

Changing Places

Touring exhibition of artists' moving image. Launches: 7 July, The House Mill, London



Changing Places at The House Mill, London. (Still: *Funland*, Bani Abidi)
Courtesy of the artist and Film and Video Umbrella. Photographer: Anna Arca.

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Film and Video Umbrella presents ***Changing Places***, a series of exhibitions staging contemporary artists' moving image within ten historic buildings across the country. At the core of the project lies the narrative of industrialisation and its global legacy: a mode of production that has altered landscapes, choreographed migration, created monumental buildings and shaped social attitudes. Through the pairing of specific sites and artworks, *Changing Places* bridges the chronological and geographical gaps between the industrialisation currently occurring across South Asia, and the places in Britain where the blueprint began.

In collaboration with several tour partners, including the Canal & River Trust and National Trust, ten buildings have been invited to host artworks that resonate with their locations. Each site has been curated to place local histories within an international context, underlining globally intertwined stories of places and people. The majority of the locations selected are non-gallery spaces. In some instances, the presence of *Changing Places* will open rarely seen interiors to the public, or bring a fresh perspective to buildings that have recently undergone or are currently under renovation. The tour launches at The House Mill, London Borough of Newham, on 7 July, with a newly commissioned installation piece and four video works throughout the Grade 1 listed 18th century tidal mill. Specially arranged guided tours will lead visitors through narrow passageways to a hidden work on the upper floor. A guided tour schedule is available [here](#).

The national tour features six artists: **Bani Abidi, Ravi Agarwal, Imran Channa, Omar Chowdhury, Desire Machine Collective** and **Yasmin Jahan Nupur**. All live in, work in, or retain a connection to Bangladesh, India or Pakistan. Presented in 2017, during the 70th anniversary of Indian independence, these artists' works cover a range of perspectives and situations, from international migration and border-transcending environmental impacts, to the individual who navigates and responds to shifting social and economic circumstances.

The title, *Changing Places*, reminds us that places are constantly on the move, regularly being transformed, re-inhabited or reinvented as places of work or leisure. The pairing of buildings with the artworks they are exhibiting reveals how historic movements continue to reverberate in the present, illuminating the universal upheavals associated with modernity and 'progress', and reminding us that change is the only constant.

Mariam Zulficar, Curator:

"Changing Places offers a counterpoint to a prevailing rhetoric, predicated on fragmentation and division, that has become normalised within our current political discourse, and at a time when notions of economic power are being reevaluated and repositioned around us. The bringing together of these sites with these particular works 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 exhibition intends to explore the notion of post-national via post colonial experiences through the various disjunctures embedded in the artworks."

Steven Bode, Director, Film and Video Umbrella:

"FVU projects have often sought to investigate the histories of the places in which they are presented, in ways that make that history resonate for the contemporary moment. 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, is responsible for delivering Arts on the Waterways, a collaborative arts programme situated on and inspired by Britain's waterways:

"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 - 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."

Additional Press Images



Changing Places at The House Mill, London. (Still: *Residue*, Desire Machine Collective)
Courtesy of the artists and Film and Video Umbrella. Photographer: Anna Arca.



Changing Places at The House Mill, London. (Still: *The Distance From Here*, Bani Abidi)
Courtesy of the artist and Film and Video Umbrella. Photographer: Anna Arca.

Notes to Editor

For further information, or to attend a press preview at The House Mill, please contact:

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Featured artists: Bani Abidi, Ravi Agarwal, Imran Channa, Omar Chowdhury, Desire Machine Collective, Yasmin Jahan Nupur

Tour dates:

The House Mill, London, 7 - 16 July 2017
Roundhouse, Birmingham, 21 – 23 July 2017
National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, 11 August – 17 September 2017
Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 15 September – 29 October 2017
Quarry Bank, Cheshire, 23 September – 19 November 2017
Whaley Bridge Transhipment Warehouse, Derbyshire, 7 October 2017
Cliffe Castle Museum, Keighley, 21 October – 19 November 2017
Osterley Park and House, Greater London, 25 November 2017 – 23 February 2018
Phoenix, Leicester, 18 January – 11 March 2018

Listing details for The House Mill:

Title: *Changing Places*
Exhibiting: *The Distance from Here*, Bani Abidi; *Locus, Temple* and *STONWORK*, Omar Chowdhury; *Residue*, Desire Machine Collective; and a specially commissioned installation by Imran Channa.
Dates: 7 - 16 July 2017
Address: The House Mill, The Miller's House, Three Mill Lane, Bromley-by-Bow, London, E3 3DU
Admission: Free
Nearest tube: Bromley-by-Bow
Opening/tour times: www.fvu.co.uk/whats-on/changing-places-at-the-house-mill

Please note that some areas of The House Mill are not fully accessible. The 'Grain Bins' on the upper floor, where the guided tours take place, are not accessible for visitors who cannot walk unaided. With the exception of the ground floor cafe in the Miller's House, the other exhibition spaces are only accessible via large stone steps.

