STRIKE Oppose
اعكس وضعك
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A play on words of the expression “strike a pose”, the words “strike oppose” in conversation may sound like a command to model oneself for a camera snapshot, however on closer inspection the phrase comprises two words that denote resistance.

Almost everything these days is broadcast or communicated over the internet, TV or radio. Be it live news reports on natural disasters, the infidelity of a political official, an execution undertaken by terrorists, a panda sneeze getting 2.4 million hits on YouTube, or a 13-year-old’s RT "#AWESOME coffee date with BFF @HotBunny15" - we are in a constant state of posing for or assembling in an audience.

The vast intake and exchange of all forms of openly sourced content is often uncritically accepted under a guise of reality. In this exhibition we examine how Arabs are both represented and projected in the ever-streaming flow of communication. The artworks inspect different forms of opposition or acquiescence to media, government regulation, kitsch and consumer culture, vanity, social taboo, injustice and mindless hogwash.

قد تبدو عبارة "اعكس وضعك" في سياق الحديث كما لو أنها إملاء أو أمر لتعديل الوضعية التي يتخذها الهر في لحظة أمام عدسة التصوير، ولكن عندما نغوص في المعنى أكثر، فإن الكلمتين معاً تعبران عن المانع عن البقاء على وضع قائم.

في هذه الأيام يتم وثب وعرض كل شيء تقريباً عبر الإنترنت أو التلفاز، وفي الواقع نحن في حالة مستمرة من الاستعراض أثناء وقفة أمام الجمهور أو الاحتكاك بهم. إن كان ذلك متصلًا بالتفاوت الإبداعي حول الكوارث الطبيعية أو فساد مسؤول حكومي أو حكم بالإعدام ينفذه إرهابيون أو عطس حيوان يبدأ تسرحيه اهتمام أكثر من 4 مليون مشاهد على "يوتيوب".

وغالباً ما يتم قبول الكم الهائل من الأفكار السطحة من الوعي المستمر الذي يتم استعراضه وتبادله بحرية من خلال الشريعة الفي في هذا المعرض نقف على كيفية تقديم إطارات العرق في هذا المعرض من المعاني ونستحضر الأعمال الفنية الحمولة على الأشكال الأفلاطية للاعتراض أو الوفاء على ما يثبت وسائل الإعلام والتضليل الحكومية، والثقافة المتزامنة والاستهلاكية، والتكنولوجيا، أخطار الاجتماعية، والظلم، والجهنم.
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Featured artist: Interview with Zena el-Khalil
Youssef Nabil
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Abdul Rahman Al Ma’aini

In retrospect
Residua
Peripheral Ution
رسالة من مقتني الأعمال الفنية

يستمر في كل عام، يكتسب مقر إقامة الأعمال الفنية النفوذ الذي كسبه خلال على مدى السنوات، حيث يعززه ضمن تشكيل أعماله المتميزة على الساحتين المحلية والعالمية من إجازات خلال فترة قصيرة. هكذا تستمر مشاركتي في تغذية السوق بثقافة الشرق العربي. وقد أعطيت 기فرات في العالم العربي، حيث العرض الأول كان في عام 2005، ويعتبر هذه الفرصة محتوىً حياماً تعرفه في التاريخ العربي.

لقد استضافنا في صالتي عرضنا الرئيسيّ المعرض الأول هو "هيئة متحدة" في عام 2010، والذي حطت فيه الكثير من الفنانون المحليين، بما فيها: "ماي مارس" و"أرشيبلي". وقد شملت تشكيلة صناع الفن التشكيلي مثل سعادية السفير السويسري، ومن المتضمنون في المعرض:
- سعدة النومي، الفنانون، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.
- يونس رضوان، الفنانون، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.
- ولد الإسماعيلي، الفنانون، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.

في عام 2011، أطلقنا المعرض الثاني في الصالة، وتماشياً مع الأسلوب الفني، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.

وبعدها، انتقلنا إلى قالب المعرض الثالث في مارس 2011، والذي استضاف تشكيلة صناع الفن التشكيلي مثل سعادية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.

وحول يقين، يبدو أن هذه الفرصة هي النواة التي نقوم بها من خلال الفنناً، والفنانين، والفنانين، والفنانين، والفنانين. وتماشياً مع الأسلوب الفني، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.

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أما بالنسبة للنظام المستخدم، فقد أعطيت على الرأس في إعداد الكثير من الأعمال الفنية، حيث نعمل على تركيز الفنناً، والفنانين، والفنانين، والفنانين، والفنانين. وتماشياً مع الأسلوب الفني، وسماعية السفير السويسري، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ، ومع مدغشاك التاريخ.

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Oppose. When spoken, the words "strike oppose" sound like the phrase "strike a pose", a fashionable instruction to pretend a smile or expression for a camera. It is upon hearing the words separately that one realizes each word connotes resistance. Strike has a range of meanings: to hit, collide, attack; eliminate something from a record, or refrain from working to voice demands. Interestingly, the word pose, which is in a particular way of standing, sitting or positioning oneself, is embedded in the word oppose, which means to refuse or reject.

When I came up with the concept for this show in early January, I could not have fathomed that in a little over a month, two stagnant Arab regimes in Tunisia and Egypt would tumble at the hands of people. I am writing this introduction just hours after Egyptians and the world witnessed the toppling of 30-year president Hosni Mubarak, a month, two stagnant Arab regimes in Tunisia and Egypt would tumble at the hands of people. I am writing this introduction just hours after Egyptians and the world witnessed the toppling of 30-year president Hosni Mubarak, a month, two stagnant Arab regimes in Tunisia and Egypt would tumble at the hands of people. I am writing this introduction just hours after Egyptians and the world witnessed the toppling of 30-year president Hosni Mubarak, a month, two stagnant Arab regimes in Tunisia and Egypt would tumble at the hands of people. I am writing this introduction just hours after Egyptians and the world witnessed the toppling of 30-year president Hosni Mubarak, a month, two stagnant Arab regimes in Tunisia and Egypt would tumble.

