



MASH FICA Award 2019 | Amitesh Grover

FICA, in collaboration with MASH, is pleased to announce the Recipient of the first MASH FICA Award 2019, dedicated to supporting artists working in new media: **Amitesh Grover**.

The announcement was made on February 3 at the India Art Fair 2019, following which an informal session was conducted with the winner by jury member Sabih Ahmed.

The open call for the MASH FICA Award 2019 was sent out in late September 2018 and we received applications from all over the country that included independent artists, photographers, designers, filmmakers, and media professionals.

The Grant invited proposals that engaged with a range of sources both within the arts and the wider field of information technologies, communications and entertainment. We defined new media in the most expansive of terms given its perpetually evolving nature. The emphasis was on projects that explored technology as form, process or subject, and were responsive to the rapidly changing environment of image production and distribution.

Jury shortlist:

The Jury for the MASH FICA Award 2019 consisted of artists **Shilpa Gupta** and **Ranbir Kaleka**, **Sabih Ahmed**, Researcher, Asia Art Archive, **Shalini Passi**, art patron and Founder, MASH and **Vidya Shivadas**, Director, FICA.

The jury was pleased to observe the proposals and the myriad ways in which new understandings of media are informing different disciplines and practices today. The jury shortlisted four finalists for the Award, namely:

Adira Thekkuveetil and Debanshu Bhaumik
Amitesh Grover
Ashish Dhola
Kaushal Sapre

The Jury was particularly impressed by the finalist proposals as they reflected each artist's distinctive commitment towards exploring the broader context and operations of media and mediation today through their art practice.

These four proposals ask informed and critical questions around the intersection of art and technology in understanding contemporary social change - from attempting to capture the affective registers of sensory technologies and wetware; to mapping the location of cultural memory across local data centres and storage facilities; to imagining newly interactive forms of documentary and sculptural practice. The selected proposals also had clear statements from the applicants on how this grant will enable them to resolve new technical and conceptual challenges in their work. The Jury's selection of four finalists offers an index of the different tendencies opening up in the field of art today that engage with mediatic regimes through performative; research-based; object driven, and interaction-based approaches.

MASH FICA Awardee 2019:

After careful deliberation, the jury awarded Amitesh Grover's project, titled **'Missing Bodies | Quantified Self'** as the first MASH FICA Award for 2019. Grover's project looks at the intimate interaction between body and technology in the age of institutional surveillance. He intends to look at the 'missing body' as one subjected to the new demands of profit and efficiency. Submitting his biometric data to 'intimate technologies' that trace and monitor his corporeal functions (such as fitbits, heart-rate monitors and GPS equipment), Grover intends to map out an affective regime enabled by contesting ideas of agency. The proposal plays with the boundaries between art, science and capital in using wearable tracking technologies to gauge a simultaneously technical and affective topography of the contemporary workplace. He intends to collate the data collected over the grant period into an exhibition exploring ideas of resistance as it manifests in the labouring body. This includes not only practical interventions in workspaces, but also insights and data collected from tech-engineers, psychoanalysts, medical experts and other professionals engaged in the microeconomics of data-centred anatomical studies.

The project is expected to manifest in different modes including a multi-media installation as well as a live, durational performance, the dramaturgy of which is developed from the data collected during the project. The outcomes of the project shall reflect upon the conditions of the data-industry by counterpointing conditions of value and work with leisure, anti-value, use and uselessness.

We wish him the best to carry out his work through 2019.

Amitesh Grover (India, b.1980) studied Live & Digital Arts at University of Arts London, U.K. His work occupies the intermediate space between Theatre, Performance and Interactive Art. He has created work on grief, sleep, happiness, and on several other ephemeral grounds of knowledge. His work has a strong orientation towards experiencing philosophy-in-performance.

He was nominated for Arte Laguna Prize (Italy 2018), Forecast Award (HKW, Germany 2015), Bismillah Khan National Award (India, 2009), and is the recipient of numerous residencies including PACT Zollverein (Germany 2018), Tokyo Culture CreaMon Project (Japan, 2013), KMAT Residency (Australia, 2011), Prohelvetia AIR (Switzerland, 2008). His works are shown internationally at festivals and in theatres, galleries, public spaces, and on the internet. At present, he is Assistant Professor at National School of Drama (India), and leads a course on Interactive Art (M.F.A.) at Shiv Nadar University.

This award is supported by the Shalini Passi Art Foundation



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