

EVENTS

EXHIBITION TOUR LED BY ANIKA DEB
Saturday 26 October, 2–3pm
Free, booking advised
Bristol-based artist Anika Deb leads a tour of Imran Perretta's exhibition.

IN CONVERSATION: IMRAN PERRETTA AND AMAL KHALAF
Thursday 14 November, 6.30–8pm
£5, £3 concessions (free for Spike Associates)
Imran Perretta discusses the themes of his commission, including biopolitics, state power and experiences of societal marginalisation, with curator Amal Khalaf.

PERFORMANCE: AMRA (IMRAN PERRETTA AND PAUL PURGAS)
Friday 29 November, 7pm–12am
£8, £5 concessions
AMRA is an audio visual collaboration between Imran Perretta and Paul Purgas. Headlining an evening of experimental music and spoken performance, the artists present a live performance incorporating electronic sound and analogue media, addressing South Asian identity, diasporic echoes and archival disruption.

Presented in partnership with Qu Junktions.

the destructors is produced by Chisenhale Gallery, London and Spike Island, Bristol, and commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery; Spike Island; the Whitworth, The University of Manchester; and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. *the destructors* is supported by Outset Contemporary Art Fund.

INFORMATION

Spike Island is an international centre for the development of contemporary art and design, located in Bristol's harbour area. Admission to the gallery is free.

Spike Island
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Bristol BS1 6UX

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OPENING HOURS

Gallery: Tuesday to Sunday, 12–5pm
(during exhibitions)
Café: Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm
Saturday to Sunday, 10am–5pm

Following the premiere at Spike Island, *the destructors* will be exhibited at partner venues across 2019 and 2020: Chisenhale Gallery from 17 January to 15 March 2020; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art from March to June 2020; and the Whitworth, The University of Manchester from May to October 2020.

Spike Island

IMRAN PERRETTA *THE DESTRUCTORS*

28 September – 8 December 2019

the destructors is a major solo exhibition and new film commission by London-based artist Imran Perretta. Working with moving image, sound and performance, Perretta's work explores ideas of biopower (state regulation over our bodies), marginality and the (de) construction of cultural histories, often drawing from personal experience. His video works are characterised by their fast paced, rhythmic editing, use of visual effects, textured soundtracks and poetic testimonies.

The exhibition at Spike Island presents *the destructors*, a twenty-three minute film in which the artist draws on his own experience as a young man of Bangladeshi heritage to explore personal and collective experiences of marginalisation and oppression. Perretta explores the uncomfortable nexus between austerity and the War on Terror, two parallel policies which have increased the economic and social marginalisation of UK Muslim communities. Shot on location in Tower Hamlets, East London and presented in the gallery as a two-screen synchronised video projection, it reconsiders the figure of alienated male youth, exploring the complexities of 'coming of age' for young Muslim men living in the UK.

The film borrows its title from Graham Greene's 1954 short story *The Destructors*. Set in post-war London, still recovering from the Blitz, Greene's story follows a gang of youths who plot to tear down an old man's house. In an era of desolation, hopelessness and austerity, it explores a generation of young men and their perceived capacity for destruction in a society marred by inequality, material devastation and social death (a sociological term used

to describe the condition of people not accepted as fully human by wider society). Perretta's *the destructors* seeks to reflect on this narrative of post-war disaffection through the period following 9/11, a time characterised by state-sponsored Islamophobia and the perpetual 'War on Terror'. The film follows a group of young people as they navigate the social pressures of growing up in society that has come to view them as both a physical and ideological threat. Set against a backdrop of widening economic inequality, targeted abuse and asymmetric law enforcement, the characters reflect on their lives and experiences through a series of poetic monologues. The script draws from the artist's personal experiences as a young, South Asian male, learning to deal with the structural violence he encountered growing up in post 9/11 context, and the broader socio-political situation that continues to this day.

Captured from multiple camera angles, the actors are framed unconventionally so as to obscure their identities. Their faces are almost cropped from view, with their backs turned to the camera, and shots are framed from over their shoulders or from elevated perspectives. This alludes to the institutional surveillance of British Muslims under the UK government's counter-terror strategy. Nervous gestures, such as rubbing hands and swinging legs, are captured in cutaways, providing subtle glimpses of the physical manifestations of their anxieties. For Perretta, these gestures of obfuscation are about the characters exercising some measure of control over their own context, narratives and visibility.

