

with diversity
from series Port of
Call, 2002. Digital inkjet print
on ragpaper.
60.9 x 83.8 cm



reintegration
assistance
from series Port of
Call, 2002. Digital inkjet print
on ragpaper.
60.9 x 83.8 cm



**Anthony
Lam**
Port of
Call, 2002

dispersal system
from series Port of
Call, 2002. Digital inkjet print
on ragpaper.
60.9 x 83.8 cm



Islam in the UK, as a theme and subject for exploration is inseparable from the broader canvas of identity and citizenship politics in a culturally diverse and contemporary Britain. I initially became interested in the issue of asylum and immigration through a professional involvement in photographic workshops (2002) with a group of young people (from Eritrea, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Somalia and Uganda) who were resident in London and seeking asylum.

Port of Call 2002, interrogates the terminology, bureaucratic language and inference (defining the issue of asylum and nationality) as contained in the British Government's White Paper 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'.

In utilising these texts within new 'pictorial' representations of England, the intention is to subvert the classical imagining and imaging of the country and in so doing, tease out the accompanying romanticized notions of a green, pleasant and genteel land. Ideals that seem redundant and at odds with present reality. These visual texts update and critically reflect the social landscape of a 21st century England.

This photographic inquiry into the psychology

and politics of borders, identity and culture, asylum and migration seems especially appropriate in this current period of international debate and discourse concerning globalisation, the West versus the rest (Of the World) and the mass movement of peoples across continents to new countries of 'safe haven'.

Biography

Anthony Lam describes himself as a photographic artist who is primarily concerned with interrogating, exploring and expanding his own relationship with and to the photographic image. His practice involves producing representations that address issues of identity and culture from a personal and socio-political viewpoint. On completion of a Diploma in Photojournalism at the London College of Printing (LCP) in 1989, Lam began to work primarily within the commercial editorial sector (UK and Hong Kong) and held posts teaching photography in London. In 2000, he obtained his MA in Photography from LCP. His diverse practice has included working with major London galleries (Barbican, Hayward, The Photographers' Gallery, The Whitechapel) and other UK organisations such as Autograph - The Association of Black Photographers, The National Trust and Brighton's Royal Pavilion on photographically informed projects and exhibitions. Between 1990 and 1996, Lam initiated and worked extensively in the east end of London on a number of public photography projects with different communities including the British Bangladeshi (Muslim) youth populace.

In recent years, Lam has continued to work in collaboration with a variety of organisations, amongst whom have been a number aimed at young asylum seekers and designed to help them to explore and express their feelings and experiences of life in the UK. Work by Anthony has recently been included in Changing Faces (London July 2003) exhibition, which documents Asian youth culture from 1970's to the present day.



wait for decision
from series Port of
Call, 2002.

Digital inkjet print
on ragpaper:
60.9 x 83.8 cm



further representation
from series Port of
Call, 2002.

Digital inkjet print
on ragpaper:
60.9 x 83.8 cm

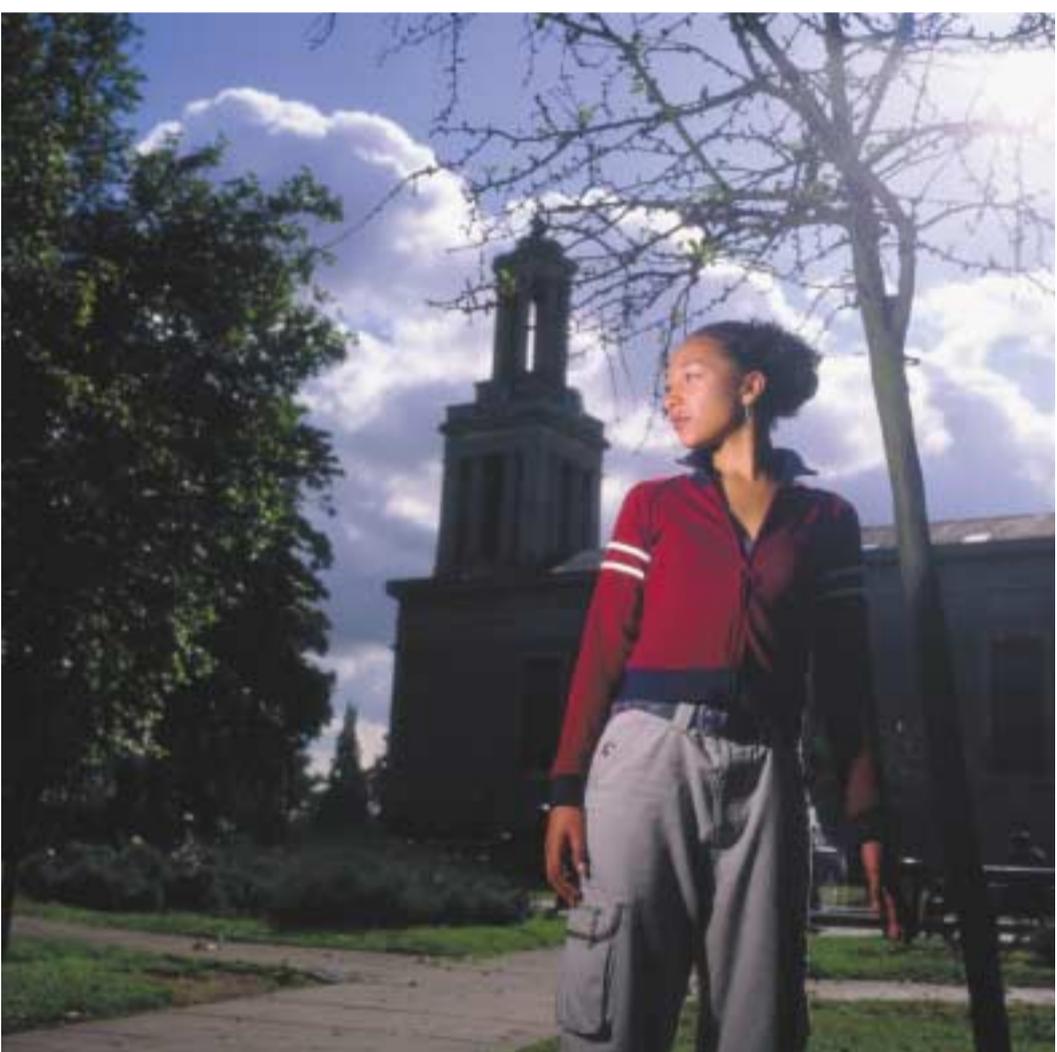
Mohammed Khalil
and Henna Al
Raschid. Formby
Beach, Liverpool,
2002.

Durst Lamda print on
Duraclear:
118.9 x 84 cm



Fatimah Kelleher,
Brixton, London
2002.

Durst Lamda print on
Duraclear:
118.9 x 84 cm



Amyandtanveer
Portraits

Installation view
of Amyandtanveer
Portraits.

London 2003.



We chose to focus on representing prominent British Muslim musicians or those involved in the UK music scene. Our approach to this project was unique in the way that we felt it was important to represent the British Muslim perspective without focusing on a particular ethnic group or traditional Muslim setting. Music has energy, universal appeal and the ability to break down barriers. We wanted to show a perspective that is focused on each individual's commitment and contribution to music.

