

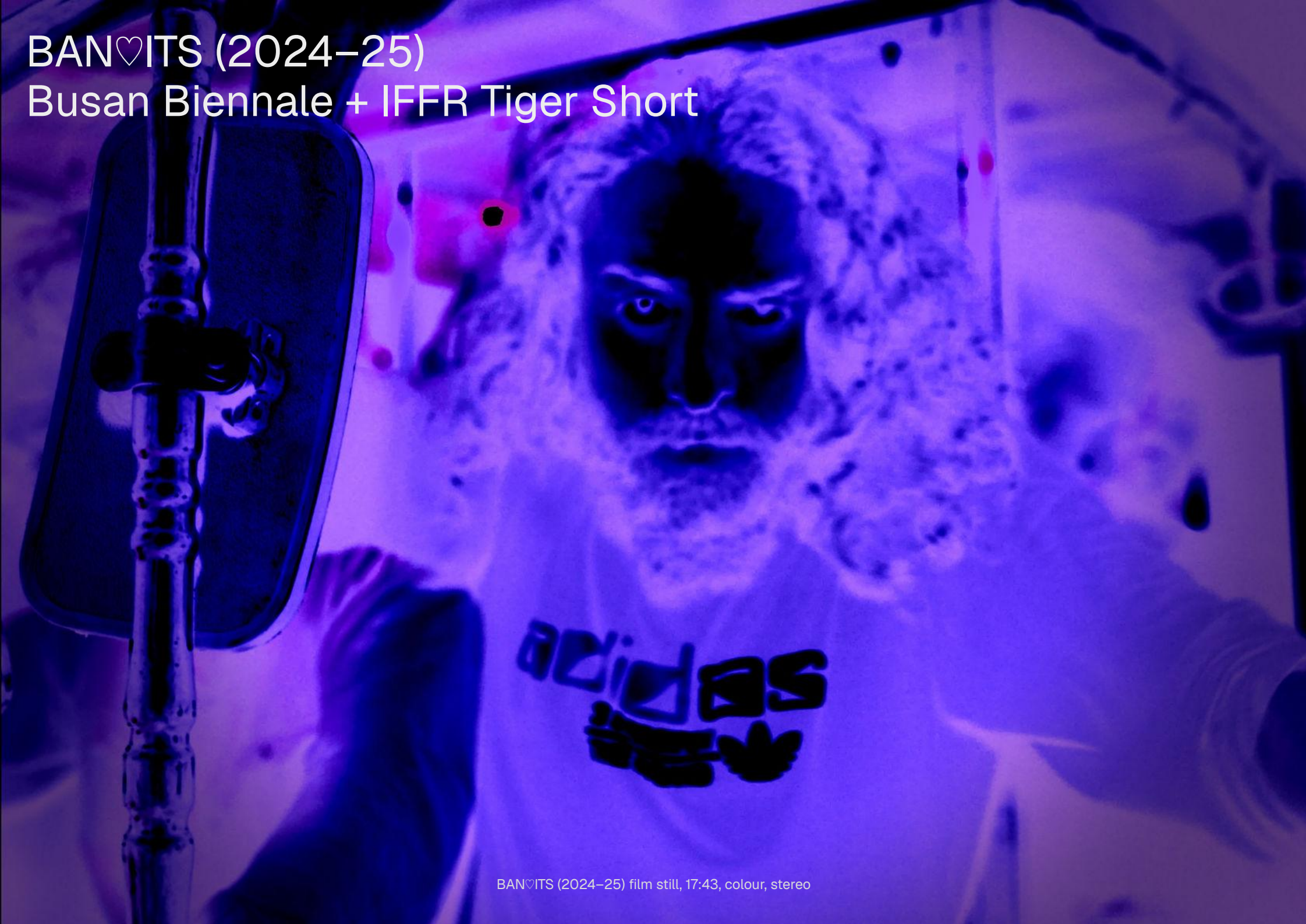
Omar Chowdhury (BD, BE, AU, 1984)
Selected Works 2026



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BAN♥ITS (2024–25)
Busan Biennale + IFFR Tiger Short



BAN♥ITS (2024–25) film still, 17:43, colour, stereo



Our wives are at home
praying to different gods

우리 아내들은 집에서 각자의 신에게 기도하고

Installation at Busan Biennale 2024, BAN♡ITS (2024–25), 17:43, colour, stereo,
Aluminium and Mesh Pavilion, JBL PartyBox Speakers, LED Lighting



[View video documentation](#)

Installation at Busan Biennale 2024, BAN♡ITS (2024-25), 17:43, colour, stereo,
Aluminium and Mesh Pavilion, JBL PartyBox Speakers, LED Lighting

Out near the lawless eastern borderlands of Bangladesh, a diasporic artist returns to make a film with a crew of washed-up ban♥its obsessed with Heath Ledger's Joker. As they comically reenact their romanticised past, we confront the divergent histories and philosophies of peasant banditry as political resistance.

Presented on a large LED wall inside a stylised village pavilion, *BAN♥ITS (2024–25)* combines cinema, ceremony and party. Flashing lights animate the roof; speakers burn beside the screen. The installation becomes both social space and stage set, while the work musically asks its central question: when the art world comes calling, who are the real ban♥its?

The bandits occupy every frame as “knowing” subjects, spraying slogans, philosophies and nihilistic declarations across the screen. Their wiry leader emerges as prophet, performer and political theorist, insisting that their failed and increasingly inert violence remains a form of revolution. Extremely unserious, serious people, in other words. But revolutionaries have always been a little theatrical. Revolutions still happen.

The artist remains physically absent but verbally present: an interloper, a pariah and a minor agent of exoticism. The bandits casually discuss murdering him for his possessions, yet he cannot quite transform their boasts into heroic cinema. Unable to verify their mythology, he turns to their soliloquies to fill the vacuum where his own art is supposed to be.



[View complete film](#)

BAN♥ITS (2024–25), 17:43, colour, stereo



They say that the civilized eat each other
문명인들은 서로를 잡아먹는다고 해



We are agents of chaos but order needs chaos
우린 혼돈의 대리인인데, 질서는 혼돈이 필요해

ArtReview Busan Biennale Review: Artistic Privilege Is Swept Aside



Installation and crowd interaction at Busan Biennale 2024

Iddddd (2023) Contour Biennale 10, Martins+Montero



Performance documentation, Iddddd (2023), five performers



Installation view Contour Biennale 10, Iddddd (2023), five performers, PVC cards, card dispenser, acetate laser etchings and LED wall segment with 3:45 video.



[View video documentation](#)

Iddddd (2023) is an installation and performance in which the artist and four dancers attempt pickpocketing techniques on unsuspecting museum visitors. However, instead of stealing, they discreetly ‘gift’ an object. The work turns theft into a delayed, uncertain encounter: visitors may only realise later, while checking a pocket or bag, that they have been drawn into an act of intimacy. At its most precarious, the action results in a performer being caught; trained by a viral Tik Tok logic of de-escalation, they look into the visitor’s eyes, dance, or say, “I’m just trying to make a living.”

A scenography of works spreads this action through a busy transitional museum space, creating isolated pockets in which attention is diverted by passers-by and a catchy Hindi music video. Five acetate etchings on the back wall of a glass elevator mimic grocery-store wanted posters, showing security images of the performers alongside their sex and race. Above them, a bright LED screen resembling a train-station information display loops a Hindi tune about love and trust. At unpredictable moments it freezes on “ATTENTION,” while a disembodied voice calls “attenzione” and “gifters”.

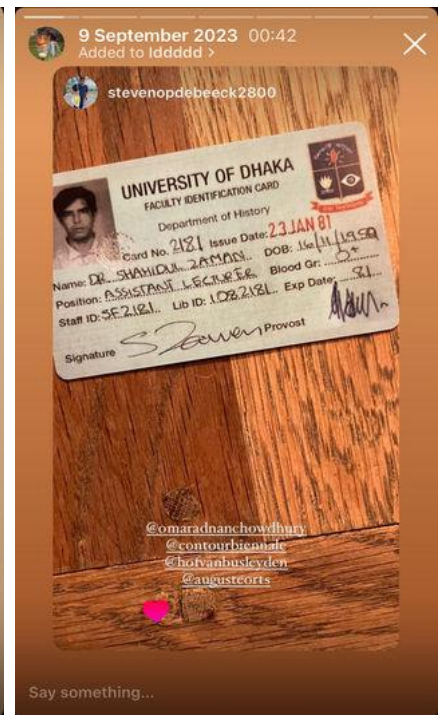
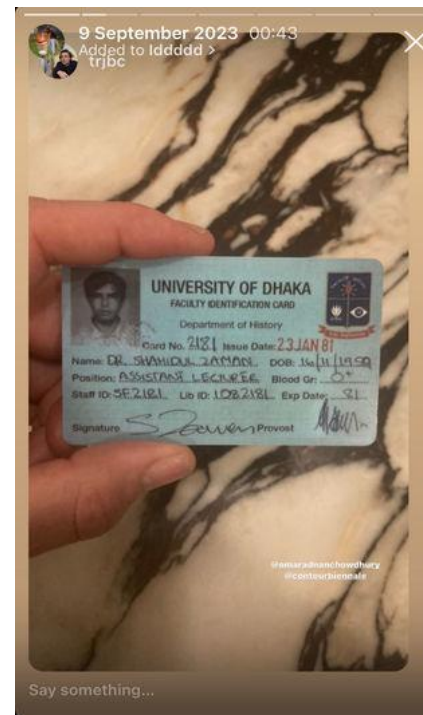
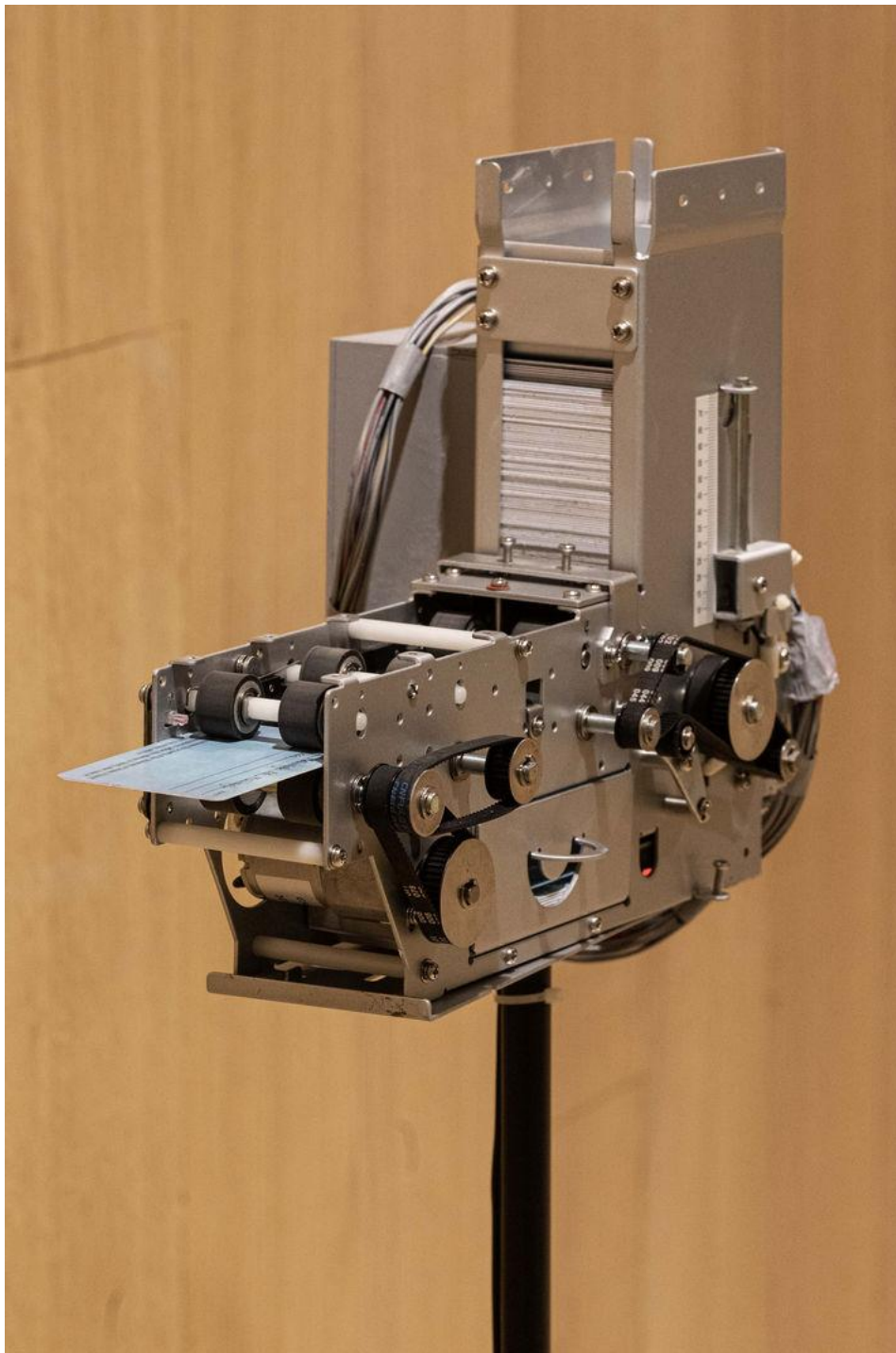
The work draws on a viral Italian meme of a far-right-associated woman who ‘warns’ Venice tourists about pickpockets. Disassembled machinery, acting as a ‘fence’ for the gifters, dispenses a facsimile of a University of Dhaka identification card for Dr Shahidul Zaman. A mystery. Multiple cameras surveil the performers as they prowl, offering glimpses. In *Iddddd*, surveillance, vulnerability and performance unsettle the line between social contact and violation: the political battle may be dismantled, but the war over intimacy has not.



