

The New Normal

Maryam Jafri solo show

Opening 22.10 h 18

22.10 – 10.12.2022

An artist is about to open an exhibition. Some well-known faces send her greetings wishing her well. Those greetings become the basis for a new work by the artist, titled *Hi Maryam* (2021).

An artist is about to fly home after an exhibition opening. She receives an email that an angry member of the public has contacted the exhibition space alleging unauthorized use of their image by the artist. The incident becomes the basis for a new work by the artist, titled *Email Chain in my Brain, Public Domain is my Name* (2021) – a series of hanging metal plates presenting a condensed version of the email exchanges.

Laveronica gallery is pleased to present Maryam Jafri's second solo show with the gallery, *The New Normal*. The exhibition brings together four recent works investigating mental health, labour and consumer culture. *Hi Maryam* exemplifies the trend of pointcasting – the delivery of a unique product or service to a single individual, personalised just for them, whereas *Email Chain in my Brain, Public Domain is my Name* crystallises Jafri's longstanding interest in art, law and ethics. Also on view is the installation *Home Office ft. Angola, Iraq, Vietnam, Vicodin* (2021). The work consists of a computer workstation playing Jafri's video *Angola, Iraq, Vietnam, Vicodin*. The video investigates consumer culture through a transnational lens, witnessing how it both shapes and is shaped by local conditions and local desires. The computer is flanked by pharmaceutically branded office supplies featuring logos of bestselling medications used to treat 'diseases of affluence' such as diabetes, depression, heart disease, dementia etc., conditions that are now epidemic worldwide. Unlike infectious diseases that affect the global poor, diseases of affluence are associated with increased wealth in a society.

Rounding out Jafri's show is the photo series *The Everyday Model* (2021), centring on the phenomenon of 'ordinary-looking' people who model for everyday consumer items. Arranged in clusters of framed images and texts, each cluster brings together different ads featuring the same model, often for competing or complementary products. By tracking the same individual across different ad campaigns, the disparate images compile a surreal visual archive of the self – one overlaid with corporate logos and advertising text. In their anticipation of emerging forms of subjectivity, one that is no longer only performative but also branded, these images both point back to the era of mass media and forward to the rise of social media. Now everyone is an entrepreneur of their self; everyone has something to confess and someone to target, at least potentially. The images also reveal the flip side to the trend of carefully curated images on social media: if real people want to look like ads, ads now want to look like real people.