



THE CHANGING ROOM

Arab Reflections
on Praxis and Times

The Changing Room: Arab Reflections on Praxis and Times is a project addressing an adversity of change towards the recent events happening in the Middle East region today. A new change arises, and with it comes a promise to a new history in contemporary art from the Arab region, designed by the 15 artists represented here.

When you detail the visual narratives proposed by the collective of works presented, the events that unraveled in the past months were questioned, predestined, and contemplated to happen. The Middle East region just witnessed a revolution against autocracy and oppression, a revolution against social scrutiny and silence. The 18 days it took to unravel Egyptians in the reality of exhaustion and humiliation, triggered by what initially arose in Tunisia, and then running through the veins of Algeria, Bahrain, Libya and Syria, to say the least, Egyptian Revolts became a global emblem of civil freedom sparked by a digital postmark, fostered out of public certitude, and obedient to social conformity. Information is your power and Vigor is your tool.

It is in *The Changing Room* project, is the artist proposed as protagonist, seeker, observer and storyteller. S/he continues their personal observations about their actual experiences from a selection of backgrounds either been displaced or in combat, under occupation or corrupt federal lead for years subservient to the so-called United Arab Republic.

The United Arab Republic, which initiated between Egypt and Syria from 1958 - 1961, came the making of the Arab Liberation Flag, which consisted of three horizontal bands of color: red, white and black with two green stars in the white center. During the same year of its foundation, came the Arab Federation consisting of Iraq and Jordan to which leaders were Hashemite cousins, and sought to oppose what the UAR was achieving. What stood between them was an All-Palestine government lead by Hajj Amin Al Hussein (Mufti of Jerusalem), who coincidentally is also the grandfather of one of the artists we present here. Karim Al Hussein marks his ancestral heritage with an eight-pointed star, ac-

knowledging the seal of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), and his journey to pilgrimage, by installing one bearing out of eight locations, in search of his paradise: *Nirvanty*.

Larissa Sansour's *A Space Exodus*, shows her longing as well as reality of displacement, by becoming the first Palestinian to walk on the moon vis-à-vis a remake to Stanley Kubrick's 1968 *Space Odyssey* in a very satirical format. A third Palestinian of mixed heritage, Steve Sabella motions us through his *Euphoria*. A transitory euphoria seeking the subsequence after being displaced, motioned and rebelled from where you once were to where you are now. He left Jerusalem in 2003, and returns every now and then, as an observer of change that keeps occurring to his city, but also watches the break out through news networks, of an attempted United Arab Republic fuse into complete national turmoils.

Khaled Hafez adopts the format of a *Video Diary*, and creates a narrative by sequencing personal footage and those of friends taken by amateur cyber shot cameras from different parts of the city during the 18 days of the Egyptian Revolution; this narrative is enhanced by déjà vu media propagated imagery extracted from Youtube and other Internet portals. Hafez constructed his story line through cumulative testimonials over the phone, through friends who were either on the grounds silently protesting, or reporting via online methods. His *TV Diaries* photo-project and depict the frozen imagery of what the live revolution offered and document in the moment by moment live reporting of the effervescent event.

Khaled Ramadan, hosts a *Skype* conversation from Copenhagen with co-curator and friend Alfredo Cramerotti in Nottingham, questioning the ownership of history: the notion of being Lebanese in comparison to the ownership of being Italian, Belgian, or Flemish who carry several cultural nations as opposed to being one national state, and vice versa. Their thoughts linger towards nation as a state of mind, as opposed to national as a state of being. Nermin Hammam proposes the age of the soldier as the protector, the fighter, the warrior, however since the unroll onto the streets of Cairo on February 4th, 2011, she has recreated a visual occupation of what defined the land they engaged with. With a backdrop of the Alps, and beautiful pink flower fields, Hammam reconsiders the defini-

tion of a harness, when repression is overthrown, and an illusion of solace replaces the harshness of power.

Sama Alshaibi discovers *Thowra*; her own take of the revolution seen through the turmoil brought about the natural existence of being, with the unexplained beginning of thousands of black birds dropping dead from the sky, to an eclipse and regional rebel fire caught across the rest of the Arab region. Alshaibi occupies her journey by visiting the rivers of Tunisia, snowfields of Arizona and sands of Egypt to cross and unite the boundaries of creation.

These are but a few suggestions to the works presented here. Marking an amalgam of installations, prints and videographies, characterizing the MENA region with a frame of socio-political reference: To know one's history might also suggest the knowledge of what will happen next. But no matter how many times history repeats itself, we can't seem to stop ourselves from motioning through the process of *verite*. Artists are the documenters, they mark the time and place of the event, regardless of how abstract or literal their verses are voiced: Loud and clear, proud and magnificent, unsightly or progressive, beautiful and regressive. They move forward to keep returning to that starting point, and ironically it is also the finishing line.

Motioning through contemporary history, a proactive group of artists who occupy a fragment of society's foreseers, protagonists and citizens of desired change: The works in this exhibition show a great deal of prediction, anticipation, as well as criticism towards the turn of events, their past and their unforeseen future. Its in the detail of every artist, will you find the rebel deep inside, and it is in gratitude to Metroquadro Gallery in association with Spazio Qubi' and associate curator Sara Rossino, will these works be available on a high platform of dialogue and recognition in Turin this Fall. We also like to extend our gratitude to Martina Corgnati, who twenty years ago started exploring, studying and writing about the Middle East art scene, in belief that one day this region will have its contribution to contemporary art history.

Aida Eltorie, Chief Curator
Cairo, August 2011

Featured Artists

Larissa Sansour, Palestine
Kader Attia, Algeria
Adel Abidin, Iraq
Khaled Hafez, Egypt
Sama Alshaibi, Palestine/Iraq
Steve Sabella, Palestine
Nermin Hammam, Egypt
Ibrahim Saad, Egypt
Khaled Ramadan, Lebanon
Ines Jarray, Tunisia
Anas Al-Shaikh, Bahrain
Ahmed El Shaer, Egypt
Marwan Sahmarani, Lebanon
Karim Al Hussein, Palestine
Bassem Yousri, Egypt

Featured Essays

Martina Corgnati, Italy
aladin, UK
Aida Eltorie, Egypt
Sara Rossino, Italy
Amira El Ahl, Egypt
Mariam Hamdy, Egypt
Heba Elkayal, Egypt
Wafa Gabsi, Tunisia

Cover image: Nermin Hammam, from the *Upekha* series (2011), lambda print, 90 x 60 cm

The Changing Room Project: Arab Reflections on Praxis and Times

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Larissa Sansour

A Space Exodus, 2008

Video: 5:30 mins

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Jerusalem, Sansour studied Fine Art in Copenhagen, London and New York, and earned her MA from New York University. Her work is interdisciplinary, immersed in the current political dialogue and utilizes video art, photography, experimental documentary, the book form and the internet.

Sansour borrows heavily from the language of film and pop culture. By approximating the nature, reality and complexity of life in Palestine and the Middle East in general to visual forms normally associated with entertainment and televised pastime, her grandiose and often humorous schemes clash with the gravity expected from works commenting on the region. References and details ranging from sci-fi and spaghetti westerns to horror films converge with Middle East politics and social issues to create intricate parallel universes in which a new value system can be decoded.

Sansour's work has been exhibited worldwide in international biennials, galleries, museums, film festivals and on the internet and is featured in many art publications. Her most notable shows include the Tate Modern in London and Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark and the IMA in Paris, France. Her work recently featured in the Third Guangzhou Triennial in China, the Busan Biennale in South Korea, Photo-Cairo4 in Egypt, The Istanbul Biennale and Art Dubai and will take part in the Liverpool Biennale later this year. Her most recent film *A Space Exodus* was nominated in the short film category at the Dubai International Film Festival.

In 2010, she launched her graphic novel "Nonel and Vovel", a joint project with artist Oreet Ashery. The book appeared first at the Venice Biennale bookshops in August and was also launched at the Tate Modern, UK, the Brooklyn Museum, USA and Nikolaj Kunsthal in Denmark. In 2010, Sansour also had her first solo shows in New York and Paris and will have a solo show in Stockholm, Sweden by the end of the year.

Sansour's work is represented by Galerie La B.A.N.K. in Paris, France. She lives and works in London, UK.

A Space Exodus quirkily sets up an adapted stretch of Stanley Kubrick's *Space Odyssey* in a Middle Eastern political context. The recognizable music scores of the 1968 science fiction film are changed to arabesque chords matching the surreal visuals of Sansour's film.

The film follows the director herself onto a phantasmagoric journey through the universe echoing Stanley Kubrick's thematic concerns for human evolution, progress and technology. However, in her film, Sansour posits the idea of a first Palestinian into space, and, referencing Armstrong's moon landing, she interprets this theoretical gesture as "a small step for a Palestinian, a giant leap for mankind".

The film offers a naively hopeful and optimistic vision for a Palestinian future contrasting sharply with all the elements that are currently eating away at the very idea of a viable Palestinian state. In *A Space Exodus*, Sansour does finally reach the moon, although her contact with Palestine's capital is cut off.

This five-minute short is packed with highly produced visual imagery. The arabesque elements ranging from the space suit to the music are merged within a dreamy galactic setting and elaborate special effects. A great deal of attention is paid to every detail of the film to create a never before seen case of thrillingly magical Palestinian displacement.



Larissa Sansour

Cairo Taxilogues, 2008

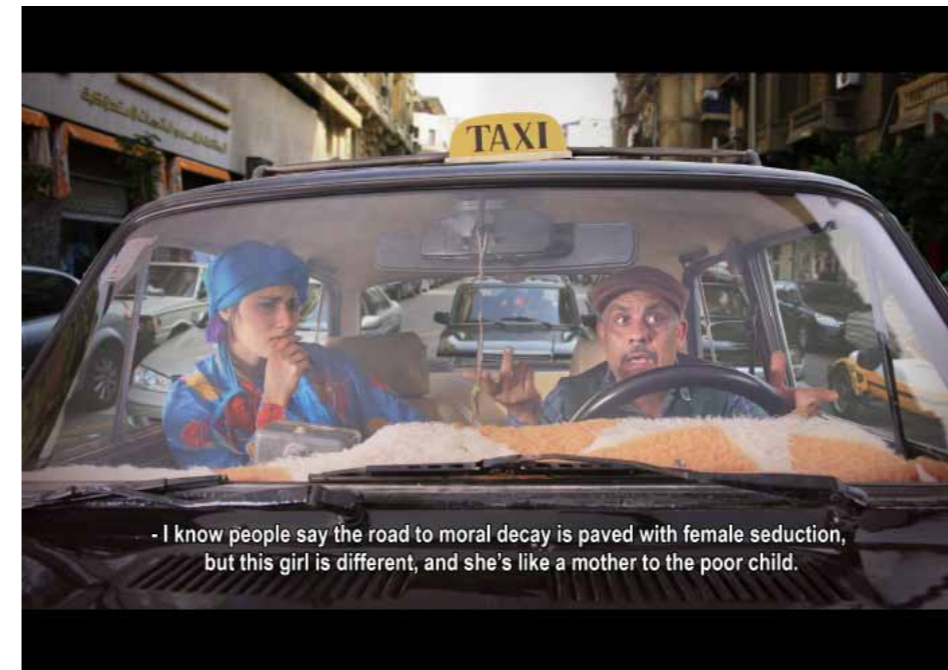
Digital Prints and Poster

This project consists of four frame grabs and one movie poster for the imaginary film *Cairo Taxilogue*.

Based on actual conversations with Cairo taxi drivers, these staged photographs constitute quasi-glitzy re-enactments of taxi rides presented as colourful and kitschy images superimposed over street scenes from the megacity.

The technicolour images and the overacting of the protagonists in the photographs augment the discrepancy between social and political insight and the state of affairs.

Cairo Taxilogue is shot on location in Cairo with the help of local actors and taps into the currents leading up to recent events.



Khaled Hafez

The Video Diaries, 2011

Video: 5:30 mins

The TV Diaries, 2011

Digital Photography Grid

It is through the photographic and video recordings he documented, that we are introduced to the events that unraveled day by day, and it was only towards the end, where Hafez had actually went down to the streets, recording the last days of the revolution on his video camera. Through the sequencing of grids, Hafez narrates the events that unraveled over the 18 days and even thereafter.

Producing a series of studio-generated conversations that randomly happen in the artists studio, Hafez is recording audio-visual dialogues that happen between artist-activists, artists-citizens, and public servants.

Sample Diary Friday January 28

I drive early to Tahrir Square. I park 100 meters before the Jewish Temple in Adly Street. The parking in the street is astoundingly easy; very bad sign as I later discover. I dwell towards the square; it should be around 800 meters or so. I make it only till Talaat Harb square. Groups of police and civil-attired informants and security personnel mingled with the National Democratic Party (NDP) thugs (we always know them from the forged elections of the past 4 decades). Those gangs harass entrants of the Tahrir Square; they focus their harassment on girls and women to intimidate the male companions and instigate physical violence. Central Police American green vehicles are parked both sides of every street. I feel and impending attack of bronchial asthma; my chest wheezes slightly. There is some smoke in the air. I decide to retreat. I go to the studio and feel totally uninspired and afraid. I go home to be with Maha, my wife and the boys. Ahmad el Shaer, visual artist, friend, colleague and my co-worker on several video projects call me; there are almost 100 thousand demonstrators filling the square, and there are water guns and tear gas. Later in the afternoon all mobile phones and the Internet services collapse. I watch Al Jazeera for 12 hours. It gets nasty with police; footage of police cars hitting demonstrators and violent confrontations on the Kasr el Nil Bridge disturb me; I panic. The military governor, a virtual position that no one knows what that is, imposes curfew, as the police withdraws and the army takes over.

