

# IMPOSSIBLE CONVERSATIONS

**M STAMPS**  
SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

## Public Programs

### **January 17, 5:30 – 8 pm: Opening Screening, Talkback, and Reception**

Join us for premiere screening of *Impossible Conversations* alongside the filmmakers, curator, and central figures in the film, listen to their stories, and engage in a Q&A session. Light snacks will be served. All are welcome. This program is organized in partnership with the Penny Stamps Speaker Series.

### **January 18, 10 am – 3:30 pm: Impossible Conversations Symposium**

10–10:15 am: Welcome by Stamps Gallery Director, Srimoyee Mitra

10:15–10:45 am: Special Screening of *Impossible Conversations*

11:00 am: *Panel #1 – Sikh Responses to Racialized Gun Violence in America*

- Moderator: Arvind-Pal Mandair, Professor of Asian Languages and Culture and Chair, Sikh Studies, U-M
- Harleen Kaur, Assistant Teaching Professor in Sociology at Arizona State University
- Gurkirat Sekhon, PhD candidate in the joint program in English and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Michigan

Noon–1:30 pm: Lunch break

1:30–2 pm: Second Screening

2:15–3:30 pm: *Panel # 2 –Trauma and Forgiveness:*

#### *The Courage to Have Impossible Conversations*

- Moderator: Francine Banner, Chair, UM-Dearborn Behavioral Sciences Department
- Pardeep Kaleka, Conciliation Specialist with the US Department of Justice-Community Relations Service; Central figure in the Impossible Conversations film
- Arno Michaelis, Public speaker, filmmaker, and author; Central figure in the *Impossible Conversations* film
- Julio Figueroa-Martinez, Restorative Justice Practitioner, Macomb Correctional Facility
- Barbara Jones, Community Dispute Resolution Specialist and Faculty Instructor, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Wayne State University
- Carrie Landrum, Adaptable Resolutions and Restorative Practices Lead, Equity, Civil Rights, and Title IX Office, University of Michigan

## Film Screening times

Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays – 11:15, 12:15, 1:15, 2:15, 3:15, 4:15

Thursdays – 11:15, 12:15, 1:15, 2:15, 3:15, 4:15, 5:15, 6:15

The filmmakers request that audiences watch the complete screening and take time to reflect in the exhibition space after viewing. Content Warning: Please be advised that this film discusses topics including gun violence and death and may not be suitable for younger viewers.

Images from *Impossible Conversations*



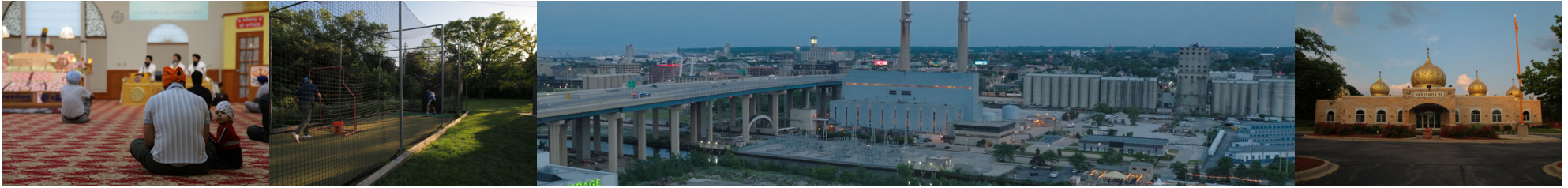
**Pratāp Rughani & David Chung:**

# IMPOSSIBLE CONVERSATIONS

January 18 – February 8, 2025

## Stamps Gallery

201 South Division Street  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104



## Pratāp Rughani & David Chung: IMPOSSIBLE CONVERSATIONS

*Impossible Conversations* is an exhibition and film installation by artists and filmmakers, Pratāp Rughani and David Chung. The film centers a seemingly impossible dialogue between Arno Michaelis, a former Neo-Nazi gang founder and Pardeep Kaleka, son of the Sikh Temple President, Satwant Singh Kaleka, one of seven people killed in the shooting attack at the Oak Creek Sikh Temple (Gurudwara) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by a white supremacist in 2012.

The film installation explores what happens when – for over a decade – Pardeep and Arno committed to a path of restorative communication — to listen deeply and connect with what motivates each other in the genesis and aftermath of atrocity.

*How does healing begin?* From the toxic polarization, division and extreme racist violence that resulted in one of the worst mass shootings at a religious site in American history, Pardeep insists that complete healing must eventually be a collective process for all, to liberate both sides.

At Stamps Gallery, *Impossible Conversations* will be accompanied by by photomurals (by Pratāp Rughani) and a dialogue and research room and research room where audiences are invited to consider what would it take for each one of us to sustain an impossible conversation.

**Exhibition curated by Srimoyee Mitra.**

*Impossible Conversations* has been supported in part by the Arts Research: Incubation & Acceleration (ARIA) program of The University of Michigan Office of the Vice President Research and the Arts Initiative, Institute of Firearm Prevention Pilot Grant, Center for South Asian Studies, the Stamps School of Art and Design, and the University of the Arts London.

### About the Artists

**Pratāp Rughani** is a writer and non-fiction filmmaker. His work develops documentary practice to enable people of radically different perspectives come into relation, sometimes in the aftermath of violence and atrocity, for example in South Africa, Aboriginal Australia, Europe, Rwanda and the USA. Configuring a pro-filmic space to enable shared “witnessing” and the path towards restorative justice is a driving force in “Impossible Conversations” evolving through his practice in over thirty documentary films and exhibitions for BBC TV, Channel 4, Modern Art Oxford, galleries and activist groups. The ethics of giving sustained attention to the experiences of marginalized, excluded or sometimes reviled “others” and bringing them in relationship to the broader culture is central to his research into ethics of storytelling and the development of “Restorative Narrative.”

Rughani writes widely on the ethics of creative practice, serves on several editorial Boards, has won awards for film, teaching, and research, and is Professor of Documentary Practices at the University of the Arts, London.

**David Chung** is an acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker. His work focuses on how identities are shaped in immigrant communities and the challenges of refugees as they integrate into new homelands.

Chung has exhibited his drawings, prints, and video installations at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Asia Society, the Walker Arts Center, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Gwangju Biennale, the Smithsonian Institution, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Chung has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and the National Board Film Board of Canada’s Award for Best Documentary Film. He was the 2013 Kim Koo Visiting Professor at Harvard University.

Chung is a professor and the director of the MFA Graduate Program at the University of Michigan Penny W. Stamps School of Art & Design.