



Annual Report

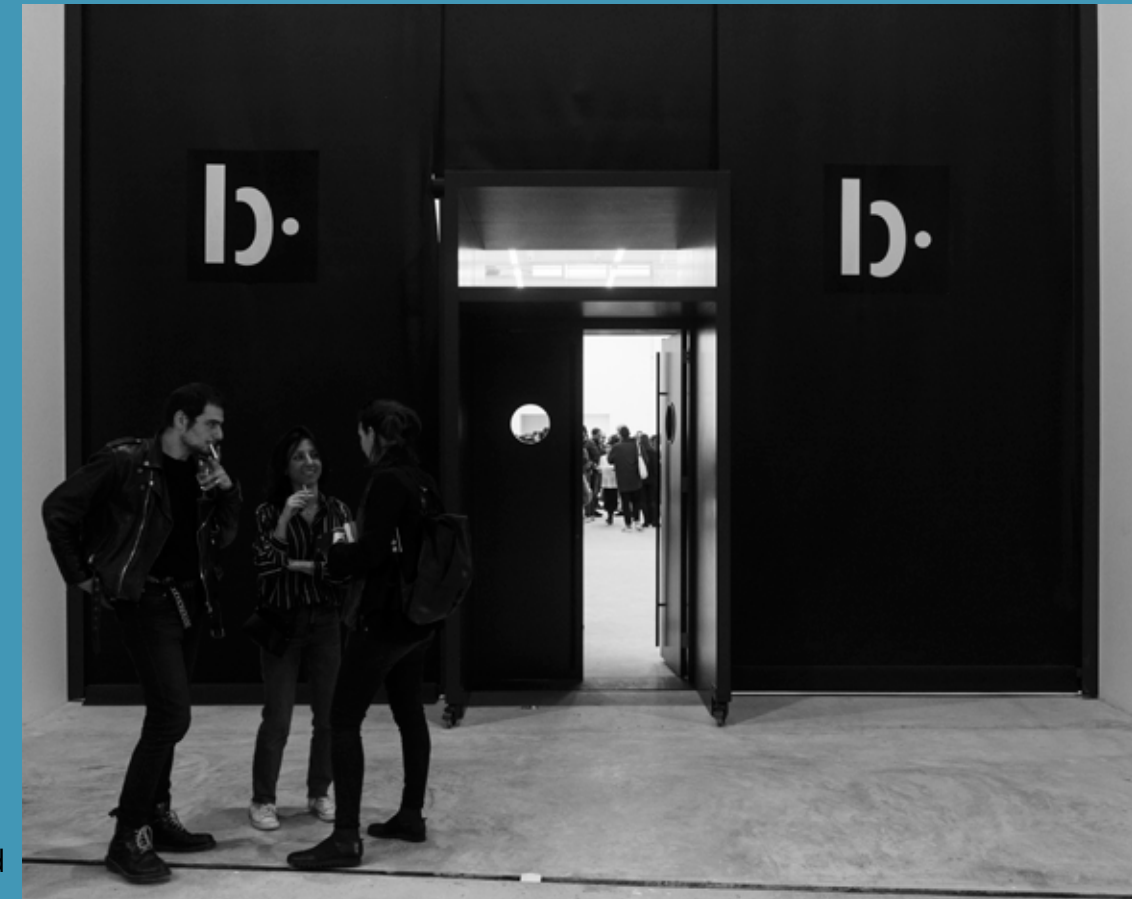
2019

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To call 2019 a year of change is definitely an understatement. It has been a year of transformation, adaptation, upheaval, and turbulence. Beirut Art Center entered its new decade with changes on every front.

We left our much beloved old space that had established itself as a landmark in the cultural scene to a new space that opened the center to so many possibilities. The rehabilitation of this former apple storage was generously designed by Bernard Khoury and his team.



In six short months, we opened the new location and celebrated 10 years of BAC.

The year also marked staff changes. Marie Muracciole ended her 5-year tenure and passed the torch to the new direction. Rana Nasser Eddin, a previous gallery director, joined the team mid February as administrative director, and an open call for an artistic director starting at the beginning of the year and ended by May.

After many promising applications, the board's artistic committee went with the unexpected but exciting selection of an artistic director duo with artists Haig Aivazian and Ahmad Ghossein. The vision the artists have will bring on a new era to BAC's identity and program. Their proposal addressed issues that the country and the region have been experiencing on social, political, economic, and environmental fronts. With their direction starting in January 2020, they will focus on how the Beirut Art Center can be an active cultural contributor to the community, economy, and ecosystem.

Touché! (gesture, movement, action) was the first show to inaugurate the space. The exhibition was curated by Marie Muracciole, as her farewell show, and Christoph Wavelet, who specialized in performance and theater arts. Touché! opened to over 700 visitors who enthusiastically came to the vernissage to discover the new space and the various new projects. The show explored the physical and sometimes unseen gestures in art, performance and music. It included 25 artworks with key works by internationally renowned artists like Roman Signer, Mona Hatoum, Tacita Dean, and Manon De Boer along side younger artists who made ambitious on-site installations such as Mathilde Lequenne, Hiba Farhat, and Ali Eyal.

The show also had a rich parallel program with musical performances by Sharif Shenaoui, Jad Atoui, Shakeeb Abu Hamdan, and a newly commissioned sound installation and performance by Jana Saleh. The opening visitors witnessed a performance by Rania Stephan and a special adaptation of Oskar Schlemmer's Stabdanz performed by Berlin based dancer, Alma Taospern.

The show to follow was How to Reappear: Through the Quivering Leaves of Independent Publishing curated by Ala Younis and Maha Maamoun, the artists behind the independent publishing initiative, Kayfa-ta. The exhibition explored publications through both a historical and visual arts perspective with 47 different participants. It brought together the publishing initiatives that highly influenced illustration, education, literature, and poetry like Dar el Fata el Arabi, Post-Apollo Press, and the journals of Mohammed Melehi with new publishing endeavours like 98weeks, Jaffat el Aqlam, Zigg, and Plane.

Along side these publications were artists' own take on the practice of independent publishing with specially commissioned works including those by Raafat Majzoub, Hussein Nassereddine, Hala Bizri in collaboration with Jana Traboulsi, and Bernhard Cella, who also issued an open call for no-ISBN art books from the region. The show also revived the artist books of many from region like Jamil Molaeb, Aref el Rayess, Ginane Makki Bacho, and Khaldoun Chichakli. The show was highly praised and has since been included in exhibitons in Abu Dhabi and Amman, and Kayfa-ta will publish a new edition with the same title.





We rounded off the year by hosting exhibitions for Ashkal Alwan's Homeworks 8. The space had two shows along with 2 performances throughout the program. The larger hall housed a group show curated by Nora Razian titled I will return, and I will be millions and included the works of Mona Hatoum, INTERPRT, Candice Lin, Dala Nasser, Tuan Andrew Nguyen, and Jenna Sutela. The other exhibition space has a solo presentation by Charbel – Joseph H. Boutros titled The distance between your eyes and the Sun. The show opened on the fateful evening of October 17.

A few days later, Ashkal Alwan announced that it has suspended all HW8 events. Within the first week, the various cultural institutions including BAC came together and pledged their support of the people's revolt and joined the general strike. As the economic and political situation became further exacerbated, we resumed our activities internally, doing some much needed archiving and inventory work, and kept the exhibition on for those interested. We ended the year with another bump, where we had an unfortunate flash flood that filled the entire space with water. Luckily, the damage was contained and everyone was safe.

The year started off with a bang and certainly ended with an even louder one. 2020 holds many new exciting chapters for BAC and country. Thank you all for being part of it!

17.04.2019 | 22.06.2019

b.

Touché!

GESTURE, MOVEMENT, ACTION

Curated by Marie Muracciole
and Christophe Wavelet

مَاس!