This exhibition brings together numerous Arab works of art that convey themes of cultural and political resistance, as well as embedded indifference and acquiescence with the status quo. The inspiration of Arab people is conveyed powerfully in an arts-related piece "Democracy" by contemporary artist Newel Kats, who has taken part in anti-government demonstrations in Egypt to demand balanced reform that includes the country’s greater population Egyptian artist Huda Lutfi’s 2008 work "Democracy is Coming" also intriguingly expresses the popular opposition developing in the backdrop of the Egyptian regime.

Arab regimes from their inception have been characterized by their religious fanaticism, violent nature and apathy; many pieces in this show cleverly provoke viewers to rethink opinions and challenge the status quo, asking questions about the role of religion in politics, the impact of colonialism on Arab society and the legacy of the Arab Spring.

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An interview with Zena el-Khalil

with Mandy Merzaban

Lebanese interdisciplinary artist Zena el-Khalil’s vibrant body of work draws on both irony and humour to reflect the contradictions she witnesses in Beirut. Khalil experiments with painting, installation, performance, writing and mixed media, while commenting on consumerism, war, chaos and the bizarre bedlam of modern Lebanese society. El-Khalil’s blog - beirutupdate.blogspot.com - gained global acclaim during the July 2006 Israeli attacks on Lebanon, when her posts appeared on global news portals such as CNN and BBC. The Israeli invasion and persistent struggles facing Palestine have motivated El-Khalil’s large-scale mixed-media paintings. She pulls photocopied images of militiamen, women and family members together with glitter, plastic flowers, strings of lights, beads, plastic toy soldiers, coloured keychains and pink and gold fabrics. The mixture articulates paradoxes she witnesses in Beirut, where political instability persists against a backdrop of mass consumption and kitsch. Born in 1976 in London, El-Khalil has also lived in Nigeria, New York and Beirut. She published a memoir, “Beirut I Love You”, in 2008 derived from her online diary, and has exhibited work around the world.

Zena el-Khalil

Do you think a blogging has been part of your identity or your art practice?

ZEK: That specific blog was part of my art practice. It started the first day of the invasion and ended the night of ceasefire. It is a piece in itself, having a specific purpose, time and place. I only went back to it eventually because I eventually happened.

MM: Do you need to start blogging during the 2006 Israeli invasion? How did writing on an online platform effect play into your experience during this tumultuous period?

ZEK: I spent the first 15 years of my life in Lagos, Nigeria. I then went to boarding school in the United Kingdom for three years, and only moved to Beirut in 1994 when I attended the University of Beirut. After graduating with a degree in graphic design, I moved to New York City for a Masters of Fine Arts, where I focused on installation and mixed media.

MM: Why did you begin to write a blog during the 2006 Israeli invasion? How did writing on an online platform effect play into your experience during this tumultuous period?

ZEK: The very first morning that our airport was blown up, I was surprised at how little reaction there was both from the Lebanese people and the international media. That night as the bombs began to fall, I started writing emails describing my situation and emotions. I was very scared and honestly believed I was going to die that night. I felt that if I died, I at least wanted people to know how I died. I did not want to be another nameless war victim like Sharaada. I believed that by writing, I would stay alive. It felt impossible to die if so many people were listening to me. The electricity, thankfully, stayed on. Internet was working. So I kept writing. The next morning, I found a lot of responses in my inbox, encouraging me to keep writing. After three days, the Guardian newspaper syndicated the next three days of my blog to newspapers across the world. I was being followed by people as far away as Hong Hong and Russia, and even our neighbours south of the border.

In a way, writing was my way of contributing to establishing a ‘history’ of a specific time and place. Like other artists my age, I am interested in the syndrome of collective amnesia in Lebanon. The 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon saw the beginnings of Arabs reaching out to technology in order to communicate during tumultuous periods. Iran was to follow soon after with Twitter. And of course, what is happening in Tunisia and the rest of North Africa is spreading like wildfire, through the use of film and sound uploads, both on phones and the Internet.

MM: What is the main theme of your blog?

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MM: When did you begin to cultivate your distinct style? What is your rationale for materials that appear in your artwork?

ZEK: I have been interested in vivid colours, glitter and fabric for as long as I can remember. A lot of it has to do with what I experienced seeing as a child growing up in Lagos, one of the most populated and likely cities

MM: Let’s begin with the basics, where did you grow up?

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on earth. My visual vocabulary today is the result of an infatuation with life on the streets, religious shrines (Christian, Muslim, Druze and even tribal African effigies), and consumer culture. My work is about the here and now, so I believe that the materials I use should represent the present time and space I live in. I use glitter because glitter reflects light and light is “Energy”, Energy in the sense of a greater power out there. I have a very meditative relationship with my art making.

MM: Objects like toy soldiers, glitter, plastic flowers and Barbie dolls are symbols of Western consumerism and can influence the identity development of youth. A Barbie, for instance, is often depicted as the ideal female form yet the doll doesn’t stand upright. How does utilising such items as your medium relate to your observations of Beirut culture?

ZEK: I was born in war. Everything around me now is war. War has always been. I was born in 1976. I grew up watching far too much TV. I watched cartoons, music videos and wars being televised. I grew up with Madonna and Michael Jackson, Iron Maiden and Bon Jovi. Spandex, lolipops, MTV, glitter, shoulder pads, the war to control oil, Glam Rock, hairspray, Thatcher and Reagan, Barbie and Ken, to me, are the backdrop that represents a generation that grew up pink. Pink is like cotton candy. It’s fluffy and sweet. Too much of it though will leave your teeth rotten and a bad pain in your stomach. Walking along a street in Beirut, one will find a large painting of a martyr, next to a shop that sells lingerie, next to a billboard advertising beer, next to a cop holding a Kalashnikov, next to a man with a pushcart selling the latest pirated Shakira CD. I am trying to expose the superficialities of war in our region and how it affects our daily lives. My work is a by-product of both political and economic turmoil. I highlight issues of violence, gender and religion and how they find their place in our bubblegum culture.

