

## **Logistic of Perceptions: Images from Conflict Zone**

With great pleasure I welcome all the participants to this somewhat ambitious yet tentative workshop – many of you are close friends and have been the pillars of strength to Majlis for last 16 years. All of you are fellow travelers into the labyrinths of image productions and representations. Some of you are new colleagues. By naming the workshop as **Logistic of Perception: Images from Conflict Zone**, we have, in some way, made our lives more difficult than even what it usually is. What we wish to touch upon is the logistics involved in perceptions and how it alters at every stage of information, conception, production, representation and presentation and consumption. Who else to make this examination than the people who are at the core of it. Contemporary visual artists, filmmakers, newsmakers and authors. The predominant assumption behind choosing this title and scheming the programme in the way that it is, was that (to quote guru Benjamin) ‘we not only look at the attitude of a work to the relations of production of its time’ but also and primarily ‘What is the work’s position in them, in its time’. And time thus means also tendencies in forms and modes of representations.

We are living in a time where tendencies in image productions, arguably, are overlapping with the ways and means of perceptions. With the emergence of an era where any image can possibly be intervened upon, reproduced in the whole or fragments at any conceivable space or more appropriately at various defined terrains, virtual or real and also can be erased as easily without even any remote archival remains – what do we do with images from conflict zone? By images we would like to address the whole range of evidential, representational, memorial, interventional and so on.

Kashmir as a conflict zone, in this workshop, is just a beginning, in the contemporary street language of Kashmir – a base camp. We first got into this exercise, as an artistic and political desperation 5 years back when we started Godaam, a digital footage archive. It was an attempt to create some pockets of stillness in the quicksand of public image narratives. Initial euphoria and multiple openings finally settled into two sectors: Bombay and Kashmir. My colleagues Hansa and later Jayashree managed to create a small guerilla resource base. People who are the ‘authors’ of the resources, people who intervened in those resources and people who may revisit these resources for further interventions are invited to be here. The circle of these participants, hopefully will help us to reach some of the main cusp areas in the practices of productions and perceptions. The logic behind is that in contemporary visual cultures the spectators are authors simultaneously and continuously.

And that brings us to our third agenda of ‘found footage/found objects/found history’. The role of ‘found footage’ in this workshop is not only of political and/or artistic strategy, but a discursive engagement with public and personal (as opposed to private); memories and memorials; punctuations and interventions.

For the sake of convenience and actually more out of inability to completely break out of the known models, the sessions are structured around conventional clusters: presentations

from social scientists, presentations from archivists, discussions with arts and news producers, related art works and films, offsite productions, onsite productions and some good time.

The works of the participating artists, filmmakers and authors are made available – either they are running in loops on the TVs outside or they are part of the library that we have put together at the backroom or exhibited in panels. Many of them will also show the works as part of their presentations. We have brought our modest collection of images from Kashmir in hard disks. They are available in the room on the first floor with Premier editing software. We hope that some of you will attempt to make some scribbles based on the Godaam material. Well, if you don't we shall do some arm-twisting on some of you. We do not expect any final products to come out of this immediately. We just hope that you will find your own ways of engaging with the material and the discourse of 'found footage' and 'images from conflict zone'. Anybody can copy anything from this collection. We shall not hold any right for the works that you may eventually produce out of it. Only request is that you must contribute some material to our Godaam. And if it really works out then we may think of some collaborative productions, publications... in hope...

Madhusree Dutta