

A provocative gallery installation scrutinizing British Asian identity

A blend of photography, soundscapes and digital media exploring cultural representations of being Asian in Britain. Three contrasting artists worked closely with over 80 participants to produce new, cleverly manipulated images and sounds of people describing themselves as British Asian; the resulting 'definitions' were aspirational, arresting, controversial, humorous and critical.

Poulomi Desai explored personal identity through a cacophony of sounds that embraced a range of dialects and languages from Urdu, Punjabi, French and English.

Zineb Sidera looked at the process of communication, censorship and experiences of being a migrant.

Ali Zaidi morphed portraits of participants asking: Do all Asians look the same? The resulting piece was called **Fresh Asian*. The definition of 'curry' was extended by presenting 26 different recipes and spices in neatly wrapped sachets. Visitors were invited to contribute their own images, ideas and responses during the presentation at the Mead Gallery and the content of the installations thereby continuously evolved.

Lead Artist

Ali Zaidi

Artists

Poulomi Desai, Zineb Sedira, Ali Zaidi

Participants

180

Producers

Karla Barnacle-Best, Janet Waugh

Funders

Arts Council England

Audience

5,750

Venue

Mead Gallery, Warwick Arts Centre

* Fresh Asian used an open-source morph software to create an ultimate Asian face from the portraits of all those who called themselves Asian. The morphed face remained in the centre while the self portraits of the participants were seen alongside it. On the same screen the objective and the subjective were played out - the collective objective perception resulting in the morph and the perception of self through the digitally unaltered portraits. Since its start in 2000, the work has been shown in many countries and in different manifestations. However the one constant has been the participants who visually contribute to the work, and always receive a copy of the art work.

The context of Asia as it is perceived changes according to the geographies and in the last outing in Lille 2007, Asia or Asian-ness was seen as merely a starting point as the images became a catalyst to discuss fear and fascination of the 'other'.