



Monitor 16



experimental film + video

Monitor 16

Shadows Swept Far Away

Curated by Vicky Moufawad-Paul
and Sameena Siddiqui

75 MINS

Featuring short films by Nour Bishouty, Kevin Lee Burton, Beny Kristia, Mahishaa, Rana Nazzal Hamadeh, Chantal Partamian, Tripty Tamang Pakhrin, and Ankur Yadav.

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INTRODUCTION

ince 2005, SAVAC's Monitor program has showcased experimental short films and videos that initiate dialogue around the shifting nature of politics, economies and landscapes across the Global South and its diasporas.

For Monitor's 16th iteration, curators Vicky Moufawad-Paul and Sameena Siddiqui have brought together eight films that reveal how states, religions, and colonial infrastructures shape bodies, land, and imagination. Urban streetcorners, remote landscapes, and residential spaces become politicized witnesses—sites where extraction, displacement, and authoritarian control leave their marks, but where care, labour, and memory also persist. Non-linear montage, poetic language, and attention to non-human actors disrupt the authority of official histories, replacing them with intimate and plural ways of knowing.

BIOGRAPHIES

Rana Nazzal Hamadeh is a Palestinian artist based between occupied Ramallah and Ottawa, on unceded Anishinaabe territory. Her photography, film, and installation works look at issues related to time, space, land, and movement, offering interventions rooted in a decolonial framework and using memory and story to engage intimately. Her practice is deeply informed by the knowledge emerging from grassroots movements for justice, both in occupied Palestine and across Turtle Island.

Nour Bishouty is a multidisciplinary artist working across sculpture, moving image, works on paper, and artist publishing. Her work attends to fragmentation in history, and the ways knowledge and fantasy are produced and withheld. She explores the limits of articulation, permission, and the generative possibilities of misunderstanding.

Tripty Tamang Pakhrin is a Nepali artist working across photography, moving image, performance, and installation. Her work grows from her childhood in a hotel-home run by her parents on the Nepal-India border and centers on domestic labor, motherhood, and the boundaries that shape familial relationships. Tripty has exhibited in Nepal, India, Indonesia, Germany, Norway, UAE, and the US.

Ankur Yadav is an artist and poet based in Rajasthan, India. Trained as a painter, his practice extends across film, poetry, scenographic installations, and site-specific interventions. His work subverts dominant narratives of exploitative capitalist practices, colonial knowledge systems, and oppressive regional politics and ideologies, which have degraded the environment of his native region. Rooted in grief, anger and loss, both personal and collective, his practice seeks to build alternative perspectives that challenge extractive systems and resist anthropocentric worldviews.

Kevin Lee Burton is a director, film festival programmer, offline editor and freelance camera operator who is Swampy Cree from God's Lake Narrows, Manitoba. In his directorial works he has designed a niche by specifically working in his ancestral tongue, Cree. Kevin was awarded Best Experimental Video and Best Indigenous Language Production for his experimental film NIKAMOWIN (SONG) at the 2007 ImagineNATIVE Film Festival.

Beny Kristia was born in Magelang and moved to Malang to pursue his studies in Communication Science. There, he and his friends in Berakinema produced several films that were featured in national and international festivals. His film *When The Blues Goes Marching In* is the last film he made before graduating from university. After graduating in 2025, he moved to Jakarta to join Milisifilem Collective to deepen his knowledge of film and art.

Mahishaa is an Ambedkarite filmmaker based in Bangalore. Most of his work focuses on urban Bengaluru. His films navigate intersections of caste, gender and masculinity. He is the founder of Neelavarana, an Ambedkarite artist collective that produces short films, music videos and documentaries focusing on Bahujan stories made by people from the community. His works have been showcased in Australia, Germany, India, and many other places.

Chantal Partamian is an experimental filmmaker and archivist whose work centers on Super 8mm and found footage. She explores speculative histories while engaging questions of archives, memory, and spectral presence. Her archival practice focuses on preserving and restoring reels from the Eastern Mediterranean through the Katsakh Project, alongside research on archival methods in conflict zones. Her films have screened widely, and her writings regularly appear in Montréal's Revue Hors-Champ.

Vicky Moufawad-Paul is the Director and Curator at A Space Gallery in Toronto. She situates her work in terms of curatorial praxis which investigates aesthetic strategies for South West Asian and North African self-determination, including counter archives, opacity, and refusal. Her writing and curating has been supported by numerous festivals, galleries and publications.