MM: In an excerpt from your memoir “Beirut, I Love You,” you say “there is a thin line between reality and dream, the problems with trying to live in a post-war city are many. Nothing works the way it should, not even the people”. Could you elaborate on this concept in the context of your mixed-media and performance works?

ZEK: Chaos. I live in a world of chaos where dream and reality collide. Things happen that seem too absurd to be real. I don’t sleep well at night. My dreams are polluted with horrid images and experiences. It is hard to find security, so I have to create my own. The more I create, the safer I feel. The more glitter I use, the closer I am to light... to the source. I take that which is rooted in violence and then I de-contextualize it so that it no longer exists. I want to negate the negative.

MM: You run the Beirut International Marathon in a bright pink wedding dress every year. How did this start and what are you hoping to convey with this performance?

ZEK: When I began this performance piece in 2003, it was as a social experiment. I was at that age that people in this part of the world deem “marriage material”. Mothers started passing by our home to sort of “check out the goods” and see if I was fit for their sons. At first, I was horrified but then decided to go with the flow and see what I could make out of it. I created a performance piece called Wahad Areese Please! (A Husband Please!) in which I got to go out and pick my husband, and not vice-versa. I chose the Beirut International Marathon as a venue because it is the only event in Lebanon where you have people from so many different backgrounds in a common space. I bought a wedding dress; spray painted it pink, and walked the 10-kilometre course in the dress. I asked people questions about their concept and expectations of marriage. Most of the discussions were about material wealth and property. Very little spoke of love. I was also trying to open a dialogue about civil marriage (which we don’t have in Lebanon) and women’s rights to pass of nationality (which we don’t have in Lebanon).
Youssef Nabil, born in Cairo in 1972, is a celebrated contemporary Egyptian photographer who produces elaborately staged photographs that resemble the melodrama of 1950s Egyptian cinema. During this heyday of Egyptian cinema, a popular technique employed was hand colouring of photographic stills for posters and advertisements. This produced hitherto images featuring unbilled actors set against a aura of romance that captivated audiences across the Arab world. Nabil, who now lives in New York, makes use of elaborate stage designs and hand painting to capture the essence of Egyptian cinema and address contemporary themes of beauty, sexuality and cultural identity. He uses both staged and documentary photography as a tool to re-contextualise his subjects, including himself, as characters in a film. Nabil finds appeal in strong female characters including Shirin Neshat, Tracey Emin, Zaha Hadid and Fifi Abdou - all featured in his work. His work has been featured at numerous solo and group exhibitions in Europe, North America, Africa and the Middle East.

Youssef Nabil

Ehsan & Light, Cairo
Hand coloured gelatin silver print
115 x 75 cm
1993

بو يوسف نبيل

تتميز أعمال يوسف نبيل المصور الكلاسيك الشهير أنجليك عام 1949 بجودة النقطة التي تظهر الصور البيضاء والسوداء الطبيعية للسينما المصرية في الخمسينيات، والتي شاعت فيها تقنية تلوين الصور البيضاء والسوداء للرسوم البيضاء في السينما والجذب. تضمن هذه الأعمال بعض النماذج الفنية بانقتظام من الواقعية التي أثرت جعل العالم العربي، بما في ذلك الفنانين والفنانين. يعترف الفنان في بوروندي بالتأمل في التصوير السينمائي للرسوم البيضاء والرسوم البيضاء ليعكس جوهر فنون السينما، ربما من خلال موضوع تمثيل والثقافة بين الفن والثقافة العربية، وهو يعتمد على التصورات والرسوم الكلاسيكية كوسيلة لإعادة صياغة شخصية. في أعمال نبيل، تبرز في أعمال نبيل شخصيات متقلبة، ولفت في أعمال يوسيف نبيل للسماوية، مثل شيرين نشأت، وتركت أثرها ودور أدبي تجاهه. وكان قد أثار هذا الاهتمام عام 1990 بعد رفض طلبه للانتساب إلى أكاديمية القاهرة للسينما، حيث قام بتصوير أشعاره بعد إصدار أشعاره في مساحة تصوير سينمائي، وعَرَض أعمال نبيل حتى الآن من العديد من العناصر العربية والمغامرة في أوروبا وأفريقيا الأوبية، والشرق الأوسط.
Lebanon's tumultuous past and the nuances of its social, political and cultural history are aptly portrayed in the work of established Lebanese artist Fouad Elkhoury. Born in Paris in 1952, Elkhoury captures daily life in Lebanon in photographs, videos and installation works. His photographs have striven to document and respond to political conflict and popular upheaval, inspired by time spent at home in Lebanon, as well as Egypt, Turkey, Gaza and the Occupied Territories. “Born Loser”, featured here, is part of Elkhoury's 2008-2009 series, What happened to my dreams, which included 32 photographic compositions. The piece juxtaposes an image of a young boy wrapped in a black-and-white keffeya exuding the persona of a rebel, alongside a written biography in Arabic outlining how this boy's aspirations for higher education were quashed by draconian Israeli exit rules. Elkhoury published a poetic journalistic account of daily life in Lebanon, Beyrouth Aller-Retour in 1984 and co-founded the Arab Image Foundation to archive and preserve photographs of the country's collective history. He has held solo shows in Munich, Geneva, Paris, Dubai, Beirut and Tokyo.

He is a boy from Gaza, learned English by himself, applied for a Fulbright Scholarship, wrote in his application form that the only way to achieve a free sovereign Palestine was not through violence, not through negotiations, but through knowledge. He was granted the scholarship, Israel refused him the exit visa.

