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MEDIA/CALENDAR ALERT

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP HOSTS AWARD-WINNING ACTIVIST FILMMAKER MARA AHMED

– Former Rochester Resident will Present Film Excerpts & Give an Artist Talk –



Film stills from *Return to Sender* (2023), Directed by Mara Ahmed. From left to right - Sumayia Islam, Fatimah Arshad, and Urvashi Bhattacharya. Image courtesy of the artist.

WHAT: [Mara Ahmed](#) (Long Island, NY) is a multimedia artist and award-winning filmmaker whose documentaries center marginalized voices and communities grappling with nuanced experiences around racism, colonization, and Islamophobia. She was a Rochester resident from 2003 to 2020, and studied art at Nazareth College, and film at Visual Studies Workshop and Rochester Institute of Technology. Ahmed will juxtapose excerpts from her latest film and create connections with images from archives at the VSW. She will be in conversation with Hernease Davis, VSW's Assistant Curator of Education and Public Programs.

WHEN: Thursday, March 28, 7pm
This program will be live streamed on [VSW's Twitch channel](#).

WHERE: Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY

REGISTER: Pay-what-you-choose; suggested \$10 donation. Free for VSW Members. [LINK](#)

ASL interpreters will be made available upon request at least two weeks before the event. Email accommodations@vsw.org with access questions.

EVENT DETAILS: As part of VSW's [In Dialogue](#) series, Mara Ahmed will present a program of her own work along with films and lantern slides she has chosen from the VSW Film/Video Archive. She will share excerpts from her latest film, *Return to Sender: Women of Color in Colonial Postcards & the Politics of Representation*, which was awarded a NYSCA grant and will premiere at ROC Cinema on May 4, 2024.

About Mara Ahmed: Best known for her non-linear, interdisciplinary work, Mara Ahmed produces documentaries, soundscapes, and artwork that trespass political borders and challenge colonial logics. Mara was born in Lahore and educated in Belgium, Pakistan, and the U.S. She is presently based on Long Island. Her art practice reflects these displacements and multiplicities. Mara has directed and produced 4 films, including *The Muslims I Know*, *Pakistan One on One*, and *A Thin Wall*. In 2023, she was awarded a NYSCA grant for her film and art project, *Return to Sender: Women of Color in Colonial Postcards & the Politics of Representation*. Mara is currently working on *The Injured Body*, a film about racism in America that focuses exclusively on the voices of women of color. Mara's artwork has been exhibited at galleries in New York and California. Her installation, *The Warp & Weft [Face to Face]*, based on an archive of stories she curated during the pandemic, was exhibited at Rochester Contemporary Art Center in April 2022 and her experimental short film *Le Mot Juste* was selected for a juried exhibition organized by Chicago's South Asia Institute in 2021. Her websites are NeelumFilms.com and MaraAhmedStudio.com

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by artist and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW Salon, Project Space Artist Residencies, and VSW Press. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. vsw.org

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