

# MONITOR 15

Experimental Film + Video

Curated by  
Faraz Anoushahpour

Mani Mazinani  
Ali Satri Efendi  
Abeer Khan  
Nimisha Srivastava  
Nada El-Omari  
Paribartana Mohanty

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# Clearings in the Fog

by Faraz Anoushahpour

*"If we see meaning [...] as a skin on the sound of language, what happens if we peel it off?"*<sup>1</sup>

In *Clearings in the Fog*, artists turn to their landscapes and bodies for resonance, reverberation, and echo—senses, in brief, of presence and distance, at scales ranging from individual to collective. The centrality of sound and listening is a guiding force through the shifting temporalities of each isolated piece as well as the program as a whole. In searching for clearings, we arrive at gestures that bring attention to the act of hearing, tensions between the audible and inaudible, and to what slips in and out of cycles of visual inscription and forms of witnessing. Through various forms and narrative structures, each film in the program creates undulating relations that animate insides and outsides, subjects and objects, forms of sensing and sounding with worlds folding and unfolding.

Mani Mazinani's *Saw Bells* opens the program with a meditative improvisation of time, sound, and motion. The frame consists of circular saw blades, a vast sky, and a small, suspended microphone swaying in and out of the frame. Every so often a mallet enters the frame to strike the saw blades. As mallet and microphone move in and out of frame, the sensorial experience of sight and sound shift. An eerie summoning of sorts occurs as the modulating fields of sound are set against the drifting clouds.

The changing contours of air and vibration lead to the mysteriously quiet place of Ali Satri Efendi's *Gelombang Longitudinal*. Guided by the soundings of a distant instrument and shifting landscapes in the fog, waves of dreams and solitude drift away in time and slowly form an illusory land in this circular visual poem.

Wandering in the humidity of domestic space, Abeer Khan's *Child-lock* projects onto the walls and surfaces of a room during lockdown. Collapsing the domestic space with visions of elsewhere, the body reconciles its confinement through unfolding impressions of the outside and fantasies of the unreachable.

Moving between the realms of the individual and the collective, Nimisha Srivastava's *Chadariya* unearths the pain and violence lived by young Indian unmarried women through the construction of a personal landscape of abortion.

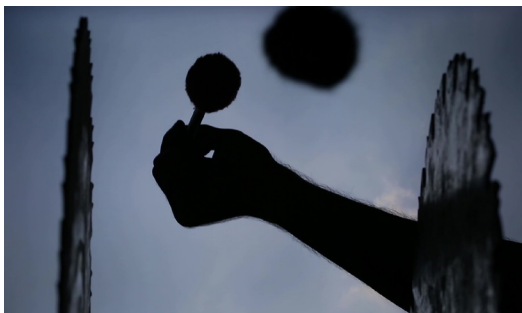
Intergenerational narratives are spoken through multiple voices in an attempt to create an interwoven “sense-scape.” The body becomes the site where pasts meet futures, congealing together in a visceral interplay between individual experience and a collective inheritance. While the haptic camerawork creates a sense of closeness, the interjecting written frames confront and trouble the ease of sharing and the real violence inflicted every day on women’s bodies. At one point in the film, a mother shares her lonely experience with pregnancy, and sings about a fabric, gesturing to life itself.

The tension between what is audible and what cannot be heard is further explored in Nada El-Omari’s piece. Exploring her dislocated voice and the inconsistencies of language, she writes, “In the pieces I store and carry along my many different roads, my dialects may be signs of bruises but reclaimed they form the skin and voice I live in.” *from where to where* من وين لوين *d’où vers où* is compiled from a series of conversations and musings that attempt to work in tandem with multiple languages, places, and temporalities. By refusing easy alignment between the visual and sonic, El-Omari points to what slips in translation, instead forming an in-between identity that finds reprieve in the banality of daily life.

In *Rice Hunger Sorrow*, Paribartana Mohanty visits Odisha, India, where the effects of the natural world and climate change occur in tandem with rapid change in the ways that humans live. Recurring cyclones, tsunamis, rising ocean levels and land erosion are mirrored by swiftly changing geopolitics, demographics, and culture. The video is an account of the artist’s encounters and resulting performative gestures responding to the evolving post-disaster landscapes. The work gathers and reconstructs sociopolitical, mythological, and artistic forms of narrative into a quasi-musical on the effects of environmental disaster as mediated through new technologies and refracted by the collaborative practices of the local people of Odisha.

*Clearings in the Fog* gestures at an experience of the opacity between the senses, flowing between seeing and hearing. The lush landscapes and confined interiors evoke smell and a visceral imagination of temperature. This program unravels the interactions and intersections between sensory experience and meaning making to build cognitive pathways towards wisdom.

<sup>1</sup>Umashankar Manthavadi, *An Archaeology of Listening – A Slightly Curving Place*, ed. Nida Ghouse and Jenifer Evans (Berlin: Archive Books, 2022).



### *Saw Bells*

Mani Mazinani, 11 min, 2022, Iran/Canada

Circular saw blades are played through two microphones: a stationary figure-of-8 pattern microphone (just below the video frame) and a mobile cardioid-pattern microphone suspended above the blades. This system is played as an instrument, one hand striking the saw bells with a mallet and the other manipulating the position of the suspended microphone. As it moves, so do our ears, revealing the available variation in the aural space. Within *Saw Bells*, motion is tied to our sight and hearing. The improvised playing/recording foregrounds our experience of our perception.



### *Gelombang Longitudinal*

Ali Satri Efendi, 5 min, 2016, Indonesia

The journey into the parallel medium where the compression and rarefaction coincide with each other. The traveling wave directs the journey to find balance within constructive interference.





