—highlighting how mental illness and coming from marginalized backgrounds intersects with internal emotional worlds. She earned a B.F.A. in Art Film from Syracuse University. Trad is a member of the artist-run gallery, Little Berlin and is currently working to create a technology exchange and rental program between the multiple artist collectives in Philadelphia to promote the exhibition of media art. She has received numerous residencies, awards, and exhibitions, both in the U.S. and Canada. She currently lives and works in Philadelphia, PA.

NAZANIN NOROOZI

Nazanin Noroozi is a multimedia artist who combines moving images, printmaking, and alternative photography processes to reflect on collective memory, displacement, and uncertainty. Noroozi's work has been exhibited at the Immigrant Artist Biennial, Noyes Museum of Art, and Columbia University. She has received multiple awards and fellowships including The New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship. She is an editor at large of Kaarnamaa, a Journal of Art History and Criticism and her work has been featured in diverse publications and platforms. Noroozi completed her MFA from Pratt Institute.

DARSHIKA SINGH

Darshika Singh is a Mumbai-based interdisciplinary artist from Lucknow. She has a diploma in Fine Arts from Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London. She describes her art practice as a process of “seeing,” and believes that all sight must start from observing the mundane, then elevating into the “essential” of things. Her art is an attempt to translate this essential sight into a world filled with its own symbology and metaphysics that can contain and exist simultaneously both inside and outside the perceptible world.

SARKER PROTICK

Sarker Protick combines the roles of an image-maker, teacher, and curator. His works revolve around temporality, materiality, and metaphysics. Working with photography, video, and sound, Protick has formed a series of works that are built on long-term surveys of Bangladesh, which explore ideas that blurs the notion of geopolitical boundaries. Protick was the recipient of Light Work Residency and a participant in the Joop Swart Masterclass. He has exhibited in museums, galleries and festivals. Sarker Protick is a faculty member of Pathshala South Asian Media Institute and Co-curator at Chobi Mela International Festival of Photography.

JURY

SONALI GULATI

Sonali Gulati is an independent filmmaker, feminist, queer rights activist, and educator. She teaches film at Virginia Commonwealth University's School of the Arts. Gulati grew up in New Delhi and has made several films—including her award-winning documentary film *I Am*—that have screened at over four hundred film festivals, at multiple venues such as the Hirshhorn Museum and the National Museum of Women in the Arts and been broadcast globally. Gulati is a Guggenheim Fellow. She has received support for her work from numerous foundations and nonprofits and gained recognition through multiple awards and fellowships.

SARAH K KHAN

Sarah K Khan uses food to provoke thought about injustice towards people and the planet. A multi-media maker and scholar from Mangla, Pakistan, she uses photography, films, print-making, maps, and writing to explore food, culture, women, migration, and identity in urban and rural environments. Khan researches and documents the lives of ordinary people who are extraordinary. She engages slowly and regards her subjects with empathy and respect. The subjects and subject matter, real or conjured, are complex individuals dealing with the challenges of life. Khan's work captures a moment—revealing the emotions, lived experiences, and humanity of those she encounters.

Ayesha Ali Ahmed is a writer, curator, and freelance editor living in Chicago.

Jenna Hamed is an artist and art worker based in Queens.

Mir Masud-Elias is a poet, lawyer and immigrant in the US from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

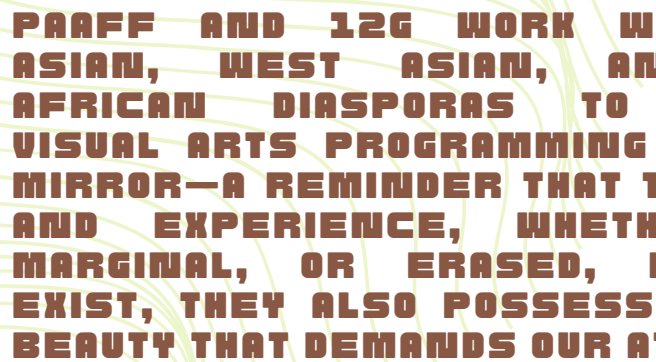
Atif Sheikh is a 12G co-founder and resident curator.

Anula Shetty is an award-winning filmmaker and new media artist.

Ayesha Syed is the Social Media Manager at 12G. She is pursuing a masters in Textile Design at Jefferson University.

Jaret Vadera is a transdisciplinary artist living and working between New York and Montreal.

Arzhang Zafar is a writer and film programmer. He serves as a programming director for the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival.



PAAFF AND 12G WORK WITHIN THE ASIAN, WEST ASIAN, AND NORTH AFRICAN DIASPORAS TO PRODUCE VISUAL ARTS PROGRAMMING THAT IS A MIRROR—A REMINDER THAT TRADITIONS AND EXPERIENCE, WHETHER NEW, MARGINAL, OR ERASED, NOT ONLY EXIST, THEY ALSO POSSESS IMPOSING BEAUTY THAT DEMANDS OUR ATTENTION.

Twelve Gates Arts (12G) is an art gallery that uplifts South & West Asian diasporic artistic production within Philadelphia's cultural ecosystem. 12G programming focuses on an emerging art landscape that maps the cultures of migration, inclusive of the systems that influence it: race, gender, creed, empire, and economy. A nod to the archetypal fortified walls that surround medieval cities worldwide, our namesake underlies our exhibitions and public events, which celebrate the melange of cultural identity that foment as peoples move and settle.

The Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival (PAAFF) is dedicated to supporting and highlighting the experiences of Asian and Pacific Islander diaspora through creative community-focused programs. PAAFF is currently the third-largest film festival of its kind in the United States. In addition to our film programs, our volunteer-run organization also presents supporting programming such as live performances, chef demonstrations, panels and lectures, and educational workshops during the festival and throughout the year. The 2022 festival runs from November 3rd to the 13th.