Each of the people we have photographed have a very different and highly personal attitude to the relationship between their faith and music. We have photographed both men and women from backgrounds as diverse as Morocco, Bangladesh, Egypt, Pakistan, America, Caribbean, Sudan and Nigeria. All are linked by the same faith and home in the UK but lead very different lives in the world of music. The continuity of the photographic style unifies the group of individuals whilst the transparency of the display helps us to remember how lives, careers and faiths are interwoven and are never led in total isolation.

We interviewed each of our subjects several times over a number of months to find out

about them and their work. For their photographs, we asked them to choose a location that they felt was important to their life. For some this is a place from their history, for others a place where they go to think. Whilst photographing them we asked each person to contribute words and drawings to an ongoing book about the project. When presenting our photographs we know that we wanted to include the whole story of this piece of work and the manner of presentation we have finally decided on reflects this journey. It is important to us that the installation allows many perspectives to be seen simultaneously – sometimes through the substance of another image.

We hope that together the photographs, the music, their illustrations and the words give an insight into this fascinating group of characters; characters involved in the ongoing development of Britain's varied and exciting cultural and musical scenes – we think these pictures also express a unique perspective on British Muslim identity.

Biography

Amyandtanveer are a London based photography and design team, otherwise known as Amy Robins and Tanveer Ahmed. Amy studied Fine Art Photography at Wimbledon School of Art before beginning work in 1995 as a filmmaker, animator and graphic designer at Peter Gabriel's Real World Studios. She then continued as a multi-media designer at a number of design companies in London before beginning work as Amyandtanveer. Tanveer Ahmed graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1995 and worked in fashion; as a stylist for music videos; in trend prediction and as a fabric designer for textile agencies before joining forces with Amy just over five years ago. Combining experience and skills allows them to develop a distinctive joint approach to creating images. Experimenting with a wide range of digital and traditional equipment, techniques and unorthodox image-making processes, Amyandtanveer attempt to reveal often hidden dimensions of their subjects. Playing with colour and composition, they are able to explore the personalities of their subjects who predominantly come from the world of music that ranges from contemporary classical to hip hop and dance. Their work has appeared in a host of well-known music and style magazines including The Wire, The Sunday Times, DJ,

Straight No Chaser and featured as album design work and on record covers. They have exhibited in the group show 000ZEROZEROZERO at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999) and the Station Gallery, Frankfurt (2000). Their first solo exhibition at the Scala Cinema in London's Kings Cross included a 20x 6ft billboard poster and six 4ft light boxes displaying new dance, hip-hop and club influenced Amyandtanveer images.



Akram Khan,
outside the Laban
Centre, London
2002.

Durst Landa print on
Duraclear:
118.9 x 84 cm



Aref Durwesh,
Slough 2002.

Durst Landa print on
Duraclear:
118.9 x 84 cm

Stefania Marchetti,
London 2002.

C-type print mounted
onto aluminium.
83.8 x 66 cm



Aysa Ali,
Bedfordshire 2002.

C-type print mounted
onto aluminium.
83.8 x 66 cm



Sam
Piyasena

Ar.Rum
Portraits &
Converts
to Islam

Nick Higgins,
London 2003.

C-type print mounted
onto aluminium.
66 x 83.8 cm



Surah ArRum

'And among his signs Is the creation of the Heavens And the earth and the variations In your languages And your colours'
Al – Quran, Surah 30:22

ArRum, Britain's first club for Muslim professionals is more than just an Islamic members' club in Clerkenwell, London it is a place for religious contemplation, a cultural and business centre, a restaurant and juice bar and most essentially a venue for Muslims and non-Muslims to meet socially. Founded in 1997 by Reedah Nijabat, the club was set up in response to young Muslim professionals who wanted a social, cultural and religious centre that fitted in with the values and beliefs of someone living in the UK. ArRum also represents the embodiment of its founder's belief in holistic living, love of contemporary art & culture and her strong stance on ethical business practices.

Reedah Nijabit was born and brought up in Waltham Forest, North London. She read law at London University and qualified as a barrister before working as a Management Consultant. Determined to found her own business, which embraced many of her own beliefs and values, she opened ArRum.

British converts to Islam

'Were we to choose a common religion for the entire world, it would definitely be Islam'
George Bernard Shaw

Many Muslims feel it more appropriate to use the term 'revert', as opposed to, 'convert' to Islam. Muslims believe that we are all born pure and that embracing Islam, one returns to the original and sinless state in which Allah created. George Sale, one of the first English translators of the Koran, proclaimed that no good Christian 'can apprehend any danger from so manifest a forgery'. More recently the events of September 11th heightened this deep-rooted mistrust and animosity felt by many non-Muslims towards Islam. Ordinary Muslims were vilified for the actions of extremists. Since the bombing of the Twin Towers, there have been around 300 reported incidents of assaults on Muslims in Britain. The popular press has not helped things by exacerbating Islamophobia and engendering an 'us and them' situation. Despite these difficulties, most of the converts I have approached were keen to be involved in this project. They have come to Islam after a long period of research and contemplation. As a result of converting,

some have lost friends and antagonised their families. For some, these adverse experiences have given them the impetus to take part in this project.

Biography

Sam Piyasena is a graduate of Central St Martins College of Art and Design and has been a visiting lecturer at both Buckinghamshire and Middlesex Universities. As a freelance photographer Sam has received regular commissions from leading style and fashion magazines such as The Face, Dazed and Confused and I-D as well as national newspapers such as The Guardian, The Sunday Times, The Telegraph and The Independent. Images of a much more personal nature taken from a work in progress were included in the group exhibition, 000ZEROZEROZERO held at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999) and the Station Gallery, Frankfurt (2000). The Curry House Project, shot in a witty documentary style, explores the unique relationship between Britain and its curry houses. Numbering somewhere in excess of 8000 and comprising a multi million pound industry as part of Britains' National cuisine, Sam contextualises his photographs against the realities of the curry house working conditions of long hours, low pay and strenuous labour for young, often Asian male immigrants.



ArRum (diptych),
London, 2002/3.

Canvas prints
Each panel
127 x 81.3 cm

A young man prays
alone at the Shadwell
Tenants Association.

Black and white print.
26,5 x 39,5 cm



Shadwell Gardens,
East London.

Black and white print.
33 x 49 cm



**Rehan
Jamil**
Allahu Akbar
(Allah is the
Greatest)

A view of East
London Mosque
looking towards
the City.

Black and white print.
33 x 49 cm



Biography

The focus for my images is to explore the typology of religious buildings used by British Muslims, from purpose built mosques such as the East London Mosque in Whitechapel to former cinemas and council flats which have been converted for use as places of worship. My series of images looks at the buildings within their urban context to examine how the spaces function for the local communities each of whom use a very different architectural space in which to congregate and worship.

As a child I watched the East London Mosque being built from across the road at my fathers factory, never knowing that as an adult I would produce a photographic documentary of the mosque and its surrounding area.

