

**Alex Baczynski-Jenkins**

*The tremble, the symptom, the swell and the hole together* 2017 performance

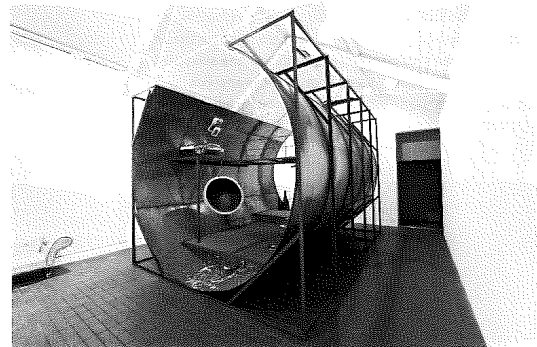
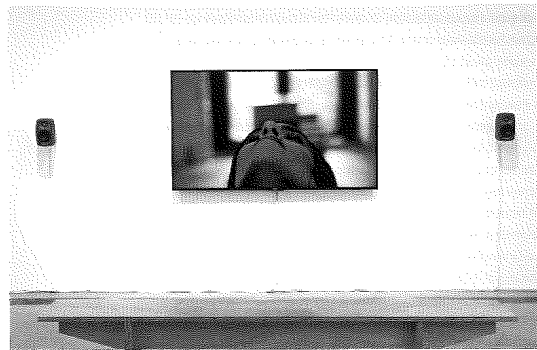
**Jamie Crewe**

*Adulteress* 2017 video

**Ben Burgis and Ksenia Pedan**

*Victoria Deepwater Terminal Estate Gallery* 2017

down from the exhibition entrance, the doors to which have been removed and fitted awkwardly in the taller, wider aperture to the second room. In spite of these unsealed entranceways, an elegant claustrophobia charges this exhibition, derived in part from the novel itself but also in the density of its complex allusions. One possible escape route may be through the empathetic relations depicted in the film, a potential underscored in an impassioned personal account of the artist's experience of gender during the residency: '... other times I have no mirror and only close friends around me, who do understand me and I can



forget about my gender while still feeling it, like there is a strong rod in me ...'

An articulation of marginal, resisting voices occurs at Jerwood Space's three discrete solo presentations. **Anna Bunting-Branch's** *The Labours of Barren House* comprises a hypnotic looped animation and related sculptural objects that explore sci-fi author and linguist Suzette Haden Elgin's constructed feminist language, Láadan. The animation shows a séance taking place, seeming to establish contact with a futuristic group of women who appear in Haden Elgin's sci-fi novel *Native Tongue*. A series of messages in Láadan is received, detailing these women's need for a distinct vocabulary with which to describe a variety of female experiences, examples of which are later translated in green font on an 1980s computer monitor. The sculptures, meanwhile, relate to a sequence in the film featuring the broken pieces of a female statue, here made reddish and fleshy. It is a delightful fan fiction, mingling and forging connections with different feminist histories, conjuring a future wave based on the creative labour of a forebear and collapsing tenses in the process.

A more ironic vision of the future is found in **Ben Burgis and Ksenia Pedan's** architectural installation *Victoria Deepwater Terminal Estate Gallery*, 2017, a 'sewer conversion' and unlikely des-res. All the markers of tasteful living appear in this critique of an uncontrolled property market: the Eames-esque chair, the spiral staircase and casually displayed copies of interior design magazines. The installation became the set for a one-night performance by Kiera Fox and Adam Christensen, depicting increasingly frantic relations between a pair of speculators, which ramped up the work's all-too-plausible absurdity.

In the next room, **Imran Perretta's** jarring single-channel video *brother to brother*, 2017, plays on a loop. Rooted in the disturbing present, its subject is a naked, hooded male, filmed cowering on a stool in front of a green screen. A series of strange violations ensues – feathers are shot onto his body, smoke billows into the room – while the subject's position is tracked with brightly coloured crosshairs. Later, we will see this body kneeling face down on the floor, the stool overturned. In-between these two moments is a powerful sequence centred on a poem detailing the artist's experience of being detained at a London airport by an Asian security guard. The text is superimposed onto a sequence of moving images of mud huts and agricultural landscapes, some shot from an aerial, possibly a drone's perspective, with the hooded figure standing slightly blurred in the foreground. A disjunctive soundtrack compounds the deep sense of unease in this work, while abrupt edits and occasional stretches of darkness invoke lights being turned on and off, of torture. It is the unvoiced poem in the middle section that packs the biggest punch, particularly its description of 'two dark bodies' – security guard and artist – performing a humiliating 'pale labour' and a perverse intimacy. ■

LAURA ALLSOP is a writer and editor based in London.

**Hardeep Pandhal**

*A Nightmare on BAME Street* 2017 video



## Birmingham Round-up

### Eastside Projects · Grand Union · Centrala

**Hardeep Pandhal's** *A Nightmare on BAME Street*, 2017, slots into Eastside Projects' continuing 'Production Show', exploring modes of artistic production and the gallery's role in that process over a two-year period. The walls of the main gallery space detail the status of the various projects, and amid the detail, research and production are listed as 'inputs' and the work itself as 'outputs'. Some of the work is yet to come, such as Sonia Boyce's upcoming performances, while other projects have been realised, such as Nicolas Deshayes' biomorphic aluminium sculptures, which also happen to be functioning radiators, one of which now adorns the facade of the building, pumping heat into the street (it might perhaps have been of more use keeping the volunteers on the front desk warm).

As with the other projects, Pandhal's listing on the gallery wall helps to demystify artistic production. While art and artists can often appear enigmatic, it is reassuring to know that YouTube tutorials formed a key 'input' to this project. The most notable 'output' is the animation, Pandhal's in-progress riff on hazily discussed topics such as childhood and masculinity. The current incarnation of the animation shows areas for potential development, such as where Pandhal has left himself notes to 'think about the background'.

As the title demonstrates, Pandhal has a mischievous attitude towards his own ethnic background; on the one hand he can deliver a sober account of Indian attitudes towards toilet training children, while on the other, in the background of another scene he depicts a drive-thru cinema showing *Minority Report*. This sort of detail encourages repeat viewing, which is allowed for by the 15-minute running time. While studiously listening to Pandhal's narration, a half-caught glimpse of something within the animation feeds the urge to watch again just for the Easter eggs, to confirm things like, yes, those were anthropomorphic bullets transforming into breasts.

The animation is delivered with wit throughout, which sometimes makes the narration difficult to follow but nonetheless ensures entertaining viewing. At times, Pandhal plays with this notion of difficult narration, struggling and taking several attempts to deliver a line beginning 'the more men's polished words gather momentum', halting the momentum of his own delivery and intentionally contradicting its content. This demonstrates Pandhal's conflicted attitude to his own work, balancing simultaneous desires to sincerely discuss toxic masculinity and violence as well as rap about shoes, testicles and Bill Viola. With this attitude, Pandhal becomes a relatable figure, wanting to address serious topics, but not without puns.

Grand Union's group show *Hand in Mind* explores the relationship between physical gestures and language. For Alex Cecchetti, dance is where the two concepts meet, with *Arabesque*, 2017, and *River Stones*, 2017, sculptural pieces

christina briggs

walk the water's edge

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