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Film screenings and discussion today look at being Muslim in India

A special screening and discussion of films by two women filmmakers – Samina Mishra and Ambarien Al Qadar – will take place today.

The Personal is Political: Being Muslim in India Today, presented by the York Centre for Feminist Research, will take place from 11am to 2pm in the Conference Room on the 5th floor of the York Research Tower, Keele campus.

Right: A screen shot from the film *Who Can Speak of Men?* by Ambarien Al Qadar

Al Qadar's *Who Can Speak of Men?* (2005) examines the lives of women in India who refuse femininity, including a seven-year-old transgender child. Going against external stereotypes of Muslim women as victims, the film also challenges its community to rethink ideas about gender and sexuality.

Mishra's great-grandfather, Zakir Hussain, was the first Muslim president of India and a founder of Jamia Millia Islamia, a secular Muslim university. *The House on Gulmohar Avenue* (2007) is a meditation on Muslim identity in India, taking as its starting point the home Hussain built on lush grounds next to the university. Mishra uses her family story to comment on religion and secularism and on the thorny issue of class.



Qadar and Mishra are graduates of the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre (MCRC), which offers India's sole master's program in film and video production. The MCRC was founded by A.J. Kidwai and Canadians James and Margaret Beveridge, with support from York's Department of Film and the Canadian International Development Agency. It is housed at Jamia Millia Islamia.

Today's event is supported at York by The Noor Chair in Islamic Studies, the Division of Humanities, the Department of Film, the Faculty of Fine Arts, the Sexuality Studies Program, the Graduate Program in Social & Political Thought and the South Asian Studies Program.

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