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**It is Not Necessary to Understand Everything by Naeem Mohaiemen**  
**As part of The Eros Effect: Art, Solidarity Movements and the**  
**Struggle for Social Justice**  
**1.2-7.5 2017**



**Tensta konsthall**

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**United Red Army (The Young Man Was, Part I), Naeem Mohaiemen, 2011, 70 min.**

Naeem Mohaiemen (Dhaka and New York) takes on the global left's relationship to visions and failures through essays, photographs, and films. The exhibition *It is Not Necessary to Understand Everything* centers around *United Red Army* (2011), a film essay which departs from the 1977 hijacking of Japan Airlines flight 472, in which the plane was forcefully redirected to Dhaka, Bangladesh. An annotated Bangladeshi magazine that covered the event at the time, and a timeline accompany the film in Tensta konsthall's main exhibition space.

A strong element in *United Red Army* is the presence of black frames with multi-colored subtitles, transcribing audio recording from the control tower, appearing at the same time that two distinct male voices can be heard. One of these voices belongs to Dankesu, the nickname for the hijacker from the Japanese Red Army, negotiating with the air-traffic controller Mahmood, the chief of Bangladesh's Air Force. Through the dialogue, in which both parties have everything to win or lose, a strong relationship is established that includes both intimate confidences and calculating power games. News footage with hostages, glimpses from international reports on the simultaneous "German autumn" with the kidnapping and killing of industrialist Hans Martin Schleyer by the Red Army Faction, the death of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Ulrike Meinhof in the Stammheim Prison, and the hijacking of a Lufthansa flight by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, are interspersed. Mohaiemen's own memories as an eight-year-old waiting for his favorite TV program

and seeing only a plane on the runway are also given a place within the story.

The Japanese Red Army Faction was established in 1971 as a militant communist group that aimed to start a world revolution, beginning with overthrowing the government in Tokyo. The group maintained contact with militant left organizations, and became internationally known through a series of attempted hijackings. For Mohaiemen, the security panic that appeared in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks triggered a research interest into earlier periods when similar sentiments flourished, like in the 1970s, away from current headlines. He is asking challenging questions about the aftermath of state and non-state violence. While doing so, he is turning his eye to the anti-state left which failed to come into power in many countries, a contrast with the more successful statist left which became so influential in Scandinavia.

*United Red Army* is part of the trilogy *The Young Man Was*, which examines the radical leftist movements of the 1970s. Together with *Afsan's Long Day* (2014) and *Last Man in Dhaka Central* (2015), *United Red Army* uses as its backdrop Bangladesh's post-war history, specifically the partition from Pakistan in 1971 and its bloody struggles. Mohaiemen's films have been shown at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka; Kiran Nadar Museum, Delhi; Marrakech Biennale; Berlinale, Berlin; Momentum Biennale, Moss; New Museum, New York; Kunsthalle Basel; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the 56th Venice Biennale.

<http://shobak.org>  
<http://scribd.com/mohaiemen>  
<https://columbia.academia.edu/Mohaiemen>

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The exhibition *It is Not Necessary to Understand Everything* is a part of the multi-year inquiry *The Eros Effect: Art, Solidarity Movements and the Struggle for Social Justice* and looks into the relationship between art and solidarity movements, performed in a series of commissions, exhibitions, workshops, presentations, and film screenings.

The *Eros Effect* project borrows its title from the researcher and activist George N. Katsiaficas's essay by the same name from 1989. We will continue to build on the analytical tool "Eros Effect," which is an attempt to acknowledge the emotional aspects of social movements. The concept thus aims to turn away from earlier theories that considered "mass movements" as primitive and impulsive, as emotional outbursts, or as exclusively rational efforts in order to change the norms and institutions of a society. With his notion the *Eros Effect*, Katsiaficas suggests that social movements always constitute both and that the struggle for liberation is equally an "erotic" act and a rational desire to break free from structural and psychological barriers. Franz Fanon made similar observations when he stated that resistance towards colonialism causes positive effects on the emotional life of individuals.

Previous exhibitions, projects and lectures include: *Symposium: The Eros Effect* (2015); screening of the documentary *Taikon* by Lawen Mohtadi (2015); exhibition with the film *Transmission from the Liberated Zones* by Filipa César (2015); lecture: *Solidarity Films on TV 1967–75* by Malin Wahlberg (2015); presentation: *The Kurdish fight for freedom and the female guerrilla as radical chic* by curator Övül Ö. Durmusoglu (2016); screening: *True Finn* by Yael

Bartana (2016); exhibition *Viet Nam Discourse* by Marion von Osten with Peter Spillmann (2016); installation *Fuel to the Fire* by Natascha Sadr Haghigian (2016) and screening of *Handsworth Songs* by Black Audio Collective (2016).

