THE SKINNY
INDEPENDENT CULTURAL JOURNALISM

Jasleen Kaur @ Market Gallery

Jasleen Kaur's exhibition creates a space of comfort that some audiences are nevertheless afraid to enter

Review by Adam Benmakhlouf | 26 Nov 2018

"Please take off your shoes," the sign reads. There's a richly abstracted floral patterned carpet over a lot of the space. A huge-scale white shirt lies across the rest of the floor and extends up to the top corner of the ceiling. A golden streamer hangs across the line of the projector's beam, its glints sliding around the dual channel video. On the floor, hand-painted brown skin-toned ceramic feet form two paths. They are filled with rice and marigolds sprout from them.

Sitting comfortably on the carpet, there's the kind of intimate and observational, close gaze that comes from sitting cross-legged in a crowded party. The huge white cotton garment that goes from the floor to ceiling seems to be the body for them all, suggestive of the community of a room full of people wearing the same work uniform or ceremonial garment.

These kinds of parallels provide the shifting structure for the video work. The two channels skip between what might be recognisable streetscapes, food preparation and perhaps a wedding, into interiors where a ritual takes place. The terminology 'non-Western' is undercut as cultural signifiers slide across spaces that resist their own placing. Footage of a busy night street in a city taken while travelling (literally, shot from the back of a moving vehicle) is combined with domestic scenes. Brown bodies sing, work and walk in procession.

Three people stop and stare into the window, through the beaded curtain. On leaving the Market Gallery, a committee member jokes that she's been keeping count of them. What are they staring at? The carpet, the brown feet, a Middle Eastern guy kneeling contentedly on the soft floor. There's an interesting tension, as something's making them take pause, and it might be the same thing that they can't bring themselves to open the door to greet.

Jasleen Kaur: I Keep Telling Them These Stories, Market Gallery, Glasgow, until 2 Dec

http://jasleenkaur.co.uk/

The Skinny, 26 November 2018