**Fouad Elkhoury**

Born Loser (diptych)
Ink jet print mounted on aluminium
Edition 2/5
40 x 120 cm
2008

**فؤاد الخوري**

يصور الفنان الفوتوغرافي اللبناني الشهير فؤاد الخوري في أعماله الفنية ماضي لبنان المضطرب، وتباينات تاريخه الاجتماعي والسياسي والثقافي، حيث يعكس الخوري في باريس عام 1984 فكلاً من خلال صوره الفوتوغرافية لبئر próxima الشرقية، ومكافحة الفيروس والجمال الترکبیة، و فی كلاً من خلال صوره الفوتوغرافية لبئر próxima الشرقية، ومكافحة الفيروس والجمال الترکبیة، و فی كلاً من خلال صوره الفوتوغرافية لبئر próxima الشرقية، ومكافحة الفيروس والجمال الترکبیة، و فی كلاً من خلال عکس فوتوغرافیا و PictureBox FALLER RETOUR في عام 1984 و创立阿拉伯图片基金会以收集和保存该国历史照片。他曾在慕尼黑、日内瓦、巴黎、迪拜、贝鲁特和东京等地举办个人展览。
Kuwaiti-born Palestinian photographer Tarek El-Ghoussein boldly addresses themes of Palestinian identity, displacement and the psychological affects of being barred from entering Palestine’s borders. In 2002, Al-Ghoussein launched an ongoing “Self Portrait” series where he presents an image of a lone individual (himself) wearing a traditional Palestinian headdress, the keffiyah, against various backdrops. Al-Ghoussein, born in 1962, has said he strives to reference and challenge frequent media depictions of Palestinians as terrorists, wearing all black with their heads wrapped in keffiyahs. Mass media can reinforce stereotypes, something he tackles by forcing viewers to look beyond their initial reaction and delve into alternative interpretations of the images. Quite fittingly, police suspicious of his motives arrested Al-Ghoussein while he was shooting the series. Al-Ghoussein now lives and works in Sharjah, UAE, and has resided in the United States, Morocco and Japan. His work has featured in group shows in Brussels, Singapore, Dubai, Germany, France and the United States, and is part of permanent collections in London, Copenhagen, Jordan and Sharjah.
Sharif Waked

Acclaimed Palestinian interdisciplinary artist Sharif Waked explores contemporary propaganda, politics, structural violence and prejudice in his engaging video, installation and painted works. Born in Nazareth in 1964 to a refugee family, Waked creates succinct and intrpied pieces that capture both the spectacle of Arabs and Islam in the media and the reality of injustices on the ground. In his piece "To Be Continued..." Waked re-creates the typical backdrops of a suicide bomber's farewell video. Speaking in Arabic, the man, seated with a book and a machine gun before him, evocatively recites stories from "A Thousand and One Nights". This compilation of Folktales begun with Shahrazad, who used Persian king Shahryar hoping to stop his practice of marrying woman after woman only to murder each one the following morning. Shahrazad halts this gruesome practice by doing with the king a trick each night before the story's conclusion for the following night. This continues for 1001 nights. The man in Waked's video places himself in a similarly complex scenario - positioning himself as an extremist in order to resist the practice. Waked's work has appeared in London's Tate Modern, the 2009 Sharjah Biennale, and the Seconde Riwaq Biennale in Ramallah, where "To Be Continued..." made its debut.

She said, most willingly, if this virtuous King permit me.
Huda Lutfi

Acclaimed Egyptian artist, Huda Lutfi draws inspiration from her vocation as a cultural historian, giving a unique flavour to a diverse body of artwork including painting, collage and installations. Lutfi, born in Cairo in 1948, often focuses on the historical representation of the female form in everyday life. She typically mixes historical texts with imagery taken from Pharaonic, Coptic, Arab, Mediterranean, Indian and African cultures. Working much like an urban archaeologist, Lutfi finds and utilises icons and recognisable objects - plastic dolls, broken chair legs, crystals from broken chandeliers - and re-contextualises them. In doing so, she reenacts the passing of time and reimagines cultural representations in Egypt. Here, Egyptian diva Umm Kalthoum is seen with a halo on her head that reads “Democracy is Coming”, as military planes fly overhead. The piece “makes reference to the prevalence of violence in the region, hiding behind the noble cause of democracy,” Lutfi says in an interview with Contemporary Practices. “She is watching what is going on but her eye-pupils have gone white with shock, apprehension and anxiety.” Holding a PhD from McGill University, Lutfi is an associate professor of history at the American University in Cairo.

Huda Lutfi

Acrylic and collage on paper
34 x 45 cm
2008

Huda Lutfi

الديمقراطية قادمة
لوحة من الأكريليك والكولاج على الورق
34 × 45 سم
2008
Iraqi artist Nedim Kufi uses mixed media to express his personal experience of being separated from his tumultuous homeland and settling in Europe in search of stability. Kufi was born in Baghdad in 1962 and left Iraq and his family, after serving in the Iraqi military during the Iran-Iraq war. He settled in the Netherlands and has utilized many materials and mechanisms - organic henna, handmade paper, video, animation and installation - to narrate his struggle with departing his homeland for a life in Europe. In his series "Absence," Kufi juxtaposes photographs of himself as a child at his Iraqi home of Kufa in the 1960s alongside parallel images where his persona is removed using Photoshop in order to, as he describes, "portray my feelings of void and banishment." "It is an expression of the disconnect between the home of my childhood and the country I see today as an expatriate," he said in an interview with UAE newspaper Gulf News in 2010. Kufi studied printmaking and sculpture in Baghdad before completing studies in Europe. He has participated in solo and group exhibitions across the Middle East, United States and Europe.
Kareem Risan

Iraqi artist Kareem Risan reflects on the complexities of Iraq’s turbulent cultural history through periods of tragic destruction, resurgence and growth in his paintings and book works. Born in Baghdad in 1960, Risan worked out of Baghdad amid the escalation in violence and political turmoil following the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. He left in 2005 and currently lives in exile, travelling between Jordan and Syria. Risan uses art making as a way to capture the shifting social and physical landscapes of his homeland, highlighting the carnage caused by war. His technique, drawing on the nuanced history of modern painting in the Arab world, combines regional motifs and abstract modern forms. Often weaving text and drawing, with heavy layers of paint and saturated hues, Risan narrates a story of the after-effects of war through colour and form. Layers of subdued greys, blacks and browns with splashes of blood red reflect Iraq like an injured body with an indefinite recovery. Risan has participated in Word into Art at the British Museum, as well as numerous shows in Tunisia, China, Jordan, Denmark and Paris.
Ahmed Alsoudani