## WORK DESCRIPTIONS

**United Red Army:: Timeline [1968–1977], digital C prints (framed and unframed), 2012**

The narrator in the *United Red Army* says that 1977 was a peak year for hijacking as a successful form of transnational violence. As if to undergird the point, an idiosyncratic timeline unravels the gradual buildup to the year of, among other things, the calamitous German Autumn. The timeline charts two timelines, one being Bangladesh's journey from 1967 to 1977, and the other the arc of international hijacking over the same ten years — the two streams merge to land on the crisis of the Japanese Red Army descending on a Dhaka Airport runway. But the staccato choices underscore that things never ended — at most 1977 was an interregnum. What would the next decade reveal? Soon to come were similar events in Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon, and more. World violence was not peaking, but only taking a new route.

Courtesy of Kiran Nadar Museum and Experimenter

**You Will Roam Like a Madwoman, archival magazine, subtitled pages, 2014**

*You Will Roam Like a Madwoman* takes as a starting point a single issue of a popular Bangladeshi magazine from the 1970s. This is the special issue that came out

during the 1977 hijack of Japan Airlines to Dhaka. A coolly aloof press note, taking up only a quarter of a column, announces that eleven air force soldiers were killed by “individuals lacking patriotism”. The artificial restraint of that note reminds us of the lead hijacker, who says (in the film United Red Army) about the same moment, “I understand you have some internal problems.” Meanwhile, the “Personals” section of the magazine includes matrimonial ads, requests for overseas penpals, and a bitter jilted Romeo, who curses his former lover to forever roam the earth “like a madwoman.” As with many of his projects, Mohaiemen builds annotated archives, complete with footnotes, from unlikely objects – here a magazine whose main achievement in the 1970s was to bring the sexual revolution to sleepy Bangladesh.

Courtesy of Syed Arif Yousuf collection.



## **Maria Lind in conversation with Naeem Mohaiemen**

### **Maria Lind**

At Tensta konsthall, we are showing a film that is the first in a trilogy entitled The Young Man Was (no longer a terrorist). The film, United Red Army, is tying together historical strings from Bangladesh, Japan, the US, and Palestine, among other places, creating a sort of knot which leads us to view the 1970s as a period of post-colonialism, liberation movements, and radical politics. Can you speak about your interest in this period?

### **Naeem Mohaiemen**

I am not sure I can tie up the answer into a neat origin story; rather it came together through a messy, ad hoc series of events and confluences. From the context of my continuing obsession with writing a comprehensive history of the 1971 war that split Pakistan and created Bangladesh (out of the former East Pakistan), I had always looked at the 1970s as the time of “now promise, now threat.” So many global movements met their end, or the beginning of the end, in the 1970s that it is hard not to bracket that decade as the time of a great retrenchment and success for rightist forces and politics.

Bangladesh’s origin story was very similar: buoyed by a wave of activism around language and culture in the 1960s, with various leftist forces as the vanguard, the country came into being on a platform of socialism and secularism (broadly, separation of mosque and state). But many variations of the Bangla left found that state socialism inadequate and started forming underground groups with the intention of overthrowing the government. Sum result: within four

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years, the government is so weakened by continuing left agitation in the countryside that it is easily toppled by a brutal military coup. Now here comes the problem: because the left was not organized enough to actually take power, the groups that came to power in the government through the coup were a rightist coalition with a very soft “Islamic” air (later that soft air granulated over the decades, as Islamism itself became a profitable form of political organizing in a changed landscape).

From an early time, my research on the 1971 war spilled over into the post-1971 years, where I saw the left as often being an “accidental Trojan horse” that, in its catastrophic failures, could end up ushering in rightist governments.