إيماءة، حَرَكَة، فِعْل

من تنسيق ماري موراكسيول
وكريستوف ويفليه

Majd Abdel Hamid · Francis Alÿs ·
George Awde · Yto Barrada · Mathilde Besson ·
Ismail Bahri · Manon de Boer · Tacita Dean ·
Ali Eyal · Omar Fakhoury · Hiba Farhat ·
Ghida Hashisho · Mona Hatoum · Ana Jotta ·
Hassan Khan · Nesrine Khodr ·
Joachim Koester · Arthur Ligeon ·
Pierre Leguillon · Mathilde Lequenne ·
Dala Nasser · Roman Signer · Rania Stephan

مجد عبد الحميد · فرانسيس أليس ·
جورج عوده · إيتو برادة · ماتيلد بسون ·
إسماعيل بحري · مانو دي بور · تاسيتا دين ·
علي عيال · عمر فاخوري · هبة فرحات ·
غيدا حشيشو · منى حاطوم · أنا يوتا ·
حسن خان · نسرين خضر · يواخيم كوستر ·
ارتور لجيون · بيار لوجيون · ماتيلد لكان ·
دالا ناصر · رومان سجنر · رانيا ستفان

Roman Signer, Wasserstiefel 1986 (Photo: Marek Rogowiec)

Artists

Basel Abbas

Ruanne Abou Rahme

Majd Abdel Hamid

Francis Alÿs

George Awde

Yto Barrada

Mathilde Besson

Ismail Bahri

Manon De Boer

Tacita Dean

Ali Eyal

Omar Fakhoury

Hiba Farhat

Ghida Hachicho

Mona Hatoum

Ana Jotta

Hassan Khan

Nesrine Khodr

Joachim Koester

Arthur Ligeon

Pierre Leguillon

Mathilde Lequenne

Dala Nasser

Roman Signer

Rania Stephan

With the exhibition Touché! (Gestures, Movement, Action), Beirut Art Center touches a new base – in the actual sense of the word, as it now inhabits its new space – and expands the experience of art in new and different ways, thus enabling us to provide a temporary and open community while maintaining our diversity.

In order to bring forward experimentation in art practices, Touché! highlights the gestures that give form to these practices. In a large sense, gestures are constituents of the life and history of human societies, and play a role as decisive as words or speech. Without them, there neither would be a shared imagination nor collective history. Thus, whether prescriptive or discursive, normative or emancipatory, gestures seek the involvement of both senses and meaning. In a manner similar to language, they are inherent to any social contract, and to the possibility of behaving socially.

In the realm of art in particular, each gesture brings into play the sensible and the intelligible: body and thought cooperate in solidarity. Should the body intervene, it does so apart from any “image”, and in accordance with an effort that targets the specific and the singular, rather than the generic. For it is at this price that an artistic gesture is capable of invention: dedicated, intended, it invites its recipients to participate in the free interplay of reciprocity. At the same time, it proffers the matter of its reciprocity: its power of transformation engages artists and visitors alike – opening the way for gestures to come.

The artists invited here may be engaged in minute movements or larger actions, or may have produced almost invisible traces or deliberately discordant representations. You will witness recordings of gestures, activating historical dimensions through representations of a body in action – with films and photographs such as those included in the works of Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou Rahme, Francis Alÿs, George Awde, Yto Barrada, Manon de Boer, Tacita Dean, Mona Hatoum, Hassan Khan, Nesrine Khodr, Joachim Koester and Roman Signer.

You will also meet traces and effects of the action of a body in space – some are installations, textiles, sculptures, drawings or paintings, such as those included in the works of Majd Abdel Hamid, Mathilde Besson, Ismail Bahri, Ali Eyal, Omar Fakhoury, Hiba Farhat, Ana Jotta, Arthur Ligeon, Pierre Leguillon, Mathilde Lequenne and Dala Nasser.

Alternating between the representation and the result of an act, between a represented body and a body that can be imagined in absentia, the exhibition plays with the visual and the haptic, with sound and time.

You will find here an early work by American artist Richard Serra, a piece that adopts the form of a list of verbs, naming the different gestures encompassed by sculpture, associated with the eight effort verbs, listed by choreographer, teacher, and theorist Rudolf Laban in 1950.

As an introduction to the exhibition, a series of short films is projected where the body is seen performing a gesture that transforms a situation, a domain or a tradition.

Touché! unfolds in three movements along four distinct spaces. Dark or bright, these spaces connect their audience with specific actions, events, and narratives, paving the way for many unique experiences, but also for sharing them with the people of Beirut.

Curated by Marie Muracciole and Christophe Wavelet.



Exhibition view. Mona Hatoum, *Roadworks*, 1985. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view. Photo by Paul Gorra.

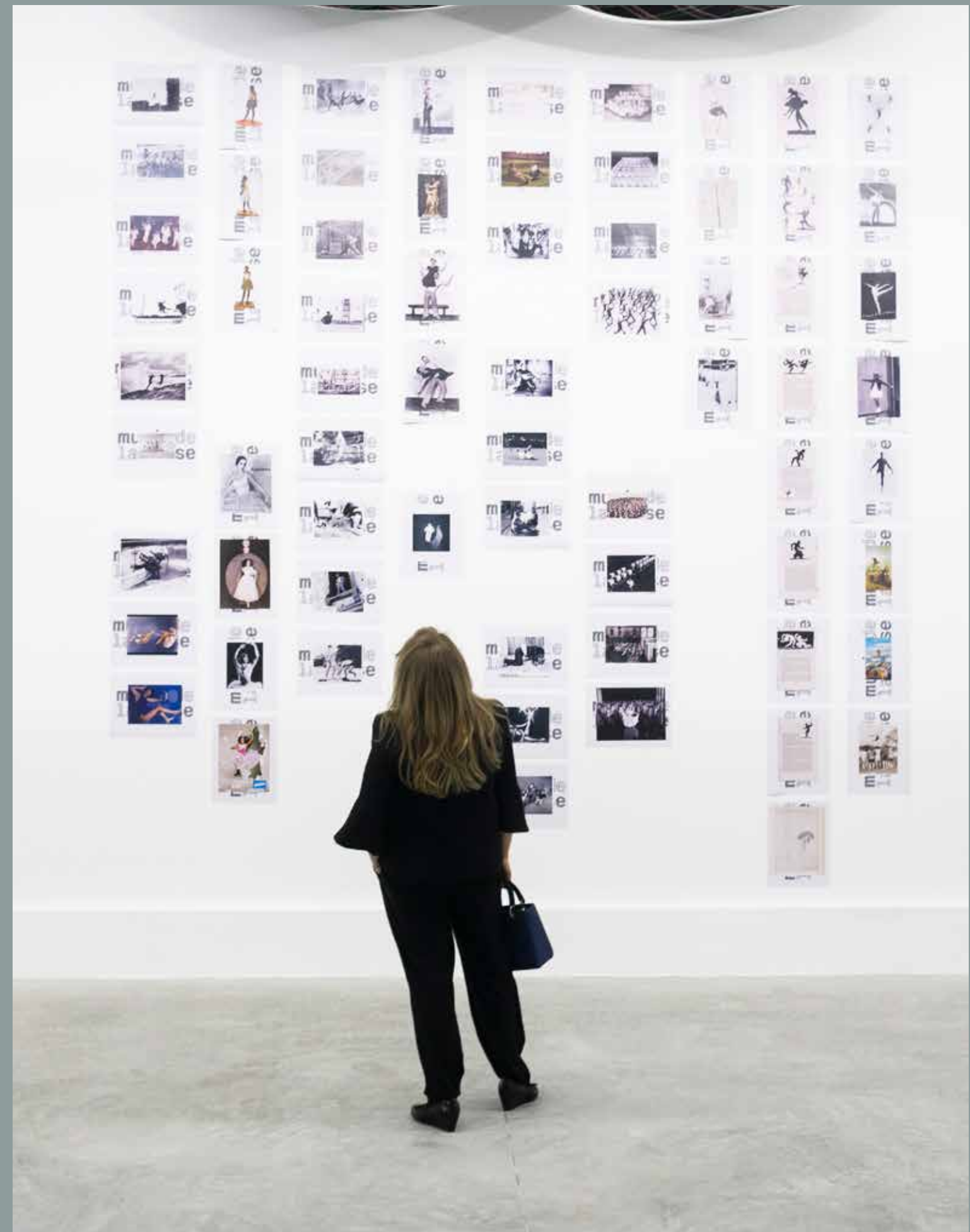
Exhibition view: Hiba Farhat, *Pre-condition: Expressions are Hurting*, 2019. Dala Nasser, *Untitled Study 1*, 2013. Mathilde Lequenne, *Tipping the Velvet*, 2018. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



