



© courtesy Christ Steele-Perkins/Magnum

Abu Ammar is Coming

Naeem Mohaiemen

2016, DCP, color & black/white, 6 min., Bengali, English. **Producer** Naeem Mohaiemen (Dhaka, Bangladesh). **Commissioned by** LUX, Independent Cinema Office. **Written and directed by** Naeem Mohaiemen. **Director of photography** Naeem Mohaiemen. **Music** Sheikh Harun-or-Rashid. **Sound design** Aninda Kabir Avik, Marcelo Añez. **Editor** Naeem Mohaiemen.

Contact: naeem@shobak.org
<http://www.shobak.org/>

In Naeem Mohaiemen's latest installment of his exploration of the revolutionary left, his starting point is a picture taken of five men in Beirut in the early 1980s. The black-and-white image shows them posing in a bombed-out building, all in military fatigues, all but one facing out to the hors-champ. Speculations on the historical background of the photo – the identity of the men and the engagement of Bangladeshi freedom fighters in the revolutionary struggle of the PLO – intermingle with aesthetic musings on the color of the light on the day the photo was taken. Interviews and research in Beirut and London yield responses of indifference and fear of prosecution for talking about past battles.

Abu Ammar is Coming follows the path of the picture and the mysterious disappearance of all residue of what was once a moment of global solidarity. The film's title refers to the 'guerrilla period' nom de guerre of Yasser Arafat, and pivots on a story told in Beirut of the Bangladeshi fighters being sent out of the city with ships carrying the remnants of the PLO after the collapse of Lebanon as a Palestinian stronghold. Like many stories connected to the image, this one also merges promise and heartbreak.

Naeem Mohaiemen, born in 1969 in London, UK, lives and works in New York, USA, and Dhaka, Bangladesh. He researches states of belonging at the edge of postcolonial markers, through combinations of essays, films, and mixed media installations. His recent project "The Young Man Was" is a series of films that considers the revolutionary left as a form of tragic utopia, including chapters on the 1977 hijacking of Japan Airlines to Dhaka, *United Red Army*, and *Last Man in Dhaka Central* about Peter Custers, a Dutch journalist jailed in Bangladesh after the violent events of 1975, and others. His work has been shown internationally in museums and film festivals. Naeem is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Columbia University and a 2014 Guggenheim Fellow (film).

Films

2003: *Azaadi/Mutiny Asian Underground* (3 min.). 2004: *Muslims or Heretics: My Camera Can Lie* (43 min.). 2006: *Disappeared in America: Invisible Man* (5 min.). 2004: *Disappeared in America: Patriot Story* (co-directed by Jawad Metni, 7 min.), *Disappeared in America: Lingerin, Twenty* (co-directed by Sehban Zaidi, 5 min.). 2005: *Disappeared in America: Fear of Flying* (co-directed by Ajana Malhotra, 9 min.). 2009: *SMS Iran (After Gilles Peress)* (co-directed by, 9 min.), *Nayak/Lost Hero of History* (6 min.). 2011: *Der Weisse Engel* (8 min.). 2012: *White Teeth (Your Mysterious Neighbors)* (4 min.), *United Red Army (The Young Man Was, Part 1)* (70 min.). 2013: *Rankin Street, 1953* (8 min.). 2014: *Afsan's Long Day (The Young Man Was, Part 2)* (40 min.). 2015: *Last Man in Dhaka Central (The Young Man Was, Part 3)* (82 min.). 2016: *Abu Ammar is Coming*.