The film is set at the Shadwell centre, a building in Tower Hamlets, London which has a rich history of serving its community. Part youth centre, part secondary school, part care facility, the decaying architecture of the building is central to the work, reflecting the ways in which shared amenities at the heart of many working-class communities have been left to decay through a lack of investment and opportunity, as is alluded to in the monologues. As the film develops, we also see the gradual ingress of smoke and water, drawing attention to the porosity of the building and its gradual physical deterioration. This space is intended to be a sanctuary for local people and yet we witness it slowly succumbing to these external forces – a visual metaphor for the issues affecting the community. An immersive soundtrack sets an increasingly anxious tone, layering sounds of the body, discordant strings and swells of deep sub bass. Percussive sounds dance around the gallery, as though there is an ominous and unknown presence moving through the exhibition space. This provokes feelings of angst and paranoia, reflecting the dissonant mental state that accompanies each character’s testimony.

Throughout each monologue we return to shots of the young men in the building’s sports hall, working together through a series of trust exercises. The group tentatively perform acts of communal support and care, showing a tenderness that has so often been withheld in a society that has been conditioned to see them as a threat. The film culminates with a trust fall. As one of the characters anxiously counts down, they take one last breath before falling backwards off screen, seemingly into the hands of the others. The film cuts to black as he falls out of frame, leaving the viewer to question if anyone was there to catch our protagonist after all.

BIOGRAPHY

Imran Perretta (b. 1988, London) lives and works in London. Encompassing moving image, sound, performance and poetry, Perretta’s work explores ideas of biopower (state regulation over our bodies), marginality and the (de)construction of cultural histories. Perretta is a graduate of the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London (2014) Recent exhibitions include *15 Days*, Jerwood Space, London (2018); *Mene Mene Tekel Parsin*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2017); *it wasn’t a crash, in the usual sense*, Arcadia Missa, London (2016); *5 percent*, Copenhagen Art Week, Denmark; and *Devotions*, MOT International Project Space, London (both 2015). Perretta was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries, World Museum, Liverpool and ICA, London (2014–15). Imran Perretta is shortlisted for the 2019 Film London Jarman Award.

SCREENING TIMES

the destructors is 23 minutes 35 seconds in duration.

Screening times:
 12:00 13:40 15:20
 12:25 14:05 15:45
 12:50 14:30 16:10
 13:15 14:55 16:35

CREDITS

Featuring	Ramzan Miah Tharek Ali Islah Abdur-Rahman Zishan Asfar	Lighting	Pinewood MBS Lighting
Written and Directed by	Imran Perretta	Filmed in London	Shadwell Community Centre, Tower Hamlets
Producer	Ali Roche	With thanks to	Nurull Islam, Director Mile End Community Project Rizwan Hussain, Director, Jawaab Poppy Bowers Irene Aristizábal Katharine Welsh Mitfaul Islam Jilad Miah Zakir Khan Amrita Dhallu Larry Achiampong Maeve Brennan Philomene Pirecki Rahila Haque Taylor Le Melle Rhea Storr Jennifer Martin Noor Afshan Mirza James Holcombe Teal Griffin Jesse Darling Takeshi Shiomitsu Amal Khalaf Rehana Zaman Abbas Zahedi Rachel Hylton The Perretta Family The Islam Family The Hylton Family not/nowhere
Associate Producer	Emma Moore		
Executive Producers	Polly Staple Robert Leckie		
Director of Photography	Tasha Back		
Editor	Imran Perretta		
Soundtrack	Imran Perretta		
1st Assistant Director	Steven O Eniraiyetan		
Focus Puller	Maiya Rose		
2nd Assistant Camera	Molly Burcham		
Digital Imaging Technicians (for Digital Orchard)	Mark Glenister Dan Alexander Curtis Ashley		
Production Sound Mixer	Tom Sedgwick		
Boom Operator	Olly Jennings		
Key Grip	Warwick Drucker		
Lighting Gaffer	Sebastian Kudanowski		
Spark	Lewis Burton		
Art Direction	Camilla Hipwood		
Hair and Make-Up	Giada Venturini		
Stills Photographer	Lenka Rayn H.		
Production Assistant	Layla Gatens		
Runners	Archie Trueger Ayo Akingbade Arthur Towey Shaun Rhode		
Colourist	Jason R. Moffat		
Supervising Sound Editor	Tom Sedgwick		
Mix Engineer	Ben Hurd		
Visual Effects	Henrik Bach Christensen		
Camera Equipment	ICE Film		