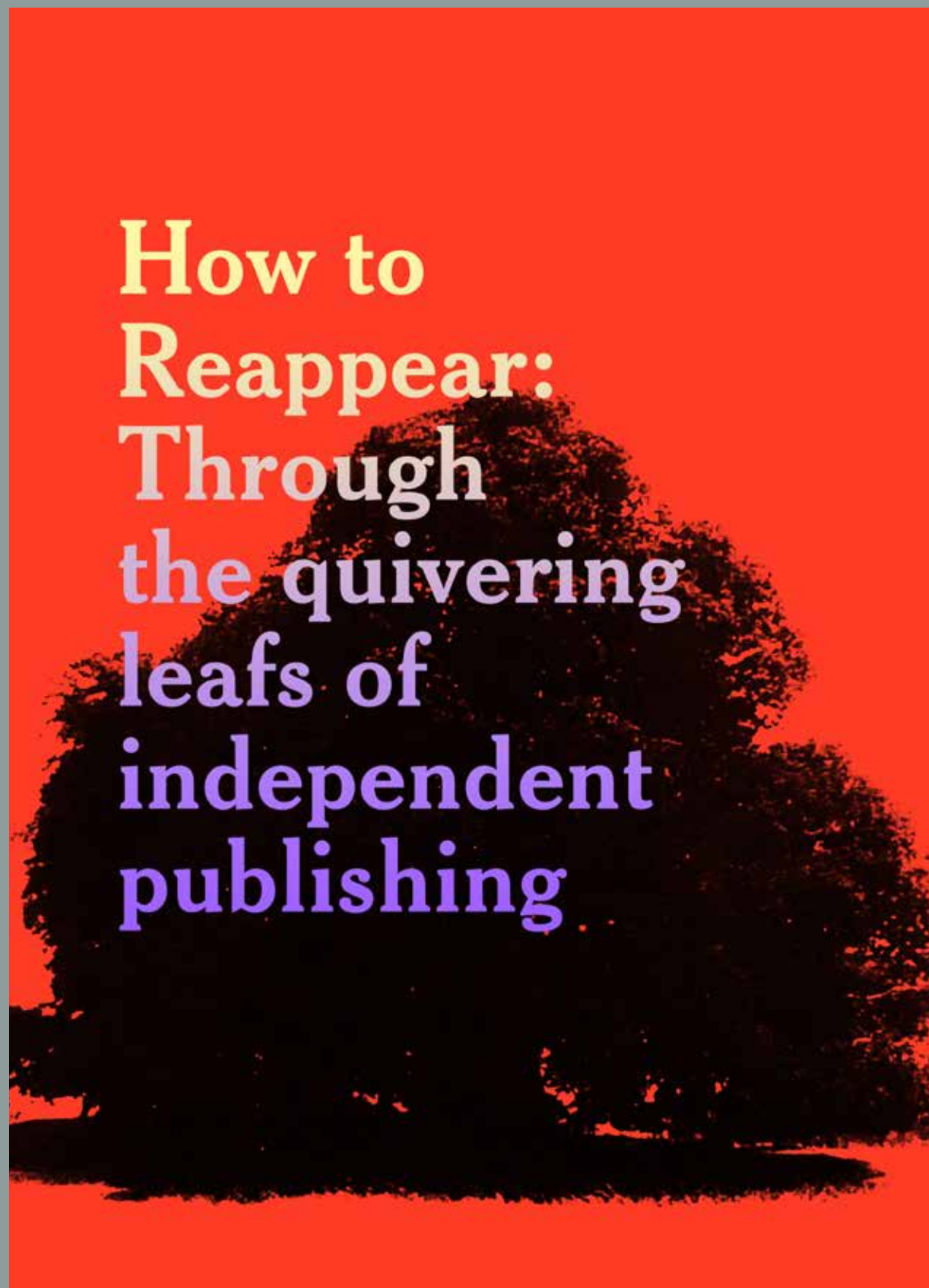
Exhibition view: Yto Barrada, Rue de la Liberté, 2000. Photo by Paul Gorra.



Exhibition view: George Awde, Still Departures, 2016. Rania Stephan, Direct, Différé, 2019. Pierre Leguillon, La Grande Évasion, 2012. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view: Pierre Leguillon, La Grande Évasion, 2012. Photo by Paul Gorra.



Artists
 98weeks
 Adib El Shabab
 Al Amaneh Series
 Ali Eyal
 Ali Taptik
 Barakunan
 Bernhard Cella
 Bon-Gah
 Bouchra Khalili
 Dar Al Fata Al Arabi
 Display Distribute
 Fehras Publishing Practices
 Flint Magazine
 Ginane Makki Bacho
 Golrokh Nafisi
 Hala Bizri
 Hussein Nassereddine
 Jabbour El-Douaihy
 Jaffat El Aqlam
 Jana Traboulsi
 Khaldoun Chichakli
 Moad Musbahi
 Mohamed Rabei
 Mohamed Melehi Design
 Studio 1985-1965
 Mohssin Harraki
 Mothanna Hussein
 Neda Firfova
 Omar Zakaria
 Plane (Mario D'souza With
 Pallavi Paul And Sahil Naik)
 Raafat Majzoub
 Sacha Abou Khalil
 Shubigi Rao
 Simone Fattal, The Post-
 Apollo Press
 Sonallah Ibrahim
 Evolution
 The State
 Yadawia
 Yay-Pop
 Zahia Rahmani / Inha
 Zamân Books And Curating
 ZIGG

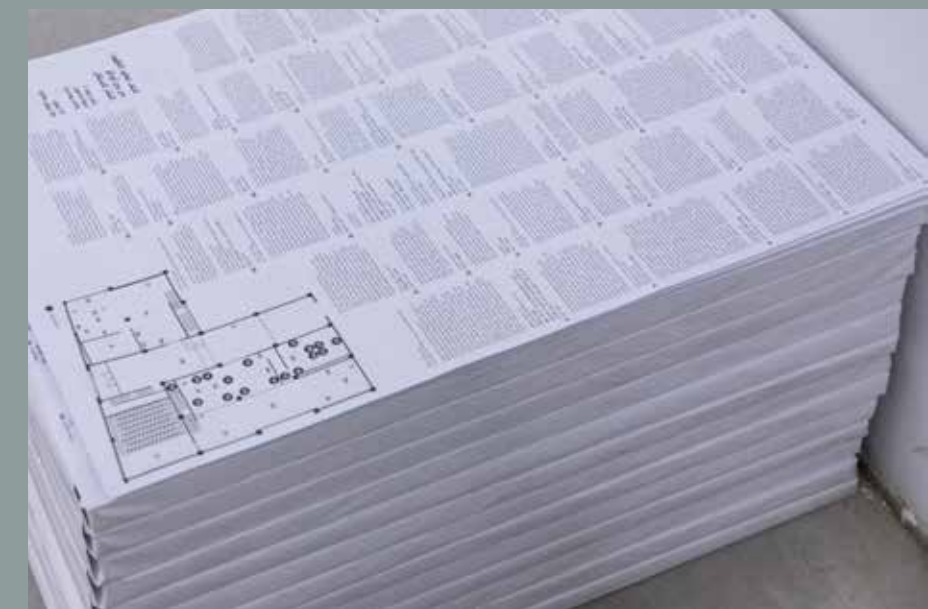
What is deemed publishable shapes our cultural landscape, but only partially reflects it. From the margins, independent publishing initiatives tend to the dismissed or underrepresented, those that are denied the public space of publication or desire it on different terms.

Beyond artist books, artists have taken on publishing as an artistic practice – thinking of publishing as a way of production, unsettling role divisions, and breaking down the lines between authorship and publishing.

The works in this exhibition share a rich variety of historical and contemporary reflections on the languages and formats marginalized in the dominant publishing industry – the snubbed genres, the outlawed subjects, the troubling subjectivities, the excessive languages, the minimal, the unprofitable, and the unfathomable.

How to Reappear brings questions on power, access, and right to publish to the fore and explores the efforts to reclaim the agency to publish, focusing on publications that maneuver around restrictive publishing regimes.

Published by Kayfa-ta (Maha Maamoun and Ala Younis)



Exhibition view. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view. The Post-Apollo Press, 1982-2012. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view. Barakunan, Narrative Liberation Front – Bunker 001, 2019, Campaign Headquarters. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



