

Fonds Kwadraat in gesprek met...

Basir Mahmood

Met veel genoegen presenteren we het 11e interview in de reeks Fonds Kwadraat in gesprek met... Deze keer vroegen we kunstenaar Basir Mahmood waar hij nu mee bezig is en wat zijn plannen zijn. Het interview is in het Engels.

Basir Mahmood (1985, Pakistan) werkt in Lahore en Amsterdam. In 2016 / 2017 was Mahmood resident aan de Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Een jaar daarna ontving hij een Werkbijdrage Bewezen Talent van het Mondriaan Fonds.

Mahmood verkent zijn positie als beeldend kunstenaar door meerdere rollen aan te nemen: als schrijver van verhalen, als initiatiefnemer die geïmproviseerde scènes in gang zet en als toeschouwer. Het afgelopen jaar nam hij deel aan de biënnale Innsbruck International 2020 en het Filmfestival True/False in Missouri, VS. In eerdere jaren was zijn werk o.a. te zien in het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, tijdens IDFA en op vele internationale festivals en beurzen. (Portret Basir Mahmood van Ahsan Ismail Photography).



What kind of project(s) are you currently working on?

Unexpectedly, this is becoming the busiest time of the year at the studio. One major project in production is a film, commissioned by the In Between Art Film, a film production company based in Spain. The work is extremely challenging, not only because of the recent travel and working restrictions it has to face, but also the very core of the project is the complex time that we all are facing right now worldwide after the coronavirus outbreak.

Another project Things Might Think funded by Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst is taking a lot of my attention. I am really nervous, yet super excited about it. This would be my first online project that I will be streaming live on Instagram and Facebook. The project is my response to the time I have stayed home during the recent lockdown. The project intends to connect with the audience in Amsterdam through time, this is the very reason why I chose to livestream.

One ongoing project funded by Mondriaan Foundation is in its completion phase. It deals with my longstanding interest in the aesthetics of balance and equality, in the decisions we take while sharing food and other resources among ourselves and others.



All voices are mine, 2018 (Still). Video commissioned by Sharjah Art Foundation.

How did you use the interest free loan of Fonds Kwadraat?

Realizing the recent shift in the political state of the world, I had to reconsider how I function as an artist and produce work. It was important for me to improve the equipment that I use, to find new means of production. The loan had made this step comfortable for me, I am experimenting with new techniques. The influences of the recent expansion would soon be visible on my practice.



Monument of arrival and return, 2016. (Still). Video. Co-produced by Contour Biennale 8.

What did it mean for you to receive an interest free loan and what was the result?

I have just upgraded the equipment in my studio, which is already helping me smooth a lot of work pressure. I am spending time learning animation and sound design for an upcoming project. This absolute new direction was only possible because of the loan. I am able to expand my possibilities without having to face additional burden on me at once.



A Message to the Sea, 2012. (Still). Video.

Where can we see your work, either online or offline?

I am listed as one of the six finalists for Portugal's prestigious and highly competitive Paulo Cunha e Silva Art Prize 2020; from my studio I am working on the installation at Galeria Municipal do Porto. The exhibition will open on 12 September 2020. If you by any chance plan a vacation in Portugal, hopefully this would be an ideal condition to experience my work.

In the Netherlands luckily one of my most important works, Monument of Arrival and return (2016), is in the permanent collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

I do have an official website (<http://www.basirmahmood.com/>) and an Instagram account (https://www.instagram.com/basir_mahmood/) that I keep updated as I produce work.



