

They are Impersonal, yet Habitation is Augmented by the Pressures of Their Indifference*

[I] Samir El Kordy
 [II] Mahmoud Khaled
 [III] Yazan El Zubi
 [IV] Helene Kazan
 [V] Neïl Beloufa
 [VI] Basma Alsharif

Curated by Sara El Adl

A shape-shifting architecture leaves behind its waste in rubbles or in vacant pristine forms. Storytelling, flamboyant upkeep or the breakdown of spatial and physical elements into a visual language are generative instruments of making a self and different experiences of time and duration accompany every reordering of an immediate space.

This exhibition looks at the way intimate spaces have been abstracted, dismantled and quantified to reflect a process of subjective projection. The spaces serve as stage for displayed acts of emotional intimacy and parallel states of paranoia, anger and trauma, while also acting as a present plane for a meditative conception of different futurities. The numerical and material components of space can be autonomous, animate and prescriptive.

Gypsum is showing the work of six artists and presenting three new commissions by Mahmoud Khaled, Samir El Kordy and Yazan El Zubi. The works span installation, photography and film. They respond to or resonate with questions through which this show has been formulated: what does it do to visually collapse a building – or take an element out and reproduce it in infinite repetition? What do we say about our historical and emotional knowledge of our spaces? How have the formal elements of said spaces been utilized, fictionalized and rationalized through intellectual and artistic practice?

[I]
 The architect offers a proposal for a house that rearranges a recognizable flow of domesticity; a plan of a midsection cut through an archetypal London townhouse recommends a gutting, where attic can be heart and the basement, an epicenter. Leisure is tied to dictated material surfaces, and contrived angles lead to a corner garden, two levels up. New renderings of the townhouse limbs disrupt movement and generate a second system.

[II]
 The sculpture of a daybed poses as a personal effect, a platform for a historicized male vanity and anxious temperaments. It stands in a room as an item of a desire around which an identity is assembled. It is an extension of ornament, social stratum and a systematic exercise of daydreaming in an adorned personal space.

[III]
 An alter persona is projected during the maintenance of baroque objects that preceded the inhabitant. A heritage that requires a rereading of interactions that informed the inhabitant's aesthetic and gestures. The flattened figurines perform in the space as permanent residents.

[IV]
 The work is a reconstruction of a mid-war family kitchen as an object of risk. A cross-hatched masking tape is placed on a window: a customary recommendation to stop the glass from shattering during a bombardment. Light permeates membranes of a house over a duration where the threshold of these

* "Architectural systems are not like human relationships. Like nature, they are impersonal, yet habitation is augmented by the pressures of their indifference." The Atlas of Novel Tectonics, Jesse Reiser and Nanako Umemoto, Princeton Architectural Press, c2006.

barriers is tested.

[V]

Set in a made-up gated community, residents fawn over their seamless environment. Fulfilling the notion of "lifestyle" to a maximum manifestation of total immersion produces an unintentional nonplace. This is a metafictional account on the excessive creation of structures and their walkways that are to become a backdrop for precharted performances. Fountains and benches trigger reflective pauses that can be afforded in this optimally idyllic setting.

[VI]

The film is a multitemporal excavation of a particular history, one that is accessible under folds of violent claims over space and homes. It is a look, in hindsight, over present and future artefacts, our waste of fossilized edifices. The hypnotic process of recording this archeology takes on a rhythm of a dystopic and familiar urgency.

Biographies

Samir El Kordy is an architect based in Cairo, Egypt. He graduated from the Architectural Department in Cairo University, Faculty of Engineering. He has worked for OMA/Rem Koolhaas in Rotterdam, and Herzog & de Meuron in Basel. In Cairo, El Kordy has realized a number of projects and has collaborated with CDC/ Abdel Halim Ibrahim in major architectural initiatives in Egypt and the Arab Region. His practice includes a range of realized architectural and urban, theoretical, research-based projects in New York, Paris, Munich, London, Rotterdam, Saint Louis, Saint Petersburg, Dubai, Ibb, Riyadh and Cairo. His project "A Monument of Buzzwords" has been exhibited in PhotoCairo 5 in Cairo, 2012, and Magazine 4, Bregenz, Austria, 2012. He was the design architect for the exhibition at Haus der Kunst, Munich "The Future of Tradition and The Tradition of Future" 2010-2011. His research "Rampart and Retreat Tourism" has been exhibited at the Rotterdam Biennale, 2009.

Mahmoud Khaled (b. 1982) studied Fine Arts at the Alexandria University in Egypt and Trondheim University in Norway. His work spans video, photography, sculpture, installation, sound and text. His solo shows include "A New Commission for an Old State," Gypsum, Cairo (2018) and Edith-Ruth-Haus, Oldenburg (2016); "Proposal for a Porn Company", Galpão VB | Associação Cultural Videobrasil, São Paulo (2016); "Painter on a Study Trip", Gypsum, Cairo (2016); "It's Never Too Late to Talk About Love", Nile Sunset Annex, Cairo (2014); "When Meanings Face Glossy Surfaces", Contemporary Image Collective, Cairo (2010) and "I Never Wanted to Be Alone in a Room", BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2010). His group exhibitions include "A Group Exhibition", Witte de With, Rotterdam (2018); 15th Istanbul Biennale, (2017); 13th Sharjah Biennale, (2017); Terra Mediterranea – in Action, NiMAC Arts Center, Nicosia (2017); "Hips Don't Lie", Centre Pompidou, Malaga (2016); "Electronic Superhighway", Whitechapel Gallery, London (2016); "Complicity", Sultan Gallery, Kuwait (2016); Lofoten International Art Festival, Lofoten (2013) and the 9th Shanghai Biennale, Intercity Pavilions Project (2012). In 2012 Khaled was awarded the Videobrasil in Context Prize, and he was shortlisted for the 2016 Abraaj Art Prize. Khaled lives and works in Cairo.