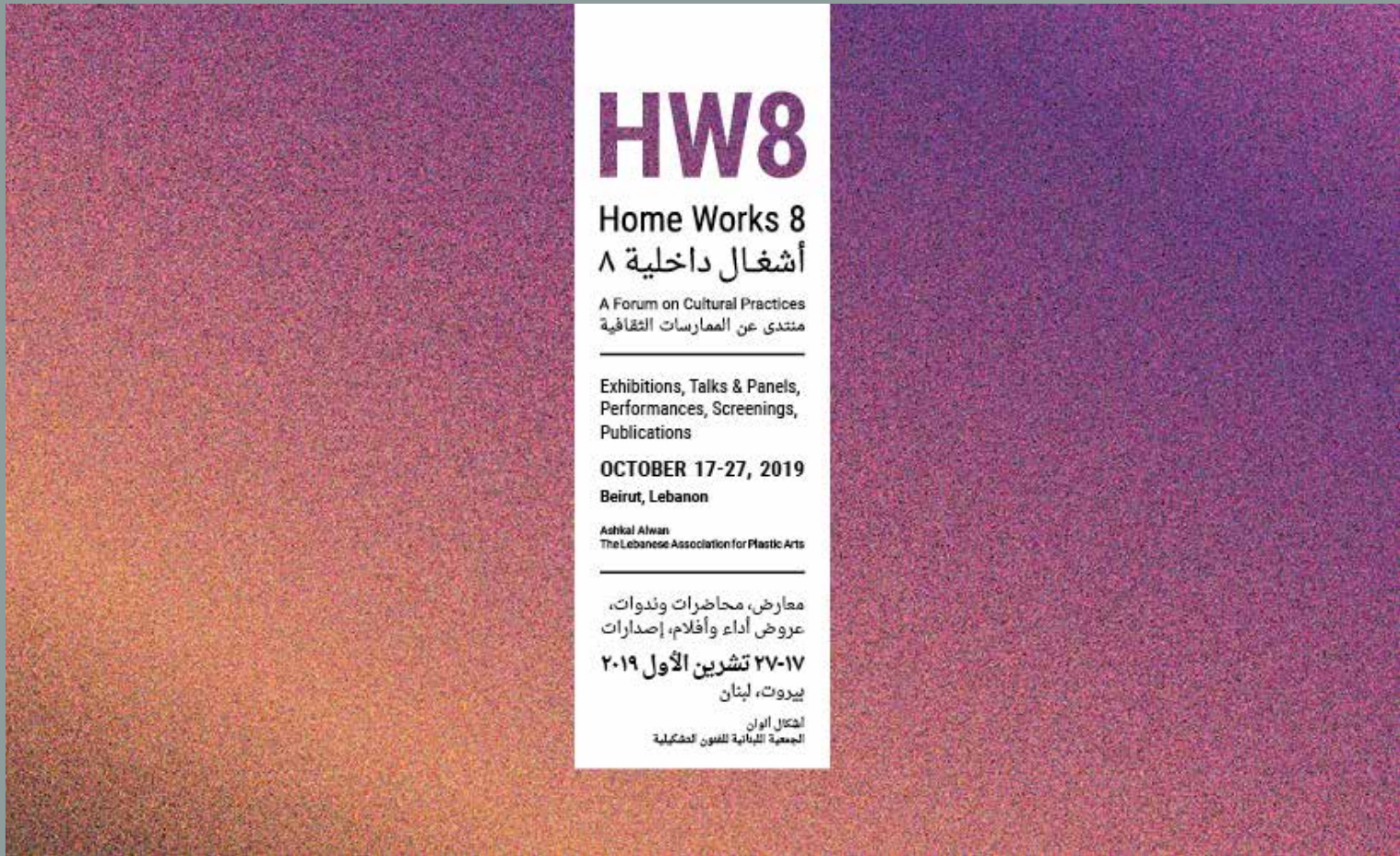
Exhibition view. Dar al Fata al Arabi, 1974-1994. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Exhibition view. Hussein Nasserredine The Complete Un-credited Works: the Image of the Face, 2018. Zaman Books & Curating, Mohamed Melehi Design Studio, 1965-1985..



Exhibition view. Bernhard Cella, No-ISBN (Arabic edition), 2019. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz.



Following a presumed conclusion of the civil war in Syria, global management consultancies have urged Lebanon and other regional actors to invest in the country’s industrial and urban reconstruction through their private sectors, inviting architecture studios, businesses, tech startups, and public policy think tanks to design, bid in, and scramble for its people’s futures. The human, material, and cultural devastation in Syria is being framed as a ground zero for transnational firms and necropolitical regimes to experiment in market maximization schemes—a violent disavowal of the hope to build another world, envisioned from Daraa to Rojava, and all the way to the Notre-Dame-des-Landes. These endeavors manifest amidst a global conjuncture characterized by decades of neoliberal austerity measures, rampant financialization, accelerated processes of ecological erosion, and a surge in right-wing identitarianism, prompting us to ask ourselves and one another: How do we safeguard the radical imagination from vanquishing discourses and economies of reconstruction? Where do we nourish spheres of interdependence and autonomy in this sterile night?

The 8th edition of Home Works summons artists, curators, filmmakers, scholars, and writers to partake in worldbuilding. In worldbuilding processes, fabricated elements are woven into authoritative realities, forging the perceptible with the imagined, and reconfiguring dominant models of being-in-the-world. When set against the backdrop of modernity and its failed utopian propositions and legacies of cultural infrastructures, worldbuilding offers an infinite set of configurations for ways to feel, make sense of, and render the world. Communities have long confronted the there and then with the construction of fantastical frameworks, designing speculative paradigms for the future, and drawing blueprints for alternative modes of doing. By convoking the radical imagination and exploring imaginary worlds as forms of knowledge, we break from systematic cycles of injury, precarity, and attrition, and participate in acts of re-enchanting the social relations and natural taxonomies that compose our world.



Still from Jenna Sutela, *Holobiont*, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

I will return, and I will be millions

This exhibition presents six artists who seek to de-stabilize socially constructed approaches to both the human body and those other-than-human bodies that exist in and around it. Through video installations, sculpture, painting, and forensic documentation and imaging, the works presented aim to de-center the primacy of the human subject in relation to ecological thought and open up to exploring the entanglement of material and other-than-human social and political histories with our own. How can we read our history as one that is created by and with ‘others’, the other-than, or the more-than human? What is at stake in re-thinking the human, not as a singular liberal subject, but as an environment inseparable from other-than-human existences?

INTERPT · Mona Hatoum · Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn · Candice Lin · Dala Nasser · Jenna Sutela

The distance between your eyes and the sun

(Charbel-joseph H. Boutros) is conceived as an abstract garden composed of two plots and an unexpected passway.

The exhibition here is treated as a material in itself that Charbel-joseph H. Boutros uses to elaborate some of his artworks. He infiltrates the exhibition’s usual structure, transforming it into an all-encompassing organic body, whose limbs, or elements, are active and participate in fabricating art. Atypical relationships are established between artworks, artist, institution, staff, and visitors; they follow new patterns and constitute altogether an ever-evolving and complex exhibition scheme. A myriad of surreal situations result from the provoked interferences and are invited to coexist in a delicate manner, forming seemingly scenarios narrated and orchestrated by H. Boutros.



Charbel-joseph H. Boutros, *The distance between your eyes and the Sun*, 2014-2019. Courtesy of the artist.



Exhibition view. The distance between your eyes and the Sun, 2014-2019. Photo by Tarek Haddad.



Exhibition view. Mineral Lick, 2019, Dala Nasser. Photo by Tarek Haddad.



Exhibition view. Race and Forest, 2019, INERPRT. Photo by Tarek Haddad.



Exhibition view. Holobiont, 2018, Jenna Sutela. Photo by Tarek Haddad.

Parallel events program in 2019

18 April

Performance • Oskar Schlemmer: Stäbetanz (‘Stick Dance’, 1927-28 for the Bauhaus Bühne, Dessau).

Alma TOASPERN (dance), Sharif Sehnaoui (music)

Reenactment & artistic direction: Christophe Wavelet

Production: Corinne Diserens

Coproduction: Rosas Studios & P.A.R.T.S (Brussels, Belgium),
ERG (Brussels) & UNA–Universidad Nacional de las Artes
(Buenos Aires, Argentina)

From 1926 to 1929, the Bauhaus in Dessau (Germany) regularly presented experimental stage works by artist Oskar Schlemmer, in collaboration with the students of this legendary avant-garde school. Soon after the first World War (1914-1918), European avant-gardes were busy with the utopias of the “New Humanity”, soon sadly challenged by the rise of fascisms and Nazism. Between these two disastrous moments, Oskar Schlemmer stands among the artists who would question the many aporias and contradictions, but also the unknown potentials that the word “art” may bear. A tireless inventor, he was constantly both in dialogue and debate with the art of his time, including that of his Bauhaus colleagues (Klee, Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, etc). Together with his teaching activities, his writings, drawings, paintings and sculptures, his stage works are equally important to his body practice. An œuvre where the relationships between body, gesture, space, time and history are challenged. His Stäbetanz (1928) appears to be a temporal activation of a constructivist sculpture in motion, a unique case in the history of XXth century Abstraction.

24 April

Concert Performance • Abu Hamdan/Atoui/Sehnaoui Trio

Sharif Sehnaoui: electric guitar

Jad Atoui: modular synth, electronics

Shakeeb Abu Hamdan: percussion, electronics

Sine waves through analog modules, strings through overlapping tremolo chains, drums and percussion through tape echoes, this new trio is set to explore sound territories as predictable as their special instrumentation allows. Sehnaoui, a pioneer of the Beirut experimental scene, is here joined by Atoui, a pro-eminent figure of the ever rising electronic music constellation, and Abu Hamdan, unclassifiable artist/musician who has recently relocated in Lebanon from the UK.



Courtesy of the artist.



Courtesy of the artists.

