

Artist statement

Basir Mahmood returns to Canvas Gallery for his third solo presentation with a dynamic body of work that moves fluidly across realms—sports, protests, celebrations, and labor—while continuing his exploration of food politics and the idea of equal sharing. These new photographic and video works unfold in vivid, observational, and imagined settings, focusing on the "in-between" spaces where energies converge, collide, and are consumed.

The images construct a hopeful imagination of shared equality—confronting the politics of hate while reflecting on the power of imagery and the playful tension between opposing forces, both in sport and in lived realities.

This body of work explores environments where sources of energy are activated, often captured at their moment of culmination—explosion, transformation, or redistribution. Borrowing motifs from sports, festivities, protests, skills, and food, Mahmood delves into the idea of consumption—both as vitality and as resource.

Through these generative and charged images, Mahmood continues his inquiry into the intersections of politics, energy, and shared human experience. He invites viewers to reflect on the generative potential that lies within the spaces we inhabit together.

Profile

Born in Pakistan and based between Lahore and Amsterdam, Basir Mahmood (b. 1985) is known for working with video, film, and photography to create poetic sequences that contemplate embedded social and historical terrains of the ordinary, as well as his personal milieu. His narratives often revolve around everyday objects, gestures, situations, and events, exploring the spaces that stretch between identity, distance, memory, the fantastical imagination of others, and a melancholy derived from social injustice, inequity, and the structures of hierarchy. Mahmood examines his own position as an artist by adopting multiple roles: as an author who writes narratives; an initiator who sets in motion collisions of people and improvised scenarios to create original stories; an observer who moves in and out of everyday situations, seeing intimately from within and from without; and a withdrawn subject, such as a disengaged onlooker in a public space.

His career began with a year-long fellowship at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2011, after which he participated in artist residencies across five countries, most notably at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam from 2016 to 2017. Over the years, he has received international recognition, securing grants such as the Sharjah Art Foundation Production Programme Grant (2016) and the Stipendium for Established Artists from Mondriaan Fonds (2022-26). His accolades include the Sesc_Videobrasil Residency Prize in Brazil (2013), the Emerging Artist Award from SAI at Harvard University (2015), a shortlist for The Abraaj Group Art Prize (2016), the VISIO Young Talent Acquisition Prize in Italy (2017), the Paulo Cunha e Silva Art Prize in Portugal (2020), and the Ammodo Tiger Short Award at the International Film Festival Rotterdam (2021).

Mahmood's works have been widely exhibited in institutions and biennials across the world, including The Garden of Eden at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; the inaugural exhibition at the Broad Museum, Michigan State University; the Asia Pacific Triennial (APT 7) at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; the Moscow International Biennale for Young Art; Sharjah Biennial 11; Time of Others at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo; the Abraaj Group Art Prize Show in Dubai; the Yinchuan Biennial in China; Contour Biennale 8 in Mechelen; Tableaux Vivants at Fondation Etrillard, Paris; Freedom of Movement at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art; Karachi Biennale 2; Innsbruck International Biennial in Austria; Lahore Biennale 2; EURASIA – A Landscape of Mutability at M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp; Tomorrow is a Different Day at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; VISIO – Artists' Moving Image in Europe at Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam; International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Art Directions Programme at Katoenhuis, Rotterdam; Far Away Is Close at Hand in Images of Elsewhere at transmediale 2025, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin; Nebula, organized by Fondazione In Between Art Film at Complesso dell'Ospedaletto, Venice; Silent Times at Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerp; Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today at the National Museum of Qatar, Doha; and Nebula Expanded at MAXXI Videogallery, Rome.

In addition to being part of various private collections, Mahmood's works have been acquired by institutions such as the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, the Centre national des arts plastiques (Cnap) in France, M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp, Fonds régional d'art contemporain (FRAC) Bretagne in France, Qatar Museums in Doha, and the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Alongside his artistic practice, he regularly teaches and delivers talks at notable art institutions worldwide and served as curator of Stedelijk Museum Video Club x IDFA in Amsterdam in 2018.