The project really came about from a desire to explore the left’s failures, precisely in the moment (the post-colonial liberation movements that you mention) that you would expect them to march into their historically “inevitable” role. Having said all that, it’s important for me to add that I’m a Marxist who believes in some form of socialism as a path to eventual human freedom, and the only possible response to unities of race and religion that threaten to tear the planet apart. So while the project quite relentlessly explores the failures of the left, and the narration (usually in my voice) also sounds a critical tone, I am still in the end optimistic and hopeful about a leftist future. I feel the need to underscore that personal position because many comrades have worried that I am spending too many of my years dissecting a corpse, and that what I will find in the end is despair. I don’t agree; I feel tragic errors can be a space for reimagining possibilities as well. There are always twinges of hope even within the most bitter, defeated moments within my films.

## **ML**

The film is also mixing world politics as expressed in the Japanese RAF hijackers’ actions and demands with your personal memories, as a child watching the boring TV broadcast of the plane waiting on the runway at the airport of Dhaka instead of your favorite British TV series about four resistance fighters in France during WWII, who thirty years later take revenge on some of their enemies. How do you see your presence in your works?

## **NM**

I want to share a little anecdote about that TV show in question. You’re describing Zoo Gang, with its dated but relevant conceit of these WWII fighters who have become some type of (maskless) crime-fighting group. The acting is quite melodramatic in that way that almost all TV shows of the 1970s and 1980s were. When I finally located a VHS of the series and digitized it for the film, I remember looking at it and thinking, “Oof, this is really bad! Was this really my favorite TV show?” Also, in a strange way, although Zoo Gang was on air in 1977, and pre-empted by the hijack, my memory had also conflated the opening credits of that show with the one for Mod Squad (I think I was quite obsessed with Peggy Lipton), which was also airing on Dhaka TV. So when I located the opening credits, they were both what I remembered (the zoo animals and the related anthropomorphism) and not what I remembered (the absence of Lipton). So you can remember things very clearly, and then find out what you remember is also a partial invention.

In the book that accompanied Prisoners of Shothik Itihash (Kunsthalle Basel), I wrote in the “Coda” that I can’t remember

things that happened last week, but have perfect recall of events from thirty years ago. I described it as a “neural quirk,” and it can be socially quite awkward, and practically quite useless (after all, you need to remember what happened last week more urgently, perhaps). In any case, I think the reason my own biography enters the films is because of this strange, very faulty and episodic recall I have. I will remember small events in my own life during the same week that the Prime Minister of Bangladesh was assassinated. And of course I don’t remember the assassination; I was only six at that time (1975). But I remember the details of my surroundings that are vivid to a six year old, and it seems natural to insert them into the script. And because televisual memories burn brighter over time (the pervasive power of that medium), those are usually the memories that make it into my work. In *United Red Army*, it is memories of watching the TV show *Zoo Gang*; in *Afsan’s Long Day*, it is watching *Murder on the Orient Express* at the Waddan theater in Tripoli, Libya (where we also lived for four years while my father worked at a new hospital). I don’t mention this, because it would have been a vertiginous level of digression, but the final scene in *Orient Express* (where all the passengers ritually stab the murderer) traumatized me as a child, and that is why I remember that film. We must have watched a film a week, at the only theater showing English films in Libya. But I don’t remember most of the others.

There is one other reason my own biography enters the projects (even more clearly in some of the mixed media installations, e.g., *Rankin Street 1953*). I have been trying to understand the ways that certain epochs inspired quite

ordinary people, from middle class backgrounds such as my own, to enroll in movements with messianic dreams and schizophrenic tactics. You can understand and parse all this out theoretically, but it is harder to understand it on a bodily level because our current reality is so starkly different — indeed we live in a time of dystopia. One way to inhabit the stories of that markedly different time was to insert myself into the narrative — borrowing from my own stories, and mixing them with those of these men. This happens most sharply in *Afsan’s Long Day*, where you cannot differentiate between the voice of *Afsan*, the prose of *Humayun Azad*, the witness at *Joschka Fischer’s* media trial, and my own *Tripoli* childhood.

#### ML

In an interview in *Mousse Magazine* you say that art “is capable of taking on a much earlier role in the digestive system of political thought.” Can you elaborate on why that is important to you?

#### NM

I can maybe explain this with an illustration, which is the *Disappeared* in the US project that allowed us to have certain conversations within the “safe” spaces of a museum; conversations we could not, as yet, have in the media. In the 1990s I migrated from Bangladesh to the US; or rather to be more specific, from Dhaka to New York (and the wrecking ball events of 2016 underscore that New York is not America). When 9/11 happened, I had been in the city for seven years. All the communities we had built up — especially that of South Asian activists, artists, performers, academics — came under the microscope in the overblown security panic reaction that fixated



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on South Asian / Arab / “Muslim” migrants in America as a sweeping category of suspicion.