Like many photojournalists producing documentary images in black and white, I too use only natural light and fixed focal length lenses. I felt that only black and white film could represent my religion, my mosque and my community with the simplicity and purity that only black and white film can create.

Rehan Jamil lives in East London and began his photographic career at the age of 17 by taking photographs for the local newspaper, The East End Enterprise. He has since continued as a freelance photographer producing documentary images relating to Asian lives in Britain. As the recipient of a Leaders for London Millennium Award, he produced work for the book, Common Ground: Portraits of Tower Hamlets (1998), which documented the physical landscapes and thriving multicultural community within the London borough of Tower Hamlets. His work has been exhibited within the group show 000ZEROZEROZERO at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999) and the Station Gallery, Frankfurt (2000). Apart from providing editorial images as a contract photographer for a number of large urban regeneration programmes, Rehan is currently working on a long-term project related to the Muslim community in Tower Hamlets and their lives around the East London Mosque. The Mosque's impending expansion will qualify the mosque as being the biggest in Europe. Work by Rehan has recently been included in Changing Faces (London July 2003) exhibition, which documents Asian youth culture from 1970's to the present day.



Rayhan Uddin,
Project Development
worker at Rihlah,
an anti-drugs support
programme.

Black and white print.
33 x 49 cm



Shoe racks, East
London Mosque.

Black and white print.
26,5 x 39,5 cm

Untitled
from series
Shopna 2002

C-type print mounted
on aluminium.
125 x 125 cm



Untitled
from series
Shopna 2002

C-type print mounted
on aluminium.
125 x 125 cm



Suki
Dhanda
Shopna
2002

Untitled
from series
Shopna 2002

C-type print mounted
on aluminium.
125 x 125 cm



My interest in this project was to document the ordinary lives of British Muslim teenage girls, focussing both on their social and home environments. One of my aims was to challenge traditional and stereotypical submissive notions of British Muslim girls perpetuated in the media. My objective was to provide a deeper insight to the motivation rather than the outward appearance of the subjects. For example, many Muslim girls perceive the hijab as a symbol of identity and empowerment rather than a sign of oppression and subjugation.

It is important to recognise that modern British Muslim girls have similar reference points and interests to any other British teenagers and are keen to expand their horizons beyond traditional social constrictions. This does not in any way undermine their devotion and loyalty to Islamic religious and cultural values.

When I first met Shopna I was immediately struck by her attitude of self-reliance and independence whilst maintaining a very approachable and warm persona.

Shopna defies all stereotypical perceptions of the hijab by integrating it into her everyday clothing, she wears the hijab as a mark of cultural respect and

from a personal sense of identity. The hijab, for Shopna, clearly represents a symbol of protection against those who seek to undermine her femininity.

I feel a strong connection between Shopna's Islamic life and my own parallel experiences as a young Sikh girl. What strikes me particularly, however, is the freedom she has in expressing her individuality, this fills me with optimism for the new found sense of identity in the Asian youth of today.

Biography

A British Asian female photographer, Suki Dhanda began her photographic career after receiving a Prince's Trust loan and gaining a Higher National Diploma in Photography at Plymouth College of Art and Design. A regular contributor to publications such as The Observer, Suki specialises in portraits of people in their environments, citing emotion, realism and identity as key elements of her work. She has produced a number of social documentary photo stories based around issues of gender and culture within Asian communities living in Britain and the USA. Her images of young British Asian females emerging from their own communities in London's East End into the broader British landscape were included in the group exhibition 000ZEROZEROZERO at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999) and the Station Gallery, Frankfurt (2000). She is currently seeking a publisher for an extraordinary series of photographs focusing on the community of Sikh taxi drivers living in New York, USA. Work by Suki has recently been included in Changing Faces (London July 2003) exhibition, which documents Asian youth culture from 1970's to the present day



Untitled
from series
Shopna 2002

C-type print mounted
on aluminium.
125 x 125 cm



Untitled
from series
Shopna 2002

C-type print mounted
on aluminium.
125 x 125 cm

Mariam Chaddah,
7 years,
November 2002.
From series
Hijabi Sisters.

Black and white print.
50.6 x 40.8 cm



Misha Shafiq,
15 years,
October 2002.
From series
Hijabi Sisters.

Black and white print.
50.6 x 40.8 cm



**Clement
Cooper**
Hijabi
Sisters

Ayah Basil Hatabet,
9 years,
November 2002.
From series
Hijabi Sisters.

Black and white print.
50.6 x 40.8 cm



Clement Cooper has said of his work in interview

“The way I approach a photograph is so simple. I don’t invent things. I don’t try to manipulate the subject matter. It’s all in front of me.”

His working practice is essentially concerned with developing feelings of trust between himself and his subjects.

“I go in first without a camera and start talking to people, drinking with them, eating with them, getting to know them, telling them what I’m doing. Then I take my work in and finally bring the camera, take a picture of them and give them back their pictures to get them involved. I let them look through the camera, let them take their own pictures.”

In his portraits, it is important for his subjects to look straight into the camera lens “Because you’re acknowledging that they are there, when you come across a photograph of a person looking at you, a very simple picture, it’s a very powerful statement. They’re saying something very personal to you and that message is very different for whoever looks at that picture”

“I’m not really trying to document social conditions but to explore the humanity

of my subjects, to try to understand them as people.”

Using very basic equipment, a simple camera and tripod, without the use of elaborate lenses and fill in flash, Clement Cooper’s use of light and darkness is a fundamental aspect of his style

“The use of light for me is a very emotional subject – very personal, because it reveals everything.”

As is his preference for black and white film because of its “simplicity” and the fact that for him,

“Black and white captures life so well. Better than any other medium. It’s so direct and it just gets the way that I’m feeling at this point in my life”

Cooper judges the success of his images in relation to three elements, the subject matter, light and composition

“The person’s got to have something about them quite marked that I have found interesting. Secondly, the way the light reveals them is important. That’s all the light does: it reveals the truth.

Thirdly the picture has to be balanced, certain things in the background have to be right. Usually with me there’s no one in the background, just me and the person”

In his most recent body of work, Hijabi Sisters, Clement Cooper has chosen to photograph all of his subjects wearing the hijab. In doing so and amongst other things, he has subtly drawn the viewer to reflect on the ethnic diversity and cultural richness which goes to make up Britain’s Muslim communities as reflected through the myriad styles of head-dress.

Biography

Clement Cooper, born and raised in Manchester’s predominantly Black and Asian communities of Moss Side and Longsight, first began taking photographs at the age of 17. Self taught, Clement worked as a photographer and reporter for a number of local newspapers, before receiving his first commission in 1987 from the Documentary Photography Archive in Manchester to record aspects of life within the Moss Side and Longsight Afro-Caribbean community. The commission resulted in his first book and exhibition, Presence (1989). Further commissions, travel bursaries and grants followed and resulted in two more solo exhibitions and publications. Deep: People of Mixed Race(1994) explores the diversity of experience of mixed race people in Liverpool, Cardiff, Manchester and Bristol and Primary (1999) is an exhibition of large-format black and white portraits of primary school children in Birmingham, Manchester and Preston. Going beyond conventional child portraiture, his subjects challenge assumptions about what it feels like to grow up against the backdrop of prevailing social definitions and ambiguities of class and race. In 2003, Clement received an Arts Council England grant to extend the work he began with Hijabi Sisters (2002) into a solo exhibition and publication, Sisters.



