

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 27 AUGUST 2019



Rashid Johnson, *Untitled (Microphone Sculpture)*, 2018. Bronze panel, ceramic tile, mirror tile, animal skin, books, shea butter, ceramics, plant, oil stick, black soap, wax. Courtesy the artist, Hauser & Wirth and David Kordansky Gallery. Photo: Martin Parsekian.

**Launch the Fall Season at The Power Plant and experience four major exhibitions by artists Hajra Waheed, Vincent Meessen, Naeem Mohaiemen and Rashid Johnson.**

On view from 21 September 2019 to 5 January 2020, The Power Plant is pleased to present four solo exhibitions by Canadian and international artists. Hajra Waheed (Canada) joins Vincent Meessen (Belgium) and Naeem Mohaiemen (USA) alongside Rashid Johnson (USA) for his first solo exhibition in Canada.

**Join us as we launch the season with a FREE Public Opening Party on Friday, 20 September 2019 from 8-11 PM.**

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to enhance their exhibition experience. Pair a visit to the gallery with a workshop, performance, film screening, artist talk or other activity.

**Details about the exhibitions and programs are below.  
Join the conversation online with @ThePowerPlantTO**

The Power Plant  
Contemporary Art Gallery

 Harbourfront centre

231 Queens Quay West,  
Toronto, ON Canada M5J 2G8

T: +1.416.973.4949

F: +1.416.973.4933

thepowerplant.org

**Hajra Waheed**

**Hold Everything Dear**

**Guest Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi**

Hajra Waheed translates research and observation into works that explore the links between security, surveillance and the covert networks of power that structure our lives, while also addressing the traumas of displaced subjects affected by legacies of colonial and state violence.

Waheed's most ambitious project to date, *Hold Everything Dear* brings together over 100 small-scale individual works on paper, a series of clay objects, a video installation and kinetic sculpture to form a web of interconnected studies. Moreover, the exhibition's title makes direct reference to a collection of essays on survival and resistance by art critic and novelist John Berger. In part inspired by Berger's texts, the works act as a meditation on undefeated despair and the possibilities for radical hope.

The artist would like to acknowledge Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec for their support of this new work.

**Presenting Donor**

The Michael and Sonja Koerner Charitable Foundation

**Support Donors**

Anouchka Freybe & Scott Connell

Susie & Vahan Kololian

Lillian & Billy Mauer

Peter M. Ross

Robin Thomson Anthony & Mary Dawn Thomson

**Arts Partner**

**Québec** 

**Vincent Meessen**

**Blues Klair**

**Guest Curator: Michèle Thériault**

**Assistant Curator: Justine Kohleal**

Belgian artist Vincent Meessen often works collaboratively, drawing on the combined knowledge of collectives to conceive exhibitions and projects that investigate the construction of colonial modernity and its impact on contemporary experience.

*Blues Klair* is developed around the newly commissioned immersive film installation *Ultramarine*, which focuses on a mesmerizing spoken word performance of the self-exiled African-American poet Gylan Kain, whose

performances in the late 1960s were a primary influence on the development of rap. Accompanying music is improvised by Belgian jazz drummer and percussionist Lander Gyselinck. The exhibition links the emancipatory nature of these histories to the 1969 occupation of Sir George Williams University in Montreal (now Concordia University) by West Indian students, which marked the struggle for equality of Black and Caribbean people in Canada.

In the blue layered textile structure that frames *Ultramarine* and multiple references throughout, the colour blue is the chromatic, historical and discursive filter through which *Blues Klair* is experienced. It is an alternative way to read history through colour, ultramarine referring all at once to a pigment, overseas territories, trade, colonial and slave routes.

***Blues Klair* is organized and circulated by the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University with the support of Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.**

**Support Donors**

Jacques Bernier & Lynn Bilodeau

**Naeem Mohaiemen**  
***What we found after you left***

**Curator: Lauren Barnes**

Naeem Mohaiemen grew up in Dhaka and now lives in New York. He combines films, installations and essays to investigate the idea of socialist utopia during the Cold War era. Despite underlining a tendency within the left to mis-recognize potential allies, a hope for a future international left, as an alternative to current silos of race and religion, is a basis for the work.

Mohaiemen's exhibition will span two seasons at The Power Plant and feature four films in a rotating program, each accompanied by photographic works as 'footnotes'. Exploring accidental overlaps between multiple left insurrections are two films from the project *The Young Man Was. United Red Army* (2011) centres on the Japanese Red Army's 1977 airplane hijacking and *Afsan's Long Day* (2014) is inspired by the 1974 diary of historian Afsan Chowdhury and the 1967-77 photo series in Astrid Proll's *Pictures on the Run* (2014).

The three-channel film *Two Meetings and a Funeral* (2017) probes the 'pivot' between the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Finally, *Tripoli Cancelled* (2017) is the surrealist fable of a man who has lived alone in Athens' Ellinikon airport for a decade.