Iraqi-born artist Ahmed Alsoudani has earned admiration in global art circles for his abstract and turbulent paintings that deal with war, atrocity, and the thin line separating life and death. Alsoudani, who was born in Baghdad in 1975, sought political asylum in the United States in 1999, and now lives in Berlin. His paintings and drawings ruminate on Iraq's troubled history but manage to display more universal themes of struggle, despair and destruction through their creation of ethereal landscapes and bursts of bright colour. Alsoudani includes static planes and solid shapes in his paintings, which draw inspiration from the works of 17th- and 18th-century European artists, as well as Francisco Goya, Pablo Picasso and from Middle Eastern art, literature and contemporary poetry. Major global collectors have taken note of Alsoudani's distinct and extraordinary works of art. He was named to Forbes Magazine's "Watch List" as one of the most-collectible emerging artists, and his work has been featured in numerous global shows including, notably, the Saatchi Gallery.
Fathi Hassan

Egyptian-born artist Fathi Hassan is recognised for mixed-media paintings, drawings and installations incorporating the written word. This piece is part of a series of works carrying the theme "Haram Aleikum", an Arabic phrase that can be roughly translated as 'Shame on You', but expressing broader themes of pity and forbidden practice. Hassan, who has lived in Italy since 1984, uses the series to reply to his experience as a North African residing in Europe, as well as politics plaguing West and Middle East ties. Hassan, born in Cairo in 1957 to a Nubian family, often avoids emphasizing the meaning of words in order not to restrict his intentions while heartening the imaginations of the viewer. He sometimes covers his canvases with phonemes – the smallest units of sound in a language – and often includes Arabic, Indian or Latin numerals referring to key dates in his personal life or marking historical events of the places he has lived. Hassan's work is on permanent collection at London's Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum and Washington's Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. Over 30 years, Hassan has taken part in solo and group shows across Europe, the Middle East and the United States.
Kader Attia

Born in 1970 in Paris, Algerian interdisciplinary artist Kader Attia weaves themes of geography, politics, history and gender into works using a diverse array of media, including installation, photography, video, sculpture and drawing. Attia sheds light on the complex relationship between East and West and how this has played out in Europe and its immigrant communities, creating relationships that are increasingly strained. Attia’s work is informed by his decidedly multicultural upbringing, which included travels between France and Algeria, and visits to Congo-Kinshasa and Venezuela. His work has drawn parallels between youth in Algeria and France whose dreams for a better life are often entangled with feelings of despair. Currently living and working in Berlin, Attia also considers the relationship between art and democracy, responding to conflicts facing Europe’s democratic development. But Attia is aware of the limitations of art in affecting societal change. In an interview with Art in America, Attia asks, “is a political statement in art relevant in regard to the reality of society? I don’t think so.” Attia participated in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, Art Basel Miami in 2004 and the Sydney Biennial after receiving the Abraaj Capital Art Prize in 2010.

An interview with Kader Attia

MM: You have commented that as a child it was difficult at times to integrate fully into either French or Algerian society, a common sentiment of Arab emigrants. How has your experience on the fringe of these cultures informed your practice and aesthetic sensibilities?

KA: Nowadays, issues of immigration have nothing to do with the ones my parents knew. At that time, Europe was asking, almost inviting, immigrants from all its former colonies to come and work. Today, the contrary happens: European countries, as well as the United States, are now closing their frontiers. But in both instances, racial discrimination and intolerance against immigrants have been prevalent. As I grew up between France and Algeria, I had to face two types of racism. In Algeria, as a child, I sometimes had to fight against other children who would mock my accent. But in France it was tougher. As Algeria won the war of its independence against France, racism in France ran deep everywhere, from the children in the streets to the media, the economic system, the social network and obviously religion. So this helped me to develop a strong interest in ethics. The motive of an act became more important than its result. That’s why, rather than being only aesthetic, my artworks try to point out the importance of ethics as the core foundation of any thought. Whatever the subject matter, I am always led by my ethics, often drawing on the theories of Nietzsche to Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida.

MM: What considerations do you make when conceptualising your work and how it will interact with a space?

Kader Attia

Demo(n)cracy
Light Installation
Edition 2/3
49 x 480 x 3 cm
2010
This was a strategy that summarised tribal groups and arbitrarily classified them into countries that do not dominate other cultures. Colonisers would categorise different groups in a country into manageable parts. This part of the global order and culture. In Western colonisation the idea of universality is seen in the way the West pretext to gather people around a dogma that makes them lose their identity and local history, to become a specifically from the interests of a small elitist group of economically and intellectually powerful people. It is a As a governing system invented by the West, the origin of democracy, a so-called universal project, draws profoundly with waves of popular revolts sweeping over the region? intention for this piece in the Arab world and or the West? Do you believe that its relevance resonates more in the Arab world holding regular elections has served as a guise for autocratic regimes. What is your relationship between government, people and social media in the context of the MENA region?

It's about “freedom”.

In Algeria, like in the rest of the Middle East, there is a huge gap between paternalist governments (gerontocracies), mainly led by old men, and discontented youth frustrated with the status quo. These governments are no longer only criticised by an Islamic opposition, but now also by young people. It is quite similar to what happened during the social revolution of 10 million workers and students in France in 1968. In Algeria, youth are demanding greater freedom in their everyday lives. This means an everyday life free of the socio-Islamic pressure enforced by those who own and want to maintain power, as well as to make concessions toward their Islamic opponents. For instance, a young couple on holidays cannot share the same room in a hotel if they can't prove they are married. The hotel can be closed if they are caught, because that's the law. This law, and many others, is based on a family code of another age. It is still currently applied, on the one hand, because of the Algerian gerontocracy, and on the other hand, because by upholding these types of laws, the government wants to please its fundamentalist opponents, who want a state run by the Islamic law.

