



Annual Report 2009

Since its opening on January 15, 2009, BAC has offered a regular and extensive program of creative exhibitions and parallel events.

Through the five exhibitions that we produced we were able to create a dynamism in the cultural scene. In our first year, we encouraged emerging artists by dedicating an annual exhibition and prize to them. We presented works by established Lebanese artists in their first solo shows in the country. We invited over 20 international artists to present their work in thematic group shows, giving the Lebanese public a rare opportunity to access such works of art.

We offered our space to Lebanese curators to present their visions, thereby developing a network of cultural partners. We presented over 40 weekly events, which included concerts, artist talks, panels and video screenings, building up a growing audience. We organized educational activities such as workshops and guided tours, involving hundreds of students and increasing their knowledge in contemporary arts and culture practice. We also launched a mediatheque, which is a unique digital resource on contemporary art production in the region, open and accessible to all members of the public.

In one year, Beirut Art Center has become an essential cultural venue in Lebanon and the region. It has gained local and international recognition through a diverse audience and significant press coverage.



Program of exhibitions 2009

January 15 – April 2, 2009

CLOSER

With : Jananne Al-Ani . Tony Chakar . Antoine D'Agata . Mona Hatoum . Emily Jacir . Jill Magid . Anri Sala . Lina Saneh
Lisa Steele . Akram Zaatari . Cynthia Zaven

Beirut Art Center's opening exhibition *Closer* featured art works drawn from personal and intimate stories, which created a space to reflect on experiences both common and unique, familiar and without precedent, public and intensely private.

All of the works included in this exhibition had in common a defined starting point from which narratives could take on various lives of their own. In initiating a process—whether it is switching on a camera before a relative without knowing where it will lead, or recording the passage of time through self-portraits taken over years—these art works created a field in which actions, ideas, and emotions may materialize unexpectedly, and even, accidentally. Often, these works shake our notions of reality by fictionalizing intimate stories and/or situating the artist as the subject/object of the work itself.



Closer - Exhibition View



Closer - Exhibition View



Cynthia Zaven - Missing Links



Tony Chakar - 4 Cotton Underwear for Tony

April 21 – June 9, 2009

EXPOSURE 2009

With: Tamara Al Samerraei . Nadim Asfar . Sirine Fattouh . John Jurayj . Jennifer Maghzal . Karine Wehbé . Raed Yassin

As part of its goal to provide a permanent space for contemporary art and cultural practice in Lebanon, Beirut Art Center's *Exposure 2009* served to promote innovative local talent. Emerging Lebanese artists or artists residing in Lebanon were invited to propose new work or work which had not yet been exhibited in the country.

The Executive board of Beirut Art Center, along with a committee invited specifically for this exhibition, selected works by up-and-coming artists, with no specific theme in mind.

This year's committee was: Jacques Aswad (writer), Joana Hadjithomas (visual artist and filmmaker), Christine Tohme (director of Ashkal Alwan), and Kaelen Wilson-Goldie (journalist).

The emerging artists' exhibition is organized in partnership with **Fidus Wealth Management, SGBL group**, and will be a yearly event. The Fidus Award has been created specifically to support this initiative and will be granted to one of the participating artists on an annual basis.