I should also note that this “othering” has a long pedigree, as we framed it within *Visible Collective / Disappeared in America*: “WWI incarceration of German-Americans; 1919 detention of immigrants in Anarchist bomb scares; WWII internment of Japanese-Americans; and HUAC ‘red scare’.” Only a year before 2001, the media panic had been about the rash of African-American men being detained by police for “suspicious” driving. Now the target had shifted, as we noted in the project *Driving While Black Becomes Flying While Brown* (Yerba Buena Center for Arts, San Francisco). We should also remember that the recent rise of the ethno-nationalist phenomenon was on top of scaremongering about “Mexicans” and “Muslims.” If you check the back pages, you will find that one of Trump’s first political acts was in 1989, with an ad campaign demanding the return of the death penalty in New York — an explicit response to the racially charged “Central Park Five” case in which five African-American teenagers were wrongly accused of a horrific rape (see the Ken Burns documentary by the same name).

After 2001, the media discourse shifted to places where it started to challenge immigrants’ right to live in America — never mind later stage processes such as “becoming American.” Our communities galvanized to push back, and for many of us the museum and gallery became a crucial space from which to fight — that’s where *Visible Collective* came from, with Ibrahim Quraishi, Aziz Huq, Vivek Bald, Donna Golden, Kristofer Dan-Bergmann, Prerana Reddy, Sehban

Zaidi, and others. One of the things we kept finding, though, is that it’s really difficult to have a rights discourse when people live in fear, and occasional catastrophes (the London tube attack was the next big event) ratchet the volume up further. It’s like emptying an ocean one teaspoon at a time. So we, the Collective, kept looking further back to see how else this had played out in the past. I already cited the pedigree of “othering” events in America. But when you talk about the World War II-era incarceration of Japanese-Americans, it’s almost too far away for people to fully grasp (although it should not be). So we started looking at these dynamics in the 1970s, which at one point the news media was calling the “decade of terrorism” (the events of that time seem quaint compared to this era’s unending chain of violence).

One of the things we started noticing is that groups like Baader-Meinhof ended up strengthening the German state; their attacks ended up removing the post-war consensus against database-driven surveillance of German citizens. Now, I would not call Baader-Meinhof a “left” group (or at least I would personally, as a leftist, insist on disowning them), but they did borrow from some of the same elements that inspired leftist insurgency, although they rendered it unintelligible through their adventurism (something the narration in Afsan’s *Long Day* makes explicit). Then I read Jeremy Varon’s *Bringing the War Home*, which tried to do a parallel investigation of Baader-Meinhof and the Weather Underground; finally Sam Green and Bill Siegel’s *Weather Underground* documentary completed a circuit in my head. I began to think quite intensely about exploring the 1970s left as a way to understand the bleak present reality of cyclical, reciprocal, eye-for-eye violence.

I am coming back to your question, in a circuitous way, to say that we were able to germinate these other ways of looking at recent history, in all their contradictions and messy fuzzy boundaries, because our space of work was the museum. If I were a journalist for a newspaper (in fact I did have this role as a freelancer back in Bangladesh for a time), or a television reporter, I would never have had the space, support, or audience to work through these ideas at that stage. I remember we went to someone at the Soros Foundation with a proposal to do a longterm research project. The 2004 elections had just happened, and Soros was on the defensive (not for the last time), so they wanted nothing to do with our “sensitive” research. Disenchanted, we went to the Queens Museum, and Prerana Reddy and Jaishri Abhicandani (who were curating Fatal Love: South Asian American Art Now) immediately made space in the museum for our research. Museums and galleries have many flaws, but they do still take risks on artists and ideas and let you explore complex terrain while conventional doors remain firmly shut.

**ML**

You titled one of your solo exhibitions, at Kunsthalle Basel in 2014, “Prisoners of Correct History.” How does a statement like this play into your work?

**NM**

That phrase originated from a newspaper op-ed I had written for New Age in Bangladesh, in response to another round of state-sponsored tampering with history books. I wrote: “At a seminar in Dhaka discussing the anniversary of the war, an elderly gentleman interrupted me, stern finger raised high: ‘You must strive to present

shothik itihash (correct history).’

At another event in Michigan, a professor said our generation was insufficiently respectful of the foundational history. Each time, I shivered and wondered who was going to decide for us, once again, what was and was not ‘correct history.’”