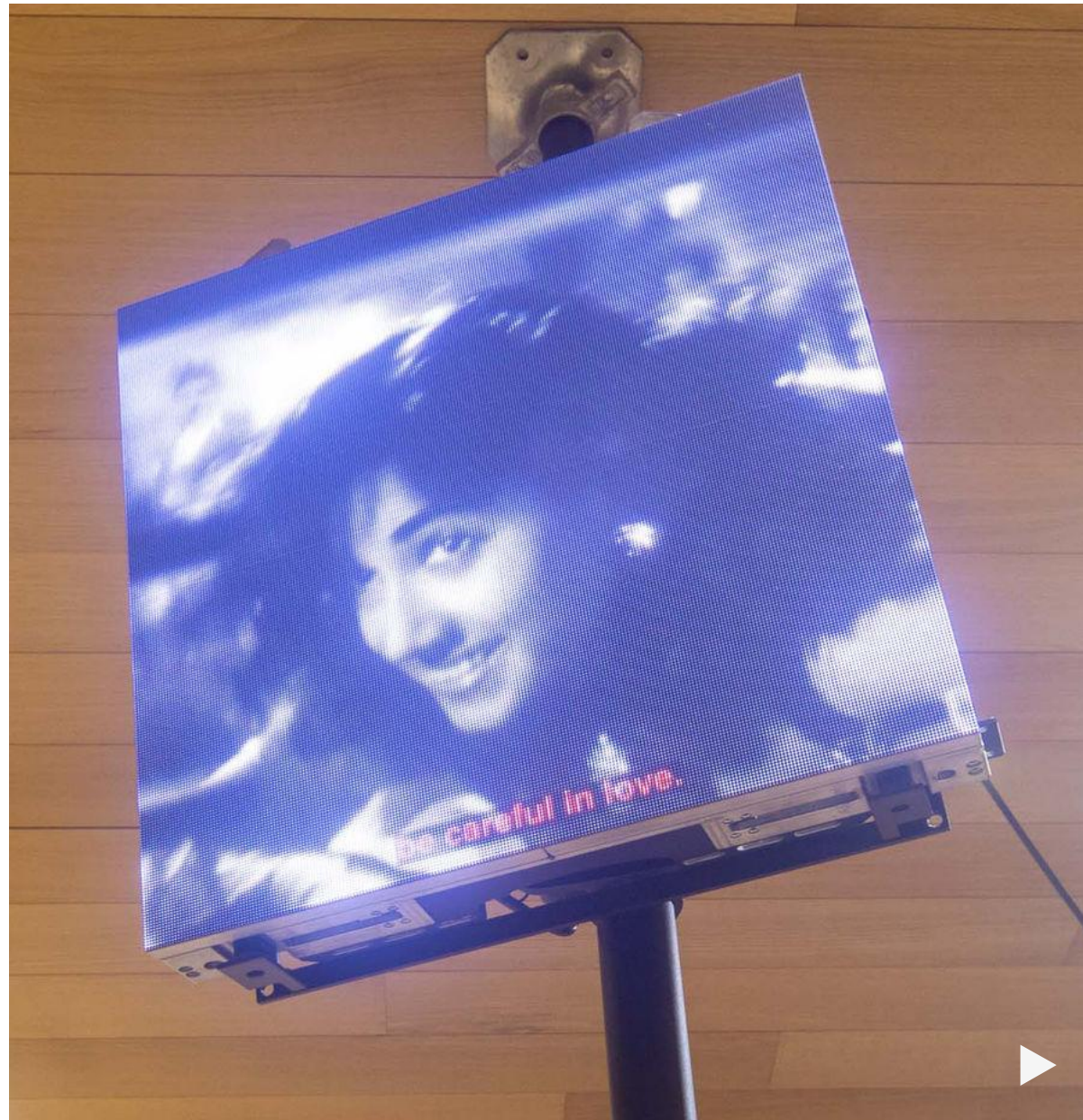
Performance documentation,
ddddd (2023), 5 performers



Wanted (2023), 29.7 × 21 cm, 5 acetate laser etchings



Left: Fence (2023), card dispenser and PVC identification cards. Right: visitors' Instagram posts showing cards received during the performance.



[Watch performance video](#)

Faydabad For-Sale (2023) Ke Ba Kahara, Dhaka Art Summit





Shroud (2023), 50' x 50' x 22', Hessian, mild steel, black dye, hand-tied and altered
Removal (2021-23), variable dimensions, removal of electrical items, removal of electricity, removal of cleaning schedules

At one of architect Marina Tabassum's earliest buildings, the looped performance *Faydabad For-Sale (2023)* unfolds through architectural interventions, video projections and death-metal music. Five performers move in synchrony with a guitarist's death-metal score to explore the tangled history of an imported modernism and its obsolescence amid Bangladesh's urban transformation.

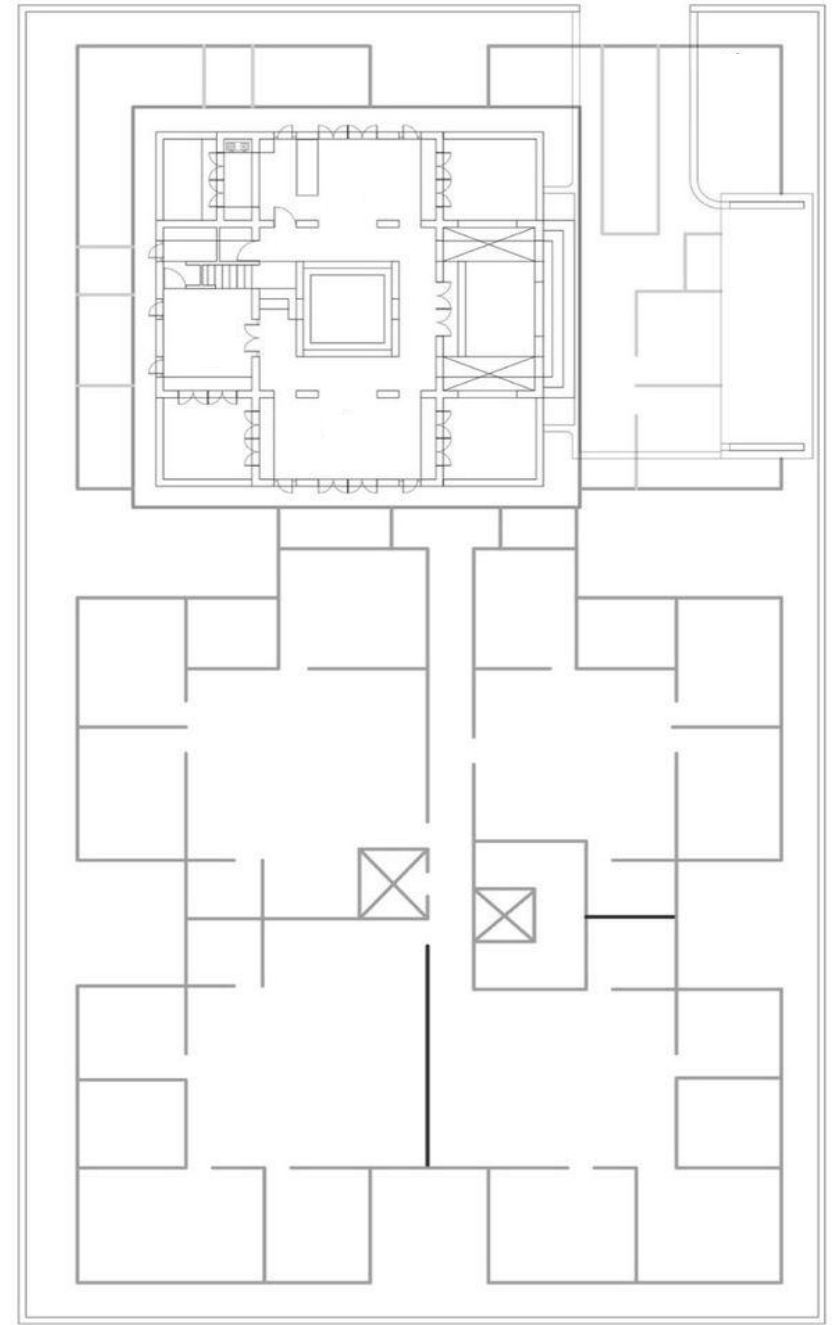
Faydabad For-Sale (2023) is the second performance and installation staged at Tabassum's abandoned early modernist property on the edge of Dhaka. Stripped of its fittings and enclosed in a metal frame and black hessian shroud, the building awaits demolition. In its place, a real-estate company proposes a contemporary block of forty flats. A sign proudly displays its 3D model, while pink Puma tape traces the proposed building at full scale across the existing site.

A salesman, an architect and a caretaker attempt to make a final sale. Their choreography is timed by a shadowy guitarist on the roof, whose death-metal compositions wash over the building through three enormous speakers. The performers follow separate paths, sometimes converging as scenes unfold simultaneously throughout the site. At the end, they return to their starting positions and begin again. Repeated four times, the work reveals different moments with each iteration while ensuring something else is always missed, producing a strange fusion of nostalgia and persistent FOMO.

Performed in Bangla, the work is accompanied by a printed translation followed like a libretto. Upstairs, a video shows an early reading by the actors; downstairs, a large projection presents the first performance in the series, staged years earlier.



Performance documentation, Faydabad For-Sale (2023).



Outline (2023), 149' × 79' × 14", nylon webbing, bamboo stakes and nails; full-scale superimposition of the proposed building over the existing site

he ba hahara

FAYDABAD FOR-SALE PERFORMANCE OMAR A. CHOWHURY 5 FEB, 2 PM BAITUR RAUF MOSQUE

5th of february 2023

A performance and installation
melding Dhaka metal music and
abandoned architecture

2pm

Visit Baitur Rauf Jame Masjid
faydabad, Dakhkhin Khan

3-4:30pm Performance at Rauf's Villa (Tabassum)

hebahahara.com/faydabad

hebahahara@gmail.com

01750 910 204



[Watch performance video](#)





Billboard (2023), 8' x 4' x 1.5", vinyl print, PVC board, steel



Echo, Saturn (II)— The Courts (2021) Annet Gelink Gallery



Barrister's Coat (2021), 55 cm × 110 cm × 10 cm black UK barrister/graduation gown, 3 UV orange fishing hooks

Echo, Saturn (II)—The Courts (2021) overlays the working spaces of Annet Gelink Gallery with fragments of the Rajshahi law courts and archive: a city within a city. The reception, offices, kitchen and basement remain in use, while taking on the atmosphere of crowded lawyers' chambers, tea stalls, barred windows and deteriorating archives where papers disappear and petitioners wait. Gallery employees are recontextualised as visitors move between these two institutions, cities and moments in time. Bureaucracy emerges not as an abstract system but as a condition of delay, repetition and obstruction. Memory accumulates and every attempt to negate the past sinks one further into it.

Visitors encounter fragments: a barrister's gown hangs in a passageway, tea is served in clay cups, a security grill replaces a window, and a ceiling fan turns overhead. Downstairs, mobile shelving, ageing papers, cabinet doors and broken handcuffs evoke the administrative viscosity of an archive slowly falling apart. The exhibition is haunted by Dr Shahidul Zaman, who visits the law courts of Rajshahi in the early 1980s, searching for the deeds to family land he hopes to sell to finance his emigration to Europe. Missing documents lead back to Partition, forced migration and an exchange of property between Hindu and Muslim families.

A ruptured voice arrives through headphones and an FM transmission disturbed by interference; two synchronised CRT monitors show silent images from Rajshahi; photographs recur like uncertain evidence. Moving through spaces normally hidden behind the gallery's public face, the visitor becomes part client, part witness and part intruder. The exhibition produces a dissociative haunting in which memory, migration and bureaucracy become impossible to separate—and the past refuses to let its subjects leave.



installation view, Barrister's Coat (2021), Removal #2 (2021), The Courts (seating)
(2021), The Courts (film) (2021), Blue Fan (2021)



Cha (2021), variable dimensions, 20 cm diameter metal kettle from Pakistan, wooden spoon, whisk, 8 cm diameter mesh kitchen sieve, single electrical hob, 40 cm × 30 cm sheet metal tray with exposed welds, 80 Kulhad unglazed clay cups, Stanley thermos, proprietary ingredients in glass containers, recipe on note paper and envelope 10 cm × 15 cm.



The Courts (film) (2021), dual-channel, 3:51, 4:3, colour, ProRes, no sound; two synchronised Hantarex 28" monitors and two media players.



Archive Vinyl (2021), Couplings (2021), Transcript FM Radio Broadcast 2016 (2021)



Archive shelving (2021), 160 cm × 200 cm × 232 cm, mobile metal archive shelving, book supports, tea-soaked paper folder, old papers circa 1940, organising paper labels



The Courts (cabinet facade) (2021), 88 cm × 136 cm × 18 cm, steel cabinet doors, silver spray paint, scratches, orange hook, broken and bent handcuffs, small screw.



Mother (2021), 29.7 cm × 21 cm × 3 cm, aluminium-framed D-print photograph on archival semi-gloss paper with reflective glass



Ajar (2021), variable dimensions, blue filter, storage door left ajar and screwed in, radio playing All India Radio (Kolkata)



The Courts (grill) (2021), 138.5 cm × 92 cm × 5 cm, galvanised steel security grill, welds, wooden banister, silver paint, metal bolts.
Removal (2021), removed large glass window from founder's office.



Barristers (2021), 66 cm × 61 cm × 3 cm, aluminium information frame with D-Print photograph on archival semi-gloss paper, keys, glass doors left ajar.



Chambers (2021), 15 cm × 45 cm × 2.5 cm, CNC machined oak wood, wood stain, metal fitting.



Land Images (some time apart) (2021), 2 × (21 cm × 29.7 cm × 3 cm), aluminium framed D-Print photographs on archival semi-gloss paper.



Rope and Chains (2021), 50 cm × 40 cm × 3 cm, aluminium framed D-Print photograph on archival semi-gloss paper.

Age of Saturn (2016) Bengal Foundation



Reflection of Lightbox (Absence) (2016), 6.5 ft x 4.8 ft x 7 in., inkjet prints on PVC, double-sided aluminium frame, fluorescent tubes



System Decay and Its Origins (2016), installation view. Variable dimensions: two soldiers in uniform, microphone, headphones playing Memoirs.mp3, sound mixer, two media players, 40-inch television playing Heuristics.mp4, security camera and monitor, and plinth with Text (Memoirs of Saturn)



Lightbox (Disillusionment) (2016), installation view, 213 × 152 × 152 cm, inkjet prints on PVC, double-sided aluminium frame, fluorescent tubes and rusted metal stand with bolts

Age of Saturn (2016) is a two-floor parafictional exhibition in which a diasporic artist attempts to recover his broken relationship to Bengal through the political historian Dr Shahidul Zaman. Film, illuminated portraits, staged photographs, family documents, collages, sculpture and performance reconstruct lives shaped by Partition, political violence, exile and return. Yet every apparent piece of evidence is troubled by substitution: memories contradict documents, private lives merge with public history and fact becomes inseparable from invention.

At its centre, the film and mirroring text, both titled *Memoirs of Saturn*, follow a solitary figure—performed by the artist Dhali Al Mamoon—moving through apartments, classrooms, streets and archives. Around the film, monumental light-boxes confront intimate photographs, publications and archival composites. Organised into unstable temporal states, events separated by decades coexist as fragments of one unsettled present. In *System Decay and Its Origins*, uniformed soldiers classify visitors, grant or refuse access, direct selected people to read aloud and return their recorded speech to the installation. Colonial administration becomes a bodily encounter in which the viewer is made subject, witness and participant.

Shortly after opening in Dhaka, the exhibition was dismantled amid opaque pressure surrounding its treatment of Bangladesh's post-independence history. Its uncertain closure echoed the work itself: censorship became another missing document, disputed memory and invisible force. This experience generated the wider Saturn cycle, in which whatever is repressed returns—altered, doubled and increasingly difficult to leave behind.



Lightbox (Exile, Now) (2016), front and reverse installation views, 180 × 146 × 25.4 cm, inkjet prints on PVC, double-sided aluminium frame and fluorescent tubes



Installation view of Film (Memoirs of Saturn) (2016), 51:00, ProRes 422, colour, stereo; projection, stereo speakers and used benches



[Watch complete film](#)

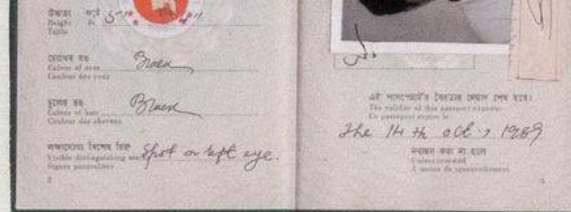
Film (Memoirs of Saturn) (2016), variable dimensions, 51:00, ProRes 422
(delivery in H.264 MOV), colour, stereo, used benches.



Photograph (Future) (2016), 122 cm × 96 cm, Inkjet print on archival photo paper



Clockwise from upper left: Photograph (Pre-history) (2016), Combine (Pre-history 2) (2016),
Combine (Disillusionment) (2016), Photograph (Disillusionment) (2016)



U.