Maha and I have lunch and dinner in front of TV, and stay till 3:00 am. The news is horrible.



Image of the young martyr Khaled Said, who was killed by police brutality, Alexandria, 2010.

Image of newly appointed VP Omar Soleiman, making the statement about the president's resignation. He reigned shortly thereafter.

The headline reads "Mubarak steps down" and to screens showings- quatters in Tahrir Square.

A grid of 16 images will be placed in black-light on plexi, showing the photodocumentation of the revolution as it unraveled over 18days (30 x 40 cm).

Karim Al Hussein

Nirvanty, 2011

From In Search of Eden series

Installation, 1.5 m in diameter



Aerial view of installation: 8-pointed star (1.5 m in diameter) with glass bottles.

In Hussein's work "North West Nirvanty," from the *In Search of Eden* series, he addresses what defines his understanding of paradise: Nirvanty – or My Nirvana, by creating a patch of flowers occupying a section of the space in glass soda bottles. Hussein's *North West*, is the direction that occupied his military training when in the American army, based in the North West region of the United States. Arranged in the shape of an eight-pointed Islamic star, which by symbol is the seal of the Prophet (pbuh), and represents the sacred Ka'ba in Mecca and Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, shown as two square structures laying on top of each other.

Hussein implements his religious history, with that of a contemporary secularism visible through a haphazard harmony of color. The north western bearing given to the 8-pointed star, uses a palette of army dress codes and pointing towards one of eight directions, bringing the artist closer to finding that path of what he hopes 'nirvana' would be.

When I was in the military, we were trained to find our bearings. That was the time where I felt secure, more so than when being in-between civilians, where situations are less controllable. I am under control, and I could help control what was happening around me. To find my Northwest means to find my guided horizon.

Without crowding and redefining the space it lays below, the patch of paper flowers sit innocuously on the ground rising in glass soda bottles, revealing his perception of solitude. Hussein's Nirvana witnesses the blend of irony that this artist is subject to. He is not only a descent to the Prophet, or a Palestinian displaced by a superimposed exile, but a Palestinian born in Libya, who carried Jordanian citizenship in which he never lived, was brought up in Egypt, and became an American when he was 26. With such a composite identity, Hussein has a drive to show the world where he comes from.

Northwest Nirvanty
Paper-folded flower installation



Steve Sabella

Euphoria, 2010

Beyond Euphoria, 2011

BIOGRAPHY

Steve Sabella, born in Jerusalem in 1975, is a London / Berlin based artist. He is the holder of the Ellen Auerbach Award (2008) granted by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and Sabella was also one of the commissioned artists for the inauguration of MATHAF: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha.

Steve Sabella's artworks have recently been collected by the British Museum in London, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and leading collectors in the Middle East including the Barjeel Art Foundation in Sharjah.

Sabella's international shows include: Neighbors in Dialogue (Istanbul, Turkey 2007 and Sarajevo, Bosnia 2008), Gates of Mediterranean (Rivoli, Italy, 2008), Palestine, La Création Dans Tous Ses Etats, Institut du Monde Arabe & the National Museum of Bahrain (Paris 2009), Deconstructing Myths & Realities, Gallery Caprice Horn, Berlin, NOW - Contemporary Art of the 21st Century, Phillips De Pury (London 2009), This is Not a Love Song, The Empty Quarter gallery (Dubai 2010), Award Month, Akademie der Künste (Berlin 2010), a retrospective solo Steve Sabella In Exile at the Metroquadro Gallery (Turin 2010) The Interrupted Image, Nicholas Robinson Gallery (New York 2010), Told Untold Retold, MATHAF Arab Museum of Modern Art (Doha 2011) and a solo exhibition Euphoria & Beyond at the Empty Quarter Gallery (Dubai 2011).

Sabella's project Jerusalem in exile (2006) explored the mental image Palestinians held of Jerusalem and has gained international attention, leading to its production into a documentary film. Consequently, Sabella has been giving a visual form through photomontage to the 'state of mind' of living in 'mental exile'.

Steve Sabella studied art photography at the Jerusalem School of Photography and New Media in 1994, and holds a BA in Visual Arts from the State University of New York (2007). Sabella received his first MA with a Caparo Award of Distinction in Photographic Studies (2008) from the University of Westminster and his second MA in Art Business (2009) at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. Sabella gave art talks / presentations in several places including the University of Cambridge, Turin University, SOAS, University of East London, Accademia Albertina Delle Belle Arti in Turin, Rostock University, Akademie der Künste in Berlin & and the British Museum in London.

Sabella's artworks and life triggered much media attention, including several TV & film documentaries. His earlier artworks have been reviewed in Palestinian Art by Kamal Boullata (Saqi Books 2009), and recent artworks have been reviewed in New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century (Thames & Hudson 2009). In Exile artwork was on the front and back cover of Contemporary Practices journal VI, 2010 including two retrospective reviews.

Steve Sabella was artist of the month of May with three featured episodes on IkonoTV.



Euphoria, 2010
155 / 127 cm
lambada print + diasec
mount
Limited edition of 6 +
2 AP

Sama Alshaibi

Thowra, 2011

Video, 5:07 mins

Thowra (revolution) was produced in the winter of 2011 – the winter of uprising in the Middle East and North Africa. The predictable cycling of seasons was interrupted by remarkable courage, unimaginable synchronization and the spilled blood of martyrs.

That same winter, marked the worldwide observations of black birds falling from the sky, an eclipse, and the blowing away of corruption, stagnation and tyranny. Sama Alshaibi's video is both a commemoration and a pointed reminder of the sacrifice of so many. Graced in the colors of revolution, the perfect storm of this winter noted in Thowra serves as a reminder of what was sacrificed for this season of change.

“I started to shoot this video without a project in mind around November. This is a bit how my art works, when I travel or know certain special events or locations that should be captured, I always shoot video and photograph them. I'm not always shooting for specific projects, but work from intuition of what I feel should be captured. Sometimes this footage finds its way into my art. I was in Jordan and Tunisia this winter, just before the uprising started. The scene of the woman in the water was shot in the Dead Sea (Jordanian side), the second scene with the sunset is in the salt lakes near Djerba in Tunisia. Then I shot the eclipse -- all those three first elements were made without knowing the revolution would soon start.

Because of my many recent trips to Tunisia, and all my good friends who live there, I was paying very strong attention to the first protests happening in Tunisia before it caught international attention. At the same time, I was fascinated by reports after New Years about a huge amount of black birds falling from the sky. At first people thought it was a single, rare event, but suddenly, over the Internet, people started to report all over the world that black birds were falling from the sky. The question to me was then, was this highly improbable, high-impact first event an awakening to the masses, who suddenly started to pay attention to the possibility of other similar (and possibly related) events? Were they indeed unique, or

do they assume a grander role, which could form a grander possibility if we only we connect the dots? Does the “clustering” of unlikely singular events then create a wildfire, troubling or inspiring those in deep hibernation?

These unique high-impact events happening in this particular winter, in this particular era where social media interconnectedness could create a clustering of possibility, could form a new vision. This doesn't take away from all the other unique events (facts on the ground, history, timing, etc), but acts simply as a trigger. A ground ripe for change has its catalyst. This led me to research the Black Swan Theory (the role of high-impact, hard to predict, and rare events that are beyond the realm of normal expectations in history, science, finance and technology) and Clustering Theory or clustering possibilities. I then found myself making a project that mimics the experience of the unique events of this winter (in symbolic form), and the introduction of clustering the unique events and deaths of the martyrs (who are represented by the black birds who have fell from the sky). So the performance/meditation of me wrapping the birds, and then hanging in the tree (no longer alive and flying, but none the less, hovering above us in reminder of their sacred sacrifice), gives new possibilities in the burnt and hibernating forest.”



Thawra, done in a white-framed box, with a white matt and glass covering the matt/screen, with a circle cut showing the video; Size: 16x20” large.

Anas Al-Shaikh

Con/temporary God

Video, 2:41 mins

In Gulf region, because mainly depending on oil industry, we became very consuming and passive societies comparing with the wealthy and advanced nations for several reasons (political, economical, historical and cultural). And because oil is still the main resource for generating energy in all around the world at least for the coming 100 years, and because the other alternatives are still not very satisfactory, and commercially high cost, so we try to not admit that the oil as an depleted natural wealth, will run out in one day.

This disregarding of the actual future, created delusive believes that oil will remain as long as the life is existed, so we only have to depend on it as lifelong savior and as “God” who distributing his blessing, love and mercy on his creatures. This kind of feeling, let our regimes and many of our people believe that we don't need to spend any effort to let our societies be developed and advanced, by depending on ourselves and by working on converting them from consumers to producers in many vital fields.

But as soon as we find that oil “the temporary savior” is run out, any pilgrimage, ritual of vows and praying around oil's

founts for reviving them to get its natural wealths, will be useless, and we will realize that time we destroyed ourselves and desertized our future by our hands, and we will discover how much the reality is painful, and all delusive hopes in ability to regain the lost natural wealths will gone with the winds.



Anas Al-Shaikh

Gulf of Phantasmagorias

Audio, 5 mins

I believe that Arab countries in the Gulf region are not built by the will of our societies, but constructed and guided by the interests' alliance, between our regimes and western powers. Our people feel that they are subjected to the leaders' political and economical interests, and have to accept this situation either by complacency or by force without having any rights to speak loudly. The royal families still deals with our societies by patriarchal and hierarchical mentality, and always want our people accepting the idea that the rulers have always the right and legitimacy to own the authority, wealth and bequest our countries to their sons. Although our societies became more aware about their rights, but most of them still not have the ability or the courage to talk, ask and fight peacefully to get their legitimate rights, because there are many contradictive powers inside and outside our region (pro-regimes groups, anti-democracy groups, sectarian groups and Western policy). All of them are ready to fight against any changes can affect their interests and hegemony, and at the same time our regimes want from us obeying and accepting their different autocratic decisions, without questioning to where this subjection will lead us.



Marwan Sahmarani

The Dictators – Studies For a Monument

Mixed media Painting

Marwan Sahmarani is an artist deeply rooted and linked to his Middle Eastern origins. His oil paintings, drawings, ceramics and performative work are a reflection upon the mediums themselves and their support in the face of sociopolitical problems. His work is a prophetic and timely reminder of the cyclic histories of violence in a region where invasion is a constant self-perpetuating reality.

He surfs between his Western cultural education and his oriental identity. Islamic and Mesopotamian art with its iconography and history mixes in with a Greco roman influence as well as the paintings of the great masters including Uccello, Rubens, and Picasso. He sources from art history the themes that remain timeless and that reflect current issues. His starting point is usually fictional and is often a story inspired by his reality and placed in the light of art history.

His works are about politics, sociology, war, and sexuality. The content of his

paintings and drawings bathes in a surrealist mood where the limit between dream, fiction and reality disappears.

In the series *The Dictators: Studies for a Monument*, Sahmarani resorts to a single format and theme, yet the result is an infinite palette of expressions, emotions and forms, almost within the same 230 x 70cm space. He composes, decomposes, wounds, even tortures his subjects, to the point of extracting their souls and splashing them across paper, where whiteness represents a void; the loneliness known only to the powerful. These works express man's quest for power over one another, the universe and God. Man has known such dictators throughout his history: the men of religion, the speech makers and givers, the demagogues. Sahmarani lays them down in their bare truth (demented, perverted, repressed), displayed like hunting trophies, reminding us that despite evolving times, history is bound to repeat itself.



Size of each work:
90 x 200 cm
Oil on canvas

Ibrahim Saad

Without Cover: 5 Squares

Photo Print + Video

*I will not go back to my home,
which I exiled from
Goodbye to all and less emotion
to all horses and vehicles
and the race barriers
Goodbye to Selevion
and his papers
and to his strange syrup
(From the novel "The unfortunate lovers," Ibrahim al-Koni)*

I'm trying to search home, maybe near me, away from me, beside me but could not feel myself. Probably I could discover the real beauty of it or something less than what it was. Let us search for our home, maybe we've enough honor that we are searching for it.

In my opinion the project is an important journey in my artistic life. Recently I have started to search for myself in time, in place, inside myself, to get a better understanding of my identity. Maybe I'm there right now or maybe I didn't find my identity until this moment.

I think that my love for experimentation and respect for the other is away from color, language or political ideology. I believe that people have their own basic needs, such as the right to live, to love and the right to live a beautiful life and be useful to him and to others and to be 100% loyal to art. My art became my life and my life is my art and that's the real motive behind this work.