Henna Jamil, 9 years
November 2002.
From series
Hijabi Sisters.

Black and white print.
50.6 x 40.8 cm



Aisha Saleem,
11 years.
October 2002.
From series
Hijabi Sisters.

Black and white print.
50.6 x 40.8 cm



I began this project by asking myself the question 'What is Common Ground?' Keeping an open mind I observed the broad spectrum of lifestyles and the expectations of British Muslims of a wide range of age groups and living in different geographical locations.

Yorkshire in the North of England provides an interesting contrast to London, so to some extent the North / South divide evolved into the main framework for the project. I began to explore the environmental differences that constitute the different social landscapes.

Bradford in the North of England, where I grew up, has undergone tremendous change over the years. Old schools, cinemas, chemist's shops etc have been replaced by fast food restaurants, supermarkets, DIY warehouses and huge electrical goods outlets. The ever familiar McDonalds and other global brands have gradually appeared and made their presence felt. Bradford as a town is now very different to the way I remember it. Today American and Euro-centric culture appear to influence and shape the social and economic aspirations of youth, whilst the older generations seem to cling to traditional modes of dress and lifestyles. Bradford,

once a traditional English market town and the heart of the textiles industry provided many jobs to British Asians in its heyday. Now almost all the mills have closed down except for the odd one or two and unemployment is high.

The East End of London is an area that has become synonymous with multiple nationalities and cultures moving into its environment and surviving economically through various trades. Brick Lane and its surroundings are also somewhere that are now very different from when I first began photographing them in 1987 with the launch of the Docklands' Light Railway. The Canary Wharf development provided much speculation at that time for the future of the East End both in terms of economics and culture. There existed a complex mix of different ideologies, religions, cultures and lifestyles that have not always been harmonious. The friction, which was generated, was one of the elements of the evolution that has shaped the East End into its present form.

This project is by no means definitive, it's my personal response to the environmental and social space I share with others. It attempts to look at the everyday but not always the most obvious elements of it. I have attempted to scratch at the surface to expose projected veneers of reality

revealed below layers of existence as painted by different cultures. It has not been my intention to offend anyone with my photographs but to record my impression of a time and a place.

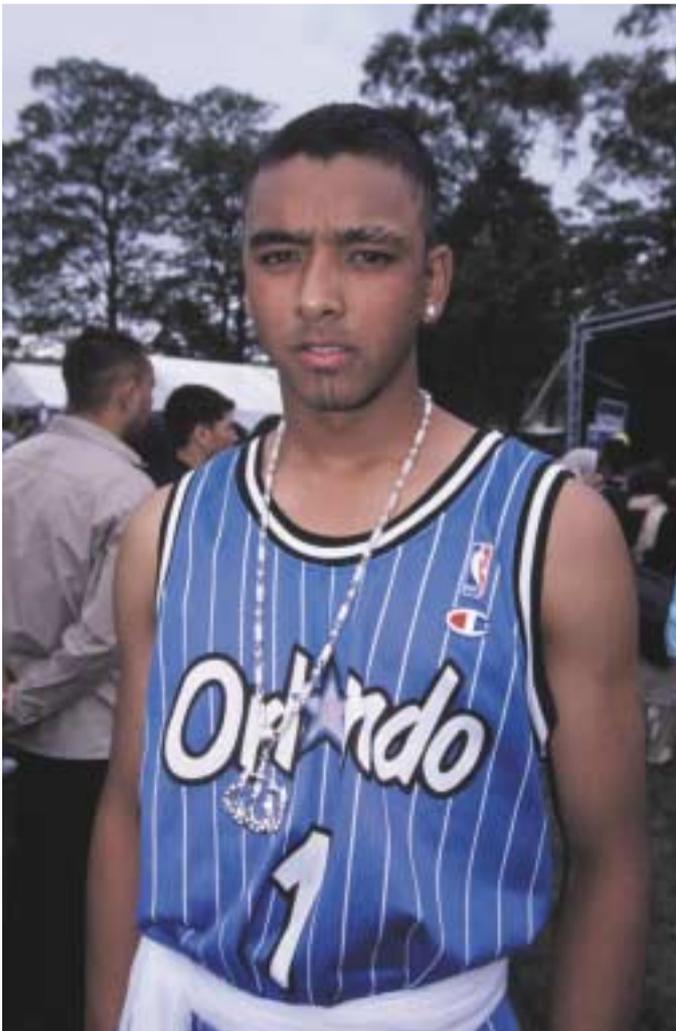
Biography

Jagtar Semplay became involved with photography at an early age pursuing his youthful interest to study eventually for an MA in the History and Culture of Photography at the London College of Printing. He has worked as a freelance photojournalist for national newspapers and magazines such as The Telegraph, The Sunday Times and The Observer and as a lecturer for various photographic projects and workshops on both a practical and an academic basis. Jagtar's keen sense of "the community" has informed much of his work. Early projects have seen him using his experience of the Asian Community in Bradford to depict the complexities between tradition and modernity within a complex and sometimes introverted society. Later documentary photographs have focused on notions of the community within a multiracial society. He has exhibited his photographs as part of the 000ZEROZEROZERO exhibition at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1999) and the Station Gallery, Frankfurt (2000) as well as featuring at Arles Photography Festival, France. Work by Jagtar has recently been included in Changing Faces (London July 2003) exhibition, which documents Asian youth culture from 1970's to the present day.



Ya Ya and Dog
Bradford, 2003.

Digital inkjet print on
Pearl inkjet paper:
38.5 x 58.8 cm



Rap Artist,
Leeds, 2002.

Digital inkjet print on
Pearl inkjet paper:
58.8 x 38.5 cm

Empty weaving shed,
Manningham Mills,
Bradford.

Black and white print.
31 x 47.5 cm



Former seaman
Choudhry Qasim Ali
tells his story,
Manchester.

Black and white print.
31 x 47.5 cm



**Tim
Smith**
Labour
Exchange

With unemployment
a large problem in
many English cities
tension between
communities has
risen, Great Horton
area, Bradford.

Black and white print.
47.5 x 31 cm



The focus of my photographs has been on Muslim communities originally from the Asian subcontinent who now live in northern areas of England.

Small numbers of men from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh settled in Britain during the first few decades of the 1900s. Much larger numbers arrived during and just after the Second World War, when Britain used the links established during the days of the British Empire to satisfy a huge demand for labour.

These economic migrants came to work and improve the standard of living of themselves and their families back home. Although these all-male pioneers initially felt their stay was a temporary one, most eventually sent for their wives and children. The transients became settlers, and laid the foundations for the biggest Muslim communities living in Britain today.

These photographs examine how the nature of employment has changed dramatically over the past sixty years for these settlers, their children and their grandchildren.