Raed Yassin - The Best of Sammy Clark
Winner of the Fidus Award 2009



Exposure 2009 - Exhibition View



Exposure 2009 - Exhibition View

April 21 – June 9, 2009

ALMOST REAL

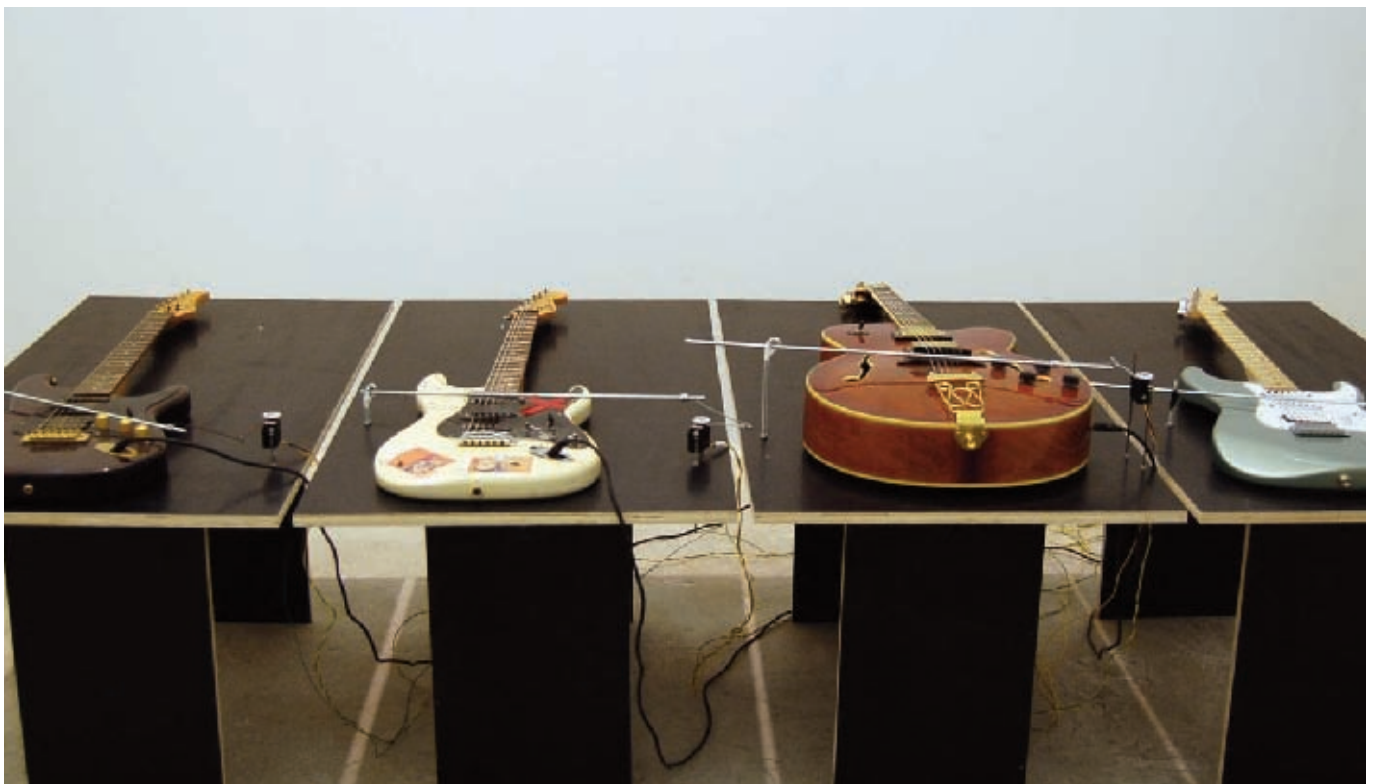
Exhibition hosted by BAC

With: Charbel Haber . Kinda Hassan . Mounira Al Solh . Cynthia Zaven

Since 2006, the Almost Real program initiated by the European Cultural Foundation has been funding and supporting works by Lebanese artists in the fields of visual and multidisciplinary arts.

For the second edition of Almost Real in Lebanon, independent sound artist and computer programmer Tarek Atoui along with Sandra Dagher and Lamia Joreige were asked to select and follow up on the production of artworks initiated within the interdisciplinary workshops Atoui had been giving in Lebanon since 2006.

These workshops were about introducing young and established artists to the use of computer and interactive technologies in the fields of sound and image performance, installation, fine art and video art. The workshops took place on a project basis, where each selected participant developed an artistic project that used these technologies in a meaningful and original way.



Charbel Haber - When No Body's Around (The Cables between us)

June 16 – July 14, 2009

THE ROAD TO PEACE PAINTINGS IN TIMES OF WAR, 1975-1991

Exhibition hosted by BAC and curated by Saleh Barakat

With: Abdel Hamid Baalbaki . Jinane Bacho . Rafic Charaf . Fouad El Khoury . Laure Ghorayeb . Paul Guiragossian . Farid Haddad . Imad Issa . Ghada Jamal . Hassan Jouni . Samir Khaddage . Jean Khalifeh . Seta Manoukian . Theo Mansour . Odile Mazloun . Jamil Molaeb . Samia Osseirane Jounblat . Saloua Raouda Choucair . Mohamad Rawas . Aref Rayess

The exhibition entitled *The Road to Peace: Paintings in Times of War, 1975-1991*, curated by Saleh Barakat, aspired to show several artistic experiences directly related to the traumatism of the Lebanese civil war produced by Lebanese artists and executed between 1975 and 1991. The body of works, in different media and practices, reflected an art that has been seldom shown in galleries or public spaces because of its violence and despair. It was produced under pain and anger in a form of expiation, cleansing and apology from the hostility, brutality and cruelty of a mad environment. 20 artists were exhibited to highlight a period of the Lebanese art scene that has been kept in the dark for a long time. A catalogue was published on this occasion.



The Road to Peace - Exhibition View



The Road to Peace - Exhibition View



The Road to Peace - Fouad El Khoury

July 23 – October 3, 2009

EARTH OF ENDLESS SECRETS WRITING FOR A POSTERIOR TIME Solo Exhibition by AKRAM ZAATARI

Beirut Art Center in collaboration with Sfeir Semler gallery organized a major solo exhibition of the work of Lebanese artist Akram Zaatari that was divided in two parts: one of which was exhibited at Sfeir Semler and the other at Beirut Art Center.

At Beirut Art Center, Zaatari presented an installation based on the letters and photographs of a former Lebanese prisoner in Israel Nabih Awada. Born in Aytaroun, Lebanon, in 1972, Nabih Awada joined the Lebanese resistance as a member of the Communist Party in 1986, and took part of several military operations against the Israeli army in Southern Lebanon before he was captured in September 1988. He was taken to a prison in Israel but could not be sentenced until two years later, when he turned eighteen. Nabih spent most his sentence in Askalan prison and was released in 1998.

The installation was composed of 12 photographs, a set of 48 photographs, 2 videos and one light-box.

