

**MARYAM JAFRI: MOUTHFEEL 06.02.2015 – 05.04.2015** Screening space **STAIR**

Maryam Jafri is an artist working in video, performance and photography. Informed by a research based, interdisciplinary process, her artworks are often marked by a visual language poised between film and theater and a series of narrative experiments oscillating between script and document, fragment and whole. This is the premiere of "Mouthfeel" short film in Finland.

Encompassing moving image, text, photography and performance, Jafri's research-based practice often merges fiction and documentary to explore how historical and economic constructs manifest in everyday gestures, manners and items such as clothes, food and textiles.

"Mouthfeel" combines staged and found footage to explore the politics underpinning the industrial production of food. The staged scenes are based on an original script by Maryam Jafri and focus on the conversations of a middle class married couple who work for the same multinational food company. Their exchange is inspired by theatre and television, where socio-political analysis is played out through every day, familial dialogue with large doses of humour, hypocrisy and violence. Quotes from scientific, self-help, and public health manuals are seamlessly woven into the apparently naturalistic dialogue, tempering it with an aura of artifice.

Set in the near future, the plot ostensibly revolves around the wife, a leading food technologist, and the husband, a senior brand manager, who find themselves stuck in a chauffeur-driven stretch limo at a security checkpoint in an unspecified global city. The wife, played by Jafri, has uncovered a potential health problem with their new product, which her husband is determined to cover up. The husband calls for pragmatism in the face of the token protests voiced by the wife, countering her half-hearted appeal to the common interest with his own appeal to common sense. Ultimately both characters are complicit. Along with excerpts of found footage sourced from different countries in the Global South and which act as "commercial breaks", *"Mouthfeel"* also address themes of convenience, good taste, and the disparities between mass and artisanal forms of production.

By bringing together television, the car, and processed food, ultimately then what is at stake is the culture and business of consumption, unchecked and aspirational, global and yet also specific in its local instantiations. Moreover, by having one of the lead characters played by the artist, *"Mouthfeel"* implicitly locates contemporary art (and thus artists) within this nexus.

Mouthfeel (2014), single screen, 2k HD video with sound, 21:34 min.

Commissioned by Gasworks in partnership with Steirischer herbst festival 2014, and produced by Spike Film and Video.

Translation and Finnish subtitles: Anu Lankinen, Pori Art Museum, Porin Videotuki.

Maryam Jafri holds a BA in English & American Literature from Brown University, an MA from NYU/Tisch School of The Arts and is a graduate of the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. She lives and works in New York and Copenhagen.

Free admission to the screening.

Additional information:

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