

## Chinwag with... Monica James

She is a project manager at Maraa, a media and arts collective and is a member of the Video Poetry Collective. The team will present Video Poetry at Lekhana today and James tells us about the concept...

**By Khushali P Madhwani**

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### ***What is Video Poetry?***

We don't have any ready definitions of Video Poetry; our exploration has been to arrive at a formal understanding of Video Poetry as a practice discrete from film and poetry. When we started, we decided that our mode of inquiry would be practice-based. We wanted to think through Video Poetry by making video poems.

### ***What will you present at Lekhana?***

We will present six video poems that explore the themes of form, desire and (de/re)construct the structure. For instance, desire - When my desire grows too fierce, I wear my bed clothes inside out, dark as the night's rough husk; Gharonda; Here Now - see your green eyes flecked with brown; Incertitude - Sometimes in the 3 am silence she screams and the city is used to subterfuge and Red Patience are the video poems. We will also talk about the conceptual questions that we were dealing with while making video poems.

### ***Explain.***

During our first meeting, we decided to define conceptual and formal constraints within which we would create each set of video poems. Our first constraint was "form". Each of us attempted to create a video poem that would be an interpretation of the poetic essence as well as the form of the source poem. During the second round, we all worked on video poems based on source poems with the theme, "desire". The constraint for the third round was (de/re)constructing the structure where we wanted to work without the compulsion of trying to replicate the form and content of the source poem. The works explore new relationships between image, text and sound while using a wide range of material from performance to archival footage and still images. Our interest is in trying to reclaim the poetic quality of the image and experimenting with it, whether this kind of work is popular in the city doesn't have any bearing on our process.

### ***How has it been received?***

The works have been well received by the audience that we have shared it with. Many of them see video poems as straddling the line between a literary work and visual art.

***(At Jagriti Theatre on Jan 19 at 2 pm).***