This exhibition was organized with the support of: **Prince Claus Fund**



Earth of Endless Secrets - Exhibition View



Earth of Endless Secrets - Exhibition View



Akram Zaatari - Letter to Samir

July 23 – October 3, 2009

PRISONER OF WAR

Solo Exhibition by BERNARD KHOURY

Renowned architect Bernard Khoury presented *Prisoner Of War*, an exhibition gathering a body of work that systematically aestheticize the war. The exhibited work appropriated the most iconographic, or widely known, artworks from renowned contemporary Lebanese and Arab artists in fabulated visual constructions. The project aimed to question and challenge this new generation's unyielding contextual practices in tackling issues of war, identity and memory, and attempts to further highlight an inability to operate or exist outside these aesthetic parameters. Artists are seemingly condemned to remain classified - within the Western laboratory conducted by curators and institutions - as Arab, Middle Eastern or regional artists. The Prisoner Of War becomes a prisoner of this fabricated context.





Bernard Khoury - P.O.W



Bernard Khoury - Catherine wants to know

October 20,2009 - January 16, 2010

AMERICA

With: Naji Al-Ali . Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri . Ziad Antar . Joseph Beuys . Wafaa Bilal . William Eggleston. Mounir Fatmi . Jenny Holzer . An-My Lê . Matt McCormick . Julia Meltzer and David Thorne . Melik Ohanian . Catherine Opie . Greta Pratt . Martha Rosler . Kara Walker

Beirut Art Center's exhibition America was an attempt to question the United States of America as a possible model of civilization. What does "America" mean in our collective unconscious?

Certainly, America is a superpower and occupies a predominant position in the world. Its actions and its policies consistently demand that others position themselves in relation to them, whether in agreement, opposition or somewhere in between, stirring as much feelings of fascination and respect as exasperation and resentment.

As this is especially true in our region, where America's policies and strategies have often been divisive and destabilizing, we believe it was relevant to take a closer look at the physical and mental territory named America through an exhibition and a series of events.

Neither an accusation nor a celebration, the purpose of the exhibition was to reflect on the mythologies that have built and perpetuated the idea of America and to consider the ways in which America has been both imagined and imaged by Americans and non-Americans alike.

The exhibition featured sixteen works by artists of different nationalities and backgrounds, living inside and outside of the United States.

Whether they focused on people, urban environment or natural landscape, whether they dwelled on pivotal historical moments or mundane ones, all these works reflected on aspects of American cultural, social and political life that have become of universal relevance.

This exhibition was organized with the support of: **Heinrich Böll Foundation** • **Ford Foundation**



America - Exhibition View



America - Exhibition View



Matt McCormick - future so bright: Motor Hotel

Program of events 2009

- Wednesday March 4 **Theater with dirty feet**
A talk on theater into art by Rabih Mroué
- Wednesday March 11 **Around Closer, video program I**
The first video program echoes the exhibition *Closer*. It features video works that shake our notions of reality by fictionalizing intimate stories and/or situating the artist as the subject/object of the work itself. Kerry Tribe's *The Audition Tapes* is drawn from a story relating to her family and becomes, with the use of actors, a complex narrative and reflection on storytelling, revealing a dramatic event. Fouad El Koury records and reflects on two major episodes that changed his life: a family separation in *Moving Out* and a poetic record of his journey to Turkey that parallels his illness in *Letters to Francine*.
- Wednesday March 18 **To make the judges cry**
A Solo Performance by Charbel Haber
- Wednesday March 25 **Around Closer, video program II**
Video Screening & Artists in Conversation
The second video program around the exhibition *Closer* focused on videos by Lina Saneh and Ghassan Salhab, who choose the most private place as a starting point for an artistic piece. The screening was followed by a conversation between Ghassan Salhab & Lina Saneh.
- Wednesday April 1 **Un-drum / strategies of surviving noise**
A Sound Performance by Tarek Atoui
Nikoll&Tarek
A Duo Performance (T.Atoui/N.Cante)
- Wednesday April 15 **Homage to Johan van der Keuken, Part 1**
Video Screening and Presentation
As a continuation of the theme developed in its first exhibition *Closer*, Beirut Art Center presented a homage to internationally celebrated Dutch filmmaker Johan van der Keuken. Van der Keuken's documentaries are beautiful and complex constructions that explore the notion of intimacy and the boundaries of fiction.
- Wednesday April 22 **Homage to Johan van der Keuken, Part 2**
- Wednesday April 29 **Homage to Johan van der Keuken, Part 3**
- Wednesday May 6 **Artist Talk by Lukas Einsele**
- Wednesday May 13 & 20 **Histoire(s) du Cinéma by Jean-Luc Godard**
- Wednesday May 27 **Old and New Acoustics**
A Solo Performance by Sharif Sehnaoui
- Wednesday June 3 **Around Exposure 2009**
Video Screening
- June 17 - July 15 **On Lebanese Wars**
On the occasion of the exhibition *The Road to Peace: Paintings in Times of War, 1975-1991*, which presented several artistic experiences related to the traumatism of the Lebanese civil war produced by Lebanese artists, BAC programmed a series of events reflecting on the war and providing a platform for discussion on this subject. This program was conceived and organized by Lamia Joreige and Manal Khader for Beirut Art Center.
- Wednesday June 17 **The Misfortunes of Some by Omar Amiralay**
Absence by Mohammad Soueid
Video Screening
- Wednesday June 24 **The lives of Artworks in and after War**
Roundtable with Saleh Barakat and Kristen Scheid . Moderator: Kristine Khouri