Perhaps this project is the homeland that I'm searching for but if I did not find it, that will be the reason for the continuation of my work to look for an imaginary reality. I'm inviting everyone to come and search for it.

In my artwork I have always used abstract images and movement that refer to nature and that are open for interpretation. Now I'm broadening up my horizon and I want to engage with issues that are relevant to society. I don't know where the frequency and tension are taking me, as I do not know the result or the final explanation. I'm comfortable to know that it is a game.

In this experiment, I would like to focus on the discarded, forgotten and neglected, to show my work in very small areas on the surface. I'm inviting the recipient to imagine or complement those white spaces that are eager and waiting for an optical response. Perhaps I wait for spontaneous sounds and automatic hands.

I think that this experience, the vision, the people now needs to be considered. I am looking for a home and my home is looking for me. I do not know where, when or how we will meet. I waited long enough for action to occur. I can already hear the dialogue between my home and myself.

"Without Cover, 5 Squares"
Digital Print, Size of each work: c. 70 x 90 cm
Including one video screening of
"Without Cover" video, 14:10 mins



Nermine Hammam

Upekkha, 2011

Digital Print



Upekkha is a post-examination to the Egyptian uprisings. Exasperating on the dual imagery of real vs. unreal, my observations began from January 25th, the first day to the revolts whereby I had visited Tahrir Square with a friend late in the evening, not anticipating that much would come out of all the tear-gas bombings and peaceful commotions created by the people. By January 27th, I had traveled to France, only to realize by Friday morning, there were massacres happening in the square I had just visited two days earlier. Now reaching out for media reports, watching channels such as CNN, Al Jazeera, French stations, and Iranian news channels; words like “democracy” and “uprisings” were being continuously used, like they were being leisurely disposed of.

Knowing the realities of the place I had just left, I was surprised by the reported emptiness provided by western media, not to mention the complete disillusionment of Egyptian Television, sending out statements that everything was alright, ‘no commotion happening here’ - A whole western ideology was being overlapped on the square where millions were demanding their human rights but not living them even during the aftermaths.

From an uprising to a revolution - across the period of 7 days, terminology kept changing. People were not sure of what was going on, and with the two days of violence,

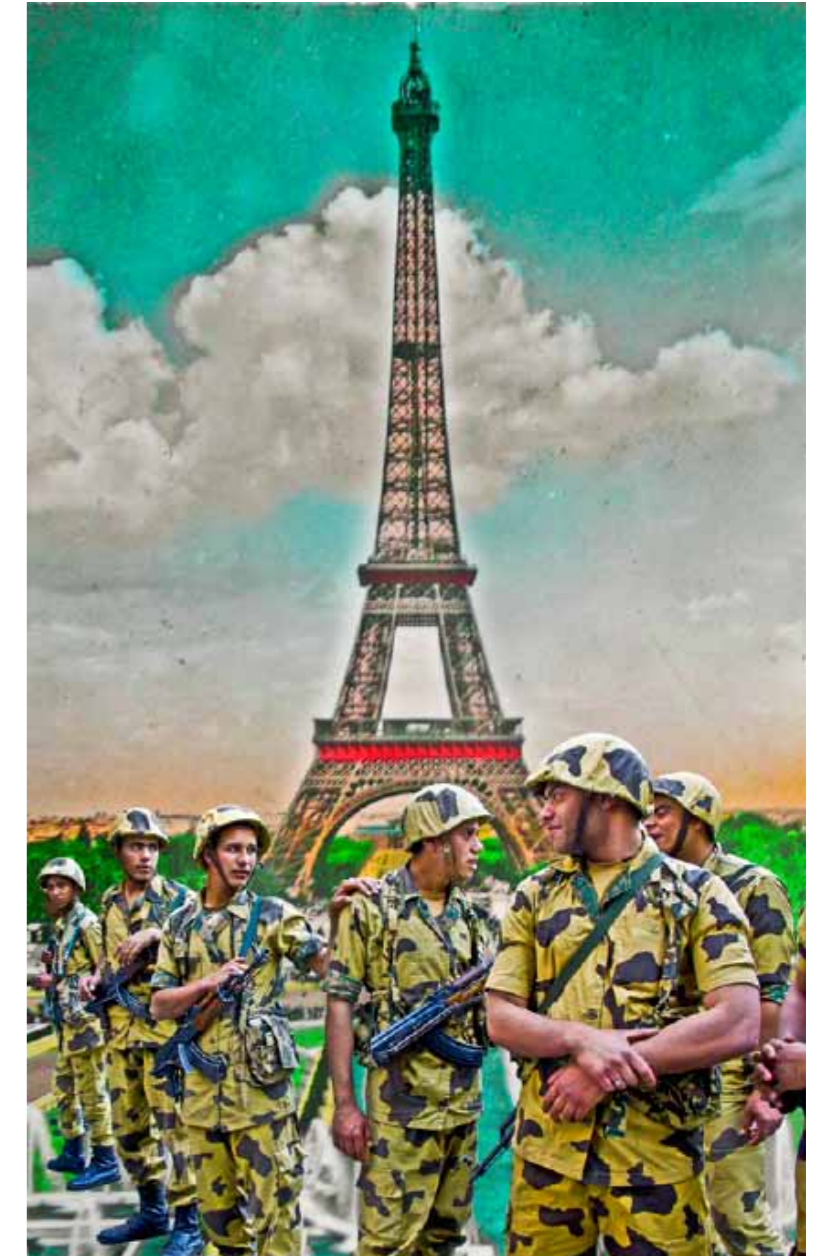
Works vary in size.
Averaging 90 x 60 cm.
Limited Edition One of
One with One Artist's
Proof.

leading up to the army's glorious arrival into all disturbed streets across the country, suddenly a projection of utopia had appeared. The people were with the army. But was the army with the people? It was that week until I could return, after so many channels and airwaves; not a single perspective laid in agreement with another. It only seemed imperative that an autocratic regime had to be removed.

I took to Tahrir Square, once again on February 5th, immediately being struck by the image of the streets of Cairo being full of army tanks. This image took me back to when I was 6 years old, in 1973 when we had just exhausted the last of the Arab-Israeli war, and even then, the army tanks seemed completely out of place. To fresh eyes who are not familiar with Cairo, it would appear as havoc - a war zone. But to the ones who are from here, living in these streets daily - it became an illusion of utopia. Little children would run up to the tanks so that their families would take pictures of them with the soldiers. The soldiers would help whether by pulling the child aboard, or posing in front of the lens, as though he won something and was about to receive his prize.

To this utopia - despite the fact that there was nothing real about them, the images actually came off as quite disturbing. Each tank, blended in with the architecture in its background. They were so out of place, that everything started to seem unpleasant. The militants seemed like kids, wearing torn shoes, resting on the shoulder of their partner, holding their guns like a toy, posing in a very romanticized and indolent manner, filled with emotional expressions on their faces, whether to that of a laughter or a cringe - they looked as though they were waiting. Waiting for their next order, waiting to leave, just aimlessly waiting.

Without a sensation of truth to these two-dimensional ornaments - It was in those snapshots, that I found the unreal landscapes of an unreal paradise occupying every negative space in the frame of my mind. The soldiers were as close to truth as you could get; and still questioning: How real is that truth since its actual presence was so cheapened.





Ines Jerray

Etiquettes, 2011

Video

The project *Etiquettes* takes place in my research on the moving image and on how things get animated. The price stickers were initially chosen because of their disposal on a roll. Indeed, quite often I use soft surfaces that wrap around an axis to match drawn and painted graphic elements. The rolls remind me somehow the organic body and its process of memory and perception. I use rolls as a support and a reading device. This arrangement is reminiscent of the process at work in mechanical or analog systems such as film or magnetic tape for instance. But rolls also evoke the notion of loop that closes on itself, that sweeps away the starting and ending points of a cycle in the flow of its interpretation. My reflection on the concept of animation and the practice of stop-motion animation caught my eye on this little roll of price stickers found in a bookstore. On the surface of these empty labels, pre-cut and joined together like the frames of images, I imagined the composition of fictional and relational ensemble.

What motivated my purchase is primarily the diversion of this purely utilitarian element, for using it as a material for manufacturing an imaginary and animated narrative. Of course these stickers virtually refer to the price, they are normally used to «support» them. The reference to the economic factor in the consumer society, the market exchange market, but also the reference to digital media where each value is encrypted and becomes a standard tool; all of these factors necessarily seep into the content of this project. Yet, I place the economical reference in this project as a background of my approach. The choice of placing the animated drawing, which its content is trivial and mysterious, on the surface of the price tickets was affirmed by the need to fill that roll with figures and animate them in a sequence. The small size of the stickers allowed me to project my imagination into a miniature space, confined and secret. That's why the character, a little girl, seems locked in her flat boxes, playing in empty spaces and narrowly fluctuates in the void, a void that seems shared by others that smother her.

To the animation drawn on the stickers is added a stop-motion animation of a real landscape, the one of a beach in Tunisia. The two images are overlaid with a transparent surface. The camera captures both of the stickers and the beach spaces. The beach is located in the background of the plastic surface where the stickers are glued. Changes in light, the crossing of pedestrians in the area of the camera shooting then, shows a fragmented sort of documentary moment. The film describes a kind of window in the window, or screen in the screen, showing the visual and filmic coexistence of formal and narrative dimensions which are radically different, but that are captured together in a same space and time. These two dimensions, two animations, are rudimentary staged so that on one hand the physical presence in the real place during the shooting is kept visible, and on the other hand the gesture of pasting and taking off each sticker for each new image is guessed.



Bassem Yousri

Homage, 2011

Installation

Egyptian identity, shaped almost 5000 years ago, has evolved to become, for me, a hazy face with a confused mind. Cairo, as I know it, is a city full of opposites and contradictions; 2000 year old neighborhoods are adjacent to high rises, poor ones are adjacent to the fanciest hotels, and decadent cars from the 50s run side by side with the most recent Mercedes. Amidst it all, the youth's quest for identity is straddled between two extreme opposites: religious fundamentalism and cultural westernization. I reflect on the complexity of this situation by creating spaces where different disciplines, dimensions, and surfaces intersect. Videos, in experimental forms as well as in the documentary form, reveal commentaries on the social and political situation, and contribute to questioning my personal role within that context.

Additionally, after living in the United States for 5 years, the issue of the audience has become more relevant to my practice. I began investigating the possibility of addressing a situation specific to my home country and at the same time engaging a viewer with a completely different history, situation, and different problems. Therefore, I became more aware of the space and the relationship that exists between my work and the spectator.

In my different practices, I draw influences ranging from ancient Egyptian murals and pre-dynastic Egyp-

tian figurines to influences from contemporary mass culture like TV shows, Internet, and comic books. I try to criticize how the culture industry manipulates the viewer emotionally and, consequently, intellectually by means of visual seduction reinforcing stereotypes. Thus, I try to achieve what Susan Sontag calls "the consciousness of form" which leads the viewer, in my opinion, to a more critical stance to what they look at. Additionally, Jacques Ranciere's investigation of the position of the spectator in contemporary life has been part of my personal exploration. Ranciere rejects a relationship between spectator and a work of art that is based on a pedagogical paradigm. Emancipation, for him, is "the process of verification of the equality of intelligence". Although I owe a lot of respect to that notion I try to invite the viewer to reexamine the work of art as a constructed image. I try to invite the spectator to become more aware of their physical and intellectual relationship to the image facing them.



Ahmed El Shaer

Nekh, 2011

Digital Prints

Use of the word NEKH is mainly by the owners of Camels when they give the order to “sit down”. Without this order, the camel will not freely decide to sit – hence he is a monument of control. In the Egyptian culture, we use the word “Nekh,” in mockery when we want to tell someone to surrender or that they gave up on what it was they were trying to control in the first place. Phrases used in the day of the Camel Battle enforced by a previous government who were trying to terrorize the youth (an IT-active society) for “change” so we said to the government “Nekh!” in order to surrender to our resistances.