- (4) সে পৌঁছেলেন, সে আমাদের সাথে থাকবে এই মাসে, হতে পারে পরের মাসেও। আমি অনেক খুশি যেহেতু বাচ্চাটা অনেক বিরক্ত করছিল। তোমার ভাইও আজকাল বেশ সময় বাসায় থাকছে। নতুন অনেক আসবাবপত্র কেনা হচ্ছে এবং পুরোনো গুলো মেরামত করছে। এখানে এখন খুব ব্যস্ত সময়। আমি আশা করছি যে তুমি ভাল আছো এবং আরও বেশি করে লিখতে পারছ। আমি ভাল আছি, আতিক ও তাই।

আমি তোমাকে সত্য কথাই বলতে চাই। তুমি কোথায় চলে গেছ? আমি তোমাকে সব চেনা জায়গায় খুঁজেছি, তুমি সেখানে নেই। তুমি কোথায় চলে গেছ? তুমি কি আমাকে ছেড়ে চলে গেছ? আমার সব কিছু খেমে গেছে এবং আমি ওই স্মৃতি নিয়ে বেঁচে আছি। এটাই কি হওয়ার ছিল? পলায়ন? আমি গত মাসে দুবার ফোন করেছি কিন্তু বন্ধ ছিল। একজন মহিলা ধরেছিল, বলেছে হয়ত ভুল নাম্বার। আমি কি ভুল নাম্বারে ফোন করেছিলাম? আমি তোমাকে সব কিছু দিয়েছি, বিনিময়ে পেয়েছি নিঃসঙ্গতা...

মিতা আক্তার জামান
মার্চ ১৮, ১৯৮৩
রাজশাহী

- (5) Another one of those days. There's no noise here. Speaking in some alien voice. Eggs, milk, flour, the rotis I make are terrible. Better to just stick to their bread. There's only one thing to look forward to but I don't know if it is even real.

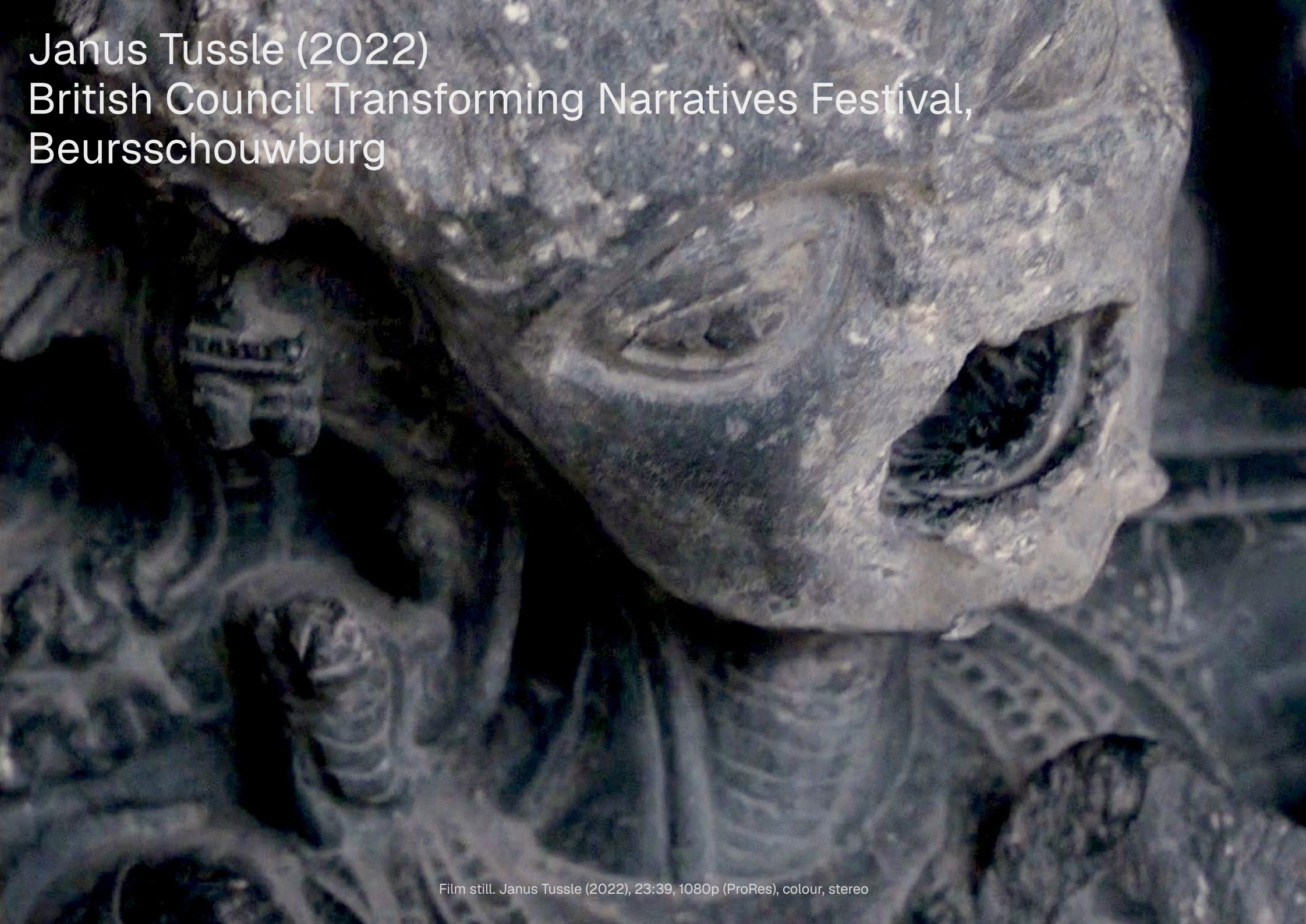
(1) The passport Dr. Zaman used on his first trip overseas. Issued 1979.
(2) Mita Zaman and Dr. Zaman on a trip to Moscow in, I think, 1988.
(3) Atiqur Zaman, born November 1980. He is at Columbia studying Art History now. Dr. Zaman and he are estranged.
(4) A letter from Mita Apa to Dr. Zaman (used with her permission). He and she are now estranged. My translation: 'has arrived and will be staying with us for this month and most probably the next one. I am very happy as the baby is demanding much time. Your brother is also at home more these days and is doing repairs and purchasing new furniture. It is very active these days here. I am hoping that you are well and that you are writing more these days. I'm well and so is Atiq. Yet not everything is alright. I have to tell you the truth. ... Where have you gone? I look in the familiar places and you are not there. Where have you gone? Have you left me? Everything for me has stopped and I'm living in those memories. It was worth it? To escape? I tried to calling two times last month and the number is not good. One woman answered, said probably wrong number. Did I call wrong number? I give my everything to you and I hear only this silence. ... Mita Akther Zaman, March 18, 1983, Rajshahi.
(5) Extract from Dr. Zaman's very limited diary, 30 August 1983.





Installation view, Age of Saturn (2016), Bengal Foundation, Dhaka

Janus Tussle (2022)
British Council Transforming Narratives Festival,
Beursschouwburg



Film still. Janus Tussle (2022), 23:39, 1080p (ProRes), colour, stereo

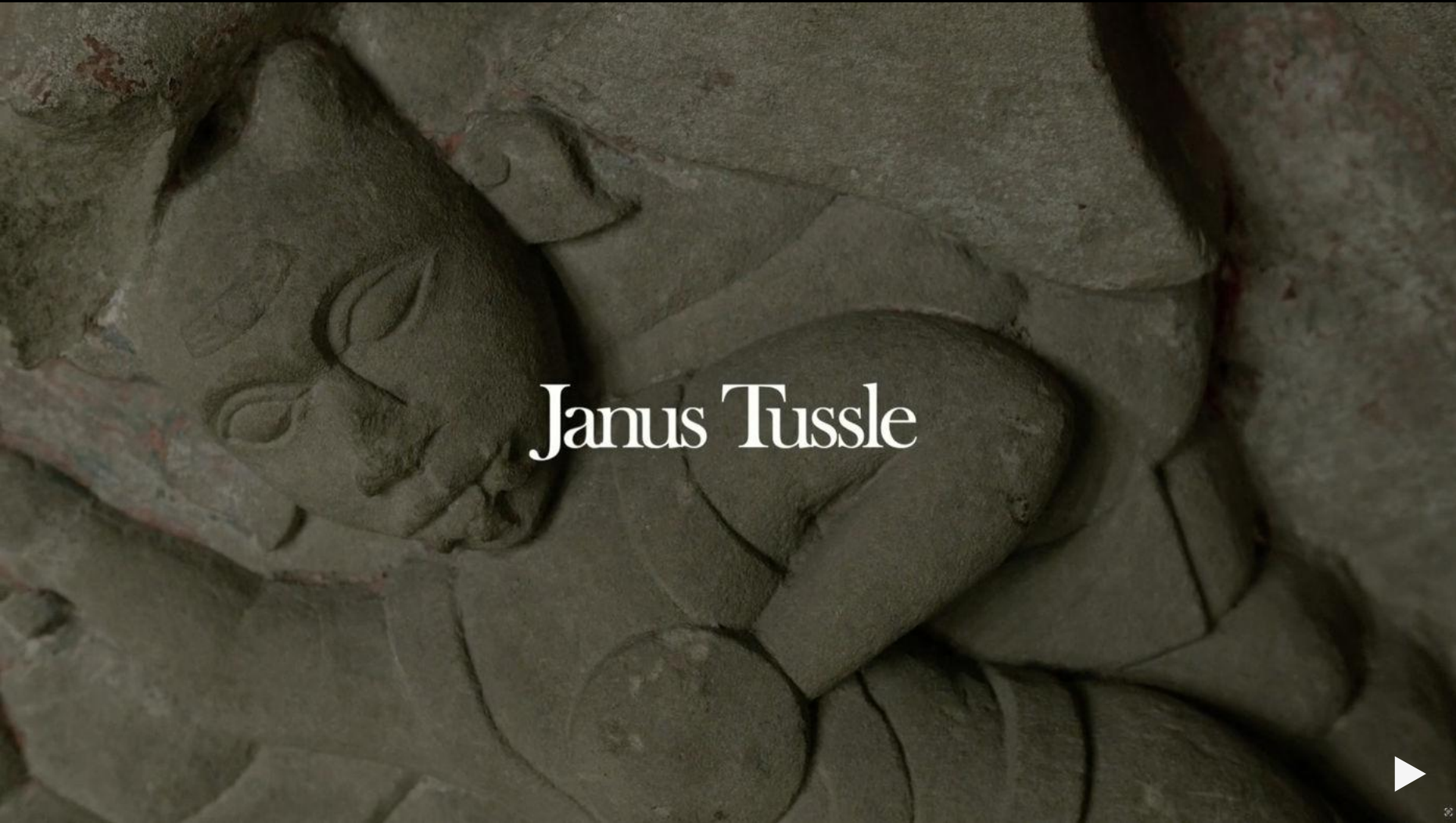
Janus Tussle (2022) is a film that investigates through structuralist techniques the aftermath and intrigue of a failed exhibition of priceless antiquities between Dhaka and Paris. Two anonymous, visually concealed sources offer conflicting accounts of what happened, shaped by rumour, political conviction and personal responsibility. Their stories involve street protests by enraged activists, priceless objects stolen and damaged by baggage handlers, the resignation of a culture minister and the sudden death of a young Bengali diplomat.

The exhibition was opposed as an unequal and potentially dangerous transaction: the antiquities were undervalued, their safe return appeared uncertain and the terms of exchange seemed to reproduce an older colonial imbalance. The film gradually complicates this account. The French institution becomes both antagonist and convenient proxy, while responsibility disperses across opaque government negotiations, neglected museums, cultural administrators and a civil society more capable of resisting an external threat than confronting its own structural failures.

Moving through obscured testimony, museum interiors and fragmentary historical traces, *Janus Tussle* is less concerned with establishing exactly what happened than with how the incident is remembered and what each participant needs it to mean. What remains is a postcolonial mystery in which exchange, trust, protection and abandonment become difficult to distinguish, still haunted by an unjust and traumatic past.



Film stills. Janus Tussle (2022)



Janus Tussle

[View complete film](#)

Full film. Janus Tussle (2022), 23:39, 1080p (ProRes), colour, stereo



Film stills. Janus Tussle (2022)

Faydabad To-Let (2021) Ke Ba Kahara, Dhaka



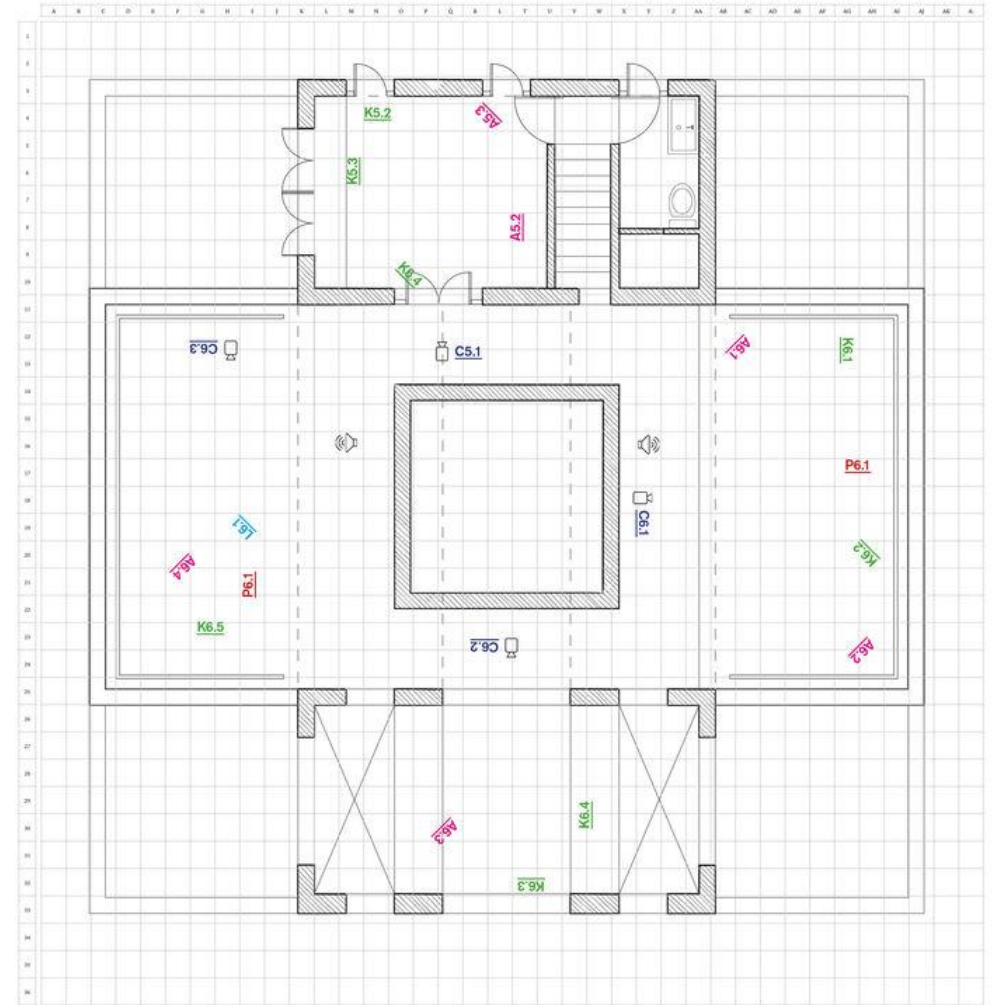
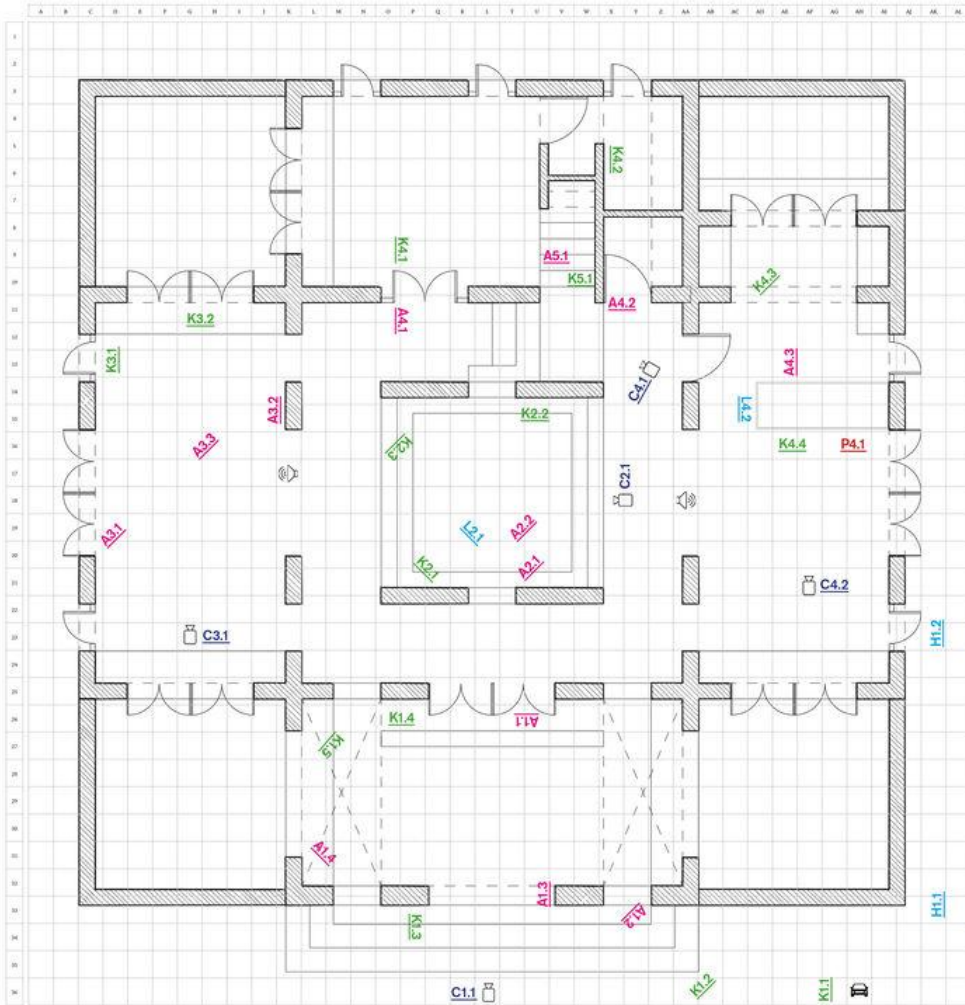
Faydabad To-Let (2021) is the first performance and installation in the Faydabad series, staged at a neglected modernist house by Bengali architect Marina Tabassum on the edge of Dhaka. Two performers, carrying scripts and following marks etched onto the floor, rehearse a scene in which one desperately tries to rent the house from the other. Drawing on regional theatre and the conventions of a property viewing, the performance uses each room and architectural feature to explore the introduction of modernism to Bengal, its possibilities and its entanglement with the difficult history of the state.