Wednesday July 1	Lebanon: Stages of civil conflict and the power of arbitration Lecture by Dr. Ahmad Beydoun
Wednesday July 8	Lives At War Lecture by Jonah Schulhofer-Wohl
Monday July 6	Portraying War in Times of War Lecture by Ghada Sayegh <i>Nostalgia from the Land of War</i> Film by Maroun Baghdadi
Wednesday July 15	<i>Because the Roots will not Die</i> by Nabeeha Lotfy Film Screening
Wednesday July 29	Screening Akram Zaatari, Part 1 Within the framework of the exhibition <i>Earth of Endless Secrets</i> , Beirut Art Center has programed screenings of Akram Zaatari's video work.
August 5 & 6	Horror is Universal (The End) A Video and Music Performance by Raed Yassin
Wednesday August 12	Screening Akram Zaatari, Part 2
Wednesday August 19	Still Lives of Walking Cities Video Screenings Curated by Beth Stryker
Wednesday August 26	Screening Akram Zaatari, Part 3
Wednesday Sept. 2	One Minute Late Concert by Rima Khcheich, Accompanied by Rabih Mroué
Wednesday Sept. 9	Talk and Screening curated by Eungie Joo
Wednesday Sept. 16	Carte Blanche to Akram Zaatari <i>Dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y</i> by Johan Grimonprez Film Screening
Tuesday Sept. 22	Meet the Composer: Oliver Schneller
Sept. 22 - Oct. 5	Indicated by Signs Indicated by Signs was a series of residencies, exhibitions, lectures, and workshops, which revolved around the theme of appearance, that took place in Beirut, Cairo, Bonn, Fez and Rabat. It was the joint effort of curators Sandra Dagher, Yilmaz Dziewior, Aleya Hamza, Abdellah Karroum, Edit Molnar and Christina Végh. Indicated by Signs was initiated and supported by the Goethe-Institut.
Wednesday Sept. 23	Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You about <i>The Thousand and One Nights</i> Artist Talk by Jalal Toufic
Wednesday Sept. 30	The Camouflaged nature of artworks in virtual and actual spaces Artist Talk by Mahmoud Khaled
Wednesday Oct. 5	The New Man. Four Exercises in Utopian Movements Interactive Performance by LIGNA
Wednesday Oct. 21	Around America I: Bill Viola (selected works) Video Screening
Wednesday Oct. 28	Around America II: <i>Punishment Park</i> by Peter Watkins Film Screening

- Wednesday Nov. 4 **Around America III: Andy, as you know I am writing a movie..., Part 1**
Video Screening curated by Stuart Comer (Curator: Film at Tate Modern)
- Wednesday Nov. 11 **Around America IV: Marking Time, Making Space**
Video Screening curated by Beth Stryker
- Wednesday Nov. 18 **Wormholes**
An Audio-visual Performance by Mazen Kerbaj (drawing) and Sharif Sehnaoui (guitar)
- Wednesday Nov. 25 **Around America V: Andy, as you know I am writing a movie..., Part 2**
Video Screening curated by Stuart Comer (Curator: Film at Tate Modern)
- Wednesday Dec. 2 **Around America VI: *Born in Flames* by Lizzie Borden**
Film Screening
- Wednesday Dec. 9 **Concert by Nabil Mroué**
- Wednesday Dec. 16 **Launching of theBook “Earth of Endless Secrets” by Akram Zaatari. Co-produced by Beirut Art Center.**

Around America VII: *Just a question.* A Performance by Tania Bruguera
- Wednesday Dec. 30 **Around America VIII**
Video screening
An american stroll in Flanders by Jacques Lœuille
Stranded in Canton by William Eggleston
- Monday Jan. 4 **Around America IX**
On William Burroughs and Beyond
Video Screening
- Wednesday Jan. 6 **Around America X**
Artist Talk by Kara Walker
- Wednesday Jan. 13 **Around America XI:**
Artist Talk by Emory Douglas
Black Panthers - Huey! Film by Agnes Varda



Jalal Toufic



Charbel Haber



Kara Walker



Rima Khcheich & Rabi Mroué



Nabeeha Lotfy & Akram Zaatari



Tarek Atoui

The Mediatheque

Beirut Art Center has created a digital multimedia library – consisting of images, videos, sound pieces, and texts by artists, writers and theorists – that is open to the public.

It focuses on artistic production from Arab countries, as well as Turkey, Iran and Armenia.