Biography

After studying photography under David Hurn at Gwent College in Newport, Wales, Tim Smith has worked as a freelance photographer with regular commissions from newspapers such as The Observer, The Guardian, The Times and The Independent. Whilst maintaining his commercial contacts, Tim has also actively involved himself in a number of community based projects centred around his hometown in the North of England. In 1986, he set up and ran the photographic department of the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit (BHRU), part of Bradford Art Galleries and Museums. Through a range of exhibitions, publications and CD-ROMs, the unit makes use of photography and oral history to reflect the experiences of the city's communities. Exhibitions and publications produced by Tim and BHRU have included Here to Stay: Bradford's South Asian Communities; Home from Home: British Pakistanis in Mirpur; Keeping The Faith: The Polish Community in Britain, and Ukraine's Forbidden History. Further examples of Tim's work may be viewed at www.timsmithphotos.com.



Unemployed young men of Pakistani origin at a football tournament, Oldham.

Black and white print
31 x 47,5 cm



Wedding Limousine, Halifax.

Black and white print
31 x 47,5 cm

Studio portrait of unknown sitters.

Contemporary black and white print from original glass plate negative. 22 x 18.5 cm



Studio portrait of unknown family group.

Contemporary black and white print from original glass plate negative. 22 x 18.5 cm



The Belle Vue Studio Portraits

Studio portrait of unknown sitters.

Contemporary black and white print from original glass plate negative. 18.5 x 22 cm



These photographs were taken at the Belle Vue Studio in Bradford, home to large communities from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the 1950s and 1960s men came to work in the city's textile industry and in public transport. Many settled in Manningham where the studio was located, and thousands of pictures were taken there to send the migrants' message home to the Indian subcontinent—that of success.

Customers eventually came from all over northern England. It was the studio to visit because the old fashioned photographer, Tony Walker, shared an approach familiar to them from the studios back home. Stiff and formal poses and serious expressions were what his new subjects wanted. Suits and ties were worn as signs of success, and were kept in the studio for those without their own.

Some demonstrated well-paid employment by holding money. Watches were worn low for show. Cameras and radios rested on the studio table.

Cigarettes and sunglasses were flourished as signs of sophistication, and books represented education. Briefcases and rows of pens lining top pockets were symbols of prestigious clerical employment, although virtually all the men would have had manual jobs. The photographer also used his retouching skills to increase his sales. By working on the negatives he was able to produce pictures with pale skin tones, valued in the sub-continent and very popular with his sitters.

In the early days of the all-male Asian community such portraits were restricted to groups of brothers, cousins and uncles. As this society developed into one that included wives and children they too began to appear, solemnly clutching handbags and babies, books and toys. The family portrait expressed the value attached to family unity, missing relatives could be included by bringing their existing picture into the studio.

The Belle Vue Studio opened in 1926, and closed in 1975 when the photographer retired. For nearly a decade the negatives lay in a damp cellar, and many thousands were dumped. When the premises were sold it was only as Tony Walker was carrying them out to be thrown away that the new owner had a look at them, and forbade him to destroy any more. The remaining 15,000 glass plate negatives have now been restored by the Bradford Heritage Recording Unit, a resource from which these pictures have been drawn.



Studio portrait of unknown sitter wearing bus conductor's uniform.

Contemporary black and white print from original glass plate negative. 22 x 18.5 cm



Studio portrait of unknown sitters.

Contemporary black and white print from original glass plate negative. 22 x 18.5 cm

Muslims in Britain: A Brief Survey

The historical connection between Islam and Britain did not begin with mass immigration from the Indian subcontinent in the fifties, yet this has become the established story among many indigenous Britons, and most British Muslims too. Both sides have lost sight of the long view. From the European Renaissance onwards, Islam has been an integral, vivid part of Europe and Britain. Kipling’s irreconcilable East and West is, and always was, an absurdity. For better or worse, Islamic and European civilisations would not have developed without each other. The crescent-shaped bread roll, the croissant, eaten every day for breakfast in Europe, is a symbol of the Crusades. Painted blue tiles and geometric design, coffee houses, the beauteous domes in Florence and Venice—and the Brighton Pavilion—factories, modern technology, the film industry in Muslim countries and countless other ideas have flowered and travelled between Christians and Muslims.
<1> The writer Nabil Mater noted in his book on Islam in Britain 1558-1685: ‘Muslims and their Arab-Islamic legacy were part of the religious, commercial and military self definition of England’
<2> These exchanges- trade, artistic, scientific, political- have carried on in spite of wars, mutual demonisation and ideological confrontations.

And so the paradox continues today in literature, films, and other cultural products. In Hollywood films, for example, Muslims often are ‘reel bad Arabs, lecherous sheikhs, personality free maidens, bomb-blowing terrorists’
<3> and yet there is a romance about desert nomads on camels, and curvy belly dancers. Arab food; Sufi music, poetry and thought; and Arabic calligraphy are much loved in the West. But as interest in Islam grows, so Islamaphobia is also on the increase. Muslims too are not exempt from this paradox: Muslims frequently consider white Christian society as deprived, godless, sex-mad and alcoholic, yet cannot resist Western freedoms and lifestyles. To the chagrin of Islamic purists, there is no going back to the days of the Prophet Mohammed. History moves on inexorably. London, milkshakes, Beckham, James Bond, MTV, liposuction, the Royals, the Victoria & Albert Museum and other Western products and institutions are now lodged in the modern Muslim psyche and cannot be excised.

A Brief History

The complex history of this contact stretches back over a millennium. There has been much conflict, starting with the wars of conquest by Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula in the 7th century, through the Crusades which began in the 11th century, the rise of the Ottoman Empire (1600 -1918) and the various struggles for and against colonial domination after the First World War. But through the wars and clashes, immense mutual respect was also evident, as was deep love between individuals.

Arguably, we may not have had the Indian Raj if Mughal emperors had not taken to the traders of the East India Company who arrived in India in 1608. One of the first arrivals, Captain William Hawkins, rapidly became a trusted confidante of Emperor Jehangir. Subsequent traders brought the emperor harpsichords and raunchy pictures of Venus and Cupid. Jehangir gave them licence to trade, which soon led to armed control and then a take-over by the British government. An enormous painted panel in the House of Commons shows British merchants mingling with Mughal high society, paving the way for colonial domination.

In art galleries across Europe, celebrated 19th century orientalist <4> painters depict Muslims as ruthless barbarians- many holding bloody swords or fainting white women. But in the same spaces, you can see other pictures paying homage to Muslim men and women, their lands, aesthetics, markets and deserts. Cairo, Amman, Marrakesh and Beirut became magnets for many

artists of the modern movement, who appreciated the different perspectives that these ancient Muslim cities provided: Paul Klee, for example, whose pictures of Tunisia evoke its magical mood and atmosphere; and Matisse, who found in Morocco the perfect synthesis of colour, light and form that informed some of his most daring pictures.

Colonialism was organised around racial and cultural hierarchies, but even within this paradigm, monotheism remained a strong bond between Christians and Muslims. In the 18th century, mixed race relationships between British Empire builders and aristocratic Muslim women were much approved of. A painting of The Palmer Family by Francesco Renaldi (1786) shows Major William Palmer with his begum Bibi faiz Baksh, their two children, and two other Muslim women with whom he lived. General James Achilles Kirkpatrick, British Ambassador to the Court of Hyderabad, fell in love with a fifteen-year old Muslim Princess, Khair un-Nisa, converted to Islam and married her <5>. Islamic art and design also inspired Lord Leighton, one of Britain’s most celebrated Victorian artists who became President of the Royal Academy in 1878, incorporated many features of Islamic design from tiles to furniture into his house in Holland Park, London, now a museum open to the public.