Yazan El Zubi is a Moroccan-Jordanian artist, working and living between Jordan, Egypt, and Morocco. He holds a BA in Architectural Engineering and Environmental design validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) program. El Zubi uses different techniques of image making which channel the juxtaposition of archeological sites and objects with their counterpart of modern spaces and daily-life items. Interested in the intersections which happen with simultaneous access to both low and high cultures, his gaze attempts to place these elements into solid portrayals of desire, satire or romance. El Zubi participated in Social Securities program at Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt (2012), the Spring Sessions Program, Makan Art Space, Amman, Jordan (2016 - 2017) and Mophradat's Meeting Points 8: The Other Side of The Curtain hosted at the Windsor Palace Hotel in Cairo, Egypt (2016). Group shows include: "A Worthy Degenerate," Townhouse, Cairo, Egypt (2016); "100 Days of Art in The Capital," Makan Art Space,

Amman, Jordan (2016); "Couturissimo," Penta Lounge Hotel, Brussels, Belgium (2018); "Ephemeral Territories," Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan (2019); Youmein Festival - Desire edition, Technopark, Tangier, Morocco (2019). El Zubi was recently in the Acts of Simulation residency program, and participated in the artist-led publication "Gently Sparkling," at the MMAG foundation in Amman, Jordan.

Helene Kazan is an artist, writer and curator. Her work investigates 'risk' in Lebanon, through an analysis of international law, architecture, and the human experience of violence, observed and argued through the frame of 'poetic testimony'. Kazan completed a PhD at the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London. She is the recipient of the 2018-2020 Vera List Center Fellowship at The New School, New York. Kazan is a Lecturer at Oxford Brookes University, the Royal College of Art, London, and was a Research Fellow at Forensic Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London (2012 - 2015). Through her interdisciplinary practice Kazan has worked with Ashkal Alwan/Digital Earth, Beirut (2019), Goethe Institute, Lebanon, the Arab Center for Architecture (2018), The Serpentine Gallery, London (2017), documenta(14), Kassel (2017), Strelka Institute for Media, Architecture and Design, Moscow (2016), Ibraaz (2015), Tate Britain, London (2015), Mosaic Rooms, London (2015), The Showroom, London (2014), the House of World Cultures (HKW), Berlin (2014) and the Beirut Art Center (2013). Kazan recently published with the Australian Feminist Law Journal, (2018), The Funambulist, (2016) and Sternberg, (2014).

Neïl Beloufa (b. 1985) is a French-Algerian artist who lives and works in Paris. He studied at l'École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux- Arts, and at l'École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, both in Paris. He also studied at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia (USA); at Cooper Union, New York, and at Le Fresnoy - Studio National des Arts Contemporains, Tourcoing (France). Beloufa was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize in 2015, the Artes Mundi Prize (Cardiff, UK) and the Nam Jun Paik (Essen, Germany) in 2016. He received the Prix Meurice for Contemporary Arts in 2013, the Audi Talents Awards in 2011, and the Prix Agnès B. Studio Collector in 2010. His work was the subject of monographic exhibitions in France and abroad, notably at K11, Shanghai in 2016, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York in 2016, Schinkel Pavillion, Berlin in 2015, the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London in 2014, the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in 2013, Palais de Tokyo, Paris in 2013 and 2018, as well as the Schirn Kunsthalle, in Frankfurt 2018. Beloufa also took part in the Shanghai Contemporary Art Biennale in 2014, Lyon Contemporary Art Biennale in 2013 and the 55th and 58th editions of the Venice Biennale in 2013 and 2019. His work is present in several prestigious collections in the Musée National d'Art moderne, Centre Pompidou, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), as well as in the Sammlung Goetz collection, and the Julia Stoschek collection.

Basma Alsharif is an artist/filmmaker born in Kuwait of Palestinian origin, raised between France, the US and the Gaza Strip. She has a BFA and an MFA from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Basma developed her practice nomadically between Chicago, Cairo, Beirut, Sharjah, Amman, the Gaza Strip and Paris. She works between cinema and installation, centering on the human condition in relation to shifting geopolitical landscapes and natural environments. Major exhibitions include: the Whitney Biennial, les Rencontres d'Arles, les Module at the Palais de Tokyo, Here and Elsewhere at the New Museum, Al Riwaq Biennial Palestine, The Berlin Documentary Forum, the Sharjah Biennial, and Manifesta 8. She was shortlisted for the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2018, received a jury prize at the Sharjah Biennial 9 and was awarded the Marcelino Botin Visual Arts grant. Basma is represented by Galerie Imane Farés in Paris, distributed by Video Data Bank and Arsenal, and is now based in Cairo, Egypt.