ARTFORUM

# "Mapping Asia"

**ASIA ART ARCHIVE**
**233 Hollywood Road, Sheung Wan, 11/F Hollywood Centre**
**May 12, 2014–August 29, 2014**

The exhibition "Mapping Asia" is a unique response to one of the most frequently posed questions at Hong Kong's Asia Art Archive: How is "Asia" defined? "Mapping Asia" takes up the conundrum from diverse vantage points, from artworks, performances, and talks, as well as materials from the archive.

Boundaries are fluid, culturally and physically. A newspaper clipping from November 14, 2013—"The World's Newest Island" from the South China Morning Post—reports on the creation of a new landmass off the coast of Pakistan. The troubled legacy of partition, meanwhile, is referenced in Naeem Mohaiemen's Kazi in Nomansland, 2009, which comprises stacks of postage stamps issued by India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh depicting poet and activist Kazi Narul Islam, each country competing to claim him as its own.

**Naeem Mohaiemen,** Kazi in Nomansland**, 2009,** stamps, mixed media, dimensions variable.

A display of Han through Yuan dynasty ceramics bearing Islamic and Roman stylistic influences complement Francisco Camacho's film A Parallel Narrative, 2014, which examines early links between China and pre–Hispanic America. Predating even the celebrated voyages of adventurer Zheng He, the film postulates the location of Fousang, first visited by the monk Hui Shen in the seventh century.

In deft shorthand for the persistent debates surrounding Orientalism, the exhibition includes the song "Getting to Know You" in a scene from The King and I (1956). While the clip ends with a clumsy exchange between Anna Leonowens and the King of Siam over slavery and Abraham Lincoln, Anna's primly catchy song reminds us that, after all, Asia is a continent we're still "getting to know."

— Davina Lee

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