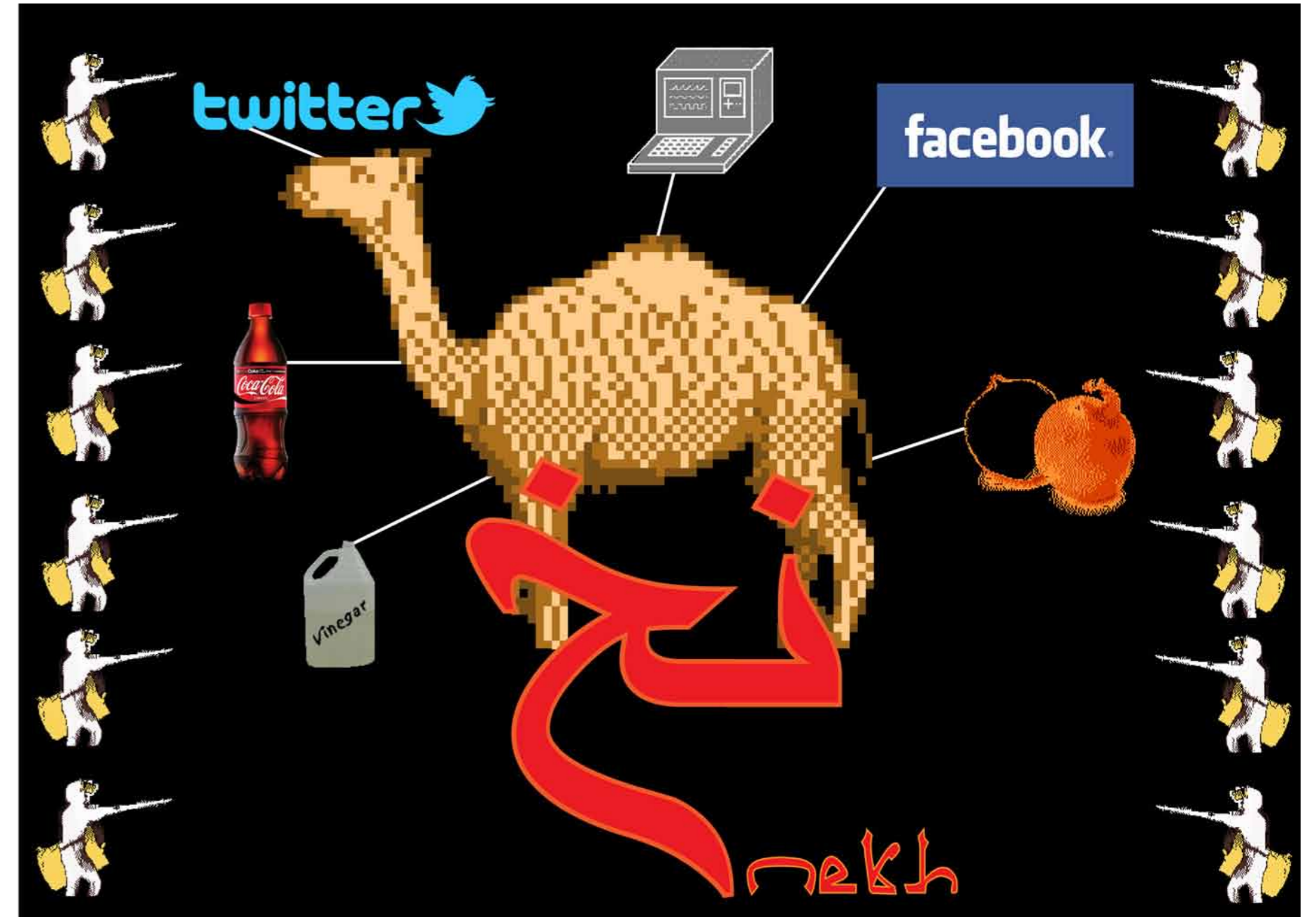
The General view:

The Artwork will be kind of digital nostalgia reflected by the situation between the protesters & exit of the Egyptian Government during the day of Camel Battle when the government tried to make people run from Tahrir Square by attacking them by camels & horses during the time protesters were also using internet & alternative technology in hopes of destroying the then regime.

The Artworks:

The final works will be digital prints using 8bit techniques. Inspired from what I saw in Tahrir Square with the details offered from my own vision of what I had to experience during the Egyptian revolts.

Latin type fused with Arabic script





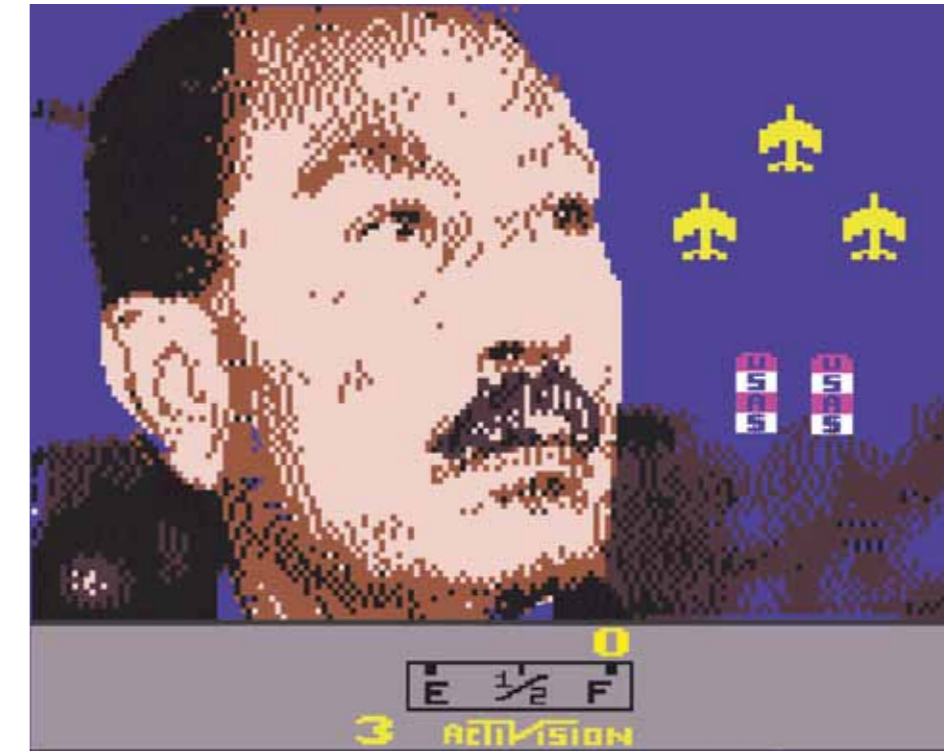
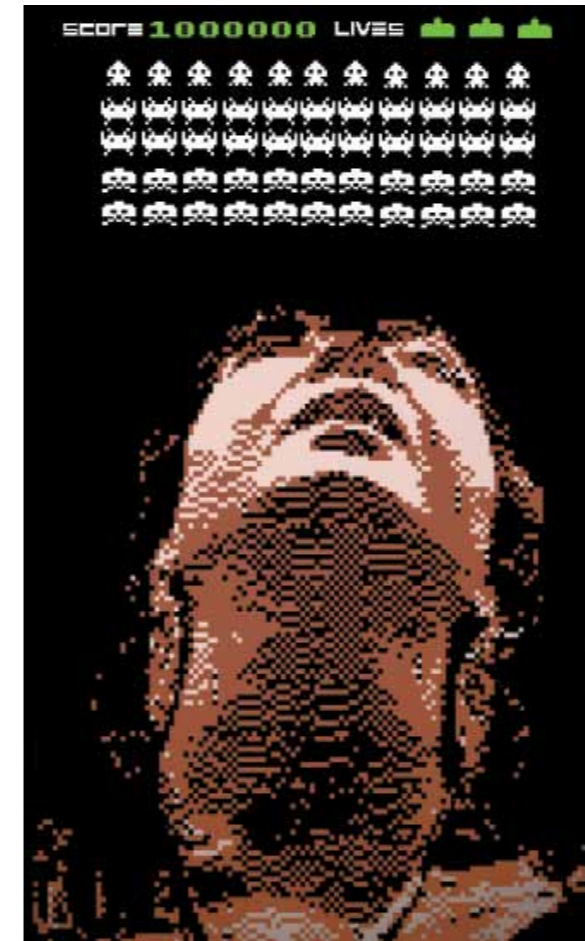
Ahmed El Shaer

8-Bit Portrait, 2011

Digital Prints

8-bit is part of the systems programming computers in its infancy, the late seventies and early eighties was used to programming games Atari and is the most famous video games in time and was the first Games Atari fad emerged in the United States in the early seventies and the turns eight-bit is the extreme version Computer scientists in the design of games in terms of form was the characters and game play elements are designed as a Color Collection not more than 12 colors and is a collection of peixls (pixel is a unit of graphic in computers) monolith consisting of a game.

Portraits of the 8-bit this technique came and went and were not included elements or characters from our region and especially our Middle Eastern which was my experience on how to deal with portraits accepted and put forward the question is if the added portraits of the personalities of our history as the Games of how will and what will be the game of Atari Games and the famous try through my experience with Atari Games that analyze it and try it through a set of portraits of 8-bit technology, which became part of the digital arts in the world.



Khaled Ramadan

The Skype Project

Video Documentary

In conversation with Alfredo Cramerotti

In his book *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, Jacques Ranciere asks, "How are we to make sense of the fact that poetic or literary locations that 'take shape' have real effects, rather than being reflections of the real?"

Poetry and literature, although fictional categories, are in many cases reflection on the real. In the case of a 'nation state building' poetry and literature form a basic ingredient of Nationalism.

Members of a 'cultural nation' are aware of constituting together a cultural and political body, different from others by sharing a number of defining cultural features. Those features include language, religion, traditions, or shared history. The question whether a nation needs to have an associated territory is subject of debate. In this sense, we are dealing mainly with an ethical and philosophical doctrine, which is at the basis of the ideology of nationalism.

The notes above are the point of departure for the Skype Project, which is part of a sequential conversation series taking place among members of the art collective Chamber of Public Secrets. Here, Khaled Ramadan and Alfredo Cramerotti converse on the issue of nation building, nation state, nationalism and the ownership of history.



Khaled Ramadan

What I Said to President Mubarak

Video, 33 mins

During the recent popular uprising and demands for basic human rights and democratic representation and governance in the Middle East (Tunisia, Egypt & elsewhere), we are often presented with a bi-polar picture of the intricate political spectrum from that region. Correspondents and pundits offer us a reductionist scenario of either pragmatically living with and accepting dictatorship, which is more than able to suppress any democratic aspirations.

The documentary film tries to break free from this straight-jacket by meeting and discussing politics with the Neo-Nasserite Hamdeen Sabahi, whose struggle to form a political party in Egypt echoes similar struggles throughout the country and the surrounding regions.

Sabahi participated as a Deputy in the People's Assembly for the district of Burullus in elections in both 2000 and 2005. As a deputy at the People's Assembly, during his electoral battles people of his constituency sacrificed themselves and even had to die to be able to reach the election boxes and express their rights to vote in the village of Balteem.

In 2009, Khaled Ramadan followed Hamdeen Sabahi and did several interviews with him about his role in the Egyptian opposition and as a member of the parliament who was jailed several times for his political opinion.



Adel Abidin

Bread of Life, 2009

Video, 6:34 mins

Bread of Life, 2009

In some cultures bread is thought of as being the source of life and so treated as a holy object, as something to be respected and not joked about. As I visited a restaurant in Cairo, I received this bread that to me seemed more suitable for playing music with than to be eaten – it was so hard it made a pleasant sound, like an instrument. I gathered together four rhythmic musicians who earn their living by playing music for belly dancers in nightclubs. I approached them with this ironic idea to play with bread – the source of life.

Video details:

Country of production: Cairo 2008

Country of post-production: Helsinki 2009

Duration: 00'06'34 minutes

Shooting format: HD (High Definition DV)- 16:9

Screening format: Blu-ray Disc.

Sound: Four channels sound

Color



Kader Attia

Couscous Aftermaths, 2010

Video, 9:36 mins

Human Beings produce an infinity of signs gathered in an “order of things” (to quote Michel Foucault’s famous essay); a vocabulary to communicate with each other and be gathered around thoughts and beliefs. By thoughts, I mean philosophy – an endless improving project of a way of thinking life, and by beliefs, I mean an endless process of improving life as a path to eternal and infinite existence. From Tradition to Modernity, Islam is one of such paths. Since my first lessons at the Madrasah, when I was a teenage boy, I had always kept this in mind.

In the video *Couscous Aftermaths* an Algerian Muslim woman, at the twilight of her life, is mixing both her memories with broken mirrors. For those that have seen its traditional preparation, her body movements evoke the preparation of couscous, a Maghreb dish that today symbolizes the Arab Muslim world. The way she moves the mirrors, mixed with images of her life, provokes reflections of what one could call “the illusions of her life” that slowly goes by until it will end.

Couscous Aftermaths is a re-appropriation of a very bad luck symbol in North Africa and in many other places: Broken mirrors. The more she’s mixing them, the more it seems that the contrary is happening. Although this movie ends by the disappearance of her husband, she gives life again to mirrors that have been broken. As if she’s starting to perceive a life of eternity.



Characteristic of *The Changing Room project*: first it is a statement room, it nourishes on the collective will of the many artists involved while containing the quality of an editorial space. The room will not function as a classical exhibition space. It will rather be a knowledge production space. At this space audio-visual information provided by different Arab artists will be processed and put on display. Our team will process the informative artworks and the visual information received from our colleagues in the Arab world and transform them into a suitable aesthetic presentation to be seen by art audiences visiting Turino.

As the statements are related to current developments, the content will change according to events taking place in the Arab world – Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Jordan and Yemen, and so it goes. The room is not a news media room but a space where constructed media is resembled. Collected from highly respected intellectuals, Arab artists and art activists, the room will provide an informative aesthetic experience collectively put together to provide the audience with alternative images of events and stories they don't seem to know much about.

The room will be a place where artists explore the Arab dream, the Arab world as a Utopia. It is rare to see Arab artists experimenting with Arabia as Utopian place. The Arab Changing Room will be a platform for such visions and we will be looking into how Arab artists think freely.