Those in power govern in a way that is out of touch with the population and does not see the deep changes that are happening during the social revolution of 10 million workers and students in France in 1968. In Algeria, youth are demanding greater freedom in their everyday lives. This means an everyday life free of the socio-Islamic pressure enforced by those who own and want to maintain power, as well as to make concessions toward their Islamic opponents. For instance, a young couple on holidays cannot share the same room in a hotel if they can't prove they are married. The hotel can be closed if they are caught, because that's the law. This law, and many others, is based on a family code of another age. It is still currently applied, on the one hand, because of the Algerian gerontocracy, and on the other hand, because by upholding these types of laws, the government wants to please its fundamentalist opponents, who want a state run by the Islamic law.

Another notable feature of the artwork "Kasbah" is the paradoxical involvement of participants who walk on these makeshift roofs. Like pedestals, the roofs elevate the participants from the ground. As the walkers over the truncated homes of people, they are also in a way walking over the "heads" of the poor: this performance becomes part of the work, like in minimal art pieces such as Carl Andre’s, viewers are allowed to walk on the plinths, except that these "plinths" in "Kasbah", refer aesthetically and specifically to a reality of the world we are living in: poverty is the pedestal for any kind of bourgeois democratic society. Shantytowns are considered the lowest form of architecture, and are consequences of the modern, post-modern and contemporary worlds.

"Kasbah" installation view at the Sydney Biennale 2010

Kader Attia “Kasbah” installation view at the Sydney Biennale 2010
Manal Al Dowayan

Saudi artist Manal Al-Dowayan, born and raised in the kingdom’s Eastern Province, combines photography and mixed media to capture the often contradictory relationships between tradition, political regulation and contemporary Saudi society. In particular, Al-Dowayan exposes the ways contemporary Saudi women negotiate and balance their historical and modern roles. In her “I Am” series, Al-Dowayan appears as a doctor, construction worker, scuba diver, and other vocations typically linked to men; she effectively highlights how involved Saudi women are in numerous spheres of influence. Al-Dowayan’s work has been informed by her distinctive upbringing in an Eastern Province compound that was far-removed from the rest of the country due to its blend of expatriate and Saudi influences. Al-Dowayan, who worked full time for the national oil company, underpins conflicts between life inside the camp and life outside of its semi-enclosed walls. She has exhibited her work in New York, Brussels, the Venice Biennale, and in the UAE. Public collections, including the British Museum, display Al-Dowayan’s photographs.
Moroccan photographer Hassan Hajjaj has won extensive praise for photographs that mesh stereotypical images of Arabs with icons and brands of contemporary fashion. Born in 1961 in Larache, Morocco and living much of his life in London, Hajjaj often reflects on the relationship between the Orient and the Occident in passionate photographs that include elements of Fashion, Moroccan street culture and consumer iconography. He often depicts women donning traditional Islamic attire augmented with explicitly Western fashion labels. In doing so, he emphasizes the power of branding and leads the viewer to consider and challenge pre-conceived stereotypes. Hajjaj is also a designer, having launched his own fashion label R.A.P. in the 1980s. He designed the ‘Andy Wahloo’ bar-restaurant in Paris, and has produced furniture from recycled North African artefacts. Hajjaj has showcased his work in group exhibitions in Belgium, London and Dubai, as well as held solo shows in Casablanca, Marrakesh, Mal, London and Dubai.

حسن حجاج

حظي المصور الفوتوغرافي المغربي حسن حجاج بشهرة واسعة اكتسبها بفضل أعماله الفوتوغرافية التي تجمع الصور النمطية للتربية مع الرؤوس والعلامات التجارية للبوتيك العصري. وقد ولد حجاج عام 1961 في مدينة العرائش الغربية، وعاش معظم حياته في لندن، وغالبًا ما يركز في عمله على تعزيز العلاقة بين الشرق والغرب عبر صور فوتوغرافية مصممة بالعابدة والتشكل على عناصر من الموضة والشارع المغربي، والعلامات التجارية.

وغالبًا ما يحرص حجاج في أعماله على تصوير نساء يرتدين النشاط الإسلامي التقليدي، ولكن مع نسج مماثل لمثله في العواصم، طابعًا هذه العناصر على الشارع، والذي يمثل النسج إلى إطارات العلامات للإمبراطورية العربية. حيث، يؤكد الفنان بهذه الطريقة على قوة تأثير العلامات التجارية، ويدعو النسج إلى إعادة التفكير في الأحكام النمطية والصور النهائية. يعتبر حجاج مصممًا بيرونيًا حيث أطلق في التصاميم عبارة كلفية ما، كما صمم المكان الخاص به مطعم بارع وغليظ في باريس، وقام بإبداع فن捐 ومبادرات للبراءة المصنوعة في غرب إفريقيا، وقد أشرس أعمال حجاج ضمن معارض جماعية في بلجيكا، ولندن، وبينما كما أقام معارض فردية في الدار البيضاء، ومراكش، ولندن، ومايكل، وبي بي.
Dr. Ahmed Mater

Saudi Arabia’s Ahmed Mater is a practicing medical doctor in the southern city of Abha who has created a body of incomparable artworks that examine modern medicine and Islamic faith. Painting, calligraphy, photography, installation and performance art all figure in Mater’s portfolio, which merges his dual passions for science and art, in a distinctly Arabic manner. Mater is recognised for a piece that he exhibited in the British Museum’s “Word into Art” exhibition in 2006 depicting an X-ray print of a torso with the image of the Kaaba positioned in the place of the human heart. Born in 1979, Mater uses x-ray images that have been discarded from the hospital where he works and paints on paper prepared with tea and pomegranate – traditionally used on religious manuscripts - to achieve a luminous effect. “So many religions around the world share this concept of giving light, not darkness. It is one religious idea that has reached mankind through many different lumières,” Mater told Nafas art magazine in 2008 of some of his pieces. Mater is from the traditional village of Rujal Al-Ma’a in Aseer, in the mountainous area of Saudi Arabia, which has also informed his work. His pieces have been displayed in solo and group shows in Turkey, Germany, Italy, Egypt, the United Kingdom and the Gulf region.

