

NEW COMMISSION: Hetain Patel, *Don't Look at the Finger*

***Don't Look at the Finger* (video still) Hetain Patel, 2017.** Courtesy Film and Video Umbrella.

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fvu.co.uk

Don't Look at the Finger is a major new moving-image work by artist Hetain Patel, commissioned and produced by Film and Video Umbrella with Manchester Art Gallery and QUAD. The work will premiere in simultaneous solo exhibitions at QUAD in Derby and at Manchester Art Gallery, opening 29 & 30 September respectively.

Don't Look at the Finger follows a ceremonial 'fight' between two protagonists, a man and a woman, in the grand architectural setting of a church. The way the characters communicate is a feat of choreography that combines Kung Fu with signed languages to express a ritualistic coming together. Their initial gestures, extravagant and small, possess an intimacy and deliberation that seems to apprehend what is about to take place. As movements amplify, the pair begin to test each other; gradually uncovering strengths, weaknesses and predictabilities. Patel then uses shape-shifting costumes to kick the performance to a different level – the wedding garb miraculously metamorphosing into full-blown Kung Fu costume. As the fight progresses, the couple's hand-to-hand combat continues to hint at the passionate exchanges and ever-shifting power struggles of a relationship.

Characteristic of Patel's work, *Don't Look at the Finger* creates a blend of signifiers set to challenge assumptions. The film encompasses Hollywood cinema, West African characters and costumes, East Asian martial arts, and a specially composed musical score that sets a transforming backdrop to the fusing of them all. The work's title comes from one of Kung Fu master Bruce Lee's most celebrated sayings, which warns us never to be distracted by a finger that is pointing at something lest we miss what it is pointing at. This seems especially relevant to the art of Hetain Patel, which once again beckons us in one direction only to reveal that its real substance lies elsewhere.



Don't Look at the Finger
(video still)
Hetaim Patel, 2017
Courtesy FVU.



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Hetaim Patel, 2017
Courtesy FVU.

Notes to Editor

Contact

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Credits

Don't Look at the Finger is commissioned by Film and Video Umbrella with Manchester Art Gallery and QUAD. Supported by Arts Council England. Initial research supported by Jerwood Choreographic Research Project.

In exhibitions at both QUAD, Derby and Manchester Art Gallery, the new commission will be installed alongside Patel's 2015 video work *The Jump*, which was commissioned by Wood Street Galleries, Pittsburgh, USA.

Exhibitions

QUAD Gallery, Derby: 29 September - 19 November 2017

Launch event: Thursday 28 September, 6.30 - 8.30pm, [RSVP](#) via Eventbrite derbyquad.co.uk

Manchester Art Gallery: 30 September 2017 - 4 February 2018

Press preview: Thursday 28 September, 3 - 4.45pm

Launch event: Friday 29 September, 7 - 8.30pm

manchesterartgallery.org

Hetai Patel's solo exhibition at Manchester Art Gallery is part of a programme of activities supported by New North and South, a network of 10 arts organisations from the North of England and South Asia with the British Council, funded by Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence Programme. #newnorthsouth

Hetai Patel is a British born artist of Indian descent who grew up in Bolton and is now based in London. Patel makes photographs, videos, sculptures and live performances, usually for galleries and theatres. He is interested in connecting marginalised identities with the mainstream in an effort to destabilise notions of authenticity and promote personal freedom. With an autobiographical starting point he uses humour and the languages of popular culture and explores fantasy through a domestic lens. Hetai Patel has exhibited at Tate Britain (2009), Serpentine Gallery (2014), Sadler's Wells, London (2015), New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2012), Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai (2015), and Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2012). He is represented by Chatterjee & Lal, Mumbai. hetaipatel.com

Selected Cast and Crew

Director of Photography [Carlos Catalan](#)

Fight Choreographer **Chirag Lukha**

Costume Designer [Holly Waddington](#)

Composer [Amy May](#)

Lead Cast [Freddie Opoku-Addaie](#), **Victoria Shulungu**

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

QUAD is Derby's centre for art and film, on the Market Place in Derby city centre. QUAD is a gallery, cinema, café bar and workshop that anyone can use. QUAD is a partnership between Derby City Council and Arts Council England. For further information on this event, or any other issue relating to QUAD, please contact Kathy Frain on 01332 285422 (mobile 07791441941) or email kathyf@derbyquad.co.uk derbyquad.co.uk

Manchester Art Gallery dates to 1835. Originally established to showcase the best art and ideas from across the world, today the gallery's 45,000-strong collection spans six centuries of fine art, design, craft, photography and fashion. It is particularly rich in 19th-century art, including an outstanding collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Yet while Manchester Art Gallery is renowned for its historic collection, it also has a reputation for staging new work by some of the most compelling artists working today, among them Turner Prize winning artist Jeremy Deller, Joana Vasconcelos, Matthew Darbyshire and Raqib Shaw. Alongside its exhibitions run events that range from feminist 'takeovers' to wellbeing sessions, political debate and creative workshops, via award-winning family, community and schools programmes. Part of Manchester City Council, Manchester Art Gallery is one of the country's most popular galleries, with over half a million visitors every year and, housed in an iconic, Grade I-listed building at the heart of Manchester, it has long been part of the creative and political life of one of the UK's most dynamic cities. manchesterartgallery.org

New North and South is three year programme of co-commissions, exhibitions and intellectual exchange across a network of ten arts organisations from the North of England and South Asia, along with the British Council. The network, supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England's Ambition for Excellence programme, will bring prominence to the work of leading Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan and UK artists and aims to connect with diverse audiences on both continents by exploring unequal and contested histories of empire and the industrial revolution. New artistic commissions, exhibitions and performances will be held in Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Colombo (Sri Lanka), Dhaka (Bangladesh), Lahore (Pakistan), Karachi (Pakistan) and Kochi (India). www.newnorthandsouth.org

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**Manchester
Art Gallery**



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