Within this framework we will arrange film and video screenings, changeable weightless installations, and arrange debates.

Naturally we will also work on a publication a Manifesto, which will include theoretical and artistic work from as many participants as possible.

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THE CHANGING ROOM BOOM CHANGING THE

Reflections Arab Reflections on Praxis and Times

ABOUT CURATOR

Aida Eltorie, is an independent curator and director to a newfound organization: Finding Projects Association and SVN Curatorial Unit. A Masters degree candidate in Islamic Art and Architecture at the American University in Cairo (2011), Eltorie's most recent project involves curating the late Ahmed Basiony at the 2011 Egyptian Pavilion of the 54th International Venice Biennale. Her past work includes curating the film program at Manifesta 8, under the curatorial auspices of The Chamber of Public Secrets, and the video collective Contemporary Arab Video Encounter (CAVE) at Maraya Art Centre (Sharjah, UAE). Editor-in-Chief of Contemporary Practices Journal (Dubai); Volumes 4, 5, and 6, Eltorie has worked with The Townhouse Gallery of contemporary art (Cairo) for a period of 5-7 years from when the Gallery first opened in Cairo, during which she was also involved with The International Museum of Women (San Francisco) when they first launched in March 2003. By 2007, Eltorie moved to New York whereby she was accepted as a curatorial intern at The Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Feminist Art Center, and continued her time there working with Bidoun Magazine for a year and then Christie's auction house with the Indian and Southeast Asian Department. She independently produced a number of international projects with artists and cultural practitioners from the Middle East and Europe, such as Khaled Hafez, Shaimaa Aziz, Haytham Nawar, Khaled Ramadan, Gregory Niemeyer, Patrizio Travagli, amongst other, with various support granted from institutions like ProHelvetia Swiss Arts Council and The Ford Foundation. Published works can be read in Contemporary Practices Journal, and catalogues for shows curated by Daniela da Prato on art from the Arab World and Iran in Paris; Breaking News (2008), Golden Gates (2009), and Patrizio Travagli's Monograph, MMX (Florence, 2010).

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222 THE ARTISTS ▶



Adel Abidin

Born 1973 in Baghdad / Iraq. Lives and works in Helsinki / Finland since 2001.

Adel Abidin, a video, installation and photography artist focuses his visual discussions on issues such as cultural alienation, identity and marginalization. Humor, sarcasm and irony are central to his language.

Adel Abidin started his art career as a painter, where he received his bachelor degree in painting from the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad in 2000. After arriving to Europe he started to work mainly with installation, interactive installations, videos and photography, and in 2005 he received his Masters degree in media and new media art from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki.

His works have been shown in different venues around the world, such as; In 2006 he got invited by the curator Mr. René Block to exhibit in the October Saloon in Belgrade. In 2007 he got selected to represent Finland at the 52nd Venice Biennale, where he exhibited his most ironic work of art, a traveling agency that promotes tourist trips to Baghdad called "Abidin Travels". as well as venues such as Louis Vuitton in Paris, the Gothenburg Biennial. in 2008 a solo exhibition in White Box Gallery in New York city, a screening at MoMA, The best young European artists exhibition in Reims/ France and The 11th Cairo Biennale. The Baltic Center for Contemporary Art 2009, the 8th Baltic biennale for Contemporary

Art in Poland. In 2010 The 17th Sydney Biennale and major solo exhibitions at: Kiasma, Helsinki's museum of contemporary art, at the DA2 Domus Artium 2002 (Centre of Contemporary Art in Salamanca)- Spain and recent solo exhibition at Location One Gallery in New York city. Also his new video installation will be featured at the opening of the museum of contemporary Arab art in Doha. In 2011 Abidin's new works will be featured in the 10th Sharjah Biennial, a solo exhibition at Artopia gallery in Milan, a solo exhibition at Gallery Anne De Villepoix in Paris. And a new work will be presented at the 54th Venice Biennale, Iraq Pavilion, organized by Sala Uno.



Sama Alshaibi

Born 1973 in Basra / Iraq. Lives and works in Arizona / USA.

Sama Alshaibi is an artist born in 1973 to an Iraqi father and Palestinian mother and is now a naturalized US citizen. Alshaibi's works in photography, video art and sculpture to evoke the language of suffering, displacement and loss. Her poetic and lyrical approach contrasts the depiction of her own history of living in war and the double negation to her familial homelands. Alshaibi often uses her own body in her works to test the limits of access and privilege; infil-

trating guarded spaces, negotiating borders and testing the dynamics of power between nation/state and its citizenry. Alshaibi is also interested in the spectrum of control and domination, whether it's the body's relationship to land and national identity, or the experience between humans' competing for resources and power. Whether it's the threshold of two different existential planes, of disorientation, and spaces between spaces, her work is rooted in the anxieties of the human experience.

Sama Alshaibi received her MFA from the University of Colorado in Photography/ Video and Media Arts in 2005. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Photography/Video Art at University of Arizona. Her work has been exhibited at arts institutions and galleries in over 20 countries including Selma Feriani, London, Exit Art, NYC, Art Dubai, Dubai, Bastakiya Art Fair, Dubai, Empty Quarter, Dubai, Traffic, Dubai, Al Hoash, Jerusalem, DARB 1718, Cairo, The Bronx Museum, NYC and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver. Her 28 time-based works (video art and films) have screened in numerous film festivals internationally, including Thessaloniki International Film Festival in Greece, CinemaEast Film Festival, NYC, DOKUFEST, Kosovo and MidEast Cut, Copenhagen/Denmark & Helsinki/Finland. Alshaibi is in prominent public collections such as Nadour, Darat al Funun, the Barjeel Collection, and the Rami Farook Collection.



Kader Attia

Born 1970 in Dugny / France. Lives and works in Berlin and Algiers.

Kader Attia was born in 1970 to an Algerian family in Paris. He studied both Philosophy and Art in Paris, and by 1993, he had spent a year at Barcelona's Escola de Artes Aplicades. He held his first solo exhibition in 1996 in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and since then has exhibited regularly throughout the world.

Attia's childhood between France and Algeria, going back and forth between the Christian Occident and the Islamic Maghreb, has had a decisive impact on his work. His time living in the Congo-Kinshasa, as well as Venezuela and Algeria, further inform the multicultural vision in his work.

Using his own identities, as the starting point, he tackles the increasingly difficult relationship between Europe and immigrants, particularly those of Islamic faith. In doing so he does not tie himself to one specific medium to explore controversial content. Attia gained international recognition at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and at the Lyon Biennale (2005). At the latter he created, Flying Rats, featuring life-size seed sculpture-like children being devoured by 250 pigeons. Other works include The Landing Strip, the culmination of Attia's work with Algerian transsexuals within wider French society.

In November 2007 he held his first solo exhibition in the USA, Momentum at the Boston ICA, and the large-scale New Works opened in February 2008 at the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle. Other recent projects include solo shows at Square Dreams at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Newcastle, in 2007, or at the Centro de Arte Contemporaneo in Huarte - Spain, and a residency at IASPIS - Sweden, in 2008, participation to major exhibitions like "La Force de l'Art" / Paris Triennial and Havana Biennale, and curating the exhibition "Periferiks" at Centre d'Art de Neuchâtel in Switzerland, in 2009. In 2010, Attia takes part, among other projects, to the Sydney Biennial, the exhibition Dreamlands at Centre Georges Pompidou, to the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship Program in Washington DC, and to the Paul D. Fleck

Fellowship at the Banff Centre in Canada. In 2011, Centre Pompidou - Paris commissions a new film, entitled "Collages", shown in the exhibition "Paris-Delhi-Bombay", and later at the Moscow Biennale.

Attia is one the winners of the Prize of the 2008 Cairo Biennale and of the 2010 Abraaj Capital Art Prize.



Khaled Hafez

Born 1963 in Cairo / Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo / Egypt. From 1981 till 1990, Hafez followed the evening classes of the Cairo Fine Arts while studying medicine. He attained MFA in New Media from Transart Institute / Danube University Krems, Austria in 2009.

International group shows include:

9th Bamako Encounters, National Museum of Art, Mali, 2011; 8th Mercusol Biennale, Brasil, 2011; Reframing Reality, Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde, Denmark, 2011; Miragem / Mirage: Contemporary Art in the Islamic World, Instituto Tomie Ohtake, Sao Paulo, Brazil, 2011; Windows Upon Oceans, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2011; 12th Cairo Biennale, Cairo, Egypt, 2010; Manifesta 8, Murcia, Spain, 2010; Miragem / Mirage, Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2010; Resistance(s) III, Fondazione Merz, Turin, Italy, 2010; Resistance(s) III, Casa Árabe, Madrid, Espagne, 2010; Modernities + Resistances, 3rd World Festival of Black Arts, Dakar, Senegal, 2010; CAVE: Contemporary Arab Video Encounter, Maraya Arts Center, Sharjah, UAE, 2010; IN/FLUX: Awkward Conversations, The 17th New York African Film Festival, New Museum, New York, USA, 2010;

The Presidents: Remix, Blancpain Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland, 2010; What's Happening Now?: Contemporary Art from Egypt, Casa Arabe, Madrid, Spain, 2010; Tarjama/Translation, The Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Icattha, New York, USA, 2010; Categorical Imperatives, The Guild Gallery, Bombay, India, 2010; Fuck Ups, Fables & Fiascos, Galerie Caprice Horn, Berlin, Germany, 2010; Tarjama / Translation, Queens Museum, New York, USA, 2009; Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece, 2009; Deconstructing Myths & Reality, Galerie Caprice Horn, Berlin, Germany, 2009; Icons Reloaded, Galerie ElyseeArts, Liege, Belgium, 2009; Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK, 2009; Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Art, China, 2008; Breaking News, F&A Projects, Paris, 2008; Cairo-scape, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin, Germany, 2008; Neighbours in Dialogue, Collegium Artisticum Gallery, Skenderija Centre, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 2008; Om Kalsoum la quatrième pyramide, Institut du Mode Arabe, Paris, France, 2008; Collectiepresentatie XXI, MuHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium, 2008; Trilogie Méditerranéenne, Palais des Arts, Marseille, France, 2008; Italia: Arab Artists Between Italy & the Mediterranean, Italian Cultural Institute, Damascus, Beirut & Cairo, 2008; Gates of the Mediterranean, Palazzo Piozzo, Rivoli, Turin, Italy, 2008; Contact Zone, Bamako Museum of Art, Bamako, Mali 2007; The Present Out of the Past Millennia, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany, 2007; Recognize, Contemporary Platform, London, UK, 2007; This Day, Tate Modern, London, UK, 2007; Sharjah Biennale, UAE, 2007; Without Title, MuHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium, 2007; Neighbours in Dialogue, Istanbul, Turkey, 2007; Singapore Biennale, Singapore 2006; Dakar Biennale, Senegal 2006; Images of the Middle East, Copenhagen, Denmark, 2006; Mediterranean Encounters, Messina, Italy 2005; Dakar Biennale, Senegal, 2004, (Francophonie Prize); Cairo Modern Art in Holland, Fortiscircus Theater, Den Haag, Holland, 2001.

Public Collections:

The Saatchi Collection, London, UK
MuHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium

Ars Aevi Museum of Contemporary Art, Sarajevo, Bosnia
Horcynus Orca Foundation, Messina, Italy
Mali National Museum, Bamako, Mali
Maraya Art Centre, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki, Greece.



Nermine Hammam

Born 1967 in Cairo / Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo / Egypt.

Nermine Hammam is a Cairo-based visual artist who creates images that are a blend of painting and photography techniques.. She obtained her BFA in filmmaking from New York University's Tisch School of Arts, going on to work with Simon & Goodman and renowned film director Youssef Chahine. She also served as production assistant in the movie Malcolm X.

Hammam's work has been widely exhibited, and is included in public and private collections around the world. With human gesture as a central subject, she seeks out individuals in states of abandonment or altered states of consciousness, whether through transcendental spiritual ceremonies in different parts of the Middle East or a visit to the beach in Alexandria. She is known for the distinct technique with which she reworks photography, addressing the influence of mass media and market stylization.

The founder and creative director of Equinox Graphics, Hammam is also known for introducing art into the public space through innovative design and branding. She is behind some of Egypt's most familiar brands, including Cilantro Café, Diwan Bookstores and the Deyafa group of restaurants and bars.