As the performers walk, sit and drink tea, the prospective renter imagines the life the house might contain. In reality, the building was unwanted and had fallen into disuse; nobody had been able to live there, and suspicions surrounded it. The renter nevertheless invests it with his ambitions. His optimism produces a melancholy reflection on the hopes carried by architects who brought Western modernism to the region, and on what remains when those ideas fail to take root.

Moving from outside to inside and from room to room, the performers continually displace the audience, which must find new ways to position itself within the building. The performers are miked, casting their voices through the rooms even when they cannot be seen. Pages from the eventual deed they sign— containing several strange conditions—hang on the walls. Outside, a small “To-Let” sign displays a mobile telephone number: an inconspicuous intervention that transforms the abandoned building into something apparently available, and changes how visitors understand the site.



[Watch documentation video](#)





Residue (2021), Chalk, vinyl stickers
 Sign (2020), 40 × 28 cm, aluminium sheet, paint, string

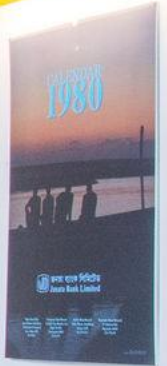


Performance documentation, Faydabad To-Let (2021), 29:22.



Marina Tabassum's house, Faydabad, Dhaka — the setting of Faydabad To-Let (2021) and For-Sale (2023). Reference photograph, c. 2011. © Marina Tabassum
Deeds (2021) (6), 32 cm × 21 cm, Legal deed paper, printing, stamps, signature, biro

Echo, Saturn (III) (2020) Majhi Residency, Berlin



Installation view of Echo, Saturn (III) (Artist Interview) and Calendar (2020) at How to Shape a Society of Care? On Kinship and Multiple Homes, Der Bogen, Berlin.



Echo, Saturn (Artist Interview) (2020), film still. Performed by Omar Chowdhury and Z. Elders;
single-channel video, colour, stereo. Video on request

The Echo, Saturn (III) (2020) installation brings together *Echo*, *Saturn (Artist Interview)*, a staged exchange performed with curator Z. Elders, with two copies of a reconstructed 1980 Janata Bank calendar ostensibly drawn from Dr Shahidul Zaman's archive. A familiar promotional format turns against its subject: the interviewer presses the artist on the unequal economies of working in Bangladesh, his diasporic authority, cultural appropriation, his use of collaborators' memories and the slippage between parafiction and deception. The questions are often rude, confronting and incriminating.

The calendars make this uncertainty physical. Across thirteen pages, the same May–June spread recurs almost unchanged; a river scene and the phrase “The beauty of a river cruise” appear, disappear and shift position, turning a mundane corporate object into a faulty instrument of recall. One copy is shown closed beneath yellow light and another opened elsewhere in the building, while the interview and its printed transcript separate speech from evidence. The curator Z. Elders put strict contractual limits on the work: permission must be asked for every two years, the work cannot be videotaped, the captions must say “Performed by Omar Chowdhury and Z. Elders.”

Together, the works ask whether another person's archive can ever be borrowed without being transformed—and whether acknowledging the violence of authorship undoes it, or simply absorbs criticism back into the work.

CALENDAR 1980

জনতা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
Janata Bank Limited

Dhaka Head Office
Janata Bhaban (16th Floor),
110 Motijheel Commercial
Area, Dhaka-1000
02-956086

Chittagong Head Branch
Lalbagh East Branch, Lal
Dighi Par Rd.,
Chattogram-4000
31-611375

Sylhet Head Branch
Tuker Bazar, Jalalabad,
Sylhet 3100
08-2171425

Rajshahi Head Branch
Ct Station Rd.
Rajshahi 6000
721-774175

1980

"The beauty of a river cruise."



May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31					

June

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				4	5	6
				7	8	9
				10	11	12
				13	14	15
				16	17	18
				19	20	21
				22	23	24
				25	26	27
				28	29	30
				31		

জনতা ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
Janata Bank Limited

Dhaka Head Office
Janata Bhaban (16th Floor),
110 Motijheel Commercial Area,
Dhaka-1000
02-956086

Chittagong Head Branch
Lalbagh East Branch, Lal
Dighi Par Rd.,
Chattogram-4000
31-611375

Sylhet Head Branch
Tuker Bazar, Jalalabad,
Sylhet 3100
08-2171425

Rajshahi Head Branch
Ct Station Rd.
Rajshahi 6000
721-774175

Calendar (2020), details. Thirteen-page wall calendar, digital print, spiral-bound, with annotations in ballpoint pen; approximately 50 × 71 cm per page.

Echo, Saturn (I) (2019)

Rijksakademie Open

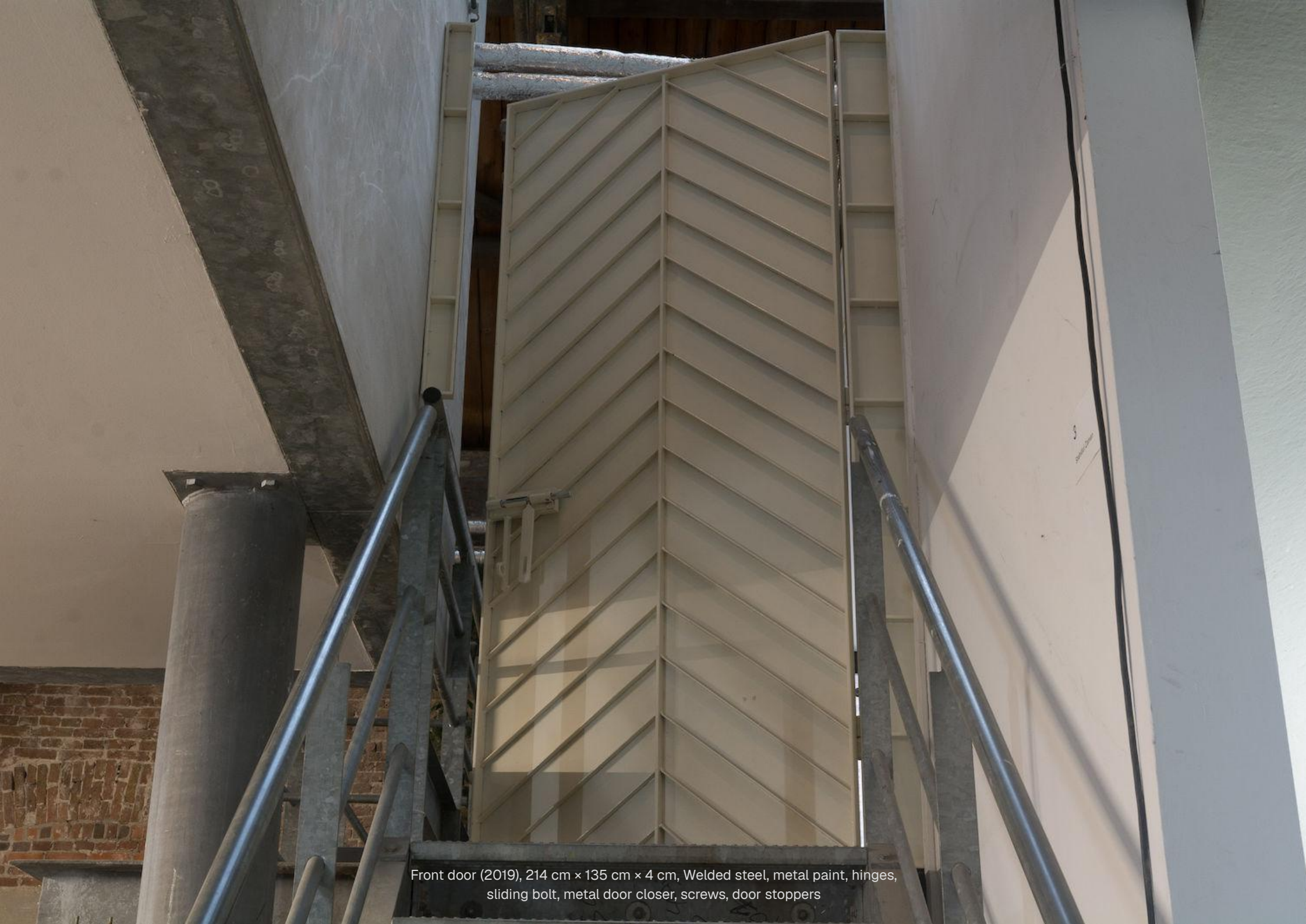


Netting (1st) (2019), 1200 cm × 600 cm (2), scaffolding netting, thread, rips, hooks, clips
Synced street lights (2nd) (2019), 200 cm × 35 cm × 125 cm (2), used street lights, LED strips, controller (Arduino with code), cabling, bracket, screws

Echo, Saturn (I) (2019) transforms a two-storey Rijksakademie studio into the ghost of the Hotel Rajmahal in Rajshahi. Gates, window grilles, scaffolding netting, doubled streetlights, repeated room numbers and radio transmissions divide the building into near-identical spaces. Moving between exposed balconies and dim interiors, visitors enter an architecture that appears simultaneously protective and feverish: part hotel, family memory, transit point and trap. The exhibition is publicly attributed to Dr Shahidul Zaman, the historian and heteronym whose unstable memories shape the Saturn series.

At its centre is a letter Zaman writes to his future wife, Mita, during a sleepless night at the hotel in February 1980. He has travelled to Rajshahi to locate and sell family land he has never seen, hoping to finance his departure for Europe and rescue their disintegrating relationship. In the letter, confession becomes inseparable from architecture: the hotel “doubles and mirrors and sighs”; a street light flickers outside; window grilles cast shifting shadows; torn netting traps him while also forming a cocoon. He promises Mita an escape and a shared future, even as the journey draws him more deeply into inheritance, secrecy and repetition.

The letter’s images spread throughout the building. Visitors pass through gates and grilles, encounter a shared washbasin and slowly turning fan, hear broadcasts from AIR Kolkata and find paired rooms illuminated by synchronised streetlights. Each element seems to confirm Zaman’s account while subtly altering it. Through near-doubles and repetitions that continually produce difference, *Echo, Saturn (I)* asks how personal memory becomes history—and whether a past reconstructed in order to escape it can ever be separated from one invented in the process.



Front door (2019), 214 cm x 135 cm x 4 cm, Welded steel, metal paint, hinges, sliding bolt, metal door closer, screws, door stoppers



[Watch documentation video](#)



Synced street lights (1st), Netting (1st), Film (#1047), Window grilles, Photograph (#1046a),
Photograph (#1046b), Sound (#1046)



Synced street lights (2nd), Netting (2nd), Letters and envelopes, Photograph (#1047c), Window grilles, Sound (#1047)



Letters and envelopes (2019), 21.59 cm × 15.24 cm (6 pages), 12.7 cm × 8.89 cm (2 envelopes) (framed in dual vitrines of 108 cm × 35 cm). Duplicate letters and period envelopes in fountain pen ink on paper offcuts, period stamps, inkjet print of postal frank, tea, black MDF, glass, screws



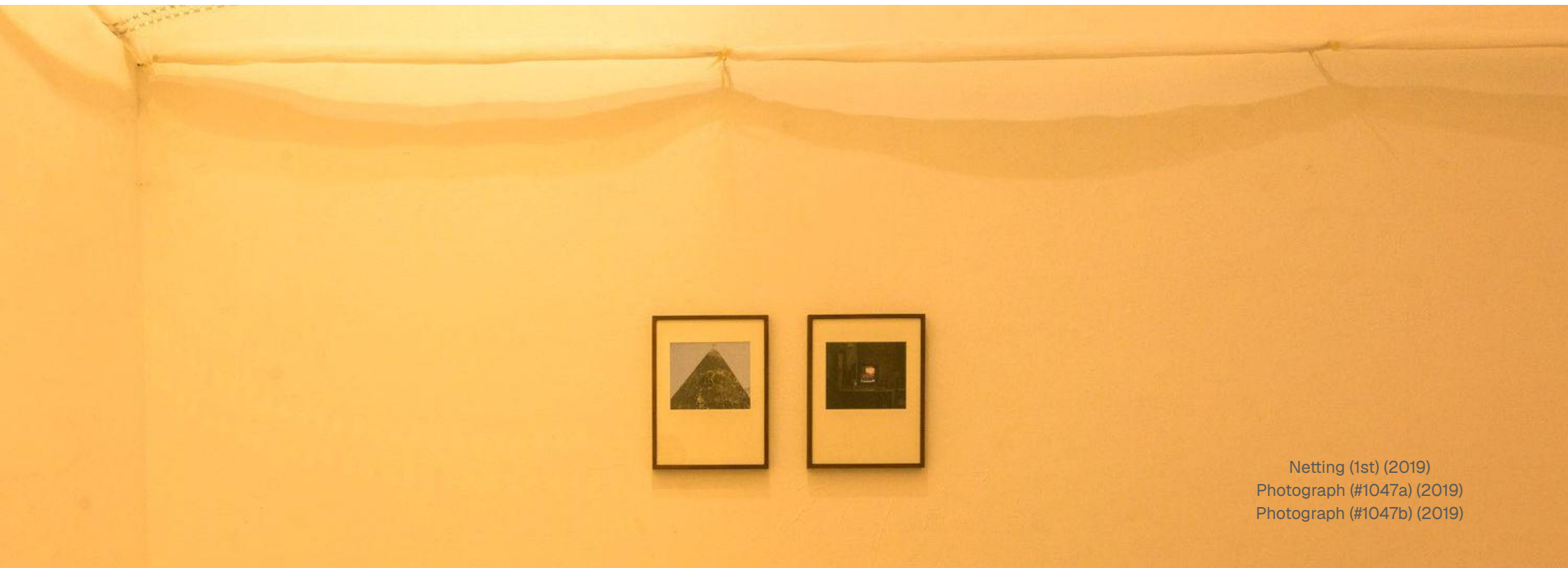
Shared facilities (2019), 70 cm × 35 cm × 35 cm
Bathroom sink, used Dettol soap, mirror, bolts
Indicator lights (2019), variable dimensions, Light
fixture, bulb, electrical wire, connector to
electrical infrastructure, screws.