So the idea of writing, rewriting, and the erasing of history by state forces was already in play. I had not yet thought of it as a framing or corralling device for my various projects, as they were vignettes from history floating by themselves as one-off projects. The idea for bringing all the projects together and constructing a linear timeline came after a conversation with the curator Adam Szymczyk. He was designing his last show at Kunsthalle Basel and asked me what I would do if I had the whole ground floor to work with. That’s five gigantic rooms, and my work is usually quite small scale. In thinking through how to work with the space, while not trying to fill the entirety of the dimensions, I proposed that my disparate projects on Bangladesh history could be reassembled into a semi-coherent timeline stretching from the years 1947 to 1977. I say semi-coherent, because there are big gaps in the chronology (from 1953 onward, especially) and the end point of 1977 is somewhat arbitrary (forty years) and really defined by United Red Army being set in 1977. Adam is very open to taking risks, and has a lot of faith in artists, so he didn’t blink before saying, sounds great, go for it. That’s how the idea came about of “Shothik Itihash” acting as a container for a series of projects that work like the “pages of an exploded history book.”

Of course in drawing together the projects which had appeared



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in different times, and different containers, you had to design new connective tissue: why go from 1947 (the enormity of the partition of India, so it's understandable there was a cluster of projects there) to 1953, when 1952 is routinely the crucial year for the beginning of post-Pakistan Bangla nationalism. I first had the idea of littering the wall with footnotes to explain these jumps, and then we migrated to producing a book as a companion to the show (instead of a catalogue). The book allowed for compiling all the texts written around the projects — sometimes as formal explanations, other times as wall text. It was a highly schematic project, with the book acting almost like an annotated guide, but because most visitors don't pick up a book until the end of the show, and because my work was so small-scale in such a large building, I think there was a lot of space for audiences to meander through the show without having any geographic and event context. So even though the work is not abstract, the context could lend it a lot of abstraction. I think about that show a lot, in terms of what art can do to generate conversations that are not possible within other, more directed mediums. A museum show has many more doors for people to enter through; a book or film often has a legible starting and end point (although there are many ways to hack that as well).

#### **ML**

You have been a member of the collective Visible Collective, which collected and disseminated visualization of data about the post-2001 security panic (inspirations included *They Rule*). Now you are active in the Gulf Labor Coalition, a group of people who research and advocate for the rights of migrant workers in the Gulf, specifically

connected to the Guggenheim museum being built there. What are the overlaps and separations between these activities and your art? In addition to this, you are writing a Ph.D. in anthropology. What is it about, and how does it relate to your art?

#### **NM**

Most of what I do doesn't come with such a clear roadmap. I try things out intuitively, and often work comes out of an accident. The moving image is my first love, and that is how I like to tell stories. Because I am committed to a certain mode of realism, and have had generative debates about this with filmmakers like Alex Gerbaulet (Schicht) and Sam Green (Lot 63, Grave C), the archive has become the core of many of these works. But I have also invented archives in the absence of real ones (especially in the Bangladesh context), and the telltale signs are often quietly tucked away — a move which has been better received in the context of the museum and gallery. There you also have the opportunity to pair a film with a mixed-media installation that can be the footnote to the film, so a lot of the heterogeneity of our forms come from the willing and open audience and programmers within this context.

But even with all that flexibility, you can't lay out a story in extended detail within the gallery — for all sorts of reasons. The Ph.D. came about as a way to chase down one of the threads of my work in detail over a period of years. The dissertation looks at the attempt by defeated communists within the Bangladesh context to reinvent their roles as historians — both official and informal — and in this way write a story of almost-victory in a nation's foundation story (1971) which also

represents the left's great failure (the state was socialist, but most of the organized traditional left had no seats at the table). For many years I have been hearing about Bangla filmmaker Zahir Raihan's missing film canister. Raihan was killed a few days after the war ended, and although at that time it was blamed on "Pakistani elements," it could just as easily have been an internal struggle against one of the Communist party's most prominent members. People always told me Raihan was killed because of that last undeveloped film canister, which promised "shocking truths." Supposedly this film canister was hidden inside a tin of flour, and one day it would be found. Imagine the contours of that story — the last missing archive of a hidden communist history of 1971, tucked away in a kitchen, to be discovered when the last rooti had been cooked. In my films, I often try to chase down these stories (e.g., *Abu Ammar is Coming*), true or false. In the Ph.D., I am constructing an ethnography of the historians who dreamed up the story of the film canister.

