

Explore one of Birmingham's hidden gems, as rooms in the Roundhouse open for a weekend of international video art



Changing Places in its previous staging at The House Mill, London. Courtesy of Film and Video Umbrella. Photographer: Anna Arca. (Still: *Funland*, Bani Abidi. Commissioned by the 8th Berlin Biennale)

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Changing Places is Film and Video Umbrella's national tour of contemporary artists' video, and it's coming to the Roundhouse in Birmingham, 21-23 July 2017. The tour presents a series of exhibitions inside historic buildings across the country, showing video and photography by international artists. The Roundhouse is one of ten participating venues, creating a rare opportunity to explore areas of this hidden gem before it undergoes restoration.

Featuring artists who all live in, work in, or retain a connection to Bangladesh, India or Pakistan, *Changing Places* presents an international perspective on one of the biggest catalysts for change in recent times: industrialisation. The placing of contemporary artworks from South Asia into historic buildings in Britain, such as the Roundhouse, aims to connect the transformations happening across the globe today, with the history of places in Britain where the blueprint for industrialisation began.

The works on show - *Funland* by Bani Abidi (video), *Capital in Transition* by Ravi Agarwal (photography) and *STONWORK* by Omar Chowdhury (video) - invite visitors to consider aspects of Birmingham's history from a new perspective. Showing on the ground floor, Omar Chowdhury's video *STONWORK* evokes the important role of the Roundhouse as a gateway for Rowley Rag - the stone that was used by workers to repair the city's streets. As we watch

people and machinery working together to extract stone for construction, *STONWORK* begins to blur the line between human and machine. Its hypnotic pace gives human characteristics to 'escaping' stones and 'sighing' machinery, while the workers slip into a mechanised stupor.

Ravi Agarwal's photographs, titled *Capital in Transition*, capture the dilapidated Birla Textile Mill in Delhi, India. In 1996 the Mill was ordered shut by the Supreme Court citing pollution laws. This left an empty space of approximately 90,000 square metres of prime land. There is now a proposal to turn the site into offices and a shopping centre, as 'capital' finds a constant revival. With the Roundhouse also sitting on the verge of renovation and transformation under the guardianship of Canal & River Trust and National Trust, the transition of both of these spaces into sites of commerce and leisure reflects a like-minded shift in both societies.

On the upper floor, *Funland*, a six-screen video installation by Bani Abidi, depicts Karachi, the main sea port of Pakistan. The city is home to the country's largest corporations involved in textiles, shipping, the automotive industry, advertising and medical research. The effects of industrialisation are as evident in Karachi as they would have been formerly in Birmingham, with both cities undergoing infrastructural development at a rapid pace. Abidi's work highlights a resulting tension through a series of vignettes that take us to a deserted amusement park, built in the 1970s and now designated for closure to clear the way for the construction of a landmark skyscraper, footage of a 1950s cinema burnt down in protest and a library that is hiding 70 per cent of its collection.

Changing Places will also form one of the stops on the Stand Up Paddleboard canal tours, taking place on 22 & 23 July. The tours explore the history and rejuvenation of the Icknield Port Loop whilst gliding through the water. Places are limited, booking essential through [B-ROW](#).

Mariam Zulfikar, Curator, Film and Video Umbrella:

"The bringing together of these particular works within the Roundhouse offers a different perspective on our intertwined histories, in the hope that we are armed with better tools with which to comprehend our current circumstances."

*The 70th anniversary of Indian independence is an ideal opportunity to consider some of the industrial architecture that sprung up in the boom years of trade with the Indian subcontinent, and how a model of industrial production that was forged in the Britain of the 19th century has been transported to other parts of the globe. By siting moving-image works by artists in a number of venues that embody Britain's imperial industrial heritage, we want to illuminate this experience of change: in the change of use of the buildings themselves, or in the wider urban environments in which they are located. *Changing Places* is a reflection on how cities transform, and how people move between them and transform them."*

Tim Eastop, Executive Producer at the Canal & River Trust:

*"The Trust is proud to be a key partner in this innovative tour of contemporary films curated by FVU. *Changing Places* is helping to address fascinating concerns for the Trust around the changing roles of the unique and historic canal side buildings that we look after across England and Wales. The tour is helping the charity to inspire people to engage with their local canal in a new way, through the lens of international contemporary film, and realise the opportunities to enjoy tremendous high-calibre cultural activities on our waterways."*

Grace Davies, Contemporary Arts Programme Manager, National Trust:

*"We are delighted to be working with FVU to present *Changing Places*, which presents work that resonates with the South Asian links within three National Trust places - the Roundhouse in Birmingham, Quarry Bank in Cheshire and Osterley in Greater London. The project also marks the 70th anniversary of Indian Independence, and the start of a period of research for National Trust that explores the links between our places and India, and will culminate in a programme of events in 2022 - the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence."*



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Photographer: Anna Arca.
(Still: *Funland*, Bani Abidi.
Commissioned by the 8th Berlin Biennale)



STONWORK, Omar Chowdhury (video still)

Courtesy of the artist and Film and Video Umbrella.



The Roundhouse in Birmingham

Photographer:
Jana Eastwood.

Notes to Editor

For further information:

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Title: *Changing Places*
Exhibiting: *Funland*, Bani Abidi (six-screen video installation); *Capital in Transition*, Ravi Agarwal (photography); *STONWORK*, Omar Chowdhury (video)
Date: 21 - 23 July 2017
Address: Roundhouse, 101 St Vincent Street, Birmingham, B16 8EY
Opening times: Friday - Sunday 11am - 5pm
Admission: Free

Please be aware that the Roundhouse is currently in a pre-restoration state. There are some areas that are not yet accessible via wheelchair (work on this is underway). There are uneven cobbles at a gradient on entry and some uneven floors.

Full national tour dates for *Changing Places*, and details of all artworks on the tour available [here](#).

Film and Video Umbrella commissions, curates, produces and presents artists' moving-image works that are staged in collaboration with galleries and other cultural partners. Since the late 1980s, FVU has been at the forefront of this vibrant and expanding area of practice, promoting innovation through its support of some of the most exciting figures on the contemporary scene. During this time, the organisation has commissioned and produced nearly 200 different artists' projects, ranging from ambitious multi-screen installations to shorter film and video pieces, as well as numerous online commissions. fvu.co.uk

The Roundhouse in Birmingham was built in 1874 and was originally stables and stores for the Birmingham Corporation. Designed by local architect W.H. Ward, the horseshoe shaped building quickly became a real landmark in the city, but over the last 10 years it has been falling into disrepair. Through a partnership between National Trust and the Canal & River Trust, and with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, plans have been drawn up to revitalise and restore the Grade II listed building, offering a base from which to explore Birmingham's canal network, a cycle hire and repair workshop and a shared working space for conservation organisations. We hope to begin work later this year. Until then, local people and visitors to the city will have the chance to explore the Roundhouse through a variety of events.

Audio visual installation courtesy of award-winning systems integrator, Feltech. feltech.co.uk

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A Film and Video Umbrella touring exhibition, supported by Arts Council England, Canal & River Trust, National Trust, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, Phoenix Leicester, Feltech, Links Signs and Heritage Lottery Fund. Curated by Mariam Zulfiqar.



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