Hanging fan (2019), 480 cm × 130 cm × 130 cm
Ceiling fan, metal brackets, controller (on low
speed), metal pole, cabling, metal paint, bolts,
screws, neodymium magnet.



Photograph (#1046a) (2019),
Photograph (#1046b) (2019)



Netting (1st) (2019)
Photograph (#1047a) (2019)
Photograph (#1047b) (2019)



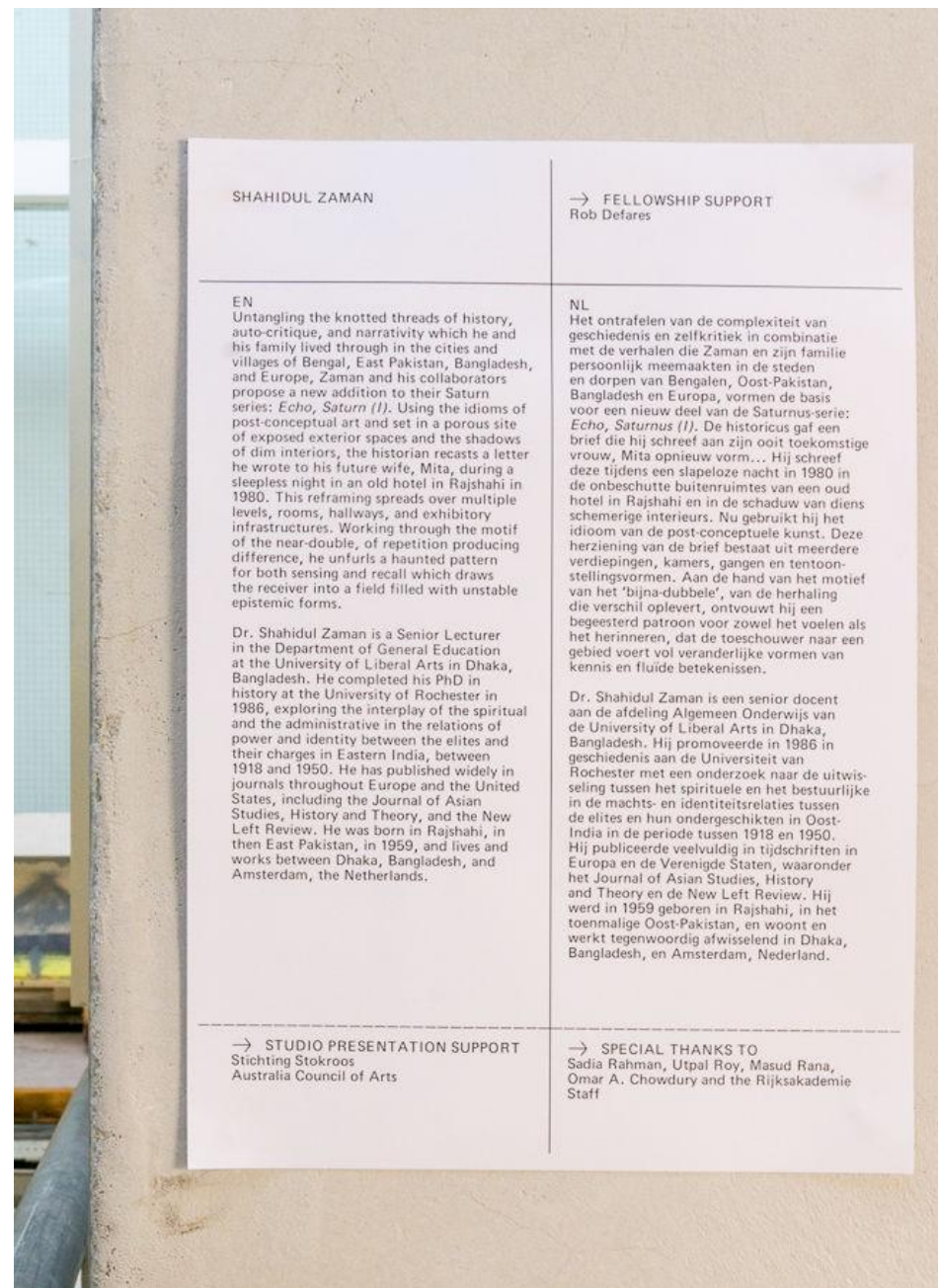
Combine (Absence) (2016), 17.53" x 11.69" (21" x 15" framed) Inkjet print on archival photo and sketch paper. Combine (Disillusionment) (2016), 17.53" x 11.69" (21" x 15" framed) Inkjet print on archival photo paper and sketch paper



Radio speaker (2019), variable dimensions, Ceiling speaker, amplifier, cabling, Mac mini playing All India Radio channels AIR Kolkata and Raagam



Translation (2019), Letter size, inkjet print on paper

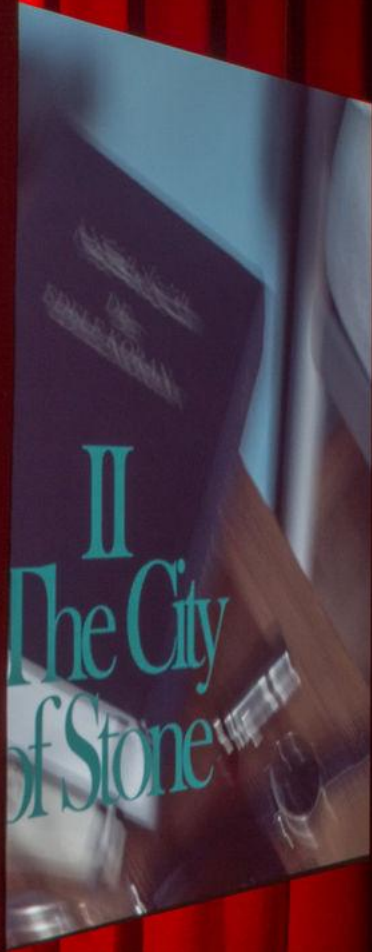


Attribution (Shahidul Zaman) (2019), variable dimensions, removal of the artist's name and substitution with a heteronym, inkjet print on paper, text by Vincent van Velsen, articles in art press and Het Parool



Front door (2019), 214 cm x 135 cm x 4 cm, Welded steel, metal paint, hinges, sliding bolt, metal door closer, screws, door stoppers

Augustijn (2018–19)
Netwerk Aalst + IFFR Mid-Length
Forecast Festival, HKW Berlin



Installation view, Augustijn (2018), three-channel video, 62 min, ProRes
422 (delivery in H.264 MOV), colour, three-channel audio



Installation view Augustijn (2018)

The three-channel film installation *Augustijn (2019)* begins with a real encounter on the wrong train. A blond, blue-eyed young Belgian named Stijn approaches Omar, a filmmaker from a Muslim background who has become an atheist. Stijn has travelled in the opposite direction, from Flemish secularism to an intense commitment to Islam. When they later reconstruct their meeting, they cannot agree on what happened: who spoke first, whether another passenger was drinking beer or why the conversation began. Each recognises that the other version may simply be the better story.

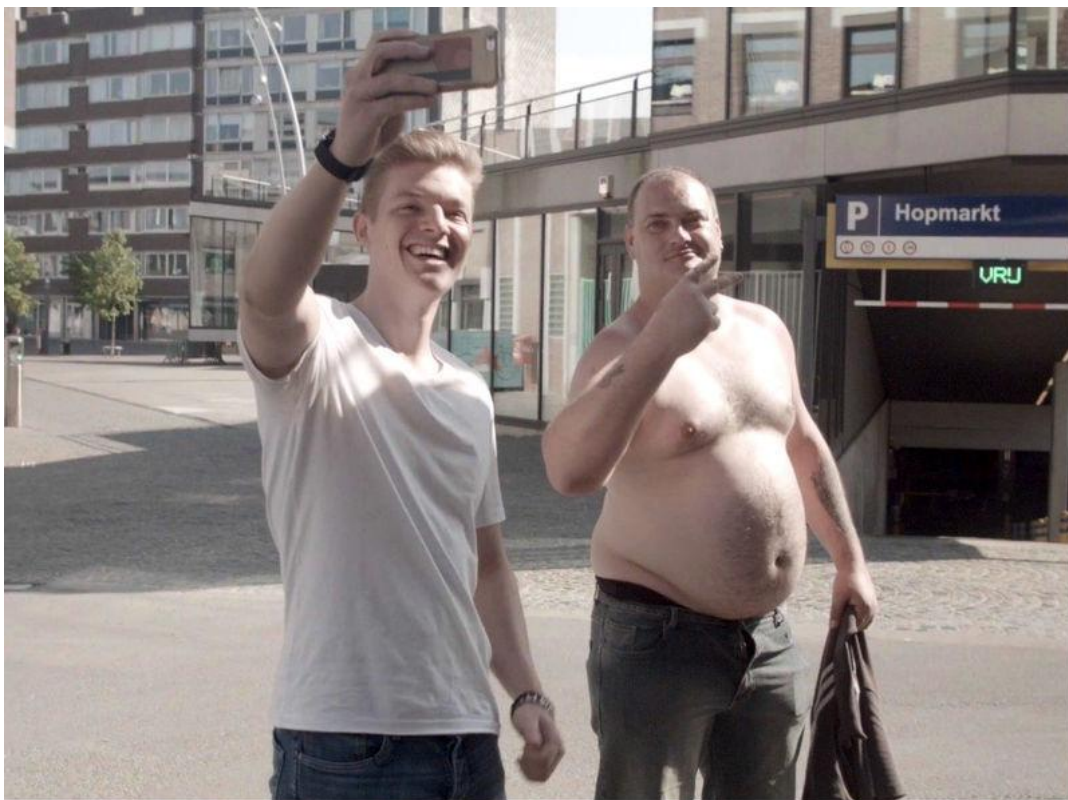
Filmed around Stijn's hometown of Aalst—in churches, schools, cars, streets and empty rooms—the work follows him as he revisits the Catholic childhood he rejected and describes the faith he adopted. He remembers praying to the Virgin Mary with his great-grandmother, plots a political party for believers, and reflects on masculinity, sex, family and the possibility of turning an empty exhibition room into a mosque. His declarations move between conviction, contradiction, humour and self-reproach. Omar remains behind the camera, questioning, prompting and occasionally correcting him; yet Stijn repeatedly anticipates the film being made, performs his own image and redirects its argument.

Scenes recur with altered framing, timing or language. Statements that initially appear documentary return as rehearsals or scripted takes, while spontaneous exchanges acquire the polish of fiction. Premiered as both a forty-seven-minute film at IFFR and as a multichannel installation, *Augustijn* allows competing versions of the encounter to remain audible at once. The portrait gradually becomes a negotiation over belief, desire and authorship between two men who recognise themselves in each other's reversed trajectories. Neither can remain simply filmmaker or subject, believer or unbeliever; each uses the other to test the story he tells about himself.

Augustijn



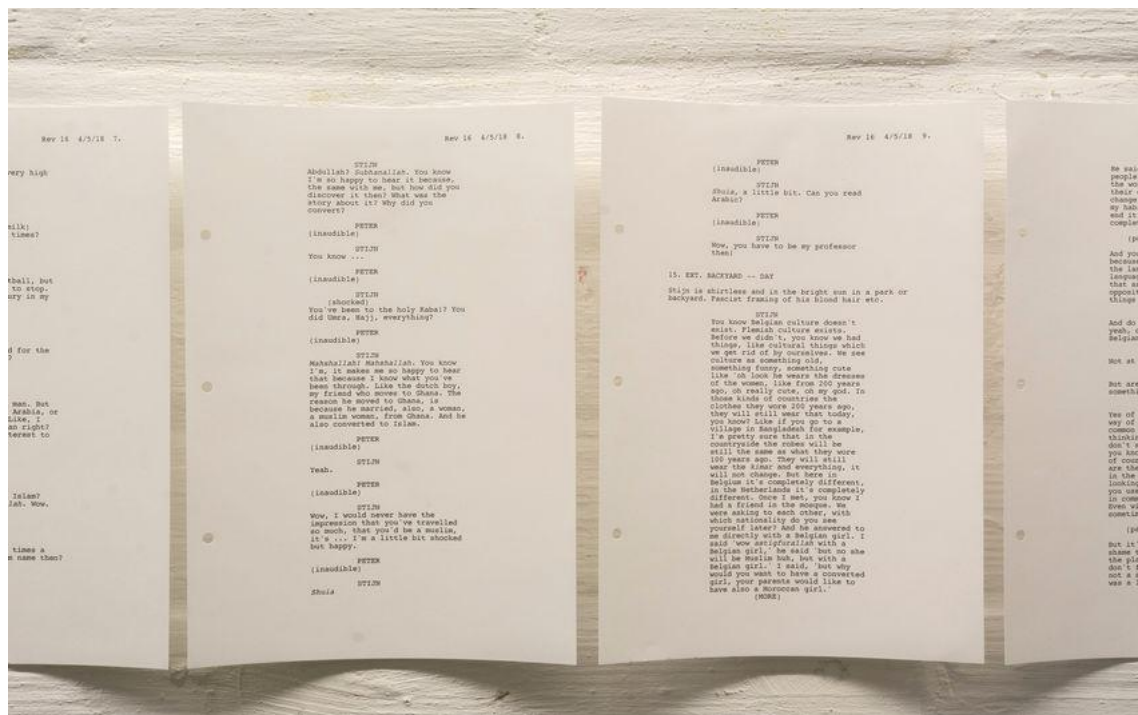
[Watch complete film](#)