The 19th century was less engaged with “the other” as equal, yet Queen Victoria herself had Muslim servants looking after her children; her favourite, Abdul Kareem, was given palatial suites, had his portraits painted, and got so close to the queen, quite shocking the nation.

As trade and travel accelerated between Britain and Muslim countries, Yemenis and Bangladeshi lascars settled in Yorkshire, Liverpool and Cardiff and the East End of London. Muslim sailors, soldiers and workers helped keep the great empire going receiving little recognition and low wages. The first mosques in Britain were set up in Woking and Liverpool at the end of the 19th century.<6>

The two world wars brought even greater Muslim contributions to Great Britain. How many people today remember the many Muslims from British colonies who fought on the side of the Allies?

Post War Migration

The size of the Muslim population increased significantly in the 1950s and 1960s with Pakistani workers recruited by British factories, mostly for the steel and textile mills located in the North of England. The war had taken a terrible toll and there was a serious shortage of manpower. Tim Smith’s pictures in this exhibition trace those early times and capture the difficulties, and joys, too, of the early migrants. Studio photographs sent back home were a must- they reassured anxious relatives and gave immigrants a moment to show off and pretend all was well. But things were not as they appeared and as the rapid de-industrialisation of the North began during the seventies, traditional forms of employment collapsed, leaving many immigrants and their children locked in disadvantage.

The violent birth of Bangladesh (1971) brought a new wave of Muslim immigrants followed by the arrival of Muslims from East Africa who, with other Asians, were forced out by black African leaders. Black African Muslims fled countries in chaos and Arab Muslims entered Britain as refugees from oppressive regimes or as part of the wealthy international elite. Iranian Britons have similar profiles. In recent decades Somali, Bosnian, Kosovan, Afghan and other Muslims have added to the diversity and mix of British Islamic life.

The Central London Mosque in Regents Park can have up to a hundred different nationalities, dozens of languages, black, brown and white, from Afghanistan to Argentina, praying together on Friday, all different, yet all equal before Allah. This diversity and sense of inclusion is one of the central motifs of this show.



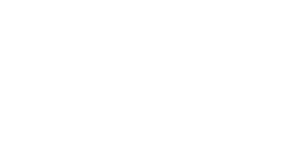
<1> For the definitive work on this read Professor Fred Halliday, Islam and the Myth of Confrontation, IB Tauris, 1995

<2> From an excerpt in The Guardian, 15th January 2000

<5> See The White Mughals, William Dalrymple, Harpercollins, 2003



<3> Jack Shaheen, Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People, Arris, 2003, p 112



<6> A full account of the Asian presence in Britain can be found in Ayahs, Lascars and Princes, Rozina Visram, Pluto, 1990



<9> The Parekh Report, Profile, 2000, p 239



<10> Community Cohesion, Ted Cantle, Home Office, 2002, p59



<4> See Rana Kabbani, Imperial Fictions, Pandora, 1986 and Edward Said, Orientalism, London 1978

Facts and figures

There are approximately 1.8M (as quoted on Today programme 7 July 2003), 1500 mosques and 100 Muslim schools in Britain today. They share the same fundamental faith but are as diverse as the world itself. Language, culture, class, different histories, geographical, racial and ethnic variations make it absurd to talk about ‘the Muslim community’ as if it is monolithic and in any way politically uniform. Rehan Jamil’s pictures of places of worship illustrate this extraordinary variety, highlighting the manner in which secular buildings (flats in tower blocks, schools, a Portakabin, disco) and even an ex-synagogue have been appropriated and converted to suit the varying needs of different Muslim communities.

Research shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims of both genders are among the least qualified, least upwardly mobile, most impoverished of ‘ethnic minority’ Britons. In comparison, Chinese, Indian and African Asian Britons are doing significantly better and some have surpassed white Britons in achievements <7>. Researcher, Dr. Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology at the University of Bristol, is concerned that ‘the confluence of the continuing severe disadvantage of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and the rise of an anti-Muslim prejudice, marks one of the biggest challenges to racial egalitarians in Britain today.’ <8>

80% of Muslims live in households where the income is below the national average compared to 25 % of non -Muslim households. Bradford, with its large Pakistani Muslim population, is now seen as the drug capital of Britain. The number of Muslims in prison has gone up from a few hundred a decade ago to five thousand today.

Discrimination, Separatism

The current race relations laws of the UK offer protection to Jews and Sikhs because they are defined as ‘ethnic’ groups with one obvious ‘homeland’. Muslims have been calling for better legal protection against discrimination but without success thus far. Campaigners, among them the now influential Muslim Council of Britain, argue that religious discrimination is, in effect, legally allowed by the British State.

This has repercussions. A young Muslim man interviewed for an independent report spoke for many when he said: ‘As Muslims we are being forced by the system to make a choice- either assimilate, compromise ourselves, or separatism whereby we create our own institutions.’ <9>

Young Muslims

There are other serious internal problems, too, which are afflicting the various communities. In some towns, young Muslim men – often with poor education and opportunities- are turning to lives of lawlessness – drugs, pimping and other anti-social activities. Some Muslim communities are completely dislocated from national life and politicians are now turning their attention to these relatively new problems.

Extremist views can appeal to young people living impoverished lives with little hope and much undirected fury. As one government report found ‘Alienation is most acute where there is both social and economic deprivation.’<10> Too many young Muslims are emotionally homeless. Racism makes them believe they cannot belong in Britain and their communities expect them to think of themselves as people from elsewhere. Hard -line mullahs from Pakistan and Arab states entice these young people into embracing a militant Islam, which bewilders their own families. Hanif Kureshi in, My Son the Fanatic, accurately reflects this confusion of identities and the loss and guilt felt by parents that their children are both more Muslim and more British than them, yet more dislocated.

But there are positive developments too. Newspapers, voluntary organisations, and cultural

institutions reflect an emerging British Islam, which is vibrant and confident. These young British Muslims are firmly rooted in this country, which they challenge, change, portray and sometimes upset. Britain, in turn, inculcates them with values, expectations and possibilities. But the essence remains attached to something old and invaluable. You see this amalgam in Suki Dhanda’s intimate pictures of a young British Bangladeshi girl who can embrace responsibility to her family and faith at the same time as enjoying many of the pleasures of a normal Western adolescence.

Islam remains the fastest growing religion in Britain and there has been no major emigration of British Muslims out to any of the Muslim countries. There are also increasing numbers of converts to Islam–mostly middle class individuals, the majority of them women. They are not ‘ some kind of liberal Islam-lite’ says one convert, Joe Ahmed Dobson, son of a British MP, but rather, proud orthodox Muslims. But for all the protestations, occupying this place cannot be comfortable, especially as all Muslims are often expected to explain themselves and their allegiances. Sam Piyasena captures a rigid vigilance in some converts, as if they must give a proper account of themselves, always.

