



The Song, 2022, video still

On Screen

Bani Abidi
17.01.2025

Curated by:
Chris Bestebreurtje and Petra Kuipers

Artist talk by:
Sam Steverlynck

Tlön Projects is thrilled to announce On Screen Bani Abidi. On Screen consists of a series of screenings of artists' films at De Uitkijk in Amsterdam – the Netherlands' first avant-garde cinema. The screenings will take place on Friday evenings and start at 21:00. Each evening will be dedicated to the oeuvre of a single artist whose works are part of Tlön Projects' *imaginary collection*. The programme was compiled by curators Chris Bestebreurtje and Petra Kuipers in close cooperation with the artists.

Video art has been an integral part of art production since the 1960s. Artists often use the medium more experimentally than mainstream directors. They are less bound by conventions such as commercial film durations or plot and can also present different kinds of narratives. Various perspectives can be combined by working with multiple screens. Or the artists focus on formal parameters such as time, light or the physical characteristics of celluloid. Sometimes other disciplines are involved such as performance, or settings, costumes or music are used which have often been created especially for the occasion.

Although video art is commonly displayed in white cubes, with or without other media, we have consciously opted for a black cube. Watching a film together in a cinema is one of the few collective experiences left in our individualised society. Sat in silence with a group, watching the same film provides connection. And an opportunity for dialogue, as afterwards Sam Steverlynck, curator at S.M.A.K. in Ghent, will talk to the artists. Besides a Q & A after the artists' talk, the audience can also exchange ideas whilst enjoying a drink in the lobby.

Bani Abidi (1971) lives and works in her home town Karachi and in Berlin. She draws, photographs, films and builds installations. Her work often centres on the founding of Pakistan and the latter's search for its own identity after decades of conflict and geopolitical tension. Although India and Pakistan were historically and socio-economically close, both countries started emphasising their unicity after the partition in 1947, as becomes apparent from *Mangoes* (1999). In this short film an Indian and a Pakistani woman, both played by Abidi, eat a mango, a popular fruit in the two countries. However both do their utmost to emphasise local differences and outdo the other.

Abidi analyses various forms of nationalism, patriotism and traces of post-colonial heritage. Other common themes in her work include identity, migration, borders, displacement and various kinds of intercultural exchange and diplomacy. A good example of this being *The Song* (2022), in which an elderly immigrant misses the chaos and noise of his homeland in his modern

flat in Berlin and comes up with an ingenious solution.

Abidi tackles major, existential questions using small observations, anecdotes or details from daily life. She translates these questions into often short, dense films characterised by imagination, humour and a dash of absurdity. Her work displays empathy, humanism and also often poetic resistance such as is the case with the recent series of drawings *Trembling Hands* (2024) that refers to people who decry the conflict in Gaza in an emotional, yet courageous manner. It's a continuation of *The man who talked until he disappeared* (2009 – 2021), a series of portraits of human rights activists and journalists who are viewed as a threat by the Pakistani state.



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Venue:

Filmtheater De Uitkijk
Prinsengracht 452, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Starting time:

21:00

Reserve your ticket [here](#)

Generously supported by:

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