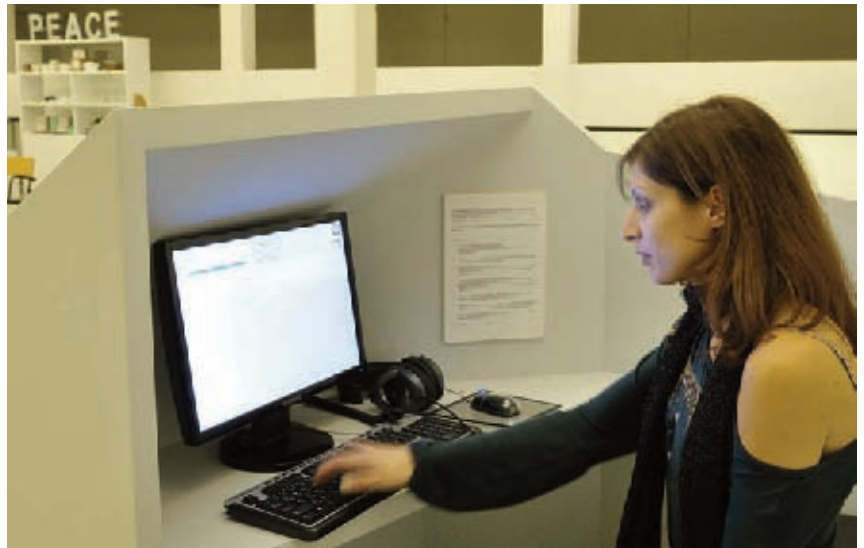
These archives and other materials are collected and listed in an electronic database that is available for consultation. Two booths specially designed for this purpose, each with an integrated computer and headphones, are placed on the top floor of the center.

The mediatheque is the first of its kind in Lebanon and is to be used regularly by students, journalists, curators, artists and the general public.

The Mediatheque is still in its early stages and will continue to be developed. At the moment, it includes 41 artists, with many more artists soon to be added.

List of artists in the Mediatheque

Vahram AGHASYAN
Janane AL ANI
Mounira AL SOLH
Ayreen ANASTAS
Ziad ANTAR
Nadim ASFAR
Mireille ASTORE
Tarek ATOUI
Tony CHAKAR
Ali CHERRI
Hassan CHOUBASSI
Fouad ELKOURY
Hala EL KOUSSY
Sirine FATTOUH
Joana HADJITHOMAS & Khalil JOREIGE
Khaled HAFEZ
Gilbert HAGE
Khosrow HASSANZADEH
Lamia JOREIGE
John JURAYJ
Amal KENAWY
Mahmoud KHALED
Nesrine KHODR
Bernard KHOURY
Nabeeha LOTFY
Maha MAAMOUN
Rabih MROUE
Nabil NAHAS
Walid RAAD
Rami SABBAGH
Ghassan SALHAB
Jayce SALLOUM
Roy SAMAHA
Lina SANEH
Setareh SHAHBAZI
Mohamad SOUEID
Rania STEPHAN
Raed YASSIN
Ala' YOUNIS
Akram ZAATARI
Cynthia ZAVEN



Workshops

March 26- March 30, 2009

No Edit?

An ABLETON LIVE and MAX MSP workshop

Directed by Tarek Atoui and Nicolas Cante (electronic musicians)

Organized by Seconde Nature and Beirut Art Center

This workshop was devoted to the use of the Ableton Live and MAX MSP softwares, which are essential tools of live computer music. Its program was suitable for beginners as well as artists who are already trained in the field. The main aim was to take participants from their home studios to live settings and to introduce them to new techniques and methods in building and conceiving live sets and sound performances.

September 26-27, 2009

Ghostly Appearances, Gestures of Radio

Workshop led by LIGNA

This workshop explored how the personal appearance of the body can be haunted by what has been historically repressed and delved into the kinds of gestural 'ghosts' that are necessary to evoke historical appearances, ephemeral but lasting at the same time. The process involved an examination of a specific space or site in the city as well as all the gestures that appear in it. The inspiration for the thoughts behind the workshop are Agamben's remarks on the vanishing gesture as a means without an end. In Beirut, LIGNA was working with participants on examining the possibilities of radio as a means and on the idea of the ghostly appearance of the radiovoice.

January 14-16, 2010

Workshop led by Emory Douglas

Emory Douglas is an artist and former Minister of Culture of the Black Panther Party.

Beginning in the late 1960s, Douglas created the overall design of the *Black Panther*, the Party's weekly newspaper, and oversaw its layout and production until the Black Panthers disbanded in 1979–80.

The workshop at Beirut Art Center explored the use of graphics for political and social purposes, taking as its starting point the prolific oeuvre of Emory Douglas.

The workshop was open to participants from various backgrounds, including undergraduate students and graduates, and especially visual artists (painters, photographers, illustrators, etc.), graphic designers, and graffiti artists.

Program of exhibitions 2010

January 27, 2010 - April 9, 2010
Solo Exhibition by WALID SADEK

January 27, 2010 - April 9, 2010
Solo Exhibition by EMILY JACIR

April-May, 2010

Homeworks

Exhibition hosted by Beirut Art Center and curated by Ashkal Alwan, The Lebanese Association for Plastic Arts

June 10, 2010 - August 14, 2010
Solo Exhibition by MONA HATOUM

August 24, 2010 - October 9, 2010
EXPOSURE 2010
Collective Emerging artists' Exhibition

October-November 2010

Exhibition curated by Jean-Paul Felley and Olivier Kaeser (Directors of the Swiss Cultural Center in Paris)

Exhibition hosted by Beirut Art Center

November 30, 2010 - January 30, 2011
Solo Exhibition by CHRIS MARKER



Emily Jacir - Where We Come From



Chris Marker - Staring Back

* The dates of the exhibitions are subject to change

Exposure

www.flashart.com

Beirut Art Center
22 April - June 8 2009

Following its inaugural exhibition "Closer" which featured Lebanese and international artists and addressed the shifting boundaries between the private and the public, The Beirut Art Center recently opened its second exhibition to date, "Exposure" with 7 works by emerging Lebanese artists: Tamara Al Samirani, Nadim Asfar, Shirin Fatah, John Jurek, Jean For Naguib, Karim Akbar and Rana Zaven, all reacting through a public call for response. The opening to the Beirut Art Center is a crucial point of supporting a new generation of Lebanese artists (the BAC's exhibition program alternates between established and emerging artists).