Shared Values in a Multi-ethnic Country

True equality is not having to apologise for your colour or family and identity but a stable nation must have core, common values, otherwise it is only a collection of villages where people battle against each other for resources and recognition but feel no attachments to anyone outside their own enclosures. Questions are now arising about the limits of diversity and the values that bind people together. For example: laws protect British children against corporal punishment in schools. Should Muslim madrasas in Britain be exempt from this? If they are, Muslim children are getting less protection than Christian children in Sunday Schools.

The place of religion in the state is being questioned with renewed vigour. Are state-funded religious schools divisive, even though most have high academic standards? Why an established Church of England when church attendance is going down and other faiths are thereby relegated to a second class status? Should secular values always take precedence over religious values in the modern world?

Current issues and dilemmas.

In Britain today public opinion is divided on the question of asylum seekers, a high proportion of whom are Muslims. Anthony Lam’s pictures give us a poignant sense of what it means to be an unwanted migrant in a world with both no borders and insurmountable borders. The desolation of modern exile is captured beautifully, and the fifties suddenly appear remarkably open.

This adds to the disillusionment of British Muslims who see the human rights of Muslims violated by western governments, by bad governance in Muslim nations, by the powerful in Chechnya, India, Palestine and other places.

September the 11th has only deepened the sense of alienation. The attacks were felt to be an abomination, and initially the British government and media were careful not to blame Islam and all Muslims for the terrorism. There was no surge in animosity towards British Muslims, although tensions have since increased and some British Muslims are expressing resentment at the intrusive, illegal and unfair treatment they claim they receive. They have become more engaged internationally, connected with the Ummah through the internet. However, completely unexpectedly, the war against Iraq brought Muslims closer to their British compatriots who came out against the conflict. For the first time, Muslims and non-Muslims marched together in protest with a strong political message.

The Making of the British Muslim Sensibility
In 1988, a massive controversy over Salman Rushdie’s novel, *The Satanic Verses*, forced British Muslims to stir from fatalism and trepidation and to lay claim to the land they had lived in for so long. Muslims from different communities suddenly came together to question absolute freedom of expression and the existing blasphemy laws which (still) only protect Christians. There were Muslims, too, who supported Rushdie’s right to publish the book and that was also part of the awakening.

Muslim hotheads burnt copies of the novel, an image that horrified the Western world, especially liberals, who had deep memories of Nazi book burning. Then came the death fatwa, issued by Ayatollah Khomeini, and Muslims began to be seen as barbarians. Anti-Muslim prejudice led to the radicalisation of many young Muslims who publicly embraced the faith they had previously neglected or passively accepted – the lines of conflict were thereby drawn.

We also saw a new dawn. Out of the inferno came the beginnings of a British Muslim intellectual tradition, now well underway. Rana Kabbani, Ziauddin Sardar, Meryl Wyn Davies, Professor Tariq Modood all write challengingly about Islamophobia, the assumptions of liberalism and Muslim fanaticism. Many young Muslims have started a journey of discovery into an authentic, more meaningful Islam. They turn to the faith as it was, read the texts, debate ideas, use their influence, reject many of the cultural sediments accumulated over the centuries.

Today British Muslims have entered the media, politics, academia and the arts and the flowering continues, although prejudice still puts up barriers. Among figures influencing national life are the businessman Lord Ahmed, the social reformer Lord Bhatia, Sir Gulam Noon, the billionaire Indian food manufacturer, Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Dr Mohammed Taranisi, a world famous IVF specialist. Other high fliers with Muslim backgrounds include:- Shazia Mirza, comedienne, top journalist Zeinab Badawi, actor Naseeruddin Shah who starred in ‘Monsoon Wedding’, and the admired novelist Abdulrazak Gurnah.

Women and Islam

The post-war migrations initially were mostly male. Women came later. Some of these men took up with white partners and then faced identity crises- like the hero in the controversial film *East is East* (1999). Harsh immigration laws after 1968

meant that many families rushed to join the men. Expectations were, and still are, that the women would keep alive the traditions, cultures, and faith. But in the most conservative families, dynamics change, cultures become porous and the pressures on women and girls are immense. Children lead separate lives within and outside the home and there are inevitable conflicts.

Values such as independence, individuality and choice inevitably enter their consciousness and although some families accommodate and even encourage these changes, others find it intolerable. Mothers who have had more proscribed lives react in two ways; they either want their daughters to be more independent or, terrified of repercussions from their families and communities, impose tight restrictions.

There are Muslim families in Britain who take their daughters out of school when they reach fourteen, although the legal school-leaving age is 16. Forced marriages are still a problem, which some consider to be growing rather than declining. Female suicide and runaway rates among these families are disproportionately high. A recent case of a young Muslim girl murdered by her uncle in her home during her wedding – all because her father agreed she should marry a Muslim of her choice – shows how great these tensions are between the old and new values and what tragedies they bring. Not much attention or care is given to these wasted lives.

As mentioned earlier, research shows Bangladeshi and Pakistani women have lower educational attainments and lower economic activity than other British Asian women and that part of the explanation for this is located in cultural and religious belief systems which locate women in the domestic sphere.

There is a success story, too, of Muslim women forging ahead but there are many more obstacles in their paths. For ambitious and educated Muslims women, Islamophobia has become a “concrete ceiling” and they are fighting against this. Middle class Muslim women – still a minority in Britain – are able to exert power, and access all that is good about their faith and cultures without being imprisoned by either. We now see Muslim women at Oxbridge and other universities and a number of writers, activists, lawyers, doctors, painters, politicians, city brokers and journalists- unthinkable fifteen years ago.

These women often lead change. Baroness Pola Uddin is in the House of Lords, Zahida Manzoor is the Legal Ombudswoman, Najma Akhtar has become an

international success with her ghazals and fusion jazz music, and Faz Hakim advises Tony Blair on race relations.

The hijab is proving to be another fascinating issue. Younger Muslims are taking on the hijab and burkha. Others reject these garments and there is considerable coercion, which creates further tensions. The symbolism of the veil has a long history in both the Western and Eastern imaginations. Cultural critic, Reina Lewis describes the ambiguity of the garment’s status. “Standing as a beacon of tradition or an emblem of progressive modernity, the veiled or unveiled, de-veiled or re-veiled, woman has been a feature of divergent struggles over decolonisation, nationalism, revolution, Westernisation and anti-Westernisation.”

<11> Clement Cooper’s serene and radiant photographs of girls in hijab provide a sophisticated commentary on the heterogeneity of the veil, conveying both the personal style and individuality which young girls bring to the display of this controversial garment.

Art and Culture

There is among most British Muslims nostalgia for the glory days of Islam when, so the story goes, Muslims were less ground down, disappointed and confused. For some, the quest for spiritual satisfaction rests with excavating the beauty of that past. Ali Omar Ermes, a Libyan British artist paints enormous pictures remembering, and replicating the great Muslim calligraphers. Tony Blair has one of his imposing paintings. It is art for God’s sake, devotional tributes which so stirred the great Christian artists in previous ages, before the time when art turned individualistic at times narcissistic. Other artists use the past to transform the present. Najma Akhtar the singer, Saleem Arif another brilliant painter whose work is abstract yet Koranic, new designers of Shalwar Khameez, all do this to great effect. The King Fahad Mosque in Edinburgh – a striking, simple geometric building of Scottish stone is a perfect symbol of this new Muslim culture with discontent generating creativity as modernity confronts memory.