Education

- 2025 Master of Film – Artistic Research in and through Cinema Netherlands Film Academy, Amsterdam University of the Arts, The Netherlands
- 2016 - 17 Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (Research-Fellowship), Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2010 Beaconhouse National University (BFA, Distinction) Lahore, Pakistan

Solo Exhibitions

- 2022 Future is Empty curated by Quddus Mirza at the Canvas Gallery Karachi, Pakistan.
- 2021 - 22 Good Ended Happily curated by Kathrin Becker at the KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany
- 2019 I Watch you Do curated by Lauren Wetmore at the Cinéma Galeries Brussels, Belgium
- 2018 Good Ended Happily at the Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 2018 Eyes Recently Seen curated by Lauren Wetmore at the Letitia Gallery Beirut, Lebanon
- 2018 All Divided Equally curated by Salima Hashmi at the Canvas Gallery Karachi, Pakistan
- 2013 We are what we eat at Grey Noise, Dubai
- 2012 I won't leave you till I die at Akademie Schloss Solitude, Germany
- 2011 won't leave you till I die at Grey Noise Lahore, Pakistan
- 2010 In the time of telling at Grey Noise Lahore, Pakistan

Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2025 VISIO – Artists' Moving Image in Europe, Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2025 International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Art Directions Programme, Katoenhuis, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 2025 Far Away Is Close at Hand in Images of Elsewhere, transmediale 2025, Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, Germany
- 2024 Nebula, organized by Fondazione In Between Art Film at Complesso dell'Ospedaletto, on the occasion of the Biennale Arte, Venice, Italy
- 2024 Silent Times, Group Exhibition, Kunsthall Extra City, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2024 Manzar: Art and Architecture from Pakistan 1940s to Today, Group Exhibition, National Museum of Qatar, Doha, Qatar
- 2024 Nebula Expanded, Group Exhibition, MAXXI Videogallery, Rome, Italy
- 2023 Tomorrow is a Different Day, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2022 Water Being Washed Away, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, Austria
- 2022 Il Video Rende Felici, Videoarte in Italia, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Rome
- 2021 EURASIA- A landscape of mutability, M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerpen, Belgium
- 2021 International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Netherlands
- 2021 Sheffield DocFest at Site: Here in This Room, UK
- 2021 Fully Leaded, Industrieweg 23A, Duivendrecht, Netherlands
- 2021 DOKUFEST (International Documentary and Short Film Festival) Prizren, Kosovo
- 2020 Lahore Biennale 02, Pakistan
- 2020 Innsbruck international biennale, Austria
- 2020 True/False Film Festival, Columbia, Missouri, US
- 2020 Identity XVI - My Home? - at Nichido Contemporary Art Tokyo, Japan
- 2020 THINGS MIGHT THINK online project funded by AFK, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2020 The Paulo Cunha e Silva Art Prize Exhibition at Galeria Municipal do Porto, Portugal
- 2020 Mascarilla 19 – Codes of Domestic Violence at MAXXI - National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome, Italy
- 2020 Open City Documentary Festival, London, UK
- 2019 Paradoxs (IDFA), EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2019 Above The Noise, National Science and Media Museum, Bradford, UK
- 2019 Karachi Biennale 02, Pakistan
- 2019 Art Dubai, (presented by Zilberman Gallery), UAE
- 2019 First Look Screening, Museum of the Moving Image, NY, USA
- 2019 Short Shadows: Second Time Around, EMPAC — Troy, NY, USA
- 2019 Look, Stranger!, Serendipity Arts Festival Goa, India
- 2019 I've seen your face before, Alice Yard, Port of Spain, Trinidad & Tobago
- 2018 MUNICIPAL ART ACQUISITIONS, FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2018 Monitor, Repeat After Me at Pakistan Pavilion, Izmir, Turkey
- 2018 CPH:DOX, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2018 SIGN 'Screenings & Settings', Groningen, The Netherlands
- 2018 10th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany
- 2018 SCENE & UNSEEN at Castle Old Rekem, Belgium
- 2018 Curtas Vila do Conde, Vila do Conde, Portugal
- 2018 Sharhaj Production Programme Exhibition, UAE
- 2018 IDFA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2017 Set in Motion (IDFA), EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2017 Directing the Real, VISIO, Sala delle Carrozze, Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Florence, Italy
- 2017 Rijksakademie OPEN, Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2017 la pensée du tremblement at Les Grands Voisins, Paris, France
- 2017 Tableaux Vivants, Fondation Etrillard, Paris, France
- 2017 Planet 9, Kunsthalle Daramstdt, Germany
- 2017 Polyphonic Worlds: Justice as Medium – Contour Biennale 8, Mechelen, Belgium
- 2017 Transformations, Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 2017 The Open Hand at Gujral Foundation, Jor Bagh, New Delhi, India
- 2016 Rijksakademie OPEN 2016, Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2016 For an Image, Faster Than Light – Yinchuan Biennial, Yinchuan, China
- 2016 Syntax and Society at The Abraaj Group Art Prize, Dubai
- 2016 Time of Others at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
- 2015 Time of others at Singapore Art Museum (SAM), Singapore
- 2015 FIVA 05 at the National Library, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2015 Time of others at National Museum of Art Osaka (NMAO), Japan
- 2015 Art Prize CBM at Premio Carlo Bonatto Minella, Turin, Italy
- 2015 Ich und Du at The Hospitalhof, Stuttgart, Germany
- 2015 Time of others at Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo (MOT), Japan
- 2014 Alchemy at Southbank Center, London, UK
- 2014 Les Rencontres Internationales, at Gaîté Lyrique and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2014 Des hommes, des mondes, college des bernardins, Paris, France
- 2014 At Intervals at the Cooper Gallery Project Space, Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, UK
- 2013 Survival Kit Festival, Umeå, Sweden
- 2013 PARALLEL VIENNA 2013 Video program by Galerie Utopia, Vienna, Austria
- 2013 18o Festival Internacional de Arte Contemporânea Sesc_Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2013 Sharjah Biennial 11, Sharjah
- 2013 Art Dubai, (presented by Grey Noise, Dubai), UAE
- 2013 LISTE 18, Basel (presented by Grey Noise, Dubai), Switzerland.
- 2013 V-Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2012 Rencontres Internationales at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2012 APT 7, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia
- 2012 Melancholy in Progress, Taiwan International Video Art Exhibition organized by the Hong-Gah Museum, Taiwan
- 2012 Inaugural Show, Broad Museum, MSU, Michigan, USA
- 2012 The Garden of Eden, Video Program at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2012 III Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, Moscow, Russia
- 2012 The first AIVA Angelholm International Video Art Festival, Sweden
- 2012 Hidden & Forbidden Identities, Venice, Italy.
- 2012 The Divided Self , Slought Foundation, USA
- 2012 RÖMER #11 – A CLOSER VIEW, Römerstraße 2, Stuttgart, Germany
- 2011 Rencontres Internationales @ GAÎTÉ LYRIQUE, Paris, France
- 2011 India Art Summit, New Delhi, India
- 2010 The Rising Tide, The Mohatta Palace Museum Karachi, Pakistan
- 2010 Cairo Film Festival, Cairo, Egypt