Exhibitions include:

2011 upekkha iman fares gallery focus 11 basel solo; 2011 anachrony, IF gallery, Paris solo; 2011 mois de l image, Deippe, France Collective; 2011 iman fares gallery paris collective; 2010 Pierre Bergé & Associés, Belgium; 2010 land of the hyper-real, Havana, Cuba Collective; 2010 Meta-noia, townhouse gallery, Cairo solo; 2010 Photo Biennale, Thessaloniki, Greece Collective; 2010 Act of Faith, Abdijdmuseum Ten Duinen, Koksijde, Belgium Collective; 2009 IL Corpus Homanus, Almasar Gallery, Cairo Collective; 2009 X Biennial, Cuenca, Ecuador Collective; 2009 Photoquai, Museum de Quai Branly, Paris Collective; 2009 Parco Horcynus Orca, Messina, Italy solo; 2009 Casa Arabe, Madrid Collective; 2009 The Blow Out, The Empty Quarter Gallery, Dubai Collective; 2009 Escaton, Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo solo; 2008 Athens Photo Festival, Greece Collective; 2008 Joburg Art Fair, South Africa Collective; 2008 places and manners of worship, the museum of byzantine cultural in Thessaloniki, Greece Collective; 2007 palimpsest, town house, Cairo solo; 2007 a retrospective 2001-2007, the sultan gallery, Kuwait solo; 2007 Act of Faith, Der aa-kerk, Groningen Collective; 2006 Ashoura, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo solo; 2006 Ashoura, Artmenparis, Paris solo; 2005 Apotheosis, Karim Francis Gallery, Cairo solo; 2004 Metamorphosis, Espace SD, Beirut solo; 2003 Cairo Modern Art, Fortis Circus Theater, Netherlands Collective; 2002 Photo Cairo, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo Collective; 2001 Portrait, Hanager Art Center, Cairo solo; 2001 Mitigation, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo solo.



Karim Al Hussein

Born 1978 in Tripoli / Libya. Temporarily lives and works in Cairo / Egypt.

Born to Palestinian parents who moved with Jordanian passports, Hussein was raised in Egypt till the age of 19, then moved to the United States. From 2003 till 2006 he served in the US Army as a war veteran in Iraq. Hussein's practice spans music, sound, video and installation. Introduced for the very first time as an installation artist, Hussein has been involved in several performance based events, and video/audio projects throughout the Middle East. Throughout the past three years, Hussein has been practicing studio art and has worked closely with well-established artists in the region such as Khaled Hafez. Hussein develops numerous sound pieces for visual art projects. From his most recent is the screening of his latest video "Lesson" in the 9th International Bamako Encounters in Bamako, Mali (2011).

Projects include:

"Lesson," November 2011, 9th Bamako Encounters, Bamako, Mali. "North West Nirvany," In Search of Eden series, September 2011, Spazio Qubi, Turin (Italy). "Change is Needed" (audio/video music piece), March 2011. "Day Dreaming" (video and music piece), July 2010. "Tuning Your Senses," (audio/video music piece), July 2010. "Change is Needed," music composition, for *The Video Diaries* (Khaled Hafez, 2011) March 2010. Audio Score, *On Presidents and Superheroes, The A77a Project* (Video Artist: Khaled Hafez) October 2009, . Live Music Performance "Live Under Fire," Mosul (Iraq), June 2006.



Ines Jerray

Born 1977 in Tunisia. Lives and works in Tunisia.

She graduated from Paris 8 University with a Master in visual and contemporary arts, and from the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera at Milan with courses in drawing sculpture and cinema. She also post-graduated from the National Higher School of Decorative Arts of Paris with an Interactive research Certificate.

Her work has been exhibited in France (ENSAD), Tunisia (cultural center of Sousse) and Japan (Maejima Art center of Okinawa). She published in the Czech review of cinema *Illuminace*.

Her most recent interest deals with Animation work as a site of cognitive and sensory experiences, which is the title of her PhD research in visual and performing arts at the University of Tunis (Tunisia) and Artois (France). With the program Visiting Arts she recently started a creative dialogue in London with the British artist Gayle Chong Kwan. Through the use of photography, video, sound and drawing, but also by a reflection on the recent introduction of animation in her practice, she's exploring with Chong Kwan the ideas of hybridization, the senses, cognition, memory and context, as a way of questioning the body and landscapes of difference that are pertinent topics to both of their work.



Ibrahim Saad

Born 1977, Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo / Egypt.

Ibrahim Saad received his BA degree at Faculty of Fine Arts. Working at the Jesuit Cultural Center in Cairo as coordinator for the Visual Arts Program. In the past, Saad has worked at the Townhouse Gallery's "Sawa" workshop and "Sawa Generation". In addition, I taught art to children at the Artellewa Gallery.

His work can be considered as an investigation into the depths of the human soul, as he tries to find new ways of communicating human emotions. Saad models himself in his performances, photography and video projects.

Group exhibitions include:

2002 "FOR JURUSELAM", Hanager Center of Art; 2004 16th Youth Salon; 2004 Nile Salon for Photography; 2004 7th Small Pieces Salon; 2005 17th Youth Salon; 2005 25th National Exhibition for Plastic Art; 2006 French Culture Center; 2007 "MAYBE AT THE GARDEN" Cairo Atelier; 2007 Group exhibition; 2007 18th Youth Salon; 2007 "ATLAS" Art Elliewa Gallery; 2007 "WAITING IN THE WHITE" due with Jolie Exonforce, Cairo Atelier; 2007 25th Cairo Atelier Salon; 2007 "YOUTH X YOUTH " Ebdaa Gallery; 2007 Group exhibition at Goethe Institute, Townhouse Gallery; 2007 " Smile while going up" installation on walls of the building, Spanish Culture Center; 2007 Summer festival at Qaied Bay Castle, Alexandria; 2007 Photography Group Exhibition, Townhouse; 2007 "Gomaa Market"

, Townhouse; 2007 " What is happening now "with George Fekry Art palace, Cairo Opera house; 2007 Black and white on the walls of Townhouse" with George Fekry; 2007 "sketches" with Lotchi , Townhouse; 2008 "100mm X 100mm" Arteliewa Gallery; 2008 Sawa at Gomhoria Theater group exhibition, Townhouse Gallery; 2008 " rosomat" at Townhouse gallery (installation art painting on all the white colours with music and light system); 2008 "Dodels art or sketch" at Mahmoud Mokhtar Museum; 2008 "Selfmap", Arteliewa Gallery; 2008 "no difference" installation, at Shenzben, China; 2009 "for Gaza" Cairo Atele, Cairo; 2009 exhibition at the French Center, Cairo; 2009 "Drawings" El Gezera Center, Zamalek, Cairo; 2009 Model Citizens Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; 2009 "The Sixth Wall" Artistic Installation at the Manchesterly Palace; 2009 "Diversity Dialogue Lunch" New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, New York City, USA; 2010 "But a Shadow of Myself : a Collaboration" the Tin Shop, Breckenridge, Colorado, USA; 2010 "Model Citizen Continuum", Schunck Museum, Heerlen, Netherlands; 2010 "Forms of Compensation" Bidoun Projects @ Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; 2010 "Forms of Compensation", Bidoun Projects @ Art Dubai 2010, Emirate of Dubai; 2010 "Angels in the Bar", El Gezera Center, Zamalek, Cairo; 2010 "The Sea Symposium", Qaitbay Citadel, Alexandria; 2010 "The Sea Symposium", El Gezera Center, Zamalek, Cairo; 2010 "The Second Black and White Salon", El Gezera Center, Zamalek, Cairo; 2010 "The Second Black and White Salon", Library of Alexandria, Alexandria; 2010 "But a Shadow of Myself at Jesuit", Cairo; 2010 "Cairo Atelier Salon", Cairo.

Group projects include:

"Model Citizens " with Elke Uitentuis and Wouter Osterholt from Netherlands ,making models for the buildings of Townhouse and the surrounding buildings; "Mobile School" with Djamel Koken from Algeria; "But a Shadow of Myself" with Alexandra Zevin. An international, intercultural, intergenerational project in which participants use silhouettes to develop self-portraits and collaborative drawings; "Model Citizens – Continuum" Two month project with Elke Uitentuis and Wouter Oster-

holt at the Schunck Museum, Netherlands; "Forms of Compensation" Sponsored by Bidoun Projects and Townhouse Gallery.



Steve Sabella

Born 1975 Jerusalem / Palestine. Lives and works between London / Berlin.

Steve Sabella is the holder of the Ellen Auerbach Award (2008) granted by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin and Sabella was also one of the commissioned artists for the inauguration of MATHAF: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha.

Steve Sabella's artworks have recently been collected by the British Museum in London, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, and leading collectors in the Middle East including the Barjeel Art Foundation in Sharjah.

Sabella's international shows include: Neighbors in Dialogue (Istanbul, Turkey 2007 and Sarajevo, Bosnia 2008), Gates of Mediterranean (Rivoli, Italy, 2008), Palestine, La Création Dans Tous Ses Etats, Institut du Monde Arabe & the National Museum of Bahrain (Paris 2009), Deconstructing Myths & Realities, Gallery Caprice Horn, Berlin, NOW - Contemporary Art of the 21st Century, Phillips De Pury (London 2009), This is Not a Love Song, The Empty Quarter gallery (Dubai 2010), Award Month, Akademie der Künste (Berlin 2010), a retrospective solo Steve Sabella In Exile at the Metroquadro Gallery (Turin 2010) The Interrupted Image, Nicholas Robinson Gallery (New York 2010), Told Untold Retold,

MATHAF Arab Museum of Modern Art (Doha 2011) and a solo exhibition Euphoria & Beyond at the Empty Quarter Gallery (Dubai 2011).

Sabella's project *jerusalem in exile* (2006) explored the mental image Palestinians held of Jerusalem and has gained international attention, leading to its production into a documentary film. Consequently, Sabella has been giving a visual form through photomontage to the 'state of mind' of living in 'mental exile'.

Steve Sabella studied art photography at the Jerusalem School of Photography and New Media in 1994, and holds a BA in Visual Arts from the State University of New York (2007). Sabella received his first MA with a Caparo Award of Distinction in Photographic Studies (2008) from the University of Westminster and his second MA in Art Business (2009) at Sotheby's Institute of Art in London. Sabella gave art talks / presentations in several places including the University of Cambridge, Turin University, SOAS, University of East London, Accademia Albertina Delle Belle Arti in Turin, Rostock University, Akademie der Künste in Berlin & and the British Museum in London.

Sabella's artworks and life triggered much media attention, including several TV & film documentaries. His earlier artworks have been reviewed in *Palestinian Art* by Kamal Boullata (Saqi Books 2009), and recent artworks have been reviewed in *New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21st Century* (Thames & Hudson 2009). In *Exile* artwork was on the front and back cover of *Contemporary Practices* journal VI, 2010 including two retrospective reviews.

Steve Sabella was artist of the month of May with three featured episodes on IkonoTV.



Larissa Sansour

Born in Jerusalem / Palestine.

Sansour studied Fine Art in Copenhagen, London and New York, and earned her MA from New York University. Her work is interdisciplinary, immersed in the current political dialogue and utilizes video art, photography, experimental documentary, the book form and the internet.

Sansour borrows heavily from the language of film and pop culture. By approximating the nature, reality and complexity of life in Palestine and the Middle East in general to visual forms normally associated with entertainment and televised pastime, her grandiose and often humorous schemes clash with the gravity expected from works commenting on the region. References and details ranging from sci-fi and spaghetti westerns to horror films converge with Middle East politics and social issues to create intricate parallel universes in which a new value system can be decoded.

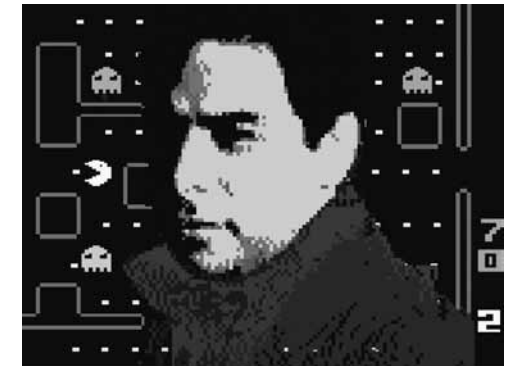
Sansour's work has been exhibited worldwide in international biennials, galleries, museums, film festivals and on the internet and is featured in many art publications. Her most notable shows include the Tate Modern in London and Arken Museum of Modern Art in Denmark and the IMA in Paris, France.

Her work recently featured in the Third Guangzhou Triennial in China, the Busan Biennale in South Korea, PhotoCairo4 in Egypt, The Istanbul Biennale and Art Dubai and will take part in the Liverpool Biennale

later this year. Her most recent film *A Space Exodus* was nominated in the short film category at the Dubai International Film Festival.

In 2010, she launched her graphic novel "Nonel and Vovel", a joint project with artist Oreet Ashery. The book appeared first at the Venice Biennale bookshops in August and was also launched at the Tate Modern, UK, the Brooklyn Museum, USA and Nikolaj Kunsthal in Denmark. In 2010, Sansour also had her first solo shows in New York and Paris and will have a solo show in Stockholm, Sweden by the end of the year.

Sansour's work is represented by Galerie La B.A.N.K. in Paris, France. She lives and works in London, UK.



Ahmed El Shaer

Born 1981 in Cairo / Egypt. Lives and works in Cairo / Egypt.

Ahmed El Shaer is a multi-disciplinary artist (installation, photography, sound, video), with a particular interest in digital technologies. His videos combine Machinima, stock footage, 3D animation and experimental soundscapes. His work has been highlighted in numerous exhibitions and festivals, among which: *Fugitive Video Project 2009* (International Festival for Alternative Film and Video, Dublin and Mantua, 2009); *Under Current: Contemporary Art from Egypt* (SAWA Gallery, Dubai, 2009); *Orebro International Video Art Festival* (Orebro, Sweden, 2008); *International Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean*, Bari, Italy (2008). He is the recipient of numerous awards and has participated in several residency programs, such as the Pro Helvetia Artist-in-Residence cycle (Zurich,

Switzerland, 2009) and the Summer Academy of Fine Arts (Salzburg, Austria, 2006 and 2007).