### *Child-lock*

Abeer Khan, 2 min, 2020, India

Produced in Covid-19 lockdown, the video surfs the freedom of mind, as the video's tagline goes, 'The mind wanders only if you let it.' *Child-lock* is the safety lock usually found on appliances. Here, *Child-Lock* takes the literal meaning and interlaces it with surrealism. Not particularly for the body but for the mind, it is an expression which can travel from the past into the future, just like our childhood days spent in humid afternoons creating various scenarios and projecting them on walls.



### *Chadariya*

Nimisha Srivastava, 25 min, 2022, India

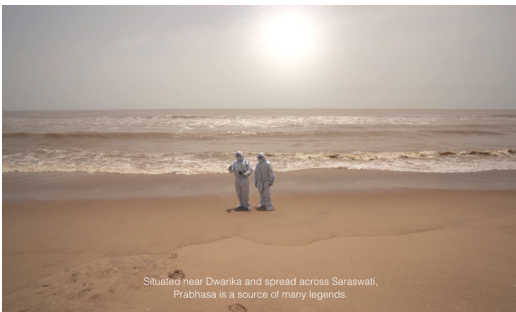
*Chadariya* is an emotional sense-scape of abortion. It unearths pain and violence lived by young unmarried Indian women. Somewhere in the middle of the narrative lies a mother sharing her own lonely experiences with pregnancy, who eventually sings her heart out about the fabric that is life itself. The film comes out of the need to be heard. It includes multiple narratives and is rooted in research about the cultural and societal hold over women's bodies and its representation as well. The film situates the viewer inside the deeply personal yet shared world of an unsafe abortion, taking the aid of music, songs, and beauty to communicate this experience.



*from where to where* من وين لوين d'ou vers ou

Nada El-Omari, 8 min, 2022, Canada/Palestine/Egypt

In the pieces I store and carry along my many different roads, my dialects may be signs of bruises but reclaimed they form the skin and voice I live in. Experiences of the where, from where, to where; a narrative amongst others. And as the words finally trickle through the needles, fingers seeping with tints trace the outline of whirling fields where I hang a jasmine branch on suspended necks and in the in-betweens, language soothes, swans mend, and the daily brings calm. We are the comfort of our multiples.



*Rice Hunger Sorrow*

Paribartana Mohanty, 20 min, 2021, India

Commissioned by VH AWARD of Hyundai Motor Group

Since the 1999 Super Cyclone, the state of Odisha is facing a surge of recurring cyclones, tsunamis, rising ocean levels and land erosion, rapidly changing its geopolitics, demographics, and culture. The video *Rice Hunger Sorrow* is a brief account of my visit, encounters and intervention—performance in specific post environmental disaster sites which are evolving near the coast of Bay of Bengal. The work speculates on new technological mediations and approaches initiated by new policies that are shaping public perception and opinions about climate change today.

## Biographies

**Mani Mazinani** (b.1984, Tehran) is a Tkaronto-based artist making installation, video, film, sculpture, photographs, multiples, sound and music. His practice evolved from an early interest in sound recording, now working with the process of translating thoughts and transferring concentration through work that thinks about scale and perception, combining subject matter and medium.

**Ali Satri Efendi** is an educator who loves films, books, music & running. He writes short stories, poems and various articles. He often makes films alone with simple technique and tools. His works have been screened at ARKIPEL: Jakarta International Documentary & Experimental Film Festival, Minikino Bali, Images Forum, Festival Film Dokumenter.

**Abeer Khan** is a Mumbai-based filmmaker and photographer with a passion for storytelling that transcends traditional mediums. With years of experience in photography and a deep fascination with cinema, Abeer has perfected the art of blending these two passions to create compelling visual narratives that challenge the boundaries of the human experience.

**Nimisha Srivastava's** films and art reflect intersectional feminist themes and human rights issues. She has been involved with various projects that deal with the personal and political in evocative and avant-garde ways. Her poetry makes up for a large personal archive and she has been a choreographer and performer of both poetry and dance, often together.

**Nada El-Omari** is a filmmaker and writer of Palestinian and Egyptian origin based in Montreal, Quebec. She has centered her practice and research interests on the intergenerational transmissions of memories, displacement and the stories of belonging and identity through a poetic, hybrid lens.

**Paribartana Mohanty** is a visual artist and storyteller based in Delhi. His work explores new environment-disaster-landscapes emerging near the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Odisha, that study the deep impacts of recurring cyclones, tsunamis, and land erosion on marginal communities, nature, and culture.

**Faraz Anoushahpour** is an artist and film programmer. He worked at Images Festival (2014-2018), and is a member of the Reassemblage Collective in Toronto. His collaborative projects have been presented at e-flux Screening Room, Flaherty Seminar, Anthology Film Archives, Berlinale, ICA, MoMA, New York Film Festival, Toronto International Film Festival, and others internationally.

## Staff

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Sophie Sabet, Communications Coordinator

**MONITOR** is committed to the presentation of experimental short films and videos that initiate dialogue around the shifting nature of politics, economies and landscapes across the Global South and its diasporas.

**SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre)** is a non-profit, artist-run centre in Canada dedicated to increasing the visibility of culturally diverse artists by curating and exhibiting their work, providing mentorship, facilitating professional development and creating a community for our artists. SAVAC was founded to be an organization staffed by people of colour, committed to support the work of artists of colour.

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ISBN: 978-0-9685468-3-3

Design: Sophie Sabet

Poster image: Paribartana Mohanty, *Rice Hunger Sorrow* (still), 2021.

Commissioned by VH AWARD of Hyundai Motor Group.

SAVAC acknowledges the support of its funders and all MONITOR 15 presenting partners.



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