02 May

Screening • Jérôme Bel, Véronique Doisneau (2005)

Véronique Doisneau, a film by Jérôme Bel and Pierre Dupouey

Invited by Brigitte Lefèvre, director of Opéra National de Paris, to produce a work about the Opera’s ballet, Jérôme Bel chose to stage a theatrical documentary about the work of Véronique Doisneau, one of the ballerinas at the Opera. Doisneau, close to retirement, alone on stage, retrospectively and subjectively, considers her own career as a dancer between the walls of this institution.

The projection was introduced by Christophe Wavelet

Recorded at the Palais Garnier, Opéra National de Paris, Paris (France), October 2005

37 minutes. Conception and direction: Jérôme Bel

With : Véronique Doisneau, Céline Talon, Sujets of the Corps de Ballet of the Paris Opera Ballet

Extracts of ballets borrowed from : Jean Coralli and Jules Perrot (Giselle), Merce Cunningham (Points in Space), Mats Ek (Giselle), Rudolf Noureev (La Bayadère from Marius Petipa / Le Lac des cygnes from Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov)

Music from : Le Lac des cygnes (Piotr Illyitch Tchaïkovski), recording of files of the Paris Opera Orchestra, solo violin Frederic Laroque, directed by Vello Pähn, Giselle (Adolphe Adam), recorded by the Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, directed by Richard Bonyngé, Decca Editions Record Company Ltd., with the pleasant authorization of Universal Music Special Projects France. A coproduction Opéra national de Paris, Telmondis. In association with France 2. With the participation of Mezzo, Centre National de la Cinématographie. Associate producers : Denis Morlière, Antoine Perset. Special thanks to Merce Cunningham, Mats Ek and the Rudolf Noureev Foundation



Courtesy of the artist.

29 May

Concert Performance • Sharif Sehnaoui Solo: Lovers, and Other Extraordinary Beings

“For the past few years I have had the concern to combine contrasted, sometimes antithetical ideas into single pieces of music. This endeavor spans from the various musical esthetics I have adopted in my work within the last decade. How can these elements be brought back together? Can multiple time signatures overlap? How to give them unity within their differences, and, moreover: what would justify their coexistence?”

In this new solo work, I chose to use an “autobiographical” approach, delving into unusual states of mind induced by past feelings & relationships, reflecting upon the ambivalent impact of these various experiences on one’s artistic visions. I tried to translate this into simple, yet complex pieces of music using the electric guitar, various effects and looping techniques to be able to layer these ideas into subjective sonic constructs.”

Sharif Sehnaoui, Beirut, 2019.

8 and 22 May, and 19 June

Sound Performance • Jana Saleh: Trapped in Three Movements (Remixing Tarab), I-III

Trapped in Three Movements (Remixing Tarab), is a sound performance by artist Jana Saleh, comprising of three movements. Each movement will take place at BAC on a different evening, the third one culminating into a party.

The definition of the word Tarab is “moved, enchanted, delighted, pleased or charmed”. To have chosen this word for this genre means that the experience of the music came first and the label second. It required musicians, a singer, and an audience to come together in euphoric unison before realising: this is “Tarab”.

To my knowledge, Arabic music is an experience first, an attempt to elevate and be elevated before being a scholarly subject. And this experience was captured in concert halls with an audience that is as necessary to the music as the virtuoso Oud player or Umm Kulthum herself. Without the coming together of those three elements, there is no Tarab.



Courtesy of the artist.



This makes Tarab an art in constant movement, as opposed to one that is still. What happens when it’s trapped, deconstructed, and remixed? What happens when it’s asked to take on a physical form?

Words by Jana Saleh.

Using Vinyl recordings of Tarab nights as a basis for play, this piece is a representation of tarab in three movements:

The Tubes

As a deconstructive element, 3 construction tubes are used to project the divided sound:

- The Musicians and the Taqsim (improvisational element needed to create Tarab)
- The Singer and the “Saltaneh” (the space the singer goes to, to transcend)
- The Audience and the Tarab (the space created when all elements, especially the audience, become one)

The Live Performance

A 45 minutes (length of a usual Tarab recording) improvised DJ set playing with the music remixed for the tubes in an attempt to liberate the trapped sounds and create a further connection with the audience, in quest of Tarab.

The Party

It’s only after being part of an experience that a state of euphoria can take place. And in that state it’s a celebration, a party.

Produced by Beirut Art Center, 2019



Courtesy of the artist.

15 May

Performance • Direct, Différé: Rania Stephan, 2019

With Direct, différé, Rania Stephan adds another layer to her practice of film and montage, often related to the history of Arab cinema: boxing. In this installation, she uses visual documentation (one for a fight and one for her fall), but also performs twice during Touché!

Stephan crosses different frontiers. She fights, punching both age, gender, and classifications between categories of the amateur and the professional and of art and sport practice. While an artist remains too often identified by a medium they are supposed to master, she brings her newly-acquired sports training from the field into the art space. Professional boxers stop fighting around the age of 30, yet Stephan begins her endeavor long after that age. While men and women are forbidden to box together, she performs with young trained men. For this installation, she recorded an exchange with one of her trainers, as well as various falls that she performed alone.

The fall is crucial. It epitomizes a loss of control, and is usually conceived as the end of an action, a collapse. It shows a different way to step into making art: not as someone who displays virtuosic skills but as someone who understands her practice as a way to explore various aspects of the real. She enables herself to take risks and to experiment. Self-exposure is here at the edge of what we ordinarily try to keep to ourselves: one self's violence and vulnerability.

Icons of collective memory adorn landscapes around the world in the forms of both historically imbued structures and newly constructed monuments. Each a performative reminder of strong held but sometimes polarizing beliefs, values, and identifiers, these icons are both revered and changeable. Powerful symbols of influence and identity, icons have the power to erase alternative narratives, yet are demolished more quickly than built. This third forum explores the icon as the product of evolving collective consciousness; sacred, powerful and precarious.



Courtesy of the artist.



Courtesy of the artist.

16 June

Screening • Jeremy Deller: Everybody in the Place, An Incomplete History of Britain 1984-1992 (2018)

Acid house is often portrayed as emerging sui generis, inspired by little more than a handful of London based DJs discovering ecstasy on a 1987 holiday to Ibiza. In truth, the explosion of acid house and rave in the UK was a reaction to a much wider and deeper set of fault lines in British culture, stretching from the heart of the city to the furthest reaches of the countryside, cutting across previously-impregnable boundaries of class, identity and geography. With Everybody in the Place the Turner Prize-Winning artist Jeremy Deller upturns popular notions of rave and acid house, situating them at the very center of seismic social changes reshaping 1980s Britain. Rare and unseen archive materials map the journey from protests movements to abandoned warehouses raves, the white heat of industry bleeding into the chaotic release of the dance floor. We join an A Level politics class as they discover these stories for the first time, viewing this familiar narrative from the perspective of a generation for whom it's already ancient history. We see how rave culture owes much to the Battle of Orgreave and the underground gay clubs of Chicago as it does to shifts in musical style: not merely a cultural gesture, but the fulcrum for a generation shift in British identity, linking industrial histories and radical action to the wider expanses of a post-industrial future.

- Source Centro Pucci

Everybody in the Place, An Incomplete History of Britain 1984-1992 is a film by Jeremy Deller, filmed in London in May 2018 with students of Politics Class, Year 12-13 and their teacher Mr Russell Child.



Courtesy of the artist.



Courtesy of the artist.

18 July

Lecture Performance · Fehras Publishing Practices: Waiting Trajectory, 2017

The movement and circulation of publications along parts of the Hijaz Railway can still be perceived from the train station in Damascus, which was built in 1908. Even after the construction of the railway stopped following the First World War, the station still operated until it was transformed into a library and book museum in recent years.

The act of transformation and the shift of meaning turned the station into a mobile space for knowledge, not only encompassing the station itself but also the station's surroundings, where streets of book and paper traders, publishers and printers come together. Today the area reflects the history of modern publishing in the region and the mechanisms for the circulation, appearance and disappearance of books.

Waiting Trajectory reconstructs the station and its surroundings through three personal narratives that enter into dialogue with the music of Al Rahbani Brothers and Fairuz's musical play Al Mahata (The Station).

Fehras Publishing Practices (Sami Rustom, Omar Nicolas and Kenan Darwich) is an artist collective established in Berlin in 2015. Friendship, memories and various interests in publishing and publication, brought them together, and drove them to establish Fehras Publishing Practices as a space for knowledge, exchange of experiences and collective work.

The collective is researching the history and presence of publishing and its entanglement in socio-political and cultural sphere in the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Arabic diaspora.

Their work is engaging different methods and ways of production, and it focuses on the relationship between publishing and art historiography. It concerns with the role of translation as a tool facing cultural domination in its traditional and modern forms, as well as a tool for creating solidarity and deconstructing colonial power. Fehras became for them an observatory for publishing strategies and practices in its relation with the political and geographical transformation of the EMNA region.



Courtesy of the artist.

The main component of their work are archival materials such as books, magazines, photographs, memoirs, letters, contemporary art publications, libraries of authors, publishers, translators, book vendors as well as radio, television, cinema and digital archives.

They collect, order and re-curate these materials by placing it in different spatial and temporal contexts.

They observe publishing as a possibility for creating, transferring and accumulating knowledge. Therefore they initiate projects that carry different forms such as exhibition, film, book, lectures, performances and produce works touch issues they are concerned with like gender, collectivity, identity, migration, and notions of independency, funding and institutions.

24 July

Talk · Simone Fattal, The Post-Apollo Press (1982–2012), 2019

Simone Fattal founded The Post-Apollo Press in 1982, specializing in poetry, experimental writing and translation. Post-Apollo has published major American, European and Middle-Eastern poets and prose writers including Barbara Guest, Lyn Hejinian, Leslie Scalapino, Robert Grenier, Etel Adnan, Marguerite Duras, Jalal Toufic, Tom Raworth and many others.

Unpublished and unseen working documents from The Post-Apollo Press history present a rare insight into the history of this important publishing project by Simone Fattal, a project little known of in our region, but that has published important works of experimental poetry, prose, and translation and become an essential part of the Bay Area literary scene. Culled from the artist own collection as well as her deposited materials at The Bancroft Library in Berkley, the Post-Apollo Press records is a unique feminist press collection that holds a rich collection of experimental Arab and international poetry and prose. A significant collection of writings and artworks by poet and artist Etel Adnan were first published by the Post-Apollo press.

In this meeting, Simone Fattal talks about the richness of her experience in independent publishing as well as about the expansion of the field and its experimentation.



Courtesy of the artist.

Simone Fattal was born in Damascus and grew up in Lebanon. She studied philosophy at the Ecole des Lettres of Beirut and then at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1969 she returned to Beirut and started painting. She participated in numerous shows during the ten years when life in Lebanon was still possible. In 1980, fleeing the Civil War, she settled in California and founded the Post-Apollo Press, a publishing house dedicated to innovative and experimental literary work. In 1988, she returned to artistic practice by doing ceramic sculptures after enrolling at the Art Institute of San Francisco. Since 2006, she has produced works in Hans Spinner’s prestigious workshop in Grasse, France. In 2013, she released a movie, Autoportrait, which has been shown worldwide in many film festivals.



31 July
Genealogy of Printed in Beirut • Jabbour Douaihy in conversation with Hussein Nassereddine

In his novel, Printed in Beirut (2016), Douaihy tells the story of Farid Abou Cha’r who comes to Beirut in hopes of publishing his book, only to face constant rejection by the publishers of the day. After taking a menial job at an old printing house, Cha’r’s life takes a turn when his boss’ wife secretly prints one copy of his manuscript. Later, it was discovered that the manuscript was printed on the same paper that was used to make counterfeit money by the print shop. In this conversation with Douaihy, artist Hussein Nassereddine prompts questions on the genealogy of the research process and the stories behind the complex weaving of events.



Courtesy of the artist.

Jabbour Douaihy (b. 1949, Zgharta) holds a PhD degree in comparative literature from the Sorbonne and works as a professor of French literature at the Lebanese University. He has published seven works of fiction and was shortlisted for IPAF in 2012. Printed in Beirut, 2016 was published by Al Saqi books, and now translated into French and English editions.

Hussein Nassereddine (1993, Beirut, Lebanon) lives and works in Beirut. He holds a Bachelor Degree of Fine Arts in Graphic Design from the American University of Beirut. His works in video, photography, image-making and writing deal with different ideas including fragility, poetics of images, personal and collective memory, history and mythology. His interdisciplinary research focuses on the ability of images to create poetic spaces and atmospheres.

His work often originates from personal observations and narratives, as well as their origins in collective history. It then develops into works that comment and draw relations between the daily and the mythological. This process delineates his attempt to create works which evoke meanings that remain suspended between the image and its description, between definition and approximation.

21 August
Some Considerations on Independent Publishing: the Case of Bidayat

Bidayat is a sociopolitical and cultural quarterly founded in Beirut in 2012, shortly after the Arab uprisings. Conceived as an intellectual platform in Arabic, Bidayat strives to create new forms of publishing critical content. Neither academic journal nor popular magazine, it is scholarly rigorous and aimed at a general readership. It engages young generations of writers and artists as well as established thinkers alike. It addresses contemporary issues while also pondering questions of memory and the archive. Bidayat’s many sections deal with literature, history, popular and folk culture, cinema, art, and the impact of neoliberalism on the economies, societies, states and cultures in the Arab region.



Courtesy of Bidayat.

In this talk, Cynthia Kreichati and Jana Traboulsi from Bidayat’s team reflect on the meaning, implications and definitions attributed to ‘independent publishing’. They consider Bidayat’s position in the publishing landscape and discuss some of the challenges it faces today.

28 August
Barakunan with Jad Atoui • Moonship Dispatch

Publishing house and media collective Barakunan presents Moonship Dispatches – an experimental reading of selections from its literature accompanied by electronic musician Jad Atoui on modular synthesizer.

04 September
Artistic Choice, Violent Omissions • Talk with Moad Musbahi and Enass Khansa

How artists choose to engage with the politics of creativity has been a concern very early on in Arabic culture, through processes of selection, reproduction and thus inclusion and exclusion. Ikhtiyar is a concept intimately tied to the creative process, a concept with many politically and historically rich facets; transmission, quotation, parody, reference, reuse, restoration, memory, conservation, copiousness. The discussion will question the role of origin, authenticity, representation and visibility in the work of ‘paper nor me_xxl’ and other examples, considering how ikhtiyar can still operate as a contemporary form of production – one with deep ethical obligations.

Performance • Improvising “Abdallah the Killed” with Hussein Nassereddine

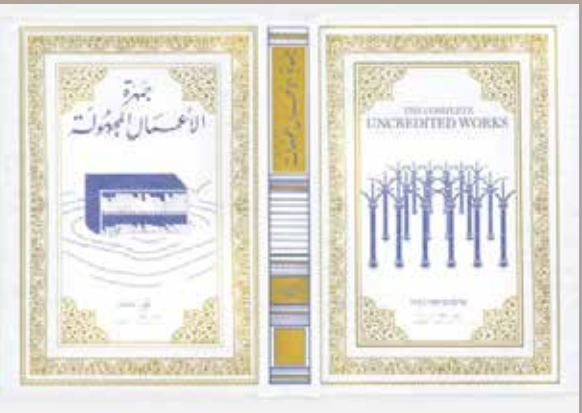
“...And mentioned is that Antarah stood and spoke in long poems when he saw the war or when he saw the ruins of the house. Imru’u l-Qays also did so, and the poets of the Age of Ignorance and those of Islam all improvised and read it as it occurred. They improvised and then forgot – except for a few verses – and others who heard them would also remember a few verses and would recite them again, and this is all that remains from the poems. Centuries after, it would get transcribed with all the changes that occurred to it, from speaker to speaker, to be written in manuscripts and then found in poetry books.”[1]



Courtesy of the artist.



Courtesy of the artist.



Courtesy of the artist.

“It is also mentioned that ‘Abdallah the Killed’ (Abdallah al Qateel) was the first poet to see the columns of the castle as palm trees, and that this was the last he saw, and that this killed him.”[2]

1. Excerpt from “The death of poets” by AL- Munkadir Ibn Qays, no date, Published in parts from the original manuscript by “Dar el Amaer”, 1986 – Iraq.
2. Ibid

18 September
Talk • Raafat Majzoub: Prototyping Cultural Practices: Artistic explorations in publishing new social systems

In this talk, Raafat Majzoub uses three of his projects — The Wishing Fountain (2015), Streetschool (2019) and The Khan Collection (ongoing) — to discuss his explorations in using the infrastructures of contemporary art and cultural practice to publish alternative collective rituals and ways to make them sustainable social systems. The presentation will be based on Majzoub’s conceptual frameworks of Active and Dormant Fictions and will trace the publication of his literary manuscript The Perfumed Garden (ongoing) as an NGO The Khan: The Arab Association for Prototyping Cultural Practices.



Exhibition view. Streetschool (Prototype), 2019, Raafat Majzoub. Photo by Barış Doğrusöz

Education and outreach

The year started with an education project initiated by former director, Marie Muracciole. The graduating students of Grand Lycée participated in The Moving Project, a visual documentation of Beirut Art Center’s relocation, guided by Sandra Helou and Edith Matta.

The project’s aim was to create a short film that documented and revealed the center’s last exhibition, Things That Shine And Things That Are Dark, its long process of relocation, and both the center’s grand reopening in its new space and its first exhibition, Touché! (Gesture, Movement, Action).

The students participated in the Moving Project in an integral sense. Their participation extended far beyond the practical aspects of photographic and video documentation.

Visiting both spaces several times, the students were given a private tour of the two aforementioned exhibitions and took an active part in the process itself through private conversations with Marie Muracciole and Yasmeen Mobayed, former education and outreach manager, about the legacy of Beirut Art Center as an artistic institution, the history of Sin El-Fil and the surrounding areas, the thematics of the exhibitions, and details of the moving process. During their visits, the students prepared and administered interviews with Marie and Yasmeen and thusly incorporated the interviews to guide the direction of the documentary.

Given the freedom of creative direction, the Grand Lycée students captured the old and new centers and the relocation process through their own particular and informed lenses.

The students were able to put into practice what they had been learning in their respective academic courses and the result was striking, as the film itself is robust in its creativity and sharp attention to detail. From video clips to photographs to sound bites from interviews, the documentary will serve as a documentation of Beirut Art Center’s history for time to come.



How to Reappear brought many tour groups including a special tour by the curators and special presentations of the works with Raafat Majzoub, Hussein Nassereddin, and Barakunan. Students from Acedémie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA), Lebanese American University (LAU), American Univeristy of Beirut (AUB), and Notredame University (NDU) came in large groups to explore the various forms of publications present in the show, much to the delight of their illustration and storyboard instructors.

We had several special art tourism groups coming from various parts of the world including groups from the BOZAR and S.M.A.K. in Belgium, MMAG in Amman, First Draft Gallery in Sydney, and a delegation from Brazil, all of which created conversations on collaborations between our institutions.

The ending of the show also coincided with Beirut Art Fair, where by we were included in the VIP program. A group of 50 fair guests and 22 members of the press were given a special tour of the show followed by a lunch. The event was a success and and inspired continued collaborations with the art fair.

The past year also saw a reconfiguring of our membership program. The new chart includes a wider audience with various amenities and activities. “Be Part of It!” was the slogan adopted to the new program that enabled members to be active contributors to BAC.



Workshops

14 September
Jaffat El Aqlam · Zine Making Workshop with Nadim Choufi
4 hours

In this workshop, participants learned how to make zines and had roundtable discussions on the history of zines, the means to design and produce their contents, and various zine distribution methods used today and in the past. The workshop was organized and lead by Jaffat el Aqlam researcher Nadim Choufi, in parallel with How to Reappear: Through the quivering leaves of independent publishing.

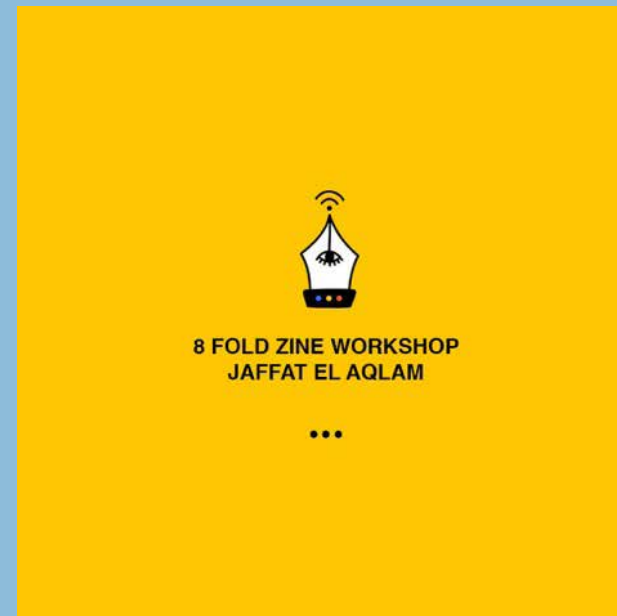
The idea of small circulation, self published work is not particularly new but what has enabled the strong presence of zines since their creation in the 40s are the communities often in the margins of mainstream culture that have used this tool in the face of publishing conditions.

What started out as sci-fi fanzines shifted to other counterculture scenes such as punk music, feminist, queer, and post-colonial thinking and became a circulation ring for issues that were deemed unpublishable.

With this status, zines formed a layer of hand to hand access underneath the publishing world, creating a form as much about the community that produced it as the product itself.

In this workshop we will be viewing zines as both the subject and object of the conditions that it rose from, the forms in which zines can take place to address the issues of their content, and to what extent the content production and different distribution methods of zines can act as archives.

These questions will hold both the discussion and practical aspect of the workshop as we work through making zines and their life outside of its production and in the hands of readers.



2020 Program proposal

Since October 17, cultural institutions have come under a wave of increasing pressure to revise the foundational tenets of their existence. Institutions have been asked to respond to ethical questions around funding structures, fair labor practices, ecologically sustainable footprints, responsibility in mechanisms of gentrification, and so on. In the arts, like in other areas of social and political life, this has meant that we have finally come face to face with the limits of liberal and leftist discourses, which have for so long constituted the lingua franca of the Art World.

The essence of this adaptation to the current situation means that in addition to the question of what an art institution like the Beirut Art Center can do in times of upheaval, we must focus on the question of what the BAC can be. What kind of model can we think of for the BAC that would allow us to maintain operations, remain relevant as a place of culture and most importantly, serve a contributing function to the culture of the revolution?

It is with these values in mind that we would like to propose below goals and vision for the coming year.

Ecology of Kinship

Two core ideas in our proposal had to do with the idea of hosting and the necessity to collaborate with sister institutions.

The BAC space is very large, and at this time we see no need to occupy it all, it is a time to huddle close together, shoulder to shoulder and to unify the ranks. We would like to approach other initiatives to take up one half of the space, and to create a lively communal compound.

We have multiple formats in mind to apply the above. We will be launching a series of conversations with institutions that no longer have a space, or that will soon lose their space, or that will undergo funding cuts, and will discuss with them possibilities of creating communal spaces/workshops/ecosystems, temporary program collaborations, and temporary institutional and artist residencies.





With all of the above formats, we imagine a compound where many of the decisions are run collectively, where conversations and activities occur on a regular basis, and where the format of the institution is in and of itself its activity.

Alternative Economies

In these times of crisis, in addition to the direct confrontation of the corrupt apparatuses of the state and its banking sector, the conversation has been increasingly turning towards finding new ways of living together, and creating economies that bypass the established capitalist networks. Agriculture is a major component of these conversations, and from this we return to our proposal for a rooftop garden, with all the more urgency and necessity.

- Community Garden: Connecting with activists, and widening the network to farmers in order to bring skills and resources together and produce and distribute quality food. This initiative would also be the platform for skill share, a series of talks, film screenings, etc.

- We will aim to connect the community garden to the Café as well. For the café, we will be contacting grassroots and home based kitchens, but also develop programming around food economies, agriculture, politics of food, food industries etc. This will link with the garden, and also offer education possibilities with food tasting, cooking classes, classes on food and seed preservation and so on.

Living Space

All of the above activities focus on what the space can be, and seeks to turn it into a living active organism where people spend time together, to work, to think, to create, to eat and to fight. In addition to the above, we would like the BAC to be an active member in a series of collectives already occurring in the cultural sector, and to offer space to host some of these meetings.

We propose to unify the bookshop and the médiathèque and have them in proximity to the café, with added storing, seating and reading areas. For this we will be proposing a program of readings, zine workshops, publication launches, but also talks and conversations between various small to medium media initiatives.

Content Production / Programming

An expanded online platform is very much a priority, even if it may take us a while to get the design off the ground due to economic hard times. In the meantime, we will seek to increase our online presence via social media where we will upload video documentation of our programs, our quarterly online publications, our profiles on the people we collaborate with and so on.

Intimate film, performance, theatre, dance programs, always seeking to create prompts for exchange and conversation afterwards.

VPN: A series of Skype lectures looking to provide a theoretical and historical framework to what we are going through, in order to learn from other contexts.

Mobile exhibition formats with the following possible themes:

- Ground zero will shape itself as a learning process critically looking at what ground zero has meant in the post revolutionary moment, the relation between war and real estate, the neoliberal machine of reconstruction, gentrification, etc...
- Waste as it is known to us, the production of waste inside a capitalist system of production is related to the production of surplus value and to the reproduction of a capitalist system. What to do with this surplus value and where to go with it? What is the historical relation between art and waste, be it in art history or in current modes of cultural production?