Sameena Siddiqui is a doctoral candidate in Art History, Visual Art & Theory at the University of British Columbia. Her research, writing, and curatorial practice engage with vernacular modernisms, photography, histories of science and technology, and digital cultures through decolonial feminist and intersectional frameworks of resistance and collective care, foregrounding labour, caste, migration, and imperial infrastructures.

or Monitor 16, we approach independent cinema as a site where resistance and solidarity are not only represented but actively produced through acts of experimental image-making and viewing. In this time of imperial hegemony through wars, genocide, environmental decline, and intensifying border regimes, we turn to Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics. According to Mbembe, the State does not simply manage life but derives power from its capacity "to dictate who may live and who must die."¹ We curated this program while witnessing the genocides in Gaza, Sudan, and Congo, as well as the attacks on Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, Lebanon, and elsewhere. The targeting of image-makers on the ground underscores the stakes independent cinema faces against the State's orchestrated production of death worlds. The destruction of image-makers is not incidental; it is central to necropolitical regimes that depend upon the elimination of those who bear witness. Against this annihilation, the artists in this program ground themselves in relationships to land and history, insisting on solidarities that refuse disappearance.

Interstitial spaces of diaspora, hotels, student protests, and ancient landscapes emerge as political witnesses and resonate within a longer anti-imperialist genealogy of cinema. By centering non-dominant perspectives—Indigenous, Dalit, diasporic, and queer—the program reveals cracks within the armour of the State. Their images linger where official narratives attempt erasure; they gather fragments of life where the State imposes silence. Across the films, resistance unfolds through tactile engagements with land, language, and memory. Mahishaa's *Babasaheb In Bengaluru* foregrounds statues of Babasaheb Ambedkar, self-funded by Dalit communities in India. These monuments are not sanctioned by the State but erected in plazas and roadsides as revolutionary claims to dignity and public presence. The statues transform everyday spaces into sites of counter-sovereignty, where marginalized communities assert visibility against caste hierarchies that continue to structure the 'modern' nation and South Asian diaspora. Tripty Tamang Pakhrin's *Welcome to Hotel Thai* considers a family-run hotel as a political space between care and authority, public and private life, revealing how intimate relationships unfold within structures shaped by land-ownership, labour, motherhood, and domestic tension. In Nour Bishouty's *On the count of three*, we meditate on a hotel as an allegory, as it is suspended between settlement and transience. Given the millions of people forcibly displaced by violence in the first few months of 2026, it is poignant to situate the hotel as a longstanding witness to historic events.

Monitor 16 also attends to fragile ecologies and vernacular knowledge. In *HOME*, Kevin Lee Burton activates a powerful sense of agency by reconnecting the body with territory. He explores depictions of masculinity and homoeroticism on the land, reclaiming Indigenous knowledge systems and fluid gender cosmologies. Rana Nazzal Hamadeh's *we would be freer* (بنكون اكثر احرار) follows

the sumac plant, native to both Palestine and Turtle Island, as a way of linking Indigenous traditions across continents. The piece positions land-based wisdom as an integral part of ecological repair and fighting for Indigenous sovereignty under settler-colonialism. Ankur Yadav's 'एक पुराना' (*The Old One*), explores weather patterns alongside local rituals, emphasizing knowledge often dismissed as superstition. Set in one of Asia's oldest mountain ranges in Rajasthan, India, the film evokes the mythical and precarious relationship between humans and the environment.

Beny Kristia's *When The Blues Goes Marching In* takes the form of a letter to the artist's father in which he recounts his experience of student protests in Indonesia during Joko Widodo's regime. In *Traces / ٢٤٧*, Chantal Partamian recovers a lost film reel in Lebanon that leads to an unraveling of queer bodies. Meanwhile, the city reveals torn architectural spaces where histories of foreign intervention, civil war, and anticolonial resistance intersect. Together, the films ask how we collectively remember, how language survives, and how images carry traces of lives.

These works resonate with the radical cinematic tradition articulated by Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino in their manifesto *Toward a Third Cinema*, which called for film to become a form of cultural production against imperial hegemony.² The films are in dialogue with Trinh T. Minh-ha's insistence that anti-imperialist cinema must unsettle the authority of representation itself.³ They also echo Tina M. Campt's call to "listen to images," foregrounding affective registers that exceed visual capture and resist the spectacle of suffering.⁴ Rather than reproducing conventional visual aesthetics, the artists embrace unruly image-making, lingering, fragmentation, and poetic experimentation as political strategies. Following grassroots filmmaking traditions across the Global South, these works refuse colonial frameworks, instead highlighting lived experiences and everyday practices of endurance.

Through deep relationality with their subjects, collaborators, and locales, the artists in *Shadows Swept Far Away* extend a Global South vision via quieter but no less radical gestures of refusal. Viewers are beckoned not to consume images but to dwell with them. Projected together, these moving shadows traverse borders and histories, carrying traces of struggle and hope.

—VICKY MOUFAWAD-PAUL & SAMEENA SIDDIQUI

¹ Mbembe, J.A., and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11-40.

² Solanas, Fernando, and Octavio Getino. "Toward a Third Cinema." *Tricontinental*, no. 13 (1969): 107-132.

³ Minh-ha, Trinh T. *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

⁴ Campt, Tina M. *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.



we would be freer (بنكون اقدر احرار)

RANA NAZZAL HAMADEH
Palestine

2023

8:41 MINS

ENGLISH & ARABIC WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Through storytelling, this film looks at the sumac plant as medicine, spice, dye, and more. Staghorn sumac is native to parts of Turtle Island and tanner's sumac to the eastern Mediterranean. Weaving between the voices of two women, one from the Mohawk community of Kahnawá:ke and the other an internally displaced refugee in Ramallah, *we would be freer* invites contemplation on the role of sumac across two occupied lands.