Audio visual installation is courtesy of the award winning systems integrator, Feltech. This creative/technical partnership with FVU makes it possible to install technology-based artworks with due sensitivity to the challenges presented by heritage building environments.
www.feltech.co.uk

Full list of works on tour (selected pieces show at each venue)

Funland Karachi Series II, Bani Abidi, 2014 (six screen installation)

Abidi's series of six video works captures the current political and ideological tensions playing out in Karachi, Pakistan. By paralleling the desire for construction with the destruction of

libraries and sites of entertainment and leisure, the work highlights how ideas around progress are subjective, beholden in this case to mob mentality, censorship, fear and imagination. The work captures a dilapidated cinema building from the 1950s burnt down by protestors, the fate of a theme park resting on the construction of the country's tallest skyscraper, and a library undergoing extreme censorship.

The Distance From Here, Bani Abidi, 2010 (video)

The Distance From Here highlights the processes and bureaucracy involved in order for migration to happen. As people wait in line, fill in papers and stand between demarcated areas, the work showcases the difficulties faced by many people across the world seeking an alternative future in another place.

Capital in Transition (I, II, III), Ravi Agarwal, 2011 (photographic work)

Agarwal's photographs capture the dilapidated Birla Textile Mill in Delhi, India. The Mill was ordered shut in 1996, along with other such mills, by the Supreme Court citing pollution laws. Thousands of industrial workers were uprooted as a result, leaving an empty space of approximately 90,000 square metres. There is now a proposal to turn the site into offices and a shopping centre, as 'capital' finds a constant revival.

The Mixer, Ravi Agarwal, 2007 (video)

The Mixer reflects Ravi Agarwal's concerns about the environmental impact of industrialisation, specifically questioning the use of concrete which contributes to 5% of the world's CO2 emissions. For Agarwal, the city itself is an outcome of the industrial processes that disconnects us from nature. For him, this is the tragedy of modernity.

Machine, Ravi Agarwal, 2007 (video)

In *Machine* we are presented with the production of plastic bottles made from a by-product of petrochemicals which are causing huge environmental damage. In both of Agarwal's works, we see a mechanical process aided by a human presence. The hands of the faceless labourers are all crucial to the process, but the identity of the labourer is portrayed as irrelevant.

Series of newly commissioned installations by Imran Channa, 2017

Imran Channa has been commissioned to make a series of new works responding to a number of the locations on the tour. The artist accessed drawings, plans and photographs from the venue archives, and was given permission to remove small samples of dust from deep within the buildings. The new artworks focus on dust, underlining how this residual material traces time and human existence.

Locus, Temple, Omar Chowdhury, 2014 (video)

Locus Temple captures how an architectural space can act as a central hub for a community. The work shows a temple providing spiritual guidance, medical facilities, a nexus for intergenerational contact, and place to eat together. The uniform clothing and collective chanting indicate that these places are about unification. The paradox comes with the insertion of new forms of technology highlighting how sites of spiritual enlightenment keep pace with the material world.

STONEWORK, Omar Chowdhury, 2013 (video)

In *STONEWORK*, people and machinery work in unison to extract natural materials for use in construction. The film's hypnotic rhythm gives rise to a blurring of labourer and machine – affording human characteristics to 'escaping' stones and 'sighing' machinery, while the workers slip into a mechanised stupor.

Residue, Desire Machine Collective, 2011 (video)

Residue portrays a disused thermal power plant outside the artists' hometown of Guwahati, India. Built during the 1970s and abandoned during the 1990s, the film shows the power plant being slowly enveloped by a forest, its decaying industrial forms being engulfed by the nature that surrounds it. The film forms a poetic reflection on the cycle of creation and destruction. The site is neither in use nor preserved, underlining how a lack of function or purpose in the present may allow its demise yet it is also a site of renewal and regeneration.

Trespassers will (not) be prosecuted, Desire Machine Collective, 2008 (sound work)

This audio work transposes the sounds of a forest to locations where nature has been cleared in favour of urban development. Acting as an audio memory of what was once present, the work draws attention to our increased separation from the natural environment, and the absence of it within the urban landscape.

Away From Home, Yasmin Jahan Nupur, 2011 (video)

Nupur presents a glimpse into the lives of textile workers from Bangladesh who have migrated to Mauritius. The film shows the paradoxes of seeking work abroad in hope of a better life. The workers articulate their capacity to earn a living, while also discussing the lack of control they now have over their personal lives. The film also reveals the cramped conditions in which the workers live, where bunk beds demarcate the confined space allocated to each person.

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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.

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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.