6/2011 screening with EDV distributors, Solus programs, Toulouse, France; 5/2011 Matilha Cultural, São Paulo, Brazil; 5/2011 VIDEOAKT International Video Biennale, Salt Gallery, Barcelona, Spain; 4/2011 screening the Presidents Remix, Salt Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey; 4/2011 Life Quartet Exhibition Alex Jesuits, Alex, Egypt; 4/2011 The Oakland Standard, Contemporary Arab Video Encounter (CAVE), Oakland Museum, California, US; 03/2011 Screening of IN/FLUX in collaboration with Performance Saga @ Neues Kino, Basel, Switzerland; 12/2010 Cairo documenta, Group Exhibition, enter active game, Cairo, Egypt; 11/2010 SanctionedArray video project, white box, New York, USA; 10/2010 Screening of IN/FLUX @ Museet for Samtidskunst, Roskilde, Denmark; 2010 50JPG: The Revenge of the Archive, The Presidents: Remix, Blancpain Art Contemporain Gallery, in collaboration with the Centre of Photography Geneva; 2010: Living Spaces The 2nd Al-ArtNow Festival for Contemporary arts; Damascus Syria, 2010 IN/FLUX: Awkward Conversations; The 17th New York African Film Festival Curated by Cedric Vincent and Dominique Malaquais New Museum, New York Axis Gallery, New York, May; 2010 Howmuch Contemporary Art Project / Nicosia; 2010 On Look Films Benefit: Featuring Films from the Middle East – Chicago – USA; 02/2010 CONTEMPORARY ARABIC VIDEOS SCREENING: WITHIN THE REGION- UCCA: A CATALYST FOR CONTEMPORARY CREATION IN CHINA; 09 /2009 the Cairo Box in the beehive experiment Amsterdam - Netherlands; 09 -11/2009 " Solus & Guests " Irish / Arabian ' Avant - Grade ' film tour 2009; 05/2009 " Under Current " Group Exhibition for Egyptian Contemporary Art at Art Sawa Gallery - Dubai; 04/2009 CIGE 2009 Special Art Project China International Gallery Exposition 2009, China; 04/2009 Fugitive Video Project 2009 International festival for alternative film and video Dublin and Mantua, Ireland; 02/2009 (MidEast cut)International festival for alternative film and video Denmark & Finland; 02/2009 All art now 1st international video art festival in Syria; 01/2009 the final Exhibition of the Cairo – Alicanty media art

Workshop at Alicante Art Center – Alicanty - Spain; 11/2008 the final Exhibition of the Cairo – Alcanty media art Workshop at Gezer Art Center Cairo; 10/2008 ÖREBRO INTERNATIONAL VIDEOART FESTIVAL - Sweden Art-Curator" Contemporary Practices Magazine; 10/2008 Biennale de Arte Contemporany de Seville Biacs3 - Spain Curator MEDRAR (Egypt) Within the region. 05/2008 Daleky Blizky Vychod 2008 Festival for short Films in Slovakia; 05/2008 The International Association of the Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM) Bari- Italy 2008; 03/2008 Dubai Art Fair, Video Art-Curator" Contemporary Practices Magazine" Sherif Awaad; 08/2007 Group Exhibition at Summer Academy for Fine Art in Salzburg - Austria; 04/2007 2nd international Youth Salon At Alexandria Atiller; 03/2007 After Urban - Video art & architecture even Festival- University of Pennsylvania, 34th & Walnut - Philadelphia USA– curator Luca Curci; 08/2006 Group Exhibition at Summer Academy for Fine Art in Salzburg - Austria; 05/2006 Zemes Rencontres de L'Image By French Culture Center in Cairo; 04/2006 1st international Festival for Short Films By French Culture Center in Port Said; 04/2006 1st international Youth Salon At Alexandria Atiller; 02/2006 1st international annual web exhibition At Egyptian Contemporary Artists site www.ecartists.com 11/2005 The Exhibition of "Form through Light 2" In Art of Palace; 07/2005 "Art communicates – across the world" project at the German Embassy Site; 11/2004 The Exhibition of "Form through Light" In Art of Palace.



Anas Al-Shaikh

Anas Al Shaikh was born in Bahrain in 1968, where he lives today. He studied architecture at Arab College in Jordan, and now works as a graphic designer, photographer, video, installation and conceptual artist, and independent curator specializing in group contemporary art projects. He frequently sits on juries and selection committees, and some time writes for cultural publications and newspapers.

His focus is on spatially conceived works through which he can relate different perspectives to the public; for example, his 1st solo installation in 2001 "Memory of Memories", was shown in a garage in old district in Manama the capital of Bahrain, attracting people from the neighborhood.

Al Shaikh has exhibited widely in Bahrain and internationally such as: "Metropolis: City life in the urban age", The 18th Noorderlicht International Photo Festival, Groningen, Netherlands (2011); "The MENASA Studio Dispatches", The Island, Art Dubai, UAE (2011); "Alsajanjal", Group Exhibition 4 for Contemporary Art Practices, Bahrain (2011); "Mapping Worlds, Understanding Worlds", The 8th International Photo-Triennial, Esslingen, Germany (2010); "Kan Ya Ma Kan", Bait Muzna Gallery, Oman (2010); "Self Representation in the Arabian Gulf", Sharjah, UAE (2009) "Re-Orientations: Contemporary Arab Representations", Rose Issa Projects at the European Parliament, Brussels (2008); Thessaloniki Film Festival, Athena, Greece (2008); "Still life: Art, Ecology & the Politics of Change", Sharjah Biennial 8, Sharjah, UAE

(2007); "Self representation in the Arabian Gulf", Virginia Commonwealth University, Doha, Qatar (2007); "The city and the street", The Circle 4, Muscat Festival, Oman (2007); "Zones of Contact", Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia (2006); "Coding: Decoding", Copenhagen Contemporary Art Centre, Denmark (2006); "Common Ground", Sharjah Art Museum, UAE, Bahrain (2006-2005); "Nazar", which travelled to the IFA, Berlin and Stuttgart, Langhans Gallery, Prague, the Aperture Foundation, New York, Fries Museum, Netherlands, and FotoFest Foundation, Houston (all 2004-2006); "Regards des photographes arabes contemporains", Arab world institute, Paris, France, Kunstforeningen GL Strand, Denmark and Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, Spain (2006-2005); "The Circle: Video

Art from Oman, Bahrain, Qatar", World Bank, Washington DC (2005); "Arab Italian Exhibition", Mediterranean Nations Festival, Bisceglie, Italy (2005); "Contemporary Curves", The 3rd Group Exhibition for Installation Art & New Media, Al Riwaq Gallery, Bahrain (2005); "Visual Arts Assemblage Exhibition", The 3th and 4th Doha Culture Festival, Qatar (2005-2004); "More Darkness... More light", The 2nd Group Exhibition for Installation Art, Bahrain (2003); "Remains of Memory - Remains of Trace", Joint Exhibition with Haela Alwaary, Bahrain (2003); and "Out to in!", The 1st Group Exhibition for Installation Art, Bahrain (2002).

His work is in the public collections of the Arab Modern Art Museum, Qatar; Bahrain National Museum; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Jordan Fine Art Museum, Amman; Noorderlicht Photography Foundation, Netherlands; Sharjah Art Museum, UAE; and Spanish Embassy, Jordan.



Marwan Sahmarani
Born 1970 in Beirut / Lebanon. Lives and works in Beirut / Lebanon.

Marwan Sahmarani is living in Lebanon where his paintings can be seen as an extension of painterly practice from 2 cultures. The context, the light, the colors, the history can affect and inspire his work. It becomes reminiscent of a sensibility that is timeless and universal. He held several group and solo exhibitions in Beirut, Dubai, Montreal, New York, Mexico... In 2010 he was one of the three recipients of the Abraaj Capital Art Prize.

EDUCATION: 1989 – 1994 Atelier Met de Penninghen Paris, France

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS: 2010 The Feast of the Damned, Art Dubai, UAE, Abraaj Capital Prize; 2009 The Dictators: Studies for a Monument, Boutique 1 Gallery, Dubai, UAE; 2007 Can You Teach Me How to Fight? The Third Line, Dubai, UAE; 2006 Paintings And Drawings (1990-2005), Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon, Masturbation, Ardbia gallery, Ireland, "Masturbation", Ardbia gallery, Ireland; 2005 Beirut el koubra, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon; 2004 Mecca Cola, Clair Obscur, Montreal, Canada No-body, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon "No-body", Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon; 2003 Non-dit, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon, Non-dit, Alternative, Montreal, Canada; 1997 Le prophète, Mogabgab Gallery, Beirut, Lebanon

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS: 2010 Con-

vergence: New Art from Lebanon, American University Museum at the Katzen Art Center, Washington, D.C., USA; 2007 Espejismos: Contemporary Art from Middle East and North Africa, International Festival of Puebla, Puebla, Mexico; 2004 Pensées et mesures, La Fabrique, Montreal, Canada; 1994 Le prophète, Espace E.S.A.G, Paris, France.



Khaled Ramadan
Born 1965 in Damascus / Syria. Lives and works between Europe and Middle East. Khaled Ramadan is an archivist, documentary filmmaker and curator. His fields of specialties are the culture and history of documentary and experimental film, with interests in the fields of alternative aesthetic and archive research.

He produces video and documentaries that explore how political, cultural, and scientific systems change the ways we think about the world around us. His films reflect the work of a film archivist not a traditional filmmaker, he often apply his theoretical knowledge in his production to learn and be informed about communities, people and the evolving social / human system. Ramadan utilizes his art as an agent for empowerment to involve viewers from all different backgrounds and communities.

Ramadan has studied at Edinburgh College of Art, and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Art. He has a master degree in architecture and Diploma in documentary film production and Ph.D. in Art History. Ramadan has occupied a variety of positions such as lecturer, advisor and curator, for among others, the Manifesta Foundation, Amsterdam; Finnish Art Council; the Danish Art Council; Norway Residency Program,

NKD; Finland Residency Program HIAP; and the Nordic Institute for Contemporary Art (NIFCA).

He curated projects and cultural programs for institutions like, Manifesta 8, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Guangzhou Triennial, Guangdong Museum of Modern Art, China, and UCCA Beijing, Danish Film Institute, Nikolaj, Copenhagen Art Center and the Nordic House Reykjavik, Iceland.

Ramadan's works are shown around the world at major festivals, TV stations and museums, like Rotterdam Film Festival; Cinema Paris; KIASMA Museum in Helsinki, Queens Museum, NY; Hamburg Film Festival; Docu-days Beirut; Video Brazil; Der Kunstwerk in Berlin; Manifesta 8; Sidney Film Festival; Milano Film Festival and San Francisco Arab Film Festival, Press TV and Al-Jazeera TV.

In 2009, Al-Jazeera TV produced a documentary about Ramadan's activities and achievement. In 2009, Ramadan was given the Achievement Award of the 11th Cairo Biennial. In 2001, he received the prestigious Hoffmyer Award.

Ramadan is member of the International Association of Curators of Contemporary Art (IKT) / www.khaledramadan.org
www.chamberarchive.org
www.chamberarchive.com



Bassem Yousri
Born 1980 in Algeria. Lives and works in Cairo / Egypt.

Bassem Yousri is an Egyptian visual artist and independent filmmaker. He was born in Algeria in 1980 and raised in Cairo, Egypt. Yousri received his BFA in painting from the School of Fine Arts in Cairo in 2003, and his MFA in painting, drawing and sculpture from Tyler School of Art, Temple University in Philadelphia in 2009. Yousri was the recipient of a Fulbright Art's Grant in 2006, and a fellowship from Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, California in 2010.

In his work, Yousri uses the whole gallery space as a canvas for his site-specific installation work where different surfaces, perspectives, and mediums overlap and intersect. In Parallel to his mixed media installation work, he creates experimental videos and documentary movies. Egyptian social and political situation, Human rights, cross-cultural dialogue, stereotypes, mass culture and the relationship between art and audience are some ideas that concern Yousri's work.

Since 2000, Yousri has participated in several collective shows in Cairo, Philadelphia, Boston, San Francisco, and his documentary film titled Keep Recording was recently shown in Murcia's Manifesta Biennale in Spain. Additionally, Yousri was commissioned to design and execute a large mural in Ephrata, Pennsylvania in 2009. He has had three solo shows in Philadelphia: at the Leonard Pearlstein art gallery at Drexel University in 2006, at the Knapp Gallery in September 2008, and at Tyler School of Art in March 2009. He was recently, in March of 2011, invited as a visiting artist at Kansas State University where he had his fourth solo show and he is currently working on a television series documenting the first three weeks of the revolution for Chanel 25, an Egyptian Television station.

