

MARYAM JAFRI: NO LITHIUM, NO WORK.

From 23. September 2023 to 14. January 2024, Gallery 1+2+3

Opening: Friday 22. September 4pm – 6pm

No Lithium, No Work is Jafri's first solo show in Denmark for more than a decade. The exhibition presents newly commissioned works alongside a selection of her previous artworks. An important focus of the exhibition is the importance of lithium today; how it is used as both a treatment for mood disorders, and as the main component in rechargeable batteries, which power electric cars, smartphones, laptops, and solar panels. In referring to lithium's dual function and characteristics, Jafri focuses on the three interlocking forms of labour in the modern world – creative, reproductive, and industrial – while simultaneously investigating mental health and consumer culture through a global lens.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Artworks created between 2011 and 2023 are displayed in three galleries on the ground floor of Kunsthal Aarhus. First, we encounter Jafri's two newest creations – *No Lithium, No Work* (2023) and *Love Reborn* (2023) – in Gallery 1. Consisting of video, objects, photographs, and texts, *No Lithium, No Work* deals with the ambivalence of lithium that might amplify questions relating to individual symptoms, mental health, and collective crises in contemporary society. The two-channel video *Love Reborn* – which has been produced using found footage and audio materials – highlights the centrality of women's work in what is (allegedly) an age of automation.

In a constellation with these new artworks, Jafri's earlier examinations of other aspects of capitalism are shown in Galleries 2 and 3. In Gallery 2, *Avalon* (2011), *Schools/Hospitals/Prisons* (2012), *Wellness-Postindustrial Complex* (2017), and *Hi Maryam* (2021) highlight significant themes relating to sexuality, labour, commodity, and wellness culture. Gallery 3 hosts *Home Office ft. Angola, Iraq, Vietnam, Vicodin* (2021) accompanied by *The Everyday Model* (2021), which allow us to deliberately contemplate today's world of pharmacological support, and furthermore an illusion of simulacrum in the era of mass media and the rise of social media.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Maryam Jafri (b. 1972, USA), lives and works in Copenhagen. For the past twenty years, she has worked across varied media including video, sculpture, and photography, with a specific interest in questioning the cultural and visual representations of historical and political economy and their impact on our quotidian experience. Jafri's practice draws upon diverse

traditions from literature and theater to the movements of Pop and Conceptual Art, often overlaid with a pointed, darkly humorous tone. Notable solo shows have been held in important museums and art institutions internationally such as, among others, Blaffer Art Museum, Houston (*A Broad and Narrow Point*, 2021); Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (*I Drank the Kool-Aid but I Didn't Inhale*, 2019); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (*Automatic Negative Thought*, 2019); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (*Meditation Square*, 2016); and Kunsthalle Basel (*Generic Corner*, 2015). She has participated in group shows at Munchmuseet, Oslo (*Munch Triennial*, 2021); Museum of Contemporary Art, Palermo (*Blocks*, 2020); MACBA - Museum of Contemporary Art, Barcelona (*Undefined Territories*, 2019); Athens Biennale (2018); Riga Biennial (2018); FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2018); São Paulo Art Biennial (2016) and Belgian Pavilion of the Venice Biennale (2015), among others.

Exhibition manager and co-curator: Seolhui Lee, Kunsthall Aarhus.

Curator: Diana Baldon.

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