Residences

- 2014 Sacatar Instituto, Bahia, Brazil
- 2013 Gasworks, London, UK
- 2012 ARCUS Project, Ibaraki, Japan
- 2012 Casa Dell'Arte Residency, Turkey
- 2011 - 12 Akademie Schloss Solitude Fellowship, Germany

Curatorial Projects

- 2025 Reflections: Artist Films in Transit, Go Short – International Short Film Festival Nijmegen, LUX 3
- 2018 Curator of Stedelijk Museum Video Club x IDFA, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Awards

- 2021 Winner Ammodo Tiger Short Award, International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR), Netherlands
- 2022 Een stipendium, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst, Netherlands
- 2022 - 26 Kunstenaar Basis Grant, Mondriaan Fonds, Netherlands
- 2020 Winner International Short Film Award, Open City Documentary Festival, London, UK
- 2020 Winner of the second edition of the Paulo Cunha e Silva Art Prize, Porto, Portugal
- 2018 - 22 Stipendium for Established Artists (Werkbijdrage Bewezen Talent), Mondriaan Fonds, Netherlands
- 2017 VISIO Young Talent Acquisition Prize (3rd edition), Florence Italy
- 2016 The Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) Production Programme Grant, Sharjah
- 2016 Shortlist Abraaj Group Art Prize, Dubai
- 2015 South Asia Institute 2015 Emerging Artist Award, Harvard University, USA
- 2015 - 16 Art Prize CBM at Premio Carlo Bonatto Minella, Turin, Italy
- 2013 Award winner of 18th Contemporary Art Festival Sesc_Videobrasil Prize, São Paulo, Brazil
- 2011 Awarded Filminute Jury Commendation for a Short Film 'Dot In the Line'
- 2010 Graduated in Fine Arts with a Distinction from the School of Visual Arts, BNU, Pakistan

Selected Talks

- 2023 Network Week Programme at Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, Netherlands
- 2021 KINDL –Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin
- 2019 Harabel Contemporary Art Platform, Tiranë, Albania
- 2018 Conversation with Philippe-Alain Michaud at the French Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, Venice
- 2018 Action at a Distance VI, Corridor Project Space, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2019 Ashkal Alwan, Beirut, Lebanon
- 2016 Futur 3, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2015 The Harvard University South Asia Institute (SAI), A memory, a monument, a material, Cambridge, USA
- 2013 Goldsmiths, University of London The Contemporary Art Talks, Department of Art, London, UK

Work in Collections

- Queensland Art Gallery collection in Brisbane, Australia
- The Centre national des arts plastiques (National Centre for Visual Arts, Cnap), France
- M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerpen, Belgium
- The Egbert and Loes Dommering Collection, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- FRAC (Fonds régional d'art contemporain) Bretagne, France
- Qatar Museums Collection, Doha, Qatar
- Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam