

30 APRIL - 21 SEPTEMBER 2024

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b. BEIRUT ART CENTER
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Floor Plan

Foreword

Conceived as a way to reflect on the 15 year anniversary of Beirut Art Center and what it can continue to offer, FORESHADOWS includes five new commissions that reflect and speculate about a present and a future. The artists have been invited with the prompt to think of the past in the present, the present in/and the future. While the exhibition is not thematic, one loose common thread that has emerged between the commissions is primarily encapsulated in a concern for “Energy”. Energy as something that is constant, that is neither created nor destroyed or disappears but that constantly transforms according to surrounding forces and conditions. The works presented reflect on personal stories and experiences over time, as well as preoccupations with lived reality and a hereafter in continuous flux.

CURATED BY **Reem Shadid**

Artists

Afram
Alaa Mansour
Karine Wehbe
Maissa Maatouk
Roy Samaha



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|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | الاء منصور
Alaa Mansour | 3 | كارين وهبه
Karine Wehbe | 5 | روي سماعة (الميزانين)
Roy Samaha (mezzanine) |
| 2 | أفرايم
Afram | 4 | ميساء معتوق
Maissa Maatouk | | |



Petrochronology

2024

Pencil on Paper

100 x 70 cm each

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

A cosmic egg. A Tellurian entity. An ancient technology. A Pipeline Crawler. An alien lubricant. A black blob from the sun. Hydrocarbon corpse-juice. The Devil's excrement. A war machine. An autonomous chemical weapon. A narrative organizer of fiction and lies, perhaps concealing a deeper truth; a conspiracy maybe?

Oil emerges as the return of the repressed, an inexorable eruption from subterranean depths, a complex of holes or voids woven through the capitalist economy exploiting the laboring spine as a parasite uses its host. Petroleum exerts clandestine influence behind the scenes, accelerating the Tellurian Omega towards its inevitable climax, consuming the hosts within the dying, combustive embrace of a solar inferno.

Within this labyrinthine web, what if, in its slumber, the dormant sentience lurks, scheming invasion through its latent agency.

To the legion of outside forces, cryptic explorers, and obscure luminaries. All the avatars that got themselves entangled without whose interference and derailment these works would not exist.

Biography

Afram is a transdisciplinary artist employing multiple mediums in their practice. They are a 2023 Ashkal Alwan Home Workspace Program Fellow, with their work published by Samandal Comics, Khabar Keslan, Haven's ManbouZine, Mazza Zine, and included in the 8th annual Mahmoud Kahil Book and The Cooper Union Archives & Special Collections.



Untitled (The Eclipse of The Heart)

2024

2 channel video installation, sound

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

“Is this a dream or reality?” she asked. It was the first day of the eclipse of the heart. The screen transformed, becoming porous, and all images dissolved into swirling liquid streams. The empire had unleashed a chronospatial annihilation that pulverized the fabric of time and space, laying siege to the very essence of the future. No images were left, only witnesses. It all speaks volumes of the destruction we now face. Yet, the machine couldn’t recognise it. What do you see when you watch death on screen?

Biography

Born in Kinshasa in 1989, Alaa Mansour is a Lebanese research-based artist and filmmaker, currently working in Lebanon. Her debut documentary film Ainata (2018), shot in south Lebanon, is a seminal work nurturing her interest in archives. She is the recipient of the Han Nefkens Foundation—Fundació Antoni Tàpies Video Art Production Grant 2023, in collaboration with NTU Centre for Contemporary Art, Singapore; WIELS Brussels; Museum of Contemporary Art and Design (MCAD) Manila; and Art Jameel, Dubai.

Calling upon a speculative archeology, her work questions the power of images and their relation to History, exploring the construction of individual narratives in the midst of collective socio-political mythologies.

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Phase 1: We, humans are species very finely attuned to our physical environment

2024

Tables, images, memorabilia, sound and video

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

Are we able to project ourselves into the future? Are we able to project images?

The future is thought of as having a past and a present; it only exists in a form of linearity. The future is conscious and does not belong to the unconscious. Visiting the past is an attempt to integrate the past into the present. The unconscious, on the other hand, has no linearity; time does not exist. What has been experienced in the past continues to resonate in the present in various forms. As I reimagine my work tables, each of which has carried a past, a present, and a future in my conscious mind. I reimagine feelings, thoughts and projections. Sitting on each table, working, writing, drawing, talking on the phone or only looking at the window was defining a time. I had 7 tables, 7 lamps, sometimes the same following me from a place to another. It reminds me of a belief that said that the cat reincarnated six times as an animal, and the seventh time, it reincarnated as a human. (Maybe the final destination of future is finally being human.)

Biography

Karine Wehbé was born in Beirut. She graduated with a BA in Art Direction and Graphic Design from ESAG Penninghen, Paris. Wehbé's work constitutes intimate and public chronicles, drawing on childhood and adolescent experiences, cinematographic and musical influences, architecture and urbanism, various histories and the mechanisms of memory and nostalgia. These components blend fiction and reality, reshuffling moments and geographies. Her methodology starts by dissecting and analysing memory, then reorganising, compartmentalising, fictionalising and documenting it within its broader historical and geographical context.



“Floating Lights” Series

2020 - ongoing

Video Installation

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

The Floating Lights series stems from an ongoing cartographic video practice, focusing on the infrastructural dimension of the collapse, namely on the ways in which the blackout affects the city and our perceptive modalities in and of the city. As the informal, private economies and DIY infrastructures rapidly established throughout Beirut rapidly change in response to the collapse, every year, the artist captures a sequence of her ballad while driving around the city at night. With every new sequence, the artist re-examines and underlines the aesthetic and political change that is deriving from the state of management of Beirut's Infrastructure.

Floating Lights I: Collapse of the state

2022

Video

12 min. and 37 sec.

Filmed during the total electricity blackout of 2021, Maatouk filmed a single traveling sequence to capture the remaining flickering lights in the city, mainly coming from cars. The work that transpired is a tableau that uses sections from the footage taken that night. Darkness becomes the paste that holds all the fragmented parts of Beirut together, it is the potential to form a unity between places divided by the sectarian grid. All these sections each carry its own rhythm resulting in a unified condition with a dispersed effect.

This work was developed with support from Akademie Der Künste.



Floating Lights II

2023

Video

4 min. and 52 sec.

In 2023, streetlights emerged in some parts of Beirut. The void left by the public sector led NGOs, politicians, and individuals to install new street lights by connecting them to private generators or solar panels. The fragmented logic of urban lighting is visible in the different color temperatures of street lights. The video suggests that these lights illuminate nothing but themselves, and produce a black background that connects streets lit by similar color temperatures. The result is a continuous sequence and the possibility to travel seamlessly between different parts of the city that are usually physically distant from one another.

SOUND BY Aia Atoui

This work was developed during the Saradar Foundation residency program With the support from Akademie Der Künste.

Biography

Maissa Maatouk (b. 1992) is an artist living and working in Beirut. Taking the form of videos, her work looks for aesthetic strategies to overcome the neutralizing effect related to sectarian power. Video becomes a way to act in the state of suspension to generate time and space outside of the power-structure causing it. She graduated with a Bachelor degree (2014) and a Masters degree (2017) in Product and Global Design from Académie Libanaise des Beaux-arts, was a 2020–2019 fellow at Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program

Special Thanks

Tarek Abbas

Lamia Abukhadra

Fares Chalabi

Gabriella Choueifaty

Sandra Dagher

Vida Guzmić

Joana Hadjithomas

Alia Hamdan

Khalil Joreige.

R O Y S M A
O Y M H A
روني سماحة

Various Works

2018-2024

Multimedia Installation

Dimensions variable

MEME XOXO

2024

2-channel video installation

8 minutes

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

- Channel 1: edited sequence of curated memes and other internet oddities including shit posts (online all mine: collected during the 2020 lockdown, the year that ended the century).
- Channel 2: Couple hugging silently, caressing slowly, staring at each other and kissing.

Performers: Ahmad Baydoun, Lama Kandil

RG_11: Tarfih Jazmur

2024

Shortwave Electro-culture installation

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by Beirut Art Center

An aluminum magnetic loop antenna fixed in a plant pot filled with soil and a rhizomatic plant (ginger): the plantation will be ionized and entertained by the electromagnetic harmonics field channeled through the radio antenna, flooded from above with a magenta full spectrum growing light.

R O Y S A
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Y سوا حة
A M H A

Sun Rave

2018

Video

11 minutes

Commissioned by BEMA

A reinterpretation of rumors heard around an apartment, which until 1989, when a major solar storm erupted, had been inhabited by a strange couple. Some suspected them of being undercover agents while others said they were just some new age occultists. The work addresses the relationship between layers of history, outstanding events in nature and ancient cyphering of language; how the cycles of the Sun's unpredictable release of energetic flares affect the magnetic fields of the earth and influence radio transmissions, communication and reason on a mass scale.

Biography

*Roy Samaha is a Lebanese artist living in Beirut. His videos have been shown in various film festivals and contemporary art exhibitions around the world since 2002. Part of his field research on electronic media in correlation with altered states of perception and a fascination with anthropological studies and accounts about shamanistic rituals and aesthetics, he got involved, parallel to his art practice, in the broadcasting and news industry, where he worked from 1998 to 2008. He uses these influences to explore the boundaries of cinematic language, the perception of reality and the memory of personal objects in works such as *Untitled for Several Reasons* 2003 and *Sun Rave* 2019. He got his M.A. degree in film studies in 2007 at USEK, Lebanon.*

Exhibition Team

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Myriam Khoury

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Ziad Chakaroun

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Operating and Management)
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Khaled Hamdoush
Youssef Hamdoush
Jamal Hadid
Taleb Ahmad Al Saj
Atallah Al Serhan
Hussein Al Hussein
Ahmad Saleh Al Ahmad

Special Thanks

The Ballroom Blitz
Lamia Abukhadra

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