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aladin

Based in London, U.K., aladin works across categories. As an interdisciplinary artist and animator his projects have been sited at: the Whitechapel Gallery, the ICA, LIFT, BAC, South London Gallery, Jerwood Space, Chisenhale Dance Space, London Design Festival, D+AD New Blood Festival, Portobello Film Festival, Festival South Bank Centre amongst others. Between 2000-4 as Co-Chair of the Cultural Strategy Group at London's City Hall he was instrumental in realising the world first integrated strategic plan for the development of the culture, media, sport, arts, heritage and tourism of a capital city. aladin also has backgrounds in strategy consultancy (advising global corporations and government bodies) and social practice (including work spanning 3 years in housing estates in South London and Montpellier, France). aladin is currently strategic counsel to Fogo Island Arts Corporation, Newfoundland, Canada in relation to regeneration of the region through social enterprise, geo tourism and arts. aladin's practice across disciplines focuses on strengthening the process by which individuals and organisations go about their work. His fundamental approach is to break down barriers, subvert conventional practices and interrogate the status quo; he places importance on responsible and sustainable governance that recognises it is answerable to wider civil society.

www.aladin.me



Martina Corgnati (Turin, 1963) is a curator and art historian. For many years dividing her time between academic activity (holding a professor chair in History of Contemporary Art at Albertina Academy in Turin), journalistic collaboration and critical involvement: writing not only for "Arte", "Flash Art", "Panorama", "Anna", "The Journal of Art", "L'Indice", "La Repubblica", "Carnet Arte", "Style" for which she was consultant director. Presently she has a column for "Chi" and writes for newspaper "La Repubblica". She contributed to the first volume of the "California Italian Studies Journal".

She wrote, along with Francesco Poli, the *Dizionario d'arte contemporanea* (Feltrinelli, 1994) and the *Dizionario dell'arte del Novecento* (Bruno Mondadori, 2001); with the same publisher recently *Artiste* (2004), dedicated to researching female artists from Impressionism to the present. She curated numerous retrospectives dedicated to masters of avant-gardes and neo-avant-gardes, such as Pinot Gallizio nell'Europa dei Dissimmetrici (Torino, Promotrice delle Belle Arti, 1992-93), Meret Oppenheim (Milano, Refettorio delle Stelline, Galleria del Credito Valtellinese, 1998/99), Gillo Dorfles il pittore clandestino (Milano, PAC, 2001) or Gianni Bertini (Pisa, Palazzo Lanfranchi, 2002). She also curated several monographs of contemporary art masters like the visual poet Lamberto Pignotti (Parise, 1996), Enrico Baj (catalogue résonnée, Marconi-Menhir, 1996), Mimmo Rotella (2000). She devotes special attention to the art of the Fifties and, from 2000 on, to non-

western art activities, especially Arab, and to the contemporary creative practices in the Mediterranean area and the Near East.

In 2001 she was appointed a member of the International Jury of the VIII Cairo Biennial, in 2003 Italian commissioner to the Biennial at Alexandria (Bibliotheca Alexandrina), in 2006 she was appointed networking curator for the First Singapore Biennale and invited 3 artists from the Arab world; her texts are included in the short guide of the event and for the occasion she gave a lecture about present art situation in Lebanon.

Later, on the same matter she curated several exhibitions and wrote several texts, scientific contributions and catalogues such as: *Mediterranean Encounters – South Est* (group exhibition including 11 artists from the Arab world: Samta Benyahia, Safaa Er-ruas, Mounir Fatmi, Khaled Hafez, Emily Jacir, Hala el Koussy, Walid Maw'ed, Moataz Nasr, Raeda Saadeh, Ahlam Shibli), Messina, Horcynus Orca Foundation, 2005; cat. *Mesogea Visions of the Landscape – the glance of the "other"* (workshops and exhibition including Akram Zaatari), Monza, Parco di Monza, 2006; cat. *Silvana Italia-Italy. Arab artists between Italy and the Arab World* (more than modern and contemporary 50 artists from Syria, Lebanon and Egypt who studied in Italy or presently live here), Damascus, Khan Assad Pasha; Beirut Villa Audi; Cairo, Horizon Gallery, 2008; and *Arab Artists between Italy and Maghreb*, Tunis, Maison des Arts, Alger, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rabat, Museum of Art; both exhibitions organized by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, curated by Martina Corgnati with the collaboration of Saleh Barakat; cat. Skira. In July 2009 these two exhibitions were presented together in the "Sala della Regina", Camera dei Deputati – Montecitorio, Rome (title changed in *Mediterranean Crossroads*, catalogue published by De Luca).

The Gates of Mediterranean – Contemporary Art from Mediterranean worlds (group exhibition including artists from the Arab world: Sonia Balassanian, Nabil Boutros, Bourak Delier, Djamel Kokene, Mounir Fatmi, Khaled Hafez, Hala el Koussy, Steve Sabella, Mounira El Solh), Rivoli (TO), Regione

Piemonte, Casa del Conte Verde and other venues, 2008; cat. Skira. She took part in *Art&Talks&Sensations*, talk show: *What Aesthetics Arab World is Expressing Today?*, Abu Dhabi, Palace of The Culture, in the context of Paris-Abu Dhabi Fair, 2008. In 2008 she was member of the International Jury of Cairo Biennale (chairman: Dan Cameron). She also curated several one-man show devoted to Arab artists and photographers in private and public galleries such as:

Khaled Hafez (san Carlo Gallery, Milan, 2006 and 2008); cat
Medhat Shafik (galleria d'Arte Moderna Spoleto, 2004; Castello di Umbertide 2007 and ot.); cat
Ahmed Askalany (Magenta 52 Gallery, Milan, 2007); cat
A photographer named Van Leo (Trieste, Castello di San Giusto, 2008); cat. Skira
Ahmed Alaa Eddin (Napoli, Castel dell'Ovo, 2008); cat
Nermine Hammam (Fondazione Horcynus Orca, Messina, 2009); cat
Sanaa Tamzini (Tunis, Musée de la Ville de Tunis, 2009); cat
Ali Hassoun. *Between the two Seas* (Siena, Magazzini del Sale, 2010); cat

She is member of the board of the magazine "Contemporary Practices Journal, Art from Middle East." Since 2000 she has been the consultant responsible for contemporary art at Horcynus Orca Foundation (Messina). She wrote the first monographic book in Italian devoted to Egyptian modern and contemporary Art: *Egypt, Mesogea, ME*, 2009.



Amira El Ahl

Amira El Ahl is a journalist working as a foreign correspondent in Egypt for Deutsche Welle, Die Welt and GEO Magazine, among others. In her work, she focuses on topics in the context of Middle Eastern culture, politics and society. Being German/Egyptian, one of her aims is to foster inter-cultural dialogue. She also has a special perspective on the roles media can play in multi cultural contexts.

Professional Experience includes: Oct. 2008 – to date Freelance Correspondent and Writer, Cairo (Egypt); Oct. 2006 – Sept. 2008 Der Spiegel (Foreign News department), Cairo (Egypt); • Foreign Correspondent, Near and Middle East; April 2006 – June 2006 Der Spiegel (Foreign News department), Cairo (Egypt); • Freelance writing and research; Jan. 2006 – March 2006 GEO (Gruner+Jahr AG&CO), Hamburg (Germany); • Worked for the magazines GEO Special, GEOlino and GEO Epoche; Jan. 2004 – Dec. 2005 Hessisch Niedersächsische Allgemeine Newspaper, Kassel (Germany); Worked as a trainee in various departments, including regional and international news, sport and culture; Oct. 2002 – Sept. 2003 Hessisch Niedersächsische Allgemeine Newspaper, Kassel (Germany); Internship at the regional news department; July 2001 – Aug. 2001 GEO (Gruner+Jahr AG&CO), Hamburg (Germany); Research, documentation and writing for the production of GEO Special Egypt; June 1998 - Aug. 1998 Toba Developers, Cairo (Egypt); Personal Assistant to the CEO; March 1998 – May 1998 St. Andrews Church, Cairo (Egypt); Teaching English as a Foreign Language to

refugees; Feb. 1992 Hessisch Niedersächsische Allgemeine Newspaper, Kassel (Germany).



Aida Eltorie

Aida Eltorie, is an independent curator and director to a newfound organization: Finding Projects Association. A Masters degree candidate in Islamic Art and Architecture at the American University in Cairo (2011), Eltorie's most recent project involves curating the late Ahmed Basiony at the 2011 Egyptian Pavilion of the 54th International Venice Biennale. Her past work includes curating the film program at Manifesta 8, under the curatorial auspices of The Chamber of Public Secrets, and the video collective Contemporary Arab Video Encounter (CAVE) at Maraya Art Centre (Sharjah, UAE). Editor-in-Chief of Contemporary Practices Journal (Dubai); Volumes 4, 5, and 6, Eltorie has worked with The Townhouse Gallery of contemporary art (Cairo) for a period of 5-7 years from when the Gallery first opened in Cairo, during which she was also involved with The International Museum of Women (San Francisco) when they first launched in March 2003. By 2007, Eltorie moved to New York whereby she was accepted as a curatorial intern at The Brooklyn Museum's Elizabeth Sackler Feminist Art Center, and continued her time there working with Bidoun Magazine for a year and then Christie's auction house with the Indian and Southeast Asian Department. She independently produced a number of international projects with artists and cultural practitioners from the Middle East and Europe, with various support granted from institutions like ProHelvetia Swiss Arts Council and The Ford Foundation. Published works can be

read in Contemporary Practices Journal, and catalogues for shows curated by Daniela da Prato on art from the Arab World and Iran in Paris; Breaking News (2008), Golden Gates (2009), and Patrizio Travagli's Monograph, MMX (Florence, 2010).



Heba Elkayal

When not protesting in Tahrir Square, Heba Elkayal is the Lifestyle Editor of the Daily News Egypt, the local partner to the International Herald Tribune in Egypt. Elkayal holds a BA in English and Comparative Literature from the American University in Cairo which she received in 2009. A journalist and writer, Heba Elkayal has spent the past three years exploring and covering the trends of fashion, food, travel, architecture and design interiors in the Middle East, while probing the universe of modern and contemporary Egyptian art. In the past year, Elkayal managed to gain in depth interviews with some of Egypt's most established and globally recognized artists, by adopting a multiple session model of recorded studio interviews and online exchanges with the creators. Though she doesn't like to label herself as a political activist, Elkayal is proud to claim herself to be a Tahrir Square citizen. She tweets at @hebaelkayal.



Mariam Hamdy

Mariam Hamdy is a trained artist, born and raised in the Middle East and currently residing in her home country, Egypt. Having completed her BA in 'Performing and Visual Arts' at the American University in Cairo, her MA in 'Contemporary Portraiture' at the Kent Institute of Art and Design, UK, she is currently pursuing her PhD focusing on 'Contemporary Egyptian Art' at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Cairo. She writes for several publications as an Art correspondent and critic, and is currently adjunct faculty at the American University in Cairo. She enjoys large designer bags and Vanilla ice cream.



Wafa Gabsi

Born in Tunisia, Wafa Gabsi studied Fine Art in Tunis and then earned her Master in Cultural studies from the University of Paris1, La Sorbonne. In the following year, Gabsi began more in-depth doctoral studies with the organization of an important field study concerning contemporary artists from Middle East. Actually, she's carrying out doctoral research on contemporary southern Mediterranean artists in the international circuit of art and cultural globalization. The central question of her research is about the issue of "arab" identity.

Gabsi works on two articles publication in 2011-2012: "Building networks of cooperation for research in the world of art. Case study in Tunisia" in REDES (Spanish scientific journal) and "La singularité artistique face au danger de l'apanage identitaire" in collaboration with the National Center for Scientific Research of Paris.

Wafa Gabsi is also a researcher in the unit of "Art and globalization"-in the Museum of Modern Art, Georges Pompidou. Recently, she participated to the symposium Exploring Mobility in the Mediterranean -in Jordan. And in October 2011, she will present a conference in the case of The German Middle East Studies for Contemporary Research and Documentation and will be then in a residence of curatorial Studies in the Node Center of Berlin.



Sara Rossino

Sara Rossino got a Degree in Arabic at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures of the University of Torino in 2008. In 2009 she got a Master Degree on contemporary history, culture and tourism in the Middle East at the same Faculty.

In 2009 she attended the Course for Museum Educators and Educational Managers at Cittadellarte Pistoletto Foundation in Biella. She attended the first year of the Specialistic Degree Course in Communication and Improvement of Contemporary Art at the Albertina Academy of Fine Arts in Torino.

She worked as assistant curator in the following exhibitions: The Gates of Mediterranean, Palazzo Piozzo, Rivoli, 2008; Giuliana Fresco. Dipingere lo spazio, Palazzo Piozzo, Rivoli; Contemporary Artists between Italy and Turkey, Yapi Kredi Cultural Center, Istanbul, 2010.

Since 2009 she has been working as a collaborator of the Education Department of Castello di Rivoli Museum of Contemporary Art, developing projects and events connected with the education to contemporary art and its languages.

Since 2010 she's been the assistant of Metroquadro Art Gallery in Rivoli (To), where she curates the exhibitions and the catalogues of the gallery.

Of her published articles and reviews can be found in Juliet Art Magazine.