

Call for Papers: Framing Artistic Practice

Students are warmly invited to produce a written or visual response to 'Shah Jahan: Personal Pop' to be published online and/or presented at the accompanying symposium on 20th of April at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague.

Deadline: Thursday 12th of April 2018.

Context of exhibition

The retrospective exhibition 'Shah Jahan: Personal Pop' (Parts Project, The Hague, 18 February – 29 April) showcases the idiosyncratic work of the unknown, prematurely deceased, highly promising artist Shah Jahan Miah (b. 1976, Bangladesh; d. 2015, UK). He grew up in Birmingham, studied at the Ruskin School of Art at Oxford University, and worked as a resident at De Ateliers in Amsterdam from 1998 to 2001. His work comprises paintings, drawings, collages, videos, installations and clothing that blend the fabric of his own everyday life with the language of popular culture. He strove to make 'personal pop': art that is close to mass culture, like pop art, but at the same time completely personal. Shah was convinced that art possessed a transformative quality, and he envisioned a position for artists at the centre of society. His body of work is made up of apparently accessible objects that on closer inspection turn out to be part of a deeper web of meanings and references, with links to art history, identity, religion and politics. As such, it meshes with contemporary reality, in which diverse worlds are increasingly intertwined. Sadly, Shah's unique ideas about art, his production drive and his unbridled ambition were overshadowed by his mental health problems and his early death at the age of 38 caused by heart failure.

Online publication and/or presentation symposium

Parts Project invites art and art history students to engage with and reflect on his relatively unknown work and archive, and produce a textual or visual response. This could be at the level of an (aspect of an) individual work, (themes within) the total body of work and/or (its place within) global art histories. Students are particularly encouraged to look into the sources of Shah's inspiration, frame his work in larger contexts and/or address broader related themes. Any contribution is welcome and, in consultation, will be put online on the website of Parts Project. Written or visual responses can also be presented at the accompanying symposium 'Framing Artistic Practice' on Friday 20th of April 2018 at Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague.

Suggestions research/response

For their research or textual/visual response, students can look into Shah's sources of inspiration. He was very much enthused by the icon of pop art, Andy Warhol, e.g. by his relationship to popular culture, modular painting techniques and modification of scale. The figure Joseph Beuys was crucial to Shah's artistic development as well, and particularly his ideas of 'everyone is an artist', 'Social Sculpture' and 'Energy Plan for Western Man'. Also, from the view of an expanded concept of art, pop idol Michael Jackson played part in Shah's thinking on multiple identities and energetic connections amongst 'people not a race' around the world in an attempt to overcome alienation of modern times. Aside of these references made by the artist himself, new insights and new framings are particularly appreciated.

In addition, students are welcomed to look at Shah's work as an entry point to discuss broader issues. One can think of addressing questions such as:

- What relationships can be imagined between personal and artistic freedom on the one hand and social engagement and responsibility on the other?
- How can an artist navigate between a multiplicity of identities, e.g. gender, psychological, political, spiritual and cultural?
- To what extent can, or should, the professional work of art be separated from the personality of the artist?
- What are the pros and cons of explicit (art) historical references in one's practice?

Information

For more information, please see website <http://www.partsproject.nl> including [downloadable booklet](#). Original archival material at disposal at exhibition venue. For questions or comments, please contact Mariska_ter_Horst@yahoo.com.

Parts Project - Toussaintkade 49, 2513 CL Den Haag - is a non-profit, alternative exhibition space dedicated to showcasing work by artists who are not, or not yet, represented by commercial galleries or public museums. Through independently curated exhibitions, Parts Project aims to provide a platform for works residing in collections that are not usually open to the public, thus making them accessible to a wider audience and opening them up to new interpretations. An ANBI-status has been granted from its establishment in 2015. Exhibited works are not for sale.