Popular culture, too, is unsettled and invigorated by these movements. Amy Robins and Tanveer Ahmed have put together a multimedia three-dimensional interactive montage, which proclaims that Islam is hip, and an important part of our contemporary life. We have Muslim jazz saxophonists, and tabla players who tour with Sting, and the celebrated choreographer and dancer Akram Khan.

Whatever else is going on that causes fear and frustration for Muslims, they must know that the wonderful diversity of Islam in Britain is the best thing they have. This exhibition attempts to capture some of that diversity and unity.

Yasmin Alibhai-Brown

<11>Veil, Institute of International Visual Arts, [ed] David Bailey and Gilane Tawadros, 2003, p12

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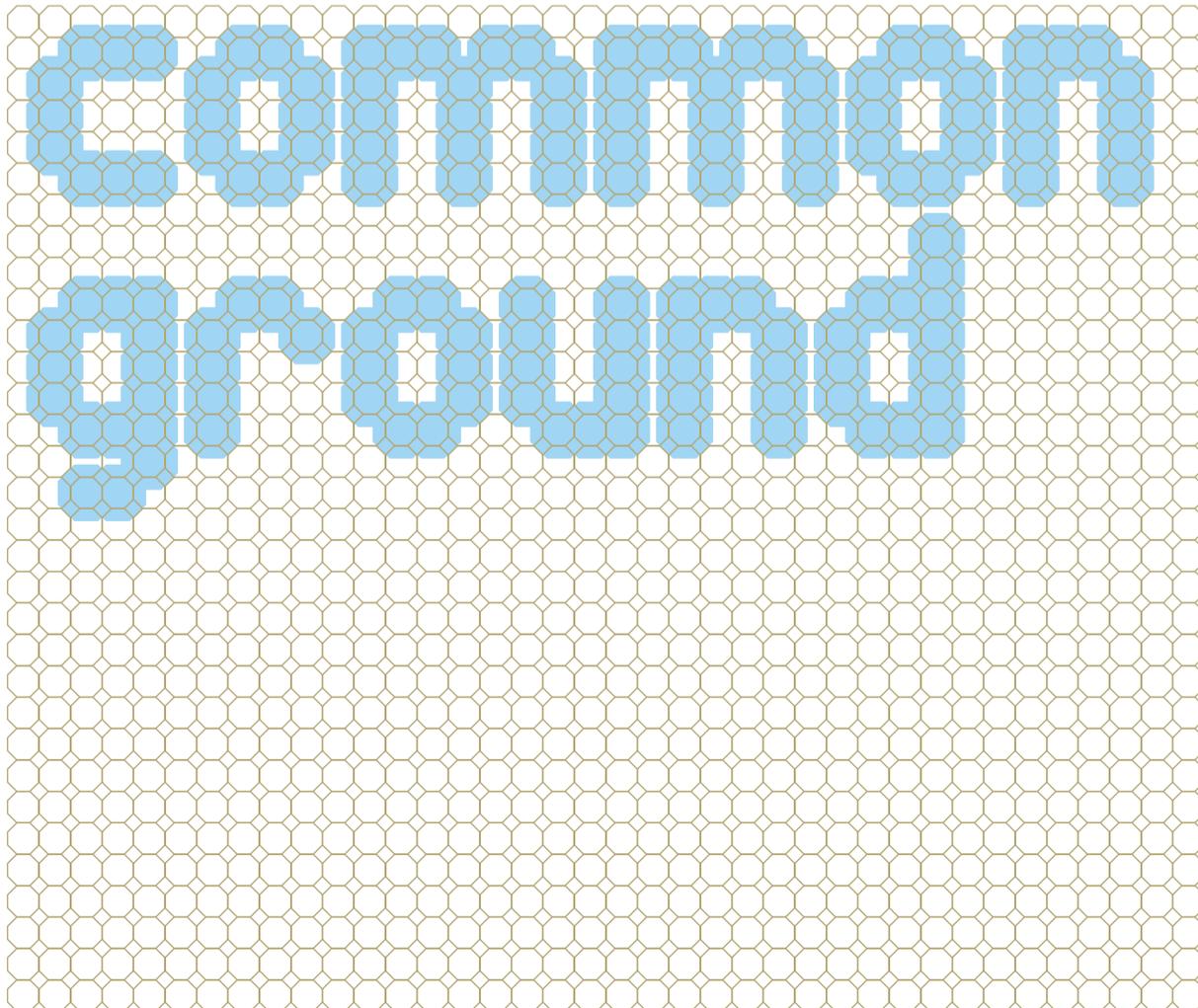
Foreword
Common Ground affords a unique opportunity for eight young British photographic artists to explore issues relating to Muslim identity in the UK. Photography is the preferred medium for these artists because it offers an unrivalled variety of strategies to engage with the wide range of the personal and social issues addressed within the commissions. In selecting these artists, we were aware of the need to reflect the particular preoccupations of British photographic practice at the present moment. Included within the scope of this exhibition is work which derives its impulse from the documentary ethos, but which questions and often subverts it in quite subtle ways. Other artists operate within more recent photographic conventions, addressing conceptual, staged or graphic elements in their practice.

The title “Common Ground” was chosen to allude to the commonalities which connect Muslim and non-Muslim communities within the UK – from popular music and youth culture to the much broader question of the practice of faith within a secular society. Given the constraint imposed by eight commissions, the exhibition cannot attempt to be comprehensive. Instead it sets out to provide a microcosm of some of the subtle ways in which contemporary Muslim identity has been shaped by the experience of Britain, and how British life and culture has consequently been influenced and enriched by the presence of its Muslim communities. Yasmin Alibhai-Brown’s introductory essay analyses the historical background to the interaction between Britain and Muslim cultures, against which contemporary experience must be viewed. As a leading British media commentator on issues relating to Muslim life in the UK, her essay will enable audiences abroad to gain an insight into some of the complexities and pertinent current concerns preoccupying British Muslims today.

From the outset the project was conceived as a collaboration with gallery curators abroad. We are particularly indebted to Yudhi Soerjoatmodjo for his sensitive and informed response to all the work and his role in curating a parallel exhibition of work on the same theme by Indonesian photographers.

My colleague Sean Williams has been responsible for all curatorial and administrative aspects of the show. Without his imaginative engagement and sensitivity, the exhibition would not have succeeded in fulfilling its original ambitions. Finally our thanks go to the photographers themselves who embraced their commissions with an intellectual and aesthetic rigour which has resulted in a diverse and challenging body of new work.

Brett Rogers, Deputy Director, Visual Arts



Aspects of Contemporary British Muslim Experience

Amyandtanveer
Suki Dhanda
Rehan Jamil
Anthony Lam
Sam Pirasena
The Belle Vue Studio
Jagtar Sempalay
Tim Smith