Expanding on an earlier project *Prisoners of Shothik Itihash* (Kunsthalle Basel, 2014), this exhibition uses the idea of footnotes that precede the main event, reversing the sequence of explanation.

**Presenting Donor**

**Jack Weinbaum**  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

**Supported by**

**experimenter**

**Rashid Johnson**  
**Anxious Audience**

**Curator: Lauren Barnes**  
**Assistant Curator: Amin Alsaden, RBC Curatorial Fellow**

For his first solo presentation in Canada, American artist Rashid Johnson has undertaken a major new site-specific work. This is the fifth iteration of the Clerestory Commission Program, which invites artists to respond to The Power Plant's central light-filled space.

Johnson has attained prominence internationally for works harnessing the rich symbolism and histories of varied materials. He is renowned for minimalist black grid constructions that serve as carriers for materials including plants, shea butter and other artefacts—objects that reference collective aspects of African-American intellectual history and cultural identity.

Since 2015, his output has encompassed representational works entitled *Anxious Audiences*. For The Power Plant, Johnson has developed an ambitious new work in this series, enveloping visitors amongst an accumulation of portraits incised in West African black soap and wax on white tile panels. Reflecting a sense of collective unease, this crowd of faces emerges through a process of 'drawing through erasure' into the viscous black surfaces.

**Presenting Donors**  
Alison & Jim Christodoulis

**Lead Sponsors**

**ProWinko**  
**ProArt!**

**Support Donors**  
Jay Smith & Laura Rapp

**Donors**  
Nadine Léonard  
Alan & Alison Schwartz

**Supported by**

**DAVID**  
**KORDANSKY**  
**GALLERY**

**HAUSER & WIRTH**

**For a full list of programs and events:**  
[thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx](http://thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx)

Together with our Fall exhibitions, we are pleased to present numerous opportunities for visitors to engage with the works on view!

Join us as all four exhibiting artists speak about their works and take part in our ***In Conversation*** series: **Rashid Johnson speaks with Eric Mack and David Moos, Hajra Waheed with Nabila Abdel Nabi and Jayne Wilkinson, Vincent Meessen with David Austin and Naeem Mohaiemen with Jaret Vadera.** This Fall offers opportunities to join various communities and engage in meaningful conversation through the **Arctic/Amazon symposium**, co-presented with OCAD University and Wapatah Centre for Indigenous Visual Knowledge, which will work towards a globalized sense of indigeneity. Participate in Power Talks at Art Toronto featuring influential art-world figures who discuss their projects, preoccupations and ideas. Enjoy **film screenings** related to Vincent Meessen's exhibition: ***Ninth Floor*** directed by Mina Shum and ***Right On!*** directed by Herbert Danska, described as the "first 'totally' black film" featuring the original Last Poets, including Gylan Kain and Felipe Luciano. This season also marks our 7<sup>th</sup> edition of **Student Night** for our audiences looking to navigate the art world and connect with peers and arts professionals. Visit for a **Sunday Scene** to hear from artists, curators and non-art professionals speak about our exhibitions. Artists are also invited to participate in **Master Class** sessions for group critiques with two exhibiting artists, as well as in **Portfolio Night** to discuss their works with our curators and guest curators. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring children to our widely popular **Power Kids** programs, each of which begins with a brief tour in the galleries, followed by hands-on art making.

For more information on exhibitions and programming, please contact the Gallery: [info@thepowerplant.org](mailto:info@thepowerplant.org) / 416.973.4949 / [thepowerplant.org](http://thepowerplant.org) / @ThePowerPlantTO

**About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery**

The Power Plant is Canada's leading public gallery devoted exclusively to contemporary visual art. It is a vital forum for the advanced artistic culture of our time that offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while engaging equally diverse audiences in their work. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art.

**Director: Gaëtane Verna**

**ADMISSION: ALL YEAR, ALL FREE**

ALL YEAR,  
ALL FREE

BMO  Financial Group

presented by BMO FINANCIAL GROUP

Providing as many people as possible with access to these programs and events remains the gallery's top priority. The initiative leading these efforts is a renewed partnership with BMO Financial Group, whose support of the ALL YEAR, ALL FREE initiative is vital to expanding and diversifying audiences by eliminating the cost of admission to The Power Plant's exhibition program.

**For bios, images, interview requests or more information please contact:**

Marketing & Communications  
[media@thepowerplant.org](mailto:media@thepowerplant.org) / 416.973.4949

**For more information, please visit:**

[thepowerplant.org](http://thepowerplant.org)

**Connect with us:**

[facebook.com/ThePowerPlantTO](https://facebook.com/ThePowerPlantTO)  
[twitter.com/ThePowerPlantTO](https://twitter.com/ThePowerPlantTO)  
[instagram.com/ThePowerPlantTO](https://instagram.com/ThePowerPlantTO)

**Join the conversation:**

#TPPHoldEverythingDear  
#TPPBluesKlair  
#TPPWhatwefoundafteryouleft  
#TPPAnxiousAudience  
#ThePowerPlantTO