

Salon

Spring

2024



In Dialogue with Mara Ahmed

03.28.24

7 - 9pm

Visual Studies Workshop

**31 Prince Street
Rochester NY**

Suggested: \$10

Mara Ahmed is an interdisciplinary artist and award winning activist filmmaker. Mara's documentaries center marginalized voices and focus on communities grappling with nuanced experiences around racism, colonization and islamophobia. Mara will present a dialogue between her new film, *Return to Sender*, and VSW's video, film and lantern slide archives.

Return to Sender interrogates colonial imagery of women, and Mara will use clips from her film and juxtapose them with images and footage from VSW's archive to make connections to current political power systems of white supremacy, patriarchy and ongoing social justice movements in Rochester.

The evening will culminate in a discussion with Mara Ahmed facilitated by Hernease Davis, the Assistant Curator of Education and Public Programs.

This program will also be live streamed via twitch.tv.

Cover image: Fatimah Arshad, film still from *Return to Sender* (2023), Directed by Mara Ahmed. Image courtesy of the artist.

This program features excerpts from tapes found in the Portable Channel Collection at VSW:

Police Brutality (1972)

Produced by People's Defense Committee for Inner City Police Coalition and Portable Channel.
Robert Stauber and Steve Hardy
Original Format: EIAJ 1/2 inch open reel video
B&W; Sound. 31:39

Discussion with city youths and others about experiences with police brutality.

Kunstler on Attica (1971)

Produced by Portable Channel.
Sanford Rockowitz
Original Format: EIAJ 1/2 inch open reel video
B&W; Sound. 20:36.

Interview with William Kunstler, Attica lawyer, on Attica and oppression.

Outtakes from "B'ism Allah" (1975)

Produced by Portable Channel.
Nancy Cain, Margaret Fahey-Putnam, Martha Gever, Nancy Rosin, Jean Vlamyack
Original Format: EIAJ 1/2 inch open reel video
B&W; Sound. 47:00.

A collection of spoken word performances by grade school children in Rochester, NY. (pictured below)



In Dialogue is a series in which VSW invites practicing filmmakers to show their work alongside materials from the VSW Collection, creating a dialogue among works that resonates with and reflects upon the approach of the filmmaker.

Best known for her non-linear multimedia work, interdisciplinary artist 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 US. She is presently based on Long Island. Her art practice reflects these displacements and multiplicities.

Mara's most recent film is entitled, *Return to Sender: Women of Color in Colonial Postcards & the Politics of Representation*, which was awarded a NYSCA grant in 2023. Mara will present a dialogue between *Return to Sender*, and VSW's video, film and lantern slide archives. *Return to Sender* interrogates colonial imagery of women, and Mara will use clips from her film and juxtapose them with images and footage from VSW's archive to make connections to current political power systems of white supremacy, patriarchy and ongoing social justice movements in Rochester.

Return to Sender: Women of Color in Colonial Postcards & the Politics of Representation will premiere in Rochester on May 4th at ROC Cinema.



Top: "India. Bombay Presidency. Young Woman (about 20 years of age). Kathiwar province (1934)." Originates from the New York State Education Department. Bottom: "Peasant Women, Palestine, 1922." Originates from Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences. From the VSW Lantern Slide Collection.

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.

The VSW Salon is a bi-monthly engagement in the VSW microcinema featuring film screenings, artist talks, Community Curator events, performances, photo presentations and conversations. VSW Salon showcases the work of local and national artists, and invites them to present their work in an intimate “microcinema” equipped to show 16mm, Super 8, digital photography and video on state of the art equipment.



Council on the Arts

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The VSW Salon is made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts and by the ArtWorks program of the National Endowment for the Arts.

LONG LIVE EXPERIMENTAL CINEMA

VSW envisions a society that values the human need to create and share ideas.



31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY

Learn more at

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