Karim Akbar, "Take Away", 2009-2010. Photograph Courtesy BAC

Basics reinforcing the city's artistic infrastructure — Until very recently Beirut did not have a non-profit, public contemporary art center — the BAC is also developing more discursive and reflexive curatorial programs with boxes, seminars and regular workshops. In fact, inside its Exhibition 1, a group of 4, which played the works of international artist, artist at the Charbel Haddad, Karim Akbar, Mourad Al-Solh and Cynthia Zaven as the outcome of a workshop of new media with sound artist Sarah Abou. This double act, which brings together 12 names working across different media and disciplines, is an exciting boost to the local art scene, building and defining new questions and approaches to the form.

Art Central force



Remember, remember

Enough space to display anything



Aching for artistic expression? Beirut Art Centre may be just what you need to launch your work into fame and fortune.

A new venue for artistic expression was opened in January 11, 2009. Called the Beirut Art Centre (BAC), it is located at 13 of 12, 12th, on street 11, a Zone 16, Beirut. It is a small, modern building with a large, open space for art.

The creation of this kind of non-profit platform and public space for contemporary artists in Lebanon is unprecedented, and it means that people of all ages can enjoy what the Beirut Art Centre has to offer. The founders and members of the executive board

are Sandra Dagher, Lina Jurek, Karim Akbar, Rana Zaven, and Maria Ghannouchi. Designed by architect Rana Zaven, the 1,000 square meters of space are divided into two floors. The exhibition space is all white and filled with light, giving a sense of openness and freedom. The building also features a large, open space for art.

BAC practices a selection of exhibitions of contemporary art throughout the year, including a range of media such as video, photography, sculpture, and installation. The BAC also hosts a variety of events, including seminars, workshops, and performances.

and international artists, artists, filmmakers, musicians, and dancers, and events and performances for artists and the public. The BAC also hosts a variety of events, including seminars, workshops, and performances.

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56 Time Out Beirut February - March 2008

FlashArt online

Time Out Beirut

12 THE DAILY STAR

ARTS & CULTURE

REVIEW

Space and time for artists emerging from, and in, Beirut

The day of frequent drives right for the artists in Beirut Art Center's "Exposure"

by Sami

Beirut's art scene is a mix of traditional and contemporary. The Beirut Art Center (BAC) is a new venue for contemporary art, and it is a crucial point of supporting a new generation of Lebanese artists. The BAC's exhibition program alternates between established and emerging artists.



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ARTS & CULTURE

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Le Beirut Art Center, une plate-forme de rencontres artistiques

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Daily Star

L'Orient-Le Jour

06
New Issues & Exhibitions

The National

review
art

Home work

berut finally has permanent, non-commercial art centre, Kaden Wilson-Goldie reports from the opening

The opening of the Beirut Art Center, a permanent, non-commercial art centre, is a significant milestone for the city. The center, located in the heart of the city, is a testament to the resilience and creativity of the Beirutis. The opening ceremony was a grand affair, with many guests in attendance. The center's mission is to promote and support contemporary art in Beirut and the region. It will serve as a platform for local artists to showcase their work and for international artists to engage with the local art scene. The center's collection will include works by both established and emerging artists. The opening of the Beirut Art Center is a testament to the city's commitment to the arts and to the importance of art in the cultural life of the city.

نوافذ

AL - Sunday 18 January 2009

الثقافة تعرف كيف تتقدم في زمن الأزمات
مركز بيروت للفن، ينهض في مصنع موبيليا متقاعد

في مطلع عام 2009، كان من المفترض أن يكون هذا هو العام الذي ستعبر فيه بيروت من مرحلة الأزمات إلى مرحلة البناء. لكن الواقع، للأسف، لم يكن كذلك. ومع ذلك، فإن الثقافة، وخاصة الفن، لم تتوقف عن التقدم. وفي هذا السياق، نرى كيف تنهض في مصنع موبيليا متقاعد مركز بيروت للفن، ليصبح مركزاً للفن المعاصر.

المركز، الذي تم إنشاؤه في مصنع موبيليا قديم، هو أول مركز للفن المعاصر في بيروت. إنه يمثل نقلة كبيرة في المشهد الفني المحلي، حيث يوفر مساحة للفنانين المحليين والعالميين لعرض أعمالهم. المركز يهدف إلى تعزيز الحوار الفني والثقافي بين مختلف المجتمعات، ولتقديم أعمال فنية عالية الجودة.