Dr. أحمد ماطر

أندم الفنان السعودي أحمد ماطر الذي لا يزال يجمع بين عمله كفنان ومهنته كطبيب في المستشفى المحلي في مدينة أبوه. مجموعة لا مثيل لها من الأعمال الفنية التي تجرب بين الطب الحديث وعناصر من الدين الإسلامي. وشاع ماطر على توظيف الرسم، الخط، التصور، والتركيب، وفهوف الأداء في محفظته الفنية التي تعكس شعفه بالعلم والمعرفة بأسلوب أصيل وسرير. وجعل أكثر ما أشتهر به الفنان ماطر هو العمل الذي شارك به في معرض كلمات في الفني مبهر الفن البريطاني في عام 2006، والذي يجسد فيه فنون بسيطة على إنسان ظهر فيه الكعبة الشرفية مكان القلب.

ويستعمل ماطر الملود عام 1979 في إبداعاته صور الأشعة البيئية التي يتحاول من خلالها في المستشفى جريسة على أوراق معدة بالشاي والرماد، وبأسلوب نحت الأقططات البيئية الفنية. وذلك من أجل إضفاء لون أكبر إضافةً إلى الدكتور ماطر. صورة أمامية عام 2008 في مقدمة حديث عن بعض لوحاته. "يشترك الكثير من الدوافع في العالم في فهم شارك التصور والمشاركة في العالم، أو ما نعرفه بـ 'الروحية'، كما استنفدو الدكتور أحمد ماطر كثيرًا أعماله من عسير وفلسطين". وهو ما komt من معرض فردي ومن ثم مع不同类型 في منطقة عسير الجبلية بالسعودية، وقد استعرض أعماله في معارض فنية وجماعية في تركيا وألمانيا وإيطاليا وعشر والملكة المتحدة وأوكرانيا.

Dr. Ahmed Mater
Illumination (Head On)
Offset X-ray film print, Gold leaf, Tea, Pomegranate on paper
55 x 105 cm
2009

أحمد ماطر
"التشميش (الرأس)")
الOFFSET بين الصورة بالأشعة السينية مطبوعة بأسلوب "خشارة ذهب، رقاقة ذهب، شاي، رمان، حبر صيني من سوق الأرشيفية".
55 سم × 105 سم
2009
Abdul Rahim Sharif

One of Bahrain's foremost artists is Abdul Rahim Sharif, whose paintings have expressed such themes as alienation, indifference, hardship, introversion and emotional disconnection using vibrant colours. Born in 1954 in Manama, Sharif has also lived in New York. Considered by Christie’s as one of their leading artists, Sharif’s paintings are a mixture of vibrancy and despondency; he often creates an underlay of muted hues that bleed through surfaces of muted and diluted natural tones. This technique creates an unstable undercurrent of colour, form and texture. His work has been exhibited in the Middle East, Europe and Asia, including solo exhibitions in Bahrain, New York, Sydney and Paris. A founding member of the Bahrain Arts Society, Sharif completed a Masters of Fine Arts at New York’s Parsons School of Design in 1978.

Abdul Rahim شريف

عبد الرحيم شريف، من أبرز الفنانين البحرينيين بأعماله التي يستخدم فيها ألوانًا نابضة بالحياة لتغمير أنماط مثل الاغتراب، واللامبالاة، والانفصال العاطفي ووصفه بـ "شريف، الذي عاش في نيويورك سابقاً كواحد من أهم فنانيها بلوحاته التي أثرت بين عناصر اللونية والشكلية، حيث تقوم تقنية هذا الفنان على إيجاد صقلية من الألوان الباهتة التي تسكن بين تشكيلية اللون النابضة بالحياة، الأمر الذي يكسب اللوحة طرازاً مميزا من الألوان والأشكال والتركيب السهوي، وقد تم عرض أعمال عبد الرحيم شريف في الشرق الأوسط وأوروبا وأفريقيا وشارك في معارض فنية بالبحرين ونيويورك وميدن وباريس، وهو عضو مؤسس في جمعية الفنانين البحرينيين، وشريك في معارض فنية بالبحرين ونيويورك، وينضب شريف في معرض فني بالبحرين ونيويورك، وهو عضو مؤسس في جمعية الفنانين البحرينيين، وقد حاز عام 1998 على شهادة الماجستير في الفنون الجميلة من "مدرسة بارسون للتصميم" في نيويورك.

Abdul Rahim Sharif
Pink Bathtub
Oil on canvas
120 x 140cm
2007
Moroccan artist Zakaria Ramhani creates forceful images of faces on canvas by using Arabic calligraphy, sometimes combined with French and English text, to create layers of readable and non-readable prose shaped into faces. Ramhani has an original style; the colourful mesmerising portraits he produces draw in the viewer and are meant to evoke feelings of idleness and desolation. Born in 1983 in Tangier, Morocco, Ramhani’s father was a painter who became famous for Moroccan and traditional paintings of scenery, portraits and still-life images. In comments to Art Space gallery, Ramhani said last year: “I use the plasticity, symbolism and aesthetic of writing to reveal and explain the notions of identity, culture and art that are generated by language. In concert with Arabic, the French language became a reality, my reality: the confrontation of cultures that is my life.” Ramhani, who participated in a creative residency at the Cité Internationale des arts in Paris in 2006, has taken part in numerous exhibitions, among them in Paris, Dubai and Egypt.

زكريا الرمحاني

يدأب الفنان المغربي زكريا الرمحاني على رسم صور قوية لوجه على القماش باستخدام في الخط العربي، الذي قد يترافق أحياناً مع تصميم إبداعي أو فني، بهدف إتاحة لوحات تشكيلية مميزة للوجود، وقد تضاف معها تشكيلات تشكيلية على نصوص ترجمة انجليزية أو فرنسية كجزء من إبداعه. هذه اللوحات تتمتع بصبغة البساطة، وتبدو إلهامًا لبيئة الرمسيات التي تشكل بها النحت. تفتقد هذه اللوحات الرمزية للوردي، والسرير، والطبيعة والفلكلور، وتثبت أن النصوص الفرنسية، والعربية، أو الوقائع، أو النصوص القصصية، أو المعاني الإبداعية، تكون جزءًا حيويًا من اللغة، والثقافة…” معروض في معرض “ذكرى الرمحاني” الذي تُشارك فيه اللغة العربية فيัน، تُظهرها في النحت، وتشير إلى أن اللغة العربية هي علاقة من الثقافات المتعايشة، والثقافة العربية، والثقافة الفرنسية، والألوان، في معرض “ذكرى الرمحاني” الذي تجسد شخصياته من خلال قلوبها، وتعبر عن نمط الحياة والثقافة، وتعبر عن تأثير اللغة الفرنسية، والعربية، على اللغة العربية، وتعبر عن العلاقات الفنية والثقافية، داخل هذه التصورات التي تُنحت بها لوحات “ذكرى الرمحاني”.

