

Free screening – all welcome!

This event is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Grabbing the World by the Lapels: A programme of short and less short films by filmmakers from across South Asia. The screening will be followed by a Q&A.

Period@Period dir: Hnin Ei Hlaing (8 min, Myanmar, 2016)

A short experimental film about taboos, an untamed rose and the changing role of women in Myanmar.

Kobi Swamir Mrityur Por Amar Jobanbondi / Statement after My Poet Husband's Death
dir: Tasmiah Afrin Mou (15 min, Bangladesh, 2016)

Rubi loved her husband very much. Yet, sitting beside her husband's body at his funeral, she does not feel grief, only a sense of deliverance.

Tradition dir: Lanka Bandaranayake (11 min, Sri Lanka, 2016)

An old woman adorns a bride with traditional Sri Lankan jewellery. As she describes the symbolic significance of every piece, the young woman remembers past relationships.

Lo Sum Choe Sum / 3 Year 3 Month Retreat
dir: Dechen Roder (20 min, Bhutan, 2015)

The traditional '3 Year, 3 Month Retreat' is practiced by Buddhist monks, nuns and other devout practitioners to achieve a higher state of clarity and motivation. By cutting oneself off from the world and delving into the inner mind, the retreat is meant to transform the practitioner. Can Lhamo find her own form of redemption?

Intermission

Mohtarama dir: Diana Saqeb Jamal and Malek Shafi'i (60 min, Afghanistan, 2012)

In 2009 the Afghan government adopted a family law that drastically restricted the rights of women. Among other things, it made it illegal for women to leave their homes without their husband's consent or to resist their husband's sexual demands. Diana Saqeb and Malek Shafi'i follow a group of Afghani women as they decide to organise a demonstration in front of the country's largest religious school, where the Shia law came into being.

Q&A

with **Lanka Bandaranayake, Ashvin Devasundaram, Ash Sharma and Valentina Vitali**

Contributors:

Lanka Bandaranayake is a Colombo-based filmmaker who began her career as an actress and costume designer. Her short film *Tradition* (2016) was screened at over 40 film festivals and received awards at the Jogja-NETPAC Asian Film Festival (Best Short Film) and *Euro Kino* Czech International Independent Film Festival (Best Cinematography).

Ashvin Immanuel Devasundaram is senior lecturer in World Cinema at Queen Mary University of London. He is author of *India's New Independent Cinema: Rise of the Hybrid* (Routledge, 2016) and *Indian Cinema beyond Bollywood: The New Independent Cinema Revolution* (Routledge, 2018). Ashvin is associate director of Tongues on Fire: UK Asian Film Festival.

Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing has worked as a freelance filmmaker in Myanmar since 2006, acting as director, producer, editor, and sound recordist. Her short *Burmese Butterfly* (2012) played at festivals in over twenty countries, while *Period@Period* (2016) won the Best Short Award at the Wathan Film Festival. Her documentary feature *Midwives* (2022) won the Special Jury Award at Sundance Film Festival.

Tasmiah Afrin Mou is a Dhaka-based filmmaker and writer. Before *Statement after My Poet Husband's Death* she made several short documentaries, including *Tokai* (2012) which received the Best Short Documentary Award at Guangzhou International Documentary Festival. She has a Masters in Political Science from the University of Dhaka, and *Baksha Bondi*, her collection of short stories, was published in 2015.

Dechen Roder is a Thimphu-based filmmaker, director of several short films and the feature *Munmo Tashi Khyidron / Honeygiver Among the Dogs* (2016). She is the co-founder of Bhutan's first film festival Beskop Tshechu. *Honeygiver Among the Dogs* (2016) premiered at Busan International Film Festival in 2016, had its European premiere in Berlin in 2017, and won three awards at the Fribourg International Film Festival, including the Special Jury Prize.

Diana Saqeb Jamal is a Kabul-based filmmaker and women's right activist. Her documentary *Twenty-five Percent* (2008) played an important role in changing European military policies in Afghanistan. *Mohtarama* won several awards, including Best Documentary at Yamagata International Film Festival. Her short fiction film *Roqia* (2019) screened at the 76th Venice International Film Festival and Locarno International Film Festival.

Malek Shafi'i is the founder and executive director of Afghanistan International Human Rights Film Festival (AIHRFF) and of Bashgahe Cinema (aka Afghanistan Cinema Club or BASA Film), a non-profit organization that promotes cultural and arts development projects with a focus on training and producing the work of emerging filmmakers in Afghanistan. A Kabul-based documentary filmmaker, Malek has directed and produced more than 30 films. He has acted as senior media and communication advisor for Radio Television of Afghanistan, several NGOs and the UN's system of agencies in Afghanistan, implementing film and media projects aimed at promoting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He has been a member of the jury at international film festivals.

Ashwani Sharma is course leader for the BA (Hons) Film and Screen Studies at the London College of Communication (LCC), University of the Arts London (UAL). He is a founding editor of *darkmatter* journal (<http://www.darkmatter101.org>) and co-editor of *Disorienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Music* (1997). He writes and performs poetry, has worked in the BBC and independent film in sound, and has been an aeronautical engineer.

Valentina Vitali is professor of Film Studies at the University of East London and director of the Moving Image Research Centre (London). She has published on South and East Asian cinemas, on the relation between cinema and nation, and on image-based work by women. Publications include *Capital and Popular Cinema: the Dollars Are Coming!* (2016), *Hindi Action Cinema: Industries, Narratives, Bodies* (2008), and *Theorising National Cinema* (2006, co-edited with Paul Willemen).

For more information about the programme, contact **Valentina Vitali** at v.vitali@uel.ac.uk