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The National

Al Mustaqbal

REVIEWS: MIDDLE EAST

Beirut Art Center, Beirut
16 January - 2 April

Chloe

A new space's inaugural exhibition declares what sort of artistic practice will sustain it. Chloe's opening show at the Beirut Art Center, now with international flavor.

The 1800-square-meter addition to the city's white cube is inventory in the hands of Luma Jazayeri, the center's director and mediator. Chloe's opening show is a testament to the center's mission to promote and support contemporary art in Beirut and the region. The exhibition features works by both established and emerging artists, including a large-scale installation by the artist Chloe.

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Art Review

ARTFORUM

NEWS REPORT FILM EXHIBITION VIDEO PREVIEW TALKBACK ART BOOKS/CD-ROM 中文

Beirut

"The Road to Peace: Paintings in Times of War, 1975-1991"

BEIRUT ART CENTER

Jbr El Wali - Off Corniche an Nahr, Building 12, Street 27, Zone 66 Adish, June 17-July 14

Through the works of artists such as Walid Raad, Akram Zaatari, and Itab-h Mout, the contemporary art scene in Beirut has become known for grappling with history, violence, memory, and lived experience in relation to Lebanon's civil war, a fifteen-year conflict that ended two decades ago. These critical and conceptual practices, however, date back only so far as the postwar period. Less visible are the more visceral and emotionally pining practices of a previous generation of Lebanese artists who worked, quite literally, under the bombs and bullets, however briefly, in arts security, even duty, to capture the horrors of war as a warning to subsequent generations not to repeat them.



Abeid Homsid Baskabak, Lebanon, 1975, oil on canvas, 82 x 104

Curated by Sarah Baskabak, hosted by the Beirut Art Center, and named for a 1978 book of haunting, diary-style charcoal drawings by the late artist Aref al-Kayess, "The Road to Peace" includes paintings, drawings, artists' books, photographs, and sculptures made between 1975 and 1990. Many of the works were culled from artists' studios, estates, and private collections. Some have never been shown before, and several were never intended for public exhibition.

The exhibition features a few overt and relatively unsuccessful attempts to do for Lebanon's civil war what Gernsheim did for Spain's. More interesting are Laurie Ghossein's obsessive, intricate drawings and Fouad Elkoury's shadowy, ink, which capture scenes of once-crushing and whimsical. Considered as a time capsule and billed as the first initiative of its kind, the show has provoked thorny questions, a number of which were asked at a valuable and occasionally volatile panel discussion that followed a week after the opening: Does the timing of the exhibition reflect real political anxieties, or is it more symptomatic of competition within the art scene and, more bluntly, of concern for market share? Do such exhibitions contribute to the field of art history, or do they reduce complex narratives to streamlined stories that are inevitably false? These are both painful and productive queries.

—Rafael Winton-Gowrie

artforum.com

"أميركا" في مركز بيروت للفن الأعمال الفنية تشرح الولايات المتحدة



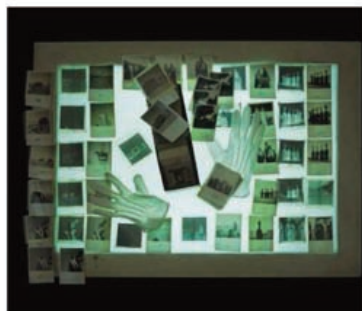
Nahar Ashabab

frieze

Current Shows

Akram Zaatari

Sfeir-Semler Gallery and Beirut Art Center, Beirut, Lebanon



Recto-verso photographs of political prisoners against kitschy, flowered backdrops captured from the originals; photographs of letters written and decorated by a certain Nabih Awada (a.k.a. Neruda, an ex-communist party resistance fighter who spent ten years in Israel's Askalan Prison); photographs of both a private collection of cassette tapes and bombings on the hills of Saïda, Lebanon in the 1980s – this is the intimate material that makes up Akram Zaatari's solo exhibition 'Earth of Endless Secrets: Writing for a Posterior Time', currently split between the Beirut Art Center and Sfeir-Semler Gallery.



In this sober and studied show, Zaatari engages with the stuff of secret histories, revisited memories and personal lives. Through new series of photographic and video works – such as 'Untold' (2008), 'Neruda's Garden' (2009) and 'Learning Photography' (2009) – Zaatari not only reconstructs a certain period in the history of the leftist resistance in South Lebanon, he also returns to some of his own earlier work. Showing photographs of existing photos and letters – documents of documents – in order to narrate Awada's imprisonment during the '90s, and revisiting his video works such as *All is Well on the Border* (1997) and *This Day* (2003), Zaatari attempts to weave this loaded political history through both fiction and the seemingly banal elements of his and Awada's everyday lives.



'Earth of Endless Secrets' performs the difficulties of directly accessing the histories and testimonies of war, occupation and resistance. Though due partly to logistical constraints, holding the exhibition in separate venues (between which there are formal parallels) enacts how fractured histories only become knowable once the impossibility of accessing them is acknowledged. Although, in some instances 'Earth of Endless Secrets' emanates a kind of flattening effect whereby a fraught history is organized into too clean-cut terms, the gestures of secret letters and testimonial remains also, however, makes Zaatari's interventions seem akin to arranging fossils (images of found shells, the capsule letter, the bombed-out hills he shot as a teenager, even the fictive videos, all act like imprints). They do this without making lofty, authoritative claims.

