



Mercer Union  
a centre for contemporary art

For Immediate Release

## Mercer Union presents Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour, and Ryan Ferko's first institutional solo exhibition in Canada with the expansive video commission *Lovers' Wind*

15 December 2023 (TORONTO, O.N.) — Mercer Union presents *Lovers' Wind*, a solo show by Toronto-based artists **Parastoo Anoushahpour, Faraz Anoushahpour, and Ryan Ferko**, from **20 January to 23 March 2024**. The exhibition features the artists' first major commission in Canada, an expansive video installation set between Iran, Tunisia, and Canada. *Lovers' Wind* reflects on narratives about place and land, and how they can obscure the people and cultures within them. This is the sixth project in Mercer Union's *Artist First* commissioning platform, following Rochelle Goldberg's *Sun Moon Stars* in Fall 2023.

*Lovers' Wind* takes its starting point from *Le Vent des Amoureux* (Bād-e Sabā, 1978), a documentary by French filmmaker Albert Lamorisse on contract with Iran's Ministry of Art and Culture. Rather than highlighting Iran's modernization program as the Ministry had expected, Lamorisse created a travelogue inspired by mysticism and folklore that predominantly featured vast, open landscapes. Set against this backdrop, the artists' works explore the tension between visions of national identity and the subjective experience of belonging. When Lamorisse's work was rejected by the state, he was asked to film sites of industry, including factories, laboratories, and the newly built Karaj Dam near the capital Tehran. In the process of filming the latter, he died in a helicopter crash, and the recovered footage was repurposed into a six-minute "postscript" that prefaced the film when it was released.

The artists treat *Le Vent des Amoureux* as a social document that foregrounds issues of knowledge production, authorship, and memory. Their exhibition *Lovers' Wind* reframes the events surrounding the production of the film to reflect on how culture is formulated and imagined, and how this process affects a people's way of understanding collective identity and memory. The eponymous, central work is a five-channel video installation consisting of a large tower projection and smaller screens. It unfolds as part investigative documentary, and part speculative fiction, disentangling the character of Lamorisse and the structure of his film to centre the experiences and words of Iranians both at home and in diaspora. A second video work—referentially titled *Postscript*—documents a chance phone conversation the artists have with an archivist, during which they speculate about Lamorisse's death, and the restoration and circulation of his recovered film reel. Through scripted and documentary filming, and featuring a cast of non-actors and community members, the artists' project culminates three years of extensive archival, community, and media research that takes stock of the social and political climate of present-day Iran within the broader historical context in which Lamorisse's documentary was produced, and posthumously released, during the Iranian Revolution.

"Parastoo, Faraz, and Ryan have developed an ambitious body of work that, while critically unpacking Lamorisse's film, offers a view of cultural memory as it's transmitted within the Iranian diaspora. In doing so, they demonstrate a broader consideration of the forces at play in human geography and the concept of remembrance as a creative act." says **Aamna Muzaffar**, Assistant Curator of Mercer Union and the curator of

the exhibition. **Theresa Wang**, Director & Curator of Mercer Union, adds “The films in *Lovers’ Wind* challenge dominant cultural and political imaginations, and offer another way of representing our experiences with place. For Mercer Union, the exhibition furthers the work we do with artists to build a critical understanding of how narratives come into power, and to give way to more productive ways of reading history.”

**Parastoo Anoushahpour**, **Faraz Anoushahpour** and **Ryan Ferko** have worked in collaboration since 2013. Their shared practice explores the tension of multiple subjectivities as a strategy to address the power inherent in narrative structures. Foregrounding the idea of place, their work seeks to both decode their surroundings and trouble the production of images through speculative narration and dialectical imagery. Shifting between gallery and cinema contexts, recent projects have been presented at MoMA, New York; e\_flux, New York; Berlinale; Punto De Vista International Documentary Festival, Pamplona; Viennale; Media City Film Festival, Windsor; New York Film Festival; Toronto International Film Festival; and others internationally.

*Lovers’ Wind* is made possible with Leading Support from [TD Bank Group](#).



*Lovers’ Wind* is presented as part of *Artist First*, a Mercer Union commissioning platform. *Artist First* commissions are made possible with the generous support of Kaye & Paul Beeston, Rebecca Carbin, Joanna & Meric Gertler, Nancy McCain & Bill Morneau, David & Erica Neligan, Donna & Robert Poile, Frances & Tim Price, and Morden Yolles. Learn more at [mercerunion.org/support](http://mercerunion.org/support).

# artistfirst

## About Mercer Union

Mercer Union is a non-profit, artist-run centre dedicated to commissioning and producing new works of contemporary art, and providing an engaging program that encourages critical inquiry and conversation. We champion ambitious exhibitions that empower diverse Canadian and international artists in formative and established stages of their practice.

## Press kit

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