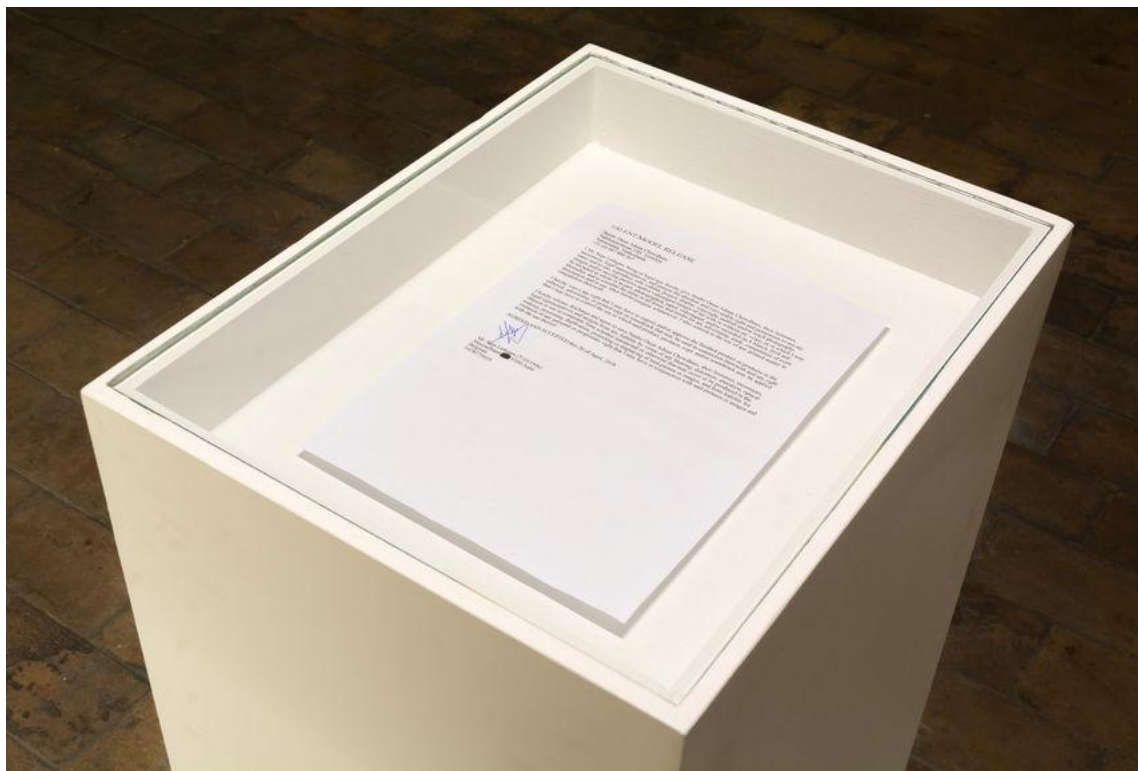
Film stills, Augustijn (2018)



Script (2018), inkjet on 100 gsm A4 printer paper, 11 pages; Contract (2018),
inkjet and gel ink on 80 gsm A4 printer paper, 1 page



Script (2018), Inkjet on 100 gsm A4
printer paper, 11 pages



Contract (2018), Inkjet on 80 gsm A4
printer paper, gel ink, 1 page, Signed by
Stijn Ledegen giving away all rights to
his image



Installation view Augustijn (2018)



Unsaturn (2018–24)

Het Bos, Antwerp; LUCA School of Arts, Brussels

De Appel, Amsterdam; Club Solo, Breda

Unwinding Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2023), empty performance setting, Terrarium, LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, 26 October 2023. Projection, sound, seating, banana plant and attendant two-channel video installation; variable dimensions

Unsaturn (2018–24) is an evolving long-form performance in which Omar Chowdhury repeatedly reconstructs the disputed closure of Age of Saturn, his 2016 exhibition in Dhaka. Each manifestation is given a new title and performed as though the story were being told publicly for the first time, whenever Chowdhury feels he is beginning to forget things. Using films, photographs, diagrams, correspondence and shifting recollections, he moves between testimony, confession, accusation and tribunal.

Chowdhury appears simultaneously as witness, unreliable narrator, injured party and author implicated in the conflict. Political censorship, institutional self-protection, collaborators' withdrawal and disputes over consent remain possible, overlapping causes. Hesitation, humour, contradiction and audience interruption are part of the work: spectators question the evidence, challenge his account and propose how he might proceed. No manifestation arrives at a stable verdict.

From 2023 onwards, recordings of every preceding performance play on monitors beside the live telling. The room therefore contradicts its claim to first disclosure, while Chowdhury's earlier selves become witnesses the present narrator cannot fully control. As memory recedes, the archive grows. Repetition preserves the event while altering it, testing whether an artwork can survive ethical rupture without turning that rupture into further material.



Unmasking Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2024), empty performance setting, Het Bos, Antwerp, 18 January 2024. Long-form performance with projection, sound, seating, plant and attendant three-channel video installation; variable dimensions



[Watch full performance](#)

Unmasking Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2024), performance still, Het Bos, Antwerp, 18 January 2024. Long-form performance, 2:15:40; projection, sound and attendant three-channel video installation



Unmasking Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2024), attendant video installation showing the three preceding manifestations of Unsaturn: Uncoiling Saturn (2018), Unravelling Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2018) and Unwinding Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2023). Three monitors, media players and headphones; Het Bos, Antwerp, 18 January 2024



[Watch full performance](#)

Unwinding Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2023), performance still, Terrarium, LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, 26 October 2023. Long-form performance, 1:43:53; projection, sound and attendant two-channel video installation



Unwinding Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2023), attendant video installation showing Uncoiling Saturn (2018) and Unravelling Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2018). Two 21-inch CRT monitors, two media players, four headphones, splitters and headphone amplification; Terrarium, LUCA School of Arts, Brussels, 26 October 2023



Unravelling Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2018), empty performance setting, De Appel, Amsterdam, 13 June 2018. Projection, sound, seating, camera and plant; variable dimensions



[Watch full performance](#)

Unravelling Saturn: coping with para-fiction (2018), performance still, De Appel, Amsterdam, 13 June 2018. Performance and conversation with Miriam Wistreich, 1:12:04; projection and sound



[Watch full performance](#)

Rijksakademielezing #11 Omar A. Chowdhury (2018), performance still, Club Solo, Breda, 19 April 2018. Performance, 1:30:55; projection and sound. Recording later titled *Uncoiling Saturn*

- 11) Other photographs from Dhali's personal collection, which were in the exhibition but not in catalogue.
- 12) Film with Dhali's image for 35 minutes, with a written narration (also in catalogue) that was never shared with Dhali. This film was projected full screen at Bengal Art Precinct, in a room at India Art Fair, and on a monitor at Dhaka Art Summit.

All elements listed above were used without our informed consent, or the informed consent of the original photographers. They were attached to a fictional narrative (in wall labels, in catalogue, and in film soundtrack) that was not shared with us in advance of the show.

In addition to lack of consent, you displayed a lack of sensitivity to the historical context, friendships, and community from which these photographs came. It was particularly insensitive to appropriate without consent photographs taken by late Tareque Masud. Catherine, Dhali, and Jolly are the survivors of the tragic 2011 car accident that cut short the life of director Tareque Masud and his cinematographer Mishuk Munier. Dhali required extensive surgery and therapy to recover the use of his drawing hand. To this day it is a traumatic memory, and we are involved in a public interest lawsuit regarding the accident. The photographs that you appropriated are mementos of a friendship and community that has been cruelly cut short. Yet your art project considered us only "raw materials" for your show.

We only discovered the usage of our personal photographs on 24th January 2016 the night before your show opening. We saw more usage of our images when we received the catalogue for *Age of Saturn* on 26th January 2016. We objected to you and Sadia Rahman about the use of our images in the show without informed consent. You verbally promised to rectify the matter, but did not do so for the duration of India Art Fair (January 28-31), Dhaka Art Summit (February 5-8), and the first two weeks of your show at Bengal Art Precinct (January 25-February 9). In the meantime, copies of your show catalogue went to numerous international visitors at India Art Fair and Dhaka Art Summit. Finally, the morning after Dhaka Art Summit ended, you informed us that you have the right to appropriate our images as part of your art practice. Your exact words in an email written on 8th February 2016 were "The works themselves become my property although they reuse images from other places."

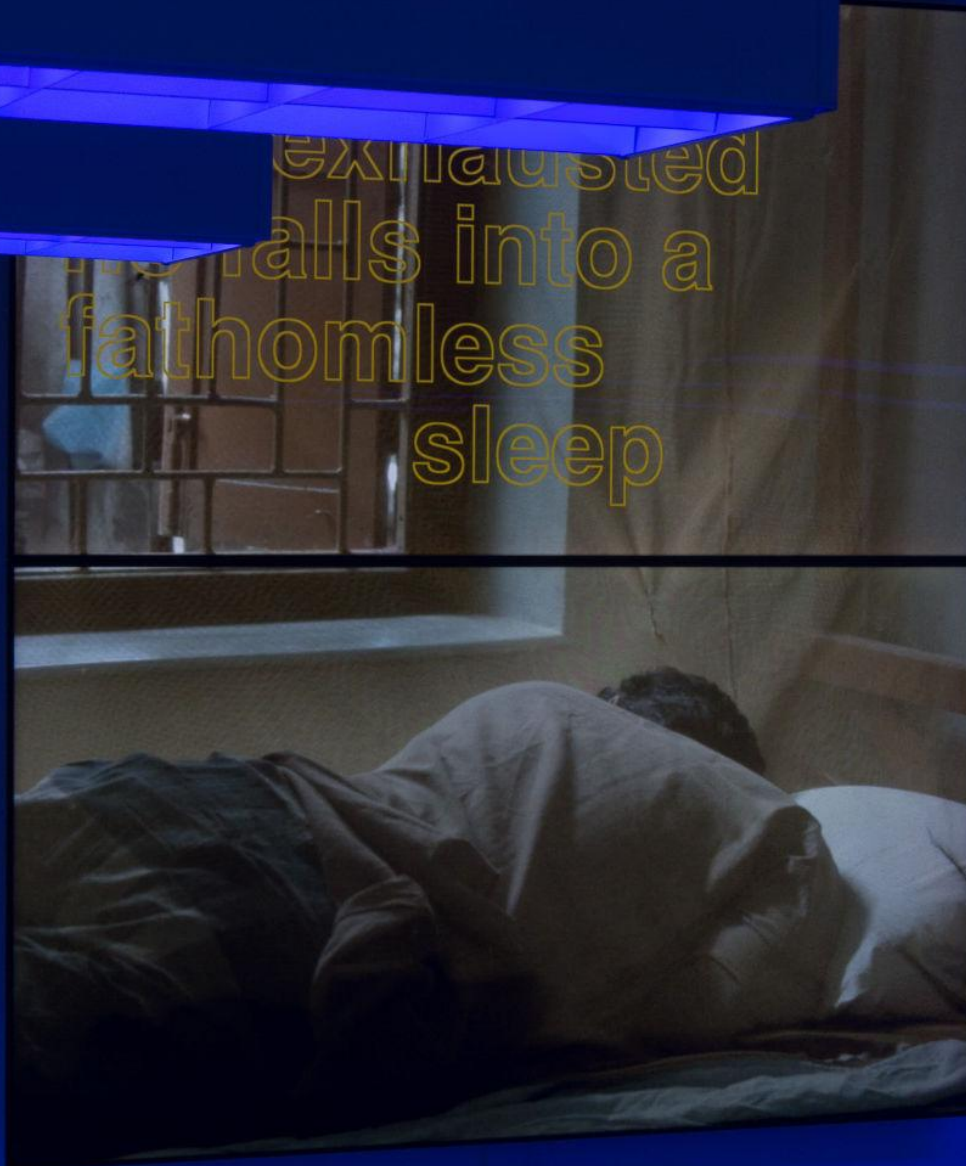
Since you grew up in Australia, and spend time in Europe, you are aware of lawsuits regarding appropriation of images (e.g., Patrick Cariou vs. Richard Prince, Associated Press vs. Shepherd Fairey). We wonder if you would have been more sensitive about the concept of informed consent if this project involved the personal photographs of an Australian, European, or American subject.

There are many artists who use appropriation, and the blending of history with fiction. There are many debates around the questions of "fair use," "appropriation," and "public domain". But there are few principles we should follow. The persons featured in the images, and the persons who took the photographs, have to give informed consent in advance. If the owners and photographers identity is not known in advance, but is brought to the artists' attention after the project is public, then the artist should seek informed consent immediately.

In light of our experience with you, we hereby send you a cease and desist notice as follows:

Echo, Saturn—Prologue (2018)

Rijksakademie Open



Lights (2018), variable dimensions, 12 TL light housings, LED strips, electrical controller, Arduino, electrical wire, fishing wire, attachments
Echo, Saturn Prologue (2018), single-channel, HD ProRes, 14:35, colour, stereo, 17:9



Lights (2018), Generator (2018), Echo, Saturn Prologue (2018), Age of Saturn Essay (2016)

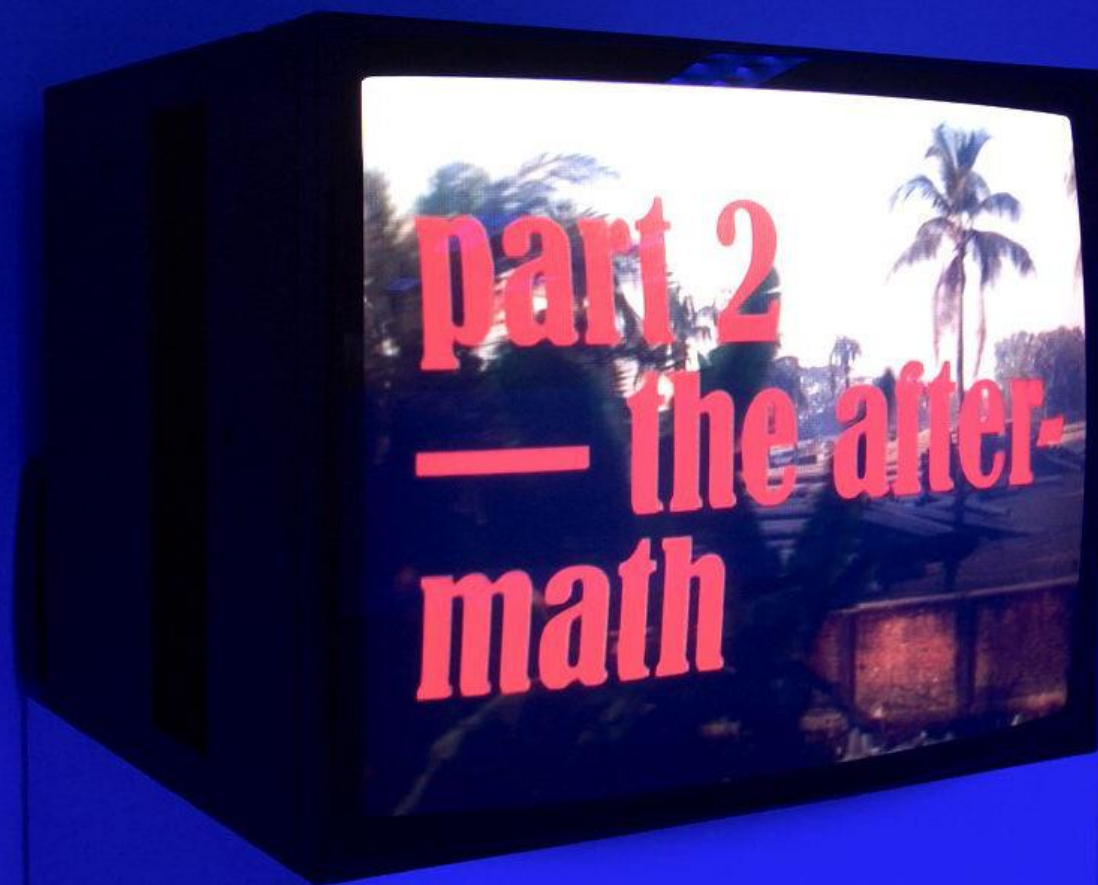
Echo, Saturn—Prologue (2018) is a parafictional installation about returning to a destabilised history. It reopened the Saturn series after *Age of Saturn* was suppressed in Bangladesh and former collaborators threatened legal action. The installation's technical, administrative and juridical forms—data charts, programmed lighting, failing electrical systems, archival documents and legal correspondence—suppress a supposed “painful” history. Recollection, evidence and invented biography occupy the same field: a past so confused and distorted that it cyclically erases and replaces itself.

Twelve fluorescent-style fixtures, converted to RGBW LEDs and suspended at eye level, replay the changing light of a significant day in Rajshahi. Across sixteen hours, yellow daylight passes through red sunset into deep blue night. A hand-annotated chart translates this remembered atmosphere into data and code, while programmed power cuts cause a diesel generator to start and run until the simulated electrical supply returns. Light becomes both an emotional register and a fragile infrastructure—remembered, measured and repeatedly interrupted.

