

ZOOM FAIR PROGRAM

Mohamed Allam

A Stream of the Holy Words. Egypt, 2008 (7min)

This narrative does not merely constitute a mode of questioning of well-worn social concepts plaguing Egyptian society. Rather, it hints at the gist of the large volume of stories and discussions flowing in countless meetings with friends, which have often been met with futility. In this video, a friend at once offers advice to his marginalized fellow citizens while presenting a social satire of some inherited cultural forms.

Biography

Born in Assiut in 1984, Mohammad Allam studied at the Arts Education Faculty of Helwan University in Cairo.

Allam lives and works in Cairo using different mediums such as video, performance and sound. Usually the surrounding environment with its social and political constituents provides the context and framework from which he focuses on the derivation of irony in his work. He attempts from these elements to link his cultural roots to a wider arrangement of networks.

He has participated as an artist in numerous events since 2003. Allam is also concerned with art management and has participated in organizing several art events in Cairo. He established the young Cairo-based artist initiative "Medrar for Contemporary Art" which aims at the promotion of contemporary artistic practices of young artists in Egypt.

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Sama Alshaibi

The Pessimists, USA/UAE, 2009/10

Chicken: 6min10sec ; Sissy: 1min40sec ; 3min45sec

Videos from the project "The Pessimists" invites a contemplation of the invisible forces that police behavior of people; the "pessimists" control one another by planting doubt, worry and fear, gestures that often engender stagnation. The perpetuation of behavioral norms relies on those policing virtue via their agents; the family and friends of one's inner circle each has a role to play. "Chicken" and "Sissy" depict two bodies standing opposite each other, first in friendly negotiations, then intimidation and finally, oppressive violence. The bodies cycle through childhood games, recalling and repeating the power dynamics of the strong and the weak; they pattern behavior in conflict escalation. "Sweep" depicts a woman feverishly sweeping her footsteps in a barren desert landscape, her personal conflict is performed over desert landscapes worldwide. The desert is my symbol of a paradoxical landscape; it always appears to shift and change shape, but nothing every really grows or changes. It reinforces the idea of the futile and repetitive acts of the ongoing and recycled conflicts of our modern history. Her paranoid and futile attempt to hide her presence, her mark of her everyday path is undermined by her own action. She continues in a never ending loop of attempting to police her own behavior.

Biography

Born in Basra, Iraq, Sama Alshaibi's art evokes the language of dislocation and loss, articulating negotiations between body, disputed land, and shifting political realities. A

photographer, installation and time-based artist, Alshaibi is primarily interested in the body's relationship to land: how it is controlled, patrolled, denied and transformed. Her works examine war, occupation and the sprawl of the military machine while presenting the human body as counter-point to such national endeavors. She often use her own body to test the limits of access and privilege; infiltrating guarded spaces, negotiating borders, even if at gunpoint.

A Palestinian-Iraqi exiled to the United States, her art reflects forced migrations and the in-between state of statelessness. Alshaibi is also interested in the threshold of two different existential planes, of disorientation, and spaces between spaces. Whether applied within a context of a political map or even the search for meaning, her practice is rooted in the anxieties of the human experience.

Alshaibi has exhibited in over 20 countries including Impressions Gallery in the UK, Exit Art in NYC, Al Hoash in Jerusalem, DARB in Cairo, The Bronx Museum in NYC and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver. She is represented in Europe by Selma Feriani Gallery (London) and in the U.A.E. by The Empty Quarter (Dubai). Her 20 time-based works (video art and films) have screened in numerous film festivals internationally, including Thessaloniki International Film Festival in Greece, CinemaEast Film Festival in NYC, DOKUFEST in Kosovo and MidEast Cut in Copenhagen/Denmark & Helsinki/Finland. Alshaibi is an Assistant Professor of Photography and Video Art at University of Arizona, Tucson, USA.

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Tala Hadid

Your Dark Hair Ihsan, Morocco/USA, 2005 (13 min)

A man is notified of his mother's death and returns from Europe to Morocco. As he rediscovers his native-city and land of origin, he remembers his long lost mother and childhood. Time becomes blurred as he crosses the topography of the city and navigates through the waters of the past and the present, of dream and of memory.

Biography

Tala Hadid made her first short film in 1993 while at Brown University studying Fine Art and Philosophy. In 1995, as she was graduating, she co-wrote and directed a feature documentary *Sacred Poet* on Pier Paolo Pasolini.

In 2005 Hadid received her MFA in Film Directing from Columbia, and completed her film, *Your Beautiful Hair Ihsan*. The film was awarded the 2005 Kodak/Cinecolor Prize and in June 2005 received a Student Academy Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. It has won several prizes (including awards from the Global Film Initiative, the Milos Forman grant and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts). It screened at numerous Film Festivals including the New York Film Festival 2005, the Sundance Film Festival 2006 and the Rotterdam Film Festival 2006 where it was nominated for a Tiger Award. In February of 2006 the film won the Panorama Best short Film Award at the Berlin Film Festival. Hadid's work has also screened, among other venues, at the MOMA in New York City, the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C, L'Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, the Seville Biennale in Spain, Oxford University, and the Photographer's Gallery in London.

Hadid is a fellow of the Sundance Institute feature film program and was invited to the writers and directors lab 2009 with her feature film project *The Narrow Frame of Midnight*

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Basma Al-Sharif

We Began by Measuring Distance, USA/Palestine, 2009 (19 min)

Long still frames, text, language, and sound are woven together to unfold the narrative of an anonymous group who fill their time by measuring distance. Longing, nostalgia, and melancholy are palpably felt, without ever giving viewers the clues to what has been lost. The film explores what it means—or how it feels—to be tied to a place, a narrative, an idea that no longer exists.

Innocent measurements become political ones, drawing an examination of how image and sound communicate history, tragedy, and the complication of Palestinian nationalism. *We Began by Measuring Distance* explores the ultimate disenchantment with facts when the visual fails to communicate the tragic.

Biography

Basma Alsharif works with photography, film, video, sound, text, and language to explore visual communication at an intuitive level. Using language as a response to images and images as a response to the aesthetic of text. Basma's work wavers between fiction and fantasy and experiment with non-linear narratives to explore subjective experiences in relation to political landscapes.

Born in Kuwait of Palestinian origin, Basma Alsharif received her M.F.A. from the School of Art and Design at the University of Illinois at Chicago, with a concentration in photography, film and video. Her Works have been screened and exhibited internationally including Manifesta 8, TIFF, Palestine Film Festivals in UK, Boston, Chicago, and Michigan, and the Sharjah Biennial and was a recipient of the Fundacion Marcelino Botin Visual Arts Grant 2009-10. Currently, Basma lives in Beirut, Lebanon.