You asked about the distinction between Visible Collective (a group effort to enter the museum with projects that pushed back against the post-9/11 panic) and Gulf Labor Coalition (which eschewed making museum work in favor of taking a research and advocacy role). The one distinction I can see is that the focus of Visible was the activities of an all-powerful state, and since we had no access to members of that structure, our interventions were designed to build a community among museum audiences. With Gulf Labor we did have direct access to the museum, and for some time meetings were going quite well — so the portion of Gulf that I was

involved with (mainly research) was invested in encouraging positive steps by the Guggenheim museum, which seemed possible for a time. With Visible, we did not think we would get to a resolution; the aim was to slow the pace of panic a little. Although I suppose the election of Obama did represent a turning point, and many of us did think that perhaps that particular dynamic of event-fear-repression was over; now it seems it is not, and we have to revive old work again — hopefully wiser this time.

Thinking through the interrelated areas of art making, direct activism, and academic research, I think many of us are going to be feeling an anxiety that we need to change the "way we do things" in the face of an overwhelming xenophobic, ethno-nationalist backlash that is spreading as a global contagion. There is no doubt we have to work in different ways, but some of what we do will continue to be relevant. Here I would like to cite one of my professors at Columbia University, Paige West, who along with JC Salyer of Barnard College wrote the following words in the context of an all-day reading of Foucault's *Society Must Be Defended* on January 20th, 2017 (the date of the American Presidential inauguration). Where they have written "scholars" and "scholarly practice" I would simply add "artists" and "art practice."

"While we think that all of us — scholars, activists, journalists, and concerned citizens in general—can always do better work, we worry that by focusing on needing to change what we are doing and how we are doing it we lose sight of what we already do really well. We work to understand the world through research, teaching, writing, and reading. Along with this, we produce

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knowledge that allows others to understand the world and to work to change it. In addition to this, many of us are also activists whose political praxis is informed by our scholarly pursuits. We are not saying that new forms of thinking and working should not be welcomed. Instead we worry about the idea that scholars are doing it all wrong, and that this is somehow connected to the results of the last election. This suggestion is dangerous and fails to acknowledge the ways in which scholarship and scholarly practice underpin some of our ability to act, react, resist, and transform.”

Let us keep doing what we do, in our spheres, using new and old methods.

Maria Lind is the director at Tensta konsthall.

**Thursdays and Saturdays, 14:00**  
Introduction to the exhibition

**Wednesday 1.2, 19:00**  
Presentation by Naeem Mohaiemen

**Wednesday 15.2, 19:00 Screening:**  
Afsan’s Long Day (The Young Man Was, Part II), 2014, 40 min, by Naeem Mohaiemen

1974. In a Dhaka flat, historian Afsan Chowdhury writes diary entries, using the third person as a distancing device. Through stories of his time in exile in Toronto, and his navigation of the debris of the left dream, he returns to the long day when he almost died. The men in uniform wanted to execute him after they found the Marxist pantheon in his library. “They thought I wrote them after I said so; I probably fit into the visual imagination of a radical. Beards are never trusted on young men.” What else do you need to identify an enemy?

**Wednesday 22.3, 19:00 Screening:**  
Last Man in Dhaka Central (The Young Man Was, Part III), 2015, 82 min, by Naeem Mohaiemen

1975. Caught up in the Bangladesh maelstrom was Peter Custers, a Dutch journalist who was arrested on charges of being involved in a failed leftist soldiers’ mutiny. Peter, like many European Leftists of his generation, believed that even if the alienated masses trapped inside modernity were numbed into obedience, the revolutionary spirit might still be found “outside” modernity – in the prisons and ghettos of the First World, or in the cities and villages of the Third. It was a search for the latter that led him to drop out of a Ph.D. program at Johns Hopkins and move to Asia.

**Thursday 30.3, 19:00 Lecture: Human Rights, Solidarity, and the Claims of the Visual by Thomas Keenan (Bard Collage)**

**Human rights aren't given automatically but are maintained through active actions and resistance. With the image as testimony as a starting point, Thomas Keenan looks closely at cases of police brutality. Keenan teaches media theory, literature and human rights at Bard College, where he directs the Human Rights Project and helped create the first undergraduate degree program in human rights in the US.**

**[www.tenstakonsthall.se](http://www.tenstakonsthall.se)**

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