A dual-screen film follows the artist's arrival in Rajshahi “in the footsteps of a ghost.” Its romantic, oneiric language is countered by a ninety-minute lecture-performance examining the history and collapse of the Saturn project. A three-page cease-and-desist letter brings the conflict into the exhibition, while stacks of *The Age of Saturn* essay return its foundational narrative as an unstable archive. Visitors could experience the work immediately as colour, sound and intermittent darkness, or remain with its slower accumulation of testimony and doubt.



[Watch documentation video](#)



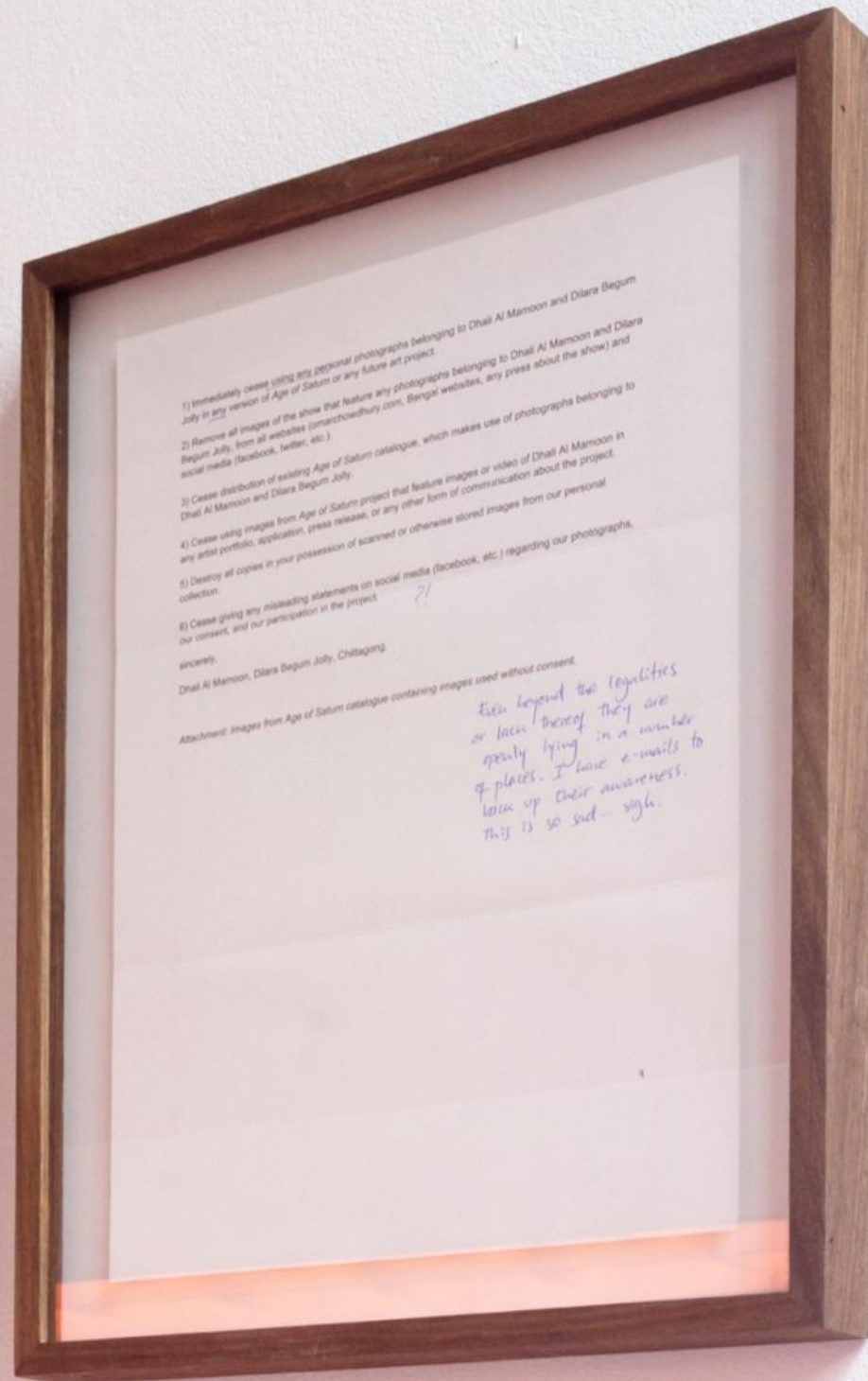
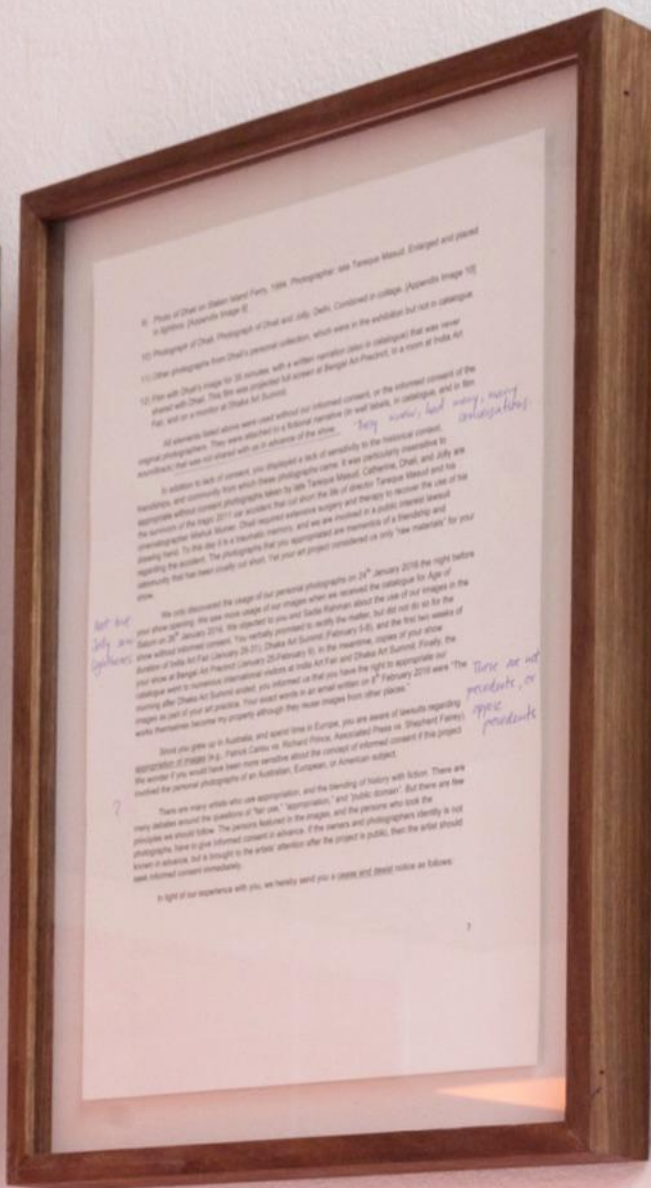
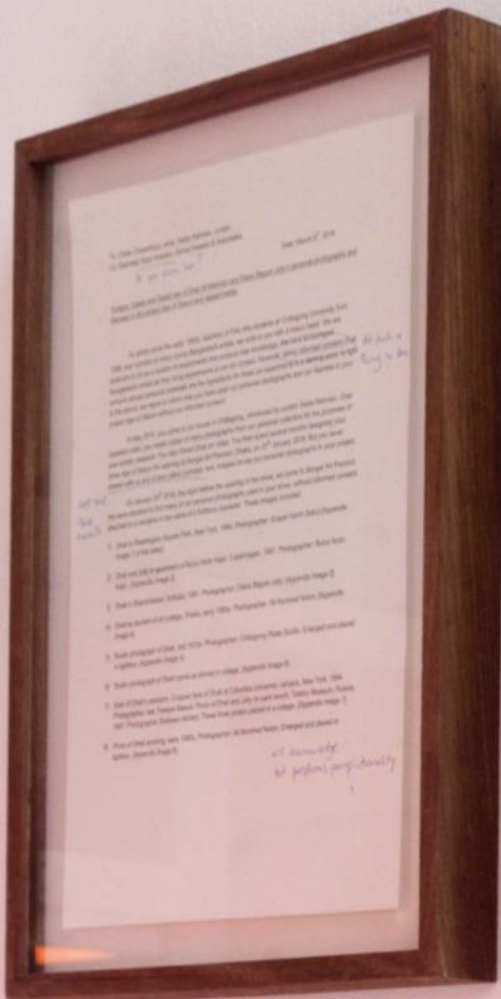
De Appel Uncoiling Saturn Lecture-performance (2018), single-channel, Hantarex monitor, 1:30:55, colour, stereo, 4:3, [View performance video](#)



Generator (2018), Diesel generator, Arduino, controllers, manual choke, electrical wire, diesel



Legend/Light Chart (2018), Inkjet on photo paper, gel pen, 30 cm × 23 cm



Cease and desist letter (2018), Inkjet on printer paper, marker pen, 3 frames, 82 cm x 34 cm



Lights (2018), variable dimensions, 12 TL light housings, LED strips, electrical controller, Arduino, electrical wire, fishing wire, attachments
Echo, Saturn Prologue (2018), single-channel, HD ProRes, 14:35, colour, stereo, 17:9

Order (2018)
Fondazione Antonio Ratti, Como



Order (2018), installation view, Asilo Sant'Elia, Como. Single-channel video, children's tables and chairs designed by Giuseppe Terragni.

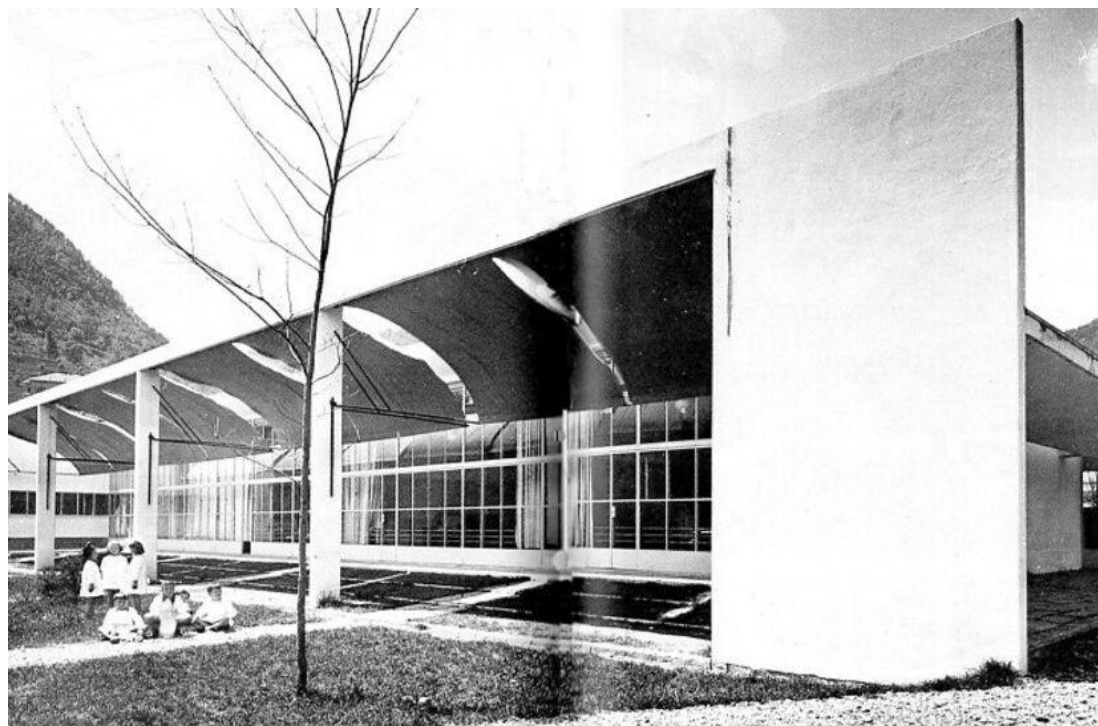


[Watch documentation video](#)

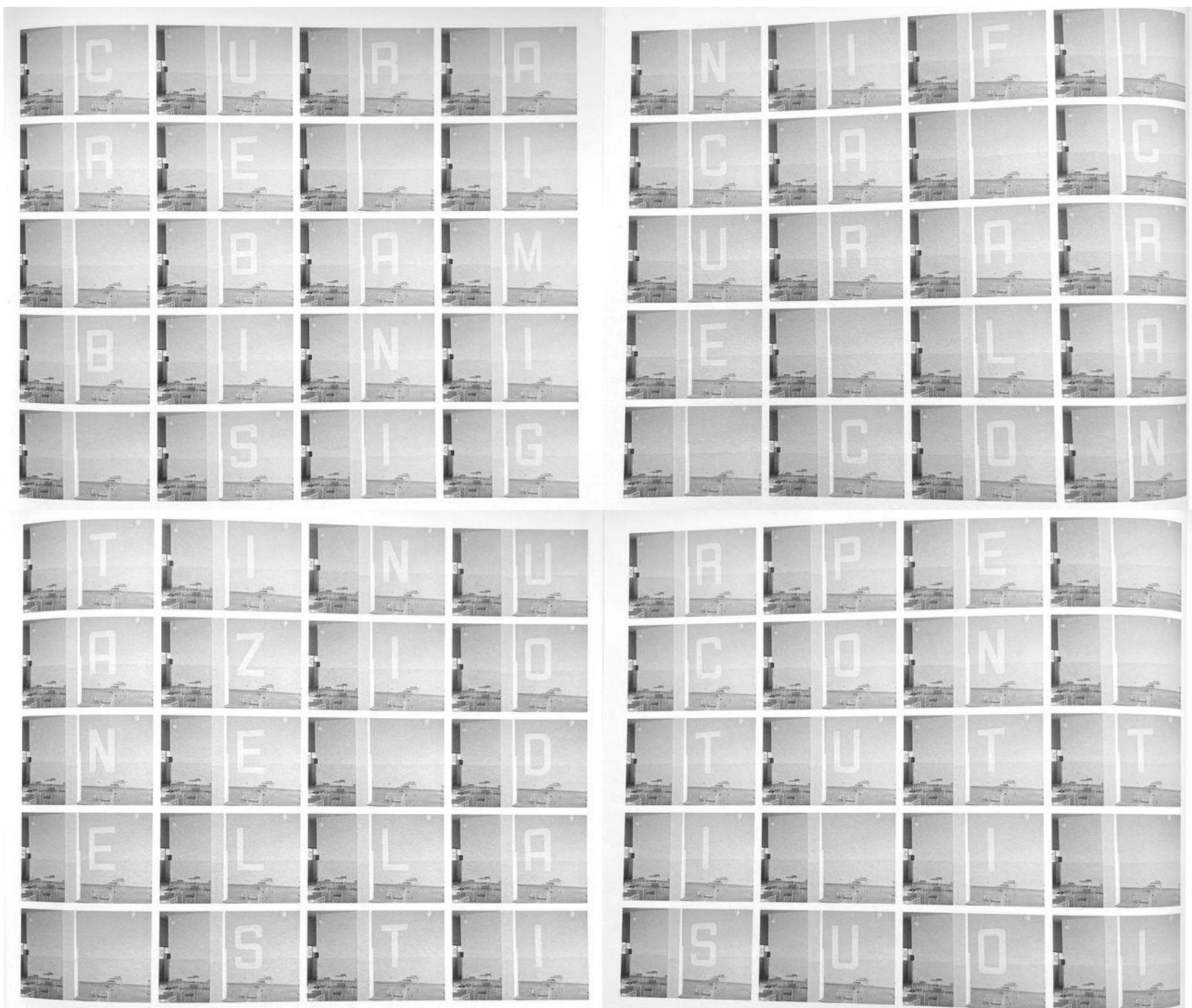
Order (2018) occupies the Asilo Sant’Elia in Como, a modernist nursery designed by the Italian Rationalist architect and committed Fascist Giuseppe Terragni. A film is projected onto a wall before orderly rows of children’s tables and chairs designed by Terragni. Isolated letters slowly appear and disappear while the voice of his granddaughter, Maddalena Terragni, recites them aloud. The letters are drawn from a Fascist sentence formerly inscribed on the walls of the school—“To nurture children is to nurture the continuation of the race, with all its supreme values.”¹ The letters hover between an elementary reading exercise, an architectural remnant and a political command.

