

PARTICIPATING IN POLITICS

Art, Anthropology, and Advocacy in Afghanistan

Amanullah Mojadidi • March 3, 2014

“Political Art in Afghanistan: Activism vs. Aesthetics”

The artist will discuss the complexities of creating art with a political message in the context of Afghanistan, and the difficulties in finding an aesthetic that transcends the activist label often imposed upon political artwork.

The artist Aman Mojadidi's practice is based on his personal experiences and academic research in cultural studies, in a world that is simultaneously globalized and fractured. With degrees in Cultural Anthropology, his work utilizes an experimental ethnographic approach, combining traditional storylines and postmodern narrative strategies to approach themes such as belonging, identity politics, conflict, and the push to and resistance against modernization; intentionally blurring and merging the lines between fact and fiction, documentation and imagination. He has exhibited his work in New York City, Los Angeles, Paris, Singapore, Hong Kong, Cairo, Mumbai, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dubai, London, Kassel for dOCUMENTA (13), Fort Kochi for the 1st Kochi/Muziris Biennale 2012, and Kabul.

Sam French • March 17, 2014

“Buzkashi Boys: Filmmaking in Afghanistan” (screening and discussion)

Sam French is an Academy Award nominated filmmaker and the founding director of Development Pictures in Kabul, Afghanistan. He directed the Oscar nominated “Buzkashi Boys,” one of the first narrative fiction films to be shot entirely on location in Kabul with a mixed Western and Afghan crew. His work has appeared on numerous broadcast outlets.

Gregory Thielker • March 31, 2014

“Sites and Non-sites: Painting at the intersection of memory and observation”

Artist Gregory Thielker uses hyper-realistic painting and drawing to investigate the way that visual images shape our understanding of place and time. His practice is centered on site projects including Afghanistan, Norway, and India, and he will be featured in an upcoming collaborative exhibition at the Usdan Gallery with Professor Noah Coburn in Fall 2014. He recently held solo exhibitions at the Republic Gallery in Paris and Flashpoint Gallery in Washington, DC, and was the recipient of the Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Fellowship and Sanskriti Residency. His work has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *The Boston Globe*, and NPR. He lives in New Jersey and is an Assistant Professor of Art at The College of New Jersey.

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