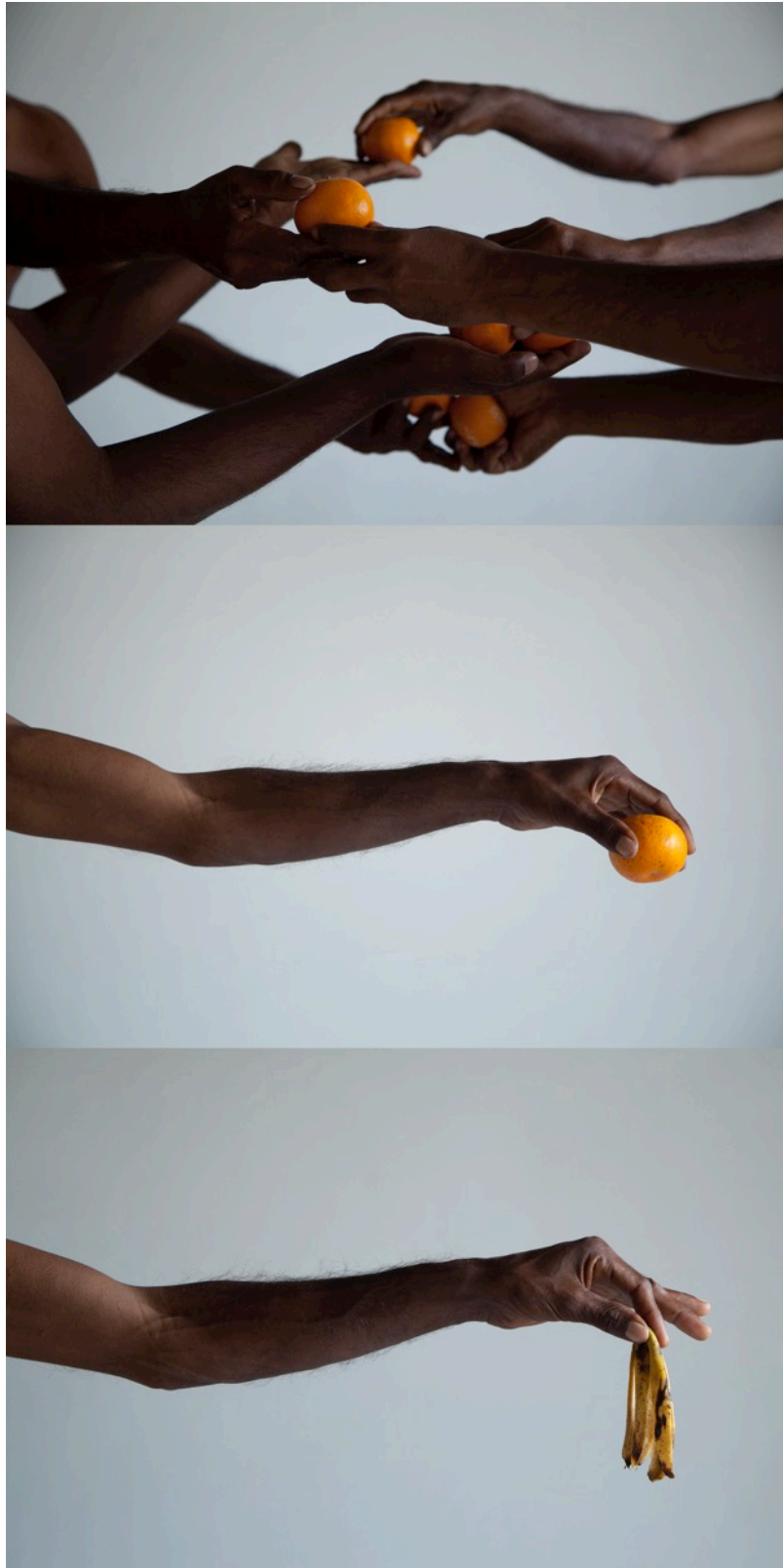
Power Between Weak, 2014. (Still). Video.

What are your plans for the future?

I am excited about a couple of new ideas that I would like to realize, which require me to learn new techniques. Having said that, at the moment most of my time is fully occupied with ongoing projects. I am sure they are also going to open new ventures for me as in the past.

Do you have a tip for young artists?

I would repeat one advice that changed my work for forever. It came from one of my teachers almost 13 years back, that I still keep. He said "ideas surround us all the time, we do not always have to travel places or time to make a great work of art." I would just say to remain conscious, however, do not get carried away that easily.



One for Each, Two For All, 2013, Acrylic face mounted photo rag, 45 x 30 cm each (Triptych).