The original paint scheme draws a horizontal line across the bottom of the projection like the guide in a child’s handwriting book. Through this deceptively simple arrangement, *Order* dismantles the sentence into its smallest components and cautiously releases it back into the building. Language no longer communicates its ideology coherently, yet neither can it be made innocent: every letter retains something of the system from which it came. Set against the beauty, openness and precision of Terragni’s architecture, the work asks how authoritarian ideas become embedded in apparently benevolent forms—schools, furniture, alphabets and ideals of care—and how aesthetic order can preserve a history that the removal of its words has not erased.

¹ “Curare i bambini significa curare la continuazione della stirpe con tutti i suoi valori supremi.”



Archival photographs of the Asilo Sant'Elia,
Fondazione Terragni, Como



Documentation of the complete projected work subsequently printed in the publication *How to Begin* (2018), pp. 27–31

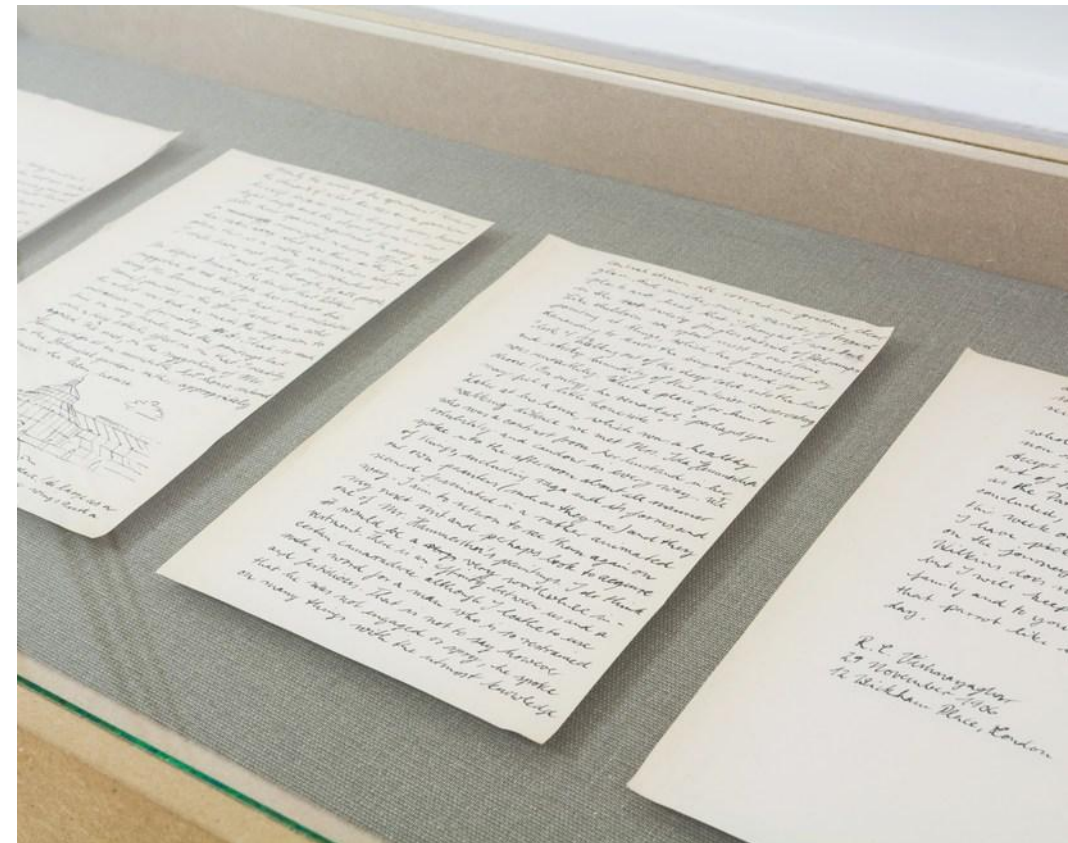
Desiring the Meeting... (2017) produces—and then destabilises—the relationships involved in art research. Across the Governor’s Mansion, evidence of an alleged 1906 meeting between Bengali trader Ram Chandra Vishnayaghar and Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi is continually rearranged. Dr Zaman’s recollection, an attributed letter and the artist’s notebook deplete their authority through their fractured placement, until the house itself resembles evidence.

Visitors—described as “receivers”—encounter the story through incomplete forms of access. A filing cabinet must be searched, projected material deciphered through a mirror, and the Bengali instruction তাকান—“look”—temporarily converts the mansion into a Hammershøian interior. A conversation can pass almost imperceptibly into performance as the person speaking moves smoothly in and out of character. A telephone call remains present but inaccessible, while dismantled furniture preserves a room’s parts but prevents reconstruction.

The components cycle positions, producing analogue retellings and re-experiences with no definitive sequence. A 120-page guide recombines the letter, research images and correspondence into forty-nine configurations. By exposing the artist’s investment, grant framing and retention of the letter, fantasy, institutional language and archival traces manufacture authority together. Its subject is not whether the meeting occurred, but how wanting it to have occurred reorganises documents, relationships and space.



Guide (2017), 120-page ring-bound publication containing forty-nine arrangements of project source texts and images



Letter and Note (2017), four-page handwritten letter and artist's notebook in custom vitrine



Cabinet (2017), dismantled furniture and fittings bound together and exposed to the elements



তাকান

View (2017), Bengali directional text in adhesive vinyl and arrangement of furniture and space



Slides (2017), projection detail, text, image and video refracted by mirror



Encounter (2017), a fragment of the source narrative performed and passed between visitors. With Chloé Op de Beek



File (2017), filing cabinet, hanging folders, laminated prints, plinth and floor lamp

Call (Inaccessible Position) (2017), audio, headphones, player and custom plinth; recording inaccessible. With Oshin Albrecht

Means (2014)
ALASKA Projects, Sydney



Means (2014), installation view, ALASKA Projects, Sydney

Means (2014) begins with the artist returning to Australia after eighteen months abroad and travelling into a country he knew principally through its cities and suburbs. Across the Southern Highlands, Great Dividing Range and Victorian gold towns, film, photography, smoke-darkened cotton, a charred eucalyptus trunk, tensioned steel wire, field recordings and fictional texts test a relation to the bush that is neither inherited nor secure.

Installed through the estranged levels of a functioning Sydney car park, the works behave less like discrete media than instruments trained on the same uncertain terrain. *The Colonies at Dusk* moves among cattle, snakes, rocks, burning trees, machinery and isolated people; a thirty-minute sound work carries the distant infrastructure of the Snowy Hydro scheme through the space. Two large cotton panels retain cooking smoke. A fire-blackened trunk becomes both found body and sculpture, while steel wire drawn across the car park gives a Minimalist line weight, risk and obstruction.

Fragments of invented journals, poetry and criticism borrow the authority of aged paper and art-historical voice, drawing Australian painting, New Topographics, contemplative cinema, Arte Povera and Minimalism into the journey. Each work offers only a partial way of looking. Together they produce an unstable belonging: the bush appears totemic, theatrical and indifferent, and looking outward becomes a test of the artist's place within it.



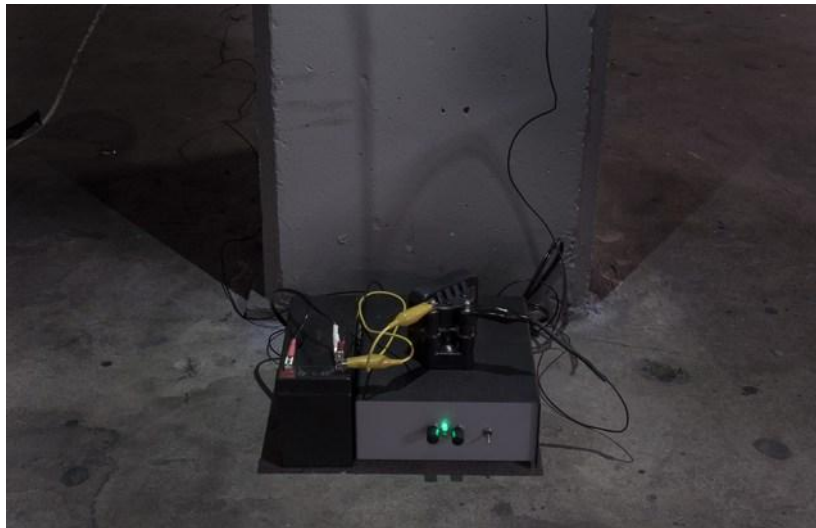
[View installation documentation](#)

Means (2014), installation view, ALASKA Projects, Sydney

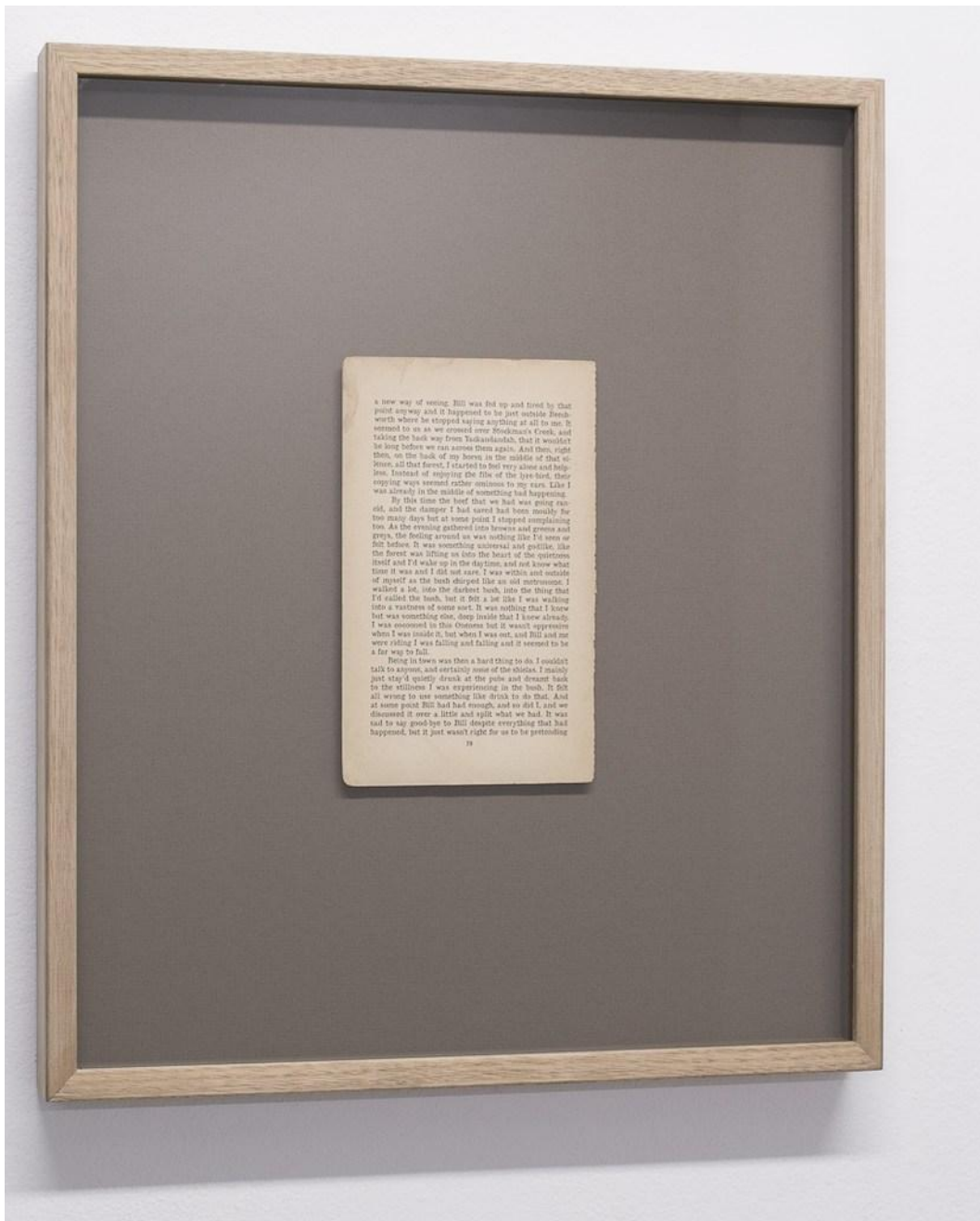


[View complete film](#)

The Colonies at Dusk (2014), 12:49, ProRes 422, 16:9, sound, colour, looped



Untitled (wire) (2014), galvanised steel wire, wire stretcher, bolts, hooks, battery and electrical components, variable dimensions



Untitled (fictional journal) (2014), inkjet print on reclaimed paper, framed, 11 × 17.8 cm

Untitled (fictional criticism) (2014), inkjet print on reclaimed paper, framed, 12.8 × 19.7 cm

Ways (2014)

4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney



Vastness in Eclipse (2014), three-channel video, 31:14, colour, stereo
Installation view, Ways, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney

Across 4A's two floors, *Ways* (2014) brings together three durational moving-image installations made through ritualistic immersion in Bangladesh. Across a tea plantation, a Hindu procession, Shia mourning rites, a Hare Krishna temple and a Sunni mosque, the exhibition questions how spiritual experience becomes visible through bodies, routines, architecture and cinematic time.

On 4A's ground floor, the three-channel *Vastness in Eclipse* moves between documentary observation, fiction and images of its own making, turning an elderly plantation worker's daily life into a meditation on mortality. Upstairs, *Torsions* compresses the crowds of Ratha Yatra and Muharram into a 106-minute rhythm: ecstasy, grief, spectacle and exhaustion approach and disturb one another.

Behind it, *Locus I and II* place films made over several years inside an ISKCON temple and a Sunni mosque beside the Buriganga River on facing screens. Their long takes attend to prayer, chant, sleep, maintenance, conversation, contradiction and humour. Headphones make spectators turn physically and mentally between two distinct spiritual worlds.

Ways refuses explanatory survey or devotional certainty. Its demanding durations convert 4A into an architecture of attention, asking viewers to encounter faith not as doctrine or exotic image but as embodied labour, communal rhythm and unresolved form.



[View full Ways exhibition documentation \(1:43\)](#)

Locus I and II (2014), two-channel video installation: Temple, 149:25; Mosque, 74:30; colour, stereo
Installation view, Ways, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney; commissioned by 4A



Locus I (Temple) (2014),
149:25, colour, stereo



Locus II (Mosque) (2014),
74:30, colour, stereo



Torsions I, II (2014), single-channel video, 106:24, colour, stereo; originally presented in B/Desh, Dhaka Art Summit 2014, curated by Deepak Ananth
Installation view, Ways, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney



[View film](#)



[View film](#)

Vastness in Eclipse (2014), three-channel video, 31:14, colour, stereo



WAYS: IN ECLIPSE
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014

WAYS: IN ECLIPSE
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014

WAYS: IN ECLIPSE
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014

WAYS: IN ECLIPSE
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014
 144 Four Print Spread, 2014
 2 Channel, 25x34x, 40x40x, 2.5x, 1,
 100x100x, 2014

Omar Chowdhury
 Ways
 30 May – 2 August 2014
 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art

Read Murtaza Vali, “An Index of the Divine,” commissioned for
 Ways, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydnev, 2014