About the Artistic Directors

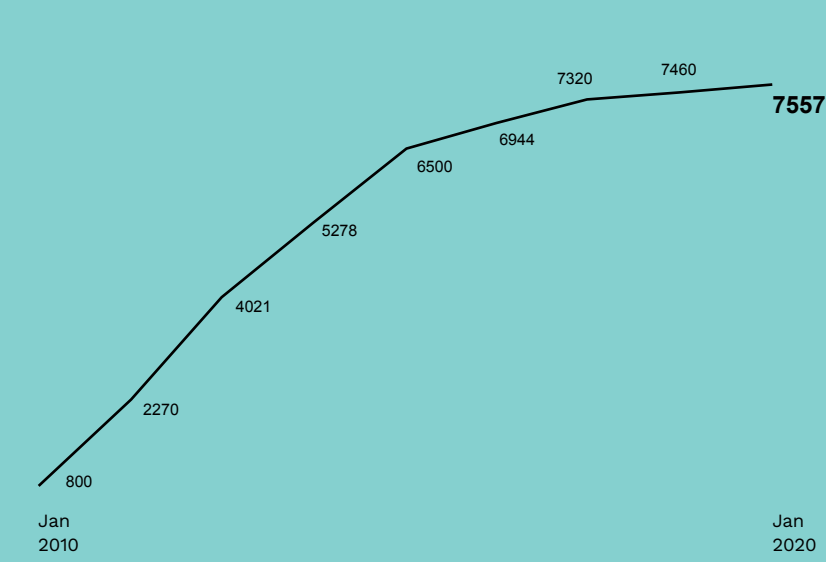
Haig Aivazian is an artist living in Beirut. Working across a range of media and modes of address, he delves into the ways in which power embeds, affects and moves people, objects, animals, landscape and architecture. Aivazian has explored apparatuses of control and sovereignty at work in sports, museums and music.

Ahmad Ghossein is a filmmaker and an artist, born in Beirut 1981. He holds an MFA in Visual Art from the National Academy of Art-(KHIO) in Oslo and a BFA in Theater from the Lebanese University, Beirut. His practice utilizes a number of media, including video art, installation, art in public spaces and film.

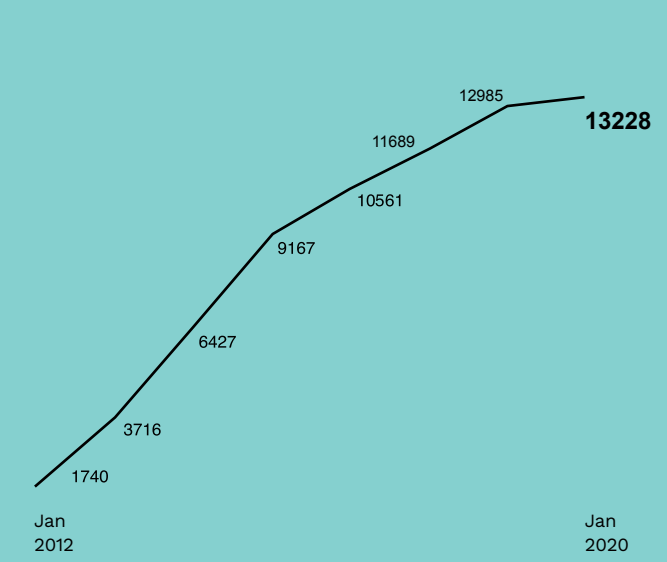
BAC in figures

Exhibition	Total visitors
Touché! (Gestures, Movement, Action) 17.04.2019 - 22.06.2019 9 weeks	1789
How to Reappear: Through the quivering leaves of independent publishing 17.07.2019 - 21.09.2019 9 weeks	1645
Home Work 8 17.10.2019 1 day	214*

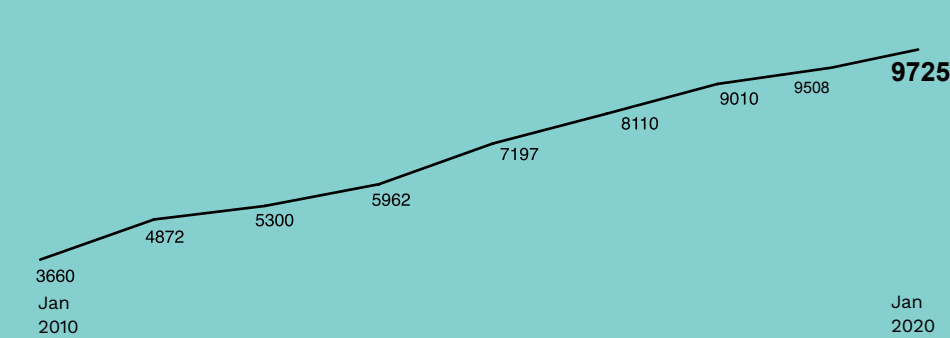
Twitter followers



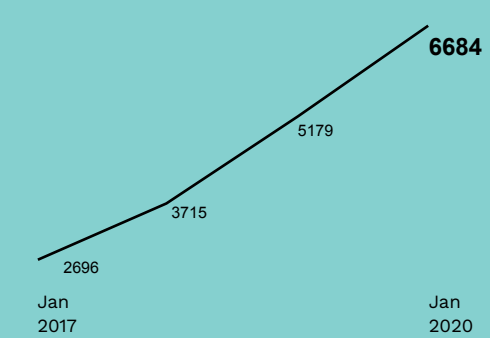
Facebook Page



Newsletter subscribers



Instagram followers



*Home Works 8 program was suspended by Ashkal Alwan in response to the October 17 uprising and the cultural institutions strike. Artworks were dismantled soon after flash flood.

Financial Report

2019

INCOMES	USD
Use of BAC provisions	\$ 114,463.00
Bank interest and administrative reimbursements	\$ 10,185.00
Public & private institutions	\$ 71,075.00
Private donors	\$ 308,640.00
Sponsors/ financial support	\$ 28,798.00
In-kind support	\$ 15,500.00
Entrance fees for events	\$ 158.00
Benefits from the bookshop	\$ 2,734.00
Rehabilitation fundraising event 2018	\$ 104,072.00
Fundraising tombola event 2019	\$ 39,665.00
Loan	\$ 19,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 714,290.00
EXPENSES	
OPERATING COSTS	
Renovation of new location	\$ 279,587.00
Yearly rent	\$ 55,500.00
Municipality charges	\$ 5,000.00
Bank interest	\$ 329.00
Electronic supplies	\$ 8,371.00
Other space fees (electricity,telephone internet, office supplies, repairs & maintenance...)	\$ 31,475.00
Salaries & services	\$ 158,710.00
Communication	\$ 6,800.00
TOTAL OPERATING COSTS	\$ 545,772.00
ACTIVITIES	
Touché! Gesture, Movement, Action	\$ 54,294.00
How to Reappear Through the quivering leaves of independent publishing	\$ 56,074.00
Opening and fundrasing activities	\$ 20,061.00
Outreach program & parallel events	\$ 2,355.00
Mediatheque	\$ 888.00
TOTAL ACTIVITIES	\$ 133,672.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,545.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 680,989.00
BALANCE	\$ 33,301.00

Budget

2020

INCOMES	USD
Ending balance 2019	\$ 33,301.00
Public & private institutions (confirmed)	\$ 40,219.00
Public & private institutions (expected)	\$ 22,993.00
Private donors	\$ 105,000.00
Private donors (expected)	\$ 5,000.00
Sponsors / financial support (expected)	\$ 5,000.00
Donations to find	\$ 96,346.00
Benefits from café	\$ 1,500.00
Benefits from editions and publications	\$ 1,500.00
Benefits from the bookshop	\$ 3,500.00
Renting the space	\$ 15,000.00
Fundraising event 2020 (expected)	\$ 80,000.00
Administrative reimbursement	\$ 7,000.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 416,359.00
EXPENSES	
OPERATING COSTS	
Yearly rent	\$ 55,500.00
Municipality charges	\$ 5,000.00
Major works and furniture	\$ 4,000.00
Electronic supplies	\$ 3,000.00
Other space fees (electricity,telephone internet, office supplies, repairs & maintenance...)	\$ 33,552.00
Salaries & services	\$ 177,627.00
Communication	\$ 6,700.00
Bank fees & interest	\$ 350.00
TOTAL OPERATING COST	\$ 285,729.00
ACTIVITIES	
Exhibitions and project spaces	\$ 40,400.00
Talks	\$ 6,500.00
Café commune	\$ 4,500.00
Garden commune	\$ 10,000.00
Workshops	\$ 15,600.00
Publication	\$ 2,100.00
Mediatheque	\$ 10,880.00
TOTAL ACTIVITIES	\$ 89,980.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 21,650.00
Reimbursement of 2019 Loan	\$ 19,000.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 416,359.00
BALANCE	0

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2019

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