On the count of three

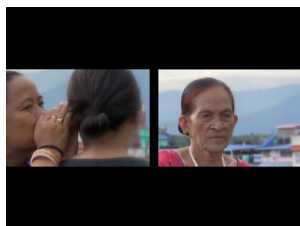
NOUR BISHOUTY
Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Canada

2024

13:20 MINS

ENGLISH

On the count of three imagines a nonspecific hotel as a witness to a full spectrum of human activity. Punctuated with sets of instructional prompts, the film combines archival imagery and staged vignettes that fold fiction and historical narration to blur the lines between care, hospitality, and authoritarian impulses.



Welcome to Hotel Thai

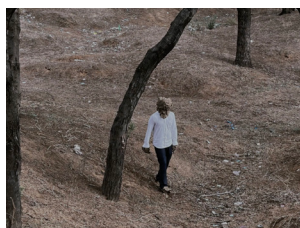
TRIPTY TAMANG PAKHRIN
Nepal, Hawai'i

2024

12:05 MINS

NEPALI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

Welcome to Hotel Thai observes the daily rhythms of a family-run restaurant and lodge on the Nepal-India border. Through gestures of labor and silence, the film traces the unspoken relationship between the artist's two mothers, women who share a husband and a home but do not speak. The work moves between memory and observation, language and its limits, to reflect on the endurance and tenderness that persist in the absence of words.



‘एक पुराना’ (The Old One)

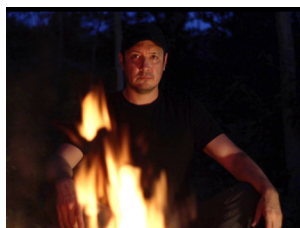
ANKUR YADAV
India

2023

10:13 MINS

HINDI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

This experimental film weaves visual and textual poetry into a non-linear narrative set in the Aravalli Hills. It captures climatic moments of storms, lightning and regional beliefs such as *totka*, a ritual to transfer curses, and the local disdain for pigeons as invasive beings. Interlacing myth, ecology, and anatomy through reflections on the human thumb, the film evokes the mystical entanglement between people, nature, and unseen forces.



HOMe

KEVIN LEE BURTON
God's Lake Narrows First Nation

2024

02:54 MINS
MUSIC: "VARIATIONS" BY NICOLAS JAAR

HOMe is a three-minute experimental video connecting the homoerotic with the land. Exploring gay identity and Indigeneity through photographs and text, this video playfully challenges notions of masculinity within the context of place and land.



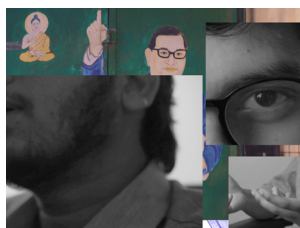
When The Blues Goes Marching In

BENY KRISTIA
Indonesia

2025

12:40 MINS
INDONESIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

A young man narrates the details of his dream from the previous night to his father, entangling the celebration of demonstration, anger, and graduation.



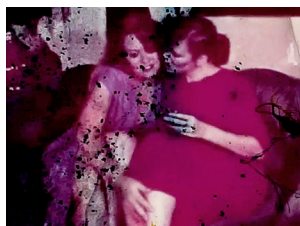
Babasaheb In Bengaluru

MAHISHAA
India

2024

4:46 MINS
KANNADA & ENGLISH, WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

In Bengaluru, statues of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar—lovingly called Babasaheb—stand as powerful symbols of resistance and equality. Unlike state-funded monuments, these statues exist through the efforts and sacrifices of the people. More than idols, they embody Babasaheb's call to Educate, Agitate, and Organise, reminding us that his vision of dignity, education, and social justice continues to inspire millions across India.



Traces / آثار

CHANTAL PARTAMIAN
Lebanon, Canada

2023

8:45 MINS

In the midst of the rubble of a torn building, a reel of film.

An unlikely unraveling of queer bodies taking shape and form, while the war-torn city around and its spectacle of toxic masculinity glitches and disintegrates.



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SAVAC (South Asian Visual Arts Centre) is a not-for-profit, artist-run centre in Canada committed to increasing the visibility of racialized artists by curating and exhibiting their work, providing mentorship, facilitating professional development, and creating a community for our artists. We support work that (in)directly addresses the ways histories of people of colour are represented alongside the story of ongoing colonialism on Turtle Island and post-colonial histories of the Global South. These works are challenging, experimental and offer multifarious perspectives on the contemporary world.

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Poster design by Abedar Kamgari and Sophie Sabet.
Film stills courtesy of the artists.

ISBN 978-0-9685468-6-4

SAVAC acknowledges the support of its funders and all Monitor 16 presenting partners.



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