Zakaria Ramhani
Faces of your other 27
Mixed Media on Canvas
240 x 200cm
2009
Abdul Rahman Al Ma’aini

Emerging Omani artist Abdul Rahman Al-Ma’aini employs intricate geometric design and expressive brush techniques in his vibrant and colourful paintings. Born in 1975 in Oman, Al-Ma’aini uses freehand drawing with staggering perfection in his abstract painting, while brilliant colours explode from the canvas, creating visually stimulating works. The Dubai-based artist, a member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society, has displayed work at various group shows in the UAE. This elaborate and atypical piece features what appears to be a man captured in an obscure pose and decked in women’s makeup. Painting in a bold, expressive style, Al-Ma’aini has gained acclaim for his artwork, which have been featured in group exhibitions in Switzerland, Spain, Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Abdul Rahman Al Ma’aini

Figure
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 90 cm
2003

عبد الرحمن المعيني

يوظف الفنان الإماراتي الناشئ عبد الرحمن المعيني، المولود في عمان عام 1975، التصميم الهندسي والتقنيات الفريدة التعبيرية في لوحاته المفعمة بالالوان حيث يستخدم الرسم اليدوي بإتقان نادر في لوحاته التجريدية. يبدع أعماله بأسلوب تصويري مختلف تماماً في إطاره حيث يبدع المعيني حالياً في الإمارات وهو عضو في جمعية الإمارات للفنون التشكيلية. وقد اشاع أعماله في معارض جماعية مختلفة في دولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة وظهر في عمله الفريد وغير التقليدي هذا شخص يبدو كأنه في وضعية غامضة، وينتسب لفنابة عاصمة وأعماله تظهر في وضعية غامضة وأعماله تظهر في وضعية غامضة. ويعتبر الفنان المجيد عبد الرحمن المعيني أحد رواد الفنون التشكيلية ونماذجه الفنية تم عرضها في العديد من المعارض الجماعية في سويسرا، إسبانيا، والشام، وبيرو، وأبوظبي.
residua refers to the solid particles that remain after a liquid has evaporated. The process involves the alteration in form of a substance over a period of time and under a set of conditions. The resulting particles can be visible or invisible, scattered or composed – and all of them are in a constant state of flux.

In this exhibition, we examine how contemporary Arab cultures are continuously transforming. Bonds between language, politics, geography and public memory are constantly loosened and strengthened, dissolved and restored with shifts in circumstances and attitudes. The artists in residua reflect on the processes and experiences that re-define Arab identities.

Arabs are confronted with challenges to their cultural identity due to many life experiences, among them: immigrating to a new country and leaving family behind; translating colloquialisms from one language to another such that their full meaning is lost; re-mapping territorial borders over years of conflict; demolishing old buildings and using the rubble to build new ones; and the rise and fall of public icons and political regimes.

These human experiences all leave behind residue that inexorably takes a place in re-moulding contemporary Arab identity.
Peripheral Vision

Artists featured in Barjeel Art Foundation’s inaugural exhibition, Peripheral Vision, examine what is beyond the direct line of sight, unveiling truths about their unique Arab identities and the complex struggles facing their communities and countries. Works in the exhibition expose different aspects of social, political and geographical landscapes that may be obstructed and out of focus. In doing so they also express and realise the contradictions and complexities of contemporary culture.

Paintings, photographs and sculptures created by artists from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria and the United Arab Emirates are featured in this exhibition. Depicting realities that lie just outside direct vision, these contemporary Arab artists are in many cases informed by experiences they have encountered on the margins of society. Standing on the edge looking in, they are able to bring to light realities with which entire communities can identify.

The artists use a variety of media - paint, cement, rubber stamps, photography, newspaper, palm leaves - to offer their own understandings of Arab identity, gender relations, memory, place and geographical boundaries.

رؤية محيطية

يستضيف العرض الأول لمؤسسة بارجيل للفنون - الذي يحمل اسم "رؤية محيطية" - مجموعة من الفنانين الذين يعبرون ما وراء الصورة السطحية والشورى ليعكسوا حقيقة هوياتهم العربية والتحديات التي تواجههن بروحهم وهم مجتمعون. ينطلقون من هؤلاء diligentlyطلقون اللوحة، والصور، والمنحوتات التي تضمن للبقاء في الدراسة والسياسة والتاريخية، كما يعبرون أيضا عن مبادئ الفقر والتحديات التي تتضمن بإرزاع اللغة العربية، في يقدم للعديد من الفنانين والصور الفوتوغرافية والتحديث التي أدناها فيناء من مصر والعراق وسوريا والبحرين، ودولة الإمارات العربية المتحدة، والتي يحمون فيها جوانب العالم الغامضة أو فيناءون هؤلاء الفنانين الغاصرين الأهالي من الجتور التي خاضوها على عامل السمع، وصولا إلى نتائج إبداعية تعبير عن وقائع قد لا يتم التعرف عليها.

ويستخدم الفنانون أنواع متعددة من المواد في أعمالهم، مثل الطلاء، والإسماع، والأحجار النارية، والصور الفوتوغرافية، والورق، وأوراق التحليل وذلك بهدف التعبير عن مفاهيمهم الخاصة للكتابة العربية، والعلاقات بين الجنسين، والذاكرة، والطبيعة، والواقع الاجتماعي.