Zaatari's 32-minute video, *Letter to Samir* (2008), foregrounds the importance of the 'act' as beholder of secrets. Lebanese fighters held in Israeli prisons developed ways of communicating via letters written in miniature script, meticulously wrapped into small cones, enveloped in layers of transparent plastic and delivered mouth to mouth across

border fences. Zaatari films Awada drafting such a letter to Samir al-Qantar, the ex-PLO fighter recently released from Israel, asking him why – upon being released – he was photographed with Hezbollah. The specifics of the unseen letter remain unknown as the act of writing becomes a link between the anterior and posterior time of a missing Left. Zaatari films these learnt gestures from above, as they transmit their separate story, distanced from exhausted political polemic. A large photograph of the capsule-letter on a white background can be found hanging a few kilometers down the road in the Sfeir-Semler Gallery (*Letter to Samir*, 2009).



The importance of meta-documentation, excavation and gesture as an artistic impulse is also apparent in the series 'Desert Panorama' (2002-6), as well as the video *Nature Morte* (2008). Along with (if not preceding) six large photographs of South Lebanon's deserted yet ominous landscape, is an 11-minute video fictively documenting the assembling of a homemade bomb. The frontal shot of an older man and his young disciple, carefully preparing the makeshift explosive, is followed by a long shot of the men silently staring into each other's eyes. As the youth straps his loaded backpack and ventures into the hills at dusk, Zaatari whispers or brings to light hidden and unknowable stories. These endless secrets are the stuff of life in and after war.

Ghalya Saadawi

frieze.com

BAC in Numbers:

Approximate number of visitors:

Opening of Beirut Art Center	1 120 visitors
Closer	1 720 visitors(average of 25 visitors per day)
Exposure 2009 & 4	1 500 visitors (opening: 535 pers. Average of 27 visitors per day)
The Road to peace	1 414 visitors (opening: 300 pers. Average of 46 visitors per day)
Akram Zaatari & Bernard Khoury	2 425 visitors (opening: 374 pers. Average of 33 visitors per day)
America	1 958 visitors (opening: 250 pers. Average of 23 visitors per day)

Total number of visitors: 10 137 visitors

Number of website visitors (as of December 2009):

24 000 visitors

Members of Facebook group (as of December 2009):

1 740 members

Number of subscribers to our electronic newsletter:

3 660 email addresses

Financial statement 2009*

REVENUES:	
Public and Private Institutions	154,537
Private Donors	214,084
Sponsors/Financial support	85,989
Sponsors/In kind support	16,000
Salaries/In kind support (3 months from the Director and Multimedia Director)	7,500
Membership	1,420
Entrance fees for events and workshops	5,565
Benefits from the bookshop	5,095
Benefits from the Boutique Café	-886 **
Renting of the space	22,500
Fundraising Event	10,300
TOTAL REVENUES	\$522,104
EXPENSES	
Operating Cost	
Renovation works	196,325
Rent of the space	54,700
Electronic Supplies	48,923
Othe Space Fees (Electricity, Telephone, Internet, Office Supplies...)	25,000
Salaries and services	79,178
Bank fees	670
Communication	4,140
Total Operating Cost	\$408,936
Activities	
Exhibition 1: Closer	17,937
Exhibition 2: Exposure 2009	16,938
Exhibition 3: Solo exhibitions Akram Zaatari and Bernard Khoury	14,248
Exhibition 4: America	36,000
Parrallel Events	10,100
Total Activities	\$95,223
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$504,159
BALANCE	\$17,945

* The financial statement of 2009, also includes the expenses of 2008, prior to the opening of Beirut Art Center. These costs were mainly for the renovation of the space.

** The Boutique Café did not reach the amount needed to cover our initial investement in it. The balance is therefore negative for 2009.

Budget 2010

REVENUES:	
Excess revenues from 2009	17,945
Reimbursement VAT 2009	7,000
Public and Private Institutions (confirmed)	91,542
Private Donors (confirmed)	31,149
Sponsors/Financial support (confirmed)	65,000
Expected donations	32,500
Entrance fees for events	6,000
Benefits from the bookshop	5,000
Benefits from the Boutique Café	3,000
Renting of the space	10,000
Fundraising Event	10,000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$279,136
EXPENSES	
Operating Cost	
Renovation works (2nd installment)	7,000
Rent of the space	54,500
Electronic Supplies	3,000
Othe Space Fees (Electricity, Telephone, Internet, Office Supplies, Repairs and maintenance...)	23,000
Salaries and services	70,500
Bank fees	
Communication	2,000
Total Operating Cost	\$160,000
Activities	
Exhibition 1: Solo exhibitions Walid Sadek & Emily Jacir	21,000
Exhibition 2: Mona Hatoum	23,000
Exhibition 3: Exposure 2010	15,000
Exhibition 4: Chris Marker	25,000
Parrallel Events	25,000
Total Activities	\$109,000
Miscellaneous	10,136
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$279,136
BALANCE	\$0

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• The list above is subject to change according to the participation of new donors. Donors who take part until June 2010 will be included in the list of 2009-2010.